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# Months after Harambe's death, he returns in memes

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JOHN SOMMERS II/GETTY IMAGES

**A memorial to Harambe the gorilla outside the Cincinnati Zoo in June.**

**By Matt Rocheleau**

GLOBE STAFF SEPTEMBER 02, 2016

It's been more than three months since the gorilla named Harambe was shot to death after he grabbed and dragged a 3-year-old boy who had climbed into the Cincinnati zoo enclosure where he

lived.

But online interest in the word "Harambe" — measured in Google searches of the word — has risen steadily in the past several weeks and today rivals the short-term spike in popularity he received in the immediate aftermath of his high-profile death.

Interest in Harambe first peaked May 31, three days after his death, Google Trends data shows. Searches of his name dropped off fairly quickly after that as the news cycle transitioned. And for several weeks, hardly anyone searched for his name.

But the tide began to turn in mid-July. Since then, searches of Harambe have been on an upward trend. The following image shows the trend.



### Web interest in Harambe over time

Chart shows search interest, among Google users worldwide, in each term between May 27 and Aug. 31.



SOURCE: Google Trends  
MATT ROCHELEAU / GLOBE STAFF

The reasons behind the Web's increased attention to Harambe range over a wide spectrum. Some people are posting silly, comical memes and attempts at dark or explicit humor. Others are [animal rights activists calling for justice](#) after his death. And some have invoked the gorilla's name and photos of him in [hateful, racist messages](#).

[The New York Times](#) and [others](#) have [explored](#) the “complicated appeal” of Harambe.

Below are some examples of G-rated Harambe memes that were intended to be funny:






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