



Hello and welcome to the NinjaVideo manifesto. This one is a bit different from the rest, in that I'm the only person on the line. I'm Phara by the way - just in case you didn't know, or you're new to the NinjaVideo podcasts - and I'll be doing this one solo.

This is partially scripted, partially free thought. And I'm going to try and keep it as light-hearted as I can, but at the end of the day this is probably the most serious podcast we've ever done.

This is our Mission Statement; it doesn't really get much clearer than that.

We decided in light of our recent traffic spikes with the start of the fall season and the havoc it wreaked with our system that maybe it was about time to explain who and what we are as an entity.

I think it's become quite obvious that NinjaVideo is a bit of a monster to run, and a lot of you are probably curious as to why we do it. So for this podcast I'm not only speaking to you as Phara but also as the voice of the administrators, the moderators, the entire NinjaVideo community, and in a way as one of the representatives of the on-line video world, and perhaps through this you'll gain a better understanding of why people like us spend such a giant amount of time doing what we do.

By the way, I take the title of representative of the on-line video world very loosely, nobody put me in this position. I'm not quite sure if I want to be in it, but it's a reality and though this might open me and my website to a bit of unwanted scrutiny it's something that we as a community felt needed to be done.

So, that's me, that is Ninja.

And let me now explain who this is for.

This is for everyone.

To everyone that's ever watched a video on-line, to anyone that's ever viewed a clip on YouTube, to every uploader and downloader, to those within the scene and the peer-to-peer, to the bootleggers that have gotten locked up for selling their warez on the street corner, to the cammers that risk their freedom every single night in movie theaters. That's one side of it.

This is also for the other side. We're doing this all encompassing. This is for the lawyers sending out notices; this is to movie producers and studio heads; to all the scriptwriters and the actors.

This is for everyone.

I'm not going to go too much into what we do, as I think if you're listening to this, you most likely know. But in a sentence or two:

We are a high quality video site (probably the best one out there, and I say this as a user of my own site

and not just as the Admin). We provide TV primarily, as well as a significant documentary section, new movie releases and sporting events in addition to a few other things. We're loved by millions, but we're hated by quite a few, and as to how we started, most of us at the top were already members of this on-line video community, and we just saw an emphasis on quality lacking, so we came together to create the highest quality site on-line.

That said, let me explain a little bit about Ninja Main.

We're realists. We know what brings people to NinjaVideo - Ninja Main in particular - it is zero hour releases on TV and movies. But while they're here they can learn - from our documentaries to the depth of our forum we are a classroom in so many ways, as well as an outlet for your general entertainment. We did this very consciously.

We could have a third of the videos that we do on the Mainsite and be equally as successful but we chose not to. We wanted to educate. We wanted to be different from every other site out there by establishing a community that revolves around the Mainsite.

Our community has its own rules and hierarchy but it's one where people can shed the superficialities of the physical world and discuss everything from good TV, to good music, to land reform in China, to recent and upcoming elections. And they can do this with complete freedom - as long as it's done in a respectful manner. People have dedicated enormous chunks of their lives to creating this home of ours online and if one was to skim through my boards they would see it in it's full glory every day.

Though it may be argued that we - as an entity - are the ultimate leech for what we take from the film and the TV industry, my community and those that helped build it are anything but. This is not an anonymous place of fake thank-you's and ignorant requests, but the closest that the Internet has ever come to an extended family. There's really no way for me to explain it and do it justice, but I suspect that if you were to register and to lurk the boards for a few days you would understand what I was saying quite clearly.

So with all that being said, let's get to some of the central points of this podcast:

Why do sites like NinjaVideo exist?

Why do people like us prefer this online world to theaters so much at a time?

What is our take on studios and Hollywood and the businesses that we are so closely tied to, but not quite friendly with?

I'm just going to speak a bit broadly here and go into what is probably the whole point of this, the meat of this.

When did the American pastime of going to the movies become a luxury? Honestly-- when? When did family night at the movies start costing fifty dollars without popcorn? As a wise moderator of mine once said, "When did leisure get taken hostage?"

Look around you... the world is in crisis, economic as well as social. Why was one of the few escapes available to us as a society taken out of the layman's reach? I want to point something out. Your numbers-- they're so wrong. You break record numbers every season. \$200 million opening weekends. Every year, those at the top of your business get richer and richer. And we, your loyal fans, pay more and more to view two hours of regurgitated plot. You say that piracy is killing you. But do you honestly think that the thousand people who watched a movie online would be the same thousand that would go to the theaters if that option were taken from them?

Your Statistics Are Lies.

If nothing else, it is through Internet word of mouth that so many otherwise obscure films succeed.

I'd like to ask you a question sometimes. Perhaps I'm being naive, but honestly, why can an actor be paid \$20 million for a movie? Why are there doctors out there paying off student loans for fifty years, but someone who essentially "lies" for a living makes millions? And this is for the entire entertainment industry. Sports players are very much included in this, mainstream musicians...

And if the comparison to doctors is a bit off, why do you make so much more than your writers? Why was there a writers' strike last year that halted TV production for the first time in years when someone like Jennifer Aniston or Jerry Seinfeld was making a million dollars per episode for a twenty-two minute sitcom?

And why - and this is probably more important - Why have we as a society accepted this? Why do we race

to newsstands for glorified tabloids mimicking news? Why is CNN reporting on Britney Spears rather than the Congo? Why am I supposed to care that Angelina Jolie had or adopted another child? Why (this is so upsetting) why are we so obsessed with this disgusting celebrity culture where someone like Paris Hilton is a heroine and children don't know who Mahatma Gandhi is? Why in a world where for the first time true knowledge is accessible to us via a few keystrokes are test scores plummeting? Please explain to me why college in the United States is utterly unaffordable. This pains me. This pains me so much.

My generation, we're a generation of cynics, apathetic to all around us, indifferent to all around us. But when did being those things mean that we had to become ignorant? When did that happen? There are times when I find myself bewildered at my own inability to feel compassion but at the same time I'm plagued by these overarching ideals.

I care not for the man standing next to me, but I sob for humanity. I weep for these ideals that I feel are being lost. I fail at paying my own rent on time, but I can stare aghast at someone who doesn't know there's a conflict between Israel and Palestine, or that there's still war going on in the world.

There are giant issues out there. Enormous issues that are so much greater than generic media consumption. Issues requiring attention far greater, far more attention in general than I could ever bring to it. And yet I see millions being spent squashing a minority like mine. One that at its core espouses the kind of groupthink necessary to enact change. One made of leaders that want to reach out across the world and help each other - even if its via something so small as uploading a newscast, or even a TV show.

But we're labeled pirates. We're called thieves. We're raided and arrested and we're forced to hide behind aliases while we weave and we bob through these grey areas of laws not yet written. We're this amorphous Internet scum looking to rob your industry. Right? We are so far from.

You... YOU have done this. You... The studios with your inflated budgets and your ridiculous salaries. You have fed the mob insignificant tidbits about celebrity antics in order for them to pay out their retirement funds in popcorn prices. But not all amongst this mob are sheep.

There are those that refuse to cater to such condescending pandering. And at heart that's what it is. It's condescending. It's patronizing. It's insulting to us as a generation. Sites like NinjaVideo force innovation upon you. This entire community does. The record profits that you have been making prove that people still go to the movies. Ad spots starting a \$250,000 for thirty seconds prove that people still watch TV.

How will you keep your audience? Why should they pay you any longer when it is clear that you care nothing for them? Will you continue to repackage the same story lines? Will you continue to shun independence? Will you continue to force us to read publicist drivel on high school dropouts with the Mickey Mouse club on their resumes? Honestly, it's time to stop.

Just stop.

Reincarnate yourselves. Utilize us. Don't shut us down. Make a stand. You've made your money. Why don't you make your statement now? Now that the networks and the MPAA stand together, why don't you embrace the Internet? And I know that you have too a degree, but it's lacking. Sorely lacking. Why not let those well-versed in this scene help. You must set aside the status quo. For it is being set aside for you.

Your screeners are being leaked by your own insiders. Let me repeat that for you:  
**Your screeners are being leaked by your own insiders.**

Embrace the peer to peer. Embrace the crowd at your door that would help you acclimate to today's technological revolution before they blast through your bureaucratic ineptitude. Your very own structuring inhibits your growth. You have generations at the top that know nothing of this new world and cannot grasp the fluidity of the Internet and its rapid-fire growth. Your industry is an industry made up of connections and cronyism and casting couches.

This is the time ripe for change. Be that change.

Once upon a time, visual media was heralded for the positive impacts it made upon society. Once upon a time a cold war was destroyed at the hands of reporters who showed millions that life was different outside the communist bloc. Once upon a time I **cared** to listen to what CNN had to say to me. Once upon a time, copyright law favored the small, and not the hidden vaults underneath a 500-acre studio. And isn't that the ugliest part, honestly... that your writers are forced into the cold with picket signs, while these glorified

Barbie and Ken dolls prance around the world for more money than most **countries** make in a year.

Please, please understand this anger. You must. It's enough. You have become complacent through your success. You have taken an industry barely one hundred years old and destroyed its public integrity. You have made fools of us and forced a discontent that is exponentially swelling through the ranks of the computer literate.

You and only you opened the door for NinjaVideo. Sites like mine are a direct manifestation of **your** apathy. You can't hold entertainment hostage any more. You can't hold news hostage.

If Rupert Murdoch wants to play FOX news on five different channels, then I'll build an Al Jazeera category and give it love on Ninja Main. If a documentary maker is saddened that his work will only be seen by a few thousand via a public broadcasting channel, then I'll give him an audience millions strong.

If you want to take advantage of the fact that the youth of my generation, some of them adults now, are lazy, we will make that youth a force to be reckoned with and give them a home on-line to gather and think.

And that's it. That is the point of all this, of NinjaVideo in particular. I truly, truly hope that this did not come off as a rant. I guess what I want, what we all want, is to be left alone. I don't want to go to jail... or court. None of us do. And if we can't be accepted, how about we're acknowledged? Not as pirates but as a generation you can learn from. Work **with** us. Learn **from** us.

This is what we do. It's part of who we are. Instead of sending a takedown notice, how about sending an introductory letter? Conference with us about what the evolution of this game should be about, because I assure you - whether or not you ever take NinjaVideo down, there will be more of us. This game can't be stopped: so how about it's understood?

We're a community, made up of millions. We come from every country, every walk of life, and every economic level. And we're smart. We're young. We're articulate. And we're your audience.

But we're tired, and we can fight back.

And this is by no means a challenge; it's just the reality.

Can I afford lawyers? No. Not at all. But will there be a hundred people to take my place if I step down? Yes... believe me there will be.

So if the moves towards peace could ever be made between our worlds then I would suggest that you take us, NinjaVideo, up on such a reconciliation. We're grown, we're educated, and we - more than most - are willing to listen. Perhaps if you are one of those lawyers or studio heads or actors, and for some odd reason you're listening to this right now, take a moment before you pick up that phone and truly think about what I said.

There is an opportunity here that has never been laid out before.

This has been the NinjaVideo Manifesto and it's time to wrap this thing up.

We're your future. We're here and we're strong and we're not moving.

I'll leave you all with a quote. I tried searching for a few choice ones on piracy and I found myself much more attracted to the ones I found on revolution:

Samuel Adams once said:

"It does not require a majority to prevail, but rather an irate, tireless minority keen to set brushfires in people's minds."

We have lit that flame and it can't be put out. Will you help us harness its power, or will you let us all burn with you alongside?

Thank you for listening to the NinjaVideo Manifesto.

**This has been Phara, with all of NinjaVideo behind me.**