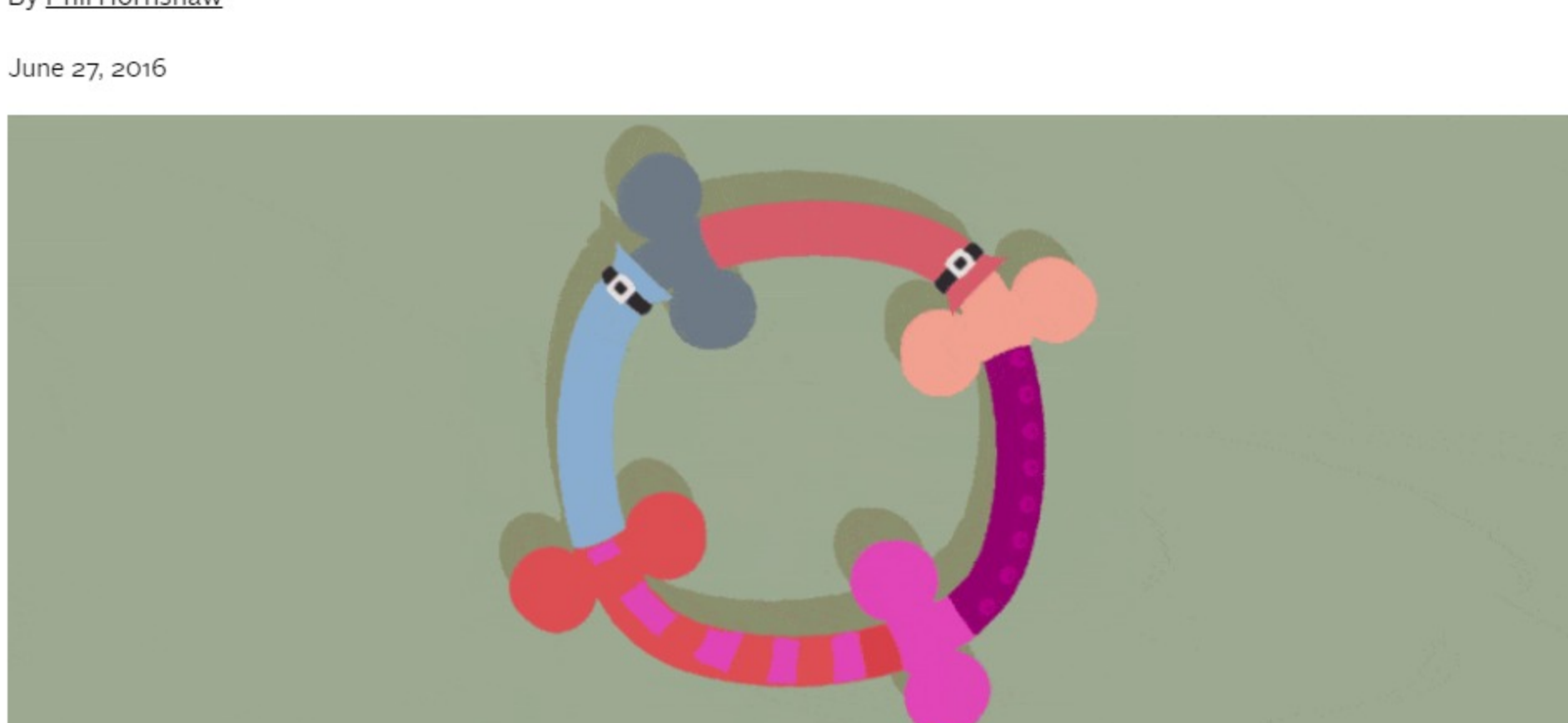


You're a Horny Disembodied Penis in 'Genital Jousting'

By Phil Hornshaw

June 27, 2016



The Electronic Entertainment Expo (E3) in Los Angeles is a massive trade convention that takes place every year, in which a huge number of video game companies show off their upcoming titles. In an off-site lot adjacent to the Hooters that stands across from the LA Convention Center, indie game publisher Devolver Digital each year shows off its own, often strange crop of games.

In that lot in the middle of E3, fellow journalist Phil Owen and I happened across an empty couch. Before it was a screen showing eight pastel-colored squares, the words "Press up to consent" splayed across each one.

We picked up controllers. We pressed "up." We were greeted by floppy penises.

We were playing *Genital Jousting*, a goofy multiplayer game in which each player controls a flaccid, disembodied penis. Each penis is unnaturally colorful—or perhaps is dressed in a little outfit—and comes equipped with a, uh, back door. The goal of the game is to control your penis and to have sex with the other penises. Sexing up the other penises scores points, and after a certain number of rounds, one of the floppy dongs is declared the winner.

As Owen and I chased each other around the screen with disembodied wangs trying to bang one another—while trying to avoid being banged—we laughed hysterically. This was possibly the most fun of anything to be found at E3.

We immediately set out to talk to whoever was responsible.

MAKING FUN OF THE IDEA OF HAVING A DICK



We found Ruan Rothmann of South African developer Free Lives. The developer previously released *Broforce*, a satirical action movie-sleazebag shooter that Devolver published. With *Genital Jousting*, Rothmann said, the developer was making light of a lot of the things that come part and parcel with being the owner of a penis.

"We see it as making fun of masculinity, that's a big part of it—making fun of a whole idea of having a dick and wanting to fuck things all the time," Rothmann explained. "And also for some reason, a lot of people seem to think that you only get points for penetrating other assholes and don't get points for getting penetrated. So what people's understanding is and the different expectations around that are interesting."

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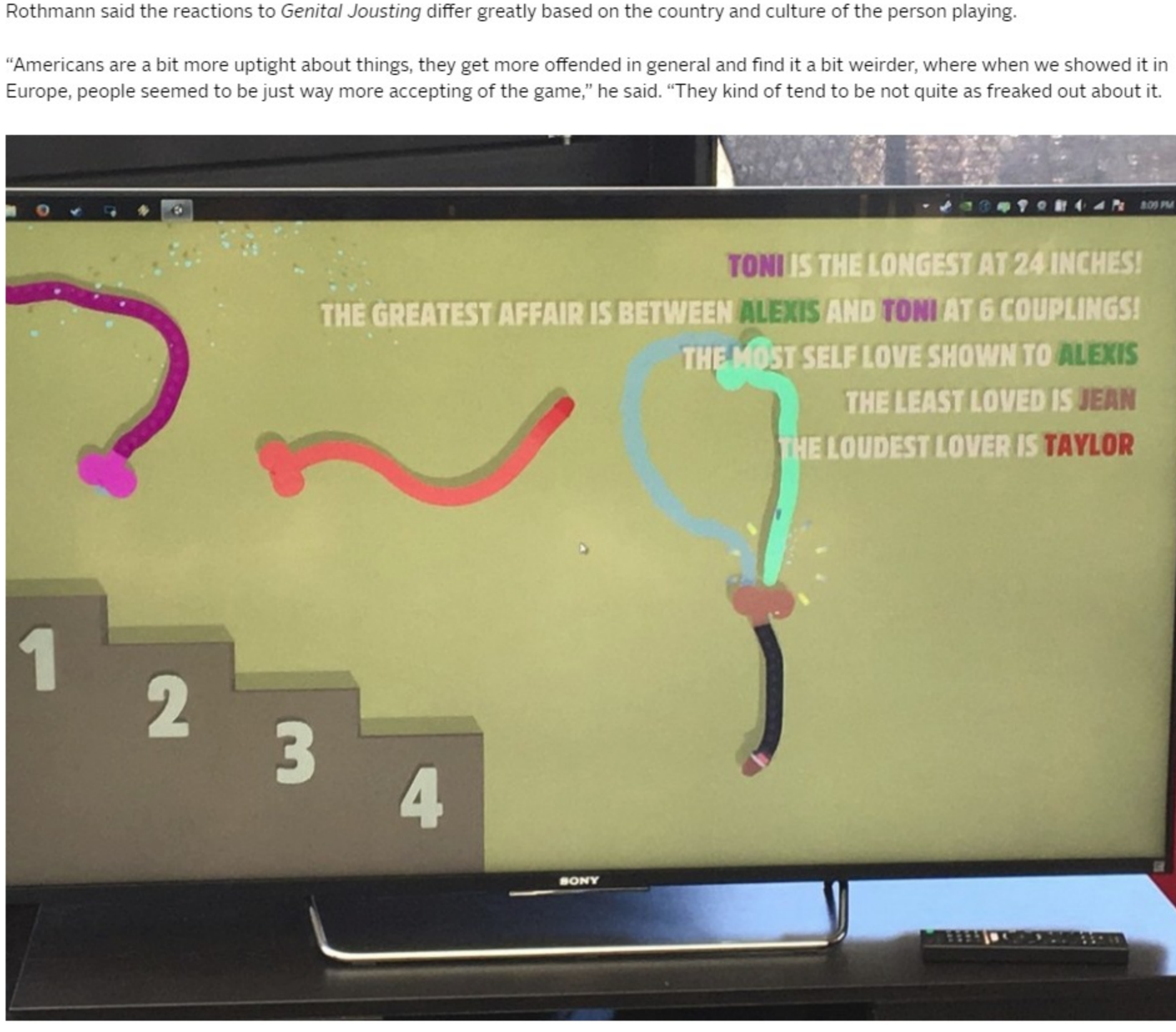
In fact, Owen and I realized, that had been our closed-minded assumption about *Genital Jousting*: we'd assumed, in what felt like typical straight dude fashion, that the goal was to do the screwing while avoiding being screwed.

That's not the case, though, as Rothmann explained, players grab points for giving and receiving—whoever gets around most wins. Already it was interesting, and weird, to unpack all the factors that might have contributed to our assumptions about the game.

Meanwhile, from an actual "winning the game" standpoint, *Genital Jousting* stops being about protecting your disembodied penis's buttock from penetration and starts being about trying to choose who copulates with whom. You want to score with as many people as possible, but you also want to score with other promiscuous players from racking up points too quickly. The more points you earn, the longer your flaccid penis becomes, and thus, the harder it is to control.

Rothmann said the reactions to *Genital Jousting* differ greatly based on the country and culture of the person playing.

"Americans are a bit more uptight about things, they get more offended in general and find it a bit weirder, where when we showed it in Europe, people seemed to be just way more accepting of the game," he said. "They kind of tend to be not quite as freaked out about it."



"A lot of people obviously are offended by the game, but a lot of other people see it as kind of empowering and feminist."

Free Lives has put some effort into ratcheting back the inherently offensive nature of a game about dicks. That's why some of the penises wear clothes, for instance, Rothmann explained.

"It's disarming in a way," he said. "Like just having penises flop around in people's faces is a bit too much. Dressing them up I think is more playful, because it's a playful game more than it is a sexual game. It's not a game that tries to be offensive—it's just about penises. Having each one have a different personality is also supported by that."

Rothmann said Free Lives even created a custom controller of arcade-style joysticks for the game, except the joysticks were dildos. Later during E3, Free Lives even brought the dildo joystick controller out, complete with the doll clothes Rothmann said the developer had purchased for it. Dressing up the dildos, just like the in-game dongs, helped make the game more playful than freaky, he said.

THIS IS NOT OUR FIRST PENIS-BASED GAME



Genital Jousting started its life in an unassuming way: the product of an eight-hour "game jam," a challenge where developers try to put together a complete game as quickly as they can, that took place in Berlin. Originally, developers Evan Greenwood and Martin Kvale wanted to "have a laugh at other people's expense"—but Rothmann said reactions to the game inspired the developers to go further.

Thus, *Genital Jousting* was born. But it's not Free Lives' first penis-filled foray.

"This is actually not the first penis-based game that has been made at our company," Rothmann said. "Before this, there was a game called *Wang Commander* and it was a game [where] you played as a disembodied penis playing in some warped soccer game between different teams of penises playing soccer."

It was with *Wang Commander* that Free Lives came up with a key idea that's part of *Genital Jousting*: the game supports eight players instead of the four that usually can play on a single video game console. The doubling of players comes from the ability to share a single controller between two players.

Sharing a controller between two people creates an intimacy that helps disarm the inherent weirdness of controlling a penis, Rothmann said.

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"You're already making people feel a little bit uncomfortable by having to play this game with penises, and if you make them have to share a controller, you make it a bit more personable," he said. "It adds a level of personability to it where you have to communicate with the guy you're playing with—you're almost touching hands."

Genital Jousting will come out later this year, Rothmann said. The focus will be on the multiplayer mode on hand at E3, but there will be more to it than that.

"We're working on a single-player story mode for the game," he told us. "We've hired a writer. It's going to be kind of an adventurous story that you play through as a disembodied penis."

Adding a story mode to *Genital Jousting* will expand it quite a bit, because as fun as the multiplayer mode was—in which wangs mostly just circle each other in short rounds, desperately trying to put things in other things, while being aware of whose things are being put in whose other things—Rothmann said the idea could be expanded—at least somewhat.

"The focal point of the game is going to be the multiplayer, as it is now, but we have to offer something for people to play by themselves too, because playing by yourself with your penis is generally an integral part of having one."

In conclusion, I leave you with the tweet Playboy Gaming editor Mike Rougeau sent when he played the game on the last day of E3:



Phil Hornshaw is a freelance writer and the co-author of *So You Created a Wormhole: The Time Traveler's Guide to Time Travel and The Space Hero's Guide to Glory*. He was hoping the latter would help him get Han Solo hair, but so far he's been unsuccessful. He lives with his wife and annoying cats in Los Angeles.

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