

Stuntman to Light Himself on Fire to Set New Record

Proving it's a fine line between ballsy and crazy

By Robert Falconer | Friday, September 4, 2009

ShareThis  0 Comments  Print



Imagine being willing to be punched, kicked, dropped, flung from speeding cars...and, yes, sometimes even lit on fire for your day job.

It's just another day in the life of your average stuntman (or woman), the unsung heroes who frequently put themselves in harm's way to make Robert Downey Jr. look athletic in *Iron Man*, Sylvester Stallone look invincible as Rambo...and Tom Cruise look taller in...well, any of his films (relax, it's a joke).

While most of us might dream of publishing a book, being a race car driver, dating a supermodel — or some other equally cliched ambition like that — Colin Decker's ambition is to set himself on fire and burn for two minutes and 39 seconds.

Why two minutes and 39 seconds, you ask? Why, to break a record, of course.

This Sunday afternoon, he'll make the attempt, reports [The Vancouver Sun](#).

Decker, a Vancouver stuntman, actor and filmmaker for the past eight years now, will attempt the fire stunt at a Burnaby film studio, in the hopes of burning without any breathing apparatus beyond two minutes and 38 seconds, which is the current record held by American stuntman Ted Bachelor.

It's all part of test of a new fire-barrier gel that Decker and his Fire 4 Hire business partner, fellow stuntman Dustin Brooks, invented in their quest to set a new standard for such stunts.

Allegedly, the gel will repel flames on any exposed part of the body to which a performer applies it. Without damage. Correctly administered, the gel apparently acts like an asbestos suit, preventing even the hairs on the body from being singed, with the gel's vapor actually being the medium that burns, as opposed to the gel itself. The actor experiences a growing warmth, but no actual burns, akin to if you put your hand in a pot of water and then held that pot over a flame or a stove burner.

The gel is said to work with a variety of different accelerants.


"We've experimented over the years with countless different flammable products," Decker said

from the set of *Marmaduke*. "I'm sure my neighbours are none too pleased with the state of my alley."

When Decker learned that Brooks's step-father, JJ Makaro, was stunt coordinator for *Final Destination 3* and wanted to do a scene involving girls on fire at a tanning salon, they began working together to create a new substance that ended up working quite well. Since then, they have used it on such projects as *The Mummy* and *Watchmen*.

If a production wants to use the gel, Decker or Brooks go to the set to apply it and supervise the stunt.

Demonstrating the gel on the *Stargate* set, Decker let a man shoot him in the face with a liquid propane flame-thrower for five full seconds.

"We sell a service to the film and television industry, we don't sell a product," Decker told the Sun. "It's just way too dangerous to just let out of our sight and let people play around with. For liability reasons and for responsibility reasons, we have to be there when it gets used." 

Facts About Stuntmen

- ▶ **Stuntmen have their own awards**
(They are known as The Taurus World Stunt Awards.)
- ▶ **Jackie Chan started off as a stuntman** (Early training in music, dance and traditional martial arts, gave him the physical credentials to do stunts in Chinese martial arts movies.)
- ▶ **Stuntmen are paid to get hurt**
(They exist because the injury or death of a primary actor can end a production.)
- ▶ **Old stuntmen don't have to retire**
(As long as they remain willing and able.)
- ▶ **Each stuntman has his specialty**
(There are three broad categories in which a stuntman can work: practical effects, mechanical effects and vehicular stunts.)

Digg

submit

Most Popular News



God and Muscle Cars Come to 'Supernatural'

- ▶ Abrams' 'Star Trek' Gets Final Blu-ray, DVD Box Art
- ▶ 'Smallville': First Look at Tom Welling in New Outfit
- ▶ Guillermo Del Toro Talks 'Hobbit' Rumors

In The Spotlight



Cherien Dabis Explores the Arab-American Diaspora in 'Amreeka'

- ▶ Could Spider-Man Follow in 'Smallville's' Footsteps?
- ▶ 'Supernatural' Season 4 Blu-ray/Crew Apparel Contest
- ▶ Why We Love Craig Ferguson

Latest Reviews



'World's Greatest Dad' is Dark, Yet Funny and Moving

- ▶ 'Mad Men' Still Reigns with Substance and Style
- ▶ 'Stargate Atlantis Fans Choice' (Blu-ray)
- ▶ 'Ponyo'

Submit a Scoop

