

"Free-Range Kids"

Have you heard of this wild new idea called "Free Range Parenting"? I saw it last week in a Nightline feature about the mother of the movement, so to speak. Apparently there are American adults, however few and radically marginalized they may be (for now), who openly advocate some unbelievably bizarre theories and methods of child-rearing. For example, some parents have been arrested and investigated over the past year for knowingly allowing their kids — their own children, mind you! — to engage in behavior as obviously hazardous as walking to and playing in neighborhood parks by themselves. I'm not making this up; some adults apparently really do have this little regard for the welfare of our nation's precious young. In Florida, for example, such callous negligence was evidenced when an eight year old boy was rescued by police after quick-thinking good samaritans called 911 to report the child walking down the street without an adult. Officers discovered him playing in his local park, by himself, as if nothing were wrong, although his guilty conscience showed itself when he ran away minutes before from the strangers who demanded to know where his parents were. The unfortunate urchin, clearly paralyzed by the pressure to protect his derelict mother, must've been overcome with relief when the heroic policemen escorted him home and immediately arrested the selfish crone he called "Mommy".

In Maryland, a couple was investigated for allowing their ten year old son to walk his six year old sister to their local park to play. Their journey forced them to cross multiple streets, but luckily the endangered tykes were spotted by eagle-eyed officers who quickly detained the children and informed CPS of the welfare violations. It seems Maryland even has a fabulous state law criminalizing the failure to supervise and surveil any minor under age 18, so we can hope that these parental failures will be jailed as well as lose custody of their neglected little survivors (who, strangely, did not seem overjoyed that their parents were brought to justice for leaving them to play alone.). Incidentally, these Marylanders appeared to be foreigners themselves, probably raised somewhere like Russia or another eastern European country with a shocking disregard for child safety.

(continued)

Thankfully, someone stopped these few "Free Range" trainwrecks before any walking, sliding, swinging, or sandbox tragedies could occur, so at least these parents were corrected and these children were taught, finally, that they really are, in fact, helpless incompetents. One only hopes the lesson wasn't too late. Still, the sad fact remains that a horrible woman now has a horrible T.V. show (called World's Worst Mom), which promotes her abominable encouragement of both child neglect and the insane notion that the world is actually a safe place that young people should feel comfortable to live in. This wicked she-beast actually let her own nine-year-old son ride a New York subway by himself. Quelle horreur! Imagine if "free range" parenting gained popularity, making children believe they could master their environments without relentless direction, correction, prohibition, and "protection" by judgmental adult overseers. What then? Of course, ~~all~~ all right-thinking people know that treating children as individuals in themselves is absurd, that it is contrary to all the wisdom of the "helicopter parent" era, the John Walsh and Nancy Grace gospel, in a time when parents are applauded for proudly spying on their kids and making sure there's a little Big Brother in every "tween" pocket... so what do these new-age Free-Rangers think their perverse anti-surveillance ideas will accomplish? Do they want to be parents with their own lives who even believe their children should have the same? Do they covet a world of anxiety-free kids with imaginations and the ability to entertain themselves and each other?? Do they favor some fantastical rollback of our tech-enabled adult pseudo-entitlement to pry into all aspects of young peoples' lives? Have they sincerely tried to imagine a world in which young people weren't trained to jump at their own shadows but instead played outside and explore the world without helmets and bullet-proof vests beneath hermetically-sealed safety suits... who do they think their kids are — themselves at that age? What do they think this is, 1991?

Hmm. On second thought...

POSTSCRIPT (added Feb. 8, 2015)

We can thank our lucky stars, I guess. There seems to be no real risk of this Free-Range foolishness taking hold in our country for awhile. No sooner did I finish this little meditation than a story comes on the news, from some Mid-Western state, I think, about a family's effort to instill a solid, healthy, All-American fear of others in a (Cont.)

dangerously naive six year old boy. Apparently, the family (four adults, I believe it was the mother, father, uncle, and aunt) finally tired of trying to tell the stubbornly good-natured kid how awful the world really is, so to break his trust in humanity before humanity could do it for them, they conspired to "kidnap" the little guy, hold him hostage in a basement for a day or so, and pull his pants down to convince him he was to be sold into sex-slavery. Despite his terror, the child surely learned a valuable lesson, and one hopes he will often visit his loving, socially-savvy family in prison to tell them so. Assuming he ever leaves the house again.

I expect proxy - uncle John W. and aunt Nancy G. are giddily proud of themselves, if not publicly so.

* * * * *

With so much space left, I'll renew my request for someone reading this to PLEASE send a copy of my blog to me. I'd like to see all of it, from beginning to end, plus this site's homepage, so I can finally know exactly how this all looks on your screens, but I'd be very happy with any part of it. Just please, not another "excerpt". I have half a dozen of those already, but still no idea what this really looks like. Does it scroll continuously from entry to entry? Can you click to read, say, only #4 or #6? Also, what number blog am I actually on, and where did I make a mistake, if I did? I think I forgot to write down a note about one (or more) of my entries, but I can't tell. I just want to see what this website looks like, how it's organized, and how my blog gets displayed. If you'd like to help with that, I'd sure appreciate it.

Thanks for reading! (And, if you know me, maybe leave a little note?)

Send letters to: Dymitri Haraszewski
AC2622 A4-216
P.O. Box 409020
Ione, CA 95640

(current address as of Feb, 2015.)
Will change in the future.