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American Idol Top 24: The Results

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The results show, or as I like to call it, Darwin in action. Before we bicker and shout about how "wrong" the results were (and they were), try to remember that it really doesn't matter what order people are cut in. In other words, while it seems a travesty that someone might be cut this week when someone else was clearly far less talented, if it would seem reasonable to see that same person cut three or four weeks from now, then don't get so upset.

The show began in a rather defensive mood, with Ryan admitting casually that some (indeed, MANY) of the contestants are familiar with the spotlight and Paula saying it shouldn't make a difference to America when voting. They miss the point. The question is not whether someone with some experience (ranging from winning *Star Search*, another reality contest or even having a multi-million dollar album released by a major record label) "deserves" to be on stage. Everyone will have their own standards as to someone they're willing to vote for and someone they consider a "pro" or at least an artist who has already had a big break and therefore isn't their idea of undiscovered talent. The question is whether the show should hide or obscure those facts from us. The answer is clearly "no." People hate feeling duped and when I'm presented a kid as fresh, new talent only to find out they've been hobnobbing with Madonna, for Pete's sake, and were actually signed to her record label, I get annoyed. Practice full disclosure. It would be strange if someone with loads of talent weren't already singing anywhere and everywhere they could. But there's a big difference between singing in local community theater and, say, touring with the national production of *Rent* in a lead role. (Which none of these kids did, as far as I know.) TELL US and tell us right away. How hard is it to tell us someone was in a band that opened for Britney Spears (show us a fun photo or footage) and then detail whether they actually released an album, etc. Tell us and let us decide. When the producers lie to us and pretend these are ids with no past, we get angry. 'Nuff said.

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After the banter, they showed a dumb faux video of the kids looking like superstars set to a Daughtry tune. Chris Daughtry's a smart guy to still work with the show and use that platform to showcase his music. He could have been dumb and said "I'm a

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rocker and Idol's not cool." Kudos to him for realizing the show was an excellent launchpad.

The show then launched into one of their patented, Up With People-style group sing-alongs. The guys looked snazzy in suits but the gals were dressed in vaguely Sixties outfits so the combo was bizarre. However when Michael Johns got a moment in the camera, it did make me think. It's got to be a major case of humble pie if not downright humiliating to go from being signed to Madonna's record label and assuming you were on the verge of stardom to auditioning desperately for *American Idol* alongside tens of thousands of kids. Carly Smithson was working in a tattoo parlor. Sometimes people act like contestants who've had prior success are "cheating" or using *Idol* to steal away a slot from someone else. The truth is that making it even with a major label behind you is incredibly difficult. And having to go to Idol after being so close shows a lot of determination.

GARRETT HALEY -- then Ryan called over Garrett and dropped the hammer. He's going home. Garrett was very composed and gracious but I kept wondering, "Where were the teenage girls?" But there are so many cute appealing guys and girls that looks just don't cut it this year.

AMY DAVIS -- She seemed to know it would happen and it did. Amy Davis was the next to go. I assume it was a mom and grandma or aunt or someone watching her, but it would be fun if it were her lesbian parents. We've had mixed race parents; isn't it about time for a contestant with two mommies or two dads? Or did I miss that happening already. I thought it was almost cruel of them to make her sing "Where The Boys Are" again and her vocals certainly didn't convince anyone a tragic mistake had been made. At the end, she rolled her eyes at her own flat notes.

Then we saw Paula Abdul's video from the new Randy Jackson album. Her vocals sounded so processed it seemed doubtful a single note came through without being pitch-corrected. But Paula had been approached during the mania of the first season about recording so the question is not about Paula making a comeback, but simply why did she wait so long?

JOANNE BORGELLA -- paired with rocker Amanda and I had no idea which it would be. But JoAnne was a pro and composed. She also kept her hands in her pocket so there was no warm hug between her and Amanda. She looked great and I was bummed since I thought she would be Top 12. I still don't know what Simon meant when he said the Burt Bacharach classic "I Say A Little Prayer" was a terrible song choice. Why? Because it's hard to sing would be the only answer I'd understand. Again, her singing didn't make me think, "Tragic error," but I'll miss her. Then we got our first shot of crying, thanks to Ramiele Malubay dissolving into tears. Soon all the gals were weeping.

COLTON BERRY -- paired with Chikezie and Chikezie certainly seemed to think he was a goner and was super-relieved when Colton got shot down. Again, I was surprised and certainly it was unfair in the sense that the guy wit by far the worst performance -- Jason Yeager and "Moon River" -- got to stay in while the equivalent gay (Amy) got the boot. Did I think Colton would win it all? Not necessarily. But I thought he was good and could go Top 12, just like JoAnne. And Simon's wrong: if nothing else, Colton would do great in a national tour of *Rent*. I'm sure he already knows all the words. Unlike the other three, Colton's performance after he got over being choked up was credible. See you off (if not on) Broadway, Colton.

So there you have it. I only picked one out of the four people going home. But at this stage of the game, so many people could be cut that really all you can wager money on is who deserves to go through. At least none of the eight people I predicted were safe got cut. But it only gets harder from here. Were you surprised by who got cut? Is your favorite still in it?

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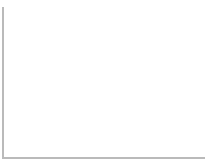
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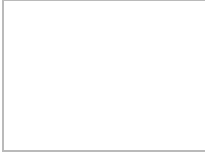
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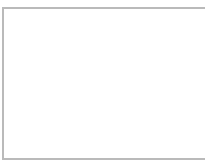
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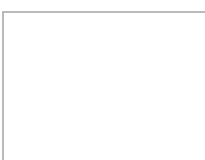
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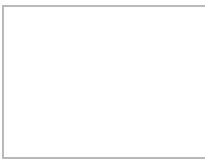
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I totally agree with AI should be more forthright about the pro/semi pro backgrounds of the singers, I mean, come on, anyone can Google these singers and find out everything they need to know. When I first watched David A, I thought what a great kid and fresh-faced, but then I go on the net and find oodles of videos of him in Star Search, etc..! I was pretty disappointed, but then you find out someone like Jason Castro who is truly a fresh face and so the competition should have more folks like Jason. Well, back to the results show, I thought the sing along at the beginning was dreadful, I had to change the channel...ha..ha. But I was sorry to see Joanne go, I thought she had a good chance to go far. The other 3 singers were the correct ones to boot, though they could have thrown in Luke Menard and Jason Yeager and no one would be surprised. They were pretty awful.

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