

The Extra Point

BY JERRY ROBERTS



1038 Will Smith Slapping Chris Rock Was a Workplace Issue

When actor Will Smith slapped Oscars host Chris Rock during the program yesterday, millions of people worldwide were left scratching their heads. Was it real or was it staged? Was it workplace assault? I'm Jerry Roberts and we'll chew this over, next on The Extra Point.

I haven't watched the Academy Awards telecast in 20, maybe 30 years. It was once a glamorous event, and I recall watching it with my mom when I was a kid. She was a big movie fan.

In the past few decades, the Oscars have become more and more political, with the Hollywood elite not just celebrating their on-screen achievements, but also values that much of the rest of America don't appreciate.

I'm on the computer yesterday and I see big banner headlines about Will Smith slapping Chris Rock on the program, so I went to YouTube to see what it was about. Let's break down what happened in the 2022 Oscars, and then see if we can locate a lesson in it.

Host Chris Rock joked about Will Smith's wife, actress Jada Pinkett-Smith, starring in a remake of *GI Jane*. You may recall the film, starring Demi Moore, about a woman who tried to become a Navy Seal.

Rock's crack was made because of Pinkett-Smith's hair resembling a military recruit, the consequence of her bout with the disease known as alopecia. She has been open about the situation, and Rock had to know that. Therefore, the joke was certainly questionable, if not in bad taste.

Here's where it gets interesting. Will Smith is seen on camera, laughing at the joke, while his wife is obviously disturbed. Then, the camera focuses back on Rock, who dismissed the

joke, saying it was actually a "nice one."

Then, he sees Smith jump up on the stage and head for him, and Rock utters the name, "Richard." That's a reference to his role in the movie, "King Richard," which won him the award for best actor.

That's seems odd to me and others, and has fueled speculation that the whole thing was a stunt. However, after slapping Rock, Smith then twice screamed obscenities at him in a threatening manner. It could have been fake, but that leads me to believe it wasn't.

However, my focus is the workplace, and that was definitely a workplace assault. Chris Rock was paid to be the host. To him, the auditorium was his jobsite. Smith attacked him during his shift, if you will.

Let's say somebody walks into your place of business, doesn't like what one of your team members says to them, and then smacks them in the mouth — what would you do?

1. Order them to leave and not come back.
2. Call security, or the police.
3. Do nothing

The Oscars' folks chose the last one. Smith was a nominee for best actor, a big star, and nobody was going to say a word to him.

Later, in a tear-filled acceptance speech for his award, he essentially said that celebrities had to take abuse and disrespect, and let it go. He apologized to his fellow actors for his outburst, but never mentioned Chris Rock.

Again, I'm assuming this was a legit thing, and Smith just lost his cool when his wife was made the butt of a joke.

(Con't.)

If so, he needs to take a course in emotional intelligence, which shows us how to control our emotions, and not do things we'll later regret.

Had Smith been in control and wanted to make Rock really pay for the perceived insult, what else could he have done?

One, he could have ignored it, knowing Rock's reputation for saying outrageous things to celebrities — which is why the Oscars event hires him every year to host the show.

Or, he could have walked on stage and said something like, "Chris, that wasn't cool. You know Jada has the disease alopecia, and has lost her hair as a result of that. If you want to make fun of me, have at it, no sweat. But to do that to her...it just makes you look like a jackass." Then, he'd leave the stage and go back to his seat.

That would have been devastating to Rock, a complete takedown.

The slap actually brought Rock a fair amount of sympathy, and much criticism to Smith.

Just another night in Hollywood. Real? Fake? We can't be sure, but one thing's for sure...I'm still not watching the Academy Awards.

That's the Extra Point. Be responsible and make something good happen today. For 93.3 and the Ray Gibson Show, I'm Jerry Roberts.

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