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takes on its life of its own, you can sit back and watch it. I mean, I would be able to turn on the late night chat shows and there'd be Freddy Krueger jokes. He'd show up as almost like a guest character in various famous cartoons. Then he began to show up in rap lyrics (the Fat Boys and Doctor Dre), then heavy metal (like Alice Cooper). It was this amusing thing to see him kind of permeate the culture for a while, and there was a detachment that's kind of fun. It's actually been a kind of lark.

In *Wes Craven's New Nightmare*, several players in the actual success of the films play themselves in a story which brings the terror off the screen and into their daily lives. Robert works on a painting of screaming souls and Heather Langenkamp gets threatening phone calls of the 'one, two, Freddy's coming for you' variety. Still, despite the clever weaving of the actors' stories with those of their characters, it remains a far cry from the surprisingly unscary real thing. For starters, movies these days are far too expensive for the actors to get performance ruining willies in the middle of.

"On a horror movie set it's so intricate, and the marks are so exact, and you're so worried about ruining a shot because it costs so much because of the special effects involved," explains Robert.

"It's also a very jokey set, because it's very ludicrous. If they're shooting me from above my hand for instance, down here [indicates waist high] there might be five guys working little levers and hydraulics so my head can expand, or the souls of my children can crawl out the top of my old Freddy sweater, and I can't move. It's pretty silly. These guys are goosing me and joking between the takes, and we're all kidding around and waiting for lunch so we can all go out for Thai food. So, it gets kind of silly on the sets.

"It's not like you're preparing constantly in some method way to throw down some teenage girl and really deal with the aspects of father rape, abuse, all the subliminal stuff. It's pretty exact and it's pretty jokey and kidding around, because you sort of have to get the jokes out, or you can't be real, and scary and violent.

"There's some guy basting me constantly with KY jelly, which is a favourite lubricant of the queens of the desert, shall we say, in America. So, you can guess what they call me on the set, the big manly crew guys, as I'm standing there bald and veined, and getting basted with that every 10 minutes or so, before somebody says 'action'. I'm sort of like a walking erection. I'm constantly getting teased, and people are bringing their babies for me to hold and kiss so they can get polaroids to stick on their refrigerator with some cheap tourist magnet. I have this sort of strange reality on the sets of these movies and it's not disconcerting at all."

All joking aside, the long hours in makeup, and their hideous results, gave Robert the impetus to play Freddy for the very first time.

"If I'm really honest with you, back during the making of the first one, I needed something to trigger me. I was in my mid 30s, so I used this sort of envy I had then of Johnny Depp and Heather Langenkamp. They were beginning their careers, they were young, they were gor-

geous, they were being pampered and blown dry, powdered and quaffed — and I'm sitting there again, four hours of medical adhesive colostomy bag glue on me, and little pieces of jigsaw puzzled prosthetics, then highlighting and shadowing, and basting me like a turkey. So I could use that kind of envy I had at them — which I could turn into anger very easily after four hours in the makeup chair — I could turn it against their beauty and their youth, which is real close to what Freddy's going through. That was the trick for me back then. Now it's relatively automatic pilot."

With no guarantee of *Wes Craven's New Nightmare* being the last in the series, the question must be asked: why do movie goers keep going back to Elm Street?

"I think it's real simple: a nightmare, a bad dream, is universal. I'm surprised no-one's really exploited it in horror before. Wes just ran with it.

"It's wonderful because you're not in control. We're never in control in our dreams. We're haunted by our nightmares. They're very sexual, dreams are. They also begin very realistically — there's that moment where they mutate into surrealism — but for a while they're quite normal. You're riding the bus to work, and then something strange begins to happen, or you're doing something very banal and random. I think people know they're not in control in a nightmare. That lack of control, when they see it in a film, is very frightening to people. Freddy's also a bit of a mind game, and that's sort of an original concept. Freddy really knows what's going on in your subconscious, and he knows how to exploit that."

Robert makes no secret of his pride in the *Nightmare* films, despite the inevitable negative criticism of violence levelled at them.

"I really believe they're several rungs up the evolutionary ladder from a lot of the crap that's perpetrated on people in the name of the horror genre. I certainly don't consider us a slash-er film. Unfortunately, I wear a glove, as this monster with these knife fingers, and if I were to reach for you right now [which he does, in characteristic Freddy-style], about the only verb you could use to describe that would be I *slashed* at you. So I'm sort of stuck with that moniker, even though that word was always verboten on our sets. I really find our films are incredibly more imaginative, and less pruriently violent.

"If you look back on our films, they became more and more and more involved with humour and with special effects, and Freddy's taunting and teasing and diabolical revenge became much more of a creative mind game than just wanton hatcheting and decapitations you see in so many other things. *Nightmare* will be opening here in June, and I would wager it'll be one of the least violent films playing, comparatively speaking, yet I [have] sort of been anointed and appointed the defacto apologist for violence in the horror industry, because kids became obsessed with this character. I think it has very little to do with violence and gore, and much more to do with an imaginative movie that the teenagers discovered for themselves and celebrated. It's about them and it's about their loss of innocence. I think they celebrate Freddy as a kind of logo for this great cheap thrill they found that they could enjoy in the dark, much like *The Rocky Horror Show*, and far less anything more macabre that parents wanna make it."

Will the sequels continue?

"God, I hope not. I'd sort of put it all to bed after part six. That was supposed to be the last one."

*Nightmare on Elm Street* sequels aside, a script for *Freddy versus Jason* was recently green lighted.

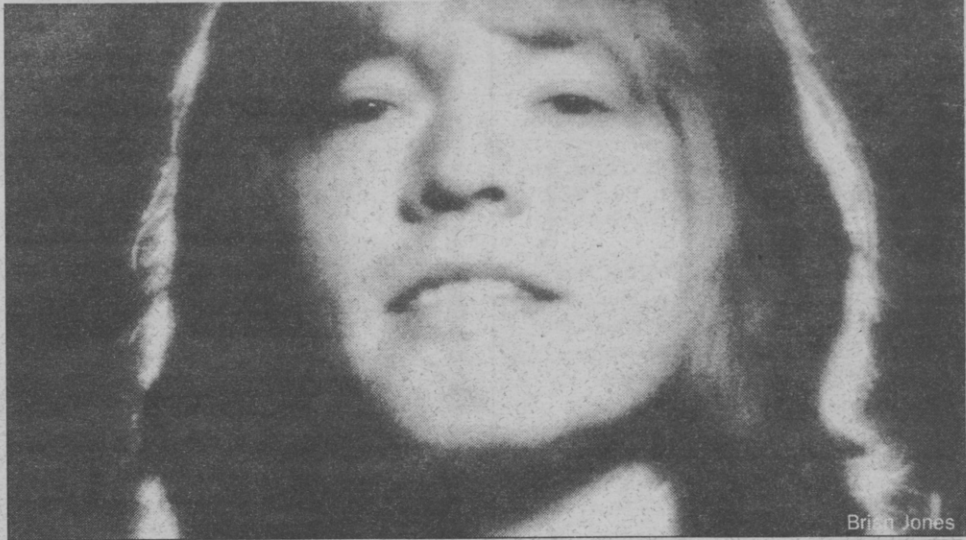
"I hear *Freddy versus Jason* and I have visions of me in a rubber suit, wrestling around with Godzilla on a train set somewhere," says Robert. "It just sounds tacky, like Abbot and Costello meet Freddy Krueger. I have not been asked to do it, nor have I been sent the script yet, so I will reserve my judgement, or my choice to do or not do this film, depending upon what I think of that script and if I'm asked."

Would you care to place your bid for who's going to win that battle?

"Well, you know, I think it has to be Freddy," says Robert, opting for the popular choice. "All Freddy has to do is tunnel his way into one of Jason's dreams, and destroy him that way. I mean *mano a mano*, I'm not really certain who would win, although I would think maybe it would be Freddy, but that could be debatable. Jason has to sleep at some point, and that's when Freddy'll get him. That would be scary because we'd see what Jason's nightmares were. That would really be awful."

BROWNWYN TRUDGEON

## back beat



Brian Jones

### BLACK - AND BLUE

It was on the second night, when I could see the yellows of their eyes, that I felt I'd really experienced the Rolling Stones as a band rather than a phenomenon. At the lip of the stage, their playing eclipsed the spectacular theatrics. You could feel the way the internal dynamics shaped their sound: Keith running his show with relaxed arrogance, Mick running his with manic perfectionism. Ronnie goofing off like something out of English music hall; Charlie of the reliable backbeat, never flashy and pathologically shy.

It really hit home what true originals and eccentrics they are — and how much still remains from their black influences. At the daftest moments I'd hear some other pilfered source, not just Chuck Berry but a jukebox of styles: Duke Ellington's band! (old friends playing loose, with clockwork precision); Little Richard! (entertainment rules: camp it to the max and keep upping the outrage factor); Labelle! (glitter gospel); even Muddy Waters-goes-Philly! ('Miss You' — Chicago blues meets disco).

From these old men who turned rock 'n'roll into a billion dollar industry, you could still feel the excitement of the day Brian Jones walked into their squalid flat with a Chess record under his arm.

On the first album, they kick-started their way into rock 'n' roll history with the opening moment of 'Route 66' — a king-hit of a riff that reeked attitude. But in the early years, the Stones were best at singles (and playing live) rather than albums. Without the songwriting skills of Lennon and McCartney, the early albums now seem padded out by tentative originals and limp R&B covers. Only 12 x 5, lovingly recorded in the Chess Studios in Chicago (Muddy Waters helped carry in their guitars) has any consistency.

It was not till 1968, when Jimmy Miller took over the production duties from the band's original manager, dandy PR king Andrew Oldham, that the Stones hit their stride on albums, with the extraordinary run from *Beggars Banquet* to *Exile on Main Street*.

The mid-60s albums that led up to that peak period have just been re-released by Abkco Records. The timing is in the best "entrepreneurial" spirit of its notorious founder, Allen B Klein (the Stones warned the Beatles not to let him manage them — Lennon took that as a recommendation). A warning, however: the first three of these are the American editions of the albums, with tracks dropped to be added to singles to create a new album of pure product. Also, these CD re-issues first appeared in 1986, when rock archaeology was in its infancy; digital remastering has come a long way since.

*Aftermath* (1966) came out against a back-

drop of *Rubber Soul*. They assert their own style (let's call it rock music) rather than emulate their black R&B heroes, and the songs — all original for the first time — convey a hip, misogynist arrogance of the reigning kings of bohemian London. ('Under My Thumb', 'Stupid Girl'; 'Paint it Black', written in Auckland, has been added — but this is still 10 minutes short of the English version.)

*Between the Buttons* (1967) is the Stones' *Revolver* — the drugs are beginning to show, in the eclectic arrangements and subversive attitudes. With hits (the desperate build of 'Let's Spend the Night Together', the punchy, complex 'Ruby Tuesday') and beat-band pop such as 'Connection' (still covered by Keith solo).

*Flowers* (1967) has lots of great songs, but as an album it's cynical product put out by bean-counters. 'Ruby Tuesday' and 'Let's Spend the Night' re-appear, 'Out of Time' is filched from *Aftermath* (from which 'Lady Jane' reappears), 'Back Street Girl' and 'Ride On Baby' are white R&B gems that were stolen from *Buttons*. Includes a truly awful version of 'My Girl'.

*Their Satanic Majesties Request* (1967). Let's blame the drugs. Awed by *Sgt Pepper*, addled by LSD, the Stones throw out this batch of hallucinogenic doodles that would almost be unlistenable if it wasn't for Nicky Hopkins's piano and (future Zeppelin bassist) John Paul Jones's baroque orchestrations on 'She's a Rainbow' — acid-pop perfection.

*Beggars Banquet* (1968) is the Stones first comeback from the dead (although Brian Jones was alive, if barely). From the fiasco of *Satanic Majesties*, they re-group with a flawless album of dissolute classics which reflect the time ('Street Fighting Man', 'Sympathy for the Devil'), their Englishness ('Salt of the Earth', 'Factory Girl') and their love for acoustic blues. Essential.

*Let it Bleed* (1969). By now the definitive rock pop band, the Beatles all but conquered, they deliver another flawless album. From the epic opener ('Gimme Shelter') to the epic closer ('You Can't Always Get What You Want'), a frightening, exciting farewell to the 60s: the Stones roll their inimitable take on rock, blues and country into the decadent 70s.

*Singles Collection: The London Years* has been re-released in a cheaper triple-pack CD rather than the lavish boxset of 1989. *Banquet* and *Bleed* aside, this is the way to hear the Stones of the 60s: in three-minute bursts, with never a foot wrong. With 'Not Fade Away', 'It's All Over Now', 'Time is on My Side' and 'Little Red Rooster' being only the build-up to the perfect triple punch of 'The Last Time', 'Satisfaction' and 'Get Off My Cloud', this is good buying. And all the rare, rootsy B-sides are just a bonus. (But where's 'Let it Rock', from 'Brown Sugar'? Maybe we'll get that the next time they recycle the Stones catalogue.)

JAMES BOOKER

