

The Bible producers deny its Satan resembles President Obama

by [Caleb K. Bell](#) in the [April 17, 2013](#) issue

The producers of the History Channel's *The Bible* have fended off claims that the actor who plays Satan in the miniseries resembles President Barack Obama.

Executive producers Mark Burnett, who created *Survivor*, and his wife, the actress Roma Downey, described the comparisons as “utter nonsense.”

“Both Mark and I have nothing but respect and love for our president, who is a fellow Christian. False statements such as these are just designed as a foolish distraction to try and discredit the beauty of the story of the Bible,” according to a March 18 statement from Downey, who starred in the television show *Touched by an Angel*.

Mohamen Mehdi Ouazanni, the Moroccan actor who portrays Satan, has played satanic roles prior to his work on *The Bible*, the statement said. The social media sphere blew up March 17 with the comparison, which was touted by conservative commentator Glenn Beck, among others.

“Anyone else think the Devil in *The Bible* Sunday on History Channel looks exactly like That Guy?” Beck tweeted along with a picture of Ouazanni in costume. Beck followed up the next day telling the media to relax. He said the similarity was “funny, nothing more.”

The History Channel also sought to dampen the controversy. “History Channel has the highest respect for President Obama,” the channel said in its statement. “The series was produced with an international and diverse cast of respected actors. It’s unfortunate that anyone made this false connection. History’s *The Bible* is meant to enlighten people on its rich stories and deep history,” it continued.

The five-part miniseries has raked in huge TV ratings since its beginning. According to Nielsen, 10.9 million people tuned in to watch on March 17, making it the most watched show on TV that night. —RNS

This article was edited on April 5, 2013.