

SF Short Film Search Winners—page 7

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Makeup: Realistic Blood

The Crimson Effect:

Realistic Blood For Your Films

By DON DOHLER

Although amateur film-makers will take great care in producing a meticulous optical or mechanical effect—such as a stop-motion model or a starship cruising through the cosmos—there is one makeup effect often taken for granted: *blood*. How easy it seems to merely pour on some store-bought "stage" blood or red poster paint, especially when an uptight actor is sitting rigid during the application—and anxious to have it over with!

Unfortunately, readily available blood fluids yield less than realistic results on the screen, since they generally tend to look too *bright-red*.

Two recent feature films, *Taxi Driver* and *The Deer Hunter*—both displaying pretty graphic violence—required a great deal of realistic bloodletting. The producers of these multi-million-dollar films, naturally, wouldn't dare skimp on something as simple, but important, as the blood effects. So they called on the talents of Hollywood's most respected makeup artist, Dick Smith, to make sure that the blood we saw on the screen

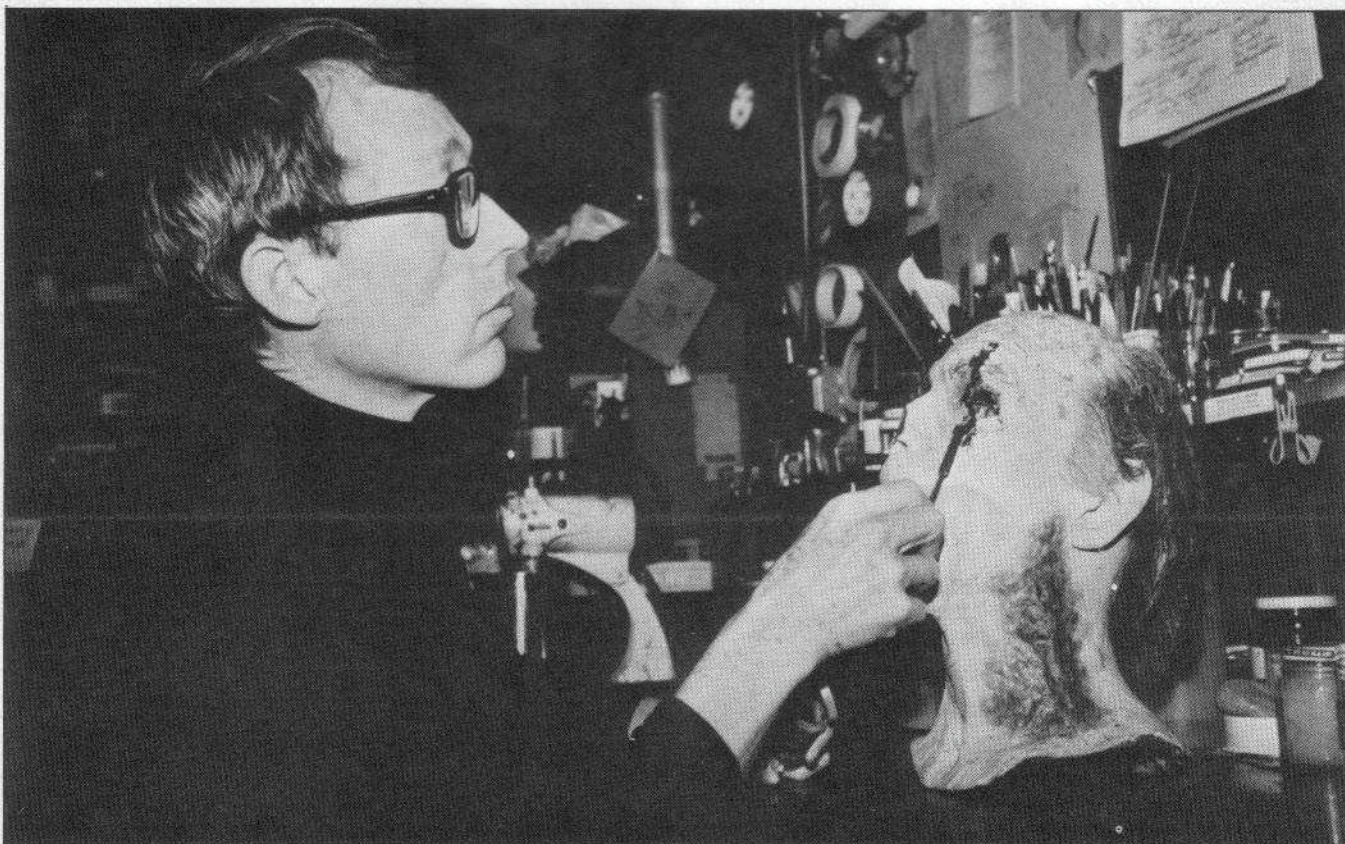
looked like *blood*. In case you didn't know, Dick Smith is the man who brought us the fabulous makeup creations in *The Exorcist*, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and will soon send chills up our spines in the upcoming movie, *Altered States*.

Fortunately for all of us, Smith is an avid CINEMAGIC fan and is kind enough to share some of his professional experience with us in these pages.

Here are Dick Smith's tried-and-proven formulas for creating movie blood guaranteed to set your audiences squirming. . . .

BLOOD MADE WITH KARO SYRUP

AMOUNT OF CLEAR KARO	ZINC OXIDE	RED FOOD COLOR	YELLOW FOOD COLOR	KODAK PHOTO-FLO*	WATER
1 Pint	½ Level Tsp.	1 Oz.	2½ Tsp.	1 Oz.	1 Oz.
1 Quart	1 Level Tsp.	2 Oz.	5 Tsp.	2 Oz.	2 Oz.
2 Quarts	2 Level Tsp.	4 Oz.	1 Oz. + 4 Tsp.	4 Oz.	4 Oz.
3 Quarts	3 Level Tsp.	6 Oz.	2½ Oz.	6 Oz.	6 Oz.
1 Gallon	4 Level Tsp.	8 Oz.	3 Oz. + 2 Tsp.	8 Oz.	8 Oz.



Dick Smith in his studio demonstrates a blood effect on the head built for a sequence of *The Sentinel*.

MIXING PROCEDURE

Put the zinc oxide into a bowl, add an equal amount of water and stir into a paste. Add the measured amounts of red and yellow food colors and stir. Add a *little* of the Karo and stir until it is well-mixed.

Pour this mixture into a container which is larger than the final amount of blood; that is, if you are making three quarts of blood, your container should be a gallon jug. This is necessary because once the formula is mixed, it must be shaken prior to each use in order to re-mix the contents, which tend to separate while sitting.

Add the remaining amount of Karo to your container and shake well. Finally, add the amount of water specified, mix thoroughly and you will have blood with normal consistency (thickness).

*If the blood will *not* be used in the mouth, the Photo-Flo can be added. Photo-Flo is a wetting agent which makes the blood flow over surfaces without beading and helps it to soak into fabrics naturally, like real blood. If you use the Photo-Flo, shake your mixture more gently than otherwise to avoid excess foaming (caused by the Photo-Flo). And remember: do *not* use blood with the Photo-Flo in the mouth!

ADDITIONAL HINTS

Food Colors: Most red food colors are similar, but the yellow ones vary. Ehlers yellow stains white paper lemon-yellow, while Schilling, McCormick and Crown yellows are more orange. If you don't use Ehlers, add only *one-half* the amount of yellow indicated in the formula.

Zinc Oxide: The type referred to in the formula is the pure powder form (U.S.P.) obtainable from a druggist or chemical supply house. In the small amounts used it is harmless, and it adds some opacity to the blood.

Darker Blood: Although the formula above matches true blood, it may look too bright when used on white materials. Use about 35 drops of *green* food coloring per quart of Karo blood to darken.

Thinner Blood: If you want a thinner blood to pump through special-effect tubes, use the same formula—with the Photo-Flo—but dilute the Karo Syrup indicated with an equal amount of water. For instance, if the formula calls for one pint of Karo, add one pint of water to it before mixing in the rest of the ingredients.

Thicker Blood: Karo blood can be thickened with small amounts of peanut butter. Experimentation will



Dick Smith's dummy from *The Sentinel* with eye cut and slashed nose.

give you the thickness you desire.

Finally, keep your blood mixture refrigerated when not in use. If you don't it will form mold and have to be thrown out. A covered, plastic container is best for storing Karo blood, and if kept refrigerated, it's

good for long periods of time.

The regular formula washes off of skin and clothes without any trouble, but the "thinner" (diluted) version may stain some fabrics. It's best to have your actors wear old clothing for scenes requiring blood.

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