



## Trump Trolls CNN Over Collapsing Cohen Story

As the narrative to CNN's "bombshell" story of July 26 continues to collapse, President Trump has taken to Twitter to let the embattled news network know just what he thinks of their questionable reporting. The president also had some choice words for reporter Carl Bernstein of Watergate fame.

"CNN is being torn apart from within based on their being caught in a major lie and refusing to admit the mistake," Trump tweeted on Wednesday. "Sloppy @carlberstein, a man who lives in the past and thinks like a degenerate fool, making up story after story, is being laughed at all over the country! Fake News!"



CNN Communications issued a retort, tweeting, "Make no mistake, Mr. President, CNN does not lie. We report the news. And we report when people in power tell lies. CNN stands by our reporting and our reporters. There may be many fools in this story but @carlberstein is not one of them."

Bernstein also replied, tweeting, "I have spent my life as a journalist bringing the truth to light, through administrations of both parties. No taunt will diminish my commitment to that mission, which is the essential role of a free press."

Tough words from Bernstein and CNN, but they ring a little hollow based on how quickly their breathless "bombshell" story of July 26 is unraveling.

The July 26 story, which alleged that former Trump attorney Michael Cohen was willing to testify that the president knew about and approved of the infamous Trump Tower meeting between Donald Trump Jr. and a Russian lawyer, has been collapsing over the past several days as Cohen's lawyer, Clinton operative Lanny Davis, admitted to being one of the original anonymous sources for it. Davis now says that Cohen did not know about the meeting in advance and cannot testify to it if called in the Mueller investigation.

Other media outlets who reported on the story have already issued retractions while CNN continues to stand behind the story. Why? Glenn Greenwald, founder of [the Intercept](#), who broke the story about Davis' about-face, believes that, if CNN issues a retraction, it will be an admission that the network told a bald-faced lie to the American people.

While other media never mentioned the anonymous source's name, CNN specifically said that Davis had refused comment when asked about the story. When they mentioned Davis, they implied that he was not a source for the story. If Davis is one of the anonymous sources CNN used for the story, they lied. Pure and simple.

"They can't retract the story and they can't admit they lied," Greenwald told Fox News' Tucker Carlson on Wednesday. "So, they are continuing to stick to what everybody knows is a lie, but not many people



Written by [James Murphy](#) on August 30, 2018

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care because people think — a lot of people, anyway — that it was done for the right political agenda.”

To put it mildly, this is an awkward situation for CNN. Over the past two years, they have been caught in several gaffes in their reporting about President Trump. In June of last year, three reporters were fired over a false story linking Trump associate Anthony Scaramucci to a Russian investment fund. The story was retracted. In December of last year, the network erroneously reported that the Trump campaign had received access to hacked DNC e-mails 10 days before anyone else saw them — another story that was false. Another correction was issued.

But this time, it’s different. A retraction or correction to this story would mean that CNN willingly and purposely lied to the American public about a key piece of information in the Trump/Russia investigation. A mistake is a mistake, but an outright lie speaks to the network’s credibility — something that should be sacred to a news organization.

Greenwald, for one, believes this incident, “to be ... one of the most humiliating moments and scandalous moments in the entire media behavior of the Trump-Russia saga.”

Still, CNN keeps holding to its story, probably believing that the American public’s short attention span will allow them to ride through this storm unscathed, more or less. Maybe they’re even right on the macro-level. Perhaps, in a week or so, the story of CNN lying to the American people will fade into the subconscious of most people. But people in the know — their peers in the media and the politicians they cover — will remember. And CNN will have lost the one thing that any real news outlet truly needs: integrity.

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