



# Porn Versus Preacher

## Only the nose hair was real

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published: October 15, 2009

*“Maybe tonight was different. Maybe it had nothing to do with God. Maybe he was probing deeper because I had embraced Ron as a friend and not judged him.”*

—Craig Gross and Jason Harper, *Jesus Loves You ... This I Know*

USC’s majestic Bovard Auditorium’s seat A28, front row, stage left, corner. It would seem the ideal location from which to observe a faux debate between Ron Jeremy, notoriously rotund and hirsute 30-year veteran of American mainstream pornography, and Craig Gross, gaunt and gangly 33-year-old Christian preacher/author promoting his latest book, *Jesus Loves You ... This I Know*.

You can see, hear and smell everything from here: debaters, moderator (Gross’ co-author, Jason Harper) and the packed house of 500-plus students and other lost souls.

The introducer introduces, the talkers start talking and the audience members begin texting and shooting video with their phones. The preacher decries bukkake, double-anal and the like, the porn star shrugs it off, and the hitherto anonymous collegian beside me, in seat A26, strikes out at the air in front of him with an invisible hammer.

It’s a frightening, desperate motion, and it repeats, rhythmically; impossible to ignore.

A26 digs his right fist into his face, grinding against his nose and right cheek, then THWAHH! — the fist shoots out about 18 inches and comes to a full stop. Slowly, it returns to the face. Over and over, 10 times, 20, 30. ...

Then A26 suddenly stops and seems to relax. The episode appears to be over.

“Gutter Mouths 29,” says Gross. “Sloppy Seconds. One Whore Plus One More. Gag Factor 26. Ass Stretchers. Two in the Bush. That Crack Is Wack. This is what porn is teaching you about women, and how they’re referred to. And Ron will say, ‘Oh, that’s just a small part of the industry.’ He doesn’t think that exists.”

Nothing shy of nitrous oxide draws convulsive laughs from college students like the recitation of hardcore titles. Even A26 is into it. But God knows what he’s capable of. A quick look reveals him to be an ordinary campus joe. Pale skin, clean clothes, clean shave, healthy head of short-cropped hair. A standard-issue oligarch-in-training.

“I met one of Ron’s friends the other night,” Gross says. “And we’re at dinner, and she said to me — I kid you not — she says, ‘The economy’s bad, so I’ve got to start doing anal. It pays me double.’”

At this, A26 starts up again. This time, the maneuver is apparent: nose-hair attack. The poor bastard has been pulling out nose hairs, or trying to. With short nails, too. Thumb and forefinger digging in a pinch, burrowing into the narrows on which the WASPs have long prided themselves, furiously trying to get a grip-and-rip.

For a moment his teary eyes meet mine, then shift back, likely focused on some bizarre childhood torture. He really can’t stop.

“Kids are seeing this,” says Gross. “And it’s destroying and changing their whole view of sex. I know this because I get e-mails from your mom and your dad and people like that, all the time.”

Gross produces a page of evidence and reads: “‘Please help me. I found a porn tape my son has. It shows girls and guys together, and girls and girls together. It makes me sick and angry and helpless. My son now made a tape of himself masturbating and sticking objects up his anus. Dear God, what do I do? Where do I turn? ... He wants the tape back. ...’”

Sounds like proper parenting, certainly a better job than A26’s father did, waking the lad at 4 a.m.

every Sunday with a flashlight and a crucifix-paddle. One hair, one whack; two hairs, three whacks. Now let's see those nails. ...

It's not a real debate so much as The Ron Jeremy Show. Gross is no fire-and-brimstoner, but he makes only broad statements with little to back them up, and Jeremy, with his fluid demeanor, depth of knowledge and handy stack of respectable newspaper and magazine clippings, handily crushes his opponent. Which is the whole point. The book is selling, the crowd is laughing, and A26 is cheering them on one nose hair at a time.

The sole turd in the cocktail, as far as I can tell, is whoever came up with the idea of turning Bovard Auditorium into Jerry Springer Lite for a few quick bucks. But like Jeremy's friend mentioned over dinner with Gross the other night, when the economy's bad. ...