



William Forsche with his Chamber of Horrors: (left to right) Jason masks for Friday the 13th VI, the evil genie from The Outing, and from Nightmare on Elm Street IV, actor Robert Englund as Freddy Krueger.

William Forsche — From Hortonville to Hollywood

What do *The Lost Boys* and *Buffy, the Vampire Slayer* have in common with Hortonville? Both are Hollywood movies which feature makeup and special effects by William Forsche, a Hortonville native.

A childhood fascination with the world of make believe, illusions and creatures led Forsche to seek a career with makeup and special effects that took him from his hometown to the very heights of Hollywood filmmaking.

At the age of 6, Forsche became intrigued with Boris Karloff's Frankenstein's monster, inspiring him to begin experimenting with materials around his home, including his mother's makeup. His first creations were a papier mache Frankenstein head and an early attempt at lifecasting in plaster, using himself as a subject.

In junior high, Forsche began working with make-up, scenery and props for school plays. By the ninth grade, he decided that he wanted to pursue a career in filmmaking. His parents preferred that he finish school and pursue a more conservative, practical career.

At the age of 15, disguised with a false beard and with a fake ID and \$15, Forsche ran away from home and hitchhiked to Hollywood. "No one believed that this would or could be a career, simply just a great hobby," says Forsche. "Perhaps that's why I had to prove to my parents and to myself that I could do this."

After arriving in Hollywood, he supported himself by working odd jobs, sleeping in a playground tunnel at a school for the blind until he could afford an inexpensive motel. Forsche soon found work as a tour guide at Universal Studios. It was there he met Dave Miller, the makeup artist who created the look for Freddy Krueger in the first *Nightmare On Elm Street* film. Miller gave him insights into the business

and a great deal of encouragement.

At the age of 17, Forsche came home to Wisconsin to see his family — a visit which ironically gave him his first break. Filmmaker Bill Rebane was in the area working on a low-budget feature called *The Game*, and gave Forsche a shot at the makeup and special effects.

Forsche then went to New York and met one of the men who would be a "great contributor" to his career. For years he had been writing to Dick Smith, Oscar-winning make-up artist for such films as *Amadeus*, *The Exorcist* and *Altered States*. He provided fatherly advice, career encouragement and guidance. When Smith retired, he sent Forsche a make-up brush that had been given to him by his mentor, Maurice Siederman (who created Orson Welles' make-up



Forsche creates a life mask of horror actor Vincent Price for the film *Dead Heat*.

for *Citizen Kane*). Forsche currently has more than 30 films to his credit, including *Critters*, *Beetlejuice*, *Ghostbusters II*, *Nightmare On Elm Street IV* and *Friday the 13th VI*. One career highlight was meeting and working with actor Vincent Price during the production of *Dead Heat*. The scenario reads like a scene from one of his movies: As the

make-up team awaited his arrival, the sky became overcast, thunder began to roll and then Price arrived in a long, black limousine. Forsche describes Price as being very pleasant and patient during the uncomfortable procedure in which a plaster-like mold is made of the actor's face in order to produce a mask on which to design the make-up.

Forsche has also had on-camera roles, appearing as a werewolf in *Howling IV*, a zombie in *Night Angel*, a policeman in *Ghostbusters II*, an extra in *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*, a laboratory scientist in *Dead Heat* and as a dancer in *Roadhouse*.

"My goal is to create illusions for the screen which appear so real that the audi-

ence never questions if it's a special effect or not. So really the less noticeable my work is, the more successful it is," says Forsche.

He is currently utilizing his talents and acquired techniques to create three-dimensional artwork. Many of his pieces pay homage to the movies — the inspiration that has driven him most of his life.

William Forsche's lifecast sculptures are currently exhibited at the Appleton Art Center's *Please Touch!* exhibit featuring sculptures of such Hollywood personalities as Vincent Price, Alfred Hitchcock, W.C. Fields, Humphrey Bogart, Kirk Douglas, Grace Kelly, Liza Minnelli, and Robin Williams.



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