There was a time when Halloween meant horror movies. It used to be that when the leaves went yellow and the pumpkins got ripe, fans could expect an avalanche of theatrical horror titles ranging from spooky to gory to silly and everything in between. Now, thanks to the SAW and PARANORMAL ACTIVITY franchises pounding their war flags on top of the holiday and sending any contending fright flicks scurrying off to January's dumping grounds, modern horror fans face dwindling options at the ticket counter come All Hallows Eve.

To our rescue rides Fango writer and maven of all things Michael Myers, Mr. Justin Beahm. In addition to compiling the upcoming definitive book on the HALLOWEEN franchise and supervising the series' official website (HalloweenMovies), the very busy Mr. Beahm is spearheading the recently announced HALLOWEEN theatrical revival across the country (and as of this writing, the film has now booked dates in the U.K. as well).

Yes, John Carpenter's immortal minimalist distillation of pure suburban terror is coming back to big screens to slake our thirst for something really scary. Along with a lively discussion on some of the more unfairly-maligned installments in the long and tortured legacy of fictional Haddonfield, Illinois, Mr. Beahm chatted with Fango on the challenges and triumphs behind resurrecting the man in the mask...

FANGORIA: About the upcoming HALLOWEEN nationwide screenings, was it your idea to bring the film back to theaters?

BEAHM: It was, yeah. After Rob Zombie's second HALLOWEEN came out and did well at the box office, immediately talk started about another film. 3D, they decided it was going to be, and

it was announced and put on the schedule. There was even a release date set for this October. It's not unusual for Hollywood to announce something way in advance, but when the pieces didn't come together on that and the fans were kind of left a little disappointed, I knew that we had to do something for them. That, coupled with a lot of people saying, "We'd like a return to the feel, the atmosphere, and slower pace of Carpenter's original." Throughout the series it was always a note that most of the filmmakers were trying to find. So I figured, "Well, we have an opportunity here with a mostly empty October," with almost no horror films in theatres. And we also have fans wanting a return to the original style—why not just give them the original? Why not just make this happen? We ended up finding Screenvision, who has an amazing number of screens all across the country. They got it from the start. They shot us what they considered to be an aggressive estimate of three hundred theatres. I would have been happy with three hundred on board, but as of yesterday, we crossed the threshold of over five hundred. And so the response has been absolutely amazing. Everyone behind this release is thrilled about the momentum is has.

FANG: And how has the fan feedback been on the idea of this revival?

BEAHM: The fans for HALLOWEEN are incredible. It's absolutely on par with STAR WARS or STAR TREK, in their dedication to discussion about the films, every minor aspect… It is almost thirty-five years now that this series has been in business, and they still talk about it with such enthusiasm, like it just came out. It's incredible. So now, as a result of that, word spread very fast. Discussion is always heated and very emotional about things like this, and you never really know what you're going to find when you put your toe in the water, but the response to this has been absolutely amazing. And that's ultimately the greatest reward in this. The opportunity to give fans the chance to sort of step back in time to 1978, to be in the theater and really take this in as the full experience. Most people that are out there—logging onto the Facebook page or Halloweenmovies.com or whatever else—many of them have never seen any of these movies in the theater, except maybe for Rob Zombie's. Yeah, the response has been fantastic.

FANG: Are you going with a digital print for the screenings?

BEAHM: It is digital. What we did was we struck a new transfer with brand new 5.1 audio on it. It's a lot simpler with this kind of a booking to do it this way. A few people have been a little disappointed that it isn't rolling in 35, but there are always going to be revival houses to do that. In order to take it to the masses, we just had to go, "All right, digital is going to be it," and that's fine. The clarity in the picture is amazing, and I think even the die-hards will be seeing new things.

FANG: I understand that you've also put together an all-new short documentary to screen before the feature?

BEAHM: Yeah, one of the things Screenvision was really interested in was new content. They gave us a time limit to it, because theatres are really restrictive as to how long your film can be if you're not a TITANIC or DANCES WITH WOLVES or something huge. Theatre time is valuable to them, so [the documentary] had to be pretty concise. The approach that I took was exploring the cultural presence of the Boogeyman around the world, and how in the United States that translates to the character of Michael Myers. So, it explores the roots of the Boogeyman and how that figure transitions into cinema and popular culture here. It also touches a little on how the violence in the series has reflected the world we live in.

FANG: You've probably gotten this question many times, but why do you think a thirty-five year old, low-budget movie like HALLOWEEN holds such an enduring appeal?

BEAHM: I think, at its core, what makes HALLOWEEN so effective is the fact that The Shape isn't something from outer space, or something with superhuman powers. It's a film about this evil penetrating the normally comfy confines of suburbia, and the places that we hold sacred. In so many of these pictures and stories about evil, oftentimes we venture into the dark places and encounter whatever it is lurking there. What HALLOWEEN does so effectively, and so simply, is that it puts Michael in the shadows that exist in every one of our homes; into the spaces in which we normally find safety and security, and he can emerge at any time from those recesses. I think that that fear is universal and speaks to everyone. HALLOWEEN touches on something very primal in all of us. Interestingly, as a result of the series continuing for so long and exploring the exploits of Michael, he has become something of a cultural icon, almost like a Charles Manson. He's certainly not a hero in any regard; he does no good, yet he is all over merchandise, tattooed on people, and omnipresent this time of year. And, of course, the mask is so perfectly iconic, eternal, and haunting in its simplicity.

FANG: You were also behind some of the extra features on the new blu-ray releases for HALLOWEEN 4 & 5. Can you tell how that gig came about?

BEAHM: This goes back to my dealings with Trancas. When the Blu-rays were being put together with Anchor Bay, we wanted to make sure there'd be some new content on there for fans. On part Five, we found some extensive production footage from the set. That opened up about fifteen minutes. There was a hint of that on a previous release, but we wanted to show as much as we could this time around to give people a glimpse into the actual making-of. On both Four and Five, we wanted to do new commentaries, so I called up Dwight Little, the director of part Four, who has never done a commentary for this picture before. In fact, he's never really been involved with the whole fan thing until now; not because he didn't want to be, necessarily, but it just hasn't happened. So bringing him in to record that track was a really cool thing that fans have been asking for, for a long time. I saw my role in that as really just to steer Dwight into interesting territory and address some of the questions that fans have had for years, and to talk about the key mysteries behind the making of the film. The white hair on the mask, for example, stuff like that. I wanted to be as fan-friendly as possible and keep him talking. Same thing with the commentary on part Five. There has never been a commentary by a Michael Myers before, so I called up [stunt performer] Don Shanks, and we got connected and recorded a track together. I'm proud of what came out of both of those, and the fan response has been really positive.

FANG: Any updates on the progress of your official HALLOWEEN book?

BEAHM: The aim has always been for a release next fall. We haven't made any formal announcement on the date yet, because we're still in the production stages on it. We'll announce it as soon as we can, but it's still very much "in the works." Want to make sure to give it as much time as it needs to be as good as it deserves to be; to give the fans what they deserve.

FANG: With so many different talents behind HALLOWEEN as a franchise, are you finding it difficult to pull together participation for the book?

BEAHM: Honestly, no. Everybody involved with the film series has been amazing. HALLOWEEN is a unique series in that so much has been written—and even filmed; there

have been many documentaries—almost entirely focusing on the first picture, though you have nine other films there with stories to be told that have gone pretty much unheard. As a result, while the rest of the people involved with the series have spent years reading what Carpenter and Debra Hill and other folks had to say about the first, they're like, "Hey, there are stories here too." I'm excited to finally give them a voice, and they were all more than happy to pitch in and be a part of it. It's been great, and I am still bringing new people onto the project every week.

FANG: You mentioned nine films, so you must be including Rob Zombie's pair of divisive HALLOWEEN remakes?

BEAHM: Absolutely. Every film in the series is getting equal space and attention in the book, which is really a love letter to the fans. There are many people who say that HALLOWEEN: RESURRECTION is their favorite in the series, or Rob Zombie's HALLOWEEN is their favorite. There's a group of people who love each and every one of these movies for different reasons, and so for that, I figure we owe it to everybody to give every film equal attention and love.

Beahm goes on to mention some of the projects on his horizon that will no doubt set Myers fanatics to salivate. This includes putting convention-floor bootleg emporiums on notice ("I am committed to getting the Producer's cut of HALLOWEEN 6 out in some way. It's definitely complicated terrain in having that kind of thing released," Beahm teases
) and more.

BEAHM: As for me, I am just doing my best to keep Haddonfield growing.

For much more on the HALLOWEEN re-release, including theaters and showtimes, visit Halloween on Screen
.