

Taylor Kinney as
Kelly Severide

MAKE-UP TO THE RESCUE

by Chris Koseluk

ON THE SET WITH THE MAKE-UP AND HAIR CREW OF *CHICAGO FIRE*

The morning begins in a Costco parking lot just west of downtown Chicago. The Willis Tower looms in the background. Spring arrived weeks ago, but you wouldn't know it by the weather. Snow flurries whip through the air.

But as chilly as it may be, the cast and crew of *Chicago Fire* have a job to do. A 10-year-old boy is in danger. A towering evergreen has snapped and fallen across a residential street, trapping him underneath. Before he can be rescued, make-up and hair must spring into action.

Just before 5 a.m., make-up department head Deborah Dee, her second Nikki Greene and third Pam Turnmire enter their trailer, shed their winter coats and prepare to greet the principals involved in today's shoot—part of the final episode for

Season Six.

Chicago Fire's base of operations is Cinespace Chicago Film Studios, a sprawling 30-stage space. It's home to the production offices, the firehouse interiors and Molly's Bar, the characters' after-hours hangout.

The show is frequently on location in and around Chicago. When this happens, everyone crams into the tiny trailer to take turns at one of the four chairs in a row of five. The remaining chair is where Christopher Payne, special effects make-up department head, works his magic.

Up the stairs is hair, manned by department co-heads Dominic Mango and Tony Mirante and key Rosalind Jones-Crosby. They take their positions at 5:40 a.m.

Needing a clean, rugged look, the first step for the male actors is a shave. As the

cast fuels itself with coffee, the guys go under the razor. Dee organizes the order for the make-up chairs and who will go to hair.

"Today wasn't too bad. I think it was 10 total. Sometimes we have 20 to 21 people," says Dee later in the morning after getting everyone to location. "People are in chairs. People are lined up behind chairs, standing by the sink, eating breakfast. They're running lines and you're saying, 'Excuse me. Excuse me,' as you're running your butt around them."

Among those populating the trailer this morning are Monica Raymund and Kara Killmer (paramedics Gabriela Dawson and Sylvie Brett), and the crew of Truck 81—David Eigenberg (Christopher Herrmann), Yuri Sardarov (Brian "Otis" Zvonecek), Miranda Rae Mayo

(Stella Kidd) and Christian Stolte (Randal "Mouch" McHolland). As she typically does, Dee makes up series lead Jesse Spencer (Matthew Casey). She also does Eamonn Walker (Chief Boden) and Taylor Kinney (Kelly Severide), who aren't part of today's scene.

Dee, whose series work includes *The Chicago Code* and *Underemployed*, has department headed *Chicago Fire* since the pilot. The title was a tip-off that burns, soot and grime would be mandatory. She quickly learned how intense this gig would be during the pilot episode.

The scene called for a floor to collapse during a fire. When Dee took her place on set, a crew member wearing a fire retardant suit approached her. He asked if she were sure she wanted to stand there. Dee replied, "Yeah, I kind of want to see what's going on."

The crew member suggested moving back. Dee didn't think it would be close enough. "He said, 'It's close enough,'" she remembers. "And when that floor dropped and the fire went up, the hairs inside my nose kind of went whoosh! 'Aaagh, I get it. Okay, where's the door? Let me out of here.'"

And that's the closest Dee has ever gotten to one of the fires.

With longevity comes wisdom. After 130-plus episodes, Dee and her crew excel under the rigors of *Chicago Fire*. They know how to protect their cast from the sun and temperatures that can soar above 100. They've endured the freezing polar vortex and harrowing thunderstorms.

To keep her crew from feeling worn out and add extra flexibility, Dee has assembled two alternating teams. "The Evens" are here today. They work all the even episodes. Key Karen Brody, second Justine Losoya and third Deida Massey are "The Odds."

"They work in the snow, sleet, rain, standing for 12 hours either freezing or burning up," says Dee. "We have two wagons that we take on set—chairs on top. It looks like a parade."

Mango joined the show in Season Three. A salon owner whose credits include *Home Alone* and *The Fugitive*, his mandate is pretty straightforward. The network wants the actors to look like firemen.

"They don't want anything edgy. Just nice, clean-cut men's haircuts," says Mango. "When the girls are on call, it has to be braided or in a ponytail. That's the dress code."

Every episode starts with a haircut for the men. Mango leaves it long to suggest



Burn injury make-up



Christopher Payne with Xion Dorsey



Deborah Dee perfecting a make-up



FROM LEFT: Deida Massey, Justine Losoya, Nikki Greene, Pam Turnmire, Karen Brody and Dee

a few days growth. "It has to look the same throughout the season, so it's just a maintenance cut," he says.

The women give Mango the opportunity to stretch creatively. When Killmer joined the show in Season Three, he gave her character braids. "She gets a lot of tweets about that," he adds. "Usually, it's just ponytails on the job. She stands out."

When a shift is over and it's time for the characters to socialize, hair gets to make the women look a little more glamorous. The department also oversees the wigs. Most are for the stunt doubles.

"Last episode, we had an actor with dreadlocks down to here," says Mango, indicating his waist. "Rosalind is really good with wigs, but we couldn't match the dreads, so I bought extensions. She made the stuntman look just like the actor. It was amazing."

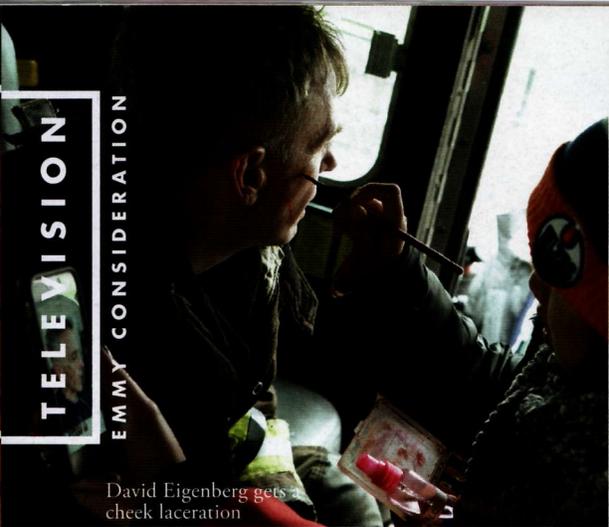
Dee has refined the make-up for

the female characters as the series has evolved. "We've established a definite look over a period of time," she says. "It's a combination of how the studio wants them to look and their own personal likes and dislikes. Miranda might get a little less, Kara medium, Monica more. We try to match the personality."

When it's time to get down and dirty, the team creates what Dee calls "Beauty Grime." "We have a grease base, an Illustrator base that looks like dirt and a powder embedded with an oil," she says. "Each leaves a different level of grime. It depends on the fire."

Payne became make-up effects department head during Season Two. His first episode involved a full-body burn.

"I had done burns before, but not nearly to the extent I do here," says Payne, whose credits include *CSI* and *Grey's Anatomy*. "A father lay down on



David Eigenberg gets a cheek laceration



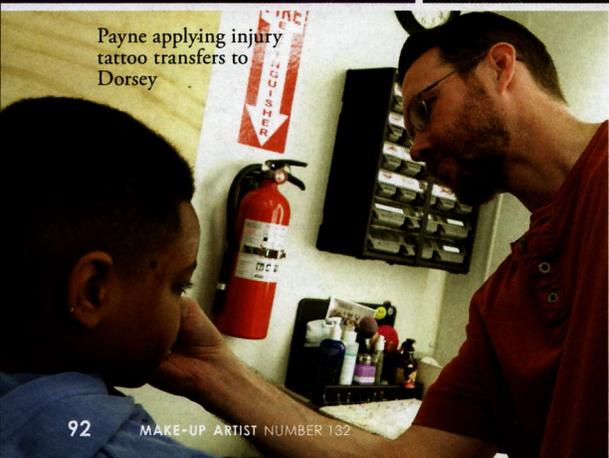
Burn injury make-up



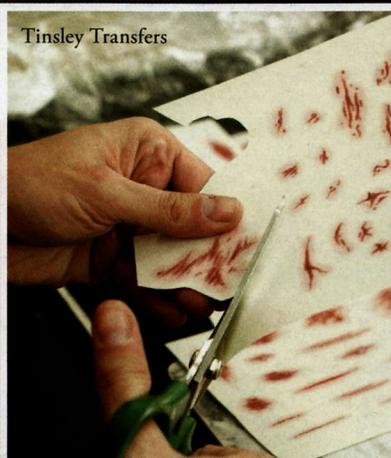
Back whip wound prosthetic make-up



Injury make-up on Christian Stolte



Payne applying injury tattoo transfers to Dorsey



Tinsley Transfers

his family during a fire. Our characters tried to resuscitate him, but he was too badly injured. It was an emotional scene with a lot of lingering shots of the actor in his burns. Talk about hitting the ground running!”

Since his “trial by fire” (his pun, not ours), Payne has become an expert at creating burns of varying degrees. He and his assistant Jamie Leodones, who started last season, know the difference between thermal, electrical and chemical burns.

“We’ve done everything from minor redness and blisters to full-body, third-degree burns,” continues Payne. “On those, we often build a bodysuit into the burned costume. It helps reduce the actor’s call time. Even then, it may take three or four hours to apply the prosthetics.”

If an actor needs to be close to real fire, Payne often just paints on the burns for safety reasons. He remembers a scene that called for both the actor and stunt performer to be so close to the flames, he had to paint a Nomex fire suit to mimic burned skin. “My number one rule is ‘Don’t maim the talent,’” he jokes. “In actuality, we take safety very seriously.”

Payne loves trying out new techniques and materials. Reading George Alahouzos’ post on Neill Gorton’s Makeup FX 911 Facebook page about the use of Kryolan’s Glatzan to create scabs led to a favorite trick.

“I realized it can also be effectively used to create the charred tissue on top of a silicone or gelatin burn,” explains Payne. “We keep a bunch of ‘burn sheets’ on hand just in case we need to do an out-of-the-kit effect.”

For chemical burns, Payne swears by Picot Antacid Effervescent Powder. He sprinkles it on a burn, and just before the cameras roll, sprays it with water. The result is a gruesome, bubbling effect. “It never fails to get a reaction from the crew,” he says.

Burns may be Payne’s bread and butter, but he thrives on the unusual injuries. “Things I’ve never seen before,” he says. “Those are the most fun.”

One rescue from last season found a religious zealot whipping his back into a bloody pulp. “It was a full-back prosthetic,” says Payne. “I did a lot of research on actual whip wounds for the shape and look of welts.”

And then there was the tuning fork. The firemen answered a call to find a man high on drugs with it embedded in his eye. To create the gag, a photographer created a hi-res photo of the actor’s eye that Payne attached to a plate. It was overlaid with a

prosthetic and applied to the actor's eye. The tuning fork was magnetic so it could be attached.

Payne's work today revolves around 10-year-old Xion Dorsey, who plays the boy trapped under the tree. Because he's a minor, he couldn't spend hours lying under the branches during setups and establishing shots. The main reason was safety. But the law also restricts the hours Dorsey can work. The solution was a stunt dummy.

"We get a whole day's worth of filming even though he's not there for all of it," explains Payne.

The week before, Dorsey came into Payne's shop at Cinespace for a lifecast. He cast Dorsey's hands and a separate face and headcast. "We can't do a full headcast on somebody that young," he says.

For the body, Payne went low-tech. "We wrapped Xion in duct tape and cut him out of it," he explains. "We filled the duct tape form with Smooth-On FlexFoam-iT! X. It created a rigid body that I cut apart at the joints. It's fast and cheap—which production loves."

The knees and elbows were reconnected with hinges. Payne used rope joints for the remainder of the body. "Low-tech, but effective," he says. "The final body is pretty floppy, but none of the joints move in an unrealistic way."

Payne went directly to the location this morning, arriving around 6 a.m. to place the dummy. After confirming with director Leslie Libman how she wanted it positioned, he put his piece in place.

As the smell of pine fills the air, Payne has one more job to do. Around 11 a.m., he leaves the set for the trailer. Dorsey's face needs a few cuts.

Knowing how important speed is, Payne opts for Tinsley Tattoos. "Six of them," he says. "When we get on set, I'll touch it up with a little blood. Maybe a little dirt. That's pretty much it."

Dorsey's lifecasting went so smoothly, Payne was able to squeeze in a test for the cuts during the session. The pre-planning pays off. He makes up Dorsey in nine minutes. "This is the first time on this show I've done a make-up entirely using tattoo transfers," he says. "They wanted him in and out of the chair as fast as humanly possible."

This is actually the second dummy Payne created for the episode. During a party cruise on the Chicago River, a

drunken passenger gets himself stuck in the boat's cowl vent. Payne's creation does all the leg flailing seen on camera.

"We decided it would be easiest to have someone in the vent puppeteering a set of dummy legs," says Payne. The smaller Leodones got the call because she was a better fit. She maneuvered the legs until the pipe was cut open. As that caused sparks, they switched to a full dummy for safety reasons.

Before lunch, Payne lends a hand with another make-up. Herrmann gets a prominent gash on his face when he dives into the tree. Payne will team with Nikki Greene, who has been doing Eigenberg's make-up for the episode, to give the actor a bright red cut across his cheek.

On set, both Dorsey and his doppelganger are big hits. Eigenberg teases the boy, asking which character he'd rather have save him. Dorsey answers, "Casey," and Eigenberg turns and shakes his fist in mock jealousy at his castmate.

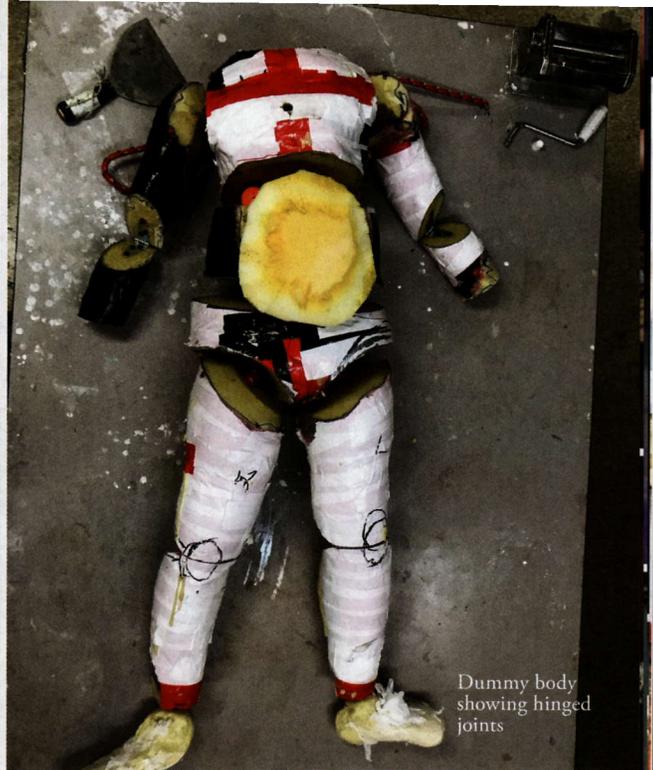
Eigenberg and a cameraman disappear into the tree to capture shots of Herrmann interacting with the dummy. When the director yells, "Cut," it is removed. Dorsey takes his place, is pulled out from under the tree and placed on a gurney. *Chicago Fire* saves the day.

Between shots, Payne places the dummy's hand on Eigenberg's shoulder, causing him to jump. Dorsey poses for photos with his stunt dummy. Everyone thinks the resemblance is uncanny.

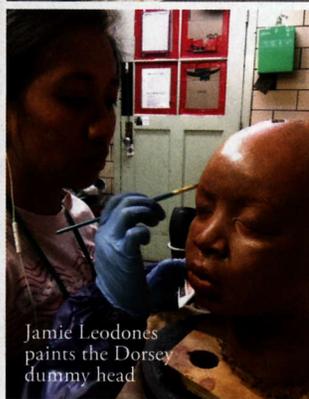
Payne loves the reaction. He knew the dummy didn't need to look so realistic, but decided to go the extra mile. "I don't want the director to say, 'Let's use the dummy for more than we intended,' and I've half finished it because I thought it was only going to be in a super-wide shot."

But when you're working with a show about characters rising to the challenge, it's only natural that everyone in hair and make-up is doing the same.

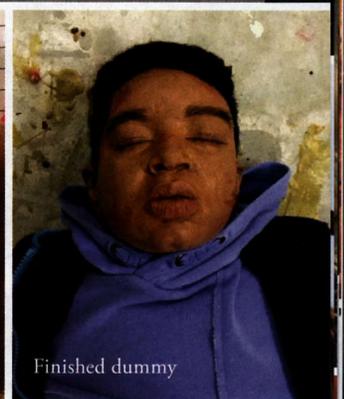
"Making it look as real as possible is simultaneously fun and nerve-racking," says Payne. "But I've had real firefighters or EMTs comment on how real something looks, and that's a great feeling of accomplishment."



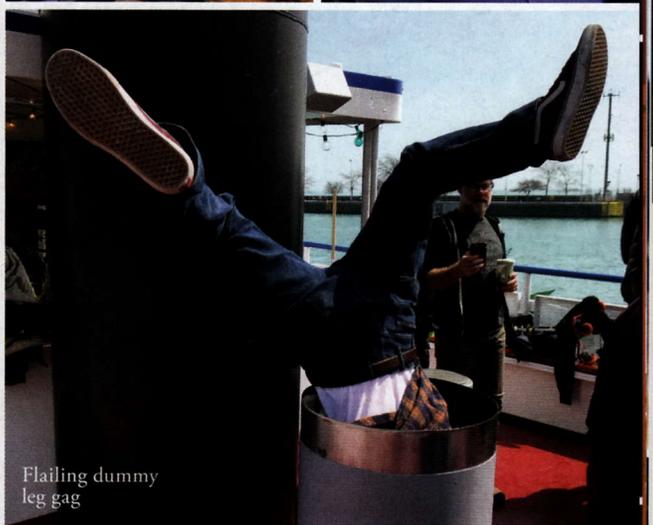
Dummy body showing hinged joints



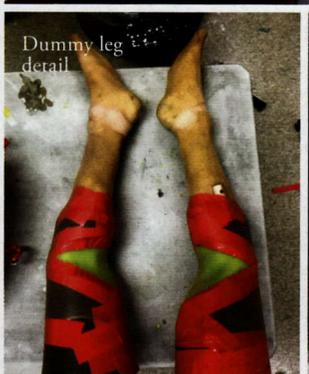
Jamie Leodones paints the Dorsey dummy head



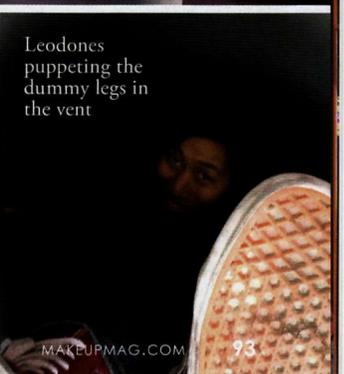
Finished dummy



Flailing dummy leg gag



Dummy leg detail



Leodones puppeting the dummy legs in the vent