Alex Jones: Five Things to Know

1. Alex Jones is a right-wing American radio host and prolific anti-government conspiracy theorist.

Jones rose from public-access obscurity to national prominence by promoting paranoid allegations against the U.S. government and a shadowy, power-hungry New World Order. Jones is the most influential right-wing conspiracy theorist in the United States today.

Online and on the air, Jones breathlessly and stridently champions a litany of absurdities. To wit: the tragic massacre at Sandy Hook elementary school was a hoax perpetrated to curtail Americans’ gun rights, 9/11 was an inside job perpetrated by the U.S. government, and juice boxes “make kids gay.” Many of his
conspiracy theories emanate from the anti-government militia movement, whose ideology Jones adopted in the 1990s.

Based in Austin, Texas, Jones boasts a national audience, thanks to his radio show, which is broadcast on 100 stations nationwide, and his websites Infowars and Prison Planet, where his many specious claims are presented, in multimedia format, as "news." Infowars' reach is not insignificant: According to web analytics firm Quantcast, Infowars reached roughly 7.5 million unique readers in March 2017, which puts it in the same ballpark as Salon.com and American Airlines' website. Jones also runs the right-wing website PrisonPlanet.com.

2. Jones has earned the vocal admiration of President Donald Trump.
President Trump has promoted a number of repeatedly disproven conspiracy theories advanced by Jones, including claims about President Barack Obama's birthplace and allegations that millions of illegal immigrants voted in the 2016 presidential election.

The mutual regard between President Trump and Jones was on full display during a 2015 radio interview, when then-candidate Trump told Jones, "Your reputation is amazing," and Jones responded, "What you’re doing is epic. It’s George Washington level." According to Jones, Trump called after the election to thank the Infowars audience for their support, and to promise he will make them proud. Jones is not letting this opportunity pass him by; in January 2017, Infowars opened a bureau in Washington, D.C., headed by Jerome Corsi, a right-wing author and conspiracy theorist who is widely credited with sparking the racist "birther" trope about Obama. As of May 2, Jones claimed he had been granted "weekly" White House press passes, but that Corsi’s permanent press pass was still pending.

3. Jones made his name as an anti-government agitator who believes the federal government is akin to a criminal organization.
Jones blames the government, overseen by a shadowy New World Order, for everything from autism (which he claims is caused by vaccines) to numerous
"false flag" operations (Sandy Hook, the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing). He is also a well-known “9/11 truther,” promoting the idea that the attacks were staged by the U.S. government for nefarious purposes. Jones’s 9/11 theories brought him a whole new audience and influenced a number of white supremacists, including Andrew Anglin (of The Daily Stormer) and Lee Rogers (of InfoStormer.com). He believes the U.S. federal government is part of a global conspiracy to disarm and enslave Americans, and points to routine National Guard training exercises as evidence. In 2015, Jones helped spark a hysterical reaction to Jade Helm, a U.S. military exercise designed to help soldiers train for various combat environments. Jones insisted it was a cover for the beginning stages of martial law, and enough people believed him that the Army had to send surrogates to calm anxious citizens.

4. Jones was one of the leading propagators of the “Pizzagate” hoax.

“Pizzagate” is a convoluted collection of lies involving D.C. pizzeria Comet Ping Pong and owner James Alefantis, whose tenuous personal connection to several powerful Democrats was spun into a nightmarish conspiracy theory in which tunnels beneath the restaurant served as the headquarters for a Hillary Clinton-sanctioned web of child trafficking, pedophilia and murder.

“When I think about all the children Hillary Clinton has personally murdered and chopped up and raped, I have zero fear standing up against her,” Jones said in a (now deleted) YouTube video posted on November 4, 2016. “Yeah, you heard me right. Hillary Clinton has personally murdered children. I just can’t hold back the truth anymore.” Jones later said his comments were a reference to U.S. policy in Syria.

The Pizzagate incident, like Jade Helm before it, illustrates Jones’s ability to influence his followers to take action in the real world, no matter how far-fetched or unrealistic his claims might be. The Pizzagate “story” emerged in the final days of the 2016 presidential campaign, and thanks in part to active promotion by Michael G. Flynn, the son of former National Security Advisor Michael T. Flynn (who also appeared to endorse the story on social media), was still going strong a
full month after Election Day, when Edgar Welch appeared at Comet Ping Pong with an assault rifle, ready to “rescue” the children he was convinced were being held in the basement. Welch fired several shots and spent close to an hour inside the restaurant before apparently determining that there were not, in fact, any signs of any criminal activity anywhere in the building. He surrendered to police, and later pleaded guilty to assault and weapons charges. Welch was sentenced in June 2017 to four years in prison.

After the shooting incident, Jones issued a rare apology for his outrageous allegations against Alefantis, saying, “I made comments...that in hindsight I regret.” It has been pointed out that Alefantis, as a private citizen, could easily sue Jones for spreading baseless accusations, and Jones’s carefully worded apology may have been an attempt to stave off any future legal action. Even after all this, Jones hasn’t dropped his child-trafficking theory – but now he’s targeting prominent Democrats, all of whom are public figures, and less protected by libel laws.

5. Jones is not demonstrably anti-Semitic, but frequently expresses his distaste for “globalists,” which some consider a dog-whistle term for “Jewish.”

White supremacists and other anti-Semites have been endlessly and loudly frustrated by the absence of anti-Semitism on Jones’s programs and websites. That said, Jones has been known to rail against the “Jewish mafia,” most recently on his March 29, 2017 radio show, when he made this memorable (though not especially coherent) statement: “Well, there is undoubtedly a Jewish mafia and the [Anti-Defamation League] will say you’re anti-Semitic. No, there's an Italian mafia, Irish mafia, Jewish mafia, Jamaican mafia, and there’s mafias, there’s Dixie mafia. And absolutely, the Jewish mafia, then, if you criticize it says you’re anti-Semitic, but the Jewish mafia is a very powerful mafia.... And the Jewish mafia mainly feeds on Jews so, like the ringworm—the Sephardic Jews, they killed over 100,000 of them in a radiation test. So one of the biggest enemies of Jews is the Jewish mafia, they worked with Hitler. Well, the head of the Jewish mafia is George Soros, he's out to get Jews.”
After the violent and chaotic "Unite the Right" white supremacist rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, Jones announced that he suspected that many of the attendees were actually "leftist Jews" "in disguise," there to discredit white supremacists and incite violence. "I mean, quite frankly, I've been to these events, a lot of the KKK guys with their hats off look like they're from the cast of 'Seinfeld.' Literally they're just Jewish actors," he said on The Alex Jones Show the day after the Charlottesville event. "Nothing against Jews in general, but they are leftist Jews that want to create this clash and they go dress up as Nazis. I have footage in Austin — we're going to find it somewhere here at the office — where it literally looks like cast of 'Seinfeld' or like Howard Stern in a Nazi outfit. They all look like Howard Stern. They almost got like little curly hair down, and they're just up there heiling Hitler. You can tell they are totally uncomfortable, they are totally scared, and it's all just meant to create the clash."