

Usual Suspects in the Deep State: Spectacle Management and the Charlie Kirk / TPUSA Affair

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Abstract

This paper tracks the emergence of Charlie Kirk, his rise to prominence with TPUSA and fall from grace with state actors. How this emergence dovetailed with the MAGA movement and symbiosis with the youth demographic enthralled by Kirk is examined here against the cleft opening between conservative political culture and Zionist influences in U.S. politics. How the cover-up of Kirk's assassination implicates the usual deep state suspects, and how social media influencers have monkey wrenched narrative management of that coverup and deepened the rift in the MAGA movement is also covered here.

Introduction

Of what happened to Charlie Kirk at the Fountain Courtyard on the Utah Valley University campus on September 10, 2025, at 12:23 p.m., much remains contested, officiously acclaimed and/or evasively dismissed. Amidst all the hot takes and sober speculation, two key events are undisputed. Charlie Kirk was seated under a tent when at least one gunshot rang out over the gathering of about 3,000 attendees. He then lurched leftwards and back. Immediately prior to that moment, Kirk had been engaged by an audience member, Hunter Kozak, a 29-year-old liberal TikToker in position within a few feet of the stage.¹ Kozak's first question: "Do you know how many transgender Americans have been mass shooters over the last 10 years?" Kirk responded: "Too many." Kozak then followed up: "Do you know how many mass shooters there have been in America over the last 10 years?" Kirk responded (his final words in life so far as we

know it): “Counting or not counting gang violence?” Within 33 hours (according to FBI Director Kash Patel), suspect Tyler Robinson had been detained, soon thereafter alleged to have had a text exchange prior to the assassination with his transgender partner, affirming his intention to kill Charlie Kirk.

Moments prior to the exchange between Kirk and Kozak—heard by thousands of attendees (and many more through online streaming)—there could be seen (if not actually noticed by audience members standing nearby) a series of hand gestures by members of Kirk’s security team positioned to his right, as well as commotion to his left involving personnel managing microphone sync and amplification. Much would be made of this activity and related incidents—including body contortions by Kirk immediately prior to the gunshot—captured on video (or otherwise available through sound recordings from cell phone capture and upload) of that day by online sleuth/podcasters in the coming months.

Within days of the incident, online chatter exploded in response to a series of official statements alleging a sequence of events associated with the suspect in custody tied to the shooting that was so demonstrably implausible, nonsensical or contradictory as to indicate a cover-up was now actively unfolding. In the ensuing days, weeks and months, and as of preparation of this paper, the preponderance of compelling evidence reviewed online by credible sources, backed by chain of evidence custody, furnishes a decisive account of what did not happen and a few plausible accounts of what likely happened at 12:23 p.m. on September 10, 2025, in Orem Utah, making clear that Kirk was not killed as alleged by the FBI. Meanwhile and continuously, Kirk’s close friend and confidante, podcaster Candace Owens, has sustained a nearly daily vigil for him, dredging materials linking TPUSA insiders and affiliated networks with suspicious activity and/or active enmity towards Kirk in the months leading to his death and

period following, attracting a massive following of online support and, also, sustained, entrenched attacks and criticism.

This paper is organized in two parts, first covering Kirk's background and the web of influences on him (the next four sections), then the continuous present since the Summer of 2025, including the response to and meaning of his assassination (last four sections). We canvass key features of Kirk's rise to prominence and fall from grace within power networks linking Christian Nationalism to Zionism, republican far right donors and lower profile apparatchiks. We track Kirk's origins, influences, and key "turning points" that define his legacy and fate apart from the script that detractors typically associate him with. The role decentralized media has played in the spectacle deconstruction of the official narrative about Kirk, and what this means for understanding events such as this with deep politics structural attributes is also examined here (Wolin, 2008; Scott, 2017; deHaven-Smith, 2006, 2013; Good, 2022).

Out of Right Field

Charlie Kirk was born in 1993 to parents Robert and Kathryn Kirk in the Chicago suburb Arlington Heights, later raised in nearby Prospect Park. The one known link Kirk had to Trump prior to the formation of TPUSA was through his father, an architect, involved in the design of Trump Tower. His mother worked formerly as a trader at the Chicago Mercantile Exchange and later became a mental health counselor. Every indication has it that Kirk's parents are moderate lifetime republicans with limited involvement in conservative politics. Their daughter's own political predilections give some indication of the parents' moderation. She (Mary Kirk) became an art curator in Chicago and is herself of liberal political persuasion ([Esposito, 2025](#)). Charlie achieved an Eagle Scout designation from the Boy Scouts. His precocious political interests were sparked at a tender age (middle school) through affiliation with the writings of conservative

economics luminary, Milton Friedman. His political views crystallized in high school through what he later described as an “indoctrination factory” of openly socialist and Marxist views promulgated by faculty (Keilman, 2018).

Kirk was effectively going places before TPUSA launched. He made his first media appearance May 21st, 2012, on Fox and Friends to discuss his high school cafeteria cookie boycott protesting price increases to promote his conservative activism. That plug was preceded by an op-ed piece he published in Breitbart alleging liberal bias in high school textbooks ([Kirk, 2012](#)). More appearances on Fox and Friends followed over the next few years, surging after 2016 and his induction into the inner circle of the Trump campaign.

Following rejection from West Point in 2012, Kirk launched (with Tea Party-backed legislative candidate, Bill Montgomery), one month after graduating from high school, what would become Turning Point USA. Preceded by the Facebook Page Kirk started just before graduating, “SOS Liberty”, TPUSA began as a garage scaled operation at Montgomery’s home in Lemont, Illinois, operating there until relocating to Phoenix, AZ, early 2019. Meeting republican billionaire and evangelical Christian asset manager, Foster Friess, at the 2012 Republican National Convention (August 27-30) gave Kirk his first glimpse into the big leagues. Friess (major backer of 2012 GOP presidential candidate Rick Santorum) would remain one of TPUSA’s most consistent and durable supporters. This contact assured Kirk his first major public address, given at the 2013 Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) in Maryland. TPUSA’s capacity building and outreach continued to focus on delivering a message of personal freedom, free market principles, and limited government to high school and college groups.

The organization’s next major gateway came after the 2016 Republican National Convention and access to deep pocket donors ([Bim, 2025](#); [Spencer, 2022](#)). Within weeks of

Trump's 2016 campaign announcement, Kirk had joined the campaign, quickly becoming close with Trump's son, Donald Jr. and anointed as a surrogate. In October 2016, Kirk co-authored (with Brent Hamachek) *Time for a Turning Point: Setting a Course for Free Markets and Limited Government for Future Generations*. Weeks later, Kirk launched *Professor's Watchlist*, an online reporting portal with the mission "To expose and document college professors who discriminate against conservative students and advance leftist propaganda in the classroom" (<https://www.professorwatchlist.org/>) (followed in 2021 and COVID lockdowns with the launch of *School Board Watchlist*, eliciting blowback as a witch-hunting campaign).

In November 2016, Kirk was named to Forbes' "30 under 30" list under the Law & Policy category for his work with promoting "the principles of free markets and limited government among the young". Now a regular on Fox News, Kirk's media prominence surged the following year with the launch of his campus tours program. His popular persona evolved from his willingness to take the conservative cause to the heart of liberal ideals, major college campuses across the U.S. These engagements were styled as part sermon, part generational encounter sessions keyed to brimming disenchantment with governing and cultural institutions and dispossession of college youth from future prospects otherwise available to earlier generations.

Racism and race-baiting allegations associated with TPUSA came to a head in 2017 during Kirk's brief but high-profile affiliation with Milo Yiannopoulos, a protégé of Steve Bannon at Breitbart News before becoming right wing provocateur and pop culture icon. Scandal arising from comments appearing to downplay pedophilia/age of consent issues led Kirk to distance TPUSA from further direct affiliation with Yiannopoulos. Evidence of persistent racist

influence among TPUSA personnel culture would dog the organization continuously through 2018 and beyond ([Mayer, 2017](#); [Feinberg, 2018](#)).

In 2019, Kirk met megachurch pastor Rob McCoy and started his podcast, *The Charlie Kirk Show*. TPUSA was now active at over 300 campuses nationwide. The same year TPUSA would nearly triple its revenues, from \$10.8M in 2018 to over \$28M in 2019 ([ProPublica, n.d.](#)).² McCoy would straddle the national stage briefly following Kirk's death. His relationship to Kirk—including the adjacent role played by his son Mikey McCoy at TPUSA—is a key piece in how, why and with what influences TPUSA pivoted onto a theological footing.

When being (merely) condescending, the liberal “gaze” on Kirk viewed him as an avatar for youth disenfranchisement and resentment post-2008 crash, and conservative umbrage with the rise of telegenic dynamism and refurbished democrat branding by Barack Obama. From an excerpt in *Politico* for her book, *Raising Them Right: The Untold Story of America's Ultraconservative Youth Movement and Its Plot for Power*, Kyle Spencer ([2022, para 3](#)) writes:

Like so many high school outsiders, he wouldn't find his tribe until after graduation, when his youth and enthusiasm for conservative causes would ingratiate him with the gray-haired Republican donor set. His metamorphosis can be seen as a case study of the power of grievance politics and a reminder that resentment is an energizing fuel most potent when delivered by leaders who have felt it deeply themselves. It is also another sign of how much Obama's optimism — so inspiring to so many — was also a deep threat to those who saw in it a future that would leave them behind.

Kirk had preternatural political instincts for message timing, positioning, and self-promotion, an auto-didact self-confidence (weaned on as much “great books” coursework as he

could power down) and savvy knack for blending stylized apologetics with punchy one-liners. This and more made him a lightening-rod for political mobilization of the under-30, liberal-disaffected, Christian-adjacent, largely (but not exclusively) white male demographic. By 2017 he was a phenome, the likes of which the Republican donor class could not recall in collective memory. He landed on liberal college campuses—otherwise considered kryptonite to GOP tacticians—like a back-to-the-future 20-something Phil Donahue from a parallel/right wing universe, brandishing cutting comebacks to young adult deer parroting liberal talking points caught in his headlights.

Kirk's first book (Kirk and Hamachek, 2016), *Time for a Turning Point*, opens (in Ch. 2) with excerpts from the fictive "Julia" profile produced by the Obama 2012 campaign to illustrate the degradations of Bush-era policies and how federal programs were vital, across the life stages, for shoring up life chances to any demographic likely to fall within the ambit of democratic party influence. In the narrative given by Obama 2012, Julia could count on the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act to guarantee her workplace pay equity. She could count on Obamacare to assure an insurance pool large enough to support millions of people previously left out of employer sponsored healthcare. With assistance from Small Business Administration under proper (liberal) influence, Julia could launch out on her own, even if she'd become pregnant without a second income to support her family. This profile, for Kirk, was emblematic of deeply acculturated defeatism and dependency.

In each of the slides about Julia's life there is some sort of unwritten but automatically and involuntarily inferred message about what fate would have awaited her without the presence of big government assistance. In this case, we conclude that Julia would not be able to stand up for herself, prove herself, or assert herself in the workplace without a

government booster seat. Just being determined and capable wouldn't be enough because she is a woman. What was once condescension has now become sound policy. (Kirk and Hamachek, 2016, p. 17)

As counterpart, Kirk constructs a fictive "Julio" to illustrate the benefits of recovering, as the conservative gaze has it, an American ethos not mired in entitlement, dependency and victimization. The lifespan portrait Kirk gives Julio (across the balance of the chapter) blossoms like a latinized Horatio Alger grafted onto George Bailey, as if lifted from a Frank Capra screenplay for Gen Z. Whereas Julia comes of age under the conditions of the unholy legacy alliance between big government and big business (Pottersville), Julio comes of age in Bedford Falls, properly understood and actualized, where free enterprise is part and parcel of communities bound together not just by mutual dreams of individual success, but a communal sense of shared destiny very like what Tocqueville famously gave account in his two volume, *Democracy in America*, and Clarence led George Bailey through a dark night of his soul to fully understand.

Mom told Julio that for years there had been anger and fear in the United States over people like his parents coming to live there. She said it was because some Americans felt that people were coming here to take advantage of government-supported welfare programs and that working Americans shouldn't have to pay for noncitizens to live here. Once the system was changed, Mom said that the problem corrected itself almost overnight. Only people who want to work come here and Americans welcome them because they know that they have to come to the United States for the same reason their ancestors came: to live better lives as a byproduct of their efforts. [...] As a result of the new immigration system [requiring a two-year probationary period contingent on no

criminal record or application for any taxpayer-funded benefits—i.e., solely reliant on the wage system] an entire industry sprouted up overnight to serve people living in that two-year window. There are medical clinics, language centers, employment search centers, and job skill training facilities. All of these arose completely unplanned and without any sort of intentional coordination between them. Even so, when Julio heard his dad talk about them, it was almost as if each of them had deliberately worked together to help him. (Kirk and Hamachek, 2016, p. 21)

Taken one page at a time, there is little to no indication Kirk intends at this stage pivoting towards faith-inflected snake-pits of ideological warfare pegged to Christian Nationalism or adjacent devotions (e.g., Zionism). Racist gravitation towards TPUSA has its counterpart in the communist gravitation towards civil rights movement of the 1950-60s – both artefacts of major social movements, not scripted for central casting. Kirk’s 2016 book ends with a conservative restatement on the etymological origins of “left” and “right” and the shared trajectory each wing shares (from “individualism” towards “collectivism” broadly defined). The consensus liberal account of TPUSA’s pivot to hard right Christian Nationalism (beginning mid-2019) has it that this was essentially tactical laundering of *White* Nationalist predilections, precisely the Right’s slander, in reverse, of mid-Century civil rights vis-à-vis its communist fellow travelers.

The liberal lens on TPUSA consistently fails to calibrate into its focal length geopolitical components deeply embedded into this movement’s backdrop. For that matter, the media imaginary for all things TPUSA is built in equal part on exaggeration/distortion and omission/vacancy: an exaggerated foreground of Christian triumphalism (nominally right-wing) against a never fully delineated backdrop of Zionism/Israel Lobby/Greater Israel Project/etc. and the hall of mirrors (and gallery of horrors) Western influence has made of Middle East

geopolitics. This stilted focus makes fuzzy the ordinal points that determined, maybe even predetermined, the course of TPUSA and Kirk's rise to prominence and fate. Speculation about what racist animus lurked in the heart of Kirk and his following is, for that matter, of limited usefulness for understanding how powers well above his pay grade retooled Kirk's persona from down-home Wunderkind of neoliberal economic doctrine to messianic figure of Christian Reconstructionism. Understanding those forces requires more than the usual (shallow) handling of Kirk's background, passage and journey to world stage. The following three sections of this paper quarry, but some, pertinent material necessary for calibrating the extent to which state actors determined the direction of TPUSA and Kirk's fate.

TPUSA's Turn Towards Faith

The move of TPUSA from grassroots, heartland conservative libertarianism towards messianic Christian Nationalism had roots going back decades in circles of Christian Reconstructionism, an offshoot of U.S. evangelism emphasizing direct Christian engagement in politics and governance, with distinctive allegiance to Zionist devotion, substantially leavened by creedal passions for dispensationalism. Christian Reconstruction effectively calls for a return to the civic religious creed of the Puritans in contradistinction with the religious pluralism typical of the American constitutional tradition. Matthew Boedy (2025) pegs the proximate origins of Kirk's shift to the acquaintance he made with California-based, megachurch pastor, Rob McCoy, in 2019.

In his premiere podcast episode (May 8, 2019), Kirk assured audiences, "I'm very careful not to have my religious views and my faith inform my political decision" (Boedy, 2025, p. 17). Yet, according to Boedy ([2022](#)), as early as April 2019, one month after he first heard McCoy speak at the 2019 CPAC event at Liberty University, Kirk parroted the elder pastor while on

stage together at the Unite Inland Empire Conservative Conference in Ontario, California. As Boedy ([2022, para 34](#)) puts it, “No longer merely attacking the Left, Kirk used biblical stories as cultural template to oppose its version of America. Such scriptural tales, he said, were the way ‘moral people’ long ago had instilled values in their children and built their culture.” By 2021, Kirk was regularly deploying theological references to exhort Christians to see themselves as “counselor(s) to the king”, telling audiences in one instance that if churches across the nation faithfully adopted that understanding of themselves, then all other problems “will start fixing themselves” (Boedy, 2025, pp. 54-55; [Kirk, 2021](#), 3.10). According to source scan by Grok, before 2021 Kirk was making 5-10 Twitter/X posts per year indicating subtle links between God/faith and rights/liberty. After 2021, Kirk was making 20-50 posts per year explicitly tying Christianity to freedom, many of which were keyed to the officious dismissal under Covid lockdown of church services as “nonessential”.

Along with others forming a hub of players around Liberty University, Rob McCoy would continue to play a major role influencing if not actively shaping Kirk’s adopted persona and generational magnetism. In 2021, he helped Kirk form and then co-chair TPUSA Faith. One online biography ([Premier Speakers Bureau](#)) indicates McCoy has been an ordained minister (following seminary training with The Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary in Fresno, California) for over 30 years and the senior pastor of Godspoke Calvary Chapel (Thousand Oaks, California) from 2000 to 2025. The Church received a major facelift in 2017 following a donation by Dan Wilks (Texas-based hydraulic fracturing tycoon with brother Farris) through his Heavenly Fathers Foundation to purchase a YMCA for \$2.85 million. According to multiple sources, McCoy met Wilks during a trip to Israel sometime between 2010-2011, likely introduced by McCoy handler, Christian Nationalist and political operative, David Lane ([Megli-](#)

[Thuna, 2017; Megli, 2022](#)). Another source ([Founders Ministries, n.d.](#)) notes that McCoy hails from a conservative military family; father was a naval officer, serving as assistant Chief of Staff of psychological warfare in Vietnam ([Coronado Eagle & Journal, 2016](#)), and mother an activist for republican causes. He has some corporate management experience (Unilever and Cheesbrough Ponds, Inc.) and served as Ventura County Sheriff's Chaplain.

McCoy entered politics in 2014 (also with Wilks backing) with an unsuccessful California Assembly race, succeeding the following year winning a seat on the Thousand Oaks, CA, city council (appointed Mayor in 2018), resigning in 2020 over the Council's Covid policies, gaining notoriety for violating the California order to close churches as "nonessential services" under Covid lockdown mandates. McCoy currently serves as pastor and political commentator for PragerU (the Prager University Foundation), a nonprofit advocacy media organization and content creator whose "mission is to promote American values through the creative use of digital media, technology and edu-tainment" ([Prager U., n.d.](#)). Founded by radio host Dennis Prager in 2009, PragerU's Leadership Council names a who's-who of ardent pro-Israel acolytes and commentators, including CEO Melissa Streit, a former Israeli army intelligence member.

McCoy's career handler is David Lane, founder, in 2005, of the American Renewal Project (eventually operating under the American Family Association), intended to mobilize evangelical pastors and faith leaders into political office (local, state and/or federal) or otherwise influence public policy. According to Boedy (2025), Kirk soon became a Lane acolyte after being introduced by McCoy at CPAC 2019. In January 2020 Kirk spoke at the ARP sponsored "Rediscovering God in America" event with Lane in California (Chino Hills, among other locations). This was a "Pastors and Pews" gathering organized by Lane's California Renewal

Project. For more than three decades, Lane has been recognized as a political fixer and inside broker for the Christian Nationalist movement. He's affiliated (according to the [Southern Poverty Law Center, n.d.](#)) with mobilizing a front group of African Americans in 1991 to support the nomination of Clarence Thomas to the Supreme Court, and with helping Jerry Falwell launch the National Committee for the Restoration of the Judeo-Christian Ethic in 1997. He's been further linked to the successful 2010 unseating of three Iowa state supreme court justices who upheld gay marriage in that state. He organized "pastor policy briefings" featuring Texas politician Rick Perry during his 2006 campaign for governor and served as finance chairman for Texas governor Rick Perry's "The Response" prayer rally in 2011 (paid for by AFA) ([Wyler, 2011](#)).

Lane began organizing "Pastors in Pews" in 2005, bringing Christian political figures including Mike Huckabee, Bobby Jindal, Ted Cruz and Rand Paul to evangelical church gatherings across the country (estimated, according to the *Christian Examiner* in 2015, to have engaged 15,000 pastors across 18 states). That initiative shifted after McCoy's (nearly) successful assembly race in 2014, morphing into "Pastors' Policy Briefings". Interviewed by the *Christian Examiner* in January 2015, Lane asserted, "The thought that came to me [...] if the Lord called 1,000 pastors to run for an elective office, and each of them had an average of 300 volunteers, that would be 300,000 grass root, precinct-level, evangelical conservatives coming from the ground up, engaged in the political process. It would change America!" ([Willoughby, 2015, para 12](#)). Lane continued, "Nobody's confused that politicians are going to save America." Moreover, "These engaged evangelicals would be voting for their biblically-based conservative values."

Supporters on the right and detractors on the left recognize Lane for his martial rhetoric, at least partially a reaction to what Lane views as the stultifying effects of the megachurch trend

of the 1980s emphasizing personal salvation at the expense of political action and mobilization ([Eckholm, 2011](#)). Writing in the *World Net Daily* in 2012, Lane called for battle to reestablish Christian prayer in public schools. “Can you picture what America would look like following a decade-long war – a knock-down drag-out – to return God, prayer and the Bible to the public schools? To regain our Christian heritage and re-establish a Christian culture?” ([Lane, 2012, para 10](#)). The next year, again writing in *World Net Daily* under title “Wage War to Restore a Christian Nation”, Lane wrote, “If the American experiment with freedom is to end after 237 years, let each of us commit to brawl all the way to the end.” Underscoring his battle cry for a Judeo-Christian republic, Lane cribbed Winston Churchill’s “Finest Hour” speech from June 18, 1940, as the Blitzkrieg rained down across Britain, “upon this battle depends the survival of Christian civilization” ([Lane, 2013, para 11](#)). Lane opened that article with a quotation he attributes to the book, *Babel and the Beast*, by Peter Leithart, leading end-times theologian of the Christian Reconstruction movement. “Throughout Scripture, the only power that can overcome the seemingly invincible omnipotence of a Babel or a Beast is the power of martyrdom, the power of the witness to King Jesus to the point of loss and death” (Note: Lane’s piece does not give citation with page number). In the same essay, Lane writes, “You ask, ‘What is our goal?’ To wage war to restore America to our Judeo-Christian heritage with all of our might and strength that God will give us. You ask, ‘What is our aim?’ One word only: victory, in spite of all intimidation and terror” ([Clarkson, 2014, para 11](#)). In December of 2013, Lane began making a summons he would repeat on several occasions, “Will a Gideon or Rahab the Harlot please stand?” for America against her foes like secular humanism and cultural relativism ([Montgomery, 2013, para 5](#)).

Writing in 2014 (in the context of the Supreme Court’s decision, *United States v. Windsor*, striking down part of the Defense of Marriage Act), Frederick Clarkson, affiliated with the Christian Right watchdog platform *Political Research Associates*, notes the shift in post-millennial evangelical mobilization tactics:

In one sense, little has changed since the methods that have defined the Christian Right were developed in the latter part of the twentieth century. But the heyday of high-profile, mediagenic leaders like Jerry Falwell, James Dobson, Pat Robertson, and Phyllis Schlafly—and their national organizations—is long gone. Their legacy is a generation of hands-on political operatives who now sustain a more decentralized Christian Right. No one now qualifies as the “leader” of the Christian Right. Instead, a constellation of smaller, electorally focused organizations has emerged, and others have evolved.

([Clarkson, 2014, para 6](#))

While Kirk did not himself make biblical references to Gideon or Rahab, his rhetoric beginning in 2024 is noteworthy for fatalistic tones, thematizing risks he was taking in references he made to “bold faith”, cultural warfare and personal sacrifice for Christian and conservative values. In May 2025 at a campus event in Phoenix, Kirk acknowledged “Look, we get death threats — people want to murder us” ([Zahn, 2025, para 2](#)). Four days before his death, Kirk posted on X, “Jesus defeated death so you can live,” which went subsequently viral ([Kirk, 2025](#)). Media sources including Hindustan Times, Yahoo News, Fox News and Instagram subsequently picked up the post immediately following his death. Influential conservative Christian podcaster, Benny Johnson, shared the post, with caption, “Charlie Kirk is an American martyr. Charlie gave his life for God and country. May we rise up with a full heart and defeat the evil that stole Charlie Kirk from us. God help us. This is the Turning Point” ([Johnson, 2025](#)). Dustin Burrows,

Speaker of the Texas House, retweeted Kirk's post, adding, "Today, we grieve the loss of a man who not only proclaimed that truth but lived it with courage, conviction, and unwavering faith. His passing is a painful reminder of the brokenness around us, yet also a powerful testament to the eternal hope we share in Christ. Charlie's voice inspired millions to stand boldly for faith, family, and freedom. Though his time here was cut short, his mission endures" ([Burrows, 2025](#)).

Sitting under the tent, moments before his (apparent) assassination, Kirk spoke, "Jesus Christ was a real person. He lived a perfect life. He was crucified, died, and rose on the third day, and he is Lord and God overall." According to Grok, onlookers substantiated this quotation:

The quote ties into Kirk's ongoing apologetics style (influenced by mentors like Frank Turek), defending the resurrection and divinity of Christ with both biblical and historical arguments. Eyewitnesses (including students and event attendees) noted he was responding to a question or engaging in dialogue about faith when the shot occurred shortly after.

On September 14th, Benoni Bible Church (South Afrida) broadcasted sermon given by pastor Rocky Stevenson reflecting on Kirk's life and legacy. Themed by Stevenson to Psalm 44:22 ("Yet for your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered."), the sermon explicitly associates Kirk with martyrdom:

The true home for the Christian is where Christ is. Where Charlie now is with the Lord Jesus Christ. Where he is gathered with his saints in glory. I can almost imagine somebody like Abel just think about this for a moment I imagine these type [sic] of scenes I can imagine somebody like Abel himself welcoming Charlie saying to him my brother here you are welcome I was the first of the martyrs you've run the race well. In

fact, you ran the race so well that many hated you in accordance with your testimony about Jesus. Because of your faith in Jesus, you are accepted here, brother. Though you were rejected down there like I was rejected, and like your Lord Jesus was rejected.

([Stevenson, 2025](#), 5:30)

Whether or not, and to what extent, Kirk was being groomed to become a martyr is material that podcasting sleuths would take up following his death. That matter is taken up in the final section of this paper. The next section probes further into the evangelical influences on Kirk and TPUSA.

The Liberty University Hub

Kirk's entree in 2019 to Liberty University would be a major force accelerator of TPUSA into evangelical circles and influences. It was here that Kirk met Rob McCoy and David Lane, connected through them to Jerry Falwell, Jr. These ties and extended networks (Liberty's connection with Sun Myung Moon and deep ties to Israel) form a critical hub of continuous influence on Kirk and TPUSA.

In 1995, Sun Myung Moon, leader of the Unification Church (often called the "Moonies" for Moon's claim to be "Lord of the Second Advent" and related publicity stunts), funneled \$3.5 million through sister organizations used to purchase and forgive a significant portion of debt owed by Liberty University (founded by televangelist Jerry Falwell, Sr.), rescuing it from bankruptcy. A year later, through another cut-out, Moon loaned Liberty \$400,000 more. Wary of Moon's negative reputation among his own following, Falwell distanced the transaction from Moon, quipping, "If the American Atheists Society or Saddam Hussein himself ever sent an

unrestricted gift to any of my ministries, be assured I will operate on Billy Sunday's philosophy: *The Devil's had it long enough*, and quickly cash the check" ([Kennedy 1998, para 2](#)).

On the surface, Falwell's ties to Moon were anodyne: both publicly decried communism and related leftist ideology, and both were major public supporters of Ronald Reagan. Beneath the surface, Moon's ties to U.S. intelligence agencies extend decades. According to CIA document released in 2004 under FOIA, the Unification Church was founded in 1961 by Kim Chong Pil, then director of the Korean Central Intelligence Agency, established by and based on the model for the CIA ([FOIA, 2004](#)). While the CIA claim of origin is contested by conventional accounts (Wikipedia lists Moon as the Church founder in 1954), circumstantial evidence indicates that the Church has been imbricated for some time in state political interests. By the late 1960s, Moon had developed close ties with the Japanese anti-communist political establishment through former Prime Minister Nobosuke Kishi (tied closely to Japan's organized crime syndicate, Yakuza) and was associated in 1978 U.S. House subcommittee investigation (the Fraser Report) with promoting South Korean governmental interests in the U.S. in coordination with KCIA agents ([Halloran, 1978](#)). Related activities associated with Moon extend into the 1980-90s, including military logistical support in Central America, and \$1B+ donations to conservative causes like the Heritage Foundation and related conservative groups (including the *Washington Times*, as well as direct-mail outlets to video-production houses, and from think tanks to academic centers). Throughout its history, the Unification Church has been tied closely to Christian Zionist movements in Asia and the United States. Through close ties with Benjamin Netanyahu, the Church sponsored the Jerusalem Summit in 2003 to cement alliance between the Likud Party and American evangelicals.

In May 2019 Liberty University presented Kirk an honorary Doctor of Humanities during the Baccalaureate for its 46th Commencement. He had first appeared at Liberty in November 2018 with close friend and TPUSA collaborator Candace Owens for Liberty's "Honoring Veterans" event. In November 2019, the Falkirk Center launched a forerunner of Turning Point Faith, created by Jerry Falwell, Jr. and Charlie Kirk to formalize connection between TPUSA and Liberty. The partnership was forged as a two-way influence pipeline between Kirk's rapidly expanding popularity among conservative American youth with Liberty's explicit educational enterprise and religious ministries. The Center hosted close Trump allies and conservative figures, including sometime Trump official and staunch Islamaphobe, Sebastian Gorka, and Christian author Eric Metaxas. Rob McCoy was active with the Center. Allegations of sexual and financial misconduct – the "pool boy scandal" and claims of nepotism, self-dealing and misuse of university resources – led to Falwell, Jr.'s ouster from Liberty in August 2020. Criticism of the Center for excessive blending of partisan political agendas with faith ("evangelical Trumpism") contributed to a petition by students and alumni calling for its closure in late 2020, eventually rebranded as the Standing for Freedom Center.

Kirk was further affiliated with Liberty University through his wife Erika, an alumna from Liberty with a Juris Master in American Legal Studies. Cabot Phillips, also a Liberty alumnus, was TPUSA Media/Campus Engagement Director who worked closely with Kirk on content creation, campus outreach, and speaker events. Rob McCoy's son, Mikey McCoy, had close affiliations with Liberty through its partnerships with TPUSA, receiving the Courageous Faith Award from Liberty's Standing for Freedom Center.

The degree given Kirk himself was "in recognition of his work and dedication to courageously promote American freedom and defend our common liberties on behalf of young

students in colleges and high schools across the country and for his example and inspiration to young people everywhere of what can be achieved when faith, conviction, and hard work are put into practice.” Receiving the honor, Kirk briefly addressed the graduates, reading from the New Testament, Matthew 5: “Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in Heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.” In his own words, Kirk continued, “The most important question that you can answer in your life is the question, ‘Who is Jesus Christ?’ Was he an act of fiction, was he a fable, or was he what I believe and what many people here believe, the Savior of the world and the Son of God. The answer to that question will come at a great price, yet the reward is even greater” ([Liberty University, 2025](#), para 10).

According to Owens ([2025a](#); [2025b](#)), it was at Liberty during deliberations over the Falkirk Center that Johnny Moore – protégé to Ron Godwin, himself tied closely with Sun Myung Moon (tapped by Moon to run the *Washington Times* in 1986) and right-hand man to Jerry Falwell, Sr. – was inserted in critical discussions with Kirk and Falwell, Jr., over the formation and structure of the Falkirk Center. Owens claims that the ouster of Falwell (he formally resigned in August 2020) was politically motivated, based on his initiative, with Kirk, to sever Liberty’s educational programming revenue from church finances (contrary to practice under Falwell, Sr.) and that this move threatened pastors who had become accustomed to substantial subsidy flows from Liberty. Owens claims that the misconduct allegations were overblown, used as cover for the underlying schism over revenue allocations that she ties to the alliance-building between leading evangelicals and Zionist influences in Israel.

Moore’s rapid career trajectory is noteworthy, particularly for its polestar guidance by Israel. His affiliation with Liberty began when his recently divorced mother was given housing in

the dorms there when Moore was 14, an episode Moore associated very positively with Jerry Falwell, Sr. ([Moring, 2012](#)). Not long after enrolling as a freshman in 2001, Moore received a position with the campus pastor's office, taken under the wing of Ron Godwin, long-time Falwell finance assistant and officer. By 2003, Moore was campus pastor. Five years later, he entered the C-suite as Vice President of Executive Projects, overseeing the Office of Spiritual Programs. By 2012 he became V.P. for Communications, handling media relations, spiritual programs, and global engagement initiatives including international mission trips. It was in this role that Moore introduced Jerry Falwell, Jr. (then University Chancellor since his father's death in 2007) to Donald Trump (then still hosting *the Apprentice*). Moore left Liberty in 2014 to serve as chief of staff to Mark Burnett, then producer of *The Apprentice*, eventually leading to close affiliation as evangelical insider with the Trump campaign in 2016 ([Smietana, 2025](#)).

In 2015, Moore founded the Kairos Company, a public relations and media positioning agency for faith-based organizations and conservative Christian politicians. Andrew Kolvet served as V.P. of Communications at Kairos from August 2015 to January 2019 when he joined TPUSA as Executive Producer of the Charlie Kirk Show. Moore sold Kairos in 2022 to Indiana-based marketing firm JDA Worldwide (Joseph David Advertising, named for the same of the Old Testament), retaining position as president. In August 2025, Moore was named Vice Chancellor of Pepperdine's D.C. campus expansion, School of Public Policy, to oversee and expand Pepperdine's influence in the capital "at the intersection of faith and public life" ([Pepperdine Newsroom, 2025](#)). While there he has served concurrently as Managing Director of Pepperdine's Master of Middle East Policy Studies program.

Trump appointed Moore to the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom in 2018, a (nominally) bipartisan, independent panel charged with issuing annual reports that rate

respect for religious freedom among selected countries. Moore parlayed his appointment to speak out for religious minorities fleeing ISIS and Christians facing persecution in China. Under Moore's direction, his company Kairos later represented (pro bono) the International Religious Freedom Summit organized by former Kansas politician (governor then senator) Sam Brownback, who had served as Trump's ambassador for religious freedom. Ahead of the invasion of Ukraine in 2022, Moore greeted Ukrainian Jewish refugees in Israel and spoke about the importance of religious liberty. Moore considers himself a Christian Zionist, and his devotion and allegiance to Israel figures prominently in his pastoral arc. "As Christians, one of our obligations is to love Israel and to love the Jewish people," he told the *Jerusalem Post* in July 2025, adding that he wants Christians to "do their college degree in Israel. I want Christians to vacation in Israel. I want Christians to spend a portion of their life in Israel" ([Smietana, 2025, para 17](#)).

In June 2025, Moore was appointed Executive Chairman of the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation (GHF) following the departure of the previous EC under protest about GHF ties to Israel. The GHF subsequently came under intense criticism for endangering civilians under the exclusive permission given by Israel to GHF for food distribution in Gaza following its decimation under Israeli assault since 2022. According to a U.N. report, over 1,000 Gazans were killed in the vicinity of GHF distribution sites and nearly 900 more on the routes of supply trucks ([UN News, 2025](#)). Israel refused access by other aid groups on claims (disputed by watchdog groups) that they were infiltrated by Hamas, diverting food to its fighters. Doctors Without Borders subsequently condemned GHF as "orchestrated killing", while over 100 other aid groups called for lifting the restrictions Israel imposed. Fifteen international human rights and legal organizations wrote GHF to cease operations or face charges of criminal and civil liability for

“aiding and abetting or otherwise being complicit in crimes under international law, including war crimes, crimes against humanity, or genocide” ([Speri, 2025](#), para 2). GHF ended official operations in Gaza on November 24, 2025.

Moore had close ties to Ronald Godwin (born 1937 in Pensacola Florida), first connected with Jerry Falwell, Sr. in 1978, running the Washington, D.C office of the Moral Majority. Godwin came from evangelical educational pedigree (Baylor University, Bob Jones University, William and Mary, and Florida State University for Ph.D. in planning and management), eventually teaching in Christian education in Florida and serving as headmaster for a school in Panama City. He founded the Liberty University School of Life-Long Learning, served as President of Jerry Falwell Ministries and Liberty University provost and senior vice president until 2020. Eight years after his initiation with the Moral Majority, Godwin was tapped by Bo Hi Pak, top associate with Reverend Sun Myung Moon, to serve as CFO and Senior Vice President of the *Washington Times* (founded in 1982 by Moon), major propaganda organ for the GOP, intended, in part, as antipode of the *Washington Post*. Moon would eventually describe Godwin as one of his “disciples”. While in tenure at the *Times* (CFO until 1992, later president of the Washington Times Corporation), Godwin persistently claimed that Moon had little direct influence over editorial policy despite being virtually its sole benefactor and revenue source ([Bardach, 2025](#)). Godwin brokered the loans to Liberty University from Moon in 1995.

As its Wikipedia page makes clear, Liberty University’s ambitions and destiny have been openly linked to ardent support for Israel and Zionism. Jerry Falwell, Sr., viewed the future of Israel as “the most crucial international matter facing the world today”. Falwell, Jr., continued this commitment, hosting Israeli speakers and opposing divestment initiatives. Following the Oct. 7 2023 attacks Liberty issued a statement: “Liberty University stands with Israel and

condemns the evil acts perpetrated on that day in no uncertain terms” ([Liberty University, 2023, para 2](#)). From 2024–2025, Liberty leadership hosted prayer vigils and survivor testimonies, including first anniversary commemoration hosted by the Standing for Freedom Center. Liberty has hosted dozens of trips to Israel since its founding in 1971. Launched in 2025, its Center for Israel offers biblical education on Israel’s significance.

MAGA, TPUSA, the Groyper Wars and Aftermath

Kirk’s close affiliation with each of the Trump campaigns, credited with netting Trump critical gains among youth in swing states (particularly in 2020 and 2024), made MAGA and TPUSA essentially cognate references to generational cohorts characterized by conservatism, patriotism and big government skepticism. Their primary distinction is persona identification and intensity of loyalty, with older conservatives hewing to Trump and the Republican right wing, under-30s to Kirk’s youth mobilization across college campuses, linking skepticism of liberal doxa with brighter futures for all. Kirk’s popularity has, nominally, been issues-based, pegged to (re)building conservative values. Trump’s cache has been based, continuously and increasingly, on throttling loyalty to and adulation for him, personally, for restoring if not superseding a past legacy of “American greatness”.

Poll numbers for the most part validate popular assumptions. A 2020 University of Washington poll (gathered the week of December 24) found MAGA devotees to be predominantly white (over 80%), Christian (over 65%), male and older (over half older than 65), with relatively lower education levels, residentially located in rural and suburban areas ([Blum and Parker, 2020](#)). Their affiliation with Trump was sparked by his outsider persona, beginning with his handling of Republican Party loyalist candidates in 2016, then charged up with his 2020 claims of election fraud. Notably, according to this poll, the “Stop the Steal” campaign and

militia groups are less popular among the MAGA movement than is claimed by liberal leaning media. Around 38 percent of the MAGA movement identified with the “Stop the Steal” campaign, and only 23 percent identified with militia movements of any kind. A 2024 Pew Poll found that Trump made significant gains across ethnic lines, essentially doubling them (from 11 % to 20%), predominantly because of Hispanic voters, but inclusive of Black and Asian voter segments ([Hartig, et al., 2025](#)).

Born in 1996, Kirk straddled the Millennials and Gen Z, cohort demographics trending towards increasing distrust in governing institutions if not actually conservative voting tendencies. A 2025 poll produced by Tuft University’s CIRCLE (Center for Information Research on Civic Life and Engagement) reports that only 16% of 18- to 29-year-olds believe democracy is working well for young people. One takeaway from this study could well serve as mantra for regular TPUSA staff meetings: “It is notable that many of the groups or institutions young people trust most are those they are more likely to see up close and potentially have personal experience with. In addition to peers and neighbors, trusted nonprofits may include groups that youth see taking action and having an impact in their communities” ([Booth, 2025, para 6](#)).

By 2019, TPUSA was a regular frequency on national media radar. In May that year, Kirk received the highest honorarium that academia confers otherwise non-degreed individuals (in his case, having only a high school diploma), and from the flagship institution of the Religious Right, eponymously named for the foundational bulwark of American mythos, Liberty University. TPUSA was effectively carving out a political space for disaffected youth with a charismatic figure articulating grievances and commanding surging audiences at the bastion of liberal orthodoxy, dominant/large university campuses, skillfully flipping hackneyed criticism

from the left to further enlarge and dial-in his messaging. Not apparently on his radar was a broadside aimed at him from the right.

In retrospect, it seems inevitable Kirk would face challenges holier than thou. At a TPUSA “Culture Wars” event at Ohio State University on October 29, 2019 (part of a planned series of campus debate tours, about six months after the first *Charlie Kirk Show* podcast), Kirk first encountered, in person, the “Groyper” protest movement whose leader, Nick Fuentes, a self-proclaimed “Christian Reactionary”, had been shadowing him since the early days of the Trump 2016 campaign. Groyper was the overweight, depressive meme icon adapted from the Pepe the Frog meme claimed by the alt-right fringe that had risen behind the short-lived media phenomes Milo Yiannopoulos and Richard Spencer, both defrocked of their influence following media scandals in 2017. The Ohio State encounter would repeat at subsequent events scheduled between October and November at Kansas State, then in California at UCLA, USC, and Stanford, followed at the University of Houston on Nov. 14, forcing Kirk to leave while being heckled by a massive swarm of Groypers loyalists chanting “American First! America First!” ([fest \(King\), 2019](#)).

Fuentes (born 1998) had been carving out his media niche since 2017 with nightly incendiary broadsides about race supremacy, homophobia and related hot-button, far-right themes. Like Kirk, he hails from a Chicago suburb, and showed an early interest in mainstream conservative politics. He was involved in his high school student government (president at Lyons Township High School) and Model United Nations and hosted a talk show on his high school television station. He completed one academic year in college (Boston University), then dropped out following his attendance at the August, 2017 “Unite the Right” rally in Charlottesville, accelerating his political shift since 2016 affiliation with Trump administration towards far-right

devotions (white Christian nationalism/racial supremacy, Holocaust denial/anti-Semitism, foreign policy isolationism). His online streaming throughout 2017 on the Right Side Broadcasting Network gained Fuentes extensive notoriety, in part for the “edgy” irony and provocateur style he actively cultivated, providing him some “plausible deniability” for staking out more extreme positions under cover of a trickster persona. He played a prominent role as crowd instigator at the January 6th, 2021, Capital protest.

On stage with Kirk at Ohio State was Rob Smith, an openly gay, Black Iraq War veteran and conservative commentator. The event was live streamed on TPUSA's Twitter and Facebook accounts. Before an estimated crowd of around 800-1,200 attendees gathered at the Archie M. Griffin Grand Ballroom, Kirk and Smith struggled to handle what became a broadside barrage of slurs and attacks during Q & A from about a dozen students affiliated with Fuentes. Kirk pushed back many questions as “racist” or “in “bad faith”. Smith mocked some questioners, implying one was closeted gay. After about 30 minutes and realizing he was losing control, Kirk cut the session short of the full scheduled event. As he appeared visibly flustered and defensive, Groyperers celebrated online while simultaneously live streaming with Fuentes hosting.

In her 3-part expose on Fuentes examining his guerilla tactics for fomenting division across the right political spectrum, to his sensationalized postures and righteous victimization claims to be “the most canceled man in America”, Anya Parampil ([2023, para 44, 52](#)) writes:

Aside from undermining Kirk, the “Groyper Wars” exposed a glaring contradiction at the heart of “America First”-oriented conservatism. While a handful of their questions touched on issues such as gay-rights and immigration, the overwhelming majority focused on the critique that Kirk was too pro-Israel, asserting it was impossible to truly

uphold “America First” principles while maintaining deference to the special relationship between Washington and Tel Aviv.

[...]

Commanding his army of trolls before a green screen in his parents’ basement, Fuentes had successfully mobilized a sustained, guerilla-style assault against what had previously been [painted](https://www.chronicle.com/article/the-far-rights-college-crusade) [https://www.chronicle.com/article/the-far-rights-college-crusade] as “the dominant force in campus conservatism.” In doing so, he consolidated his influence over the most fringe elements of the American right and showed mainstream MAGA conservatives that he was a force to be reckoned with.

Parampil catalogs other key instances where Fuentes materialized to disrupt right-leaning/adjacent causes (e.g., opposition to vaccine mandates and the war in Ukraine, upending the campaign of a viable anti-war republican candidate) with tactics very like what the FBI deployed in the 1960s against civil rights, anti-war and other Left leadership through COINTELPRO, upstaging activism with holier-than-thou denunciations, character assassination, and staged disruptions keyed to media hot-takes and streaming video uploads. Since Kirk’s passing, a growing online consensus has it that Fuentes has been operating, for some time, as a federal asset very much in the mold of COINTELPRO, intended to associate otherwise reasonable criticism of Israel with disaffected youth turned to hard-right sensationalism and anarchism (also homophobia and misogyny through “incel” affiliation), pushing Kirk further into the media phalanx of Zionism.

While there is some evidence that Kirk modulated/hardened his position on immigration following the Groyper Wars, a Grok scan of X posts over the period following October-

November 2019, through Oct. 7, 2023 and beyond, indicates little apparent influence on Kirk by the Fuentes faction of America First over Israel, the primary thrust of attacks the Groypers hurled at Kirk. Whether in terms of his evangelical devotions, anti-Democrat or anti-BDS perspective, or from a pan-Western/cultural/Judeo-Christian values standpoint, Kirk remained, publicly, steadfast (through the summer of 2025) in his stance for Israel and characterization of its actions in the region as overwhelmingly reasonable if not essential for peace. This was particularly the case in the months following the Oct. 7, 2023, breach of Israeli security and attack and subsequent assault by Israel on Gaza. Amidst major escalation of force by Israel, Kirk appeared, publicly, to be hard lined well into 2025, his highest year on record for posts expressing, essentially, ardent and unqualified support for Israel. Evidence following his death would make clear that in over the summer, 2025, his personal support for Israel was collapsing while his fear and resentment of major Zionist donors was escalating ([Blumenthal and Parampil, 2025](#); [Blumenthal, 2025a](#); [Blumenthal, 2025b](#)).

Maybe because he could read the polls showing decisive declines since 2019 in youth support for Israel ([Silver, 2025](#); [Lobe, 2025](#)), or because of his predilections for candor, flare for apologetics and/or instincts for truth telling, Kirk would sometimes divert from otherwise formulaic repetition of TPUSA approved talking points. Appearing on the PBD Podcast Oct. 12, 2023, days after the fateful breach of Israeli border defense and catastrophic assault and loss of life on Oct. 7, Kirk spoke the quiet parts out loud. Taking a cue from host Patrick Bet David's open skepticism about how the border was breached, and the convenient political upsides for Bibi Netanyahu resulting from the crisis, Kirk rhetorically scoured to the point of openly challenging the veracity of the official account.

So, I've been to Israel many times. The whole place is a fortress. When I first heard this story, I still have the same gut instinct that I did initially. I find this very hard to believe. I've been to that Gaza border. You cannot go 10 ft without running into a 19-year-old with an AR-15 or an automatic machine gun that's an IDF soldier. Right? So, the whole country is surveilled. ([PBD Podcast, 2023, 28.18](#))

Kirk went on to discuss the previous nine months of Israeli politics being “on the verge of civil war” because of moves by Netanyahu to redefine judicial rights under the Israeli constitution. “There were protests planned this week against Netanyahu where they anticipated tens of thousands of people to take to the streets. That's now all gone, Patrick [host Patrick Bet David]. Netanyahu now has an emergency government and a mandate to lead.” Then saying how he was not willing to go so far as to accuse Netanyahu of direct involvement in a false flag incident, Kirk continues, to the audible gasp of his host:

But I think some questions need to be asked. Was there a stand down order? [...] Six hours. I don't believe it. Israel is the size of New Jersey. When I took a helicopter ride from Jerusalem to the Gaza border, it's 45 minutes. Six hours. They're live streaming the killing of Jews. Did somebody in the government say, 'stand down'? That is a legitimate, non-conspiracy question. The whole country is the IDF! The whole country! And you're trying to tell me that they're [attackers from across the Gazan border] going to concerts, and kibbutzim and schools? And by reports it's six hours [of sustained attack without any IDF response].” ([PBD Podcast, 2023, 29.20](#))

At this point the program producer intervenes to support Kirk's claims, pointing out that his remarks are not “like a right winged, uh, reporting. This is from the *New York Times*.” Given the media profile of PBD (mainstream libertarian/entrepreneurial), this exchange may have been

choreographed to get ahead of open internet speculation at the time about what Israel knew and when it new it regarding the events of Oct. 7. Up to this point, the discussion might have been merely straw man posturing intended to test audience reaction for more “limited hangout”, for Kirk goes on to assert his pro-Israeli position. “I just want to make sure my position is clear here,” Kirk announced, then proceeding to list possible alternative explanations for how the security breach occurred.

A few moments later Kirk returns to the core skepticism he had let out of the bag. “I have to be careful how I say this. They’re going to try to ethnically cleanse Gaza. And I don’t use that term lightly.” Then, after essentially confirming that Israel has a “mandate to seek justice”, Kirk inexplicably circles back to his initial skepticism, alternating between Chesire grin and startled realization. “But there are some serious questions here, Patrick. And let me tell you, my pattern recognition over the last five years has become pretty sharp. Covid, Maui fires, Epstein [whom Kirk would openly link to Israel in a podcast a few months later]. When I see a story and it doesn’t click, our guts are usually right.” The pronoun reference slip-up here between first person singular (I) and plural (our) seems to have been intentional. Kirk is then interrupted by one of the program’s co-hosts over the perils of assigning “ethnic cleansing” ambitions to any culture, Muslim, Christian or Jewish.

Kirk’s signal was clearly received. Under headline published October 31, “Anti-Israel, Anti-Jewish Tone Pushed by Isolationist Wing on Right”, the Christian Broadcasting Network went on the offensive. Linking Kirk into other “far right” criticism of Israel including “Holocaust denier” Nick Fuentes, Tucker Carlson, Candace Owens and Stew Peters, the piece rhetorically distances (implicitly mainstream) Christian support from a rump caucus the CBN associated with the Ron Paul faction of “America First” ([Christian Broadcasting Network, 2023](#); [Brenan, 2025](#)).

Kirk spoke before audiences about Epstein on his TPUSA American Comeback Tour stop at Florida State University (Tallahassee, February 28, 2025) during Q/A session. He returned to the theme, speaking with Carlson and Megyn Kelly (both formerly with Fox News) on stage at the Turning Point Student Action Summit in Tampa, Florida, July 11-13. These latter two interviews make clear that, as with war with Iran, Kirk realized the MAGA loyalists needed validation regarding what had become a bright red line for the base. In an X post immediately following this event, on July 14, Kirk contorted himself trying simultaneously to defend Trump's obfuscatory actions while affirming the need to plumb the depths of the Epstein network. From his "gut instincts" appearance October of 2023 on PBD regarding October 7, to his concerted focus on Epstein ties to Israel in July 2025, Kirk continued his full-throated support for Israel, his condemnation of Hamas, and his denunciation of student protests of the genocide in Gaza, until his death.

The Final Schism

Beginning early June 2025, open tension between Israel and Iran reached headlines. Media likewise surfaced of the "civil war" in MAGA between pro-war advocates and those abiding Trump's campaign promises to end foreign entanglements ([Fadel, 2025](#); [Samuels, 2025](#); [Axelrod, 2025](#)). On June 12, Kirk posted on X: "No issue currently divides the right as much as foreign policy. I'm very concerned based on everything I've seen in the grassroots the last few months that this will cause a massive schism in MAGA and potentially disrupt our momentum and our insanely successful Presidency" ([Kirk, 2025a](#)). By Monday, June 17, reports of a major split in Trump's inner circle began to circulate. That day, Kirk again posted his wariness on X, calling out "the radical interventionist faction" in American foreign policy, including an extended excerpt from a recent podcast singling out Senator Lindsey Graham for his "lunacy" to call for

regime change in Iran. “This sounds like Hillary Rodham Clinton in Libya!” ([Kirk, 2025b](#)). Later the same day, he again called out Lindsey Graham on X. “Lindsey Graham quickly went from ‘We need to take out the nuclear facilities’ [to] ‘We need to take out the Ayatollah’. Taking out the nuclear sites with direct, strategic, violent precision is a defensible position, toppling yet another regime is pathological and asinine” ([Kirk, 2025c](#)). He made more posts June 19th and 20th along the same lines, sustaining his signal that regime change would be a catastrophe (.

Across these posts, Kirk straddles a razor’s edge of explicit confidence in Trump to “make the right decision” and his harsh criticism of interventionist hawks. According to Tucker Carlson ([Kelly, 2025](#), 85:00), it was around this time that Kirk visited Trump in the Oval Office urging restraint towards Iran. While Kirk remained steadfast in his outward support for Israel, his position towards Iran indicated he was paying close attention to the polls and clearly understood the schism emerging in MAGA over that issue.

After a week of strikes and counterstrikes between Iran and Israel, Kirk appeared Friday, June 20th on Newsmax, issuing an exasperated plea that torched social media.

Look, we have to be very careful here. This isn't just another small regional actor. This was Persia. This is a very proud country with a very deep history. It's a big country—it's two and a half times the size of Texas with 92 million people.

You have to look at the history of the region to understand what we're facing. They were a great power for a thousand years. Not even the Romans could defeat Persia. Now, I'm not saying they're comparable to our Marines or to our Air Force—obviously, we have the greatest military in the history of the world—but is that really the battle that we want in front of us? Do we want another 20-year engagement in the Middle East?

President Trump has to weigh all of this. He has earned our trust and, I believe, he's going to bring this to completion for the betterment of all Americans. But we must remain restrained and disciplined against another endless, reckless war. Our future is not in the Middle East sand; that will only further bankrupt us. President Trump is interested in nation-building one nation—America.³

Two days later Trump announced the launch of Operation Midnight Hammer (the strike on three Iranian nuclear sites). Publicly, Kirk rushed to acclaim Trump, calling the targeted strikes on nuclear facilities a “master class” for avoiding the “endless war” scenario dreaded by himself and kindred voices on the right. Privately, he endured a hailstorm of blowback for his criticism.

Kirk’s date with his own very personal turning point was now upon him. The following weeks made clear there would be no splitting the middle over Iran and, by extension, persisting with his unqualified support for Israel against a rising tide of resentment and misgiving across youth demographics. The showdown came weeks later, at the July 11-13 TPUSA Student Action Summit in Tampa, Florida. Likely intended by Kirk to sustain his own distance while relieving some steam on the issue, he secured major speaking slots at this event for three leading dissidents of Israel-first foreign policy, including Tucker Carlson and Megyn Kelly, and popular libertarian podcaster and comedian Dave Smith. Carlson issued a scathing dressing down of billionaire Zionist influence bundler, Bill Ackman, and Smith was broadly considered the hands-down winner in debate over Israel with Zionist political commentator and author, Josh Hammer.

Soon after the event, a confidante reportedly very close to both Kirk and the White House told journalist Max Blumenthal that Kirk was “bombarded with infuriated text messages and phone calls from Netanyahu’s wealthy allies in the US, including many who had funded TPUSA. According to his longtime friend, the Zionist donors treated Kirk with outright contempt,

essentially ordering him to fall back into line.” Credited directly by Blumenthal, the source said, “[Kirk] was being told what you’re not allowed to do, and it was driving him crazy,” and that Kirk was not only stunned by the hostile nature of the interactions, but “frightened” over the backlash ([Blumenthal and Parampil, 2025, para 10](#)).

A donor event “in the Hamptons” (which one among those exclusive townships along the south shore of Long Island, New York, not specified) was subsequently convened sometime in the first week of August with major TPUSA backers strongly affiliated with Israel, including Bill Ackman. According to Blumenthal ([2025a](#)), one source attending told him the event turned quickly into an “intervention” clearly intended to bring Kirk back into the fold. Another source at the event told Blumenthal that Ackman himself confronted Kirk about what happened at the Student Action Summit, at which point another attendee, Natasha Hausdorff, the legal director of UK Lawyers for Israel, began screaming at Kirk. At some point, according to Blumenthal, Ackman demanded Kirk rescind his invitation to Tucker Carlson for the TPUSA AMFEST scheduled for December 2025. Further, according to Blumenthal and Parampil ([2025](#)), Kirk had recently declined a “massive infusion” of funding to promote Israel favorable programming by TPUSA. Two weeks before his death, Kirk also declined an invitation by Netanyahu to meet with him in Jerusalem. Days later, on August 6, and without referring to the meeting in particular, Kirk spoke on the Megyn Kelly podcast and addressed being attacked and threatened about Israel. Notably, in the same interview, Kirk again doubled down on his unwavering support for Israel.

On September 2, 2025, eight days before his final public appearance, Kirk issued a company-wide memo specifying “an organizational-wide DOGE effort” to address, among related items, “reshaping company culture” to be led by Justin Streiff. Streiff had been with

TPUSA since 2020, serving in a development role. Following Kirk's death, Tyler Bowyer (first TPUSA COO and long-time republican party operative in Arizona) cancelled the DOGE styled audit. Meanwhile, substantial evidence of financial irregularities, laundering, bribery and embezzlement accredited by observers to be the impetus for Kirk's memo, has been surfaced ([FERENCE, 2025](#)).

Loose Ends and Plausible Motives

The FBI was on the scene of Kirk's assault within 16 minutes. Within or around that timeframe, TPUSA personnel had removed Kirk's body and other key evidence from the scene, including a video camera SD card (but leaving the camera installed on tent just behind Kirk) and crucifix necklace Kirk had been wearing. Less than 2.5 hours later, Israel Prime Minister Bibi Netanyahu posted on X, "Praying for [Charlie Kirk]". The next day Netanyahu would break away from an Israeli war cabinet meeting for an interview on Fox News about Kirk, insinuating that Israel's enemies were responsible (in lieu of any hard evidence). The morning of September 11th, FBI Director Kash Patel and Utah Governor Spencer Cox held a news conference, establishing an initial timeline of the event, releasing photos identifying a person of interest, and confirming recovery of the alleged weapon. The next day, September 12th, Kash Patel provided a full timeline briefing including (suspected) shooter identity (Tyler Robinson), type and caliber of weapon used and assertion that the suspect acted alone. Within days, the location of the tent Kirk occupied was under construction for surface repaving. Sometime early after Kirk's murder, then Director of the National Counterterrorism Center, Joe Kent, was blocked by the FBI and Department of Justice from pursuing leads available suggesting "some kind of foreign nexus" in Kirk's murder ([CARLSON, 2026, 90:00](#)).

Hot takes among podcasters commenced immediately, quickly disconfirming the official narrative on the grounds of eyewitness video uploads and related evidence on the ground at the scene. Theories accumulated over the ensuing weeks and months. Critical evidence, including acoustic pattern analysis pulled from multiple video uploads, suggests that the gunshot heard by the crowd passed by Kirk's right side, likely landing in high resistance buffering material in the trunk of a van parked in a tunnelway behind the stage ([TriggerSmart, 2025b](#)). Apparent lack of blood at the scene (and no analysis ever given), no bullet exit wound, impossible ballistic claims attributed by FBI to alleged weapon and ammunition, and visual evidence of Kirk's upper body movement at the moment of apparent impact (decorticate stiffening while moving back and leftwards, likely only from severe brain trauma) further challenged the official narrative alleging a fatal gunshot to neck originating above, front and slightly left of stage. Scrutiny of video uploads further probed the visual evidence confirming that some form of explosive sequence from beneath the t-shirt Kirk wore was not in synch with official attribution of high velocity gunshot impact.

In the weeks and months following, a clutch of podcasters, led by Candace Owens, would sustain a nearly daily vigil on the investigation and evidentiary leads and gaps in the case. As more video and eyewitness evidence accumulated, sleuths began assembling greater context for means and motive of the assassination. Owens would establish a "tips line" email address leading to the identification of Egyptian registered aircraft flight activity out of nearby airport on the day of the shooting, matching this same plane's travelogues with multiple air travel destinations by Erika and/or Charlie Kirk. This and other revelations led to a series of evasive statements and lies by TPUSA personnel including, in particular, Rob and Mikey McCoy (lied about phone call Mikey made within seconds of the alleged gunshot), Terry Farnsworth (lied

about why he removed the SD cards from the camera behind Kirk), Andrew Kolvet (lied about coroner report), and Tyler Bowyer, Justin Streif and Erika Kirk (multiple misstatements and/or lies, including eyewitness allegation placing Erika Kirk at U.S. intelligence base, Fort Huachuca, two days before the assassination, that she subsequently attempted to mislead and misdirect).⁴

The preponderance of evidence at the scene of the crime and circumstantial evidence surrounding TPUSA prior to and immediately following the assassination spectacle on September 10th, strongly indicate that Kirk's death had been planned and coordinated well ahead of time among multiple actors with military capacity and advanced if not clandestine weaponry, and either directly or subsequently in league with local, state, and federal law enforcement officials. All available evidence and the sum of suspicious actions by likely suspects make clear that Tyler Robinson (who, in any event, pled not guilty to criminal charges) has been set up as patsy. Even a small sample of suspicious evidence is exculpatory: the very public nature of Kirk's death paired with the remarkable timing of the final question for Kirk about transgender mass shooting moments prior to the incident clearly intended for maximum polarization politics; the inexplicable failure of law enforcement to secure crime scene evidence and official statements contradicting eyewitness accounts; the incoherent sequence of actions attributed to Robinson directly following the incident; and the caliber of the alleged weapon and lack of apparent exit wound in Kirk, taken together, clearly indicate that the cause and motive in Kirk's death lay elsewhere than the disaffected, rogue pathology of a non-aligned, "lone gunman".

There is some evidence that Kirk was snared in financial entanglements sometime before 2018, tying him to a TPUSA Board member serving as his financial advisor. Also, TPUSA Tax filings (990 reports) beginning around 2021 and each year subsequently indicate that Kirk and Tyler Bowyer were each pulling income across all four TPUSA affiliated organizations with no

stated management roles ([Iced Coffee Hour, 2025](#); [TiggerSmart, 2025a](#)). Tyler Bowyer was COO of TPUSA at the time. Online forensic accountant and financial sleuth, Zach Digregorio ([2025a](#), [2025b](#)), produced exposé indicating what appears to be millions funneled from TPUSA to America's Turning Point in fiscal year 2023-2024 by Bowyer. That money was sent to a UPS box rented by Arizona Republican legislator Jake Hoffman, allegedly for purposes of business transactions tied to company Hoffman owns. The appearances of impropriety in that instance are glaring, particularly given evasive responses by Hoffman to these revelations ([Digregorio, 2026a](#)).⁵ Appearances suggest that these funds were being used as kickbacks and to launder MAGA campaign donations to the Trump campaign for 2024. This may explain a bizarre letter from Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent directly to Erika Kirk discrediting online media claiming TPUSA was under active IRS investigation, but with inexplicable handwritten salutation matching Trump's own script style. Kirk's internal audit proclamation ("DOGE action") and announcement eight days before his last appearance were likely his attempt to expose what appears to be a laundering operation converting TPUSA into a dark money conduit. Combined with evidence that Kirk had himself received money early in his career not otherwise accounted for suggests he was lured into associating with players well beyond his capacity to manage or influence.

Erika Kirk's behavior following her husband's death, and cumulative evidence indicating a past very different from her projected persona, strongly suggest she was associated with military intelligence working for the U.S. and/or Israel. Both her parents work directly in or adjacent to military contracting. Her own occupational profile has the earmarks of "sheep dipping" typical of intelligence assets, employment characterized by limited continuous performance with any given pursuit typically with brief international residence. Erika was

involved in real estate, modeling/pageantry, and the entertainment industry. She appears online in a CIA produced training video about threat of utility grid attacks and collapse from EMP. Her affiliation through her mother with a Romanian orphanage (Everyday Heros) is conspicuously timed with military contracting in the same area at the time for which the orphanage may have offered operational cover. Her affiliation with a military base in Romania through Everyday Heros, sometime later under suspicion of child trafficking, likewise suggests conduct and motives typical of intelligence assets. Erika's past relationship history indicates both risk taking and emotional manipulation and disinterest in the welfare of others. There is further evidence that she engaged in an inappropriate relationship with a female minor in Michigan while involved with a professional basketball player in early 2015; grooming behavior that, linked with the Hungarian military base allegations, strongly suggest trafficking affiliation. There is likewise evidence of continuous marital strife with Kirk, and suspicion by him from before they were married that she was installed in his life as an agent (See [Coleman, 2026a](#); [2026d](#).)

Her conduct following Kirk's death, including immediately assuming his role as TPUSA CEO, mercurial interactions with company personnel (first assuring them they all had a "home" there, then shortly after, summary dismissals of nearly 40 employees under suspicion of leaking information to news sources), hackneyed public appearances and melodramatic conduct, are all characteristic of assumed identity and sociopathy. Her rise to prominence in TPUSA, beneficiary of massive life insurance policy taken out by Charlie Kirk in 2023 ([TriggerSmart, 2025a](#)), and her refusal to engage in good faith with doubts about how Kirk was killed clearly implicate her as a person of interest, if not a prime suspect in his demise.

Other parties with clear motive and prospects to gain from Kirk's death (or lose large under the scenario of his turning away from them) include executives and key staff at TPUSA

(enjoying high salaries and lavish company perks) and also vendors with lucrative, year-over-year no bid contracts (under threat of financial audit and turn away by Kirk from major donors), the Trump Administration and his Zionist supporters (loss of a generation of voters if Kirk openly broke with Netanyahu and Trump's Jewish backers), Bibi Netanyahu and Israeli intelligence/IDF (loss of major political asset in the Christian Zionist movement and major publicity crisis). Massive endowment growth by TPUSA coupled with continuous hard-sell tactics towards donors to "give to save America right now" indicate it is being coopted, very much like the Unification Church, into laundering substantial amounts of donor and dark money to targeted political lobbying and other initiatives. The offer allegedly made by Netanyahu (according to [Blumenthal and Parampil, 2025](#)), sometime around July 2025, "to arrange a massive new infusion of Zionist money" further implicates all of the above in a league of unified interest to end Charlie Kirk's affiliation with TPUSA, if not also his life and legacy. All of this begs asking: To what extent have these interests always had a "turning point" in mind for which Kirk was an unwitting Pied Piper?

Spectacle Management in the Deep State

First published in 2008 (reprinted in 2017), Sheldon Wolin's *Democracy, Inc.: Managed Democracy and the Specter of Inverted Totalitarianism* (Princeton University Press) offers a Rosetta stone for scholarship seeking useful scaffolding not otherwise available from conventional political science handling of the Global War on Terror (GWOT) and affiliated, "deep state" events. Wolin's formulation for "The dynamics of the Archaic" (Chapter 7) is particularly useful for characterizing the niche role played by Charlie Kirk and TPUSA in the oscillating arc of American-styled "Great Awakenings" with the millennial fall from democratic grace of the United States.

From 2008-2016, roughly the period of Wolin's publication to Kirk's rise to national prominence, polling by Pew Research, Barna and Gallup indicate 35-40% of Americans identified as born-again Christians, a large segment of evangelical Protestantism since the 1970s ([Pew Research Center, 2015](#); [Barna, 2009](#); [Barna, 2016](#); [Newport, 2018](#)). Data from both 2007 and 2013 polling indicate a strong correlation between born-again identification, end-times beliefs, and affirmation of the Virgin Birth ([Barna, 2007](#); [Masci, 2013](#)). Wolin elucidates how the nature of this belief structure hews closely with Superpower/totalitarian dynamics:

Many of the main elements in the dynamics of Superpower—corporate capital, Christian evangelism, elitism, American nationalism and exceptionalism—share a *triumphalist faith*. The distinctive element contributed by religious fundamentalism is a *dynamic of hope*, nourished on an absolute promise of a climactic, triumphant moment that, despite delays, satanic mischief, and false prophets, will be realized. Strong traces of its influence are evident in the theological imagery adopted by politicians, from [President] Reagan's depiction of the "evil empire" of the Soviet Union to [George W. Bush's] jeremiad: "We will never forget the servants of evil who plotted the attacks of [September 11, 2001], and we will never forget those who rejoiced at our grief." Millennial hopes mix with other elements in the totalitarian dynamic to feed an *impulse toward limitlessness*. Culturally, Americans are continuously exposed to exaggerated claims and encouraged by advertising, TV, movies, and popular music to entertain *extravagant expectations about their future* (Wolin, 2017, pp. 116-117) [emphasis in italics added].

By 2016, Charlie Kirk had emerged as if from a time capsule chrysalis, with a youthful exuberance, self-assurance and easy affability that Republican America had continually—if with flagging hopes—cherished would return since at least the 1984 re-election campaign slogan of

Ronald Reagan promising “It’s morning again in America”. Like Reagan, Kirk was (nominally) an outsider. Both were archaists in Wolin’s mold so far as they embodied a “fondness for singling out privileged moments in the past when a transcendent truth was revealed” (Wolin, 2017, p. 217). This propensity for cherished truths fuels and is reciprocally fueled by an “odd couple of Superpower” alliance in Wolin’s formulation, one “that finds reactionary, backward-looking archaic forces (economic, religious, and political) allied with forward-looking forces of radical change (corporate leaders, technological innovators, scientists) whose efforts contribute to steadily distancing contemporary society from its past” (Wolin, 2017, p. 217). This characteristically American “zest for change”, according to Wolin, “coexists with fervent political and religious convictions that bind the identity of believers to two ‘fundamentals,’ the texts of the Constitution and the Bible and their status as unchanging and universal truths” (Wolin, 2017, p. 217). Kirk’s youthful zest for the past (as given account in his debut book, *Time for a Turning Point*), in this instance, is fitted into a Mobius Strip with Trump’s hagiography of next-gen tech titans (e.g. Elon Musk and Peter Thiel). Kirk was the youthful avatar for fundamental truths paired with Trump’s “mature” tribuneship of the next/next technoutopianism. An inverted “maturity” dynamism perhaps noteworthy in this context propelled a kind of “nostalgia for the future”: Kirk grounded in time-tested principles with Trump given to impulsive exuberance for untested opportunity.

From its origins until around 2019, TPUSA hewed primarily to the Constitutional wing of the fundamentalist attachments Wolin identifies. Thereafter, and under the influences this paper examines, TPUSA fully assimilated to the second fundamentalism, bent explicitly to Zionist purposes conspicuously timed and congruent with the second Trump coming in 2024. From 2020 to his death, Kirk fulfilled a kind of Boy Wonder counterpart to Donald Trump’s Pompadour-

Draped Crusader, offering the eternal redemption youth confers to the sunset relevance of aging politicians. At the same time, as with the contortions he made regarding Iran and Epstein over and against his unflagging confidence in Trump and Israel, Kirk's persona, if not his authentic self, had faceted contours.

To understand why Kirk had to be killed requires probing more deeply than Wolin ventures, into the innerworkings of what Peter Dale Scott (2015) has effectively and indelibly dubbed "the American deep state". While beyond the scope of this paper to produce, the forensic method of inquiry Scott has exemplified—a "deep history" characterized by a chronology of events for which public records are typically either falsified or nonexistent—is essential for schematizing the evidence that has accumulated since September 10th, 2025. The contours of what happened that day seem increasingly within the ambit of what Scott dubs a "deep structural event", i.e., one "deeply rooted in illegal covert activity in various branches of U.S. intelligence and with predictable accompanying pattern of official cover-ups backed up by amazing media malfunction and dishonest best-selling books" (Scott, 2017, p. 97). Such events are further characterized by "America's engagement in ill-considered wars" (Scott, 2017, p. 98), of which the U.S./Israel joint assault of Iran this last March 2026 and subsequent escalation to full confrontation, is indicative if not exemplary. The preponderance of evidence indicates that Kirk died for reasons very like JFK, RFK and MLK; to stall if not head off, entirely, surging popular resistance to unlawful escalation of war.

Characterized as an "event", deeply structured or otherwise, Kirk's assassination raises *cui bono* and *modus operandi* questions. Under the formulation for "state crimes against democracy" (SCAD) by Lance DeHaven-Smith (2006, 2013), the Kirk assassination (and transmogrification of TPUSA to serve propaganda for Israel and war with Iran) parallels similar

incidents, their knock-on events and coverups in U.S. history (e.g., the several political assassinations of the 1960s, the FBI's COINTEL programs, the Gulf of Tonkin and September 11, 2001 incidents, the Iran-Contra affair, election irregularities, etc.). Together these constitute various species of *coups d'état*, acts whose continuous frequency subvert the foundational integrity of governing institutions, with consequences beyond any given political moment or singular agendas (Good, 2022). Two elements particularly relevant to SCAD theory have been in play in the Kirk affair: deployment of the conspiracy theory slur against any gainsaying of the official narrative, and evidence of multiple concurrent assassinations.

According to SCAD theory, state propaganda organs deploy the “conspiracy theory” slur to head off importuning inquiry into criminogenic political events, described by deHaven-Smith as the “conspiracy theory conspiracy”, entailing tactics of swarming gainsayers of the official narrative, neutralizing them one way or the other, typically with attacks characterizing them as “fringe” or their views as indicative of discredited “agendas” commonly associated with “hate groups”. It is in this way that state actors render their criminality hermetic, impervious to inquiry or criticism and for that matter endemic (Good, 2022; Hagen, 2022). For deHaven-Smith and others writing under the SCAD heuristic (Kouzmin, Witt and Kakabadse, 2012), state criminality denotes the modus operandi of a “guardian elite”, whose loyalties supersede statutory law and oaths of office.

Erika Kirk and surrogates initially ignored the accumulating social media commentary questioning the official narrative of the assassination. As evidence and audiences accumulated, newly installed CBS News chief, Bari Weiss, arranged for an extended interview exclusive with Erika Kirk, tailored explicitly to denouncing Candace Owens and other podcasters by association. Bibi Netanyahu issued similar denunciations, including publicly announcing that

Israel had nothing to do with Kirk's death. TPUSA surrogates who assumed hosting position of the Charlie Kirk Show have done likewise, issuing ad hominem and related attacks that have escalated in step with the accumulation of evidence gathered by Owens and others.

Also, according to SCAD theory and research, SCADs are often committed in sequenced pairs or clusters (deHaven-Smith, 2013, p. 152). On the same day as the Kirk assassination, September 10, Israel killed 31 journalists and media workers in targeted attacks on two newspaper offices in Yemen's capital city, Sanaa. The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) described this as the deadliest single attack on journalists in 16 years. Israel justified these actions, claiming they hit propaganda sites linked to the Houthis ([Mandour, 2025](#)). Over September 9-10, Israel carried out its first-ever direct military strike on Qatar, targeting Hamas negotiators gathered in Doha's diplomatic quarter under pretext of US-brokered ceasefire proposal, killing seven. Writing in *Middle East Monitor*, Zarqa Parvez notes:

The attack, which killed six people including a Qatari security officer and several Hamas members, represents far more than another tactical military operation. It marks *a watershed moment* that exposes the *fundamental collapse of the international order established after World War II* and demands urgent reconsideration of how global diplomacy and security function in the 21st century ([Parvez, 2025, para 1](#)) [emphasis in italics added].

Overnight and early morning, September 13, Israel initiated a barrage of airstrikes across Gaza City, killing at least 32, including 12 children in a hospital ([Associated Press, 2025](#)).

Aaron Good (2022) meticulously parses the cumulative conundrums attendant to deep state and SCAD dynamics, deftly assembling key nodal points, from Enlightenment principles

and the age of democratic revolution, through WWII, the Cold War, and the continuous present. In his Ph.D. dissertation, published in 2022 in book length under title *American Exception: Empire and the Deep State*, Good deploys deep historiographical methodology to reveal how “institutionalized lawlessness” (which Good dubs, after German political/legal theorist Carl Schmitt, as “exceptionism”) was essentially in place by 1948 under the dictum of “plausible deniability” conferred to CIA operations under U.S. National Security Council directive. Cold War exigencies, force magnified by the nihilistic implications of nuclear weaponry, subsequently made possible the formulation of a suite of perpetual exemptions for state actors from legal statute and Constitutional ordinance, if not also elemental assumptions of human morality. Central to Good’s formulation of American Exceptionism is the role that capital accumulation and the pursuit of global hegemony—the “overworld” counterpart to “underworld” components always umbilical to state criminality—play in the perpetuation of state law-less-ness. Within weeks of the U.S. and Israel initiated attacks on Iran in March this year, Trump twice made announcements of progress in negotiations that Iran flatly denied, in each instance before close of markets on Friday. In each instance, insider trading in billion-dollar, single trades against the rise and rapid dip were evident ([Due Dissidence, 2026](#)).

Conclusion: Navigating the Simulacra Parade

In sync with Wolin’s (2017) “dynamic of the archaic”, Good (2022) identifies a kind of perpetual anachronism:

Unfortunately, the deep state system has turned the politician into something like a modern analog of the priest-king. Rather than controlling and managing institutions in the public interest, our contemporary priest-kings must scramble to appease *inscrutable forces that may as well be supernatural*. These governing forces include the corporate

media, the petroleum industry, high finance, the national security bureaucracies as well as various other foreign and domestic lobbies (Good, 2022, p. 276) [emphasis in italics added].

Representative Thomas Massie's (R-KY) congressional putsch (climaxing in November, 2025), forcing Trump's hand in the Epstein affair, has instigated a very public reckoning with a potent sample of what priest-kings – from Sultans to Pharaohs to any number of potentates across time and continents – have availed of themselves. While on the one hand “nothing new under the sun”, the locus and timing of these revelations – from within the bosom of the country born from revolution against elite intrigues and entitlements, and concurrent with Charlie Kirk's Wunderkind revival of those founding values – has produced no minor tribulation for the U.S. body politic. The opening paragraphs from a February 2026 Substack essay posted by Dennis Kucinich (former mayor of Cincinnati, Congressional Representative and two-time Presidential candidate) offer a stunning sample of how the Epstein revelations continue to shatter public consciousness in the U.S:

Today the Trump Administration, at the behest of the decrepit Netanyahu government, was instrumental in the bombing of a girls' elementary school, killing 157 children. Let that sink in. Journey to the center of the world of American leaders' madness and ruin to see desperate Iranian parents picking through rubble, searching for any signs of their little girls.

Now tell those parents, as we are being told, that America has done this so the Iranian people can be free. It's the Empire's new equation, Freedom = Death.

This murderous approach that the Trump Administration has wantonly indulged is identical to the policy of the Netanyahu government to bomb schools in Gaza and to murder innocent children as a (psychopathic) determination of heading off retribution in the future. The murder of children has become a state sacrament.

This is, in fact, an extension of the Epstein saga, the destruction of innocence through child rape, murder and cannibalism by powerful people whose thirst for blood will never be slaked in this cartwheeling carnival of human sacrifice called war. ([Kucinich, 2026, para 1-4](#)) [boldface in original]

In July, 2025, amid polling showing a decisive decline in U.S. public support for Israel, Bibi Netanyahu rushed to Washington, D.C. for meetings and press conference to announce “there’s been a concerted effort to spread vilification and demonization against Israel on social media” ([Tait, 2025, para 2](#)). He followed this with comments in August, blaming bot farming he alleges originates from Asia (masquerading “as homespun southerners”) for 60% of anti-Israel bias ([Freiberg, 2025](#)). Meeting the following month with social media influencers at the Israeli Embassy in New York, Netanyahu described social media as “the most important weapon [...] to secure our base in the US” ([TRTWorld, 2025, para 2](#)). Meanwhile, in February 2026, following an interview with Ambassador to Israel, Mike Huckabee, Tucker Carlson publicly stated that Israel has threatened his family ([Tress et al., 2026](#)).

While beyond the scope of this paper to more than speculate, the role of social media “influencers” like Tucker Carlson and Candace Owens needs close attention from scholarly inquiry like what the Journal of 9/11 Studies supports. Social media is a disruptive force on a par with the Gutenberg Bible. Very like a 16th Century parishioner under the influence of rising literacy and mass publication, today’s media consumer need not take mainstream communion to

interpret the media “canon”. Very like the 18th Century coffeehouse culture Jürgen Habermas attributes to the “structural transformation of the public sphere” (Habermas, 1989), X, TikTok, and other social media platforms now expand laterally to virtually every corner of the planet instantaneously. Interactive modalities like comment sections and live chat sessions (scalable under subscription to “members only content”) create topical plebiscites, on the daily, featuring 10s if not 100s of millions of devotees poised to “ratio” any number of podcast channels (when comments outnumber the “likes” given any post). Whether the vast majority of this is “spectacle commodification” will of course be relevant to scholarship. Wherever there is an algorithm there is a pecuniary nexus. To what extent Candace Owens, Tucker Carlson and their creed themselves manufacture consent based on persona management and “constructed integrity” is matter warranting disciplined attention (Scruggs, 2025). The more we find ourselves in continuously hybrid space between real and hyperreal, between simulacra and simulation, the less stable are any ordinal, meaning-making navigational points. Determining who in this space is an honest broker sending pirate signals through a “Matrix” relay of commodified “noise” is no straightforward matter. Where did the “real” Charlie Kirk end and the “simulated” alter begin? At what point did Constitutional Kirk morph into Eschatological Kirk?

It's worth pondering Good's (2022) evocative postulation above: “Rather than controlling and managing institutions in the public interest, our contemporary priest-kings must scramble to appease inscrutable forces that may as well be supernatural.” Thanks in no small part to a huge plebiscite continuously available to her, Candace Owens has made several revelations of satanic symbolism or otherwise affiliated activity associated with the death of Charlie Kirk. Satanic references affiliated with ritualistic abuse, murder, “spirit cooking” (cannibalism) and so on are evident or adjacent to many revelations affiliated with the Epstein affair. Supernaturalism and

satanism share many cognate references. Satanism's reliance on a signal relay of symbols syncs closely with the narrative economy popularized in the science fiction film trilogy *The Matrix* (itself loaded with occult symbolism), the storyline of which was closely inspired from the work of French post-modernist theorist Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation* (originally published 1981). To Good's (2022) postulate above we might therefore consider: Does it really matter if Satan exists when elites effectively behave as if he does so while convincing the vast majority that they do not conduct themselves satanically?

For Baudrillard, the "real" is relegated to the outposts (a desert) of any given/actual/embodied experience; a continuous, day-break awakening hangover from nihilism. In a digitally produced, continuously virtual world of secrecy-influenced (occult) signal relays transmogrified by artificial intelligence generated bots and spin-off "sub-routines" (derivative narratives), the production line of simulacra that Baudrillard had in mind nearly 50 years ago will become more and more a phantasmagoric super studio, a menagerie of persona and spin-off personae. This year's "Charlie Kirk" model will square off against this year's "Nick Fuentes". Whatever might otherwise have been a genuine "turning point" will be continuously subsumed, redirected to source from ordinal points commanded by the architects, not the denizens, of the Supra-Simulation (i.e., the Matrix). Those who commanded Charlie Kirk's "brand" required its original, Kirk himself, to be returned to its source. Kirk's death was necessary for the emancipation of his symbol from the desert of the real that Kirk (eventually) came to embody through his open questioning of the Israel lobby. For Candace Owens and the millions following her and devoted to *their* Charlie Kirk, willing to accept a "red pill" reality dispossessed of refractory images, the emancipation of Kirk's "symbol" is mourned as the degradation of his "real" purpose. Kirk has been made simultaneously the martyr for *their* cause and its antithesis,

notably like the titular character of Ralph Ellison's Mid-Century American literary masterpiece, *Invisible Man*.

Shortly after Kirk's death there surged a production of meme videos associating him with the titular lead character, Truman Burbank, from the 1998 film *The Truman Show* (preceding the cinema release of *The Matrix* by less than a year). As we learn from the beginning of the film, Truman (played pitch perfectly by Jim Carey) is entirely the product of a simulation very much in the mold Baudrillard had in mind. The storyline evolves as Truman discovers, bit by bit, that the world he presumed to be so real and reliable was counterfeit. Keyed very much to the same dilemmas posed by *The Matrix* film trilogy (but over much less screen time), *The Truman Show* veers suddenly at the end from calamity to irony. Tempest-tossed at sea in a sailboat, the storm surge that nearly drowns him suddenly stops. His vessel steadies, transiting calm seas for an indeterminate interlude. Moments later (in film time) the boat's bowsprit (literally) punctures what had been the scene's horizon line as Truman breaches the last counterfeit of his world.

Exiting the vessel and standing on ledge (materializing precisely at waterline), Truman pounds violently on the surface he assumed moments earlier was unlimited horizon. Gathering himself, he walks along at the waterline junction with this (abutment) horizon; a sequence filmed with wide angled camera lens, from a short distance, conspicuously imparting the last illusion of the film, now projected back in a double-entendre onto the (also doubled) audience: Truman may or may not be walking on water. A few paces along this ledge walk there appears a utility exit staircase that Truman climbs—running his fingers delicately across the cloud painted surface—to a closed door (with embossed “EXIT” at hand level but no apparent door handle) that he pushes open to a darkened space. Accosted suddenly by the alternatingly tender/caring and menacing/condescending pleadings of the show creator, Christof (played by a beret capped Ed

Harris), now booming God-like from PA system above, Truman pauses briefly at the darkened opening before him. In a final inversion of role and reality, Christof breaks demeanor, impetuously demanding Truman answer him: “Well say something, God damn it! You’re on television! You’re live to the whole world!!” Truman then turns to deliver his signature greeting/good-bye, waving back to television viewers whom he realizes, now, have been watching him his whole life. This scene sequence alternates with Truman’s love interest, actually an actress in the show, who herself cheers him on while watching this penultimate moment unfold from her own television.

The association of the Truman meme with Charlie Kirk has it that he was himself duped like Truman, realizing too late that his TPUSA “family” was counterfeit. That interpretation seems to preclude Truman’s (and Kirk’s comparable) final gesture: opening a door at the terminus of the simulacrum, jamming the simulation that produced “Truman”, poised at the dark void of possibilities not otherwise predetermined – the desert of the real. Such openings, and what they might potentiate, would seem to be forever beckoning. If, how and to what extent such momentous “spaces” can be actualized is the stuff of hero’s journeys, one dark opening at a time. Kirk became aware of the simulation he had been ensnared by and, like Truman, he began signaling his awareness on open channels. Fearful he intended to exit the simulation controlling and defining him, his handlers convened in the Hamptons to shepherd him back into the fold, which his appearance on the Megyn Kelly podcast shortly after made clear he would not abide.

The film’s closing moments pan to audience members exuberant with Truman’s triumph, then to an utterly deflated Christof as the network executive (played by Phillip Baker Hall) orders the control room director, Simeon (played by Paul Giamatti), to cease transmission.⁶ The final scene returns to two security guards who, moments earlier, with countless viewers around

the world, exulted that “He made it!”, as the television screen they watch turns to static lines. Eating pizza, they ask each other “What else is on? Where’s the TV Guide?” Andy Warhol famously exalted the Campbell soup can to the same aesthetic actualization as Marilyn Monroe (both artworks produced in the year of her death, 1962), exposing the counterfeit beneath all media products in a fashion very like what Baudrillard glimpsed with *Simulacra and Simulation*. With similar realization of contrast, we (the actual viewers) glimpse the simultaneous exultation of Truman’s heroic defiance with its reduction to the banal: just another channel in a parade of simulacra.

Earlier in the film, around the 32:00-minute mark, Truman chases someone resembling his father (presumed by him to be deceased) into a building to an elevator. As Truman approaches the elevator doors, a security guard rushes to detain him. Momentarily turned towards the guard, Truman misses what the audience has already glimpsed as a young woman casually walks directly past Truman through the now opening elevator doors into a room with a behind-the-scenes production crew including workers on a break, lighting equipment, cables, and the artificial “set” wall. Appearing to agree to walk away with the guard Truman reverses course suddenly as the doors hang open upon the oblivious crew, one of whom suddenly looks up, meets Truman’s startled gaze, then alerts the others, who rush clumsily to replace the set wall for the interior of the elevator. At the same moment, the initial guard is joined by another to forcibly remove Truman from the building.

The preponderance of available evidence clearly indicates that Charlie Kirk’s assassination in Orem, Utah was a major stage production, designed for maximum political polarization optics. Since then, an audience in the millions, and growing, for Candace Owens and a clutch of diligent podcast programs (not including untold reposts) has been effectively glued to

a frame-by-frame deconstruction of a real-world counterpart to *The Truman Show* elevator sequence. If so, and to what extent, that audience attention can be sustained for simulation-signal-jamming purposes is a matter that scholarship ought to be paying very close attention. If as Good (2022) and Hagen (2022) indicate, the likelihood of that happening is slim to nil. As deHaven-Smith (2013, pp. 104-105) puts it:

To the extent that the national security elites are influencing national political priorities by manipulating the constellation of issues confronting the nation, all of the theories in the social sciences and their associated research programs are studying downstream phenomena while the real explanation of events resides earlier in time and higher in America's authoritative hierarchy. In other words, it is quite possible that the social sciences are studying shadows and that the people making the shadows are designing them for effect. Of course, this was how Plato described the situation of the citizens, except that in his story, which we must assume was a noble lie, the philosophers were helping citizens understand the shadows, not using the shadows for social control.

Writing the Introduction to the 2017 edition of Wolin's *Democracy, Inc.*, dissident journalist Chris Hedges takes note: "We are tolerated as citizens, Wolin warned, only as long as we participate in the illusion of a participatory democracy. The moment we rebel and refuse to take part in the illusion, the face of inverted totalitarianism will look like the face of past systems of totalitarianism" (Hedges, 2017, p. xxxi). Digital IDs and digital currencies, "15-minute cities" and vaccine passports are now very real prospects if not off-the-shelf actualities. Those agendas are being seamlessly brought forth by a suite of larceny against public will formation (democracy), including: manufactured (geo-engineered) climate catastrophes (drought, flooding, soil degradation and poisoning, bio-engineered crop failures, etc.), plague (bio-engineered, gain

of function outbreaks), economic instability (embargo, currency degradation and arbitrage), social instability (war/famine/economics-induced migration catastrophes), and so on, and on and on. It was no accident that *The Truman Show* director, Peter Weir, chose to close the film with two security guards indifferently changing the television channel. Very like conventional scholarship and mainstream media, those security guards, nominally responsible for tracking threats to our well-being, are playing to a script with an infinite regression of unactualized possibilities, but for the grace of a sustained human impulse to bear (vocal) witness to the accumulating glitches in the Matrix all around us, all the time.

Endnotes

1. For a deep dive into the family affiliation of Hunter Kozak with Hollywood and other connections to Kirk, See Coleman (2026b, 2026c).
2. TPUSA reported revenues increased nearly 40%, year over year, through 2022. In 2023 TPUSA pulled in over \$80m. For more, see ProPublica, <https://projects.propublica.org/nonprofits/organizations/800835023>.
3. This passage is no longer available from source. It is presented here as recreated by Gemini (and confirmed by Grok) from available material posted online and confirmed in related reports and clips uploads.
4. TPUSA has multiple direct ties with Ft. Huachuca. Captain Adam Neff (cousin to Blake Neff, staff at TPUSA) is associated with Ft. Huachuca through the 111th Military Intelligence Brigade, operating the US Army Intelligence Center of Excellence. Neff interrogated Mitch Snow, the eyewitness on September 8 and 9, 2025 of Erika Kirk and TPUSA security chief Brian Harpole (and also of Cabot Phillips, former boyfriend to Erika Kirk, friend to Charlie Kirk and close affiliate with TPUSA). Robert Kolvet, brother to Andrew Kolvet (top TPUSA personnel), is officer with rank of major, assigned business manager for US Army NetComm, headquartered at Ft. Huachuca. Another Kolvet brother, Kurt, is Lt. Col. for the 757th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, who does annual training at Ft. Huachuca. Andrew Kolvet tried to give Erika Kirk cover for allegations she was at the fort by mocking sleuths about “some fort”. Brian Harpole’s security offices (Integrated Security Services) are located a few blocks from the gate to Fort Huachuca. Erika starred in film (“November Renaissance”, never released) shot at Ft. Huachuca. Jake Hoffman’s marketing business is called *ITenLLC*. The 110th Military Brigade runs border patrol operations out of Ft. Huachuca. For more, see Digregorio (2026b).
5. Hoffman has more than a decade-long affiliation with the Farnsworth political clan of Arizona, ties connecting him to influence peddling and legislative rigging with linkages to child sex trafficking. See Digregorio (2026c).
6. From Edenic plot point elements (the Seahaven simulation, Truman’s love interest/knowledge temptress) to overt nominal references (Christof, Simeon, Tru(e)man), the Christological emblems in the film story have received substantial commentary. The storm surge sequence has been likened to the account of Christ calming the Sea of Galilee (Books of Matthew, Mark and Luke), in this instance with Truman (now like a defiant Job) excoriating, “Is that the best you’ve got?!!”, to which Christof finally capitulates, instructing the show director (Simeon) to stop the waves. The disciples, in this instance, are ambiguously signified and inverted: in one sense they are the film production crew witnessing Christof’s fall from grace; in another they are the audience at large witnessing Truman’s simultaneous transcendence (Morgan, 2026).

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(Note: Online sources identified here were accessed, variably, from Dec. 27, 2025 through June 30, 2026.)

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