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**"Clowning" Around at Lost Boys**

Clowns are seemingly funny and amusing to most based on childhood recollection but ask any functional grown up what they find most frightening and they will let you know the freakiest sight is a laughing clown; big feet, red nose, whiskey-breath, arthritic hands and all! So when the crew at Lost Boys Studios were asked to design and animate a scary clown for IV ½ Productions Inc. they looked no further than their worst nightmare and childhood memories.

"...I (grew up) with a primal fear of clowns in general. I was terrorized by Woodland clowns as a wee toddler", states Erik Ellefsen, Sr. 3D Animator, who created the clown from design and sketches to final modeling. "I don't think there is a grown up anywhere whose bowels don't contract at the very whisper of the word 'circus'." Therein lied our vision of this devil-like Jester."

"Unlike Erik, my childhood terrors were dogs not clowns. I grew up in the Outback and our worst nightmare were Dingo Dogs [Australian wild dogs]" Allan Henderson, 3D Animator who modeled the clown's clothing and shoes.

"...The scariest thing about this commercial is that we actually pulled it off. I mean its not like we've never done the impossible before, but this was just plain nuts. It was real bad a day didn't pass that I didn't say to myself, "Oh man, we're dead." Our software must be real good cause my guys are just not right in the head." [Mark Benard](#), President.

[La Luz \("The Light"\)](#) takes us on a surreal journey under a child's bed where we enter a fantasy world where our beastly Bozo beckons us closer to him. Eventually we enter his spiral-coated esophagus where we find him, once again, perched swinging on a swing. Finally twisting his head off and pitching it to us like a true New York Yankee at the World Series but not before we have a chance to see his big google-eyes pop out of its sockets. The run-away head rolls into a toddler's room where it bumps a night-light on making the clown and all the fear (of the insurance world) it represents disappear into magical fairy dust

Technically, our character integrated all that most animators dream about; design direction from sketches to final output and creative freedom with intense, complex animation sequences. Once the client approved the artwork, 6 weeks were spent modeling and animating him using MAYA and 2 weeks compositing with Discreet Logic's INFERNO. A few challenges lay ahead; one of them was creating dynamic hair that looked both wiry and worn as a clown' but also had enough weight and movement to add to the animation. MAYA Hair and MAYA Cloth were applied for the hair and the clown's necktie, pants and tux tail. Even with the individual software utilization hand animation was put to use by all the artists.

["La Luz" \("The Light"\)](#) is a 60-second television commercial for GNP Insurance based out of Mexico DF. The spot was produced and directed by award winner, Norman Christianson of IV ½, creative agency, Teran TBWA and will air in its' market region in conjunction with 3 other spots for the GNP campaign. Lost Boys for another of the 4-part campaign, also created Visual Effects for a spot entitled "[Bumper Cars](#)". [Mark Benard](#), Allan Henderson and Geoff Richardson of Lost Boys on-set Digital Effects Supervision for both shoots.

Founder and President Mark Benard formed Lost Boys Studios Inc. in 1997 for the production of 3D animation and digital effects for the film, television and videogame industry. For more information please visit our website at [www.lostboys-studios.com](http://www.lostboys-studios.com)