

Death, *Star Wars*[™], and the LEGO[®] Pooper Trooper

Before LEGO[®] *Star Wars*[™]: The Video Game crashed onto the scene, raking in millions and redefining what it meant to be a LEGO game, a *Star Wars* game, and a family-friendly game, it was a mostly overlooked project by Lucasfilm.

While TT Games and the LEGO Group had faith that the title would do well, those at Lucasfilm overseeing the use of the *Star Wars* property saw the game as a merchandising opportunity at best and a poor fit at worst.

"We were working on all sorts of different games like Secret Weapons Over Normandy, and Armed and Dangerous and the Old Republic games," said Matt Shell, Director, Product Marketing at Lucasfilm. "My boss had come to me and told me that I was going to be working on this new LEGO *Star Wars* game and, to be honest, I think we all were kind of like, 'Huh?' That didn't make a whole lot of sense for us, given the other types of games we're working on, given what our audience looked like, given the direction of the company."

That early relationship was really just about working on the marketing and as a licensing partner, since Eidos was publishing the game, he said. The LEGO Group brought with it a sense of identity – perhaps misplaced – that its products were really just for young children.

"When we were thinking about LEGO games, you were you were talking about little kid games and little builders, it was nothing like the LEGO games that we know today," he said. "Anybody that says we heard about making LEGO *Star Wars*: The Video Game and thought, 'This is going to be a huge hit.' And, 'This is makes perfect sense.' – you know, I'd be the first to tell you they were lying. Because that was not exactly the first thought that any of us had. It took a lot of convincing. There were a lot of a lot of conversations that happened in order to convince us that this is really going to be the match made in heaven it's turned out to be."

As LEGO *Star Wars*: The Video Game approached its 2005 launch, many inside Lucasfilm were beginning to realize just how much fun the game was. And that successful launch confirmed an evolving take on TT Games' approach to LEGO games.

Because of that, the relationship with Lucasfilm continued to grow, first expanding to include more of the *Star Wars* movies, and then adding the Indiana Jones titles. The two companies continue to push boundaries and discover new ways to tell the Lucasfilm stories.

Perhaps Shell's favorite bit of marketing magic was the idea he came up with to promote the boss battles in *LEGO Star Wars III: The Clone Wars*. It involved a brick bowel movement.

"We were trying to think of different ways to highlight the boss fights, which we were bringing to the franchise, which we hadn't really had before," he said. "And so it seemed like a natural fit to have one of the troopers go up against a boss and then literally, you know, have a brick bowel movement on screen. "

The group came up with an animated concept and Shell loved it, but then he had to get permission from both Lucasfilm and the LEGO Group.

"We have a beautiful conference room upstairs that has a view of the Golden Gate Bridge," he said. "It's an all-wood room with big leather chairs. It's like when you're a kid, you think of the most magical meeting you could ever have. It takes place in this room.

"I'm in there and Howard Roffman [president of Lucas Licensing] was in there, and our president at the time was in there, and a bunch of execs from the LEGO Group, and I had to present this concept. And I literally presented as the character s---ing a brick, and there was complete silence in the room. I don't think anybody knew how to react because, you know, the LEGO Group was there."

Shell managed to get the approval after a bit of convincing and the rest is a glorious 11-second piece of award-winning marketing history.

Matt Fillbrandt, Executive Producer in charge of product development at Lucasfilm Games, noted that by the time TT Games was working on *LEGO Star Wars: The Force Awakens*™, the game was in production at the same time as the movie.

That game not only featured a pivotal death scene from the movie – which had to be presented in a way that was both lightly humorous, but also didn't disparage the movie's own evocative scene – but the developers weren't given a lot of advance insight into what would be happening until the movie was basically out.

"There was a lot of conversation around how to handle that," Fillbrandt said. "And I think, if I remember correctly, there were even some issues with the LEGO Group side of it where they have specific rules that you're not supposed to penetrate a minifigure."

The death scene was violent, so there were a lot of complicated elements to navigate.

"We would take trips out to the TT Fusion Studio in the UK, and we'd be out to dinner, having a team dinner after a daylong meeting, and I'd be out on the sidewalk talking about this scene specifically and what we could do with it and how we're going to handle it. But ultimately, but we ultimately came up with it."

The relationship between TT Games, the LEGO Group, and Lucasfilm Games helped to create a new entry point into Lucasfilm's many famed properties, specifically designed for a younger audience.

"This is how they're learning the stories, they're learning the characters," said Shell. "This is their *Star Wars* until they're introduced to the movies and TV shows. "

Fillbrandt added: "I think, for those of us who got to play with LEGO bricks as kids, that even with the adults who might love the movies, there's also that part of remembering what it was like to put together those first sets that you had and use your imagination to play with these things. And then, when you get to play the games, it all comes to life there, and you get to interact with those characters in the stories that they tell in this magical moment."

Explore more...

In order of appearance:

[LEGO Star Wars: The Video Game](#) - Wikipedia

[TT Games](#) - Official website

[SPU Darwin](#) - Inside the LEGO Group's Secretive Strategic Product Unit Darwin

[LEGO Indiana Jones: The Original Adventure](#) - Official website

[LEGO Bits N' Bricks Season 1 Episode 9](#) - How Harry Potter and an amazing demo led to LEGO Star Wars: The Video Game

[LEGO Pooper Trooper commercial](#) - YouTube

[The Han Solo scene from LEGO Star Wars: The Force Awakens](#) - YouTube

[LEGO Star Wars: The Force Awakens](#) - Official website

Transcript

Bits N' Bricks Season 2 Episode 20: May the 4th Be With You

May 4, 2021 · 1:02:14



Prologue – 00:00

(Music)

Ethan Vincent

Welcome back, listeners to the Bits N' Bricks podcast. We wrapped Season 1 awhile ago, but we haven't quite dropped into Season 2 yet. So why are we here, Brian?

Brian Crecente

Vroom, pew, pew, pew, pew pew-

Ethan Vincent

-Brian, Brian what are you doing?

Brian Crecente

I'm providing scene-setting sound effects for your announcement.

Ethan Vincent

Great. Yes. Happy May the fourth everyone.

Brian Crecente

Pew, pew, pew, pew.

Ethan Vincent

Yeah, we might as well just get that out of the way. Yes, it's May the fourth, and before Brian tries to do R2-D2's screech, let's hop into this one-off special episode, but make sure you come back later in the month for a full fledged return of Bits N' Bricks Season 2.

Bits N' Bricks: Introduction – 00:50

(Child's voice announcing Bits N' Bricks)

Ethan Vincent

Welcome to Bits N' Bricks, a podcast about all things LEGO games. I'm Ethan Vincent.

Brian Crecente

And I'm Brian Crecente. Together, we look back at the rich 25-year history of LEGO games, chat with early developers and seasoned studios, who have all tackled the creation of video games for one of the most popular and respected toy companies in the world: The LEGO Group.

(Bits N' Bricks Season 2 theme music)

Ethan Vincent

Good morning, Brian.

Brian Crecente

Hey, Ethan. How are you? I know you've been doing a lot of globetrotting this month. So how are things?

Ethan Vincent

Oh, man, it's been kind of crazy. I've been, of course, been away from my home on film production doing a little documentary series. And it's been almost seven weeks.

Brian Crecente

Wow.

Ethan Vincent

So I've spent all this time traveling around the US, even to New York, right?

Brian Crecente

Yes. Yeah, that was great. It was, you know, it's funny we finally met and had a lovely dinner. I cannot believe that this month was the first time we have ever met in person in two years of working together.

Ethan Vincent

Yeah, just great to see you, man. And boy, that was a fantastic dinner. A good choice.

Brian Crecente

Yes! The mousse.

Ethan Vincent

Yes. Lava cake. I had the lava cake.

Brian Crecente

It's probably too early though to be talking about delicious, delicious chocolate desserts.

Ethan Vincent

Yes. So what should we be talking about this week, my friend?

Chapter 1: A Brief History of Lucasfilm Games – 02:21

Brian Crecente

Well, *Star Wars*, Indiana Jones, all of the George Lucas goodness rolled up neatly into a collection of digital LEGO brick wonders.

Ethan Vincent

Yes, *Star Wars*, Indiana Jones, who does not know those first of all? And second of all, just how amazing and great those films are. You know, I'm pretty aware of George Lucas and Lucasfilm, but what can you tell me about how he got into video games?

Brian Crecente

You know, it's a really interesting history that dates all the way back to 1979 when George Lucas recruited Ed Catmull from the New York Institute of Technology to head the Lucasfilm Computer Division. The division was formed to focus on non-linear film editing, digital sound and graphics. A computer games team was later created within the division in 1982. And then in 1986 the graphics group was sold to Steve Jobs who renamed it, well -

Ethan Vincent

Let me guess...Pixar?

Brian Crecente

You got it. Pixar! The folks behind Toy Story, Monsters Incorporated, The Incredibles, and on and on and on.

Ethan Vincent

Oh yeah. I mean the Pixar movies are amazing and well loved, of course. I think about the influence Pixar had on the early strategic product unit Darwin Group. You think about how they looked at these early Pixar movies and said, "Hey, why don't we do that with the LEGO brick? Why don't we do that with LEGO DNA? Why don't we create a little LEGO movie?" You know it of course was a huge influence for them. So one of the things I thought was really cool is, in September of 2009 at the Biennale Venice Film Festival, all the executives John Lasseter, Andrew Stanton, you know, Brad Bird, all those guys, they were

granted the Golden Lion for Lifetime Achievement Award. And it was granted to them by Lucasfilm founder George Lucas. So it kind of goes full circle here.

Brian Crecente

Yes, so the other half of that group, the Lucas Computer Division became Lucasfilm Games' Group. And they worked with Atari, which helped fund the group. Because of that funding, Atari actually got the license for *Star Wars* video games. So the Lucasfilm Games Group instead of working on *Star Wars* properties, mostly focused on creating original titles, and I think frankly the entire world is very happy that happened because it brought us an amazing list of games, including the fantastic *Maniac Mansion*; *Habitat*; *Labyrinth*; *The Secret of Monkey Island*, and you know, I could just keep naming games.

Ethan Vincent

Yeah, but didn't they also make some early Indiana Jones' games?

Brian Crecente

Yeah, they did actually. *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* hit in 1989. And *Indiana Jones and the Fate of Atlantis* was in 1992.

Ethan Vincent

Yeah, you know, this is really interesting, Brian, because you think about the Lucasfilm Games group and they're doing all these great games, but like you said they're not doing *Star Wars*. When when did that start up again? Were they able to kind of get back to that?

Brian Crecente

Yes, so the first in-house *Star Wars* game was the excellent space combat simulator, *X-Wing*, which went on to spawn a beloved series. Then in the mid 90s, they started making first-person shooters with *Star Wars: Dark Forces*, and then *Jedi Knight: Dark Forces II*. The franchise got a very successful series of role-playing games with *Knights of the Old Republic* in the 2000s. And they even had a massively multiplayer online game in 2003 with *Star Wars Galaxies*.

Ethan Vincent

Again, really fascinating history, just video game history, I love it. How does this all come together, Brian?

Brian Crecente

Well, it's interesting. It's all really about the context. So LucasArts is in the midst of this sort of renaissance of *Star Wars* video games. They're churning out massive hit after massive hit for fans of hardcore gaming. In 2004 alone, the studio released five games, four of them based on *Star Wars* properties, and in 2005 they released six more games from

Mercenaries: Playground of Destruction, to *Star Wars Battlefront II*. 2005 also happens to be the year that *LEGO Star Wars: The Video Game* hit.

Ethan Vincent

Aha, there's the connection, and you know, I look back at the episode we did on this and these early beginnings with Giant Interactive. Super fascinating and just an incredible story of also how this game came to be.

Brian Crecente

Right. And this history of these tremendous successes by LucasArts at the time with these sort of very gritty action-oriented games, goes a long way in explaining the early internal reaction to the LEGO Group coming up to LucasArts and saying they want to make a video game based on a *Star Wars* property.

Ethan Vincent

Yeah, I can only imagine, like here you are making first-person shooters and massively multiplayer online games, and tactical games, right? And all of these titles aimed at adult fans of *Star Wars*, people who really live and breathe for the franchise, and suddenly along comes the LEGO Group with this game.

Brian Crecente

Yeah, exactly, and now on top of that, you have to look at the LEGO Group's history at the time. Even though the company had been making video games for a decade by the time *LEGO Star Wars: The Video Game* came out, with a couple of exceptions they were basically very different than that massive hit, the *LEGO Star Wars* game.

Ethan Vincent

Yeah, yeah. You know, they had obviously done *LEGO Loco*, *LEGO Friends*, *LEGO Racers*, *LEGO Bionicle*. A lot of these games were viewed, I think on some level, as an extension of the marketing arm of the LEGO Group, maybe not by its gaming merits, you know?

Brian Crecente

Right, and on top of that, they definitely skewed toward a much younger audience. So, you take LucasArts and its tremendous success with teen-friendly, adult-friendly hardcore games, and here comes the LEGO Group with a history of children and family games, and at least internally, to be frank, there was a lot of initial doubt about what would come of it.

Ethan Vincent

To be frank, right? So you aren't Frank normally, Brian?

Brian Crecente

Ah, yeah, so OK –

Ethan Vincent

(Laughs)

Brian Crecente

– to be blunt (laughs). So to be blunt, internally at LucasArts, the very first TT Game, LEGO *Star Wars: The Video Game*, was sort of brushed off initially. It was seen as a marketing stunt, something that certainly wouldn't have any major impact on anything Lucas was doing on its side.

Ethan Vincent

Yeah, but boy, did that change. I mean, that's remarkable that change.

Brian Crecente

Yes, and very quickly.

Chapter 2: Matt Fillbrandt and Matt Shell - Part I – 08:33

Brian Crecente

And that brings us to today's episode. Matt Shell, Director of Brand Marketing at Lucasfilm Games and Matt Fillbrandt, Executive Producer in charge of product development at Lucasfilm Games wanted to tackle this interview together because they've worked basically side-by-side forever on these titles.

Ethan Vincent

Yeah, and boy did they have great chemistry. That was so fun, Brian, to hear how this worked out and how they managed to turn so many emotive, amazing moments in the films into these poignant, but also family-friendly moments made of LEGO bricks.

Brian Crecente

Yes. All that and more in this interview. So let's have a listen.

(Music)

Matt Shell

My name is Matt Shell. I'm the Director of Brand Marketing at Lucasfilm Games. Yeah, so I went to college for business and marketing and graduated and started working at a strategic design and marketing firm. And Sega was one of our clients. I went to my first

meeting there. And I said, "My God, I've got to work at this place. This is the coolest job I've ever seen." And I got a job there and worked there for a little bit, and when my department was laid off I said, "There's only two jobs that I think I can go to next that would make me happy." One of those was hosting the Tonight Show, which didn't seem like a real feasible option. And the other was working for *Star Wars*. And that was, God, probably 16, 17 years ago, and I've been here in a number of different roles throughout the last 15 years or so.

Matt Fillbrandt

I'm Matt Fillbrandt, I'm the Executive Producer in charge of product development at Lucasfilm Games. I actually worked at a law firm, but with the intention of going to law school, but after having worked with attorneys in a high pressure law firm environment, I decided that probably wasn't a good path for me to take, and I wanted to try to get into something more creative. I was a huge video game fan. And so I had frequently been going to the Lucasfilm website, and lo and behold, a position opened up at LucasArts in the legal department. Had a lot of similarities with things that I'd been doing at that time in corporate law, and I took a chance, applied for the position and ended up getting it with the mindset of knowing that I wanted to do something else. I didn't know what at that time, but I just want to get my foot in the door at Lucas, and I made a transition over to production. I started there back in 1999, so I've been with the company for now 22 years, I guess. And it's been a great ride so far.

Brian Crecente

When did you, both of you, I'm curious, when did you first hear about TT Games working on a Lucasfilm property? And what were your thoughts when you first heard that there was going to be this sort of team up and the LEGO Group was involved?

Matt Shell

Yeah, I think that's probably more along my timeline at LucasArts.

Ethan Vincent

This is Matt Shell speaking,

Matt Shell

If you remember, we were working on all sorts of different games, you know, flight games like *Secret Weapons over Normandy*, and *Armed and Dangerous* and the *Old Republic* games. My boss had come to me and told me that I was going to be working on this new LEGO *Star Wars* game, and to be honest, I think we all were kind of like, "Huh?" Like, that didn't make a whole lot of sense for us given the other types of games we were working on, given what our audience looked like, given the direction of the company. And so that project came over to me primarily because it was really just a marketing relationship at the time. We were not publishing that game. So you know, we knew about TT, we had very

few conversations, and mostly it was just about working on sort of that creative, the creative elements for the game with Eidos, and working as more the license holders on the title moreso than we were from a production or marketing standpoint.

Brian Crecente

Yeah, you know, it's interesting, you raise an interesting point. If you look at sort of a snapshot of the year before and the year of that game's release, no one would have expected a LEGO game to come from one of the properties because you had the Battlefront games, you had Knights of the Old Republic, you had Mercenaries, Empire at War, so those are all like T and up rated games that are certainly, like you said, they're sort of meant for a particular, I think a very particular sort of audience. And then along comes this game that is, at least at first blush, seems like it's tied directly to a much younger audience.

Matt Shell

Yeah. Well, first off, you gotta love those titles that you mentioned. Those were really exciting and fun times for us working on things like Mercenaries, it was really a hoot. If you remember, the LEGO *Star Wars* game was sort of the first of these movie-type games that had that LEGO spin on them. But before that, when we were thinking about LEGO games, you were talking about little kid games and little builders and games that took advantage of the LEGO generic minifigs. And there was... it was nothing like the LEGO games that we know today.

Brian Crecente

Yeah, no, you're right. I mean, yeah, there's obviously well before them, but LEGO Island, and then there were like a bunch of other games sort of around that time - LEGO Loco, LEGO Racers - but they were all definitely sort of more tied to the theme ets and more tied to a much younger audience. So on the one hand, you've got LucasArts doing titles that are sort of much more teen and adult. And on the other, you have LEGO Group doing titles that are much younger and theme-set themed. And then the output is something that doesn't match either of those, which is, I think, really fascinating.

Matt Shell

Yeah, I think anybody that says we heard about making LEGO *Star Wars: The Video Game* and thought, "Oh this is going to be a huge hit, and this makes perfect sense," you know, I'd be the first to tell you they were lying because that was not exactly the first thought that any of us had, you know, it took a lot of convincing. There were a lot of conversations that happened in order to convince us that this is really going to be the match made in heaven as it's turned out to be.

Ethan Vincent

Matt, this is Ethan here. I think that it's interesting what you said about not too many people having that foresight about the potential success. But I also remember in putting another episode of Bits N' Bricks together on TT Games, that Brian and I heard the story of one of the producers at Lucasfilm Games getting these builds and looking at them, you know, doing check-ins on them, and with every successive build that came in more and more people were showing up to play it and crowding around behind this person, and by the end it was like a sudden realization, at least, you know, among developers, that there's this really fun game there. And I guess my question is, is this an urban myth or is that true?

Matt Shell

Yeah, I think that's true. I mean, we certainly grew with the game as we were getting a better understanding of it, and seeing how all of this sort of magic came to be, you know, that fun, and tongue in cheek nature of the game, the whimsy of the game. You really don't understand it until you see it. It's not the kind of thing that can be described really easily, and translates to something that makes people go, "Oh, yeah, yeah, that's a great idea, that makes perfect sense." And so once people started getting their hands on it, seeing it, getting videos of the gameplay and the cutscenes, I think it really started to translate to something that made sense for all of us.

Brian Crecente

Now, Matt Fillbrandt, what was your first sort of realization that there was a LEGO game in the works or a TT Game with one of the properties?

Matt Fillbrandt

You know, people I think were familiar with the fact that the LEGO Group had been working with Lucasfilm licensing to put out the physical brick set since about the late '90s. And so that proved, I think, to be quite successful. And so you could sort of imagine, it wasn't like this was the first time that that the LEGO Group and Lucasfilm and *Star Wars* had done something together. So you start to think about the sets that you might have been familiar with, and how those we're going to come to life and animation, and how are they going to do that with this hard plastic bits, and how the character is going to work. And so I think that was like a very interesting thing, because most of the people that I know that are in gaming, or have had kids remember their time with LEGO bricks as kids, that's kind of a magical time in your sort of coming of age. And it's sort of awakened this playfulness, I think, in all of us that there could be something pretty fun there to be able to interact with those elements and relive elements of the various trilogies through that medium in a totally unique, and in a way that's completely honorable to the series of games that you really don't get anywhere else, I think.

Brian Crecente

When you look at that first game, one of the things that really stands out, in my mind, is the fact that it sort of minted a very specific type of humor that TT Games was able to use throughout all the properties, the LEGO games that they've come out with since, which seems to appeal both to children and adults. And I'm just curious, you know, they're sort of doing this on the fly with his first game. Do you think that it... did it sort of translate well when it came to those *Star Wars* and Indiana Jones properties? Or do you feel like that was a struggle initially?

Matt Fillbrandt

From my perspective, I think it worked. I mean, I think it was so kind of fresh and new from that perspective that, you know, kind of hats off to Howard Roffman for taking a chance with something like this that really hadn't been done before with an IP, and had the vision to see potentially building off of the success of the brick, physical brick side of the business, that there could be something special here. And, you know, I think because of that sense of humor, hats off to Jon Burton and the folks at TT at the time that were able to kind of bring their vision in that whimsical element to this property that married what effectively is a, you know, a really a kid's toy, and sort of the ability to break things apart and build things and all those different elements in a way that was so compelling.

Matt Shell

Yeah, I think just just to add to that: Matt sort of hints at it, but I think that humor that you talk about is really what allows this game to cross so many barriers and boundaries of its audience. It is a kid's game. You know, and it does primarily speak to kids in the type of gameplay, but the humor is what allows adults and different demographics to find this enjoyable to play on their own, like this isn't – you'd think it would just be a game that kids would play or maybe parents would play to introduce their kids to *Star Wars*, but plenty of adults find it really enjoyable, I think primarily because of that humor aspect, you know, the little – putting things on their head a little bit and telling just a slightly different story with a humorous bend to it really allows it to reach a much different audience.

(Music)

Chapter 3: Excerpt from Bits N' Bricks Episode 9 with Tom Stone – 20:26

Ethan Vincent

So, Brian, what I'm hearing both Matt saying here in this interview, too, is just how skeptical and surprised they were about LEGO *Star Wars: The Video Game*. But I'm reminded of that they weren't the only ones. There were people who bankrolled the game, even potential publishers, who seemed disinterested in the idea behind the game.

Brian Crecente

Yeah, that's true. You know, in fact, we did an interview with Tom Stone, who was the founder of Giant Interactive, which was the studio that was later bought out by Traveller's Tales to become TT Games. He talked a lot about what it was like to sort of shop this game around before it had a publisher.

Ethan Vincent

And we chatted with a bunch of people about those early years at TT and about *LEGO Star Wars: The Video Game* back in Episode 9 in *Bits N' Bricks*, Season 1. Let's take a listen.

(Sound of lightsabers)

Brian Crecente

You know, it's easy to forget, when you talk about game development, how many people how many ideas, how many long nights are involved in creating a game. Burton tells us that much of those core ideas tied to sort of the foundational work of this game and in turn, sort of all the games that came after it, came from people like John Hodgkinson and James Cunliffe and Jeremy Pardon. He said he liked the idea of having a lot of different characters in the game, each with their own abilities, because of something that he saw and played on an old ZX Spectrum, this old game called *Thunderbirds*, and so that's where some of that inspiration came from. So anyway, once the deal was made and Traveller's Tales were deep into development of the game, Giant Interactive still had one really big issue they had to solve, and that was they needed to find someone who could publish and disseminate their game to retailers around the world.

Tom Stone

We took a trip to Los Angeles and we met with THQ, we met with Activision, and we met with Electronic Arts. We had already previously met with Ubisoft, and we'd met with Eidos. I think they were the five publishers that we met with. I then received a phone call from Activision at the time saying, "Really enjoyed the demo, but we don't think this game is going to succeed, so we don't want to be your distribution partner." I got a similar phone call from THQ saying, "Yeah, you know, we think it's like an interesting idea, but we don't think it's that big an idea, so actually, we don't want to be your distribution partner." And then, because I'd worked for Electronic Arts, I thought, "Well, they'll be on board." We'd already worked with Electronic Arts on some LEGO brick stuff, I thought they might be on board, and they actually turned me down as well. So at this point, I was thinking, "Ooh, this could be interesting. So we've got this game that we were working on developing it, and we are not going to be able to find a worldwide distribution partner." Anyway, Ubisoft and Eidos actually did say, they both said, we really believe in this, and we'd love to work with you on it. And we decided to go with Eidos. Part of the reason we went with Eidos because they didn't have any other games. And we thought, they will give us all their attention. And we think that's really good for this. I didn't want to be fifth on the list at,

let's say, at an Activision or another company. I want to be at the top of their list. This is the most important game that we're going to release in 2005, and that was true for Eidos. That was their most important worldwide game in 2005. We got attention in Japan (the game was released out over there), it got an incredibly powerful release in Europe, and they did a fantastic job in North America. So that's how that happened.

Ethan Vincent

While they were able to find a publisher eventually, it was touch and go. And for Tom Stone, it was very personal.

Brian Crecente

Yeah.

Ethan Vincent

He had invested a lot of his personal funds, and even put his house on the line to get the funding for Giant Interactive. And if they couldn't find a publisher, or if the game didn't do well, there was a very good chance he would have lost it, but Stone said he kept his spirits up during those dark moments of rejection by going back to watch children test the game as work continued on it.

Tom Stone

I had young gamers coming into the cottage where we worked. And I just listened to their response, their reaction. They were screaming with delight as they were being able to be these Jedi Knights, slicing up the droids and anything made of LEGO bricks and fighting each other. And they were dropping in and dropping out two-player gameplay. And I just watched them and thought, "This game is going to be successful. I just know it. Look at the reaction of these 8-year-old kids who are playing this game. They absolutely love it. Don't care what adults think. These kids love it." And that was proven to be true. And I just, I listened to them rather than listen to the adults, if you like.

(Lightsaber sounds)

Ethan Vincent

That quote there from Tom Stone, Brian, I love it how he talks about that experience. And there's a lot more to hear in that Season 1, Episode 9, so make sure you give that a listen if you haven't already.

Chapter 4: Matt Fillbrandt and Matt Shell – Part II – 26:09

Ethan Vincent

But now back to the two Matts who are about to talk about stormtroopers in hot tubs, and an award-winning commercial about a brick bowel movement so absurd that it required not one but two swear bleeps.

(Music)

Brian Crecente

One of the things that you both sort of touched on this, this sort of, there's this sense of irreverence that I feel like most people, if they came to Lucasfilm or came to any other IP owner, they would say, "No, you can't do that." And the one, the example I think of is I think the very first, well maybe it's not the first one I saw, but it's certainly the one that stuck in my head. There's this scene, and I think it's *LEGO Star Wars II: The Original Trilogy*, just a tiny little scene where you find these stormtroopers hanging out in a bathtub. And I remember when I saw that, first off, I thought it was hilarious, but like the very second thought I had was, "How did they get that approved?" And so I'm curious, was that a struggle? And when you saw these were you like, "Oh no, we can't do that. You can't have stormtroopers hanging out in a hot tub."

Matt Fillbrandt

I can't speak to the initial approval of how it got in the initial game because I didn't work on that.

Ethan Vincent

This is Matt Fillbrandt speaking.

Matt Fillbrandt

Sometimes things like that it's not always obvious that it's going to be a gag or a joke that is necessarily going to work. I think the ones that – we sort of have a philosophy when it comes to having humor with Lucasfilm IPs and our franchises, is that we want to have fun with it, but we don't want to make fun of it. So things like that, I think, it's the kind of thing that, at least from my perspective, you might think, well stormtroopers hanging out in a hot tub doesn't necessarily make sense in the *Star Wars* universe, but because of the LEGO bricks, it sort of works. And then you're like, well, it's obviously being satirical that you've got characters running around, there's mayhem all over the place, and you open a secret door and all of a sudden, you find a bunch of stormtroopers with their helmets on sitting in a hot tub, is just instantly is a great gag, it's just funny, so I know that's one that we have brought back and done a bit of a homage to in *The Force Awakens* games, etc. And so, when things like that work you want to pay respect to them because they're so good.

Matt Shell

Yeah, I think I'll just add, you know, our involvement back in 2005 –

Ethan Vincent

This is Matt Shell.

Matt Shell

– there was very little work for us to do other than, I mean I joke, but I think my primary role on that title was getting the sticker approved which had, you know, the sticker that called out the film, Episode 3, that the story elements from that movie were in the game. It was literally just a sticker on the cover of the box, and I think we worked on the key art. And as time has gone on, we're now involved with every aspect, every joke, every story element that's included in the game, and so at the time, early on it was much more consumer products play and those humor and story elements that we included years ago, we now are taking throughout the entire process from creation of the story and the jokes, to the implementation in the games.

Ethan Vincent

I have another question here. Do any of you have any sort of favorite surprising scenes or gags in the Lucasfilm games' library that have been turned into LEGO games?

Matt Shell

You know, there's tons of great moments in all the *Star Wars* games. But I think my favorite actually belongs to LEGO Indiana Jones, and that's when the – and Matt can tell a little bit of the behind-the-scenes of the story – but when (sounds of LEGO Indiana Jones gameplay) they open the Ark of the Covenant and the disco ball comes out, and everybody starts disco dancing, was an E3 demo moment I'll never forget, one of the more enjoyable moments for me as it relates to that franchise.

Matt Fillbrandt

Yeah, I mean, there's so many that it's really hard to say exactly which one is your most favorite. I think the ones that stick in my mind that some of the things we've used in teasers and had show up in cinematics in the game too, where there's the Kylo Ren (sounds of gameplay) gag where he throws out his infamous lightsaber that has the three lightsaber blades on it, and of course, it doesn't work and he rattles it and they keep going out different sides, is a good one. At the beginning of the Force Awakens when you play The Episode VI level and you have that dramatic moment where Luke and Darth Vader have fought the Emperor and they're having Darth Vader's death scene and he's asking him to take his helmet off and he pulls his helmet off (popping sound effect) and lo and behold, he's under there (soundsof gameplay scene) with Anakin's head so he has to shake the helmet and actually take off Anakin's head and put on the one of the dying Darth Vader. You can only do that, a gag like that, with a LEGO *Star Wars* game because it's not going

to work anywhere else. And it's a way to just have fun with the franchise and kind of, you know, somewhat a wink and a nod to some of the history in the past and also just satirize it in a way that's just, is just brilliant.

Brian Crecente

You, I've forgotten now which one of you was responsible for this, in a good way, but you guys were talking about a ad, that I think you even sent to me, I know you even sent to me, which is hilarious, but I'd love for you to describe it and explain – did this actually air this ad?

Matt Shell

Oh, yeah. Yeah, this definitely aired and I'm going to jump in before Matt Fillbrandt tries to take credit for my work because I'm usually trying to take credit for his, so before he can even get in word in I'm going to say, "Yeah, this was absolutely me. This is Matt Shell talking," so there's no confusion. I don't want anybody to give anybody else credit because this is one of the best moments of my career, I think at Lucasfilm. And what you're referring to is what we, very lovingly, refer to as "the pooper trooper spot."

Brian Crecente

Nice.

Matt Shell

And this was one – we were doing 30 second spots for TV. I literally think I brought it up as a joke. I don't know about your audience here. Are we are we allowed to swear?

Ethan Vincent

You know what, we can beep you. So go ahead, Matt. Go ahead.

Matt Shell

OK, well, I'm going to do it. I'm going to drop one here for you because I literally said it'd be funny if there was a way we could convey them to [swear beep] a brick. Because these are LEGO minifigure characters, and, you know it's like, it seemed obvious how can nobody have ever come up with this before? So we worked with our agency to come up with a concept where the trooper literally – and I think if I remember correctly, one of the marketing pillars that we had for the game, you know, I should have prepared better for this, I think it was *LEGO Star Wars III*, and we were touting the boss fights. We were trying to think of different ways to highlight the boss fights, which we were bringing to the franchise, which we hadn't really had before. And so it seemed like a natural fit to have one of the troopers go up against a boss and then literally have a brick bowel movement on screen. And they came up with this concept, and I loved it. And I literally was – I've said no matter what we do, going forward, I'm going to get this spot approved. Most people probably haven't been to Lucasfilm, but we've got some beautiful, beautiful conference

rooms at our campus and our exact conference room upstairs literally has a view of the Golden Gate Bridge. It's sitting in the pristine Presidio. It's an all-wood room with big leather chairs, and it's like when you're a kid you think of the most magical meeting you could ever have. It takes place in this room! And, you know, I'm in there and Howard Roffman was in there, and our president at the time was in there, and a bunch of execs from the LEGO Group, and I had to present this concept. And I did what I said earlier, I literally presented as the character's [swear beep] a brick, and there was complete silence (chuckles) in the room. And I don't think anybody knew how to react. It took a lot of convincing in that room, but I came out with an approval, and it was all systems go, we literally went downstairs and started production. And when this thing finally aired, I knew we had a winner.

(Excerpt from LEGO *Star Wars* III commercial)

Matt Shell

At fact, I think that was the first acceptance speech I ever had to give was for the marketing awards we won for that spot. It was a great, great time, a great project and one that I am exceptionally proud of. It's the only project I've ever worked on that has included LEGO brick poop, I can confidently tell you that.

Brian Crecente

You could have had a whole backstory – you could have had it been a red brick, and then you could say that he had beets for dinner the night before. And like it could have been a whole thing, but you didn't-

Matt Shell

You're hired. It is my kind of humor.

(Music)

Brian Crecente

So I'd love to talk about LEGO *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* because I think there's a lot of interesting things that happened in there. And you have to tackle some pretty extreme scenes, including spoiler alert maybe for someone out there, but you've got Han's death in the game. So how is it that you guys discuss that? And how you are going to turn that into something that wasn't either going to be too much for a kid's game, or sort of make fun of a scene in a way that would belittle it in some way?

Matt Fillbrandt

Yeah, it's a great question because there's two things about this that were challenging. The first was, that scene in the script reads that we were given ahead of the film coming out, that scene was considered super, super secret. So we didn't actually know exactly what

the scene was, we didn't know that Han Solo was going to be killed until the movie effectively came out. So we weren't able to even share that information with TT up until that point, only to tell them be ready to do something when we can show you more details about it because it was such a secret part of the film. And then it was very clear, we had many conversations with Howard Roffman at the time, and other folks, about how can we handle this scene because there was a sentiment that it was too soon, with the game coming out so close to the movie launch, that trying to make light of it or have fun with it in too heavy-handed of a way was going to be kind of disrespectful to Han Solo's legacy as part of the franchise. So there was a lot of conversation around how to handle that. And if I remember correctly, there was even some issues with the LEGO Group side of it where they have, you know, you're not supposed to penetrate a minifigure, so because of the way that Kylo (spoiler alert) kills Han, we couldn't actually show it. And obviously it's very violent, so there's just so many different complicated elements to this. But I think in the final execution, and I can even remember we would take trips out to the TT Fusion studio in the UK, and we'd be out to dinner having a team dinner after a day of long meetings, and I'd be out on the sidewalk talking to Howard Roffman and Douglas about this scene specifically and what we could do with it and how we're going to handle it. But ultimately, I think our ability to do it in a way that was appropriate for *LEGO Star Wars*, knowing the audience is going to skew younger, dealing with all the brand issues around it. But we ultimately came up with this idea that you see, as Kylo and Han are sort of confronting each other and having this very dramatic conversation on this bridge, that you see these two stormtroopers that are sort of watching this interaction on the side. And when the final blow is dealt, one of the stormtroopers sort of swoons and falls over, so it gives it kind of a light touch while still conveying some of the drama of that scene, and we used all the the VO from the film because that game was the first fully voiced *LEGO Star Wars* game that had been done to that point. And so, it's sort of like you have all the drama and the performance from the actors, well, obviously the LEGO brick visuals accompanied with some of these other elements to try to take some of the serious elements out of that while getting it across. So it was very complicated.

Ethan Vincent

I think Brian and I have a bunch of questions here, but I'm curious, were there other plot points you had to hold back and not tell TT Games until the movie was out? And I guess, did that have any impact on production?

Matt Fillbrandt

I think making a game in parallel with a movie that's in production is an extremely difficult undertaking because scripts, they get rewritten, there's changes, characters are in, they're out, and the game lead times are so much longer. It takes months and months and months to sit down, and not only write all the the design documentation and pull this vision of how you're going to tell the story together, but as a movie works, sometimes shots come and go and you're making - having to make changes on the fly, and so it was our job to try to keep them informed as best as possible. And there was a small group of people that were

able to get script reads periodically throughout the process, and we kept them up to date, but it really wasn't until the movie came out and they basically saw all the little details, and I'm sure there were other details that I don't remember. I think if you even watch some of the making-of video that comes out with the DVD (plug!) you can see that there are some deleted scenes underneath Maz's castle, and perhaps the implication that character may have had, you know, Force powers of different – and things like that that we were potentially planning on some of those elements to be in the final cut of the film. And so the development team obviously has to rush, you know, keep ahead of that progress and make their best guesses about what they're going to do. And if something changes dramatically like that, then we have to cut it out of the game, which is, can be unfortunate lost work for them, and that's no fun to have to like, obviously go, "Hey, guys, you know that thing you've been working on for however many long months? Yeah, it's not in the movie anymore, so we need to change it."

Brian Crecente

So I was going to ask about that. So the voices, the voicing in the game, then it sounds like is a mix of the tracks pulled from the movie, but you also have some of the people come in and either re say lines you need to or give new content to you. Is that essentially right?

Matt Fillbrandt

Yes, you can't kind of go halfway. It's really, you know, to get half the cast to come in and do stuff, but the other half is sound-alikes if you're going to use the stems from the films and things of that nature, it all has to stand up next to each other. Because the sound-alike as good as they might be, isn't going to sound like the original actor. So, but luckily, they were able to get all the principal players to come back and participate, for the most part, and I think it really pays off in the storytelling and for fans to know that when they hear those lines, that's the real McCoy, the Harrison Ford, etc., etc., that is participating in this event to make it even feel more authentic, which is important to us as well.

Brian Crecente

You mentioned the fact that this is obviously it was a game based on a single movie, and that must have had some sort of impact beyond the fact that, you could go into more detail, you mentioned that you guys were able to do some of this filler, not filler content, but fill in the gaps there between Return of the Jedi and The Force Awakens. Were there any other changes that you noticed because this was a game based on a single movie?

Matt Fillbrandt

You know, the fidelity of the visuals was a leap forward for the LEGO *Star Wars* franchise. Clearly TT had been doing that with other franchises. But you know, in part that's why I think leading off with Episode VI served multiple purposes but was a bit of a, hey, you know look, if you remember what the complete saga and some of the previous LEGO games where the classic content have been shown, look at what we can do now with this,

the fidelity of the visuals, the storytelling. And honestly, the gameplay was a big conversation from the beginning in working with Mike Taylor and the folks at TT Fusion in like, how are we going to do something different? Because I think there had always been, at least in my recollection with the *LEGO Star Wars* game franchise, is we were always kind of the first to do some of the new features that TT brought into their games, and so, I think we were cognizant of trying to preserve that legacy. That's a big part of what Lucasfilm has been about as a technical innovation company in all forms of film and TV and things like that. And what kind of new gameplay elements can we add, and we were able to do that with sort of cover-based gameplay, which hadn't been done, I don't think in any of the *LEGO* games at that point, and so it was really trying to push on all different areas of the game to make it a great experience and a retelling of the film, and authentic from that standpoint, but just to be a great game in itself and push the entertainment quality level up as high as possible.

(Music)

Chapter 5: Jonathan Smith – 44:01

Ethan Vincent

OK, so we've spent a lot of time here speaking with the two Matts about working with TT Games, but we wanted to kind of flip this a little bit too and hear from the other side of that collaboration and what that was like. That's why we invited Jonathan Smith, Head of Production at TT Games, to talk about the studio skillful work with Lucasfilm.

(Music)

Brian Crecente

What has it been like working with Lucasfilm and these amazing properties?

Jonathan Smith

It's one of those questions (laughs) that immediately captures so much of my life, and the life here at TT for all of us over so many years, that no immediate word is grand enough, big enough, wide enough, deep enough to be able to respond without immediately sort of spiraling into encompassing everything that's come since the very first encounter on which so much of what we've done since has been founded with Lucasfilm and Lucasfilm Games for *LEGO Star Wars* way back in 2002. So my hesitation there speaks to the depth of feeling that all of us have for that relationship. How important it's been for us. How proud we are to have been given the gift of that relationship, and then to sustain and develop it further, game after game, year after year from *LEGO Star Wars*, back in 2005, through *LEGO Star Wars II* and onwards through *Indiana Jones*, and now into *LEGO Star Wars: The Skywalker Saga*. At all turns, the teams at Lucas have been fantastic partners in every

respect: fans of the games with players' interests at heart; supportive of the teams; excited by the things we're trying to do; full of imagination and wit, and the sort of charm that we find very important as we try to make these games that are fun and funny. And it's been nothing less than a delight to have their support, and to be able to draw upon their expertise, not only in general terms when it comes to making games that are good and right and fun, but of course, in particular, when it comes to making games that are deeply rooted and expertly connected to the wonderful, wonderful universe of *Star Wars*.

Brian Crecente

So you – it's interesting, obviously you all have worked on quite a number of Lucasfilm properties. I'm curious about one in particular and that's *The Force Awakens*, because that was one where, first off, there are a couple unusual things here. First off, you used some of, or most of the same voice cast. You were producing this, developing this game while the movie was in production, or at least prior to the movie's release, and the movie had some stunning moments, and so I have a lot of questions here, but I guess my first one is: How and when did you find out that Han Solo died?

Jonathan Smith

(Laughs) When we work on a film that's still in production, we're given progressive access through treatments, to script readings, to follow-up sessions as the script changes, and then we get to see some of the early footage, and eventually, some of the final footage prior to the film, and every step of the way is always a delight. They're always surprises. As fans of the properties we're always hanging on every moment, every slight detail and change we're lapping up. We speculated along the way where the bits that were left out, from what we saw, could take the story, but of course, only when you see it: (a) in black and white in the final script, and then (b) when you actually see it on screen, does it have the impact as well, that's the way that the story has gone. This story that we love was so connected to has now gone this way. Yeah, it still gives me shivers to sort of look back on that experience and remember it.

Brian Crecente

Did having this sort of moving target make it a lot more difficult, or was that something you're just used to with these sort of games?

Jonathan Smith

We've made a number of games where the movie that we're telling the story of, is still in production. So the moving target, as it were, yeah, it is something that we're used to working with, and to be honest, quite enjoy, because it's something that we have a pretty unique expertise in being able to deal with. So I guess our sense of specialness – TT can do this, TT can work with a movie even while it's still in development, TT can have good conversations with partners where they're trusted enough to be able to try things out,

during a period of creative development for a big Hollywood movie – is something that we're proud of and we treasure, and therefore we do enjoy.

Brian Crecente

So there are obviously a ton of properties. It does make me wonder, why do you think that TT Games and the LEGO Group fit so well together?

Jonathan Smith

So, the Lucas properties, *Star Wars* and Indy, have been fantastic fits for everything we love doing at TT Games – storytelling with fun. And also, I think really great fits for the LEGO Group as well to support that through their shared sense of adventure, which gives the players lots of fun, exciting things to do in dramatic situations across a variety of different locations, but also imagination, the sense particularly in *Star Wars*, that we're part of an incredibly rich and diverse universe. And that imagination, that sense of wonder that creates, is entirely aligned with the freedom that LEGO Company gives you in all of its products, including the video games that we make.

Ethan Vincent

I have a question. I've talked to several people, younger than me, of course, who tell me that their first encounter with *Star Wars* came when they played *LEGO Star Wars: The Video Game*, you know, that was their first kind of intro to the franchise, you know, it was through the game, and to me, that's such a fascinating and different entry into this saga. How do you view your role in this incredible gaming company, who first brought *Star Wars* to an entire generation through your video game?

Jonathan Smith

I mean, it's an incredible honor and something everyone has worked on those games feels every day to have been part of enabling players to encounter these wonderful universes for the first time. And to then establish their sense of what those universes can be and mean for them, their personal stories, the stories of the experiences they had together with other players in their family, or their friends at key moments, is wonderful and absolutely keeps us going. It's interesting to look back on those first *LEGO Star Wars* games in the context of a generation now. These foundational memories of *Star Wars* are intimately connected with *LEGO Star Wars: The Video Game*, perhaps whose senses of what's important and interesting about culture is video games first. There was something about the freedom that LEGO bricks gave us, when I say LEGO bricks, I mean the idea of LEGO bricks being brought together with style was being brought into video games that enabled us to do something other than tell the stories. The stories had already been expertly, brilliantly told in the movies. What the video game space enabled us to do was to incorporate those stories into a wider sense that put the player at the heart of an adventure into those universes, and that does make those memories personal because they were unique, they happen to that person. It wasn't the same version of those stories played in every cinema

for every player of the game. Everyone went about that game exploring it and discovering it in their own way. And that's something that is really special, is special to the medium of video games. And yeah, again, that we're really lucky to have been able to be a part of.

Brian Crecente

I have one last question, Jonathan, and this is a personal question: *Star Wars* or Indiana Jones?

Jonathan Smith

Star Wars means so much because that's where this LEGO game adventure for TT began with *LEGO Star Wars*. That was for me, personally, also the game that I played first with my children when they were youngest. We love Indiana Jones, we rewatch the movies regularly, but we remain all of us really active fans of *Star Wars* as a family. So while I love them both, my heart and my personal sort of experience is deeply, deeply bound up with *Star Wars*. We're obviously at the moment deeply, deeply bound up in that universe finishing *LEGO Star Wars: The Skywalker Saga*, so our imaginations and dreams are very, very much occupied in that galaxy far, far away.

(*LEGO Star Wars* music)

Chapter 6: Matt Fillbrandt and Matt Shell – Part III – 54:33

Ethan Vincent

I really like that interview with Jonathan. And obviously, we need to get back to our interview with Matt Shell and Matt Fillbrandt. The two wrap things up with a discussion of the surprisingly influential power of a LEGO video game, especially, as Jonathan put it, in a galaxy far, far away.

(*LEGO Star Wars* tune continues)

Matt Shell

I think that we've said it earlier about the key to these ingredients making the sort of magic come together –

Ethan Vincent

This is Matt Shell speaking.

Matt Shell

– you know, this is what we call like a four quadrant game, we really are – it's a game that is attractive to kids, to boys, to girls, to parents, to – you name it. And I think having that, you know, the sort of spin that we can take on these stories, the stories that are so well known,

like there's very few movie franchises that are so well known in pop culture and to so many people as Indiana Jones and *Star Wars*, I mean, there's something very special about those. And when you can take those stories, and change them just a little bit, you know, put a little bit of a humorous spin on them, it's sort of fresh all over again, and you're able to sort of look at things that you knew so well, and just having a little bit of a spin on them makes them so much more attractive to play over again and to relive. There's just nothing else really like it. I mean, I can't think of anything else that would work as well as *Star Wars* or Indiana Jones.

Matt Fillbrandt

You know, now it sort of seems ubiquitous but –

Ethan Vincent

Here Matt Fillbrandt speaking.

Matt Fillbrandt

– back when the first game came out in 2005, think of the gap between 1977 to 2005, and the fact that those of us that grew up with those movies and knew those properties, but there's a generation of kids that weren't necessarily that familiar with them. I know with my own son was convinced there were five Luke Skywalkers till he saw the movie and understand some of the – like, oh, no, even though there's five minifigs and they all have different outfits in the game, they're actually the same guy because he didn't quite, hadn't quite put it all together in his head. But you know we wouldn't, I don't think, ever make a game of a movie in another format other than LEGO bricks because you're just giving it such a fresh perspective as Matt said that doing it in HD one-for-one I don't think is what really would be interesting to our fans. They'd want to watch the movies but they'd rather see other stories, but with LEGO bricks it totally works.

Matt Shell

Yeah, I think it's a great point that Matt brings up –

Ethan Vincent

Here, Matt Shell again.

Matt Shell

– we really are introducing a whole generation of people to *Star Wars* through these games. And that's why you'll see now a lot of things that we consider when we're doing the marketing is we won't even talk about the fact – here's another spoiler since Matt spoiled that Kylo killed Han Solo, I'm going to throw out another spoiler which may not, this is very, very nichey so it may not be as widely known – but Luke Skywalker's father is a very, very popular character in the *Star Wars* universe. I'll try not to ruin it –

Brian Crecente

OK, thank you.

Matt Shell

- but that's something that we don't even really talk about in marketing for the games, before, so because we don't want people to, for those that are experiencing this for the first time, we don't want to ruin that surprise in a trailer or a TV commercial. We want kids to be able to experience that for themselves. We want parents to be able to share that moment with their kids, because we know a lot of kids have not seen the movies and they are experiencing and learning about *Star Wars* through these games.

Brian Crecente

Yeah, you know, it's interesting, I have a son who's now 19. And he grew up playing these games. And for him, he definitely played the games before he watched the movies, and in fact, we'd played the games together and then we would watch the movies because that was what sort of made him interested in both *Star Wars* and Indiana Jones. I'm just curious you both mentioned that, but is that something that, I guess did it bother you all that maybe that was the first entry point for some people, the games rather than the movies?

Matt Shell

Wait, let me just make sure I understand: Did it bother us that we got to go into the conference rooms with the president of our companies and say, "Hey, games is introducing kids to *Star Wars* for the first time." No! Of course not! We love being able to tout that.

Brian Crecente

(laughs) Yeah, I mean, it's amazing. I have heard, again, not anecdotally, that it has done a lot for at least a certain generation of gamer and of film watcher, I guess, when it comes to exposing children to, and not just to the movies, but also to some LEGO toys. Like that game, those games were sort of the entry point to both those worlds, which to me is so interesting.

Matt Shell

Yeah, that's absolutely true. We've seen it go in places like E3 and *Star Wars* Celebration, where you're able to talk to the fans and talk to families and hear their stories. We know this is a fact that this is *Star Wars* for them until they're introduced to the movies and TV shows.

Brian Crecente

Excellent. Is there anything else either of you would like to add about working with TT Games with your properties?

Matt Fillbrandt

You know, from the development side, they've been great partners.

Ethan Vincent

This is Matt Fillbrandt speaking.

Matt Fillbrandt

It was a great experience working with them on *The Force Awakens*, and we're continuing to work with them very closely on *The Skywalker Saga*, and we can't wait to release that game out to the public soon. And all our partner partners with LEGO Group. It's one thing when you have one IP holder involved, and it's a much more complicated process when there's multiple stakeholders, but we have a great relationship among the three or four parties, I guess, with Warner Bros. involved as well, and we look forward to bringing more games out to fans in the future.

Ethan Vincent

Thanks for listening to our May the Fourth special episode. Tune in for Season 2 of *Bits N' Bricks* starting Wednesday, May 26.

(Postscript music)

Bits N' Bricks: Credits – 01:01:10

Ethan Vincent

Bits N' Bricks is made possible by LEGO Games. Your hosts are Ethan Vincent and Brian Crecente. Producing by Dave Tach. Our executive producer is Ronny Scherer. Creative direction and editing by Ethan Vincent. Writing by Brian Crecente. Mixing and sound designed by Dan Carlisle. Music by Peter Priemer, and short excerpts from the video game series *LEGO Star Wars*. We'd like to thank our participants: Matt Fillbrandt; Matt Shell, and Jonathan Smith. Additional voice from Tom Stone from Episode 9 of *Bits N' Bricks*. We'd also like to thank the entire LEGO Games team. For questions and comments, write us at bitsnbricks@LEGO.com. That's bits, the letter N, then bricks@LEGO.com. And as always, stay tuned for more episodes of *Bits N' Bricks*.

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