Written by Tony Timpone
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While actor Jackie Earle Haley assumes the role that made Robert Englund a star in the remake of A NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET, the original Freddy has been globetrotting of late. When he's not hitting the museums and restaurants in Europe with wife Nancy, Englund has been acting in films in Italy (NIGHT OF THE SINNER; see item here) and Spain, where he just shot the topical kids-and-violence thriller I WANT TO BE A SOLDIER, directed by ROJO SANGRE's Christian Molina. Fango got the scoop and a couple of exclusive behind-the-scenes photos.

"I WANT TO BE A SOLDIER is the story of Alex, an 8-year-old boy [Fergus Riordan of Jaume Balagueró's FRAGILE] fascinated with violence on TV, cinema and video games," Molina tells Fango. "A boy, who, finally, will be a victim of that violence he admires."

Alex's morbid obsession with violent entertainment inspires him to conjure up an imaginary friend, the staunch Sgt. John Cluster (actor Ben Temple of [REC], FRAGILE and ROMASANTA). Cluster encourages the boy's bloody viewing habits and antisocial behavior with his parents and classmates, until Alex's concerned teacher suggests counseling for the troubled kid. That's where Englund comes in, playing a child psychologist; Danny Glover, who last visited the genre in SAW, cameos as the principal.

With I WANT TO BE A SOLDIER, the filmmakers wanted to make a statement about the desensitization of young minds and the potential for tragedy. "Co-writer Cuca Canals and I

came up with the idea for I WANT TO BE A SOLDIER while reading a newspaper headline that stated: 'By the time a child turns 12, if parents don't prevent it, he or she will have seen more than 40,000 murders and 200,000 acts of violence on the Internet, TV, cinema and video games,' " Molina says, obviously concerned with these statistics. He insists, based on the evidence, that it is bad for children to watch, say, repeats of THE SOPRANOS or play GRAND THEFT AUTO all night long. But what about fantasy-based horror films? Are they better or worse for impressionable minds? And who is ultimately responsible when a warped psyche snaps?

"I have a profound love for action and horror films," Molina says, "and I'm aware that many of the films to which I refer in my work, and which I so deeply admire, should only be seen by conscious adults who know how to draw the line between fiction and reality. At no instance do I criticize these films in I WANT TO BE A SOLDIER, and at no point do I intend to suggest that these movies are the seeds of evil. I love these films! The seed of this particular evil is the all-too-easy access that children have to this content, for which their parents are mostly, if not solely, to blame. What can a child become if we don't let them grow as they should: watching and doing child things, doing and watching things that their minds are prepared for?"

Despite all the heavy themes in the English-language film, Molina had a lot of fun directing American stars Englund and Glover. "Work with both of them was incredible, wonderful, a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity," he says. "It was a great pleasure to work with one of the greatest horror-movie myths, Robert Englund. And Danny Glover is a very professional actor, with an overwhelming talent." For more on I WANT TO BE A SOLDIER, check out its official website .

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