PYRO STORY DISCUSSION
(Pyro = Working Title of *Amped III*))
*Story Discussion Document #*1

STORY "GOLDEN RULES"
1. The story shalt incorporate players' customized characters.
2. The story shalt be tied to players' escalating experience/gear/skills/access.
3. The story shalt work within integrated gameplay modes.
4. The story shalt be entertaining.

STORY TONE
In my opinion, the central storyline should have a **relatively consistent tone** (though story "tangents" can certainly have widely varied tones). Everyone agrees that the story should be humorous and entertaining, however there are at least <u>six</u> potential, fundamentally different approaches:

(A) High Adventure: A rollicking tale involving a mystery and/or quest, colorful characters, good humor; player is swept into the action and, by accomplishing tasks and overcoming obstacles, goes through a variety of twists and turns and gradually reveals the existing backstory, leading to a big payoff (or several, with pathing).

(B) Faux Fantasy: A story set in the real world, with the focus completely on the player, who may interpret reality in a fantastic way, have a double (fantasy) life, display his thoughts in a unique way, etc.; For this concept, the backstory is less important than the player's reaction to what's happening around him.

(C) Sci-Fi (Lite): This encompasses lighter sci-fi elements, such as time travel, alternate history, urban legends, aliens, etc. Levels of humor, technicality, and weirdness vary a lot from story to story.

(D) Parody: A tongue-in-cheek approach to storytelling that pokes fun at clichés, pop culture, movies, books, people, genres, etc.

(E) Pythonic: A unique style of humor that walks a fine line between wildly zany and ridiculously stupid; In Monty Python's full length features, the story is structured on a well-known quest and utilizes elements of parody.

(F) Fantasy: The broadest category of all, this can be anything from sci-fi to anime, limited only by the creators' imaginations; humor isn't precluded, but can be more difficult to pull off without the standard perception of reality to play against.

STORY CONCEPT "A": HIGH ADVENTURE

[EXAMPLES]

- Indiana Jones movies
- XXX
- Robert Ludlum/John Grisham novels

[PROS]

- Most reality-based
- Most natural transition from gameplay in *Amped I* & *Amped II*
- Easily integrated with career and/or players' escalating experience/gear/skills/access

[THE BIG QUESTION(S)]

- Will the game be built around a substantial storyline (which, in my opinion, this story concept requires)? Do fantasy elements have a place in this type of story? How well will this story concept gibe with the Pyro Soul?

STORY CONCEPT "B": FAUX FANTASY

[EXAMPLES]

- Big Fish (story/flashbacks)
- Scrubs, Andy Richter (protagonist POV fantasy sequences)
- The Fisher King (protagonist-only perception of reality)
- Calvin and Hobbes (protagonist-only fantasy life)

[PROS]

- Reality-based, but with lots of creative leeway
- Good opportunity to use a wide variety of graphic styles
- Possibly best fit with the Pyro Soul

[THE BIG QUESTION(S)]

- Can the story content be customized? (This is the most player-centric story concept, so each player's experience should be at least slightly different.)

STORY CONCEPT "C": SCI-FI (LITE)

[EXAMPLES]

- Back to the Future
- X-Files
- The Butterfly Effect
- Sky Captain and the World of Tomorrow

[PROS]

- Unique story concept for a sports title
- Freedom to create our own "rules"
- Appease Brenner's Chupacabra obsession

[THE BIG QUESTION(S)]

- Can a sci-fi story be hilarious? Should it be? Should we consider sacrificing some of the humor for an extra helping of weirdness? Will the sci-fi lean toward reality or fantasy? What does our target audience think about sci-fi?

STORY CONCEPT "D": PARODY

[EXAMPLES]
- Austin Powers movies
- Beastie Boys videos (Sabotage, Intergalactic, etc.)
- Kill Bill

[PROS]
- Hip, intelligent humor style (if executed properly)
- Opportunity to poke fun at ourselves, gaming conventions, snowboarding culture
- Good counterpoint to THUG II's "in your face" jackassness

[THE BIG QUESTION(S)]
- Can this concept be hip, smart, and entertaining without crossing the line into *stinky* cheese? Can fantasy elements be added without disrupting the tone?

STORY CONCEPT "E": PYTHONIC

[EXAMPLES]
- Holy Grail
- Baron Von Munchausen
- Roger Rabbit

[PROS]
- No restrictions on humor or realism
- Greatest potential to achieve cult status
- Good fit for Snow God, Snow Sharks, Snow Weasels

[THE BIG QUESTION(S)]
- Is it just too much? Are we going for cult status or broader appeal?

STORY CONCEPT "F": FANTASY

[EXAMPLES]
- Wizard of Oz
- Yellow Submarine
- Heavy Metal

[PROS]
- Anything goes
- Opportunity to create unique Pyro Universe
- Most differentiation from Amped I & II

THE BIGGEST QUESTION OF ALL: *REALITY VS. FANTASY*

Amped I & *Amped II* provided an essentially realistic snowboarding experience with little zaniness and no fantastical (*i.e.* unrealistic) elements. Currently, *Pyro* is headed in a very different direction with proposed elements such as Snow Gods, Snow Weasels, Awesomeness Displays, etc., and this raises some fundamental questions:

1. Is a realistic snowboarding experience still a vital element of *Pyro*?

2. If so, will the game be based in reality with forays into fantasy? Or will this be a fantasy world that features realistic snowboarding?

3. If we're offering a *non*-realistic snowboarding experience (*i.e.* a unique Pyro universe), do we need to explain this to the player? Should we use the story to transport the player from the realistic world of *Amped I* &*Amped II* to this new universe (*a la* Wizard of Oz)?

4. Could *Pyro's* new direction alienate fans of *Amped I* & *Amped II*?

PYRO STORY PARAMETERS
Story Discussion Document #2

STORY TONE:

"PARODY": A tongue-in-cheek approach to storytelling that pokes fun at clichés, pop culture, movies, books, people, genres, etc.

Reality/Fantasy: Alternate, exaggerated, or distorted pseudo-reality (aka *fantasy lite* – mostly realistic foundation with fantastic elements of varying degrees).

Theme/Moral: Story elements will be fun, funky, and good-hearted, rather than dark, cynical, or bitter; the focus will be on the positive side of snowboarding (and youth) culture with an underlying message of "What's so funny 'bout peace, love, and understanding?".

[EXAMPLES]
- Austin Powers movies
- *Airplane*
- Beastie Boys videos (*Sabotage*, *Intergalactic*, etc.)
- *South Park*

[PROS]
- Hip, intelligent humor style (if executed properly)
- Opportunity to poke fun at ourselves, gaming conventions, snowboarding culture
- Good counterpoint to THUG II's "in your face" jackassness

[THE BIG QUESTION]
- Can this concept be hip, smart, and entertaining without crossing the line into *stinky* cheese? Can fantasy elements be added without disrupting the tone?

STORY SCOPE:
- ❖ Will incorporate players' customized characters;
- ❖ Will be tied to players' escalating experience/gear/skills/access;
- ❖ Will work within integrated gameplay modes;
- ❖ Will be entertaining;
- ❖ Will offer customized content (for different types of player characters), but to what degree is TBD;
- ❖ Will not conflict with "real world" boarding mechanics;
- ❖ Will motivate players to complete the game with a strong narrative thread;
- ❖ Will have levels of content so players can (partially) control story intensity;
- ❖ Will integrate real-world locations, pros, etc.;
- ❖ May have some pathing and/or multiple resolutions (TBD);

POSSIBLE STORY INSPIRATIONS & STORYTELLING DEVICES:

- *It's a Wonderful Life* (Clarence the Angel, changing the future [save snowboarding, *et. al*.])
- *Star Wars* (Obi Wan, the Force)
- *Big Fish* (story/flashbacks, act out tall tales, legends [chupacabra], etc.)
- *Scrubs*, *Alley McBeal* (protagonist POV fantasy sequences)
- *The Fisher King* (protagonist-only perception of reality, hero/quest elements)
- Monty Python (myth parody, animation blended with live action)
- Calvin and Hobbes (protagonist POV-only fantasy life, animation)

POSSIBLE STORY INSPIRATIONS & STORYTELLING DEVICES:

Snow God

- ❖ Could be a guardian angel;
- ❖ May be a loveable loser trying to earn his wings (think *It's a Wonderful Life*);
- ❖ There may be an entire pantheon of Snow Gods (of which ours is the most junior or misfit member);
- ❖ Some Snow Gods may be evil and be in conflict with good Snow Gods (think the Council of Wizards in *Lord of the Rings*);
- ❖ Snow Gods could provide story direction, help, incentives, task intros, etc.;
- ❖ Snow Gods could appear in different guises;
- ❖ Snow Gods may appear only to the player (and maybe a few other NPCs) and be invisible to most other boarders (think *Harvey*)

Bruce Lee, Che Guevara, etc. We've discussed the idea of seeing someone fall off a cliff (to his death, presumably), and then reappear later in advancing states of decomposition (think *American Werewolf in London*). If we tie the player's ability to see a dead person to his/her association with the snow god, then maybe we could justify the appearance of other dead people, such as Bruce Lee or Che Guevara? The snow god could even introduce them as his buddies…?

Snowboarding Lifestyle/Xen

- ❖ The "Moral of the Story" will be along the lines of South Park episodes ("…You know, I learned an important lesson today…");
- ❖ Keep the message very positive and life-affirming;
- ❖ Use themes of acceptance, diversity, and goodwill

PYRO STORY NOTES
Story Discussion Document #3

BLOCKING ISSUES:
Does the Player have a CREW?
Can the Player make CHOICES with NPCs?

STORY COMPONENTS:
Plot
Characters
Dialogue
Tone
Humor
Pacing
Theme
Moral

STORY/GAME ELEMENTS:
I.   Plotline
II.   Plot-advancing Gameplay
III.   Challenges (Character-advancing)
IV.   Story-related Sandbox
V.   Non-Story-related Sandbox

PLOT DEVELOPMENT:
I.   Introduction [Player's motivation to interact with Snow God? Objective/Quest?]
II.   Plot Point 1
III.   Midpoint
IV.   Plot Point 2
V.   Finale 1
VI.   Finale 2

STORY ITEMS:
SEQUENCES: Music Videos – Slo-Mo – Magic Runs – Evil Forest
Awesomeness Videos ("Love Ride") = *South Park* Musical Interludes
Villain?
"Straight" storyline within a Fantasy World (different objectives)?

Actual Geography

Jr. Snow God

Snow God Altars

Snow God wants to talk through Objects

"Tell him what he's won!"

Snow God's spectacular exits and entrances

PANTHEON OF SNOW GODS

Snow God's "Skating Accident"

Character Inspirations for Snow God?????

Bad Snow God "strips" Player

Bad Snow God only "Old School"

Dave Curtin Snow God: No style points

Other Players have cooler Snow Gods

"I haven't been completely honest…"

Message from the Future: "Save Snowboarding?"

Butterfly Effect

Pro Boarders are Superheroes (only to themselves)?

STORY-RELATED ISSUES:

Mixed Animation Styles (different for each character)?

Snow God is pals with Bruce Lee, Che Guevara, etc.?

KOOL-AID MESSIAH

(Don't panic – working title only)

Story Discussion Document #4

STORY OBJECTIVES

- Strong Single Player Experience
- Limited Multiplayer Experience
- Crew Interaction
- Complement (not Obstruct) Gameplay
- Male AND Female Player
- Reality/Alternate Reality Blending
- Clever Premise
- Humor (smart and/or silly); Allegory; Irony
- Snow God
- Theme: "Freedom"
- Theme: "Selling Out Snowboarding"
- Theme: "Gaminess/Gaming Conventions"
- Theme: "The Magic of Snowboarding"
- Strong Payoff

Fight the Power

Beat the Game

Freedom

Take the Long, Strange Trip

Freedom tastes nothing like chicken. Hang with your crew…trick to shock and awe…chase the Yeti…maybe even save the world as you know it. Do what you want to do.

PYRO BACKSTORY IDEAS

1. **The Haunted Mountain**. Mysterious happenings, ghost sightings, etc., are scaring the boarders off the mountain. You and your posse decide to investigate. One by one, your buddies disappear and it's up to you to find out what's happened to them. Eventually, you discover that it's a nefarious ploy concocted by Old Man Withers from the Amusement Park.

2. **The Snow Job**. Someone on the mountain is on a crime spree. What starts out as petty vandalism and tagging soon escalates to putting sugar in the ski patrols' snowmobiles' gas tanks, and then cutting the lift cables. Worst of all, it seems that someone is trying to pin the crimes on you and your posse. Can you identify the villain(s), catch them in the act, and clear your name before you get busted and/or someone really gets hurt?

3. **The Treasure of Monte Bordo**. Rumors of a lost silver mine are confirmed when you and your crew discover the frozen corpse of an ancient telemark skier while carving up the back country. An oilskin pouch found in the dead skier's jacket contains a yellowed map and a number of clues. You must locate both natural and manmade markers scattered around the mountain in order to find the secret mine entrance.

4. **The Unbearable Lightness of Boarding**. After a near-death fall, you are revived by a strange, *Obi Wan*-type character who then mysteriously vanishes – or was it only a dream? His whispered words lead you to investigate and you find out about the legend of the Mountain Man. Many have attempted to find and ride the paths (or *chutes*) of enlightenment hidden around the mountain, but only the truly pure of heart will commune with the Mountain Man and reach snowboarding nirvana. But beware! There are those of the dark side who would reveal the Mountain Man's secrets.

CRED

"The Good, the Bad, and the Awesome"

OPEN-ENDED
RPG CHARACTER TYPES/DEVELOPMENT
MULTI-PATHED DEVELOPMENT
REPUTATION TRACKING
PUBLICITY
SPONSORS
EQUIPMENT
PERSONAL COMPETITIONS
RPG: Skills, Equipment, etc.

SOCIAL

"Mountain Side Story"

MULTI-PATHED
CREWS/ALLIANCES/FACTIONS/CLIQUES
EMOTION: Rivalry, Romance, Betrayal, Revenge, etc.
REPUTATION TRACKING
POLITICAL
GROUP BEHAVIORS/ACTIVITIES
INITITATIONS/DARES = VIGNETTES

MYTHOS

"Lifestyles of the Rich and Snowy"

WORLD OF SNOWBOARDING
INTERNATIONAL
LANGUAGE
MAGAZINES/JOURNALISM
PHOTOGRAPHY/FILMING (a la Warren Miller)
COMPUTER GAMES
PRO/CELEBRITY
RESORT MYTHOLOGY

FREESTYLE

"The Unbearable Lightness of Boarding"

FREEDOM (SLACKER) FANTASY
LIVE THE DREAM/ESCAPE
LIGHT, ADVENTURESOME
ZEN (Positivity, Spirituality)
RPG ELEMENTS
CAMPFIRE JAMBOREE