

GameSpy.com Game Developer Diary – Part One
(Intro to Ethan and story, enhancements to gameplay)

Dave Hasle, Senior Producer – Monolith Productions

Our lead character from *Condemned: Criminal Origins* was Ethan Thomas – who will carry his role forward with *Condemned 2: Bloodshot*. Ethan Thomas was an investigator, one of the best in fact, in the Serial Crimes Unit – referred to as the SCU. But lately his cases kept coming up cold. It wasn't until his fateful meeting with a stranger called Malcolm Vanhorn that he realized that there were events happening outside of his control. He also realized that there was something different, something special, about him when he found himself thrown out of a fourth-floor window – and survived.

When we set out to create *Condemned 2: Bloodshot*, we scoured the boards, the forums and any place we could find to get people's thoughts, ideas and feedback on what they wanted. Our feature list is nearly entirely driven from the public's input.

One of those areas was the story itself. We left many a gamer slightly confused when it came down to the story in *Condemned: Criminal Origins* – so we have set out as one of our goals to provide a cohesive story with a satisfying conclusion. We have wrapped this motivation for the player into the motivation for Ethan Thomas himself. Ethan wants answers to the strange events that have plagued his life – and he's not going to let anything stop him.

We're going to pick up Ethan's life about a year later – now totally down on his luck. He is angry, bitter, and struggling to drown out the memories that keep replaying in his head. He has lost his direction, focus, and has been holding the world to blame – and still not quite able to figure out what had happened and who, or what, had brought him down. All he knows is that someone is going to pay as he tries to figure out what is going on.

There will be some familiar faces for fans of *Condemned: Criminal Origins*. Rosa, Ethan's stable sidekick, is coming back as well as a few others. We've made some stronger visual statements with our characters, including Ethan himself. We have a greater range of characters as well as AI to go with them this time around.

Condemned 2 offers a more straightforward story that we feel will grab the player from the moment they pick up the controls and carry them to the end – and leave them with a satisfied grin on their face. The story works on a multitude of levels: there are the

‘inner-demons’ that plague Ethan, Ethan’s reputation with the SCU, the ominous presence that seems to still haunt him, the reason for the pervasive violence throughout the city and the struggle to not only understand it but to end it while coming to terms with his own true self.

We also poured through all available information on the web regarding what people thought of our gameplay and what they’d like to see the second time around. We heavily revisited every aspect of the gameplay, not only bringing on several new gameplay features but also re-evaluating the features from *Condemned: Criminal Origins* that we want to carry forward.

An area we put a lot of work into is the forensics system. With the first game, we used the forensics as a trigger for story-telling events, really nothing more. This time around, we’ve fully fleshed out the system to allow the player to use tools whenever they’d like, to use their own powers of observation (such as allowing them to zoom in when they are in a forensic event), to make their own conclusions based upon the information at hand and even skip the forensics if they just want to go kick some butt.

We’ve always wanted to maintain the overall visceral feeling of melee combat and we wanted all new gameplay systems to support that. We set ourselves as our number-one goal to “Evolve and Expand Your Combat”. So some of the systems we’ll be discussing in upcoming diaries are the fist-to-fist fighting system, the chain attack system, the thrown weapons system, the environmental finishing moves, multiplayer and a number of others. We’ll be able to share more on these, and all of our features, in the coming months, so stay tuned!