

Konspirationsmaskinen efter mordet på Charlie Kirk

Källa: YouTube, kanalen MS NOW

Video 1: MS NOW reporter behind Charlie Kirk series delves into dangerous conspiracy theory machine — https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=juSBmP06S_E

Video 2: Who Killed Charlie Kirk? How conspiracy theories sparked a MAGA civil war — <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UnNwU92c15Y>

Hämtad: 2026-08-11

Rapportnivå: 1 — enkel bedömning

Transkriptionskälla: Manuella undertexter från YouTube (CC1 respektive ordinarie textspår)

Om rapporten

Rapporten behandlar två videor från MS NOW som hör ihop. Den ena är den första delen av reportageserien The Deep End with Brandy Zadrozny, en dokumentär på knappt 47 minuter om konspirationsteorierna kring mordet på Charlie Kirk. Den andra är ett kort studiosamtal där Chris Hayes intervjuar Zadrozny i samband med lanseringen. Materialet redovisas i den ordning uppdragsgivaren angav, det vill säga med studiosamtalet först, men tyngdpunkten ligger på dokumentären.

Rapporten är skriven på nivå 1, vilket innebär att den kritiska bedömningen pekar ut uppenbara svagheter och lösa trådar samt ger ett kort meningsmotståndarperspektiv. Den driver inte oppositionen fullt ut. Fullständiga transkriptioner av båda videorna finns sist i dokumentet.

Video 1 — Chris Hayes intervjuar Brandy Zadrozny

Metadata

- **Titel:** MS NOW reporter behind Charlie Kirk series delves into dangerous conspiracy theory machine
- **Kanal:** MS NOW
- **Publicerad:** 2026-08-07
- **Längd:** 7 minuter 44 sekunder
- **URL:** https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=juSBmP06S_E

Videobeskrivning (kanalens egen text)

I sin nya serie The Deep End undersöker MS NOW:s Brandy Zadrozny hur konspirationsteorierna kring mordet på Charlie Kirk underblåser ett inbördeskrig på den amerikanska högerkanten. Brandy medverkar hos Chris för att diskutera saken.

(Översatt från engelska. Resterande del av beskrivningen består av prenumerationslänkar och kanalpresentation.)

Sammanfattning

Samtalet är ett lanseringssamtal för dokumentären och återanvänder flera av dess klipp. Hayes inleder med iakttagelsen att fullständigt orimliga konspirationsteorier har trängt in i stora delar av den amerikanska högern, och att företrädare på högerkanten själva nu har börjat oroa sig för det ekosystem de har varit med om att bygga.

Zadrozny redovisar sin arbetsmetod, och det är samtalets mest informativa moment. Från september och framåt såg hon varje avsnitt av Candace Owens program. Varje gång Owens nämnde en person förde hon upp namnet på en lista. Därefter såg hon dessa personers program och förde upp dem de i sin tur nämnde. Resultatet blev ett omfattande kalkylark över nätverket, och det hon har sett i det är att människor har gått från noll följare till miljoner.

Två poänger framträder tydligare här än i dokumentären. Den första gäller tempot i jämförelse med Zapruderfilmen: den blev allmänt tillgänglig först tolv år efter mordet på Kennedy, medan videorna på Kirk sköts ut i flödena omedelbart. Zadrozny betonar att algoritmerna, särskilt på X, serverade materialet även till människor som inte alls ville se det, och att det började spelas upp automatiskt. Den andra gäller skadan på utomstående: Hayes lyfter att slumpmässiga åskådare på filmerna pekas ut som mördare eller medbrottslingar och kan få sina liv sönderslagna.

Zadrozny gör också en distinktion som är central för hela projektet. Att människor tillsammans försöker förstå vad som faktiskt har hänt är normalt, och forskningen kallar det kollektivt meningsskapande. Men nästan omedelbart tog något annat vid, drivet av en stor grupp konspirationsteoretiker som lever och försörjer sig på nätet.

Samtalet avslutas med exemplet Baron Coleman, advokaten som sade upp sig i januari för att ägna sig åt detta på heltid, eftersom det är mycket lönsamt. Zadrozny har spårat intäkterna och anger superchattar som ett användbart mått. Coleman tjänade 350 000 dollar under årets fem första månader.

Video 2 — Who Killed Charlie Kirk?

Metadata

- **Titel:** Who Killed Charlie Kirk? How conspiracy theories sparked a MAGA civil war

- **Serie:** The Deep End with Brandy Zadrozny, avsnitt 1
- **Kanal:** MS NOW
- **Publicerad:** 2026-08-06
- **Längd:** 46 minuter 55 sekunder
- **URL:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UnNwU92c15Y>

Videobeskrivning (kanalens egen text)

Ögonblicken efter att Charlie Kirk sköts och dödades började konspirationsteorierna. Ingen har gjort mer för att förstärka dem än Candace Owens, som grep tag i sin väns död för att bygga ett imperium på nätet med grundlösa anklagelser och tunna halvsanningar.

I den första delen av MS NOW:s The Deep End with Brandy Zadrozny följer vi Owens väg från uppåttstigande MAGA-stjärna till en av internets mest splittrande agitatorer, när hon leder ett nätverk av konspirationsteoretiker i att så tvivel om den officiella bilden av Kirks död och beskylla alla från regeringsföreträdare till hans änka Erika Kirk.

Detta är berättelsen om vad som händer när en politisk rörelse byggd på konspirationsteorier blir måltavla för sin egen skapelse.

(Översatt från engelska.)

Tes

Mordet på Charlie Kirk den 10 september 2025 kunde ha enat en MAGA-rörelse som redan slet sig själv i stycken över Epsteinhandlingarna och kriget i Gaza. I stället utlöste det en konspirationsindustri med Candace Owens i centrum, som vände rörelsens egen misstro inåt mot dess egna institutioner: Turning Point USA, Erika Kirk, åklagarna, till sist administrationen själv. Zadrozny's tes är att detta är vad som händer när en politisk rörelse byggd på konspirationsteorier blir måltavla för en.

1. Zapruderfilmen som ram

Dokumentären öppnar och stänger med mordet på Kennedy. Zapruderfilmen är 26 sekunder, 486 bildrutor, stum och i färg, inspelad av en klädmakare den 22 november 1963. Den visades inte i tv förrän tolv år senare, och när den väl kom fick den många amerikaner att sluta tro på Warrenkommissionen.

Kontrasten bär hela filmen. Mordet på Kirk fångades av ett stort antal kameror från många vinklar och sändes omedelbart till miljoner mobiltelefoner. Zadrozny's formulering återkommer i slutet: JFK var 1900-talets definierande konspirationsteori, och detta kan bli 2000-talets.

2. Candace Owens biografi som förklaringsmodell

En betydande del av filmen ägnas Owens bana, eftersom Zadrozny menar att den förklarar varför hon gjorde det hon gjorde mot Kirk och mot rörelsen han byggde. Owens växte upp i Stamford i Connecticut och utsattes i high school för grov rasistisk mobbning. NAACP drev fallet, föräldrarna stämde skolan och förlikning nåddes.

År 2016 startade hon Social Autopsy, en sökbar databas över människors inlägg och konton på nätet, avsedd att rensa bort näthatare. Projektet kolliderade med Gamergate. Owens vände sig inte mot de huvudsakligen högerextrema männen bakom trakasserikampanjen, utan mot deras offer, som befارade att databasen skulle bli ett verktyg för uthängning. Kickstarter stoppade projektet, Owens förklarade det med en konspiration från vänstern, och bytte bana.

Därefter följer en snabb bana: YouTube-kanalen Red Pill Black, anställning hos Turning Point fyra månader senare, formellt som director of urban engagement och sedan kommunikationsansvarig. I december 2018 kom Hitleruttalandet vid ett evenemang för Turning Point UK, där hon menade att nationalism inte var problemet utan att Hitler ville globalisera. Studentavdelningarna krävde hennes avgång och 2019 var hon ute. Sedan PragerU 2019 och Daily Wire året därpå.

Brytpunkten kom med den 7 oktober 2023. Owens första reaktion var enligt filmen påfallande måttfull, men i november sade hon att Israel begick folkmord. Ben Shapiro, som är praktiserande jude och uttalad Israelvän, kallade henne skamlig och uppmanade henne att sluta. Hennes program, som formellt skulle handla om kultur, ägnade allt mer tid åt kriget och åt öppen antisemitism. I mars 2024 var hon ute.

Zadrozny's slutsats om denna period är den avgörande: Owens hade inte så mycket kastats ut ur MAGA-medierna som vuxit ur dem. Hon nöjde sig inte längre med att sprida befintliga konspirationsteorier riktade mot vänstern. Hon började producera egna och rikta dem mot sina nya fiender på högerkanten.

3. Paraplymannen, då och nu

Ett elegant historiskt avsnitt om Louie Witt, försäkringsförsäljaren från Dallas som i femton år bara var känd som Umbrella Man. Han stod med uppfällt paraply i uppehållsväder ungefär där Kennedy träffades. Teorierna: han signalerade till en skytt, eller paraplyet dolde en giftpilsavskjutare så att en man från CIA kunde fullborda arbetet. Witt trädde fram 1978 sedan en tidning i Dallas avslöjat hans identitet. Den verkliga förklaringen var att han tänkte häckla presidenten med en anspelning på faderns eftergiftspolitik mot Hitler under tiden som ambassadör i London.

John Updike citeras från en kolumn i The New Yorker 1967, där han undrar om ett verkligt mysterium döljs, eller om varje lika närgången granskning av ett litet utsnitt av tid och rum skulle ge samma skörd av egendomligheter, luckor, inkonsekvenser och bubblor i omständigheternas yta.

Filmen klipper direkt över till Utah, där nätsleuther behandlade varje person i publiken som misstänkt eller medbrotsling, och där det talades om umbrella boys, pojkarna som stod hopträngda under ett paraply.

4. Kollektivt meningsskapande som mekanism

Forskaren Stephen Prochaska förklarar begreppet, som inom forskningen kallas participatory misinformation eller collective sensemaking. När vi möter något ovisst, tvetydigt eller nytt försöker vi förstå det, och vi gör det inte isolerat utan

i grupp. Men i praktiken finns en hierarki. Vissa har större inflytande i en given gemenskap, och för somliga bygger hela försörjningen på att navigera i uppmärksamhetsekonomin. I detta fall sitter en person i toppen.

5. Owens egen teori

Zadrozny har sett så gott som varje avsnitt av Owens program sedan Kirks död. Mellan annonser för konservativt profilerad hudkräm, köttprenumerationer och rådgivningsbyråer för gravida drar Owens fram sin anslagstavla och spinner en ny tråd om vem som kan vara inblandad. Varje avsnitt får miljontals visningar.

Den sammanklippta versionen av teorin lyder: Kirk stod inför ekonomiska hot på grund av sin förändrade hållning till Israel, förbundspolisen är medskyldig till mörkläggningen, hans hustru står nu i spetsen för organisationen, man mördas oftast av någon man känner, påståendet att Tyler Robinson erkänt är en upprepad lögn, och Robinson är en underrättelseoperation. Owens hävdar att hon är mycket nära ett genombrott.

Zadrozny är noga med att påpeka två saker. Videorna är i verkligheten inte alls så sammanhängande som klippet antyder, utan gör utvecklingar om drömmar, Satan, tidsresor och Japan. Och det finns inga belägg för berättelsen, har aldrig funnits några, och det utlovade genombrottet kommer aldrig.

6. Nätverket, kartlagt som ett solsystem

Detta är filmens centrala bidrag. Metoden är densamma som beskrivs i video 1: varje gång Owens hänvisade till en annan skapare eller byggde vidare på dennes material fördes personen upp på en lista, och sedan upprepades förfarandet nedåt. Zadrozny säger uttryckligen att listan inte är fullständig, men att den är ett användbart underlag för att förstå nätverket. Deltagarna är poddare, juridiska experter, vapenintresserade, influerare och några som kommit från ingenstans. Var och en har sin egen älsklingsteori.

Owens är solen, med sex miljoner prenumeranter och minst en miljon visningar per avsnitt. Runt henne kretsar följande:

- **Ian Carroll** — konspirationsteoretiker och filmare, känd för att skylla den 11 september på judarna, tidigt ute med att peka ut Israel.
- **Jimmy Dore** — ståuppkomiker, tidigt ute med att avråda sin publik från att tro på uppgifterna: JFK dödades av en magisk kula, men Kirk träffades av en mirakelkula.
- **Baron Coleman** — advokat och tidigare radioprogramledare som sade upp sig i januari; hans program kallas av Owens för efterfesten till hennes eget. Hans teori är att det vapen åklagarna pekar ut var för kraftfullt för att inte ge utgångssår, och att Kirk i stället kan ha döats av en sprängladdning gömd i en mikrofon eller ett halsband.
- **Elizabeth Lane** — tidigare skådespelare och modell från Georgien, sedan 2024 undersökande journalist på strömningsplattformen Unified TV, tidigare känd endast för Kremlvänliga inslag om Ukraina. Ett samtal hos Tucker Carlson satte henne på kartan. Hennes teori är att Robinson är offer för en

hemlig sinneskontrolloperation från CIA och att han sattes dit av sin rumskamrat.

- **Billy Webb** — tidigare flygvärdinna, producent av vuxenmaterial och van life-influare, numera en populär Kirk-tvivrare som följer förhandlingarna på plats.
- **Zach DeGregorio (Wolves and Finance)** — påstår ekonomiska oegentligheter hos Turning Point och har fått kravbrev från organisationens jurister.
- **Nia** — kanadensisk videobloggare som liksom Owens började med att gissla wokeness; sedan hon började publicera om Erika Kirk har kanalen vuxit med 50 procent.
- **Chris Martenson** — tidigare ekonom, sköt mot grisdelar för att hävda att skottet kom från en annan skytt.
- **John Bray** — lantbrukare i Oklahoma som med sin hustru säljer talg och kombucha, upphovsman till teorin om den exploderande mikrofonen.

7. Pengarna

Detta är filmens hårdaste material, i den meningen att siffrorna är kontrollerbara. Club Candace kostar 12 dollar i månaden och ger tillgång till ett slutet forum. De insamlingar hon gör till sina rättsprocesser får enligt det finstilla användas som hon vill. Superchattar, alltså inlägg som tittare betalar för att få upplästa i sändning, ger intäkter i realtid. Men de stora pengarna kommer från annonser: enligt Bloomberg kan de främsta konservativa poddarna ta mellan 10 000 och 100 000 dollar för en enda uppläst annons.

Baron Coleman sänder tre till fyra timmar i sträck ungefär fem dagar i veckan, och en god del av tiden går åt till att läsa upp superchattar. Enligt analysverktyget Playboard kan en enskild sändning ge upp till 6 000 dollar, och sammanlagt har han dragit in omkring 350 000. Därtill kommer försäljning av profilprodukter och ett medlemskap för 9,99 dollar i månaden. Han uppger själv i ett textmeddelande till Zadrozny att han inte är ute efter att bli någon stjärna i de nya medierna.

Även de minsta kanalerna kan träffa rätt. När John Bray i december började synas hos större program, först hos en profil som kallar sig Trigger Smart, därefter hos Coleman och slutligen med ett omnämnande av Owens själv, följde en flodvåg av beställningar till gårdens webbutik. Han beskriver det som att de nu är kända över hela världen.

8. Granskningen av Brays teori

Zadrozny säger uttryckligen att hon inte försöker motbevisa Owens eller nätverket i stort. Påståendena vilar på antydningar och trådar på anslagstavlan, och de kan antingen inte motbevisas eftersom de aldrig formuleras som ett verkligt påstående, eller kräver oproportionerlig möda att vederlägga. Hon åberopar Brandolinis lag: den energi som krävs för att vederlägga strunt är en storleksordning större än den som krävs för att producera det. Och när man väl är klar har de gått vidare till nästa berättelse.

Brays teori prövar hon ändå, eftersom den är den mest konkreta och har spridits längst. Bray fäste sig vid den trådlösa mikrofonen på Kirks skjorta och frågade sig om det kunde ha varit en liten bomb. Han byggde en laddning, sprängde den inne i en grisdela och menade att såret stämde. Enligt vad han själv berättat i poddar matade han därefter Grok och Claude med en bunt rättsmedicinska artiklar och videomaterial och bad chattbottarna uppträda som rättsmedicinska experter. Resultatet, hävdar han, bevisar en samordnad händelse med flera källor.

Zadrozny vänder sig till fyra sakkunniga:

- **Josh Brunty**, professor i cyberforensik vid Marshall University, om genren: materialet använder verklig forensisk terminologi och tekniker som reverse projection, och en webbplats kan produceras på minuter, vilket får analyserna att framstå som vetenskapliga. Han säger sig vara mycket misstänksam mot Brays webbplats.
- **En andra videoforensiker**, som avböjde att stå med namn på grund av ämnets natur, säger att det inte finns något scenario där de mätningar Bray påstår sig ha gjort kan göras utifrån videorna på hans webbplats.
- **Gunnar Farneback**, upphovsman till den optiska flödesalgoritmen som Bray anger som sin huvudmetod, svarar att han har svårt att få ihop påståendena, och att det utifrån de delar han menar sig förstå förefaller finnas så många metodologiska brister att analysen knappast utgör belägg vare sig för eller emot någon hypotes.
- **Robert Maher**, professor i elektro- och datateknik vid Montana State University i Bozeman och författare till Principles of Forensic Audio Analysis, med gevärsskott som specialitet, identifierar den klassiska knallen från en projektil som passerar mikrofonen följd av mynningsknallen från vapnet. Varje påstående om att mikrofonen skulle ha orsakat den dödliga skadan måste förklara varför den ballistiska signaturen ligger exakt rätt i tid. Hans hastighetsberäkning, omkring 800 meter per sekund, utesluter dessutom den handpistol andra teoretiker har föreslagit.

9. Varför just högerkanten

Zadrozny bemöter den fråga hon ofta får, varför hon fokuserar så mycket på högern. Hennes svar är att det aldrig varit ett val. Det finns gott om konspirationsteorier också på vänsterkanten, men högern har med några undantag varit bättre på det, och framför allt mer villig att använda konspirationsteorier som medel för ett politiskt mål. Kirk själv gjorde det, vilket beläggs med klipp om haitier som skulle äta människors husdjur, om den vita befolkningens tillbakagång i Los Angeles som något avsiktligt, om överfallet på Paul Pelosi och om dödsfall efter vaccination.

10. Frestelsen att tycka att de förtjänade det

Filmens ärligaste avsnitt. Zadrozny noterar att många kände just så när Owens och andra vände sig mot Erika Kirk, mot Turning Point och i praktiken mot Trump. Hon tar upp det med Jack Posobiec, Kirks återkommande medprogramledare, mannen bakom Pizzagate och en lång rad andra

konspirationsteorier, som nu vädjar till publiken att tro på uppgifterna om Tyler Robinson och lämna en sörjande änka i fred.

Poängen är att konspirationsteorier inte stannar. Berättelserna byggs på, och kretsen av dem som måste vara invigda växer bara. Numera omfattar den Turning Point, delstaten Utah, förbundspolisen, den amerikanska militären och utländska militärer.

11. Erika Kirk och Turning Point

De värsta teorierna har enligt Zadrozny riktats mot änkan. Utöver AI-genererade smädesångar och hån förekommer anklagelser om delaktighet i mord. Turning Point ställde in hennes framträdande vid University of Georgia i april med hänvisning till allvarliga hot mot hennes säkerhet, och i maj greps en 26-åring i San Antonio för terrorishot mot henne och en förestående kvinnokonferens. Offentliga försök att stoppa konspirationsteorierna tycks bara ha förvärrat saken.

Turning Point avböjde att uttala sig officiellt men bjöd in Zadrozny till högkvarteret i Phoenix, där hon under flera timmar fick träffa Erika Kirk och organisationens ledning och fick svar på alla sina frågor. Hon beskriver en organisation som kämpar med att sörja, att hantera nästan ständiga hot och trakasserier, och att varje dag undra vilken ny falsk berättelse Owens kommer att lansera.

Kirk drog in 85 miljoner dollar om året, huvudsakligen från en mödosamt uppbyggd krets av anonyma förmögna givare. Hans död gav ett uppsving i både följare och medel, men det återstår att se om Erika Kirk kan föra organisationen genom stormen. Turning Point är nu knutet till JD Vances förhoppningar inför 2028 sedan hon gett honom sitt stöd, och resultaten i mellanårsvalen är blandade: många vunna primärval i delstaterna, men en förlust i valen till styrelsen för Arizonas största energibolag i april. Erika Kirk säger till Zadrozny att teorierna och lögnerna är sårande och frustrerande, men att hon redan genomlevt det värsta som kan hända henne.

Slutsats

Åklagarna säger sig ha DNA-bevisning, flera erkännanden och videomaterial som visar Robinsons skuld. Turning Point hoppas på en snar och öppen, tv-sänd rättegång som ska tysta ryktesspridningen. Zadrozny tror inte det. Det blir enkelt för konspirationsteoretikerna att väva in domstolen och åklagarnas bevisning i sina egna berättelser som ännu ett lager av det korrumperade.

Hennes avslutande tes är epistemologisk snarare än politisk. Owens nätverk borde oroa fler än Turning Point och MAGA, eftersom vem som helst kan bli kanonmat oavsett vilken sida man står på. Och faran med denna nya era är inte främst att vi luras av desinformation, utan att vi förlorar orienteringen, ger upp försöket att skilja verkligt från överklagt och i stället blint följer starka män eller kvacksalvare som ramar in allting som lögn och hot. Hur långt kan vi gå ner i kaninhålet innan vi går vilse där?

Samlad syntes

De två videorna är samma material i två format. Den korta är ett lanseringssamtal med Chris Hayes, den långa är dokumentären. Läser man dem tillsammans framträder tre linjer.

Hastigheten är själva argumentet

Jämförelsen med mordet på Kennedy bär hela filmen, men den avgörande skillnaden är tempot. Zapruderfilmen behövde tolv år på sig för att undergräva Warrenkommissionen. Videorna från Utah gjorde motsvarande arbete på timmar, med algoritmisk distribution till människor som inte sökt materialet och med omedelbar utbetalning till dem som tolkade det.

Konspirationism har blivit ett yrke

Det som skiljer detta från 1960-talets amatörforskare är inte teorierna utan affärsmodellen. Superchattar, medlemskap, upplästa annonser och gårdsbutiker gör att en advokat säger upp sig i januari och att en lantbrukare i Oklahoma är världskänd i december. Filmen påstår aldrig rakt ut att pengarna är motivet, men den lägger fram siffrorna och låter dem tala.

Rörelsen kan inte stänga av det den byggt

Detta är den verkliga tesen, tydligast formulerad i avsnittet om Posobiec. En rörelse som lärt sin publik att gå förbi den vanliga prövningen kan inte sedan återinföra prövningen när det passar den själv. Kirk framställs som medbyggare av just den maskin som efter hans död riktades mot hans eget verk och hans egen änka.

Kritisk bedömning — nivå 1

Bedömningen pekar ut svagheter och lösa trådar i materialet. Den är inte ett försvar för konspirationsteorierna, som saknar belägg, utan en granskning av hur väl dokumentären bär sina egna anspråk.

Uppenbara svagheter

Nätverkskartan visar association, inte samordning. Zadrozny är öppen med metoden och säger själv att listan inte är fullständig. Men det är ett snöbollsurval med hennes eget tittande som utgångspunkt, och solsystemsmetaforen antyder en hierarki och en gravitation som metoden faktiskt inte kan fastställa. Att A nämner B visar att B får uppmärksamhet av A, inte att A styr B.

Den lösaste tråden är obduktionen. Filmen nämner i förbigående att åklagarsidan ännu inte fört in något obduktionsprotokoll i bevisningen. Colemans invändning om utgångssår avfärdas med hänvisning till personer nära Kirk, bland dem hans säkerhetschef, alltså en part med eget intresse i saken, och inte med ett rättsmedicinskt dokument. Zadrozny gör ett grundligt arbete med mikrofonteorin men lämnar sårballistiken öppen. Det är just den punkt hennes motståndare kommer att peka på, och den svagheten är hennes egen redaktionella prioritering.

Maher vägrade gå igenom Brays påståenden punkt för punkt, vilket han också säger rent ut. Motbevisningen av mikrofonteorin vilar därmed på allmänna principer, nämligen att ljudbilden stämmer med en passerande projektil och en mynningsknall, och inte på en systematisk genomgång. Farnebäcks svar är starkare, men också han formulerar sig försiktigt. Sammantaget är avsnittet hederligt redovisat men tunnare än det låter vid första genomlysningen.

Biografen över Owens är retoriskt stark och evidensmässigt mjuk. Bågen från mobbning över Gamergate och kränkthet till konspirationism är en berättelse konstruerad i efterhand. Den förklarar elegant, men den är inte belagd som orsakskedja, och den gör Owens till en psykologisk typ snarare än en aktör med skäl.

Partiskheten är strukturell. MS NOW är part i konflikten. Påståendet att högern helt enkelt varit bättre på det här spelet framförs som en iakttagelse från ett decenniums bevakning, men beläggs anekdotiskt. Att Owens, Bray och de flesta andra namngivna avböjt medverkan redovisas hederligt, men resultatet är att nätverket beskrivs helt utifrån och att deltagarnas egen redogörelse för sina motiv saknas.

Slutligen glider terminologin mellan mord och lönnmord genom filmen. Zadrozny noterar själv glidningen en gång, men materialet växlar därefter utan att skillnaden görs till något.

Anknytning till egen forskning och pastoral praktik

Filmens avslutande tes ligger nära en kritiskt realistisk position: det finns en verklighet, vår tillgång till den är förmedlad och felbar, och felbarheten ger oss ingen rätt att överge frågan. Men filmen artikulerar aldrig den positiva kunskapsteorin. Den ställer diagnos utan att beskriva metoden. Just där ligger luckan för den som arbetar utifrån kritisk realism: vad ska man göra i stället, när ögonvittnesmaterialet finns i tolv versioner och ingen av dem avgör saken?

Materialet är i praktiken en fallstudie i urskillningsfrågan. Mekanismerna är desamma som återkommer i karismatiska och profetiska sammanhang: den karismatiska uttolkaren som ensam kan läsa tecknen, det ständigt växande antalet invigda, motbevisens oförmåga att någonsin nå fram, och de ekonomiska drivkrafterna bakom själva avslöjandet. En gemenskap som lärt sin publik att gå förbi vanlig prövning kan inte återinföra prövningen när den själv blir måltavla. Brandolinis lag, att det kostar en storleksordning mer arbete att vederlägga ett påstående än att producera det, är en pastoralt användbar formulering.

Metodmässigt är Zadroznys snöbollskartläggning, alltså att spåra vem som citerar vem och bygga listan iterativt, densamma som ligger bakom kanalnätverkskartläggningen i Krick-utredningen. Det bekräftar metodens rimlighet, men bör också läsas som en varning: samma begränsning gäller där. En korsreferenslista visar flöden av uppmärksamhet, inte samordning eller styrning, och slutsatser om det senare kräver annan bevisning.

Kort meningsmotståndarperspektiv

Det starkaste motargumentet är inte att konspirationsteorierna skulle vara sanna. Det håller inte, och den rättsmedicinska granskningen i filmen räcker långt för att visa det.

Motargumentet är i stället att dokumentärens egen form speglar det den kritiserar. Här finns en dold maskin, en nätverkskarta, en central gestalt som utövar dragningskraft över de mindre, ekonomiska motiv som förklarar deltagarnas beteende, och ett anspråk på att den officiella bilden av vad som pågår är otillräcklig. Strukturellt är detta en berättelse om vilka som ligger bakom. Owens publik kommer att läsa den exakt så, och filmen ger dem materialet att göra det.

Därtill: avsnittet om frestelsen att tycka att MAGA-rörelsen förtjänade det är den punkt där filmen kommer närmast att erkänna sitt eget motiv. Det är också den punkt där den går vidare snabbast.

Källor

Samtliga källor nedan är hämtade ur videornas eget material. Inga externa källor har tillförts, eftersom rapportnivå 1 inte kräver det.

Namngivna sakkunniga

- **Brunty, Josh.** Professor i cyberforensik vid Marshall University, med delad tjänst vid institutionerna för kriminologi och rättsvetenskap respektive data- och elektroteknik. Ledamot i redaktionsråden för Forensic Science International: Digital Investigation och Journal of Forensic Sciences. (Explicit nämnd; intervjuad i filmen.)
- **Farnebäck, Gunnar.** Upphovsman till den optiska flödesalgoritm som Bray anger som sin huvudmetod. (Explicit nämnd; skriftligt svar citerat.)
- **Maher, Robert.** Professor i elektro- och datateknik vid Montana State University, Bozeman, författare till Principles of Forensic Audio Analysis. (Explicit nämnd; skriftligt svar citerat.)
- **Prochaska, Stephen.** Forskare om kollektivt meningsskapande och deltagande desinformation. (Sannolik identifiering — undertexterna återger namnet förvanskat.)
- **Anonym videoforensiker.** Avböjde att stå med namn med hänvisning till ämnets natur. (Oklar hänvisning; identiteten framgår inte.)

Litteratur och begrepp

- **Updike, John.** Kolumn i The New Yorker 1967 om paraplymannen och de övriga egendomligheterna i JFK-materialet. (Explicit citerad.)
- **Maher, Robert.** Principles of Forensic Audio Analysis. (Explicit nämnd som författarens lärobok.)
- **Brandolinis lag.** Att den energi som krävs för att vederlägga strunt är en storleksordning större än den som krävs för att producera det. (Explicit nämnd.)

- **Warrenkommissionen och Zapruderfilmen.** Ramberättelsen för hela dokumentären. (Explicit nämnda.)
- **Participatory misinformation och collective sensemaking.** Forskningstermer som anförs av Prochaska. (Explicit nämnda.)

Data och journalistiska källor

- **Bloomberg.** Uppgiften att de främsta konservativa poddarna kan ta mellan 10 000 och 100 000 dollar för en uppläst annons. (Explicit nämnd.)
- **Playboard.** Analysverktyg för YouTube som räknar superchattar; ligger till grund för uppgifterna om Colemans intäkter. (Explicit nämnd.)
- **Zadrozny's eget kalkylark.** Snöbollskartläggningen av nätverket, byggd genom att spåra korsreferenser mellan skapare. (Explicit beskriven i båda videorna; underlaget publiceras inte.)

Översikt

Källa	Typ	Video	Tid	Kontext	Status
Zapruderfilmen och Warrenkommissionen	Historisk referens	2	00:00:01	Ramberättelsen för hela dokumentären	Explicit nämnd
Louie Witt, Umbrella Man	Historisk referens	2	00:16:12	Exempel på hur en egendomlighet får en trivial förklaring	Explicit nämnd
Updike, kolumn i The New Yorker 1967	Litteratur	2	00:17:42	Anförs för tesen att all närgående granskning ger egendomar	Explicit citerad
Stephen Prochaska	Forskning	2	00:19:10	Förklarar kollektivt meningsskapande och hierarkin i det	Sannolik identifiering
Bray matar Grok och Claude	Metoduppgift	2	00:29:52	Chattbottar ombesdagera rättsmedicinsexperter	Explicit nämnd
Bloomberg om annonspriser	Data	2	00:31:01	Underlag för intäktsuppskattningen	Explicit nämnd
Playboard	Data	2	00:31:52	Underlag för Colemans superchattintäkter	Explicit nämnd
Brandolinis lag	Begrepp	2	00:33:37	Motiverar varför hon inte försöker vederlägga allt	Explicit nämnd
Josh Brunty	Forskning	2	00:34:10	Om hur pseudoforensiskt material byggs	Explicit nämnd

Anonym videoforensiker	Forskning	2	00:35:22	Mätningarna kan inte göras ur materialet	Oklar hänvisning
Gunnar Farnebäck	Forskning	2	00:35:37	Metodologiska brister i Brays optiska flödesanalys	Explicit nämnd
Robert Maher	Forskning	2	00:36:01	Ljudanalys: projektilknall, mynningsknall, cirka 800 m/s	Explicit nämnd
Zadrozny kalkylark över nätverket	Eget underlag	1 och 2	00:05:53 / 00:22:05	Grunden för hela nätverkskartan	Explicit beskriven
Baron Colemans intäkter	Data	1 och 2	00:07:17 / 00:32:04	350 000 dollar, anföras som motivbild	Explicit nämnd

Transkription – Video 1

Källa: manuella undertexter (CC1-spår) hämtade från YouTube med yt-dlp 2026-08-11. Video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=juSBmP06S_E.

Sändningstextningen är maskinellt satt och innehåller hörfel, växlande versalisering och avbrutna meningar. Felen är bevarade som de står.

Förvanskade egennamn har försetts med rätt stavning inom hakparentes, till exempel Zabrunder [Zapruder], så att texten går att söka i. Ett frågetecken i hakparentesen markerar osäker identifiering. Själva felstavningen är orörd.

(00:00:01) Every day it seems to me I encounter some new example of the degree to which completely insane conspiracy theories have consumed huge swaths of the American right. We've reached the point where many right-wing figures themselves have started freaking out about the ecosystem that's been built, that they've helped built. And one of the most high-profile examples of this pattern is the impenetrable web of conspiracy theories that have grown up around the killing of right-wing influencer Charlie Enterprise reporter, Brandi Zadrozny [Brandy Zadrozny], has been following the growth

(00:00:33) of right-wing conspiracies for years. And today she's out with the first installment of her new digital series, The Deep End, Who Killed Charlie Kirk? How Conspiracy Theories Sparked a MAGA Civil War. This episode charts the rise of trutherism, for lack of a better word, around Kirk's death. The JFK conspiracy theory was the defining one of America's 20th century in this. May be the defining one of the 21st. Candace Owens' conspiracy theorists love the comparison. Any other similarities between the JFK assassination and the About 5 million. Israel's basically the only power capable

(00:01:08) of such an ASSASSINATION OF JFK AND BOLT AND CHARLIE KERK [Charlie Kirk]. JFK TO MLK, NOW TO CJK. THIS IS IN MY OPINION AN

UNDENIABLE STATE KILLING. WHY WOULD AN OFFICIAL STORY BE ENOUGH TO STOP THEM? And why would they start caring about who gets hurt? The Candace Owens conspiracy machine shouldn't just worry Turning Point or MAGA. Anyone can become cannon fodder. It doesn't matter which side you're on. And the danger from this new era of conspiracy theory isn't just that we'll be duped by misinformation, but that we'll lose our sense of direction. That we'll give up on trying to make sense

(00:01:45) of what's real and what's not, and blindly trust and what's not, how far can we go down the rabbit hole before we're lost there? WE'VE BEEN TALKING ABOUT IT. WE'VE BEEN TALKING ABOUT IT. BRANDI ZADRAZNY [Brandy Zadrozny] JOINS ME. NOW, BRANDI, FIRST I HAVE TO SAY CONGRATULATIONS, I WATCHED THE FIRST HOUR TODAY AND IT It is riveting and fascinating, and I'm so, so excited about this series. So it's great work. I want to start maybe with just describe because, you know, obviously it was a horrible thing that happened and it was was a huge news story and we saw it and it was actually

(00:02:19) on film, which you start out by sort of comparing the Zapruder [Zapruder] film and how that doesn't stop anything. The fact that it's on film, in fact, probably facilitates it. How quickly and THEORY, AND HOW LARGE THIS CONSPIRACY THEORY STARTED TO GROW UP AND TAKE ABLE TO TAKE A LOOK AT THE COLD. YEAH, WE STARTED OUT BECAUSE THERE'S A PROOTER [Zapruder] FILM. WHAT'S INTERESTING ABOUT THAT IS THAT IT WAS 12 YEARS AFTER John F. Kennedy was shot, that that video was made widely available. And it really did sort of spark a new brand of conspiracy theory. Everybody was watching every moan of it,

(00:02:56) dissecting it. And it really did sway a lot of opinion when you look at public polling. Now, with the assassination of Charlie Kirk or with the killing of Charlie Kirk, it was immediate. And not only was it immediate, it was pushed into the feeds. The algorithms, especially of X, served it up to people who did not want to see it at all, and it started playing immediately. And we've talked about just how immune we've gotten a lot because of social to some of this violence that we see on a constant basis. But people saw that immediately and just people went to work right away,

(00:03:29) like a really I think of it as a machine powered up. And people started taking the clips they were getting and immediately looking at them for what was wrong or or what was out of place, or what seemed off. Trying to figure out at the beginning, some trying to figure out where, what had actually happened, right? That's a normal thing that normal people do. It's called collective sense-making, academics call it. But But then, almost just as immediately, something else started. And it's this wide range, this huge group of conspiracy theorists that live online and make a living online,

(00:04:00) started to dissect it and come up with these really insane theories. Yeah, I want to just play another clip about how everyone in the video immediately starts to become a suspect and also just how dangerous this is,

right? You've got people like, you know, identifying random people on video as like possible murderers or co-conspirators and like that they can have their lives blown up and destroyed. But take a look at this clip as you sort of walk through some of this. Internet sleuths treated every person in the crowd as a potential suspect or co They need to look into these umbrella boys,

(00:04:31) like these boys that showed up and were huddling under an umbrella. The content came so fast. Okay, did you catch that? I'll show you in slow motion. The security guy in the blue and Charlie's bodyguard in a tent looked at their watch simultaneously. There was a significant number of young men wearing maroon shirts. First here, then here, then here. Then it hits the back of his skull." They all became side characters in an alternative theory. People who call themselves citizen journalists took the videos from multiple angles slowed them down and zoomed in to dissect

(00:05:09) and analyze facial expressions and hand movements from the growing list of crowdsourced suspects and marked them up with red circles and arrows that, together, are supposed to add BIT OF PEOPLE THAT ADD UP TO SOMETHING. SAME AS THE JFK CONSPIRACY THEORISTS, JUST WORKING MUCH, MUCH FASTER AND CHASING THE INSTANT PAYOUTS FROM social media platforms. On that last line, how good was this for? I find myself even when I see them, I'm like, oh, what's this? How good was this for traffic, particularly for Candace OWENS, WHO I THINK WAS LIKE THE NUMBER ONE SORT OF PROMULGATOR,

(00:05:43) BUT FOR ALL OF THE FOLKS DOING THAT? YEAH. SO AT THE BEGINNING OF THIS, YES, IN SEPTEMBER, I STARTED, YOU KNOW, IT WAS A WEEK BEFORE CANDACE OWENS STARTED SAYING THAT ISRAEL WAS BEHIND THIS AND STARTED FLOATING MILLIONS OF LITTLE CONSPIRACY theories and so I started watching all of her shows and every time that she would mention someone I would write them down on a list and she would you know mentioned an Israeli plane or something and then I'd mark but she would reference this guy named Ian Carroll and so he got down on the list. And then I watched Ian Carroll's show

(00:06:11) and every time Ian Carroll mentioned someone, I put that person down on the list. And so at the end of it, what I have is this huge spreadsheet of people who have been amplified and used by Candace Owens to promote WROTE HER THEORIES ABOUT CHARLIE KIRK. WHAT I'VE SEEN ON THAT LIST IS PEOPLE GROW FROM ZERO FOLLOWERS TO MILLIONS of followers. For some, it's been better than others. But there's this guy, Barron Coleman [Baron Coleman], and you can see him right now in the top box in the middle of the square with a blue hat on. And Barron Coleman [Baron Coleman] was this lawyer for far-right,

(00:06:40) folks. He represented some far-right folks against SPLC and some other things, but he sort of came out of nowhere and he started promoting these theories. Candace Owens calls him the after party to her show. He was a lawyer that quit his job in January and he quit his job in January to do this full time

because it's very lucrative. I tracked also all of the money that these creators were making and they make them through super chats and a lot of other ways. But super chats is one good metric. And that's just people who will pay you to read their thing on air. He made \$350 ,000 in the first five months

(00:07:20) of this year, just doing this.

Transkription — Video 2

Källa: manuella undertexter hämtade från YouTube med yt-dlp 2026-08-11.

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UnNwU92c15Y>. Transkriptionen innehåller åtskilliga hörfel i namn, bland annat Zaprruder för Zapruder, Steven Pchesca för Stephen Prochaska och Farnbeck för Farnebäck. Felen är bevarade som de står, men har försetts med rätt stavning inom hakparentes så att texten går att söka i. Ett frågetecken i hakparentesen markerar osäker identifiering, som Hunter Kak [Hunter Kozak ?].

(00:00:01) The Zaprruder [Zapruder] film 26 seconds 486 frames silent and in color a home movie taken by a dress maker named Abraham Zapruder on November 22nd 1963. It captured the assassination of a president. This film wasn't shown on television until 12 years after its recording. For 2 years he like most Americans believed in the official version, the Warren Commission version of what happened. But the day he first saw that 8 mm of Pruda [Zapruder] film, that amateur film that was made, that was the day he stopped believing. It triggered our most popular and enduring political conspiracy theory that

(00:00:37) Kennedy wasn't killed by a lone gunman, but by a cast of conspirators, foreign and domestic, hiding behind a pathy. Fast forward more than 50 years to another assassination. this time of a Republican activist who dominated new media, arguably swayed elections, and wielded huge influence over Trump's cabinet picks. A 31-year-old who many on the right hoped would someday be president. This assassination was captured by scores of cameras from his many different angles and broadcast immediately to millions on smartphones. The Zaprruder [Zapruder] film, a grainy home video, had the power

(00:01:13) to make many Americans believe their government had orchestrated the assassination of John F. Kennedy. The videos of the killing of Charlie Kirk live and at the speed of social media could have even more power to splinter a political movement and maybe shatter what's left of a shared reality. Whatever you think of Charlie Kirk, campus crusader, MAGA kingmaker, hatemonger, he was one of a kind. A teenager who talked his way into the conservative movement and by 31 was a major voice in picking President Trump's second running mate and current vice president. JD Vance

(00:01:59) is the best uh for a lot of different reasons. He was a media giant with millions of followers and billions of views. This video that you're about to

see, 1 billion people saw who know what knows what it means for the election and for the civilization. I'm Brandy Sadrasny [Brandy Zadrozny], a senior reporter at MS Now, and I've been covering the MAGA movement for over a decade. I've watched how politicians and operators on the right embraced conspiracy theories. In that time, I saw what was once fringe become normal. Conspiracy theories became constant. presidential elections, QAnon,

(00:02:32) a pandemic, and I watched as Charlie Kirk pushed those conspiracy theories into the mainstream, right? Allegedly, Haitians are going around and taking people's pets and eating them. After his death, a machine powered up, one that runs on distrust, one that Kirk helped build, and it did exactly what it was designed to do. It rejected the official story. The question is, was he the shooter? It seems like we're being spoonfed a narrative. I now believe there is a federal level of corruption and conspiracy involved in this murder. Okay. Now, a cottage industry

(00:03:09) of conspiracists say Kirk's accused killer is a psyop suggest his widow Erica [Erika] is in on a cover up and that our own government or a foreign one ordered the hit. This far out content has incredibly convinced millions, unleashing waves of harassment against those who are closest to Kirk, breaking apart one of MAGA's most powerful alliances between politicians and conservative influencers. We should not say things like they shot Charlie. Candace knows I disagree with her on this. Stop. That's it. That's all I have to say. Stop. It's also building a captive and paranoid audience on

(00:03:49) top of his grave. Where are Charlie's homies at? Why are you guys all silent? Something's not right. We don't know. Know, but we know. And soon we're going to know now. This is a story about what happens when a political movement built on conspiracy theories becomes the target of one. When what they've built comes for them. I've spent months following the story. It's taken me to the university in Utah where Kirk was shot, to the turning point stages where his widow is fighting to keep hold of his legacy, into the Provo courtroom where prosecutors are building the case against his alleged killer,

(00:04:24) Tyler Robinson, and into the unhinged online universe where creators are dismantling that case and selling another story. Just asking the question, who actually murdered Charlie Kirk? And who shot Charlie Kirk? Who killed Charlie Kirk? You know, we're getting close. I first met Candace Owens in 2018. Okay, so first I really appreciate you taking this time. I know started on in a Twitter battle. I'd come to Stanford University to see her speak with Charlie Kirk. Kirk was just 24 years old then. He'd worked social media on Trump's 2016 campaign and was back to building Turning Point USA, the group he'd started four years earlier

(00:05:09) to fight the left on college campuses and to recruit young Republicans. If you're asking me, do I think the black community has been crippled economically? The answer would be yes. It has been crippled economically by Democrat policy. Kirk was crisscrossing the country, owning the libs, and building a digital enterprise on the back of its college debate tapes.

What have I ever said that's racist? Name one thing. We've enabled people to speak about racism and by enabling people, giving them a platform. Like who? Like Candace Owens. Exactly. Oh, Candace Owens is a

(00:05:37) racist. Kirk had just hired Candace, technically as Turning Point's director of urban engagement, then promoted to communications manager, but really she was a sidekick and everything Charlie wasn't. A woman, black, and to Charlie and his roster of old white donors, comparatively cool. Met Candace back in November, hired her 5 minutes after I met her, and as they say, the rest is the future. Before we go any further, I should note that Candace declined to be interviewed for this video. When I asked, she sent a statement through her rep. She called me slimy and said it made her

(00:06:09) skin crawl that I would reach out in the wake of Charlie's assassination. And for the record, this is a weird thing to say since this was the text Candace sent after that story published. And inconsistent with how Kirk spoke publicly about me. And we've dealt with Brad Zadnney [Brandy Zadrozny] before in some stories. She's very smart, um, a relatively fair person, but she still has that, you know, pepper in her insults. But Candace runs on vibes and for an audience with a very short memory and attention span, it seems to be working out. Happy 6 million subscribers. We did

(00:06:38) it. I'm so proud. Now, how she became the fastest growing right-wing podcaster in America, it's a story worth telling because Candace's rise and ultimate crash through conservative media helps make sense of why she'd go on to do what she did to Charlie Kirk and the movement he helped build. Candace grew up in Stamford, Connecticut with her parents and grandparents. In high school, she was the victim of some pretty terrible racist bullying. It was big state news. The NAACP took up her case and her parents sued, eventually settling with the school. In 2016, as Trump stampeded

(00:07:12) toward the White House, Candace was living in New York City, working with a few other young women in a small marketing startup when she had an idea. It was rooted, she said, in her experience being bullied in high school. She called the project social autopsy. It would be a website, really a searchable database of people's online accounts and posts. With the ability to privatize social profiles and use pseudonyms in place of real names, it has been a free-for-all. That is until now. Candace said social autopsy would rid the internet of cyber bullies and trolls. Social

(00:07:45) autopsy is your digital footprint, so be mindful of the words that you share. But social autopsy ran straight into another corner of the internet. Gamergate may be the most consequential battle in the internet culture wars. Gamergate. It's a story about sexism in the world of video gaming with all the elements of a Hollywood script. Players were invited to um click on the screen and when you did that, an image of me became increasingly battered and bruised. As a result, now she says she and her husband had to flee their home this weekend because of threats made against her on Twitter.

(00:08:17) Candace's problem wasn't with the mob of mostly far-right men leading the organized campaign of harassment, doxing, and threats against women in the video gaming community. It was with its victims who feared that social autopsy was a doxing machine that internet trolls were going to use to victimize more people. They called Candace out. She dug in and she found support from the men pushing Gamergate and others on the far right. Her company lost its financial lifeline when Kickstarter suspended the project. Owens blamed a conspiracy from the left from the victims of

(00:08:50) Gamergate. And so she left behind her career as a tech founder and reinvented herself as a hardright influencer. I became a conservative overnight. You know, I realized that liberals were actually the racist, that liberals were actually the trolls. So Candace starts a YouTube channel called Red Pill Black, a reference to her race and the matrix speak for discovering some secret truth. In these new videos, Candace sported a bold lip and a sarcastic tone, and no take was too conservative or contrarian. Oh my god, Charlottesville. White supremacy is alive and well. Run,

(00:09:23) stop. Charlie Kirk noticed, and 4 months after she started with her new conservative identity, Turning Point USA scooped her up. At the Illinois event where her hiring was announced, Owens said, quote, "By the end of 2018, I'm going to be one of the most well-known people in this country because I'm going to lead the black revolution for the conservative movement." She would turn out to be halfright. Candace started making videos for Turning Point, where she's anti-Dei, anti-feminism, antibm [anti-BLM ?], anti-me. You get it. Alan Kaepernick [Colin Kaepernick], you are a coward. America,

(00:09:54) despite what CNN may tell you, is not a racist country. Does this look like a symbol of hate? Am I offending you? Is this offensive? By 2018, she was one of the most well-known people on the right. But her reputation wasn't stellar. Candace sort of burned through the conservative movement at a pretty impressive clip. In the interest of time, I'm going to speed through this part. April 2018, Kanye West tweets, quote, "I love the way Candace Owens thinks." From there, Owens is hanging out with Trump, traveling everywhere with Charlie. Antifa just showed up to protest us

(00:10:27) eating breakfast because um they're [__] losers. Candace was also getting into trouble into what would become a pattern of being charitable. We'll call them gaffs. The worst one came in December 2018 at a Turning Point UK event. When you think about whenever we say nationalism, the first thing people think about in at least in America is Hitler. You know, he was a national socialist. But if Hitler just wanted to make Germany great and have things run well, okay, fine. The problem is is that he wanted he had dreams outside of Germany. He wanted to globalize. He wanted

(00:10:58) everybody to be German. Everybody to be speaking German. Everybody to look a different way. That's not to me that's not nationalism. Describing this years later, Candace would say the backlash to those Hitler comments literally made her sick, got her blacklisted at Fox News, and almost

cost her everything. I quite literally was facing a threat that everything was going to be over because how dare I say that? I have absolutely no right to say that. Turning Point Campus chapters called for her to resign. And by 2019, she was out, but not done. In 2019, she's picked up by Prager U [PragerU],

(00:11:30) an ultra-conservative nonprofit that makes short form videos. Candace hosts a podcast and narrates right-wing revisionist history shorts. And now for a brief history of slavery. After a year, she signs up with The Daily Wire, a company helmed by Ben Shapiro that defined and dominated conservative media. I'm here. I'm a conservative. I'm not apologizing. And at Daily Wire, she could see where her audience was going. More extreme, more seduced by conspiracy theories. On September 1st, 2023, on her own Daily Wire show, she told them this. And this almost feels fraudulent,

(00:12:05) right? Oh, if I don't like the person, I'm going to just smear them. I'm going to just say that they are a Soros puppet. And then a bunch of people will believe it because a bunch of people on the internet have had their minds bent and they can't process reality. But she kept feeding them conspiracy theories and the Daily Wire seemed fine with that. It's easy to understand why, right? Candace up to now had generally followed the unwritten rule of the right. Thou shalt not speak ill of another Republican. But in 2023, something happened to make Owens and many others

(00:12:35) break ranks and to make some, including Owens, lean into a specific genre of conspiracy theory. The oldest one that would be a red line for the Daily Wire. The breaking news out of Israel. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has declared that Israel is in a state of war after what's being called the worst attack on the country in 50 years. On October 7th, 2023, Hamas and other Palestinian armed groups carried out an attack on civilians in Israel and on military bases near the Gaza border. In all, more than 12,200 people, mostly civilians, were killed. Israel responded

(00:13:09) with bombs in Gaza and declared a complete siege, cutting off food, fuel, and electricity. Pundits and people ran to ideological corners. The loudest voices seemed either all for Israel or all against it. Nuance, as it often goes on the internet, was really hard to come by. And incredibly, Candace's initial response was measured. I find that when I can't get behind people that think it's fine because a Jewish person is dead and because I can't get behind an individual that think it's acceptable to basically come within an inch of calling for a genocide of Muslims,

(00:13:45) it's best to remain silent. Right. Candace didn't stay silent for long. In November, she said Israel was committing a genocide. Daily Wire boss and founder Ben Shapiro, who's an observant Jew and a big supporter of Israel, called her disgraceful. They fought in public. He told her to quit. She called him unhinged. And while this workplace fight was playing out publicly, Candace's program, which was ostensibly supposed to be focused on culture, was dedicating more and more time to the war in Gaza, but also just blatant anti-semitism, talking about sinister gangs of Jews and Hollywood

(00:14:17) and what she called DC Jews, chasing political power and trying to silence her. And in March 2024, she was out. Or as Candace put it, she was free. She started out again on her own, but what would become clear and fast is that Candace hadn't so much been flung out of MAGA media as she'd outgrown it. And she was no longer content to pedal existing conspiracy theories aimed only at the left. She would create them and deploy them at her new enemies on the right. September 10th, 2025. Utah Valley University. It's the first stop on Turning Point USA's fall campus

(00:15:00) tour. The setup is familiar. Charlie Kirk sitting under a white tent. A long line of people before him waiting to ask their question. Thousands of young people and fans from the area are watching from this kind of fishbowl courtyard. A graduate student and liberal Tik Tocker named Hunter Kak [Hunter Kozak ?] has the mic. Do you know how many mass shooters there have been in America over the last 10 years? Counting or not counting gang violence? Great. What was that? Utah law enforcement officials had announced they had a suspect in custody. We got him. Tyler Robinson, 22 years old,

(00:15:35) from St. George, Utah. Robinson's arrest might have united a MAGA movement that had been tearing itself apart over the Epstein files in the war in Gaza. It might have provided a common enemy, a focus on the lefty posters who were joking about Kirk's death or the trans community or Antifa that the Trump administration had blamed for Kirk's murder. We are going to channel all of the anger that we have over the organized campaign that led to this assassination to uproot and dismantle these terrorist networks. It might have. If not for Candace Owens, they would be going down the center part of town somewhere. This is Louis Wit [Louie Witt], a Dallas insurance

(00:16:18) salesman. But for 15 years after the Kennedy assassination, Wit [Witt] was just known as Umbrella Man. It was one of dozens of details from the scene that journalists and the public poured over from that day. Details that when zoomed in on question, seemed strange. A man standing watching Kennedy's motorcade right about the spot where Kennedy is shot. He's holding a black umbrella, but there's no rain. Skeptics leapt on the umbrella man. Some theorized that he'd opened his umbrella to signal a gunman. Others got more creative. One JFK truther, who went on to publish

(00:16:51) a newsletter called the Grassy Null Gazette [Grassy Knoll Gazette], imagined that the umbrella had hidden a kind of weapon, a dart launcher, that shot Kennedy so a CIA gunman could finish the job. Whit [Witt] came forward in 1978 after his identity was revealed by a Dallas newspaper. Why were you carrying an umbrella that day? Um, actually, I was going to use this umbrella to heckle the president's motorcade. Like most conspiracy theories, this one had a much less memorable explanation. It was a jab at Kennedy's father, who, as ambassador to Great Britain before World War II, had supported

(00:17:26) an appeasement policy with Hitler. Has exhibit 405 ever contained a gun or weapon of any sort? Uh, this umbrella? Yes. No. No. In a 1967 New Yorker column, John Updike considered the umbrella man alongside the other

people and details conspiracy theorists had squinted over. He wrote, quote, "We wonder whether a genuine mystery is being concealed here, or whether any similar scrutiny of a minute section of time and space would yield similar stranges, gaps, inconsistencies, warps, and bubbles in the surface of circumstance." And so it went with Charlie Kirk's assassination.

(00:18:04) Internet sleuths treated every person in the crowd as a potential suspect or co-conspirator. We need to look into these umbrella boys, like these boys that showed up and were like huddling under an umbrella. The content came so fast. Okay, did you catch that? I'll show you in slow motion. The security guy in the blue and Charlie's bodyguard in a tent looked at their watch simultaneously. There was a significant number of young men wearing maroon shirts. First here, then here, then here, then it hits the back of his skull. They all became side characters in an alternative

(00:18:41) theory. People who call themselves citizen journalists took the videos from multiple angles, slowed them down, and zoomed in to dissect and analyze facial expressions and hand movements from the growing list of crowdsourcing suspects, and mark them up with red circles and arrows that together are supposed to add up to something. Same as the JFK conspiracy theorists, just working much, much faster and chasing the instant payouts from social media platforms. Steven Pchesca [Stephen Prochaska] studies how this kind of thing happens. How people online collaborate to interpret events and create

(00:19:16) narratives to explain them. People in academia call it participatory misinformation or collective sensemaking. When we are trying to understand anything that we don't understand initially, it's we're uncertain, something's ambiguous, something's new or novel. And so we we don't understand these things in isolation. There's selective sensemaking process does involve this these crowds of people coming together trying to understand something but in practice some there are some people just have more influence within a particular community there are people whose

(00:19:45) almost entire like livelihoods are based off of navigating this attention economy in other words there is a hierarchy and in this case one person sits at the top since Charlie's death I've watched nearly every episode of Candace's show I know nearly every day of the week in between ads for conservative branded moisturizers and beef subscription boxes and crisis pregnancy centers. Candace pulls up her conspiracy board and spins a new yarn about who might be implicated. Every episode gets millions of views. Here, in her own words, edited for clarity, is her loose theory of

(00:20:19) the Charlie Kirk assassination. He was face facing financial threats um over his shifting stance on Israel. We have to explore every lead because the feds are not they are implicated in this cover up. Charlie's wife is at the helm of the company. The reality is that you're you're most likely to be murdered by someone you know. I think we can all readily dismiss the repeated lie that Tyler Robinson confessed to his crime. This is a setup. Tyler was a psy. I maintain that

this is not going to be the JFK story. I'm going to figure out exactly what happened and I'm

(00:20:51) getting very close against all odds. Candace's videos are not as coherent as this edit. She digresses to dreams and Satan and time travel and Japan. It's a lot. And the episodes don't really make sense on their own, but together they paint this picture. Israel, billionaires, corrupt US government, greedy turning point, all conspiring to eliminate Charlie Kirk because, she says he had finally broken free of those who controlled him. It is worth saying again, this is a story for which there is no evidence, has never been any evidence. And even as Candace promises

(00:21:28) she is getting closer to some proof, some witness, some break in the case, it never arrives. Now, a daily show is a big lift. And Candace only has a few employees, but she has a stable of volunteers, part of what she calls the Candace Intelligence Agency. It is a cottage industry of conspiracy theorists focused just on this case. Candace put it like this. We are all partners in this group project to figure out what actually happened on September 10th. Candace sits atop a network of online creators who feed off, amplify, and ultimately make money off each other. I mapped

(00:22:05) it out like this. Every time Candace referred to another creator or piggybacked on their content, I put them on a list. Then I watched their content and when they referred to another creator's theory or piggybacked on that, I put that person on the list, too. It's not complete, but I think it's a useful data set for understanding this network. The creators on this list are podcasters, legal experts, gun enthusiasts, social media influencers, and a few people who really came out of nowhere. Each have their own pet theory. This decentralized media landscape is how influencers

(00:22:37) collaborate, how they build an audience, and how they are monetizing a complex new conspiracist universe. Okay, so imagine that Candace Owens is the sun. She provides the gravitational pull that keeps the entire Who Killed Charlie Kirk universe alive. Her YouTube channel alone sits at 6 million subscribers. Every episode gets at least a million views, and each post is a growth spurt for her channel and the smaller ones that she mentioned. You've got Ian Carol [Ian Carroll], a conspiracy theorist and filmmaker known for blaming 9/11 on the Jews and who early on blamed Israel for Kirk's

(00:23:13) death. You would normally not think to look at Israel, which is like Charlie is like the biggest Israel supporter ever, but when you understand the circumstances and the context, they immediately become the most likely. Jimmy Door [Jimmy Dore], a stand-up comedian, was early to tell his audience that they shouldn't believe what they were being told about Kirk's death. So JFK was killed by a magic bullet, but Charlie Kirk was hit with a miracle bullet. What are the odds? Candace has been on both of their shows and vice versa. In effect, cross-pollinating their brands and widening their

(00:23:46) reach. Now, with the midsized planets, they don't have an audience that Candace needs. Instead, they supply the fresh content to feed the overarching narrative. Guys like Baron Coleman, a lawyer and a former radio host whose show Owens calls the afterparty to hers. Coleman is a just asking questions guy. The word allegedly hangs on a sign behind him in his home office. His value comes in the holes he pokes in Tyler Robinson's criminal case. Now, Coleman's pet theory, and it's maybe the most popular one, is that the rifle that prosecutors allege was used to shoot Kirk couldn't

(00:24:20) have done so because that gun was too powerful not to cause an exit wound. The case was over. Tyler Robinson's not I mean, in my opinion, not going to get convicted um because that neck wound is so inconsistent with a gunshot. Now, the prosecution hasn't entered an autopsy into evidence, but people close to Kirk, including his head of security, have said that the bullet was shot from a rooftop above, moved down and fragmented inside Kirk's body. Coleman, without evidence, posits that instead of a gun, Kirk may have been killed by an explosive device hidden in a microphone

(00:24:53) or a necklace. Then, we've got Elizabeth Lane. She's smaller than Coleman, but a rising star. Journalist Elizabeth Lane, that's the one who has been positing that Erica [Erika] Kirk is a psychopath. Lane's theory of the case is that Robinson is a psy likely the victim of a secret CIA mind control operation who was set up by his roommate. Lane hails from the former Soviet Republic of Georgia and was until recently an actress and a model. But sometime in 2024, she started calling herself an investigative journalist and hosting programs on Unified TV. That's a streaming platform owned

(00:25:26) by a wellness guru who sells among many other products recliners that he claims can heal all sorts of ailments. Lane was kind of an unknown, attracting only the attention of fact checkers and disinformation researchers for her pro- Kremlin dispatches and unqualified support for Putin around the war in Ukraine. But after Kirk's death, Lane went hard on conspiracy theories around Charlie Kirk. A high-profile interview with Tucker Carlson put her on the map. I do want to ask you, it it bothers me a lot and I know it does it bother you too and I know that you probably

(00:25:57) don't sleep because you think about this stuff. Who killed Charlie Kirk? Um I mean I you know there's a man in custody based in Utah. Lane became a fixture at the Tyler Robinson hearings. Investigative journalist Elizabeth Lane um is not giving up on this story. She's been on the ground in Utah connecting the CIA dots, the three-letter agency dots and connections. Lane isn't the only person to come from nowhere. There's Billy Webb, a Candace Reply girl who I've sat behind in Tyler Robinson hearings. Billy was a flight attendant, an adult content creator, and a van life

(00:26:29) influencer on TikTok before that. And now she's a popular Kirk Truther. There's a 22-year-old kid up against the death penalty for something that he didn't do, and I'm not going to stop talking about it. Then you move out even further from the sun, and you get to your niche creators. Now, these are

the architects of a very specific kind of content. content that informs the other creators and sometimes will eventually make it all the way upstream. There's Zach Deg Gregorio [Zach De Gregorio ?] aka Wolves and Finance. He makes content that alleges fiscal impropriety by Turning Point. Anyone who knew about

(00:27:01) the political activity and was involved in the coverup would go to prison. And yes, that includes Erica [Erika] Kirk. De Gregorio's content presented with no actual evidence has fueled the Turning Point was in on it conspiracy theories. Turning Point's lawyers have sent a cease and desist letter. I'm looking for a lawyer. Mom and gossip bloggers who've previously covered the Amber Heard trial and Blake Lively's legal drama turned their talents toward Erica [Erika] Kirk. I genuinely started to consider whether Erica [Erika] is a pathological liar, has some sort of psychological disorder, is a variant from

(00:27:35) another timeline, or is a victim of MK Ultra. Like I know the last two options sound pretty extreme, but like that's genuinely where my mind started to go because I honestly just can't make sense of the things that she says. That's Ni, a Canadian YouTuber who started out like Candace, making videos of sailing wokeness. And since Kirk's assassination after she started posting about Erica [Erika], her channel's subscribers have grown by 50%. YouTubers who do not get nearly enough credit for their amazing discoveries. One such YouTuber is Ni. An astounding number of

(00:28:09) conspiracist creators have shot into the carcasses of various dead animals. We got the pork shoulder, we got the steel, and then we got these two leaders behind it. We're going to shoot a cow femur. And then to make it even harder, we're going to slap on a huge slab of beef. Hickory smoked young turkeys, but they're very a lot thicker than a neck. I do have a moose leg. Chris Martinson [Chris Martenson], a former economist, he shot at pig carcasses for his videos, theorizing the bullet came from another shooter. This shot you're about to watch, strikes about in the center, goes right through the bone. Here's the paper behind it. Notice

(00:28:48) that there are no holes in it at this point, and the shot comes in. And it's just going to replay that over and over here for so you can see it. So again, the shots coming in downhill like this from here to here. It's coming in on a downward angle. But few of the sleuths in this outer galaxy have been more determined or obsessed as he puts it than John Bray. Bray is an Oklahoma farmer who with his wife sells products like beef tallow and kombucha. He is essential as the original architect of the exploding microphone theory. Bray watched Kirk's assassination and focused on the

(00:29:27) wireless microphone attached to Kirk's shirt. What if it wasn't just a microphone, Bray theorized, but a little bomb? Bray tested his pet theory with experiments out of his garage. He built a tiny explosive device, encased it in a pig carcass, and set it off. He said the wound matched Kirk's and then you see the full rectangle kind of area on it. As he explained on Kirk Truther podcasts, Bray fed Grock [Grok] and Claude a stack of forensic papers, uploaded video of

the assassination, and then told the chatbots to act as forensic experts. The result, Bray says, prove a quote

(00:30:03) coordinated multissource event. These creators are singular and symbiotic. Over the last year, they have grown together, many doubling and tripling their audiences. And to be very, very clear, this for most of them is their full-time job. Consider signing up for a membership on my website, wolvesandfinance.com, for \$6 a month. Your support helps me to keep making these videos. There is a whole lot of money to be made on YouTube and downstream by pushing these conspiracy theories. For Candace, there's the membership. For \$12 a month, Club Candace gets you into a private

(00:30:39) forum. And the donation she asks to fund her legal fights, but which the small print clarifies she can spend any way she likes. And then there's the live audience paying her in real time with super chats. Those are messages that viewers buy to get their comment penned up high so that Candace might read it on air. But for Candace, the big money, it comes from ads. It's not clear just how much Candace makes per ad. According to Bloomberg, top conservative podcasts, including Candace's, can command anywhere from \$10,000 to \$100,000 from reading a single ad. Candace isn't the only

(00:31:13) conspiracist making a living off Kirk's death. Baron Coleman, the host of the Candace Afterparty, he quit his job as a lawyer this year to be a full-time podcaster. Friday, January 2nd, um I informed my full-time job that I was no longer going to be an employee there. Now, Coleman streams three or four hours at a stretch about five days a week. And a good chunk of those hours is just Coleman reading super chats out loud. \$5 here, \$200 there. I didn't realize they were sending you money with these. I didn't even see the dollars signs next to these things. Wow,

(00:31:48) look at you guys. Yeah, that's that's so we don't run ads. They're they're paying me to not run ads. According to Playboard, a YouTube analytics platform that counts super chats, a single one of his streams can pull in as much as \$6,000. In all, he's earned about \$350,000. On top of that, of course, Coleman sells merch and a \$9.99 a month membership that unlocks private streams. Not bad for a father of eight, who told me by text he isn't chasing it. I'm not out to be a new media star, he said. Even the creators with tiny audiences can hit gold. John Bray, that

(00:32:21) guy with the farm and the exploding mic theory, his tiny channel has a link to support this work that goes to his Blue Mountain Farm website. In early December, he starts to appear on some of the bigger truther shows, like this one from a guy who goes by the handle Trigger Smart. The next day, Baron Coleman covers the Bray Theory. I think he's on to something here. And then Candace gives him a shout out. I have seen John Bray and the work that he's doing. I find it to be very compelling as well. And I have been communicating with him behind the scenes. For John and his farm,

(00:32:54) a small miracle, a massive influx of orders and messages. No one could have ever guessed the variables that have come together to sort of allow us to now be known really worldwide. Lately, we've had so many requests for people wanting our products across the globe. You might have picked up that I'm not trying to debunk Candace or the creators in our orbit. Most of them rest on this overthought innuendo and red string theories that either can't be disproved because they never state a real claim or take enormous energy to disprove. And for those there's little payout because by the

(00:33:32) time you do they're on to their next story line. It follows Brandolini's law coined back when Twitter was good that says the amount of energy needed to refute [__] is an order of magnitude bigger than needed to produce it. But for farmer John Bray's work, since it seems like the most concrete and has spread the farthest, did you see that that exploding mic theory? Did you guys talk about that on here? I've heard that theory, but I don't know if that makes sense. I think the energy may be worth it. Both to get the facts out there and to show what it takes for someone

(00:34:04) trained as a librarian and a journalist to get to the bottom of just one of these theories. So, first I reached out to Josh Brunty. Josh Brunty is a professor of cyber forensics at Marshall University with a joint appointment in the department of criminal justice, criminology and forensic sciences and department of computer sciences and electrical engineering. He serves on the editorial boards of forensic science international digital investigation and the journal of forensic sciences. Is a fellow of the digital and multimedia sciences section of the American Academy of Forensic Sciences and is the author of loads of award-winning

(00:34:39) research including research on forensic analysis of wearable devices. They're able to essentially generate scientific content videos that might look credible. uh they might use reverse projection techniques, techniques that that are somewhat used in the forensic community, but they're able to uh generate scientific terminology that make these things seem as if they're real. And then they're able to produce a website within a matter of minutes and post uh those analyses to that particular site. Do you trust this website? I'm I'm very suspect of it. Then I talked to a

(00:35:22) second video forensics expert who declined to go on the record because of the nature of this story. They said there was no scenario where the types of measurement that Bray claims he was making could be made from the videos on his website. Then I emailed Gunnar Farnbeck [Gunnar Farneback]. He's the inventor of the optical flow algorithm that Bray cites as his main method of investigation. Dr. Dr. Farnbeck [Farneback] said in part, quote, I have a hard time making sense of the optical flow related claims on that site. From the parts I think I understand, it seems likely that there are enough methodological

(00:35:54) flaws that the analysis provides little evidence for or against any hypothesis at all. Then I asked an expert to analyze the audio. I sent Bray's

website to Dr. Robert Maher. He's a professor of electrical and computer engineering at Montana State University, Bozeman [Bozeman], and author of the textbook Principles of Forensic Audio Analysis. He specializes in gunshot sounds. He said the audio from the Kirk shooting had the classic ballistic crack of a bullet passing by the microphone and then the pop sound of the muzzle blast from a gun. He said, quote, "Any assertion

(00:36:28) that a microphone Mr. Kirk was wearing was somehow involved in the fatal injury would need to account for why the ballistic audio characterization is exactly aligned in time. And while we're here, the speed of the bullet, Mar [Maher] said something like 800 m/s from his audio analysis would also rule out a handgun or palm pistol as other conspiracy theorists have suggested. What's the palm gun guy, Jesse? Well, the palm gun guy is a member of Charlie's security team. And it does appear that he had a palm gun and fired it at Charlie at point blank range. Here's the footage. Take a look at

(00:37:08) this man right here, folks. This is Charlie Kirk, security guy. He appears to have a palm gun in his right hand and he aims it at Charlie Kirk and squeezes the palm gun firing off around directly into Charlie Kirk's neck. Dr. Maher declined to speak about Bray further. He said, quote, "I'm sorry to say that I don't have the time or interest in going through a conspiracy theorist's claims in a step-by-step manner. My work goes from the audio evidence without need to conjure up details that are likely due to limitations of the recorded data and other faulty assumptions."

(00:37:46) Finally, I tried to talk to John Bray to check what I found and ask him what I was missing about his theory. He declined to be interviewed, as did most of the Kirk conspiracists mentioned in Candace's network. And really, there's no reason for them to talk to me or any other journalist at all. Their audiences are loyal and growing. Their universe is expanding with new creators joining all the time, just hoping to break through. It is a great day. We made it to Candace. We made it on Candace's show. If you have deep connections with Candace, so please make sure you get this video

(00:38:24) to her. Candace needs to see this. Stop telling content creators, someone already covered that. We got it. We have to keep recovering covering and covering and covering to keep this story alive. I've reported on conspiracy theories for a long time now, and the question I got a lot was, why do you focus so much on the political right? But it wasn't really ever a choice. While there are plenty of conspiracy theories on the left, the right was, with a few exceptions, just better at this game. They were more willing to embrace conspiracy theories as a means to a political end.

(00:39:00) Charlie Kirk certainly was. You can see the white population collapse in LA. That's intentional. They've wanted it that way. They want us to believe that this was a political attack against Paul Pelosi. about two 911s have already died of people that have died since getting the vaccine, but it could be 10 or 20 times beyond that because some people might not be registering these adverse reactions and I'm just saying reportedly have died. I just want to be very clear

about this. And maybe because of that, when conspiracy theorists like Candace Owens grabbed hold of

(00:39:34) Kirk's assassination, when they turned on Erica [Erika] Kirk and Turning Point USA and Trump effectively, a lot of people felt like, well, perhaps they had it coming. Jen, I had your same feelings with Candace. Like, I guess the enemy of my enemy is my friend. So, I kept agreeing with her. Yeah. But I kept being like, "This is Candace Owens. It was something I brought up to Jack Poic [Jack Posobiec], Kirk's regular podcast co-host, who famously pushed Pizzagate and a million other conspiracy theories. Since I was at Turning Points America Fest in December, I was trying to report on

(00:40:08) the future of Kirk's organization, but I found attendees preoccupied with the conspiracy theories about Kirk's death. So was Pobic [Posobiec]. To the haters out there, no, these Robin simpers, and that's what I'm going to call him, the Robin Simpers. No, Tyler Robinson did this. He did this. If we're ever going to get through this personally, let alone the movement, the organization, etc., it's you got to start with that. You just got to start with that. Now, he was asking for compassion, for common sense. He was asking people to believe the official narrative about Tyler Robinson and to

(00:40:42) leave a grieving widow alone. But what Pobic [Posobiec] should well know, and what Turning Point was learning is that conspiracy theories don't stop. The theories build and the collection of actors who must be in on it just grows. TPUSA, the state of government, state government of Utah, the federal bureau of investigation, the US military, foreign militaries, they're all involved. By far and surprisingly, some of the worst conspiracy theories have come for Kirk's widow, Erica [Erika]. Since his death and since she took over as CEO of Turning Point, there's been a constant stream of

(00:41:20) commentary and content mocking and criticizing both Charlie Kirk and Erica [Erika]. Viral AI songs and comedy. Get on your feet. Every morning I wake up to a new headline lying about me. Now, making fun is one thing. Accusing her of murder is another. Public attempts to stop the conspiracy theories have only seemed to make things worse. I asked Turning Point USA for an interview to find out what they were dealing with and what they saw as the path forward. They declined to go on the record, but they invited me to their Phoenix headquarters where I sat down with Erica [Erika] and other leadership. They spent hours

(00:42:05) with me. They answered all my questions. What I saw was an organization struggling, struggling to weather a storm that would have been unthinkable a year ago. Struggling to grieve, struggling to navigate near constant threats and harassment, and wondering each day what false storyline Candace Owens will come up with next. In April, Turning Point USA canceled Erica's [Erika] appearance at the University of Georgia, citing serious threats to her safety. San Antonio police arrested a 26-year-old in May for making terroristic threats against Erica [Erika] and an upcoming

(00:42:37) women's conference. Before Kirk's assassination, Turning Point had a war chest full of cash and political capital and was ready to spend it on the midterms. Kirk was pulling in 85 million a year, mostly from his hard one rolodex of anonymous wealthy donors. And while Kirk's death inspired a surge in followers and new funds, it remains to be seen if Erica [Erika] Kirk can pull Turning Point through the conspiracy storm. What is the vision for Turning Point USA? Aside from the elephant in the room about my husband, our mission is the same. Before Kirk's assassination,

(00:43:13) Turning Point was mobilizing young conservatives to win races large and small. Now it's tied to JD Vance's 2028 hopes after Erica [Erika] Kirk endorsed him. And TPUSA's early midterm results have been a mixed bag. Its candidates have won a lot of state primaries, but it also poured money into board races for Arizona's biggest utility in April and lost. We beat Turning Point USA. Beyond elections, Charlie Kirk was trying to hold together a MAGA coalition on the brink of civil war. Now Erica [Erika] Kirk has to do it without him, supporting Trump while honoring her husband's opposition to an

(00:43:46) unpopular war waged by the US and Israel against Iran. Meanwhile, conspiracists are playing back Kirk's own videos, including one questioning the assassination attempt on Trump in Butler, Pennsylvania. Was this a setup? What's going on here? As proof that if he were still alive, he'd be questioning his death right alongside them. And maybe he would. What's clear is that at least online, without a north star, Turning Point is being drowned out by the same conspiracists that Charlie Kirk used to command. All right, you guys. Straight to jail. straight to jail for questioning. At least Erica [Erika], I don't care who's mad. I really do not care who

(00:44:24) wants to be upset after this episode. When I sat down with Erica [Erika] Kirk, she told me the conspiracy theories and lies from Owens and her minions were hurtful and frustrating, but that she'd already lived through the worst thing that can happen to her, so she'd weather this. Prosecutors say they have DNA evidence, multiple confessions, and videos showing Robinson's guilt. Erica [Erika] and Turning Point are hoping that a trial will come soon and that Robinson will be found guilty. And they're hoping that an open televised trial will quiet the conspiracy theories. I'm not so sure.

(00:44:55) It'll be easy for conspiracists to fold in the courts and evidence presented by prosecutors into their stories. Our courts are completely compromised. Our courts want nothing to do with this. The JFK conspiracy theory was the defining one of America's 20th century. And this may be the defining one of the 21st. Candace Owens's conspiracy theorists love the comparison. Any other similarities between the JFK assassination and the Charlie Kirk? About 5 million. Israel's basically the only power capable of such an assassination of JFK and both and Charlie

(00:45:27) Kirk. From JFK to MLK now to CJK. This is in my opinion an undeniable state killing. Why would an official story be enough to stop them? And why would they start caring about who gets hurt? The Candace Owens

conspiracy machine shouldn't just worry turning point or MAGA. Anyone can become canon fodder. It doesn't matter which side you're on. And the danger from this new era of conspiracy theory isn't just that we'll be duped by misinformation, but that we'll lose our sense of direction. That we'll give up on trying to make sense of what's real and what's not and blindly trust strong men or follow snake oil saleswomen who frame

(00:46:07) everything as a lie and a threat. How far can we go down the rabbit hole before we're lost there?