

Sigma Paws Intro

[Clip: "I'm not allowed around schools"]

And this is where I realized this was gonna be a problem.

Sigma Paws is a furry Tiktoker with a deeply obnoxious persona. A lot of his videos are just of him dancing, which is fine, but there's also this streak where he's constantly flexing? And I mean that both literally, and in that he really wants you to know that he has a lot of money. Yeah, furries famously love it when you act like that...

When he's not flexing, he's screaming about his anti-furry haters. Which he then "defeats" by flexing his wealth again. There seems to be a throughline where he puts a heavy emphasis on class and social status. He seems to think that he's above his haters because he's rich.

On top of that, he has this strange series where he keeps discussing whether or not he thinks he can take various streamers in a fight, where he for some reason feels the need to point out that they have more subscribers than him.

Given this emphasis on hierarchy, I guess it's not surprising that he also has a music video that treats women as disposable: vessels to be used for sex and promptly discarded. And then there's this video where speculates on a YouTuber's sexuality, and another where he body shames a streamer.

As the kids say these days, the vibes are fucking rancid.

I feel like Sigma Paws can be summarized cleanly by this TikTok where he just starts screaming at his camera in the middle of a ski resort, making a huge scene so that he can pretend for the internet that he's being harassed all the time. This poor woman that was witness to this is just like, what are you doing? Why are you like this?

He's loud. He's desperate for attention. But above all, he's not real. Oh thank god, he's not a real furry. He's just a character that Anthony Po made up so that he could claim that he went undercover as a furry for 200 days.

Wait, isn't that worse?

Sorry, I'm just trying to process this. So, you decided to pretend that you were a furry, and to you, that meant that you should be as annoying as possible? Like, when you called out those streamers, some of them featured your videos on their streams. And that was the whole point,

right? Because you wanted attention? But how many people were watching those popular streamers at the time? Hundreds of viewers?

And you bragged that you kept getting posted on cringe subreddits. Is that really something to be proud of, when it's not your reputation that's on the line?

You wanted to spread the influence of Sigma Paws, but what about all of those randos that you did successfully manage to reach? Are they gonna realize that this was a bit, months later? No, right? They're just gonna think that that's what furries are: the intentionally incendiary caricature that they saw on a stream, which you made up as an outsider. Damn, alright, we haven't even made it to the video yet.

Anthony Po

So Anthony Po is a 22 year old YouTuber that's been making videos since he was a teenager. Most of his videos have surpassed a million views, and several of them can single-handedly eclipse my entire 13 year career on YouTube. He's a big fish. I'm not gonna pretend to be an AnthPo scholar, but of the random sampling of videos I checked, some of them were funny as shit.

[Clip from the beginning of his house video]

Anthony apparently went on a year-long hiatus from his channel, only to suddenly return a couple weeks ago, teasing new content. A day later he released a new video: "I Spent 200 Days Undercover as a Furry." Reviews were mixed. Many seemed excited that their favorite boy was back, and even a lot of furries seemed happy to be featured in a popular video that does say some nice things about us.

But then some darker questions began to bubble beneath the surface. Questions like, hey, why did you infiltrate a queer event under false pretenses? And why did you try to record gay men having sex for a YouTube video? But we'll get to all that.

Admittedly, this video did get some positive buzz at times from furries. Anthony spends about a minute of its runtime saying that furries don't deserve the hate that they get, showing a couple interviews that highlight people for whom the fandom has been a positive force in their lives. It's nice.

But to be frank, ending on this note felt a bit like a strategic move. People don't tend to consume YouTube content very critically. In fact, you're lucky if they even look at the screen, or for that matter, stay in the same room that the video is playing in. So if you end your video with "wow, aren't furries great," you can trick a lot of people into thinking that that's what the video was about. They might even share it with other furries, having not registered that the whole thing is a verifiable minefield of homophobia. Whoops.

The tension between these two extremes can be felt right out of the gate, when Anthony is introducing the premise of the video. See if you can spot the overwhelming cognitive dissonance in this clip.

[Clip of “Furries are the laughing stock of the internet, but are they really that bad? That’s not what I want to talk about though. I want to talk about furry parties.]

It’s a lot, right? I’m just not sure how someone manages to write those sentences back to back like that. He openly acknowledges that furries get a lot of abuse hurled their way, and that we don’t deserve it. And then without a second of hesitation pivots to how he did all this so that his non-furry audience would have more furry material to gawk at.

Inauthentic Immersion

He means “orgies,” by the way. That’s the word that he’s coyly dancing around because he doesn’t want to get demonetized. He could have said “room parties,” which is what people actually call them, but I guess he never learned that. So he seemingly spent the whole con specifying “furry party,” which starts to sound particularly insane when he’s talking to real furries who are currently standing in the middle of an actual furry convention.

[Clip: a furry party???)

[Clip: how do you do, fellow kids?]

Yes Anthony, everyone here is a furry, so it would have to be a furry party.

Okay, that was a bit petty of me. Honestly, I just have a bit of a pet peeve with this trend I’ve noticed in popular YouTube videos where the title implies that they did something that was impressively high-effort, only for the substance of the video to reveal that they didn’t actually try very hard at all.

Anthony wants us to think that he lived as a furry for 200 days, but if he did, this video features basically zero evidence of that. He doesn’t mention going to any fur meets, nor did he seemingly attend a furry night at a gay club. There’s no VRChat footage. In fact, I think it’s pretty damning that he doesn’t even mention a single furry that he ever met before going to the convention in his 200 day experiment.

As far as I can tell he just filmed some TikToks in his home and went to a ski slope once, which he cuts to over and over again because he has so little actual evidence of his 200 day experiment. Did you make a single furry friend in those 200 days, Anthony? What do you think the word “community” means? You don’t learn what it’s like to be a member of a subculture by sweating through a fursuit head in your office chair.

I guess it's pretty easy to go undercover for 200 days if you never actually approach the people you're infiltrating. I've been undercover as a train conductor for twelve yeaars~ They'll never catch me.

There's a few other reasons that I think he never actually immersed himself in the furry fandom. Like how his entire video premise is nonsense. [Clip: furry parties, are they real?"] If you spend even a single day on furry Twitter you're probably going to find a video that was taken at a room party, both explicit and not. So the thing that you're supposedly trying to prove is already widely documented public knowledge.

[Clip: BetaEtaDelota reacting to how dumb this premise is]

The other thing that strikes me as out of touch is that, (and I could be wrong here because it's sadly getting harder to tell) the art on those business cards really looks AI-generated. I'd love to hear who the artist is, and we both know that you could have afforded it since you love flexing your cash so much. But at a glance it has that uncanny vibe that I've subconsciously learned to detect over the last few years. A specific kind of high contrast, super clean rendering that paradoxically has what feels like weird, obvious mistakes here and there.

I point this out because art is the driving force of the furry fandom, so most draw a hard line at the use of AI, which is seen as theft. Even if you don't personally draw, it can be heartbreaking to watch someone like Chunie having an emotional crisis as people train their machine learning algorithms on his art so thoroughly that the generated images even reproduce his signature.

It's a double no-no to then go on to sell your AI-generated furry art for a profit. The video ends on the note that Anthony has a hundred leftover business cards and that he's going to sell them at his store "for cheap." Well, cheap in his words. When I looked he was charging \$10 a pop. I guess a millionaire would think that that's cheap...

[Clip: "I mean it's one banana Michael, what could it cost? Ten dollars?"]

If I'm doing the math right, he would have made more off these cards than he paid for his fursuit in the first place.

[Clip: \$700]

All of this is frustrating because it makes it feel like he never had a genuine interest in the community like he claimed, but instead saw filming the internet's most consistent punching bag as an easy source of content.

[Clip: "purchased the worst fursuit head of all time."]

Damn, alright. Someone made that. It's kinda cute, even if it looks a bit more like a squirrel than a wolf. You don't need to trash it in front of everyone. It's not self-deprecating humor when it's about someone else's art.

And then there's the fat-shaming. It's honestly one of the biggest signs that Sigma Paws was inauthentic. Because buddy? Uh, bears do very well for themselves in this community. Body shaming doesn't belong here.

Neurodivergence

Before we get to the really bad stuff, I do have a bit of an issue with the part that people usually like. And not just because I'm a needless contrarian all the time.

So furies who half paid attention to this video while washing the dishes or something generally share the same opinion: You shouldn't record people having sex, but otherwise that was a heartwarming video that makes furies look pretty good. And if that's the shared feeling among casual viewers, then I can't really disagree, can I? I'm pointing out all of these issues, but sometimes the effect of a piece of art is more important than the actual text of that piece of art.

[Clip: "most furies know that what they're doing is cringe, which in my head is like the first step towards not being cringe."]

Even if the effect seems to be largely derived, not from the bulk of the video, but from what we were essentially told to feel about it at the end.

[Clip: South Park "y'know, I learned something today"]

What people seem to remember is that Anthony starts the video by saying that it bothers him how furies are treated online. (Never mind that he spends the next ten minutes of the video contributing to that.) Then there's the fun bit on the dance floor. [Clip: I love furies] And then he explains that furies are neurodivergent.

[Clip: "It's just something that most of them enjoy, and a good chunk of furies also have some sort of neurodivergence."]

But y'know... that bit has been sticking with me. It sounds nice at first blush, but on repeat viewings it hits a really specific point that's been bothering me about coverage of furies for years. Don't get me wrong, yes, furies are very open about and accepting of neurodivergence. We're not perfect, but it's hard to think of groups that handle it better.

I think the issue I have with this framing is that it's always phrased like an answer that implies a question, and that question is: "Why are furies like this?" It always seems to come up when some third party is trying to explain furies to non-furies. And by bringing it up at all, it always

ends up sounding like an explanation. "Oh, they're neurodivergent, that's why." And doesn't that just feel kind of condescending?

They could always say "oh, these people are a community that found a rare source of euphoria through unfettered self-expression." But that would imply that we're right. And unfortunately, positive coverage of us is still always subtly couched in the narrative that we're strange and perverse, if ultimately harmless. So instead we're framed as people who just must have something different about our brains. That must be the reason we're like this.

But here's the thing. We're not really neurodivergent. Not overwhelmingly, anyway. I know, that sounds wild, considering how often it comes up. But as far as I can tell, the anecdotal evidence that you're thinking of isn't supported by the real statistics. According to FurScience, 6% of furries have been diagnosed with anxiety, and 9% have ADHD, which is completely in line with the general population.

What is significant is that 12% of us are autistic. Now this is a male dominated fandom, and boys are about four times more likely to be diagnosed with autism than girls, but that's still around three times higher than the national average. That is a lot of people. But it's also not? Like it's a bit weird to define a community as a whole by a subgroup that makes up so little of the population. It would be like declaring any room to be full of furries the moment I walk into it. Like, I am there, and I'm valid, but that's not really how words work.

And I say all this as someone who is himself in the process of pursuing diagnosis. I've been in twice so far, and I've gone through all of the questionnaires. They don't think I'm autistic. I think I have ADHD, but my scores were all in this borderline, gray area kind of place. Toaster's answers as an outside observer have my doctor questioning whether I have an anxiety disorder or not, so I just finished a sleep apnea test and I'm going in for therapy in June. She wants to address everything else before she even thinks about testing me for ADHD. It's a process, and it's a nightmare, made worse by the fact that every time I make any appointment it's always going to be more than a month in the future. Just, ugh.

But what I do know, and I understand that this may not be true to your story but it is true to mine: What I do know is that I'm not a furry because I might be neurodivergent.

I'm a furry because I'm gay.

I feel insane for even having to point it out, but it's strangely common for media coverage of furries to summarize us based entirely on the 12% of us that are autistic while carefully dodging the 80% of us that are LGBT. It feels a bit like going to a leather bar so that you can ask all of the daddies whether or not they have ADHD. I mean, I'd be curious to know, but it does feel a bit off topic. And sure enough, how many times does Anthony say "gay" in his video about furries? Trans? Queer? LGBT? Nonbinary? Zero. Not a single mention.

This is what makes the part of the video that's celebrating the furry fandom ring as hollow and inauthentic to me. The rest of the entire video is chock full of homophobic jokes, but then when it was time to celebrate us, suddenly we're neurodivergent. And then the really cynical part of my brain can't help but think that this partitioning is deliberate.

It ends up feeling like Anthony intentionally avoided mentioning our queerness because then he'd be saying out loud that he's infiltrating a queer community for content. And while there's a whole genre of videos where someone documents people for being weird, which is maybe something that we should interrogate about ourselves, it's generally understood that you probably shouldn't impersonate a member of a minority group for youtube clicks.

So, through the warped perspective of online optics, this kind of thing is seen as more acceptable if you just say that our brains are different and leave it at that. Never mind the smell, that's just the subtly implied ableism.

Creepy Infiltration

Okay, I think we've spent enough time eating around the crust. Let's actually get to the contents of the video.

So, Anthony's objective was to infiltrate a queer event, pretend that he likes men, get invited into an intimate gathering under false pretenses, film sexual acts, and then somehow turn this into postable content for his YouTube channel that has 1.7 million subscribers.

I'm honestly impressed. My mind is blown, just trying to imagine how someone comes up with this concept, thinks it's a good idea, plans a trip with his friends that apparently don't think to stop him, executes on this plan, edits the hours of footage from the trip, rewatches the finished video, and then still thinks, yeah, that's ready to upload. He just had so many chances to stop.

But he didn't.

It's strange watching how single-minded he is about getting into a room party, too. Like he got the chance to interview several people who are members of a group that he claims to be interested in, but then in the edit he skips right over all of these encounters, adding narration that lets us know how frustrated he was that these people weren't randomly telling him about the sex that they have. It's almost as if he views them as obstacles? Like they're in his way.

[Clip: AnthPo's frustration]

Furry Weekly [TO BE RECORDED]

[Clip: Sigma Paws bragging about being recruited by Furry Weekly to do interviews]

I know what you're thinking, so yes, I did go and try to find what Sigma Paws wrote for Furry Weekly.

While I was searching, I did find this nice article by Danielle: The Christmas Tale of Lorfy and Livu. You see, Livu had just received his fursuit, but suffered an apartment fire only a week later, which destroyed the suit as soon as he'd gotten it. "I wanted to recreate that happiness for him, especially after such a distressing event," Lorfy said, so he went and recreated the entire suit as a gift.

Wait holy shit, that's amazing actually.

Furry of the Week is a regular segment that's all about spreading positivity within our community, and this was the segment that Anthony claimed he'd taken on. But wait, I can't seem to find anything credited to Sigma Paws anywhere on the site...

[Clip: Sigma Paws filming himself being recruited by Furry Weekly, on speaker phone]

"Ah yeah, that was me on the phone. I was made aware of him actually being a YouTuber pretty quickly **after** he posted his video, so I've been wondering how many people he actually made contact with on behalf of Furry Weekly. No though, he never did any work for us. I haven't watched his full video but from what I've heard, it just seems like he used Furry Weekly as a cover to try and interview some people, but it never resulted in anything for us... he indeed just asked to join, I wanted to give him a shot, and when I messaged him asking when I could incorporate him into our team, he didn't message me again."

- Yeshua, President & Editor of Furry Weekly

So he ghosted them. He bragged about getting the credentials to write for a small, feel good column, interviewed people under false pretenses, and disappeared once he got what he wanted.

I think I hate YouTubers now.

The Dance

The video is split into an A plot and a B plot, like a TV show. The A plot is about him trying to get into a room party, and the B plot is about him trying to win the dance competition. Okay, finally, something normal to do. Except he clarifies that he views the dance competition a glorified courtship ritual.

[Clip: my other strategy]

[Clip: someone will want to sleep with me if I win.]

I swear, polite society always frames gay people as being sex-crazed perverts, but it's the straight people who interact with us who can't seem to just be normal about it.

Oh, and I have bad news, Anthony.

[Clip: Foster/Ozone winning dance competition, overlaid with his tweet "Contrary to popular belief, being good at dancing has never gotten me hole"]

Disgusted by Homosexuality / Gay for Spectacle

Even though it runs counter to the entire premise of the video, for some reason Anthony can't stop reminding us that homosexuality grosses him out.

[Clip: "This may look like the face of a happy person but it's actually the face of a man about to have a face full of fur. Naked fur."]

Naked... fur? Are they naked? Or are they in a fursuit? Whatever.

I cannot stress enough that this is a thing that he's doing to himself. No one is pressuring him into this, and I'm willing to assume that the adults that he's trying to be intimate with would prefer to be touching someone that actually wants to be touched. Not someone who acts like they're going to throw up at the idea of commenting on someone else's dick.

[Clip: nice cock, *vomits*]

He's invited into the telegram group that's organizing the naked party, and then starts freaking out when the participants post nudes in there.

[Clip: recoiling at nudes]

[Clip: "dead dove inside" from Arrested Development]

Grow up. Anthony, you're the one that's coming into our spaces and pretending that you like it. So why are you reacting to it all like it's the insect eating challenge from Fear Factor? Wait, can I reference Fear Factor?

Just lemme....

SHIT, it was canceled when he was five. Uh... I don't have a new reference. I'm 34 and my taste has already calcified.

[Clip: oh it's a femboy]

What...? Who on this cover did you think wasn't a man? This guy? What did you think the title "Let the Best Man Win" meant? Y'know what, never mind.

Homophobic Stigmas

Things take a turn for the worse here, because unfortunately he couldn't just leave it at the jokes about how he's straight and terrified of dongs. In fact, this video is pretty insidiously homophobic throughout. Like when he bought the book from Fenris Publishing.

[Clip: any eight or nine year old could get to the porn books]

What the fuck? No. Absolutely not. This is a lie. Anthony is lying here.

Of course they checked your age, Anthony. You had to present your ID at registration. [showing my badges] Anthony was at Anthro New England in this video. I've never been there, but I have been to Midwest Fur Fest, Las Vegas Fur Con, Biggest Little Fur Con, Midwest Fur Fest again, Further Confusion, Las Vegas Fur Con again, and I just got back from Furry Weekend Atlanta.

While you can technically roam the hotel space without being an attendee, the Dealer's Den is a closed event where they check your badge on the way in. And I got every single one of my badges by waiting in a long line on the first day so that I could show the staff my driver's license (and usually proof of my Covid vaccination). So, they knew I was 18 or older.

All that it takes is a quick look at the Anthro New England website to verify that, while minors are allowed to attend the convention, they must be chaperoned at all times by a parent or guardian. Like, I saw a kid kill it at the dance competition once, but her mom was right there the whole time. If she did take her kid into the marketplace, she would have also clearly seen these big 18+ Adults Only labels that Fenris puts on the cover of every book.

So, no. No "eight or nine year old" is getting a copy of "May the Best Man Win" from the Dealer's Den. But thank you, Anthony, for implying that the queer event you attended was selling pornography to children. It's not like "think of the children" has been the most effective attack on gay and trans people for longer than either of us have been alive. This is totally a safe climate in which to make that misleading accusation.

Which takes us back to that opening clip.

[Clip: I'm not allowed around schools]

Masquerading as a member of a queer subculture, Anthony made his Sigma Paws character a pedophile. That's the implication of him not being allowed near schools: that his gay character is

a registered sex offender. And he could have let that choice die there, but we know about it because he thought it was soooo funny that he then ended up putting it in the video.

I thought the younger generation was supposed to be more in touch with LGBT issues, what is going on Anthony?!

Oh, and speaking of Sigma Paws, he has a TikTok where the whole joke is that he's following a woman around because he wants to have sex with her dog. So Sigma Paws is also a zoophile? How does this keep getting worse?

[Clip: (AnthPo, distorted?) Furies get bullied a lot but do they deserve it?]

But that's not all!

[Clip: "Final step: STD testing"]

[Clip: "you're gonna get HIV at a furry orgy."]

You see, the joke is that gay men have a lingering stigma that still follows us decades later because a disease ravaged our population in the 80's and Ronald Reagan ignored the crisis because he preferred it if we'd just die.

It's comedy gold, really.

And then, when Anthony leaves for the party, his friend records himself saying that Anthony is currently getting "molested by furies," and then Anthony chose to put that clip in his video. Because as we all know, gay men are sexual predators, and that's hilarious!

[Clip: (AnthPo, distorted?) Furies get bullied a lot but do they deserve it?]

Man, I'm just tired at this point. How did we get here? How does a zoomer make a video about queer people where the comedy is barely distinguishable from a movie by The Daily Wire?

[Clip: anything from Lady Ballers]

It's garbage, and I feel like in another world there might have been a larger discussion about these details, but the video famously got so much worse. I don't think most people interrogated what all of these earlier comments meant because what came next was too upsetting for them to think about anything else.

It's time to talk about the room parties.

Filming a Room Party

If we take Anthony's word for it, literally every single thing he did in his 200 day experiment was in service of him going to a con, finding a party where people were being intimate, and filming it for his YouTube channel. That's not even me reinterpreting anything, it's just his explicit mission statement, which is absolutely wild. Like, holy shit dude.

He finally gets his lead by passing out business cards that just say "invite me to your orgy, please." Someone reaches out, inviting him to a telegram group to organize the party. Now, what follows is sensitive, so I'm going to be as vague as possible.

Anthony attends a nude party, which just consists of a bunch of furies laying in bed together. Instead of showing any footage, he got an animator to recreate the scene with Animal Crossing characters. He then catches wind of a second party, and arrives to find someone straddling a large fursuiter. He joins in.

This second party doesn't get a recreation. Instead, we see the real footage, albeit heavily censored. We see it when Anthony strips down and climbs into bed.

He doesn't stay long.

[Clip: "returning from war"]

So, uh, that's violating.

Imagine coming home from a convention and finding out that some YouTuber filmed you in your most vulnerable moments and posted it online to his 1.7 million subscribers. Sure, you're blurred. You're not getting doxxed or whatever, but you know that's you.

That's just not acceptable behavior, and I really struggle to get into the headspace that would allow someone to do this. Because it's not a spur of the moment thing. It took months of planning, and even when he had the footage he had so many chances to realize that he shouldn't use it. And there were people all around him who should have told him no.

It's just such an obviously bad idea that even long-time fans of his can be seen saying that this video just felt off. But for any non-furies I'll try to better articulate why this bothers so many of us as much as it does.

In a previous video I described my experience of going to my first furry convention. I woke up with my boyfriend in the hotel room, opened the curtains, and looked down to see all of these colorful fursuits walking the streets, clearly identifiable despite the distance.

And in that moment, I felt a weight lift from within me. I had known that I was gay for over a decade. I had only just come out of the closet eight months ago. And now, I realized, I was

surrounded by my people in a way that I had never been before. I was in a safe space. Safe from the harm that someone might do to me for being who I am. But also safe to express myself and explore myself.

When we throw a convention, it's a bit like having a Pride event. We're creating a dense cluster of marginalized people so that for one weekend we can just be normal. In a lot of ways, going to a convention, putting on a suit, it's therapeutic for people.

So think about what it does to us when someone intrudes on our space to make a mockery of us? To other and exoticize us, and exploit us for their content. It's cruel. Infiltrating us under false pretenses is a violation of trust. And doing it just to watch us fuck is dehumanizing.

What I've learned from doing YouTube is that we, Anthony and I, can be powerful. In my Beastars video I came out to my audience in real-time. That was a risk. I had no idea how it was going to go, but it ended up inspiring people. The comments section and my DMs are filled with people who made positive changes to their lives: coming out to their parents, committing to their transition, embracing their furry side, reaching out and meeting people who are in community.

That video breaking a million views and having the reach that it has had? If that's my peak as a creator, knowing what it did, I think I can die happy with that. When I started making videos as a 21 year old I never imagined that I could have a positive impact on people's lives. It's kind of terrifying, because who the fuck am I?

When I was at FWA a few weeks ago, I got stopped and recognized a record number of times. It was surreal, and not only because some of them were while I was wearing fishnets and booty shorts. A few of those people even told me that I was the reason that they were there, because they've had their own journeys since they saw that video.

So imagine my frustration when I get home to see that one of my peers, and a much larger channel at that, uses his platform to do the opposite? I had a rule against responding to videos made by other YouTubers because my heart can't handle that drama, but I haven't been able to think about anything else since.

Like, he says one of the participants looks like a Discord Mod, which is a fairly significant insult about one's appearance. I know multiple people who have really struggled to find themselves attractive. Most mainstream media is designed to make you feel bad about yourself if you don't look like Anthony, and people who have internalized that will even say that to your face.

But what furies have come to understand is that, actually, everyone is a whole lot more attractive than they realize. I've also been re-evaluating my own appearance after a lifetime of negative feedback, because I've been given the chance to see myself through the eyes of others and believe that they actually like me. Through this community we're given a chance to repair our sense of self and realize that we are worthy of love, and that we probably don't even really believe in the standards of beauty that we've been told are correct anyway.

So imagine you have this kind of affirming experience, only to find out that a YouTuber decided to body shame you in front of hundreds of thousands of people.

[Clip: furries get made fun of a lot, but are they really that bad?]

Crashing the Dance / Apology / Content Creation

While I was working on this video Anthony posted an apology on Twitter, which for clarity I will now read in full.

I want to clear up some misconceptions from the furry video.

I removed 2 minutes from the video after speaking to one of the people involved and they asked to be removed. They did not want the situation to become a huge deal—for their sake, I'm trying to avoid doing more damage than I've already done.

I did not film audio or video of anything sexual—just cuddling. I am not here to defend myself, just wanted to clarify.

All audio was remade. Recording was mentioned beforehand. A phone was visibly setup in the hotel room. And then afterwards everything was heavily blurred or remade entirely. I had spoken to lawyers and checks were done by YouTube.

This being said, this DOES NOT excuse what I did as anything less than horrible.

I'm disappointed in myself and am so sorry to those specifically involved and to those who feel betrayed.

For those criticizing me for perpetuating stereotypes amongst the furry community, I want to apologize and emphasize that wasn't my goal in any capacity.

I greatly appreciate those of you who reached out with genuine concern.

I turned the video into a fundraiser for the Trevor Project.

See, as far as apologies go, it's not the worst. He acknowledges that he did something wrong, and takes the full blame for it. And I'm not one of those people who sees any influencer apology and reacts with "you're just saying that to appease us," or whatever. I'll take it as fully sincere.

There are some strange details, though. Like how in the apology he claims he that he didn't record any sexual acts, but in his original description of the second room party he definitely

described a sexual act. So he's either being misleading here, or he made up the original version of that scene to make his story spicier.

It's also objectively insane that he has the gall to claim that he never set out to perpetuate stereotypes about furies. Literally the entire goal of the project was to document what goes on in room parties, which he frames as a salacious secret. His entire mission was to perpetuate a stereotype.

Like with many apologies, it mostly seems to come down to the fact that he doesn't perceive himself as a bad guy, so he can acknowledge that his actions resulted in something bad, but can't reconcile that his intentions were rotten from the start.

To his credit though, yes, the entire segment with the two room parties is gone entirely. The video was 17 and a half minutes long, and now it's only 15. I believe the video had already been seen by 500 thousand people at that point, but at least it's gone now.

As a side note, this does mean that the video is extremely bad now, even for its target audience. It starts with a mission statement, builds to a climax, and then just... doesn't follow through. All of his reactions were within the part that had to be cut, so the video just doesn't work at all. Don't get me wrong, it's good that he removed that section. But it's wild to me that he's left the rest of it up now that it's this incoherent, shambling corpse of a video. Sorry, it just bothers me on a structural level. It is bad art.

He presumably has more than enough footage to start over and make a different video out of the material. "I Competed in a Furry Dance Competition." ...Not that I'm in any hurry to see him try to talk about furies again.

It does feel a little weird that the apology feels the need to tell us that he spoke with lawyers before making the video. First of all because "this is all technically legal" would never really function as an ethical defense of his behavior.

Second of all because this video had a 3D animated Animal Crossing adaptation of the room party he went to. He says he was visibly filming, but someone featured in this segment asked that it be removed. This makes sense, because it's not super uncommon for people to film sexual acts for their own personal use, but even in that context no one would be expecting that you're doing it for YouTube content.

So, my main takeaway from this part of the apology is that he took the time to clear the segment with his lawyers, he took the time to commission an artist to animate the segment so that he would have more compelling YouTube-friendly visuals to share, but he didn't take the time to ask for the consent of the people he was documenting for an audience.

Content brain is a scary thing. When you make videos for YouTube, or TikTok, or stream on Twitch, you're subjecting yourself to the incentive structures that come with those platforms.

Now, back when I made my YouTube account in 2006 I was just lying about my age so that I could watch Red vs Blue as a 16 year old. The front page was a manually curated space. The algorithm didn't even exist yet. But nowadays audiences are massive, and you can feel the algorithm's presence at all times.

Hell, I'm not free of it. I'm currently working on a video about Beast Complex because my last video absolutely bombed on a scale that I didn't even think was possible, so I figure I should at least make every other video be about some kind of furry topic so that I don't lose what audience I have. (this one doesn't count) In some ways I'm limiting myself by trying to just make Let's Plays and polite media analysis.

I mean, look at Ben of the Week, the other guy in the video we're talking about. Prank calling the military, driving in VR, one star: ripped my hole. Everything is so scintillating, salacious, and scandalous. If you're smart, what you actually want to do is come up with an irresistible title and thumbnail first, and then backfill the video idea and all of the actual work later. It's extremely good advice for this platform, but it's also an ass-backwards approach to creating art.

And I kind of worry about the kids that grew up in this environment. Anthony is positively tame compared to the genre of person that just harasses people on the street while shoving a phone in their face to film their reaction, and some of the kids that do that look like they're 14 years old.

And on that note, Anthony is only 22 years old. I myself started out on youtube when I was 21, and that guy was an idiot. My saving grace is that I was only making gaming videos for an audience of approximately no one. Anthony is kinda supposed to be spending his early 20's fucking around and finding out, just like the rest of us. It's just that, whoops, now he's a millionaire with an incomprehensible social reach because capitalism under internet 2.0 has a completely unhinged reward structure. I mean, no one's gonna complain about having a ton of money, but you are kind of opting out of the chance to have a normal life, and that's a choice that you likely won't realize you even made until long after you made it.

I just hope that with age he'll come to understand how selfish this all really was. The way he stepped over boundaries, exploited a community, and treated real human beings like they were obstacles in his path.

The video ends on what I see as a perfect summary of how this all felt to watch. Anthony didn't qualify for the actual dance competition. But he's got a YouTube video to make, so he shows up anyway, storms the stage, and just starts performing.

[Clip: AnthPo crashing the stage]

Damn, that's some hype editing, Anthony. It'd be a shame if someone removed it.

[Clip: livestream of AnthPo crashing the stage]

It's a bit disrespectful to all of the participants who worked hard to qualify for the competition. It's also immensely rude to the poor host of the show, who is probably an unpaid volunteer. It's their job to keep this two and a half hour event on schedule, but screw that, some YouTuber has decided to make this all about them. After all, his video needs an ending. That's way more important than the event, the host, the real competitors, and the hundreds of furies in the audience.

Anthony Po needed to make a video, so they're all just props.

And perhaps the greatest sin, he didn't even bother to stick around to actually watch the performances. You can see that he's still winded when he leaves. Way to tell on yourself for having never actually cared. And then he shouts the most honest thing I've heard him say.

[Clip: "I GOT WHAT I WANTED"]

[CREDITS, overlaid with "but that's not what I want to talk about today" "I'm not allowed near schools" and "I GOT WHAT I WANTED"]

Fixes

Pet owner is a man

Video Sources:

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Notes Document:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1EJmXb3mtUMmmcRk5bLO1v6S3SC-ezepAENlSe3wioZ0/edit?usp=sharing>

Furry of the Week: <https://www.furryweekly.com/issues/285>