

Culture Shock Gaming  
By Christopher Navarrete

[Play intro music for the 1<sup>st</sup> paragraph and Fade out when 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph is ending.]

CHRISTOPHER

Welcome to Culture Shock Gaming, where we talk about the past and present of video games. In today's episode, titled Video Games Struggle on Violence, we'll be discussing how Mortal Kombat and Grand Theft Auto's controversies started and popularized video game violence.

[Wait ten seconds.]

CHRISTOPHER

The creation of the Nintendo Entertainment System spawned the belief that video games were toys targeted towards children. However as the video game industry grew, so did its audience. Games were not only being marketed to young children, but young adults. As a result, extremely violent video games such as Mortal Kombat and Grand Theft Auto were created. Both video games were infamous for the controversy they generated, particularly Mortal Kombat as it was one of the first

video games to have sparked the debate of video games causing children to commit violent acts.

[Play Mortal Kombat sound effects while waiting for eight seconds and have techno music slowly fade in and play in the background for the next two paragraphs.]

CHRISTOPHER

Mortal Kombat, a fighting game inspired by the rated R action film Bloodsport, was placed in arcades in 1992. However what attracted audiences was not it's gameplay, but its blood and gore. Mortal Kombat featured secret finishing moves called fatalities that gave players the ability to decapitate and burn opponents alive among others. Because most arcades contain no age restrictions, parents, politicians, and the media reacted negatively to this as they believed children would emulate Mortal Kombat's violence after playing.

[Wait for five seconds.]

CHRISTOPHER

According to BBC News, This backlash led to a court case in 1993 where Former Chief of staff Joe Lieberman vowed to have a rating system for video games to be created.

Lieberman was successful as The Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB) was introduced within five months; its first act was to give Mortal Kombat an M rating, making it illegal for those who are underage to purchase the game.

[Wait for eight seconds and slowly fade in and play rap or rock music for the next two paragraphs.]

#### CHRISTOPHER

The ESRB would take action once again against Rockstar's Grand Theft Auto San Andreas (GTASA) for its controversial hot coffee mod in 2005. Originally programmed to be locked away, "hot coffee" was a scene that featured two characters having intercourse. Despite being made inaccessible, it was discovered and programmed back into all versions of the game by modders. The ESRB recalled all versions of GTASA after it was found and changed its rating from M for mature to A for adults.

[Wait for five seconds and play some gun sound effects.]

CHRISTOPHER

Despite this, GTASA, or rather all GTA video games, were more notorious for having the ability to murder innocent civilians and police officers while being depicted as a criminal. According to Doug Gross of CNN, GTA quote inherited the mantle of violent game poster child from 'Mortal Kombat' unquote due to it being more realistic in its violence and setting. Multiple court cases soon followed the games releases, however the first recorded case was in 2003 where Rockstar was sued by the family of two victims who were shot. They believed GTA was the main reason as to why their loved ones were murdered in the first place.

[Fade out music and wait for eight seconds.]

CHRISTOPHER

GTA and Mortal Kombat would cause researchers to study the effects violent video games have on children who play it. A report from the American Psychological Association (APA) examined 150 different studies in 2015 and concluded that video games may lead to increased

aggression, but not to the point of committing crimes. As reported by Michael Casey of CBS News, '[s]cientists have investigated the use of violent video games for more than two decades but to date, there is very limited research addressing whether violent video games cause people to commit acts of criminal violence.'

[Wait for five seconds.]

CHRISTOPHER

In a more recent study from 1991 that addresses the omissions Casey points out, it found that video games may lead to depression and conduct disorder. More than 4,000 adolescents over the course of their lives participated, among those, approximately 1,800 were effected. However the study states that this was mainly found in children who played shoot-em-ups, namely Doom.

[Wait eight seconds and play ending music throughout the next two paragraphs.]

CHRISTOPHER

Although the risk of acquiring depression and conduct disorder is low, there are many other factors that may increase or decrease the chance of it occurring. Despite

the fact that violent video games still receive negative criticisms for their violence, the industry continues to be successful in spite of the accusations.

[Wait ten seconds.]

CHRISTOPHER

Thank you for tuning in today's episode of Culture Shock Gaming titled Video Games Struggle on Violence. Look out for the next episode of Culture Shock Gaming where we'll be going in depth about the controversial method of paying for video game content, microtransactions. We hope you enjoyed our podcast, see you next time.