



## The Parent Test (Part 2):

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### Some Thoughts on Cultural Compliance

I want to follow the maxim, "if you can't say anything nice, don't say anything at all" — really I do — but I may have painted myself into a corner when I titled that first Parent Test post as "Part 1". The thing is, I was excited

to see a show about the juxtaposition of various parenting styles in search of which of them might mold the most pro-social, independent, functional, and fundamentally decent young humans; so excited, even, that after the first underwhelming episode, I was still full of hope that there would be some real substance to ~~it~~ <sup>it after</sup> all.

Two episodes in, I'm afraid that hope is gone.

Though I hate giving up on anything this fast, it's become all-too-clear that The Parent Test is just another prime-time pusher of parental panic, and that holds no appeal for me. Worse still, the show even made itself a collaborator in the worst sort of cultural co-optation, which I'll address in a moment.

The main "challenge" in episode 2 was to see what kids would do if a stranger knocked on the door while their parents were away. If they answered, ominous music cued us (one wants to say "coerced us") to imagine the helpless little wretches instantly snatched away from their idyllic existence by some maniacal murderer or molester... and who can say which fate is worse?? When our "Natural Style" parents — whose adorable little girls answered the door right away — tried to defend themselves by explaining that they intentionally teach their kids to be friendly and kind to everyone, and that they choose to live in a rural area largely to avoid filling their impressionable youngsters full of fear, they were rebutted with didactic distortions about how "most kidnappings occur in small towns," and about the perils of "sheltering" children. Those critiques, I thought, naturally suggested a question: "Who is more sheltered, children raised to openly greet strangers, or those taught to never open the doors of their own homes to outsiders?" But, of course, no one on TV was up for challenging the orthodoxy so bluntly.

As child after child answered the door when people knocked (where did they learn such reckless behavior!?), we saw the horrified expressions and tears (TEARS!) of the parents on the panel, finally leading to the worst example of this rotten program's pandering to our culture of engineered fear and bourgeois conformity. Sadly, but unsurprisingly, it involved the gay parents.

Our gay dads, the "Routine Parenting" Maghen-Dekels, put on a tour-de-force

demonstration of cultural indoctrination. First, one of them stormed off the stage in true Homo-Dramaticus style, all theatrical weeping with his partner right behind him in clingy pursuit. Next, they flexed their mainstream bona fides by refusing to show the footage of their impish little six-year-old opening the door to God-Knows-What, as if the boy lived in a world where small children were NOT routinely disembowled by monsters pretending to be regular old electric company employees. The more composed of the two fathers then performed an angsty monologue about how their video wasn't shown because "That video would NEVER be shown!", and how he couldn't understand the need to show clips of children failing to match their parents' levels of paranoia (which was a fair question, though he framed it rather differently). Finally, we got to see his bravura performance of emotional distress as he described how he felt ~~in~~ <sup>in</sup> witness<sup>ing</sup> "my little boy flinging open the gates for a PREDATOR to take my child away!!"

Ah, yes. Right. The "PREDATORS". {yawn} Of course.

So, here we shift from trifling comments on a mediocre TV show to something more nefarious. I highly doubt it's ~~just coincidental~~ <sup>just coincidental</sup> that the "predator" melodrama came to a head with the gay male parents of two boys. Here's why.

From about 1960 to the mid-'80s, the American "gay rights movement" evolved from the mostly disregarded squawking of a few social non-entities — openly gay men, of whom there were very few — into a genuine civil rights juggernaut. By the 1990's, battles were fought from the streets to the courts, in classrooms and in living rooms, and a funny thing happened along the way: Homosexuality became culturally accepted. The price of tolerance, however, was the gay soul, as Queers now had to disavow queerness, even as the word "queer" itself lost its pejorative connotations and became a warmly embraced term of endearment by the early 2000's. Marginalized homos, to move from the margins to the mainstream, struck a Faustian bargain with the suburban breeders they wished to emulate, pulling the umbrella away from the really faggoty faggots so that now the freaks and fetishists, the drag queens and trannies and BDSM daddies and juvenile hustlers (and most especially the pedosexuals who loved them even as they were mercilessly exploited by them) ... all were ~~excluded~~ <sup>ruthlessly</sup> excluded ~~from the~~ <sup>progressively</sup> inclusive New World Order. "Respectable" homosexuals rejected the rest because Good Gays aspired to big stuccoed houses with tiny lawns and a leased Lexus in the always-just-rinsed driveway; they wanted the PTA, the pda, the hospital deathbed recognition, and the palimony payments when hetero-centric monogamy failed them, as it inevitably must. The right sorts of gays wanted The American Dream, that great

delusion originally sold to generations of useful idiots and wage slaves to protect the ruling classes from the millions of angry "black" men they were keeping in bondage... and those social-striving gays got it. Welcome to "Whiteness", sodomite; now even you can be accepted on TV shows like The Parent Test!

Ultimately, this Maghen-Dekel duo — who look like a truly loving couple with well-rounded, happy kids — are standard bearers for a corrosive hetero-normativity, and they play the role to its histrionic hilt, snarling the popular zoological slurs and invoking all the terror of child rearing in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Nevermind that we live in the least hazardous era of all human history, a time when almost everyone is literally the safest they've ever been... except, perhaps, for those tagged <sup>to be</sup> sacrificed at the altar of cultural convention and conformity.