

Beauty pageants get ugly

by *L_Brent_Bozell*

Nobody tunes into a beauty pageant and expects a public-policy discussion that could be mistaken for C-SPAN. The long-standing perception about the question-and-answer section at the end is that the aspiring beauty queens will uniformly voice their strong support for world peace, an end to hunger, and free lipstick and mascara for the homeless.

The latest Miss USA pageant on NBC illustrated that beauty pageants are becoming a dangerous culture-war minefield. It doesn't matter how brilliant your answers sound. All that matters is that you provide the politically correct answer, or your dreams will be blown to smithereens.

Carrie Prejean, Miss California, put her high-heeled shoe on a mine when she was asked a gay-marriage question by the gay-activist judge using the wacky pseudonym "Perez Hilton." If you don't know who this man is, it only means you don't care very much about whether Britney Spears wore underwear on her latest outing for the paparazzi. His celebrity-hounding blog is popular enough in Hollywood that movie studios advertise on it.

It quickly became apparent there was only one expected answer to his question: "Vermont recently became the fourth state to legalize same-sex marriage. Do you think every state should follow suit? Why or why not?"

Notice how the question was loaded like a gun: Should every state be just like Vermont?

Miss California was a little surprised to be thrown this curveball. Did any other contestant get a question like this? No. She stumbled into an answer: "I think it's great that Americans are able to choose one or the other. We live in a land that you can choose same-sex marriage or opposite marriage." But then, still thinking aloud, she made a decision. She decided to take a stand for traditional values. More to the point, she decided to stay true to her principles: "You know what, in my country and in my family I think that I believe that a marriage should be between a man and a woman â€” no offense to anyone out there â€” but that's how I was raised, and that's how I think it should be, between a man and a woman."

Boom! The dream was dead. Carrie Prejean had proclaimed she would rather be "biblically correct" than politically correct. There is now a religion test for Miss USA: Christians need not apply. Defending traditional marriage, even in the most gentle of ways, made Prejean unacceptable.

Another Miss USA judge, former beauty queen Alicia Jacobs, made it quite clear on her blog that Miss California's answer was beyond stupid, considering the sexual orientation of many pageant judges and

organizers. "My final ranking for Miss California was 4th runner-up and if I could have made her 51st runner-up, I would have."

Prejean not only lost the crown, but also opened the gates for ridicule. The insults began to flow like lava from a volcano. The leader of this hate-Carrie crusade was ... Perez Hilton. He marched over to a camera to record a rant for the Internet. "She lost, not because she doesn't believe in gay marriage, Miss California lost because she's a dumb [B-word], OK?" The next day on MSNBC, Hilton issued a fake apology: "I was thinking the c-word, and I didn't say it," he said, laughing.

The mudslinging was just beginning. On his blog, where Hilton regularly draws graffiti over the photos he's posting, he drew over the microphone that pageant co-host Billy Bush was holding in front of Miss California's mouth. The microphone was now a penis. Sadly, this gutter-blogger's best defense is that he quite routinely draws semen dripping out of the mouths of celebrities, both male and female.

And Miss USA hired him as a judge.

We know that beauty-contest judges are often a mix of former beauty queens, famous actors and others you wouldn't mistake for the Supreme Court. But how low are these pageants stooping for judges? Hilton is now an instant celebrity, interviewed on ABC, CBS and even two shots on CNN's "Larry King Live."

It was a natural time to announce his new music single on I-Tunes. It's a love song called "My Penis."

How ironic is it that Hilton used to work for the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation? He personifies the word "defamation," and GLAAD, naturally, had no unkind words for him. They insisted only that the media notice that Miss California's answer was factually incorrect, that you can't "choose" a gay union in many states.

This is how the one-way "defamation" street works, apparently. GLAAD forced the firing and ruined the award-winning career of actor Isaiah Washington from "Grey's Anatomy" for using the gay F-word on the set. But now Perez Hilton can run around in public and call this unsuspecting beauty-pageant contestant all kinds of awful profanities, and the media have made him a star.

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