

CARTRIDGE DUST



|
BLESSED BEGINNINGS

CARTRIDGE DUST

ISSUE ONE:
BLESSED BEGINNINGS

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CARTRIDGEDUST@GMAIL.COM
(P.S. WE ALSO ACCEPT PITCHES.)

HIYA,

Cartridge Dust has been in the works for so long and I don't know how to convey to you how happy I am that you're finally reading it.

Every draft I've done of these ends up waxing lyrical about unimportant pish but this is all that really matters: thank you to everyone who we told about this daft wee zine that said they were excited to read it, or offered to help with it. Our spare time has been hard to come by, so to anyone who offered theirs: thank you.

In our first issue, we're talking about everything that's important to us, mainly Doritos and Korn. Jedward make an appearance too. Please tweet us and let us know which Final Fantasy character you are destined to ride like a show pony. Incidentally, article was supposed to be a running tally of the number of belts in Tetsuya Nomura-designed games, but I lost the will to live after Final Fantasy X. That's not a joke, I actually was ready to die.

Merry Christmas. Happy New Year. I hope you enjoy Cartridge Dust as much as I've enjoyed pretending I know how the fuck InDesign works. I hope there's a second issue, and I hope you come back to read it. Have a good one.

Love,

Katie
xxx

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A LIST OF CASES YORK MORGAN WOULD DEFINITELY HAVE SORTED RIGHT OUT, IF HE WERE REAL, BUT HE'S NOT (FUCK)

WORDS BY KATIE CAMPBELL

PLAYING DEADLY PREMONITION, YOU GET THE REAL FEELING THAT FRANCIS YORK MORGAN (JUST CALL HIM YORK, THAT'S WHAT EVERYONE DOES) IS NOT ONLY ONE OF US BUT A REALLY FUCKING GOOD FBI AGENT WHO COULD DEFINITELY GIVE DALE COOPER A RUN FOR HIS MONEY. AGENT COOPER COULDN'T EVEN DIVINE THE FUTURE FROM HIS COFFEE CUP, WHAT A DWEEB.

Who Killed JFK?

You know for a fact that if York had been on that grassy knoll, we'd have JFK's assassin behind bars. Give him a piece of JFK's skull from Jackie O's classic Channel two-piece, and with few taps of his breastbone, he'd start profiling up a suspect in no time.



Jack the Ripper



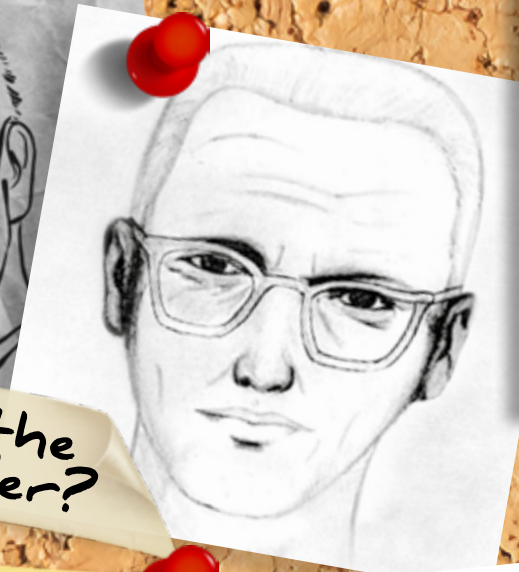
Coffee was introduced to England in 1538 so all York would have had to do is find one of the 3,000 coffee houses in England, pop in for a cup of java, and see what was up. Otherwise maybe the initials would appear in the victim's entrails? Failing that, tan some opium, see what happens.

Who is the zodiac killer?

フランク

ヨーク

モーガン



Theodore "He's Not Your Daddy He Murdered and Raped Like 30 Fucking Women" Bundy went on two killing sprees before getting caught (idiot), deciding to represent himself in court, then flinging himself out a courtroom window to escape. Do you think York would have left him on the lamb for six days? I think not.

Ted Bundy



Who would play York in the movie Zodiac? I kind of feel like Kyle MacLachlan is the obvious choice because he's a babe and he's literally the inspiration for the character. What about John Hamm, what's he up to? Anyway. York's coffee would have answered this one, crisis averted.

DORITOS CRASH COURSE: THE TIE IN THAT TIME FORGOT

THE BIZARRE CORPORATE
CONTENT THAT WAS FAR BETTER
THAN IT HAD ANY RIGHT TO BE.

WORDS AND VIDEO BY JAMIE HARKIN

Corporations love making money. Even the slightest whiff of a market being lucrative and they will double down trying to find ways to rinse people for their spare change. In the immortal words of Karl Marx: “Cash rules everything around me, C.R.E.A.M., get the money. Dolla dolla bills y’all.”

It comes as no surprise then that since the popularity of gaming exploded in the 80s, corporations have been finding ways to snatch some of those sweet sweet Benjamins from the sweaty pockets of greasy nerds worldwide.

Junk food companies are no different. Half the B-tier games on 8-16 bit systems were platformers based on unhealthy treats. Chuppa Chupps had Zool, McDonald’s had M.C. Kids, and even 7up had Cool Spot, which still released in the UK despite us having a far superior mascot (Fido Dido 4 lyfe).

This continued well into the 7th console generation and subsequent digital age with games like M&Ms Kart Racer and the incredible looking Sneak King. However, things started to change: you needed to do more to push sales in the gaming market, and that’s just what Doritos did.



KORN IV: THE MURDER AND REMURDER OF FREE RADICAL

JONATHAN DAVIS KILLED FREE RADICAL, PASS IT ON.

WORDS BY KATIE CAMPBELL

Korn and video games exist in a kind of weird intersection where their songs don't simply sit in the background of the games; they're intentionally dragged into the worlds of a number of them with the fans kicking and screaming.

Jonathan Davis, lead singer of Korn and owner of several Adidas kilts, fucking loves video games. He's got a massive gaming rig – consoles, a PC and TVs – and he gets his poor roadies to cart them around so he can game while on the road. Just get a Switch, mate.

His relationship with games is surprisingly pure, though. He loves Toy Story 3 and he's right into Spyro. When he was diagnosed with a blood clotting

disorder, video games provided him with relaxation therapy.

The singer's first foray into the world of video games was his attempt to create a nu-metal version of Celebrity Deathmatch in the early noughties: Pop Scars. In 2004, he told MTV: "It's basically a celebrity fighting game, but in the context of a Soul Calibur or Mortal Kombat, where it's a real fighting game and it's not just a cheap fighting engine, just for the hell of it because it's celebrity fighting. It's going to be this real killer fighting [game] with these incredible different worlds where you can go."

Pop Scars was set to feature others from the nu-metal scene:

Limp Bizkit, Marilyn Manson and Staind were slated for an appearance, as well as pop stars like Mary J Blige (although MTV's article notes that she couldn't be reached for comment regarding her inclusion). Not a lot is known about the game as Davis pulled the idea in the very early stages, before even finding a platform for the game, but it featured character art by the late Marty Emond and design from American McGee.

Korn would be asked by Ubisoft to contribute a song for the Free Radical developed first person shooter Haze. "Gaming for me is a religion and Haze is the shit," said Davis. "I had to come up with a track that can hit up that kind of rush I get from the game and I think we really rocked it!" Davis claimed he watched the game's trailer fifty times before



PRESS X TO SKIP JONATHAN DAVIS



THIS IS HAZE. I'M TELLING YOU THIS BECAUSE NO-ONE PLAYED IT AND YOU WILL DEFINITELY NOT KNOW. KORN WERE IN IT, BY THE WAY.

finally coming up with the song, which Ubisoft claimed to be the beginning of a "strategy of creative partnership with different figures in the music industry".

Christian Salomon, vice president of worldwide licensing at Ubisoft said: "This partnership with Korn is original in the video game industry in that the song will be released and promoted as a full-fledged single, and not just as a download with the video game. It is a testament to the synergy possibilities between music and video games, which often share the same audience."

Haze was unfortunately a critical flop, garnering mediocre reviews from its overhyping as a "Halo killer," paired with some executive meddling on what was supposed to be a critical deconstruction of the genre. Korn would now find themselves associated with the game that killed Free Radical, who were then acquired by Crytek.

Learning absolutely fucking nothing from their guilt by association in the murder of Free Radical, Jonathan Davis contributed a song to Silent Hill Downpour, the first of the series to not feature regular composer Akira Yamaoka. The decision to include Korn felt like one Konami imposed on

Vatra Games, the Czech studio who designed the game. Tom Hulett, the game's producer, acknowledged in an interview with Engadget that there were "a lot of factors" which resulted in Korn's inclusion in the game, acknowledging the fans' displeasure at the song by saying that it wouldn't be rammed down their throats and they could just skip it.

"I'm a big Silent Hill fan. I can pretty much guess how [fans] are going to react to everything we do," Hulett told Engadget. "I wasn't wrong on this one, in how they'd react, but I think they should hopefully calm down a little bit. You know, Murphy won't be listening to Korn, or Korn won't be playing over a cutscene. It's nothing like that."

Despite this, fans decided to fight back against this injustice in the most effective way possible: by creating a petition. You sure showed them, Silent Hill fans. The petition noted that the decision to include Korn in a Silent Hill game that isn't even about the theme of "teenage angst" showed "a complete lack of respect for fans," like

Konami has ever shown respect for anyone at any point. "...but do we really want the Silent Hill franchise to be known as the game people make fun of or the deep and amazing experience we usually know it for," asked the petition writer, not understanding that people also make fun of things that do not include Korn.

It wasn't until this year that Korn would actively contribute their works to video games again, presumably so they could shake their hot streak of bringing down developers (RIP Vatra and Free Radical). The band performed a live concert in MMORPG AdventureQuest 3D and AQWorld, which Artix Entertainment tragically called "the most brutal moshpit ever". The event itself was free, but players could essentially buy Korn merch in the game, and take part in a Q&A with the band. Davis spent a while anonymously wandering around the game, chatting to people and buying loads of Korn merch, which I'm sure we can all agree is completely adorable.

EVERY TIME JONATHAN DAVIES SINGS
BOOM NA DA NOOM NA NA NEMA A
SMALL STUDIO GOES UNDER

WHICH FINAL FANTASY CHARACTER WOULD YOU FUCK BASED ON YOUR STAR SIGN?

いっぱつ一発でめいちゅう命中しなくたって、にんしん妊娠するまでハメつつ続ければいいだけだし。

WORDS BY KATIE CAMPBELL



ARIES
21 MARCH – 20 APRIL

Your ideal match is someone who dreams big. No-one is a bigger thinker than Final Fantasy VIII antagonist, Ultimecia, whose goal was to compress time to make herself a god. Get your freak on with the woman who literally wants to fuck time.



TAURUS
20 APRIL – 21 MAY

My crystal ball says you need someone who matches your single-minded nature. That could literally be anyone. But you, you lucky bitch, get landed with the blonde bombshell himself, Final Fantasy VII's Cloud Strife. Aerith's dead, get in there.



GEMINI
21 MAY – 21 JUNE

When it comes to selecting a partner, Gemini need someone who can handle both facets of their personality. Zidane Tribal of Final Fantasy IX loves to be loved and is always looking out for his friends, so the loyalty will do you well. What that tail do, baby?



CANCER
21 JUNE – 23 JULY

You need someone who can make decisions and doesn't mess about when problems arise. Cold and intellectual, but also passionate and powerful. Move over Wakka, because it's Lulu from Final Fantasy X for you. Good luck trying to undo all 417 of those goddamn belts.



LEO
23 JULY – 23 AUGUST

You get to fuck Tifa. Please don't ask me to explain this. Horoscopes aren't accurate and everyone wants to fuck Tifa, so please don't fucking ask me to explain myself because I cannot be fucking arsed. Do you know how much work this takes? Seriously.



VIRGO
23 AUGUST – 23 SEPTEMBER

Virgos love someone hardworking and loyal, and match well with fellow earth sign Taurus. Who else would you grab by the horns but the number one Final Fantasy hero, the Warrior of Light? He's kind of like a bull, right?



LIBRA
23 SEPTEMBER – 23 OCTOBER

You need someone who can handle your theatrical nature, like perhaps a fellow thespian? Who's a more theatrical bitch than Kefka, Final Fantasy VI's primary antagonist? Get down with the clown and have him enjoy the sounds of thousands screaming.



SCORPIO
23 OCTOBER – 22 NOVEMBER

Scorpios need someone a little more sensitive and empathetic who can deal with their powerful emotions. Enter Final Fantasy IX's ultra-sensitive and ultra-sweet Vivi. What's under that hat? You're going to find out.



SAGITTARIUS
22 NOVEMBER – 22 DECEMBER

You need someone generous and idealistic. Who matches that criteria more than an environmental terrorist? For you, it's the very Final Fantasy VII's number one hot dad, Barret. Be sure to ask him if he has any other attachments for that gun arm.



CAPRICORN
22 DECEMBER – 20 JANUARY

Capricorns's traits of practicality, intellect and resourcefulness scream "please let me fuck Quistis Trepe from Final Fantasy VIII, also could you ask her if she'll please remember to bring that whip with her". Who's hot for teacher? You are.



AQUARIUS
20 JANUARY – 19 FEBRUARY

You're one of the few signs able to handle the dual nature of Gemini, so fuck Kain Highwind from Final Fantasy IV. His inability to choose between light and dark makes him irresistible. Let him stick his lance in you. Ooh matron. Fucking hell what have I just written.



PISCES
19 FEBRUARY – 21 MARCH

Final Fantasy X's Lady Yuna bridged the gap between the physical and otherworld, much like Cancers do, so let her take you to the Eternal Calm. Sorry Tidus. He's technically dead anyway I guess. Can you fuck a semi-sentient mass of pyreflies?

THE LONG READ: THRILL KILL

THE SORDID HISTORY OF THE UNRELEASED PS1 FOUR-PERSON BRAWLER THRILL KILL, WHICH HAS GONE DOWN IN INFAMY SINCE BEING LEAKED BY AN ANONYMOUS DEVELOPER.

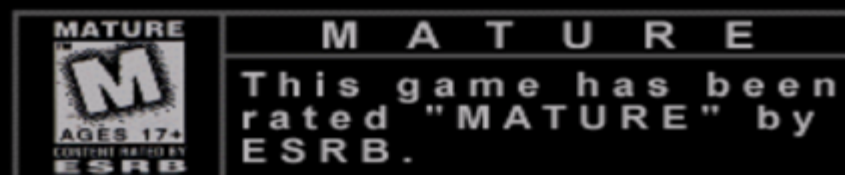
WORDS BY KATIE CAMPBELL

WARNING

THRILL KILL™ CONTAINS EXTREMELY GRAPHIC AND VIOLENT SCENES AND SUBJECT MATTER.

Terms and Conditions

- You must be at least 17 years old to view or play this game.
- You must not find images of adults engaged in violent acts to be offensive or objectionable.



- ☒ I AGREE TO THESE TERMS AND CONDITIONS AND PROCEED AT MY OWN RISK.
- ☐ I CAN NOT IN GOOD CONSCIENCE PLAY THIS GAME.

Everyone who's heard of Thrill Kill knows more or less why it was cancelled: it was too violent. But this wasn't an act of censorship as much as it was just EA being EA before they were known for that classic brand of EA bullshit. The game was developed by San Diego-based Paradox Development, who according to graphic artist Robert Hunter, were attempting to create a 3D challenger to Mortal Kombat, which was still a 2D fighting game at the time. Paradox were creating Thrill Kill to be published by Virgin Interactive.

In a ZDNet article, former vice president of design at Virgin Interactive, who worked on the project, said: "The bottom line is that the mandate was to create an 'adult only' game. That's what 'Thrill Kill' was designed to be, an adult game. We wanted a game that went all the way. This was supposed to be a full-blown adult fighting game that had sexual overtones and was disturbing."

That's exactly what Paradox came up with, and the game was shaping up for a Q3 1998 release nicely when in the summer of that year, Electronics Arts Pacific snapped up Virgin Interactive for £122,500,000. At this point, Thrill Kill was but weeks off shipping. Local industrial band Contagion had recorded their score for the game, and it was coming along nicely. It was ready to go – in fact, talks for a sequel called FUBAR or S&M were already in the works. EA, however, had other ideas.

Despite already getting approval from Sony to put Thrill Kill on the PS1, Louis Castle, one of the founders of Paradox, told VG247 that EA decided it would be better for the industry if the "senselessly violent" game was not put to market.

Pat Becker, director of corporate communications at EA, told ZDNet in 1998: "The decision [to discontinue Thrill Kill] was made as soon as we could make it after we acquired

[Virgin Interactive]. From the time that the deal was closed to the time that decision was made was a couple of weeks.

"It wasn't a decision that was made hastily. Our whole executive team was involved in the decision to cancel the game, and we certainly evaluated it to see if there was something that we could do to make ourselves more comfortable with the content. The tone and the tenor of the game are just too violent."

EA were so concerned about Thrill Kill harming their image as a publisher that they went as far as to bury it. Programmer David Olloman claims that EA's ties with senator Joe Lieberman was one of the reasons that the game was "placed on the highest, dustiest shelf they could find." Senator Lieberman was one of the central figures in the 1993 congressional hearings on video games, which ultimately resulted in the creation of the ESRB a year later.

In true EA fashion, several sources told Variety that the publisher didn't even come down

to San Diego to tell the team that the game was cancelled. Instead, the devastated employees at Paradox found out via the gaming press that their project was no more.

With EA scrapping Thrill Kill, there were hopes from the staff at Paradox that the game could be shopped to another publisher in order to get the, at the time, 99% complete game out of their studio and onto store shelves. With the game seeming to be a worthwhile challenger to Mortal Kombat's blood-drenched crown, other publishers came knocking at Paradox's door to get their mitts on the title, including Eidos Interactive. Olloman told VG247 that publishers came to their studio with blank cheques, trying to buy the rights from EA, but the association of the controversy was simply too much for them. They wanted nothing to do with the game, and that meant burying it.

It's not accurate to say that Thrill Kill was the first video game to receive an AO (adults only) rating by the ESRB – that honour should actually be





NTSC U/C

PlayStation™



bestowed upon the 1993 CD-I game *The Joy of Sex*, which was for gamer boys who wanted to improve intimacy in their relationships via the illustrations of sex. *Thrill Kill* was the first game to be given an AO rating for violence alone (as opposed to sexual content) – specifically for animated violence and animated blood and gore, but since it was never released, the real holder of the title is Rockstar's *Manhunt 2*.

Evidence exists to show that the developers were actively working to lower the AO rating, too. In the States, stores won't carry AO-rated games, so it severely hampers the amount of profit that can be made off of games.

Thrill Kill was leaked by someone – or a few people – who worked on the project after its cancellation. There currently exists four versions of the game: uncensored, censored, NTSC beta, and PAL beta. The uncensored and censored versions are both the “full” versions of the game, in total working order and featuring all FMV sequences, including character endings. The existence of the censored version seems proof positive that the team was working to reduce the AO rating, as well as the game's strange pre-title confirmation scene that you are definitely over 17 and not offended by violence, which sports an M rating.

The NTSC and PAL betas either are missing FMVs or have none at all, and are missing music. In the PAL version, there is no music at all, and the AI is incredibly poor. Some fans claim there were two additional versions of the game leaked: the E3 1998 demo build of the game which was on show at the convention and features one-button thrill kills, and the review copy of *Thrill Kill*, which has the same move set as was printed in the October 1998 issue of *Tips & Tricks* magazine.

In the censored version, Belladonna's thrill kill “Go Down” is removed. This move

involves her seductively moving down her opponent's body and out of sight of the camera as if she's going down on them, only to have it revealed at the last second that she is, in fact, tickling their feet. Her erotic moans have also been changed to laughs, no longer suggesting she's horny for murder. Cletus, who carries around a severed leg which he beats people with, now says “yummy” as he eats the leg, but the blood that spurts as he does so is removed.

It's important to note just how close to release *Thrill Kill* was when EA canned it: not only was it ready to ship, but an old gaming magazine scan found via Reddit shows that games stores, in this case, Electronic Boutique, were already advertising it as being available soon at the retailer. It had received a reasonable amount of coverage from the gaming press, appearing on the front cover of the aforementioned issue of *Tips & Tricks*, while EGM issue 110 featured a page of editorial on it and PSM issue 14 included a *Thrill Kill* PS1 lid sticker.

Paradox had a game they could do nothing with but scrap, an engine they built from scratch that was technically extremely capable, and an absolute requirement to find a new project to work on, lest the studio go under.

Enter the Wu-Tang Clan.

As Complex points out, the failure of *Thrill Kill* coincided with the rap collective beginning a massive marketing push, having come to the end of RZA's five-year plan that established the direction of the Wu-Tang Clan. With RZA stepping back from maintaining the group's image, the task was handed to Oliver “Power” Grant and his brother Mitchell “Divine” Diggs, who began the mass-marketing of the Wu-Tang brand. With this came a new venture: a Wu-Tang video game.

Paradox set about reskinning *Thrill Kill*, pinning down Activision as publishers for the game. This came with its own



set of problems: only two people on the team actually liked the Wu-Tang Clan (producer Kevin Mulhall joked to *Variety* that he'd have been more excited if they'd approached him about a Depeche Mode game), but the team were grateful to Activision for essentially keeping them afloat after the rug had been pulled right out from under them.

Unfortunately, the development of Wu-Tang: *Shaolin Style* (Or *Taste the Pain* if you're in the UK) came with its own difficulties. Paradox employees weren't allowed to meet with the band, and their lack of real intimate knowledge of the Wu-Tang Clan led to some random decisions regarding some of the more obscure members of the Clan, like making U-God a ninja.

Wu-Tang: *Shaolin Style* was released just in time for the

turn of the millennium, hitting store shelves in November 1999, a mere year after *Thrill Kill* was supposed to hit shelves. According to staff who worked on it, *Shaolin Style* was “70%” *Thrill Kill*, and it was fairly obvious to anyone who had seen the latter that the two were simply the same game in different disguises. *Shaolin Style* did retain the violence of *Thrill Kill* but requires you to put in a code that's hidden in the manual in order to see it. Heads are still very much lopped off, and the gibs are utterly ludicrous.

Shaolin Style was released to fairly positive reviews, despite ODB absolutely not being voiced by ODB or anyone who even vocally resembles ODB (every time the voice actor mumbles “don't mess with big baby Jesus” ODB spins in his grave) and Method Man telling Complex that the game “stinks”.

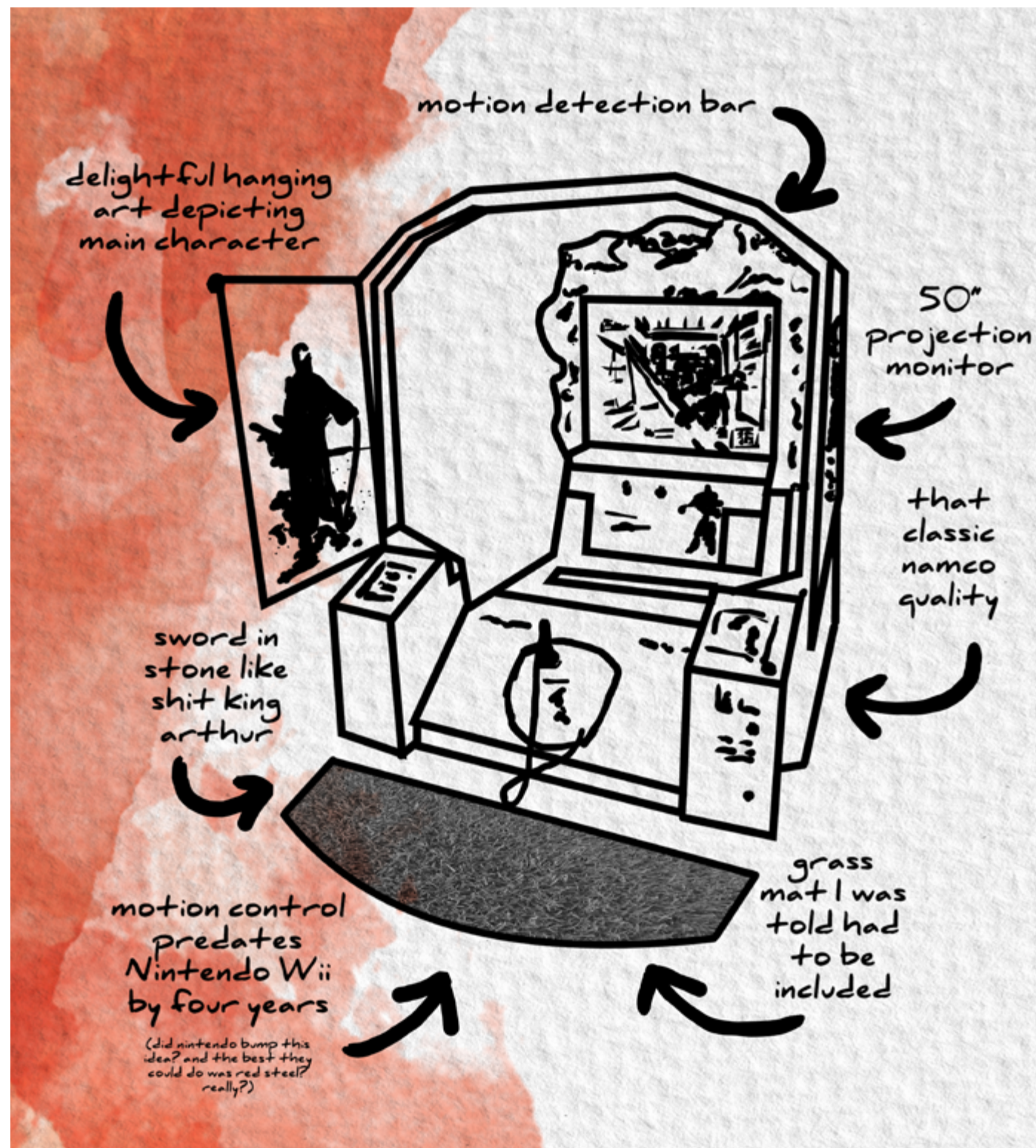
Thrill Kill's legacy wouldn't end there, as its engine would go on to power other Paradox games: *X-Men: Mutant Academy* and its sequel, and *Rock 'Em Sock 'Em Robots Arena*. They would develop *Insane Clown Posse* vehicles *Backyard Wrestling* and its sequel before being bought by *Mortal Kombat* developer Midway in 2004.

Thrill Kill's hype as a dirty, dingy, fucked-up horror show has preceded it for over twenty years now, but looking back at it with modern eyes, it seems more like an over-the-top parody of fighting games than an actual cause for concern. Had it been released, it's hard to see how it would have made its mark, but the “keep sharing the tapes” spirit it embodies has kept *Thrill Kill* from being killed off altogether.

ARCADE DREAM MACHINE: MAZAN: FLASH OF THE BLADE

IT'S KIND OF LIKE ONIMUSHA AND RED STEEL HAD A WEAN

WORDS BY JAMIE HARKIN



I spent a large chunk of my childhood in and out of arcades. A misspent youth chucking money into machines designed to rinse you, under harsh red neon tube lighting. What I would call a sensible investment of my time and funds.

Growing up in a coastal town is partially to blame for this hobby. What else can you do when it's pissing it down and you're bored shitless at the beach? It often came down to a choice between freezing your baws off going for a paddle or visiting one of the three arcades within half a mile of each other along the prom. I generally chose the latter.

One of the arcades (which closed when I was three) was only an arcade in the old Scottish sense: a neon room full of puggys and seedy old men sparking up fags, then shouting at each other and then sparking up another fag when the first had inevitably fizzled out. It was really the other two that played a big part in keeping me occupied as a child. I'm not going to talk about them right now, but just know they were pretty radical, dude.

This wasn't where I encountered Mazan: Flash of the Blade however. On a wee trip down south to a Butlins style holiday park called Haggerston Castle with my auld Da, after having a shot on a quad bike, I found it. Hidden in a small arcade, nestled between a Whac-a-Mole style ticket spitting game called Spider Squasher and some 2p machines sat one of the best arcade experiences I had encountered in my young life: Mazan.

The selling point is fairly obvious with this one. It's your average light gun game with a twist. The machine is surrounded by sensors and so instead of the usual garishly coloured overly heavy arcade light guns, your weapon of choice is, as you might have guessed, a katana. The sensors track where your blade is and replicates it on screen allowing you to block and slash your way through hordes of enemies.

As a wee man who was heavy into swords this was absolutely fucking mind blowing to me. Finally I could swing a plastic sword with reckless abandon and no get screamed at by my Maw. Pure arcade magic. It even managed to get me to stand next to a machine decorated with spiders, which I am terrified of, for hours on end. Try getting anything to make me to do that now (it's no fucking happening).

Looking back, it was also probably my first interaction with Japanese horror as well. I wouldn't scare the shit out of myself with Silent Hill 2 for another few years and I was too much of a shitebag to read Goosebumps never mind Uzumaki. Levels filled with oni, ghosts and horrific insects were a far more thrilling concept to me than your standard light gun fair of laughing gun man or zombie. It was proper out there stuff for a tiny UK arcade in 2002.

The cabinet itself was super aesthetically pleasing too. Styled with faux wall scrolls, grass and a stone to pull the blade from, it blew your average Time Crisis cab out of the water. What kid doesn't want to feel

like some sick anime version of King Arthur wrenching a katana from a stone and cutting down everything in sight?

Maybe because of all the things that made it so unique, it never really caught on in mainstream arcades. I can hardly see your average bowling alley being either up for giving up so much space for cabinet decorations or finding the disturbing Japanese monster designs appropriate for your average family day out.

I have never seen this machine anywhere else and in all likelihood I'm never going to, which is frankly heartbreaking. It was fun, rad looking and a unique arcade experience unlikely to ever be replicated in the home. An experience lost to time.

Who knows? Maybe I'll win the lottery, pick up one of these machines and relive my youth; swinging a plastic sword around like a tiny madman, with my Da looking a mixture of concerned and embarrassed somewhere in the background.



BADVERTISING: DRAGON QUEST IX

HOW TO ALIENATE YOUR CORE AUDIENCE IN UNDER TWO
MINUTES OF ADVERTS.

WORDS AND VIDEO BY JAMIE HARKIN

Video game marketing is a strange beast. Sure, it's had its success stories over the years but that sadly tends to happen less often. Although generally, the misses tend to be a lot more entertaining than the hits.

Few series have struggled to establish themselves in the west as much as Dragon Quest. Unlike its main comparable contemporary Final Fantasy, Dragon Quest never found mainstream success outside of Japan until relatively recently.

Dragon Quest Builders acted as a gateway that introduced a bunch of new fans to the franchise. Dragon Quest XI followed and gave those newcomers a taste of what a proper Dragon Quest entry is really like: charming, traditional and epic in terms of scope.

Let's take a trip back to 2010, a time when Dragon Quest hadn't fully arrived in the west. While reasonably successful, Dragon Quest VIII hadn't quite been the mainstream hit that Square Enix wanted it to be. This led them to hand overseas production of Dragon Quest IX to Nintendo as a DS exclusive.

As you will see however, this responsibility may have proved too much for Nintendo UK.

BADVERTISING JEDWARD VS DRAGON QUEST IX



CARTRIDGE
DUST

CARTRIDGE DUST RECOMMENDS

WHAT RIGHT DO WE TWO IDIOTS HAVE TO RECOMMEND YOU ANYTHING? NONE. BOLD OF YOU TO THINK WE WON'T DO IT ANYWAY.

KATIE RECOMMENDS: BIOSHOCK COLLECTION (PS4)

In an act of sheer boldness, I come to you recommending the Bioshock Collection, which was £7.99 on the PlayStation store until like, ten seconds ago.

The games I'm playing right now are: Bioshock on the PS4, and Pokémon Shield, and Ace Attorney on the Switch. Yet I am recommending you play Bioshock.

When I first played Bioshock back in the Xbox 360 days, it put the shits right up me, because I am a massive fearty cow. Playing it now, it still does. I hate knowing I'm going to turn around to find a splicer right up in my face; I hate when the lights cut out and back on to reveal a room full of splicers have somehow moved, and are crawling up to get me; I hate the horrible sound of a nearby spider splicer, but not knowing where exactly that sound is coming from. I hate it, but I love it. I hate the anxiety it forces me to feel; I love to hate the anxiety so much more.

I love Bioshock, and I love the absolute capacity you have to inflict pain upon your enemies, because I am apparently a psychopath? There's a sadistic pleasure in combining the plasmids to take out your opponents. I still laugh every time I smack someone in the

face with their own mask using the telekinesis plasmid.

The atmosphere is still brilliant; all art deco and oppressive, and there's still that wonderful sickness that hits my stomach when I see a Big Daddy or a Little Sister. The twists still hurt, even though at this point, we're all very aware of the tropes Bioshock plays on. Replaying it, you see more clues and hear more you missed in the first instance, and it's just as thrilling after all these years.

Bioshock never really played badly, or looked ugly, so in my opinion, there isn't much to truly refine. It's been beautified for the HD re-release, as has Bioshock 2. Infinite is just the same game; there's no difference.

My reasoning to recommend you this game is nowhere near as clever or as nuanced as Jamie's explanation of why you should give Death Stranding a chance, but listen, Bioshock is really good. It is. The announcement that there's a new one coming is a good thing, even if it doesn't have Ken Levine. Coming back to Rapture for me has been euphoric and just so enjoyable. Descending back into that fucked up libertarian hellhole and bouncing my way through with a crossbow and a fucking

sick hand that shoots bees decimating the culmination of Ayn Rand's bullshit nonsense is my idea of a terrific time.

If anything, my reason for recommending this to you is thus: re-exploring the hideousness of Rapture, and taking the time to stop and appreciate everything that Bioshock is has been just a terrific experience. I can't recommend it highly enough. I'm really looking forward to getting into Bioshock 2, and trying to fall in love with Bioshock Infinite for the...fifth? Sixth time? More importantly, I'm excited to get back into Rapture with Elizabeth and fall in love with the horror show all over again.



JAMIE RECOMMENDS: DEATH STRANDING (PS4)

Take me to the beach.

It's not often that the next Kojima game comes out. As a big Metal Gear fan and someone who was let down big style by Metal Gear Solid V, it's safe to say I was at the very least concerned about Death Stranding.

From its extremely slow trickle of trailers, it came across at best as incoherent and at worst downright nonsensical. Flesh tanks, Guillermo Del Toro running around in a sewer with a baby and Mads Mikkelsen kicking about with his skeleton pals having a wee smoke. It was pure fever dream material.

This unwillingness or inability to convey what the game was actually like served to the hurt the game when it released. With Kojima hitting out with his 'Strand game' patter, people had no idea what they were in for. Understandably upon realising it wasn't going to play like a conventional AAA open world action game, people went off their nuts. They blasted it as shite or 'not fun' and moved on.

Somewhat trepidatiously I went into it with an open mind, ready to go along with whatever this clearly wild ride was going to be. Around 50 hours later I can safely say I absolutely loved it.

The game is a slow, arduous trek across unforgiving terrain and hostile environments that will at times leave you as a player both weary and livid. While this sounds like a negative aspect, I found it to be the exact opposite.

I am of the opinion that games don't necessarily need to be fun to be valuable experiences. The gameplay loop and world of Death Stranding is infinitely fascinating and wholly unique. The exploration, combined with difficulty of the terrain, makes



what other games would see as a path to get to the next part of gameplay into a valid and engaging form of gameplay itself. Death Stranding is very much about the journey rather than the destination.

Along this journey your actions will affect other player's worlds and vice versa. Say you build a structure; that structure will then appear in a select number of player's worlds and help them too. Generally if they use this structure then they will 'like' it, which is your primary form of experience throughout the games.

At first I assumed, as with any multiplayer community, that there would be people out there specifically trying to mess with other players. As the system is weighted to heavily towards rewarding positive activity, however, I was proven wrong.

In a similar way to Journey it created this bizarre sense of camaraderie with people I would never meet or have any form of communication with outside of building structures. I found myself loading a truck full of materials and building all the roads in my and by extension other player's worlds so we

could travel more easily, netting me lots of 'likes' and a strange sense of accomplishment.

Don't get me wrong, I can totally see how this is not a game for everyone. It's full of Kojima-isms in both its plot and gameplay. Kojima never has and never will be subtle; his themes are hammered home blatantly again and again through narrative and gameplay. At times Death Stranding is both obfuscated and long winded.

It is all these things intentionally, however, and if you can deal with Kojima on his usual tangents then you will get a lot of joy out of this one. In how many games can you drink a perfectly rendered can of Monster and then go for a shit, the sounds of which are masked by motorbike sounds and an advert for Norman Reedus' AMC show?

Death Stranding was so fresh and out there that it had me enraptured for the entire play through. Despite featuring possibly the worst written line of dialogue in gaming history, its goofiness and eccentricity were charming. Play this one if you want something different.

CARTRIDGE DUST'S CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

GOD SAVE US FROM THIS HIDEOUS YEAR
VIDEO BY JAMIE HARKIN



NEXT ISSUE

WE TRY TO WORK OUT IF ANYTHING CAME
OUT IN THE LAST DECADE THAT'S WORTH
CELEBRATING.

CARTRIDGE DUST

WILL RETURN IN
ISSUE 2

DECONSTRUCTION OF A DYING DECADE

OUT AT SOME POINT, DON'T RUSH US FFS, IT TOOK US THREE MONTHS TO PUT THIS GODDAMN ISSUE TOGETHER

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PlayStation banding taken from a Japanese PS1 copy of Resident Evil

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