= Neil Druckmann =

Neil Druckmann (born December 5 , 1978) is an Israeli @-@ American writer , creative director and programmer for the video game developer Naughty Dog , known for his work in the video games The Last of Us and Uncharted 4 : A Thief 's End . He was born and raised until the age of 10 in Israel , where his experiences with entertainment would later influence his storytelling techniques . He studied computer science at Carnegie Mellon University , before searching for work in the video game industry .

Druckmann 's first video game work was as an intern at Naughty Dog . In 2004 , he became a programmer on Jak 3 and Jak X : Combat Racing , before becoming game designer for Uncharted : Drake 's Fortune and Uncharted 2 : Among Thieves . He was later chosen to lead development on The Last of Us as creative director , a role he continued during the development of Uncharted 4 : A Thief 's End . In addition , Druckmann has also written comic books . He worked on the motion comic Uncharted : Eye of Indra , prior to the creation of his own graphic novel A Second Chance at Sarah . He later co @-@ wrote The Last of Us : American Dreams with artist Faith Erin Hicks .

Druckmann has received high praise for his work on The Last of Us , receiving several awards and nominations for his contributions , including two BAFTA Awards , a DICE Award , and two Writers Guild of America Awards . His work on Uncharted 4 was also praised .

= = Early life = =

Druckmann was born in Israel on December 5 , 1978 , to Judy and Jerry Druckmann . At a young age , Druckmann 's older brother Emanuel showed him comic books , video games , and movies . These forms of entertainment , particularly video games by Sierra Entertainment and LucasArts , helped Druckmann to learn English . Druckmann became particularly interested in story @-@ telling , and wrote his own comic books . He moved to the United States with his family in 1989 . He attended middle school and high school in Miami , Florida , then studied criminology at the University of Florida .

Druckmann soon became a research assistant at Florida State University , while living in Tallahassee , Florida . He spent a year at the university working at the Visualization Lab within the School of Computational Science and Information Technology , beginning in July 2002 . During this time , he began developing the game Pink @-@ Bullet , for Linux and Microsoft Windows , with some friends . At one point , he wanted to be an animator , which required enlisting in art classes , but his parents forbade him from doing so . After taking a programming class , Druckmann realized that it was his preference , and began a Bachelor of Computer Science in December 2002 , which he completed the following year . Druckmann moved to Pittsburgh , where he attended Carnegie Mellon University ; in August 2003 , he began his Master 's degree in Entertainment Technology , which he earned in 2005 from the Entertainment Technology Center . In April 2004 , Druckmann developed the game Dikki Painguin in : TKO for the Third Reich for the Nintendo Entertainment System as a student at Carnegie Mellon , in collaboration with fellow student Allan Blomquist .

= = Career = =

At the Game Developers Conference , Druckmann met Naughty Dog co @-@ founder Jason Rubin . After Druckmann " bugged " Rubin , the latter gave him his business card . In 2004 , Druckmann joined Naughty Dog as a programming intern , before being promoted to a full @-@ time position as a gameplay programmer a few months later . During the development of Jak 3 (2004) and Jak X : Combat Racing (2005) , Druckmann continued to ask co @-@ president Evan Wells about joining the design team . Wells restrained from moving him to the design team , as he was originally employed as a programmer , but agreed to review Druckmann 's design work if he completed them after working hours . Following the development of Jak X , Wells concluded that Druckmann was skilled in the field of design , and gave him the role of game designer for Uncharted : Drake 's Fortune (2007) . In this position , he worked closely with Amy Hennig to construct the story of

Uncharted , before working on Uncharted 2 : Among Thieves (2009) as a lead game designer , becoming more involved with the core writing of the game . Druckmann also worked on the original design and story of Jak and Daxter : The Lost Frontier (2009) , prior to Naughty Dog 's abandonment of the game ; High Impact Games completed development .

 In 2009 , Druckmann worked on the motion comic Uncharted : Eye of Indra , as writer and director . A prequel to Drake 's Fortune , Eye of Indra tells the story of Nathan Drake prior to the events of the first game . Druckmann 's first graphic novel , A Second Chance at Sarah , was published by Ape Entertainment in February 2010 . With illustrations by artist Joysuke Wong , the novel relates Druckmann 's interest in traveling back in time to meet his wife at a younger age . " There 's something cute and poetic about that idea , " Druckmann explained . He felt that he shares many similarities with the novel 's protagonist Johnny , and that " a lot of Johnny 's flaws and fears are based on [his] own shortcomings " . The comic was originally released on February 24 , 2010 ; critics particularly praised Wong 's illustrations , as well as Druckmann 's writing and character development .

 Following the development of Uncharted 2 , Naughty Dog split into two teams to work on projects concurrently . With one team working on Uncharted 3 : Drake 's Deception (2011) , co @-@ presidents Evan Wells and Christophe Balestra chose Druckmann and Bruce Straley to lead development on a new game ; Druckmann was chosen for his determination and talent for design . Though they were originally set to develop a new game in the Jak and Daxter series , the team felt that they " weren 't doing service to the fans of [the] franchise " , and decided to create a new game , titled The Last of Us .

 When conceiving ideas for The Last of Us , Druckmann used a concept that he created as a student at Carnegie Mellon University . His idea was to merge the gameplay of Ico (2001) in a story set during a zombie apocalypse , like that of Night of the Living Dead (1968) , with a lead character similar to John Hartigan from Sin City (1991 ? 2000) . The lead character , a police officer , would be tasked with protecting a young girl ; however , due to the lead character 's heart condition , players would often assume control of the young girl , reversing the roles . He based The Last of Us on this concept , replacing the police officer with Joel , and naming the young girl Ellie . Prior to directing the game , Druckmann took acting classes in order to " talk to [the actors] in the same language " . The game was released on June 14 , 2013 to critical acclaim , with particular praise directed towards Druckmann 's work on the story . He earned numerous awards for his work on the game , including a BAFTA , a DICE Award , a Game Developers Choice Award , a Golden Joystick Award , and a Writers Guild of America Award .

 Druckmann later worked on the downloadable expansion pack The Last of Us : Left Behind , a prequel focusing on Ellie 's relationship with her friend Riley , which received critical acclaim . He earned additional accolades for his work on Left Behind , including a second BAFTA and Writers Guild of America Award . In particular , he was praised for writing a scene involving a kiss between two female characters , which was named a " breakthrough moment " for video games . He also co @-@ wrote the four @-@ issue comic book miniseries The Last of Us : American Dreams , with writer and artist Faith Erin Hicks . It was published by Dark Horse Comics , with the first issue released in April 2013 , and was lauded for Druckmann 's writing and character development , as well as Hicks ' simplistic illustrations .

 Following Hennig 's departure from Naughty Dog in March 2014 , it was announced that Druckmann and Straley were working on Uncharted 4 : A Thief 's End (2016) as creative director and game director , respectively . Initial reports claimed that Hennig was " forced out " of Naughty Dog by Druckmann and Straley , though co @-@ presidents Evan Wells and Christophe Balestra later denied this . Druckmann co @-@ wrote the story alongside Josh Scherr . The game was released on May 10 , 2016 to critical acclaim , with continued praise directed towards the story .

 = = Personal life = =

 Druckmann currently resides in Los Angeles , California with his wife Maya and daughter . He became a father during the development of The Last of Us ; his daughter was a " huge inspiration "

to him when writing the game . He found that the birth of his daughter reinforced his ideas about family , realizing he would " do anything " for her . Druckmann is Jewish , although found he regularly writes about " white , straight , Christian male " characters , encouraging him to instead create more diverse characters . Druckmann 's favorite video games include Monkey Island 2 : LeChuck 's Revenge (1991) , Ico , and Resident Evil 4 (2005) , and he is often inspired by character @-@ focused comics such as Preacher (1995 ? 2000) , and Y : The Last Man (2002 ? 2008) .

Works

Video games

Literature

Film and television

Awards and nominations