BLOOD DRIVE, coming this November from Sidhe (developer) and Activision (publisher), and available for XBOX 360 and Sony PlayStation 3, features a trifecta of themes that will have our gamers salivating: blood, cars, and zombies. We got a chance to speak with Lead Designer Chris Cervantes on some of the game's intricate details, the development team's inspiration and making it rain. Hit the jump to check it out!

FANGORIA: With everything I've read about BLOOD DRIVE, I can't help but think of CARMAGEDDON, which is often overlooked as one of history's more violent video games.

Is this a bit of an homage?

CHRIS CERVANTES: Two obvious game influences would have to be the CARMAGEDDON and TWISTED METAL franchises, although the intent was never to be a clone of either, or even an amalgam of the two. There were specific things about both those titles that the team really liked and we tried to make sure we looked at what worked and what didn't across each of those games as well as others in the car/vehicle combat arena.

Our directive and the direction of the initial pitch was "car combat with zombies." From there, some fundamental choices were made in terms of weapons, game-play and feel, and then we tried to push things as far as we could within the scope of the project and do our best to set BLOOD DRIVE apart and make it stand on its own. Truth be told, there aren't a lot of vehicle combat games out there. It's a relatively small genre and if people want to compare BLOOD DRIVE to the big two I mentioned up top… well, we'll take that as a compliment.

FANG: What influences did you draw from the world of pop-culture when designing the concept?

CERVANTES: You should see our wall of inspiration. Really, we have a wall, it's awesome! We

tried to hit as many of the standard zombie tropes as we could, based on movies and general pop culture. Personally, I'm a huge fan of ZOMBIELAND, SHAUN OF THE DEAD, DAWN OF THE DEAD and so on. I could babble about undead flicks for days, as well as the [books] ZOMBIE SURVIVAL GUIDE and of course WORLD WAR Z. It was really important to the team to capture the combination of horror and sometimes just absurdity that makes those films and books so great.

Once we felt like those bases were covered, we went to work on the fiction of the world. There were several different iterations of the history and back story for Las Ruletas and the Blood Drive Tournament. The goal was to get this functional, yet twisted vision of a world that had clawed its way back from a zombie apocalypse. All is not well, but it's just functional enough and people are just messed up in the head enough from all that's happened, that strapping a mini-gun to a car and running over zombies on a television show seems like a reasonable pastime.

FANG: What is it about the Sin City atmosphere that makes it such a hotbed for zombies and gruesome violence?

CERVANTES: Several different ideas for locations were floated around at the beginning of the project. When the pitch was originally written, the game was set in "Generic small town type A" but as the fiction grew and the idea of a Zombie Tourism industry and the televised Tournament evolved, an "unnamed casino city in the desert" seemed like a logical choice for this kind of lifestyle and sport to come about. Also neon lights are all win.

FANG: Does the game structure function as more of a racing game or a demolition-derby style smash-fest?

CERVANTES: The game has several different events, each with its own goal. At the end of the day though, it's never a bad thing to blow up another car, or to run over a zombie. So both of those remain the core of the game-play no matter what event you are playing— race, demo derby smash-fest as you put it, or one of the more unique modes. On a personal level, I'm terrible at racing games so I wanted to make sure we had race modes that I could win by blowing up the other drivers.

FANG: What can you tell us about the game-play mechanics in the way of zombie deaths and the physics behind them? Are we looking at a blizzard of blood and body parts?

CERVANTES: I don't know about a blizzard per se, but all of the standard zombies (AKA "Shamblers") will rag-doll if you hit them hard enough with your vehicle or weapons fire, as well as dismember, once again based on what they are hit with. It's pretty easy to "make it rain", only with body parts instead of cash. The special zombies take a bit more firepower or force to send flying or to rag-doll them, bit its quite satisfying sending one of the Behemoths flying.

FANG: What types of customization can players expect for their vehicles?

CERVANTES: The game-play philosophy behind Blood Drive was a very arcade-y, game show-y feel. We didn't want players to have to worry about spending time between events and matches fiddling with ammo counts, weapon placement and the like. BLOOD DRIVE is all about constant action.

Each driver has a favorite weapon they will spawn with that is specific to the character/vehicle chosen. Once in game however, players will be able to pick up any weapon they find throughout the various arenas. Very fast paced, run-and-gun (drive and shoot?) FPS style. Out of ammo?

Go run over another weapon pick-up and you're good to go. On top of that, each car also has a unique special attack or Rage Power. These powers are fueled by killing zombies and each vehicle's is unique and reflects the personality of its driver.

In addition to Weapons and Rage Powers, there are also a host of other power-ups and pickups placed in the arenas; repair kits, speed boost and other super power ups; all of the standard stuff. We also have a load out system that allows players to assign different sets of perks to their vehicle at the beginning of each match. The perks do all kinds of nifty stuff; everything from doubling your ammunition capacity, to upgrading the speed and acceleration of your car, to damage boosts and all kinds of other car and zombie splattering goodies!

FANG: Are there varying modes of game-play, or is it all-out vehicular zombie-slaughter mayhem?

CERVANTES: There are seven different event types in the single player Tournament; obviously all of them revolve around killing cars and zombies in some way or another to progress through the tournament and be crowned the Blood Drive Champion. The Challenge mode of the game has a set of, well, challenges that are all based on the various event types. Some are score based, others time based, and all of them will post the player ranks to online leader boards.

FANG: How was the game's soundtrack developed?

CERVANTES: We are fortunate enough to have our own personal audio/sound/music ninja, Jeramiah Ross. He worked with a New Zealand composer to create the custom tracks for the game, plus he scoured lots of music libraries looking for the wide variety of music to fit the mood and setting of the game as well as the personality of the characters. Each character has a

custom playlist that is specific to them, players will have the option of letting that playlist rock, or switch to the full track list that will cycle through all of the songs in the game. For sound effects, Jeramiah created many in our in-house studio, but also worked with the foley artists at Peter Jackson's Park Road Post post-production facility to create the basic zombie-crunching sounds and some of the car-crunching metal sounds. Car engines and lots of other car sounds were created by Greg Hill of Soundwave Concepts in Melbourne, Australia.

FANG: Can you tell us a bit about the multi-player options?

CERVANTES: The game supports four-player multiplayer. All the modes are free-for-all style. Yhere are no teams in BLOOD DRIVE, it's every driver for him or herself.

Players will be able to set up multiplayer games and choose which events they want to play. Once in game, the events will cycle through the chosen list. Players will be able to drop in and out at any time, so there's never a need to exit out and sit in a lobby and wait for people to show up. Just start the game and people can jump in as they like.

BLOOD DRIVE is out today for XBOX 360 and Sony PlayStation 3.

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