

INFECTION

A COMPUTER GENERATED SHORT FILM

In competition
Festival International du Film
CANNES 2000

Colour 35mm 1:1.85
8.5minutes

directed by James Cunningham
produced by Paul Swadel
in association with the New Zealand Film Commission

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SYNOPSIS:

A mutant hero. A digital action thriller. The perfect digital crime.

A 'DELF' (digitally engineered life form) is deployed to infect a corporate computer system - it's mission: to destroy the 'student loan' of it's hacker-creator. How will the little three-fingered hero get into the bank's records vault? With a little luck and a highly polished fist! Pixel carnage ensues....

FESTIVALS AND AWARDS:

Best Short Film - NZ Film Awards 2000

Best Technical- NZ Film Awards 2000

Best Short Film – Montreal Just For Laughs Film Festival - 2001

Cannes Film Festival, France - May 2000 - In Competition

Sydney Film Festival, Australia - June 2000

Puchon, Korea - July 2000

Hamburg, Germany - June 2000

Montecatini, Italy - July 2000

Melbourne Film Festival, Australia - July/August 2000

Wellington, New Zealand - July 2000

Auckland, New Zealand - July 2000

Christchurch - July 2000

Edinburgh, Scotland - August 2000

Sao Paolo, Brazil - August 2000

Invercargill, New Zealand - August 2000

Athens Film Festival, Greece - September 2000

Taipei Golden Horse, Taipei - September 2000

St Tropez, France - October 2000

Valladolid, Spain - October 2000

Stockholm, Sweden - November 2000

Rio de Janeiro, Brazil - November 2000

Gijon Film Festival, Spain - November/December 2000

Stockholm Film Festival, Sweden - November 2000

Sundance Film Festival – February 2001 – Official Selection

DIRECTOR'S NOTES:

March, 2000

INFECTION is my third short film and my first fully funded theatrical short film, and looking back I am happy with the work I have done.

The first time I watched a print of INFECTION, the hired theatre was peppered with friends who had come to see what on earth I had been doing for the last year in our spare room - which looked somewhat like NASA space control near the end of production.

My friends all seemed to like it and many of them were genuinely surprised at what I had made, let alone baffled as to how on earth something like this emerged from that little room. I took that as a good sign. Many thoughts were racing round my head as I watched it on the big screen. I was glad I had spent the better part of 12 months working on this, I felt very

lucky that I had been given this opportunity, I felt that I had given of my very best and I was proud of my film.

Making a computer animated short film, like anything, has its ups and downs. The most prevalent downs are the tedium (some of the work involves dull mechanical repetitious processes); loneliness (working alone all day for months on end) and having bad computer or software days where nothing seems to go right. But I definitely think these are outweighed by the ups - making one thing kick something else; being my own boss and listening to CDs all day.

I am glad to be a film-maker in what is the next major medium, especially since it has so much potential still to be explored. The medium allows for a lot of experimentation and manipulation, which gives me a huge amount of control over the final product.

It was important to me that I choose a subject that is only possible to produce with computer graphics. Otherwise, why go to all that effort? So I went a bit wild on designing the characters. In INFECTION land everything is a cipher for digital transactions that happen invisibly in the real world, somewhere on a silicon chip. Observing administrators are ugly great eyeballs on a pair of hands. The three fingered hero is a little more obscure in its representational design, but functionally it rocks at kung-fu.

So, where to from here? I have a feature film idea in development, I have just directed my first music video and I am about to start work for Peter Jackson on his LORD OF THE RINGS trilogy. I see it as perfect timing for me to learn how to get from a 9 min short to a 120 min feature, what it means to direct a feature and how to tackle the logistics of such a visual effects-heavy production.

PRODUCER'S NOTES:

March, 2000

It was never my aim to be 'a producer'. It confuses the hell out of a lot of people. I'm a classically trained drama director who picked up quite a few tricks & skills over shooting a few of my own films.

And here comes along this brilliant, obsessed guy (James) with a psychopathic-anything can be done attitude - *that* I recognised as being not unlike my own. And a creative powerhouse ensued - three shorts: DELF, BLINDER, INFECTION. Two focussed people can get an awful lot done.

The interesting thing about INFECTION, when we pitched it, was that our Exec-Pros, Morrison-Grieve were primarily a fast turnaround documentary company. And here was us with this concept of James sitting in New Jersey, USA, while we looked at wire-frames in Auckland, NZ, over a ten month period. That's a big one for non-animation people to swallow. They did.

Now we've got a beast of a film on our hands and are plowing on to a feature. It's gonna be a biggiee.

And I'll go on being a Film Director who's also a 'boutique Producer' of James Cunningham's animation work.

BIOGRAPHIES

James Cunningham: Director

Born 31 Oct 1973, Auckland, New Zealand

Education

Rangitoto College, Mairangi Bay, Auckland 1987-1991

Elam School of Fine Arts 1992-1997:

BFA Bachelor of Fine Arts in Photography

MFA Master of Fine Arts in Computer Graphics

Married 25 March 1994 to Lisa Kaaren Bailey

James is a 26 year old digital animator currently living with his wife at Princeton, New Jersey. He began manipulating digital imagery in his undergraduate years doing a BFA in photography at Elam School of Fine Arts in Auckland, New Zealand. After securing a scholarship to research 3D photography his work moved across into realms digital animation.

He spent his 2 years of MFA study creating two self funded films BLINDER, & DELF. Both films were painstakingly constructed & animated with Silicon Graphics software & rendered on Onyx supercomputers. To date these films have toured numerous international media art festivals & biennales (2nd prize, UFVA, Stuttgart, SIGGRAPH, Split, Toronto, Sydney, Melbourne, Hamburg & Cannes Forum).

INFECTION is his third film.

Paul Swadel: Producer

Paul is a theatrical drama & TV commercial director who made his first film 14 years ago. His work has had a strong digital twist for many of those years.

Starting with a BFA in Film at Canterbury University, New Zealand, he later did an MFA at Elam in Auckland in Intermedia. He set up the moving-image component of a Media-Arts degree in Waikato and has undertaken residencies and 'shooting expeditions' in Japan, USA, Brazil and across Europe.

His recent film ACCIDENTS has screened in competition at Venice, Melbourne, Bilbao and won a special jury mention at Clermont Ferrand 2000. He has just completed a new live action film LIKE AN ANGEL that has been digitally composited and printed to 35mm.

Paul has worked in creative partnership with James on 3 films over 5 years (DELF, BLINDER & INFECTION). They are now developing digital / live action feature projects.

INFECTION: Credits

A SUPERCOLLIDER Production

DIRECTED by James Cunningham

PRODUCED by Paul Swadel
In association with the Short Film Fund
Of the New Zealand Film Commission

COMPUTER ANIMATION PRODUCTION James Cunningham

REALISATION CONSULTANT Lisa Bailey
SCRIPT CONSULTANT Geoff Houtman
DESIGN CONSULTANT Andrew Malloy
EDIT CONSULTANT Ken Sparks

RESOURCE ASSISTANCE:
Dave Demmocks – Silicon Graphics
School of Architecture @ Princeton University
Mark Sylvester @ Alias/Wavefront
Evan Woo @ Advantage Group

INFERNO EDITOR Stefan Coory
TECHNICAL SUPPORT Mathew Cunningham
POST PRODUCTION FACILITY Digital Post (nz)

SOUND DESIGN Dave Whitehead
MUSIC COMPOSITION Joost Langeveld
FOLEY ARTIST Rachel Keen

LAB The Film Unit
CINE_POST SUPERVISOR Colin Tyler
CINE-SOUND SUPERVISOR John Neill
SOUND MIX Mike Hedges
MIX ASSIST John Boswell
FILM GRADE Lyn Seaman

THANKS TO

3D Dept @ Digital Post
Angela Bell
Scott Bruce
Mark Campbell
Reuben de Latour
Fat Films
Mary-Catherine Harrison

Anne Lester
Drew Levy
Gary Little
Jeff Sanchez-Smith
Marc sanchez
John Sarnecki
James Turner

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER Morrison Grieve Ltd
In association with the Short Film Fund of the New Zealand Film Commission

Dolby Digital Surround Sound in selected theatres.

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