

BY AUDREY WARD

UK sales agent AV Pictures has closed deals with Square One in Germany and Transmission in Australia on gore-fest *Lesbian Vampire Killers*.

The film features UK comedy stars James Corden and Mathew Horne from the BAFTA award-winning *Gavin And Stacey* TV series.

Lesbian Vampire Killers premiered at the EFM yesterday and co-producer Momentum Pictures is planning a major release in the UK on March 20.

In addition, the film has been sold to the Middle East (Eagle), Poland (Vision), Singapore (Shaws) and Turkey (Horizon).

"Ever since we launched the title, distributors have been following the project with excited curiosity. We are thrilled to have once again given the opportunity to such a young and talented director," said Vic Bateman, managing director of AV Pictures.

BBC FILMS, HANWAY GROOM TEEN SPIES WITH CHERUB

BY AUDREY WARD

BBC Films is to tap into the teen market with an adaptation of the first book of Robert Muchamore's teen spy series.

Cherub: The Recruit, which is being introduced to buyers here by HanWay Films, marks the start of what BBC Films hopes will be a film franchise aimed at 14 to 16-year-olds.

Ronan Bennett wrote the script, Christopher Smith (*Triangle, Creep*) is directing and Sarah Radcliffe is producing. The story fol-

lows Cherub, a top-secret branch of the British Secret Intelligence Service, which recruits orphans and trains them as intelligence officers. Shooting will start this summer.

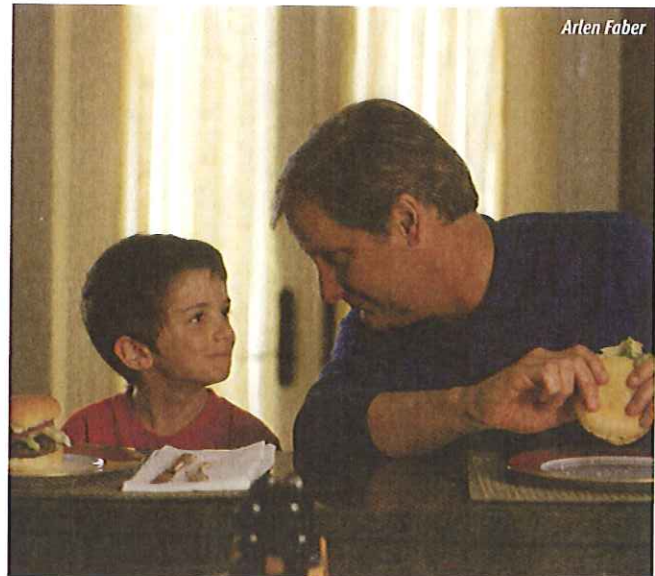
BBC Films executive producer Jamie Laurenson said: "It's about reaching an audience we could always do with hitting more."

BBC Films is also preparing *The Buried*, a ghost story to be directed by James Watkins (*Eden Lake*) and the cast is yet to be decided. "Projects like *Cherub* or *The Buried* are quite fun to do and they're

expanding what we're known for. We're known for our talent, for the literary or cultural projects, and we're trying to develop the genre and comedy films alongside," Laurenson said.

Other upcoming BBC Films productions include Debbie Isitt's *Nativity* (sold here by Protagonist), Stephen Poliakoff's *1939* (The Works), Tom Hooper's *The Damned United* (Sony has worldwide rights), Jane Campion's *Bright Star* (Pathé International) and Jon Amiel's *Creation* (HanWay).

Magnolia Pictures has picked up US rights to John Hindman's romantic comedy *Arlen Faber*, starring Jeff Daniels and Lauren Graham, following its world premiere at Sundance last month. Elle Driver is handling international sales here. Magnolia plans a summer release. Senior vice-president Tom Quinn and head of business affairs Jason Janego negotiated the deal with ICM, CAA and Jana Edelbaum from iDeal Partners. ICM represents both Graham and Daniels. Daniels plays a reclusive author of spiritual books who falls in love with his chiropractor. Lou Taylor Pucci, Olivia Thirlby, Kat Dennings and Nora Dunn round out the cast.



UK'S HUDSON LAUNCHES COLOGNE-BASED PRODUCTION OUTFIT

BY MARTIN BLANEY

UK-born, Cologne-based director Steve Hudson has launched his own production company, Gringo Films, with producer Sonja Ewers, to develop and produce international features.

They are in Berlin to meet potential partners to board their first two feature projects, which

are at the script development stage.

The first, *Zen In The Art Of Archery*, based on the international bestseller by German philosopher Eugen Herrigel, is being developed with Japanese co-producer Kiyoshi Mizokami's company Twin-M, which originally approached Gringo Films

with the idea for the project.

"We optioned the book in German and it is intended to have a Japanese director to direct. There could be some shooting and post-production work done in Germany," Hudson told *Screen*. Script funding has been granted by the German Federal Film Board (FFA).

In addition, Gringo Films is working with the former MTV presenter Steve Blame on *Take The Blame* about the rise, fall and wild excesses of the 1980s London nightclub scene. The screenplay is being co-written by Blame with Hudson and has received backing from Filmstiftung NRW.

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