

Republicans are real Americans, Democrats are too



BARB GUY

Thank heavens I saw “Boogie Man” last week; it was good prep. It’s a documentary about Lee Atwater, Republican Party dirty-trickster, the man with Alex P. Keaton looks and charm who taught Karl Rove every divisive, dishonest, cheap-shot move in his book.

Atwater, who on his deathbed regretted and apologized for how he conducted himself in politics, would have recognized his own pre-regret strategy coming out of the mouths of a number of people this week. Here are some examples:

“Liberals hate real Americans who work and accomplish and achieve and believe in God.” (Robin Hayes, Republican congressman from North Carolina)

“The news media should do a penetrating expose . . . I wish

the American media would take a great look at the views of people in Congress and find out if they are pro-America or anti-America.” (Michele Bachmann, Republican congresswoman from Minnesota)

“We believe that the best of America is in the small towns . . . and in these wonderful little pockets of what I call real America . . . hard-working, very patriotic, very pro-America areas of this great nation.” (Sarah Palin, governor of Alaska and soon-to-be Governor of Alaska)

Obviously, Palin and her pals are delusional. All that’s required to be a real American is citizenship. You may possess - and profess - any idea you choose and be a real American, and a “good” one.

America has two major political parties and who knows how many small ones. Republicans are real Americans. Democrats are too. Members of the Green Party are real Americans. People who think Sarah Palin is not that bright are real Americans. Those who think Barack Obama is a weenie are, too.

So are folks who have no intention of voting in this election. Muslims, atheists and agnostics are real Americans. Black and brown people, Arabs and Asians are real Americans. It should go without saying that Native Americans are real

Americans. So are gay and lesbian people and folks named Hussein. And I have news for Michele Bachmann: no member of the United States Congress is “anti-America.”

That’s the problem. Atwater and his ilk taught Republicans to slap the “un-American” label on anyone who disagrees with their politics. The term that used to be reserved for those loyal to another country, chiefly spies, now can brand anyone who is against the war in Iraq or supporting a woman’s right to choose.

If you don’t wear a flag pin you’re un-American. Even if you do, you still might not be part of real America if you live in a city or you’re black or poor or your mom overstayed her visa back before you were born.

Luckily, the week also brought words from a wise Republican, a man I admire a great deal in spite of his terrible fall from grace, former secretary of state and former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen. Colin Powell. He came forward this week to declare his support for Barack Obama.

Demonstrating the best of American values, Powell said this of McCain and Obama: “Both of them are distinguished Americans who are patriotic,

The Salt Lake Tribune

who are dedicated to the welfare of our country.”

Powell went on to say that Obama’s steadiness, intellectual vigor, intellectual curiosity, depth of knowledge, inclusivity and brilliant choice of vice president won him over. He said Obama will make an exceptional president, a transformative president.

Anyone - *anyone* - who tries to tell you that Republicans are innately real Americans and Democrats are innately not real Americans is a fool. I suggest we tell them so by using our most sacred American possession - our right to vote.

BARB GUY is a regular contributor to these pages. © Salt Lake Tribune.