



<http://www.spookyblue.com/halloween/corpsing/>

Turn a cheap skeleton into a terrifying corpse (Beef jerky style)

Introduction



Ah, the ubiquitous cheap plastic skeleton in a bag. Also euphemistically referred to as a bucky (blow-mold Bucky). At \$12-\$14, it's so cheap that you probably have two or three of them. The problem is that it's not very scary to look at. In fact, it looks kind of goofy. You can dress it up and hang it under a black light. Or...why not corpse it?

What is "corpsing"?



Corpsing is the art of coating some humanoid shape (usually a Bucky skeleton) in such a way as to make it appear to be a rotting corpse. There are many different techniques to try. My particular favorite that is presented here I call "beef jerky style". You'll end up with a very dry-looking desiccated corpse. Other styles include "bar-b-q", and "worm food". These are my names. I don't know what anyone else calls them. Gross, probably.

Parts list

- 1 cheap plastic skeleton in a bag Usually available around Halloween at Big Lots and novelty stores.
- 1 quart carpet adhesive ("carpet latex") Available at Home Depot in the paint department.
- 1 roll of paper towels Without prints unless you like pretty flowers on your corpse.
- 1 small can of redwood stain Get the water-soluble kind. Cleanup is easier. If you want a different color for your corpse, there's plenty to choose from. You won't need very much, either, so get the smallest amount you can buy.

Preparation

Carpet latex is tacky. I mean, it's really tacky. Anna Nicole Smith tacky. I sprinkled talcum powder over my work surface before I started and it was one of my better ideas. I also recommend some latex gloves.

Construction

The rest of this how-to is more of a "here's how I did it" instead of a hard and fast set of rules. You'll doubtless discover some other way to corpse your skeleton that you like better. That's why these things are fun. Somebody has an idea and 200 other people run with it with wildly different results.

Start off with a (relatively) clean plastic skeleton. If you've painted it, that's okay. Mine was painted and it turned out fine. Wearing gloves, smear a fair amount of latex onto the chest. Tear strips of paper towel and push them firmly onto the latexed area. Smear a thin coat of latex over the paper towel. Repeat over the entire torso. Work on one side at a time instead of trying to flip the corpse over.



After the first layer is down, go back and place a second layer. Use latex to hold the strips in place, but only just enough to keep them from peeling away. You'll discover that with a little practice you can introduce wrinkles by pushing the strips around a little as you lay them down. To create bumps and areas that suggest a mass of tissue, simply add more strips. Try saturating a piece of paper towel, then wadding it up and placing it on your skelly. Build up the area and lay more strips over it.

For a very sinewy look, roll a saturated thin piece of paper towel between your thumb and forefinger until you have a long string. Then apply it to the corpse and smooth it down with a little more latex. Repeat.



The deformed head that comes with this skeleton has gotten a bum wrap. No, it's not 100% realistic, but you'll be surprised how much better he looks after a few layers of skin. You can opt to put a different head on your corpse, but don't discount the potential creep factor of the original.



If you do corpse the head, try cutting out the black painted area where the original's eyes were, then corpse all around the sockets. Use your imagination and build up different areas for a more grotesque look. This one reminds me of a shriveled up apple. A few strands of fake hair from a cheap wig make a wispy hairdo for your gruesome friend.

Position your skeleton in the pose you want before you start corpsing. The joints aren't what you'd call moveable when everything is dry. There is some room to move around, but just barely. If you try to move the joints around too much you'll tear them.

When you corpse the joint areas, try braiding a few strings (described above) together and anchoring them with a good glop of latex. Several of these plus a layer or two of 'skin' over them can make very convincing muscle structure. Make them long enough that there's plenty of length on either side of the joint to apply extra latex.

After you've had all the fun you can stand playing with latex and paper towel, it's time put some color on that boiled chicken looking thing you've made. I used water soluble redwood stain. There is a wide variety of color to choose from. Darker stains like cherry and mahogany will result in a much darker, almost baked-looking corpse. I chose a somewhat lighter color for the jerky boy.

Everyone has his own style for these things. You can paint on your stain, spatter it on with your fingers, or blot it with a cloth. It depends on the effect you're going for. I

dabbed mine on with a cloth, then spread it around. Start out with just a small amount until you get the feel for how dark it's going to be and how well it's going to spread.



You can go over the same area a couple of times to make it darker. Try to vary the color and don't leave behind any repeating patterns. I even stained the teeth to make them look as rotted and dried out as the rest of the body.



After the stain has dried (about 4 hours unless you really poured it on), sprinkle talcum powder all over your corpse. Brush it into cracks and crevices with a brush or piece of cloth. This will keep your newborn monster from sticking to the cat and it smells pretty. Plus, it really adds to the dried-out effect.

Don't be stingy with the talc. If you put on too much, just brush or vacuum off the excess.





In his previous existence as Calamity Jack, this guy had a hole cut into the back of his head to install blue LEDs. Plus, holes let any resident evil spirits out. If your beef jerky corpse will be spending much time outside it might not be a bad idea to give him a coat or two of matte acrylic sealer. You can use shellac, but that'll make him a little shiny, and dead dry things aren't shiny like that.

This is a fun, affordable, and extremely easy project. If you don't have one of these cheapo plastic skeletons, you can pick one up at Big Lots or Wal-mart at the beginning of the season. With a nod of appreciation toward Jerry Chavez who is credited with the first paper-towel-coated-Bucky corpse, have a great season!

Obtained from
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