

## Pastor vs. porn star

### Debate in Springs highlights opposing views about industry

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Ron "The Hedgehog" Jeremy is a hero to many. He has convinced unattractive men everywhere that they too can have sex with gorgeous women.

Jeremy is the unlikely porn king, one of the most visible men in the business, a man who has made nearly 2,000 pornographic movies and had more than 4,000 sexual partners, and who did it all before Viagra was invented.

He will be in town today to debate the virtues and ills of pornography with a hip, young Christian pastor who looks like a refugee from an emo band and hands out Bibles that say "Jesus Loves Porn Stars" on the cover. The two have even become pals.

Jeremy talked to us from California and Craig Gross from Grand Rapids, Mich. Below is the tale of the tape between the two verbal combatants.

#### DETAILS

The Great Porn Debate  
Where: Shove Memorial Chapel at Colorado College, 1010 N. Nevada Ave.  
When: 7 p.m. today  
Cost: Free

RON JEREMY, porn star

SUNDRIES: 54, Jewish, father was a physicist and mother a book editor

HOW HE GOT INTO PORN: His girlfriend sent a nude picture of him to Playgirl. Soon, he abandoned his career as a special education teacher (he has a master's degree), and dropped his pants for the movies.

Why do debates? The porn king is protecting his kingdom. The \$14,000 appearance fee doesn't hurt, but Jeremy says he does it because the porn industry is worth defending. He sparred with a feminist lesbian and a recovering sex addict before the porn pastor came along.

#### PORN VIEWS:

- Degrading or empowering to women?  
"Sex is not degrading," he said.  
Jeremy highlights the many women who make a mint in porn; says gay films show it's not about degrading women and S&M films typically give the women the power; and offers graphic examples of gender equality involving bodily fluids.  
(You'll just have to attend the debate to hear about that.)

- Destructive habit or fun fantasy? Jeremy said everyone knows porn is a male fantasy world filled with beautiful women who always say 'yes' . . . so what? He parodies porn dialogue: "Here's a cup of coffee, eat me' . . . These lines would get you slapped in real life."

- As for sex addicts, Jeremy points out that some people abuse alcohol and some priests abuse little boys, but he's not trying to outlaw booze or religion.

FIND OUT MORE: Of course, you can check out Jeremy's body of work, but in recent

years he's starred in the melancholy portrait, "Pornstar: The Legend of Ron Jeremy" and the comedy spoof "Being Ron Jeremy."  
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CRAIG GROSS, porn pastor

SUNDRIES: 31, married, two children

HOW HE GOT INTO PORN: As a youth pastor, Gross was confronted with lots of kids struggling with porn, he said. He started the XXXchurch.com Web site to combat porn; now it gets more than a million hits a month and is his full-time gig. Gross also created the Esther Fund to help people who want out of the industry.

Why do debates? Basically he gets a captive audience of porn fans. "Ron is the celebrity and I'm the pastor. Ron is the draw; do you think he needs me?" he said. "I'm there because I want to help people."  
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SPECIAL TALENT: Winning over people who are suspicious of Christianity. He reserves his harshest words for old-school Christian leaders: "The land of Dobson is more, 'We're right, but everybody else is wrong. ' Suddenly they're the authority on every subject even if they don't know a damn thing about it. The Christian world has a few spokespeople and bad ones, who run their mouth on every topic. It's not that I'm watering it down, but it's not the judgmental finger pointing. That's just tired."

PORN VIEWS:

- Degrading or empowering to women?  
"It's a brutal industry and a lot of people don't make it," Gross said. He argues that porn hurts people in the industry and people who consume it. He points out the violence and humiliation often visited upon women in porn.

- Destructive habit or fun fantasy? Gross argues the "progressive nature of porn, " as people tend to consume more of it and harder stuff. He says porn fantasy distorts the way real sex works and the way real relationships work, and a marital aid often becomes an addictive substitute.

