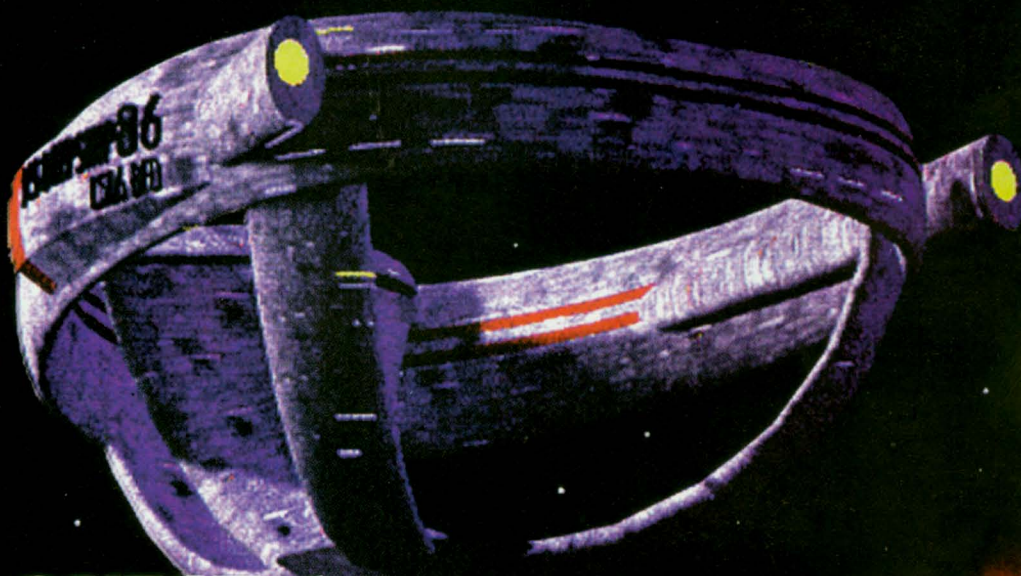


Meet the
maker

GET READY FOR THE NEXT BIG THING!



SPACE QUEST 6: THE SPINAL FRONTIER

ROGER
WILCO™

A VISIT WITH SCOTT MURPHY

Scott Murphy was the twisted genius behind much of the satire found in Space Quest 1 thru 4. His sarcastic wit was sadly MIA from the fifth episode of the popular comedy game series, but now he's back for more.

Whatta Sucker!

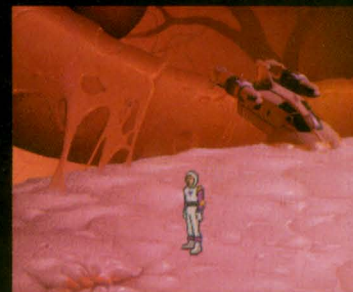
We caught up with the Murph as he was recovering from some virus or other, so while a conversation with Scott is normally a laugh a minute, this one was snot...We'll apologize in advance.

What happened to the "Two Guys From Andromeda" that used to do Space Quest development together?

SM: I'm not sure if it was a personal hygiene thing on my part, but Mark Crowe headed upwind to Eugene, Oregon. Mark Crowe did the design for *Space Quest 6* up there at Dynamix, and I didn't really want to get soggy so I stayed here. After Mark realized that *Space Quest* games just aren't as much fun to make without me around, he turned his attention to *MetalTech* games instead.

So how'd they rook you into doing another Space Quest game?

SM: I was young and stupid...I didn't know that it was illegal to do that with a llama...they had pictures. Seriously; I got back involved with *Space Quest* when we did the Collection last Spring, and I realized how much fun it was to spend all day knee deep in all the surreal silliness that is the *Space Quest* universe. Working with a team of merry pranksters on a caffeine high after too much coffee—it's a lot like returning to preschool—only the hours are longer. I really like





Designer Scott Murphy (Front Row Center-ish) scoured the Earth to find a design team with enough gall to produce the sarcastic, satirical Space Quest 6. Don't hate them because they're beautiful.



Scott Murphy claims that he "really relates" to Roger Wilco despite the fact that he isn't blonde, isn't a janitor, and only spent one night of his life in outer space.* Does he really think we buy a line like this?

(* Something about college and the CIA. Don't ask.)



It's the lair of the Wing-ding Commander. He looks like some sort of weird mutant cross between the Cowardly Lion and Toto. Again, don't ask.



Much of Space Quest 6 is based on real historical events. Here Roger makes a mid-1980's visit to Ronald Reagan's colon.

where the story is going, too. I was something of a fan of the old "Fantastic Voyage" movie where they inject Racquel Welch—and an even bigger submarine—into a human body. The idea of a janitor loose in the same situation has serious possibilities. I also liked the idea of slapping around Windows and that abstract "info Highway" thing. I have no trouble thinking about myself in an orange vest cleaning up trash on the side of the info highway...It's just the offbrand way my mind works.

You have a reputation for being cocky since your games have been so good. Do you fear competition from any of the new games you see coming?

SM: Well, at first I was spooked about Roberta's new one, but later I decided that players will certainly get a scare from *Phantasmagoria*, but that I'm not spooked. I think *Space Quest* and *Phantasmagoria* kind of compliment each other and I expect *Phantasmagoria* will inspire a lot of *Space Quest* sales.

How did you come up with that idea?

Well, I figured it out one night after I'd caught *Night of the Living Duds* on TV. I was freaked out kind of horribly, and I couldn't go to sleep because I knew that the monsters under the bed would eat me, so I ended up watching *F-Troop* and *Gilligan's Island* reruns on cable the whole rest of the night. With that in mind, I'll tell players now, *Phantasmagoria* is a shorts destroyer. It's a three Pamper game at least. You won't be sleeping any time soon once you get it, and *F-Troop* hasn't gotten any better with age, so play *Space Quest 6* instead of watching TV. You won't be sorry. That's my pitch. Think it'll sell any games?

What did you expect a janitor's cabin to look like? (We hear that mechanics don't work on their own cars either.)



So you think that the comedy of Space Quest 6 will be a sort of antidote for the horror of Phantasmagoria?

You betcha. *Space Quest 6* is a funny game. You'll forget all about the really scary stuff in that other game – in fact, it might be the only way you ever get back to sleep after *Phantasmagoria*. Maybe we should put that on the box.

Have you played Phantasmagoria yet?

SM: No, but I saw the movie. Seriously, just outtakes. There's this whole weird cult following at Sierra of people who can't wait to see what the next thing is that winds up on the cutting room floor, and if that footage is any indication, I'm going to be watching a lot of *F-Troop* soon. I don't know too much about what will make it into the game, but I can definitely say that I'd pay mega-buckazoids for a certain pumpkin color blouse.

Why the subtitle: "The Spinal Frontier." This is mostly a satire of video and computer games isn't it?

SM: It's actually kind of hard to tell you what this game targets in the way of satire really...video and computer games, certainly...also vital organs and various bodily fluids. We take a poke at certain bodily orifices too—but only ones that can be discussed in polite conversation since kids will be playing. We also take shots at Al Lowe's forehead...Life. Death. Taxes. The whole of the known universe really, which means a lot of space so *Space Quest* is still a good name...*Spinal Frontier* was somebody's idea of humorous since a good part of the game takes place in the body of a corpsman named Santiago. We all wanted to call it "Where in Corpsman Santiago is Roger Wilco" but lawyers seem to lack humor about things like that...My next choice was *Roger Wilco and the Colon of Doom* but I eventually gave in and

called it *Spinal Frontier* because it reminds me of *Spinal Tap*. That's one of those bizarre movies I can really relate to.

The "Where is" name is an obvious poke at the popular educational series. What other computer and video games do you satirize?

SM: Well, there's a pretty good send-up of the game *Street Fighter 3* called "Stooge Fighter 3." The contestants are Big Mo, Larman and Coily and they fight in a slapstick way. There's also some pretty good running gags that target the character from *Wing Commander III* that looks like a big cat. We put a kitty litter box in his cabin. Care to guess where you'll find the Captain's Log?

We can guess. So your basic style of humor hasn't changed then?

SM: I don't know about that, there's a lot of new thinking in this game. I won't say I completely walked away from the obscure 2001 references—that movie was so cool and so weird that it stayed with me—and I take potshots at *Star Wars*, *Star Trek* and whatever, but there are also references to games like *Mortal Kombat* (More Dull Combat) and I've even got an obscure O.J. reference in there that no one will ever find.

Ever get anyone mad at you?

SM: Well, the various past lawsuits against *Space Quest* are something of a legend, so I guess so. You know, lawyers are like life insurance salesmen but without the sense of humor. We've made a lot of fun of Roberta Williams over the years, but she doesn't seem to care so that's not any fun, and maniacal ScumSoft President Elmer Pugg was patterned after Ken Williams...Gee, I hope Ken doesn't read this.

We ran out of Space Quest art so this is a screen from Leisure Suit Larry 17: Larry Visits Uranus. (That Al Lowe, he's such a card. How does he keep coming up with witty and original stuff like this!?)



We won't tell him if you don't.

SM: Yeah, I doubt he'll read this.

What will the marketing guys forget to say about Space Quest 6?

SM: We tried very hard to make a game that players of all ages will enjoy on their own level. There's some jokes in the game that only kids will understand, like the stuff that parodies the *Carmen San Diego* games—adults and teenagers don't play them, just kids. The video game stuff won't be as amusing to adults as it will be to the teenagers, and we've hidden lots of jokes in the game that adults will understand but that will go completely over the heads of anyone not old enough to pay taxes. It's kind of an interesting mix, but it seems to work.

Final question: When can we expect to see "The Spinal Frontier" in stores?

SM: Well, about a year ago, we were saying it would ship "Just in time for Christmas." Then we started saying "Shipping in January—Just in Time To Miss Christmas." After that, we started the line "A Great April Fools Day Gift for the Fool in Your Life"...We're taking our time to do it right. Our goal is to blow more product release dates than any prior Sierra game—an ambitious goal I assure you. Our latest motto is "Makes a Great Gift for Mom on Father's Day—an even better Graduation Gift. Watch the Back-to-School ads this Halloween for our special Thanksgiving offers. Makes a great Christmas present."

You missed mentioning Easter.

SM: Of course we didn't mention Easter. That would be silly.

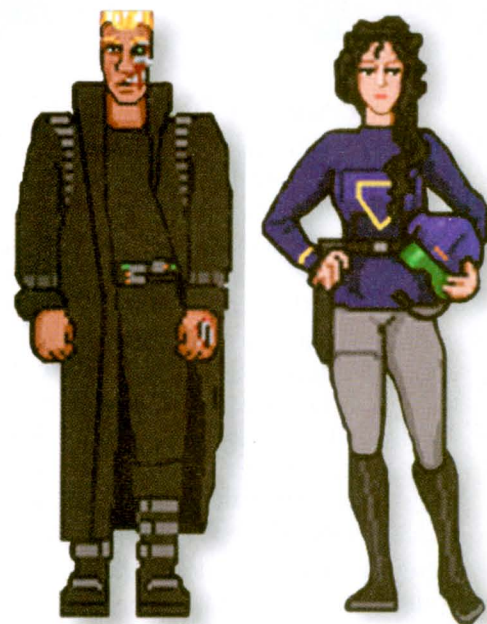


More taste - less people when you dine at Mr. Soylent

Okay, so they don't look so attractive now. We bet you'll change your tune around closing time.



No white Broncos in this parking lot. No way. No sleezy O.J. jokes in Space Quest. Not here. Uh-Huh.



This is Howser with Corpsman Santiago. No, we didn't steal Howser from that other show. Does he really look like a doctor to you?

