

10 THINGS

YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT

The Southern Poverty Law Center





Understanding the SPLC's hate list and its dangers requires understanding the SPLC, its history, and how it has changed from a civil rights organization into a politically partisan and fundraising - driven organization.

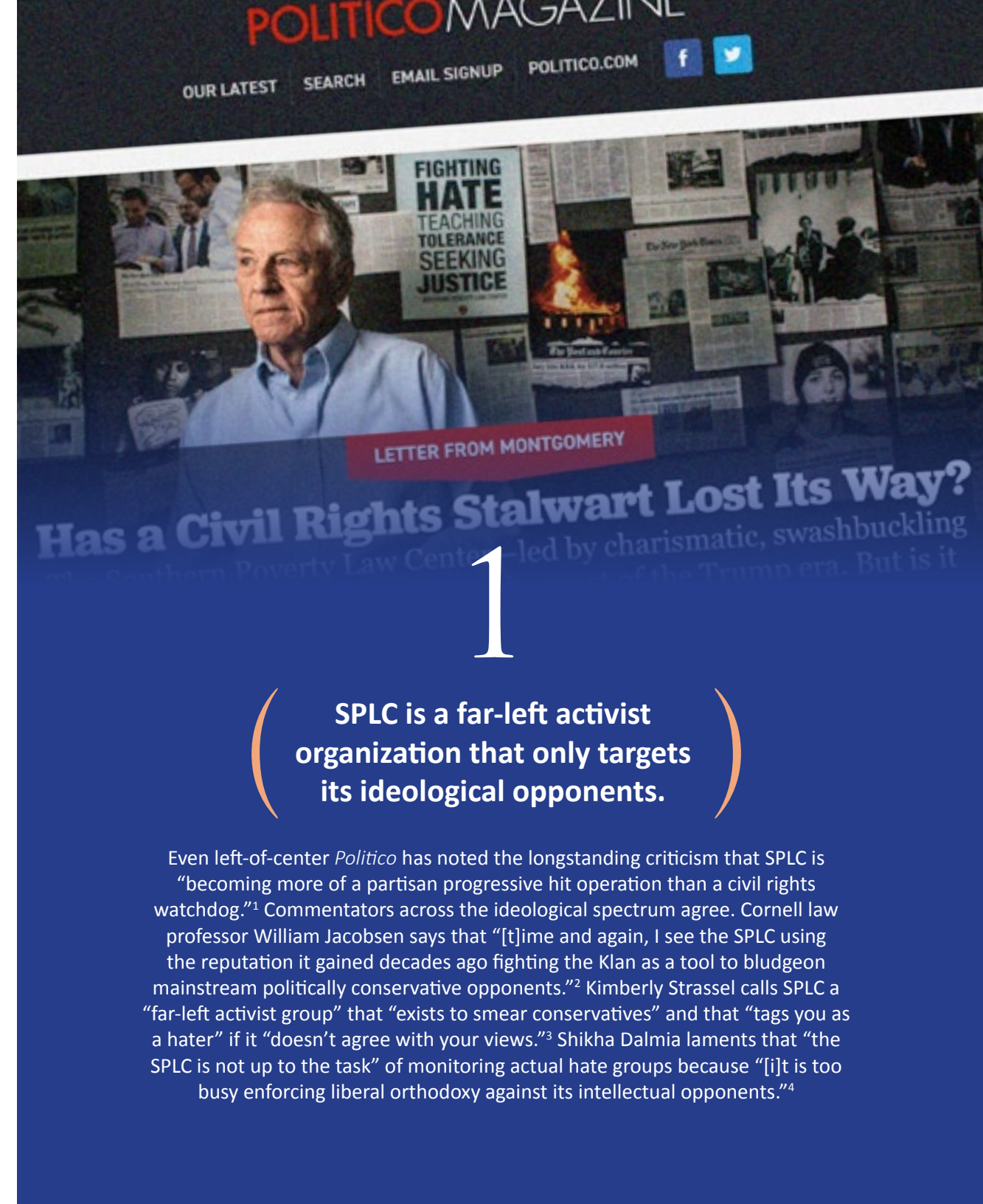
While the SPLC did good work decades ago fighting segregation in the South, it has become an unreliable, scandal-ridden, and far-left activist organization that attacks anyone who disagrees with its narrow political agenda. Here are ten things you should know about the SPLC.





...I see the SPLC using the reputation it gained decades ago fighting the Klan as a tool to bludgeon mainstream politically conservative opponents.

William Jacobsen, Cornell law professor



SPLC is a far-left activist organization that only targets its ideological opponents.

Even left-of-center *Politico* has noted the longstanding criticism that SPLC is “becoming more of a partisan progressive hit operation than a civil rights watchdog.”¹ Commentators across the ideological spectrum agree. Cornell law professor William Jacobsen says that “[t]ime and again, I see the SPLC using the reputation it gained decades ago fighting the Klan as a tool to bludgeon mainstream politically conservative opponents.”² Kimberly Strassel calls SPLC a “far-left activist group” that “exists to smear conservatives” and that “tags you as a hater” if it “doesn’t agree with your views.”³ Shikha Dalmia laments that “the SPLC is not up to the task” of monitoring actual hate groups because “[i]t is too busy enforcing liberal orthodoxy against its intellectual opponents.”⁴

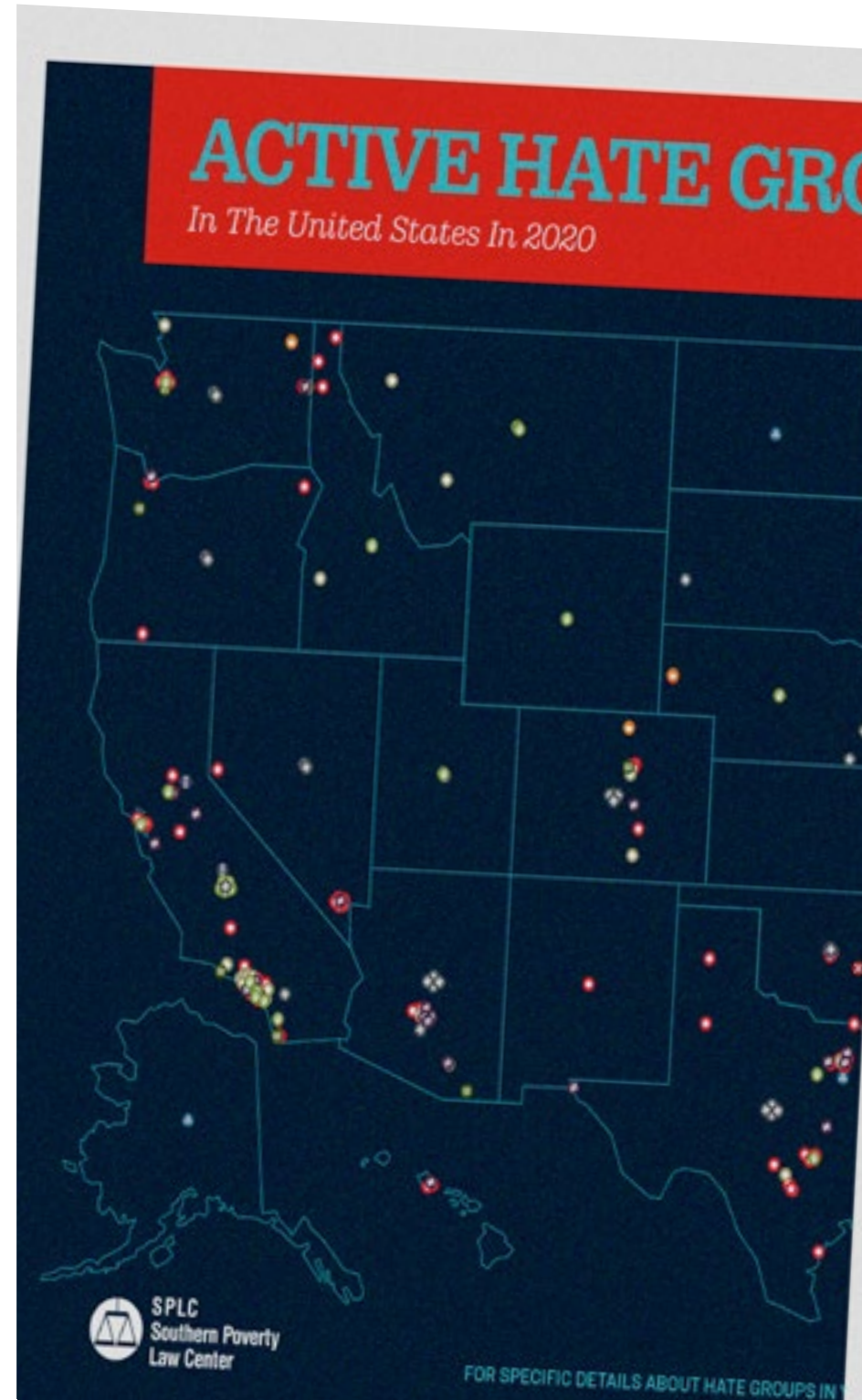
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SPLC’s conception of “hate” includes broad swaths of mainstream, conservative America.

SPLC’s “Hatewatch” blog is a perfect example. SPLC says this blog “monitors and exposes the activities of the American radical right” and the “activities and events of anti-LGBT organizations.” The so-called “radical right” and “anti-LGBT organizations” include many respected mainstream conservative and religious organizations and individuals, such as Ben Carson, Heritage Foundation, Dennis Prager, PragerU, The Federalist Society, Franklin Graham, Catholic Medical Association, Alliance Defending Freedom, Heritage Action, Focus on the Family, Family Research Council, Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission, Liberty Counsel, Pacific Justice Institute, The Leadership Institute, First Liberty Institute, Ruth Institute, European Center for Law and Justice, Alaska Family Council, Florida Family Policy Council, Texas Values, and Homeschool Legal Defense Association, to name just a few.

Demonstrating the breadth and danger of SPLC’s conception of “hate,” SPLC labelled the Boston chapter of The Federalist Society “anti-LGBT” because it hosted then-United States Attorney General Jeff Sessions for a talk on “The Future of Religious Liberty.”⁵

It’s simple – if you promote a viewpoint SPLC disagrees with, they label you a hater or extremist. SPLC does not want dialogue or debate. They just want to cancel you.



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SPLC’s lack of credibility is apparent across the political spectrum.

Jeff Bezos acknowledged to Congress that Amazon’s use of the SPLC “hate group” list to determine which nonprofits can participate in AmazonSmile is “an imperfect system.”⁶ He also stated that he “would like a better source if [he] can get it.” Following Mr. Bezos’ testimony, members of Congress⁷ and a prominent group of Orthodox Jewish rabbis⁸ both issued public letters calling upon Amazon to stop relying on the SPLC.

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SPLC’s hate group list is a deceptive fundraising tool.

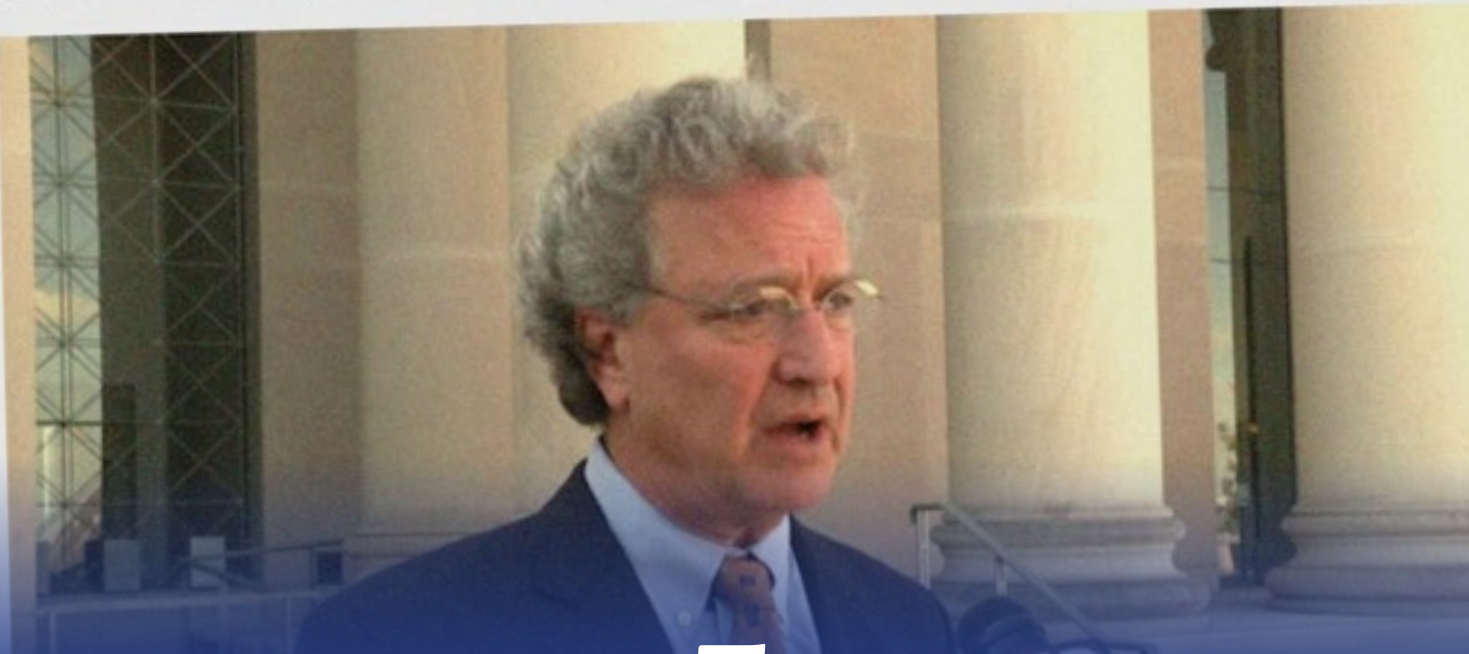
In an article titled “The Southern Poverty Law Center Is Everything that’s Wrong with Liberalism,” Nathan J. Robinson, the editor-in-chief of Current Affairs, carefully scrutinized SPLC’s “Hate Map” and concluded that it is an “outright fraud” and “a willful deception designed to scare older liberals into writing checks to the SPLC.”⁹ And former SPLC employee Bob Moser wrote that “it was hard, for many of us, not to feel like we’d become pawns in what was, in many respects, a highly profitable scam.”¹⁰

Southern Poverty Law Center president resigns after a co-founder was fired

By Susannah Cullinane, Hollie Silverman and Devon M. Sayers,

CNN

Updated 1602 GMT (0002 HKT) March 24, 2019



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SPLC suffers from a “systemic culture of sexism and racism.”

In 2019, SPLC fired its co-founder, and its long-time president resigned amid numerous employee reports that SPLC suffers from “a systemic culture of racism and sexism within its workplace,” as reported by CNN, the LA Times, the NY Times, NPR, and many other media outlets.¹¹

6

Federal courts have said SPLC’s “hate group” label is based entirely on its subjective opinion.

A federal judge recently found that the SPLC hate list does not “depend upon objective data or evidence” and its application of the “hate group” designation is “entirely subjective.”¹² And another federal judge ruled that SPLC’s “representation or description” of a nonprofit organization as a hate group “is not one ‘of fact.’”¹³

7

SPLC’s goal is to crush its avowed political opponents.

SPLC’s Senior Fellow Mark Potok, former editor-in-chief of SPLC’s *Intelligence Report*, said: “Sometimes the press will describe us as monitoring hate groups and so on.... *I want to say plainly that our aim in life is to destroy these groups, to completely destroy them.*”¹⁴ SPLC has never renounced this statement.





The biggest problem with the hate map, though, is that it's an outright fraud. I don't use that term casually. I mean, the whole thing is a willful deception designed to scare older liberals into writing checks to the SPLC.

Nathan Robinson, **Current Affairs**

U.S.

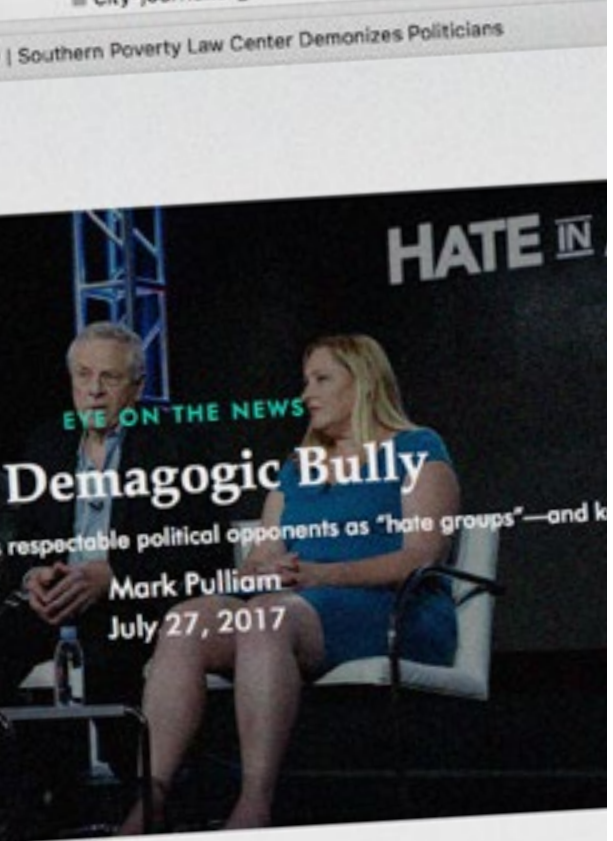
Southern Poverty Law Center Settles Lawsuit After Falsely Labeling 'Extremist' Organization

BY GREG PRICE ON 6/18/18 AT 2:06 PM EDT



SPLC has publicly disavowed several of its erroneous “hate” or “extremist” labels, the most recent retraction costing them a \$3.375 million settlement.

SPLC included Maajid Nawaz, a Muslim reformer who has devoted his life to opposing violence, and Ayaan Hirsi Ali, a renowned human rights activist who suffered at the hands of Islamic extremists, in its “Field Guide to Anti-Muslim Extremists.”¹⁵ Mr. Nawaz threatened to sue for defamation. In response, SPLC pulled the Guide. Ultimately, SPLC publicly apologized for labelling Mr. Nawaz an extremist and agreed to pay a \$3.375 million settlement.¹⁶ SPLC also publicly apologized to Dr. Ben Carson, who was included in its “Extremist File” in 2014 for his view that marriage is the union of one man and one woman.¹⁷

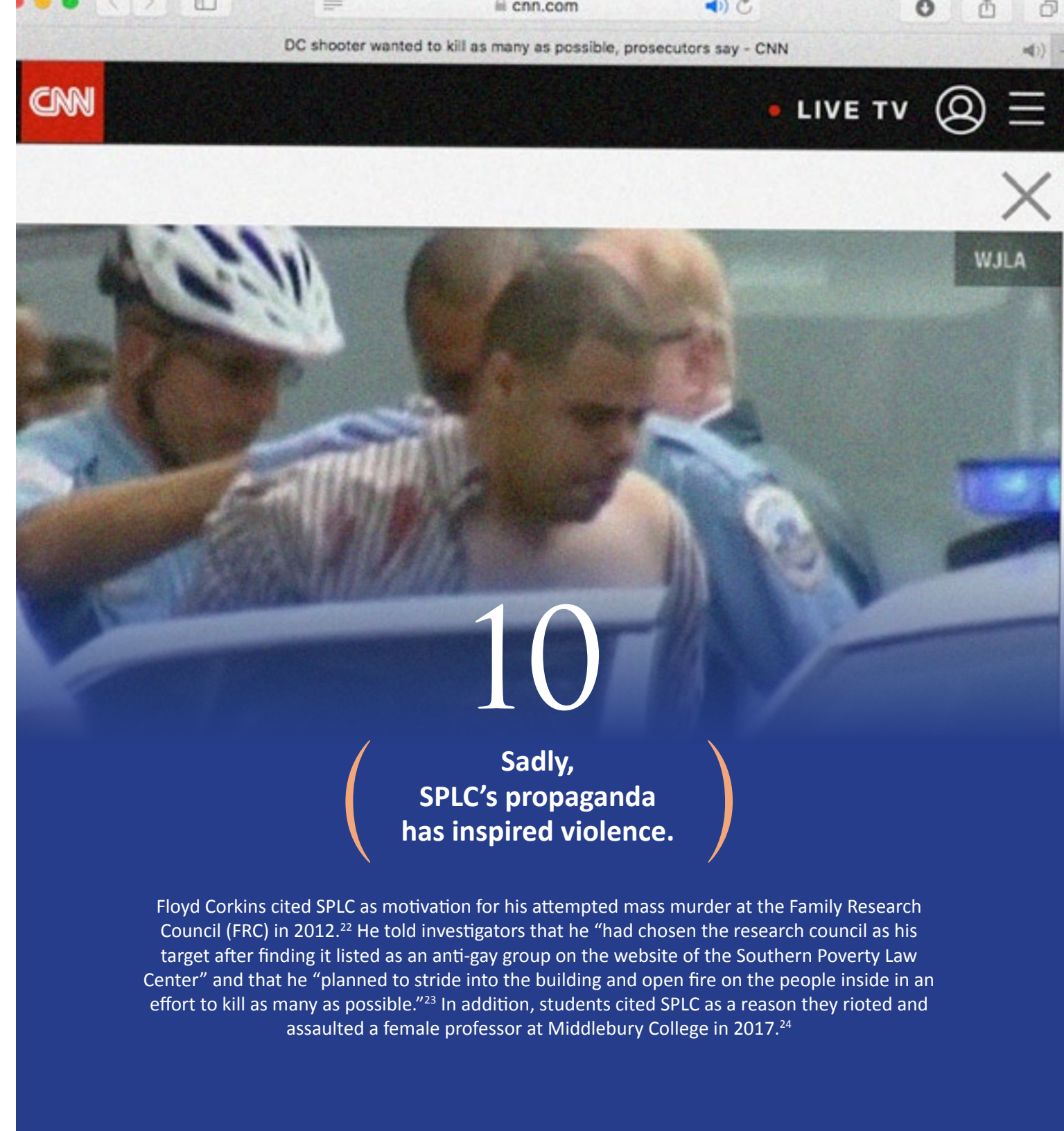


successful demagoguery as “keep[ing] the
y an endless series of hobgoblins, most of t
politics,” but his insight is equally applicabl
extravagant claims. For the past 40 years, a
nter, has excelled in promoting such unwar
e process amassing a fortune from its credu
ife with dangerous “hate groups”: the Ku K
ilitia groups, radical-right terrorists, and m
xtremist groups operating across the count
ases, reports, and—importantly—direct-ma
eming with smoldering churches and syna
nd even lynchings.
erance is at an all-time high, diversity is ur
efined and reported by the Federal Bureau

9

**SPLC’s “hate” label shuts down
civil discourse and breeds contempt
for those who hold different views.**

Mark Pulliam observes that SPLC’s hate label results in “dissent [being] de-legitimatized, and political foes [being] demonized.”¹⁸ Megan McArdle criticizes SPLC for lumping “principled conservatives” with “bigots” and observes: “Given the increasing tendency of powerful tech companies to flex their muscle against hate groups, we may see more and more institutions unwittingly turned into critics or censors . . . of fairly mainstream ideas.”¹⁹ Karl Zinsmeister said, “Taking people and groups with political views different from your own and lumping them with villains and gangsters is the mark of a bullying organization that aims to intimidate and even criminalize philosophical opponents.”²⁰ And *Politico* questions whether “[a]t a time when the line between ‘hate group’ and mainstream politics is getting thinner and the need for productive civil discourse is growing more serious, fanning liberal fears, while a great opportunity for the SPLC, might be a problem for the nation.”²¹



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**Sadly,
SPLC’s propaganda
has inspired violence.**

Floyd Corkins cited SPLC as motivation for his attempted mass murder at the Family Research Council (FRC) in 2012.²² He told investigators that he “had chosen the research council as his target after finding it listed as an anti-gay group on the website of the Southern Poverty Law Center” and that he “planned to stride into the building and open fire on the people inside in an effort to kill as many as possible.”²³ In addition, students cited SPLC as a reason they rioted and assaulted a female professor at Middlebury College in 2017.²⁴

Endnotes

- 1 Ben Schreckinger, *Has a Civil Rights Stalwart Lost Its Way?*, Politico, July/August 2017, <https://politico.com/2lsnOxw>.
- 2 Schreckinger, *supra*.
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- 12 See <https://law.justia.com/cases/federal/district-courts/district-of-columbia/dcd-ce/1:2019cv00087/203379/18/>.
- 13 See <https://cases.justia.com/federal/district-courts/alabama/almdce/2:2017cv00566/64434/68/0.pdf?ts=1568970996>.
- 14 See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vi1KQte6y0I&feature=youtu.be>. Emphasis ours.
- 15 Jack Crowe, *Southern Poverty Law Center Quietly Deleted List of 'Anti-Muslim' Extremists After Legal Threat*, National Review (April 19, 2018), <https://bit.ly/2pnr6UY>.
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ACTIVE HATE GROUPS

In The United States In 2020

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I am going to acknowledge that [relying on the SPLC] is an imperfect system, and I would love suggestions on better or additional sources.

Jeff Bezos



SPLC
Southern Poverty
Law Center

FOR SPECIFIC DETAILS ABOUT HATE



ADFLegal.org