

Dirtbags

My Journey from a Casual Fan, to Supporter, to Devotee, to Pariah in Vaush.5's Community



Hello. My name is Pumpactionmusket, and up until two nights ago as of this recording, I was a moderator for Pigpuncher's fan Discord server. Before I get started properly, I just thought I would tell you a bit about myself. I am a 28-year old man working part time at a library and currently focusing on studying to become a medical coder. In terms of my political beliefs, that is very much up in the air. I'm hovering around Democratic Socialist for the time being but I'm not all that big into labels, I am a Sanders supporter, though. I have been quite a fan of Breadtube WAY before they even adopted that name, but prior to that I was subscribed to atheist-centric channels whose purpose was to shit on crazy Christain evangelicals and fundamentalists and disprove Christianity, as well as indulge in the occasional political toe tipping. Pre-Gamergate, the political scene on YouTube was OVERWHELMINGLY left-wing as the right were struggling to gain even the slightest foothold there. As the anti-feminist, Anita/Zoe Quinn hysteria took hold, however, I was swept up in the current.

Fortunately, I never had the slightest interest in joining message boards like 4Chan, NeoGaf or any of those 'anti-PC' cesspits. There was an instance on Gamespot, quite a few years back when I got irrationally angry at a review of a walking simulator game called, Gone Home. The person who reviewed the game was a trans-woman by the name of Carolyn Petit, and I was upset because I flat-out refused to acknowledge that this should even be classified as a game, and that she only gave the game the score that she did because of the LGBT messaging. An exchange followed that has pretty much been loss to time, but I do feel ashamed of myself for my behavior. For a time, I don't know for how long, I ate up the whole anti-SJW, anti-feminist malarkey spewed out by the likes of Sargon, Thunderfoot, Amazing Atheist and others. I would've wound up as another drone if it wasn't for one quirky, blonde haired British content creator in particular.

Harry's aka Hbomberguy's is something quite special. His most popular videos are him railing on Fallout 3's betrayal of the Interplay games and Moffat's terrible, TERRIBLE writing in the Sherlock TV series. Those types of videos are excellent starting points, but his work laughing at the absurdity of how reactionary YouTube blows things out of proportion. These 'Measured Response' videos are masterfully crafted deconstructions which excel as using humor as a tool for nailing down his points. From there, I branched out into other like-minded content creators such as the soft-spoken Shaun (formerly called Shaun and Jen), to the eloquent sophisticated Ollie/aka Philosophy Tube, to the blunt and outspoken Bad Mouse. More up and coming creators would join in the coming years but these four were the main pillars that propelled me into having the political beliefs I hold today.

I first found out about Pigpuncher from a call in he did with Destiny on a stream. I was only subscribed to Destiny's YouTube channel for a few months prior to this point, I didn't bother watching on Twitch for two reasons: 1. I don't care for streams with thousands of participants in chat as I like to feel like I have an actual voice, which is why I prefer smaller streams. 2. Political streams just weren't interesting to me. My first impression when I first heard Pig's voice was, "This kid sounds nervous as all hell but he seems rather bright". Destiny wasn't all that invested in the conversation (Destiny loves his bloodsports), but it didn't get to Pig, he was happy to get the opportunity to talk to him. Commenters in the video were pleasantly surprised by Pig's performance, left-wing content creators his age are virtually non-existent and I, personally, was filled with hope. Pig was in the comments directing curious people to his channel, and I followed with them, I wanted to see what this young man had to offer.

Pig's content, suffice to say, wasn't particularly impressive. He started off as a Minecraft channel, a daring and original experiment of content creation to be sure, but slowly began to drip political commentary starting off with a video criticizing Notch for being an all-around shitty person. Naturally Pig's fans didn't take kindly to it, hate comments, mass downvotes and all that jazz. But I had to give the dude credit for trying in spite of the backlash. His scripted videos were essentially him talking over stock video about various topics occasionally

interspersing with images and video clips. At this time, Pig identified as a liberal, as he wasn't particularly educated on leftist ideologies, so he was not railing against capitalism yet. I am not going to expound on Pig's upbringing or how he was pulled out of the alt-right rabbit hole as this is all well-treaded ground at this point. Basically, he was a JQ-believing, woman-hating, racist edgelord until Destiny's shock-jock debates snapped him out of it. That being said what enamored me about Pig in the early days I was subbed to him was the discussions he had in his call-in streams.

Unlike nowadays, when Pig maybe does a call-in session, maybe once a month (shortly before my departure he said he won't have another until he reaches 15k subs, which Social Blade predicts will take roughly a month) he had several daily streams back to back in which he just plays a game and talks to random folks who show up in his server. One conversation that stood out to me was with an 11-year old African-American boy who shared his experiences with alt-right indoctrination, which Pig was rightfully shocked to learn about. These streams were a nice mix of casual debates, discussion on world events, personal issues and it was all around just a pleasant experience. Pig was slowly making a niche for himself as an all-around chill dude you can talk about anything with. However, as Pig continued to shift his content away from Minecraft and gaming and into politics, turmoil between him and his old gaming buddies began to arise.

This was bound to happen. I am NOT well versed in the shape of Pig's fan Discord at its most turbulent period as I joined afterwards. One of Pig's friends would end up leaving, but he did manage to convince his best friend to stay and eventually bring him into his political fold. Out of respect for these folks, I will refrain from naming members of the community, mods and members. I joined Pig's Discord at a whim, I have been a member of a fan Discord for a Let's Play channel, but that server felt cold and hostile and I thought this one would be different. It was the most welcoming space, close knit and casual, no pressure whatsoever. Everybody knew each other, despite being 27 at the time I felt at home with these youngsters. Seeing all this activity from Generation Z warmed my heart. Maybe the youth aren't doomed to reactionary bullshit, maybe they can make a difference. If there's one positive thing to come out of this whole mess it's the bonds I formed with these people, I cherish these interactions.

The original bunch, or as I like to call them, "The Old Guard" consisted of a wide range of different personalities, political beliefs, hobbies, and passions. The first one, funnily enough is a moderator who was given the position after she DM'd Pig to tell him how useless and absent his previous mods were. She has a heart for cyberpunk and space travel and is incredibly tech savvy, gets a kick out of debating and a true believer in rehabilitating people. Her long-distance girlfriend would also join to moderate, and despite being completely apolitical her kindness is something to behold. Then there's the America-loathing dude from Argentina who is not afraid to say what he thinks about how my nation is an apocalyptic force of unrelenting death and destruction. He's pretty cool. The fourth person was another outspoken member of the community from Texas who pulls no punches, even when it comes to criticizing Pig (more on

that later). The last two, despite being rough and tumble types, actually consoled me during a difficult period on what would've been my dead mother's 60th birthday. Last, but most certainly not least, was a 16-year-old with a love of classical music and Kropotkin who would eventually become a mod. After they came out as trans, they lost interest in politics and started behaving rather erratically. After they left, I was unable to get in touch with them.

Going back to Pig, things were looking up. He began to network with other small lefty creators such as NonCompete, Faraday Speaks, and Suris, a former member of Christian fundamentalist cult. He even was interviewed by the New York Times and NPR, along with Destiny and Contra Points. During this time, Pig started streaming his reactions to videos by right-wing channels, Steven Crowder, No Bullshit, Prager U, the usual suspects. When a controversy would emerge, such as the Carlos Maza "adpocalypse", Pig would jump on it and give his take. This wasn't nuanced or thought-provoking content, but Pig argued that this amount of content was necessary to compete with the daily videos uploaded by reactionaries. He also made a concerted effort to create content designed to deradicalize young teenagers who have succumbed to the ideology that engulfed him. A noble endeavor to be sure, but there was another, unconventional content creator who will captivate Pig, and their relationship will be the source of contention and have considerable ramifications later on.

What is there to say about Vaush that hasn't been said already? I had the 'privilege' of subscribing to him on Twitch a week or two before he was banned for saying Israel should be carpet-bombed. Five dollars well spent. There's an argument to be had about his rambunctiousness, hot-headedness, and complete disregard for civility is essential for drawing 'chuds' (Vaush's term for reactionaries because, 'YAY slurs') into the light so that they can join the left, but at one point I have to ask, "Where do they go from here?" So, you manage to convince a small army of young edgy kids that leftism is the way forward who hate capitalism and tankies in equal measure. Great. Are you going to take steps to address the misogyny, anger, and mean-spirited toxicity that is so prevalent in these circles? No? Okay, then. I feel what Vaush is doing is not too dissimilar to a Scared Straight program. Rather than use the gradual method used by traditional Breadtubers to plant seeds in these kids' heads over the course of an extensive period of time, this man opts for a Blitzkrieg approach prioritizing speed above results.

Suffice to say, I do not have a particular high opinion of this man. At the time, however, I didn't think much of it. I also didn't think that Pig would anchor himself to him, and alienate many people in the process in his undying crusade against 'wokesolds' for the unforgivable crime of having standards for leftist discourse, but I'm getting ahead of myself. At one point, Pig decided to take on the edgy, rabidly anti-Semitic content creator, E;R. This is when a man by the name of Flamenco comes into the scene. Flamenco is the Moby Dick to Pig's Captain Ahab, the Moriarty to his Sherlock. Pig invited him into the Discord after being impressed by his composure during a multi-person debate (Pig vs four people, he likened this to Vaush's Killstream appearance) regarding his E;R stream. I couldn't STAND the guy. I found him slippery

and manipulative and Pig eventually banned him from the server. Pig convinced me that Flamenco was a clear and present danger to him and the community, but looking back, I think Flamenco is just a thrill seeker who gets a kick out of messing with Pig and Vaush with questionable political beliefs. Am I saying this to trigger what's left of Pig's fanbase? Perhaps.

One day, two mods quit the server, and I am promoted to replace. I am shocked at this turn of events. One of the mods that left was the 16-year old Kropotkin fan that I bonded with. I accepted the position excited and scared at the opportunity. Just the fact that the higher ups decided that I was a pillar of the community so to speak, was surreal for me. I think now would be a good time to give a run through of the mod team. There's the power couple I mentioned and then there are two of Pig's friends who do precisely dick. One only pops in to promote his YouTube channel and the other doesn't t post AT ALL. I'm told that that the two of them do help with creating the rules, but I wouldn't know because of the server's completely unnecessarily three-tier ranking system for the moderators. On the lowest you have the people in blue who can't ban, only kick and are unable to change server settings. They're also excluded from the super-secret 'High Command' chats, both voice and text. Then there's the second-tier, the 'Second in Commands' who can ban, change rules and get to attend the conclave to elect the next Pope....oh and they get access to the High Command rooms. And then there's the third-tier which are Second-in-Commands that are in Pig's circle and in times of crisis talks only to them. Anarchism at work.

Now comes the part where I talk about the first member of the old guard to be banned. During one of his streams, he casually brings up Memology, an edgy channel that posts short videos with over 100k subs. Pig talked about the guy for just under a minute, but that was all it took for Memology to respond. The stream vod was brigaded, Pig spent the following day deleting comments from Memology from the video. Pig would proceed to milk this drama with Memology, making four videos out of it while his fans raided the server to spam porn and an assortment of other horrid shit. Yes, Pig was endangering the community so that he can make a few bucks. Keep in mind that there are a considerable number of minors. While this was happening, Pig was streaming a call-in session dedicated to Memology fans to convince him that he wasn't a Nazi. The man from Texas, was not having it. He was enraged that Pig would resort to this. It came to a head when he @ed Pig, calling him out for profiting off the drama at the cost of endangering the server. As a mod, I tried to calm him down, as he dared Pig to ban him, and he obliged.

The day-to-day on the server was rather therapeutic. Sometimes people come in who have been referred to by friends so that we could 'breadpill' them, results varied. Like any political server, there's frequent discussion on current events, breaking news, memes, the works. The Vent channel received more and more as people joined, and the memories I have of consoling and being consoled convinced me that, in light of all that has happened, we mods made a difference. I helped calm down a dude with PTSD who was triggered by watching a 'Love Death and Robots' review. There were a considerable number of members dealing with

significant mental health issues and, as somebody who suffers from depression, I really appreciated it. I was on both sides of this particular channel. Then there was the particularly controversial NSFW channel, which the Texan did NOT approve of. Don't worry, it was age gated so the kiddos had to go through the effort of clicking "Yes" when it asks them if they are 18 or older. We had two debate channels, a meme channel, a gaming channel. There was also a quarantine channel for undesirables called "chud corner", which is where the Texan went before ultimately being removed.

I will now recount how I felt about Pig for the vast majority of my time as a member of the community. He captivated me; he really did. His content wasn't deep in the slightest, but I liked how raw and unfiltered it was. I thought that this was a person who could make a difference in a space filled to the brim with daily reactionary videos. These right-wing channels were heavily favored by the algorithm because of the frequency of how they were uploaded and that this would be a grand opportunity to gain some ground. I watched and listened to his streams and videos almost religiously, here is a snippet of my 'Liked Videos' list.

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20

Anti-SJW CRINGE Compilation

PIGPUNCHER



21

PRAGER UWU IS PURE CRINGE (LIVE)

PIGPUNCHER



22

HOW THE ALT-RIGHT INDOCTRINATES TEENS (LIVE)

PIGPUNCHER



23

STEVEN CROWDER IS UNFUNNY AND WRONG (LIVE)

PIGPUNCHER



24

Phantoms of the Communards: A Percussive History of Mai 68'

Jenn Baker



25

WEEABOOS DEFEND LITERAL NAZI ANIME REVIEWER (LIVE)

PIGPUNCHER



26

BIG BRAIN SOYBOY WATCHES VIDEOS AND TALKS ABOUT POLITICS (LIVE)

PIGPUNCHER



27

"The Quartering" DEBATE PREPARATION STREAM (LIVE)

PIGPUNCHER

As you can see, I was a true believer. I was also quite active in chat, even after he moved over to the new website, and followed him on Twitch. Also, I donated more money to him than any

other content creator or streamer, first through Super Chats, than through the website. I was literally invested in this kid. However, my views on Pig's content has soured considerably since.

Now that the honeymoon period is officially over and I have a clear head, I will now offer my criticisms regarding Pig's content. For starters, he watches the same videos Vaush watches. At one point, Pig watched a clip of Vaush reacting to a Prager U video, with his face on one side and Vaush's side on the other. He has a habit of not finishing watching the videos he reacts to due to boredom, and then proceed to spend the remainder of the stream playing computer games. It's fine, it's not like it's his job or anything.