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Hooked (R1 America)



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Posted: Fri Jan 27, 2006 2:19 pm Post subject: Hooked (R1 America)

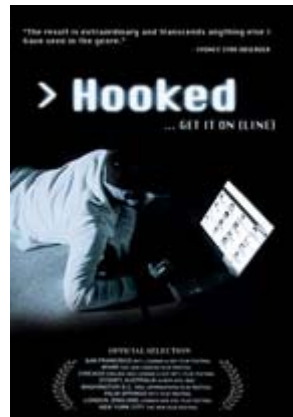


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Hooked (2003)

R1 America
Eclectic DVD



The Film:

The internet. A massive subject that could cover absolutely anything in the world to make a documentary about. But why would you make a documentary about something so boring as, say, normal online dating, when there are so many taboo subjects readily available to hand on the internet? Well, Todd Ahlberg's directorial debut presents us with one of these taboo's - "gay online

cruising". Basically, Ahlberg interviews a series of homosexual men of differing ages and backgrounds about how and why they go online to meet other men to arrange an immediate meeting between the each other for sexual encounters. I have to be honest and say that the subject matter did make me feel uncomfortable throughout the film, but this is more likely to be due to the fact that they spend so much time discussing being 'Hooked', compared to the dangers that could come with meeting with a stranger online and not knowing them. We are told that the online gay community go by three main rules. The first is 'stats' where people want to meet others of a particular stature (one's physical structure). The second is 'party and play' which is where they meet up with gay men who take the same drug as them (which is what 'party' means) and then continue on to have a sexual encounter. Finally, we have the 'hook-up' which is where they don't want to know the person, sometimes just leave the door open to their home, lie down face against the bed, and say they don't even want to see what the other man looks like. Pretty much all the men that feature in the documentary are from Western states in America (California etc) and, well, I can't see this going on as openly in other places (apart from maybe Brighton). The documentary does a good job of going from telling us about the experiences, to how some of them have gone to what they thought is a muscular 18 year old's house and it's a middle aged guy, to some of the more bizarre requests they get on the internet (too explicit to talk about in this review). Although they do touch on safety in the interviews, it soon goes back to the same explicit chat once the director realizes that not one of them cares about their own safety and that they know the dangers before the 'hook up'. An interesting, and in my opinion, disturbing (still would be if it was straight sex) documentary which is worth a rent before buying.

The DVD:

Video:

Eclectic DVD has provided the documentary in it's OAR of 4:3. The picture is clear when it needs to be, but, as a lot of the interviews have been done over webcams, it obviously loses a lot of the picture quality throughout. All in all, the picture is certainly not unwatchable, and although the webcams add to the subject (sort of), it can put off a bit. There are also no subtitles included on the disc.

Audio:

We have been given the original dolby digital 2.0 English stereo track for Hooked, which suffers from the same problems as the picture in regards to the fact that there is a drop in quality with the webcam interviews which is to be expected. There are no audio dropouts however, and the audio is clear throughout.

Extras:

Commentary - We kick the DVD's extras off with an audio commentary with director/writer/producer/editor Todd Ahlberg. Ahlberg speaks for the duration of the 60 minute feature albeit with the odd moment of silence (which is pretty

normal for a solo commentary). He discusses why he came up with the idea, how he found the interviewees and about being a one time regular in the online cruising realm himself.

Making Of - Next up have a short featurette about the making of Hooked. It mainly talks about the difficulties of setting up interviews using webcams (mainly technical) as well as some of the problems overall making the film. An interesting, albeit short, featurette lasting just six minutes and three seconds.

Trailer - We finish the extras off with a two minute trailer which is exactly what it says on the tin.

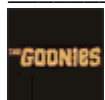
OVERALL:

An interesting yet uncomfortable documentary, with adequate picture and sound and some nice extras.

Film – C+
Picture – C+
Sound – C+
Extras – B-
Overall – C+

Comparison available [here](#).

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