

# Kenosha far-right vigilante Kyle Rittenhouse announces a shooter video game targeting media organizations

Luke Galvin  
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On June 23, Kyle Rittenhouse, the fascist gunman who shot and killed two people and wounded another during protests against police brutality in Kenosha, Wisconsin, on August 25, 2020, announced that he was lending his name to a new video game.

*Kyle Rittenhouse's Turkey Shoot* allows players to “[p]lay as Kyle Rittenhouse to destroy fake news turkeys in a simple point ’n shoot game for all ages to enjoy!”

Among the targets: “turkeys” branded with the labels “fake news” and “MSDNC,” the latter being a portmanteau combining the liberal news outlet MSNBC and the initials of the Democratic National Committee.

The advertising and official site for the game state that the proceeds from pre-orders, set at \$10, will fund plans “to sue the left-wing media organizations for defamation.”

A video released by developer Mint Studios features Rittenhouse posing with a nerf gun while claiming that “from the very beginning” of the shooting he “did nothing wrong.” He continues, declaring that the media have falsely smeared his name and that “it’s time to fight back against the fake news machine.” Right-wing pundits such as Ann Coulter have begun promoting the game on Twitter.

Rittenhouse was acquitted in a Wisconsin courtroom in November 2021 for his vigilante killing spree. The *World Socialist Web Site* wrote at the time that the acquittal was a “judicial travesty.” We warned that the verdict would “embolden... violent paramilitary forces that have been cultivated in the orbit of Trump and the Republican Party” and were promoted following mass demonstrations against police murders.

The legal basis of Rittenhouse’s acquittal was a

fraud. Throughout the trial, the judge, who clearly sympathized with the defendant, excluded all political context, such as Rittenhouse’s idolization of fascist militias and far-right causes.

Aside from the game’s idiotic premise, it is clearly part of an effort to associate the game’s developers with Rittenhouse and the far right in general. There are concerns, however, that the video game announcement may be a scam.

Despite pre-orders commencing at an above-average price, there’s no listed release date or window, and no explanation of what platform or storefront the game will release on—information considered to be essential for game releases. This raises the possibility that the game is merely a front to solicit political donations for the far-right vigilante, whose “lawsuits” against the “left-wing media” are groundless and unlikely to pass legal muster.

The promotion of such violent propaganda by Rittenhouse and his ilk is bound up with the ruling class’ broader assault on democratic rights, which is only warming up. The public promotion of a shooting game starring a fascist gunman targeting media organizations is a serious provocation and indicative of the growth of violence among the far right.

The game’s debut came the same day as a pair of reactionary Supreme Court rulings that expanded the license to carry concealed weapons and restricted the ability of defendants whose Miranda rights were violated to sue the police for damages. The repeal of the right to abortion on June 24 closely followed.

There are long-standing connections between the video gaming industry and the military and far right. Writing in 2020, the industry publication *Game Rant*

noted that “the US Army, Airforce, Navy and other branches all have a level of investment in the video game world.”

“Due to failures in traditional recruiting methods,” the publication explained, “the US military has doubled down on its digital recruitment efforts and found unconventional ways to reach prospective soldiers.” Now, “[b]y accessing some of the most popular esports games on the web, it has direct access to thousands of gamers of all ages who could be valued recruits for the US armed services.”

The far right has gravitated toward the internet gaming community. In 2014, the “Gamergate” controversy, involving “highly graphic, disturbing threats” (*Washington Post*) aimed at female game developers and other industry figures, produced real life threats.

“The frenzy reached extreme heights,” wrote the *Post*. “In 2014, the Game Developers Conference received a bomb threat in response to a scheduled appearance at its awards ceremony by Anita Sarkeesian, a feminist games critic. While her appearance went on as planned, a month later she canceled a speech at Utah State University after an email threatened a shooting massacre at the event.”



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