
Nightline Face-Off: Is America Addicted to Porn?

Porn Supporters, Detractors and Yale Students Debate the Role of Porn in the U.S.

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Yale University is the academic home to numerous Pulitzer Prize winners and Nobel laureates, several U.S. presidents, senators and award-winning actors.

On Friday, the college, which is also known as a hotbed for student debate and political discourse, held a discussion on an unlikely topic □ porn.

As part of "Sex Week at Yale University," two divergent sides met for the second "Nightline Face-Off," in which they asked the question: Is America addicted to porn?

"Porn king" Ron Jeremy along with Vivid porn star Monique Alexander squared off against "porn pastor" Craig Gross and former porn producer Donny Pauling.

Watch the debate unfold this week on ABCNEWS.com, plus watch the full story on "Nightline" Thursday at 11:35 p.m. ET

Nearly 500 students, alumni and a smattering of current porn stars filed in to the LoRicco Ballroom located just outside of Yale's sprawling New Haven campus.

Sporadic chants of "We love Ron" filled the stairwells as students waited in line. Porn detractors arrived wearing "Porn is Bipartisan" T-shirts and waving anti-porn signs.

"This has been the most hyped event of our Sex Week here at Yale," said one freshman male. "I'm excited to see Ron Jeremy in an academic setting. I'm coming in with an open mind, not really knowing what to expect."

Other students were a bit more biased. "I'm just here 'cause I love porn," said Constance, a freshman English major. "And I'm not ashamed to say it at all."

The debate, moderated by ABC News' Martin Bashir, highlighted the vast differences in both sides. Jeremy and Alexander argued for their right to free speech and the importance of free will, while the porn detractors shared anecdotes highlighting the

dark side of the porn industry.

After the initial arguments and several heated moments, the debate was opened to Yale students. Hands shot up, and many students asked questions on a variety of topics.

Alexander, who at 25 has been in the porn industry since she was 18, was asked what her parents thought of her career. Another student asked about the prevalence of amateur pornography.

Porn Industry Still Booming

There's no question that pornography is a booming business in the United States. Despite a decline in the sales and rentals of porn videos, it's still a multibillion-dollar industry, and the rise of amateur videos, revenue-sharing Web sites such as XTube.com and technological advances bringing pornography to your cell phone and beyond means that porn is as prevalent as ever.

The Adult Video News Media Network, a trade publication, estimates that the industry earns \$14 billion annually. The adult film industry may be innovating and evolving, but is porn really just another form of entertainment, or is it an addiction?

Is porn dangerous or harmless? Is it necessarily degrading to women, or could it be empowering?

In 2006, "Porn King" Ron Jeremy and "Porn Pastor" Craig Gross embarked on a series of debates about porn in America, organized through Wolfman Productions. They have held 16 debates to date on the pros and cons of pornography, including debates at college campuses such as Ohio State University, Colorado College and the University of Missouri.

Last spring, the first ["Nightline Face-Off: Does God Exist?"](#) pitted actor and evangelical Kirk Cameron and his partner at the Way of the Master against two self-proclaimed atheists.

The second "Nightline Face-Off" features Ron Jeremy and Vivid porn star Monique Alexander on the pro-porn side, while Craig Gross and former porn producer Donny Pauling argue the anti-porn side.

Porn Is Healthy

Jeremy, 54, has appeared in more than 1,800 adult films and is listed in the Guinness World Records for "Most Appearances in Adult Films."

He is also the author of an autobiography and has appeared on the VH1 reality show "The Surreal Life."

"I think porn is healthy," Jeremy said in one [XXX Porn Debate](#). "It's all part of that wide world of entertainment, nothing more, nothing less," he added.

Jeremy's goal? "We want happy, healthy people watching porn recreationally," he said at one debate.

Jeremy was be joined by 25-year-old porn actress Monique Alexander, who is under contract with Vivid Entertainment. Alexander became a dancer at the age of 18 and has been working in the adult industry since 2001.

"I am perfectly fine," Alexander said, adding that she thinks "porn is a lot more acceptable now."

She believes pornography actually gives women more power and control. "We get paid more money than the men," she said. "We have more say so."

Alexander said couples approach her to thank her for her films because they have helped spice up their relationships.

"It's just sex," Alexander said.

Porn Is Dangerous

Five years ago, Craig Gross, a seminary-trained evangelist, created an online fellowship called XXXChurch.com, originally intended to serve as a resource for Christians who were struggling with pornography. The Porn Pastors, as Gross and his co-founder call themselves, now target their preaching at members of the porn industry, encouraging them to turn away from the sex industry and seek salvation.

Gross said they are obeying the great commission at the end of Matthew's Gospel to "go and make disciples of all nations."

"I think that God is using people that work with XXX Church to carry about his message, to carry out his plan," Gross told "Nightline" in a 2007 interview.

The Porn Pastors believe porn is dangerous for society -- delusional for men and disrespectful to women. They say the fantasy of porn inhibits people from building and sustaining meaningful relationships.

"When you get in a relationship with a real woman, you're not going to know what to do," Gross said during one debate.

"Porn is a lot easier than sex, especially now with the Internet," Gross told "Nightline." "You can get it when and where you want it ... and so what we see is people resort to the pornography, even when they are married and they could have a great sexual relationship."

Joining Gross in the "Face-Off" was former porn producer Donny Pauling. Pauling worked in the industry for nearly a decade, producing thousands of hours of material. But in September 2006, two years after he was first contacted by XXXChurch and began to re-examine Christianity, Pauling said he turned away from the industry and turned his life over to God.

On his Web site, donnysramblings.com, Pauling writes that he was driving home after landing a new and lucrative deal when "God just reached out and touched me," and "I instantly lost all desire to produce porn."

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