

We Gamers are a people used to hardship and oppression. Everywhere we go we encounter casual discrimination and harassment. We are seen as socially inept losers by some and violent outcasts by others. We are insulted and looked down upon by all in the general public. We have grown to expect this kind of treatment though. The insults hurled our way hurt, but they do not break us. The accusations dent but do not destroy our built up armor. Our shared mutual hardship has instead fostered a sense of community amongst us. We know all too well that we live in a society, but it does not stop us from being who we are. Interior struggles and tension exist, but in moments of crises this community can come together and defend what little it is has from those who wish to further reduce our social standing, and be a shining light to others. It is a moment like this that I intend to write about now, so that future generations of Gamers may look back and see that we are strong as a group, and that despite what society tells us, we have value.

At the onset of this virus, I was admittedly not worried. I initially did not believe a quarantine would occur, I didn't believe that the virus would spread like it has. Even if it did, I did not fear. I didn't feel my life would be impacted to any major extent. My daily routine would remain the same. Wake up, practice my edge guarding with Captain Falcon in Smash Ultimate, and get some practice in with Gannondorf on roll reads. Then I would jump into a Call of Duty session with my boys, and I would continue trying to unlock the crossbow. I would then play some Battlefield 4 and enjoy suicide bombing enemy tanks and assault vehicles. I would get clips, and share them with my brother. After that, I would play my franchise game in Madden, and finally conclude my day by exploring Breath of the Wild, specifically the deserts around the Gerudo city. As a gamer, I am used to the rigid routine that my lifestyle requires. None of these purists would be hindered in any way by the outbreak of COVID. The people affected would be the very Chads who are at the forefront of the oppression we Gamers face. They would lose their precious sports leagues, their gyms would shut down, and they would be unable to go out with their girlfriends. The same girlfriends who refuse to give us Gamers a chance, only because of their preconceived, Hollywood influenced ideas of attractiveness and beauty.

These were my initial thoughts, and obviously they were wrong on all fronts. The virus spread rapidly across the world, and almost as rapidly a panic spread across the populace. The sports leagues did shut down, as did the gyms, and the Chads were unable to take their girlfriends out. But an additional, unforeseen consequence transpired. The Chads, when their lifestyle was altered by the virus, quickly took on ours. They stayed in, they forsaked the gym and their vanity fueled weight lifting for Smash, they no longer went to frat keggers, they instead gathered for gaming sessions. This was a major issue for us true, pure gamers. In what seemed like an instant, our pregame lobbies, long seen as a place where our culture could exist and flourish unmolested, were now inundated by the most cruel of our oppressors. Their presence hampered our ability to be ourselves, our ability to game. Within the first week of the quarantine, the unthinkable happened. Xbox live crashed. It was down for hours, and in that time, all was black. The misery I felt was nearly unmeasurable. It was one of the darkest periods of my life to date.

This overload of online gaming servers continued on, and for a week that felt like an eternity, it continued. Every day the only respite I had ever known from society's wrath was disrupted. All seemed lost, and indeed it looked like the Gamer people had met an obstacle they could not simply endure, a

blow that could not be absorbed. That was until a brave pair of gentlemen Gamers stood up, and showed all of the Gamer people that all was not lost. These heroes were Charlie White, also known as penguinz0, Cr1tikal, The Soggy Slopster, Big Papa Moist, MoistCr1tikal, and the Slapper, and Alpharad, a YouTuber whose real name I do not know. These two saviors of the Gamer people announced that they would be sponsoring a \$10,000 Smash Ultimate tournament to be streamed on Twitch. I cannot put into words the feelings of ecstasy I felt when I saw White's face on YouTube, announcing the tournament. White is a leader in the Gamer community. To the non-gaming public he may be better known as the poet Genghis Swan, or as the star of The Hunger Games, or as the lead song writer and vocalist for the band The Gentlemen. On that day, he uplifted a people. No longer would the Gamer people be unable to express who they are. The stream happened, and it was glorious, a triumph of the human spirit in the face of unconquerable odds. Two men, from the bottoms of their hearts, tapped into their own personal funds and decided not to use this money on worldly pleasures, but instead opted to use that money to unite and inspire a disenfranchised community.

To me, this story is an example of people coming together in a time of crises and creating something good. It was an example of what people can do when they spurn selfishness in favor of selflessness, what can be accomplished by a few to benefit the many. That I feel is one thing that has stood out in this time plagued by coronavirus, public panic, and supply hoarding. Despite all the negative going on in the world today, it only takes a few to make a positive difference. It took only 2 men to offer a respite, however brief, to the world. As I am writing this, we are still in the midst of this outbreak, with many in the news saying the worst is to come. But instead of looking ahead with fear and dread, I can look ahead with hope and optimism, knowing that anybody from any walk of life can be a light in the darkness for the larger populace. It made me realize that we all as individuals have the potential to rise above the panic of the time and do something good. To use a Gamer term, the moral of this story is that it only takes one person to do something "freakin epic" that helps the world.