There is a point in every successful film franchise when the core fan base starts curling its lip a bit. For the immensely lucrative series of Saw shockers, that dip went down last year with the release of director (and former series editor) Kevin Greutert's sixth installment. While all the previous entries owned their opening weekends' box-office charts in their Halloween seasonal premieres, SAW VI slunk to second banana against the punishing viral-marketed power of the low-budget vérité shocker PARANORMAL ACTIVITY. And that's a damn shame, because SAW VI was without a doubt the best entry since the first and—even removed from the confines of the series—played as a first-rate, exceedingly well- directed and dazzlingly violent thriller.

+But Lionsgate and the Twisted Pictures people weren't pleased at being financially snubbed in what they had long claimed as their season to shine. And when it was subsequently announced that Greutert had been signed to direct PARANORMAL ACTIVITY 2—then scheduled to challenge the seventh Saw on October 22—the producers took offense and exercised their contractual ability to bring the director back into their fold—partially against his will—to helm the already-in-preproduction SAW 3D, replacing returning SAW V director David Hackl.

It was all a very tangled web indeed, and Greutert—who had to quickly leave his LA home to fly back to Toronto—wasn't shy about publicly sharing his upset at the maneuver on his blog and in the press. But now, with the impending release of the latest in the ever-evolving horror/ morality tale/torture saga upon us, the director is much calmer about the results. Continuing the exploits of the disciples of long-dead, self-aggrandizing serial killer Jigsaw (Tobin Bell, see page 52) and his wicked, body-wrecking clockwork traps, SAW 3D (now opening Oct. 29) looks to be the apex of everything that came before it. And in three dimensions, what fright fan in his or her right mind could resist?

In fact, when he sits down with Fango to discuss his lean, mean, dimensional shocker, Greutert is, dare we say, rather excited about the picture…

FANGORIA: How are you feeling now? Are you more at ease with the situation?

KEVIN GREUTERT: This has been a hard year, for sure. Probably the hardest since puberty, and my spirit has been kicked around quite a bit. But when it came to making this film, at the end of the day, I didn't want to let the fans down, and I wanted them to feel good about the picture I had the responsibility of making. And I have to say, I've test-screened the film to some of my more objective friends, and it's really, really good. But yeah, it was scary making a movie while being sabotaged by prep time and other factors.

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