[GB] Videogame Refused Rating

IRIS 2007-7:1/23

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“Manhunt 2”, made by Rockstar Games for PS2 and Nintendo Wii consoles, cannot be legally supplied for the time being within the UK. This follows the decision by the British Board of Film Classification - BBFC not to give it a classification. In 2003,“Manhunt 1” was classified “18”, i.e., no-one under 18 may rent or buy it.

The BBFC stated that the principal reasons underlying its decision included:

- The unrelenting focus on stalking and brutal slaying;

- The sustained and cumulative casual sadism in the way in which killings are committed; and

- its unremitting bleakness and callousness of tone.

In general, the BBFC seems to have been persuaded by the:

- sheer lack of alternative pleasures on offer to the gamer combined with,

- the overall narrative context.

The BBFC was concerned that classifying “Manhunt 2” for supply would involve “a range of unjustifiable harm risks, to both adults and minors, …and that its availability, even if statutorily confined to adults, would be unacceptable to the public”. The parents of a young man who was stabbed and beaten to death have blamed “Manhunt 1”,claiming that it influenced his killer - although this opinion was not shared by the police.

Rockstar Games may ask for a formal “reconsideration” from the BBFC and/or an appeal, within six weeks, to the independent Video Appeal Committee. The VAC was set up by the BBFC under the Video Recordings Act 1984.

In 1997 (the last time the BBFC decided to refuse a classification), “Carmageddon” was refused a rating - but the decision was overturned on appeal.

Information on appeals and the composition of the committee can be found in BBFC Annual Reports. Appeal decisions are also the subject of BBFC press releases.

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BBFC Annual Reports

http://www.bbfc.co.uk/downloads/pub/BBFC%20Annual%20Reports/

Video Appeal Committee- VAC Terms and Conditions

http://www.bbfc.co.uk/downloads/pub/Submitting%20Companies/Video_Appeals_Committee_Terms.pdf

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