**Headline:** How Alex Jones Helped Enrich the Global Elites He Railed Against

**Teaser:** The bombastic conspiracy theorist paved the road of misinformation for decades, creating a perfect setting for Trump’s presidency, and ultimately benefiting the very elites he claimed were out to exterminate humanity.

By Sonali Kolhatkar

**Author Bio:** Sonali Kolhatkar is the founder, host and executive producer of [“Rising Up With Sonali,”](https://www.risingupwithsonali.com/) a television and radio show that airs on Free Speech TV and Pacifica stations. She is a writing fellow for the [Economy for All](https://independentmediainstitute.org/economy-for-all/) project at the Independent Media Institute.

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**[Article Body:]**

Alex Jones’ decades-long career of serving up conspiracy theories cloaked in lies and violent rhetoric may be coming to an end as a [jury has just awarded](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/08/04/us/alex-jones-sandy-hook) $4 million in damages to the parents of a 6-year-old killed at Sandy Hook Elementary School.

For years, Jones fueled speculation that a horrific mass shooting resulting in the deaths of 20 children and 6 faculty at an elementary school in Newtown, Connecticut, on December 14, 2012, was an elaborate hoax, and that grieving parents were “crisis actors” paid to help curb gun rights. The latest lawsuit is one of several brought by parents of Sandy Hook victims. The hefty fines he now owes may very well put him out of business, especially considering his admission to the public and his viewers that the mass shooting—contrary to his repeated claims—was “[100 percent real](https://abcnews.go.com/US/wireStory/sandy-hook-parents-alex-jones-claims-created-living-87866827).”

It is important to understand that Jones and his media empire, Infowars, have been a central node in the constellation of far-right institutions that eroded an already fragile American democracy, feeding irrational paranoias and subverting the facts that undergird our shared reality. Just as Jones unleashed conspiracies about fake shootings, he egged on millions of former President Donald Trump’s supporters into believing that the 2020 election was stolen.

Amplifying Trump’s Twitter call for his followers to gather in Washington, D.C., on January 6, 2021, [Jones said on his show](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/07/us/politics/alex-jones-jan-6-trump.html) in December 2020, “This is the most important call to action on domestic soil since Paul Revere and his ride in 1776.” He also reportedly convinced one of his fans, Julie Fancelli, a grocery store heiress, to help fund Trump’s now-infamous rally to the tune of $650,000.

Understanding these links, the House select committee investigating the January 6, 2021, attack on the U.S. Capitol is now apparently [seeking Jones’ phone records](https://www.npr.org/2022/08/04/1115674589/alex-jones-texts-jan-6-committee), which provided crucial evidence during the defamation trial brought by Sandy Hook parents.

Jones’ comeuppance is a long time coming, and understanding his origins helps make sense of how modern-day conservatism took hold. His own lawyer [said](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/07/us/politics/alex-jones-jan-6-trump.html) it best: “Over many years Infowars has become a go-to source for people deeply suspicious of the government, so it should come as no surprise that many of the attendees at the [January 6, 2021,] rally had passed through Infowars’ doors.”

He has spent more than two decades sowing the seeds of suspicion against the government, using [various media platforms](https://www.grid.news/story/misinformation/2022/08/04/alex-jones-origin-story-four-moments-that-shaped-the-multiplatform-prophet-of-paranoia/) such as radio, public access television, film, and later, streaming video, weaving wild narratives designed to question institutions. He cut his conspiracist teeth on promoting the so-called “[9/11 truth](https://www.politifact.com/article/2021/sep/09/how-911-attacks-helped-shape-modern-misinformation/)” movement, which paved the way for modern-day misinformation.

Jones’ 2007 film, “[Endgame: Blueprint for Global Enslavement](https://tinyurl.com/29l3e8),” played on the fears of elites controlling people’s lives. Claiming to reveal a “secret plan for humanity’s extermination,” the film’s website explained that “[f]or the New World Order, a world government is just the beginning,” and that “[o]nce in place they can engage their plan to exterminate 80 percent of the world’s population, while enabling the ‘elites’ to live forever with the aid of advanced technology.”

The film is still available on [Amazon](https://www.amazon.com/Endgame-Blueprint-Enslavement-Alex-Jones/dp/B000VSDNHS). Bizarre and unhinged as it sounds, it convinced many of its viewers that global elites were driving human extermination. Several Amazon users left reviews suggesting that “Endgame” should be “required viewing” for high school students.

Of course, as unfounded as Jones’ claims may be, there *is*, generally speaking, a vast capitalist cohort of global elites driving human extermination in its thirst for wealth and profits—whether that can be encapsulated as a “conspiracy” is arguable. Americans have been suspicious—with good reason—for years that moneyed elites are screwing over the rest of us.

Fossil fuel companies like [Exxon](https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/exxon-knew-about-climate-change-almost-40-years-ago/) (now ExxonMobil) have known about climate change for decades but allowed the planet to catastrophically warm in order to keep their profits flowing. Billionaires and even many world leaders have [hidden their wealth](https://www.icij.org/investigations/pandora-papers/global-investigation-tax-havens-offshore/) from taxes and public view in offshore tax havens, thereby stealing revenues that could lift up the poor. [Multinational pharmaceutical corporations](https://cepr.net/the-drug-companies-are-killing-people/) have hoarded intellectual property at the expense of lives—all in the service of profits. The common theme for these very real, fact-based, well-documented schemes is unfettered and predatory global capitalism.

While many are aware of the ways in which wealthy and powerful individuals and corporations are harming humanity and the planet, far too many others have fallen prey to the seductive lies of Jones, Trump, and their ilk.

A [2010 ABC News story](https://abcnews.go.com/Nightline/alex-jones-day-life-libertarian-radio-host/story?id=10891854) about Jones’ Infowars explained aptly that “[w]hile he admits that some people may watch him purely for entertainment, he says the real reason for his recent growth is that the public increasingly mistrusts government. He does seem to have tapped into the dark national mood.”

Jones knows he is preying on his viewers. He once reportedly [told](https://www.splcenter.org/hatewatch/2021/03/02/alex-jones-leaked-video-i-wish-i-never-met-trump) a filmmaker he could sell his audience “dick pills” because they would “buy anything.”

Eli Massey and Nathan Robinson, writing in Current Affairs, [explained](https://www.currentaffairs.org/2019/06/the-terrifying-world-of-alex-jones) that “Jones’ worldview lacks the specificity and coherence of a Marxist worldview,” and that Jones “is trying to help his viewers understand but in the end they only become more confused and afraid, because the danger is coming from everywhere.”

So, what exactly is Jones’ own “endgame”? The answer turned out to be a viewership angry over global elites, paranoid about dangers from all sides, and confused about how to address these vague dangers—which was perfectly receptive to a con artist cult leader figure like Trump.

In 2015, Jones offered the power of his platform to [then-candidate Trump](https://www.cnn.com/2015/12/02/politics/donald-trump-praises-9-11-truther-alex-jones), helping to launch the political career of a man who deeply wounded the nation on multiple fronts and who, like many of his presidential predecessors, further [enriched billionaires](https://www.theguardian.com/business/2019/oct/09/trump-tax-cuts-helped-billionaires-pay-less) and [hurt middle-class](https://www.rollingstone.com/politics/politics-features/trump-covid-response-economy-jobs-taxes-inequality-1080345/) and [low-income](https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2020/02/trump-isnt-waging-a-war-on-poverty-hes-waging-a-war-on-poor-people/) Americans.

Those Americans who might have been receptive to critiquing predatory capitalism and its very real damage were instead deployed to lift up the people and institutions that are screwing over the planet and its inhabitants. They fell for the lies spewed by Jones and Trump and helped [remake the Republican Party](https://www.wsj.com/articles/trump-remade-the-gop-now-what-11604956604) into a far more dangerous institution than it already was. It is possible that Jones may fade away, bankrupted, his tail between his legs, forced to admit his own lies. But he leaves behind a powerful and dangerous legacy.

Jones also offers a grim lesson in the power of narrative building and how, when deployed effectively to dangerous ends, such narrative work can erode the democratic institutions that have the power to regulate capital, while preserving and strengthening undemocratic moneyed elites.