"What did you have planned for cavefolder 2?"

A boring wall of text because I have no other way to explain what I was planning

Cavefolder was initially for a college assignment that I just threw together without thinking.

All the creative choices for the show were made "just because," and it happened to be sheer coincidence that it would receive such positive reception when I posted it online- NOT because I made a real effort to make it amazing/deep or something. I really enjoyed working on it at the time though- it was just me, my college spring break, and my freedom from having quit my last YouTube channel, RobotUnderscore. However, I foolishly promised that I would make more episodes since I WAS interested in making more, but I never realized that I had already lost interest the moment I moved on to other videos that same year.

Cavefolder 2 was a giant failure because I didn't want to actually make it- I was hyped up by everyone wanting a sequel so much that I convinced myself I was obligated to. For years.

Issues already arose from how I didn't like a lot of what cavefolder already has. It felt too pretentious with its vague story about some depressed box man, and I also didn't like the comparisons it had to an indie video game. The visual similarities were as clear as day though, since the video was 60 frames per second, the rendering style was simplistic, and the animations/voices practically screamed "role-playing game." Ultimately, the comparisons to (and requests of) a cavefolder video game made the show feel a lot less original in my eyes, overshadowing the worldbuilding intentions I had at play. On top of all of this, if you've tried using the .blend files for cavefolder at all yet, they're broken and hard-to-use from my failed attempts to utilize the NLA Editor and Linking to create a system for easily re-using 3D models and animations. (Now I know why Blender isn't used by giant animation production companies.) But obviously all this aside, I still saw loads of potential for what the show could be in a future video.

So I decided I wanted to remake cavefolder 1, make cavefolder 2, and release both in 2022.

(I'm gonna call the existing video "cavefolder 0" from now on, since that was going to be no longer part of the official plot once the REAL cavefolder 1 & 2 were completed.) The first thing I wanted to do was establish what the "mysterious world" was, and I decided to use the original ending of the cavefolder 0 saga as my new start point. Had I continued cavefolder in 2019, the show's finale was going to be a big reveal that Andy and Bulb are actually files in a dying computer. It certainly didn't help that someone in the comments section of cavefolder 0 correctly guessed that ending a long time ago LOL.

(SIDE-NOTE: I had a different storyline planned for episode 2 in 2019 that I never started working on. It was going to be about Andy and Bulb finding a mysterious library of books and pages guarded by a character that would vaguely look like i.imgur.com/UJkWcrX.png named The Cachekeeper. The twist was that the books are all the abandoned files of an internet browser cache, but Andy and Bulb wouldn't

have known that since the Cachekeeper was too busy trying to kill them by flinging huge swaths of books and doing a bunch of other visually-trippy Monument Valley shit to try and kill the two.)

So the NEW cavefolder was going to be a story about adventuring through computers and the internet.

Cavefolder 1 would START in a Windows XP-like computer, opening up with a montage of a kid growing up on Microsoft Paint and Club Penguin and other things from the 2000s home computing era. Andy and Bulb are drawings made by this kid. But one day, the computer would be abandoned for a new one, leaving Andy and Bulb unattended by the computer's auto-updates. One of these updates would be a rash decision by the makers of the computer's operating system to delete all the files of their older computers still connected to the internet. It's flimsy, I know, but I basically needed a reason for Bulb to fling the computer into safety mode.

The computer Andy and Bulb are in originally has color, but everything is black & white in safety mode.

Bulb basically saved the entire computer from certain death by booting the computer into safety mode, but he didn't do it in time to save Andy's memory. As a result, Andy forgets who he is and all the fun he had with the kid and Bulb. This is what connects back into the original story of cavefolder 0. Cavefolder 1 would retell the original cavefolder video in a much more somber light: Bulb desperately tries to keep living his same fun life with Andy, but everything is in safety mode and Andy is depressed and amnesiac. Bulb is still lazy with surface-level interests like in cavefolder 0, but this time he tries taking Andy to Donny's not for fun, but to try and deny that Andy forgot his memory and everything is ruined.

Bulb has a crisis by his inability to cope with Andy's memory and their home both being destroyed.

Andy, when he still had his memory, was a very patient and understanding person to Bulb, trying to remind him to relax and trust others, among other vague life lessons I didn't figure out yet, but now that Andy's memory was gone, Bulb now has no choice but to carry the weight of being the sole rememberer of their memories together AND finally listen to all that advice Past Andy had been desperately trying to share with him. As the rest of cavefolder 0 goes, Andy eventually becomes motivated with the idea of exploring to learn more about himself and the world around him. Bulb has no choice but to tag along, now putting their hangouts together on Andy's terms for the first time ever, instead of all those years of playing video games and eating Donny's that Bulb loved and Andy joined in only for Bulb's company.

Andy and Bulb wouldn't explore the entire computer but instead go straight to the big tower.

The two would eventually explore the insides and find a leftover update patch for the computer. This patch was basically an experimental file system that uses AI to send a 500 MB .zip by itself around the internet. Andy and Bulb would board this uncertain spaceship and then get sent off into the internet, unable to control their vehicle. 2019 cavefolder was about solving the mystery of the dying computer they were in. 2022 cavefolder would be a colorful adventure about exploring worlds outside of their own, grappling with story themes about technology being outdated and other characters they meet simply being tossed aside by the rest of the world moving on to newer and shinier things. There was also going to be a character named Atlas that looked like my old blue robot character from the RobotUnderscore era, acting as an admin for the computer stuck in safety mode.

Not much else was planned, but Bulb's character would slowly change into a more open and relaxed person, as his old self simply could not survive out in the internet. Andy would learn about himself again

and make new memories exploring with Bulb in vast cities, abandoned websites, terrifying servers, and other abstract, atmospheric interpretations of stories about personified computer files struggling with being no longer wanted. The computer aspect isn't important visually though, it would be just a smaller detail as opposed to something like ENA. At some point, Andy and Bulb would have a shot at restoring their old world and memories by venturing into the heart of the computer company to find a possible cloud save that might have escaped, only to find that it didn't save anything. Like with real computer files, Andy and Bulb would confront that file deletion is permanent, and Andy's memory is gone forever.

That's more or less it. (Everything from this point on is rambling about what I learned.) I was going to plan the rest of the show as I went. As you can probably tell, this was stupidly ambitious, and I got SUPER-fixated on this vision for a new cavefolder, so much so that it made it very hard to delegate work to other people and share what I had in mind, because it was so exact. My biggest regret that will haunt me for a good while is that I didn't kill cavefolder 2 before promising other people they could work on it with me. Telling them I killed the very project they were so hyped up to be a part of was soul-crushing. Obviously, killing giant projects is nothing new to me, and I find it cathartic to let go of an unrealistic vision I have that I could never possibly make in my life.

However, having other people involved in cavefolder as I pulled the plug on it fucking HURT.

So was that what I was doing this whole time? Writing and rewriting and feeling hopeless on where to start the actual production? Yes. I basically did zero work on cavefolder from the moment the original video came out in March 2019, all the way to Summer 2021. What I DID do though in the meantime was brainstorm ideas and gather research. The research was basically me gathering pictures that inspired me for what I could make cavefolder 1 & 2 into, as well as lists of songs to use to establish moods for each scene. Not only do I not want to share this inspiration research because it will doxx my location (as there is a very specific source of inspiration near my house that I take lots of pictures of,) but I might reuse the immersive feelings/aesthetics I had in mind for cavefolder in another future project.

Hell, I might retire/switch to an adventure series after I get tired of making comedy videos.

As you know, I want to return to making stuff like Stickmen 2020. Eventually I have to move on to the next big thing afterwards though, using some of what I had originally planned for cavefolder. However, I have to remember to stick to that creation formula that works- the process of the Stickmen 2020 style. I spent the entire RobotUnderscore era learning 3D for years and desperately trying to find a video format that I liked. During that time, I made the highest-quality animations and 3D art in my life.

But the bitter truth I learned is that I don't care about animation or art on its own.

So what does that make me? A writer? A director? A fraud? I honestly don't know. Maybe I was corrupted by having my childhood grow up on YouTube, getting used to the satisfaction of finishing stopmotions regularly when I was running coolernow123 as a kid. Turns out, it was never animation itself that I loved, it was just that specific process of making simple videos out of stuff in my house. I grappled with not knowing my real motivation a lot back in Stickmen 2020's height on Newgrounds, where I mentioned on a podcast that I felt like a fraud for prioritizing quantity over quality on a site that's supposed to be a refuge for traditional, time-consuming animation. But I know myself better now.

My quantity IS my quality.

I've always found it hard to imagine myself in the shoes of people that spend YEARS of their lives to make a single video game or animation. Now I realize how much this hugely important sacrifice is what makes those people true artists. Cavefolder was never going to work because I wasn't going to be able to live with the thought of spending many months actually making the show. Time is precious, and I want to use it to be with people and experience new things and enjoy life, not slave away day in and day out at what will basically be just a 4-minute video.

But ultimately, I repeated the same mistake I made with coolernow123's idiots.exe: I let people's hype take over my own priorities, again. I let everyone convince me I was obligated to make cavefolder 2 without asking myself if I wanted to. I disrespected the process that worked with Stickmen 2020, thinking I had video-making all figured out and that a new cavefolder would come just as easily. Except it didn't.

I learned the hard way what disrespecting the process does to someone.

It seems contradictory to be someone who likes making animated videos but hates actually animating them, but ultimately I learned that I should be thinking about creating in terms of what you're willing to sacrifice for it. If there's anything to take away from everything, let it be this: <u>if you ever want to attempt something creatively huge in your life, make sure you are 200% okay with the thought of spending how many hours per day sitting at a computer or elsewhere to make it happen, for who knows how long.</u> I'm well into my 20s and if I spent entire chunks of my life at a computer making just a single animated video, I would never be able to live with myself. I know many people DO live for the actual act of animating and drawing, and there's far more of those people on Newgrounds and Twitter and everywhere online that's creative. I mistakenly thought I had to be exactly like them in order to count as a creative person. 7 years of failed 3D projects later, I've finally learned that's not the case, and cavefolder should hopefully be my final lesson in dreaming about something I only care about as a finished project and not what it takes to bring to life.

This ramble has gone on long enough, but if you've gotten this far, I think you can see what I've learned and where I wanted to take cavefolder. I don't want to deny people that fell in love with the idea, which is why I made it public domain, as you know from reading this. Ultimately, I'm happy I saved myself from years of spiteful production and unhappiness, while still leaving the door open for others to continue cavefolder if they wish. However, I still have a great debt to pay to the people that were going to work with me on this. I'll have to live with the mistake of promising something they were excited about making (that I couldn't actually do) for many, many months, only to murder it right in front of them. One day I'll figure out how to make up for it. But for now, I have to look out for my well-being and life outside of making internet videos, knowing better than ever how to never cause grand delusions like this again.

See you soon.

wavetro