

# The Wolves of Vinland

a Fascist Countercultural “Tribe” in the Pacific Northwest

Rose City Antifa

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Over recent years, a host of new organizations and projects have surfaced in the US, attempting to rebrand fascism for new audiences. For several decades fascist organizing has been associated with the hijacking of “skinhead” fashion and culture, but increasingly the fascist Right moves in other scenes as well. Fascist organizers intend to build countercultural visibility and appeal to disaffected working class whites, who may already be active in a subculture of some form. Fascist counterculture attempts to build in settings such as the neo-folk and black metal music scenes; religion in the form of “folkish” heathenry or Asatru; and independent publishing projects mixing political and “nonpolitical” content. One manifestation of this Alt-Right countercultural/“spiritual” organizing in the Pacific Northwest (PNW) is called the Wolves of Vinland Cascadia.

Drawing upon a mix of motivational speaking, weightlifting, hand to hand and tactical arms training, hyper-masculinity and pre-Christian Germanic religion, the Wolves of Vinland (WoV) have situated themselves as the group du jour on the countercultural Right. The group expresses an elitist and patriarchal worldview, much of which is copied from the philosophy of Julius Evola. (Evola considered himself to be to the Right even of fascism; however Evola was attracted to the Nazi SS as a model of the sort of “elite” he wished to cultivate, and moved to Nazi Germany after the fall of Fascism in Italy.)

Dressing in motorcycle club style vests, painting their faces, and building a “tribe,” the WoV have successfully and quietly organized two other chapters across the United States. Despite the claims to be inspired by historical pre-Christian Germanic people, the WoV tend to organize similarly to outlaw “1%er” biker gangs. They have a proper group (the official WoV) and feeder clubs, from which they draw in new members. These feeder groups are part of “Operation Werewolf”. In the last year or so, a third WoV chapter has begun organizing in the Portland area under the leadership of self-proclaimed “anarcho-fascist” and gay anti-queer militant Jack Donovan. WoV has recently been listed by the SPLC as an active hate group, which suggests just how far they have gone.

The WoV have received attention from both militant antifascists and watchdog organizations, but for many people this group has largely flown under the radar. “Crypto-fascism”—that is, fascist messaging when dog-whistled or veiled with esoteric references—is harder to spot and confront than some buffoon marching around with a swastika flag. This, arguably, also makes such a current more dangerous; we believe “crypto-fascism” must be both uncovered and directly combatted. In this article, we expose the history of the Wolves of Vinland, their use of Operation Werewolf as a recruiting tool, the nature of Evola-influenced worldview, and the activity of the Cascadian Pack of WoV, their leader Jack Donovan, and his allies.

# The Wolves of Vinland: Origins and Belief

The WoV organization was started roughly 10 years ago by self-styled fitness coach, motivational guru and white supremacist Paul Waggener along with his brother Matias. Drawing from Nazi era Norse imagery, total misreadings of Germanic and Scandinavian paganism, Men's Rights Activist ideology, and drawing on the power lifting and black metal subcultures, they have cobbled together a "tribalist" Evolian cadre organization. These guys have gotten a lot of press due to their competent use of social media as an outreach tool and their ability to craft a very specific übermensch countercultural cool.

The theories of Julius Evola (1898 – 1974) are a primary influence on WoV. Scholar Franco Ferraresi correctly stated that "Evola's thought can be considered one of the most radically and consistently anti egalitarian, anti liberal, anti democratic, and anti popular systems in the twentieth century." ("The Radical Right in Postwar Italy," *Politics & Society*, 1988 16:71-119, Pg. 84) The esotericist Evola believed that the world, specifically the West, has been and is going through a decline rooted in materialism, a lack of spiritual awareness, and opposition to "masculine" principles. This final phase of decay and collapse is called the "Kali Yuga" (Evola borrows the concept from the Hindu cycle of Yugas.) This phase would be ended by willing individuals (called "aristocrats of the soul") bringing about a rebirth by implementing a "Traditional society" — basically a return to some imagined Golden Age. Evola wrote about Roman society with regard to this theory, but Evola's claims been applied to other western cultures as well.

The myth of rebirth from the ashes is key within fascist ideology. What set Evola apart from standard fascist ideology was his aversion to large political party organizing and populism. Evola also scorned nationalism as not being elitist enough. Such opposition to nationalism may place Evola outside of "fascism" narrowly defined—if one believes that fascism is necessarily nationalistic, then Evola clearly falls outside that "fascism" (and to its right). However functionally Evola and Evolian thought have generally aligned with fascist political movements – as demonstrated by Evola's efforts to gain favor with select Italian Fascists and then German Nazis during his own lifetime. Evola's ideas have also been useful to more recent neofascist movements. These ideas are best known in Europe but dovetail neatly with American notions of the tough, heroic individual as well as anti-state sentiment among disaffected whites who feel their power in society slipping. Nothing is more astutely "American" than calls for cleansing violence without a party mechanism and a "dictator" in charge.

The Wolves of Vinland leader Paul Waggener – like many Evolians – is trying many things to see what will get traction for his political goals. Those goals are the creation of a cadre organization capable of surviving the immanent western decline and emerging as leaders of the next "traditional society" in the next cycle of Yungas. Waggener is responsible for a series of cultural projects which he uses to express themes of western decline and emasculation. These projects range from "outlaw" country (Paul

Waggener & the Howling Grimness) and black metal bands (Cladonia Rangiferina), to an awful “Film Studio” (Anarchist Films) and his many esoteric and fitness e-books online. Waggener’s interest in a plethora of subcultures is part of a strategy of ‘fishing’ — casting out lines into different areas of social life until something (or someone) gets hooked. In this case, the religious influences and hyper-masculinity of the Wolves of Vinland have come to dominate the values of the organization.

For the Wolves, the Golden Age of the past they look to is a hodge podge of pre-Christian Scandinavian, Viking, and Germanic tribalism. They have not been the first to mix heathenry or Asatru with far right wing politics and outright fascism. In fact the origins of organized heathenry in America come from overt racists: Else Christensen, a Third Positionist Danish immigrant who started the Odinist Fellowship; Stephen McNallen who was a Soldier of Fortune contributor and self-proclaimed founder of Asatru in America under the Asatru Free Assembly (now the Asatru Folk Assembly); and Michael J. Murray AKA Valgard Murray, a former organizer for the American Nazi Party in the 60’s and former spokesperson for the Arizona-based National Socialist outlaw brotherhood Iron Cross MC. Despite these origins, an overwhelming majority of heathens or Asatru practitioners in America are currently not racist, racialist, or even far-Right politically. Nevertheless, it is easy enough to mix racist politics with pre-Christian Germanic folk religion, since there are precursors to draw on when giving a modern racist inflection to discussions of the gloried past of folk belief.

The Wolves of Vinland push a hyper-masculine image, politics and practice inspired partially by Evola. This has resonance in modern America, where professed Men’s Rights Activists (MRAs) have been loudly beating the antifeminist drum over the last decade or so. Simply put: the threat of liberated women has some men pissing in their pants. This panic is due to a failure of imagination in which gains in women’s freedom cannot be seen by some men as anything except a loss to their own. As we have stated in a recent article, reactionary hypermasculinity has gained traction with disaffected working class whites in large numbers. The radical solution to the “problem” of feminism posited by Evola and others is a return of heroic masculine warrior-kings or aristocrats, to bring about a rebirth of the currently declining age.

The Wolves of Vinland fully buy into this neo-masculinist, warrior worldview. This can be seen in their many online photographs in which physical fitness, toughness, fight training and “manliness” can be contrasted with the mundane world around the viewer. Many of these photographs are taken by the internationally known professional rock and roll photographer, and local Portlander, Peter Beste.

The Wolves of Vinland are essentially an Evolian cadre group wrapping itself in neo-pagan imagery. Many of the organizers such as Paul Waggener and Jack Donovan have strong ties, if not partial ownership in popular powerlifting gyms. Paul and Donovan use an extensive network of social media accounts to promote their motivational fitness and strength training regimes, Paul’s of course are for sale online.

Their events, such as the ones held at their crowdfunded hall “Ulfheim” in Virginia, are ritually opened with bouts of boxing and MMA style fighting. The Ulfheim

compound contains several off-the-grid houses based in rural Lynchburg, VA and was crowd-funded with the help of white nationalists cultural networkers Counter-Currents Publishing, as well as a marketer for conservative American political website World Net Daily. Not only is overt violence used internally in the group it is part and parcel of their political warrior ideology. To the point that Jack Donovan's webstore sells various merchandise stating "Violence is Golden". Those on the far-Right often celebrate physical violence to assert dominance; for the Wolves, violence has become a holy act.

Not only is physical violence part of WoV ideology; racial violence is part of their practice, as the outcome of their romanticized "tribal" identity. One member of the Lynchburg pack, Maurice "Hjalti" Michaely spent two years in the custody of the State of Virginia after burning down a historic Black church and causing over \$1 million in damage. Despite claims by the group that this event wasn't racially motivated, members of the Lynchburg group have been photographed numerous times with tattoos and patches on their vests of the Black Sun symbol, Nazi styled swastikas, and "SS" style lightning bolts. In fact their leader Paul has a large Black Sun tattoo on his chest.

## **Wolves of Vinland and Operation Werewolf: Organizational Structure and Strategies**

Despite their claims of having over 300 members the WoV organization itself is rather small. Spread out over 3 chapters: Lynchburg, VA (Ulfheim/Appalachia), Cheyenne, WY/Colorado (Windborn) and recently the Pacific Northwest (Cascadia), WoV have a dedicated following and membership made up of mostly working class white men. Their numbers seem inflated as they seem to be counting hangers on, wives/girlfriends of patched members, and possibly even their children who also wear "cuts" of the organization. These cuts, battle jackets, or vests members wear tell of their open association with the group and role within it. Unlike more disciplined 1%er (outlaw) biker gangs, WoV's main motivation is political rather than criminal. Jackets are not completely uniform, with members wearing an assortment of handmade patches with slogans on them, often including misspelled Runic words and animal bones.

Similar to biker gangs, though, WoV use "feeder" groups to draw membership into its ranks. The feeder organization is of course run by Paul Waggener and called "Operation Werewolf" (OW). Most new members from the current era of the group are drawn up from the OW ranks, for their dedication to the political and quasi-religious goals which are preached ad nauseam in OW forums, publications and merchandise. OW subscribers wear "cuts"/battle jackets and are encouraged to form their own local self-organized groups. They have a complicated symbolic language, typically using runes, hand signs, numbers and acronyms. Like the Wolves they enjoy posing for the camera

on social media showing off tattoos, muscles, and weapons (knives, swords, pistols, and tactical rifles).

OW participants are essentially cadre wannabes who generally adhere to the ideology but perhaps not in full. Some may be atheists, right wing libertarians, “anarcho-capitalists”, occultists or outright white supremacists who are not in tune with the nuances of the WoV worldview. It is clear that the numbers of OW are substantially higher than WoV. This also means that where there is a WoV pack, there are typically also OW members in the same area. Online photos from participants reveal organized clusters up and down the west coast from SoCal to Washington State. Recently there have also been groupings forming internationally under the OW banner in various European countries thanks to social media.

It is important to note that “Operation Werewolf” shares its name with the guerilla German resistance force organized by Adolf Hitler in 1944 during the decline of Nazi control. OW uses Nordic and Germanic symbols from both before the Christian era and also the Medieval period — one example being the Wolfsangel, a medieval chivalric arm erroneously identified and used by Nazi occultists as a “rune.” This symbol has also been used by the Azov Regiment, a far right Ukrainian neo-Nazi military formation currently fighting Russia under State sanction.

## Jack Donovan

In recent years Oregon based Alternative Right writer Jack Donovan (AKA Jack Donovan-Malebranche) has been writing about masculinity, western decline, and white identity. Donovan’s notoriety began with the publication of his book, *The Way of Men*, which has been reviewed and frequently cited by the “men’s movement” that has been growing in many English speaking countries. The men’s movement is a reactionary grouping of ideas best expressed in the narrative that men are being feminized (by feminism, modernity, or even tainted food) and that western civilization is declining because maleness is under attack. The only way to revive manliness and save the West, according to these advocates, is by physical fitness, authoritarian values drawn from an idealized past, and a liberal application of violence. Increasingly, WoV hero Julius Evola has been cited on radical “men’s movement” pages as a figure worth studying.

Among Jack Donovan’s achievements are extensive writing for the North American New Right, Counter Currents Publishing, Radix Journal, and other far-Right websites and journals. Donovan has openly identified as an “anarcho-fascist”, “white nationalist”, and “racialist”. He has gained a following in the political space where neo-masculinity meets up with neo-fascism. Although gay, Donovan unequivocally rejects modern gay culture. AsAnti-Fascist News noted about the National Policy Institute 2015 Halloween conference, where Donovan was a guest speaker :

“Donovan is known for being a gay “anti-gay” author, so to speak, where he writes extensively how queer men should abandon gay identity because it is associated with

effeminacy, leftist politics, and feminism. He instead identifies as an “andriophile” and writes about the important (sic) of male tribalism and deeply misogynistic works on the edges of the Men’s Rights movement. More recently he has been extending an incredible support to white nationalism, leaning more in the direction of folkish Heathenry in the masculinist and tribalist interpretations. “

In 2014 Donovan started a chapter for the Wolves of Vinland known as the “Cascadia Chapter” or “Cascadia Pack”. Previous to this he identified himself as an Operation Werewolf Operative. Donovan and his new cadre have held WoV events near the Portland Metro area, specifically on land owned by local White Supremacists and fellow fascist alt-righters Juleigh Howard-Hobson and her husband David Hobson. Juleigh is a poet and ardent anti-feminist, and propagandist for the North American New Right (as is Donovan). Both her and her husband attended the David Irving Holocaust Denial lecture that Rose City Antifa protested in 2009. At the time, Juleigh and David were members of the now-defunct European Americans United racist organization.

Donovan’s recent celebrity has given the WoV a deeper reach into MRA and powerlifting circles. Local strength coach and Donovan ally Chris Duffin of Elite Performance Center (based in Clackamas, AKA Kabuki Strength Lab) let Donovan and the Waggener brothers be his first non-power-lifting interview on his video podcast. Duffin is such a supporter that he lets Donovan run a tattoo studio out of EPC’s backroom known as “New Barbarian Tattoo” (14350 INDUSTRIAL WAY, CLACKAMAS, OR, 97015, by appointment only). In this space, Donovan recently gave fascist lawyer Augustus Invictus a large back tattoo. Donovan also painted the large mural of a bird of prey with “VICTORY” on the interior wall of the gym. We’ve received reports of Donovan openly recruiting out of EPC for his WoV Cascadia group. Sadly, Donovan was given a slight degree of respectability by Fight Club author and former Portlander Chuck Palahniuk, who was interviewed by Donovan on his podcast “Start the World”. This in turn increased Donovan’s profile, which he uses to build an online business selling books, art, decals, and patches to the hypermasculine crowd.

The carefully crafted image of men returning to the ‘natural order’ by painting their faces and howling in caves is reminiscent of new age ‘men’s groups’ with a faux-Viking twist. All the elements of WoV may be in vogue, but they are far from innocent. Creating small groups with a focus on physical prowess and fighting ability (fist fights and wrestling are required of members), combined with the hyper-masculine Evolian worldview instilled in members, all mimic the most militant sectors of the far-Right in Europe. The gang-style organizing found in WoV is also found in the most violence-prone parts of the white power movement here in the US.

## Call to Action

Outside of WoV, Evolian and far-Right themes are creeping into a growing number of other cultural and/or “spiritual” spaces. For example, the neo-folk project Changes

(white nationalist Robert N. Taylor and his cousin Nicholas Tesluk) named a 2013 tour “Ride the Tiger,” making reference to Evola’s book of the same name. Anti-fascists and anti-racists must be able to recognize and oppose this milieu, even if its catchphrases, themes and iconography differ from stereotypes about what white supremacists do and say.

We do not think that the self-description of Evola-fanboys as “Traditionalists” should be accepted, since this title obscures their radical anti-egalitarian worldview. Functionally, these figures are as much a part of neo-fascist practice as the “national anarchists,” who reject strict state-nationalism while propagating myths of violent rebirth in terms of culture or “tribe” instead. Similarly, claims from WoV and their ilk that they are merely engaged in culture-building should be challenged. While it is true that WoV do not participate in political activity narrowly construed (e.g. lobbying) the point of their “culture-building” is to change society at large, moving it in a patriarchal, authoritarian and racially-divided direction. Not only does this project have political ramifications down the line; when combined with militaristic organization it has immediate consequences — the plot against a Black church is not mere coincidence.

We have outlined the history of the Wolves of Vinland; their use of Operation Werewolf as a recruiting tool; the nature of their worldview, and the role of their leaders Paul Waggener and Jack Donovan as well as some of their allies in the growing far-Right creep in the Pacific Northwest. The Trump campaign has certainly galvanized white nationalists and overt fascists alike; however another threat is the growing normalization of far-Right themes and discourse in subcultural spaces, which also contributes to radicalization. Jack Donovan and the Wolves of Vinland are emblematic of this growing infiltration. The need for antifascists to reclaim these spaces is greater than ever.

At end of August-beginning of September the Operation Werewolf website was hacked and various social media accounts shut down. The WoV claim to “Have sorted the identity of the transgressor” but have yet to do anything besides completing an indiegogo campaign “looking to raise 15,000 dollars in 30 days”<sup>[1]</sup> which actually raised money above and beyond its goal. While tactics like this may not stop WoV from organizing permanently they certainly make it more difficult for them to operate. However, these online approaches are no substitute for opposing racist and far-Right organizing within cultural projects and social spaces, in real life. As such, it should be noted that when they are not working out or reenacting pseudo tribalistic rituals, Donovan and his “pack” regularly attend black metal shows, drink at bars, and eat at restaurants around the Portland area (including Oregon City), and do so typically fully patched up.

*For more information please visit the original post here.*

The Ted K Archive

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It's Going Down. <<https://itsgoingdown.org/wolves-vinland-fascist-countercultural-tribe-pacific-northwest>>

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