KEVIN COSTNER

WATERWORLD
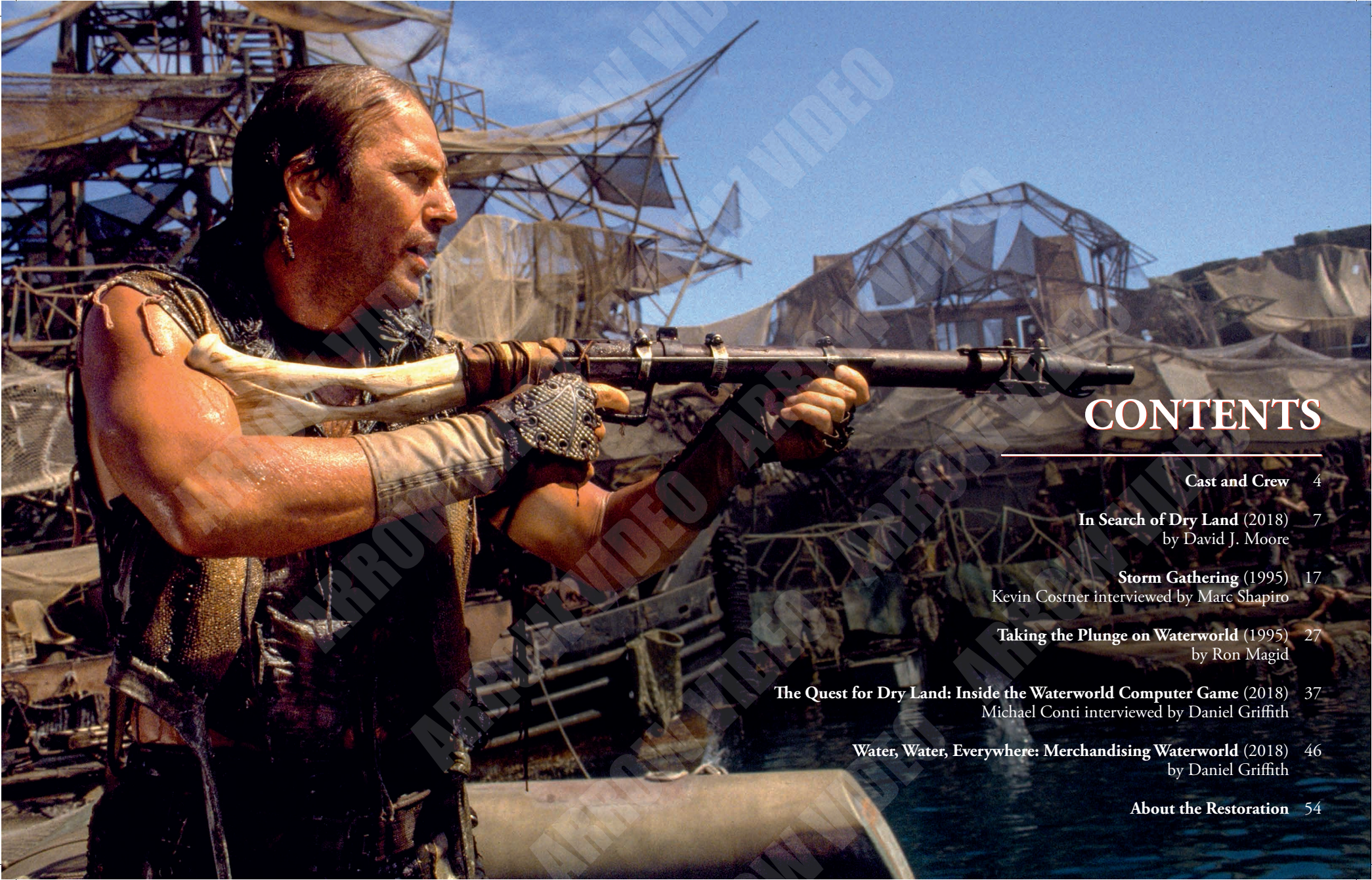
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Kevin Costner Mariner
Dennis Hopper Deacon
Jeanne Tripplehorn Helen
Tina Majorino Enola
Michael Jeter Gregor
Gerard Murphy Nord
R.D. Call Enforcer
Chaim Jeraffi Drifter # 1
Kim Coates Drifter # 2
John Fleck Doctor
Robert Joy Ledger guy
Jack Black Pilot
John Toles-Bey Plane gunner
Zitto Kazann Elder / Survivor
Zakes Mokae Priam
Sab Shimono Elder

CREW

Directed by **Kevin Reynolds**
Written by **Peter Rader** and **David Twohy**
Produced by **Charles Gordon, John Davis, Kevin Costner**
Executive Producers **Jeffrey Mueller, Andrew Licht, Ilona Herzberg**
Associate Producer **David Fulton**
Production Manager **John J. Smith**
First Assistant Directors **Alan Curtiss** and **David Sardi**
Second Assistant Director **Robert Huberman**
Director of Photography **Dean Semler** A.C.S.
Production Designer **Dennis Gassner**
Film Editor **Peter Boyle**
Music by **James Newton Howard**
Line Producer **Gene Levy**
Casting **David Rubin** C.S.A.
Casting Associate **Jakki Fink**
Costume Designer **John Bloomfield**
Stunt Coordinator **R.A. Rondell**
Kevin Costner Stunt Coordinator **Norman Howell**
Visual Effects Supervisor **Michael J. McAlister**
Art Director **David Klassen**
Set Decorator **Nancy Haigh**
Property Master **Mike Milgrom**

IN SEARCH OF DRY LAND

by David J. Moore

Dry Land: It's not just their destination. It's their *destiny*. So declares The Deacon of the Deez (played by Dennis Hopper), the one-eyed water pirate lord of the *Exxon Valdez*, to his legion of starving followers (slaves?), who have followed him on a journey to a legendary, far-off place beyond the horizon, known as Dry Land.

The polar ice caps have long ago melted, raising the ocean levels and drowning out the landmasses of Earth. No longer a broken Pangaea board of countries, the world has become a never-ending expanse of water, where straggling bands of survivors exist on massive floating atolls: metallic, manmade structures where cultures and languages have intermingled and given birth to a radical post-apocalyptic vision of desperation, hope, fear and strange new currencies. Dry Land is a mythical realm where fruit grows, where animals walk on four legs, where a man can stand straight, never swaying with the current. It is a place where the tide ends, and where a new way of life can begin and, as in any great post-apocalyptic film where characters dream of an untouched, uncontaminated place (see *Valhalla Sector, Genesis, The Source, City of Helix, Interzone, New Eden*, etc.), Dry Land is sought by two sorts of survivors: those who would protect and seek to cherish life, and those who would kill, maim, and destroy to attain it.

In such a world – in such a *water* world – there must be a prophesied individual to propel the story. And indeed there is, a "prodigal child" named Enola, played by Tina Majorino, who has no idea where she came from, but is very, very special. With a mysterious map tattooed on her back, she has been adopted by a beautiful, damaged survivor woman named Helen (Jeanne Tripplehorn), who hopes to keep her safe, but with The Deacon's "Smokers" (jet ski-riding marauders who have a never-ending supply of cigarettes provided by their overlord) everywhere, her chances of getting Enola safely out of the area are slim to none, and shrinking by the minute.

Dennis Hopper's Deacon is a quintessential end of the world villain. Sporting an eye patch, a colorful vocabulary, and enough conviction to steer a steamship, he knows his most valuable commodity – oil ("the black stuff") to fuel his tanker – is diminishing, and thus his timetable to locate Dry Land is slipping away faster than you can say "Smeat". Hopper had been on a career upswing following his bad guy turn in Jan De Bont's smash hit *Speed* the year before, and he was the ideal choice to play The Deacon of the Deez, who sees in Enola's tattoo the fulfillment of his promise to his congregation of hungry human mongrels. One might wonder what sort of leader he'd become should he ever reach Dry Land... Perhaps he'd create a society of warriors and cutthroat killers, much like Stuart Wilson's warlord Marek became in Martin Campbell's apocalyptic adventure *No Escape* (1994).

Enter the hero: A mutant outcast, known only as Mariner (Kevin Costner, in his prime), who is modeled very much in the vein of the post-apocalyptic vagabond / gunslinger / samurai archetype perfected in George Miller's original *Mad Max* trilogy (1979–1985). A man of few words who has survived in the wastelands for years on his souped-up, armed catamaran; he's selfish, and reluctant to become involved in matters beyond his control. We know how he survives: he recycles his urine, drinks it, and spares a few drops of water for his tomato plant. He is cynical and knows a secret about Dry Land; he has a rare ability to breathe underwater thanks to his gills, and it is there at the bottom of the ocean where he finds the precious dirt that everyone topside covets so much. There's no such thing as Dry Land, or so he has come to perceive, but this knowledge isn't enough to quash the hope Helen has that he will accompany them into the unknown as their protector. The Mariner agrees to help Helen and Enola for an agreed-upon term of reward, and despite his best efforts not to, he begins to care for both woman and child, leading to the inevitable sequence where he must lay his life on the line to save them from the Deacon and his Smokers. Just like Max in George Miller's original trilogy, The Mariner has a heart beating underneath the monosyllabic stoic persona. Though he may lose his sweet ride and have to start from scratch (a common theme in post-apocalyptic cinema), he has done right by humanity and shown that he is more than the sum of his (mutant) parts.

Waterworld is truly something else. In the mid-1990s when it was produced and released, cinema was just about to experience a fascinating and somewhat frustrating period of Hong Kong-infused action thanks to John Woo's crossover into Hollywood and the bigger, louder, and more expensive Simpson / Bruckheimer-type influx of studio and star-driven branding. Looking back on that era, much of the product to have come out of the machine more or less has a common denominator that connects it all together. The era of the star-driven action movie vehicle was still very much in vogue, but there's only one movie that stands apart, and quite frankly *above* its contemporaries – *Waterworld*. Heckled, derided, and panned in a vomitorium of bad press that chronicled its troubled, very costly $175 million production (the film was nastily dubbed "Fishtar" or "Kevin's Gate"), Universal's *Waterworld*, directed by Kevin Reynolds, fought a massive, uphill, against-the-current battle, and was finally released theatrically in the US in July 1995, during a summer that saw the release of such diverse blockbusters as *Batman Forever*, *Congo*, *Judge Dredd*, *First Knight*, *Babe*, *Clueless*, *Desperado*, and *Species.* With its colossal budget, complicated production and unusually long running time of 135 minutes, *Waterworld* became an easy target for cynical critics, and Costner's epic was wrongly portrayed as a massive flop and a blatant riff of *The Road Warrior* (1981).

Its lukewarm reception fell mostly on Kevin Costner's shoulders. Costner, who was at the height of his powers as a movie star, had never done anything remotely as ambitious as this before, even when he'd produced, directed, and starred in the epic western *Dances With Wolves* (1990), which had garnered him Best Picture and Best Director awards from the Academy. Clad in wet tatters, with strings tied tightly around his arms to enunciate his muscles, his Mariner took Costner's heroic image to a whole new level. This was a great fit for him. Interestingly enough, Costner returned to the wasteland as star, producer, and director (and song contributor) in a completely different end-of-the-world epic known as *The Postman* only two years later. Clearly, Costner had an interest in

the post-apocalyptic genre, and he made two highly interesting films in the category. Love them or hate them, neither *Waterworld* nor *The Postman* have ever been copied or repeated in any way, shape or form. You've gotta give them that.

Director Kevin Reynolds had come from the USC Film School, and his first short film was famously seen by Steven Spielberg, who then gave him his shot at directing his first feature, *Fandango*, released in 1985. From then on, Reynolds embarked on a hot streak of action films, often period-set adventures, the first of which was the war film set in and around a Soviet tank entitled *The Beast* (1988). Next was *Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves* (1991), a revisionist take on a well-worn tale, starring a very American-sounding Kevin Costner in a role perhaps better suited for an Englishman (or at least an actor bothering to affect an English accent). Costner is still quite dashing as Robin of Locksley, and Reynolds' flair for big-budget action adventures was fully evidenced here. His next film *Rapa Nui*, (1994), told a story of the legends of Easter Island, with full-scale tribal action scenes, and next came *Waterworld*. Later in his career, he returned to swords and horses with *The Count of Monte Cristo* (2002) and the romantic adventure drama *Tristan & Isolde* (2006). He later teamed with Costner again for the western miniseries *Hatfield & McCoys* (2012), and then directed the faith-based historical epic *Risen* (2016), which told the story of Jesus's resurrection from the point of view of a Roman soldier. Reynolds has had an incredibly stalwart career as a genre filmmaker, and with *Waterworld* smack in the middle of his body of work, it's clear that he is one of the best in the business at crafting large-scale action scenes in some of the biggest and most grandiose movies made in the pre-CGI era.

The post-apocalyptic adventure genre owes a great deal of debt to George Miller's striking and trend-setting *Mad Max* trilogy – *Mad Max* (1979), *The Road Warrior* aka *Mad Max 2*, and *Mad Max Beyond Thunderdome* (1985). These films really set the template for the post-nuke, post-whatever apocalypse movie. Up till then, some of the most celebrated movies set in a post-apocalyptic period had been Stanley Kramer's devastating *On the Beach* (1959), Ray Milland's hysteria road film *Panic in Year Zero!* (1962), Franklin J. Shaffner's radical *Planet of the Apes* (1968), Michael Anderson's dystopian apocalypse adventure *Logan's Run* (1976), or the more obscure, but equally eyebrow-raising end-of-times film *Zardoz* (1974), directed by John Boorman. Miller brought the apocalypse to a layman's level, where the steering wheel sits, and he set the engines roaring, and let the action rip. Never before had audiences witnessed the starkly dangerous and frightening outlook of crazed marauders and vehicular murder the way Miller presented it. This post-nuke world needed a renegade hero with a sawed-off shotgun, a modified vehicle, and a rage to match the madness outside.

Roger Corman, Italian genre filmmakers, and other exploitation producers from around the world churned out dozens upon dozens of *Road Warrior* rip-offs, and to this day that single film with its simple formula continues to be remade for the home video market. It's an easy pitch: a wandering hero comes upon a struggling outpost under attack by a bloodthirsty band of raiders and must choose a side: protect and aid the innocent, or join the stronger, evil side and become the warlord's highest paid enforcer. *Waterworld* followed the same approach but ballooned the budget and gave the story a bold new setting, which was vivid and beautiful. We'd seen countless desert wasteland

apocalyptic films up till then, and this was the first one (and to date, the only one) that set the *entire* story and action on water. Instead of a washed-out, dry-looking brown, rusty desert palette, we are given a lush, deep blue landscape. It remains the only one of its kind.

Virtually a swashbuckling pirate adventure movie with a soaring, upstaging (and wondrous) score by James Newton Howard, *Waterworld* resembles both a science fiction steampunk actioner and an old Errol Flynn cinematic escapade in glorious color. Its inspirations are obvious, but one wonders how it has influenced other filmmakers, namely the Father of the Apocalyptic Action Film himself, George Miller. When watching his grand return to the wasteland, the lauded *Mad Max: Fury Road* (2015), one will notice some striking and obvious similarities to *Waterworld*. Like the Deacon of the Deez, *Fury Road*'s warlord Immortan Joe (Hugh Keays-Byrne) addresses his congregation of starving and dying of thirst unfortunates, doling out water in brief increments, with promises of better things to come. Recall The Deacon tossing cans of Smeat as he preaches and reminds his followers of a former sea captain named "Saint Joe." Also, notice the way Max (played for the first time by Tom Hardy) assists (against his better judgment) a group of women who are trying to find The Green Place, a safe haven that exists only in memory and fables. Immortan Joe's cancer-ridden War Boys resemble The Deacon's Smokers in more ways than one. Even the ending of *Fury Road* with its iconic dénouement as Max looks up to Furiosa (played by Charlize Theron) is oddly reminiscent of the final moments between The Mariner and Helen in *Waterworld*. I'm not denying the power of *Fury Road*, but it's very curious how these two films share themes and significant moments. In the way that *The Road Warrior* and *Mad Max Beyond Thunderdome* helped inspire and propel an entire genre – and *Waterworld* specifically – I would also propose that Miller was inspired, perhaps even subconsciously, by *Waterworld*.

Waterworld's opening narration explains that, "The polar ice caps have melted, covering the earth with water. Those who survived have adapted, to a new world." Long before Al Gore conceived *An Inconvenient Truth* (2006) or James Cameron created *Avatar* (2009), *Waterworld* was spinning an environmentally-conscious agenda… and it was mocked for it. You think *Waterworld* is science fiction? Why don't we just call it science *fact*... with mutants? And jet skis? Okay, let's not do that just yet, but let's face it, this movie was onto something *way* ahead of its time. You can't deny it… One day in the future when we're all trying to recycle our pee and dreaming of a place called Dry Land, some sunbaked crazy guy muttering to himself will find this gorgeous Blu-ray special edition of *Waterworld* washed up in a bottle… He'll look at it and have no idea what the hell it is, but he'll prize it like *paper* or *dirti,* and get a bundle for it. Just wait…

Though Universal never made a sequel to *Waterworld*, their theme parks still host a live *Waterworld* stunt show. As of this writing (September 2018), Universal Studios Hollywood, Japan, and Singapore continue to have their *Waterworld* spectacle on daily rotation for guests. It's a nice reminder that a nearly 25-year-old film, which was never franchised or rebooted, is still being celebrated as a singular entity that continues to entertain an audience worldwide.

David J. Moore is the author of **World Gone Wild: A Survivor's Guide to Post-Apocalyptic Movies** *and* **The Good, the Tough, and the Deadly: Action Movies and Stars.** *He also works as a freelance film journalist and publicist.*

STORM GATHERING:
AN INTERVIEW WITH KEVIN COSTNER

by Marc Shapiro

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"Let me set the record straight," chuckles Kevin Costner during a conversation in a Los Angeles hotel room two weeks before his futuristic epic, *Waterworld*, opens. "We did not build an airport landing strip in the middle of the water. I did not cut the film to feature myself in vanity shots. I did not computer-enhance my hair and the gills do not resemble a woman's private parts."

Costner wants to set the record straight about *Waterworld*. The actor is more than willing to address the truth, good or bad, and his much-discussed futuristic epic's ultimate shortcomings. But the actor is also tired. The daunting task of helping sell *Waterworld* all over the world is beginning to show in tired eyes, a slowed-down speech pattern and overall weariness of appearance. But the grind has manifested itself in a forthright, candid Costner who is more than willing to face the controversy that has thrust the actor and the film into the eye of a speculative hurricane.

"This is probably not the greatest story ever told, but it's a pretty good action picture," he says. "I think it's a pretty good story and I think we've made some advances in the action movie genre. I know where the movie's not perfect, but I also know where *Waterworld* delivers and I'm happy about that."

Costner has danced around the fringes of action films with the sweeping *Dances With Wolves* [1990], *Silverado* [1985], *The Untouchables* [1987] and *Wyatt Earp* [1994], but has never really treaded turf populated by the likes of Arnold Schwarzenegger, Mel Gibson and Bruce Willis. "I did this movie because I wanted to do a summer movie. I wanted to do something thing that nobody could mistake for *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf* [1962/66]. I just want a movie that people weren't going to scrutinize too much. But I also knew that I didn't want to make the typical action movie that relies on the one-liners and jokes. You know how these things work; something big happens then somebody has something cute to say about it. I didn't want a movie without humor, but I wanted the humor to come out of my character's toughness and the outrageousness of his situation. I knew going in that approach would make the film a much tougher movie for audiences to watch, but I felt it was worth the risk of doing something different."

Merman's Woes

Essential to "doing something different" was painting Costner's mysterious Mariner as a somewhat ruthless bastard for most of the movie. "I don't so much think of him as a bastard as I think of him as a bear in a cage with a sign over his head that says, 'Don't play with me.' If you set up a character like that and don't follow through, then you're winking at the audience and saying, 'I'm a tough guy, but I'm not really a tough guy.' I believe you have to be consistent with your behavior."

At one point in the film, the Mariner makes Costner's point by smacking Jeanne Tripplehorn in the head with an oar. "He just comes out and bangs her in the head, laughs Costner. "The audience laughs, because this guy is really tough. But I'm hoping that people get the fact that it isn't a gratuitous hit. He hit her because she was holding a gun on him. It would have been easy to have ended the scene where the Mariner drops the sail on her and not have him come across as being brutal. But that wouldn't have been consistent. The generosity in the character was that he didn't throw her overboard or kill her." Costner also liked the moments with the child Enola (Tina Majorino). "There's a lot of comedy in those sequences. When all the characters get together, it's like a storm gathering."

But the moments that stick out uppermost in Costner's mind were those when his life was quite literally in danger. "And there were many of those moments, too many for my money, and a lot of those were my fault. As a producer, I made a lot of judgment calls for scheduling. There were situations where I knew if we didn't get certain stunts done, we would have to come back to them." He recalls that numerous stunts were one-take events which required Costner, rather than his stunt double, to take center stage. "There were at least 10 of those stunts, and the problem was that there was this natural danger. It was a situation where if something went wrong, then it was all over. I'm not being overly dramatic. That's just the way it was. There was one sequence where I was strapped to the top of my boat's mast that went fine – until the cameras cut. Everybody quit the scene, but the boat kept going out to sea and it took about 20 minutes for them to catch up with me. I couldn't get down and the stunt people couldn't get up to me. It was a bad deal that could have been the end of me."

"One of the biggest mistakes we made was starting this movie without a completed script." Costner offers by way of confession. "This is not a standard movie for me. There was money all over the place. From a fiscal point-of-view, I felt I knew how to produce this movie. Had this movie been totally in my camp, this movie wouldn't have started when it started and it would have been managed differently."

Costner claims that *Waterworld* was always going to be an expensive movie, regardless of the rumor mill, and that the original budget was approximately $135 million. "But the studio [Universal] was afraid to come out and say they were green-lighting a movie with a budget over $100 million, so they said the original budget was only $65 million. The result was that the public thought that

Waterworld was over budget and behind schedule even before we shot a foot of film, and I don't think that was fair."

"The script didn't become unwieldy, in terms of what we were trying to accomplish," Costner continues with an air of diplomacy in his voice. "But the vision changed. How a director works is how a film gets made and, on *Waterworld*, a lot of the overages [budget excesses] can be attributed to our director." The actor is obviously uncomfortable with the mention of director Kevin Reynolds – longtime friend and director of Costner's *Fandango* [1985] and *Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves* [1991] – who once again went at loggerheads with Costner and left the project shortly after turning in his cut of the film.

"Kevin and I just don't have it anymore," Costner sighs. "I felt for a long time that we were a very effective team but, as it turns out, we're not. I guess it was just hard for me to let go."

Costner turns even more reflective in commenting on the harsh treatment *Waterworld* received from some of the press during its making. "The film is done and I think it's a pretty good film. It would be real easy to just thumb my nose at the entire media, but I won't do that because I don't admire that kind of behavior. I had my pound of flesh taken by many people, and there have been a lot of cynical and hurtful things that have been said about both the film and myself. It would be easy to group all the media together and blame what has been happening to me on all of you, but I won't do that because that would make me a bigot, and that's not how I want to be perceived. I've never liked the idea of the press telling me what to think and, unfortunately, I think on this film, the press has done just that. I don't know how this tidal wave of often false information is going to play on the psyche of the film audience. Hopefully, the film will be taken on its own merit.

Water Wings

Bad press on *Waterworld* wasn't something that Costner needed. His last major film, *Wyatt Earp*, was a box-office failure, and neither *The War* [1994] nor *A Perfect World* [1993] lit the lights. The actor has a good laugh at the Hollywood "three strikes and you're out" benchmark. "I guess that means if *Waterworld* is a failure, then I'm going to jail. I loved *Wyatt Earp*. It was a good movie. *A Perfect World* didn't make a lot of money, but it did make its cost back. *The War* was a very good film. If you brought me those three scripts today, I would still do them in a minute. I don't think my career is in the balance with *Waterworld*. People are still wanting to hire me and, for somebody who has supposedly had all these flops, there are a lot of people in this town who would kill to have my career." The actor concedes that he does not have "a real sense of box office" when he decides on a particular project. "I think I have a sense of story and character. I would much rather know in my heart that something is going to be a pretty good movie. That's where my focus is, and most people feel the same way."

Costner's *Waterworld* turmoil was matched in the past year by the end of his 16-year marriage. Personally and professionally, the by-and-large impression of Costner is that things are kind of rocky. In a sense, he agrees. "Personally, I wish I was in a different place. Professionally, I feel pretty

good. I can work with who I want to work with. I can usually make the films I want to make. That's a pretty good place to be. I have the ability to make choices above and beyond what a lot of people have. I'm able to reinvent my life if I choose to. I'm in a very enviable place that way. But I don't think anybody should envy my life." The actor brings the conversation back around to *Waterworld*. "It's a flawed work, just like every movie I've done, but it's also the kind of movie that, hopefully, people won't mind having all their questions answered. People will go see *Waterworld* because they want to know what's going to happen. They're going to be willing to go into this world and accept its vocabulary and events. This isn't something people are going to spend a lot of time intellectualizing about. This is not a plot movie. This is a journey movie that's inviting people along for the ride."

"You know, for better or worse, I'm a storyteller," Kevin Costner concludes, "and because of my track record, I get the heat, whether the story works or not. Many people worked on *Waterworld*, and any success this film has is their success. But ultimately, it all still comes down to me. I don't understand why, and I don't necessarily think I deserve that kind of attention. For me, it's a lot of weight to carry around."

STEVE BURG 11/15/93

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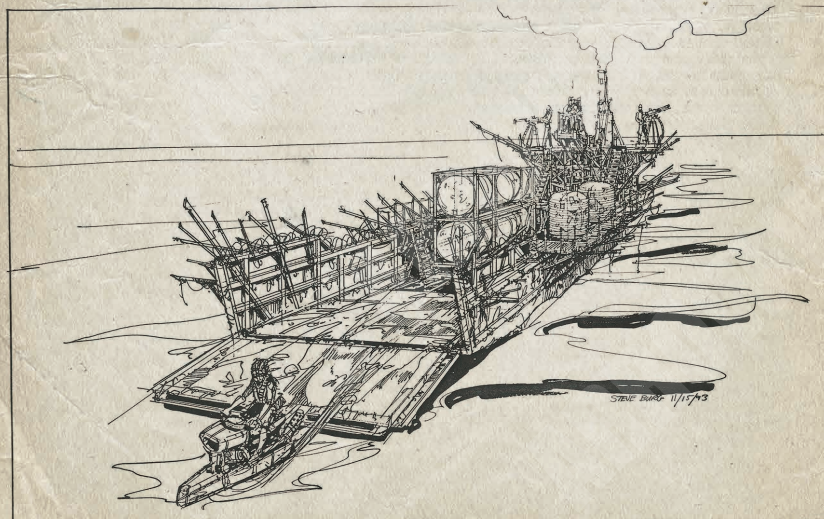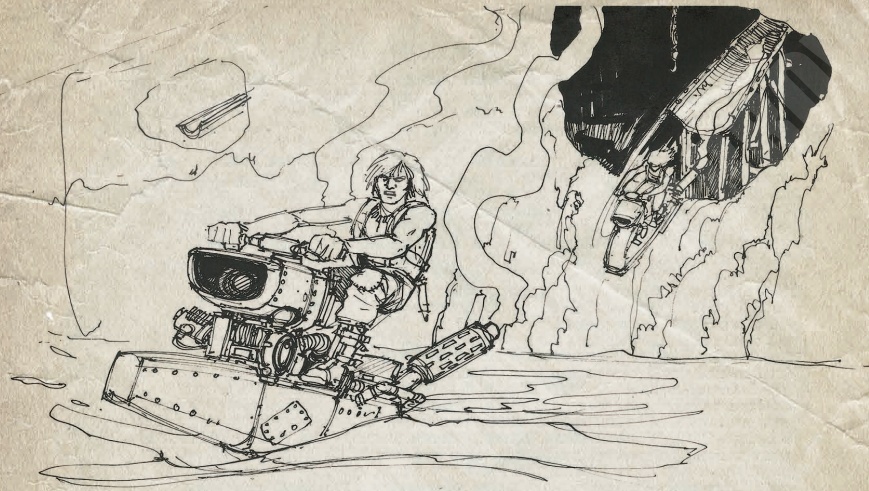
TAKING THE PLUNGE ON WATERWORLD

by Ron Magid

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Outer space has been deemed the final frontier, but we know more about the cosmos than we do about inner space: the oceans of our own Earth represent virtually the last opportunity on this planet to explore the unknown. In many ways, the depths of the waters covering 60 percent of our world are more fascinating than the far reaches of the solar system. Why then, in the history of the cinema, have only a handful of films ever dared to journey into this realm? Because it's extremely difficult to shoot on water, to work with water, and, heaven forbid, create effects on water. Since *Waterworld* proposed to deep-six our entire planet, it should come as no surprise that it became the most expensive movie ever made.

Michael McAlister, the visual effects supervisor on Universal's controversial megaproduction, first confronted the problems inherent in mixing water and effects while working with Dennis Muren as chief effects cameraman on *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom* [1984] at Industrial Light & Magic. While at ILM, McAlister proved himself indispensable, the man who could figure out virtually any mechanical effects problem from the speeder bike chase of *Return of the Jedi* [1983] to the mine chase of *Temple of Doom* (he actually modified the Nikon still camera that rode on the miniature mine track in that sequence). In recent years, McAlister's effects filmography has ranged from the spectacular (*Die Hard 2* [1990]) to the elegant (*The Hudsucker Proxy* [1994]) to the invisible (*Wrestling Ernest Hemingway* [1993]). So what prepared him for the effects tsunami he was about to face on *Waterworld*? "Just my entire career!" he quips.

Like most effects artists, McAlister has moved away from the confining equipment-intensive approaches of motion control and towards the freedom of digital solutions. "The thing that most excited me about working on *Waterworld* was that it was really the first opportunity to deal with what has been historically a very formidable problem, miniatures in water, using the new digital tools. The computer has given us a lot more freedom to be creative on the set - there's virtually nothing we can't do anymore."

The approach McAlister formulated towards *Waterworld*'s monumental effects challenges would put that adage to the test. McAlister and visual effects producer Kimberly Nelson originally distributed some half-dozen unique effects sequences among three effects houses. Specific CG characters and objects were assigned to digital experts Rhythm and Hues and Boss Film. The latter

facility created a CG balloon hovering over the gondola piloted by Gregor, the scientist/inventor played by Michael Jeter. Rhythm and Hues handled a similar effect, creating a CG spinnaker box kite that deploys from the Mariner's trimaran - a threehulled catamaran - so he can escape from his enemies. McAlister also chose Rhythm and Hues to handle all of Waterworks 3-D character generation, including denizens of the deep like the Tracker Sharks, which the film's villain unleashes to locate the Mariner after his escape in the kite. McAlister found the Tracker Sharks (later cut from the film) more problematic than the fictitious Whalefin, an unpleasant cross between a whale and a shark, which the Mariner catches for dinner! But the bulk of the work was awarded to Cinesite, which had previously handled such diverse tasks as digitally restoring Disney's animated classic *Snow White* [1937] and creating period effects for Woody Allen's *Bullets Over Broadway* [1994].

But as the *Waterworld* production shot and shot and shot on the atoll set they'd built on the ocean off Hawaii, the number of effects skyrocketed from a modest preproduction estimate of 160 to a staggering final total exceeding 400 shots, which necessitated bringing in many more effects houses to process all the work. "We had to go to 10 or 11 facilities just to get the show done," McAlister admits. "There's no way I could have done this movie without digital power and multiple facilities. Part of the challenge of *Waterworld*, above and beyond all the creative and technical aspects, was just getting the job done."

The first major hurdle for McAlister and company to overcome had to do with creating villain Dennis Hopper's hideout aboard the infamous *Exxon Valdez* supertanker. The 600-foot stem-to-stern set was itself a miniature (the real tanker measures 900') and was constructed *outdoors* in Southern California's City of Commerce. With mountains and telephone poles clearly visible in the background, handling what Cinesite's crew called "sky-garbage removal" stress-tested their digital technology. "We didn't bother to put up any screens - nothing," McAllister insists. "After the fact, we took out all evidence of the City of Commerce; you'll believe that the entire third act of *Waterworld* was filmed someplace completely different."

Creating the CG water surrounding the land-locked Valdez set and stretching to the horizon required a collaboration between Jerry Tessendorf of Arete, the company that wrote the computer code for water, and Cinesite digital effects supervisor Jamie Price and senior digital effects supervisor Brad Kuehn. "There's a lot of things that go into water, certain repetitious patterns in the waves, which at first I didn't like," says Kuehn. "Then I realized that water's more boring-looking than I thought!"

Defining the final look of the ocean took several months. And since nothing was ever easy on *Waterworld*, those shots of the 600' set surrounded by CG water had to intercut exactly with longer shots of a 1/8-scale model of the Valdez surrounded by real water plates! The Valdez miniature constructed by Mark Stetson, Bob Spurlock and crew at Stetson Visual Services measured 110' from stem to stern, which led Stetson to observe that had it been seaworthy, the Valdez model would've been classified as a ship, not a boat!

Ironically, after completing *Waterworld*'s miniatures, Stetson Visual Services closed their doors forever. As proof that there is life after *Waterworld*, Mark Stetson has landed at Digital Domain as a

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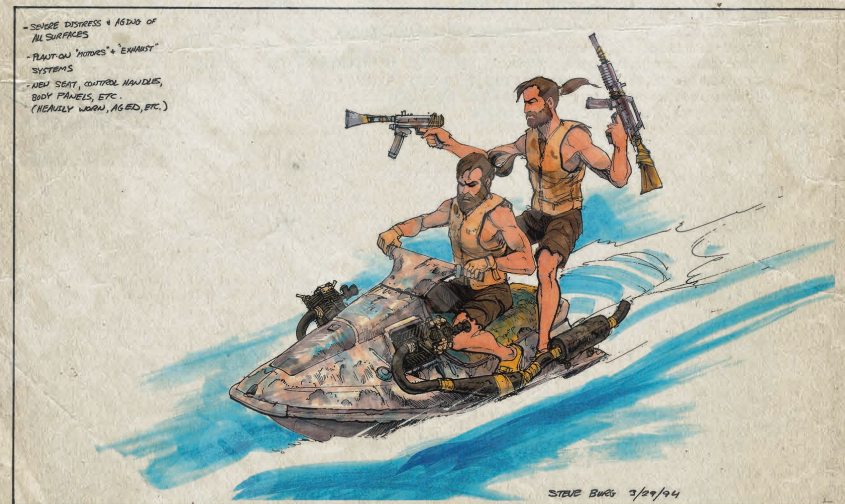
SMOKERS - JETSKI MODIFICATIONS

visual effects supervisor. No doubt he's prepared for anything after assisting McAlister in creating the film's most challenging effects sequence, in which the Mariner tows a diving bell containing Jeanne Tripplehorn through the submerged remains of Denver, Colorado.

Prior to creating the scene, McAlister studied books on the *Titanic* and other naval disasters, as well as underwater footage shot by Stetson, whose company also constructed a huge miniature depicting the undersea wreckage. "The whole point of the city," McAlister relates, "was to illustrate what had happened to the human race – to convey the desperation that occurred as the [people had moved] higher and higher above ground, building abodes on top of rooftops as the water level rose. We wanted to show the decay – it's a ghost town." Amidst the remains of Denver's downtown district and shattered ski-lifts, the modelmakers also planted dozens of homages to past aquatic film adventures including the sunken boat Orca from *Jaws* [1975] and a submersible from *The Abyss* [1989].

To make the heroes' tour of the undersea city haunting, romantic and believable, McAlister insisted that the actors really had to be swimming in water with the city around them. Aside from building a full-sized re-creation of Denver and submerging it, McAlister knew of only one way to get the shots he wanted: filming Costner towing Tripplehorn in the diving bell against a massive underwater bluescreen. Great idea, but the hitch was that it had never been done before. For a shot in *The Abyss*, director James Cameron had filmed Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio in close-up, with a bluescreen behind a windowed tank, but McAlister thought that would prove too confining for the scope he had in mind. "I wanted a 20' x 30' bluescreen down there," McAlister explains. "Where were we going to find a windowed tank that could hold 30 feet of water? I knew we had to film this scene underwater as opposed to in a smoky soundstage because of the lighting and the amount of minutiae in the water [required to make] it seem as if they were actually swimming through a scene, as opposed to floating through air. And there was no backup plan! There was no way to test it except to go do it and spend a lot of money with the principal actors shooting underwater. If it had failed, our only option would have been to quietly disappear from the planet and not leave any forwarding address!"

Fortunately, McAlister was working with Brad Kuehn, who had some unorthodox ideas of his own about shooting underwater bluescreen, especially in relation to particles in the water. "I was there when Mike shot some motion tests at USC's pool with a bluescreen underneath the water," Kuehn recalls. "We were both concerned about this dirty water in the pool contaminating the blue, but then we both got the idea that the dirty water might help us more than hurt us, because having these particles moving around the Mariner really gave us a sense of the volume of water this guy's existing in.

"So we told Mike, 'When you shoot this underwater bluescreen, contaminate the water–we think it'll work!'" Kuehn laughs. "It was a challenge, but we felt that with digital technology today, we had all the tools to make the Mariner look as if he were swimming through this underwater city. To make it look submerged, Stetson actually shot dry-for-wet with two passes of clean background plate and a smoke pass."

"Technically and creatively, that was the biggest leap I had to make in terms of the digital technology on *Waterworld*," McAlister says. McAlister knew that lighting was a key cue in creating the underwater look. In front of the underwater bluescreen, Costner carried a bare lightbulb (which was later made to look like a flare with the help of CG). "The flare was a design decision about where the lighting in the city was going to come from," McAlister relates. "As it turned out, it didn't serve as the key light source, but it does help us feel as if we're underwater because as the Mariner swims away, these flares get less and less red, which adds a certain element of reality. If you go underwater with a real camera, you see 30' in front of your face. If you go down 600', which is where our city's supposed to be, there is no light, so we had to invent a whole look that wasn't real, but looked real and still gave us enough visibility."

At Cinesite, Kuehn, Price and company combined Stetson's miniature passes with McAlister's underwater bluescreen footage, composed by cinematographer Dean Semler, ACS and photographed by underwater expert Pete Romano from Hydroflex. "After we got Costner in the scene and saw how that worked, we augmented it with CG minutiae to add layers and depth," Kuehn says. "We then added the Mariner's CG flares and layers of CG bubbles coming off the flares."

Like everything in *Waterworld*, it seems, this sequence was a make-or-break moment. "Yeah," McAlister sighs, "it had to work. Fortunately, we made some pretty good choices in the beginning, testing as much as we could, and we were able to get guys like Brad at Cinesite in line with us to say, 'Yeah, we think we can do it – we don't know how yet but we'll do it.' And then we just had to go for it, because otherwise the technology and the art of the industry never advances. There were some people out there who thought I was crazy, friends who shook their heads and said, 'I'm glad it's you and not me,' but that's what makes it fun. If you don't hang it out on the edge once in a while, you get bored."
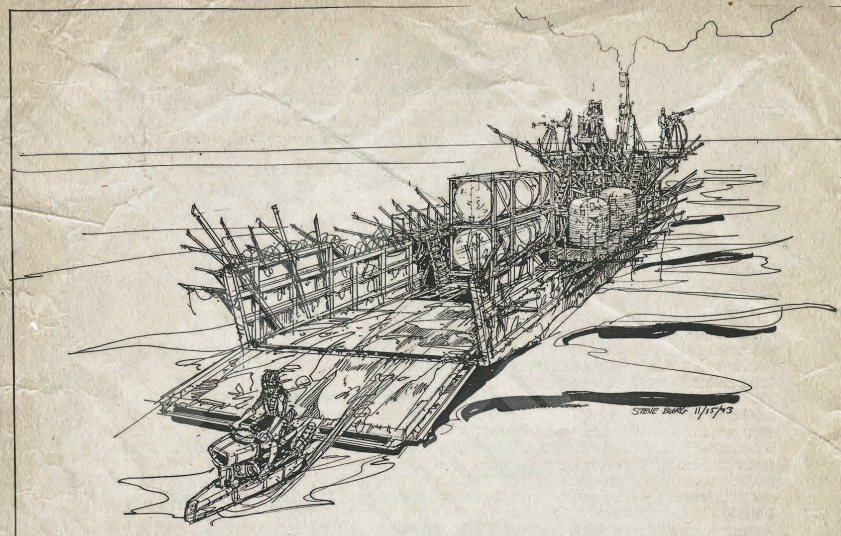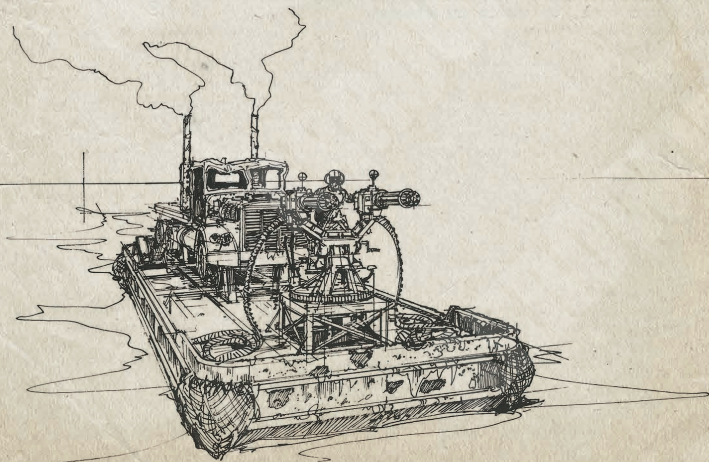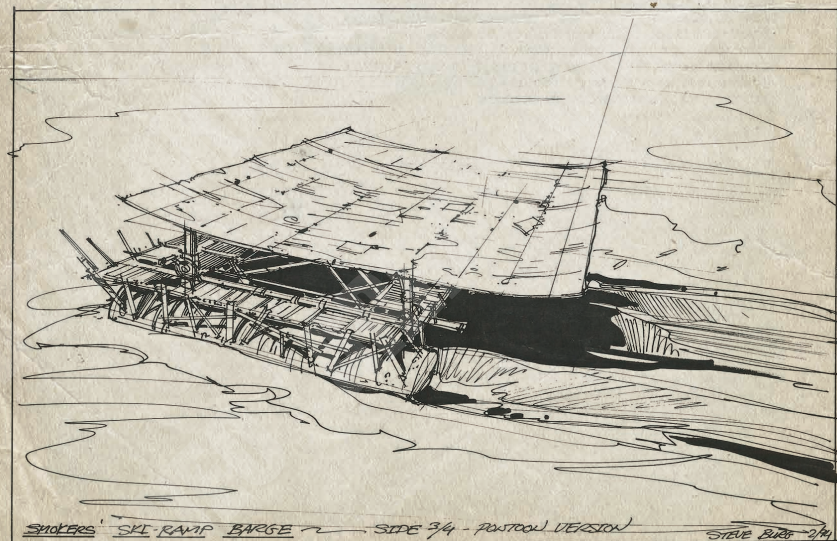
WATERWORLD™
The Quest For Dry Land
REAL-TIME *Interplay* STRATEGY/COMBAT
BY GAMERS. FOR GAMERS.™

TEEN
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AGES 13+
CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB

THE QUEST FOR DRY LAND:
INSIDE THE WATERWORLD COMPUTER GAME

by Daniel Griffith

The future… Well, the future according to the early 1990s when, thanks to the arrival of CD-ROM, the PC gaming industry embraced the use of live-action video and more dynamic gameplay. In this halcyon era, game designers and programmers were finally freed from the data limitations of the floppy disc. With the colossal amounts of storage space (650MB) afforded by the CD-ROM format, now the only limit left for the gaming industry was its imagination (and possibly, its wallet).

Based on the success of LucasArts' first CD-ROM release, *Star Wars: Rebel Assault* (1993), Interplay Productions set about building on the model of that game's live-action sequences and pre-rendered computer-generated backgrounds to produce a video game adaptation of Universal Pictures' 1995 summer blockbuster, *Waterworld*. The game, *Waterworld: The Quest for Dry Land* (1997), was a real-time strategy adventure in which the main character (War Chief) navigates through 20 missions of varying difficulty. While commanding a legion of warriors, the player executes attacks on enemy atolls using jet-skis, assault craft, and rocket barges. Here, Ballyhoo Motion Pictures documentarian Daniel Griffith discusses the production and release of the *Waterworld* PC game with Michael Conti, who produced and directed three live-action games for the computer game publisher Interplay (*Sin City Enhanced* [1993], *Waterworld: The Quest for Dry Land*, and the unreleased *Cyberhood*).

DANIEL GRIFFITH: In the mid-1990s, the PC gaming industry made a shift from graphically-based storytelling to using live-action video. How did Interplay Productions adapt to this emerging trend, and when did you become involved with the company?

MICHAEL CONTI: Well, there was a period of about three years where all the companies that were prominent in the CD-ROM gaming field were bringing in producers, directors, and actors to film live-action footage. These live-action sequences were then brought into the gameplay. I was hired by Interplay as a producer, but what I really wanted to do is direct. The only way I could do that was to come in as a producer and hire myself to be the director. The work I had done prior to that was for renowned B-movie filmmaker Roger Corman, so I had enough experience working in live-action. Interplay tossed me into a lion's den of programmers and we began developing specific games featuring these live-action interstitials. I had just completed work on the multimedia version of *Sim City*, which included live-action interactions with principal characters, such as the Mayor, the police chief, etc. The *Waterworld* project came out of that progression of bringing live-action into the gaming arena.

DG: Video games based upon motion pictures date back to early arcade consoles. By the mid-1990s, every gaming platform had experimented with film and television adaptations. When was Interplay approached by Universal Pictures to develop a tie-in PC game based on the film?

MC: First of all, Interplay already had the license to create a game based on *Star Trek: The Original Series* (1966-1969). So, they were already familiar with the process of dealing with a major motion picture studio, as well as bringing in celebrity actors, like William Shatner, to do voice acting for these role-playing games. During this time, the studios were investing in certain game companies. Universal Pictures made an investment in Interplay and that gave us the connection to adapt *Waterworld* into a game.

DG: Do you recall what stage the production of the film *Waterworld* was in when Interplay started work on the game?

MC: The film was close to completion when we began development of the game. Interplay hired the British video game developer, Intelligent Games, who were kind of the 'author' of the project. They had a core game model that was already structured, so the *Waterworld* material was branded on top of the that. All the art that was based on the film was placed into that existing template. Then the designers would make a determination regarding how, under various stress levels, the live-action characters would react to you (the player). These would be triggers within the game. Those reactions are all defined on paper based upon the architecture they were using for the game. In a sense, we were given these scenarios to go film.

DG: Describe your process of replicating the environments and character of the film.

MC: One of the people I brought on to help me write the segments had just finished working for Kevin [Costner] on the development side of *Waterworld*. So I hired him to make sure that the characters we were using, and their language, were authentic to the depiction in the actual movie. From there, we laid out the groundwork for the physical production. We knew we were going to use clips from *Waterworld*, and we knew we were going to be recreating portions of the film to match the game's narrative. We assumed we couldn't get the top-of-the-line actors, so we would be using the second-tier cast members, like R.D. Call, who would be reprising his role as the Enforcer.

DG: Speaking of the cast, why didn't Michael Jeter return to reprise the role of Gregor? He was replaced by John Fleck, who had a background character role in the original film.

MC: If I recall correctly, Michael Jeter wasn't available on the dates we were shooting, so we had to cast an alternative that resembled him.

DG: What kind of support did you receive from Universal Pictures when recreating the environment of the film?

MC: Interplay was working closely with the newly-formed Universal Interactive Studios, so they were our direct link to the studio. They helped us with everything we needed. Because the film was so recent, we had access to the costumes, the props, and a limited number of set pieces. I fondly remember going over to Universal Studios and selecting the set pieces, which we then transported over to the studio we used and re-staged. I was also lucky enough to have a few crew members on our show that worked on *Waterworld*, specifically in the props and wardrobe department.

DG: Describe the method in which you captured these sequences for their insertion into the game. Were there any technological limitations?

MC: At the time, the way the videos played within the game was software-based. So, there was no hardware, like a graphics card or an encoder, that was presenting the individual movie. Therefore, we were kind of limited in terms of how we could film the sequences. Also, all of the new material was shot on professional, broadcast-quality video, not film. Our budget was only around $40,000

for 20-22 minutes' worth of footage. In the beginning, we did a lot of testing with the color palette to make sure the images weren't too splotchy. We also couldn't move the camera too quickly because it would be hard for the video playback to catch up. So a lot of the action would take place within the frame. Those were some of the limitations at the time.

DG: What was the next stage in the process after you wrapped principal photography on the inserts?

MC: Once production was completed, I went through hours of B-roll material from *Waterworld*, including material that was never used [some of which would resurface in the Ulysses Cut of the film]. Then, I worked with a color corrector to match the video footage we shot on the stage with the 35mm film clips from the motion picture. We really tried to make it play as smooth as possible. An example of that would be the sequences that were filmed on the water, which is what led to the enormous cost of the movie in the first place. We couldn't do that, so we shot those sequences on the soundstage. To show reflections from the water, we had a grip in the corner with cardboard and aluminum foil bouncing the light around to create this shimmering effect. From there, the filmed sequences were dropped into the game itself. Pretty simple.

DG: Universal Pictures released *Waterworld* in the summer of 1995, but the PC game didn't hit the shelves until 1997. What was the delay?

MC: The movie came out in theaters while the game was still in development, and didn't do as well as they projected. Finally, when the game arrived, there wasn't as much interest in the game. But there is often a big lag behind the release of the movie and the release of the game.

DG: What did you think of the actual film, *Waterworld*?

MC: (Laughing) What did I think of the film itself? You know, I teach at a community college now and one of the exercises we do is take a certain genre of film and cut a trailer for it in an opposite genre. For instance, we take *Mary Poppins* and turn it into a horror film. Well, we took *Waterworld* and edited a trailer which advertised it as a comedy. Watching it with that age group, the movie does not hold up well.

DG: Looking back, how would you describe your experience working on *Waterworld: The Quest for Dry Land*?

MC: In those days, I had a real enthusiasm for filming. Going from being a production assistant for Roger Corman, then suddenly working my way up to producer/director on a project with Universal Studios, it was pretty amazing. Obviously, these were pretty heady times for all of us, and we really felt like we had to do the best possible job we could.

Daniel Griffith is a documentary filmmaker specializing in motion picture and television history. He is the owner of Ballyhoo Motion Pictures.
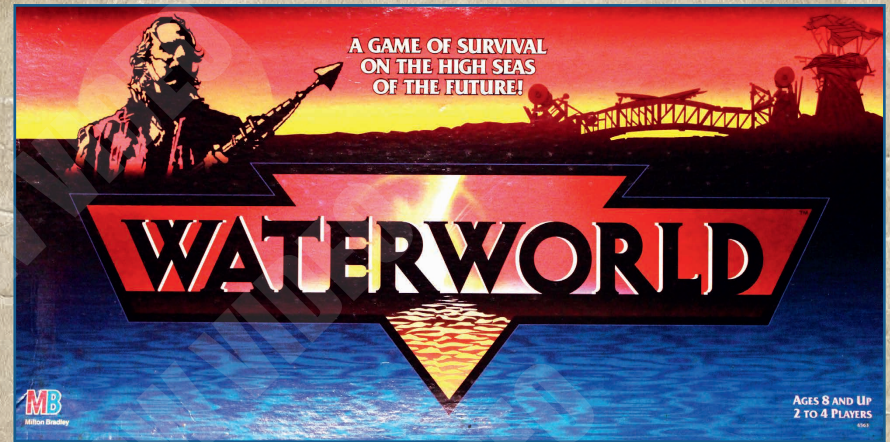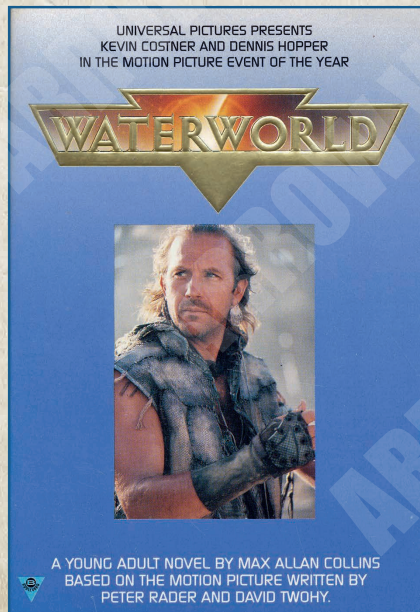
WATER, WATER, EVERYWHERE:
MERCHANDISING WATERWORLD

by Daniel Griffith

The world of *Waterworld* expanded beyond the realms of films and video games. Here we present the full suite of other merchandising tie-ins, which include novelizations, board games, comics and more…

THE NOVEL
The novelization was written by American mystery writer Max Allan Collins, most well-known for the *Road to Perdition* series of graphic novels and the *Dick Tracy* newspaper strips. Collins slowly developed a reputation as a dependable movie tie-in author in the early 1990s, beginning with his adaptation of Clint Eastwood's *In the Line of Fire* (1993). The premise of the *Waterworld* novelization was taken from an early draft of the script (likely, after screenwriter David Twohy was brought in, but before the script was altered on location). The novel contains several scenes that did not make it to the film and was modeled more after Homer's *Odyssey*.

UNIVERSAL PICTURES PRESENTS
KEVIN COSTNER AND DENNIS HOPPER
IN THE MOTION PICTURE EVENT OF THE YEAR

A YOUNG ADULT NOVEL BY MAX ALLAN COLLINS
BASED ON THE MOTION PICTURE WRITTEN BY
PETER RADER AND DAVID TWOHY.

A GAME OF SURVIVAL
ON THE HIGH SEAS
OF THE FUTURE!

AGES 8 AND UP
2 TO 4 PLAYERS

Sink the Deez and find land!

BOARD GAME
A tie-in board game was developed by Milton Bradley in 1995 to coincide with the film's theatrical release. The objective of *Waterworld: A Family Board Game of Survival* was simple: be the first player to discover Dry Land. This is accomplished by collecting various resource cards for guns, supplies, etc. Along the way, players must attack and destroy the Deez, gain control of the in-game compass, and steal resources from their opponents.

ACTION FIGURES

By the mid-1990s, Kenner Toys was desperately looking for franchise opportunities that would replicate the success they had in the late 70s and early 80s with the original *Star Wars* trilogy (1977-1983). In 1995, they entered a deal with Universal to create an exciting toy line for *Waterworld*. The company manufactured eight figures based upon characters from the film, as well as one large vehicle (the Trimaran). Of course, four of the eight figures were different renditions of Kevin Costner's character, The Mariner. Unfortunately, the films lackluster box-office performance in the United States impacted Kenner's ability to successfully promote the toy line. As a result, the figures found their way into discount dump bins by the end of summer.

COLLECTABLE CARDS

In the Summer of 1995, the bubble gum magnate turned trading card giant, Fleer, manufactured a series of non-sport collectable cards for *Waterworld*. The 150-card series not only included scenes from the film, but they also featured behind the scenes photographs and crew information.

THE ACTION ADVENTURE MOVIE EVENT OF SUMMER '95

WATERWORLD

Universal Pictures creates a world unlike anything you've ever imagined presenting an epic tale of good versus evil; a ruthless villain and a courageous hero for all times.

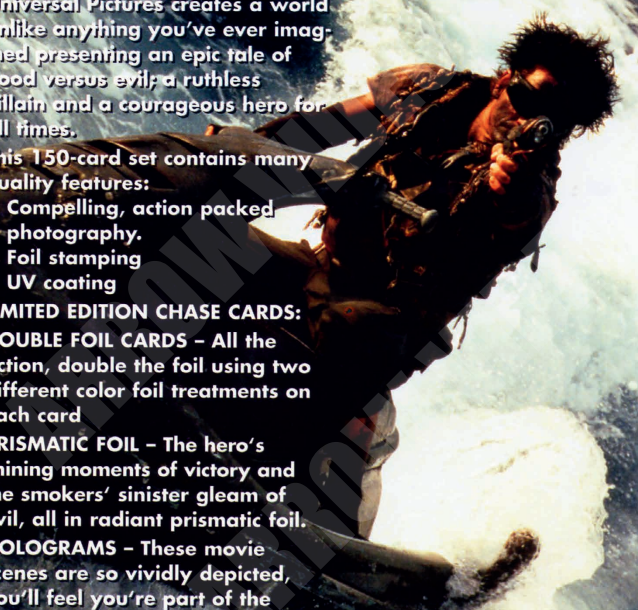This 150-card set contains many quality features:
- Compelling, action packed photography.
- Foil stamping
- UV coating

LIMITED EDITION CHASE CARDS:

DOUBLE FOIL CARDS – All the action, double the foil using two different color foil treatments on each card

PRISMATIC FOIL – The hero's shining moments of victory and the smokers' sinister gleam of evil, all in radiant prismatic foil.

HOLOGRAMS – These movie scenes are so vividly depicted, you'll feel you're part of the action.

WATERWORLD TM & © 1995 Universal City Studios, Inc. All Rights Reserved. Licensed by MCA/Universal Merchandising, Inc. Dist. by Fleer Corp.

WATERWORLD
FLEER ULTRA

SETS SAIL JULY '95

COMIC BOOKS

In 1997, independent publisher Acclaim Comics entered a licensing deal with MCA/Universal to create a series of adventure comics based on the film, entitled *Waterworld: Children of Leviathan*. While the series was limited to only four issues, it did answer several questions that the film did not, including how the world became flooded. The comic also explored the origin story of the Mariner. The series was written by Christopher Golden and Tom Sniegoski and featured artwork by Kevin Kobasic and Barbara Kaalberg.
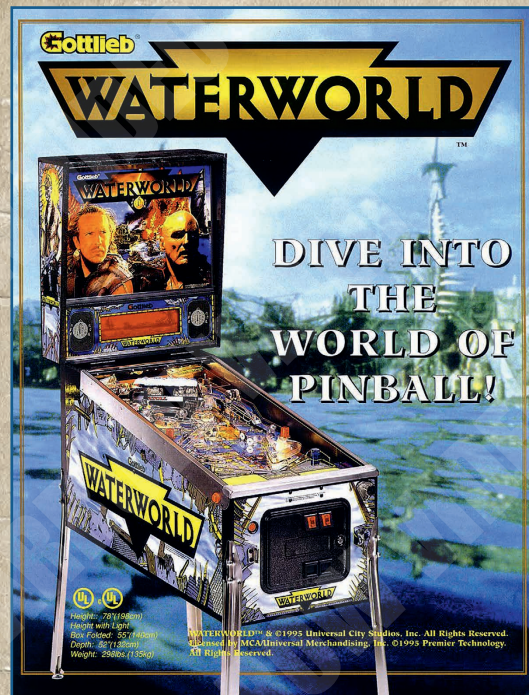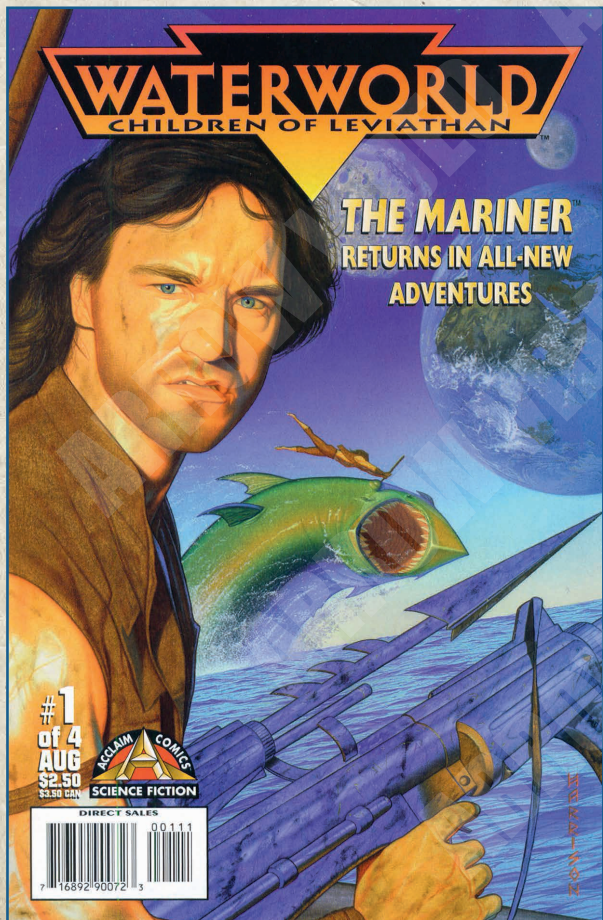
ABOUT THE RESTORATION

Waterworld was exclusively restored by Arrow Films and is presented in its original aspect ratio of 1.85:1 with stereo and 5.1 sound.

The original 35mm camera negative was scanned in 4K resolution on a Lasergraphics Director scanner at EFilm, Burbank. Additional 35mm intermediary elements were scanned in 4K resolution for those sections unique to the Extended TV Cut and Ulysses Cut versions. An extensive search was undertaken by NBC Universal to locate all the additional sequences, optical sections and titles necessary to complete these longer versions of the film. Some of the effects sequences in these longer versions were never completed for the theatrical release so they remain in unfinished form.

The film was graded and restored at Pinewood Studios Group, London. Picture grading was completed on a DaVinci Resolve and restoration was completed using PF Clean software. Final grading review and approval was supervised by Director of Photography Dean Semler at EFilm, Burbank. The stereo and 5.1 mixes were remastered by NBC Universal.

All original materials supplied for this restoration were made available by NBC Universal.

Restoration supervised by James White and approved by Dean Semler.

PRODUCTION CREDITS

Disc and Booklet Produced by **James Blackford**
Executive Producers **Kevin Lambert**, **Francesco Simeoni**
Technical Producer **James White**
QC Manager **Nora Mehenni**
Subtitling **The Engine House Media Services**
Blu-ray Authoring **David Mackenzie**
Design **Obviously Creative**
Artwork **Paul Shipper**

SPECIAL THANKS

Alex Agran, Pat Bauman, Michael Brooke, Rebecca Budds, Alan Cleland, Jake Chapman, Michael Conti, Michael Davis, Katy Gamble, Dave Grove, Jashesh Jhaveri, Glenn Kenny, David J. Moore, David Morales, Marc Morris, Tim Naderski, Kerry O'Quinn, John Pegg, Stephen Pizzello, Darren Rae, Leigh Reid, Edwin Samuelson, Peter Schade, Matthew Stibbe, Chris Taft, Patrick Wilbraham

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