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THE STAND HOMOSEXUALITY

Tim Hardaway is a former NBA guard, a very good one at that. Hardaway, in fact, was employed by the NBA, and should have participated in the All Star weekend of the NBA in Las Vegas. Those appearances were cancelled and Hardaway turned from favorite son, to persona non grata. He did so because he dared to speak his mind. He did so in a radio interview. Hear then the words of Tim Hardaway.

He was asked how he would interact with a gay teammate. He said:

“First of all, I wouldn’t want him on my team.”

Doesn’t sound too incendiary to me, does it to you?

Hardaway went on:

“If he was on my team, I would, you know, really distance myself from him, because, uh, I don’t think that is right.”

So, if Hardaway was on a team with a gay player, he would distance himself from that player. Distancing in sports among players happens all the time. Has Hardaway no right to conduct himself as he wishes?

And more. Hardaway said:

“I don’t think he (a gay) should be in the locker room while we are in the locker room.”

Hardaway in essence was saying that a gay man has sexual attraction to another man and that if a gay teammate were in the same locker room with a heterosexual Hardaway, he would find that inappropriate, unacceptable. Sounds to me like, so far, Hardaway is entitled to his opinion, not to mention his freedom of speech. He would not want a gay team member. If he had one, he would keep a distance. And that gay person should not be in a locker room where other men, most or all heterosexual, are dressing and undressing. Why I wonder isn’t Hardaway entitled to those opinions and further entitled to verbalize those opinions as he wishes?

Hardaway was then accused by the radio show host of uttering comments which were flatly homophobic. He was further accused of “bigotry” by the host ready to fan the flames. That prompted Hardaway to say:

“You know, I hate gay people, so I let it be known. I don’t like gay people, and I don’t like to be around gay people. I’m homophobic. I don’t like it. It shouldn’t be in the world or in the United States.”

So, now it is said, Hardaway crossed the line when he said he hated gay people and not homosexuality. Hate is serious stuff and perhaps all, or almost all, could say that is wrong. If Hardaway admits he is homophobic, hating all gay people, then that is wrong as well. I guess there is a real fine line between hating gay people and not liking gay people, and perhaps that is wrong as well.

But he also says that he doesn’t like to be around gay people and surely that is his choice, even as there are some gay people who do not wish to be around straight people. Surely Hardaway has the right not to like homosexuality and the practice thereof, does he not? He should also have the right to think that homosexuality should not exist in the United States or in the world for that matter, should he not? Is he not entitled to his opinion, even as so many heterosexual people believe that adultery is wrong and should not exist in the US or the world at large for that matter.

Heavy stuff.

The hatred of any person is wrong. Every religion, including and especially Christianity, and the great secular moral precepts agree. Any straight or heterosexual person who hates a gay person is simply wrong. Entirely wrong. There is no justification or rationale which justifies such hatred, none whatsoever. But, do we not have the right to disagree with or dislike the practice of homosexuality, and do we not have the right to verbalize those thoughts and opinions as our precious right to freedom of speech guarantees? It may not be politically correct to do so in this day and age, but any individual, especially any American should have the right to form opinions about homosexuality, or any other kind of sexuality, and to voice those opinions. The NBA and every other organization in this politically correct world of ours are themselves bigots, practicing “bigotry”, a prejudice against those who do not like or disagree with homosexuality by attempting to shut-them-up. That is an extremely dangerous suppression.

Hardaway was banned by the NBA and ostracized by current players and former teammates. Pressured as he was, Hardaway recognized the problem, the real problem and said:

“I’m sorry. I shouldn’t have said I hate gay people or anything like that.”

He is right. He should not have said that he hated gay people. But it is interesting to note that he never apologized for disagreeing with or not liking homosexuality as such. Perhaps he recognized that was his right to think that way, which did not require an apology.

Interestingly, there are some players who have expressed some “general concern” about playing with a teammate who is gay. Perhaps there are even more who feel that way but would not have the courage to say so. Some NBA players say that Hardaway went too far for he is the only current or former player to express outright hostility toward gays. None

approved that approach. They asked Shaquille O'Neal, at one time, and perhaps even now, the premiere player in the NBA what he thought. Shaq had an interesting reply. He said:

“On really sensitive issues, in the time that we live in, you have to be politically correct. Even if that's not what you're thinking, you have to really be politically correct. And he (Hardaway) obviously wasn't politically correct in his statements. Maybe that's how he felt, but he wasn't politically correct. My view is that I have always been taught not to judge people. To each his own.”

Interesting. You can read those comments different ways. The interesting thing in those remarks is a concern about things politically correct. Not right and wrong. Not the rights of an individual to express himself. But that which is politically correct. Peer pressure in the NBA would prevent Hardaway from speaking his mind or saying what he believed. No matter what you believe, keep it to yourself.

Every human being alive has an opinion about homosexuality. Right or wrong, or perhaps even indifference, for it or against it, everybody has an opinion about homosexuality. And, there is always some time, some where, where that opinion is verbalized. We say what we think. And, that is the issue with Hardaway. He said what he thought about homosexuality. He exercised his freedom of speech, a courageous thing, perhaps knowing that all around him, including and especially the NBA, would be against him. Argue as you will about expressing views on homosexuality, or any sexual issue for that matter, but nothing, nothing, should ever in any way prevent free expression, freedom of speech! No matter how obnoxious, insensitive, and especially if not politically correct, no speech should be suppressed for that is the inherent, the most fundamental, the prime right of every American guaranteed by our Constitution. That Constitution champions the right of every homosexual to champion homosexuality and to verbalize that belief in the lifestyle any way he or she sees fit. That very same Constitution should guarantee the right of any other person, including Tim Hardaway, to disagree with, to dislike homosexuality.

No one has to listen to what you say or what I say. You can tune out, move on, ignore or reply with your own differing opinion. You have that right, and so do I. But neither of us has the right to prevent anyone else from expressing their opinion. Protect and preserve freedom of speech, of any kind, or sooner or later WE WILL LOSE IT!