



← DRAGON AGE 2

SHADOWS OF THE DAMNED →

GOD HAND



a review of
god hand
a videogame developed by [clover
studio](#)
and published by [capcom](#)
for the sony playstation 2 computer
entertainment system
text by hamish todd



Bottom line: *God Hand*
"WOULD NEVER LIE TO YOU"

20
AUG
2011

There is no such thing as immersion, and a good thing too.

You can see something strangely revolting played out in recent "[games](#)." Watch that video, or play something like *Enslaved* (zero stars), or *Bejeweled* (zero stars) and you'll feel patronised and lied to. You might ask, of the designer: "You're trying to make me think I've accomplished something when really I've not. Why are you working so hard to lie to me?"

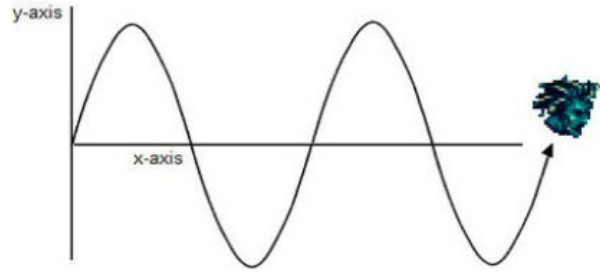
The "game" developer looks blankly back at you. "I'm making a video game," they say. "The whole thing is a lie. All games lie. If I've set up an epic, orchestrally scored, well animated, well written setpiece, then why is it so important that it also be difficult to play? Why don't you just pretend that it's difficult? You're already suspending a lot of disbelief by accepting that the characters are real. By taking it a step further and pretending you're involved in it, you could get a lot of gratification."

This way of looking at games is an [aberration](#). Games are not about having powerful verisimilitude with tossed-off involvement — it's meant to be the other way around. I do not have to suspend my disbelief to enjoy *Tetris*, or *Rhythm Heaven*, or *God Hand*. And paradoxically *God Hand*, with its absurd kung fu, its enormous floating bananas, its thick line between good and evil... would never lie to you in the way that those games do.

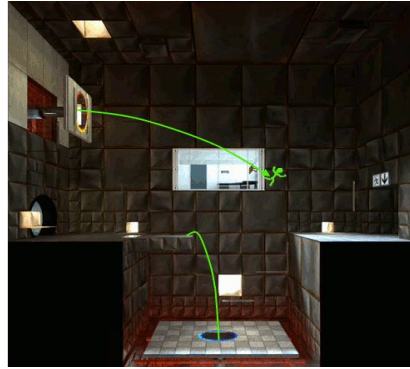
God Hand does not do *immersion*. What it does is *concentration*, in a quantity which only the deepest games can achieve. In general, games which inspire "concentration are usually utterly indifferent to the concept of "fiction", and *God Hand* has palpable disdain for fiction — that's why in place of characters we

Level design writing:

$$Y = \sin(x)$$



Medusa Heads (Kotaku)



Portal (RockPaperShotgun)

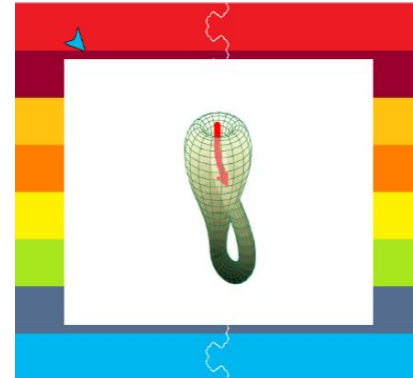


Half Life (Destructoid)

Games:

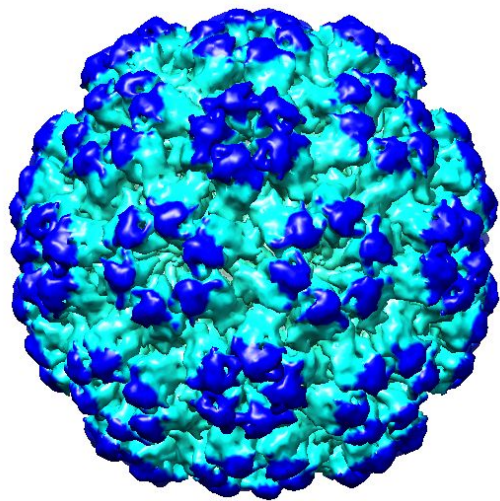


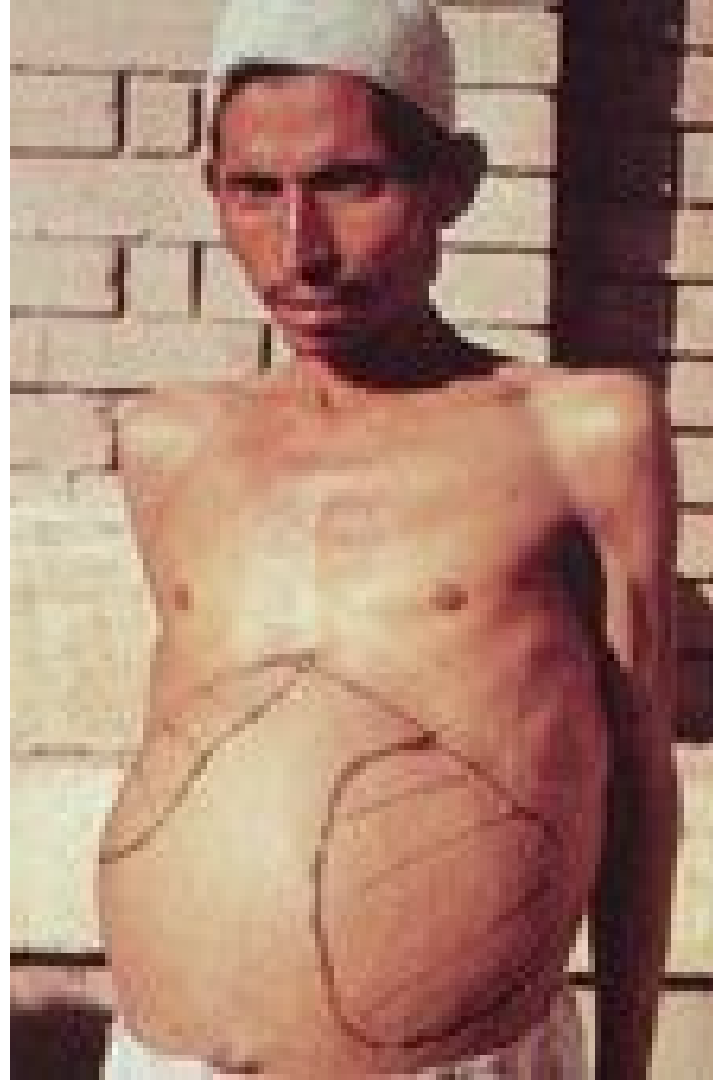
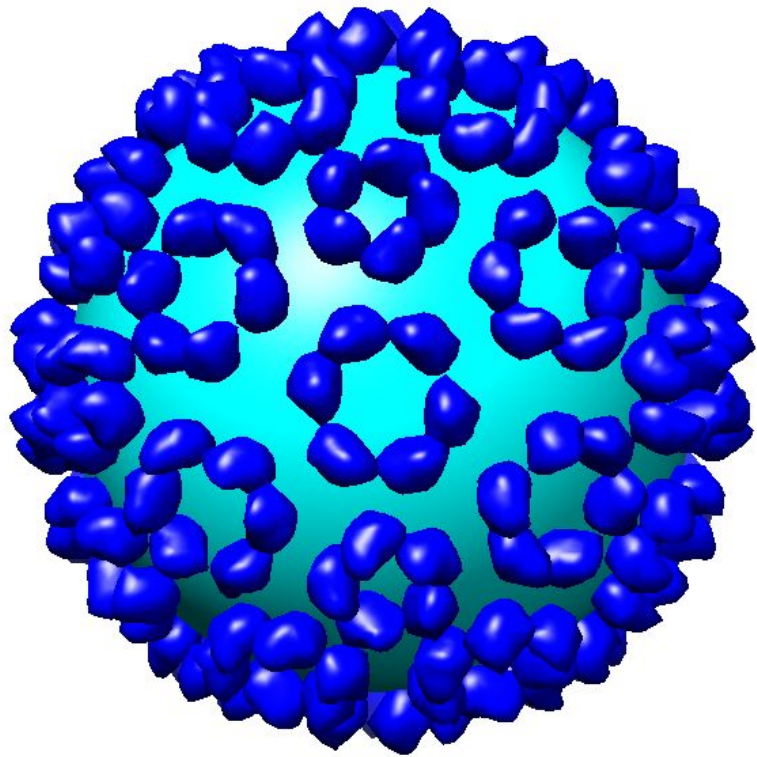
Music of the Spheres

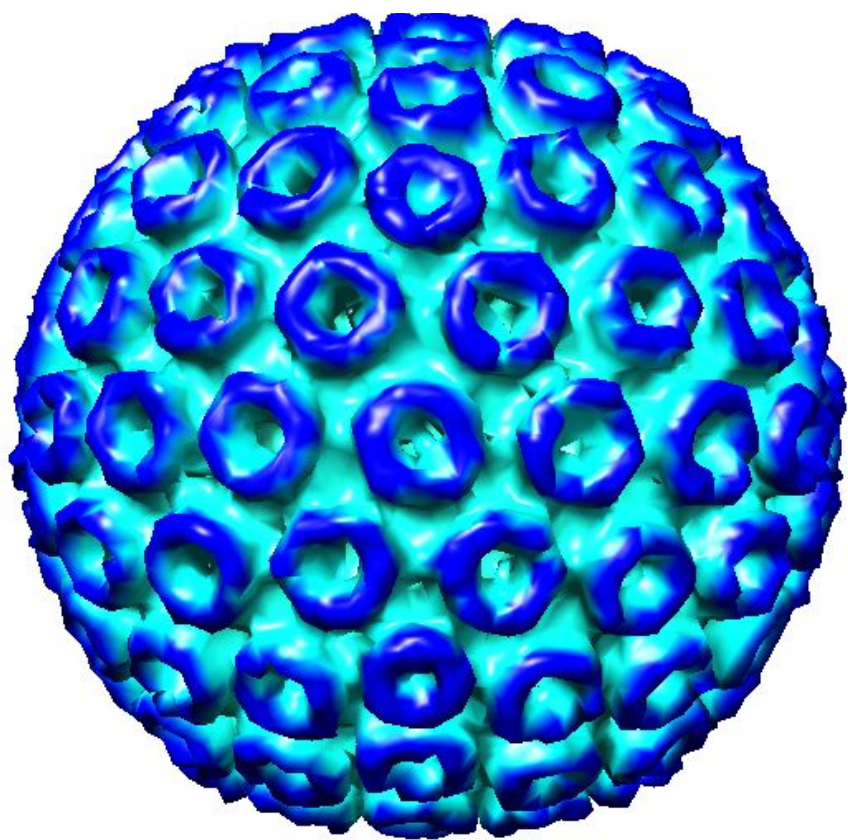


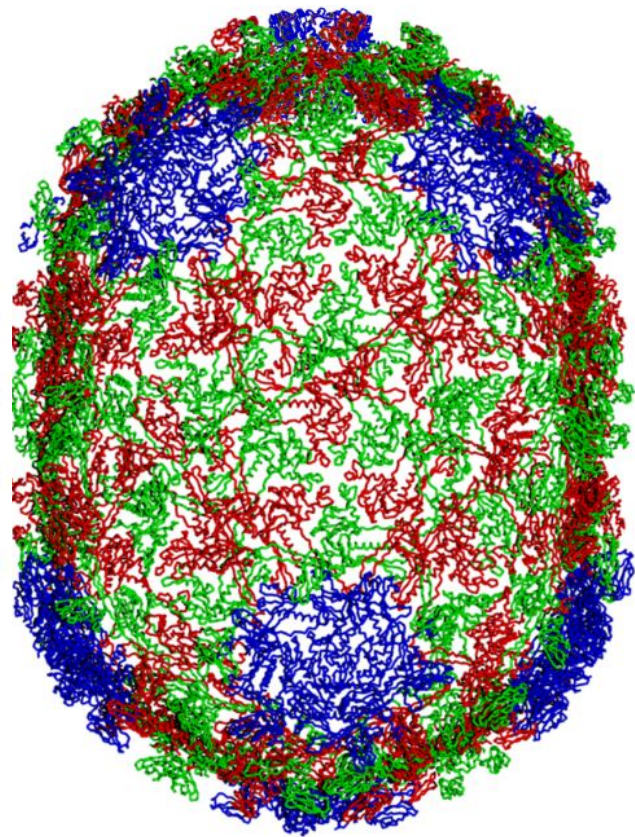
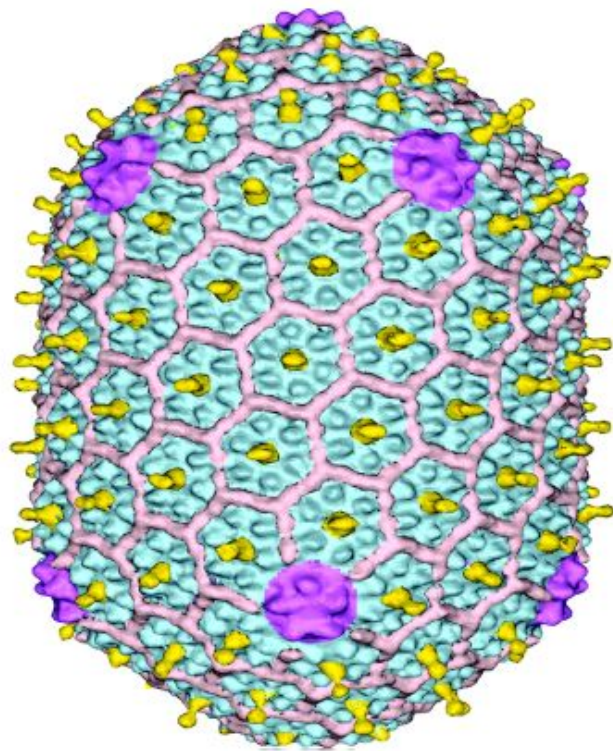
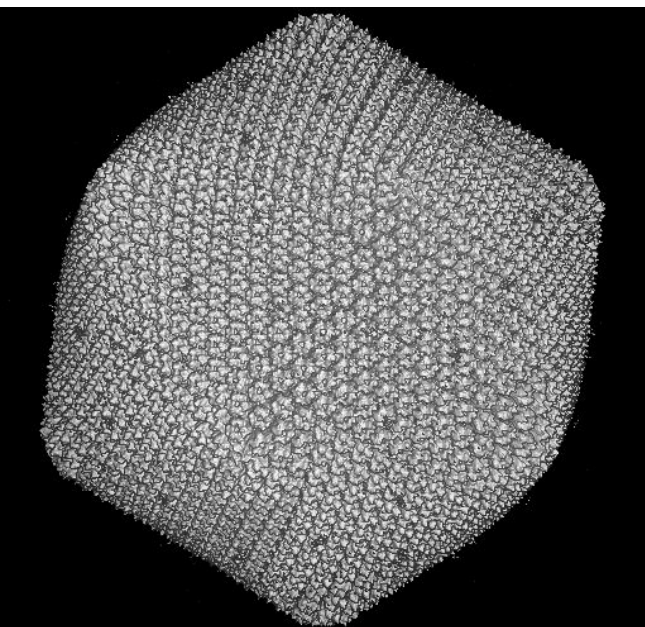
The Stranger Loop

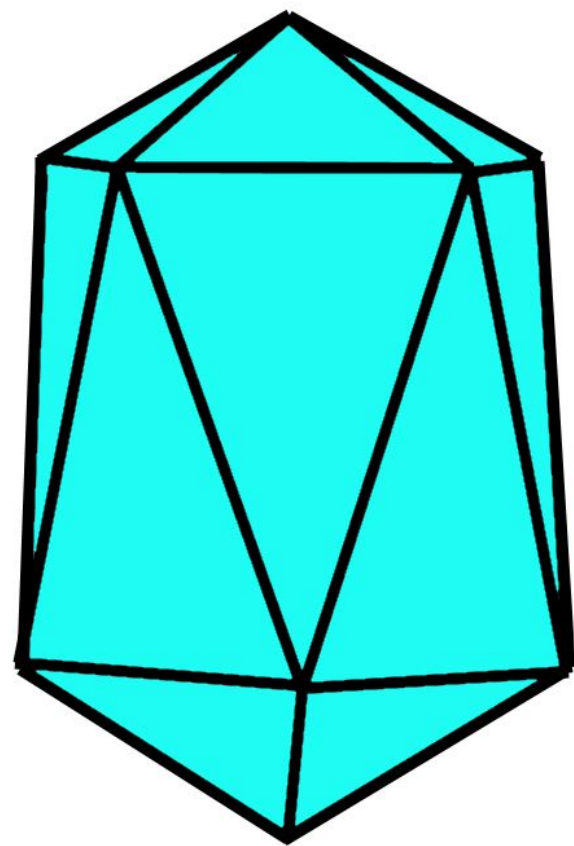
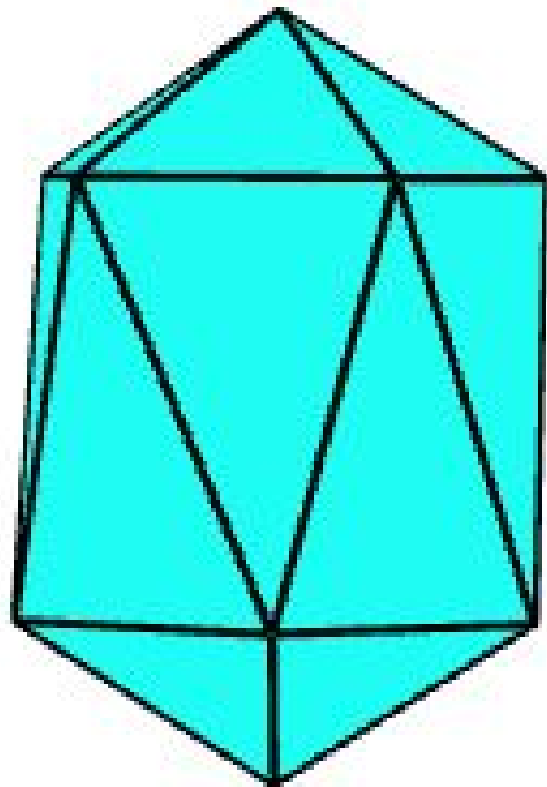
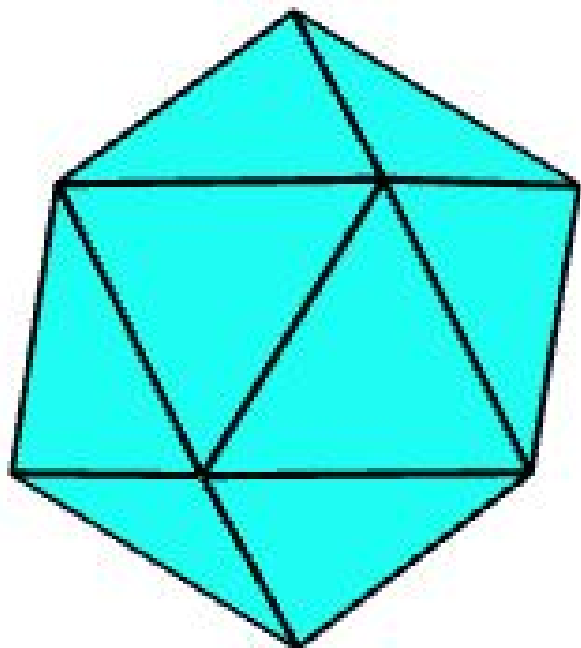


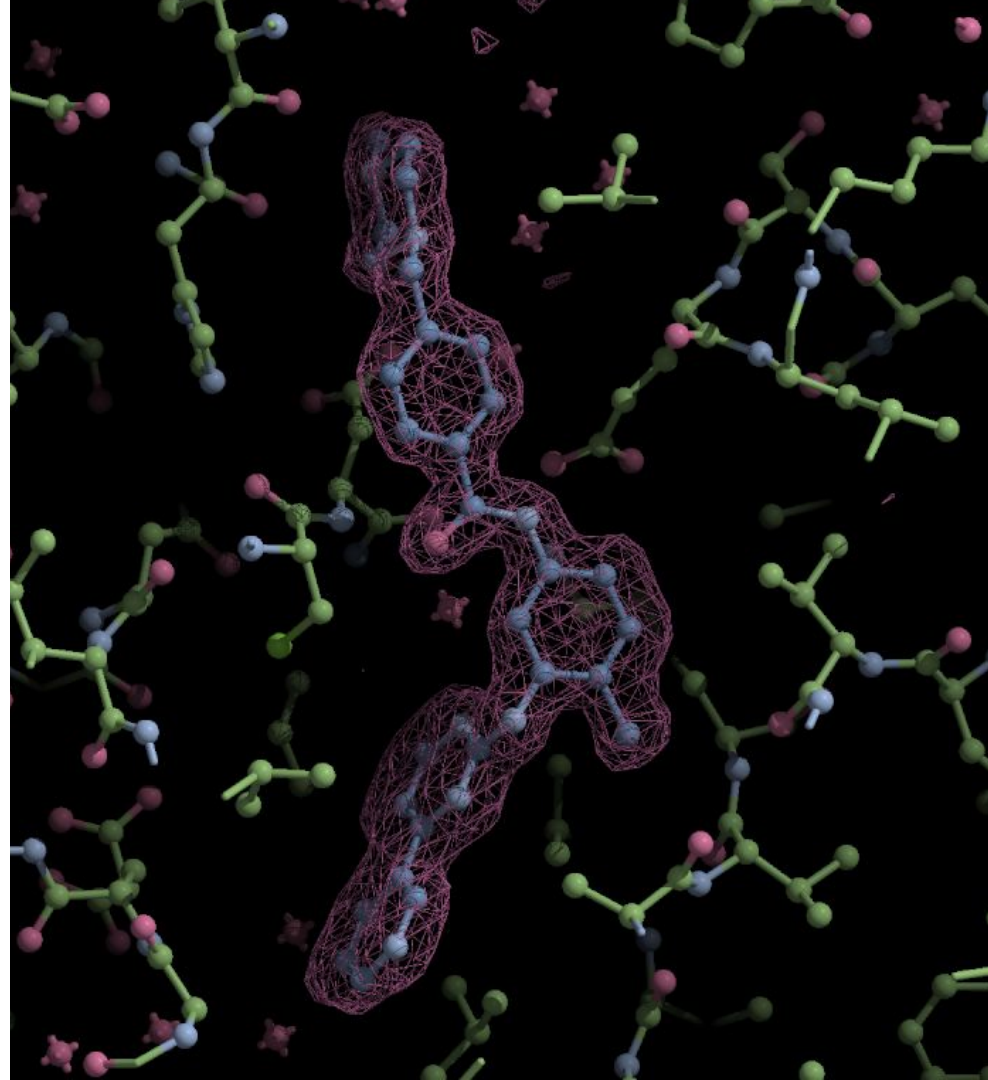


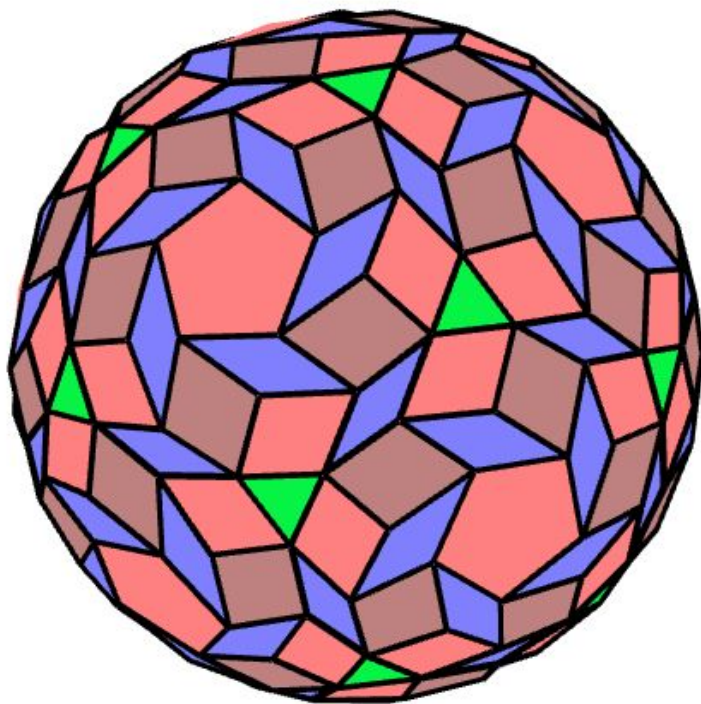
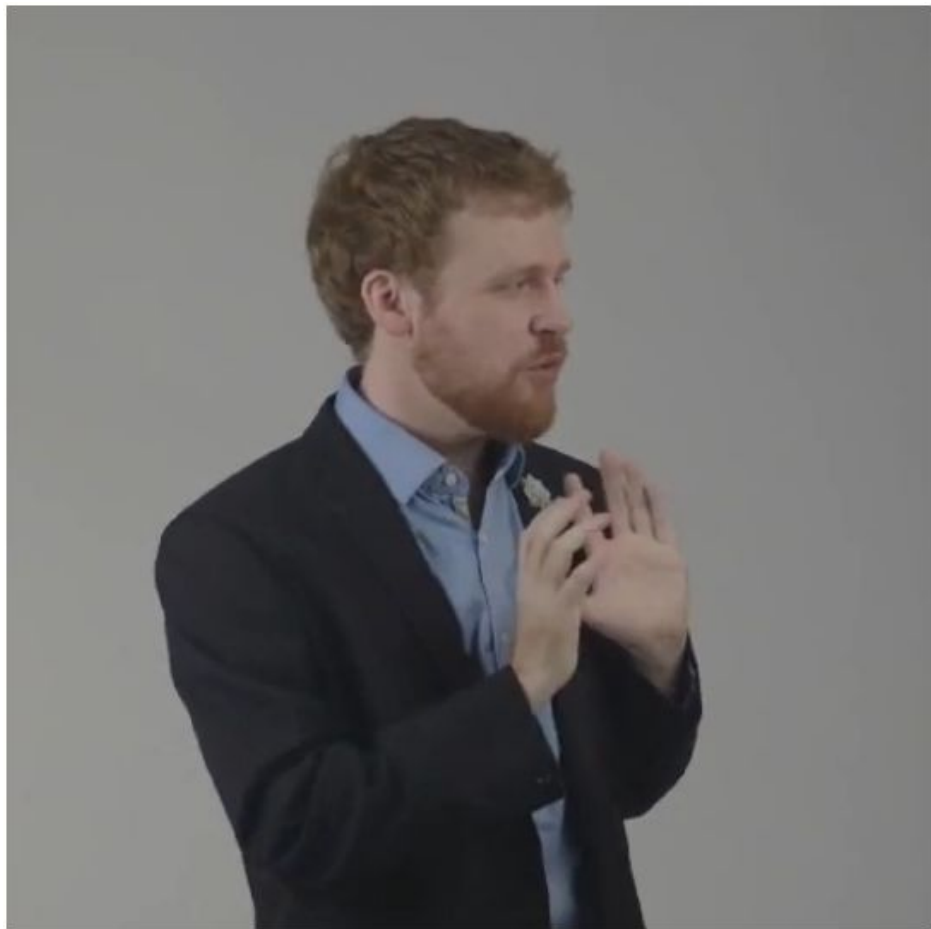












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Please say hi!