

(America's Funniest Home Traumatizations, Redux)

A few posts back (Aug. 12, 2020), I wrote about an ~~unfunny~~ video I'd seen on one of my favorite TV shows, America's Funniest Home Videos. Turns out, there's a whole recent trend of similarly unkind videos, and I wonder whether you folks, readers of this blog, have seen them? I'm sure they're all over the internet, videos of adults, presumably parents, recording themselves basically lip-synching to their children's angry outbursts. The "joke" here is supposed to be that these overwhelmed parents are so in-tune with their frustrated kids' cries that they can perfectly time and imitate every screaming demand and breathy, burbling sob in the "temper tantrum." The parent typically holds an expressionless face, then bursts into a pseudo-shriek that makes it look like the child's voice is coming from the adult's mouth. Hilarious, right?

Ok, I admit, I can see how one might laugh, especially at the perfect timing and incongruity of Mom or Dad suddenly ranting like a frustrated 5-year-old. It looks silly. And I also get that the videos that aren't fakes (many seem staged, to me), those take some talent to mimic so accurately, ~~and~~ yes, it's gotta be frustrating for a parent to hear the screeching cries for 10 minutes, half an hour, or even longer. I get it; people need to vent without taking it out directly on the kid. Problem is... it's super mean.

No doubt no one likes to be mocked, yet we've all mocked others at times. It's a passive aggression that most people are guilty of. I've done it. I still do it; it makes me feel a little better when I'm essentially powerless. Not having kids myself, though, perhaps I can be forgiven for failing to grasp why parents should feel so powerless as to need to mock their own sons and daughters, ~~but~~.

Here's my thought on this — if you feel you must lash out a little, in a basically harmless way, just to maintain sanity, fine... but for chrissake, don't then share your mean-spirited imitation of your offspring with others! Just keep it between yourself and the void. Honestly, to publicize such self-indulgent exploitation... are these parents so enamored with their own child-degradation skills that they feel compelled to show them off — along with their kids' less-than-proudest moments — to the whole freakin' world? How will ^{the kids} feel when they inevitably see the vids in a few years, probably with a collection of digital high-fives for the adults and some nasty comments for the "whiny brats" being mimicked? Maybe embarrassed? Maybe humiliated? Betrayed? Surely many will feel at least that, and rightly so, I'd say — they've had a shameful private moment broadcast to earn a parent some "likes" by making their own child look, well, childish. They'll eventually see how the online chatterati shallowly disregards the fact that, in that moment, however nerve-frayingly ridiculous the "tantrum" seems to adult sensibilities, the kid had a very real experience of distress, and their own parents chose to exploit that anguish by showcasing it for the amusement of millions of strangers.

Just ask yourself, would you like your private unhappinesses and overreactions to be not only made public, but publicly made fun of... and that by the people you trusted most? Dear immature parents: Please stop whoring yourselves out for cheap, minimal fame at your kids' expense. Don't be selfish dicks; ~~after all, even very young people are still people.~~ Respect them, right?