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***Regina
Pacheco***

Exclusive Coverage

Tech N9ne

GAMES REVIEWED

Wolfenstein

THE NEW ORDER

WATCH DOGS

Exclusive
Coverage



50 Cent
Animal Ambition



Michael Jackson
Xscape

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June 2014

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20 QUESTIONS

Get To Know Your Cover Model

Regina Pacheco

Photography by Andrew Gates
Make-up & hair by Bioanca Robinson

R

egina Pacheco you may remember was a featured girl in our March 2010 issue, well, we brought her back and made her our newest cover girl. She's a Latina with a heart of gold. She grew up in Moreno Valley, California and quickly found that she loved being in front of the camera and the camera loved her back. She has been modeling since she was young and she also has been doing make-up for over 7 years. Since our last meeting, Regina took a break from modeling to attend classes where she studied fire protection and it had a profound affect on her, so much so that she decided to become a certified EMT to help others and potentially save lives. Through this experience she wanted to learn more about how the body functioned through health and fitness so she became a certified fitness trainer. Regina finds this very gratifying since she has the opportunity to help people make goals and obtain these goals. She also likes the fact that people look up to her in a way that changes their lives for the better through health and fitness.



20 QUESTIONS

Your Cover Model Cont'd



20 QUESTIONS

1.What's your Ethnicity?

My ethnicity is pure Latina.

2.What's your zodiac sign?

October 17, baby that means I bring balance with my Libra zodiac sign.

3.Where are you from originally?

I was born and raised in Moreno Valley, California, but now living in Los Angeles.

4.What did you like most about growing up in Moreno Valley, CA?

What I liked most was about growing up there was, it was a small town. I honestly loved that I was raised in a family town. It taught me a lot about family and I met some amazing childhood friends.

5.What kind of mischief did you get into while growing up?

I was a crazy little teen. [Smirk] Once I got my driver license, I took everybody's cars for joyrides. My parents and my sisters didn't like that too much. [Laugh]

6.What's the craziest thing you've ever done?

The craziest thing I've ever done was while in Las Vegas in 2013, I shaved the side of my head. It was one of the best haircuts I've ever gotten with no regrets.

7.What's your favorite hobby and why?

Being athletic with sports is my passion. Any free time definitely calls for an athletic sports activity.

8.What's your guilty pleasure?

My guilty pleasure is desserts. I try my best to stay away, but anything with sprinkles and pistachio flavor is a must in my book.

9.Who do you admire and why?

I admire my parents, they are my blessing, without them I wouldn't be who I am.

10.If you could change one thing in the world what would it be and why?

If I can change one thing about the world, it would be for everyone to give out positive energy. Live to inspire, motivate and teach each other.

11.What's one of your personal goals?

To be the leader of my life and to leave footsteps for others to remember me.

12.What do guys compliment you on the most?

Guys compliment me on my personality the most. I'm a down-to-earth girl which is hard to find nowadays.

13.What's your favorite body part on yourself?

I love my eyes, so big yet so much mystery.

14.What do you look for in a guy?

This may sound cliché, but I look for personality, someone that shares the same interests as me. Someone that can listen, we could talk for hours about anything. A man that can understand and be patient when needed.

15.What's the first thing you notice about a guy?

I love a man's facial features. Strong bone structure like the jaw line I think is the sexiest thing on a man.

16.What's your ideal first date?

I'm old-school so I want to be swept off my feet, I want it to be romantic. Take me to a place that tells me you really listen in our late-night conversations. Take me to a place that tells me you're a man that cares about detail. Ideally nature walks and watching the sun rise or set with a touch of imagination.

17.What turns you on?

My turn on is attention, simple enough, but I love when a man looks into my eyes.

18.What turns you off?

I can't stand when men are so certain, but so rude.

19.What's your biggest pet peeve?

This is funny to me but I hate when people pick food off of the dish that I'm enjoying. I'm a germ freak and that drives me crazy.

20.Who's your celebrity crush?

First, I would have to say Paul Walker, but he is no longer with us, may God bless his soul. So currently, I would have to say Romeo Santos, he is such a sexy man. His music is so passionate.

RM

20 QUESTIONS

Your Cover Model Cont'd



20 QUESTIONS

Your Cover Model Cont'd



20 QUESTIONS

Your Cover Model Cont'd

“I love when
a man
looks into
my eyes.”

20 QUESTIONS

Your Cover Model Cont'd



STATS:

Birthday: October 17

Height: 5'4"

Weight: 115lb

Measurements: 34D-25-36

See more of Regina at
[instagram.com/regina_pacheco](https://www.instagram.com/regina_pacheco)

ALL ACCESS

The Latest Albums Reviewed

Stay Hungry

Written by Jeremy Weeden

50 Cent is back on the music scene with his 5th studio album, *Animal Ambition*. *Ambition* is an album in the vein of the mixtapes 50 used to drop before albums like *Before the Massacre*. The main attraction, the upcoming album *Street King Immortal*, will be coming out later this year. *Ambition* is reminiscent of 50 Cent's earlier work and acts as a good reintroduction.

Animal Ambition kicks off with a bang with "Hold On," a track that will take listeners back to 50 Cent's earlier days. Over a slow beat with hard hitting drums 50 raps about the crazy life he leads with the lyrics, "I woke up this morning, this is insane/Rich as a motherfucker, and ain't much changed/Open my eyes, no surprise, I'm with a different bitch/Different day, different ass, different tits."

"Don't Worry Bout It" features Yo Gotti and the two rappers tell people not to worry about what they have or what they are doing. "Animal Ambition" appropriately includes animal sounds in the beat and is about 50 Cent's ambition and desire to achieve success. He raps "Got the eye of the tiger, I'm on that animal shit/I got the heart of a lion and the looks of an elephant/Yea I'm scared of rats, but I'm ready for anything."

"Smoke" features Trey Songz and is one of the more upbeat songs on the album. Over a heavy synthesized beat from Dr. Dre, 50 raps about a woman who has him feeling high. This song has garnered the most airplay and will probably be the biggest single from the album.

Another standout track on the album is "Irregular Heartbeat" featuring Jadakiss and Kidd Kidd. Jadakiss proves he has yet to lose a step dropping the lyrics, "Trying to back pedal and stumble on the curb/You starin at the ground, you mumblin your words/Literally I can see your heart pumpin through your shirt/Pussy your whole life, you always been a bird/Scared for so long it's all up in your nerves/Screw 9-1-1, you probably call up the reserves."

"Winner's Circle" catches 50 reflecting on his successes while also acknowledging he is trying to reclaim his legendary status. He raps the lyrics, "Consider this the theme song for victory/The shit you say to yourself when you make history/I'm trying to make it feel like the first time/Like a junkie I'm sort of chasing my first high/I'm focused, I'm disciplined, I'm ready/Mentally on point, sharp as a machete."

"Chase the Paper" is another song on the album that fans of classic 50 Cent will love. Over a rhythmic beat 50 raps about how he chases money while other dudes chase women. The song also features Prodigy of Mobb Deep and Kidd Kidd.

"The Funeral" finds 50 telling one of his classic hood tales. He proves he is still a very adept storyteller with vivid descriptions of what is taking place. "Flip On You" features Schoolboy Q who shows why he is one of the best young rappers in the game with the lyrics, "Live my life behind the rules/Running from the cops, smash the rocks up under my shoes/Spit out the eighth that once hid in my face/Bounce spring over the gate/Didn't get caught, I guess my escape/Nigga was fate."

Overall, *Animal Ambition* is a good album and probably 50 Cent's most complete work since *The Massacre*. The album is sure to wet the appetites of his fans and have them waiting impatiently for *Street King Immortal*, which is scheduled to drop in September.

Artist: 50 Cent
Album: Animal Ambition
Website: 50cent.com

★★★★★
Label: G-Unit
Release Date: June 3, 2014





Still King of Pop?

Written by Silas Valentino

Posthumous: it's one of those words that has me feeling a little giddy whenever I have an appropriate opportunity to drop it. How often can you say it outside the occasional discussion of posthumous compilation releases or in referring to a child born after the death of their father (another definition for the word). Beyond the little joys vocabulary can spark the Michael Jackson estate recently released *Xscape*, the slain King of Pop's second posthumous release—and just like certain words it's a highly produced pack of bubble gum pop that provokes subtle joy.

MJ has been dead for exactly five years and in that time he's made more money than I could ever fathom. Luckily for the people who made local news for publically mourning his death in 2009 the Jackson Estate is slowly leaking out rosy-polished outtakes, rarities and cutting room floor gems. They gave the world *Michael* back in 2010 where they misattributed Dave Grohl and made a lot of us feel a little uncomfortable at the record's apparent money-grabbing existence. Whoever is pulling the MJ property right's strings is feeling no remorse for the heavy borrowing from one of music's greatest entertainers.

But don't let the backdoor greed get in the way of pop music royalty. These songs are truly wonderful and if you're fan of Michael Jackson—whom am I kidding? —If you're a fan of good time music, *Xscape* is an excellent option for your up-tempo delight. It just lacks a genuine, authentic feel.

"Love Never Felt so Good" is a bright, shiny jam that sounds as if Michael has gone all *Thriller* zombie and returned to show Bruno Mars how to do it right. Co-written by Paul Anka (the musical mad genius who wrote the score to Sinatra's "My Way" and the Johnny Carson theme song), this album opener is an immediate pleaser. In staying consistent with the album's odd behavior relating to Jackson's legacy, Justin Timberlake contributes some vocals in one version of the song. What if MJ is up on the cloud pissed that the Wynton Marsalis to his Miles Davis is cramping his song?

Dug up from his *Bad* sessions from the mid 1980s, "Loving You" is a soft R&B funk that really shines in its demo version. Skip the Timberland hyper-produced album take and blast the Reagan-era ode to Michael's favorite device: love. I was barely a twinkle in my father's eye when this song was composed but it's drenched in enough 80's goo to make me want to comb my hair sideways to match my nighttime sunglasses.

Track 6, "Do You Know Where Your Children Are," takes on a different meaning after Jackson's 2005 child sexual abuse trial.

The most surprising track on *Xscape* is "A Place with No Name," a wobbly sugar bite that was heavily influenced by the 1970's soft rock band America's tale of heroine addiction. Sharing certain lyrical structure and melody to "A Horse with No Name," "A Place with No Name" is another track that sounds way better in its demo form.

Amazing isn't it? Michael Jackson sounds the best when he has total control over his work versus having his renowned fans rework his leftovers.

Last May during the Billboard Music Awards the Michael Jackson estate took massive liberty over MJ's image when they splattered it on a big screen in holographic form. A Call of Duty-resembling Jackson danced and sang "Slave to the Rhythm" while the audience cheered and looked both awkward and severely stunned. This is a good image to describe Jackson's posthumous releases. They make you smile while simultaneously alienating pop music's golden child.

Artist: Michael Jackson
Album: XSCAPE
Website: michaeljackson.com

★★★★★
Label: MMJ / Epic
Release Date: May 13, 2014

ALL ACCESS SPOTLIGHT

Written by Samuel Wendel

Facebook.com/HedPE

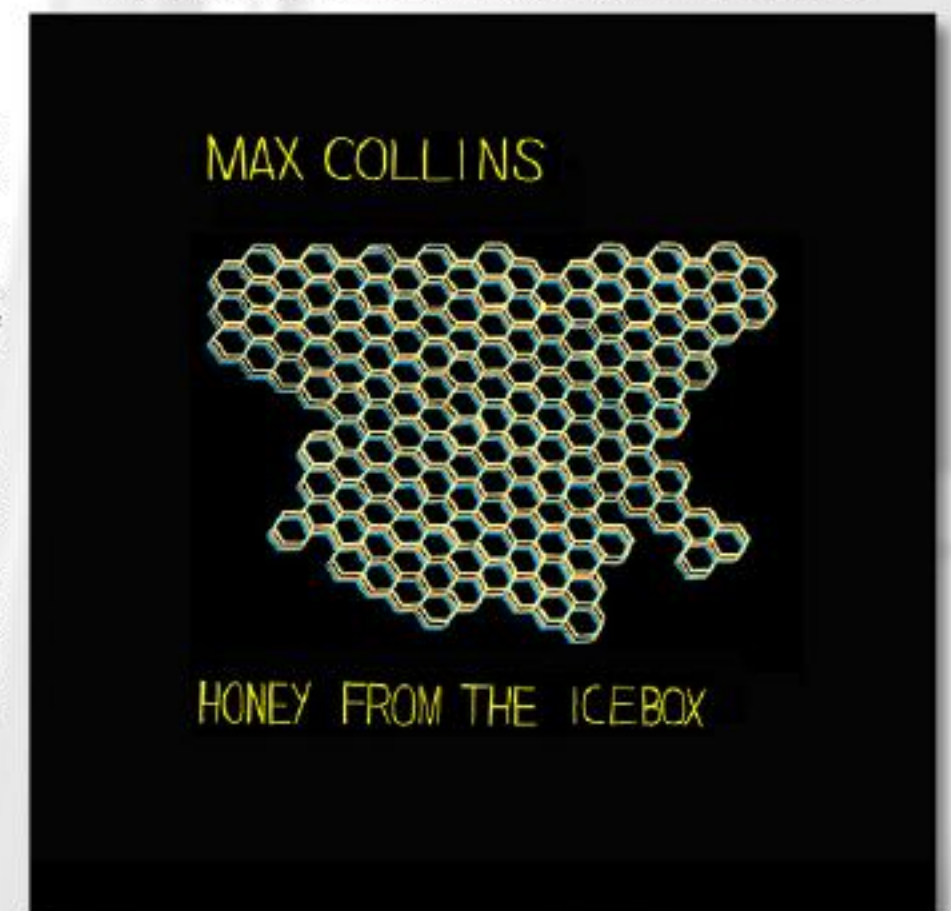


Hed PE, *Evolution*

Most bands, regardless of genre, would consider themselves lucky if they manage to stick together for more than a decade. With twenty-plus-years under their belts, rap-rockers Hed PE can safely say they're one of the lucky ones, with a long and storied career and—as of July 22—nine studio albums with their name stamped on it. Hed PE's latest effort, entitled *Evolution*, finds the band sticking to the formula that's endeared them to their fans: creating pulse-quickenning heavy metal-infused rap-rock music.

Lead vocalist Jared Gomes, or Jahred as he's known in the band, proves that he still has the energy and flow to carry Hed PE when the riffs get repetitive and the rest of the band still brings enough raucous noise to keep head-bangers happy. The first single "One More Body" is one of the heavier cuts from the album and retains their signature sound, but Hed PE have also learned how to slow it down and change their style a bit, as evidenced by the synth-driven song "The Higher Crown." Despite its title, *Evolution* finds Hed PE not completely exploring new ground, though instead shows them taking full advantage of their experience to continue rehashing their sound in energetic ways.

Facebook.com/MaxCollinsMusic



Max Collins, *Honey from the Icebox*

1990's FM rock radio stalwarts Eve 6 might be all but six feet under the ground in terms of popular music relevancy but surprisingly enough they're still making music—and front man Max Collins just dropped his first solo effort entitled *Honey from the Icebox*. The same voice that powered Eve 6 to stardom with the single "Inside Out" takes center stage on this album, but the instrumentation shows that Collins isn't a releasing a collection of discarded B-sides that didn't make the Eve 6 cut.

Gone are the muscled power chords and slick production; *Icebox* is stripped down and features a warmer, almost jangle-pop like sound to it that should evoke comparisons to The Lemonheads. As a whole, *Icebox* is a lighthearted breeze; nothing about it is terribly complex, but the songs are catchy and it doesn't require rapt attention to listen to it from start to finish. And most importantly, it should appeal not only to Eve 6 fans, but as a standalone alternative rock album too. Standout tracks are opener "Push it Down," "Sports Bar" and lead single "World on Fire."

Facebook.com/GotAGirl



Got a Girl, *I Love You But I Must Drive off this Cliff Now*

The name "Got a Girl" may not ring any bells for most people, but it's actually the name of a new collaborative effort comprised of famous hip-hop producer Dan the Automater and actress and musician Mary Elizabeth Winstead. On odd couple no doubt, but seeing as the duo met and hatched the plan for Got a Girl during the filming of the wacky 2010 film *Scott Pilgrim vs. World*, the outlandish circumstances of their debut album *I Love You But I Must Drive off this Cliff Now* become a little more believable. And as an album, it's surprisingly good and finely crafted—a nod to Dan's expertise.

Lead single "Did We Live to Fast" opens with a loop of doorbells chimes being formed into a beat before Winstead's sultry croon drops in over a slick piano line and drum loop. "Did We Live to Fast" and the rest of the album sound like they should be the score to an *Ocean's Eleven* or other heist like film. And that's the album in a nutshell: a slick, well-produced collection of songs that would sound at home in the very thing—a movie—that helped spawn the album.

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LIVE & LOUD

The Live Show Reviews

Tech N9ne

Photo by Nicolas Bates
Written by Dan Sinclair

Just off the Sunset Strip in West Hollywood, a writer and a photographer stand outside the House of Blues, anxious to cover Tech N9ne spit out some quick-ass rhymes. One excited young man seems to recognize this duo and asks them, "Hey, are y'all with TMZ?" Saddened that they are not, in fact, TMZ, the music-loving twosome must let the poor young man easy with a simple, "No." They are not TMZ. They are also not ticket scalpers who stand outside of Phantogram shows, either (anyone remember that one?). They are simply Nick and Dan, the proud, beautiful faces of the Live and Loud section of RUKUS magazine, and they are ready to cover some Tech N9ne for you, dear readers.

Inside the House of Blues, it's packed from wall to wall with hip-hop fans from just about every background. Though the writer tried, he could not stereotype typical Tech N9ne fans by race, sex, age or lifestyle as it appeared every single one was represented by somebody that night in West Hollywood. And none of said groups seemed against blowing large clouds of marijuana smoke from any given spot throughout the club. Oh, and they're pretty fucking amped. They all started screaming even when the dude was just doing the sound check.

But soon enough the curtain is raised and Kansas City, Missouri's own Aaron Dontez Yates, better known as the one and only Tech N9ne, takes the stage donning all black except for white face paint. And he's just as excited to be here as the crowd is. "Hell, yeah! Let's do this! What the fuck's up, L.A.?" Apparently screaming is what the fuck is up in Los Angeles as the writer nearly goes deaf from the overwhelming response from the fans. "You ready to do this shit?" Yes, it appears that everyone is definitely ready to do this shit.

Oh, but are they, really? Tech N9ne rips right into the first verse of "Strange Music Box," and the crowd has difficulty rapping along to "I've been hibernatin' in the deepest darkest part of Necropolis/Now that I'm poppin' its top, yes, I'm the opposite of monogamous." But as the lyrics get faster and faster, they resort back to just dancing and clapping along instead.

But there is one man who comes damn close to matching the lightning-fast words that race out of Tech N9ne's klasser, and that's longtime collaborator Krizz Kaliko. He takes the second verse, and then gets his own intro as Tech N9ne leaves him alone on stage. Krizz takes this time to remind the crowd that "Y'all can't fuck with us!" This is fine though as it didn't appear that anyone was going to. Krizz is not only a talented MC by the way, he shows off his lungs later in the evening and the man's got a pretty fucking great singing voice to boot.

Eventually Tech N9ne returns to the stage to kick the show back into gear with crowd favorite "Riotmaker." It's been said that the nickname "Tech N9ne" was given to Mr. Yates because his rhymes shot out of his mouth much like the way bullets do from an assault rifle, and I don't think there really is a better description than that one, honestly. It's this ridiculously fast speed his verses spray out into the mic that really sets him apart from his contemporaries. While many so-called rappers focus on creating the perfect catchy hook, N9ne constantly reminds us the most attractive part of this art form is still the flow of the verse. And those verses get faster and faster as the night goes on.

And there is no better sidekick to match Tech N9ne beat for beat than Krizz Kaliko as the two battle their way through damn near 40 songs over the course of the night, giving fans max bang for their minimum buck. What songs you ask? Songs like "Like Yeah," "Einstein," "Am I Psycho?," "Hard," "He's a Mental Giant," "Worldwide Choppers" and "I'm a Playa" among many more. The songs just keep coming one right after another, and no fan wants it to end as they continue to dance, sing and smoke weed the whole night through.

The House of Blues felt like a house party, but instead of shitty music barely seeping out of someone's old boom box, this one featured the booming acoustics the Sunset Strip is famous for and rapid, never-ending lyrics from one of the fastest MCs in hip-hop today. And it's a party where everyone can be themselves no matter who they are or what they look like. Oh, and face painting is not only welcome, it's fucking encouraged.

Venue: House of Blues
Website: strangemusicinc.com

Date: June 4, 2014
City: West Hollywood, CA



COMING UP

Models To Keep An Eye On

Valerie Berkes

Photography by Andrew Gates
Make-up & hair by Regina Pacheco



Valerie Berkes is an all-American beauty who hails from Riverside, California. There's nothing plastic about this blonde...sorry *Barbie*. Her modeling career first started when her high school senior photos drew attention to *PUSH modeling agency*. Not even a month after graduation she had booked her first gigs as a tradeshow model for *E3* and *Comic-Con*. From there she hit the ground running, modeling events for brands such as *Corona Light*, *NIKE*, and has been published for *99.1 KGGI radio*. These days you can find Valerie serving wings and beer at *Hooters*, where she has also been published on the Ontario, CA bikini poster. Currently, she is in the running for the 2015 nationwide *Hooters* calendar which has not yet been finalized or released...fingers crossed. Valerie is majoring in broadcasting and communications and aspires to one day host sporting or television events. Valerie Berkes is the total package; brains, beauty, and a whole lot of booty!



COMING UP

Models To Keep An Eye On Cont'd





THE STATS

Birthday:
February 14

Zodiac Sign:
Aquarius

Measurements:
34D-25-36

Height:
5'9"

Weight:
129lb

Ethnicity:
I am full caucasian.

Hometown:
Riverside, CA

Turn Ons:
A guy with a sexy voice.

Turn Offs:
I hate when guys have bad manners.

Ideal first date:
My ideal first date is anything adventurous or different. I find the whole dinner and movie date cliché and boring.

Guilty Pleasure:
Cheeseburgers and chocolate are my favorite things to indulge in.

Pet Peeves:
I can't stand Slow drivers, I like going fast.

Celebrity Pass:
Channing Tatum, he's so handsome.

See more of Valerie at
[instagram.com/valerieberkes](https://www.instagram.com/valerieberkes)

GAME ON

The Latest Games Reviewed

New World Order

Written by Jesse Seilhan

As publishers get more and more desperate to reach the top of the sales chart, going back to the well has been a fairly common practice. Hundreds of properties have been brought back from the dead, some great and some not-so-much, but the experiment is always interesting to watch. When Bethesda said they were bringing back Wolfenstein, many shooter fans groaned, as it has been done time and time again, but nothing since the original 1992 Wolfenstein 3D has actually been a worthwhile game set in this universe. Even more groans were uttered when multiplayer was left on the cutting room floor, as developer MachineGames wanted to focus on telling a compelling story without having to split their time and resources. Cut to 2014 and the Wolfenstein: The New Order has finally been released, and is shockingly excellent.

It is really hard to believe that a franchise that has been drug through the mud so much could make a convincing reason to continue existing, but this game does just that. First and foremost, the game looks great, running on the "Rage" engine id made popular a few years back with a game of the same name. The controls are as snappy as a game can be in the modern console age, allowing players to dual-wield a variety of weapons and dump ammo with ease and precision. The level design is more open than expected, letting you tackle scenarios in different ways. The sound design is fantastic, with gun shots echoing just right and the reworked versions of classic tunes into the German language is quite effective in increasing the game's "believability" factor.

As surprising as this might seem, the story is potentially the best part of The New Order. Our hero, B.J. Blazkowicz, is back to kill some nazis, but the twist here is that he failed to do so during Hitler's initial uprising and was put into a semi-coma for more than a decade. When he gets back on his feet, the Nazis have won, the United States has fallen, and the world is a radically different place. This changes the very nature of city structures, art, and architecture. All the heroic characters are made up of different backgrounds and creeds, all displaced by the Nazi regime and looking for some payback. B.J. is the bravest of them all, transforming from merely a grunting face at the bottom of your tiny PC monitor to a fully fleshed-out character with a honest range of emotions.

The game sticks close to the tried-and-true 90's FPS formulas, but has learned what makes an engaging single-player, breaking up the action between insane firefights with brief side-missions that involve more exploration and dialogue than throat-slitting. When the action does heat up, you would be hard pressed to find a more violent game this year. You'll be yelling "Xbox, record that!" with a twisted smile once you start playing around with the excellent stealth mechanics, often ending in a bloody spray erupting from one Nazi scum or another.

What should have been another retread into World War II beaten-to-death territory became a smart, fresh, engaging, and most importantly, extremely fun entry into a series that has not been treated too kindly over the years. The New Order shows what an aging franchise in the right hands can actually turn into, especially when given the time, the tools, and the vision needed to return a classic to glory. No, it does not have the morphine-drip multiplayer every shooter since Modern Warfare has been bloodsworn into having, but the story is good enough to make that irrelevant. If you are looking for a great shooter that truly rises above the average zoom and shoot copycat modern military borefest, give this game a shot.

Game Title: Wolfenstein: The New Order
Producer: Bethesda
Platform: PC, Xbox One, Xbox 360, PS3, PS4
Website: wolfenstein.com

★★★★★

Ratings: Mature

Genre: FPS

Release Date: May 20, 2014



wolfenstein
THE NEW ORDER

GAME ON
The Game Reviews Cont'd

WATCH DOGS™

Hacking the Hype Machine

Written by Josh Schilling

It seems at times that the games we enjoy get larger and larger with each passing release. Larger in scope, larger in craft, and, most certainly, larger in hype. Most games today could easily handle a 100 hour play-through when all of the side quests, collectibles, and multiplayer aspects are considered, and it offers up the conundrum of how much is too much. With all of the quantity of content, it is a rare bird that connects with the most important facet of quality, and these games seem to throw a bunch of stuff at you in the hopes that a player will find at least a little bit of the plethora of content to be absolutely outstanding. Watch Dogs attempts this blitzkrieg approach, by taking a well-known, Rockstar-ian, open-world foundation and sprucing it up in new and exciting ways. Mix that with the heightened capabilities of the next-gen consoles, and the high expectations for this game that were started back in 2012 could actually be realized. Or at least they could in one of the mini-games, right?

Watch Dogs takes place in an alternate version of Chicago in which the city is linked together with a computerized system called ctOS, which keeps an eye on the citizenry by linking cameras, personal devices and all other means of electronica. Enter the main character Aiden Pearce, the typical coolly named Caucasian video game protagonist who is an expert hacker that makes the most of his technical skills. He is able to tap into ctOS in order to manipulate the city in a variety of truly interesting ways. Since he operates beneath the law and is often pursued by a variety of foes, he can change traffic lights, raise bridges, or cause a multitude of other distractions to evade and escape. In addition, he uses his handy dandy smartphone to assist him in his many infiltrations, and the player can opt for a stealthy, hacking method of getting the job done rather than going in guns blazing, but of course you can do that too if that is your choice.

This game offers an interesting choice in multiplayer as well. Along with some seen-it-before free roam antics and auto races, you can hack in another player's game, or be hacked into by a random stranger. You must discover the infiltrator by the identification mode on your phone and then halt his escape, or if you are the invader, you must hide in plain sight as your opponent frantically searches for you. This leads to some intense moments as you avoid then escape, and brings the overall flavor of this game to the forefront of the multiplayer experience.

Along with the decently told main story, there are a ton of other things to do around the open world of this brilliantly rendered city. Tons of side quests, the various multiplayer modes, mini-games, collectibles, and just general farting around the town can take up a great deal of game time. This can be a little distracting when you realize that the main character is on a revenge quest and can't stop the digital drug-like trip that have you bouncing on psychedelic flowers or destroying the city as a giant mechanical spider.

There is some serious quality in this game. Just driving around the city that seems so very alive is impressive in itself. Add to that the unique hacking aspects and you have a game that does set itself apart from previous open world games, but not far enough to completely take away the feel that you're playing a technologically advanced GTA V. I did have a lot of fun in this world, however, even though it tried hard to make me stray from the ultimate goal of finishing the story. For any player that loves to explore every nook and cranny of a game, you will have a long way to go if you want to call this game completed.

Game Title: Watch Dogs

Producer: Ubisoft

Platform: Xbox One, Xbox 360, PS4, PS3, PC

Website: watchdogs.ubi.com

★★★★★

Ratings: Mature

Genre: Action-Adventure

Release Date: May 27



Exclusive Coverage

By Jesse Seilhan and Josh Schilling

For those that love videogames, nothing beats E3. Every year, gamers from around the world put down their controllers and watch the press conferences that Microsoft, Sony, and a few publishers put on in anticipation of what their favorite hobby will bring them over the next year or so. This year was no different, as Microsoft dedicated 90 minutes to pure gaming, with title after title being announced, debuted, or showcased in a media blitz of stunning visuals. EA and Ubisoft showcased why they are the kings of the third-party, giving fans of both consoles something to cheer about for this holiday season and next. Finally, Sony revealed a few new devices (Playstation TV, Project Morpheus, and a white PS4 that comes with Destiny) as well as showing off a ton of new games coming to the PS4 over the next 18 months. The following day, Nintendo held their own digital press conference, showing off the future of a few favorite franchises, from Smash Brothers to Zelda, the latter shown off for only a mere 60 seconds.

The big reveals this year were mostly in the form of sequels to popular franchises, but there were a few surprises tossed in as well. Tomb Raider is getting another game, as are the classic Xbox franchises Crackdown and Phantom Dust. Sony is bringing back Grim Fandango and Little Big Planet, and Nintendo has a new Yoshi yarn game and debuted a Kirby claymation title, as well as giving Toad his very own adventure. Of course, fans of shooters will have plenty to play this year and next, with the annual Call of Duty and Battlefield entries going toe-to-toe and the newest Rainbow Six and Star Wars: Battlefront games looming in the horizon.

Overall, this year's expo was fantastic, from the amount of playable games to the sheer level of graphical fidelity the industry has achieved. The show floor wasn't nearly as crowded as in years past, mostly due to the new consoles already being a known quantity. This year was all about the games as we got our eyes and hands on over 30 brand new ones, and we've picked the top six that you should be the most excited about!

We have to give a shout out to the fantastic indie games that were represented in the Xbox and Sony areas. Be on the lookout for some fun, creative titles like #IDARB, Guacamelee, Never Alone, Knight Squad, Source, and Valiant Hearts. Some of the best times you can have in the video game world is loading up a \$20 indie and seeing where it takes you.



METAL GEAR SOLID V THE PHANTOM PAIN

Konami is always fairly tight-lipped about the Metal Gear Solid franchise, releasing cryptic pieces of information and insane trailers in the run up to the game's release. This year, we were given a 30-minute presentation on the ins and outs of the new title, one that sees Kiefer Sutherland back in the role as Big Boss/Punished Snake. This time, Afghanistan is your playground and the open world gameplay that director Hideo Kojima gave us in Ground Zeroes is now 200x larger, as players are able to stealth their way across a vast desert region. The use of a horse will get you closer to the bases you have to take over, but once you're on your feet, Big Boss' myriad of weapons and spy tricks will help you get to your destination.



Gameplay is similar to most MGS games, with stealth, holdups, crawling, and cardboard boxes being a large part of the strategy. This game gives players a vast array of technology at their disposal, as vehicles, ammo, weapons, and more can be dropshipped into the battlefield at anytime. The cigarettes are back, but have become The Phantom Cigar that allows time to pass at a super speed, so you can let some of the guards go to sleep and attack when the time is right. Enemies and their vehicles can also be claimed for future use, as a balloon known as the "Fulton Recovery System" is attached, whisking them off to your home base. That base can be completely customized to your liking, adding helipads, anti-aircraft weapons, and more, defending the water fortress when enemies attack. It is reminiscent of the tanker from MGS2, but way larger and fully traversable, including those annoying drones that float around and, in this case, protect you.

This is certainly the most ambitious MGS game to date and it looks stunning, running on the FOX engine



that the team behind Kojima's masterpiece has been working so hard on for years. While no release date was given, it looked good enough to ship this year. The guy running the gameplay demo was a total pro, acing the level without being seen (until he wanted to be), getting an S rank in under 25 minutes, capturing as many enemies, vehicles, and one lonely sheep, as he could. It was for sure a standout amongst the litany of games we saw that week.

Metal Gear Solid V: The Phantom Pain

Publisher: Konami

Platform: Xbox 360, Xbox One, PS4, PS3

Genre: Action-Adventure

Release Date: TBD

A L I E N I S O L A T I O N™



The best thing I can say about this game is that I heard grown men and women shrieking next to me while playing it. The immersion, the haunting atmosphere, and the incredibly frightening, stalking alien make for one crazy gameplay demo. Wearing headphones in a dark room is exactly the best way to play this game, which is how we were experiencing it. All my character had was a shoddy motion tracker, one that gives the relative location of your foe without truly giving away its position. It beeps rapidly as the beast gets closer to pouncing upon you, ultimately going silent when he is far away.

The game takes place within the Alien universe but doesn't follow a single film, as Ripley's daughter is now stranded in space onboard a ship that contains some looters and the aforementioned stalking alien. While you can come across a few weapons scattered about, taking down the alien one-on-one is foolish and will always result in your death. The flamethrower I found did do a good job scaring him off, but it was only a matter of time before he came back and found me without any ammo to repeat the offense. Stealth and strategy are your friend, as moving around the ship quietly will allow you to block off areas and access new ones, keeping you from being eaten and finding precious ammo for your few available firearms.

The length of this game, its impact over that length, and how well the atmosphere sustains its inherent creepiness are all valuable questions coming out of E3. But for the short time we had to play this game, the impression was made that the team at The Creative Assembly knows exactly what they are doing. There is nothing but a horrible taste in gamers' mouth after the last Aliens game, but this one seems to stick to what made the first movie such a horrifying experience. A balance of tension and exploration is one that few games ever get right, so hopefully this October sees the return of a true survival horror game.



Alien: Isolation

Publisher: Sega

Platform: Xbox 360, Xbox One, PS4, PS3, PC

Genre: Survival Horror/

Release Date: October 7th, 2014

CALL OF DUTY

ADVANCED WARFARE

Every year, Call of Duty tries to grab the brass ring, the very brass ring it obtained back nearly a decade ago with Modern Warfare. Since then, the team at Infinity Ward has split time with Treyarch, whose Black Ops series has eclipsed the Modern Warfare series in both scale and sales. This year, publisher Activision has decided that a three-team approach is best, giving each title longer to incubate to ensure the games don't feel as rushed. Sledgehammer Games is coming off engine work they did for Modern Warfare 3 and are now doing a game all alone, going to the near-future to bring Advanced Warfare to next-gen consoles. High Moon Studios (makers of Transformers and Deadpool) will handle the last-gen editions, although nothing has been confirmed for the Wii U.



The demo we were given was two-fold: one showed off the action side and the other showed off stealth and patience. The action set piece was located in San Francisco, with terrorists storming through the Golden Gate Bridge before unleashing a dozen drones onto the helpless population and eventually taking down the iconic structure. The playable character had a bit of a jet pack boost that allowed him to move vertically a lot more than prior CoD games. While not as jump-happy as Titanfall, it definitely allowed for more variety than the average shooter. The shooting seemed familiar enough, but being able to jump from truck to truck opened up the combat playground a bit more. The stealth sections showed off a fully invisible camo suit that allowed the main character to weave in and out of a heavily occupied forest region. Stealth takedowns are back and more gruesome than ever, although some might just stick to the run-and-gun philosophy that has worked so well for so long.

You can tell that sound is an important component of their dedication to realism, as the explosive action was as crystal clear as it was visually sharp. They've rebuilt the sound from the ground up, avoiding using canned sounds used in previous entries. Sledgehammer's approach to this game has been very authentic, even going out and getting Kevin Spacey to star as the main villain in the game. With a new Battlefield game coming out this year, as usual, November will be the battleground for console and PC gamers alike and Advanced Warfare looks like it might be the game to beat.



Call of Duty: Advanced Warfare

Publisher: Activision

Platform: Xbox 360, Xbox One, PS4, PS3, PC

Genre: FPS

Release Date: November 4th, 2014

DESTINY



This is probably the most anticipated title that was playable at E3. If you're into first-person shooters, and odds dictate that you most likely are, then this game will most assuredly make you happy. With immersive co-op/multiplayer gameplay along with an interesting campaign, Destiny offers a little something for everyone. With a heavy emphasis on the social aspects, this is a game that could bring reluctant single-player stalwarts into the realm of party-based play. Think of it as a combination of Halo, Borderlands, and Playstation Home, and you'll have a good idea of what's in store.

Bungie has shaken off the shackles of Microsoft exclusivity, and the Playstation-only fanboys are finally going to be able to see what all of the hullabaloo is about. The hands-on experience I had was a three player co-op romp into the post-apocalyptic realm that this story encompasses. It started in a hub area where players from around the globe can meet, upgrade their stuff, and perform various inane actions like sitting, pointing or the inevitable dancing. I have to admit that the dancing threw me a bit, and took away from the atmosphere this game was trying to create, but we were then whisked away to a world that allowed us to flex our trigger fingers.

Each player has an object called a Ghost, a softball sized gem looking object that reminded me of Bit from the original Tron. The Ghost can do a variety of things like point you in the proper direction, open impassible doors, or summon a hover-bike thing for you to zoom around on. After getting acclimated, it was time to face some baddies, and the tight game mechanics that you would expect from a Bungie game were out in full force. We did a couple of simple jaunts into rooms infested with alien-types and then got to experience the evolving world as other Alpha blessed players were jumping in and out of the battles. The world did seem alive, and the promise of a shared-world shooter seemed to be what was on the table. Taking down giant raid bosses using a variety of of the class-specific powers is as thrilling as it was visually stunning. Definitely a must-play!



Destiny

Publisher: Activision

Platform: Xbox One, Xbox 360, PS4, PS3

Genre: FPS

Release Date: September 9th, 2014

THE WITCHER 3 WILD HUNT

Even though these guys were the hands down winners for best swag and best overall presentation at E3, the game itself looks downright brilliant. What was shown in the demonstration was a humongous open world with excellent fighting mechanics along with some very interesting characters. This is a living, breathing fantasy world that you get to putter around in, and the comparisons to Skyrim are inevitable, in fact it's been said that this Witcher 3 game world will be 20% larger. Of all the games I saw, this is the one I am looking forward to the most.



Geralt of Rivia is the snowy-haired protagonist of this game, and what we saw in our presentation is what takes place immediately after the events that were shown at the Microsoft Press Briefing. Geralt, with griffin head in tow, arrived at a massive, bustling city that was surprising in its scale and detail. This game seems to really take some steps forward in the open world genre not only in the size and scope of the world, but in the details that get overlooked in so many other games. As Geralt strode through the city on horseback, the ambient conversations didn't seem scripted or forced, and it was easy to feel immersed in the world even through a demo. I can only imagine how it is going to feel with a controller in hand.

After conducting business in the city and gaining insight to his next objective, Geralt fast-traveled to another



portion of the world. From there, the action RPG elements were introduced while we saw some smooth fighting and enthusiastic dismemberments, as well as some wonderfully interesting characters. The developer CD Projekt RED has really set some high targets to achieve with this world they've created, but if they take the same care and attention that they showed to the media at E3 and apply it to their vision of what Witcher 3 can be, then this has the possibility of being something spectacular.

The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt

Publisher: WB Games

Platform: Xbox One, PS4, PC

Genre: RPG

Release Date: February 24th, 2015

BATTLECRY



This game came as a bit of a surprise, because the main attraction of the Bethesda area was supposed to be *The Evil Within*. While that game is good, it was upstaged by the third-person, multiplayer arena fight that is *Battlecry*. This game takes place in a world without gunpowder, so blades and bows are the dominating weapons in the field. The backstory and different character classes add charm to the game, and the battle action was fast paced and exciting. There is a definite *Team Fortress* vibe albeit not as comical, and you will get to customize the characters to help you stand

apart. Some of the most fun I had at E3 was running around the *Battlecry* arena looking for more enemies to kill.

In this world, wars are fought on a smaller scale, and nations send their soldiers to battle arenas to solve their differences. Only two nations were shown, the England-like Royal Marines, and the Russian-flavored Cossacks. Each nation had three identical playable warrior types, although two more currently unplayable warrior types were teased. The three we were able to play were the Duelist, a dual wielding stealth specialist, the Enforcer, a heavy with a massive sword that's so big it can transform into a shield, and the Archer, who as you would expect from the name is the ranged striker. Since there is no gunpowder in this world, the action of this game is close and intense. If you survive some skirmishes, you build up adrenaline and can then unleash character specific heavy attacks that help you dominate for a short time.

This game is going to be free to play, which is shocking considering the detail going into this work. With sixteen players per side fighting in beautifully designed arenas directed by Viktor Antonov of *Half-Life 2* fame, the quality of this game is readily apparent even with a year left until its beta. The couple of rounds I played felt organic, and were a hell of a lot of fun, even though we had barely scratched the surface of character customization or the different combat skills. The best compliment I can give to this game, is that my partner and I were on the same page in that we both wanted to conspire to see if we could get back into the Bethesda booth in order to play that game again.



Battlecry

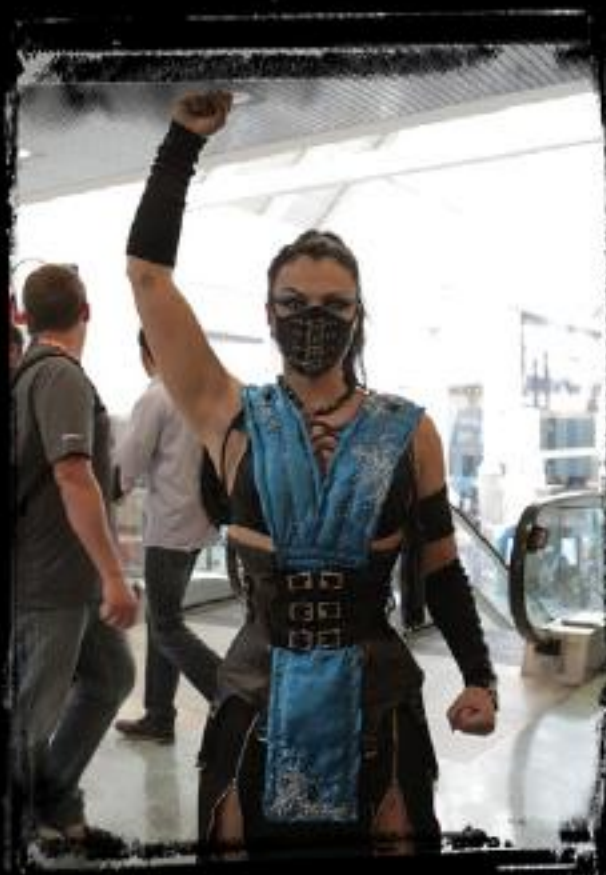
Publisher: Bethesda

Platform: PC

Genre: Arena Brawler

Release Date: Beta in 2015









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