

Professor George, what were you thinking?

Michael Sean Winters | Jul. 30, 2009 NCR Today

I can't improve on my colleague Thomas C. Fox's takedown below of Glen Beck's outrageous comments calling the President a racist. But, the controversy caused me to watch Beck's show last night. It is truly shocking that someone is allowed a prime time television slot who brings precisely no analytical capabilities to the task of reporting the news, who rants instead of argues, and who distorts history and the news in equal measure in fits of tortured logic that are pitiful even by the low standards at Fox News. I wondered to myself, "Why would anyone consent to be on such a show?"

And then, like a bad nightmare, along comes the next guest, Princeton Professor and rightwing darling Robert P. George. I have no way of knowing when Professor George's appearance was scheduled. I do know that you pretty much had to avoid every news website yesterday to miss coverage of Beck's outrageous comments about the President. Many of us in the media appear on shows when we don't agree with the host on this issue or that problem, although according to the on-air banter, this was not the professor's first such appearance on Beck's dreadful show.

But I wonder why Professor George did not see fit to cancel his appearance or at least address the host's comments, seeing as they were so public and so outrageous. It is not like Princeton is desperate for the coverage: One of their most prominent alumna is about to join the Supreme Court. Professor George is quick to call others to account when they fail to distance themselves from the policies of someone with whom they are affiliated, despite the fact that our political system, of which he is an expert, was designed precisely to create such floating alliances of people who disagree on some issues but not on others. Such shifting alliances are one of our principal guarantors of liberty if I recall the arguments of the Federalist Papers. Does Professor George apply the same standard to himself? I look forward to a statement from the professor, and from many whose conservatism is too honorable to be associated with the likes of Beck, disassociating himself from the calumny of his recent host.

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