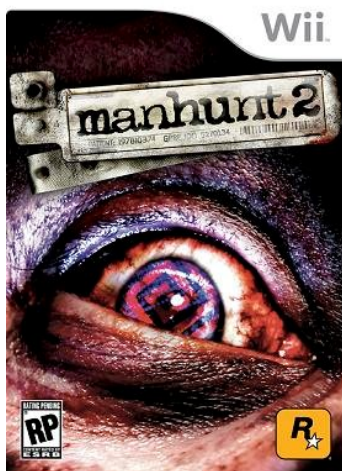


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[Susan Linn of Campaign For a Commercial-Free Childhood Rips Game Biz Over Manhunt 2](#)

October 30th, 2007



Joining other well-known critics of violent video games, Dr. Susan Linn of the Campaign for a Commercial-free Childhood has weighed in on the release Manhunt 2.

In a just-issued press release, Linn also had harsh words for the video game industry:

Tomorrow's release of Manhunt 2 epitomizes much of what's wrong with the videogame industry's current system of self-regulation.

Research clearly demonstrates that playing violent videogames can increase the likelihood of aggressive behavior in children and youth. Yet even as the industry claims it wants to keep its most violent games out of the hands of children, it virulently opposes any legislation that would give teeth to its often unenforced guidelines for sales and marketing of M-rated games.

Linn was also unsparing in her criticism of the ESRB, which rates video game content:

There is no transparency in the ESRB's ratings process; no explanation was given why the rating for Manhunt 2 was downgraded from Adults Only to Mature. A recent review in the New York Times says the resubmitted version "seems to retain at least 99 percent of the original content".

Because of the change in Manhunt 2's rating, it's a given that this ultra-violent game will be sold to children. Forty-two percent of underage shoppers in a recent study by the Federal Trade Commission were able to purchase M-rated games. The ESRB has confirmed that its allegiance is to the industry paying its bills, not to the children it's supposed to be protecting.

[California's Leland Yee Warns Parents on Manhunt 2 Halloween Release](#)

October 30th, 2007



With the Manhunt 2 launch now upon us, influential video game violence critics are weighing in.

California State Sen. Leland Yee (D), architect of his state's contested video game law, has issued a press release urging parents to boycott Manhunt 2. Said Yee:

Not surprisingly, this game is being released on Halloween. Halloween already presents many safety concerns for parents. With the release of Manhunt 2, parents will now face a new challenge from the purveyors of violence.

It is imperative that parents avoid purchasing this game for their children and always review the video games their children are playing. Ultra-violent, interactive video games such as Manhunt 2 can have negative effects on our children.

[Common Sense Media CEO Trashes Manhunt 2; City Hall Press Conference Today](#)

October 30th, 2007



As the Manhunt 2 launch draws near, the hurly-burly over the controversial game shifts to San Francisco where watchdog group Common Sense Media will hold a 10AM press conference at City Hall.

On Friday **GamePolitics** reported that the organization was [urging parents to boycott Manhunt 2](#). The game is scheduled to arrive in stores tomorrow.

There was a bit of an *oops* in CSM's Manhunt 2 bashing, however, as GP's Friday coverage pointed out. At least one gory scene detailed by the group - that of a police officer being decapitated by a shovel - apparently came from an early build of Manhunt 2 which was [leaked online by an SCEE employee](#) in September. A Rockstar

press representative told GP the scene did not appear in the M-rated retail version of the game.

In the wake of Rockstar's denial, Common Sense Media issued a [revised press release](#) yesterday. The [Associated Press](#) picked up the story, which is now getting wide play in the mainstream media. CSM CEO Jim Steyer told the AP:

In my opinion, it's the most senselessly violent and offensive thing I've ever watched. It's disgusting. It's so violent, it struck me personally as pornographic violence.

The group acknowledged that the decapitated police officer image it released on Friday was from the leaked early version of the game:

Common Sense Media was able to download footage of an apparently unedited version of the game that is now available to download on the Internet. It is unclear which of the numerous gruesome scenes from the online version have been edited from [the retail version]...

CSM also wanted to know what changes were made by Rockstar that led to an M-rating from the ESRB:

Common Sense believes that parents, educators, and other consumers would benefit from knowing what specific parts of the game were edited or removed to get the rating reduced, but information about the re-rating process has been very limited.

Meanwhile, the ESRB told the Associated Press:

[The M-rating] is a very clear and firm warning to parents that the game is in no way intended for children.

Publisher Take Two Interactive reiterated its denial that the police decapitation scene was in the retail version of Manhunt 2:

A spokesman... said the unrated version used a color encoding system common to Western Europe and could be played in the United States only using a Sony PlayStation 2 console modified without company permission.

Take Two media representative Ed Nebb told the AP:

The claim that an unreleased version of Manhunt is readily available on the Internet, and that children can easily download and play the unrated game, has not been proven.

At today's press conference in San Francisco, CSM will be showing video clips from the leaked version. From the CSM press release:

Common Sense downloaded a version of the game that is available online, and will be showing illustrative clips of that version to the press a day before the official title is scheduled to hit stores on Wednesday.

GP asked CSM if the location of the press conference at City Hall indicated that the San Francisco government was somehow getting involved, but a CSM representative nixed the idea. However, another source told **GamePolitics** that SF Mayor Gavin Newsome's press secretary is a former Common Sense Media employee.

California State Senator Leland Yee's district encompasses San Francisco as well, but a spokesman told GP that, as of last night, Yee was not involved. Yee, of course, is the architect of California's 205 video game law, currently under review by the U.S. Circuit Court. Yee has previously [weighed in against](#) Manhunt 2.