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Biden Falsely Insists That Trump Praised White Supremacists at Charlottesville

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On Thursday, when Joel Pollak, the host of *Breitbart News Tonight* on Sirius XM radio, accused former Vice President Joe Biden of misquoting President Donald Trump after the 2017 Charlottesville episode to make it appear Trump had praised white supremacists and neo-Nazis, Biden insisted that Trump did praise those groups who clashed with counter-protesters.

“He did not,” Biden responded, when Pollak asserted that Trump had condemned the neo-Nazis at the protest. “Let’s get this straight. He said there were very fine people in both groups. They were chanting anti-Semitic slogans, carrying flags.”

Trump was quoted at the time, and has been quoted many times since, as saying there were “very fine people on both sides.”

The confrontation between the “two sides” took place during a time when statues of Confederate icons were being taken down across the country. In Charlottesville, Virginia, a statue of Confederate General Robert E. Lee was being targeted for removal, which precipitated a rally for it to remain, organized by a group that had a permit from the city to protest its removal. Others who were in favor of its removal then formed a counter-protest.

It was at this point that two other opposing groups decided to use the occasion for their own goals — one group composed of self-proclaimed white supremacists and neo-Nazis, and another opposing group of radical leftists, including the viciously violent Antifa. Not surprisingly, a violent confrontation ensued, and a female protester was run over by an automobile driven by a self-proclaimed white nationalist.

Anti-Trump leftists and their allies in the mainstream media quickly moved to use the tragic loss of life to attack Trump politically. When some reporters asked Trump about the episode, he tried to differentiate between the peaceful protestors found on both sides, and the violent activists also found on both sides.

“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.”



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Reading that statement, it was very clear that Trump was *not* calling the white supremacists or the neo-Nazis “fine people,” and that only a moron could honestly think that he was. Yet, reporters quickly advanced the story that Trump had called the neo-Nazis and the white supremacists “fine people.” One reporter then shouted, “You were saying the press has treated white nationalists unfairly?”

It is doubtful if that reporter or any of the reporters or politicians who have falsely accused Trump of saying the white nationalists were being treated unfairly by the press are really that dense. It is most likely a case of a deliberate strategy to paint the president as a racist.

Trump responded, “No, no. There were people in that rally, and I looked the night before. If you look, they were people protesting very quietly taking down the statue of Robert E. Lee. I’m sure in that group there were some bad ones.”

Trump continued to explain something that the media should have already known if they were good journalists. “The following day, it looked like they had some rough, bad people — neo-Nazis, white nationalists, whatever you want to call them.” Again, Trump explicitly called the neo-Nazis and white nationalists “rough, bad people.” He did *not* call them “fine” people.

Bravely, Trump tried to defend the peaceful protesters who were there just to defend the Lee statue. “But you had a lot of people in that group that were there to innocently protest and very legally protest, because you know — I don’t know if you know, they had a permit. The other group didn’t have a permit.”

Trump concluded, “So, I only tell you this, there are two sides to a story. I thought what took place was horrible moment for our country, a horrible moment.”

It is so obvious that Trump did *not* praise the neo-Nazis or the white supremacists that one would think that even if some in the media just did a poor job at the time of reporting the facts, they would come back now and correct their prior mistake. But, in the Yahoo News story on Biden’s criticism of Trump in response to the question from the Breitbart reporter, they subtly interjected their anti-Trump bias.

Yahoo termed Trump’s words after the Charlottesville episode his “infamous response.” Instead of actually quoting Trump’s actual words as we have done here, Yahoo dismissed the Breitbart reporter’s question of Biden as part of “an effort among Trump supporters in the right-wing media to claim that the president didn’t actually call neo-Nazis and white nationalists very fine people.”

Biden is a politician, and while his characterization of Trump’s words is still wrong, it should be understood that he is going to cast the words of a political opponent in the worst possible light. The media, on the other hand, including Yahoo News, cannot have even that flimsy excuse. To continue to say that Trump praised the neo-Nazis and white nationalists, despite the facts, is inexcusable. It is not credible that they and other media are just grossly incompetent. It must be something else, which is roundly condemned in the ninth of the Ten Commandments.

Photo: AP Images

Steve Byas is a university history instructor, and the author of History’s Greatest Libels, in which he examines many of the falsehoods told about great historical personalities such as Thomas Jefferson, Joseph McCarthy, and Clarence Thomas. He may be contacted at byassteve@yahoo.com



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