

Showtime in America: Idiots' Delight, A Quasi Review. "It's All A Lie"

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Region: [USA](#)

Theme: [History](#), [Media Disinformation](#)

"The making of a journalist: no ideas and the ability to express them." – Karl Kraus, Half-Truths & One-and-a-Half Truths

"Suppose you were an idiot. And suppose you were a member of Congress. But I repeat myself." – Mark Twain

"All cats die. Socrates is dead. Socrates is a cat." – Eugene Ionesco, Rhinoceros

If believability is your gauge for discerning truth, you are living in a fantasy world. But that is the reality of life in the United States today. This is the land of make-believe in which actors and audiences are engaged in a vast folie à deux full of sound and fury signifying a nothingness that passes for intelligence. Assertions made convincingly enough are the new facts for a population hypnotized by a stage-managed reality show.

The recently closed Kavanaugh/Blasey Ford Show that mercifully had a short run at the National Comedic Congressional Theater is the latest case in point. The believability of the actors was said to be the key issue. In other words, who seemed to be telling the truth. Demeanor was determinative. Facial expressions evidence. The mass media, those paragons of truth-telling, entertained their audiences for a few weeks by marching out their puerile pundits to tell audiences who of the two primary actors was more believable, while the politicians, not willing to allow their media accomplices to outdo them in truthfulness, donned their masks and performed their usual public service of moral outrage and did the same in their unbiased ways.

There was no child to yell and tell the world that all the king's sycophants, like the king, were naked – naked liars whose jobs depended on disinformation and deceptions meant to amuse an entertainment-besotted and bored public hungry for a bit of truth in a society drowning in agitprop and propaganda. A public watching the wrong show.

The words the real Frank Serpico, the honest and brave cop, not the actor, Al Pacino, who played him in the movie *Serpico*, come to my mind. He told me that when he was lying in a pool of his own blood on the night of February 3, 1971, having been shot in the face in a set-up carried out by fellow cops, he heard a voice that said, "It's all a lie."

"It's all a lie."

Those words sum up the spectacle that is American society today. And while lies are nothing new – didn't Aletheia, the Greek goddess of truth, flee into the wilderness just last week and say to a wandering searcher, "Among the people of old, lies were found among only a few, but now they have spread throughout all of human society"? – we are living in a

time of unprecedented technological media mind manipulation difficult to penetrate. Harold Pinter called it “a tapestry of lies” in which facts don’t matter. What happened never happened; what never happened happened. It’s all about believability in the national media’s hypnotic show, whose purpose Russell Baker described 25 years ago as being to “provide a manageably small cast for a national sitcom, or soap opera, or docudrama, making it easy for media people to persuade themselves they are covering the news while mostly just entertaining us.”

I know something about believability. When I was a young teenager I appeared on a famous game show called “To Tell the Truth.” Of course I lied, since lying was the name of the game then, as now. I was not who I said I was. When I walked out in front of millions of television viewers and the celebrities who would question my veracity, I knew (although I was an impostor and not the real Robert McGee – son of a U.S. Senator, by the way) how to put on a face to fool the faces that would scrutinize my smallest expressions for any sign of feigning. Although these celebrities knew the game well, I beat them at the believability game, I am sorry to say. My demeanor or mien (facial expression) was in sync with my words, an ability to act that I didn’t know I had. I was an all-American boy – a student at an elite Jesuit boys’ prep school, the captain of the basketball team, my father (Edward) a lawyer – learning the national pastime of seemingly being “perfectly honest” as I lied. And it worked, and the \$250 that I won – I almost said earned – set me on a path that led to a fork in the road that I took. When I picked this fork up, it hissed and tried to bite me with its poisonous forked tongue. So I quickly threw it down. It was then I realized that my thirty pieces of silver (\$250) were a betrayal that would haunt me forever if I didn’t try to become a genuine actor.

Soon I would come to realize that my Jesuit schooling was preparing me to be “a man for all seasons.” It had nothing to do with beer and girls. It was all about becoming a member of the ruling class. In other words, a man with a forked tongue who could speak out of both sides of his mouth to suit the occasion. Learning this skill would lead me to the social heights where I could smoothly move among Democrats and Republicans, liberals and conservatives, elites and regular people, defense attorneys and prosecutors, actors and audiences, alleged victims and alleged victimizers, etc. Nothing would be foreign to me, except myself, for I could become a perfect hypocrite, a double-man, my own doppelgänger without a shadow.

I could become another judge-penitent like Albert Camus’ Jean-Baptiste Clamence in his novel, *The Fall*, and take up a double profession, become double-faced and rich in the process. Perhaps I could join the CIA and “sincerely” follow its motto:

“And you shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32).

I could become a professor with nothing to profess but my innocence. I could become a psychologist and specialize in lie detector tests. I could learn how to lie while sincerely telling the truth while hooked up to one. I could be confused and act confused and not know the difference

I could denounce torture while justifying it. I could pretend impartiality while being partial. I could claim independence while playing the puppet. I could remember to forget and forget to remember and remember that I forgot the details of what I remembered.

And no matter how I acted or what I did I could always remain a “nice guy.”

I could even say with Clamence that I am 100 % innocent, my case is exceptional, as I played the parts of victim and victimizer; could say:

As I told you, it's a matter of dodging judgment. Since it is hard to dodge it, tricky to get one's nature simultaneously admired and excused, they [we] all strive to be rich. Why? Did you ever ask yourself? For power, of course. But especially because wealth shields from immediate judgment, takes you out of the subway crowd to enclose you in a chromium-platted automobile, isolates you in huge protected lawns, Pullmans, first-class cabins. Wealth, cher ami, is not quite acquittal, but reprieve, and that's always worth taking.

I could become such a celebrated actor that I could make you believe my believability when I put on a tearful face or a devastated face or a confused face or an angry face. I could confess my vulnerability and make you my ally, and I could plead with you in a halting way to sympathize with how I was victimized so long ago or yesterday. But even if you didn't believe me, I could feel justified in knowing that I was playing my part in ShowTime in America, keeping you amused, and doing my part to advance the interests of those who accepted me for the role. And I could always deny that I had been selected, and could always maintain I entered center stage of my own volition because I wished to fulfill my civic duty to see justice done.

But I promise, like Clamence, I would never reveal who stole the painting of “The Just Judges” that I keep hidden in my cupboard. Some things must remain hidden. After all, who wants to know the truth?

But I digress. I'll be quiet, and stop with the what-could-have-beens. The show must go on. We both know that. It is what is. I look forward to reading what will no doubt be a best-selling and most truthful exposé of the Kavanaugh/Blasey Ford Show. I imagine contracts have been signed, and the mini-series shouldn't be far behind.

In the meantime, I would like to leave you laughing with a quote that has been disturbing me since I first read it after writing it:

Until we see through the charade of social life and realize the masked performers are not just the politicians and celebrities, not only the professional actors and the corporate media performers, but us, we won't grasp the problem. Lying is the leading cause of living death in the United States. We live in a society built of lies; lying and dishonesty are the norm. They are built into the fabric of all our institutions, into our psyches. In America, there's no business but show business, and we are sham actors, amusing ourselves to death while we spread death and destruction in our war theaters all around the world. Theaters in which the tragic plays we direct hold no interest for us. We prefer our Idiots' Delight.

“It's All a Lie.” Maybe that should be the title of the next show.

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