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360zine

Issue 39 | February 2010

Free Magazine For Xbox 360 Gamers. *Read it, Print it, Send it to your mates...*

EXCLUSIVE

RED DEAD REDEMPTION

Exclusive hands-on and screens with Rockstar's Wild West epic

REVIEWED!

MASS EFFECT AND BIOSHOCK 2:

The best games of 2010 already? Reviewed inside



PLUS!

EXCLUSIVE! DANTE'S INFERNO

Reviewed all the way to hell and back



PREVIEWED! SUPCOM 2



FIRST LOOK! KANE AND LYNCH 2



EXCLUSIVE PLAYTEST + BIOSHOCK 2! SUPPLEMENT





Welcome to 360Zine



This is the month where videogames made a comeback. After a slightly disappointing winter, and a January filled with solid if not spectacular efforts (Bayonetta not included), it's taken three very special pieces of work to lift us out of the post-Christmas mire.

Between BioShock 2, Mass Effect and the startlingly impressive Red Dead Redemption, we've been blessed with a hat-trick of brave, ambitious and supremely well-made videogames, the likes of which actually challenge what our medium can achieve.

These are games that are actually about something. They have something to say, be it Mass Effect's commentary on race or Red Dead's morally ambiguous history lesson, and that's so rare in gaming. Enjoy them all, and the issue. We know you will.

360Zine FEEDBACK!
Click here to tell us what you think of the new issue

Dan Hutchinson, Editor
360zine@gamerzines.com

Don't miss! This month's top highlights

Red Dead Redemption
HANDS-ON PREVIEW!

Mass Effect 2
The full verdict

Dante's Inferno
Reviewed inside!

BioShock 2
Reviewed And Rated

QUICK FINDER

Every game's just a click away!

- | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------|
| Alan Wake | Red Dead Redemption |
| Kane And Lynch 2: Dog Days | Prison Break |
| Lost Planet 2 | Supreme Commander 2 |
| Clash of the Titans | Mass Effect 2 |
| Quantum Theory | BioShock 2 |
| BlazBlue | Dante's Inferno |

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We recommend you close and re-open the magazine and select "Play" when asked about the multimedia to enjoy the magazine as intended.

MEET THE TEAM

Probably the best games writers on the planet



Jon Denton
Is seriously considering changing his name to Shepard.



David Scammell
David's in gaming Rapture this month.



Andy Griffiths
Has ordered his leather chaps.

Prison Break
Hands-on inside



▶ **PLAYBACK OPTIONS:**



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In stores February 12. DANTESINFERNO.COM

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Go to Hell.



VISCERAL GAMES



PS3 PlayStation 3

PSP PlayStation Portable

XBOX 360

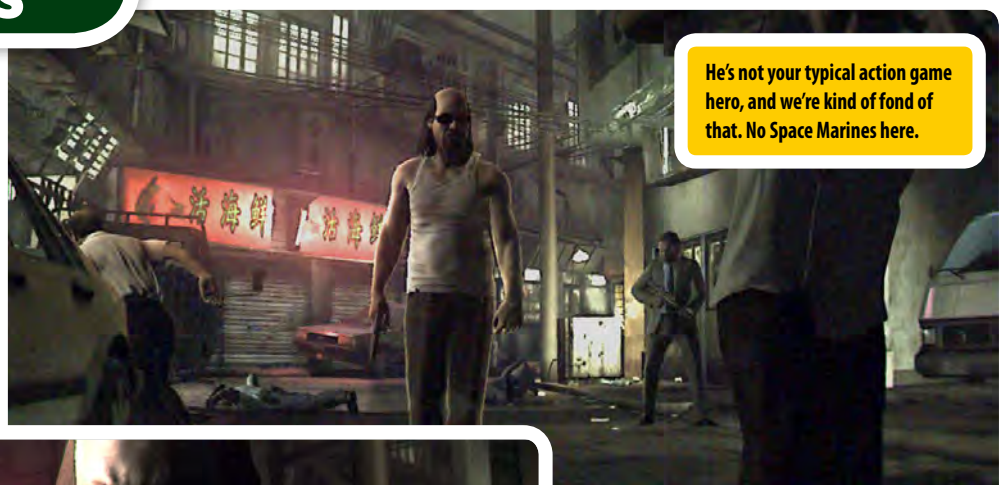
XBOX LIVE

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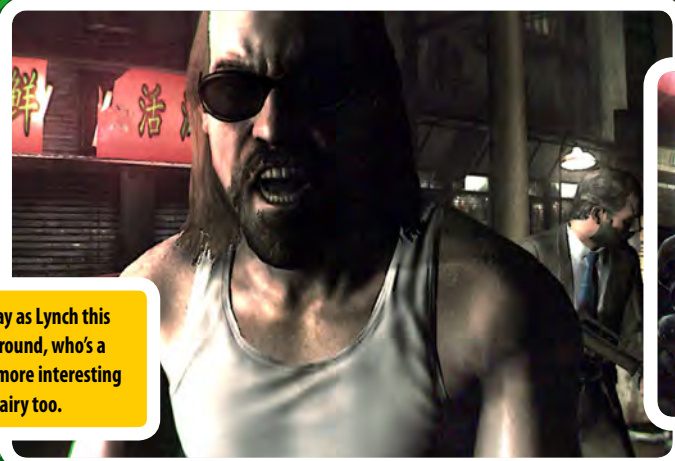


KANE & LYNCH 2
DOG DAYS 伏魔

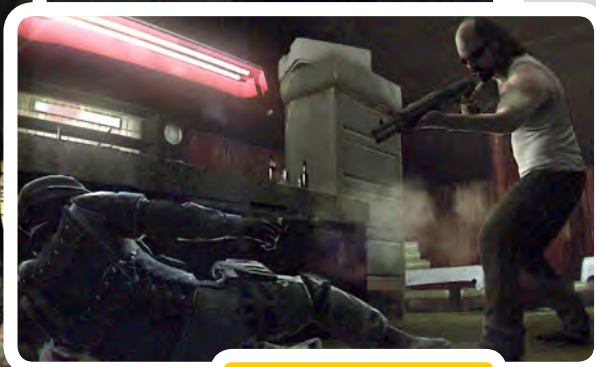
Publisher: Square-Enix
Developer: IO Interactive
Heritage: Kane & Lynch
Link: www.kaneandlynch.com
ETA: May 2010



He's not your typical action game hero, and we're kind of fond of that. No Space Marines here.



You play as Lynch this time around, who's a much more interesting sort. Hairy too.



The camera is unquestionably Kane & Lynch 2's most interesting feature, shaking and moving like a Paul Greengrass flick. It might prove distracting to some, though.



"Dog Days could be IO's finest work since Hitman Blood Money"

FIRST LOOK

Kane & Lynch 2: Dog Days

The Greengrass effect...

PREVIEW FEEDBACK!
Click here to tell us what you think of Kane & Lynch 2

It's getting a sequel?

Yes, it is. After a lukewarm critical reception to the first Kane & Lynch game, few could have expected a sequel, but here it is, and it promises to rectify many of the mistakes of the original.

So what's different?

There are three things you really need to know about Kane And Lynch 2: Dog Days. Firstly, you now play as Lynch, the mentally disturbed baldy who played second fiddle to the altogether more boring Kane in the first game. He's calmed down a lot since then, but don't be surprised if he starts hallucinating at some point. Secondly, the game plays out in setting du jour, Shanghai. And thirdly, but by no means leastly, the whole thing's 'shot' in a pseudo-handycam style, like the Bourne movies or Cloverfield.

Will that not get distracting?

Possibly, but it's hard not to be impressed by the level of dedication and diligence that has gone into creating a camera that really changes the way the game feels. It's more than just a gimmick, as it defines the entire aesthetic. As the whole thing is styled up like CCTV, particularly vicious moments in combat appear distorted to give it that YouTube-like vibe. It's certainly an interesting direction to take.

Anything else to declare?

There's a multiplayer mode that's still somewhat under wraps, but one of the successes of the original was its super-tense bank heist, so expect something similar. And it's out sooner that you'd think – in the first half of this year. All in all, it seems that IO Interactive has listened and acted upon the criticism of the original, and Dog Days could be its finest work since Hitman Blood Money.

TOM CLANCY'S SPLINTER CELL CONVICTION



BEST XBOX 360 GAME
BEST ACTION/ADVENTURE GAME

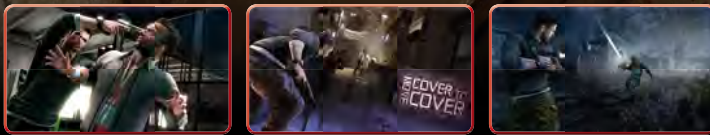


PC - BEST ACTION GAME



PLAYBACK OPTIONS:

COMING SOON



ENTER A DANGEROUS WORLD WHERE JUSTICE
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JUSTICE. REVENGE. **CONVICTION.**



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XBOX LIVE



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Jump in.

XBOX 360.



Alan WAKE

Publisher: Microsoft
Developer: Remedy
Heritage: Max Payne
Link: www.alanwake.com
ETA: May 2010



It's not the most exciting name in the world, but nor was Max Payne, and that turned out well.

FIRST LOOK

Alan Wake

PREVIEW FEEDBACK!
Click here to tell us what you think of Alan Wake

New screens emerge

More Alan Wake?

Oh yes, Microsoft and Remedy Entertainment have released a lovely batch of new screenshots for their perennially delayed survival horror, and they're looking pretty good indeed. The visual fidelity seems to have jumped up another level, meaning that it's definitely one of the best-looking games around.

Anything new to report?

These screens are designed to show off the lighting engine, which is pretty staggering. It's a bit of a treat to see a third-person game that's not built on Unreal 3, and Remedy's proprietary tech delivers visual depth and clarity like little else. Of course, it's not all for show. Alan needs to use the light to best his enemies, turning his torch into a sort of low-fi superweapon. Remember, he has to stay A. Wake. Geddit? You'd better have by now...

And what did we already know?

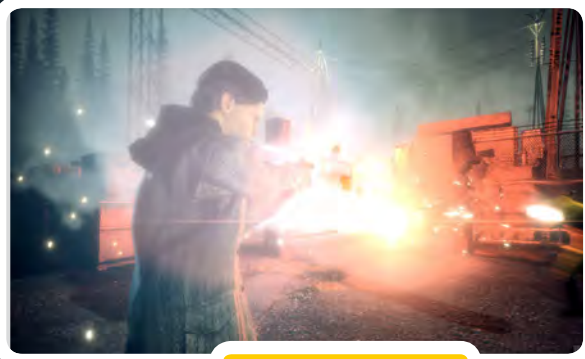
Well, Mr. Wake is a writer who has taken refuge in the sleepy American town of Bright Falls in order to get away and concentrate on his new story – a Stephen King-style horror. As time passes, the contents of Wake's book begin to come to life in the town, and when the sun goes down, all hell breaks loose. The game's split up into an episodic structure in a similar way to that other classic survival horror game *Alone in the Dark*, but hopefully that's where the comparisons will end. It's survival horror yes, but one powered by physics, lighting and genuinely impressive technology. Just seeing trees fall down in the distance separates it from almost any other example of the genre, such is the spectacle.

Anything else to declare?

It's finally coming out this year, and in the first half of this year at that. It's been the most delayed game on the 360 bar none, with many fearing for its quality, but as it gets nearer and nearer to release, it's time to get excited about Mr. Alan Wake. Even if he does have a very boring name.



You never know what's coming in Alan Wake. The environment conspires against you.



The lighting engine is pretty much second to none. It's all Remedy's own tech.



"As it gets nearer and nearer to release, it's time to get very excited about Mr. Alan Wake"

SUPREME COMMANDER 2



MARCH 2010

▶ PLAYBACK OPTIONS:

THE BRAVE WILL FIGHT,
BUT ONLY HEROES WILL COMMAND

WWW.SUPREMECOMMANDER2.COM

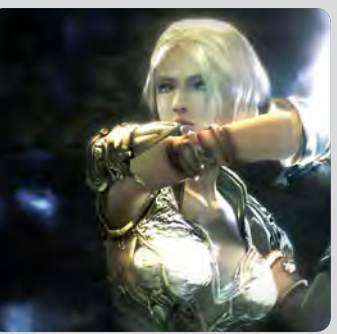


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INCOMING

A fistful of top new titles coming to 360...



Quantum Theory

Publisher: Tecmo Koei | **ETA:** March
Tecmo Koei's Gears of War-er up has been officially dated for March this year, so anyone hankering for a bit of cover shooting should start getting ready. It also promises some co-operative blasting in environments that change shape and size in real time. And we're guessing that's what the quantum theory in the name refers to.




Lost Planet 2

Publisher: Capcom | **ETA:** 2011
Sadly, Capcom's snowy sequel has dropped back into the mysterious future world of Financial Year 2011, so we'll have to wait a wee bit longer to get our four-player co-op bug hunt on. Still, a new batch of screens – which you can find on GamerZines.com, naturally – show more giant boss battles and a ridiculous amount of carnage. Should be considerably better than the original, then.

Clash of the Titans

Publisher: Namco Bandai | **ETA:** March

The daft-looking sequel of the very daft-looking original movie is getting its very own game, and seeing as the subject matter is Greek Mythology and giant monsters, it's no surprise that it all looks a bit God of War. It's being handled by Game Republic, who produced the Genji games on PS3 – and more recently RPG oddity Folklore. Expect sandals, swords and a few mutli-headed sea monsters.




RISK: Factions

Publisher: EA | **ETA:** June
Xbox Live Arcade is due its own global warfare sim very soon, courtesy of the fine folks at Electronic Arts. As you can see by the screenshot, things have been injected with a dose more personality than the classic board game, but don't think that means you'll need any less strategy. Get your Generals' hats on, people.



Game Room

Publisher: Microsoft | **ETA:** 2010
The new concept coming out of this year's Consumer Electronics Show was Game Room, a pseudo MMO-type space where you and your Live friends' Avatars can hang out and play retro games together. The games themselves will be 240 MSP to keep, but can also be one-credited for 80 MSP should that take your fancy. Microsoft is promising 3,000 games within the first year of Game Room's availability, so this could prove to be a retronaut's haven. If nothing else, it'll be better than PlayStation Home...

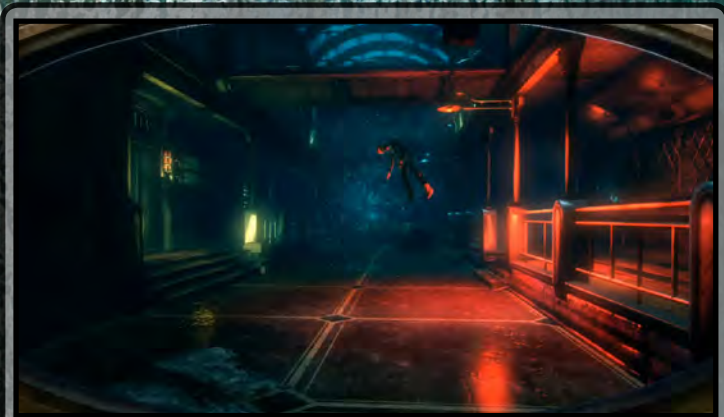


BlazBlue

Publisher: PQube | **ETA:** TBC
This gorgeous 2D fighter gets ever closer to a UK release. It's one of the most technical entrants into the genre ever, designed for those who know their cancels from their cross-ups and want to test their dexterity at the highest level. By far the best truly 2D fighter this gen (discounting SFIV's 3D models), and a treat for anyone with a Fight Stick.

UPCOMING

FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL	MAY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BioShock 2 Dante's Inferno 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Battlefield Bad Company 2 Quantum Theory 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Red Dead Redemption Splinter Cell Conviction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Crackdown 2 Alan Wake



▶ **PLAYBACK OPTIONS:**

BIO SHOCK 2

9TH FEBRUARY 2010
WWW.BIOSHOCK2GAME.COM



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RED DEAD
REDEMPTION

Publisher: Rockstar
Developer: Rockstar
San Diego
Heritage: Midnight Club
Los Angeles
Link: www.rockstargames.com/reddeadredemption
ETA: 30th April

HANDS ON

EXCLUSIVE
SCREENS!

Red Dead Redemption

Shall I dub thee Unforgiven

January was a strange month for gaming. Snowed in, people inevitably spent a lot of time on their consoles, and (Bayonetta aside) probably sunk a lot of time into some fairly middling games. Stuff like Darksiders and Dark Void, which are perfunctory for the most part, suddenly

became serious talking points on the boards and podcasts that make up the online gaming community. It's taken a three-pronged attack to lift this particular journalist out of the videogaming funk. Mass Effect 2 and BioShock 2 can be found later in this very issue, both sequels of the highest

"It's the sheer ambition that bleeds from Red Dead, an almost overwhelming amount of detail"



That looks like fun, right?



You won't see this screenshot anywhere else. Another picturesque scene masks the tension of the time.

quality imaginable; games that push the boundaries of what is possible in this medium. Yet it's the third part of this highbrow trio that really has us frothing at the mouth about its potential. And now that we've spent time in Red Dead Redemption's rural sprawl, there's almost no questioning the game's successes, even now.

Our time in the game world was enough to get to grips with the basics, of course, and play out a couple of missions, but it's the sheer ambition that bleeds from Red Dead, an almost overwhelming amount of detail covering every inch of its huge expanses of land. That's what had us wide-eyed in astonishment, almost fearful of its size.

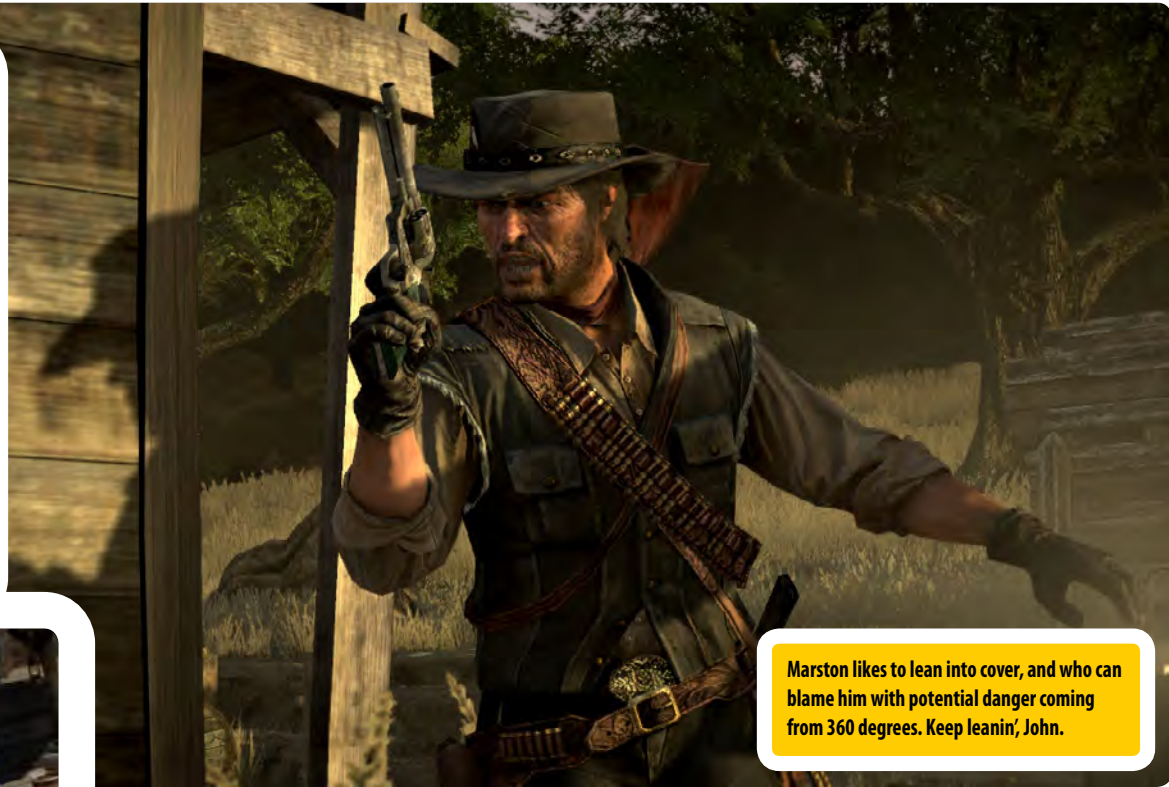
Back to basics for a second though, and Red Dead Redemption does, at a very basic level, feel like GTA IV. In that you're controlling a weighted, properly animated character, one who can run with the A button, jump with X and

slide into cover with the right bumper. Similarities largely end there, though. Even though they're built from same digital clay, GTA IV and Red Dead Redemption are in some ways the antithesis of one another. One's a biting satire of modern America, a walled-in microcosm of anarchic behaviour within an almost dystopian society, a game about existing within what already exists. Red Dead Redemption, >

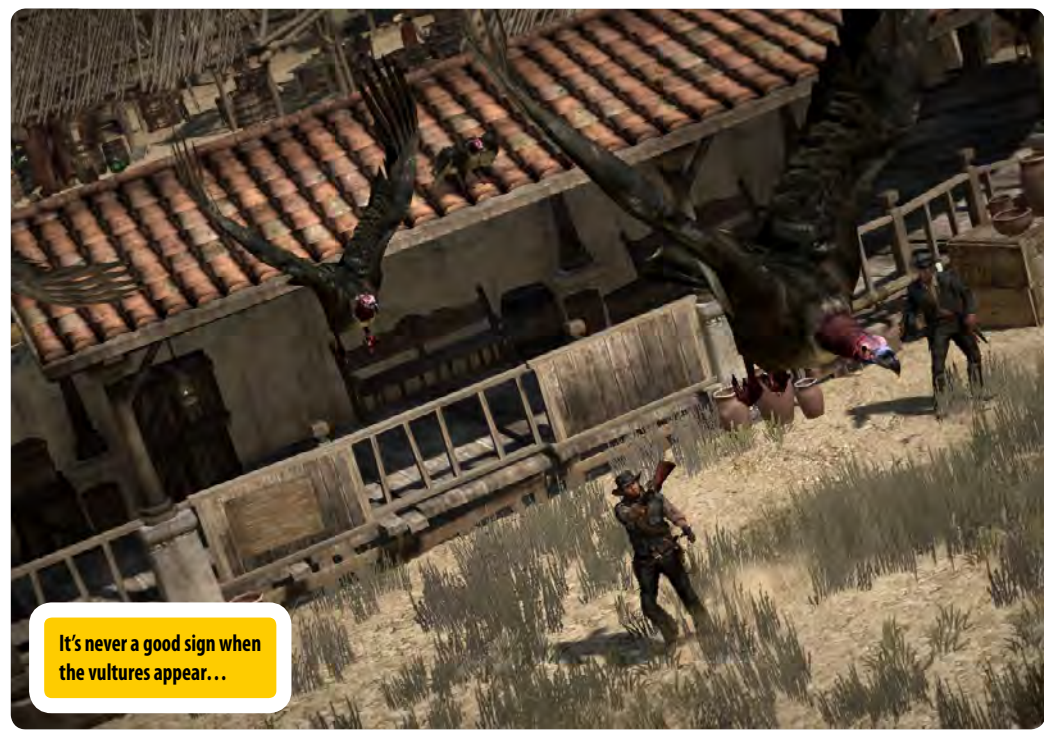




The horse animation is faultless throughout.



Marston likes to lean into cover, and who can blame him with potential danger coming from 360 degrees. Keep leanin', John.



It's never a good sign when the vultures appear...

> Read Dead continued

though, is a game of discovery, the biggest ever from Rockstar, where new experiences, people and sights sit not just around the corner, but miles in the distance. So while you might take missions from acquaintances and have shootouts from behind low-walls, this is not GTA 1908.

For starters, horseback travel does not feel like carjacking. At any point you can whistle for your trusty steed, and she'll come galloping over. From there, trotting works in a similar way on-foot running, while a full-on canter requires a bit more oomph on the A button and

a watchful eye on the horses' stamina bar. The way she, and indeed any other equine NPC in the game, is animated is a joy to behold. Even tugging the reins sees her head shake left and right in a genuinely believably way.

Gunplay is handled in a typical way, with cover, twin-stick aiming and a selection of Wild West weaponry, from a carbine rifle to a double-barrelled shotgun. The beauty comes from the reactions of the enemies. Powered by Naturalmotion, the bad-guys crumple and fly in brutally realistic fashion when they're clipped by your buckshot, meaning you can shoot someone's legs out and they'll tumble forward. >



> Read Dead continued

Our time was spent between strolling around the countryside of New Austin, one of the game's three huge areas (the others being West Elizabeth and Nuevo Paraiso), shooting animals and skinning them, stumbling across a gang's hideout and taking them out; generally living the life of a lawless rider. Missions, though, showed off a couple of new mechanics.

Reading from the script

Our first scripted sequence saw John Marston take a ride with the local sheriff across the outback, where story-critical dialogue is exchanged between the two. Riding and listening at the same time would be a little tricky, so you can hold the button to enter a 'cruise control' mode and enjoy the view while you enjoy the snappy dialogue. Red Dead Redemption doesn't have GTA's bawdy sense of

humour, but there are still moments of light shining among all the grit.

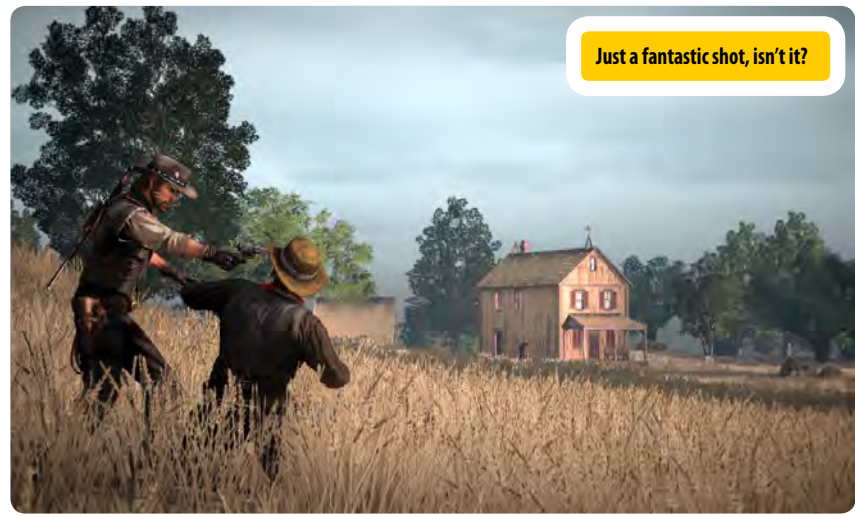
One such light is 'Irish', a vagrant who we helped out on our second mission, in return for a Gatling gun. He's an amusingly drunk sort, and his mission involved a ride to a local mineshaft where said gun was being stored. A Terminator-style shootout ensued, ending with a thrilling ride on the back of a minecart which can be used as mobile cover. Great stuff.

Ultimately though, out of context missions were fun, but it's the limitless possibilities that sit waiting in the open

countryside that make Red Dead Redemption the most tempting prospect so far this year. In our short wander, we shot vultures from the sky – triggering a 'sharpshooter' mini-game. We were tracked by a cougar through the bush, before turning around and shooting as it charged. Bandits assaulted a prostitute outside a saloon, and beat them up with our bare hands. At one point, a stranger called us over to his campfire to relax. Turns out he was a cannibal. And now he's dead. It's a dangerous new world out there, and we can't wait to go back. ●



Sheriff Johnson from Armadillo is a tough man to please. Helping him track down thugs is a good start.



Just a fantastic shot, isn't it?

"We were tracked by a cougar through the bush, before turning around and shooting as it charged"



PREVIEW FEEDBACK! Click here to tell us what you think of Red Dead Redemption



HOW COMPLETE?	FIRST IMPRESSIONS
90%	95%
GTA in the Wild, Wild West? Sounds good to us	



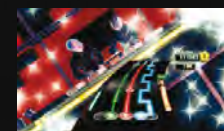


▶ **PLAYBACK OPTIONS:**

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PlayStation 2



Wii



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PRISON BREAK

Publisher: SouthPeak Entertainment
Developer: ZootFly
Heritage: Two Worlds
Link: www.zootfly.com
ETA: March

HANDS ON

Prison Break

Finally, a TV game tie-in you can be proud of

Ah Wentworth Miller. The girls love you, no doubt, but it doesn't disguise the fact that you cannot act. It's a known truth that no one has ever brooded more than Michael Schofield in the hit series Prison Break – not even those kids in Twilight – and now you can brood too, as Prison Break is coming to the 360.

Let's get the bad news out of the way first. You don't actually get to play as Schofield. Not even Philip Schofield. No, while Wentworth and his chums Sucre, T-Bag and the rest are very much in the game, you'll actually be taking control of a guy called Tom Paxton. He's an undercover FBI agent who has been sent in to Fox River penitentiary to

ensure that Schofield's brother, Link, is executed on time.

It's slightly contrived as a set up, no doubt, but a decent way of offering fans an alternative viewpoint on the events of the first series. As Paxton, you'll be the new fish, another inmate in Fox River, and integrating yourself into prison life is your first port of call. Placating the various cliques and factions within the penitentiary walls is key to achieving this, but it's not long before Prison Break settles into its more familiar rhythm of stealth, melee combat and clambering.

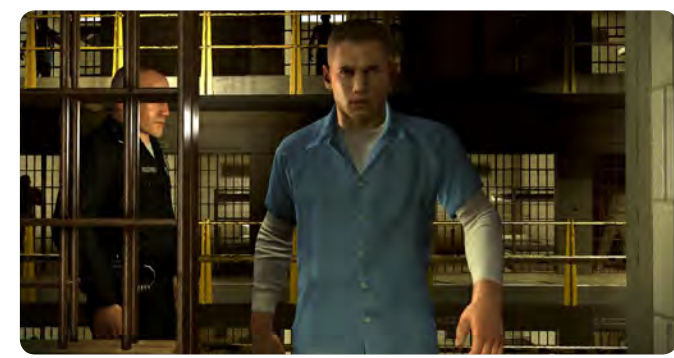
Firstly, the stealth. Usually such a bugbear for season gamers, it's handled as tactfully as possible. Yes, it involves a lot of patience as you lean against walls and hide in the shadows, watching guards' patrol routines and picking your time to sneak past. If you're spotted, the game instantly restarts you at the last checkpoint rather than making you wade through a tedious load screen, and the actual act of sneaking is made fairly painless thanks to intelligent level design and plenty of hiding spots to use.

In fact, ZootFly has gone to great lengths to ensure Fox River is a recognisable and coherent space,

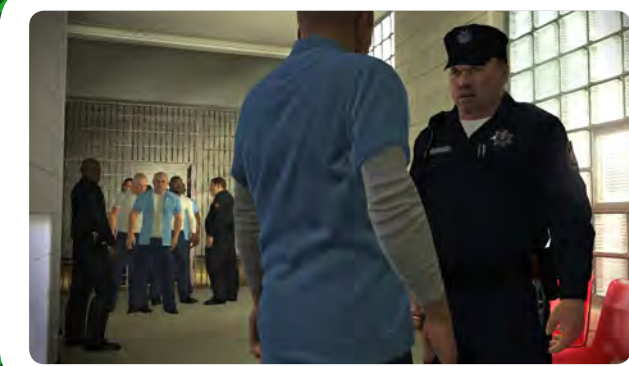
As in the TV show, leaning against mesh fences is a great way to go unnoticed. It's a daft programme.



"It's a known truth that no one has ever brooded more than Michael Schofield"



Wentworth likes to tickle the dead. Don't ask us why, because we just don't know.



PRISON BREAK

> Prison Break continued

echoing the show's greatest success: building a believable, if extremely exaggerated world. Just glancing at the shots across these pages should fire off a few memory synapses if you've watched the first season, and bumping into the members of the cast is sure to put a few smiles on faces.

Of course, it's not all smiles. Fox River's a dangerous place to be, and it's not long before you're getting yourself into trouble. Prison Break's melee combat doesn't quite have the depth of Batman: Arkham Asylum's, but it manages to match its impact. Heavy and light attacks are simple to execute, but satisfying to watch, as Paxton lays the unquestionable smackdown on anyone who chooses to mess with him.

And with this being prison, you have to make sure your opponents aren't going to get back up and shiv you in the jugular, so Paxton can grab hold of enemies and pound them out, or even kick them into unconsciousness. It ain't pretty, but hell, it's effective.

The final string in Prison Break's bow is Paxton's Ezio-levels of climbing ability, meaning he can climb elevator shafts, prison walls and scaffolding with minimal effort. 'Climbable' object are highlighted in yellow (you'd think the prison's builders would have figured that wasn't a good idea), and it's simple enough to hop up a structure and peer down on the prison life below.

For a licensed effort, Prison Break is actually shaping up surprisingly well. And you don't need to be Wentworth Miller to be excited about that. ●

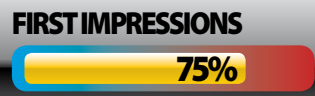


A lot of success can be had by sticking to the background and keeping away from the guards.



Leaning on walls. It's a videogame staple.

PREVIEW FEEDBACK!
Click here to tell us what you think of Prison Break



We wouldn't mind getting banged up with this one



PREVIEW

Supreme Commander 2

Publisher: Deep Silver
Developer: Gas Powered Games
Heritage: Supreme Commander, Total Annihilation
Link: www.supremecommander.com
ETA: March

Global War-ming

The perennial discussion point with console RTS games? The controls. It's an argument that'll never go away, and even though modern consoles have the grunt to run the sorts of algorithms and equations necessary to chart huge open-ended battles, it's no use if you can't play the damn things.

Halo Wars managed to make real-time strategy playable on the consoles, but did so in exchange for

real depth or purpose, instead plumping for an 'action RTS' that amounted to little more than a fun but unfulfilling victory march.

Supreme Commander 2 – or SupCom2 to its friends – is looking to change all that. From the mind of Chris Taylor, head of Gas Powered Games and the brain behind the fantastic Total Annihilation and the well-received (on PC, at least) SupCom original, Supreme Commander 2 lets you deploy troops in the most ludicrously enormous battles ever conceived in a real-time strategy. We're talking real-time war on a global scale, here.

If you've never seen SupCom's most famous trick, then you're missing out. Being able to scale back from the battlefield so far that you can see the entire planet is quite something. It was part of the first game too, but that fell foul of the old argument (control? Keep up) and in truth, suffered on a performance level as well.



It's got to be said that it does all look a bit Halo, doesn't it?

"Supreme Commander 2 lets you deploy troops in the most ludicrously enormous battles ever conceived"



The scale is immense, as you'd expect. Remember you can zoom out for miles.





> **SupCom 2** continued

With considerably more time for optimisation though, Supreme Commander 2 suffers no such ills. It's smooth and convincing on 360, showing off its immense battles with no technical hiccups.

Work has gone into the control scheme too, streamlining the troop selection and cursor movement for console. Of course, this is the type of thing that can only be truly judged after significant play time, but it's moving in the right direction.

More interesting than bleating about controls schemes though, is SupCom 2's promise of a more 'emotional' RTS

experience. Typically, the only emotions that any RTS player will feel are immense frustration, stress, tension and then a euphoric sense of relief, but Supreme Commander dares to be different. Well, not that different – those emotions will still play an integral part – but the 18 story missions aim to deliver a narrative that actually gets under your skin and makes you question your actions on the battlefield. Don't expect something as existential as Mass Effect, but it should offer a little more gravitas than, say, Red Alert 3 managed to achieve.

Players take control of one of three 'enigmatic' (their words, not ours) commanders, who each lead the game's three rival factions into interstellar war.



There's a lot more sci-fi drama than your typical RTS game. Let's hope the controls hold up.

It's not Hemingway, but it adds a little colour to the battles. Not that SupCom necessarily needs it, because as you can see from the Halo-looking screenshots, it's a fine-looking game.

All the components are definitely there, with all of the parts neatly slotting into place for a run at the ultimate console real-time strategy title. If Gas Powered Games can really nail those controls, then this could become a cult multiplayer offering over Xbox Live too – simple enough to appeal to the

masses but with the depth and know-how that all RTS game demand. Supremely interesting indeed. ●



PREVIEW FEEDBACK!
 Click here to tell us what you think of Supreme Commander 2



HOW COMPLETE?	FIRST IMPRESSIONS
90%	80%
Potentially supreme	

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Publisher: EA
Developer: BioWare
Heritage: Mass Effect,
Dragon Age: Origins
Link: www.masseffect.com
OUT NOW

Mass Effect 2

Deeper. Darker. Better

It's rare for videogames to be about something. Of course games have a subject matter and often a story, but more often than not they're quite content to tell a tale of men shooting monsters or men beating up other men. Mass Effect 2 though, dares to be a game that's about more than pop-and-shoot cover, dialogue trees and Vangelis-like synth music. So if you're searching for pathos from an RPG, then look no further.

Mass Effect 2 is a game as much about themes as it is levelling up. The original built a world and established an intergalactic society, alluding to the

tensions that come from pitting the galaxy's races together. In Mass Effect 2 though, this is pushed to the forefront, telling a story of humanity – itself a relative newcomer to the galactic community – and how its rise to power is perceived. By placing you in the shoes of the most influential human, your own choices, actions and demeanour have the widest reaching outcomes possible.

It's genuinely thought provoking, echoing real-life tensions without falling back on the obvious tropes of America and oil. And the fact that this cleverly woven narrative is interactive is

further testament to BioWare's ambition and its ability to achieve.

The story itself starts with a bang. No doubt you've heard it all by now, but Shepard's original Normandy cruiser is destroyed by a malevolent alien race known only as The Collectors, and during the ensuing madness Shepard is shot out into space, where he suffocates and dies.

Two years later, and he's resurrected by the shady pro-human group



CAUSE AND EFFECT

The mechanics of suicide



Cover up



Shepard



Mech warrior



Cover up

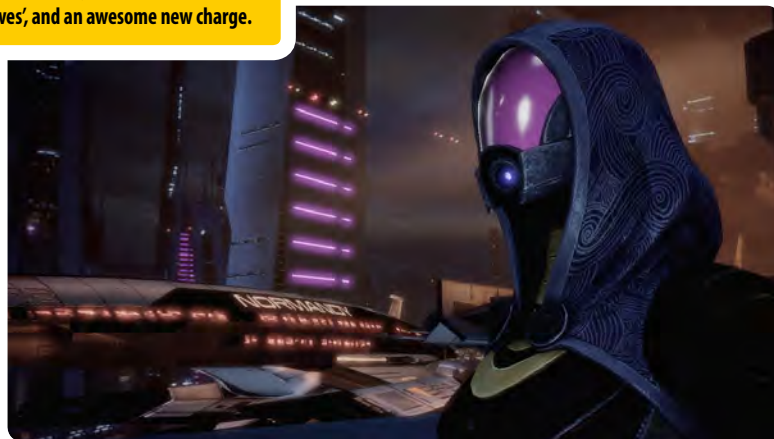
The original game featured cover-based shooting, but its reliance on RPG dice rolls proved counter intuitive. Now the game isn't afraid of just being a shooter during its combat-heavy sequences, and it's better for it.



The Quarian Tali makes a comeback in Mass Effect 2, complete with a Russian accent and a cool hat.



Biotic powers are more pronounced than in the previous game, with far more flexibility in the 'throw' and 'pull' moves, and an awesome new charge.



> Mass Effect 2 continued

Cerberus, and this is where the primary driving force of Mass Effect 2's narrative tension comes from. Led by the chain-smoking, Martin Sheen-voiced Illusive Man, Cerberus is an organisation with a checkered past, but one willing not only to help Shepard back onto his feet, but to charge him with saving humanity from The Collectors, who are annihilating entire human colonies with seemingly no reason or cause.

Placing your trust in Cerberus is optional, but trying to save the galaxy is not, meaning you have to travel through

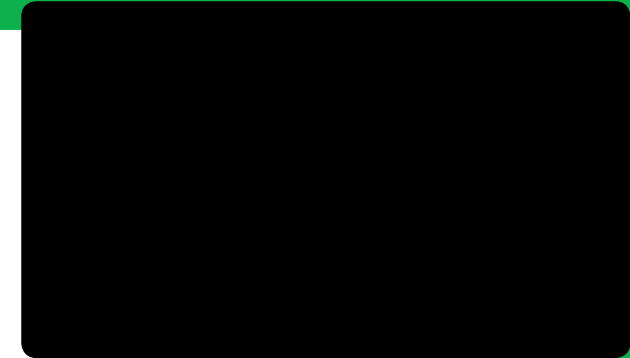
space assembling a team ready and willing to fight. This ensemble cast is largely predefined, save for a few branches, but how you interact with them – if of course you choose to at all – is entirely up to you.

Each cast member is recruited during a daring mission into some of the galaxy's most dangerous hot spots, giving Mass Effect 2 a chance to flex its action muscles. It seems like Shepard's been working out.

Firstly, and most importantly, BioWare has ditched the dice rolling that

underpinned the original game's combat, instead creating a proper cover shooter where the player's accuracy and skill with the twin sticks governs their success, rather than arbitrary statistics.

"The Collectors are annihilating entire human colonies with seemingly no reason or cause"



It's part of a smoothing process that eliminates much of the traditional RPG systems from Mass Effect 2. You won't spend hours hunting for loot or tinkering with the minutiae of your character's abilities, instead time and processing power is spent on the logic that determines your own story arc through the game's fantastically well-pitched conversations, how your relationships blossom with your crew, and ultimately, who lives and who dies.

Despite the gravitas that weighs Mass Effect 2 down – which is a compliment to its choice of tone and convincing narrative threat – there's plenty of time for diversion. Once again, the whole galaxy is there to be explored, this time with an avatar of the Normandy >

FREEZE FRAME

Taking you through the game one step at a time



10 MINUTES

It's good to be back in Mass Effect. The music, the visuals, the tone... It's all superb.



1 HOUR

Spoiler alert – The Normandy is attacked by The Collectors, and Shepard dies.



3 HOURS

Well, for a bit, anyway. Cerberus brings him back to life and things get going once again.



6 HOURS

You'll be pulling together a team of premium-grade soldiers from across the galaxy.



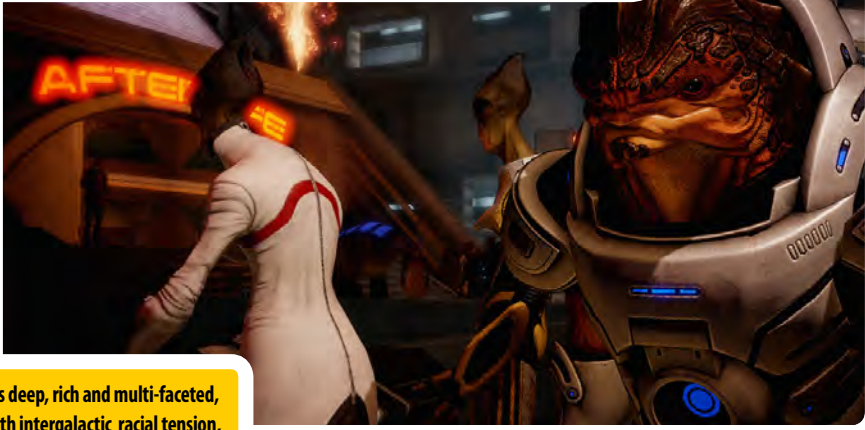
10 HOURS+

At this point, you'll find that the story ramps up to staggering levels of intrigue and excitement.

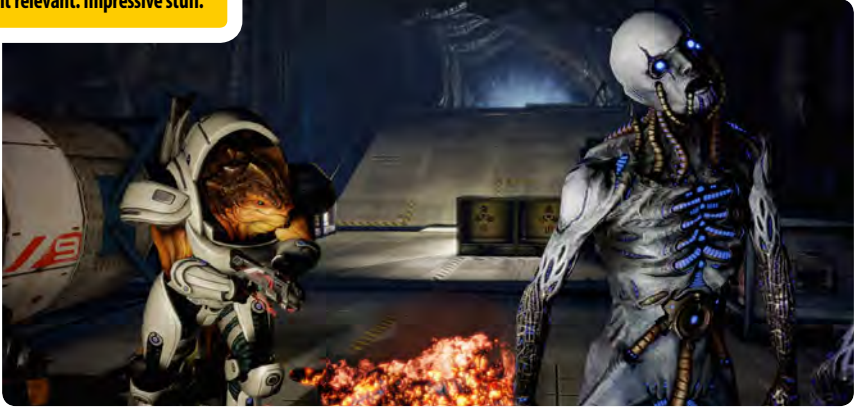




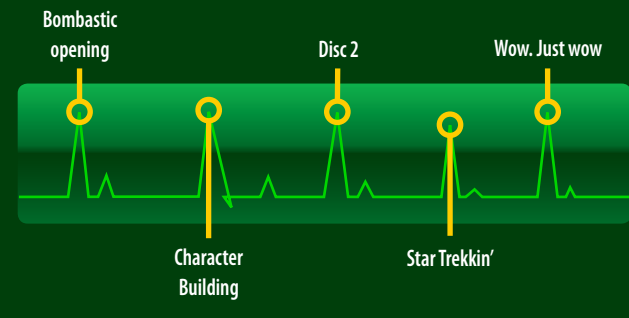
Cover is snappier than before, as if the game has stopped trying and is just happy being a shooter.



The story is deep, rich and multi-faceted, dealing with intergalactic racial tension, but making it relevant. Impressive stuff.



PULSOMETER *Signs of life*



> Mass Effect 2 continued

literally pootling around the different solar systems. Planets can be scanned for minerals using a clever geiger-style vibration, and mined for materials which can be traded for research into weapon and armour upgrades. It's a simple and elegant system, but compulsive in that wonderful way that BioWare seems to manage effortlessly.

The odd tweak

There are tweaks to the way health and ammunition work, the way hacking is accomplished, and even the way you direct your squadmates into cover – all of which enhances the experience – but the memories you'll take away from Mass Effect 2 are not war stories, they're coverstations, insights into the backgrounds and the plights of your crew, relationships and one-liners.

The way it pushes you into a racially tense universe where your actions define an entire world's public

perception is just an amazingly well-judged piece of narrative design from BioWare, and the fact that the game has the dialogue and vocal performances to match is almost unheard of in gaming.

Perhaps its greatest achievement, though, comes on a second viewing, where entire story strands and character arcs change as you battle for humanity once more. It's a sci-fi world so rich and full of colour, yet it's still one that you can manipulate and alter just through your actions. Incredible.

So, in a gaming world where headshots and XP mean dollar signs and sequels, BioWare has achieved the impossible. Thoughtful, considered and utterly bombastic with it, Mass Effect 2 is the thinking man's blockbuster. ●

360Zine Verdict

The richest sci-fi world ever conceived now has the game to go with it

- Incredibly deep story
- Shooting mechanics all improved
- RPG hardcore might be disappointed

95%



BioShock 2

Bring your daughter to the slaughter

Publisher: 2K Games
Developer: 2K Marin
Heritage: BioShock
Link: www.bioshockgame.com
OUT NOW

After reaching BioShock 2's dizzying climax, it seems mad that this sequel had its vocal share of detractors. The shift in development team – more in name than personnel – coupled with the inclusion of multiplayer spelled out doom to many who loved the measured pace and searing intelligence of the original. How wrong they were.

BioShock 2 is a better game than its predecessor. Unquestionably. While the foundations laid by Irrational's first foray into the underwater metropolis of Rapture still underpin everything achieved here, the way 2K Marin and its

creative director Jordan Thomas have realised the true potential of the BioShock idea is just staggering.

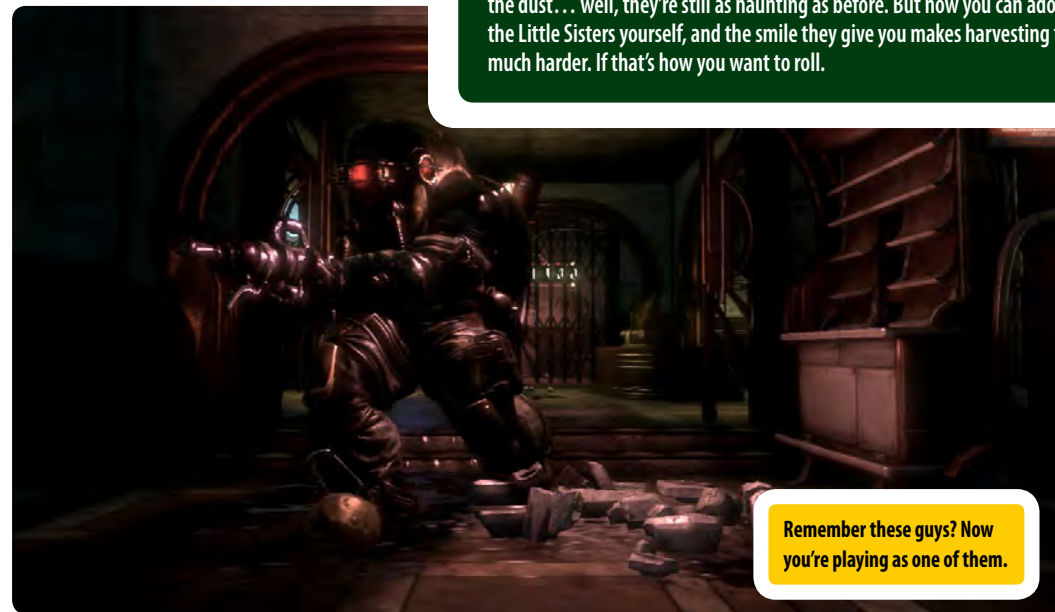
Name anything, and BioShock 2 is a marked improvement. Story? Yes. Atmosphere? Amazingly, yes. And combat? There's no competition. Even before the multiplayer, which sadly was not available at the time of review, BioShock 2, stands tall above its revolutionary forefather, like the Big Daddy towering over its human creator.

Where BioShock dealt with ideas of objectivism and authorship in videogames, and shocked the world with its incredible attention to detail

and brave narrative themes. The sequel expands upon these, but from a different perspective. The antagonist, Dr. Sofia Lamb, is more of a Marxist figure than Andrew Ryan, but one who has developed a zealous following among the denizens of Rapture, whom she refers to as 'The Family'. You, of course, play as a Big Daddy, the only one capable of free will, casting the player as the individual against a commu-fundamentalist regime.



Aesthetically BioShock 2 is just as strong, if not stronger, than the original.



Remember these guys? Now you're playing as one of them.

WHO'S YOUR DADDY?

The evolving ecosystem of Rapture



Daddy's gone



Civil war



Gather round



Daddy's gone

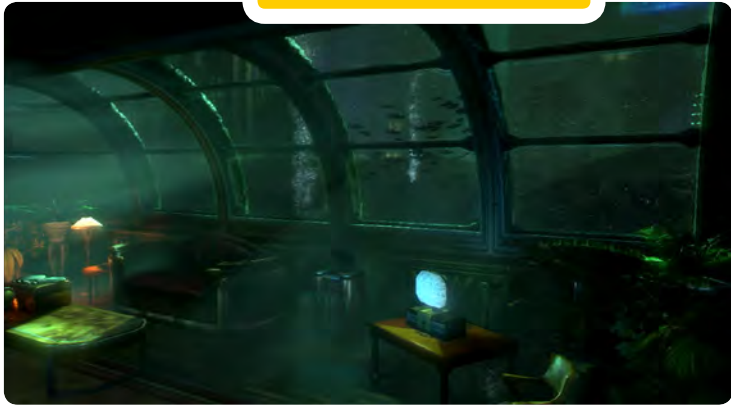
The tears that flood from a Little Sister when her Big Daddy protector bits the dust... well, they're still as haunting as before. But now you can adopt the Little Sisters yourself, and the smile they give you makes harvesting that much harder. If that's how you want to roll.





Multiplayer promises a frantic but tactical mixture of deathmatch and objectives.

Once again, much of the story is revealed through found audio logs dotted around Rapture. The acting and scripting is top notch throughout.



> **BioShock 2** continued

And the driving force behind the story is the search for Eleanor, your own daughter and Little Sister, who Lamb is keeping in captivity.

The rest of the cast all have legitimate motivations, and it's up to you who you trust. BioShock made us wary of that voice in our ear, and the sequel plays on that, toying with our own sense of belief and tempting us with a twisted morality. Just as before, you can slaughter other Big Daddies to steal their Little Sisters, but now the Harvesting option is more lucrative,

making it more tempting but ultimately more sickening. You can also choose to adopt the little ones and go hunting for Adam together, opening up attacks from Splicers as the Sister jams her sizeable needle into an 'angel' – a rotting corpse.

BioShock 2's morality is hazier than the original. Reactions to characters you meet along the way you meet determine how the story plays out, and ultimately your own pans out, but nothing is as black and white as the simple 'kill or save' of the first game.

So, the story, thematic sensibility and creaking, doomed atmosphere is all there, but what about the combat? The original suffered somewhat by not capitalising on its bold ideas. BioShock 2, though, is one of the most

"BioShock 2's morality is hazier than the original – nothing is black and white"

compelling shooters ever crafted. Being a Big Daddy, you're noticeable tougher than Jack, mainly due to your ability to dual-wield Plasmids and weaponry, and of course the giant drill sitting on your right arm. You can combine elemental attacks with artillery fire smoothly, but real success only comes from analysing the environment and working out how you can turn it to your advantage.

Whether it's setting traps to trick a Big Daddy or offset a Splicer assault, or hacking a room full of turrets and cameras (with the brilliant, game-changing hack dart tool), BioShock 2 teaches you to use your surroundings to your advantage to feel as powerful as possible. And it works – the game >

FREEZE FRAME

Taking you through the game one step at a time



10 MINUTES

A staggering reveal shows off Rapture from the deep – it's amazingly evocative stuff.



1 HOUR

Just getting to grips with being a Big Daddy and working out what tools you have at your disposal...



3 HOURS

...Like this awesome drill, which decimates Splicers without a second thought.



6 HOURS

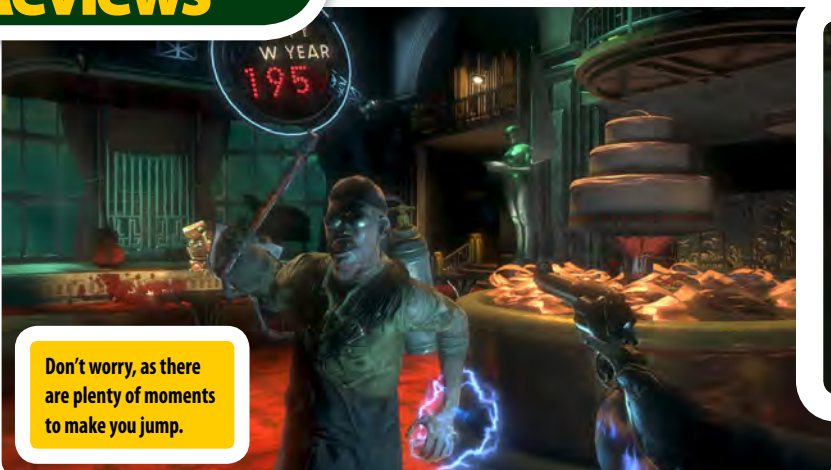
The story's really kicking into gear and you've had to make some very tough choices along the way.



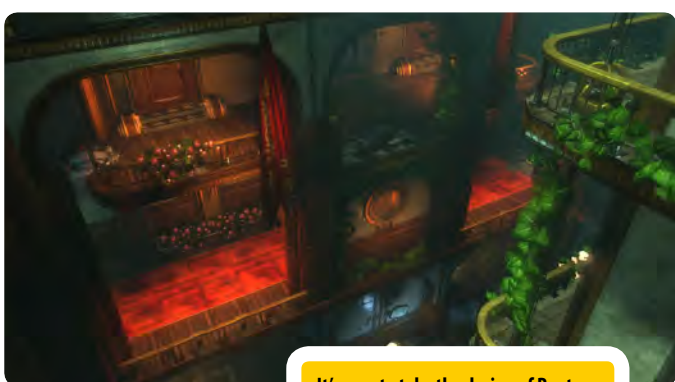
10 HOURS+

As the story builds to a crescendo, there's barely time to reflect on the great gaming experiences.





Don't worry, as there are plenty of moments to make you jump.



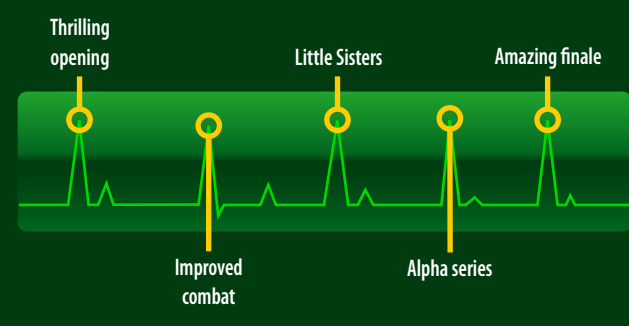
It's easy to take the design of Rapture for granted, but it's still the most impressive videogame space around.

The sections of the game where you're forced underwater are some of BioShock 2's highlights. The artistry on show is second to none.



Eek! Now you're in trouble.

PULSOMETER *Signs of life*



> BioShock 2 continued

is rarely frustrating, perfectly pitched on its normal difficulty and hugely rewarding for players patient enough to not just rush into every skirmish.

Also, the volume of customisation available means you can create your Big Daddy in your own image, as it were, focusing on specific combinations of weaponry and Plasmids, instead of just plodding through as the jack of all trades – pun quite pleasingly intended.

A grand scale

It allows the fights to take place on a grander scale, too. BioShock 2 has a 'stalker' character (the utterly terrifying Big Sisters) who announce their own arrival with a hideous scream, then hurl everything in their power at you until you stop them dead, like premenstrual art-deco pitbulls. Plan appropriately, and you can take one out in style. Don't, and it'll be a quick visit to the nearest Vita-Chamber for you.

Ultimately though, BioShock 2 is about much more than slick combat and screaming psychopaths. It's a complex, cerebral trawl through a magnificently depraved world and a fiercely original narrative, one that's perfectly paced and flawlessly delivered. Whether it's the echoed stomp that sounds out as you tread the sea bed, the screen-tearing power of drill-dashing a Splicer in the heart, or the haunting disquiet of just walking through this once-proud but never-pure city, BioShock 2 just bleeds class from every digital pore.

Few thought that 2K Marin could ever match the brilliance of BioShock. Surely no one thought they would blow it clean out of the water. ●

360Zine Verdict Somehow manages to be even better than the original. A masterpiece

- Outstanding story and atmosphere
- Much improved combat!
- Vita-chambers still an odd choice

95%



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Publisher: EA
Developer: Visceral Games
Heritage: Dead Space, Dead Space Extraction
Link: www.dantesinferno.com
OUT NOW

Dante's Inferno

We're on a highway to Hell...

To be honest, it doesn't even try to hide it. Dante's Inferno is the most flagrant God of War clone ever conceived, and it doesn't appear that Visceral Games even cares. Why pretend? It steals every idea it has from Sony Santa Monica's mythological masterpiece, and seems almost proud of it, too.

Thankfully though, it's also the best God of War clone ever made, and by

some distance. Visceral Games has managed to capture the sense of awesome scale that separates Kratos' adventures from the brawling pack, filling the screen with incredible sights at almost every turn.

As you're probably aware, Dante's Inferno is based upon the classic 11th Century literary work from Dante Alghieri, The Divine Comedy. Now, obviously the original poem did not

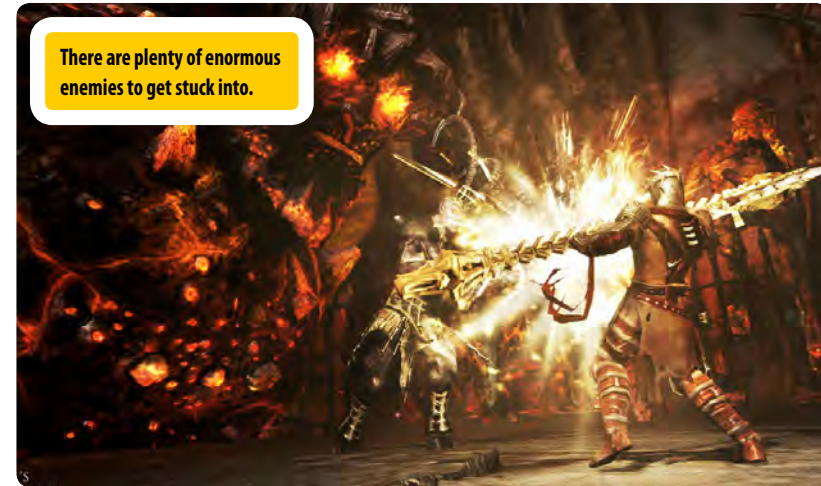
feature combo chains or Quicktime Events, but clear differences aside, Visceral has actually done great work in creating a vision of hell that echoes the nightmarish descriptions that appeared in the original text.

Descending through Lust, Greed, Gluttony and the rest of the nine circles of Hell is, at first at least, an audiovisual feast – albeit one that you probably wouldn't want to eat. Once again, Visceral Games has displayed its flair for body horror, creating some of the most revolting, disgusting images you're ever likely to see. Whether its pallid, skeletal women with phallic protrusions bursting from their stomachs or a trip through the fetid intestines of Hell, every part of Dante's Inferno has been designed to shock, provoke and upset.

It's somewhat of a shame, then, that such bold visual design only houses a God of War style of gameplay. Even though cutting down swathes of demonic hordes is well handled with Dante's whirling dervish of Scythe attacks and elemental magic, the

"This is the best God of War clone ever made, and by some distance"

There are plenty of enormous enemies to get stuck into.



SAINT OR SINNER

What type of man is Dante?



Poet



Warrior



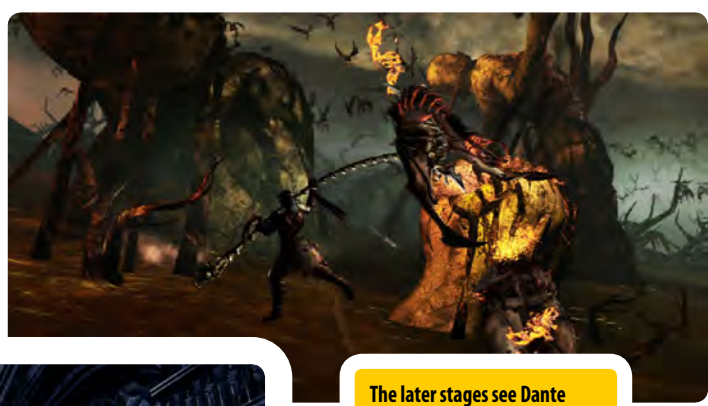
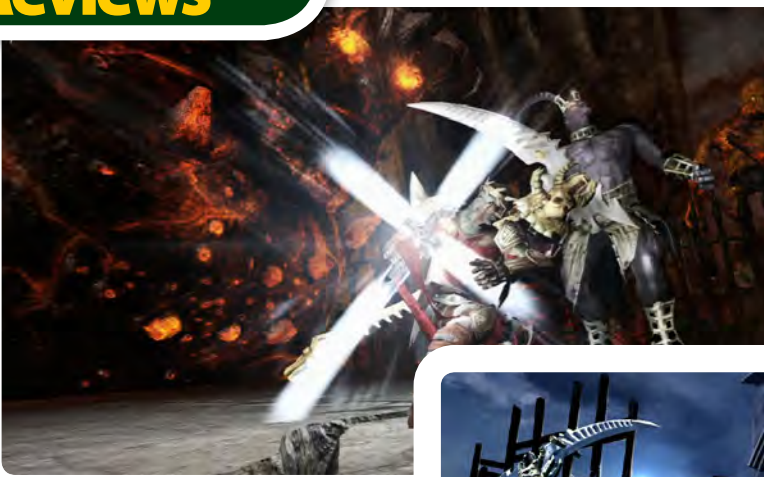
Redeemer



Poet

Of course, the real Dante Alghieri did not stitch a cross to his body and actually descend into Hell. His poetry can be seen on loading screens, and in abridged form throughout the game.





“Leaves you slack-jawed in wonder or grimacing in disgust”

Hell itself, you're forced to spend an hour battling through identical challenge room. After the creativity and invention found in the earlier levels, it's somewhat of a disappointment to find this towards the end of the game.

So it's important, then, to remember Dante's successes in its early salvos – those moments were it leaves you slack-jawed in wonder or grimacing in disgust. It's still the best God of War clone ever made, but Kratos would never be seen near those final few hours. They'd only make him angry. ●



The later stages see Dante walking through the rivers and swamps of Hell to rescue his bride. Blimey, it must be love.

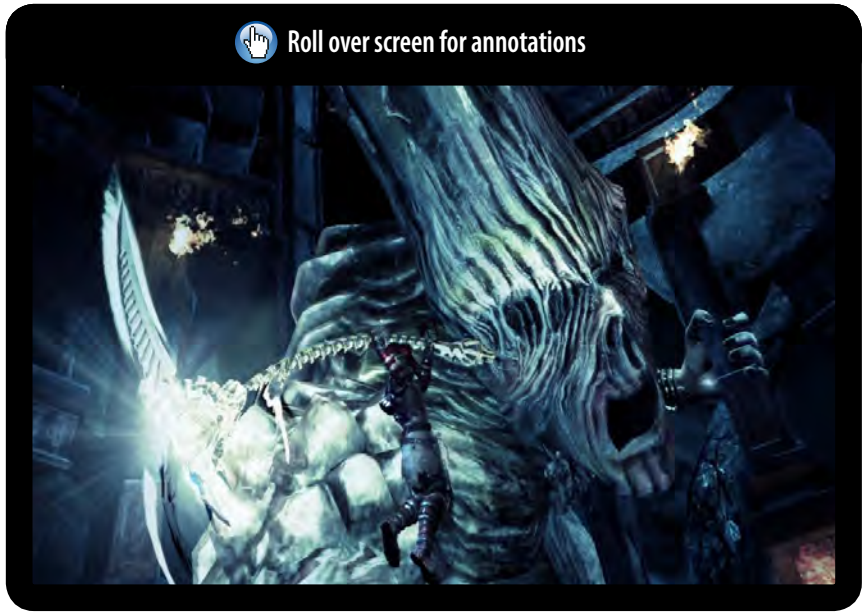
One man and his Scythe... which he stole from Death in a boss fight. As you do.

> Dante's Inferno continued

variety of enemies doesn't match up to Sony's classic. By the end of the game, you'll have seen every enemy hundreds of times, and there's no real tactical difference between fighting a grunt or a hellish minotaur.

And the bosses – while incredible to look at, and at times genuinely quite terrifying – prove far too frustrating and unfair. Attack patterns that are almost impossible to learn and offense that takes off incredible amounts of damage on Dante's Inferno's normal (or Zealot) setting, often stop the game in its tracks and push you right to the very limits of your sanity.

Still, the interim parts are so full of visual invention that it's enough to push you through even the hardest boss fight, until, that is, you reach the game's one weak spot during its final hour. It's as if the team just completely ran out of ideas. Just as you're making your final descent into the very core of



Roll over screen for annotations

360Zine Verdict *It could end better, but it's largely a thunderous God of War clone*

- Stunning vision of hell
- Solid core mechanics
- Weak final levels

80%



In **360Zine**
Issue 40



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BIO SHOCK 2

THE MAGAZINE

FROM THE PUBLISHERS OF P3ZINE, THE FREE PLAYSTATION 3 MAGAZINE

EXCLUSIVE PLAYTEST



Hands-on with the first four hours!



**Exclusive
interview
inside!**



FEATURE



**How BioShock changed
the first-person shooter
genre forever**



CONTROL →



WELCOME

If there was any doubt about BioShock 2's credentials, our extensive hands-on preview should eliminate them once and for all. The Big Daddy's return to Rapture is one of the most impressive, immersive and atmospheric creations ever in this medium.

Learning about the birth of Rapture and the beginnings of the Big Daddies is going to prove a fascinating journey, once again told through the eerily affecting audio logs, and the nuances in the environment itself.

Of course, all of this fantastic stuff came from Irrational's original BioShock, so we've delved back into the 2007 masterpiece to bring you a piece on how BioShock changed first-person shooting forever.

Enjoy the issue,

Jon Denton

Contents

Playtest 03

The first four hours of the game, and everything you can expect to see therein.

Origins 08

Delving back into the original game and exploring its influence on the industry.

Interview 11

The developers speak.

"The game is still laden in atmosphere and wilfully immersive"





HANDS ON

UNDERWATER LOVE

Darling it's better, down where it's wetter...

Publisher:
2K Games
Developer:
2K Marin
Heritage: BioShock
Link:
<http://bioshock2game.com>
ETA: 9th February

It was with mild trepidation that we stepped into the sizeable boots of BioShock 2's Big Daddy. After all, these were the first strides in a world that has hosted one of the finest and bravest games of this generation, and we were naturally worried that 2K Marin might not have captured the brilliant mixture of style and class that defined the original.

Five minutes in though, and we weren't worrying any more. We were too busy losing ourselves in the sinister and mesmerising decay of Andrew Ryan's underwater metropolis, Rapture.

Set 10 years after the events of the original game, BioShock 2 promises to tell the story of the original Big Daddy, who has been brought back to the city under the sea for reason yet unknown. What is fathomable from the early stages though, is that Rapture is in an even worse state than ever. It's being run by a woman called Lamb, who seems to have acquired herself a zealous, fanatical following, and being a Big Daddy, you've got a rather large drill on your right hand.

Clearly 2K Marin has been listening to feedback on the original, because BioShock 2's combat is vastly improved. The drill itself is your first and only weapon during the primary stages of the story, but



Flame effects are fantastic.

what a weapon. It can be revved by holding the trigger, but that takes up valuable fuel. So, a tug of the same trigger will allow you to smash enemies in the face with no hit



"BioShock 2 promises to tell the story of the original Big Daddy"



Even though he's mutated, this guy's still stylish.



Daddy's Back

Getting in deep with the Big Daddy



It's you

Drill

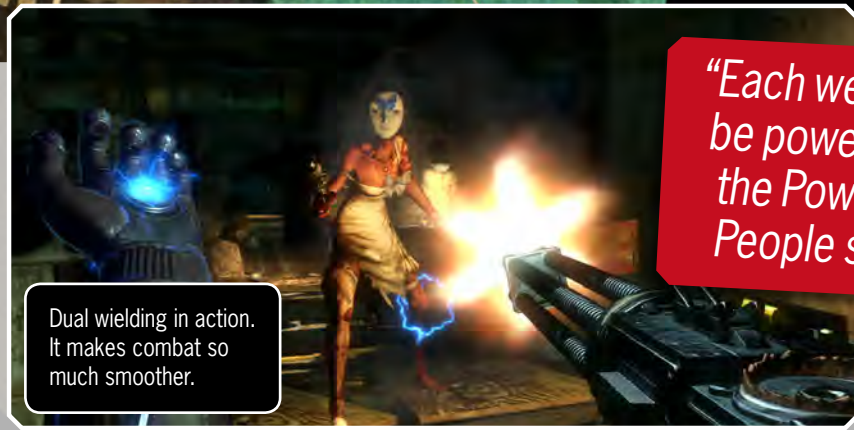
Rivet gun

It's you

You are the original Big Daddy, a sentient creature capable of incredible destruction. Quite why you're back in Rapture is not yet known, but it has something to do with the mysterious woman known as Lamb.

> BioShock 2 continued

on your fuel tank, only their now-mangled face. Of course, it's not long before BioShock 2 starts dishing out the weapons and really comes into its own as a shooter. Within the opening few levels, we'd stumbled across the classic Big Daddy rivet gun – complete with landmine-like trap rivets, a machine gun and a rather beastly double-barrelled shotgun. Each weapon can be powered up at the Power to the People stations that are found dotted around Rapture, and with more choice and

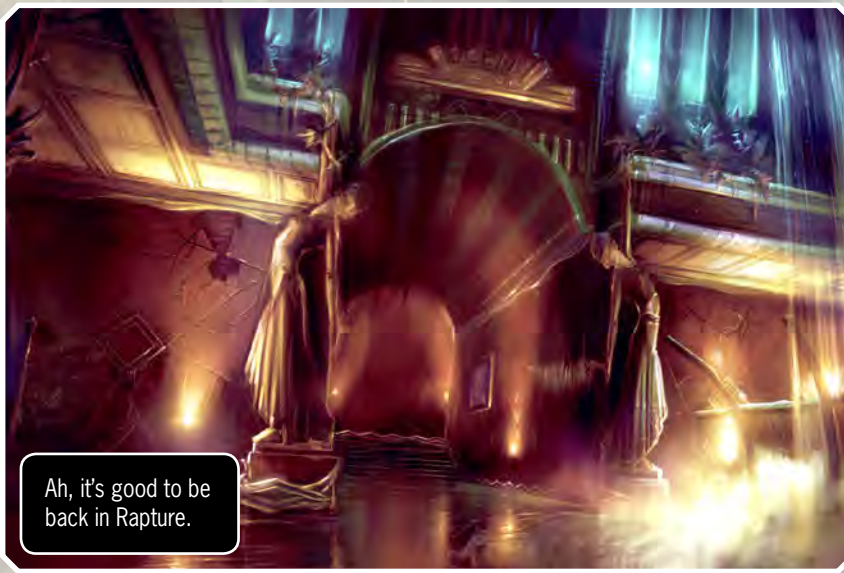


Dual wielding in action. It makes combat so much smoother.

"Each weapon can be powered up at the Power to the People stations"

variety, it's possible to really shape your Big Daddy in your own image, if that doesn't sound so weird. If firearms sit on a Big Daddy's right hand, then the left is scorched

and charred by BioShock's most interesting combative tools: Plasmids. The key to combat is mixing up the left and right hands, the industrial and the organic, and BioShock 2 facilitates this by allowing your Big Daddy to effectively 'dual' wield, hurling plasmid fire and buckshot together in an almighty hailstorm of death and destruction.



Ah, it's good to be back in Rapture.



Big Daddy vs Brute Splicer. Now there's a good fight.





> BioShock 2 continued

And you'll need it. Joining the manic splicers are Brutes, big fat tank enemies that take a hell of a lot of damage, and of course other Big Daddies, who are as powerful and tenacious as ever.

Success comes from managing the key elements of every scenario. Accurate use of Plasmids and bullets is important, but ignoring the other ways in which the environment can help would be foolish. As before, you can hack security cameras, health terminals and gun turrets to your advantage, but unlike before, you now have a remote hacking tool that smooths out the whole process, and basically changes the entire game.



Freezing is still a powerful tool to have in your arsenal.

"Success comes from managing the key elements of every scenario"

Blast a hacking dart into something mechanical and a golf-swing style mini-game will pop up on the bottom of the screen in real-time, and if you manage to stop the moving line in the green or blue segments, then well sir, you've got yourself a new toy.

As battles get more and more chaotic, identifying then hacking the appropriate technology is as important as popping caps and unleashing hellfire.

Along with all the weapons, Plasmids can be upgraded, further empowering the player to craft their own experience. By the time we hit Siren Alley – the game's fourth 'level', if you can call them that – we had a powered-up drill and a left hand that could chain an electric shock around a room full of splicers. Imagine what's possible by the game's later stages. >



Talking Heads

Who are you going to meet?



Tenenbaum

Big Sister

Splicer

Tenenbaum

The saviour of the Little Sisters returns in BioShock 2, and it seems like she's on your side. But as with everything in the eerie world of Rapture, you never quite know who to trust. Still, she's worth knowing. Without her, you'd be lost.



> BioShock 2 continued

In order to get there, you'll have to make some poignant choices, and not just how you want your machine gun to look. BioShock 2 ups the moral quandaries that split the original game, with life-or-death decisions affecting story-prominent characters, as well as the defining BioShock question: help or harvest.

Yes, the Little Sisters return, and being a Big Daddy, they're more than a little fond of you. Killing another Daddy puts you in adoptive care of a Little Sister, who you can harvest for Adam or pop on your shoulder to look for corpses. Nice.

Corpse hunting opens up another new facet of BioShock 2's gameplay,

"Corpse hunting opens up another new facet of BioShock 2's gameplay"

as an Adam-syringing Little Sister will have to be protected from an encroaching horde of murderous splicers. Traps and clever use of the environment are key, but the Adam rewards are worth the effort.

Should you choose the darker path of a child-murderer though, then you'll have to contend with

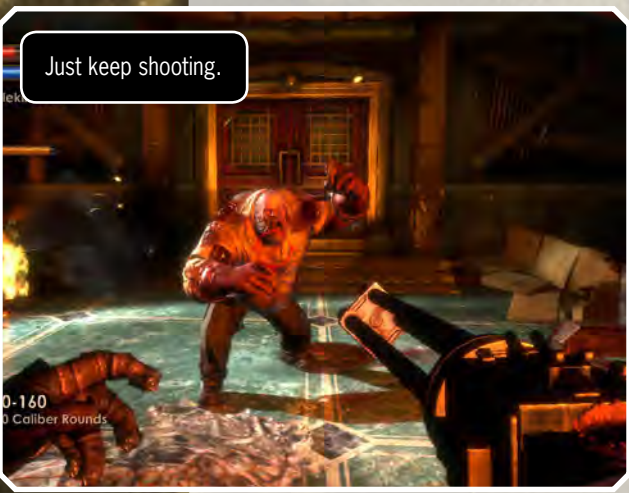


Big Sister. Not someone you ever want to see.

Rapture's newest inhabitant, the shrieking psychopath known as Big Sister. And trust us, the less time you spend with her, the better.

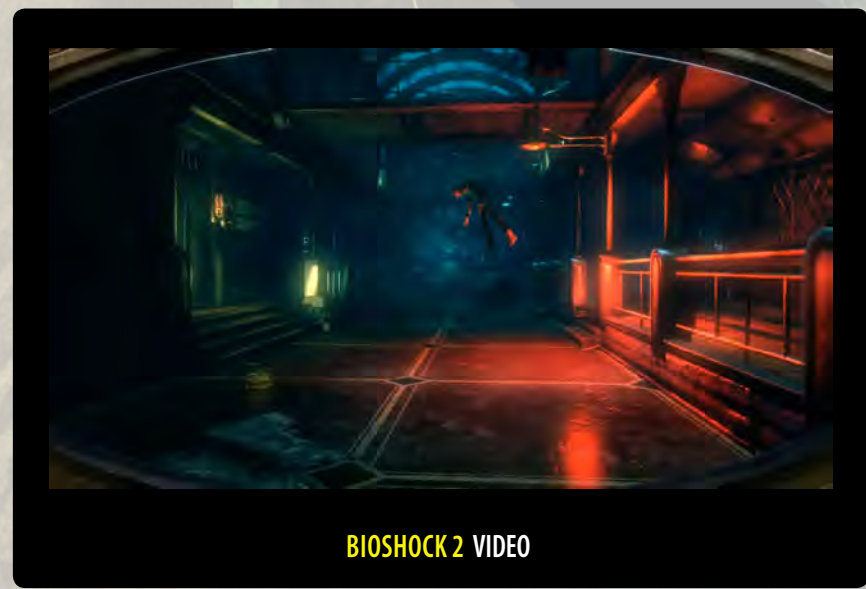
You'll know when Big Sister is coming, as the most horrendous noise known to man starts tearing through your television speakers. Big Sister's scream will go down in gaming history as one of the most harrowing sounds ever heard, and fighting her is an absolute nightmare. She's as tough and dangerous as a Big Daddy, but far more agile, leaping up to the rafters and speeding across the ground. Every time she appears, and it's not always scripted, you know you're in for a serious fight.

Don't let this amplified focus on gunplay concern you though, this is still very much a BioShock game, capturing that sense of dread and despair as you tread the same creaking floors as the citizens of a doomed experiment in objectivism. The story is still artfully written and delivered, the atmosphere

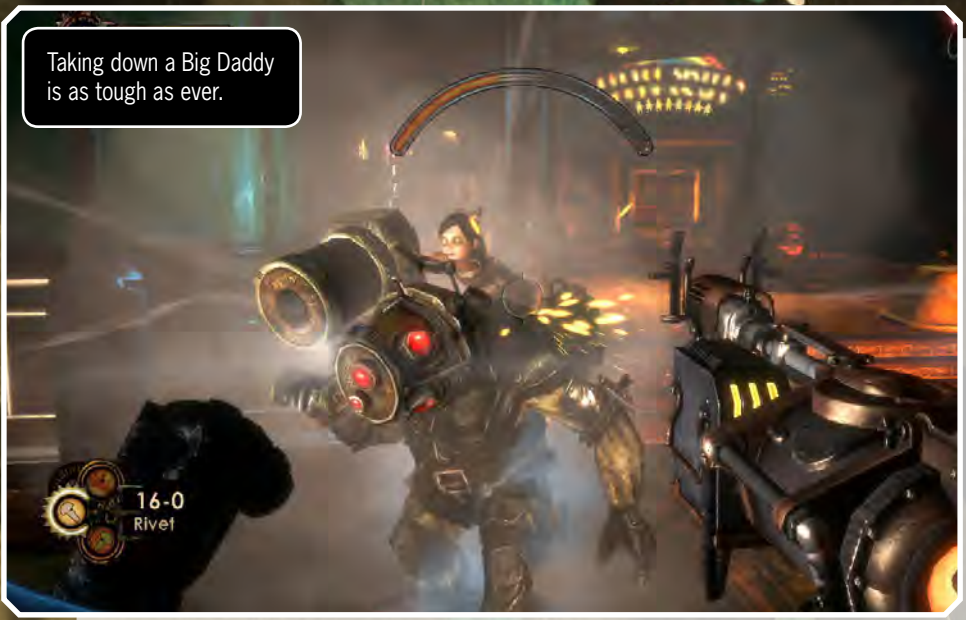


Just keep shooting.

0-160
0 Caliber Rounds



BIOSHOCK 2 VIDEO



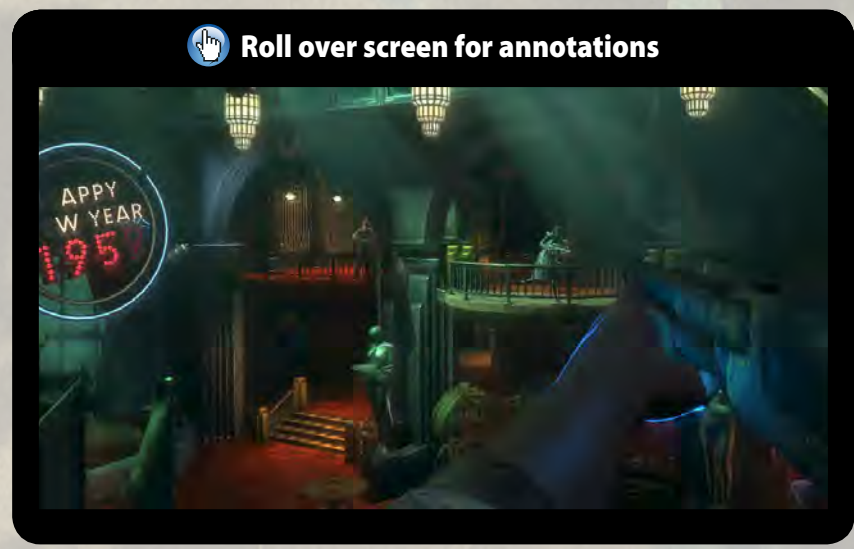
Taking down a Big Daddy is as tough as ever.

“BioShock 2 is shaping up like an early game of the year contender, even at this early stage”

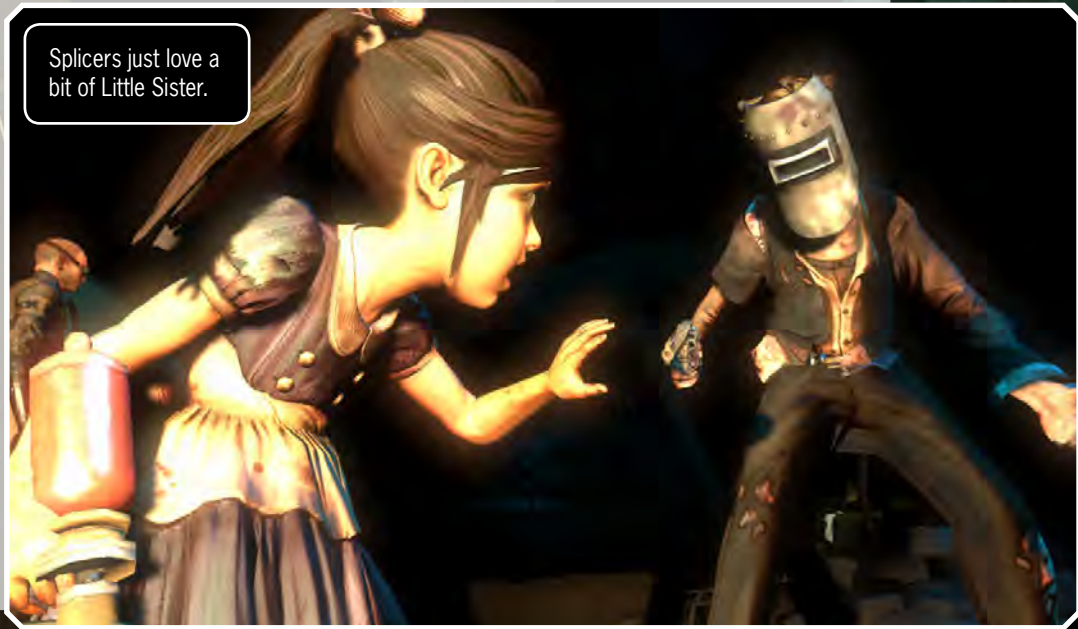
> BioShock 2 continued

still tangibly unpleasant and wilfully immersive. BioShock 2 does what BioShock did so well – which is making other games just look a little silly by comparison. It's in the way the story is delivered through chilling audio logs, how the pace of combat is offset with the haunting deep-water trudges between sections of the city, it's even in the stunning, cliff-top reveal that matches the first game's narrated bathysphere tour. Add a hitherto under wraps multiplayer mode and you have a

package more than worthy of the name. BioShock 2 is shaping up like an early game of the year contender, even at this early stage, and if it can maintain the narrative drive that propels its first four hours through the rest of the game, then there's no reason why it won't be held in even higher esteem than the original. Trepidation? 2K Marin hasn't even heard of the word. ●



Roll over screen for annotations



Splicers just love a bit of Little Sister.

'THE SEA OF DREAMS

Remembering the brilliance of BioShock

It seemed too good to be true. A first-person shooter with its own ecology, an underwater society that tread new ground at every corner, a story that dealt with Objectivism and Randian archetypes... it couldn't happen. But it did. And it was BioShock.

There's no wonder that Irrational Games' original subaqueous masterpiece is held in such high esteem among the gaming community. It's unquestionably one of the bravest and most ambitious pieces of work to have ever appeared on a console, but also one that married that literary ambition with rock-solid and breathtakingly innovative mechanics, leaving players breathless.

It all begins, of course, with the atmosphere. That daunting drop into the ocean, surrounded by a wall of fire, soon followed by the unsettling descent into a bathysphere – the only dry land as far as the eye could see. Then, a spooling tape, a rousing voice, and there it was, Rapture. The opening to BioShock will go down as one of the greatest



It's an endlessly stylish game throughout.

WHO'S YOUR DADDY?

The best enemy ever?

The hulking, haunting figure of the Big Daddy is memorable, not only for its masterfully creepy design, but the fact it's one of the few FPS enemies that acts independently of the player. Basically, Big Daddy is the herbivore of BioShock's ecology but not a herbivore you ever want to get on the wrong side of. He'll leave you alone, but he wants to be left alone as well. Get in his face, and he'll shove you away with an angry growl. Attack him though, and you better be ready for a serious fight, as The Big Daddy brings the pain, and won't stop until he's dead.



Rapture is a massive playground.



> The Sea of Dreams continued

in gaming history, partnering cinematic flair with taut, tense gameplay, and presenting an environment the likes of which we'd never seen before. BioShock's first half an hour felt like a brave new world, not only in the fiction, but for gaming as a medium.

Before long, the story has its hooks into you. Who is this agitated Irishman barking desperate orders to you? Where is Andrew Ryan, the

wide-eyed visionary and creator of this underwater metropolis, and where can I get something more powerful than this bloody wrench!

Of course, it's only when BioShock settles into its own rhythm that it really reveals all of its secrets. The Plasmids, which allow you to equip your left hand with all manner of elemental powers, were not only a very nifty extra weapon, but they allowed you to approach enemy



ADAM'S SONG

Addictive qualities

Adam is the lifeblood of this fractured society. It's a powerful drug that Rapture inhabitants use to splice their own genealogy to massively enhance their own power. Sadly, as everything that sounds too good to be true tends to be, it all went horribly wrong. The deranged Splicers are Adam-addled maniacs who will do anything to get more, the Little Sisters exist only to harvest Adam from corpses, and perhaps inevitably, you become completely dependant on the stuff too. Adam can be exchanged for Plasmids, which allow you to fire bees at enemies, set fire to pools of oil or electrically charge a puddle of water. Just don't take too much...



confrontations in new and interesting ways. Pools of oil could be ignited, bodies of water electrified. Instead of just pointing and shooting – the very language of the first-person shooter up until then – BioShock was asking us to examine our surroundings, to bend every element and every factor to our own will to defeat the surge of vile Splicer mutants who baying for our blood.

The depth and wit of the combat came to a head in BioShock's signature set pieces, the Big Daddy battles. Seeing one of these hulking monstrosities solemnly traipse around Rapture's aquarium corridors was bad enough, but getting into a fight with one was something else entirely. Players had to use their ingenuity to outthink and outbattle these overpowered antagonists.

If, and when, a Big Daddy fell, it left players with conflicting emotions. Triumphant over adversity

is always satisfying, but when it's also accompanied by the pained sobbing of a Little Sister, it's hard not to feel a pang of guilt run through you. Then what a position to be put in – are they still alive and therefore worth saving? Or is the Adam supply they hold onto so dearly worth casting your own morality aside for? It's not as easy as you might think. Rapture can do funny things to a man's mind.



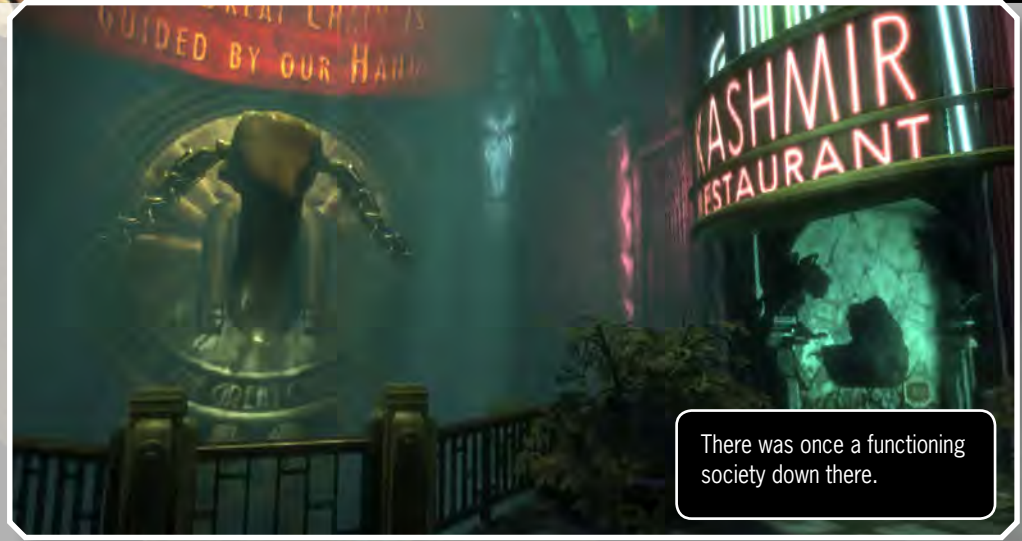
> The Sea of Dreams continued

Perhaps BioShock's greatest achievement came at its climax – a reveal of Fight Club proportions that not only blew the narrative apart but toyed with the very notions of player control in videogames. It's rare for games to be about anything other than that pointing and clicking, so to have one that only tested our dexterity but also our morality? Well, that's just unheard of.

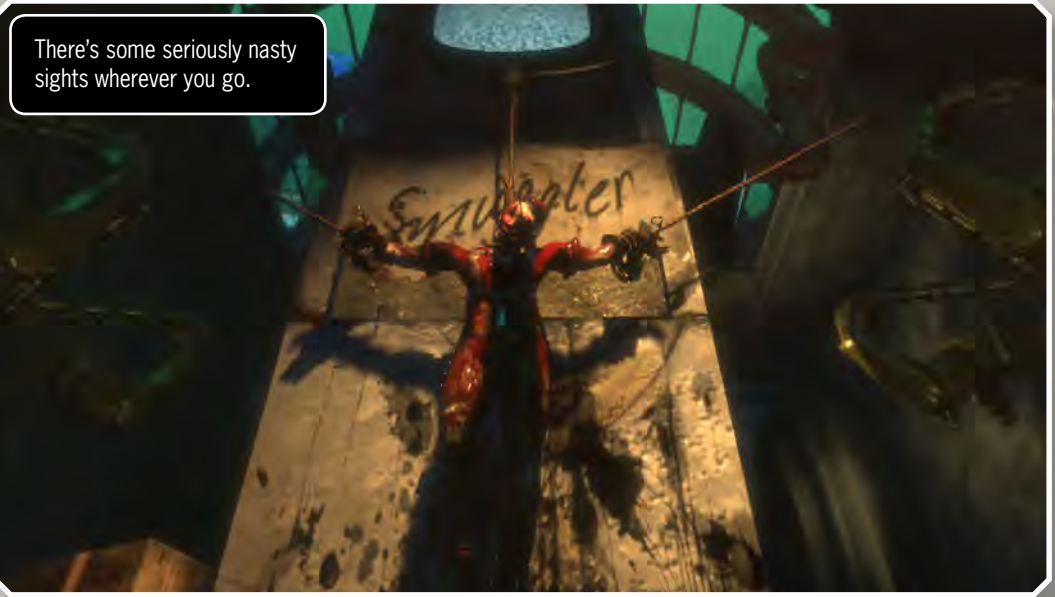
In the short time since its release, BioShock has gone on to influence all corners of the gaming landscape. Whether its audio logs appearing in

superhero games or the dulcet tones of bygone-era music adding colour to a nuclear wasteland, the effect BioShock has had on the gaming world is a lasting and a very welcome one.

If all videogames had this much diligence and intelligence housed within their digital walls, then the world of the gamer would be a happier and richer one indeed. So, what are you waiting for? Would You Kindly go back and revisit the wonderful, horrifying world of Rapture. And that's an order. ●



There was once a functioning society down there.



There's some seriously nasty sights wherever you go.

LISTEN UP

Changing the way we hear videogame stories

Technically it may have come from System Shock 2, but BioShock was the first game to truly thrust a new style of storytelling on audiences. Instead of thrusting cut-scenes and exposition at the player, BioShock weaves its tale of moral decay and abandoned hope through audio logs which can be found throughout Rapture. By piecing together the lives of these once-proud citizens of a now-dilapidated Atlantis, the true horror and insanity of what has gone on down there is revealed. It's a technique that's already been borrowed by other games, and will continue to do so.





INTERVIEW

RAPTUROUS

Time for a quick chat with the developers to find out even more about the stunning underwater world of Rapture...

Why did you decide to let the player take on the role of a Big Daddy? Does this remove the element of fear that was found in the first game?

The Big Daddy is one of the most iconic characters in Rapture, so it's interesting to place the player in that position; to see the world through his eyes. And you're not just any Big Daddy, as you play as Subject Delta, a prototype Big Daddy who has access to Plasmids as well as weapons. What's more, you have free will, a luxury that regular Big Daddies don't enjoy. But even for Delta, there's plenty to challenge you. Rapture's a far more dangerous place 10 years on – we often joke that Jack from the original game wouldn't last five minutes in the place that Rapture has become in BioShock 2. Those splicers have

been splicing for a further 10 years by the time you begin the game, so make no mistake, you'll face some pretty brutal opposition.

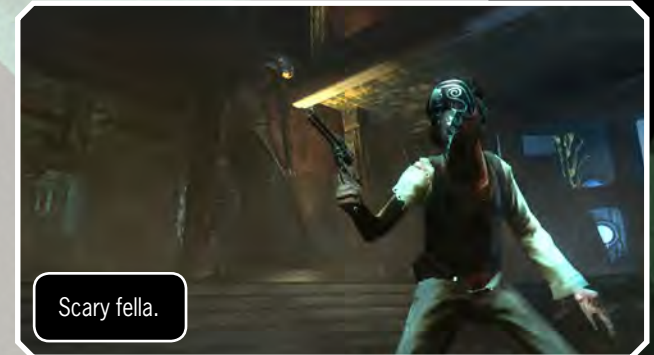
Rapture is now ruled by Sofia Lamb, a political opponent of Andrew Ryan, who stepped into the power vacuum after his death. She imposes a collectivist philosophy on Rapture and its citizens, in an attempt to draw them into a kind of family – which obviously spells trouble for Delta, as this Rapture family views your presence as a threat. You'll still go toe-to-toe with Big Daddies to reach their Little Sisters and the Adam they harvest, but this time around, you can actually adopt the Little Sisters and get them to harvest Adam for you.

There's a new Big daddy type to challenge you too – the Rumbler. He takes a very defensive stance, by

laying down a perimeter of mini-turrets and retreating behind them to launch rockets at you. This makes for a very different kind of Big Daddy fight, which challenges you to come up with new tactical approaches. And finally, at the top of Rapture's predator tree are the Big Sisters – Sofia Lamb's crack troops. Boasting the power and resilience of a Big Daddy, but with immense agility and the ability to wield Plasmids, the Big Sisters will hound you until one or the other of you lies dead. So don't worry. Or rather, do worry, as there's more to fear than ever before.

In addition to more conventional weapons, Plasmids are a key part of BioShock's combat. How many Plasmids will feature in total in the full game?

Quite a number, but it would spoil it



Scary fella.

for your readers to go into too much detail! You can expect to see familiar Plasmids, such as Incinerate and Winter Blast, as well as some new additions to your biological arsenal. The interesting thing to note is that every Plasmid now has three upgrades which alter the tactical effects of it. The third-tier Incinerate upgrade, for example, can be employed like a flamethrower, to deal constant flame damage to an enemy. Tonics also play a big part in how you shape Delta's abilities too, and you'll find you can develop your combat abilities in new and incredibly satisfying ways. You can exploit the technology, environments and denizens of Rapture to a level that Jack – the protagonist of the original BioShock – simply wasn't able to do. And ultimately, you can really make Rapture work for you, by turning it against itself.





> Interview continued

We hear that there's a new hacking mechanic. Can you tell us about this?

In the first BioShock, you'll recall that hacking paused the game, and presented you with a Pipemania-style mini-game. It works differently in BioShock 2. The mechanic has changed to make it more immediate, but also increasingly challenging as you encounter tougher locks, safes, turrets and so forth. When you hack a piece of technology, you're presented with a mini-game which

doesn't pause the game itself – you can complete it while you're on the move. In addition, you don't need to run up close to the item you want to hack any more. Early on in the game, you'll get access to the Remote Hack Tool, which enables you to fire a Hack Dart from a distance. As you can imagine, this is incredibly handy if you're facing a security camera or turret. Imagine strafing into the line of sight of a turret, firing a Hack Dart into it, and ducking around the corner to hack it before it even gets a round off. It's



Little Sisters play an integral part in the story of BioShock 2.

just another of the many ways in which you can manipulate the environment of Rapture and make it work for you.

going to hell in a handbasket... the Plasmids are flying, and to survive you need to start splicing.

BioShock was known for its fantastic single-player experience, but in the sequel you're adding in a multiplayer component. At a time when there are so many key multiplayer titles coming to market – Modern Warfare 2, MAG, Battlefield: Bad Company 2 – so what is it about BioShock 2's multiplayer that will make it stand out?

Cue the Sinclair Solutions Home Improvement Programme. This is the backdrop against which multiplayer games are played out – with you as essentially a lab rat for Sinclair Solution, field testing their new Plasmid technology as you contribute to the very civil war that brought about the fall of Rapture. As you start playing and earning Adam, you'll rank up, which enables you to increase your arsenal by unlocking new Plasmids, weapons and tonics.

BioShock 2 multiplayer features a narrative backbone which makes it unique. While the single-player game is set 10 years after Jack left Rapture, the multiplayer sets the clock back to Rapture's civil war. It's New Year's Eve 1959, and you're a regular citizen of Rapture. But it's all

There's a lot of scope for tactical play as well – a finely honed team of players can complement each other with their differing abilities. Imagine playing the Winter Blast expert with a melee specialist at your elbow, ready to dive in and crack the icy sculptures you make of the opposing team. It's going to enormous fun. ●

Artwork in the game is stunning throughout, including this apartment.

