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The new farcical splatter flick SMASH CUT is a hilarious horror homage to the legendary Godfather of Gore, Herschell Gordon Lewis. Directed by SUMMER’S MOON’s Lee Demarbre and starring LAST HOUSE ON THE LEFT cult fave David Hess and adult-film star Sasha Grey, with cameos by THE HILLS HAVE EYES’ Michael Berryman and Lewis himself, the movie is currently available on DVD from Media Blasters on its Shriek Show label. Demarbre and Hess chatted with us about the movie; see their comments and some exclusive pics after the jump!

SMASH CUT is the brainchild of friends and co-writers Demarbre and Ian Driscoll, who bonded over their longtime love of everything Lewis. “SMASH CUT is about my favorite moviemaker, Herschell Gordon Lewis,” Demarbre tells Fango. “He was a pioneer. He invented the gore picture, being the first person to put blood on the screen in BLOOD FEAST.”

And if Demarbre wanted to imitate his idol in that sense, he has certainly succeeded with the gruesome SMASH CUT. It focuses on washed-up—and frankly awful—horror director Able Whitman (Hess), who believes that he might turn his fortunes around if his movies featured real human organs as props, as opposed to the fake gore of his previous flops. Of course, procuring those parts means turning to murder—and local reporter April Carson (Grey) teams up with private investigator Isaac Beaumonde (Jessie Buck) to stop Whitman’s brutal killing spree.

Though SMASH CUT boasts an eclectic cast, porn star Grey has garnered the most attention, as it represents part of her transition to more mainstream movies. Demarbre has been asked

repeatedly why he cast Grey in a role that did not call for nudity, and notes, “SMASH CUT is not about T&A. I directed her to be the straight man. She is the Dean Martin in the picture to Jerry Lewis. In the scenes without Hess, she is bubbly and cute. She’s fun and smart, and we’re going to work together again.”

Hess, on the other hand, is as nasty as ever and appears in almost every scene of SMASH CUT, and it would seem that this situation must have created a tremendous amount of pressure on the performer. “Being a lead actor is a lot more than just acting,” Hess tells Fango. “It is being there for all the supporting cast. When you have a character-driven film or an ensemble-driven film, as SMASH CUT is, then the ensemble has to carry the film as opposed to the acting. I was the person whom the rest of the cast relied upon to be their glue.”

Hess will be forever remembered as the brutal psychopath Krug in Wes Craven’s 1972 landmark LAST HOUSE ON THE LEFT, and while that may be the seminal film of his career, other genre flicks such as SWAMP THING and HOUSE ON THE EDGE OF THE PARK dot his résumé. Demarbre was thrilled to bring Hess in as his topliner in SMASH CUT. “The producers thought we’d have to cast a Canadian in the lead for tax credit, but then decided it would be OK to go with an American,” the director recalls. “As soon as they said that, I thought, ‘David Hess.’

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Nearly 40 years after LAST HOUSE, SMASH CUT gives us yet another chance to see Hess play a sadistic killer, and despite the fact that so many years have passed between the two films, Hess sees a number of similarities between Whitman and Krug? “In many ways, they are a lot alike,” the actor notes. “It is like the law of similarity. That which you have already done over the years is going to come out in some way or another.”

So which part would he rather be known for: Whitman or Krug? “I like being remembered as Krug, because he is one of the quintessential heavies of all time,” Hess says. “I wasn’t aware of that back then. I brought a lot of my own character to Krug. I bring a lot of the humorous side of me to Able Whitman. I’ve been lucky to have had a seminal role once and then, four decades later, the opportunity came along to do another seminal role.”

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