

“FACE OFF”: Sixth Casualty

Written by Sean Abley
Thursday, 05 April 2012 15:55



Sweet and even-tempered Heather Henry was the sixth to depart Syfy's makeup-competition series FACE OFF. The Dallas-based FX artist gave us some choice dirt on the show, Gary Coleman's penis and the I SPIT ON YOUR GRAVE remake.

FANGORIA: What's a nice girl like you doing in an industry like this?

HEATHER HENRY: Well... [*Laughs*] My bio mentioned that I have a sharp tongue and a sick sense of humor, but I guess that never came through in the final edit. I've always loved art, and I've always loved movies, but for some reason it never occurred to me to have that as a career until after college. Some friends made a short film and I made a fake head to get cut off, and I really enjoyed it, and I needed a career change. So I just started pursuing it. I took all the makeup classes at a community college that I could, and all the theater classes and set design and lighting. I saved up my money and went to the Joe Blasco school and never looked back.



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FANG: I know there's a lot of film production in Texas. Are you finding there are a lot of makeup FX opportunities there as well?

HENRY: Sometimes. I worked on PRISON BREAK, which was heavy with cuts and bruises, and a lot of tattoos. I got really good at getting people dirty and bloody, bruised and cut up. After that I worked on CHASE, which was kind of similar—a lot of fights and cuts and bruises. And then I worked on GCB, which was the opposite [*laughs*]. In between those shows, I've just worked on a lot of independent films, and a couple of big-budget films, but always as an additional makeup artist.

FANG: What was your audition process for FACE OFF? I've talked to some contestants and it took weeks, and for others it took months.

HENRY: I watched the first season and loved it. I thought it looked like the best time ever, even though I'm a bit reserved and I never wanted to be on television, never had any aspirations for that. I was actually working on the GCB pilot, and I took a Saturday and did a quick makeup on myself using a piece I'd made for somebody else. I sent it in and didn't really expect anything to happen from that audition, but I actually got a call that day asking me if I'd done all the stuff, if I'd made all the pieces and if everything was mine. And a few days later, they told me they'd like to fly me to Los Angeles in a few weeks for the finals. Four or five days before I flew out there, they told us about a new test: a full makeup on ourselves in two hours. I went to the store and bought everything I could possibly need, and treated it like a challenge. I got as much done in those days that I could possibly get done.

Then I flew to LA and they had us do our makeup tests, and we had psychological evaluations and interviews and camera tests and all sorts of stuff. It was a few months after that that we finally found out if we were on the show. That was the most agonizing part. I actually had a job offer to go to Germany, which was a great opportunity and I really wanted to go. But I just kept holding out, because I had this feeling that I was going to be on FACE OFF. I didn't want to turn down a great job for a possible job, but I did. And I'm really glad it paid off.

FANG: What was the hardest part of the FACE OFF experience?

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HENRY: Not having any contact with anybody you knew before the show. Everything starts to feel very surreal. You get really wrapped up in what you're doing at the house. That was probably the hardest part for me. In a technical way, although we had so many supplies, we didn't have a lot of the materials I'm used to using. We had a different brand, or we had something similar but not quite the same. That was actually really hard for me. You get used to your certain products. They didn't have anything that could be chemically harmful, so we didn't have any eurothanes, plastics, fiberglass, stuff I'm used to using. We had to kind of go back to old-school ways of doing things.

FANG: Let's talk about the judges for a second. Is it my imagination, or is Ve Neill tougher on the women?

HENRY: I definitely feel Ve is tougher on the women. I know she loves that women are in the industry, and maybe that's why she's harder on them. I'm not really sure. But I definitely felt like she was tougher on the ladies. She wouldn't let anything slide with us. I felt it. I just thought maybe it was just me.



FANG: What are your thoughts on the judges overall? Are they right on with their criticisms? Are they overly harsh?

HENRY: I do think typically they're right on, but they're still overly harsh [*laughs*]. I guess that makes good television. I think if you'd asked them their opinions outside of the show, they wouldn't be as brutal as they are on it. Some things they say are for entertainment purposes, but the critiques are usually pretty accurate, I believe. I respect all their opinions. I usually looked forward to their critiques, until that final episode [

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laughs

]. But I knew it was bad, so I was actually wondering why I was spared Glenn [Hetrick's] wrath. He was really hard on me, and Patrick was kind of hard, and he's always the nice one. Then I was bracing myself: "Oh boy, here comes Glenn's critique." And then McKenzie [Westmore] was like, "Heather, you can step back down?" And I was like, "What happened?"

FANG: Normally for contestants on reality competition shows, it's either a complete surprise when they get sent home, or they know well before they get up on the judging stage that they're probably going to be eliminated. Did you have a sense during your final challenge that this was it?

HENRY: Every episode I got anxious, because I'd look around the room and see someone's work and think it was great, and the judges would tear it down. And then there would be something I didn't think was that great, and it would win. So I wouldn't know who would be where. I got sick on episode six, so I was kind of DayQuil-y that day. So the whole time was...I was pretty chill the whole day, actually [*laughs*]. I could hear [guest judge] Greg Cannon's voice in the corner while they were interviewing him, and all I could hear was, "Too subtle, too subtle, too subtle..." And seeing that on TV, they were talking about Sue [Lee], but that got into my head: "I gotta make it bigger. I gotta go bigger."

Then the piece came back, and it was like bubblegum. It looked OK when she was in a chair, because she was leaning back. It wasn't until we got to the stage, I was like, "She looks like Droopy Dog." And it just got worse and worse while we were waiting. Even though I knew it looked really bad and I was embarrassed by it, I still thought there were a couple that were worse than mine. So I knew I was going to be at the bottom, but I really didn't think I was going home. And it wasn't until I was actually standing on that red circle, and I saw Beki [Ingram] holding her chest—and that's how I normally felt when I was up there, feeling like my heart was going to beat out of my chest—and I was totally calm. That's when I realized, "I'm the one going home. But I don't want to be eliminated..." Usually, people are looking up at ceiling or looking down, waiting for that, and I was just staring at Glenn. I was just staring him down. "You're going to say my name. Just say it..." And part of me didn't want them sending Beki or Ian [Cromer] home, because I thought those two were going to make it to the end.

FANG: Do you think being on FACE OFF is going to be good for your career?

HENRY: I think it might help me out a little bit positively. It's made me go after bigger jobs I

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wouldn't normally go after. It helps me at least get my foot through the door. I treated the whole experience like a job interview. I didn't cry or any of that. You wouldn't cry on the set. I tried to be as fun and easy to work with as possible.

FANG: Speaking of which, I get the impression that Sue is a little, how do I say this...fragile?

HENRY: I knew there would be a Sue question in there. Sue and I actually worked together pretty easily on episode three. But just seeing how she was with other people, and knowing that she was talking poorly of people behind their backs all the time, that's why I didn't want to work with her in this episode. You always knew she was going to make herself the victim, and I didn't want to deal with it. I felt bad for Tara [Lang] because she got stuck there.



FANG: We could see her during her interviews talking about other people, but it sounded like she was doing it on set as well.

HENRY: The first set of interviews was done in the house, in the basement. And we could hear screaming. So that kind of tipped us all off that she wasn't being very kind in her interviews. Athena [Zhe] was my roommate, and she and Matt [Valentine] were good friends, and Matt and Sue were good friends, so she would hear all sorts of stuff. She would kind of give me a heads-up: "Sue was just saying awful things about you..." I would treat her in the house as though...I still believe she might have undiagnosed Asperger's. She always had the most inappropriate responses to things. Inappropriate in a human sense—like, that's not what people do or say. She'd laugh at the wrong time, or she'd cry when you weren't saying anything mean. And she actually confided in me after the show, when we were waiting for our flights, that she has a really hard time reading people, communicating with people and understanding

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what they mean. So that’s when I was like, “She has Asperger’s and she doesn’t even know it.” But as long as I had that in my mind, I was able to treat her with compassion.

FANG: What’s the weirdest job you’ve ever had?

HENRY: That’s easy. On a film called MIDGETS VS. MASCOTS, I had to make a 14-inch penis for Gary Coleman’s character, and a one-inch penis for the main character. I didn’t even get credited in it, because they said they didn’t want anybody to know that wasn’t his real penis. But I’ll tell you right now: That wasn’t his real penis.

FANG: Did you have to apply it as well?

HENRY: I did. The department head on that movie helped me. I had to get him shaved, and apply it. There was one point when I got the giggles and had to step out for a second to control myself. [The department head] was kneeling in front of him, and he had his legs really tightly together, and she was like, “Open up for mama...” [*Laughs*] We had to walk him across a field to get him to the set with his penis in my hands to keep it from dangling on the ground. Very strange.

FANG: When you’re doing makeup on set over a long production, the artist and the actors tend to bond while they’re in the chair. I can’t imagine what it was like working on I SPIT ON YOUR GRAVE, considering the subject matter and what the lead actress went through. And to top it off, you were a woman working on a rape/revenge film. Can you share your thoughts about working on that movie?

HENRY: I was really excited to get to do I SPIT ON YOUR GRAVE. The original was such an iconic horror movie. Normally, I try to keep my relationships with actors strictly professional. But on SPIT, I was staying in the same hotel with everybody, and given the nature of the film, we did get to know each other pretty well. I did say at the wrap party, “Wow. I’ve seen everybody here’s asses.” Sarah Butler was awesome. She was able to get herself out of her character quickly. The whole cast was very nice, and we all got along really well. There were many surreal moments on that set. One day, we were all skipping down the dirt road singing “Lean On Me” on the way to shoot another day of a rape scene.

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FANG: So what's next for you?

HENRY: I'm going to stay in Dallas. The reason I would move to LA would be able to work with more people more often. I'm not really by myself, but there's not the caliber of artists I'd like to learn from out here. I started a company with two other artists here, called [High Noon Creations](#).

We're making museum pieces, props for haunted houses. I got to work on DALLAS after I came back from FACE OFF, more independent films, commercials, photo shoots—basically the same stuff I was working on before FACE OFF.

FANG: And now you're reality-TV famous. Have you been recognized?

HENRY: I know, it's weird. Only a few times. One time I was at the Halloween convention in Houston, and I was with Nix [Herrera], and they always recognize Nix first. And then they're realize after, "Oh, you were on FACE OFF, too!" And then I was at a concert one night and I got recognized 10 times. Oh, and at the makeup store.