

The Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool Wasn't Vandalized

By [Mitch Jackson](#), June 21, 2026



FACT CHECK: Trump is claiming the Lincoln Memorial Reflection Pool was vandalized.

I'm calling bullshit.

The pool is full of algae. The blue paint is peeling off the bottom. It looks exactly like what happens when a project is poorly planned, poorly managed, and poorly maintained.

That's not vandalism.

That's an accountability problem.

The Task

Late Saturday evening a member of my Uncensored Objection community reached out to me about President Trump claiming that criminals were behind the green algae mess at the Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool. I decided to have some fun with this convicted felon's latest unsubstantiated assertion and so early Sunday morning, before things get busy with Father's Day, I ran last night's reader question and the related issues through my law firm's artificial intelligence system for analysis. Here is what it gave me. You decide if Trump is telling the truth or if he's full of slimy, green, stinky algae? Let me know in the comments.

First, the background. The Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool turned bright green this month, only days after a more than 14 million dollar renovation was supposed to make it beautiful for America's 250th birthday. The American flag blue paint on the bottom started peeling and floating to the surface. Algae took over the water. Then the story got strange.

Park Police and the National Guard moved in, and a 67 year old three time Olympic athlete ended up in handcuffs for reaching into the water to touch a loose piece of paint.

Trump has an explanation for all of it. He says vandals sabotaged the pool and poured chemicals into the water, crimes he insists deserve years in jail. He says law enforcement is investigating. He has not produced any evidence or video footage showing anyone vandalizing the pool.

What follows is what the AI researched and produced. Read every word, because as usual, the truth is a lot simpler than the story the White House is selling, and it points in a very different direction.

Camera Security

The Reflecting Pool sits inside one of the most heavily watched stretches of ground in the country, and the cameras were already running long before this controversy started. **EarthCam** operates a 24/7, high resolution 5G camera embedded in the pyramidion at the very top of the Washington Monument, and its wide angle view looks west across the National Mall with the Reflecting Pool and the Lincoln Memorial sitting right in frame. That feed is public and archived, with the imagery time stamped, and anyone on the planet can pull it up.

We know the daytime archive does its job, because that same camera captured the “8647” markings in the grass near the World War II Memorial from roughly six in the morning through mid morning, several hours before any visible law enforcement response arrived. On top of that public feed, a 2003 Government Accountability Office report documented that the United States Park Police run a control room closed circuit television network covering the Lincoln Memorial area, a system the report said had operated continuously since March of 2003. Now add the National Guard troops photographed over the past several days standing along the stone edges of the basin and walking the paved paths beside the water. This pool has been watched 24/7 from a livestream overhead and by officers and troops standing right at the waterline.

So look hard at what this administration is asking you to accept. Someone supposedly carried corrosive chemicals onto that guarded lawn, poured them into a monument pool sitting under a public livestream and a federal police camera network, and walked away without a single released frame showing it happen. Trump is also asking you to believe that someone took a knife, jumped into the pool and started slicing the bottom of the 2,028 foot long structure without being caught on camera.

If any of that footage existed, the White House would have posted it within the hour and looped it until the story told itself. The administration has put out exactly one image that the president calls proof of vandalism, and that image shows no one pouring anything and captures no act of sabotage in progress. Releasing nothing more is the tell. The simpler explanation has been sitting in plain sight the entire time.

What Actually Happened

From an engineering standpoint, the green water is predictable. The pool is huge and barely knee deep, holding 6.75 million gallons at just 18 to 30 inches, so sunlight reaches the painted floor across the whole surface and feeds algae directly. The 2012 rebuild understood that danger and added a recirculation and filtration system that draws from the Tidal Basin and treats the water with ozone, built specifically to keep a shallow, sunlit basin from going green. This renovation broke that defense.

The New York Times reported before the water was turned back on, that the pipes connecting the pool to its treatment plant were never repaired, so the system was not running when the basin refilled. The fresh fill then seeded the problem, carrying residual algae out of dormant supply lines into the pool, and the dark American flag blue made it worse by absorbing solar heat and warming water that algae thrive in. None of this is new. Algae has plagued this pool for decades, and weeks after the 2012 reopening the Park Service drained it for about 100,000 dollars for the same reason. The peroxide and ozone nanobubbler crews are using now treat the symptom and leave the broken circulation loop in place, so each cleanup brings another bloom. A shallow, sun baked basin refilled with algae laden water before its treatment system was fixed will turn green on its own. It has done so before.

The Odds

Put real numbers to this and the vandalism theory falls apart. Start with the strongest evidence, the track record. This pool has fought algae since it opened in 1922, and it bloomed green within weeks of its last full renovation in 2012, which forced a 100,000 dollar drain and cleaning. Experts this month called the conditions essentially perfect for algae and the result predictable, so on the documented record a fresh bloom in a shallow, sun baked basin like this one is close to a certainty. The Interior Department traced the current bloom to residual algae in supply lines that sat dormant for eight weeks while the pool was drained and resurfaced, which means the seed was already in the water before anyone could have touched it. Now test the sabotage claim against scale.

The pool holds about 6.75 million gallons, and even at the lower estimate of 6.5 million, a five gallon bucket of anything is roughly one part in 1.3 million of that volume. You cannot realistically turn millions of gallons green with a poured in dose, because an algae bloom grows biologically from existing cells and nutrients over days, and this basin handed it every condition it needed. The human odds are just as lopsided. The Lincoln Memorial drew about 8.5 million visitors in 2024, which averages to more than 23,000 people a day passing the pool. Even using estimates deliberately generous to the sabotage theory, say one in a thousand of those visitors would want to harm a national monument and one in a thousand of them would also know the exact chemistry needed to bloom millions of gallons, the model still falls to roughly one capable person every six weeks, before we account for the guarded, camera covered site and the complete absence of any released footage.

In 2001 he pleaded guilty to conspiracy to bribe a sitting member of Congress, and in 2010 he pleaded guilty again to a false statement about a campaign contribution tied to his own daughter's congressional run.

In any case, this guy's crew, and others, ran a rushed, no-bid project centered on a blue waterproof coating, and that waterproofing failed in trials, producing bubbles and holes at the slab joints where the pool chronically leaks, the same coating now peeling into the water. They replaced the filtration system, but they stopped short of overhauling the buried pipes and full treatment plant that specialists say durable algae control requires. They then refilled the basin through supply lines that had sat dormant for eight weeks, carrying residual algae that seeded the bloom, and they finished it in a dark blue coating that likely warmed a shallow, sun exposed pool into close to ideal conditions for the green water.

A permanent fix starts with the part this renovation skipped. Crews need to repair the pipes linking the pool to its treatment plant and actually run the recirculation and filtration loop the way the 2012 design intended, so the system keeps pace with the algae load. Killing algae is the easy part. The filtration has to pull the dead biomass out, because if it rots in place the nutrients release back into the water and the bloom restarts.

The biggest nutrient source is the fill water itself, since the Tidal Basin supply carries the nitrogen and phosphorus that feed growth, so treating that incoming water matters as much as skimming the surface. The dark American flag blue deserves a second look, because it absorbs more heat than the neutral grey surface it replaced and warmer water blooms faster. Beyond the hardware, the Park Service needs steady weekly monitoring and control of nutrient inputs like runoff and bird waste. The honest answer is that a shallow basin this size in full sun will always lean toward algae, so permanent means a treatment system that runs and gets maintained year round.

Conclusion

And here is the bottom line the AI handed back to me. Trump is doing what he always does. He is dodging the blame and pointing at invisible criminals. The truth is simpler and a lot less flattering.

Nobody sabotaged that pool. The green water came from a rushed, incomplete renovation that ignored the experts and skipped the one repair that actually mattered. That is not vandalism. That is negligence wearing a fresh coat of blue paint.

One more thing, RELEASE THE EPSTEIN FILES.

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