

# Trump Spokeswoman Unloads on David Duke ‘Controversy’

With Hillary Clinton’s pneumonia diagnosis keeping her sidelined, CNN decided to take on the role of campaign surrogate this week with an attempted public grilling of Donald Trump’s national spokeswoman, Katrina Pierson.

Appearing on *The Lead*, host Jake Tapper began asking about David Duke, a white supremacist and former KKK member who has declared his support for Trump. Based on the question, it would appear Tapper was attempting to defend Clinton’s use of the word “deplorable” to describe Trump supporters.

“The campaign said they do not want his support or the support of people who think like him. Why not call him deplorable?” Tapper asked. “The critics say that not doing so makes it look as though the Trump campaign is trying to not offend white supremacists and nationalists.”

Pierson immediately pointed out that Trump had denounced Duke on a number of occasions, and that when CNN asked about Duke’s comments several weeks ago, Trump “shut it down immediately.” Then, she dropped a whole bag of dimes on the mainstream media—and, specifically, CNN.

“The only reason David Duke even has a platform is because CNN keeps talking about it,” she said. “Let me agree with something Tim Kaine said in that package there about if you ignore something it grows and gets worse. That’s absolutely right. That’s exactly why we have ISIS today. For Hillary Clinton to call half of the people of this country deplorable, that’s absolutely disqualifying her. It wasn’t half of Trump’s supporters, she actually went after all of Trump’s supporters by saying half are all those terrible names – racist and sexist, homophobic, and the other half were just desperate.

She has essentially called out 100 percent of Trump's supporters. But I will say this is typical of the elite politicians and if you don't agree with them, somehow you're a deplorable person and that's what Hillary Clinton thinks of half of America."

Tapper, now on the defensive, claimed Clinton had "backed off the word 'half.'" He asserted that Trump and GOP vice presidential nominee Indiana Gov. Mike Pence had picked up the support of white supremacists, neo-Nazis, and other racists, naming off David Duke, James Edwards and the website TheDailyStormer that caters to neo-Nazis.

Pierson countered that the Trump campaign can't control what other people do. And said she was more uncomfortable with Seddique Mateen – the father of Orlando nightclub mass murder Omar Mateen – appearing at one of Clinton's campaign events and openly and enthusiastically supporting her campaign.

"[But] people who want to control illegal immigration are labeled racists and bigots. People who want to stop ISIS from coming into their communities are called Islamophobic," she said. "These are hard-working American citizens and I know Hillary Clinton and a lot of her friends don't live in a border state, their children go to private schools and they don't have to live with the impact of illegal immigration like many of us in border states do. But to insult them based on insinuation is absolutely absurd.

"We can turn around and say look at people supporting Hillary Clinton, burning the American flag, defacing public property, violently protesting, calling for cops to be murdered in the streets."

Tapper then turned his attention to Republican criticism of Trump, quoting U.S. Sen. Mike Lee, who said the Trump-Pence campaign "must identify David Duke's racism as deplorable" and should be "explicit in its denunciation of the alt-right

movement.” Pierson pointed out that Lee was also a #NeverTrumper who “has never had anything nice to say about Mr. Trump.”

“Really, this entire interview and all of these interviews based around this one word – deplorable – is simply because the Trump campaign is not going to use Hillary Clinton’s terminology,” she said. “That’s what we’re talking about here. The campaign has disavowed – Mr. Trump as well as Mike Pence said we do not like the support nor want the support of individuals like this. But we can’t control them.”

Tapper “broke out the thesaurus” to find a different terminology, and asked if Trump thought David Duke was “vile.”

“Absolutely, and that’s exactly why the campaign wants nothing to do with him,” she said. “We have said that a number of times on a number of networks. And the only reason why David Duke gets play is because the media keeps him out there, not the Trump campaign.”