

THE RUNNER

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ABOUT

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letters to the Editor are encouraged; however, they must be signed and verified to be considered for publication and should be no more than 300 words in length. All letters may be edited for clarity and length.

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'TransAmerica,' a real-life lesson

By Emily Shapiro
Staff Writer

Imagine, going through life feeling like you were given the wrong sex, feeling that there was something wrong with you, that you were born in the wrong body. That's exactly what Stanley (the main character in "TransAmerica") is feeling.

He finds his penis "disgusting" and longs to become Bree.

This is what the presentation given by Professor Pratt dealt with in the first film of the Women and Gender Studies.

Transamerica is a movie about a transsexual, but it involves so much more. Just when Stanley is ready to make the final step in his difficult journey (a sex change operation) he receives a call from his son,



Emily Shapiro/The Runner

Prof. Pratt at the presentation of "TransAmerica"

who is in lockup in New York.

Stanley is shocked to find out about his son, a child whom he didn't know existed.

His therapist suggests that he go and bail out his son.

Stanley adamantly refuses, but is forced to go when his therapist tells him that she will not sign the necessary paperwork for his operation, until he has made peace.

Thus begins one of the most hilarious and eye-opening road trips I've ever seen in a movie.

Toby is a teenager with a foul mouth, lousy attitude, and is also a prostitute. He is a crack addict and spends a good amount of time feeding his addiction, even though he promises Stanley/Bree that he will quit and go straight.

Upon first seeing Stanley/Bree, Toby accepts her. Stanley/Bree insists on being known as a woman and does not tell Toby that she is his dad. (Complicated, yes.)

Later Toby finds out that Stanley/Bree is a man, and grudgingly accepts it.

During their road trip the two form a bond, which will be severely tested. Toward the end of the film Toby expresses his love for Stanley/Bree and wants to make love to him, but Stanley is adamant. It is in this crucial scene that the truth is finally revealed. Stanley tells Toby he is his biological father.

Both Stanley and Toby part company to go back to their respective lives, we find Stanley proceeding with his operation and fully becoming Bree, while Toby ends up in L.A. filming porn movies, (his dream job).

The movie addresses the complexity of humans. Just when we think we have everything worked out, BAM! Something unexpected crashes into our world, and what we think we know, we don't have a clue about.

For example, in the beginning Stanley believes he is ready to become Bree, he has lived as a woman and acts like a woman, but he isn't really ready to be a woman.

He works at a restaurant, as a dishwasher and tries to fit in, but isn't comfortable. After his experience with Toby, and with his newfound confidence, he is fully a woman.

This is seen at the end of the movie where Bree is promoted to server, wears a skirt and laughingly jokes along with her boss and others.

The discussion with professor Pratt opened my eyes toward transsexuals. Before this I had no idea why a person would do this to himself or herself. The idea of transsexual has been taboo for a long time.

The first part of the discussion was spent talking about the movie, and trans in general.

Among the many questions one stood out the most: why someone would want to do this to themselves; and the answer surprised me.

"Some trans describe being born in the wrong body as a birth defect, so you would fix this just as you would a harelip," stated Pratt.

Another question was asked about trans people dating, and marriage.



photo courtesy of www.imdb.com

Kevin Zegers as Toby and Felicity Huffman as Bree in "TransAmerica"

"A lot of trans gendered people go after people of the opposite sex, and sometimes they even get married," said Pratt.

The other part of the discussion, found us chatting about the Castro district (in San Francisco).

"This great community supports transgender people," stated Pratt.

"TransAmerica" (2005) stars Felicity Huffman in dual roles as Stanley/Bree, Elisabeth Peña as Margaret, and Kevin Zegers as Toby. It was written and directed by Duncan Tucker.

It was nominated for two Oscars (2006) for Best Performance by an Actress in a Leading Role, (Felicity Huffman) and Best Achievement in Music Written for Motion Pictures, Original Song (Dolly Parton) for "Travelin' Thru."

It also garnered a Golden Globe (2006) for Felicity Huffman for Best Performance By an Actress in a Motion Picture-Drama, and won two Independent Spirit Awards, (2006). One for Felicity Huffman for Best Female Lead and one for Duncan Tucker for Best First Screenplay.

Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,

After reading the February 7 coverage of my January 31 presentation on Tejano music, I wrote you a personal email requesting an apology and retraction. In my letter I stated that the article bore little resemblance to my actual presentation, that I doubted that your reporter had even attended my talk except perhaps to take the accompanying photo, and that the article was embarrassing to me.

Your apology in this week's Runner states that the story in question, "... included information from Wikipedia and the professors (sic) website not accredited (sic) in the story. Reyna voiced concerns about the article including information that was not covered at the event.

Actually, my concern is that nothing

reported in the January 31 story came from my talk.

A truthful and complete statement would have been that: 1) the entire January 31 story was a complete fabrication; 2) the entire contents of the story were selectively lifted — plagiarized — from the Internet and attributed to me, and 3) the information from Wikipedia contained erroneous and ludicrous statements (e.g., that the TUBA is part of Tejano music!!!) that would tend to discredit forty years of research that I have done on the subject.

Sincerely,

José R. Reyna, Ph.D.
Chair and Professor of Spanish
Department of Modern Languages and Literatures

Religious scholar to speak at CSUB

Story provided by CSUB
Public information

California State University, Bakersfield's Philosophy and Religious Studies Departments will host a talk entitled "Pentecostalism: Past, Present, and Future" by Douglas Jacobsen, a scholar of Pentecostalism in America, on Monday, Feb. 26, at 7 p.m. in the Albertson Room in the Doré Theatre on campus.

Bruce Jones, religious studies professor emeritus, said, "This is a great opportunity to hear about the fastest growing movement in Christianity in America and globally from one of the most eminent scholars of Pentecostalism in the world. The religious and cultural implications of

the growth of Pentecostalism are vast, and should be of interest to Christians and non-Christians alike."

Jacobsen is a distinguished professor of church history at Messiah College in Pennsylvania. He is the author of "Gracious Christianity: Living the Love We Profess" and "Thinking in the Spirit: Theologies of the Early Pentecostal Movement." His books will be available for sale and autographing after his presentation.

The event is free and open to the public. Parking fees will be waived in Lots B and C. For more information, please contact Jones at (661) 833-8607 or bjones@csub.edu.

Runner on the Street

By Nathan Campbell
News Editor

This Week, The Runner asked, "How do you feel about switching to a four-quarter system?"



Richard Figueroa
Criminal Justice, Senior

"I guess it's cool if people get done faster."



Jasmine Banelos
Accounting, Sophomore

"I think it is a good idea."



James Pfeifer
Criminal Justice,
Sophomore

"I like how it is now."



Katherine Cruz
Psychology, Junior

"I think we should keep it the way it is. I don't think it would be fair to the students that like to go home over the summer."



Rajinder Dillon
Psychology, Junior

"I like what we have right now, I really don't want to switch."