



Robin Williams' Suicide Brings Out Worst, Weirdest And Most Personal Of Twitter

By Betsy Rothstein
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In the age of social media, if you can even call it “media,” **Robin Williams’** death, a suicide as the result of “severe depression” is an onslaught of emotions. Good and bad. Angry and touching. And lots and lots of confessionals. *Mediaite* swiftly made an example of *Politico* Magazine writer **Glenn Thrush** for dismissing Williams’ death as not *quite* as important as the masses were making it. There are certain things you’re not allowed to say as people are expressing grief, thinking up memorable movie lines and posting YouTube videos.

And just like that, the Twittersphere had their villain, someone on whom they could take out all their outrage and presumable sadness over Williams’ death. Thrush, after taking a lot of bullets, later expressed something that made sense to me: “To tell the truth I loved the guy (and memorized his first comedy album) but I find the mass reaction jarring.”

The mass reaction is jarring as is the never-ending 24-hour news cycle that makes a death like Williams’ lack a grace it might have been able to possess in previous times. Even close friend **Whoopi Goldberg** felt no need to go on CNN last night. Instead, through a publicist, she said she wasn’t ready to talk.

Moments of silence. Can they still exist?

Among the journalists Thrush received grief from was ex-*Reuters* social media editor **Matthew Keys**, who felt Thrush came off as “callous.” I do hope Thrush saw the rich dark humor in being judged by someone who allegedly worked with a hacking group to break into the *LA Times* website to change a headline. He later blamed Trazodone sleeping pills for unreliable statements to the FBI. He also reportedly got then *Bloomberg Businessweek’s* **Jared Keller**, now at *MicNews*, fired for publishing a private email exchange between them. (An act some might, ahem, deem callous.)

“I shit on no one,” Thrush told Keys. “Read the original tweet.”

A now apparently pious Keys replied, “I did read it. And you might be blind to it, but it came off very callous.”

Keys also asked, “Will Dylan Byers [Thrush's media reporter colleague at *Politico*] write about Glenn Thrush using Robin Williams death to prove himself a total dick?”

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The alleged ex-hacker seemed to relate to Thrush on some level. “I’ll be one of the first to acknowledge that people have misplaced priorities,” he wrote. “That said, I’m not compelled to shit all over people who are saddened to learn that one of their favorite actors has died.”

As big and seemingly sensitive as that sentiment is, I’ll take my online morals seminar from anyone but Keys.

In other waves of grief, journalists admitted that they, too, have suffered with depression. Among them, *Mediaite* editor-in-chief **Andrew Kirell** and *Washington Examiner*’s **Ashe Schow**.

As some began urging those with depression to get help, journalists like Kirell and Schow protested, saying they had no idea what they were talking about.

“Yep. Sometimes depression is like drowning,” shared Kirell. “I’ve been there. It’s not as simple as just telling someone [to get help].”

Schow, too, admitted her personal experience with depression. She had trouble with people declaring that those with depression should “just” go get help. “Just’ pointing out I was diagnosed at 11 and suffer every day. You’re arguing with a fellow sufferer.”

George Scoville, a political strategist who previously worked for the Cato Institute, was firmly on the side of Kirell and Schow. He declared, “Direct online appeals to depressed people to “please get help” demonstrate a total lack of understanding of the illness of depression.”

Charles Flemming, who writes for RedState, argued that Schow’s “toxicity is bleeding into your judgments other people’s kindnesses.”

Schow replied, “Thanks for telling me how to handle my pain while scolding me for doing that to others.”

Sophia Nelson, a motivational, spiritual author of *The Woman Code* who posts on a number of sites, including *HuffPost*, came out with perhaps the biggest confessional of the night.

“We mock & deride people who are hurt,” she wrote. “Attempt suicide. We call them weak. No. They are wounded there is a big difference. Take this deeply personal because I am just emerging from a season of dark depression. Shocked? Sure. I hid it well.”