

The Rayman 4 Story

A behind-the-scenes story of ghosts, raving bunnies,
and a fan's honest transparency on why

DISCLAIMER: What's disclosed in this particular document is a set of recollections, which vary in accuracy, straight from the minds that worked on each respective project. It's important to remember that what transpired years ago doesn't necessarily reflect anyone's current views or opinions.

No one I've discussed these projects with was required to share such information or materials with me, and I'm neither legally bound by NDAs nor am I tied to Ubisoft in any official capacity regarding the company's intellectual property. All sources will remain anonymous, to protect those who were kind and courteous enough to allow me to know what has been kept under wraps for so many years now.

Section I: The Rise & Fall of Phoenix Studio

Rayman Ghosts

The story begins with a company known as Doki Denki Studio, which was founded all the way back in the year 1996 in Lyon, France. This studio was responsible for working on licensed video game adaptations of pre-existing IPs, primarily pertaining to Disney, such as *Winnie the Pooh*, *Donald Duck*, as well as *The Smurfs*. When Doki Denki Studio became defunct in 2004, its staff began anew and formed Phoenix Studio, also in Lyon, France.

Phoenix Studio steadily built a strong relationship with Ubisoft as a corporate entity following their prior contractual work with Disney IP-centric titles on titles such as *Winnie the Pooh's Rumbly Tumbly Adventure* and *Donald Duck: Quack Attack*. One day, while staff from Phoenix Studio were assisting Ubisoft in porting Peter Jackson's *King Kong* to the PSP, someone from within the company—out of essentially nowhere—proposed the prospect of Phoenix Studio handling the development of a new mainline *Rayman* title for both console and handheld platforms, due to Ubisoft Montpellier (the main branch of Ubisoft responsible for handling all prior home console *Rayman* titles save for *Rayman 3: Hoodlum Havoc*) being busy with the development of Peter Jackson's *King Kong*.

“We were subcontractors [*sic*] at that time, used to work on *King Kong*. Actually, it was strange that we were even asked to work on the *Rayman* IP. Crazy business, you would think it's all planned and all.. mostly some drunk fucktards with an infinite paycheck. Seriously, better work on your social skills and liver ability if you want to mean business in this field. Naw, sometimes magic happens, but it's a hell of a coincidence. Right people at the right place and time, I really think this is all fucking random. People of good will in the right environment, reading people's minds. (shout out to my men at Arkane, back in the days.)”

— 3D Artist (*Rayman Ghosts*)

As was foretold, a deal was struck—now Phoenix Studio was the primary developmental resource for a new *Rayman* title whilst Ubisoft Montpellier would provide constructive feedback and assistance.

“Long time ago... I actually did the animation (Rayman Sex Bomb Vignette), but never worked at Ubisoft. At the time I was working for a small indie studio in Lyon and we were doing a *Rayman 3* prototype which got canceled after one year of dev. I was the lead

animator on the project & ended up creating some small vignette animations alongside the prototype dev, to capture the mood of the game.”

“About the story behind the prototype, it's pretty simple.

The studios did a lot of Disney games (*Winnie the Pooh*, *Peter Pan*, etc...), and the latest we made was produced by Ubisoft. At the end of the production, we were asked to develop a one year playable prototype for PS2.”

“Yes, it was Phoenix [Studio]. It spawned after the death of Doki Denki, with basically the same people.”

“Don't think we had a really playable prototype. but we did a walkthrough/gameplay animation though.”

— Animator (*Rayman Ghosts*)

You may have noticed that I've been utilizing the name *Rayman Ghosts* to refer to Phoenix's *Rayman 4* project. That's due to it not only being the internal project name amongst staff members at Phoenix Studio, but also due to it being the crux of the project's gameplay.

“The gameplay was mainly about having a ghost following you, different ones with different abilities. Not a bad idea per se, but it turned the game into a puzzle game and was not that fun to play. Not Rayman enough I guess, I don't really know why Ubi canned it.”

—3D Artist (*Rayman Ghosts*)

The Rayman entities seen throughout the project's pre-production material (with varying appearances and abilities) weren't traditional transformations à la *Rayman 3: Hoodlum Havoc*, but rather each a unique Rayman “ghost” that would follow the player, assisting them during specific gameplay segments when required. This is why the Rayman that the player would have controlled doesn't transform into any of these unique entities, but instead the ghost would phase in and out of existence—akin to virtual assistants of sorts—where they'd help you out during specific gameplay segments: copying the player Rayman's actions with a bit of a delay à la Tails in *Sonic the Hedgehog 2*.

As outlined within design documents, the goal of *Rayman 4* was accessibility—for 100% of players to be able to finish it—as well as revitalizing the series as a retelling of the events of the first Rayman video game, akin to the first two mainline home console entries. The narrative wasn't ever truly set in stone.

“I must confess the story was changing all the time but it was about Rayman and his clones who were going to have different gameplays in the game. Also the big prototype

Phoenix showed to Ubi was with the chewing gum and bigfoot clones in the Art world. I also remember drawing this stained glass of Dark Rayman.”

“The prototype was graphically beautiful but it became clear that the game design was not really at the same level and that’s when it started to go down. As for the PSP prototype, Ubi had already decided it was enough and it did not go further.”

“It was just not really fun to play and *Rayman 3* was one of the most fun games at the time so it was a problem. My take is that Phoenix didn’t have the experience and the programmers to do a triple A game and Ubi started to see that so the game started HUGE but began to transform into a little puzzle game changes after changes.”

“If I remember correctly Mr. Dark was in fact Dark Rayman in disguise, that’s why I mixed the two.”

— Character Designer (*Rayman Ghosts*)

The closest the team ever came to finalizing a narrative essentially revolved around a child in the real world being wounded to the point of losing all functionality in their limbs after a rather gruesome accident. Said child would connect with the character of Rayman through the game world in a similar manner to *Tron* but with a Pixar-inspired, emotional tone.

(Hubert Chevillard (Senior Art Director) recalls this narrative in the following video at the 1:05 timestamp: [YouTube: Rabbids: The Voice of Madness - STORIES - gTV](#))

“The year was 2005 and I had finished my Art School two years ago, the [REDACTED] School in Lyon, specialized in illustration, video games, and animation. I was now working in a movie poster shop to pay my rent and one day a friend of mine told me that Phoenix was searching for a character designer right now. During my studies I did an internship at Doki Denki [which] was going to transform into Phoenix Interactive a few years later, so they already knew me and hired me not long after.”

“When I heard the project was *Rayman 4* I was amazed. My job was to create all the characters that would populate the different worlds of *Rayman 4*, the many friends and foes of the hero and also his strange clones. It was a total dream job for a young artist like me. I started to work first on the big Villain: Mr Dark and it was so much fun.”

“I remember when the guys from Ubisoft first came to see our work, they were going from desk to desk with the Phoenix lead team. When they all arrived at my desk, I started to explain with passion how I had created the design for the villain, forgetting to let the art director speak. Then the same evening, all the team was at the restaurant to celebrate and the big boss told me that they all did panic, seeing me speaking to the Ubi guys. But all went well and he congratulated me for my assurance. Those were the good times, the early times. After that of course everything would get worse...”

— Character Designer (*Rayman Ghosts*)

Whilst a bulk of the work done on Phoenix Studio's *Rayman Ghosts* project was primarily pre-production, there was prototype work done, with the biggest showcase of their work in a functional state being a meeting between Ubisoft and Phoenix Studio that had a fully-realized Picture City in 3D, along with both the Big-Foot and Chewing Gum variants of Rayman fully functioning.

Ubisoft, while entrusting Phoenix with their work on the project, also kept a rather watchful eye on them as they utilized Ubisoft's internal JADE engine with the project.

"It's too far in the past for something that did not last long so I can't tell you exactly how far we went in the production. I only remember fragments. We had a Rayman that could climb his environment, I had coded multi grids pathfinding and grid cells occupancy ratios in Jade and procedural animation attacks for some NPCs, we hadn't been very far to say the least."

"At the time I did work on the programming side of Rayman 4 shortly before it was decided that Ubi would take back the production of the game by itself. We were only around 4 programmers in charge of delivering a prototype which did not go too well. We were only starting to get familiar with the Ubi engine (Jade) that Ubi was already planning to take the production back. Following these sad times the mood at the studio was not ideal, with a technical director trying to get us busy by making a 3 hour long meeting where he would demonstrate his knowledge of the PS2 hardware with no practical use for us other than keeping us from questioning the future of this studio. I was reluctant to play this fool's game but not being experienced enough at that time I tried my best not to fall asleep during these meetings while I should have confronted the TD and asked him if these meetings were really necessary."

"Compared to working at Phoenix, getting back to work in Artefacts Studio was bliss. Mainly because we were in control of our productions. I can't speak for all the others except for a few as I don't know where some of them ended up at that time. But after that painful experience, working at Artefact was like being in paradise where I was able to tackle a lot of varying tasks by coding our engine, gameplay, UI, you name it...Without having constantly a watching eye over every single aspect of what we did because our tools and productions were our properties. That's with the energy I regained when leaving Phoenix that I realized how somewhat toxic was the context back in Phoenix. At Artefacts I finished every single game I started."

"They were extremely conservative about their engine and game licenses, to a point where we suspected even before they put a halt to development that some of them did not want to hand us their game from the very beginning to start with. But to be honest I

also don't remember us having a clear game design as to what the game was supposed to look like once finished. So we may have our part of responsibility.”

— Programmer (*Rayman Ghosts*)

Phoenix Studio, whilst full of passion and heart for *Rayman Ghosts*, lacked the AAA development experience required to tackle such a title. What eventually resulted in the cancellation of *Rayman Ghosts* and the demise of Phoenix Studio was Ubisoft's distrust of Phoenix Studio using their internal assets, lack of available resources to meet a timely deadline, and poaching Phoenix Studio staff towards the end of development as a means to run the studio dry and siphon off its resources. The PSP variant of the game was the result of the game gradually decreasing its scope to the point of becoming an isometric 3D puzzle game.

“To be honest with you, that was the project that made me quit the company, I quit when it was canned like, fuck that, we had the opportunity to work on something cool at last but blew it.”

— 3D Artist (*Rayman Ghosts*)

“It was great to work with real experienced artists at the time, like the guy who made all the sets who was a beast, don't remember his name. [REDACTED] was a 3D artist and he was great also, he became a friend of mine. Like a lot of us he was slowly losing interest in the project but was also sad to see how it was ending. I don't know if there is a world where Phoenix would have done a great Rayman game. The company was just not good enough for this kind of big monstrous game. The funny thing is years later I worked at Ubisoft for the hated Rabbids, storyboarding, writing and directing episodes of the tv show's later seasons but that's another story.”

“He has a cool 90's attitude with his funny design but I always wonder why his fans are so passionate about him. Sadly I know that Ancel, his own creator, is tired of him and Ubi thinks he is outdated so it always amazes me to see that in parallel there are so many fans who are still waiting for a new game or anything with him in it.”

— Character Designer (*Rayman Ghosts*)

“Just out of school, I developed a project with 2 talented friends. We were quite close. One left Lyon (the city where Phoenix Interactive was) and had been contacted to work on that project. He couldn't do it so he called us, [REDACTED] and I. The studio was urgently looking for people. We barely showed our book because they were in such a hurry. In the beginning we would design the sets and props.”

“I was not very good at set design ... but the colorist (a guy who had a lot of experience in matte painting for the cinema) who was in place left the project after a few days, for personal reasons. There was a moment of panic and during a meeting the managers

wondered how to replace him. I raised my hand. And they were happy with my work, so I continued with the color. Under the artistic direction of [REDACTED].”

“The team was really great. We had time, budget and freedom. What was great was that not only did we have excellent working conditions, but we had delighted feedback from Ubisoft.”

— Colorist (Rayman Ghosts)



Conceptual Artwork Credit: Anonymous Character Designer (*Rayman Ghosts*)

Artwork Acquisition Credit: Liam Robertson (*DYKG/Did You Know Gaming Researcher*)

Recherche d'univers



Conceptual Artwork Credit: Anonymous Artist (*Rayman Ghosts*)

Section II: The Birth of the Bwah

Rayman Raving Rabbids

“I was with the team from the beginning. We actually hired quite a number of fresh faces, including a number of interns (who did a great job by the way). Part of the team of the previous project (*King Kong*) went on to build another engine, hence the recruitment.”

“I remember that in the beginning the game was supposed to be an adventure game, like what you see in the video (E3 “War of the Worlds” Trailer), with bunnies invading the world and Rayman defending it. But the game had to ship with the Wii, and after a while we saw that we didn’t have time to do a full adventure game. Also, the Wii and its Wiimotes was a perfect console to try out various gameplays. So we decided to switch the type of game just after E3. I guess that the video was a hint at the state of the project at that time: we wanted to do an adventure game (beginning of the video), but at the same time there are various types of gameplay (fighting, racing, even dancing). It’s nice to see that the dancing concept that would eventually lead to *Just Dance* was already in the head of some people.”

“The only playable thing I remember from the adventure prototype was Rayman and Rabbids. Frankly, I don’t know if the designers wanted to have Globox and Teensies in the game, probably yes because they are part of the Rayman franchise, but I can’t be sure.”

“I would say that the team initially wanted to do an adventure game, because that’s what Rayman games were at the time. But we also saw this brand new machine, with exciting new controllers, so we wanted to do an adventure game with brand new game mechanics. And the more we tried, the more we saw it was complicated, because the gameplay ideas we had with the Wii controllers were difficult to introduce with the adventure game approach. I would say that in the end, what really made us make the decision to go with a collection of mini-games was time. With the material we had at E3, and with the dead-line of the Wii, we had time to do a mini-game collection, but not an adventure game.”

“Frankly, I don’t have the exact dates in mind, it’s too long ago. I do remember that we didn’t have much time to do the mini-games once we decided to do the switch, though. Roughly between E3 and launch of the game (but even at E3 some elements of the mini-games were already in the mind of the designers, or even as prototypes). Concerning the adventure game part, I really don’t remember when it started. Probably a bit after the release of *King Kong*, since it was mostly the same team.”

"I remember this time as one of the most intense I ever had in my career, with long working hours but also a sense of pioneering something exciting and new."

— Programmer (*Rayman Raving Rabbids*)

"I am puzzled as to why Ubisoft never hired me after a few RRR games, but the stint I did was with a unique team... they flew me out to Montpellier, France... They all worked in this funky but cool old French building (Development Villa) that often flooded, so they would have to move the servers out of the basement when it rained a lot."

"The Rabbids voice was originally an artist or maybe a "coder" on the team... he would just do that whilst working and they turned it into the Rabbids voice."

"They were certainly a tight crew...We had fun and that came across in the games. It was frustrating at times, but worth it!"

— Composer (*Rayman Raving Rabbids*)

The *Rayman Raving Rabbids* era of development begins with the conceptualization of who we know as today to be the Raving Rabbid—a stubby-legged rabbit known for its earth-shattering scream and demonic nature when provoked. It has often been claimed that the Rabbid character was created one day by Michel Ancel while on a train ride to a reunion. According to former Rayman developers, however, it isn't entirely clear why this character was created, other than simply as an antagonist for a new video game.

"Ahha, I actually think it's hilarious and think of myself as one illegitimate father of these pests."

"Fun fact : I've heard that in order to fill the release slot, they had to create and develop Les Lapins Crétins (Raving Rabbids) in a rush."

"Like I said, I've heard they were so screwed they didn't have a Rayman to fill the release slot, they had to come up with an idea real quick."

— 3D Artist (*Rayman Ghosts*)

"It was rushed I think, Ancel wouldn't do it so the Rabbids were a way to control the whole thing because Ubi needed a Rayman 4 at all cost. There was not enough time to do a great game but it didn't matter, the Wii was coming and the promise was fun for all the family."

— Character Designer (*Rayman Ghosts*)

It was evident from the early development material that *Rayman Raving Rabbids* was meant to be an action-adventure game featuring Rayman taking his world back from the reign of the Raving Rabbids. But how much work was done on this iteration? Quite a bit, despite the fact that this iteration was only in development for around four to six months.

“In the beginning, it was a new Rayman adventure game in 3D. The guy who owned the brand (Michel Ancel) left the project, so the core team did Raving Rabbids (Party Iteration) in 5 months. We worked night and day...Exhausting!”

“In the beginning, we had many different rabbits but we didn't have time to create an ambitious game so I kept only two models. The big black one with fur and the iconic white rabbit.”

“There [were] no combat mechanics...There was no gameplay...This was the reason the big guy (Michel Ancel) left the team. He was unable to have a vision so when he left we did something simple to create a game. Hard time with him at this time.”

— Director (*Rayman Raving Rabbids*)

“After *King Kong* we were looking for an idea for the next game. As no idea was really good the default backup was Rayman. At this time I was a kind of technical director and was working both on *Rayman 4* and our next engine/editor. Most of the [*King Kong*] gameplay programmers were working on *Rayman 4*. I was programming libraries used to handle maths, physics, path finding... So I was both building what was used by other gpp and some ingredients. Quadruped races / mounts, Flying creatures/ mounts, Basic systems for Rabbids to take cover.”

“As there was no direction / no vision about what could be the game, at some point Ubi asked Ancel to show something and as it wasn't a game but pieces, Ancel left the studio almost pretending it wasn't his fault if the game wasn't there. Then Ubi asked the team with no more director to make a launch title in six months for the Wii And we reused any tech built to prototype almost 120 mini games & we kept 60 of those.”

“I can remember every creature was planned to get a funny and serious version: pig/tiger bat/eagle etc...You were supposed to fight them as a mini boss then to free them from corruption so they'll become a Mount.”

“I had a blast while working with Michel on BGE. He was really pushing me in a very gentle and nice way. That's the nice and great side of Michel. He was exceptional at bringing energy within the team. I was a junior, it was my first job. I quickly started to work on the hovercraft that was just something to travel from A to B. But as I wanted it to be cool then it became more and more a part of the game (races, shooting, jumping to do some platform gaming etc) Michel was building his game using what was emerging from members of the team (we were just three gameplay programmers)So to learn it was

the best place ever : I wasn't asked to build something precise, I had almost a wildcard to try and build things."

"The spider (mount)! I can tell you I still use some of my findings almost twenty years later to explain things not to do in various projects. Was working on BGE2 at some point and made a tool that was building a city in a few clicks. A trailer leaked. The work I have done for traffic simulation has never been used by Ubi at that time but I joined Beenox to work on a Spider-Man game and my experience helped me to build the traffic system in New York, as well as car physics simulation. Then I rejoined Ubi Quebec and once again I improved my previous system for traffic simulation for Assassins Creed Syndicates. Some of the avoidance systems in SpiderMan or Syndicates are based on what I used in King Kong for cars in New York. So this pattern is everywhere in my work, building knowledge then it becomes a tool : insects rope algorithms from King Kong then became the ropes used by Splinter Rabbids & the grappling hook in Syndicates. The SplinterCell Rabbid rappel rope is exactly the same thing as the Assassin Creed Syndicate grappling hook gun. IK from King Kong was used for RRR mounts and for ACD horses with improvements every generation. I think my horse IK is now part of the animation toolbox for all AC games : they partially come from RRR. We all don't have infinite time and energy so when you know one way to do something, it's often more efficient to re-use it than to try something totally new."

"When we got the first explanation about the Wiimote we were really excited but then reality strikes back : it's not precise as advertised nor so robust in tracking. In RRR there is a rhythm/ dancing game : someone in Paris got the feeling it could be a game by itself-> Just Dance ! It started from RRR (not saying Paris devs weren't visionaries) It just proves that lucky mistakes are often the starting point of great games."

"About the FPS the rhythm in action/camera movement was the work of a close friend that a few years later left Ubi for Beenox (to become [REDCATED]) and it's because of them I joined their team on the Spider-Man project. I remember I programmed the bullet interception code as players were clicking on incoming projectiles but we wanted them to get our own projectile to get the right trajectory to intercept. At the beginning clicking was sending projectiles to where the reticle wasn't so you were missing all the time. I also made the chain visual that was grabbing Rabbids."

— Programmer (*Rayman Raving Rabbids*)

As multiple parties attest, it wasn't only deadlines and the coming of the Wii that caused the development of Ubisoft Montpellier's *Rayman 4* to change course, but also the actions of Michel Ancel behind the scenes during the project's production.

"Ancel is an asshole, nobody that worked with him on more than one or two projects wants to work with him anymore. He has to create a new team of fresh, innocent devs for every project as all the people that know him don't want to work with him. It's not the

“French genius” that press and marketing describes. He is charismatic but one of the worst creative directors I have worked with. He never knows what he wants, he asks the team to build things then he takes the best ideas and pretends they are from him. Ancel left multiple times when I was working at Ubi Montpellier. He lied to all the BGE team pretending we would have a bonus for the gold master. We all worked very hard, but got nothing. So the team was furious & he left, same with Rayman 4.”

“Michel has charisma, energy, curiosity, was able to program, animate, modeling so a bit of all knowledge. But he’s a very bad manager, absolutely not a visionary & absolutely not a game designer.”

— Programmer (*Rayman Raving Rabbids*)

“There was an internal fight between Michel and the Art Director which made the development quite painful. The Art Director who thought of himself and the art team as the most valuable thing. He’s the one who called the level designers “pizza delivery men”. He always wanted to be Michel but fell short to understand that a game is about fun and supported by looks.”

“Ubisoft was extremely protective back in the days, literally wouldn’t even send people to GDC for fear of them being poached.”

“Throwing the cow was a prototype I did for the adventure game. Rayman could grab a box then rotate to build inertia then throw the box into a giant generator which then crumbled into pieces. For context, I was playing around with mechanical systems. I had just finished building a sequence where Rayman was breaking in a giant robot then destroying it from the inside. I thought I’d think of fun stuff to break mechanisms if ever it would be needed in the rest of the game. So instead of just using that throwing ability as a combat mean, I tried to prototype precision throws. That’s how I ended up with the generator thing. Kind of using the throw to play basketball. The generator was a giant hoop with electricity inside.”

— Designer (*Rayman Raving Rabbids*)

This project met a fate similar to Phoenix Studio’s *Rayman 4*, albeit without being canceled—instead, it was taken in a completely new direction. The team managed to secure a project that went gold, is forever synonymous with the Nintendo Wii platform, and which proved to be a financially viable business venture for the company, despite not necessarily living up to *Rayman* fans’ expectations.

Side Note: You may have noticed I didn’t mention anything about the found remnants of the planned narrative of *Rayman Raving Rabbids* often mentioned in press interviews and other materials (which this document will cover later). Why is this, you may ask?

Other than the supposed lack of creative vision for the project on Michel Ancel's end, most of the narrative elements (in regards to Rayman and Andre's supposed girlfriend-rescuing antics) as shown in the concept art is rightfully attributed to **Jacques Exertier**, a prolific multi-faceted creative who not only is credited for writing and visual work on *Rayman 2: The Great Escape* but also *Beyond Good & Evil*. It was confirmed to me directly that a majority of the publicized artwork pertaining to the adventure game era of development should be attributed to him. For example, Jabbit The Rabbid holding Rayman's girlfriend hostage in an homage to Jabba the Hutt and Princess Leia of *Star Wars* fame.

Although a friend of his confirmed this oddity to me, I haven't personally had any one-on-one correspondence with Jacques. If anyone could make sense of this, it would be he himself. It was a potential personal connection that didn't come into fruition in the past, but who knows what the future may bring?

Before progressing further into the document, I'd like to address the Nintendo Game Boy Advance adaption of *Rayman Raving Rabbids*—the handheld counterpart to the home console title of the same name which was actually a repurposed adaption of Phoenix Studio's *Rayman Ghosts* project, retrofitting Rabbids as enemies as well as the *Rayman Raving Rabbids* premise due to budget constraints.

“On mainly all Visual Impact games the largest parts of the game engine were written by myself. At the time of Rayman [REDACTED] was the lead developer on this platform. A very nice guy. He now runs his own company and they are making a quite good game ... although their main activity is VR. [REDACTED] was the lead artist, they made all these graphics based on existing sketches from Ubisoft. I don't remember what they gave us exactly but I am quite sure [REDACTED] redid all the artwork that was inside the rom. I remember we were quite 'free' for the game concept and it was based on a mutation-rayman, where each mutation had its own capabilities. As we worked through the 3rd party section of Ubisoft, we had rare contact with the real *Rayman* team, which resulted in an important change when we hit the alpha stage and the Rayman team tested the game. It appeared they had been working on 'rabbits' while we were in a completely different setting... so we had to adapt all to rabbits... so it was consistent (or at least as much as possible) This is probably why there were left overs and unused assets and even unused game modes that are all left in the game.”

“Indeed ... the initial design was with the ghosts.”

“We have a scenario and we were free to make our own assets. As far as I remember the game was Alpha, so it was quite advanced before they asked us to change everything. *Raving Rabbids* on GBA was not like the other platforms... for budget reasons they just asked us to add rabbits.”

“You must know that the music was made by Ubisoft and not our team. The decision of what music goes where was also theirs ... I have no idea why music did not make it where ... It's been a long time.”

“Ubisoft is a long story and has a certain DNA of how they handle people and developments. There was crunch time but globally the people that worked at Ubisoft were actually very kind. We have had budget arguments but that is business. On the developer side... they sometimes have marketing related requests and we always found a solution to make it work. I think *Rayman* was a 6-8 month dev cycle. The world has changed... GBA didn't come with Unity or Unreal Engine, we got a very technical hardware manual and we had to write the engine and tools ourselves. I know that Ubisoft can have a bad reputation amongst developers but on the dev side itself it wasn't bad at all. They closely followed the development and I don't remember delivering late with them...”

— Developer (*Rayman Raving Rabbids GBA*)

While this is the bulk of the information I've gathered (both publicly and privately) over more than three years regarding the two aforementioned projects, the journey doesn't end here. There's still more to cover: proper contextualization, my own motivations, explaining oddities surrounding these two projects (mainly pertaining to internal development materials leaking), and my relationship to both the fanbase at large and to former and current Ubisoft staff. It goes all the way back to my years as a young teen with immeasurable curiosity and access to the internet...

Side Note: In regards to understanding certain information within the data of the leaked *Rayman Raving Rabbids* adventure game prototype, I'd like to provide some personal insight.

Firstly with regard to an environment/level named “Sphincter Cell”. This was an inside joke by the game's audio director **Yoan Fanise**, not only due to the textural and conceptual design being a remnant from *Rayman Ghosts* that ended up being reworked for *Rayman Raving Rabbids GBA* as a world referred to as “The Organic Caves”, but also due to the implementation of all the gaseous noises you hear when traversing the innards of that particular environment.

Secondly, as people familiar with the data may have noticed, certain maps within the data (viewed via the JADE editor/engine) used the abbreviation ‘FPP’. This abbreviation stood for “First Published & Playable”, meaning exactly what the name implies.

Finally, not all of the maps in the released adventure game materials pertain to *Rayman*, as a select few of these maps are actually graphical research projects meant for a potential sequel to Ubisoft Montpellier's Peter Jackson's *King Kong* video game. My hypothesis in regards to this particular point is that Ubisoft Montpellier wanted to indulge in such experiments on the off chance they were asked to provide a follow up project for their former tie-in video game if the film of the same name ever received an official theatrical sequel.

Section III: Curious Conundrum

Meeting Your Heroes and the Unique Experiences that Come at a Cost

DISCLAIMER: From this point on, sensitive and/or personal topics may be mentioned with regard to not only myself, but those with whom I've corresponded, that pertain not only to the development of both primarily mentioned iterations of Rayman 4 within this document, but also those who have worked at Ubisoft both past and present, alongside the collection of fans I personally have interacted with at the time of writing.

Such sensitive topics include and may not be limited to mental and emotional health, ██████████, ██████████, etc. Though these topics may be too heavy for some, I present this information as a full unadulterated recollection of all of my experiences with the topics and individuals at hand for the sake of proper contextualization, transparency, and historical authenticity of the events that transpired that lead to me acquiring not only the knowledge presented in this document, but also the corresponding long standing connections.

If you're not comfortable with reading further following this disclaimer, that's understandable. Everyone has their limits, and no one will ever be forced to do anything they'd rather not for the sake of their own comfort.

Given anyone's possible skepticism toward my authenticity in regards to the information shared in this document, I felt it would be necessary to recount where my personal connections began with former Ubisoft and Rayman project-related staff members, such beginnings taking me and anyone reading all the way back to when I was but a mere thirteen years old. I made a vow during that time in my life to thank anyone and everyone that made anything I personally loved, by any means necessary (within reason). As such, I spent a majority of my free time seeking out those who contributed toward entertainment franchises I enjoyed. One of these franchises was without a doubt Rayman, and as luck would have it, I ran into an all too familiar face to those who have a taste for the musical compositional side of the series: **Remi Gazel**, one of multiple composers for the very first home console Rayman title.

One day I decided to be kind towards Remi and present to him an illustration of Rayman as a gift from the heart, as a proper thank-you for his contributions to not only the series, but my happiness as a whole, for the joy their compositions brought me for years on end. Little did I know at the time that this in turn would cause Remi to personally invite and ask me to illustrate his album artwork for his then-upcoming Kickstarter project album known as *Rayman by Remi*.

From this occurrence onward, a steady “connection stream” domino effect occurred in relation to Rayman and Ubisoft as my life progressed. I’ve run into folks such as **Christophe Heral** (*Rayman Origins* and *Legends, Beyond Good & Evil*, etc.), **Frederic Houde** (Rayman’s Co-Creator), **Davide Soliani** (*Mario + Rabbids*), **Claude Samard** (*Rayman M/Arena* Composer), and countless others related to the very corporation and media franchise that forever has my undying love.

Side Note: Whilst in the past I found a few of these connections rather meaningful and heartfelt, I must admit that a select few ended up becoming rather heartbreaking and cruel in retrospect. **Remi Gazel**, though a decent man, didn’t really treat me well for a certain amount of time after being approached to illustrate the album artwork for his then-upcoming *Rayman by Remi* Kickstarter album. He was under the assumption that I was going to provide my services as a creative completely free of charge, and showed rather harsh aggression toward me when I inquired about meeting Michel Ancel. Though I was a teen and didn’t understand why making such a request would cause quite an uncharacteristic fuss at the time, it truly did reveal to me how different someone may act behind the image they display publicly.

After determining that Michel Ancel was a sore point to Remi Gazel (as he was to many on his team, as mentioned previously), along with me wanting to help a former friend of mine achieve their dreams of working with those behind the Rayman franchise, I passed the album art opportunity onto EarthGwee (and her work was fully compensated by Remi). The referral was an honest affectionate gesture of my own accord. I had a similar experience with **Christophe Heral**, composer of *Beyond Good & Evil* alongside *Rayman Origins* and *Legends*. I gifted him personally requested artwork of Globox as an act of kindness at the time, and while I am often talkative, I seemed to have been perceived as annoying and infuriating enough to deal with to not only have him show similar signs of aggression towards me when generally inquiring about Michel Ancel, but also having him purposely redirect me to **Serge Hascoët**, someone within Ubisoft known for their misconduct and harassment of former Ubisoft staff. Though the aforementioned connections were made over social media, I often ponder how irresponsible it is to send someone who is essentially a minor at the time to pester an adult primarily known for such unpleasantries.

These connections gave me not only a newfound sense of friendship, but a gradually growing family I had nothing but unconditional love and care for. Said connections grew and evolved until one day when I decided to don a metaphorical detective hat and use my connections to look for materials the public had been curious about for years, which takes us to where my research in regards to *Rayman 4* truly began...

I decided to take matters into my own hands, to truly get to the bottom of everything pertaining to both publicly known iterations of *Rayman 4*, not only for preservation of development materials but also to satiate everyone’s curiosity surrounding the titles, as well as for personal reasons which I’ll divulge later. The first figurative domino came to me through a former friend, who suggested I look into Phoenix Studio’s project then known as *Rayman 4*. I took their advice,

and with enough digging, I came across an abandoned personal blog from one of the project's core animators, with posts from the mid to late 2000s clearly containing material related to the project (still frames and inaccessible source video files from what are now publicly shared animation vignette tests from the project).

Side Note: This now-former friend is actually a rather popular entertainer in the Rayman community. What I thought was a close connection between us ended abruptly during a discussion about the mistreatment of *Rayman 4* developers, when they suddenly claimed I was "edging [them] on" with my insistent passion on the topic, and before I even had a chance to reply, they left. They did not want to listen to me talk about the projects anymore. While I can be repetitive, it's out of sentiment for the mistreatment of people I care about. This is just one of the reasons why I've developed a silent and finicky demeanor when approached by innocent fans inquiring about *Rayman 4*. Other reasons will be discussed later.

Following this discovery, I kept digging and eventually got a hold of the animator, and the rest is history. Developer after developer, I kept running into them nearly seamlessly. They shared their personal insights and experiences with the projects, with a "happy to help" attitude to boot. This continued for months on end, highs and lows aplenty, finding everyone I could reach to discuss such materials and share their hearts with me, until one fateful connection in particular was met, one connection that—whilst the most crucial in regards to *Rayman Raving Rabbids* dev materials being unearthed—was arguably the most painful for me to go through... This is the story of not only how the Phoenix Studio *Rayman Ghosts* development materials leaked, but also the *Rayman Raving Rabbids* adventure game prototype being unearthed, and how I believe I was a core contributing factor to its eventual release.

Section IV: Leaking Burrow

How Ghosts and Bunnies Came Out to Play

Firstly, I'd like to address the elephant in the room in regards to the gradual leaking of *Rayman Ghosts* dev materials over the last few years as of the time of writing. Those materials you've seen leak online in the form of various Maya/3DS Max screenshots, animated vignettes, gameplay footage mockup, etc.? Those all came from the various developers who bestowed them upon me after I inquired about their experiences and work upon their respective titles. I was given proper clearance from those anonymous individuals to release the materials. As to why I distributed them the way I did, in multiple locations on various social media platforms? It was primarily due to the one mistake I regret making while researching confidential materials: expecting people *not* to post any such materials without proper clearance on my end first.

When the search first began for *Rayman 4* dev materials and information, I was far more vocal and willing to privately share what I was up to, that was until someone (whom I won't name) decided to post a screenshot to a social media platform of a folder structure I had on an old PC pertaining to the materials to let the public in on what was transpiring. Once I made a public statement in regards to not wanting the post the materials out of fear, and I was genuinely *hammered* by an onslaught of Rayman fans who equated me to a bully and expressed displeasure in ways that I still vividly remain in my mind due to the sheer amount of messages I received over such a decision. This wasn't an isolated incident either, this was a common trend for me in regards to the fandom over various information-sharing-related occurrences over the last few years.

Nearly if not all of my social media platforms were filled to the brim with people scolding me and constantly attempting to acquire any and all information about the projects by any means necessary. I was quite literally being stalked on all social media platforms and harassed by a sizable number of individuals over information that I had yet to find a proper way to convey publicly in a convenient and comfortable manner. This also was the case in regards to personal messaging, not only in regards to *Rayman Ghosts*, but any information and materials regarding *Rayman Raving Rabbids* as well, alongside Rayman as a whole, both past and present.

I was frequently manipulated and fed a constant facade of people playing nice with me for their own personal gain. Some people, despite me repeatedly expressing my discomfort toward sharing such information and materials, continued to make manipulative comments (both direct and indirect) to emotionally guilt trip me into not only going as far as I could with researching the materials—further than I already had—but also into sharing those materials, alongside my corresponding contacts pertaining to the projects at hand. For example, indirect remarks such as “if only X person did this” (referring to me), or people directly telling me “if only we had X”, were used as a means of emotional manipulation.

My boundaries, health, and sanity were being sacrificed so much over projects I was once passionate about, due to the unfortunate actions of those I trusted. From going public with my research at the time, I developed relationship-threatening paranoia on all fronts of my life. My relationships suffered, to the point where I slowly had to regain who I was before everything transpired while simultaneously losing nearly everyone I held dear in the process. When you live life surrounded by Rayman fans by default, when you're constantly being hounded on a near-daily basis by requests for status updates on people you know personally (as well as unsolicited rumors about those people), it steadily eats at you until you're someone you don't recognize anymore.

Side Note: As an addendum to the above material, I'll be disclosing an event which truly made me realize how heavily I was being monitored for *Rayman* information. One day whilst I expressed publicly on a personal social media account I was having [REDACTED] [REDACTED] my public outcry for help was posted directly in the general text channel within a major Rayman Discord server without my consent so that the poster could complain about me. I was part of that server, potentially unbeknownst to them, and upon seeing that I immediately broke down. I was quite literally on the cusp of **committing suicide**. My every move was being watched and judged accordingly, for anything and everything I was doing. I've already had prior experience being stalked by creeps and pedophiles, amongst other traumatic experiences on the internet.

For the sake of brevity, let's continue on with how the *Rayman Raving Rabbids* dev materials leaked online, more specifically the adventure game prototype. It begins with me in the midst of my usual detective work, only for a former friend to then give me the name of someone whom I hadn't yet spoken to about their work on *Rayman Raving Rabbids*. This was when the internally retained *Rayman Raving Rabbids* dev materials other than information was scarce (only information thus far was divulged to me) until the fateful day I met this former developer...

After inquiring as to whether or not they maintained anything from the game's prototype, lo and behold: they sent me multiple screenshots related to the adventure game iteration of the project, alongside explanations of what was showcased in each. This excited and relieved me simultaneously. After having talked to countless individuals involved with the project, there was finally concrete evidence of someone retaining a copy of the material outside of Ubisoft Montpellier's development villa. However, unbeknownst to me at the time, that joy would soon falter into an unforgettable experience no one should ever have to endure...

This developer was a former designer on the *Rayman Raving Rabbids* adventure game who became a playtester when development transitioned to the party game era. This individual, while passionate in regards to their work on the adventure game, was also someone who proved to be unstable socially. Without divulging into exact details for the sake of brevity, they would be peachy keen and be more than happy to talk about their work, only to be rather cold and harsh later, treating me like I was an insect. This was a pattern that went on for months

while discussing the possibility of obtaining the showcased materials, where I was more than willing to adhere to the conditions they had set.

One day, after feeling that this individual had mistreated me for long enough, I decided to cut ties completely—despite not only the materials being at stake, but also that I still retained connections to their streaming community at the time (which was and still is full of honestly decent people). Following this detachment and discomfort with researching *Rayman Raving Rabbids* due to my prior experiences with this particular developer, people persistently harassed me with previously mentioned manipulative tactics, expressing their sadness and disappointment over my lack of access to the internal materials, despite me explaining how uncomfortable I was researching anything pertaining to *Rayman 4* at that point in time.

This manipulation, boundary-pushing, and guilt-tripping led me to discuss obtaining additional materials with a rather well-known media preservationist (whom I so happened to personally meet) who doubled as a close friend to this particular designer. Until I turned up in their life, they had absolutely no clue this designer actually worked on *Rayman Raving Rabbids* and instead primarily knew them for their streaming career. I made an honest plea for them to handle obtaining the materials instead of me after everything that transpired, hoping and praying that they'd sympathize with me—not only for the sake of historical preservation, but for the sake of my own sanity regarding the topics at hand.

This preservationist, while usually well-meaning and decent, stated, point blank, that my mental health “lacked priority” compared to other things they had going on in their life at that point. However, a few days after I quietly cut ties with them following their behavior, the adventure game iteration of *Rayman Raving Rabbids* would leak via AnonFile and 4chan on Christmas Eve of 2022.

This build contained most if not all of the material created for the adventure game era of development, but it was quite broken and a majority of the content could only be experienced and viewed with the included JADE editor/engine. I suspect this was the case due to the build being tampered with to remove any material pertaining to the party game era of development. This is evidenced by the odd build date of the original leaked material, as well as the mental gymnastics used by the aforementioned designer due to the legal concerns they expressed to me privately in regards to releasing these prototype files.

Side Note: As for how the development materials ended up outside Ubisoft Montpellier's development villa, I do have what I believe is a strong contender for an explanation, but with a possible hint of doubt.

In order to produce the Xbox 360 version of *Rayman Raving Rabbids*, there existed an asset disc containing all material from both eras of development, that was hand-delivered to Ubisoft Shanghai by one of the former designers on the project. This disc was used not only for refining pre-existing assets for higher definition standards, but also to build upon what already

existed to create Xbox-exclusive content. My theory is that in the midst of hand delivering this particular disc to Ubisoft Shanghai, one of the former developers I've spoken with backed up the data and held onto it for years to come as a personal keepsake.

With the context provided thus far, those reading this document will have questions, and these questions are likely some flavor of: "*why?*"

The answers to all such questions are as follows: unity, reunions, and second chances.

Section V: Passionate Reunion

The Many “Why’s” and Accompanying Answers

Ever since my search for information and materials regarding *Rayman 4* began, my goal wasn't only to properly archive them for the sake of historical preservation, but also a multitude of other reasons rooted in sentimentality. Knowing that the adventure game met an unfortunate demise alongside Phoenix Studio's *Rayman Ghosts* project, I wanted to take it upon myself to research both projects as a means to repurpose and revitalize each team's respective visions into one coherent vision as a sensible modern-day sequel following the events of the recent mainline Rayman video games. Knowing how much fans of old wanted to experience both *Rayman Ghosts* and the canceled adventure game iteration of *Rayman Raving Rabbids*, and knowing the unfortunate circumstances surrounding both projects, I found a worthwhile cause I was more than willing to take on: not only to bring Rayman back into the limelight, but to bestow upon the staff (who weren't given a proper shake the first time around) another chance to collaborate to produce the game they wanted to, in an industry that has changed quite a bit since both projects were initially conceived.

Though they're not always guaranteed to be surefire companions, I view these people as not only friends, but as newfound family for the impact their work has had on my life. As such, I am determined by any means necessary to not only revive Rayman for the greater good of providing the joy the series has to old and new fans alike, but also to provide Ubisoft and its former employed staff with a creative sounding board with which to revitalize the character, following more than a decade of absence from the home console video game market.

Side Note: While I wasn't and am still not employed by Ubisoft or any of its branches, if push comes to shove, I fully intend to properly pursue licensing their intellectual properties, in a similar manner to that of *Street Fighter X Mega Man*. This means that upon proving myself to the company I would properly communicate and work with Ubisoft directly to release such hypothetical titles.

While conducting research in regards to *Rayman Raving Rabbids*, I did reach out to someone who had prior legal correspondence with Ubisoft about arranging such meetings. I state this as a means to convey that I did look into handling matters regarding my research within proper legal confines, but upon hearing back from this particular individual, they informed me that their connections (Ubisoft employees) no longer worked at the company. After telling me this, they acquired a newfound aggressive tone with me in all further correspondence.

To those I held close, I often privately shared my plans to revitalize former staff and Rayman as an IP, but this was, often hurtfully, met with doubt and conditional support from those I

looked to for *unconditional* support. This was yet another factor as to why I grew increasingly silent whenever approached about the material in this document.

The following passages describe the core pitch of the game, from which I intend to make a playable proof-of-concept for public release. This will let the fanbase gauge whether or not I would be a good fit for being creatively involved with Ubisoft's IP, not only in regards to Rayman, but the company's surrealistic repertoire as a whole. This pitch and associated proof-of-concept are meant to serve as an affirmation of quality and respect in regards to the IPs utilized therein, and also as a proper gateway into the creative innovations and financial viability of bringing myself, former staff, and the IPs at hand back into the limelight.

Pitch: *Rayman Raving Reunion*

(Recontextualized Rayman Raving Rabbids Adventure Game Revival)

We arrive at my pitch in regards to revitalizing Rayman, a revitalization of *Rayman Raving Rabbids* as originally intended: a proper adventure game follow-up to the prior home console Rayman titles, but recontextualized as a sensible sequel to the modern day titles whilst respecting the core visions of the canceled iterations of *Rayman 4*.

Narrative (Introduction Sequence)

The game begins with Rayman and company (including former allies from the franchise making some welcome reappearances) attending Rayman's birthday party, celebrating his accomplishments as a hero in the forest environment where Rayman was first abducted by Rabbids all those years ago. Meanwhile, Rayman himself ponders his overall importance and shortcomings as a hero, due to his fundamentally unconventional nature and his previous experiences in the series often ending with the villains getting away or having the last laugh. After Rayman reminisces for a while, the environment grows quiet, with the sound of a spoon on a toasting glass calling everyone over to sing the man of the hour his happy birthday song. Upon Rayman closing his eyes and keeping them shut per the request of everyone involved, their voices trail off. Rustling bushes and mumbling chatter start filling the air. Once the area around Rayman grows faint, he opens his eyes to an all too familiar face: a Raving Rabbid staring him down. It lets out a scream, which is quickly joined by a horde of unrelenting disfigured, zombified, and otherwise visually unique Rabbids all around, which then pounce on him. Before being knocked unconscious, Rayman sees an ominous shadowed figure in a flying wheelchair adorned with discarded toilet accessories, amidst a steadily rising population of Rabbids and machinery in the background.

Rayman wakes up in a rather disgustingly unclean, yet high-tech underground holding facility, only to find his hands missing. The facility is full of not just captured Teensies, but Globox's children, donning archetypical black and white striped prisoner uniforms. The facility is steadily shipping groups of these inhabitants into a vast collection of Rabbid-shaped motherships with holding cell underbellies to store prisoners alongside other personnel and supplies. Rayman, upon seeing such horrific implications, ends up thrown into a jail cell of his own, however unbeknownst to the Rabbids who throw Rayman into the cell, they just so happened to throw him into the same holding cell as his blood-brother *Globox*, prompting Globox to run towards Rayman and hug him with the utmost of relief. Not long after the impromptu reunion, to the sudden surprise of Rayman and Globox, Murphy flies right into the cell holding the duo via a ventilation shaft, popping off the front cover and accidentally hitting the nearest wall head-on. After Rayman and Globox assist dusting him off and checking if he's conscious with a "how many fingers am I holding up" test administered by Globox, he stabilizes and informs the duo of where the Rabbids are holding Rayman's hands. Upon disseminating this information, the trio now have to find a way to make their escape from their holding cell and head to their new goal, all the while Rayman remains defenseless without his hands.

After an introductory level that teaches the player Rayman's on-foot movement and controls, the trio finds the first boss of the game guarding Rayman's hands: an enlarged mecha of an Electroon piloted by none other than Rabbid Pink of *Rayman Raving Rabbids* fame, complete with an Rabbid insignia eyepatch to hide damage dealt to his face from years-long deterioration. The name of the game with this boss would be utilizing your prior movement knowledge to avoid attacks and maneuver the boss into its own boulder debris from the ceiling to inflict damage on it. Upon the boss being defeated, the mecha would explode and would leave Rabbid Pink full of rage and calling for Rabbid prison guards, causing the protagonist trio to be reprimanded yet again, with at least a semblance of comfort from the fact that Rayman has now regained his hands.

Rayman and friends later find themselves thrown into the all too familiar *Rayman Raving Rabbids* coliseum, said coliseum being the above-ground counterpart to the previously seen underground high-tech prisoner holding facility. A roaring and raving-mad audience occupies the stands while a rather large Rabbid, Jabbit the Rabbid, is seen in front, lounging with who appears to be an imprisoned Ly the Fairy being held against her will as a servant to Jabbit. With a snap of Jabbit's fingers, the player is thrust into an introductory combat sequence, taking out a horde of blood-thirsty Rabbid mooks with some of them riding unwilling innocent creatures.

Upon completion of the combat tutorial, Jabbit, out of frustration, then challenges the trio to a three-lap rocket shell race around the innards of the coliseum for the sake of entertaining the Rabbid masses. This race serves as the player's introduction to vehicle and mount-centric controls. Jabbit inevitably loses the race as his massive build causes the miniature rocket shell he pilots to grow sluggish and weary in a comedic fashion. After completing the final lap, the protagonists spot an opportunity to rescue Ly the Fairy from her shackles and immediately attempt to make a break for it with a horde of Jabbit's Rabbid minions following behind in sci-fi

hovercrafts, complete with lasers and toilet-themed weaponry. The chase culminates with Rayman and company being knocked clean out of the sky, in a similar fashion to *Rayman 2: The Great Escape*'s introductory sequence, but with the now-four protagonists once again separated above what appears to be *Rayman 1*'s world map.

Rayman finds himself landed in Candy Chateau, needing to not only find his comrades, but also hurry back home to put a stop to whatever truly is going on here, and find out exactly why the Rabbids are back after being dormant in Rayman's world for years. Who was that mysterious figure observing Rayman during his birthday party? Why have the Rabbids gone violent and put aside their foolish ways in exchange for a more vicious demeanor? Why are all of the Rabbids visually disfigured?

Narrative (Misc. Details)

Throughout the game, the player alongside Rayman will discover that the mysterious shadow silhouette character the Rabbids were being led by was none other than the former leader of the Rabbids, *Professor Barranco*. His misguided anger and retaliation towards Rayman was the result of years of abuse and mistreatment by the residents of The Glade of Dreams following the Rabbids' behavior in the original party game trilogy. The Glade of Dreams inhabitants essentially stereotyped the species as being dimwitted, and looked down on them for their lack of respectable attributes—despite their technological advances—seeing them as easy targets for bullying. This caused the Rabbids to not only become disfigured from these years of torment, but also from lying in the shadows for so long, where they steadily plotted their revenge.

In this story, Professor Barranco has personal history with Rayman, communicated throughout the game in multiple flashbacks, going all the way back to when he was an infant. He watched Rayman from behind the scenes ever since the events of the first Rayman game, inspired and amazed by his feats as a hero (as were the other Rabbids). Professor Barranco, along with practically the entire species, saw Rayman as someone they aspired to be equal to in prowess, and as a potentially never-ending amusing test subject for them to study—no matter how often were put down or bullied for being different—and keep themselves entertained. After the celebratory party at conclusion of *Rayman 2: The Great Escape*, a young Professor Barranco is offered Rayman's scarf by Rayman himself, which he continues to wear in the present day—albeit in a battered and bruised state—to hide his disfigurement. The scarf creates Barranco's shadowy silhouette.

The day which led Professor Barranco and the Rabbid population to become as vicious as they are was the very day the Rabbid masses decided to kidnap Rayman for the first time. They took him back to the coliseum in order to, in their eyes, have fun with him—to test their favorite hero's unique abilities to the utmost degree, like a lab rat, after observing all of his prior feats. What Professor Barranco thought would be a chance to challenge Rayman as an equal turned out to be an unforgettable experience, full of violent and traumatic torture, of not only himself but also his Rabbid comrades, constantly being smacked around and embarrassed for things that seemed normal to them. The Rabbids never truly understood the negative connotations of kidnapping and enslaving innocent creatures, due to their social ineptitude and general

misguidedness. Their experiences following *Rayman Raving Rabbids* resulted in them steadily becoming more vicious and bitter. Their stubbornness, arrogance, and lack of accountability culminated in the Rabbids you see in this title: ferocious beasts of varying shapes, sizes, and ages. They not only want complete control over the Glade of Dreams and Rayman and friends' heads on a silver platter, but will hunt anyone down by any means necessary to make it happen.

Gameplay

The gameplay mechanics are similar to *Rayman Origins* and *Legends*, but in a 3D space. Unlike those games, however, exploration is at the forefront, alongside organically-connected, tight-knit sandbox levels, à la Rareware's *Banjo-Kazooie*. Worlds are filled with an ever-increasing supply of Rabbid-centric enemies alongside former series staples (revived by the Rabbids as a means to truly put a stop to Rayman). Given the Rabbids' technical prowess, it felt appropriate for them to know how to revive the likes of deceased Robo-Pirates whilst infusing them with their own sci-fi and toilet-themed weaponry, for example. Think the likes of The Lividstones, Electroons, etc. but fully mechanical and decked out to the highest degree in humor, sci-fi efficiency, or both.

The game has three core gameplay loop collectables: Lums, Teensies, and Globox Children.

Lums are used not only to restore a once again shattered heart of the world (The Rabbids shattered it in order to slow Rayman down) but also as a form of in-game currency to purchase cosmetics for the player to don whenever they desire—after purchasing them at designated Nymph seamstress shops overseen by Betilla & co., scattered throughout the various worlds. Upon providing enough lums for a given costume, they'd hand knit it for Rayman as a gesture of affection and to “get their creative side on” to make the eponymous lad as stylish as possible (to the player's liking, of course). A select few of the planned costumes include Classic Rayman (*Rayman 1*), *Rayman Raving Rabbids* disguises, and combat outfits (*Rayman 3*).

Teensies are a world-centric progression collectable: rescue enough of them as rewards from completing various tasks in each world (complete with busting them out of cages by force) to progress to a penultimate platforming gauntlet challenge in each world, testing what you've learned as the player, where you play as none other than *Globox* in order to proceed to the next world. Unlike Rayman, Globox cannot perform any combat maneuvers, due to him having his former *Rayman 2: The Great Escape* personality, leaving him solely reliant on his maneuverability and crafty avoidance of enemies. Why do you play as Globox for such a platforming challenge, you may ask? This brings us to our last core gameplay loop collectable...

Globox Children, much like Teensies, are held in cages. Instead of being tied to primary mission objectives, however, they're scattered out in the open, often hidden in each world as a collectable for the player to find while exploring. The number of Globox Children the player has collected as Rayman in that world prior to the Globox platforming challenge dictates the number of children Globox will be able to use (akin to *Pikmin*) during said platforming gauntlet. Each world has its own category of Globox Child, each with its own visual design and elemental properties that may be utilized by Globox for the sake of traversal or slowing down enemies.

Upon completing each world's platforming gauntlet, Globox and Rayman send the children off to a safe, undisclosed location before approaching that world's boss. Bosses in the game are titanic mechanical variants of previous Rayman enemies, which Rayman has to scale via platforming while doing whatever he can to disassemble each machine—from both the outside and inside—until it's nothing but a scrap heap. They're essentially an expanded platforming challenge, complete with their own unique behavioral patterns, mount utilization, and means of inflicting damage upon Rayman. Think Microsoft's *Voodoo Vince*'s final boss mixed with the urgency of *Rayman 2: The Great Escape*'s level *The Precipice*.

Mounts in this revitalization of *Rayman Raving Rabbids* won't always behave in a traditional sense, as this game explores an often forgotten facet of Rayman's abilities, as seen in *Rayman 2: The Great Escape*. Rayman, within a certain radius, will have the ability to control sentient creatures via a steady electrical stream emitting from his navel, akin to telekinesis, allowing for unique puzzle-solving possibilities and the utmost freedom for the player (within reasonable limits, as to not break the design of any core gameplay segments).

Unlike the original concept of "The Art of Dance", pertaining to the costumes/disguises in the adventure game iteration of *Rayman Raving Rabbids*, this title has Rayman scour tombs like those of *Rayman 2: The Great Escape* (in addition to other locations) in order to uncover a prophecy of the fall of the Rabbids. This prophecy is foretold by ancient scriptures marked with dance moves that Rayman can use to summon elemental powers. These dance moves function much like songs in *The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time*: using a combination of button inputs, Rayman's fists change visually to represent what elemental ability is currently in use as well as their specific function. Some examples of planned elemental abilities include Fire, Water, Air, Ice, and Earth.

The game encourages backtracking to explore material unlocked as the player progresses, optionally using a fast-travel system where Rayman could move through specially marked Rabbid burrow mounds to quickly travel from point A to point B.

Environmental storytelling is also a key element, with both familiar and new worlds being filled to the brim with increasingly vulgar and immature vandalism as the player progresses through the story and each world, conveying to the player the damage the Rabbids are causing by their mere presence alone.

Side Note: Given the topic at hand, I want to address that this isn't the only pitch I've ever written in regard to Rayman, the Rabbids, or Ubisoft's IP repertoire as a whole. I only discuss this one in particular given its relation to Rayman 4, alongside not wanting to reveal my metaphorical full deck of cards on the off chance I may get the opportunity to develop them later in life or repurpose my ideas for them into wholly original media of my own creation.

Section VI: Closing Statements

With everything I've disclosed in this document, I wanted to not only come clean with my experiences regarding *Rayman 4*, but also regarding those involved with the franchise and Ubisoft as a whole, developers and fans alike. There was one specific event which transpired recently (as of the time of writing) that was the catalyst for my decision to finally release all of this information to the public, in addition to the prior discussed events.

This portion of the story takes us to modern day Ubisoft, in the Milan branch, despite my past involvement in regards to *Rayman 4* and how much of an open secret it was that I've always had a trustworthy relationship with those who currently still work in all branches of the company. I maintained healthy relationships with those responsible for the *Mario + Rabbids* titles alongside the *Rayman in the Phantom Show* DLC, so much so that I always went out of my way to let everyone on the team know how much I appreciated and valued their work and companionship in any way that I could, such as by gathering as many fans as possible to collectively thank the team members, alongside offering artwork and sentimental words to encourage them and their efforts no matter what they were up to, both individually and company-wide.

Months in advance of an in-person fan meetup for *Rayman in the Phantom Show* which gave invited fans an opportunity to playtest and meet those who worked in Milan, I was informed on multiple occasions of what to expect, from those who were invited privately. One person was invited initially, but later declined to attend. When the event came and went, I was informed from a close colleague in the studio that the invitations weren't up to *them*, but rather a community manager from Ubisoft Montpellier. Not being invited, whilst understandable, really left me feeling a somber sadness for months afterwards. Though it wasn't up to the core staff, nor does the world owe anyone anything, it was particularly odd to me given how those involved with the studio knew of me personally and a sizable number were following me on social media. I really wanted to see my friends and those I considered family, so to not be invited (which, again, is understandable) really made me feel as though no one even fought for me to be invited. I was left feeling an isolation I wouldn't dare wish upon anyone for many months.

This isolation, the experiences listed in this document, and above all else also being fed rumors about Davide Soliani in relation to the studio (of which I was already informed by a former leak enthusiast I used to know) left me with a plethora of uncomfortable emotions and thoughts about my experience with the Rayman franchise. I had to ponder all elements for months to find peace and come to terms with everything that transpired in relation to Ubisoft and Rayman.

Why am I including this in this document? Multiple reasons really, primarily for the sake of full transparency on my end, but to also let this be a cautionary reminder of whom to trust.

To those innocent Rayman fans who were just curious about the information I had:

May this document (aside from my experiences) help you flourish and satisfy your curiosity, not only in regard to both *Rayman 4* projects, but to help you chase your dreams and harness your creativity no matter what anyone else may say. Become inspired by those who came before and utilize your knowledge to the best of your ability. Always believe and have hope that Rayman will one day come back. Fight for what you believe in and do whatever it takes to achieve your goals.

To Ubisoft staff, both former and present:

I really did my best to fight for you in every way conceivable. You all are, no matter how I may have been treated, a crucial group of people in my life, a distant family that, while we may not always see eye to eye, I always want to provide for, so long as it means you're comfortable and happy. I really put my best foot forward to give you all the second chances you deserved, along with proper encouragement when times were tough. If I ever failed you or anyone involved, I humbly and sincerely apologize. I will always fight for you all and have your voices be heard no matter what may transpire. Family sticks together through thick and thin.

With everything expressed in this document, this will also serve as my resignation from the internet for an unspecified period of time. Recounting such personally taxing events alongside sensitive internal matters is an overwhelming amount of material to take in, so I have no doubt that this document will be dispersed accordingly the moment it goes live. To best remain at peace and allow others to process these topics at their own pace, it's best that I remove myself publicly from all social media platforms for a while, for the sake of my own sanity. Instead, I'll be keeping to my close friends.

Remember to follow your heart and never give up, life will lead you to where you want to go as long as you persevere. Always live, laugh, and prosper.

—*Sacred Surrealist*