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## REVIEW

# DVD Review: *Liberty In Restraint - Behind the Eyes of a Fetish Photographer*

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First, a caveat. There are many things that *Liberty In Restraint* is not. It is not a salacious exposé, fodder for the moral mainstream to laugh and point at the marginalised. It is not titillation, a wank fest for the furry handcuff brigade. It is not educational — for every question it answers, it raises three more.

Above all, *Liberty In Restraint* is an intimate portrait of one man, his extended family and his personal journey around the sharp edges of life. And it makes for disturbing, beautiful viewing.

Director Michael Ney should be congratulated for his restrained and objective representation of the life and works of Noel Graydon, [BDSM](#) photographer and player. His sensitive rendering skillfully avoids clamping an unwelcome, socially conscious interpretation to the balls of the subject, freeing the viewer to examine their own, often visceral, reactions.

Superficially, we are watching a fetish photographer — and what a photographer. Noel Graydon's captivating photographs reveal, in some ways, the ultimate objectification which is so often a part of the world of BDSM. They depict the iconography of the body in crisis. But Graydon's experience of BDSM was far from superficial and his photographs were born of experience, not voyeurism. As a recovered heroin addict, trained submissive and professional dominant, his submersion in the underbelly of the world informed his overarching fascination with the psychology of complex relationships: between individuals, the pleasure/pain divide, and between man and his addictions to adrenalin — and worse.

The journey though his experience is illustrated with a series of real life vignettes involving himself and his friends in the scene - from intricate shibari (Japanese bondage) and genital torture, via play-piercing and mummification to flagellation and electro-play. These are ordinary people engaging in extraordinary acts, aficionados of an extreme and often misunderstood expression of love and respect between consenting, complex and altogether human individuals.

There is little doubt that the images are hardcore; if the perceived violence doesn't get you, his exploration of religious hypocrisy may. It is easy to have an automatic reaction to what appears to be naked hostility. Unless you have already contemplated this complicated paradox on the fringes of acceptability, it is unlikely that you will be swayed by this DVD. There is nowhere for the closed-minded or the weak-stomached to hide; but for the rest, a perplexing, provoking treat.

Noel Graydon died incongruously and suddenly of a heart attack in July 2007 and *Liberty In Restraint* is a fitting tribute to his life. It does not sensationalise the BDSM experience, nor does it attempt to evangelise or bleat for acceptance and understanding. It merely tells the naked story of a man; how life was for him and how he came to create the startling images which survive him.

Corylus is pleased to live in Scotland, living as disgracefully as is possible given her lamentable state of finances. She bears life's little hiccups by repeating the mantra 'life is inherently absurd' until she feels calmer, but sometimes a very spicy Bloody Mary is the only solution.



## Comments

#1 — February 15, 2008 @ 19:38PM — Michael Ney [[URL](#)]

Thanks for the review.

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