

Dark Shadows

Make-up artists Todd McIntosh and Andrew Clement take us behind the scenes on the remake of the Gothic soap opera *Dark Shadows*

A Shivers interview by Joe Nazzero

WHEN THE WB NETWORK announced plans for a new TV pilot based on the long-running Gothic soap opera *Dark Shadows*, it was the kind of challenge that most make-up artists dream about. After all, the original series featured a Vampire as a lead character, not to mention demons, werewolves and assorted creatures, so the new version could prove to be just as exciting. "It had the potential to be

another once-in-a-career-type show," claims Todd McIntosh, a lifelong *Dark Shadows* fan, who had just spent half a decade as make-up department head on *Buffy The Vampire Slayer*. "How many chances would I have to do monsters and beauty make-up side-by-side on a weekly basis again? So when this came my way, I was ecstatic. There were many times that the producers said things like, 'You're our ace in the hole; we know you can do any of this stuff.' They

relied on the *Buffy* level of experience I had, while at the same time telling me that, they didn't want anything to look like *Buffy*! In fact, they didn't want any of *Dark Shadows* to have a *Buffy* feel to it. So I would have lost the job with that experience if I hadn't had so many other things weighing in on my side, including being a huge *Dark Shadows* fan. I tried to keep that a secret, but it didn't last very long. And then we hired Andrew Clement of Creative Character to do the lab work, and it just so happened that at the time that Andrew took the job, a lot of the Optic Nerve staff were with him. So some of the sculpting was done by some of the *Buffy* team."

Clement already had a long-standing relationship with producer John Wells thanks to his company's work on such shows as *ER*, so he was a natural choice to tackle the pilot's make-up FX and prosthetic work, while McIntosh would act as on-set department head. "I had no idea it was going on," explains Clement, "but I met with one of the people in Wells's office, who said, 'We've got this *Dark Shadows* project, and we think you'd be great for it'.

"Being a feature director, PJ Hogan [*Peter Pan*] had an incredible budget, so when I went into this production meeting, we

"They didn't want any of *Dark Shadows* to have a *Buffy* feel to it, so I could have lost the job!"

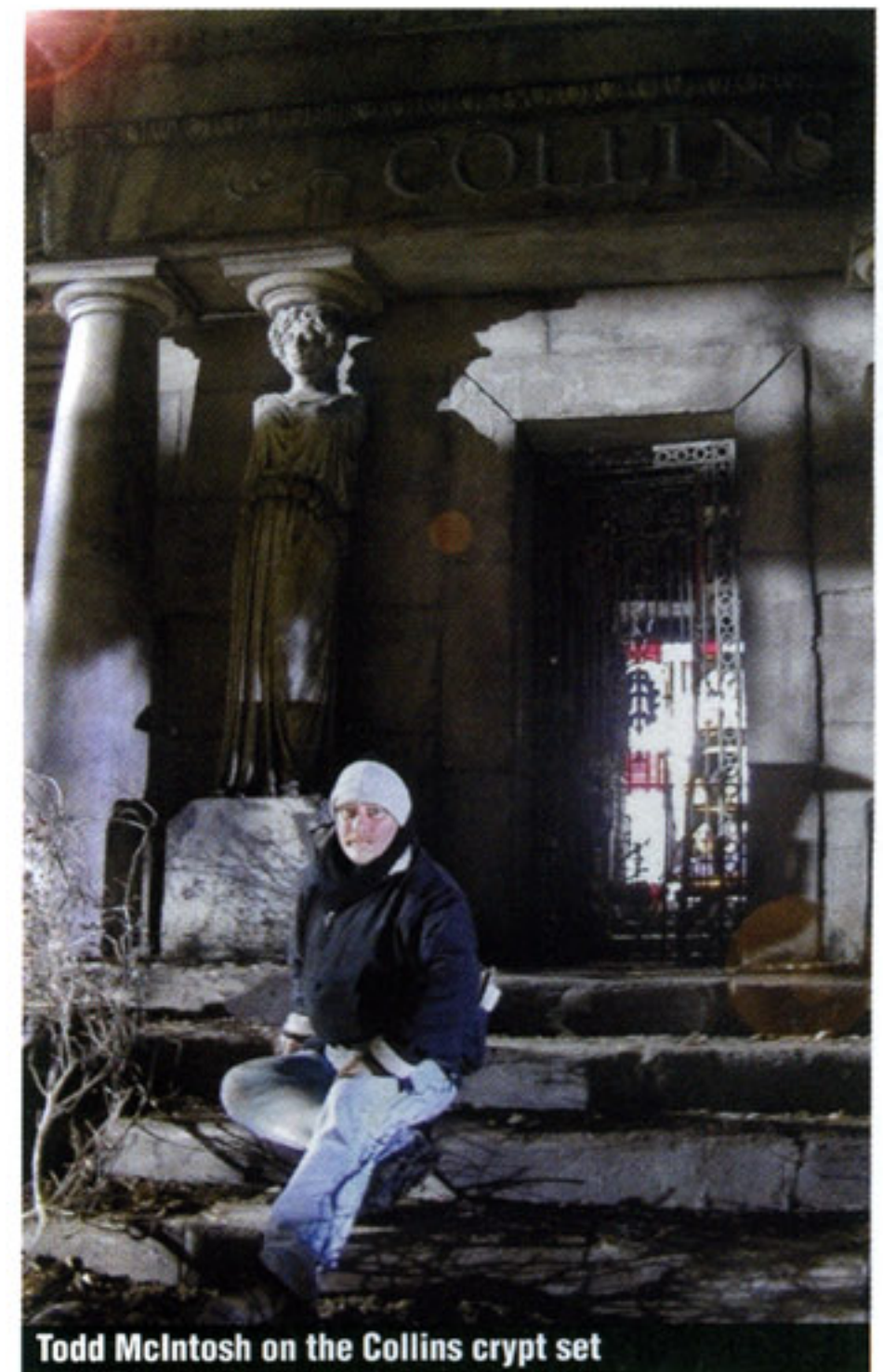


Wheaton sculpts the face of Barnabas, seen opposite





John Wheaton's concept painting for a werewolf in *Dark Shadows*



Todd McIntosh on the Collins crypt set

started talking about puppets for this and that, and I thought I'd gone to heaven. But people say a lot of things before the budget comes in, and that's when things start becoming make-ups and expectations start to narrow. There were a couple of situations where it was suggested that we use stock pieces, and try to repaint some things that we'd done previously, but this was such an important project, I thought that everything had to be brand new. Also, the director had a really solid vision of what he wanted to see. He came in with some fantastic mummy books and he would pull out pages and say, 'I want exactly that!' so it was much more of an exercise in translating some of these actual mummies that he saw onto a Human face."

Pedigree Project

As it turned out, the production may not have been all that interested in creating a project reminiscent of *Buffy*, but Clement actually used some of the original Optic Nerve team, including John Wheaton, who did some of the sculpting and concept work on *Dark Shadows*. "We were able to get a lot of things done a lot more quickly, because they were already accustomed to that pace. It's great to have people who have a pedigree from that type of project, but we have a very different look than Optic does, and I really wanted to preserve that, so I kept a firm hand over everybody so that it looked like it came from our shop. John did some of the concept work, as did Jordy Schell and I, so it was mainly the three of us."

While Clement's team built all the prosthetics, McIntosh was in charge of applying them on set, and acting as liaison between the production and lab. "When you're working in television, it's virtually impossible to do the lab work and the show at the same time," he elaborates. There's the speed with which things needed to be



The clothed dummy of Barnabas 'like an Aztec mummy' says Andrew Clement



The dummy mummy Barnabas

done, and we were also stuck in a situation as happens with a lot of pilots, where there are many bosses. Each of these factions had decision-making capabilities, so in fact, we cast Doug Jones and were sculpting on him for the Barnabas mummy before Barnabas was cast. Because of that short turnaround time, there was no way for a make-up artist like myself to have built the thing, and run the show as well, because I was already filming while things were still being built."

10-day Shoot

"We had 10 days to shoot the one-hour pilot, and I think we went over by a day. Most of it was shot at Warner Bros. We also used real locations all over town, but the director



Doug Jones, who played Abe Sapien in Hellboy, in the make-up chair

PJ Hogan coming off *Peter Pan*, had a huge reliance on CGI. I'm not sure if it might have been possible to do the pilot a little cheaper using more practical locations, but a great deal of the mansion, the old house and different elements of the show, were CG-ed in, so that put the price up. My guess would be that any company looking at a \$5 million pilot was going to say this is too expensive to shoot! for a series."

"It was tough," agrees Clement, "because I knew they had a very firm budget cap, but Todd helped me out, and the key hairdresser on the show found these fantastic wigs that she was able to purchase for her own rental stock. As a result, we were able to have use of them, which took a great deal of stress off my budget. Time-wise, I thought it was going to

be a fantastic crunch, but we had four weeks before we started shooting, and then it was about a two-week shoot, during which we were still producing things."

One of the big make-up challenges on the pilot was creating a series of transitional

"It might have been possible to do the pilot cheaper using practical locations, but a great deal of elements on the show were CGI."



John Wheaton's concept art for Barnabas



Glenn Eisner works on a sculpture for a prosthetic make-up



John Wheaton's beautifully-rendered design for the Train Demon



Doug Jones in make-up as the Train Demon

stages for Barnabas Collins (Alec Newman), from mummified state to a fully revived state. "When you initially see Barnabas," says Clement, "we took the appliances made for Barnabas and placed them on a dummy that was even more sunken in than Doug Jones, which is really saying something. So we made this papery-looking thing that looked like a South American mummy, and when it gets a drop of blood on it, we switched to Doug in a make-up. And finally, we had the actor [Newman] in the make-up, so he's slowly reconstituting himself until he's finally Barnabas again. I don't know if they ever would have revisited those stages in later episodes. There was a point when we were pretty certain that this was going to get picked up and it was going to be something special, but we weren't sure what the weekly was going to be. Is it going to be like the original **Dark Shadows**, where you don't see too much? Is it going to be like the Nineties version where you really didn't see anything at all?"

New Vampire Star

McIntosh is quick to praise star Alec Newman, who follows in the footsteps of Jonathan Frid in the original series and Ben Cross in the short-lived '90s revival. "Alec was anxious to make it work right, and wanted to be part of it. He came to dinner at my home while we were in pre-production and I loaned him a number of books on Vampires and Vampire mythology so he could do some research. He was definitely

"Alec Newman was anxious to make it work right, so he borrowed a number of books on Vampire mythology to do some research."



Alec Newman as the decayed Barnabas...



...and restored to youth



He's boogedy...Doug Jones as the Train Demon



Marley Shelton with Doug Jones

into it, and out of everyone who lost a job because **Dark Shadows** didn't happen, I feel the worst about Alec, because it would have been a great thing for him. Maybe it's a big advantage that he didn't do Barnabas, because something better will come along."

As for Jones, he was working double duty, also playing the corpse-like 'Train Demon' seen in an opening dream sequence. "I think we were saved on that character," says Clement, "because the approach we took was so much different. For Barnabas, Doug had real dentures, and it was a really nice withered corpse make-up, sculpted by John Wheaton. The Train Demon had these extended teeth that were on top, that were sculpted over his own teeth. He didn't have the ability to bare his lips, but it really gave a really interesting skeletal look to it. So the approach was very different, and the train demon being a little more boogedy



Prosthetics are sculpted... and applied to...



actress Ivana Milicevic...



...as the demonic Angelique!



Marley Shelton as Victoria Winters



Ivana Milicevic as Angelique – ‘an aggressive and powerful enemy’

really saved us. I think you can slightly see a similarity, but I don't think it's distracting in the least."

Another major character in the pilot is the beguiling Angelique (Ivana Milicevic), who in sharp contrast with the original series reveals her true demonic colours early on this time. According to McIntosh, "It was an interesting plot device to throw Angelique


"A major character in the pilot is the beguiling Angelique. She would have been an aggressive and powerful adversary..."

into the works so quickly in the pilot, and I think it would have worked very well. The rest of the series hinged on Angelique's appearance and what was going to happen between her and Barnabas, and we only just barely set it up. My guess is, she would have been an aggressive and powerful adversary."

"There's a scene where they find her as just bones," adds Clement, "and another where she's this apparition floating in the woods, and we did the make-up for that, but you just can't see it. There's also a stage where she's been slammed by a car, so we had to do a busted-up accident make-up. She was going to be a key character, coming back in pretty much whatever guise she wanted to, like a shape-shifter but more ethereal."

Sadly for all involved, the network ultimately decided not to pick up *Dark*

Shadows as a series, but for the pilot's make-up team, it was still an unforgettable experience. It was a dream job for me," says McIntosh. "With Marley Shelton [who plays Victoria Winters], her beauty make-up was as much fun to do as the original *Buffy* make-ups. We were doing Tippi Hedren in *The Birds*; we specifically chose foundations, eye colours, and lip colours that reflected that 1950s beauty, so it would have been a show that used my skills to their best ability."

Clement is a bit more pragmatic. "I never allow myself to get too worked up," he reflects. "A job isn't a job until the cheque clears, but I had such a great time. I got to work with so many fantastic people, I had a great crew, and we were able to create work that we did not have before, so I have no regrets. It was a fantastic experience. I would do it again in a heartbeat." 



A test for Angelique's 'busted-up' look



Marley Shelton, director PJ Hogan and Doug Jones as the Train Demon