

Men's Rights Activism: A Malevolent World Of Make-Believe

theestablishment.co/2016/02/05/mens-rights-activists-are-like-kids-who-love-live-action-role-playing/

By Kathi Valeii



My 10 year-old and his friends are obsessed with LARPing—Live Action Role Playing. If you're not an adult nerd or in possession of rad nerd children, LARPing basically involves people acting out imaginary fantastical battles in the real world. From what I've observed, its success is contingent on an almost chillingly vivid imagination and a willingness/ability to enter an alternate state of reality in order to prevail over (pretend) injustices and ensure (pretend) self-preservation.

You know, the kind of pretend that the [Men's Rights Activists](#) are currently struggling against—the global scourge of misandry!

Daryush "Roosh V" Valizadeh, MRA blogger and misogynist extraordinaire, is—even by Men's Rights Activist standards—the most vile of women-haters. [Last year on his blog](#), he suggested that the solution to the problem of rape is simple: make rape legal when done on private property. The piece led to such backlash, he [added a disclaimer](#) that it was meant to be "satirical" . . . a full year later.

Return of Kings (ROK) is Roosh V's special MRA project, boasting more than 2,000 articles since 2012 on male superiority and why women basically suck. (Their top 35 article list includes such topics as "Modern Female Privilege" and "Rape Culture was Manufactured to Wage an Unjust War Against Men.") Nearly 90,000 people even signed an [online petition](#) to get ROK banned from the UK as a result of its despicable statements about women.

["Both LARPing and Men's Rights Activism are contingent on an almost-chillingly vivid imagination."](#) _

On Saturday, February 6, ROK had planned global MRA meetups for hetero-cis men to commiserate over the oppressive Fembots of the world. After publicly posting times, locations, and detailed instructions for attendance,

ROK [cancelled the meetups](#), citing “safety” and “privacy” concerns. The decision also may have had something to do with the amazing decision by a Toronto boxing club to [show up](#) at the meetup, so when Roosh did what he threatened to do—take photos of any female protesters—he’d be snapping pictures of bad-ass, boxing women. (There were also rumblings that the meetings may simply move [underground](#).)

Observing the plotting and scheming that went along with the meetup announcements was a fascinating peek into the deluded existence of an MRA fantasy world—a world of misandry just as make-believe as the one fancied by LARPer. Except, you know, LARPer are *decent human beings* who are *totally aware that the world they’re inhabiting is make believe and the pretend play doesn’t involve accusing women of making up rape*.

Except for that.

Here, in no particular order, are the top three ways the covert [Return of Kings meetups](#) are like outrageously sinister versions of innocuous LARP battles among 10 year-olds.

Epic Battles Require Epic Secrecy

During LARP battles, no one can know where dragon eggs or dragons are kept—except, of course, the Dragon Riders. To help protect these coveted assets, Riders can read minds—but they have to be very careful and selective with that power, because scanning the minds of others can severely reduce a Rider’s power . . . power he just might need for an epic battle.

Return of Kings members don’t have the mind-reading powers of Riders (as far as we know—perhaps they’re guarding *that* secret very closely), but they do use mind games and furtiveness to protect the goods in their imaginary world of misandry. Their advice on how to identify a fellow MRA?

“To identify your fellow tribesmen, ask the following question to a man you suspect is there for the meetup: ‘Do you know where I can find a pet shop?’ If you are asked this question, answer in the affirmative: ‘Yes, it’s right here.’ You can then introduce yourself and get details about where to proceed at 8:20. If you ask someone for the pet shop and they appear confused or actually try to direct you to a real pet shop, they’re not there for the meetup.”

Question: When one announces a very secret password to the Interwebs . . . is it still a secret password? And I’m not even going to ask how one “suspects” they’ve spotted another fellow neo-masculine nightmare. Perhaps—like feral rats—MRAs exude a pungent pheromone to recognize their own? Or are [“make rape legal enthusiasts”](#) readily identifiable? If so, I’d like that aesthetic breakdown.

Danger Lurks Around Every Corner—Be Prepared

I recently took my child and his friend on a woodsy walk that turned into an epic, roving battle involving rolling in water and mud. During this imaginary fight, they identified two imminent threats: possible “bear tracks” in the snow and a geocaching box that contained a Greek god death omen.

While finding a death omen in the woods is rather scary, I admit, it’s surely not as frightening as the five [“Ideological Opponents”](#) outlined by MRAs, including Social Justice Warriors who are, obviously:

“Hysterical and loud, prone to committing civil infractions, but not generally criminal. Their objections stem from internal boredom; they need something they can brag about on Facebook. Unreasonable. Do not engage with them, merely ignore.”

Thankfully, these men have someone—clearly a former operative—guiding them in ameliorating these dangers with some “basic operational security” measures:

1. *Don't give out your real name and keep personal references vague. In fact leave your ID at home or in your car. Also where (sic) plain clothes and nothing identifying like sports jerseys, something with a company logo, etc.*
2. *If there is a lurker taking a lot of photos are (sic) videos don't confront that person. Just quietly disburse (sic) if it looks like a trap. Worst case scenario is someone took photos of you hanging around in a public place on a Saturday night. Other then (sic) the remote implication there is nothing wrong with being in a public place unless it looks suspect like you would have had to drive three hours, etc.*
3. *Pay for everything that night in cash.*
4. *If your group does decide to record contact info to coordinate a further meeting write it down on a piece of paper and entrust it solely to your leader.*

And then, obviously, dart stealthily around the castle wall and mount your goddamned dragon.

Dress The Part, Dress For Success

For their battle in the woods, my son and his friend each brought their favorite foam weapon replicas—a large battle ax as tall as the kids, a dagger, and a shield. One even wore a hood and leather arm bands. This costumery—which can also include cloth pouches to protect dragon eggs—is a key component of LARPing. Think *Eragon*, think *Lord of the Rings*, think Magic the Gathering. LARPer costumes are both a commitment to the fantasy and a conduit to another reality.

[“LARPers and MRAs both use costumes as a conduit to another reality.”](#) _

But what does one do to a stealth MRA meetup to properly convey their fidelity to a shared vision of world dominance?

*“Business casual is the style of the day. No trashy logo-tees, ripped jeans, or black eyeliner. *Dress like men. However avoid good suits, and ties especially. There is a small chance that you may be physically assaulted, or have a drink thrown on you; the tie is a choking hazard, and there's no reason to ruin a nice suit. Dress pants or jeans and a button-up shirt will suffice.”*

Right, of course. And keep the conversation *believable*. Think hot wings, Fantasy Football, or elegant diatribes on the [societal merits of neomascularity](#).

*But *imagine* yourself as an axe-wielding viking.

Lead image: [flickr/Hans Splinter](#)