

SHE VS. HE: The Spread of the Brigitte Macron Conspiracy Theory

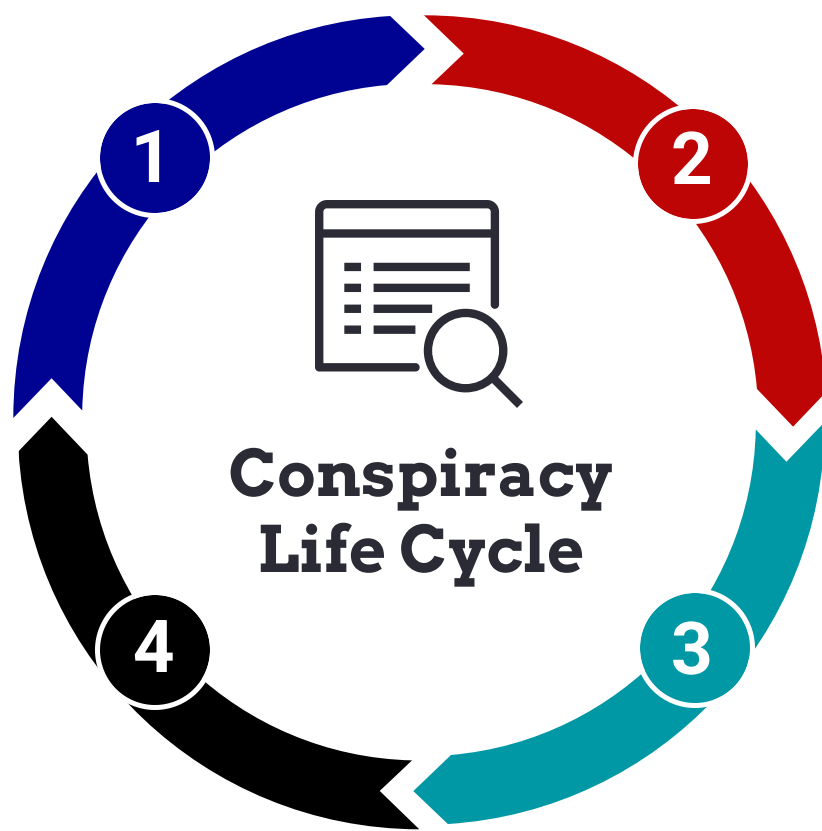
Lisa Thomez
ENG 571
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Origin

The conspiracy theory gains a fringe far-right French audience, situated within popular anti-establishment narrative [1].

Persistence

Videos and images framed as "evidence" supporting the conspiracy theory continue to emerge in online groups, beginning the cycle anew. The discrediting of these claims by mainstream media is seen by believers as proof that the claims are true, as they believe the Macrons and the "establishment" control these media [1,4].

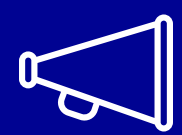


Amplification

YouTube video and podcast series legitimize claims through journalistic production value for conservative audiences in France and U.S. [1].

Response

Defamation lawsuits filed by the Macrons and promises to provide "physical evidence" to disprove claims draw attention and coverage in mainstream media, potentially promoting further spread of the conspiracy theory [1-3, 7].



You Won't Believe Your Eyes!

1. Conspiracy theorists compare current photos of Brigitte Macron to old photos of her brother, Jean-Michel Trogneux, highlighting similarities in facial structure. Some theorize that Brigitte Macron is really Jean-Michel Trogneux and that the "real" Brigitte Macron died decades ago [6-7].
2. Other images that are shared to promote the theory are photoshopped, like this image of a Russian model with the face edited to resemble Macron [8].
3. Key proponents of the theory such as Candace Owens take to social media to double down on their positions [4].



Bigger Picture



The accusations against Brigitte Macron gained traction after being tantalizingly placed within an existing deep-state narrative. The conspiracy added another more sinister layer to the Macrons' already-controversial relationship, which began when 15-year-old Emmanuel was a student of 40-year-old schoolteacher Brigitte [1, 5, 9].

The absurdity of the concept was both headline- and clickbait-worthy, and it lent itself to amplification via the spread of adulterated images of Brigitte Macron.

This conspiracy theory also found a home (and additional legitimacy) within a growing group of "transvestigation" conspiracy theorists [1, 7].

References

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