



'Manhunt 2' Game Still Banned in U.K.

By MATT SLAGLE – 4 days ago

British regulators on Monday banned a toned-down version of the violent video game "Manhunt 2," saying the changes didn't go far enough to alter the game's "bleakness and callousness of tone."

The game's maker called the decision "a setback for video games."

In June, Take-Two Interactive Inc. suspended plans to distribute the game — because it was rejected by the Entertainment Software Rating Board in the United States and by regulators in Europe — but finally agreed, two months later, to release the revised version.

The game, made by Take-Two's studio Rockstar Games, allows players to assume the role of an escapee from a mental institution who can go on a killing rampage.

In the U.S., the less-violent version eventually was accepted by the rating board, an industry group, and received a Mature rating, meaning it is appropriate for consumers age 17 or older. It will ship on Halloween for the PlayStation 2, PlayStation Portable and Nintendo Wii game systems.

But the British Board of Film Classification said it was unsatisfied with the changes, which included blurring out some of the game's execution-style kills.

"The impact of the revisions on the bleakness and callousness of tone, or the essential nature of the game play, is clearly insufficient," BBFC director David Cooke said in a statement.

Cooke said it was up to Take-Two and Rockstar Games to resubmit a further edited version. Rockstar Games said it would appeal.

"The changes necessary in order to publish the game in Britain are unacceptable to us and represent a setback for video games," Rockstar Games said in a statement. "The BBFC allows adults the freedom to decide for themselves when it comes to horror in movies and we think adults should be similarly allowed to decide for themselves when it comes to horror in video games, such as Manhunt 2."

Rockstar Games did not explain in detail what it was about the BBFC's current demands that were unacceptable compared to the earlier alterations made for the U.S. market.

Take-Two shares fell 6 cents to close at \$17.98 Monday.