

Don Imus stretched the limits of relevancy this past week, and lost his career as a result. In a faithful reconstruction of Icarus' flight, Imus proved what happens when everyone else treats him the way he likes to treat everyone else, and at the same time as he inserted "nappy headed ho" into the vernacular he also provided a Mel Gibson-esque opportunity for closeted bigots everywhere to feel temporarily enlightened. Now that the zeitgeist has absorbed him and spit him out, we are left to ponder how the latest in his seemingly endless chain of intolerant utterances led to his downfall this time.



Pawn thinks the answer is simple, the press has built up a large catalog of truly frightening photos of him, and has been just waiting for a chance, in this 24/7 wired news environment, to use them all. The CNN homepage was a veritable slide show of craggy rugged Imus facial disaster. The world will be a better place when this orgy of Imus is behind us once and for all. Where's Dannielynn Hope when we need her?

We make much of relevancy, us of **Fortune**. What is it that we are carrying on about? It is that so much of popular culture, and by dint of that, so much of our immersive 24/7 newsphere, is obsessed with things which really have no relevance to our lives? More time is spent on Anna Nicole Smith than Darfur. Neither has any direct affect on our lives, but at least Darfur is about events which are affecting millions of people, as opposed to the dozen or so who are actually affected by Smith's issues. There are so many people affected by the goings on in Darfur that [Google Earth shows it](#).

What is so compelling about the Imus debacle, at least to **Pawn**, is that here is a story of immense relevance, the issues broached, or is it breached — racism, sexism, bullying — are the unhealed sores which fester on our national psyche. Viscious attacks are leveled daily against so many people in our society, we have come to take it for granted. The misogyny implicit in Imus' remarks, however, seem especially raw since the blows fell on Cinderellas, young women who had done nothing but incite the public's (a small sector of it at least) interest for their perseverance.

In a recent *New York Post* column, Dick Morris and Eileen McGann wrote about the contrasts between Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton. In this slashing attack on Hillary, they take this tired swipe (in reference to recent poll numbers), "Turned off by Hillary's shrill advocacy, they love Obama's reasonable demeanor." It has become the norm that whenever a pundit, of either gender, differs with a woman, that woman is "Shrill." One rarely hears men described

as shrill, save David Sedaris, perhaps. Men may be “strident,” but women are “shrill” or “stentorian” on a regular basis. This systemic misogyny has seeped so thoroughly into our collective conscious that we are barely even aware of it anymore. What woman could possibly run for office and not be characterized as shrill, given how we have all been conditioned to this frame?

It is a reflection of that reality that Imus gave us. He trotted out a stereotype and threw it in our faces. This is not to exonerate him; what he said was ugly and it quickly and effectively stripped those ten young women from Rutgers of their achievement and glory they deserved. He made them small, or he tried to. He failed.

That it failed speaks volumes about our society. Just what it says will take some time to sort out.