

What does it mean to be a “Karen”

It is the eye-rolling retort that Karens everywhere have come to know all too well: "OK, KAREN." "Yes, it is their given name — but on the internet, "Karen" has come to stand for so much more. According to a popular meme, Karen is a middle-aged white woman with an **asymmetrical** bob asking to speak to the manager.

asymmetrical 不对称的

The name was chosen for its association with whiteness. It is that privilege that the meme sets out to skewer.

In 2018, it was among a handful of female names to become attached to a **spate** of viral videos showing white women racially targeting people of colour. The antagonist of one such clip, of a woman calling the police over a group of African American men having a barbecue in a park in Oakland, California, came to be known as BBQ Becky (another name applied to white women online).

spate 一连串（不愉快的事物）

resonance 共鸣；反响

The meme has new **resonance** in the time of coronavirus, increasingly being applied to those who are protesting against social distancing measures or treating the pandemic as permission to unfairly police others.

The male equivalent might be the "Kyle" meme: an angry, aggressive white teenage boy. But "Karen" is far more popular than "Kyle"— and the fact that an older woman's name has been made an internet-wide figure of fun has led to criticisms of the meme as misogynistic.

Karen Sandler, an attorney and software freedom advocate, says at first she was "a little sad" to see her name being applied so negatively — but it has in some ways been a wake-up call.

"It has helped me really appreciate the advantages that I have in life, and **emboldened** me to speak out when I see people being ignored or disadvantaged," says Sandler.

emboldened 有胆量的；勇敢的