

# Makeup as an art

**'FAKING IT' REQUIRES PERFECTION ON A GIANT SCREEN**



Transforming human epidermis into scaly alien skin, youthful faces into wrinkled matrons and muscular bodies into mutilated corpses is hardly a job for mere mortals. Yet it's all in a day's work for makeup artists.

In making the artificial look real, they walk a fine line in pushing far enough to create drama without arousing suspicions of latex and rubber cement. Measuring success can be done rather simply, such as the time Brad Look, MFA (CCM) '88, noticed the horrified faces of crew members watching an actor yank off his nose.

To create these two aliens for "Star Trek" episodes, Brad Look first had to consider the basic structure of the actors' faces, take casts of their heads, sculpt new features, then make new molds. Other times, he scavenges old prosthetics and pieces them together. *At bottom right, Brad receives his 1996 Emmy for work on "Star Trek: Voyager."*

The onlookers had seriously believed the prosthetic nose, which Brad had applied earlier, was real.

That's success. So is winning an Emmy. And Brad did that, too, just last year.

His Emmy came for his efforts mutating a human into an alien on the TV series "Star Trek: Voyager." Applying prosthetic makeup is Brad's forte, having gained extensive experience on various Star Trek shows, including the TV series "Star Trek: Deep Space Nine" and the movie "Star Trek: First Contact."

In the makeup artists union in Hollywood, Brad shares a certain distinction with another UC alum. He and Zoe Thompson, CCM '89, are the only members who hold theater degrees from a program specifically for makeup artists.

Zoe is also making admirable strides in the film industry, but in different circles than Brad's special

## A BRAD LOOK STORY

Brad's first use of prosthetic makeup came in the fourth grade, when he ordered fake ears and spirit gum to be Mr. Spock for Halloween. Without directions, he swabbed his ears liberally with the spirit gum and plopped on the fake ears. They didn't stick.

He repeated the process about 20 times, unaware that the spirit gum had to dry. It finally worked.

The real complication came at bed time. The ears would not come off. He eventually ripped them off and splashed his own sore ears with a little soap and water (which has no effect on spirit gum).

In bed, he rolled over. The pillow stuck to his left ear. He rolled over again, pulling the pillow over his face and pasting it to his right ear. He jumped up with visions of pranksters trying to smother him.

"It took half an hour to scrape off my ears," he says with a grimace. "It's funny now, but it wasn't funny at the time."





effects work. She primarily does beauty makeup for film, publicity shots, on-camera interviews and awards ceremonies, as well as some unusual challenges for commercials.

While their end products vary greatly, the two do share a common professional dilemma: horrid schedules. Regardless of the show, makeup artists are the first to arrive on the set and the last to leave.

The first production responsibility on a day of shooting is makeup application, which could take six hours or longer. Next, the makeup artists have to remain near the monitors during filming — up to 15 hours — to do continual touch-ups. At the end of the day, another hour is usually needed to remove the makeup. Finally, after everyone else has left, the artists clean up their areas to begin fresh in the morning. In many cases, “morning” is only a few hours away.

Brad’s worst scenario was working two straight days without sleep on “First Contact.” He was applying prosthetic makeup to create “The Borg,” Star Trek’s archvillains who are half human and half robot. The actors were glued into their suits and remained that way for the entire day. The only break Brad got during the “grueling” six-hour application process was stretching his back when an actor went to the bathroom.

Both Brad and Zoe agree that 18-hour days are not uncommon in television, and many Fridays stretch into 23 hours to finish production before the weekend. To recover, Brad sleeps all day Saturday, then goes to bed early on Sunday to resume the schedule Monday morning. Social lives are nonexistent, he says. “You’re just too tired. All you do is work and sleep.”

Lack of a social calendar, however, is the least of their concerns. The reality of sleep deprivation hit home last spring with the news of a Hollywood cameraman falling asleep at the wheel after working a 19-hour day. His death spurred efforts to get several unions to restrict the hours studios can demand.

Few people realize makeup’s arduous timetable, Brad says, because of a “Mission: Impossible” mentality, as he calls it. “Even people here in

Hollywood think you just transform someone into a character within minutes, because they’ve seen it happen on ‘Mission: Impossible.’”

It’s a common misperception, which Brad helped perpetuate in “The Mask,” where Jim Carrey changed his appearance on screen by simply putting on a mask. But the prop in Carrey’s hand was only that. His new “face” was actually composed of interlocking pieces that took Brad and two other makeup artists four and a half hours to apply.

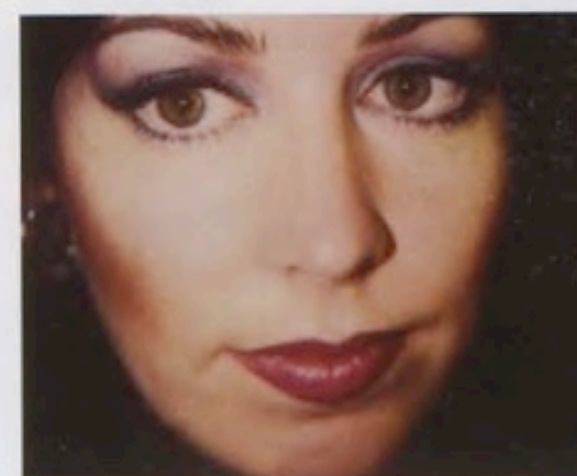
Zoe’s work usually requires more subtlety. She is frequently asked to make performers look their best for Golden Globe or Academy Award ceremonies, movie posters and album covers. Once she made up Olivia Newton-John for a “TV Guide” cover.

But some of the best money and the most fun lie in commercials, she says. She aged a soccer player 50 years for a Super Bowl commercial, made a child’s wig for a hair salon advertisement and created a circus act’s “dog-boy” for a cable company ad. “I spent two hours gluing hair all over this guy’s face,” she grins. “It was the most fun I had had in a long time.”

Another advantage to commercial work comes from shorter hours. That is particularly important since Zoe and her husband, Jeff Hay, had their first child, Sam, last year. “Going to work for 12 or 15 hours a day and seeing my baby on the weekends isn’t what I wanted,” she says.

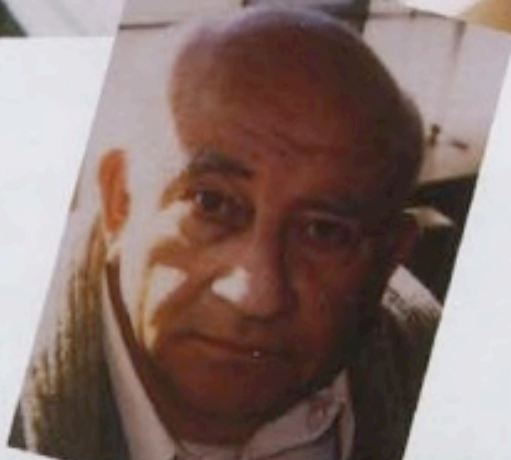
Turning down big movie jobs made her nervous at first, but work keeps coming. One of the attractions producers find in both Zoe and Brad is their college education. Degrees in theater design and production with an emphasis on makeup are rare commodities. Brad says they are the only degree-holding members of the union and he is the only instructor with a makeup degree at UCLA, where he has taught part time for eight years.

Both alumni praise CCM professor and resident makeup artist Lenna Kaleva for the program she started at UC in the ’70s. Only two other schools in the country have programs that train professional makeup artists, and both of those programs were



While Zoe Thompson’s work is more subtle than Brad’s, she can obtain a variety of looks with one face — in this case, Dana Delany’s. Dana is ready for a ’70s flashback, *at the top*; for scenes dating several decades earlier, *in the middle photos*; and for a rather risqué adventure, *at the bottom*.





started by former students of Professor Kaleva's. "It's a unique program," she simply states. "No one had ever trained professionals before."

"The things I learned from Lenna are amazing," says Zoe. "It gives you such a head start to come from a program like CCM's. People who come through other schools don't know what they are missing."

CCM's master's degree program in makeup selects only three or four candidates at a time, and Brad was its only student while he was here. He compares it to Hollywood's former apprenticeship program, which consisted of working with senior makeup artists for a four-year period, he explains. "Since they got rid of that, finding qualified artists has been a real problem. UC is probably the only place in the country today that comes close to that apprenticeship program."

Zoe came to UC intending to work in theater. With an undergraduate art degree, Brad had already tried that avenue and entered the master's program, planning to head to Hollywood. The attraction that had lured him into

**The wide range of Zoe's work includes making Dana Delaney look gorgeous for a period piece, bloodying an actor for a car wreck, putting Ed Asner in a good light, turning Swoosie Kurtz into the "Old Red Head" and creating a frigid face for a commercial.**

films eventually enticed Zoe: more money and opportunities to do more creative makeup. They also enjoy the perfection required of work that may be enlarged 700 percent on a screen.

"Every little hair and brush stroke has to be done correctly," Zoe says.

In the future, Brad predicts that makeup artists will work more often with computers. He already had a taste of that in the movie "Star Trek: First Contact." "We have a sequence at the end where the Borg queen is pulled down, and her flesh is eaten off. There's no way we could have done that with conventional makeup; it's so darn expensive. Soon there may be a division of makeup artistry called 'computer character enhancement.' We need makeup artists who can bridge that gap."

The one thing Brad and Zoe don't enjoy is location work. Zoe swore off Westerns after working in the desert on "Tombstone." "It was horrible," she says. "All you do all day is make people look dirty and dusty, then try to keep the real dirt and dust off them. Everyone is sweating, and all you can smell is horse manure. It's not as glamorous as people think." Brad also had a location nightmare, shooting in Central America where "insects would literally bite and eat your flesh," he says.

Although he and Zoe love their careers, they are quick to agree on one point: "It's not like the illusion 'Entertainment Tonight' gives you," Brad says. "There are not a lot of parties."

## A ZOE THOMPSON STORY

While working on the movie "Nixon," Zoe struck up a conversation with Anthony Hopkins. Knowing that he had done "The Silence of the Lambs" with Jodie Foster, she mentioned working with Jodie on "Little Man Tate." Chatting about "Silence," he suddenly did an impersonation of the crazed murderer he had portrayed. It's a sight she'll long remember: "Richard Nixon doing Hannibal Lecter," she says shaking her head.

*Zoe, far right, with a colleague.*

