

Unreliable Narrators

Nobody asked but ...

On a podcast today, I heard the most descriptive term I have encountered in a long time, “unreliable narrators.” That is a universally useful concept, as the problem seems epidemic among humans. In this particular instance, the phrase was used to throw shade on the Facebook/Cambridge Analytica kerfuffle (it is a political dust-up, after all — the pols all wanted to look like they understood the 21st Century, while kicking another can down the road).

Al Capp, in his Li'l Abner comic strip, once had a character, Dogpatch's rep in Congress, namely Senator Jack S. Phogbound. The character generated his own fog bank in self-service to never saying anything that wasn't opaque. He was an unreliable narrator.

Nowadays we have a plague of unreliable narrators. Will the human race lie itself to death in pursuit of votes and viewers?

— Kilgore Forelle