

MONSTERS IN THE MORNING

BY GABRIELLE JONES

It's dark and drizzling, as we pull up to the studio at 5.30am, ready for yet another action-packed day on the second series of Power Rangers to be shot in New Zealand. Entering the makeup truck, trying to engage the gears of my brain – "Quick, where's that coffee?" Ah, a perfect cup of frothy soy latte luxury, conjured up by the magical 2nd AD.

Now we are ready to open shop. First customer of the day is the diabolically evil 'Fembot', looking at this stage, decidedly unthreatening in her baby blue dressing gown and ugh boots. An hour later, oozing evilness, she steps down from the makeup truck to slip into her head-to-toe leather cozzie.

Her boss and arch villain, half-man, half-dinosaur, is next in the chair.

Contact lenses are inserted before under-mask musculature is outlined and sculptured with a reel colour palette. This provides a base dimension that will endure a long day on a hot set. Rimming the eyes with black makes the contact lenses leap to life, and the actor is starting to feel the part!

Today we have time to sample the breakfast buffet, then another caffeine shot and it's onto set for a block-through of the first scene. At this point the creatures supervisor, Mark Knight, enters set bringing with the rest of his creation, which, aside from cozzie, is comprised of a full head mask with articulated jaw, collapsing neck armour, and three taloned gloves – a design-and-build process that began over a month ago. The results are impressive, especially when combined with the talents of the actor. The crossover is a great opportunity for the makeup and the monster departments to work creatively together.

Creatures such as these, require such reusable pieces, present their own inherent problems, because of the materials used. Sound problems, caused by friction between multiple pieces of urethane, rubber and vinyl, inevitably result. However, after careful consideration, new felt linings, and the occasional KY lube job, ADR was happily deemed unnecessary.

All the creatures are, of course, replicated for use on more action-oriented Second Unit which runs concurrently with the Main Unit.

The team makeup/monster standbys are available to move between the two units.

Shooting blocks are approximately 9 days long, with prep done for the next block whilst shooting the current one.

The union between monsters and makeup ends with the villain lead, as the monster supervisor has a horde of other creatures that are itching to take over the world. These are more fully suited, and thus are in no need of makeup.

...oozing evilness, she steps down
from the makeup truck...

Meanwhile, with a fresh latte in hand, I am kept busy designing and realizing the look of the rest of the characters that comprise the Power Rangers genre – a genre that provides us with a playing field of makeup variation that is really only restricted by budget and time. Dynamic wigs, old age makeup and looks that swing from cartoon glamour to fantasy wizards are an episodic norm for the cast.

A cast of characters as varied as only a world threatened by mutant hybrid monsters, with spandex-clad dinosaur-taming teenagers for heroes, can be!

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