

Beyond the Concrete Milkshake



Tactics for Defeating Media Trolls & Grifters

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About this Zine

The modern "media troll" (Latin name, *medius troglodytus*), also commonly known as the "Portland grifter," is a relatively new species, at least in the numbers they appear in today. They are commonly found in flocks near protests, blockades, and progressive or leftist movement events of all kinds, camera in hand, squawking their trademark cries: *freeze peech!* and *just asking questions!*

While initially appearing to the untrained eye as a "Common Street Journalist" (*medius via vulgaris*) due to their similar bearing and plumage, this is actually a clever evolutionary ploy designed to lure their prey. The unwary activist confuses the two species at their own peril.

-- From "A Treatise on the Media Grifter," Archives of the
Antifascist Turdwatching Society

Art by "Birb" (Instagram: @_birbles).

"Beyond the Concrete Milkshake" is dedicated to Sophie Scholl (May 9 1921 – February 22 1943) and the White Rose Society.

Contributors to this guide include the Oh Shit! What Now? collective, Jesse from Popular Mobilization Portland, Nick Dement, Auntie Fa, Susan "George" Schorn, and my followers on Twitter. Thanks also to my first readers.

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Find me online: @KitOConnell / kitoconnell.com

Did I leave something out or get something wrong? Send feedback to kitoswn@protonmail.com.

Protest in a Pandemic

When I began this project, the novel coronavirus wasn't even on my radar. Then, the global outbreak came and for a moment I wondered if anyone would ever take the streets again.

The current nationwide uprisings reflect the anguish and anger of Black people over police brutality and systemic racism, and their immense bravery in the face of this pandemic.

COVID-19 requires new, creative techniques to create safer protests. Many of these are still being invented as I write.

The sadly politicized nature of the pandemic also means media trolls may take fewer precautions and engage in higher risk activities than those of us in what's broadly described as "the Left." As a result, it may be even more important to isolate them from your movement than ever, particularly from any vulnerable participants in your events.

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Beyond the Concrete Milkshake: An Introduction

During the Occupy movement, the smartphone allowed anyone to broadcast live or instantly report on protests or police action using social media. Some of these citizen journalists started to bring in donations from their viewers, usually just enough to keep them supplied with Megabus tickets to the next protest. Most of them either broadly supported the movement, or subscribed to "journalistic neutrality."

Then, some of them figured out you can make way more money working for the dark side. So they tucked their beanie caps down a little lower and got to work making the Left look bad. A trickle of donations turned into a flood of money.

Dishonestly edit a video, and you could land a job with Infowars. Get roughed up while harassing antifascists, and you earn a 6-figure paycheck. All you have to do is give up a piece of your soul.

Counter-Media Tactics Be the Media

The details of creating a media plan are beyond the scope of this zine. However, here are a few tips

Decide If you're talking to the media, which media you'll talk with, and who will do the talking.

Research local media trolls and create a dossier. Make sure key people have access. This will make many of the other tactics more effective.

Encourage people to remain silent and simply refer media to your designated representatives.

Create your own media in the form of tweets, 'grams, videos, blog posts, articles, podcasts ... Make your narrative louder than theirs.

Film the trolls back. This makes them uncomfortable. And makes it harder for a media troll to claim they were an innocent journalist when they participate in fascist mayhem. **Film the police** too.

Pro-Tips

Press Protection Squad

Dedicate a team of volunteers to "protect" media trolls both from getting hurt and from getting useful footage. The squad physically surrounds and isolates trolls, forcing them to move away from the protest and blocking their cameras.

Hula hoops wrapped in bubble wrap are popular tools in the Pacific Northwest. You can add a few "FRAGILE" stickers for effect.

Diversity of Tactics

You can't control other people, only yourself. While you and your comrades might agree to a code of conduct, a handful of strangers can throw your plans into disarray.

Be prepared. If someone does start throwing those mythical concrete milkshakes, you can protect your crew from any blowback without calling the cops or playing 'peace police.'

Now activists are faced with the complex task of preventing these "media trolls" and grifters from damaging their movements or exposing activists to harm. The most notorious trolls join nazis in physical assaults on the left. Many share activists' faces & contact information in the name of "journalism," in some cases exposing them to violent neo-nazi threats.

Physical retaliation, while sometimes necessary for self-defense, can backfire by creating unwanted sympathy for the troll. This zine is intended to offer suggestions for countering media grifters in a way that empowers, rather than harms your movement.

Noise

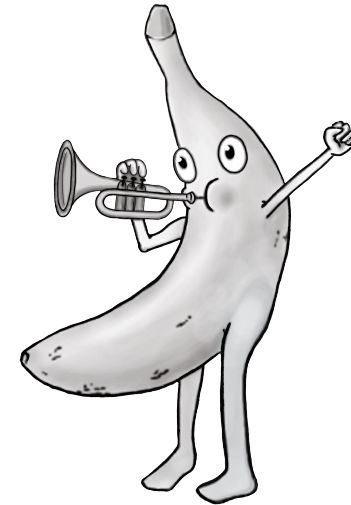


Be loud. Enough noise can ruin livestreams and simple videos. But a talented audio engineer can isolate audio from an interview and filter out a lot of your noise.

Play copyright music on your phone or portable sound system to make recorded videos unusable on YouTube and other major platforms.

Get personal. Research trolls in advance, then loudly announce personal information or embarrassing details that they won't want shared in a public video.

Spectacle



Be Ridiculous. Dressing up, playing music and other silly behavior can undercut the fascist narrative of an epic battle between "patriots" (nazis) and "ANTIFA" (regular people).

Use umbrellas, banners, flags and signs to block the cameras of enemy media trolls.

Fart Whistles. Just like dressing up in a banana costume, you can disrupt serious interviews with audible clowning.