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## Manhunt 2 given UK greenlight

Controversial game could be on shelves for Xmas

by Katie Scott published on 11 December 2007

A controversial video game, banned twice by censors, is to be released in the UK.

Developer Rockstar Games has won a long-fought battle with the UK censors with an appeal to overturn two bans on its game, Manhunt 2.

The video appeals committee allowed the appeal by Rockstar Games, the game's creator, by a majority of four to three.

However - the BBFC may appeal it. The director of the BBFC, David Cooke, stated that the committee would study the judgment, which will be released to the public in the next few days.

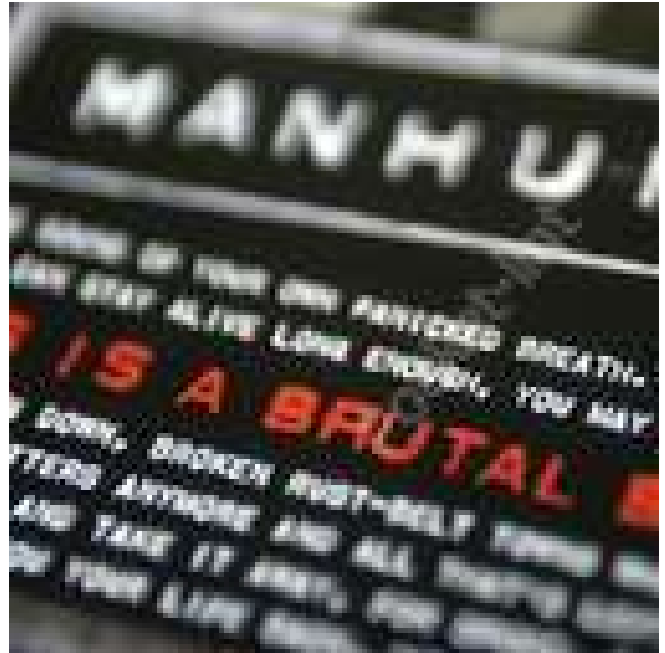
He said: "The BBFC twice rejected Manhunt 2 for its focus on varied and cumulative killings. We recognise that rejection is a very serious step, in which the desire of publishers to market their games, and that of the public to buy them, must be balanced against the public interest".

The BBFC has the power to take the case to judicial review, or award the game an 18 rating, which will obviously impact on sales.

The PS2 and Wii versions of Manhunt 2 were originally banned by the BBFC in June. Like its predecessor, Manhunt, it has caused a huge amount of controversy for its violence.

Cooke said at the time of the first ban: "Rejecting a work is a very serious action and one which we do not take lightly. Where possible we try to consider cuts or, in the case of games, modifications which remove the material which contravenes the Board's published Guidelines. In the case of Manhunt 2 this has not been possible".

"Manhunt 2 is distinguishable from recent high



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-end video games by its unremitting bleakness and callousness of tone in an overall game context which constantly encourages visceral killing with exceptionally little alleviation or distancing. There is sustained and cumulative casual sadism in the way in which these killings are committed, and encouraged, in the game."

In October, a revised version of the game was brought before the committee and again rejected. Cooke again made a statement which, although recognising that changes had been made by the developer, said that these were simply not enough.

He said: "The impact of the revisions on the bleakness and callousness of tone, or the essential nature of the gameplay, is clearly insufficient. There has been a reduction in the visual detail in some of the 'execution kills', but in others they retain their original visceral and casually sadistic nature".

He added that Rockstar Games had chosen to ignore changes that the committee had suggested.

Rockstar has, in the meantime, released a generic statement and has told the press that it does not know whether the game will be ready for release in the UK before Christmas.