

The Heartfelt Press-Release Future

By Jim Shahin



I've seen the future of relationships, and its name is Jude Law.

The actor, who was nominated for Oscars for his roles in *The Talented Mr. Ripley* and *Cold Mountain*, said he learned through press accounts that his affair with his children's nanny wounded his fiancée. "Following the reports in today's papers," he said in a statement, "I just want to say I am deeply ashamed and upset that I've hurt Sienna and the people most close to us."

Sienna is Sienna Miller, invariably described in the press as Law's "actress fiancée."

Although the couple's woes are as old as a typical Hollywood movie story line, what got me is the thoroughly modern way that Law discerned the impact of his actions: *following the reports in today's papers*.

Like he was following his investments or the weather forecast.

This, I submit, is the manner in which all of us will communicate in the future. If everyone is going to be famous for 15 minutes, then it stands to reason that everyone will learn about their misbehavior and its impact on those around them through reading the tabloids.

And the correctives will follow suit. In the old days, flowers might have been used. But the trailblazing Law felt so bad when he learned of his contretemps that he did what any responsible person in his situation would do: He sent out a press release.

Who says romance is dead?

His statement expressed his "sincere regret" to Miller, his costar in the remake of *Alfie*.

Despite the tender gesture, the weirdest thing happened. In the days that followed, Miller reportedly called off their wedding. She seemed to conclude that a press release wasn't quite enough.

Some people, I guess, just can't be satisfied.

Miller's pique notwithstanding, I think it is obvious that the future belongs to press releases. It is the New Way. It is how husbands will communicate to wives, workers to bosses, siblings to one another.

"Johnny," Mom will say to her eldest son, "I have been reading accounts of your having given your brother a swirly. I want you to send out a press release this instant, young man, and apologize."

And Johnny will comply. "Having heard admonishments from my mom, I deeply regret giving my fourth-grade brother, Dylan, a swirly. When we were fighting — which, by the way, he started — I meant only to give him a noogie. But he escaped. I grabbed him and tried to give him a wedgie. But he ran into the bathroom. One thing led to another, and next thing you know, I'm giving my younger brother a swirly. I am deeply sorry for any pain I caused my younger brother, and I am not snickering when

I write these words. Honest."

For me, the future is now. I am climbing on this bandwagon before it ever leaves the station. And so, here and now, let me issue the following press release:

"Jim Shahin publicly apologizes to his wife, Jessica Shahin, expressing his 'sincere regret' that he left the refrigerator door open — again (!) — even though he wasn't actively looking for anything in the refrigerator. Instead, he was over by the sink, eating the sandwich he made, wondering if it would be improved by adding, say, jalapeños. Which is why he didn't close the door: He might want to get right back in there, but wouldn't want to be slowed down by having to open it all over again. But that is no excuse.

"Jim recognizes that his actions in the kitchen cause anguish to Jessica and, well, not to too many others. His mom, maybe, who tried for years to get him to 'SHUT THE DOOR WHEN YOU'RE DONE USING THE REFRIGERATOR!'

"So, to them, he apologizes with this prepared statement that he wrote himself and didn't have his publicist write, because a) if his publicist had written it, it would be better, and b) he doesn't have a publicist. Still, just because he couldn't afford to pay somebody a lot of money to fix his problems and had to do it on the cheap doesn't mean he doesn't feel really bad about the suffering he has caused those close to him. He promises to never leave the refrigerator door open again and only hopes that Jessica will forgive him."

I'll let you know if I receive a press release from Jessica. **AW**