



# POP CULTURE LIGHTNING ROUND

AN INTERVIEW WITH JELLYVISION

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Way back in the 90's while everyone was watching *3rd Rock From the Sun* and meticulously caring for their Tamagotchi, I sat alone in my basement playing a little trivia game called *You Don't Know Jack*. Unlike anything before it (or after), the game felt alive and dynamic; its host insulted my guesswork answers and everything about it just sucked you in to the gameshow experience.

Flash forward to today and it's been over 10 years since a new *You Don't Know Jack* game hit shelves. Thankfully Jellyvision is back with an all-new game for the Xbox 360 and PS3 this February to revitalize the genre that understood good trivia is about more than just the questions.

Mike Bilder, General Manager at Jellyvision was kind enough to answer a few questions about the forthcoming release.

**You Don't Know Jack has had a pretty interesting history, it's changed a lot as gaming's evolved over the years. What have you guys learned going from regular PC releases to the weekly online game and now a modern console release?**

What have we learned? We've learned way too much about stars like Diddy and Ke\$ha, that's what. We could probably do an entire game called *You Don't Know Diddy* at this point, but we won't, unless he pays us to do so.

But something useful we've learned is that you have to tailor the game to the platform you're delivering it on. For instance, the weekly online games were written specifically in a world where it was just Cookie (the host) and one intern whom Cookie hated, running the show from a sound booth, and the jokes and dialogue were geared toward developing a more intimate storyline. Leaderboards and a message board for people to talk smack were important to the success of that version, to create a sense of

community that existed naturally when it was a PC game, when people were playing together at parties. For the current console version, it's a whole different story. You've got up to four players (instead of up to three, like the old PC version) and a ton of episodes and the story of the game reflects that. There more characters, more question variations, more everything. It's just bigger in all respects. At the same time, each episode stands alone as its own thing, because the game will most likely be consumed in small chunks. **The trivia genre has never been really big on the consoles, do you think the recent push towards more casual-friendly games has changed that? What makes now the right time to bring back the king of quizzes?**

First of all, we were never kinged. We're pretty sure we were duked at one point, and we were definitely earded. Multiple times. But thank you.

The truth is, after all those years, we never stopped getting letters from people practically begging us to bring this game back. It was flattering to be sure, if not a little insane. And you'd read reviews of other trivia games, and almost invariably the game would be compared to *YOU DON'T KNOW JACK*. One magazine called us the 5<sup>th</sup> best party game of all time (*Rock Band* was #1), and that was after the brand had been dormant for 7 or 8 years. So clearly there was still momentum behind the game, and luckily THQ agreed with us on that.

But you're right, the casual gaming market has definitely ballooned in the past few years, and that really played a big part in it. **Cookie Masterson has been a big part of the series since the 90's. How have you guys kept the character fresh over the years and what can we expect from his performance in the new game?**

It's hard to know what to say here because no matter what we say,

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it will only go to his already engorged head. But since you asked, Cookie is the undeniable star of our game, and it just wouldn’t be the same without him. It’d be kind of like *The Price Is Right* without Bob Barker. Does anybody *really* watch that anymore?

Cookie is a fun character because he’s kind of a blank slate. The writers can throw anything at him and constantly take his character into weirder and weirder places. And luckily, Tom Gottlieb, the actor behind Cookie, has the memory of a hawk. For this current game, one of the writers wrote something about Cookie’s dad, and Tom was quick to point out that Cookie’s dad had been dead for several years. Or maybe it was vice versa.

**Between the Xbox 360’s *Scene It?* games and the PS3’s *Buzz* series there have been a few trivia-specific peripherals made. YDKJ doesn’t come with any of these accessories, how does the game stay casual-friendly without requiring a bigger box?**

Well, it also stays pocketbook-friendly by not having those accessories. Also, the game is compatible with the Big Button controller, in case somebody’s already got one. But we think it works just fine with the standard controllers for each console. **Seeing the rise and fall of more spectacular massive-style game shows like 1 vs 100 on Xbox Live did the team face any concerns designing a new multiplayer online experience for YDKJ?**

Not really. There were challenges, obviously, but 1 vs. 100 was a unique case in that it required players to play at a specific time to fully experience the game. We thought that was an intriguing idea, but of course with YDKJ, you can play anytime, anywhere, wearing anything you want.

**Through the 90’s YDKJ games were released 2-4 times per year in order to stay fresh and relevant. How will the new YDKJ keep content fresh for players post-release?**

We’ve got downloadable content that will be released on Xbox LIVE and PlayStation Network. We also have a few other surprises up our sleeves, but we’ll keep them there for now, until they become too itchy.

**In the classic games the game has checked your system’s date and time to deliver context-sensitive insults from the hosts. Does the new YDKJ make use of any similar extraneous monitoring to add additional realism to the experience?**

Maybe. We’re not going to give everything away, you know. We will say this: If you play a lot by yourself on weekend nights, we’ll know about it. We’ll know.

**Why do you think the YDKJ games have endured for so long when other trivia games have come and gone over the years? What’s the secret to the series’ success?**

When we first developed the idea for YOU DON’T KNOW JACK, the goal was simple: Create a trivia game for people who don’t like trivia games. By mixing in pop culture references, focusing on story and comedy, and encouraging party play, we were able to do capture that audience. The great thing was, though, that in creating a game for people who didn’t like trivia games, we also created a game that appealed to people who DO like trivia games. So we kind of lucked out on that one. Now, after all these years, we think we’ve pretty much honed this machine into top working order, and we think it shows in our newest version.

TO SLEEP PERCHANCE TO NOT BE AWAKE

If the snooze button on Rip Van Winkle’s alarm clock gave him 10 extra minutes of sleep, how many times would he have to hit it to sleep for 20 years?

SCREW

a little over a hundred thousand times

a little over a million times

a little over a hundred million times

Lion	Tiger	Bear	Oh My
\$623	\$2,875	\$3,336	\$1,656