



## Reviving Freddy: Interview with Andrew Clement

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By Joe Nazzaro

At first glance, it could be considered a thankless assignment: creating the elaborate prosthetic makeup for Jackie Earle Haley, who was playing Freddy Krueger in the 2010 remake of *A Nightmare on Elm Street*. After all, the character had already been played in nearly a dozen films, making him one of the most recognizable faces in horror history.

But that wasn't about to stop makeup effects wizard Andrew Clement from Creative Character Engineering, who was able to create a look for Haley's Freddy that was new and distinct while still paying homage to elements of the original. Clement recently took time to discuss his work on the film, which includes a couple of memorable moments that unfortunately didn't make the final cut...



JN: How did you originally get involved in the *Nightmare on Elm Street* remake?

Andrew Clement: I had worked with one of the producers on *Repo Men*. He told me that it was going to be happening and wanted to get me in to meet some people, so I did a little research and

discovered that there had been rumors for somebody else to be in the role. It was Billy Bob Thornton, so in preparation for whoever I was going to be meeting, I started knocking out a design or two based on Billy Bob, just to see how he was going to look in a version of the makeup. And then I met with [director] Sam Bayer and Andrew Form and Sam Fuller the producers and we really hit it off so I did some designs based on what we talked about at that meeting and ultimately they awarded me the film.

JN: I can't help thinking this could be a no-win situation for a makeup designer, because you're basically recreating an iconic character. Were you worried about that?

AC: I knew that it was sort of going to be a no-win situation with a portion of the fans, and I've always had a lot of respect for the original makeup. I thought Kevin [Yagher] and all the parties involved with it did a great job, but one of the things that I did when we started really talking about the new film, I went through my files where I had photos of all the Freddy makeups that had been done over the years, and I put them up on my bulletin board in film order so that I could see the arc of what Freddy was over the years and what somebody would accept. There have been a lot of different versions over the years, so I figured there was some room for a different interpretation. I knew that I wouldn't please everybody, but I was hoping that I would please some of the people. And of course my biggest concern was pleasing the director and having everybody who was there confident with what they could work with.

JN: Was there anything they specifically wanted or didn't want to see?



AC: In the beginning when I was first doing all the design iterations, I did everything from things that were really fantasy-oriented to things that were grounded in burn makeups; some very subtle things where the actor really showed through. At this point, I knew that they were really interested in having Jackie play the character and as soon as I heard that they were considering Jackie, I was like, "Oh, he's the guy!" I hadn't seen *Little Children*, but I had known his work from when he was a kid and I knew that he had played Rorschach [in *Watchmen*] and knew what he would be capable of, so I thought he would be perfect. So I really started focusing my designs on him. I also had Tully Summers doing some 3D concepts for me, and Constantine Sekeris was doing some concepts and we were all feeding off of each other, so that was a lot of fun and we ultimately got it down to this one design that everybody really liked.

JN: If you're basically creating what amounts to a stylized burn makeup, is there a line you have to be careful about so it doesn't become too horrific?



AC: You're absolutely right, but I think we're actually saved by the virtue of the fact that it is a makeup. To look at an actual burn victim on screen — I have some unfortunate reference material that's really difficult to look at and it's very heartbreaking. They're so far gone that it's difficult to believe that somebody could survive with their face looking like that. You just couldn't look at them, but I have Jackie's eyelids and his humanity still there. I couldn't really get rid of his lips with a regular makeup without going to a false front or pulling them back ridiculously far with silk or something like that. But I think you're right, and we tried to keep it bloodless so it wasn't dripping and oozing and all these terrible things. It was fairly dry and it was a healed burn so I think we ended up striking a nice balance that doesn't go too far.

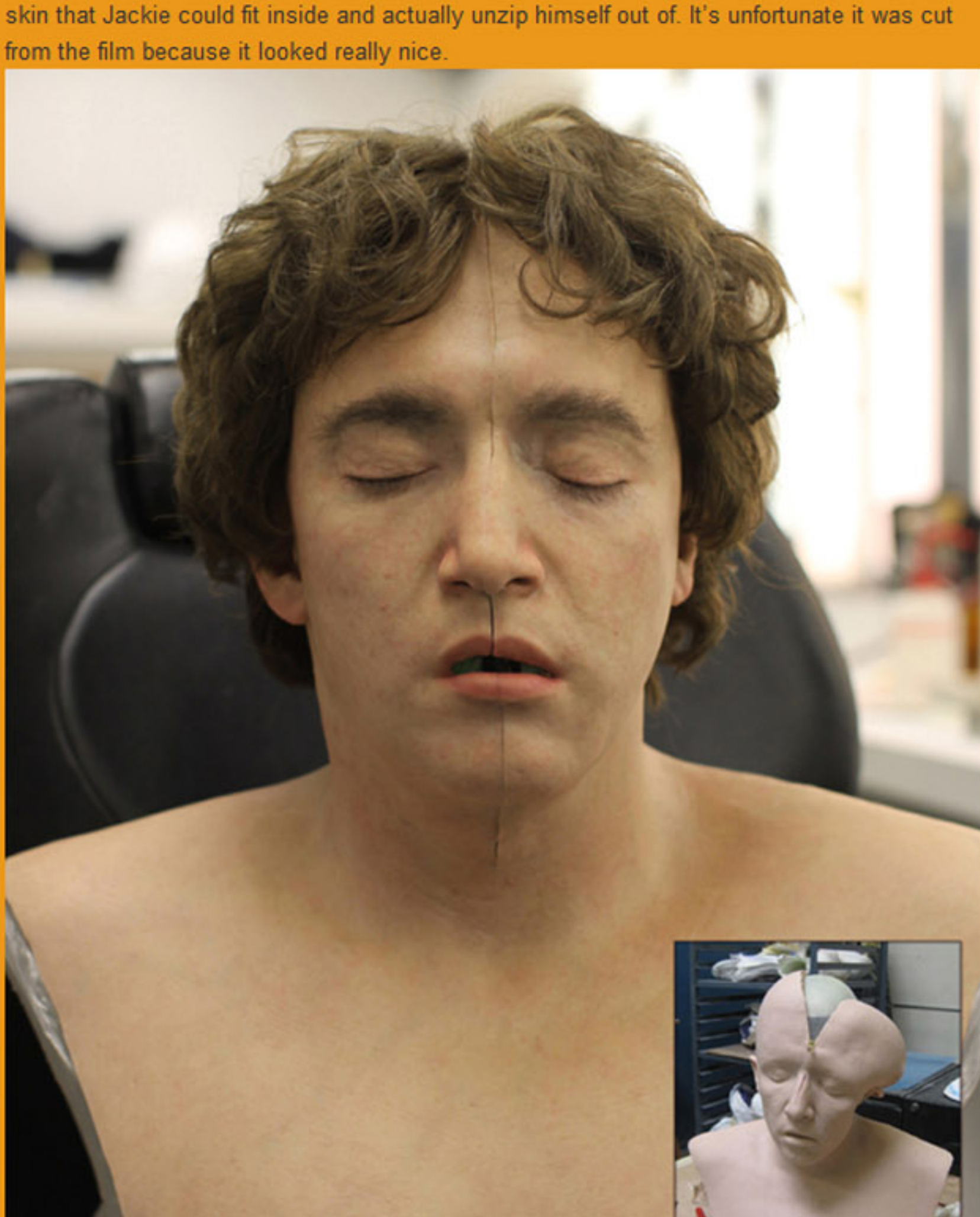
JN: Was there a lot of other work on the film aside from the Freddy makeup?

AC: For the re-shoots, we actually did a makeup of Jackie being burned, so there's a shot of him in the process of becoming Freddy. They called me up and said, "We want something to show that this is happening, so what can we do?" I actually dragged out some of my original concept art that I had done and said, "Well, this looks like Jackie on the way," and they said, "Perfect!" So we did one full-face silicone appliance that we glued on, that was nice and subtle, so you can still see it's Jackie, but you can also see that he's on his way to becoming Freddy. We also did Freddy's victims, so we did all of the traditional four-slash appliances from his blades.

We also did six or seven full bodies of people, some of which were pretty complicated. One of them was the character of Chris for whom we made this whole mechanical rig inside the dummy. Freddy is supposed to kill her by smashing her head into the ceiling so I said, "Let's do it so when she bashes that ceiling, her neck can get broken in a way that he's clearly broken her neck!" We built an aluminum and steel armature into the dummy so you could slam it into the ceiling and the head would telescope and bend down so the shoulders could actually hit the ceiling. They ended up never using it so that was a shame, because we spent a lot of time getting it just right.



There was another effect that got cut, where the character of Quentin is seen in a dream and we did a little riff on something that Sam had done for a music video, where someone unzips their head and another character is inside, but in this film, it was supposed to be Quentin who unzips himself and Freddy comes out. What we had to do was make an oversized Quentin head, so we took a life cast of Quentin and tooled it up and then we made a silicone negative that we swelled in kerosene until it was large enough that we could actually make a Quentin skin that Jackie could fit inside and actually unzip himself out of. It's unfortunate it was cut from the film because it looked really nice.



JN: What are you happiest with as far as your work on *Nightmare* is concerned?

AC: I'm really happy with the entire film. I think for as incredibly compressed as pre-production was... we didn't get Jackie until the 11th hour; we were stuck in negotiations, so my build on that makeup was incredibly tight. I needed to stay on my feet and be aware of all the changes, so to come up with what we came up with was really nice. I'm terrifically proud of everything we did on that film. Working on that makeup is like looking at the Star Destroyer from *Star Wars*: you've got people who analyze every little piece of plastic that's put on this thing, and even trying to reproduce it, so I really want everything to be carefully thought out and not fudged at all. It's definitely going to be compared to something, but I think this makeup does stand on its own.

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