

## Salt of the Street Judicial Branch

### Court of Opinion

#### **Dissenting Opinion: Lies from on High**

If you remember all the way back to 2016, not that it was an eventful year or anything, it was in November that Time Magazine relayed the Oxford Dictionaries latest “word of the year” landing on the term: Post-Truth. If you break the word down, it’s as simple as it sounds. Whether or not it means anything “real” is another question, but again whether it means anything or not the popularity of the term has exploded since the run up to and during the entire 2016 presidential campaign and still remains popular to this day. Why is that?

Not that this should surprise anyone but our current Commander in Chief, President Trump seems to do a fair bit of lying, truth stretching and the complete misrepresentation of facts, some even going as far to call him our “liar in chief”. Is this a fair labeling? I suppose it depends on whether your looking at his twitter feed or listening to his speeches, preferably ones he doesn’t go off script and sticks to the teleprompter. Regardless of what your stance is towards the current American President, I think it’s safe to say that lying in todays public world, in particular the political world, is at an all-time high.

In a September 2016 article the polling company Rasmussen Reports reported that “A Rasmussen Reports national telephone and online survey finds that just 29% of all

Likely U.S. Voters trust media fact-checking of candidates’ comments. Sixty-two percent (62%) believe instead that news organizations skew the facts to help candidates they support.” These numbers should be shocking, but unfortunately whether it’s just the sheer amount of journalistic bullshit we put up with day to day or simply this so called “age of post-truth” we live in but these numbers didn’t surprise me. Given the fact that the Rasmussen Reports poll was taken almost 2 years ago I don’t hold it as true today, though if you asked me those numbers probably wouldn’t be any better if they weren’t worse.

Let’s put President Trump aside for a moment and focus on the big blue elephant in the room. I’ll give you a hint. The last name starts with a C and ends in ‘inton’ and no were not talking about Mrs. Hillary Clinton, were going to talk about her husband, the former President of the United States, President Bill Clinton. You may remember hearing the line “I did not have sexual relations with that women.” Okay well maybe you don’t remember it being said at the time, since its coming up on 20 years since those words were delivered to the American people but I suppose in a political world like the one we live in here in 2018 a statement like that would probably be the norm.

To avoid an extra lengthy essay I won't even begin to explain all the ins and outs of why President Clinton was being impeached, we'll just say that there was a lot going on. I will just mention the "Whitewater scandal" as the main reason, maybe we'll dive into that another day, but this is how President Clinton found himself testifying in front of a Grand Jury. This is when we got the golden line of "It depends on what the meaning of the word 'is' is," with regard to the truthfulness of his statement that "there is not a sexual relationship, an improper sexual relationship or any other kind of improper relationship." All that is a fancy way of lying. It's omitting the truth by questioning the basis of truth in its entirety. It doesn't make sense in any normal situation and that is 100% by design. In the past and today, mostly during sworn testimony, terms like "I don't recall" or "I'm not sure I remember that" are thrown around in an obvious attempt to escape answering a question truthfully without implicating yourself on perjury charges. Just another form of lying.

When I bring up my absolute disdain for these types of modern political lies I'm almost always met with the same response. "Well Offie, they all lie, they're politicians." I'm sorry but that doesn't work for me. We've become so damned used to being lied to all the time we all just sit back and except it. I refuse to believe that we, the people can't hold our representation accountable, especially when they lie and we catch them. I don't know of a working mechanism within government already that can actually begin to hold people accountable and that fact distresses me. I know we have an impeachment process and perjury laws that

can help keep people honest but, again going back to President Trump, what can we do about his twitter? The biggest take away I want to leave you with here is that lovely term "Fake-News". The President on twitter, and even in off the cuff remarks after speeches, likes to refer to the major media outlets as pushers of so-called fake-news. When we reflect back on things like the Michael Cohen situation that to this minute is continuing to unfold.

Don actually just sent me a Washington Post Article which speaks to the Former Mayor of New York, Rudolph (Rudie) Giuliani, who is a new addition to President Trump's legal team, saying that Trump did indeed repay Michael Cohen through a series of payments after Cohen paid \$130,000 to adult film actress Stormy Daniels. This completely contradicted a statement the President gave to a reporter on Air Force One last month. From the Washington Post, "Did you know about the \$130,000 payment to Stormy Daniels?" and the President followed up with a "No." Now all of this hinges on whether or not we can trust the former Mayor at his word, because we haven't seen evidence yet, but coming from a member of the Trump legal team I'm giving him the benefit of the doubt.

Again, were left with yet another possible lie from a member of our government. The highest office of governance at that. And that's where we're left. Left to wonder what is actually true in this new era of post-truth. I wanted to come to some form of a conclusion by the end of this but I much like the rest of us are simply left with questions. Questions about who and what we can actually trust. My

only suggestion is to simply stay on top of our representation in government. Fact check what you can for yourself and try to reserve harsh judgment before looking into the evidence. Maybe then, one day, we'll have enough social pressure to force our public figures to stay honest. Maybe.

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