

Crowds flock to DC statue mocking Trump and Epstein in “Titanic” embrace

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On Tuesday, March 10, a gold-spray-painted 12-foot statue of Donald Trump and Jeffrey Epstein appeared on the National Mall, courtesy of the anonymous artist collective Secret Handshake. Titled “King of the World,” in honor of Jack Dawson’s line from James Cameron’s 1997 film *Titanic*, the statue has quite possibly received more interest from ordinary people than Trump’s own newly rebranded, gaudy and little-loved “Trump Kennedy Center” just over 1.5 miles away.

The piece depicts Trump and Epstein locked in the famous bow embrace from *Titanic* between Leonardo diCaprio and Kate Winslet. Placed on the Mall days after Trump initiated his war against the people of Iran, the image symbolizes a widely held popular intuition that Trump started the conflict in an attempt to bury the Epstein scandal and his own role in it beneath a tidal wave of blood and patriotic bombast.

The statue reproduces the ship-rail scene down to the last kitsch detail—except that here Epstein, arms flung wide, takes the place of Rose (played in the film by Winslet), while Trump stands in for Jack (DiCaprio in the film), behind him, grasping his wrists and gazing lovingly over his shoulder. A plaque beneath the work drives the point home: As with the affair between Jack and Rose, “This monument honors the bond between Donald Trump and Jeffrey Epstein, a friendship seemingly built on luxurious travel, raucous parties, and secret nude sketches.”

Crowds of tourists and DC residents have flocked to photograph themselves in front of the grotesque figurine, reacting with laughter, applause and derision. “Ugly-ass statue, but accurate,” remarked a passerby to WTOP News. The basic sentiment expressed by the statue and its reception has been contempt for the president and the entire degenerate social layer he

personifies.

Secret Handshake has repeatedly skewered Trump and Epstein in the past; this is the third major piece in their series. In January, they installed a gigantic three-dimensional replica of a birthday note Trump allegedly scrawled to Epstein over the outline of a naked woman, Trump’s looping signature positioned where pubic hair would be. An earlier work, “Best Friends Forever,” placed the pair on a park bench in matching golf gear, hands nearly touching, in a parody of sentimental friendship that the group said was meant to mark “the enduring love between billionaires and their fixers.”

The Mall’s latest addition extends the same line of attack, but on the literal front lawn of the American government.

The administration’s defense has essentially been to acknowledge that the entire political establishment is dirty, so what’s the problem? Rather than denying the statue’s message, the White House has responded with deflections, denouncing it as the product of “wealthy Democrat donors” and whining that similar monuments to Democrats who courted Epstein should also be created. As in all things, Trump speaks for the ruling class.

Trump’s name appears repeatedly in Epstein’s flight logs and contact lists. The most recent accusations claim the Department of Justice withheld thousands of documents and victim interviews potentially connecting Trump to sexual assaults in its massive file dump in January.

Trump’s government is packed to the gills with the late financier’s acquaintances, collaborators and would-be chroniclers. Among those named in the latest document releases are former White House chief strategist Steve Bannon, who exchanged extensive

emails with Epstein while working on a documentary; Elon Musk, Trump’s consigliere on mass layoffs and “efficiency” and a key player in the federal downsizing drive; Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick; and Federal Reserve nominee Kevin Warsh, whose name appears on guest lists for an Epstein Caribbean gathering alongside fellow oligarchs and their hangers?on.

Add to this the countless billionaires, hedge?fund managers, lawyers, media executives and pseudo?intellectuals who cycled through Epstein’s Manhattan townhouse and private island, and the statue on the Mall begins to look less and less like satire.

The Trump/Epstein “Titanic” burlesque has struck a nerve because it crystallizes, in one nauseating image, the understanding that the war on Iran, like the war on immigrants and the war on science, is being waged by a government drawn from and answerable to a rapacious oligarchy that treats human life as disposable. The public laughs at the statue because it recognizes something true in it: A ruling class dancing on the prow of a sinking ship, arms spread wide, shouting that it is “king of the world” as it steers civilization toward disaster.



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