

Edgy 'Don Jon' won't be for everyone



By Jeremy Miller

"Don Jon" is Joseph Gordon-Levitt's first stab at writing/directing while also playing the lead, with which I was very pleasantly surprised.

Also starring Scarlett Johansson, Julianne Moore and Tony Danza there's a perfect blend of talent. Jon (Levitt) is a cliché New Jersey middle class playboy. His routine consists of church, his pad, his car, his boys, hooking up with new girls every weekend and his real addiction – porn.

Via narrative, Jon expresses the "escape" he feels when watching porn, and fantasizes about a sex life comparative to that of his porn stars. Though he scores "10s" on the regular, he is constantly unsatisfied with a lack of willingness or exploration on the part of his partner. He's had them all, seemingly, until he crosses paths with Barbara (Johansson) who is the perfect 10. They spark a rather forward relationship, and immediately she holds the power over him by withholding sex.

She comes from upper class, and certainly acts like it. Despite the fact that the film overtly objectifies women, Barbara is a power figure, insisting she meet his family, he start going to school, and upgrading his job before finally having sex with him. Once they finally do the deed, Jon is of

course not 100 percent satisfied so he sneaks out for a late night movie in the living room. She catches him and threatens breakup until he lies his way out of it and promises never to do it again.



He pulls out the big guns to bail him out and drops the “I love you” bomb, which of course gets him out of trouble. Their relationship blossoms and despite the minor squabbles they seem like a pretty great couple. They each meet the others family and everyone loves everyone.

As the film progresses Jon is increasingly unable to meet the demands of Barbara, most notably her rule against him cleaning his own place. Come on Babs, the man just wanted a Swiffer! Enter Esther (Moore) who’s a middle aged and certainly troubled woman in his class. She also catches him watching porn and sparks up a casual conversation about it. Now Jon has two women on the line, each with a very different opinion of his porn addiction.

Jon tries to make his relationship with Barbara work, but finds his needs still aren’t being met and finds refuge in Esther’s openness on the subject. The story rolls on and characters evolve, and the ending is soft and genuine.

Overall, I thought it was extremely entertaining. I loved the humor, I thought it was quick and clever, and delivery was spot on. Tony Danza, who plays Jon Sr., really stole the show and was funny and lovable despite his foul mouth abrasiveness. Just based on the trailer and premise you know there’s a lot of sexuality in the film. There were a few awkward moments,

but honestly I felt the way Levitt delivered took a commendable amount of courage and didn't disgust me in the least. I wouldn't drag your mom to this one, and it may be weird with your significant other, but still totally worth it.

As a first time director, Levitt really pushed the boundaries and demonstrated a refreshing sense of confidence. Why not a five? Well, unfortunately there were a few times where I thought Scarlett was a little too desperate to really capture the essence of an East Coast girl and it took away from her character. Lastly, there were some edits that tried way too hard to be as quick and clever as the dialogue and really made me worry about seizing up at any moment. Other than that, Levitt totally nailed it.

South Lake Tahoe resident Jeremy Miller has more movie reviews online.