



In *Kidding*, after car thieves accidentally installed a gold rim on the PT Cruiser belonging to Jeff (Jim Carrey), it stayed put. Right: the Bickering Beavers are among the puppets seen in the background of the show.



MAXWELL ORGELL

Kidding

Secret items fall into two categories for Maxwell Orgell. "There's the natural progression of what you do in visual storytelling," he says, "and then there's the fun screwing around."

Orgell has done plenty of both on the set of Showtime's *Kidding*. The dark comedy centers on Jeff Piccirillo (Jim Carrey), who plays children's TV show host Mr. Pickles. He's so revered that in the show's second episode, when a ring of car thieves realize they've stolen and taken apart his car, they

rush to reassemble and return it before Jeff notices it missing. "Showrunner Dave Holstein and I made a joke that in their haste, they threw on a gaudy gold rally rim from a sportier car," Orgell notes.

He took that joke and drove with it. Ever since that episode, Jeff's stodgy PT Cruiser has had a gold rim on its left rear tire. "You have no idea how many times cast and crew asked me why I did that. There was even a point when the transportation department changed it back, thinking it was some sort of mistake."

Set dressers made a number of puppets for the "visual clutter" in the background of the show's puppet shops, including a butterfly with a sausage body and a Soviet Kitty named MirKat (after the Russian space station *Mir*).

They designed a number of new puppets for season two, including the Bickering Beavers. In his office one day with art director Scott Enge and assistant art director Jackie Kay, Orgell recalls, "I was looking at them, and one was wearing red plaid, the other was wearing blue plaid," as they discussed the puppets. He was hit with inspiration: "The puppets are beavers, they're lumberjacks, they work in the forest. I have to make one in red plaid and one in blue plaid," to mirror his crew members. "That is one of my personal favorites."

In addition to researching characters and period when developing spaces, he says, "You also look back on things that were personal to you." Jeff has suffered great tragedy and is separated from his wife, whom he still loves. "For Jeff's sad apartment, I had to think of my first horrible apartment from college," Orgell says. "I remember going out of my way with that one to recreate the cabinetry in the kitchen and the tilework in the bathroom that were really common in a lot of those kinds of places."

