



Hot Girls Wanted Discussion Guide

Directors: Jill Bauer, Ronna Gradus

Year: 2015

Time: 84 min

You might know these directors from:

Sexy Baby (2012)

FILM SUMMARY

Journalists Jill Bauer and Ronna Gradus met while working at “The Miami Herald,” and in their debut film, “Sexy Baby,” they address the effect the Internet has on female sexuality. Following this exposé, they set out to make a film on how men were handling the Internet’s depiction of sexuality. The more men they interviewed, the more the word “pro-am” was repeated. Men were clearly turned on by this professional-amateur field of Internet pornography, Bauer and Gradus began to turn their attention to the characters populating this trend.

In *HOT GIRLS WANTED*, we are introduced to Stella May, Ava Taylor, Ava Kelly, Lucy Tyler, and Brooklyn Daniels, young women ranging from the ages of 18 to 25. Fresh off their first airplane ride, their first time in Miami they are feeling on top of their game. They feel the world is at their feet and their future is bright. They trade in their given names, strip down in front of a camera, and perform scripted sex that often borders on abuse. For what? The promise of fame, money, and escape from the humdrum of daily life.

“It’s a lot of money for a girl, so why not?” Brooklyn states. “It’s a boost of confidence to know that you’re wanted that much.” Raised in a world where a woman’s value is still largely based on appearance, Brooklyn reflects the innocence and insecurity behind these girls’ decisions. By letting the girls defend their choices in their own words and be their real selves in front of at least one camera, *HOT GIRLS WANTED* wastes no time graphically displaying the reasons why not to get involved in “pro-am.” No sooner than they’re sucked in to the Internet porn world are they spit back out, emotionally battered, physically torn, psychologically scarred.

HOT GIRLS WANTED makes no qualms about it: If porn is the best thing we can offer our young girls as a means of success, we as a society have a long way to go.

FILM THEMES

As a quick way to escape the hometown doldrums, girls flee the nest for a career in Internet porn. Little do these teens know that their appeal is short-lived, while repercussions remain.

INTERNET PORN AND THE INDUSTRY OF THE GIRL NEXT DOOR

“Barely legal,” the class of teen porn blossoming across the Web. Everybody wants a piece of innocence, and for some there is nothing more sexually than a helpless teen girl dressed in next to nothing naively bending over. Capturing that innocence on film and broadcasting it over the widely accessible platform that is the Internet makes for a multi-billion dollar industry. The disposable commodity that these girls become is a secondary concern at best, as Internet users consume porn by the bucketful, and a new class of business leaders emerge. In the potent words of talent scout Riley Reynolds, “I used to be bullied in school. Now I’m the shit.”

THE TEMPTATIONS

Insta-celebrity, money, travel, excitement; the promises offered by the Internet porn industry to a girl teetering on her parent’s front steps facing the adult world are overwhelmingly appealing. With minimum wage jobs starting at \$8.25 an hour, and porn shoots raking in around \$800 a scene, the decision to strip down for the sake of easy cash seems like a no-brainer. Why toil away as a waitress in a diner when she can ride around in fast cars, sip champagne with the rich and be told that she is a princess? As porn actress Ava Taylor states, “I’m trying to be famous. You’ve gotta do what you’ve gotta do.”

THE PITFALLS

When porn is what girls have hung their hopes and dreams upon, it doesn’t take long for them to realize that their rocket-speed rise to fame and fortune makes an equally rapid descent. Out of the jaw-dropping sums they purport to earning, a large amount is siphoned off by their agent, with even more going into their personal upkeep (hair, nails, makeup) and living expenses. Suddenly \$800 a pop doesn’t sound like all that much, and the little extra money offered for a creampie or a facial abuse is no compensation for the resulting physical, emotional, and psychological damage. Once a girl’s appeal as a sweet nothing expires a hard drop awaits, complete with personal trauma and rejection from family and community.

VIOLENCE OVER INTIMACY

Extreme physical abuse in porn sells. The worse it looks, the more it’s worth. Girls attend porn shoots on their own, faced with a stranger who has less than noble intentions. The line between rape and “I guess this is what you’re supposed to do to me” becomes blurred, and girls find their bodies beaten through excessive hardcore sex and their minds grappling with emotional insecurity. The images they are making, however, constitute a great deal of what they themselves have learned from the mainstream media about sex, and intimacy in sexuality remains a far cry from any sort of practiced, experienced reality in their lives.

“Most girls in the industry would say yes to anything. If it had a dollar sign in front of it, sign me up.”

Tressa, AKA Stella May

“Every day a new girl turns 18, and every day a new girl wants to do porn.”

Riley Reynolds, Porn recruiter

“Having sex outside of porn scares me. I don’t want to commit myself to someone like that.”

Karly, AKA Lucy Tyler

FURTHER DISCUSSIONS:

1. How would you define the primary message of *HOT GIRLS WANTED*? What do you think the directors were setting out to achieve by making this film?
2. What are your thoughts on pornography? Is there a way to maintain a healthy balance between one's sexuality and the consumption and/or creation of pornography?
3. Did you find any parts of *HOT GIRLS WANTED* difficult to watch? Were any facts revealed in the film shocking, or do you feel you had a realistic understanding of this segment of the online porn industry before watching the film?
4. How were you taught about sexuality as a teenager? Do you feel you have a healthy relationship with your own sexuality? In which ways did your youth prepare you and likewise not prepare you for adult sexuality?
5. Why is abuse porn - in which women are victimized - so hugely popular? What is the appeal for millions of consumers of this type of porn? Are there any ways in which contemporary society is creating these longings in individuals, or in which women are portrayed to be deserving of such abuse?
6. The online porn industry is largely unlegislated. What, if any, laws should be created to monitor and legislate the creation and distribution of Internet porn?
7. Have you seen "Sexy Baby," the other film by co-directors Jill Bauer and Ronna Gradus, which deals with female sexuality and the Internet? If so, discuss. If not, are you interested in seeing it?
8. Discuss the notion of innocence in relation to teen porn. Why is the "shelf life" of a girl as a teen porn actor so short? In which ways has life experience been given a bad reputation, and innocence glorified in mass media?
9. Does the porn industry perpetuate violence against women? Can a girl/women work in porn and still be empowered? Are there any ways in which pornography empowers women?
10. Discuss your views on sex. When intimacy is removed from sex, what do we risk, if anything? Are we more liberated if we feel free to sleep around with whomever, whenever? What is the connection between emotional intimacy and sexuality?

NOTES:

FILM FACTS:

- HOT GIRLS WANTED premiered at the 2015 Sundance Film Festival, where it was nominated for the Grand Jury Prize. Netflix soon after picked it up and released it in May 2015.
- Co-directors Jill Bauer and Ronna Gradus both have a background in journalism and met while working at “The Miami Herald,” Bauer as a writer and Gradus as a photographer. Their first film – “Sexy Baby” – addresses the impact of the Internet culture on female sexuality. Following this, they set out to make a film on male sexuality in the digital age, but became sidetracked when so many of the men they interviewed discussed their interest in professional-amateur (pro-am) pornography, which led them to make HOT GIRLS WANTED. During the film production Bauer managed sound recording, while Gradus worked as the director of photography.
- Co-producer Rashida Jones got involved with HOT GIRLS WANTED due to her interest in the pornification of pop culture and how a woman’s sex is purported to be that which gives her value, thus limiting her choices in life.
- Abuse porn gets 60 million hits per month.
- Rachel, “AKA Ava Taylor,” worked in the porn industry for 6 months, during which time she filmed 85 videos and made \$80,000, but only returned home to Illinois with \$2,000. She has since left the porn industry and currently works as a photographer.
- The word pornography is derived from the Greek words “porneia,” meaning “prostitution,” and “graphein,” meaning “to write or to record;” thus, pornography is the depiction of prostitution. Pornography, which visualizes sexual acts in a sensational manner, is differentiated from erotica, which portrays sexuality in a more “high-art” fashion and also focuses on feelings and emotions as well as physicality.
- In the United States the sex film industry is centered in Los Angeles, while Budapest, Hungary, serves as the European hub.
- The majority of Internet porn consumers are men, with a ratio of 3:2 over women. 20% of men admit to watching porn at work. 40 million Americans regularly visit porn sites, and Utah – where 62% of the population identifies as Mormon – clocking up the highest percentage of porn subscribers across the U.S.
- Karly, “AKA Lucy Tyler,” left the porn industry in June 2015 and returned home, where she works on her music and studies marine biology.
- The majority of new amateur porn recruits are targeted through Craigslist, a service that was started in 1995 by Craig Newman as an email distribution list featuring events in the San Francisco Bay area. In 2000, it began expanding internationally and is currently featured in 700 cities in 70 countries. Most porn talent scouts place their ads in the “talent” section.

WAYS TO INFLUENCE

1. **Watch** SEXY BABY, the first film by directorial team Bauer and Gradus, which addresses the impact of the Internet on female sexuality.
2. **Support** the work of [Scarleteen](#) – to provide honest, pertinent guidance and offering information on sexuality, sex, sexual health, relationship information, advice, and support for young people.
3. **Find** out more about [Hardy Girls Healthy Women](#), a non-profit organization that sets out “to create opportunities, develop programs, and provide services that empower” girls.
4. **Contribute** to changing society view of women. Co-producer Rashida Jones works with [About Face](#), an organization equipping women and girls with tools to understanding media messages that affect self-esteem and body image – fin out more about them and [take action!](#)

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Influence Film Club – We are the conversation after the film.