

## ***Newt Gingrich Without Tears***

***By Mel Lavine***

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He advertised himself as the smartest person in the room. His rivals may have meant well, but they did not know how things worked in Washington. They were not historians like Newt, had never served as speaker of the House (though he failed to acknowledge he resigned in disgrace.).

They also had never worked closely with Ronald Reagan like Newt. In fact Newt rated scarcely a mention in Reagan's diary, and, according to Lou Cannon, the late president's biographer and a former Washington Post reporter, Reagan had little to do with the congressman.

It's too soon to see how the Florida primary plays out for Republicans in the days ahead. Funny things happen on the way to conventions. But it's not too soon to take note that the ex-speaker was the first to play the race card, coded, of course, as when he called President Obama "the most successful food stamp president ni American history."

When Juan Williams, a Fox News panelist, in a debate a couple of weeks ago in South Carolina, suggested that his remarks might be "intended to belittle the poor and racial minorities," Gingrich sneered, "I know among the politically correct, you're not supposed to use facts that are uncomfortable."

Republicans in South Carolina lapped it up.

In 2010, as Charles M. Blow reminded us recently in the New York Times, Gingrich told an interviewer for a right-wing publication that President Obama adhered to a "Kenyan, anti-colonial" outlook. He added, "I think he worked very hard at being a person who is normal, reasonable, moderate, bipartisan, transparent, accommodating – none of which was true."

The source of Gingrich's defining moment about the president was an article in Forbes which, he said, gave him the "most profound insight I have read in the last six years about Bararck Obama."

The article was by Dinesh D'Souza, a native of India, an author of conservative Christian books, and the president of the King's College in New York City. In the article Gingrich cited, D'Souza said:

“Our president is trapped in his father’s time machine. Incredibly, the U.S. is being ruled according to the dreams of Luo tribesmen of the 1950s. This philandering, inebriated African socialist, who raged against the world for denying him the realization of his anti-colonial ambitions, is now setting the nation’s agenda through the reincarnation of his dreams in his son.”

Gingrich’s enthusiasm for D’Souza’s rhetoric heaped poison on the political landscape.

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