

Freddy's dead, and Mike doesn't feel so good

Freddy's Dead: The Final Nightmare

Robert Englund, Lisa Zane, Yaphet Koto
directed by Rachel Talalay

Plaza
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Scammed. Schnookered. Taken for a ride. Gyped. Let's face it folks, I got lied to.

Recently *Fangoria* magazine interviewed the people behind the making of *Freddy's Dead: The Final Nightmare*. They made it sound as if it were going to be a great movie. Of course, I didn't expect them to tell the reporter, "It's gonna' suck bad, like last week's Hoover." But they made it sound awesome. They lied.

Here are some examples:

Aron Warren, producer: "We're taking a lot that has come before in the previous *Nightmare* films a step further. We're breaking a lot of the series' conventions and taking the *Nightmare* concept to a place it's never been before."

Robert Englund, actor: "The humor is there, but not to the degree that it's been in previous films."

Rachel Talalay, director: "(I felt) that a more adult script that concentrated on characters was the next logical step."

In retrospect, maybe Warren wasn't lying. This movie does go where no other *Nightmare* movie has gone: straight in the toilet.

I had trouble with this movie from the very first frame. We are told that the nice suburban California-like town of Springwood, site of the mythical Elm Street, is in Ohio. Ohio?? Where'd they come up with that? Anyway, *Freddy's Dead: The Final Nightmare* is set ten years in the future

MIKE LONG

Movies

(where bad horror films are used as torture devices...just kidding) and the first scene displays an FBI-like map of the U.S., which shows that there are no teenagers left in Springwood.

To its credit, the opening sequence is quite promising. It parallels the "flying house" scene in *The Wizard of Oz*, except instead of the Wicked Witch, we have Freddy (Robert Englund) shouting, "I'll get you my pretty, and your little soul too." After this, the movie goes downhill faster than a runaway jelly donut on a treacherously icy bobsled run.

We are introduced to John (Shon Greenblatt), the last teenager in Springwood. (Editor's note: I thought you just said that there weren't any teenagers in Springwood. Just wondering.) (Mike's note: I realize that there is a discrepancy in logic here, but I didn't write the movie. If I had written it, it would've been called "Stuart in Lollipop Town.") (Editor's note: Huh?) (Mike's note, part two: Shut up, Monday!)

Because Freddy can't leave town, he sends John out to bring back more teenagers. And sure enough, he does. John ends up in a shelter run by Maggie (Lisa Zane) and Doc (Yaphett Kotto). Maggie takes John back to Springwood to find out about his past. Some other teens from the shelter tag along. They are killed off and Freddy gains the power to escape the confines of Springwood. The battle (yawn!) begins in order to stop Freddy before he takes over the world.

How come teenagers in the *Nightmare* films are like no one I've ever met? I mean, granted, I've never known anyone who has been tormented by a killer in their dreams, but that's beside the point. Do you know any girl who practices kung-fu 23.9 hours a day? I don't either. Maybe if



They promised that this would be the last one, so say goodbye to the biggest horror star of the decade

the kids were more realistic, the film could've been a little bit better.

Rachel Talalay is not a bad director. She sets up some very interesting shots, but because the script is weaker than a wet Hi-Dri towel, her talent can't save the movie. The script just plain tries to hard. Because this is going to be the last *Nightmare* film, writer Michael DeLuca piles everything onto the Freddy mythos that he can. If this stuff had really been important, Wes Craven would have put it into the first film. We learn exactly how and why Freddy became a killer in the first place. We meet Freddy's evil father, played by Alice Cooper. (Editor's Note: Maybe it should've been called *Freddy's Dad: The Final Nightmare*. Ha-ha-ha.) (Mike's note: Monday, shut up.)

We meet "the dream people," who gave Freddy his power. Please, give

me a break. Freddy's mystique is what once made him a great character, we don't need a 20/20 expose on his past. The only redeeming feature of this trip down memory lane is that we get to see the arsenal of maiming gloves that Freddy once owned.

As for the humor in the film, *Freddy's Dead* has more than parts 4 and 5 put together. In the stupidest scene in the movie (I flipped a coin), Freddy says the funniest thing I've heard in a long time. The humor in the *Nightmare* films has diminished and all frightening qualities that Freddy might have once possessed. Even my cat Leonardo, who gets under the bed when the doorbell rings, isn't afraid of Freddy. When I learned of this I said, "Aren't you afraid of his glove with the claws?" Leonardo thought about this for a second and then, raising his paw, replied, "Nah,

I've got four of them myself."

I'm sure some of you are wondering just what in the hell "Freddy Vision" is. Yes, some, but not all, of the film is in 3-D. Yes, you do have to wear glasses. You know to put your glasses on when Maggie puts her's on in the film. The 3-D effects are the worst I've ever seen. I assume that the filmmakers were trying to compare Freddy to those classic 3-D creatures of the '50s. All they managed to do is give me a headache. Even the shoddy effects of *Jaws 3-D* have *Freddy's Dead* beat.

Freddy's Dead: The Final Nightmare is a complete disaster. It's truly sad to see the biggest horror star of the decade go out with a whimper. If they truly have "saved the best for last" as the ads proclaim, I can only assume that there will have to be another one.

Sadistic Tatie exemplifies black comedy genre

Tatie Danielle

Tsilla Chelton, Isabella Nanty, Neige Dolsky
directed by Etienne Chatiliez

Chelsea
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The art of black comedy, as vague a term as that may be, is most often accomplished through the use of material which would ordinarily provoke feelings of disgust, terror or revulsion. Instead, it is manipulated to create a situation which is actually humorous in the context of the film at hand.

Although death and violence are the traditional devices of films pinned

NED DIRLIK

Movies

with the black comedy tag (for example, *Eating Raoul*, *War of the Roses* and *Parents*), Etienne Chatiliez' *Tatie Danielle* succeeds in this elusive genre with but one "tool" — an old woman (the title character) who may at first appear harmless but is actually as harsh and infuriating a movie character as any in recent memory. Director (and co-screenwriter) Chatiliez gives us a tumultuous chapter from the life of an icy, razor-sharp specimen, a lady who, from the movie's opening, proceeds to systematically slice up the feelings of all those around her. When she is finally gone, she leaves in her wake a gaping hole, carved into the existing perceptions of the elderly which are

so much a part of today's society.

For a little longer than an hour, the film occupies itself with one theme only: the uninterrupted assault by this great-aunt on all the obsequious, subservient types around her. The various crimes against humanity perpetrated by Tatie (played wonderfully by Tsilla Chelton) are heartless: she sets her dog on people, intentionally abandons her young great-nephew in the park, insults her niece-in-law's cooking, calls friends' daughters ugly, urinates in her dress at a dinner party, and indirectly (but intentionally) causes the death of her devoted but ditsy housekeeper, Odile (Neige Dolsky). As victims and locations change, her behavior remains bitterly consistent. She seems to draw from a bottomless well of cruelty, without reason or mercy.

This bizarre one-woman show ends abruptly, however, when the inevi-

table happens — she meets her match, in the form of Sadrine (another fantastic performance, this time by Isabella Nanty), a tough young nanny who is to care for Tatie while the family escapes to Greece. After a few initial confrontations of the when-iron-wills-first-clash type, the two settle into a harmonious, almost enjoyable co-existence, each realizing that they are essentially birds of a feather. No matter how spirited Sadrine remains, however, peace cannot last long with Tatie around, and the film ends appropriately as her final unpredictable and destructive moments cause mass confusion and distress throughout the city of Paris.

More than anything else, this is a movie about relationships. For one thing, it doesn't tell much of a story in the traditional sense. While it does detail the progression of a family's interactions, nothing ever really

changes. Halfway through the movie, I felt that the ending really wouldn't matter much, that a similar impact would be retained regardless of the exact finish. The viewer certainly doesn't get to know the characters themselves; the movie is about how they relate to one another, not about what kind of people they are. Even Tatie can never be fully understood — we are shown that her husband is dead, but are told nothing of their life

See TATIE, page 11

THE RATINGS

- — wait for the video
- — go to the dollar theater
- — only pay matinee price
- — pay full price
- — take your sister, too