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Ron Jeremy, left, defended the porn industry while anti-porn pastor Craig Gross criticized the effects of porn on both those within the industry as well as viewers psychologically affected by it. The event, sponsored by Impact, attracted more than 2,400 people.

Master debaters

Porn star Ron Jeremy and anti-porn pastor Craig Gross met a packed crowd for their debate Thursday night

By: Brittney Hansen

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It was probably a smart move for Impact to hold the debate "Porn: Good or Bad?" with Ron Jeremy and Craig Gross in Bresnan Arena Thursday, as students began lining up an hour in advance and filling the space to near capacity with more than 2,400 in attendance.

"Overall we feel that it went beyond what we expected," said Ashley Minshall, president of Impact. "The attendance was great."

Adult Video News (AVN) Magazine has ranked Jeremy as No. 1 in their "100 Top Porn Stars of All Time," He has starred in more than 1,800 adult films, boasts to having had sex with 4,000 to 5,000 women, has appeared on the Dave Chappelle Show, appeared in 14 music videos, "the Surreal Life," "Boondock Saints" and "Spun."

He has also earned a bachelor's degree in education and theatre, a master's degree in special education, lectured at Oxford

University and written a memoir titled "Ron Jeremy: The Hardest (Working) Man in Showbiz."

Gross is a pastor from Southern California and co-founder of the Christian anti-pornography website xxxchurch.com. The site aspires to help those who struggle with porn addiction and those in the industry by offering free accountability software that tracks Internet activity and offers practical and spiritual support.

Gross has been featured in GQ Magazine, "Good Morning America," Newsweek, CNN, the LA Times, the New York Times and Nightline. He has also written several books and popularized the Internet phrase "Every time you masturbate, God kills a kitten."

"I started this church to help people like yourself," said Gross. Gross referred to this generation as the "porn generation," noting that porn today is like sex education. Porn star Stormy Daniels even uses the same font for her logo that Disney uses.

According to Gross, the majority of people looking at pornography online are under 18 and the average age someone sees porn for the first time is 11. Gross also said that the industry tries to sell idea that underage girls are making porn with titles such as "Young But Not Innocent," which Jeremy starred in.

"I'll admit, a lot of kids do see porn when they're young," Jeremy replied. "But we don't target that audience." Jeremy also mentioned the Child Pornography Prevention Act of 1996, which bans the industry from having an individual even portray a minor and pulled films like "Blue Lagoon," "Lolita" and "Tin Drum" off shelves.

"We do make some girls look barely legal," he said. "But barely legal, 18 and over."

Gross also raised concerns about the portrayal of women in adult films.

"Porn is degrading," Gross said. "It's not empowering women just because we're giving them a larger paycheck.

Jeremy mentioned a list of women who have made millions in the industry and some who have even started their own production companies, but said, "I never said in my entire life that porn empowers women."

Jeremy acknowledged the double standard in which children are raised in society, admitting that if he had a daughter, he would prefer that she not follow in his footsteps, but if she chose to, that she would do it with a smart business sense.

"If I had a daughter, chances are she would get a lot of college," he said. "Not a lot of girls who have gone to college choose

to do porn," adding that most women in the porn industry do not have a college degree.

Gross argued that since he has began the xxxchurch, he has seen pornography destroy many marriages and lives due to addiction or unrealistic expectations.

"Pornography is a fantasy, it's not real," he said. "It's not what you're going to deal with in a real relationship." He said that belief would inevitably lead to disappointment.

"It is fantasy," remarked Jeremy. "Anything you can think of, porn can create it."

Jeremy said that porn should not ruin a marriage and that many women complain that men watch too many sports, and still other couples watch porn together.

Students began lining up for the meet and greet before the debate finished, hoping to get a photo and an autograph from the B-list celebrity. The line went all the way from the Bresnan Arena to Pennington Hall.

Minshall said she felt the debate went really well, but was a little concerned about some students' questions during the question and answer portion of the event.

Questions ranged from how to get into the business, will there be an "Orgazmo 2," who was the best woman Jeremy had ever had sex with (he listed about 10 major porn stars) and penis size (9.75 inches). Two women even asked Jeremy to prove it. Only a few serious questions about the effects of porn were asked.

"We didn't feel that all of the students took the debate seriously," she said.

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