



A response to the reaction to the reception of the backlash over the Great Interview Mishap

We didn't have time for a cartoon, plus we are already using two and that's the limit. So here's a flame in a teacup, because we don't have the technical knowhow to depict a storm in a teacup. PHOTO: STS

THE OUTRAGED CORRESPONDENT

Among the things on social media that have outraged people, especially journalists and social media influencers and social justice warriors, is the bungled interview by a Bangladeshi of a well-known American academic.

We are naming neither party in the fear of backlash that we shamed the person who, according to the various reactions, "speaks bad English", "should be celebrated for taking initiative" and also "is not a genuine journalist, so how dare?"

First came the news that a small online platform and a young "journalist" (contractually obligated quote marks) was interviewing the stalwart social critic or the father of

modern linguistics as many call him.

Then came news that the interview didn't happen after all. This correspondent woke up to vague statuses on Facebook cringing at the sheer audacity of the interviewer who failed in calculating the right time, no thanks to daylight savings.

This triggered the phenomenon that critical thinker Do Burnhim (to the ground) recently referred to as the reaction to the reaction to the reaction video.

The easiest of them came first. They critiqued the dude's English, lamented on the country's otherwise impeccable but now tarnished image, his inability to respect the great linguist, the audacity of getting a sponsorship. In long-winding statuses that took precious minutes to write, they

criticised his poor English language capabilities. They also questioned his social media use.

"This was all just a social media gimmick. He did it for the likes. I cannot believe he took screenshots of personal correspondence with the man and shared them on social media just to get popular and create a hype," said one user who also got plenty of likes and comments himself for his daylong rant on the matter.

But soon enough, as afternoon rolled into evening the other side came along. This was the reaction-to-the-reaction-to-the-interview gang. In even longer, more nuanced statuses, they let everyone know how much they loved the critical thinker and how valuable a lesson this interview is for Bangladeshis because at least the TikTok generation

(which btw is considered even worse than the Facebook generation) now knows who this great linguist is.

They defended the interviewer's English and critiqued the colonial mindset of the first responders to the Great Interview Mishap.

They quickly explained daylight savings to every idiot and confirmed how difficult it is to get a hang of it because the white people truly love how to confuse the living daylights out of us. They questioned the first responders' reaction and asked them if they were so into the great linguist, why didn't they set up interviews themselves?

"Comment on the good. See the good side here is at least people now know who Chomsky is (I have read reviews of his books, so I am well

aware) and they should pick up some books to increase their self-awareness," said yet another reactor.

Small-time news media outlets were also quick to make collages informing people of the Great Interview Mishap. Many went on to comment there as well. Both first and second and third reactors. Against the interviewer, for the interviewer, against the whole thing, for the whole thing and it went on in an endless loop. Until, well until yours truly decided to do a reaction to the reaction to the reaction to the interview, to finally seal the deal?

UPDATE: Soon after this story was published, the outrageous correspondent stayed up late into the night scrolling through social media to see the reception of this article and the reaction to this particular piece. It was not good.

420ANDME

Want to know your history in HD? Accuse someone powerful of sexual assault

UNCRITICAL CORRESPONDENT

A new trend has taken hold in Chapasthan, which has seen multiple accusations of sexual assault against powerful, politically connected individuals so that the so-called victims can learn of their entire history and background and have old memories unearthed.

The trend started after Famous Person (FP) accused Rich Political Person (RPP) of trying to rape her and the entire country of Chapasthan went up in arms.

From Facebook commenters, television news channels, to actual members of parliament -- everyone was talking about the incident that allegedly took place at an alleged club, but definitely at midnight. The FP had accused the RPP, who is also a CIP and member of a political party and former chief head hodom of a club, of forcing her to drink alcohol, physically assaulting her, and then trying to rape her.

She was victim-blamed, of course, but that's not the point. Part of the victim-blaming was television channels digging up old footage of her going to another club, this too after hours (as all victims do) and (out of frame, but definitely her) throwing plates, glasses and ashtrays when told she would not be served drinks.

"That is why I was trying to make her drink when she arrived at my club. That was after hours too, but as she was an FP, I made a special consideration," the RPP said while sipping a glass of coloured water in his air-conditioned jail cell, from which he was soon released following impassioned parliament speeches from his party colleagues proclaiming his decency.

"Oh, I was also protecting the bottles of imported liquor, because she was trying to steal them. I may have pushed her then, and beaten up her gay companion and made him dance," there were good-natured guffaws from behind the camera when the RPP said this.

Soon, it was not just footage of the FP going to clubs, but pictures and footage started surfacing of her childhood, in which she was seen crying at her 12th birthday party and, going further back, throwing toys out of her pram in a rage when she was one-and-a-half years old. There was also an interview of her best friend during her teen years, who accused her of being a spoilt brat. In another interview her sister said that the FP had once stolen her ice cream and threw it out the window.

"I would have forgiven her if she had eaten it, but she did it just to spite me," her sister said.

From all of this the court of public opinion built a case against her which said that her

blubbing press conference was just following a pattern of behaviour that had been well established.

Among this digging of her past to prove that actual sexual assault could never take place in a pious society such as Chapasthan's, a lot of old pictures surfaced, for which her family was very thankful. Family holidays were retraced in minute detail, special attention given to the Western countries they visited.

Following this, anyone who has lost memories or wants to find out about their past started accusing powerful persons of sexual assault.

"I had to apply for university but couldn't find my birth certificate," said Aparna. "So, I

accused a bureaucrat of trying to rape me."

Soon enough, Aparna had her birth certificate and pictures of her staying out on the rooftop past sundown resurfacing.

Another woman, who wished to remain anonymous (not for long, eh?) accused another powerful man (anonymous) of rape.

After showing pictures of her wearing a sleeveless salwar kameez and a selfie where she was seen posing with three men during what seemed like an office party, she was asked what records she was seeking to unearth.

"Nothing, I am actually saying that (bleep bleep) raped me," Salma said, and we ended our interview, promising to find her high school graduation certificate soon.



InCEL member terms 'masked men date' hogwash

Health minister says they are exempt from mask guidelines

UNROMANTIC CORRESPONDENT

After months of faithful mask-wearing amid the Covid-22 pandemic, a group calling themselves the Infinitely Charming and Evergreen Lads (InCEL) has announced a ban on its members wearing masks even as infection rates and deaths spike countrywide.

The group came into prominence a few months after the onset of the pandemic and became very popular worldwide.

It started out with men (it is an all-male group) complaining on social media that because of stay-at-home guidelines, their love lives had taken a hit. They soon coalesced into a group where they mostly bragged about past romantic conquests and how they could not wait until the pandemic was over and they could be "out and about again".

On a side note, this correspondent dug through the original members' profiles (all fully public, of course) and could not find a single picture of them on a date.

Once lockdown was eased, all the InCEL members went about with renewed confidence, sure that after long months of isolation, the dating scene will be lit.

"All of us wore masks religiously for

the first few months after lockdown ended," said Osama Zaman, the founding member. "We were all very excited about the idea that was doing the rounds then -- everyone was saying 'masked men date', so we were all wearing masks.

"But that was in fact counterproductive. No matter how much time we spent wearing masks -- indoor selfies, outdoor selfies, bathroom selfies, shower selfies, whistling-at-the-fairer-sex-on-street-corner selfies -- there was zero luck on the dating front.

"That is when we realised the real problem. As the mask hides half our faces, none of the ladies can see how handsome we are. So, I have declared last week that no InCEL member shall wear masks from now on. Things are about to get very busy!"

The group has also had very high turnover since the "no mask, now date" announcement, but experts say that is because a lot of them have been contracting Covid.

Meanwhile, Chapasthan Health Minister Mahid Zalek told reporters that InCEL members will not be forced to wear masks.

"It's not like they are mixing with anyone other than themselves anyway. Maybe, soon, we won't have a problem," he said.