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When out filmmaker Joe Castro (TERROR TOONS) invited me to the set of THE SUMMER OF MASSACRE, I had no idea I'd eventually be working on, and appearing in, a slasher film so violent it would earn a place in the GUINNESS BOOK OF WORLD RECORDS.

DAY ONE

I arrive at Castro's small home in the San Fernando Valley at 4:30 PM to find it packed with cast, crew, equipment, and two very friendly dogs. Filming has already begun on a scene with Castro regular Jerry Angelo (JT Seaton's NIGHTSHADOWS) that takes place in a restaurant. Furniture has been moved aside to create a restaurant location in the corner of the dining room. With the lighting placed just right, the rest of the house falls into darkness, isolating the table. But will this really play as a restaurant? (I have my doubts, but when I see the finished product, Castro has used CG FX to a startling degree, including completely erasing his home and replacing it with an upscale restaurant.)

Castro is pacing; tense, but not angry. "Why is this taking so long? We should be done with the dialogue. We've been here over an hour!"

What's taking so long is the sound. Castro's home is in the flight path for one of the small commuter airports that litter the valley. Every ten minutes a plane flies overhead, ruining another take. Finally, almost an hour later, the scene is complete.

While the crew is holding for sound between takes, Castro gets the call that every low-budget filmmaker dreads: an actress is backing out at, literally, the last minute. Her scene is next, but she's just now telling her director/producer that she's too sick to make it to set. Not one to dwell on one of many problems this production will face, Castro gets off the phone and asks everyone in the room, "Does anyone know an actress in her forties that's available right now? She has to be okay with a really bloody death scene…"

I get on my iPhone and text message every actress I know who fits that description. Finally, my friend Tchia Casselle responds with an enthusiastic "Yes!" There's no time to audition, so I show Castro her photo on my phone. He approves and Tchia is on her way over.

While we wait for Tchia to arrive, Castro begins the makeup FX on the villain of this segment, the Boogieman played by wrestler Scott Barrows. Barrows is a giant of a man, who looks even more enormous in Castro's very crowded house. In Castro's FX shop (aka his garage), Barrows endures layer after layer of tape, rubber bands, what I assume is latex, and makeup. Castro and his assistant work incredibly fast, with the makeup completed in just twenty minutes.

Tchia arrives, and after a quick "Hello and thank you!" she's put in the makeup chair. Bloody is right—Tchia's face is immediately covered in torn flesh and blood. As Castro applies the makeup she tries to study the script, a task made more difficult by the gouged-out eye appliance that obstructs her vision.

It's now 8:30 p.m. and Tchia's death at the hands of Barrow begins. This massive monster has his hands wrapped around Tchia's head, jerking her back and forth in the hallway of Castro's house. Someone holds the script off camera so Tchia can cheat on lines she doesn't have memorized. As the scene gets progressively bloodier, Castro pours liquid into Tchia's mouth so she can vomit up blood. Take after take of blood vomiting, which is so disgusting the crew is gagging. I start to wonder just what I've gotten my friend into.

We're now at the point in the night were everyone, fueled by endless diet Cokes and cups of coffee, needs to use the restroom. Unfortunately, there's only one bathroom in this house, and it's right off the hallway where Barrows is crushing my friend's skull. In between takes the crew lines up to pee. Steven Escobar (executive producer, director of photography, and Castro's partner) leans over to me and says, "I thought one bathroom would be okay, but I didn't know my house would become a studio when I bought it…"

At midnight, the deed is finally done. Tchia jumps in the shower fully clothed in a futile attempt to get the blood off not only her face and out of her hair, but out of her wardrobe (which she supplied). The crew starts loading the equipment into several cars in preparation for a company move to a rooftop location in Hollywood. I say my goodbyes and head out, but Castro and the rest of the production will be out until 3 a.m. shooting another death scene. No permits, of course.

As I head out to my car, Castro tells me, "I'm going to use you in the film tomorrow. I have a really great death scene for you!"

TO BE CONTINUED