Last year, FANGORIA was invited to visit the set of the 3D remake of FRIGHT NIGHT (opening tomorrow from DreamWorks/Touchstone), where, amidst a full day of filming, we were ushered into a setting for which the excitement for never dies: the makeup trailer of KNB EFX veteran Howard Berger. Once inside, surrounded with walls plastered with tests of vampiric transformations of all kinds, the co-founder of the legendary makeup FX house took us through his and his team’s thought process behind the blood, guts and monsters for the reworking of Tom Holland’s 1985 classic.

Unfortunately, having seen the film, it would seem as if the in-camera work he so enthusiastically discussed has been scuttled by digital augmentation (unless, of course, his comment below about audience perception is correct). Still, his heart was in the right place as he guided us through his ideas behind the vampire designs of Jerry Dandridge (Colin Farrell), Evil Ed (Christopher Mintz-Plasse) and Amy (Imogen Poots).

Jerry

“Always when you’re dealing with vampires in different films, you’re looking for a new angle, and on this film, it really was dealing with things that Craig [Gillespie, the director] wanted to see,” he says. “What was cool was that he had a different view, especially because he’s not a horror guy. He’s never directed a horror film. He’s barely seen a horror movie. When he first got brought onto the show, we gave him this giant list of movies to watch, and he has two teenage sons that are totally into horror films, so that certainly helped him, and we told him what he should stay away from. What we did want to do was, we wanted Jerry to be a predator, and part of the character is that he’s a vampire that has survived hundreds and hundreds of

years, but also a serial killer as well. Granted, he kills for the feed, but he also kills for the fun. So we really tried to do a form-follows-function, and one of the things you'll see on the designs is, it starts off very subtle, where it's just eyes and teeth, and gets a bit bigger with veins and then really big into our final monster makeup.

"We really wanted to do something with the teeth," he continues, "and though we started off with the kind of standard vampire incisors and fangs, we then kind of segue into sharp teeth, and they become rows and rows which unfurl when it's time to attack, so it's not just like a big jumbled mouth of teeth. There's actually a reason for it. It's something we'll see happen in the film digitally. We built all the digital apparatuses for Colin to wear coinciding with his makeups, and we won't do a lot, but there's a little digital augmentation. I think that always kind of works well, especially when you're trying to come up with something different. The fact that we have that option is great, be it if we pull Colin's mouth a little bit wider or eyes a bit farther apart, enough so that it looks odd.

"We also wanted to keep the essence of Colin; he has this animal magnetism to himself and his performance, and obviously vampires are very seductive, and we wanted to keep all that. We never have him walking around in big monster makeup. What causes these flare-ups are adrenaline and anger, so they happen very quickly, like a puffer fish; it puffs and recedes back. It's kind of the same thought we came up with. We just wanted something interesting and different to look at, and the way Colin's playing it is really fantastic. He really respects the original film. Everybody on this seems to respect that movie."

Evil Ed and Amy (Spoilers)

"Chris is a great Evil Ed, and we have two different stages of makeup on him," Berger explains. "He has a subtle version, which is eyes and veins and dentures, and then he ramps up because of anger and ends up getting his arm chopped off and gets up to second stage, which is what he's in today. It's a full silicone prosthetic piece with bigger dentures and different-color eyes and ears, and then of course his arm stump.

"Our other big makeup is on Amy. We kept *the* mouth [from the '85 version], and we wanted to keep that original concept alive. We kind of took what the guys did back in the '80s and revisited and revamped it. What, again, is going to be a slight CG augmentation is the interior of the mouth. It's digital, but everything else is a prosthetic on her, a whole full-face piece with a big smile. It has a lot of movement when we glue it down. We'll see it quickly, but it will be

effective. I think in the original film they held on that makeup for quite a while and you kind of knew what the gag was. I think with this we'll be able to do some trickery."

Achieving The Desired Effect

"All the makeups we've done on this show are all silicone," Berger says, "and as that technology is growing, we're just finding 100 uses for it. One of the reasons we use the silicone is we want to create a level of translucency. Craig kept saying there's a couple of shots in I AM LEGEND which although those are digital creatures, there's some extreme translucency that he really liked and the studio really liked. So what we wanted to do was come up with something that would kind of mirror that look, but practically. We're trying to do as much practical as possible.

"There's not a lot of digital stuff; it's not a big, giant showcase for CGI. It's really a lot of suspense and some drama and some laughs and some blood and guts and a whole lot of makeup effects and a little digital. We're using all the digital stuff where we feel it will enhance the movie, not 'Hey, in lieu of storyline, we'll have a big, giant digital effects sequence here.'

"There are a million things I like about this movie, and what I'm really into is Craig's vision. He created a very realistic universe. There's nothing that's over-the-top, nothing like seeing Jerry's house and there's fog coming out. He could be the guy next door, which is a kind of serial-killer point of reference. I like the fact that Craig is really keeping with wide shots, long wide shots. He's not an insert sort of guy. It's not 5,000 edits to a little bit of story. He tells the story in a wide shot, and I think that's great. That's classic filmmaking. And it's something that hasn't been done in horror movies. It's a little bit like a '70s horror film, where you see it. It's so wide and all this crazy crap is happening, and he really just tries to do a lot of stuff in camera in one take. It's something I would love to do more of. It's a far better magic trick than thousands of inserts and edits.

"There are a lot of different effects we have that I think a lot of people will unfortunately think are digital or some sort of visual effects trickery, but it was all in camera. There's a tremendous amount of in-camera stuff which is really, really fantastic."