

Editor
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Commentary on Commentary

My commentary on Ray Meachum's "Dark days" column of Friday, October 2, written and mailed that day, did not appear until Thursday, October 8. In it I ridiculed Meachum's predicate, that ^{in writing on the Bork nomination} the members of the Senate Judiciary Committee would be "slinking into the crowd of the Senate as a whole" where "they obviously hope their individual positions will get lost in the crowd." I noted ~~also~~ that this was typical Meachum, the omniscient mind-reader. I noted also that no "slinking" would be possible and that there would, inevitably, be ^{published} considerable attention to all votes.

"Can anyone both honest and in his right mind," I ^{asked} ~~said~~, "Believe that with all the exceptional attention to and ^E controversy about the Bork hearings and nomination it could be possible ~~to~~ for any senator to hide his vote in any way?"

Among other things Meachum pontificated that the Democrats would hold their members strictly in line for a straight party-line vote on this nomination. I pointed out that were this the actuality there would have been no need for those hearings because the Democrats control the Senate and that the actuality was that the Republicans, on this matter, were not able to keep their members under Meachum's imaginary "tight control."

Well, four days after Meachum's typeset visions were published and my commentary was mailed the Senate committee ~~voted~~. It was, ^{live} ~~in its entirety,~~ broadcast by radio, ^{was on all TV} and without a single exception each of the Senators was, as I'd predicted, quite explicit in stating his reasons for his vote. ^{This} ~~There~~ was quite the opposite of Meachum's made-up "slinking." All were ^{pointed out} quite articulate.

Not only was it impossible for any Senator to hide his position, it was politically unwise, as anyone making Meachum's ^e pretenses about knowing Washington ^{and politics} should have known.

Now for Meachum's additional fabrication, one that it was really stupid to make up, that silliness of the ~~the~~ committee members "obvious," no less, alleged "hope," that ^u their individual positions will get lost in the crowd^u of 100 Senators voting:

As of midday the day my commentary appeared, Thursday, October 8, a week after Meachum's right-wing extremist's nightmare pretended to be political commentary was published, 51 or a majority of the Senators had stated a forthright and very

public position against the Bork nomination. *They did not have to - They wanted to. The thing had got to come.*
With only brief radio newscasts as of ^{mid} that day, I cannot state that those that day that Senators who announced they would vote against Bork's nomination ~~to the Supreme Court~~ issued detailed explanations of their positions, but I can and do state that the first 49 did exactly that.

This is to say that once again, in excruciating detail, Meachum was entirely wrong. Or, as I've said over and over again, without a single refutation, and as I said in the commentary I wrote October 2, Meachum was once again inventing truth to serve his prejudices and preconceptions and at the same time was flaunting his ignorance.

He wasn't right about anything. ~~and~~ ^{his} That is ~~the~~ usual condition when he writes about national and international affairs.

Meachum has the right, ^{as I} said, to deify Bork and Reagan, but he also has the obligation to be factual and truthful. *He wasn't.*

He did refer to what he described as Reagan's "incandescent presence," ~~his~~ ^{Reagan} He also called ^{Reagan} "a bigger than life icon." This gets close to deification.

How brilliant is Meachum's incandescent icon when he actually depended upon getting the votes in support of Bork from those conservative southern Senators against whom Reagan had campaigned ^{vigorously?} in vigor ~~and~~ ^u when despite Reagan's efforts to defeat them

and his expenditure of considerable GOP funds in the attempt they were elected - by the votes of the southern citizens who were so articulate and ^{united} ~~unified~~ in opposing

These conservative Southern Senators come out against His Incandescent Icon-ship and against Bork.
Meachum once proclaimed, with his customary detachment from truth and reality,

that when he makes a mistake he admits it. He had ample opportunity after the committee's broadcast and extensively reported vote. But, consistent with several years of egregious error, never once retracted or apologized for, he did not.

There is no requirement that a columnist be right in his expression of opinion. There is, however, the reasonable presumption that he tries to be accurate and truthful, that he not merely make up and present as fact whatever at any moment seems congenial to the prejudices with which he begins and the ^{political} positions he had stated earlier.

Meachum has once ^{himself} again proven, as my cited commentary begins, a columnist rather than a propagandist and a propagandist rather than a real thinker.

Once again he has corrupted fact and truth to prejudice the views of those who read our only local newspapers. Once again he has been dishonest and untruthful in his heaping of calumny on those he does not like and still again his column has been amateurish propaganda rather than factual and thoughtful.

Once again, unfortunately, this appears to be the standard and the desire of the papers. And once again, this relates to matters of considerable import. I do regret it, as I very much appreciate the papers' fairness in publishing contrary views. However, it is axiomatic that the refutation rarely catches up with the misrepresentation.

Frederick ought be entitled to honesty, fairness and truthfulness in both reporting and commentary, and those who are not intimately conversant with national and international affairs ought not have their trust imposed upon or their minds and beliefs twisted by a wrong-headed propagandist pretending to be a political commentator.

Harold Weisberg