Deployment Strategy

Production Notes

Deployment Strategy is the creation of MTV Network's Mark Cheng- a software developer, graphic designer, and filmmaker.

In 2005, Cheng was working as a consultant in the financial district of New York City and encountered a software bug in a program designed to assess risk factors for stock trading. All risk variables were being output at 10 times their normal value and no stocks were being recommended for purchase. Cheng playfully diagnosed the bug as Paranoid Schizophrenia to his clients. The event served as the creative seed to Deployment Strategy, a film which ponders the political and social impact of artificial intelligence.

Cheng completed the first draft of the script in Spring '05 during his final year of business school. The script drew on prominent themes in the course curriculum to create a future where self-aware software is the new competitive advantage for corporations and nations.

Summer '05: With an MBA degree under his belt, Cheng began the pre-production process with casting in New York City. Nathan Faudree, Horror Magazine Fangoria's Scream King, joined the cast to play The Major, the hard line leader of the Homeland Security Cyber Crime's last purely organic division. Faudree can also be heard in Troma Pictures' "Poultrygeist" as the voice of the monster. To fill the role of the Combat Mech, a cybernetic super soldier designed for infantry fire teams, Cheng found former Mr. Universe, Rob Mason. The lead role of Lee, the wet-behind-the-ears soldier, went to newcomer Rey Oliver Bune. Bune had just earned his Masters in Chemistry when he found his calling as an actor.

With a full cast in place, Cheng started to recruit a team that would help bring his vision to reality. Patryk Rebisz joined as the director of photography. Patryk had worked with stars like Lindsay Lohan and was also well versed in the new wave of digital filmmaking. Prop design was given to Brian Thone, a Connecticut industrial designer who spent his time converting Trans Ams into real life Knight Rider replicas.

Finally, to arm and dress the cast of futuristic soldiers, Cheng turned to The Weapons Specialists, the largest supplier of weapons and weapons-related props in the East Coast. Having armed such films as

Aliens, War of the Worlds, and the ongoing Law & Order series, the Weapons Specialists were well equipped… and hugely expensive. The authenticity of the soldiers' appearances was critical to creating a convincing story, so Cheng knew that he needed this vendor. To make it work, Cheng bartered his web developer skills and, in exchange for all the supplies he needed, promised to create an online inventory management system for the company. The endeavor began during pre-production and stretched on nearly 8 months after principle photography wrapped, but the results, www.WeaponSpecialists.com, is now the largest online database of weapons and weapons related props on the internet.

Principle photography began Dec 17th, 2005 on location in New Jersey and wrapped the first week of January 2006. Two weeks later, Cheng started his new job at MTV Networks as a web developer for the Nickelodeon brand. He also began what would become a 1 1/2 year post production phase.

The bulk of the post production workload- editing and special effects - were handled by Cheng alone. Several of the in-camera practical effects like severed arms and heads were enhanced digitally in post as was a key gun fight which employed compressed air squibs. Roughly a dozen computer generated effects were outsourced to an animation studio located in Poland. Art Duck Studios took 3D models designed by UK-based artists and storyboards photoshopped by Cheng. All communication took place over instant messenger with digital proofs being uploaded to a shared FTP server. In the end, over 100 digital effects were created for the film.

For the soundtrack, Cheng enlisted Chris Haigh, a composer residing in England. Cheng and Haigh met on an online filmmaking community early on during preproduction. Haigh came on board officially after reading the script and sending Cheng a short composition he created inspired by the read. The two corresponded over AOL instant messenger and Skype video conferencing. Sound design and engineering was done by Rob Daly, a New York resident who had worked previously on DVD editions of the ever popular cartoons: Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, GI Joe, and Transformers.

Deployment Strategy was completed on May 28th, 2007 - nearly 2 1/2 years after it began - and had its premiere in Times Square, New York, at the Paramount Pictures Screening Room in the Viacom Building. The film is currently touring the festival circuit and has already received accolades from a number of genre festivals.

Cheng is currently writing a feature-length adaptation/sequel to Deployment Strategy which he intends to finance via private equity for distribution to broadcast cable or direct-to-DVD.

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