

## Review: 'Blood Dragon' a blast of pure '80s mayhem

May 9 2013, by Lou Kesten

---



This video game image released by Ubisoft shows a scene from "Far Cry 3: Blood Dragon." (AP Photo/Ubisoft)

Video games came of age in the 1980s, a decade that was also the heyday of cheesy Hollywood action movies. Thirty years later, you don't have to look hard to see the influence of one medium on the other. The ultraviolent power fantasies that seem so corny today—movies like "Rambo," "Commando" and "The Delta Force"—pretty much provided the template for popular games like "Call of Duty" and "Gears of War."

"Far Cry 3: Blood Dragon" (Ubisoft, for the [Xbox 360](#), [PlayStation 3](#), PC, \$15) makes that connection more explicit. It's an affectionate tribute to a cinematic era in which one guy with a lot of guns could solve all the world's problems.

The musclehead here is Rex "Power" Colt, a cybernetically enhanced supersoldier who's sent to a remote island to prevent a madman from building an unstoppable army. Rex is voiced by Michael Biehn, a veteran of genuine '80s classics like "The Terminator" and "Aliens," and his growly one-liners contribute as much to the atmosphere as the game's pulsing synth-heavy soundtrack.

The story has everything you could want from the genre, including a painfully awkward sex scene, a montage of Rex training and a flamboyantly over-the-top climax. The plot is laid out in pixelated, minimally animated cut scenes, although most of the action takes place in the fully up-to-date engine Ubisoft created for last year's "Far Cry 3."

You don't need that game to play "Blood Dragon." Instead, your \$15 buys you a scaled-down version of "FC3" with a smaller map, fewer weapons and a streamlined leveling-up system. It takes just six hours or so to play through, which isn't necessarily a bad thing if you felt "FC3" dragged on too long.

"Blood Dragon" is an intriguing experiment in downloadable content from a big publisher like [Ubisoft](#). If you loved the parent game, you get a fresh new adventure using the same mechanics. If you didn't play "Far Cry 3," you get a solid sample for one-quarter of the price. Either way, it's hard to resist. Three stars out of four.

---

Here are a few more inexpensive, downloadable releases that evoke

memories of gaming in the '80s:

— "Guacamelee!" (Drinkbox Studios, PS3, Vita, \$15) combines the two-dimensional fisticuffs of, say, "Double Dragon" with the exploration of "Metroid." It's a fast-paced romp with gorgeous graphics drawn from Mexican mythology.

— "Monaco: What's Yours Is Mine" (Pocketwatch Games, Xbox, PC, \$15) takes the top-down perspective of early maze games like "Robotron: 2084" and applies it to a nerve-racking heist caper. You can play solo, but it's much livelier when you cooperate online with three other thieves.

— "Thomas Was Alone" (Curve Studios, PS3, Vita, PC, Mac, \$10) boils down the running-and-jumping platform game to simple visuals that could have worked on an Atari 2600. Its heroes are simply colored rectangles—but as the game proceeds, they develop distinctive, endearing personalities.

**More information:** [far-cry.ubi.com/fc3blooddragon/](http://far-cry.ubi.com/fc3blooddragon/)  
[www.guacamelee.com/](http://www.guacamelee.com/)  
[www.pocketwatchgames.com/Monaco/](http://www.pocketwatchgames.com/Monaco/)  
[www.thomaswasalone.com/](http://www.thomaswasalone.com/)

© 2013 The Associated Press. All rights reserved.

Citation: Review: 'Blood Dragon' a blast of pure '80s mayhem (2013, May 9) retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2013-05-blood-dragon-blast-pure-80s.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.