

JUMP RAVEN: **A Dark Tale of Ecocide and Salvation**

Melting ice caps, drowning cities, genetic counterfeiters: These are the daily realities in the world of *Jump Raven*[™], CyberFlix Inc.'s dark vision of ecocide and salvation. The new CD-ROM arcade title debuts January '93 and is the latest, fastest, screamingest one yet. The game mode is completely interactive: players can choose from more than 24 weapons, six copilots, and even 12 different sound-tracks, including hip-hop, techno, death metal, and grunge. *Jump Raven* takes the player on a voyage through a world turned terrifyingly upside down.

The time is the not-so-distant future. Failing to solve Earth's environmental woes, humanity now faces catastrophe. Global warming has flooded cities around the world, including New Orleans, London, and Yeltsingrad (formerly St. Petersburg). African savannas and Brazilian rain forests burn out of control. Tsunami, plague, and starvation have killed millions of people and wiped out most animal life.

What's left of Earth's biological heritage survives only as genetic samples, frozen in liquid-nitrogen "pods" and secured in fortified zoological reserves. Such precautions are needed—the environmental and economic chaos have turned cities into free-fire zones where all are armed and no one is safe.

Breakneck Action and Deadly Enemies

As the legendary mercenary pilot, Jump Raven, your mission unfolds in a rusting, neo-feudal New York. A Bronx-based Skinhead gang has hijacked the irreplaceable gene pods and scattered them throughout the city. It's up to you and your hover jet to get them back. Sequestered in three of New York City's most famous boroughs are your enemies, organized and powerful criminal gangs:

- The Skinheads—The Bronx-based racists are vicious descendants of today's antisocial groups. They steal bootleg weaponry and are known for taking no prisoners.
- The Da Kuan—Chinese for "fat cats," the Da Kuan are an international gang of gene counterfeiters and smugglers. Their headquarters is Brooklyn, now leased to the Guangdong Free State, the wealthy and powerful successor to the People's Republic.

- The Cyberpunks—Dreaded mutants who thrive in an abandoned Wall Street, Cyberpunks are the most powerful foes in *Jump Raven*, a Franken-nerd combination of *Seinfeld*'s Kramer and the Terminator.

Humor and Humanity

Jump Raven is by no means a typical clanking, ham-handed arcade blast-fest. Far from it. The title is filled with an array of colorful personalities who are the real stars. Programmed with individual strengths and weaknesses, *Jump Raven*'s pilots are a first for a CD-ROM arcade title. You select, interview, and hire from among the following:

- Lark—A red-headed, no-nonsense pilot who seeks to avenge her father's death. It is Lark who reminds you with no uncertainty that any flirtation whatsoever is a nonstarter in an interview.
- Thrash—Skateboarder extraordinaire and legendary airman, young Thrash hails from Langley, Virginia, and is a defensive-weapons whiz when he's not completely out to lunch.
- Dogstar—A cyborg from South Boston, Dogstar is profane, gruff, and impatient. He doesn't mince—or censor—his words. He prides himself on putting rookies in their place . . . quickly.
- Nikki—A home-bred and corn-fed Texan, the Shakespeare scholar from Sarah Lawrence sprinkles her comments with provocation and quotes from the Bard.
- Cheesestick Limbaugh—Great-grandson of the 20th century pundit, Cheesestick is a top-notch top gun who's full of himself and God-awful jokes.
- Chablis—Chablis ("like the wine") is one of the last of the great mall rats. A just-in-time retailer, Chablis enlisted in the air corps after a tidal wave wiped out L.A.'s Bev Center.

Scattered throughout the title is a supporting cast whose function is to help you during game play. Some examples:

- The Weapons Lady—An unflappable British technocrat who stands by her arms-company's motto: "Sterling technology for a tarnished world."
- Rusty Needle—Lead singer for *Deathkiller*, a futuristic metal band now stranded in a flooded cornfield and forced to watch the Filipino Nurse Channel.

ABOUT THE TECHNOLOGY

Besides being a rollicking entertainment product, *Jump Raven* is also a technological pioneer on several fronts. Invented by software programmer Bill Appleton, CyberFlix's tools give this CD-ROM title a unique and innovative appeal. The more noticeable advances:

- Talking Agents—Pilot commentary on your game play appears throughout *Jump Raven*. Utilizing CyberFlix's puppet technology, the designers were able to offer realistic characterizations.
- Speed—"This title books!" is how one Beta tester described it. Thanks to proprietary compression (more on that later), *Jump Raven* gives users a hell-for-leather ride at speeds unequaled by other CD-ROM titles.
- Compatibility—*Jump Raven* can be played on any color Mac IIs with a 256-bit monitor. A PC version is also expected shortly.

Though the effortlessness of the interface makes *Jump Raven* a user's dream, the work to get it there began 10 years ago when CyberFlix president Bill Appleton started writing the code that would become the basis for DreamFactory™, CyberFlix's proprietary tools that allow for the sprite projection, data compression, and real-time movement that gives life and action to *Jump Raven*.

CyberFlix's *Lunicus* is an earlier example of DreamFactory. Both *Lunicus* (which recently won *MacWorld* magazine's 1993 Game Hall of Fame award) and *Jump Raven* are only the beginning.

"CyberFlix is not satisfied—and can not be satisfied—in offering creating titles devoid of personality, of meaning. We want our titles to pull an emotional response from the user," Appleton explains. "No one really has an attachment to a cyberspace devoid of people, but if a title can make people laugh or sigh or smile, then you not only have fully-developed entertainment, you have a new, involving popular art. This is CyberFlix's goal."

Those goals are aided immensely by the use of the DreamFactory engine. Invented by Appleton, this novel engine is primarily composed of three critical tools:

- Interactive Movie Editor (IME)—The IME is the CyberFlix work horse that performed the extremely radical data compression in *Jump Raven*'s spectacular, full-screen movie sequences while also permitting interactively within those frames. IME allows individual scenes to feature buttons and trigger sounds, and it permits players to jump from one sequence to another without waiting.

- The Cyber Puppet Editor—This program takes 20-frame-per-second talking heads and makes them realistic and believable by analyzing the character's dialogue and automatically scripting mouth movements that correspond with it. The tool also adds random blinks and other muscle movements that users will see in the reactions of the "talking agents" or characters on Jump Raven's control-panel video screen.

- The Virtual Environment Construction Kit—This tool allows CyberFlix programmers to edit thousands—even tens of thousands— of action sequences or "movies" into one seamless whole. When complete, the effect offers players the exhilarating sensation of moving in real-time anywhere within the digital terrain. In addition, moving sprites can be translated, scaled, rotated, clipped, and projected into these movie segments further heightening the excitement. The shrapnel, secondary explosions, and fireworks in *Jump Raven* were all made possible with the use of this tool.

These tools give *Jump Raven* a technological edge over similar works, a big advantage in today's CD-ROM arena where titles are apt to unfold with agonizing slowness.

"The consumer doesn't want to wait," Appleton says. "*Their* standard isn't a multimedia-development tool; it's reality, and that's in real-time. If consumers can walk to the fridge to get a beer in 30 seconds, than they better be able to navigate through cyberspace just as quickly."

ABOUT THE CREATORS

Started in a basement by four guys a little less than a year ago and now allied with a global entertainment giant with a four-title distribution and development deal, CyberFlix would appear to be one of those overnight sensations you read about from time to time. But CyberFlix's success didn't just appear with this morning's news cycle; it began at least a decade ago, with BILL APPLETON and his vision of interactive, digital entertainment.

Appleton's dream began in 1984, when he was enrolled at the graduate school of economics at Vanderbilt University. It was there that he saw his first Macintosh. Call it love at first sight, or a propitious coincidence in George Orwell's favorite year. Whatever it was, the Mac's impact on Appleton was profound.

"I saw that little Classic," Appleton recalls. "I watched what it did, and 10 minutes later I knew that my future had changed

completely. Economics was dead for me. Somehow I was going to write software."

With absolutely no programming experience, Appleton began the arduous task of learning how to write computer code.

"I quit school, moved into my parents' basement, and didn't come back out into daylight until I had mastered the basics," he recalls as he jokes of the time he spent back home in Oak Ridge, Tennessee. His goal: to develop tools that would enable users to create their own titles.

The result was Appleton's *Course Builder* and *World Builder*. These two programs were the first writing tools for the Macintosh that gave users the means to write their own fantasy-adventure games. He went even further with the groundbreaking *SuperCard*. Those pioneering works eventually led him to game design. Appleton created and published two hit arcade-style games, *Apache Strike* in 1988 and *Creepy Castle* in 1991.

By that time Appleton had been to, seen, and done California—gaining invaluable experience in the ways of software companies. He returned to Tennessee to set up his own company with the goal of taking his writing tools to turn out entertainment products for everyone. With art director Jamie Wicks, Appleton created *Lunicus*. Released in April 1993, the CD-ROM adventure was a big hit at *MacWorld* and became a favorite with the critics as well, winning a number of awards and favorable mentions.

Appleton finds his success gratifying, but he's not content to rest here.

"We're developing tools to make it possible to create a full-length film on your desktop," he says. "Once we do that, then anything and everything is possible."

Events have pretty closely followed Appleton's wishes. Since early 1993 CyberFlix has grown from two to four to 10 employees with more expansion to come. *Lunicus* has been a critical smash hit, and Hollywood, in the form of Paramount Communication, has become a potent and powerful ally. The future is bright. CyberFlix is already preparing its next two projects: *Viper*, an arcade title modeled after Paramount's new TV show, and an adventure, yet unnamed, set in a real-time, old-West environment.

"It's happening for us," Appleton says. "That's good. But more important is that we keep pushing the boundaries, exploring and challenging ourselves, and creating titles that entertain and mystify."

Though Appleton may be the eye of CyberFlix's technological hurricane, there are other creative forces that created *Jump Raven*,

and Appleton is adamant that they receive success and recognition, too.

"This isn't a grandstand, and I'm not the only person up here. CyberFlix is a group effort," he says. "I could never, ever accomplish this much by myself. We're a composite of dynamic, creative talents thrown together. We can argue and disagree, but we usually work really well together. *Jump Raven* is proof not of my talents, but theirs. And they're pretty astounding."

Imagine creating not one, but 12 musical scores for one project. That was the task facing CyberFlix's musical composer, SCOTT SCHEINBAUM. His efforts resulted in a multitracked tour de force. Players can choreograph their action by choosing from a variety of music: hip-hop, heavy metal, grunge, or techno—all of it written expressly for *Jump Raven*.

"It wasn't easy," Scheinbaum allows. "Four basic styles with 12 different themes is a lot of work. Besides the themes, I needed to compose theme and incidental music, not to mention locate and record the voices for all *Jump Raven*'s characters."

Reaching into the back files of his sound library, Scheinbaum managed to weave wailing Mullahs, lapping water, and machine-gun fire into a rich tapestry of sound. He stayed up late, scanning the AM radio dial searching for a Bible Belt preacher to sample just the right sort of fire and brimstone predictions that have come true in *Jump Raven*.

It was all detective work. "People really take their aural environment for granted," says Scheinbaum. "But if you only listen, you'll find a wealth of material to explore all around you."

Finding appropriate voices for the characters proved to be another sleuthing exercise. Scheinbaum tapped a host of people in Knoxville, including a jazz DJ, a bartender, and a Mandarin-speaking photojournalist.

"It drives you crazy trying to find the right voice," he says. "We recorded and re-recorded voices, and sometimes it still wasn't right. I found myself eavesdropping on people in the supermarket and at the mall in hopes of finding the perfect characterization."

Scheinbaum spent the Reagan years playing in various Southeastern punk bands, most notably Ministry of Love. And, as a member of the Real Hostages, he has toured with notable bands, among them REM. In his spare time Scheinbaum still likes to compose music.

Creating and imbuing characters with wit, humanity, and emotion is becoming vital to CD-ROM titles. Credit for inventing *Jump Raven*'s world and characters goes to ANDREW NELSON, a writer whose work has appeared in *GQ*, the *Washington Post*, and *Conde Nast Traveler*. Approaching the title as dramatic, rather than as an arcade experience, Nelson gave *Jump Raven* its memorable personalities and menacing world.

"Until *Jump Raven*, the digital personality was largely catatonic—empty of meaningful, expressive characters," Nelson says. "*Jump Raven* is different. It's got depth, texture, and an attitude. I hope players find that the storyline makes the action within *Jump Raven* even more exciting."

Nelson got the idea for *Jump Raven* from a newspaper article. "It reported a puzzling phenomena," says Nelson. "Scientists all over the world are now documenting a mysterious decline in the number of frog populations. They're vanishing all over the world. No one knows why. I thought: *What happens if this is only the beginning?* The world of *Jump Raven*, though I hope it won't be, could become mankind's future."

Nelson then set out to imagine this world interactively. "CD-ROMs are nonlinear; so much of what is felt is built on inference, on gathering details," he says. "To create a rewarding interactive story, you have to do with words what Seurat did with color—build texture and meaning with layers. In an interactive movie you use dialogue, not paint."

A former resident of L.A. and New York, Nelson now finds himself living in a Tennessee log cabin. "The advantage? The opossums have eaten all the roaches," he says. What eats opossums? "I don't know," he says.

JAMIE WICKS is the art director, designer, and modeler of the detailed, digital universe that serves as the backdrop for *Jump Raven*'s white-hot battle sequences.

Wicks also conceived and built the myriad weaponry and armor used by the characters in the adventure. With names like Skullcracker, Thorhammer, and Flying Komodo, these armaments were a challenge, but his biggest task, he says, was modeling the players' battle craft.

Deadly and slick, the *Jump Raven* hover jet was, for Wicks, a labor of love. Influenced by the lines of a Corvette, he would often get ideas right from the source, by sitting in a friend's '88 model, sketching and musing on ways to make the arcade craft just as slick.

In addition to Detroit's inspiration, Wicks says his influences extend to futuristic artists Syd Mead and H. R. Geiger.

"I look at those visionary illustrators a lot. They've managed to create detailed, imaginative images that work at all levels. That's the sort of detail I was trying to achieve when I designed *Jump Raven*'s world. It's an interesting environment—cool, distressed, and rusting," he says about this nightmare New York. "Despite the insurrections, people still want to live in Manhattan. Why, I don't know."

Wicks, who also designed most of the graphics for *Lunicus*, does most of his modeling work in various 3-D render programs. He has always enjoyed drawing and sketching and graduated with a degree in computer science from the University of Tennessee.

If a writer gives the characters personality, it was up to illustrator DEBBIE HUGHES to give them a face. An award-winning painter whose work has appeared on the cover of Baen Books and on interiors of Easton Press books, *Amazing Stories*, and *Science Fiction Age*, Hughes took her first digital assignment as a challenge.

"[Among artists] there's sometimes a slight hesitation to step into cyber space. But there are aesthetics there, too, and furthermore, I think it's important to push boundaries. CyberFlix did it with *Jump Raven*. We'll do it again in the future."

She developed favorites while painting the many characters that comprise *Jump Raven*.

"It was inevitable," she says. "I liked Lark the most." She's like most of the women I paint; she's lovely, but also strong, resourceful, and intelligent. I admire those qualities and hope they come across in Lark as well."

The most difficult character to do? Hughes has an answer immediately.

"The hardest character to render was Dogstar," she recalls. "He's half cyborg, so I had to impart as much personality as I could in just the one human eye he has and in his scowling mouth."

With Hughes creating the characters, the award-winning artistry of MARK MAXWELL went on the packaging. Maxwell's depiction of an apocalyptic New York is both terrifying and ironic. "Start spreading the news, this New York's going to be a pretty nasty place," Maxwell hums the famous ode to Gotham. "You can make it there—with enough firepower." In addition to the box, Maxwell designed the CD-ROM's official logo.

Specializing in space, high technology, and science fiction, Maxwell's work is well known at magazines (most notably, *Amazing Stories*) and at NASA (he was the mission artist for the agency's Spacelab J project). He has also been exhibited at the Smithsonian. He and Hughes live in Oak Ridge, Tennessee's famous scientific community.

All the creativity in the world wouldn't be much good if the rent weren't paid. Taking care of those nitty details, from ordering the office stationary to negotiating distribution contracts is CyberFlix's general manager, ERIK S. QUIST. A lifelong friend of Appleton's, Quist was coaxed to leave his law practice to come on-board for the start-up. It was a jump that many attorneys may dream about, but few actually do.

"I have always wanted to expand past the practice of law into business. I consider CyberFlix to be the opportunity of a life time. I get to use my legal background and expertise in a company on the cutting edge of the industry."

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JUMP RAVEN

Technology by BILL APPLETON
Art Direction by JAMIE WICKS
Sound and Music by SCOTT SCHEINBAUM
Screenplay by ANDREW NELSON

THE CAST

[In Order of Appearance]

MARTHA HUME	Susan Chatterji
TED LEHMAN	Lou Battaglia
SCOTT SCHEINBAUM	The Perobot
JENNIFER BYERS.	Lark Williams
WYN MAXWELL	Dogstar O'Mara
JESSAMY THOMISON	Chablis Sedgwick
MARSHALL STEVENS	Cheesestick Limbaugh
JEANNIE VONBLANKENSTEIN	Nikki Nakamora
JAMIE WICKS	Thrash
PENELOPE UNDERWOOD	The Weapons Lady
SCOTT SCHEINBAUM	Lenny
SCOTT SCHEINBAUM	Fuel Truck Driver
SCOTT SCHEINBAUM	The Skinhead
LOIS RAIMONDO	The Da Kuan
SCOTT SCHEINBAUM	The Cyberpunk

Additional voice-overs by
Suzanne McConnel, Scott Scheinbaum, and Jamie Wicks

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