

Let me rephrase the Daily News' question: Is the current ethical inquiry worthwhile? Yes. Let it run its course and the country will be better for it. Meanwhile, why not enjoy the irony and paradox of it all?

Does anyone really believe that Newt Gingrich would have gone after a Republican clone of Jim Wright? Or that there are none such? Does anyone believe that a Democratic nominee with faults like those of John Tower would have been rejected as secretary of defense by a Democratic majority? If so, they had better go back to the pumpkin patch.

Does anyone really believe that politicians are not mirror images of those who elect them? Does anyone really believe that they would play the game differently?

My point is obvious: We are to blame for the ethical mess in Washington. We have always known about the perks and the sleaze, but we have never bothered to demand higher standards.

— Bill Becker
Woodland Hills

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The editor
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Public Forum
Daily News
P.O. Box 4200
Woodland Hills, CA 91335

June 16, 1989

Dear Editor,

Let me rephrase the question: Is the current ethical inquiry worthwhile? Yes--let it run its course and the country will be the better for it. Meanwhile, why not enjoy the irony and paradox of it all?

Does anyone really believe that Newt Gingrich would have gone after a Republican clone of Jim Wright? Or that there are none such? Does anyone believe that a John Tower look-alike on the Democrat's side of the aisle would have been rejected for Secretary of Defense by a Democratic majority? Or that he would never have been nominated by a Democratic President? If so, they had better go back to the pumpkin patch.

Does anyone really believe that politicians are not mirror images of those who elect them? Does anyone really believe that if they were in the politician's shoes, they would play the game differently?

My point is obvious--we are to blame for the ethical mess in Washington. We have always known about the "perks" and the "sleaze," but we have never bothered to demand higher standards, either from apathy, cynicism, or because we enjoy trickle-down benefits ourselves. For example, how many aerospace employees seriously disagree with current practices in lobbying Congress? How many of us really admire the "whistleblower" who takes ethical codes seriously? How many of us think instead that he or she is just stupid for going public, or simply wants revenge?

Only now that a politically motivated mud-slinging contest is underway are we forced to take these questions seriously. Yes--the nation will be better off when the air clears. But, who among us can honestly feel holier-than-thou about it?

Sincerely,

Bill Becker
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Bill Becker