

Fractious politics leads 'Far Cry' video game to US

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Ubisoft has sold some 42 million copies of the "Far Cry" videogame since the first installment launched in 2004, making it one of its biggest franchises, according to the company

The latest edition of the blockbuster shooter video game "Far Cry" plays out on US soil, inspired by angry political divides and intense isolationist passions in rural America.

French video game powerhouse Ubisoft on Friday officially unveiled "Far Cry 5," which pits players against a dangerous, violent cult calling the shots in a fictional setting of Hope County, Montana.

Previous "Far Cry" games have been set in exotic spots in places including jungles of Africa, Himalayan mountains, and an archipelago in the South Pacific.

The idea of bringing the action game to the US had been considered early in the franchise, but the idea was shelved after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the proclaimed end of the Cold War ushered in a calmer political atmosphere, according to executive producer Dan Hay.

Political tumult that gained momentum during the past couple of years while the latest installment of the game was being developed brought a feeling that American society wasn't as safe and secure as one might hope, according to Hay.

Hay said the 2008-2009 economic crisis, Brexit, anti-immigrant agendas, and the divisive but victorious election campaign of US President Donald Trump has changed the climate.

Freedom, faith and firearms

Hay and his team spent two weeks in Montana, seeking out people and groups distrustful of outside authority and inclined toward their own communities.

"When we were in Montana we met very real people," said Hay.

"When they talk, they give you pearls of wisdom."



"Far Cry 4" video game executive director Dan Hay pictured in front of a poster for the Ubisoft title in San Francisco on October 9, 2014

The pillars of "Far Cry 5" became freedom, faith, and firearms, according to its creators.

Hay and his team created a fictional cult led by a magnetic leader named Joseph whose three grown children help manage the flock.

"The game is about a father who believes the end of time is coming and he has been chosen to save people, whether they want to be saved or not," Hay said.

Players will be pitted against the cult, and must form a resistance force by enlisting other in-game characters, an early glimpse revealed.

"Far Cry is definitely about chaos, but is it also about building a beautiful world," Hay said.

Players will be called on to use weapons, strategy, stealth, and allies, and can get backup from dogs, gun-toting allies, and even propeller-plane bombing runs.

Ubisoft plans to showcase the game at the major E3 video game show in Los Angeles in June and release it on February 27 of next year.

"It is not meant as a commentary on politics in America," Hay said.

"Montana is beautiful and filled with interesting people, but there is also this feeling of not wanting to be (messed) with and a sense of 'we can do it ourselves;' and there is something really 'Far Cry' about this."

Official "Far Cry 5" trailers providing glimpses into the game and its characters racked up more than 100,000 views within hours of being posted on YouTube early Friday.

Ubisoft has sold some 42 million copies of "Far Cry" overall since the first installment launched in 2004, making it one of its biggest franchises, according to the company.

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