

## **THE MASTERS OF THE WORLD**

*by Giorgio Mottola*

*in collaboration with Greta Orsi*

*Footage: Alfredo Farina*

*Image research: Alessia Pelagaggi, Evanthia Georganopoulou*

**12/09/2025**

### **DONALD TRUMP – PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

I am friends with many of them. I know the good leaders and the bad ones, I know the intelligent ones and the stupid ones too. Some are really stupid, and they are not doing a very good job. Europe is not doing a good job on many fronts.

### **GIORGIO MOTTOLA VOICE-OVER**

In recent days, Donald Trump has attacked the European Union with a level of aggression entirely unprecedented in the history of transatlantic relations.

**09/12/2025**

### **DONALD TRUMP – PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

Europe is heading in a bad direction, a really bad one, especially for its citizens.

### **GIORGIO MOTTOLA VOICE-OVER**

Since being re-elected to the White House, Trump has dramatically escalated the confrontation with the European Union, which, from a historic ally, now appears to have been cast in the role of an enemy.

### **STEVE BANNON – FORMER CHIEF STRATEGIST TO DONALD TRUMP**

The European Union and NATO have done nothing but take advantage of the United States. Meloni and Italy have been the worst. You guys talk a lot. Meloni talks a lot about Ukraine – we'll do this, we'll do that for Ukraine – but you haven't even come close to spending 2% of your GDP on defence. You spend money on climate change, you have wage-support schemes, you have pensions – over here our workers don't have those things. You guys should be ashamed of how much you and your elites have exploited the United States. President Trump has finally realised it!

### **GIORGIO MOTTOLA VOICE-OVER**

Steve Bannon was Trump's chief strategist at the White House at the start of his first term. Although he no longer holds any institutional role, he is now one of the most influential and widely listened-to voices of the Trumpist "Make America Great Again" movement, which is advancing increasingly radical positions against the European Union.

### **STEVE BANNON – FORMER CHIEF STRATEGIST TO DONALD TRUMP**

Individual nations should take back their sovereignty, just as the British did.

### **GIORGIO MOTTOLA**

So the solution is the dissolution of the European Union.

### **STEVE BANNON – FORMER CHIEF STRATEGIST TO DONALD TRUMP**

Europe has turned into your master. Italy must reclaim its sovereignty. You need your own currency, to manage your own problems, Italian solutions to Italian problems. Stop bowing down to Brussels.

### **GIORGIO MOTTOLA VOICE-OVER**

Blowing up the European Union appears to be an objective long pursued as well by certain American foundations and think tanks, such as the Heritage Foundation, the most important conservative organisation in the United States. As far back as twenty years ago, an official document from its research centre was entitled: "Is the European Union a friend or an enemy of the United States?" The central argument was that European institutions would sooner or later collapse, and that Americans would do well to accelerate this collapse. They wrote, in fact, that "there is no reason why the United States, having acted as midwife at the birth of this political child, should not also play a role in its disappearance".

**REPORT 26/10/2025**

**RAPHAËL KERGUENO – RESEARCHER, TRANSPARENCY INTERNATIONAL NGO**

The election of Donald Trump has increased attempts to influence European policies, also because at the same time there are many more far-right political forces in the European Parliament.

**GIORGIO MOTTOLA**

And which organisation has increased its meetings the most?

**RAPHAËL KERGUENO – RESEARCHER, TRANSPARENCY INTERNATIONAL NGO**

The Heritage Foundation has already organised seven meetings in one year, which is quite strange, because in the previous five years it had held only one meeting.

**GIORGIO MOTTOLA VOICE-OVER**

By consulting the archives of the U.S. Internal Revenue Service, Report has uncovered an impressive increase in the flow of funds from Trumpist American think tanks to Europe. The twelve most important U.S. conservative foundations sent €109.7 million over five years, with all twelve progressively increasing their investments in Europe. In 2020, the total flow of funds was €9.9 million; by 2024, it had risen to €28.1 million, an increase of 180%.

**RAPHAËL KERGUENO – RESEARCHER, TRANSPARENCY INTERNATIONAL NGO**

Only two are registered in the Brussels lobby register, which is a major problem, because it means that all the others offer no transparency regarding how they spend the money or what activities they carry out in Europe.

**GIORGIO MOTTOLA VOICE-OVER**

To increase American pressure on European institutions, last week the White House clarified its strategy on the continent in an official document. The document raises the alarm about a real and clear risk of the destruction of European civilisation, which the U.S. administration, however, intends to prevent by putting it back on the right track.

**12/09/2025**

**DONALD TRUMP – PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

Most European nations are dying, they are dying! I think what is happening in Europe is horrible. I believe Europe as we know it is in danger. It could become a completely different place. And I think Europeans need to do something about it.

**GIORGIO MOTTOLA VOICE-OVER**

And to stop the destruction of European civilisation, Trump seems to be relying primarily on certain leaders of the old continent, starting with Giorgia Meloni.

**13/10/2025**

**DONALD TRUMP – PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

In Italy, we have a woman, a young woman. Who is... I can't say because it might be the end of her career if I do... she is a very beautiful young woman. Where is she? There she is. You don't mind being called "beautiful," do you? Because you are. Thank you so much for coming. I really appreciate it. She really wanted to be here, and it's incredible. In Italy, she is very well respected. She is a highly successful politician.

**GIORGIO MOTTOLA VOICE-OVER**

For a long time now, Giorgia Meloni and Fratelli d'Italia seem to have fully embraced the Trumpian project regarding Europe.

**17/04/2025**

**GIORGIA MELONI – ITALIAN PRIME MINISTER**

My goal is to make the West great again. And I believe we can do it together.

**DONALD TRUMP – PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

Yes, we can.

**GIORGIO MOTTOLA VOICE-OVER**

But the problem is that for Trump and the United States, the real priority is making American companies great again first and foremost. In fact, as highlighted in the National Security Strategy document, one of Trump's main concerns is European regulations, which he considers too strict. American frustration with Brussels' laws—aimed primarily at curbing the power of US tech multinationals—became particularly evident last week when the European Union fined X, Elon Musk's social media platform, €120 million for failing to meet certain transparency obligations. In response, the world's richest man wrote that the European Union should be abolished and sovereignty should return to individual states. Shortly after, President Trump also attacked the European institutions, rushing to Musk's defence, who had financed his election campaign with \$300 million.

**09/12/2025**

**DONALD TRUMP – PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

This is a bad thing. Elon didn't call me for help, but it's really a serious matter. I don't think it's right. No, I don't think it's right. Listen: Europe needs to be very careful.

**SIGFRIDO RANUCCI – IN STUDIO**

For those following *Report*, it's no surprise that there is a plan to dismantle the European Union. As clearly outlined in the United States' National Security Strategy. And it's also no surprise that this plan involves Trump and Putin as allies. In 2019, as we reported, hundreds of millions of euros had already flowed from Russian oligarch foundations into ultra-Christian, far-right American foundations, which form the core of Trump's electorate, and then on to European associations and parties promoting policies aimed at undermining the European Union—and even destabilising the papacy of Pope Francis, judged too inclusive towards migrants. In short, Trump wants to treat us as a US protectorate where American weapons and gas can be stationed. Now, Giorgio Mottola, in a remarkable investigation, adds a rather unsettling piece to this picture. In Silicon Valley, a handful of billionaires—the same place where the new techno-right is being formed—believe they can change the world, step outside the current economic-financial system, and position themselves as a barrier against the collapse of Western civilisation, proposing a new world order to be run through technology. Today, the data we share online and the devices we use transfer information that allows us to be monitored, surveilled, and at times, controlled. This conviction among Silicon Valley billionaires has

found an important ally: after the elections, they allied with Trump. The idea is to move into a new era: from “you are the product” to “you are the target”. The most visible face of this alliance has been Elon Musk, who has sought to immediately leverage his companies—first Starlink—and intervene in European politics, supporting far-right actors, and even interfering with Italian sovereignty, including decisions by the judiciary to repatriate migrants from Albanian centres. This is a sign of intolerance towards European rules and state powers, which, although divided to exercise checks and balances, protect citizens’ freedoms and prevent abuses. Unfortunately, Elon Musk has found a significant foothold in Italy. Giorgio Mottola.

**23/09/2024**

**ELON MUSK – ENTREPRENEUR**

It is an honour for me to be here to introduce—and also to award—a woman who is even more beautiful inside than she is outside. Giorgia Meloni is a woman I admire.

**GIORGIO MOTTOLA VOICE-OVER**

One month before the presidential election victory, Elon Musk presented Giorgia Meloni with the award that the Atlantic Council gives to those who have distinguished themselves in strengthening relations between Europe and the United States.

**23/09/2024**

**GIORGIA MELONI – ITALIAN PRIME MINISTER**

I thank Elon for the kind words he dedicated to me and for his ingenuity, so valuable in the era we live in.

**GIORGIO MOTTOLA VOICE-OVER**

Giorgia Meloni and Elon Musk met for the first time a few months after the leader of Fratelli d'Italia was appointed Prime Minister. The intermediary was a 31-year-old Roman, Andrea Stroppa.

**GIORGIO MOTTOLA**

The first challenge is understanding exactly what she does for Elon Musk—is she a lobbyist, a consultant, an adviser?

**ANDREA STROPPIA – STARLINK & SPACEX CONSULTANT**

None of that, just a friend.

**GIORGIO MOTTOLA VOICE-OVER**

Formally, Andrea Stroppa is a computer scientist, and given his past as a hacker, his network of contacts is quite remarkable. He is very close to the Elkan family and the Bin Salman family, which governs Saudi Arabia. After Giorgia Meloni’s election, his role as Elon Musk’s envoy in Italy also became publicly known.

**GIORGIO MOTTOLA**

How did Giorgia Meloni and Elon Musk meet?

**ANDREA STROPPIA – STARLINK & SPACEX CONSULTANT**

Elon was going to France for a meeting with the French President. I asked if he wanted to come to Italy because we had this promising new leader, young and capable. So we tried to organise the meeting at Palazzo Chigi.

**GIORGIO MOTTOLA**

So you acted as the intermediary between Elon Musk and Giorgia Meloni?

**ANDREA STROPPA – STARLINK & SPACEX CONSULTANT**

Yes, I helped simply by putting them in contact.

**GIORGIO MOTTOLA**

How did you do it? Did you call Giorgia Meloni and ask if she wanted to meet Elon Musk?

**ANDREA STROPPA – STARLINK & SPACEX CONSULTANT**

A journalist facilitated the meeting through her office.

**GIORGIO MOTTOLA**

Who was the journalist?

**ANDREA STROPPA – STARLINK & SPACEX CONSULTANT**

Nicola Porro.

**NICOLA PORRO**

You already understand that Elon wants to send a very clear message.

**GIORGIO MOTTOLA VOICE-OVER**

Thanks to Andrea Stroppa, a direct relationship was established between Elon Musk and Giorgia Meloni, giving the Prime Minister a preferential channel with the White House.

**ANDREA STROPPA – STARLINK & SPACEX CONSULTANT**

Elon certainly made an important endorsement that helped.

**GIORGIO MOTTOLA**

So he really acted as a booster in this relationship with Trump?

**ANDREA STROPPA – STARLINK & SPACEX CONSULTANT**

I'd say yes.

**GIORGIO MOTTOLA VOICE-OVER**

The privileged relationship with Elon Musk reportedly also helped in the release of Cecilia Sala, the journalist arrested last December in Iran and freed after lengthy negotiations with the Tehran regime.

**GIORGIO MOTTOLA**

Did Elon Musk have a role in Cecilia Sala's release?

**ANDREA STROPPA – STARLINK & SPACEX CONSULTANT**

I think her fiancé contacted me...

**GIORGIO MOTTOLA**

Her fiancé?

**ANDREA STROPPA – STARLINK & SPACEX CONSULTANT**

Yes, and he asked for help regarding his fiancée. I spoke to Elon Musk, and he got involved.

**GIORGIO MOTTOLA**

He got involved? What did he do?

**ANDREA STROPPA – STARLINK & SPACEX CONSULTANT**

He intervened to ensure that the United States accepted that Italy was rightly conducting activities to bring the journalist home.

**GIORGIO MOTTOLA VOICE-OVER**

According to Stroppa, after Musk's intervention, negotiations with Iran were unblocked because the United States would renounce the extradition of an Iranian engineer held in Italy, who was released and sent back to Tehran a few days after Cecilia Sala's liberation.

**GIORGIO MOTTOLA**

Did you also liaise with the Italian government, with Palazzo Chigi?

**ANDREA STROPPA – STARLINK & SPACEX CONSULTANT**

No, absolutely not.

**GIORGIO MOTTOLA**

So you handled everything yourself, almost like the Italian Foreign Minister?

**ANDREA STROPPA – STARLINK & SPACEX CONSULTANT**

A family in difficulty asked me for help.

**GIORGIO MOTTOLA**

But effectively, you bypassed everyone—you bypassed Giorgia Meloni, you bypassed Tajani.

**ANDREA STROPPA – STARLINK & SPACEX CONSULTANT**

No, absolutely not.

**GIORGIO MOTTOLA VOICE-OVER**

The collaboration with the Meloni government soon also took on a business dimension. Members of the executive branch almost immediately began contacting Andrea Stroppa, eager to understand how to involve Starlink, Elon Musk's satellite telecommunications company, in public projects.

**GIORGIO MOTTOLA**

Before this friendship between Musk and Meloni developed, had the government ever sought the services of Musk's companies?

**ANDREA STROPPA – STARLINK & SPACEX CONSULTANT**

No, absolutely not.

**GIORGIO MOTTOLA**

And then what happened?

**ANDREA STROPPA – STARLINK & SPACEX CONSULTANT**

Government officials became active because they were curious or apparently interested in Starlink, in satellite connectivity.

**GIORGIO MOTTOLA**

After the friendship had already formed?

**ANDREA STROPPIA – STARLINK & SPACEX CONSULTANT**

Yes, exactly.

**GIORGIO MOTTOLA**

When this relationship was consolidating, and Meloni was gaining Trump's favour, were you the man of the moment?

**ANDREA STROPPIA – STARLINK & SPACEX CONSULTANT**

Absolutely.

**GIORGIO MOTTOLA VOICE-OVER**

Initially, the government intended to entrust Starlink, which operates a constellation of over 6,000 satellites around the Earth, with managing emergency communications for defence and key ministries, and to use Musk's satellites to bring high-speed internet to areas not covered by fibre optics. But after the controversy erupted, Giorgia Meloni had to defend herself in Parliament.

**19/12/2024**

**GIORGIA MELONI – ITALIAN PRIME MINISTER**

I'm saying this to you, and also to Senator Monti, who even claimed that we granted Elon Musk a sort of moral protectorate in our country. Well, I don't know... now allow me a joke, Senator Monti, I don't know what film you've been watching. I can be friends with Elon Musk and at the same time be the head of the first Italian government to pass a law regulating private activity in space.

**GIORGIO MOTTOLA VOICE-OVER**

A few weeks later, during the parliamentary committee discussion on the law regulating the space economy, a surprising amendment from the Democratic Party was approved. It effectively prevented Starlink from managing emergency communications for State apparatuses using its satellites. The reaction of Elon Musk's Italian intermediary was furious. On social media, he openly threatened "friends of Fratelli d'Italia" and wrote: "avoid contacting us for conferences or anything else".

**ANDREA STROPPIA – STARLINK & SPACEX CONSULTANT**

At one point, a section of Fratelli d'Italia even began to oppose Starlink.

**GIORGIO MOTTOLA**

Perhaps because by then the goal had already been achieved, i.e., the personal relationship with Trump had been established?

**ANDREA STROPPIA – STARLINK & SPACEX CONSULTANT**

I don't believe this came from the Prime Minister, and the relationship is excellent. I think some people in certain ministries... the Prime Minister says, "Starlink is an interesting technology," and they all respond: "let's put Starlink everywhere, let's figure out how it works". But actually...

**GIORGIO MOTTOLA**

To please her?

**ANDREA STROPPIA – STARLINK & SPACEX CONSULTANT**

Yes, to please her, but there was no real interest.

**GIORGIO MOTTOLA**

Were there people working against it within the government?

**ANDREA STROPPA – STARLINK & SPACEX CONSULTANT**

Absolutely.

**GIORGIO MOTTOLA VOICE-OVER**

In particular, Stroppa seems to have had an issue with the Minister of Economic Development, Adolfo Urso, the author of the space economy law.

**GIORGIO MOTTOLA**

You also attacked Adolfo Urso directly several times.

**ANDREA STROPPA – STARLINK & SPACEX CONSULTANT**

I wouldn't put him in the top class. The government team certainly has a very capable leader, let's put it that way, very good, with some strong players, but also some weak links, as they say in Rome.

**GIORGIO MOTTOLA**

Weak links?

**ANDREA STROPPA – STARLINK & SPACEX CONSULTANT**

Yes, weak links.

**GIORGIO MOTTOLA**

Within the government, you mean?

**ANDREA STROPPA – STARLINK & SPACEX CONSULTANT**

Yes.

**GIORGIO MOTTOLA VOICE-OVER**

However, after Stroppa's public outbursts, the situation seems to have shifted back in favour of Elon Musk's companies. A September report from the interministerial committee chaired by Minister Adolfo Urso stated that Starlink technology is far superior to its European counterparts, requiring a strategy to be agreed with the US. Meanwhile, FiberCop, the company installing TIM's fibre optic network and partly government-owned, signed an agreement with Globalsat, an American company reselling Starlink services in Europe.

**ANDREA STROPPA – STARLINK & SPACEX CONSULTANT**

What Urso wrote in the report is obvious. A quick Google search would have sufficed. Starlink is the highest-performing constellation. The fact that FiberCop made an agreement with this reseller... it's obvious, meaning it's the best satellite technology on the market. They tried to oppose it in every way, but...

**SIGFRIDO RANUCCI – IN STUDIO**

So Starlink could get back in through the back door. According to Andrea Stroppa, after helping Meloni gain Trump's favour and resolving the Cecilia Sala case, Elon Musk would have sought to cash in. Meloni herself reportedly asked to try involving Starlink in public projects, discussing with government officials, but faced resistance from some ministries, particularly from the President of the Republic, Mattarella, who personally intervened in Marseille on the issue of space occupation. He had advised acting at a time when neo-feudal figures of the Third Millennium were emerging—modern corsairs



to whom jurisdictions were being entrusted, aiming to manage parts of the commons represented by cyberspace and outer space, almost usurping democratic sovereignty. The billion-euro contract in question concerned emergency communications between the military and key ministries. It seemed reckless and inappropriate to entrust it solely to Elon Musk, so European entities were preferred. Crucial in this was the position taken within the Supreme Council of Defence, especially by the Quirinale adviser, Saverio Garofani, who found himself at the centre of controversy after an article in *La Verità* about a possible Quirinale plan to bring down the Meloni government. The news was strongly denied by the Quirinale, but Garofani was nevertheless caught up in the controversy. Now, after attempting to channel Starlink and influence European countries by interfering in their policies, Musk has also identified a new enemy: journalism. Journalism, he believes, is dead, and thus his platform X may no longer suffice to disseminate content. The transition from *Report* to *Welcome to Report* could be imminent.

### **GIORGIO MOTTOLA VOICE-OVER**

For a couple of years, the world's richest man has put his financial resources and platforms at the disposal of far-right parties. He has repeatedly intervened in Italian domestic politics, always defending Giorgia Meloni. And in January, during the German federal elections, he openly supported Alternative für Deutschland, the party accused of neo-Nazi sympathies, whose leader Elon hosted for a long live session on X, his social media platform.

**09/01/2025**

### **ELON MUSK – ENTREPRENEUR**

Many media outlets portray AfD as far-right and somehow associate it with Nazism or something similar. How do you respond to these concerns?

### **ALICE WEIDEL – AfD LEADER**

The National Socialists, as the name suggests, were socialists. Adolf Hitler considered himself...

### **ELON MUSK – ENTREPRENEUR**

Yes, that's true, he nationalised industries.

### **ALICE WEIDEL – AfD LEADER**

Yes, of course, Hitler was a communist and considered himself a socialist.

### **GIORGIO MOTTOLA VOICE-OVER**

After acquiring Twitter, the world's richest man also seems to be targeting other media outlets.

### **GIORGIO MOTTOLA**

Is he expanding from X to other media?

### **ANDREA STROPPA – STARLINK & SPACEX CONSULTANT**

That's what I suggested to him.

### **GIORGIO MOTTOLA**

Meaning?

### **ANDREA STROPPA – STARLINK & SPACEX CONSULTANT**

I suggested that, in my view, it would make sense at some point to acquire media outlets in Europe.

### **GIORGIO MOTTOLA VOICE-OVER**

One indication of Elon Musk's intention to build a media network in Europe emerged from an Instagram page with millions of followers and views, *Welcome to Favelas*. In January, the page's managers announced that they had participated in a meeting with Musk's emissaries on the subject of independent media. Between the lines, it is suggested that *Welcome to Favelas* was co-opted into Musk's media project.

### **ALEX ORLOWSKI – ONLINE PROPAGANDA EXPERT**

*Welcome to Favelas* publishes a form of citizen journalism, but it's distilled into what could be called "infotrash": the worst you can find presented as news. It's not informative because, in some cases, it's labelled poverty porn.

### **GIORGIO MOTTOLA**

Poverty porn?

### **ALEX ORLOWSKI – ONLINE PROPAGANDA EXPERT**

Pornography of violence and degradation.

### **GIORGIO MOTTOLA VOICE-OVER**

*Welcome to Favelas* collects user-submitted videos, mainly depicting violence by ethnic minorities, fights and urban decay. Its content is published on a Telegram channel with 500,000 members, an Instagram page with over 1 million followers and a TikTok account with 3.5 million subscribers. Over the years, the videos have become extremely viral, shared by millions via messaging apps and picked up by newspapers and television news.

### **ALEX ORLOWSKI – EXPERT IN ONLINE PROPAGANDA**

When a major national outlet picks it up, it's placed in a narrative frame, with context explaining the situation.

### **GIORGIO MOTTOLA**

But the images come to him on his phone without any explanation.

### **ALEX ORLOWSKI – ONLINE PROPAGANDA EXPERT**

Exactly. They come without context; the focus is simply the violence. Sometimes footage is shot from a neighbour's balcony showing an allegedly drunk immigrant. Often they're not even drunk, just people with untreated psychiatric issues.

### **GIORGIO MOTTOLA**

The effect is social alarm.

### **ALEX ORLOWSKI – ONLINE PROPAGANDA EXPERT**

Social alarm and disgust towards a public administration that does nothing.

### **GIORGIO MOTTOLA VOICE-OVER**

The founder and operator of *Welcome to Favelas* is Massimiliano Zossolo. After the announcement of collaboration with Elon Musk, the Italian right began to take a keen interest in him. Last September, the youth organisation of Fratelli d'Italia invited him to speak at its national festival about youth, the future and universities. Beside Zossolo were the priest-educator Luigi Merola, the Sports Minister Abodi and the Deputy Minister for Social Policies Maria Teresa Bellucci.

**MASSIMILIANO ZOSSOLO – FOUNDER, WELCOME TO FAVELAS**

*Welcome to Favelas* speaks for itself. It's Italy, truly unfiltered. What happens ends up on *Welcome to Favelas*, and people see what they want. But from there, we can observe real phenomena.

**GIORGIO MOTTOLA VOICE-OVER**

Zossolo contributes from a pedagogical perspective as an expert on "cultura maranza", a contemporary term used for troublesome street groups, mostly composed of immigrants and second-generation Italians.

**MASSIMILIANO ZOSSOLO – FOUNDER, WELCOME TO FAVELAS**

First of all, you need to give back a little of the trouble these 'maranza' cause. Sandro Pertini used to say 'brigante, brigante and a half'. I say: 'for maranza, maranza and a half'.

**GIORGIO MOTTOLA**

A kind of consecration, then?

**MASSIMILIANO ZOSSOLO – FOUNDER, WELCOME TO FAVELAS**

Yes, I'm putting myself forward.

**GIORGIO MOTTOLA**

A panel of high pedagogical value, by the way.

**MASSIMILIANO ZOSSOLO – FOUNDER, WELCOME TO FAVELAS**

Maybe too much, because at first they asked me: "Do you want to come and speak here?" Then I saw: a minister, a deputy minister.

**GIORGIO MOTTOLA**

And "maranza, maranza and a half", what does that mean? Do you mean they should be beaten up?

**MASSIMILIANO ZOSSOLO – FOUNDER, WELCOME TO FAVELAS**

Those who understand, understand. Give a bit of their own discomfort back to them. Violence is always wrong.

**GIORGIO MOTTOLA VOICE-OVER**

Zossolo's non-violent turn, however, is a relatively recent achievement. About ten years ago, he was convicted of public destruction—a conviction that nevertheless marked a turning point in his life and for the creation of *Welcome to Favelas*.

**GIORGIO MOTTOLA**

How did *Welcome to Favelas* come about?

**MASSIMILIANO ZOSSOLO – FOUNDER, WELCOME TO FAVELAS**

It started during a period when I was essentially under house arrest.

**GIORGIO MOTTOLA**

But why were you under house arrest?

**MASSIMILIANO ZOSSOLO – FOUNDER, WELCOME TO FAVELAS**

Because in 2011 I took part in the famous Indignados protest. They arrested me during some clashes.

**GIORGIO MOTTOLA**

Because you allegedly stormed an armoured vehicle, I think.

**MASSIMILIANO ZOSSOLO – FOUNDER, WELCOME TO FAVELAS**

That's what the prosecution said, but there are also videos—I didn't really do much...

**GIORGIO MOTTOLA**

You got a conviction.

**MASSIMILIANO ZOSSOLO – FOUNDER, WELCOME TO FAVELAS**

I received a nine-year sentence in the first instance for destruction, a crime derived, by the way, from the Rocco Code; so we're also talking about a fascist law, if you like.

**GIORGIO MOTTOLA VOICE-OVER**

By a proverbial twist of fate, as seen at the Gioventù Nazionale festival, today Zossolo seems to have become an idol, especially for young right-wing supporters. *Welcome to Favelas* has indeed become a click machine with hundreds of thousands of daily views, trying to establish itself as the main participatory journalism and watchdog outlet in Italy.

**GIORGIO MOTTOLA**

Initially, though, many of the posts on those pages included content that is an understatement to call inappropriate—photos of ex-girlfriends...

**MASSIMILIANO ZOSSOLO – FOUNDER, WELCOME TO FAVELAS**

What you're saying was never posted on *Welcome to Favelas*, but in private groups where anyone could post whatever they wanted. That's where photos of traffic accidents started to be posted...

**GIORGIO MOTTOLA**

In some cases, even ex-girlfriends... revenge porn, right?

**MASSIMILIANO ZOSSOLO – FOUNDER, WELCOME TO FAVELAS**

Revenge porn was strictly prohibited. There was plenty of porn, but it was downloaded from porn sites and re-uploaded there. There were girls in the group who posted their own risqué videos. But that was only a tiny fraction of the porn compared to all the other content.

**GIORGIO MOTTOLA VOICE-OVER**

Over the years, the pages were repeatedly shut down by Facebook due to inappropriate content. So Zossolo decided to bring *Welcome to Favelas* mainly to Telegram, where there are far fewer restrictions. Even today, Telegram remains one of the main channels for distributing *Welcome to Favelas* content.

**ALEX ORLOWSKI – EXPERT IN ONLINE PROPAGANDA**

We analysed a few hundred posts from March 2025 to 10 October, just a few days ago, and you'll find content like this: dramatic images of shootings, drunk drivers in Bastardo, women being beaten violently, fights in Bolzano involving 'Maranza' (local youth gangs), and tourists diving and hitting their heads. As you go down, you see less violent stuff, but the posts that went most viral were those about beatings... women being attacked violently. I ask myself whether this woman gave permission for this video to be shared.

**GIORGIO MOTTOLA**

Most of the content is about fights, accidents, though.

**MASSIMILIANO ZOSSOLO – FOUNDER, WELCOME TO FAVELAS**

That's not true.

**GIORGIO MOTTOLA**

I went through the whole Telegram channel from the last two years.

**MASSIMILIANO ZOSSOLO – FOUNDER, WELCOME TO FAVELAS**

That's the Telegram channel.

**GIORGIO MOTTOLA**

And the content is almost exclusively that.

**MASSIMILIANO ZOSSOLO – FOUNDER, WELCOME TO FAVELAS**

Those are the stronger posts that can't be hosted on Meta. But if you look at all the content across TikTok, Telegram and Instagram, violent posts are probably only 1 in 20.

**GIORGIO MOTTOLA VOICE-OVER**

Indeed, since last February, immediately after the announced meeting with Elon Musk's envoys, Instagram, Telegram and TikTok pages increasingly feature self-produced content from *Welcome to Favelas*, with reporters going to the scene to interview victims of abuse and injustice.

**MASSIMILIANO ZOSSOLO – FOUNDER, WELCOME TO FAVELAS**

Mothers on the warpath. I speak plainly. Because I'm tired. For *Welcome to Favelas*, we invited Afd, Alternative für Deutschland, here in Rome. We'll meet them at Termini station...

**GIORGIO MOTTOLA VOICE-OVER**

Between self-produced content and user submissions, Zossolo's pages post around ten times a day. A real newsroom pace.

**GIORGIO MOTTOLA**

How many of you keep *Welcome to Favelas* running?

**MASSIMILIANO ZOSSOLO – FOUNDER, WELCOME TO FAVELAS**

Let's say we have about twenty to thirty permanent collaborators.

**GIORGIO MOTTOLA**

How is the whole structure funded?

**MASSIMILIANO ZOSSOLO – FOUNDER, WELCOME TO FAVELAS**

Funded? At the moment, no one gets paid.

**GIORGIO MOTTOLA**

And how did you manage to find 20 people to work for free?

**MASSIMILIANO ZOSSOLO – FOUNDER, WELCOME TO FAVELAS**

Because they believe in what they do.

**GIORGIO MOTTOLA**

So you don't earn anything from *Welcome to Favelas*?

**MASSIMILIANO ZOSSOLO – FOUNDER, WELCOME TO FAVELAS**

I did some sponsorships in the past. At the moment, no, I have no earnings.

**GIORGIO MOTTOLA VOICE-OVER**

In fact, on the Telegram channel, *Welcome to Favelas* still publishes advertising for cryptocurrency sites, betting sites and dubious Amazon product sales. According to Zossolo, he has not received a single euro from Elon Musk, although, after the fateful meeting, every post published by *Welcome to Favelas* carries the slogan youarethemedianow: now you are the media. A hashtag launched by Elon Musk immediately after Donald Trump's victory to attack traditional journalism and announce investment in participatory journalism, meaning content published directly by users without official journalist mediation.

**01/11/2024**

**ELON MUSK – ENTREPRENEUR**

Journalism is dead. We don't need it anymore; with the internet, anyone can learn whatever they want, whenever they want. That's why X is the future. It's participatory journalism, what you hear from ordinary people, made by the people and for ordinary people. That's all there is to it.

**MASSIMILIANO ZOSSOLO – FOUNDER, WELCOME TO FAVELAS**

What I hope for is to create a sort of league, a federation for European citizen journalism.

**GIORGIO MOTTOLA**

With the goal of replacing traditional media, at least that's what Musk says?

**MASSIMILIANO ZOSSOLO – FOUNDER, WELCOME TO FAVELAS**

Replace? At the moment, I'm not replacing anyone, on the contrary. I think I actually help traditional media a lot, since every evening I turn on the news and there's a *Welcome to Favelas* video.

**GIORGIO MOTTOLA**

But Musk's project, the goal is to create...

**MASSIMILIANO ZOSSOLO – FOUNDER, WELCOME TO FAVELAS**

Yes, but that's Musk's project, not mine. There wasn't a mutual interest, because obviously Musk doesn't even know I exist. But there's something about that kind of vision that interests me.

**GIORGIO MOTTOLA**

But there has also been talk of building a European citizen journalism network?

**MASSIMILIANO ZOSSOLO – FOUNDER, WELCOME TO FAVELAS**

That's what I would like to do. I want to create a *Welcome to Favelas* model, like the one I'm developing now with various Italian editorial teams and extend it across Europe.

**SIGFRIDO RANUCCI – IN STUDIO**

But *Welcome to Favelas*—journalism is something entirely different. It finds its nobility in the figure of the mediator, who somehow must stand between the fact and the public. A journalist must be knowledgeable, independent in reporting a fact, contextualizing it, providing memory and most importantly explaining the impact on the public. Here, instead, *Welcome to Favelas* just turns on the camera and broadcasts anything—it doesn't explain why something happens, it doesn't help understanding, it only serves to raise social alarm, which in turn justifies a surveillance society. This is a concept dear to the tech-right billionaires in Silicon Valley. Now, if these technocrats, these billionaires who have amassed unparalleled wealth in history, were to take control of information, depriving journalism of its watchdog role, wealth, technology and propaganda would become one. This would endanger citizens' freedom and their right to be informed. These Silicon Valley billionaires, aiming to go beyond purely economic and financial realms and to act as a bulwark against the dissolution of Western civilization, propose a new world order: technology decides, politics communicates. After Trump's election, they found an alliance with the US president. The most representative face of this tech-right, these billionaires, is Peter Thiel, Musk's former partner and founder of one of the most powerful, mysterious and secretive companies in the world: Palantir. Palantir, which produces surveillance software, was initially created to fight terrorism, but has been adopted by many private actors and governments to monitor, control and even repress. Its name comes from *The Lord of the Rings*, Tolkien's book, to which Thiel is obsessed. Palantir was the black crystal ball used by Sauron, the evil lord of Mordor, to control his servants. That's what Palantir is used for.

#### **GIORGIO MOTTOLA VOICE-OVER**

After spending nearly \$300 million supporting Trump's campaign, Elon Musk was appointed head of the Department of Government Efficiency, where he led a mass layoff campaign of public employees. The honeymoon with Trump didn't last long. After only five months, Elon Musk resigned, to the great delight of part of the Trump movement.

#### **STEVE BANNON – FORMER CHIEF STRATEGIST TO DONALD TRUMP**

When I spoke to the president, I told him from the start: this is a very bad person, bad for the nation. And we made him run away. Even though he was the richest man in the world, he left with his tail between his legs. We'll make him leave for good soon.

#### **GIORGIO MOTTOLA**

Are you going to deport Elon Musk?

#### **STEVE BANNON – FORMER CHIEF STRATEGIST TO DONALD TRUMP**

One hundred percent. The rules must apply to everyone. He lied about his status when he applied for citizenship. So, technically, he is not a citizen of the United States.

#### **GIORGIO MOTTOLA VOICE-OVER**

Bannon's threat, which is unlikely to have any real consequences, nevertheless reflects the deep hostility felt by part of the Trumpist world toward the unprecedented alliance between the President of the United States and Silicon Valley tech companies. After having timidly opposed him during his first term, the heads of the most powerful American technology companies rushed to pay homage to Trump at his presidential inauguration.

#### **STEVE BANNON – FORMER CHIEF STRATEGIST TO DONALD TRUMP**

They are not true nationalist populists; they are oligarchs who run everything in the United States and who have been granted total monopolistic power. We will prevent our populist movement from being infected by the oligarchs' virus.

#### **GIORGIO MOTTOLA VOICE-OVER**

But perhaps it is already too late. Even though Elon Musk has stepped out of the spotlight, his former partner Peter Thiel has so far remained in the shadows, acting as a kind of hidden director. Thiel co-founded PayPal with Musk in the 1990s. Today, Peter Thiel is one of the most influential billionaires in the United States. Through his investment funds, he helped launch startups such as Facebook, Airbnb, LinkedIn and the original core of OpenAI, the company behind ChatGPT—all of which have since become giants of the technology sector.

#### **SLOBODIAN QUINN – PROFESSOR OF INTERNATIONAL HISTORY, BOSTON UNIVERSITY**

He has always had this philosophy that competition is for losers. He doesn't believe in a form of capitalism where there is balance among competitors. For him, the only goal is to become the most powerful of all, and he achieved that by buying out all his competitors, even when it was economically irrational.

#### **GIORGIO MOTTOLA VOICE-OVER**

With Trump's re-election, billionaire Peter Thiel has built a sprawling, tentacular network inside the White House. His key man is Vice President J.D. Vance, a former partner in one of Thiel's investment funds, who received 15 million dollars from the former PayPal founder for his election campaign—the largest single donation ever made to a Senate candidate. At the Office of Science and Technology Policy, which regulates the technology sector, the director is another former associate of Thiel's, Michael Kratsios, later appointed as Trump's chief science adviser. Also in business with Thiel was David Sacks, whom Trump put in charge of regulating artificial intelligence and cryptocurrencies. Other former associates now include the Secretary of Energy, the Chief of Staff of the Department of Defense, the Under Secretary of State and the Deputy Secretary of Health.

#### **GIORGIO MOTTOLA**

Is Peter Thiel one of the most influential figures behind Trump?

#### **STEVE BANNON – FORMER CHIEF STRATEGIST TO DONALD TRUMP**

I know Peter. He's a good person, but he's also a pretty strange guy.

#### **GIORGIO MOTTOLA**

Do you consider him an oligarch?

#### **STEVE BANNON – FORMER CHIEF STRATEGIST TO DONALD TRUMP**

He's an oligarch, one hundred percent. He's got his hands in everything now, but he has to stop. Or we'll make him stop.

#### **GIORGIO MOTTOLA VOICE-OVER**

At the moment, however, it is above all Peter Thiel's companies that appear to play a central role within the Trump administration. In its first five months, the US government has entrusted some of its most sensitive dossiers—such as monitoring protests at universities and managing mass deportations—to one of the most controversial defense-sector companies on the planet: Palantir, owned by Peter Thiel.

#### **JUAN SEBASTIÁN PINTO – FORMER PALANTIR TECHNOLOGIES EMPLOYEE**



Palantir is a name taken from *The Lord of the Rings*, where it refers to a magical stone that allows whoever uses it to see distant places and faraway events. It grants enormous power to whoever possesses it, but also carries the risk of abusing that power.

### **GIORGIO MOTTOLA**

Who chose the company's name?

### **JUAN SEBASTIÁN PINTO – FORMER PALANTIR TECHNOLOGIES EMPLOYEE**

Peter Thiel, who—together with his inner circle—was obsessed with Tolkien.

### **GIORGIO MOTTOLA VOICE-OVER**

Sebastián Pinto worked for a couple of years in close contact with Palantir's top management as a copywriter, giving him direct access to the company's main projects. He is the only former employee so far to have spoken publicly about Palantir's activities, which are shrouded in secrecy.

### **JUAN SEBASTIÁN PINTO – FORMER PALANTIR TECHNOLOGIES EMPLOYEE**

Palantir aggregates big data that are disconnected and unable to communicate with each other. By making them interoperable, Palantir turns them into something useful for applications and services, automating processes that would normally require extensive human labor.

### **GIORGIO MOTTOLA VOICE-OVER**

A concrete example is the work Thiel's company is doing for the US immigration department, which is engaged in a campaign of mass expulsions and deportations. Thanks to Palantir's AI-enhanced software, the US government can monitor—at the click of a button—the activities of a suspect and their family members across all existing social networks and institutional databases.

### **JUAN SEBASTIÁN PINTO – FORMER PALANTIR TECHNOLOGIES EMPLOYEE**

This is something terrifying, going beyond dystopian literature or films like *Minority Report* or *Blade Runner*. Palantir helps governments and private companies extract maximum value from all the data we put online or that are stored in government databases—whether the goal is to make more money or to surveil us.

### **GIORGIO MOTTOLA VOICE-OVER**

After taking office, the Trump administration granted Palantir access to the data of all US citizens, awarding the company a \$113 million contract to make information on every single citizen—starting with health data—accessible through a single software platform. In recent months, the US government has also awarded major contracts totaling €10 billion to collaborate with the US Army and the Department of Defense. Palantir's software is routinely used on the battlefield and for lethal missions.

### **ALEX KARP – CEO, PALANTIR TECHNOLOGIES**

Palantir exists to be disruptive. We work with the best in the world to scare our enemies—and when necessary, to kill them.

### **GIORGIO MOTTOLA VOICE-OVER**

Recently, Palantir publicly claimed responsibility for its operational support of the genocide in the Gaza Strip, where the Israeli army is using software such as *Lavender* and *Where Is Daddy* to monitor the movements and online and physical activities of

targets and then kill them, once identified, through targeted drone strikes or bombings.

**JUAN SEBASTIÁN PINTO – FORMER PALANTIR TECHNOLOGIES EMPLOYEE**

An application like *Where Is Daddy* makes it possible to track the children of one's enemies right into their homes, so that those enemies can be struck while they are with their families. And it hardly matters if you end up killing people who have nothing to do with it.

**GIORGIO MOTTOLA**

Are these applications based on Palantir software?

**JUAN SEBASTIÁN PINTO – FORMER PALANTIR TECHNOLOGIES EMPLOYEE**

We don't know the details of Palantir's partnership with Israel, but we do know that Palantir provides its data infrastructure for the Israeli army's war missions.

**GIORGIO MOTTOLA VOICE-OVER**

For several years now, Palantir has also been operating in Europe and has entered some of the most important institutions in Brussels, as discovered by a former Member of the European Parliament.

**SOPHIE IN 'T VELD – MEMBER OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT 2004–2024, RENEW EUROPE**

I followed this case for many years, and at a certain point I discovered that Europol was working with Palantir and using its software. There was even a staff exchange. Europol personnel went to work for Palantir and vice versa.

**GIORGIO MOTTOLA VOICE-OVER**

Europol is the agency that coordinates all European police forces. After the collaboration with Palantir was made public through a parliamentary question, Brussels decided to terminate its contracts with the American company. Despite this, many European governments have used—or continue to use—Palantir's services. The British and Greek governments allowed Thiel's company to access the health data of all their citizens during the COVID pandemic. In Germany, Palantir has worked with several local police forces, and in France it collaborates with the intelligence services.

**SOPHIE IN 'T VELD – MEMBER OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT 2004–2024, RENEW EUROPE**

If you dig a little deeper, you realize that Palantir is everywhere. It is present in most European states and in all our critical systems—healthcare, hospital and patient data, police services and intelligence agencies. Palantir has also been hired by the Ukrainians to conduct battlefield intelligence.

**GIORGIO MOTTOLA VOICE-OVER**

In Europe, Palantir's clients also include major corporations such as Deutsche Telekom and chemical giants Henkel and BASF. In Italy, until last year, the company had a partnership with Ferrari. Driver Charles Leclerc even starred in a promotional video for the American company's software.

**CHARLES LECLERC – FERRARI F1 DRIVER**

It's super impressive. Really impressive.

**NICOLÒ DANIELI – FERRARI ENGINEER**

By advancing our work with Palantir, we will be able to maximize the use of our data through the creation of sophisticated, AI-driven models.

#### **GIORGIO MOTTOLA VOICE-OVER**

The Elkann family has maintained strong ties with Peter Thiel for years, and in 2022 Palantir signed an agreement with Stellantis to optimize vehicle performance, including through the management of driving data sent via Wi-Fi from millions of Stellantis vehicles on the road to the parent company.

#### **JUAN SEBASTIÁN PINTO – FORMER PALANTIR TECHNOLOGIES EMPLOYEE**

What is most worrying about this collaboration between automotive industries and Palantir is the enormous quantity of data these companies now have at their disposal. Today, in new cars, almost every component is tracked.

#### **GIORGIO MOTTOLA VOICE-OVER**

Until now, the internet economy has been based on the formula: “You are the product”. For years, we have known that all our online activity is tracked and profiled. We then discovered that through smartwatches, fitness bands and internet-connected household appliances, private companies receive real-time data about our health, our lifestyles, and—thanks to robotic vacuum cleaners—even detailed floor plans of our homes. Until now, however, we believed that the use of this data served exclusively commercial purposes: selling us more products. With Palantir, instead, we have entered a new era: from “you are the product” to “you are the target”. The data we provide while browsing the internet or using connected devices can in fact be used by governments and private actors to monitor us, repress us and surveil us. And in extreme cases, as we have seen in Gaza, to kill us with pinpoint precision inside our homes. And although the European continent currently has stricter rules for tech giants, Europe too has long since become hunting ground for Palantir.

#### **SOPHIE IN 'T VELD – MEMBER OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT 2004–2024, RENEW EUROPE**

In this way, Europe has bound itself to a man who does not love democracy, does not love freedom, and above all does not love the European Union.

#### **SIGFRIDO RANUCCI – IN STUDIO**

Peter Thiel founded Palantir in 2003. It was created as a big data analysis company to fight terrorism after the September 11 attacks. It was immediately adopted by the CIA and the FBI and was likely used to identify Osama bin Laden in Pakistan in 2011. It has been adopted by police and intelligence agencies not only in the United States but also by most European governments, and it manages an astonishing volume of data all together: criminal records, surveillance cameras, geolocation data, satellite images, industrial sensors, as well as personal records, health data, insurance data, and bank statements. Palantir’s main software products are Gotham, Foundry, Apollo and AIP. Gotham is the core of Palantir in military contexts; it has been used in Iraq, Afghanistan, Palestine by the Israeli army, and in Ukraine. Foundry, by contrast, interfaces with factories, banks, and hospitals; it collects data and information and creates a digital twin. It analyzes data and suggests optimal strategies to clients—production lines, suppliers, and financial assets. Apollo is the data aggregation system that allows Gotham and Foundry to communicate, integrating them into hybrid environments such as public administration clouds, private infrastructures, and war zones. All three software systems run on the AIP platform, which is where artificial intelligence resides. This AI uses all available information, analyzes it, and suggests the best decisions to make, while masking the traceability of those decisions. In other words, artificial

intelligence becomes fully embedded in the chain of command, without assuming responsibility for those who actually command. All the governments that have imported Palantir have not merely imported software, but an ideology: that of Peter Thiel. A vision of democracy he outlined in a 2004 book, *The Straussian Moment*, where he describes a new concept of technology as a form of combat against Western decline and the overcoming of the state—at least as we understand it. Thiel was deeply influenced by the philosophy of René Girard, whose worldview centers on mimetic violence: violence generated by human desire. When a person desires an object, they do not desire it because it has intrinsic value, but simply because another person desires it. This generates violence and social disorder, which can only be pacified by finding a scapegoat; if no scapegoat is found, social disorder escalates. This is the diagnosis of society onto which another vision is grafted—this time with an economic foundation—drawn from what is considered the Silicon Valley bible: *The Sovereign Individual* by Davidson and Rees-Mogg. According to them, capital generated through the digital economy and cryptocurrencies—able to evade taxation—is produced by individuals with entrepreneurial talent and very high IQs. These “sovereign individuals” will no longer be identifiable by geographic location or citizenship; they will move within a kind of airborne tax haven in cyberspace. They accumulate wealth and power outside any jurisdiction. We are, in every sense, entering a digital Middle Ages, in which the state and the nation as we understand them will dissolve. Democracies and politics will become little more than relics. The concept of public service will disappear, as will security provided by governments, which will instead be entrusted to private actors—something resembling armed bands. All of this will lead to extreme inequality: on one side, the technological aristocrats who continue to control technology and accumulate wealth; on the other, individuals deemed incapable, who do not govern technology but are subjected to it. According to Peter Thiel, this transition will be extremely violent and must therefore be addressed—how? By preventing it. That is why he offers his company, Palantir, which is capable of prevention through monitoring, surveillance, and, if necessary, repression. To guarantee the survival of the sovereign individuals—among whom he himself is included—from the collapse of civilization. For this reason, Palantir is offered as a power structure to replace states: a secret institution, cloaked in commercial secrecy, that uses the sorcery of technology to gain knowledge of all causes and hidden movements, enabling predictive control with no room for chance, abolishing risk. A company that offers those who possess it a near-divine power.

## **OCTOBER 2020 – “LIBERTOPIA” CONVENTION**

### **PETER THIEL**

We will never be able to win an election, because we represent too small a minority. But perhaps we can unilaterally change the world, without having to constantly persuade people, beg and plead with those who will never agree with us. We can do this through technology. I believe technology is an incredible alternative to politics.

### **GIORGIO MOTTOLA VOICE-OVER**

And so Peter Thiel has become a point of reference for the so-called Tech Right: a movement born in Silicon Valley that openly argues for abandoning Western democratic models, since—as Peter Thiel wrote some time ago in one of the most important American conservative magazines—“freedom is no longer compatible with democracy”.

## **QUINN SLOBODIAN – PROFESSOR OF INTERNATIONAL HISTORY, BOSTON UNIVERSITY**

In his view, we need to escape the suffocating model of Western democracy based on the principle of “one person, one vote,” which only produces regulatory delays and legislative complications.

#### **GIORGIO MOTTOLA VOICE-OVER**

Peter Thiel is one of the few who express these views publicly, but they are shared by many Silicon Valley billionaires. Since the early 2000s, anti-democratic, anti-egalitarian, and openly racist ideas have begun to spread in Silicon Valley.

#### **EMILIANO BRANCACCIO – PROFESSOR OF POLITICAL ECONOMY, UNIVERSITY OF NAPLES FEDERICO II**

We call them the Tech Right; some define them as techno-fascists. Undoubtedly, these powerful figures are often openly racist, frequently misogynistic, hostile to sexual freedoms, and nationalist in what we could define as a neo-colonial sense. So there are elements that are classically fascist in the way they conceive politics. But there is also something more. Traditional fascism had a mediating relationship, didn’t it, between the public and the private spheres. These people do not. They are, so to speak, free-market absolutists who then incorporate elements of fascism into their libertarianism. Umberto Eco spoke of *Ur-Fascism*, right? An eternal fascism, always returning. I would say these represent a form of ultra-fascism—they go beyond. There is not only racism, misogyny, and nationalism, which were typical of classical fascism, but also unrestrained market liberalism, a desire for total freedom of capital in service of their own interests. In a sense, this form of ultra-fascism could, under certain conditions, prove even worse than traditional fascism.

#### **GIORGIO MOTTOLA VOICE-OVER**

The American Tech Right has a key ideological figure: Curtis Yarvin, a computer scientist with a passion for politics and philosophy, who has profoundly influenced the thinking of Peter Thiel and other Silicon Valley billionaires.

#### **QUINN SLOBODIAN – PROFESSOR OF INTERNATIONAL HISTORY, BOSTON UNIVERSITY**

Curtis Yarvin worked as a software engineer in San Francisco in the 2000s and ran a blog that became very popular, where he wrote that democracy, the welfare state, popular voting, and parliamentary assembly are mental viruses—things like *The Matrix*, designed to prevent us from seeing the truth.

#### **CURTIS YARVIN – SOFTWARE ENGINEER AND POLEMICIST**

Back in 2007, on my blog, I was the first to coin the term “red pill,” or maybe I borrowed it from the movie *The Matrix*, which used it in a different way.

#### **MATRIX**

Blue pill: the story ends. Tomorrow you wake up in your bed and believe whatever you want to believe. Red pill: you stay in Wonderland, and I show you how deep the rabbit hole goes.

#### **GIORGIO MOTTOLA**

Do you offer red pills to people?

#### **CURTIS YARVIN- SOFTWARE ENGINEER AND POLEMICIST**

I offer red pills. And I believe red pills are not entirely harmless—neither for individuals nor for nations.

**GIORGIO MOTTOLA VOICE-OVER**

Taking the red pill means abandoning what are considered the false values of Western democracy, such as the idea of gender or racial equality, and embracing what Curtis and his followers call the Dark Enlightenment: the idea of the total supremacy of technology, to which no limits should be imposed.

**GIORGIO MOTTOLA**

With the Dark Enlightenment, you accept the supremacy of science but reject the Enlightenment idea of equality?

**CURTIS YARVIN- SOFTWARE ENGINEER AND POLEMICIST**

I believe there is something deeply violent in this false belief that we are all equal from the neck up, or on the inside.

**GIORGIO MOTTOLA**

Do you believe that not all races are equally intelligent?

**CURTIS YARVIN- SOFTWARE ENGINEER AND POLEMICIST**

I think there is a biological relationship between my DNA and my ability to obtain a degree in computer engineering. If I went to Angola and forced Angolans to study computer engineering, it would be like torturing them. It wouldn't work. It's wrong.

**GIORGIO MOTTOLA VOICE-OVER**

According to Curtis Yarvin, people of African descent are generally less intelligent than Asians and white Caucasians. And white men have higher intelligence peaks than white women. This is a theory that has increasingly spread among Silicon Valley engineers and managers over the past twenty years. It is based on early-1990s studies with weak scientific foundations, according to which human beings can be measured and classified based on their IQ.

**GIORGIO MOTTOLA**

Has an ideology of IQ emerged?

**QUINN SLOBODIAN – PROFESSOR OF INTERNATIONAL HISTORY, BOSTON UNIVERSITY**

IQ has become a totem for people in Silicon Valley, used against the idea of racial and gender equality. The assumption is that measurable human intelligence—and therefore IQ—defines your ability to contribute to economic growth. Focusing on IQ is their way of saying that society should return to the dominance of white males, whom they consider genetically better endowed with the cognitive abilities needed to produce the innovations required by political economy.

**GIORGIO MOTTOLA VOICE-OVER**

The ideology of IQ soon spread from Silicon Valley into politics as well.

**02/07/2025- DONALD TRUMP – PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

I have a high IQ. That's something people like. We like people with high IQs. This is X. An exceptional guy. A great IQ. He's an individual with a very high IQ. The smartest people are sitting around this table. It's a very high-IQ group.

**GIORGIO MOTTOLA VOICE-OVER**

By measuring IQ, it would therefore be possible to distinguish productive people from unproductive ones. For this second social category, Curtis Yarvin proposes an extreme

solution: locking the poor and the outcasts in windowless buildings and connecting them to virtual reality 24 hours a day through headsets.

**GIORGIO MOTTOLA**

You have written terrifying things about the unproductive poor.

**CURTIS YARVIN- SOFTWARE ENGINEER AND POLEMICIST**

I believe the main problem is how to make them live with dignity, and taking government money for an entire lifetime is not dignified.

**GIORGIO MOTTOLA**

So they should be confined to virtual reality?

**CURTIS YARVIN- SOFTWARE ENGINEER AND POLEMICIST**

It's a more sensible solution to confine them to virtual reality, where they essentially become gamers.

**GIORGIO MOTTOLA**

And they play for their entire lives?

**CURTIS YARVIN- SOFTWARE ENGINEER AND POLEMICIST**

Still better than filling them with drugs and making them happy while letting them ingest tons of fentanyl.

**GIORGIO MOTTOLA VOICE-OVER**

Because of the radical nature of his theories, Curtis Yarvin was once treated like a pariah in the American intellectual landscape. Today, however, many members of the Trump administration openly cite him, and many attribute to him the intellectual authorship of the project to fire public-sector employees carried out by Elon Musk. Among them is the Vice President of the United States, J.D. Vance, with whom Curtis Yarvin appears to have a privileged channel.

**GIORGIO MOTTOLA**

You seem to be very influential within the U.S. administration. Vice President Vance mentions you publicly.

**CURTIS YARVIN – BLOGGER**

I think my influence is overstated, although it's not completely false. I believe my influence is strongest among the younger members of the Trump administration, because my fans are mostly young people.

**GIORGIO MOTTOLA**

Have you met Vance since his appointment as Vice President?

**CURTIS YARVIN – BLOGGER**

Yes, I've met Vance several times, but it's wrong to think that I talk to him every day or advise him directly. As I said, many members of his staff are certainly influenced by my ideas. But imagining me as the American Rasputin is completely wrong.

**GIORGIO MOTTOLA VOICE-OVER**

And soon Curtis Yarvin may also arrive in Europe—and in Italy. With this AI-generated video, he announced his intention to curate the U.S. Pavilion at the next Venice Biennale, explicitly stating that his goal is to "Trumpify" contemporary art.

## **VIDEO**

We're going to Trumpify the Venice Biennale this year. To give that world control of the Venice Biennale. It could be the most fucked-up manipulation of all time. We'll go in and rebuild American art. There's a single violent executive order. And we'll take control of the whole fucking thing.

## **CURTIS YARVIN- SOFTWARE ENGINEER AND POLEMICIST**

We'll see if the administration accepts it, but it's certainly a real possibility.

## **GIORGIO MOTTOLA**

Is your goal to Trumpify the Biennale?

## **CURTIS YARVIN- SOFTWARE ENGINEER AND POLEMICIST**

Yes, but for me Trumpifying means producing something that can shock and unsettle the elites and the academic art world.

## **SIGFRIDO RANUCCI – IN STUDIO**

A pavilion at the Venice Biennale—one of the most important cultural events in the world—could be dedicated to the Trumpification of contemporary art. And it could be curated by Curtis Yarvin, the ideologue of the American Tech Right, who conceives democracy, the welfare state, popular voting, and parliamentary institutions as a mental virus. Like Morpheus in *The Matrix*, Yarvin offers us his red pill to reveal the reality in which humanity is trapped. But what is the alternative reality that Yarvin proposes? One in which Africans are genetically considered, on average, less intelligent than Asians and white Caucasians. In which white men have intelligence peaks higher than those of white women. In which IQ—the intelligence quotient—is the only parameter by which a person's value can be judged, because economic growth depends on IQ. All other human beings are therefore unproductive and, according to Yarvin, must be locked in a room, 24 hours a day, connected to virtual reality. This is his concept of dignity. Yarvin, once dismissed as a madman and regarded as a mere visionary, is now considered a point of reference—especially for the American Tech Right, but also for the Trump administration. He is even credited with the intellectual authorship of the plan to dismiss public employees. He has a privileged channel with Vice President J.D. Vance, who was supported during the elections and heavily financed by Peter Thiel. Vance is positioning himself for a post-Trump role and has effectively already opened his presidential season with the publication of the U.S. National Security Strategy document. Vance, as we said, was financed by Thiel—Thiel, who is exporting his concept of democracy through Palantir. A concept according to which Western democratic models must be abandoned, since freedom is no longer compatible with democracy. That is why European rules are too restrictive for him. This is what is happening. What do we want to do about it?