

Recently, a video created by Marie Mott, entitled “The Complicated Relationship between the Black Community and Jews” has resurfaced.

When Marie first shared the video on Facebook, many in the Jewish community were eager to watch it. Many of us had interacted with Marie and marched alongside her. We unequivocally denounced anti-Blackness. Historically both communities have often united to fight hate though, at other times, there have been divisions—both racism and antisemitism. We expected this video to dissect how both communities have promoted hate against the other. We expected the video to discuss how we must come together to heal pain and unite against hate.

Unfortunately, this was not the case. The video did not discuss community relations; rather, it was a distorted view of history used to create a false narrative regarding the Jewish community. Throughout the video, Marie oversimplified history. She exaggerated historical facts, and she presented disinformation about the Civil War and slavery. The truth is that, yes, there were Jewish people who owned slaves and joined the Confederate army. This is a horrific part of our history which we will never deny; however, the number of Jewish slaveholders and Confederate soldiers was drastically lower than what Marie stated. Additionally, the vast majority of American Jews immigrated here in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (post Civil War) as refugees to flee religious persecution.

The video that has resurfaced, specifically the shorter version that has been more widely spread, represents just a portion of Marie’s comments across multiple videos. Additional videos contained offensive comments aimed specifically at Chattanooga’s Jewish community. Regardless of intent, Marie’s statements were divisive and blurred the lines of antisemitism.

To this day, Marie has offered no apologies for her statements. In fact, when the videos first emerged in 2020, members of the Jewish community reached out to Marie to have a conversation. She did not accept. When this video resurfaced, Marie initially doubled down and defended her comments. She has only now agreed to meet with members of the Jewish community, and we look forward to a discussion, which we hope will be fruitful.

As members of Chattanooga’s Jewish community, we strongly condemn Marie’s comments and denounce antisemitism in any form. Hate has been prevalent throughout our history. In the past several years we have seen a resurgence of hate-mongering aimed at all minority communities. We must come together to stand up against hate instead of further dividing our communities.

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| Seth Weitz          | Jill Weitz        | Beth Lowe           | Rob Lowe       |
| Erin Cohen          | Vicki Lewis       | Jennifer Lincove    | Aaron Lincove  |
| Mark Shapiro        | Arona DeSure      | Adam Gerson         | Laura K. Moore |
| Jami Friedrich      | Elizabeth Thomas  | Erica Newman        | Brandon Newman |
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