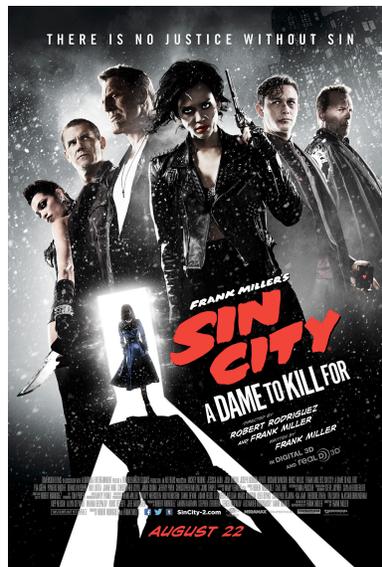


DIMENSION
F I L M S

FRANK MILLER'S SIN CITY: A DAME TO KILL FOR

Production Notes



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FRANK MILLER'S SIN CITY: A DAME TO KILL FOR

Production Notes

Co-directors Frank Miller and Robert Rodriguez reunite to bring Miller's visually stunning "Sin City" graphic novels back to the screen in 3D in FRANK MILLER'S SIN CITY: A DAME TO KILL FOR.

In a town where justice doesn't prevail, the desperate want vengeance and ruthless murderers find themselves with vigilantes on their heels. Their paths cross in Sin City's famous Kadie's Club Pecos.

The film opens with fan-favorite "Just Another Saturday Night," when Marv (Mickey Rourke) finds himself in the center of carnage as he tries to remember the preceding events.

"The Long, Bad Night" tells the tale of Johnny, a cocky young gambler (Joseph Gordon-Levitt) taking his chances with the biggest villain in Sin City, Senator Roark (Powers Boothe).

The central story, Miller's acclaimed "A Dame To Kill For," features Dwight McCarthy (Josh Brolin) in his final confrontation with the woman of his dreams and nightmares, Ava Lord (Eva Green).

"Nancy's Last Dance" follows Nancy Callahan (Jessica Alba) in the wake of John Hartigan's (Bruce Willis) selfless suicide. Driven insane by grief and rage, she will stop at nothing to get revenge.

RETURNING TO SIN CITY

When FRANK MILLER'S SIN CITY opened in April 2005, the film was a critical and global box office success. Breaking new ground, the movie was filmed entirely on green screen and brought Miller's black and white graphic novels to life. Rife with strong women, flawed heroes, and vile villains, fans immediately asked for a sequel.

Co-directors Robert Rodriguez and Frank Miller strongly agreed if they did a follow-up, it had to take on an even bolder appearance than that of the first film.

Having popularized 3D filmmaking with SPY KIDS 3D: GAME OVER, Rodriguez knew the world of Sin City would come to life in a whole new way using the technique. Though some 3D films can leave moviegoers overwhelmed, Rodriguez believed bringing the Sin City universe into 3D would do just the opposite, recalling, "I always thought if any movie could lend itself to 3D, it would be the "Sin City" books because of the graphic novel quality." Rodriguez felt the film's signature black and white aesthetic would actually enhance the 3D experience, adding, "with the 3D, you feel like you are inside a graphic novel."

Some of the stories in A DAME TO KILL FOR are prequels to the narratives from the first movie. Characters killed in SIN CITY, like Marv (Mickey Rourke), Goldie (Jaime King), and Hartigan (Bruce Willis), return in this installment. Explaining his timeline, Miller says, "I tend to play around in the "Sin City" books as I am in the movies now - I bounce from one point in time to another so characters can seem to come back to life when actually, all I've done is go back in time."

Both Rodriguez and Miller agreed on critical and fan favorite "A Dame To Kill" as the central story. Not only does it reunite favorite characters, but it also introduces one of Sin City's most evil creatures, the beautiful and deadly Ava Lord (Eva Green).

Chronologically, it takes place prior to "The Big Fat Kill" (featured in the first film) and explains how Dwight McCarthy (Josh Brolin) came to have a dramatically different face.

Miller comments, "Built around a tragic romance between a man and the love of his life, it's a story that involves a lot of betrayal, a lot of darkness and a lot of guilt...all the great stuff that goes into film noir. It's a story that I'm very proud of and Robert is very fond of."

To set the tone, Miller and Rodriguez decided to open the film again with Marv, in “Just Another Saturday Night.” In the story, Marv struggles to recall a very nasty encounter with a group of frat boys.

Having faithfully followed the books in SIN CITY, Rodriguez and Miller chose to incorporate new stories into the second film. Rodriguez explains, “The first movie was all about being very true to the books and translating them directly to the screen. The second film we thought, ‘Let’s give them a surprise so that people can’t just go to the comic book store, buy the book and know what’s going to happen.’”

One of the new stories, “The Long, Bad Night,” features a young, cocky gambler named Johnny (Joseph Gordon-Levitt). He returns to Sin City to try his luck at poker, playing against the town’s most powerful and nefarious politician, Senator Roark (Powers Boothe).

The second new narrative, “Nancy’s Last Dance,” follows “That Yellow Bastard,” the story of exotic dancer Nancy Callahan (Jessica Alba) and her relationship with the cop and her personal savior, John Hartigan (Bruce Willis).

The sequel occurs four years after Hartigan commits suicide to save Nancy. Still dancing at Kadie’s, she is a shell of her once carefree self and desperate to get revenge on the man she blames for Hartigan’s death. Unable to continue watching her spiral out of control, Marv offers his services.

The Natives Return

Production on FRANK MILLER’S SIN CITY: A DAME TO KILL FOR began in late October 2012, eight years after the first film was shot at Troublemaker Studios, Rodriguez’s production facilities in Austin, Texas.

Coordinating the schedules of over a dozen principal actors proved to be quite tricky, so Rodriguez employed a technique he uses in most of his films -- he recorded certain group scenes with individual actors. In other words, many of the actors who appear in scenes together did not necessarily shoot at the same time.

Even though Jessica Alba has filmed several movies with Rodriguez since SIN CITY, she felt differently about coming back to make the sequel that changed her career. Alba comments, “I’m much more comfortable in my own skin as a woman and an actress. I’m fearless in a way that I wasn’t when I did the first one.”

Not a fan of having the Marv prosthetics applied to his face, Mickey Rourke speaks honestly, “I don’t like sitting in the makeup chair for anymore than ten minutes but I’m stuck there for hour plus a half hour to get it off. But the big picture is, aside from the makeup stuff, it’s a pleasure to go to work. I really look forward to being on the set and working with a director that I love, that I have respect for, that I care about and I know that he feels that way about me, so I give him everything. And when Frank says something about the character, it takes it to the place of how they envision it.”

Rosario Dawson, who plays Gail, the fierce and sexy leader of the Old Town prostitutes, compares her feelings now to when she first came on set nine years ago. “It’s the same giddiness that we had the first time we were shooting. You’re coming back and playing characters that you’ve played before but there’s this whole other excitement in the way that we’re shooting this and it’s going to be in 3D. With what Robert had learned with all the new technology, he and Frank are just delighted to have the opportunity to play with this material and bring it to life in a whole new way.” She adds, “I can only imagine this time, with things just jumping out of the screen, every slap, every gush of blood, every snarl, Gail coming at you full force!”

Returning to Troublemaker for his third film with Rodriguez, Bruce Willis says, “It’s like stepping back into a family and everybody is enthusiastic about the film, the storytelling and how they shoot movies is really alive. I always like coming down to Austin.”

The first to film was actress Jaime King, who plays Old Town’s identical twin sister prostitutes, Wendy and Goldie. On coming back, she relays, “It feels so nostalgic being here and on the green screen and working with Robert and Frank again. It’s such a joy to play these characters again in a different and expanded way.”

Powers Boothe who portrays the corrupt Senator Roark, comments, “The first time I worked on the green screen was a little odd, a little strange to me. This time around, I knew what it was going to be and I felt much freer and more able to do what I do in conjunction with those two gentlemen. It’s just been great.” He laughs, “I don’t want to gush too much...but come on....”

THE NEW INHABITANTS

The new cast members include actors Rodriguez has worked closely with before like Josh Brolin, Jeremy Piven and Lady Gaga. Others were friends or actors Frank and Robert had long admired like Joseph Gordon-Levitt, Ray Liotta, Stacy Keach and Christopher Meloni. Eva Green

dazzled the co-directors with her recent performance in **300: RISE OF AN EMPIRE**, the sequel to **300**, the film based on Miller's graphic novel. Rodriguez and Miller had to recast various roles, including Manute, originally portrayed by the late Michael Clarke Duncan and Miho, played by Devon Aoki. The filmmakers chose Dennis Haysbert and Jamie Chung, who both gave impressive performances.

Many Rodriguez films cast well-known actors in roles that differ from their usual choices. Such is the case with Christopher Lloyd, who portrays Kroenig, the drug addicted back alley doctor in "The Long, Bad Night." Lloyd laughs, "I read the script and I loved the part. I don't know if I would have necessarily thought of me but I'm very happy that Robert and Frank got stuck with that image and it all came to pass."

Making her second film appearance is Lady Gaga, who recently had an extended cameo as La Chameleon in Rodriguez's **MACHETE KILLS**. This time, she plays waitress Bertha who takes pity on Johnny in "The Long, Bad Night." About her casting, Gaga explains, "Robert and I had been talking about a couple of different roles but it just so happened that I was playing in Houston one night. He called and asked if I could fly in the next day and play Bertha. He needed a New York girl so it was the perfect role for us to do together again."

THE RESIDENTS

MARV

Appearing in all four segments of **SIN CITY: A DAME TO KILL FOR** is Marv, one of the most unlikely heroes in Sin City. Despite being a bruiser with an uncontrollable temper, Marv will do just about anything for his friends and is fiercely protective of women, especially Nancy Callahan.

Frank Miller comments, "Marv is a person who most people think is insane because of the way he behaves. What he really is is a man born in the wrong millennium. He could have been a Roman gladiator and people would have honored him but instead he's a misfit that hangs around in bars and breaks a lot of faces but he's a loyal man that seeks justice at every turn."

Speaking of Marv, Rourke says, "He is a character that at times, the audience may have to struggle with: 'Do we like this guy? Does he have a screw loose?' Marv doesn't really think of the big picture, he's just in the moment. He doesn't really think of the repercussions and the price he'll have to pay for it."

In “Just Another Saturday Night,” Marv tries to piece together how he ended up surrounded by smashed police cars and dead frat boys.

In the central story, “A Dame To Kill For,” Marv reunites with his formerly sober drinking buddy, Dwight McCarthy, and witnesses Dwight’s descent when his old girlfriend, Ava Lord, returns. When she double crosses Dwight, Marv puts himself in grave danger to help his old friend, leaving behind his usual trail of blood and bodies.

In “The Long, Bad Night,” Marv offers Johnny sage but unheeded advice. And in “Nancy’s Last Dance,” Marv can no longer stand by and watch Nancy Callahan fall apart.

Of working with Rourke, Rodriguez notes, “as amazing as he is in the first film, he’s even better here...Rourke really brought it. Every turn he gave me more than I even needed.”

NANCY CALLAHAN

In the first SIN CITY, Nancy’s love interest, John Hartigan, saves her twice from murder and ultimately kills himself to save her a third time. “Nancy’s Last Dance,” is the story of how she deals with the aftermath and marks the first female voiceover plotline.

Miller says, “In this story, we realize the depth of her grief and self contempt. In the previous story, “That Yellow Bastard,” she grew up to become an exotic dancer and she danced for the love of it. In this story, she becomes aware that she’s not doing that anymore, she’s basically a puppet to turn on a bunch of horny men. She’s so filled with self-contempt and full of various sides of grief, especially rage. She becomes a creature of powerful inner demons and she has to wrestle with that and reconcile that and take out her own form of justice to transcend.”

Jessica Alba had long discussed the return of Nancy Callahan. She recalls, “Frank, Robert and I have worked on this story pretty much since SIN CITY ended. We’ve talked about Nancy and her evolution and where she goes from here.” Further describing her character she says, “She takes quite a journey. You would not recognize this Nancy from the first film. I think it’s really cool to see a character who was really innocent and naive in the first one evolve into this warrior.”

Of her relationship with Hartigan and the torment she now feels, Alba comments, “She really relied on Hartigan to be her knight in shining armor but he took his life at the end of the movie. This story picks up on what that’s done to her spiritually and physically.” She continues, “She got stuck when Hartigan died. Nancy feels abandoned, angry and victimized by him because he left her to deal with it on her own. There’s a lot of language and voiceovers in the movie regarding that.”

Nancy Callahan was known for her fluid and beautiful dancing and that has changed as she's become hardened. In the first film, Alba created her own dances. This time, she requested to work with a choreographer due to her character's transformation.

She explains, "I worked with a choreographer even though Robert didn't want me to because I'm not really a dancer. I really wanted to show Nancy falling apart from the beginning of the movie and what leads to her nervous breakdown. I didn't just want it to come out of nowhere, so you get little bits of her disappearing into another person through dance and then she completely loses it."

Of Senator Roark's influence on Nancy, Alba says, "He's represented so much for her but he's a character out of a nightmare that actually existed and has been torturing her and eating at her for so long that she's finally had enough."

On her performance, Rodriguez asserts, "She's the character we've seen transform the most. She goes from being the innocent little girl in the first film to the darkest of the SIN CITY characters...We're all very proud of what she did, which would freak people out. I mean, it's pretty cool."

JOHNNY

"A Long, Bad Night" centers on Johnny, a completely new character that Frank Miller wrote for the film. Arriving in Sin City in a 1960 Corvette Convertible and dressed to the nines, he saunters into Kadie's spinning a silver dollar between his fingers. Immediately attracted to Marcie, a sweet but sassy newbie to Sin City, he proceeds to win large amount at the slot machines before asking how he can get in on Senator Roark's back room poker game, taking Marcie with him. And so begins Johnny's long, bad night.

Unlike any story in the first movie, Miller wrote "A Long, Bad Night" and its protagonist distinctly for this film, without any preexisting graphic novel. Gordon-Levitt had the unique opportunity to collaborate with Miller and Rodriguez on the development of his character.

Gordon-Levitt comments, "The character of Johnny was written in the script but there weren't any drawings so it didn't have as much specificity. It's an actor's dream to be working with filmmakers who are so collaborative, so open and eager to incorporate my creative contributions into the movie."

Joseph Gordon-Levitt was a huge fan of Sin City. He explains, "I love that it embraces the fact that this is not reality, this is a heightened and stylized comic, almost a portrayal of a world that came

out of the mind of Frank Miller. As an actor that really frees you up because you are not just tethered to ‘Would this happen in reality?’”

Commending his creativity and skill, Miller states, “Joseph, like the best actors, teaches the director and writer a lot with the performance and interpretation that they give events. Because of what he brought, I was able to write dialogue I thought was much more focused, stronger and more emotional...”

SENATOR ROARK

Featured in “The Long, Bad Night” and “Nancy’s Last Dance,” Senator Roark is the most powerful man in Sin City and one of its most depraved inhabitants.

Powers Booth elaborates: “He’s controlling and fearless because he knows what strings to pull on what puppets. He has god-like delusions. Roark has a great line where he says, ‘When I read about God, the entirely wrong thing happens. I want to be him and in Sin City, I am.’”

Senator Roark was featured in the first film’s segment, “That Yellow Bastard,” in which his son, Roark Jr., is a serial child killer who kidnaps eleven-year old Nancy Callahan. When cop John Hartigan rescues her, he severely maims Roark Jr. **f** feeling that Hartigan has caused his son a great injustice, Senator Roark frames him. Years later, Hartigan rescues Nancy again from the now horribly disfigured Roark Jr. and finally kills him. Hartigan then kills himself to stop Senator Roark from seeking further revenge by going after Nancy.

Of Roark’s feelings towards Nancy Callahan, Boothe says, “Senator Roark is a bit ambivalent about Nancy because she was much younger in the first film but now, she’s matured, she’s attractive and his attitude towards women is questionable. He gets onto the fact that she is attempting to work into his world in a negative way, so he plays with her for awhile.”

He also does the same with Johnny. Boothe comments, “He has a lot of fun with Johnny. He perceives him as this young hotshot who thinks he knows a lot more than he does so he sort of baits and toys with him.”

DWIGHT MCARTHY

The protagonist of the “Dame To Kill For” story is private investigator and photographer Dwight McCarthy, played by Josh Brolin. As the prequel to “The Big Fat Kill,” this narrative depicts

how Dwight came to have full facial reconstructive surgery. In this story, Dwight's appearance and attire are completely different.

Four years prior to this story, the beautiful Ava Lord left Dwight to marry one of the wealthiest men in Sin City. Devastated, Dwight plunges into drinking binges and uncontrollable rages, which he refers to as "letting the monster out."

Miller describes, "Dwight is a very metaphoric figure. He's the character that changes the most over time in Sin City. When we first meet him in this film, he's had a tragic affair that ended horribly and trying to pull his life together. Just as he's starting to crawl out of the muck, the woman of his dreams comes back and that's where the trouble starts."

When Ava Lord begs Dwight to save her, he feels compelled to once again become her protector. Brolin comments, "When this woman comes back into his life, it's just kind of amazing how the scaffolding that he's built in the last four years falls away very quickly." He continues, "He becomes absolutely obsessed with thoughts of her again and all those triggers set forth that monster that he's pushed down. Once it comes out, he's willing to do anything for her...to kill, to maim and put himself in a position to be extremely hurt. It's about obsession and lust and losing yourself to all that."

As his world falls apart and he becomes a hunted man, Dwight is forced to hide in the place he initially ran from -- Old Town. In this part of Sin City, his former lover, Gail, reigns supreme over a gang of lethal prostitutes.

Dwight is a man of few words and much of his inner thoughts come in the form of narration. Brolin comments on expressing his character without the use of much dialogue, "It's in the eyes and every movement speaks volumes so you try to figure out a way to do that without indicating everything. I have a lot of trust in Robert because he knows how to pick up on these things, when to zoom in on something and when to cut away to make it as compelling as possible."

A long time fan of Miller's work, Brolin looked forward to working with him and reuniting with Rodriguez whom he had worked with on GRINDHOUSE. He relays, "I'm used to working with two directors because I've been working with Joel and Ethan Coen and it's the same thing with Frank and Robert. It's truly co-directed and there's a complete trust between the two."

AVA LORD

Often referred to as a succubus, Ava Lord is the classic femme fatale. With her jet black hair, penetrating green eyes, ruby red lips and goddess-like body, men fall at her feet and are willing to do

her bidding, no matter the consequences. Claiming her life is in danger, Ava implores Dwight to save her from her husband and his pernicious right hand man, Manute.

Eva Green describes her character, “Ava is an enchantress, a siren, she casts spells over men. She can read men’s minds and she can become whatever they want her to be. With Dwight, it’s very interesting because there’s a true connection. He’s probably the only man she ever loved.” She continues, “Ava has so many facets...she can be a damsel in distress for Dwight, with Manute she’s a goddess and with Mort, she’s the sexy kitten. As an actor, it’s great because you can show so many colors.”

Frank Miller has referred to Ava Lord as “Every man’s most glorious dreams come true but she’s also every man’s darkest nightmares.” Rodriguez and Miller spent a lot of time searching for the perfect actress to play Ava. Rodriguez states, “That character is one of his most loved characters and it’s a tough role. But there was one person we were in agreement...and that was Eva Green...She pulls it off to where you go, “Okay, that’s a dame to kill for.” Miller adds, “we knew that the actor would need to be able to embody the multifaceted characteristics of this femme fatale and we found that in Eva Green.”

MANUTE

A constant in the Sin City universe and one of its most mysterious inhabitants is Manute. A loyal and lethal bodyguard, Manute has served many of the town’s most powerful figures. Audiences witnessed Manute with an eye of gold in the first installation. The story behind this deformity comes to life in **A DAME TO KILL FOR**.

Miller explains, “More is revealed about Manute’s past because we see it happen. He’s always seeking someone to essentially worship. In the first film, he was worshipping the crime lord of Sin City and in this story, he worships Ava Lord.”

Describing Manute’s complicated relationship with Ava, Haysbert says, “He is part protector, disciplinarian, lover, actually anything she wants him to be.”

In the first film, Manute was played by the late Michael Clarke Duncan who gave a powerful performance. Clarke Duncan passed away shortly before the start of production.

Finding an actor that could take on that role and expand on the iconic character was something the filmmakers took very seriously. Robert and Frank met with Dennis Haysbert. Haysbert remembers, “We got on really well and I hoped for the best. It was an absolute honor to take over this

role and to pay a bit of homage to Michael Clarke who did such a great job in the first one but when I got this role, I was determined to put my own stamp on it.”

On working with Haysbert, Miller says, “His physical presence is one thing but that voice of his comes rumbling up from the earth and seems to have no bottom and absolute force. Dennis brought the very dark, spiritual side of Manute to the story.”

GAIL

The Old Town section of Sin City is controlled by a team of cutthroat prostitutes equipped with an arsenal of weapons and directed by the boldest of leaders. Gail (Rosario Dawson) takes great pride in her position and exudes passion and intensity like no other.

On stepping into this role for a second time, Dawson states, “She is the fiercest of Amazon warriors and one of the most outrageous characters I’ve ever played. Gail is full-on all the time.”

Gail’s one soft spot is her on/off relationship with Dwight McCarthy, who returns to Old Town desperately needing her help, even though it endangers herself and her friends.

Dawson explains, “The story gives you an opportunity to see a different side of Gail who is usually pretty intense, vicious and strong but she’s in love with Dwight so you see there is a softer side of her that does exist.”

She continues, “She will lay her life down for any of the girls, for any of the ideas that she holds true but Dwight is something deeper. Her heart is Sin City, as is Dwight, and she will defend him to the death. She doesn’t want to compromise anyone else but she’s definitely not going to let Miho or the Goldie and Wendy get in her way of keeping Dwight safe.”

MIHO

Deadly little Miho is one of Miller’s all-time favorite characters. Never speaking a word, her enemies don’t see or feel the silent slice of her sword until it is too late.

Originally played by Devon Aoki, the filmmakers learned she was pregnant with her second child and would not be able to reprise the role.

Rodriguez recalls, “**W**e had just a couple of days to cast Miho. We met Jamie Chung... she’s just amazing physically and how she moves and the strength as if she’d been living with this character for a year. She just fit right in.”

A longtime fan of the film, Chung recalls, “When I got the call about Miho, my first question was about Devon Aioi because I’m such a big fan of her work, especially in SIN CITY. Those are big shoes to fill. It’s kind of bittersweet but I’m definitely excited.”

Of the physical demands the role placed on her, Chung recalls, “I’d be doing all these stunts like flipping thirty-six times and wielding a sword without even exhaling and doing it as a very challenging character. It’s hard to be very physical and not even blink. It was a lot of fun and all the makeup works as a mask.”

WENDY & GOLDIE

Jaime King returns to play Old Town’s identical twin sisters, Goldie and Wendy, prostitutes in Old Town. In the first film, Marv wakes up to find Goldie lying dead next to him and sets out to avenge her murder. In the prequel, we learn a little bit more about Goldie and her relationship with her sister.

Describing them, King says, “Despite being twins, they are two very different people. I see Wendy as more ruthless, hardcore, colder, more precise and blunt. Whereas Goldie is the one with the bigger heart, she’s more compassionate and gentler. They’re very different and it’s fun to play two very different people on screen.” Rodriguez adds, “I forget myself that it’s the same actress playing both...The walk, the attitude, it’s completely different. She’s terrific.”

MORT

Portrayed by Christopher Meloni, Mort is one of the few cops in Sin City that plays by the rules – until he encounters Ava Lord.

Meloni recounts, “Mort and his partner go to investigate the murder of Ava’s husband and he falls in lust with her. Mort is just one more fly in Ava’s web. He’s a married straight-laced cop that wouldn’t fix a parking ticket for you and then he falls under the spell of Ava.”

Meloni recalls the first time he heard about the film, “I got a call around three years ago that Frank Miller was a huge fan.” Laughing, he continues, “I was like, ‘Get out of here! How does Frank Miller even know who I am?’ but it was so exciting. Then I got to Skype with him and Robert. Frank’s my champion.”

BOB

As Mort's partner, Bob represents the typical Sin City cop, abusing the perks and power that come with his position. Bob tries to save Mort from Ava's duplicitous ways.

Piven elaborates, "Ultimately, Bob is the moral compass when you think he's the scumbag. I love that particular arc, only Frank Miller could come up with that. It was a great and unexpected turn."

Having worked on **SPY KIDS: ALL THE TIME IN THE WORLD**, Piven became friends with Rodriguez and looked forward to reuniting with him. Also a Frank Miller fan, Piven explains, "I was familiar with Frank's works and there's obviously something very dark and funny and accessible about his stuff. I took the ride and I loved it."

WALLENQUIST

As one of the last actors to film, Stacy Keach portrayed the rancorous and grotesque mob boss, Wallenquist. Working for nine hours under layers of prosthetics, Keach brought to life the character his good friend, Frank Miller, had long wanted to bring to the screen.

Of his character, Keach says, "Wallenquist is pure evil but I feel there's another side to him that's justifiable in terms of his motives. Yes, he's evil and he's the boss but he's a sucker for a pretty girl and in this case it's Ava."

VISUAL EFFECTS & 3D

Rodriguez was insistent on shooting the film in 3D rather than converting it in post production. Having shot with the Alexa camera on previous films, he understood all its possibilities and used the Pace 3D system with it.

The entire film was shot against green screen with very little set pieces. As in the first movie, the virtual Sin City world is all digital. However, advancements in technology allowed Rodriguez to achieve a look even closer to that of Miller's illustrations. Miller's graphic novels served as the storyboard reference for the VFX artists.

The film's VFX producer, Crys Forsyth-Smith comments, "Robert wanted to push the graphic elements more this time. The 3D further brings viewers into the Sin City world."

VFX house Prime Focus handled the majority of the VFX and 3D, with just under twenty-three hundred VFX shots in the film.

COSTUME DESIGN

A DAME TO KILL FOR marks the ninth collaboration between Costume Designer Nina Proctor and Robert Rodriguez. Having brought Miller's creations to life in the first **SIN CITY**, Proctor had learned a lot about how textures and colors appear in black and white.

Proctor comments, "We shot in color against the green screen and now, the 3D adds one more level to the process. I have to be very careful. I study the fabrics and think of everything in black and white."

Nina and her team handcrafted most of the costumes at Troublemaker in the costume design studio that she supervised the building of several years ago.

Frank Miller encouraged Nina to work freely, and to not adhere to the exact details of his novels. Proctor comments, "Frank draws all these folds in his renderings and we use his book for the storyboard. What I try to stay true to is the silhouette that he drew. It's my job to bring the color, depth and texture and to give the costume a little bit of life."

She comments, "With the new stories, Frank's given me a certain amount of freedom with the costumes and because of our experience on the first **SIN CITY**, he trusts me and likes to leave the costumes up to me."

Summarizing some of the main characters' wardrobe, Proctor describes:

Nancy: "Jessica and I were able to work together for about a month and a half before filming, even before we had a schedule. She sent me the music she would be dancing to so I knew what her emotions were going to be and I tried to design costumes that reflected those things." She continues, "Some of the costumes I wanted to have great movement like the leather feather one that shook all over. We ended up adding extra layers because it was really effective shooting it in color and then switching it to black and white with the 3D camera."

Gail: "One of my biggest challenges was how was I going to at least match that costume that Gail wore in the first movie. With her, it's very important that the strength of the female comes through the costumes. Rosario was so open and just embraces her character so much that it makes it fun to costume her. We kept her in the leather and the spikes and did a bit of color this time."

Ava: **“I really wanted Ava to have a 1940s feel to her without being 1940s because Sin City is timeless. We try to avoid any particular era but there’s something very beautiful and sensual about the clothes from the 1940s. Eva and I had the same feeling of where we wanted to go with the costumes. Her wardrobe was very specific and I wanted to stay true to the graphic novel.”**

Dwight: **“His dress is different than in the first film where he was always in a trench coat and high-tops. This time I went with what his character was doing in the film – he’s a photographer, a little bit of a detective and a fighter so I brought those aspects in.”**

Johnny: **“He only has one costume that he wears through the whole story. Joseph had a very clear idea about how he saw the character so he and I worked together on his costume. He was just delightful to work with.”**

Manute: **“We lifted Manute off the pages of the comic. It’s more or less a chauffeur’s outfit, very tailored and strong but Manute is so much more than that, he’s almost a spiritual being. Dennis brought such power to the costume.”**

Miho: **“She’s almost warrior-like in this and she does a lot of sword-work so I did a wrap all the way around her waist. That way, her sword could hang from it and she was able to move freely without being constrained in the costume.”**

On the trust Miller has with Proctor, he muses, **“I’ve learned over time to do a decent job of dressing up my characters when I draw them but Nina is the expert and just inspired. I will give her a notion and what comes back is not at all what I asked for but follows my intent much more closely than what I ever could have imaged because I usually didn’t know it existed.”**

Proctor explains, **“Frank and Robert are a little different in how they work. Robert wants to see everything before it’s camera-ready. Frank likes to be surprised. He enjoys seeing the actor walking on set in full costume and full makeup.”**

MAKEUP

In addition to the gorgeous, buxom women Frank Miller is famous for drawing, the Sin City universe is filled with men who have been disfigured during their years in Sin City. In the first film,

audiences were shocked by That Yellow Bastard's deformed body, the gun muzzle lodged in Jackie Boy's forehead, and Marv's primeval shaped head. Those looks were perfected by long-time Rodriguez collaborator, Greg Nicotero of KNB EFX.

During this film, Nicotero aimed to cut down the time it took to apply the Marv prosthetics to Mickey Rourke. Nicotero recalls, "We recreated the prosthetic and streamlined the application process. I brought in my right hand, Gino Cragnole, who worked on the first film with me to co-apply Mickey's prosthetics. We'd become friends with Mickey on the first film and had a great time on this one too."

Nicotero and his team also applied Marv's prosthetics to Mickey's stunt double, Stunt Coordinator, Jeff Dashnaw. Dashnaw wore the prosthetics in the first film, as well. Laughing, Nicotero remembers, "When we did the first film, Jeff and I were standing in Robert's office with a few of the possible Marv stunt doubles and Robert said, 'Why don't we do it on Jeff?' Since then, Jeff's worn the makeup twenty-five to thirty times. He never sits still and has me laughing the entire time to where my airbrush is shaking. He also reminds me every day that I did this to him."

Dwight's reconstructed face posed another challenge to the creative team. Nicotero comments, "We made some minor changes - we gave him a nose prosthetic, an upper lip, jaw, chin, contact lenses and a wig. It was just subtle enough."

Nicotero even had to recreate Dwight's eyeball, which hangs out of his skull at one point. Nicotero explains, "We use Frank's books and sketches for a visual template to reference and from there, we make three dimensional prosthetics. There's a scene where Dwight's been beat up by Manute and in the graphic novel, it's really obscure in regards to the blood splatters and a big eyeball sticking out. So we did a really cool sculpture and applied it onto Josh. And the way they shot it really had a lot of depth to it, like all the meat had been removed from his eye so between that and lots of cuts and bruises, it looks spectacular."

Another challenge was creating the enlarged and craggy face of mob boss Wallenquist, played by Stacy Keach. Nicotero used layers of prosthetics to inflate Wallenquist's head and to create his 29-inch neck and scarred complexion.

Keach remarks about his experience with KNB, "Putting those prosthetics together was an amazing experience. I'd worn masks before and I thought I was going to be miserable being in there for eight or nine hours but it wasn't. The worst part was getting out of it. They made my job very easy."

Miller remarks on KNB's incredible work, "Greg Nicotero is able to look at my drawings and interpret them in three dimensions which isn't the easiest thing to do because a cartoonist can get away with lying a lot. I can make a character's profile a mass in front of his face and no one yells at me but Greg has to make all things with work from both angles."

Makeup and Hair Department Head, Ermahn Ospina, has been working with Rodriguez since **DESPERADO**. For almost twenty years, Ermahn has created the makeup looks for the sexy and powerful women in those films, including the first **SIN CITY**.

Ospina comments, "Working on green screen and now with the 3D, the more specific challenge this time has been the 3D because based upon the information we get from the new cameras and the new technology. You can read so much on someone's face. I have to be careful because I want the characters to look real despite the fact that you are seeing fiction and the women, especially, I don't want them to look like they are wearing makeup which is ironic."

PRODUCTION DESIGN

Steve Joyner and Caylah Eddleblute's production design team had been working with Rodriguez since the film **FROM DUSK TILL DAWN**. At Troublemaker they built a design facility with equipment to rival any Hollywood film studio.

The first film used some sets against the green screen, including Kady's. This time, Rodriguez didn't want any sets. The only pieces used were doorways for actors to walk through, stairs when necessary, and basic props like tables and chairs. The rest of the set was comprised of visual effects.

Given this challenge, Joyner and Eddleblute built 3D models of each set so the filmmakers and actors could have a feel for where they were on set.

Since Troublemaker uses only one green screen soundstage, Eddleblute describes the process of switching scenes, "Every forty minutes or so, we're bringing a set in, taking it out and setting up the next."

Joyner adds, "We don't have walls because Robert wants to be able to light the actors in a really dynamic and unique manner. How we get around not having a set is by having a model of every set that we've generated from Frank's artwork in his books. But often times, Frank will have just drawn a frame that's a grand entrance to a house and nothing else so we go to him and he laughs and says, 'I drew the door, I didn't draw the architectural plans for a film set.'"

Eddleblute adds, “The models are a great way to figure out how to place the light and have a sense of continuity when you shoot one environment multiple times based on actor availability. For instance, we’ve probably brought the Club Kady's set onto the green screen about fifteen times during this shoot. We need it in a configuration so that we can get the camera moves to accommodate those actors’ viewpoints. Every time is a puzzle.”

She continues, “Robert was very clear in the beginning of this installment that he wanted an absolute stylized look and there was nothing in the physical world that would really go that far. The one thing we’ve been able to bring in as far as set dressing is all the fabrics because like Frank’s drawings, the bedding and upholstery really exaggerate the tone.”

Modest about their work and long working relationship with Robert, Eddleblute laughs, “If nobody calls our names, that means we’ve done a really good job.”

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