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The Donald Trump Lies You Forgot

By Ted Rall

June 9, 2017

This week's political coverage — probably next week's too — will likely be dominated by deposed FBI director James Comey's incendiary testimony before the Senate Intelligence Committee. However, Trump's "lies, pure and simple" are limited neither to the president's claim that Comey's FBI was "in disarray, that it was poorly led" nor his litany of falsehoods — most recently, that the mayor of London doesn't care about terrorism and that Trump's First 100 Days were the most productive of any president in history.

Comey's lucid, Hemingway-tight testimony feels like the beginning of the end for this administration. Anything could happen, of course. But it feels overly optimistic to imagine this circus lasting another year.

If and when the obituary for Trump's political career is written, his admirers will record his historic, meteoric rise. Indeed, Donald Trump was the most effective presidential campaigner of my lifetime: repeated what lines worked, ditched the ones that didn't, mastered social media, ignored outdated dogma, tapped into voters' long-ignored resentments, nailed the electoral college map, and did it all for pennies on the Hillary Clinton donor dollar.

True, the brilliant campaigner can't govern. But that's a story for another time.

His critics' postmortems will emphasize that Trump's brightly burning campaign rallies were fueled by lies: Obama was Muslim, Obama wasn't born here, global warming is a Chinese hoax, illegal immigrants are streaming across the border (years ago they were, no longer), police officers are the real victims (as opposed to the numerous black men they shoot).

These lies are scandalous. They ought to be remembered. But we shouldn't let them overshadow Trump's biggest lie of all: that he would be different, outside the ideological box of the two parties.

"Trump meets the textbook definition of an ideological moderate," Doug Ahler and David Broockman wrote in the *Washington Post* last December. "Trump has the exact 'moderate' qualities that many pundits and political reformers yearn for in politicians: Many of Trump's positions spurn party orthodoxy, yet are popular among voters. And like most voters — but unlike most party politicians — his positions don't consistently hew to a familiar left-right philosophy."

Whiff!

Trump promised a hodgepodge ideology, a "pick one from column D, pick one from column R" Chinese menu that appealed to many voters whose own values don't neatly adhere to either major party platform. Who cares about doctrine? Let's do what works.

As president, however, that turned out to be a lie.

Trump has governed to the far right. In fact, on just about every issue you can think of, Donald Trump has governed as the most extreme far-right politician of our lifetimes, and possibly in the history of the Republican Party.

Candidate Trump criticized North Carolina's "bathroom law" and said Caitlyn Jenner could use whichever bathroom she wanted in Trump Tower. President Trump rescinded the right of transgender students to use the school restroom of their choice.

Flip, flop, from somewhat to right-wing conservative, over and over and over again.

Candidate Trump lit up the GOP (and relieved not a few Democrats) by criticizing the stupid Iraq War and promising to put America First. President Trump's cabinet of generals is bombing the crap out of Syria and asking Congress for a 10% increase in Pentagon spending.

Candidate Trump was all over the place on abortion rights. President Trump is trying to defund Planned Parenthood and appointed Supreme Court justice Neil Gorsuch, a right-wing extremist who will likely cast the decisive vote against *Roe v. Wade*.

Candidate Trump promised bigger, better and cheaper healthcare for all Americans. Trumpcare will leave tens of millions of patients with no insurance whatsoever.

He even welched on his most controversial promise: to improve relations with Russia. Within a few months, he allowed that U.S.-Russian relations “may be at an all-time low.”

“Trumpism was never a coherent worldview, much less a moral code that anchors the president,” Graham Vyse wrote in *The New Republic*.

#Wrong!

Trumpism is extremely coherent and consistently Extremist. Donald Trump turns out to be Ronald Reagan times ten, minus charm. Trump turns out to be Ronald Reagan times ten, minus charm.