

So How Is THAT a Bully?

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“Ta-DAAA!” Monica’s computer sounded the trumpet loudly. She was being warned that her supervisor, Richard Stonier, was trying to contact her with an instant message. She was right in the middle of a big project that was due in 50 minutes, and she didn’t appreciate being interrupted by him again, for the fourth time in the past hour. She continued working for about a minute until her whole screen vibrated in front of her face. He was sending her a nudge, which meant she better respond immediately or he would give her a written warning that she was being insubordinate.

She stopped what she was doing, saved her work, and opened his instant message.

“What are you doing?” was the important message.

“I am still working on the Garner project,” she responded, feeling anger inside her begin to burn. He knew what she was doing! He had asked her that twice within the last twenty minutes! She needed to get back to work. She was about to close his message when he sent her another one.

“Why you working on that now?” he asked. Why was he asking? He knew why she was working on it. He had assigned it to her. They had just had this same discussion a few minutes ago!

“Because it’s due in 50 minutes,” she responded. “I thought you finished that,” he said. “You told me this morning to make changes to the second half,” she typed, irritated that he was wasting her time.

“What changes are you talking about?” he asked. Instead of typing the entire list, Monica opened her email and copied and pasted the list of 66 changes he had insisted she make, and she sent the message to Richard.

“I’m not sure if all these necessary,” he immediately responded. He didn’t have time to read them just now! What was he talking about? He had been so adamant about these changes being of utmost importance this morning, when he had sent her the list three times.

“Which changes aren’t necessary?” she typed.

“I would have to go over all them all and let you no,” he replied.

“This is due in less than an hour,” she typed.

“You don’t have to tell me when it is do,” he responded. “That is not OK.”

“I’ve already made some of the changes,” she said. She took a deep breath and slowly turned her head to the left and right to stretch her neck.

“You shoul no of done that,” he told her. She was used to his misspellings and poor grammar. “Not OK!”

“You told me this morning to make the changes,” she argued. She hated arguing with him. She could never win.

“What changes you made? I need list out of all chnanges you of made so far in the doc,” he insisted. Oh, great, now she had to go into the document and report to him all the changes she had made! Finding them again would take longer than it took to make the changes.

“I started at the beginning of the list you sent me and I am about 3/4 through it,” she typed, hoping he would be satisfied with that answer.

“OK I need a list of the changes you make before you make them,” he typed.

She copied and pasted the list again and sent it to him.

“OK you always need to check with me befor you start on somthing lik this,” he said.

“You sent me the list and told me to get it done,” she said.

“You won’t have time to get it dome on tome,” he mis- typed.

Not if you don’t let me get back to work, she thought angrily. She was tempted to go back to the project and ignore this conversation.

“You have a lot of other urgent projects you need to be done,” he warned. “You need to learn how to set up you priorties.”

“Yes,” she responded. She had found it was often better to just agree with him, even when she didn’t agree with him. This was the urgent project. This one was due first.

“I got a new cat,” he typed.

Whoopee, she thought. She bit her lip to keep herself in check.

“That’s good,” she responded. “Guess what we named it,” he said. She didn’t have time for this!

“Boy or girl?” she asked, as if that mattered. “Wrong,” he typed. “Is it a boy cat or a girl cat?” she clarified. “Were not sure,” he replied.

“I give up,” she typed. “Just guess,” he insisted. “Garfield?” she typed. He would be the type of person to choose a name like Garfield. “Wrong. Guess again.” She didn’t want to guess! She didn’t care if he had a new cat, and she certainly didn’t care what its name was! She had lots of work to do!

“Snoopy?” She was fresh out of cat names. “Nope. That a dog name.”

“I don’t know,” Monica said, exasperated. Her supervisor was doing all he could do to make sure she couldn’t finish the project on time!

“Just guess,” he repeated. How could she possibly guess what it was?

“Cathy?” she guessed, rubbing her aching forehead with one hand.

“It’s not a comic name,” he said. Well, that was some sort of a clue. That narrowed it down to about a million possible names.

“George Washington?” she typed. She just wanted to finish this game of torture and get back to her project!

“No, but you getting closer,” he said.

What name was close to George Washington?

“Martha?” she guessed, shaking her head.

“Now you get colder,” he responded.

“Thomas Jefferson?”

“Nope. Its no Thomas Jefferson.”

“Abraham Lincoln?” What name could possibly be close, in Richard’s mind, to George Washington?

“Not at all. You are just guessing names.”

Wasn’t that what he had told her to do?

“George Bush?” Monica was getting desperate.

“Ha-ha, very funny. You almost made me laugh.”

“Seattle?”

“No, not at all even one tiny bit close,” he said.

“I give up,” she admitted.

“Do you give up?” he asked.

“Yes, I give up,” she repeated.

“Sure you can’t guess it?” he asked.

“I’m sure I’m sure,” she said.

“What do you mean by that?” he asked. Was he messing with her or just wasting her time? Didn’t he have anything to do? Why was he getting paid more than double her salary for this?

“I can’t guess it,” she said.

“Are you sure you don’t want to try again?” he asked.

“No,” she replied. How could she get him to understand what she meant?

“You’re not sure?” he asked.

“I AM sure. I can’t guess.”

“OK, you missed your chance.”

So, give me the booby prize, she thought.

“So, what is it?” she asked.

“What is what?” he answered. He must be kidding! What was the matter with him?

“What is your cat’s name?” she asked.

“You really want to know?” he asked. Not really, she thought.

“Yes,” she typed. Why was she permitted to lie to him like this? Or, rather, why was she being forced to lie to him like this?

“That’s it,” he said.

“What?” she said, immediately regretting she had typed that. He might have let her end the conversation if she hadn’t asked another question.

“That’s it,” he repeated.

Monica reviewed the last few lines of their conversation. Was the cat’s name ‘Yes’ or ‘That’s it’?

“OK, great,” she typed. Now maybe she could get back to her work.

“Guess how we picked that name,” Richard typed.

Monica wasn't in the mood for guessing games! She had real work to do!

"I don't know," she responded.

"Just guess," he urged.

"It just seemed like that should be its name?" she guessed.

"What do you mean by that?" he asked.

"I don't know. Why did you pick that name?"

"What do you mean by that?" he repeated. She considered not responding and just getting back to her work.

"I give up."

"What do you mean by that?" he repeated a second time. Was he just copying and pasting his response? She could do the same. "I don't know. Why did you pick that name?" she asked

again. "Are you pay attention?" he asked. "Yes," she answered. Are you? she thought. "I got a new car," he said. "I thought you said a new cat," she typed. Oh, no, he had

drawn her in again! "Yep," he typed. Maybe his last line was a typo? Now what was she to say? Monica sat there, staring at her monitor, not knowing what

to do. "It is orange," he typed. Either a cat or a car could be orange. "Really?" she responded. Actually, she didn't care if it was

a cat or a car or both. She didn't really want to know anything about his personal life. He just irritated her to no end!

"Yes, really sweet."

"That's good," she answered, a safe response, for either a cat or a car.

"I got a great deal," he said.

He must be referring to a car. Who would get a great deal on a cat? Well, *he* might.

"That's good," she copied and pasted, sighing with frustration.

"Yeah, it's really nice," he continued.

A car or a cat could be really nice. Which one was he talking about? Oh, she didn't even care! Why didn't he leave her alone? She only had a few

minutes left to work on the project. He was wasting all her time! He had been right – now she couldn't finish the project; she didn't have enough time.

The phone rang. She was saved by the bell! "Gotta go," she typed. "Phone call. Bye." "Cach ya late," he responded. Monica answered her phone. The caller ID just said

'cell phone' so she didn't know who it could be, but she was thankful for whoever was saving her from the instant message conversation she had been having with Richard. "Hi, this is Monica," she said cheerfully. "Hi, it's me, Haddon," her co-worker, Haddon Hanson,

said. She was relieved to hear his voice. He was so nice and always so helpful. He was the one other employee who worked under Richard, supervisor of two. She liked Haddon. He was a good person.

"Thanks for calling me," she said. "You got me out of a sticky conversation." She didn't want to go into detail, because Haddon and Richard were pretty close.

"Well, I just want to let you know, Richard told me to call you and tell you, I turned in the Garner project to the Chief," Haddon said.

"I thought—" Monica began. The Garner project had been her project! She had worked on it by herself for three weeks, then she had sent it to Richard for his approval two weeks ago, following the proper chain of command. This morning he had sent her the list of 66 changes to make before it was due today. Why didn't Richard just tell her that he was having Haddon turn it in the way it was, her first version, before she spent all day making the changes?

"So, the Chief somehow thought I did it all, and he told me I could go home early," Haddon said. "I tried to tell him it was a team effort, but he got a phone call, from Richard, I think, and he dismissed me."

He told the Chief it was a team effort? Monica had done ALL the work on that entire project, that huge project, and Haddon had gotten the credit! It was so unfair, but this type of situation was typical.

"So, I'll see you tomorrow," Haddon said. "Oh, don't forget to do those two Help Desk requests I have due this afternoon. I'm so glad I am getting off early. I have some things at home I need to do."

"See you tomorrow," Monica sighed, frustrated and disappointed as Haddon hung up the phone. She knew better than to argue or even say

anything. She rarely got a break when the Good Ol' Boys' Club was in session. She sat staring at the handset for a few seconds before replacing it on its cradle. Wow, now the project she had been working on so diligently was not even on her list anymore, and she suddenly had two new projects to do, Haddon's projects, besides her other three projects that were due this afternoon. She was both relieved and angry. Her emotions were getting a workout this afternoon! "Hi, Monica," Laura Lewis said, as she slithered into Monica's tiny office. Laura, the receptionist, was very sweet, but her sweaters were always too tight and her blouses were too far unbuttoned. Richard often spent a lot of his time at her desk, just hanging around with her, chatting about anything that was

not work related. "Hi, Laura," Monica said. "What can I do for you?" "Can I get a couple of those books that Richard made?" she

asked, looking at Monica's family pictures, as her long, blond hair fell across the desk. "Actually, I need four of them."

"Books that Richard made?" Monica asked, wondering to what books she was referring. As far as Monica knew, Richard had never made a book – or anything else, for that matter, besides conversation. She slowly shook her head. "What books that Richard made?"

"Yeah, you know, those books he made with all the staff pictures, you know, in each department?" Laura picked up a photo of Monica's husband, Pierre, and examined it.

"Hmmm, let me check," Monica said, turning to her file cabinet.

"Your husband is so photogenic," Laura remarked, as she drooled over him.

"Yes, isn't he?" Monica agreed, as she looked through stacks of booklets she had made.

"He is about the nicest person I've ever met," Laura said, flicking her head to toss her hair behind her back. "You are so lucky to be married to him. His accent makes him seem so romantic."

"It is a real blessing," Monica said, pulling out several copies of the staff photo books. "Are these the books you want?" She handed them to Laura.

"Yeah, those are the ones Richard made," Laura said, taking them from Monica with a smile.

“Well, I made those from the staff database,” Monica said.

“Oh, really? In the Admin meeting, Richard passed them out to everyone there and he said he made them,” Laura said. “I guess he meant to say you guys made them collectively, like, um, his department made them.”

“I guess that is what he meant,” Monica said. The entire administration thought Richard had made the books. Once again, one of the Good Ol’ Boys was taking credit for her work.

“Oh, I was wondering, is the Internet down?” Laura asked. “I can’t get to the corporate website to order supplies and I tried to get into my Facebook, just to see if it was working, and I couldn’t get that either, or my email account.”

“I don’t know,” Monica said. “I’ve been working on a project so I haven’t been using Internet.”

“Can you check it out for me?” Laura asked, tossing her hair. “And can you give me a call if you find out anything?”

“Yeah, sure, I’ll check into it,” Monica promised. She needed to make a note, to add it to the list of things she had to do so she wouldn’t forget about it.

“Well, enjoy your afternoon!” Laura said, as she left Monica’s office with the ‘books Richard made.’

“You, too,” Monica shouted after her, wondering how she was ever going to finish all of her work as well as Haddon’s two projects.

“Ollie oxen free, take a chance on me,” Laura sang loudly, as she walked down the hall.

Monica smiled, trying to remember the real words to that song.

“Ta-DAAA” Monica’s computer again sounded the trumpet loudly, indicating Richard wanted another instant conversation with her. She reluctantly opened its window.

“You there?” he asked.

She wanted so badly to ignore the message, to pretend she wasn’t there. Maybe she could run out of her office right now; but she couldn’t do that. She wasn’t like that; she was honest.

She had to respond. “Yep,” she answered, resigned to not completing anything today. “Haddon went home early,” Richard typed. “OK,” she responded. “When you say OK you are shouting,” he reprimanded. “I’m sorry,

I didn't mean to shout," she apologized. "Capitol letters mean you are shouting."

Capitol letters are letters at the Capitol building, she wanted to type.

"I'm sorry, I didn't mean to shout," she repeated, by copying and pasting.

"You should say okay instead of OK."

OK! she thought. Wasn't 'OK' the abbreviation of 'okay?' She had been using it for years and he had never mentioned this before. As a matter of fact, Richard usually typed 'OK.'

"Okay," she typed. She wondered if he planned to tell her about the Garner project, which was due five minutes ago.

"Don't make any more changes on Gagner project," he typed. "We R going to turn it in the way it was. Good enuff. OK?"

Thanks for letting me know, right on time, she thought.

"Okay," she copied and pasted, pursing her lips.

"You need to take over Haddon's afternoon projects today since he went home. OK?"

"Okay," she pasted again. Why was he shouting 'OK'?

"And make sure you get your own projects finish before you go home today."

"Okay," she pasted, letting out a huff of air.

"But no overtime, you know. We have no budget for you to get overtime."

"Okay," she pasted, knowing that Richard and Haddon got paid for overtime nearly every week.

"I going home now," he typed. "I have something important I need to take care of that is none of your business."

Great, maybe I'll be able to get some work done, once you stop interrupting me, Monica thought.

"Okay," she pasted again.

"If you need me, you can email me or call me on my cell phone," Richard typed.

“Okay,” Monica pasted again. This was getting easy: one response, no thinking required.

“I have some important work to do. Make sure you get a help desk ticket before you responding to any requests for help. By,” he typed.

She saw the indication that he was offline, finally.

She still didn’t know the name of his cat or if he had a new car, and she still didn’t care.