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Movies

'Chucky' spawns another sequel

Evil doll plants 'Seed' for new fans

By Gary Strauss
USA TODAY

Chucky, Hollywood's campy serial-killing doll, is a box office small fry. But filmmakers hope the 2-foot-tall slasher's latest movie will muscle up new legions of fans.

Distributor Focus Features aims to cash in on moviegoers' resurgent appetite for horror films and Chucky's cult-like status among aficionados with *Seed of Chucky*. The movie opens Friday in more than 2,500 theaters.

Seed is the fifth incarnation in the Chucky series but the first since 1998. Only the first film pulled in more than \$33 million in U.S. theaters. But the modestly budgeted films have been profitable, relatively strong in the DVD market and are developing a following through repeated TV showings during Halloween.

"We're optimistic *Seed of Chucky* has the potential to be the most successful" of the franchise, says Focus marketing chief David Brooks.

Wisecracking Chucky's appeal? "He's got a Napoleon complex. He's a little guy with a lot of rage — people can relate," says *Seed* director Don Mancini, who developed the first Chucky film as a UCLA student in the 1980s and masterminded the sequels.

"The idea of an evil doll come to life is a fun, freaky concept," says longtime fan Justin Olivetti, 28, a youth pastor in Livonia, Mich., who

runs the horror film fan site www.mutantreviewers.com. "I'll definitely see *Seed of Chucky*."

Red-haired, scarfaced Chucky first waddled onto the big screen in 1988's *Child's Play*, a pedantic slashfest in which a toy doll's spirit was overtaken by the soul of a psychopath, before moving on to murder sprees in two *Child's Play* se-

quels and *Bride of Chucky*.

Seed resprouts Chucky, doll-bride Tiffany and their gender-baffled offspring, Glen, born to an artificially inseminated Jennifer Tilly.

Tilly plays a B-movie actress who is filming a movie about Chucky. "Art imitates life," says Tilly, who also does Tiffany's voiceover.

Macabre humor abounds, including Chucky's road-rage killing of a Britney Spears look-alike and appearances by hip-hop star Redman and oddball director John Waters.

Being in a Chucky movie "was my dream, because I love Chucky," says Waters, who plays a paparazzi. Both Tilly and Waters have a large



By Rolf Konow, Rogue Pictures

Chucky: A "fun, freaky concept."

He's a killer at the box office

The low-budget Chucky movies aren't blockbusters, but they tend to be profitable:

Film	Millions:
<i>Child's Play</i> (1988)	\$33.2
<i>Child's Play 2</i> (1990)	\$28.5
<i>Child's Play 3</i> (1991)	\$15.0
<i>Bride of Chucky</i> (1998)	\$32.4

Source: Boxoffice Mojo.com

gay following, which should help draw *Seed* viewers, Mancini says.

Set in Hollywood but shot largely in Bucharest, filming was slowed by language barriers and other problems unique to the former communist state. "It was difficult to find palm trees and a buff, good-looking surfer that you'd find in California," Tilly says. "There's not a lot of either in Romania."

Given Chucky's profit margin, he and his brethren might slash their way well into the millennium. "The possibilities are really endless," Mancini says. "I wouldn't mind seeing a Chucky musical."

Contributing: Susan Wloszczyna