

Well Tenzin, it appears your comment was written around Aug. 20th, sent to me by BTB on Sept. 3rd, and I received it yesterday, Sept. 20th. It also appears your comment focussed entirely on my post about Whispers, which seems odd since you wrote it under "The Presumption of Whiteness" post. Anyway, I'll answer your comment line by line.

* (Tenzin writes) "Again, using this man's untimely death as fodder for your narcissistic ramblings. Your 'epitaph' to him was insulting. Horribly insulting."

That's a rather mean thing to say, Tenzin, and surprising because I'd thought we'd turned a bit of a corner after I brought Mr Goehler's passing to your attention. Besides, I think Whispers himself would disagree with your accusations. As to narcissism — and it's unfortunate this comes up in the first sentence " — are you very familiar with the clinical definition? (Also, are you very familiar with irony? Lol!) I doubt that many people who know me would say I lack empathy, or that I'm particularly grandiose or an admiration-whore. I don't believe much of what I write here implies those things, either.

Epitaph, Ms Pot, is your word and not mine, as I'd only intended a brief reflection on how Whispers' suicide so starkly reminded me to not judge people by the characters they portray, because they are invariably deeper and more multifaceted than whatever my own always-limited experience with them suggests. I never intended to praise the man, though I've developed a greater appreciation for the complex person behind the simple "Whispers" persona from the stories his friends and acquaintances here have shared with me. Surely you don't think my acknowledgement of either the depth of his feeling for his son or the impact of his tragic last act on my own thinking was "insulting", do you? Are you insulted just because it came from me? You know you aren't required to read my blog, right?

* (T. writes) "You insulted this man in his death and inappropriately in the manner of it."

Insofar as I can make sense of this accusation at all, I refer to the paragraph above. I certainly never mocked Whispers or criticized his final decision in any way. Every person should get to choose how he or she will go out, and although I wish Whispers would've tried to weather the storm, I understand ~~his decision~~ ^{and respect his} decision not to. I'm certain that nothing I wrote suggest otherwise.

* (Tenzin writes) "You cooed and squirmed with delight at the manner I took offence to this: I did? What in my reply to you could possibly make you say this? In fact, I had no impression you'd taken offence to anything other than my ill-advised crack about you and whispers sharing "troll tendencies", which I admitted was regrettable and uncalled for. But my reply to you evidences no "delight" at any negative reaction from you, as I felt no such delight. I thought my words and tone were rather conciliatory, were they not? "Cooed and squirmed"?? Tenzin, I'm neither a cooer nor a squirmer. You attribute so many unflattering things to me that simply do not exist outside your imagination. Why?"

* (Tenzin writes) "Even trying to compare yourself to Oscar Wilde and other famous wits. You are none of these people, and you never will be."

Well, I certainly agree I'll never be anything like an Oscar Wilde, though I thought it was you who'd appropriated his words without giving him credit until @Chugakusei pointed it out? Anyway, I don't believe I made any such comparison as I don't recall it and that really doesn't sound like me. If anything, ~~maybe I~~ ^{maybe I} said I'm clearly NOT in the league of those luminaries? I tend more toward over-earnestness, I think (though that can be important too, no?) and so sometimes I try to be distinctly lighter hearted and more humorous. No need to remind me that I don't often succeed... I'm well aware of the fact. ☹️

* (Tenzin writes) "Here's a tip from someone who writes for a living. In an epitaph, YOU Never Insult The Deceased."

Right, well, again... not an epitaph. It was also no insult to speak candidly about whispers — a person I actually spent real time with — and to express my regret at not replying to his last two letters to me, which remains one of my more significant failings of recent years. I'd always assumed I'd see him again, but tomorrow is never promised, is it?

Also... you write for a living? What sort of writing?

* (Tenzin writes) " (This man's family and friends and children) will read your 'epitaph', your spiteful, toxic, bitchy, poisonous ~~diatribe~~ ^{laced} diatribe of someone you once spent time with in jail."

Well. When it comes to toxic diatribes, I suppose you are the expert. That said, I do wish you'd quote exactly what you're referring to. I had no spite toward whispers, and "bitchy" seems a bit oversold, no? Also, again, not an epitaph, ^{but} although I hadn't intended his family or friends to see it, I suppose I hope they do now, both the original post and the more recent one with comments from others who knew him, as well as my own ~~evolving~~ ^{evolving} appreciation of an obviously complex man. I'd like them to know that he ~~had an impact~~ ^{had an impact} here, and he is not forgotten. My fear is that no one would create anything to memorialize him at all - remember, I didn't know ~~remained so close~~ ^{remained so close} to anyone - and I wanted to be wrong about that but in case I wasn't, I thought I should try, because however mixed my own feelings about him may be, he did and does deserve to be remembered... and NOT merely as a deceased "criminal," which would be a terrible shame if people only knew what the news media said about him.

* (Tenzin writes) "Maybe he didn't like you."

Sure, maybe he didn't. But I think our feelings about each other were probably pretty similar. We enjoyed some conversations, shared some stories, kicked ideas around, disagreed at times and agreed at others. We weren't close, but we were amicable and shared many acquaintances as well as, I believe, some degree of mutual respect. You'd be shocked by much of what he told me about his experiences, no ~~doubt~~ ^{doubt}.

* (Tenzin writes) "When he's dead, you get to knock him, because you didn't have the guts to do it when he was alive. And you did knock him, didn't you? Gave his character a good slap."

I suppose I did "knock" him a bit, but I didn't slap his character. I simply told what I knew. And we spoke often and honestly enough that he knew I didn't entirely approve of some of his ways. No one who knows me would ever accuse me of lacking the guts to speak my mind, though I try to refrain when no good can come of it and feelings may be hurt. Whispers's facade led me to believe he was pretty impervious to emotion, so I never worried much about his feelings, and in retrospect I should've been more compassionate despite his professed contempt for the concept. We all need a little soft-hearted kindness at times, don't we?

* (Tenzin wrote) "You slapped his efforts too, put him on the ground so anyone following his blog could see some conflated person you lied about, just in case they liked him or thought what he wrote was good."

Mein Gott, does your own hypocrisy NEVER startle you? This sure sounds an awful lot like what you regularly do with me on this site. Projection, Tenzin... it's real. Anyway, my post was for people who read my blog, not his, and in any event I don't believe I "slapped his efforts". If I did, please tell me how so. In all honesty, from everything he ever told me about his case as well as his exploits in here, I doubt he had quite so much faith in his imminent release as you think he did. But maybe he did. I like to believe he had a chance, and not just from a sycophantic suck-up session with a couple of pompous parole commissioners. He deserved consideration on his own genuine merits, although my admiration for his unique character is tarnished by some of his behaviour toward others in here. But much of that may have just been an expression of his frustration with an impossible situation. Anyway, I never lied about him, and I've ABSOLUTELY never tried to poison anyone else's liking of him, as you suggest. I simply do not operate that way. Those whom I dislike I generally just leave to those who do like them, and despite my ambivalence about Whispers, I'd damn sure never try to smear his reputation or encourage others to like ~~him~~ ^{him LESS.} Remember, I'm not a cop or a prosecutor or any such crusader type. I'm not you, Tenzin.

* (Tenzin writes) "Did you read Father John's response to you? No, you haven't, have you?"

Why on earth would you imagine I haven't? The better question is, did YOU read it, and if so, did you understand it? Do you not see that he isn't criticizing me, but thanking me — and thanking you as well — for reminding him (in his words) "that behind ^{each} ~~every~~ entry of text are real people, living, breathing, and sometimes loving." It's much like what Whispers' manner of death reminded me of. Father John was also surprised ~~at~~ at seeing one blogger (me) relating my experiences with another blogger (Whispers), something he'd apparently never seen before, as well as by YOUR "nearly tender, practically kind" response to me, which he'd definitely never seen before. Incidentally, I had read your ~~comment~~ ^{comment} much the same way he did (and I was similarly taken aback by it), but judging from your current missive it seems both Father John and I misunderstood you as thoroughly as misunderstood him, didn't we? You were being neither tender nor kind, but just restraining your bile for a change. Well, do re-read his comment if you'd like; I believe you may find something you overlooked before.

* (Tenzin writes) "You screwed up, in a very nasty way."

Honestly, I have no idea what you're on about in some of these comments. It really seems that you've just radically misread both my words and my intentions, probably because you have some ghoulish cartoon fantasy of who I must be and how I must think. I'm inclined to say "grow up", but that just makes me sound immature too, along with belittling young people.

* (Tenzin writes) "Save your ire for the cops who caught you. Leave people alone."

Why T, are you finally coming around?? 😊 I never thought I'd find you agreeing with me that cops are not people! Congratulations on your awakening, though. It feels good to open your eyes outside the cave, no? 😊 Anyway, my post on whispers showed no ire, so I don't know what you're talking about.

Incidentally, saying any cops "caught" me implies I was doing something illicit to be "caught" for, and that's just not the case. It also implies that they didn't just bumble their ~~incompetent~~ ^{incompetent} carcasses into my path and then proceed to blow up a multitude of lives in order to boost their beer funds with the promotions and bonuses they were sure to ~~be rewarded with~~ ^{be rewarded with} for doing so much damage to so many people... and that's not the case either. All the tragedy and ~~havoc they wreaked~~ ^{havoc they wreaked} ~~on~~ a bunch of actual humans who were just minding their own business was simply a stroke of dumb luck for the destructive doughnut brigade.

* (Tenzin writes) "Leave his remaining children, friends, and family, memory of their dad and friend alone. Better still, remove the 'epitaph'."

If I believed I'd posted anything upsetting to many or most of them, I'd consider removing the post, of course. But I don't think anything I've written has upset anyone but you. I still hope that anyone who knew and loved William "whispers" Goehler, who happens to see my posts about him, will see that he WAS liked and appreciated in here... but again, that original post was more about my own journey and whispers' role in it. ~~I hadn't~~ ^{I hadn't} expected it to be read by people who knew him, but by people who read MY blog for whatever reasons. Your response inspired me to include other prisoners' remembrances

of him later, once I realized my posts could be a vehicle for people outside to understand who Whispers was to those who knew him inside. He truly does have admirers here, and many were eager to talk to me about him, but in the end not many were willing to let me disseminate their stories on here, not even anonymously. Whispers was colorful and a bit of a lightning rod, and anyone who REALLY knew him wouldn't be surprised or upset to hear that.

* (Tenzin writes) "Leave his memory alone. It doesn't belong to you."

True. I agree. Nor does it belong to you, nor to anyone really, but to EVERYONE who knew him in one capacity or another, and I really believe that he of all people would never begrudge others their opinions or expressions, about him or anything else really. I don't mean to sound too much the dick here, but you DEFINITELY did not know this man, Tenzin. Not at all. He wouldn't have appreciated your "advocacy" on his behalf in a self-righteous crusade to prevent someone you don't like from talking about him, nor your conduct on my blog in general. Whispers could be a bit of a bully at times, but that doesn't mean he LIKED bullies any more than anyone else. I'm fairly sure of that much, at least.