

**Your On the  
Street Reporter**



**Uyless Black**

**Newt Gingrich at the National Press Club**

## Preface

Hello and welcome. I thank you for taking the time to examine some of my work. Additional information can be found at [www.UylessBlack.com](http://www.UylessBlack.com) and [blog.UylessBlack.com](http://blog.UylessBlack.com)

This material represents a work in progress. As readers provide feedback, as I uncover new information, if I uncover errors, I will update or correct the text of this manuscript. That stated, I hope my initial efforts have led to a fairly stable offering.

On-line publishing is a new experience for me. Most of my work has been produced in books from my publishers. They are fine companies, but I wanted to try something new. I find I now have more control over my work. Not the content, as my publishers have never asked me to include or exclude anything of significance. Rather, I find I can now more easily integrate, separate, or merge pieces of work. Hard copy does not lend itself to such flexibility.

Most of the writings you will find at my Web site and my blog are available free of charge. Some material is on a fee basis, but not much.

I ask you to honor the copyrights on this material. Unless the book, essay, or report is priced, I am creating this work for our personal use. It is not intended for commercial consumption. Please note the footnotes and obtain permission from the sources if you wish to re-use any of the text, tables, or photos for commercial purposes. If I later decide to sell any of this work, I too will go through the copyright procedures. You are welcome to cite my work; I ask you to provide attribution.

I have used hundreds of sources for my work and I am keen to credit others' help. It only takes a footnote, and I hope other writers do the same for me. If I have missed citing a source, it is without intent.

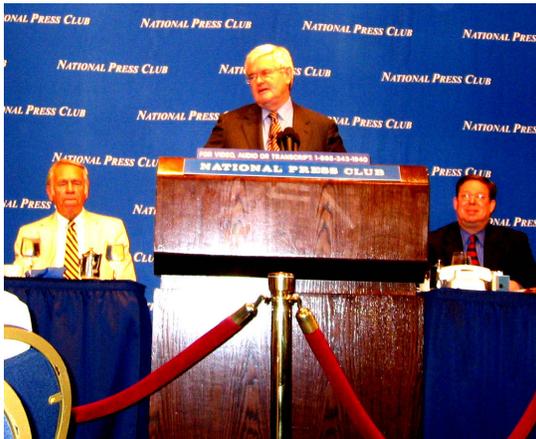
I use comments and conversations that are inside quotes in one of three ways: As verbatim reconstructions (from recordings); as nearly accurate reflections (from my notes); or as more distant remembrances (which I usually paraphrase). I take Mark Twain's approach to quotations: I strive for accuracy; if I do not have exact notes, I strive to convey the spirit and meaning of the quote.

I hope to hear from you about my work. I hope you enjoy it. I hope you will find some of it edifying. I hope you get a few laughs along the way.

## Newt Gingrich at the National Press Club

**August 19, 2005**

Hello from Your On the Street Reporter. I spent a couple hours this afternoon at the National Press Club (NPC) attending a luncheon at which Newt Gingrich was the featured speaker. Here is a report on this event, and a snapshot of Newt at the NPC is shown in Figure 1.



**Figure 1. Newt Gingrich at the National Press Club.**

One of the overall themes at NPC get-togethers is freedom of the press. During Newt's introduction, a NPC representative made reference to the recent incarceration of a reporter for not revealing to the government her source for a story. Since that announcement, I have begun noting the number of times an unnamed source is used for a news article.

Answer? Many. I'm not sure we would have much of interest to read in the papers if reporters did not use background sources. Anyway, one of the rooms at the National Press Club is named the First Amendment Lounge. Perhaps that's where all the unnamed sources and their reporters meet after work to drink away their concerns about jail time.

Attending NPC luncheons and dinners provides opportunities to converse with a wide variety of people during the meal. Your dining partner is anyone who happens to sit down next to you. Today, the Executive Director for the Society for Neuroscience (SFN) was seated to my right. This organization consists of 36,000 scientists and physicians who study the brain and nervous system. I am interested in SFN because of my writings about the changes we are making (and will make in the future) to our species that will eventually lead to a very different set of folks walking our streets. Anyway, take a look at [www.sfn.org](http://www.sfn.org) for information on this interesting organization.

### **Newt, I Feel Your Pain**

In keeping with the theme of these reports, let's focus on the trivial. Why in the world would parents name their baby Newt? Surely an albatross to take through life. By contrast, my name of Uyless seems quite ordinary. If you consult your dictionary for "newt," you will read something

similar to this definition:<sup>1</sup> “**Newt**. A small amphibian of the salamander family with short legs and a well-developed tail.”

I’ll hand it to you Newt. I can imagine the taunts and jeers you experienced as a child. I know, I’ve been there. One of my nicknames was “Useless.” Another was “Under Designed,” a mockery of my initials, U.D. Newt, In spite of your name, you became a successful politician and the Speaker of the House. Well done.

And for more information on this subject, go to Newt.org. There you will find enlightening discussions on small web-footed water animals. Just kidding. Actually, you can study interesting and serious issues about which Mr. Gingrich spoke during his luncheon speech.

### **Real Change**

Mr. Gingrich’s main topic for his speech was the health care system in America. The gist of his presentation is that the government programs are dangerously out of control and the continuance of present policies will led to catastrophic problems for America in the future. He said, “If we don’t change our way of doing things, we will not succeed.”

His arguments were well spoken and persuasive. I was impressed, but I was not about to give up my benefits. Over my dead body, Mr. Gingrich. Of course, my attitude and those of other citizens is a big part of the problem. “Entitlements” are called entitlements for a good reason. Turning 65, I’ve recently received my entitlements card. As such, I’ve been running amok with delayed visits to doctors, heart surgeons, hearing specialists, joint experts, opticians, and dermatologists. At times, I received redundant treatments and duplicate services (Ahem, second opinions, if you will.) All free, with no questions asked.

### **Expanding Medicare**

I may someday wander into a psychic parlor, “Say, do you accept Medicare payments for your phrenology readings?”

According to Newt, the answer is very close to, “Yes. And we’ve just been approved for Medicaid payments for performing out of body experiences.”

Newt is probably looking over his shoulder for Shirley McLaine to appear demanding a retroactive national healthcare card for her prior citizenship in colonial America. Yes, our national health care system is that screwed-up.

Newt likened the current situation to a drunk going to his local Emergency Room six times a week for a hangover, with no questions asked from the ER personnel. All the drunk needed to do was give the hospital his entitlements card; let the nurse give him a free pain killer; go home; wait for Sunday to become Monday; then start the cycle over again.

I’d never thought about the actual medicinal aspects of alcohol. As I sat in the National Press Club, I thought I might test Newt’s concept with a serious drinking session Irish Coffee, but I decided I preferred my current life style of practicing moderate excess. Jokes aside, his point was

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<sup>1</sup> Microsoft® Encarta® Reference Library 2005. © 1993-2004 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.

that our health care system is breaking-down from fraud, waste, and the inability to change the current system.

### **Real Change Requires Real Change**

For this latter thought, Mr. Gingrich has coined a phrase, which he used several times in his speech, “Real Change Requires Real Change.” This utterance was one of the first statements of his talk to the National Press Club audience. Being a person who is interested in catchy phrases, his saying caught my attention. I thought *it doesn't mean anything*.

For a while, I wrestled with Newt's underlying philosophy regarding “Real Change Requires Real Change.” In so doing, I lost the theme of parts of his speech. But his cliché was not the only reason for my disconnect. Newt talks fast; very fast. I could not believe he was from Georgia. After about fifteen minutes into his speech, I had the impression I was listening to (conservative) dialogue from the West Wing TV show, whose conversations resemble a fast forward operation.

Fortunately, I later obtained a hard copy of his views, including parts of his speech. The reason his “Real Change Requires Real Change” was so confusing was because the oral rendition does not convey the crucial fact that the verb “Requires” is underlined. As in, “Real Change Requires Real Change.” There. That did it for me. How about you?

My flip remarks are not giving Mr. Gingrich enough credit for his saying. After he uttered it for the first time in his speech, he said politicians and officials in the health industry speak of “real change,” but they, “shrink the issue to the smallest component.” He meant a component that could be managed more easily. For example, adding a new rule to the thousands that already exist, and calling a press conference to declare a major fix was made to the system.

I think Mr. Gingrich is on target. I also think the magnitude and complexity of the problem with our health care system is such that no one really knows how to deal with it. Newt informed his audience the Medicare and Medicaid programs are governed by 39,000 pages of rules and regulations (not including supplements). He thinks a paperless system is essential, one that allows authorized personnel (across the country) to have access to a person's medical records.

Newt made a sidebar comment about FDR and social security: When FDR created social security, the average person died two years before they were eligible for its benefits...”...the greatest political achievement of all time!”

### **Questions from the Audience**

There are appropriate and inappropriate places for satire and parody. These Reports are for fun and I hope you get a few chuckles from them. National Press Club lunches are forums to air serious issues. As another example, no one dare smile on a PBS news program. And another, the Pebble Beach professional golf tournament TV program is broadcast for folks to watch people play golf---not to watch a comedian play mediocre golf, crack mediocre jokes, and distract golf fans from watching a TV program on golf. If I want comedy, I'll turn to a comedy program. OK, I got that off my chest.

### **The Enemy is Us**

Several questions during Newt's talk pertained to immigration, especially the illegal immigration taking place between Mexico, and our states of California, Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas. Permit me to summarize Mr. Gingrich's thoughts on this issue:

- Why is America building a multibillion missile defense system when you can drive it (a missile) across the border?
- Eye scans and/or fingerprints should be required computerized images for all immigrants and health care recipients.
- Blue cards should be mandatory and illegal immigrants should be shipped back. No one should enter the United States who has broken the law. Mr. Gingrich said of this practice promotes law breaking, adding the comment, "It's sick."
- Businesses should be held accountable for hiring illegal immigrants.
- Medicare and education should not be available to illegal immigrants. It's an insult to the legal immigrants who are in the country, and especially those who are awaiting permission to enter.
- You become an American citizen to become an American citizen. Knowledge of U.S. history and competence in English should be absolute requirements for citizenry.
- The ethnic politicians are creating this problem, even though the majority of American citizens (including Hispanics) want tight border controls.

You know from my "Here Comes the Neighborhood" Report that I am in agreement with some of Newt's assertions. I will not revisit all my comments in this report, but include one paragraph:

For several years, I lived in Canada a couple months of each year. During this time, I came to understand the potential problem we may be creating in this country with uncontrolled immigration. It's called Balkanization---the division of a country into smaller subunits. If you haven't witnessed it firsthand, I can assure you, it's an unproductive way to run a country.

There is no bias or prejudice associated with my views. Nor do I think those of Mr. Gingrich are ones of racial or cultural discrimination. I think we are merely stating the obvious. Then why can't this problem be solved?

I venture to say America's consumers and businesses are furnishing much of the fuel that stokes this fantastic problem. Until three years ago, I was a businessman. I looked to cut expenses in order to make a profit. As I recounted this part of the report to my wife, Holly told me I would never have hired illegal labor or under-paid my employees. I'm not sure. Luckily, my businesses glided along with the dot.com boom, so I never fretted about the overhead costs of my employees and contractors.

Ah yes, my motives were pure, but Joe Manufacturer across the street is going to find the least expensive way to produce a widget. Why? Because Josephine Consumer down the way is looking for the least expensive widget on the market. Result? Baby, bring those Mexicans and South Americans across the border in any shape or form. You want your lawn tended? Fine. You want your hamburger flipped at McDonalds? Fine.

Oops; hold on there. Restricted immigration? Effective Blue Cards? Diminution of immigrant flow? OK. But mow your own grass; the lawn cutter can't get over the border. And grill your meat yourself; the short order cook is still in Juarez.

I wish the immigration problem Newt discussed could be blamed on the ethnic politicians' stand on the issue. The problem is more complex. From my limited view, it's as much a matter of national will as anything else. I know some very smart people are reading Your On the Street Reporter reports. Some even understand economics. Some even read *The Economist!* I look to your input to fill me in (and the rest of us) on this seemingly intractable subject.

### **Newt is Far From a Newt**

Newt is an engaging speaker and an intelligent man. I wish he would not talk quite so fast, and I think his catch-phrases could use a bit more work. But overall, I was impressed with Mr. Gingrich.

I rarely engage in conversations with the speakers at luncheons, lectures, and symposiums. Perhaps I don't because I spent twenty years on the podium, usually talking to groups of people for seven hours a day, five days in a row. At the end of the day, I often did not have a lot of sentences remaining in my inventory. I have empathy of these folks and tend to let them go their own way at the end of their presentation. But I made an exception today.

- Reporter, "Nice talk, Mr. Gingrich."
- Newt looks directly at me, shakes my hand and says, "Thanks"
- Reporter, "I've not been a really big follower of yours....."
- Newt's eyes start to glide past and above your Reporter, as he releases our hand shake.
- Reporter, "...but your talk today on health care was very convincing."
- Newt's eyes come back in my direction. As the next well-wisher pushes me aside to get his two-cents in, Newt says, "Thanks."

Your On the Street Reporter.