Jake Gyllenhaal Is Not Here for Taylor Swift Questions

Left, by Mike Pont/WireImage; Right, from GC Images, both from Getty Images.

In 2010, famously private Jake Gyllenhaal and Taylor Swift dated. Nearly a decade later, he's shutting down questions about it in interviews-this time in The Guardian.

At the time, Gyllenhaal was nine years her senior-a minor scandal-but the relationship only lasted three months. It would have turned into one of the smoldering ember piles of forgotten celebrity relationships that dot the tabloid landscape if not for that maple-latte photo and "Red," the song Swift allegedly wrote about Gyllenhaal, which initiated him into a sort of club: a group of men that have inspired Swift songs.

Now, nearly seven years later, in the year of our Lord 2017, the actor has to contend with the unhappy reality of answering questions about his time with Swift. Call it club dues, made payable to interviewers.

Gyllenhaal has spoken about the relationship without giving too much away before (notably in 2015 on Howard Stern), but he's no longer abiding those questions. Writer Tim Jonze for the The Guardian found that out in an interview, which was ostensibly about the actor's new movie, Life. Here's the tensest part of the exchange, as it's rendered by Jonze:

For someone so intensely private, wasn't it playing with fire a little to start dating [Taylor Swift]? Asking this proves to be a mistake. "I think when you're in a relationship, you are constantly scrutinised, your friends are scrutinised, but ..." He trails off and stares at me, ramping up the intensity of his eyes like he's done in so many roles. But what? Gyllenhaal just continues to stare. Then he performs an exaggerated shrug. So, er, did he listen to any of the many songs rumored to be about him? More silence. The atmosphere has become uncomfortably tense. Would he like to move on? "I would love to not talk about my personal life." I don't think this is, massively. "Oh, really? You don't?" he asks.

Are you s-h-i-v-e-r-i-n-g yet? Put on another layer because later Gyllenhaal recounts his time meeting Obama and manages to bring it back to The Question. "[Obama] told me: 'You have a job as an artist to help people through difficult times, to illuminate things through art.' He said: 'That's your job.' And my parents have always said that, too. And I'm sure you know it, because you seem like a very smart person who has done their research, particularly into tabloid research, which is obviously the most important of all research."

And that's not it for the Siberian tundra of an actor. Still on politics, Gyllenhaal says, "So, it's an irony to me when people say: 'An entertainer or actor should not be political,' because it's very easy to sideline people and, for instance, ask about past relationships or things that I believe are meant to be private."

Gyllenhaal is the iceberg, and Jonze, the Titanic, completely sunk by Gyllenhaal's final act: "muttering" to a handler, "It's always the last [interview of the day]." We've all learned a valuable lesson, too. Gyllenhaal's Life is fair game, but his life is not.

Vanity Fair has reached out to Gyllenhaal for comment.