

Tom Six and Laurence Harvey on "HUMAN CENTIPEDE 2", Part One

Written by Samuel Zimmerman
Tuesday, 11 October 2011 11:20



As with his wildly polarizing first film, Tom Six's sequel to THE HUMAN CENTIPEDE is love it or hate it, and possibly even more so this time around as it's pointed directly at its audience. Taking aim at both those who adored his exercise in madness and those who despised it, FULL SEQUENCE (on VOD tomorrow from IFC) leaves its viewers with plenty to discuss. Good thing Fango got a chance to sit down with Six and his star Laurence Harvey to talk the disturbed Martin, reactionary filmmaking, the horniness of doctors and much more.

In THE HUMAN CENTIPEDE 2 (FULL SEQUENCE), "the iconic Dr. Heiter has inspired a real-life protege, the sickly, disturbed security guard Martin, who takes his gory inspiration from the original film to horrific new extremes...and one-ups the doctor with his pièce de résistance, one of the actresses from THE HUMAN CENTIPEDE (FIRST SEQUENCE), Ashlynn Yennie."

FANGORIA: You've said that you've always had the idea for two more. How did the reaction to the first and the reactionary nature of this sequel fit into, or re-shape, your original plans?

TOM SIX: When I was writing the first one, I had so many ideas. I knew part one had to be psychological because people had to get used to the sick idea first. So, in the second one I knew you had to show things and I was already thinking for a sequel, "What would be worse than a surgeon making a human centipede?" That would be somebody who doesn't have medical skills making a human centipede, so that must be a fan or something. When I was traveling the world and people asked me, "what if some maniac out there copies your idea," I knew for sure. I didn't want to copy my first film in any way. It'd be ridiculous to find another Deiter. So many sequels do that and it usually fails. So I wanted to make a completely opposite film and because the audience wanted to have more, I really shoved it in the second time. If you want more, you get more. It's really in the sixth gear and I go full force, and I really spray everything out. It's also a reaction to the death threats for the first one. I couldn't believe I'd get death threats for a film like that because it's just a movie, it's make-believe. That's what I also rub in, in the second one, it's just a movie. It's a roller coaster ride and that's it.

LAURENCE R. HARVEY: The violence gets so excessive and Grand Guignol and absolutely over-the-top, it kind of reminds people that it is a movie and it is a ride.

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FANG: Were you eager, or a bit hesitant to get involved?

HARVEY: I think my agent was hesitant [*laughs*]. I think when he was first approached he looked on Tom Six's website and it says "adult entertainment, Amsterdam" which has different connotations [*laughs*]. Once he told me it was HUMAN CENTIPEDE, I knew about the first one from it being on at Frightfest in London and it picked up a couple of awards and was this kind of quirky, body horror kind of thing that was being talked about online. It seemed like such an interesting idea, but I kind of thought, "Well, I'll go and meet the guys and see what they're like and see if it's of interest." Then I saw a screening for people who've been called for castings and interviews. I went in knowing it was this cult hit and came out kind of absolutely loving it. It's this great mix between high art and low art. You spend the first half hour going, "Is this a good film? A bad film? Is this a comical film?" It wants you to try and work that out for yourself. There are these high art references and low art references. It really grabbed you and Dieter's performance encompasses the whole film as well. It's beautifully shot and it kind of looked like those 70's Euro films where you'd get a French actor, an Italian actor, an American guest star.



FANG: How did you two collaborate to create Martin? The film seems to be initiating a discussion; did you two discuss him being an example of extreme fandom?

SIX: First of all, I wanted the complete opposite character. Dieter is tall and thin, and I wanted small and fat. It had to be a guy who had no power at all, even with his mother. So I went to the total other side of the spectrum. I wanted a guy that does the operation without empathy for his victims. He doesn't understand that he's hurting people. He just thinks like a child, almost. Of course, the media says if some lunatic out there copies your idea, it must be someone who is nuts, not healthy in their brain. I really wanted a guy like that, who's living in his own world and everybody bullies him and he's just living in his fantasy world and he just decides to make the fantasy come true.

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HARVEY: Initially, there wasn't a written script. Tom sat me down and told me the whole story scene by scene, as it is on screen right now; telling me camera work, lighting, effects. Also, we discussed a lot about what Martin was and wasn't. I felt uncomfortable playing somebody with a mental health problem, but Tom had worked out the character in such a way that we could look at it as being that his family were responsible for emotionally, intellectually, educationally and socially retarding him. It's because of his abusive father and mother, and the people around him that the mother tries to get involved.

It was also handy in that it gave a reason that Martin wanted to look towards Dr. Heiter, even if it's as this kind of fantasy father figure that he could play towards. That gave me a way through to why Martin decides to make a human centipede, so you could read it on two levels: as this kind of tabloid archetype doing what the tabloids say is going to happen, somebody simply copying a film which I don't think happens. I think somebody who's predisposed to violence is going to commit violence. They may copy the gun style of Chow Yun-Fat or something, but they've still got a gun and they're still going to shoot, irrespective of watching a John Woo film. There's also the level of Martin's search for a father, and in order to make himself worthy of Dr. Heiter he's got to make a centipede. It's also a gift to Ashlynn as well. I don't think Martin gets the sense that she doesn't want to be his front.

FANG: Do you think Dr. Heiter would be proud of Martin?

HARVEY: I'd like to think so. Dieter would be appalled [*laughs*]. But Dr. Heiter wouldn't want to meet Martin because he hates people. Martin would simply be stepping out of the frying pan into the fire.



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FANG: The choice of black and white is a strong one, how and when did you arrive at it?

SIX: When I made part one, I used clinical colors, the camera work is very steady and that really fit the story of Dr. Heiter. For the second one, I wanted to do a completely different film. I wanted to create a dark story; it had to look dirty and beautiful at the same time. Black and white really helped the story of Martin. If I did it in color, all the attention would go to the gore and centipede. It's much more than that. It's a story, and the black and white gives it a really uncomfortable feeling, like ERASERHEAD and I did a SCHINDLER'S LIST. Spielberg used a red dress, I used brown diarrhea. It's an ode to SCHINDLER'S LIST!

HARVEY: It's also Martin's view of the world, which is through security cameras. When we finally got the finished script within the first ten minutes, he's bashing somebody over the head. We talked about how Martin should be a sympathetic character, who through a misguided sense of what he's doing and not realizing how it's affecting people, he does bad things. So, a way to try and make Martin the underdog was to play him a bit like a silent movie clown, like Chaplin or certainly Buster Keaton with the kind of excessive violence, but also the deadpan quality to it.

FANG: Martin is very different from Dr. Heiter, but there is certainly a doctor in this film who makes an impression. Everyone in the film seems to be an extension of something, who and what is Dr. Sebring? Do you have a skewed view of doctors?

SIX: I'm so afraid of medical things. I can't go into a hospital. I know some doctors, the same one I referenced for part one who helped me do the operation. Doctors are such fascinating, strange people because they have so much knowledge. They are so highly intelligent like the Nazi doctors, which is the most nightmarish thing ever. I also hear stories. Doctors are very horny as well, and they have a high suicide rate at the same time. They're so strange, and this character is like this home-doctor, psychologist, but behind this nice, gentle persona, he's f*cking little boys in Thailand. That idea, I really liked. So he really fancies Martin. That's exactly what I do, he's going in as a guy who has to help Martin, but instead he wants to f*ck him.

HARVEY: Well, he's the father figure that the mother wants to bring in. I think his mother is a hypochondriac, always ringing up the doctor, and Martin's already had one abusive father who's in jail. Now she wants to bring in this guy.

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SIX: Somehow, pedophiles are very attracted to Martin. [laughs]

TO BE CONTINUED