

Trump conference video incites violence against opponents

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A conference of ultra-right supporters of President Trump, held at the Trump National Doral resort in Miami, with his son Don Jr. as featured speaker, included the showing of a gruesome video that portrays Trump slaughtering his critics in the media and the Democratic (and Republican) parties with an assortment of weapons.

The video was created in 2018, using a scene from the graphically violent 2014 movie *Kingsman: The Secret Service*, directed by Matthew Vaughn and based on a British comic book series. It starred Colin Firth and Samuel L. Jackson. Trump's face is crudely superimposed over the Firth character as he walks down the pews of a church, labeled the Church of Fake News, attacking and killing people.

Among those shot, stabbed, disemboweled, strangled, set ablaze, thrown out of windows or otherwise disposed of in the nearly three-minute video are Barack Obama, Hillary Clinton, Bernie Sanders, John McCain, Mitt Romney and Representative Maxine Waters, a black congresswoman who has been a frequent Trump target on Twitter. Another victim is simply labelled "Black Lives Matter."

Other slaughtered characters are identified with a wide range of media outlets (with corporate logos superimposed over the faces). These include CNN, MSNBC, PBS, National Public Radio, the BBC, the *Washington Post*, *Vice News*, *Huffington Post* and BuzzFeed. After the bloodbath, the Trump character grins with glee at his handiwork.

The creator of the site that first posted the video in 2018, known by his internet handle Carpe Donktum, met with Trump this past July in the Oval Office. The president called his guest a "genius." Donktum had already posted an altered "spaghetti western" video that showed Trump slapping and shooting CNN reporter

Jim Acosta.

That same month, Trump held a White House "social media summit" with far-right internet figures, including Donktum and James O'Keefe, the founder of Project Veritas, which has released secretly recorded and doctored videos seeking to frame up liberal politicians, media outlets and activist groups targeted by Trump. Another guest was Ben Garrison, who has published cartoons denounced by the Anti-Defamation League and the Southern Poverty Law Center for their anti-Semitic and racist text and imagery.

A participant at last weekend's conference in Miami saw the Trump video and recorded it on his cell phone, then leaked it to the *New York Times*, which published a report Sunday night on its website.

The American Priority 2019 conference began on Thursday, the same day that Trump delivered a fascist rant at a rally in Minneapolis, where he attacked "far left" and "socialist" Democrats as people who "hate our country," continued his baiting of immigrants, and issued a racist attack on Somali refugees who have settled in Minnesota. In the speech, he condemned an "unholy alliance of corrupt Democrat politicians, deep-state bureaucrats, and the fake news media."

While Trump was rhetorically slaughtering his foes at the Target Center in Minneapolis, his most ardent supporters were at a three-day conference where they could view Trump's innermost desires displayed in the graphic video. It was part of an exhibition of internet "memes" available for viewing in a side room seven hours a day.

Besides Donald Trump Jr., other top names in the Trump camp listed as speakers at the conference included former White House spokeswoman Sarah Huckabee Sanders, Florida Governor Ron DeSantis, Florida Congressman Matt Gaetz, former Congressman

Jason Chaffetz, now a Fox News commentator, right-wing provocateur James O’Keefe of Project Veritas, former Trump campaign manager Corey Lewandowski, and former Trump campaign aide and convicted perjurer George Papadopoulos.

American Priority has begun holding conferences as a more openly fascistic alternative to the Conservative Political Action Conference held early each year in Washington DC. Last week’s event was the group’s second, attended by hundreds of ultra-right activists and held at the Trump-owned resort adjacent to his Doral golf course.

The group’s organizer Alex Phillips claimed that the video had been submitted by a “third-party vendor” and that American Priority was not responsible for its content and did not advocate violence against Trump’s political or media critics. “American Priority rejects all political violence and aims to promote a healthy dialogue about the preservation of free speech,” Phillips said in a statement.

However, according to a report by Right Wing Watch, a project of the liberal People for the American Way, American Priority carefully vetted those attending, particularly from the media, who were “by invitation only.” A Right Wing Watch representative had his \$250 entrance fee refunded by mail, then was bodily escorted out of the Trump Doral when he attempted to attend anyway.

Jonathan Karl, the ABC News correspondent who is president of the White House Correspondents Association, issued a statement condemning the video. “The WHCA is horrified by a video reportedly shown over the weekend at a political conference organized by the president’s supporters,” Karl said. “All Americans should condemn this depiction of violence directed toward journalists and the president’s political opponents.”

The Trump White House, of course, denied any responsibility for the video and pretended to be shocked that anyone would accuse the president of inciting violence against his opponents.

The video is a gruesome demonstration of the fascist essence of Trump’s political appeal. As the WSWS warned in a perspective statement published yesterday, “Trump is instigating violence against his political opponents and politically encouraging fascistic individuals who have carried out acts of mass murder

directed at immigrants and Jews” (see: No to American fascism! Build a mass movement to force Trump out!).

As several press reports noted, the visual style of the video is very similar to a video shared by the president himself on Twitter in 2017, in which Trump wrestles and punches a character whose head has been replaced by the logo of CNN.

Last year, a Trump supporter in the Miami area, Cesar A. Sayoc Jr., was arrested after mailing package bombs to several of Trump’s Democratic and media critics. Sayoc pleaded guilty to 65 felony counts and is serving a 20-year prison sentence.

Both Robert Bowers, who murdered 11 people at the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh in 2018, and Brenton Tarrant, who murdered 50 people at two Muslim mosques in New Zealand earlier this year, have cited Trump’s election in 2016 as an inspiration and a step forward for their white supremacist and neo-Nazi views.



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