

TELEVISION PROSTITUTION

HBO's new reality show, 'Cathouse,' takes reality television to disgusting level

On Dec. 8, HBO will air a documentary filmed at the Moonlite Bunny Ranch, a Lyon County, Nevada brothel.



JENELLE WILSON

"Cathouse," a part of HBO's "America Undercover" series, was filmed using hidden cameras to catch the brothel's clients' "dealing" with prostitutes; the clients were later told they had been filmed and almost all gave their consent to allow HBO to use the footage, according to abcnews.com.

This documentary is yet another in the seemingly endless and completely out-of-hand parade of "reality" television shows where people will do anything to be on TV — it's "Big Brother" meets the "Best Little Whorehouse in Texas." It's also glamorizing and misrepresenting a wholly unglamorous and dangerous profession.

According to abcnews.com, the Moonlite Bunny Ranch opened its

doors in 1955, 17 years before prostitution became legal in Lyon County in 1972. The owner of the Moonlite Bunny Ranch, Dennis Hof, purchased the business in 1993 and set out to make it "America's premier house of ill repute."

He added a helicopter pad and more than 200 sex workers are employed. Many famous clients are alleged to have visited the brothel, including Minnesota governor Jesse Ventura and Larry Flynt. John Wayne Bobbitt and the "Celebrity Boxing" veteran Joey Buttafuoco have worked as official greeters.

Dennis Hof told "Entertainment Tonight," "It's a party, it's a spring break party, 24/7. 365, that's what the Moonlite Bunny Ranch is." Sunset Thomas, a porn star and Adult Video Hall of Fame inductee, as well as Hof's girlfriend, will be featured in the documentary. Also in the show is

"Julia," a new, married prostitute with children who loved the idea because it allows her to "be with (her) fans."

Hof pledges, "You're going to see things you won't believe," such as a woman taking her 22-year-old son to the ranch to lose his virginity. Reuters says you'll also see a married couple celebrating their 15th anniversary with a menage a trois, a widower who has gone without sex for two years and just wants to be cuddled and a pimp who tries coaxing away one of the girls.

According to Reuters, no sex is shown in the documentary. What is shown is a mixture of "bargaining, seduction, provocative touching and nervous laughter, up through and including payment — in advance — to Madam Suzette."

Except, no matter how much Dennis Hof spruced up the Moonlite Bunny Ranch, sex work is still dangerous and unhealthy. The "documentary" certainly will not show the less

sensational aspects of prostitution.

While brothel workers are considerably better off than streetwalkers and call girls — they are free of pimps, regularly tested for sexually transmitted diseases and have more control over what they do — they still suffer from many of the same emotional problems. When asked if they had considered suicide, 42 percent of brothel workers said yes; 19 percent had actually attempted to kill themselves, according to sociologist Robert H. Lauer. They also suffer from emotional problems such as anxiety, hostility, depression and guilt. Prostitution is not a spring break party, and to promote it as such is disgusting.

But HBO is not stopping at the misrepresentation of prostitution for entertainment purposes. The "America Undercover" series has other topics to tackle as well. "The Ice Man and the Psychiatrist" explores a hit man who admits to

killing more than 200 people. In January, HBO will be airing "Animal Passions," which deals with the life of a rural Missouri man who legally resides with his "wife," a pony — an actual pony. Other shows in the series include "Taxicab Confessions 2003: Girls Like It Hot," "Autopsy 9" and "Cannibal: The Real Hannibal Lecter." There's nothing like sex and gore to pull in the ratings.

Hof, who gets half of everything the brothel workers earn, and HBO are exploiting the 200 women working at the Moonlite Bunny Ranch for their own gain. They are only showing the side of prostitution that sells, which will surely bring viewers in droves, and ignoring everything else. Apparently, emotional problems are a little too real for "reality" TV.

Jenelle Wilson is a junior political science major. Graphic by Josh Darwin.

Doctors should adopt face transplant procedure

Operation allows those with facial deformities to have a new chance at life

It seems straight out of the Hollywood plot from *Face-Off*, but medical advances have led to the possibility of offering full-facial transplants to disfigured patients within a year. According to ananova.com, advances in anti-rejection drugs have made it possible for doctors to perform full-facial transplants on patients with disfigurements caused by rare types of cancer, severe burns and accidents. The procedure transplants facial muscle, skin, veins, arteries and even bone from a deceased donor to a recipient. The deciding factor in this surgery is not whether doctors can perform the lengthy and complex procedure, but rather if they should remove one person's face and give it to another. Although stuck in this ethical dilemma, doctors should perform full-facial transplants to give burn and cancer victims the chance at a new life.



ANDI BACA

Full-facial transplants allow people with deformities the chance to live as normal a life as possible. For those cancer and burn victims who live with extreme facial disfigurements, a facial transplant is a breath of hope to improving their careers, families and self-esteem.

Christine Piff, a cancer survivor and the founder of Let's Face It, a charity that counsels disfiguration victims, said, "If they could have this kind of surgery that could give them their lives back or restore some sense of quality in life, then surely that's a good thing."

Doctors perform other organ transplants every day and never question the ethical debate behind it. The only difference between transplanting a kidney and a face is that the face is visible and the kidney is not. Plastic surgeon Peter Butler told ananova.com facial transplants are controversial because they are "visible and part of our expression. It's emotional and functional."

External or not, transplants give life to a patient in one way or another. Although facial transplants do not impose the same level of urgency that other organ transplants do, to the victims, they are no less important.

While enthusiasm with recipients is high, possible donors seem to turn their cheek at the idea of giving away their face. According to YAHOO! News, a survey of doctors, nurses and the public showed most people would accept a

face transplant, but few were actually willing to donate their own face following their death. Hospitals can ease the hesitations between families and recipients by establishing ways for both parties to meet face to face. By meeting a recipient and hearing their story, families will be more likely to see the positive impact that their deceased loved one has on the life of someone else.

Unlike the evil switch Nicolas Cage pulled on John Travolta in *Face-Off*, transplant recipients will not look identical to their donor. According to cnn.com, transplanting fat and skin to an existing bone structure leaves the patient with many of their own features, not those of the donor. Although a complex bone transplant might give the recipient features which resemble the donor, it is not quite the identity theft that some imagine.

As the debate continues, critics worry about the possible psychological effects the transplant will have on the donor's family and on the recipient. According to Guardian Unlimited, psychologists warn against how families would feel if someone looked like their loved one and how the recipient would feel with a different face. Both parties would need advising and

counseling before and after the procedure, but this should not mean the opportunity for a transplant should not be available. Doctors cannot predict the way each family or recipient will feel and how they will handle the procedure, so they should not discount providing the transplant based on what they think will happen.

Doctors also question the possibility of misuse in the future of facial transplants. Psychologist, Dr. Aric Sigman warned that the procedure could be abused. "Inevitably there will always be people who look over the precipice and want to appropriate medical technology for aesthetic reasons," he said. That should not even be a concern since people have the option of plastic surgery to enhance their features. Additional hospital regulations and screening processes will ensure that only qualified patients receive transplants.

Facial transplants give accident, burn and cancer victims the ability to piece their lives back together. If doctors see the importance and value of organ transplanting, they should see the same need in facial transplants.

Andi Baca is a senior journalism major.

MAIL CALL

In response to Leann Bickford's Dec. 4 column:

Just because the Coalition for Life has a boycott on Planned Parenthood supporters does not make its supporters or workers immature. Also, Planned Parenthood has an equal right to boycott the Brazos Valley Coalition for Life (BVCL) if they choose to do so.

And who are you, Ms. Bickford, to judge us? How do you know what other things we have done or not done to help the community? I met one supporter of the BVCL who had adopted several children. My parents adopted two, myself and my sister. Just because the BVCL is dedicated to ending abortion does not mean that its members do not help struggling families.

Pretend you were my birthmother, Ms. Bickford. What gives you the right to tell me if I can have a life of my own or not? It's my life in question, not your body.

Don't tell me that it is your choice. Would I think that you are a bad person if you did

abort me? No. Like you said yourself, that is for God to decide.

Cody Sain
Class of 2006

Abortion is not a "moot point," nor is debate on the topic useless.

Pro-lifers believe that abortion is murder because life begins either at conception or soon thereafter. Roe v. Wade says that, at the point of viability, the privacy rights of the mother are no longer sole and a state may prohibit abortion. Viability is the point at which the child may survive with artificial aid outside the womb. The problem here is that this point changes with medical technology. A fetus in 1990 may be deemed not a human life, while the same fetus in 2000 may be deemed a viable human life and deserve protection. This floating definition of human life is a serious flaw that requires active debate. I applaud the BVCL.

Jerad Najvar
Class of 2003

Caution doesn't mean fear

"Worldwide Caution" was issued last month warning Americans to remain vigilant in the face of continuing terrorist threats against civilians. According to CNN, the caution was issued in response to a taped statement of Osama bin Laden praising attacks on governments aligned with the United States and warning U.S. allies that they could be next. Consider the alarm to be the U.S. State Department's way of wishing us all a fun and safe holiday travel season.

Despite fulfilling a moral obligation to protect their citizens here and abroad, in issuing the warning, they have shattered the belief that the world could be safe again for pleasure and business travelers.

As Joe Brancatelli of *The Washington Post* said, many Americans have become caught up in it all and want to stay home, stay safe and venture no further than their own figurative and literal backyards.

The most irritating aspect about the "Worldwide Caution" is it blankets the entire world as a target for terrorist activity. After the attack on Bali in October, which was aimed at injuring more Americans than Australians, the U.S. State Department issued a "public announcement" on terrorist activities in Southeast Asia, and repeated its concern about the possible heightened risks to American citizens and American interests in Malaysia.

The announcement focused on a specific area where terrorist activity was known to take place and was something to seriously consider when planning trips to that geographic region.

This latest caution might as well encompass North America, all of Western Europe, pockets of Eastern Europe (Hungary, the Czech Republic), Japan, Australia, and even Russia, for they are all allied with the United States in some form or fashion.



MELISSA FRIED

"The most irritating aspect about the 'Worldwide Caution' is it blankets the entire world as a target for terrorist activity."

Suddenly, every major metropolitan city is considered a target and everyone is a suspect. The caution completely takes the fun out of traveling.

To top it off, foreign governments are not too thrilled about the United States issuing a warning against countries

where there is no big risk of terrorism. After all, not one European government warned its citizens not to travel to the United States in the following months after Sept. 11. If we cower, the terrorists have won. This is the rhetoric in our post-Sept. 11 world.

If we change our travel destinations, our eating habits, what we say, or any other part of how we live, the battle is lost.

We cannot coop ourselves up and wait until the danger passes and things are safe again — this is the most naïve of all thoughts. Things will never be completely safe. It is a harsh reality to accept, but the sooner we do, the sooner we can deal with it.

This certainly does not mean we should ignore the warnings from the state department, or blindly plan a vacation without checking the status of a country — what is "safe" today, may be considered dangerous tomorrow.

We should definitely pay more attention to where we go, but we should not allow these "cautions" to hinder us from taking the trip we always wanted to take, or doing the studying abroad.

The "Worldwide Caution" is merely common sense with a fancy title.

Rather than let a "Worldwide Caution" ruin our lives by allowing us to fear the unknown, we should accept the fact that the world is not a safe place anymore. But then again, neither is our own backyard.

Melissa Fried is a sophomore international studies major.

