2020/10/07 - Readthrough and other updates

If you haven't realized it yet, I have a full feature script: Christmas on the Run - version 02

I'm also working on a short based on the script: Short Film

We did a read through of the script as well. With the help of Momona Komagata we setup a read through with a few nice folk. If you have 2 hours and 50 minutes available, you can watch it here:

We weren't able to read through the entire script. We had to skip a section because it was taking too long.

So what exactly did I learn? A few things:

The script is pretty long due to very long descriptions.

I think this is the primary issue with the script at the moment. I spend a lot of time describing action and details which I think slows down the pace to the reader. For an example let's look at:

http://leethomson.myzen.co.uk/Blood_&_Treasure_1x01_-_The_Curse_of_Cleopatra.pdf

This script has excellent action description. It's fast paced, keeps the reader attention and uses vivid language to paint the broad strokes. Then it lets the reader form their own mental imagery. I think since I took the verbose route by trying to explain every little detail, it sort of had the opposite effect from what I wanted. Painting the broad strokes is actually the writing style of two of my favourite authors: Michael Crichton and Andy Weir.

Let's look at an example.

A tense moment as the PMCs coordinate their defense. We stay with Dr. Castillo and Max, huddled in the darkness. The dull thud of FOOTSTEPS is carried deep through the tunnels, coming closer and closer...until--

Other wordly glowing red eyes alight in the darkness. WTF?

Then...*plink!*, *plink!*, *plink!*

FLASH! BANG! the grenades detonate in front of the PMCs. FROM THE SMOKE: a dozen red laser-sights reach into the room--

The PMCs fire *brakka-brakka!*--

Dr. Castillo peers out to see the PMCs taken out one at a time by precise fire from silenced submachine guns.

The laser-scoped ASSAULT TEAM advances into the tomb. The otherwordly glowing red eyes are from their night-vision goggles. Their faces covered by balaclavas.

Their lasers criss-cross, searching for more armed targets. Satisfied, one puts up his hand--ALL CLEAR!

As the smoke swirls, the MEN part to reveal their LEADER, who--in his own mask and night-vision goggles--strides into the tomb. He takes it in, sees something missing.

What struck me most about this is the use of simple words like "plink", "FLASH", "BANG", etc. Simple words which portray sound and imagery we're all familiar with. Avoids having to go into detailing the action and surroundings.

I'll try to incorporate that in my next draft.

But for now I want to concentrate on the short.

Short Film

I've been thinking about how to make the short. All the animated films I've scene are exactly that: films. But what if we provide more of a "gaming experience" to the audience. Basically the movie plays and the audience has control over the camera, within specific constraints. For example the camera has to be a specific distance from the character. So it's even possible for the audience to simply wonder away from the action to look at other things.

This means the surroundings have to be built more completely, as opposed to building only for the frame.

Would that be a more immersive experience?

Pros

- A novel idea. I haven't seen it done for scripted movies.
- Can work with virtual reality
- Doesn't preclude making a standard movie

Cons

- Will it be an immersive experience?
- More work as all the animation has to be polished. It can be seen from any angle.

- Camera angles portray emotions. That could be lost in this medium, but could it be replaced by the immersive experience?

Technical Work

- All the animation, texturing, etc will be done in blender
- Everything will be exported to some intermediary format (fbx, etc)
- Scene will be imported in a game engine like Unreal/Unity/Godot
- Exported from Unreal as a game.

I think I'm gonna try that. Since we're doing something new, let's experiment.