

TUCKER CARLSON

IMPACT: Tucker Carlson is an American right-wing commentator who has denounced the growing power of an “Islamic cult” in the Middle East, labeled white supremacy as a hoax, and advocated prompt handling of the “Islamic problem” that he believes is an imminent threat in the United States.

- Tucker Carlson was born in San Francisco, California, in 1969. After graduating from Trinity College in Connecticut in 1991, **Carlson began his career as a fact-checker for The Policy Review, a conservative journal then published by the right-wing Heritage Foundation. After stints working for *CNN* and *MSNBC*, **Carlson joined *Fox News* in 2009. In 2016, Carlson began hosting “*Tucker Carlson Tonight*” for the network.****
- In 2010, **Carlson launched the right-wing news publication *The Daily Caller* along with Neil Patel**, a former policy advisor for Vice President Dick Cheney. A 2017 report by Harvard University found that ***The Daily Caller* “played a ‘key role’ in ‘creating and disseminating stories’ that promoted deep ‘anti-Muslim sentiment’** and ‘stoked the belief among core Trump followers’ that Hillary Clinton was ‘criminal and treasonous.’” In 2018, *The Daily Caller* reporter Scott Greer severed ties with the publication after acknowledging that he had written an article under a pseudonym for the white supremacist publication, Radix Journal, which is founded by Richard Spencer, the leader of the white nationalist National Policy Institute.
- In 2006, **Carlson described Iraqi citizens as “semiliterate primitive monkeys”** during an interview on the Bubba the Love Sponge radio show. In the same interview, **Carlson alleged that Afghanistan is “never gonna be a civilized country because the people aren’t civilized.”** Speaking more explicitly about Islam, **Carlson argued that a successful American politician would need to espouse anti-Islam views**, stating, “If there were a Democrat to come out in the 2008 election and say, ‘You know what the problem is? It’s Islamic extremism. It’s not terror, it’s not some, you know, indefinable threat out there. It’s these lunatic Muslims who are behaving like animals, and I’m going to kill as many of them as I can if you elect me.’ If a Democrat were to say that, he would be elected king, OK?”
- Responding to the 2015 Charlie Hebdo terrorist attacks, **Carlson stated, “This is an Islamic problem we’re facing.** It’s become rigid, it’s become doctrinaire, fundamentalist, and the world is suffering as result. At some point, the Obama administration is going to step up — or some subsequent administration — and call the problem what it is, which is a religious problem.”
- In 2015, Carlson accused the Obama Administration of intentionally ignoring Islamic terrorism, arguing, “He [Obama] named a couple isolated incidents where mentally ill Christians shot individuals as if that’s the same as an Islamic cult taking over in effect an entire country in the Middle East. They just don’t understand what the problem is intentionally and I think it’s troubling.”
- In 2018, **Carlson attacked those who would label Executive Order 13796 a “Muslim Ban,” dismissing such criticism as the “dumbest talking point ever.”** Although the ban does not explicitly state that Muslims are not to be allowed into the United States, organizations such as the ACLU and the National Immigration Law Center have labeled Executive Order 13796 as a ban on Muslim immigration because five of the seven countries listed in the executive order are Muslim-majority nations. There were multiple iterations of President’s Trump’s promised “total and complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States.” Federal courts blocked significant portions of the January 2017 EO and found subsequent iterations to be “blatantly anti-Muslim, unconstitutional, and an abuse of the president’s

TUCKER CARLSON

power.” However, on June 26, 2018, the Supreme Court of the United States upheld the third iteration of the ban.

- In 2019, the Council on American-Islamic Relations, a Muslim advocacy and civil rights organization, called for advertisers to drop *Fox News* over comments made by Carlson regarding Representative Ilhan Omar (D-MN). On July 9, 2019, **Carlson described Omar as “living proof that the way we practice immigration has become dangerous to our country.” Carlson invoked Omar’s criticism of the United States as proof of the faults in America’s immigration system**, stating, “A system designed to strengthen America is instead undermining it. Some of the very people we try hardest to help have come to hate us passionately.”
- Carlson has **frequently sought to connect acts of extremism with the presence of immigrant populations, namely Muslim immigrants.** In May 2017, **Carlson asked his audience, “Why is violent terrorism an inevitability in Europe now? The answer is, what most people understand but relatively few admit, the demographics changed. There are a lot more Muslims living in Europe now.”** Framing his argument to specifically condemn Muslim immigration into the United States, Carlson stated, “You wouldn’t import a massive Muslim minority into your country simply because it’s made you feel open-minded and virtuous and hope for the best. That’s a faith-based approach and it’s nuts.”
- Many of Carlson’s supporters and guests have allied themselves with anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim causes. **Chadwick Moore, a right-wing journalist, spoke on Carlson’s show about Muslims on April 24, 2019, describing Islam as the “most hateful, intolerant religion on Earth.”** In an April 2018 broadcast of *Tucker Carlson Tonight*, British right-wing commentator Katie Hopkins argued against Muslims’ ability to assimilate as immigrants, stating, “You can’t take Muhammed, stick a blonde wig on him, and put a name badge that says ‘Ulf,’ and turn him into a Swede. It doesn’t work like that.” **Amongst others who have voiced support for Carlson are white nationalist Richard Spencer, former Ku Klux Klan leader David Duke, and the neo-Nazi website The Daily Stormer.**
- **In August 2018, Carlson hosted British anti-Muslim activist Tommy Robinson on his show.** Robinson has a history of propagating anti-Islam views, and has been banned from Facebook and Instagram for “posting material that uses dehumanizing language and calls for violence targeted at Muslims.”
- In February 2017, Carlson aired a segment on his show whose primary focus was addressing whether supposed increases in violent crime in Sweden were indicative of larger problems pertaining to large-scale refugee programs. During the segment, Carlson interviewed documentary filmmaker Ami Horowitz, whose film *Stockholm Syndrome* has been challenged by Swedish authorities for spreading false information about the nature of Sweden’s refugee program.
- In February 2018, Carlson interviewed Sonia Ossorio of the National Organization for Women to discuss Macy’s recent announcement that it would begin selling hijabs and modest clothing in its stores. During the segment, **Carlson described the hijab as a form of coercion**, asking Ossorio, “Do you think women should be coerced to dress modestly? Is that a feminist goal?” Carlson then compared Chinese practices of footbinding with the hijab, stating to Ossorio, “But would you be - if Macy’s sold a new line of Chinese footbinding shoes - would those be empowering too?” **Carlson stated that hijabs are a means of “forcing them [women] to be modest,”** refusing to acknowledge Ossorio’s arguments that numerous Muslim women choose to wear hijabs as a form of personal empowerment.

TUCKER CARLSON

- Carlson has **promoted the belief that immigrant populations are being brought into the United States as a means of replacing American citizens.** During an interview with former DNC communications director Luis Miranda, Carlson questioned the motives of immigration, stating, “Ok, so my concern is for my fellow Americans. And they can’t afford to have children. But rather than fix their problems or even think about them we are like ‘we’ll just import new children.’ Does that seem like a sort of ass-backward way to approach this?” Although Carlson proclaimed that such a perspective did not imply that he was “against the immigrants,” **Carlson’s views bear similarities to the “Great Replacement” theory.** The theory, which has been referenced by far-right gunmen, including the Christchurch mosque shooter, claims that the “white race” is under threat due to non-white immigration and low white birth rates.

Bridge Initiative Factsheet