

Tough test left last lady spellbound

The Apprentice (TV3)

By [Pat Stacey](#)

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I don't recall ever being in a job interview where the person sitting on the other side of the desk thought they were playing the role of the tough-guy cop in a hammy crime drama.

(Mind you, there was that fella who used to edit a newspaper and is now on the telly, and who spent the whole time I was in the room spinning in his chair, steepling his fingers and seemingly directing his questions at the ceiling. But then he has always been a bit of a ham.)

Still, this is not the real world we're talking about; this is The Apprentice. And this being the penultimate episode, Bill Cullen took a couple of steps back and handed the remaining three contestants, Steve, Stephen and Geraldine, over to the tender mercies of four trusted interrogators: recruitment supremos David Block and Mairead Fleming, HR honcho Sheena Clohessy and media mogul Gavin Duffy.

Hapless

Our two hapless heroes and one hapless heroine faced an extremely tough round of questioning, during which a 100-watt table lamp and the words "Ve haff vayz of making you talk" wouldn't have seemed out of place.

Geraldine, the chirpy, squeaky Liberties sparrow whose fluffy featherbrain exterior hides a heart of pure titanium, was pulled up by Mairead Fleming over her poor spelling.

There were 20 speling errorz in the ferst paragraf of her CV. "Have you ever heard of spellcheck?" asked Mairead, sarcastically. "Or a dictionary?"

Geraldine said the first thing she'd do if she got the job was introduce herself to everyone in Bill's office and find out if there was anything she could help them with. Except spelling, obviously.

Geraldine later admitted she didn't understand David Block's question "What makes Bill Cullen tick?" It would be an unkind person indeed who suggests that this begs another question: "What makes Geraldine thick?"

Ultimately, it was Geraldine's lack of business experience, rather than her lack of spelling skills, that led to her feeling Bill's well-heeled boot on her backside. Next week's final is now a mano a mano affair between wide-eyed Steve (who I thought handled Gavin Duffy's needlessly invasive questions about his past alcoholism and gambling addiction with dignity) and gimlet-eyed Stephen, a man with all the warmth of a frozen fishfinger and the hair colour to match.

Nothing fazes Stephen, who declared: "I'm one of the most talented people in Ireland at the moment." Not so much as an orange eyelid flickered when he was told his CV was a greater work of fiction than War and Peace.

Arrogance

Gavin Duffy said Stephen's biggest flaw was his "uncontrolled arrogance", yet admiringly conceded that he's the kind of tough cookie you'd want on your side. SAS material, in fact. Me, I would have thought the mafia would offer Stephen better career opportunities.

If I were Bill Cullen, I'd give Stephen the job. I'd be fearful that I'd wake up some morning to find the bedsheets covered with oil and the decapitated bonnet of my favourite Bentley lying at my feet.

FOR TOMORROW: Pat will be reviewing Victoria and Shane Grow Their Own (RTE1) and reacquainting himself with Dynasty (CBS Drama)

STACEY'S STARS

*The Apprentice *****

- Pat Stacey
