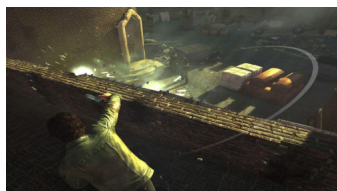


## “Wanted: Weapons of Fate”: Time Flies When Curving Bullets

Written by Luke Hamilton  
Monday, 13 April 2009 06:27

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Many movies have video-game tie-ins released alongside them, but few receive the proper time and attention needed to make a *good* game. *Eragon* was poorly designed and repetitive, *Watch men: The End Is Nigh* was nothing but fighting the same thugs every five minutes, and just about any big children's movie in the past year had a frustrating game to go with it.

*Wanted: Weapons of Fate* is a rare occasion when a movie got a video game, but it was released eight months after tr the movie hit theatres. The designers took the time to make a fun game, but it's not without drawbacks.

*Wanted: Weapons of Fate* is based on the story of the graphic novel and movie *Wanted*. But instead of rehashing old plots, a fresh story using elements of both is introduced to the *Wanted* universe, starting five hours after the end of the movie. Players take up two alternating roles during the game's main story: Wesley Gibson, pathetic loser turned super-assassin; and Cross, Wesley's father, during flashback sequences that take place before the events of the movie/novel.

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The game starts as Wesley is about to kill someone dumb enough to break into his apartment, but that situation turns into a fight for survival against a European division of the Fraternity of Assassins. With the skills Wesley learned from the Chicago Fraternity before destroying it, he must fight his way through mobs of highly trained assassins in search of the explanation for why he is still being targeted.

Because the biggest draw to this game for fans of the movie and novel is story, the game keeps everything relevant to the source material. No time is wasted with small fries that can't handle a weapon; just like in the movie, everyone you run into is an experienced killer.

Little touches are also thrown in for the comic fans: the in-your-face attitude of insulting everyone (including the player) about everything; the "killer suit" Cross and Wesley both don in the comics; and references to characters that were not included in the movie, such as The Spider. The story will probably not make much sense to someone who hasn't seen the movie or read the novel, but fans will definitely appreciate it. I should know: I'm one of them.



As the title *Weapons of Fate* suggests, the game is combat-heavy, with a focus on the third-person perspective and a "speed cover" system, which allows you to move from cover to cover quickly and in style, while shooting at your enemies as the opportunity arises. Your weapons are limited to a pistol, dual rapid-fire pistols (which you don't get until you're almost three-quarters through the game), and a knife. It sounds ridiculous for me to say you can shoot to your heart's content, but you'll find so much ammo after taking out an enemy that you'll be questioning if each is carrying a small nation's munitions.

The surreal tactics from the movie are given to players to utilize, but they're easy to learn and never so complicated that they hinder the experience. My favorite ability is being able to "curve" bullets to hit enemies that are in cover. It's as easy as holding a button, moving the control stick to an angle that will hit the target, then letting go of the button to fire. If done perfectly, the camera will follow the bullet in slow motion as it curves through the air and takes out an enemy, or multiple enemies depending on their positioning. A simple trick to do, but when done right, you can't help but get a feeling of accomplishment.

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It's by no means a tough game to get through; the first night I sat down to play was the same night I beat the game, within a matter of four hours. After completion, you can play through the story as a new character or increase the difficulty, but nothing is changed beyond that, which some will see as too little bang for the buck. I found it worth playing again just because the play style was fun; I got a big kick out of curving six bullets at once with the rapid-fire pistols to make them collide and create fragmentation explosions.

Character and level designs are done well, and the smart choices of destructible boxes and movable carts for the cover add to the experience. James McAvoy and Morgan Freeman did not return from the movie to voice the game, but the replacement voice actors do a good job, with their voices sounding almost exactly like their movie counterparts. The background music is forceful and feels right with the game, but when the game automatically saves its progress, the music cuts out from time to time.

*Wanted: Weapons of Fate* definitely doesn't last long for a player with experience in any kind of shooting games. For me, though, the combat was such a kick that I can forgive that, and I was even willing to play through a more difficult version of the exact same story just for the fun of it.

Fans of *Wanted* should get a lot of enjoyment out of it, and even people who aren't fans should get a kick out of the bullet-curving. But with a small variety of play options and a short story mode, you definitely want to be sure before picking it up for the long run.

*Wanted: Weapons of Fate is available for the Xbox 360 and PlayStation 3 systems for \$59.95. For this review, the author played the Xbox 360 version and completed the story mode on normal and hard difficulties.*

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