



Written by [R. Cort Kirkwood](#) on September 9, 2020

Did Atlantic Editor Crib *Godfather 2* for Hit Piece on Trump?

Former and current Trump administration officials adamantly deny the president called the U.S. Marines who died at Belleau Wood during World War I “losers” and “suckers,” as *The Atlantic* claimed in an anonymously sourced hit job.

But if the story is false, the question is this: Where did the magazine’s editor-in-chief, Jeffrey Goldberg, get the idea for his tall tale?



One Twitter user thinks he has the answer: Goldberg’s writings reveal something of an obsession with the *Godfather* films and cribbed a scene from Part 2, in which Sonny Corleone calls the men who enlisted to fight in World War II “saps.”

A deleted scene from Part 1 provides more evidence for the theory.

Goldberg’s Tale

On September 3, [Goldberg offered](#) this account of Trump’s trip to France in 2018, where he was to visit a military cemetery:

When President Donald Trump canceled a visit to the Aisne-Marne American Cemetery near Paris in 2018, he blamed rain for the last-minute decision, saying that “the helicopter couldn’t fly” and that the Secret Service wouldn’t drive him there. Neither claim was true.

Trump rejected the idea of the visit because he feared his hair would become disheveled in the rain, and because he did not believe it important to honor American war dead, according to four people with firsthand knowledge of the discussion that day. In a conversation with senior staff members on the morning of the scheduled visit, Trump said, “Why should I go to that cemetery? It’s filled with losers.” In a separate conversation on the same trip, Trump referred to the more than 1,800 marines who lost their lives at Belleau Wood as “suckers” for getting killed.

Major news organizations quickly — and falsely — claimed, as leftist writer [Glenn Greenwald observed](#), to have “confirmed” the account, which meant they spoke to the same anonymous sources.

But then came what the media call “pushback.”

Former national security advisor and Trump critic John Bolton [told Fox News](#) that Goldberg’s account was “simply false” and that bad weather scratched the trip, as he explained in his White House memoir, *The Room Where It Happened*.

“Marine One’s crew was saying that bad visibility could make it imprudent to chopper to the cemetery,” [Bolton wrote](#). “The ceiling was not too low for Marines to fly in combat, but flying POTUS was obviously something very different.”

Jamie McCourt, the U.S. ambassador to France, and Zach Feuntes, former deputy chief of staff at the White House, also say Goldberg’s anonymously sourced yarn is false.



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“In my presence, POTUS has NEVER denigrated any member of the U.S. military or anyone in service to our country,” [McCourt told](#) Breitbart. “And he certainly did not that day, either. Let me add, he was devastated to not be able to go to the cemetery at Belleau Wood. In fact, the next day, he attended and spoke at the ceremony in Suresnes in the pouring rain.”

[Fuentes told Breitbart](#) the same thing:

You can put me on record denying that I spoke with *The Atlantic*. I don’t know who the sources are. I did not hear POTUS call anyone losers when I told him about the weather. Honestly, do you think General Kelly would have stood by and let ANYONE call fallen Marines losers?

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said likewise.

Worse still, confronted on CNN with Bolton’s account, Goldberg confessed that “all of those things are true.”

If so, then Trump did not cancel the trip because he thought American Marines were “losers” and “suckers.”

Amusingly, Goldberg said his sources demanded anonymity because “they don’t want to be inundated with angry tweets.”

Too Much *Godfather 2*?

If the story is false, the question is where Goldberg got the idea.

A Twitter account titled The Ghost of Daniel Parker speculates that Goldberg pulled the idea from the final scene of *Godfather 2*, a flashback that features the Corleone brothers discussing the bombing of Pearl Harbor and ensuing enlistment of 30,000 men.

“They’re a bunch of saps,” Sonny says. “They risk their lives for strangers.”

??Jeffrey Goldberg’s Atlantic story about Trump’s alleged comments was lifted from the ending of the *Godfather II*. pic.twitter.com/DT4I6kZ6RD

— ghost of daniel parker (@SeekerOTL) [September 7, 2020](#)

That tweet is followed by screen shots of Goldberg’s many references to the films and the Italian mob in his writing:

Don’t believe me? Check out Goldberg’s past writings...he’s obsessed with the mafia and *The Godfather*. <https://t.co/ELK1Odj7c0> pic.twitter.com/5mOimYFzwI

— ghost of daniel parker (@SeekerOTL) [September 7, 2020](#)

Yet that scene isn’t the only place Goldberg would have found inspiration if Ghost of Daniel Parker is correct.

In a deleted scene from the first film, Don Corleone asks Michael about the battle decorations on the uniform.

“What are all these Christmas ribbons for?” the Don asks.

“They’re for bravery,” Michael replies.



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Replies the Don, "What miracles you do for strangers."

A similar line [appears in the novel](#).

Image: [Screenshot of a *Godfather* movie poster on Wikipedia](#)



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