

Halloween favorites HOCUS POCUS, CHUCKY, and THE ADDAMS FAMILY films share DNA with DAFT PUNK and the GEICO CAVEMEN

Family-owned Special Effects Company ALTERIAN STUDIOS, INC. throws a broad net across the Entertainment Industry.

LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA, USA, November 5, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Tony Gardner grew up in Ohio, and wanted to get into the film industry. Moving to California he was hired onto the makeup effects crew for "Michael Jackson's Thriller." He also played several zombies in the music video: crawling out of a grave, losing an arm, and advancing on Ola Ray with Michael during the finale inside the house.

Gardner's first job as an independent effects artist was the creation of the animatronic "Half Corpse" character for the cult classic film "The Return of the Living Dead." [The Half Corpse was a Zombie that spoke](#), and introduced the now-mainstream idea that Zombies ate brains.

After leading a team of artists responsible for creating the gooey victims of "The Blob" in 1988, Tony and his wife Cindy formed a special makeup effects company named Alterian Studios. The early 90s brought a slew of genre films through Alterian's doors, starting with the "Addams Family" films starring Raoul Julia and Angelica Houston, as well as Disney's "Hocus Pocus," and Sony's "The Craft."

Says Gardner: "The weirdest job interview that I can recall was the one for "Hocus Pocus," that went essentially like this: "Can you design a 300 year old zombie whose mouth is stitched shut with leather cord, gets his fingers sliced off on camera, as well as his head knocked off and reattached a couple times? And while you're at it, we also want to run over a cat with a bus and then have it re-inflate live on camera. ...and please make this all "kid friendly" of course...this is a Disney film."

The Addam's Family films were certainly more straightforward, but not any less challenging:



Tony Gardner at Alterian Inc. with Chucky and Hocus Pocus' Billy Butcherson.



It's been fun to be able to create such interesting characters and bring them to life, and also have the fans be so supportive of what we've been doing and very vocal in regards to letting us know!"

Tony Gardner

items to create for the first film included an animatronic House Clock with functioning figures of all of the Addams characters, a living Bear Rug, Cousin Itt, a Finger Trap, animatronic Orchids that attacked trespassers, and an [sword fighting scene between Pugsley and Wednesday](#) that sprayed 55 gallons of blood into the elementary school audience. "Addams Family Values" added a 17 foot tall "miniature" version of the Addams house and a highly combustible version of Uncle Fester's Dream House, designed to explode into a massive fireball. "I remember the day we filmed the Dream House exploding very well," says Gardner. "The house left Alterian fully assembled on a

few flatbed trucks for filming, and then all that came back after wrap were a few milk crates with some scorched bits of the house and lawn statuary."

In the 1990s Alterian was approached by Daft Punk to design and create a robotic look for the electronic dance music duo, thanks to a referral from Spike Jonze, who worked with Gardner and Alterian on the Jackass television series and films by way of [old age disguise makeups for Johnny Knoxville and crew](#). Chucky came knocking at the door at the same time, and so did the Martin Agency, who was in search of someone to design and create a group of "modern Cavemen" for a series of Geico ads.

"I didn't realize it at the time, but we were definitely putting our foot into the pop culture waters on all three accounts. Chucky was already a twenty year franchise, but none of us expected that the Daft Punk robots and the Geico Cavemen would have the same lasting impact - or transcend it. Nor did we expect that we'd remain involved with all the same projects and people over the decades to come." Gardner's collaborations with Daft Punk includes multiple music videos with Gardner writing and directing one, as well as a feature film called "Daft Punk's Electroma."

The Chucky films spawned a TV series that is in its third season on SyFy and Peacock. Gardner is a Producer on that series in addition to building and performing Chucky along with his team. Alterian also worked on "Hocus Pocus 2," and added Winnifred's "Book" to their list of iconic characters.

"It will be interesting to see where Chucky and Hocus Pocus take us down the road. The fact that the fans genuinely enjoy the work that we're doing means everything to us, and we can't wait to show them the new ideas and characters that we have planned!"

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