



May 1, 2007

All the rage

By ANN MARIE MCQUEEN

The Internet makes it hard to tell whether celebrities are more prone to losing their temper these days, or we are just better able to find out about it when they do.

But we sure do greet their outbursts with a certain kind of almost giddy delight, don't we?

When Alec Baldwin lost it and left an angry cellphone message calling his young daughter "a thoughtless little pig," he opened the door to some serious discussions about the issue of parental alienation in protracted custody battles.

But his angry tirade, leaked to the website TMZ.com, also sparked, in quick succession, an Angry Alec cellphone ringtone, plans for a talking Alec Baldwin Daddy Dearest doll, a fake horror movie trailer and satirical calls from Rev. Al Sharpton for him to be fired from his NBC sitcom 30 Rock. Everyone from Judge Judy to buddy James Caan weighed in. And Baldwin is hardly the only celebrity to sully his image by anger.



Celebrities such as Alec Baldwin, Brad Pitt, Britney Spears, Jimmy Kimmel and Bjork have been in the news lately for losing their temper. (Diane Bondareff, AP)

ON-AIR ANGER

Earlier in the month, late night host Jimmy Kimmel grew visibly angry on-air when he guest-hosted an episode of CNN's Larry King Live on the issue of paparazzi stalking celebrities.

Kimmel attacked the editor of a snarky New York City website called Gawker.com, which offers a regular feature called Gawker Stalker.

Residents send in their celeb sightings, and Gawker editors post them as soon as possible.

Kimmel was clearly disgruntled with Emily Gould from the outset, over a Gawker Stalker sighting suggesting he was drunk -- "you post things which simply aren't true on the site" he told her -- and the interview quickly deteriorated.

Instead Kimmel berated Gould, who tried to argue no one has a reasonable expectation of privacy these days, saying she was in effect "throwing rocks at celebrities."

What really seemed to set Kimmel off was when Gould suggested the celebs were protected by "piles of money."

"Not all celebrities are wealthy," he said tersely. "I mean, you know, that's a silly and stupid thing to say, you know that."

Though Kimmel stopped short of an outburst, any fan of his would be left with a significantly different impression than that of a jovial funnyman.

Even the amiable Brad Pitt reportedly lashed out when a Daily Mirror reporter approached him at a bar and asked about his family.

The writer says Pitt went on a rant about negative press targeting his girlfriend Angelina Jolie, before stopping and saying "I'm sorry if I seem to be taking my frustration out on you."

The examples are many: Britney Spears, in a sarcastic, Valley Girl-accented diatribe against her bad press; Tom

Cruise getting nasty with Matt Lauer on The Today Show, Icelandic singer Bjork attacking a paparazzo in an airport.

At least one writer has pointed out there is there is a certain amount of schadenfreude involved in watching a celebrity of Baldwin's wattage fight publicly with ex-wife Kim Basinger, who is also famous.

DELICIOUS GOSSIP

There is the pure, delicious gossip factor to consider, too. And, mostly, seeing someone successful like Baldwin fail to stop himself from snapping over a personal problem makes plain-old stressed-out regular folk feel much better about the times they might have done it too.

A recent survey from Ivory revealed that more than 10% of us are even multi-tasking -- that is mentally tackling to-do lists, talking on the phone, and even eating and drinking -- in the shower.

"We're always on the go ... when our kids come and ask 'mommy can you take me to the park? We snap," says Ronnie Nijmeh, the head of ACQYR, a Toronto-based coaching company that helps people deal with stress.

"The biggest problem is people don't really realize they're stressed until there is an acute problem ... stress has to be managed before it happens, during when it happens and after it happens. It's a constant thing."
