

THE WHAT, WHY, WHO, WHERE, WHEN, AND HOW OF

VOICE OVER IN VIDEO GAMES



WHO AM I?

SAMUEL KURNIT

ACTOR / VOICE ACTOR

- ▶ Been acting all my life
- ▶ Began voice over career in 2013
- ▶ Have appeared in:
 - ▶ video games
 - ▶ commercials
 - ▶ industrials
 - ▶ web explainers
 - ▶ audiobooks
 - ▶ live voice over stage performances

WHAT?

WHAT IS VOICE ACTING?

- ▶ It's acting with your voice, duh
 - ▶ It's doing everything a live actor does, but with only your voice.
- ▶ NOT just talking into a microphone for money
- ▶ It appears in more places than you think
 - ▶ video games, animation, radio, phone systems, etc.

WHY?

WHY SHOULD I CONSIDER VOICE ACTING FOR MY GAME?

- ▶ Immersion
 - ▶ Dialogue: read or heard
 - ▶ Text takes you out of the moment
 - ▶ If your player is reading, they aren't playing
- ▶ Which games' and character's voice acting stands out to you?

WHY?

PORTAL

- ▶ A fun puzzle game made way better by Ellen Mclain's GLaDOS.
- ▶ GLaDOS' constant jabs kept you going.
- ▶ Set the tone of futility in machine testing man.
- ▶ Also really funny.



WHY?

BASTION

- ▶ Logan Cunningham's narrator provided so much atmosphere.
- ▶ Even with Darren Korb's music, you wouldn't have had the same experience without that languid, grizzled, cowboy voice.



WHY?

UNCHARTED

- ▶ It's Nathan Drake!
- ▶ He's a lovable scumbag with a heart of gold that Nolan North absolutely nails.
- ▶ Imagine the action set pieces being interrupted by dialogue you have to read. Not a cinematic experience.
- ▶ Side note: some of his best lines were improvised.



WHY?

ALL 3 GIVE YOU SOMETHING THAT TEXT ALONE CAN'T

- ▶ Atmosphere
- ▶ Investment
- ▶ Production value

WHO?

WHO ARE THESE MYTHICAL CREATURES CALLED VOICE

- ▶ I'm in VT, aren't they all in NY or LA?
 - ▶ That used to be true, but the internet changed that
 - ▶ You can be a game developer just about anywhere, same goes for voice actors
 - ▶ First project I worked on I recorded from NY with other actors in Atlanta, San Diego, Vancouver, Louisiana

SO, THEY'RE EVERYWHERE, HOW DO I FIND SOME?

- ▶ There's no one answer, but there are many methods
 - ▶ Casting professional
 - ▶ Professional casting sites (backstage, actors access, voice123, etc.)
 - ▶ Amateur casting sites (castingcallclub, VAA, behindthevoiceactor, etc.)
 - ▶ Social media (facebook, twitter, linkedin, instagram, etc.)
 - ▶ Craigslist, Reddit
 - ▶ Networking - The best way by far

NOW I KNOW WHERE THEY ARE, HOW DO I CATCH ONE?

- ▶ You put out a casting call
 - ▶ A document or posting that lays out what you are looking for and what you can offer for it
 - ▶ Include info about the game
 - ▶ Is it a post apocalyptic fps? A trippy puzzle game? A fantasy RPG with steampunk elements?
 - ▶ As much info as you are willing/able to put out can go into it

CASTING CALL – CHARACTER BREAKDOWN

- ▶ Character gender, age (exact or range), personality traits, anything specific that influences the character
- ▶ A character portrait (if available/applicable)
- ▶ Approximately how much work will it be?
 - ▶ Total number of words; is this the protagonist, the antagonist, a bit part, etc.

CASTING CALL – AUDITION MATERIAL

- ▶ Some lines to audition with
 - ▶ Pick a few that have different emotional states and attitudes
- ▶ Be specific about the format you want your auditions submitted in: the length, how many takes, where you want them sent, and any other info you need
- ▶ This can weed out the people you don't want to work with, if they can't follow directions now...

CASTING CALL – COMPENSATION

- ▶ Include any compensation you are offering
 - ▶ May differ based on the size of the role and on what fits your budget
 - ▶ Be upfront and honest
 - ▶ Doesn't have to be money
 - ▶ Get the relationship started on the right foot

CASTING CALL – AUDITIONS

- ▶ You don't have to include a breakdown for every role, you can cast smaller roles off the auditions for larger ones
- ▶ Feel free to hide something weird in there, see who's paying attention
- ▶ Put an end date on it!
- ▶ Once you've received your auditions, listen to them!
 - ▶ Choose who you feel best fits each role and extend an offer
 - ▶ When they accept, you are in business
 - ▶ If they don't accept, amend your offer, or move on to your number 2 choice
 - ▶ Don't tell them they were your number 2 choice

SAFARI FIGHT!

Hello! I am making an iOS fighting game called Safari Fight! and am in need of some voice actors to bring the characters to life. This is a 2-button fighting game featuring safari animals; the art style is very cartoony, and I'd like the voices to match that. Each character has about 25 lines and then a whole lot of fight noises/growls. It's a passion project, so I can't pay much. I'm offering \$25 per character and credit in the final game.

To submit, please send a separate mp3 (with no more than two takes) for each character you are auditioning for. The file format should be CharacterName - YourName.mp3.

So if I was auditioning for Walter Buffalo, my file would look like this: WalterBuffalo - SamuelKurnit.mp3

Send your files (and links to any reels or resume that you have) to casting@SafariFight.com by February 29th, 2016. Also, include in the email your favorite ice cream flavor.

Have fun with it! GO WILD!

Attack Giraffe

Attack Giraffe has been training for this for a long time and he's going to take down the competition. He's a smooth talker who's gone over the edge. Think Billy Dee Williams Colt 45 ads, but filled with rage. Think Neil DeGrasse Tyson, and someone badmouthed astrophysics.

Pre fight taunt:

I can barely even see you from up here.

Signature move:

Neck snap attack!

Losing statement:

I'm still...better looking.

Winning statement:

Who's king of the jungle now?

Growls/Animal Noises

WHERE?

WHERE?

WHERE DO THEY RECORD?

- ▶ 2 options
 - ▶ Home Studio or Professional Studio
 - ▶ Each have pros and cons

WHERE?

PROFESSIONAL STUDIO

- ▶ Pros
 - ▶ Consistent sound
 - ▶ Controlled environment
 - ▶ Quality Equipment
- ▶ Cons
 - ▶ Scheduling
 - ▶ Proximity
 - ▶ Money



WHERE?

HOME STUDIO

▶ Pros

- ▶ Cheap
- ▶ Easy Scheduling

▶ Cons

- ▶ No control
- ▶ Quality differences
- ▶ Self Direction
- ▶ Time



WHEN?

WHEN IN MY GAME DEVELOPMENT SHOULD I DO IT?

- ▶ You can cast very early on
- ▶ You'll want a fairly final script before you start recording
 - ▶ The more you revise, the more you re-record, may start to cost you money
- ▶ You can add the audio into your game at any time
 - ▶ It can influence the animation, good to do it early in that cycle

HOW?

HOW DO I DO IT? WHAT'S THE RIGHT WAY?

- ▶ There is no right way
- ▶ Tips & Tricks
 - ▶ Set goals and reasonable milestones
 - ▶ Make sure your actors have deadlines
 - ▶ Be honest about whether or not you are open to interpretation
 - ▶ If you want them to stick to the scripted description make it known, if you're open to some experimenting, let them know
 - ▶ Be honest in your feedback
 - ▶ If you aren't getting what you want, let them know. It's your name on the game, your reputation
 - ▶ When casting, ask for reels and resumes, you'll know who's professional
 - ▶ Don't discount non-professionals, everyone starts somewhere!

Samuel Kurnit

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SK

VOICE OVER

Commercial/Web	Vermont Comedy Club Zebware Lander College	Keilani Lime Infrakultur Fly on the Wall Productions
Video Games/Animation	Technobabylon Shardlight (in production) Norse Noir: Loki's Exile Startup Alley	Wadjet Eye Games Kreative Spill Games Pixlwise Inc.
Audiobooks	One Last One Tommy Has a Yeast Infection	AudibleScripts.com

FILM

3 Angry Supervillains	Lead	NYU Tisch
Gravesend, MA Tourism Board	Lead	Chris Knowles
The Princess & The Pauper	Lead	CNGM Pictures
Love & Badminton	Supporting	Kenneth Maharaj
Gouge	Supporting	Briana Bleecker
Matinee	Supporting	NYIT Film School

TELEVISION

Fishtank	Supporting	Columbia University
Secret Lives of Stepford Wives Ep 111	Featured	Sharp Entertainment
Deadly Devotion Ep 104	Featured	Lion TV

THEATER

A Cuckold	Harvey (Supporting)	Downtown Art
Twelve Angry Men	Juror #8 (Lead)	Sheil Park
Flowers For Algernon	Charlie Gordon (Lead)	Wandering Minds
Arsenic & Old Lace	Captain Rooney (Featured)	Wandering Minds
Lone Star	Ray (Lead)	Theater For Engineers
Steel Mags	Multiple Characters	The Pub Theater
You're Not Good Enough	Multiple Characters	The Pub Theater

TRAINING

iO Improv:	Level 1	Jason Shotts	iO Chicago Training Center
	Level 2	Colleen Murray	iO Chicago Training Center
	Level 3	Shad Kunkle	iO Chicago Training Center
	Level 4	Jason Chin	iO Chicago Training Center
	Level 5	Bill Arnett	iO Chicago Training Center
	Level 5b	Noah Gregoropoulos	iO Chicago Training Center
Improv for Actors 1 & 2		Piero Procaccini	Second City Training Center
Acting 1, 2, & 3		Michael Pieper	Second City Training Center
Voice Over		Melanie Ehrlich	New York, NY
Advanced Scene Study		Darell W. Cox	Profiles Theater
BA in Political Science			Boston University

SPECIAL SKILLS

Intermediate Bass Guitar; Accents: Eastern European, British (Proper and Cockney), American (Southern, New York, Boston, Midwest), and Pirate; Avid Video Gamer; Comic Book Collector; Valid Driver's License and Passport, Can Raise One Eyebrow

TIPS & TRICKS CONT'D

- ▶ Credit your actors!
 - ▶ They may want to be credited a specific way
 - ▶ It may be all you can offer them, so you owe it to them to get it right
- ▶ Let your actors know when they are allowed to talk about being in the game
- ▶ If you liked working with them, remember their name/info and keep in touch
 - ▶ You'll both want to work again in the future (networking)
- ▶ Every voice actor knows other voice actors
 - ▶ If you need something specific, don't be afraid to ask them if they know someone that can do
X
- ▶ If you can, get some finished audio to your actors for their reel
 - ▶ It will help them book the next one!

HOW?

TIPS & TRICKS CONT'D

ACTORS ARE PEOPLE TOO

QUESTIONS?

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