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NIGHTMARE 4

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Makeup FX supervisor Bart
Mixon gets all the girls.



By MARC SHAPIRO

Talk about feeling like a kid in a candy store, Bart Mixon had a mouthful of Milky Ways the day he opened the script for *Fright Night—Part 2*. "I turned to a page and it said, 'Regine suddenly turns into a monster from hell,'" recalls Mixon. "I thought to myself, 'A monster from hell? This is going to be fun.'"

Mixon remembers that introduction to the FX-laden *Fright Night* sequel from the comfortably cluttered office of Make-up FX Unlimited. The fledgling company, whose *Fright Night—Part 2* chores were its first gig as the creature/prosthetics right arm of Fantasy II, is putting the finishing touches on the film. The odd insert and miniature is being shot or fine-tuned, but Mixon, studying an FX breakdown for an upcoming production, is already primed for new projects.

Mixon, a contributor to *Terminator* and *RoboCop*, had worked with Fantasy II's Gene Warren Jr. on many occasions. Talk between the two had gotten serious about a makeup adjunct to Fantasy II's visual magic. His first official effort under the Make-up FX Unlimited banner was a dummy head for *Dracula's Widow*. When Warren offered Mixon's shop as a bonus in bidding for the *Fright Night—Part 2* job, Mixon suddenly found himself keying one monster of a monster movie.

"There's definitely more monster-type things in this film than in the first *Fright Night*," compares Mixon. "The stuff in the original was nice, but we've definitely got much more of it."

So much, in fact, that Mixon ran into difficulty assembling a crew for what would ultimately be two groups of makeup people working on the movie. "At one point, a lot of people were available," relates Mixon. "But by the time I found out we would be doing prosthetics, too, many of the people I wanted were working elsewhere. I started with a core group and was able to get other people for short periods of time."

Anchoring the core group was key sculptor Brian (*Jason Lives*) Wade, key painter Aaron Sims, key moldmaker Jim McLoughlin and a moonlighting (from Rick Baker's studio) Norman Cabrera. Also on board for various periods of time were Gabe (*Brain Damage*) Bartalos, Barney Burman, Brent Baker, Matt Rose, Bill Sturgeon, Joey Orosco,

A HARD DAY'S FRIGHT NIGHT

Bart Mixon assembles a
virtual Murderers' Row of
FX talent to take on the
stylish sequel.



The FX gang's all here: (top left) Jim McLoughlin, Brent Baker, Bart Mixon, Gregor Punctatz, Aaron Sims, (bottom) Barney Burman, Gabe Bartalos and Brian Wade.

EDITOR'S NOTE: At presstime, *New Century/Vista* bumped *Fright Night—Part 2* to a fall release.

Gregor Punchatz and Richard Snell. It was a heavyweight FX lineup that, in less capable hands, could have caused some major ego problems.

"It didn't," testifies Bartalos. "The reason was that Bart took advantage of everybody's artistic abilities. Everybody on the crew was given one specific effect that was their own and then offered the opportunity to float and help out in other areas. Everybody knew what everybody was good at, so we didn't have to waste time feeling each other out."

By Mixon's estimation, fully 90 percent of *Part 2's* makeup and prosthetic work that his company handled centered around the seductress vampire Regine, and the most ambitious energies went into a subtle transformation in facial appearance that Regine (Julie Carmen) undergoes at several points in the film, most radically in a party scene where she switches back and forth between normal and weird. "[Director] Tommy Lee Wallace wasn't sure what he wanted," explains Mixon of the design process. "He kept saying, 'Max Headroom,' and I kept saying, 'What's that mean?'"

What it meant was that Wade, credited with the "Super Regine" sculpture, and Mixon resorted to sculpting nine clay sketches before a design everybody could live with was decided upon. "We came up with three appliance pieces," lists Wade, "a lowered brow with an

For this effect, Bart Mixon and Jim McLoughlin applied gelatin makeups to a double's hands which were positioned in-frame to help bring the burnt Regine puppet to life.



During postproduction, it was decided that a close-up would be needed for the sequel's stop-motion bat sequence. Mike Joyce and Bart Mixon swung into action and rebuilt the radio-controlled puppet.

overlapping nose piece, a U-shaped cheek piece and a jaw piece that fit under the cheek and went from temple to temple."

For the transformation, Carmen was photographed both in and out of makeup in front of a blue screen and with a motion-controlled camera. Carmen, all the while, was seated in a special chair that kept her dress and a prop arm in registration while the more exotic makeup was applied. Gene Warren Jr., the film's visual FX supervisor, oversaw the scene's filming and the subsequent dissolving and matting of the two images into one shot.

"That was a really iffy proposition," confesses Mixon, "and we're still not sure how it will look once the opticals are added, but the original sequence turned out nice."

The elevator sequence in which Regine appears in midtransformation into a giant bat (i.e. the earlier "monster from hell" description)

Stage two of the burnt Regine, minus its gelatin skin.



provided some major design challenges, to which everybody on the crew arose. Aaron Sims contributed some early sketches. Mixon threw in some ideas centered around his penchant for long skinny fingers. Bartalos and Cabrera began mental preparation for monstrous legs and detailing. McLoughlin had a nifty tongue in mind.

"Our initial reaction was to go with something wild with yard-long ears and spines coming out of the arms," claims Wade, who's now assisting Steve Johnson on *Nightmare 4*. "The teeth were going

The Regine Monster hands sported mechanical finger extensions designed by Bill Sturgeon.



Dinah Cancer doubled actress Julie Carmen for her flaming death scene. The entire makeup took three hours to apply.

to be really monstrous. But the director's input, and the fact that the creature had to bear some resemblance to the finished giant bat puppet, resulted in reduction of the ears and teeth. What we came up with is good, but we could have come up with something totally wild."

Bartalos reveals that the monster claw hands were sculpted in clay and epoxy with a spandex support and finger caps attached. "I also painted the nails and punched in the hair," he says. "It was an easygoing situation. Everybody worked on different things and had a lot of fun." Bill Sturgeon sculpted the creature's neck-to-crotch body suit. Cabrera contributed booty-style monster feet, a cross between a lady and a monster with exaggerated muscles and veins (which, depending on the

rumored final edit, may or may not be seen).

(Note: skip the next six paragraphs if you don't want the movie's ending revealed.)

As the sequence unfolds, Regine completes her transformation into the big bat, crashes through the elevator floor and swoops down to the bottom of the shaft. Two bat puppets, a stop-motion miniature sculpted by Brian Wade over a Mike Joyce armature and a full-size puppet molded by McLoughlin and Baker and sculpted by Rose, Wade and Sims were used in the scene. "Originally, the sequence was designed with only the stop-motion puppet in mind," Mixon remembers. "Little by little, it evolved into a giant wing tip and then a full-sized bat seen crashing through the floor."

The stop-motion shots, animated by Fantasy II's Justin Kohn, combined rear-projection live action and in-camera split screens for insertion of the miniature bat. The huge puppet was placed on a rod and pushed through the elevator floor and out

the other side—where Regine, returned to the original form and preparing to destroy Charley, is suddenly hit by sunlight reflected off a mirror by Peter Vincent. Original makeup suggestions for the death makeup were rejected by Wallace on the grounds that they were too gross, a problem that was ultimately overcome with a relatively standard-issue gelatin burn makeup applied by McLoughlin and Mixon.

"We made a series of dummy heads," McLoughlin explains. "The first dummy head had mechanics, jaw movement, fangs growing and brow movement, which I built into it. A series of tubes were also attached, which allowed us to pump trichloroethane to swell the head's latex skin. Gelatin burn makeup was applied to a double's hands to help bring the scene to life."

With these elements in place, the boys lit the dummy head on fire to simulate the sequence's beginning in which Regine's flesh begins to burn away. The fiery scene was completed as the skins were stripped off the first dummy head, a new corpse mask slipped over the existing mechanics and a gelatin burn appliance attached over the mask. The head was once again set on fire, exposing the Regine corpse puppet





The finished first-stage Richie makeup, applied by Norman Cabrera. Fangs, contacts, and a good coating of K-Y Jelly and pus were added prior to filming. Stage two consisted of a throat piece and a lip/chin piece by Bart Mixon.

head underneath.

For the fiery finale, a Regine body suit, sculpted by Mixon, McLoughlin, Sims and Punchatz and worked on at various stages by the rest of the crew, is torched in various places to simulate the effect of fire damage. A beam of sunlight and flames over the body were added in postproduction by Fantasy II.

"We tried for a droopy, melty look when we were sculpting the corpse body," interjects Sims, a former *Evil Dead II* assistant. "At one point we even showed a nipple melting away, but for whatever reason, that shot did not make the final edit."

The death-by-holy-water of Charley's roommate-turned-vampire Richie offered the FX crew an opportunity to get away from the now-familiar acid burn look. "We decided to go for a more puffy swollen look, kind of like what Dick Smith did in *Spasms*," asserts *Summer School* vet Cabrera, who applied the first-stage Richie makeup. "Facial appliances were created to reflect what the head would look like after tubes were attached, and trichloroethane was pumped through the foam latex appliances, which resulted in that swollen bloated look." The effect, which incorporated a dummy head and facial mechanics, was shot in postproduction by Fantasy II.

Next up on the FX parade was the infamous Newberry, the bowling emporium proprietor who is decapitated and whose head winds up in an alley's ball return. McLoughlin sculpted and added the gore FX from a standard life cast. Bartalos painted it and punched in the hair.

For the scene in which Belle accidentally slices open the chest of Bozworth, plastic hands and sculpted nails were created. "To give the puncture effect that extra push, we fit real X-acto blades into the nails," grins Mixon. "We knew they were going to work when Tommy Wallace cut himself one day while inspecting the hands."

The glowing, melting death of Belle in the holy cloth was accomplished through the use of two skulls. "We used two gelatin heads on that effect," informs Mixon. "One had a fiberglass skull, which we backlighted to begin the meltdown process. Then we cut to a gelatin head with a wax skull to complete the process. The entire effect was done through time-lapse melting in an oven."

Mixon reports that a number of vampire teeth sets were constructed by Snell for the various actors. The shop created an additional large hollow canine, which was raked across an actor's neck in the scene where Charley is bitten by Regine. "There were also a lot of Charley-related molds and sculptures, primarily neck and hand wounds, that were indicated at an early point in the filming but ultimately not used," he sighs.

"There's definitely more monster-type things than in the first *Fright Night*."

**—makeup FX supervisor
Bart Mixon**

Mixon is candid about director Wallace's presence at his shop during production. The director asked for numerous changes and displayed much more interest in his creature makers than usual.

"To a certain extent, it wasn't surprising," Mixon judges. "This was my first time keying a major effect



Brian Wade's rough sculpture of the Regine Monster incorporated Bart Mixon's extended teeth design, elements of an Aaron Sims sketch, and many of Wade's own ideas, such as the oversized ears. Is that teamwork or what?

film, and he probably felt he had to keep an extra eye on me. Tommy also didn't want this to be an all-out effects movie, which was part of the reason why he constantly suggested changes. None of that bothered me. It was his movie, and I was more than willing to give him what he wanted to make him happy."

But making Wallace happy did not get in the way of making Mixon happy with what he and his crew accomplished. "We've done a couple of things on this film that haven't been done before, especially with our approach to the Richie effects," he beams. "To a large extent, however, what we've done is traditional. It's primarily a lot of dummy heads and appliances, stuff that's been done before. We knew going in what would work, given the time and money we had, and we went with those things."

To a man, the Make-up FX Unlimited crew views the *Fright Night—Part 2* experience as an enjoyable one. For supervisor Bart Mixon, it was a chance to show his prowess at the head of a major film; for Aaron Sims, who concedes he was the raw rookie in this all-star FX lineup, it was a chance to learn from some established craftsmen. And for everyone in between?

"Man, it was fun," Bartalos grins. "Just a whole lot of fun."

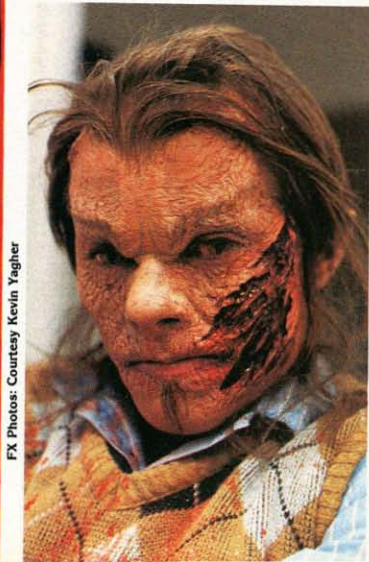
EVIL ED: GONE FOR GOOD?

By CHAS. BALDIN

This is what a nerd looks like when he's possessed by the devil . . .



. . . and this is what a possessed nerd looks like after you shoot him in the face with a zip gun.



FX Photos: Courtesy Kevin Yagher

Stephen Geoffreys, the man who chortled his way into horror history with "Fright Night" and now "976-EVIL," won't rest on his laurels.

Picture Chris Sarandon's chic, ultra-cool, mysterious vampire character in *Fright Night* raking his three-inch demon nails across the longest blackboard you could ever imagine. Feel it deeply. Let it wash over you. Now, hold that thought. Yow! That hurts, eh?

Just getting you ready for *that* laugh. You know, the one that launched a 1,000 jeers. Forget the vampire talons scraping slate, how about a maniacal, amplified hiccuping goat's bleat of a fractured cackle pumped through 10,000-watt, six-track Dolby speakers, sending shivers up your butt? It's "Evil Ed" Thompson, the really weird high school kid in *Fright Night* who turns into one of the most obnoxious bloodsucking teenaged terrors ever seen (or heard). You're familiar with

the type we're talking about; you've seen 'em in dozens of generic teen-kill splatter flicks. These are the guys you want killed the quickest, preferably in the most painful

"Hoax revenges himself on people you want him to, almost to the Grand Guignol level."

method available.

Now, while this reporter waits in production manager Rick Blumen-

thal's office on the set of *976-EVIL*, there's just a hint of that laugh wafting down the halls. It's much softer, a nervous punctuation of sorts, and it belongs to Stephen Geoffreys, a young actor described at one time as "a young Jack Nicholson" by critics Siskel and Ebert, and one actor forever ingrained in Fango memories as perhaps the most, uh . . . "unusual" serum sucker ever.

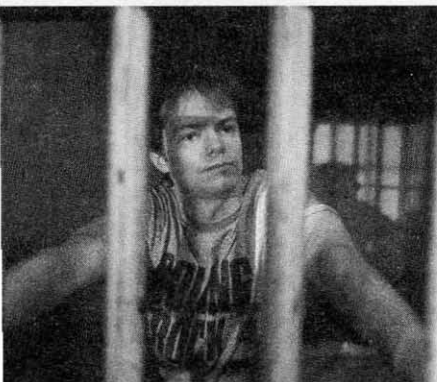
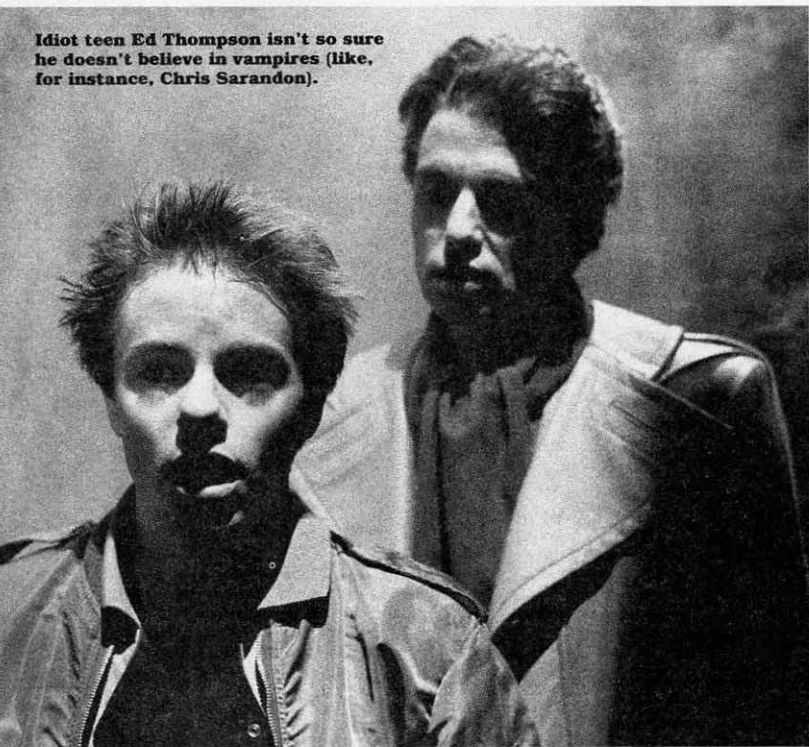
Relax, gang, Geoffreys is not "Evil Ed." He's a capable, thoughtful, versatile actor who performed a role that made a lasting impression on plenty of viewers. "I took my family to see *Fright Night*. They know me as I am, so they don't fall for it as much as other people do," he explains. "To them, it's just Steve up there being an actor. People who recognize me react to me in that ex-

"Sorry, Ed, you won't be back for the sequel," mourns Roddy McDowall. (Inset) Evil Ed in his lupine stage.



Fright Photos: Copyright 1985 Columbia

Idiot teen Ed Thompson isn't so sure he doesn't believe in vampires (like, for instance, Chris Sarandon).



The Chair, one of the slew of prison flicks this year, finds Geoffreys behind bars.

act way; they think I'm going to bite them or something. It's funny."

Geoffreys speaks of his past roles in genre films in excited bursts, occasionally interrupted by that funny little laugh. "Horror movies are fun to do. They're exciting; there's never a dull moment. You really have to use your imagination a lot. You just don't put the makeup on and be scary," he says. "You really *have* to believe it. You have to believe this is really happening to you. If you can achieve that reality, it's exciting."

Geoffreys began acting for real at

a performing arts high school in Cincinnati before moving to New York and attending acting classes at New York University. Before coming to Fango's attention by way of *Fright Night* and *976-EVIL*, Geoffreys appeared in *At Close Range*, *Fraternity Vacation* and *Heaven Help Us*. He also turned up in a *Twilight Zone* episode, penned by Ray Bradbury, titled "The Elevator" (where he's eaten by a giant spider) and co-starred with the late James Coco in the haunted prison film *The Chair* (Fango #73). He was set to reprise his role as Evil Ed in the forthcoming *Fright Night—Part 2*, but balked early on because of the flimsiness of his character.

"In the script I read, they were just bringing me in there like they felt obliged to bring Evil Ed into a scene, and not for any concrete reason. So I would just be sitting there, laughing like in the first one, for no apparent reason," he discloses. "The part that I read wasn't very strong at all. This one, *976-EVIL*, is much better. I panicked, I was afraid I couldn't get out of *Fright Night 2*."

He complains that this current follow-up is a classic example of sequel fever. "It's just a sequel, it's not another movie," he emphasizes. "Since the first one was such a hit, they figure they can make some

money off its reputation." Oh, Lordy, the credo of the cash register again resonates through the minds of the studio execs, always hungry for a product to clone, sequelize and continually dismember and redistribute 'til nary a trace of the original remains.

Geoffreys explains the legal

"Horror movies are fun to do. They're exciting; there's never a dull moment."

wranglings necessary to extricate himself from the sequel: "There is a part in *Fright Night—Part 2*, though he's not called Evil Ed. They hired another actor and changed the name of the character." Hey, just a minute, wasn't Evil Ed on the receiving end of a fatal staking at the climax of *Fright Night*? Well, vampire lore must constantly be amended these days so logic never gets in the way of sequelitis.

When asked about the attraction that *976-EVIL* held for him, he is quick to point out, "With any play or movie I do, I like to get really excited about what the character has to do in it, what happens to him and his life. My character Hoax Wilmoth goes through so much in such a variety of situations. There's this devil I get hooked up to, who gets into the phone system through this weed that's growing to hell," enthuses Geoffreys.

And, according to the script, his character goes through plenty of those ch-ch-ch-changes. He starts out as a shy, browbeaten, 15-year-old nerdish type who's bullied and belittled constantly by his possessive, cantankerous mother (Sandy Dennis), a fanatically religious nutcake described by scriptwriters as a "cross between Norman Bates' mother and Blanche DuBois." Once Geoffreys' character gets re-energized by the Cloven Hoofed One, he begins to transform (makeup FX by Kevin Yagher) and strikes back at those who've been tormenting him. By fang and claw, Geoffreys rips faces, yanks hearts out, severs hands, launches spider invasions and impales *Teen Beat* pinheads on pitchforks before breaking ol' Mom's neck and allowing her fresh corpse to be devoured by a pack of possessed felines. Everybody else simply goes to hell

in a handbasket—the lucky ones, that is.

Geoffreys is obviously pleased with his choice of film roles and praises director Robert (Freddy K.) Englund. "Having done the three *Nightmare on Elm Street* movies, he knows the style of these films," the actor affirms. "I have a lot of trust in him, and I respect his directing." Geoffreys acknowledges that he especially enjoys working with directors who have been actors themselves, claiming they "have a certain sensitivity; they've been there."

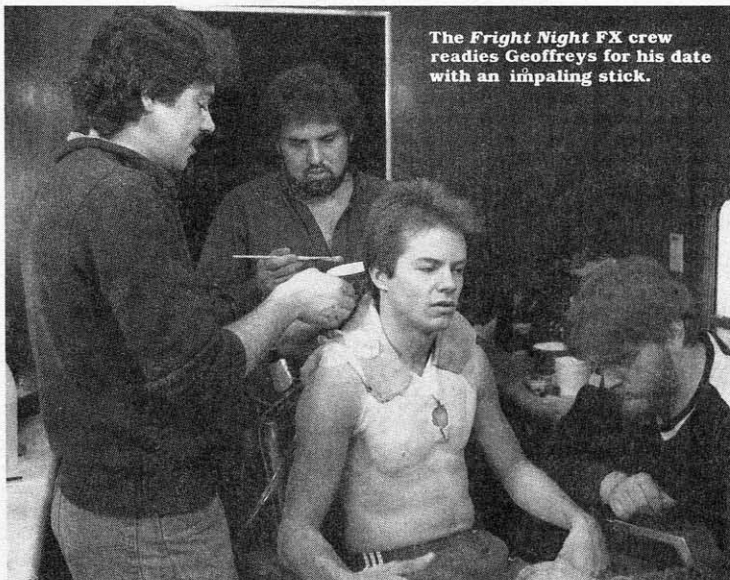
Another fact that emerges during the day's shoot watching Geoffreys prepare for a scene in which he confronts his cousin Spike is that he is a very "physical" actor. He spends minutes limbering up, bending, stretching, shaking his arms and pacing about. He later admits, "As an actor, you've got to use your entire body, to let the people know what's going on. In real life, you don't walk around, pretending there's a camera angle from just your chest up."

As his satanic possession progresses, Geoffreys must wear various latex appliances on his face and emphatically adds, "This makeup is not like a mask. It's very thin, so there's a lot of things I can do with it. In fact, the way it's designed, it adds to the character. It really makes sense, and it doesn't hold me back at all."

He's not held back by director Englund, either, when it comes time to even the score with the people who've been less than Christian with Geoffreys' character in the pre-demon days. Englund nods, "He revenges himself on the people you want him to, almost to the Grand Guignol level. I mean, we get into our gore, into our violence, but there's a logic there. You want him to avenge himself, but he just gets out of control."

At the height of his demonic possession, Geoffreys sprouts fangs and talons and gets down and dirty with jokers like Marcus, Airhead and Rags; with noxious nicknames like that, you can be sure they're getting just what they deserve. Of course, ultimately, Hoax must pay the price for his pact with Ol' Scratch. Nothing ever comes easy, and there are no free lunches. And don't worry, he's not laughing now or ever more.

Before he is swallowed up in that black, fiery chasm of the netherworld, Geoffreys has a few last words. "I just love to act; that's all I ever want to do," Geoffreys sighs. "Just keep on doing what I'm doing, whether it's films or plays or




The *Fright Night* FX crew readies Geoffreys for his date with an impaling stick.

musical comedies. Doing films and theater is a great balance." His Tony Award nomination for *The Human Comedy* should help him keep that balance.

A few hours later, Geoffreys is back in the makeup trailer, having his third-stage prosthetics touched up by Kevin Yagher's crew, as this

reporter prepares to pack it in for the day. Upon leaving the set, one could almost swear he hears an eruption of flushed, convulsive giggling, erupting in staccato bursts of demented glee, echoing down the halls behind him. A quick turn of the head reveals nothing.

He who laughs last, indeed. 



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