Abstract: Domestic terrorism is defined by the FBI as “violent, criminal acts committed by individuals and/or groups to further ideological goals stemming from domestic influences, such as those of a political, religious, social, racial, or environmental nature,” but it is not codified as a law that can be prosecuted. This paper argues that federal hate charges do not do justice to the terrorist acts perpetrated by white men against racial, religious, and existential “threats.” Rather than tracing the motives and mapping the origins of these acts of violence through the overlapping but distinct ideologies of white nationalism, white supremacy, and Christian nationalism, this paper examines domestic terrorism as an act of conviction affectively inspired by conspiracies pertaining to replacement and online processes of radicalization. In particular, this analysis focuses on three examples of domestic terrorism—at the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina in 2016; the Unite the Right rally in Charlottesville, Virginia in 2017; and the Chabad of Poway Synagogue in San Diego, California in 2019—to suggest that hate crime charges undermine and undervalue the importance of convicting perpetrators for animating and amplifying conspiracy theories networked online that incite feelings of persecution under the auspices of white genocide.

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