

Kevin McCarthy causes a tempest in the New York Times' teapot



by Lev Tsitrin

Can one be blamed for not following a rule that does not exist – because it doesn't make any sense?

Of course not – but the *New York Times* is trying, all the same.

The presumed villain of the story the paper vigorously trumpets in [both its news](#) and its [opinion sections](#) is Kevin McCarthy, the House minority leader. His “sin” that the *New York Times* uncovered, and now tries to push to the public is this – having stated in the close inner circle right after January 6 events that he would tell Trump that he should resign, Kevin McCarthy changed his mind. He likewise restricted himself to fulminations about some members of the Republican caucus in the narrow, leadership circle, but did not go public with his condemnations, his initial, red-hot ire having cooled off in a few days.

In a nutshell, after putting the lines on the drawing board,

and sounding his ideas in front of a few people, Kevin McCarthy decided that his initial ideas weren't that good after all.

Leaving aside the obvious point that politics is a notoriously cynical business (take Obama, who erased his publicly-trumpeted "red line" on Syria's use of chemical weapons, causing power vacuum that invited Iran and Russia to dominate Syria, ultimately resulting, among so many other problems, in the present-day war in Ukraine), what is wrong about the inner-circle debate, and about changing one's mind afterwards?

New York Times' position seems to be that people should never alter their initial views. Needless to say, this simply doesn't make any sense. I very much doubt that every journalist or writer working at the paper is required to publish his or her initial draft of the story, never altering it (if so, the paper would have fired its editors). This doesn't make any sense in art – if Rembrandt's painting does not conform to his initial sketch, does it diminish Rembrandt's genius, rather than merely highlight the nimbleness of his thinking? We know for a fact from surviving impressions that his etchings went through multiple, sometimes drastic alterations as he changed his mind, the earlier states as valuable as the later ones. It doesn't make any sense in science – Einstein's initial, draft computation of the angle of the bending of light he predicted in his general relativity theory was just a half of what he ultimately computed, and published later. Does anyone hold it against Einstein?

So yes, the passage of time makes a difference in perception, and rightly so. Being rigid is a mark of being stupid, not of being principled. Time gives perspective, and people's minds change as that perspective changes. That's a good thing. Even the *New York Times* now agrees that it erred in its (non-)coverage of the mass starvation that accompanied Soviet collectivization in 1930es, and of Holocaust. So if the editorial position of *New York Times* itself can change with

the passage of time, what's the big deal about Kevin McCarthy changing his position the day after the fog of January 6 situation cleared, and it turned out not to be as dire as he initially thought?

Stirring the pot and blowing a molehill into a mountain may seem worthwhile to the *New York Times'* editors at the moment, given the upcoming midterm elections – but in reality it only highlights the pettiness of the *New York Times*. There are more than enough real problems in America which the *New York Times* refuses to cover (judicial fraud is one such). Creating a Kevin McCarthy tempest in a teapot only highlights the basic fact of the paper's journalistic and political hypocrisy.