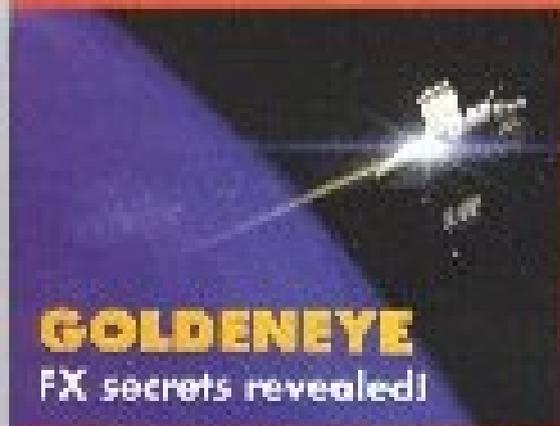


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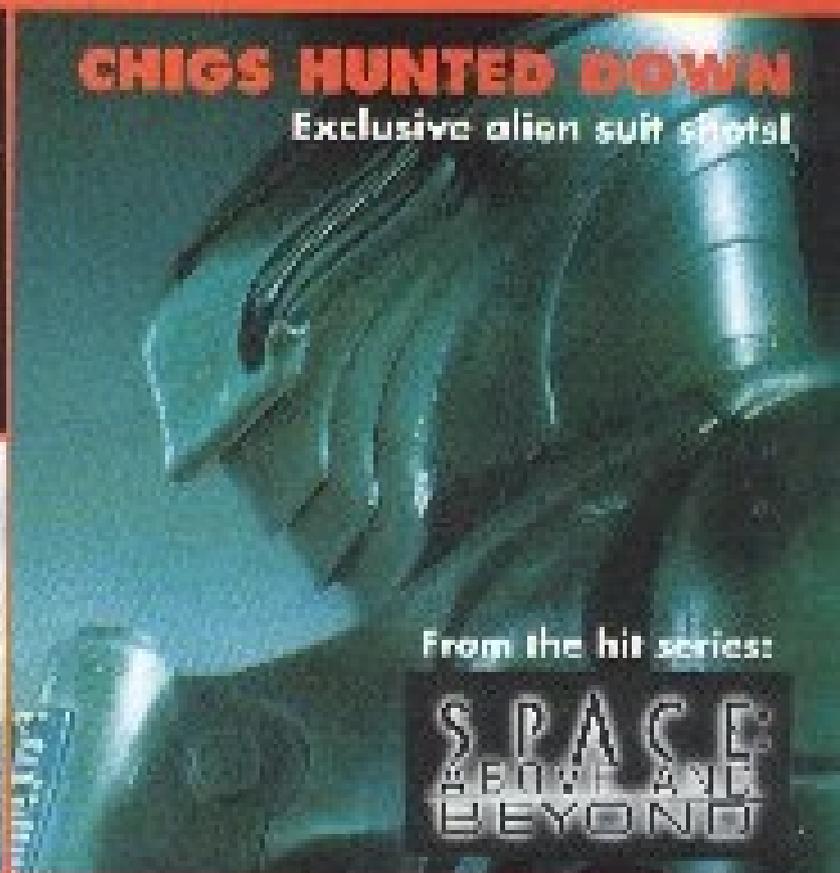
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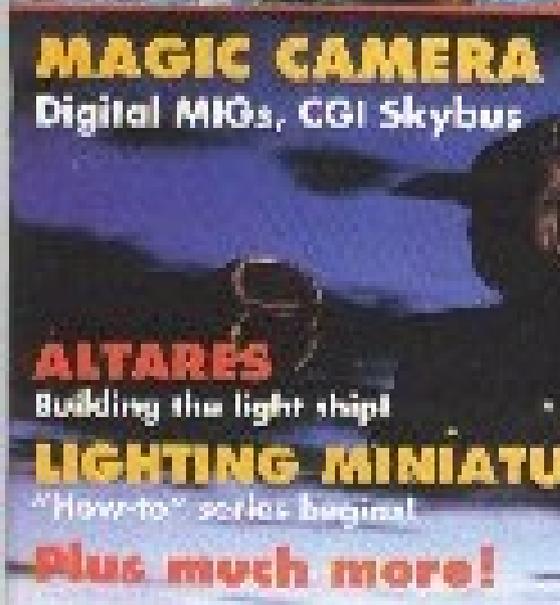


CHIGS HUNTED DOWN

Exclusive alien suit shots!

From the hit series:

SPACE ABOVE AND BEYOND



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Digital MIOs, CGI Skybus

ALTARES

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Creating the Aliens for

SPACE: ABOVE AND BEYOND

By Ian James Colmer

subsequently came fiberglass masters we could then refine and add detail to. Once completed we made our silicone case moulds from them and had Wayne Nelson (a fellow propsmaker) pull out four sets of suit pieces for us while we prepared the fittings. To get the suit to slide on easily I had to wear a tight lycra bodysuit underneath the other layers which consisted of reptile-like skin in the joints, and black foam filling behind the fiberglass suit. Once all four suits were in the workshop we began the tedious task of fitting them together with all the various straps and skin pieces.

Even though we built four suits, I was the only one who featured in the pilot before the show was relocated to the states. The pilot was shot in its entirety here on the Gold Coast in Australia, and all the sets and props were made here and taken back to America.

The most demanding scene for me was the "death scene", in which *Damphouse* takes pity on the captured alien sniper and

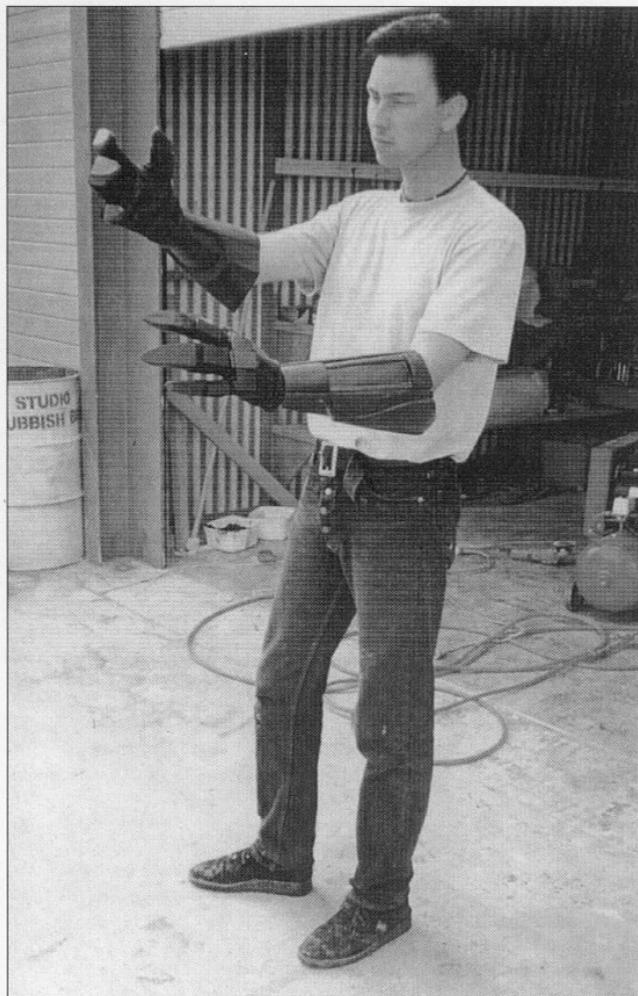
The two-hour pilot of Fox's ambitious space marine series *Space: Above and Beyond* was filmed in Australia. The task of creating the "chig" suit seen in that pilot was given to Jason Baird, a prosthetics artist who hired myself - Ian James Colmer - and Phil Moritz (of ACME props and SFX) to help sculpt and create four of the creatures.

We were given drawings by Patrick Tatopolous (*Stargate, Independence Day*) and began the task of translating these into wearable, 3-D costumes.

Firstly we needed a model, which turned out to be *me*, partly because I am six foot seven inches tall, and David Nutter thought it would be easier to have someone who knew the suit wearing it. This also made

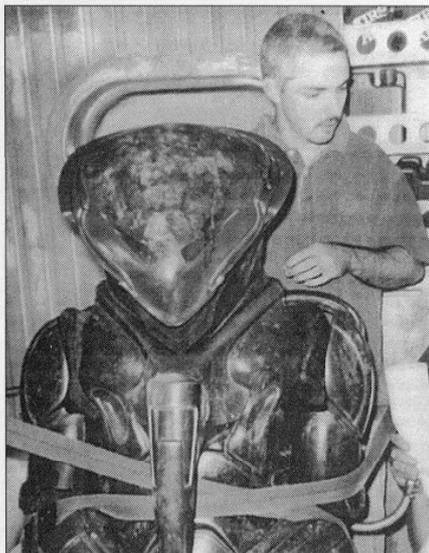
it easy for us to try on the pieces as they were made and not to have to wait around for fittings.

The basic form of the suit was built up in *plasticine* over a fiberglass body and shaped until everyone (the directors and producers) was happy. From this approved sculpt we then pulled plaster moulds, from which





gives it a drink of water, resulting in its immediate death. I rehearsed the scene alone with David Nutter without the suit, which was pretty scary considering I had no acting ability and this was the director of my favourite show (**The X-Files**)! As an aside,



we *did* create an alien head to go underneath the helmet. The original idea was that you would see what the alien looked like when the helmet broke open after the alien ship crash-landed.

It was impossible to get the sort of movement everyone wanted in the neck area because of the angles in the suit and the tight timeframe, so it had limited movement. For the shoot I had to sit on a box, tied up, in a hot suit, in a small room about the size of a bathroom, with smoke and hot lights. Because of the tight shots, we used a close-up head which had no eye holes so I could not see anything, and had to rely on a radio mike to listen for cues, which were being drowned out by the sound of two small fans mounted into the back of the helmet feeding me precious little air.

The death scene took nearly a whole day to film ...a day I was glad to see the end of!

opposite page left: the author testing the completed Chig suit gauntlets and right: suited up for the big death scene.

this page top left: Chig breast plate and helmet;

top right: the original suit sculpt.

above left: Patrick Tatopolous' pre-production artwork for the alien suit.

left: Ian Colmer prepares to act out the death of the alien sniper.

right: suit as seen on screen.

