

POLITICS AS USUAL: The Big Lie

By Alison Collins-Mrakas

I was watching CNN the other day, as per usual, and, when I stopped yelling at the TV (Trump's new talking head Scaramucci was yammering on about his love for the president and I was losing my mind listening to sycophantic nonsense), I was struck by the thought: when did lying become okay?

Not the little fibs that social niceties require. You know, when someone has dyed their hair a colour not found in nature and they ask you if you like it. What can you say but, 'well, it's lovely'?? Their hair is going to be that colour for quite some time, no sense in hurting their feelings about something that can't be changed; so, we lie to avoid the sting of truth.

Well, until their hair grows out. Then you should tell them the truth so they don't die their hair orange again.

I don't mean that kind of lie. I mean the flat-out, bald-faced, chin-jutting out defiant big fat lie? I don't understand how we got here, but we are most definitely here now. We exist in a place where people lie with absolute abandon and feel no compunction to own up to their whoppers even when caught.

And yes, I am sorry, but I have to bring up the large elephant in the room: Trump. Trump epitomizes this new reality. He has done more for normalizing lying than anyone else I can think of. The man simply cannot seem to tell the truth.

Even when presented with video, audio, or what other definitive, objective evidence exists that he has said or done something, he will simply deny the existence of said proof and say whatever he wants to say and that's just the end of it.

His truth is the only truth that matters. Whether it actually is the truth or not, is irrelevant. It's whether his followers believe it is the truth that matters. And they do.

The idea that there are literally millions of people who accept the 'word' of one person over objective evidence to the contrary is both frightening and maddening.

But I am not just talking about Trump, so don't send me flaming emails. He's just the loudest proponent of this type of worldview. Everyone does it.

From the nobody local blogger spewing out absolute tin-foil hat gibberish to world leaders making evidence free policy statements. The truth, reality even, seems decidedly beside the point. Everybody is an expert. And everyone's truth, is the truth.

I have touched on this before in previous columns, this move towards attempts at negating the existence of objective reality. I think it is very dangerous. If folks no longer believe that there is an objective truth, then what do they actually believe in? What can they actually believe in? And worse still, what is the point in believing in anything or anyone, if at the core you don't believe what they are saying is true anyway?

How can we have effective leadership or governance when there is no accepted truth, there are no accepted norms anymore?

Not to be dramatic, but where does that leave us?