Alex Jones: Right-wing conspiracy theorist stokes fear of GMOs, pesticides to sell ‘health supplements’

Alex Jones is a radio host and media personality known for the Alex Jones Show and InfoWars.com, both notorious for spreading conspiracy theories and fake news, including about genetically modified food and modern agriculture.

Jones has promoted various “false flag” and “New World Order” conspiracy theories, such as that the US government orchestrated — or at least refrained from preventing — the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the Oklahoma City bombing, the Boston Marathon bombings and the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting. He has claimed that Recently, Jones promoted the conspiracy theory that the US government was involved in the 2017 Las Vegas Strip shooting.

He often has on his show leading fringe GMO critics, such as Mike Adams of NaturalNews.com, Dr. Shiva Ayyadurai, and Jeffrey Smith, all also known for promoting anti-GMO fake news.

New York Magazine described him as “America’s leading conspiracy theorist”; Rolling Stones called him “the most paranoid man in America”; and the Southern Poverty Law Center called him “the most prolific conspiracy theorist in contemporary America.” When asked about these labels, Jones said that he is “proud to be listed as a thought criminal against Big Brother.”

The Alex Jones Show has approximately 2 million weekly listeners and is nationally syndicated on about 60 radio stations. InfoWars.com ranks as the 330th most popular website in the world, according to Alexa, a company that monitors commercial web traffic. Jones has over 1.5 million Facebook followers.

His conspiracy theories related to GMOs and pesticides are well documented. On his show and website, Jones warns of various health dangers associated with the consumption of genetically modified foods and the use of pesticides on crops. He often refers to a retracted study by French activist scientist Gilles-Éric
Séralini [GLP profile here], which purportedly showed that rats fed GMO corn developed cancerous tumors.

He also links the herbicide glyphosate to cancer and other ailments, an allusion to a report by the International Agency for Research on Cancer [GLP profile here], which has been widely criticized by the scientific community and recently embroiled in a scandal related to the withholding of data showing no link between the herbicide and cancer.

Similar to “Food Babe” Vani Hari [GLP profile here] and “Health Ranger” Mike Adams, Jones promotes and sells questionable “supplements” and other products that claim to improve human health. According to John Oliver, of Last Week Tonight, Jones spends nearly a quarter of his on-air time promoting products sold on his website. Bad Science Debunked reports that Jones, Hari, and Adams all sell products containing GMOs despite their public opposition to genetically modified food and warnings of negative health effects.

Newsweek reported on Oliver’s episode on Jones:

In one extended promotional segment, Jones refers to a product as “organic,” then backtracks to say that while it is made of organic materials, it is actually GMO. “But it’s not like the super high-tech stuff,” says Jones. “It’s just like bacteria that’s been bred to secrete and produce…. It’s just like beer is bacteria. There’s a lot of good bacteria, obviously…. That’s how the Japanese do it.” And then, most confusingly of all: “This stuff is only found in comets. And trace amounts in blueberries.”

In June 2017, NBC aired an interview with Jones by journalist Megyn Kelly, where she challenged many of his conspiracy theories. NBC was criticized for how the show was advertised before airing and for giving Jones a platform to spread his messages.

In December 2015, Donald Trump appeared on Jones’ show for a half hour discussion. Trump adviser Roger Stone has appeared on the show multiple times. According to Mother Jones, campaign aides for Donald Trump and Donald Trump Jr. have promoted Infowars stories on social media. In August 2016, Jones said on the air: “It is surreal to talk about issues here on air, and then word-for-word hear Trump say it two days later.”

“To many, Jones is a bad joke,” writes the Southern Poverty Law Center. “But the sad reality is that he has millions of followers who listen to his radio show, watch his ‘documentaries’ and read his websites.”

In His Own Words
“I’m here to tell you, 1776 will commence again if you try to take our firearms! It doesn’t matter how many lemmings you get out there on the street, begging to have their guns taken. We will not relinquish them! Do you understand?”
—CNN’s “Piers Morgan Live,” Jan. 7, 2013

“Same-sex marriage is sold as a civil right. And I believe that people as individuals — I’m a libertarian — have the right to do what they want as long as it doesn’t hurt others. And I’m not obsessed with the subject like people on different sides of the debate are. But clearly, from the eugenicist/globalist view, and they’ve written textbooks on it, you can look them up, they [the globalists] want to encourage the breakdown of the family, because the family is where people owe their allegiance. That’s why they want to get rid of God. Not because they’re atheists, but because they want the state to be God. And so they are taking the rights of an ancient, unified program of marriage and they are breaking it.”
—YouTube interview, June 2013

“Then they’ll release the big one, and they’ll kill probably half the population of the United States. Folks, I’m telling you right now, I’m sure of it. They’re going to stage terror attacks. I will be very surprised if they don’t stage something by the end of this year.”
—“Alex Jones Show,” Feb. 13, 2009

“Humanity has got to get off-world. We need access to the life-extension technologies. Talk about discrimination, forget skin color. I want the advanced life-extension! I want to go to space! I want to see interdimensional travel! I want what God promised us and I won’t sit here and watch Satan steal it!”
—“Alex Jones Show,” March 16, 2016

“A lot of liberal women, as you know, the new thing is having a jihadi…There’s nothing sexier than a jihadi because it’s so fun to have him step on your head and kick you in the gut. Now, if the man treats you good and loves Jesus, he’s bad. But if he kicks you in the teeth and stomps on you, it’s liberal, it’s trendy, you go smoke hookah with him, and it’s fun.”
—“Alex Jones Show” Feb 8, 2016

“Obama is hardcore Wahhabist; he is al-Qaeda.”
—“Alex Jones Show” Jan 6, 2016

“We’re going to return the republic. We’ll never be perfect but my God we’re not going to keep babies alive and harvest their organs. We’re not going to sell their parts for women’s cosmetics. We’re not gonna have Pepsi with baby flavoring in it.”
—“Alex Jones Show” Dec 8, 2015
“I have deep context for every claim I make. I know some people say I exaggerate, but I believe everything I say. It’s just that the denial is so strong, the apathy so deep, that people need something to shake them out of their morass. We’re like flowers who naturally turn toward the sun, and the globalists want us turned toward Hollywood and the TV so they can poison us.”
—Quoted in Rolling Stone, March 2011

Early life

Jones was born in 1974 in Dallas, Texas, and grew up in the Dallas suburb of Rockwall and the city of Austin, Texas. His parents were a dentist and a homemaker. In his video podcasts, he reports he is of Irish, German, Welsh, mostly English, and partially Native American descent. He was a lineman on his high school’s football team and graduated from Anderson High School in Austin in 1993. As a teenager, he read conservative journalist Gary Allen’s None Dare Call It Conspiracy, which had a profound influence on him and which he calls “the easiest-to-read primer on The New World Order”. After high school, Jones attended Austin Community College.

Radio, websites and mail-order business

The Alex Jones Show is broadcast nationally by the Genesis Communications Network to more than 90 AM and FM radio stations in the United States, including WWCR, a shortwave radio station. The Sunday show also airs on KLBJ.

According to journalist Will Bunch, a senior fellow at Media Matters for America, the show has a demographic heavier in younger viewers than other conservative pundits due to Jones’s “highly conspiratorial tone and Web-oriented approach”. Bunch has also stated that Jones “feed[s] on the deepest paranoia”. Jones is the operator of the web sites infowars.com, a fake news site, and prisonplanet.com.

Legal actions

In February 2017, the lawyers of James Alefantis, owner of Comet Ping Pong pizzeria, sent Jones a letter demanding an apology and retraction for his role in pushing the Pizzagate conspiracy theory. Under Texas law, Jones was given a month to comply or be subject to a libel suit. In March 2017, Alex Jones apologized to Alefantis for promulgating the conspiracy theory and retracted his allegations.
In April 2017, the Chobani yogurt company filed a lawsuit against Jones for his article that claims that the company’s factory in Idaho, which employs refugees, was connected to a 2016 child sexual assault and a rise in tuberculosis cases. As a result of the lawsuit, Jones issued an apology and retraction of his allegations in May 2017.