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## Pure cheek: the Ben Dover story

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### ABSTRACT

This article explores the career of British porn performer and producer Lindsay Honey, more commonly known as Ben Dover. Arguably Britain's most well-known pornographer, Honey's career is significant in that it spanned 40 years, beginning when the distribution of hardcore pornography was criminalized and ending when the digital distribution of porn via the internet had become ubiquitous. Drawing on three interviews conducted with Honey in 2017 that were eventually edited into an episode of the documentary series *Sexposed*, alongside archival research which includes media reportage and legal documents, I show how Honey's career illustrates considerable cultural and economic developments that affected the production, distribution and consumption of pornography in Britain. I suggest that such analyses of long-form careers can further contribute to our understanding of porn as a business.

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British pornography; porn work; Ben Dover; Gonzo; cultural labour; technology

## Introduction

While there has been an increase in academic work on the development of Britain's pornography business (Smith 2005; Deslandes 2015; Stoops 2018; Wickstead 2020; Cofield, Mechen, and Worley 2022), there remains a shortage of studies exploring the careers of workers, such as performers, producers, directors and distributors. Outside academia, there have been biographical accounts of performers (Sheridan 1999) and distributors (Killick 1994), as well as autobiographies, such as the innumerable volumes written by the late Mike Freeman (Freeman 2011, 2012a, 2012b, 2012c, 2013a, 2013b, 2013c), the entrepreneurial Gold Brothers (R. Gold 1997; D. Gold 2012) and performer Ric Porter (2010). Such sources are undoubtedly invaluable resources for pornography historians, although they often have a tendency towards myth-making (Schaefer 2005; Alilunas 2016) and abridge details on industrial practice and other aspects of cultural labour, such as employment, wages and hours, the organization of work and regulation. Moreover, aside from Simon Sheridan's (1999) biography of Mary Millington, histories of female workers remain scant.

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In my own work, I have frequently drawn on the experiences of British adult entertainment workers (Carter 2018, 2022a, 2022b, 2023), and in the documentary series I produced – *Sexposed* (Fletcher 2018). Across six episodes performers and producers gave first-hand, on-camera reflections on their cultural labour. Mia Young gave an account of the challenges new performers face when entering the business, Tiffany Morris discussed the changing conditions of labour and the value of owning one’s intellectual property, Michelle Thorne spoke candidly about her long career as a female porn performer, Terry Stephens talked about attempts to organize a disorganized industry through the UK Adult Producers Network, while Dave Wells reminisced on his unconventional journey from performer to producer.

The first *Sexposed* episode focused on Lindsay Honey, who discussed his 40-year career in British porn.<sup>1</sup> His story is particularly significant for its longevity, something that is uncommon in a precarious economy with a difficult legal history. Therefore, an analysis of Honey’s career helps illustrate the cultural and economic shifts that have impacted British porn work, particularly as it moved from an illicit to a licit space. In this short article, I draw on two of these interviews with Honey and triangulate these with media reportage, archival documents and interviews with others involved in Britain’s pornography business. This is not intended to be a mere celebration. Instead, I want to highlight how Honey’s career illustrates industrial development over an extended period of time and show how ‘new industries, their institutional rules, and their competitive dynamics emerge and change’ (Jones 2001, 911).

### ‘Doin’ a bit of porn, are ya?’

Born in 1956 in Sittingbourne, Kent, Simon Lindsay Honey’s early ambition was to become a drummer. After flirting with success, playing drums for bands such as Sparks and former Bay City Roller Ian Mitchell, Honey became discouraged by the lack of earnings as he did not write the songs and began to understand the importance of intellectual property ownership. Around 1979/1980, realizing that ‘something had to change’, Honey responded to adverts in *The Stage* magazine, a publication that contained advertisements for jobs in the performing arts. Through this, he met agent Kent Boulton, who found Honey modelling work for the Swedish hardcore magazine *Private*. It was Boulton who introduced Honey to pornographer Mike Freeman:

First time I met Mike Freeman I was on a photo shoot [...] and I turned up for this audition [...] from this ad in *The Stage* that I’d seen which said ‘models wanted male and female’. I said ‘what is it that you do?’, he said ‘we basically take pictures of you having sex and I pay you £150’. I said ‘when do we start?’. About half way through the audition this guy turned up, sort of long hair beard. He said ‘alright mate, doin’ a bit of porn are ya?’ [...] He was just starting this Videx, this video porn company, which of course had never been heard of, was the first one, and all the rest of it. And we got chatting and he said ‘do you wanna come down and check out what we are doing. I’m doing this film’ [...] we hung out, I got on well with him, really well. At the time I was 23 or something.

Back then, the Obscene Publications Act 1959 criminalized the sale of hardcore pornography in Britain. Despite this, such material was openly exchanged via bookshops and through mail-order. Freeman, formerly known as Michael Muldoon, had been active in this economy from 1964, producing Soho Postcards – photographs depicting hardcore

sex – and rollers – short hardcore films on the 8-mm format – between 1967 and 1969. Freeman was completely self-taught in film production, using amateur and semi-professional techniques, and was very much an opportunist with a criminal background who exploited the domestic demand for hardcore. In 1979, after serving a 10-year sentence for murder, Freeman wanted to resume his pornography business. However, at this point in time, domestic production was practically non-existent, and small-gauge film formats were being replaced by the newly introduced medium of home video.

In the early years of this new technology, there was some legal confusion about whether video could be considered an article under the Obscene Publications Act 1959. Freeman set out to exploit this ambiguity, starting the company Videx Ltd, which produced and distributed hardcore films shot on electronic news gathering video equipment. Funded by a childhood friend and the Department of Trade via the London Chamber of Commerce (see *Late Night Video*, vol. 1 no. 3), Freeman became the only person making hardcore pornography on video tape in Britain, taking a free-market approach to entrepreneurship that fit well with Margaret Thatcher's enterprise ethos of the early 1980s (Gray 2002). Honey became his star male performer. In an interview, Freeman recalled 'hearing about this guy "Lindsay" with the biggest cock',<sup>2</sup> and gave him the main male role in *Truth or Dare* (Freeman, dir. 1980), arguably the first shot-on-video hardcore film produced for the British market. As Peter Alilunas (2016) observes, shot-on-video production quickly dominated the American hardcore market, taking over from film. However, in Britain, few risked shooting hardcore content, and those who distributed it either re-released their earlier rollers, such as John Jesner Lindsay, or focused on selling American films that were smuggled into Britain. For Honey, this lack of competition was due to others being 'scared shitless from going to prison'.

Selling via mail-order through advertisements in video magazines and newspapers, Videx became a profitable enterprise, with VHS films retailing from £40.25 each,<sup>3</sup> illustrating the high prices hardcore commanded back then. Honey recalled visiting 'the post office every day [...] and it was like all cash money coming in. It was like madness'. Honey appeared in further films and began assisting Freeman in running the business, designing mail-order advertisements and occasionally filming:

[...] he taught me about things. I mean, specifically with regard to making films, he didn't have a faintest idea what he was doing, really. But I took it all in anyway and learned [...] the basics of, you know, setting shots up and crossing the line and all the rest of it.

Although Honey and others have commented on Freeman's haphazard and relaxed approach to filmmaking (Flint 1999, 98), Honey still saw Freeman as an unacknowledged pioneer of gonzo pornography:

He invented gonzo porn by mistake and didn't even realise that he'd invented something and of course everyone gives a lot of other people credit for including me, which I don't take credit for at all; I think John Stagliano is usually credited with being the first sort of commercial gonzo, which is true. And of course, that was all possible because of the small cameras we have now [...] but back then Mike was shooting gonzo on this massive great breeze-block of a camera [...] that weighed about 40 pounds.<sup>4</sup>

In 1980, a court appeal relating to the video screening of hardcore pornography at a basement premises in Soho determined that the video cassette could be considered an

obscene article contrary to section 1(2) of the Obscene Publications Act 1959.<sup>5</sup> Honey claimed that he gave little thought to the legality of making hardcore porn:

I was kind of aware it was illegal. But I didn't realise it was as illegal as it was [...] because I found it really difficult to believe that anyone might think it's illegal, but does anyone really care? But people did care. The establishment cared like fuck, and I didn't realise that. So even though I knew we were doing something illegal and blatantly advertising in all the magazines. But we was [*sic.*] just doing it and that sort of laissez faire attitude of Mike et al meant I thought, well, you know, no one seems to give a shit, so it must be all right.

Videx first ran into trouble after making two hardcore gay films, *Dial a Guy* (Freeman, dir. 1981) and *What a Gay Day!* (Freeman, dir. 1981), with Freeman attempting to take advantage of the underserved gay porn market. In 1982, a court found Freeman guilty under the Obscene Publications Act 1959 for selling these titles and the BDSM-themed *Sex Slave* (Freeman, dir. 1981). Honey escaped prosecution:

I didn't go to prison. I managed to get off by my finest acting role ever of pretending to be a stupid wannabe popstar who didn't know what was going on. So, I was basically classed as the office boy and I'd been led astray.

While in prison, Freeman asked Honey to keep the business going: 'He said "do you want to make your own film?" I went "alright, yeah, I'll have a crack". So, he gave me some money and [...] I went off, made me own film'. Using the knowledge Honey acquired while working with Freeman, he made *Rock n Roll Ransom* (Honey, dir. 1982), starring former Bay City Roller and band mate Ian Mitchell, and was involved in the production of *Death Shock* (Honey and Thring, dirs. 1981). As Neil Jackson (2017) observes, it is not uncommon for performers to move into production. For porn director John Stagliano, performer/producers bring the unique expertise of knowing how to film sex, rather than having technical filmmaking proficiency (Maina and Zecca 2016, 423). After 10 months, Freeman came out of prison, but still awaited a further trial for *The Videx Video Show* (Freeman, dir. 1982). On this occasion, Honey was also indicted. Choosing to defend himself, the court found Freeman and his associates not guilty. Eventually, Freeman was found guilty under the common law offence of perverting the course of justice.

## Bootlegging

Evidently, the Videx period was a formative experience for Honey. Beyond acquiring technical skills through working alongside Freeman, he also realized the profitability of hardcore pornography, arguably being influenced by Freeman's entrepreneurship and willingness to evade the law. The introduction of the Video Recordings Act 1984 removed any ambiguity around distribution of hardcore films on video. This made the sale of uncertified video cassettes a criminal offence, creating a black market for hardcore pornography (Petley 2011, 134–135). Still possessing the Videx mailing list and seeing an economic opportunity, Honey decided to start Grafton Marketing in 1986, a mail-order company that sold pirated copies of hardcore tapes smuggled in from the Netherlands:

what we'd do is we go to Amsterdam, and we'd sit there like for two days go through all these films that came out and pick the best quality ones. And then we take the VHS cassette apart, take the [...] spool [...] out and then we either put them in whiskey [...] cardboard tubes which exactly is the same size and we'd fill them up with tapes, sticking them in the back

of the car, or we'd take the side panels off [...] where the speakers are, and like shove them all in there. Yeah, we never got caught.

On return, an associate duplicated the tapes, which sold for between £20 and £60 each, evidencing the high prices pornography commanded on the black market; Honey posted them out to customers. Honey claimed to have made 'enough money to go on expensive holidays', again emphasizing wealth as a motivating factor in his enterprise. However, Honey noticed the mailing list contracting – 'it was getting to the point where it wasn't worth the risk for the money we were making'. Moreover, he and his then partner, glamour model Linzi Drew, were 'working in the strip circuit' and 'earning good money'. As Jeffrey Escoffier (2007, 191) observes, it is not uncommon for porn workers to diversify their income through 'engaging in other forms of sex work that are complementary to their employment in pornography'.

Through an ongoing association with Private, which dated back to his first modelling job, Honey became a photographer for the Swedish company. Calling this his 'big break', Honey began to wind down Grafton Marketing. Unbeknownst to him, the business had been under police surveillance for two years. After sending a letter to customers, informing them that the company was ceasing operation, the police raided Drew and Honey. Prosecuted on 9 March 1992 for 'publishing and possessing obscene articles for gain', Honey received a nine-month sentence, with Drew getting three months (*Daily Telegraph*, 10 March 1992). On release, Honey resumed working for Private, this time making films:

I was getting 10 grand [£10,000 budget] a movie [...] we shot on Betacam. We'd two-week pre-production and leads, you'd write the script and then two weeks trying to get a hold of the people. Then we'd do 10 days filming usually. And then I'd go to Sweden, Stockholm for two weeks to edit.

On his first assignment – '*Private Video Magazine*, which was like a vignette sort of tape [...] eight scenes' – police arrested Honey after a Post Office worker reported him for sending a package to Sweden, it being illegal to send 'indecent' material through the Royal Mail according to the Post Office Act 1953. This was one of the many overlapping laws used to regulate hardcore pornography in Britain (see Carter 2023, 21). However, as barrister Geoffrey Robertson (1979, 178) points out, indecency is often perceived as a lower-level offence than obscenity, increasing the chances of a guilty conviction. Honey received a fine, but no prison sentence.

Using the alias Steve Perry, a reference to the lead singer of the American band Journey, Honey made around 12 films for Private between the years 1993 and 1995. While shooting for Private, Honey contributed to the softcore *Members Only* series for the British video label MIA, featuring his partner Linzi Drew and other British glamour models. Following a falling out with Private, American producer John Stagliano contacted Honey. A fan of Honey's partner Linzi Drew and knowledgeable about the British glamour scene, Stagliano planned to film one of his popular Buttman series of gonzo films in Britain:

[...] he got in touch and said 'I want to come over to England to shoot a movie could you produce it for me' [...] [I] got all the locations got all the girls, I hired some lights and all this sort of stuff. I thought he's gonna need all of this. So, they came over [...] and I thought where's all the kit? He just bought one of the new Hi8 cameras that had just come out. And so he unzipped his bag, took his camera out and said 'right, where are we

shooting then? And I went 'what the fuck is that?' [...] showed them the lights and he said 'no, don't need any of them' [...] I was thinking what's going on? Because working for Private I'd have lighting crews and sound booms.

Alilunas (2016, 206) comments on the impact gonzo had on the American adult film business, with its minimalist production practices disrupting the 'aesthetic model of the Golden Age' and being ideally suited to video distribution. Honey recalled being 'blown away' by Stagliano's simple approach to filmmaking, seeing it as reminiscent of what Freeman had attempted to achieve with Videx. As well as supporting the production team, Honey cameoed in *Buttman's Bouncin' British Babes* (Stagliano, dir. 1994) as a mechanic and improvised some dialogue. Once the shoot ended, Honey drove Stagliano back to the airport and was asked about his future plans now that he had ceased working for Private. Stagliano encouraged Honey to 'do a character like mine in England and you can like pretend I'm your [...] English cousin'. Stagliano gifted Honey a cassette titled *Buttman's Bend Over Babes* (Stagliano, dir. 1990):

So I was looking at the cover and I thought oh, I need a character like Buttman [...] the first *Batman* film had come out and that's why he called himself Buttman. I thought that's good, what do I need? *Bend Over Babes*, I thought hang on a minute Ben Dover [...] fuck me, there's a name.

## Ben Dover

After working with Stagliano, Honey immediately purchased a Hi8 camera: 'I thought I'm gonna make it different to John's because he was too laid back [...] I wanted to be a sort of cheeky cockney chappie'. The first two Ben Dover films were softcore – 'obviously I didn't want to go back to fucking prison again' – and he managed to sell them immediately to the British video label MIA. Honey also sent copies to Stagliano in America, who requested a hardcore version – 'I said, well there isn't a hardcore version, because it's illegal over here. So, I bit the bullet and shot four movies straight off, hard and soft'. *Ben Dover's English Class* (Honey, dir. 2006), a compilation of scenes from earlier releases, typifies the Ben Dover style. In one scene, Honey interrupts two women, supposedly fashion students, walking down a street. He introduces himself as 'Ben Dover from the Student Opportunities Development Agency' and tells them that that he is trying to get people 'to advise on the State of the British fashion industry, with particular regard to the lingerie industry'. The handheld Hi8 camera shakes, as it quickly moves to show the performers' bodies and the microphone captures the strong wind, placing the viewer in Dover's position and connoting a sense of realism. A transition of video noise, again attempting to emphasize amateurism, takes the viewer to an indoor location where the two women discuss lingerie, model outfits and end up having sex with each other. Another male joins the scene, having sex with the two women; Ben Dover films and receives oral sex. Lengthy expositions of Honey's jocular interactions with performers became one of the tropes of Honey's earlier productions.

Humour was central to the Ben Dover character, contrasting markedly with Stagliano's Buttman, who Honey described as 'very quiet' and 'subdued'. Ian Hunter (2014, 161) sees Ben Dover as an extension of the bawdy, British sense of humour commonplace in the British sex comedies of the 1970s, updating 'the working class conspicuous sexual



consumption of 1970s sexploitation icons such as Robin Askwith of the *Confessions* series'. I asked Honey why he took such an approach – 'the humour was very intentional, because I thought if I got nicked, if you're in court and I played the films and the jury are laughing I'm going, mate, you can't find me guilty, you're laughing your head off'. This suggests that Honey had become more mindful of navigating Britain's messy porn laws, shooting hardcore solely for distribution outside the country. He also commented on being influenced by comedy and sitcoms, believing that the 'porn industry takes it way too seriously'.

After the demands of shooting for Private, the gonzo model was more economical – 'book a girl, little camera, no lighting, get a location, make it up as you go along [...] it was basically just easier'. With a rough production budget of around £1500 a scene – 'Location £200, the girl £350–£450 [...] the lads got £250–£350' – Honey edited the films and performed the music that played over the credits. In the early films, he rarely had sexual intercourse with performers, relying on a group of reliable males, usually being masturbated or fellated to climax at the end of a scene. Success came quickly, securing distribution deals in the UK, Europe and America:

I was getting \$40,000 from America for the hard version [...] some cable deals [...] \$10,000 for that. And then I was selling to English TV, late night softcore [...] another £10,000 for that. And then I was selling to Europe [...] getting about £20,000 [...] so we were making about £80, £90, £100,000 a movie.

His status as a transnational pornographer was validated in 1997 when he won the Break-through Award at the Adult Video News award – 'that's when it all got a bit mental'. In the UK, MIA released the 18-rated softcore variants on VHS and satellite television subscribers could view them on The Adult Channel; hardcore bootlegs circulated on the black market. According to Honey, these were often smuggled in from Germany and included German voiceovers over the British dialogue, and abridged the long expositions where he conversed with performers. Through this illicit distribution, a British male audience grew, with the Ben Dover character assimilating well with the 'new lad' phenomenon (Attwood 2005), the Britpop music culture of the late 1990s (Bennett and Stratton 2010) and, arguably, New Labour's creative industries manifesto, where 'Cool Britannia' had become an exportable commodity (Flew 2011). Competitors also began to emulate Honey's jocular, gonzo style. There was Phil McCavity, a character created by Scottish pornographer Jim Dean; Frank Thring's Lee Nover; softcore duo Shagnasty and Mutely; and a female named Betty Swollocks; among others. For Honey, 'imitation is the sincerest form of flattery' and these imitators made him realize that Ben Dover had become 'like a genre' which rivals tried to emulate.

The sale of hardcore pornography became effectively legalized in 2000 through a review of the British Board of Film Classification's Restricted 18 (R18) certificate (Petley 2011; Hunter 2014). Now hardcore could legally be sold in sex shops providing that it had a British Board of Film Classification certificate. Alongside this change in policy came the introduction of the digital versatile disc (DVD), emerging in 1997. By the time of liberalization, the DVD had gained a strong foothold in the home video marketplace, enjoying a fast rate of adoption (McDonald 2007). With Honey already having an audience and a catalogue of films ready for release, he was well positioned to exploit this new economic opportunity. It also further streamlined his workflow:



When DVDs came out, I was still shooting on Hi8 [...] and then ended up on DV Cam, which I thought was a fantastic format. So, I was shooting on DV Cam and then editing straight onto masters [...] it was just simple [...] then you send it off to the DVD company and they print you off 3000 copies.

Initially, he also benefited from the internet, introducing a website around 2002. Honey quickly noticed DVD sales beginning to dwindle and memberships to the Ben Dover website increasing. He and his manager, Julian Becker, decided to diversify the brand and release Ben Dover clothing and sex toys for sale via the website. Honey admitted to leading a lavish lifestyle, enjoying expensive holidays, and buying sports cars and properties. It seems that he was underprepared for the dramatic economic shift broadband internet would have on the business. At the end of the 2010s, he signed a distribution deal with Paul Baxendale-Walker's Bluebird Films, perhaps a final attempt to reboot the Ben Dover brand. New titles, such as *Ben Dover's Motor Birds* (Honey, dir. 2009), now shortened the elongated expositions that had become a key feature of the Ben Dover character, a commercial decision which Honey viewed as 'selling out'. Similarly, *Like Father, Like Son* (Honey, dir. 2012), saw the introduction of Ben Dover's 'son', but had little, if any, success.

Around this time, an attempt was made to cross into the mainstream, which was documented in the BBC Four production *Rich Man Poor Man: Ben Dover Straightens Up* (Denyer, dir. 2009). He also briefly dabbled with stand-up comedy and an unsuccessful online distributed mockumentary series *The Only Way is Dover* (Honey, dir. 2012). Like others involved in the pornography business, Honey found it difficult to get mainstream work, claiming to have been rejected from appearing in the reality television show *Big Brother* because of his past work.

By the early 2010s, his business all but ended:

that was really when it just went to nothing. All these big companies started buying all the tube sites and putting the stuff on there for free. It had got to the point [...] where it had gone full circle [...] back in the 80s and 90 [...] it was a luxury product [...] they were willing to pay £60 for a VHS because they couldn't get it anywhere else [...] it was very much a prized possession. Now everyone for some reason assumes it's free. It's like quite a weird mindset.

Honey responded by trying to seek reclamation from those who freely downloaded his films through a controversial practice called speculative invoicing. David Wall (2017, 161) defines this as 'the sending of invoices to alleged copyright infringers demanding payment else face further legal action'. Starting the company Golden Eye with his manager Julian Becker, they sent letters to 9124 people whose internal protocol (IP) addresses were linked to illicit downloads of Ben Dover titles, requesting a payment of £700 to avoid a court hearing. The result of this action was a protracted legal process, which ultimately determined that an IP address is not solely sufficient identifiable evidence of an infringer (Mendis 2013, 64–65).<sup>6</sup> Considering that the Ben Dover brand grew through pirated videos in the late 1990s, Honey's litigious stance appeared to alienate many fans. Honey began to seek work as a porn actor, appearing in productions for Bluebird Films, and in several low-budget non-porn productions. In 2017, a bladder cancer diagnosis all but ended his porn career. He now mainly resides in Spain and works as a disc jockey for a local radio station.

## Conclusion

Beyond lasting 40 years, Honey's career is significant in that it highlights a range of cultural, political and economic factors that impacted on the production, distribution and consumption of pornography in Britain. First, Honey's experiences emphasize how accelerated technological change has constantly 'shaken the [pornography] industry' (Coppersmith 1998, 95). Honey's career shows a move from the cumbersome and limited electronic newsgathering equipment of the early 1980s to the more portable Hi8 and DV Cams that, as Alilunas (2016) suggests, allowed for greater immediacy, placing the spectator increasingly closer to the action. This intimacy became a key feature of Ben Dover's gonzo style, including lengthy expositions with performers that sought to capture the contiguity of a sexual encounter. It also required minimal production facilities, making it an economical form of production.

Second, Honey's career illustrates the ever-evolving regulatory framework for pornography in Britain. It began when the sale of hardcore was criminalized and entrepreneurs sought to exploit its scarcity by bootlegging or using production techniques that enabled them to bring films to market. Interestingly, as Honey's porn work progressed, he became more mindful of legalities, focusing on Britain's lucrative softcore home video and satellite television market, but distributing uncensored edits internationally until hardcore became legal in 2000. He also tried to use the law for his own economic benefit in the 2010s, seeking to recoup lost profits from those who illicitly downloaded his films. Such long-form analyses of porn careers can tell us more about the difficult relationship of the pornography business with the law and how workers negotiate these tensions.

Finally, there is something to be said about the role of transnational entrepreneurship and the importance of cross-border trade (Carter 2022a). Whether it be smuggling video tapes into Britain during the mid-1980s, working for Private or arranging shoots for travelling American pornographers, transnational exchange is a key feature of pornography enterprise and one that remains underexplored. Moreover, transnational networks also led to distribution deals in America, Germany and the Netherlands, allowing Honey to maximize the profits from each Ben Dover production. As the British Girl Adult Film Database notes, the travel of Honey's films across geographic borders and legalities has resulted in them often being censored or re-edited.<sup>7</sup> Indeed, in Britain, their many re-releases and re-issues as compilations makes it tricky to construct an accurate filmography, once more emphasizing the challenges facing those researching porn's history. Honey's interviews brought up other aspects of porn work that I have been unable to include here for reasons of brevity, such as sexual health, the impact porn had on his personal relationships – an area he found difficult to discuss – and the difficulties faced when moving out of the porn business. But how might his experiences compare with other long-form porn careers, particularly those from different genders or sexualities? While interviewing other British porn workers for *Sexposed*, I was struck by how Honey's digital pessimism contrasted markedly with the experiences of entrepreneurial females like Michelle Thorne and Mia Young, who were far more optimistic about the economic opportunities of digital distribution through content sharing platforms. Through analyzing such experiences of porn workers over an extended period, not only do we gain an understanding of how a

range of players negotiate industrial change, we can also gain new insights into how pornography functions as a business.

## Notes

1. Lindsay Honey, interview, 12 September and 10 October 2017.
2. Mike Freeman, interview, 3–6 April 2016.
3. Approximately the equivalent of £160/US \$200 in 2023.
4. In an interview with Ian Hunter (2014), Freeman rejected Honey's claim of him being a gonzo pioneer.
5. See Attorney General's Reference (No. 5 of 1980) [1980] 3 All ER 816.
6. See *Golden Eye International Ltd v Telefónica UK Ltd* [2012] EWHC 723 (Ch).
7. See <https://www.bgafd.co.uk/miscellany/bendover.php>.

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