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Top Stories

X-Rated

Porn star and pastor debate adult industry

By Ashley Hopkins, contributing writer
 Posted on September 18, 2006

A line of 1,175 students stretched across the Quad Wednesday joined together in one common purpose: to talk sex with

Jeremy, a porn star and director who has appeared in over 100 films, debated Craig Gross, pastor for XXXchurch.com — the anti-pornography Web site on the Internet — about pornography in Wilson Hall. Each gave an opening statement and fielded student questions ranging from everything from the role of women in pornography to how to receive the best orgasm.

"We wanted to get people asking questions," said Jeremy, president of marketing and communications for the University Board. "This is what you want to know. We thought it would be a great event to kick off the year."

UPB president Randi Sponenberg said, "We decided to bring this event to campus because we felt putting the spotlight on a hot-but-often-overlooked issue would enlighten the community."

Throughout the night, Jeremy reiterated his stance that pornography is a legitimate career choice for consenting adults. "It has a right to exist," said Jeremy. "It's that simple."

He also said that it can be empowering to women who choose to be in the adult industry.

"These girls are all making a billion dollars and bossing around men," said Jeremy while holding up photos of women in the adult industry who are now running their own pornography companies.

Gross, on the other hand, finds pornography to be degrading toward women. Through his site and his tours, he is trying to help women feeling trapped in the business a way out.

"Porn doesn't empower women," Gross said. "The only way to make it is to do hardcore material. The problem is most girls don't know what they're in for."

The debate also centered on the topic of whether pornography is just entertainment tailored toward natural sexuality, or if it is a fantasy world that is both fake and unrealistic.

"It's part of the wide world of entertainment," Jeremy said. "Nothing more, nothing less."

Said Gross, "I'm not against sex by any means, but porn isn't real. It's fantasy."

Many students enjoyed the debate, finding it both interesting and an important learning experience. Some were surprised by what they heard. "I liked it most when the speakers took sides I would not have expected them to take," said Andrew Harris, a first-year English graduate student. "With Ron Jeremy, you expect to hear about nothing but free license and wide-open sexuality, and yet I got to hear him talk about religious tolerance, industry standards and what's not glamorous about the porn industry."

Harris added he was relieved Gross refrained from "Bible thumping" and was glad to see he rejected Pat Robertson and Jerry Falwell. Jessica Schultz, a sophomore, said, "I liked that both were open-minded."

Despite their varying beliefs, both Jeremy and Gross have and will continue to tour together across the country.

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