

"FACE OFF": Ninth Casualty

Written by Sean Abley
Thursday, 24 May 2012 08:44



Beki Ingram says working in Robert Kurtzman's shop prior to her stint on FACE OFF prepared her for dealing with the pressure cooker atmosphere of the reality TV competition.

FANGORIA: Judging just from what I saw on the show, I felt that, of the women, you had the most street cred. I pegged you to be in the top three. I'm trying to ask this delicately—what tripped you up?

BEKI INGRAM: I really don't think anything went wrong, necessarily. I think at the end of the day, Sue (Lee) and Ian (Cromer), with the sheer quantity of the things they created, versus what I created, made mine look dull in comparison. I almost went too simple stupid as opposed to over the top obnoxious. I played down the makeup.

FANG: You and Sue were so diametrically different, and yet you seemed head-to-head on the show.

INGRAM: Yeah, it was really strange. As far as her sculpting ability, Sue can sculpt an old-age makeup like nobody's business; maybe even in her sleep, whereas I had never sculpted old-age makeup. And in fact, this is the most I've ever sculpted [before]. As far as I was concerned, sculpting was probably one of my weaker points. Fabrication is probably one of my higher points, and I'm used to being a shop rat. As far as sculpting, there are a million other great sculptors out there.

FANG: So for a layman, what does "fabrication" mean?

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INGRAM: Fabrication means taking the raw materials and creating something out of it. Whether it be foam latex, doing latex buildups, sewing something together; basically everything outside of sculpting, making a mold, and creating something out of a mold. It's using every other technique that's available to you ...

FANG: I was talking to another of the contestants, and they said they were mainly an applicator, and that's what they wanted to do. And to me, that sounded like she wanted to be the inker of a comic book; somebody's already drawn it, and you're just filling it in with ink. And I wasn't sure what the appeal was. Is that an accurate perception of what that job entails?

INGRAM: The one thing that is extremely interesting about this show is we have all different kinds of skill sets. For example, when we're working on a movie, there is a team of people that just applies the makeups. They're applicators. The benefit of doing that is if you can apply a makeup very cleanly, it's more beneficial having you on set applying makeup than having you back at the shop running polyfoam in a mold. There are usually departments of people that just run foam appliances, that just apply the appliances, that just sculpt the appliances. For this show, what makes it so crazy diverse, is you have to have every single skill set that you may not be comfortable with.



FANG: And what is your main skill set?

INGRAM: My main skill set is I have a huge diversity of skill sets [laughs]. So I can sculpt, I can make a mold, I can run my foam, I can apply my piece, I can paint my piece, and then I can be on set and do touch ups. If you want me to, I can do straight makeup. If you want me to, I can just work in the shop. I can be a key for multiple different departments.

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FANG: And what do you prefer?

INGRAM: I actually like to do the whole gambit. I really love set work. I love applying makeups. I love wrangling blood. I love being an insect wrangler. When I found making movies, I was looking for something to expand my artistic ability. And the moment I put a makeup on somebody, I realized this is where I needed to be as an artist. I needed to utilize the human body as a 3-D canvas.

FANG: In talking to past contestants it seems that there are two types of FX artists; those that are happy in the shop, executing other people's designs—maybe doing some design themselves—but mainly there to serve the bigger picture; and those that want their own shop. Do you lean one way or the other now?

INGRAM: I am a collaborative artist, and I hold very, very, very dearly to my heart the ability to be able work with multiple, talented people. In order to be a shop person you have to be able to do that. To own my own shop at this point would be awesome, but there are so many great shops out there already, with so many great names attached to them that I feel, with my age and my range, owning a shop would almost be detrimental to me as far as being able to work with as many people as I possibly can. It would kind of put me in a tiny pinhole of people I could work with. And then I'm in competition with the big dogs. I'd much rather work with the big dogs than be in competition with them. But I would love to own my own art studio. That would be awesome.

FANG: What had you been doing before that?

INGRAM: I had been showing my artwork for a very long time. I sold my first piece of artwork when I was fifteen. Ever since then, I've been trying to show and sell my artwork as much as possible. The job that I had before basically getting fired from it, was being a vegan chef at a little vegan restaurant. I walked into work one day after being on set until six o'clock in the morning, and they were just, like, "Movies don't make you money!" And I just put my apron down and was, like, "well that is just every single ounce of energy I needed to make this my career" [Laughs]

FANG: What's the most unusual makeup you've been involved in?

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INGRAM: Last year, we actually got to work with Don Coscarelli on his new film, JOHN DIES IN THE END. It was so exciting because I got to head up one of their main creatures, which was a meat monster. I got to make a whole, entire suit out of meat pieces, and huge foam-fabricated rib cages that were articulated as he breathed, and his gut was hanging out. It basically looked like a creature created out of the meat section of the grocery store. It was so much fun, so creative. I got to work with a group of interns, and show them the little beginning steps of how to make something, and how to apply it to a spandex suit. It was really fun.

FANG: It sounds like you're pretty much horror focused. Is that your preference, or is it just because that's where most of this work is?

INGRAM: I work with Robert Kurtzman. Robert being the guru of horror, the "K" of KNB FX. In 2005, I got invited to work on his film, THE RAGE, and I declined it because I was working on a Bigfoot film. Then in 2007 I had another opportunity to work on THE DEAD MATTER, and after that I basically fell in love with the shop, the shop people, the diversity, and I haven't left since.

Because he is in the horror genre, that automatically puts me in the horror genre. But I'm totally fascinated with fantasy and LORD OF THE RINGS and all of that. If I could I'd love to work on a movie like PANS LABYRINTH. That would make my whole century, I think. Right now, doing horror is so easy and so quick, and for a beginner person, horror can teach you the realistic aspects of how to create a human being, and how to make that human being look like they're in distress. And that benefits you on any other film you work on, in any other genre.

FANG: What's the deal with the webisodes on the P13 Entertainment/Creature Corps [website](#)?

INGRAM: We do a weekly webisode, whether it's a tutorial or some sort of funny episode. Basically, we take you behind the scenes on the projects we're working on; teach people how to do life casts, body casts, all sorts of stuff. We've been doing that for about three years now.

FANG: Having watched the whole season, and based on my own experience producing reality TV, it seemed like you were there despite the show. You didn't seem affected by any of the

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shenanigans of the other contestants, or the producers.

INGRAM: Well, yeah, I was not there to play games. And I realize it was a game show. I wasn't there to mess around. I was there to win the prize and to go as far as I could. Making it to nine episodes without being in the top three is pretty fantastic, if you ask me. I just wanted to make it as far as I could. Winning the money was not my main factor. Being able to showcase my diversity and my skill set was mostly what I was there for. As far as the reality TV shenanigans, I work with some wacky people. The stress level we have at our shop is tenfold [compared to] the reality TV show craziness. For me, it was almost like, there's always going to be somebody crazy; there's always going to be somebody that doesn't hold their own weight; there's always going to be somebody that cries all the time. So I already knew the personalities that could possibly be there, and so I was ready for anything. I was ready to work with a baby if they needed me to.

FANG: What do you think the net gain will be of having been on the show?

INGRAM: My whole goal for the show was to basically say to any person who had doubted my ability before, "Hey, look what I can do. This is what I can do. This is who I am." It was basically a calling card. It was the fastest way to get my name and my face out to as many people as I possibly could. Working with Kurtzman, for me and for multiple other artists, is kind of like the top of the game. The only thing that can happen from here is more work, more set time, more ability, more creative control. Basically it was just a calling card.