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# Rolling Stone

**Rolling Stone** Meet Alex Jones



## Meet Alex Jones

The most paranoid man in America is trying to overthrow the 'global Stasi Borg state,' one conspiracy theory at a time



It's just past 9 a.m. when Alex Jones pulls his Dodge Charger into a desolate parking lot in Austin. From the outside, the squat, single-story office complex that Jones calls his "command center" resembles a moon base surrounded by fields of dying grass. But inside, blinking banks of high-tech recording gear fill the studio where he broadcasts *The Alex Jones Show*, a daily talk show that airs on 63 stations nationwide. Jones draws a bigger audience online than Rush Limbaugh and Glenn Beck combined — and his conspiracy-laced rants make the two hosts sound like tea-sipping NPR hosts on Zoloft.

### Glenn Beck's Shtick? Alex Jones Got There First

A stocky 37-year-old with a flop of brown hair and a beer gut, Jones usually bounds into the studio, eager to launch into one of his trademark tirades against the "global Stasi Borg state" — the corporate-surveillance prison planet that he believes is being secretly forged by an evil cabal of bankers, industrialists, politicians and generals. This morning, though, Jones looks deflated. Five days ago, a mentally disturbed 22-year-old named Jared Loughner opened fire on a crowd in Tucson, Arizona, killing six and seriously wounding Rep. Gabrielle Giffords. Loughner was reported to be a fan of *Loose Change*, a film Jones produced that has become the bible for those who believe 9/11 was an inside job.

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All week, Jones has been twisting in the media crossfire. Now, his staff plays him a clip of a new attack by Limbaugh. In it, the conservative icon bemoans the social rot caused by three films that prominently feature Jones, including *Loose Change*.

"So a conspiracy movie," Limbaugh bellows, "appears to be the most influential media of this young man's life."

**Another Runaway General: Army Deploys Psy-Ops on U.S. Senators**

percent inside their little thought bubble. He points out that *Loose Change* has been viewed by at least 50 million people. "During these societal upheavals, it's messy," he says. "A lot of bad things happen. And yeah, you're gonna have paranoid schizophrenics that get set off by the crazy things corporations and governments are doing, and by those who are exposing it to them. But we can't allow ourselves to become paralyzed. If a schizophrenic takes three hits of acid in the forest and sees demons in the trees, and snaps, do you cut down the trees?"

### The Truth About the Tea Party

Jones being Jones, he's not sure the Tucson rampage is as simple as a psychotic snap. Turning over the possibilities sends the tendrils of his anti-government imagination into wild motion. "The whole thing stinks to high heaven," he says. "This kid Loughner disappeared for days at a time before the shooting? My gut tells me this was a staged mind-control operation. The government employs geometric psychological-warfare experts that know exactly how to indirectly manipulate unstable people through the media. They implanted the idea in his head by repeatedly asking, 'Is Giffords in danger?'"

### National Affairs: Political and national news coverage from Tim Dickinson

eugenics operation. The latest WikiLeaks dump? All the hallmarks of an intelligence disinfo campaign." While urging his audience to wake up and smell the police state, Jones can sound thoughtful and intellectual, quick to quote Nietzsche, Plato, de Tocqueville, Gibbon and Huxley. Mostly, though, he defaults into machine-gun bursts of rage that crescendo with an adolescent snarl — Holden Caulfield playing Paul Revere.

"Government-lab-produced airborne Ebola?" Jones thunders. *"It's comin' your way! Enjoy it, yuppies!"*

It's just after 11 a.m., and Alex Jones is just getting started.

Jones has been yelling into microphones and bullhorns more or less continuously, and often at violent volumes, for the past 16 years. Since launching his broadcast career, he has become a multiplatform prophet of paranoia who sees diabolical plots in every turn of the news cycle. In his Manichaeian melodrama, nodes of private and state power share an ugly face and a demonic brain intent on a single, shared goal: creating the New World Order. To Jones, the New World Order is a

rainbow-rantasy landscape populated by three groups: a rebel alliance of liberty-loving patriots (his fans); masses of consumerist sheep (those who ignore him); and a sadistic elite (global bankers and their agents), forever tightening the screws on the imperiled remnants of human freedom.

The New World Order's methods are many: manufactured economic crises, sophisticated surveillance tech and — above all — inside-job terror attacks that fuel exploitable hysteria. The endgame, Jones believes, is a mass eugenics operation that will depopulate the planet by poisoning our food and water with fluoride, radioactive isotopes and various futuristic toxic soups being engineered in New World Order laboratories. Those who resist are being tracked by secret, federalized police bunkers known as "fusion centers" that will eventually round up every dissenter and throw them into camps run by the Federal Emergency Management Authority.

By disseminating such theories over the airwaves and online, where followers can get the word out faster than any film distributor, Jones can draw a million viewers within days for a documentary like his *The Obama Deception*. "In the past, such theories were circulated in booklets, books, public speeches and sermons," says Chip Berlet, who studies conspiracy culture for Political Research Associates, a Boston-based think tank. "Jones reaches more people over the Internet than any conspiracy crank in U.S. history."

Jones has 80 million hits on his YouTube channel, and his fringe views have slowly begun to infiltrate more mainstream outlets. Many of his fans, in fact, believe that Glenn Beck routinely rips off Jones, stealing

corporate-media assembly line. He takes information from me about secret combines and elites and then spins it against big government, but he ignores big business. He says George Soros is at the top of the New World Order power pyramid? Give me a break. I have no love for Soros. But I don't trust Beck. Ninety-eight percent of my audience hates him. New listeners tell me I'm a Beck wanna-be. I'm like, 'No, it's the other way around.'"

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In November, Jones put on a demonstration of his power by employing his latest guerrilla technique. Asking his audience to stage a mass online search of the phrase "Revolt Against TSA" — a tactic known as Google Bombing — Jones instantly manipulated the term to the top of Google's search index. As intended, the maneuver caught the sensitive traffic antennae of Matt Drudge, who put the TSA story on the national news agenda. "Our show was the detonator on the cap of the TSA story, and Drudge was the barrel of the gun," says Jones. "The result was a direct head shot on the New World Order."

Such attacks get Jones lumped in with the far right, for good reason. It was Jones, a longtime supporter of presidential candidate Ron Paul

neatly into any political category. Ignore the left and right wings, Jones likes to say. "Study the brain of the bird."

To Jones, what matters most is the "continuity of agenda at the top. When I called Clinton a Wall Street puppet, they called me a right-wing extremist. When I said the same about George W. Bush, they called me an anti-war communist. Now that I'm against Obama for the same reasons, mainline conservatives embrace me. When I attack the next right-wing 'savior,' they're gonna call me a communist again."

On the spiritual cancer of modern capitalism, Jones sounds more like Ralph Nader than a Fox Business channel libertarian. "Madison Avenue makes us addicts of consumerism, using glass wampum to steal our capacity to direct our own lives," Jones says. "The globalists are smart and tell us sin is fun, sin is a red-devil cheerleader. No — sin is cheating other people, it's sending troops to die in illegal wars, it's keeping people dumb so you can control, exploit and kill them."

Jones and his staff are currently scripting his 19th film, which will examine the New World Order strings attached to Rick Perry, Sarah



instead of bringing them together.

For such an angry guy, the barrel-chested Jones is a surprisingly jolly presence. Off-air, his gravel-pit voice softens to crack jokes with his young staff, dote on his wife and three kids, and take chatty calls from his 86-year-old grandmother. Jones is always talking about how boring and conventional his life is. He attends a Methodist church on Sunday, blushes at profanity and likes to take his family hiking on the 193 miles of trails that crisscross Austin. Any rage left over from his show appears reserved for the black Dodge Charger he guns down Austin's highways, 450-horsepower engine roaring, speakers pumping old-school rap, heavy metal and classic country.

"People think I'm depressive and angry, but it's the opposite," Jones tells me over margaritas at his favorite Mexican joint. "My life is a love letter to humanity. What the globalists do is a hate letter, a curse."

The restaurant, like many of Jones' favorite spots, is located in South Congress, an artsy neighborhood featured prominently in *Slacker*, director Richard Linklater's 1991 ode to Austin's eccentrics. Here, in

your name: he asks the guys.

"My one weakness is enjoying my long enemies list," he says, after posing for a picture with a young fan who looks like she just stepped out of a Suicide Girls pinup calendar. "I don't get off on being famous."

Critics of Jones often focus on the question of whether his narrative of evil is responsible for inciting violence. Last July, an ex-convict named Byron Williams was arrested following a gun battle with California police. Williams, an Alex Jones fan, was allegedly on his way to shoot up the Tides Foundation, a liberal nonprofit that had been targeted by Glenn Beck in repeated rants. To hear Jones tell it, such violence is really the fault of the New World Order — and victims like Gabrielle Giffords are essentially collateral damage.


"Some unstable people are drawn to the bright flame of enlightenment that is so-called 'conspiracy culture,'" Jones says. "Some trees are going to become uprooted in a storm like this. But we can't stop telling the truth for fear of what telling the truth is going to do. If we do, then human life as we know it is over and we're just Prozac-head automatons."

and have protested the Council on Foreign Relations with a banner because it's the most effective thing to do," he says. "But if someone attacks the globalists at the CFR, it will be a manifestation of all the evil they've been part of — the corporate neocolonialism, the bombings of villages." Evil, as he sees it, begets evil. "I don't want anybody to attack the CFR," he insists. "But it's up there in the hierarchy. We'll all be judged."

Jones was born in Dallas in 1974, the descendant of two lines of Texas frontiersmen. He describes a childhood that will disappoint those searching for the Freudian roots of his crusade. His parents, a dentist and a homemaker, raised him with love in the manicured suburb of Rockwall. "I was the all-American kid with a great family," he says. "I read Time-Life books, played football, was friends with everybody."

Home life was intellectual, but not overtly political. "My parents were careful not to give me political views almost as an experiment to see what I'd turn into," he says. "The closest thing to a childhood political training was some neighbors who were members of the John Birch Society. They'd come over for dinner and I'd be exposed to those ideas, starting at around age two."

It was in high school that Jones discovered a corrupt, *Blue Velvet* underbelly to his town. At weekend parties, he watched as off-duty cops dealt pot, Ecstasy and cocaine to his friends. "A truck would appear, sometimes with a guy still in uniform inside," Jones recalls. "Then, on Monday, they'd have D.A.R.E. and drug-test us for football." Jones, a young varsity lineman, did not appreciate the irony. "I was like, 'You want to drug-test me, when I know you're selling the stuff?' I



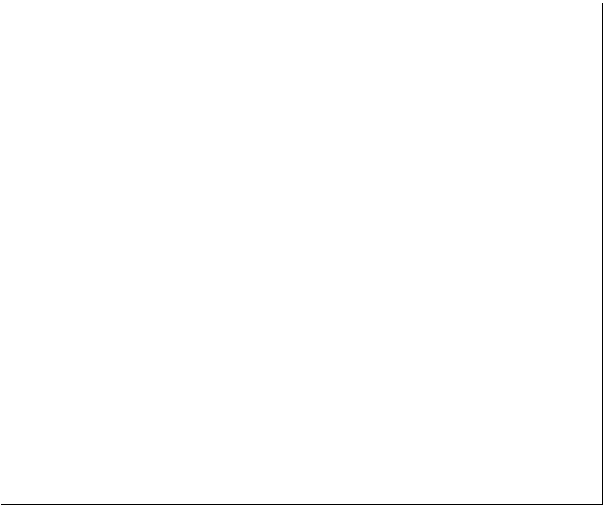
Things came to a head during Jones' sophomore year, when he was pulled over while driving without a license, a six-pack of beer under the passenger seat. Jones told the cop he was corrupt and had no right to enforce laws. "They brought me to jail," Jones says. "Afterward, one of the cops told me to wise up, or they'd frame me and send me away." The following week, his father was so spooked that he sold his dental practice and moved the family to Austin. A few months later, Rockwall County's sheriff was indicted on organized-crime charges.

For Jones, the encounter with state hypocrisy was transformative. "The Rockwall cops were lowbrow thugs, and Alex was a hell-raiser," says Buckley Hamman, a cousin who grew up with Jones. "The conflict with the cops started Alex down the road of his current pursuit."

In Austin, Jones quit football and smoking pot ("It made me paranoid"), and began consuming history: Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*; Shirer's *Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*. "I started understanding that governments have been staging terror and dealing drugs throughout history," he says. "The whole program was there."

The most enduring influence, though, was a 1971 bestseller he found

its wealth to the Ford and Rockefeller foundations. As a teenager, Jones read the book twice. "It's still the easiest-to-read primer to the New World Order," he says.



After graduating high school in 1993, Jones took classes part-time at Austin Community College, and he found himself drawn to the studios of Austin's community-access cable station. Soon he was subbing for sick hosts, mixing conspiracy theorizing with muckraking reporting. When the federal building in Oklahoma City was bombed in 1995, Jones began accusing the government of being involved in the attack. "I understood there's a kleptocracy working with psychopathic governments — clutches of evil that know the tricks of control," he says. His mailbox began to overflow with manila envelopes from fans who offered up more pieces of the New World Order puzzle: RAND reports, declassified intelligence, yellowed press clippings. Within months, Jones landed his own show on KJFK, a local station, and became a folk hero in Austin, a town that prides itself on its characters.

By 1999, when new owners of the station fired Jones for what they

across the country. My NPR colleagues made jokes about it, he says, "but I was reaching more people at home than the terrestrial station."

A new age of media was dawning, and Jones was one of its earliest pioneers. "Alex Jones is a model for people to create their own media," says Michael Harrison, editor of the industry trade magazine *Talkers*. "When the history is written of talk broadcasting's transition from the corporate model of the 20th century to the digital, independent model of the 21st century, he will be considered an early trailblazer."

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Jones also moved into filmmaking with *America: Destroyed by Design*, which posits a "World Bank takeover" of public lands. The film caught the attention of Richard Linklater, an Austin director who would go on to cast Jones as a crazed street prophet in his animated cult hits *Waking Life* and *A Scanner Darkly*. Jones won a spot as a host for a libertarian-minded syndication outfit, which was set up to steer business to a gold company called Midas Resources. Jones quickly began racking up affiliates. He was nearing 100 stations on July 25th, 2001, when he looked into the camera and issued a warning that has since become legendary among 9/11 Truthers. "Please!" he implored

system, he said.

Seven weeks later, Jones became the only radio host in America to begin his September 11th broadcast with a tirade against the U.S. government. "I went on the air and said, 'Those were controlled demolitions. You just watched the government blow up the World Trade Center.' I lost 70 percent of my affiliates that day. Station managers asked me, 'Do you want to be on this crusade going nowhere, or do you want to be a star?' I'm proud I never compromised."

After 9/11, his mainstream commercial appeal plunged to zero, but his cult profile continued to rise. A month after the attacks, Linklater's dreamy and innovative film *Waking Life* featured an animated version of Jones driving through downtown Austin and proselytizing through a rooftop megaphone. "We are being conditioned on a mass scale!" Jones yells to empty streets. "Start challenging this corporate slave-state ... and *stand up for the human spirit!*" As the rant builds, Jones' face progresses from pale, to violet, to blue, and finally to crimson-red, the color of spilled blood, a picture of madness.

The Bush years were a ripe time for Jones and his message of government deceit. The lies leading to the invasion of Iraq and the complicity of the media were plain for all to see. By the time Jones produced his 9/11 film *Loose Change*, he was no longer a lonely voice in the media wilderness, but the founding father of a growing national movement. Charlie Sheen suggested he organize a 9/11 Truth conference in Los Angeles, and Jones appeared in Linklater's adaptation of Philip K. Dick's dystopian novel *A Scanner Darkly*. "Alex's

police van for ranting publicly about government drug dealing.

His future arrest, or worse, is not a scenario Jones finds fictional. "I know I'm risking my life, but if they kill me, it'll confirm everything," says Jones, who has been arrested four times and suffered a torn rotator cuff for his activism. "This information that I've helped reverse-engineer is here to stay. I enjoy life. But I'd rather they blow my head off at a rally when I'm 40 than die during surgery at 85. There's freedom and power in total commitment."

Unlike many of his conspiracy-minded predecessors — Henry Ford, the Ku Klux Klan, the militia movement — Jones has no tolerance for racism or anti-Semitism. "There is no globalist command center, and I never make it about certain groups," says Jones, whose wife is of Jewish descent and whose adopted sister Marley is Asian-American. "All humans do the same stuff. Class solidarity should transcend race and religion in the fight against the globalists. Everything they touch turns to mutated death."

Jones claims he can document every aspect of the New World Order



claims they say. Jones points to an old Henry Kissinger memo as proof of a New World Order plan to forcibly depopulate the Third World, but a close reading of the document reveals little more than government officials beginning to grapple with the strategic implications of runaway population growth. Nor does Operation Northwoods, a declassified 1962 government proposal for staging terror in the United States and blaming agents of Fidel Castro, serve as proof, as Jones frequently implies, that every act of terror originates with the U.S. government. The fact that Wall Street and big business exert an alarming control over the political system does not mean that every financial crash is part of a long-term scheme to bankrupt the world and leave everyone prostrate before the planned release of a cancer-causing monkey virus.

This is not to say that Jones is a conscious fabulist. By all impressions, he is shockingly sincere in everything he says. But for a man of otherwise high analytical ability, his logic and reading-comprehension skills are often victims of his Ahab-like obsession with the New World Order. Extreme extrapolation and prosecution by circumstantial

some people say I exaggerate, but I believe everything I say. It's just that the denial is so strong, the apathy so deep, that people need something to shake them out of their morass. We're like flowers who naturally turn toward the sun, and the globalists want us turned toward Hollywood and the TV so they can poison us. It's like one of those drawings with a hidden pattern. Once you stare long enough, it appears. Then you wonder: How did I ever not see it?"

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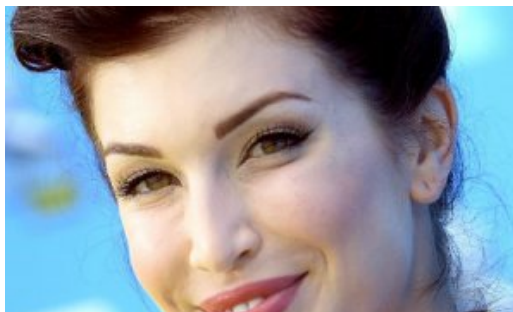
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