We horror fans know that scary movies come in all different flavors. Those of us who have taken the time to sample these flavors know that while delicious cinematic meals can be found at the fanciest of restaurants, they can also be found at the bottom of the dumpsters out back. The vast majority can appreciate the DEAD ALIVEs, and the like, but what about the SLEEPAWAY CAMPs, and other such garbage? The films even a mother has a hard time loving. We horror fans find a type of perverse satisfaction in reveling in these tragically horrible disasters that is akin to watching a clown car crash. Sure, they're on fire and bleeding amongst the burning wreck, but they're juggling and trying to extinguish the flames with seltzer bottles that keep spraying them in the face. We can't help but stare and laugh. In other words, if you are going to make a horror film you need to make a choice. Either shoot for greatness, or aim for the toilet bowl. We simply do not have time or patience for anything in between.

With that being said, it's time to talk about the perpetual hype machine, HUMAN CENTIPEDE (FIRST SEQUENCE). Anyone who has seen The Dillinger Escape Plan could guess that I am a sucker for spectacle. I've always been attracted to all things dangerous, hideous and destructive (GG Allin anyone?). I had been following the Internet buzz from the moment I saw the teaser trailer last year. Disgusted critics and festivalgoers alike promised a film that would raise the bar for gross-out flicks while simultaneously lowering the standards of general filmmaking. Naturally, I took the first opportunity to see HUMAN CENTIPEDE that I could. Unfortunately, it was not what I had hoped.

Director Tom Six is heralded as being the second coming of Cronenberg, but I just can't see the parallel. The latter built his career on body films that skirted the line between the beautiful and the perverse. Of his own films, Cronenberg has stated that he does not use gratuitous violence as a shock and awe strategy. It is not blood for the sake of blood. Rather, his violence is a matter of circumstance that is used to develop characters and further the existing plot. HUMAN CENTIPEDE failed in this regard as I had a hard time discerning any type of character development or deeper metaphoric meaning. However, this is not an automatic deal-breaker. As I stated before, the truly gore-obsessed have developed their celluloid palettes to appreciate all types of fright flavors.

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