

[00:00:00.730] - Nathan

Hello. Hello. It has been a hell of a week for me, but welcome to Nonsense and Noise, a podcast about the queer pop culture media experience. I'm your host, Nathan Kato, and I, as you can tell from that intro, I'm tired. It has been a long week for me. So I'm kind of new at my job.

[00:00:25.390] - Nathan

I started at this place back in May, so it's been about five months officially, and I'm kind of being thrown right into the fire with stuff that I'm working on. I kind of know what I'm doing. I also kind of don't know what I'm doing, so there's just been a lot of stress, and my current boss goes out on maternity leave in exactly a week. And the person that I will be reporting to, which was the person who hired me. They're helpful, but also, they're the type of person who you get into a conversation with, and you realize that they haven't helped you at all.

[00:01:06.730] - Nathan

So I need to really do some digging to make sure that all my conversations with them are fruitful. And I get what I need out of them, which is really exhausting. I do kind of miss the days where I could ask people and get a straight answer instead of like this whole song and dance, but, oh, well, that's my life now. But otherwise I am excited. Today is the day when Metroid Dread is released. I am planning on streaming that on Twitch whenever I get my copy of that, and I did not pay Game Stop extra money to get it on the day of release.

[00:01:49.570] - Nathan

So I'm most likely getting it sometime next week. So if you follow me on Twitter, look for tweets that are announcing that I'm going live on Twitch and come hang out. Come watch me scream in space and get demolished by the E.M.M.I. as they seek to end my entire existence. So that kind of leads me into the next segment, which is a pop culture update. So as I mentioned, Metroid Dread was released today.

[00:02:23.350] - Nathan

I'm super excited about that. Not sure how much I can really talk about that in terms of how you experience that as a queer person, but it's always fun to be gay in space and scream in space, especially when there's a giant robot following you. But we'll see more and Samus is a legendary icon. The next piece of news, which isn't really news at this point. The Mario movie is supposedly coming to theaters next year during the holiday season. Nintendo partnered up with Illumination to make a Mario movie, and I'm sure everyone has seen the casting for the voices, very star-studded cast, and everyone is. I don't think anyone is happy with the fact that Chris Pratt is the voice of Mario. I think it would be very funny if

the entire voice cast sort of like everybody was fine for their roles. And then Chris Pratt just does a terrible job as Mario because I don't know, he doesn't really have any voice acting skills.

[00:03:32.950] - Nathan

When I learned that he was in the Lego movie while watching the Lego movie, I was like, oh, yeah, of course, that's Chris Pratt.

[00:03:39.130] - Nathan

He's just talking. The other funny take that my friend and I had was for Seth Rogen voicing Donkey Kong. If he just did the Seth Rogen voice and also was the only character that was not animated, that would be really funny. It would probably make the movie more enjoyable. Yeah.

[00:04:01.370] - Nathan

So the Mario movie is a thing. The other positive or more positive news that came out of the Nintendo Direct at the end of September was Bayonetta Three. We're finally getting Bayonetta Three. I personally have not played the earlier games yet, but I do intend on doing that. I have a large catalog of games that I want to get through, and so I can actually enjoy Bayonetta Three when it comes out.

[00:04:27.290] - Nathan

So I guess this means I should probably play Bayonetta One and Two, but Bayonetta Three is supposed to come out next year. I know many people were eagerly awaiting it. The trailer itself was pretty fun. They teased Astral Chain, which really sent me over the edge. I'm not done with Astral Chain yet, but one of the mascots showed up and I was like, oh my gosh, are they doing an Astral Chain sequel, which would be really cool.

[00:04:53.450] - Nathan

Astral Chain is a really awesome game that is very genre defying. And I think maybe one day I will talk about Astral Chain on here. So Bayonetta Three is coming out. And then the last piece of pop culture news to cover is Bretman Rock being on the cover of Playboy. So we all know what Playboy is.

[00:05:16.310] - Nathan

Not everybody might know who Bretman Rock is, so he is an AAPI or Asian American Pacific Islander model/influencer. I've seen him on Instagram before. I don't really follow him, but he's also openly gay, and he's the first openly gay male model on the cover of Playboy. And this is pretty cool. I'm happy that he's the first openly gay male model on the cover of Playboy, like, I'd rather it be him instead of some white twink.

[00:05:50.450] - Nathan

But I think the complicated part about that, especially, like my own feelings about it. I'm kind of torn about it just because Playboy is a magazine that kind of, the whole point of it is to be sexy, and really upholds the objectification of women because it's run by men. And so it just feels really weird to me that Bretman Rock is the first gay man on the cover of Playboy because there are a lot of stereotypes that gay Asian American men face, like, specifically sexually. So there's a lot of fetishization, basically, any of the fetishization that Asian women face, like gay Asian men face as well.

[00:06:39.230] - Nathan

So there's the stereotypes of being submissive and a bottom and just basically a receptacle for other men. So that's kind of like the grain of salt that I took the Bretman Rock Playboy cover with. It's hard, because on one hand, like I said, I'm very happy that it's not some white dude like a white gay man as the first gay male cover model for Playboy. But on the other hand, there's just so much that the gay community has to fix in terms of just fetishizing Asians. And just like society has to fix, like white society has to fix in terms of just like fetishizing Asians.

[00:07:26.690] - Nathan

So yeah, that's pretty complex.

[00:07:30.530] - Nathan

And I have no real way to pivot into this, but we're going to just take a hard left into now the main content of the episode. We're still covering Shang-Chi and talking about that because I have not yet exhausted all the topics that I want to talk about. This week's episode is talking about fight choreography, martial arts and everything. So the martial arts actually themselves tie quite tightly back into the themes.

[00:08:01.010] - Nathan

So Wenwu is, as a refresher, Shang-Chi's dad and is a very forceful fighter, very strong, and he will use force to get what he wants. At the beginning of the movie, we see him single handedly demolish an army with the Ten Rings, and he fights using Kung Fu or gongfu. It's very aggressive, and he fights specifically using the Black Tiger Style of gongfu. And that means- the Black Tiger Style is characterized by a lot of like aggression, and it's one of the most powerful gongfu forms. So that is very fitting for Wenwu's character.

[00:08:48.650] - Nathan

And then, on the other hand, you have Yingli who's Shang-Chi's mom and she uses baguazhang, which is very gentle, very gentle style and mostly focuses on redirection of energy, kind of similar to the Japanese martial art Aikido, which is more focused on taking energy from your opponent and redirecting it either to protect yourself or to send it back at your opponent. So in addition to the martial arts, there is a lot of reference to other media that Shang-Chi uses to make a point. So the opening scene in the Bamboo Grove between Wenwu and Yingli where they're first initially fighting that is highly reminiscent of the House Flying Daggers and House Flying Daggers is interesting because it is a Kung Fu movie, but it's also like the directors specifically stated that it's actually more of a love story.

[00:09:56.150] - Nathan

So that was interesting in that I don't know. I was kind of focused on more of the fight itself, and I was excited by the choreography it was very dynamic.

[00:10:05.510] - Nathan

The colors are bright, and you also have a little bit of some mysticism going on with how Yingli is using her martial art to fight against Wenwu and not really hurt him and just more or less protect herself as well as the entrance to Ta Lo. But yeah, it was interesting that pretty much everything about that Bamboo Grove scene is a nod to House of Flying Daggers, so it's very interesting that I think that was a really good backdrop to use for painting and establishing the romance between Wenwu and Yingli. So that was an important part.

[00:10:47.810] - Nathan

But then also the other, I guess, more prominent- it felt media reference in all of the choreography, all the martial arts and everything was really Avatar. Avatar, the Last Airbender, not Avatar Blue People, as I mentioned with my friend Bryn in episode two, I don't think Avatar Blue People had any sort of cultural impact there's, apparently like Pandora, which is the Blue People world, but there's like a Pandora section at Disney World, apparently, or something like that.

[00:11:22.970] - Nathan

I don't even know. I just don't care about that piece of media. It was cool. The special effects were quite good, but it was kind of just like we did some space colonization, and this one person kind of decides to be like, hey, so what we're doing might actually be bad. Let's not do that.

[00:11:45.530] - Nathan

And then I don't know. It's like Pocahontas with Blue People, but also worse, because the guy essentially isn't... He's not part of the Blue People, but he puts on- there's a lot to unpack in Avatar, but either way,

there is no cultural impact because Avatar almost instantly faded from public consciousness, even though we're supposedly getting 20 million more Avatar movies, which doesn't make any sense. But yes, Avatar the Last Airbender! Sorry, that was a long digression there.

[00:12:19.730] - Nathan

So once again, the two major martial arts forms that show up in Shang-Chi are gongfu and baguazhang, and these actually show up in Avatar the Last Airbender as well. Gongfu shows up in terms of fire bending. And I don't remember if Avatar uses specifically Black Tiger, but I think they used Northern Shaolin gongfu as the model for fire bending. But then again, Northern Shaolin style is very broad, but either way, it carries a lot of the same connotations as it does in the movie, where it's very forceful.

[00:13:04.310] - Nathan

And I know that when you're watching Avatar for the first two out of three chapters... Or not chapters.

[00:13:14.030] - Nathan

But like overall, seasons of Avatar, fire bending is seen as very aggressive, and it comes from a place of anger. And even though Iroh tries to be like, hey, focus on the breath and everything. You see a lot of that power coming from anger, which I think is a very interesting tie to Shang-Chi and how both Shang-Chi and also Wenwu use and also Xialing use gongfu, they're very aggressive and at least okay. The only time when it's used in self defense is really like when Shang-Chi is fighting for his life on the bus.

[00:13:51.710] - Nathan

And then also there's the fight between Shang-Chi and Xialing and the Golden Daggers Club.

[00:13:57.650] - Nathan

But other than that, even during Shang-Chi's fight with Xialing at the Golden Daggers, Xialing is pissed, and she doesn't really give him a chance to do anything. So there's that and then also anytime that Shang-Chi is fighting his father. Obviously those were some quite heated blows that took the place of dialogue in terms of like, this is a conversation that's going on. And the two are obviously not happy with each other. Like Wenwu thinks that Shang-Chi is going to assume his rightful position and Shang-Chi is like, hey, I don't really want to be the leader of an assassin organization.

[00:14:41.030] - Nathan

I killed a man and didn't go so well. I ran away from home and I made the dumbest civil, not the dumbest, but like the silliest civilian name because I was like, yeah, my name is Shang-Chi, but I'm going to go by Shaun. It's fine. So yeah, gongfu and anger and force. And just like this destructiveness of that style really

comes through a lot in how the movie handles that style. And also Interestingly enough, gongfu is actually like a really big broad style of martial arts. And so there are lots of different sub styles that come off of it. So you've got Northern Shaolin style, and then you've also got Southern Shaolin style. And under that large category of Southern Shaolin, there's also different styles under there.

[00:15:38.570] - Nathan

And one- I think it would have been interesting if instead of tiger style gongfu, if Wenwu had used Hung Gar, which is or Hong Jia- I'm butchering the Cantonese pronunciation, Hong Jia is the Mandarin pronunciation of those characters. But it's another style of gongfu, and that course matches up with Earth bending from Avatar. And I'm sure folks remember that Earth bending in Avatar is kind of slow, but it's ultimately pretty powerful. And it would have been interesting to see if Wenwu had used that instead of the Black Tiger style, just because I think it's very fitting because Black Tiger is very aggressive and fast and powerful and it doesn't really match up with the characteristics of Hung Gar.

[00:16:31.170] - Nathan

So ultimately it makes sense.

[00:16:33.210] - Nathan

But it would have been really cool to see that sort of dialogue happening. And I think it would have been cool to see more martial arts styles in the movie. But ultimately we see these two, and I mean, they do make a pretty good dialogue and sort of counterpoint between each other. So that is gongfu and fire bending. And the other style that we see in Shang-Chi is baguazhang. Baguazhang is also known as circle walking, and as we've seen a lot more gentle than gongfu and correspondingly, this actually matches up with the form that air bonding- airbending was modeled off of.

[00:17:20.010] - Nathan

This is actually most apparent to me when I believe there's a scene where Yingli kind of takes a step and balances basically on one foot while leaning backwards. And if you watch the opening to The Legend of Korra, you actually see Aang do that move in the opening. I believe Tenzin does that at some point as well. But you see that move and when Yingli did that, I was like, oh, this is definitely air bending, and it's also very interesting to see how much that was mentioned and sort of like alluded to in the movie, because whenever Yingli or Yingnan- not whenever, but a couple of times when Yingli or Yingnan used baguazhang, they actually had the wind going.

[00:18:13.110] - Nathan

And that for me at least was like the main smoking gun to be like, okay, this is definitely the same martial arts form.

[00:18:21.630] - Nathan

So that was really exciting to pick up on. But it's also interesting to see that ultimately that is the style that prevailed. You've got the baguazhang from Yingli winning against Wenwu's gongfu, and then the same thing when Shang-Chi uses the baguazhang against his father, he wins that fight, and he manages to sort of reclaim the rings and use them on his own. And also when Yingnan fights Shang-Chi in Ta Lo when she's showing him basically the power of what she can do, she kicks his ass. It's really interesting that this martial arts form that is really more focused on energy redirection instead of force is seen as so successful.

[00:19:13.590] - Nathan

And I think it's very interesting because we see the same sort of thing modeled in Avatar the Last Airbender, where at least in the first main series of Avatar with Aang, his world view is very much shaped by airbending and the air bending culture from the Nomads, which it's very akin to the Tibetan monks and Buddhism. Basically just like, do no harm and a life full of pacifism. And so it's very interesting that we have sort of the strength that is brought about by this martial arts form that we see in Shang-Chi. And I think this is sort of lampshaded- or not lampshaded, but this is sort of like dispelled a little bit in Legend of Korra in the second season I believe, when the Red Lotus tries to kill Korra. Air bending can be quite dangerous because air is pretty important for life, or at least for us as creatures who need oxygen to survive. So that is really hinted at in the fact that- or not hinted at. But it explicitly happens where Zaheer kills people by suffocating them and basically taking the air out of their lungs.

[00:20:33.570] - Nathan

And so it's interesting that you have that juxtaposition, at least in Avatar, that this martial arts form is both gentle but also deadly. And we do see that in Shang-Chi not only in the examples that I mentioned, but when Yingli fights against the Iron Gang, I've said this multiple times. She has a body count. She does a lot of work.

[00:20:59.550] - Nathan

I once again would have to watch the movie again to see how many bodies there are. But she kicks a lot of booty before going down. So I would have been curious to see how that fight scene would have gone, because as we saw in the Bamboo Grove, there's not a lot of direct damage that she can do. And we also see that in Avatar as well. With airbending like airbending, you don't really land any direct hits on people.

[00:21:29.490] - Nathan

You kind of like redirect people to hurt themselves. So yeah, I would be very curious to see that sort of play out. And now the final sort of connection here that Airbending has with the movie in terms of referential connection is air bending is the signature art of the Air Nomads. And that group of people in the Avatar universe is very connected to the spirit world, and just like, very spiritual, which makes sense, given that their real life connection is the Tibetan monks. And it kind of makes a lot of sense that when it comes to Shang-Chi actually getting rid of the evil Flying Spaghetti monster, he uses baguazhang to exorcise the thing.

[00:22:26.410] - Nathan

Granted, he shoves ten rings into the thing's booty hole, and there's a lot of stuff. Er, not a lot of stuff that happens, but he uses those to destroy the evil Flying Spaghetti Monster, along with the help of the Guardian Dragon or whatever. But yeah, that was another sort of reference that I saw there, and that was a nice touch. But overall, I think with the two different martial arts styles that were featured in there, I was pretty happy to see them and also really understand the sort of reference and the themes that were portrayed through them.

[00:23:04.690] - Nathan

I thought the movie did that quite well.

[00:23:06.670] - Nathan

So that's about it for the main sort of topic. This is quite short compared to some of the other topics, just because this is sort of like this is what it was and here are the connections. And this is how I felt about it. So with that being said, if you liked what you've heard or if you like what you're hearing, please feel free to drop by the Patreon and support the show. I am completely independent.

[00:23:32.950] - Nathan

I am trying to eventually move over to Spotify. Right now I'm hosting on SoundCloud. Donating over on the Patreon would help me immensely in terms of moving over to Spotify and taking care of all the background stuff that I need to take care of for running this podcast. For the Patreon, there are a couple of tiers that are available. You can donate whatever you can, but the tier one gets you a shout out on the podcast.

[00:23:59.950] - Nathan

If you want an example of what that's like, you can tune in to episode three, and you just get a shout out like my friend Tanner did, and I guess he gets another shout out. So tier one is a shout out, tier two you

get early access to the Pod. As I mentioned at the top, I'm switching over to a bi weekly release schedule just because my life is exploding and my mental health is important to me, and this is for fun. I'm not getting paid to do this at all, so I'm trying to find some way to balance doing this and having it still be fun.

[00:24:36.010] - Nathan

But tier two gets you early access, which is the day before release, and most of the time, I'm trying to figure out how to best do this, but so far I've been releasing the audio files on Patreon the day before the public release, and then tier three gets you, I guess, exclusive access to suggesting topics for the show to cover. So far, the main suggestion that has come through is to cover Boys Love media, and I've got a couple of things that I've watched, and I also have a guest in mind.

[00:25:11.290] - Nathan

So that is something to look forward to. But yeah, you can suggest topics, and I will consider them for review and make an episode at some point. So that's the Patreon, as I mentioned also at the top since Metroid Dread dropped, I'm going to be playing it and you can come join me on Twitch and watch me scream in space and run in terror from the E.M.M.I.

[00:25:36.850] - Nathan

The E.M.M.I. are these robot things that are able to traverse any terrain and just go watch the trailer for Metroid Dread. The beeping noise that they make is haunting. And then, of course, if they hit you, then it's game over. And I'm looking forward to displaying how bad I am at video games on the Internet. But yes, if you are interested in joining me for that, look out for alerts on my Twitter or you can follow me on Twitch at [Twitch.tv/kahtonotkayto](https://www.twitch.tv/kahtonotkayto).

[00:26:11.590] - Nathan

That is K-A-H-T-O-N-O-T-K-A-Y-T-O. It's the same spelling as my Twitter handle and my Instagram, and I'm going to be trying to stream on Tuesdays and maybe Thursdays. We'll see about that. I think actually, no, my old schedule is like Tuesday and Saturday, so I think I'm probably going to be holding to that because I've got other engagements on Thursday nights. So yeah, feel free to join there.

[00:26:37.750] - Nathan

As I mentioned before, my Instagram and my Twitter are both [@kahtonotkayto](https://www.instagram.com/kahtonotkayto). Twitter is where I'm more active and get more goofy shit that comes out of my brain, and I'm trying to put more stuff up on Instagram, but we'll see how that goes. Just because I don't use that platform as it's intended. I don't really use Twitter as it's intended either, because why use platforms correctly when you can use them

incorrectly. So that's the show. Thank you so much for tuning in, and I will hope to see you next time!
Thanks, bye.