



FEATURES

- Director's commentary
- Making of Hooked

Hooked

By JFelix

Disc Details:

Video:	1.33:1
Anamorphic:	No
Audio:	• English (Dolby Digital 2.0)
Subtitles:	N/A
Runtime:	60 minutes
Rating:	N/R
Release Date:	January 24, 2006
Production Year:	2003
Director:	Todd Ahlberg
Released by :	Eclectic DVD
Region:	1 NTSC

RATING



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Todd Ahlberg
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QUOTES

"While I know there must be few exceptions to the rule (hi, Morrissey), are most people on the Internet, regardless of race, creed or sexual orientation, just cruising for pants-area contact anyway?"

"At a short 60 minutes, *Hook* still manages to drag, with each person recounting the same thing broken up by gaudy techno music and shots of long stretches of highway – a

Just looking at the box made me feel a bit unnerved. In order to explain (and to fill up space in this review), let's take a good look at the back of the box: "Within the gay culture, 'online cruising' – going online to meet other



men and arranging an immediate, real-time sexual encounter – is rapidly emerging as a prime pastime.”

Of course, the first thing that crossed my mind was, “What, and straight people don’t like sex?” I know the back of the box is supposed to paint a sordid description that will attract an audience, but Jesus. Suggesting that “gay culture” (whatever the hell that actually means) consists of Internet-surfing cock-mongers is a terribly broad statement. While I know there *must* be a few exceptions to the rule (hi, Morrissey), aren’t most people on the Internet, regardless of race, creed or sexuality, just cruising for pants-area contact anyway?

In fact, I decided to test my nagging feeling on the most obvious of gay hook-up sites, gay.com to see just how accurate the box description is. Let’s take a look!

Person 1: Are you familiar with "A city in the sea"??

Person 1: A poem of his

Person 1: The city in the sea

Person 1: he wrote it in 1831

Person 2: Hmmmm, not familiar with that one

Person 2: It probably was dark-oriented

Person 1: "Lo! Death has reared himself a throne"

Person 2: Gothic poem



The discussion of Edgar Allen Poe’s most famous work went on for almost two hours before the chat site locked me out, displaying a huge graphic for Colt Video. I don’t even like Colt Video. So there you have it. An hour-long documentary of people talking about nothing but frenzied sodomy, and all I get is a discussion of poetry.

metaphor that could probably be decoded by a computer with a head connected to the Information Superhighway; More like Information Superhighway "Supehigh gay"

"With a bit of editing, it could have been a decent 30-min cable special...!"

I feel cheated.

But let's get away from that whole sticky argument and get to the actual film itself – **Hooked** is a short documentary on the subject of gay Internet cruising. We meet face-to-face with a selection of men who, while varying in race, age, size and shape, have a few things in common: they're all obsessed with picking up guys off the Internet for the soul purposes of sex, and they all have the '70s' gay facial hair to prove it.

Okay, that might be an exaggeration. Only most of them have awful facial hair. The rest have awful shaving burns and baseball caps. Some are wild cards and have both facial hair *and* baseball caps.

If the general look of the participants seems fairly homogeneous, what they have to say is downright repetitive. Most recount their sexual awakening thanks to the Internet and how they delved into the dark regions of their desires through Internet hook-up sites. They eventually became desensitized, even emotionally dead, after what



they did. Sure the story is a worthy cautionary tale, but I didn't have to hear it a dozen times. Boo hoo, you're emotionally dead inside ... and? Maybe you should have realized this when you were soliciting strangers for sex in the middle of the road at 3 a.m.? I'm probably being a bit harsh – sexual addiction is probably a terrible, terrible thing. In between the roadside face-fucking, that is.

Even by the end of the film when they're wrapping up the stories of each person, it seems quite generic. Almost every slow-motion shot is accompanied with a quote, usually saying something like, "I found a boyfriend online and haven't been on the Internet recently." Yawn. At a short 60 minutes, **Hooked** still manages to drag, with each person recounting

the same thing, broken up by gaudy techno and shots of long stretches of highway – a metaphor that could probably be decoded by a child with a head cold. Information Superhighway? More like Information "Supehigh *gay!*"

Presentation

Shot on consumer video equipment and even webcam footage, **Hooked** fares about as well as any recent documentary. While some shots are filled with pixelation during quick shots of still photographs, I'm certain that it's probably due to the source material, which are probably some badly compressed JPG pictures.

The webcam footage comes off as surprisingly decent. On the audio side, the music is loud – too loud. You'll be reaching for your remote as you turn the volume up whenever someone's talking, and back down whenever some techno music decides to rear its ugly head and assault you with its heavy bass.



Extras

You'd hope the disc would come with a commentary featuring the participants, but sadly that's not happening. You get a dry *commentary* from director Todd Ahlberg, who spends most of his time talking about the technical side of



the film rather than the people featured in the documentary itself. Considering that the back of the box suggests that there are 100 minutes of bonus features, I was ready to strap in for some sort of feature-length *making-of documentary*, but no, it was a simple five-minute travelogue discussing director Ahlberg's road trip around the country gathering all the personal interviews himself. Also included is the film's theatrical trailer. The extras combined, *including* the commentary, do not add up to 100 minutes.

Overall

With a bit of editing, it could have been a decent 30-minute cable special (LOGO could use something to pack in between all those Erasure videos), but no. It's a long, unfocused 60 minutes. Combine that with the tepid extras and you have an easily skippable disc.



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