

Preview By: WoLf | Posted: 28-03-2005

---

Games are funny things; you can have the best story, plot and graphics in the world with cutting-edge gameplay and features. You can have the most immersive experience possible and someone will still find a way to make it much better, since the glory days of editors for Doom and Doom II (and well before) people have been making levels and enhancements for games.

Now the success of a game is often measured in the mod potential, how far can a regular 'Joe public' user stretch the game in terms of new content, new levels and in some cases brand new gameplay elements? The games that now stand the test of time are ones such as Unreal Tournament and its many incarnations, Half Life and its sequel and both Max Payne titles.

This brings me neatly to the subject of this small article, since I don't want to let too many cats out of the bag or ruin every surprise.

A short while ago Games Xtreme, notably myself received a special invite to look at the highly professional work of a new mod team that's hit the Payne scene with an explosive modification for the game entitled: The Hall of Mirrors.

It may not mean much to most of you but to those fans of Kurt Wimmer's masterpiece of dark future filmmaking: Equilibrium, it means just one thing: Gun Kata.

Mr. Anderson (The real Mr. Anderson) has been a friend of mine for some time now since we share the same passion for Wimmer's work and games in general. He is the founder of the Hall of Mirrors mod for Max Payne 2 which thanks to the highly talented Rico (Gun Kata implementation and animation) has already started to shape up quite nicely.



The HoM team comes across as professional and has a strong work ethic; they don't pussy-foot around and have already made leaps and bounds in the implementation of levels, models and elements from Equilibrium. The HoM mod promises a kick-ass blast-fest style of gameplay based around key scenes from the movie and already has the models for Grammaton Cleric John Preston and the Sweepers (the guards of the futuristic city of Libria) working within it.

Basically: If you want to play a Grammaton Cleric and shoot down your enemies with their signature move: Gun Kata, in HoM you can. The team has focussed on the gameplay and Kata moves rather than trying to build a story due to time constraints and their current modus operandi.



The team has implemented a pretty cool shatter effect onto the visors of the Sweepers, and if you can hit one with a bullet you can cause an instant one-shot kill against the target followed by a nice spray of broken glass. But what really has my interest is the way that Rico has taken the basic game engine of Max Payne 2 and added an extra layer of gameplay by incorporating the Gun Kata into the game.

What is Gun Kata I hear you ask?

*"The Gun Katas: Through analysis of thousands of recorded gun fights, the Cleric has determined that the geometric distribution of antagonists in any gun battle is a statistically predictable element.*



*The Gun Kata treats the gun as a total weapon. Each new position representing a maximum kill zone; inflicting maximum damage on the maximum number of opponents, while keeping the defendant clear of the statistically traditional trajectories of return fire.*

*By the rote mastery of this art, your firing efficiency will rise by no less than one hundred and twenty percent, the difference of a sixty three percent increase to lethal proficiency, makes the master of the Gun Katas, an adversary not to be taken lightly." ~ Dupont - Equilibrium.*

Taken literally it is the ability of a Grammaton Cleric to work out thanks to statistical probability where every assailant is in a gun fight, and shoot them while keeping out of their line of fire. Far fetched? Impossible to do for real? But in films and games these things are just a step away for a talented director or in Rico's case, a man who's laboured night and day to implement the Gun Kata into the mod.



I won't go too in-depth into what's been done with it in the HoM mod suffice it to say so far so good, GK is in there and it functions pretty darn well if you ask me. Rico has done a stunning job of working with the Max Payne 2 engine and has pushed it beyond the limits of the original game. He's added several GK movements from the movies and even created some of his own styles, the styles look pretty fluid and the motion is superb.

We're promised even more improvements and even more features as the mod continues to grow, and the whole thing is shaping up to be one of the best mods for Payne 2 yet, especially for a Gun Kata fan like myself. Since 100 Bullets was canned a while ago (unless someone picks it up again) the HoM mod is our only real chance to see proper EQ style Gun Kata in a game and Rico, Mr. Anderson and their team are the ones to pull it off.



We'll try and keep you updated as the mod progresses and we wish the team the best of luck from all here at Games Xtreme.

If you want to interact with the team you can visit their website at: <http://hom.paynereactor.com/>

And for those fans of Equilibrium who are looking for more than just the movie, the awesomely talented webmaster JenGe runs the best EQ fansite on the net, which can be found here:

<http://www.freewebs.com/equilibrium-movie/>

The site has several forums dedicated to games and gamers, including a place where the HoM mod members hang out and you can find tonnes of screencaps, fan inspired pictures and much more at Jen's site.

There are several excellent writers to watch out for at Jen's site who have expanded the EQuniverse with their own creations. Libby, JudasFM, Calico and MaWa have all joined me: ClericWolf in adding to EQ's rich environment. So if you are a fan of the film or you're looking for information on the mod for May Payne 2, stop by and say hi to the forums and the team.



It'd be a 'Sense Offence' not to.