

Coinbase

01.31.22

→ Animated \$hort Film

Treatment by @LishaTan



x



x



01

introduction

hello coinbase team! 🙌

We really can't thank you enough for considering us. I love the potential of this project, not only because the style is right in my wheelhouse and my entire team is jazzed about the prospect, but because the brief is so unique. Not just in scope and style, but because it lives on the edge of technology, and we love that at The Mill. We have the global scale, tech and producing resources, and in-house creative talent to make this project epic.

So, let's not dilly dally; there's a lot to unpack, a lot to discuss, and some cool things to look at.

Here we go!
- Lisha

CROWD \$OURCED → ADVENTURE

Before we dive into the story, style, and execution bits, let's touch on customization and how we roll out and deliver on the scenes. While we want to create an experience that is as 'crowdsourced' as possible, we, of course, need to be smart with our production. Leaning on our technology resources, we can find specific ownership areas of our film, such as billboards, other types of signage, names of characters (before we do any VO/acting), and skins. Together, we'll find the right give and take as to what elements of the film can be crowdsourced as well as a timetable in production for what crowdsourced events can happen.

For example, if we are still in the board-o-matic or script phase, we can have the community pick the getaway vehicle, and lock it down before we build the asset. But if it's later on in production, things like signage, names of locations, colors, etc., are easier to do. We want to create a mesmerizing, fluid experience, so let's not get jumbled with too many moving parts.

02

approach

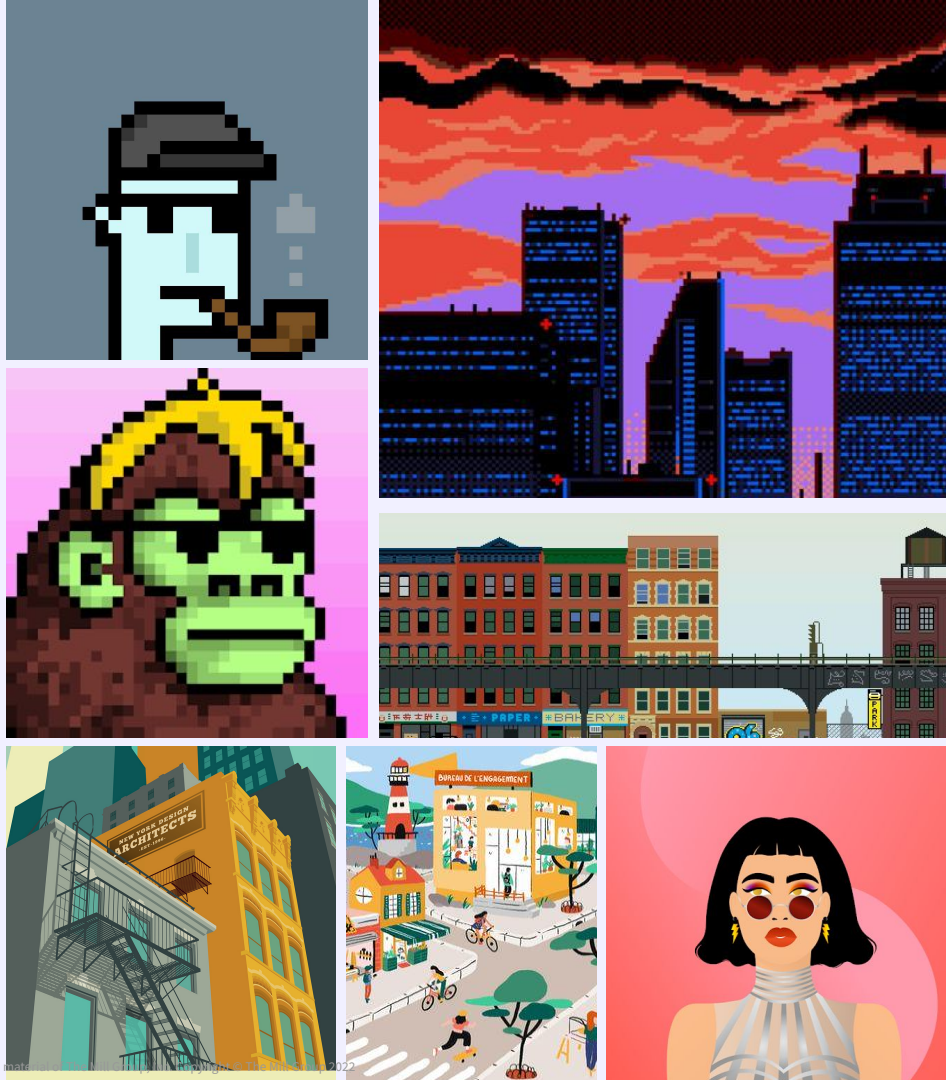


To achieve a film of this length while still being mindful of budget, we want to use a **mixed-media approach**. Not only do I love working with a variety of character and animation styles, but the very nature of that approach also fits the concept perfectly because there are so many styles and types of NFTs.

Our film could become more and more mixed media as it grows and the crew/s grow? We could break it up into animation sections that match the hero NFT style of that scene. Meanwhile, our characters keep their same style throughout, regardless of what 'world' their inhabiting, i.e., an 8-bit character stays 8-bit even though they are in an entirely cel-animated environment. That way, once we build our characters, we can move them throughout our film, repurposing assets without needing to redesign.

It might go without saying, but since we aren't partnering with other NFT projects, we would like to explore and be inspired by the most popular ones. And, at the very least (steering clear of any copyright issues) give them a nod.

Along those same character lines, we'd like to pair our styles with a matching heist archetype. We don't need to be too literal, but finding an appropriate pairing will help our storytelling and beef up the character's development.



A decorative design featuring a solid magenta background with black squares scattered in the corners. A central horizontal bar is divided into a black left half and a bright yellow right half. The number '03' is centered in the black section, and the word 'story' is centered in the yellow section.

03

story

THE \$TORY

→ OVERVIEW

We're so excited to jump in and workshop the best way to tell this caper, and while it's tempting to start that process now, it really is a big task that we have to get absolutely right. That being said, we couldn't help but be inspired by your initial take on the story, so we wanted to share some of our initial thoughts and some snippets of scenes and action that can propel the narrative.

We love the idea of not being bashful when it comes to playing up heist tropes in our film. This is our story so let's go with what works. Ocean's 11, Money Heist, Now You See Me, the list goes on and on, and they all have similar nuances and setups because that's what we all want to see. We also wonder about a way to bring some gamification to the narrative as a whole or in parts. It's just an early thought, but we can look at areas of the script where this can work or how we carry this concept through the film's entire architecture.

THE \$TORY

→

STRUCTURE

As said, we don't need to try and solve this now, but how we structure our story and how our hero character fits into it all is crucial to making an engaging film with twists and turns and making our Hero a character we're rooting for along the way.





THE \$TORY

→ SETUP

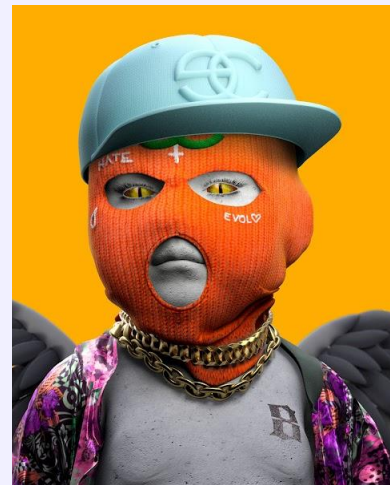
There are a few ways this can happen, and, of course, this is an early take on it, but every story needs motivation for action.

Why are the anti-heroes crewing up? Maybe they hear rumors of the drop and want it for themselves? We could start with a montage of news reports, newspaper articles, Twitter threads, discord, etc. Everyone is guessing what the drop is, and everyone wants it. Through this type of cinematic convention, we can create a global buzz around the drop during a quick intro, and this is how we introduce the goal of our anti-heroes.

THE \$TORY

→ SETUP A

We can see our first baddie contact another baddie; they get together in a dingy tiki bar and start floating who they need to crew up. From here, they go on a recruitment drive to assemble the team. The hero gets wind of this mission and disguises himself as an obscure NFT to infiltrate the group. Helping himself get to the drop, but picking off the other NFTs along the way, sabotaging them in the process?





THE \$TORY → SETUP B

Our hero is secretly leading the crew to get to the vault, but he knows the other NFTs are up to no good. A bit of a Keyser Soze - Usual Suspects moment - maybe without all the backstabbing... but? This would allow us to focus more on the individual characters, their style, skills, backstory, etc., and let our Hero lead the action and motivate the story. Once they arrive, our Hero reveals his true avatar - we'd drop clues along the way. Luring them into the headquarters to entrap them in an escape room-inspired fun house situation, our Hero thwarts their plans to break into the vault.

THE \$TORY

→ OUR HERO

BAYC YACHT CLUB



It's so important that, while building up our team of anti-heroes, we keep our Hero integral to the film. We want the audience to feel connected to him and root for him. So, while we can spend screen time with others, their backstories, skills, etc., we can't lose sight of our Hero. This is why embedding him in the crew, making him the ringleader, feels like the right way to go, instead of having him do his own thing.

On the outside, the Bored Ape characters might appear jaded and tired of life, hanging out at a heavy metal bar. But, on the inside, he's an intelligent, passionate being, moving through life with the cool swagger of Snoop Dogg, and we need to feel that aura, capturing it in scenes through his actions, as subtle as they might be.

Also, because we want to love our Hero, we wonder about finding a way for him to go ahead and help the 'evil' crew/his other team members gain exposure as well. The community is largely supportive, so it might be nice to work in a story beat that can support that-- a twist to the twist.

THE \$TORY

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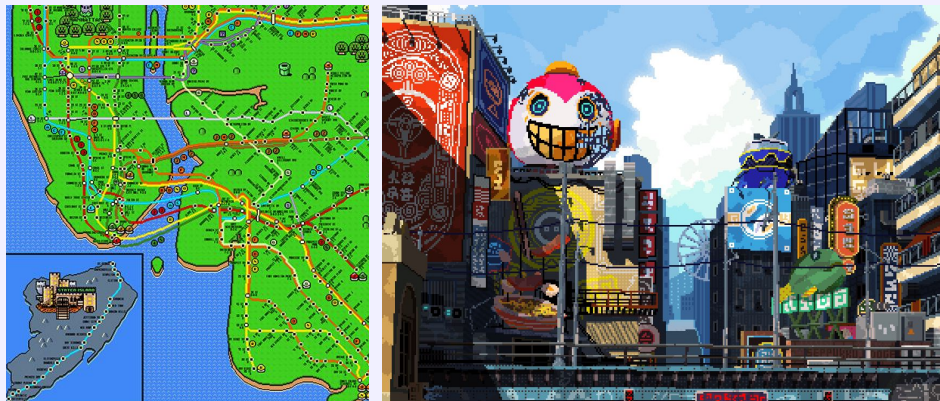
SNIPPETS

Again, just an early round of exploration, and the key is to naturally connect all these, but let's look at heist-inspired scenarios we should explore and how we might execute them. I want to make this an exciting and watchable short story, taking the best bits from cinema and putting them into the film.

THE \$TORY
→ SNIPPETS

THE MISSION BRIEFING

A must-have in any respectable heist film, I love the idea of the mission briefing being very tongue-in-cheek with a motion graphics style- perhaps inspired by an 8-bit video game. We can use a mo-graph style to present a lot of information but keep it fun and engaging. This could also be where we start our story and tell it from a flashback perspective- using the Mission Briefing as a sort of touchstone. But, regardless of how we get there, we also need to meet our crew.





THE \$TORY
→ SNIPPETS

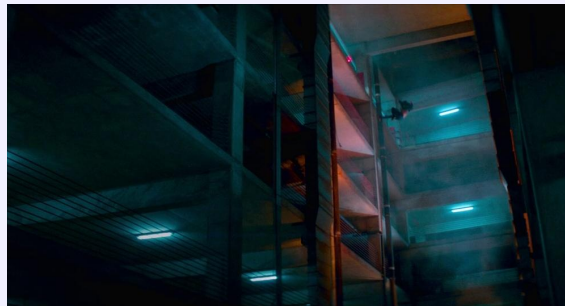
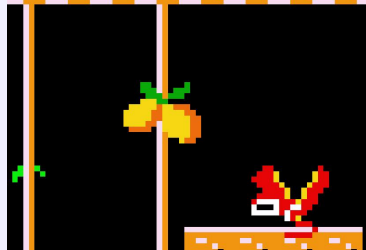
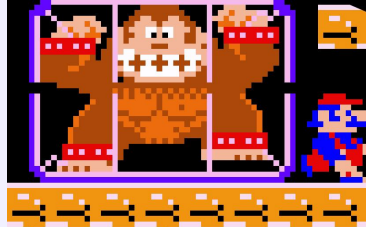
CREWING UP

While the entire film is going to be a blast, this part of caper-lore is always a fun one. We can treat the 'crewing up' in more montage style or gradually build it up, introducing characters as we reach different narrative points. This is the perfect time to inject some humor into our film as we see their backstories-- giving each character some real personality. It's a great time to showcase them in their own element and style, doing what they do best in bombastic fashion, we want to make each one bigger than the last.

THE \$TORY
→ SNIPPETS

PRISON BREAKOUT

I like the idea of a jailbreak, as it could be a natural part of our 'crewing-up' plotline. It's not needed, but it is a fun avenue to explore. We could make it a more traditional-style prison or explore ways to visualize a sort of NFT jail - is it a sort of purgatory of obscurity - who are the guards - are there walls, or is it a digital tether? All fun things to think about.





THE \$TORY
→ SNIPPETS

A CHASE

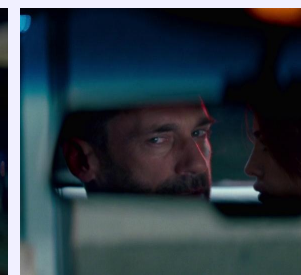
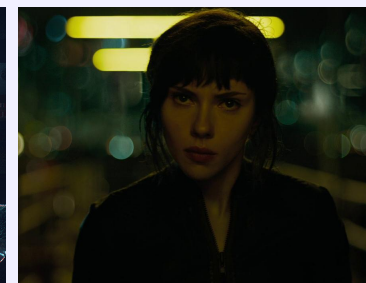
The prison break could lead us here, but it definitely doesn't have to. Not all heist movies feature chase scenes, but who doesn't love action. We can also have some unexpected scenarios bleed into our chase with our mixed media approach. Unconventional vehicles, modes of transport, chasing on foot, on the road, or in the air.

THE \$TORY

→ SNIPPETS

THE BETRAYAL

As the story develops, it might be too complex to pull off, but I like the idea of a betrayal within the ranks. We could save this concept for the final vault scene and see them turn on one another with a suspenseful battle of sorts, almost like a game of tag with thrilling fight sequences and a battle of wits, each using their inherent traits to move forward to the treasure, only to be stopped by our hero, who actually holds the key.



THE \$TORY
→ SNIPPETS

THE GRAND FINALE

THE DROP

We want this scene and moment to feel beyond big! This is a culmination of everything our film has been working towards, and to make this scene super impactful, a full CG approach feels like the way to go. All of our unique styles converge in a way against an absolutely premium backdrop and world. In a sense, it creates the metaphor that they can all coexist in the real-digital-world.

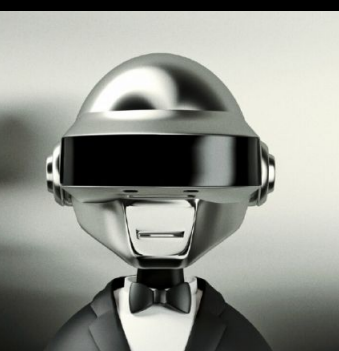
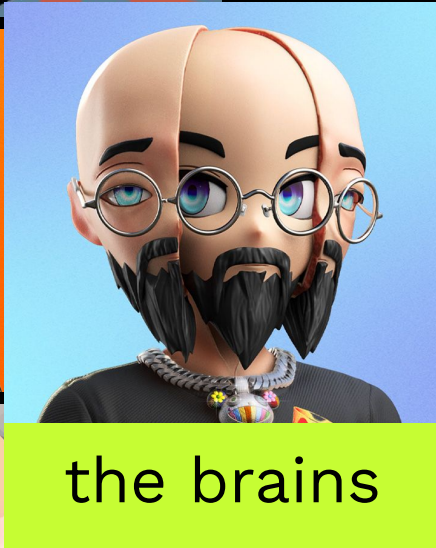
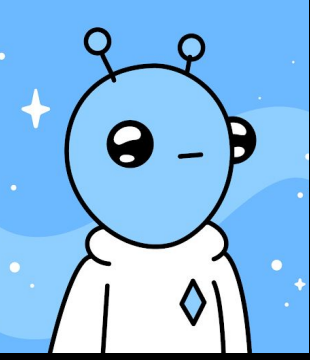
This is an area of the film where we see some serious gamification potential, with different floors acting as levels that give our characters different challenges—maybe, in a way, picking them off and whittling down the competition. When the vault opens, our hero's potential is unleashed as he transforms into a massive King Kong-sized version of himself. Maybe he brings the other characters along, too, unleashing their potential to the world as well. Maybe more NFTs (collaborations) emerge throughout the skyline? Alternatively, if the prize is his and his alone, we love the idea of giving the entire cityscape the Bored Ape Yacht Club treatment in a powerful visual takeover. And, here, we can also reveal the insane AR activation at the actual Empire State Building- this is really exciting.



→ THE \$TORY
CHARACTER TYPES

Whether we opt for a single crew of characters with our Hero embedded within, two rival crews, or small crews all seeking the same prize, we'll feature characters that inspire a heist narrative. Their skill sets will help motivate the action and narrative.

Of course, as the script develops, some of these can shift, but within our heist world, we'll want to feature:



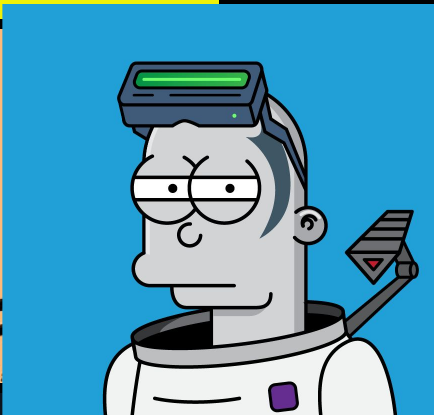
Now, this is tricky because the brains can be a leader... or someone that the leader has enlisted, so who's really the brains? If we want to reserve the category of the 'brains' for our Hero; then, we have to feature: The Tech.



the mill

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the tech

Sure, everyone on this squad is tech-savvy, no doubt, but this character can take it to the next level - Swordfish on steroids. After all, someone has to break the getaway driver out of NFT jail.

story_03





the wildcard

Our getaway driver. An adrenaline junky at heart, this member is always late to the party but always brings the biggest bang. They can get you into trouble and out of trouble just as fast. And, typically, they'll say the most inappropriate but honest things.



the muscle



Every team needs some muscle. Strong, resilient, and probably a bit oversensitive, this huggable bear (not necessarily literally) might also rip your arms off. This character type can also inhabit a misdirected form - maybe a bit out of left field, but Joe Pesci in Goodfellas, his Napoleon complex, makes him the perfect fit.



the safe cracker

While any of our characters could be female, we really like the idea of featuring a confident woman inspired by the World of Women NFT collection. In a traditionally male-dominated space, she's not only a fashionista pushing back against the status quo, she's also a world-class safe-cracker.



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the victor

The Bored Ape character on the outside he looks like an ape that's kind of jaded and tired of life but has all the money and time in the world, and hangs out at a metal bar”

I want to imagine that inside his disinterested exterior he is actually an intelligent and passionate being, a chameleon of sorts. Kind of like Snoop Dogg.

We can portray him in his illustrative style, or create him in 3D to make him more tangible

We will, of course, look at other heist-centric character types, but again, the story we lay out will inform what characters we'll feature and vice versa. We might feature a master of disguise, a weapons expert, a slight of hand magician, contortionist, etc.

story_03

THE \$TORY

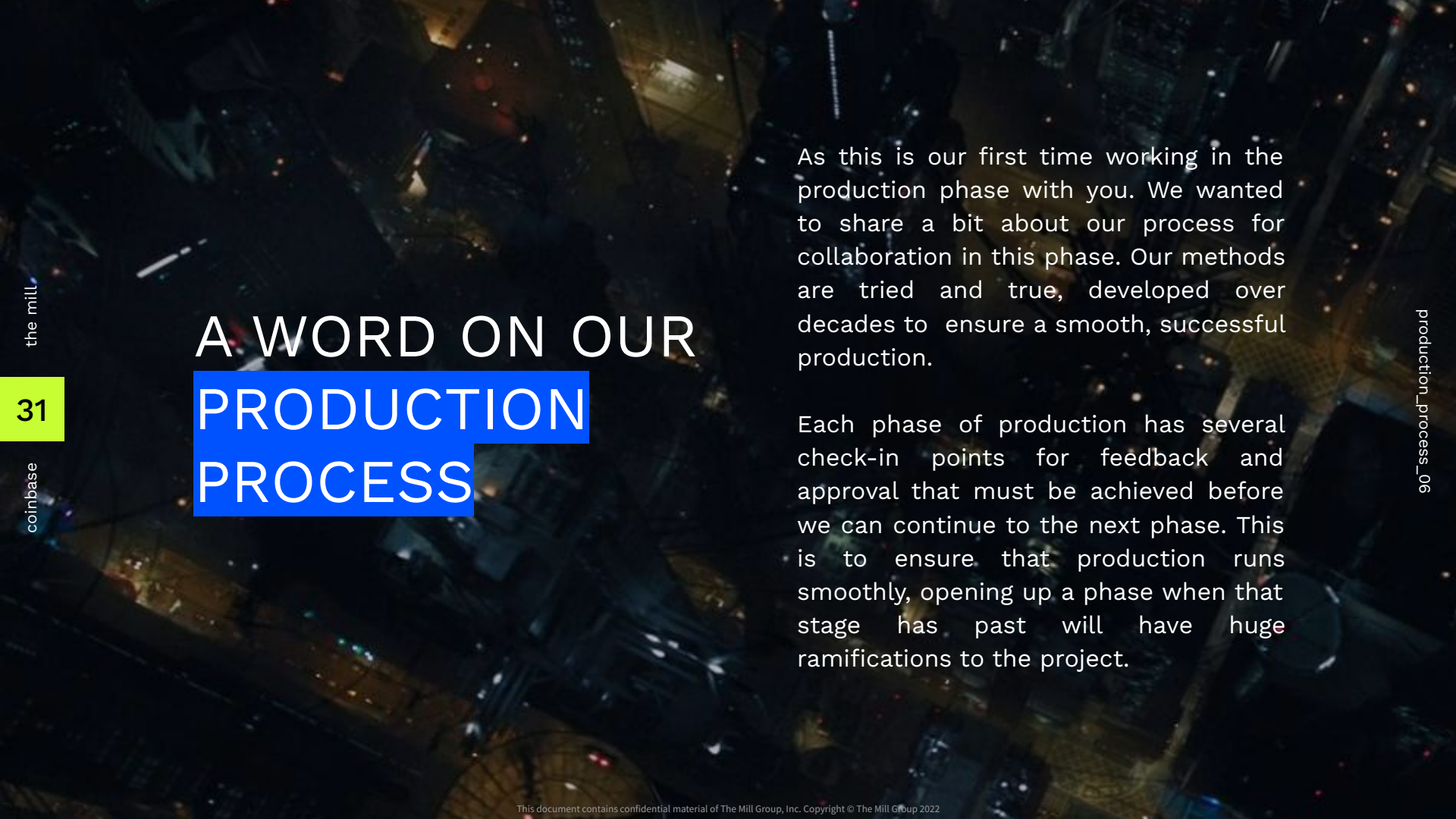
VISUAL METAPHORS

Because of the nature of our story and the nuances of the Crypto, NFT, Blockchain world, we want to find compelling visual metaphors throughout our film. Let's help visualize the concept for those who don't fully understand. We will lay out details of the story within the script, and our character's dialogue will help, but we want to follow the age-old adage: show, don't tell-- whenever possible.



04

production process



the mill

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A WORD ON OUR PRODUCTION PROCESS

As this is our first time working in the production phase with you. We wanted to share a bit about our process for collaboration in this phase. Our methods are tried and true, developed over decades to ensure a smooth, successful production.

Each phase of production has several check-in points for feedback and approval that must be achieved before we can continue to the next phase. This is to ensure that production runs smoothly, opening up a phase when that stage has past will have huge ramifications to the project.

THE BLUEPRINTS

→ FOR OUR PARTNERSHIP

→ PHASE 1 SCRIPTING

Our initial phase is script development. Here we develop the story, the characters' personalities, and backstories. As a director, I love to work in a collaborative way, so we'll have an initial story session where we can brainstorm and workshop the structure of the narrative. From there, we write the first draft of the script in conjunction with your writer and have 3-4 rounds of revisions before we lock the script from a creative and production perspective.

→ PHASE 2 BOARDING

After script lock, we move into storyboard development to lock in our story and visual narrative. This work results in a 'board-o-matic' used as a blocking and timing blueprint for our main production phase. We will refine our board-o-matic, and any script revisions needed will be addressed in this phase.

→ PHASE 3 APPROACH TO ART

Virtually simultaneous to this phase, we'll begin work on character art and environmental concept paintings for approval on key scenes. If there are any original characters we need to create from scratch, we will design them in this phase.

→ PHASE 4 CG LOOK DEV

Once we've reached this phase, we commence our CG look development of character, environment builds, and textures.

→ PHASE 5 PREVISUALIZATION

Following the approved board-o-matic stage, we move into pre-visualization. Here we block out timings and camera moves for our story. This is the last stage before animation or before shooting if we are using motion capture. If we opt for a mo-cap shoot, we'll ingest the footage before starting animation.

→ PHASE 6

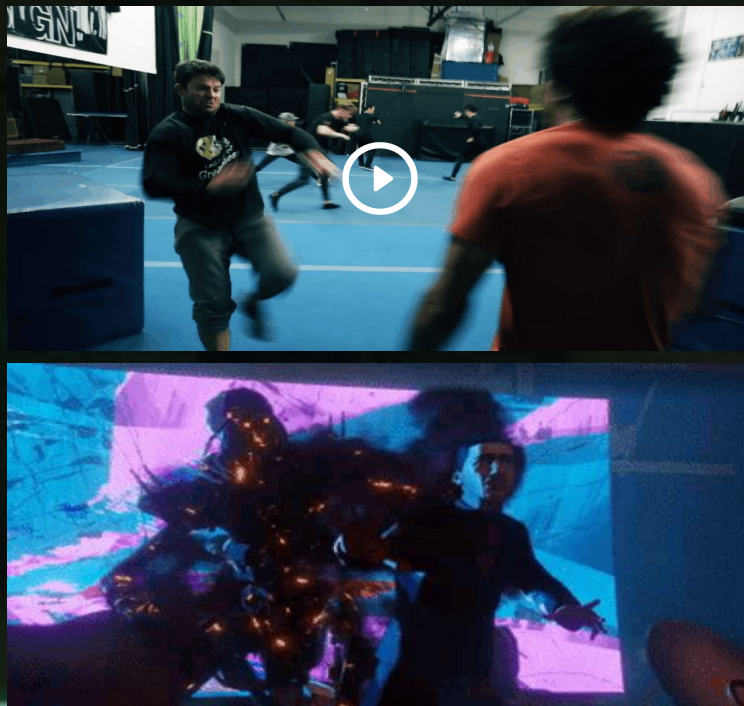
MOCAP/REFERENCE SHOOT

We'll cast actors that embody the personality of the characters we create to play both the voice and acting roles. This method is the most efficient, especially if we are doing facial capture, for the 3D humanoid characters. Plus, if you have celebrity talent that you partner with, and they are game to get into a mocap suit, let's do it.

Since we'll have a mix of CG characters and 2D characters, we'd also like to mocap and shoot references for our 2D characters at the same time. This is great for our animation team because they can see everyone interacting together in real-time.

Also, if we feature stunts or combat scenes (which we will most likely do), we'd love to work with a stunt choreographer to develop an exciting fight sequence that flows. We will give them a blueprint for the outcome we want, but their expertise can really take an action sequence to the next level.

From here, we'll edit the reference footage from the shoot into an edit of our story while ingesting all the mocap data for 3D animation. Here, our animators embellish what we captured on the day, and our 2D animators will use the footage as a reference for animation.





→ PHASE 7

PATH TO DELIVERY

During the animation stage, there are several rounds of reviews before we lock. With 2D animation, we need to finalize animation before moving into cleanup and color. With CG, we have to lock animation before lighting and rendering.

When all animation is locked and rendered, we move into compositing, finishing, and finally delivery.

05

music + vfx

SOUND EFFECTS → AND MUSIC

While the visuals are a huge consideration for the film, they are really only fifty percent of the piece. We tie everything together with a rich bed of sound effects that will heighten our animation and bring a sense of realism to our world. We can also incorporate/create character-specific sounds when appropriate that speak to their design.

As we move into the boarding and animatic stages, we can start experimenting with scratch tracks to our tone and style, heading in the right direction.

- 01 We can work with an **A-List music house** to create an original score. This will give us the flexibility to compose specific moments that accentuate our film-- really setting the mood for each chapter.
- 02 The other would be **licensing a popular music track** and remixing that to tie in with the game. This could be one way to go, especially if there are some artists that the community has really gravitated towards. The right track and artist can create more hype around the trailer.
- 03 Depending on the **celebrity outreach**, this could be potentially an opportunity to work with a well-known artist to do the music. You mentioned Grimes, and she is huge in the cyber art and gaming world. Is there someone who already has a relationship with Coinbase? Diplo, Nas, you dropped Post Malone in your deck, but just to name a few that feel right.

WITH **MUSIC**,
WE CAN GO
A FEW WAYS



06

who we are



the mill

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coinbase

THE MILL



CAPABILITIES

→ WE ARE THE MILL

We are specialists in campaign ideation, creative technology & production, partnering with brands to deliver creative impact across all media.

Our Team of original thinkers, Directors, Designers, Developers and Producers share the same ambition: **to create memorable experiences that excite and captivate your audiences.**

who_we_are_06



LISHA

→ REEL



STRATEGY
→ CREATIVE



EXPERIENTIAL
→ INTERACTIVE



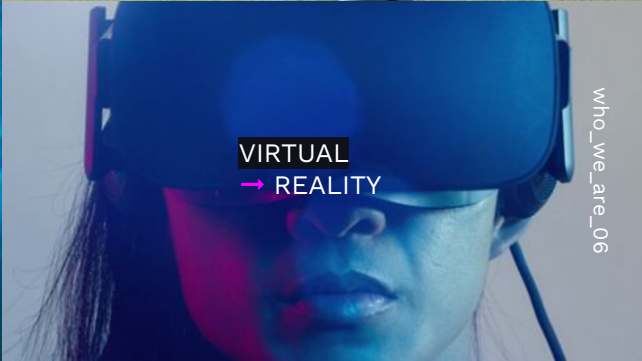
LIVE ACTION
→ PRODUCTION



AUGMENTED
→ REALITY



CREATIVE
→ TECHNOLOGY



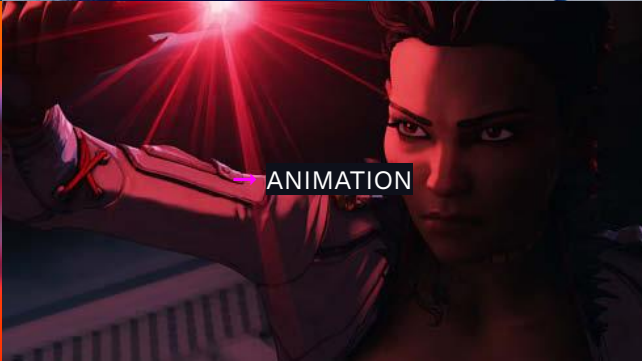
VIRTUAL
→ REALITY



CG
→ VISUAL EFFECTS



→ DESIGN



→ ANIMATION

the mill

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coinbase

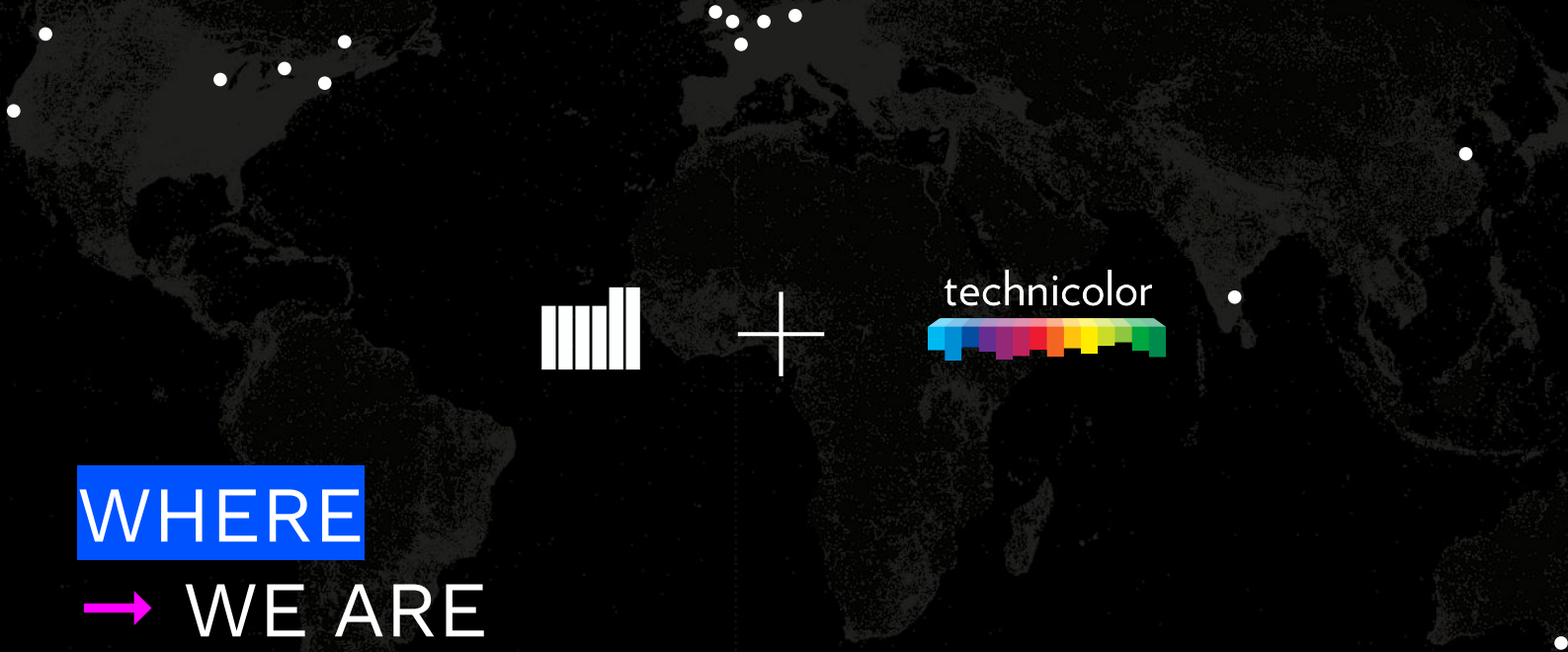
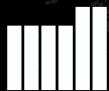
who_we_are_06

WHERE

→ WE ARE

We are global creative community, backed by the scale and artistry of Technicolor.

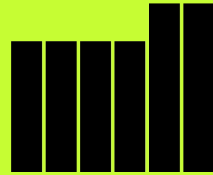
→ THE MILL IS A TECHNICOLOR COMPANY



THANK → YOU

We couldn't be more excited by the potential of this project and we have the talent to support all its wildest dreams. Of course, these are just our initial thoughts, but we look forward to developing a truly epic film with you.

💙 Lisha & The Mill



THE MILL ✖ LOS ANGELES

3233 S. LA CIENEGA BLVD.
LOS ANGELES, CA 90016
T: +1 310 566-3111