During the summer of 1999, Carol Swain was a tenured associate professor of political science and public policy at Princeton University’s Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs. She had earned a Ph.D. from the University of North Carolina and was pursuing a master’s degree in law from Yale. She already had published one acclaimed book with Harvard University Press and was immersed in a second—on the sensitive topic of affirmative action.

By anyone’s reckoning, Swain was and is the quintessential academic. She also is black.

After the racist murders in Illinois, Swain began to wonder how Benjamin Smith and other white nationalists viewed affirmative action. She combed the web sites hosted by the World Church of the Creator and like-minded groups, but found no clear answers. At last she decided there was only one way to find the truth.

She would commission interviews with the leaders of the nation’s most virulent white hate groups.

She shelved her affirmative action book and started a new one. Two years later, she had her answers.

On the morning of September 11, 2001, after jets flown by Muslim terrorists had crashed into the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, Swain called Cambridge University Press and asked the publisher to change the name of her forthcoming book.

Her preferred title? Woe to America: The New White Nationalism and Other Threats to Society.

“My book is a wake up call,” said Swain, who is now a professor of law and political science at Vanderbilt. “We’re at a point in history where we have an opportunity to avert disaster. I believe that unless we take action today, we’re headed for unprecedented levels of racial and ethnic conflict.”

The new face of hate

Matthew Hale is the Pontifex Maximus of the World Church of the Creator (WCC). After Benjamin Nathaniel Smith’s killing spree, Hale told CNN that the young man was “a pleasant person who believes in his people, the white people. I can’t say anything bad about him.”

That’s hardly surprising, since Smith was a devoted foot soldier for the WCC who distributed racist flyers to fellow students at the University of Illinois. What is surprising is that Hale holds a J.D. from Southern Illinois University School of Law. He passed the Illinois Bar, but was prohibited from practicing
law because of racist and anti-Semitic views.

Hale is no cross-burning redneck. He is, however, an excellent example of today’s white nationalist. It is alarming, but Swain’s research shows that growing numbers of racists are college educated, financially secure, middle-class Americans.

“Many in the white nationalist movement are bothered by the stereotype of the blue collar guy that marches with the Klan,” said Swain. “They are working hard to change that stereotype.”

Swain points out that there is a difference between white supremacists and white nationalists. “Many of the people interviewed [for my book] wanted to make that distinction,” she said. “They would argue that a white supremacist wants to dominate other groups. Many of these people say they don’t want to rule over anyone. They just want white people to have the same rights as minorities.”

In The New White Nationalism in America: Its Challenge to Integration (her publisher didn’t go for the title change), Swain profiles the leaders of the largest, most active white nationalist groups in the U.S., including the National Association for the Advancement of White People, the National Alliance, the World Church of the Creator, and David Duke’s EURO—the European-American Unity & Rights Organization. These nationalists insist they represent white Americans who have become embittered over a host of racial double standards.

Don Black, who hosts the swastika-strewn web site “Stormfront,” could be the new face of racism. Black defines his web site as “a resource for those courageous men and women fighting to preserve their White Western culture, ideals and freedom of speech … a forum for planning strategies and forming political and social groups to ensure victory.”

Sounds like the local fraternal lodge, doesn’t it?

Don’t be fooled, said Swain. The new racists may be less physically threatening than the jack-booted skinheads of the ’80s, but they are even more dangerous. The peril lies in the insidious appeal of their message.

“The groups that are a threat are the ones that argue in favor of white self-determination, white pride, and white civil rights,” Swain said. “The groups we need to watch are the ones led by people like Jared Taylor. He graduated from Yale and holds a graduate degree from the Paris Institute of Political Studies. He’s much more dangerous because he would fit in at most major universities and no one would be alarmed unless he started to discuss his views widely.”

Marketing courtesy of Josef Goebbels

White nationalism is increasing in popularity, thanks in part to a marketing strategy drawn from Nazi propagandist Josef Goebbels. (“Never lose sight of the fundamental principle of propaganda—the constant repetition of the most effective arguments.”)

In 2000, the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) set the number of U.S. racist groups at 602. According to Mark Potok, editor of the SPLC’s Intelligence Report, white nationalist groups are on the rise. “We’ve seen that as a clear trend in the last

All they are saying is give hate a chance

The New White Nationalism features interviews with America’s top white nationalists. So who hates what?

World Church of the Creator. This group has its own religion called Creativity, based on racial Darwinism. Leader Matthew Hale believes that if whites don’t take action—up to and including a racial holy war—they will become extinct. Follower Lisa Turner, a devotee of Hitler’s Mein Kampf, calls non-whites “mud people.” She claims that wherever Jews migrate, society fails.

National Alliance. A neo-Nazi group led by William Pierce and considered the most dangerous in America. It became infamous after the bombing of the Oklahoma City federal building when it was revealed that Timothy McVeigh had been inspired by The Turner Diaries—a novel by Pierce that calls for a race war. Pierce is a former professor from the University of Oregon who called Adolf Hitler “the greatest man of our time.”

EURO—the European-American Unity & Rights Organization. David Duke, ex-Klanzman and former Louisiana Republican state representative, founded EURO. Duke claims to defend the rights of whites against discrimination, multiculturalism, and the influx of non-European immigrants into the U.S. He reviles Jews and America’s support of Israel.

American Renaissance. A magazine edited by Jared Taylor, who attended Yale and holds a graduate degree in economics. Taylor’s message is that multi-ethnic societies cannot succeed and that non-Asian minorities are genetically predisposed to pathologies.

NAAWP—the National Association for the Advancement of White People. Led by Reno Wolfe, the NAAWP denounces racial double standards and black-on-white crime.
few years. These groups are popularizing their message and connecting with people.”

Potok said the Pacific Northwest has the highest number of racist groups, followed by the Ozark region and western North Carolina. The South as a whole has the fewest hate groups, perhaps due to civil rights efforts in the region during the ‘60s.

Thanks to the global reach of the Internet, however, racists no longer have to join the hate group next door. “People won’t necessarily go out and join groups, but they’ll be sympathetic and subscribe to many of those views,” Swain said. “That’s the danger.”

Josef Goebbels would have loved the Internet. “The more the movement grows, the more we must exploit technology,” he told Hitler’s followers in the 1930s.

Matthew Hale cites the WCC’s large Internet presence as the best tool for spreading its message. “We have a web site specifically for teenagers, and we also have a web site specifically for women,” he boasts in The New White Nationalism.

Fellow racist Don Black is the poster child for Internet-spread nationalist propaganda. “The Net has provided us with the opportunity to bring our point of view to hundreds of thousands of people who would never have otherwise [have] been in touch with any of our organizations,” he said.

According to an October 2001 article in USA Today, more than 5,000 unduplicated visitors come to Black’s Stormfront web site each day. Those visitors can access chat boards, a store, a kiddie page, and the “Nite fo’ Crimmus”—a “’Twas the Night Before Christmas” knock-off featuring watermelon, drugs, and a reindeer named Chenequa.

Journalists and editors traditionally have acted as media gatekeepers, selecting and filtering what reaches the public. But the Internet has no such watchdogs.

“I think the Internet is a tremendous alternative source of information,” former Klansman David Duke said. “It’s a media bypass.”

Educating racists
The Internet also is the best tool for recruiting the fastest-growing segment of hate groups nationwide: young white males on college campuses. According to Swain, these men feel trapped by the straightjacket of political correctness.

“They don’t understand why it’s acceptable to have ethnic organizations and not white organizations,” she said. “They’re stifled and struggling under political correctness. There may be some rebellion, but mostly it’s just that young people don’t understand.

“If a white person does the same thing as a minority—especially when it comes to language and speech—they will be punished much more severely,” Swain explained. “Young white people who have always been in the majority, who are fearful for the future [might] consider actions that they might not have contemplated before.”

According to Swain, the new white nationalists are brilliant at exploiting resentment over racial double standards. Their tactics draw angry young men like spoiled meat draws flies.

Nationalists also have learned to take advantage of sociological research. Unfortunately, much of the information they spin is accurate. As examples, Swain points to the black crime rate and to studies that show that if current trends continue, whites will be a numerical minority in the U.S. soon after 2050.

This selective use of academic data resonates with many intellectuals on college campuses. William Pierce, who holds a Ph.D. from CalTech and heads the neo-Nazi–oriented National Alliance, claims that his organization has “seven times the percentage of academics in our membership as exist in the general population.”

Swain believes it’s time for the academic community to wake up and address the danger before them. “This is taking place right under their noses and they don’t have a clue. There are racists who don’t head hate groups but who have tremendous academic and intellectual influence. Michael Levin, who teaches philosophy at the City University of New York and who believe that blacks are genetically inferior, is just one example.

“What I would like to see on college campuses,” she continued, “is to remove the political censorship and to create a more inviting environment for people to express their views, even if you or I might find those views offensive. Even with some of the [white nationalist] professors, we should bring them to campus and put them on a panel with those that disagree and let them debate their ideas.”

Recipe for a devil’s brew
As she began to write The New White Nationalism, Swain wondered if the U.S. was headed for unprecedented levels of racial
Carol Swain was born in a four-room shack in rural Virginia. One of twelve children, she knew she was bright, but with a father who had only a third-grade education, college was unimaginable.

After dropping out of school, Swain married, bore two sons, worked in a factory and lived on welfare. But her dream of college—and a sense of mission—never died. So she got her GED, worked her way through community college, then earned a bachelor's degree, a master's degree, a Ph.D. and an MLS—courtesy of federal loans, grants, scholarships, and a full-time job.

“I was never focused on discrimination and I never considered myself handicapped because of my race or gender,” said Swain, who is a woman of deep serenity and faith. “I truly believe that if I had internalized that, I never would have tried the things I did.”

Vanderbilt Law School Dean Kent Syverud says of Swain, “I admire her honesty, intelligence, and courage in addressing issues and viewpoints that most academics avoid. I believe Carol Swain’s personal experience and extraordinary professional qualifications well suit her to speak and write about racial issues in America.”

Time for tough love
Swain lays much of the blame for anger over affirmative action at the door of black religious and political leaders. If black leaders addressed the real problems in the African American community, she argues, much of the ammunition used by white nationalists would be disarmed.

“Instead of attacking mostly symbolic issues like the elimination of the Confederate flag,” Swain said, “I would like to see the black leadership address behaviors among African Americans that cause other groups to view them with suspicion.”

The black crime rate is the perfect case in point.

“When you mention the black crime rate, most people will say it’s mostly black-on-black crime,” Swain said. “But the levels are too high, whether it’s black-on-black crime or black-on-white crime. Black crime causes non-blacks to fear blacks and blacks to fear each other.”

“I believe that unless America’s leaders deal with some of these issues, we are going to confront a national crisis around issues of race,” she declared. “If ever there was a need for tough love, this is it.”