

G4 Celebrates Epictober, Part One: Joe Lynch

Written by Amanda Dyar

Wednesday, 26 October 2011 17:57



Featuring a trio of short films from directors Sam Balcomb, Drew Daywalt and Gregg Bishop, that combine video games and horror to create three highly creative-and frighteningly nerdy-works, Epictober is G4's celebration of the year's spookiest month. Included is THE HUNT (based off the hit NES game DUCK HUNT), KART DRIVER (culled from the MARIO KART franchise) and THE BIRDS OF ANGER (from the highest selling mobile game ever ANGRY BIRDS), all overseen and handpicked by Joe Lynch (WRONG TURN 2, CHILLERAMA). FANGORIA interviewed Lynch and the talented filmmakers about the series. You can see part one of the talk below...

FANGORIA: When taking a closer look at this project, this could only come from the mind of an avid gamer. Have you played the games involved?

JOE LYNCH: Of course! Like the directors, I grew up gaming. I evolved from the mall arcade to the Atari and Vectrex, then to NES & Sega Master System, then to Genesis and SuperNES, Dreamcast, Playstation 1 and 2 and so on all the way up to now with app gaming and Xbox 360 (no Playstation 3 for me, yet). So, I was well versed in all three games selected by the directors, as were they of course! There are a lot of in-jokes and Easter eggs hidden in each short as a nod to the gamers as well. What made this so much fun was taking the familiar language from each game and applying the rules, style and storytelling of genre filmmaking, especially horror.

FANG: The three different directors were hand-picked by you order to give each film a unique perspective. How did you arrive at your choices?

LYNCH: When G4 approached me about the idea of overseeing a series of shorts, I was so excited about the chance to work with directors I admire and respect, but also ones who knew their way around the "viral video revolution," which has a lot of that DIY spirit from the early days of indie film. Sam Balcomb, Drew Daywalt and Gregg Bishop are guys I've been fans of for years and I've always wanted to see into their own process which is a great thing to do as a filmmaker. Everyone has a method to their madness, and I learned so much from each of them for sure! But when it came with the ideas for each short, we made a long list of games we thought could "port" into the world of horror. Not too surprisingly, each guy came back with their own choices for games. I loved this, because it showed they were passionate about spinning their game selection into something new, unique and exciting. So, while I got the honor to make

G4 Celebrates Epictober, Part One: Joe Lynch

Written by Amanda Dyar

Wednesday, 26 October 2011 17:57

the decision on the directors with G4's full support, the guys were the creative geniuses of the game selections.



FANG: MARIO KART and DUCK HUNT are family classics in the video game industry. How do you think the die-hard fans of the game series will react to them being turned into a horror story?

LYNCH: Both MARIO and DUCK HUNT are indeed classics, which was my only reservation; attempting to put a new spin on a well-known property. But when Drew and Sam pitched me their ideas—namely, Mario as a disgruntled, Travis Bickle-esque anti-hero in a gonzo foreign horror bug-out like Noe's I STAND ALONE or Park's OLDBOY and The Asshole Dog from DUCK HUNT as Bruce the Skark from JAWS—I was hooked. All three directors, like myself, are avid students of cinema, so it was such a great time just chewing the fat and talking about film, and that would naturally segue into how to tell these tales using the things we love about pure cinema. So yeah, it was just an excuse to geek out with the guys, but all that love is in each film along with plenty for the hardcore gamers to appreciate too, and I think they'll dig how we've twisted each tale to fit the Halloween season.

FANG: BIRDS OF ANGER also sees homage to THE BIRDS. How will these two worlds be combined to create the perfect mash-up, and will we be given a reason behind why these birds are so angry?

LYNCH: Well, you'll just have to see what the Mad Dr. Bishop has concocted in his symbiosis of two pop-icons! It was arguably the most ambitious of the three, with no disrespect to Drew or Sam's work, because Gregg clearly wanted to thrust the ideas in the game into the world of Hitchcock and those damn birds from his 1963 film. But once we saw the storyboards and then the footage, we knew Gregg was onto something special. How he weaves the elements from things we love about ANGRY BIRDS, Hitch movies and even 60's noir/potboilers is both seamless and the kind of idea that makes you go, "Why hasn't this been done before?" It's

really a sight to see.

FANG: In THE HUNT, will gamers finally get to see some justice brought to that annoying dog? With 27 years of built-up hostility, I think killing off that dog would be a nice selling point.

LYNCH: When Sam and I discussed the idea of making DUCK HUNT, I wasn't sure how we'd be able to make malicious mallards, but then Sam simply said, "Asshole Dog," and it was like a bell went off. I clearly remember playing NES and wishing that snickering dog would just die while playing DUCK HUNT, and, now, Sam and his amazing team at Rainfall Films have created a whole new take on the game's mythology. I don't think you'll ever see the game the same way again, and that was the point of this project on a whole, to take what you know about these games and hopefully make you rethink their conventions. But again, you'll just have to see what happens in THE HUNT to find out the fate of that asshole dog. Just know, it won't be pretty.

FANG: Mario has spent most of his gaming career seeking out distressed damsels. It's enough to drive anyone over the edge. Do we finally get to see the plumber bash some skulls and catch the girl without her being ripped from his arms in the next cut-scene?

LYNCH: Oh, there's a lot of head-crushing in this one! Fans of Gaspar Noe and Scorsese will be thrilled with the psychological element of a man tormented by love and the MARIO and KONG. There's been a lot of Mario parodies over the years, but, when Drew and co-writer Stephen Johnson delved into the darkness of Mario's relationship struggles and tried to ground the mythos with a sleazy, Eurotrash touch, it just made total sense that there are still a lot of alternate stories to tell in the world of our favorite plumber.

FANG: How well do you think these titles will be received, and will there be more shorts or even full-length features like these titles from you in the future?

LYNCH: It's funny, because you never know what is going to be successful in the world of viral video. Anything gets hits these days; production value, story or idea be damned. Who would have thought Charlie getting his finger bitten would be an internet sensation? So, you really can never predict what will be successful and only time and page hits will tell. But I think G4's initial concept of mashing games and horror to coincide with their Epictober promotion was a stroke

G4 Celebrates Epictober, Part One: Joe Lynch

Written by Amanda Dyar

Wednesday, 26 October 2011 17:57

of genius, and being able to have creative freedom with the conception and execution of these projects and work with these 3 directors has been a dream; we had such a great time. G4's also been a huge supporter of the project by commissioning posters, trailers and a promotional roll-out online just like a real feature film campaign, so I'm confident people will see them and knowing what's in-store for the viewer. I think fans of both horror and games will really dig them. For me, even though I'm working on features like KNIGHTS OF BADASSDOM, CHILLERAMA and now EVERLY, I'll always continue to work in the short-form arena. I'm so thrilled that short films have grown in popularity over the years, and since the technology to create has become so easy to acquire and use, it just means it's easier to create for any forum and put it online, which is now really the most global way of presenting your work. If these shorts do well, I'm sure we'll be back to mashup some more blood and bytes for your viewing pleasure.

FANG: If you could have any other game turned into a horror flick, which would it be and why?

LYNCH: I'd actually love to see a huge monster/disaster movie version of KATAMARI DAMACY. It's got all the tropes of a great big horror thriller: the unassuming yet nefarious antagonist, the scope of a big blockbuster destroying cities like Godzilla and especially how the rolling debris ball just keeps absorbing everything around it till the world is destroyed, kind of like the Blob, which is one of my favorite monsters of all time. Wow, that's actually a really good idea! Um, excuse me, I need to call Jerry Bruckheimer now, thanks.

TO BE CONTINUED...

For more, head over to G4 where you can watch all three shorts now: [THE HUNT](#) , [KART DRIVER](#) , [THE BIRDS OF ANGER](#)