

[← GO BACK](#)

Stealing a kiss: Ron Jeremy and Stormy Daniels attend his birthday party in 2007.

SCANDAL

Hardened Criminality?

The world's most inexplicably famous male porn star has been accused of rape (again). Ron Jeremy's former ghostwriter lays bare how he got where he is



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Ron Jeremy was pissed. And when Ron Jeremy got pissed, he never looked threatening or intimidating. He was like a red-faced Care Bear. Like all you had to do was tickle his belly and he'd start giggling and a rainbow would shoot out of his stomach and he'd forget what made him such an adorable sourpuss in the first place.

"I just don't understand why everything has to be about sex," Jeremy said.

I'd been hired by Jeremy and his publisher to co-write an autobiography called *The Hardest (Working) Man in Showbiz*. There was a boner pun *in the title*. I'm pretty sure that "make everything about sex" was my entire job description.

This wasn't my first conversation with Jeremy. It was the summer of 2004, and so far I'd clocked nearly 100 hours of interviews with him. They usually took place at his Franklin Towers condo in Hollywood, or more specifically, in a hot tub where Jeremy lounged, his rotund body floating like a furry boiled ham. I sat nearby, clinging to my cassette recorder and trying to pretend that I really did want to hear another story about how Guns N' Roses guitarist Slash is one of his best friends.

"I just don't understand why everything has to be about sex."

Jeremy and I had reached a point in the co-writing process where it was obvious we were at a crossroads. We wanted to write two very different books.

Jeremy wanted it to be about a talented kid with an enormous *schmekel* from Bayside, Queens, who found fame in adult films but really had a lot more going on, like playing non-naked roles in mainstream films like *Boondock Saints* and *Detroit Rock City*, and doing stand-up comedy, and being in reality shows like *The Surreal Life*, and rapping on *Billboard* hits like "Freak of the Week." Not to mention that he had a lot of famous friends who thought he was really quite talented—the late filmmaker John Frankenheimer, for instance, who once told Jeremy, "You're much more talented than people give you credit for." Oh, and he had a master's degree in special education, his own brand of seven-year-old rum, and he did his own kung fu moves in *Orgazmo*, which was directed by the *South Park* guys, who, by the way, are super-famous and were so excited to work with Jeremy.

The book I wanted to write was about a talented kid with an enormous *schmekel* from Bayside, Queens, who found fame in adult films and became one of the great tragic figures of white-male exceptionalism.

"Why Me (Too)?"

The book we (kind of) wrote together became a best-seller in 2007 and garnered some not terrible reviews. *The New York Times* claimed that even the most cynical readers "may conclude that Ron Jeremy is a likable guy."

Jeremy and I didn't keep in touch. We had a brief public scuffle in 2008, when he complained to *Vulture* that he was "shafted" by his co-writer. "[Porn star Jenna Jameson] gets Neil Strauss, and I get Eric Spitznagel," he griped. "He got a lot of stuff wrong. We were delayed by one year, the things he got wrong."

I responded with what *Vulture* called “a doozy of an email,” in which I recalled that the book wasn’t delayed because of factual errors but “because Ron was too busy hosting wet t-shirt contests and signing tits at strip clubs to meet with his ghostwriter.”

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That was our last contact, and the last time I thought about Ron Jeremy. And then, 12 years later, came the rape charges.

In late June of this year, Jeremy was formally charged by the Los Angeles district attorney with raping three women and sexually assaulting a fourth between 2014 and 2019. Days later, more than two dozen more women came forward with accusations, claiming everything from unsolicited groping to forced sexual intercourse.

Their accounts are like a creepy plot description for the worst porn video ever made. One woman summarized her experience with Jeremy to the *Los Angeles Times*: “He bends me over the railing at the restaurant, lifts up my dress and does his thing.”



A pair of grimy red Crocs completes Jeremy's red-carpet look at a movie premiere in L.A.

Jeremy has faced accusations similar to these before—most recently in 2016, but charges were dropped when the district attorney's office found insufficient evidence—but this is the first time he's been handcuffed because of sexual-misconduct allegations.

Since the arrest, there have been rumors of *even more* victims coming forward—possibly as many as 50—and bizarre tales of his “semen-stained Crocs,” which, if true, would make Monica Lewinsky’s semen-stained blue dress from Clinton’s downfall seem almost ... sophisticated? (Jeremy did not respond to requests for comment.)

The most ridiculous defense of Jeremy’s alleged conduct has come from his own attorney, Stuart Goldfarb, who told the AFP news agency that Jeremy couldn’t possibly be a rapist because he’s “essentially been a paramour to over 4,000 women. To allege that he is a rapist is beyond ... I mean, women throw themselves at him.”

This flattering portrayal is difficult to take seriously in light of the barrage of photos of Jeremy, now 67 years old, at his arraignment in June, entering a not-guilty plea while wearing a prison-issue orange jumpsuit and looking downright ghoulish, like a crusty-skinned creature featured on the cover of *Famous Monsters of Filmland* magazine. He was Riff Raff, the butler in *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*, with another hundred pounds.

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The “women throw themselves at him” argument misses the point of Ron Jeremy. Yes, it is astounding that a man who has gone his entire adult life cashing paychecks for having sex with women could potentially lose his freedom for rape. The only other porn actor with the name recognition to match Jeremy’s, John Holmes, destroyed his life with drugs, unsafe sex, and unsavory friendships with gang members. But not rape. A porn star going to prison for rape is like McDonald’s tycoon Ray Kroc going to prison for stealing hamburgers.

And the people gnashing their teeth about Jeremy in a #MeToo era—tweeting outraged hypotheticals such as “Why was a weirdo like Ron Jeremy ever given celebrity status in American culture?”—are also missing the point of Ron Jeremy.

This is the third (and likely final) act in Jeremy’s Great American Tragedy. It had to end this way. The thematic through line—in fact, the guiding principle—of Ron Jeremy’s entire life and career has been “I deserve more than this.” It’s why he became famous (or infamous) in the first place, and it just might be the cause of his downfall.

Ron Jeremy is the American id in denial. Generations of men have been told that they can have anything their heart desires. The proof was in Ron Jeremy, who despite having a body built for sweatpants and sadness, and a mustache that looks like it was stolen from the prop closet of a community theater, has slept with 4,000 women.

How does a man who slept with 4,000 women possibly go to jail for the rest of his life for (allegedly) raping three women and assaulting a fourth? Because how dare 4 women in 4,000 say no? This is America, and as pop culture (and Ron Jeremy’s porn *oeuvre*) keeps reminding us, *nobody* says no to the American male.

Reel to Real

Jeremy rolled in the hot tub, sending little tsunamis of warm water splashing toward my feet.

“I was the guy who gets covered in debris when the ghost bursts out of the fire hydrant,” Jeremy said, reminiscing about his blink-or-you’ll-miss-it movie appearance in the 1984 comedy *Ghostbusters*. “On the video, where they crop it off to fit the screen, I’m completely gone. When the movie came out, I got so many phone calls. And then when the video came out, I got none. But with the wide-screen edition on DVD, you can see me again. If you freeze-frame that scene, you can see me.”

I’d heard this tale before. Jeremy had told me about his *Ghostbusters* cameo on at least three separate occasions. Each time, I took notes and pretended it was something we might want to include in the book.

According to the Internet Adult Film Database, Ron Jeremy has appeared in approximately 2,451 adult films. Let’s say that, conservatively, he’s had an average of one orgasm captured on film or video for every appearance, and that every orgasm lasted, at a minimum, six seconds. That’s 14,706 seconds of recorded money shots or just over four hours of nonstop climaxing.

The original *Ghostbusters* and its 1989 sequel have a total running time of three hours and 27 minutes. Every Ron Jeremy orgasm on public record, if spliced back-to-back in one continuous loop, would take longer to watch than the entire celluloid legacy of Bill Murray busting ghosts.

That seems more noteworthy than whether Ron Jeremy has a nonspeaking role in *Ghostbusters* that lasts a nanosecond.

“I just think there are more interesting things about me we could put in the book,” Jeremy complained. “Like how about my work with PETA?”

Logical Phallusy

Things had been contentious for a while, at least since I’d given Jeremy a draft of the first chapter a few weeks earlier. He hadn’t specified how he wanted the book to begin, so I thought it’d be fun to set it at a video shoot for a gang bang. Just Jeremy and 17 or so girls, all young enough to be his daughter. He’s in his 50s, well past the age when most male porn actors have been put out to pasture, and he’s having a panic attack.

The scene was imagined as an internal monologue: “Jesus Christ, what the hell happened to me? Am I really still doing this with my life?” Much like the Macbeth soliloquy where Macbeth is hallucinating cutlery just before he murders Duncan: “Is this a dagger which I see before me?”

Jeremy’s story is basically the same as Macbeth’s: a meditation on the folly of blind ambition, and how Jeremy is complicit in his own damnation. Except his dagger is his penis.

I would have written the whole thing in iambic pentameter if I had thought Jeremy would be O.K. with it. But Jeremy was not—and would never be—O.K. with any of it. Then again, the real Macbeth probably wouldn’t have been satisfied with his “dagger” speech, either.

How had it come to this for Jeremy? The tale of his rise and fall (and continued falling) goes back 41 years, and we were just getting started digging into that narrative. @