

= Diary of a Camper =

Diary of a Camper is a short 1996 American film made using id Software's 1996 first @-@ person shooter computer game Quake . It was created by United Ranger Films , then a subdivision of a popular group of computer game players , or clan , known as the Rangers . The film was first released over the Internet as a non @-@ interactive game demo file . The video is generally considered the first known example of machinima ? the art of using real @-@ time , virtual 3 @-@ D environments , often game engines , to create animated films . The story centers on a lone camper ( a player waiting in a strategic location instead of seeking active battle ) who faces five members of the Rangers clan in a deathmatch , a type of multiplayer game in which the goal is to kill as many opponents as possible .

Although players had previously recorded segments of gameplay , these were usually deathmatches or speedruns , attempts to complete a map as quickly as possible . Diary of a Camper was the first demo to contain a narrative with ( text @-@ based ) dialogue , instead of merely showing gameplay . Commentators have called the work primitive , but acknowledge its importance in establishing video games as a medium for filmmaking .

= = Synopsis = =

Diary of a Camper occurs entirely within the Quake map DM6 ( " The Dark Zone " ) . After exploring some of the area , the Rangers gather and decide to send two members , Sphinx and Pyoveli , to scout a room above . Shortly after they teleport into the room , the camper waiting there kills them both , as confirmed by in @-@ game text messages that appear on the screen . The remaining three Rangers ? ColdSun , ArchV , and an unidentified member ? realize their comrades ' fate and return fire from a distance , killing the camper . Examining the remains , they identify their foe as John Romero .

= = Precedent and new ground = =

Diary of a Camper is built on the ability to record gameplay , which appeared earlier in id Software's 1993 computer game Doom . Using this feature , players could efficiently record game events , rather than the rendered video itself , and later replay them in real @-@ time through the game engine . Doom 's successor , Quake , offered new opportunities for both multiplayer gameplay and customization , while preserving the demo recording ability . In the book Machinima , Kelland , Morris , and Lloyd stated that multiplayer games became popular , almost a sport , and demo files of matches were recorded and studied . Paul Marino , executive director of the Academy of Machinima Arts & Sciences ( AMAS ) , used a different analogy : " Players began to record deathmatches with a more cinematic flair .... [ T ] he viewpoint of the player became the viewpoint of a director . "

Well known for their playing skill and their ability to program game modifications , the Rangers conceived the idea to use Quake for filmmaking in August 1996 and released Diary of a Camper on October 26 , 1996 . The group 's new demo surprised the Quake community by exploiting the game differently . According to Henry Lowood , Diary of a Camper contains the action and gore of previous gameplay demos , but in the context of a simple story instead of the usual deathmatch . A BusinessWeek article compared the events of the film to those of a typical deathmatch . Like many of its predecessors , the demo was recorded in Quake 's networked multiplayer deathmatch mode , but " it marked the transition from sports footage to moviemaking . The players were choreographed like actors , ... delivering their lines as plain text .... " Lowood stated that " Diary of a Camper breaks with the demo movie as documented gameplay " because the spectator 's perspective is independent " from that of any player / actor ; the movie is not ' shot ' from the first @-@ person perspective of the shooter . " Lowood called the film a " transformation of competitive play to ... minimal theatrical play " , emphasized through the inclusion of references to gameplay , such as the camper .

Before Diary of a Camper 's release , Uwe Girlich , a German doctoral candidate , had documented

the Quake demo file format , in which " the player coordinates and the camera positions may be different " . He added that " for people with too much spare @-@ time Quake can replace a full 3D modelling system " . However , the Rangers developed Diary of a Camper before any demo @-@ editing software tools had been publicly released ; clan member Eric " ArchV " Fowler instead created his own tools to reposition the camera and to splice recorded footage . As with all of United Ranger Films ' productions , Heath " ColdSun " Brown wrote the story , and Matt " Unknown Soldier " Van Sickler was the director . In the release notes , Brown credits clan members Chris " Sphinx " Birke and Mute with helping Fowler with " movie packaging " .

Diary of a Camper and the films that it inspired were initially called " Quake movies " ; the term machinima was later coined in 1998 , in response to the increasing use of other game engines . There was initial hesitation to retroactively label Diary of a Camper the first machinima piece ; a Machinima.com article from February 2000 opened , " It 's kinda hard to pin down the first Machinima : things like the Doom speedruns , the Stunt Island stuff and the Demo Scene all compete for the title . However , it 's a lot easier to pin down the first piece of film made in a 3D game engine : Diary Of A Camper " . Marino states that the AMAS carefully defined machinima in 2002 as " animated filmmaking within a real @-@ time virtual 3 @-@ D environment " to separate machinima from its creative lineage . Separating machinima from the demoscene and earlier demo recordings , he defines Diary of a Camper as the first machinima work . Lowood also contrasts the film with earlier recordings of " documented gameplay " .

= = Reception = =

Despite Diary of a Camper 's importance in establishing machinima , commentators have criticized the film 's actual content . Marino called the plot " simple " ; likewise , Kelland , Morris , and Lloyd believed that " it wasn 't much of a story " , and Lowood wrote that " the plot offers little more than a brief sequence of inside jokes " . Among major Quake movie review sites , Roger Matthews of the Quake Movie Library called the film " not much more than a deathmatch with a camera " . On Psyk 's Popcorn Jungle , Paul Coates wrote , " This movie is dull . It is not very interesting . " Stephen Lum of The Cineplex criticized the film for its " weird humour " .

Although Quake movie critics found shortcomings in Diary of a Camper , they mentioned positive aspects , including the work 's novelty ; however , their final ratings varied . Matthews wrote that " the camera work was very nice and never once screwed up " , and Lum gave the film " a perfect 10 for Innovation / Originality because [ it ] started the Quake Movie craze " . Of the major Quake movie review sites , only The Cineplex gave Diary a good rating overall , 7 @.@ 5 out of 10 . Matthews and Coates rated the film 20 % , and 2 out of 10 , respectively . Later , Coates updated his review , saying , " I feel I overreacted at the fact that DoaC was old . It 's the first ever Quake movie . I have to give the Rangers massive credit for that .... But , by today 's standards , the rating seems to fit . "

Because of its significance , Diary of a Camper continues to be featured in machinima presentations . It was one of the first works to be included in the Machinima Archive , a collaboration among Stanford University , the Internet Archive , the AMAS , and machinima.com. In a 2005 event at Stanford University , the film was presented with later machinima works , such as Red vs. Blue . Likewise , the Australian Centre for the Moving Image included it in a 2006 machinima exhibit .