With Platinum Dunes’ remake of Wes Craven’s seminal somnambulist shocker A NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET ready to be unleashed, Freddy Fever is at its peak once again. So the time is perfect for NEVER SLEEP AGAIN: THE ELM STREET LEGACY, a lengthy study of the original ELM STREET films from the people who brought you the definitive FRIDAY THE 13TH documentary, HIS NAME WAS JASON.

Having toured the convention circuit, NEVER SLEEP AGAIN is hitting DVD May 4 in a jam-packed two-disc special edition (see details here). FANGORIA tracked down directors Daniel Farrands and Andrew Kasch and writer Thommy Hutson to get the red-and-green striped skinny on their project:

FANGORIA: What are some highlights that this documentary will deliver for NIGHTMARE devotees?

Andrew Kasch, Daniel Farrands, Kelly Jo Minter, Thommy Hutson

THOMMY HUTSON: As Freddy fans ourselves, we have been clamoring for something special on the NIGHTMARE franchise for years, so we worked hard to deliver that. It has become a show that goes deep inside the films and phenomenon, and we ended up with over 100 brand new interviews spanning every film, including each movie’s director, as well as stars such as Robert Englund, John Saxon, Mark Patton, Lisa Wilcox, Danny Hassel, Lisa Zane, Monica Keena, rock legend Alice Cooper and so many more! NEVER SLEEP AGAIN is also loaded with clips, photographs, storyboards, conceptual art, publicity materials, archival documents and behind-the-scenes footage. Looking at what we have accomplished, we hope everyone sees what we set out to do: create the ultimate, definitive NIGHTMARE documentary—one that would make even Freddy Krueger smile.

FANG: How did NEVER SLEEP AGAIN come about?

DANIEL FARRANDS: This was one of those projects where the stars truly aligned. Thommy and Andrew and I first worked together on HIS NAME WAS JASON, and shortly after that, Andrew and I were recruited by Paramount to produce the bonus features for Paramount's FRIDAY THE 13TH Deluxe Edition DVDs. We had an amazing time on those, and it was a time when we all bonded and created something we truly believed in—and had so much fun doing it, we decided to tackle the bonus features on THE HAUNTING IN CONNECTICUT, a film I produced last year. If anything tested our mettle and determination as a team, it was that one—six weeks from inception to delivery of well over three hours of packed documentary featurettes, multiple cast-and-crew commentaries and behind-the-scenes sneak peeks. Luckily, we didn't kill each other—though we absolutely ran afoul of a not-so-happy spirit or two—and decided we'd love to tackle the ultimate horror franchise.

We had already been making initial plans when Thommy came aboard, and we all just bonded again and everything felt right with the universe. We really felt it was our time to tell this story, and to tell it without interference from self-appointed "executives" and just listen to each other as a team—to help each other and jump in and do it with pure kidlike enthusiasm and fun. Getting Heather Langenkamp [pictured left at the original Elm Street house] on board as our narrator and executive producer helped legitimize the project tremendously—then Robert Englund, then Wes Craven?! We felt like we were dreaming, and at times we did have to stop and wonder if we were trapped in an endlessly looping episode of FREDDY'S NIGHTMARES.

We shot a two-minute teaser trailer with Heather last summer that made the rounds on-line and kind of got the horror community mobilized and excited about the show. After that, we reached out to a few more NIGHTMARE alumni, and then a few more, and before long we started receiving calls from other "Elm Streeters" who had heard about what we were doing and just wanted to get in on the fun and stroll down that street with us one more time. And who were we to turn them down? From LA to New York to Texas to Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, to London and even Beijing, China, we have scoured the four corners of the world to bring the ultimate lineup of familiar faces back to Elm Street. When we started the project, we never would have guessed that our final tally of interviewees would be 106! That certainly must be some kind of record, at least in the annals of horror documentaries.

But our real reason for doing this show was that we are all huge Freddy fans. We did it totally on our own, 100 percent independently, yet found that by doing it we were greeted with an outpouring of welcoming, helping hands—[production managers] Annette Ashlie Slomka and Lito Velasco, [associate producers] Bill Philputt and Steve Barton—and support from the horror community that we couldn't have imagined. It's kind of like FIELD OF DREAMS—build it and he will come. Even if in this case, it's a guy with a ratty red-and-green sweater, an old fedora and a wicked set of fingerblades. We love NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET, and we hope that love shows through in the work, and that fans will truly feel like they've gotten a first-hand look right alongside all of us at this groundbreaking horror series.

FANG: How does NEVER SLEEP's content compare to the numerous bonus featurettes on previous DVD releases of the films?

ANDREW KASCH: Normally, when you do a behind-the-scenes segment for a studio, they always come back with notes like, "You can't say this," or, "We can't have that," and the most interesting stories are often kicked to the curb. It's been kind of cathartic for everyone involved, because we've allowed people to let loose and be themselves. This is a 100 percent indie project, and as a result, there's an honesty here that you won't find in most average DVD fluff. You get to hear the very best and worst of how things went down and the lessons people learned along the way. My hope is that aspiring filmmakers can take something away from it.

FANG: Were there people who you really wanted to interview but weren't able to commit to the documentary?

KASCH: Johnny Depp was obviously the holy grail, but the harsh reality is that he's the biggest movie star in the world and we're a couple of indie guys running around with a camera. People like Depp and Patricia Arquette have a wall of publicists, agents and managers around them at all times, so it was hard to break through and even put the bug in their ear. We also tried hard for Peter Jackson and Frank Darabont, but they were busy on respective projects. Can't complain, though—we all wanna see [Darabont's upcoming series] THE WALKING DEAD.

FANG: How did you go about contacting everybody involved in the franchise, and what were their initial reactions?

HUTSON: A lot of phone calls and e-mails to agents, managers, publicists, friends and sometimes even the actors or crewmembers themselves. With so many interviews, it was an incredible undertaking, but as Daniel mentioned, the people on our team were amazing and we found a way to make it happen. The nice thing was that everyone was so supportive, offering not just their time, but anything they had from their adventures on Elm Street. We've gotten amazing photos, footage and stories that are funny, touching and incredibly honest. Listening to all of the people who have made the NIGHTMARE films makes you understand completely how much they cared about what they were doing. For some, the films literally changed their lives! It was great to be able to hear first-hand how wonderful Elm Street was as they looked back.

Also, even the people who could not participate were supportive. On a project like this, every minute counts and some people simply weren't available, but each one made sure to let us know they were wishing us well. It's a good feeling that what we were putting together meant something to so many people involved.

See NEVER SLEEP AGAIN's official website here , and picks up FANGORIA #293, on sale this month, and #294, on sale in May, for our own exclusive interviews with numerous cast members from the NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET franchise.

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