

# Trump posts racist video depicting the Obamas as apes

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Late Thursday, President Donald Trump posted a 62-second AI-generated video clip on his Truth Social account that ends with a depiction of Barack and Michelle Obama as apes.

The video is centered on the Big Lie that the 2020 election was stolen through the manipulation of voting machines in key states. The largely AI-generated video brought together pseudo-documentary imagery and graphics suggesting “intentional manipulation” of vote counts, packaged in the familiar style of far-right conspiracy propaganda.

In a one-second clip at the end of the video, the Obamas are seen as apes with smiling faces. The presentation is of a piece with Trump’s constant racist agitation combined with his appeals to his white Christian nationalist political base.

The video also includes images of Trump taken from a far-right meme video that portrays the fascist president as “King of the Jungle,” with Democrats turned into assorted animals and accompanied by a snippet of the song, “The Lion Sleeps Tonight.” Trump is shown as a lion, accompanied by the reactionary Pepe the Frog meme, which was widely embraced by fascist and neo-Nazi layers during the 2016 campaign.

In this way, the video fuses the cult of the leader, the stolen election lie and the racist language already familiar to Trump’s fascist milieu of supporters. The images are brief and clearly designed to flash by as a signal to those steeped in the racist trope that has a long history in American white supremacist ideology.

White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt’s response was to trivialize and normalize Trump’s racism. In statements to reporters, she insisted that the clip was “from an internet meme video showing Trump as King of Jungle and as characters from The Lion

King,” dismissing criticism as “feigned” or “fake outrage” and instructing the press to “cover something that genuinely concerns the American public.”

Leavitt’s role was twofold. First, she functioned as a political shield, asserting that the clip was harmless online satire and “meme culture” and therefore not to be taken seriously, even as it trafficked in one of the most disgusting forms of racist depiction. Second, by denouncing journalists as engaged in “fake outrage,” she echoed the administration’s broader campaign to intimidate the press, cast any criticism as illegitimate and normalize fascist content as part of everyday political discourse.

The post was eventually removed from Trump’s Truth Social feed amid mounting criticism from the US political establishment. Both Democrats and Republicans were compelled to distance themselves from it. Republican Senator Tim Scott, the sole black Republican in the Senate and an active supporter of Trump, wrote on X, “Praying it was fake because it’s the most racist thing I’ve seen out of this White House. The President should remove it.”

After Leavitt defended the meme, the White House shifted to damage control, claiming that the reposting of the video was “erroneous” and had been carried out by a “staff member,” not by Trump himself.

Trump refused to admit any wrongdoing or error. Speaking to reporters aboard Air Force One, he said in typical form, “No, I didn’t make a mistake.” Instead, he presented himself as the victim of hypersensitive critics and dishonest media.

Trump learned this “never back and admit nothing” position from Roy Cohn, the fascist attorney who was his ruthless lawyer and mentor in the 1970s and early 1980s. Cohn rose to infamy as chief counsel to Senator Joseph McCarthy during the 1950s, where he

spearheaded ruthless anti-communist witch hunts, interrogations of alleged subversives and purges of federal employees that fueled both the Second Red Scare and the Lavender Scare against LGBTQ individuals.

The corporate media, instead of calling out the blatant racism of the Trump administration for being a central component of his fascist platform, described the video as “controversial” and “racially charged” but isolated the incident from the broader program of the White House.

The racist meme is in fact part of Trump’s open embrace of Christian nationalism, highlighted in his speech a day earlier at the National Prayer Breakfast. In a rambling 70-plus-minute address, Trump boasted that he has “done more for religion than any other president” and insisted that he has brought Christianity “back to center” in American politics.

He declared that he does not “know how a person of faith can vote for a Democrat,” effectively labeling tens of millions of people as godless enemies of the nation. Trump also called for an event on the National Mall to “rededicate America as one nation under God,” a direct attack on the separation of church and state.

This drive is a central plank of the fascist “great replacement” narrative, which fuses white racial dominance and Christian identity into a single “national” community supposedly under siege by immigrants, religious minorities and secularism. This racist and white supremacist conspiracy theory alleging that white, European-descended populations are being deliberately “replaced” through mass immigration of non-whites, higher birth rates among minorities, and falling white fertility rates, orchestrated by elites (often identified as Jewish or liberal) to eradicate white Christian civilization.

The depiction of the first black president and first lady as jungle apes is also art of Trump’s campaign to rehabilitate symbols and ideology of the Confederacy and the Southern slavocracy. From the defense of Confederate monuments and flags to the praise of General Robert E. Lee as a “great general,” Trump has repeatedly signaled his alignment with those who mourn the defeat of the Confederacy and seek to legitimize its legacy.

The AI video extends this historical falsification into the digital age, using new technical means to revive the

oldest and most reactionary racist stereotypes.

Far from being an accidental excess, the current racist provocation and others are a deliberate component of Trump’s political strategy. They are intended to mobilize the most backward, chauvinist and violent elements in society and give them a sense of encouragement in carrying out violent attacks against black people, immigrants and all those deemed to be “un-American.”

At the same time, Trump’s memes serve to far-right networks steeped in racist and antisemitic ideology, assuring them that his administration recognizes and speaks their language.

Racism has always played a central role in the efforts of the American ruling elite to divide the working class and deflect attention from the real source of social and economic crisis: the capitalist system. By circulating images that degrade black people and African Americans, Trump is reinforcing the Big Lie that social problems are caused by “undeserving” minorities and immigrants rather than the parasitic financial oligarchy and crisis of capitalism.

The spectacle of the US president posting such filth on social media speaks to the degradation of the ruling oligarchy, which is seeking to normalize racism as part of its attacks on the working class. It is this same degenerate billionaire elite, including Donald Trump, that is protecting the co-conspirators of the sex trafficker Jeffrey Epstein.



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