

Blood Spattered Blog: I Was Made For Burying You, Baby

Written by Chris Alexander

Saturday, 15 January 2011 09:23



Death sucks. It's sad, strange, scary and unfortunately inevitable. And what's worse is that, no matter how unfair it seems, when it comes to your passions and material possessions, you—as the saying goes—"can't take it with you."

But if you're a geek, if you've been tempted to legally change your name to James T. Kirk, think of baseball as a religion or wear eight-inch platform dragon boots to the mailbox, then the good souls at Eternal Image are making a strong bid to help you betray that train of thought.

The company—incorporated in 2006—has been making news and waves by selling collectibles to corpses, giving your busted shell one last blast of nerd-tastic pop-culture glory. First with a series of licensed Major League Baseball products including coffins and urns, then with the intergalactic, ghost-of-Roddenberry-approved STAR TREK urns (with the words "To Boldly Go..." emblazoned on their fronts) and now with a newly minted (the product will be officially unveiled later this month), Gene Simmons-sanctioned Kiss casket.

What better way to box your body than with the band that rocked your body in life?



Since FANGORIA deals with the fantasy of death, we thought it fun to speak with the company that combines that fantasy with mortality's grim reality. Here, then, is a conversation with Eternal Image CEO and president Clint Mytych. If you or someone you know is about to kick the bucket and is really bummed about having to say goodbye to that limited-edition framed European one-sheet of Kiss MEETS THE PHANTOM OF THE PARK, then this interview will offer comfort and hope...enjoy.

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FANGORIA: Tell us about the mandate of Eternal Image.

CLINT MYTYCH: Our theme here is to celebrate the passions of life. We take brand names that people identified with in life, their passions and hobbies, and make those trademark designs an essence available in memorial products—things like caskets, urns, prayer cards and candles. STAR TREK and Kiss are a major part of our entertainment line. In the case of STAR TREK, it has been extremely popular, with orders coming in from as far away as the Philippines. Right now we have the urn, but the STAR TREK casket is only four months away.

FANG: So are these items always purchased for the dead? I can imagine there must be a strong collector's market for them.

MYTYCH: It's both, of course, but as far as caskets and urns, our products don't really follow any known normal path to purchase. I mean, if a family member dies, people go in and ask for New York Yankees casket at the funeral home—and if it's not in the funeral home, they'll order it for them. This is unprecedented. We've given the public the power to go in and request a product by brand name, and that has never happened before. We've also found that if someone is deceased and their remains are in someone's home, the relation will call and tell us, "Your urn is a better resting place for our loved one, so I'm buying your urn and putting their remains into it." That has never happened before either, that someone switches remains, sometimes years after they were cremated. That's pretty exciting for us.

FANG: Anytime a journalist talks about Simmons and his licensing of the Kiss brand, the sentence always ends, "...and there's even a Kiss coffin!" This is the second wave of that product; can you tell me how you got linked up with Simmons?

MYTYCH: I forget how it first happened, really. We talked to Gene a couple of times, and the people at Live Nation made a style guide available to us to see what we could do. The press have covered us a lot over the years, especially with the baseball items—we have 300 times more returns than companies that have been around 110-plus years. So I think it was Live Nation that heard about us and approached us about everything, not just caskets. In fact, by the middle of next year we'll have the Kiss casket, urn varieties, prayer cards and registry books. Gene even asked if we could do some pet projects, and since we already do stuff for the American Kennel Club, we'll do some Kiss pet urns too.

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FANG: Is there any controversy in what you do? Have any, um, death “purists” called the product out for being tacky?

MYTYCH: Honestly, journalists in their due diligence are the only ones who ask me that; we’ve never had anyone e-mail us and say our products are tacky or disrespectful. I mean, the number-one foundation of our portfolio is the Vatican, and Catholic or not, that adds legitimacy. And the other thing is that our design team works with the brands directly to ensure that everything we do design-wise is approved. It’s collaborative. We’re not slapping logos on existing products, we’re trying to shape something from the ground up...

FANG: ...or the ground down, as the case may be...

MYTYCH: Hahaha...yeah...

FANG: Is this stuff built to last? I mean, if we dig up the Kiss coffin in 100 years, will it still be playing “Rock and Roll All Night” or what?

MYTYCH: Our caskets are 18-gauge steel, they’re insanely durable with the best quality graphics wrapping available. They’re made to last a lot longer than wood. They’re thick gauge and they’re vacuum-sealed and airtight, meeting all industry standards.

FANG: Can you tell us about some of the features of the Kiss coffin?

MYTYCH: I can tell you that there’s black velvet, leather, silver studs and the Kiss logo on the headboard. This is the most unique interior we’ve ever offered. There will be a plastic tray on the bottom if someone wants to use it as an ice chest at a party...and we’re still tweaking it a bit.

FANG: What’s the retail on this thing?

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MYTCYH: It will sell for \$3,995 MSRP retail. Within two days of announcing the Kiss casket, we had already had record-breaking requests from Germany, the Netherlands...again, it's unprecedented. We'll be shipping these all over the world right off the bat.

FANG: So you *can* take it with you...

MYTYCH: Well, I mean, it's hard enough to lose someone, but we hope offering the sort of products we do makes the process easier. For one thing, it will save many the time and pain of picking a casket in their time of grief.

So there you have it. If you're on death's door and wanna Shout it Loud, go to www.eternalimage.net and have a gander at their wares. They don't do Plaster Caster's, unfortunately, and a coffin will set you back more than a Deuce, but at least your remains will be encased in the facades of your greasepaint-and-stage-blood-coated icons for 100,000 Years.

Alexander out.

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