



Milo Yiannopoulos: Five Things to Know

1. Milo Yiannopoulos is a controversial right-wing media personality and provocateur.

While he refers to himself as "the world's most fabulous supervillain," and claims to be a conservative and a fearless bulwark against the encroaching forces of "political correctness," Yiannopoulos is in actuality a provocateur who specializes in attacking groups he dislikes. He particularly despises the left and promotes what he calls "a new cultural libertarianism."

Yiannopoulos is the founder of The Kernel, an online tabloid magazine about technology, which was sold in 2014. He then became an editor at Breitbart, an ultra-conservative news and opinion website that has promoted racist and anti-Muslim themes. He resigned from Breitbart after controversial statements he made about pedophilia came to light in February 2017 and caused an uproar.

Yiannopoulos rose to prominence during the "Gamergate" controversy, publishing a column on Breitbart denouncing the "feminist bullies tearing the video game industry apart." This was a momentous stand for Yiannopoulos, as it energized and attracted an audience that was tired of the "guilt-mongers," as he put it, among feminists and other civil rights groups, which he dismissively calls "SJWs," or "social justice warriors."

2. Yiannopoulos is a misogynistic, racist, xenophobic, transphobic troll who is extremely good at getting people to pay attention to him.

Yiannopoulos has capitalized on his growing visibility, launching vicious trolling attacks on women, Black Lives Matter activists, transgender people, and Muslims.

His attacks have a range of far-flung targets, including African-American comedian and actor Leslie Jones, who temporarily left Twitter in 2016 after Yiannopoulos incited a campaign of racist misogyny against her. The Twitter campaign was in reaction to Jones starring in a remake of the movie "Ghostbusters" and included references to her as a man and an ape. Yiannopoulos was then banned from Twitter, thus losing his base of over 300,000 followers on the social media platform.

He has also referred to feminism as a "cancer" and embraced the "Gamergate" controversy, where women involved in the videogame industry were subject to online abuse, including rape and death threats.

Yiannopoulos has also promoted anti-Muslim views. He held an event called "Wake Up!" during the 2016 Republican Convention that featured anti-Muslim activists Pamela Geller and Geert Wilders, a Dutch politician, among others.

In addition, Yiannopoulos created a "Privilege Grant" for white men only, which is in line with his effort to promote white identity and push back against diversity and multiculturalism. The grant was described as "exclusively available to white men who wish to pursue their post-secondary education on equal footing with their female, queer and ethnic minority classmates." In March 2018, Yiannopoulos announced that the charity administering the grant had closed, but failed to explain what happened to the money that had already been raised.

3. Yiannopoulos has embarked on several controversial campus tours.

In 2016, Yiannopoulos launched his "Dangerous Faggot" tour, visiting college campuses across the country to rail against issues like feminism, political correctness, transgender rights, and Black Lives Matter. His appearances, often at

the invitation of conservative student groups, caused tremendous controversy and have even led to violence.

Yiannopoulos' actions and words on campus have had other repercussions. He outed a transgender student at the University of Wisconsin during a stop on his "Dangerous Faggot" tour. Yiannopoulos, who is gay, displayed a photo of a transgender woman and named her – in front of an audience of 300 people, plus online viewers. "The way you know he's failed is I can still bang him," Yiannopoulos announced, according to the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel. The student, who had protested a university policy requiring transgender students to cover "non-conforming genitalia" at all times while using campus locker rooms, quickly withdrew from school, according to university officials.

In January 2017, a man was shot during a protest of Yiannopoulos' talk at the University of Washington in Seattle. A week earlier, protests shut down his talk at the University of California Davis. In early February 2017, violent protests prompted the cancellation of his talk at the University of California-Berkeley.

In the fall of 2017, Yiannopoulos attempted once again to speak at universities in California. While he succeeded in speaking to hundreds of students at California State University at Fullerton in November, his plans to give speeches at a number of other universities fizzled.

In February 2018, Yiannopoulos announced yet another college speaking tour, starting at UCLA. He proposed giving a controversial speech there entitled, "10 Things I Hate about Mexico." The Republican organization that had invited him later cancelled the speech, saying that the proposed event had polarized the group's leadership. Two months later, Louisiana State University canceled Yiannopoulos' speaking engagement after he failed to secure adequate insurance for the event.

4. He is often identified with the alt right, but is actually more of an alt right apologist.

In March 2016, Yiannopoulos co-wrote an article on Breitbart in which he championed the alt right and generally expressed a lack of concern about the movement's racism, anti-Semitism, and white supremacist ideology. In the article, he called the ideologues of the alt right "dangerously bright." He also said that the young rebels of the alt right were "drawn to the alt-right for the same reason that young Baby Boomers were drawn to the New Left in the 1960s: because it promises fun, transgression, and a challenge to social norms..."

Although many media outlets refer to Yiannopoulos as a leader of the alt right, the white supremacists of the alt right reject him due to his alleged Jewish ancestry (he identifies as a Catholic but often promotes his Jewish background to ward off accusations of racism or anti-Semitism). They also snub him on the basis of his homosexuality and his promotion of inter-racial sex. Nonetheless, he is part of the alt right orbit, since he agrees with its views against immigration, globalism, political correctness, and mainstream conservatism. In turn, the alt right views him as part of what they call the "alt lite" –people who accept a lot of the alt right's views but reject white supremacy and anti-Semitism. For his fans, however, Yiannopoulos may serve as a gateway to the alt right.

In October 2017, BuzzFeed wrote an exposé on Yiannopoulos' relationship with the alt right. The article revealed that he had close ties to white nationalists and had even asked them for comments on the article he wrote about the alt right for Breitbart. According to the Buzzfeed article, Yiannopoulos sang a karaoke rendition of "America the Beautiful" in April 2016 at a bar in front of a group that included white supremacist Richard Spencer. During the song, people in the audience reportedly gave "Sieg Heil" salutes. Yiannopoulos told BuzzFeed that he is not a racist and that he disavowed white nationalism.

5. Yiannopoulos gained notoriety for his antics and a book deal, but his relevance is dwindling.

In December 2016, Yiannopoulos inked a \$250,000 book deal with Simon & Schuster for his memoir "Dangerous." The news prompted a widespread backlash against the publishing house and swagger from the newly minted author. "I met with top execs at Simon & Schuster earlier in the year and spent half an hour trying my hardest to shock them with lewd jokes and outrageous opinions," Yiannopoulos announced. "I thought they were going to have me escorted from the building but instead they offered me a wheelbarrow full of cash." In February 2017, when comments Yiannopoulos had made about pedophilia surfaced, the book deal was canceled, and the Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) rescinded an invitation to speak at their 2017 event.

Yiannopoulos self-published his book and later sued Simon & Schuster for cancelling the book deal. In February 2018, he dropped the lawsuit against the company.

Yiannopoulos also gained notoriety when the online publication LGBTQ Nation named him "Person of the Year" in 2016 after he got the most online votes, thanks at least in part to stories posted on Breitbart and 4chan urging followers to support him.

However, Yiannopoulos' resignation from Breitbart, his cancelled book deal and his largely unsuccessful college tours have lately diminished his "brand." Meanwhile, he has made a number of appearances on the conspiracy-oriented site InfoWars, run by Alex Jones, a right-wing American radio host and prolific anti-government conspiracy theorist.