

Rolling Stone: Men Who Abstain From Porn Are Dangerous Alt-Righters

There's a [scene](#) in *The Big Lebowski* in which The Dude bitterly objects that the pornographer Jackie Treehorn, viewed by the local sheriff as an upstanding citizen who "draws a lot of water" in Malibu, "treats objects like women, man." Lazy, inarticulate stoner though The Dude may be, even he understands that porn is a shady business and that those who produce it are a detriment to society.

To read *Rolling Stone*, though, you'd think these people were providing a valuable public service. In a [recent piece](#) by EJ Dickson, the expert witness is Dr. David Ley, a "clinical psychologist and sex therapist" who "has partnered with the [pornographic] cam website Stripchat" to spread the word about "sexual health." The story also includes interviews with the vice presidents of two different porn sites, an embedded tweet about the supposed health benefits of chronic masturbation, and – to wrap it up – a "comforting message" from an "adult performer and director." They all want you to know that porn won't hurt you or anyone else. After all, everyone is watching it.

A segment on Trevor Noah's *Daily Show* takes it a step further, trotting out the same psychologist from the *Rolling Stone* piece to explain that porn and masturbation make "a lot of really good things happen in your body and your brain" and that "people who watch more pornography...are more feminist" and have "more egalitarian values." The correspondent responds with a joke – delivered without a trace of self-awareness – about how watching a 95-on-1 gang bang made him realize that "women have it so hard."

To the [millions of Americans](#) who struggle with porn addiction, to those raped and [murdered](#) by sexual sadists who cut their teeth on violent porn, to the sex trafficking victims coerced into porn, have no fear! Your sacrifice is not in vain; it will usher in a golden age of sex-positive emancipation!

But if the producers and consumers of pornography are so clearly dedicated to spreading sweetness and light in the world, what kind of monsters would oppose them?

According to Dickson, the enemy is anyone currently participating in #NoNutNovember, a viral internet challenge that encourages men to go 30 days without watching porn or masturbating. In what's become a tell-tale sign that the hip vanguard of the cultural left's late-stage sexual revolution feels threatened, Dickson lets us know, in no uncertain terms, that those who dare abstain from porn have embraced "the ideology...of the far right": "anti-Semitism," "homophobia," "racism," and "misogyny." He even includes Ley's "You know who else hated porn? Hitler!" argument and goes out of his way (and I mean waaaaaaay out of his way) to name drop Alex Jones and Milo Yiannopoulos.

Both *Rolling Stone* and *The Daily Show* focus on debunking the supposed boost in virility that comes from semen retention (which, granted, is bunk) that motivates some #NoNutNovemberers. But the extent to which both outlets ignore the obvious reality that most participants are driven primarily by a desire for self-control is staggering.

Ley actually criticizes Jordan Peterson (whom he calls "a leader in the alt-right movement in Canada") for telling young men that "there is nothing noble about masturbating to pornography."

"That's noble! That's healthy!" Ley insists. Dickson, meanwhile, reacts indignantly to the ["Coomer" meme](#), an image used by #NoNutNovember participants to mock those who

compulsively watch porn.

Really? Noble? If that's the case, it's a recent discovery. Throughout the ages, Christians and pagans, Easterners and Westerners, philosophers and poets – and yes, even the hedonists, most of whom had some standards and would have sought out heartier fare than the low-hanging junk food of smartphone porn – have agreed that the uninhibited indulgence of sexual desire makes one not only weak but contemptible.

This idea is there [in Confucius](#), who wrote in his *Analects*, “I have not seen one who loves virtue as he loves sex.” It's there in Plato, for whom those ruled by their bodily impulses are relegated to the lowliest status in his *Republic*. It's there in the Book of Genesis, Epicurus, Marcus Aurelius, St. Paul, St. Augustine, [Frank Herbert](#), and even Kanye West (both [pre-](#) and [post-](#)conversion). The spirituality of the Muslim poet Ni?ami, the asceticism of Siddhartha, and even the cultish machismo of the Proud Boys all point to the same eternal truth: if we fail to master our appetites, they will enslave us.

Perhaps such enslavement is the goal. The time of the self-governing man, we're told, is over. All the negative psychological and relational effects of porn are acceptable if only men can be reduced to such a state of surfeited acedia that they will roll over, accept the Pavlovian rewiring of their brains, and become good, docile consumers, fit only for the post-patriarchal age of Pornhub and Amazon Prime.

Of course, signs are already emerging that the apostles of the porn gospel may not like the kind of men that their creed of sexual “liberation” produces. Ross Douthat [has described](#) these men as “a breed at once entitled and resentful, angry and undermotivated, ‘woke’ and caddish, shaped by unprecedented possibilities for sexual gratification and frustrated that real women are less available and more complicated than the version on their screen.” [If Dickson is afraid of men who](#)

[don't watch porn](#), wait until he sees what men who do watch porn are capable of.

Fortunately, this attempt to create a society in which self-discipline [is vilified](#) is doomed to failure. Aristotle understood this when he insisted that the well-ordered, virtuous individual of the *Ethics* must precede the well-ordered state of the *Politics*. Self-control makes strong men. Self-indulgence makes weak men. Strong men make good citizens. Weak men make good slaves. Strong men are capable of doing harm. Weak men are incapable of doing anything else.

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