

DAVIS GRAVEYARD

West Coast Haunters Convention

Creating video ghosts





Welcome children let me tell you a story
from a time long ago.....

Talking Head

Advanced effect

Tell it like it is

When creating the video head effect it is a good idea to start with the story that you want the actor to tell. You can use the rules or the tale of your haunt. Be creative

Excuse me, what did you say?

Find someone who is a good speaker or has done voice talent. You are looking for someone that can recite a story with clear diction and a style that suits your haunt. You will be using the track as it is recorded, so someone who can complete the whole speech from start to finish clearly is important.

Watch your head

It is important that the actor not move during filming. It is easier to keep the face aligned with the bust

if the head does not move. This is a particular example of when to let the actor see what they look like. Hook up a monitor for the actor so they can watch how still they are holding their head.

Fade into black



With this effect it is important that you only see the face of the actor. We use a black nylon balaclava on the actor for filming. (I believe that

when you order one of these, you will end up on an FBI list somewhere .)

You can use many of the same techniques that you used to make the ghost. You can add audio tracks on the video, but you will need to keep

the original actor script.

How not to be an alien

You will need a larger head than a wig head to project the effect. Because of the throw of the projector, the video needs a larger surface. We recommend that you create a large round head out of Styrofoam and do some simple sculpting to create a "face".



If you try to use the large round head without any features, you effect will look something like a talking alien.

The best way to create features is to project the effect onto the round oversized head and take sculpty or clay and put on a nose, eyebrows



and lips. Just a few simple features make a tremendous difference.

Visit our web site at www.davisgraveyard.com for more information on this effect.



Is that a ghost way there in the back?

Hidden Ghosts

Advanced effect

Real ghosts are elusive

It is easy to understand why you want to put all your good props in front where people can see them, you are proud of them, and you should be, they are amazing!

After years of having the ghosts up close and personal, as center-pieces of the display, we decided to add some layers to the haunt.

So we moved the latest ghost effect all the way to the back of the yard, behind all the props, so it was only partially visible. This provided a much more "real" ghost effect.

We got a lot of ground to cover

Instead of our normal ghost effect where the ghost is in a fixed in small area, in or around a prop, this new effect would cover 30 feet across the back of the yard.

This was done by running a cable

from the shop (church facade) to the house. We took 3 ten foot fabric photography back drops and sewed them together leaving a loop at the top to run over the cable.

The fabric was then stretched across the cable to act as a "screen" for projecting the ghost effect. Sandbags were used along the bottom to hold the fabric taut.



How does that saying go?

Never work with kids and animals?

Our friends, who have been kind enough to be the ghosts in the graveyard have great kids that have been watching their parents get all the attention for years and definitely were dying (not literally) to be part of the graveyard.

We put up the backdrop and dressed them all in white and had them walk around and act out a few scenes.

Lesson learned: No matter how excited they are to do this, usable filming time for kids is about 30 minutes...after that...distraction sets in.

How are we going to sync up

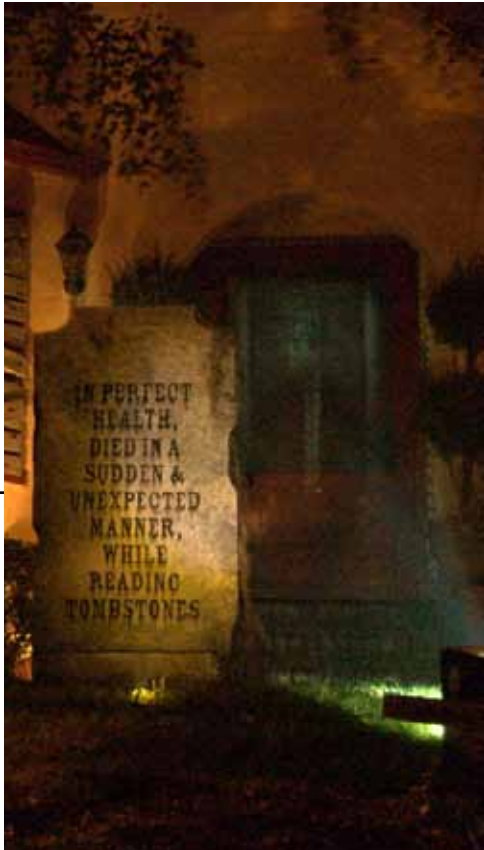
Most of our ghost effects have been in a fairly tight area, nothing like 30 feet, so how do you cover so much area. One thing we did not want was to sync up two projectors.

To cover the distance we put the projector in the middle of the yard half way back. This allowed for a wider throw of the projection. We put the tombstones up in a "v" shape around the projectors throw. You can see on the picture above how the farthest back tombstone just has a sliver of light from the projector hitting it.

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That ghost just appeared out of nowhere, it must be real!

Ghost in the yard

Advanced effect

What if we just...?

We found that you can project on other surfaces with amazing success. We decided to try a ghost walking out of the front door of the house. It was a simple effect that required a bit of advanced editing - but well worth the time.

Tale of two videos

First you need to film the background of your effect with no actor. A minute or so of footage should do the trick.

They make separate video of the actor in the scene. In our case we had an actor in a costume walking

down several stairs and right to the camera.

Both of these videos can be shot in the daylight or in a lighted area.

Walking out of thin air

Now we are going to need to put those two videos together. This will create the effect of a ghost appearing out of thin air.

Take the first video without the actor and crop it to just the area the actor will appear in. Use several of the techniques from the ghost effect to slow the video down and add some contrast.

Then take the actor video and

import it into your existing project and crop it to match the background.

Use the fade effect to fade the actor video on to the existing background. If you need more background time. Just copy the background video and paste it onto the end of the track as many times as you need.

Fade the actor track out at the end to create the ghost illusion.

Lumens make a difference

With this effect is important to have a good projector. As that you may not be projecting on a black surface you will need a bright projection. In a well lit or outdoor area, the Zoombox or torpedo will not work. Use ebay to find a good used projector for this project.

I hear someone coming

In our display we showed the ghost walk out of a door and down some stairs. When the ghost appeared and started to walk, we added some eerie echoing foot steps that continued after the ghost had disappeared.

This gave the illusion that the ghost was still walking in the yard...but where did he go? Very creepy.



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