GOD OF WAR ™

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Background Questions

1.   You started your career as an aspiring film director, 'fell into' the gaming world and, thankfully for us, have stayed here. What is the appeal of gaming?

More than any other medium, gaming has the potential to transport you to another world. I think this is one of the main reasons people watch movies, read books, and play games. Life is pretty stressful and sometimes mundane and sometimes people want to escape and have great adventures. I always wanted to be one of the people who created these adventures and for me, for a long time, film was the best way to go about providing these experiences. But once 3D console gaming came along, it was very evident that the best way to give players amazing experiences was through games.

2.   Your games are stylish, dark and bloody? Why?

I don't really know. I just really like exploring my dark side, I guess. It is not a conscious desire or anything. It just kind of happens. I remember telling my wife after TWISTED METAL:BLACK that I was done with all the blood and guts and scary stuff and that, for my next game, I was gonna make this high adventure, family friendly Greek mythology game. And I really tried. GOD OF WAR started out much more friendly and bright, but bit by bit, the dark stuff crept in. I really do have other aspects of my personality and I am going to try real hard to make my next game a bit lighter. I am so proud of GOD OF WAR, and the voice and soul of the game, but I am ready to move on to something a bit brighter.

3.   Do you think game production should be recognised as as much of an 'art' form as cinema and literature?

It doesn't really matter to me. It means absolutely nothing to me if my games are thought of as art or if people think of me as an artist. I would be much more flattered if people thought of me as an entertainer. I think

entertaining people is a much more noble pursuit. That said, I do think games have the same potential for moving people on an emotional level as books or film. I think much of the problem is we don't have enough people in the business who are striving to create that kind of experience. There are a few, but not many.

4.   Do you think that gaming, with its emphasis on involvement and control of the action, is changing society's attitude to narrative?

I do think attitude to narrative is changing, but I don't know why. It may be a mix of games (where players really shape the narrative themselves) along with the massive availability of more traditional linear entertainment (with DVDS, PAY PER VIEW, TIVO, Internet, etc). Whatever the reason, it is becoming harder and harder to watch traditional narrative because it is so easy to second guess the story and know what is coming an hour before it arrives. Sure, the great movies and books get around this by being great and imaginative. But I think games have really trained people to think about narrative in a unique way so the traditional method has to work harder to be effective. I'm not a hardcore gamer at all, but these days, most times I would rather play a game and/or surf the net than go see a film. And I think that's because most films these days are very 'been there,done that'.

5.   Who would cite as your biggest influences from film, literature and gaming?

Before Spielberg started making 'message' movies, I loved him SO much. That period from 75 to 84 was just magic. He really was the best entertainer on the planet. I miss those days. Maybe WAR OF THE WORLDS will bring him back? From games I really love Hideo Kojima and Fumito Ueda, who directed ICO. Both of these guys really bring soul to their games and I really respond to that as a player. From books, I love Stephen King, Michael Chrichton, Stan Lee and Orson Scott Card.

6.   Where do you find the inspiration for your productions and your characters?

Mainly from my love of the movies and games I grew up playing. I was such a pop-culture kid, seeing every movie, playing every game, reading tons of comics. And I still just love that stuff. I'm thrilled to see the new STAR WARS, can't wait to play the new ZELDA, and dying to see the new SUPERMAN movie. Every Wednesday I hit the comic shop to pick up an armload of new books. You know, I love being a geek and I love having a job where I get to entertain the geek part of myself all year long! So it really just comes down to me going: what would I like to play next? And if it's not on the market already, I go to my bosses and try to get them to let me make it!

7.   How important is music in creating the feel of a game?

It is a massively important tool in making a game. Music is really a shorthand way to communicate with the audience, you know? Hearing a particular melody or a particular vibe from a song can do more to sell your scene than any other element. In GOD OF WAR music was of huge importance and I am so proud of the way it turned out.

8.   What is your favourite game; film; drink; book; food; gadget?

Film: Raiders of the Lost Ark
Drink: Diet Coke
Book: Ender's Game
Food: Cheese Pizza (no sauce)
Gadget: PSP
Game: FLASHBACK or DEUS EX

9.   What is your biggest: love; hate; mistake?

Love: My Family
Hate: being fat
Mistake: Not to sound like an ass, but I don't believe in mistakes. If you do something- good or bad- you do it because you wanted to. How can doing what you want be a mistake?

10.   What is currently playing on your i-pod / in your car?

I'm so not hip to music. Lets see, right now I am listening to a compilation CD of southern rock from the 1970s. Also, BLACK EYED PEAS are good, soundtrack to FLASH GORDON from QUEEN, QUEEN'S greatest hits, STYX greatest hits, and soundtrack to RETURN OF THE KING. Oh, and Kenny Chesney, who is this country singer I really dig. He sings this song about having a daughter (like I do) and it makes me cry every time. I'm a wimp, what can I say?

And….What scares you most?

Never finding the balance between my work (which I love and which fuels me) and my family and soul (which I love and which fuels me). Never enough hours, you know?

ENDS