

H A R L A N   R I C H A R D S

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Michael Cohen's Credibility

Michael Cohen is singing like a canary and I don't blame him one bit. However, he is being pilloried by Trump defenders and branded as an admitted liar who cannot be relied upon to tell the truth. I saw some of the excerpts from the hearing where Mr. Cohen testified and marveled at how outraged the Republicans were at Mr. Cohen's accusations against Trump.

I guess they are not familiar with how the criminal justice system works. Hundreds of thousands of citizens have been imprisoned in the United States based on testimony by people with less credibility and greater incentive to lie than Mr. Cohen has. It is so commonplace that it is the exception and not the rule when there is a jury trial which does not contain testimony by an unreliable witness. In my personal experience (and with knowledge of other prisoners' cases) prosecutors will use whatever evidence they can get their hands on to gain a conviction.

It doesn't matter what the truth is. As long as the witness is willing to give testimony that will aid in securing a conviction, prosecutors will use it. And most of them have no qualms about coaching a witness to ensure that his or her testimony results in a conviction. It happened to me. When witnesses to the fight gave differing versions of events (one telling the truth and one lying), a "reinactment" was staged so that all the witnesses would tell the same story - the lie about what happened became the testimony of all the witnesses. Because of that, I was sent to prison for life. Had they told the truth, I would have been acquitted.

People who don't like Trump don't care whether Mr. Cohen is telling the truth as long as he implicates Trump in something. People who like Trump don't care either, as long as they can destroy Mr. Cohen's credibility and save Trump.

At the same time Mr. Cohen was testifying, President Trump and Kim Jun Un were meeting. The parents of Otto Warmbier castigated Trump for believing Kim Jun Un when he claimed he knew nothing about Otto's torture which led to his death. Trump has lied or misstated over 8,000 times since becoming president. His view is if a person denies doing it, then he or she didn't do it.

Here are some examples: Trump defended Putin when Putin told Trump he didn't interfere in the 2016 elections. Trump defended the Saudi prince when he claimed not to know about the murder and dismemberment of the Washington Post journalist. Trump endorsed the Republican senate candidate who claimed he didn't have sex with all the teenaged girls who accused him of doing so.

Apparently, if you say you didn't do it, then you didn't. If that was true, then our prisons would be empty. But as we all know, they are full to bursting.

In Trump's America, the truth is irrelevant. It's what your supporters believe that counts. And Trump's supporters believe he is wrongly accused and nobody will ever convince them otherwise.