**[00:04-01:04]**

Well, I think nowadays when you release a game, you'd spend the next two weeks fixing bugs, people find. That's kind of one the upsides are downsides of releasing digitally is when people find issues, we can go in and fix them immediately. So, we spent the last couple weeks just addressing small, little things. Nothing major has been found, so that's quite pleasing, but we still want to tweak things to get the best experience we wanted out there. So, that's pretty much what we’ve doing and a lot of interviews and stuff like that, and a lot of like watching Twitter non-stop during the day.

 **[01:04-01:12]**

How would you describe the response so far?

 **[01:14-02:04]**

I think the response has a better than I had anticipated. I mean, it's kind of what we'd hoped for, but I think the response that players had especially to the themes of the story, I think they really kind of got all that. And that's very, very pleasing for me, you know, because sometimes you build something, and people don't quite understand the themes you were going for, the point and the purpose of the story. And that can be a little frustrating, but I think people just totally got a lot of what we were trying to do which is very kind of rewarding.

D: People has been posting a lot on Twitter about their emotions and the game is making them feel things, and that I really wasn't expecting. It’s a gratifying response.

 **[02:05-02:23]**

Yeah, if we were talking about how it had made them cry, and now, I feel bad for making people cry, but it is nice to see how it has affected people on a somewhat deep level.

A: Imagine it was happy tears.

 **[02:24-02:52]**

I hope it was happy tears. (lol) Hope they were not “I spent more than $20 in the video game” tears.

A: Looking back to the past years, when you had your first initial ideas and the development, did you end up where you expected it to be? Did you achieve what you set out to achieve?

 **[02:54-03:23]**

D: I think that sort of yes, or no? I think we achieved what we set out to achieve and it wasn't exactly what we intended to do at the beginning or how we intended it to turn out, but we were expecting that it wouldn’t quite be what we thought at first.

So yeah, yes or yes or no.

R: I think anytime you’re dealing with a creative medium, writing, it’s just an exploration process you know, you put a stake in the ground when you start and then you just continually move that stake around as you as you write and design, and you play test and everything else. So, I think we put a stake in the ground, and we had to move it sometimes when we didn't like the way things are working, but your ideas don't come out fully formed, it’s a process of building that stuff.

 **[04:06-04:39]**

But I think generally the game did what we wanted it to do, but maybe not in the ways we wanted to do when we first started

D: Things like plot and puzzles, tend to change a lot during development. But things like theme don't change so much.

A: What surprised you the most during this project?

D: The thing that surprised me the most was keeping it a secret for two years.

 **[04:40-04:44]**

And you Dave did anything surprise you?

 **[04:45-04:50]**

D: I mean yes, that same thing certainly did.

 **[04:52-05:08]**

They were a few near leaks, I think over the over that time, I kept this door behind me locked. I have a son who is now 8, and yeah, he was five when we started this and I never told him what I was working on and somehow he never found out.

 **[05:11-05:46]**

How important was to bring the old crew back?

 **[05:47-06:32]**

I think having Dave on board was absolutely important. I mean, there's no way that that it could have happened without him. I think other people that were brought on, we really tried to have a mix, right? We didn't want to it to be a “get the old band back together” and we all make the same game we would have made back then. So, you only brought in people, you like Dave and David Fox and the musicians, but we also brought in a lot of new people who maybe played Monkey Island like you when they were young. And, and some people that really hadn't ever really played Monkey Island before. And I think that mix is really important because we weren't, we weren't just trying to build a game that was a Nostalgia trip.

 **[06:33-06:41]**

And we were trying to build a game that was new and having new kind of blood in the mix is really important.

 **[06:43-06:58]**

 **[06:59-07:26]**

A: Dave, did you have any reservations going back into this universe?

D: I didn't. I was ready for it, like just looking forward to working with Ron some more, and coming back to Monkey Island seemed like a great Avenue for that. The World is sort of fun, charming and kind of serious in its heart but light on its surface. And I just needed all of that in my days. So, I was like, yeah, I spend a couple of years doing that, it sounds good.

A: Was it a fresh start or did Tale’s influence how you approached this game?

 **[08:27-09:26]**

D: Tales was a very different animal. I mean this, this was an attempt to do essential Monkey Island as a TV show, is it was episodic coming out very frequently and we made the thing very fast. The whole thing, took less than half the time I think than Return to Monkey Island did with a smaller team too. I think the main take away from that is for me, personally, was don't do it without Ron because that felt weird the whole time. And you know I got to bring him in as consultant but that kind of wasn’t enough.

But other than I think that game thought me a little bit that’s coded in everything else that I’ve between 1991 and today. It has been the kind of a gradual evolution of adventure games over that time, and sort of the audience too is sort of there's an older section of it now and they have jobs, and they have less free time and less patience. I think the world is a whole has less patience for things. So if we really took that to heart and have tried to gradually remove the frustration from the experience, and just leave the good kind of mental gymnastics and fun stories and all that stuff. So adventure games have been gradually improved over the years.

And to that point, I mean, let me talk about monkey and it's it's it's in the pain in the ass one of the most influential games from that era in the early nineties and you wrong. You spoken about in Francis, you brought into the first games from the book on Stranger Tides and the theme park ride in Disneyland.

 **[10:24-11:00]**

A: You’ve mentioned the inspirations for the first games. Where did you draw inspiration from with this game?

 **[11:01-11:38]**

I don’t know there were any specific inspiration for this game, but I was watching Black Sails about the time we started this game, and there's a whole dynamic that goes on in that TV show, with the characters in, in voting, and getting the crew to agree to things and that really heavily influenced the part on the LeChucks ship, you know, where you have to the crew to vote to go to Monkey Island. You know, and that show really influence that because I found that to be very, very interesting.

 **[11:40-11:48]**

A: You David did you see anything out there that you know all the video games or something that inspired you into this work? Something new or the old games?

 **[11:55-12:04]**

D: Yes, I certainly did. I had been already playing the Monkey Island series with my son because he was just getting to be about ready for that.

And we stepped out up as soon as Rod called me and said, hey, let's, let's do Monkey Island. So, you know, it's a weird thing to research yourself and, and then also to research other games that people have made on a property that you came up with, and see how it's changed, as a different hands. And, you know, there's a lot of stuff in those other games that we liked and wanted to incorporate. So, in a way Monkey Island is now inspiring itself in various ways, there's also the Pirates of the Caribbean movie, which is one of my favorites and which seems to pull a few things from the old Monkey Island games and which I referenced in the script for this one. So, there's a there's a big circle going on pirate media influences itself.

 **[13:00-13:19]**

A: Which part of the game was that refence?

D: It’s a little side quip in the museum.

 **[13:21-13:49]**

What's been the biggest difference for you as game designers working on the Monkey Island today compared to 30 years ago?

 **[13:51-14:51]**

I think for me it's that there is so much pulling of people. There's so much media now you're from from really really nice TV shows to games to your everything is just pulling in people and you're back in 1990 there was there wasn't a lot pulling up people. There were a lot of games released TV was fairly boring and the appeal I think that the players back then tended to be a little bit younger and now a lot of game players, y'all have kids, they have families and that's pulling on them. And so, when we set out to make this game, when things are really wanted to do was, was be able to respect people's time- We didn't want to build this amazingly hard game that you were just, you're banging your head on the keyboard, trying to solve and you really can't do that today anyway, because of the internet.

If people get frustrated, they'll just immediately go to the internet that I look up a walk through this, probably wrong to begin with and I'll get even more frustrated. And so, I'm doing things like the built-in hint book is allowing people to look up hint that they want them. But but doing it within the context of the game and making sure that the hints are always, right. So, for me, and it really, it really is about respecting people's time these days.

 **[15:25-16:25]**

D: I was going to bring up a production thing rather than design thing it's just that back in back in the 90s you know we had to be in an office together. On this project has been all remote and it would have been all remote even if there hadn't been a pandemic. Ron and I live in the same time zone at least but many hundreds of miles apart. So, getting together casually every day to design things would have been difficult. And, you know, there's some stumbling blocks to try to develop something remotely, you have to a lot of zoom meetings and stuff. But it's also allowed us to have a team that sort of from all over the world with all kinds of different and interesting people on it which is another thing we wouldn’t be able to do in the 90s.

 **[16:25-17:19]**

Would you say it's easier to make a game now but harder to get the attention with all the competition?

Yes, it is. Way back then you were fighting for shelf space in a in a brick-and-mortar store and you had interest distributors in your game and you had to make a physical copy and ship it out there. And that was sort of the barrier to entry. Now anybody can make a game and they can put it out there and they can find a small audience, but discovery is the problem. You have to make a lot of noise to tell people that your game exist and get them to actually go and find it.

 **[17:21-17:36]**

So, would you say if you had to pitch the idea about the secret of Monkey Island in today, Ron, and not 1989. Do you think the game would have been made?

 **[17:38-18:07]**

I think no it probably wouldn't. Just because I think adventure games these days are not in the hot category, right? So, I think you probably would have been hard to do and get somebody and do it. Maybe we could make a scrappy little thing, but I think building a real, a real game, it would have been hard. It would have been very hard to do that today.

 **[18:08-18:53]**

Yeah, I'm speaking about that. I mentioned the Golden Age adventure games back when you first started. But what do you think the future has in store for this genre? Do you think people want these different experiences? You still see a future for adventure games?

R: I imagine 30 years from not that I and David will be roped in roped into doing another Monkey Island game.

A: Not before?

 **[18:55-18:59]**

D: We’ll be under 90, c’mon we can do it!

 **[19:05-20:05]**

I think there is a very bright future for narrative games, their stories and people love narrative stuff. And then they do like narrative games. I think you're the pure point and click adventure genre, I've always believed that it needs to evolve, and I think one of the problems with it not kind of maintaining its popularity is it didn't really evolve. And some of the things we've tried to do with return to Monkey Island is the way the interface works, and some of the quality of life changes that we made to it. It mean, those are the kinds of things that help the genre evolve a little bit and there certainly are narrative games that have been quite successful. Games like Firewatch for example has been very very successful and you know, it's not a point-and-click adventure game but it's kind of an adventure game in a lot of ways and I think there's a very bright future for narrative games because people love to be told stories.

 **[20:13-20:28]**

I have to ask about fans and fandom. We’ve seen it recently with Star Wars and Lord of the Rings, and it's also occurring in with video games like you experience the summer.

Is it a blessing or a curse to make games that have so many fans?

R: I think it's both. It’s a blessing and a curse.

D: We wouldn’t have been able to make it at all if there wasn’t a fanbase.

 **[20:48-21:48]**

R: I think fans are wonderful. They are fans and you're trying to make something for them and they enjoy what you're playing. But then there is the other side of the coin which is fans and sometimes become very possessive over the thing. That they have a vision in their head for the way they should be and if you do not follow their vision exactly of what’s in their head they can get very upset about it. And I don't think that is anything new, right? I think that has been going on always, but what we have now is, we have things like Twitter.

People got really upset with the ending of Monkey Island 2 when it came out and lucasfilm got letters from people. They wrote letters that put stamps on them, and they put them in the mailbox and they told me how much they hated the ending of Monkey Island 2.

But today they'll all have Twitter and they can just pummel Dave and I directly with their stuff in and I have to go get a stamp and write a letter anymore. So, I don't think anything has really changed in how people react to things but the immediacy of reacting now is immediate.

 **[22:13-23:13]**

A: When did the after the second game and you kind of stood on the sidelines senior you know you will continue without you. Did you ever feel like that fan that wanted to give criticism and held back, did you feel some of those feelings you see from fans today?

R: No. I didn't. I mean there were things in the other games that I personally would not have done, but I respect the people that build those games. I respect what they did, their creativity and choices they made, and I respect those things. So, no, I wouldn't have jumped on Twitter back in 1998 and criticize Curse of Monkey Island and all that stuff now, because I respect what those guys did with the game.

 **[23:13-24:04]**

D: Conversely it was actually really fun to experience Curse of Monkey Island as an audience member, it was the first time for me seeing what other people work you know from the other side of the counter and where they were getting with these things, and it was super fun.

A: There was a lot of stuff going on this summer with visual criticism, and you Ron stopped sharing from the game. Has anything changed with how you interacted with the fans after the release now that people have actually played the game? Are you seeing any shifts in the feedbacks?

 **[24:05-25:05]**

Yeah, I've seen quite a dramatic shift. I think, I think before the game was released the number of people that that didn't like you're the Arts specific, I think that number was actually quite small, but they were just incredibly vocal about it. And once a game is released, now what we see is all of the people who loved it and did like it before is kind of responding to it, and then it kind of drowns out the negative people a little bit. But I think you know is it's definitely shifted amount. I don't know that we've convinced anybody that hated the art style, to love the artstyle now, maybe one of two people. But the number of people that are really happy with the art style and love the game, those people really are just completely drowning out the negative people today.

 **[25:05-25:44]**

D: We did get one or two apologies actually.

R: That’s true. We did. (ha ha)

D: I was sort of expecting the turnaround. The entire time I was a Telltale Games which is like almost a decade. Every time we announced the project, there would immediately be a hue and cry from people and who hadn’t even seen anything. They would just know the name of the game, what license we are working with, and they would immediately starts quibbling about how we were going to screw everything up in the casting choices were wrong. And just anything we announce would always be met with some blowback from some of the more forbit fans, and then we would release the game and everything would be fine.

People will stop talking about this stuff and play it and they would like it, I was sort of expecting the same thing here.

 **[25:52-26:22]**

You would have done the same thing again if you could go back? No regrets?

R: None at all. We always really loved the art style, we believed in the art style and we completely believed in Rex, the art director. So there was there was zero doubt in the team that we were doing the right thing, and you could we go back in time or I wouldn't have changed anything at all.

 **[26:23-26:51]**

The game is out and obviously the question is, what's next for the series?

 **[26:52-27:13]**

I don't know specifically. We don’t own the IP, it's all owned by Disney. So, ultimately, it's their decision where that stuff goes. Whether Dave and I are involved in Another Monkey Island, is your kind of an open-ended question, but I cannot believe the Disney will not make more monkey Island games.

 **[27:14-27:56]**

Would you want to make more?

R: I think after I've had a nice long vacation I will think about that.

D: We would have to do the thing that we did at the beginning of this project was which was we got together and just kind of chatted between ourselves to figure out whether we had something to say with it and we realized that we did and that's when we agreed to do it.

R: I think the goal when we started this was not to make another Monkey Island, but to make a new monkey Island. And if we were going to make another MI after this is, Dave said, we would want to make a new game. Not just another Monkey Island.

 **[27:59-28:33]**

A: What's next for you guys?

R: Yeah, I know, I think for me, it's, it's several months. So, just relaxing and letting kind of ideas percolate up as necessary.

D: I'm working on Halloween at the moment, it’s a big thing at my house, but after that I'll start thinking about new pitches.