

"DARK DAYS"

The timing of his "Dark days" column is perfect - for exposing Roy Meachum's ignorance, prejudices and contempt for fact and reality. Once again ^{he} ~~is~~ is a columnist rather than a columnist, a propagandist rather than a thinker whose thoughts deserve serious consideration.

He is entitled to favor Bork for the Supreme Court and to eulogize him and Reagan but Meachum is not entitled, even in a column, to misrepresent. But misrepresent he does, from the outset where he prates the impossible, that by sending the nomination to the full Senate ~~for an up or down vote~~ ^{without any recommendation} the Judiciary Committee members can and will be "slinking into the crowd of the Senate as a whole" where "they obviously hope (Meachum, the inveterate mind-reader) their individual positions will get lost in the crowd."

Committees can and always have voted to confirm, to oppose or to take no position on nominations. That does not start with this committee and this nomination. ^{This committee stated} ~~The actual~~ reason is to give those undecided members more time to consider the record compiled by the committee.

Meachum cannot have been ^g taking in the hearings most of which were on public TV and all of which were broadcast by ^{radio} stations (including Washington's WPTV) serviced by Pacifica ^{radio} or he again is less than honest when he says that other than those who said they had not made up their minds, Senators Specter the Republican and Heflin and DeConcini, Democrats, the other members had not ^{articulated} taken explicit and forthright positions, for or against. So, save for these three, no "slinking" is possible for committee ~~the~~ members.

Part of the marvel of Meachum's self-exposure timing is that the day before his column appeared Specter held a news conference to announce his decision to oppose Bork. He gave explicit and lucid reasons that in themselves expose Meachum's departure from fact and reality. Three other senators, all southerners from conservative constituencies, also ^{than} said they will oppose Bork's nomination ~~the day before~~ ^{the day before}

~~Meachum's column appeared.~~

both honest and
But were none of this true, can anyone *in his right mind* believe that with all *the attention* to and controversy about the Bork hearings and nomination it could be at all possible for any senator to hide his vote in any way?

The Bork nomination and hearings have attracted such enormous attention and expression of interest there is no paper in any constituency that *at the least,* will not devote considerable attention to its own senators' votes. *everywhere* ~~at the least and~~ it in more than merely likely that all votes will receive the great attention they warrant.

Once again, Meachum just makes it up as he goes, inventing fact to serve his unretarded indulgences of his animus, prejudices and *propaganda* political beliefs.

True to Orwell and "Through the Lookingglass" Meachum represents that this extraordinary expression of public interest in how our government works and should or should not work, the very essence of democracy in action, *is* ~~Meachum says~~ the exact opposite, "another time when democracy degenerates into each Big Hog rooting for himself, leaving the people in muddled confusion."

If there were any confusion, and confusion is hardly the word for it, it is in the murk of Meachum's mind. There is no popular confusion, unless Meachum, who quotes nobody, associates only with "mongolian idiots." *all those lie spoken to are* People are generally pretty *mostly* positive ~~for or~~ against the Bork nomination, *actual* Republicans and Democrats alike.

Meachum can hardly be aware of Bork's *actual* record, a consistent record from which he never ~~ever~~ deviated except for a few minor pretenses *utterly* essential to getting the nomination out of the committee *at all.* *If* ~~yet of~~ Meachum took the hearings in, he cannot be unaware of Bork's actual record, *especially* including in particular as Bork himself represented it. Like *all* "any persons" in the "fourteenth Amendment referred *s* only to *blacks* ~~race~~ and, specifically, not to women. Bork swore that he didn't see any meaning in the Ninth Amendment. It reads, in full, "The enumeration in the Constitution of certain rights shall not be construed to deny or disparage others retained by the people."

To those who do not want to rewrite the Constitution, as Bork has been trying to do most of his adult life, the meaning is clear: the people have rights that are not

enumerated in the Constitution and they are not to be ^{denied or} ~~denied~~ slighted in any way.

Meachum's misrepresentation of the actual Bork record is, ^{Reagan's purpose in nominating Bork, as usual, hedged with} ~~as usual,~~ ^{Meachum's standard} "can be viewed" ^{is} as a "epu-
lican attempt to restore a core to our national political scene."

There is no "core" American traditionalism or legal philosophy in Bork and what he stands for and has espoused.

The real core is this ^{newest} Reaganite effort to pack the Supreme Court, as he has already packed the lower federal courts, with ideologues and authoritarians, ^{It is} ~~as~~ part of the Reagan/Bork belief in authoritarianism, not genuine democracy. Meachum and Bork view Reagan as an elected king, with ^{no real limit on executive power}

If Meachum were at all familiar with Bork's record on the Circuit Court he would know that this is his record, fostering authoritarianism, a supreme executive power, and that this extends even to his decisions in Freedom of Information litigation,

^{I was the FOIA litigant and that lawsuit is among}
~~as I know from personal knowledge from having him sit on and grossly misrepresent~~
^{will cited by the Reporters Committee on Freedom of the Press in opposing Bork's nomination}
~~in my own FOIA litigation.~~

The rest of this newest "meachum mishmash ranges from the venomous to the ridiculous ^{There is so much it is not possible, in few words, to address and deodorize} and when he can get away with so much commentary in few words it is not possible to respond to all of his political garbage.

The Democrats, he says, will keep their members under tight control and all will ^{vote} ~~vote~~ ^{against Bork} ~~against Bork~~. If this were true there would ^{no need for those} ~~not~~ have been ~~this long~~ hearings because the Democrats have a safe majority in the Senate. But can it be that it is ~~them~~ beyond the comprehension of the self-portrayed omniscience Meachum that in fact it has been the Republicans who have kept their members under tight control and that to now only two have announced against Bork?

"Ronald Reagan, " ^{proclaims} ~~states~~ "Meachum ^{proclaims} ~~states~~, provided an incandescent presence in our national consciousness, even to his opponents." Incandescent like Jesus maybe? "A bigger than life icon, immune from official and personal questioning."

This is sick. It is untrue, It is dishonest and it fairly represents the "dark days" in our ^{of} community coming from Meachum's propaganda and self-promotion.

Roy Meachum

Dark days



10/2/87

Having milked the Bork hearings for their maximum publicity value, the Senate Judiciary Committee threatens to contribute one more page to this year's dismal political record.

The committee is poised to make no recommendation Tuesday when it is scheduled to vote on the controversial judge's nomination to the Supreme Court.

Some members want to divert the heat certain to descend from the pro- and anti-Bork forces by slinking into the crowd of the Senate as a whole. This way they obviously hope their individual positions will get lost in the crowd.

Such moral cowardice must not pass unnoticed. As the majority, Senate Democrats deserve the burden of the blame. But Republicans merit no pure white robes.

The nation is passing through another time when democracy degenerates into each Big Hog rooting for himself, leaving the people in muddling confusion.

These days are darker because in recent years Ronald Reagan provided an incandescent presence in our national consciousness, even to his opponents. The man became a bigger-than-life icon, immune from official and personal questioning.

It makes no difference that a number of voices were waiting to cry "I told you so." They were a motley crew, perhaps driven into shrieking frustration because they understood so clearly the masses and media were wrong all along about the ex-actor's role as America's leader.

Whatever the reality, well into his second term, the president actually drew strength from the near-hysteria of his opposition. Again, history repeated itself in this regard. Franklin D. Roosevelt used his enemies to expand his political base.

Casting aside the lesser players and cluttering detail, the Iran-Contra scandal reduced Ronald Reagan to a flickering image as devoid of real presidential power as any character in one of those old movies.

This revelation of the incumbent's fumbling inconsistency, more than his lame-duck status, is the underlying cause for the chaos at the center of our national life.

Reagan's fall from public grace came so swiftly as to create a void, the resulting vacuum sucked from the Washington woodwork seeming-hordes

of would-be successors. Then the number adds to the confusion.

In surveying the list of Democratic and Republican presidential contenders, no reasonable human being has reason for optimism about the country's future.

Gary Hart and Joe Biden were never to be taken seriously, despite their supporters' hopes.

Biden's rise drew its only meaningful strength from Hart's self-elimination, and make no mistake the Colorado senator committed political suicide by taunting the media to catch him sexually misbehaving.

Biden's fall was equally a self-willed act. Falsely claiming academic stature after his candidacy had fallen under intensive public scrutiny was tantamount to cutting his own throat.

Biden's borrowings from other politicians made for fascinating reading but

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it takes no great sophistication to know that speechwriters lift from each other all the time. A minimum of research could have yielded sufficient grounds for a blistering counterattack.

Candidate Biden had no defense for his ill-founded boasting about his school track record.

Now it develops Massachusetts Gov. Michael Dukakis's campaign was a casualty of Biden's exit. It seems the governor's staff assembled and distributed the videotape that was the highlight of the anti-Biden plagiarism charges. Two important Dukakis staff members were forced to resign.

Of the remaining Democratic candi-

dates: Rep. Richard Gephardt is impossibly dull; Jesse Jackson cannot escape the anti-Semite charges he brought down on himself by calling New York "Hymietown"; Paul Simon owes his election to the Senate to a California hate merchant who poured over a million dollars into vitriolic attacks on former Sen. Charles Percy.

Who's left? Tennessee Sen. Albert Gore Jr., nationally famous for having a wife who offended many Democratic faithful by spearheading efforts to censor "dirty" song lyrics.

The Republicans are in no better shape for the post-Reagan era. Vice President George Bush seems poised to drown in his own mediocrity. Rep. Jack Kemp may be the darling of GOP right-wingers, but that very fact leaves him outside the pale for Republicans looking for another national winner.

Self-defrocked preacher Pat Robertson rounds out the GOP's known candidates. Despite his early flashy wins, can anyone seriously believe the Rev. Robertson will win the support of a majority of voters in next year's presidential elections?

Taken in the light of the current chaos, naming Robert Bork for the Supreme Court can be viewed as a Republican attempt to restore a core to our national political scene. If true, naivete remains firmly entrenched in the White House in spite of the Iranian arms deal experience.

Instead, the Bork nomination stands revealed as an incredible act of hubris, doomed to drag the nation into further confusion.

It is a sign of White House desperation that the judge himself has set about buttonholing each and every senator. This personal lobbying is so extraordinary that, by itself, it should disqualify Bork from the Supreme Court.

In the end, the Democrats will enforce party discipline and invoke their majority to deny the wounded Republican president any victory.

This 200th anniversary of the Constitution will not go down as a prime year in the history of the United States.