



USOC official Peter Vidmar resigns after anti-gay marriage actions

By Christine Brennan, USA TODAY

Updated 5/9/2011 10:17 AM | 140 | 43 | Share

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Olympic gold medalist Peter Vidmar, who last week was named chef de mission for the 2012 U.S. Olympic team, abruptly resigned Friday after a firestorm of negative attention in the media and inside the U.S. Olympic Committee due to his 2008 actions against gay marriage.



By Rusty Kennedy, AP
Peter Vidmar, shown here at the 1984 Olympics where he won two gymnastics gold medals, resigned Friday as the chef de mission for the 2012 U.S. Olympic team.

As first reported by Outsports.com, and then in the Chicago Tribune, Vidmar participated in two anti-gay marriage demonstrations and donated \$2,000 for the successful 2008 Proposition 8 ballot initiative in California defining marriage as between a man and a woman. The proposition overturned a California Supreme Court ruling that permitted same-sex marriage.

"Olympic gold medalist joins Rancho Prop 8 demonstration," said The Orange County Register on Oct. 30, 2008, in which it quoted Vidmar as saying, "It's good for our society to have a traditional definition of marriage."

Vidmar said his opposition to same-sex marriage comes from his religious beliefs as a Mormon.

"The Church wanted to take a stand on the issue, and they invited their members to take a stand," he told the Tribune. "I chose to be involved."

In U.S. Olympic circles, there was concern that Vidmar wasn't just expressing his personal opinions on a controversial issue, but that he had moved into an



Peter Vidmar, shown here at the 1984 Olympics where he won two gymnastics gold medals, resigned Friday as the chef de mission for the 2012 U.S. Olympic team.

When the Tribune story broke, reaction was nearly immediate — and almost entirely negative — within the USOC. Aimee Mullins, the former president of the Women's Sports Foundation and chef de mission for the 2012 U.S. Paralympic Games team, said she was

"concerned and deeply saddened" about Vidmar's past actions.


"The Olympic movement is about promoting equity for all," she said.

In a statement released Friday evening, Vidmar said, "I have dedicated my life to the Olympic movement and the ideals of excellence, friendship and respect. I wish that my personal religious beliefs would not have become a distraction from the amazing things


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that are happening in the Olympic movement in the [United States](#). I simply cannot have my presence become a detriment to the U.S. Olympic family. I hope that by stepping aside, the athletes and their stories will rightly take center stage."

"Peter is respected the world-over for his dedication and commitment to the Olympic movement and is rightly considered one of America's great Olympic champions," said USOC CEO Scott Blackmun. "I believe Peter would have served our athletes well, but given the nature of this issue, I certainly respect his decision to resign. As we look toward London 2012 and the selection of Peter's replacement, we'll do so with the sole intent of showcasing America's best and brightest stars and the inspirational story that each member of our Olympic team has to share."

A day earlier, a well-known gay U.S. Olympian, figure skater Johnny Weir, told the *Tribune* that it was "disgraceful" to have a person with Vidmar's views and actions in a position that makes him the symbolic head of a U.S. Olympic team.

"It's wrong," Weir said. "I certainly wouldn't want to be represented by someone who is anti-gay marriage. It isn't just about marriage, it is being allowed equal rights as Americans. The fact this man who is very publicly against something that may be represented on the American team is disgraceful."

The USOC said it was unaware of Vidmar's actions on same-sex marriage before naming him chef de mission.

"I have never tried to hide this," said Vidmar, 49, the winner of two Olympic gymnastics gold medals in 1984 in [Los Angeles](#). "It is what it is."

Informed by the *Tribune* of Vidmar's position on the issue, Blackmun originally issued a statement reaffirming his selection:

"Peter is a tireless advocate for sport in this country and someone who has inspired many with his successes in the world of sport. That is why we chose him as our chef for the London Games. We respect Peter's right to religious freedom, and we understand and respect he fact that many Americans do not share his views."

Vidmar is chairman of the board of [USA Gymnastics](#) and has served on the President's Council for Physical Fitness.

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for Summ. J.



Peter Vidmar, anti-gay marriage advocate, chief of mission for U.S. 2012 Olympic team

Apr 29th, 2011 by Jim Buzinski.

The U.S. Olympic Committee [has named](#) Peter Vidmar, a 1984 gold medalist in gymnastics, as its chief of mission for the 2012 U.S. Olympic team in London. In this job, Vidmar will be the liaison officer for the U.S. team in dealing with the International Olympic Committee and London organizers.



Vidmar, a Mormon, is an active opponent of gay marriage. In the 2008 fight for Proposition 8 in California, Vidmar [donated \\$2,000](#) to pass the ballot initiative and also [protested in public](#). From the Orange County Register:



Peter Vidmar stood with other demonstrators in favor of the Nov. 4 ballot initiative that would define marriage as being between one man and one woman, undoing a California Supreme Court ruling that allowed same-sex marriages in the state.

Vidmar, who won two gold medals and one silver in the 1984 Olympic Games, says that he is in favor of equal treatment for homosexuals and in favor of Prop 8.

"It's good for our society to stay with a traditional definition of marriage," said Vidmar, a Coto de Caza resident.

This is not the first time the USOC has made a decision antagonizing the gay community. When Dr. Tom Waddell started an international multisport event for LGBT people in 1982, he wanted to call it the "Gay Olympic Games." But he was successfully sued by the USOC, which hounded him for \$96,000 legal fees as he was dying of AIDS. The event was renamed the Gay Games. The USOC at the time had no problem with there being events called the "Rat Olympics" or "Dog Olympics."


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28 Comments on “Peter Vidmar, anti-gay marriage advocate, chief of mission for U.S. 2012 Olympic team”



Doc Marten
on Apr 29th, 2011 at 3:31 PM

#1


This is a boneheaded move on the part of the USOC. The 2012 Olympics will be much more inclusive of LGBT people than the Olympics have been in the past-I mean, the London Committee is even selling a gay pride pin, for crying out loud. And yet, the USOC chose an unapologetic BIGOT to represent US athletes-gay and straight-at the first LGBT inclusive Olympics. This choice just screams STUPID.



Myke
on Apr 29th, 2011 at 4:13 PM

#2


Well said, Doc Marten! Again, the US shows how hypocritical it is. “Liberty and Justice for all”???????



Timothy
on Apr 29th, 2011 at 4:25 PM

#3

One interesting side note: the attorney for the USOC against the Gay Olympics was Vaughn Walker. The same Vaughn Walker that declared that Proposition 8 was a violation of the US Constitution.




Sarah
on Apr 29th, 2011 at 9:57 PM

#4

Thank you for covering this issue!

Guess what? As long as Peter Vidmar is Chef de Mission for the U.S. Olympic team, I will be rooting for other countries.

He can be Chef de Mission for his LDS temple’s Capture the Flag team.



Jodi
on Apr 29th, 2011 at 9:58 PM

#5

“he is in favor of equal treatment for homosexuals and in favor of Prop 8.”

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Miss California Sparks Furor With Gay Marriage Comments on Miss USA Telecast

Published April 20, 2009 | FOXNews

Miss North Carolina Kristen Dalton was crowned Miss USA on Sunday, but the big story to come out of the normally politics-free telecast was Miss California's comments regarding gay marriage.

When asked by judge Perez Hilton, an openly gay gossip blogger, whether she believed in gay marriage, Miss California, Carrie Prejean, said "We live in a land where you can choose same-sex marriage or opposite. And you know what, I think in my country, in my family, I think that I believe that a

marriage should be between a man and a woman. No offense to anybody out there, but that's how I was raised."

Keith Lewis, who runs the Miss California competition, tells FOXNews.com that he was "saddened" by Prejean's statement.

"As co-director of the Miss California USA, I am personally saddened and hurt that Miss California believes marriage rights belong only to a man and a woman," said Lewis in a statement. "I believe all religions should be able to ordain what unions they see fit. I do not believe our government should be able to discriminate against anyone and religious beliefs have no politics in the Miss California family."

PHOTOS: Pics from last night's controversial show.

Co-director Shanna Moakler said that she fully supported Lewis' statement.

But Prejean told FOXNews.com that she has "no regrets" and is happy with the answer she gave.

PHOTOS: 10 beauty pageant scandals from years past.

Miss California's answer sparked a shouting match in the lobby after the show. "It's ugly," said Scott Ihrig, a gay man, who attended the pageant with his partner. "I think it's ridiculous that she got first runner-up. That is not the value of 95 percent of the people in this audience. Look around this audience and tell me how many gay men there are."

Charmaine Koonce, the mother of Miss New Mexico USA Bianca Matamoros-Koonce, argued back.

YOU DECIDE: Did Miss California's answer cost her the crown?

"In the Bible it says marriage is between Adam and Eve, not Adam and Steve!"

The pageant had enjoyed a scandal-free year until earlier this month, when Miss Universe 2008 Dayana Mendoza was skewered for a blog posting from a trip to Guantanamo Bay. The entry described having "aloooot of fun" at a base that houses the notorious military prison; it was later deleted from the pageant's Web site.

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http://www.foxnews.com/entertainment/2009/04/20/miss-california-sparks-furor-gay-marriage-comments-miss-usa-telecast/[6/22/2011 11:12:33 AM]

The winner, Miss North Carolina Kristen Dalton, a 22-year-old aspiring motivational speaker and entertainer from Wilmington, edged out first runner-up Miss California, and second runner-up Miss Arizona USA Alicia-Monique Blanco, of Phoenix.

"It feels really natural," Dalton said of her win. "I've worked so be here and this has been my lifelong dream and it's finally here. And whoever knew you could win in a turquoise gown?"

VIDEO: Did Miss California make a big mistake?

Contestants from all 50 states and the District of Columbia competed in the pageant, aired live on NBC. Contestants were judged by their performance in swimsuit and evening gown modeling contests and their responses to a question asked onstage; unlike the rival Miss America pageant, Miss USA contestants do not perform a talent.

The top 15 contestants worked the stage in white string bikinis designed by pop star Jessica Simpson's swimwear line. Rocker Kevin Rudolf performed his song "Let it Rock," followed by The Veronicas, who performed their single "Untouched" as the top 10 beauties showed off their choice of glittering evening gowns.

Dalton's was a flowing, blue Grecian number that stood out among a series of white gowns.

Her title comes with a year's use of a New York apartment, a public relations team, a two-year scholarship at the New York Film Academy and an undisclosed salary.

She also will go to the Bahamas in August to compete in the Miss Universe pageant, where American beauties haven't been lucky in recent years. Both Miss USA 2008 Crystle Stewart and her predecessor, Rachel Smith, wiped out on stage during the evening gown competition, becoming accidental YouTube stars.

The Associated Press contributed to this report.

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AS THE EPIDEMIC ENTERS ITS FOURTH DECADE, WE LOOK BACK AT THE EVENTS THAT CHANGED THE COURSE OF HISTORY

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|| MEDIA ||

From The Advocate August 2009

The Real Perez Hilton

Perez Hilton was heralded when he embarrassed Miss California and derided when he did the same to *Milk* screenwriter Dustin Lance Black. So what's a guy to do when he's the most loved *and* most hated gay guy in America?

By Benoit Denizet-Lewis



Editor's Note: *This issue of The Advocate had already gone to press by the time Perez Hilton made national news by calling will.i.am of the Black Eyed Peas a "faggot" after they exchanged words at a 2009 MuchMusic Video Awards. This is an Advocate.com exclusive update to the cover story.*

If I were to begin this profile of Perez Hilton in the style of one of **his blog** posts, which is to say that if I were to begin this profile in the style of a catty, celebrity-obsessed seventh-grade girl, I might write something like this: *OMG!!! Sources confirm that former fatty Perez Hilton is getting LEAN and wants to get NAKED with writer Benoit Denizet-Lewis! Can U believe it?!!?*

Perez admits as much to me one recent evening in Los Angeles, as we're braving rush-hour traffic in his Toyota Camry, a car that seems entirely wrong for the self-described Queen of All Media. He's been talking about gay things (cute boys, the gym, gay marriage, *American Idol* finalist Adam Lambert), but he's kept it all above board until now, blurting out that he's almost ready to take his clothes off.

I'm not sure what to say to that. I also feel a sudden and unexpected kinship with former Miss California Carrie Prejean, who drew Perez's infamous question about gay marriage at the Miss USA 2009 pageant in Las Vegas. When she told Perez that she believed marriage should be a union between a man and a woman, he called her "a dumb bitch" on a video blog on his website, PerezHilton.com, igniting a firestorm and propelling the loudmouthed gossip blogger into the national conversation about gay marriage. (Perez had actually written the question hoping Miss Utah would answer it, thereby bringing attention to the Mormon Church's financing of the Yes on Prop. 8 campaign.) Will Perez call me a mean name too if I respond negatively to his nudist intentions? Fortunately, I've misread the situation. Perez doesn't want to get naked with me in his Camry. He wants to get naked in front of other people at a later date. PHEW!

"I've been working so hard on my health and my body," he tells me sometime during the 20 minutes it takes us to drive four blocks, "and I'm almost to the point where I'm comfortable enough to show it off. When I am, I'm going to be naked, all the time, everywhere. I'm going to be like Marc Jacobs. Every photo shoot he does, he's naked. That's going to be me."

There's symbolism, I think, in Perez's impending nakedness. Both professionally and socially, the 31-year-old Perez, whose real name is Mario Lavandeira, tells me he's never felt so happy, so free. (This is a month before Perez saw his world upended in Toronto, June 21, at the MuchMusic Video Awards, when he called Black Eyed Peas front man will.i.am a "faggot" and then allegedly was punched in the eye by the band's manager. Instead of receiving sympathy, Perez, who posted an angry and tearful video on his blog the next day, was ridiculed by celebrities and readers of his blog alike, some of whom said he had it coming. Perez also found himself under attack from many in the gay community, who were aghast to learn that he'd used the word "faggot" to describe the musician. "I've always known that a lot of gays didn't like me," he told me a week after the incident, "but after this it felt like *no* gays liked me. It was one of the worst weeks of my life." More on the incident and Perez's reaction to it later.)

After falling into a deep depression several years ago, the "professional troublemaker," as he calls himself, says he made a conscious decision to "create the happiness" he wanted. He's started eating healthier and working out, moved his mother and sister from Miami to Los Angeles (they live downstairs from him in his charmless gated apartment complex), and bought a goldendoodle puppy he named Teddy Hilton whose portraits now adorn his apartment walls. Recently, Perez has also tried to bring happiness to his romantic life.

"My whole life has been a quest to be happy," he says, adding that he feels a kinship with Oprah Winfrey, who he suspects is on a similar life quest. Unlike Winfrey, though, Perez says he doesn't read self-help books -- or any books, for that matter.

What he does do -- and what he says brings him an endless amount of happiness -- is "entertain the world" on his blog, which reaches 14 million readers each month (mostly women in their 20s) and is the 131st most popular website in America, according to the Web information company Alexa. As a blogger Perez relies heavily on exclamation points, abbreviations, and the caps lock key, and he loves to draw cocaine and semen on the faces of celebrities he dislikes. An unapologetic believer in outing closeted celebrities (he ridiculed Clay Aiken relentlessly, scrawled "bottom" on a picture of Lance Bass, and was losing patience with Adam Lambert before the singer came out on the cover of *Rolling Stone*), Perez saves his most vicious criticism for people he considers to be (a) train wrecks or, worse yet, (b) dishonest.

Emmy Rossum, an actress and singer who considers Perez a close friend (many of his friends refer to him as Mario), tells me Perez gets genuinely offended when people deny who they really are. "I think he's so proud of who he is and he's so unabashedly himself that he doesn't tolerate hypocrisy or people who pretend to

be something they're not," Rossum says. "It's no wonder that he's so taken by people like Katy Perry, Madonna, and Lady GaGa. They're all talented people who speak their mind and are real people."

By championing the music of his favorite real people, Perez also has become, as Lady GaGa puts it to me, "the ultimate tastemaker in popular culture right now," although one has to wonder if the will.i.am incident might permanently hurt his tastemaking brand. Lady GaGa has certainly profited from Perez's relentless cheerleading but insists that he "can't be bought." (They talk on the phone nearly every day and can sometimes be found eating out together on Sundays, Perez's one "cheat day" on his diet.)

Perez has leveraged his cultural influence for more than just access to the celebrities he worships. To the dismay of many, the Miss California episode propelled him into a leading role in the marriage equality movement. But Perez's activist streak is nothing new. Back when he moved to Los Angeles in 2002 in a failed attempt to become an actor, he worked for a time at Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation; Joan Garry, executive director at the time, remembers him as an "outrageous, larger-than-life personality who was obsessed with entertainment and really passionate about LGBT equality." Perez then went to work at the gay magazine *Instinct*, which he says fired him after five months for selling books on the Internet that publishers sent for free to the magazine.

Perez's activism -- his earnest belief that one of his true callings is as a civil rights leader -- is the reason we're stuck in traffic tonight. Normally, he prefers not to leave home on weekdays, when he gets up well before sunrise and works on his blog until about 7 p.m., taking only an hour break in the afternoon to work out with a trainer. But Perez agreed to drive across town to appear in a public service announcement for marriage equality. On our way, I ask him if he ever feels a conflict between his roles as a gossip blogger and gay rights activist. "Do you ever feel the need to tone down the outrageousness when you're making the argument for gay marriage?"

He shakes his head. "I don't really separate the two parts of me like that," he says, wearing black jeans and a white T-shirt that says "Vote for Gay Marriage." "I mean, I'm gay, and I make no apologies for that. Ever. I'm just being me. Besides, there are a lot of gayer people out there than me. On the gay scale, I'm probably a 6 out of 10. I could be way gayer!" He pauses to answer an e-mail on his Sidekick. "But what's wrong with being gay, anyway?" he huffs 10 seconds later. "Nothing. I love being gay! I'm gay. I suck cock. I went on this date the other night with this guy who said he didn't like sucking cock, and I was like, 'Excuse me? I don't have time for you.' I'm gay. I'm *very* gay. And I like sucking cock. A lot. Put *that* on your cover!"

Perez Hilton has been "very gay" for as long as he can remember. "I saw Marky Mark in those Calvin Klein ads when I was 13, and I was pretty much sold," he says. "There was no confusion, no dating girls. I know I was born gay."

Still, he wasn't ready to come out publicly at his all-boys Jesuit high school in Miami, where he was -- no real surprise here -- a vocal presence known for speaking his mind. "I said and did outrageous things," he recalls, "but I got away with it because I was a good student. I wasn't a fuck-up. I was ambitious and resourceful. I remember that my parents couldn't afford a school trip my class was taking to Spain, so out of the blue I sent letters to big companies asking if they would sponsor me. I raised enough money, and my teacher told me, 'You're going to go far in life.'"

In 1996, Perez moved to New York to pursue acting at New York University's Tisch School of the Arts. Japhy Grant, a writer who attended Tisch with Perez, remembers him as being more interested in celebrities than anyone he had ever met. Both Perez and Grant dreamed of making it big in Hollywood (Perez as an actor, Grant as a screenwriter), but when Grant moved to Los Angeles after graduating, he found an angry and depressed Perez who rode around town on a bike because he couldn't afford a car.

"The city was being really brutal toward him at the time, and you could tell he wasn't happy," Grant says. "He was on that VH1 show *From Flab to Fab*, and he was scarfing down laxatives. He was really struggling for direction, and one day I said, 'You should start a blog.' He was, like, 'What's a blog?'" (Perez and Grant are no longer friends. In a scathing 2006 Salon.com article criticizing Perez for his outing of gay celebrities, Grant called him "a crass, self-serving marketer disguised as an ideologue.")

Perez first called his blog PageSixSixSix.com (a play on the iconic *New York Post* gossip section Page Six), and his devotion to it was immediate and unwavering. "He sat about four seats in front of me when we both worked at *Star*, and he basically spent all day on his blog and not doing much work for the magazine," recalls Anna Holmes, who now edits the website **Jezebel.com**. "A few people definitely got annoyed."

But it didn't matter, because on March 11, 2005, the tabloid television program *The Insider* labeled Perez's blog "Hollywood's Most-Hated Website," temporarily crippling the site's server but effectively putting his name on the map. Before long Perez was a celebrity in his own right. "I still can't believe that I've become famous by writing about famous people," he says. "It's even weird that I did it by writing a blog. I'm a tech idiot."

Perez isn't the only one surprised by his success. "Perez is that kid who came out to L.A. with no interest in anything other than becoming famous, and, remarkably, that's what he did," Grant says. "When he was starting his blog, I kept telling him, 'Mario, be careful. You can't write that on your site. You'll get sued! It's going to blow up in your face. This is not going to work. You'll never get a job in this town again!' But, of course, he's proven me wrong in every way. He did get sued, but it didn't matter. He wrote what he wanted and apologized later."

Or, more accurately, he never apologized at all. When I ask Perez if he's ever written anything he's regretted, his answer is emphatic. "No, never," he says. Not even when he incorrectly reported the death of Cuban president Fidel Castro? "OK, I do regret *that*," he concedes. "I'm never going to live that one down. Of course, I regret when I get things wrong, but fortunately, that doesn't happen very often. I'm very careful about what goes on my site. Unlike a lot of other [tabloid media outlets], I don't make shit up. I don't have anything if I don't have the trust of my readers. I always tell the truth."

A few minutes later, though, when the conversation turns to one of his favorite targets, actress and singer Miley Cyrus, he matter-of-factly admits to, well, not telling the truth. "Do I really think Miley is a slut? No. But I am going to call her one because it's fun! I don't claim to be objective. I don't really believe everything I write. What I write is an exaggeration of what I believe. It's heightened reality. I write a lot of things just to piss people off or get a laugh. I'm not *The New York Times*. I'm Perez Hilton."

And as Perez Hilton, there is very little he considers out of bounds. Two weeks after my trip to see him, he angered many people by posting pictures of Dustin Lance Black, the Oscar-winning screenwriter of the film *Milk*, engaging in what appears to be unsafe sex with another man. Why would Perez, who claims to want nothing more than gay equality, post photographs that could defame one the movement's brightest spokespeople and be used as ammunition against his message?

"I actually have a huge crush on Lance," Perez told me by telephone the day he ran the pictures, "but I'm all about equality, about treating gays the same way I would treat straight people. I would post the pictures if it was a straight celebrity. I love Rihanna, but recently her naked pictures leaked and I posted them. So

should I not do it with a gay celebrity? Do we want to be treated equally, or do we not? Besides, I'm a gossip blogger. This is my job."

In person, Perez comes off as significantly less vitriolic than his blogger persona. I found him to be surprisingly laid-back and even likable in real life, but he's not a deep or nuanced thinker and seems generally unwilling (perhaps unable?) to look critically at himself. He seems all too eager to genuinely believe his own spin, to make up his mind and *then* go searching for the evidence -- or the rationale -- to back it up. And though his close friends praise his honesty, he doesn't strike me as all that *intellectually* honest. A conversation we have about the Miss California controversy hints at these shortcomings.

I begin by asking him if there is any answer Carrie Prejean could have offered that would have disagreed with his position but not warranted him branding her "a dumb bitch." He nods vigorously. "Oh, yes, there could have been so many other better answers!" he says.

I ask him to name one. "Well, she could have been much more eloquent than she was," he says. "She could have said, 'I think our country was designed in such a way that the states can decide for themselves, and I support our country in whatever it is that they think is best for us.' Or, you know, a bunch of other answers."

Either Perez is lying to himself or to me (most likely, to himself), because I doubt that his suggested answer would have placated him. In fact, it strikes me as *less* eloquent (not to mention less honest) than the one the beauty queen gave: "I think it's great that Americans are able to choose one way or the otherâ€¦". In my country and in my family, I think that I believe that a marriage should be between a man and a woman, no offense to anybody out there. But that's how I was raised." If Perez so loathes hypocrisy and so values people who are true to themselves, as he claims, then how can he justify attacking Prejean?

I go on to ask Perez if he regrets calling her a bitch. I don't suspect that he does (he's been criticized for years for being a misogynist, with no effect on his behavior), but his answer is telling. "The word 'bitch' has no meaning to me," he says. "It's just a word." But how would he react, I ask, if a celebrity publicly called him a "dumb faggot" -- or some other derogatory word that *did* mean something to him -- while they claimed as a defense that the word meant nothing to them? Perez either doesn't understand the question or doesn't want to go there. Maybe, putting himself in someone else's shoes -- genuinely attempting to feel empathy -- is a better-to-be-avoided occupational hazard for a man who spends his days mocking others.

"This whole idea that I'm a misogynist who is really mean to women is silly to me," he says. "I *love* women. I worship women. Hello? I'm all about divas, remember? I bow down at the feet of women. Unless you're a dumb bitch, in which case I'm going to call you one."

While Perez seems genuinely aghast that anyone would respond to his relentless name-calling with violence, few people were surprised when he was punched in Toronto. But many gay people were shocked to learn that Perez had, in an attempt to hurt will.i.am, called him a faggot. "For someone in our own community to use it to attack another person by saying that it is, quote, 'The worst possible thing that thug would ever want to hear,' is incredibly dangerous," Rashad Robinson, senior director of media programs at GLAAD, said in a statement. "It legitimizes use of a slur that is often linked to violence against our community. And it sends a message that it is OK to attempt to dehumanize people by exploiting antigay attitudes."

But Perez tells me that, in the heat of the moment that night, he almost chose to use a different word. "I thought about calling him the *n* word," he says over the phone a week after the incident, "but I thought the *f* word was even worse. I was so filled with hate at that moment because I was hated on so much, and I reacted in the worst way possible. Then I went on to make a bunch of other mistakes. I shouldn't have made the video. I shouldn't have released so many statements. But what's come out of all of this is that I've learned so much about myself, and I'm in a much better place. I'm actually thankful that it happened. As cheesy as it may sound, I had almost a spiritual moment when I just let all of the anger and worry go and am now filled with peace, happiness, and wisdom. I could let this jade me and go back to being the super bitch that I was when I first started the website, but I've softened on my website and in life, maybe because I'm happier in my personal life than I've ever been."

Perez says he tries to take his cues from Madonna, or at least from what he imagines Madonna might do in similar situations. "In times of doubt I ask myself, *What would Madonna do?* " he says. "For the majority of her career, she was as equally hated as she was loved. She went from one controversy to another, but she just worked through it. She didn't let it affect her. And that's what I'm going to do. Even if I feel battered and hopeless and that the whole world is against me like I did during the week after this happened, I'm just going to soldier on."

After filming the marriage equality PSA, Perez drives us to an upscale club for the birthday celebration of a local party promoter. When we arrive, he spends a minute being photographed on the red carpet before stopping for a series of quick, inane interviews with reporters from magazines like *Star* and *Us Weekly*. He never tires of talking about celebrities, and there is plenty to talk about tonight. Only hours earlier, Kris Allen was crowned the newest American Idol.

"OMG!" Perez gushes in a reporter's microphone. "What an upset on *American Idol* ! I totally thought Adam Lambert was going to win. I'm kind of devastated." (To my surprise, Perez says he doesn't actually watch *American Idol* -- or any other television except awards shows.)

When another reporter notices Perez holding a wrapped present in his left hand, the following conversation ensues:

Reporter: You brought a present.

Perez: I did.

Reporter: What did you get him?

Perez: Porn.

Reporter: What kind of porn?

Perez: Hot gay porn!

With that settled, Perez makes his way inside the party, where a handful of "Z-list celebrities," as Perez dismissively calls them, mingle with their assorted friends and hangers-on. Among the recognizable faces (in Hollywood, at least) is Matt Dallas, best known for being the attractive young star of the former ABC Family series *Kyle XY* .

Perez's and Dallas's relationship has become a source of some potential drama in the evening. Perez has repeatedly called Dallas gay, even posting occasional updates on his blog about who Dallas is supposedly dating. Perez doesn't like to call this "outing." "What I do is *report*," he says, "just like I will report on the love lives of straight celebrities." Dallas has publicly denied being gay (on *The Howard Stern Show*, no less), and a friend of his wonders aloud at the party if the actor might have a few choice words for his least favorite blogger. I relay this to Perez, who can't seem to care less. After all, being accosted by celebrities is nothing new for him. As Perez tells it, Tara Reid once threatened to throw him in the pool at a party, Nicole Richie approached him at a coffee shop and demanded that he call her anorexic to her face (Perez declined), and *Desperate Housewives* gardener Jesse Metcalfe found him at a nightclub and announced, "Do you know how many times I've fantasized about killing you?"

Dallas chooses not to join this growing list of celebrities, and unless you count a couple of persistent social climbers who try desperately to engage him, Perez ends up spending much of the party alone or talking to me. "Most people I know out here just sort of tolerate Perez," one party attendee says. "Some will pretend to like him, but not many people actually respect him."

With no one he knows to talk to (his friend Katy Perry doesn't arrive until later), Perez sets his sights on a boyish 25-year-old who looks like an actor or model but is apparently neither. (Perez's longtime friend Eric Carr, who works in film marketing, told me that Perez's taste in men "is on the higher end" and that the blogger "wishes he could marry actor Zac Efron.") "He's really hot," Perez says of the young man at the party, trying to build up the courage to walk over and give him his number before we leave. Fifteen minutes later, he texts me from across the room -- "Still trying to work my magic here." More time passes. "I'm such a pussy," he whispers to me a few minutes later as I stand near the pair and watch as the young man playfully grabs Perez's shoulder. In the end, the man gives Perez his number before Perez can give him his.

"I know I didn't show it there, but I've actually gotten much better about asking out guys that I'm attracted to!" Perez tells me as we make our way to the exit. "I'm definitely on the prowl for dates. And to my surprise, a lot of guys that I've asked have said yes."

How does he know if someone is dating him only because he's a celebrity? "I think I'm self-aware enough to figure that out," he says. "But if it's just for a casual date, I don't care if someone's using me. I'll use them right back. I know how to play this game."

After five years as Hollywood's most notorious blogger, one would hope so. And as tempted as Perez might be to engage in some mutual using tonight with his new friend, it will have to wait. "I need to get up early and get to work," he tells me as we wait for a valet to bring him his Camry. "I may not be the best writer or the funniest writer, but I work harder than anyone I know. People can say a billion different things about me, but they can't say I'm lazy. And I have to give myself a pat on the back, because these last few years I could have lost my focus, or gotten caught in the bullshit of going to parties every night. But I didn't. And I have my success to show for it."

Benoit Denizet-Lewis is a writer with The New York Times Magazine and the author of America Anonymous: Eight Addicts in Search of a Life .

Exhibit 4-149

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Attacks on Miss California reveal intolerance of gay-rights activists Point of View • Beauty queen is latest target of a campaign to silence critics of same-sex marriage. OTHER VIEWS

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COLLEEN CARROLL CAMPBELL | Posted: Thursday, April 30, 2009 12:00 am | No Comments Posted

"I believe that a marriage should be between a man and a woman. No offense to anybody out there, but that's how I was raised."

0

With that mild answer to a beauty-pageant query earlier this month, Miss California Carrie Prejean was catapulted to the center of an international controversy resulting in vicious attacks on her character, intelligence and religious beliefs.

The assault began almost immediately after the 21-year-old college junior answered a question about her views on same-sex marriage from Perez Hilton, a gay gossip blogger and Miss USA contest judge who earned his fame by drawing obscene doodles on celebrity photos and "outing" gay stars on his website. Incensed by Prejean's failure to endorse his views on gay marriage, Hilton took to the airwaves and Internet to call Prejean a string of unprintable names.

The incident would be just another laughable case of a blogger behaving badly were it not for the fact that Hilton's histrionic response was echoed by a chorus of more respectable voices. They ranged from the TV journalists who fretted on air about Prejean's insensitivity and pageant officials who publicly sided with Hilton to the parade of Hollywood celebrities who denounced Prejean and high-ranking gay British politician Alan Duncan, who called her a "silly [expletive]" and said that if she turns up murdered, "you will know it was me."

For all the fuss, Prejean hardly is alone in her conventional view of marriage. Polls show that most Americans share that view and voters in 29 states, including California, have approved state constitutional amendments banning gay marriage. Yet Prejean did something most Americans who oppose gay marriage no longer dare to do: She voiced her beliefs in the public square. And when pressured to recant, she refused.

Prejean's boldness has made her the latest target of a cabal of strident gay-rights activists and their media allies who define even the most muted public words against same-sex marriage as hate speech. These ideologues increasingly rely on intimidation tactics to advance their cause where rhetorical persuasion and democratic means have failed. In an ugly twist for a movement that once made "tolerance" its rallying cry, the most glaring examples of intolerance in today's marriage debate come from supporters of same-sex marriage.

That intolerance was on full display in California last fall, before and after the passage of the Proposition 8

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gay-marriage ban. Anti-Proposition 8 TV ads blatantly stoked religious prejudices by depicting wild-eyed Mormon missionaries gleefully terrorizing a lesbian couple. Gay activists published an online blacklist of individual contributors to the Proposition 8 cause so those donors could be targeted for harassment, boycotts and firings. After the election, evangelical, Catholic and Mormon churchgoers faced angry protesters screaming at them on their way in to their respective churches. In Palm Springs, a raucous mob of gay-rights activists was caught on TV ripping a cross from an elderly woman's hands and stomping on it, while shoving her and swatting her with their placards. In Michigan, a band of gay-rights activists incensed by the California vote disrupted an evangelical church service, yelling at churchgoers, pulling a fire alarm and unfurling a gay pride flag from the church balcony as part of their "Bash Back" campaign.

Such boorish behavior typically receives little coverage from the mainstream media. Yet many Americans have noticed the increasing intolerance of the gay-marriage movement and they resent it. Perhaps that's why Miss California has enjoyed a surge of grassroots support in the wake of her media flogging. At a time when many politicians and pastors are too intimidated to defend their beliefs about marriage, a beauty queen willing to stand up to a bully is an inspiring sight.

Colleen Carroll Campbell is an author, television and radio host and St. Louis-based fellow at the Ethics and Public Policy Center. Her website is www.colleen-campbell.com.

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Alan Duncan defends Miss California murder quip



Senior Tory jokes on *Have I Got News For You* that he would like to kill Carrie Prejean for beauty queen's views on gay marriage

BY LARA ELLINGTON-BROWN

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LAST UPDATED 11:16 AM, APRIL 27, 2009

A senior Conservative politician, **Alan Duncan**, has had to defend himself after joking on television about murdering the American beauty queen **Carrie Prejean** for being homophobic. The shadow Leader of the Commons, seen as a contender for Home Secretary if the Conservatives win the general election, was a guest on Friday night's BBC1 show *Have I Got News For You* when he made his comment in response to Prejean's much publicised views on gay marriage.

The 21-year-old Miss California contestant had been asked by celebrity journalist **Perez Hilton** at last week's Miss America pageant whether she believed every American state should legalise gay marriage. She replied: "I believe that a marriage should be between a man and a woman. No offence to anybody out there, but that's how I was raised and that's how I think it should be - between a man and a woman."

Duncan, an openly gay politician who is married to 40-year-old press officer James Dunseath, said he didn't agree with the blonde beauty at all and went on to label her a "silly bitch" before commenting: "If you read that Miss California has been murdered, you will know it was me, won't you?"

The 51-year-old's comment appeared to shock other contestants on the show, with comedians **Katy Brand**, **Frank Skinner** and **Paul Merton** balking at the suggestion. "That's a hell of a statement to be making on camera there Alan," Brand said before Merton chipped in: "For someone planning to be Home Secretary." It seems viewers failed to see the funny side, too. Both the BBC and Ofcom received complaints after the show.

The Metropolitan Police have also been dragged in to the row after the leader of a religious group that opposes homosexuality reported Duncan's remarks. **George Hargreaves** of the evangelical political party The Christian Party said: "A senior politician suggesting, even as a joke, that it is OK that Miss Prejean should be murdered for her evangelical Christian views is totally unacceptable. How can we stop gun and knife crime when the man who thinks he will be the next Home

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Lara Ellington-Brown is a journalist based in London who has written for the Financial Times and The First Post.

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Secretary makes death threats?"

If the Tory MP is at all worried about the implications he is hiding it well. He has urged the public to consider his remarks in the context of the BBC1 show. "Of course it was in jest," he said. "It is a comedy show after all. I'm sure Miss Prejean's very beautiful and that if we were to meet we would love each other. I have no plans to kill her. I'll send her a box of chocolates - unpoisoned."

Filed under: [Carrie Prejean](#), [Miss California](#), [Alan Duncan](#), [Gay marriage](#), [Have I Got News For You](#)

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This was a joke - not a good one - but it must have been enough of a comment to get to those christians with thin skins and low IQs - the evangelical christians, blinkered religious nazis who hate anybody else disagreeing with them, to come out from beneath their stones. Did they actually watch the programme? No, thought not.

Posted by William Tayleur at 3:12pm on April 27, 2009

Come on, it was just a joke! Although I think he should let the girl have her views, he was just kidding. Of course he's not really making a death threat. Why would anyone take that seriously?

Posted by Katy Docherty at 11:28am on April 28, 2009

Agree with William, these sad one eyes need to get a life and stop trying to be thought police for the rest of us, the Met are already doing a good enough job in that direction. This show trades on being funny [very] AND outrageous, and anyone of a sensitive disposition with a closed mind should avoid it. I avoid Celebrity Come Dancing, I don't write to complain about it. I saw the funny side of the remark and the follow ups, but the dim complained and are noticed. The actual remark made no mention of 'wanting to kill the silly bitch' or of intent, it stated '... you will know it was me, won't you?' A flippant question based more on jumping to conclusions than anything else.

Posted by foolonthehill at 12:35pm on April 28, 2009

I remember the good old days when if someone was Tory they kept it to themselves.

Posted by Fred Smith at 12:54pm on April 28, 2009

It is very sad that the Tory party has come to the state where people like Duncan are welcome. It is not his sexual proclivities which are worrying, it is his inability to be a gentleman. There are many who would not agree with his view on sexual matters but who are sufficiently tolerant to accept that it is a matter of little or no importance. It becomes much more difficult when he exhibits such intolerance himself. He is not Home Secretary material. He is not even ministerial material.

Posted by John Clare at 12:05am on April 29, 2009

John Clare. No, it was the silly girl who was intolerant, she's a darling of the extreme neo-con right in the US, very intolerant people. I'm glad we have Tories who are not just gay, but can go on comedy shows and joke, who actually have a sense of humour. We simply don't have the level of right wing hate that America is plagued with. I think the writer of the article is trying to stir something up however, in giving the loonies of the Christian Party a voice, however marginal.

Posted by foolonthehill at 3:31pm on April 29, 2009

It amazes me how the left Socialist engineered machine criticises anyone who has an alternative opinion. It is vulgar people with their low IQ who throw any hopefully civilised conversation into a witch hunt. Look at America? Since embracing multi-culturalism, liberalism, globalisation and the free sex ethos it has fallen on its knees. When I was a child America was seen as wholesome and clean and its TV programmes reflected that but today the US revolves around gossip, sex, infidelity and drug use.....what a spectacular decline!

Posted by Nicholas Folkes at 8:40am on May 1, 2009

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Perez Hilton 'Floored' by Miss California

abcNEWS

By LUCHINA FISHER
April 20, 2009

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Miss North Carolina may have taken the title of Miss USA. But everyone seems to be talking about first runner-up Miss California, who raised eyebrows with her answer to judge Perez Hilton's question and sparked the ire of the self-proclaimed gossip queen.

Hilton asked Miss California's Carrie Prejean her thoughts on legalizing gay marriage during the Miss USA 2009 pageant, which aired live Sunday night on NBC.

"Vermont recently became the fourth state to legalize same-sex marriage," he said. "Do you think every state should follow suit, why or why not."

At first, Prejean seemed to trip over her words before giving an answer that drew a mixed reaction from the audience and a look of thinly veiled disgust from Hilton.

"I think it's great Americans are able to choose one or the other," she said. "We live in a land that you can choose same-sex marriage or opposite marriage. And you know what in my country, in my family I think that I believe that a marriage should be between a man and a woman. No offense to anybody there, but that's how I was raised and that's how I think it should be, between a man and a woman."

Apparently, though, some were offended by Prejean's answer. On television, there could be heard the sound of boos, drowned out somewhat by applause.

Hilton has been blogging about what he called the "worst answer in pageant history" since the show ended.

In a video blog posted Sunday night, he called Prejean "a dumb b----." He later apologized in the blog, offering to take Prejean out for coffee and a "talk."

"I was floored," Hilton told ABCNews.com Monday. "I



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Miss California Carrie Prejean left answers... [View Full Caption](#)

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he didn't say this before, but to her credit, I applaud her for her honesty. However, she is not a politician, she's a hopeful Miss USA. Miss USA should represent everyone. Her answer alienated millions of gay and lesbian Americans, their families and their supporters."

He also believes her answer cost her the contest because, to his knowledge, no Miss USA contestant has ever been booed during the question-and-answer portion of the show.

Hilton Suggests a Better Answer

"She lost it because of that question. She was definitely the front-runner before that," Hilton said, adding that he's "very happy with whom the judges chose," Miss North Carolina's Kristen Dalton.

Prejean told "Access Hollywood" on Monday that she felt like the winner, even though she came in second place, after receiving more than 1,000 messages on Facebook and 2,000 friend requests.

And even though, she believes her answer "did cost me my crown," she told the entertainment show, "I wouldn't have had it any other way. I said what I feel. I stated an opinion that was true to myself and that's all I can do. It is a very touchy subject and he [Perez] is a homosexual and I see where he was coming from and I see the audience would've wanted me to be more politically correct. But I was raised in a way that you can never compromise your beliefs and your opinions for anything."

Hilton said Prejean could have chosen an answer that he believed would have been less political. When he asked Miley Cyrus the same question on Twitter after the show, he was surprised by her response: "I believe that EVERYONE deserves to be happy. That's all I'm saying."

Comparing Cyrus and Prejean, Hilton said, "A 16-year-old gave a better answer. If she [Prejean] had said those two sentences, that would have been a better answer."

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Perez Hilton 'Floored' by Miss California

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April 20, 2009

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On his video blog, he offered another alternate answer. "I would have said, 'Hmm, Perez, that's a great question, that's a very hot topic in our country right now. And I think that's a question that each state should decide for themselves.'"

He also said what he would have done if Miss California had been crowned the winner.

"I would have gone up on stage -- I s--- you not -- and snatched that tiara off her head and run out the door," he said in his video blog. "I would probably have been arrested. But so be it. I need a cocktail now."

Keith Lewis, who runs the Miss California competition, released a statement to the media in response to Prejean's answer last night.

"As co-director of the Miss California USA, I am personally saddened and hurt that Miss California believes marriage rights belong only to a man and a woman," said Lewis in a statement. "I believe all religions should be able to ordain what unions they see fit. I do not believe our government should be able to discriminate against anyone and religious beliefs have no politics in the Miss California family."

Co-director Shanna Moakler, the 1995 Miss USA, told the media that she fully supported Lewis' statement.

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Exhibit 4-152

Exhibit to Pls.' Memo in Supp. of Mot.
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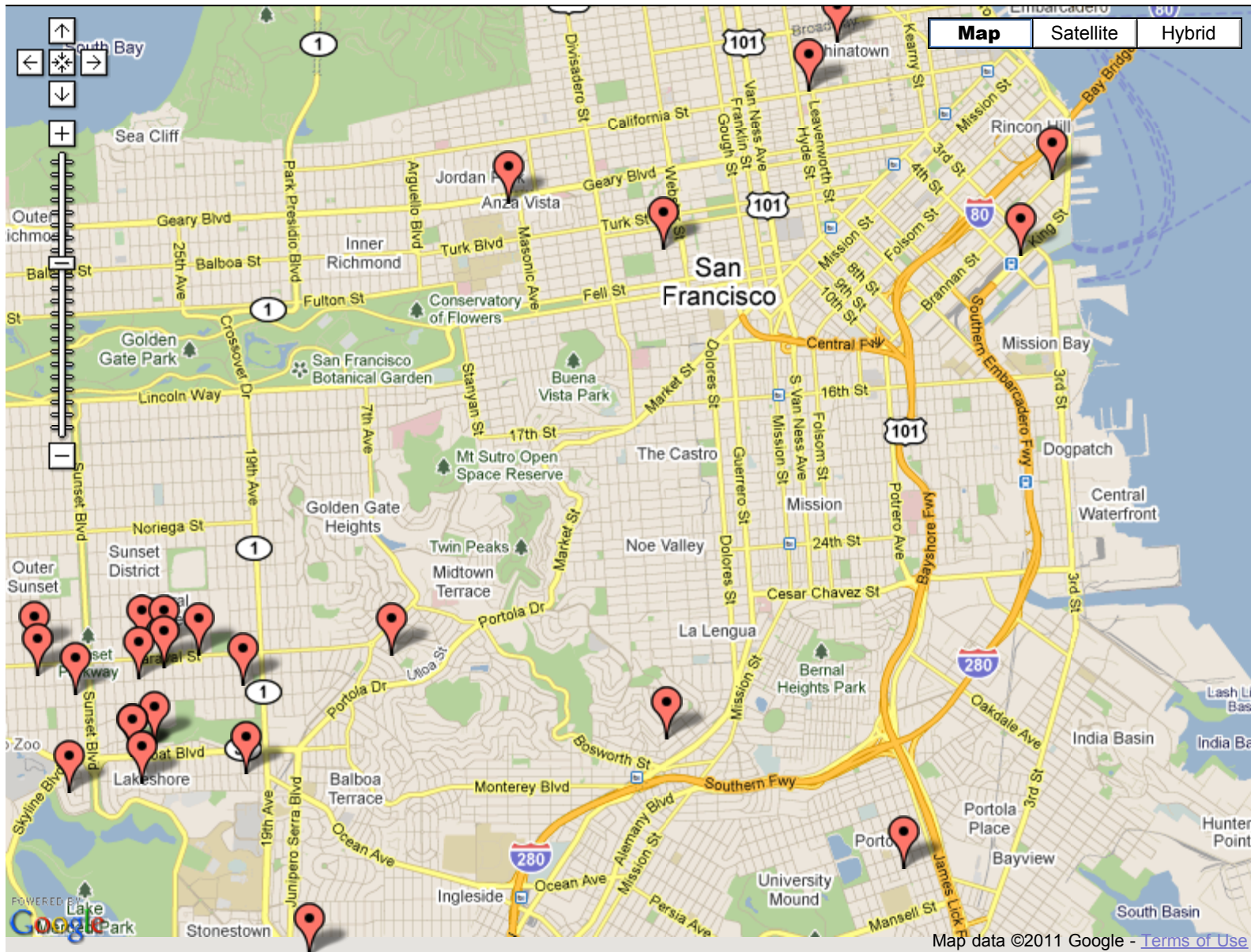


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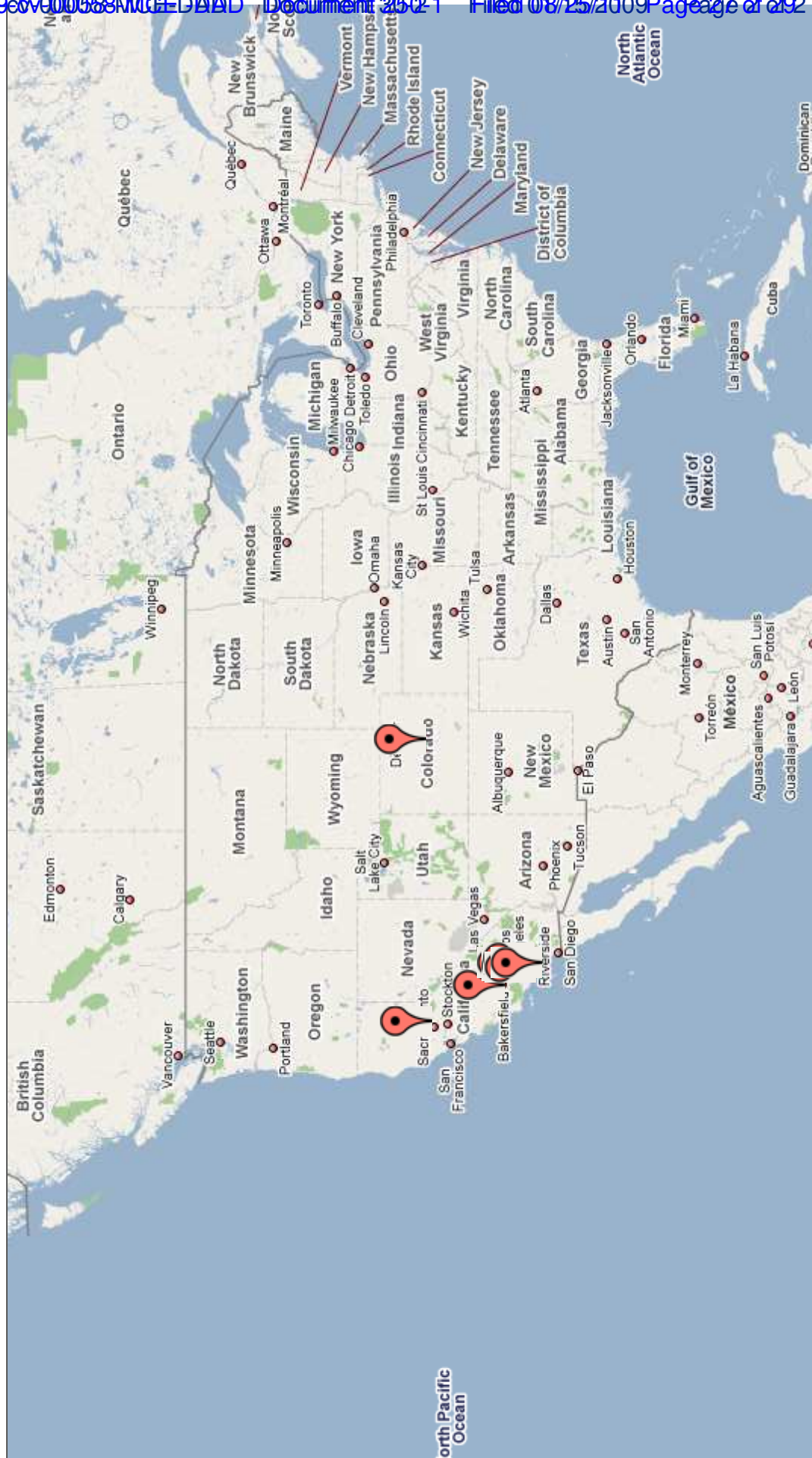
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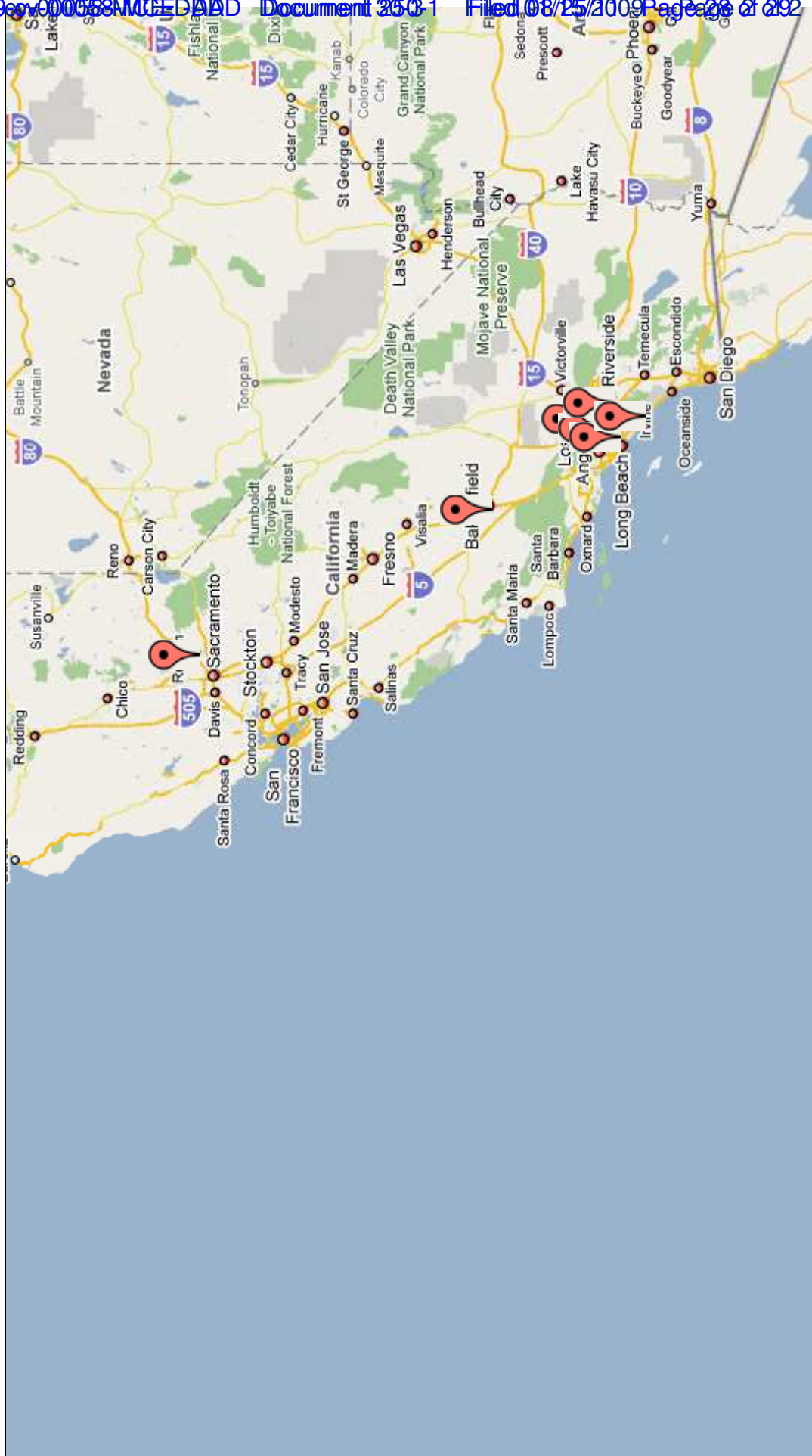
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