

How *not* to self-destruct on Twitter: the People vs Jessica, Tshidi & Itumeleng

 By [Tiffany Markman](#)

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I wrote a piece recently on the [five things you should look out for on Twitter](#):

1. Twanity (self-congratulation)
2. Twysteria (bandwagoning)
3. Twales of woe (a chronic case of the POOR-MEs)
4. Twitchery (cliquey bitchery)
5. Twattery (shameless hard sell)

And then, oh then, what happens but several fascinating case studies emerge before me. Not one. Not two. *Three*.

[I wasn't the only columnist](#) to have her antennae tweaked and her case-study file fattened by [#JessicaLeandra](#) (the k-word tweeter), [#TshidiTshamana](#) (the all-white-people-must-die-tweeter) and [#ItumelengMabeba](#) (the I-hope-you-get-raped tweeter) - here, if you need one, is [an overview of who's who](#).

But the communication lesson to be learned from this week's series of very public #twatastrophes is that, **if you're going to self-destruct publicly, do it the old-fashioned way**. Among friends. Or, at least, sympathetic strangers.

Don't do it with a phone in your hand.

Because what we have here, folks, is the social media equivalent of drunk-dialling. Here's how it works:

1. You have a few too many hard days, or glasses of wine, or raised middle fingers, or taxi drivers almost klapping your car, so...
2. You tell people that you *believe* are 'close' to you...
3. In a group that you *believe* is smaller and more intimate than it is...
4. What you really think. No holds barred. Uncensored.
5. You offend someone. Or, in the cases of Jessica, Tshidi and Itumeleng, you offend everyone.
6. The #twysteria begins.
7. And you are then the sad, doomed little beastie I referred to in [part one of this article](#), around whom the twitchy wagons start to circle.

Now, I'm not going to give the three #twisketeers (cheesy, I know, but I'm enjoying myself) well-intentioned advice on how to save their sorry personal brands from e-lynching - [much wiser parties than me have already done so](#) - but I *am* going to suggest four things to keep in mind before 'drunk dialling':

1. **Not everyone who follows you shares your perspectives.** They may be your fans, especially if you're an *FHM* poppie, but that doesn't guarantee that they're a 100% like-minded community. (Nonhle, this means you...)
2. **Even if you have a small followship**, and you think you know everyone in it, you're at risk of having your tweets reach audiences bigger than you intended. Because people follow people who follow people, and so on.
3. **You can have as many lofty goals as you like**, but once your name is linked online with stories about a guy who wished rape on someone, prospective employers will find out when they Google you. And they all do.
4. **Think before you become a Twitter [troll](#).** There's a big temptation on Twitter (and in the comments section of news articles) to be salacious, inappropriate, contentious. To say things you wouldn't otherwise say. To stir people up. To be nasty, even. But that's why real trolls seldom use their real names. Unless they're stupid. Please: don't be stupid.

And that's it from me, folks. Once again, I'm disinclined to pen a trite conclusion just for the sake of it. There's *CSI* to be watched. And it's been a long day. Tweet on. Just self-destruct with caution. - [@tiffanymarkman](#)

ABOUT TIFFANY MARKMAN

I spend 10 hours a day writing - and teaching others to write. I was South Africa's Freelance Copywriter of the Year in 2020 and one of the world's 'Top 50 Female Content Marketers' in 2021.

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