

Michael Cohen's parting shot: I fear what happens if Trump loses in 2020

Posted by Joan Russow

Wednesday, 27 February 2019 23:57 - Last Updated Saturday, 09 March 2019 19:37

"This behavior denigrates the office of the president, and it's simply un-American."

By Dylan Scott@dylanlscott@dylan.scott@vox.com Feb 27, 2019, 5:35pm EST



Michael Cohen leaves after testifying before the House Oversight and Reform Committee on February 27, 2019. Andrew Caballero-Reynold/AFP/Getty Images

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Michael Cohen closed his remarkable testimony before Congress on Wednesday with an opaque but alarming warning about what could happen if President Donald Trump loses the 2020 election and some words addressed directly to his former boss.

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“My loyalty to Mr. Trump has cost me everything: my family’s happiness, friendships, my law license, my company, my livelihood, my honor, my reputation and, soon, my freedom. And I will not sit back, say nothing, and allow him to do the same to the country,” Cohen said at the hearing’s closing. “Indeed, given my experience working for Mr. Trump, I fear that if he loses the election in 2020 that there will never be a peaceful transition of power, and this is why I agreed to appear before you today.”

He then turned his remarks to Trump himself, running through a long list of actions he has found unacceptable — attacks on law enforcement and the media, family separations at the Mexican border, friendliness with hostile foreign leaders — that Cohen said motivated him to testify.

“This behavior denigrates the office of the president and it’s simply un-American,” he said. “And it’s not you.”

Cohen’s full closing statement is below:

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I have acknowledged I have made my own mistakes and I have owned up to them publicly and under oath. But silence and complicity in the face of the daily destruction of our basic norms and civility to one another will not be one of them.

I did things and I acted improperly, at times at Mr. Trump's behest. I blindly followed his demands. My loyalty to Mr. Trump has cost me everything, my family's happiness, friendships, my law license, my company, my livelihood, my honor, my reputation and soon my freedom.

And I will not sit back, say nothing, and allow him to do the same to the country. Indeed given my experience working for Mr. Trump I fear that if he loses the election in 2020 that there will never be a peaceful transition of power, and this is why I agreed to appear before you today.

In closing, I'd like to say directly to the president: We honor our veterans even in the rain, you tell the truth even when it doesn't aggrandize you, you respect the law and incredible law enforcement agents, you don't villainize them, you don't disparage generals, gold star families, prisoners of war and other heroes who had the courage to fight for this country. You don't attack the media and those who question what you don't like or what you don't want them to say and you take responsibility for your own dirty deeds.

You don't use your power of your bully pulpit to destroy the credibility of those who speak out against you. You don't separate families from one another or demonize those looking to America for a better life. You don't vilify people based on the god they pray to and you don't

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cuddle up to our adversaries at the expense of our allies. Finally, you don't shut down the government before Christmas and New Year's just to simply appease your base.

This behavior denigrates the office of the president, and it's simply un-American. And it's not you.

So to those who support the president and his rhetoric as I once did, I pray the country doesn't make the same mistakes that I have made or pay the heavy price that my family and I are paying, and I thank you very much for this additional time, Mr. Chairman.