

# More dark days: This time it's Meachum

**T**he 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 a calumnist 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 without any recommendation the Judiciary Committee members can and will be "sinking 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.

Meachum cannot have been taking in the hearings, most of which were on public TV and all of which were broadcast by radio stations (including Washington's WPFW) 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, Senator Arlen

Specker, the Republican; and Senators Howell Heflin and Dennis DeConcini, Democrats, the other members had not articulated explicit and forthright positions, for or against. So, save for these three, no "sinking" is possible for the committee members.

Part of the marvel of Meachum's self-exposure timing is that the day before his column appeared Specker held a new 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 then said they will oppose Bork's nomination.

Can anyone, both honest and in his right mind, believe that with all the exceptional attention to and controversy about the Bork hearings and nomination it could be 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. It is more than merely likely that everywhere all votes will receive the great attention they warrant.

Once again, Meachum just makes it up as he

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goes, inventing fact to serve his unrestrained indulgences of his animus, prejudices and political propaganda.

True to Orwell and "Through the Looking Glass" 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 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 muck of Meachum's mind. There is no popular confusion, unless Meachum, who quotes nobody, associates only with idiots. All those I've spoken to are pretty positive mostly against the Bork nomination — Republicans and Democrats alike.

Meachum can hardly be aware of Bork's actual record, a consistent record from which he never deviated except for a few minor pretenses essential to getting the nomination out of the committee. If Meachum took the hearings in, he cannot be unaware of Bork's actual record, especially as Bork himself represented it. Like "all persons" in the Fourteenth Amendment

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refers only to blacks 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 listed in the Constitution and they are not to be denied or slighted in any way.

Meachum's misrepresentation of Reagan's purpose in nominating Bork, as usual hedged with Meachum's standard copout, ("can be viewed") is "a Republican 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 Reaganite effort to pack the Supreme Court, as he has already packed the lower federal courts, with ideologues and authoritarians. It is 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. This extends even to his decisions in Freedom of Information 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 all of his political garbage.

The Democrats, he says, will keep their members under tight control and all will vote against Bork. If this were true there would have been no need for those hearings because the Democrats have a majority. But can it be that it is beyond the comprehension of the self-portrayed omniscient Meachum that in fact it has been the Republicans who have kept their members under tight control?

"Ronald Reagan," Meachum proclaims, "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 community coming from Meachum's propaganda and self-promotion.

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