



Mark's Place

<http://www.markbsplace.net/SubPages/hall-joking-skellys.htm>

Joking Skeletons Halloween Prop How-To

About The Joking Skeletons

One of the things that I noticed over the years was that there were always a lot of parents and teenagers hanging around while the kids circled through the haunted house repeatedly. I wanted to give the yard some curb appeal and give the parents something to look at while they were waiting so I came up with the idea of the joking skeletons. They were a massive hit and I was told they were the best part of the whole haunted house!

Two skeletons telling jokes to each other is not an original concept and I've seen variations on it in other haunted yards but I was looking for something that was:

- 1 - easy. This project does not wire anything, build anything or disassemble anything.
- 2 - cheap. I happened to have all the parts.
- 3 - animated. It had to look pretty cool.

I had a pair of "Talking Boris" heads and I resolved to use them for the animation. The rest of the gag was fairly simple to create once I had the basic pieces down. Since all I had was the cheap blow-mold skeletons ("Bluckies") that could not stand up realistically I decided to have the skeletons in lounge chairs.

For the actual jokes I spent some time researching jokes and then created my own mp3 files. The jokes were read into a microphone and then I edited them using an audio program to make the audio come from the left or right channel. I typically left the laughter in both channels as it would make their jaws move while laughing. It's not professionally done but I think that's part of the charm...or perhaps it's just the terrible, terrible jokes!

Parts List

If you have absolutely nothing, it will be fairly expensive, but it uses fairly common parts so its probable you already have at least some of them.



2 - "**Talking Boris**" heads. They come in two different types, ones with a wireless micro"bone" and ones with a normal wired one. I happened to have the wired one but a wireless one would be even easier as the boombox could be located in a different location.

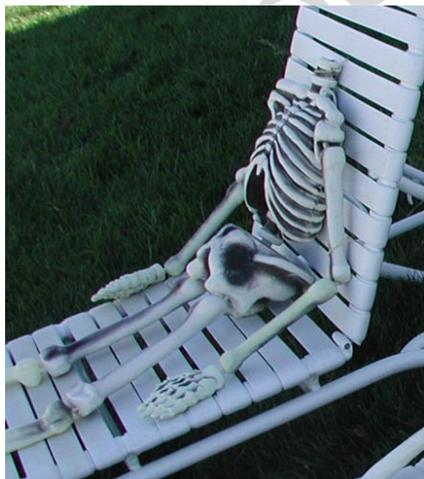
2 - **blow-mold skeletons**. I used this particular type rather than a more realistic one because the head easily pops off. If you want to use a more realistic one then you must do some extra work to attach the Boris head to it.

1 - **portable stereo or boombox**. The type with removable speakers would be ideal, this allows the speakers to be mounted right behind the appropriate skull.

2 - **lawn chairs**. I used loungers but regular chairs could also be used.

Some duct tape and string.

Building The Prop



1. Set up the lawn chairs

2. Rip the skull off the skeleton. This is easy to do since the plastic is the soft flexible type.

3. Position the skeletons on the lounge and use some method of holding it there. I used some twine and you can see below that I simply tied it around the neck and elbow.



4. The Boris skull has a black plastic stand. Pull it off the base and stick the black plastic "neck" down through the hole of the skeleton. It wouldn't stay in place so I used some duct-tape on the top of the head to hold in on. The picture below unfortunately is at the wrong angle to show the neck-plastic but it should be fairly obvious.



5. Since the actual vocal output from the Boris skulls isn't as high quality as I would like, I determined to have most of the audio come from the boombox. That meant I wanted to have the actual speaker right behind the skull so the sound would come from the right place.

I also needed the micro"bone" to be held directly against the speaker, that way the speaker would do double duty as both producing the audio and making the Boris move. My low-tech solution was to duct-tape the micro"bone" to the front of the speaker and to duct-tape the whole speaker to the back of the lounge at the appropriate place as shown below:



6. Since the speaker arrangement looked pretty obvious even at night, I figured it needed to be covered up. So I simply draped a couple of old towels over them and nobody ever noticed.

7. Put a stereo cd in the player and let it go. You need a stereo cd so that the two speakers will make sounds at different times and make it look like they are really talking to each other.

At the top of the page is a link to a small video of the prop in action as well as the mp3 joke files that I used. I burned my own cd from the files and set it on repeat.

That's it! if you choose to build it I hope you enjoy it and your "customers" enjoy it even more.