

VICTOR “MAKAVELI” CUADRA

A journey to the early days of esports through the eyes of Victor
“Makaveli” Cuadra

Esports History
Preservation
Effort for the
Community

To the esports community and future generations of competitors,

My name is Victor “Makaveli” Cuadra.

This document is a historical record — a contribution to the preservation of our shared legacy as competitive gamers, pioneers, and early builders of what would one day become the global industry known as esports.

For decades, I remained silent about my role in those formative years. I was content to walk away, let the era fade, and quietly support the growth from a distance. But time — and the encouragement of respected peers — has made one thing clear:

If we do not document the roots of esports, they will be lost. As with people, I believe the same is true of organizations: You should always remember where you come from.

This packet contains:

- A professional overview of my competitive journey
- Testimonials from peers and champions who shaped the scene
- A narrative walk-through of the early evolution of FPS competition
- Archival media and historical visuals from the era

This is not about recognition. It’s about preservation. About sharing the story of a time before sponsorships, before agents, before infrastructure — when we showed up out of love for the game and a belief that it could be something more.

Outside of a prototype Pentium 4 rig gifted by Intel — more a gesture of belief than sponsorship — I was never paid to represent esports. I showed up in national interviews, early press coverage, and industry events because I believed our scene deserved advocates who lived the culture. I carried that responsibility not for compensation, but because someone had to show the world that what we were building mattered.

This is for the players who remember. For the historians who care. For the next generation, so they know where it all began.

Sincerely,

Victor “Makaveli” Cuadra

Former Quake II World Champion

Network Engineering Professional – IT Operations

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Victor “Makaveli” Cuadra is not a footnote in the story of esports — he is part of its foundation.

Between 1998 and 2002, he defined excellence across Quake II and Quake III, became the de facto Quake II World Champion, and set a new standard for competitive presence — both in-game and in the public spotlight.

He wasn’t just one of the best FPS players in the world.

He was the prototype for the modern esports professional.

Professional Peak LAN Record (1998–2000):

- ~78% map win rate | ~80% match win rate across major events
- Top 3 finishes at every major LAN during his prime
- Notable LAN wins over top talent: Shub, Rix, Immortal, Wombat, Unholy, Doomer, Kane, Sujoy
- International recognition following a 3–0 sweep of Europe’s champion in Stockholm

Makaveli’s true legacy, however, lies beyond the win column. He trained with Thresh, practiced “the craft” before the term existed, and directly mentored the next generation — including future world champions like ZeRo4. His preparation methods, mental discipline, and media presence prefigured the professional standards now expected of today’s pros.

In an era without infrastructure, he built his own.

In an era without role models, he became one.

In an era without guarantees, he showed up anyway — and delivered.

This document serves as a community artifact: a snapshot of what esports once was, and how it evolved through the contributions of players like Makaveli.

Competitive Resume

Tournament/Event	Result	Notes
PGL Season 2 1998	3rd	First major LAN
CPL Frag 2 1998	2nd	Single-map loss to Rix, tourney winner
CPL Extreme Annihilation 1999	3rd	Single-map loss to Immortal, tourney winner
XS Invitational (XSi) 2000	2nd	5-0 Group Stage - Match Record 9-2 (2 nd to Fatal1ty)
Razer CPL 2000 (100K Prize)	2nd	5-2 Match Record (2 nd to Fatal1ty)
WCG US Nationals 2001	3rd	Not Practicing, Retired
WCG Regional Qualifier 2002	1st	Not Practicing, Retired
Recognized Unofficial Quake II World Champion (1999)		Defeated Shub, EDL Champion, 3 games to 0 on LAN in Sweden directly after his victory. Makaveli was the representative for North America.

Legacy & Impact

- Mentored by Thresh, the original esports champion.
- Trained alongside Immortal, his equal and rival.
- Inspired Zero4, who became a world champion. Post-retirement matches with ZeRo4 available — see Video Document.
- Practiced “the craft” before it had a name — bootcamps, mental discipline, player development. The culture today’s pros live by traces directly through his lineage.
- Respected by Rapha, the modern GOAT of Quake.
- Analyst and ambassador two decades later — name still carries weight.

Legacy Spotlight: *The Craft Lineage*

Makaveli practiced “the craft” before it had a name — and passed it through the players who now define it.

THE SEED

Dennis “Thresh” Fong

Widely recognized as the world’s first professional gamer, Thresh brought instinctual mastery to early FPS.

- Taught Makaveli the raw elements of elite play: map control, tempo management, weapon denial, and psychological pressure.
- These instincts weren’t codified — just felt and passed directly.
- Makaveli built a repeatable process for player development off these lessons.
- Thresh was the spark; Makaveli was the system.
- This became the early foundation of what today’s pros call *the craft*.

THE ROOTS

Victor “Makaveli” Cuadra

- Structured training before coaching existed — bootcamps, scheduled practice, player style rotation
- Prioritized mental discipline, opponent profiling, and map mastery
- Built structured prep environments with Immortal in the late '90s — before Fatal1ty’s pro era took shape
- Mentored ZeRo4 while still competing
- Articulated the “esports athlete” mindset on CNNfn in 2000
- Set the foundation for the values modern pros now live by (Preparation > Talent)

THE TRUNK

John “ZeRo4” Hill

- World Cyber Games Champion (2001) – 3x QuakeCon Champion
- Esports Director, Bethesda / BGS
- “Victor stood out for his humility, mentoring emerging talents like myself with respect and guidance that shaped our growth.”
- Carried structured prep and game-planning into the next generation
- Became the competitive standard for early 2000s Quake

THE BRANCHES

Shane “Rapha” Hendrixson

- 7x QuakeCon Champion | Quake Pro League Icon
- Known for unmatched game sense, preparation, and competitive mentality
- Publicly credited Makaveli: “He helped build the foundation that many of us, including myself, would later stand on.”

Alexei “Cypher” Yanushevsky

- 4x QuakeCon Champion | ESWC & DreamHack Winner
- Arena FPS prodigy known for world-class mechanics and feel-based timing
- Grew up in Belarus watching Makaveli’s Quake II demos starting at 7–8 years old

“Makaveli was one of a kind... He has always been a legend to me — and he always will be.”

THE TREE TODAY

- Structured training, map theory, discipline, and pro conduct — all now industry standards
- The mindset Makaveli pioneered lives on in today’s elite competitors like Rapha and Cypher
- Throughout professional FPS environments — the craft is now codified

- But it started with players like Makaveli who built it *from instinct, not infrastructure*
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“Makaveli wasn’t just a competitor. He was the blueprint for the modern esports professional. Alongside pioneers like Thresh, Makaveli set a model for modern esports professionalism, blending skill, discipline, and vision in an era with no playbook.”

The craft is no longer a mystery — but someone had to define it before it had a name.

The Evidence of “The Craft”? His Consistency

It wasn’t just that Makaveli *trained differently* —
It’s that his results proved it worked.

In an era where volatility was the norm —
Makaveli was a constant in LAN performance.

While other elite players peaked and dipped, he delivered Top 3 finishes across:

- Multiple titles with different metas (Quake II and Quake III)
- Multiple formats (single elimination, group stages, international invites)
- Multiple regions (North America and Europe)

His performance wasn’t based on hot streaks or favorable brackets —
It was the byproduct of a repeatable, disciplined system.

Across these events, Makaveli maintained a >78% map win rate and defeated players who *won* tournaments at other times.

That’s not luck.

That’s not streaks.

That’s “the craft” — proven under pressure.

The Esports Visionary

- 2000: Appeared on CNNfn, predicting cross-platform gaming, gamer-led hardware marketing, and the future shape of esports.

- 2000: Compared esports to traditional sports: "I strive to be the best just like anybody else in any other sport..."
- That same year, Intel selected Makaveli for a prototype Pentium 4 testimonial project — marking what is likely the first major hardware marketing collaboration with an esports player.

Before Twitch, before YouTube sponsorships, before esports endorsements existed — Makaveli was already trusted to represent the gaming market to the world's leading tech companies.

- Also featured in Men's Journal — one of the earliest mainstream media coverages of professional gaming.

The Decline — And Why It Matters

- Burned out due to lack of infrastructure, not skill.
- Walked away from an unsupported scene while still capable of beating the best.
- Rejected call to represent NA, still recognized as a world elite player.
- A pioneer forced to exit before the industry he foresaw could fully support him.

Final Reflection

Makaveli didn't just succeed as a player — he embodied the blueprint for what a modern esports professional would become:

- Elite Competitor — Dominating LANs and defeating the world's best.
- Professional Discipline — Treated esports like a career before it was one — building his own bootcamps, studying opponents, and holding himself to elite standards.
- Charismatic Presence — Commanding media attention in an era before streamers and influencers existed.
- Visionary Mindset — Anticipating the fusion of gaming, hardware, and mass media decades before it became standard.

- Community Focused — Encouraged, inspired, and guided next generation talent. Believer in fan-friendly spectacle during pro matches.

At a time when esports had no playbook,
Makaveli was already living the future.

Why Makaveli is a Foundational Figure

- Exceptional competitive record on LAN.
 - Became the face of esports on national TV before Twitch even existed.
 - Created a blueprint future champions followed.
 - Inspired multiple generations of greatness.
 - Built the bridge from esports' beginning to its future.
 - Practiced “the craft” before it had a name — structured training, mental discipline, and player development long before they became industry standard.
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Closing Statement

Makaveli wasn't a footnote. He was part of the foundation.

He didn't know if what he was doing would matter — but 20+ years later, esports looks exactly like the future he predicted.

The full story of Makaveli's journey—from dial-up duels to global stages—awaits in the detailed narrative to follow.

"The following testimonials have been provided with the individuals' consent and affirmed as accurate reflections of their views."

Testimonial from Shane “Rapha” Hendrixson

“Makaveli may not have had the same tournament resume as players like Thresh, ZeRo4, or myself — but that’s not the only thing that defines greatness. His impact on the early scene, especially in helping shape the next generation, was crucial.

The strategies, the mindset, the professionalism — all of it was still being invented during his time. He helped build the foundation that many of us, including myself, would later stand on.

Makaveli was also one of the first people to represent esports on national television — and he did it with confidence and composure. At a time when gamers were often stereotyped, he stood out as someone who could represent all of us with class.

His presence mattered. His influence mattered.”

**— Shane “Rapha” Hendrixson,
Quake Pro League Champion, 7x QuakeCon Winner, Esports Icon**

Testimonial from John “ZeRo4” Hill

“As a contemporary of Victor "Makaveli" Cuadra in the nascent days of esports, I can attest to his exceptional prowess as a Quake competitor and his genuine camaraderie off the battlefield. Rising to the pinnacle of Quake 2 and Quake 3 players, Victor pursued his passion with unwavering dedication, sacrificing time and resources for the love of the game in an era devoid of today’s financial rewards. Unlike many elite players who remained distant figures, Victor stood out for his humility, mentoring emerging talents like myself with respect and guidance that shaped our growth.

Our enduring friendship reflects his character, and his encyclopedic knowledge of gaming strategy and history has made him a natural fit for commentary, where he elevated the scene for years. As esports chronicles its origins, Victor’s name will shine as a pioneer whose contributions as a player, mentor, and ambassador, left an indelible mark on esports.

— John “ZeRo4” Hill,

Quake 3 World Champion, Bethesda Esports Manager, BGS Business Director

Testimonial from Alexei "cYpheR" Yanushevsky

When I was 7 or 8 years old—on a different continent, in a completely different part of the world, thousands of kilometers away from North America—I started to learn about Quake and the Quake community. I was thrilled just reading about the world cup tournaments and downloading demos from internet cafés, where we all gathered to play and learn Quake together.

My older brother was the national champion in our country, and he would always bring home demos of American players from the internet café. We watched them together—Thresh, Fatal1ty, Immortal—and of course, Makaveli. His Quake II demos were especially hard to find, but when we did get them, it was incredible. Seeing how the elite top players in the world played was both exciting and educational. We studied those battles with admiration.

Makaveli was one of a kind. He had a rare balance in all aspects of the game—very smart tactical decisions, and also great movement. His matches against Immortal on Q2DM1 (The Edge) or Q2DM3 were my absolute favorites. I must have watched them at least 100 times, and I still remember them vividly after all these years.

He was a major inspiration for me. The dream of one day playing that well, and competing in tournaments, burned in my mind. Makaveli was one of the first players whose tactics I tried to copy and showcase at the local level. Out of all the demos I collected, I had the most of Makaveli. He has always been a legend to me—and he always will be.

Alexei "cYpheR" Yanushevsky, 4× QuakeCon Champion, ESWC & DreamHack Winner, Arena FPS Legend

Testimonial from Johnathan “Fatal1ty” Wendel

Coming up in the early days of esports during the Quake/Doom era, I was constantly trying to find the best players—who they were, and what made their gameplay so special. I quickly learned names like Thresh, Lakerman, Kane, Timber, and Entropy.

When Quake 2 finally came out, I was curious to see which new players would rise to the top. Makaveli was that player—followed by other greats like Immortal and Rix.

Hearing about Makaveli traveling to Europe to face off against the #1 player overseas was the kind of thing I dreamed about as a teenager. Even back in the Quake 1 days, I knew it was possible to go international and compete against the best. Makaveli went to Sweden and beat Shub, the EDL Champion, 3 games to none. That’s when I truly considered Makaveli a World Champion—the best of the best.

When Quake 3 came out and I heard Makaveli was competing in another invitational event—where the top 12 players in the world were brought together—I was excited to finally meet him in person. That event also marked my first time traveling overseas to achieve what Makaveli had already done: win against the best players in the world.

That tournament ended up being my breakout moment, as I went undefeated—winning 18 games straight and losing none—on my way to being crowned the Quake 3 World Champion. Makaveli gave me a great match. I’ve always believed in respect and honor, and I’ve always looked up to what Makaveli accomplished in Quake 2. I’ll always consider him a champion and a trailblazer during that era of esports.

Just two months later, Makaveli and I faced off again at the CPL Summer World Championship for \$100,000. He fought his way through his side of the bracket and truly showed the world that he was the best Quake 2 player to transition into Quake 3. He was always in the conversation—someone you had to deal with.

I enjoyed battling Makaveli—not just because of his competitive drive and ability to get it done, but also because of his charisma and media presence. He always looked like he was having the best time, and he made sure you knew it. The trash talk always brought a smile to my face, because Makaveli was truly one of the real characters of early esports. He deserves to be recognized for his trailblazing role and the legacy he helped build.

Johnathan “Fatal1ty” Wendel, 12-time FPS World Champion and a global pioneer in making esports a recognized profession.

Testimonial from Dennis “Thresh” Fong

It’s an absolute honor to write this letter in acknowledgement of Victor "Makaveli" Cuadra’s role in the history of esports. I’ve known Victor since we were teenagers, first meeting in the early days of competitive gaming through Doom and Doom II, back when LAN parties were the heartbeat of the scene. Even then, Victor stood out—not just for his gameplay, but for his outsized personality, relentless confidence, and unshakable passion for competition.

In those early years, Victor was a good player—talented, determined, and endlessly competitive—but often found himself just shy of breaking into the upper echelon. That never stopped him from being one of the most entertaining and vocal personalities in the room. His trademark trash talk was as much a part of his identity as his railgun. And while he hadn’t yet become one of the greats, there was always something unmistakably electric about him.

At one point, Victor approached me and asked if I would coach and mentor him in preparation for an upcoming tournament. I rarely, if ever, coached anyone—but I saw potential in him. More than that, I saw hunger. So I shared everything I knew. How to think about the game at a higher level. How to control the map—and by extension, the match. How to deny resources, read opponents, manipulate their decisions, and dictate the pace of play. In short, how to master the mental side of competition.

Victor absorbed it all. He internalized every lesson, refined his mechanics, and transformed his approach. Soon, he wasn’t just playing like me—he was winning like me. He didn’t just knock on the door of greatness anymore—he kicked it down. He became a champion in his own right.

But what’s even more impressive is what came next. Victor evolved into a true ambassador for the scene. He carried himself with charisma and class, representing esports with both bravado and humility. He brought energy, passion, and legitimacy to the early days of our industry and helped shape what competitive gaming could look like.

He’s earned his place among the legends—not just through his skill, but through his journey, his influence, and his unwavering love for the game.

Sincerely,

Dennis “Thresh” Fong, Winner of Red Annihilation, PGL Champion, Recognized as the World’s First Professional Gamer

Testimonial from Kurt “Immortal” Shimada

My first deathmatch ever played was with Makaveli when I was 11 years old. We became gamer buddies and still play together to this day. I practiced Quake2 with Makaveli extensively during the blossoming of the eSports era. We ran bootcamps at his house, turned bedrooms and living rooms into LAN setups, and even used oversized tournament checks to block our screens and simulate real tournament pressure. It was old school, but it worked because we had the competitive drive to constantly improve our gaming prowess. Our numerous practice sessions elevated us above everyone else playing at the time.

Makaveli approached the game like a professional when eSports started to become a reality. He would strategize ahead of time before playing in matches by studying his opponent and making adjustments to his game. I still remember us breaking down the mega room on the map Match1 — brainstorming how to trap it, bait it, how to get out if you were caught. Nobody else was thinking like that at the time. Most people just showed up and played. We had a process that was different from our competition. Our preparation leading into Extreme Annihilation directly fueled my victory over Rix and the rest of the competition.

Our practice sessions allowed me to come prepared and ready. This would not be possible without the structure we built together. We trained seriously, held each other accountable, and ran through scenarios most players weren’t even considering. By the time I faced Rix, I knew exactly what I wanted to do and shut him down on the map I was favored to lose on.

Makaveli and I were by far the two best players at that event. The single-elimination format didn’t reflect that, but the outcome spoke for itself. I won the tournament and Makaveli took 3rd. If the bracket had played out differently, I’m confident we would have met in the finals.

One last thing I’ll say about Makaveli: His game elevated over time. He went on to be a top tier Quake3 player when most Quake2 players vanished from the scene. I watched him build himself into a world-class player. He didn’t start out dominant, he became dominant. He didn’t rely on raw talent. He relied on intuition, preparation, and execution of method. And it worked, his results speak louder than any words.

— Kurt "Immortal" Shimada Champion, Extreme Annihilation | Early Quake Pro-gamer

Testimonial from Jason “Unholy” Carlton

My name is Jason Carlton, known as Unholy in the Quake community, a founding member of Death Row, the first recognized professional esports team, where I played alongside Thresh, widely regarded as the top pro gamer in history. Together with Death Row, we swept every major Quake 1 team tournament we entered across three years, and I earned a reputation as one of the world’s top Quake 1 duelers. After my playing days, I helped establish the Global Gaming League, serving as Head of Gaming and League Commissioner. For nearly a decade, GGL hosted dozens of major tournaments, evolved “shoutcasting” into the live-streamed video broadcast esports coverage model that endures today, and helped champion gaming culture and esports to the mainstream.

It’s a true privilege to write this letter about Victor “Makaveli” Cuadra’s impact on esports. I first met Victor in the late 1990s, as I was wrapping up my Quake 1 career and he was just stepping into the spotlight. From the start, Victor had a certain fire—a raw talent matched by a magnetic charisma that made him impossible to ignore. He was a fierce competitor, always ready to turn a match into a spectacle, even if he wasn’t yet among the elite.

By the time I started playing in Quake 2 tournaments, Victor had transformed into a serious contender. I knew he’d be a challenge, a clear sign of how quickly he was rising in the scene. Our match at Extreme Annihilation left a lasting impression. I’d never lost in team-based Quake 1 tournaments, so defeat wasn’t something I took lightly—it was, to be honest, a bit of a sting. But Victor outperformed me that day with a level of precision, strategy, and composure that was undeniable. His growth since our earlier encounters was striking, and that loss made it clear he’d joined the ranks of the best, standing tall alongside greats like Thresh, Immortal, and Fatality. It set a new bar for Quake 2, and Victor was the one raising it.

That time was a pivotal moment for esports, as the industry began to gain the respect of traditional sports. Victor was at the forefront of this change, bringing the discipline of a true athlete to every match. We both grew up playing organized sports—I in basketball, Victor in soccer—which was rare among players of that era, something we bonded over and saw reflected in our journeys through esports. That athletic foundation shaped how we approached the game, helping Victor connect with fans, media, and sponsors in a way that felt genuine and relatable, making his advocacy for esports deeply impactful. He played a vital role in showing the world what gaming could be during those formative years, and it was this same ability to connect that later made him a natural in broadcasting. He became one of the leading talents of his time, covering major esports events around the globe with the same energy and professionalism that defined his days as a competitor. I can still picture him at those first tournaments, his voice resonating through the crowd, bringing the

excitement of esports to new fans in a way they could relate back to the traditional sports world they were familiar with.

Outside of gaming, my friendship with Victor remains strong to this day, a connection that started in those early Quake days and has grown through our shared dedication and love of competitive gaming. His achievements are remarkable—countless tournament wins against elite competitors, an international championship, and a place as one of Quake’s all-time greats. Through his victories and advocacy, Victor helped lay the groundwork for the thriving esports world we see today, a far cry from the scrappy days we navigated without the fame and fortune players enjoy now.

His journey—from a fiery newcomer to a champion, broadcaster, and mentor to future stars and Hall of Fame members—shows his deep commitment to the game. By remembering Makaveli’s contributions, you not only honor him but also preserve the legacy of prior generations who laid the foundation for esports, ensuring their contributions endure and continue to inspire long into the future.

Sincerely,

Jason “Unholy” Carlton

Former Professional Quake Player, Death Row

Head of Gaming and League Commissioner, Global Gaming League

Victor "Makaveli" Cuadra: The Blueprint of the Esports Professional

Before esports had agents, franchises, or a global spotlight — before the world knew it was an industry — Victor “Makaveli” Cuadra was already living the future.

He was one of the first to blend elite gameplay with charisma, vision, and presence — setting the tone for what today’s esports icons are *still chasing*. And he didn’t just show up — he *dominated*, defeating world-class players, predicting the evolution of the scene, and carrying himself like the esports professional the industry hadn’t yet caught up to.

The Rise to Glory – Forged by Friendship, Tempered by Rivals

The Story of Thresh, Immortal, and Makaveli

Before esports had prize pools, sponsors, or arenas — there were modems, instincts, and a few kids who didn’t know they were building history.

Victor “Makaveli” Cuadra’s journey began in the early 1990s, competing in *Doom II* over direct dial-up connections. He first met a rising prodigy named Kurt “Immortal” Shimada through a Prodigy message board, and the two began playing one-on-one matches — intense, tactical, and way ahead of their time. Immortal was just 11 years old, but already showed flashes of brilliance. Their bond was immediate. Long before organized multiplayer took shape, the two were sharpening their skills in isolation — a private rivalry that would quietly shape the future.

Later, it was Immortal who discovered a multiplayer network called DWANGO, and introduced it to Victor. At the time, nearly all West Coast players used the San Jose server, which was home turf for Dennis “Thresh” Fong, his brothers, and several other top competitors. It was the epicenter of early online FPS in California.

But not for long.

As DWANGO expanded, a new server came online in Fremont, closer to where Victor and Immortal lived in the Bay Area. Because of long-distance phone charges tied to dial-up access, they — and others from the East Bay — migrated to the Fremont server. It became their new home base, and soon after, they were leading the charge. Victor and Immortal were widely considered the #1 and #2 players on the Fremont server, dominating most opponents and forming the core of the Fremont Server Team.

That team would go on to represent Fremont in server-vs-server competitions, facing off against other regional squads — including teams from places like Seattle and Portland. These weren’t casual matches. They were coordinated, competitive, and reputational. Even

before prize pools existed, server pride was on the line — and every match was treated like a proving ground.

From within that fiery, competitive culture, a trio began to take shape — names that would go on to define early FPS history: **Thresh, Immortal, and Makaveli.**

At the time, he wasn't even "Makaveli." He was just Victor — a local kid with a railgun for a mindset and a name Thresh already knew.

Makaveli formally met Thresh and his brothers at a small DWANGO LAN around 1994. It wasn't a tournament — just CRTs on folding tables, wires everywhere, and a room full of teenage firepower. The atmosphere was electric — players learning not just how to aim, but how to *win*.

Then came a pivotal night. At a regular house LAN hosted by a DWANGO member, the group gathered in anticipation of something new — QTest, the public beta for Quake, was about to drop. It released while Thresh, Immortal, and Victor were all in the same room.

No lights. No sponsors. No spectators.

But in hindsight, it was legendary — not for where they were, but for *who was there*.

PGL Season 2 – The Reunion

In **1998**, Victor registered for **PGL Season 2**, which held its LAN finals during **E3 in Atlanta**. It was one of the first major tournaments tied to a mainstream event. The league had buzz, but the scene was still forming. Players came from online circles, IRC, and word of mouth — not scouting or sponsors.

Victor entered under a new alias: **Makaveli**.

Thresh had no idea.

So when Makaveli walked out of the hotel and ran into Dennis on the sidewalk, his reaction was instant:

"Victor?!"

Makaveli smiled.

"I saw you on TV. Figured I'd give it a shot."

It was a surprising and joyful reunion. The two had grown up through the same early LANs, from DWANGO to Fremont, where they'd downloaded QTest together. Makaveli wasn't just another competitor — he was someone Thresh **knew personally**, trusted, and respected.

Makaveli leaned on Thresh at the event for advice and confidence.

He wasn't cocky, despite his bravado.

There were players in the bracket he'd faced online **and not beaten, and he knew it.**

There were no seedings, no leaderboards — just raw perception.

"I hadn't beaten some of them. I didn't know if I could."

He didn't dominate the way he would later. But he played smart, composed, and sharp.

"I remember rubbing my palms on my jeans mid-match. They were drenched with sweat."

And when it counted, he rose.

Makaveli finished **in third place**, his first big LAN performance, in a field of respected names.

Frag 2 – The Rivalry Deepens

Shortly after PGL Season 2, Makaveli traveled to **Dallas** for **Frag 2**, his **first CPL event**. This was no longer PGL turf — CPL was a **rival league**, backed by **Angel Munoz**, and carried its own tension with Thresh and the ecosystem he'd helped build. There was an unspoken edge to the scene shift, one you could feel in the air.

Makaveli and Immortal came to make a statement.

They tore through the bracket — destined to meet.

Then came the semifinal.

Makaveli surged to an **8–0 lead**. Dominant. But Immortal fought back, tying the score. The match went into sudden death. At megahealth, Immortal pressed for the win — but stepped backward into **lava**.

Makaveli advanced.

He stood up, stunned, the tension pouring off him.

"Anybody got a cigarette?!"

It became legend.

In the final, he faced **Rix**, the silent champion. A veteran of QuakeCon, Rix had the experience, the composure, and the LAN resume to match. For Makaveli, it was his **first time under those lights** — a big-stage final with money and momentum on the line.

The bravado was still there.

“You ready to get owned?” Makaveli asked, trying to settle his nerves.

Rix smiled calmly: **“Well, that’s just like, your opinion, man.”**

Behind the swagger, Makaveli was anxious. He could feel the weight of the moment. He had leaned on Thresh in Atlanta, but this time — it was all on him.

He gave it his all. But it wasn’t enough.

Rix closed it out in a single map — a reality of early esports formats before best-of-three sets or double elimination existed.

Makaveli fell to second place — after losing just one map.

The margins were that small.

The same could be said for **Immortal**, who finished third in a bracket stacked with talent.

Still, the message was clear: **Makaveli wasn’t a fluke. He belonged.**

He had taken out giants, held his own, and made it to the final.

He had arrived. Again.

PGL Season 3 – The Phenom, the Champion, and the Shadow Duelist

Coming off the buzz of Frag 2, Makaveli entered PGL Season 3 with momentum. But qualification was brutal. With only two West Coast LPB slots, he found himself in a bracket with both **Thresh and B2** — an impossible climb.

He didn’t qualify, but he still showed up. And everyone knew he belonged.

There were competitors in the LAN Final bracket that Makaveli had played **countless times in practice** — and beaten **every single time**.

Not “most of the time.” Not “usually.” **Every. Time.**

So the league gave him a **show match** on stage — a crowd-pleasing exhibition against a European FFA winner who’d been flown in.

“This poor guy had no idea what he was getting into.” Makaveli would later say.

He didn’t just want to beat him. He wanted to make a statement.

It started with dominance. Then came the flair.

Makaveli began using **hand grenades only** — taunting, styling, landing frags with a smirk.

“It was pure bravado,” he later admitted.

“They told me to cool it. And looking back... yeah, that was wrong. But that was who I was at the time. Young, hungry, trying to create a gaming spectacle.”

The crowd laughed. The staff winced. And Makaveli reminded everyone:
Even when not on the official bracket — he was a presence you couldn't ignore.

Thresh vs. Immortal – Legacy on the Line

The bigger story that weekend was unfolding in the main bracket: **Dennis “Thresh” Fong** was squaring off against his longtime protégé, **Kurt “Immortal” Shimada**, now just 14 years old — a rising phenom, molded by Makaveli's own hand.

Game 1 was on Q2DM3.

Immortal won.

And the room fell silent.

Thresh, the icon of esports, had lost — to a teenager he'd known since childhood.
The defeat was real. So was the emotion.

Immortal, despite the win, **felt the weight** of what he'd just done.

“I felt bad,” Kurt later admitted.

“Dennis had so much riding on this. And at that moment, I realized how much this mattered to him. He was my friend. He was our guy.”

Thresh was stunned — but not defeated.

That night, with everything on the line, he turned to the one person he trusted to give him a real fight in practice.

“Vic, can we train tonight?”

Makaveli didn't hesitate. They went back to the **Gamers.com office**, just the two of them.
Dennis needed reps. He needed confidence. He needed intensity.

Makaveli gave it to him.

“Thresh was locked in. I gave him everything I had.”

The next day, it showed.

Thresh came back strong in the rematch. This time, he controlled the rematch on Q2DM3.
He took Immortal out. And on the **final map, Powertrip**, Immortal paid for his earlier oversight — he hadn't practiced the map enough.

Thresh routed him.

He became the **PGL Season 3 champion**.

But behind that trophy was a quiet truth:

He sharpened his blade against Makaveli the night before.

Extreme Annihilation – The Revenge and the Ruse

Makaveli and Immortal now understood what it took. Gone were the days of “let’s see what happens.” This was professional now. They trained side-by-side — building muscle memory, covering weak maps, practicing positional situations, area denial, map control, every matchup scenario they could think of.

They blocked off monitors with their **prize checks** to prevent screen peeking. They practiced every day. It was war-room level prep.

“Thresh used to “gear up” closer to tournament time, but we decided to go next level.”

There was no question in their minds — they were the best. What happened at Frag 2 still burned in both of them.

“This time, no matter who it is — Rix is going down.”

They said it out loud. They meant it.

And most importantly:

“Nobody is beating us at this tournament — but each other.”

When the tournament came, they were no longer unknowns.

They were **respected**.

Recognized.

Badges ready. No lines.

But even with their prep, both players found themselves tested early.

Makaveli started off rough in his Match1 opener — trailing 8 frags early. But he recomposed, flipped the script, and **absolutely crushed his opponent**, finishing with a 30+ frag total and barely conceding anything afterward.

Immortal, on the other hand, faced real danger.

Down big on Q2DM1 against a player named **Sniper**, he had to stage a frantic comeback in the final moments — one of the **most clutch wins of his early career**.

Eventually, the bracket narrowed. Makaveli vs. Immortal.

Again.

Makaveli had dominated the lead-up.

“I was crushing him in practice the night before. He thought he was done.”

But this time, **Immortal turned the tables.**

Makaveli was stunned.

“He pulled that game out of his ass.”

It was a single-map format — sudden death in the truest sense.

Makaveli lost only one map at the tournament — and it sent him home.

Immortal advanced. Rix awaited.

His crew had said, *“No one beats Rix on Match 1.”*

Immortal did — **by 20+ frags.**

Makaveli smiled from the sideline.

He had helped forge that performance.

Those skills — that resolve — were sharpened in fire, over thousands of hours of practice with one man:

Makaveli.

And while Immortal stood atop the bracket, **both he and Makaveli remain confident to this day:**

“If that tournament had a true grand final, with a real set or double elimination format — we would’ve met again.”

But that’s how it was in early esports.

One map. One moment. Everything.

The Call to Sweden

With Thresh retired and Immortal stepping away due to the growing pull of EverQuest, Makaveli found himself alone at the top of North American Quake II.

Immortal had been his everyday opponent, his sparring partner, his sharpening stone.

Thresh, once a mentor and competitor, was now more a symbol than a rival — someone to lean on for emotional clarity, but no longer for LAN-level intensity.

There were no more weekly duels with world-class players. No more controlled, high-stakes practice.

And yet, Makaveli’s game was sharper than ever.

Then came the call.

The European Duel League was holding its grand finals in Stockholm, Sweden — and they wanted a single North American representative to face their champion.

It was a rarity in that era.

True international matches were practically unheard of.

There were no global circuits, no easy flights, no guarantees of fair play or even identical hardware.

It was a gamble — and a statement.

There was no official world ranking system back then, but reputations were everything. And across practice servers, event brackets, and LANs, one name rose to the top of every shortlist:

Makaveli.

He wasn't just going as a player.

He was going as a proxy for an entire region — carrying the weight of North American Quake on his shoulders.

And the stakes were personal.

Just one year earlier, Thresh and his Clan Death Row teammates had traveled to Sweden for an international NetQuake and QuakeWorld showdown against the elite Clan 9.

They were trounced.

Unprepared for the pace, the precision, and the coordination of Europe's best, North America had been humbled on foreign soil.

Makaveli had no intention of making the same mistake.

"This wasn't just about me. This was about avenging my friends. This was about proving that the best players in the world weren't just in Europe — they were in North America. And I was going to be the one to prove it."

The deal was simple: fly to Sweden, and face the freshly crowned EDL champion in a best-of-five — no bracket, no buffer.

Makaveli accepted.

Preparation Without a Playbook

In the weeks leading up to the match, Makaveli needed somewhere to sharpen his edge.

Without Immortal, without a formal team, he turned to an old friend.

Thresh offered Makaveli access to the Gamers.com office as a training ground — a quiet, focused space to ready himself for the fight of his career.

Every day, an employee of Gamers.com who resided in the same city as Makaveli, would pick him up in the AM. Makaveli would spend all day at the Gamers.com office preparing for Sweden during these sessions.

It was there that Makaveli pestered Thresh into one last duel — a warm-up match on Q2DM1, a map Makaveli had all but mastered.

Thresh wasn't in competition form. But he was still a dangerous and instinctive opponent. And Makaveli beat him soundly.

"I know Dennis wasn't in top shape and I don't think he felt he would win. But Dennis is excellent when it comes to psychology, and he knew what a victory over him would mean to me mentally. To be fair, I barely beat that man in anything. Very talented and intelligent."

That mattered. That said he was ready.

His form was peaking.

The Rise of Another

Around this time, a **new name began appearing** on Quake 2 servers.

Makaveli noticed a player who stood out — not because he was winning, but because his losses weren't as brutal as everyone else's.

"I was beating guys by 30–40 frags. This kid? I was still winning, but only by 20. He made me think. He made me work. He never gave up when others would fold. Kept coming back for more despite the losses. I respect that."

The name was **Zero4**.

One day, Makaveli decided to **test him properly**. On Q2DM1, Makaveli broke protocol and let the kid grab the railgun — a weapon he always denied his opponents.

"I could tell he was talented. So I just wanted to get a sense of what he was capable of."

It backfired. Fast.

Zero4 surged to a 14–0 lead.

Makaveli, cool as ever, typed:

"Now I'm going to try."

He locked in, tightened his control, denied angles, and clawed his way back — eventually **winning the match**.

“John still brings that up. He couldn’t believe I could just flip the switch like that. It still makes me laugh to this day, because John admitted how angry it made him at the time. But I knew then — he was special. Very few players could force me to lock in like that to win. I could usually just go through the motions.”

Makaveli packed his gear. The sparring was done. The next match wouldn’t be in California or on a practice server.

It would be **on the world stage**.

The duel with Shub was about to begin.

Arrival in Enemy Territory

The trip to Sweden got off to a chaotic start.

Makaveli’s luggage was lost.

He was placed in a shared hostel with other competitors — something completely foreign to American expectations.

"I wasn’t bunking up with a bunch of guys. I told them I was going to walk down the street and check into the first hotel I saw."

The hotel’s name?

First Hotel.

Even after the rough travel, Makaveli arrived prepared. His mechanics were crisp. His mindset was sharp.

But the environment was a shock to the system.

Rushed from his hotel to a local LAN café, still adjusting to the time zone, he was immediately invited into casual matches against Europe's best — including Shub himself in an instagib game. This is a railgun only, 1-shot 1-kill mode of Quake.

Jet-lagged and getting familiar with the new LAN environment, Makaveli lost — badly.

"Shub was a machine. I could immediately tell he had fantastic mechanics and rhythm. And everyone kept telling me: ‘He’s the favorite to win.’ I won’t lie — it shook me a little. But I buried that. I kept the Makaveli persona as a shield. Cool. Confident."

What mattered most was that Makaveli knew he was ready — *his preparation was solid*.

As he practiced against other elite European players over the next two days, it became obvious:

He wasn't struggling.

He was *dominating* — 15, 20, even 30 frag victories became routine.

"These were the best Europe had to offer. And I found the games... easy for the most part. The number 3 and 2 players were also talented. Rufus and Blue. Good competition, but I could beat them as well. Blue took me by surprise in a warmup game on Q2DM1, I let him run up the score when I knew it was over. Beat him back on Q2DM3 convincingly and asked for a rematch on DM1, he refused. He knew, I took him light and was going to come back hard."

But he never played Shub in practice.

That was by design.

He chose to conceal his final form until it truly mattered.

The Champion Who Proved It On the World Stage

When the time came, it wasn't just another match.

It was Europe versus North America.

Precision versus power.

Shub versus Makaveli.

And when it mattered most, Makaveli delivered — sweeping Shub 3 games to zero in 3 tightly contested games.

No bracket reset.

No excuses.

No mercy.

"This wasn't a fluke. It wasn't a bracket gift. This was the best of Europe — and I beat him at his best, on his home soil. Directly after he just won the European tournament."

There was no prize money.

No trophy.

Just pride — and a place in history.

In a room filled with LAN killers — the elite of Europe — **Makaveli stood tallest.**

Victories like this don't just define players — they become legends.

And in the early days of esports, legends weren't built in bracket results.

They were told in **stories** — and this one, people still tell.

But Makaveli didn't get there alone.

He was **forged through fire** — a fire stoked by two of the greatest players to ever touch Quake:

- **Dennis "Thresh" Fong**, the most dominant player of his era, and Makaveli's early mentor.
- **Kurt "Immortal" Shimada**, the prodigy turned rival, whose relentless LAN battles helped sharpen Makaveli's edge.

Thresh lost only two maps across his career:

- One in Quake 1 (to *Reptile*)
- One in Quake 2 (to *Immortal*)

Makaveli trained with both. Makaveli learned from both.

He was Thresh's **go-to sparring partner** before the PGL Season 3 Finals.

He went blow for blow with Immortal in elite tournaments and LAN showdowns.

And when it came time to represent them on the international stage —

He didn't just uphold their legacy.

He elevated it.

The Aftermath – Legends at Rest

After defeating Shub in Stockholm, Makaveli wasn't just celebrated — he was understood.

In a time before rankings, before esports governing bodies, before structured global circuits — there was only **reputation**. Only LAN. Only results.

And after Sweden, there was no debate.

Makaveli was the **de facto Quake II World Champion**.

"If someone wants to say there was a player out there who could've beaten me or Shub? Respectfully disagree. That was the peak. We were the best."

But competition does more than crown winners.

It builds bonds.

Despite the result, Makaveli and Shub had found a rhythm in their rivalry — and a respect that transcended brackets. So when the event was over, Makaveli did something very few could have predicted:

He **invited Shub to California** — to stay with his family, see the West Coast, and explore the other side of the world.

And Shub accepted.

“A short time later, I was picking up a Norwegian Quake II player in the San Francisco Bay Area. Wild.”

What followed was the kind of post-victory chapter that can’t be found on Liquipedia.

The two rivals became **temporary brothers**, exploring American culture, riding roller coasters, and — naturally — playing Quake II. But this time, there were **no lights**, no brackets, no pressure. Just **skill versus skill**. Pure.

The duels were **incredible** — fast-paced, chaotic, brilliant.
Each one a reminder of just how **elite** they both were.

“It made me appreciate that 3–0 even more. Because when we let loose? Nobody could dominate the other. Back and forth action. Shub was great at Quake 2.”

The only tragedy?

They didn’t record a single match.

“At the time, we wanted it to be just for us. No demos, no eyes. We didn’t want it used for trash talk or analysis. We just wanted to play — pure. And now? We both regret it. Because those were some of the best games ever played.

But that was the exception. For most of my career, I played in public. Rarely smurfing. Rarely hiding. If someone wanted to study me, copy me, or even figure out how to beat me — go ahead. I believed in my process. I wanted the scene to grow. If my demos and visibility helped someone else sharpen their game, I considered that part of the mission.”

They also teamed up under alias — **terrorizing the West Coast servers** as an unstoppable duo.

“We did smurf for my dad’s Quake II clan once. Just obliterated these poor amateurs. They had no idea they were up against the top two players in the world. I remember laughing watching the death messages scroll from Shub destroying people.”

It was lighthearted. Fun. The last high note of an era.

Soon, Shub would fly home.
And so would Quake II.

The **Quake III Arena hype train** was already rolling.
The **ID Software tour bus** was on the road.
And a little thing called **Q3Test** was just around the corner.
Makaveli's victory had closed one book.
A new one was about to begin.

A New Arena – The Shift to Quake III

Makaveli had conquered the Quake II world.
But a new game was on the horizon — and it wasn't just a sequel.
It was a redesign. A rethinking. A *challenge* to the very style that had brought him to glory.

Quake III Arena had arrived.

Gone was the meta of iron-clad weapon denial — weapons now respawned quickly.
Players started with a **machinegun**, a major departure from the weak-spawn days of Quake I and II. The game was **faster**, more **fluid**, and more **aim-intensive**.

Even **John Carmack**, the architect of the franchise, was quoted as saying that Quake III's design was meant to “get rid of the Thresh factor.”

“That was my style of play. I took a lot of elements from Dennis and incorporated it into my approach. They were changing the rules because players like Thresh, and honestly myself, had figured out how to dominate. They didn't like the blowouts. They wanted tighter games. And they succeeded.”

Makaveli wasn't immediately sold.
He experimented with the early builds, but the game was still in beta — **balance issues**, mechanical quirks, and movement inconsistencies plagued its pre-release versions.

He **watched** as tournaments came and went:

- **Hakeem won Frag 3**
- **Wombat took Ground Zero**

Makaveli stayed on the sidelines, refining his understanding, watching the scene take shape.

But the whispers started.

On **IRC**, in scrims, in forums — people questioned his absence.
Was he ducking the Quake I players?
Was he afraid Quake III would expose him?

Makaveli responded in only the way he could:

“I had only ever placed in the top 3 of any LAN I attended. So unless something changed I told them... you might as well reserve me a podium spot.”

The old-school confidence sparked pushback — accusations of arrogance, trash talk, classic early esports bravado.

But Makaveli wasn’t posturing.

He was **grinding**.

Slowly but surely, he was adapting. His aim tightened. His movement sharpened. His item control evolved. He worked on **route running**, **timing**, and **relearning dominance** in a game designed to neutralize it.

And the wins started to come back.

“I was never the most talented player. But I worked extremely hard at refining my skills in both games. Eventually, I became a top tier competitor in the world through dedication and perseverance.”

During this period, as always, alias culture ruled the servers.
Everyone was hiding their names. Playing incognito. Testing styles in silence.

And then — something familiar.

“I was in a game. Lost a close one. One of my old friends was watching and was stunned I had actually dropped a map. ‘Who the hell is that?’ he asked. I didn’t hesitate: ‘Zero4. No doubt about it.’”

Makaveli could **feel** it — the movement, the rhythm, the mindset, and the mechanics.
Zero4 was **adapting**, and not just to Quake III.
He was adapting the **Makaveli playbook** — and improving it.

It was a sign.

The new era wasn’t coming.

It had arrived.

Then came the **XS Reality Invitational** — or **XSi** — a landmark event that brought together Quake III's rising stars and the legends of Quake I and II.

Makaveli received his invitation.

So did **Immortal**, making a brief comeback.

It was a new game.

But it was **still Quake**.

Time to step into the arena once more.

Return to the War Room – Preparing for XSi

The invitations were in.

Makaveli.

Immortal.

Quake III Arena.

Sweden.

It felt like déjà vu — another major LAN, another clash of continents, another shot at proving who still held the crown. And just like they had for **Extreme Annihilation**, Makaveli and Immortal went to work.

They went back to the **war room** — a familiar setup in Makaveli's home, lined with monitors, mousepads, and the oversized **prize checks** from past events repurposed as **vision shields**, separating screens and reminding them what was at stake.

But something was different this time.

“Immortal wasn't the same player. Not in spirit, not in fire. He had met his future wife in high school by that point — his heart was somewhere else. And honestly? Looking back, I can't blame him.”

Makaveli still cherished having his old friend back by his side.

But the chemistry, the edge, the shared obsession — it wasn't there anymore.

And the game itself? It didn't help.

Quake III Arena was a different beast. Faster. Tighter. Less forgiving. And **Immortal was struggling**.

Their practice sessions had none of the frantic brutality of their Quake II days.

No more running each other into the ground, no more 20-frag momentum swings.

Makaveli was **winning consistently** — sometimes handily.

“I wasn’t sure if I was that good... or if he had just fallen that far. Only Sweden would give me the answer.”

Still, there was comfort in the routine — in sitting shoulder-to-shoulder, clicking through maps, theory crafting item routes, and whispering old jokes between spawns.

It was a spark of nostalgia, and a flicker of closure.

“We had been lions once — me and him. Unstoppable together. And even if we weren’t hunting the same way anymore... it still felt right, getting ready for battle one more time.”

What waited for them in Stockholm would be faster.

Sharper.

Colder.

But they were going anyway.

XSi – The Dawn of a New Rivalry

The **XS Reality Invitational** was unlike anything that had come before it.

Held in **Stockholm**, XSi wasn’t just another tournament — it was the **first true global showdown for Quake III Arena**, bringing together the top players from across every Quake generation: Quake I gods, Quake II legends, and the emerging specialists of Quake III.

It was a summit — and a storm.

Makaveli and Immortal both received invitations.

But this wasn’t Quake II anymore.

Immortal struggled in the **group stage**, visibly frustrated, unable to find the rhythm in this faster, more volatile meta. It was a difficult moment — a symbol that the era was shifting.

So did **Shub** — the European champion Makaveli had defeated just months earlier.

Both were out early.

But Makaveli?

Makaveli came alive.

He tore through the field and was undefeated in the Group Stage, **defeating legends from every corner of the Quake legacy**:

- He knocked out **Wombat** 2–0 in the bracket stage — the most recent tournament champion and a respected force.
- He beat **Kane, Timber, Doomer**, and a swath of elite names who had carved reputations in Quake I and early Q3A.
- And he did it cleanly. **Decisively.**

“There were a lot of talented players there. But I felt confident I could pull through when it mattered and beat them. Only one player at that event felt like a true threat. Just one.”

His name was **Fatal1ty**.

The two met in Sweden — two Americans in a foreign land, face-to-face for the first time. One, a reigning force in Quake II and early Quake III. The other, **a rising prodigy**, still unknown to most of the European scene.

“That was the first time we met. He was still relatively new to the spotlight — but he had that look. That drive. I knew right away he was going to be something.”

They clashed — a showdown of an elite Quake 2 player and the emerging Quake 3 phenom. Makaveli **lost maps**... but he didn’t lose his grip.

He had just **beaten everyone else in the tournament**, and there was no doubt about his standing.

But this was **Fatal1ty’s breakout**.

His **first international victory**.

The start of a career that would go on to reshape how the world viewed professional gaming.

“If someone asks who won XSi, the answer’s Fatal1ty. No question. But who did he have to get through to do it? That was me.”

Makaveli didn’t just show up in Quake III.

He **proved** he could still beat the best — in a game that wasn’t built for his style, in a generation designed to neutralize dominance.

And yet, the only player to stop him?

A future Hall of Famer.

XSi wasn't a fall.

It wasn't a stumble.

It was **Makaveli's re-entry into the fire**, in a new game, against new blood — and he **stood tall**.

It also marked the **passing of a torch**. From one of Quake's foundational champions... to the next.

Makaveli was no longer the future. He was the bar to be passed.

Makaveli's Code: Bravado With a Purpose

Esports in 2000 was still wild, raw, and undefined. It wasn't just about who won — it was about *how* they won. In that environment, Makaveli didn't just play to take matches. He played to make **statements**.

At the XS Invitational in Sweden — the same tournament where Fatal1ty claimed his first major win — Makaveli faced off against Wombat, the recent champion of CPL Ground Zero. Wombat had earned that title by winning a notoriously slow Grand Final on Tourney2, defeating Xenon 1–0.

Makaveli, preparing his own Quake III debut at the time, was watching.

"I was furious internally," he later recalled.

"Here I step away to sharpen up, and you're out here stinking up the joint with a 1–0 snoozefest in the final? Esports wasn't established yet. We needed fans. We needed sponsors. That wasn't it."

When Makaveli's bracket delivered him Wombat on **Tourney2**, he saw an opportunity — not just to win, but to **send a message**.

He beat Wombat 2-1, purposely playing slow to criticize the previous final. Makaveli was leading 2-0 the majority of the match.

For 15 straight minutes, Makaveli controlled the map with surgical precision. He did just enough damage to keep Wombat out of control, without finishing the job. The goal wasn't efficiency. It was symbolism.

"It wasn't about the score. It was about showcasing how horrible that play was for the viewer, the opponent, and that 'winning isn't everything' regarding the situation we were in. We needed butts in the seats, not people falling asleep as you run away all game. So I

controlled him and played slow on purpose, kept it 2-0. Gave myself a little room for error, and good thing because he got a frag around the final minute”

And then, after the match, came the signature Makaveli move.

He walked up to Wombat and asked, “*Was that lame?*”

Wombat said it was.

Makaveli smiled and said:

“Don’t ever do that in a final again.”

It was part bravado, part mentorship, part performance art. But above all, it was **Makaveli’s ethos on full display:**

Control the game.

Respect the audience.

Play with meaning.

And always — always — leave an impression.

Razer CPL – The \$100,000 Showdown

Despite an uphill battle in prep, Makaveli’s performance at **Razer CPL** was electric.

He tore through the early rounds of the **Winner’s Bracket**, dispatching legendary names with surgical precision:

- A revenge victory over **Rix**, the veteran who had denied him a title back in the Quake II days.
- A dominant win against **Sujoy**, a well-known Quake I duelist who had recently secured 3rd place in another major event.
- And several more elite names along the way, in a bracket stacked with international talent.

Makaveli was **surging**.

But then he met a familiar face.

Fatal1ty.

The two clashed once more — and this time, it was Fatal1ty who prevailed, sending Makaveli down into the **Loser's Bracket**. But Makaveli wasn't done.

There was **\$10,000** on the line in the very next match.

Lose and take 3rd — walk away with 10K.

Win, and you're in the **Grand Final**, with at least **\$20,000** guaranteed.

His opponent?

PowerK — the S. Korean phenom, flanked by an entourage, representing a country that had begun treating esports like a professional industry before the rest of the world even caught on.

The match was on **Tourney4**.

PowerK took an early lead — tight movement, sharp aim, a few early exchanges going his way.

But then... something snapped.

Makaveli took control.

"I really started turning up the heat. I could feel it — I was moving, timing, hitting the critical shots. It was mine."

He dismantled PowerK in the final minutes, securing the **victory with a 23-7 score**, and punching his ticket to the **Grand Final**.

The map roll? **Q3DM13**.

Makaveli already knew: *"I was toast. I knew I had gaps in my preparation, and watching his previous performances on the map, I knew I was about to pay for that oversight. Fatal1ty was extremely sharp. The work he put in was obvious to me."*

With incomplete prep, and most of his experience on DM13 coming from bot matches in California due to limited competition, he was walking into a losing battle. Makaveli knew the value of thorough preparation at this level.

Fatal1ty, by contrast, had been **bootcamping for months**.

He had a **LAN setup**, a group of elite players in his region who connected regularly, and the **first signs of what modern esports training would look like**.

Makaveli was a gladiator.

Fatal1ty was a polished machine.

The result: **13–0**.

“This was innovative thinking for its time, the LAN server setup kept him in LAN form. Quake plays faster on LAN, there is an adjustment some people struggle with. Fatal1ty should be credited for raising the competitive bar even further. He improvised on top of the preparation foundation, which shows an immense passion for competition. It’s a labor of love. This made me want to push harder with my own preparation.”

Still, the moment wasn’t just about victory.

It was about *arrival*.

The **award ceremony** was a spectacle. Cameras flashed, media swarmed. And standing in front of them?

- **Fatal1ty** — the new champion.
- **Angel Munoz** — the face of the CPL.
- **Makaveli** — confident, sharp, and smiling in defeat.

“I was still a media darling. Even in second place — people gravitated toward me. And Angel saw it too. He didn’t have one marketable star. He had two.”

This was more than just a game now.

This was **esports beginning to professionalize**.

This was the **infrastructure forming**.

And Makaveli, win or lose, was right at the center of it.

“At Razer CPL, I made it to the Grand Finals—another top LAN finish. The venue was packed. Cameras were flashing. For a brief moment, the future of Quake—and maybe even esports—ran through me. I was at the center of it all.

I was young. Traveling alone. Atlanta, Dallas, New York, Razer CPL, Sweden—twice. I was winning, representing North America, beating the best Europe had to offer. And I was by myself.

No parent in the crowd. No one pacing behind me, nervously watching my matches. You'd think a parent would want to go with their kid to something like Razer—especially given my recent accomplishments. This wasn't new. They didn't oppose it. They followed the results online and would congratulate me on wins. But there was an indifference to it. Back then, I didn't think about it much. I was focused. I had work to do. But looking back? They didn't understand. They still don't. My father behind me would've mattered—looking out for me. I had no idea what I was doing looking back. An immature kid with zero business sense or real world experience. I don't blame them for not understanding. But I recognize it was an extra weight. I carried all of it alone.”

The Exit – Burnout, Betrayal, and Walking Away at the Top

After Razer CPL, the buzz still followed Makaveli. He was media-friendly, respected by peers, and had silenced the doubters again. Small events came and went, but the next *real test* was already on the calendar:

Babbage's CPL — another six-figure prize pool, a new apex of Quake 3, and all the spotlight you could ask for.

Makaveli entered as the **#2 seed**.

And this time, he was prepared.

Drawing inspiration from Fatal1ty's rigorous bootcamping, Makaveli crafted his own training gauntlet — setup a schedule, a rotation of quality players, and different styles of players to simulate what he would face in bracket environments— the closest thing to an organized coaching program that early esports had ever seen.

“I felt sharp. I felt ready. I felt like I was going to get Fatal1ty back. I was a fierce competitor — there was no way I was going to let him outwork me at this next tournament.”

But esports, as a system, wasn't ready for him.

There were no structured support systems.

No team staff.

No safety net.

Makaveli was broke.

He borrowed money from a friend for the flight.

He bunked with another in a hotel room he didn't book.

And still — he showed up.

What greeted him was a logistical mess.

Players weren't allowed to warm up on the tournament machines. There were no setups for private practice. Tournament delays dragged on. And Makaveli, loyal to the scene, found himself doing **media appearances for Angel Munoz**, while his rivals were quietly getting ready to compete.

He was starving. Literally.

"I could barely afford food, penny pinching to get by so I wasn't eating properly. My blood sugar was tanking. I felt physically ill at times. But I smiled for the cameras. I was mindful I had to keep the 'this can be a profession' image."

He begged to forfeit his seed just to play a few early matches — anything to shake off the rust. Makaveli hadn't played a duel in over 3 days and had raised concerns about it before match day.

No one listened.

"This wasn't Angel's fault. He was doing the best he could in a very difficult time for esports. Trying to really get it off the ground on the business and financial end. I think for a while I was bitter because I felt that he should have helped me. But in hindsight, I don't think I ever truly confided in him about my fears and struggles. I was too immature at the time to see I was looking too far ahead, too fast. The ecosystem simply wasn't ready for what I envisioned: Gamers as the new age athlete."

Finally, the tournament began, and it was a perfect storm of disaster.

Makaveli faced **Prozac**, a top-tier opponent, right out of the gate — with no warm-up, no map time, no rhythm.

He lost.

A rebound win against Rix followed — a revenge of sorts, but hollow.

Then came a final match on ZTNDM1 against another elite European.

He was out.

"It was devastating. I prepared like a champion. I felt sharp. I was playing some of the highest quality Quake 3 of my life, I had improved from Razer CPL. But I was used as a mascot, not supported like a competitor."

Worse, he watched players he'd consistently bested climb higher. A bootcamp sparring partner took fourth. A player he bested at XSi took 3rd. The winner? Zero4—the West Coast phenom Makaveli had sparred with online, a kid who'd grown up studying his demos.

"I knew I belonged on that podium. And I had nothing to show for it."

It was a bitter truth to swallow.

Yet amidst the frustration, a flicker of pride refused to die.

At Razer CPL, Makaveli had seen the young Zero4 stumble — raw, talented, but untested. He had seen it before anyone else: the spark, the future potential waiting to ignite. And now, watching Zero4 stand atop the summit, Makaveli felt something more than envy or regret.

He felt vindication.

This player — shaped in part by his shadow — had carried the torch forward.

Even as his own tournament unraveled under fatigue and frustration, Makaveli felt a strange peace settling in.

The future was in good hands.

The echoes of his impact were already taking root — in players who would shine under even brighter lights.

And after the event, as the adrenaline faded, the existential questions began to creep in:

"Here I am, one of the best in the world — and what do I have to show for it? What was all the preparation and sacrifice for?"

Then came the final blow.

A Ryder Cup-style **NA vs. EU team event** was being organized almost immediately after. Makaveli was invited to participate in the event in London. This discussion took place in

January shortly after Babbages CPL.

A chance to unite with Fatal1ty, to lead North America together as allies instead of rivals. Participate in an international rivalry that he helped create.

He declined.

"I loved it too much. I knew if I played that event, it'd pull me back in. Hanging with the guys, training with Fatal1ty — there's no way I wouldn't have been sucked back in. But I couldn't do that to myself. Walking away was one of the hardest things I've ever done, and I made it final after Babbage's CPL — cold turkey. No esports. No 'pro gaming.'"

Realistically, what was I supposed to do? I had nothing. Still living at home. Turning 22 that year. Time waits for no one. My father doesn't even understand esports now — imagine what it was like back then. No income. No way to get to events. No way to train properly. Absolutely no support. My parents weren't on board. 'Get a real job.'

I looked 10+ years out and saw the truth: the scene, as it was, wasn't sustainable. Even at my peak, staying could've wrecked my future. I had no foundation — nothing to fall back on.

I didn't walk away because I stopped believing in esports. I walked away because I believed it deserved better — a future I hoped to see, even if I couldn't build it myself."

Just like that, it ended.

Makaveli left **not because he couldn't keep up**, but because he refused to **keep playing in a system that didn't respect the commitment** required to compete at that level.

"It was one of the most difficult decisions of my life. I still don't know if I made the right call. I had gas in the tank. I was peaking, not declining. One of my biggest regrets, is I never got to find out if all that work and preparation would have paid off at Babbages. I will never know."

But what he walked away from?

Was the *foundation* that today's esports stands on.

And sometimes, the people who leave first — are the ones who laid the bricks deepest.

The Final Chapters – Legacy Without the Spotlight

Makaveli's final competitive chapter didn't come in a single moment — it was a slow fade, marked by three final events that reflected both his residual greatness and the reality of walking away in pieces.

In 2001, he earned a spot on the U.S. team for the World Cyber Games in Quake 3, joining future world champion Zero4. The event, held in Seoul, South Korea, was styled as an Olympics for esports — the global scene was taking shape. But Makaveli was no longer chasing glory. This was approximately a year after Babbages CPL.

"I didn't want to go. Some friends convinced me to compete, so I drove down and stayed with friends in the area. I just showed up in L.A. and won a spot. No real practice. No drive. Just momentum and reflexes. I had already taken several extended breaks from Quake over the year. I wasn't the same player anymore, and I could feel it."

Looking back, it's one of the few moments Makaveli openly regrets.

"I took that spot from someone who probably wanted it more — who would've trained hard, who would've given it everything. I didn't. I just wanted to see Korea and support John. I was chasing the travel, not the trophy. I didn't practice before Korea, and I didn't practice in Korea. My heart wasn't there anymore."

He put in a poor showing. His head wasn't in it. He already had a job back home working in a restaurant, bussing tables. The lights of esports had faded.

In 2002, he gave it another try. He entered the WCG Regionals, and won. But again, it was muscle memory — not preparation.

"It was being held in my neighboring town about 15 minutes away, so I said what the heck. Just go."

He went to New York for the next stage and didn't make the finals. The edge had dulled.

Not because he wasn't talented. But because he wasn't training.

And in esports, that's the slow death. Skill isn't static. It erodes. You don't just *have* it — you maintain it. And Makaveli wasn't. What once came naturally was now fading from disuse. No amount of past dominance could override the simple truth:

If you want to be elite, you have to grind. He wasn't grinding.

It was a slow burn — a competitive form quietly decaying while life pulled him in another direction.

His last tournament came later that year at QuakeCon 2002. But by then, it wasn't about competition — it was about nostalgia. He attended with his younger brother and two friends from work, just to show them what an event looked like. Still, he finished in the 9–12 bracket. Not bad for someone who hadn't practiced. The structured discipline he exhibited earlier in his career, was gone. Just instinct now. Echoes.

"Zero4 was there too. Even he didn't do great. The scene was still stacked with killers. But I wasn't sharp anymore. I had walked away too many times. The hunger was gone. It was over. I was already living that restaurant worker lifestyle and thinking about college."

That was it. Victor "Makaveli" Cuadra never entered another tournament.

No fanfare. No final match under the lights. Just three quiet exits — one after another — until the stage finally went dark.

And when it did, Makaveli didn't chase it.

"I was content with letting Zero4 shine, and considered him a worthy successor to my dominance on the West Coast. He climbed 'Mount Makaveli' and had become a monster. Absolute killer. I was proud of him."

Esports glory was no longer an interest, as by then, a different kind of challenge was taking shape — one not played in brackets or under lights, but in the steady rhythm of everyday life.

Epilogue – The Final Level

Life didn't end when the lights went dark.
It just changed.

Victor "Makaveli" Cuadra stepped away from the professional stage, but he carried the lessons of esports into a new arena — one built not with brackets and prize pools, but with perseverance, discipline, and quiet victories.

Today, he is a college graduate, a homeowner, a husband, and a father to three beautiful children.

He forged a career in IT Operations, specializing in Network Engineering — a field where precision, problem-solving, and relentless learning mirror the skills he once honed on virtual battlefields.

Fittingly, Makaveli now works for Twitch — talk about full circle.

Occasionally, you can still catch him in chat, playfully ribbing the competitive action and engaging with the community.

The "quiet legend" nobody really knows.

The competitive fire and love for the esports community never vanished. It just found new games.

And some connections never faded.

Even now, more than twenty years later, Makaveli still plays with the old guard — Thresh, Immortal, Zero4, Fatal1ty.

The rivalries have softened into friendship. The battles have become memories. The trash talk? Still elite.

Makaveli was deeply hurt by his experiences as an esports competitor, leading to his withdrawal to private life. Thorin's outreach for an interview rekindled Makaveli's connection to the esports community.

And Zero4 convinced Makaveli to be an analyst for Quake Champions, officially bringing Makaveli out of the shadows.

He attends QuakeCon again — not to prove anything, but to be part of the legacy he helped create.

At one of those events, he even stepped back into the arena — a casual 2v2 Quake Live LAN tournament. His first in-person matches since retirement over 20 years ago.

He finished third in the amateur event.

Not bad for an old man.

The highlight? Facing Rapha's team in what felt like a generational exhibition.

Of course, Rapha's squad dominated — but that wasn't the point.

The point was the moment before the match — the fire still flickering.

Makaveli opened his phone that morning to a photo of himself eating breakfast.

It was from Rapha.

Underneath? A gif of Robert DeNiro doing the “I See You” gesture with his fingers.

It was a challenge. A nod. A moment of respect from a champion who knew exactly whose footsteps he had followed.

Makaveli smiled.

“I laughed and told my friend, ‘Damn it, he’s already spotted me first.’”

The stage lights may have gone out.

But the friendships, the lessons, and the legacy burn brighter than ever.

Some victories aren’t measured in trophies.

They’re measured in the life you build after the final match is played.

Makaveli built a good one.

The Visionary With a Mic Before Streaming Was a Thing

Makaveli wasn’t just elite with a mouse — he was decades ahead with a mic.

In December 2000, he appeared on CNNfn, the financial arm of CNN — watched by investors, venture capitalists, and entrepreneurs. In a time when mainstream media barely understood gaming, Makaveli was breaking it down with clarity and confidence.

He predicted:

- Cross-platform gaming
- Gamers as the future of hardware marketing
- And the idea that pro players should be the voices tech companies listen to

Let that sink in. In a pre-Twitch, pre-YouTube world, Makaveli already knew what the gaming economy would become — and he was living it before the world knew how to catch up.

And it wasn’t just talk.

At the same time he was making these predictions on CNN, Intel — the most dominant tech company of the era — entrusted Makaveli with a prototype Pentium 4 processor for a marketing testimonial project. He was given access to cutting-edge hardware before its public release — a rare privilege normally reserved for industry insiders.

Makaveli proudly bragged about it in the competitive gaming IRC channels — a playful but powerful moment that showed just how deeply embedded he already was in both gaming culture and tech advancement.

Before esports had content creators, Makaveli was the content.

Before gamers had sponsorships, Makaveli had early corporate trust.

Before esports players sold CPUs, GPUs, and hardware to the world, Makaveli was the first blueprint.

Men's Journal captured his influence visually — showing him leaning over cutting-edge monitors in a national magazine spread.

Before esports had content creators, Makaveli was the content. There were no agents. No esports managers. No playbooks. Makaveli was writing it from scratch.

The Legacy That Echoes

Makaveli stepped away — not because he faded, but because the world wasn't ready yet. There were no six-figure salaries. No brand deals. No sustainable infrastructure. He had real-life decisions to make, like so many of esports' founding generation.

But his name never faded. And his influence? It only grew.

Zero4, future world champion, learned by watching Makaveli on servers.

And **Rapha**, considered by many to be the most mentally dominant Quake player of all time — the “**modern Thresh**” — grew up in a scene built by those Makaveli inspired.

There's a **lineage** here:

Thresh → Makaveli → Zero4 → Rapha

That's not coincidence. That's legacy. That's bloodline.

And decades later, when **Quake Champions** launched and the scene came full circle — Makaveli was called back to be a **broadcast analyst**.

Why? Because legacy matters.

And his never left.

His voice brought clarity, history, and authenticity to the desk. You don't bring someone back after 20 years unless their name **did and still means something**.

And Make No Mistake

If you were around for the foundation of esports —

If you were in the servers, the IRC chats, the early LANs, the bleeding edge of competition

—

You **knew** Makaveli.

Even today, his name still echoes through those conversations —

quietly, respectfully, and with weight.

Among legends, it's whispered, not shouted.

Because some names don't need volume to carry power — they carry **history**.

A Legacy That Would Thrive in Any Era

In many ways, Makaveli's impact was constrained not by talent, but by time.

If his career were transplanted into today's esports ecosystem — with structured tournament formats, reliable prize pools, sponsorships, salaried teams, and full-time support staff — he wouldn't just have more titles.

He'd be a **mainstay on championship stages**. A **fixture in content**, analysis, and brand leadership. A **competitive icon and media darling**.

His performances wouldn't be whispered about in IRC logs or shared as demo files.

They'd be clipped, monetized, and broadcast to millions.

His interviews wouldn't exist in fading archives.

They'd go viral.

What he did in a nascent, uncharted era of esports — with no guarantees, no financial backing, and no blueprint — speaks louder because of the context in which it happened.

“In today's esports world, you don't have to win every time — you just have to stay in the fight. That's where I would've flourished. My mindset was built for consistency, pressure, and the long game — even before there was a system designed to reward it.”

In a modern framework, he'd thrive. But in the one he helped build? He already did.

Why Makaveli Is A Foundational Esports Figure

Makaveli isn't a footnote in esports history.

He's part of the foundation.

He was:

- A Quake II World Champion, defeating Europe's best on their turf. One of the first international esports champions.
- The #2 Quake III player in the world, behind only Fatal1ty.
- A slayer of champions: Immortal, Shub, Wombat, PowerK, Rix, Sujoy, and more.
- A student of Thresh, a rival competitor to legends, and a teacher to future champions.
- A founder of “the craft” — building structured prep, training systems, and professional discipline before esports had the infrastructure to support it.

And beyond the matches,

Makaveli was one of the first players to show that **gamers could be ambassadors** — not just competitors.

At a time when the world barely understood what "esports" even was,

Makaveli stood on national television with CNNfn, in Intel marketing campaigns, and in mainstream press —

long before players had agents, contracts, or corporate playbooks.

In 2000, Intel trusted him to help launch their Pentium 4 processor — formal enough to require an NDA, but informal in spirit.

There was no big-money contract.

No endorsements.

Just a prototype machine, a handshake in spirit,

and the belief that a gamer could represent the future of technology.

It was likely one of the first deals of its kind —

an early corporate partnership with an esports player *before* the term "esports influencer" even existed.

Today, top players and streamers earn tens of thousands — sometimes more — for the same kind of testimonial work.

Makaveli wasn't chasing a check.

He was chasing belief:

The belief that gaming was the future,
and that players deserved a place in the broader world of culture, marketing, and
technology.

And he helped lay the first stones on the road every modern player now walks.

He had the skill.

He had the charisma.

He had the timing.

He just didn't have the right era.

But that's a responsibility of the current community:

To honor those who were ahead of their time.

Makaveli didn't just compete.

He defined.

He entertained.

He inspired.

He was the esports professional prototype,
living twenty years ahead of schedule.

If you are telling the story of esports?

It's incomplete without Makaveli.

Makaveli's Reflection – Legacy and Closure

"Walking away from esports was one of the hardest decisions of my life.

*I left in my prime — still sharp, still capable. I was world class and I let it fade
deliberately."*

*"I don't want fame, or money. I just want the community to know the sacrifices some of
us made. This is said without bitterness or envy... It's pride: Some today are living our
dream from the past."*

Interviews and Highlighted Matches

CNNfn Interview – *December 2000*

Link: <https://youtu.be/dBvGvRiFaVc?si=ui7YPVOqJVqmj>

Key Timestamps & Quotes:

- **1:10** – “What do I like most about it? Definitely the competition. I strive to be the best **just like anybody else in any other sport...**”
- **3:24** – “**Who better** to tell the general consumer about what is best on the PC market **than a gamer?**”
- **4:15** – “Hopefully we can link the two markets and **get communication between console users and PC users.**”
- **Throughout** – Makaveli discusses pro gamers as hardware influencers, a concept that would become a core part of esports business models in the 2010s.

Reflections with Makaveli – 2 hour interview

Link: <https://youtu.be/NsFTurkykqQ?si=wN1fvN0V4Xrgz3Zh>

Key Timestamps & Quotes:

- **1:34** – Reminiscing about the early days of dial-up, how he met Thresh and Immortal.
- **8:16** – The importance of being in the “right gaming circles” in the formative years of gaming/esports, Thresh’s early dominance.
- **9:50** – Reflects on past criticism of Angel Munoz, the CPL vs PGL rivalry, Thresh’s refusal to compete in CPL events
- **16:59** – Discussing the events of the PGL Season 3 Finals, Makaveli practicing with Thresh to gear him up for his final win in competitive 1v1 play.
- **32:50** – Makes point about old hardware vs new and his mental approach during his dominant period of competitive play.
- **43:25** – Talks about his young trash talking persona. Once brash, now a reflective veteran.
- **48:13** – The Shub Showdown in Europe. Shub travels to US to stay with Makaveli after the event. Regret of not recording private practice games with Shub.

- **59:45** – Having to adjust after being on top in Quake 2 with the release of Quake 3, which had a very different meta.
- **1:27:33** – Babbages CPL – What happened? Organizational difficulties, lack of support structure.
- **1:30:35** – The CNNfn interview. The vision of pro gamers being the “athlete for PC hardware.” The importance of putting forward a good face for esports.
- **1:34:43** – The last gasp of esports competition for Makaveli. WCG 2001 qualification reflections. Talks about being mentally retired, despite playing. Talks about his career transition after gaming.
- **1:39:30** – Connection with Zero4. The Thresh > Makaveli > Zero4 > Rapha lineage. Knowing Zero4 would be a championship threat before he was champion.
- **2:07:12** – Closing wisdom.
- **Throughout** – Makaveli presents a full picture of not only his career, but the esports ecosystem that was forming at the time. A historical journey through what would one day become a billion+ dollar industry.

Interview with Makaveli on the evolution of Quake and esports (Beyond Strafe Jumping)

Link: https://youtu.be/_gq-xu0XC_8?si=Od_GB8i85I7JQPJH

Key Timestamps & Quotes:

- **03:05** – Makaveli discusses the difference between the different esports eras.
- **15:50** – Insight on hardware changes from old esports competition to the modern era. Makaveli offers insight on whether or not “gear matters.”
- **24:10** – Makaveli reflects on practice and the importance of discipline. Mentions Rapha and ties it back to Fatal1ty for setting a new standard in esports preparation.
- **26:30** – Makaveli reflects on his decision making process to walk away from esports.
- **34:40** – Makaveli discusses his more recent transition to the commentator booth. Mentions the impact of Zero4 specifically asking him to be involved with Quake Champions.
- **1:02:50** – Makaveli discusses the lineage with Rapha. Mentions how Zero4 told him Rapha would be the next big player in Quake before it happened.

- **Throughout** – Another reflective interview where Makaveli discusses his career as a player, changes to the esports ecosystem, his connection with modern players and participation as a caster in recent events.

In The Keep Podcast - #31 Makaveli (Quake 2/3 Pro)

Link: <https://youtu.be/jAheoWdlnTk?si=tFzD1WNQxNp4ZiEE>

Key Timestamps & Quotes:

- **06:35** – Makaveli discusses personal competitive drive, how he doesn't understand the competitive concept of "going easy."
- **9:50** – Shares thoughts on how gaming rivalries fueled the competitive scene. The formation of clans and regional loyalty.
- **14:50** – Discusses the growth of streaming and gaming viewership overall. With the Makaveli bravado people are used to, he tells all the modern gamers making millions of dollars today: "You're welcome."
- **38:50** – Makaveli touches on the challenge of staying motivated toward the end of his run and how it contributed to his skill decline and retirement.
- **44:10** – Makaveli discusses the stigma of being a "pro gamer" at the time and the at home pressures to pursue something more traditional. "I feel like this is going to be something big in the future. So I want to be a part of it, help start it..."
- **Throughout** – Light-hearted interview where Makaveli discusses his career, the struggles of early esports, real life pressure affecting his decisions, and the overall growth of esports as an industry.

Highlight Matches

Makaveli vs PowerK (Razer CPL 2000 - \$10,000 on the line to see who goes to Grand Final) – Quake 3 (7-7 at 10 Minutes, then Makaveli goes nuts – Final Score 23-7)

https://youtu.be/k92Gud4Xh_A?si=RZVgcYt17S1AdLnK

Makaveli vs Shub (EDL Champion)– Game 3 (European Duel League Finals – Stockholm, Sweden 1999) Final match in best of 5 series. Makaveli wins 3rd match to secure 3-0 sweep. *"We both played tight in those games. A lot on the line in regard to regional pride."*

https://youtu.be/Lye__mmV-NQ?si=XEjvgYQkIW7guU9u

Makaveli vs Rix (Razer CPL 2000) – Quake 3 – Frag 2 Revenge Match

<https://youtu.be/0W7r97WMcYs?si=MigDOXH-QxtP9jRL>

Makaveli vs Immortal (Quakecon/Frag 2 1998) – Quake 2

<https://youtu.be/9XkQc2n0Gs4?si=6eL2P0zlFp33lpbB>

Makaveli vs Toxic (PGL Season 3 – Qualification Bracket for LAN Finals) – Quake 2

<https://youtu.be/MNpx0qGZYSE?si=0o6Ba1ZGy-y5SYI3>

Makaveli vs Zero4 (Online Match – 2002 – Zero4 Reigning WCG 2001 Champion)

Post Retirement, Makaveli Plays the World Champ Tough, 10-10 with less than 5 minutes to go.

“It was always fun when I’d play with John towards the end of my journey. Seeing his development and growth as a player was a treat. John was a great player that would push you to your limits, and break you, if you couldn’t deal with the pressure. Run you right off the map.”

<https://youtu.be/Czeide9XPR8?si=oE6VYUqjqdCWXqYj>

Makaveli vs ZeRo4 (WCG US National Finals – New York - 2002) – One of Makaveli’s last official professional matches against the reigning WCG Champion ZeRo4.

Makaveli’s final showdown with ZeRo4 wasn’t just a farewell — it was a passing of the torch. A quiet nod from one era to the next, fought not with ceremony, but with railguns and resolve. - *“The student is now the master.”* (7-3 for ZeRo4)

<https://youtu.be/bvTTGNlzavA?si=CDshw7RiMpr9-JH0> (Part 1)

https://youtu.be/FRtqvIB6vpQ?si=tDxKiL8YP1Xqp_j1 (Part 2)

Makaveli vs. Wombat – XS Invitational (Quake III – Tourney4)

Comeback from 7–1 down to win 8–7 over the reigning CPL Champion. A showcase of elite LAN poise. Elimination Match – Makaveli knocks defending champion out of the event.

<https://youtu.be/KmjOxvhohTc?si=xvNFqXaU4GiJpUI>

The XS Invitational marked Makaveli’s official Quake III Arena debut — and the stakes couldn’t have been higher. Facing off against Wombat, the reigning CPL Ground Zero Champion and runner-up at Frag 2, Makaveli entered the match as the underdog.

This was Wombat’s third major Quake III event. He was already considered the most accomplished LAN player in the game at that time. Fatal1ty had not yet won a major tournament — *Wombat was the standard.*

The match was played on Tourney4. Wombat surged to a 7–1 lead. But Makaveli refused to fold. Over the final minutes, he locked in, methodically clawed back, and delivered a final kill in the closing seconds to win 8–7.

“I was 20 years old. I said ‘reserve me a podium spot.’ Then I went to Sweden, eliminated the reigning champion from the tournament, and took top 2. That’s not talk. That’s delivery.”

Makaveli vs [9] Timber – XS Invitational (Quake III – Tourney4)

Elimination match between D16-Makaveli and [9]Timber from the legendary Clan 9, one of Europe's premier Quake organizations. Timber had defeated Makaveli earlier in the tournament, but now faced him again in the lower bracket — with his tournament life on the line.

Makaveli was already up 1–0 after a win on Tourney2 and looked to close out the series on Tourney4. With bracket pressure mounting, Makaveli delivered a composed, high-level performance — eliminating Timber and avenging the earlier loss.

<https://youtu.be/vJoagVnaGmM?si=bYD1Lp-tpW9soei7>

Makaveli vs [9]Doomer – XS Invitational (Quake III – Q3DM13)

Makaveli matched up against [9]Doomer from the legendary European Clan 9 in this lower-bracket elimination match at the XS Invitational in Stockholm, Sweden. This footage captures one of the two games in the set, which Makaveli won 2–0 — eliminating Doomer and continuing his dominant lower bracket run.

<https://youtu.be/tm70QMoyHOo?si=G-oBgWSLMh7Xsz06>

Makaveli vs [sk]Kane – XS Invitational (Quake III – Tourney2)

Makaveli faced an early 4–1 deficit in this elimination match against an SK Gaming representative. Rather than panic, he tightened his grip on map control and turned the tide with calculated dominance in the mid-game. The final score? 12–8, with Makaveli eliminating yet another player backed by an esports organization.

<https://youtu.be/gyxVBVgSPLo?si=erQImX6bd2T5AUIT>

Makaveli vs Immortal - Pre-EA Training Session (Quake II – Match1)

A rare internal training match between Makaveli and Immortal recorded shortly before Extreme Annihilation 1999. This footage captures the foundational development of structured FPS preparation — a time when no coaches, analysts, or organizations existed.

This match served as part of a self-directed bootcamp regimen, where both players simulated high-pressure tournament conditions. It reflects early experimentation with mega room traps, resource denial rhythms, and psychological flow disruption — all precursors to modern coaching systems.

Immortal would go on to **win** EA. Makaveli placed **3rd**, losing only a single map to Immortal. This video helps contextualize their dominance as a product of serious, methodical pre-tournament prep — something exceedingly rare at the time.

https://youtu.be/WISYw4qzQw8?si=MR1CEF_YmPqOdQCO

Visual Section: Victor "Makaveli" Cuadra

1. Makaveli at the European Duel League Finals – Stockholm, Sweden (1999)



Pictured confidently preparing for his international showdown, Makaveli would go on to sweep Shub 3–0. This landmark match marked one of the first true East vs. West battles in esports history — and crowned Makaveli as the de facto Quake II World Champion.

2. E3 Atlanta, Georgia – PGL Season 2 Finals (1998)



Makaveli (far right) alongside esports pioneers Thresh (left of Makaveli) and B2 of Clan Death Row. Captured during a break from the PGL Season 2 LAN finals, this photo reflects the early brotherhood and showmanship of professional gaming at a time when esports was just beginning to emerge into mainstream recognition.

3. Before Greatness – Early LAN Party, Circa 1995–1996



A rare glimpse into the formative years of competitive gaming. Makaveli (center, smiling) and Thresh (far left, gesturing) attend a DWANGO-era LAN — years before Ferraris and esports fame. Seated is a young Immortal, around 12 years old, who would one day famously hand Thresh one of the only map losses of his career.

4. First CPL Event Appearance – The Frag (1998)



Makaveli's original CPL event badge, misprinted with "PGL" due to his status as a standout from the Professional Gamers League's Season 2 Finals — and widely viewed at the time as part of the "Thresh/PGL" lineage.

This marked Makaveli's **first entry into CPL competition**, where he quickly proved he wasn't just a league player — he was a force at *any* LAN. This badge is more than a credential — it's a snapshot of a moment when rival circuits were colliding, and Makaveli was crossing over to compete with the best on every battlefield.

5. QuakeCon World Championship – 2019



Being a Quake legend comes with privileges. Makaveli, holding the Quake World Champion belt — not because he just won it, but because he's Makaveli. A nod from today's scene to one of the pioneers who helped build the foundation of competitive Quake — and who still commands respect on any stage.

6. XS Invitational – Stockholm, Sweden (January 2000)



Makaveli locked in and competing at the XS Invitational, where he was still “the man to beat.” This event marked Fatal1ty’s first major win, but Makaveli remained the measuring stick for greatness. It was also here that Makaveli famously gave Wombat the now-legendary lesson about slow play.

“Don’t ever do that in a Final again.” – Makaveli to Wombat following his purposeful 2-1 victory expressing the need to keep esports entertaining.

7. Razer CPL Finals – Post-Match Media Frenzy (2000)



An unforgettable moment in esports history: Fatal1ty (left), Angel Munoz (center), and Makaveli (right) face the cameras after a landmark championship. This image captures the dawn of esports celebrity and the birth of an industry.

“I defeated Shub in an international showdown, defeating the best in Europe at the time in Quake 2, and took down some of the world’s best two international tournaments in a row in Quake 3.” - Makaveli

8. Razer CPL 2000 – Dallas, Texas (April 13–16)



Makaveli's official attendee badge from the Razer CPL Event 2000, where he represented Clan Deathrow (Thresh's Clan) and competed under the D16-Makaveli tag. This tournament is etched into esports history as one of the most high-profile Quake III Arena showdowns of its time.

Makaveli finished **2nd overall**, against a stacked international field, taking home \$20,000 and standing alongside Fatal1ty and Angel Munoz during one of the most photographed esports moments of the era. This badge represents the apex of CPL-era competitive prestige — and Makaveli's dominance at that level.

9. CNNfn Interview – December 2000



Makaveli appears live on national television, advocating for the future of esports. He predicted cross-platform play and championed the idea that gamers were ideal PC hardware ambassadors — both now standard in the industry.

“Who better to tell consumers what’s best on the computer market than a gamer?”

10. Quake III Arena Promotional Tour – San Francisco Bay Area (1999)



Quake II World Champion Makaveli, front and center during the Quake III promotional push. Captured outside the iconic tour bus, this moment bridges two legendary eras of competitive FPS.

11. Post-Razer CPL, 2000



Makaveli, fresh off a \$20,000 second-place finish at Razer CPL, holding his iconic oversized check. A candid snapshot from a friend's house, this photo reflects the very real — and very raw — rewards of early esports.

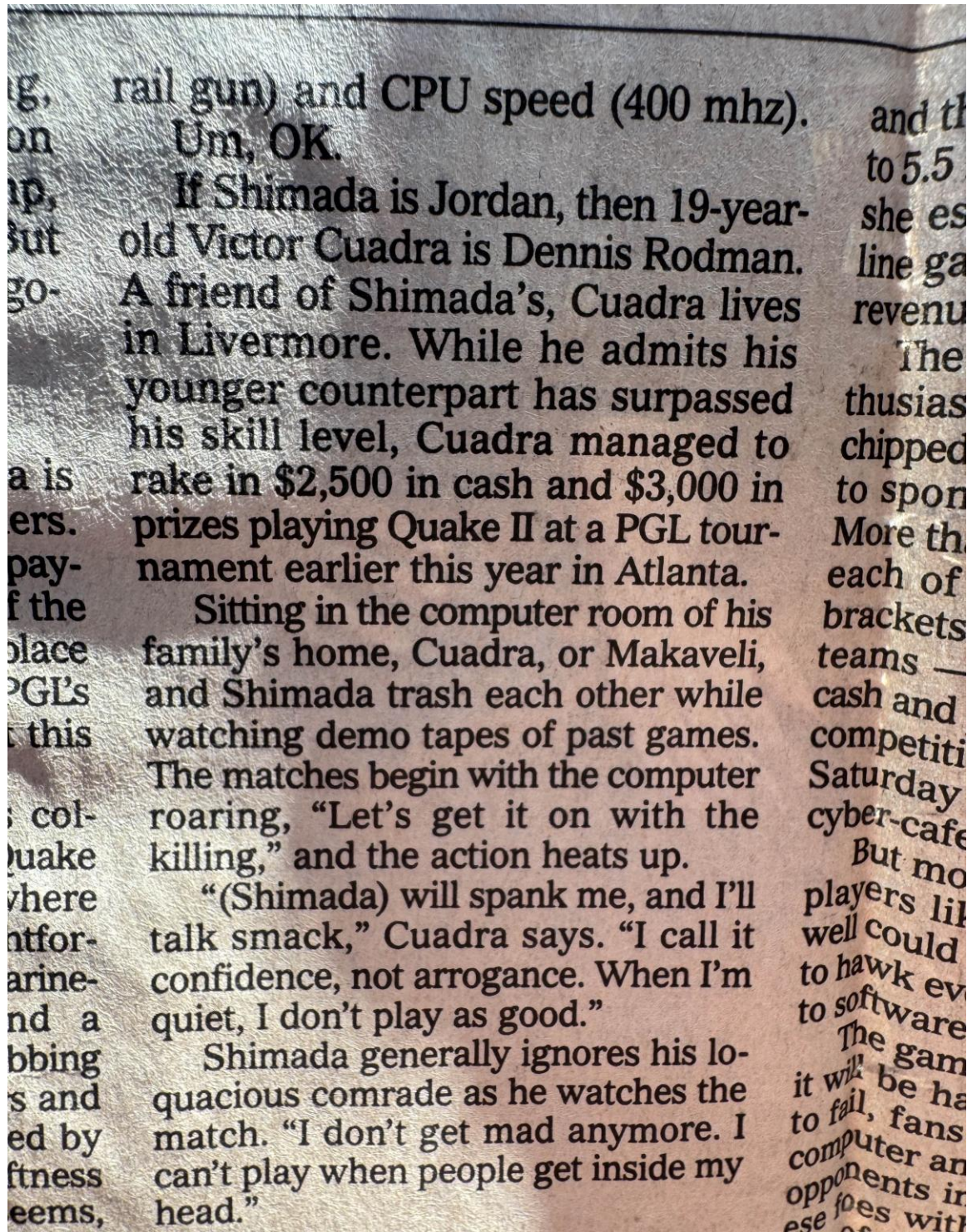
12. Tri-Valley Herald Front Page – December 26, 2000



“Cyber-Stud” — a headline both humorous and telling. This feature helped shift public perception of professional gamers from basement dwellers to respected digital athletes.

“They didn’t know how to cover this stuff at the time. I still find this framing hilarious.” - Makaveli

13. Early Media Coverage – Late 1990s



While Thresh was the icon, Makaveli and Immortal were the names everyone else knew. This piece captures their friendship, fierce competitiveness, and the emerging swagger of early esports.

14. PGL Season 2 Trophy – May 29, 1998



Third place in the “Action” category at the Advent Championships. This metal trophy stands as a relic from the era when the esports foundation was still being forged.

15. Makaveli's Trophy Collection – 1998 to 2000



From left to right:

- PGL Season 2 (1998) – 3rd Place, Action Category
- CPL Extreme Annihilation (1999) – 3rd Place
- CPL Frag 2 / QuakeCon (1998) – 2nd place to Rix

A legacy in steel — earned, not gifted.

16. QuakeCon 2024 – Still in the Fight



Makaveli competed in a casual open Quake Live 2v2 event, his first LAN competition in over 20 years, and finished 3rd. While Rapha's team took 1st, Makaveli proved the old guard still had the fire for competition.

"I forgot how much I used to love doing this." – Makaveli competing at Quakecon 2024

17. Makaveli & Zero4 – QuakeCon 2023 World Championship



Once mentor and protégé, now brothers in legacy — Makaveli and John “Zero4” Hill reflect on their history and contribution to the Quake dynasty.

18. Makaveli, Toxjq, and Cha1n – QuakeCon Hangout



Old school meets new blood. A casual moment between Makaveli, legendary Quake champion Toxjq, and current pro Cha1n — generations united by railguns and respect.

19. Post-Match Banter – QuakeCon 2024



Rapha and Effortless share post-match laughs with Makaveli after defeating him in a 2v2. Trash talk met humility and history in this generational clash.

20. Makaveli & Rix – QuakeCon World Championship 2023



Once fierce rivals, now respected friends. Makaveli and Rix reunite to reminisce on their early competitive years and the journey esports has taken since.

21. "Playing to Win" – Newspaper Feature, November 11, 1998

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 1998

Features • Comics • Television

SECTION D

Fyi

GETTING A READ ON GIRLS' SPORTS

There are books about girl sleuths and books about baby-sitting clubs, but where are the stories for our budding female athletes?

They're alive and well in "The Broadway Ballplayers," a young-adult series about five girls written by former All-Big Ten basketball star Maureen Holohan. Holohan is appearing at several Bay Area schools next week, including Lafayette School. She will also be at Barnes and Noble, 1149 S. Main St., Walnut Creek, 7:30-8:30 p.m. Tuesday.

ADOPTION CONFERENCE

There are many facets to adoption, from the search for birth parents to the boom in overseas adoptions. For anyone touched by adoption, personally or professionally, the American Adoption Conference offers three days packed with information.

Sponsored by the Post Adoption Center for Education and Research, the conference begins Thursday night at the Holiday Inn Golden Gateway, San Francisco, with registration and a comedy cabaret by comedienne Reno called "Reno Finds Her Mom." The conference continues Friday and Saturday with a total of 51 seminar sessions; participants can attend any or all days. Call 415-381-0632 to register.

Playing to win

Competition heats up for video game pros

VICTOR CUADRA, 19, left, Daniel Cuadra, 13, and Kurt Shimada, 15, watch a replay of one of the virtual-reality battles.

DOUG DURANT/TIMES

but not hearing

her bites her tongue. to tell her daughter. But

ghter

t learn

lessons

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er is thinking she's s before. But ... aybe across the state, r continues in her girl voice. Can't get any obs, without a degree. know what she would t she knows college is

mer is suspicious. Hasn't aborate plans only to lashed? Hasn't she y only to have that ad- in her face? ghter knows it is more o go away but wants to her friends. Bad influ- mbition, less initiative — m now for what they

IANA-SUAREZ

ers



Makaveli and Immortal featured in official PGL uniforms, replaying game demos as Makaveli's younger brother Daniel looks on. A family moment in the early media spotlight.

22. Makaveli & Robert Krakoff – Razer CPL Awards, 2000

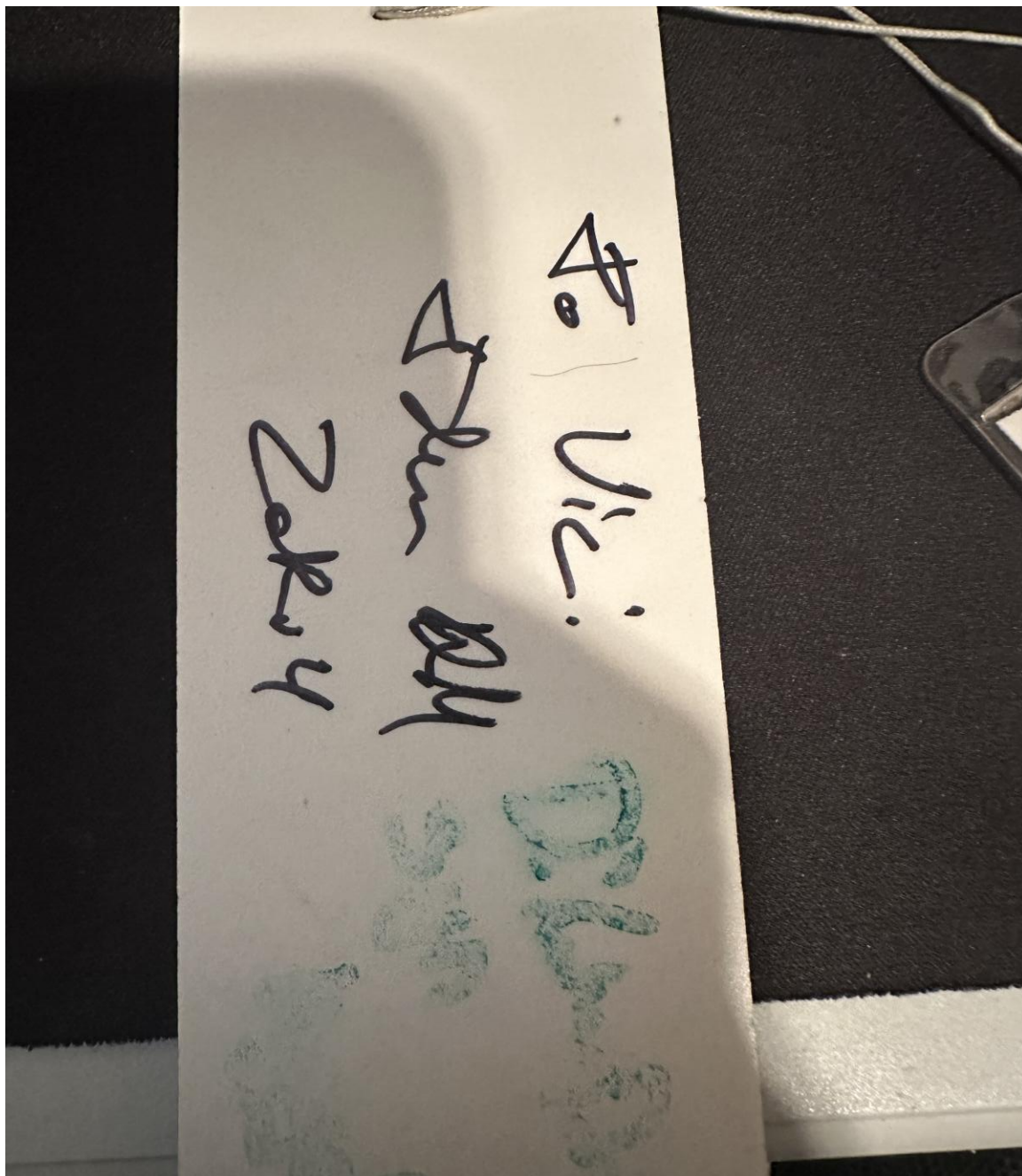


© 2000 www.eviled.com

Makaveli playfully “adds zeroes” to his prize check beside Razer President Robert Krakoff, a pioneer whose belief in esports helped launch Razer’s global rise. Krakoff passed in 2022, but his impact is still felt across the industry.

23. World Cyber Games 2001 – Seoul, South Korea





Makaveli's official competitor badge from the inaugural World Cyber Games, where he represented the United States in Quake III Arena. On the back is a handwritten message from John "Zero4" Hill — signed jokingly "To Vic" — marking a symbolic and heartfelt moment in esports history.

At this event, Zero4 emerged as the new world champion, and this autograph wasn't just a signature — it was a **passing of the torch** from mentor to protégé. Makaveli recognized his time was coming to a close, and his respect for Zero4's rise turned this keepsake into one of the most meaningful items in early competitive FPS lore.

24. Official WCG Jersey – World Cyber Games 2001, Seoul, South Korea



Makaveli's authentic tournament shirt from when he represented the United States in *Quake III Arena* at the inaugural World Cyber Games. The bold "Makaveli" lettering confirms his role as a national competitor on a global stage. On the sleeve, the silhouette of the pre-9/11 New York City skyline — including the Twin Towers — turns this jersey into more than gaming memorabilia. It's a poignant artifact from a moment when global politics and esports history quietly intersected.

A rare blend of **competitive legacy and world event symbolism** — preserved in fabric.

25. Makaveli the Analyst – Quake Champions Era, Likely DreamHack Winter, Sweden



Some rivalries never die — they evolve. While on broadcast duty during a major Quake Champions event, Makaveli brought back his signature swagger with a self-made **“EU Tears”** prop, celebrating a North American victory in the finals.

A lighthearted jab and homage to the long-standing NA vs. EU rivalry he helped ignite during his playing prime. This moment showed that Makaveli's edge and entertainment value never retired — they just picked up a headset.

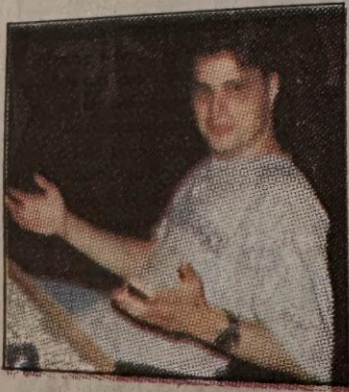
26. The Brotherhood Behind the Battle – PGL Season 3 Finals (1998)



"Moments after PGL Season 3 — Thresh, Immortal, and Makaveli (left) share the triumph. A quiet reminder: greatness is forged not just in battle, but in the bonds between those who push each other to the top."

Square Eyes, Nimble Hands — Big Payoff

Parents will not like reading about Victor Cuadra. This kid from Livermore — well, he's 20, but still a kid in our book — could serve as every teen's smart-mouthed comeback, when



Victor Cuadra

mom barges in and tells him to stop playing those violent computer games.

Mom says, "Hey, Buster Brown, you can't make a living playing Quake III."

Buster: "Oh, yeah. Well, look at Victor Cuadra. He just won \$20,000 at the latest Cyberathletic Professional League tournament."

Mom will be stumped for a comeback because, dang it, it's true. Cuadra is one of the most successful, if least known, pro "athletes" in the Bay Area. A recent graduate of...

"In 2000, while most of the world still doubted gaming's future, Victor 'Makaveli' Cuadra silenced critics — winning \$20,000 at a Cyberathlete Professional League tournament and proving professional gaming was real. A pioneer of esports before it had a name."

28. The New Pioneers – Early Esports at the Dawn of a Revolution



Before multimillion-dollar prize pools, before packed arenas — there was heart, friendship, and the belief that gaming could become something bigger. Victor 'Makaveli' Cuadra (top right) shares a moment of celebration with fellow players and early esports visionaries in media. A generation that dared to dream first.

29. Crafting the Future – Creativity and Competition Collide



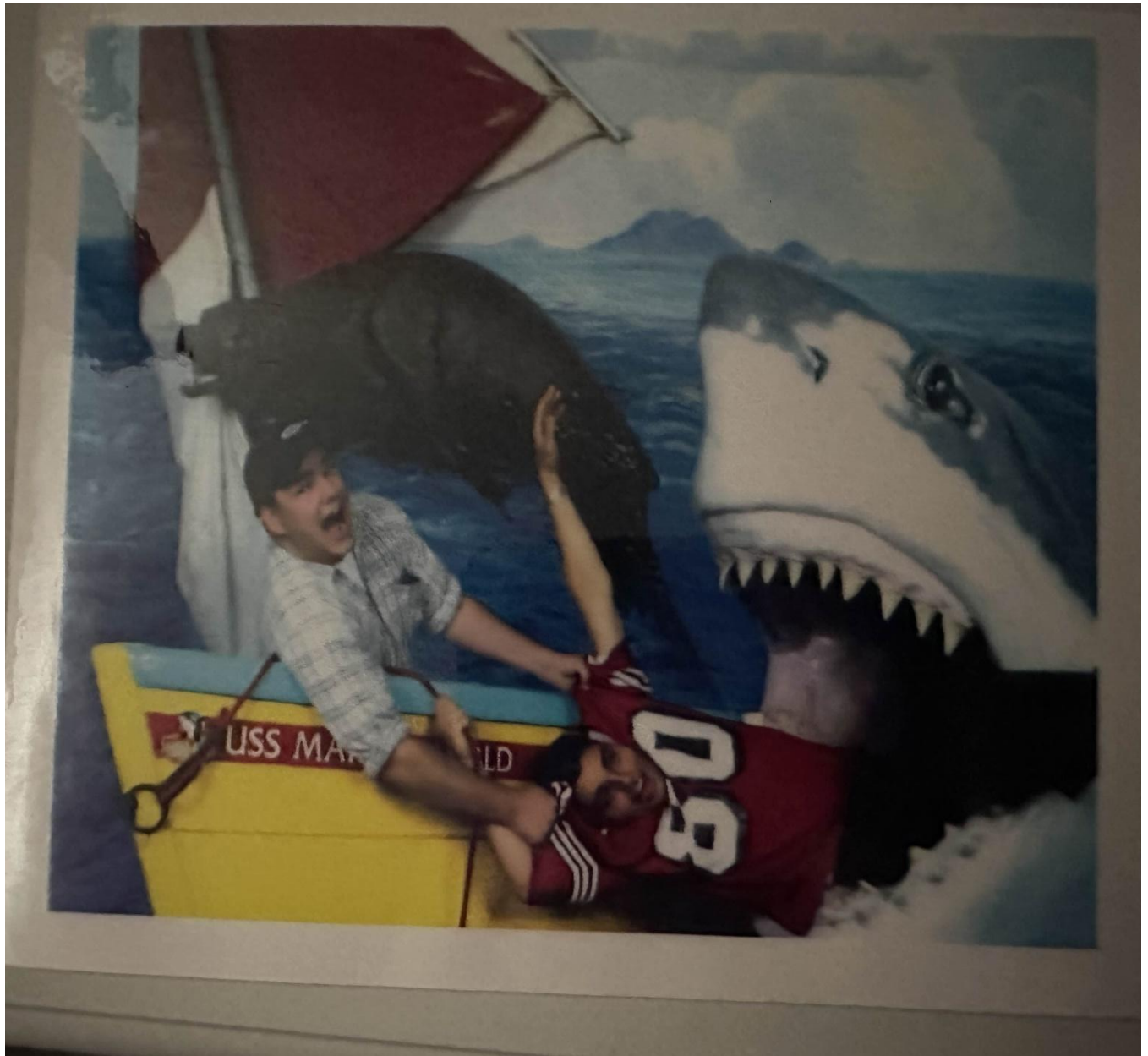
Long before esports had professional content teams and production studios, players like Victor 'Makaveli' Cuadra (center right, cap backwards) and Kurt 'Immortal' Shimada (front) worked hands-on — building guides, sharing knowledge, pushing the community forward. Captured here collaborating with peers at Tremor Studios during the rise of professional gaming.

30. Fatal1ty in his element at XS Invitation in Stockholm Sweden



Johnathan "Fatal1ty" Wendel at his station at the XS Invitational held in Stockholm, Sweden. (Jan. 2000) This would mark Fatal1ty's first major tournament win, defeating Makaveli for 1st place. This photo was taken by Makaveli.

31. Shub Rescues Makaveli



Playful moment after their Quake 2 showdown in Sweden. Pictured at Marine World in Vallejo, CA in 1999 – Shub pretends to rescue Makaveli from being devoured by a shark. Shub stayed with Makaveli at his family home for about a month. An example of Makaveli's relationship building in esports.

32. ZeRo4 Enters the Main Stage



Makaveli took this picture of John “ZeRo4” Hill becoming a star and signing autographs. This is where he approached and had his own player badge signed by the up and coming Quake star.

33. WCG 2001 US Quake 3 and Counter Strike Team Photo



ZeRo4 Far Right – Makaveli 2nd from Left. Socrates 2nd from Right. Immortal 4th from Right.

United States Quake 3 and Counter Strike teams pose for a photo. A reunion of Makaveli and Immortal at an event, although in two different games as Immortal was on the US Counter Strike team.

34. Makaveli, Immortal, Rix – Extreme Annihilation 1999



Makaveli, Immortal, and Rix pose with their trophies after Extreme Annihilation. This after Immortal had his dominant victory on Match1. Rix looks less than pleased in this photo.

35. Makaveli and Immortal – PGL Event est. 1998



Immortal and Makaveli smiling at a PGL event, estimated to be some time in 1998. These two were an inseparable pair in the early days of esports.

“Immortal was always like a little brother to all of us since the early days of Doom 2 LAN parties.” – Makaveli

36. Makaveli, DJWheat, and Unholy – E3 2017



Makaveli, DJWheat, and Unholy — still standing, still connected.

Legacy isn't just about moments. It's about the people who lived through them together.

37. Makaveli, Fatal1ty, Thresh, and Unholy – E3 2017



Time passes. But some bonds — and some legacies — don't fade.

Makaveli Final Comment:

"The games are over. The lights have dimmed. But the friendships, the legacy, and the love for this scene remain.

I was there — and I never stopped believing in what we built."