Stop filming concerts



Look, I understand where you're coming from. You paid good money to be here at the Eras Tour or whatever. You waited in line for two hours. You were up all night selecting your outfit. You sat in ridiculous traffic. You fought a relentless battle against Ticketmaster, and dagnabbit, you *won*. You're here, you persevered, and you want the world to *know* it.

You're here, you persevered, and you want the world to *know* it

Also, you're spending your Saturday night singing "Love Story" at the top of your lungs in a crowd of thousands of very attractive and well-dressed people, and those loser couch potatoes who follow you on Instagram presumably are not. You promised your mom that you'd get out of the house more, and you'd like her to know you're keeping your word. And you *really* love Taylor, some of the weirder tracks on *Evermore* aside, and you want to share her with the world.

What better way to achieve these ends than to film the entire concert and post it to your Instagram story?

Trust me. I understand the temptation. I myself have done this

now and again. The urge is human and valid. However, I am here to bring you an unfortunate but very necessary truth: nobody wants to watch your concert footage. Nobody.

I don’t care how great your phone’s camera is. I don’t care what fancy things you think you’ve done with the settings. Your videos are terribly lit. The room you are in is very, very dark. You are too far back from the stage. We cannot see anything. The artist you are filming looks like a teensy, blurry toy army guy that we would not recognize if you hadn’t tagged them 50 times.

That’s before we even get into the audio quality. Even concerts recorded by professionals with high-quality equipment often don’t sound all that great. You, meanwhile, are recording someone 10,000 miles away from you from the middle of a crowd that is screaming their faces off. We cannot hear Taylor. I’m sorry, it’s the truth. We cannot hear her, and it’s high time somebody let you know.

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Finally, I am going to get a bit philosophical. I understand that your concert footage has a lot of meaning to *you*. I’m not going to be one of those people who stands here and insists that you will never watch the videos you take. I, personally, treasure the small amount of concert footage that I keep on my phone. I was watching a video I took of BTS’s Los Angeles concert just this morning while waiting for the bus.

But I do not watch my concert videos because they are objectively good, entertaining, or interesting. I watch them because they’re a reminder of a time in my life. A time when I was in the same room as an artist I love, hearing them sing songs I love directly to me. They take me back to the roar of

the crowd, the heat of the fireworks, the plastic smell of the stadium seats. They take me back to a once-in-a-lifetime memory, an adrenaline and an environment I may never get to experience again.

Here's today's second unfortunate truth: our concert footage does not have that impact on anyone else. For someone who wasn't there with us, our videos are identical to literally any video of this same concert that exists on YouTube or TikTok. (In fact, they are probably worse. Sorry.) When you post a picture of your cat rolling over, you're sharing a moment in your life (and your cat's life) that does not exist anywhere else in the world. When you post an objectively terrible video of Harry Styles singing "Fine Line" at Madison Square Garden, you're posting a video I can find literally anywhere, at any time, on any social platform – and that I've probably also already seen on my feed by virtue of being a person that exists on the internet. Keep a few valuable, choice videos on your phone. Don't post all three hours to Instagram.

Now, I can already hear the comments. *But Monica, if you don't like concert Instagram Stories, just don't watch them!* No. That's not how Instagram Stories work. We aren't told if a story is going to be concert footage before we click on it. We just tap your little picture, expecting pictures of your cat, child, dinner, or whatever it is that's your normal fare because you are someone whose life we are curious about and whose joys we hope to share and celebrate – and then we are bombarded with a stadium full of AirPods-shattering shrieks. If you're someone whose Stories I watch often, your story is usually going to be on my front page when I open Instagram and thus one of the first things I habitually click on, and if you've posted 937 Blackpink clips to your story, that means you're subjecting me to videos of frenzied American crowds attempting to scream the Korean lyrics of "Shut Down" every time I absentmindedly open the app for the next 24 hours. And

that is, frankly, not something any of us needs.

Now, imagine the experience when Lady Gaga is in town and *everyone* I follow is there. It’s terrible concert footage all the way down.

It’s concert footage all the way down

But again, I understand. And I think we can reach a compromise.

Here’s what I propose. When you attend a concert, you are limited to *three* Instagram Stories. You can make these whatever you want. You can tag the artist. You can tag your mom. You can tag Tim Cook. I don’t care, but you get three.

This will send the message you’re trying to send. You will show the world that you are at a concert and that you are very cool, social, and musical. There will be three, and we will happily watch three. We will celebrate and heart-react three. But we don’t need to watch a thousand, and I promise that we will not celebrate or heart-react a thousand times.

There are all kinds of ancillary benefits here. Once you’ve filmed your three, you can put your phone down. Your arms will be *so* grateful. You can really *enjoy* watching the concert that you paid good money for, as opposed to spending the whole time fussing over white balance.

Not only that, but a future where everyone follows this rule will make concerts better for everyone. At any given time, orders of magnitude fewer people will be filming. That means fewer phones in your way. That means you don’t have to stand on your toes to see over the iPad Pro the six-foot-five guy in front of you has been brandishing for two hours. Everyone at the show will have a better time — and the footage the rest of us have to watch will look much better, too.

https://www.theverge.com/23811133/instagram-stories-iphone-con

cert-footage-sotp