

The xX files: The Dragon and the Thin man

[February 21, 2002 -- 7:52 p.m. Orchards Beach -- Virginia]

I receive a call from Terrence Mason -- (Director of Development for Ronin Entertainment.) "I'm working on a 'new' video game for the XboX", he says. "Only the hottest new game system to hit the market..." I thought to myself. Terrence tells me -- "they need a Kickboxer for the motion capture portion of the game..." which basically involves being hooked up with wires, sensors and a variety of other gear...

Kind of like an Avatar in reverse.

Assembling my finest footage -- I send him a tape of my work and await his answer. A few weeks later -- Terrence contacts me telling me "I was their Kickboxer!" I wanted to know every detail. On oath of silence from Microsoft and Ronin -- This project was so top-secret -- that he wouldn't even let *me* know what it was about. (Was 'he' even classified for this information -- I wondered?) The only clue I was given -- was that the game would feature Martial Arts as its theme. While this was all very exciting -- at the same time the neomicro-information I just received, made me a little on edge. Fine by me -- I was ready to take on any and all challengers -- albeit digital ones.

[10:13 a.m. Novato, California]

Looking through the window of the DC-10 -- the descent felt like a dream in reverse, as my wife Bette and I prepared for our 'final landing'. Soon -- I was about to get in touch with my 'inner morph'...

After entering the empty warehouse where I was to about undergo my inner-journey -- I became mentally transported from my real-life surroundings -- to a 30 images-per-second review of every movie I've ever seen or been in with a warehouse just like this. Before being fitted with my 'Rendwear' -- a skin-tight suit with dozens of polystyrene balls attached -- I mused, "what would the people who think you're stealing their soul by taking their photo think about this..." The suit feels comfortable --- actually kind of cool -- like a scuba outfit. I wondered if one day we all might be wearing these...

Specialized cameras realize every one of your movements -- instantly downloading the resultant data into meaningful binary information. Your 'biotar' or "bio-avatar" is constructed from a series of plotted points which are then modeled into a wire-frame object. The character-object becomes realized as a meaningful-viewable character after artists apply color, texture, shadow effects, gradients and environmental movements to compensate for wind, light, etc.

I had stumbled across what I first thought to be a black hole, but in blue. As I came closer -- the particles of air and light condensed into a halo and I saw 24 cameras in a big circle. A simple table was set-up -- and there were computers, monitors and wires all around --

back-lit by the shadowy outline of the team from Ronin -- a consortium of great people and computer geniuses -- all with a passion for their craft. Terrence's previous efforts lent his work to films like **Star Wars: The Phantom Menace** and many other projects for George Lucas. Terrence is the man.

After studying my tapes repeatedly -- Terrence analyzed how I performed the individual strikes that I use in the ring -- taking into account the movements used in Martial Arts including; Jab, Spinning Back fist, Hooks, Uppercuts, Front, Round, Side and Spinning kicks. All of these movements were recorded, digitized and downloaded creating a binary representation of me -- that would soon be replicated through further manipulation of silicon and circuitry. I was far from done -- these were just the basic movements...

After being hooked up - - I didn't know what I was supposed to do. What I did know, is what I told Terrence. . . "I would give him 100%."

I continued my ecto-dialogue with the nameless, faceless computer that knew more about the physics and math of my movements than I did. No problem -- *let's see how it likes this combination...* On to Defense with dodging, slipping, bobbing, weaving, thrusting and parrying. This hyperSession lasted 5 hours. I was exhausted to my digital and otherwise core after all that non-stop kicking and punching. I hoped the computer caught it all.

There was something happening -- something strange ... Suddenly, I could no longer feel what were my veins and what were the wires and the polystyrene balls around me..it felt like 5^%#@#(8

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Bruce Lee: Quest of the Dragon -- Ronin Entertainment

<https://youtu.be/tP4G0Dw04RM>