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Pulse brief

Fans debate status of Marine 'Idol' Josh

Last week, "American Idol" finalist Josh Gracin impressed viewers with his performance of a Garth Brooks song, "Ain't Goin' Down 'Til the Sun Comes Up."

But what's gone down lately on the show's online message boards? A small skirmish over the stateside status of the singing Marine from Westland, Mich.

"Josh should leave," griped an "Idol" fan who wanted him off the show because other Marines are fighting in Iraq.

"The PR he is providing is priceless," countered another. "Get off his back."

A few fans argued Josh should be over there fighting. The majority defended him, saying U.S. troops aren't allowed to choose when or if they go overseas.

And a wave of pro-Josh messages slammed the current issue of LA Weekly, where columnist Nikki Finke advised Josh to "suck it up and ship out on his own," especially since some members of his unit have been deployed to Kuwait.

According to a military

spokesperson, however, the flap is much ado about nothing.

Josh's status is the same as it's always been, says Capt. Shawn Haney of the Marine Corps liaison office for movies and television. Namely, he hasn't received any deployment orders, but if he does, he'll answer the call.

"He knows it, the show knows it, everyone knows it," says Haney, who's acting as a liaison to "American Idol."

For the moment, Josh is living with the show's eight other finalists in a large secluded house with reporters kept away. Normally, he's stationed at California's Camp Pendleton.

Although some Marines from Josh's unit, the huge 1st Force Service Support Group, have been sent to the Persian Gulf, his particular maintenance section hasn't been given those orders.

"A lot of people don't understand Lance Cpl. Gracin doesn't get to decide when he deploys," says Haney.

There's always a chance Josh could be sent overseas. If that happens, "Idol" producers have promised he can return as an automatic finalist next season.

—Julie Hinds, Knight Ridder Newspapers (KRT)

Pornography

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they feel about porn violence. The subjects spread over a wide demographic — ages 19 to 67, gay, straight and bisexual, and their answers are equally diverse. The author found his interviewees primarily through the Internet but also through friends and acquaintances.

Beneath this discussion, Loftus subtly attempts to debunk the feminist theories traditionally contending pornography is nothing more than an expression of men's desire to control women. However, the argument doesn't come across as the book's strongest aspect. In fact, the point almost gets lost in the swirl of loosely organized interviews, which constitute the bulk of the work. But the writing is nowhere near a failure; the content is compelling, especially for female readers who want to gain more insight into men's preferences. The subjects' responses seem extremely honest, intimate and detailed, and turning the pages evokes a feeling of voyeurism. Sometimes shocking and sometimes endearing, the work accomplishes the task of persuading men to talk about a taboo subject they have often been admonished to keep under wraps.

"I saw that a huge section just wasn't getting discussed," Loftus said, adding that his main objective was to illuminate the subject and

widen the public debate.

He said pornography is often associated with unnecessary pain, suffering and shame.

"People know better," he said.

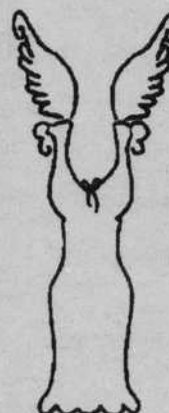
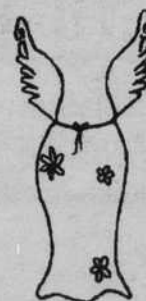
Loftus, a Harvard alumnus, was born in Eugene and once worked as a full-time reporter for The News-Review in Roseburg; the remainder of his biography is too vast to recount in this space. Loftus was a runner in high school, breaking Steve Prefontaine's freshman two-mile record. In college, he appeared on stage with Estelle Parsons; later, he wrote freelance stories and even traveled the globe. Recently, Loftus was a contestant on "Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?" Now, he has embarked upon what he calls a "do-it-yourself book tour." He has introduced "Watching Sex" in Roseburg, Portland, Coos Bay and Seattle. He will speak at Southern Oregon University on April 14 and will make two appearances at Stanford on April 16.

"Watching Sex" is enlightening, and curious women and men alike will benefit from its content. The work, available at bookstores now, offers insight into others' views surrounding pornography and a tool for solidifying the reader's own opinion. Find out more about the author and read snippets of "Watching Sex" at www.davidloftus.com.

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