

<b>Institution:</b> University of Central Lancashire		
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> UoA 33 - Music, Drama, Dance, Performing Arts, Film and Screen Studies		
<b>Title of case study:</b> Woody Guthrie and 'Old Man Trump'		
<b>Period when the underpinning research was undertaken:</b> July 2008-August 2019		
<b>Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:</b>		
<b>Name(s):</b> Will Kaufman	<b>Role(s) (e.g. job title):</b> Professor of American Literature and Culture	<b>Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:</b> January 1991-present
<b>Period when the claimed impact occurred:</b> January 2016-present		
<b>Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N</b>		
<b>1. Summary of the impact</b> (indicative maximum 100 words)		
<p><b>'The literary scholar Will Kaufman has made a remarkable discovery.'</b> — Jeet Heer, <i>The New Republic</i>, 21 January 2016</p>		
<p>Kaufman began researching the US balladeer Woody Guthrie in 2008, when he won the first of his two BMI-Woody Guthrie Fellowships to conduct research into Guthrie's unpublished writings—notebooks, letters, song lyrics, prose manuscripts—housed in the Woody Guthrie Archives in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Three books have emerged from this research: <i>Woody Guthrie, American Radical</i> (Illinois UP, 2011), <i>Woody Guthrie's Modern World Blues</i> (Oklahoma UP, 2017) and <i>Mapping Woody Guthrie</i> (Oklahoma UP, 2019). In 2014, while on his second trip to the archives, Kaufman discovered a tranche of writings, letters and song lyrics by Guthrie excoriating the racist housing policies of his Brooklyn landlord, Fred C. Trump in the 1950s. At the time, it appeared to Kaufman as nothing more than an historical curiosity; but in 2015, when Trump's son Donald announced his candidacy for the US presidency, Kaufman realised that, from beyond the grave, Woody Guthrie had something to say about the racist legacy of the Trump empire. After Kaufman published his findings in January 2016, they were frequently referenced in public commentaries during the US presidential election cycles of 2016 and 2020, as well as the mid-term elections of 2018. High-profile musicians put the unearthed lyrics to music in recording and performance [C], and the material informed television documentaries [D] and biographies [G] of both Guthrie and the Trump family, as well as Kaufman's own TEDx presentation (18.8k views on YouTube as of 8/1/21) and his song-and-spoken-word 'live documentary', <i>Woody Guthrie and 'Old Man Trump'</i> [D].</p>		
<b>Underpinning research:</b> (indicative maximum 500 words)		
<p>Kaufman has always focused on the political and social dimensions of Guthrie's writing. His research process has involved poring over the archival materials, extracting relevant evidence and drawing verifiable conclusions—about (for instance) Guthrie's activism [1] (<i>Woody Guthrie, American Radical</i>), his relation to modernity [2] (<i>Woody Guthrie's Modern World Blues</i>) or the impact of time and space on his consciousness [3] (<i>Mapping Woody Guthrie</i>). The primary sources uncovered in Tulsa in 2014 indicated to Kaufman that, in Guthrie's estimation, the Trump legacy was one of corruption and race-hatred. As he wrote in one of the discovered notebook entries concerning his landlord: <b>"I suppose Old Man Trump knows / Just how much / Racial Hate / he stirred up / in the bloodpot of human hearts / When he drew that color line..."</b> Kaufman unearthed two unpublished prose-poem essays ('Beach Haven Race Hate' and 'Racial Hate at Beach Haven'), two song manuscripts ('Beach Haven Ain't My Home' and 'Trump Made a Tramp Out of Me'), and letters in which Guthrie discussed Fred Trump's racist policies. Kaufman examined these discoveries in the contexts of the balladeer's voluminous writings on fascism and Jim Crow racism in the 1950s, his travels and performances, his biography, friendships and political agitation. In addition to Kaufman's two articles in <i>The Conversation</i> [K], a TEDx presentation and his 'live documentary' performances [G], his underpinning research fed into chapters in his two most recent monographs, <i>Woody Guthrie's Modern World Blues</i> and <i>Mapping Woody Guthrie</i> [2,3].</p>		
<b>3. References to the research</b> (indicative maximum of six references)		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Woody Guthrie, American Radical</i>. Illinois UP, 2011.</li> <li>2. Will Kaufman, <i>Woody Guthrie's Modern World Blues</i>. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2017.</li> </ol>		

3. Will Kaufman, *Mapping Woody Guthrie*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2019.

**4. Details of the impact:** (indicative maximum 750 words)

Kaufman's archival discovery of the previously unseen Woody Guthrie lyrics led to two major *Conversation* pieces: in January 2016, 'Woody Guthrie, "Old Man Trump", and a Real Estate Empire's Racist Foundations' [B] (923,943 views) and in September 2016, 'In Another Newly Discovered Song, Woody Guthrie Continues His Assault on "Old Man Trump"' [B] (61,597 views). These pieces highlighted Guthrie's experiences of a racially segregated Beach Haven community in New York and the opinions of his landlord Fred Trump. The unearthed lyrics left **"no doubt over Trump's personal culpability in perpetuating black Americans' status as internal refugees – strangers in their own strange land."** [B] The publication of these pieces coincided with the 2016 presidential election and contributed to the creation of new cultural artefacts linking Donald Trump to the racist policies of the Trump real estate empire. In turn this shaped and informed public and political debates during the 2016 and 2020 presidential campaigns.

**The co-production of new cultural artefacts**

The song popularly known as 'Old Man Trump' [C] was crafted by Ryan Harvey out of quoted extracts from Kaufman's first *Conversation* article [B]. A fellowship of high-profile American musicians subsequently performed and/or recorded these lyrics. First, Harvey, Tom Morello (of Rage Against the Machine and Prophets of Rage) and Ani DiFranco released their collaborative version of 'Old Man Trump' just in advance of the 2016 election. Johnny Irion and US Elevator contributed a separate version of 'Old Man Trump' [C] to the online resistance project, *30 Days, 30 Songs* (latterly retitled *1000 Days, 1000 Songs*), **"written and recorded by musicians for a Trump-free America"** and described by the *Washington Post* as **"a playlist of songs that Donald Trump will hate."** [F] Other noted singers who have performed live and recorded versions of the lyrics include Lucinda Williams, Glen Hansard, Jared Tyler, The Prophets of Rage (with Chuck D and Tom Morello), Tim Grimm, the Last Internationale and Wilco's Jeff Tweedy [C].

The versions by Ryan Harvey and Tom Morello, Johnny Irion, Tim Grimm and The Last Internationale [C] show a combined 152,656 YouTube views (as of 6/1/21) [C]. YouTube indicates that a number of these pioneering versions have inspired subsequent versions—covers of covers—by lesser known musicians and singers who have posted their performances, such as Middle Class Joe, Pete Sinjin, the Missin' Cousins, 101, and the New Ashgrove Players, whose combined YouTube viewing numbers are 440,500 [C]. In April 2020, during the run-up to Trump's re-election campaign, two-time Grammy-nominated singer-songwriter Eliza Gilkyson released her album *2020*, which includes her song, 'Beach Haven' (2,040 views on YouTube as of 6/1/21), **"based on a letter in the Woody Guthrie archives that Woody had sent to Fred Trump about his segregated apartments."** [C] As she explained on her website, **"This record was born out of a visceral desire to promote unity, commitment and action during this epic showdown of people versus power and truth versus lies."** [D]

Beyond strictly musical performance, the popular *Daily Dollop* podcast by US comedians Dave Anthony and Gareth Reynolds broadcast an episode (300A) on Donald Trump [D], including a discussion of Kaufman's Guthrie findings, which earned 20,049 views on YouTube and 24,741 listening's on Soundcloud (as of 6/1/21) [D].

Kaufman's archival research fed into his song-and-spoken-word TEDx presentation, *Woody Guthrie and the Art of Making Good* [D], presented in Tulsa, Oklahoma, in April 2017, with a live audience of over 200 (including Guthrie's daughter Nora and the eminent US composer David Amram). YouTube viewings of this presentation have numbered 18,823 (as of 6/1/21) since its posting on 19 May 2017. Finally, there is Kaufman's own public performance, a 'live documentary', *Woody Guthrie and 'Old Man Trump'* [D], presented at over 35 public venues in the US, UK, and the European continent between April 2018 and March 2020 (when COVID curtailed further performances)—at arts festivals, civic theatres, music clubs, bookshops and art galleries—with average audience numbers ranging between 10 and 100 per performance.

**Shaping and informing public and political debate**

Kaufman's first *Conversation* article on Guthrie/Trump [B] has to date earned 922,393 readings, with full reprintings in *Gawker* (367,999 hits), *The Raw Story* (174,663), *Quartz* (74,623), *The Guardian* (38,193), *New Statesman* (17,221), *Scroll.in* (15,547), *History Buff* (5,472), *Sun Times National* (4,066) and *Newsweek* (1,792) [E]. It garnered 69,602 Facebook shares and 3578 Tweets. Kaufman's second *Conversation* article on Guthrie/Trump [B] has earned 60,978 readers and reprintings in *The Raw Story* (21,593), *Scroll.in* (18,634) [E], and other combined sources totalling 20,746. It had 1,655 Facebook shares and 230 Tweets.

Kaufman's findings went global and helped to shape political discourse that was critical of Trump during the time of his presidential campaigns in 2016 and 2020. Using Woody Guthrie's lyrics, uncovered by Kaufman, popular news pieces were assimilating Donald Trump with his father Fred, thereby informing public debate during the periods of increased political mobilisation: *The New York Times*, 'Woody Guthrie Wrote of His Contempt for His Landlord, Donald Trump's Father' (25 January 2016); *Time*, 'Woody Guthrie Wrote Songs About Donald Trump's Dad' (21 January 2016); *Washington Post*, 'The Unbelievable Story of Why Woody Guthrie Hated Donald Trump's Racist Dad' (20 June 2020) and *The New Republic*, 'Woody Guthrie Wrote Some Moving Lyrics about Donald Trump's Racist Dad' (21 January 2016) [F]. The uncovered lyrics were also helping to shape and inform international discussions on the presidential campaign and included *The Australian*: 'Trump's Father Discriminated Against Blacks, Woody Guthrie Lyrics Claim'; *Toronto Star*: 'Song Lyrics Reveal Why Woody Guthrie Hated Donald Trump's Dad'; *Journal de Montreal*: 'Woody Guthrie avait denonce le racisme du pere de Trump'; *Rolling Stone* (German edition): 'Woody Guthrie nannte Trump schon vor 65 jahren einen rassisten'; *Monitor* (Hungary): 'Folk pjevac Woody Guthrie prezirao je svog stanodavca Trump'; *Deccan Chronicle* and *Asian Age* (India): 'The Making of a Radical in America'; *Blitz* (Portugal): 'A estranha ligacao entre Woody Guthrie e Donald Trump'; *Quotidiano* (Italy): 'Woody Guthrie cantava contro Trump fomenta lodio razziale ma era il padre'; *La Vanguardia* (Spain): 'Apartamentos racistas de los Trump – Woody Guthrie' [F]. Such pieces certainly fed into the broader international discussion of Donald Trump's positions on race during the presidential campaign of 2016. A strong indication of the material's potency returned in June 2020 with a *Washington Post* article "'Racial Hate': A Famed Folk Singer, Trump's Dad and Angry Lyrics at a Tulsa Landmark" [F] in advance of Trump's Tulsa rally. The rally was considered controversial and insensitive due to its location at the site of a race massacre in 1921 and was hosted on the 19<sup>th</sup> June, a date of celebration honouring the emancipation of African Americans. Posted comments on the article include: **"As the show tune from South Pacific says, 'You've Got to Be Carefully Taught.' And Donald Trump was"** and **"Astounding! THE folk hero of America knew the truth in 1950!"** and **"Bruuuuuuuuce! (Springsteen). My brother American, we need you to record this song!"**

Kaufman's research had an impact beyond the presidential election cycles of 2016 and 2020. During the US midterm elections of 2018, two high-profile articles appeared in the US press. October 2018 saw John Whitlow's 'Trump Is Just Another Crooked New York City Landlord' open in the *New York Times* [F] with Guthrie's Beach Haven writings. The following month, Amanda Petrusich published 'A Story about Fred Trump and Woody Guthrie for the Midterm Elections' in *The New Yorker* [F], writing: **"Will Kaufman, a Professor of American literature and culture at the University of Central Lancashire, in Britain, was the first researcher to discover the lyrics in Guthrie's considerable archive. Earlier this week, I went to see them in person."** Petrusich's conclusion may be taken as a strong and telling impact indicator: **"Gazing at his lyrics, in Tulsa, the morning before Election Day, I felt a brief and welcome punch of faith."** [F]

**Enhanced cultural understanding of issues and phenomena:**

Kaufman's work resulted in enhanced cultural understanding on both highly personal and public levels. Woody Guthrie's daughter, Nora Guthrie, indicates in the online documentary *Even if Your Voice Shakes* (2019) [D], produced by Ryan Harvey, that Kaufman not only helped to rewrite the history books on Guthrie, but he also helped the Guthrie family



themselves understand their own history: **“We were able to move out of our little apartment in Coney Island to this bigger apartment in Beach Haven. Of course, as a little child I didn’t think anything was wrong, and it wasn’t until many years later, when Will Kaufman did the research, that I realised that it was a segregated community.”** [D]

On the more public level, in 2018, Bohemia Films commissioned Kaufman as chief consultant and contributor to the BBC-TV 4 documentary, *Woody Guthrie: Three Chords and the Truth* [D], first broadcast in March 2019 and subject to a public screening and talkback at the sixth anniversary celebrations of the Woody Guthrie Center in Tulsa, in April 2019. The documentary includes a substantial section on the Guthrie-Trump connection, with Nora Guthrie declaring forcefully to the camera: **“Woody’s a fighter, and there’s a time to fight. And I don’t want any misunderstandings about what this is about: this is about the Trump family and their racist history.”** A host of reviews reflect the impact—*The Financial Times* (5-stars): **“Politics, history and Trumps repeating themselves ... a new BBC documentary charts the life and times of the singer-songwriter, which are perhaps not so different to our own”**; *The Sunday Times* (Critic’s Choice): **“[The film] takes off when it examines specific songs ... and an attack on a racist landlord—Donald Trump’s dad”**; *The Observer* (Pick of the Day): **“Handsomely illustrated with archive footage, this fine programme features contributions and intelligent observations ...”**[F]

### **Shaping and informing public attitudes and values**

In addition to the wealth of news coverage and documentary prompted by Kaufman’s research, a significant body of biographies and studies on both the Trump family and Guthrie have been informed by it. David Cay Johnston’s *The Making of Donald Trump* (2016) [G] and Michael Kranish and Marc Fisher’s *Trump Revealed: The Definitive Biography of the 45<sup>th</sup> President* (2017) [G] situated Guthrie’s writings in the context of the broader history of racial discrimination in the Trump real estate empire. One of the essays in Bandy Lee’s edited collection, *The Dangerous Case of Donald Trump: 37 Psychiatrists and Mental Health Experts Assess a President* (2017; updated 2019) invokes Kaufman’s findings to conclude: **“Unlike Trump, I was fortunate to watch my father come home daily from saving lives as a physician. I can only imagine how ashamed I would have felt if my father had been accused of being racist by anyone, much less a famous composer.”** [G] In similar psychological territory, the publication of Mary Trump’s familial memoir, *Too Much and Never Enough: How My Family Created the World’s Most Dangerous Man* (2020) [G] sparked a review essay in the *New York Review of Books* (24 Sept. 2020) [D] drawing on the Guthrie connection to critique the Trump empire’s history of dishonesty and profiteering as well as racism: **“Woody Guthrie, who lived at Beach Haven in the early 1950s, wrote a song, never recorded, about Old Man Trump’s racist rental practices; the feds later investigated Fred and Donald for racial discrimination.”** [G] Martha Brockenbrough’s *Unpresidented: A Biography of Donald Trump* (2018) uses Guthrie’s phrase, unearthed by Kaufman, to discuss the father’s socially malign influence upon the son: **“The folk singer Woody Guthrie moved into a Trump apartment in December 1950 and came to write an angry song about Trump stirring up hatred ‘in the bloodpot of human hearts’ .... His son Donald, in elementary school when Guthrie wrote his song, would stand accused of racism along with his father.”** [G]

Two recent sociological/societal studies utilize Kaufman’s research on Guthrie to critique more public and less biographically focused issues. Kevin Young’s *Bunk: The Rise of Hoaxes, Humbug, Plagiarists, Phonies, Post-Facts and Fake News* (2017) [G] discusses Guthrie’s anti-Trump writings as implicit interrogations of mendacious real estate euphemisms. Kenneth S. Schmitz’s *Physical Chemistry: Multidisciplinary Applications in Society* (2018) [J] uses Guthrie to discuss the relationship between race and physical structures (buildings) and legal structures (the 1968 Fair Housing Act). Finally, the latest biography of Guthrie, Gustavus Stadler’s *Woody Guthrie: An Intimate Life* (2020) [G] draws on Kaufman’s research to expand upon existing conceptions of Guthrie, inviting America and the world at large to re-vision the iconography of the ‘Dust Bowl Balladeer’ and see him as a social critic ‘attuned to the problem of whiteness’—an analysis never before articulated comprehensively in Guthrie studies.

**Contribution to widening public access to and participation in the political process**

The adoption of Kaufman's findings by amateur and professional musicians in new versions of 'Old Man Trump' and 'Beach Haven Ain't My Home' has transcended beyond merely providing new forms of artistic expression. These publicly available reimagination of Woody Guthrie's lyrics have provided an open forum for members of the public to engage with the political process surrounding the US presidential elections of 2016 and 2020, when Fred Trump's son Donald Trump was running for office. Over 60 years after the lyrics were written by Guthrie, they are continuing to provide new and innovative methods of widening public access to key elements of modern politics. These re-recordings have been successful in engaging with the public on a large scale and providing a platform via video comments for public discussion. These postings have enabled grassroots musicians to engage with wider audiences, musicians who do not already have largescale platforms such as The Missin' Cousins [C] (446K views). Comment from the Missin' Cousins: **"We disabled the comments for this song because this Trump shit is just too depressing"**, which at least suggests that a lively discussion *had* been engendered!); Delila of Last Internationale [C] (11K views); **"Thank you, Delila! I found your video after an insane week of Donald Trump's foolish and hateful ranting, and your clear and quiet and truthful voice was a drink of cool water!"** Comments on the video of the New Ashgrove Players (30.7K) indicated lively and at times heated political debate with comments ranging from [C]; **"Oh, dear God, why didn't we do more to stop this monster?!"** to **This is a fraud. Woody Guthrie did NOT write this song or any song with this title. This was made up by Will Kaufman and maybe [Guthrie biographer] Joe Klein**"; Pete Sinjin [C] (9.8K); **"I freakin love this. This song needs waaay more attention"** and **"I heard several versions of Old Man Trump on Youtube. I like your version the best. Well done!"** Perhaps the best example of this can be seen through the work of high profile musician Tom Morello of Rage Against the Machine, who declares in his YouTube pitch for the Firebrand Records issue of Ryan Harvey's 'Old Man Trump': **"I'm Tom Morello and I'm standing up against Old Man Trump. Because when it comes to race relations, he's like an old school segregationist. When it comes to foreign policy, he's like an old school napalmist. When it comes to women's issues, he's like a frat-house rapist. So let's not elect that guy. And I want YOU to stand up against Old Man Trump, too—not just him, but the history that he represents and the policies that he's put forward. I'm standing up against Old Man Trump"** [C]. This posting garnered 29.2K views on the Firebrand Records YouTube channel, with the notice: **"You can stand up against Old Man Trump too by streaming and/or downloading Ryan Harvey's track "Old Man Trump."** Spotify cites over 54K listens to the Harvey cover as of this writing. Morello's video was picked up, recirculated and amplified in articles in *The Guardian* ('Old Man Trump: Tom Morello Gives New Life to Woody Guthrie's Protest Song'), *New Musical Express* ('Tom Morello Compares Donald Trump to Frat House Rapist') and *Rolling Stone* ('Watch Tom Morello Liken Trump to "Frat House Rapist"') among other sources [F].

The phrase 'Old Man Trump' coined by Woody Guthrie and discovered by Kaufman now brings up 1,150,000,000 results on Google; it has its own substantial Wikipedia entry and the hashtag #OldManTrump on Twitter assimilates Donald and Fred Trump together. Clearly Kaufman's research has enabled Guthrie's lyrics and the Trump empire's history of racism to become part of a language to express political arguments in the age of Trump.

**5. Sources to corroborate the impact** (indicative maximum of 10 references)

- A. Corroborating Contacts
- B. Conversation Articles
- C. Evidence of musicians using lyrics
- D. Media Evidence (Documentaries)
- E. Reprints of Conversation articles
- F. Newspaper Article Evidence
- G. Literary Evidence