

# Behind the scenes of 'Uncharted 2: Among Thieves'

25 September 2009, By DERRIK J. LANG , AP Entertainment Writer



In this video game image released by Sony Computer Entertainment America Inc., a scene is shown from "Uncharted 2: Among Thieves." (AP Photo/Sony Computer Entertainment America Inc.)

(AP) -- The cast of the action-adventure sequel "Uncharted 2: Among Thieves" are doing something most video game actors never do: They are rehearsing together in a room.

The crew of six practice a pivotal scene in the highly anticipated follow-up to "Uncharted: Drake's Fortune," the third-person [PlayStation 3](#) game developed by Naughty Dog.

"Should I say, 'We have to keep moving forward,'" asks actress Claudia Black, "or 'we can't go back'?"

Gordon Hunt, the game's motion-capture and voice director, and Naughty Dog creative director Amy Henning quickly ponder her query then declare the motivation for Black's character, shady treasure hunter Chloe Frazer, is definitely onward.

The rapid-fire discussion is all part of a creative process that's more akin to making a movie than a [video game](#).

"With the sequel, we wanted to explore the characters more, especially our leading man

Nathan Drake, and introduce new characters into his world," says Henning. "A lot of video games are grim and action-driven and not very colorful or romantic. We thought it would be fun to capture that vibe but also make it very contemporary, not some retro adventure."

"Uncharted 2," which is set for release Oct. 13, finds Drake traveling Indiana Jones-style across the globe in search of the mythical kingdom Shambhala. Much like the first title, Drake must engage in epic gunfights, navigate huge obstacles and solve puzzles to progress in the game, but the developers are refusing to sacrifice the storytelling.

During rehearsals, Black again surveys the directors to see if her readings are cryptic enough. With double-crossing plot twists laced throughout the single-player campaign, the cast must scrutinize the subtleties of their performances.

Henning and Hunt are allowing the actors to tweak their lines along the way, a luxury not usually afforded in most Hollywood productions. That means there's ample improvisation on set, which is just a large room filled with dozens of cameras and nondescript set pieces that will later be digitally transformed into planes, trains and automobiles.

"That is a huge thing for an actor, to have that ability to say, 'Let's do it again and try this,'" says Nolan North, the actor who plays Drake, the quippy fortune hunter players control in the "Uncharted" games. "They have all these choices to make it the best it could possibly be. That's something you don't even get in television or film sometimes."

Most games usually rely on actors to individually record their parts. Much like an animated movie, voice actors often never perform opposite their co-stars and rarely create their character's movements. Not so on "Uncharted 2": The actors perform their scenes together, clad in skintight suits, and everything - including the audio - is

recorded at the same time.

"Acting purists claim that voice work is the ultimate form of acting because it requires skill that isn't prejudiced by appearance," says former "Farscape" star Black. "This game, oddly enough, incorporates more of the three different forms of acting in one project than anything else I've ever done because we're required to use our own bodies."

Rene Auberjonois, who plays a mysterious anthropologist in the "Uncharted 2," says the process is nothing like the special effects he experienced while working on "Star Trek: Deep Space Nine" for seven seasons.

"It's completely different now, which is one of the reasons why I wanted to come work on this project," says Auberjonois, who played shapeshifting alien Odo. "Since this seems to be the wave of the future, I thought it would behoove me to have this experience. It's fascinating because you really are working in the realm of your imagination."

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On the Net:

<http://www.naughtydog.com/>

<http://www.unchartedthegame.com/>

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APA citation: Behind the scenes of 'Uncharted 2: Among Thieves' (2009, September 25) retrieved 27 November 2022 from <https://phys.org/news/2009-09-scenes-uncharted-thieves.html>

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