

News on Wizard of Gore with Crispin Glover

<http://www.esplatter.com/2006news/wizardofgore.htm>

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June 25, 2007 -- Starring Crispin Glover (pictured) in the title role, the remake of the H.G. Lewis classic screens at the L.A. Film Festival Thursday June 28 at 10 p.m., Landmark Theaters, 10850 W. Pico Blvd.

Director Jeremy Kasten is no stranger to horror fans, having helmed ["The Attic Expeditions"](#) (which has its own cult following) and the recent DVD release "Thirst." This month, his magnum opus "Wizard of Gore" remake of the 1970 [classic by H.G. Lewis](#) -- is screening at the L.A. Film Festival. You can catch it this Thursday, in fact. The film features horror heavyweights Glover ("[Friday the 13th: The Final Chapter](#)"), Brad Dourif ("[Child's Play](#)") and Jeffrey Combs ("[Re-Animator](#)"), along with "[Hostel Part II](#)" star Bijou Phillips.

Esplatter: How did "The Wizard of Gore" come into being?

We've been looking at doing a bunch of HG Lewis remakes. It took a year to negotiate the deal on Wizard of Gore. Dan,

who is the producer who had been with me on "Attic Expeditions," just stayed on it. After that year, we tried to raise money to do a bunch of them. We bought rights to do a couple of them.

It became harder to focus on several movies that were super low budget. We almost made "Wizard of Gore" at Universal with a company. We pulled out at the last minute. When you have to accommodate the money on every decision, the chances of you making a good movie is not that good. It took another year or so to raise the money again.

Esplatter: Do you expect to do any more HG Lewis remakes?

We have rights of first refusal on a couple of them. I would love to, but the thing is this. If you have a special take on a movie its worth it.

Esplatter: Have you spoken to HG Lewis about your remake?

I talked to Herschel last week. I really emphasized to him and he got this -- it was a heartwarming conversation -- I said to him: People get mad about remakes, but if you think of this as a cover, its your spin on someone elses genius. Its not saying the song is crappy and Im going to fix it. People do that with theater all the time. Its a cover of "Wizard of Gore." Its a different movie, but the same movie. "Wizard" has the beats and the characters of the original movie in a lot of ways. But its a reimagining of how you would approach that material.

Esplatter: Can you tell me about the other HG Lewis films you're going to remake?

If you dont mind Id rather keep it close to my vest.





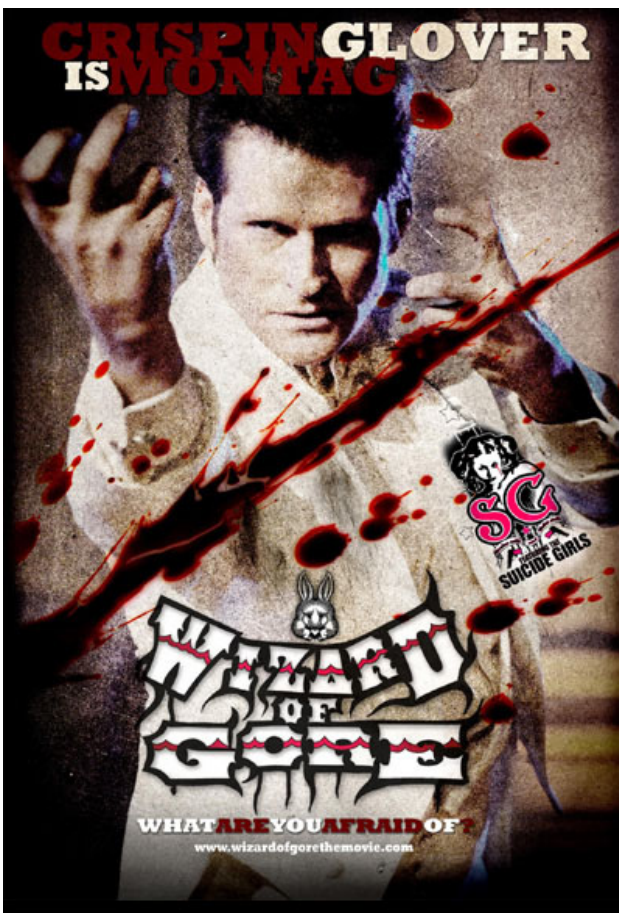
Esplatter: HG Lewis' films are classic because there are so unintentionally campy. But so many horror films today try to be funny are intentionally campy. How do you approach that issue as a filmmaker?

I can only speak to the movies I find funny and delightful and even campy. They never seem to approach the material with looking to crack up at how silly they are being. I think the reason John Waters movies are great is because nobody in them is playing it like they're not taking it as seriously as Shakespeare. My approach to "Wizard" was not to make a campy movie at all but to take completely seriously.

Crispin Glover in a white tux cutting suicide girls open and sniffing their intestines -- that's over the top. But when I'm shooting the movie, you don't say this is funny and ridiculous. You treat it with absolute seriousness. That's how they seem to find success.

Esplatter: Where is it screening?

It got picked up for foreign [distribution]. It got picked up [before] and screened at Cannes. The premiere will be the 22nd at the Los Angeles film festival [Note: It also screens at the L.A. Film Festival Thursday, June 28 at 10 p.m., Landmark Theaters, 10850 W. Pico Blvd.]. Above all else, it's a horror movie. But it is truly set in a post-punk LA world. We call it splatter noir, in a not self-conscious way. The world that LA occupies now and the time we live in is very appropriate for a noir movie. The world Montag lives in, where he does underground magic shows where girls get cut up, is perfect for the downtown post-punk scene. It would be cool to start the movie where it takes place.



Esplatter: How long have you wanted to make this film?

I've wanted to make it since I was 12. When I was 11 was when you would still rent a VHS or Betamax stack. You'd have a birthday party and have a class come over and watch movies. The summer we got our first VCR, a neighborhood video store came in. I think some of the first movies that showed up in the horror section were Lewis films.

Esplatter: So how did the Suicide Girls get involved in the production?

I'd been a member. I joined because I was Googling myself and I found SuicideGirls. [One member] said "Attic Expeditions" was one of her favorite movies. I realized what a great fit this would be. I talked to friends involved in the site. You can't just go in there and say you want to make a movie with the Suicide Girls. They're really protective of their brand. It was a slow and not unpleasant courting process where I got permission to cast through the site for the movie. When the movie comes out theatrically, the fact that the Suicide Girls has a contingent in every city, that's such a nice support base for the movie. I

think the members of the site will be happy with the movie

After the film festival, what's the next step?

We're looking for a distributor. If we're viewed as a success and people are rowdy and like the movie, that will go a long way to getting us a good release. It's a different film. There's a lot of press right now surrounding pornographic gore aesthetic. I've always been a big proponent of tits and blood. But "Wizard of Gore" has more than a little bit of what I like in movies: complicated narrative and weird characters. It's not a straightforward hunt and huntee kind of film.

Esplatter: Does it seem to you that films are more politically correct today that you can't make horror films the way they were made in the 1980s? Even "Grindhouse" was pretty tame compared to the films it was spoofing.

Try to make a rape and revenge movie in this political atmosphere. Those were very heavy ideas that those films carried. I'm not saying it's right and wrong. There's a certain level of censorship that filmmakers are working under now. There's no way to work around it. There's no Corman financing those movies.

Esplatter: Does "Wizard of Gore" buck the trend?

I like to think so. There's the things that make movies icky are much darker than simply physical violence. It's all about context. I think the context "Wizard of Gore" plays in is much more disturbing than what I've seen in a long time.

Esplatter: Have you seen Crispin Glover's "What Is It"?

I saw "What Is It?" five months ago. He's playing the same weekend we're playing. He's amazing. He's Crispin Glover. He's everything you'd expect and hope him to be, albeit not insane. He's an incredibly charismatic actor. He's a quiet guy when he's not acting. He's a very serious guy. He'd rehearse over and over and over. He'd like to give me subtle variations. You really appreciate that as a director and editor.

Esplatter: Did he see the original "Wizard of Gore"?

He didn't see it until we came to him. He really enjoyed things in the original film. He has talked about how the influence of "Wizard of Gore" could be seen in Cronenberg's films, particularly "Videodrome." He liked a scene from the end of the movie. He wanted to bring it into the movie. We shot a version of that scene. It was only their second scene together with Bijou.

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September 29, 2006 -- The trailer to the remake of H.G. Lewis' "Wizard of Gore" is now up. The [original "Wizard of Gore"](#) hit screens in 1970 and remains a camp classic. The new version stars Crispin Glover (previously of the ["Willard" remake](#)) and Jeffrey Combs of ["Re-Animator"](#) fame. It was directed by Jeremy Kasten, who made ["The Attic Expeditions"](#) a few years back. ESplatter took some flack for panning that movie. Click [here](#) for the trailer.