

A Dead-Long Day

October 13, 2001

We set out at 8 a.m., John Jones and I, and hit the road headed to Atlanta for a weekend of blodd, guts, and rock n' roll. When we arrived in Atlanta around 1 p.m., we made a stop at Truett's Grill (a sister restaurant to the Dwarf House and Chick-fil-A). We ordered the item you can only get in Atlanta at a Truett Cathy restaurant — hot browns. Hot browns are day-old chick-fil-a sandwiches chopped up into little pieces then cooked in a thick, country gravy. The concoction is topped with cheese, bacon, and toast. It's wonderful. The gravy is also good for dipping fries. It's one of the things I miss most about Atlanta.

Now that we're full, we head north to Buckhead to meet up with Roy and Sabrina, two friends of mine from Netherworld. When we arrive, Mike Oteat is also there. Mike is Roy's roommate and also sometime ghoul. The three of them recently worked on a film together, but we'll get to that later.

3 p.m.

Upon entering Roy's house it seems pretty normal. We sat on the back porch and caught up for a little while. John Jones was meeting everyone for the first time so it was also kind of a get-to-know-you session. Then we took John down to the basement for make-up. Now, I've been going to that house — and that creepy basement — since my cousin lived there with Billy for so many years. But John Jones was blown away. There are body parts, masks, mirrors, tools, glass eyes, and all kinds of crazy stuff down there. A few of Cousin Paul's pieces (and posters) still remain.

Roy directed me to the barber's chair he uses to make his "victims" more comfortable. By now I'm dressed in my Catholic schoolgirl garb: short plaid skirt, black mary janes, white knee socks, a white button-down, but an open one with a satin leopard-skin bra just barely revealed underneath.

The gelatin had been boiling and now Roy was applying the adhesive to my chest. He created a lovely autopsy scar, then Sabrina handed him the stitches to create the final touch. He also did my face, latex and goop for a big gash in my cheek. Lots of sprayed make-up and veins. He also did my arms blue and veiny. I looked great. John Jones snapped photos until Sabrina got him seated. She got his latex face on and prepared him for Roy to paint him dead.

I went upstairs and put my pigtails in. John Jones was wearing a short matador/tuxedo jacket and pleather pants — and we both looked dead. But hot! So off we go to meet Cathy and Robert at Rocky's Pizza for dinner. Yes, we were going to dinner.

5 p.m.

We arrive at Rocky's Pizza. Cathy is already there. She's laughing and enjoying our new looks. She's also brought her camera. We take a few pictures and I ask John Jones "Is my chest open?" I wanted to be sure the scar was showing. Cathy was amused at how you don't hear that every day. To be sure.

Our waiter is Rashid. He is completely unfazed by our appearance. Although, the fact that he would bring our food and then just run away may have been a sign. I assumed it was just bad service. Hmm ...

When Robert and Kaye showed up they brought a friend from Tallahassee named Deb who'd come up to see the show. Then Deb's boyfriend Daniel showed up. They were both really cool. Daniel looked at the gash in my face and was like, "Is that real?" He wasn't kidding. That was the funniest part of all.

Robert had also brought me a super fabulous gift — 12 Alice Cooper CDs I didn't have! That was too cool. John Jones and I have Alice for 10 trips back to JAX. Alright!

6:25 p.m

John Jones and I were going to Netherworld next to take pictures of Sabrina and Roy doing make-up at the house. I was afraid, after a road closing and a detour, that we wouldn't make it by lights-out at 7 p.m. We got there at 6:50. Whew! On our way in from the parking lot though, the line was long to get into the house. A 10-year-old black kid was so funny. He goes, "Look, it's Britney Spears ... the dead one! And Michael Jackson!" Now where he got Michael Jackson for John Jones I don't know. But it wasn't the last time he heard it. It also wasn't the last time I heard Britney. At least I was dead, but that really wasn't what I was going for.

Once inside, I shot about 10 photos for Sabrina and myself. I also had a few moments to talk with Mark, Stacy, Denise, and some others. Everyone was asking where I was. I explained that I'd moved to Florida. They were like "Ohhhh ..." Because I'm always working at the house for nearly the entire season. I really miss it too.

Once Roy and Sabrina finished, and gooped themselves up, we were ready to walk the house.

Roy and Sabrina looked great by the way. Roy had done a lot of green, zombie effects and textured his skin. He'd also painted himself which was hard to believe. It was a great job. Sabrina was wearing this gorgeous formal dress, strapless, with her autopsy scar glaring. She was also very blue in the face. She looked great.

We first took John Jones behind the scenes to our little fire escape where we hang out on break, smoke cigarettes, and cool off. Then we went through the back hall to sneak into the Netherworld house. It was really cool. I usually know the house so well that it's hard to scare me, but I knew this year they'd rebuilt it. They got me a few times! One guy overhead grabbed me with huge arms, a few of the air cannons made me jump, etc. I knew a lot of people. I'd be like, "Oh, hi Dustin." But some I didn't. Many won't leave character, they just keep coming after you. It was fun.

And Anthony, whom you might remember from my Dragon Con travelogue and photos (remember, the white guy in the loin cloth and bull rings?) made a quiet but smelly appearance.

We finished Netherworld and went into the 3-D house and oh my god. It was the best one I'd ever seen. I knew it was John's first time going through one of those, we're one of the only ones in existence. But the artist who'd done much of this year's house had a Geiger-esque style. John Jones kept calling it "elaborate, so elaborate" and with the 3-D glasses on the floor had been

made to look like floating dots and all this crazy stuff. It would be awesome to live in a house like that.

The clown house had been replaced with a spider house. I made sure the person that was blended into the wall got John Jones. That's one of my favorite scares because you can't see it coming. There was also a 3-D black hole this year for the first time. This is a spinning room that you walk through on a metal catwalk. There's one in the regular house, but in 3-D it was amazing. We could've stood in there for about an hour!

The last corridor out had a light that shone in your face and with the 3-D glasses on you couldn't see anything but bands of color. This one guy kept coming out of the light at me. He got me every time! Finally he was like "Didn't you used to work here? What's the matter with you?" Hey, I'm still human!

8 p.m.

Now that we'd finished the houses, it was time to get our press party passes from Billy, who was supposed to arrive at 7:30 with Linda Blair. Well, he still wasn't there. So I talked to Harmon in the box office, we made photos with Ig the Troll, and generally scared people in the parking lot. I kept messing with Sabrina by singing the pop songs being played by the radio station that was broadcasting. I am a pop culture junkie, even if it's bad. But I love Alice, so I'm OK. ☺

Billy finally arrives close to 8:30 p.m. I get to see him for all of about a minute. He did bump us to the front of the line to meet Linda though. We took a few pictures and she and John Jones talked about fashion. She was really nice. Still very cute and shorter than me!

The passes we received were for a Thrashers/Alice party that was to start at 9:30. So now we realize we've actually got plenty of time. We head downtown to The Tabernacle.

9:30 p.m.

When we get to the show, we're the first ones at the party. In fact, we're about the only ones. Apparently, Alice has gone to kick off the Thrashers season, then he stayed for the game. The game must've run long because neither the Thrasher nor Alice ever made it to the party before he went on stage. So we had some free drinks and sat in the library. There was also tons of food.

We soon realized that we were getting VIP concert seats as well. We had the entire second balcony, and they were all empty. We got the choicest seats in the venue and because we had press passes, Sabrina and I both brought our cameras in without them saying a word. Awesome!

We got lots of stares in the party when some of the normals began to show up. Not that I'd call this normal, but some weird groupie-looking girl in the bathroom was saying how cute I looked and ran her fingers down the backs of my legs feeling my knee socks and everything. Um, excuse me! For once Sabrina wasn't there to block. Guess she figured it was I was safe in the girls' room. Too bizarre.

Women were talking to John Jones left and right. Guess he looks good dead. One of the women working at the party for the radio station was asking him who did his make-up. He pointed to the green guy standing next to me. Ha ha Anyway, the woman said she'd heard Linda Blair on the

radio that day saying that whoever was doing make-up at Netherworld was doing an incredible job. What a compliment! Roy seemed pretty unaffected, but come on! She knows her stuff.

Another woman was talking to Sabrina and I about how we got into that. “Into what?” I asked her.

“You know, make-up, costumes, and stuff,” she clarified.

“Um,” I stammered, and looked at Sabrina to answer.

“Well, you guys are going to be onstage, right?” she asked.

“Ohhhh, no,” we told her. We just did this for fun, we continued to explain, and then told her about Netherworld and the movie gigs. But that was a pretty cool compliment to their work yet again.

We suddenly heard noises inside the hall. We went inside to get our seats. Alice came out and put on a kick-butt performance. Everyone loved it. He did all his hits, and then — probably my favorite part of the night just because it was so unexpected — he did Nurse Rozetta. This is a song from his album “From the Inside” which I first had on vinyl when I was 14 years old. I met him and he autographed it for me (along with Kane Roberts, yum). The album is a very personal and actually beautiful one. Bernie Taupin (yes, of Elton John fame) wrote some of the lyrics. But it’s a hard one to find, not exactly popular. I recently found it on Amazon.com through a German producer on CD. I was so happy.

His band was great too. One of his guitarists looked like Chris Katan though, and I kept joking with Roy about it. Occasionally I’d raise my fist and say, “Corky!” I didn’t torment anyone else with my observation though, because once you noticed it you couldn’t help but notice it.

Eric Singer was absolutely phenomenal. If you don’t remember, he used to play drums for Kiss. He’s been playing with Alice on at least the last two albums, but all I can say is he made me want to run home and practice. Man, he was good.

Some of the theatrical highlights were, of course, Alice’s head got chopped off. His dancer was actually his daughter and she was pretty good. There was a lot of Asian art and martial arts stuff on the stage, and she was engaging him in sword play. At the end, after she kept doing terrible stuff to him, he had her dragged off and put in the trunk of a car and he spat, “Kids!” Pretty funny.

For his encore, we couldn’t figure out what he was going to do. It seemed he’d done it all since he’d already played for more than two hours. But he didn’t let us down. Alice came out in an American flag shirt and sang “Elected.” During the performance, a guy dressed as George Bush came out in a white button-down and a big smiling mask. When he turned around his shirt read “bin Laden Sucks!” That was cool.

For the last song, Alice came out with a t-shirt that read, “Britney Spears Wants Me.” When he turned around a little while later, the back revealed the word, “Dead.” It was too funny. Later, his daughter came out in my outfit (☺) and did a little bit of her first hit and sang the chorus, “Hit me baby one more time.” So Alice shrugged his shoulders and started punching her. He cut her head off with a large axe and put it on a stake on the stage. It stayed there even after he left. That was great stuff.

After the show, we found Kevin, his wife, and their entourage. He did drive the hearse there but we weren’t able to go in it because we were at the house. But it was well worth it. We also saw

Nate who John Jones said reminded him of Chris Farley. He was on the floor screaming how “That was freaking awesome!” It was a trip.

There was also a fight, so we went back to the party. This time it was packed. Lots of Thrashers, but I don’t know who any of them are. Alice’s meet and greet happened after the show (that’s very unusual), but again it was because he was at the game and it ran long. We tried to wait around the party to see if he’d ever come up there, but he didn’t. That was cool, it was getting late anyway so when they began to shut the party down we were OK with just getting home. Oh well.

We were still getting more stares since there were so many new people. John explained the process by which I was being checked out. I didn’t really notice, but when he told me I thought it was funny so I’m going to share. He said first they noticed my shirt because it seemed to be open, then they went to my skirt and knee-highs, then the finally went to my face, and then back to my face again. And then they slowly turned away, then sometimes back to my face just to be sure. I think that’s hilarious. I wonder how they looked at Sabrina? I wish now I’d noticed it!

12:30 a.m.

We leave at 12:30 and go back to Roy’s. We get to screen their movie “Cheerleader Autopsy.” Roy had explained that it had something to offend the whole family. He was right! Thoroughly offensive. But Roy’s special effects were amazing. And it was pretty damn funny. The girls are falling asleep by this time though. I’m struggling on the couch and Sabrina’s about to fall out of the chair. She had me worried. We get to bed well after 4 a.m. Roy and I were probably up until after 5 or 5:30 I think.

10:00 a.m. (Sunday, actually)

Up early in the a.m., sometime between 9 and 10. We all got up and went to La Madeline for brunch. The Marietta location of Le Peep had closed, so it was a second choice but a great one. I had never been there for breakfast, but I love their food. Everyone else likes it too and I’m happy. We sat in the little grotto room on a mahogany picnic bench. It was really charming. I was tempted to sit by the roaring fire because it was a little chilly, but the grotto room was comfy. Roy said he missed me living in Atlanta because I know where all the good restaurants are. I’m such a chow hound, you know. But he also teased me about how much I liked Cracker Barrel. We used to eat there and Chuck E. Cheese’s near the house quite often. Too funny.

John Jones and I hit the road a little while later. We were back in JAX by dinnertime. We talked the whole way home about how much fun we had and how little sleep we got. It was a blast. Almost enough to make me miss Atlanta ...

THE END