



NEVER SLEEP AGAIN – THE ELM STREET LEG-

ACY – Truth be told the Nightmare on Elm Street series is no different than any of the others. The original is a classic but the sequels are usually horrible (save for a fluke or two). So how does that bode for a 4 hour (!) documentary on the entire series (up through **FREDDY VERSUS JASON**)? Actually very well thank you very much!

Narrated by Heather Lagencamp this intriguing and fascinating tour through the creation of Freddy Krueger and his many exploits is never dull. With the participation of damn near everyone involved with each production (save for the expected no-shows like Johnny Depp and Patricia Arquette) the viewer gets to hear some sordid and candid details. Perhaps the most interesting aspects involved the screenwriters brought in to continue Freddy's tour of duty in nightmare land. Writer David Chaskin sure comes off like a clueless idiot when discussing how he dreamt up the incredibly lame part 2. I also find it odd that nobody involved with the making of that picture realized how strong the homo-erotic content was. Really?

From here the subsequent sequels are discussed with emphasis on the effects. Starting with part 3 it became obvious that FX were the new stars of the series as more and more effects teams were brought in to do groundbreaking work (sacrificing everything else like story, characters, acting, etc.). My only question about part 3 is why does no one talk about Craig Wassan? His name isn't even mentioned despite the fact that he is seen in several clips and stills. Odd.

Renny Harlin, Stephen Hopkins and Rachel Taladay are all very candid about their roles as directors even though the films have little-to-no redeeming value. Wes Craven sure has some great quotes about the original and New Nightmare which are clearly the best of the bunch. When you hear him talk you can't believe someone so smart could make movies so dumb like **SHOCKER** and **DEADLY FRIEND** for example!

To delve any deeper here would be pointless as time and space are limited. Do yourself a favor and check it out. Even if you don't care for the movies that much like I do keep in mind the stories behind each production are usually way more entertaining than the films themselves. Kudos to everyone involved with this as it is an example of how passion and love for something can transcend the screen and capture the viewer's imagination like nothing else. Easily *the* standout documentary on any film series my eyeballs have witnessed.

BROTHER THEODORE: TO MY GREAT CHAGRIN

I am guessing that not too many folks know about or are familiar with Brother Theodore. Heck if I hadn't read an interview with him conducted by former Fangoria editor Bob Martin I might be clueless as well. Yet he strikes an imposing figure, but more importantly his voice is priceless. However after coming to America from Germany (where he survived Dachau...only his parent's weren't so lucky) he struggled to find his way. He eventually made a living as a humorist/monologist but one gets the impression he could have amounted to much more. Those are some of the themes touched upon in this wonderful documentary that eschews standard

formula and opts for a different touch. Here the only on-screen presence is Theodore himself. All of the interviewees are only heard...never seen. This may irritate some since the viewer has no way to know who is speaking unless they recognize the voice.

Some may be surprised to find out that Dick Cavett, Woody Allen and Eric Bogosian are some of Theodore's biggest admirers. Cult fans should recognize the voice of Joe Dante who cast him in **The Burbs** which is probably the most recognition Theodore ever received here in America. Others may recognize him as the narrator to the American trailers for **House by the Cemetery** and **Mad Doctor of Blood Island**. Yet it is his live performances... whether on stage in New York or on television shows like David Letterman for which he will be known for. Thankfully plenty of clips are provided that show Theodore in his element. While he is generally known as a comedian, it seems his brand of black humor could really be seen as deadly serious yet we will never know exactly how to take him...and thus is part of his charm.

One other touch I should mention is the fact that Theodore was alive at the onset of this documentary but his health was in decline (he was in his 90's) so while he can be heard we see a puppet version of him liven up the screen. Another odd choice to be sure but again when one considers the subject it makes perfect sense. Sadly this feature wasn't commercially available. Instead interested parties can get it straight from the director himself (Jeff Sumarel) via Darryl Mayeski's *Screen Magazine* website. It is one documentary you aren't likely to forget anytime soon and comes highly recommended to those willing to take the plunge.



APPREHENSIVE FILMS

ALL NIGHT HALLOWEEN PARTY

—The fine folks at Apprehensive films have put out a Halloween party DVD which combines vintage cartoons along with movie trailers. The theme is of course on the spooky side so some of the cartoons focus on a spider luring flies to his "hotel" and another one about a pin cushion man looking to pop balloon people? To be fair this one really didn't have the Halloween flavor but it is the first one and I'm sure most would just ignore it or fast forward to the next one. The finest animation is last

with a vintage Max Fleisher short featuring skeletons of all sorts and a definite sense of the macabre. I believe this might be featured in Joe Dante's segment of the *Twilight Zone* movie but I could be wrong.

A nice surprise is the selection of trailers. They are all rather oddball titles which is great since they aren't the same 'ol ones you might expect to see...**Konga**, **Reptilicus**, **Son of Blob** and **It Conquered The World/She Creature** double feature just to name a few. The trailer for **House on Haunted Hill** looks to be either edited or just missing frames otherwise everything else is in decent shape considering the age of the materials. Running 65 minutes the length might seem too short but it actually plays perfectly and as an added bonus the feature is in a continuous loop which is perfect for parties and what not. Some extra trailers are on hand and the one for the snake Kung Fu flick (!) **Calamity of Snakes** looks simply amazing! All in all a fine disc that would sit nicely next to *Something Weird Video's Monsters Crash the Pajama Party* DVD.