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**EDGY FILM.** Director Shinichiro Ueda, who shot to stardom with a zombie movie featuring a delightfully long single shot, has for his latest project turned to a video tool that's become an everyday part of this pandemic era: the Zoom call. Pictured is Harumi Shuhama, an actress performing in a scene from Ueda's new film, *One Cut of the Dead Mission: Remote*. (Photo courtesy of @One Cut of the Dead Mission: Remote via AP)

## Japanese director known for single shots releases Zoom film

By Yuri Kageyama  
The Associated Press

**T**OKYO — The Japanese director who shot to stardom with a zombie movie featuring a delightfully long single shot has for his latest project turned to a video tool that's become an everyday part of this pandemic era: the Zoom call.

Shinichiro Ueda's new 26-minute film was shot remotely — no one had to meet in person — and features footage shot by the actors themselves on their smartphones as well as recordings of meetings on the now ubiquitous video calling app Zoom.

A comedic horror film centered around teleworking, *One Cut of the Dead Mission: Remote* was released earlier this year and shared for free on YouTube. It features the same characters from his award-winning 2017 film *One Cut of the Dead*, which has one shot that was 37-minutes long.

"All of Japan, the entire world, is feeling a bit stressed out over the fears about the coronavirus, and so I just had a simple wish to cheer people up a bit through light-hearted entertainment," Ueda, 36, told The Associated Press in a recent interview that fittingly took place by Zoom.

"Watching entertainment has saved me, helped me cope often when I was depressed. I sensed a mission of sorts that I have to make this work now," Ueda said.

The backdrop for *One Cut of the Dead Mission: Remote* is the hopelessness artists, performers, musicians, and filmmakers are feeling these days, when social-distancing restrictions make it extremely hard to pursue their usual work and livelihood. It's something Ueda said he was feeling himself.

The plot centers around a cast and crew shooting a short movie about a mystery intruder who attacks by tickling victims so they can't stop laughing.

What results is a defiantly hilarious concoction of unsteady selfies, obvious edits, and formulaic storytelling.

Yet the work communicates a powerful, moving message about creative people coming together, despite obstacles, and their unwavering devotion to filmmaking.

One sequence and the credit roll feature some of the more than 300 people from around the world who sent in video clips of their smiling and dancing, responding to a social-media request.

Ueda's style incorporates slapstick comedy and focuses on visual, rather than

explanatory verbal storytelling, an approach relatively rare in contemporary Japanese film.

"I grew up on Hollywood films. I've watched more American movies than Japanese movies. The works I watched were all made on a global standard, not something just understood in Japan. That helped me develop the knack for pursuing works enjoyed by everyone in the world, works that deal with universal themes and primordial desires," he said.

Ueda, wearing a *Citizen Kane* t-shirt for the interview, said his influences include works by Billy Wilder, Quentin Tarantino, Steven Spielberg, Martin Scorsese, Wes Anderson, and Sidney Lumet.

In addition to directing, Ueda also writes the screenplays for his films and edits them himself. He frequently works on a shoestring budget.

His earlier *One Cut of the Dead* film had a budget of 3 million yen (\$28,000), but has won awards in the U.S., Europe, and Japan. The Japanese title of that film can be translated as "Keep that camera rolling," which is exactly what Ueda did for 37 minutes, or nearly half of the film.

Cannes award-winner Koji Fukada praised that earlier work as "a film that passes by in a flash of mesmerized joy over pieces of a puzzle that fit utterly perfectly." *Variety* said the film "captures all the craziness and exhilaration of movie-making on a minuscule budget."

Ueda said he's pretty sure a long uncut sequence will be a staple of his filmmaking. "All the techniques — the filming, lighting, recording — must continue without stopping. The actors must keep acting without stopping. What's being demanded is enormous. But that difficulty is what makes it fantastic. In a sense, everyone has to come together, to get that one shot," he said.

"All the wonders, meaning, and legacy of filmmaking are packed in that single take."

Ueda has been making films since he was a teen running around with a handheld video camera. He said he's found the key to success is to just keep making films. Lots of them.

"It's only after 200 or 300 bad films you will have that one great film," he said.

"I believe that what counts, beyond anything else, is that you just keep making films. Just keep making mistakes."



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### POISON WARNING

### DO NOT USE METHANOL-BASED HAND SANITIZERS

Signs and symptoms of methanol poisoning include: headache, blurred vision or blindness, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, loss of coordination, and decreased alertness. Check the FDA List for contaminated products: [bit.ly/FDADoNotUse](http://bit.ly/FDADoNotUse)

#### Hand sanitizer safety reminders:

- > Use it as directed, to clean hands. Do not swallow hand sanitizer.
- > Store it up, away, and out of sight from children. Supervise children while they use it.

Questions? Poison Control can help.



Fast. Free. Expert. 24/7,  
confidential help.

If you suspect a poisoning, don't take a chance.  
Call 1-800-222-1222.

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This year gathering for meals with people outside your immediate household is not recommended. If someone who doesn't live with you attends, the following tips are provided to keep your family safe during holiday mealtimes.

- Enjoy a meal with members of your immediate household
- Instead of family or buffet style dining, try preparing individual food plates so there's no sharing of utensils
- While gathering with people from outside your household, always wear your face covering
- Only remove your face covering to eat
- Be sure everyone washes their hands thoroughly and dries them with paper towels before and after eating
- Wash your hands thoroughly and dry them with a paper towel after sneezing and blowing your nose



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Display advertising space reservations for  
our special *Year of the Ox* issue are due  
Monday, January 18 at 5:00pm.

The *Asian Reporter's* Lunar New Year  
special issue will be published on  
Monday, February 1, 2021.