**Character Assassination**

Hi everyone, supporters of football! This is where we get to dive deep into the amazing life story of Cristiano Ronaldo, one of the greatest football players ever, merely uttering his name conjures up images of athletic brilliance, or is it just me?

I mean, this Portuguese sensation has pretty much taken over the football world. He has won an incredible five Ballon d'Or trophies, considered the Michael Jordan of soccer. Remember the five Champions League winning medals that he has shining in his trophy cabinet? That, people, is the European club success equivalent of the Holy Grail!

Is it possible for us to briefly discuss his ability to score goals? More than 800 professional objectives? It is truly astounding, not to mention impressive! With his constant pursuit of perfection, Ronaldo is like a goal-scoring machine.

Buckle up. This is gonna be one wild ride through the highs and lows of Ronaldo's extraordinary journey. Let's do this!

Has Ronaldo's conduct warranted the landslide of criticism that has come his way? Or has the media gone overboard in relentlessly targeting Ronaldo and assassinating his character? That's what we'll aim to unpack.

**Return to Manchester United**

Alright, let's rewind to last summer when the Manchester United faithful were euphoric, it was announced Ronaldo would be making a fairytale return to the club where he first shot to stardom. But the 36-year-old didn’t come back out of sentimentality – persistent reports revealed the controlling Glazer family ownership had not actively pursued Ronaldo, Yep, you heard that right.

Nevertheless, Ronaldo took to the Premier League with ease, rattling in goals and earning points almost single-handedly it seemed. But here's where the plot thickens, United’s form remained inconsistent and as interim manager Ralf Rangnick tinkered with the team, he grew perturbed at being substituted and dropped.

Rumors of a fractious relationship between player and manager swirled, with Rangnick’s questionable man-management not helping matters. Ronaldo must have wondered what he had returned to.

**Family Tragedy**

Then came the bombshell in April, he and his partner Georgina Rodriguez suffered unimaginable grief when their newborn son tragically passed away during childbirth. The heart-wrenching loss left Ronaldo understandably devastated.

Yet remarkably, only a week later he returned to the pitch to honor his son’s memory, scoring on an emotional night versus Arsenal. Playing during such a trying period in his personal life required a great deal of bravery and professionalism from Ronaldo.

But wait, there's more. He later revealed that there was a lack of empathy from Manchester United over his tragedy claiming the club doubted him when he missed preseason due to his daughter’s illness thereby accusing them of not believing family came first. If true, it’s no wonder Ronaldo felt isolated and uncared for.

**Deteriorating Relationship**

Fast forward to the summer of 2022, Ronaldo decided his future lay elsewhere and informed United of his wish to leave should an acceptable offer arrive. What followed was a media free-for-all of transfer speculation that seemed to unsettle him. Ouch!

New manager Erik ten Hag had not shown unequivocal support for Ronaldo, preferring to assert his authority. After Ronaldo’s unauthorized early departure from a preseason game, Ten Hag laid down the law by exiling him from first-team training.

It felt like a manager stamping his mark, but for Ronaldo, the public humiliation left him feeling disrespected. Ten Hag’s selection decisions soon made Ronaldo feel sidelined as he was often named substitute or brought on late in games.

The tension reached boiling point when Ten Hag ordered Ronaldo to warm up but didn’t bring him on against Tottenham. Ronaldo’s anger at the apparent show of disrespect led to him storming down the tunnel before final whistle – an act of petulance that saw him disciplined. I guess he's also a human, don't you think so?

By this point the relationship was broken beyond repair. He gave a scathing interview criticizing the club, accusing Ten Hag of provoking him and claiming the owners care little for United’s success. It was the final straw, the result? United swiftly terminated his contract.

**Saudi Switch**

So, where does a fallen football god go from there? Saudi Arabia, apparently, in January 2023, he completed a mega-money move to Saudi Arabian club Al Nassr. Now, some fans and pundits sneered at this transfer, looking down on the Saudi league as a cushy semi-retirement destination for faded superstars.

But Ronaldo had no intention of coming to the Middle East to simply wind down his illustrious career. Oh no, he was driven by that fiery competitive spirit to prove all his naysayers wrong.

And prove them wrong he has! At the ripe old age of 38, he has shown that he's still one of the most dangerous finishers on the planet, with his arrival, he's been banging in goals for fun in Saudi Arabia.

He fired Al Nassr to cup glory in his first few months at the club, quickly endearing himself to his new supporters and showing he's still got that winning spark.

His blistering goalscoring form earned him a recall to the Portuguese national team, despite all the bridges he had burnt back in Europe, not bad for a player supposedly in the twilight of his career!

While critics continue to question the quality of his new league, one thing remains beyond doubt - his dedication to maintaining peak fitness and performance levels remains completely unrelenting.

He's clearly determined to keep playing for as long as physically possible and retirement doesn't look to be on his mind any time soon because he is driven by an insatiable hunger to keep proving himself.

So in Saudi Arabia, while he may be thousands of miles from the glitz of Champions League nights, Ronaldo has found a fresh start and new motivation. His critics have only added fuel to his fire. At 38 years young, the Ronaldo show rolls on!

**Plight of a Superstar**

So how did one of football's biggest superstars end up being so vilified? Well, some of the blame certainly lies with Ronaldo himself. That explosive unauthorized interview where he blasted his club and manager was clearly ill-advised. And walking off the pitch in a huff after refusing to go on as a substitute - not exactly a professional move.

But did the criticism go too far? Did the media and public go into overdrive trying to tear him down from his pedestal? I think there's a strong case to be made there as the extreme vitriol aimed at him at times seemed over the top.

Look, he broke out of his squeaky clean role model image - he's not a saint or superhero. He's a human being with flaws and moments of weakness like all of us, I can't even imagine the pressures of trying to maintain superhuman standards of excellence year after year after year.

As Ronaldo entered his late 30s, some dip in form and lapses in discipline were inevitable. But the way every tiny misstep was seized upon and amplified by his detractors was relentless. It seemed like agendas were at work to assassinate his character at every turn.

At Manchester United, the whole environment had turned toxic. His manager, teammates and even the club's owners seemed to be against him by the end. And the apparent lack of empathy from the club over personal tragedies like the death of his child - inexcusable, if true.

Ronaldo isn't blameless by any means. But he deserved far greater respect than he received for his contributions over the years. Tearing down legends who don't live up to impossible standards serves no one in the end.

**Conclusion**

So what's the verdict on this Ronaldo saga? His hyped return to Manchester United promised so much - a fairytale homecoming for a club legend. But it quickly dissolved into a bitter blame game that only served to tarnish Ronaldo's legacy.

The way United treated their prodigal son was unbecoming of a club of its stature. Ronaldo certainly could have handled some situations with more maturity. But in many instances, the manager and club failed to accord him the respect his contributions and achievements deserved. Really!

The blame is shared here - both Ronaldo and the club shoulders responsibility for allowing the situation to descend into an ugly, damaging spat played out in public.

In the court of public opinion, Ronaldo has been judged extremely harshly. The media have gleefully assassinated his character without restraint. His reputation as a selfless team player certainly lies in tatters.

But for all his faults, nothing can erase Ronaldo's magnificence on the pitch. His hunger and talent have given us so many unforgettable moments over the years. He remains an icon, one of the greatest players who has brought so much joy through his extraordinary abilities.

Ronaldo's troubles in the twilight of his career show that we place unrealistic expectations on our superstar athletes. We forget they are human underneath the glossy facade - flawed humans like each of us.

Once the results dip and controversies emerge, we rapidly turn against them. The viciousness with which legends are torn down once they show vulnerability reveals an ugly side to today's media and fans.

Ronaldo's story is a cautionary tale. Let's appreciate our sports heroes while at their peak but understand they remain imperfect people, not superheroes. The relentless character assassination serves no one in the end.