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00:05 - 0:30 -Scott Rigg

Hi my name is Scott Rigg and I'll be interviewing you today, and your name is ... Andrew aka Andy Breyer. Hi and we're interviewing you regarding your experience playing video games. What games started you to play? What inspired you to start playing those games?

0:32 - 1:25 -Andy Breyer

Well I guess I grew up in the beginning of it all, so I started out with *Pong*, which ... even back then, I guess that was kind of exciting because we didn't know any better. (Oh sorry, I have trouble reading that upside-down here) So I say that started me playing, but then obviously things got a little bit more colorful, a little fast, so I'd say probably ... well the first games I've had was a video pinball machine. [pause] Yeah I don't know.

1:30 - 1:52 -Scott Rigg

Alright, so jumping ahead a little bit, in 1981 you became the international *Asteroids* champion in an Atari-sponsored competition. So, why did you choose this particular game? Were there any other options you could have entered in, and I'd like to know that experience for you.

1:53 - 3:02 -Andy Breyer

Well, back in the day, I think some of the stores actually had mini-competitions. I vaguely remember meeting some people and playing *Atari Basketball*. So, just started out going to little competitions and then every year, Atari pretty much gave you one choice. So the first year I can remember where they actually had these competitions, it was the *Space Invaders*, the 2600 version. And I did pretty poorly, but I think you had to get X number a thousand you win a free T-Shirt, so that was the attitude I took, so I'm pretty sure even in the interviews back then for the *Asteroids*, my main goal was just go have fun and win a T-Shirt and hope for the best. It's the only other option I could remember. I think the following year they followed it up to a Pac-Man tournament.

3:03 - 3:06 -Scott Rigg

And did you enter the *Pac-Man* tournament?

3:07 - 3:11 -Andy Breyer

I didn't (do as well) in *Pac-Man*. Still am to this day.

3:12 - 3:29 -Scott Rigg

Alright, so what was your initial motivation when you started playing these games and entered these competitions? What initially motivated you? So you said the T-Shirt.. Was that the prize / main motivation for you?

3:31 - 4:04 -Andy Breyer

I had no expectations of winning the Regionals at all. You know, my previous year, I'd seen some of the competition. I think Steve Marmel won *Space Invaders*, and *Asteroids* is just a

tough game, so I was hoping for the best, but again, win the T-Shirt, get back in line, wait an hour, try again, get back in line, try again, I mean, I probably played about eight times, if I recall.

4:07 - 4:28 -Scott Rigg

So regarding your playstyle when playing these games, do you consider yourself to be more risky in your playstyle, or more cautious? What's sort of your strategy when tackling these games? ... Let's use *Asteroids* as an example.

4:37 - 5:12 -Andy Breyer

You know, I guess I'm not too risky a guy, I got a cautious strategy. you know, I'd like to think I have a pretty fast trigger finger. So now that you mention that... the shields, the hyperspace, whatever, I'd try to save that. I'd try to repeatedly tap maybe six times in a row really fast. That was a little bit risky I guess you could say, but I always had another finger on the panic button.

5:13 - 5:22 -Scott Rigg

So what would you say your strengths are then in your Video game skills? What would you say is your biggest strength in there?

5:23 - 6:32 -Andy Breyer

Oh I would say the reflexes. The reflexes, and a little bit of Precision. In fact, I really liked some of the old style controllers the best. The original Atari Joystick, you know a lot of people held it with their hand, and I used my thumb on top of it. You got about eight different basic directions you could go, up, down, sideways, and the diagonals, so I'd say I was pretty good at that, although I recently discovered that (*Starplex*) ... it was a 5-button controller that was supposed to look like the Arcade style. And I think Sears made a version of it. I'd like to say it was *Starfire*? Probably got a few of 'em downstairs. You know, when I revisited *Asteroids* back with Paul (Zimmerman), two years ago and I used those controllers, I played a lot better than ever.

6:33 - 6:42 -Scott Rigg

So, what would you say your weaknesses are then, in terms of your skills?

6:46 - 7:12 -Andy Breyer

Well I mean, if I ... if I don't like a game, then I probably won't try too hard to master it. ... It's got too many function keys, or all sorts of things to remember to do your tricks.

7:13 - 7:22 -Scott Rigg

So to your memory, was there a particular arcade that you went to back when you were playing? (If you can't remember, that's fine)

7:23 - 7:57.0 -Andy Breyer

Well I remember there were probably three in the neighborhood that I went to, and of course the one I remember the best is just at the local mall that was about mile and a half away from me. We used to even walk there when we were 14 and couldn't get a ride. And you know, they had some contests, too, smaller-scale, if you get the high score of the month, whatever, you'd get 30 or 50 tokens kind of thing.

7:57.5 - 8:02.0-Scott Rigg

Would you win any of those contests when you would enter them?

8:02.5 - 8:27 -Andy Breyer

I ... definitely won one of them, I remember it well. It was time pilot. And the thing about that game is you know, I'd go play for an hour, set a high score. The next day, this guy, what was his name.. Chris Gorjantis? He'd come in the next day and ...

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0:00 - 0:37 -Andy Breyer

Beat me by a few points, and then I'd come in the next day and beat him by a few points and it just kept going on and on.. and so finally I [he] got me into using a bit of strategy and went in the last day of the contest and I played for eight hours straight. So even if he couldn't beat me, he didn't have the time to beat me. You know, we joked about it probably a few days later.. and he already made his mind up that if I beat him one more time that he wasn't going to try, so I wasted half a day for nothing.

00:39 - 0:45 -Scott Rigg

So what would you say is your fondest memory of going to the arcade?

00:47 - 1:08

Well that's definitely up there, but you know, I even got fond memories of ... Didn't Chuck-E-Cheese used to be called something else?

1:08.5 - 1:10 -Scott Rigg

It used to be called Pizza Time Theater.. (I think)

1:15 - 1:32

Well in any case, I mean, you know I was probably about 16 when that place opened up, and I don't remember it being quite so childish. I did remember some games I used to like back then, it was kind of a neat concept for its time.

1:34 - 1:40 -Scott Rigg

Do you remember who introduced you to your first game?

1:42 - 2:29 -Andy Breyer

That's really very (reliquescent?) man. and I'm going to have to say no, but you know, I probably ... there's a few people it might have been, either a guy named Michael Freed, or a kid by the name of Mitchell. In any case, we were one of the first people that got the Atari 2600, and [we'd] just always go to each other's houses and check out the newest games. At the time something

like Canyon Bomber just looked all pretty and colorful; never see anything like it. Of course it doesn't compare to anything these days.

2:33 - 2:55 -Scott Rigg

So moving onto your high score and your motivation for it, what were your first impressions when Atari announced that there would be a competition for the highest score for *Asteroids*? Did this aspire you to enter? Did this excite you?

2:56 - 4:00 -Andy Breyer

Well like I said, it excited me, I had no expectations of winning, but I guess I could elaborate and say that once I actually did win the regionals, it inspired me to practice, practice, practice.

I came from a family that loves to eat, but I just didn't feel that I was strong enough when I got down there for the competition. We're touring Washington D.C. and all that and all the free food you could imagine. I skipped a few meals just so I could try some new strategies, and of course there were people there competing against me, like a kid from New York.

He'd just try to sabotage your game, and he'd be all like "Oh, you just put your ship in the top left corner and you'll never get hit!" and of course that didn't work out too well at all. You couldn't see anything coming from above it, all the different sides.

4:03 - 4:10 -Scott Rigg

So to your memory, how many people were you up against in this competition?

4:11 - 4:42 -Andy Breyer

Well the regionals were you know.. a thousand.. I.. I.. I can't even begin to guess, the line wrapped around the mall.. I mean maybe there wasn't that many, but all the cities, all the countries that were represented, I believe the finals were only seventeen people, and it was possible that one of them didn't even show up. Pretty much every country except for Russia that I could remember.

4:43 - 4:53 -Scott Rigg

So were there any roadblocks that you had to overcome when trying to reach the score in the competition? Were there any challenges?

4:53 - 6:01 - Andy Breyer

Oh yeah, Challenged to restrain myself.. I actually... that kid from New York, In one of my interviews it said that I do well under pressure, which in general is true, but I think I was sinking fast on my first game, and lost my first three ships. One to go, wasn't even sure I was going to get a bonus ship, and he was already done with his game for some reason, and he was behind me ,just egging me on, and going "Oh Here's the pressure that you like," and "What are you gonna do now?" that kind of thing, and I just wanted to turn around and slap him, but instead I focused, and I ended up getting another 370,000 points in that one ship alone and earning a couple of other ships so..

So I guess either he drove me, or my ... whatever word I just said there, (laughs) I'm sorry, long day. The pressure.

6:01 - 6:17 -Scott Rigg

So then you won this competition and after winning, what was your interest in competing future competitions after that one? Were you motivated into maybe entering more?

6:18 - 7:05 -Andy Breyer

Well you know, after getting that kind of money as a kid, Sure I was motivated, but the next one was Pac-man, and after that I don't remember.. Atari really weren't doing too well themselves as a company, so I didn't hear about anything else that I could compete in. I wouldn't have been good at Nintendo, and we didn't really have the internet back then. So, news didn't travel as fast, so somehow between not hearing about that contest and eventually growing older and arguably growing up a tiny bit just losing interest for a while.

7:08 - 7:35 -Scott Rigg

So I read some old newspaper articles about this competition, and in the Interview, you told the reporters that you didn't like *Asteroids* that much, and when they asked you whether you felt like a champion, you stated "no, not really". Have those feelings that you had post-championship changed? Or do you still feel the same way as you did back then? Do you remember those things?

7:36 - END

I do, and it haunts me to this day, because you know.. I ... I don't know. I'm paraphrasing, but I feel like I might have single-handedly killed Atari by saying such nonsense. And of course, I've seen some documentaries on Showtime or some cable station where they're talking about how ET the game killed the company and it was terrible and everything. Of course, they explained that it really wasn't, all that good stuff. Then what was it? I actually did like *Asteroids*, It was just peer-pressure, being a naive little 15-year-old, and the Atari PR people just getting us a (buzzkill?)

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0:00 - 0:25 -Andy Breyer

stores you could say whatever you want, and all these kids just kept saying "Okay, we'll just say it sucks," and it just kind of snowballed from there. I mean I still play *Asteroids* a little bit, I went and bought a [Atari] 5200, and got a nicer version of the game. So, that answers that part...

0:26 - 0:31 -Scott Rigg

So describing the events of the competition..

0:31.5 - 2:07 -Andy Breyer

We didn't finish that question! I felt like a champion, you know? I guess in retrospect, I hadn't really thought about it, but right now, I don't know if it's the coffee speaking, but I guess I kinda do feel like a champion, you know?

Being a 15-year-old, and beating that many people, that's gotta count for something, and you know it's just kinda drawn out a little sidebar here, but I ended up auctioning, putting some of my memorabilia on eBay not too long ago, not all of it, but just some shirts that wouldn't fit, a jacket that used to look silver but somehow turned pink-ish over the years, so I put some of that stuff out there.

What I thought was a reasonable was a starting bet and then couldn't buy it now, and I mean I woke up the next day, and the stuff was all bought, and I was like "awww I must have pressed that too long!"

And then I started E-mailing back and forth with this guy, he's from Australia, and he's trying to put more fair bids on my medals and things of that nature, so like I said it made me feel pretty good that people had wanted to pay big money for that stuff 30 years later.

2:16 - 2:28 -Scott Rigg

The competition itself -- can you describe the events that took place during that ... from the start to finish, how the competition was composed?

2:29 - 2:48 ... 2:58 - 4:37 -Andy Breyer

Yeah, I pretty much remember, I just forget if they eliminated some people right away. I'd have to go back and look in my notes, but basically they had all of us lined up next to each other on separate machines with our backs to the audience playing our game ...

So we really couldn't see what the person next to us wasn't doing, we couldn't see what was behind us unless someone was egging us on and trying to get us to turn around, but you know, I think I could say my parent's were there, other people had some guests, but overall it was a pretty small crowd. So we all played at once, and played our game, and I forget if it was the top six, or everybody got to play again, but bottomline you get to add your two scores together. So after the first round, I definitely was in the lead, and second round came around, and by the time I finished my game, I looked to the left of me, I looked to the right of me, and I was the only one playing. I don't think I had the highest score that time, but you know, well obviously the two added together were, but just the fact that I was playing longer than everybody else plus had the lead, it felt pretty good right about then.

So it was pretty exciting, and of course, I turned around after the event, and seeing my mom and dad clapping, standing up, whatever. First standing ovation of two, probably more.

4:38 - 4:50 -Scott Rigg

Did you have any methods that you would use that you could tell someone and they'd be instantly better at the game? (*Asteroids* in particular)

4:56 - 5:45 -Andy Breyer

Well in the [Atari] 2600 version that I played, the hyperspace was so random, I'd say avoid it at all costs, because you're not going to be in a better position, you'll probably come back on top of a rock.

So that's just absolute emergency. The other thing is practice practice practice, and since I've played the game pretty recently, I seem to remember you only to get four bullets out at a time, so use them wisely. If they hit something, you get replenished right away. If you're in a spot where it has a lot of screen to traverse before it dies out, you might be in trouble.

5:48 - 5:55 -Scott Rigg

So would you say anything set you apart from other players at the time?

6:00 - 7:07 -Andy Breyer

Well obviously from some of them for sure, but there was definitely a lot of good players out there. My thing was at the time, Video Games were my passion pretty much, so I practiced all that, got together with certain friends, some that I mentioned, I remember another had an Odyssey machine, so .. you know, got a little variety.

Another friend of mine had the ... what were we just talking about, Nintendo? I actually enjoyed games by a company called Fairchild, so I guess that was my big social event. Other things that I did such as, learning how to type when I was 14 in highschool, and playing guitar, just all the hand-eye coordination just all compounded and made me get better at each one of those things.

7:08 - 7:17 -Scott Rigg

So did the game (*Asteroids*), contained any huge glitches or bugs at the time that could be exploited for points?

7:17.5 - 8:11 -Andy Breyer

I'd say more exploited for losing the game, as I mentioned. Yeah, I didn't see too many in that one, maybe if I recall, football and soccer had some glitches. ... Back to I think I remember in soccer.. there was.. and I can't explain how to do it anymore, but there was a way you could kind of turn the possession over to the other person, but really you kinda got it on reserve and as soon as you pressed the button at a certain point, the ball would be back with you.

So that was kind of fun, and it made football and soccer some of my favorite games even though the graphics were pretty primitive and the movements were pretty primitive and the three or four guys on the field at a time.

8:12 - 8:22 -Scott Rigg

At the time, when you were competing, did you have a lot of other responsibilities that you were balancing while competing?

8:23 - 8:27.2 [END] -Andy Breyer

Uhh, no, I mean, you know, I did well in schools, but..

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0:00 - 0:24

(Slipped that edge..?) Did get my first job with a work permit when I was somewhere around 14 but the boss told me, he could tell I hated the job and he'd gave me 6 hours a week. So, no, not a lot of responsibilities, pretty spoiled kid, didn't do too many of chores at the time either.

0:25 - 0:30 -Scott Rigg

So, since your win, were you able to replicate the score pretty easily?

0:41 - 1:37 -Andy Breyer

For the most part, I pretty much went on hiatus since college. As I alluded to with that new controller, I don't think I played it with the exact same settings. I think on this Twin Galaxies contest, there were no free ships. But yeah, I probably did better, I think I have a record on the wall right now that might be third or fourth place with that setting. It was as almost as high as some of my games at the championship. I know if I sat down and didn't eat for a day and just didn't eat again, I could do it, despite my lack of 20-20 vision at this point.

1:45 - 1:50 -Scott Rigg

Were there any instances where the arcade owner would kick you out for playing too much? Was that a common thing at the time?

1:51 - 2:27 -Andy Breyer

No, that wasn't. I take it that is now?

Scott Rigg

I've heard it's happen to a couple players, It wasn't a common thing.

Andy Breyer

No.. back in the day, some of my friends got kicked out for other reasons, they would take a piece of dental floss and tape it to their quarter, and try to get a few games out of the same quarter or more. If they saw the owner then they would snap the string.

2:28 - 2:37 -Scott Rigg

For the competition, how much time did you use to practice / prepare for the competition?

2:43 - 3:30

Andy Breyer

Well I guess which competition we're talking about..

Scott Rigg

Your *Asteroids* World Championship..

Andy Breyer

Well the world tour, I'm sure there was some time in between the regional and the world where I took it really seriously, you know, stepped it up and everything, did my hour to five hour a day, I really didn't remember. It was enough to know that I couldn't get scores with consistency, so that's where I stepped it up at the championship, and used up any minute that I could.

3:36 - 3:46 -Scott Rigg

So when you got your high score at the competition... To your knowledge did it inspire other players to start playing *Asteroids*, to try to also get a high score?

3:47 - 4:03 -Andy Breyer

To my knowledge, i'm going to say no. Since it was just a competition, a one-time thing. Nobody else had a chance to do what I did, never again.

4:12 - 4:24 -Scott Rigg

So how close was the actual competition, where you got your high score? How close were it to second place finisher? Was it a very close competition?

4:25 - 5:19

From what I remember, I had a comfortable lead, maybe 10 or 20 thousand, but we'll have to look at the history box for that. I got magazines, I got newspaper clippings downstairs and all that. Now at the regionals, that was different. the scores were higher, because people had more chances, and there were more people. People had just beat the next guy by 2000, and then I remember when some of the guys were up there before I was, and I'd be at mcDonalds, and I'd recognize the kid who had the highest score at the time, and I'd be saying to them, "Wow, How'd you do that?" Well, I ended up beating them, and I'd invite all them over to my house to play my machine.

5:20 - 5:29.0 -Scott Rigg

So looking back now, at your time playing competitively, do you have any regrets? Would you do anything differently?

5:29.3 - 5:59 -Andy Breyer

Well sure, I definitely would have kept my mouth shut, about that thing we were talking about (earlier), other than that who knows? Maybe I would have dabbled with the systems, or tried harder at some of the other contests.

6:01 - 6:12 -Scott Rigg

So, about your Hiatus, after your win, were there any particular reason that discouraged you from playing?

6:13 - 7:33 -Andy Breyer

Oh, well I like I said, I wasn't really aware of much competition, I mean, I did upgrade my equipment a bit, I bought the Atari 800 computer, brought that to college with me, probably played some games privately with my roommates for a while, and a little lesser in grad school, just seemed like something to me personally, that I grew out of, Although obviously I came back a little bit. Seems to be a tightly-knit community.

I was kind of surprised that ZimmZamm reached out to me, and there was that other gentleman that you guys might have been interviewing recently. There's even a guy by the name of Frank (Cardua?), he has a bunch of records, He found me on the internet, I just remembered back in the day, it seemed more like a rivalry, and this day in age, it seems like people are trying to get back and get involved and beat some of their scores.

7:40 - 8:02.5 -Scott Rigg

Post-world championship win, you stated that you spent about 50 cents at most on the game, and that you don't like to waste your money on this kind of stuff. You also said that you'd only begun playing *Asteroids* about three weeks earlier and about five hours to get ready. So is this stuff true, or is this just stuff that you were just saying as a kid?

8:03 - 8:27.4 [End] -Andy Breyer

Well, there is some truth to it, I guess I can elaborate and say, if you got a video game at home, then you can play it for free at home, because you could spend \$20 on the cartridge, why spend money to play the same game?

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0:00 - 0:54.5 -Andy Breyer

I guess the answer is that it is a lot better than the arcade, or a better version. ... The 50 cents, that I'm sure, I spent more than that at some times, but maybe I was alluding to my days of time pilot and where I literally would put in one quarter and play for 48 hours. Play games you're good at, spend 4-6 hours doing that, and it's already time to go home. What else do we have here?

0:59 - 1:07 -Scott Rigg

How much time did you practiced before? Did you only start three weeks before the competition?

1:08 - 2:36 -Andy Breyer

You know, if that's what I said, I'll have to believe that, I mean, I don't know how long the game had been out. I don't remember if I had the Atari version or the Sears version, or if there's any difference It's all been a blur to me right now, but I don't even know how long the game was out before the competition, but as far as luck, there was definitely some luck there.

I had the skills needed, but it's a matter of the hand you're dealt, whether you're playing monopoly, or a work situation, I had a server crash at work, and I was fortunate enough to be armed with enough brain power tools to somehow or another move everything from one server to the other off of a backup and get things running in four hours when I was only on the job for like six months.

So I mean, you know, there's luck, there's preparation, and just doing the right things to make the most of it.

2:43 - 3:06 -Scott Rigg

When I looked up the highscore for the game *Asteroids*, it came out with the number, 41,338,740. I'm not sure of the version of *Asteroids* this would be from..? because this is quite a large number. It's held by John McAllister, after a 58 hour session playing the game in 2010.

3:07 - 4:00 -Andy Breyer

I think I've seen a video of him on YouTube, and that's definitely the arcade version. Mine was the old Atari 2600, the cartridge, first home videogame that came out. there's no comparison to

the two. I challenge you to do your homework and playing both, but the arcade version is easier. That being said, I could not play that game for that long. I don't think I can play any game that long, I don't think my kidney's would handle it. [pause] That's kind of crazy.

4:02 - 4:15 -Scott Rigg

So your winnings for the competition, you were told you were able to win up to 10,000, but you only received 5,000. Was there a reason they told you for that, or was that never explained to you?

4:16 - 4:34 -Andy Breyer

It was explained to me that it was basically a reporter error. It was disappointing.

4:41 - 5:24 -Scott Rigg

So in terms of your recent gaming, there were talks between you and Paul Zim-Zam Zimmerman to set some world records for the vintage atari 7800 games, *Asteroids*, *Asteroids deluxe*, and *Space Tool* at the 2010 Video Game summit. Since there were no officially recorded scores for the game, I couldn't find any article for these games. Did you end up sending any of these scores?

5:27 - 5:37 -Andy Breyer

Quite honestly, I just gotten accustomed to Space Tool that day, although we were getting pretty good at it. I'm not sure there are any real scores that were recorded for that, at least the version we were doing. So I have a feeling our version could have been If I recall, he (Paul) was videotaping them while we were playing and was going to save them because he wanted to record a bunch of other high scores and send them all in at once. I'm going to have to follow-up with him on that. But I think that videotape still exists of our efforts. That being said, him and I can get together tomorrow and beat some of those.

5:41 - 5:55.5 -Scott Rigg

Has the interview that you did with Twin Galaxies a while back, did that inspire you to start playing these games again and attempting records like you did at the 2010 video game summit?

5:56.0 - 7:08 - Andy Breyer

I'd say to some respect, yes. In fact, I think I set that *Asteroids* record that I sent them after the interview, but I'm not 100% sure regardless. it was a result of my talks with Richy Booth over there, who seemed to be a very cool youngster. I guess i was inspired at the time. Their website went over a bunch of changes, and it just... I don't remember what the hangups were, but maybe you got to register, or send them some money, or to have an official rep.

There were some kind of hoops that made it discouraging. In fact, I don't think I wasn't able to get back on the website, and look up the highscore that I already had, and I guess I lost interest. If I couldn't even see it, then it wasn't as interesting to me.

7:10 - 7:20 -Scott Rigg

So in what ways did your public gaming success in the past help you in preparing for the challenges you face today?

7:48 - 8:04.0

Andy Breyer

Am I allowed to E-Mail you that one?

Scott Rigg

That's alright if you can't think of an answer. I know it's a very provoking question.

Andy Breyer

Well we can come back to it.

Scott Rigg

We can come back to it if you think of something at the end of the interview.

8:04.5 - 8:14 -Scott Rigg

Have you competed in any other sort of big competitions, video-game related, since your *Asteroids* World Championship win?

8:24 - END - Andy Breyer

I'm going to say, nothing comes to mind.

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0:00 - 0:10 -Andy Breyer

I did a staged battle of the bands on VH1's *The Surreal Life* but it's totally different.

0:12 - 0:22.9

Scott Rigg

If Atari ...

Andy Breyer

Oh wait, I take it back. At the video game summit I think we were doing..

Scott Rigg

Alright well guess that constitutes as a video game competition

0:23.0 - 0:31 -Andy Breyer

Yeah but I mean there'd only be like five people and have two people have a token prize. Nothing too hardcore.

0:32 - 0:47.0 -Scott Rigg

So if Atari today invited you to another world championship, or their various classic games including *Asteroids*, would you accept, would you compete again in the Atari World Championship?

0:47.5 - 0:51 ... 1:01 - 1:04 -AB

Oh Yeah, Definitely. It would be a blast from the past... Why, can you set that up?

1:04.3 - 1:12 -SR

Nah, I don't have connections with an Atari guy, Don't think I can revive the company.

1:16 - 1:23 -SR

Gaming has changed since the '80s. How do you feel about the gaming industry as it is today?

1:25 - 1:59.0 -AB

Well I guess I'm a little bit out of the loop. I personally don't really play any of the newer games. I'm still a fan of the classics. I guess parts of it are fascinating yet frustrating; being a step-father to a young teenager who plays all of those battle.. whatever you call... all those army games.

1:59.1 - 2:02 -SR

All those First Person Shooters... those types of games, yeah.

2:03 - 2:40 -AB

Yeah, whenever you live in a 2-bedroom condo with four people and he's got his headphones on and he's talking to people all over the country... You can't get any sleep. You just put a lampshade over his head to block out some of the sound while he's talking, but you know, other than that it's fascinating. It's great that so much revenue can still be made on those products. They keep on reinventing football, they keep on reinventing racing games.

2:42 - 2:50 -SR

So was there anything you would change about the games that existed back in the 80s seeing all these new games?

3:01 - 3:20 -AB

I guess I haven't seen them enough. I mean, I was more into the reflex thing than everything looking perfect. As long as the game's responding to your touch. Now, not every game did that...

3:29 - 3:37.9 -SR

So how do you see your future involvement with gaming? Do you still see yourself playing video games in the near future?

3:38 - 4:18 -AB

I'd say casually, I got a lot on my plate, between job, and family, being in a band, and played chess for one of my old companies seasonally. So you know, if the scheduling works out right, and they're actually doing something with games that I can play or I learn quickly, then sure. Don't necessarily like to drive out of state to have to attend these functions.

4:19 - 4:29.9 -SR

So do you have a favorite game from the past or present? What would you say your favorite game is, currently?

4:30 - 4:43 -AB

I'm going to go with.. I liked Phoenix a lot. It's just your typical shooter-em-up space game, which I'm not sure you're familiar with.

4:44 - 4:47 -SR

I'm not familiar with the game. I'll have to look that up.

4:48 - 5:20 -AB

You know, I just had enough activity whether you're shooting at these dragon-like things or their eggs, or the big mothership. I guess it always fascinated me when people somehow or another went from 2000 to 200,000 with a single shot, 'cause you know, I don't know if people knew all the secrets to cheat on these games, it's documented how to do it now of course,

5:23.7 - 5:30 -SR

So regarding your other areas of interest, what are you up to these days?

5:31 - 6:54 -AB

I guess I just recently about a year ago, joined a band that does a tribute to Death Leopard, The singer's just fantastic, so it's just like the guy looks just like him a little bit. I play in a band that considers themselves a dance band, You know, we just started playing just male and female rock-n-roll, now their big goal is to play weddings, festivals, you know, bars. Always play songs with a beat, whether it's a slow dance song, country song, disco song, they just want to keep people movin' and drinkin', and sweating, and screaming for more.

I mentioned the chess. A year ago, I bought a bicycle, so I could start riding to work, start riding about five and a half miles each way, stay a little bit in shape a little better, let me remind you that I'm never been too much of an athletic person, so it has been a little bit of a challenge.

6:54.2 - 7:31 -AB

Yeah, job, job family.. lately I've been enjoying the work at my job. Whether it's just seeing how well Windows 10 works with our current server environment. Cloning servers, upgrading processors, all that geeky stuff. Rumor has it that I talk about my job too much around the house, so I try to watch what I say these days.

7:33 - 7:42 -SR

So regarding your job in IT, did your experience playing in video games as a kid help you get into that field with that interest of computers?

7:42.9 - END -AB

Absolutely. I went to school thinking that I might want to program video games, and I was always good at Math too, our geometry teacher got us into programming the old Apple whatever. Probably the first computer Steve Jobs ever made, so we always found that fascinating. Unfortunately, I think graphics and artificial intelligence were the hardest classes for me to grasp. So I kept going to school, going to school, had a database course..

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0:00 - 0:29 -AB

... and decided I like database courses a lot more than graphics programming. Even as a side project as a kid, I tried writing my own version of *Breakout* on the Atari 800, which is a game I

enjoyed a lot, and versions of that *Arkanoid* a nice twist on that. The programming I did on that was terrible.

0:30 - 0:32 -SR
Did it run?

0:33 - 0:46 -AB
Oh it ran, it ran. I can probably still find it, I actually recently sold a computer to a guy in Virginia off of eBay or Amazon something like that. I can probably find and construct on where to find that game.

0:49 - 1:04 -SR
In your interview with Twin Galaxies you said you had an unfinished song about your experience during your world championship called "The day after Bad Luck day". Have you finished that song?

1:05 - 1:36 -AB
No, I was just telling it in my head. I guess I'm not too good at finishing too many songs either. You know, I have probably half a dozen or so songs that I've finished by myself, but no, not that one. That was probably a rip-off of a melody of some other popular song at the time too, like a *smoke on the water* or something.

1:36.5 - 1:47 -SR
So after your win, one of your prizes was the Table-top version of the *Asteroids Deluxe*. I was just curious, if you still own it..?

1:47.5-2:50 -AB
Technically yes. I loaned it to a bar in Wisconsin, and I don't know if you read that in the interview or not. It's about 6 hours away from here. I'm never supposed to receive half the royalties in exchange for loaning it to them and they were going to put up images of me and articles and all that.

I don't think the bar did too well, Supposedly the machine is still intact, but these guys are busy doing other things, Carnivals, and what have you. It's probably not cheap to have it shipped here, but I actually just e-mailed the guy today in fact, because I thought about it again and I basically said "Let's make it our New Year's Resolution to find a way to get that back to me". I wasn't as concerned about it back then because I lived in a two-bedroom condo, but now I got a little bit more room.

2:51 - 3:06 -SR
So you talked about your interest in Chess.. How does your playstyle regarding that game compare with faster paced arcade games? Is there any crossover in your opinion?

3:07 - 4:48 -AB
Well, you know for some of the matches, they practice speed Chess, but basically the game I play for the team is a timed game, so you hit the clock and you get 90 minutes to make your first 45 moves. We do try to make each move count, and use as little time as possible when you

don't have to. Of course, if you move too fast, you throw the whole game away in 30 seconds. So it's just a challenge, and the more you practice, the better you get at it. I don't play speed chess per say too much, I haven't. I'm still open to it, but even last night, even though I lost, I played conservatively, I played smart, I just happened to be down a piece the whole game, and sometimes you can still pull off a draw.

The guy outright beat me by 350 points, so that would have been pretty impressive, but his clock was ticking, more than mine was, and played him before. So usually he thinks fast, and I've stumped him before a couple of times.

5:35 - 5:43 -SR

When you are playing games, what would you say your biggest challenges are, generally?

5:45 - 6:45.4 -AB

Well, one challenge that comes to mind is, if you're at the arcade and the machine's been beaten and the controllers don't respond too well, that's probably the biggest challenge for me. Sometimes it's memorization, depending on the game. even on say, *Galaga* on the bonus rounds, where the ships come out in different patterns.

Other challenge include just avoiding injury. in particular the (Atari) *Centipede* with the trackball, push that thing too fast, sometimes your skin gets between the ball and the machine, and you get pinched.

6:45.6 - 7:01 -SR

So were a lot of injuries common with older Arcade equipment? Even long-term injuries like Carpal Tunnel and stuff and older controllers weren't very ergonomic..?

7:01.7 - 7:05.8-AB

I'm going to say very possible, very likely.

7:05.9 - 7:07.9-SR

Have you experienced that?

7:09 - END -AB

Yes. Yes. But, well at least, I don't know if it was Carpal Tunnel, but I did have to wear a splint down on my wrist in college. but it could have just been from a cheap guitar and holding on for dear life just to get the sounds to come out right. I had a cyst removed in my wrist at the age of 16 and I seriously think that could have been caused by the *Asteroids* Table-Top, you could just see moving these two fingers... all of the motion in there.

So anyways, I had that removed at the age of 16, and then I had to get (another one) re-removed ... two years ago? It actually looked like a Golf Ball at points. It got really big. Someone jokingly said "Just hit it with a stapler", and I did. The first time it worked like a charm, but the second time it kept coming back.

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0:00 - 2:25 -AB

... and eventually it just seemed like it wouldn't break. Although I hit it real hard and it softens two days later. I went to a professional surgeon, and apparently just removing it isn't enough, they got to sew some things tight in there so these liquids don't keep leaking, so that's the gist of it.

Knock on wood. I'm better now, but they told me to do all these exercises to keep it from sticking, and I don't think my skin's sticking, but it certainly looks like I got a dent in there. I was just e-mailing a guitar player friend of mine and he said "The best thing you can do is just keep remembering to stretch, whatever ails you all the time and keeps you limber for whatever you want to do whether it's guitar or video games."

Now it would have been nice if the first surgery I recovered no problem, the second surgery they told me I would recover in 10 days, so I booked it, the first available slots, which was 11 days before the show I had to perform. So I figured, 10 days, well hey, 11 days, I should be fine. Get my bandages off and whatever and what they'd tell me..

They're like "okay, you're a kind of better, but now you got to come back for physical therapy. Physical Therapy? Yeah, you won't be able to move your hand for a little while. Wait a second. You guys told me I'd be fine in 10 days, and here I gotta play this show!", so..

So that was a challenge, especially since we started out with the songs with the fastest guitar playing that I do, the *Guns 'n' Roses - Sweet Child O' Mine*, *My Sharona* from *The Knack*, so part of the middle of the show, I ask the other guitar player to take a couple of the parts for me.

2:27 - 2:30 -SR

So what do you enjoy the most about playing video games?

2:31 - 2:58.8 -AB

Well I guess I'm a competitive person, so I guess I have the 'setting new records', whether they are personal bests, or beating my friends. Everything I do, I like to be good at. I'm not great at everything, but the things that I do, whether it's grades in school, or this stuff?

2:59 - 3:03.3 -SR

And what do you like the least about playing them?

3:04 - 3:11.5 -AB

When you're stagnant, when you don't get any better. In fact, you get a little bit worse. It gets a little bit frustrating sometimes.

3:16.6 - 3:26 -SR

You talked about, wanting to design video games one day when you were a teenager. If you had the opportunity to design a video game, what would it be like?

3:42.3 - 4:08 -AB

You know, I guess I'm not that creative back in the day. I might have tried to program *Monopoly* for the computer before it was done. So I'd say I'd be better with straight-forward logic kind of games than the action.

4:11 - 4:23 -SR

Would you say that you had a lot of benefits from playing *Asteroids* from your win? Did you receive a lot of benefits?

4:25 - 5:23 -AB

I'd say fair amount, including recognition. I even got phone calls from people I didn't know about for a while. Some old married lady that was probably 15-30 years older than me struck up some conversation "Oh yeah I saw your picture in the paper, you look like such a nice boy", but even more importantly, I was getting the opportunity to be in the TV commercial for the *arcadia* video game, so that ended up paying me more than my winnings at *Asteroids*. Definitely some benefits, 15 minutes of fame, whatever you call it.

5:23.9 - 5:33.5-SR

So how did your parents treat the competition? Were they supportive of you playing video games?

5:36 - 6:47 -AB

Oh yeah, yeah, it was probably a typical holiday present for me. They'd get X number of cartridges, and of course, they flew down to Washington DC with me, on my time. If I recall, I had a first-class ticket to go down there all by myself, and they asked the sponsors to trade it in to have three coach-class tickets so they could go for free.

But no, they were very supportive and other than the fact that they had some choice words for my little snippet that we had a bit earlier, they told me I had this beautiful future with Atari, which who knows? There's a lot of competition. There was certainly ... Activision. They're still around, and they got a start by making the cartridge for Atari, right?

6:53 - 7:00 -SR

So what was your favorite video game mechanic?

7:01 - 7:01.7 -AB

My What?

7:02 - 7:12.3 -SR

So in the game *Asteroids*, what was your favorite mechanic of the game that you liked? Was there any mechanics in other games that you liked more?

7:12.5 - 7:14.5-AB

I'm not sure I understand the question.

7:14.7 - 7:32.5-SR

So the way the game plays. What was your favorite aspect of the way the game plays? Was there any other games that you liked certain aspects of that you wished was in *Asteroids*?

7:34 - END -AB

Maybe we better start with one half of the question first and make sure I got it right. There's the *Asteroids Deluxe* Table-Top which was my prize, and it was the upgraded version of the *Asteroids* that the one gentleman was able to play for 58 hours. His game was tougher because he had these little diamond shaped...

They looked like stones that would break into little diamonds and that would break up into little triangles. I kinda liked that 'cause the first time you ever shake one, you're just not expecting those things to come and tear you to pieces. They move that fast. So that was kind of

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0:00 - 0:19 -AB

I think I enjoy it because you quickly learn that you kind of got a running start and shoot from a distance so they don't add up right on top of you. Just mastering that was kind of fun, although I'm not quite sure if that answers your question.

0:19 - 0:38 -SR

No that answers it, was there any mechanics in different games that you liked more? Because you said *Asteroids* isn't your favorite game. What about your favorite game makes you like it more than *Asteroids*?

0:39 - 1:58 -AB

Well, you know, that's a two-part question. So First of all, I mean the *Asteroids* on the Atari 2600 wasn't one of my favorite games. *Asteroids Deluxe*, I actually enjoy that game and I think I've played that game for six hours once, and might be able to do it again.

My high scores vary from 200/600,000, but I liked it better because it was more predictable. It was still a challenge, but it wasn't unfair. All the movements you could see coming. If you deserved to die, you deserved to die for the most part. But *Galaga*, there's a game that had something in it that I liked with the possibility to earn the other ships and have twice the firing power, but with the power comes the risk because you're twice as big, and you could get one or both of those guys blown up real quick.

2:00 - 2:13.0 -SR

Would you say that any skills that you picked up outside of gaming helped you when playing the arcade games?

2:13.4 - 2:23.0-AB

Um, Yeah, I think I alluded to that earlier from the typing and the guitar playing, all the hand-eye coordination.

2:31 - 2:44 -SR

So did you get any transferrable skills from playing *Asteroids*? Did any skills you picked up into the game translate into anything outside of the game or other games, even?

2:55 - 3:07 -AB

Well I mean, indirectly from competing, at least I got exposure to a little bit of speaking in public, which is really nothing to do with the game itself. I might have to think about that one too.

3:12 - 3:17 -AB

Let's see... Yeah, I might have to think about that one too. There's gotta be something there.

3:36 - 3:48.7 -SR

Did you pick up any hand-eye coordination skills from playing the games, that maybe helped you play the guitar or anything like that? Did it sharpen your skills in that way maybe?

3:48.724 -3:56-AB

Yeah I mean they all kind of went hand-in-hand, just trying to think of something different.

3:57 - 4:40 -SR

That's alright if you don't have an answer to that one. So regarding the question we skipped earlier, if I can find it.. In what ways did your public gaming success in the past help you in preparing for any challenges you face today?

I heard you just say that you picked up some public speaking skills from your past when that had nothing to do with the game. That would be something that ..

4:41 - 4:42 -AB

Exactly.

4:42.6 - 4:46 -SR

Do you have an answer to that question though?

4:48 - 4:53 -AB

Well that might be my answer, but let's see what we got here...

5:13 - 6:44 -AB

Well I guess related to that success, just the practice, practice, practice. Another thing that I picked up later in life is like I said, exercising and staying a little fit, so I started playing tennis a bit, and what can I say about that? No Lessons, just pick it up, and kind of learn as you go.

So we in particular, we got these friends that are probably 20 years younger than us, so his kid's a little bigger than me, a little better shape, he actually has tennis lessons, and has tennis challenges of his own. So, Yeah I forget, we might have played 3 or, roughly 3 matches in one day, and I forget if I even won a single game against the guy, maybe I did, maybe I didn't. Maybe it was one, but I kept at it. The next time, I won 3 or 4, and it went up from there.

So I guess the tougher your challenge, the better you arise to it, at least the best you can.

6:52 - 7:17 -SR

So that concludes all of our questions for right now. Are there any remaining comments or questions you would like answered before we end the interview? I know you talked briefly about the commercials that they paid you to do. Can you maybe talk about that a little bit?

7:23 - END -AB

Well the hardest part about that is having no acting skills whatsoever, public speaking was hard enough, but acting.. and having a British producer. So it's like every phrase, he wanted me to say, he'd have his thick British accent. It was really hard for him to really convey what "Andy Breyer" would sound like saying this.

"So why don't you stand there... Arcade Action comes home, whatever!" It was just real thick, and I didn't feel like I had a good coach to do its justice, but still, being a part of the Screen Actors Guild, and getting that experience, that was kind of fun.

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0:00 - 0:46 -AB

You know they did a few other things for me too. I went to some conventions to help promote the game, and they bribed me with.. they paid me with stereo equipment, which was kind of nice back in the day. They had some famous actors/celebrities sponsor them. I think one of them was from that one show *Family Affair*,

She played the older sister, I don't think it was Buffy, I forget the name now, but yeah, it was the first time I got to actually meet some semi-famous people.

0:49 -1:05 -SR

Any other comments about your experience that you can think of? It's alright if we end it here, if you don't have any other comments.

1:06 - 1:20 -AB

Maybe we should just e-mail that, and give me a little bit of time and just relive some of this, and maybe to tell you just a little bit more of what you want to hear.

1:20.1 -END -SR

We got a lot from the interview. You did a really well job answering these questions, so thank you, Mr. Breyer. It was nice interviewing you. This concludes our interview.