

# GUN

Written by Doc\_Brown  
Tuesday, 13 June 2006 18:00

---



**Developer:** [Neversoft](#)

**Publisher:** [Activision](#)

[Trailer](#)

**ESRB Mature 17+** (Blood and Gore, Intense Violence, Sexual Themes, Strong Language, Use of Alcohol)

**PEGI 18+** (Game contains depictions of violence)

*Some of the links in this review lead to external sites that do not belong and are not maintained by The Foxhole. The Foxhole staff is not responsible for the content of these sites or the way their owners deal with privacy. These links are here for informational purpose only.*

## A Drop of Time

“Experience the brutality, greed, and lust that was the West.” That’s the tagline of the game, and to that end it proffers the late 1800s equivalent of Vegas—a place where a person could indulge in every vice known to man. Within this vast and sparsely populated landscape there was little to no law enforcement to be found; oftentimes the only difference between the good guys and the bad was whether they killed for the good of others or for themselves. In this kind of world, there is only way to get by: the way of the gun.



## Quite a Yarn

Beyond a shadow of a doubt, GUN’s strongest selling point is its story. The opening cinematic shows Coronado’s second expedition in 1542. Ambushed by Native Americans under cover of a sand storm, the Spaniards are slaughtered and the golden cross they were carrying stolen. The game proper then commences in Montana, 1880. The protagonist, Colton White, and his father Ned are mountain men, trapping game to sell to the steamers traveling the Missouri River. Cole and Ned proceed to board one such steamer, the Morning Star, shortly after gameplay begins.

En route to their destination, however, the steamer is attacked by “savages.” Ned confesses that he is not Cole’s real father and shoves him overboard, but not before giving him a token to the Alhambra whorehouse in Dodge City and telling him to contact someone named Jenny. When the ship’s boilers subsequently explode, Ned is killed and the Morning Star sunk to the bottom of the Missouri. The rest of the game follows Cole’s quest to avenge his father, discover his past, and figure out how it all ties into the golden cross that disappeared over 300 years ago.

# GUN

Written by Doc\_Brown  
Tuesday, 13 June 2006 18:00

---

Overall, the story of GUN is excellent. It's well structured, compelling, and features several twists along the way. It's also brought to life with some well-directed cutscenes, an outstanding score, and top-notch voice acting. Thomas Jane (Cole), Kris Kristofferson (Ned), Ron Perlman (Mayor Hoodoo Brown), and many others are all excellent choices for their roles. And Lance Henriksen (railroad tycoon Thomas MacGruder) proves once again (see also the defunct 3DO title *Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*) that no one can read scripture quite like he can, with his opening narration in the above-linked trailer.



## You Can Lead a Horse to Water

As excellent as the story and related elements are, the rest of GUN is markedly average. Graphically, the engine passes muster, but only just. And the open world—which allegedly covers a stretch of land including Montana, Kansas, and the New Mexico Territory—merely takes a couple of minutes to traverse on horseback. Even ignoring the massive world accomplished by *Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas*, the West of GUN seems unnaturally tiny. The fact that they decided to slap down an invisible barrier on the edge of Dodge doesn't help any.

Gameplay is predominately of the click-click-boom variety, although you can also race against the clock for the Pony Express, search for patches of gold to mine, and play Texas Hold 'em, among other activities. To give you an edge in the gunfights you can enter a bullet time-esque quickdraw mode, and you'll need it considering the absurd amount of enemies they'll throw at you. What's more, you don't actually use any ammo in quickdraw, meaning you can kill two-dozen men using a single six-shooter without reloading. It's indicative of the more arcade-like route they decided to take the game.

It doesn't stop there. Despite the modicum of time it takes to ride to Empire, New Mexico, bandits will almost always ambush you along the way. Working as a deputy will result in more bad guys than Dodge could actually house flooding the streets with guns blazing. When told to break up a fight, lethal force is the only option the game even presents you with. And it amazes me that the developers of the *Tony Hawk* series could take the potential inherent in horse riding and turn it into something so simple. To say there are some missed opportunities here is an understatement of epic proportions.



## Smoke Signals

I wanted to take a moment to address some concerns that have come up over the portrayal of

# GUN

Written by Doc\_Brown  
Tuesday, 13 June 2006 18:00

---

Native Americans in the game. The argument goes that depicting them as bloodthirsty is racist. I counter that it is racist. The game does not depict this as their natural state, but as retaliation against injustices committed against them (like MacGruder's railroad cutting through their land). You, I would argue, would do the same in their situation. And if that's not good enough, consider these words by Randall Jahson, the game's writer: "GUN is still a videogame, let's remember, not a history course."



## Conclusion

GUN tells a riveting tale, but saddles it with an engine and gameplay that just aren't up to snuff. It would easily make a better movie than a game, so my advice is to wait for the price to drop before making a purchase. If they do go ahead with a sequel, I for one hope they keep the solid storytelling intact while adding more realistic gameplay, a massive game world, and more enjoyable horse mechanics. Imagine actually riding out into the desolate wilderness, living off the land, and bringing your spoils back to sell. You know, like the classic edutainment title Oregon Trail—for adults ("You have died of... syphilis.").

Game Rated

7/10