

BLOG

The Extremist Medicine Cabinet: A Guide to Online “Pills”



Published: 11.06.2019

November 06, 2019

“Pills” feature prominently in the online chat rooms and forums dedicated to right-wing extremism. These are not actual pharmaceuticals; instead, each “pill” sends a message about a person’s level of dedication to an extremist ideology or cause. Are they just beginning to learn about an ideology, or have they progressed further to embrace a nihilistic, potentially violent mindset?

While online posts about “pills” can help outside audiences gauge individuals’ states of mind, they are primarily used as a shorthand within extremist groups’ internal conversations.

This shorthand is critically important, as today’s extremist movements largely operate online. From the [incel movement](#) to [the alt right](#), many subcultures are born online, and members use the internet as their primary method of contact and radicalization. This means group “belonging” is demarcated by language and nomenclature rather than the uniforms and marches that defined earlier extremist groups. Earlier groups – and most subcultures in general -- maintained their own language to establish and solidify a sense of group belonging, but for some of these more recently established groups, coded language is vital. It’s used for everything from explaining how far one might be willing to go in the name of an extremist cause to weeding out interlopers and spies.

For the novice forum browser and researcher, these linguistic codes can be baffling to navigate, and for good reason: much of it is designed to confuse the uninitiated. Not only are the references often utterly opaque, they can also be wildly offensive, counter-intuitive and/or essentially meaningless.

This primer is meant to explain the fringe internet’s conspiratorial obsession with “pills,” widely used as a shorthand to identify one’s progress through radicalization, or to put it another way: a handy guide to how committed you are to a particular extremist ideology.

Most “pill” references harken back to the Red Pill, featured in the 1999 blockbuster movie “The Matrix,” in which Neo, played by Keanu Reeves, is offered a chance to see the world the way it really is.

Like many who find themselves drawn to fringe political ideas, Neo “feels something he can’t explain...that there’s something wrong with the world.” He is offered a choice: swallow the blue pill and remain in the world he knows, oblivious to the real truth, or take the red pill and finally see the **real** world.

What follows is a guide to the vast and confusing dispensary of virtual “pills” frequently referenced in extremist forums, chats and messages.

Note: Many of these pills have different meanings within different groups. It should also be noted that the term “redpilled” (it can be a noun, a verb and an adjective) can be completely innocuous. For the purposes of this explainer, we are examining the terminology primarily in its extremist context.

The Red Pill

The red pill is the most basic of pills, and it can refer to almost any kind of political awakening (and does not necessarily indicate a move towards extremism).

In posts about American political parties, the red pill generally refers to the GOP, while the blue pill is aligned with the Democratic Party.

For many, the red pill is just the first step in a longer journey. Being “redpilled” means shifting away from one set of beliefs to another set of (antithetical) beliefs. This can be as basic as a Democrat becoming a Republican, or as radical as someone coming to believe that Jews control the world or that feminism is destroying the West.

Mainstream usage of the term includes conservative speaker Candace Owens naming her YouTube channel “Redpilled Black,” a reference to her “awakening” as a black American and moving away from liberal beliefs in favor of conservatism and nationalism. Similarly, Fox News once referred to Kanye West as having taken the “red pill” when the rapper expressed [his support for President Trump](#).

Crossover between the term’s mainstream and extremist application was on display during the 2016 presidential campaign, when candidate Donald Trump tweeted a picture of Hillary Clinton next to a Star of David with the caption “Most Corrupt Candidate Ever!”

This prompted well-known white supremacist David Duke to tweet: “Nice to see Mr. Trump slipping some 'Red Pills' to the American people!”

In extremist terms, being redpilled means you have bought into at least one of the antisemitic, racist and conspiratorial tropes of the far-right movement. For many, it is the first tentative step down the rabbit hole toward radicalization.

In MRA (Men’s Rights Activists) and incel circles, the red pill is extremely specific and serves as an introduction to a particularly dystopian and misogynistic world view.

The incel red pill can be explained by the 80/20 rule, which says that 80% of women desire just 20% of men. This means that the vast majority of men will never be desirable and consequentially will never find sexual fulfillment and happiness. Among incels, the red pill represents the realization that feminism has caused a massive shift in power, and that feminism (understood by incels as women having the right to sleep with anyone they wish), gives women far too much power, and has led to “hypergamy,” incel speak for women pairing up with men who are more attractive. In most cases, the red pill is only a stepping stone; the far-right and the manosphere consider the red pill a call to action. For white supremacists, the redpill encourages political activism and fighting an anti-white system. For incels it means trying to be more attractive in an effort to join the 20% of men who get women. In this context, the red pill is almost optimistic. The world is unfair, and the odds are stacked against you, but you can fight back.

The Black Pill

For those on the extreme right, the black pill represents nihilism, or a realization that the system is too far gone to change. The powers that govern our lives are too deeply entrenched and too powerful to do anything about.

In the incel movement, the black pill is far more pernicious. The term was popularized on the men’s rights blog Omega Virgin Revolt, where it was first used by commenter

Paragon in 2011. Like their extreme right counterparts, incels believe that taking the black pill means realizing that their situation is hopeless. Where redpilled incels are not happy about their place in society, they believe there are ways out of incelldom, including working out, plastic surgery and a host of dubious self-improvement strategies; blackpilled incels believe that their situation is permanent and inescapable. In a blackpilled world the sexual marketplace is governed exclusively by genetics. A man is either attractive to the opposite sex or he is not, and no amount of self-improvement can change this.

This is where the incel movement takes on characteristics of a death cult. Taking the black pill leaves a person with relatively few options: Giving up, or in incel parlance "LDAR" (Lie Down and Rot), suicide (incel forums are filled with suicidal fantasies and threats, as well as encouraging comments to those considering suicide) and "going ER." The latter is a reference to Elliot Rodger, who killed six people near campus at the University of California, Santa Barbara, in 2014. In incel forums members, "Saint Elliot" or "The Supreme Gentleman" as they call him (and he called himself), is hailed as a hero.

While Rodger didn't explicitly refer to himself as blackpilled, he displayed the key trait of the blackpill: He believed that attempting to change the status quo was futile and the only possible outcomes were death and violence. In a manifesto posted shortly before his killing spree, Rodger wrote:

[Women] think like beasts, and in truth, they are beasts. Women are incapable of having morals or thinking rationally. They are completely controlled by their depraved emotions and vile sexual impulses...Women should not have the right to choose who to mate and breed with. That decision should be made for them by rational men of intelligence...Women are vicious, evil, barbaric animals, and they need to be treated as such.

Similarly, [Alek Minassian](#), who killed 10 people when he rammed a truck into a crowd in Toronto in 2018, and [Scott Beierle](#), who killed two and injured four in a Tallahassee yoga studio in that same year did not publicly identify as blackpilled, but were viewed as blackpilled by others in the incel community.

The Rape Pill

The rape pill is a term used within a subset of the incel community whose members identify as "rapeceles." They believe all sexual interaction between men and women is (or should be) coercive. Women, they figure, are mindless beings incapable of making sexual decisions for themselves, so it is incumbent upon men to make those decisions for them. In the unlikely event an incel encounters a woman who does have the intellectual wherewithal to make this decision, the rape pill mentality holds that rape is still necessary. This is because incels believe every relationship requires one person to be dominant (the man) and the other to be submissive (the woman).

Rapeceles believe that women who are raped are reassured on a primal level that because the (male) perpetrator is forceful, he is capable of taking care of her.

The Siege Pill

This is the most extreme pill, and represents the divergence between the "mainstream" far right -- the faction that tries to bring about change within the established political system -- and the radical, revolutionary vanguard.

The pill takes its name from neo-Nazi James Mason's newsletter (and book) *Siege*, which encouraged and praised right-wing terror. A siegepilled person embraces violent acts of terror to accelerate the impending race war. Members of groups like [Atomwaffen Division](#), an organization linked to several murders and terror plots, are siegepilled by nature of their membership. There are multiple references to Christchurch shooter Brenton Tarrant as having been siegepilled. The red, black and siegepills are the

most concerning in terms of radicalization. The red pill represents the initial stage of radicalization and the blackpill and siegepill advance that radicalization and eliminate all but the direst possible outcomes of the radicalization process. Only a small minority of siegepilled and blackpilled individuals will go on to commit acts of violence, but individuals who have been black- or siegepilled tend to condone and encourage violence, creating a group dynamic and online echo chamber where violence is glorified, and violent actors canonized.

Other pills:

In addition to the three "pills" mentioned above, there are a host of extremely specific (often abhorrent) variations on the pill meme.

The Blue Pill

The blue pill is the counterpart to the red pill. The blue pill means remaining blissfully ignorant about how the world works. To those who have been redpilled, everyone else is bluepilled.

The Purple Pill

The purple pill is the incel version of centrism. It rejects both redpill and bluepill philosophies as misguided at best and idiotic or repulsive at worst. Purplepillers attempt to explain male-female behaviors in a more moderate and, relatively speaking, sensible way.

The Pink Pill

This pill is the female version of the incel black pill. While many incels argue that women by definition cannot be incels, since there will always be incels willing to sleep with women, femcels (female incels) do make up a small subset of incel culture.

(Ironically, the original incel was a woman, a Canadian student who was outspoken about her lack of sexual activity). The pinkpill is femcels' realization that no matter how fully they embody the perceived ideals of femininity (being thin, submissive and fully made-up) they will never be attractive to men.

The White Pill

The white pill refers to an optimistic worldview in the face of adversity. Like the red pill and the black pill, the white pill is not limited to a single subculture and is used by extremists of all stripes. Being whitepilled is believing in whatever movement you belong to and feeling good about your role within it. For instance, when President Trump declared that certain U.S. representatives should go back where they came from, white supremacist podcaster Nick Fuentes wrote on Telegram:

"I'm totally whitepilled by this latest Trump controversy. It reminds me of the reaction to the "drugs crime and rapists" comment at his announcement or the Muslim ban."

The Bread Pill

The bread pill has different meanings to different subcultures. Among the extreme right it refers to embracing traditional Christian values of gender roles and family.

On the extreme left, the breadpill is a reference to the 1892 book *The Conquest of Bread* by Russian anarcho-communist Peter Kropotkin. In the book, which has become something of a primer for modern day activists, being breadpilled refers to joining the ranks of anarcho-communists.

The Iron Pill

Taking the iron pill most often refers to lifting weights and working out. Among the extreme right, being ironpilled refers to working out in preparation for the impending race war.

The Green Pill

The green pill is shorthand for environmentalism. Within the extreme right it can refer to eco-fascism, an ideology that mixes totalitarian fascism with radical environmentalism.

Those who subscribe to an eco-fascist world view, while not directly linked to any known acts of violence, are increasingly calling for violence against those whom they believe pose a threat to the environment. This perceived threat most often comes from Jews, whom eco-fascists believe care only about making money, even at the cost of the environment. As such, the siege pill may follow the green pill.

The Dog Pill

The dog pill is the belief among certain incels that women would rather sleep with dogs than them. They base this on extremely anecdotal evidence combined with speculation about canine anatomy relative to their own.

The Reverse Dog Pill

This is the incel response to the dog pill, and the idea is that if women would rather sleep with dogs than with them, then they in turn will start sleeping with dogs instead of women. The debate around this pill was tagged “SERIOUS” on a popular incel message board – which may be a strong indication it is not, in fact, taken seriously.

The JB Pill

Short for “jail bait” the JBpill is a reference to pedophilia. It is used mostly in the incel world, but even there only rarely, and incels should not be confused with pedophiles.

RELATED CONTENT

When Women are the Enemy: The Intersection of Misogyny and White Supremacy

Tallahassee Shooter Appears to Have Been Racist Incel

Atomwaffen Division (AWD)/ National Socialist Order (NSO)