Written by Michael Gingold
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Too many movies these days have generic, nondescript titles that tell you nothing about what you're going to see when you buy a ticket—HOW DO YOU KNOW, JUST GO WITH IT et al. Fortunately, there are still some flicks that tell you all you need to know just from reading the moniker. HOBO WITH A SHOTGUN is one of those films—you're aware right away of not only what you're in for, but the spirit in which it will be presented. That name wouldn't be out of place on a roadside drive-in sign or a 42nd Street marquee from 30 years ago—which is not a coincidence.

HOBO WITH A SHOTGUN, opening in its native Canada March 25 from Alliance Films and in the U.S. May 6 from Magnolia Pictures' Magnet Releasing, was spawned from a faux trailer put together by the Halifax, Nova Scotia-based team of director Jason Eisener, producer Rob Cotterill and writer John Davies for a GRINDHOUSE contest sponsored by Robert Rodriguez. Not only did their $150 HOBO preview win the competition, it was attached to Alliance's GRINDHOUSE prints for the movie's Great White North release. It wasn't long—in fact prior to Rodriguez's own MACHETE beginning its trip from mock preview to bona fide feature—before talk of a HOBO expansion began.

"Alliance hooked us up with Niv Fichman from Rhombus Media in Toronto, who's one of Canada's biggest producers," Cotterill recalls. "He said he wanted to make a movie with us, and we started working on the HOBO feature script. Canadian filmmaking is kind of a slow process, so while John was writing HOBO, Jason and I decided to make TREEVENGE [their award-winning 2008 killer-Christmas-tree short] just to keep going; we wanted to keep making movies, so we self-financed that. And I think what TREEVENGE did for us was secure with Niv and other people—because its success was just crazy—that we were for real and we knew what we were doing, and we could make a movie with very little that people wanted to see."

Assembling a core creative team—including cinematographer Karim Hussain, a filmmaker in his own right (SUBCONSCIOUS CRUELTY)—the HOBO creators found themselves granted a

remarkable amount of freedom by their backers (also including Whiz Bang Films, another Toronto outfit). “Karim will say that we were like kids in a candy shop,” Cotterill notes, “because my experience working on features is that when you get your financing, especially when it’s a first-time director, first-time producer and first-time writer, the other producers will be all over it. But they were very hands-off, they didn’t f**k with us [laughs]. It’s amazing; I really don’t know how it happened.”

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