



Top 10 Plays of the Week

By Elliott Burns

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posted February 22nd 2017

"Wow, just WOW everyone! So I've got some really big news I want to share with you... Earlier today, after I finished my lunch, Kung-Pow Chicken Sub by the way, I went into my boss's office and calmly explained that I would be leaving the company. So I am now t-minus two weeks until I walk out those doors for the last time EVER.

Why am I doing quitting? Because of YOU! Because of everyone out there who follows this channel, who watches these videos, who makes up this community. After 3 years posting video after video after video, this channel now makes enough in YouTube advertising revenues for me to dedicate my life to it!"

[he holds a wireless webcam with his right hand; raised up it faces back towards him and the room, behind are drawn curtains, shelves of video games and collectable figures, his computer set up and a pro-gaming chair.]

"I want to say a huge thank you to everyone of you! This is a dream come true, for me, my wife (going on 6 months now guys), and our puppy."

[crouching down with his left hand he raises a small fluffy dog to his chest.]

"Say "hi" Jasper, say "hi" to everyone. Jasper's really happy that Daddy gets to stay home all day now and doesn't need to leave him alone. You know what else it means... it means from today onwards I'll be posting more videos, more of the content that you LOVE, like this:"

[the screen switches to footage of a plane pulling a barrel-roll over a middle-Eastern oil refinery; overlaid his voice can be heard erratically.]

"This is Goose Feet! OVER! Deploying payload,"

[just before the right-wing clips a tower, pulling to first-person perspective he is launched into the air, rifle in hand, screaming:]

“MAYDAY MAYDAY pilot down over enemy territory,”

[pulling his chute.]

“I’m going in hard, guns blazing, send EVAC NOW, this is not a drill, I repeat NOT-A-DRILL!”

[the screen switches back to him in his room.]

“Not to mention our times together...”

[now we see a squad of armour clad super soldiers charging up a hill, plasma blasts rain down overhead from multi-jawed aliens and explosions erupt either side; amongst the chaos and lighting-effects he’s heard reciting the Micky Mouse Club theme tune:]

“Who’s the leader of the club, That’s made for you and me, M-I-C-K-E-Y M-O-U-S-E,”

[as his team mates respond with burst of laughing and cries of:]

“SHUT THE F*** UP.”

[back in his room again he pants, physically exerted by his excitement.]

“But most important of all, it means I can dedicate more time, NAY, dedicate my life to showing off the best-of-the-best of your clips, the greatest examples of battle from all over the world! Every week I will be showing the most courageous, outrageous and outright insane feats of computer game brilliance that you send me. And each week you can vote on who is the greatest-of-the-great. The insanest-of-the-insane.

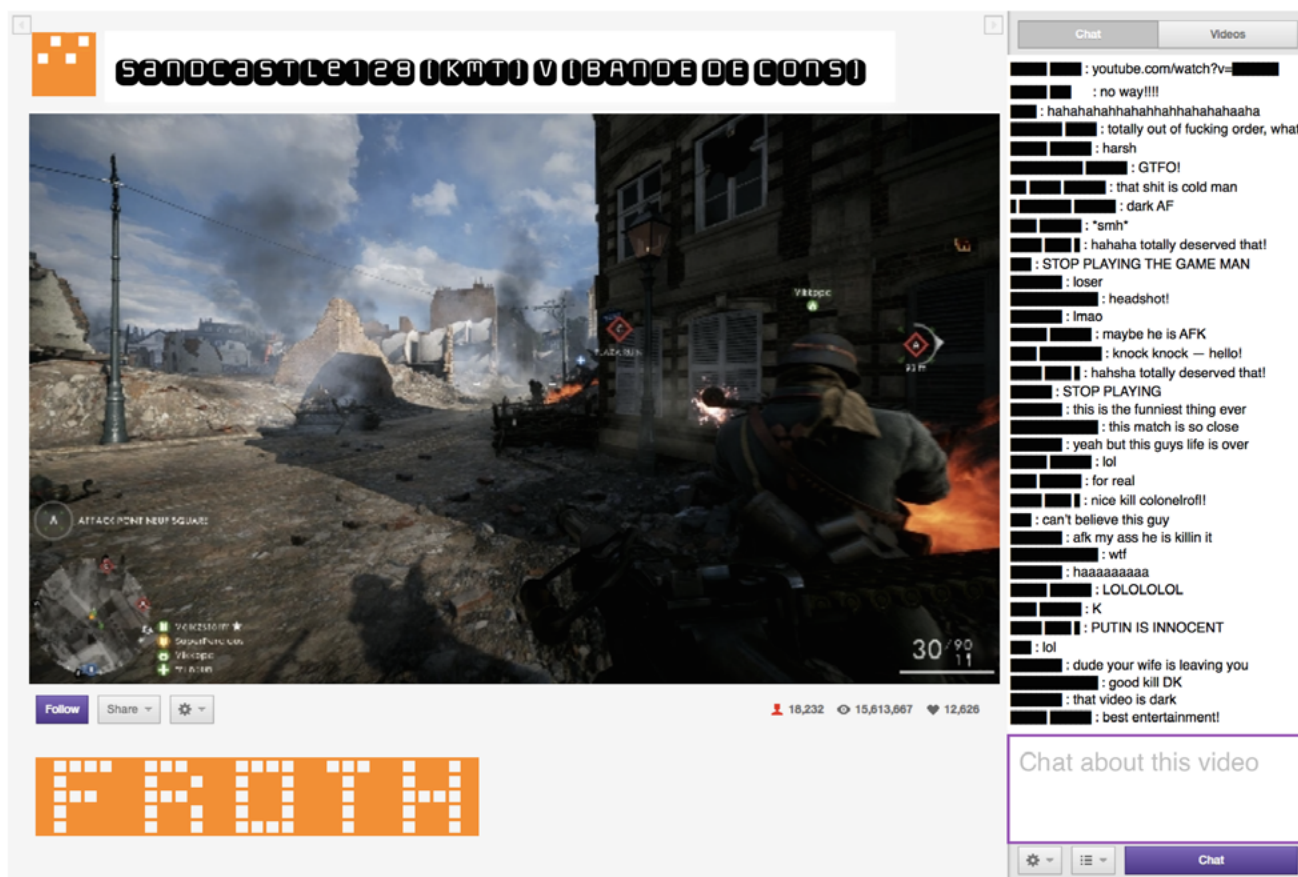
Because I LOVE you guys, I LOVE that you’ve invested in me, this channel, this community that we’ve built together. Keep the likes, the comments, the shares, everything coming. Follow me on YouTube, on Facebook, on Instagram. There’s going to be competitions, give-aways, constant non-stop banter-rific laughs...”

[his focus trails off slightly, pulling out of character before dropping back in...]

And of course, as always, my content is free to view. Subscribe and help me continue making this dream come true, and check out my online-store (link in the description below) for some excellent merchandise!

I can’t say how much this means to me. All your support, it makes my life worth living... So for now, until next time, PEACE OUT, *SandCastle128*”

[the screen splits into 12 pieces showing a selection of related videos]



March 1st 2017 00:23am

Downstairs the kettle is whistling; it's on the gas and there's no sign anyone will take it off soon. His wife is asleep with the dog curled up by her feet. In 'his office' the glow of his monitor illuminates his face, providing enough light for the webcam to see him, yet leaving the background in darkness.

With his headphone-mic set he can't hear the kettle. He won't notice it until this round is over with either the terrorist or tactical-squad winning.

He's entered the villa through an open first-floor window. Downstairs a firefight is breaking out as three teammates try to catch the terrorists in a pincer movement, breaching from the front and back entrances. He's careful to avoid traps, they may have left explosive around any corner, or could be camping, waiting for him to make a mistake. Any second now his team should be able to identify how many hostiles are on the ground-floor; however, until then he'll need to exercise extreme caution.

The fifth member of their squad is holding back, sniper scope poised to take a shot through any exposed window. It's the third round and they're two games down, the enemy are co-ordinated so they're working to draw them out.

His teammates report comes in: "They're all on the ground floor. *SandCastle128*, on my mark, assault from the main stairs." A deafening volley of machine gun fire opens up, his HUD reports one target down, sniper fire takes a second. "GO GO GO." He runs into the fight, catches two targets from behind, raises his shotgun to iron sight and pulls the trigger.

His wife smacks him round the back of the head. His shot misses and the targets turn filling him with lead. "Kettle's boiled, I'm going back to bed!" That live-stream went out to 4,156 people on Facebook.

posted March 1st 2017 00:25am

██████████ : KETTLES BOILED KO thats my vote for best kill of the week!

👍377

reply ██████████ : hahaha

reply ██████████ : ██████████ check this out

reply ██████████ : he won't post it

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March 1st 2017 01:01am

He'd closed the live-stream soon after his wife had interrupted him. It wasn't an inopportune time and he thought he'd handled it smoothly enough, that trademark mix of sport-commentator hyperbole and military references. Now, just past 1am, *SandCastle128* sits in the dark watching the comments collect. Maybe later he'll review the incident, pay it some critical attention and gauge his community's immediate response, but for now he isn't feeling up to it.

Before all this had started there wasn't much acclaim in being a video gamer. Sure within the community there were names, and some money to be earned if you were a pro, a lot in South Korea. Yet, he was one of the few people who'd really brought it into the mainstream. 3 years of uploading videos, fine tuning his craft and persona, penetrating the cultural bubble of frat boys, turning video games from a marginalised interest to something millions tuned in each day to watch. Nowadays his moniker was recognised at water-coolers.

There was pride in being at the forefront of a new profession. When he'd first met his wife he'd rambled on about his aspirations, how he wanted to be a self-made man, the potential he saw and his commitment to it. Despite her disbelief it was one of the things that had attracted her to him, had helped her bypass his reluctance to do much else with his spare time.

But now he wondered what would happen. He'd edged his way across the celebrity line and was subsequently vulnerable to the public response. He didn't like, nor understand, celebrity. Outside a small sphere of films he couldn't identify actors and reality-stars confused him.

posted March 3rd 2017

"Here we are, coming live from the battlefields of Northern France, it's CONQUEST, the forces of England versus the forces of Germany! An all out battle to see who will win, and who will fall. I'm your host *SandCastle128*, strap yourself in, its going to be wild..."

[today he was ramping up his game, the incident had awoken him to the jeopardy of his situation; his future, no their future, rested on his performance. What had once been a liberating opportunity was now tinged with a precarious edge. Peripherally he knew celebrities could be felled by a single blow, or worse, fall into anonymity. And unlike the D-A listers he wasn't equipped with a personal assistant or agent to help him navigate this unknown terrain.]

"THIS IS YOUR COMMANDER, send reinforcements to Bravo now, Stat, DO NOT DISREGARD THIS COMMAND."

[if he was going to regain the ground he'd lost he needed to put on a show. Pull references from the back catalogue of material stationed in his mind.]

"I love the smell of NAPALM in the morning!"

[whilst flame-throwing a tunnel of krauts.]

"No bastard ever won a war by dying for his country."

[rallying his friends for a charge up hill. And towards the end of the day, playing in a shell punctured German village:]

"I started this war killing Germans in Africa. Then France. Then Belgium. Now I'm killing Germans in Germany."

March 4th 2017 03:20am

Maybe today he'd overdone it, he'd clocked up 13 hours across 3 different games, that plus 4 more editing videos and running his social media accounts. For lunch he'd had energy bars. His wife had cooked dinner for him when she came home, unfortunately he was in the middle of a serious live-stream and couldn't come down until it was cold. Though it wasn't all bad: in the morning he'd been for a run, he wasn't one to neglect his body for the game.

Putting in a little extra time was going to be worth it. He now knew that he needed a plan to expand his business. One day they'd want children, that meant medical costs and university fees. A couple more years earning YouTube royalties and then diversify, maybe a book deal, or better yet a TV show. He knew if he stayed the course a network would eventually take notice.

posted April 13th 2017

[standing in front of the battlefield SandCastle128 is trying to react according to the combat unfolding. Coordinating his limbs isn't as easy as he'd expected. That plus he always ends up occupying an important part of the screen, where the action is and he shouldn't be.]

"...and he goes on and ON, that's 5, now 6, now with the perfectly timed grenade 7, 8, 9! But it doesn't stop there! These guys on the right haven't seen him yet but wait until, BAM..."

[except the problem is he's on the right of the screen too, so we can't see who he's talking about. This new venture into green screen isn't working out as he wanted. He decides to risk it and post the video, gauge the general reaction and work out how to improve it.]

posted on the fridge April 12th 2017

*Hal I'm going to my Mum's until Monday. You haven't been out of that room much lately. I don't see why I should come home everyday to a house that's **empty**. Use this time to think O.K. Love, Emma.*

April 14th 2017 10:48am

How could he have missed her note? At least it explains why the dog had been acting up so much. He can't handle contacting her right now, he's too much work on, there's a big tournament this weekend and he's going to do special video commentaries on as many of the matches as he can. He won't play but covering the event will help open up potential job offers when pro-gaming goes mainstream in the U.S.

April 17th 2017 19:28pm

What a great weekend, he's feeling fantastic, elated, he's completely forgotten why he was down before. Thousands upon thousands were tuning into his live-stream commentary of the matches, and not to see the games, to hear him! He's still riding the wave of excitement when he hears the door open downstairs. She's back. He remembers the note on the fridge, Fuck. He takes off his headset so he can hear better, listen to her moving about the house, try and discern whether she's annoyed or whether, as he's hoping, she's gotten over it. The dog's excited to see her again, that's a good sign. He waits a couple seconds more, wondering whether he should go down and see her, or wait till she wants to see him...

posted April 18th 2017 00:23am

[you can see and hear his frustration being taken out on the enemy Zeppelin. For five lives now he's been getting into bi-wings and heading up into the air to try and down the looming death machine]

"... chugga chugga chugga..."

[he imitates the gattling-gun over the in-game sound effects.]

"... nnnnooaaaahwwwwhuh!"

[as he turns his plane down into a spiral, dodging enemy fire and pulling back around for another approach.]

"SandCastle128 going in for the kill! Let's take this B**** Down!"

[he doesn't swear whilst playing, its not part of his persona, he knows it won't help him in the long run, won't get him to his goal. TV networks don't like it if you swear.]

posted April 18th 2017 00:25am

██████████ : is it just me or is this really weird?

👍58

reply ██████████ : Z Z Z Zooooom he's lost it

reply ██████████ : he has actually taken the Zeppelin down though

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April 27th 2017 11:20pm

Eventually every soldier gets it. When he reaches that point where he's seen too many things, been in the field too long, his mind turns and his eyes fix into a hundred meter stare: when the bullets have finished, when you've repelled the final hoard of intruders, beaten them back with every inch of strength you had, and watched your friends get turned to meat around you, unable to help them. It comes across a man, falling back into the relative calm, back to the loading screen, waiting for the slots to fill up again and the battle to restart. You can see them resting, contented, but somewhere else completely, the focus totally gone. The opposite condition, a complete antithesis to the intensity of combat.

It's not his fault that his mind is shot, that outside the intensity of the match his brain resorts to a power saving mode. But his wife can't understand it. She hasn't seen what he's seen, doesn't know the toll it takes, never will, he never wants her to, this is something he can't share. But it's creating a distance between them and he doesn't know how to begin. The war trained him to be a machine, an efficient killer; when he comes home his mind won't remodel itself, it's stuck that way. So increasingly he feels more at home in the conflict, amongst others who think like him, amongst men whose lives are equally marked by tracer fire and a thousand respawns.

She doesn't seem to try as much either. On the odd occasion that he's come downstairs, tried to interact with her, suggest they walk the dog together, he's found her on her laptop or phone, deliberately ignoring him, refusing his attempts and advances. There's a stalemate between them: the staircase forms a no-mans land, they negotiate the house in order to avoid each other, collecting intelligence on each other's movements in order to plan a route to the fridge or the bathroom.

posted April 28th 2017 11:58am

This is my first post. I've been following this forum for a few weeks now and after reading about your experiences, learning the same thing is happening to other women, I finally feel confident enough to speak.

My husband is addicted to video games, he's on his computer at least 12 hours everyday. What makes it worse is that it's his job. He posts videos on YouTube and thousands of people watch them, so for anything I say against it, there's hundreds of others congratulating him.

We practically live separate lives. We avoid eye contact, I don't even think he thinks about me sexually anymore. When he finally comes to bed at night I just pretend to be asleep, I can't fight with him at 4am.

I don't know what to do. I've tried speaking to him but he's either too locked into the screen to respond or tells me it's work and it's for our future. What do I do?

Help!

Anonymous.

posted April 30th 2017 02:34pm

[crouched in a thicket he edges forward, they're close to their target zone having infiltrated past numerous unsuspecting guards. This is the moment he likes the most, a second or two before the action opens up, when all the planning is in place. All six of them are spread along the southern perimeter of the base, targets have been designated, one team setting off a distraction whilst the other head for the main objective.]

"this is *SandCastle128* asking for a final sit-rep..."

"*Zephr1000* in position and ready"

"*Pis_Blitz* ready"

"*x_ElitePlayz_x* one second I'm just setting up"

"*meme.jpeg* good to go"

"approaching entry point, *GrZZ* ready"

"O.K. on my count... 3, 2, 1, Go, Go, GO."

[he's playing on one computer, with a second set up to stream directly to Facebook, he can see the smiley faces, hearts and thumbs, and he can read the comments as they appear, calibrating his commentary to their reactions. It's a perfect feedback loop.]

██████ : youtube.com/watch?v=██████

reply ██████ : no way!!!!

reply ██████ : hahahahahhahahhahahahaaha

reply ██████ : totally out of fucking order, what a b****

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[his team just breached the compound wall and proceed towards their target, a supply dump. Taking down occasional regulars they make it to their target, place charges and retreat back to detonate.]

"BLOW IT!"

[the explosion is terrific, the computer rendering accurately encapsulates how the heat engulfs the surrounding air and distorts it. The screen mimics an earth shattering tremor, shrapnel courses through the air and the buildings attempt to crumple in a realistic manner. Every NPC in earshot turns towards the explosion, the frames per second drop, the computer churns, the fan increases its rotations. Yet amongst it all he can't focus, he's torn between the two screens, rapidly his eyes shift between the incoming combatants and every re-post of that YouTube link.]

posted April 30th 2017 11:22am

"A lot of you might know my husband, he goes by the name SandCastle128, but he's got a real name, it's Hal. For the last few years he's been creating a career for himself gaming online and back in February he was able to quit his job and do it full time. At first I was really proud of him, it's what he wanted and he made it all himself, but quickly it's become all consuming. You only know him through a screen, you don't know what this means for the rest of his life. It's eroding every other aspect of his life, he doesn't talk to me anymore, he wouldn't notice if I was out the house or not. So that's why I'm posting this on YouTube and sharing it on his live streams, it's the only way he's going to hear me. Stop or I'm leaving you. I can't live like this anymore."

April 30th 04:33pm

It's taken him about two hours to bother finding out what the link was all about. She's crying by the end, barely able to see where to click to turn off the recording. It was filmed in their bedroom six hours ago, he can see the alarm clock in the background. His computer tells him it's a Sunday, she could still be in the house. But instinctively he knows she's already gone, taking off his headset he can't hear a sound, no sobbing, no activity downstairs, no dog scratching at the door.

He walks downstairs, not drastically affected, in the back of his head he's still upstairs running through the last skirmish he conducted, thinking about how he could have done better and the men he left behind. There's a cup of milky tea on the kitchen counter with the first few spots of white mould beginning to form. He can't quite recollect whether he'd made it, or had she? He hasn't been in this part of the house since about 2am, she might have made it before leaving... how long does mould take to form?

Instinctively he makes another cup and returns to the game, somehow he feels it will present a solution.

May 4th 03:18am

Today, like yesterday and the day before, he's locked himself into a pattern of perpetual suicide. His kill to death ratio is a joke. Each respawn presents a single problem: how to end it all? Drop a grenade at his feet, count 3, 2, 1 and BANG. Wait 15 seconds, and he's back again in another identical body.

Maybe in his next life he'll drive a jeep off a bridge, drop from a plane, run into enemy fire or sink to the bottom of an ocean. Take his teammates with him or die alone, it doesn't matter too much either way. He takes little enjoyment in seeing his body rag-doll through the air, launched into flight from a pile of C4 charges.

On the first day of his ritualistic self-sacrifice his audience laughed. The montage of deaths, accompanied by his newly morose attitude, was comical, like Bill Murray in Groundhog Day. Watching his body crumble, collapse and vanish in increasingly obscure circumstances had a slapstick quality. Now on day 3 the joke is wearing thin.

posted May 5th 08:22pm

"Do it, just do it! Do IT, do IT, do IT!!!!"

[he's been chasing a noob round the spawn point for about 5 minutes, insisting that he team-kills him. Today he's been on a death-by-cop binge; every time he respawns he runs to the nearest teammate and goads them into shooting him. Sometimes they happily oblige, others don't want to mess up their score, and in the case of this noob, well he's confused.]

"Come on MAGGOT, shoot me, you Don't have it in YOU! Were you born stupid?"

[he inflects the manner of a army drill sergeant, borrowing heavily from Kubrick's Full Metal Jacket.]

posted May 5th 08:28pm

██████████ : I'm done with this, he's an a**

👍 23

reply ██████████ : I'd kill him

reply ██████████ : GAME OVER I say

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May 7th 04:45am

With his audience in decline he retracts from first-person-shooters, steps away from the community that has formed and fallen apart around him. Booting up an emulated version of The Sims he begins a new game, brings up the cheat menu, Ctrl+Shift+C, and enters:

rosebud

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...and on until he's accumulated enough simoleons. Next he builds a model of his house, walks his avatar upstairs to a small room. He sits himself by the computer then deletes the door.

