Shadowrun October Q&A Part II

SALLY: Okay, scootch a little closer again.

MITCH: I mean I don't really know how… other than if I lean over.

SALLY: Okay, you're good. You're good—leaning's good.

MITCH: Oh wait, I can do this (lowers chair)… but I don't wanna—oh wait, my contract specifically states that I can never be lower than Weisman.

ALL: [laughter]

MITCH: This is bullshit.

SALLY: Okay, um… there were just so many great questions that we thought we'd make another part to this video. And these are more specific questions, so if you didn't get yours answered, stay tuned…it might happen now!

MITCH: Yeah!

JORDAN: In other words, welcome to part two!

SALLY: Yeah, Q&A part two part two!

JORDAN: Part two part two! Oooh, ooh wait a minute…

MITCH: Wow, that's like Chuck Woolery… two minutes and two seconds!

SALLY: [laughter] And they're wearing fancy collared shirts.

MITCH: Yes, it's a special day for us.

SALLY: Yeah, you should see Mitch's shoes.

JORDAN: Those are nice!

SALLY: I know, aren't they? Yeah, you gotta show 'em now.

MITCH: [shoes his loafers]

SALLY: Awww. Look at that.

MITCH: [sheepishly] It's just a shoe… Anyway I had to go to court today… [dismissive wave]

SALLY: [laughter] That's for another time…

MITCH: Yep.

JORDAN: Okay!

MITCH: We're just all happy that I'm here.

JORDAN: Remember that an indictment is not a conviction.

MITCH: That's right. [laughter]

JORDAN: That's all we're sayin', okay?

MITCH: Can we get to the questions?

SALLY: Yeah I think we can do that.

MITCH: Are there questions? Cuz… you said there were a whole bunch that spilled over into today.

SALLY: Mmmhmm.

MITCH: Chop chop. I've gotta game to make.

SALLY: Okay. Cool, well I'm just gonna go right into it then. How will the quest difficulty grow as the runners get more karma? Is the main storyline difficulty gonna be greater for play who did a lot of sidequesting? And what will be the impact of leveling on player-designed runs?

MITCH: Okay, so really this is just about difficulty ramp and leveling.

SALLY: Yeah.

MITCH: Okay great! Jordan. Take this one.

JORDAN: Yeah. In other words, "Senator, no comment." Um, so yes, the… right now we're actually looking into kind of how side questing comes off of the main plot. And karma… and for the people who don't know, when you earn karma that's how you advance your character. You spend karma to add skills and attributes to your character. Actually, within this main game campaign itself, uh we're actually not too afraid of that. In terms of how that's gonna work—

MITCH: I mean, we'll do it the way we always have. You know.

JORDAN: Yeah, I mean it's just going to be governed—they'll be some governors around it so you can make sure you don't get too far out of balance with the campaign itself. Really, the meta one is the place that we've been spending more time thinking about, which is when a character is going in between, let's say, the Seattle campaign and a campaign created by a user. How does karma work back and forth in between that… how do you set so that if I'm creating a particular campaign or story as a user and I'm trying to bracket it to say it's for characters—

MITCH: How do I know that this is okay for my character, and we go, as we do all the time, we go right back to old school role playing for our inspiration.

JORDAN: Yeah so back in the day when you would publish an adventure for a game you would write on the cover say for what level characters that adventure is for, so we're gonna—

MITCH: White Plume Mountain.

JORDAN: [laughter] We're gonna—oh that's back in the day—we're gonna embrace that same concept, so when a gamemaster (which is what we're calling users who create campaigns and their own stories) creates a campaign they will also establish what the right karma range is. And we'll do the same on ours as well, so that you'll be able to make sure that you're bringing characters into stuff that is appropriately challenging.

MITCH: You need to be this high—

JORDAN: To ride this ride. Exactly right.

SALLY: Cool. All right so one potential player wants to know, "Will I be able to make a troll shaman with cyberware? If so, what overlays will she have access to?"

MITCH: Oh, okay yeah, good question.

JORDAN: Well first off I like that it's a she. That was good.

MITCH: Yeah that was very slick. Very 21st Century. We embrace you.

JORDAN: Totally. So um, yeah.

MITCH: Well first of all, you will be able to combine any race with any profession, any focus, so step one.

JORDAN: Correct.

SALLY: Well, any of the available ones that we've talked about.

MITCH AND JORDAN: Right.

JORDAN: Yes, the combination that was asked about will totally exist. Now, the question is, can you have more than one profession view in the realities of the system that we've been talking about. And what we've come to is that yes, you can grow up to two. And that that second view is enabled by hitting a certain skill plateau. In some cases it'll be gear-related, in some cases it's a skill plateau. We still don't know exactly when or where those—

SALLY: [obnoxiously loud coughing]

MITCH AND JORDAN: Are you okay?

SALLY: Sorry, yeah!

MITCH: We're gonna power through.

JORDAN: The entire Internet, let's all send Sally some psychic energy—

SALLY: [coughing evermore]

JORDAN: Because she's going on vacation soon, she needs to feel better before she goes, okay? Come on everyone, hands out. Psychic energy.

MITCH: I feel bad for everybody on the airplane for you.

MITCH AND JORDAN: Put your fingers on the screen, give her psychic energy!

SALLY: [cough/laughter hybrid] Clap if you believe in healthy Sally.

MITCH: So now we were on overlays, and when you'll see them. So you're gonna start with one. Everybody will start with one. And then as you grow up and you hit sort of a trigger point, our current thinking is that you'll have the option of adding a second one. But no more than a second one.

JORDAN: That's correct.

MITCH: And that is… a work in progress.

JORDAN: Yeah. And a much longer answer than you probably wanted. But it's okay because it got Sally psychic energy.

SALLY: Yay!

MITCH: Oh, and can a shaman have cyberware? The answer is yes.

JORDAN: Yes. So—

MITCH: Yes but he'd take a karmic hit—sorry, essence hit.

JORDAN: Yeah, exactly right, you take essence hits, which of course will have impact on your shaman abilities.

SALLY: Cool, okay so now we have a mage question. Are mages gonna be able to park themselves in a corner and astrally project fully? Uh would doing so switch to an astral view? And could they then go scouting out ahead into different areas so that runners don't know what to expect?

MITCH: That sounds cool, we should do that in a sequel.

JORDAN: Yeah, because we're not doing that in this one.

SALLY: Another question is, is there gonna be a Shadowrun Returns 2?

JORDAN: [laughter]

MITCH: It's actually Shadowrun Double-Secret Returns.

JORDAN: I thought we were going with Shadowrun Returns Again?

SALLY: Shadowrun Returns Returns.

MITCH: You are a visionary.

JORDAN: Bottom line, we are actually not going to have astral projection in this game.

SALLY: So it's like out of scope.

JORDAN: Yeah. The mages are going to be able to do all sorts of totally cool things, throwing spells and looking at auras and so on—[to Mitch] or did that go to shamans?

MITCH: We should actually address that right now. Because we said this at PAX, and when we talked in person with people, but it's worth talking about really fast because we needed to better differentiate from Shadowrun Returns gameplay point of view, shaman and mages. And Jordan will tell you about that right now.

JORDAN: So what we did is, as Mitch said, we felt that for the game, for the CRPG, we needed a little bit more kind of clear lines that you can get away with in a real gamemaster RPG. And so we wanted to differentiate between the mages and the shaman. So the mages get all of the hermetic magic. So they're going to be able to have the big spellbooks, cast all those spells from the books. They're going to be focused on energy sources, the equivalent of laylines, so that when they position themselves on the laylines, they're able to cast their spells at low mana costs. The shaman on the other hand become the sole denizens of spirits. So they will be the ones who will be conjuring spirits from things that they find in environments, uh, water, earth, so on—

MITCH: Oh wait, you know what we get asked sometimes in person? Will there be toxic spirits in the game.

JORDAN: And Mitch, what do we answer?

MITCH: Uh, we answer yes!

JORDAN: Yes!

MITCH: There will be toxic spirits in the game. And by the way, we got some pretty cool art concepts that we're looking at… I think tomorrow for that, so…

JORDAN: Yeah, we're excited to see what they come up with. Uh anyway so yeah, shaman are very focused, or exclusively focused on the conjuring, manipulating, and imagining of the spirits, and all the different things that they can conjure spirits from. Uh, the thing I'm embarrassed I can't remember is which one we gave the ability to read the karma, the essence of the other characters.

MITCH: I'm pretty sure that's the mage.

JORDAN: Yeah. TBD we'll look it up.

MITCH: I mean yeah let's face it, next week it's gonna get changed up as we get it on screen.

JORDAN: Yeah, but we wanna make sure that we divvied up all the cool stuff between the two—

MITCH: Mulvihill will keep us honest.

JORDAN: He does so.

MITCH: Yes.

SALLY: Is weapon customization gonna be available?

MITCH AND JORDAN: No.

MITCH: But, you'll be able to buy different weapons that are different versions of a weapon. So for example, if you got a FNHAR, you could get that with a scope. You could get an FNHAR with a muzzle suppressor or a recoil suppressor—that kind of thing. But they'll each be separate objects. We're not going to mix and match things, just as we're starting to say more regularly, [to Jordan] and now that you're saying it more regularly, it makes me sleep easier. That's out of scope. We're past the point where "what if" is happening and now we're at 'we're making this game this way.'

JORDAN: Yeah just, you know, the calendar clicks on, and so yeah we'd love to have kind of a crafting kind of system where you mix and match different pieces together.

MITCH: Oh yeah, that'd be great.

JORDAN: Yeah just… future, future versions. Not this first one.

SALLY: Cool, okay. Um so just, some stuff about this version and how it's gonna be compatible with various machines.

MITCH: Okay.

SALLY: Um, will the PC be like… improved, or will it be like, tablet version but bigger?

MITCH: Oh, okay. Ah, I shouldn't speak first because then [to Jordan] you keep looking at me like 'anser the damn question!'

JORDAN: No! See you're the one they can throw stuff at.

MITCH: Thanks for that. Well first of all, we will tailor the user interface to the different platform or machine you're one.

JORDAN: Yeah.

MITCH: So you know touch and mouse are two different things. So, those things will be different, and also what you see on screen will be slightly different on a smaller tablet than it will be on the PC. So the gameplay won't change, but your field of view will likely change a little bit. But we want to make sure that the gameplay is such that that's not an advantage for PC users. Nah, the good thing about an advantage also—eh, I suppose it could be—because it's not—this version is not a multiplayer game.

JORDAN: Exactly, and that's one of the things that… if indeed this was a multiplayer, then we would be…

MITCH: Jumping through hoops.

JORDAN: You'd have to lock to the lowest common denominator, but because it's exclusively, at the moment, a solo play game, right now, you can get larger field of view on the PC than you can on the tablet, just because the resolution of the screens are larger. Uh and right now it's not bothering us, it's—

MITCH: No I mean we're playing it on both so, whatever.

SALLY: Is there any chance that it's gonna be on smartphones?

JORDAN: Um, you know, I wouldn't… at the moment the safest thing to say is no. It's not that it won't run, we just don't really think that it's gonna be fun.

MITCH: Yeah, it's a tactical game where I'm running around with maybe four characters and I'm like [imitates gaming on a humorously tiny screen]. I don't think so.

JORDAN: They're too small, you can't see 'em, you can't manipulate it right, it's… you have to be scrolling like crazy…

MITCH: It's a different play pattern too. It's not like, you know I'm waiting for the bus and I'll play a little Angry Birds or something.

JORDAN: No, it's…

MITCH: It's more of a focused game, I want to sit down with my time.

JORDAN: We're trying to make it work so that you can get in and out of it with shorter cycles so that you can you know, play more regularly, and not just—

MITCH: But that has nothing to do with the tablet. That's just our approach to the game.

JORDAN: Yeah, absolutely. It's not like you have to reserve a whole weekend to play it, but it's not, as Mitch said, it's not like a three minute, you know, while you're waiting for the bus kinda thing. So I think both from a form factor and kind of an immersion factor, we don't really think it makes sense on the phone.

MITCH: Neither factor.

JORDAN: Neither? Neither [pronounces it differently]. Let's call the whole thing off.

SALLY: Yeah, okay, speaking of which, same for the video. That's pretty much it.

MITCH: Really? Okay.

SALLY: Oh, OH! No it's not!

MITCH: Oh, what?

SALLY: Um, the last question I wanted to ask was um you know a bunch of people on the internet have been asking about the Orks and you know, their teeth.

MITCH: Oh you mean like fangs vs. tusks and—

SALLY: Yeah, or like yeah, stuff like that.

MITCH: Or Orks and Trolls.

SALLY: Uh huh!

MITCH: Okay.

SALLY: So yeah if you guys could just address that, I'm sure that would make a lot of people happy.

MITCH: Let's start with, we like 'em!

JORDAN: Yeah! I mean, you know, Shadowrun has been illustrated by literally thousands of artists over the years, and as a result there are thousands of different visions of what the characters and what the environments and what the metahuman races look like, and, you know, each time you do your own thing—what you like. I, personally, from the very beginning, have always liked a little more monstrous twist on the Orks and Trolls that are in the game.

MITCH: Yeah you've been very consistent.

JORDAN: So I've kindof been pushing our artists to you know, to bring them to life, which I love what they've done. But one of the things we've embraced in the game from the beginning is that this isn't just about my vision or our vision of Shadowrun. What we're trying to do is get the tools out there for people to create their Shadowrun and their stories. And so there is, you know, well, we're not ready to go into great detail yet, but we will in a future update.

MITCH: [mysteriously] There is room for customization.

JORDAN: Yes. That's how we'll say it so far. Um, so you know, I like mine, you'll like yours!

MITCH: Yeah.

SALLY: Do you guys have anything else to say?

MITCH: It was great to spend some more time with you.

JORDAN: Yeah, I think we should go back to the fireside chat one day. I liked that. That was a fun one. Maybe next time we'll do a fireside chat. And until then, thank you for all your continued support, and um again the great collaborative nature…

MITCH: And thanks for all the questions. You know, obviously we're trying to answer as many as we can. We gotta get back to work but, you know, there's more.

JORDAN: Yeah. But thanks again, we're uh, we're pluggin' away.