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**Tim Burton and Rick Baker
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Leo (Mark Wahlberg) is this century's human rebelling against those damn dirty apes.

**THE FUR FLIES
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PLANET OF THE APES

Over 100 gorillas, standing upright in military uniforms, watch their chimpanzee leader go berserk two stories above them. Shrieking and waving his sword, he slashes the rope suspending an enormous chandelier, which plummets earthward, shattering in a huge spurt of flame. Welcome to the new *Planet of the Apes*.

Ralph Winter, who is executive-producing the film with Richard Zanuck, says that the new *Planet* is neither a remake of nor a sequel to the 1968 original that spawned four feature follow-ups and two TV series. "Dick Zanuck calls it a 'reimagination,'" he offers. "This is [director] Tim Burton's version, just as the first movies were another version of Pierre Boulle's book."

There are some similarities. In both *Planets*, a human astronaut—Charlton Heston's cynical Taylor in the first, Mark Wahlberg's kinder-hearted Leo Davidson this time—crashes onto a world populated by civilized chimpanzees, gorillas and orangutans, who all believe that humans are a lower life form. In the first *Planet*, humans and simians had truly switched places, with *homo sapiens* unable to speak. In Burton's tale, the humans talk, functioning as slaves for the apes.

"The humans outnumber the apes 10 to one," Winter explains. "That's why the apes oppress them."

Although the latest *Planet*, like its predecessors, is a 20th Century Fox production (opening July 27), it's filming this January morning on Stage 27 on the Sony lot, since no available Fox stage is large enough to house the Ape City set. A painted horizon of a sky above lava fields is on the far wall, opposite stone-like dwellings that look as though they've been hewn into a mountainside. Uneven staircases branch off into alleys and hidden chambers.

"We've put several million dollars into the set," Winter reveals. "We started building this in July [2000], and finished just days before we [began filming] here. It's 32,000 square feet. It normally has a big tank—the tank is out, but it allows us to contour the stage up at an angle instead of a flat city that's

built on one level. All of this is foam, carved with garden tools and chainsaws. It looks like it's been here for hundreds of years, with weeds growing out of it and vines that have gone wild, and that's truly the vision of Tim and Rick Heinrichs."

"The idea was to create an environment that is reminiscent of what we would associate with the simian species in our world," explains Heinrichs, Burton's longtime production designer who won an Oscar for *Sleepy Hollow*. "But it's one that has a culture, civilization, history and heritage to it, one that sort of intertwines nature with the architecture. We pulled an enormous amount of photographs of ancient cultures that created a superior architecture for their time—the Egyptians, the Etruscans, Angkor Wat, which is an ancient city in Southeast Asia."

A sight almost as unusual as a gorilla army is the presence of a screenwriter on the set. Lawrence Konner, who with partner Mark Rosenthal did the final drafts of a screenplay worked on by others (most significantly *Cast Away*'s William Broyles Jr.), says that the finishing touches on today's scene were only added the night before. "It included



**"Thade is a direct descendant of the apes' religious figure—their version of Christ, I suppose."
—Tim Roth, actor**

destruction and madness, but it never included climbing to the top of the chandelier and cutting it down like the Phantom of the Opera," the scripter notes. "Tim had this idea and called me, and we got the scene written in a few hours. They've asked me to be on set probably because we got a late start on the script. There's still work being done, but it's been great."

Otherwise, Konner (whose previous collaborations with Rosenthal include another ape epic, *Mighty Joe Young*) says he's not allowed to reveal script details: "[Burton's] got armed guards around here, snipers," he jokes. He speaks generally, though, of the changes he and Rosenthal have wrought in the screenplay: "I believe there's more action, more depth of character, more real ape behavior."

"Twice as big and twice as loud as yesterday!" the assistant director calls. Chimpanzee general Thade makes a leap across a several-story chasm before demolishing the chandelier again. Thade is played by Tim Roth, but the jump—assisted by wires that will be digitally removed in postproduction—is being performed by his stunt double, Terry Notary, who also serves as the movie's ape movement coach.

Roth explains what's going on: "It's a scene where the humans have got past the outposts into an area that I don't want them to get into, and I go apeshit, and then I run off with the army to find them. Thade is a direct descendant of the apes' reli-



Tim Burton regulars Lisa Marie and Glenn Shadix don't mind that the director made a monkey out of them for his new film.

Photos: Sam Emerson

gious figure—their version of Christ, I suppose. He believes that the humans should be decimated.”

Roth's chimp makeup, one of the many created for the film by Rick Baker, is impressively lifelike. “You just look in the mirror and play with it,” the actor says, “because the expressions that we [normally] make don't necessarily translate, so we have to reinvent them.”

John Chambers won the first special Oscar presented for makeup for his work on the original *Apes*; 13 years later, Baker was the first artist to win the award in regular competition, for *An American Werewolf in London*. Baker says he appreciated Chambers' work, but knew how he'd like to expand on it: “I thought it'd be nice to see the apes' teeth and to see a little more individuality, give them more mobility.”

Baker was first approached to do the makeup on a contemporary *Apes* six years ago, when Oliver Stone was attached to direct. However, in 2000, Baker was preparing to take a hiatus from makeup work in order to spend time with his family when Burton called. “Tim ruined all those plans,” Baker laughs. “He came to my office, we talked and I got real excited, just the fact that it was *Planet of the Apes* and Tim Burton.”

The schedule was almost as hairy as the characters, Baker reveals. “We could only do so much until we had actors, and all of our main apes were the actors to be cast. And as always happens, they cast like three weeks before, instead of six months before.” Before the main actors were set, “We concentrated on doing background, generic [make-ups]. Most of the work was done in four months.

I would've asked for a year. We made something like 500 background masks. I don't know how many different sculptures we did, but there were at least 10 of each—10 different chimps, 10 different gorillas, 10 different orangs.”

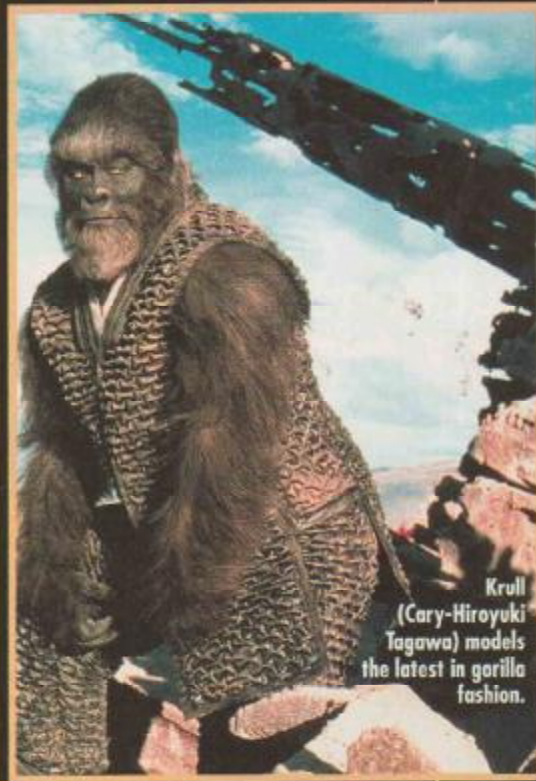
The foreground actors each have individually designed foam rubber appliances. “On the orangutans, we have the big cheekpads,” Baker says. These are found on adult males in reality, but not in *Apes* films until now. Baker says he told the filmmakers what they should look for in potential apes: “The way I'm doing the makeup,” he explains, “the person has to have the right kind of face for this to work. I

actually gave [Burton and company] life casts, to demonstrate what made a bad face, which would be a big nose and a short upper lip. So they started out worrying about it, but they completely forgot. When they said Tim Roth was a possibility to play Thade, I was going, ‘What part of this big nose thing did you not understand?’” Baker overcame the problem of concealing Roth's proboscis: “It turned out to be really cool-looking—he's a great villain.”

Baker himself makes a brief appearance in the movie, playing a chimp rather than one of his beloved gorillas. “The script said, ‘A group of older apes,’ and I thought, ‘OK, that's me,’” he laughs. “Old apes playing some kind of game and smoking hookahs.” Baker's isn't the only notable cameo—Heston did a one-day stint in chimp makeup as Thade's father and '68 *Apes* heroine Linda Harrison is a captive human.

Roth notes one interesting effect of the makeup—it temporarily razed the star/extra/crew caste system. “At the beginning, the hierarchy of filmdom went haywire, in that most of the people didn't know who we [the principal actors] were,” he laughs. “You'd sit down in a chair. ‘Excuse me, you can't sit on that.’ We got kicked up the ass and reminded of what it was like when we first started acting.”

In Chambers' old *Apes* makeup design, the teeth were part of the upper and lower muzzle appliances, which meant that the apes'



Krull (Cary-HiroYuki Tagawa) models the latest in gorilla fashion.



In this army, it's obvious why they call them grunts.

beings read all kinds of bullshit into chimpanzees," Roth says. "The fact is, they're quite vicious, but we have a kind of cuteness thing—I liked the idea of twisting that around."

"Apes are eight times stronger than humans," Notary points out. "They can rip your arm off. If you've seen chimps playing, it's just crazy how they leap around, and we're trying to get as much of that as possible. We're gonna have a big herd of chimps quadrupeding in the battle scenes, 50 guys running on all fours."

Might, not numbers, helps the apes rule this time.

"The gorillas are more gentle, which they are in real life. I'd much rather be in a cage with gorillas than with chimps." —Terry Notary, ape movement coach

lips could not move independently. "The actors' real teeth were buried behind about an inch of rubber," Baker recalls. "I thought about this for a long time. When Fox first approached me, I thought, 'We can do an animatronic gorilla that looks absolutely real, but that's not *Planet of the Apes*. Part of the charm of the first film was the actor-motivated apes. So we really have to do makeups and we need to be able to show the teeth; let's just make some big-ass dentures.' " These fit over the actors' real teeth. "We push the muzzle out as much as we can with the teeth and have as little amount of foam [in the muzzle] as possible.

"Speaking with the teeth in takes some practice. One of the problems is saying 'P,' because you have to put your lips together. There was a scene last week, it was supposed to be real dramatic, where Thade says, 'Apart from my father...' He kept saying, 'A fart from my father,' " Baker laughs. "I think they're going to have to loop that."

Talking isn't the only challenge. All of the actors playing simians—from leads to extras—attended "ape school" for two months, where Cirque du Soleil veteran Notary and longtime Baker associate John Alexander instructed the performers in all aspects of simian movement. "I kind of had to develop a new species," Notary explains. "Unlike the old *Planet of the Apes* where [the apes] waddled, Tim said he wanted to develop a whole new movement where everyone had the same base, but then had their own individuality within that.

We showed him from zero to 100 percent ape movement, from quadrupeding chimp to fully standing human, and he said, 'About 20 percent ape and 80 percent human.' So we started developing that and came up with a first position, which is feet parallel, knees slightly bent, slightly erect, but everything's kind of weighty, rhythmic and circular.

"Apes in general are very grounded, solid," he continues. "That was probably the hardest thing for the actors—to really stop everything and just be, to learn how to breathe and be completely focused on whatever they were doing. [Apes] are easily distracted, but when they're into something, they're into it.

"We started with the sitting position," Notary adds. "We focused on just head turns—how do you turn your head? And slowly standing, and then walking and then, as you walk, how would you lean on something? It was just basically trying to do everyday real-life things, but feeling that directness of an ape. The gorillas are more gentle, which they are in real life. I'd much rather be in a cage with a bunch of gorillas than with chimps—you're much more likely to live. The orangutans are the slow thinkers. Paul Giamatti plays an orangutan, and he's just hilarious. His movement is just phenomenal. He's constantly asking for more—'What kinds of things would I do if I get angry?' The chimps do more as far as touching and grabbing and swinging."

The volatility of chimps was the reason that Roth lobbied to have Thade's species rewritten from gorilla. "Human

Some actors adapted more readily than others. Cary-Hiroyuki Tagawa, who plays the gorilla Krull, a former soldier who is now a servant to aristocratic chimpanzees, has long experience in martial arts and invented the form known as Chuu-shin. "One of the key elements in martial arts is movement," Tagawa says. "A lot of martial arts styles, especially Chinese animal styles, are based on having watched animals.

Estella Warren last co-starred with Sylvester Stallone in *Driven*, so working on a film full of simians should've been no problem.





If gorillas like Attar (Michael Clarke Duncan) and chimps like Thade (Tim Roth) can get along, why can't they accept humans?

handled—this way? Tagawa chuckles, "I think he was having fun. He's a dream creative person."

Helena Bonham Carter, who plays Ari, an upper-class chimp who believes humans should have ape rights, agrees with this assessment. "Tim's a visionary," she raves. "Every single film he does has his stamp, and yet to work with him, he's unbelievably open and non-controlling. He's all intuition and instinct and heart. He never finishes a sentence, but somehow you know automatically what he means."

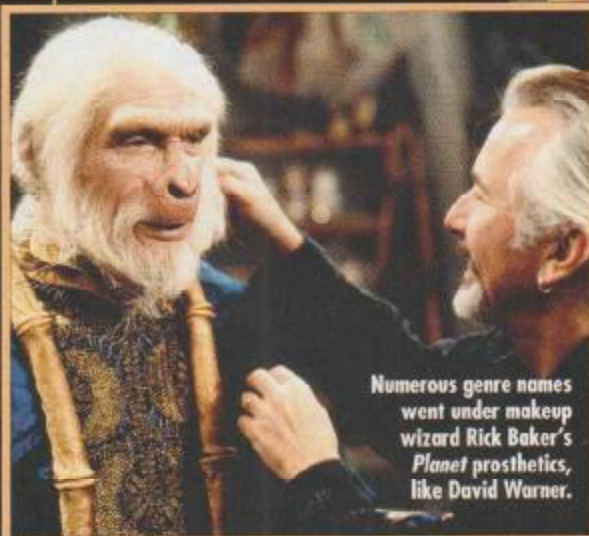
So I came to this film with that background and yet," he laughs, "there's no ape style of martial arts. There is a monkey style, but not necessarily a *big* monkey. Going to ape school became a whole 'nother thing."

Tagawa feels that gorillas, which can grow to 8 feet tall and 600 pounds, have gotten an undeserved bad rap in the

movies, based on their reactions when their family groups are threatened. "Anybody would be fierce if someone came into your house and started messing with your babies," Tagawa notes. "Once in a while, apes go nuts and just run through the trees, scaring everybody in the whole tribe just

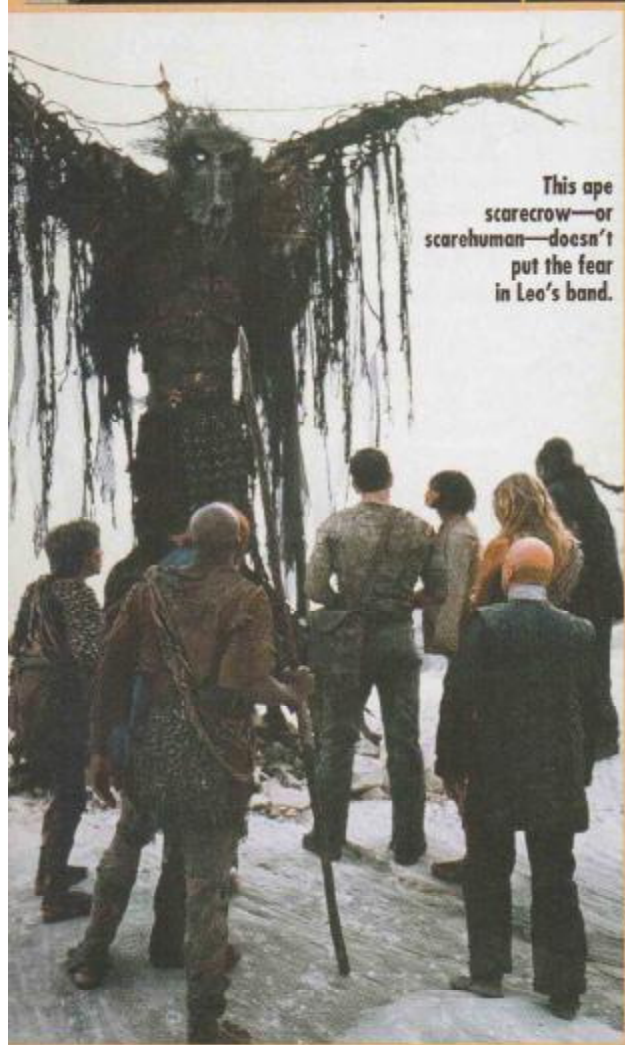
to remind them who's in charge. One of the critical parts of [playing an ape] is the understanding that with 600 pounds, an animal that big can move so gracefully and stop on a dime. That has to do with using your whole body. There are some points where we do use full quadruped [movement]. Because of my martial arts background and being limber, I was able to move that way. For the apes, it's all about pulling, this upper-body movement. You have two shoulder joints and two hip joints you have to rotate that [as a human] you don't normally have to do. Terry is on the set every day—if you start to forget, he'll let you know right away."

Once he had the hang of being a gorilla, Tagawa got into the spirit of it, he reports: "I would do things like run around the set in between takes at full speed. I would jump Tim Burton—when we were in the jungle set, I would wait for him in a tree and pick him up and carry him around the set." The director's reaction to being manhandled—or ape-



Numerous genre names went under makeup wizard Rick Baker's Planet prosthetics, like David Warner.

This ape scarecrow—or scarehuman—doesn't put the fear in Leo's band.



Carter admits that she didn't take to being an ape as easily as some of her colleagues—in fact, the first time around, she flunked ape school. "Major ape deficit disorder," she laughs. "I lacked everything. But then I buckled down to concentrate and I'm slowly understanding it now. Apes are much more tactile, much more sensual. So that's been fun." It has also been tiring. "We have to get up early, and it's five hours' makeup. One is always working on sort of a deprivation of sleep. What keeps me going is that [playing an ape] is always a source of humor, so that keeps me awake."

"The great thing about this movie," says Luke Eberl, who portrays an oppressed human adolescent, "is that everybody has kind of become a family. If you're friends with somebody, it's easier to work with them."

It's certainly a *big* family. "We have about 500 to 700 people in front of the camera and another 500 people on the crew," Winter reports. "It is a 24-hour operation. Some of these people come in

(continued on page 82)

"APE" RECALL

It's a spectacular sight: over 100 upright, clothed apes stand tensed and ready for their agitated simian leader to give them the sign to follow him into battle. This scene in director Tim Burton's "reimagining" of *Planet of the Apes* will make one kind of lasting impression on movie audiences this summer, and will no doubt create a different kind of indelible memory for the technicians and the performers wearing ape makeup. Then there's the small cadre of genre press on hand to do articles for various publications. There are few (if any) writers covering science fiction, fantasy and horror who don't have a long-standing love for the subject, and it's likely these folks have fond recollections of when they first saw the original 1968 *Planet of the Apes*.

Still, I'm the only one present experiencing a visceral flashback. Yes, I can remember the exact circumstances of the first time I saw each of the Apes films, but that's not what the sight of all that makeup and the smell of foam latex and adhesive is triggering. Watching the actors between takes, nearly all giving in to the impulse to work the makeup with exaggerated facial expressions, loping rather than walking, even grooming imaginary bugs out of visitors' hair, I can't stop myself from thinking, "I can't believe I'm here. Again."

In 1972, 29 years ago almost to the day, I visited my first film set: *Conquest of the Planet of the Apes*. I was 11 years old and didn't know a soul connected with the movie, or anyone in the film business. However, I was passionate about all things *Planet of the Apes*. My mother, both indulgent and supportive, read in the paper that *Conquest* was being filmed on location only about half an hour from where we lived. She thought I might be interested in seeing how a movie was made.

We arrived on the second night of filming in Century City's open-air shopping mall. The production company had set up their base camp, with makeup tables, trailers and catering, in the underground parking garage. The camera and lighting equipment was arranged in the plaza at the west end of the concrete footbridge that spans the Avenue of the Stars. There were enormous lights up on stands twice my height, an apparatus that looked like an eccentric fairground ride—the camera crane—and a stuntman in gorilla makeup having his facial hairpieces reglued to the edges of his appliance to repair the damage done by sweat and the night wind. As far as I was concerned, I had found the secret heart of the universe. Nothing could have kept me away for the rest of the shoot, and—thanks, Mom and filmmakers—nobody tried. Consequently, I was there every night for two weeks.

I don't believe this would be possible today—film sets have become much more wary of uninvited guests. However, the *Conquest* company seemed simply bemused to find themselves the subject of such heartfelt scrutiny by a kid. I was told where I could safely stand and watch as camera rolled. Many of the crew were nice enough to answer questions, and I learned a lot by observing—I could see first-hand where appliances left off and skin began, how many different ways a scene could be played, the amount of preparation that went into a stunt. I saw that what in the movie appeared to be a fire born of kerosene poured on concrete was really created and controlled by a

wooden platform equipped with metal coils and gas jets. This contraption is actually visible in a few shots of the riot; it's that object in the foreground that looks like a giant mousetrap. And then there was Roddy McDowall as the chimpanzee rebel Caesar, projecting so the microphone could capture his voice across the open space as he exhorted an ape mob to bloody rebellion.

The actors were incredibly kind. Hari Rhodes, who played the bureaucrat Mr. MacDonald, allowed me to read his copy of the *Conquest* script, even leaving it in my hands when he went back to his trailer: "I trust you." Natalie Trundy, the film's ape leading lady and wife of producer Arthur P. Jacobs, invited me to watch a day's shooting on the soundstage for the "I understand, Mr. MacDonald" scene.

As for McDowall, I surmise that he found it pretty funny to be the object of a preadolescent's blatant crush—especially when (indeed, primarily because) he was made up as an articulate chimpanzee—but he was extraordinarily gracious about it. One night, he invited me and two other young fans into his trailer, chatting with us for about 90 minutes between lighting setups. Although I didn't see it that way at the time, this was essentially my first "So, what's it like wearing effects makeup?" interview.

Of course, there were plenty of incongruous sights—apes in eyeglasses, smoking cigarettes on long holders, using the pay phone—to put things into perspective. Still, physically being there, a few yards away from an ape horde in full shrieking cry, arms swinging low as they thundered over the bridge, was a life-changing experience. On one hand, I understood it was make-believe—but then again, it was literally, tangibly happening in front of me. When it was all over, the biggest question was: How could I ever get to see anything like it again? Welcome to entertainment journalism, writing for FANGORIA—and the chance to briefly come full circle.

—Abbie Bernstein



Witnessing the *Conquest of the Planet of the Apes* first-hand was a thrilling experience for a budding writer.