

## FROM INANE TO INSANE

It isn't often that I'm at a loss for words, but on Tuesday when the President answered a question I was speechless.

The question was: "Would you prefer a Democrat or a child molester elected to the Senate?" The answer was illuminating â€¦ "we need the vote in order to pass our priorities, and he said he didn't do it." This from the same president that believes the words of Vladimir Putin when they say that he didn't interfere in the presidential election last year. "We report, you decide."

We have to remember some facts about this race for Senate in Alabama.

First, this is the heart of the old Confederacy. Outside of the metropolitan areas, the War of Northern Aggression was never won by the Union â€¦ they just kind of called a ceasefire. This is 'bubba' country where the term 'redneck' is a badge of honor to be worn with pride. Trying to take down a Confederate monument would come close to causing a modern day lynching. This is KKK country and the home of many white supremacist groups and militias.

Couple this with high percentage of evangelical Christians, and it becomes a volatile mix of 'relitics' which has become the basis of Roy Moores support. It's here that the Bible's 'law' becomes supreme and no "Washington liberal" is going to tell us what to do.

It's like a medieval castle that has deepened the moral moat and pulled up the intellectual drawbridge. It bristles with the 'slings and arrows of outraged fortune' and unleashes them whenever challenged. "My mind is made up, don't confuse me with the facts."

These are people who wear their morality on their sleeves. They proudly profess to be "God-fearing, church-going people" of high moral character. I have to wonder if they still sacrifice livestock at the altar, eat shellfish or pork, or work on the Sabbath â€¦ all of which are required or prohibited if they are going to claim this moral high ground.

The last time I checked, having this temperament would preclude having anything to do with someone who had sexual proclivities for young children. But somehow, they are willing to overlook nine women and numerous Gadsden law enforcement retirees who had first-hand encounters with the judge, or were told to not let him anywhere close to teenage girls. They're willing to support someone that they wouldn't let within hollering distance of their own teenage daughters.

If I were to try to make this moral connection, I would have to tie my mental processes into a giant Gordian Knot. It would require such a

disconnect of competing thought streams that I would probably be considered legally schizophrenic.

And yet it persists. And it isn't just rural Alabama. If you scratch the surface of the rural countryside anywhere from east Texas to Georgia and Mississippi to Appalachia and the Ozarks, you'll find varying degrees of the same sentiments. This is the countryside of 'Easy Rider' and 'Deliverance'. Time has warped or stopped for many of the communities.

Change isn't going to come easy to this area. Those moral precepts that they take from the Bible, even with all the contradictions and convolutions, will continue to reign supreme and conflict with tolerant liberal social views for the foreseeable future.

But some of those conflicts I just can't wrap my brain around. How can it be that there is a 'sacred' marriage, but the man (or woman) has an affair or long-term relationship outside that marriage and people just wink and grin and look the other way. But you talk about a same-sex marriage and it's as though the lightning was going to strike from a clear sky and the earth open up and swallow you to hell.

"Oh well, we just hate the sin but love the sinner." This is the countryside of Jim Baaker, who defrauded his flock of millions of dollars, went to prison, and now still claims a televangelistic flock of thousands. This is the countryside of Jimmy Swaggert who was caught with prostitutes in Louisiana and still commands the loyalty of thousands through his own satellite television channel. This is the countryside of Huey Long, the 'Kingfish' of Louisiana, who ran one of the most corrupt state governments in the country for a generation. This is the countryside of George Wallace, who proclaimed from the steps of the University of Alabama: "Segregation then, segregation now, segregation forever", as federal troops accompanied the first black student to enroll at that school. This is the countryside of 'Bull' Connor, the sheriff who confronted the marchers at the Edmond Pettis bridge at Selma with dogs and firehoses.

Given the history of this part of the country, it logically follows that these sentiments still simmer below the surface of 'southern hospitality' and 'genteel appearance.' If you don't believe this, just look at the number of Confederate flag decals on NASCAR race cars and highway vehicles on southern roads. Roy Moore is just the symbol of that sentiment and ideology that the president pulled the scab from and is scratching the underlying wound.