

Beware the Bogey Man: A new low, even for McCain and his ignorant supporters!

Written by Reggie

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On Friday, as he rallied his bigoted, small-minded followers in a suburb of Minneapolis, John McCain made a most bizarre attempt to reverse the fear mongering and bigoted tone of his faltering campaign

The incident involved a brief exchange between a pathetic McCain supporter and her increasingly desperate candidate. What happened was this: during a rally at Lakeville South High School, McCain handed his microphone to a woman who expressed her concerns about Barack Obama "I don't trust Obama," she said. "I have read about him. He's an Arab."

Just then, for just one unrealistic nanosecond, I naively hoped that John McCain would take the high road and reject such a bigoted attack from someone in his painfully ignorant audience. Instead, my heart sank in disbelief as I heard the response to this ethnic slur from a man who would be our national leader.

"No, ma'am" offered John {our hero) McCain, "He's a decent, family man, [a] citizen that I just happen to have disagreements with on fundamental issues and that's what this campaign is all about."

Implicit, of course, in that response was another message: ***Don't worry, ma'am, Barack Obama is NOT an Arab. Unlike Arabs, he's a decent, family man.***

The malice of that response, of course, was NOT in what was said, but in what was NOT said. What McCain did NOT say was that his supporter had been taken in by the vicious Rovean playbook. What McCain did NOT say was that she had just uttered a totally unacceptable racist statement that had no place in an American town hall meeting. What McCain did NOT say was that this uninformed woman was making an anti American statement by claiming that Arabs are not to be trusted, and that she feared Barack Obama because he was an untrustworthy Arab.

Of course, as a typical McCain supporter, this poor woman was expressing her fear of Muslims, not just Arabs. **She had no clue that not all Muslims are Arabs and that not all Arabs are Muslims.** And by expressing her biased fear, this pathetic woman also had no clue that millions of Arabs are her fellow countrymen and women.

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For the uninformed and deeply indoctrinated supporters of fear and hatred against Arabs or Muslims or any other group, anywhere, here are a few FACTS about American Arabs which may or may not influence the bigotry they have ingested and now irresponsibly spew:

- At least 3.5 million* Americans are of Arab descent. Arab Americans live in all 50 states. More than 80% are American citizens.
- **The Arab American community is religiously diverse, but 63% of American Arabs are Christians.**
- Almost every major religion is represented in the Arab American community.: Christians: Maronite Catholic, Melkite Catholic, Syrian Catholic, Chaldean Catholic, Roman Catholic, Antiochian Orthodox, Syrian Orthodox, Coptic Orthodox, Protestant; Muslims: Sunni, Shia and Druze
- Arab Americans with at least a high school diploma number 85%
- More than 4 out of 10 Arab Americans have a bachelor's degree or higher.
- 17% of Arab Americans have a post-graduate degree which is nearly twice the American average (9%).
- Of the school age population, 13% are in pre-school, 58% are in elementary or high school, 22% are enrolled in college and 7% are in graduate school.

I cite these statistics in a meager attempt to bring some balance to the propaganda being disseminated by the fear mongers in the McCain campaign, and to draw some attention to this revealing moment of divisiveness and polarization. The ugly insult towards Arabs and Muslims everywhere remains largely ignored by the corporate media as they rush to paint McCain's response as a reversal of his tactics of fear and loathing. It is not.

It will continue with unrelenting virulence to the last moment.

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But, at this moment, I remain so very incensed by the depths to which John McCain is willing sink. I truly cannot imagine the feelings of Arabs or Muslims in America or elsewhere in the world who were witness to the reality that their ethnicity can be used as red meat to incite the basest instincts of bigoted voters in the United States of America.

In recent McCain/Palin rallies, Barack Obama has been portrayed as a terrorist, as a Manchurian Candidate, and, horror of horrors, as a community organizer. That venom now has been refocused on the bogey man created on 9/11. The message to Arabs and Muslims everywhere is clear. It is both patriotic and acceptable to devalue a human being by suggesting he may be dangerous enough to be one of them. How ugly is that?

But then again I remember that they hate us for our freedoms.