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Contact: Angela Mitchell, (PR, Mr. X)
954.983.5877 (U.S.), Paramitch@aol.com



MR. X GETS SERIOUS ABOUT MONKEY BUSINESS FOR SPYMATE

*Acclaimed Effects Team Creates Seamless Title CGI Character for a
Secret Agent Chimp that Leaps, Skis, Chops – and Saves the World!*

Toronto, Ontario. October 29, 2003 – The talents and minds at **Mr. X** have been at it again, and have now helped to bring an unforgettable character to life for the upcoming feature film **Spymate**: A secret-agent superchimp (and his CGI stunt double) named Minkey!

In *Spymate*, a former spy and his fearless partner – a chimpanzee “spymate” named Minkey – must go back into the fray in order to save his kidnapped daughter from an evil scientist out to destroy the world. Principal photography on *Spymate* was completed in May 2003, and Mr. X has spent the time since intensively and seamlessly blending the CGI version of “Minkey” with the actions of the talented live chimp who portrays the “spy primate” in the film.

Minkey is a rich, entertaining, and unforgettable character, who brings a wide array of very human characteristics to the screen, and serves as another reminder of the close relationships between humans and chimpanzees. Mr. X’s work on the film is to showcase Minkey’s Kung Fu-fighting, snowboarding, mountain climbing, and trapeze exploits via computer generation. Mr. X will also accomplish these goals, secondarily, through matte painting, and set extensions – but always in a wholly realistic way, indistinguishable to audiences from the antics of the talented real-life chimpanzee who plays the role for the majority of the film. Thanks to Mr. X, Minkey the chimpanzee spy carries out his top-secret mission with humor, finesse, and an astonishing array of skills never before seen in the chimp world.

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Mr. X Inc. • www.mrxfx.com • 35 McCaul Street, Suite 303 • Toronto, Ontario M5T 1V7
Phone: (416) 595-6222 • Fax: (416) 595-9122 • Email: dennis@mrxfx.com

Providing pre-production and creative design, previsualization, set extensions and digital effects specifically for the character of Minkey, Mr. X was once again chosen for a high-profile feature film thanks to its recent successes on such films as *Wrong Turn*, *Blizzard*, *Men with Brooms*, *Ararat*, and dozens more. The company's talented creative team has been working intensively to bring an impressive array of digital talents to the job.

The most exciting challenge offered by *Spymate* for the Mr. X team was the necessity for a realistic, full CGI Chimp stunt double, for use with unattainable camera moves, as well as for stunts which would be dangerous or impossible for a real chimp to perform.

Most of the team's time and focus was spent on bringing Minkey into the action through the creation and integration of his CGI double, to work seamlessly with the live-action character performed by the talented chimp actor in the role. "To accomplish Minkey's incredible stunts, and to do so in a way that would fool the eye, the Mr. X team worked meticulously to recreate the features and characteristics of the wonderful chimp actor who played the role, studying his face, expressions, and unique mannerisms as much as possible," comments **Mark Stepanek**, the Mr. X 3D Supervisor. "For example, the chimp loved to clap his hands together vigorously, so that was something we made sure to bring to the CGI version of Minkey."

Such additional aspects as appearance, behavior and texture were also lifted from actual film footage of the chimp so that the CG-doppelganger would be indistinguishable from the real one. With this goal in mind, extensive care was taken with even the smallest details, all the way down to superbly realistic matte painting and set-extensions, cbth simulations, and more, with the Mr. X team even assisting with the design and virtual blocking and editing of some of the monkey's CG action sequences.

And the team accomplished all this while keeping a constant eye on performance and subtlety: "We wanted to achieve a result that didn't call attention to itself, but which achieved an invisible link between computer generation and reality," adds Stepanek. "We wanted to keep people's eyes on the real chimp, so that he was supported, but never overshadowed, by his CGI double."

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The process has ultimately been a highly enjoyable one for the whole team, which also used dynamic simulations (in *Renderman* and *Maya Fluid FX*) to realistically create natural phenomena, including an avalanche for one pivotal scene, and volumetric clouds (which were essential to a scene in which Minkey “jet packs” through a photo-realistic sky).

“When all is said and done, Minkey the ‘spymate’ will be an unforgettable character for kids and parents alike,” comments Mr. X President **Dennis Berardi**. “We’re delighted and honored to have had a hand in bringing Minkey to life!”

About *Spymate*

Produced by **International Keystone Entertainment**, *Spymate* is a film that’s sure to entertain the entire family, and swings into theatres in Winter, 2003. *Spymate* was directed by **Robert Vince**, and stars a talented cast including **Debra Jo Rupp, Chris Potter, Richard Kind**, and **Emma Roberts**.

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.

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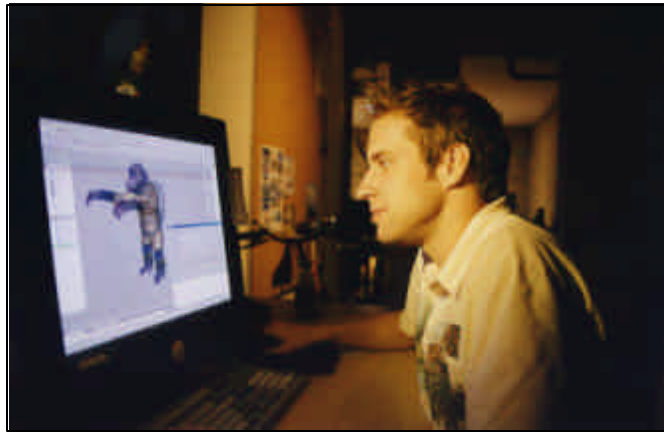
With credits on dozens of distinguished projects including ***Wrong Turn, Blizzard, Ararat, Cube 2: Hypercube, The Sweet Hereafter*** and many more, Mr. X helps to define the very look and feel of a film. New projects in the works for the company include such anticipated feature releases as ***Dawn of the Dead, Resident Evil 2*** and ***Cube 0***.

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 **(954) 983-5877** or Paramitch@aol.com.

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Mr. X and Spymate
Project Visuals

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



*Mr. X's Mark Stepanek reviews a wireframe image of Minkey
for the feature film **Spymate***



*Mr. X's Mark Chong at work on a pivotal avalanche sequence
for the feature film **Spymate***