



Episode 978: Charlottesville Once More: Left-Anarchist Keith Preston Discusses

Guest: Keith Preston

WOODS: All right, I read your piece on Charlottesville. I liked it very much. I recommended it yesterday's episode, 977, with Paul Gottfried, and he likes it very much and I saw that he emailed you about it. So it's an interesting piece and it's great that you've gotten apparently negative feedback from both sides on this and positive feedback – I'm inserting this part myself – from all the good and decent folks out there. So that's good, because I think it is an evenhanded overview of this. It's hard. With an episode like this, there are emotions and you feel strongly about what's happening, but we're trying to just get the bottom factually of what went on and then try and analyze it. Before we do that, I want you to try and explain to people who you are ideologically, because when I billed you a couple of days ago or a day or so ago as coming up, I think I called you a left-anarchist, and I don't know if that's how you'd identify yourself. So if I did that wrong, can you correct me?

PRESTON: It's close enough. I am a –

WOODS: [laughing] Okay.

PRESTON: I'm an anarchist. I'm interested in critiques of power sort of in the Nietzschean, Foucaultian tradition. I'm very similar to a left-anarchist. My main criticism of the left-anarchists is that I don't think they really apply the anarchist critique of power as broadly as they should. They tend to have this narrow, party-line, leftist agenda instead. But it's close enough.

WOODS: All right, so having said that, you bring an interesting perspective to this question and to so many questions. In fact, this post reminded me I have to read AttackTheSystem.com a heck of a lot more often than I am, because who knows what other gems I've missed out on? Give me an overview here. Now, it was hard to get exactly all the facts immediately and I wasn't there. In fact, I was out with my kids the whole weekend, so I still haven't really gotten to the bottom of who started what and how'd the violence get started, what were the circumstances. I don't really know anything about that. I know that there was this torch-lit march at night, and then there was a rally the next day, and then a guy drove his car into a crowd of people. That is pretty much my knowledge of the situation. Can you try and fill in those gaps for me a little bit?

PRESTON: Yeah. Well, the actual rally was a rally called Unite the Right, and it was organized by the alternative-right, alt-right movement. A lot of different individuals were scheduled to speak at this rally, including people from divergent ideological backgrounds, but they're still within this wider alt-right banner. The left of course was incensed by this, so the left organized a counter-protest.

Where the problem seems to have started is a number of things. First, among the alt-right there was a difference of opinion as to which groups should be allowed to participate. There were apparently some that were fine with having Klan and neo-Nazi groups participating; there were others that didn't want those elements present. Ultimately, I think the decision was made that it would be pretty much open to anyone under the umbrella of the alt-right, which would include the white nationalist far right. There were some groups who were "patriot groups" that, as I understand it, pulled out of the rally because of this. I'm still looking for confirmation as to which groups.

But the bottom line is that you had a large turnout of hundreds of individuals and groups associated with this alternative-right milieu ranging from people that could be considered neo-Confederates or patriots or 3%ers or militia types or probably some right-wing-leaning libertarians all the way over to neo-Nazi and the Klan and groups of that nature, as well, so it was pretty broad cross-section of the right-wing subculture in the United States.

They were scheduled to have the rally at noon on Saturday in Charlottesville. The night before, they held a torchlight parade in the area of Charlottesville where the University of Virginia, or I guess it's where the Robert E. Lee statue is located. It's in what's now called Emancipation Park. As I understand it, that torchlight parade was not announced until the day that the parade actually happened, so you all of a sudden had about 300 alt-right guys running around through Charlottesville looking to find tiki torches. So they did have their torchlight parade on Friday night.

Of all the videos – I was not in Charlottesville, by the way, when this happened. Of all the videos I've seen of the parade, it seems to have been fairly well organized. They seem to have had marshals there trying to keep people in line and make it look like an organized, professional event. I do think that the intention of this parade was one of intimidation. I do think they were trying to create an intimidating presence there in the city, trying to intimidate their opponents as well as the city over this issue of the monument, the Lee Confederate monument and all of that. And I do think they were trying to create this kind of Nazi aesthetic with the torchlight parade. I don't think that they intended for this to be a violent action, but I do think that's kind of the image they were going for.

I've heard reports from various sides that they were attacking counter-protesters or hecklers as the march was going on. I have seen videos of scuffles between marchers during the torchlight parade and people on the sidelines. Now, how that got started it's hard to say. When you get a group of hotheads together with a lot of mutual hatred and animosity and not to mention polarized ideologies, scuffles like that are going to happen, and sometimes it might be the alt-rightist guys that start the scuffle and sometimes it might be the other side, or sometimes it may be mutual. You would really have to try to evaluate it on a case-by-case, person-by-person basis almost. But there were some scuffles of that type apparently. I did see evidence of that without being able to determine the source of it.

There was also a claim that on Friday night during the torchlight parade, there was also a worship service going on at a nearby church that was apparently called in opposition to this, a kind of interfaith, standard progressive church type of activity. It's been claimed that the alt-right marchers tried to intimidate this church or they tried to surround this church and were shouting threatening slogans. I've been unable to confirm that. The worship service was certainly going on and the torchlight parade was certainly going on. It may be that the alt-right people simply walked by the church during their parade. They may have had stopped at a static location next to the church at one point. They may have actually engaged in counter-protest actions against the church. They may have heckled people at the church. I have seen no evidence that they were actually planning to engage in any act of violence against this church.

If they were trying to do that, it would be a serious matter obviously, but I haven't seen that that was the case.

Of course, the big event was on Saturday, and the alt-right people began milling around in the park in the morning. The event was going to be at noon, so it was fairly early in the morning when these people started to arrive. The counter-protesters started to arrive as well. The earliest wave of counter-protesters appeared to be people from what we might call the peaceful left or the mainstream left, just ordinary liberals, left-wing-leaning people, people that want to voice their opposition to the white nationalists or whatever, not people that are inclined towards violence or anything like that. The problems on the left end of it with the counter-protesters seem to begin when the Antifa showed up.

One of the best reports on that I've seen was done by Faith Goldy, who is some kind of independent journalist with The Rebel Media, which is I think kind of a libertarianish, conservative, patriot-leaning alt media site. But she was actually there with a Periscope livestreaming some of this stuff, and she was right there near the action when the car incident happened as well. But according to her, the gathering was going relatively well considering the polarized groups of people that were present, and a lot of the problems began with the Antifa showed up because they showed up planning to instigate – essentially to incite a riot. They showed up and started throwing bottles and rocks and things of that nature.

Now, where the big controversy comes in is this question of who actually started the fight. It's kind of like in school when two kids get into it. Who started the fight? Well, sometimes it's hard to tell. It's clear that a lot of the alt-right people came anticipating that there would be violence. Now, whether they planned to instigate violence or not is a separate question. It may be that some did and some didn't because we're dealing with a lot of different individuals and groups here. But it's clear that some alt-right people came anticipating violence. In particular, some of the more radical groups came carrying shields, sticks, pepper spray, weapons of different type.

There was one group in particular that was called the Traditionalist Worker Party, which is a National Socialist organization. These are not ordinary conservatives; this is a National Socialist organization. And I know the two fellows who founded this group personally. They will tell you they are National Socialists. But they apparently came ready to be the frontline shock troops of the alt-right if any skirmish occurred. There were also some militia and 3%er, Oath Keeper types who were armed, and apparently they saw themselves more as peacekeepers. They saw themselves as there to keep the peace and protect the rally. At least that's the line they're taking.

So we had a situation where we have these armed militia guys and we have these neo-Nazi groups that show up with their shields and sticks and helmets and all fo that, and we have the Antifa showing up with all of their weapons and pepper spray and sticks and objects to throw. At least one Antifa was also armed. There's a group called the Redneck Revolt that were actually carrying guns.

WOODS: Ugh. Okay, go ahead.

PRESTON: All right. So from what I've described so far, it's pretty clear why this event turned out the way it did. Now, I want to say this. In the state of Virginia where this happened, carrying guns in public is not illegal. It's an open-carry state, so as long as you have all of the proper permits and licensing and a legal firearm and all that, you can openly carry guns. So all of the people who were carrying guns were within their legal rights to do so. And all of the groups that were assembling for a protest or a counter-protest were also within their legal rights to do so.

The city of Charlottesville had tried to shut down the alt-right rally by revoking their permit. It was taken to court, and a federal judge ruled that the city of Charlottesville had unlawfully revoked their permit on grounds that the opposition groups had retained their own permits. So the city was trying to claim that public safety or something like that was an issue, and the judge ruled clearly this was a case of political discrimination. You're denying these people a permit to hold a rally because of their beliefs and philosophy, not because of other issues, because the same standard has not been applied to anyone else in these incidents.

So during the time that everyone started to assemble – all of the alt-right groups started to arrive, all of the counter-protester groups started to arrive – it appears that at one point, the Antifa was planning on shutting down the rally through violent means, and the alt-right people were anticipating this. Now, I observed the Antifa people in action myself, and this is their standard mode of operation. They are essentially – I guess we could call them professional rioters in the sense that what they do is they show up at right-wing events and they try, often successfully, to incite a riot, because their goal is to shut down right-wing events and keep them from happening, and they're all for using violence and whatever other methods they can to do this. Now, that's not true of all counter-protesters. Most of the counter-protesters in Charlottesville were not people from violent organizations or who came with the intention of engaging in violence. I don't get that impression at all. But this particular sector did, the Antifa and other similar groups.

So the Antifa showed up. The hardline National Socialists showed up. You had the militia guys with their guns in the middle of this. And of course you also had the cops. What could go wrong, right?

WOODS: Yeah.

PRESTON: So at one point, it appears that the Antifa were trying to march towards the rally site for the purpose of shutting it down. I've also had people who were on the counter-protester side tell me that neo-Nazis were charging into the crowd of counter-protesters trying to pick fights or assault someone or things like that. I haven't actually seen any videos of that. I've had word-of-mouth confirmation of that. It wouldn't surprise me, because I have seen neo-Nazi groups do that at right-wing demonstrations in the past. They go up to the counter-protesters and they try to pick a fight with them and they'll go into the crowd and hit somebody. Although a lot of that involves mutual combat as well. I mean, the people on the other side – some people on the other side can be pretty violent as well. But we do have to consider what kind of groups we're dealing with here.

So it's unknown as to how the rally really escalated out of control. I'm hearing all kinds of reports from different directions, but apparently the real catalyst was the police came in to shut down the rally. Somebody gave the order to the police to shut down the Unite the Right rally and keep it from happening. Initially, it seemed like it was either the mayor of Charlottesville or perhaps the vice mayor. It may have been the governor of Virginia who initiated that action, Terry McAuliffe. But a state of emergency was declared, which is the – normally, that's the kind of thing that you use in the event of a flood or an earthquake or something like that. But a state of emergency was declared. When a state of emergency is declared, this gives local authorities a lot more leeway than normal as far as imposing fairly drastic actions, including shutting down a rally that's otherwise protected by the First Amendment and things of that nature.

So the police showed up – well, they were already there, but the police started pouring in in riot gear and with a bullhorn announcing that the rally had been disallowed because a state of emergency had been declared. Now, the alt-right leaders who were planning on speaking at this rally apparently decided to engage in civil disobedience. They apparently told the cops,

Look, we're not going anywhere. You can arrest us if you want. We're not going to resist arrest, but we're not just going to go away. And apparently, the police did arrest Richard Spencer, who is probably the most well-known leader of the alt-right, and he was taken off to jail.

And when the police went around dispersing the alt-right crowd, I've gotten several different accounts as to the specific details of what happened, but it looks like what happened is the police dispersed the alt-right gathering into the crowd of protesters. Rather than having a separate area to take the alt-right people to and order them out from another direction, say from another street or another entrance to the park or whatever, apparently the alt-right people were dispersed into the crowd of protesters. And when the dispersal started, that seems to be when the malay began. Now, as far as who started what, that probably all comes down to the individual. There were probably a lot of individuals punching each other and throwing rocks at each other and hitting each other with sticks and using pepper spray on each other.

You know, I've been dealing with extremist groups of different types for almost 30 years, and I know fairly well how different groups of these types operate. And I'm quite certain that there were people on both sides of this that had no problem with engaging in violence as soon as the opportunity presented itself. I see no evidence that the alt-right leadership that organized the rally specifically intended for there to be a malay of this type. I don't get the impression that they actually wanted this to happen. I think there were some people within their ranks who weren't about to turn down the opportunity if it did come along.

And the same is true of the counter-protesters. I see no evidence that the counter-protesters generally wanted a violent malay to take place, with the exception of the Antifa, perhaps a few other similar groups, because that's just what they do. That's what they thrive on. I'm sure they came with the intention of inciting a riot and trying to shut down the rally through violent force, as well. In fact, I suspect that may be in part what led to the declaration – well, what led to a final decision to shut down the rally, is when it became obvious that the Antifa was going to try to shut it down by force. Although I do think there were efforts by the city of Charlottesville to prevent this incident from happening as well. I think they really didn't want this to happen and were going out of their way to find ways to keep it from happening.

But once the rally was shut down and the crowds were dispersed into each other, all hell essentially broke loose, and there were lots of fights going on all over the place. A lot of people who were there with the independent media have said on every corner here and there, you saw a different group fighting with each other. Again, in terms of who's responsible, it all probably comes down to the individuals in the particular circumstances. When you get a group of people like this together who hate each other's guts and people have weapons and it's a hot day and all of that, this kind of thing is going to happen.

The main problem, though, that led to the escalation of this once the rally was shut down and once the protesters were dispersed into each other's vicinity was the fact that the Charlottesville police simply disappeared. Apparently the Charlottesville police were virtually nowhere to be seen for about two hours. From roughly before noon when the rally was shut down until after 2 p.m., essentially the police disappeared from the area and let the two different sides have at each other, pretty much. And this went on for a couple of hours.

If you watched all of the different videos that have been posted on YouTube and all sorts of other venues of that type, it's very difficult to even tell who is who in many of these videos. You just see people fighting with each other. It's hard to tell who's from the alt-right and who's from the Antifa and who's from the left and who's from the right. There's just a lot of chaos and violence going on. There were genuinely criminal acts committed on both sides. There was one incident where a young black guy was beaten by five alt-right guys with sticks. That video is

actually online. That's the most serious incident like that that I know of other than the car incident.

As for the car incident, that was actually recorded by some independent media people and others that were present. And what is actually shown is there's a car that's speeding down the street and runs into the back of another car, and it looks like people are being pinned in between cars, both the car that James Fields was driving and the one in the front, and also there's a car on the side of the street; it looks like somebody got pinned between the car on the side of the street and Fields' car as well. This incident has been recorded from several different angles.

Some of the alt-right people are claiming that what happened is that Fields' car was attacked by a group of Antifa and that he was simply trying to make an escape. Now, that is certainly plausible in the sense that the Antifa would certainly not be beyond doing that. If they saw an alt-right guy, particularly this guy because James Fields was associated with the Traditionalist Worker Party – so if they saw one of the TWP guys getting into a car, they would most certainly attack the car and start beating the car with clubs and things like that. You could see how someone in that position would try to make a quick getaway, hit the gas really quickly.

Now, I haven't seen any evidence that that's actually what happened. It seems more like this guy was driving at a fairly high rate of speed when he hit the people that he actually hit, and it seems that he then backed up – and I'm not sure where he went after that. I'm not sure if he was trying to hit someone again or simply make an escape. So I haven't actually seen any confirmation that James Fields was literally trying to escape a type of Reginald Denny situation. Reginald Denny was a man who was pulled out of his vehicle and beaten nearly to death in Los Angeles in 1992 when the Rodney King riots happened. There have been claims made that that's what happened with this incident. I haven't seen that proven yet. I don't think that's really the case. I'm very skeptical of that. You know, James Fields is innocent until proven guilty, but it doesn't look good for him. I'll say that.

WOODS: Yeah. Right, right.

PRESTON: Okay, so as far as the car incident, that was the most serious incident that happened, because someone was killed. The person who was killed was a paralegal who worked for a law firm in Charlottesville. She was some kind of left-wing activist. It's been claimed that she was involved with Antifa and had been involved in actually facilitating the attack on the car that James Fields was driving. I have seen no evidence of that. I have seen no evidence that she was involved with Antifa. From everything that I have been able to gather about her, she wasn't that into that kind of activity. She was more of a conventional left-wing progressive-type activist. And the impression I get is that she was simply in the wrong place at the wrong time. She just happened to be crossing the street when this guy came barreling through.

There were independent media people there who very nearly were hit by this car. Faith Goldy was one, with Rebel Media. There was also a guy from the *Charlottesville Press*, a photographer who came very close to getting hit by this car. So for whatever reason this guy decided to just drive his car into a crowd of people – From what I have read in the mainstream media, assuming that can be trusted, this man, James Fields, apparently has a fairly violent history. Apparently his mother had called the police on him on multiple occasions because he was threatening her in their home and things like that, so he seems to be a troubled individual from what's come out about him.

Eventually, the police came back in and started to restore order. But the big question, though, is where were the police during this incident. Were they ordered to stand down? Did they just

walk off the job and say, Hey, I'm not bothering with this? This is a pattern that we see happening in multiple situations. We've seen this in Berkeley. There was a similar incident like this in Berkeley about four months ago in April. There was a free speech rally that was held by some alt-right people and some Trump supporters and other groups of that type, and the Antifa and some other similar groups showed up to engage in a counter-protest, and it became a very violent, street-fight type of situation just like what happened in Charlottesville. In Berkeley, no one was killed, but it was also a situation where the police just seemed to stand down, just kind of let the different sides have at each other. In fact, there were police in Berkeley who were claiming they had been ordered to stand down. I've heard reports of police officers in Charlottesville claiming that they were ordered to stand down as well. I haven't been able to confirm that, but there have been some independent media people who've claimed that police officers told them that.

So that seems to be where it stands. It seems to be simply a malay between two groups of people who hate each other's guts, and ultimately, someone got killed.

WOODS: All right, that's a lot of information. I just wanted to let you talk for awhile and just lay out exactly what happened as you see it. Let's pause now and thank our sponsor.

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All right, so now I want to get into some analysis of the situation. You have an interesting take on it. You say that you believe this kind of confrontation is more psychologically motivated than it is racially or ideologically motivated. I'm not sure I'm convinced of that, but I'm open to being convinced. What do you mean by that?

PRESTON: Well, for one thing, as far as it being racially motivated, if you watch the videos of this incident very carefully, what you actually see is that it's mostly white people that were participating in this. This was not a black-versus-white incident at all. This was not a race riot. You do see some African Americans and perhaps other minorities among the counter-protesters, but by far everyone on both sides were white. I've also heard reports from people who participated in the alt-right rally that there were people who were not white there. I even saw one photograph that was taken where it looked like an Asian man was actually marching with the alt-right group. And this is fairly common. I've witnessed alt-right events myself where you actually have people of color there present on the alt-right side, so that's not uncommon. And it's not uncommon either that with the left, whenever I have seen these anti-fascist demonstrations by leftists, usually they are predominantly white people.

So what you're dealing with is not a race riot. What you're dealing with is a rivalry between two ideological camps, which apparently most of the time it's most predominantly white people. I would say there's a supermajority of white people on both sides of this, and I've seen other similar incidents – nothing quite this extreme where people actually got killed, but I have seen other similar incidents where you see the same kind of ethnic breakdown. Mostly different groups of white people fighting each other.

Obviously there are ideological differences involved, but I also think psychology drives a lot of this. There are various psychological factors that different people possess that drive them towards different kinds of political factions, particularly when you're dealing with extremist groups of different types. You find a lot of people, for example, in the right that they are basically misfits, that are social losers, and that participating in these kinds of activities is something that gives them a sense of identity and power and belonging and relevance.

And you see similar things on the left as well, although I do think on the left you have a somewhat different motivation. My experience with the hard-left groups is that you find

different personality types in that. You find some people who are basically the dreamer types, the preacher's daughter who thinks there needs to be more love in the world and all of that, and you'll see someone like that at a hard-left rally sitting right next to sociopathic opportunistic types who are all just about power and any way that they can gain power. And you see similar tendencies on the far right. You see people that have a very cultic ideologically framework they hold to, along with sociopathic opportunists, along with transgressive individualists.

Now, when it comes to the alt-right, I've been observing the alt-right for years because I know a lot of the leaders of the alt-right personally. I've actually written for some of their journals. I've actually spoken at a couple of their events. I've also had a lot of dealings with the hard left over the years. And what it seems to come down to is there's this one category of people on the left that are now sometimes called the regressive left as a negative, and then you find a counterpart to that on the alt-right. I think it's really a sort of the regressive left on one hand, this kind of social justice warrior, Antifa configuration versus this kind of alt-right, white nationalist, neo-Nazi whatever configuration on the other end.

And I do think that a lot of these problems are rooted in the psychological factors that drive these people. It's almost like two rival cults waging war with each other. I've observed people that I know getting involved in some of this stuff over the years, and over the years, I've known people personally who would seem to get driven deeper and deeper into some of these groups, people who were once relatively reasonable people becoming fanatical social justice warriors or they're starting to sympathize with the Antifa, or people who were once relatively normal libertarians and conservatives getting deeper and deeper into the alt-right and then going full neo-Nazi and things of that nature. There's something that drives that on psychological level. People who adopt these kinds of extreme views are not people that are just objectively looking at arguments and saying, I think this side's right; I'll go with that. I mean, there's something else that drives these kinds of things, and that's what I'm saying when I say there's more psychological factors that drive this.

I will say this about the alt-right. I mentioned that a lot of the social justice warrior types are the regressive left. I would say that a lot of the alt-right might be called the transgressive right, and what I mean by that is a lot of the alt-right people that I know personally – and I know quite a few of them, including some of the more famous ones – seem to me to be people who thrive on being transgressive. They're just all about thumbing their nose at society's taboos. It's interesting because, as I said, I know a lot of the leaders of the alt-right, including ones who were organizing this march, some of whom were speakers and so forth. And I think that one reason I'm able to analyze this in a more detached way is because I don't see these guys necessarily as these fearsome neo-Nazi types.

Now, there may have been people like that at the rally. But when I think of all the people I know who are involved in the alt-right milieu, I don't think of *Triumph of the Will*; I think of *Revenge of the Nerds*. And that's really what it seems to me to be. It's all about just being as transgressive as possible, using racial epithets, making crude gas chamber jokes, just taking the whole – It's like having an anti-PC themed frat party or something like that. That's how the atmosphere of the alt-right has often been, or at least has often seemed to me. Now, I do think that there's a point where it starts to overlap with the more seriously violent neo-Nazi groups. There are groups like that that have a lengthy history of engaging in violence, and I do think that some of this stuff has fueled that as well.

I think the same thing has happened on the other side. I think the fanatical left has grown and become more emboldened and they have this idea that they're entitled to shut down free speech largely through mob action. But one thing that a lot of people who are more leftward leaning in their politics don't seem to grasp is that there is also a violent left along with the

violent right and that increasingly I have seen in recent years the violent left becoming more emboldened. Everyone knows who the neo-Nazis are. Everyone knows who the skinheads and the Klan are. And these are not popular movements at all. Fewer people know who the Antifa are, but the Antifa are essentially the left's counterpart to the Klan or the skinheads or the neo-Nazis. This is a very violent movement. They are oriented towards attacking and shutting down any kind of events that they consider to be right-wing.

Not only that, but they engage in random violence against individuals. I know of one case where they beat up a gay guy for having a Hitler mustache. They just saw a guy with a Hitler mustache and assumed he must be a Nazi and they beat him up. And they stabbed someone. Apparently someone had been posting messages on social media in Vermont after Charlottesville happened, and this is a guy from the left. He was actually criticizing certain aspects of the left. And they apparently ambushed this guy outside of his house and stabbed him. They didn't kill him, but they wounded him. And I've actually known people personally who have had this kind of thing happen to them. I've actually seen the Antifa in action. I mean, they will attack elderly people, disabled people, women. They're very indiscriminate in their violence. So they're at least as violent as anything I've ever seen among their counterparts on the right.

I have been predicting for months that someone was going to get killed at one of these events. As long as these violent left-right confrontations have been going on, I've always thought, Yeah, someone's going to get killed. And sure enough, it happened. In fact, it's interesting because when the Battle of Berkeley happened back in April, I asked a friend of mine; I said, "How long do you think it's gong to be before someone gets killed?" And he said, "Oh, probably about four months." And sure enough, four months later, it's August someone got killed. So if anything, I would advise people not to have anything to do with these groups and not to have anything to do with these events. If there's an alt-right rally, don't go, and don't go as a counter-protester. Whatever your politics, just stay away from this kind of stuff. I knew people who were going to go to Charlottesville on both sides, and I would tell people don't go to that. That's not going to end well, and it didn't.

WOODS: What I want to know is how does this kind of thing grow? And by this kind of thing, I mean more demonstrations like this by this — let's say this wing of the alt-right, because the alt-right now is becoming a term that is not all that helpful. Because originally, the term alt-right could have been used to describe all kinds of people, just anybody who dissents from the conservative movement but yet is still right of center is alt-right. But now alt-right, because both Richard Spencer and the media want the term to generate in people's minds only the ideas of Richard Spencer, it leads to a lot of confusion. Well, then, who are the other people who are neither at the Heritage Foundation nor Richard Spencer? Who are the people in this middle ground? And if we call them alt-right, then people think that they also want to have torch-lit processions and so on. So it's very confusing and unhelpful at this point. The term, I just don't know what to do with it.

But my question is, given that at this point we see that there are watchdogs who are going to look for people in these demonstrations, find out their identities, and get them fired — and this has been done numerous times now — Mike Cernovich, who is considered to be by the Spencer alt-right — they call him "alt-light" because he's not fully onboard with them. But Cernovich says the result of this kind of demonstration and these kind of associations that have now been attached to the alt-right is that anybody who has anything to lose will never take part in them. I mean, if you have a job anywhere, you would never want to take part in them. Therefore, that means that these kinds of events are only going to attract, frankly, losers who have nothing to lose. And then the thing becomes self-perpetuating and gets worse and worse. Where am I wrong about this, Keith? I don't see how this grows.

PRESTON: Well, it remains to be seen whether or not this particular movement is going to grow or not. Now, since Charlottesville happened, a lot of alt-right people – and I agree that the term is problematic, but increasingly, it's being used as a euphemism for the far right in the sense of neo-fascists, neo-Nazis, white nationalists, all of that. Obviously, they want to have more events. They're already talking about having more events. Increasingly I think there's going to be a move to prevent them from having events by various authorities, whether local governments or university campuses and all of that. Already a couple of alt-right events have been cancelled, I think one at the University of Florida and one at Texas A&M, on grounds that it's a public safety issue, that there's going to be a riot and we're trying to prevent that. That's the rationale. So I think increasingly, there's going to be that kind of response by the authorities to the alt-right.

What you're talking about as far as the way that the Antifa and other similar groups will identify who the participants in these events are and then "dox" them and then they'll inform their employer that, Hey, this person was at this meeting of official bad people, or whatever. Yeah, I think that that will have the effect of encouraging non-participation in political activities generally.

In fact, it's gotten to the point now where people are becoming the victim of mistaken identity. You have people who are being identified as having been at one of these events when they weren't. It's the wrong person. What will happen is the Antifa will take a picture of someone. They'll see if they can find the picture on the Internet, and they'll find someone who looks like that person or someone who lives in the same area who has a similar look or dress or something like that. They'll assume that is the individual without getting their facts straight. And I've seen them make all kinds of crazy mistakes when it comes to things like that. So I do think that most likely the most extreme elements within the far right will be emboldened by some of this, some of the more relatively moderate people may be more put off by it and may pull back from it.

I also think that the hard left is going to be inflamed by this. I think, particularly after someone was killed in Charlottesville, I think that the hard left is going to be out for blood after that as well. In fact, that's already happened. One of the organizers of the alt-right rally in Charlottesville was trying to hold a press conference and was actually attacked during the press conference by counter-protesters and had to be dragged off by the police for his own safety. And I've seen other confrontations of that type take place as well. So in many ways, I think this kind of violence will continue to escalate, because the most extreme people on both sides are going to be emboldened by it. More moderate people or more pacific people might pull back from this. They may say, Look, no demonstration is worth this kind of drama. But people who want there to be violence, people who thrive on violence, people who live for violence will probably perhaps even be more drawn to these kinds of incidents.

WOODS: Well, we've already talked for quite a while and I do want to let you go. I don't want to keep you longer than I promised I would. Or I don't think I made any promises. I made an implicit promise given the standard length of the show. I'll say that people really should read what you wrote. I mean, this episode is very helpful, but to have something is writing. I'm going to link to it at TomWoods.com/978, but they should also be visiting you at AttackTheSystem.com. First of all, it's just badass to type that into your computer anyway, right? AttackTheSystem.com? How could you not want to type that in. So definitely you want to check out Keith Preston. And also your books. Make me a pitch – we talked about your book last time. Make me a pitch for a book people should read so they'll understand the world better – a book by you. It's got to be a Keith Preston book.

PRESTON: Well, the most comprehensive book I've ever written is just called *Attack the System*; it's the same name as the website. And you'll get a very comprehensive overview of

some of my ideas and how I see the world and things of that nature, so that's probably the place to start. It's just called *Attack the System*. You can order it from the website.

WOODS: All right, so AttackTheSystem.com is the site. This is the second episode in a row that I've — Yesterday we talked about a variety of things with Paul Gottfried, but this one really homed in specifically on the events in Charlottesville. And as I say, I'm not quite sure I follow what comes next from these folks, because they're celebrating this as a victory, but I just can't see that it is. I think it did inflame left and I think it repulsed almost everybody in the country. And yeah, it's true they got their message out, but maybe it's better for them not to get their message out in light of the response to this kind of thing, particularly to that torch-lit thing. Of course you could try to claim this was peaceful, we didn't hurt anybody. But obviously, what kind of IQ do you think we have? How could this not have been intended to send a message of intimidation to people? Just very, very, very disturbing to see something referred to as "the right" behaving like this. Because I think of myself as being on the right, and now the result of all this is that the left has been wanting to say for the longest time that anybody who's mildly on the right is implicitly like these people or is bound to lead this this. We're already hearing this. Milo Yiannopoulos leads to this automatically. Therefore, this justifies and emboldens them in their attempts to stifle the free speech of others. So unfortunately, I don't see this doing anything other than spiraling down at this point. Again, am I wrong about any of that?

PRESTON: Well, it could go either way. I think some of it is going to be dependent upon how motivated people are going to be to participate in these events. As I said earlier, I do think more extreme people will be emboldened by this. More moderate people may be inclined to pull back. I also think, though, that the response of the authorities is going to get increasingly intense over time. I don't really see the government at any level — law enforcement and local officials, state officials, federal officials — allowing this to spiral this out of control where we have a Charlottesville every week. Quite possibly, the government will step in and start making examples of leaders of some of these groups, rightfully or wrongfully.

In fact, I've already heard that the Department of Justice is conducting an investigation concerning whether or not the car incident may have been some kind of conspiracy or whether or not James Fields may have had other people planning that attack with him. When the federal government comes after you with conspiracy accusations, that's definitely something to take seriously. I have seen that happen on the other side as well, among people on the left who got hit with those kinds of charges, sometimes under fairly dubious pretenses. So it seems to me that increasingly a lot of people who are organizing and participating in these events are really walking a fine line and potentially making some serious trouble for themselves. I don't think that's necessarily going to stop some of the more extreme people. It may deter others.

WOODS: Well, with that, we're going to wrap it up for today. You and I should talk more. I guess I'm going to see you in Baltimore in a few months. That'll be enjoyable. We'll have to get a drink and talk about things we don't talk about on the show. Who knows what that would be? But we'll just see what comes of it. Thanks again, Keith. I appreciate it.

PRESTON: Thanks, Tom.