

Media/Don Imus

WHY I WON'T TALK TO JOURNALISTS ANY MORE

"...I have granted my last interview. Now, in their own medium, I shall tell you what these journalists are really like..."

I want to say right up front that I am a star. I am in fact a very big star. The hottest thing to hit radio in 50 years. I have been in New York less than a year, and when you are not in New York City the national press ignores you. I was a big star last year in Cleveland, but the New York press was not bright enough to realize what I was going to mean to them. Now everybody in the country wants to write about me. The following outfits have recently done or are doing articles about Imus in the Morning: *Life*, *Time*, *New York*, *Esquire*, *Rolling Stone*, *Newsday*, *New York Daily News*, and dozens of lesser papers and tip sheets.

Because they all know now that I am a star, every lame, alcohol-dazed, drug-crazed, parasitic creep with a felt-tipped pen and a Norelco cassette wants to get in on the act. In their depressing attempts to become heavyweight journalists, they all want to write about what Imus in the Morning is really like. Their idea of sensitive, in-depth writing is to call me arrogant, callous, irreverent, tasteless, shallow, weird, and vicious. They call me a disk jockey. What they really want is to get close to my groupies.

I have tolerated them until now. I could have misused my power by drowning them over WNBC's 50,000 watts. No. But I have granted my last interview. And now, in their own medium, I shall tell you what these hack journalists themselves are like.

In the first place, every wimp who has ever interviewed me has actually asked me what time I get up in the morning. I have answered with whatever hour popped into my mind. They were all true answers.

The second thing they always ask me is how I prepare myself mentally for my show, how I get "up." They print whatever I tell them, which so far has included: I pop pills; I snort coke; I rub peanut butter under my eyes; I ask Him for wit.

The third thing they always ask is: What is a typical day? That is one of the stupidest questions on earth. I do not have typical days. I am a star. In fact, I do not have days at all. I have events, many of which I relate on the air.



Imus in the Morning: They call him arrogant, callous, tasteless, weird, vicious.

The *Esquire* guy opened up with "What's a typical day?" I told him, First off, a typical day is not to read *Esquire*. He persisted. So I told him I shot up to get it together, did my show in a nod, ate late breakfast in a coffee shop, checked my business interests on 42nd Street, and then went home to my garage apartment in Greenwich to take a nap before sitting down at my typewriter to spend three to four evening hours ferociously writing original comedy bits for the next day's show. This is more or less true.

I called *Esquire* to check this guy out. An editor there told me this is a serious story. I am hip to what *Esquire* means by a serious story. They interview in 1972, and run the hatchet job in 1976, with a picture of the subject exposing himself before the *Pietà*.

Now, this *Esquire* guy does not seem to me to be a bad dude. He is an intellectual, and I decide to go ahead with him because I need an intellectual article about me. He says he plans to analyze my appeal to middle-class folk. He uses the biggest words of all the journalists I have talked to. He said he would write about the vicarious pleasure the average working-class stiff gets from hearing me tell my boss to bug off.

The *Daily News* guy uses only three-letter words from the Crossword. The way he tried to get the real Imus in the Morning was to ask me what nationality I was. Actually he said "nat." I said Welsh, English, Polish, Jewish and

colored. He used the first four, which corresponded exactly to the number of olives he had accumulated in glasses at the restaurant. He has been writing this junk for a hundred years, and he was the first biggie I met here, so I was doing my humble act.

But the main thing to remember about the *Daily News* guy is that he prints whatever I tell him. I tell him I am replacing Carson, and he prints it. I tell him Gambling is buying NBC to shut me off, and he prints it. I tell him I haven't long to live, which is what drives me, and he prints it. The other day my engineer called him and said I had just died. The *Daily News* guy asked him what time I got up that morning.

The *Newsday* guy arrived at the studio one morning wearing a backpack, looking like he just came off the Oregon Trail. I was worried that the creep was just going to pitch camp right there and smoke dope. I wasn't far wrong, because one of the first interesting things he told me about himself was that he didn't have enough money to get his car out of the parking lot. I gave him a few bucks and showed him where the men's room was. He didn't ask many questions. He had been taping my comedy bits off his radio for some time, and he had with him one of those typical little cassette tape recorders all these guys carry, and a stack of tapes which I assume he is now bootlegging as a record album. While he sat watching me do my show he made occasional notes in a little book. Every time he went to the men's room I looked in the book. His notes showed that he was missing some important points. Every time he came back from the men's room I filled him in. As a result, the story he did on me was not too bad.

See, these guys do not understand how their own business works. They think they just get the idea to do a story on Imus in the Morning, and they go do it. That is not the way it happens. They are being set up. Most of the stories are assigned because I get them assigned. For example, I called *Time* magazine one day and said I was handling publicity for Imus in the Morning, the hottest radio per-

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sonality in the entire country. I told them that Imus would not ordinarily talk to journalists, but that I could get him to talk to *Time*.

Right away they sent over a photographer and some technical stiff, and those guys trampled all over union rules and set up lights in the studio and photographed me. They also sent over one of their foxes. She spent two days with me, asking intelligent questions. *Time* has a lot of very bright, diligent women working for them. Then they have a lot of very dull, drink-ravaged male hacks writing the stories. *Time* ran a one-line quote from me, and got it wrong.

One guy I never fully understood was the *Rolling Stone* guy. This Charles Manson look-alike showed up one morning at the studio with dirty Levi's and a pretty girl. He pointed to the girl and delivered a carefully rehearsed one-liner which I quote: "Imus in the Morning, I want you to meet Sidney in the flesh."

It was downhill from there. We went for breakfast, and the girl wisely got bored and left, which seemed to panic the *Rolling Stone* guy. A guy from *Life* happened to be with me, so *Rolling Stone* begged *Life* to sit in on the interview and help him with questions.

Which brings me to the *Life* guy. *Life* was going to do the story, of course, because everybody else had now done it. But this meathead never took any notes, never turned on his tape recorder in four months. The thing about a guy from *Life* is, you can't shake him off. What they do is send somebody out to live with you for a year before deciding not to run the story. The guy never has to write anything, just keep stubs for his expense account.

But in time this *Life* guy really unnerved me. He almost got us arrested when he threatened to hijack a plane we were in over California. He almost got me in a fight with some docile Coca-Cola executives in the Bahamas. He kept pressing me to interview him on the air. He tried to talk like me, and told broads everywhere we went that he was Imus.

And so I have decided not to give any more interviews. The fact is, I do not need to tell jive-mouth fake writers what time I get up in the morning. I do not need to be asked what I eat, what I smoke, how old I am, or what I do all day. I have 50,000 watts with which to promote myself. The next journalist I will talk to is Clifford Irving, when he gets out. He will, in fact, write the authentic story of Imus in the Morning. Meanwhile, I shall remain a powerful, exciting enigma.



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