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## Real People Pose Real Challenges for TV Hair and Makeup Artists

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Albert Einstein is one of the most recognizable figures of the 20th century, not just for his groundbreaking scientific theories, but for his look — and crowning halo of late-life gray hair. So in trying to tell the scientist's life story in National Geographic's "Genius," how would a hair and makeup department recreate the man, while also ensuring the look didn't feel like a costume?

"Everyone knows the look; there are countless images [and] we feel we know him," says hair department head Fae Hammond, who with key stylist Tash Lee and hair and makeup designer Davina Lamont had to come up with a good

answer for that and for many other questions while fashioning star Geoffrey Rush into Einstein.

The solution? Wigs, made in part with Rush's own locks. "Geoffrey felt it should be 15% Einstein and 85% himself," says Hammond.

"I wanted to make sure that if anybody looked at our Einstein, they saw what they thought he should look like," adds Lamont.

Such is the conundrum that multiple hair and makeup artists faced this season when trying to recreate living, or formerly living, figures: how to balance the need for accuracy with the exigencies of creating a TV series in mind.

Real life can intrude when re-creating famous faces, and artists have to be both accurate and willing to be creative to meet audience expectations.

In the case of Zelda Fitzgerald (for Amazon's "Z: The Beginning of Everything"), Mitchell Beck (hair) and Patricia Regan (makeup) had to face that fact that star Christina Ricci didn't really resemble the Jazz Age It girl.

*“Christina [Ricci] has a fabulous, glamorous face. She’s a much more beautiful woman than Zelda [Fitzgerald].”*

**PATRICIA REGAN**

"Christina has a fabulous, glamorous face," Regan says. "She's a much more beautiful woman than Zelda Fitzgerald, who had an interesting face, but was not a great beauty."

Additionally, absolute accuracy – using makeup of the period, for example, was a no-go: many makeups of the early 20th century were toxic and it would be illegal to use them today.

Plus, these days most television is created in HD or other high-resolution formats, which is far more unforgiving than the low-res television of yesteryear. Special attention needs to be paid to colors, which may look different on screen

than they do in real life. For example, blue-based reds can look black, says Regan.

In the end, it was about coming as close as possible to evoke, rather than hit the nail on the head. “Our Zelda is different, but the final result still emulates the real Zelda,” she says.

In the case of HBO’s “Wizard of Lies,” about jailed financier Bernie Madoff, a different challenge loomed: star Robert De Niro is actually more recognizable than Madoff, so efforts had to be made to ensure audiences saw the character, not the actor.

After pruning back his hairline and adding some prosthetics to the nose, Carla White (De Niro’s makeup artist) and Jerry Popolis (De Niro’s hairstylist) leaned on the actor to complete the transformation.

“The hope is it’s subtle enough to give you the feeling of Bernie Madoff, without knowing what was done,” says White. “If it’s too blatant and distracting, we haven’t done our job. The audience needs to accept it, and hopefully not focus on the visuals. Then they can enjoy the drama of the story.”

Says Popolis, who did not see the final filmed result until “Wizard’s” New York premiere, “at first, you say, ‘Oh, that’s Bob,’ but then in a few minutes, you fall into the character and you don’t think about De Niro anymore.”

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