



Step into our TestSafe Time Machine and revisit some of the amazing things that we have done over the years.

## The Day Londonderry Stood Still

The day, 9<sup>th</sup> July, the year 1998. Security men had sealed off TestSafe. All homes and animals had been evacuated for 425m from Ground Zero. The local police and RTA certified personnel had blocked off Londonderry Road. Was this a major chemical or biological incident? ... or just a disaster rehearsal?

It was in fact none of these horrendous things. Matrix Films had hired our site for

a special effects explosion as part of the first Matrix film. A helicopter was to be crashed into the side of a skyscraper, exploding and shattering all the windows. In a



Helicopter on a swinging arm just prior to being swung into the glass front building.

quiet back lot at TestSafe, an expert team of special effects technicians had been beavering away for weeks, painstaking setting up one of the most unforgettable scenes from the Matrix movie.

To achieve the effect, a ¼ scale model of the helicopter was mounted on a swinging arm, and part of the glass-fronted building had to be constructed nearby.

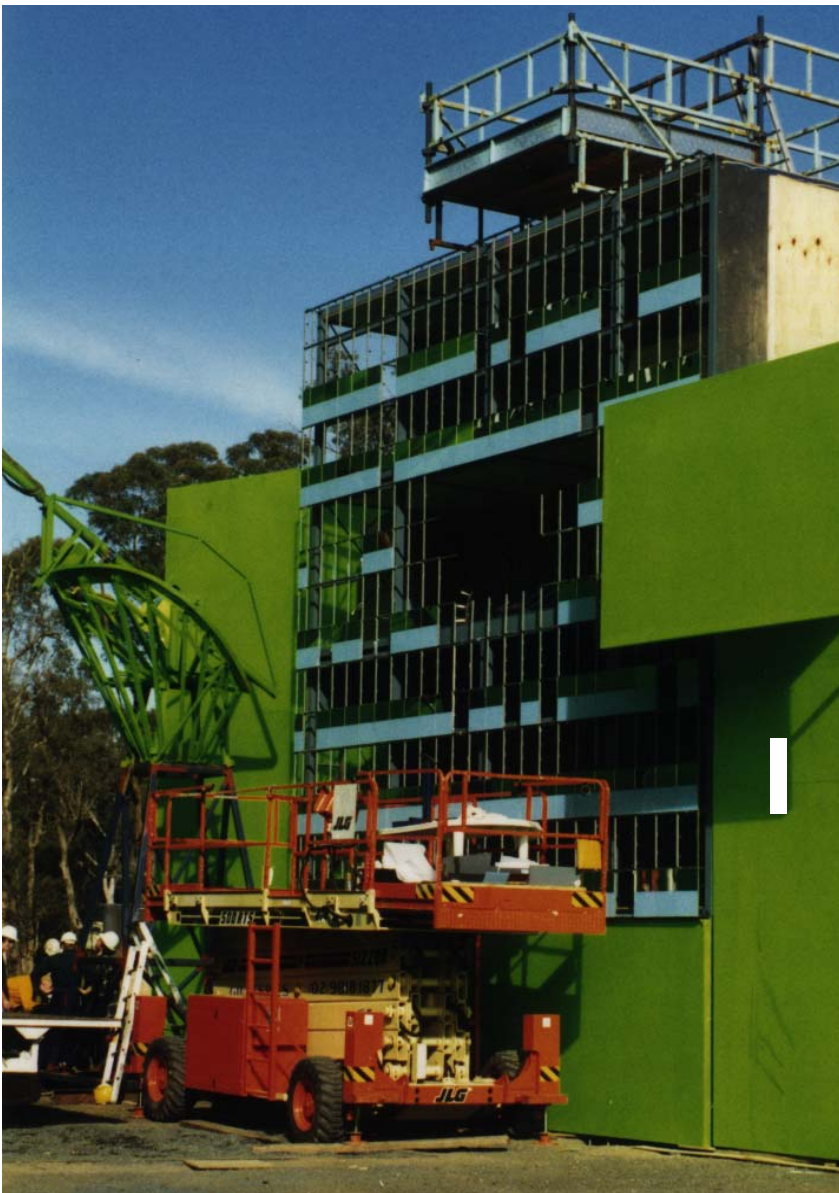
At last all was ready for the "Big

*Bang*”. The helicopter was swung into the building. At the point of impact, 1Kg of explosives blew up the helicopter and the glass from the building was shattered by a sequence of concentric rings of detonating cord.

Eight slow motion cameras filmed this sequence, one at 300 frames a second! The FX crew had to use real glass, and by the end of the sequence, the green screen was full of holes from the shattered shards of glass.

There was a risk that the intensity of the explosion could cause possible hearing loss within a range of 425 metres, so audiometrist Klaus Mathiasch (a now retired WorkCover employee) carried out noise measurements.

Fortunately, these showed that the noise levels did not exceed the safety criteria as prescribed in the NSW OHS Noise Regulation.



TestSafe is regularly used for trials and safety tests on movie pyrotechnics and other special effects. In 1999, the Matrix Special Effects Team was awarded an Oscar for the film’s Visual Effects. TestSafe had played its part in making this happen!

We would like to think that someday there would be another **“Big Bang”** of a similar kind at TestSafe. We will keep you posted.