



Photobomb these folks. Stand up and block them. Put your hand in front of their camera. Wave your arms in front of them.

Can I grab a snap of that?

C. Douglas Phillips, MD, FACR

"I always thought of photography as a naughty thing to do."

—Diane Arbus

Well, Diane had something there. And as a photographer who did her best work with the surreal, the marginalized, she knew photography very well. My riff here isn't about the surreal (which I know pretty well), but about photography. A special subset of photography. You have all experienced it.

Let me set up the scene: You're at a meeting, maybe in the back of the room, since you're a little late (definitely have to stop having that nightcap). You've got the official meeting program in your hand, and as a modestly obsessive-compulsive physician (you're in radiology, right?), you've got it open to the session notes. There are the slides you're about to see. You have a little USB drive with all the talks in your official meeting canvas bag, which is lying at your feet. If you're really OC, you've got your laptop fired up and the USB in, and you're looking at the real thing. Lights dim, lecture begins. And, as you look to the screen up front, A HUNDRED SMART PHONES, 50 DIGITAL RECORDERS AND AT LEAST 10 DIGITAL CAMERAS START FILMING THE TALK!

I particularly love the people behind me who leave the flash on and light up the back of my head. I LOVE those folks. Do not turn around and confront them – it only earns you a flash in the eye, and you won't be able to see for several minutes.

I've wondered about this for a long time. As an occasional speaker, I've seen the lit-

tle warnings on screen and around the room telling people not to record the talk. I've also asked, as a moderator, that people refrain from same. And as far as I can see, all that does is double the likelihood that someone will hold their digital camera in front of me personally. What do they get out of this? I gave up on asking people. I have never gotten an answer, usually just a shrug and a sad look that means they are thinking, "You poor fool. You just don't get it, do you?"

Presumably, these recordings and photographs are traded on some black market: "Hey, I've got a 2009 William Bradley lecture on MR contrast that I'll trade for a 2010 Brant-Zawadzki on Lumbar Degenerative Disease." Maybe there is some behind-the-scenes value system. This thinking is driving me nuts, too. I have this idea that my own lectures are like some kind of valueless nonsense.

I would imagine that most of these recordings and digital images are destined for deletion in the near term. I cannot believe for an instant that people review bad photos instead of printed or provided digital materials on the flight home, or keep them around for referral in the reading room: "Hey, great case. I think that's just like that case Dr. Hoo-bee-whateee used in a lecture three years ago. Wait, I'll just pull it up and show you." Right.

So, here's my idea: Photobomb these folks. Stand up and block them. Put your hand in front of their camera. Wave your arms in front of them. If I'm speaking, I'll understand and won't call on you as you wave like a maniac.

Mahalo.

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