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Contact: Angela Mitchell, (PR, Mr. X)
904.982.8043 (U.S.), Paramitch@aol.com



MR. X TAKES YOU FOR A RIDE IN "FOUR BROTHERS"

Effects Studio Brings a New Spin to Paramount Action Thriller

Toronto, Ontario. August 12, 2005 – Visual effects studio **Mr. X** takes the audience for a ride in the climactic car chase of the new Paramount Pictures action thriller **Four Brothers**. Created for the film's acclaimed director, John Singleton, the sequence is an action packed blend of digital effects and live action.

Starring Mark Wahlberg, Tyrese Gibson, Garrett Hedlund, and Andre Benjamin, *Four Brothers* is the kind of gripping urban drama acclaimed director John Singleton is known for. The story follows four men who band together to uncover the mystery behind the death of the woman who raised them – and to exact vengeance on the killers.

Amidst a howling snowstorm, the brothers, with Bobby (Mark Wahlberg) at the wheel, race after their suspects at breakneck speed down the backstreets of Detroit. Mr. X worked with the filmmakers to design and plan the complicated sequence, generating elaborate pre-visualizations for each shot.

"Our most rewarding experiences at Mr. X come when we partner with the filmmakers at the earliest conceptual stage to help design and shape the execution of complex effects sequences," explains Dennis Berardi, VFX Supervisor for the film. "On *Brothers*, we had the

opportunity to work closely with the production team to create meticulously accurate pre-visualization for the sequence. Through this we were able to assist the director to choreograph the action, uncover filming challenges, and develop a complete filming solution down to each camera lens and position well before shooting began.”

Weather continuity emerged as one of the key challenges of the shoot. The team at Mr. X is no stranger to digitally enhanced weather though, having effectively tackled nearly 300 shots for *Assault on Precinct 13* (2005), the previous year. Utilizing photographed elements of a real blizzard as well as computer-generated snow, Mr. X was able to turn a production’s uncooperative mild weather into a believable winter, digitally enhancing and integrating a snowy, wintry atmosphere into the action of *Four Brothers*. These snow effects included blizzard elements and snow particles, snow banks, debris, as well as visible breath elements.

While the snow surely added a lot of excitement to the sequence, a car chase wouldn’t be complete without a dramatic crash. In this case, the crash was tightly choreographed so it was decided that a completely computer-generated car would be used for several shots.

Mr. X has built a reputation for photo-realistic CGI and this project was no exception. Berardi cites their attention to detail as the key to their success, “Our artists used the original car manufacturer specifications in modeling all of the vehicles involved. Textures, reflections, and other tiny imperfections posed the greatest challenges to realism, but 17 layers of rendering later, our digital vehicles fool even the most experienced eye.”

The filmmakers were thrilled with the end result, which may be the most recognition the visual effects team receives. Berardi remarks, “If we’ve done our job right, the audience will be caught up in the action and won’t even notice we were there!”

On *Four Brothers*, the Mr. X team was led by Visual Effects Supervisor **Dennis Berardi**, along with Senior Technical Director **Colin Withers**, CG Supervisor **Sean Cohen** and Compositing Supervisor **Aaron Weintraub**, along with Lead Composer **Kristy Blackwell**. Artists used such tools as Alias Wavefront’s *Maya*, *RenderMan*, *Deep Paint 3D*, and

MentalRay for the 3D work, *Shake, Flame*, and *Inferno* for compositing, and *PhotoShop* for some subtle 2D elements.

Mr. X continues to build upon its successful track record of partnering with filmmakers to create story-driven visual effects, as seen in ***Assault on Precinct 13, Ice Princess, Dawn of the Dead*** (2004) and ***Resident Evil: Apocalypse***, as well as dozens more. Upcoming projects for Mr. X include such anticipated titles as ***The Greatest Game Ever Played, Truth, A History of Violence, Justice and the American Way, Revolver***, and ***Silent Hill: Centralia***.

Paramount Pictures presents ***Four Brothers***, an action-packed urban drama directed by **John Singleton** and starring **Mark Wahlberg, Tyrese Gibson, Andre Benjamin**, and **Garrett Hedlund**. *Four Brothers* was directed by Singleton from a screenplay by David Elliot & Paul Lovett, and is produced by Lorenzo di Bonaventura and executive produced by Ric Kidney. The film is scheduled for U.S. release on August 12.

Who is Mr. X?

Bringing together a unique mix of artists, filmmakers, VFX supervisors, and programmers, Mr. X specializes in partnering with filmmakers to provide story-driven visual enhancements. The artists and creative minds at Mr. X are known for their superb, photo-realistic achievements in CGI, their skills in digital matte painting, VFX compositing, and Post/VFX supervision, as well as for their realistic digital creations of epic-scale and otherwise impossible stunts. With a studio equipped with a rare mix of the latest imaging technologies, the team at Mr. X is committed to pushing the limits of the digital realm, and in making the impossible, possible.

With credits on dozens of distinguished projects including ***Ice Princess, Assault on Precinct 13, Resident Evil: Apocalypse, Dawn of the Dead (2004), Wrong Turn, Blizzard, Ararat, The Sweet Hereafter*** and many more, Mr. X helps to define the very look and feel of a film.

For more information on **Mr. X**, please visit their website at www.Mrxfx.com, or for pictures or interviews, please contact Dennis Berardi at **(416) 595-6222**, or via e-mail at Dennis@Mrxfx.com.

For public relations materials, bios, or further backgrounders, meanwhile, please contact publicist **Angela Mitchell** at **(904) 982-8043** or Paramitch@aol.com.

Note: For a complete list of Mr. X titles and credits on *Four Brothers*, please refer to the credits list to follow. Images from *Four Brothers* are also attached – please **do not crop**, and credit **© 2005 Paramount Pictures and Mr. X, Inc.** whenever these images are used for your story.

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Digital Visual Effects by Mr. X (Credits)
Four Brothers (2005)

<i>Visual Effects Supervisor</i>	Dennis Berardi
<i>Senior Technical Supervisor</i>	Colin Withers
<i>CG Supervisor</i>	Sean Cohen
<i>Compositor</i>	Kristy Blackwell
<i>Rotoscope Artist</i>	Annu Gulati
<i>Rigging and Animation</i>	Brian Anderson
<i>Texture Artist</i>	Hoa Tran
<i>Particle Systems and Debris</i>	Shane Glading
<i>Animation</i>	Matt Ralph
<i>VFX Production Manager</i>	Sarah McMurdo

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Praise for the Action and Atmosphere of *Four Brothers*

“...the pictures of snow drifting over a decrepit Detroit neighborhood in the post-Thanksgiving gloom can put a lump in your throat...The movie suspends storytelling for several superbly coordinated action sequences, including a slippery car chase over icy streets and a machine-gun invasion of the Mercer home that shows it to be as porous as a cardboard box.”

—Stephen Holden, *The New York Times*

“A car chase and a daylight gunbattle are brilliantly executed, both flashbacks to an era when action meant stunts and not CGI....Cinematographer Peter Menzies Jr. and designer Keith Brian Burns give wintertime Detroit an appropriately chilly, inhospitable look...”

—Kirk Honeycutt, *The Hollywood Reporter*

“It’s a finely tuned Motor City engine: The action, including a nighttime car chase through a blinding snowstorm, is fast, brutal and efficient.”

—Scott Foundas, *L.A. Weekly*

“The effects are old-school and the lack of CGI is refreshing The car crash sequence and bloody gun battles make your heart race – and that’s a good feeling Singleton strives for and achieves a sense of realism throughout the film, from the cold and harsh colors used to portray the city’s underbelly to the crimson blood that flows after the gunfights, the look of “Four Brothers” is striking.”

—Rebecca Murray, *About.com*

“Singleton stages a great car chase that slip-slides along a deserted Detroit street in the middle of a snowstorm.”

—Eleanor Ringel Gillespie, *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*

“It’s a ‘shoot-’em-up’ and a whodunit on snowy asphalt. It’s a crafty commentary on street mores and a bloody revenge fantasy. It’s darkly farcical and cunningly retro. “Four Brothers” is several movies in one slick, stressed vehicle, its hard-grinding gears meshing with infectious gusto and rough-and-tumble vigor.”

—Gene Seymour, *Newsday*

“There’s a stunning chase sequence through some not exactly scenic urban streets in the middle of an early snowstorm....The cars can only attempt to speed down those streets – they swerve and fishtail on the ice as they try to get a purchase, which is part of what makes the chase so exciting. But the snow also gives these cars a soft-focus glow, making it look as if they’re moving in slow motion. It’s a chase scene that borders on the hypnotic.”

—Stephanie Zacharek, *Salon*

“...Fantastically wooly car chases (one shot in a blizzard is breathtaking)...”

—Annette Cardwell, *Filmcritic.com*

Mr. X and *Four Brothers* Pictures and Logos

Please feel free to use these logos and images when discussing our project:



Anatomy of a Chase: Above (1) Mr. X's Previsualization of the pivotal collision.



Anatomy of a Chase: Above (2) The original visual – before effects or enhancement.



Anatomy of a Chase: Above (3) Using CGI, the car is roughly blocked into the scene's action



Anatomy of a Chase: Above (4) The car is realistically and meticulously rendered, right down to texture, grit, dirt, and rust



Anatomy of a Chase: Above (5) The now fully-realistic car is now further integrated into the scene, with the addition of wind, speed, and other preliminary atmospheric elements



Anatomy of a Chase: Above (6) The finishing touch to a grueling midwinter collision at high speed: Snow, ice and debris complete the sequence and bring a believable chill to the air.



Above: Mark Wahlberg and Tyrese Gibson in *Four Brothers* (with winter snow and breath effects added by Mr. X effects).



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