

ABSTRACT

Blood at the Root: Donald Trump and the Rhetoric of White Supremacy

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This thesis examines and elaborates on the connection between the rhetoric of President Donald Trump, and the ideologies and rhetorical appeals of white supremacists, both contemporarily and throughout American History. *Blood at the Root* examines two case studies of Donald Trump's rhetoric as candidate and president, and traces the appeals of these words to their origins in white supremacist, anti-Semitic, and anti-immigrant rhetoric in the United States. We also show that these connections are unlikely to be coincidental, and that either Trump himself or those around him are aware of the racial signaling that pervades Trump's political rhetoric. Finally, *Blood at the Root* demonstrates that Trump is aware of and seeks to capitalize on racial tensions in the modern United States, as evidenced by the tailoring of his rhetoric to the language of White Supremacy today. In summary, Donald Trump uses old modes of racial signaling in ways that appeal to new, racist constituencies. President Trump capitalizes on modern racial tensions by invoking old racial tensions, framed through modern issues such as globalism, trade, and illegal immigration.

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BLOOD AT THE ROOT:
DONALD TRUMP AND THE RHETORIC OF WHITE SUPREMACY

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INTRODUCTION

Fire and Fury

Since his announcement of candidacy in June of 2015, Donald Trump's time in the presidential spotlight has been marked by unconventionality. One of the primary criticisms leveled at the now-president is that he is, ironically, unpresidential. The rhetoric of Donald Trump's presidential campaign was, from the outset, markedly different from the tenor of previous American political campaigns. While animosity and divisiveness are far from new phenomena in United States politics, particularly in presidential elections, Trump rapidly distinguished his campaign through his use of contentious, combative, and uncivil rhetoric. This led many in establishment political circles, both Republican and Democrat, to label him unpresidential. At the time of his announcement, few truly believed that the scandal-plagued celebrity billionaire could become the Republican nominee, let alone President of the United States. It seems fate, or perhaps the political will of the American populace, has a sense of humor.

Donald Trump's victory in the 2016 presidential election seemed to be, for all intents and purposes, an impossibility. Analysts from practically every source were predicting Hillary Clinton, Trump's Democratic rival, to win the election as late as November 8, 2016, election day.¹ As votes were tallied, however, the tide slowly but surely began to shift. When Wisconsin was ultimately counted in favor of Trump, the

¹ Montanaro, Domenico. "NPR Battleground Map: Hillary Clinton Is Winning — And It's Not Close." NPR.org, October 18, 2016. <https://www.npr.org/2016/10/18/498406765/npr-battleground-map-hillary-clinton-is-winning-and-its-not-close>.

results were all but certain. Donald Trump, real-estate mogul and reality show host would be the 45th President of the United States. In winning the 2016, Donald Trump turned the United States virtually on its head, and upended previously held notions about how elections and presidential campaigns were supposed to work. People were shocked. More than that, however, many people were afraid.

Donald Trump's rhetoric on the campaign trail was more than merely contentious: it was inflammatory, even violent. From the outset, Trump was unafraid to speak his mind, and speaking his mind often consisted of tirades against those he held responsible for America's perceived ills. His early campaign platform consisted of views that were isolationist, harshly anti-immigrant, and dismissive of opposing viewpoints. Trump almost immediately took a hardline stance on his political opponents, as well as the previous administration. To Trump, the fault for what he saw as American decline lay almost universally with Democrats, and in particular the Obama administration. In his rallies, Trump openly jeered at protesters, characterized his opponents as "weak" and "losers," and built an image of himself as the only one who could "Make America Great Again."² To some, Trump was merely a firebrand, an outsider distinguishing himself through unconventional campaign tactics. Some even found this appealing. Trump's status as a political outsider, combined with his fiery rhetoric and promises to "Drain the Swamp" of Washington cronyism, led some to believe that he truly offered an alternative to what they saw as a stagnating, ineffective system.³ To others, however, Donald

² Appelbaum, Yoni. "Trump's Claim: 'I Alone Can Fix It.'" The Atlantic, July 21, 2016. <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2016/07/trump-rnc-speech-alone-fix-it/492557/>.

³ Friedersdorf, Conor. "It's Time for Trump Voters to Face the Bitter Truth." The Atlantic, May 11, 2018. <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2018/05/trumps-washington/560105/>.

Trump's campaign tactics were dangerous. Many saw, and continue to see, a very clear connection between the rhetoric of Donald Trump, and historical iterations of racism, white nationalism, and white supremacy in the United States. The effects of these rhetorical appeals are not merely political. An analysis by the Washington post revealed that "United States counties where President Trump hosted a campaign rally in 2016 saw a 226 percent increase in reported hate crimes compared to similar counties that did not host one."⁴ The links between Trump's rhetoric and racism, white supremacy, and ethnocentrism have very real, and oftentimes fatal, consequences. The aim of this thesis is to show that such connections are not mere speculation, but are grounded in concrete, publicly known historical fact.

Racism and white supremacy have a long and blood-soaked history in the United States, a history far too broad to fully explain in an undergraduate thesis, let alone the introduction to one. Early American settlers brought African slaves to the New World, and the practice of slavery would endure in the United States until the end of the American Civil War in 1865, more than one hundred years after the first American colonies were established. Even following the abolition of slavery, racism was legally codified in the United States,⁵ particularly in the South. Black Codes, voting restrictions, and Jim Crow laws all sought to ensure that, though they were free, former slaves would not be granted equal citizenship. Such discrimination was not limited to African

⁴ Folley, Aris. "Hate Crimes Rose by 226 Percent in Counties Where Trump Hosted Campaign Rallies in 2016: Study." Text. The Hill, March 23, 2019. <https://thehill.com/blogs/blog-briefing-room/news/435458-hate-crimes-rose-by-226-percent-in-counties-where-trump>.

⁵ Blackmon, Douglas. *Slavery by Another Name: The Re-Enslavement of Black Americans from the Civil War to World War II*. Anchor, 2009.

Americans. Hispanics, Irish, Asians, and practically every other non-White Anglo-Saxon ethnic minority were all subject to legal codes and cultural norms that put them on the low end of racial, ethnic, and cultural hierarchies. These practices established an American language of white supremacy, a culture in which the dominance of the white American population was of paramount concern, to be maintained by even the most violent of means.

Violence has always been a particularly prominent tool in the white supremacist arsenal. Paramilitary groups such as the Ku Klux Klan enforced their vision of racial superiority by committing extralegal violence against those who challenged the established order, white or black.⁶ Particularly in the early-to-mid 20th century, thousands of innocent men, women, and children were tortured or murdered in the name of white supremacy. Some of these lynchings were justified by the alleged crimes of those lynched, in many cases falsified accusations of rape. Others were simply meant as an example.⁷ It is only recently that the United States has begun to move towards true racial equality, both legally and culturally. In particular, the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960's represents perhaps the greatest steps towards undoing centuries of de facto and de jure racial discrimination, though issues such as police violence and mass incarceration of minorities cast doubt on how far we have actually come.

⁶ Alexander, Shawn. *Reconstruction Violence and the Ku Klux Klan Hearings*. Bedford/St. Martin's, 2015.

⁷ Wells-Barnett, Ida B. *The Red Record: Tabulated Statistics and Alleged Causes of Lynching in the United States*. Project Gutenberg, 2005.

Despite the progress we have made as a nation, white supremacy is still a force in American culture and politics. Neo-Nazis, Klansmen, and white supremacists in general, though they represent a relatively small portion of the United States population, are still vocal and active in American culture, particularly in recent years. Perhaps most notable is the recent and very rapid rise of the “alt-right,” a loose coalition of neo-Confederate, neo-Nazi, and white supremacist groups that originated on internet message boards such as 4Chan. To be sure, racism is no longer socially acceptable, at least not in the mainstream. Congressmen no longer advocate for segregation or slavery, Constitutional amendments prevent laws from discriminating on the basis of race, and those who openly espouse racist views are largely ostracized. Nonetheless, the traditions and rhetoric of violence that America’s history of white supremacy have cultivated are far from forgotten. The primary argument of this thesis is that Donald Trump, in the language and policies of his campaign and presidency, has directly appealed to the history of white supremacy and racism in the United States, primarily through rhetoric that denigrates political opponents, villainizes immigrants and minorities, and frames American identity by way of exclusion. These appeals, in the broader scheme, work to normalize racism, and thereby empower and embolden those who subscribe to racist, white supremacist, and ethnocentric ideologies.

My argument consists of two primary case studies, both examples of statements made by Donald Trump while in office as President. The first chapter examines Trump’s 2016 foreign policy slogan, “America First,” and its connections to isolationism, anti-Semitism, and xenophobia in the United States. The second chapter deals with Trump’s characterization of El Salvador, Haiti, and African nations as “shithole countries,” and

the implications this statement has in light of America's historical fascination with Nordicism and racial purity. In examining President Trump's rhetorical strategies and appeals, I will show that his policies, as well as the way in which he frames them, have direct historical connections to iterations of xenophobia, white nationalism, and racial superiority in the United States. To demonstrate this, I draw on an extensive body of literature regarding the history of racially antagonistic rhetoric in America, as well as connecting historical characterizations of racism to their modern counterparts. In doing so, my goal is to show that these connections are too frequent to be happenstance, too blatant to go unnoticed, and too historically well-known for the President himself to be oblivious. In short: whether or not President Donald Trump is himself a racist, the rhetoric of his campaign and his presidency have consistently appealed to a constitutive history of racist ideology in the United States of America.

CHAPTER ONE

America First

When Donald Trump began his presidential campaign in June of 2015, many in the media, as well as the public sphere, took immediate note of the vehement isolationism underlying his ascendant political platform. From calls for a wall at the southern border for which Mexico would supposedly pay, to anti-Chinese tirades on unfair trade practices and trade deficits, Trump's rhetoric has been, from day one, focused a self-interested version of the United States rising above all other considerations in both domestic and foreign policy. In his announcement speech on June 16, 2015, then-candidate Trump asked, "when was the last time anybody saw [the United States] beating, let's say, China, in a trade deal?" He then turned his sights on Mexico, Saudi Arabia, and Japan in turn. Donald Trump's announcement speech largely consisted of him laying the blame for the United States' perceived troubles on nations that had taken advantage of its political ineptitude. In Trump's words, "the U.S. has become a dumping ground for everybody else's problems."⁸ The focus of Trump's announcement speech was his intention and vision to "Make America Great Again," a vision contingent on America's return to the top of the totem pole.

The isolationism already evident in Trump's announcement crystalized in 2016 as Trump began to firmly establish a foreign policy. In interviews with the New York

⁸ Time Staff. "Here's Donald Trump's Presidential Announcement Speech." *Time*, June 16, 2015. <http://time.com/3923128/donald-trump-announcement-speech/>.

Times, Trump expanded on the isolationist ideas set up in Trump's announcement and gave this political platform a name: "America First." Once again, Trump enumerated the ways in which the world had taken advantage of the United States' supposed impotence. Citing everything from trade deficits to the rise of the Islamic State in the Middle East, Trump pinned the blame for America's woes squarely on the foreign policies of the previous administration.⁹ This in and of itself makes Trump's policy unique among transitions of power. Even during a change of presidential party, the incoming president has historically allowed the policies of the outgoing administration to stand, or at least has not made his mission the total negation of the previous administration's policies. Trump has, from the outset, taken a much different approach.

One of the most consistent and coherent goals of Donald Trump's presidency has been the erasure of the Obama Administration's legacy. As of January 2018, President Trump has tried to overturn 189 Obama-era rules and laws, in everything from environmental protections to civil rights. The majority of the policies attacked have been cabinet-level agency decisions.¹⁰ The message was clear: above all else, the power, prestige, and economic sanctity of the United States would be the driving force behind any actions taken by a Trump administration. While such isolationism is not inherently

⁹ Haberman, Maggie, and David Sanger. "Transcript: Donald Trump Expounds on His Foreign Policy Views." *The New York Times*, January 19, 2018, sec. U.S. <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/03/27/us/politics/donald-trump-transcript.html>.

¹⁰ Eilperin, Juliet, and Darla Cameron. "How Trump Is Rolling Back Obama's Legacy." *Washington Post*, January 20, 2018. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/politics/trump-rolling-back-obama-rules/>.

racist and ethnocentric, Trump has built his vision of American supremacy on a platform rooted in racism, ethnocentrism, and nationalism.

Isolationism in American politics is not a new phenomenon. Two periods stand out as particular high-water marks for American isolationism, both preceding American involvement in a World War. Until 1917, President Woodrow Wilson largely ran on a platform of non-interventionism in the Great War, going so far as to issue a formal proclamation of neutrality on August 4, 1914. In it, he acknowledged the diversity of opinion in the United States regarding the war, in part due to America's nature as an immigrant nation. Nonetheless, President Wilson urged neutrality "in fact, as well as name," and impartiality "in thought as, well as in action."¹¹ However, American non-interventionism was ultimately compromised by the German strategy of unrestricted warfare on the waters. Attacks on American merchant vessels, as well as the sinking of the British liner Lusitania, stiffened anti-German sentiment within the United States. The sinking of four further American merchant ships in 1917, combined with covert German efforts to turn Mexico against the United States, led President Wilson to declare war on Germany on April 4, 1917.¹²

This pattern of attempted neutrality repeated itself as World War II loomed. Even as the Third Reich invaded Poland, France, and Belgium, as well as launching fierce air raids against England, the United States maintained a policy of nominal neutrality. The

¹¹Wilson, Woodrow. "President Wilson's Declaration of Neutrality - World War I Document Archive." BYU Libraries, May 28, 2009. https://wwi.lib.byu.edu/index.php/President_Wilson's_Declaration_of_Neutrality.

¹² Office of the Historian. "Milestones: 1914–1920 - Office of the Historian." United States Office of the Historian. Accessed April 16, 2019. <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1914-1920/wwi>.

memory of World War I was still fresh in the minds of Americans, and few were willing to repeat the unprecedented carnage the Great War had brought. As before, the United States qualified its neutrality by providing material and logistical support to its allies in Europe, most notably through the Lend-Lease Act of 1941. On December 7, 1941 American neutrality ended in the wake of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, and public opinion once again leaned heavily towards intervention, with approximately 97% of Americans supporting Congress' declaration of war on Japan.¹³ A declaration of war on Germany followed four days later, on December 11.

Surges of isolationist sentiment in the United States prior to both World Wars parallel each other in terms of progressive logistical involvement, and both ended in the aftermath of direct attacks on the United States, in turn cultivating a shift in public opinion. Trump's own pattern of isolationism mirrors this trend in some respects, as public opinion has long been turning against the United States' involvement in the Middle East. However, isolationism before World War II was distinct in its ties to anti-Semitism, white nationalism, and, notably, the slogan "America First." Though these sentiments all but vanished in the wake of the attack on Pearl Harbor, for a time, racist, particularly anti-Semitic, isolationism had a prominent place in American public discourse. Before the United States went to war against Germany, American support for Nazism was not uncommon. Prominent public figures such as Father Charles Coughlin promoted anti-Semitic conspiracies and voiced support for Hitler and Mussolini's racial

¹³ Saad, Lydia. "Gallup Vault: A Country Unified After Pearl Harbor." Gallup.com, December 5, 2016. <https://news.gallup.com/vault/199049/gallup-vault-country-unified-pearl-harbor.aspx>.

policies.¹⁴ On February 20th, 1939, after Germany's invasion of Poland but prior to the attack on Pearl Harbor, a group of American Nazi supporters called the German American Bund hosted a "Pro American Rally" in New York City's Madison Square Garden, in reality a pro-Nazi event. The rally featured a 30-foot portrait of George Washington, which was flanked by American flags and Nazi swastikas. Over 20,000 people attended the rally.¹⁵ Similarly, Trump has been accused of inciting hate and violence at his own political rallies, conjuring up immigrant boogeymen and linking their supposed evils to his Democratic rivals.¹⁶

Lindbergh and the AFC

The most visible figure in inter-war isolationism was Charles Lindbergh, a man legendary for completing the first continuous transatlantic flight from New York to Paris. Lindbergh, already famous for his accomplishments in aviation, gained further notoriety for his strict anti-interventionism in the years preceding World War II. As tensions between Germany and the rest of the world grew, particularly in the wake of Kristallnacht, Lindbergh remained relatively reticent to criticize Hitler's policies, or to sever his apparently friendly ties with prominent Nazi officials. Lindbergh had been awarded the Commander Cross of the Order of the German Eagle by Hermann Goering, one of the most powerful and influential men in the Third Reich. Lindbergh was harshly

¹⁴ Hansan, J.E. "Coughlin, Father Charles." Social Welfare History Project, January 22, 2013. <https://socialwelfare.library.vcu.edu/eras/great-depression/coughlin-father-charles/>.

¹⁵ Kramer, Sarah. "When Nazis Took Manhattan." NPR.org, February 20, 2019. <https://www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/2019/02/20/695941323/when-nazis-took-manhattan>.

¹⁶ Bort, Ryan. "Trump's Closing Message: Racism, Violence and Plenty of Lies." *Rolling Stone* (blog), November 5, 2018. <https://www.rollingstone.com/politics/politics-news/trump-racist-ad-immigrants-751827/>.

criticized for accepting the medal at all, particularly in light of Germany's increasingly hostile and anti-Semitic activities.¹⁷

Part of Lindbergh's anti-interventionist activities included his leadership of the America First Committee, a group dedicated to preventing American involvement in the brewing conflict. The AFC was the foremost anti-interventionist group in the United States preceding the attack on Pearl Harbor. Following its establishment in 1940, the group gained national attention, reporting peak membership of 800,000, centered mostly around Chicago.¹⁸ Lindbergh became the spokesman of the AFC in late 1940 and began speaking to sellout crowds in such venues as Soldier Field and Madison Square Garden.¹⁹ ²⁰ Through this platform, Lindbergh decried the need for American intervention on a national and very visible stage, and buttressed his stance and speeches with racist and anti-Semitic language. Lindbergh cited American Jews as a key group pushing the United States towards war, claiming that "large [Jewish] ownership and influence in our motion pictures, our press, our radio, and our government," were central to pro-war activism.²¹ Publicly, Lindbergh denied accusations of anti-Semitism, instead pointing his concerns towards preventing war with Germany.

¹⁷ Horrigan, Brian. "Lindbergh's 'Nazi Medal.'" *Lindbergh and American Culture* (blog), January 17, 2012. <https://lindberghandamerica.com/2012/01/17/lindberghs-nazi-medal/>.

¹⁸ Cole, Wayne. *America First: The Battle Against Intervention, 1940-41*. Cole Press, 1953.

¹⁹ "Charles Lindbergh Speaking at Soldier Field." *UPI - Charles A. Lindbergh*, August 5, 1940. https://digitalcommons.chapman.edu/upi_lindbergh/26.

²⁰ "Speech at Madison Square Garden, by Charles Lindbergh (5/23/1941)." Accessed April 19, 2019. https://www.historyonthenet.com/authentichistory/1939-1945/1-war/1-39-41/19410523_Charles_Lindbergh_Speech_at_Madison_Square_Garden.html.

²¹ "Speech at Madison Square Garden, by Charles Lindbergh (5/23/1941)." Accessed April 19, 2019. https://www.historyonthenet.com/authentichistory/1939-1945/1-war/1-39-41/19410523_Charles_Lindbergh_Speech_at_Madison_Square_Garden.html.

Privately, however, Lindbergh expressed racial views not dissimilar from those of the Nazis. Lindbergh stated in 1939 that peace and security hinged on the ability of white people to “preserve that most priceless possession, our inheritance of European blood,” a view very like the Nazi fixation on Aryanism.²² His racial attitudes, belief in eugenics, and previous associations with Nazi Germany led many to question Lindbergh’s loyalties, though Lindbergh insisted that his primary concern was preventing American involvement in the growing war. Similarly, Trump has often framed his “America First” platform as a response to globalism, or the growing interconnectedness of international political and economic affairs. However, many on the far-right believe that globalism constitutes a worldwide conspiracy overseen by Jewish “puppet masters.” Such conspiracy theorists accuse figures such as George Soros, a Jewish billionaire and philanthropist, of controlling “the economic and political world order” and “destabilizing ethnic and national identities.”²³ Such narratives are far from new. Adolf Hitler used a similar rationale in his infamous treatise *Mein Kampf*, pinning the ills of Germany after WWI on an international Jewish conspiracy. However, President Trump has, himself, adopted elements of the modern, anti-Semitic conspiracy narrative. In October 2018, Trump accused Soros of paying people to protest the confirmation of then-Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh.²⁴ Later the same month, the President alleged that Soros was

²² Lindbergh, Charles. “Aviation, Geography, and Race.” Accessed April 19, 2019. <http://library.flawlesslogic.com/lindy.htm>.

²³ Burton, Tara Isabella. “The Centuries-Old History of Jewish ‘Puppet Master’ Conspiracy Theories.” Vox, November 2, 2018. <https://www.vox.com/2018/11/2/15946556/antisemitism-enlightenment-george-soros-conspiracy-theory-globalist>.

²⁴ Durkin, Erin. “Trump Tweet Labels Anti-Kavanaugh Protesters as ‘Paid Professionals.’” *The Guardian*, October 5, 2018, sec. US news. <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2018/oct/05/trump-anti-kavanaugh-protesters-paid-professionals-tweet>.

funding a caravan of migrants headed for the southern border, a claim for which he produced no evidence.²⁵ Soros is also a favorite target of the alt-right in general, and has been accused of “orchestrating alleged violence from so-called ‘antifa’ groups, manipulating the world economy, being a wartime Nazi collaborator and sponsoring the entirely fictional project of ‘white genocide.’”²⁶ In invoking George Soros as a secretive influencer, Trump is invoking an ages-old, anti-Semitic fairy tale. The rhetoric of Trump’s America First is, in this respect, little different from Lindbergh’s.

For its own part, the America First Committee was focused primarily on preventing American intervention. However, for the duration of its existence, Lindbergh remained the public face and voice of the AFC. Though the AFC did not publicly adopt Lindbergh’s anti-Semitic and Nazi sympathetic views, his position as the group’s spokesperson gave Lindbergh a consistent and nationally visible platform through which to express these views. Because of this, Charles Lindbergh’s notoriety is linked to the notoriety of the America First Committee. Though rightly hailed as a pioneer of aviation, Lindbergh’s reputation has been perceptibly tarnished by his involvement with anti-Semitism, white nationalism, and Nazism. Even within his own time, Lindbergh was labeled as a Nazi sympathizer, both by the American public and those in power. President Franklin Roosevelt went so far as to say, “If I should die tomorrow, I want you to know

²⁵ Levin, Bess. “Trump: ‘A Lot of People Say’ George Soros Is Funding the Migrant Caravan | Vanity Fair.” *Vanity Fair*. Accessed April 16, 2019. <https://www.vanityfair.com/news/2018/10/donald-trump-george-soros-caravan>.

²⁶ Wilson, Jason. 2018. “‘Dripping with Poison of Antisemitism’: The Demonization of George Soros.” *The Guardian*, October 25, 2018, sec. US news. <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2018/oct/24/george-soros-antisemitism-bomb-attacks>.

this, I am absolutely convinced Lindbergh is a Nazi.”²⁷ Modern hindsight only strengthens the bond between Lindbergh and anti-Semitism, with historians such as Max Wallace citing Lindbergh’s anti-interventionism as directly harmful to the Jewish people, a harm inextricable from the words “America first.” As scholars begin to more closely study the rhetoric of Donald Trump’s campaign, the same will undoubtedly be true of his use of “America First” as a slogan of isolationism.

“America First” and the Klan

There is, additionally, a lesser known but far more explicit link between “America First” and isolationist racism. During the 1920s and throughout the early 20th century, the newly resurgent Ku Klux Klan used the words “America First” as a rallying cry for their unabashed white nationalism. The Ku Klux Klan is one of the most prominent and notorious white-supremacist groups in United States history. First founded in 1865, the Klan began in the South as a reaction to Reconstruction in the wake of the Civil War. Six former Confederate officers created the first chapter in Tennessee, and by 1867, the Klan had begun to spread throughout the South.²⁸ Though it lacked cohesion, the first Klan rapidly emerged as a vigilante force dedicated to restoring white supremacy in the south and overthrowing the Republican Reconstruction government. The Klan pursued these goals primarily by way of threats and violence against freedmen and Republicans.

²⁷ Potter, Matt. “Roosevelt Called Lindbergh a Nazi.” San Diego Reader, February 3, 2016. <https://www.sandiegoreader.com/news/2016/feb/03/radar-roosevelt-called-lindbergh-nazi/>.

²⁸ Fleming, Walter. *Ku Klux Klan: Its Origins, Growth, and Disbandment*. Neale Publishing, 1905.

In 1870 and 1871, the Klan was suppressed by the Enforcement Acts, passed by Congress with the intent to curtail the Klan through prosecution.²⁹ Though some paramilitary groups continued the Klan's racially violent activities, it lay largely dormant until 1915. The Klan was re-founded in the wake of World War I, and by 1920 had evolved from a loose coalition of racist militias into a fully-fledged fraternal organization. This new growth was largely due to *The Birth of a Nation*, a 1915 film glorifying and romanticizing the goals and activities of the first Klan.³⁰ The Klan adopted a formal agenda of anti-immigrant, anti-Catholic, and anti-Semitic sentiments, underlying these goals with a vision of "the distinctive institutions, rights, privileges, principles and ideals of a pure Americanism."³¹ This vision of pure Americanism was almost wholly reactionary. The second Klan crystalized its identity around perceived existential threats to the established order. Some of these threats were moral; the Klan advocated prohibition, and decried divorce and adultery. However, the greatest threat touted by the Klan was immigration.

The Klan envisioned white, Anglo-Saxon protestants, or WASPs, as the only true Americans. In much the same way that Charles Lindbergh and the AFC warned of Jewish warmongering influence, the Klan railed against what they perceived as the death of white culture at the hands of immigrants. "America First" became a rallying cry for the

²⁹ "U.S. Senate: Landmark Legislation: The Enforcement Acts of 1870 and 1871." United States Senate. Accessed April 19, 2019.
<https://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/common/generic/EnforcementActs.htm>.

³⁰ "Nation: THE VARIOUS SHADY LIVES OF THE KU KLUX KLAN." *Time*, April 9, 1956.
<http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,898581,00.html>.

³¹ McWhirter, Cameron. *Red Summer: The Summer of 1919 and the Awakening of Black America*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, LLC., 2011.

Klan during the 1920's, with the slogan appearing in a variety of Klan related materials and literature. Coins were issued with "America First" on one face and "Preserve Racial Purity" on the other. Klan publications integrated the slogan into a longer credo: "America first, last, and forever." The "Imperial Proclamation," which served as evidence in a 1921 Congressional hearing, stated, "[The Klan] stands for America first – first in thought, first in affections, and first in the galaxy of nations." "America First" was the Klan's call for white protectionism, a mantra for those who sought to preserve their besieged way of life.³²

The Klan used "America First" as a rallying cry against what they saw as an existential threat, namely the diversification of the United States through increased immigration. Though he has not presented his own message in such explicitly racial terms, Trump's political platform has been distinctly anti-immigrant from the outset. In his candidacy announcement speech, Trump promised to build "a great, great wall on our southern border," claiming that "When Mexico sends its people... they're bringing drugs. They're bringing crime. They're rapists."³³ On August 27th, 2016, Trump further outlined his foreign policy. A significant portion of that speech was dedicated to Trump's stance on immigration, particularly illegal immigration. He vowed to "begin swiftly removing criminal illegal immigrants from this country... use immigration law to prevent crimes, and not wait until some innocent American has been harmed or killed before taking

³² Emery, David. "FACT CHECK: Was 'America First' a Slogan of the Ku Klux Klan?" Snopes.com, February 9, 2018. <https://www.snopes.com/fact-check/america-first-ku-klux-klan-slogan/>.

³³ Time Staff. "Here's Donald Trump's Presidential Announcement Speech." *Time*, June 16, 2015. <http://time.com/3923128/donald-trump-announcement-speech/>.

action.”³⁴ From its inception, Trump’s “America First” has been inextricably linked to protectionist and anti-immigrant sentiments, as was its use by the Ku Klux Klan.

Yesterday’s America First

On its face, “America First” could simply have been another isolationist mantra. After all, isolationism was not rare following World War I. The carnage caused by the war was unprecedented, and America’s involvement had left the public disillusioned with the notion of foreign involvement. However, the Klan’s use of the slogan is inextricable from its racist ideology. When the Klan advocated for America above all else, it did so from a constitutive understanding of America as white and protestant. This understanding continues today. In 2015, former Klan Grand Wizard David Duke tacitly endorsed Donald Trump’s presidency, arguing that for his followers to vote against Trump would be “treason to [their] heritage.”³⁵ Duke, though he never formally endorsed Trump’s candidacy, saw in Trump’s isolationist stance a continuation of the Klan’s own ideology, calling Trump “the best of the lot” due to his stance on immigration.³⁶ It is worth nothing that, for his own part, Trump has openly disavowed the support of Duke and all white

³⁴ Factbase. “Transcript Quote - Speech: Donald Trump in Des Moines, IA - August 27, 2016.” Factbase, August 27, 2016. <https://factba.se/transcript/donald-trump-speech-des-moines-ia-august-27-2016>.

³⁵ Kessler, Glenn. “Donald Trump and David Duke: For the Record.” Washington Post, March 1, 2016. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/fact-checker/wp/2016/03/01/donald-trump-and-david-duke-for-the-record/>.

³⁶ Kaczynski, Andrew. “David Duke On Trump: He’s ‘Certainly The Best Of The Lot’ Running For President.” BuzzFeed News, August 25, 2015. <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/andrewkaczynski/david-duke-on-trump-hes-certainly-the-best-of-the-lot-runnin>.

nationalists, though only after intense questioning and criticism following his apparent reluctance to decry them.³⁷

The use of “America First” by both the AFC and the Klan are not little-known facts. In 2016, the Anti-Defamation league issued a statement urging then-candidate Trump to reconsider his use of the slogan, pointing to its previous associations with Nazism and anti-Semitism. The ADL pointed particularly to the phrase’s use by Lindbergh and the AFC, citing the connection of both to Nazism and Anti-Semitism. The ADL was clearly concerned that Trump’s use of “America First” would signal support and connection to racist ideologies.³⁸ Through both the AFC and the Klan, there is a clear historical link between the slogan “America First” and ideas of racism, white nationalism, and vehement protectionism. This fact is extremely relevant given Donald Trump’s use of the slogan as a shibboleth for his own brand of isolationist politics. The primary thrust of Trump’s proposed foreign policy is that, in all things, the interests of the United States must come first. This is not itself a problematic idea, at least insofar as rhetoric is concerned. However, the mere use of “America First” as the rallying cry behind an American protectionist movement irrevocably changes the rhetorical tenor of that movement. As a slogan of American protectionism, “America First” is inextricable from racism and white nationalism, a link supported not by tenuous connections, but direct

³⁷ Schmich, Mary. “David Duke and Donald Trump and the Long Ties of History - Chicago Tribune.” Chicago Tribune, August 15, 2017. <https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/columnists/schmich/ct-david-duke-mary-schmich-20170815-column.html>.

³⁸ “ADL Urges Donald Trump to Reconsider ‘America First’ in Foreign Policy Approach.” Anti-Defamation League, April 28, 2016. <https://www.adl.org/news/press-releases/adl-urges-donald-trump-to-reconsider-america-first-in-foreign-policy-approach?referrer=https%3A//www.google.com>.

historical usage. For Donald Trump to use “America First” as a mantra for isolationism is for Donald Trump to hearken back to a long and racist tradition.

Today's America First

It is, however unlikely, possible that President Trump himself is unaware of the historical connotations of “America First.” This does not mean that his rhetoric is immune from such connections, but that someone may be influencing Trump’s rhetoric by linking it to historically racist isolationism. If this is the case, one such influencer may be Steve Bannon, the President’s former Chief White House Strategist. Bannon is widely known for his role as co-founder of Brietbart News, a far-right news website notorious for its ties to the alt-right.

In order to understand Bannon, Brietbart, and their connections to Donald Trump, it is necessary to understand the alt-right. While the movement itself is not so much a unified front as a loose association of similar ideologies, the collective agenda of the alt-right has begun to coalesce around overtly racist ideals. Groups that identify as alt-right typically espouse anti-Semitic, white nationalist, and fascistic ideologies, with some claiming to be neo-Confederate or neo-Nazi. The movement is additionally associated with isolationism, anti-feminism, economic protectionism, and populism. Though many members of the alt-right openly identify as racist or white supremacist, others use the moniker to disguise such sentiments. A notable example is Richard Spencer, who coined the term in 2010, and has since used the phrase to thinly veil his version of white nationalism.³⁹ The Associated Press acknowledges such attempts at disguising racism and

³⁹ Ford, Patrick J. “Economism in the Alt Right.” *Taki’s Magazine* (blog), July 27, 2009. https://www.takimag.com/article/sniperstower/economism_in_the_alt_right/

recognizes the alt-right as an explicitly racist movement.⁴⁰ The alt-right gained national attention in 2017, when their “Unite the Right” rally in Charlottesville, Virginia erupted in violence, resulting in the death of counter-protestor Heather Heyer.

In 2007, Bannon became a founding member of Breitbart news, and in 2012 was named executive chair of the organization. Under Bannon’s leadership, Breitbart’s agenda became increasingly nationalist, and its ideals began to align with those of the alt-right. The site began to publish articles with a distinctly anti-Semitic and anti-feminist bent, such as pieces comparing feminism to cancer and labeling an anti-Trump commentator as a renegade Jew. Breitbart’s connection to the alt-right grew steadily until, in July of 2016, Bannon described Breitbart as “the platform for the alt-right.”⁴¹ This remark put the connection beyond question. Breitbart news, as well as Bannon personally, were and are more than willing to embrace the members and ideologies of the alt-right, a group overtly dedicated to white nationalism, racism, anti-Semitism, and isolationism.

In August of 2016, then-candidate Trump named Steve Bannon as chief executive officer of the Trump campaign. This move alone was enough to incite controversy. Bannon’s infamy as a spokesman for the alt-right led many to see the appointment as a tacit endorsement of the alt-right platform. Following Trump’s inauguration in February of 2017, Bannon was named as Chief Strategist for the Trump

⁴⁰ Danizewski, John. “AP Definitive Source | How to Describe Extremists Who Rallied in Charlottesville,” August 15, 2017. <https://blog.ap.org/behind-the-news/how-to-describe-extremists-who-rallied-in-charlottesville>.

⁴¹ Posner, Sarah. “How Donald Trump’s Campaign Chief Created an Online Haven for White Nationalists.” *Mother Jones*, August 22, 2016. <https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2016/08/stephen-bannon-donald-trump-alt-right-breitbart-news/>.

administration, a position of considerable influence. In an even more controversial move, Trump appointed Bannon to the National Security Council over and above the Joint Chiefs of Staff, supplanting the United States' chief military official with a former right-wing extremist journalist. This move in particular drew widespread criticism from both sides of the aisle. John McCain, Republican senator from Arizona and then-Senate Armed Services chairman, called Bannon's appointment "a radical departure from any National Security Council in history," and expressed concerns about Bannon's increased prominence in the Administration.⁴² In the White House, however, the message was clear. Steve Bannon was not just another figure in the Trump administration, but a focal point.

One incident in particular sheds light on the scope and depth of Bannon's influence. On August 11th and 12th of 2017, the alt-right emerged in visible force in Charlottesville, Virginia. Richard Spencer and Jason Kessler, a prominent neo-Nazi, organized and held a rally dubbed "Unite the Right," ostensibly to protest the removal of Confederate monuments and memorials from public spaces. However, the rally served the double purpose of visibly and publicly uniting the already-coalescing alt-right around white nationalism. In the words of Jason Kessler, "this is gonna [sic] be a victory heard... around this world, that white people have a right to stand up for themselves," showing his vision of the rally as a platform for white unification.⁴³ The list of attendees also speaks to the nature of the event. Among the participating groups were neo-Nazis, Klansmen,

⁴² Everett, Burgess. "McCain Blasts Bannon Placement on National Security Council." POLITICO. Accessed April 7, 2019. <https://www.politico.com/story/2017/01/mccain-bannon-nsc-234329>.

⁴³ Kessler, Jason. "Federal Judge Rules Unite the Right WILL Happen in Lee Park!! - YouTube." YouTube, August 11, 2017. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pIzHirR5kbY&bpctr=1555655606>.

neo-Confederates, and a branch of the Canadian alt-right known as Alt-Right Montreal. Prominent individuals in attendance included Spencer, Kessler, David Duke (a former Klan Imperial Wizard), Nathan Damigo (leader of Identity Evropa, a neo-Nazi group), and Eric Striker (a writer for the neo-Nazi news site *The Daily Stormer*). Also attending were a number of armed, right-wing militia groups.

On the night of August 11th, the rally began with an unsanctioned and unannounced march through the University of Virginia. Torch-bearing participants, up to 250 in number, moved across the campus chanting anti-Semitic, Nazi, and white supremacist slogans. Among these were “You will not replace us,” “Jews will not replace us,” “Blood and Soil,” “Heil victory,” and “White lives matter.” The sanctioned protest was scheduled for noon the next day, August 12th, but began early in the morning. Protestors and counter-protestors gathered in Emancipation Park, with the protestors again chanting white-supremacist slogans. Carrying Confederate battle flags, Nazi flags, and anti-Semitic posters, protestors yelled, “the Goyim know,” “the Jewish media is going down,” and “gas the kikes, race war now.” By noon, the pre-approved start time of the rally, the protests devolved into street brawls, and dozens on both sides had been injured. The City of Charlottesville declared a state of emergency at 11 AM, and the gathering was declared unlawful shortly after.

At 1:45 PM, James Alex Fields Jr., a self-proclaimed white supremacist and neo-Nazi, drove his car into a crowd of counter-protestors. The initial ramming sent counter-protestors flying. Fields then hit a parked car and reversed through the crowd to flee the scene. 19 people were injured in the attack, and one was killed. 32-year-old Heather

Heyer was among the injured and was pronounced dead at a nearby hospital. The other 19 patients survived, though five were critically injured in the ramming.⁴⁴

Two hours after the vehicular attack on August 12th, President Trump released a statement condemning what he called “a display of hatred, bigotry and violence on many sides.”⁴⁵ This apparent equivocation between the actions and ideologies of protestors and counter-protestors drew immediate backlash from both sides of the political aisle. Democrats and Republicans alike condemned Trump’s response to the rally as insufficient, particularly criticizing his apparent unwillingness to directly condemn the white supremacists present. The White House subsequently released an addendum to the President’s remarks on August 13th, which specifically named white supremacists, Klansmen, and neo-Nazis as targets of the President’s condemnation.⁴⁶ However, on August 15th, President Trump again assigned blame for the violence to both protestors and counter protestors. Trump claimed that “you had a group one side that was bad. You had a group on the other side that was also very violent,” stating further that there were “very fine people” on both sides of the rally.⁴⁷ President Trump, despite clear criticism

⁴⁴ VICE News. “Watch VICE News Tonight’s Full Episode ‘Charlottesville: Race and Terror.’” *Vice News* (blog), August 21, 2017. https://news.vice.com/en_us/article/qvzn8p/vice-news-tonight-full-episode-charlottesville-race-and-terror.

⁴⁵ Johnson, Jenna, and John Wagner. “Trump Condemns Charlottesville Violence but Doesn’t Single out White Nationalists.” *Washington Post*, August 12, 2017. https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/trump-condemns-charlottesville-violence-but-doesnt-single-out-white-nationalists/2017/08/12/933a86d6-7fa3-11e7-9d08-b79f191668ed_story.html.

⁴⁶ King, Laura. “White House Defends Trump’s Response to Deadly Violence in Charlottesville as Criticism Intensifies.” *chicagotribune.com*, August 13, 2017. <https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/nationworld/politics/ct-trump-virginia-white-supremacist-condemnation-20170813-story.html>.

⁴⁷ Trump, Donald. “Read the Complete Transcript of President Trump’s Remarks at Trump Tower on Charlottesville.” *latimes.com*, August 15, 2017AD. <https://www.latimes.com/politics/la-na-pol-trump-charlottesville-transcript-20170815-story.html>.

from opponents and supporters alike, continued to equivocate between white supremacists and those who oppose them.

President Trump was reportedly urged by Steve Bannon not to criticize far-right activists too harshly, lest he alienate a significant portion of his voting base.⁴⁸ If true, this fact indicates two important trends. Firstly, it further confirms that Steve Bannon's ideological priorities are in line with those of the alt-right. The list of attendees at the Charlottesville rally is unequivocal where Trump is not. As stated by those organizing the rally, and as evidenced by the groups in attendance, Unite the Right was an event aimed at coalescing the alt-right around racist, anti-Semitic, and anti-immigrant ideologies. Steve Bannon's connections to Breitbart News already link him to the alt-right, especially through his endorsement of the site as the "platform for the alt-right." Bannon's defense of protestors at Unite the Right further cements this connection. His reticence to criticize members of the alt-right may be due to the fact that, at his core, Bannon is ideologically aligned with them. While Trump has not openly expressed support for the alt-right or their ideologies, he did express support for the cause allegedly behind the Unite the Right rally, the removal of Confederate statues. In a statement following the rally, Trump stated, "this week it's Robert E. Lee. I noticed that Stonewall Jackson's coming down. I wonder, is it George Washington next week? And is it Thomas Jefferson the week after?"⁴⁹ In comparing Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson to Washington and

⁴⁸ Johnson, Jenna, and John Wagner. "Trump Condemns Charlottesville Violence but Doesn't Single out White Nationalists." Washington Post, August 12, 2017. https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/trump-condemns-charlottesville-violence-but-doesnt-single-out-white-nationalists/2017/08/12/933a86d6-7fa3-11e7-9d08-b79f191668ed_story.html.

⁴⁹ Trump, Donald. "Read the Complete Transcript of President Trump's Remarks at Trump Tower on Charlottesville." latimes.com, August 15, 2017AD. <https://www.latimes.com/politics/la-na-pol-trump-charlottesville-transcript-20170815-story.html>

Jefferson, Trump is echoing the neo-Confederate and white supremacist rhetoric that characterizes the alt-right.

Secondly, Bannon's admonishment to Trump, as well as the response to Trump's remarks, show that the President's rhetoric is very clearly signaling to an audience motivated by racism and racial fear. Though mainline political figures were almost universal in condemning President Trump's equivocation, fringe figures were encouraged by his remarks. Among the first to come to President Trump's defense was David Duke, former Grand Wizard of the Ku Klux Klan. In a tweet, Duke thanked the President for his "honesty & courage to tell the truth about #Charlottesville & condemn the leftist terrorists in BLM/Antifa."⁵⁰

Duke further admonished President Trump to "take a good look in the mirror and remember it was White Americans who put you in the presidency, not radical leftists." Though Duke was pleased with Trump's equivocation, he clearly felt that the President had gone too far in calling for unification against hate. In an interview with the Indianapolis Star, Duke said that he and others like him were working to "fulfil the promises of Donald Trump," claiming that "we voted for Donald Trump because he said he's going to take our country back."⁵¹ Daily Stormer founder and Neo-Nazi Andrew Anglin also praised Trump's response, in particular his refusal to denounce the support of white nationalists and supremacists. According to Anglin, "People saying he cucked are

⁵⁰ Wolf, Byron. "David Duke Lauds Trump's Defense of 'Very Fine People.'" CNN, August 15, 2017. <https://www.cnn.com/2017/08/15/politics/donald-trump-david-duke-charlottesville/index.html>.

⁵¹ Wolf, Byron. "David Duke Lauds Trump's Defense of 'Very Fine People.'" CNN, August 15, 2017. <https://www.cnn.com/2017/08/15/politics/donald-trump-david-duke-charlottesville/index.html>.

shills and kikes... He did the opposite of cuck. He refused to even mention anything to do with us. When reporters were screaming at him about White Nationalism he just walked out of the room.”⁵² Rhetoric like Anglin’s is a prime example of the unique constitutive language of the alt-right, language that Trump seems increasingly willing to adopt, or at the very least not to condemn.

Anglin’s use of the term “cucked” to defend President Trump’s statements is a remarkable insight into the mind of the alt-right, and helps demonstrate the extent to which the alt-right were and are willing to integrate Trump’s rhetoric into their own esoteric language. “Cuck” is derived from the word “cuckold,” which means “a man whose wife is unfaithful.”⁵³ The term cuckold has been adopted by far-right and alt-right adherents to refer to someone, almost always a male, who is considered weak or unmanly, or to refer to an action that demonstrates such weakness.⁵⁴ Thus, when Anglin refers to Trump as not having “cucked,” he is effectively saying that the President stood his ground by refusing to directly acknowledge white supremacist involvement in the Charlottesville protests.

The term “cuck,” particularly in relation to the President, is characteristic of the alt-right’s emphasis on anti-feminist and pro-male values. When the alt-right equates

⁵² Oppenheim, Maya. “Neo-Nazis Say Trump’s Response Is ‘Really, Really Good’ and Did ‘Not Condemn Them.’” *The Independent*, August 13, 2017. <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/neo-nazis-white-supremacists-celebrate-trump-response-virginia-charlottesville-a7890786.html>.

⁵³ “Definition of CUCKOLD.” Merriam-Webster, 2019. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/cuckold>.

⁵⁴ Roy, Jessica. “‘Cuck,’ ‘Snowflake,’ ‘Masculinist’: A Guide to the Language of the ‘Alt-Right.’” *latimes.com*, November 16, 2016. <https://www.latimes.com/nation/la-na-pol-alt-right-terminology-20161115-story.html>.

cuckoldry with weakness, they convey a number of messages that each express a portion of their particular ideology. Firstly, in associating cucking or being cucked with weakness, the alt-right convey disdain for the subversion of traditional masculinity. Underlying the idea of being cucked is the belief that, if one's wife is unfaithful, it must be because one is weak. Secondly, calling someone a cuck for appearing weak or acting weakly connects the strength of the individual with their sexual prowess or desirability. The assumption is that, if one is weak in some way, one must be the kind of person whose wife would be unfaithful. Finally, the ways in which the alt-right uses the word "cuck" demonstrates an implicit connection between the alt-right's own ideologies and the strength of traditional masculinity.

Andrew Anglin's use of the word "cuck" to defend President Trump's remarks demonstrates the ease with which the alt-right have been able to integrate the President's rhetoric with their own ideology. A central tenet of the alt-right's message is anti-globalism, or the belief that increased globalization through free trade and unfettered markets is a threat to national identity. Though both right-wing and left-wing anti-globalist ideologies exist, extremist right-wing anti-globalism is distinctly racist in character. Right-wing anti-globalists, broadly speaking, believe that globalism is a Zionist or Marxist conspiracy against white identity or Western culture.⁵⁵ The alt-right is no exception. According to the Southern Poverty Law Center, the core belief of the alt-right is "that 'white identity' is under attack by multiculturalist forces using 'political

⁵⁵ Fuchs, Christian. "Antiglobalization | Social Movement." Encyclopedia Britannica. Accessed April 19, 2019. <https://www.britannica.com/event/antiglobalization>.

correctness’ and ‘social justice’ to undermine white people and ‘their’ civilization.”⁵⁶

Donald trump capitalizes on this paranoia by using rhetoric which either parallels it directly, or draws upon the same fears.

It seems, then, that Donald Trump’s message of “America First” appeals directly to the anti-globalist sensibilities of the alt-right. Trump’s America First rhetoric primarily focuses on the threats posed by free trade and unfettered immigration, both of which are central concerns of far-right anti-globalists. As if to make the connection unequivocal, Trump himself equated his opponent, Hillary Clinton, with what he cast as “corrupt globalism.” According to then-candidate Trump, the 2016 Presidential election represented “a choice between Americanism and [Clinton’s] corrupt globalism,” an ideological dichotomy central to alt-right rhetoric.⁵⁷ Whether intentionally or not, President Trump’s remarks surrounding the Charlottesville rally, as well as his rhetoric more broadly, very clearly signal to a group of people motivated by racist ideologies.

What is more, Donald Trump’s supporters, as well as the President himself, seem aware on some level that what Trump is saying is unprecedented, and even taboo. In 2016, USA Today compiled interviews with 103 voters from all 50 states, all of whom were asked why they were supporting Trump in the upcoming election. Of the 103 interviewed, many cited Trump’s tendency to “speak his mind” and “tell it like it is” as a primary reason for their support. Among the things they said: “I think it’s about time that

⁵⁶ “Alt-Right.” Southern Poverty Law Center. Accessed March 14, 2019. <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/ideology/alt-right>.

⁵⁷ Trump, Donald J. “Hillary Says Things Can’t Change. I Say They Have to Change. It’s a Choice between Americanism and Her Corrupt Globalism. #Imwithyou.” Tweet. @realDonaldTrump (blog), June 22, 2016. <https://twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/745693029089034240>.

we start speaking our mind a little more,” “[Trump] is outspoken and believes in what he says,” “I just think he tells it the way it is,” “I do appreciate how he isn’t politically correct,” “Political correctness is... approaching a point of lunacy... Donald Trump, I believe, is a candidate who is going to stand up for what is appropriate,” and “he was saying the things that a lot of people want to say but they can’t.”⁵⁸ Clearly, Donald Trump’s supporters believed, and in many cases believe, that what differentiates Trump from other, more conventional politicians, is his willingness to say what other cannot, or perhaps should not say.

After Trump labeled Haiti, El Salvador, and African countries as “shitholes,” (see Chapter 2: “Shithole Countries”) Ohio Representative Jim Renacci defended the President’s rhetoric, saying “I’ve said all along the president many times says what people are thinking.”⁵⁹ In October of 2018, Trump led a rally in Houston to support his one-time rival, Texas Senator Ted Cruz. His speech at the rally consisted largely of tirades against globalism and globalists, as well as the Democrats he accused of supporting them. At one point in his speech, Trump stated “You know, they have a word, it sort of became old fashioned, it’s called ‘a nationalist.’ And I say really, we’re not supposed to use that word, but you know what I am? I’m a nationalist.”⁶⁰ Trump’s self-

⁵⁸ USA Today. “Trump Nation.” USA TODAY, 2016.
<https://www.usatoday.com/pages/interactives/trump-nation/>.

⁵⁹ Dispatch, Darrel Rowland { Columbus, Jessica Wehrman { Washington Bureau, and Lynn Hulsey. “Ohio Senate Candidate: President Trump ‘Says What People Are Thinking.’” daytondailynews. Accessed April 17, 2019. <https://www.daytondailynews.com/news/state--regional-govt--politics/ohio-senate-candidate-president-trump-says-what-people-are-thinking/MAlcIZCUMt7XuaBhjz9y7N/>.

⁶⁰ Sonmez, Felicia. “Trump: I’m a Nationalist and I’m Proud of It.” Washington Post. Accessed April 17, 2019. https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/trump-im-a-nationalist-and-im-proud-of-it/2018/10/23/d9adaae6-d711-11e8-a10f-b51546b10756_story.html.

identification was quickly criticized as a nod to white nationalists and white supremacists, and it is worth noting that this was not the first instance in which Trump had been accused of “dog-whistling,” or using coded racial signaling. For his own part, Trump stated that he had “never heard that theory about being a nationalist,” and insisted that he merely wanted to emphasize his love for the United States. Nonetheless, Trump’s use of the word “nationalist,” particularly to describe himself, cannot be separated from the historical associations of that word with racism, anti-Semitism, and white supremacy. Given that Trump seemed aware that it was not a word he was “supposed to use,” it is hard to imagine that he is ignorant of these connotations, as he claimed.

This, in truth, only a part of the much broader problem surrounding Trump’s rhetoric of “America First.” The manner in which Trump and his associates use “America First” harkens to a body of constitutive rhetoric in which America is white, Christian, and above all, dominant. The history of “America first” shows that it is the mantra of groups that subscribe to a particular constitutive myth, one which places whiteness at the center of what it means to be American. In this mythology, white people were the first settlers, the geographical and technological pioneers, and the guardians of the Western world. America is the greatest nation on earth, and has a mandate to maintain that position. Furthermore, America was, in this view, built by white Anglo-Saxon Protestant men, and as a result, such people constitute the only “true” Americans. This in turn allows the exclusion of immigrants, people of color, Jews, women, and practically anyone else who does not fit the mold. The myth of America first is inherently a myth of white supremacy. For Donald Trump to invoke the myth through his use of the slogan is

for him to signal his support for those who believe in America first, so long as that America is white and Christian.

CHAPTER TWO

“Shithole Countries”

On January 11, 2018, President Donald Trump presided over a meeting with a bipartisan group of senators to discuss a then-contested immigration deal. During the meeting, Trump allegedly questioned the wisdom and necessity of accepting immigrants from certain countries, particularly Haiti, El Salvador, and African nations. According to sources familiar with the discussion, Trump stated: “Why are we having all these people from shithole countries come here?” President Trump went on to single out Haiti in particular, arguing that immigrants from Haiti should be excluded from any potential deal on immigration. Trump reportedly asked, “Why do we need more Haitians?” and urged lawmakers to “Take them out.”⁶¹ The President then proposed that “the United States should instead bring more people from countries such as Norway,” and suggested an openness to immigration from Asian countries as well.⁶² For his own part, Trump denied in a tweet that he had specifically used the language “shithole countries,” though he admitted that his language “at the... meeting was tough.” The White House, when pressed for comment, did not deny that President Trump had used the language alleged.⁶³

⁶¹ Vitali, Ali. “Trump Referred to Haiti and African Nations as ‘shithole’ Countries.” NBC News. Accessed November 25, 2018. <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/white-house/trump-referred-haiti-african-countries-shithole-nations-n836946>.

⁶² Dawsey, Josh. “Trump Derides Protections for Immigrants from ‘Shithole’ Countries.” Washington Post, January 12, 2018. https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/trump-attacks-protections-for-immigrants-from-shithole-countries-in-oval-office-meeting/2018/01/11/bfc0725c-f711-11e7-91af-31ac729add94_story.html.

⁶³ Kenny, Caroline. “Trump Denies Making ‘shithole Countries’ Comment – cnn.com” CNN Politics, January 15, 2018. <https://www.cnn.com/2018/01/12/politics/donald-trump-tweet-daca-rejection/index.html>.

While the nature of Trump's language was never explicitly confirmed, the fact that the White House did not directly deny the President's alleged statement speaks to the legitimacy of the accusations and their endorsement of the sentiment expressed. Though Trump himself has denied the use of such language, the President's assertions should be taken with a grain of salt, particularly in light of congressional testimony given by Trump's former personal attorney, Michael Cohen. According to Cohen, Trump once asked him to "Name one country run by a black person that's not a shithole... name one city." This was, according to Cohen, while President Obama was still in office.⁶⁴ This seems to demonstrate that Trump's primary concern is not with the economic or social development of minority-population countries, but subscribes to racist ideas of who is and is not fit to lead.

Political ideologies aside, President Trump has a well-documented habit of lying, or at best misconstruing, information about his own actions. In May of 2018, Trump accused his policy of family separation at the border on a "horrible law" put in place by Democrats. While United States law does separate families in the event that parents are charged with a federal misdemeanor, it was Trump's administration that enacted a "zero tolerance policy" that sent illegal immigrants to Homeland Security for prosecution, a move beyond any taken by any previous presidency or legislature. It was this policy specifically that led to migrant children being separated from their families, as all illegal

⁶⁴ Clark, Dartunorro. "Michael Cohen Says Trump Made Racist Remarks in Conversations." NBC News, November 2, 2018. <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/white-house/michael-cohen-says-trump-made-racist-remarks-conversations-n930596>.

immigrants were now subject to criminal prosecution, requiring such separation.⁶⁵ This deception fits into a regular pattern. In January of the same year, Trump tweeted that he had completely prevented *Fire and Fury* author Michael Wolff from speaking to him or administration officials, having “authorized Zero access to the White House.” In reality, Wolff was able to visit with administration officials in the White House more than a dozen times, as admitted by press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders.⁶⁶ In these and numerous other instances, the President has shown a clear disregard for the reality of his actions, in particular through his statements on Twitter.

For example, throughout his campaign and well into his presidency, Trump framed illegal immigration from Mexico and Central America as an existential threat reaching a fever pitch. No policy of Trump’s illustrates this better than his repeated calls for a wall running along the US/Mexico border, a plank in Trump’s platform that has existed since day one, and is still a favorite talking point. The need for a wall is ostensibly based on some new influx of illegal border-crossers, and Trump has repeatedly asserted that number of illegal immigrants in the US is at record levels. In reality, rates of illegal entry into the United States have been declining since 2007, with the undocumented population at an estimated 11.4 million in 2012,⁶⁷ rather than the “30 or

⁶⁵ Tobias, Manuela. “Trump Blames Democrats for Own Policy Separating Families.” @politifact, May 29, 2018. <https://www.politifact.com/truth-o-meter/statements/2018/may/29/donald-trump/trump-blames-democrat-own-policy-separating-family/>.

⁶⁶ Kruzel, John. “Did Author Michael Wolff Have Access to the White House?” @politifact, January 5, 2018. <https://www.politifact.com/truth-o-meter/statements/2018/jan/05/donald-trump/did-author-michael-wolff-have-access-white-house/>.

⁶⁷ Baker, Bryan, and Nancy Rytina. “Estimates of the Unauthorized Immigrant Population Residing in the United States: January 2012.” *Department of Homeland Security*, March 2013.

34 million” that Trump has claimed.⁶⁸ Trump’s press secretary, Sarah Sanders, additionally claimed in January of 2019 that “nearly 4,000 known or suspected terrorists” had been apprehended amidst a caravan of migrants making their way through Central America to the United States. Trump bolstered Sanders’ assertions, saying that “The border is... a problem of national security. It’s a problem of terrorists.” Such claims have no basis in fact. The State Department refuted the Trump Administration’s position, stating that “At year’s end there was no credible evidence indicating that international terrorist groups have... sent operatives via Mexico into the United States.”⁶⁹ Thus, any assertion that President Trump makes regarding his statements in the Jan. 11th meeting should be seen as suspect at best.

For the purpose of this thesis, Trump’s alleged statement calling Haiti, El Salvador, and African states “shithole countries” will be regarded as genuine. While the President’s remarks were not made in a public setting, it is reasonable to assume that he was aware they would be circulated. Trump’s presidency has been under intense scrutiny from its beginning, and the inner workings of the Trump administration have been the subject of continuing news coverage. Whether the President wills it or not, even his private remarks are often exposed to a broader audience. The President’s statement in the Jan. 11th meeting should not be examined apart from the broader context of his political platform.

⁶⁸ Sherman, Amy. “Donald Trump Wrongly Says the Number of Illegal Immigrants Is 30 Million or Higher.” @politifact, July 28, 2015. <https://www.politifact.com/florida/statements/2015/jul/28/donald-trump/donald-trump-says-number-illegal-immigrants-30-mil/>.

⁶⁹ Rosenkrantz, Holly. “Sanders Repeats Claim on Terrorists at the Border Refuted by Administration’s Own Data,” January 7, 2019. <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/sanders-repeats-claim-on-terrorists-at-the-border-refuted-by-administrations-own-data-chris-wallace-fox-news-sunday/>.

President Trump's "shithole countries" remarks are not, in themselves, anything new. From the beginning of his candidacy, Trump ran on a distinctly anti-immigrant platform. In the 2015 speech announcing his candidacy for president, Trump argued to restrict immigration from Mexico, claiming that "They're sending people that have lots of problems, and they're bringing those problems with us. They're bringing drugs. They're bringing crime. They're rapists." Aside from broadly characterizing an entire nationality as inherently criminal, such a characterization plays into racist stereotypes of Mexicans and Mexican-Americans. He additionally advocated, and continues to advocate, for the construction of a wall at the U.S.-Mexico border to curtail illegal immigration.⁷⁰ President Trump also proposed and implemented, albeit in a significantly altered form, a plan to greatly restrict immigration by Muslims, stating during his candidacy that "Donald J. Trump is calling for a total and complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States until our country's representatives can figure out what the hell is going on."⁷¹ Trump later created an Executive Order restricting entry by citizens from a number of Muslim majority countries, though the plan had to be changed significantly in the face of numerous legal challenges.⁷² Trump seemed aware of the problems his travel ban might face. According to lawyer and former New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani, Trump once asked him how to legally implement his "Muslim ban," telling

⁷⁰ Time Staff. "Here's Donald Trump's Presidential Announcement Speech." *Time*, June 16, 2015. <http://time.com/3923128/donald-trump-announcement-speech/>.

⁷¹ "Updated - Establish a Ban on Muslims Entering the U.S." PolitiFact, January 16, 2017. <https://www.politifact.com/truth-o-meter/promises/trumpometer/promise/1401/establish-ban-muslims-entering-us/>.

⁷² "Timeline of the Muslim Ban." ACLU of Washington, May 23, 2017. <https://www.aclu-wa.org/pages/timeline-muslim-ban>.

Giuliani to “Put a commission together, show [Trump] the right way to do it legally.”⁷³

Hostility towards immigration is a significant part of Trump’s political platform, his rhetorical appeals, and his presidential policy.

What *is* remarkable about President Trump’s “shithole countries” comments, even in the midst of his well-established anti-immigrant platform, are their distinctly racial connotations. The countries that Trump singled out, El Salvador, Haiti, and (broadly) African countries, are all nationalities that constitute minorities in the United States. They are countries of native brown and black people. They also represent relatively small populations in the United States. According to the most recent Census data, Salvadorian Americans constitute 0.71 percent of the United States’ population, Haitian Americans 0.29 percent, and Sub-Saharan Africans 14.1 percent.⁷⁴ These populations are by and large non-white, and have faced a well-documented history of discrimination, both legal and cultural, as a result. Furthermore, President Trump expressed a desire to “bring in more people from countries such as Norway,” a state with a distinctly white, racially-homogenous population. Though President Trump also expressed an openness to Asian immigration, his admiration seemed primarily aimed at white immigrants, and his hostility directed towards non-white immigrants. Though not explicitly stated, President Trump’s rhetoric on immigration seems to strongly mirror the rhetoric underlying the Teutonic myth.

⁷³ Savransky, Rebecca. “Giuliani: Trump Asked Me How to Do a Muslim Ban ‘Legally.’” Text. The Hill, January 29, 2017. <https://thehill.com/homenews/administration/316726-giuliani-trump-asked-me-how-to-do-a-muslim-ban-legally>.

⁷⁴ U.S. Census Bureau. “American FactFinder - Results.” Accessed November 29, 2018. https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_15_1YR_DP05&prodType=table=American.

The Teutonic Myth

The Teutonic myth is a form of Nordicism, an ideology that holds those of Nordic descent are the master race. The myth is focused around the presumption that the “Nordic type” is both physically and mentally superior to other racial groups, and that this racial type is in danger of dilution or extinction through interbreeding. Nordicism became a well-known ideology by the early 20th Century, with figures such as William McDougall, a British psychologist, characterizing the Nordic type as having “fair colour of hair and skin and eyes... great independence of character, individual initiative and tenacity of will.”⁷⁵ Nordicism was such a prevalent belief in the United States that President Theodore Roosevelt himself held that “unregulated immigration would lead to the demise of the white race,” unless the “American race stock” were maintained through procreation.⁷⁶ For his own part, Trump subscribes to a “race horse” view of genetics, and credits his genetic background with his intelligence and success in business.⁷⁷

The Teutonic myth is an inherently racist ideology. It is built upon principles of racial superiority and inferiority, and puts forth that the Nordic type is and has always been dominant, both physically and culturally. Certain proponents of Nordicism went so far as to argue that members of the Nordic race had been in the elite of ancient civilizations such as the Romans. Accounts by historians such as Suetonius and Plutarch

⁷⁵ McDougall, William. *The Group Mind*. USA: Arno Press, n.d.

⁷⁶ Dorsey, Leroy. *We Are All Americans, Pure and Simple*. The University of Alabama Press, 2007. Pg. 53

⁷⁷ Mortimer, Caroline. 2016. “Donald Trump Believes He Has Superior Genes, Biographer Claims | The Independent.” Independent.Co.Uk. September 30, 2016.
<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/donald-trump-president-superior-genes-pbs-documentary-eugenics-a7338821.html>.

were cherry-picked for details that could suggest Nordic origin, such as blond or red hair. Hans Gunther argued in his 1927 text “The Racial Elements of European History” that Nordic tribes had influenced Troy, Rome, and Greece, and had forced their Indo-European languages “on to the subject, mainly Mediterranean, lower orders.”⁷⁸ According to the myth, the Nordic type, as the master race, had its hands in the building of civilization and the subjugation of lesser races since antiquity. The Teutonic myth is one of white supremacy, and justifies its principles of white privilege through racial and ethnic superiority.

The Teutonic myth has long been integrated into American culture and politics. Particularly in the early 20th century, eugenics became a widely popular ideology in the United States. Some state governments, occasionally with federal funding, implemented programs aimed at ensuring the survival of the white race through involuntary sterilization, euthanasia, and immigration restrictions. The state of Indiana famously passed the world’s first eugenics-based sterilization law in 1907, based on the belief that “criminality, mental problems, and pauperism were hereditary.” To this end, the law mandated sterilization for certain individuals in state custody. Though the original law was overturned in 1921, the practice was reinstated in 1927, and not repealed until 1974. By that time, “approximately 2,500 total in state custody were sterilized.”⁷⁹ Nominally, eugenics as practiced in Indiana was aimed at reducing undesirable societal behaviors, certainly a problematic goal, but not an inherently racist one. In practice, however,

⁷⁸ Gunther, Hans. *The Racial Elements of European History*. Blurb, 1927.

⁷⁹ “IHB: 1907 Indiana Eugenics Law.” State of Indiana. in.gov, 2019.
<https://www.in.gov/history/markers/524.htm>.

eugenics-based sterilization laws were yet another tool used to pursue white supremacy and racial purity.

Mandatory sterilization, both in Indiana and the 31 other states that adopted such laws, disproportionately targeted people of color and other minorities, and in particular the women of these communities. Following the Supreme Court's 1927 ruling in *Buck v. Bell*, which legitimized forced sterilization for the mentally disabled, rates of mandatory sterilization skyrocketed. By 1931, 12,145 people had been sterilized compared to 3,233 in 1920. This figure increased to 38,087 by 1940. By 1961, approximately 62,162 people had been involuntarily sterilized, 61 percent of whom were women. These programs were particularly directed at black women, a focus based on stereotypes of "welfare queens" and deviant sexuality. Southern physicians were known to carry out "Mississippi appendectomies," the practice of secretly and non-consensually removing a black woman's uterus during an unrelated abdominal surgery.⁸⁰

Countless other examples of eugenics-based practices exist in the history of the United States. An investigation by the U.S. Government Accountability Office revealed that between 1973 and 1976, a portion of Native American hospitals preformed more than 3,400 sterilizations, with records suggesting that staff ignored informed consent requirements. In New York, major teaching hospitals directed that residents in training should preform hysterectomies (removals of the uterus) that, while nominally elective, met a bare minimum of informed consent. 99% of these procedures were performed on Black and Puerto Rican women, according to the Committee to End Sterilization

⁸⁰ Kluchin, Rebecca M. *Fit to Be Tied: Sterilization and Reproductive Rights in America, 1950-1980*. Rutgers University Press, 2011.

Abuse.⁸¹ These procedures took place even where eugenicist policies were not implemented. Even after the laws themselves ceased to identify racial or cultural purity as the motive, the ideas behind eugenics remained well in practice.

The history of American eugenics is long and, tragically, spoken of relatively little. Its impact on countless, primarily minority lives, is a deeply unsettling chapter in American history, and demonstrates the danger of the principles of racial purity that underlie Nordicism and the Teutonic myth. What is more, eugenics do not stand alone in American history. Anti-miscegenation laws, statutes aimed at preventing racial intermixing through marriage, were in place in some states before the US was established as an independent nation. Such laws persisted legally until 1967, when they were outlawed by the Supreme Court in *Loving v. Virginia*. Walter White, a key figure in the early 20th Century NAACP, wrote in *Rope and Faggot*, his account of American lynching, that the Teutonic myth nearly gave rise to “A bigoted, ruthless reign... of fanatics sworn to persecution of all whom they did not like or approve... and the danger of its recurrence is not yet past.”⁸² However, general American ignorance of the scope of our racist past is, perhaps understandable. The American eugenics movement of the early 20th Century was quickly overshadowed by the most blatant, public, and openly horrific example of eugenics in practice: Nazism.

⁸¹ Begos, Kevin. “The American Eugenics Movement after World War II (Part 3 of 3).” INDY Week, June 1, 2011. <https://indyweek.com/api/content/0f32cca6-48f9-5cc9-a7a3-53f75cec4a73/>.

⁸² White, Walter. *Rope and Faggot: A Biography of Judge Lynch*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 2001.

National Socialism, more commonly known as Nazism, was the dominant political ideology of Germany from 1933 to 1945. Nazism, built on a foundation of German superiority and anti-Semitism, was the driving force behind the Holocaust, the systematic slaughter of over 10 million Jews, Romani, political dissidents, and other state-deemed undesirables throughout the sphere of German influence. Between 1942 and 1945, those considered inferior under Nazi definitions of racial and cultural purity were sent to work or extermination camps. Some were assigned to construction or war production as slave labor, but the vast majority were summarily murdered in gas chambers upon their arrival. This system of extermination followed a lengthy campaign of political suppression and physical segregation, all of which was carried out under the direction of Adolf Hitler's Nazi party, which had gained total control over all affairs of German government. Legal measures such as the Nuremberg Laws established a system of codified inferiority for so-called "Untermenschen," literally "underhumans," the culmination of which was the "Final Solution." Under the control and direction of the SS, a Nazi paramilitary group, millions of Jews, homosexuals, POWs, racial minorities, mental patients, invalids, and political activists were starved, frozen, beaten to death, shot, gassed, and killed for medical experiments, all in the name of preserving the "master race".

The foundational principle of Nazism was German nationalism integrated with the furtherance and protection of an "Aryan master race." Aryans were believed to have descended from ancient Nordic people who invaded India and later spread to Persia, supposedly precipitating the rise of the Persian Empire. Nazi Aryanism strongly emphasized the historical superiority of the master race. Under the Nazi myth, Aryans

were responsible for the dominance of Greek and Roman cultures, as well as the Renaissance, the Spanish Empire, and practically any other powerful or flourishing civilization. According to Nazi textbook author Jakob Graf, “everywhere Nordic creative power has built mighty empires with high-minded ideas... though the creative Nordic blood has long since vanished in many places.”⁸³

The Nazi racial ideology was inherently one of racial conflict. Aryans were held to be superior to all other races, and their dominance above all other races was a central tenet of Nazi government and politics. Nazi racial politics emphasized the physical, mental, and historical superiority of Aryans above all other races, cementing a radical form of Nordicism by government action. Under Adolf Hitler, Nazi Germany sought to reclaim what they saw as ancestral territories in Austria, Poland, and Czechoslovakia, and return them to control by supposedly pure, Aryan Germans. The goal of Nazism was the restoration of Aryan dominance, and its protection against mixed races such as Jews and Slavs, an end undertaken by incomparably destructive means. Nazi Germany’s invasion of Poland in 1939 predicated the most destructive conflict in human history. Nazi racial politics were directly responsible for the deaths of 17 million innocent people. The myth of Nordic and German racial dominance justified systematic discrimination, followed by legalized oppression, and culminating in unparalleled destruction.

Nazi Germany represents a culmination of the dangers that ideologies built around racial dominance present, but is far from the only example of systematic, racially-motivated violence built upon Nordicism. It is easy to isolate the actions of the Nazis to a

⁸³ Mosse, George Lachmann. *Nazi Culture: Intellectual, Cultural and Social Life in the Third Reich*. Univ of Wisconsin Press, 2003.

single case, to treat the extremism of Nazism as an outlier, an impossibility in any other time and place. However, to do so is to ignore the threads of racial violence that exist in the United States, and to wash over the role the Teutonic myth played in shaping our own shameful racial history. More than that, it ignores the very real potential that such ideas have to take root in the United States. On February 20, 1939, more than two years before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, the pro-Nazi German American Bund (GAB) packed New York City's Madison Square Garden for a "Pro American Rally," ostensibly a celebration of George Washington's birthday, but in reality a pro-Nazi demonstration. More than 20,000 men and women attended, sitting in front of a stage draped with American flags side by side with swastikas, and dominated by a thirty-foot tall portrait of George Washington. The GAB was not an isolated group. In the 1930's it was "one of several organizations in the United States that were openly supportive of Adolf Hitler," and its message was explicitly one of anti-Semitism and Nordic supremacy.⁸⁴ It is far from impossible for Nazism, or a similarly white supremacist ideology, to become dominant in the United States.

Nazism still exists in the United States, but generally in a greatly weakened form. While neo-Nazis are certainly still present in American life, they no longer pack stadiums with supporters. However, President Trump has shown a disturbing habit of echoing the racist ideas underlying Nazism in his own rhetoric. Trump's biographer Michael D'Antonio claimed in 2016 that the Trump family "subscribes to a racehorse theory of human development," remarkably similar to the principles behind eugenics. Per

⁸⁴ Kramer, Sarah. "When Nazis Took Manhattan." NPR.org, February 20, 2019. <https://www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/2019/02/20/695941323/when-nazis-took-manhattan>.

D'Antonio, "[The Trumps] believe that there are superior people and that if you put together the genes of a superior woman and a superior man, you get a superior offspring." Donald Trump has personally credited his genes for everything from his intelligence to his success in business. In his own words, "I'm a gene believer... Hey, when you connect two race horses, you usually end up with a fast horse."⁸⁵

Calling Haiti, El Salvador, and African countries "shitholes" is not Donald Trump's only connection to the Teutonic myth. It is merely one among many publicly visible instances in which Trump has expressed some degree of support for eugenics and Nordicism, and echoed the language of white supremacy. The history of the United States shows clearly the dangers of such rhetoric becoming commonplace, and perhaps no period demonstrates these perils better than the lynchings of the 1900's.

Strange Fruit

The lynching movement in the 20th Century United States was, contrary to some modern characterizations, not a phenomenon isolated to vigilante groups. Rather, it was a systematic campaign of violence aimed at the suppression of minority voices, and predicated on ideas of racial superiority. In outward appearance, lynchings were extralegal affairs, carried out in a fits of passion as a sort of twisted frontier justice. In reality, lynch mobs operated with the tacit approval, if not outright endorsement, of public officials and law enforcement agencies alike.

⁸⁵ Mortimer, Caroline. "Donald Trump Believes He Has Superior Genes, Biographer Claims | The Independent." independent.co.uk, September 30, 2016.
<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/donald-trump-president-superior-genes-pbs-documentary-eugenics-a7338821.html>.

In *Rope and Faggot: A Biography of Judge Lynch*, author Walter White portrays the reality of lynching in horrifying detail. As assistant secretary of the NAACP, White was intimately familiar with the vicious cycle of violence and inaction that plagued African Americans throughout the 20th Century, and through exposés such as *Rope and Faggot* sought to debunk the mythologies that propped up the culture surrounding lynching. Where proponents of lynching characterized the violence as a way to punish the Black community for alleged crimes, most often rape, White revealed lynching as symptomatic of a culture of racial control, “used to keep African Americans in their place by policing racial boundaries, punishing and terrorizing prosperous African Americans, and squelching hints of black opposition to the racial order.” (White 2001) Lynching had nothing to do with justice and everything to do with maintaining the established racial hierarchy. Racial violence was a means for Southern whites to maintain their position as the dominant race.

Southern whites justified maintaining the established racial order by any number of means. Common among these were assertions that African Americans were violent, inherently criminal, or prone to sexual violence and deviancy. The social order was very often characterized as protective; an underlying principle of lynching was that when black people were scared, white people were safe. Other justifications were more methodical. In the chapter *Science, Nordicism, and Lynching*, White details the lengths to which proponents of lynching would go to root their prejudices in what they believed was science. In pseudosciences such as phrenology, the study of how skull shape supposedly influenced intelligence and behavior, “The lyncher, the Klansman, the Nordacist, the disenfranchiser, the opponent of advancement of the Negro or other dark-skinned race

found... comforting assurance of the fundamental soundness of their prejudices.”⁸⁶

Prominent physical scientists of the day advanced theories rooted in the idea of racial superiority, seeking to prove their biases by any flawed means available.

White directs particular criticism at Nordicists as “ballyhoo experts of a blue-eyed, blond-haired, dolichocephalic superman” seeking to stir up fears of any group that might threaten their supposedly pure Nordic blood, whether Catholic, Jew, or any sort of foreign. White ridicules the notion of “pure blood,” pointing out the absurdity of any genealogy remaining racially pure over a few centuries, much less thousands of years. Despite the baselessness of their claims white argued that the Nordicists posed a genuine danger to the present and future stability of the United States, pointing to states such as Mississippi as examples of the outcomes of Nordicist dominance. White directly connects the racist foundations of ideologies such as Nordicism to lynching and racial violence. When such groups are allowed to dictate public discourse and policy, the inevitable outcome is “the lawlessness and bigotry which find outlet in, among other ways, lynch-law.”⁸⁷

While few people actively advocate for the revivification of lynching as justified punishment, apart from the more radical elements of white supremacy, the quasi-judicial principles underlying lynch-law have found new expressions today. As Michelle Alexander argues in *The New Jim Crow*, former overtly racist systems of racial control

⁸⁶ White, Walter. *Rope and Faggot: A Biography of Judge Lynch*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 2001.

⁸⁷ White, Walter. *Rope and Faggot: A Biography of Judge Lynch*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 2001.

have been replaced with nominally colorblind yet powerfully restrictive new machinery, particularly in the criminal justice system. The War on Drugs, and with it the increased policing of urban America, has created a system of mass incarceration, which in turn has inextricably associated blackness with criminality, an image that Alexander calls the “criminalblackman.” Though the days of consequence-free lynching are largely past, Alexander argues that “the threat of police violence is ever present” for people of color. With the rapid growth of police power in the War on Drugs, “A wrong move or sudden gesture could mean massive retaliation by the police. A wallet could be mistaken for a gun.”⁸⁸ To Alexander, the noose and hanging tree have been replaced by handcuffs and jail cells. The sign that says, “whites only” has been replaced by “felons need not apply.”

Donald Trump has himself echoed the kind of rhetoric that Alexander argues underlies and justifies the War on Drugs. On July 28, 2017, at a rally in Long Island, Trump told police officers present, “When you see these thugs being thrown into the back of a paddy-wagon... please don’t be too nice,”⁸⁹ apparently urging the officers to commit police brutality during their arrests. On August 28 of the same year, Trump pardoned and subsequently praised Arizona sheriff Joe Arpaio, who had been sanctioned for racial profiling and inhumane prison conditions.⁹⁰ He has frequently exaggerated or falsified urban crime statistics to justify increased policing in major cities, rhetoric that almost

⁸⁸ Alexander, Michelle. *The New Jim Crow*. New York: The New Press, 2012.

⁸⁹ Gertz, Matthew. “President Urges Officers to Commit Acts of Brutality, Officers Laugh and Cheer Wildly. Beginning to Think Problem Isn’t a Few Bad Apples.Pic.Twitter.Com/O1sGw6lGy.” Tweet. @MattGertz (blog), July 28, 2017. <https://twitter.com/MattGertz/status/891005850420224001>.

⁹⁰ Leonhardt, David, and Ian Prasad Philbrick. “Opinion | Donald Trump’s Racism: The Definitive List.” *The New York Times*, January 15, 2018, sec. Opinion. <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/01/15/opinion/leonhardt-trump-racist.html>. <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/01/15/opinion/leonhardt-trump-racist.html>.

directly parallels the “tough on crime” language that helped launch the War on Drugs, and the resulting mass incarceration.⁹¹ In his positions on criminal justice, racial profiling, and police violence, Donald Trump is regurgitating the nominally colorblind rhetoric of the New Jim Crow.

Trump and the Teutonic Myth

With all of this said, it is remarkable how explicitly President Trump’s remarks regarding “shithole countries” mirror the underlying ideologies of Nordicism and the Teutonic myth. The basic premise of Trump’s statement is that immigrants from places such as Norway are, for one reason or another, preferable to those from El Salvador, Haiti, and Africa. To be sure, one could attribute the basis of Trump’s remarks to the economic status of the countries in question. Norway is objectively more developed and economically well-off than Haiti, El Salvador, and many African nations. However, the commonalities among the countries that Trump singled out, alongside Trump’s previous remarks on immigration, are difficult to ignore. President Trump’s rhetoric on immigration has, from day one, directed its ire primarily at groups that constitute minorities in the United States. Mexicans, Haitians, El Salvadorians, and Muslims have all been directly targeted as groups undesirable to have in the United States. These are not isolated incidents: this is a clear thematic element of the President’s hostility towards immigrants.

⁹¹ Palmer, Chris. “Trump Said Philly’s Murder Rate Is ‘terribly Increasing.’ It’s Not.” [https://www.philly.com](https://www.philly.com, January 26, 2017.), January 26, 2017.
<https://www.philly.com/philly/news/politics/presidential/Trump-said-Phillys-murder-rate-is-terribly-increasing-Its-not.html>.

Even more striking is Trump's stated enthusiasm for immigrants from Norway. The majority of Trump's rhetoric, both throughout his campaign and into his presidency, has been overtly hostile towards immigration into the United States. The President has very rarely expressed support for increased immigration, and as a result, any instance in which he does is immediately noteworthy. Thus, for Trump to advocate directly for greater immigration from countries such as Norway suggests a particular rationale. The exception to the rule is the exception for a reason, and in Trump's case, it is difficult to ignore the racial connotations of such a particular and explicitly stated preference. In his remarks on Jan. 11, Trump established a clear dichotomy between the immigrants he favors and the immigrants he does not, a dichotomy that harkens back to long and well-documented mythologies of white superiority and racial dominance. Whether Trump is aware of it or not, his rhetoric on immigration mirrors the rhetoric underlying the fundamental principles of Nordicism: white good, non-white bad.

Americans, Pure and Simple

Trump is far from the only President to use racially charged rhetoric regarding immigration. As the United States grew more and more into a haven for immigrants seeking a better life, the rhetoric surrounding immigration became inevitably and inextricably tied to race. In the late 19th and early 20th Century, the question of who could be an American was framed by racial politics. Jim Crow laws in the South, the lynching era, and the wounds of the Civil War ensured that racial divides in the United States were far from bridged. Predictably, these issues spilled over into the growing debate over immigration. As more and more people sought to enter the United States and build their

livelihoods, racial politics shaped the laws and policies that dictated who could and could not become an American.

President Theodore Roosevelt made immigration, as well as the cultivation of an American identity, a central part of his presidency and political activism. In *We are all Americans, Pure and Simple*, author Leroy Dorsey details how Roosevelt used racial tensions to build the idea of an American identity that, while still largely rooted in ideas of racial purity, simultaneously addressed and integrated the reality of a burgeoning immigrant population. While Roosevelt's personal views largely reflected the racist ideologies of his day, Dorsey argues that national stability was foremost in the President's mind when formulating rhetoric and policy. Roosevelt knew that a nation torn apart by racial struggle would not survive, and so he sought to sublimate these tensions under a vision of a new Americanism.

Among the core tenets of Roosevelt's American ideal were rugged individualism and self-reliance. Roosevelt believed that American identity was something built, worked for, and earned, not simply given. This ideology particularly emphasized the importance of literally building oneself. Influenced by his asthmatic childhood and the bullying that came as a result, Roosevelt came to believe that strength of character was inextricable from strength of body, and as a result, the strength of American identity was linked to the physical strength of the American people. Men who demonstrated a "delicate [touch]" or were otherwise "weakened by timidity" were "unworthy of their status as leaders or Americans."⁹² Physical hardiness was the mark of greatness, both individually and in the

⁹² Dorsey, Leroy. *We Are All Americans, Pure and Simple*. The University of Alabama Press, 2007.

communal identity. This belief in strength influenced Roosevelt's foreign policy as well. He was a driving force behind the creation of a fleet of modern battleships for the U.S. Navy. These ships were popularly nicknamed the "Great White Fleet," and were sent by Roosevelt on a worldwide voyage, both as a message of goodwill, and a demonstration of the United States' growing martial power.⁹³

Roosevelt believed that cultivating the kind of physical sturdiness that he idolized required a sort of arena, a stage upon which natives and foreigners alike could perform the physical feats necessary to become true Americans. According to Dorsey, "Roosevelt held out the promise of national salvation to immigrants and nonwhites if they coupled both physical hardihood and strength of will to benefit the community." As a result, Roosevelt was very much influenced by tales of the American frontier and the ways in which the brutality of pioneer life had shaped the growth of American identity. In particular, Roosevelt was drawn to the writings of historian Frederick Jackson Turner, who argued that "the frontier experiences of settlers in the wilderness of the North American continent had transformed them into something uniquely American."⁹⁴

According to Turner, the clash between savagery and civilization that took place on the frontier was instrumental in shaping a distinctly American identity. The rigors and dangers of life in the new West were the subject of fascination for those in the East, and Turner's thesis turned the rugged frontiersman into the model American. However, as

⁹³ Dorsey, Leroy. *We Are All Americans, Pure and Simple*. The University of Alabama Press, 2007.

⁹⁴ Dorsey, Leroy. *We Are All Americans, Pure and Simple*. The University of Alabama Press, 2007.

Turner pointed out, the frontier was rapidly disappearing. This concerned President Roosevelt, who saw the frontier as a means by which the “strife of races” could be ended, or at least subdued. Roosevelt’s fear was that “Without such an arena or its contestants, the potential for gaining manliness – a key requirement of Americanism – might be in jeopardy.”⁹⁵ To keep his country together, President Roosevelt needed a new frontier.

Roosevelt found his new crucible in “the complexity of modern life,” pitting the apparent apathy and decadence of the early 20th Century against his ideals of rugged manliness.⁹⁶ The Frontier Myth had been built around the clash between “civilized white against all other cultures,” in particular the “savage” Native Americans. Manly strength on the frontier had a distinctly martial element to it. In order to survive on harsh and uncivilized lands, one needed to be fierce and hardy, and it was this ruggedness that came to define Americanism for Roosevelt. Roosevelt’s use of the myth, however, was framed differently. He used the image of the frontier hero and the myth of rugged individualism “to give Native Americans, blacks, and immigrant a preeminent place in the story,” a protagonist’s role previously reserved for whites alone.⁹⁷ President Roosevelt reframed the United States’ mythic origins on the frontier by creating space in which non-whites, regardless of their national origin, to become a part of a new American identity.

⁹⁵ Dorsey, Leroy. *We Are All Americans, Pure and Simple*. The University of Alabama Press, 2007.

⁹⁶ Dorsey, Leroy. *We Are All Americans, Pure and Simple*. The University of Alabama Press, 2007.

⁹⁷ Dorsey, Leroy. *We Are All Americans, Pure and Simple*. The University of Alabama Press, 2007.

It should be noted, however, that Roosevelt's vision of "Americans, pure and simple" was not a message of racial inclusion, but rather one of racial sublimation. Roosevelt's goal was that immigrants and Natives should shed their old racial and cultural identities to become a part of the "melting pot" of modern America. Though Roosevelt provided room for non-whites to earn their place as Americans, this equality was gained "by discarding their hyphen," by which Roosevelt meant their former identity as Irish-American, German-American, etc. Any immigrant who retained their old national identities, languages, or customs was considered disloyal. To Roosevelt, "immigrants who refused to demonstrate their loyalty 'should be interned at hard labor' and, if their disloyalty was of an active type, they 'should be buried.'"⁹⁸ Roosevelt thus opened the doors of American identity to immigrants, Natives, and African-Americans, but only to those who were willing to shed the baggage of their cultural and racial past. By comparison, Trump frames immigrants and immigration as almost universally harmful, and leaves no room in which they can become Americans.

Nonetheless, President Roosevelt's vision of the new, rugged American was remarkable in its openness to immigration and racial diversity. Roosevelt's message was one of tacit inclusivity. Though the price of admission was high, any who possessed the right qualities and was willing to "discard their hyphen" could be, in Roosevelt's view, considered an American, on relatively equal footing with their white fellow citizens. To be sure, such equality was never truly total in practice. Jim Crow laws in the South remained in place until 1965, and many white citizens had difficulty swallowing the

⁹⁸ Dorsey, Leroy. *We Are All Americans, Pure and Simple*. The University of Alabama Press, 2007.

notion of non-whites being truly American. Roosevelt himself was no exception. As Dorsey writes, Roosevelt “maintained white privilege at the expense of a real conception of racial and ethnic diversity... affirming the worst stereotypes of immigrants and nonwhites whose only sin was that Anglo-Saxon whites considered them different and inferior,”⁹⁹ Roosevelt’s, however, was still a far more progressive view of race in the United States than the nativism that preceded, and followed, his time in office.

In 1924, President Calvin Coolidge signed into law the Immigration Act of 1924, also known as the Johnson-Reed Act. The Act implemented national origins quotas, which restricted immigration from foreign nations to 2 percent of the number of foreign-born individuals of their nationality living in the continental United States as of the 1890 census. The law also excluded wholesale immigrants from “a geographically defined ‘Asiatic Barred Zone’ except for Japanese and Filipinos.”¹⁰⁰ Though China was not included in this zone, the Chinese Exclusion Act, passed in 1882, already prevented the Chinese from obtaining visas.¹⁰¹ Though the Chinese Exclusion Act represented the first sweeping legislation to prevent immigration, calls for such laws were common throughout the late 19th and early 20th centuries. These laws were distinctly racist and nativist in nature. Their goals were, more than anything else, “to preserve the ideal of U.S. homogeneity,” which is to say white, Anglo-Saxon dominance.¹⁰² It was exactly this

⁹⁹ Dorsey, Leroy. *We Are All Americans, Pure and Simple*. The University of Alabama Press, 2007.

¹⁰⁰ Office of the Historian. “Milestones: 1921–1936 - Office of the Historian.” Accessed April 17, 2019. <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1921-1936/immigration-act>.

¹⁰¹ Office of the Historian. “Milestones: 1866–1898 - Office of the Historian.” Accessed April 17, 2019. <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1866-1898/chinese-immigration>.

¹⁰² Office of the Historian. “Milestones: 1921–1936 - Office of the Historian.” Accessed April 17, 2019. <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1921-1936/immigration-act>

kind of nativism that Theodore Roosevelt sought to subdue through his vision of the new American, and it is this same nativism that Donald Trump seeks to leverage through his rhetoric and policies.

As previously mentioned, a key plank in Trump's political platform since his announcement of candidacy has been a distinctly anti-immigrant stance. Trump began his campaign by calling for a wall to be built at the Southern border, claiming that Mexican immigrants were drug dealers, rapists, and criminals. Later on, he advocated for a complete and total shutdown of Muslim immigration into the United States. Though he framed the necessity of such a ban in terms of national security and preventing terrorism, the fact that Trump specifically targeted Muslims suggests a far more xenophobic motivation. However, perhaps Trump's most abhorrent policy was that of family separation, a zero-tolerance stance on illegal immigration that separated children from their parents if caught crossing the border illegally.

The policy was implemented in April of 2018, and officially announced by Attorney General Jeff Sessions in May. It directly undid the policy of previous administrations, which was to keep families apprehended at the border together while in detention, and was justified by Trump Administration officials as a deterrent to illegal immigration, and considered as early as February 2017.¹⁰³ Between April and June of 2018, nearly 2,000 children were separated from their parents under the policy, until it was rescinded by Executive Order, after intense bipartisan and public pressure on

¹⁰³ Ainsley, Julia. "Trump Admin Discussed Splitting Moms, Kids to Prevent Asylum in Feb. 2017." NBC News, June 18, 2018. <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/immigration/trump-admin-discussed-separating-moms-kids-deter-asylum-seekers-feb-n884371>.

President Trump.¹⁰⁴ Trump later claimed that the policy had in fact existed for 60 years, and that his executive order had undone the actions of previous administrations.¹⁰⁵ This is patently untrue. It was the Trump Administration that began the zero-tolerance policy specifically as a means to curtail illegal immigration, and fulfill a campaign promise grounded in racist, nativist visions of who can be an American.

President Donald Trump's remarks referring to Haiti, El Salvador, and African countries as "shitholes" are shocking enough in their own right. In isolation, they invoke myths of white supremacy and Nordic superiority that have long held ground in American discourse. However, when viewed in the context of Trump's broader stance on immigration, as well as the policies he has implemented to further this stance, they become merely another example of the ways in which President Trump has leveraged racist, nativist fears in his rhetoric. In contrast to Roosevelt's claim that all can become Americans via the crucible of the frontier, Trump separates families, cages children, and strictly defines Americanism by exclusion. He makes no attempt to be welcoming, or to provide space for an American identity apart from whiteness. Donald Trump's vision of what it means to be an American is a vision inextricable from historical iterations of nativism and white supremacy.

¹⁰⁴ Kevin, Kelleher. "DHS: 1,995 Children Taken from Families Under 'Zero Tolerance.'" Fortune, June 15, 2018. <http://fortune.com/2018/06/15/dhs-1995-children-separated-families-zero-tolerance-policy/>.

¹⁰⁵ "Remarks by President Trump and Vice President Pence at Signing of Executive Order Affording Congress an Opportunity to Address Family Separation." The White House, June 20, 2018. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-president-trump-vice-president-pence-signing-executive-order-affording-congress-opportunity-address-family-separation/>.

CONCLUSION

Familiar Fruit

Regrettably, two case-studies are deeply insufficient space in which to address the scope and depth of President Donald Trump's rhetorical connections to historical iterations of American white supremacy. Donald Trump has held office for more than two years now, and in any one-month period over that span of time, it is not difficult to find at least one publicly made statement by the President or his associates with overt and clear connections to historical or modern white supremacist rhetoric. However, Trump's racist statements and activities are not by any means limited to his recent presidential activities. Donald Trump has been in the public eye as a businessman, celebrity, and presidential hopeful for more than three decades, and in that time, he has established a long track record of racially antagonistic remarks. In fact, what effectively constituted Trump's first foray into public consciousness was a 1973 housing discrimination lawsuit.

In 1973, Donald Trump and his father, Fred, were sued by the Justice Department for discriminating against black people in public housing. Though Fred Trump had already established a public presence, the suit became front-page news and, according to the New York Times, "amounted to [Donald Trump's] debut in the public eye."¹⁰⁶ Though the suit ultimately ended in a consent decree that "did not include an admission of guilt," a fact that Trump emphasized, the Trump organization had long been under

¹⁰⁶ Mahler, Jonathan, and Steve Eder. "'No Vacancies' for Blacks: How Donald Trump Got His Start, and Was First Accused of Bias." *The New York Times*, January 20, 2018, sec. U.S. <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/28/us/politics/donald-trump-housing-race.html>.

scrutiny for alleged racial bias in renting. In 1967, of 3,700 apartments in New York City's Trump Village, only 7 were rented by African-American families.¹⁰⁷ Similar incidents followed the Trump organization to California. As Donald Trump began to build his own public identity, it became increasingly clear that Trump properties had no vacancies for people of color. In 1978, the Trumps were again under fire from the government, which alleged that Trump Management had violated the terms of the 1973 consent agreement. Though the investigation became moot before any concrete case could be built against the Trumps, they had uncovered further allegations of discrimination in renting, along with a pattern of "racial steering," the practice of confining minority renters to a small number of complexes.¹⁰⁸ Whether in view of the public or in the eyes of the State, the Trump name is no stranger to allegations of racial misconduct.

One of the most famous and public examples of Donald Trump's racism took place in 1989. On April 19th of that year, jogger Trisha Meili was assaulted and raped in Central Park. Several others were attacked and injured on the same night, and the subsequent investigation produced five primary suspects, all of whom were men of color; four were African-American, one was Hispanic. Prior to the suspects' trials, the FBI tested the rape kit of Trisha Meili, and found that it did not match the DNA profiles of *any* of the five accused. Despite this, all five were tried and subsequently convicted, with

¹⁰⁷ Mahler, Jonathan, and Steve Eder. "No Vacancies' for Blacks: How Donald Trump Got His Start, and Was First Accused of Bias." *The New York Times*, January 20, 2018, sec. U.S. <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/28/us/politics/donald-trump-housing-race.html>.

¹⁰⁸ Mahler, Jonathan, and Steve Eder. "No Vacancies' for Blacks: How Donald Trump Got His Start, and Was First Accused of Bias." *The New York Times*, January 20, 2018, sec. U.S. <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/28/us/politics/donald-trump-housing-race.html>.

some convictions being affirmed on appeal. The “Central Park Five,” as they came to be called, served prison sentences ranging from six to thirteen years.¹⁰⁹

On May 1 of 1989, then real-estate magnate Donald Trump took out full page advertisements in four major New York City newspapers, calling for the return of the death penalty, particularly in reference to the Central Park Five. In the ads, Trump argued that the justice system had “cross[ed] the line from the fine and noble pursuit of genuine civil liberties to the dangerously permissive atmosphere which allows criminals to beat and rape a helpless woman.” His ultimate point, emphasized in the ad by capitalization, was that “Criminals must be told that their CIVIL LIBERTIES END WHEN AN ATTACK ON OUR SAFETY BEGINS!” Trump urged those in power to empower police forces by “[unshackling] them from the constant chant of ‘police brutality,’” and closed the advertisement by repeating its title: “BRING BACK THE DEATH PENALTY, BRING BACK OUR POLICE!”¹¹⁰ In short, Trump seemed convinced, even before the Central Park Five had their trials, that the men were uniformly guilty, and deserved to die for their alleged crimes.

Trump’s advertisement in its entirety is a shockingly vitriolic attack on bedrock principles of due process and criminal justice. The notion that even the accused and convicted have rights is an idea embedded in the United States Constitution, and for Trump to attack that idea is, in and of itself, problematic. However, the message of the

¹⁰⁹ Schanberg, Sydney. “A Journey Through the Tangled Case of the Central Park Jogger,” November 19, 2002. <https://www.villagevoice.com/2002/11/19/a-journey-through-the-tangled-case-of-the-central-park-jogger/>.

¹¹⁰ Trump, Donald. “BRING BACK THE DEATH PENALTY, BRING BACK OUR POLICE!,” May 1, 1989.

Central Park Five ad cannot be taken out of the context of the defendants themselves. Trump's advertisement also included an admonishment to then New York City Mayor Ed Koch against his belief that "hate and rancor should be removed from our hearts." Trump disagreed vehemently. He stated that "I want to hate these murderers and muggers. They should be forced to suffer, and when they kill, they should be executed for their crimes... Yes, Mayor Koch, I want to hate these murderers and I always will."¹¹¹ On its face, Trump's statement may only indicate anger towards the alleged actions of the Central Park Five. Underlying his call-out to Mayor Koch, however, is the unstated principle that Trump was not supposed to hate "murderers and muggers" for their race, and Trump's counter-assertion that he *did* want to hate them, and always would.

It is vital to view the Trump ad in the context of the racial makeup of the Central Park Five: four African-American, one Hispanic. Donald Trump stated clearly and unequivocally that he wanted to hate the Central Park Five, and all like them. Trump was actively advocating the reinstitution of the death penalty for the Central Park Five, and all like them. Though merely speculation, one must wonder if Trump's remarks would have been as vicious had the accused been white, rather than people of color. The racially-charged connotations of Trump's ad were evident at the time, as may in New York City turned out to protest at Trump Tower following the advertisement's run. In 2002, all five of the Central Park convictions were vacated based on further evidence that vindicated the accused. Nonetheless, in 2014, Trump published an op-ed in the New York Daily News, calling a settlement between the State of New York and the Central Park Five "a

¹¹¹ Trump, Donald. "BRING BACK THE DEATH PENALTY, BRING BACK OUR POLICE!," May 1, 1989.

disgrace,” and labeling the defendant’s exoneration “the heist of the century.”¹¹² Twenty-five years after the initial event, and twelve years after the Central Park Five’s exoneration, Donald Trump maintained that the men were guilty.

The Central Park Five ad is a remarkably clear-cut example of racial “dog whistling,” or non-explicit racial signaling. In *The New Jim Crow*, author Michelle Alexander examines the way in which systems of racial control have become “colorblind” by removing explicit mentions of race or color from legal codes and public rhetoric. Part of the rhetoric of this new racial control is what Alexander calls the “criminalblackman,” an underlying public association of black people with criminality. The War on Drugs has created perceptions of blackness inextricable from criminal activity and of crime inextricable from blackness, perceptions which are nonetheless nominally race-neutral. It is this apparent colorblindness that, according to Alexander, lets “racial bias... operate unconsciously and automatically – even among law enforcement officials genuinely committed to equal treatment under the law,” (Alexander 2010). This unconscious bias is exactly what Donald Trump’s advertisements were meant to leverage, and what his rhetoric surrounding criminal justice is meant to leverage even today. When Trump promotes policies that are tough on crime or derides criminality in the United States, he provides room between the lines where his audience can read-in their own racial biases.

¹¹² Trump, Donald. “Donald Trump: Central Park Five Settlement Is a ‘disgrace’ - New York Daily News,” June 21, 2014. <https://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/nyc-crime/donald-trump-central-park-settlement-disgrace-article-1.1838467>.

Donald Trump's advertisement calling for the death penalty is designed to capitalize on the underlying image of the criminal blackman that Alexander lays out. When Trump calls the Central Park Five murderers, muggers, bullies, or thugs, as he does throughout the course of the ad, he is counting on his audience to fill in the racial blanks. Trump is relying on those reading the ad to see the hypothetical criminal as Black or Hispanic, and thus to let their conscious or unconscious bias take the wheel in deciding what constitutes justice. What makes Trump's attempt at racial signaling even more remarkable is that he did not have to rely wholly on the imagination. Because the Central Park Five were all men of color, it became all the easier for Trump to frame their alleged crimes in a distinctly racial light, while still paying lip service to the rhetoric of colorblind law and order. Donald Trump's remarks regarding the Central Park Five demonstrate that racist rhetoric is not new to the President.

It is possible, however unlikely, that Trump's racial signaling is merely a pragmatic rhetorical strategy, designed either by him or his subordinates to capitalize on racial tensions in the United States. People like Steve Bannon would have been influential in leading Trump to this kind of rhetorical appeal, and would additionally have been aware of the level of resentment that Trump could leverage in running for office. Even following his ouster from the White House, Bannon has remained a prominent advocate of nationalist protectionism. However, as shown above, incidents like the Central Park Five are all too common throughout Donald Trump's public past. It is thus hard to imagine that Trump's ideological leanings have been entirely a product of Bannon's urging. Rather, it seems more likely that Trump chose Bannon as a key figure in his administration because the two were already ideologically aligned.

Trump Today

More recently, Donald Trump gained notoriety as the most prominent public figure in the “Birtherism” movement, a group dedicated to the conspiracy theory that President Barack Obama was not born in the United States, but in Kenya, and thus was not qualified to be President. Even after Obama produced and publicly released a birth certificate in 2011, something that he was by no means required to do as President, Donald Trump maintained the conspiracy. On September 16, 2016, Trump seemed to publicly disavow the birther conspiracy, stating at a public event that “President Barack Obama was born in the United States. Period.”¹¹³ However, as recently as November 28, 2017, several months after Trump took office, the New York Times reported that the President “has used closed-door conversations to question the authenticity of President Barack Obama’s birth certificate.”¹¹⁴ Despite his protestations to the contrary, it would seem Donald Trump is unwilling to let go of a racist conspiracy that he spearheaded for years.

While attacks of this nature are common enough ammunition for Trump’s opponents, recent events have brought forward accusations of racism from previously ardent Trump allies. On February 27 of 2019, Donald Trump’s former personal attorney Michael Cohen testified before the Congressional Oversight Committee, prior to serving a previously appointed prison sentence. The hearing was primarily on matters tangential

¹¹³ Pramuk, Jacob. “Trump: ‘President Barack Obama Was Born in the United States. Period,’” September 16, 2016. <https://www.cnn.com/2016/09/16/trump-president-obama-was-born-in-the-united-states-period.html>.

¹¹⁴ Haberman, Maggie, and Jonathan Martin. “Trump Once Said the ‘Access Hollywood’ Tape Was Real. Now He’s Not Sure. - The New York Times,” November 28, 2017. https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/28/us/politics/trump-access-hollywood-tape.html?_r=1.

to a then-ongoing investigation into potential collusion between the Trump Campaign and Russian state actors to influence the 2016 election. In his opening statement to Congress, Cohen stated that he was ashamed of his “weakness and misplaced loyalty” to President Trump, and regretted the actions he had taken to “protect and promote him.” Cohen further said, “I am ashamed because I know what Mr. Trump is. He is a racist.”¹¹⁵

Cohen went on to outline specific instances in which President Trump exhibited racist behavior, claiming that “He once asked me if I could name a country run by a black person that wasn’t a ‘shithole.’” As Cohen pointed out, this followed Trump’s remarks calling countries such as Haiti “shithole countries,” a remark previously examined in depth in Chapter 2. Cohen also stated that President Trump had commented that “only black people could live that way” when driving through a struggling Chicago neighborhood, and that “black people would never vote for him because they were too stupid.”¹¹⁶ These alleged slurs against the intelligence of African-Americans are shocking enough in their own right, but, as with many of Trump’s racially charged remarks, they do not stand alone.

Over the course of his campaign and his presidency, Donald Trump has fired back at some of his more public critics, in particular black critics, by denigrating their intelligence. Trump lashed out on Twitter against basketball star LeBron James following the former’s appearance with Don Lemon on CNN. Though James was appearing

¹¹⁵ Schaff, Erin. “Full Transcript: Michael Cohen’s Opening Statement to Congress.” *The New York Times*, February 28, 2019, sec. U.S. <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/02/27/us/politics/cohen-documents-testimony.html>.

¹¹⁶ Schaff, Erin. “Full Transcript: Michael Cohen’s Opening Statement to Congress.” *The New York Times*, February 28, 2019, sec. U.S. <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/02/27/us/politics/cohen-documents-testimony.html>.

primarily to talk about philanthropy work in his hometown of Akron, he mentioned his belief that Trump was “using sports to divide the country,” in reference to the President’s repeated attacks against NFL players kneeling during the National Anthem.¹¹⁷ Trump took James’ statements as an affront, and responded by challenging the intelligence of James and Lemon, both of whom are black. On August 3, 2018, Trump tweeted, “LeBron James was just interviewed by the dumbest man on television, Don Lemon. He made LeBron look smart, which isn’t easy to do.”¹¹⁸ The very next day, during a rally in Ohio, Trump suggested that Democratic representative Maxine Waters, a black woman, had a “low IQ.”¹¹⁹

It is worth noting that Michael Cohen has previously lied to Congress under oath, a fact that he acknowledged at the beginning of his testimony. Cohen has, by his own admission and as evidenced by his criminal convictions, built a career on dishonesty and deception. Thus, any statement that Michael Cohen makes, even under oath, must be regarded with suspicion. However, Michael Cohen worked closely with Donald Trump for more than a decade, serving as Trump’s personal attorney from 2006 to 2018. As Trump’s personal attorney and “fixer,” Cohen would have gained intimate knowledge of

¹¹⁷ Caron, Christina. “Trump Mocks LeBron James’s Intelligence and Calls Don Lemon ‘Dumbest Man’ on TV.” *The New York Times*, August 7, 2018, sec. Sports.
<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/08/04/sports/donald-trump-lebron-james-twitter.html>.

¹¹⁸ Trump, Donald J. “Lebron James Was Just Interviewed by the Dumbest Man on Television, Don Lemon. He Made Lebron Look Smart, Which Isn’t Easy to Do. I like Mike!” Tweet.
@realDonaldTrump (blog), August 3, 2018.
https://twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1025586524782559232?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw%7Ctwcamp%5Etweetembed%7Ctwterm%5E1025586524782559232&ref_url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.nytimes.com%2F2018%2F08%2F04%2Fsports%2Fdonald-trump-lebron-james-twitter.html.

¹¹⁹ “Trump on Maxine Waters: ‘Low IQ Person.’” *Washington Post*, August 4, 2018.
http://www.washingtonpost.com/video/politics/trump-on-maxine-waters-low-iq-person/2018/08/04/b7511bb8-9846-11e8-818b-e9b7348cd87d_video.html.

Donald Trump's personal and business life. He would have spent a considerable amount of time in the President's company, and had access to his personal and business materials. If anyone is in a position to speak to Donald Trump's character and beliefs, it is Michael Cohen.

Make no mistake: Michael Cohen's allegations against Donald Trump are unprecedented. No sitting president since Richard Nixon has been accused of criminal misconduct and racism to the degree that Donald Trump has been, both by his opponents and those who were once closest to him. And yet, the mainline Republican response to Cohen's accusations of racism has been, at best, lukewarm. During the course of Cohen's questioning before the House Oversight Committee, Congressman Jim Jordan (R-OH) raised concerns about the motive behind Cohen's testimony. Jordan seemed primarily occupied with the possibility that Cohen was being used as a "patsy" by Democrats in a ploy to "remove the President from office... because Tom Styer told them to."¹²⁰ Jordan went on to link Cohen's testimony before Congress to the ongoing Muller investigation, which President Trump and many Republicans characterized as a "witch hunt," levied by Democrats as revenge for their loss in the 2016 election.

Representative Mark Meadows (R-NC) further rejected Cohen's allegations that Trump is a racist by bringing forward Lynne Patton, a black woman who was appointed by Trump to work in the Department of Housing and Urban Development. Meadows' argument was primarily that "there is no way that [Patton] would work for an individual

¹²⁰ "Watch: Michael Cohen Testifies Before House Oversight Panel | C-SPAN.Org," February 27, 2019. <https://www.c-span.org/video/?458125-1/michael-cohen-president-trump-he-racist-con-man-cheat>.

who was racist.”¹²¹ Meadows’ argument seemed to be that, because Donald Trump has employed and worked closely with black people, it is impossible for him to be a racist. That this argument is flawed hardly bears repeating. Michael Cohen’s allegations, while certainly not from the most reliable source, do not exist in a vacuum. The aim of this thesis has been to demonstrate that, from the announcement of his candidacy in 2015, Donald Trump has consistently used rhetoric that either appeals to or directly invokes historical trends of racism and white nationalism in the United States. No number of African-American employees can alter that fact.

The focus of this thesis has largely been on the connections between Donald Trump’s rhetoric and the language of white supremacy throughout American history. Throughout these two case studies, we have examined how Donald Trump has revived old forms of anti-immigrant and anti-minority rhetoric to capitalize on modern racial tensions in the United States, and how this rhetoric has been picked up on and integrated into the language of his supporters. However, also worth examining is the way in which Trump himself has begun to integrate the language of modern white supremacy into his own rhetoric. 21st Century racism, in particular as manifested by the alt-right, has a distinctly nationalistic flavor and a unique constitutive vocabulary, both of which Trump has increasingly begun to adopt.

¹²¹ “Watch: Michael Cohen Testifies Before House Oversight Panel | C-SPAN.Org,” February 27, 2019. <https://www.c-span.org/video/?458125-1/michael-cohen-president-trump-he-racist-con-man-cheat>.

“Keeping America Great”

On March 17, 2019, Donald Trump posted a series of Tweets in response to Fox News cutting Jeanine Pirro’s show following remarks by Pirro that many considered Islamophobic. Pirro had suggested that Rep. Ilhan Omar’s (D-MN) practice of wearing a hijab was “antithetical to the United States Constitution,” a statement that Fox was quick to denounce. Trump came to Pirro’s defense, demanding that the network reinstate Pirro’s show. He urged Fox to “Stop working soooo [sic] hard on being politically correct... and continue to fight for our Country.” Trump further stated that Fox faced a choice: “Be strong & prosper, be weak & die!”¹²² For her own part, Pirro refused to apologize for her remarks, and returned to her regular time slot after a two-week absence. Both Pirro’s remarks, as well as Trump’s defense following her suspension, demonstrate connections to Islamophobia and white nationalism. Of particular note, however, is the way in which Trump’s tweets mirror the rhetoric of the extreme right-wing.

In *Terror in the Name of God*, author Jessica Stern undertakes to explain the motivations and mindsets of religious terrorists. One subject of this examination is right-wing extremist groups of the kind that constitute the alt-right. Though extreme right-wing groups are not universally motivated by religious concerns, there is an almost inextricable link between Christian extremism, white supremacy, ethnic nationalism, and anti-Semitism. The Ku Klux Klan, perhaps the most famous white supremacist group in the

¹²² Trump, Donald J.“....Must Stay Strong and Fight Back with Vigor. Stop Working Soooo Hard on Being Politically Correct, Which Will Only Bring You down, and Continue to Fight for Our Country. The Losers All Want What You Have, Don’t Give It to Them. Be Strong & Prosper, Be Weak & Die! Stay True....” Tweet. @realDonaldTrump (blog), March 17, 2019. https://twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1107273645196537857?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw%7Ctwcamp%5Etweetembed%7Ctwterm%5E1107273645196537857&ref_url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.thisisinsider.com%2Ftrump-fox-news-jeanine-pirro-show-ilhan-omar-hijab-comments-2019-3.

United States, has long framed itself as a Christian fraternal organization, and many other far-right groups appeal to the perceived need to maintain a kind of Christian purity in the United States. Stern attributes the appeal of such groups, in part, to “an implicit promise to restore [their followers’] wounded masculinity.”¹²³ Right-wing extremist groups gain followers by offering them strength over their supposed enemies. The enemies themselves include Jews, globalists, non-whites, and feminists. Whatever the foe, the broader goal for those joining such groups is a restoration of strength and masculinity.

In Chapter 1, we discussed the ways in which the language of the alt-right has adopted a distinctly anti-feminine bent, and emphasized the importance of so-called “traditional” masculinity. For the alt-right, the world can be divided into “alphas” and “betas,” the strong and the weak. To those who subscribe to the alt-right view of masculinity, “Alpha males are leaders, like Trump; beta males are portrayed as weak and emasculated,” (Roy 2016). This frames President Trump’s entreaty to Fox News to “Be strong & prosper, be weak & die!” in a much different light than it may immediately appear. Trump’s tweet characterizes Fox’s decision to suspend Jeanine Pirro as weakness, and suggests that to reinstate her would demonstrate strength. This itself mirrors the strict alpha/beta dichotomy to which the alt-right adheres, a parallel which becomes particularly salient considering Trump’s allusion to political correctness.

The alt-right is obsessed with political correctness, a trend to which they attribute “most of society’s ills, including feminism, Islamic terrorism, and overly liberal college campuses,” (Roy 2016). Political correctness constitutes “Anything that challenges an alt-

¹²³ Stern, Jessica. *Terror in the Name of God*. New York: HarperCollins, 2003.

right person's right to say whatever they want, whenever they want, in any way they want to say it."¹²⁴ To the alt-right, a particular weakness of "cucks," "snowflakes," and "libtards," all of which are denigrating terms for their political enemies, is an emphasis on political correctness. The alt-right does not fear offending others through their speech; in some cases, they rejoice in doing so. In his tweet defending Pirro, Trump accuses Fox News of "working soooo [sic] hard on being politically correct," framing their decision to suspend Pirro's show as a kind of acquiescence to a culture of political correctness, which he sees as detrimental to the United States. This is far from the only instance in which Trump has railed against political correctness. In 2015, shortly after announcing his presidential candidacy, Trump states that "political correctness is just absolutely killing us as a country... anything you say today, they'll find a reason why it's not good," (Cillizza, 2018). In June of 2017, Trump tweeted, "We must stop being politically correct and get down to the business of security for our people."¹²⁵ In these, as well as in many other cases, Donald Trump has seemingly adopted the language and constitutive ideologies of the alt-right.

On April 5, Trump tweeted that the press are "truly the ENEMY OF THE PEOPLE!" [author's emphasis]¹²⁶ Though Trump had previously characterized news

¹²⁴ Roy, Jessica. "'Cuck,' 'Snowflake,' 'Masculinist': A Guide to the Language of the 'Alt-Right.'" *latimes.com*, November 16, 2016. <https://www.latimes.com/nation/la-na-pol-alt-right-terminology-20161115-story.html>.

¹²⁵ Trump, Donald J. "We Must Stop Being Politically Correct and Get down to the Business of Security for Our People. If We Don't Get Smart It Will Only Get Worse." Tweet. *@realdonaldtrump* (blog), June 4, 2017. <https://twitter.com/realdonaldtrump/status/871325606901895168?lang=en>.

¹²⁶ Trump, Donald J. "The Press Is Doing Everything within Their Power to Fight the Magnificence of the Phrase, MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN! They Can't Stand the Fact That This Administration Has Done More than Virtually Any Other Administration in Its First 2yrs. They Are Truly the ENEMY OF THE PEOPLE!" Tweet. *@realDonaldTrump* (blog), April 5, 2019. <https://twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1114221533461790721>.

outlets critical of his policies in similar terms, the April 5 tweet represented the first instance in which he referred to press broadly as an enemy. Such language evokes the strict dichotomy that the alt-right sees between enemies and allies. Anyone remotely critical of alt-right ideologies, in particular those who accuse the alt-right of racism, is labeled an enemy, and described as a “crybaby” or “whiny.”¹²⁷ As examined in Chapter 2, Trump has openly referred to himself as a “nationalist,” a move seen by many as a signal to white-supremacists and the alt-right.

In a particularly blatant instance, on January 22 of 2016, Trump retweeted a post by a user with the handle “WhiteGenocideTM.”¹²⁸ White genocide is an alt-right and white supremacist conspiracy theory that liberalism and pro-immigrant policies, as well as practically any policy that does not directly benefit white people, are “a risk to whiteness and a step on the road to the eradication of the white race.”¹²⁹ Though Trump himself has never explicitly used the term “white genocide,” he has repeatedly republished tweets by known white supremacists, as well as tweets advancing white supremacist conspiracy theories. In August of 2018, he tweeted that he was directing

¹²⁷ Roy, Jessica. “‘Cuck,’ ‘Snowflake,’ ‘Masculinist’: A Guide to the Language of the ‘Alt-Right.’” *latimes.com*, November 16, 2016. <https://www.latimes.com/nation/la-na-pol-alt-right-terminology-20161115-story.html>.

¹²⁸ Trump, Donald J. “@WhiteGenocideTM: @realDonaldTrump Poor Jeb. I Could’ve Sworn I Saw Him Outside Trump Tower the Other Day! <https://twitter.com/WhiteGenocideTM/status/690560137040400384/photo/1>pic.twitter.com/E5uLRubqla.” Tweet. @realDonaldTrump (blog), January 22, 2016. https://twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/690562515500032000?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw%7Ctwcamp%5Etweetembed%7Ctwterm%5E690562515500032000&ref_url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cnn.com%2F2016%2F01%2F22%2Fpolitics%2Fdonald-trump-retweet-white-genocide%2Findex.html.

¹²⁹ Roy, Jessica. “‘Cuck,’ ‘Snowflake,’ ‘Masculinist’: A Guide to the Language of the ‘Alt-Right.’” *latimes.com*, November 16, 2016. <https://www.latimes.com/nation/la-na-pol-alt-right-terminology-20161115-story.html>.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo to “closely study the South Africa land and farm seizures... and the large scale killing of farmers.”¹³⁰ This was an apparent reference to a racist conspiracy theory that post-apartheid land reform in South Africa is a progenitor of white genocide, a theory advocated by neo-Nazis, white supremacists, and the alt-right (Williams 2018). Additionally, in 2015, mere months after announcing his candidacy, Trump retweeted a factually incorrect graphic suggesting that the majority of white homicides are committed by black people, a favorite talking point of white genocide theorists.¹³¹ Though the graphic itself was later removed, Trump’s tweet remains on his feed. Though he has nominally disavowed their support for his campaign and presidency, Donald Trump has repeatedly been accused of covertly signaling support for such individuals and their ideologies. If anything, the President’s own track record of publicly made statements and tweets shows that his support for such groups is not tacit, but frighteningly brazen.

The aim of this thesis has been to show that, through his rhetoric on the campaign trail as well as during his time in office, President Donald Trump has consistently signaled support for the alt-right, white supremacy, and white nationalism. One method of this signaling has been allusion to historical iterations of racism, as demonstrated by

¹³⁰ Trump, Donald J. “I Have Asked Secretary of State @SecPompeo to Closely Study the South Africa Land and Farm Seizures and Expropriations and the Large Scale Killing of Farmers. ‘South African Government Is Now Seizing Land from White Farmers.’ @TuckerCarlson @FoxNews.” Tweet. @realDonaldTrump (blog), August 22, 2018. https://twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1032454567152246785?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw%7Ctwcamp%5Etweetembed%7Ctwtterm%5E1032454567152246785&ref_url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.vox.com%2Fpolicy-and-politics%2F2018%2F8%2F23%2F17772056%2Fsouth-africa-trump-tweet-afriforum-white-farmers-violence.

¹³¹ Williams, Jennifer. “Trump’s Tweet Echoing White Nationalist Propaganda about South African Farmers, Explained.” Vox, August 23, 2018. <https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2018/8/23/17772056/south-africa-trump-tweet-afriforum-white-farmers-violence>

the two case studies here examine. Our aim has also been to show that such references are well-known enough that it is highly improbable that Trump himself is unaware of these connections. Based on the evidence gathered, it seems clear that Donald Trump is intentionally leveraging racial tensions, and adopting the rhetoric of white supremacy to bolster his base of support. Whether or not Trump is, himself, a racist, he certainly seems to find the rhetoric of racism appealing, or at the very least useful.

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