Patriot Front

Key Points

- Patriot Front is a white supremacist group whose members maintain that their ancestors conquered America and bequeathed it to them, and no one else.

- Patriot Front justifies its ideology of hate and intolerance under the guise of preserving the ethnic and cultural origins of its members’ European ancestors.

- Patriot Front spreads its hateful propaganda via the internet and by distributing banners, fliers, posters, and stickers.

- In 2020, Patriot Front transitioned from using explicit antisemitic and white supremacist language in its propaganda to more cover bigoted language,
Patriot Front is a white supremacist group whose members maintain that their ancestors conquered America and bequeathed it to them alone. They define themselves as American fascists or American nationalists who are focused on preserving America's identity as a European-American identity.

Some of their statements, or statements of their members, have included:

“America is our nation, passed down to us by our fathers, and so long as we live, the enemies of our people will not stand unopposed.” - Patriot Front, Twitter, November 6, 2017

“The American Identity is not merely given upon birth, it is seized through the potential of one's blood, and the extent to which they fulfill their natural duty to their people.” - Patriot Front, Gab.ai, October 1, 2017

“The American identity was forged in a struggle between civilizations that ended in victory for our ancestors.” - Patriot Front, Twitter, September 17, 2017

Origins
Patriot Front is a Texas-based alt right group led by 24-year-old Thomas Ryan Rousseau. The group split from Vanguard America (VA) in late August 2017, several months after VA participated in a white supremacist rally on the capitol steps in Austin, Texas. Both Rousseau, as the Texas leader, and Dillon Hopper (aka Dillon Irizarry), as the group's national leader, spoke during the event. Hopper later...
complained that Rousseau had led event organizers to believe that Rousseau, rather than Hopper, was VA's leader, and that Rousseau's lengthy speech during the rally further confused people about the group's true leader.

Two days after the Austin rally, Rousseau began his takeover of the group's servers and its "bloodandsoil.org" website. In an exchange that was posted on Twitter, Hopper explained, "On June 20, Thomas underhandedly and deceitfully exiled me from all Vanguard discord servers that HE controlled due to 'security reasons.' I logged off...and when I got back an hour later I was banned from every single server, including the women's server. It was literally a coup with the guise that I left to handle family matters."

Just a few weeks later, with Hopper conspicuously absent, Rousseau led several dozen Vanguard America Texas members and associates at the August 12th "Unite the Right" rally in Charlottesville, Virginia. Though Rousseau led the Unite the Right contingent, it was Hopper who faced derision in the rally's aftermath as event images showed that James Alex Fields Jr., who is accused of plowing his car into a group of counter-protesters and killing Heather Heyer, participated in
the event standing shoulder-to-shoulder with Vanguard America, and carrying a shield bearing the group’s fascist symbol. VA has denied that Fields was ever a member of their group.

In late August, as Hopper isolated himself from the fallout from Unite the Right, Rousseau seized the moment. Rather than take over the troubled Vanguard America, he opted to rebrand VA’s “bloodandsoil.org” as the Patriot Front website. The move allowed those associated with Patriot Front to distance themselves from both Vanguard America and any association with James Field. Ironically, the bulk of those who defected to Rousseau’s Patriot Front were those who attended “Unite the Right” under the Vanguard America umbrella.

**American Nationalism**

Leadership disputes aside, the split between Vanguard America and Patriot Front is symptomatic of the divergent opinions among white supremacists about optics and how to best promote their cause to the public. Rousseau’s camp prefers to promote “American Nationalism” and advocate for a racist ideology that appeals to conservatives, using ostensibly unifying symbols like the American flag. In that same vein, Patriot Front uses an image of a fasces, the original symbol of fascism (a bundle of sticks featuring an axe) encircled by thirteen stars as “an American symbol of revolutionary spirit.”

They also use the American flag during demonstrations, and often wear American flag-themed masks or bandanas. After the split, one Patriot Front member posted on the alternative social media network Gab, “There is room for multiple iconography [SIC] as long as it’s rooted in Americana. You can have a proper patriotic organizational flag alongside old glory. The issue is the folks among us demeaning the sacrifice of our ancestors and denouncing this nation as never being valid or moral.” He also wrote, “We have been advocating for American Nationalism for a while. Unfortunately, our imagery with VA didn’t facilitate it. When we in leadership split from VA we went full on American Fascism/Nationalism to great success.”
Antisemitism

They may have split from Vanguard America, a group known for directly targeting Jewish institutions with hateful propaganda, but Patriot Front hasn't abandoned their anti-Semitism. The organization has distributed anti-Semitic fliers promoting Patriot Front on college campuses around the country.

In October 2017, someone placed a Patriot Front sticker on the glass door of a Jewish educational institution in Los Angeles. The sticker read: “The Goyim Know,” a reference to an anti-Semitic trope about Jews trying to keep non-Jews “in the dark” about their plans for world domination. A week later, the same institution was targeted by a second Patriot Front flier, this one bearing symbols of Islam and Judaism and the words “Reject the False Dichotomy. Both Must Go.”
Another Patriot Front flier, which depicts two hands representing Jews and communists taking over America, has been disseminated widely.

Anti-Semitic online rhetoric is common among Patriot Front members and associates, and has included the use of “ZOG,” a white supremacist acronym for “Zionist Occupied Government” which reflects the popular white supremacist belief that the U.S. government is controlled by Jews. Members have also used “1488,” a combination of two popular white supremacist numeric symbols (14 is shorthand for the “14 words,” a white supremacist slogan, and 88 stands for HH, or Heil Hitler.)
Antisemitism in their own words:

- “The international Jewish community has an undeniable, predominant role in assisting and promoting the factions that most viciously attack the moral and ethical foundations of America, and in eroding the financial bulwarks against globalism.” - Patriot Front, Twitter, November 11, 2017.

- “We acknowledge the disproportionate and detrimental influence of the rootless Jewish community in America, and seek to counteract them.” - Patriot Front, Twitter, October 29, 2017

- “Speaking out against the disproportionate influence of Jews in America is always met with wild opposition. Such reaction is proof enough.” - Patriot Front, Twitter, October 3, 2017

- “The biggest threat to America right now is jewry because of their overall subversion; browning of America; race-mixing porn, drug pushing, etc.” – Patriot Front Internal Chatroom, Rocket Chat, December 15, 2021

- “Jews are not exempt from my moral convictions. If I say that a matter is reprehensible, repugnant, and so on, Jews are not given a clearance to our moral judgement.” – Thomas Rousseau, Patriot Front Internal Chatroom, December 11, 2021.

Additional Activity
Patriot Front is active online and uses social media to promote racism, anti-Semitism and intolerance, but they are also part of a broader effort by white supremacists to move from their longtime roles as online provocateurs to real-world activists. Real-world activism generates the group’s desired localized outrage and media attention, as well as images and videos, which can be used to generate self-promoting and graphic online content.

Patriot Front’s most frequent form of activism has been the distribution of propaganda on college campuses and in various communities across the United States, with the only exception being Hawaii. The group was responsible for 80 percent of all \textit{propaganda incidents nationally in 2020}, averaging about 14-related propaganda incidents per day. The group continues to build its “brand” by using red, white and blue colors in its propaganda, promoting its own iteration of “patriotism” that combines white supremacist and neo-fascist ideology. The group continues to use ambiguous phrases in its propaganda such as “America First,” “United We Stand,” “Better Dead Than Red,” “Two Parties. One Tyranny,” “Reclaim America,” and “Not Stolen. Conquered.”

In addition to distributing fliers and stickers, Patriot Front has added stenciled graffiti, banner drops, and the reprogramming of traffic signs as mechanisms for spreading its ideology. Patriot Front members are required to engage in activism or risk expulsion, Rousseau stated during a national Patriot Front meeting. “Every single one of us places promotional material,” he said. “If you do not, please let me know. I need to have a talk with you. You may do it on the weekends or the weekdays or both, with or without locals, but you do it.” Patriot Front often uses its propaganda to target its perceived enemies. This has included leaving flyers at a Black church, stickering an LGBTQ community center and more recently the vandalization of memorials for George Floyd and other inclusiveness murals in New York, Newark, New Jersey, Philadelphia and Louisville.
Patriot Front members reprogrammed a traffic sign in Milford, Pennsylvania.
In addition to distributing propaganda, members also participate in private meet-ups, which routinely involve a physical fitness element like boxing or hiking. The group's internet propaganda stresses physical training and includes images of members boxing, coupled with phrases like “Become war” and “Train with your friends. Fight your enemies.”

**Flash Demonstrations**

A central tactic to Patriot Front is “flash demonstrations” – privately planned and unannounced events that allow groups to promote their beliefs while limiting the risk of individual exposure, negative media coverage, arrests and public backlash. These flash demonstrations are mainly orchestrated for a quick photo and video opportunity that is then turned into online content.
During these flash demonstrations, Patriot Front members generally wear khaki pants and a blue or white polo shirt; many also wear masks. The group intensely focuses on “optics,” they have used attention-grabbing smoke bombs, signal flares and torches during their demonstrations. Members routinely chant, “Blood and Soil,” a slogan with origins in Nazi Germany that Patriot Front uses to conflate white European identity with American soil.

Patriot Front puts an emphasis on the Founding Fathers and “Patriotic Holidays,” often picking historical locations or significant American holidays, like Memorial Day or the Fourth of July, for their flash demonstrations. In a recent interview conducted by Media2Rise, a white-supremacist production arm of the Rise Above Movement (R.A.M.), Rousseau stated, “In times of tranquility and prosperity, national holidays can be times of celebration for what you have, but we are not in those times, so these days [there] needs to be calls to action.” Patriot Front plans an annual “National Action” flash demonstration in Washington, D.C. These D.C
marches are attended by members from across the country including group leader, Thomas Rousseau.

Patriot Front makes regular appearances at anti-abortion events across the United States as well. Members have attended the March for Life rally in Chicago annually since 2018 as well as various other pro-life events where members hand out promotional material, carry banners, and Patriot Front flags.

While Patriot Front hides behind the veneer of “American Nationalism,” their views on abortion are ultimately targeted at the protection of white children. Patriot Front sees abortions as a “plutocratic scheme” by the U.S. government, where abortion seeks to “deprive Americans of their lives because the dead may not provoke.” Patriot Front states, “Those destroying the American family can only have the intent of destroying the American people.” Patriot Front views the “American people” as those of pan-European descent whose ancestors conquered America and bequeathed it to them alone. This relates to the common Patriot Front slogan, “Blood and Soil,” which promotes the idea that people with white blood have a special bond with American soil. To maintain this perceived bond, Patriot Front believes that white children must be protected to ensure the future prosperity of a Pan-European United States.

Recent Activity:

**Chicago, Illinois, January 8, 2022:** An estimated 50 members of Patriot Front attended a March for Life anti-abortion rally in Chicago, Illinois carrying riot shields, a banner reading "Strong Families Make Strong Nations," and Patriot Front flags.
Washington, D.C., December 4, 2021: An estimated 100 members of Patriot Front held a flash demonstration marching down the National Mall carrying riot shields, a banner reading "Victory or Death," and Patriot Front flags.

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, July 3, 2021: An estimated 150 members of Patriot Front marched through Center City Philadelphia. The participants arrived in the city, packed into three Penske moving trucks. The march ended with counter protesters chasing the marchers back to their Penske moving trucks and law enforcement arriving on the scene.

Patriot Front members at the 2021 March for Life event in Chicago, Illinois. Members have attended the event annually since 2018, with the exception for 2021 when the event was cancelled due to COVID-19.
Nashville, Tennessee, June 6, 2021: Several dozen members of Patriot Front participated in a flash demonstration at the state capitol in Nashville, Tennessee.


Washington, D.C, January 29, 2021: Several dozen members of Patriot Front held a flash demonstration.

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, November 7, 2020: Several dozen members of Patriot Front held a flash demonstration in downtown Pittsburgh.

San Bernardino, California, May 25, 2020: Approximately one dozen members of Patriot Front held a flash demonstration at the Soldiers and Sailors Memorial in San Bernardino. The group held a banner that read: “Reclaim America.”

La Porte, Texas, May 25, 2020: Approximately 15 members of Patriot Front held a flash demonstration at the San Jacinto Memorial in La Porte. The group held a banner that read: “No more foreign wars.”

Washington, D.C., January 24, 2020: Members of Patriot Front demonstrated at a pro-life rally in Washington D.C.

Washington, D.C, February 8, 2020: More than 100 members of Patriot Front held a flash demonstration marching down the National Mall in Washington D.C.

Chicago, Illinois, January 11, 2020: Approximately one dozen members of Patriot Front demonstrated and passed out propaganda during a pro-life rally in Chicago.

Multiple Cities, April 1, 2019: Patriot Front members demonstrated outside AIPAC offices and Israeli consulates in New York, Chicago, Houston, and Boston “in support of national sovereignty, and in opposition to Zionist influence.”

Chicago, Illinois, January 13, 2019: Approximately 7 individuals associated with Patriot Front attended a pro-life event in Chicago. Wearing bandanas over their faces, they distributed propaganda and held a banner that read: “Strong families strong nations.”

Washington, D.C., December 3, 2018: Approximately 50 individuals associated with Patriot Front held a flash demonstration in Washington D.C. holding a banner that read: "Reclaim America."

San Antonio, Texas, July 28, 2018: Approximately 20 individuals associated with Patriot Front disrupted an "Occupy ICE" event. Images and video of the incident indicate that Patriot Front members vandalized the Occupy ICE camp while shouting, "Strong borders, strong nations."
Austin, Texas, March 20, 2018: Patriot Front posted a video on twitter of approximately 20 individuals, led by Thomas Rousseau, demonstrating at the State Capital in Austin.

January 14, 2018: Approximately 12 members of Patriot Front attempted to join a March for Life event. They carried a banner that read: "Protect our posterity." Police forced them to leave the event.

Laguna Beach, California, December 10, 2017: Several Patriot Front members participated in an anti-immigration demonstration. They held a banner that read: “Deport them all. America is our birthright.”

Chicago, Illinois, December 7, 2017: Several Patriot Front members and associates shouted, “blood and soil” during a rally protesting Trump's decision to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. They later displayed a banner on a Chicago overpass that read: “Deport them all.”

Los Angeles, California, December 6, 2017: Two white males dressed in utility worker uniforms hung a banner on the Mulholland bridge reading: “Americans are white. The rest must go.”

Rockville, Maryland, November 12, 2017: Patriot Front flyers were pasted to the door and mailbox of the Montgomery County Republican Party Headquarters.
Austin, Texas, November 5, 2017: Patriot Front members and associates lit flares during a demonstration in front of a bookstore they described as a communist gathering place.

Austin, Texas, November 4, 2017: Approximately 25 Patriot Front members and associates, wearing masks and carrying burning torches, demonstrated in front of the George Washington statue at the University of Texas.

Austin, Texas, October 26, 2017: A Patriot Front “white families matter” banner was posted at Texas State University.
Gainesville, Florida, October 19, 2017: Members of Patriot Front (seen in the image below wearing white shirts and sunglasses) assisted with event ticket distribution and private security at Richard Spencer’s speaking appearance at the University of Florida.

Los Angeles, California, October 17, 2017: Members unfurled a banner over the Skirball exit of the 405 freeway that read: “RESURRECTION THROUGH INSURRECTION.”

Houston, Texas, October 2, 2017: A Patriot front banner that read, “For race and nation,” was displayed on a Houston overpass.

Dallas, Texas, October 1, 2017: A Patriot Front banner was hung from a Dallas overpass that read: “Take a knee, back in Africa.”

Houston, Texas, September 24, 2017: Twenty-nine members of Patriot Front, Daily Stormer book clubs, Whomsters and Houston Goylers gathered outside a Houston Anarchist Book Fair where they unfurled a “Blood and Soil” banner, used smoke bombs, and chanted phrases such as: “Blood and Soil,” “F**k you faggots,” and “anti-White.”
September 18, 2017, Austin, Texas: A Patriot Front banner that read, “Unite the White,” was hung from an overpass in Austin.