



**Your on the
Street Reporter**



Uyless Black

**Politics in America
Charlie Rose at the National Press Club**

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Hello from Your on the Street Reporter. Last week, Sylvia Gann Mahoney and I attended two events at the National Press Club (NPC) in Washington, D.C. I am a member of the NPC and I had asked Sylvia, as my publicist, to accompany me to the Fourth Estate Awards ceremony and the member, non-resident week-end.

The former is an annual event of dinner and speeches to honor an esteemed journalist. The latter is an affair to acquaint NPC members who do not live near the nation's capital about the workings of the National Press Club. As a former resident in the D.C. area, I was familiar with NPC's setup, but I wanted Sylvia to learn about the institution, and I wanted to meet Charlie Rose, this year's recipient of the Fourth Estate Award. Recently, this award has been bestowed on the people shown in this table:

2013	Andrea Mitchell	<i>NBC News</i>
2012	Bob Woodward	<i>The Washington Post</i>
2011	Jim Lehrer	<i>PBS Newshour</i>
2010	Bob Schieffer	<i>CBS News</i>
2009	Thomas Friedman	<i>The New York Times</i>
2008	Christiane Amanpour	<i>CNN</i>
2007	Paul E. Steiger	<i>The Wall Street Journal</i>

I am sure many of the readers of this blog are familiar with Charlie Rose. He has a talk show on PBS and works the desk on CBS morning news. I watch his PBS program a couple times a week, not knowing who he will have as guests. Liberal, conservative, show business, politics, sports, finance...name it, and Charlie has likely interviewed someone in the field. It is not just someone off the street, but someone well-known, often famous. I've watched him interview Dick Cheney, Joe Namath, Hollywood stars, economic gurus, etc. with equal competence and fairness. He comes across as neither conservative nor liberal. But he likes golf, so he likely leans a bit to the right. (Right...watch out for that slice, Charlie!)

Sylvia is by far the best publicist/literary agent I have had the pleasure to employ. Granted, I have had only one other agent. With the exception of soaking my wallet and me, he personified lethargy. Nonetheless, I would stake a claim against any writer's agent that mine is good as they get.

She is working under an immense handicap. Even though I have published some forty books with respected publishers and had success with all of them, my current writings are not what these publishers want me to write. They want more computer networks books whose subjects do not interest me. (Perhaps I will write a few more on broader, social subjects pertaining to the Internet.)

She had previously met Charlie at a program in which five panelists appeared on the Ninth Annual Bob Schieffer Symposium on the News at Texas Christian University (TCU) in Fort Worth. When I asked Sylvia to fly to DC for these events, she accepted with the response, “And Charlie Rose is going to meet you this time!”



Figure 1. Brief lamentations.

And we did meet, as seen in Figure 1. We talked briefly during a pre-dinner reception, before the award ceremony. He was gracious and out-going, not only because that is his nature, but I suspect because of my comment. I imagine this man has heard “I like your show!” more times than I can count my tennis double-faults. He seemed relieved with my: “If your golf game is as good as your program, you could be on the tour.” That broke the ice, although my smooth talk did not land me a slot on PBS.

We exchanged a few lamentations about golf, and I bade him goodbye. As I walked away, my agent said to Charlie, one she had offered to him earlier in the evening: “Charlie, with Uyless’ credentials, he would be a good interview.” He smiled and responded he would look into it. As I departed, I said, “As you likely know, Sylvia is my publicist.” Charlie responded with a laugh, “Yes, she told me!”

The dinner went down fine. The ceremony was light and fun. Charlie’s colleague from CBS, Norah O’Donnell, did a moderate roast and toast. Al Hunt of *Bloomberg View* spoke of



Figure 2. The award.

Charlie’s accomplishments. Leon Wieseltier of *The New Republic* gave an eloquent speech. Myron Belkind, the President of the National Press Club, also spoke, and presented the award to Charlie, as seen in Figure 2.

News coverage of the event had this to say about the evening: “While acknowledging having had ‘a remarkable life’ on television, Rose, 72, noted one disadvantage of his high-profile TV career: ‘I have to watch myself grow old on camera.’”

“Rose said his aim as a journalist is to ‘get a sense of who we are and who we want to be.’ Throughout his career, Rose said he has had the opportunity to interview everyone from ‘poets, politicians, businessmen,’ and people in almost every walk of life.

“He also said he “stood on the shoulders” of many people, noting that his parents had never gone to college, but supported his chance to get a good education. Rose graduated from Duke University and the Duke University School of Law.”¹

Many of the conversations I had with journalists, other writers, and news media managers during this extended weekend revolved around the rapid emergence of the Internet and its transformation of the print-publishing world. Times have indeed changed. So have many print magazines, newspapers, and jobs, often replaced with shoddy journalism and slapdash writing; half-baked ideas appearing on slipshod blogs. On the surface, the future of high quality journalism seems bleak.

I am optimistic. I see a rebound coming. Without question, it will be online, so don't do too much investing in paper futures. It will reflect the dedicated and meticulous journalism we have come to expect from America's Fourth Estate, many who are members of the National Press Club, an organization I hold in high esteem. In subsequent reports, I will expand on these ideas. For now, support your local paper. It's still the best game in town for news, local events commentary and how your community fits in the scheme of things.



Figure 3. Fine figures.

In closing, thank you my fine publicist, for your belief in my work, and your work on my behalf. Thank you Mr. Rose, for bringing to the public a TV program in which insightful journalism comes forth, but without the bombast found on several channels adjacent to PBS. Your low-key, non-biased approach to questioning your guests serves as a *graceful* model to those on other channels who sully the journalism profession. Figure 3 of Charlie and Sylvia serves as a fitting close to this narrative.

¹ <http://press.org/news-multimedia/news/master-interviewer-charlie-rose-honored-fourth-estate-award-national-press-club>.