



Dallas, Texas - Blurring the line between feature films and video games, Janimation just completed an intense computer generated “trailer/teaser ad” for “Stranglehold”, an action video game currently in development for next generation consoles and PC. To create cinematic imagery based on renowned action film director John Woo, Janimation collaborated with FailSafe Creative and publisher/developer Midway Games. Janimation’s trailer, rated as one of the top ten most popular when it premiered at the 2005 E3 conference, will be used by Midway to heighten interest in the game until its release sometime in 2006.

“The fast growth in the video game industry is prompting some very prominent feature film directors into trying their hand at helming an interactive story,” says Janimation principal Steve Gaconnier. “Stranglehold” allowed us at Janimation to implement many new tools to expedite all processes of animation production.” According to Gaconnier, a team of two dozen required only twelve weeks to do the “Stranglehold” trailer from concept to completion. “We are getting to the point in games where image quality needs to rival what is being produced in today’s blockbuster films,” adds Gaconnier.

Janimation produced and created characters, environments and animation based on action director John Woo’s most memorable action sequences. In the minute and one-half trailer, Woo’s influence, a.k.a. slow motion sequences, are readily seen in the animation, compositions and action sequences directed by Janimation Creative Director Jeffrey Dates with character development provided by Lead Character Designer Greg Punctatz. Inspiration for the duo came from Woo’s countless action flicks including Face/Off, Hard Boiled and Mission Impossible II.

The “Stranglehold” trailer opens with the likeness of international action film star Chow Yun-Fat (Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon, Hard Boiled and Bulletproof Monk) returning to his role as Inspector Tequila. Tequila finds himself immediately involved in a shoot-out while sitting in a high-tech mafia nightclub. The hyperkinetic action and freeze-framed sequences that make up John Woo’s signature are all featured, thanks to Senior Effects Animator Lyn Caudle’s automation of effects, including muzzle flashes, bullet hits, and spent casing discharges. After Chow Yun-Fat neutralizes a room full of bad guys, he quickly exits the bar area and descends the stairway, literally shooting his way towards a face off with his arch nemesis.

“The whole studio kicked butt on this project,” says Gaconnier, who added that the production paradigm is quickly changing. “The projects have to be completed really fast,” he says. To help expedite “Stranglehold”, Gaconnier enlisted the help of Senior Technical Director Ludovick Michaud to write proprietary tools for Janimation. The tools allowed the studio to complete and render the required 57 shots in record time.

Janimation is located at 840 Exposition Ave., Dallas, TX 75226. For more information, contact Kim Dates at 214-823-7760 or visit their website at www.janimation.com.

Credits:
Midway Games

Agency: Failsafe Creative
Creative Director: Simon Miller
Music Composer: Joseph Washbourn

Sound Design: John Dennis, The Sound Spot (Dallas)

Stranglehold Credits (for Janimation):

Executive Producer:	Steve Gaconnier
Animation Producer:	Pete Herzog
Creative Director:	Jeffrey Dates
Operations Supervisor:	Mike Duffy
Supervising Technical Director:	Ludovick Michaud
Technical Director:	Judson Rogers
Visual Effects Lead:	Lyn Caudle
Visual Effects Animator:	Todd Keuncle
Lead Animator:	John Griffith
Animator:	Paul Waggonner
Animator:	Steve Quentin
Lead Modeler:	Greg Punchatz
Modeler:	John McInnis
Modeler:	Jesse Sandifer
Modeler/Rigger:	Eric Turman
Modeler/Rigger:	Scott Stewart
Texture Editing:	James Chen
Lead Composer:	Jennifer Hudgens
Composer:	Josh Bray
Composer:	Will Nicholson
Composer/Designer:	Jimmy Gass
Digital Artist:	Rares Halmagean
Texture Artist:	Mark Ross
Render Wrangler:	Kevin Korngut
Systems Administrator:	Karen Carmelli
Executive Assistant:	Jennifer Magill