

Not THAT MGM Lion...

Have you seen that MGM lion video? When I asked a friend about this the other day, he apparently thought I was referring to the lion that roars at you from the screen in the beginning of some movies – not THAT MGM lion! I'm talking about the shocking video of the lion turning on his trainer at the lion exhibit in the MGM Grand Hotel in Las Vegas. Notice I didn't use the word "attack". Animal experts (including Jack Hanna, my favorite animal expert) who have reviewed the footage have agreed that it wasn't an attack, but rather retribution or perhaps rough play from one grumpy lion. The fact is, had the lion been attacking, it would have been over in a matter of seconds with a tragic outcome for the trainer. The trainer escaped uninjured, and watch how the lion follows him out of the enclosure, giving him "yeah, you'd BETTER run" looks all the way out:

Personally, I do think the lion was playing rough. He might have gotten a bit irritated at the trainer, but if he had truly wanted to hurt him, he could have killed him in seconds flat, which is why extreme caution should always be used when handling exotic animals. I wish the video showed what was occurring between the lion and his trainer just before the incident. Seconds before, the lion seems relaxed, but then the camera pans away until the lion lunges for the trainer's leg. What I find truly amazing about the video is the female lion's reaction. She follows the male lion around the enclosure throughout the incident, seemingly trying to get him to stop stalking the trainer. Just after the male lion's first lunge, the female even jumps on his back and gives him a little nip. A penny for... scratch that – I think I'd pay a lot of money for the thoughts of these lions!

Scary as these incidents are, I'm happy to report that this one had a positive outcome – the trainers are fine. I wonder if that trainer will be working with that male lion again?