

from [Sydney Smith](#) <>
to
date Wed, Sep 1, 2010 at 1:51 PM [hide details Sep 1](#)
subject MEDIA INQUIRY - Aisha / Nazia Blog
mailed-by gmail.com

Dear Mr. Hairan,

I am a reporter for media ethics news website [StinkyJournalism.org](#) (See more about us below my signature). I read your story on your blog and Huffington Post about Time and CNN's Aisha and had a few questions for a report on our site.

1. Have you confronted CNN or Time directly? Have you had any contact with them?
2. Have you had any direct comment with the woman Nazia/Aisha since the CNN and Time covers?
3. Do you have any other comments regarding your claims the story is fake? Have you had any support in your claims?

Thank you very much for your time.

Regards,
Sydney Smith, reporter

As background : Art Science Research Laboratory, [www.asrlab.org](#) , a not-for-profit, co-founded by Rhonda Roland Shearer, adjunct lecturer at the School of Journalism and Mass Communication, University of Iowa, and her late husband, Harvard professor and scientist, Stephen Jay Gould. ASRL is a non-partisan journalism ethics program in which students and young journalists work with professional researchers to promote the media's use of scientific methods and experts before publication. We also publish investigations of factual errors and ethical breaches by media outlets, [www.StinkyJournalism.org](#). Alexa ranks [StinkyJournalism.org](#) in the Top 20 most visited news media watchdogs. (In context, Columbia Journalism Review is ranked 3rd- 4th on list).

from [Abdulahadi Hairan](#) <
to Sydney Smith <>
date Thu, Sep 2, 2010 at 10:17 AM [hide details Sep 2](#)
subject Re: MEDIA INQUIRY - Aisha / Nazia Blog
mailed-by gmail.com
signed-by gmail.com

Dear Sydney,

Thank you for your email and the questions as well for your interest in the story. Following are the answers to your questions:

1. No, I have not confronted TIME or CNN. I have never been in contact with them, neither before nor after this story.
2. I had no direct comment with the woman after Time published the story. Since June 20th, I have been out of Afghanistan (right now, in the Netherlands). Hence, I was not able to contact the woman in Kabul and someone told me she was taken to the US.
3. Well, I had covered that story in 2007. I believe it is the same woman. The photos provided by Time and CNN and the photos I took a few days after the incident are of the same woman. The only difference is that the photos are taken in different situation and from different angles, so some people think it may not be the same woman. I took her photos in 2007, just three or four days after she was through the incident. The Time took the photo in 2010, after there were lot of surgeries and treatment.

Best regards,

- Show quoted text -

On Wed, Sep 1, 2010 at 10:21 PM, Sydney Smith <> wrote:

Dear Mr. Hairan,

I am a reporter for media ethics news website StinkyJournalism.org (See more about us below my signature). I read your story on your blog and Huffington Post about Time and CNN's Aisha and had a few questions for a report on our site.

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Abdulhadi Hairan, Kabul, Afghanistan

From [Sydney Smith](#) <>

to Abdulhadi Hairan <>
date Thu, Sep 2, 2010 at 5:29 PM [hide details Sep 2](#)
subject Re: MEDIA INQUIRY - Aisha / Nazia Blog
mailed-by gmail.com

Thanks so much for your quick response.

I've been researching the various reports and was wondering if you happened to still have contact information for the following people you source in your 2007 story. I realize it was a long time ago, but figured on a long shot, perhaps you had an e-mail address for them or their agency : Fauzia Younasi and Mohammad Yaqub Khan, provincial police chief of Zabul.

Thanks so much .

Sydney

- Show quoted text -

from [Abdulhadi Hairan](#) <>

to Sydney Smith <>
date Fri, Sep 3, 2010 at 5:13 AM [hide details Sep 3](#)
subject Re: MEDIA INQUIRY - Aisha / Nazia Blog
mailed-by gmail.com
signed-by gmail.com

Hi Sydney,

I was in contact with those two people by phone when I was in Afghanistan, when I wrote about that incident in 2007. The police chief has been transferred since then and I don't have any email address of Fauzia Younasi.

Best regards,

- Hide quoted text -

On Fri, Sep 3, 2010 at 1:59 AM, Sydney Smith <> wrote:

Thanks so much for your quick response.

I've been researching the various reports and was wondering if you happened to still have contact information for the following people you source in your 2007 story. I realize it was a long time ago, but figured on a long shot, perhaps you had an e-mail address for them or their agency : Fauzia Younasi and Mohammad Yaqub Khan, provincial police chief of Zabul.

Thanks so much .
Sydney

On Thu, Sep 2, 2010 at 10:17 AM, Abdulhadi Hairan <> wrote:
Dear Sydney,

Thank you for your email and the questions as well for your interest in the story. Following are the answers to your questions:

1. No, I have not confronted TIME or CNN. I have never been in contact with them, neither before nor after this story.
2. I had no direct comment with the woman after Time published the story. Since June 20th, I have been out of Afghanistan (right now, in the Netherlands). Hence, I was not able to contact the woman in Kabul and someone told me she was taken to the US.
3. Well, I had covered that story in 2007. I believe it is the same woman. The photos provided by Time and CNN and the photos I took a few days after the incident are of the same woman. The only difference is that the photos are taken in different situation and from different angles, so some people think it may not be the same woman. I took her photos in 2007, just three or four days after she was through the incident. The Time took the photo in 2010, after there were lot of surgeries and treatment.

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Thank you very much for your time.

Regards,
Sydney Smith, reporter

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journalists work with professional researchers to promote the media's use of scientific methods and experts before publication. We also publish investigations of factual errors and ethical breaches by media outlets, www.StinkyJournalism.org. Alexa ranks StinkyJournalism.org in the Top 20 most visited news media watchdogs. (In context, Columbia Journalism Review is ranked 3rd- 4th on list).

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Abdulahdi Hairan, Kabul, Afghanistan

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Abdulahdi Hairan, Kabul, Afghanistan

from [Sydney Smith](#) <>
to [Abdulahdi Hairan](#) <>
date Tue, Sep 21, 2010 at 5:17 PM [hide details Sep 21](#)
subject Re: MEDIA INQUIRY - Aisha / Nazia Blog
mailed-by gmail.com

Hi,
Sorry to just be in touch.

We've been in touch with both the Grossman Burn Foundation and the Women for Afghan Women for comment regarding your story.

The Women for Afghan Women told us that Time's Aisha and your Nazia are different women. Do you have any comment?

Also, since we last e-mailed, have there been any updates in your story ? Have you been in touch with the woman Nazia?

Thanks so much. We're just trying to figure out exactly what the stories are...
Sydney

from [Abdulahdi Hairan](#) <>
to [Sydney Smith](#) <>
date Wed, Sep 22, 2010 at 4:15 AM [hide details Sep 22](#)
subject Re: MEDIA INQUIRY - Aisha / Nazia Blog
mailed-by gmail.com
signed-by gmail.com

Hi,

You are welcome. I have not been in contact with anybody regarding the stories because my circumstances in which I live right now don't allow me to do that. But I went through a video of the woman CNN reported as 'Bibi Aisha' and she is the same woman. I concluded that she is the same woman. What Women for Afghan women think about them is their own thinking. But somebody told me that Nazia/Aisha was shifted to the US, she no longer live in Afghanistan. And it was after that, when she was offered to be relocated to the US, that she started blaming Taliban for what her husband had done with her. The Taliban, in a statement available on their website, have also publicly condemned the incident and said they were not involved in that particular case.

Best,

- Show quoted text -

from Sydney Smith <>
to Abdulhadi Hairan <>
date Thu, Sep 23, 2010 at 8:57 AM hide details Sep 23
subject Re: MEDIA INQUIRY - Aisha / Nazia Blog
mailed-by gmail.com

Dear Mr. Hairan,

I've been in contact with the Women for Afghan Women, who say that for certain Aisha and Nazia are different women.

"I've seen his photos. I know about the case. Aisha is NOT Nazia. These are two different people. ... First if you look at the pictures, you will see that it's two people. Second, Nazia still lives in Afghanistan. She's in another shelter. Third, Nazia's injury happened in 2007. Aisha's is a new case. She went with a raw wound to the U.S Military. "

Similarly, The Daily Beast's December 2009 story on Time's Aisha matches the Women for Afghan Women's, See the link here

<http://www.thedailybeast.com/blogs-and-stories/2009-12-28/afghanistans-unspeakable-crime>

"U.S. Air Force Major Dr. Jeff Lewis still remembers the stifling August afternoon when Nadia reached his surgical team near southern Afghanistan's Tarin Kowt, a town long known as a Taliban stronghold. The young woman, whose name has been changed to protect her security, had been brought to the coalition's Forward Operating Base Ripley by her father, who hoped the base's medical clinic could help his teenage daughter, who he said was around 17 or 18 years old. She was missing most of her nose and both ears.

"Lewis and his clinic staff immediately went to work cleaning the girl's wounds and treating her for trauma. She was conscious, but largely incoherent. The girl's father told the Americans, through the base's translator, that Nadia's in-laws had cut off her nose and ears as punishment for the young woman's attempted escape from her husband's home, which she had fled after years of physical abuse.

"She said she had been forced to marry her husband, a local Talib, when she was about 13, in order to settle a dispute between his family and her uncle's. She had never been educated and

had had no say in the matter. From the beginning, her husband's family mistreated her. She was forced to sleep in the stable with the animals and beaten regularly. When she could bear it no longer, she ran away. But neighbors turned her into the police, and she ended up in prison in Kandahar. Her father picked her up from jail and returned her to her in-laws after they assured him they would treat her better. Only days later, however, they maimed her in retribution for her disobedience."

Right now, our research now settles with a he said-she said regarding Aisha's identity. Do you have any other proof to support your claim that Aisha and Nazia are the same person? Have you been able to contact any of the people who verified your 2007 story to see what they think?

Also, your previous e-mail (below) says your "circumstances" don't allow you to contact anyone -- what do you mean by that?

Thank you very much.

Sydney

- Show quoted text -

from **Abdulahadi Hairan** <>
to Sydney Smith <>
date Thu, Sep 23, 2010 at 10:16 AM
subject Re: MEDIA INQUIRY - Aisha / Nazia Blog [hide details Sep 23](#)
mailed-by gmail.com
signed-by gmail.com

Dear Sydney,

You have very good investigative talent. That makes your work more reliable and professional.
[TEXT REDACTED AT HAIRAN'S REQUEST FOR CONFIDENTIALITY]

May be they are not the same woman, it was just a question that I put forth in a blog post, as my circumstances don't allow me to investigate about this, I thought other people may do. Now it is upon you to decide if it is the same woman or a different one. I am not going to say that what I say is absolutely right. These incidents happen in Afghanistan everywhere as family disputes and honorary issues. But I doubted this particular case.

Best regards,

from **Sydney Smith** <>
to **Abdulahadi Hairan** <>
date Wed, Oct 27, 2010 at 4:10 PM [hide details Oct 27](#)
subject Re: MEDIA INQUIRY - Aisha / Nazia Blog
mailed-by gmail.com

Thanks very much Mr Hairan for your help and explanations. I am still working on investigating this, and was wondering about your relationship with Huffington Post...

Did you write this blog on your own and then the Huffington Post pick it up? Did they ask you

to republish it? I am wondering about the process of your work ending up on the Post's site...
Thanks very much for your time. I hope all is well and that you and your family are safe.

Regards,

Sydney

- Show quoted text -

from [Sydney Smith](#) <>
to Abdulhadi Hairan <>
date Wed, Oct 27, 2010 at 4:10 PM [hide details Oct 27](#)
subject Re: MEDIA INQUIRY - Aisha / Nazia Blog
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Did you write this blog on your own and then the Huffington Post pick it up? Did they ask you to republish it? I am wondering about the process of your work ending up on the Post's site...

Thanks very much for your time. I hope all is well and that you and your family are safe.

Regards,

Sydney

- Show quoted text -

from [Sydney Smith](#) <>
to Abdulhadi Hairan <>
date Sun, Nov 21, 2010 at 2:58 PM [hide details Nov 21](#)
subject Re: MEDIA INQUIRY - Aisha / Nazia Blog
mailed-by gmail.com

Hi Mr. Hairan,

Just following up.

We were wondering if you planned to run a correction on your blog or in Huffington Post since you sent this e-mail below.

Have you been in touch with Huffington Post to notify them that you've gone from saying it is fake, to now saying that you're not sure.

Also, we have been in touch with the Air Force:

We found that and are writing that:

Air Force press desk spokesperson Vicki Stein told StinkyJournalism via e-mail that Lewis, who has since been promoted to Lt. Col., verified "what was reported" in [Time's](#) cover story on Aisha, [these](#) two ABC News [reports](#) and the [Daily Beast's 2009 article](#).

Lewis was quoted in [this March 11](#) ABC News report as saying Aisha's injuries shocked him. "It was barbaric and shocking to see this, that somebody had done this to this young girl... It was unlike anything I've ever seen," Lewis said. "I'm surprised that ... it still exists, this type of problem in the world."

All the above news reports - by Time, ABC News and the Daily Beast - report a family member took Aisha to a U.S. military base -- Forward Operating Base Ripley, where she was helped.

Lewis's confirmation of his treatment of Aisha in 2009 combined with the details in the Time, ABC News and Daily Beast reports of Aisha's story indicate that Aisha and Nazia are indeed two different women.

Thank you very much.

- Show quoted text -

from [Sydney Smith](#) <>
to [Abdulahdi Hairan](#) <>
date Sun, Nov 21, 2010 at 3:02 PM [hide details Nov 21](#)
subject Re: MEDIA INQUIRY - Aisha / Nazia Blog
mailed-by gmail.com

Also, we will be going to press Wednesday AM and will need a response by Tuesday evening.

Regards,

Sydney

- Show quoted text -

from [Abdulahdi Hairan](#) <>
to [Sydney Smith](#) <>
date Mon, Nov 22, 2010 at 2:59 AM [hide details Nov 22](#)
subject Re: MEDIA INQUIRY - Aisha / Nazia Blog
mailed-by gmail.com
signed-by gmail.com

No, I am not going to change anything in my HuffPost post. My points are clear there. It was a question: Is TIME's Aisha story false? My question and doubt about the Time's story was based on the photos and some similarities between the two reported women. And I had empathized on the point that this happens everywhere in Afghanistan and some areas of Pakistan as domestic violence. That Taliban itself has rejected the story in a public statement. Now, after that, I was not able to research or do some follow-up work on the incident. So I cannot surely confirm if it was the same woman or two different women. But my doubt and the questions still exist.

Best,

- Show quoted text

from [Sydney Smith](#) <>
to [Abdulahdi Hairan](#) <>
date Mon, Nov 22, 2010 at 11:10 AM [hide details Nov 22](#)
subject Re: MEDIA INQUIRY - Aisha / Nazia Blog
mailed-by gmail.com

Dear Mr. Hairan,

1. The only question posted in your article is the headline. A simple read of your article doesn't suggest any tentative statement. Your article clearly states that you believe Time's Aisha story is fake.

2. Here are the following definitive statements that you made. There is no doubt expressed in the piece.

"After reading both the stories, and having a close look at the photos, I must conclude that the Taliban story of cutting off the woman's nose and ears as told by CNN and *Time* is false. "

"All these accounts and the photos prove that Aisha and Nazia is the same woman and that this is a domestic problem which prevails widely in the Afghan society. There is a strong need to work for reducing domestic violence instead of making fake stories by the well-established media organizations."

3. You wrote that you "empathized" (emphasized?) that "this happens everywhere." However, this point is only addressed here: "All these accounts and the photos prove that Aisha and Nazia is the same woman and that this is a domestic problem which prevails widely in the Afghan society." And, in that sentence, it isn't even clear what "this is a domestic problem" refers to...Does it refer to mistaken identity? Does it refer to having one's ears and nose cut off?

4. You wrote that the "Taliban itself has rejected the story in a public statement" as if that is support for your claim. However, you don't even mention that in your report for readers to consider. Why not include it in your article if it is support?

5. You don't tell readers you didn't research or verify these things. Your witnesses aren't available. Why not? Readers would be led to believe that your claims are researched and verified.

6. You wrote : "I cannot surely confirm if it was the same woman or two different women." Meanwhile, you wrote in the Huffington Post: "I must conclude that the Taliban story of cutting off the woman's nose and ears as told by CNN and *Time* is false." This doesn't add up. Please explain.

Please explain the above points.

Thank you.

Regards,
Sydney

- Show quoted text -

from **Abdulhadi Hairan** <>
to Sydney Smith <>

hide details Nov 22

date Mon, Nov 22, 2010 at 11:22 AM
subject Re: MEDIA INQUIRY - Aisha / Nazia Blog
mailed-by gmail.com
signed-by gmail.com

Dear Sydney,

Once the circumstances allow me, I may research about it and write another piece. Thanks for correcting my spelling, I wrote the email in a little bit hurry.

Thanks

- Show quoted text -

from **Abdulhadi Hairan** <>
to Sydney Smith <>
date Wed, Nov 24, 2010 at 2:46 PM hide details Nov 24
subject Re: MEDIA INQUIRY - Aisha / Nazia Blog
mailed-by gmail.com
signed-by gmail.com

Dear Sydney,

Finally I know that your purpose of writing to me was not for making any report, but removing the post from Huffington Post. It is done as you wanted: The Huffington Post editors removed my post. I have posted something about this whole issue on my blog www.abdulhadihairan.com.

Best regards,

- Show quoted text -

from **Sydney Smith** <>
to Abdulhadi Hairan <>
date Wed, Nov 24, 2010 at 4:44 PM hide details Nov 24
subject Re: MEDIA INQUIRY - Aisha / Nazia Blog
mailed-by gmail.com

Dear Mr. Hairan,

That is incorrect. We are and have been working on a report on the media inaccuracies in reporting on Aisha. As tomorrow is a U.S. holiday (Thanksgiving) and we were still waiting for our fact-checking information, we delayed publication til next week. The claims made in your post are a part of our fact-checking on the Aisha story.

We will happily send you the link when the story is published. We are very careful and detailed in our fact-checking hence the multiple emails with questions.

Please let me know if you have any further questions.

Regards,
Sydney
- Show quoted text -