

Gaming Episode P1.mp3

Britney [00:00:01] Hello, everyone, welcome to this episode of The Mic Drop, I'm Arthur Britney, and today we got a really special guest from the BBC, Shay Thompson.

Britney [00:00:15] Give it up for her everyone.

Shay [00:00:18] Hello. Thanks for having me.

Britney [00:00:20] Yeah. And on the other side, we got our usual guest. Larry, how are you doing, Larry?

Larry [00:00:27] What's going on, Britney? How you doing and how you Shay it's a really, really great to have you here today.

Shay [00:00:32] Oh, I'm happy. I'm happy and excited to talk about some video games.

Britney [00:00:38] Yes.

Britney [00:00:39] Our passion. And, you know, this is really important. And that that is why we are here today, because we came from different backgrounds. But we all got one thing in common is that we love video games. So Shay can you talk us a little bit about yourself and video games experience and how you get really engaged with this lifestyle? I would say because it's not a hobby for us.

Shay [00:01:05] At this point is not a hobby.

Shay [00:01:07] At least I'm lucky and proud enough to say that I'm making money off of this. My mom still doesn't understand how or why, but I am. I'm a presenter and game journalist or gaming journalist rather. Yeah, I started in the industry about two years ago, just like from doing stuff like making coffees and teas for a games media broadcast agency, didn't know that those were a thing either. I've always been into games my entire life, but the professional side of it was so like, I guess like unapproachable. It was, it was this thing that I knew was maybe happening off off in the distance but didn't know how to approach it. So I made like a couple of, like, really terrible YouTube videos and that got noticed by someone. And then it just ended up snowballing into what I'm doing now. I've got BBC Sounds podcast presents to continue that I'm on every other week and I've done stuff with McLaren and BAFTA and also Xbox as well.

Britney [00:02:04] Oh, cool, amazing.

Larry [00:02:06] That's quite a lot of stuff already. Particularly we've been, you know, your your two year reign, which is incredible.

Larry [00:02:12] I guess I wanted to ask Shay, like, how what got you into, you know, gaming in the first place in terms of gaming culture? Could you perhaps, like, talk us through, take us through, like, you know, your own history in relationship to to gaming?

Shay [00:02:26] Well, I mean, you're part of that history, Larry. I don't know if people are aware of this, but we're actually related. So I like I spent, you know, hours and hours watching him and Lincoln, like my brother, like playing video games. And just I mean, I was never really good at them as a kids, but like, I think what was what was really cool

about it, and it's very different to something like music or film or TV where you're a passive participant in that with games, you're an active participant in your fun. Sometimes that fun feels like work when you're grinding for something in a day, RPG or like, you know, playing through stuff that you don't like, or yeah, just my job now, which is yeah, a lot of the time playing stuff that I don't like. Yeah, like the fact that you, you are the architect of whether or not you have fun. I think that's like a really interesting concept to me. And when I was growing up like there were so many things that kind of grabbed my attention, I was like, I don't think I'm ever going to have an experience like this watching a TV or a movie like playing Metal Gear Solid 2 for the first time, I sat and played that in one sitting and at the time I was like 10 or 11 like that blew my tiny little mind. I was like, oh my God. Like engaging with politics and art and tech in this way was just like nothing like I'd ever experienced. And yeah, I don't think I don't think there's another medium that does that.

Larry [00:03:44] Really it's I've got to say, it's so special and amazing to be to be talking especially with family, that I've grown up with someone um, someone else especially, you know, talking to to a Black woman who's who's had these experiences, because I guess, you know, in terms of my experience, of course, of like growing up and gaming and like you say, we're you know, we're part of each other's lives within that, right, one thing isn't separate from the other in order for, you know, us kind of getting into gaming or where we have now.

Larry [00:04:18] But I remember when we we kind of like reconnected, you know, a couple of years ago, a few years ago, and like, you know, I found out that, you know, you are professionally doing the thing with gaming. And I was like, whoa, like, this is mad.

Larry [00:04:34] But I've got admit there was a part of me that kind of I felt a bit like disappointed with myself because I felt like, gosh, I wish I wish if there were additional things that I could have perhaps like done when, you know, playing games with linking and remembering, you know, you were there and she either was there as well, like, you know, that maybe to kind of like bring to the table in a way that would would continue to picture interest. I mean, you know, look, you've made your way. You've done your thing, and here you are. But I guess, like, you know, I can remember even at the time we were we me and then we were so into like gaming, like, you know, we were played like day and night when it came to like the holidays from school and stuff. Right, like we would it was everything was about the game and and yeah, I, I don't know, like maybe maybe I am kind of like overthinking it or maybe being perhaps a bit emotional about it. But I wonder, gosh, like maybe there were things that I could have done or said additionally. I mean, you know, we're at this place now which is great and we can share that. But I guess yeah. My question to you maybe is, you know, were there things perhaps where you felt like you had to create your own kind of personal space and relationship in building, or am I kind of overthinking this? I don't know...

Shay [00:05:52] No, Because I think like whenever I think of memories of gaming, I do think like Lincoln and you are there like regardless of whatever. I think professionally I had to kind of eke out my own space because there wasn't really one for me. I mean, because of obvious, like social issues, but also the fact that, like games is a relatively young industry, you know, like my job job, if you can call it that, like, didn't exist, like even ten years ago.

Shay [00:06:19] So, like, I really had to kind of craft my very own bespoke space in this world as like as regards to gaming. So I don't I know I wouldn't feel bad about that at all, you know, and I think also the way that I engage in games is very it's very different, I

suppose, where you and Lincoln played a lot of, like, platformers I am horrific at like your Super Mario... I'm just very bad at them. I like I don't you know, I like I like sidescrollers, I like where I'm empowered as a player to cover up the fact that I'm really bad and like not very dextrous. So like first person shooters, like Overwatch I go into like a hot minute. I got pretty good. And then I was like, I put it down for a couple of weeks and I was like, actually I'm really terrible in this. So yeah. No, I think yeah. I think I've just kind of found my own space, my own tastes and it's like for you, you know, so I wouldn't be so mad about that.

Larry [00:07:13] No. Right back at you. And it's just it's, it's great that we're able to share that now and even even professionally, especially as well. I think I really do relate to you in in that feeling of like being in a space that you have to kind of carve as your own. You know, I would say in terms of both of our trajectories, you're directly within the industry. Whereas for me, I'm still, you know, within my my trajectories as an artist, I involve gaming into what I do. Of course, you know, it becomes a part of some of the processes of writing for films that I make or, you know, sculpture installations, things like that, or even sound especially, actually. And I'm, you know, even at the moment working on some research to create essentially a range of mix tapes that culminate different sounds or soundtracks to different video games within history, both historical and contemporary, which, you know, hopefully I'll be able to open up at some point in time. But you you actually you did you you did a session with a range of other industry types, right kind of talking about gaming in relation to, you know, soundtracks or music. Would you could you perhaps expand on that a bit? Because like, this is something Britney and I have been talking loads about, about the interest of of music and how that shapes your experience of playing games?

Shay [00:08:44] Absolutely. Yeah. I mean, it was a really cool session. I've been meaning to try and find the VOD so I can send it over to you because it was a great session with all the tech issues. I love doing remote stuff, but essentially what it was is like the art of like music and games and, you know, music in video games, like helps create such an atmospheric feeling. For me, it's like it's part and parcel of a lot of things. Even if the game isn't necessarily atmospheric, like the Streets of Rage soundtrack, it's something that's in my head like all the time, that it's not necessarily because, like, you know, it's a horror game. It's quite, quite the opposite. It's just that it builds it feeds into what the game is trying to communicate to you and that you have, you know, a range of streets, there are people fighting and that, yeah, it feeds into what you feel, it's like OK, now the it's going to quiet down and then you have, like, the crescendo of, like, the boss music coming in and you're like, OK, I might potentially die here. Like, it's all a part of like the narrative worldbuilding, as it were. And yeah, getting to talk to those composers and just seeing what their perspective of it was, was brilliant. There were some business stuff that even right now I'm like, I still don't understand. But one question that I loved and it's very rare that I write a question on my art that was so good. But basically what it was, is like all of those composers have a very specific signature sound. And I wanted to know, like, how they were able to retain that while still having to create something within somebody else's vision. And they all obviously had very, very insightful and interesting answers, and especially for like the kind of fledgling composers who were watching, because every day a lot of people are like kind of obsessed with making sure that they have this signature sound. And I think it was in on that said, like, don't worry about that stuff kind of comes out naturally as you develop a love for your craft. You know, it comes naturally. It's not something you necessarily have to worry about, which I thought was endlessly interesting.

Larry [00:10:36] That is amazing. That really is amazing to hear. Like, even as somebody who, you know, makes music and sound, works myself like to to to hear about other professionals who are like look like don't sweat that whole thing of like whether something

sounds like you or whatever you sound like. What does that even mean? Right. It's you know, it's really kind of being absorbed of that culture and kind of just just having a good time with it. Right. Whilst learning, of course. And expanding. Were any of the other composers just out of curiosity, were any of them perhaps like not classically trained, for example, or people who, you know, didn't kind of or did anyone, like, talk about, you know, learning without like music notation, that kind of thing, just just out of genuine interest?

Shay [00:11:26] You know, I didn't ask that just because a question I tried to avoid, especially with people who were, quote unquote, quite successful. I've never asked, like, how they got there just because the answer is always I was lucky. And unfortunately, the panel was just a bunch of white guys. So even triply so, you know, so so no, I didn't ask that. I'm not too sure I'm going to say I'm you know, why it's this is going to sound really bad. I actually don't think I think the majority of them probably aren't classically trained because, you know, like he said, that the way he started composing video games was he was composing for like a Power Rangers cartoon and then somebody asked him, do you want to make the soundtrack for Fallout Tactics? And he was like, yeah. And then it just went from there. So I'm going to say no. And that is no shade, I promise. I might say I have been fed some shade. I'm not being shady. That is literally what he said.

Shay [00:12:18] So what I take from that, what you will, yeah.

Larry [00:12:24] Britney, was there anything that perhaps like piques interest?

Britney [00:12:28] Yeah. You know, I like some ideas that she brings to the table. And Larry and I, we were discussing last time about the music and video games. And, you know, it's like sometimes I wish that I got like a soundtrack, you know, to be ready for a situation, to just imagine you're like in the middle of the street and suddenly you start to hear the Super Mario race track. You know, the one with your with the penguin. You're like, oh, my God, it's like I'm getting ready to run or something like that. Or if you're like walking, just imagine if you are like walking on the street and you hear the Guardian music from Breath Of The Wild, I think you will have a mini heart attack. Like when you're walking on Breath Of The Wild, you hear the Guardian music. It's like, oh, my God, what is it?

Larry [00:13:19] You know, so true.

Larry [00:13:21] It's interesting that you mention that because like it for me brings up the history of how I guess from the point when the Legend of Zelda games, you know, kind of came into the realm of 3D. So you're thinking about Ocarina of Time. I remember running across like Hyrule's Field and like, you know, you hear the soundtrack and everything's okay and stuff. And then the soundtrack would just completely switch on you when an enemy comes in and it just kind of jumps in and focuses onto that. You know, it just kind of thinking about that alone, what you know, which you kind of like throughout Britney just kind of made me kind of laugh a little bit because I used to, you know, talking thinking about Lincoln, as Shay mentioned, our close relative. You know, I remember we would like make jokes about, like the way the music would change. And it's just this really weird kind of in-joke, meme-ish kind of behaviour, you know, but it's just so incredible how gaming music can kind of do that.

Larry [00:14:20] And I would even argue like it's cinematic, even beyond traditional cinema, because because it's self-aware, it's aware of the environment, is aware of the situation, and it really is kind of evolving. And it's not simply just for two hours. It could be

20 hours. It could be 100 hours. It could you know, it can be constant. Right. So, yeah. Yeah. Just I don't know, those things kind of came to my mind

Shay [00:14:44] And I'd argue like that kind that those kind of experiences will stay with you longer sometimes than light, even like a film experience. I think it's because of the time that you invest in those worlds. Like, I mean I'll I'll play a mediocre game and I'll be like, oh, it was a pile of rubbish. But then I'll still be talking about it and thinking about it. Whereas if I watch a mediocre film like that will just be like a drop in the bucket. And I'm like, yeah, back with all the other memories. I don't think of, you know, like because like the time span is like so vastly different between the two. Absolutely.

Britney [00:15:17] You know, the experience of being really merged on video games because you're using more than one sense. Usually when you are watching a movie, you're having two senses like you're hearing and you're listening, but you've got more active your mind when you're playing video games because you need to be aware of what's going on. So it's more easy to build that memories when you hear a song on video games, for example, if I. Here, that is Super Mario Sunshine Song, where you don't have the jetpack

Britney [00:15:44] I get frustrated immediately. I hate those levels. You know, it's just such a bad memory. But, for example, if I hear the Saria's song from Ocarina of Time, I will try. It will start to dance like that. Oh, yeah.

Larry [00:16:06] Oh, yeah. Totally. Totally. I think one of my favourite songs is the Song of Storms. Oh, I just think that's and I think that that song carried on into Majoras Mask.

Shay [00:16:17] It did. Yeah.

Larry [00:16:18] I remember, I remember when I got Majoras Mask, like I think it was the Christmas that it came out. So like what, two thousand or whatever.

Larry [00:16:25] Like it was just so it was incredible to like come across that, that moment like because that that song in Ocarina of Time like to me it just felt like this, this track that's on the side, it's not part of the, you know, the main kind of like, you know, soundtrack that you hear when you're riding through Hyrule and stuff. And so to hear it kind of like brought back the oh gosh, this is really this is beautiful. You know, speaking of soundtracks, I'm going to ask you both what what what what are some of your favourite video game soundtracks?

Shay [00:16:59] Oh, I always have, like, prepared for this because I think about soundtracks a lot. Yes, I could share a baby like Streets Rage, just a classic. It's on Spotify and what it came out Spotify. I was like, yes, I actually got a notification for it, which shows you how much I spent searching for it. So that's great soundtrack really. Like it's I guess like sixteen bit like but like almost like nineties house. It's, it's just genius. The Marvel versus Capcom two soundtrack classic. Very good. I'd even say like all three of the Streetfighter Three's So New Generation, Second Impact and Third Strike Brilliance soundtracks. I know a lot of people like The Last of Us ones, I think. What's his name? Gustavo Santaolalla. I think he's really talented. And there are some songs, a very seminal for me, especially in the second game, but I might define them. They're like background music for when I'm working.

Britney [00:17:57] Well, in my case, I'm a Nintendo fan boy, I only play of Nintendo video games. So of course, in that sense, mine and they are all come from Nintendo, the first Super Mario is a must especially the Super Mario 64. You know, if I hear a song I immediately got my memory to, where is that? If I'm hearing the the Snow Mountain song, I immediately think about snow if I if I see the the the Gombat, song which is the race one. I immediately think about race. So that's one of my favourite. Also Ocarina of Time. I played Ocarina of Time a thousand of times and I cannot get over it that I'm still praying for a port on the Nintendo switch because we got that. And another one soundtrack that really, really it's remarkable in my life is the Pokemon's soundtrack,.

Shay [00:18:56] oh Yeah,.

Britney [00:18:56] You know, Pokemon's. Sountracks breaks me a lot of memory, but I will highlight it, especially on the last Pokémon, Pokemon Sword and Shield and the Gym's leaders.

Shay [00:19:10] Oh, yeah.

Britney [00:19:11] Oh, my God. That's, I mean playing video games. I never felt really, really into something. Once I hear that song, you know, it's like it's like a constant beat the whole battle. But once you reach the final Pokémon, the crowd start like to singing, and they scream. And you really feel like you're in the middle of the stadium with a thousands of people around you screaming because you're playing with the Pokémon. So it's like that feeling of the getting really into the peak of the of the battle. It's like, oh my gosh, I could explain how I was. That feel is just like you can only can get it when you're playing that. I love that that remix is like only just amazing.

Larry [00:20:01] Wow. So cool for me. I mean, one of the most important soundtracks, it means the sounds of my childhood is definitely the streetfighter two soundtrack.

Shay [00:20:13] Oh Yeah.

Larry [00:20:12] So, you know, when I think about like playing games both at home but also I don't know, like going to see someone play at an arcade at like a kebab shop or whatnot, you know, and obviously arcade cabinets, you know, pretty much by the deficits. Right. But I remember, like, whenever I was going to a cab office or a kebab, like just hearing the the speakers kind of like pumping of like the background to attract whatever it's like, you know, Ryu stage, you just like bam bam. But yeah. Like it's just really, really kind of like quite special to me. And, and again like that that was also a soundtrack that depending on how the battle was going for yourself or for the enemy. Right. The music would switch up, it would speed up or that kind of thing.

Larry [00:21:03] And I remember when when I when I was younger, when I would play like when that kind of thing happened, like, I remember kind of feeling a bit like tense like Oh gosh like I gotta block this, I gotta make sure that, you know, before it's over, before the time runs out.

Larry [00:21:19] Right. You know, so the way that, you know, it's like Yoko Shimomura was able to kind of bring that into quite a limited kind of like chipset at the time. We're talking about, you know, this moment of like 16, but gaming and so on is just just amazing. I want to jump on this thing that you mentioned about like, you know, there may be games

that are not so good, but the soundtracks really good. I was crafting one of my mix tapes yesterday and I was listening back through the soundtrack for Altarpiece, which was a guy.

Shay [00:21:56] Oh yeah. Yeah,.

Larry [00:21:57] They are the same drive and came on arcade and its a game that me and Lincoln played a lot.

Larry [00:22:01] Yeah. Actually, and we even would make fun of it.

Shay [00:22:06] So weird.

Larry [00:22:06] It's terrible its really just, you know, it's just there's very little you can you can do. Like it's a great idea, you know. Yeah. These guys are kind of like brought back to life by Zeus to say, you know, this this kind of like enchanted princess or whoever from this evil person who is sending through these creatures and that.

Larry [00:22:28] But like, it was just so limited.

Shay [00:22:30] So limited. Yeah.

Larry [00:22:33] You know, but again, the soundtrack was so cool, like, you know, particularly the sound when when you kind of like change to like different beasts and things like that, it just felt like, well, all right, we're on a journey. We're going through, we're going through. And then, you know, it's weird, though, because, yeah, the gameplay for me is trash. But, you know, the the soundtrack really special.

Shay [00:22:55] Yeah. Yeah. I'm trying to think of, like, some of the things I don't know, maybe it's because I played a lot of mediocre games and like nothing about them, I have stood out like cyberpunk I my gosh, well there is not even the soundtrack is like the curated kind of like radio soundtracks it gets I guess they're like, oh it's on there. But I like but I like the actual score. I was just like I was left feeling very underwhelmed, so.

Larry [00:23:22] Oh gosh. Right. So just just to make clear to listeners, Cyberpunk 2077 is a game which came out just toward the end of last year, 2020. It was developed by CD Project Red.

Larry [00:23:37] And yeah, there's been quite a lot of controversy, to say the least, around in the game. Yeah. Britney, Shay, you want to talk about that?

Britney [00:23:49] Wow.

Britney [00:23:49] Yeah, I'm not trying to spoil the shade, but that's why I only trust Nintendo.

Shay [00:23:56] Yeah.

Britney [00:23:58] Because you know a.

Britney [00:24:01] You know, the thing with cyberpunk and all this drama around, it's like, you know, you play with the community and basically that's the stuff and. They've been developing the game for over seven years and, you know, they've been teasing and

hyping the community for several years about this game and also they've been also a lot of delays with this game, which is not bad at all because a delayed game can be good eventually. But if you rush a game, that will be a mess, totally which is what happened here in this case. So the thing is, CD Project Red, they started to tease the video game, but only in the new generation consoles. So what happened there is like we didn't get any preview for the old gen and the game came out. It was totally broken and completely unplayable on the old generation and that.

Shay [00:25:07] I bought on the new generation as well.

Shay [00:25:07] I was playing on PC. I like.

Britney [00:25:09] You played on PC

Shay [00:25:11] I played on PC. Yeah. And it wasn't like, you know, my my entire experience of this game can be summed up by when I finished it, I didn't compete with the side quests and it comes up at the end. I did get to the end unfortunately, and it says, oh you know, you can play from twenty, seventy seven. There's more stuff for you to see in Night City. And then you know what happened. I'm going to show you. So I took a picture as I was like I had this happened. I got a blue screen on my. The whole shot, my entire PC down, and I was like, well, that is it. I will never return to Night City Thank you, CD Project Red, it was not good at like I for another project that I work on. We did an entire timeline of since the game was announced and teased about seven or eight years ago, we did a timeline of all the new stories that came out. But it goes much deeper, like the way that they interact with like gender expression and like a lot of the anti-trans sentiment, not only from the game itself, but the developers and their social media. And also, like, I'm not I'm definitely not talking like the entire nation of Poland with a transphobia brush. But if you understand a lot of the anti LGBT sentiment and how that feeds into the development of the game, I do think that's really important. And I can, like, send a link to it. Yeah, but I think that helps contextualise what this all helps contextualise what this game is trying to say, which isn't a lot, but also like. Yeah, with the development was I think, you know, there's a big problem in the way that all games are created. And I like I've had people say, oh, it's the same thing for like film and TV. We spend a lot of hours like, you know, working insane hours. That's not a good thing. And that's not a justification. Like the fact that crunch is so prevalent is is a massive issue. We should absolutely care about the labour that goes into making our games because we spend so long playing them. It was the fact they made this pledge to say that we're not going to crunch and then ended up crunching anyway, the late game. It should have just come out like several years later. And then even as as as recent as yesterday, they threw their entire quality assurance team under the bus saying that the bucks were there for it's just a mess. It's it's not a good situation at all. And like I do think it's important to have conversations about this and think about, you know, I what you know, what goes into the meat that becomes the sausage that all these video games.

Larry [00:27:35] You know, of course, I was just wondering, would you mind perhaps just expanding on, like, the meaning of crunch just because obviously, again, you know, we're gamers, so we understand.

Shay [00:27:44] Sure. Yeah.

Larry [00:27:44] For those listening,.

Shay [00:27:45] So crunch essentially means that, you know, teams will regularly work 100 hour workweeks in order to get a game shipped, like basically made to then be released to the public. And we crunch isn't an exclusive to CD Project Red. It's something, unfortunately, you see across the board like a rock star. The people that make GTA and redemption at Naughty Dog who made Crash Bandicoot on Child and the last of US. You know, it's something that we see, especially in Triple A titles, Triple A being like the big budget video games, the ones that we like previously mentioned. Yeah, I mean, who wants to work 100 hour workweeks? Nobody like, you know, we're advocating for something a lot lower than that, like, you know, and and that's not an unreasonable ask. But it's constantly as I said, it's widespread in the games industry. It's it's pretty bad for it,.

Britney [00:28:36] You know.

Larry [00:28:37] Yeah. No, please go. Go for it.

Britney [00:28:39] Yeah, that's what I mean.

[00:28:40] Something Nintendo has been doing during this couple of months. You know, they are they are not announcing video games until they are finished. So that's why we got like the surprise release of Age of Calamity. No one was expecting, no one heard any rumour. Everyone was talking about Breathe Of The Wild 2 is coming , so then nintendo said, I got this for you. We were like, wow. So people it's like hyped it. And they are asking for a nintendo direct. So to see what's going on, what's coming, what are you planning? Nintendo. What do you think? It has been wise in that sense to not say, you know, we're not going to have a release date for anything. We've gonna to tell you once it's finished and I will say that will be something wise in the case of a cyberpunk. Yeah, because at the, at the beginning. They said one date and they change it to another date and they delayed the release date like for like three times. But it was obvious they need at least. Six, seven, eight months more.

Shay [00:29:49] A year, I say I want to be. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Britney [00:29:52] So it will be wiser and everyone should understand the actual context of a pandemic and everyone working from home. It's naturally if you don't have something ready, you can delay that. Yeah, it's totally reasonable. So in that sense, I mean, it seems that they don't, but it will be more wiser to not give a release day until they finish and say, you know what, it's coming next month. Get your coins ready.

Larry [00:30:22] It's really disappointing. And even for me, as somebody who who's played some of CD Project's games, in fact, I played the Witcher 3 and all the expansions on the on the Nintendo switch, I absolutely loved it. Funny, funny, funny thing with that, actually, because, you know, you have a come for people who are like really witcher fans of sort off . But like, the funny thing that I found even when I was playing that game was actually the amounts of bugs that I came across as well, like, you know, even like game crippling bugs where the game would just shut down. I'd lost stuff that I'd been working on over 10, 20 minutes, etc. But a lot of things should have worked and they didn't work or I knew I would put in an input and it just wasn't happening. And we're talking about a game that was is critically acclaimed. It got so many awards and someone. Right. And then also the other thing as well that, you know, CD Project, of course, his history was like that. They they started out as a really small company, you know, who were really against a lot of like the typical types of things that happen within the gaming industry, including crunch hours and things like that. Right. They would speak out about that. It's quite ironic, right, that that

same company would then kind of like fall victim to their own words, like a kind of like, you know, prophecy, kind of like told from what I'm going to just put out there and say it's great. They wanted to release a game for Christmas, which is, you know, the best period of time to, you know, to to sell your console or software. And they you know, obviously the higher ups, they made those decisions against perhaps any potential advice that they likely received. Because, I mean, who in a development team would want to see a game go out that is just not ready.

Shay [00:32:12] Yeah. And just not ready. And you not in the state to be played on on the vast majority of platforms? I think as much as I have been quite negative about the game, obviously there are several hundred people working on this title. And to have their work so thoroughly lambasted on the Internet, I think it just sucks. It just is. It just sucks like big time. And yeah, it's really interesting. Like I said in the timeline video that we did about cyberpunk history, like I like a lot of they're almost like radical roots I had no idea about because I quite like antipiracy. They've done a lot of strides. They've made a lot of strides because like gaming and piracy, there's a there's a very big kind of storeyed history there. So they've done they've done a lot of really cool stuff. And to see them stray so far from their initially radical Ritz's, it's a real shame, especially considering the fact that, you know, The Witcher was this widely acclaimed. It's like in a lot of ways regarded as like one of the best games of all time. The Witch 3. I mean, and then obviously, you know, that was the Netflix show. Like, it's funny. It's but yeah. Yeah. This is not been.

Larry [00:33:20] Britney.

Larry [00:33:21] Would you like to explain for those that are listening, you just gesturing towards.

Britney [00:33:27] Yes, I got a Henry Cavill's pictures back of me and we because we were talking about the Witcher.

Larry [00:33:35] With glasses as well. Yeah. Really cool.

Britney [00:33:38] I found it in a magazine so it's the biggest I could get it for free. So, don't blame me

Larry [00:33:42] Is amazing.

Larry [00:33:46] Yeah, it's crazy in a way. We've kind of I guess kind of reviewed or you've given us, you know, reviews Shay of Cyberpunk. There was a game we wanted to talk to you about as well. Britney, we're trying to Shay you never got to to play over the Christmas because, you know, the Christmas period for those of us as gamers is that point in time where you pick a game or two and you just get into it.

Larry [00:34:09] Right? You just focus.

Shay [00:34:11] And unfortunately, mine was cyberpunk, so.

Britney [00:34:14] Oh, gosh,.

Larry [00:34:15] I feel for you. I really honestly, I really I think because there's nothing worse than having that point in time.

Larry [00:34:23] In the year when everything shuts down and you make the wrong choice of game, you know, you put your heart or your soul or your trust into the thing, and then it just doesn't deliver.

Shay [00:34:33] Can I just be really obnoxious for a second? I did not choose. I was like, OK, I had to play it for work. And that was what it was, because I have so many other cool games. I was just like, I really want I'd like to sink my teeth into these next. Now, this face of a cyberpunk and I was like, okay, cool, I'm just sorry, because I don't I feel like I've been very negative without actually saying anything critical about my. The problem is, is that the game is I mean, aside from all the bugs, because a lot of that stuff is incidental. I don't know the mechanics, but like, it's a game. First of all, that like looks and feels like it was made seven years ago, which makes sense given the development time. It doesn't innovate on anything. It has. It's very indulgent with absolutely nothing to say. It flirts with the ideas of like, you know, anticapitalism and, you know, gender expression and even like sex work, but then doesn't commit fully to actually saying anything profound about those things. So then it ends up being this this weird thing where even your your character that you're playing us is this with centrist when it comes to, you know, engaging with certain issues, which is so unbelievably frustrating to players. And and then, yeah, like I said, has nothing interesting to say, and it's just not that interesting to play like it's a weird GTA clone that had it come out in like 2013 when Saints Row three came out, I wouldn't have blinked twice. I probably wouldn't have even picked up had I not been, you know, congrats. Contractually obligated. I would have the whole time I was I'd rather be playing Saints Row three, because at least that engages with its own law and a much more interesting and meaningful way.

Larry [00:36:08] So it doesn't take itself to know.

Shay [00:36:11] None.

Larry [00:36:11] None Of it knows what it's saying.

Shay [00:36:13] Yeah,.

Larry [00:36:13] Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. Anyway, you know, moving on, before we do go, I wanted to ask Shay one more question. I guess you know where we've kind of spoken critically, particularly about a game like, you know, cyberpunk and some of the problems of certain types of tropes of Indie that the gaming industry.

Larry [00:36:39] There things that I guess for you that, you know, you've come across, that you you are either trying to challenge or would like to see change within within the industry.

Shay [00:36:50] This is a very interesting question, because if you'd asked me like a year ago, I would have said, you know, I want to make sure that, you know, we have fair representation across the board. But I think it goes a little bit more than that, because I think when people think and talk about representation, they I think they just mean like not even just within games. I mean, like within like gaming positions, like in the industry. I think they just mean like taking white people from those positions and putting people of colour or other marginalised people involved at the top. And I'm just I don't that's not the answer either. But all roads kind of lead back to capitalism, you know, and and fighting that and making sure that doesn't just bleed through everything that we do. If we're thinking about, you know, always making sure our pockets are lined, then the result is very hollow work

across the board. And I think that's a lot of that is happening. People are like, oh, God, the BLM protests, let's let's try and find the closest black person you can find. And I'm like, I that's not that's not what I'm here to fulfil. And that's not also the response. And that shouldn't be what we do. You know, and I think I think it's just realising that actually money isn't how we should be operating or having money at the forefront of our minds and how we should be operating. Like Crunch, for example. We shouldn't be trying. It shouldn't be a race to the bottom to try and get a game out because it coincides with the holiday period. It should be. No, let's let's take the time to craft this story and this experience, because that's what we want to communicate to players and then have it come out whenever it's supposed to. Let's have, you know, these diverse voices talk about this game because, you know, because having diverse voices and perspectives is really important to increasing diversity of thought, you know? Yeah. I don't know if that makes any sense, but.

Larry [00:38:39] no,no, no it does, it does.

Larry [00:38:39] Yeah. I mean, even like I remember reading somewhere, I don't remember that the article per say, but just finding out, I mean, you know, it makes sense anyway. But the fact that, you know, there are way more people of colour, for example, that play video games than the white people do. And then also the amount of women who play video games is pretty much like half and half in relation to men. Yet that kind of aspect of representation, whether that's through the story, whether that's true, the depth of conversation or, you know, just just, you know, unique kind of perhaps like insight. And, you know, again, kind of jump in on what you spoke about with Cyberpunk, which feels to me like they basically didn't they didn't do enough of the research they needed to there wasn't enough consultation that was, you know, that was really kind of like jumped on and so on, that these kinds of things are, you know, really, really are important. And especially if, you know you know that the game makers, the ones who are pointing out those games, you know, it's almost as if perhaps like the fans need to really be considered of even even more really within this environment that is quite diverse. In that respect, it's just within I guess, from obviously I'm trying to gather from what you're saying like that there are problems within the industry that really need to be ironed out. And like you say, money, money isn't quite simply going to be the the way that is going to happen.

Shay [00:40:00] Yeah, no, exactly that. Pretty much like nailed on the head.

Larry [00:40:04] Well, my gosh, I feel like I could talk to you both forever, like with games and, you know, hopefully we'll have, you know, more chances like to do this. It was really, really exciting talking to you Shay. Thank you so much for coming along. As always, Britney, really lovely talking to you. My name is Larry Achiampong, and this is another episode of The Mic Drop