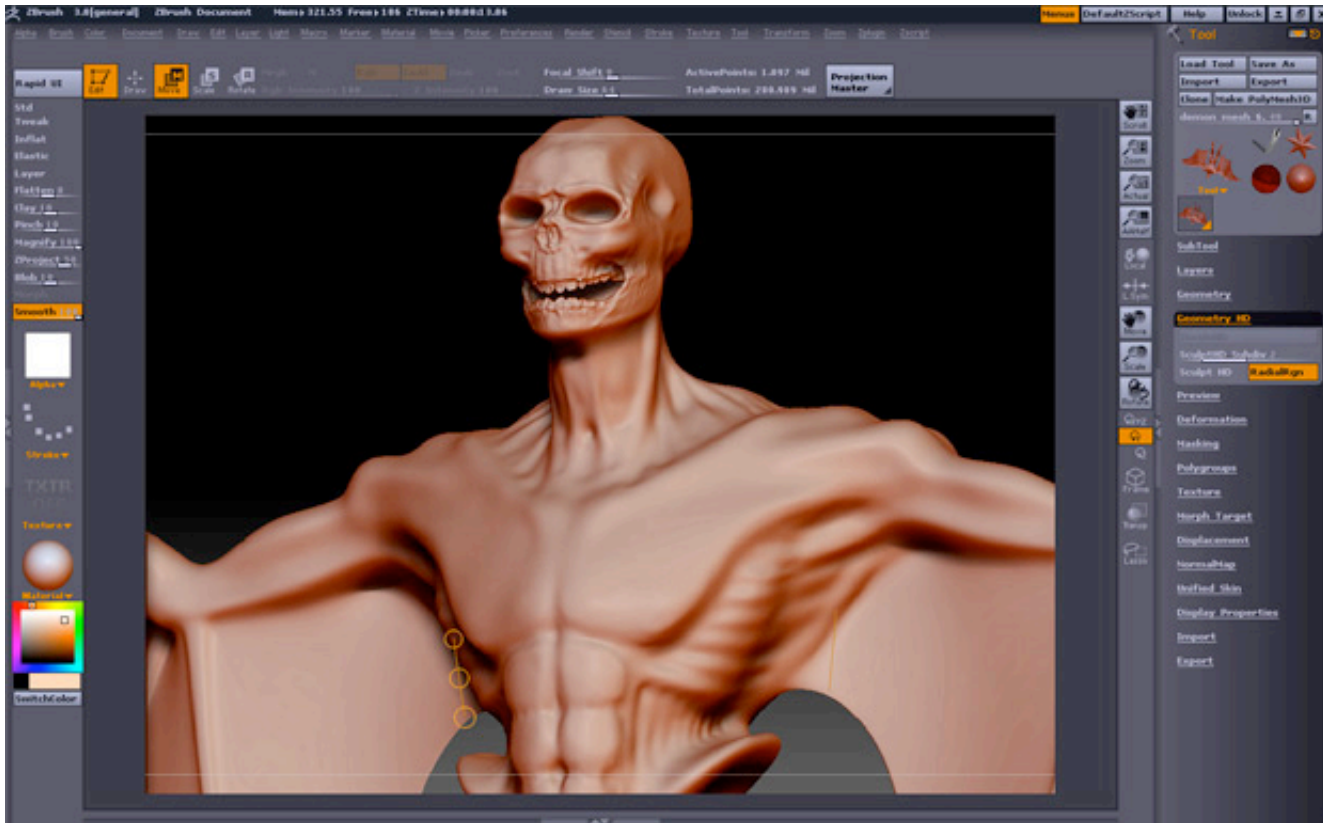




THE PIXEL CORPS HUB PRESENTS



PRIEST'S AWAKENING

by Vince Bauer

***"Wars have been fought from the beginning. None more devastating than the last. Justice and mercy. Those two are at war within me. Which will prevail?"
- opening from Josh Harris' film, "Priest's Awakening."***

We all have hopes and aspirations for our career paths. We all have dreams and visualize greatness in leaps and bounds, but also in small steps because we know that to get from here to there, it takes hard work, sacrifices, a whole lot of help and a single-minded fixation on believing in ourselves against all odds, against the naysayers, against those lacking vision of their own that what we imagine we can become, we will become. We are artisans. We are visionaries. We are dreamers.

Josh Harris has a dream and a whole lot of enthusiasm that goes along with it. At its core, a project close to his heart. For Josh the thought of whether he will prevail has never crossed his mind. He has set his eyes upon a goal and step by step, he moves closer to realizing his dreams. Josh Harris will prevail.

But where does all this stem from? And just what is this vision that occupies his every thought?

I asked this and more. . .

VB: *Hey, Josh. Good to get a chance to talk to you. I want to dig in and have you speak at length about your current film project, but let's get some of the preliminaries out of the way. Introduce yourself.*

Josh: My full name is Joshua Paul Harris. Call me Josh. I'm 26 and I grew up mostly in California, but a little in Oregon and Colorado. I live in Fairfield, CA, now. I have two sisters and I'm engaged to Julia Stensrud. She's in school to eventually become a movie makeup and hair artist.

VB: *What's your educational background?*

Josh: I took in a ton of honors and AP classes in high school and attended a private university called Point Loma for a year for Music Business. I dropped out because it was way too expensive. I have been to a couple community colleges since, until I finally decided that I wanted to do film. I wasn't about to go through another wasteful academic experience, so I finally decided to attend the San Francisco School of Digital Filmmaking to actually learn something. And I did.

VB: *I know your current film project preoccupies most of your time. What's going on behind the scenes that people may not know?*

Josh: My film, Priest's Awakening, has been a big job since I have no budget. And I mean no budget in the sense that there was no piece of paper budgeting funds. In fact, there are no funds at all. To pay the bills, I am currently starting a business doing video and web sites, which is doing ok, and I work part-time at a church that has weekly video needs and is way flexible in their expectations. In the meantime, I write scripts and write for the local newspaper.

I love this film project. It's been a great experience from the beginning. Working with everyone has been a tremendous joy to me because it tickles me to see something I like so much being crafted by such creative people. It's really cool. I'm just not a huge fan of the red tape and tax implications, but it's a necessary evil. It's a business. Sometimes I hate the word "Money". I know that's crazy. But it's always too much of a factor in whether or not a good film is made or not.

I am currently writing my third feature script called "No Ambition" and plan to shoot it next year on a HVX200. This will be my first feature. I also have a great adventure/comedy movie I want to do called "The Quest". I'm thinking Bruce Campbell in a starring role, but he might be well-aged and in a wheelchair by the time I'm ready.

VB: *What brought you to the Pixel Corps?*

Josh: Through school and talking to Alex, I was able to get hooked up. It's been just over a year and a half since I joined.

VB: *And how did your film project, "Priest's Awakening," get started?*

Josh: My buddies and I were always talking about making movies. We talked about vampires, which I personally thought were totally overdone, so we eventually settled on angels and demons.



concept art of Lucifer

The basic idea came to me from a nightmare/waking dream I had a long time ago. It got me thinking about the possibility of a man seeing into the spiritual world in a literal sense. I wanted to have a character who somehow visualizes the true intentions of people in a visceral way, such as demons or angels pulling invisible strings, because it seemed like a very fresh and cool perspective on the age-old story of good and evil.

VB: *What sort of research have you done and how has it affected both your choice of setting and storyline?*

Josh: I read a ton of books about angels and demons. I decided to stick with the more American versions, as opposed to Jewish or Middle Eastern types because it seemed more close to home. I decided I would express the story of good and evil through humanity's conflict with itself, through religion and other spiritual means.

Another major factor in my research was terrorism and 9-11. Since I was going to express the fight of good and evil in a realm of spirituality, I began to wonder about terrorists, and, more specifically, those that kill others or themselves in the name of God. I wanted to point out why I think that is so horrible, so I decided that the best way to communicate to Americans was by making an American terrorist and an American terrorist group.

This is a post World War III setting. Much of the world has been sent into ruin. America has been conquered. There is now a one-world government. Essentially, Priest, my main character, joins a

resistance group, called the New Knights Templar, which the new world order considers to be a terrorist group. The coalition army killed his family in cold blood. In a rage, Priest comes out of hiding and kills the soldiers. But Azazeal, one of Lucifer's most trusted officers, makes an appearance. It is the beginning of Priest's sight, his first awakening to the spiritual world around him.

VB: What's it been like managing this project? What can you say about your actors, your set and shooting work, and the outcome of it all?

Josh: Managing it all has been challenging, but only when things aren't going insanely fast, which they do sometimes. Sometimes all sorts of new developments happen at once and it's hard to keep up. Other times, things slow way down until someone is done putting in the time on a particular element or two. Ultimately, recruiting people is always the biggest challenge when you don't have big bucks.

I found my actors around the school I went to. I knew my characters, so it wasn't hard to spot who would best portray the character out of the pool of people available to me. The actors have been very patient with me and the project overall. I think it's because I prepared enough to make it work and I'm able to improvise and make things work when we're shooting.

I think potentially the best footage in store for the project is the CG scenes, specifically the virtual set and CG demon.



Cinema 4D Virtual Set by Vince Bauer

I didn't do any filming abroad for the short, but I do plan to do filming abroad for the feature. I was able to use the F950 for the greenscreen shots, which was an awesome experience. The school's greenscreen was a vital part of the short. This short depends greatly on the CG, which is why the Pixel Corps is so very important to the project.



greenscreen and composite by Josh Harris

I want this project to exhibit a small portion and flavor of the trilogy I am writing. I think the 18-40 demographic is pretty much what I'm shooting for. I think for this short, I won't worry much about distribution other than get it into festivals and show it to some people who might have the ability to fund the other features.

VB: How did the Pixel Corps become involved?

Josh: Alex was key. I think the first time I ever talked to Alex, I asked something like, "Hey, I'm going to McDonald's, do you want something?" And he said, "Yeah." I don't remember anything but the fact that he wanted a diet Coke.

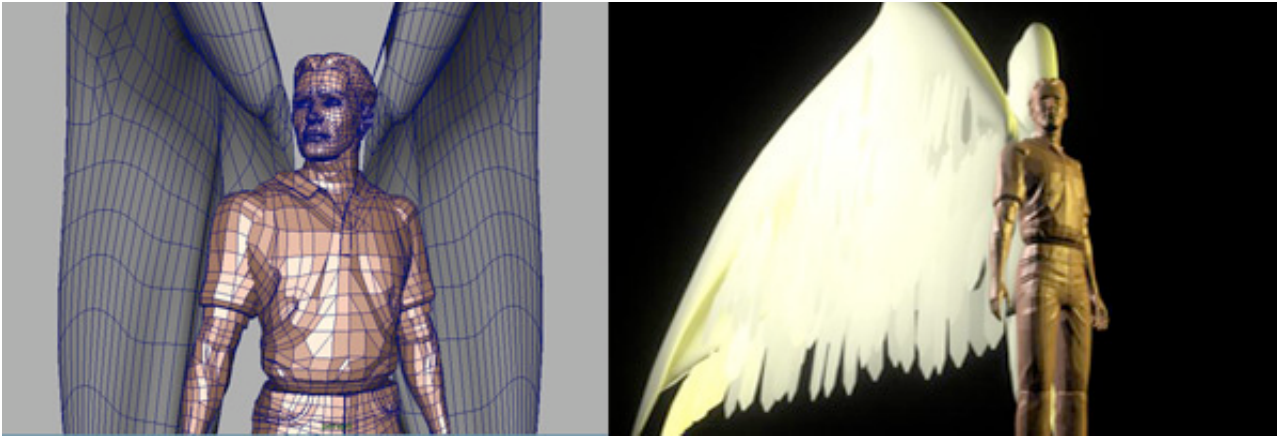
Alex has been a tremendous encouragement to me as a young filmmaker, allowing me to dream big and to get me hooked up here in the PXC. If it wasn't for the school, I wouldn't have ever met with Alex. I owe a lot to a lot of people.

VB: Talk a bit about what's been done so far? How has the Pixel Corps helped? What would you like to see happen to propel this project even further?

Josh: So far the entirety of the short has been shot. It's about ten minutes, but almost every shot has some sort of CG in it. In fact, I think there is only one shot where there isn't some sort of special effect going on in it, that's where Priest is sitting writing in his journal.

Pixel Corps artisans have provided awesome matte paintings, particle effects, animation, virtual sets, match moving, and a little photogrammetry has been done. So far, the main people who have stayed with it in the PXC are Roger Nobs, Katherine Hernandez, and Vince Bauer.

There have been other people who have helped, but mostly those are the people that stayed with it the longest. Scott Sullivan and Matt Manning also did some great work too.



Pre-Viz wireframe and modeled wings by Katherine Hernandez and her team



concept art for "War in Heaven" matte



finished digital matte by Roger Nobs

The PXC Member's Collaboration Forum has been invaluable to Priest's Awakening. Maybe it's because of the free-spirited folks hang out there. I'm not sure exactly. What has sparked new life into the project is usually when a new person hops on board, providing new ideas on how to get various elements done. That is always awesome!

I think the main issue is finding a way to get more help from the PXC members, because there are so many talented people that it makes sense for me to spend my time recruiting from inside the PXC than from outside. Recruiting outside has been great, but recruiting from the inside would be greater. It's a solid group of people and there is plenty of support. As opposed to trying to build my own support from the ground up, there is a forum of knowledge that has already been put together, so it's been a fantastic experience. I think the PXC is an awesome creation.

VB: OK. So make your pitch. How can PXC Artisans help all the more?

Josh: In all honesty, some of you might have read this thinking, how the crap did this guy get any of this done, what a total amateur. In reality, I am, in some ways. The fact is, I need people like you to help me. I need people who can do what I can't do.

When I was on sports teams, I never got most points scored or best offensive player or defensive player, but I always got the most-improved award. That should mean something. In baseball my favorite position was batter; in football, all-time-quarterback; at school, my favorite class was recess; and whenever I played monopoly, I would cheat to win. Is that wrong?

I know that might not translate outside of America, but just understand that I hate losing, I like controlling my destiny and I like having fun.

As to what I could really use at the moment? I need people to texture some angel models, to model and texture some angel wings, to texture and animate a cloak or two, to key and composite a scene on a virtual set, and to texture a demon model.

Interested? Send me email at: joshp.harris@gmail.com

VB: When all is said and done...when "Priest's Awakening" is up on a marquee, somewhere, what's next for Josh Harris? Where do you envision yourself going?

Josh: Priest's Awakening is three features, so those won't be done for a while. I am actually writing books so I can flesh out the idea because I love the story so much. I mentioned "No Ambition" and "The Quest," which I also hope will lend credibility and funding for the Priest trilogy.

Most success stories start off with a group of people sticking together and making it work. That's what I want. So, ultimately, where I am going to be in the future is the same spot everyone else who worked with me is going to be. That's my goal.

Want to know about the Priest's Awakening Project, the awesome work already done and the challenges that lie ahead? Check out the Atheneum.

If you'd like to comment on this article, please visit [here](#).

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