

What the hell is Abdul Razak Baginda saying?

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COMMENT It was initially a bit of a surprise to read Abdul Razak Baginda's interview with the online news website The Malaysian Insider yesterday.

This man who was once charged with abetting the murder of the Mongolian national Altantuya Shaariibuu and got acquitted for it suddenly popped out of oblivion to ... well, whaddya know, talk about the murder and the final sentencing of the two police commandos to death for killing her in 2006 and blowing up her body with C4.

What I didn't find so surprising - but infuriating instead - were the scandalous things Razak said.

For one, on the motive for the killing, Razak says: "Only the two policemen know. Rogue police do kill people, like in so many remand cases."

How dare Razak compare the police duo's killing of Altantuya with the deaths of suspects held in police remand? And does he think Malaysians are so stupid that we would believe the idea that chief inspector Azilah Hadri and corporal Sirul Azhar Umar killed Altantuya at their own wanton will, without being instructed by a third party?

Are the police force going to take his remark lying down? Do they not feel insulted by his insinuation that police go about killing people as and when they feel like it, like Azilah and Sirul must have done?

"If you just treat this as a murder and do not politicise it, then it is just a straightforward murder case," Razak also says.

A straightforward murder? Did he say a straightforward murder? Would a straightforward murder need the use of C4? Is it normal for cops to kill people and then blow up their bodies with C4? Besides, where did Azilah and Sirul get their C4 from?

And weren't the two involved only because Razak had sought help from deputy superintendent Musa Safri, Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak's former aide-de-camp, and this help was needed because Razak had had an affair with Altantuya and she was blackmailing him so he needed to get her off his back?

So, who is the focus of this murder? Who was the source of the problem that led to the murder?

And yet Razak can say, "Shit happens"? It was his shit that happened in the first place, and now he seems to be putting the sole blame on the hapless commandos and implying that they are "rogue cops". Is that funny or is that funny?

The laughable bits

He says the case got politicised, but even without even politicising anything, we are already puzzled by several unanswered questions - apart from the one surrounding the motive.

Questions like why records of Altantuya's going in and out of Malaysia were expunged; like why Musa introduced commandos such as Azilah and Sirul (left) to Razak when the latter asked for protection from Altantuya's harassment; like why Musa was not called to give evidence during the trial; like why Najib SMSed lawyer Muhammad Shafee Abdullah this unseemly message: "Pls do not say anything to the press today. i will explain later. RB (Razak Baginda) will have to face a tentative charge but all is not lost."

So what the hell is Razak talking about now?

Oh, and here's the laughable bit in his interview. He goes on to say, "Look at MH370, what, there was a conspiracy? Come up with the evidence. Nobody came up with the evidence. Things just happen. Bermuda Triangle. Certain things are just unexplainable. So why not this? That they (Azilah and Sirul) just went on their own. Why not?"

Oh yeah? And this illogical comparison between the murder and MH370 or the Bermuda Triangle is coming from someone who holds a DPhil from Oxford University? (Mind you, though, I have it on good authority that Razak's doctoral dissertation was eminently worthy of the degree.)

Maybe it isn't a surprise after all that Razak should speak up now. He avows that it is because the speculation about the murder has become "extremely ridiculous" and "more twisted" and it "makes me more angry".

But he also makes it clear that "(b)ecause of my closeness with Najib, those who wanted to kill Najib (politically) at that time saw it as a golden opportunity to use it against him". He claims this is all a political game. "We are all victims of this political game."

He also disavows knowledge of the alleged US\$500,000 commission arising from the government's purchase of the Scorpene submarines. "Where did that come from? Honestly, the US\$500,000 was news to me. I didn't know that," he now says.

And he makes this count: "I have said this hundreds of times, I don't even know how to say it any more. Najib never knew the woman. Najib is innocent. If you all think there is a connection, where is the evidence?"

His parting message: "I hope the focus will be on me, rather than Najib. You know, it is my story. Poor guy. To be honest with you, words cannot express my feelings towards how he has become a victim."

That part is true. It is Razak's story.

I repeat: It was his affair with Altantuya that began the story. She came to blackmail him. He asked for help to stop her harassment. Help was provided in the form of Azilah and Sirul. They picked up Altantuya from no place other than outside Razak's house. She was then taken away and killed, and her body was blown to smithereens.

So, how can Razak justify that "rogue cops" Azilah and Sirul "just went on their own"? Has his coming out now to talk really accomplished its purpose?

Like I said, Malaysians are not that stupid.

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