

## COMMENTARY

# Russert failed to heed his own advice

By MARK SOMMER

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Before the start of last week's nationally televised Senate debate in Buffalo, moderator Tim Russert lectured the audience at WVED-TV studio on the need to act respectfully toward the two candidates.

It's too bad he couldn't follow his own advice.

Not long into the debate, the "Meet the Press" host and South Buffalo native leveled an astonishingly cheap

## Russert: We did fine

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Russert's questions stood in stark contrast to the questions posed by The News' political reporter Robert McCarthy and WGRZ-TV anchorman Scott Levin. Their questions concerned issues people in Western New York are concerned about, such as the upstate economy, education and affordable health care.

Russert's performance was a disappointment for a journalist proclaimed by Brill's Content magazine to be the nation's most influential talk show host. But it certainly wasn't out of character.

Drudge by having him on as a guest.

Before the debate, Russert told the studio audience that journalists need to be balanced and objective. There was some irony to his words.

In a black mark for network news programming, Russert's show was the first to heap respectability upon notorious Internet smut sluth Matt

Russert also warned the studio audience beforehand that Buffalo needed to behave appropriately once the debate got under way, so that we would come across as a city to be proud of.

He shouldn't have been worried about us. We did fine. Native son Russert, on the other hand, embarrassed himself and his profession.

Like a bull in a china



**At least Russert could have raised the scandal —**

**— with greater sensitivity and tact. But he didn't. Instead, he chose pyrotechnics over illumination, sensationalism over substance.**

The problem is that there was no need for Russert to revisit the scandal. TV news

However, Russert could have at least raised the issue — and its painful consequences with greater sensitivity and tact. But he didn't. Instead, he chose pyrotechnics over illumination, sensationalism over substance.

That's because Russert knew his bottom feeding approach guaranteed headlines —

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as it gets. Not