

An Encounter with . . . **Ace Lightning and the Carnival of Doom**

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On a dark and gloomy night, punctuated by peels of thunder and flashes of lightning, Mark Hollander, a teenage boy from England new to North America, is alone in his room playing a computer game — *Ace Lightning and the Carnival of Doom*. Everything is normal until a previously unseen warning appears on Mark's screen:

"Entering Level 7. Enter at your own risk."

Suddenly, a bolt of lightning hits

the satellite dish atop the family home and "The Game Begins." This is the first episode of the youth series *Ace Lightning and the Carnival of Doom*, a Canada/UK, Alliance Atlantis/BBC co-production which I shot "film style" on digital video, with a few twists, beginning in 2001. After a year off, a second season followed in 2003 and there are prospects for a third.

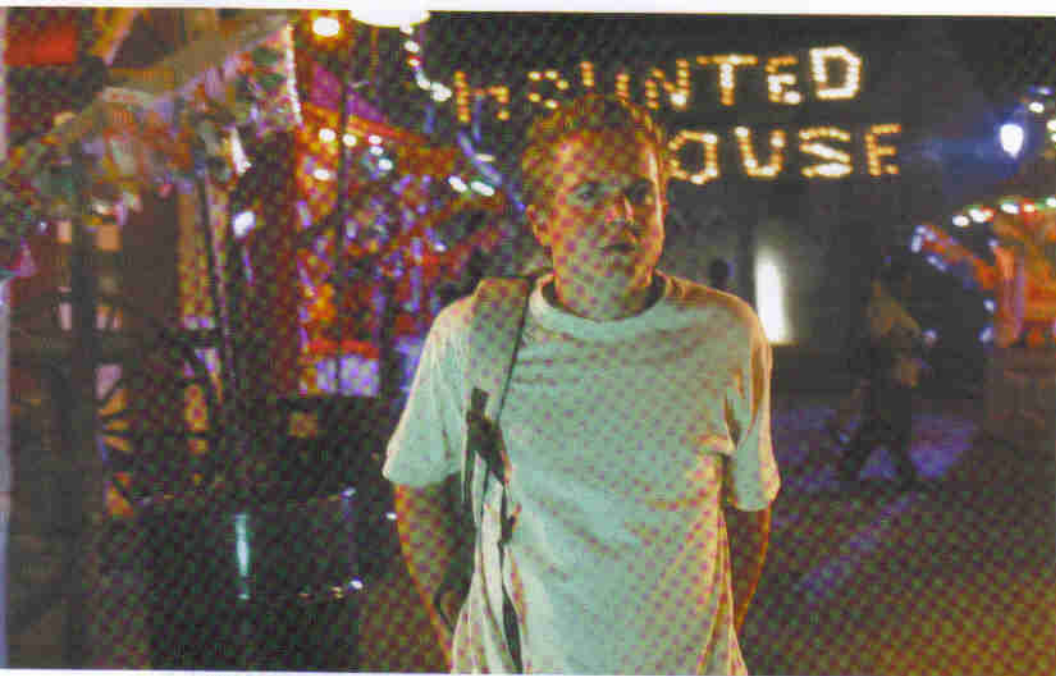
To sketch the plot, the lightning bridges the gap between the game and our world, allowing the combatants

from the game in the Sixth Dimension to escape into ours. The good guys are led by super hero Ace Lightning, a member of the Lightning Knights, who recruits Mark, our English teenager, as one of the Knights. The bad guys include Lord Fear, Staffhead, Anvil, Dirty Rat, Pig Face and Lady Illusion.

The show's otherworldly experience is unique partly because of the interaction of live and animated characters, the latter of whom, including Ace himself, appear in roughly half of each 30-minute episode. In addition, the series was shot with the Sony DVW-790WS PAL camera in 16:9 format using the BBC's electronic cinematography process. In this end-to-end process, the DVW-790WS records the signal digitally, ensuring that the signal remains in the digital domain (there is no standards conversion of any kind) until the material is output to tape as NTSC 4:3, PAL 16:9 or whatever format the distribution company accepts for delivery to a broadcaster.

Ace Lightning is seen in over 80 countries and has been dubbed into German, Spanish, French, Italian, Cantonese, and a number of Slavic languages.

When Rick Siggelkow, executive producer for BBC Worldwide North America, and producer Jim Corston approached me to do this series, we had extensive talks about the concept



CARNIVAL OF DOOM: Teenage hero Mark Hollander (Thomas Wansley) faces the unknown in *Ace Lightning and the Carnival of Doom*.