

‘Nearly Pulled King Charles Arm Off’: Trump Tries One Last Move on Charles III — The King Shuts It Down Cold as Cameras Catch His Frustratio

By [Yohance Kyles](#) | May 1, 2026

President [Donald Trump](#) has a habit of attempting to assert dominance over other men he finds intimidating. He does this with his backhand compliments, viewed as insults and his signature handshake.

The 79-year-old American politician put his ego-tripping behavior on display with another needless tug-of-war during England’s King Charles III’s exit.

The British monarch and his wife, Queen Camilla, were set to leave the United States following their state visit. Over the last few days, Charles and Trump traded underhanded insults like high school boys as their wives watched.



President Donald Trump pulled out his signature aggressive handshake when meeting King Charles III of England. (Photo credit: White House)

But Trump couldn't let him go home without one last attempt to show he's the older and bigger cousin, literally.

On April 30, cameras caught Trump and first lady Melania Trump bidding farewell to Charles, 77, and Camilla, 78. The pair prepared to travel to Joint Base Andrews in Maryland, concluding their four-day trip.

The Trumps exited the White House on Thursday to greet the royals for a final goodbye. The couple stood on a red carpet set up outside the presidential residence.

After acknowledging the press members waiting outside, the president called Charles the "greatest king."

Moments later, the scene seemed less cordial when Trump pulled off his signature aggressive handshake with Charles. He forcibly pulled the king's hand closer to him.

Charles held his own, however. The son of Elizabeth II and Prince Philip jerked his hand back with a slight smirk on his face. He continued to make light banter, but the tension was obvious.

Melania, 56, then stepped in to embrace Charles as he backed away from Trump. He gave her a hug and a kiss on both cheeks before she hugged Camilla.

Charles kept inching toward the car, waiting like a kid ready to go home, but never fully making it. Both couples spoke for several more seconds until Charles and Camilla entered the car to ride to the airport. Their next destination is Bermuda.

The interaction between Trump and Charles ended on a friendly note. Yet, people on social media were far more interested in the handshake tussle that suggested there was a level of uneasiness between the president and the king.

One Threads users [noticed](#), "He tried it again. And King Charles won it again!" Over on [Facebook](#), one commenter noted, "The tension in the king's arm as he tries to finish that awkward handshake."

Another Facebook comment about Trump's literal squeeze play read, "Nearly pulled King Charles arm off!"

A third joked, "Hope Charles counted his fingers and checked he still had his watch and rings."

“Does Charles get in the car and have his secretary immediately squirt some Purell in his palms?” a Threads user sarcastically wondered.

On Charles and Camilla’s departure, one poster [expressed](#), “They couldn’t get out fast enough. Edging toward the car. Avoiding hugs and dodgy handshakes.”

Charles was likely prepared for Trump to try his patented handshake routine at the end of their Washington stop, because he was subjected to the former reality television show host performing the same forceful pulling motion during their initial meeting on April 27.

Other world leaders have had to deal with Trump’s pull-and-yank handshake throughout his time as president. In 2017, French President Emmanuel Macron was forced to shake the MAGA chief’s hand for nearly 30 seconds at a NATO Summit in Brussels, Belgium.

That same year, then-Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe was stuck in a 19-second handshake with Trump during an Oval Office photo op. Former Prime Minister of Canada Justin Trudeau was actually praised for his strong grip while facing the Trump handshake showdown in 2017.

“It goes down to asserting dominance,” University of Illinois psychology professor Florin Dolcos explained to [HuffPost](#) about Trump’s forceful handshakes. “Why he wants to do that? I don’t know. It looks, to me, like he is trying too hard.... It looks ridiculous.”

Frank Bernieri, an associate psychology professor at Oregon State University, added, “It’s an intimidation tactic. There are self-preservation strategies, and intimidation is one of the main ones.”