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## Nightmare-ish Makeup: Re-Imagining Freddy

An Interview with Special Effects Makeup Artist Andy Clement

By Marjorie Galas



Andrew Clement developed individual panels of silicone "flesh" to construct Freddy Krueger's (Jackie Earle Haley) mangled face, minimizing application time.

Photo courtesy of: Warner Bros. Pictures

Andy Clement has been following Freddy for years.

As a special effects makeup artist and the founder of Creative Character Engineering, he's amassed an extensive reference library on character effects used over the years. He has knowledge on everything from the types of foam and latex appliances used on the original Freddy to decisions that were made in the creation of certain aspects of the character's face, such as constructing a nose much larger than actor Robert England's, giving Freddy the appearance of a "male witch."

When Clement was first approached to be involved in the re-imagining of "A Nightmare on Elm Street," he was not only excited to become affiliated with an iconic horror movie villain, he was also excited to use technological innovations to redefine Freddy's look, from the nose on.

"We have the opportunity now to digitally remove the nose," said Clement. "That's one of the first things that's going to be burned off in a fire, but they didn't have the means of doing that back then. So instead of doing nothing, they gave him this oversized shnooz."

After agreeing to provide the special effects makeup for the movie, "Nightmare" fans began contacting him, dictating elements of the character that needed to remain intact. Knowing there were going to be segments of the horror universe who would never be satisfied with his Freddy, Clement made it his mission to pay homage to the original as much as possible.

"We really brought it to a new level, we did things with contact lenses, we did things with the hand, we put little twists that were still very respectful of the original," said Clement. "This 'Nightmare' is just pedal to the metal horror, and in the others there was a certain amount of camp. I think that makeup fit that time and that sort of film. But this isn't that sort of film."

Freddy's face was altered during the seven previous "Nightmare" films. Clement began his process of defining the spidery, burnt skin look by assembling photos of all the previous incarnations of the character as a means of both seeing what the audience would accept of the character and defining his own path. Knowing that the updated material and techniques could provide something really frightening, Clement focused on balancing a clinical look of what would happen to a person thrown into a fire along with character-driven choices necessary for Freddy to be accepted throughout the film.

After making a life cast of actor Jackie Earle Haley, Clement began sculpting the molds for the silicone appliances that would later be attached to Haley's face. The foam and latex of the past required heavy makeup that created a flat, painterly quality to the surface. With the proper coloring added to the silicone, a translucency could be played with that added dimension to the character's appearance. Clement spent a great deal of time developing coloring that would work best for the camera and lighting set-ups of the film.

"The silicone, as it comes out of the bucket, is just a cloudy white. So it's really important that you add powered pigment and you add flocking, which are these tiny fibers that look like little capillaries in the skin," said Clement. "There's a lot of work that has to be done before you do any of the localized coloration. We constantly did a quality check to make sure the colors didn't shift."

Multiple tests were done until both Clement and director Samuel Bayer felt satisfied that the skin had a natural coloring to it. Once the best base color for the silicone was achieved, tattoo inks were used to pre-paint the appliances prior to their application to the actors. The strong lighting that was used on the set created challenges that Clement and his team had to quickly tackle.

"The lighting was very tough on the makeup. We wound up doing things on the fly that very first day before Jackie even got before the cameras," said Clement. "We had to jump up the texture. The lighting was very harsh: from a great distance it had the tendency to blow through any coloration that we put on the surface."

The appliances are applied in sections to Haley's face over a three to four hour period. Due to their delicate nature, they could not be reused. Thirty people were working under Clement to create, color, and prepare the pieces that were necessary for the thirty day film shoot. In addition to the makeup used for Freddy, Clement and his staff also had to create all the makeup for Freddy's victims ranging from cut and stab wounds to more intricate effects.

"One of the characters had to have skin that would unzip, and Freddy would come out from inside the actor," said Clement. "We took laser scans of the actor and we did some special life casting tricks that would allow us to get an enlarged head, about one and a half the actual size, so Jackie could fit inside it with the makeup on and unzip and peel the skin off, so we had a lot of crazy things happening."

The limited time frame and creative freedom in finding innovative ways of creating effects both subtle and showy that "Nightmare" provided was a perfect match with Clement's interest.

"One of the things that I love about the films I've been offered recently is that I've been called on to do things that are so subtle and delicate to things that are so big," said Clement. "On 'Nightmare,' we had these scratches that we did on a little girl. Freddy just grazed her, so they are just tiny welts on the skin. We made these transfer appliances that are just a whisper, and when the light shined on them they looked like the skin was just grazed, not broken but welted up. We also made a dummy with a steel armature in the head and neck, so when it slammed into the ceiling, the head would hyper-extend down, the shoulders would hit the ceiling and it was very clear that her neck was broken on impact. To actually have that range of scope of work is the thing that excites me now."

Added Clement, "I like having something like Freddy that's really speaking to the audience, that the audience is engaging in and actually having some sort of emotional reaction from. If I can be a part of that, it gives me the greatest thrill in the world."

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