

This is a limited-time practice in my news reporting & writing class. I was asked to write a breaking news within 1.5 hours after a mock news briefing based on a real false donation scandal was held.

Chinese Actress Zhang Ziyi's False Donation Scandal Confirmed

Newly-disclosed chat logs confirming that Zhang Ziyi had been defaulting on her pledged donations for two years until it came to light recently, challenge the international star's reputation again especially after she blamed the middleman.

Zhang's team failed to explain their inconsistent statements on the timing they knew the middleman didn't deliver the donation, if he had done that as they claimed, in Monday's press conference, casting doubts on whether Zhang was trying to cover up the charity fraud and make the middleman a scapegoat.

The middleman, Yang Cishan, who unveiled the chat logs right after the conference, accused Zhang of breaking their agreement and giving only \$40,000 to his Angel Charity, \$100,000 less than promised, after Zhang's film promotion came to an end two years ago.

Zhang's team had already made up for the shortfall, and they hope the public could 'focus on the result,' said Yang Tianzhen, Zhang's manager.

Zhang Ziyi promised to donate 200 guide canes and 100 typewriters, with a total price of \$140,000, for the blind children in Chengdu Special Education School in 2017, when promoting her new movie where she played a blind woman. However lately, a local newspaper pointed that Zhang had yet to fulfil her promise after two years, leading to a common online criticism of charity fraud.

Zhang Ziyi, a star of 'House of Flying Daggers' and also one of the best-known Chinese actresses internationally, burst into tears at the conference when making an apology to those waiting kids, but then suddenly left due to 'emotional flooding'.

The middleman acknowledged that Zhang's team had contacted him in private and asked his charity to take the blame since the uncompleted donations were revealed by a local newspaper.

He also apologized for diverting the first part donation to other programs because he 'didn't want to buy shoddy stuff for children'. He promised to give the money back to Zhang as soon as possible.

Yang Tianzhen, speaking on behalf of Zhang, insisted at first that they were totally unaware that there was no donation made until the shortfall came to light, since they went through a middleman, who should take the blame for not buying guide canes and typewriters for blind children, according to a statement released last Friday.

However, she changed the story later at Monday's press conference, saying that they refused to finish the donations because they already discovered the middleman's undelivered donation two years ago, which went against their previous statement.

She also said that their team needed time - as long as two years - to look for a new reliable middleperson to complete the donation, and they happened to find one days ago, which had nothing to do with the public pressure. 'Just a coincidence,' said Yang.

The two sides didn't sign on a contract due to their mutual trust back then and Zhang Ziyi's pledge. 'I'd stake my reputation of an A-list actress on it. There won't be any problem,' said Zhang.

Several brands have reportedly announced to suspend their endorsement deals with Zhang since the scandal keeps widening.

The middleman, Yang Cishan, in charge of the Angel Charity, said this kind of default on donations happens quite often among those entertainment stars.