Shane Hollander and Ilya Rozanov: The Puppy Interview

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Shane Hollander and Ilya Rozanov: The Puppy Interview

by Rmh03

Summary

Shane and Ilya play with puppies and talk about their relationship.

Notes

See the end of the work for notes

Shane and Ilya have done lots of media-related things together before, of course. But this - this is different.

Yuna helped to set this up, as she almost always does, but apparently, there was demand for them to do light-hearted stuff like this, too. The younger generation of sports fans has, for some reason, been wanting to see their athletes disarmed and in different situations, answering questions in a very different context than the typical flashing lights of a press conference.

It's different because of the setup. The two of them are sitting on the ground in a completely white section of the studio they're shooting in. There's a video producer behind a camera rig they've already talked to, who's doing last-minute checks and set up. Off to the side, there's an animal handler with several wiggly puppies, almost ready to be released.

It's also different because this media event isn't just about the fact that they're some of the best hockey players of their time. It's about them, about the fact that they're great athletes and also in love. So in love, they got married. It's a whole different beast than what Shane is used to, the kind of appearance he hasn't gotten used to yet. It's nerve-wracking, even if it is silly.

Still. Still, Ilya is here, and there are puppies to be played with as they answer their questions. This interview won't make the people who dislike them like them more, and it most certainly won't make any homophobes who post shit about them happy. But this isn't for those faceless masses. It's for themselves.

The filming starts in earnest with a slate marker and the squeeze of Ilya's hand in Shane's. Ilya, in his deep voice, starts off the script with: "Hello, Buzzfeed. We're Ilya and Shane." Shane couldn't hide his grin if his life depended on it.

*

The questions are almost all softballs, agreed-upon terms from their initial meetings and negotiations with the company. For the most part, they're easy to answer, the kind of thing that Shane has answered so many times; the script for what to say is baked into his brain.

They’re asked about the upcoming season, what it’s like to play together. They’re asked about their wedding, about what they like to do for fun (the answer to which a well-timed bark from a puppy prevents from getting too absurd or inappropriate). They are also, for better or for worse, asked about their time dating in secret.

It’s not so much a sore subject as it is sort of uncomfortable to talk about that time in their life in a situation like this. As fun, or maybe thrilling is the better descriptor, as it sometimes was to be sneaking around all the time, it was still a hard and stressful time. There are people in their lives who are still weirded out by the fact that Shane and Ilya kept it a secret for so long, which still makes Shane uneasy. Plus, not all of the angst and stress is gone from when they were outed. It was hard and scary.

Still, Ilya and Shane are professionals who can handle tough questions. Especially when they’re sitting right next to each other, trying to snatch puppies away from the other's arms. They’re competitive and playful, even in this setting.

The producer behind the camera asks: “How has your relationship changed, now that the two of you are out and proud about your relationship and marriage?”

Shane opens his mouth to speak, but Ilya beats him to it. Ilya is looking down at his lap, where one of the puppies is sprawled across his crossed legs. He’s smoothing his fingers over the puppy's soft ears and paws. The action almost makes Shane ache to just be home and down with the day already, the sight too cute for Shane to not want to go home and cuddle up with his husband.

“Our teammates say we’re --” he pauses, like he’s searching for the right word. Shane gives him time to think it over. “Very domestic. We’re not allowed to talk about our evening plans in the locker room anymore. They say we are gross.”

“It’s nice to be open with our teammates, though.” Shane chimes in, taking his eyes off of Ilya to watch the two other puppies tumble and tussle about a foot away from him. They are really cute, even as Shane winces when one of them body slams him with his whole weight. It’s nothing like getting hit on the ice, obviously, but Shane is sort of worried about them hurting each other somehow.

“Yes. Yes, it is. It is nice to be open with the rest of the world, too.”

The producer in front of them is mostly hidden behind the filming setup, but Shane can still see enough of her to catch a sweet smile on her face at their answer.

“Do your teammates tease you a lot?” is the follow-up question.

Shane takes that one, before Ilya can say something teasing that will end up sounding like he hates his teammates' guts. Ilya’s too sweet to actually mean it, but the internet audience watching them definitely doesn’t know that.

“Yeah. But we give it as good as we get it.”

Satisfied with that tangent, the interviewer switches gears.

“Ilya, you’ve had quite the reputation as a big partier since you were a rookie. How have you adjusted to this “domestic” time in your life? Is there anything you miss?”

“Yes. I do still like to party and go out and stuff. I am very rich, it’s fun to do. But I would not trade those parties for things like this,” he gestures down at the now sleeping puppy curled up in his lap, but he’s looking right at Shane. “I am very, very happy. I am not stuck at home. I go out with the team sometimes, and then I come home. Where I am happy.”

“Yeah,” Shane says, feeling sappy and in love, even under the bright lights, getting stared down by cameras, with rambunctious puppies trying to tug on the material of Shane’s pants.

“Alright, guys,” the producer says, voice snapping out of the formal interviewing voice she was using a moment ago. “I think we’re about good to wrap up here. We can get some closing shots, tell us about what sports fans have to look forward to for your upcoming season. Otherwise, we’re just about done.”

There’s the snap of a slate again, marking the end of a scene. Ilya leans over without dislodging his puppy to press a kiss to Shane’s cheek. All of the staff around them are too busy with whatever they’re doing to be watching, but it still makes Shane blush. Shane

grumbles and goes to push Ilya away, but Ilya just catches Shane's wrist in his grip, which really doesn't help in making his blush go away.

"How'd you end up with the sweet dog, while I've got these ones fighting all over me?"

Ilya shrugs, a smug smile on his face. "I guess all of your boring is rubbing off on me."

Shane could make a comment about something else rubbing off on him, but he saves that for later.

"Hey," Shane whispers, just low enough for the two of them to hear. "I love you. I'm glad we're here."

Ilya leans even closer, this time shuffling the puppy, who flops over with an irritated huff. "Yes. I'm glad we are here, too."

End Notes

I would do anything for Connor and Hudson to do a puppy interview, so I just wrote Shane and Ilya doing one to scratch the itch instead.

Thanks for reading! :)

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