

# Brian Harte *Unplugged*

I'm standing in Starbucks, waiting for my skinny latte, and scanning for somebody scanning for me. Brian's got my photo, but never sent me his. Maybe it's a photographer thing. Better behind the lens and all that.

Is he that tall guy with the uber-trendy black-framed glasses and the leather document wallet? Nah, too corporate. What about that grungy dude fiddling with his iPod? Probably not. Or the one in the grey anorak? Definitely not.

And then I see him. He's just come through the door and is bounding towards me. Ear-to-ear grin and twinkly eyes. And stuff. Lots of stuff. He's got a rucksack, a laptop case, a holdall and what looks like two pizza boxes.

He deposits his baggage and sinks into a chair. He looks like he needs a double espresso, but I order him tea and a chocolate-chip cookie just to be on the safe side. You never can tell with these creative types.

It's a good choice. Brian doesn't need caffeine. He's high on something else. His work.

'I almost became an optometrist,' he tells me, as he finishes his cookie. 'I did two and a half years, but I realised it wasn't for me. So I changed and followed my passion.'

Brave man. He started by trying his hand at film-making, but his one and only production was about a tattooist in Bradford. It had lots of still shots in it, he tells me. A signal, perhaps, that he hadn't quite found his calling.

Then one day, he got the chance to do some darkroom work. Just a few photos that needed developing. A quick job.

'I came out twelve hours later,' he chuckles. He'd discovered his vocation.

And he's off. It's Photoshop this, manipulation that, lenses (new ones in the rucksack, didn't want to leave them in his car), frames (stunning ones he pulls out of the pizza boxes) and tales of a kid who wailed when Brian finished a photoshoot and tried to leave. His enthusiasm is contagious.

I look at my watch. Our one hour together has morphed into two. How did that happen?

But Brian's still on a roll.

'Is there anything else you need to know?' he asks enthusiastically. He could go on forever. He's one eager puppy.

No thanks, Brian. I think I've got the picture. As I leave, he's got himself another tea (just as well), has flipped open his laptop and is digitally riffling through yet more photos.

Not your ordinary tea break. But then Brian's no ordinary photographer.