

The Charlottesville Lie Must Die

How can this happen in the 21st century, right in front of our eyes? How can a lie be manufactured, then mainstreamed, despite explicit video and written evidence to the contrary?

We're not talking about a debate concerning the origins of the universe. (Sorry, but there were no human eyewitnesses, and the event wasn't captured on camera.)

We're not talking about whether a certain king conquered a certain country in 722 or 721 B.C. (Ancient chronologies can be confusing.)

We're talking about something that happened in 2017, live and on camera, followed by a press conference to make things totally clear. How can things get so twisted?

It's called the power of the lie, and this same lie surfaced again in an article written by presidential candidate Joe Biden, denouncing anti-Semitism in response to the Jersey City kosher grocery shootings.

Speaking of the hatred that united the Jersey City shooters and the synagogue shooters in Poway and Pittsburgh, Biden then blamed President Trump for this hateful climate.

He said, "After Charlottesville, instead of condemning a naked display of hatred, Trump assigned a moral equivalence between those streaming through the night with torches, chanting anti-Semitic bile—and the courageous neighbors and activists who stood against them. He gave license and safe harbor to white supremacists, Neo-Nazis and the KKK."

He continued, "As I said after Charlottesville, we are in a battle for the soul of this nation. And, it's why I am running

for president.”

The only problem is that Trump did not say that “those streaming through the night with torches, chanting anti-Semitic bile” were very fine people.

To the contrary, on Aug. 12, 2017, the day of the Charlottesville protests, he said, “I think there is blame on both sides.

“You had some very bad people in that group” (referring to those protesting the removal of a Confederate statue). “But you also had people that were very fine people, on both sides.”

Then, two days later, Trump issued a categorical statement, saying, “Racism is evil, and those who cause violence in its name are criminals and thugs, including the KKK, neo-Nazis, white supremacists and other hate groups.”

How on earth could anyone get this wrong? And how on earth, now more than two years later, could former Vice President Biden claim, “He gave license and safe harbor to white supremacists, Neo-Nazis and the KKK”?

Read Trump’s words again; then read Biden’s words again. This is willful misrepresentation.

Not only so, but the next day, on Aug. 15, at a wide-ranging press conference, Trump said again that “we condemn in the strongest possible terms this egregious display of hatred, bigotry and violence.”

And in answer to another question, he explained exactly what he meant by the “very fine people.” He said, “You had people in that group that were there to protest the taking down of, to them, a very, very important statue and the renaming of a park from Robert E. Lee to another name.”

That’s who he was talking about.

Then, when asked if we should take down statues of Thomas Jefferson, he said, "OK. Good. Are we going to take down the statue? Because he was a major slave owner. Now, are we going to take down his statue? So you know what? It's fine. You're changing history. You're changing culture. And you had people, and I'm not talking about the neo-Nazis and the white nationalists, because they should be condemned totally. But you had many people in that group other than neo-Nazis and white nationalists. OK? And the press has treated them absolutely unfairly. Now, in the other group also, you had some fine people, but you also had troublemakers, and you see them come with the black outfits and with the helmets and with the baseball bats. You've got—you had a lot of bad—you had a lot of bad people in the other group..."

Then, in the very next question, Trump was asked, "You were saying the press has treated white nationalists unfairly?"

He responded, "No, no. There were people in that rally, and I looked the night before. If you look, they were people protesting very quietly the taking down of the statue of Robert E. Lee. I'm sure in that group there were some bad ones. The following day, it looked like they had some rough, bad people—neo-Nazis, white nationalists, whatever you want to call them. . ."

He could not have made himself clearer. And anyone with an open heart and mind—really, anyone who simply wanted to know the truth—would understand exactly what he was saying.

What is so frightening is that people—millions of people—believe the lie. And they believe it to the point that, if you're white and you voted for Trump, then you are, by default, a white nationalist, a racist.

Of course, Trump's cardinal sin was calling out hatred on the left as well as on the right, speaking against both neo-Nazis and Antifa.

And, given his comments in the past about Mexicans and Muslims, which were either exaggerated or taken out of context, it was all too easy to create the Charlottesville lie.

Now, more than two years later, the top Democratic candidate for president, in an article denouncing anti-Semitism, can blame the president for anti-Semitic violence.

Adding to the irony is the fact that the Jersey City shooters were black supremacists, not white supremacists. And Biden's article was posted on Dec. 18, one week after Trump's executive order combating anti-Semitism. Yet Trump is to blame for the shooting of these Jews.

May God help our nation pursue the truth before a web of lies so entangles us that we can no longer find our way out.