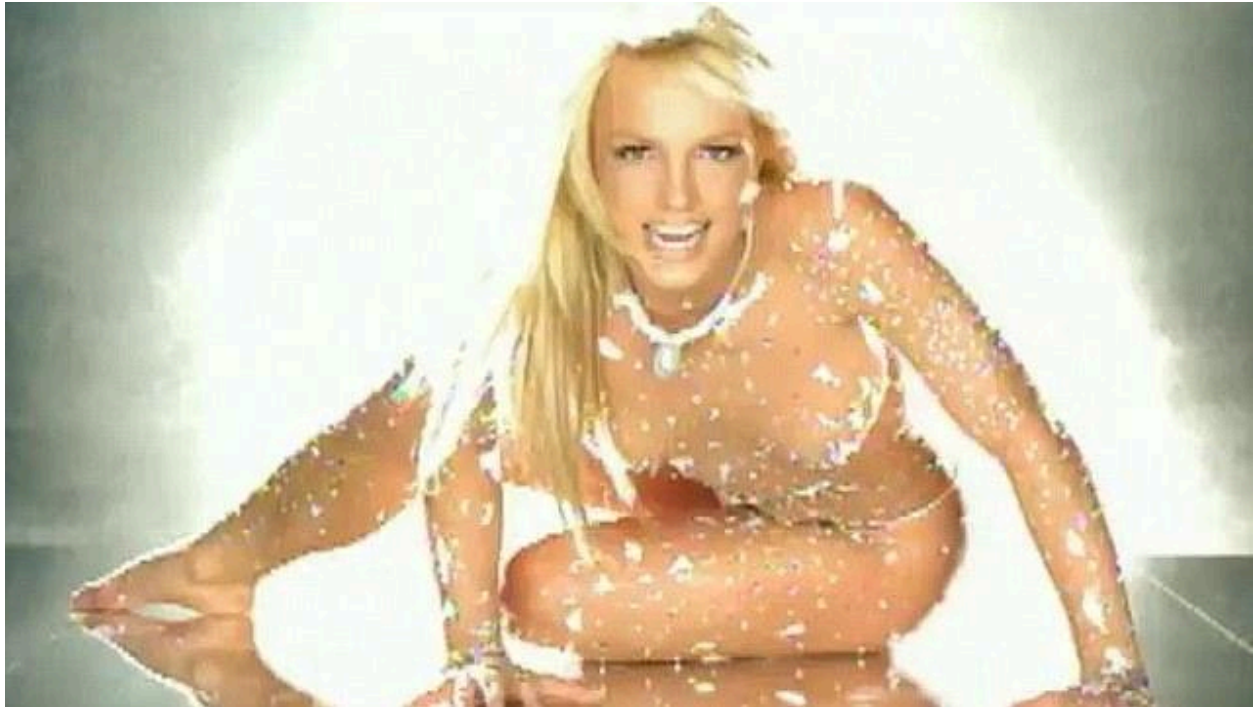


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The current season of Australia's Next Top Model has been rocked by a violent scandal, after a playful paint fight escalated into Lord of the Flies territory very quickly.

In an art project gone very, very wrong, Taylah Roberts, 18, physically attacked fellow contestant Ashley Pogmore, also 18, after she got paint on her shirt. Initially both were laughing as Taylah wrapped her hands around Ashley's neck, but it didn't take long for both girls to end up in tears.

Taylah was subsequently disqualified from the show after the incident, with producers obviously deeming her behaviour out of line and inappropriate.

But the episode in which the altercation takes place doesn't actually air until this evening though, so how has the incident come to be a national news story?

Because Australia's Next Top Model are publicising it.

Back in May during filming of the show, there was talk on social media and reports in the news of 'a scandal' on this season's ANTM. Apparently a bully had been disqualified by producers

because of a physical incident.

It could have just ended there, but last night, A Current Affair aired footage of the fight, and interviewed both girls, as well as ANTM judge Charlotte Dawson.

Both girls were obviously upset about the incident. Taylah regretted her outburst and Ashley was upset that her friend had been kicked off the show.

“Obviously violence isn’t right,” Ashley said. “And I’m not sitting here defending what she done, but I’m defending who she is as a person... She’s going to be a fantastic model, and I don’t want her career to be jeopardised over something that’s just a complete misunderstanding.”

Judge Charlotte Dawson added that she’s worried about the wellbeing of both girls as a result of the footage going public: “When this is public, when this goes to air, I know certainly on social media both of them are going to get backlash and that is something that can be incredibly difficult for young girls to deal with.”

So why have the producers of ANTM decided to use this incident as an enticing piece of publicity to draw people to the show? Well, for ratings, obviously.

It appears that this was unfortunate incident between friends. A play-fight got out of hand. One girl reacted with an inappropriate level of physical violence and was, quite rightly, disqualified from the show.

But if they found the behaviour so unacceptable, and are now worried about the backlash two vulnerable young girls are going to receive from the public, why air the footage at all?

That’s the question Gretel Killeen had for Charlotte Dawson this morning when she appeared on Mornings to further discuss the episode (airing tonight, coincidentally).

Dawson replied that it’s a way for them to show that “violence will not be tolerated on our show.”

Right. So violence will not be tolerated on the show but if it takes place we’ll publicise the crap out of it and use it to draw in as many viewers as we can. That’s television for ya.