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"Poisoning the blood": Trump's ugliest moments on immigrants

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Time line:

Nov. 10, 2015: Praises the infamous "Operation Wetback"

Nov. 17, 2015: Links immigrants to the Islamic State

Dec. 7, 2015: Proposes a total ban on Muslim immigrants

Dec. 10, 2015: "Muslim problem"

March 2016: "Islam hates us"

June 2, 2016: Judge with Mexican heritage has "absolute conflict"

June 2017: Haitian immigrants "all have AIDS"

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Jan. 11, 2018: "Shithole countries"

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May 8, 2019: Chuckles at supporter who said to "shoot"

undocumented immigrants

July 14, 2019: Tells (nonimmigrant) Democrats to "go back" to their countries

Oct. 7, 2021: Haiti and AIDS, again

September 2023: Begins invoking the "blood of our country"

Oct. 9, 2023: Suggests Hamas is sending terrorists to the United States

Dec. 16, 2023: Doubles down on "poisoning the blood," also tying it to Asia, Africa

When Donald Trump began saying that immigrants poison the blood of our country in September, he could have argued plausibly that he didn't know the construct was one of Adolf Hitler's infamous talking points.

Today, that argument isn't going to fly, thanks to the thorough airing that his use of the phrase received — including here — in a way Trump couldn't have missed. Yet he is saying it again.

Over the weekend, Trump returned to this rhetoric about undocumented immigrants.

"They're poisoning the blood of our country. That's what they've done," he said in New Hampshire. "They poison mental institutions and prisons all over the world. Not just in South America. Not just

the three or four countries that we think about. But all over the world they're coming into our country from Africa, from Asia, all over the world.

Trump's comments are particularly notable in that he explicitly links the poisoning of our blood to predominantly non-White areas of the world. Back in September, Trump linked the term blood-poisoning to how people are coming in with disease.

His new comments are merely the latest in a long compendium of ugly and racist comments about immigrants, Muslims and racial minorities. Here's a timeline:

June 16, 2015: A launch featuring rapists

June 16, 2015: A launch featuring "rapists"

In his 2016 campaign launch, Trump immediately invoked the idea that a substantial number of undocumented immigrants were criminals, drug traffickers and even rapists.

When Mexico sends its people, they're not sending their best, Trump said, adding: 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. And some, I assume, are good people.

(Data have shown the violent crime rate for undocumented immigrants is actually lower than for the population as a whole.)

Nov. 10, 2015: Praises the infamous "Operation Wetback"

At a debate, Trump spoke approvingly of President Dwight D. Eisenhower's effort to deport hundreds of thousands of undocumented immigrants an operation considered infamous for how inhumane it was and how many deaths it caused.

[Eisenhower] moved 1.5 million illegal immigrants out of this country, moved them just beyond the border, Trump said. They came back. Moved them again beyond the border, they came back. Didn't like it. Moved them way south. They never came back. We have no choice.

Nov. 17, 2015: Links immigrants to the Islamic State

Trump often pitched undocumented immigrants as being disproportionately strong young men the implication being that they could prove dangerous. But sometimes he more explicitly linked them to terrorism.

But if they're here, they have to go back, because we cannot take a

chance," Trump said. "You look at the migration, it's young, strong men. We cannot take a chance that the people coming over here are going to be ISIS-affiliated."

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Trump proposed a Muslim immigrant ban in a press release.

"Donald Trump is calling for a total and complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States until our country's representatives can figure out what is going on," the release said.

Dec. 10, 2015: "Muslim problem"

"The United Kingdom is trying hard to disguise their massive Muslim problem," Trump said in a tweet. "Everybody is wise to what is happening, very sad! Be honest."

March 2016: "Islam hates us"

Trump told CNN that "I think Islam hates us," and then doubled down when asked about the comment the next day.

"Last night, you told CNN, quote, 'Islam hates us?'" CNN's Jake Tapper said. "Did you mean all 1.6 billion Muslims?"

Trump responded: "I mean a lot of them. I mean a lot of them. There's something going on that maybe you don't know about, maybe a lot of other people don't know about, but there's tremendous hatred."

June 2, 2016: Judge with Mexican heritage has "absolute conflict"

Trump told the Wall Street Journal that a judge, Gonzalo Curiel, overseeing a case involving him had "an absolute conflict" because he was "of Mexican heritage" and belonged to a Latino lawyers' association. Trump pointed to his plans to build a wall at the southern border.

The judge was born in Indiana to Mexican immigrants. Then-House Speaker Paul D. Ryan (R-Wis.) called the remark "the textbook definition of a racist comment."

June 2017: Haitian immigrants "all have AIDS"

The New York Times reported that Trump had derided immigrants from Haiti by saying they "all have AIDS" and immigrants from Nigeria by saying they come from "huts":

Haiti had sent 15,000 people. They "all have AIDS," he grumbled, according to one person who attended the meeting and another person

who was briefed about it by a different person who was there.

Forty thousand had come from Nigeria, Mr. Trump added. Once they had seen the United States, they would never go back to their huts in Africa, recalled the two officials, who asked for anonymity to discuss a sensitive conversation in the Oval Office.

The White House denied these comments, but years later Trump made a public comment linking Haitian immigrants to AIDS.

Nov. 29, 2017: Promotes fringe anti-Muslim videos

Trump on Twitter promoted unverified videos from a fringe British anti-Muslim group depicting Muslim crime. One of them was titled "Muslim migrant beats up Dutch boy on crutches!"

Jan. 11, 2018: "Shithole countries"

Trump privately bemoaned that so many immigrants were being allowed to come from "shithole countries" like Haiti and asked why more couldn't come from countries like Norway.

"Why are we having all these people from shithole countries come here?" Trump said, adding: "Why do we need more Haitians? Take them out."

May 16, 2018: "Animals"

Trump began likening certain undocumented immigrants to "animals."

He responded to a question about the gang MS-13 by saying, "We have people coming into the country, or trying to come in and we're stopping a lot of them but we're taking people out of the country. You wouldn't believe how bad these people are. These aren't people. These are animals."

June 19, 2018: "Infest"

"Democrats are the problem," Trump tweeted. "They don't care about crime and want illegal immigrants, no matter how bad they may be, to pour into and infest our Country, like MS-13."

Oct. 24, 2018: "Invasion"

Trump began invoking the idea of an "invasion" while talking about MS-13.

"It's like liberating, like a war, like there's a foreign invasion," Trump said. "And they occupy your country. And then you get them out through whatever. And they call it liberation. You liberate it."

Oct. 29, 2018: Expanding use of "invasion"

Trump made clear the supposed "invasion" wasn't just about gang members, linking it more broadly to "caravans" of migrants.

"We're being invaded," Trump said. "When you look at that thousands of people on the bridge, when you looked at that bridge loaded up with people, that's called an invasion of our country."

Nov. 1, 2018: A supposed threat to women

Trump again expanded upon the "invasion" trope, suggesting those arriving from across the border are particularly threatening to women.

"I don't want them in our country. And women don't want them in our country. Women want security," Trump said, adding: "You look at what the women are looking for. They want to have security. They don't want to have these people in our country."

May 8, 2019: Chuckles at supporter who said to "shoot" undocumented immigrants

"How do you stop these people?" Trump asked at a rally in the Florida Panhandle.

"Shoot them!" a supporter responded.

"That's only in the Panhandle you can get away with that statement," Trump said with a smile. "Only in the Panhandle."

July 14, 2019: Tells (nonimmigrant) Democrats to "go back" to their countries

Trump in a series of tweets urged members of "The Squad" to "go back" to their countries.

"Why don't they go back and help fix the totally broken and crime infested places from which they came," Trump said. "Then come back and show us how it is done. These places need your help badly, you can't leave fast enough."

Only one member of "The Squad," a group of four left-wing House members, was actually an immigrant (Rep. Ilhan Omar (D-Minn.)). Of the others at the time, one was Black, one was of Puerto Rican descent and one was Muslim.

Oct. 7, 2021: Haiti and AIDS, again

Despite the Trump White House's previous denial about a previous comment, Trump in a Fox News interview explicitly tied Haitian immigrants to AIDS.

So we have hundreds of thousands of people flowing in from Haiti, Trump said. Haiti has a tremendous AIDS problem. Many of those people will probably have AIDS, and they're coming into our country. It's like a death wish for our country.

September 2023: Begins invoking the "blood of our country"

It's the blood of our country, Trump said Sept. 20. What they're doing is destroying our country.

It's poisoning the blood of our country, he added in an interview Sept. 27. It's so bad, and people are coming in with disease. People are coming in with every possible thing that you could have.

Oct. 9, 2023: Suggests Hamas is sending terrorists to the United States

We have no idea from where they come the same people in many cases, the same people that just attacked Israel, you know that, right? Trump said.

There is no evidence that Hamas terrorists are coming to the United States.

Dec. 16, 2023: Doubles down on "poisoning the blood," also tying it to Asia, Africa

They're poisoning the blood of our country. That's what they've done, Trump said. They poison mental institutions and prisons all over the world. Not just in South America, not just the three or four countries that we think about, but all over the world they're coming into our country, from Africa, from Asia, all over the world.