The second victim on Syfy’s makeup competition series FACE OFF, Nicholas “Nix” Herrera, met his maker after he and fellow competitor Jerry Macaluso (in the bottom two for the second time in a row) failed to sufficiently waterproof their turtle-human hybrid.

FANGORIA: What were you doing before being cast on FACE OFF?

NICHOLAS “NIX” HERRERA: I’m actually a freelance artist. I’m known for my body painting, but I got my start in the haunted-house industry back in 1989. So during the summertime I body-paint, and then from fall to winter is all Halloween. I actually had some of my work in FANGORIA back in 2000, from a local haunted house here in Orlando called Skull Kingdom. So it’s pretty cool talking with you guys now, 12 years later.

I’ve been here for the last 20 years. Orlando has been the best place for me to be. It’s where I got my start in the industry. I started out as this character at a year-round haunted house, and that’s where I pretty much learned the trade, from the FX artist putting a bald cap on me every day and airbrushing me from waist to head. Everyone asks me to move to LA, but [Orlando] is the perfect pace.

FANG: Are you self-taught?

HERRERA: Pretty much—just watching the other artists work on me, or having the opportunity to work at Universal Studios during Halloween Horror Nights, or Grinchmas. I was fortunate enough that people saw something in me worth taking a minute to teach me. It’s ironic, because my mentor, Bill McCoy, ended up teaching at Joe Blasco, and the girl I’ve been dating for the last six years, before I met her, went to Joe Blasco and had Bill as her teacher. I’m just so fortunate to have very good friends.

FANG: There’s a lot of production down South; have you also been working on commercials and TV shows? Or is it mainly body painting for haunted house-type stuff?

HERRERA: It’s pretty much split between the two. I haven’t done a whole lot of work on films. It’s mostly the body painting. I do a lot for celebrity parties, or competitions, promotions for Budweiser and different companies. And then from August until November, I actually go overseas and work for a theme park called Ocean Park in Hong Kong. It’s one of Asia’s biggest haunted attractions, which is really cool. It’s very different with the horror fan base in Asia, because they’re more about taking photos with the characters rather than being scared by them. Which makes a makeup artist’s job that much more difficult, because it’s being captured on film. For instance, there’s a character called “Kappa” who has a bowl of water on his head, and to defeat him you have to bow, so he pours the water out. And you look at this character and think it’s completely silly, but the Asian culture loves it, they just eat it up. It keeps us away from doing Freddy and Jason, those kind of characters. I’m the type of person who gets bored easily, so having the change from body paint to Halloween effects is a good mix for me.

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