Democracy Now! Interview with Leonard Zeskind
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Guest: Leonard Zeskind, author of Blood and Politics: The History of the White Nationalist Movement from the Margins to the Mainstream. He is the founder of the Institute for Research and Education on Human Rights in Kansas City, Missouri, and has studied far-right, racist and neo-Nazi groups for more than three decades.

Rush Transcript

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JUAN GONZALEZ: We turn now to yesterday’s shooting at the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington. Shortly before 1:00 p.m., a longtime white supremacist entered the museum and opened fire, killing a security guard named Stephen Johns and injuring another. The gunman, eighty-eight-year-old James von Brunn, was injured after other guards returned fire.

The shooting came hours before a new play, Anne Frank and Emmett Till [Anne & Emmett], opened at the museum.

The Holocaust Memorial Museum will be closed today in honor of Stephen Johns, the security guard who was killed.

This is Bill Parsons, chief of staff at the museum.

BILL PARSONS: We just want to say that never take your guard force or your security people for granted. These folks are trained. They train all the time. They did exactly what they were supposed to do to protect people at the museum. Our hearts really go out to the family right now and to the guard who was shot.

JUAN GONZALEZ: Washington, DC Mayor Adrian Fenty said investigators believe the gunman, James von Brunn, acted alone.

MAYOR ADRIAN FENTY: In these days and times, you never know when someone is going to grab a gun and use it in an inappropriate way, as was done today. But we want to thank the heroism of the security guards, the Metropolitan Police Department, for being on hand very early to make an arrest. We believe we have someone who was a lone gunman, but we’re going to spend the night investigating any and all other leads.

AMY GOODMAN: Wednesday was not James von Brunn’s first run-in with the law.
Police said he was a longtime white supremacist and anti-Semite. In 1981, he was arrested after entering the headquarters of the Federal Reserve, armed with a revolver and a twelve-gauge shotgun. He told police he was planning to take Paul Volcker, then chair of the Federal Reserve Board, hostage. He ended up serving over six years in jail for that incident.

Von Brunn runs the website HolyWesternEmpire.org, which was listed last year as a hate site by the Southern Poverty Law Center. He once worked at Noontide Press, run by [Willis] Carto, one of the nation’s most prominent white nationalists and anti-Semites. The shooting at the Holocaust Memorial Museum Wednesday marks at least the third recent shooting involving a gunman with ties to the white nationalist movement. On May 31st, anti-abortion activist Scott Roeder allegedly shot dead Dr. George Tiller at his church in Wichita, Kansas. Roeder was a former member of the Freemen, a white nationalist militia organization. On April 4th, a white supremacist in Pittsburgh shot dead three police officers.

We’re joined today by one of the nation’s leading researchers on right-wing hate groups. Leonard Zeskind has been closely monitoring white nationalist and anti-Semitic groups for over thirty years. He’s just published the book Blood and Politics: The History of the White Nationalist Movement from the Margins to the Mainstream. He joins us from Kansas City, where he runs the Institute for Research and Education on Human Rights. It’s good to have you with us, Leonard Zeskind. Let’s get right to this first story, what happened yesterday at the Holocaust museum. Who is von Brunn?

**LEONARD ZESKIND:** Von Brunn, as you noted, is a longtime white supremacist. In the early 1970s, as you noted, he worked for Noontide Press, which was later incorporated in the Institute for Historical Review, which was a Holocaust denial outfit. His book—in his book, he makes acknowledgments to the major, quote, “intellectual” figures of the white nationalist movement: Francis Parker Yockey, who committed suicide in a San Francisco jail in 1960; Wilmot Robertson, who developed the theory of a dispossessed white majority; and Revilo Oliver, a classics professor at the University of Illinois who wrote periodically for a magazine in West Virginia called White Power.

**AMY GOODMAN:** We’re going to break and then come back to this discussion for the whole hour and talk about all of these incidents of violence and, overall, the history of the white nationalist movement. Leonard Zeskind is our guest, his new book, just out now, Blood and Politics. Stay with us.

**AMY GOODMAN:** Our guest for the hour, joining us from Kansas City, is Leonard Zeskind. His book, Blood and Politics: The History of the White Nationalist Movement from the Margins to the Mainstream. Juan?

**JUAN GONZALEZ:** Leonard Zeskind, your book appears to be a really comprehensive look at the modern history of the white nationalist movement. But you give a lot of attention to two key figures in that movement, [Willis] Carto and William Pierce. Could
you talk about their—what their role was in this modern—the resurgence of the
movement, because obviously there has been a right-wing or racist or neo-fascist
movement in the country for years before?

LEONARD ZESKIND: Well, the movement that developed in the ’70s after the civil
rights movement was predicated on the belief that they had lost the civil rights battles of
the ’60s, that white people were a dispossessed people in the United States.
Willis Carto was emblematic of the—what I call the mainstreaming wing of the
movement, that is, a part of the movement that believed that they could find a following
among a majority of white people.

And William Pierce was the exact opposite. He believed that the majority of white people
would never join their movement without being terrorized into it. And he led what was
called the vanguardist movement, developing small cadres that would work inside of
other organizations.

JUAN GONZALEZ: And Pierce was the author of The Turner Diaries, was it?

LEONARD ZESKIND: Pierce—

JUAN GONZALEZ: How important—

LEONARD ZESKIND: Pierce was a former physics professor. For a while, he was
associated with George Lincoln Rockwell in the ’60s, who ran the National Socialist
White People’s Party. And then he founded the National Alliance. And he did author two
novels: The Turner Diaries, which narrated a story around terrorist cells that overthrew
the government, which they believe was Zionist-controlled, and a second book called The
Hunter, which was based on the notion that lone wolf killers could do the job that the big
organizations could not do.

AMY GOODMAN: That issue of lone wolf, it’s what the media is talking about when
they refer to von Brunn, to the alleged shooter at the Holocaust museum who right now is
in critical condition. A police officer, he shot dead there; another one is injured. But talk
about this issue of the lone wolf idea. And we’re going to—

LEONARD ZESKIND: Well—

AMY GOODMAN: Go ahead.

LEONARD ZESKIND: Well, the lone wolf is a person who has been a member or
associated with the white nationalist movement for a long time and makes a conscious
decision to act on his own, so as not to get other people involved in his actions legally. I
make a distinction between Scott Roeder in the Freemen, former Freemen member in
Kansas, and von Brunn and the shooter in Pittsburgh. The shooter in Pittsburgh wasn’t
actually associated with an organizational effort. He just read white nationalist websites.
That’s different than a lone—than the lone wolf theory.
AMY GOODMAN: And the issue of this report that the Justice Department put out in April, a nine-page report that was called “Rightwing Extremism: Current Economic and Political Climate Fueling Resurgence in Radicalization and Recruitment,” it warned about the potential for violence from right-wing groups, fringe groups. At the time, right-wing pundits and politicians fiercely criticized the Homeland Security secretary, Janet Napolitano, for releasing the report. This is an excerpt from Fox News of Sean Hannity interviewing James Dobson of Focus on the Family.

SEAN HANNITY: [The Department of Homeland Security, Dr. Dobson, is warning law enforcement officials] about the rise in right-wing extremist activity. Now, some of—for example, they would define it as people that maybe think we’re not controlling our borders, people that have pro-life bumper stickers. I’m not Ron Paul’s biggest fan, but if you have a Ron Paul bumper sticker, you might be viewed as a radical by the government. And I’m thinking, what do you think of that interpretation, especially coming from a guy that started his political career in the home of an unrepentant terrorist who bombed our Pentagon and Capitol and sat in Reverend Wright’s church for twenty years?

JAMES DOBSON: Isn’t it interesting that the media has jumped all over this, when there aren’t any examples of it? There are no Timothy McVeighs out there right now. They’re making a big deal out of something that hasn’t happened and may not happen.

AMY GOODMAN: Leonard Zeskind, can you respond? I mean, ultimately, the pressure led to the Justice Department taking back the report.

LEONARD ZESKIND: Well, I had my own criticisms of the report, which was that the Department of Homeland Security did not make an analytical distinction between the types of white nationalists, like David Duke, who are going to run for office, and Willis Carto, who are going to seek a broader majority, and the followers of William Pierce, the people that are going to be shooters. And that analytical failure led to, in my mind, an incomplete report.

I think we can say that every time the government pinpoints the problem of racist, anti-Semitic, anti-choice violence, the perpetrators of it all scream, and the apologists for it all scream. So, that’s to be expected.

JUAN GONZALEZ: Leonard Zeskind, I’d like to ask you about what seems to be an ebb and flow in especially the most extreme violent wings of the white nationalist movement. It seems that whenever there is a Democrat in control, whenever the Democrats are in control of the White House, there seems to be a resurgence of this kind of activity. And when Republicans are in the White House, it seems to ebb somewhat. Is that your analysis of what’s happened?
LEONARD ZESKIND: Well, it is true that during the presidency of Bill Clinton there was multiple acts of violence. There were Aryan bank bandits in ’95, ’96 era. There was the Timothy McVeigh problem. There was the Freemen, who set up an armed encampment in Montana.

But it’s also true that during the Reagan years there was a group called “The Order” that killed the talk-show host Alan Berg, that robbed banks, killed a Missouri highway patrolman, and spawned a whole series of other kinds of violence that ultimately led the government to crack down on those groups. And that happened in the Reagan years.

AMY GOODMAN: And President Obama being African American, what role does that play in this, do you feel?

LEONARD ZESKIND: Well, I think what the election of President Obama does for the hardest core of this movement is confirm their belief that white people are victims, confirm their belief that white people no longer run the country like they think they should. And it’s not news.

I think it’s interesting to note that David Duke, last summer, told—former Klansman David Duke, and currently active in National Socialist activities in Europe, that man endorsed Ralph Nader for president, when he talked to a reporter from Mississippi. So, the notion that Barack Obama’s election naturally, in a knee-jerk fashion, starts a white nationalist response, I think it’s a little more complicated than that.

JUAN GONZALEZ: The issue of immigration and how that has been used by the white nationalists—in one article you wrote in 2005, where you were attending a meeting in Las Vegas of various anti-immigrant groups, you quoted a Barbara Coe from the California Coalition for Immigration Reform saying that, quote, “illegal barbarians who are cutting off heads and appendages of blind, white, disabled gringos.” The relationship between the white nationalist movement and the growth of anti-immigrant sentiment in the country?

LEONARD ZESKIND: Well, it’s my argument that the bulk of the anti-immigrant movement is motivated by the same concerns as the white nationalist movement: the lack of, quote, “white control” over the country. And they look at immigration as a demographic time bomb for them that will explode in mid-century, when white people are no longer a demographic majority and are one minority among many. So, immigration actually is their principal concern at this point.

AMY GOODMAN: And can you talk about these two, what you call, political trends—mainstreaming and vanguardism—in how to deal with, well, whites not being in the majority anymore?

LEONARD ZESKIND: Well, the mainstreaming and vanguardism cuts across various organizational lines. Within the same Ku Klux Klan outfit, you could have people that are joining the order and some people that are going to support David Duke. So you have
these—it’s a political trend. And some people jump from one to the other. This week, they’re looking to get a majority of white people, and the next day, they jump into the—they give up, and they join the vanguardist stream.

I think that for people on the progressive side of the street, they have a battle for the hearts and minds of ordinary white people that they need to fight in order to keep the white nationalists from gaining hegemony over most white people. And I think, in some cases, we’ve been able to very much do that through peer organizing.

The vanguardists are a different problem. Mostly, they’re a law enforcement problem, which is not the problem of the progressive movement. But it’s also true that they do engage in regular political activity. It should be understood by all of us, and we should expose it and stand up and tell people what we think it is.

JUAN GONZALEZ: And when you talk about the mainstream part of the movement, the mainstreamers, what role does television, shows like Sean Hannity and the impact of Pat Buchanan and other right-wing populists who are always on a lot of the cable shows and on radio, the Limbaughs of the world—how does this affect the ability of the right wing, of this most extreme right-wing movement, to win sympathizers and supporters?

LEONARD ZESKIND: I think Pat Buchanan, you must remember, ran through the Republican primaries in ’92 and ’96 and won three million votes among Republicans in both those years. When he ran independently as a Reform Party candidate in the year 2000, he did very badly.

What the ordinary white nationalist sees when they see Pat Buchanan or Sean Hannity on the television, they see somebody that justifies their beliefs. I’m not sure, and I’ve not seen any evidence, that they actually draw people into the movement. I think what they do is take people that already have those kinds of ideas and give them a sense of rational justification.

AMY GOODMAN: You spend a lot of time, actually, in the book talking about Pat Buchanan, running through the Republican presidential primaries and then on from there. Talk more about his role over these decades.

LEONARD ZESKIND: Well, Pat Buchanan, if you will remember, was a Nixon speechwriter. He was the Reagan communications director. There was no foreign intervention during those years that he wasn’t willing to support. He was an anti—saw himself as an anti-communist, and he was willing to invade every country to prove it. But after the collapse of the Soviet bloc—and I discuss this quite a bit in the book—after the collapse of the Soviet bloc, Buchanan changes, because the problem for him is no longer external, it’s domestic. It’s the problem of white hegemony. It’s the problem of immigration. It’s the problem, for him, that he believes this country should be a European country. And he weds that to a long history of support for people charged as war criminals in the United States. So he’s the perfect person to represent the white nationalists in the mainstream.
What he does do, during both the ’92 and ’96 campaign, is bring hardcore white nationalists into his campaign operation. It was in the year 2000, they were actually the rank-and-file troops for a lot of his operation. So, he ran in ’92, after David Duke won the majority of white votes in Louisiana and pointed to a constituency that Pat Buchanan thought should have a voice.

AMY GOODMAN: And the Liberty Lobby support for him, and again back to what the Liberty Lobby is, going back to the issues that we’re dealing with today?

LEONARD ZESKIND: Yes. Liberty Lobby, which no longer exists, it got into a fight with another organization and bankrupted itself. But at the time, Liberty Lobby supported Pat Buchanan’s run through the Republican primaries in ’92. They thought, in ’96, that he should run as an independent. And in the year 2000, when he ran as a Reform candidate and he picked Ezola Foster, they were unhappy, although they supported him. But other white nationalists withdrew their support. Even if Ezola Foster was a former John Birch Society member or a anti-immigrant activist, they weren’t going to support Pat Buchanan, because they saw a black running mate.

JUAN GONZALEZ: And you also talk in your book about the relationship between the white nationalist movement and the election of Ronald Reagan and their involvement in the Reagan candidacy. Could you talk about that?

LEONARD ZESKIND: Well, in the Reagan—what he did by going to Philadelphia, Mississippi—and others have said the same thing—he signaled that the states’ rights crowd had a home within his campaign. It’s my argument, though, in this book that the election of Ronald Reagan was a breaking point for people like Liberty Lobby. Liberty Lobby looked at Reagan after his election, and they said, “Look, this guy is going to be just a regular, quote, ‘Zionist conservative,’” that he was going to support Israel, which they hated, and that they were going to—the Reagan era was going to continue the control of the Federal Reserve Bank and all these issues that the Liberty Lobby was campaigning against. So, actually, the election of Reagan was a breaking point for many white supremacists.

AMY GOODMAN: We’re going to break and then come back and talk about the latest incidents and go back, from von Brunn to Tiller to the man who shot three police officers in Pittsburgh in April.

This is Democracy Now! Our guest is Leonard Zeskind. His book is *Blood and Politics: The History of the White Nationalist Movement from the Margins to the Mainstream*. You can go to our website at democracynow.org for the transcript, the video and the audio podcast. We’ll be back in a minute.

AMY GOODMAN: Our guest for the hour is Leonard Zeskind. His book is *Blood and Politics: The History of the White Nationalist Movement from the Margins to the Mainstream*. 
So, you have James von Brunn, who allegedly walks into the Holocaust Memorial yesterday and opened fire—opens fire, and he kills a security guard, and he is critically wounded himself. Von Brunn, a longtime history of white supremacy, of racism, of anti-Semitism, author of the 1999 book *Kill the Best Gentiles*, a racist and anti-Semitic tome that argues whites are seeing “today on the world stage a tragedy of enormous proportions: the calculated destruction of the White Race.” In 1981, he attempted to put the whole Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve under legal nonviolent citizen’s arrest, brought in guns.

Leonard Zeskind, explain what his philosophy about Federal Reserve has to do with the white supremacy ideology. Put this all together for us, and then go back in time, both to the Pittsburgh killing as well as to the killing of Dr. Tiller.

**LEONARD ZESKIND:** Well, the Federal Reserve has been a target of white nationalists, but also varieties of far-right ultra-constitutionalists who don’t have race at the center of their belief system. But for the far-right ultra-constitutionalists, they believe that the Constitution reads that a private agency like the Federal Reserve should not be coining money and regulating the value thereof, that it’s the federal government that does it.

For the white supremacists, they believe that the moment that the Federal Reserve Bank was created in 1913 was the moment that the international bankers—and they have a whole list in all their propaganda of who they believe the international Jewish bankers are, a list that, by the way, includes, you know, the Rockefellers, who weren’t Jewish by any means—and they believe that it was the moment that Jews took control. So, when these people are opposed to the Federal Reserve, they’re not opposed to a government, per se; they’re opposed to Jewish—what they believe is Jewish control of the government. When they target and tell people that the Federal Reserve is unconstitutional, it’s based on a specious reading of the Constitution.

**JUAN GONZALEZ:** And what about the whole role of the attitude toward Israel, in general? Clearly, among many conservative white Christians, they strongly support the state of Israel. And yet, you have this group of white nationalists who see Israel and a worldwide Jewish community as a threat to their lifestyle.

**LEONARD ZESKIND:** Well, in the book, I describe a moment in 1988 when Pat Robertson, the Reverend Pat Robertson, runs through the Republican primaries and excites the white Christian constituency into the Republican Party. And the Liberty Lobby, at that point, says, “Look, we disagree with the Reverend Robertson on the issue of the Federal Reserve, but mostly with his support for the state of Israel.” So they use that as a line of demarcation between themselves and what we think of as the Christian right. These people have a thorough anti-Semitic conspiracy theory, which separates them, to some degree, from the Christian right. On other issues, like opposition to abortion, trying to force women back into seventeenth century, quote, “traditional” roles, those kinds of issues, opposition to gay marriage, they support those issues. But on the issue of Israel, they think that the Christian right is wrong. So that’s the core of the
difference between the Christian right and the white nationalists. And I try and explore that in the book a little bit.

AMY GOODMAN: Leonard Zeskind, the issue of Holocaust denial, how this fits in, and then the link between the white supremacy, the racism of von Brunn, his connection to Noontide Press, leading Holocaust denial press, with the anti-abortion movement—the connection between the white nationalist movement and the anti-abortion movement?

LEONARD ZESKIND: Well, in the case of Holocaust denial, this is a rewriting of history that, for some, is simply, you know, a way to poke a stick into Jews’ eyes. They see this as a way to aggravate Jews. For others, like William Pierce, he says specifically, “We cannot do what we want to do in the United States as long as people believe that these Hitler crimes occurred.” And so, he says it destroys the white ethic of survival. So, for Pierce, Holocaust denial is a strategy to repeat the Holocaust in the United States by denying it in the past. And for some in the movement, that’s clearly part of their idea structure.

AMY GOODMAN: And the connection to anti-abortion movement?

LEONARD ZESKIND: Well, the anti-abortion movement, as we all know, is dominated by organizations in the Christian right, is dominated by a wing of the Catholic Church, and is not, in the main, associated with the white nationalist movement. But a number of the killers have had some relationship to the white nationalists.

I go back in the book to describe the murder of Dr. Gunn in Pensacola, which was the first of these murders. And the man who incited the shooter—now, the shooter is just a regular Joe that’s an anti-abortion nut case. But in the case of the incitement, the person who was leading him, it was a man, John Burt, who had been part of the Klan in Florida in the ’60s and talked about the fact that he had committed acts of violence in the battles for civil rights in Saint Augustine.

In the case of Scott Roeder, we know that he put on a, quote, “sovereign citizen” license plate on his car in the 1996. That was a sign that he was a part of the Freemen. And the sovereign citizen movement was part of a clearly defined racial theory of the Constitution. These people believed—the Freemen, the Posse Comitatus before it—these people believed that there were two classes of citizens in the United States. One were organic sovereigns, or sovereigns, who drew their rights from God, and the rest were Fourteenth Amendment citizens with lesser rights, and this was everybody who wasn’t white and Christian. And they were—the so-called Fourteenth Amendment citizens got their rights from the government, where the sovereigns got their rights from God. And so, they believed that they could adhere to a set of what they called Christian common laws, rather than what they called statutory law in the United States.

Roeder was part of that. That indicates to me that when he shot—when he allegedly shot Dr. Tiller, he was acting out of a complete theology, if you will, a theology that tells him
that his citizenship is superior, that abortion is wrong, that women have to obey men, and so forth.

JUAN GONZALEZ: I’d like to ask you about the impact of the Oklahoma City bombing on the white nationalist movement. Clearly, that was the major wake-up call in our lifetime about the dangers of the white nationalist movement within the United States. What impact did the—in the aftermath of the conviction and execution of Timothy McVeigh, did it have on the rest of the white nationalist movement?

LEONARD ZESKIND: Well, the conviction of Timothy McVeigh was part of a general crackdown by federal government on the shooters and the bombers and the bank robbers in the movement. And as I pointed out earlier, there were several groups. The Aryan Republican Army was active at the same time that Timothy McVeigh was. The so-called Phineas Priesthood was. They shot people, too. So it was a general round of violence. What happened is, the government came in and made major arrests all across the board and, for at least a little while, tamped down the most violent wing of the movement. Then came 9/11 and the war against terror. So shooting people was no longer considered by the white-ists, if you will, a useful strategy.

I think now that we’re eight years away from the 9/11 events, what we’re going to see is an increase, but it’s related to the fact that the war on terror is ebbing, in their mind, and they’ve got room to do what they want to do.

AMY GOODMAN: Leonard Zeskind, how much of a threat, do you see, is the white nationalist movement today? I mean, von Brunn was writing this stuff. He was writing books. He was keeping a website. He could be watched. Do you think this was preventable? How do you think the government should be monitoring these groups?

LEONARD ZESKIND: Well, I’m not sure that I’m ready to set government policy on this issue. What I can say is that the people that are residents of this country can stand up and say to the white nationalists and the anti-immigrant movement that they support human rights for all people. I think we can go out and do peer organizing among young people that—and middle-aged people now, that are joining the skinhead white power music scene. I think we can stand up and say this stuff is wrong. And I think that, in the long run, is a more important way of curbing this problem than simply relying on police powers from the government.

AMY GOODMAN: How many people would you say are involved in this movement?

LEONARD ZESKIND: I’d say there’s about 30,000 hardcore members. I don’t tend to—some people measure this movement by the number of organizations. Since many of the people have cross-organizational memberships and skip from one organization to the other, or one organization falls apart and three organizations take its place, I tend to look at the aggregate number of folks. It’s about 30,000 in the hardcore center of this.
I’d say there’s somewhere between 200,000 and 250,000 what I call active supporters. These are people that read the publications, go to the meetings, read the websites, donate money.

And then there’s a third layer, which was tapped by Pat Buchanan and David Duke in the Louisiana, and this is people that will support it in a voting booth but won’t get out on the streets with the national socialist movement and march around in swastikas.

**JUAN GONZALEZ:** And the connection between our white nationalists here in the United States and groups in other parts of the world? Clearly, in Europe there is a resurgence of neo-Nazi organizations and groups.

**LEONARD ZESKIND:** Well, I think what we can say is that there have been longstanding ties between white nationalists in the US and those in Europe. Francis Parker Yockey, one of the people cited by von Brunn, Francis Parker Yockey was an American. He was in the American Army right after World War II, and he became part of the neo-Nazi resurgence in Europe in the immediate postwar era.

What we know today is that numbers of organizations have direct organizational links to the French National Front, to the British National Party, to the German Democratic National Party in Germany. And they look at, for example, the last European elections to see how their people did. They pay more attention to the events in Europe than some of the people that are in the media today.

**AMY GOODMAN:** Finally, Leonard Zeskin, can you talk about how you got involved with researching the white nationalist movement, going back thirty years ago?

**LEONARD ZESKIND:** Well, I’m—older than thirty years ago, I’ve been an adult, and I began as a generic anti-racist activist. I came of the opinion in the mid-’60s that white people needed to organize other white people to oppose racism. It was an idea promoted in the mid-’60s. And I took that on as part of what I wanted to do. In about 1978, we started to see an upsurge in white supremacist violence again. And then, in 1979, there were a number of events and shootings. At the time, I wasn’t a professional in the business at all. I was just an average rank-and-file community activist type.

**AMY GOODMAN:** We’re coming up on the thirtieth anniversary of the Greensboro massacre in November. What was your relationship with the protest around that?

**LEONARD ZESKIND:** Well, on February 2nd, 1980, a number of civil rights and religious groups, as well as some of the organizations on the left, came together for a big march in Greensboro. And I was one of several people in Kansas City that drove all night into Greensboro so that we could march in solidarity and in opposition to the shootings in Greensboro.

**AMY GOODMAN:** Explain what happened there. Explain what the Greensboro massacre is.
LEONARD ZESKIND: Well, what happened—what happened was there was a group of anti-Klan activists in North Carolina that were busy physically confronting the Klan whenever possible. And the Klan decided to shoot back, as it often does. And the Klan came in with a caravan of—I think it was fourteen cars, but I might be wrong about that. People slowly got out of their car, popped the trunks, pulled out their weapons and started shooting people in the crowd. It was an awful massacre. The people did not get convicted in state courts, one of the many cases of racist violence where state murder charges were not successfully prosecuted. And it opened up, if you will, a whole stream of violence in North Carolina.

AMY GOODMAN: And again, the killing yesterday, von Brunn opening fire in the Holocaust museum. Last night, there was supposed to be a big opening of a play by Janet Langhart Cohen, who’s a journalist and a playwright, the wife of William Cohen, the former Defense Secretary. In fact, he, William Cohen, was there in the museum right near the shooter. Her play was about Emmett Till and Anne Frank, putting them together in conversation. The eightieth anniversary of Anne Frank’s birth is tomorrow, June 12th. She was born June 12th, 1929. And Emmett Till, the fourteen-year-old boy from Chicago, went down to Money, Mississippi in 1955. His mom sent him down to be with family, and he was lynched by a white mob. Do you think that could have anything to do with—among those who were going to be attending was Eric Holder, the Attorney General. Final words, Leonard Zeskind?

LEONARD ZESKIND: Well, I’m not sure that we know the last word about the von Brunn incident in Washington. I think it’s a mistake for the Washington police to say they’re going to do an overnight investigation to determine what the motives were and whether or not other people were involved. I think that it’s an indication that we’ve got a problem, that we need to learn about it, we need to pay attention, and we need to stand up and say no to this white nationalist movement.

AMY GOODMAN: Leonard Zeskind, I want to thank you for being with us. Your new book, Blood and Politics: The History of the White Nationalist Movement from the Margins to the Mainstream.