

10/12/94

Mr. Mike Powell
Hearst Post
Woodstock, Maryland,
War Hill,

Part of what I mention in the enclosed may amuse you, the Garner part.

I was a Senate editor when he was vice president. His chauffeur I refer to looker. ^{liveried} ~~the~~ ~~car~~ ~~men~~ ~~that~~ ~~from~~ ~~central~~ ~~castings~~ and it was the official car in which he got his bootleg whiskey that Garner kept in the open, in gallon jugs, on a mahogany open bookshelf made for him in the Senate carpenter shop. When I needed space for galley proofs I asked that shop for a set of shelves. I was told I could get one right away if I did not mind the blemish. That is how I learned what those many rings from the whiskey came from. And would be hidden by the galleys anyway. Plus I could get it right away.

I had gotten behind in my work because the Department of Justice had borrowed me from the Senate for its most sensational lawsuit of that era, again "Bloody Harlan" County, Kentucky, coal operators and their deputized gunthugs. When after four months of work with DJ and the FBI down there I needed help I borrowed a proof reader from the Government Printing Office. Jeff Burnett, a good ol' boy from Independence, MO, was loaned to me. Soon he was drunk after very long lunches. He and Garner had struck up a friendship on an elevator, Garner invited him around for some of that good corn whiskey and it became a daily event.

Garner did have open house with his bootleg white lightning. Which was not white, it was clear. I liked it, too. I bought it ~~legally~~ legally. With the most honest labeling I can remember, Singing Sam: "The whiskey in this bottle is warranted not to be more than 90 days old."

My, Mike, if you had seen those bedraggled and hungry veterans walking to Washington from all over the country, being fed when they ate by people who had little and felt for them! They slept where they could, regardless of weather. Bands of them from all over, swelling as they came together. And it was Douglas McArthur who was in charge of the army that actually did shoot them to chase them out of the District.

People bought stock on margin then, very little margin, leading to the reforms that are being wiped out. Hundreds killed themselves, many by jumping out of windows. The most popular song of the day was "Brother, Can You Spare a Dime?"

It was Hoover and the GOP record for the previous decade that elected FDR, not Garner.

It was nothing at all like what H^hachum makes up, the situation in which the GOP killed the recent legislation.

Best,

Hardy

Meachum's Raw "Raw deal"

Hardball

History is never good enough for Roy Meachum so for his own purposes he improves on it, as in his mistitled "Raw Deal" column, the raw deal he invented and attributed to the Democrats at the time of the Great Depression that began in 1929.

Meachum writes his column half of which is on that subject he so little understands without mention of Calvin Coolidge, the President whose policies were the direct cause of the Depression. He also blames it on the innocent people who suffered from it:

"However, in rage at having its self-inflicted balloon burst, the electorate..."

He invents a new Herbert Hoover for his column, too, perhaps because if Hoover ~~had~~ claimed to have been a Quaker he had to be good, and with it invents for Hoover what he did not have and offer, any ^{meaningful} program "to alleviate the national agony."

Unlike Meachum, who admits he was an "infant" then, I was an adult. I know the ^{Meachum blames} Jack Garner slightly when he was vice president. (And his chauffeur he sent in his official car to West Virginia twice a week to bring back the moonshine corn whiskey Garner preferred, two wicker baskets of gallon jugs of it each trip. I worked for the Senate then. I even inherited the Hoover bookshelf when the rings from the jugs got to be unsightly. Garner was a real tough character.)

But FDR did not select Garner as his running mate because he was Speaker of the House. "Real politics is not that simple. FDR picked Garner because as an ~~unit~~ ultra-conservative he could appeal to a part of the electorate that did not go for FDR.

As just about all Presidential candidates do.

Reagan picked Liberal Republican ~~Law~~ Richard Weicker the first time and then the George Bush who had, correctly as it happens, castigated Reagan's economic programs as "Voodoo economics." JFK picked Johnson because he could appeal in the South as JFK did not.

Hoover's record abroad as a ~~humanitarian~~ humanitarian was excellent. I can remember as a school boy that we were taking canned food to school so he could feed "the starving Armenians."

But his domestic policies were the exact opposite.

Witness his calling out the army to attack, shoot^a real bullets, at the veterans of World War I whose families were starving and they held a march on Washington from all over the country to get the bonus they had been promised and Hoover denied them. Yes, he had starving veterans of that war shot ~~on~~ by the army when they were encamped on the Anacostia flats in an effort to pressure the Hoover administration to keep its obligation to give them the ~~bonus~~^{promised} bonus they needed for their kids not to starve.

And rather than "destroying" the non-existing Hoover program to bootstrap the nation, when he had a constructive program the Democrats ⁱⁿ ~~congress~~^{noted for} enacted it. Such as the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, to finance what could not be financed through normal banking channels. Not being an "infant" then I knew its general counsel who laid the foundation for its enormous help when World War II came. And my wife, also not then an infant, worked for it.

The truth is the exact opposite of Heachum's excuse for inventing his "Raw deal":
Herbert
"... the destruction congressional Democrats dealt the country while ruining Hoover's reputation." He had no reputation to ruin when after campaigning saying he would put two chickens in every pot he actually used the Army to shoot starving ~~XXXX~~ American veterans who had ~~found~~^{fought} for their country when they had the temerity to ask what was due them to feed their families, if only temporarily.

Hoover was not ~~known~~^{known} as "the great humanitarian," as Heachum writes. He was in fact known as the "great engineer." But as President he had no engineering at all to overcome what Republican policies had brought about, only hewing that same line. That and the lack of controls on getting rich without the money to back up the stocks bought while the market was climbing is the immediate cause of the Great Depression, Hoover had ~~his~~^{his} share of responsibility for it and he hadn't the slightest idea how to work and lead the country out of it. That is what elected FDR, not any imagined Cactus Jack Gannor leadership in the House.

And leading to that terrible depression, the Republican^s controlled both House of the Congress. They could have passed any legislation they wanted.

The real "Raw deal" is Heachum's in again rewriting our history for his own purposes.

Which not infrequently including ^{de} his telling us how all-knowing he is about just about anything and everything.

In this column he invented his "Raw deal" to appear to be balanced in his criticism of the GOP's blocking of "filibustering" to death last week a proposal to tighten registration and disclosure rules for all lobbyists and ban them from giving free meals and other gifts to congressmen."

In a single paragraph he refers to "the GOP 'nabobs' who did that as "Mr. Garner's spiritual successors" and as "Garner-like in their ambitions."

Or, Meachum justifies what they did to ~~know~~ block the attempt to limit electoral dishonesties ^{by} comparing it with what he invented to attribute to Garner. Read the Democrats.

This is like his blaming the average American for the Great Depression:

"However, in rage at ~~the~~ having the self-imposed inflated balloon burst, the electorate dumped all over the president," Hoover.

Most of the electorate in those days of Meachum's infancy could not afford butter, leave alone stocks and bonds. They bought uncolored margarine, ladled off of blocks, with the coloring supplied separately, for about ten cents a pound. Wages for most people were so low one of FDR's reforms with his National Recovery Administration was to have a minimum wage of \$14 a week. I can recall working Saturdays when I was in high school for \$2.00, from 8 in the morning until 10 at night, brown-bagging for lunch and supper. For the average American, most by very far of Meachum's "electorate," buying stocks was like ^{having} pie in the sky. They did not and they could not.

Meachum says "It may be pointless to speculate the Raw Deal unleashed by (Garner) ... may have destroyed whatever chance the nation had of heading off the gross tragedy" of the Great Depression. "speculate" is hardly the word for it. This and the Democrats "ruining Herbert Hoover's reputation." Both of these and his other pontifications are ridiculous, preposterous.

The true "Raw deal" is that trusting readers who did not live ^{rough} those terrible years are misled and deceived ^{believing} into Meachum's justification of the GOP "nabobs" blocking electoral reform.

Roy Meachum



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10/2/94

Raw deal

Everybody knows about Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal, which arguably facilitated America's survival during the Great Depression.

Very few folks have ever heard of what I now call "the Raw Deal," the destruction congressional Democrats dealt the country while ruining Herbert Hoover's reputation. In my childhood, the former Republican president was the loser butt of countless vicious jokes. After all, popular opinion ran, the noted Quaker "caused" the depression.

In fact, the greed that brought the national catastrophe was endemic and truly bipartisan. The GOP received (and deserved) major share of the blame simply because it was the majority that controlled both Congress and the White House during the 1920s. (Disabled Woodrow Wilson's final term slopped over into the first two years.)

Mr. Hoover took office only some seven months before Wall Street's roof fell in. However, in rage at having its self-inflated balloon burst, the electorate dumped all over the president. In 1931, triumphant Democrats elected U.S. Speaker John "Cactus Jack" Garner, a vengeful and brutally petty Texan.

In retaliation for his party's past failures and with both eyes fixed on the 1932 presidential race, Mr. Garner swung his new power to cripple and crush every attempt by the GOP incumbent to alleviate the national agony.

For two years Mr. Hoover twisted in the wind. The man whose great fame derived from saving many of post-World War I Europe's millions from starvation was reduced to helplessness while his own people headed for the new decade's hopeless unemployment and gut-wrenching hunger.

It may be pointless to speculate the Raw Deal unleashed by the speaker and his minions in both houses may have destroyed whatever chance the nation had of heading off the gross tragedy that followed. But it's safe to say men, women and children suffered needlessly in order to "buy" the Texan his terms as Mr. Roosevelt's running mate.

Interestingly, many who have never heard how Mr. Garner climbed onto the White House back porch know all about the low regard he held for his last high office. The

vice presidency, he reportedly declared, was "not worth a pitcher of warm spit."

As you must surmise, that aphorism captures how I feel about the politician who practiced gridlock with a vengeance while I was an infant. It also expresses exactly how I feel about Mr. Garner's spiritual successors, the GOP nabobs who have held Capitol Hill and the nation

hostage to their own Garner-like ambition in recent months.

Moreover, most polls and pundits seem to agree Sen. Bob Dole, Rep. Newt Gingrich and company have a better than average chance of reaping rewards for deliberately and with malice aforethought halting the legislative process dead in its tracks. Time after time they raped the spirit of the U.S. Constitution.

One Republican senator explained flip-flopping on a reform measure he supported last year by telling a *Sun* reporter: "If you're looking to us to plead inconsistency: yes...Obstructionism in the defense of liberty is no vice."

The reference to Barry Goldwater's most famous quote, which began with "extremism," would win no favor with the one-time GOP presidential candidate, who always demonstrated a firm aver-

sion for subterfuge in any form.

Under the guise of protecting "grass roots" rights, senate Republicans filibustered to death last week a proposal to tighten registration and disclosure rules for all lobbyists and ban them from giving free meals and other gifts to congressmen.

Among the groups that fought the measure with a "frenzy," according to the *Washington Post*, were such "grass roots" organizations as the National Rifle Association and the American Civil Liberties Union. (My ACLU membership resignation is in the mail.)

Ironically, what Majority Leader George Mitchell described as a "nearly identical" bill passed the Senate with 95 votes earlier.

Comprehensive health care reform, the administration's most ambitious undertaking, died of slow

strangulation through a combination of GOP misinformation and the Democrats' failure to make the reform a truly bipartisan effort. As with bringing on the Great Depression, not all today's faults lie on a single side of the congressional aisle.

Nevertheless, Republican determination to crucify Mr. Clinton and his party created the *Washington Post's* invocation of "frenzy," which evokes blood-maddened sharks going after wounded prey. The same image had come to mind when first I learned about Speaker Garner's gang attack on Mr. Hoover.

There was nothing "fair" about the original Raw Deal. Its "turnabout" makes me equally sick to my stomach. I cannot believe fair-minded Americans will reward the modern Cactus Jacks by voting them even more power to stifle democracy. Still, stranger things have happened in the name of the republic.