

One Two Freddy's Coming For You...

There is a scene in *Wes Craven's New Nightmare* where original *Elm Street* ass kicker Heather Langenkamp (who played Nancy) is surprised during a talkshow interview when her co-star, Robert Englund, is introduced. When a set of knives slash through the wall to make way for his entrance, it is clear he has decided to appear in costume, as Freddy Krueger — the face sucking, waterbed burping, mother decapitating, teenage eating, bastard son of a thousand maniacs.

It was with this in mind that I stood outside the door of Robert Englund's Regent suite. Surely he wouldn't spend four hours in makeup just to scare the shit out of the cluster of foreign journo's he would meet that day, I reasoned. Indeed, he hadn't, and the door was opened by the dude who occasionally appears as a presenter on the Horror Hall of Fame awards.

It was as the pizza faced Freddy Krueger that Robert Englund first found fame in New Zealand, back in 1984. In the States he was already well known as the equally skin afflicted alien Willie, in the TV mini-series *V*, which would not screen in this country until several years later. When Robert first donned the Freddy makeup for Wes Craven's original *A Nightmare on Elm Street*, he had no idea he would go on to play the character seven times.

"No-one is more surprised than me," he says. "I was quite pre-occupied, at the time, with my first real bout with fame and celebrity,

as a result of starring in *V*. So, I was really dealing with that, and sort of not watching this little *Nightmare* phenomenon snowball.

"I remember, one day I was in New York, signing autographs at a convention. I was sitting next to William Shatner, and I noticed that my line changed from science fiction, *V*, *Star Trek* types, to sort of speed metal, punk, heavy metal kids, and they all wanted me to write 'Freddy' down as an autograph. That was my first inkling this thing had gone through the roof."

I refer Robert to the aforementioned talk-show scene in the film. The crowd is full of cheering kids, wearing masks of their child molesting hero. Oxymorons don't get much nastier than that.

Does it concern you that Freddy, as an entity removed from you, has gained such a large following?

"That sort of peaked maybe 1989 in the States, 1990. For a couple of years there at Halloween, everybody you saw was dressed like Freddy.

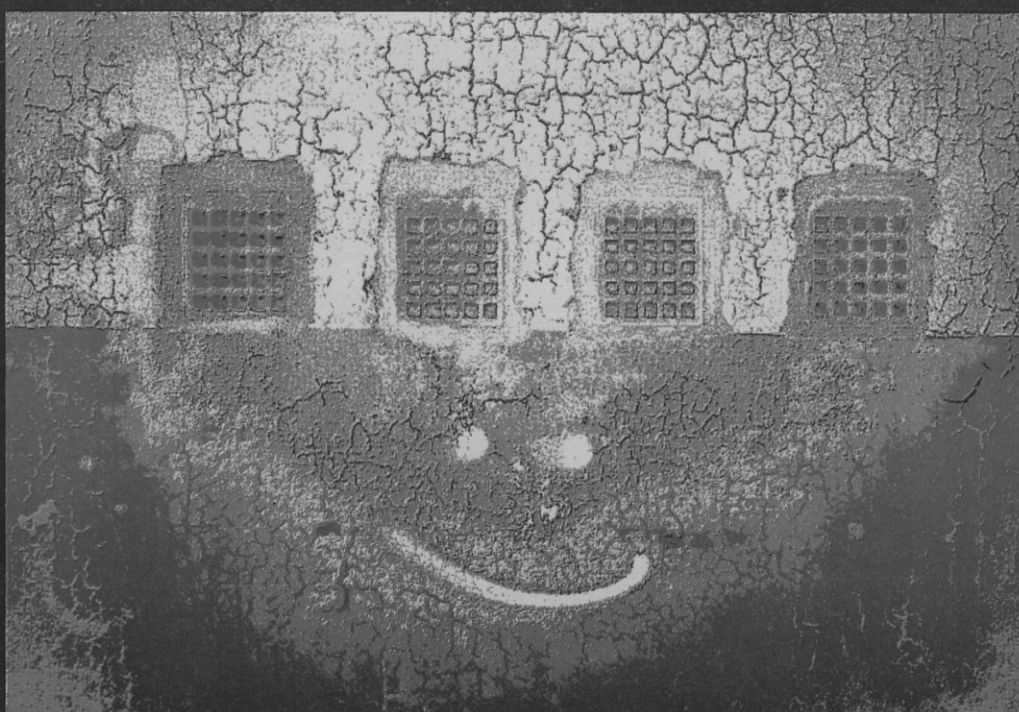
"It was kind of enjoyable for me on a couple of levels. First was that I had a relative anonymity regarding Freddy for a while, because no-one noticed it was me. People all knew my face, but they would recognise me from *V*, or other movies and TV shows. So that was kind of a bonus, until I began really doing the talk shows and things like that.

"The other thing with all of that is, when it

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