

Diary: Director Jeff Speed on DIY gore in Municipal Waste's new video

Written by Jeff Speed

Thursday, 10 May 2012 07:29



Achieving high production value on a shoestring budget is always a challenge, but then throw in space stations, spaceship interiors and multiple gore FX and you are flirting with a PLAN 9 disaster, right? I say, “bring it on.” This was the challenge presented when Municipal Waste’s Tony Foresta pitched me the cannibalistic space voyage that was the band’s latest single “The Fatal Feast.” This was an opportunity I couldn’t pass; and so on a tiny budget, an epic bloodbath would be born.

After locking down a perfect location (Laurel Canyon Stages, set of *FIREFLY*), production designer Chris Speed and I focused on the elements that would take this video over the top—the practical gore FX and spaceship miniatures. We came up with three effective kill scenes (Captain’s Disembowelment, Gore Geyser, Astro Face Melt) that we could pull off with our limited resources and budget and, at the same time, cut seamlessly with the band’s gruesome *DUSK ‘TIL DAWN*-inspired performance.



The “captain’s disembowelment” scene has the band violently ripping out fistfuls of their leader’s intestines, and devouring them in a rabid frenzy. We used about twenty feet of homemade latex intestines (provided by FX artist Charlene De La Torre), a bucket, fake blood, and a double of the captain’s button down shirt. Three shots were needed to sell the kill. First, a wide shot of the band tearing out the Captain’s guts (with the bucket of intestines just out of

Diary: Director Jeff Speed on DIY gore in Municipal Waste's new video

Written by Jeff Speed
Thursday, 10 May 2012 07:29

frame on the captain's lap). The composition here is critical to make this cheat work. Next, is a close-up of intestines being ripped out of the fake torso: stuff the shirt to give it body mass and rig a bowl of bloody intestines just behind the area that will be torn through. Punch between the buttons of the shirt and pull out a healthy handful of gore. Lastly, there's a close-up of the Captain's blood curdling reaction to tie it all together.



The "gore geyser" is the grisly aftermath of a chase scene through the Waste Station corridors. The victim is trapped behind a closing door as the bloodthirsty band rapidly close in for the kill. Chris built a miniature version of the door out of cheap wood, and painted it to match. We rigged the door parallel to the ground so that we could dump a five-gallon bucket of blood straight down through the door opening. We shot the gore explosion sideways so that when we turned it horizontal in post, the blood would look like it was shooting straight out of the door.



The 'astro face melt' scene is the keystone kill of the video, and the most difficult. We had an astronaut whose face melts off by his own boiling blood. We rented two duplicate space helmets and made them liquid tight with gaffer's tape and neoprene from an old wet suit, then rigged them with blood tubing. Our actor wears one helmet, and the other helmet has our melted skull face (made by FX artist, Steve Aparicio) inside it. We attached a blood filled fire

Diary: Director Jeff Speed on DIY gore in Municipal Waste's new video

Written by Jeff Speed
Thursday, 10 May 2012 07:29

extinguisher to the actor's helmet and let it rip. Once the blood level rises above the actor's nose we have our shot. Now we have to match this shot to the helmet with the skull in it, so composition, lighting and blood level must be the same. Then, we release the blood out of the new helmet and reveal the astronaut's melted skull face.



Blue screens and miniatures were uncharted territories for Chris and I, but DP Doug Cheney had done some experimenting with these kinds of shoots, so we were in good hands. Chris did an incredible job constructing the spaceships out of various models, pieces of plastic, poster board, beer cans and paint. Armed with a blue screen, slider, a couple of c-stands and a Canon 7D, we were able to launch the ships into orbit. We shot each ship on its own separate plate, with the intention of compositing the shots together in post. For the Waste Station approach, we pushed in on the stationary ship with the camera mounted on the slider. For the Rescue Ship fly by, we pulled the camera/slider back away from the stationary ship. Once the shot is reversed in post it will look like the Rescue Ship is flying forward past the camera and out into space. Both shots were filmed at 70 fps to add weight to the ships and smoothen out the camera moves. The space background was composited and built in AfterEffects.



In my opinion, you can't beat practical FX. And in terms of low budget filmmaking, it might be your only option. You'd be amazed what kind of crowd-pleasing gags you can pull off with quick

Diary: Director Jeff Speed on DIY gore in Municipal Waste's new video

Written by Jeff Speed
Thursday, 10 May 2012 07:29

cuts, low light, and a little creativity. So go get your hands bloody.

We had way too much fun making this vid. Many more gruesome projects to come, stay tuned!

Jeff Speed, Writer/Director

{youtube}GLY4Rpii7bM{/youtube}

