Low-budget goremeisters may come and low-budget goremeisters may go, but Herschell Gordon Lewis endures. The man credited with inventing the splatter film is back in bloody business with this week’s DVD release (via Media Blasters on its Shriek Show label; see details here) of THE UH-OH! SHOW, his first feature as director since BLOOD FEAST 2: ALL U CAN EAT nearly a decade ago. Helping him do it were a pair of fellow Floridians with a similar penchant for entrail-laden entertainment: producers Andy Lalino and Andrew Allan of The Film Ranch.

The duo had previously churned out the award-winning short FILTHY and the grisly mad-science feature BRAINJACKED when they became involved with the Lewis project then titled GRIM FAIRY TALES. The collaboration was a dream come true for the two lifelong fans of the director. “I was introduced to the cinema of H.G. Lewis as an impressionable teenager, in the pages of then-fledgling FANGORIA magazine,” Lalino recalls. “I was making a gradual transition from Saturday-matinee creature features to drive-in/exploitation fare, and there was no filmmaker at the time more notorious to the curiosity-seeker than Lewis! Titles like BLOOD FEAST and THE GRUESOME TWOSOME, and the graphic stills accompanying the articles, forewarned that these movies were not for shivering cowards, and to be experienced only by the bravest of souls—at the risk of personal sanity. It was a rite of passage; a brazen dare; a challenge a young cinephile could take to graduate into manhood.”

The then-burgeoning VHS boom made Lewis’ films easily available, allowing them to feast on what Lalino describes as “a nonstop barrage of gory effects that often topped themselves scene after scene. Mix that with a cast of colorful, theatrical villains, and what you have is akin to a crude, bloodsoaked league of supervillains *à la* the ’60s BATMAN TV series.” Lalino later met Lewis at a Florida horror convention, and says, “I recall being surprised that he was so generous with his conversational time, but since then I’ve come to discover just how appreciative he is of his fans. It was at that convention that we became friends, and shared a bond as filmmakers. Andrew and I were poised to produce another feature—little did we know it would be for a horror legend like Lewis!”

THE UH-OH! SHOW—the first of Lewis’ fright flicks on which he’s also the credited screenwriter since 1965’s COLOR ME BLOOD RED—takes place on the set of an over-the-top game show where contestants literally play for their lives. Get an answer right, and you’re rewarded with riches, but get it wrong, and you face the “Wheel of Misfortune,” a spin of which determines what form of dismemberment you suffer. “A question for horror fans: Are you looking for H.G. Lewis characters worthy of being mentioned in the same breath as Fuad Ramses, Montag the Magnificent and Adam Sorg?” Lalino asks. “THE UH-OH! SHOW delivers by introducing a new assortment of scary and sexy HGL characters, including gore-geous reporter Jill Burton [Nevada Caldwell], crazed show host Jackie [THE LOST BOYS’ Brooke McCarter], the hulking Radial Saw Rex [Broward Holsey], the outrageous Fred Finagler [B-movie regular Joel D. Wynkoop], models Champagne [BRAINJACKED’s Krista Grotte] and Coco [Lauren Schmier] and many more.

“There are also two cameo appearances horror fans will dig: Mike Christopher, the “Hare Krishna zombie” from Romero’s DAWN OF THE DEAD, as a hip ticket scalper, and Troma’s incomparable Lloyd Kaufman as a foul-mouthed pimp,” Lalino continues. “Kaufman is a personal friend of Lewis’ and was tremendously excited to be on the set. It’s my opinion that Kaufman doesn’t get enough credit as an improvisational comedic actor—he’s so hilarious and witty, and so good in his role. As a special treat for the fans, Herschell is also the movie’s narrator; in test screenings, we found to our surprise that his scenes were among the audiences’ favorites.”

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