

Our focus is immigration law
 f t in 800.717.8472 goffwilson.com

PASTORIKRANS VISIT pastorikrans.com
 ATTORNEYS AT LAW CALL 603.369.4769
 NEW LOCATION: 82 NORTH MAIN STREET, SUITE B, CONCORD, NH 03301

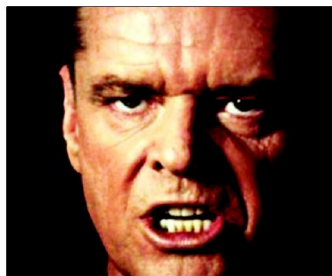
Opinions

You Can't Handle the Truth¹

Without my glasses, it looked like maggots climbing up the walls of my beloved Capitol building while their colleagues killed a cop, as they screamed slogans of hatred, including chants urging the hanging of the vice-president of the United States. I say "my" Capitol building, because as a true believer in participatory democracy, the Capitol of the United States is my church and even in the years I've lived away from Washington, D.C., when I close my eyes and envision the Capitol dome at sunset, tears well in my eyes. Raised in the 50's post World War II patriotism, when each school day began with prayers, the Pledge of Allegiance, the Battle Hymn of the Republic followed by the Marine Corps Hymn, I was raised all red, white and blue. My parents were children of immigrants; my Dad went to college after WWII on the GI bill and my Mom became a registered nurse thanks to the public health service's wartime Cadet Corps Nurse program. America was the land of opportunity. I was in fourth grade when a young, vigorous President Kennedy urged my generation to ask what we could do for our country and we craved to offer our lives to public service. Citizenship was glorious and that little girl growing up in a New England village just knew that by the time she was old, say, 70 years of age in 2021, the United States would have solved poverty, racism and inspired the world with the glories of democracy.

At home, in church and in school, honesty was the holy grail. Do not lie. Do not steal. Do not bear false witness. Do not lie. Do not lie. Tell the truth. Tell the truth. Always tell the truth.

When the country exploded in the wake of my lifetime's first Big Lie, revealed by the Pentagon Papers, that young men, both drafted and enlisted, had been sent to Vietnam to kill, be killed and maimed without honest accountings for why; when the director of the FBI of the United States tossed a briefcase full of incriminating documents into the Potomac River, when I first experienced large Washington, D.C. demonstrations as a student at G.W.U., including one where the Capitol Hill police opened up a wedge in our group to allow some actual Nazis from Virginia to drive their white station wagon into our crowd, where one of the Nazi's beat me with my own "Free Bobby" sign; when I first learned of the House Judiciary Committee and watched each night re-runs of each day's Watergate Hearing on public television (because it was too hot to sleep in my



tiny campus apartment, literally a stone's throw from the White House)... with all that was spinning, I entered law school in a barn up on Mountain Road in Concord, New Hampshire. Why law school? Because I had hope in a system based on truth; it had been lies which caused harm, caused war. The law was all about truth. And back then, truth mattered to both major political parties and both of those parties gravely, seriously and sadly searched for, and found - and believed in the truth, then performed their Constitutional duty, as the courts performed theirs and during that hot summer of 1974, Richard Nixon, president of the United States, because of his epic dishonesty, resigned the presidency apologetic and ashamed.

Truth was paramount in law school. We learned that there were ethics rules and they were sacred. We would not be allowed to sit for the bar exam if there were dishonesty blemishes in our record. We could not engage in moral turpitude. We took it so seriously that one classmate booted his fiance out of their apartment fearful that "living in sin" might mar his bright future. Following graduation, as an applicant for the bar of Virginia, I had to sit for an interview with a member of the bar whose "pass" on my character was a prerequisite for sweating through the bar exam in Richmond so I could argue my first motion in

the United States District Court, District of Columbia.

While I had learned on TV that sneaky lawyers could manipulate witnesses and hide evidence so that the truth was hidden from jurors, I learned from the Rules of Professional Responsibility that one could be disbarred for making a false statement of fact or of law to a tribunal, including by failing to correct an earlier statement; and that lawyers have duties to be fair to opposing counsel and to never engage in conduct intended to disrupt a tribunal. I was taught that arguing a weak point which a judge deemed frivolous could result in sanctions, both financial and professional, and that we were supposed to provide the court not only with our arguments, but also contrary, relevant authority. I was taught that as a representative of the bar, my conduct and statements even outside my office were expected to meet standards of honesty, for what we say, what we do, reflects on the third, and equal, branch of government, the judiciary.

Remember our patriotic fable? Our founding father, George Washington, chopper of the cherry tree, famously proclaimed, "Father, I cannot tell a lie." I suggest that fear of humiliation, fear of a loss of professional standing (even licensure), was cemented for this lawyer atop a lifetime of lessons which raised honesty to the highest platform of morality. Truth meant something. Means something. Something important. Something basic. Something solid. Truth matters.

And so, when members of our New Hampshire Bar proclaim, without evidence to the contrary, that the recently impeached president actually won the presidential election, that there was voting fraud justifying the multiple (frivolous) lawsuits seeking to disenfranchise heavily minority voting populations, thus fomenting hatred and disrespect to our Democracy, I say this: I am enraged and disgusted. I am also ashamed, ashamed that there has been no clear message from official spokespersons from either our courts or bar, that such lies are lies; and such lies have harmed our Democracy. A large percentage of our nation has pivoted away from truth. Lying is celebrated by the past president's supporters because the lies tell a story they prefer. We, members of the bar of New Hampshire, must confront these lies at every opportunity, and since the courts and bar associations can issue statements, it's about time they did. Nicholson's character was wrong. We can always handle the truth.

- 1. Jack Nicholson's most iconic movie snarl

Nancy Richards-Stower, political activist, is an employee rights attorney with an office in Merrimack, New Hampshire.



Opinions in Bar News

Unless otherwise indicated, opinions expressed in letters or commentaries published in *Bar News* are solely those of the authors, and do not necessarily reflect the policies of the New Hampshire Bar Association Board of Governors or the NHBA staff.

Arthur G. Greene
 CONSULTING, LLC
 supporting & advising the legal community

ELDER LAW OPPORTUNITY

Manchester law firm concentrating in elder law, estate and special needs planning, and probate and trust administration, seeks experienced attorney interested in long-term career and an opportunity for partnership. Open to merger with small law firm.

Confidential inquiries to agg@arthurgreene.com