

In the Year of the Big Lie, two whoppers take the prize

Michael Costello/Lewiston Tribune

Annually, this corner recognizes the most egregious rhetorical insults against the American people. Often these insults are examples of foolishness or arrogance. But this year stood out for its transgressions against the truth. The year 2014 deserves to go down in history as the Year of the Big Lie. Actually, there were lots of big lies in 2014. Sadly, we have come to expect dishonesty from our politicians. But the year just past stood politicians clinging bitterly to chronic lies.

Barack Obama got the year started when, in an interview with The New Yorker magazine, he dismissed Islamic State terrorists as the JV team. He was adhering to the narrative created by his propagandists that Islamic terrorism was a thing of the past. He had killed Osama bin Laden. He could pacify Muslims with sweet talk.

Now it's possible that this was not strictly a lie. It could have been ignorance. Obama has since confessed to watching ESPN's SportCenter during the time reserved for reading his daily briefings. But what followed was a colossal lie.

After the Islamic State conquered much of Iraq, NBC's Chuck Todd asked Obama, "Was that (the JV comment) bad intelligence or your misjudgment?"

"Keep in mind I wasn't specifically referring to (Islamic State)," Obama replied. "I've said that, regionally, there were a whole series of organizations that were focused primarily locally, weren't focused on homeland, because I think a lot of us, when we think about terrorism, the model is Osama bin Laden and 9/11."

That was a flagrant lie. How did he think that he would get away with it? Has he never heard of Google? Anyone who wished to could read The New Yorker transcript online. And even the most cursory examination of the interview transcripts reveals that Obama was speaking specifically about the Islamic State.

The laziness, dishonesty and arrogance this episode exposed earned Obama the Early Retirement Kozmo. He isn't even trying anymore.

Long ago, British Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli observed that there were three kinds of lies - lies, damned lies and statistics. But Disraeli's statistical lies referred to accurate data that was used dishonestly, such as our unemployment data. And so it's not clear where he would have classified intentionally fabricated data.

Democrats, including the president, have spent much of the last year pushing the narrative that American college campuses are home to a culture of sexual assault. They have cited statistics that claim that between one in five women will suffer a sexual assault before completing a college degree.

Radical feminists have pulled this before and Democrats have fallen for it before. Feminists once claimed that the "rule of thumb" referred to a law that permitted a man to legally beat his wife with a stick, provided the stick was no thicker than his thumb. They also convinced Democrats and the news media that women were more likely to be beaten after the Super Bowl than any other time of the year. Feminists even convinced the networks to run public service announcements asking men not to beat their wives after the game. As it turned out, both stories were lies.

And it has also been revealed that there exists quite a trove of honest data on college sexual assaults and a few reporters strayed from their ideology and committed flagrant acts of journalism. They quickly discovered that this was all nonsense and that the frequency of sexual assault was closer to 0.27 percent. In addition, most of these sexual assaults were committed by a few serial predators, who committed an average of six assaults each.

This means that, far from being the seething cauldron of sexual assault, as Democrats claim, the overwhelming majority of men who compose college communities pose no threat to women. There is no "rape culture."

This caused some illuminating reaction from the left. The two U.S. senators pushing hardest for laws aimed at solving this imaginary crisis are Kristin Gillibrand, D-N.Y., and Claire McCaskill, D-Mo.

Gillibrand quietly removed all references to the one-in-five statistic from her website. McCaskill angrily replied that that truth doesn't matter to her.

"Frankly, it is irritating that anybody would be distracted by which statistics are accurate," McCaskill said.

Accurate data are a distraction? Don't bother McCaskill with facts. She don't need no stinking facts. She has a narrative to push.

And so McCaskill earns the Benjamin Disraeli Memorial All of the Above Lies Kozmo.

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