

Graham Platner timeline and lies

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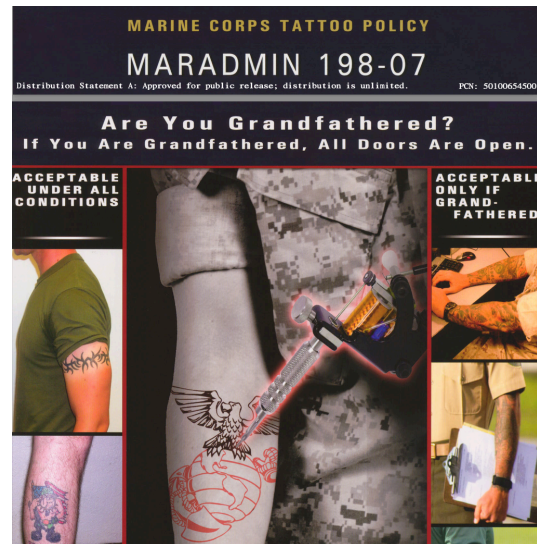
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[Pod Save America](#), Oct 20, 2025, *blaming his sleeve tattoos for forcing him out of the Marines*



Marine Corps, [“Think Before You Ink”](#), MARADMIN 198-07
“If you are grandfathered, all doors are open”

1. Summary - lies about tattoos

Graham Platner, running for Senate in Maine, has told two major lies about his tattoos and his departure from the Marine Corps. Both are easily fact-checked and would surely be used against him in a general election.

In 2009, five years after Platner enlisted, he sought to return to active duty in the Marine Corps but was denied. At this time, during the Iraq War, the Marine Corps was so desperate for manpower that servicemen were being forcibly recalled to active duty – but they did not want Platner. Platner then left the Marine Corps and joined the Maryland National Guard instead. Platner has repeatedly blamed his expulsion on a new Marines tattoo policy which banned forearm sleeve tattoos. This is his first lie. While Marine Corps policy did change in 2007 to bar sleeve tattoos, **all currently serving Marines were exempt**. All of Platner’s existing tattoos would be grandfathered in. The only non-exempt tattoos were those in a new prohibited category: tattoos that were racist or associated with extremist groups. That is, **the only tattoo Platner had in 2009 that would bar him from the Marines was the Nazi Totenkopf on his chest**.¹

Platner’s second lie is that he did not know that he was wearing a Nazi symbol until 2025. Platner’s tattoos would have been formally reviewed twice: in March–June 2007, when the new policy went into effect, and in 2009, when he sought to return to active duty. In 2007, his commanding officer was required to produce a photographic documentation of all his existing tattoos; Platner would have signed it. In 2009, an officer at the enlistment office would have reviewed his tattoos for compliance. Even if Platner did not know the Totenkopf’s significance when he got the tattoo in 2007, **he would have been told its meaning by 2009**. An officer trained in identifying and weeding out extremist symbols would not miss a Totenkopf.

Note that Platner made a choice: he could have covered his Totenkopf and continued in the Marines, but chose to keep it and switch to the National Guard. **He valued his tattoo enough to leave the Marines for it.**

Strategy: demand that Platner provide his 2007 and 2009 Marine Corps tattoo documentation

¹ There is only one way Platner’s sleeve tattoos could have been a problem: if he got them *after* the new policy was announced in 2007. Platner was required to follow Marine Corps standards for the duration of his 8-year contract, including his time on Independent Ready Reserve (IRR). But Platner himself implies he already had them in 2007 (“*I got them all in... they’re literally Marine Corps tattoos*”), and Politico says he got them “*between Fallujah and Ramadi*”, i.e. ~2005. Platner purportedly told another story on Reddit at one point (Jul 18, 2019 post), claiming that he should have been grandfathered but the Marines lost his documentation. In this case he would have been able to challenge; he says implausibly that he chose not to (“*Fuck that*”).

2. Platner timeline (based on articles & statements)

- 1999 - starts at Hotchkiss (CT, boarding school), age 15, but is kicked out within a year
- 2000 - starts at John Bapst (ME, boarding school), as a commuting day student. Graduates Spring 2003
- 2003 - gap year, backpacks in Europe and North Africa
- 2004 - starts in the Marines. Iraq x2. In 2005 he is a guard at Abu Ghraib.
- 2007 - gets Totenkopf tattoo (while on a 3rd deployment, in Europe). Marines implement new tattoo policy.
- 2008 - leaves Marines active duty after < 4 years, enrolls at GWU but drops out, likely after 1 semester
- 2009 - tries to return to the Marines, says he is denied over tattoos. Enrolls in the MD Natl. Guard instead
- 2010 - Afghanistan with MD Natl. Guard (4th deployment) *He is posting on Reddit as "P-Hustle" by now*
- 2011 - back to GWU, living in DC. He bartends on weekends at the Tune Inn, blocks from the Capitol. Gets a DUI
- 2012 - leaves the Natl. Guard after 3 years, the end of his military service obligation
- 2016 - leaves GWU, no degree after 5-6 total years. Likely stays in DC but sources are inconsistent.
*likely 2016: starts getting therapy from the VA, starts getting disability benefits.
 family friend Jock Crothers reaches out to help: "He was in rough shape"*
- 2017 - ??? - buys a house in Maine *"down the street from where he grew up"*; his father loans him the money
- 2018 - starts with Constellis, works in Kabul. Comes to Maine on leave, spends 2 weeks oystering with Crothers, then back to Afghanistan for 6 months, then quits. He now stays in Maine
- 2019 - working in Maine at Crothers' oyster farm. He and his mom seek to expand operations.
- 2020 - takes over the oyster farm. He sells oysters to his mom. He makes a video about oystering
- 2021 - makes another video about oystering, with his mom. Then a third in 2022
- 2025 ("early summer") - Dem consultants supposedly give him 2 weeks to commit, then get him a full team.
Joe Calvello, John Fetterman's former comms director, and Morris Katz "seal the deal"
- Aug. 19 - releases video to launch campaign. Calvello manages the launch
- Oct - Platner's policy director, campaign manager, and finance director all quit after scandals emerge.

Summary of timeline - Platner's timeline shows two recurring characteristics: a pattern of quitting things, and a support system that has cushioned him from consequences. He left a prep school (Hotchkiss) and quit college (GWU). He left the Marines active duty saying he was disillusioned (but also *"I loved Iraq.. I loved fighting there"*), entered college and left quickly, tried to return to active duty, switched to the National Guard, finished out his contract term saying again that he was disillusioned, back to college and quit again, signed on as a private military contractor, then quit that within a year saying once again that he was disillusioned with the military. Despite this instability he has been buffered from financial hardship. Two of the private schools he attended are among the most expensive in the U.S.; he likely could not have attended GWU without help, more than the GI bill provided. His father loaned him the money to buy a house. His entry into oyster farming was brokered by a family friend who passed on his hobby farm; his mother is one of his primary customers. His entry into politics was brokered by out-of-state operatives, who provided consultants, campaign staff, and initial funds. They built him a rollout video that continues a pattern of lying about his service: while Platner now decries the military he also overstates his combat experience. Platner's timeline has a gap where it is unclear what he was doing: 2017, between dropping out of university and starting at Constellis. This gap may reflect a mental health episode since around that time he began receiving disability benefits. He appears most happy and stable when living among family and friends in Maine. On the campaign trail, he has responded to questions with anger, accusing others of trying to ruin his life. He is defensive about his tattoo and repeatedly lies; he has not expressed regret or taken responsibility.

3. Issues / inconsistencies

A. Platner's military service

Platner routinely makes false statements about his military service, overstating his time in the military and in combat. In reality Platner served 4 years in the Marine Corps and ~3.5 years in the National Guard. He did **two combat tours** to Iraq with the Marines (9 and 7 months), then a non-combat Marines deployment on a ship (7 months) and a tour training police in Afghanistan with the National Guard (9 months). He later returned to Afghanistan with private firm Constellis, guarding diplomats (~6 months). ([Politico](#), [Jer. Post](#), Marines [DD214](#))

Four combat tours. Up through his campaign rollout, Platner often claimed 4 combat tours.

In 2021, he claimed four combat tours in a [Reddit](#) post and said his service in Afghanistan was combat: *"I did 4 years in the Marine Corps infantry and 4 years Army infantry, with 4 total combat tours to Iraq and Afghanistan"*.

In 2021 he said in an interview (with step-brother Seth Frantzman) that his training role in Afghanistan involved combat: *"since they were utterly incapable of doing it on their own, we were going on combat patrols and dragging along some Afghan cops to pretend they were doing a mission. So we operated basically as a US rifle company."* *"what we were doing was....engage the enemy and shoe-horn the Afghan component into it."* ([Jer. Post](#))

Aug. 2025: in his campaign rollout [video](#), Platner, wearing a Marines T-shirt, said he had *"a decade of military service going overseas"*, while the text on the video said *"Graham Platner served overseas for 10 years"*. Both statements are false and would be so even if he counted his time with Constellis as military service. Platner then implied his deployments were all combat tours, though did not say it directly: *"I did four infantry tours in the Marine Corps and the Army"*.



Dec. 2025: Platner told Politico he was in combat in Afghanistan: *"going out into the fucking valleys and getting in days-long running gunfights"*. In

May 2026 he was still saying *"I fought in Iraq and Afghanistan"* [Twitter](#)

Three combat tours. On the campaign trail Platner began saying he did three combat tours in Iraq, turning his ship tour into combat. Media repeated it without checking. He often dropped the claim that Afghanistan was combat.

Nov. 2025: Maine Public (Steve Mistler) reported that Platner had been regularly saying that he had 3 combat tours in Iraq: *"he gave his usual account of returning to Maine after three combat tours in Iraq with the Marines, a fourth in Afghanistan with the Army and the abandoned pursuit of a college degree in between."* ([Maine Pub.](#))

Aug. 19, 2025: The Bangor Daily News (Billy Kobin) wrote that Platner *"served three tours in Iraq as a Marine and one for the Army in Afghanistan before returning to Maine"* [Bangor Daily News](#), [Facebook](#)

Oct. 17, 2025: WaPo (Liz Goodwin) interviewed Platner about his old Reddit posts and said he *"served three tours in Iraq"* ([WaPo](#)) The same day Platner released an apology video where he says he spent his 20s overseas *"fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan"*, a return to calling his Afghanistan service combat. [Twitter](#)

Nov 8, 2025: NBC (Allan Smith and Sahil Kapur) called Platner *"a Marine veteran whose views were shaped in part by serving three combat tours in Iraq"*. (In the interview Platner addressed concerns that he is another John Fetterman, and says *"I know that these are just words.. I just have to ask people to trust me."*) ([NBC](#))

Mar. 2026: Newscenter Maine said Platner *"ha[d] completed three combat tours in Iraq.."* ([Newscenter ME](#))

Apr. 2026: Wash. Examiner (Emily Hallas). The first item in their *"Five things to know about Maine Senate hopeful Graham Platner"* is that he *"enlisted in the Marines shortly after graduating high school and participated in three combat tours in Iraq"*. (Both claims are false: he took a gap year after high school, backpacking in Europe; see [B](#)).

B. Why Platner's start in the Marines was delayed

Sources say Platner enlisted “*after high school graduation*”, but his graduation was Spring 2003 and he cannot have started serving til Spring 2004. **ADDITION:** this issue was cleared up by Politico in Dec. 2025, who report that Platner took a gap year after failing to get into GWU and traveled and “*backpacked in Europe and North Africa*” [Politico](#) In April 2026 the Marine Corps also confirmed the service dates by releasing Platner's [DD214](#) form: he entered service with the Marines on Mar 1, 2004 and separated on Apr. 29, 2008.

C. Why he was denied a return to active duty in the Marines in 2009

Platner says he took ‘terminal leave’ and left active duty after < 4 years, then later tried to re-enlist in the Marine Corps and was denied because of “forearm tattoos”, so joined the MD National Guard instead. This is false. **He was likely barred from the Marines because of the Totenkopf tattoo he got in 2007.**

Leaving: military contracts are normally for 8 years: 4 years active duty, then 4 years on “individual ready reserve” (IRR), during which one can be recalled to service. Platner saying he left the Marines in 2008 – “*I have a bunch of leaves saved up, so I take something called terminal leave, which allows me to leave the Marine Corps early*” (New Yorker), but it would be very unusual to be discharged, and Platner almost certainly went on IRR, the normal route. (The timing of when he left the military, in 2012, is also right for a normal 8-year military service obligation.) So his timing is normal. **What is highly unusual is that Platner was denied a voluntary return to active duty, during the Iraq War when manpower was so short that thousands of Marines were being forcibly recalled from IRR.**

Re-enlisting. New Yorker: “*tried to rejoin the Marines but he had several forearm tattoos, which were newly banned by Marine policy.*” Platner: “*The Marine Corps changed the rules*”. The policy change he is referring to is from 2007, when Platner was on active duty; it bans sleeve tattoos but exempts currently-serving Marines. Platner's commander was required to document his tattoos by July 1 2007; Platner would have signed the documentation package. His exemption would then continue through IRR. (The only way his forearm tattoos could be an issue in 2009 is if he had gotten new ones.) The new 2007 policy also required his commander to report any “*questionable tattoos*” that might “*bring discredit to the Marine Corps*” for being “*racist*” or linked to “*extremist groups*”; the report would be entered into the system used for processing reenlistment. Platner would also be subject to administrative review of his tattoos when trying to return to active duty in 2009. **The Marine Corps officers checking for extremist tattoos would understand his Totenkopf.**

D. Enrollment at GWU (2008-2009 and 2011-2016)

First enrollment: Platner says he started at GWU in 2008. He would have had to take the SAT by Fall 2007 (or re-use 5+ year old scores from Fall 2002) and apply by early January 2008, while he was deployed abroad. This schedule means he was expecting to leave active duty by late 2007. (Platner says he then knew in 2008 - i.e. in Fall when he started - that college was a bad fit; he likely stayed only 1 semester.)

Expense: Platner says the GI Bill let him attend college. He was enrolled at GWU over 5.5-6 years (2008-2009, then 2011-2016). GI benefits are usually granted for 36 months (4 academic years), and 48 months at most. He could only be covered by the GI benefits if he took some personal leave during that time. Also: in 2009, GWU was ranked as the most expensive college in the U.S., with tuition and fees of \$40,437. GI benefits would not cover it all: in 2025 they cover less than ½ of GWU tuition. Platner could have gotten a fellowship, but it is unlikely he could have kept it once he fell off track. He was bartending three nights a week during his college years, but that would not be enough. He almost certainly had financial help on his tuition.

E. The missing 2017

What did Platner do between dropping out of GWU in 2016 and joining Constellis in 2018? **There is no record of what he did in 2017.** Articles and interviews omit this year. Zeteo says Platner moved back to Maine in 2016, but omits 2017. Similarly, the New Yorker article says Jock Crothers thought of offering Platner the oyster farm and reached out “while Platner was in D.C.” and “in rough shape”, likely 2016, but it then skips to 2018. Other sources say Platner moved to Maine in 2018. Platner’s 2020 video says he left Maine for 15 years after enlisting, i.e. that he returned in 2018. His company webpage says Platner “returned home in 2018” (and “took over operation” of the oyster farm in 2019). Platner says in one video that he joined Constellis in 2018, came to Maine on leave and spent time oystering, returned to Kabul for 6 months, and **then** moved to Maine. But he also said in [Oct. 2025](#) that in 2017 he was “back in Maine, utterly lost”. And we know he signed a deed on his Ellsworth house in June 2017. (*The New Yorker and Platner [himself](#) say he got a VA mortgage, but county records show his dad loaned him the money.*)

F. The transfer of the oyster farm

Was the oyster farm a gift or a sale? The oyster farm was Jock Crothers’ retirement project; he had had a summer home in Maine and retired there. Platner’s website says that Crothers started it in 2012 as a “small experimental farm”. The farm was not formally incorporated as a business til 2018, but it would have had some resale value. No article says whether Crothers gave the oyster farm to Platner or sold it, and if sold, what was the price and who paid it. In 2025, a local news station called Platner only a “co-owner”.

G. When he knew about the Nazi tattoo

Platner said in an official statement that he did not know the Totenkopf symbol’s significance until after he declared his run for the Senate. Press looked to disprove this: the Jewish Insider quotes a source as saying he called it a “Totenkopf” in 2012; CNN cites a Reddit discussion in 2020. Platner likely knew much earlier, as his tattoos would have been reviewed by the Marine Corps in 2007 and 2009. **If the Totenkopf tattoo was why Platner was denied a return to active duty, he would have been told the reason by 2009.**

H. Who recruited him to run, and when

Platner was recruited by political operatives who will not identify themselves. The New Yorker says Platner was scouted by “a group of mostly millennial Democrats” looking for a candidate “a few weeks before” before the onset of “Platner fever”, i.e. in late July 2025. This seems off, since Platner also began appearing in local news features in late June 2025, and deleted 15 years of Reddit posts in July. The New Yorker says the consultants gave Platner just 2 weeks to commit, which could be true, in terms of a final commitment to run, but he seems to have prepped for longer. The article hints at a large cast of characters, saying Platner’s recruiters were “coordinating with Maine labor leaders, community activists, and volunteers, many of them Bernie Sanders campaign alums”, but names only one (Josh Shedlock, president of the Southern Maine Labor Council), saying all others would not speak on the record. It says campaign operatives Morris Katz (Mamdani) and Joe Calvello (Fetterman) “sealed the deal”. Platner’s mom has mentioned Katz, Calvello and Shedlock, but the backroom powerbrokers are not known. In Dec. 2025, Politico mentioned two new names as recruiters: Daniel Ezra Moraff and Leanne Fan, New England-based members of the Democratic Socialists of America. David Hogg, former DNC vice chair, was also involved before the campaign launch. (Platner also had DC connections from his years bartending there.)

On Aug. 19, Platner entered the race with a campaign video and a slick website. Bernie Sanders and Ro Khanna must have been onboard already since they endorsed Platner on Aug. 30 and Sept 4. Union endorsements came soon after, in October. In his podcast appearance, Platner angrily blamed the “political establishment” and “apparatus” for the attacks on him, but his run is very much steered from above.

4. Questions for Platner

- **Can he provide a copy of the 2007 report documenting his tattoos?** If not, when did he get his forearm tattoos? If before Mar 2007, did his commander document them as required? If after Mar 2007, why did he knowingly violate Marine Corps policy? **Why did he falsely claim he was barred by the 2007 sleeve tattoo policy when the policy clearly exempted currently-serving Marines?** Did the Marine Corps make note of the Totenkopf when his tattoos were reviewed in 2007? In 2009 when he tried to return to active duty? Can he provide documentation on his 2009 tattoo review? **Was he denied a return to active duty in the Marine Corps because of his Totenkopf tattoo?**
- Why does he mis-state the number of his combat tours? What did he really do in Afghanistan?
- Does he have a trust fund? Did his father have one?
- Who paid his tuition at Hotchkiss? Why did he leave Hotchkiss so quickly?
- Why did he stay at GWU for so long but not graduate? Did he take personal leave? If not, did his GI benefits run out? Did he get financial help with his tuition? If so, who helped him?
- What was he doing in 2017?
- Was the oyster farm a gift from Jock Crothers or was there money exchanged? If so, how much and who paid? Who is his co-owner?
- When did he join Constellis? Did the VA consider him disabled then? Was he in Kabul before coming to Maine on leave? Did he tell a reporter he was in Afghanistan with the NG but not Constellis?
- Why did he get “higher disability benefits” from the VA? Is it appropriate that he is still drawing disability benefits? Given his track record of quitting and his struggles, how can he reassure voters he is now stable enough to take on the pressures and responsibilities of a US Senator?
- **Who recruited him to run for office and when?** Were the people who recruited him really strangers who just saw his videos, or were they people he knew from his time in DC? (Note: Joe Calvello implies he knew Platner from the Tune Inn in DC “back in the day”)
- **Why did the people who recruited him refuse to talk to media on the record?**

5. Comparison to other candidates

Platner’s campaign is directed by staffers who worked with ‘upstart’ candidates John Fetterman and Zohran Mamdani, but he has far less experience than either of those men did when they ran for office. Prof. Seth Cotlar notes that Fetterman & Platner are both “*downwardly mobile sons of the upper middle class*” [Bsky](#)

John Fetterman

Education: BS Finance (Albright College), MBA (U. Conn), MPP (Harvard)

Experience by 1st Senate Run (2016): Chubb (2 years), AmeriCorps, Mayor (11 years, from 2006)

Experience by 2nd Senate Run (2022): also Mayor (13 years, to 2019), Lt. Gov of Pennsylvania (3 years)

Zohran Mamdani

Education: BA Africana Studies (Bowdoin College), 2014

Experience: music 2016-2019; 4 campaigns: volunteer 2015 and worker 2017 (City Council), campaign manager 2019 (NY State Senate), worker 2019 (County DA); NY State Assembly 2020-2025 (5 years)

Graham Platner

Education: no degree, attended GWU 2008-2009 and 2011-2016

Experience: Marines (4 yrs), Natl. Guard, Tune Inn bartender (5-7+ yrs), Constellis (1 yr), oyster farm (5.5 yrs)

6. Sources and details - Platner

A. Early, primary sources

- Nov. 1999, Ellsworth American article talks of his enrollment at Hotchkiss as a “*first-year student*”
- Nov. or Dec. 2002, Ellsworth American (both 1999 & 2002 reprinted in the [Wash. Free Beacon](#), Oct. 2025) talks of his being a commuting day student at John Bapst and that he’d been there for “*three years*”
- Nov. 25, 2002, co-author on a pro-Palestinian “Student Union” op-ed in the [Bangor Daily News](#)
- Mar 27, 2008, article in Ellsworth American. Platner says “*I loved Iraq. I loved being there. I loved fighting there.*” He is photographed in a Blackwater hat and says he wears it to “*get a rise out of*” people bothered by Blackwater’s recent war crimes. He talks of burning the corpses of enemy combatants. (Parts [1](#) [2](#), repost)
- 2008, interviewed by MTV and CNN as part of a program on vets returning to college (repost by [KFILE](#))
- 2010 - starts posting on Reddit as “*P-Hustle*” (til 2021). Examples: Dec. 4, 2019 he posts about improvising grenade launchers in Iraq to bypass regulations on mortar fire in populated urban areas. (Reposted on [X](#), Reddit [video](#)). Feb 8, 2019, he posts that he has always voted for Susan Collins but no longer will ([X repost](#)). On Jan 2, 2020, he explains why he enlisted: “*Wanted to have an adventure and kill some people*” ([X repost](#)). See also articles in “post-revelations” section. In [2021](#) he said he was “*radicalized*” by “*America’s imperial wars*” and that he did “*4 total combat tours to Iraq and Afghanistan*” (but he did only 2, in Iraq).
- June 2017 - Platner buys a house in Ellsworth. His father loans him \$200K for it. (Hancock County [1](#), [2](#)) The New Yorker says he got a VA low-interest mortgage but there is no evidence the VA was involved [New Yorker](#)
- Feb. 28, 2019, Ellsworth American. Platner asks to expand oyster operations. He and his mom come to the “public scoping session”, the only ones to attend. Suggests he is already running the farm. [Ellsworth Amer.](#)

B. Oyster farm promotion (2020-2023)

Platner appeared in videos or webpages several times in 2020-2022 as part of a fight against a Norwegian fisheries company’s “American Aquafarms” proposal. That permit application was terminated in April 2022.

- 2020: Frenchman Bay Conservancy video featuring Platner <https://frenchmanbay.org/aareponse/> or <https://vimeo.com/656810672> The website calls him the “*owner-operator of Frenchman Bay Oyster Company*”. Platner says the farm is 6 acres and that he is the owner of “*Frenchman Bay Oyster Company*”. Says he joined the military and “*left Maine for about 15 years*” (i.e. 2004-2018) and came back “*after 15 years away*”. Says the bay “*brings me an immense sense of peace, and place, and security, and joy... I don’t want to lose that.*”
- 2021: Video, “Coming home to farm oysters”. Posted by the Maine Aquaculture Assn., July 19 2021 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j_evFA0QDpw
Video: Shows him and his mom on his boat. Platner says he did “*8 years in the infantry*” and then was a “*security contractor in Kabul*”. He says he worked in Kabul, then was home on leave and oystered with Jock Crothers, then returned to Afghanistan for 6 months, then quit, moved to Maine and bought a boat. References his mom often: “*My mother is 100% my biggest cheerleader.*” “*The fact that I get to have a personal and business relationship with my mom, the fact that my mother has a restaurant that I get to sell my products at, it’s really quite wonderful*”
- 2022: story on the Coastal Enterprises Inc. webpage from Jan 26, 2022 [CEI Maine](#)
Tells his origin story, covers a 2021 grant for equipment. “*His best customer happens to be his mom.*”
Note: in the 2021 video Platner says Crothers started the farm in 2010, but the 2022 story and his website both say it was 2012. The Frenchman Bay Oyster Company was incorporated only in 2018, right before the handover; it is now also known as the Waukeag Neck Oyster Company. [OpenCorporates](#)
- July 6, 2023 - Platner gives Rep. Jared Golden (ME-02) a boat tour and has lunch with him. The event may have been arranged by the Maine Aquaculture Association [press release](#)

C. Campaign-associated events (June - October 2025)

2025: by late June, Platner began appearing in the press, suggesting his team was preparing for a run

- June 25, 2025. WABI news show “My Maine Takes: Logan goes oyster farming” [WABI YouTube](#)
A local news feature on Platner. Calls him “a co-owner” of Waukeag Neck Oyster Company.
- July 4: NYT Travel special “Slurping Toward Nirvana on the Maine Oyster Trail”. [NYT](#), [NYT arch.](#)
The NYT was to visit 2 oyster farms; one is Platner’s. (The other is Glidden Point). Platner gets a photo.
- July: Platner deletes years of his old Reddit posts, suggesting he is running [Politico](#)
- Aug 16: Platner’s team shoots a video. Reporter Lisa Wood Shapiro is in attendance. [New Yorker \(arch.\)](#)
- Aug 19. Platner’s campaign launch video is posted on [Twitter](#). Multiple news articles appear. The campaign website likely goes live. (Its first archive is Aug 20; domain was renewed Aug 8) [Arch. site](#)
- Aug 21: The (rebranded) Waukeag Neck Oyster Company webpage has been updated. [Site](#) [Arch. site](#) Slick new site Includes the 2020 and 2021 videos about Frenchman’s Bay, plus the WABI video from June 2025
- Aug 30: Sen. Bernie Sanders (ME) endorses Platner [Politico](#). Sanders calls Platner “a proud member of America’s working class” 36 year old Jordan Wood has been in the race since April. Janet Mills is not in yet. Rep. Ro Khanna (CA-17) endorses on September 4 [Politico](#)
- Oct 14: David Hogg’s coalition of youth groups endorses Platner [The Maine Wire](#), [Facebook](#)
Hogg had traveled to Maine before Platner’s announcement and posted a photo in a boat with Platner on 8/19. He had recently been forced out as DNC vice-chair.

D. Post-announcement news articles on Platner (with biographic details)

- NYT (Annie Karni), Aug 19, 2025 - the day he announced his run NYT [NYT NYT Arch.](#)
Quotes Platner as saying he was recruited by “political organizers” in summer 2025: “there was going to be a bad decision made for this race, and they went looking around this state for someone.”
- Zeteo (Prem Thakkar), Aug. 19, 2025 - the day he announced his run [Zeteo](#)
Says Platner “joined the Marines out of high school”, omitting his gap year. Says he deployed to Afghanistan in 2010 and 2011. Claims: “In 2016, he moved back to Maine, where he began gaining support from the Veterans Affairs department, getting physical and mental therapy.” This contradicts other sources that say he moved in 2018, but is consistent with his buying a house in 2017. Says he started with Constellis in 2018, consistent with other sources.
- Bangor Daily News (Billy Kobin), Aug. 19, 2025 - the day he announced his run [Bangor Daily News](#)
Says he was approached to run “recently” by “people affiliated with “Maine labor and community groups”. On [Aug 23, 2025](#), a followup article shows a 2003 yearbook picture with Platner as “Most Likely to Start a Revolution”, suggesting he was a senior then.
- The New Republic (Ana Marie Cox), Aug. 29, 2025 [TNR](#)
A flattering, almost fulsome and highly personal piece. She flew to interview him because his campaign video “struck.. [a] deep chord in me.” Platner tells her “I voted Democratic, my whole life” (though in 2019 he said he voted Republican). He says he enlisted because “I wanted to play soldier”, that he has a traumatic brain injury and PTSD.
- New Yorker (Lisa Wood Shapiro), Sept. 25, 2025 [New Yorker \(arch.\)](#)
A detailed article but with many problems. Shapiro is a longtime acquaintance of Platner’s; she was told about his Senate run in July and met with him on Aug 16, before his campaign rollout. She says he was recruited in summer 2025 by “millennial Democrats” who had seen his 2020 video (vs. Bangor Daily News’ “labor leaders”), but none of “these Democrats” would speak on the record. She does not name any of them. She describes Platner’s separation from the Marines as because of “several forearm tattoos, which were newly banned by Marine policy”; she does not fact-check. She describes 2 deployments to Iraq: 1st Abu Ghraib, then Ramadi, but not the 3rd deployment when Platner got the tattoo. She describes his National Guard deployment but omits his time with Constellis. She says he bought a house with a VA mortgage but county records show Platner’s father loaned him the money. She reports his marriage in 2024 (others say 2023) and that his wife left teaching and became his business manager that year.

E. Oct. 2025: revelations about Platner

- Politico (Adam Wren, Erin Doherty, Jessica Piper), Oct 16, 2025 [Politico](#)
First reports of posts on Reddit as “P-Hustle”, from subReddits r/SocialistRA and r/politics. Posts quoted are from 2018 and 2020. Says posts were deleted “3 months ago shortly before Platner launched his Senate bid”
- CNN (Andrew Kaczynski, Em Steck), Oct 16, 2025 [CNN Kfile](#) [CNN \(arch.\)](#)
Similar to Politico reporting. Likely the first to report. Has a good photo of his forearm tattoos, from the NYT. Includes posts on r/Antiwork and r/SocialistRA, says the account was created in 2009. In 2021, Platner wrote on r/SocialistRA “My time in America’s imperial wars definitely radicalized me further” (but in 2010 he had listed on Reddit many ‘imperial’ wars he would enjoy fighting, including the Indian wars and Nicaragua in the 1920s).
- Bangor Daily News (Sawyer Loftus), Oct 17, 2025 [Bangor Daily News](#)
More reporting on Reddit texts, these ones racist.
- Response video from Platner, Oct 17, 2025 <https://www.facebook.com/reel/665152456670364>
- Rep. Ro Khanna (CA) reiterates support for Platner on X, Oct. 17, 2025: [X, archived](#) [X post](#)
“The DSCC leaked this to try to destroy Platner the day after their hand-picked candidate entered the race” “I respect Platner’s journey and the man he is today.” “I won’t cower to the establishment”
- YouTube / Pod Save America (Tommy Vietor), Oct 20, 2025 [YouTube](#) 32:59 starts talking about tattoos
Platner shares a 2015 video of himself shirtless, with his Totenkopf tattoo visible (19:30), during his brother’s wedding (presumably his younger brother who press never name - stepbrother Seth Frantzman married in 2012). He is trying to get ahead of a story. Platner says he got the tattoo in Split, Croatia during his “3rd deployment with the US Marine Corps”. Says he had deployed to Fallujah (2005), then 5 months at home, then Ramadi for 8 months (2006), the “most intense” of his deployments, very violent, then at that point he had the opportunity to “either get out of the Marine Corps or extend for a few months and then re-deploy” [NOTE - this makes little sense since he had only been in for 2 years at this point]. He says his third deployment was mostly in the Mediterranean, “liberty ports”, lots of drinking. (This is when he got the Totenkopf tattoo.) Said he had gotten into GWU but realized immediately in 2008 that he was not ready and went to re-enlist in the Marine Corps and couldn’t because of his sleeve tattoos, “the Marine Corps changed the rules... stupid fucking... drove everyone insane”. Then “Army” (i.e. MD National Guard) Afghanistan 2010-2011, got out of the Army 2012. He says he joined Constellis in 2018. Says of his service “I needed to get disillusioned.” (27:25) He denies deleting his Reddit posts pre-emptively, though they were deleted at the start of his campaign. Says of the leaks “They’re trying to destroy my life.”
Note: Vietor (Thomas Frederick Vietor IV) attended Milton Academy, a prep school like Hotchkiss, where he played on the lacrosse team.
- Jewish Insider (Matthew Kassel), Oct. 21, 2025 [Jewish Insider](#)
Quotes an anon as saying Platner had said ‘Oh, this is my Totenkopf,’ in 2012 at Tune Inn where he bartended. Says Platner “would often take his shirt off drinking with friends late at night at the bar...” Quotes Platner’s defense: “It was not until I started hearing from reporters and DC insiders that I realized this tattoo resembled a Nazi symbol.” Quotes old Platner Reddit posts on r/liberalgunowners defending lightning bolt tattoos on a man who impersonated a federal officer. Mentions white supremacist Richard Ward posting a photo with Platner at a Maine fair in August 2025: Ward has visible “88” tattoos.
- Washington Post (Liz Goodwin), Oct. 21, 2025 [WaPo \(arch.\)](#)
Says he was made aware that opponents had the video and called it a Nazi tattoo “several weeks ago”. Quotes fellow Marine Phil Proschko as saying he got tattooed with Platner and didn’t know it had Nazi associations.
- The Advocate (Chris Wiggins), Oct. 22, 2025 [The Advocate](#)
More Reddit texts, these homophobic (2016-2021). Says he left the military in 2012; does not explain further.

- Vanity Fair (Keziah Weir), Oct. 23, 2025 [Vanity Fair \(archived\)](#)
Describes Platner and his mother at a town hall in Ogunquit, Maine. Mother Leslie Harlow says *“she and others had encouraged her son to run for legislature”* and *“alluded to conversations with coalition-builders like Jason Shedlock, president of the Southern Maine Labor Council, who participated in the search for a Democratic candidate to take on Collins, as well as Platner’s now-advisers Morris Katz and Joe Calvello.”*
- Washington Free Beacon, Oct. 23, 2025 [Wash. Free Beacon](#)
Provides clips from the Ellsworth American from Nov. 1999 talking of his enrollment at Hotchkiss as a *“first-year student”* and from Nov. or Dec. 2002 talking of his enrollment at John Bapst as a day student.
- AP (Kimberley Kruesi and Patrick Whittle), Oct 23, 2025 [AP](#)
Platner says he has covered up the tattoo. Repeats Platner’s story that he got it in Croatia in 2007 while drunk. He claims to have been unaware it was a Nazi symbol. This article says he *“serv[ed] three tours as a Marine”*.
- PBS, Oct. 23, 2025 [PBS](#)
Repeats his story of covering up the tattoo. Says he left the military in 2012; does not explain further.
- CNN (Andrew Kaczynski), Oct. 24, 2025 [CNN](#)
Says that Platner discussed Nazi symbols in a 2020 Reddit thread, and that he told an acquaintance *“years ago”* that his tattoo had Nazi associations.
- The Atlantic (Tyler Austin), Oct. 24, 2025 [The Atlantic](#) [The Atlantic, arch.](#)
Platner says after leaving the service in 2012: *“I was angry at the country for making me go do this.”* (He volunteered.) Says his 2010-2011 deployment lasted for a year. For his 2018 stint with Constellis, says he left Afghanistan after 6 months with a shoulder injury. (Does not mention going there before his leave.) Says he was *“disillusioned and angry”* afterwards. Rep. Ro Khanna: *“Do we want our political governing class to be like the classmates I had at Yale Law School... or do we want normal people also having a chance at these offices?”*
- Alex Seitz-Wald, Oct. 27, 2025, X post [X post, aseitzwald](#)
Platner says at a town hall : *“I am running as a Democrat, despite my party trying to destroy my life.”*
- WSWS (Jacob Crosse), Oct. 30, 2025 [WSWS](#)
Reprints a 2010 Reddit post. Platner says he would have volunteered to fight in *“The Indian Wars, the Phillipines [sic], Haiti, Nicaragua in the 1920s, Vietnam, Nicaragua and El Salvador again in the 1980s... Small wars are pretty enjoyable... small wars provide the rush of small combat actions.... Small wars are thinking wars.”*

F. Oct. 2025: campaign shakeups

- Oct 18, 2025 - Platner’s political director leaves [WABI](#)
Genevieve McDonald (his political director) resigns over Platner’s statements on sexual assault: *“they are not words or values I can stand behind in a candidate for the United States Senate”*. On Oct 21 she posts about the tattoo: *“he knows damn well what it means”*. Also *“The DC consultant class has fucked up our US Senate race ... The vault is open for the GOP to crush any dreams we had in the general.. We cannot be this painfully stupid.”* [X](#)
- Oct 23, 2025 - Platner has begun demanding NDAs. His interim campaign manager leaves [Politico](#)
Platner has offered McDonald \$15,000 to sign one but she refused. He is forcing current staffers to sign NDAs. Kevin Brown becomes his campaign manager; others say recruiter Dan Moraff was in the role before, but Moraff denies it.
- Oct 27, 2025 - Platner’s campaign manager leaves after only a few days on the job [Politico](#)
Kevin Brown, who joined the campaign less than a week ago, says he is leaving to spend time with his family.
- Oct 31, 2025 - Platner’s financial director leaves [Politico](#)
Ronald Holmes, who has been financial director since Aug., says *“Somewhere along the way I began to feel that my professional standards as a campaign professional no longer fully aligned with those of the campaign.”*

G. Post-Oct. 2025: events and more revelations

- Nov 2025 - The Maine Wire reports that Platner is still getting disability payments [Maine Wire](#) Platner gets \$4800/mth in disability (\$57.6/K/year). He has also paid his wife over \$3.5K from campaign funds.
- Dec 5, 2025. Politico profiles Platner, with the names of some who scouted him. [Politico](#) Says that Platner was kicked out of Hotchkiss, and took a gap year after high school and “backpacked in Europe and North Africa.” Gives dates of his tours. Implies he got his Totenkopf after July 2007 (so it would not be reviewed til 2009). Says he got a DUI in Virginia in Nov. 2011. Talks of his love for combat. Claims he was recruited in July 2025 by Daniel Moraff and Leanne Fan, as 2nd choice after another candidate. Does not mention David Hogg’s involvement.
- Jan 2026 - Platner pauses his campaign to go to Norway for IVF treatment, to save money He says he’s going because of cost: “The expense of this in the US is astronomical - \$25,000”. Says his Senate campaign is a way to “build power” to help others with costs. [Facebook WGME](#). (His father paid for the trip NYT).
- Jan 27 - Platner sits for an interview on Nate Cornacchia’s “Valhalla VFT” podcast [YouTube](#) Platner calls himself a “longtime fan” of the podcast, which has broadcast antisemitic conspiracy theories
- The Portland Press-Herald reports that Platner is spending mostly on DC consultants [Port. Press-Her.](#) Most of the money, \$2.2 M, went to DC-based Helix Campaigns. Platner’s wife has now received over \$14K.
- Feb 23 - the head of the IBEW asks Chuck Schumer to end his support for Mills [Port. Press-Her.](#) Michael Monahan (IBEW): “Your committee’s support for Janet Mills is troubling to our membership...” He sees Platner as a “kind of a Manchin, Fetterman type, in that kind of category”
- Feb 26 - Platner reposts Holocaust denier Stew Peters, then quickly deletes it [Jew. Insider Image of post](#) Platner’s post: “As always, there’s one thing that brings Republican and Democratic politicians together..”
- Feb 26 - Platner says on a podcast he didn’t know about his Nazi tattoo [X](#) (Edward Isaac-Dovere, CNN) “I’m not going to apologize for something that, like, I didn’t know about or do. The moment that it was clear and I was putting it in that context I had it covered” He also says he is a WWII history buff.
- Feb 28 - Platner’s damage-control instructions for staffers are leaked [X post](#) (Burgess Everett, Semafor) Staffers are given a scripted response about the Totenkopf tattoo: “He did not know the meaning at the time and covered it once he learned about it”. Platner’s official campaign message is, he did not know until 2025.
- Feb 28 - The Jewish Insider writes about Platner’s January appearance on Valhalla VFT [Jew. Insider](#) Controversy erupts and Platner is condemned for his associations
- Mar 1 - Pod Save America brings Platner on for another softball interview, doing damage control [X YouTube](#) They promote it: “Graham Platner wants the Democratic party to become a party of working people again.”
- Mar 1 - **unverified** rumors are posted that Platner dealt coke while bartending in DC [Bsky Mar1](#) [Bsky Mar2](#) Unclear how independent these posts are; this may be a single rumor multiplying rather than multiple reports
- Mar 2 - Sen Ruben Gallego of Arizona endorses Platner [WaPo](#) Gallego’s consultant Rebecca Katz also works for Platner. She had previously worked for John Fetterman.
- Mar 4 - Jon Favreau of Pod Save America, who has said he is not supporting Platner, promotes him. He touts a poll showing Platner leading Mills by 7 points, defends him on [X](#): “He sat down for our interview wearing an Anti-Fascist Knitting Club t-shirt.” The [poll](#) shows Platner’s strongest support comes from voters making > \$100K.
- Apr 23 - Josh Keefe, a Platner high-school classmate, says he left Constellis out of “disgust with the state of American involvement in the country” (but he told the Atlantic it was because of a shoulder injury). ([The Nation](#))
- Apr. 30 - Janet Mills suspends her campaign, saying that she does not have the funds to continue.
- May 4 - Platner does a video with a Trumper, implies the 2016 primary was stolen from Bernie Sanders [X](#) “Blow it up and do something different... it’s a compelling message” “the powers that be refused to let him have it”
- May 11 - the [Free Beacon](#) reports that Platner’s partner in the oyster farm is Robert Allerton Cushman III Cushman III’s family own the island where the farm is located; he bought a stake in 2021. Like Platner’s father he went to St. Paul’s and then Dartmouth. The article also says Platner’s only customer > \$5K in sales is his mother.

H. Connections to journalists and political operatives

The Tune Inn, where Platner bartended on weekends for 5+ years, is a storied DC hangout a few blocks from the Capitol, where journalists, staffers, and politicians drank ([WaPo CityExperiences](#)) Many DC journalists now writing about Platner likely knew him personally. A month after Platner's campaign kickoff he made a trip back to DC to hold an event at the Tune Inn, guest-bartending and greeting his DC supporters. Platner's DC connection matters since he himself has made an issue of it: *"Running establishment candidates who are chosen or supported by the powers that be in D.C. — in Maine specifically — has been a total failure"*

- **Joe Calvello** (Platner's advisor). On Sept 11, 2025, Calvello implied that he had known Platner from the Tune Inn prior to recruiting him, posting photos of Platner there with *"Graham Platner doing some guest bartending at the Tune Inn (he was bartender here back in the day)"* [X Sept Calvello](#)
- **Ryan Grim** (DropSite News): longtime customer of the Tune Inn who was friendly with Platner. At the Tune Inn, Platner bartended Friday, Saturday, and Sunday nights; Grim says he was at the Tune Inn every Sunday. On Sep. 4, soon after Platner's announcement, Grim had him on his podcast and said that he'd known Platner in DC. (Grim implied he did not help recruit Platner; he says *"friends in Maine"* reached out to him in summer 2025 to tell him about the race.) Grim seemed proud of the connection and DropSite posted the interview segment. [X Sept DropSite](#) On Sep. 21, a month after Platner declared, Grim posted a photo of the Tune Inn on X, with Platner campaign material in the window, and *"Tune Inn is supporting its former bartender. @grahamformaine"* [X Sept](#) On Oct 23, the day Platner reportedly began issuing NDAs to staff, Grim posted a long defence of Platner, again implying a personal connection: *"he was my bartender"*. [X Oct](#) Grim admits Platner is *"maybe upper middle class"* but defends this as part of a long tradition of wealthy socialists: *"Lenin's dad was a high-ranking education official. Fidel's dad was a wealthy businessman"*. On Oct. 30, Grim participated in a softball [interview](#) that let Platner defend himself.

Sullivan, Maine is a town in an area with summer visitors and some wealthy families who stay all summer.

- **Lisa Wood Shapiro** (who wrote the New Yorker profile) is a longtime summer Maine resident: *"I've spent almost every summer of my life on Frenchman Bay, near Sullivan"*. She has Platner's cellphone number as a friend / acquaintance (*"like many of my neighbors"*). Shapiro is an NYU graduate (film studies); she was in film in the 1990s, then worked in Greenwich Village, NY; she now lists her location as *"New York and Maine"*. She is not a political journalist and her article on Platner seems to be her only political piece. Her usual articles are more like *"Looking to Buy a Window Air Conditioner? Read This First | WIRED"* (Aug 2025) or *"Plantaform's Smart Indoor Fogponics Garden System Is Innovative, But Is It Safe?"* (June 2025). She has 27 articles on MuckRack and writes mostly for Wired. There is no reason for her to be chosen to lead a major profile of a high-profile political candidate other than her personal connection to him. It is not clear whether her New Yorker piece on Platner was commissioned before his announcement or pitched after it was written. Like that of Ana Marie Cox of TNR, her profile of Platner is personal and flattering and opens with a scene of Platner in a boat. [LinkedIn MuckRack New Yorker \(arch.\)](#)

Other / uncertain

- **Pod Save America:** Tommy Vietor and Jon Favreau's podcast has twice hosted Platner for softball interviews after scandal erupted, giving him a platform to defend himself ([Oct 20](#), 2025 and [Mar. 1](#), 2026). In October, after criticism, Favreau publicly denied a connection to Platner (*"I have no ties to the campaign, and as I have said a million times over the last week, I'm not even supporting Platner"*). [X \(Jonfavs\)](#) but he also routinely defends him.

7. Sources and details - military / other

A. Marine Corps tattoo policy

- Marine Corps policy update, Mar 20, 2007 (MARADMIN 198/07)
<https://www.marines.mil/News/Messages/Messages-Display/Article/894217/announcement-of-changes-to-the-marine-corps-tattoo-policy/>

The new policy prohibits sleeve tattoos, but says that **existing sleeve tattoos are grandfathered in**. It puts the responsibility on commanders for documenting tattoos on their Marines that need grandfathering. Documentation must be completed by July 1, 2007 and the Marine must sign page 11 of the documentation form. The policy also prohibits tattoos that are racist or associated with extremist groups and says information about “questionable tattoos” will be entered into the system used for re-enlistment and transfers.

2. EFFECTIVE 1 APRIL 2007, PARAGRAPH 1004.1C OF MCO P1020.34G, MARINE CORPS UNIFORM REGULATIONS, IS CANCELLED AND REPLACED WITH THE FOLLOWING PARAGRAPH. "... MARINES ARE PROHIBITED FROM:

C. TATTOOS OR BRANDS ON THE HEAD AND NECK. SLEEVE TATTOOS ARE LIKEWISE PROHIBITED. A SLEEVE TATTOO IS A VERY LARGE TATTOO, OR A COLLECTION OF SMALLER TATTOOS, THAT COVERS OR ALMOST COVERS A PERSON'S ENTIRE ARM OR LEG. HALF-SLEEVE OR QUARTER-SLEEVE TATTOOS THAT ARE VISIBLE TO THE EYE WHEN WEARING STANDARD PT GEAR (T-SHIRT AND SHORTS) ARE LIKEWISE PROHIBITED. A HALF-SLEEVE OR QUARTER-SLEEVE TATTOO IS DEFINED AS A VERY LARGE TATTOO, OR A COLLECTION OF SMALLER TATTOOS THAT COVERS, OR ALMOST COVERS, THE ENTIRE PORTION OF AN ARM OR LEG ABOVE OR BELOW THE ELBOW OR KNEE.

TATTOOS OR BRANDS THAT ARE PREJUDICIAL TO GOOD ORDER, DISCIPLINE AND MORALE, OR ARE OF A NATURE TO BRING DISCREDIT UPON THE MARINE CORPS ARE ALSO PROHIBITED. PREJUDICIAL TO GOOD ORDER, DISCIPLINE AND MORALE, OR ARE OF A NATURE TO BRING DISCREDIT UPON THE MARINE CORPS MAY INCLUDE, BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO, ANY TATTOO THAT IS SEXIST, RACIST, VULGAR, ANTI-AMERICAN, ANTI-SOCIAL, GANG RELATED, OR EXTREMIST GROUP OR ORGANIZATION RELATED."

3. THE FOLLOWING NEW SUPAPARAGRAPHS 1004.1C(1) AND 1004.1C(2) ARE ADDED.

"(1) MARINES WHO CURRENTLY HAVE A SLEEVE TATTOO(S) WILL BE GRANDFATHERED. THE MARINE'S COMMAND WILL INSERT A PHOTOGRAPH(S) OF THE RESPECTIVE TATTOO(S) ALONG WITH A MEASUREMENT(S) OF THE SIZE IN INCHES AND OF THE LOCATION(S) ON THE BODY AND THE DATE THE TATTOO(S) WAS DOCUMENTED, ON THE PAGE 11 OF THE MARINE'S SRB. THE MARINE WILL SIGN THE PAGE 11 ENTRY VERIFYING THE INFORMATION IS CORRECT."

"(2) THE DEPUTY COMMANDANT FOR MANPOWER AND RESERVE AFFAIRS IS DESIGNATED AS THE ADJUDICATING AUTHORITY FOR ANY TATTOO ISSUE INVOLVING RETENTION OR SPECIAL DUTY ASSIGNMENTS. REVIEW OF A QUESTIONABLE TATTOO(S) WILL BE SUBMITTED TO DC M&RA (MM) VIA THE REENLISTMENT, EXTENSION, LATERAL MOVE SYSTEM (RELMS). THE PACKAGE WILL INCLUDE A PHOTOGRAPH(S) OF THE TATTOO(S), MEASUREMENT(S) OF THE SIZE IN INCHES, DESCRIPTION OF THE LOCATION(S) AND EXPLANATION AS TO WHY THE TATTOO(S) HAS BEEN DEEMED QUESTIONABLE BY THE COMMANDER."

4. COMMANDERS ARE REQUIRED TO EDUCATE ALL THEIR MARINES ON THE NEW POLICY AND DOCUMENT ANY MARINE THAT REQUIRES GRANDFATHERING BY 1 JULY 2007.//

- Marine Corps communique, Mar 20, 2007
<https://www.hqmc.marines.mil/News/Article/Article/552547/corps-clarifies-tattoo-policy/>
Claims that the new policy (set by administrative message 198) is not so stringent as to affect recruiting
- Marines website, Mar 20, 2007
<https://www.lejeune.marines.mil/News/Article/Article/512068/corps-clarifies-tattoo-policy/>
Says that administrative message 198 “details new guidelines for Marines with tattoos, specifically, restricting them from getting sleeve tattoos while protecting those who already have them.” “Those individuals who have sleeve tattoos are required to be documented by their command by July 1” Platner would be grandfathered in.
- Stars and Stripes, Sep. 17, 2008
<https://www.stripes.com/news/2008-09-17/marines-no-sleeve-tattoos-for-guards-recruiters-1940046.html>
Covers the policy changes implemented March 2007 (operational April 2007) that banned sleeve tattoos. Says all currently serving Marines are grandfathered in, but cannot be newly assigned as guards or recruiters.
- Marines, “Think Before You Ink” poster showing acceptable tattoos under Maradmin 198-07
<https://www.marines.mil/portals/1/Publications/Marine%20Corps%20Tattoo%20Poster.pdf?ver=2012-10-11-163526-213>
Shows examples of tattoos that would pass or fail the policy. Platner’s tattoos might need to be grandfathered.
- Marine Corps tattoo policy update, 1/15/2010 (MARADMIN 029/10) also reiterates prior policy
<https://www.marines.mil/News/Messages/MARADMINS/Article/889087/amplification-to-the-marine-corps-tattoo-policy/>
- Marines website, Feb. 2010, article by Cpl. Priscilla Sneden
<https://www.marines.mil/News/News-Display/Article/552884/corps-cracks-down-on-excessive-tattoos/>
Mentions the administrative message 029/10 of Jan. 15, says it clarifies policy, which prohibits sexist, racist, eccentric, vulgar or otherwise offensive tattoos.
- 2024 Task and Purpose article on a potential Totenkopf patch in the Special Forces [Task and Purpose](#)
The Totenkopf was seen as a completely unacceptable symbol for the US military
- Platner forearm tattoos. Not full sleeves, but would count as quarter- or half-sleeves



[WABI](#), 0:17



[Pod Save America](#), 33:12



[Frenchman Bay Conservancy](#), 4:03



[CNN](#), Oct. 16, 2025

- Military discharges
Dept. of Labor <https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/VETS/files/USERRA-Fact-Sheet-3-Separations.pdf>
Characterizes types of discharges with no further military service obligation (MSO). There is no evidence that Platner was discharged in 2008 and had to “re-enlist”. He likely went on IRR, as would be normal after completion of ~4 years of active duty.

B. Involuntary recalls of IRR Marines (2007 - 2009)

- Mar. 2007: 1800 Marines get recall notice for 2008 deployment, 855 sent to Iraq ([Stars and Stripes](#))
- Sep. 2007 - recall notice sent for possible activation in early 2008 ([Stars and Stripes](#))
- DVIDS Hub: <https://www.dvidshub.net/news/20142/irr-warriors-take-charge-iraq>
Interviews with recalled Marines in June 2008
- 1st Marine Division newsletter [newsletter](#) - story of a recalled marine
- 2008 blog posts by an IRR Marine resisting recall (Benjamin Lewis, note his forearm tattoos)
Oct. 2008: <https://couragetoresist.org/marine-benjamin-lewis-pledges-recall-refusal/>
Dec. 2008: <https://couragetoresist.org/facts-of-involuntary-activation-from-the-irr/>

C. Education and GI benefits

- GI Bill eligibility (2025, but reflects criteria in 2008, other than Rudisill)
<https://www.va.gov/education/about-gi-bill-benefits/post-9-11/> Eligibility
- GWU admissions schedules (2025, but very standard so likely similar in 2008 and 2011)
<https://undergraduate.admissions.gwu.edu/first-year-applicants> Readmission
- Forbes, on GWU tuition and fees, 2008-2009: GWU is most expensive in the U.S.
https://www.forbes.com/2009/02/17/most-expensive-colleges-business_0217_colleges_slide.html
GWU is #1 on their list, at \$40,437/year tuition and fees for 2008-2009
- VA on estimated GWU payments under the Post-9/11 GI Bill
<https://www.va.gov/education/gi-bill-comparison-tool/schools-and-employers/>
\$29,291 tuition benefit for GWU plus \$2,952/month housing.
Current GWU tuition is \$69,780/year + \$740 mandatory fees: <https://www.gwu.edu/cost-gw-education>
- GWU Yellow Ribbon program (additional tuition support for veterans, 50% on top of GI bill)
<https://military.gwu.edu/yellow-ribbon-program>

Prep schools

- Prep school ranking, global (as feeders to the Ivy Plus and Oxbridge)
<https://www.prepreview.com/ranking/world/boarding-school-ranking.php>
Hotchkiss (Platner) and Milton (Vieter) are both ranked #5-10 in the world.
- Prep school ranking, US (as feeders to the Ivy League)
<https://rise.crimsoneducation.org/bdsa-articles/20-best-college-prep-schools-in-the-u-s-for-ivy-league-admissions>
Hotchkiss (G Platner) is ranked #6 and Milton (Vieter) is ranked #9
- Milton Academy (Thomas F Vieter IV, Robert Allerton Cushman). \$73,950/year boarding [Milton](#) 2023-2024
Estimated Ivy League placement in 1996: 33%. *Cushman born ~1921* [NYT](#)
- Hotchkiss School (Graham Platner). \$75,790/year boarding [Hotchkiss](#) 2025-2026
- St. Paul's School (Bronson Platner, Robert Allerton Cushman III, Thomas F Vieter III). \$74,500 boarding [SPS](#)
TF Vieter III born ~1944, B Platner born ~1947, RA Cushman III born ~1991 (when his dad was ~45)
- LCC, Montreal (Robert Allerton Cushman Jr). C\$33,220 non-boarding [LCC](#) [LCC](#) [Cushman](#) b. ~1946
- Commonwealth School (Daniel Ezra Moraff). \$60,075 non-boarding [Commonwealth](#) 2025-2026

8. Sources and details - family background

Grandfather Warren Platner, father Bronson Platner, mother Leslie Harlow, stepfather Joel Frantzman, older step-brother Seth Frantzman. Graham Platner also has a younger brother who is rarely mentioned by press.

Grandfather: Warren Platner, renowned architect, interior decorator, and furniture designer

- NYT obituary, April 2006 [NYT](#). Platner's archive is at Yale University. *Obit lists son Bronson Platner as living in Ellsworth, Maine. His three daughters all live in Connecticut.*
- His furniture line is still in production. The "Platner Easy Chair" retails for nearly \$20,000 [Knoll](#)
- Essay on Platner's enduring design influence, from [Design Observer](#)
- Interviews with Warren Platner, 1981: for "[Interior Design: The New Freedom](#)" and for [RISD](#)

Father: Bronson Platner, lawyer

- Attended St. Paul prep school, New Hampshire [Politico](#)
- Reprimanded by the Maine bar in 2008: https://www.mebaroverseers.org/dah_schedule/decisions.html?id=88934
- 3 books, self-published: Sinners All (2013), The Old Folks at Home (2015), and Another Way to Hell (2019). All are from "CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform" or "Independently published"
- Runs for city council in 2020: <https://www.facebook.com/bronsonforellsworth/>
- \$60K in contributions to political candidates 2011-2024: Daily Caller (Ashley Brasfield), Oct 2025 <https://www.aol.com/news/maine-oyster-farmer-dad-somehow-173105367.html>

Mother: Leslie Harlow, restaurateur

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/leslie.harlow.3> calls her a "digital creator" who studied at Boston U.

1983 - marries Bronson Platner. Son Graham Platner is born in Sep. 1984, followed by another son.

Divorced from Platner by 1992. Likely 1987 - 1992 marries Ira J ("Joel") Frantzman. Divorced by 2014.

1980s - owns the Town Farm restaurant in Bar Harbor.

- Bar Harbor Story, Feb 9, 2023. [Bar Harbor Story](#)
Oddly, Harlow talks about Joel Frantzman and his first wife without mentioning she later married him.

1992 - Sullivan Harbor Farm and Smokehouse is founded by married couple Leslie Harlow and Joel Frantzman.

- Portland Press Herald, May 31, 2014 [Portland Press-Herald](#)
Frantzman had married Harlow before 1992; they continued working together after divorcing. They buy fish and shellfish, smoke them, and sell to high-end customers (restaurants like Legal Sea Foods).

1993 - owns the Sullivan Harbor Farm and Smokehouse (possibly opened only this year)

- LinkedIn <https://www.linkedin.com/in/leslie-harlow-56608225/> Likely not updated.
Bare-bones Linked-In, describes her as owning the Sullivan Harbor Farm and Smokehouse since 1993.

2005 - Harlow leaves the Sullivan Harbor Farm after 12-13 years. (This may be when she divorces Frantzman?)

- Seafood Source, Mar 19, 2019. Says she '*parted ways with the business*'. [SeafoodSource](#)

2014 - Harlow opens the Ironbound Restaurant, with partners. 85 seats, outdoor area. Closes in winter.

- Acadia Visitor, Aug. 2014. (See also the Portland Press Herald 2014 article linked above) [Acadia Visitor](#)
The new restaurant opens in the space of the former Le Domaine Inn. Harlow is described as the co-owner and founder of The Maine Grind.

2016 - Sullivan Harbor Farm is shut down for unsanitary conditions. They blame an employee for not filing FDA paperwork but the DOJ report cites “*significant, recurring violations*” of safety standards and says the owners were warned “*for more than a decade*”. In 2017 the employee is convicted of embezzling funds. Harlow buys the business back from Joel and in 2019 it re-opens.

- DOJ filing, Feb 12 2016, and press release. Calls Joel Frantzman the owner, via Mill Stream Corp. [DOJ announcement https://www.justice.gov/archives/opa/file/824871/dl](https://www.justice.gov/archives/opa/file/824871/dl)
- Ellsworth American, Feb 16, 2016. Says Joel owns the company via Mill Stream Corp. https://www.ellsworthamerican.com/news/hancock-seafood-business-shut-down-for-food-safety-violations/article_d5fb9bc8-b867-502f-9b6b-acb78dd02c70.html
- Ellsworth American, Mar 17, 2017. Covers the shutdown and the trial of the employee. Calls Leslie Harlow the current owner and Joel Frantzman the former owner. https://www.ellsworthamerican.com/news/cops/embezzler-sentenced-to-six-months-in-jail/article_a2679215-45d5-5ba9-b000-3402d800a4a4.html
- Bangor Daily News (Bill Trotter), Jan 24, 2019. “*3 years after closing, Hancock seafood firm’s efforts to reopen stymied by federal shutdown*” <https://www.bangordailynews.com/2019/01/24/news/3-years-after-closing-hancock-seafood-firms-efforts-to-reopen-stymied-by-federal-shutdown/>
- Seafood Source, Mar 19, 2019 (link above). Covers the re-opening with Harlow as the owner.

2024 - Harlow starts a home goods store called Trio.

- Maine Biz, July 15, 2024. [Maine Biz](#) Describes Harlow as an “*entrepreneur*”. Says Trio leases space along with a new bar called Black Moon Public House. Says she has recently sold the Maine Grind, and previously sold a smokehouse (i.e. the Sullivan Harbor Smokehouse) and an unnamed restaurant in Bar Harbor (maybe Town Farm)

Stepfather: Ira J. (“Joel”) Frantzman

First wife was Lucy Abbot, children Seth Frantzman, Julia Diaz. He and Lucy used to run the Little Lyford Pond Lodge and Camps from the late 1970s to 1987. Moderately wealthy (or from wealth), enough to have a “Joel Frantzman Family Foundation” with \$600K in assets. It first files in 2013 and has its tax exemption granted in 2017. Also donates to many Maine causes. Second wife Leslie Harlow. Now maybe is with Monica Quill?

<https://projects.propublica.org/nonprofits/organizations/466489367>

<https://www.grantable.co/search/funders/profile/the-joel-frantzman-family-foundation-us-foundation-466489367>

Daughter Julia Diaz lived in Washington, DC in 2015 (the period when Platner was there)

<https://www.acadiavisitor.com/patrons-savor-food-casual-air-at-perrys-lobster-shack/>

Seth Frantzman posts about the camp “*I grew up in this place, from when I was a baby until age 7*”

- 2019 YouTube video by Frantzman https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vu_gqRHyrhE

Posts about a 2021 NYT article on the camp: “*Skiing hut to hut in the Maine wilderness*”

- <https://x.com/sfrantzman/status/1463976051529375759>
- <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/16/travel/maine-cross-country-skiing.html>

Stepbrother: Seth Frantzman

Says he grew up with Platner, who is about 4 years younger (Frantzman was born ~1980 and Platner 1984). His father Joel married Platner's mom Leslie Harlow likely 1987-1992 (no later than 1992).

Now a Middle East analyst with a PhD in political science from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Runs the "Middle East Center for Reporting and Analysis" (MECRA), writes for the Jerusalem Post. Adjunct fellow at the pro-Israel think-tank FDD (Foundation for Defending Democracies), where Pete Hegseth's brother also worked. Wrote a book on the Middle East published in 2019 by Gefen. Married in February 2012.

- Aug 22, 2021 - Twitter post about Jerusalem Post article. *"I admire Graham Platner who I interviewed for this piece, we grew up together in Maine; and he has some important points to make;"*
[X sfrantzman](#) [Jerusalem Post](#) Talks about Platner's Afghanistan deployment with the National Guard in 2010-2011.
- August 2024 - visits Platner in Maine. From FB, reposted on [Reddit](#)
Platner has an old Blackwater sticker on his refrigerator, though by the time he joined it was called Constellis.



- LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/seth-frantzman/> Born ca. 1980.
- Personal about page: <https://sethfrantzman.com/about/>
- MECRA webpage: <https://www.mideastcenter.org/>
- FDD "Team" page, with Frantzman: <https://www.fdd.org/team/fdd-team> (since 2023, May -Dec.)
<https://web.archive.org/web/20231201005234/https://www.fdd.org/team/fdd-team/>
Also: archived 2017 page with Pete Hegseth's brother
<https://web.archive.org/web/20171003144418/http://www.defenddemocracy.org/about-fdd/team-overview/category/staff>
- Long War Journal. Author page for Frantzman gives his bio and links to articles.
<https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/author/seth-frantzman>
- Daily Beast. Author page for Frantzman. <https://www.thedailybeast.com/author/seth-frantzman/>
- The Jewish Chronicle. Author page. <https://www.thejc.com/author/seth-j-frantzman-jai5crqm>
- The Spectator. Author page for Frantzman <https://www.spectator.co.uk/writer/seth-j-frantzman/>

Allerton Cushmans

- Robert Cushman and John Carver organized the Mayflower's 1620 voyage. Isaac Allerton sailed on it. Cushman sailed on the Fortune in 1621, then returned to England, leaving son Thomas behind. Thomas married Allerton's daughter Mary in Plymouth ~1636. [Mayflower Compact Signers](#), [Mayflower History](#)

9. Recruiters Daniel Moraff and Leanne Fan

A. Daniel Ezra Moraff

Dan Moraff currently lives and works in Pennsylvania; he has never lived in Maine. He runs a political consulting firm in Pittsburgh, PA (“Dark Forest”) but does not list all his clients and projects in one place.

Education: Moraff had an elite education: high school at the private Commonwealth School (class of 2011), then Brown University (BA 2014, Urban Studies), then after 7 years started at Yale Law School in 2021. (He would have graduated YLS in 2024) ([CM Magazine](#), [LinkedIn](#)). In the years between Brown and Yale Law School he started or joined Dark Forest and began working on political campaigns.

Political work: After graduation, Moraff worked for 2 years at a variety of internships, including writing for the satirical publication The Onion. He started political work in 2016 and continued through his time in law school.

In 2016 he worked for Debbie Medina, running for the New York State Senate in District 18, Brooklyn as a Democrat ([In These Times](#), [Ballotpedia](#)). In 2017 he was campaign manager for Mike Pappas, running for District Justice in Pittsburgh. In 2019 he consulted via his Dark Forest company on the campaign of Lisa Middleman for DA, an Independent running against a Democrat in Allegheny County, NY. In 2020 he was Bernie Sanders’ Massachusetts field director ([WWLP](#)). In Sep 2020 he started working with the Alliance for Police Accountability managing a ballot initiative campaign in Pittsburgh. In 2022, while a student at Yale, he reportedly recruited Summer Lee to run for Congress in PA ([Jewish Insider](#)). In 2024 he reportedly advised Dan Osborn who ran for Senate in Nebraska as an Independent; Osborn lost but did unexpectedly well. (Osborn is running again in 2026, against Nebraska’s junior senator Pete Ricketts.) Moraff then reportedly scouted Graham Platner in early summer 2025, as a second choice after a previous candidate for the race had unexpected skeletons in his closet ([Politico](#)).

Political writings: Moraff has been a DSA member since his student days at Brown. In 2017 he wrote an article, drawing on his campaign for Debbie Medina: “*Want to elect socialists? Run them in Democratic primaries*” . Moraff argued: “*The Democratic Party is deeply flawed and repellent to left challenges—but it still offers the easiest path for socialists to win elections and build power now.*” ([In These Times](#))

B. Leanne Fan

Leanne Fan, as a CUNY sociology PhD student, was a co-author on a 2021 voter study (“*Commonsense Solidarity: How a Working-Class Movement Can Be Built, and Maintained*”) commissioned by Jacobin magazine. Jacobin says it was a collaboration with something called the “Center for Working-Class Politics” but no information is available for that center; its website redirects to jacobinmag.org. The results were released to the New York Times, who described it in Nov. 2021 as about “*What moves swing voters*” ([NYT](#), [NYT_arch](#)). [Jacobin](#) called the study “*our work*” and described its three objectives as “1. How can progressives win in working-class America? 2. How can progressives more effectively engage low-propensity working-class voters across lines of race and geography, especially outside large cities? 3. What are the electoral advantages and disadvantages of various kinds of progressive platforms and messaging? Can different progressive messages work in different areas?” (Full report [here](#): it is branded as Jacobin, Center for Working-Class Politics, and YouGov.) The study “generally” defines a “working-class” voter as simply non-college-educated. Fan herself described the study as being about testing out “*Bernie Sanders-style messaging*” on non-college-educated voters, in a 2022 interview with [Socialist Forum](#) (“*How Can the Left Win in Working-Class America?*”).

The study was never submitted as a peer-reviewed publication. It was critiqued in an article by Peter Ikeler (Prof. of Sociology, SUNY Old Westbury), Andy Sernatinger (a labor activist from WI), and Erin Cass (an activist from NY), all associated with the [Tempest Collective](#) ([Spectre](#)). They found fault in its methodology (“*a transparently non-representative sample*”) but also argued that the stated conclusions were not supported by the study’s own data. “*The authors judge the numbers in service of a particular project... Democratic Party realignment.*”