



THE MAKING OF HITMAN CODENAME 47

THE HITMAN SERIES MAKES USE OF SUCH AN ELEGANT FORMULA IT'S HARD TO IMAGINE IT ANY OTHER WAY. BUT THE ORIGINAL ENTRY IN THE SERIES COULD HAVE BEEN A VERY DIFFERENT GAME, AS JACOB ANDERSEN REVEALS

Words by Edward Love

Hindsight is a funny thing. Today, the *Hitman* series is beloved, with a calculated antihero and a tried-and-tested stealth action setup.

Every time you slip into Agent 47's dark suit you know you're gearing up for a succession of guilty pleasures, from filching disguises to assassinating key targets, a formula so good that it has had its share of copycats since. But like any great idea, IO Interactive didn't crack the *Hitman* code in one sitting. It took hard work and refinement to crystallise the vision, and as we have discovered, a thousand pieces needed to fit together.

The truth is that IO Interactive nearly didn't make *Codename 47* at all, and it originally intended to make



IN THE KNOW

- » **PUBLISHER:**
EIDOS INTERACTIVE
- » **DEVELOPER:**
IO INTERACTIVE
- » **RELEASED:** 2000
- » **PLATFORM:** PC
- » **GENRE:**
Third-person shooter

a simple shooter that would pave the way for bigger and better things. The company was a joint venture between Reto-Moto, a Danish development house, and Nordisk Film studio. The former wanted to make a fantasy MMO they had dubbed *Rex Dominus*. The latter was hesitant. "One of the marketing guys at Nordisk Film persuaded us to stop development on *Rex Dominus*," recalls Jacob Andersen. "We were asked to prove ourselves with a simple shooter first."

A run-and-gun action game would indeed be quicker to create and it would give Jacob and his team the leeway to get back to their world of might and magic. So they changed tack, drafting storyboards for an action game based on John Woo movies like *Hard Boiled* and *The Killer*. You'd play an assassin in a suit icing Chinese mafia types, hardballers spitting fire and fury.

Many of IO Interactive's workers had cut their teeth making Mega Drive titles in Los Angeles for Scavenger, Inc, but this new game would be built for the PC. Why? "Well, it was hard for us to get hold of development kits in the new setup," Jacob recalls. "On top of that, 3D hardware was beginning to appear for the PC, which made it extremely interesting to develop for."

The Glacier engine was built and IO spared no expense. "Since killing was the main theme of the game, we wanted to do something special," Jacob says. "Standard 'death animations' just looked too static so some of the coders tried to see if they could use real-time inverse kinematics for the falling bodies. The first versions ran terribly slowly until one of the programmers figured out a way to fake the whole calculation."

As fate would have it, IO Interactive was introducing proper ragdoll physics into the fold, which is one of the



» [PC] When you're in a mobster's home surrounded by his goons, you better make sure you're in a disguise.

