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STORIES THAT MOVE

AMAZON AT COMIC-CON

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Amazon at Comic-Con

A HEROIC ADVENTURE

1 (800) 247-4302
INFO@CZARNOWSKI.COM



Challenge

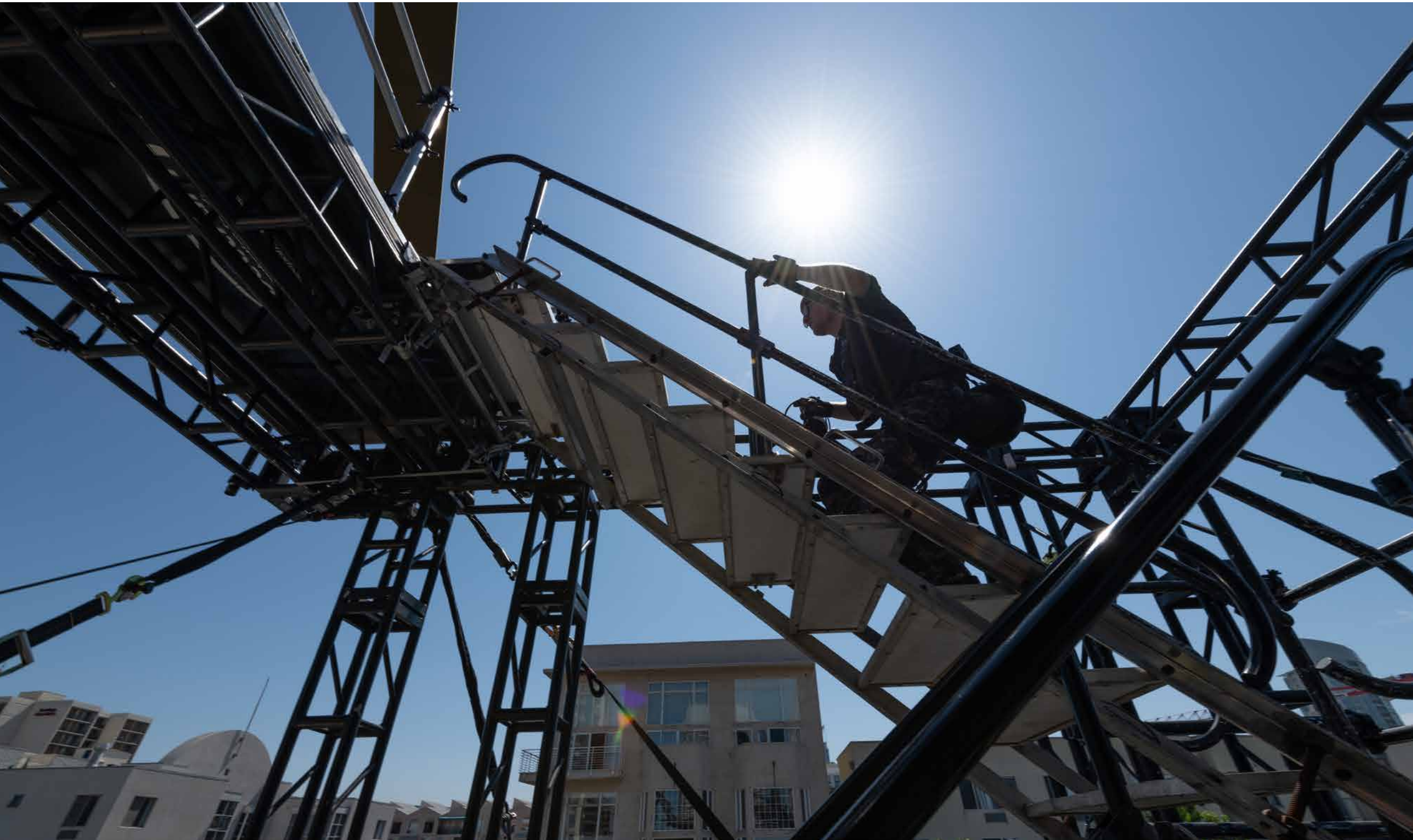
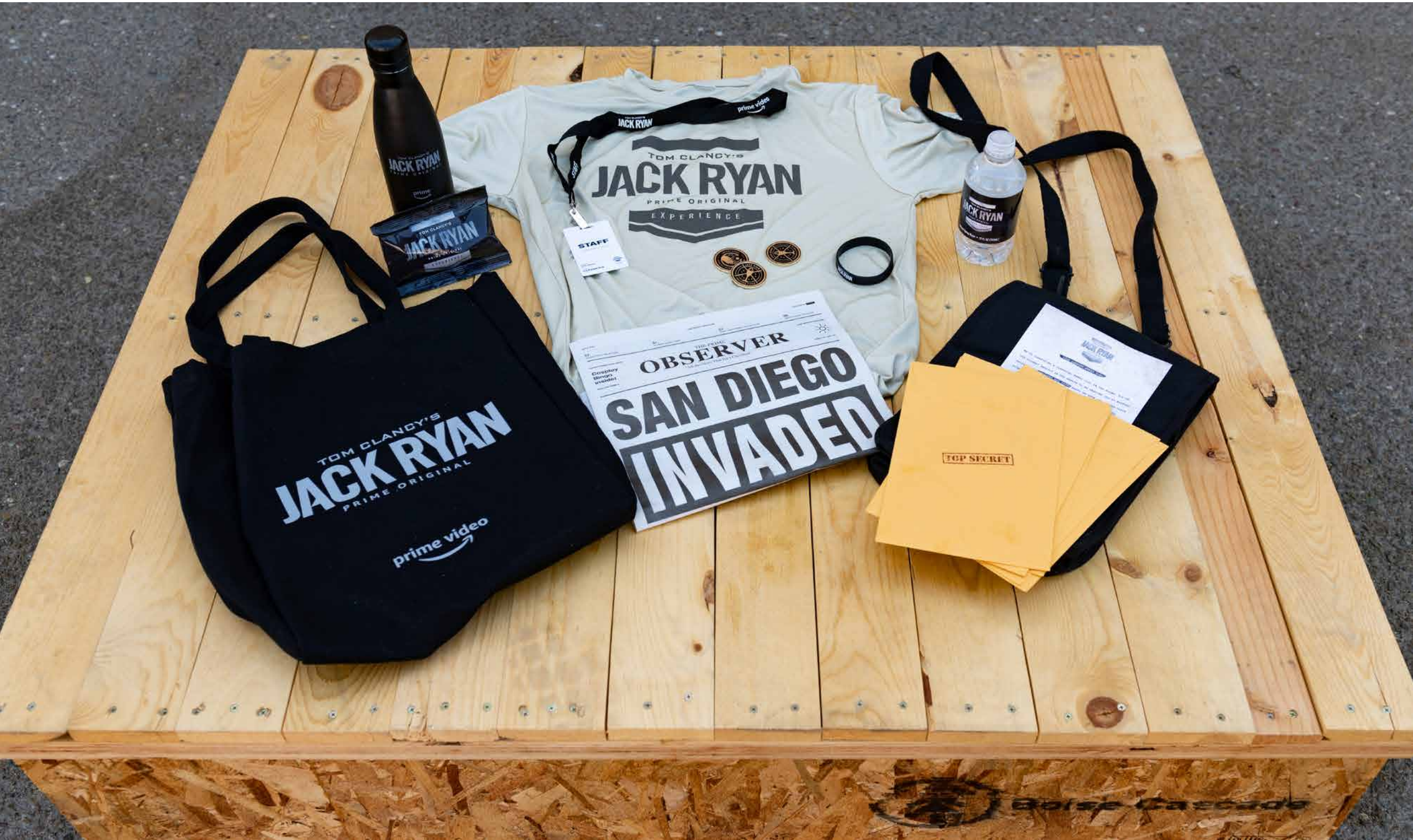
To partner with creative agency Media Monks in the design and execution of the country's largest virtual reality experience at the world's biggest comic and pop culture festival.

Solution

An authentic outdoor experience that turned Comic Con’s parking lot into a Yemen city block and completely immersed attendees in the adventurous world of Amazon’s unassuming hero, Jack Ryan.

Amazon wanted a Disney-level experience to promote their new Jack Ryan Prime series at Comic-Con. So they hired Media Monks to create an expansive virtual reality experience. And when Media Monks needed help designing and executing it, they came to us.

The project was a massive undertaking. The footprint alone covered nearly an acre and a half and housed three distinct activations that ranged from the mind-bending to the heart-pounding. And the detail required to cultivate an absorbing reality in both the real and virtual worlds was next level.



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“We partnered with Czarnowski because we had worked with them on many other projects doing big installation builds before. And with this one, it was one of the biggest installations we’d ever done. We needed a partner we could totally trust to execute it.”

– Chris Byrne, Director of US Partnerships and Production, Media Monks



The experience’s most buzzed-about activation was the training field, where attendees were turned into ‘Jack Ryan’ trainees, suited up with a backpack, harness, sensors and VR goggles and sent off to complete a daring mission.

The trainees’ first assignment was a three-story climb up the side of a building to perch in the jump seat of a 45-foot-long rooftop helicopter we created using foam, paint and lots of ingenuity.

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Once their harness was attached and the VR goggles were on, trainees “jumped” from the helicopter. What felt and looked like a fast drop thousands of feet above the streets of Yemen for the participant was actually a controlled, slow-paced lowering over a large wind fan.

Down on solid ground, trainees were told to reach out and shut off the power grid, giving staff the opportunity to reconnect the participant’s tracking system without pulling the participant out of character or experience.

Trainees were then instructed to walk a foot-wide plank that seemingly connected one building to the next. More than halfway through, part of the plank appeared to disappear, forcing trainees to keep traversing the narrowed walkway or jump to safety. Once on the other side, trainees had to duck behind boxes and ward off assailants to make their escape via zipline.

The zipline was only 150-feet long but felt like 1,000 feet in virtual reality. Trainees were then ushered behind the wheel of a truck to race down the streets of Yemen, dodging bombs, fruit cars, chickens and more before reaching the safe room.



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If guests weren't up for taking on the training field, they could hang out in the Yemeni marketplace filled with lounge areas, food stalls and beverage bins. Visitors could grab a marketplace newspaper containing a crossword, hidden clues and trivia to guide them through the market and towards prizes. Each marketplace tent also offered games, quizzes and other interactions with Jack Ryan-themed characters.

To deliver a completely immersive experience, every detail of each activation was carefully considered—from ensuring the costumes were down-to-the-socks accurate, culturally respectful and properly sized for 90+ staff to placing boxes, walls and other objects within millimeters of where they existed in the virtual world.

The same detailed approach was taken to staffing by hiring actors who looked and felt the part. Each team member was given a narrative, talking points and a purpose for being there to enhance the reality of the experience.

We worked with Army and Navy suppliers to source staging and props, including clothing and real army tents for the marketplace. We also managed other logistics like permitting, on-site safety, line management and off-site promotion to make sure the experience ran smoothly and was well attended.



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Amazon was thrilled with the exposure and attention the Jack Ryan Experience received, including a Best of Comic-Con nod from CNET and lots of social media love from participants who felt it was the best thing they participated in at Comic-Con 2018.

With one of Comic-Con's longest lines, it was no surprise the attendance goal of 2,000 visitors per day was exceeded by more than 1,000.

Partnerships are important, and we were proud to work with Media Monks to create this exciting, one-of-a-kind experience for Amazon.

"Czarnowski's catch phrase is "We love what we do." And I think that was very clear in the way we interact with them and the way their team came together and supported us as we pulled off this installation."

– Chris Byrne, Director of US Partnerships and Production, Media Monks



Say hello.

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