

PENNY BLOOD

HORROR & CULT ENTERTAINMENT



Eating Pie at the Devil's Dinette

Producer/ Director Bill Zebub speaks on *Night of the Pumpkin*

By Rob Hauschild

While his name might evoke some horrifying thrift store black metal album painting of the Prince of Darkness perched atop a throne of fire, wickedly poking the asses of the damned...in reality, the eclectic, prolific, outsider filmmaker Bill Zebub (with well over 20 features and documentaries in release

to date) is much more concerned with comedy. That is, the comedy of errors and the Hades-worthy torture we prick each other with here on earth every day. Just imagine if Brother Theodore and John Waters conspired to film a death metal nudie remake of a Hal Hartley film, scripted by Jerry Lewis – and you are getting warmer to exactly where the heart of Bill Zebub cinema rests.

Zebub's movies may be about the humor that's in the hell of other people, but are also populated with gorgeous women who take off their clothes as a result of it, and who more often than not prove smarter and stronger than their on-screen male counterparts.

And that's where his latest, **Night of the Pumpkin** (2010), fits right in. What if a woman could survive a horror movie, not because she kicks ass, fires a gun or wields a machete ... but because of her unique-to-womanhood strength and perspective? When **Night of the Pumpkin** is released in April on DVD worldwide, that 'What If' will be answered. But for now, we want to know what inspired Bill Zebub to come creeping into horror territory, and of course, we want to annoy him a little as well.

PB: What is scarier, Night of the Pumpkin or Death Metal?

BZ: Scary death metal.

PB: And why is a killer pumpkin man scary?

BZ: I don't know if he is scary, but the fat slob who plays him has scared girls in real life.

PB: Do you fear legal action from the makers of the Pumpkinhead movies, even though your monster has an actual pumpkin head?

BZ: Lawsuits are the best publicity. But I have never seen the movies you named. It would be hard to steal material from something I never saw.

PB: Then what or who has inspired you to do a basic, maybe even 'retro' styled horror movie?

BZ: I wouldn't call it basic. There are a lot of layers. One night I was thinking about the qualities a strong female lead would have. Many movies that have strong female characters actually make the women strong by giving them masculine traits. A woman who fires a machine gun, who fights like Bruce Lee, or who storms the grounds in an arrogant swagger is just a guy in a girl's body. Why has no one ever made a woman triumph using feminine traits? That is what began my wanderings.

PB: But is there a horror movie that influenced Night of the Pumpkin.

BZ: No movie influenced Night of the Pumpkin. It really just started out when I was at an art store when they were pushing the Halloween theme. I looked at a cartoon of a Jack-o-lantern while I was waiting at the register. I wondered if I should attempt to make a mask like that. I just couldn't shake the thought. It would be so much fun to work on something like that. That was really what started it all. Stories then started popping into my head, and before long I had written quite a lot of notes. Those notes formed into the script.

PB: If your pumpkin monsters' head is already carved, where did his brains go?

BZ: Plants don't have brains, and the monster's head isn't carved. The monster in the movie is a sort of soldier ant. He attacks the enemies of his species. Certain people have been

marked when they destroyed the immature pumpkin creatures. They are in a lot of trouble.

PB: Well, how did you make the pumpkin monster head... but tell us only if you promise not to bore us with a how-to lesson?

BZ: "I did not ask thee from my clay to promote me." That is what the creature said to me. It started as clay, lovingly sculpted by me, and then I spent some money at smooth-on.com for mold-making materials and silicone. The actual mask is heavier than a motorcycle helmet and probably offers more protection. It will last forever. The whole process was a huge amount of fun.

PB: What were the reactions of the other actors when faced with the pumpkin monster head.

BZ: I was complimented. People liked the mask. I altered the color of it on screen – I diminished the intensity of the color – something that I regret now. I tried to give only the barest amount of screen time to the pumpkin creature because I wanted to focus on the actresses. To me, the horror of the story is really the group dynamics. Beliefs, ignorance, and confidence can be scary.

PB: Who was your Kane Hodder – the man behind the pumpkin monster?

BZ: I don't know who Kane is, but the tubby and slothful person who played the pumpkin creature was chosen because the plants mimic men – and the most common form of man in America is short and overweight. This also fit into my experiment of doing everything opposite of a slasher kind of flick. I didn't want the villain to be tall and muscular.

PB: Why should horror fans buy,

rent, or download your movie, aside from the hot naked chicks?

BZ: I don't actually think that horror fans should do any of those things. That is, if they expect to see a horror movie. Of course, there are horror fans who will probably enjoy the movie, but in the same way that horror fans might enjoy a comedy. I've broken too many rules for it to be marketed as a horror flick. It's a low budget, flawed, experimental movie.

PB: Then can we expect the type of humor found in your other movies? Even the name of the movie hints this, because the word pumpkin is silly.

BZ: I wanted to call the movie "Pumpkin, Pumpkin, the Peter-Eater" but many people thought that it was a porn movie about a go-go dancer named "Pumpkin". I didn't write this movie to be a joke, but it's got some humor in it. I know that, right from the start, getting this movie to be seen will be an uphill battle. Who really wants to see a pumpkin monster? I wrote the script without any thoughts about whether people will buy the movie or not. I don't care. I wanted to write this story, and it was a pleasure to do it.

PB: Are outright horror movies a new direction for you?

BZ: I've never made an outright horror movie. I suppose I could try that one day.

PB: Planning a sequel as most horror filmmakers do?

BZ: No. The story is all there in one movie, with a lot of stuff left for individual interpretation. Aren't sequels usually reserved for movies that sell a ton? This is not that kind of movie, ha ha.

PB: But I did hear that you re-titled

this movie 'Night of the Pimpkin' for urban markets.

BZ: Yes, and there will also be a version called "Knight of the Pumpkin" that is to be sold at Renaissance Faires.

PB: Forget about horror, readers really want to know: What is the best brand of pumpkin pie on the market today?

BZ: Entenmann's is really the only brand that I eat. Some people know about my love of pumpkin pies and they buy me other brands, or they attempt to make a homemade version, but I usually refuse. I eat a huge amount of Entenmann's when the pies are in season, and it's hard enough not to turn into a fat pig. If I ate every pumpkin pie I came across, then I would be as fat as the guy who played the pumpkin creature in my movie.

PB: We will end this interview this in reverse - here is where you can say anything you want and I will write a question to fit your answer.

BZ: Yes, I am even more handsome in real life. The movies just give the illusion that my forehead is that big.

PB: I'm not writing a question to that crap.

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