

Eric Chamberlain
IFDM 210 Pipeline: Preproduction assignment

Skyscraper Summer

by Eric Chamberlain

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Back Story

“Skyscraper Summer”

Ferris “Chuck” Baller comes from a comfortable yet somewhat bland middle class family living in a one-story baby turtle (actual paint color, look it up) house on a dead-end street. His sister suffers from insecurity issues, his mom makes pie and his cat is friendly but has no friends because it is an indoor cat. *Yearning for action beyond the trimmed-hedge geography and Walmart topiary of suburbia, Ferris grows restless.*

Ferris has a job recycling tape and reconnecting mistakenly mowed blades of grass. The work is ferociously tedious, but it gives him a paycheck. It takes a sharp eye to correctly match blades of grass, and Ferris of the Ballers is no slouch when it comes to detail.

One day after work, shooting the breeze with his coworkers about the merits of grass, one of Ferris’ friends asked him how long he has been at his current job. Ferris sullenly replied that he has had the job for over five years. The vast ocean of time spent screwing with tape and grass had never really occurred to Ferris, but suddenly, suddenly it hit him hard. Rather than being proud of his consistent work ethic, he found himself restless, almost panicked, realizing that he was wasting his precious life. Ferris stared into space, with the gaze of a hardened combat veteran who sees beyond the horizon and into the will of the divine, but without being a hardened combat veteran who sees beyond the horizon and into the will of the divine.

As the Summer of ‘78 burns on and the halcyon of faded days loses its grip on the imagination, Ferris finally decides to venture beyond the subdivisions and seek excitement in the Big City.

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Character description

Name: Ferris Baller

Age: 23

Friends: Ferris has plenty of acquaintances, but only a small handful of friends from the school days. His clique is comprised of all the guys who don't fit into any of the other cliques. He has plenty of personal projects, hobbies and half-baked ideas to keep him busy so, while he is not an outright loner, friends are a matter of convenience more than anything else. He has a slight inward contempt for others but manages to be friendly.

Desires: Ferris is really bored with where he is and wants to go out and see what the world is all about. He's tired of being trapped in his job after high school, he's never had a career, and he wants to go kick some butt in the universe. He does not like being offered help. Ferris feels like he can't really define his life or even get close to others until he somehow proves himself (mostly to himself). Ferris wants to break free and do something big.

Balance/routine: Ferris wakes up every day at 6:30, skips a shower and eats on his way to work with a slight hangover. Work is easy but tedious. Ferris breaks for lunch, listens to news stories of exciting, far away places on the radio, then goes back to work. In the late afternoon he goes home, plays with the cat and fantasizes about doing big things while his mom yells at Wheel of Fortune on TV. After dinner he heads out with friends to drink beer, listen to music and talk about the things they never seem to get around to doing, underneath the distant city lights, dimming in atmospheric perspective.

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Story synopsis, Skyscraper Summer

Act I

Ferris has left the safe and placid mediocrity of suburbia and is entering the city. He looks around, taking in the sights. Like a kid in a candy store, he doesn't really know what to do or where to go. Being his first time in the city, he is a bit overwhelmed by the hustle and bustle. As he settles down and is finally enjoying his time, Ferris fixes his gaze upon a skyscraper and determines that he will bounce all the way to the top. It's exactly the kind of excitement he seeks in life. He instantly realizes his objective and has a burning desire to get to the top of the building.

Act II

Ferris looks up to the top of his target. He makes sure he has enough space, gets a rolling start and speeds toward the building. He bounces and then bounces again, but fails to reach the top of the building. After a couple more tries, Ferris realizes he is no closer to achieving his objective. Just as he begins to ponder the finality of his failure, he has an idea!

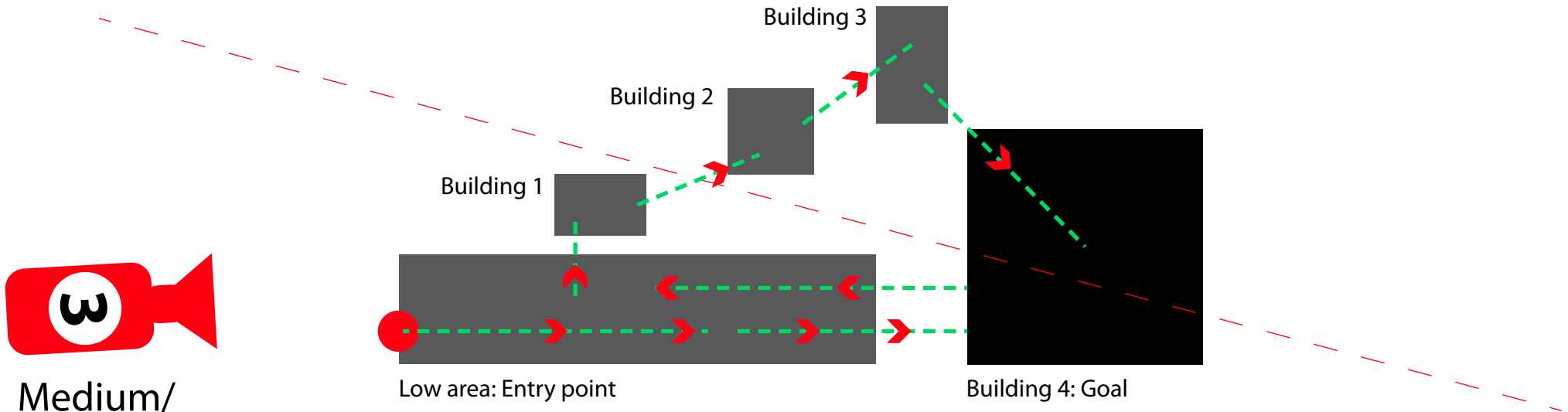
Act III

Ferris looks around at the different buildings, exuberantly realizing that he can bounce his way up smaller buildings and work his way to the top of the skyscraper! Holy cats! He gets a rolling start, bounces to a building close to him, then to a higher building, and another and he finally reaches the top of the skyscraper! Ferris has successfully defeated boredom and proven himself. He can finally get on with his life!

Top-down set/camera chart

Path of action

180° Line



Medium/
medium close-up



Wide shot



Establishing shot

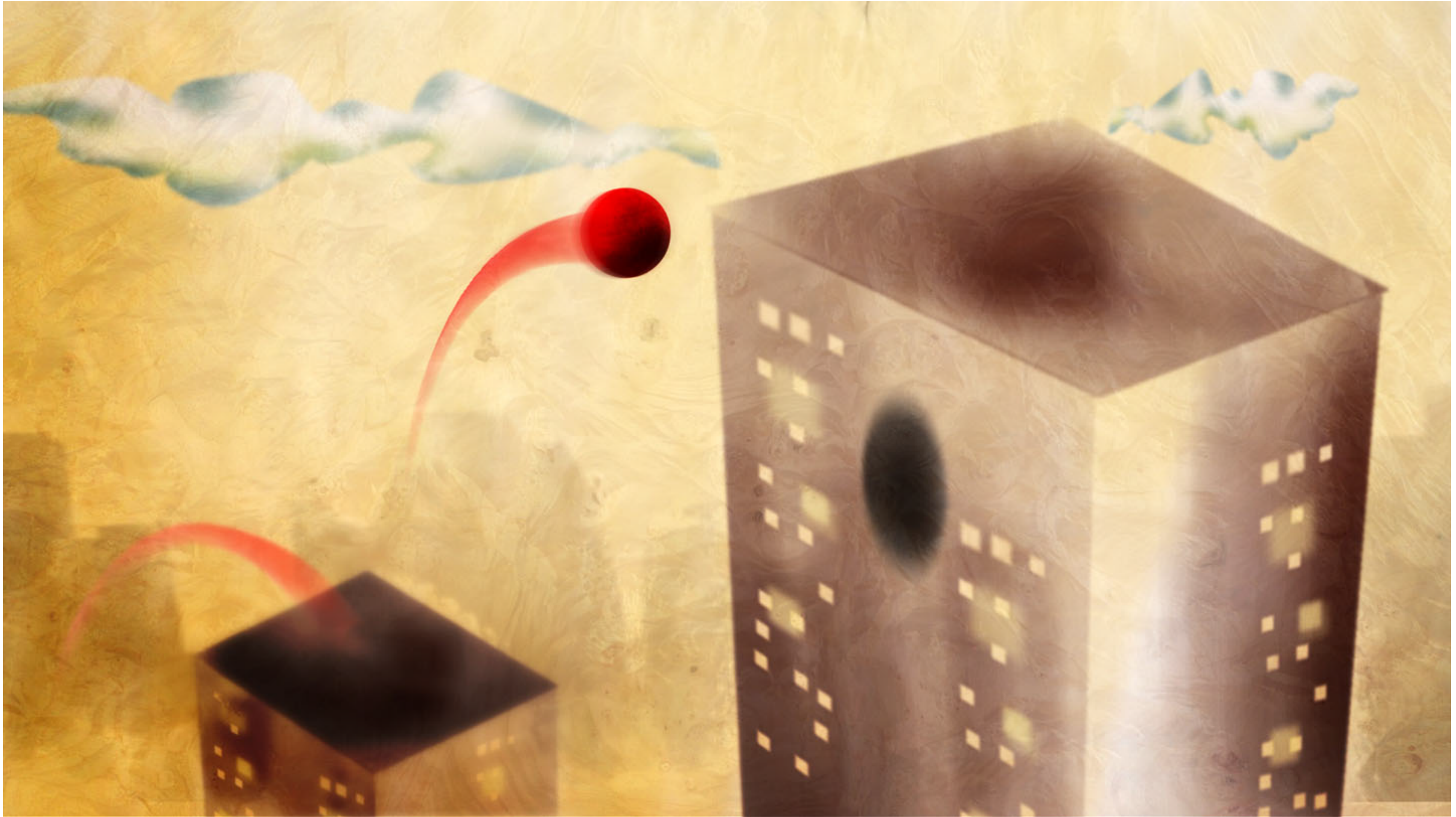
Concept art, Skyscraper Summer



Concept art, Skyscraper Summer



Concept art, Skyscraper Summer



Storyboard, Skyscraper Summer

