

The Parent Test (Addendum):
Still No Abductions!



How many kidnappings do you hear about each year? Two? Three? Maybe ten if you're addicted to true-crime T.V.? After finishing my second Parent Test post last week, I realized I'd forgotten to mention that our host/expert, Doctor Adolph Brown, had weighed in on how important the "Stranger Danger Challenge" was especially important because the threat of child abduction is "very real", citing a statistic that "2,300 kids go missing each day in America". Two-thousand three-hundred. Every day. That seems shockingly high, right? And we SHOULD be shocked... at least if we assume, as he clearly intends us to, that the 339,500 children "gone missing" each year were kidnapped, because that figure isn't even remotely close to being accurate.

Let's be clear: the term "gone missing" is mealy-mouthed meaninglessness, deliberately chosen to frighten gullible parents and nothing more. Ol' Adolph appears to state how often people under 18 are reported missing ("child" having been down-defined by crusader propaganda to include even teenagers who are well past childhood). It's a quote that includes legions of 17 year olds who run off with friends for a day or two or ten, along with countless other adolescents who've aggrieved the ancients to the point of unnecessary police involvement. It includes absent-minded middle schoolers failing to report their intent to stay overnight at a neighbor's house, as well as some preteens whose neurotic helicopter parents call for SWAT teams whenever their precious dolls shuffle in three hours late after missing their schoolbus.

Without question, Dr. Brown's figure includes every instance of a divorced parent taking little Aiden or Ashley without asking, and even times when they're clearly entitled to but a psychotic ex-spouse blows a gasket anyway. These are not events that sane people would call abductions, and even when non-custodial parents really do abscond with their offspring, that's still a far cry from what "stranger danger" drills are invoking. Nevertheless, that is exactly what this ridiculous show featured: a "test" to see if kids would open the door to strangers (and their parents' bug-eyed horror when they did), all purportedly justified by the "2,300 missing kids" per day. It was a cynical manipulation of facts, grossly misleading and... well, really, just gross.

The threat of stranger abduction is not "very real"; it's virtually non-existent, and shame on this show for unapologetically promoting parental ~~paranoia~~ ^{paranoia}. We owe our future so much more than just generations of people trained to be terrified of boogymen and their own shadows; trained to be terrified of each other.

HEY! Wanna contact me through a channel that can't be seen by literally EVERYONE in the world? Write to:

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