

Is this the most toxic man on Earth?

WORDS *by* GENEVIEVE GANNON

Andrew Tate is the most famous man you've never heard of. With millions of followers, he's polluting our boys' minds with a world view that's sexist, racist and violent. And that's just the beginning ...



Andrew Tate (left) taunted climate activist Greta Thunberg (below) on Twitter and in a video. Days later, Romanian authorities arrested him and his brother Tristan.



“You need a man who can kill somebody and hold a baby in the same day.”

— Andrew Tate

Being a man is all about assertiveness and status. “You need a man who’s capable of being violent when the time appears. You need a man who’s capable of making money. You need a man who can kill somebody and hold a baby in the same day.” So says Andrew Tate, a self-described high-status male and influencer who produces online content telling young men how to think, act and get rich.

The former UK *Big Brother* star lives in a compound in Romania that is registered as a firing range so his security guards can carry guns. According to a now-infamous tweet, he owns 33 cars. He thinks Adolf Hitler was pretty smart, and his views on migration and multiculturalism are hideously racist. A self-confessed misogynist, he complained last year that “females don’t respect how difficult it is to become a high-value man”. Also, he added, all a woman needs to be high-value is to be hot. “If you’re nice it’s a bonus but it’s not even that necessary,” Tate said.

If you’re wondering why this man’s words are being printed in the pages of *The Weekly*, it’s because Tate and the “manosphere” he’s a part of have become impossible to ignore.

Tate, 36, made global headlines in December when he tried to get a rise out of climate activist Greta Thunberg by tweeting at her about his large collection of fuel-guzzling supercars. His Bugatti has a quad turbo engine, he told her, and he owns two Ferraris. “Please provide your email address so I can send a complete list of my car collection and their respective enormous emissions,” Tate wrote on December 27. Greta shot back: “Yes, please do enlighten me. Email me at smalldickenergy@getalife.com.”

Greta’s skewering of Tate went viral. The sensationally clickable exchange was picked up by every outlet from CNN to *Grazia* magazine. Tate filmed a video reply, dressed in a red silk robe and smoking a cigar. Pizzas were delivered part way through his speech, which he interrupted to say, “Make sure that these boxes are not recycled.” The level of public interest in the story exploded when Romanian police raided Tate’s villa in Bucharest and arrested Andrew

and his younger brother Tristan. Some news sites gleefully reported that it was the pizza box in the video to Greta that tipped authorities off to his location. This is untrue. The Tate compound had been raided in April 2022 as part of an ongoing probe into a suspected human trafficking operation.

Romania’s Directorate for Investigating Organised Crime and Terrorism (DIICOT) had been watching the brothers since 2021. Both men were taken into custody, though neither has been charged and both denied the allegations. But suddenly, everybody was asking who Andrew Tate was, and when they dug into the hours and hours of video content he had disseminated, they were alarmed by what they found.

Tate is the biggest voice in the manosphere, which is an online movement that coalesces around the idea that feminist forces are trying to

marginalise traditional masculinity. The manosphere encompasses conspiracy theorists, extreme misogyny and men’s rights activists. It’s also becoming more mainstream. At one point in 2022, Tate was the most Googled man in the world.

Boastful and domineering, Tate says gleefully misogynistic things designed to attract controversy and clicks such as, “If you put yourself in a position to be raped, you must bear some responsibility. I’m not saying it’s OK you got raped. No woman should be abused regardless. However, with sexual assault they want to put zero blame on the victim whatsoever.”

He says he lives in Romania because it’s corrupt, “which suits me because I’m f*cking rich”.

Most worryingly for parents, who were learning about Tate for the first time, was the discovery that their sons already knew exactly who he was. The Andrew Tate hashtag had been viewed 12.7 billion times on TikTok as of August. He has since been booted off the platform. Yet his presence remains.

Ninety-two per cent of Australian high-school-aged boys have heard of him, according to a survey by men’s mental health charity Man Cave, and one-third say they relate to him.

A quarter of surveyed Australian boys look up to Tate. That’s Tate who said in a now-deleted YouTube video, “I’m not a rapist but I like the idea of just being able to do what I want.”

It’s no wonder parents are concerned.

Making a misogynist

Andrew Tate is the son of US chess master Emory Tate, but he and Tristan were mostly raised by his mother in a council estate in the UK. Tate’s rags-to-riches narrative is a big part of how he sells himself as an oracle on wealth creation. He idolises his father, who died in the middle of a chess tournament, and says he learnt from Emory’s attack-driven playing style.

“He turned me into a brilliant person. You can’t argue with the methods if the result is flawless,” Tate wrote of his dad after his death in 2015. He claims to be a member of Mensa and a chess prodigy

but rather than pursuing chess he became a professional kickboxer and won several championships.

He galvanised his profile by appearing on UK *Big Brother* but was kicked off after a video surfaced of him hitting a woman with a belt. Tate and the woman both released videos saying the act was consensual. Tate then began making money operating a pornographic webcam business and delivering his rapid-fire sermons on manhood online.

The reasons young Australian men say they like Tate are, “He has right opinions and knows what his [sic] talking about” and “He is persecuted



Chess family strives to keep pressures of game in check

The road to internet fame for Tate included chess (above), kickboxing (below) and a short stint on UK *Big Brother* (bottom).



because of snippets of what he says taken out of context and scrutinised.”

“It’s a bit of a Trojan horse,” says Kobe Helu, 19, a Man Cave facilitator. “He hooks in young men with things that are attractive to them, which is confidence, money, women. Then a lot of boys can be influenced to the other things that he would say, on a lower level.”

Kobe delivers workshops in schools and says Tate’s videos began appearing in his social media feed last year. “I just noticed, ‘Whoa, this guy’s taking over.’ Then it slowly crept into other social media.

“Some of his catchphrases were coming up in workshops. The popular ‘Are you a G [Gangster]?’ ‘Are you a Top G?’ ‘What colour’s your Bugatti?’ and ‘How much money do you have?’ Other facilitators were like, ‘Who is this guy?’ For me, I felt prepared to handle it because I knew.”

Kobe says young men are drawn to Tate’s confidence. “The answer I heard from most young boys is that he’s not afraid to be himself.”

A lot of Tate’s content is benign. Among his “41 Tenets of Tateism” are tips like, “I have the sacred duty to only eat the highest quality foods possible to maintain my health, vitality and masculine virility”. And: “I utterly disapprove of violence in romantic or familial relationships. I support good and honest governments and will obey their laws.”

“Some of the stuff he says is actually really good,” says Man Cave CEO Hunter Johnson. “It’s like, work hard, protect your family, stay in shape, keep grinding it out but don’t just sell your life away to a big corporation. These are good messages. That’s mostly what’s resonated with young men.”

Perth mother of three Jane says she tries to show her son that Tate is bad, but some of his lessons have proved useful.

“The main thing that worries me is I feel like my son lives in this dream world now where he thinks he can just go out and be

a billionaire. I'd like to bring him back to reality and I don't seem to be able to do that," she says.

Her 15-year-old son, Tom, discovered Tate early in high school and become an ardent follower.

"He'd always been a very gregarious, happy-go-lucky kind of kid. He went to a primary school where everyone was gorgeous," Jane says. On his first day of high school, Tom was punched in the stomach. "That's where the change started. He battled to find his feet. He just didn't know how to negotiate that."

Finding Tate turned things around for Tom. Physical strength is a cornerstone of Tate's life philosophy and Tom "started to get a few weights at home. He doesn't look physically different. But it's more the fact that he thinks that's the way to solve the problem. So, Tate helped him in some ways, but I say help with inverted commas," Jane says.

Tom joined Tate's "Hustler University" (HU) which "trains" its students in subjects like crypto currency, stocks and eCommerce. HU's popularity grew rapidly due to an affiliate marketing scheme Tate created to pay users for promoting it. Others have criticised it as junk and a scam.

Tom used his savings to pay a monthly HU subscription fee and to invest in the creation of his own online store.

But despite HU testimonials from students claiming they're "printing money" and making US\$3000 a day, he made only two sales: one to his dad and one to his grandfather.

"He wanted to pay more money to market it further. I said, 'I think you've got to stop'," Jane says. "I just couldn't see any more money going down the drain."

More worrying for Jane than the loss of Tom's savings, however, is that he's started parroting some of Tate's misogynistic rhetoric.

"He told me one night at the dinner table that if a married couple get divorced, the woman gets an easy ride because she gets all the money that the man's worked for. My husband and I are on almost equal wages. I looked at him and went, 'Where does that come from?'"

"He makes little comments about my driving. 'This car's trash and your driving is trash.' I'm constantly asking myself, 'How deep does that go?'"

How Tate took hold

Hunter says young men are drawn to Tate because he tapped into the discontent and confusion that Hunter sees in young men growing up in a post-MeToo world. He presents a model of masculinity and a blueprint on which to achieve that model.



"What these young men feel is they are cleaning up a mess that they've inherited," he says. "They didn't create it and suddenly they're the problem. The fingers are all pointing to them. They're buying into this belief that masculinity is under attack and that they need to lose their favourite masculine traits and become, in their world, overly feminised."

"The script, or the model of masculinity that's been handed to them, is in a state of confusion. It was be tough, don't cry, be a protector, be stoic. Now it's be more vulnerable, cry more often, you're privileged, you're entitled, you're part of the patriarchy and you're the problem. We're now at this inflection point where they're going, 'Who do we even look to, to navigate out of this?'"

Jane agrees that Tate has installed himself as a domineering role model.

"My concern is that Tate is lighting a fire under these young men's spirits."

— Hunter Johnson

Tate's gun-toting (top) and money-splashing lifestyle (above) came crashing down with his arrest.

AAP, AUSTRALSCOPE, GETTY IMAGES, INSTAGRAM, TWITTER. SUPPLIED AND USED WITH PERMISSION.

There are positive influences out there, too – Chris Hemsworth is a "pretty good role model", she says – but they're not targeting young men in the same way as Tate, who "emails constantly". "The level of control is constant: 'Do things my way.'"

Recently, Tate's commandment was that men should make decisions fast. "If you're not making fast, quick decisions, then you're a worm. If you haven't got courage, you don't make decisions quick," Jane reports.

In a leaked HU video, Tate reinforces the value of speed: "Everything must happen instantly. Quickly. Fast. With speed. Attack. Hitler conquered Europe with blitzkrieg. You need to go quickly."

Because of comments like this, UK anti-fascism site Hope not Hate has been monitoring Tate's links to far-right activists. The group is concerned about his anti-immigration and anti-multiculturalism sentiments. Tate has also expressed admiration for Joseph Kony, the head of Ugandan terror group the Lord's Resistance Army, who Tate said is a "G".

Tate would tell you he's a great role model. He professes to be a moral, law-abiding citizen. He says he's deliberately abrasive and often taken out of context. In September, a journalist from *The Times* pressed Tate on one of his most overtly violent lines, which has been reprinted in publications the world over: "Bang out the machete, boom in her face and grip her by the neck. Shut up, bitch."

The context, Tate explained, was that a girl had told him she'd cut off his head with a machete if he cheated on her, and he was telling her how he'd stop her. "And she laughed out loud. 'You're so funny! Give me a kiss.' So that was a joke," Tate said.

"It's a joke" is what young men often say when challenged on Tate. And yet, there's malevolence behind this self-styled provocateur.

The dark side

After the December raid on Tate's villa, DIICOT released a statement about its investigation into an alleged operation

that involved two UK men luring women to Romania with the promise of a relationship, then enslaving them to make pornography. They called it the "loverboy" method.

Six women came to Romania believing they were going to be married to a man who had professed "real feelings of love", DIICOT said.

The women were then forced to perform pornographic acts that were uploaded onto a user-pays adult website. The captors used physical violence, mental coercion and constant surveillance to exploit the women, and claimed the women had to repay debts they owed, DIICOT alleges.

Investigators also say one of the men violently raped one of the women.

The Tate brothers deny the allegations. At the time of writing, Andrew Tate remains in custody. He's considered a flight risk. His supporters stand behind him. Video footage has emerged of men in Greece protesting his arrest. They marched in the streets chanting, "Free Top G!"

"My concern is that Tate is lighting a fire under these young men's spirits and giving them a purpose and a community that is not healthy, or about sustainability and love and genuine prosperity," says Hunter. "I don't think society is getting the gravity of what a generational effect this can have."

He urges people with young men in their lives to "step into the arena".

"At the moment, I think we're just sludging through the swamp trying to work it out."

"We know there are so many good men out there, but the challenge is those who have control of the internet and have engaged audiences and are living out these performative lives. I think we've just got to have way



Tate's provocative words are having "a generational effect" on young men, according to Man Cave's Hunter Johnson.

more messy conversations. That's the journey for us to solve. How do we do our own inner work so we can constantly show up with respect, with integrity, with kindness and with our values out the front?"

The good news is young men are primed for more positive influences. Man Cave's survey found plenty of young men who were not buying what Tate is selling. They are turned off by his "obsession with materialistic possessions" and how that defines his identity. They reject his egotism and arrogance.

"His values are completely backwards. I just don't believe everything he says," said one Australian high school boy.

"He's a misogynist and his views on women, and their relationship with men, is terrible," said another. "He's just not a good person." **AWW**

To learn more about Man Cave's resources on healthily engaging teenage boys, visit themancafe.life