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## Do you really know these men?

BY PAM DEFIGLIO Daily Herald Staff Writer

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Comedian Steve Bridges turns heads when he dresses up like George Bush and John Kerry. Either one would make a great Halloween costume - if you've got \$20,000 to spare

We're down to the wire. In just a few days, you'll be making that momentous decision you've been pondering for months: What to be for Halloween, of course. Did you think we meant the election?

They come just two days apart this year, which ties them together inextricably. So why not have a little fun with that? Choose a topical Halloween getup: Bush or Kerry.

To get the look, you could buy a cheapo rubber mask. But if you're willing to spend a cool \$20,000, as talent agent Randy Nolen did, you can hire an Oscar-winning Hollywood makeup artist to transform you into The Prez or The Challenger.

Spending that much may seem crazy, but Nolen was crazy like a fox. He realized his client Steve Bridges, a comedian, did a killer George W. Bush imitation. If he could look like Bush, too, he'd be a hot ticket.

The investment paid off. With makeup prosthetics, which are foam latex mini-sculptures attached to the face, Bridges metamorphosed into Bush - and later, into Kerry. Corporations and associations booked his act, as did "The Tonight Show with Jay Leno," Judy Woodruff's "Inside Politics" on CNN, "Good Morning America" on ABC and Fox News with Brit Hume. And, regardless of what happens on Nov. 2, a made-up Bridges is scheduled to rehash it with Leno the following night.

Nolen, who recently moved from a Geneva office to California digs, thinks this kind of makeup will start a trend.

"Likeness prosthetics is in its infancy for live entertainers. Of course, Hollywood has been doing this for a while," Nolen says. Films like "The Wizard of Oz" used prosthetics as early as 1939, though Nolen says they've improved a lot over the years.

The fake face

Transforming into internationally recognized figures like Bush and Kerry would not be easy. To pull it off, Bridges brought in a heavy hitter - Kevin Haney, who won an Oscar for making Dan Aykroyd into an older man in 1989's "Driving Miss Daisy."

Then the real work began.

Haney sat Bridges down to make what he calls a "life mask" of his face. He put a rubber cap over the comedian's hair and applied a clay-like substance all over his face. After it dried, the clay became a mask of Bridges' features.

"Next, I sit down with my clay and my photos of Bush or Kerry, and I sculpt the Bush or Kerry face over Steve's life mask," says Haney.

This results in a mask that looks like Bush or Kerry from the outside, but has Bridges' features on the inside.

The next step is to reproduce that mask with the goal of putting it on the actor's face.

But there's a trick to this. Any mask will limit the actor's ability to create facial expressions. So Haney breaks the mask into 11 pieces, including the forehead, cheeks, eye bags, nose and upper lip, ears and sides of the mouth. He makes molds of each piece.

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"I have a shell of each piece, and I pour liquid foam latex inside and bake it for four hours," Haney explains.

"Then I glue that piece on to Steve. If all the pieces go together right, then he looks like who he's supposed to look like."

The pieces, which overlap, provide flexibility for Bridges.

"It's remarkably easy for the actor to talk and move with this on his face," says Nolen. "You can leave it on for 10 or 12 hours. It's flexible and it breathes. It's quite an improvement over years ago."

Haney agrees. "The actors love that it doesn't inhibit their movements at all," he says. "Steve can even blow out his cheeks. It's very expressive stuff."

It's not necessarily comfortable, though.

"It's more comfortable than people would think," Haney says. "But imagine wearing a Band-Aid over your whole face."

Presidential impostor

Applying the prosthetics, makeup and a wig takes two and a half hours, but when it's finished, Bridges really looks like a presidential contender.

"We were doing a show on Fox, and a guy from Germany we met on the elevator was absolutely convinced that Steve was John Kerry," Haney recalls.

"It is a convincing illusion, as long as you don't get it in the wrong light."

Unfortunately, the prosthetics can't be reused. Every time Bridges has a gig, Haney has to make a new set, at a cost of about \$450.

For the person who simply wants to make a smash at a Halloween party, it's hard to replicate that kind of time and talent.

Haney admits creating Kerry or Bush would be difficult for the Halloween party goer, because both have difficult faces to create with makeup.

"There's no easy way to do it," he says.

But if you must try, he recommends getting a wig from a costume shop, because the hair has a lot to do with the look. He notes both Kerry and Bush have full heads of hair.

You'll have to use pigmented hairspray in frosty white and silver gray to create streaks and tips in the hair.

But creating that long face of Kerry's presents a challenge. You can't do it with makeup, and costume shops don't carry fake chins. Even if they did, Haney says other complications would arise.

"I don't know how you'd do Kerry's chin without it falling off," he says.

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