



ANDREW ON WEDNESDAY

When the private becomes public

These last weeks we have witnessed a couple of boobos made by public figures who many claim should know better than to spill out comments on social media.

Let's take this one step at a time. While appropriate use of language is called for, whether it's on Twitter, Facebook or some blog or other, let's try to get away from this bigoted mentality that haunts our nation. Let's forget, this is the same country that is known for its non-stop gossiping and where so many swear their heads off even when faced with the slightest contradiction they might face, whether it's an old woman struggling as she is crossing the street with her shopping trolley or getting overtaken by a car at a zebra-crossing when the lights are still red. So getting one's knickers in a twist might be a bit too much.

Then again calling Ira a 'bitch', whether it is in private or public, is a 'no-no' and Dr Andrew Borg Cardona being the reputable and experienced lawyer he is should have known better.

Like every other human being, Ira deserves better - not only because of the 'service' she has rendered to the local music industry. Her lovely presence, her willingness to remain humble, her disposition to be closely affiliated with the people who listen to her music which she has done for so many years deserves better, much better. While I do not subscribe to any hero-worshipping and will not put Ira on a pedestal, because she has done all this for herself as well, she most certainly didn't warrant this misapplication. To add insult to injury, all of this happened less than 24 hours before

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spreads faster than the speed of my typing - so there you go, slap-slap but let's get on with it. Oh, and as a side note, if people believe that winning the Eurovision would favour the government as election day looms (because it would create a feel-good factor), I would really give up completely on this country. It would only mean that the Maltese and Gozitans are loony, which I really don't think is the case. In my opinion, people will choose a government that will improve their salary, provide for cheaper fuel and gas, postulate opportunities for training and employment and is ready to reduce bureaucracy - that is the feel-good factor that people are keen about! God help us if having a concert shifts the vote - that would really call for all politicians to pack up and go fishing.

Anyway, so I think we agree that this was wrong and inappropriate.

This hinges to other circumstances that have raised eyebrows. What Mr Joe Grima, the former Minister and Government's Special Envoy for the World Tourism Organisation said on Facebook following the appointment on the new Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, who happens to be a Muslim, is farcical and absurd. He was quoted as saying:

"The writing is on the wall. The cockroaches have invaded dear old London. Londoners thought they were buttering their bread by voting in an Islamic Mayor but with the butter they allowed in the

cockroaches."

Since then, Mr Grima has apologised and claimed that he was misinterpreted. He said that he had no intention of making this sound like a racist blurb. Well, well.

However, unfortunately, this shooting from the hip is becoming symptomatic of broadcasters, bloggers and people who thrive on social media (including police officers). One needs to appreciate that the level of discourse that is plunging by the minute is nowhere near decent. We are obliged as individuals whether in our private or public capacity to make sure that the way we talk and relate to each other creates dialogue and an opportunity to bring together the complex issues that construct our society. Easy-to-use social media, time on one's hand or a passion towards a party or some ideology do not give us the right to throw it at each other left, right and center. Let's face it, we have a couple of blogs that have redefined insults. I think that the wealth that comes with progress in terms of opportunity to speak our minds should not be mixed up with saying it as it comes imprudently and impetuously.

This, unfortunately, is indicative of where we stand in this country at the moment. The mud-slinging, the anger, the blown up antagonism we can do without and political parties have a primary responsibility in toning down the aggression and asking their supporters to do likewise.

Ghandi xi Nghid
by Dr Andrew Azzopardi

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she had to perform in the final of the Eurovision Song Contest. This is further compounded by the fact that the Prime Minister was called a 'motherf*cker'.

I'm sure people with an ounce of common sense would know that the virtual world has never been so real and the word

18 May 1996

Bomb blast destroys London bus

Three people are feared dead and eight have been hurt after a bomb exploded on a double decker bus in the heart of London's West End.

The front of the bus was destroyed by the force of the blast on the Aldwych near the Strand.

The bus had travelled over Waterloo Bridge along Lancaster Place and was passing a Ministry of Defence building and turning onto Aldwych when the bomb exploded.

The explosion comes just nine days after the IRA ended its ceasefire with a bombing in the Docklands area of London, which killed two people.

Scotland Yard says it received no warning of the explosion which happened at 2238 GMT.

The blast, thought to have been on a New Cross to King's Cross bus, could be heard



five miles (eight kilometres) away and witnesses described devastation at the scene. Six people have been taken to St Thomas's Hospital. Three of the injured have "significant" head injuries.

A further two people have been taken to University College Hospital.

One man is "serious but stable" in intensive care while another was admitted with minor cuts.

Three of the casualties were in two cars in front of the bus when the explosion happened.

Paul Rowan, 31, a BBC employee, de-

scribed how the bus was a tangled mess, with metal and glass scattered over about 50 yards.

"I saw one woman who looked in a very bad way. She was face down on the road with bad looking head injuries. There was blood all over the place."

Ten ambulances, five fire engines and four paramedic units were called to the scene.

A large area of the Strand was cordoned off amid fears over another device and police with loudspeakers warned people to move away or to stay inside restaurants, theatres and hotels.

Charing Cross railway station was closed, preventing many people from catching their last trains home to south-east London and Kent.

No one has admitted carrying out the attack but one theory is that the bomb exploded as it was being taken to another destination in London.

Detectives are sifting through the wreckage and the London Central bus company is to hand a tape from the video recorder fitted to the bus over to Scotland Yard for examination.

The Prime Minister John Major was being briefed by officials at 10 Downing Street about the attack. The Irish Government condemned the explosion as "an appalling outrage".