

Designing Over the Top

SAINTS ROW: THE THIRD

Postmortem

ME!

- **Worked on:**
 - Red Faction 2
 - The Punisher
 - Saints Row 2
 - Saints Row: The Third



- **Design Director on Saints Row: The Third**

SAINTS ROW: THE THIRD

- **Development Time:**
 - 3 Years - Oct '08-Nov '11
 - (SR2 shipped Oct 2008)



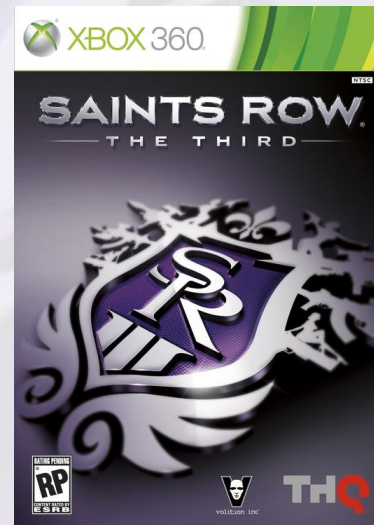
OVERVIEW |



THREE WAY



1. SETTING THE TONE



2. RAISING THE QUALITY BAR

- 'Holy Shit' Moments
- Pacing
- Playtesting



3. SCOPE CONTROL



SETTING THE TONE

WHAT IS “TONE”?

- ***“Prevailing character or style”***
 - *(dictionary)*
- ***“A writer's attitude toward subject, audience, and self.”***
 - *(literary)*
- ***“Tone can be as important as text.”***
 - *Ed Koch*

TONE EXAMPLE – Batman



TONE –

1. The Creative Boundaries

2. The Emotional Experience

a) aka Player Experience



TONE - Saints Row 2



EFFECTIVE TONE



INEFFECTIVE TONE



What is SR3?



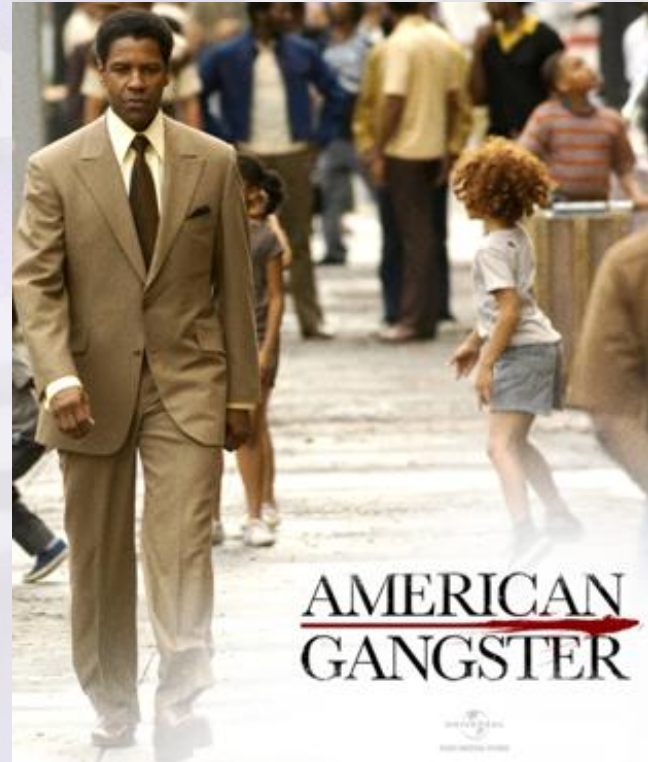
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What is SR3?



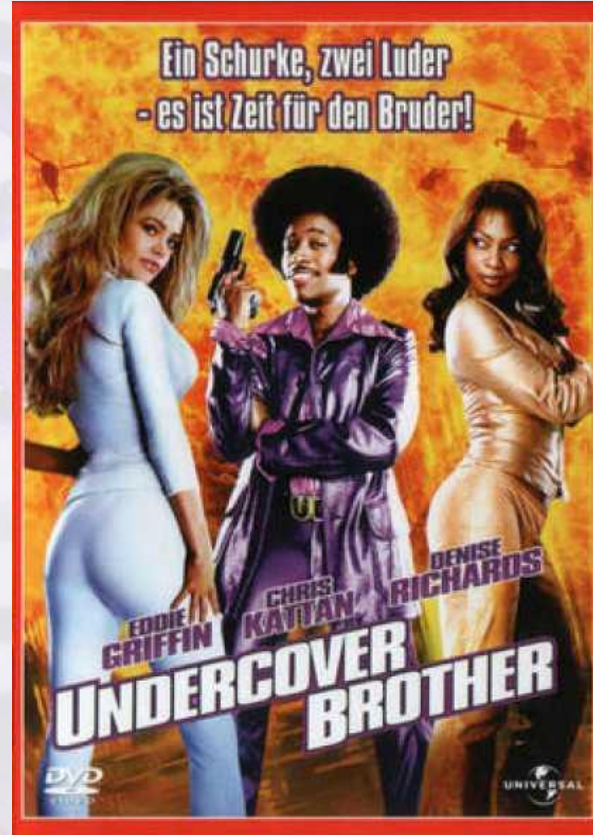
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THE PROBLEMS



THE PROBLEMS



THE RESULT?



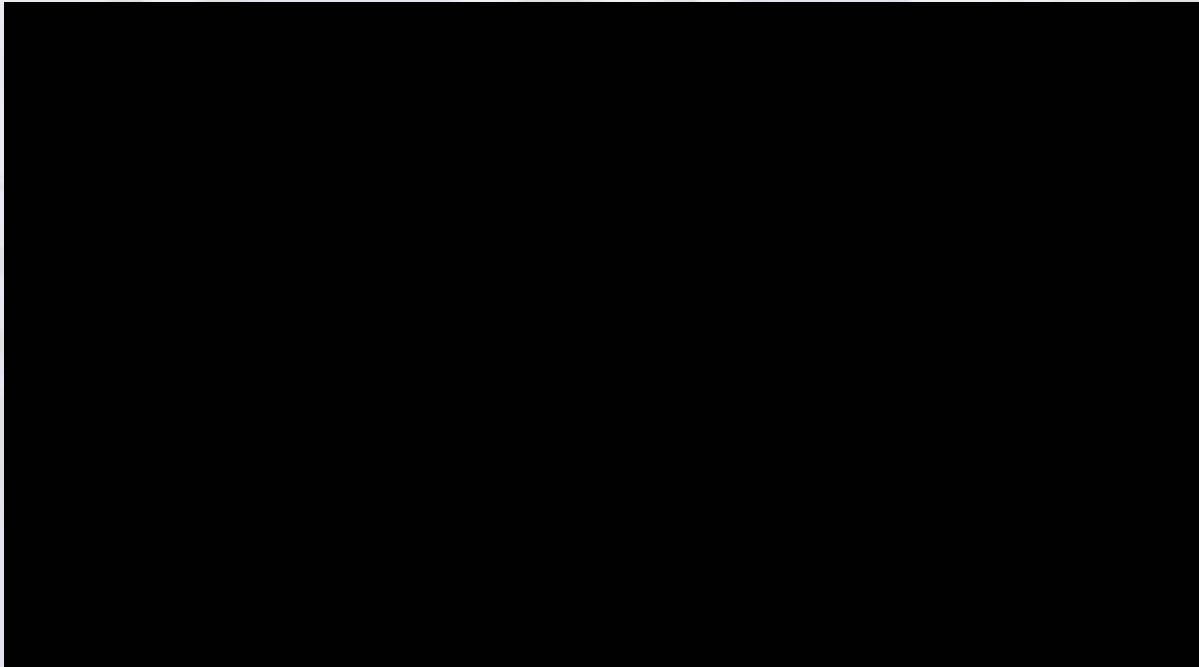
CONFUSION

Yeah, I don't understand it either.

THE SOLUTIONS

- **Brainstorming meetings**
 - Design Mantra – “Embrace the Crazy; Fun Trumps All”
 - “Over the Top”
- **Team Presentations**
- **Movie Outings**
- **Tone Video**
- **‘Aha’ Moments**

Tone Video



‘AHA!’ Moments

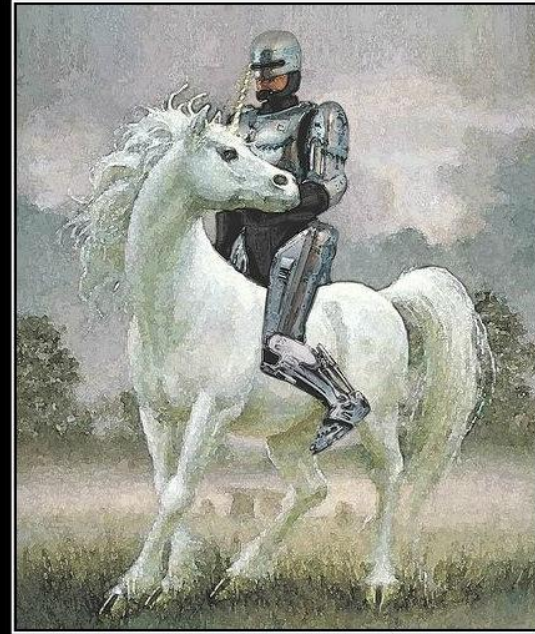


LESSONS LEARNED

- The Entire Team **MUST** own and be part of the Tone/Vision
 - If only Directors/Leads own the game, it'll be a constant battle
- Defining Tone is tough, but vital
 - If you have to explain it more than once, step back, refocus
- Use multiple methods of Tone delivery
 - Not “one size fits all”
 - Design “Briefs”
 - Tone/Vision Videos are amazing tools

RAISING THE QUALITY BAR: **‘HOLY SHIT’ MOMENTS**

THE GOALS



Robocop on a Unicorn

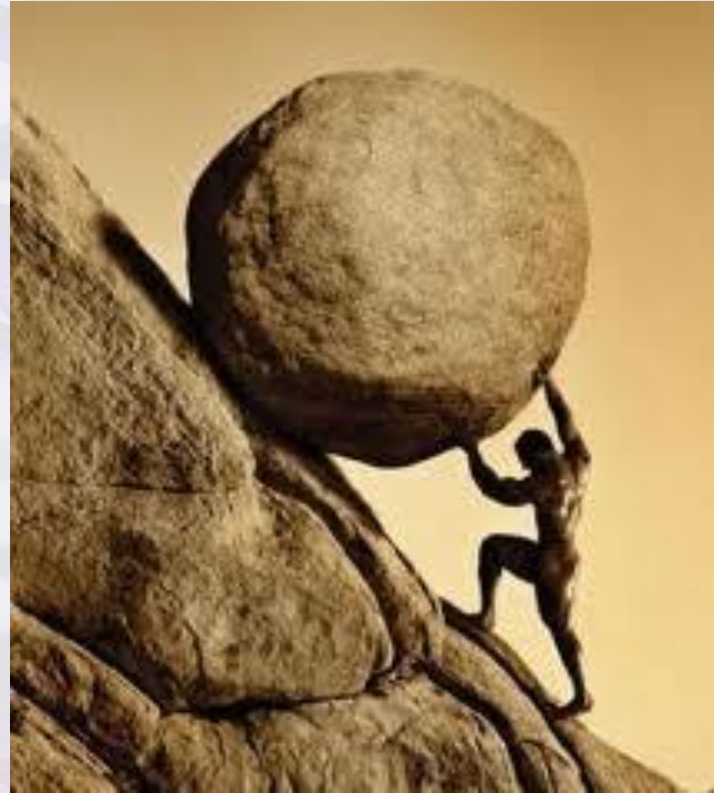
Some things are simply beyond God's power...

quickmeme.com

THE PROBLEMS



THE PROBLEMS



THE SOLUTIONS

- Pre- Visualization



THE SOLUTIONS



EXAMPLE: Mission 01 – Bank Vault Ride



EXAMPLE: Mission 02 – Skydiving



EXAMPLE: Mission 06 – Ball Ride



THE LESSONS LEARNED



**WHO'S AWESOME?
PRE-VIS IS AWESOME!**

THE LESSONS LEARNED

- Pre-vis however possible



THE LESSONS LEARNED



TEAMWORK

Never underestimate it.

THE LESSONS LEARNED



RAISING THE QUALITY BAR: **PACING**

THE GOALS



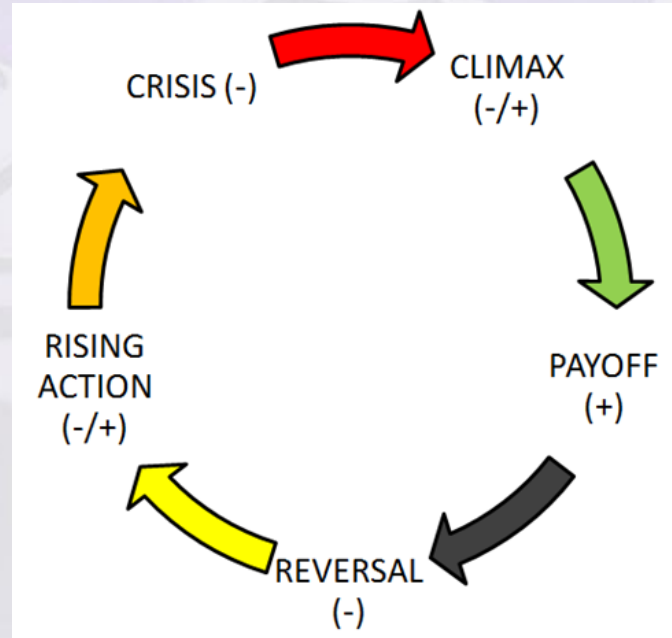
THE PROBLEMS



THE PROBLEMS

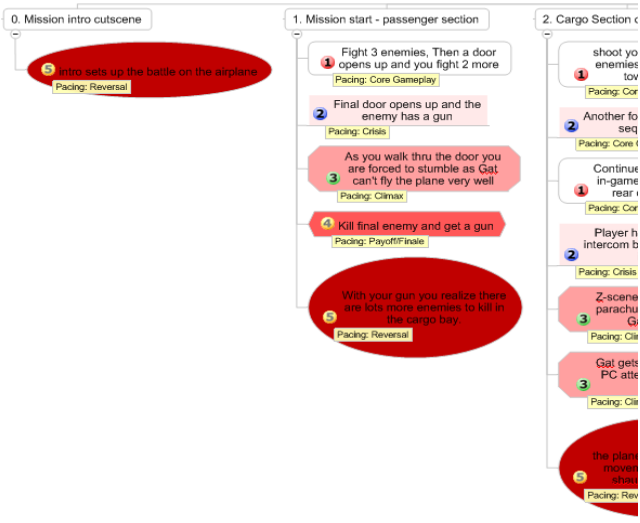


SOLUTIONS - PACING VISUALIZATION

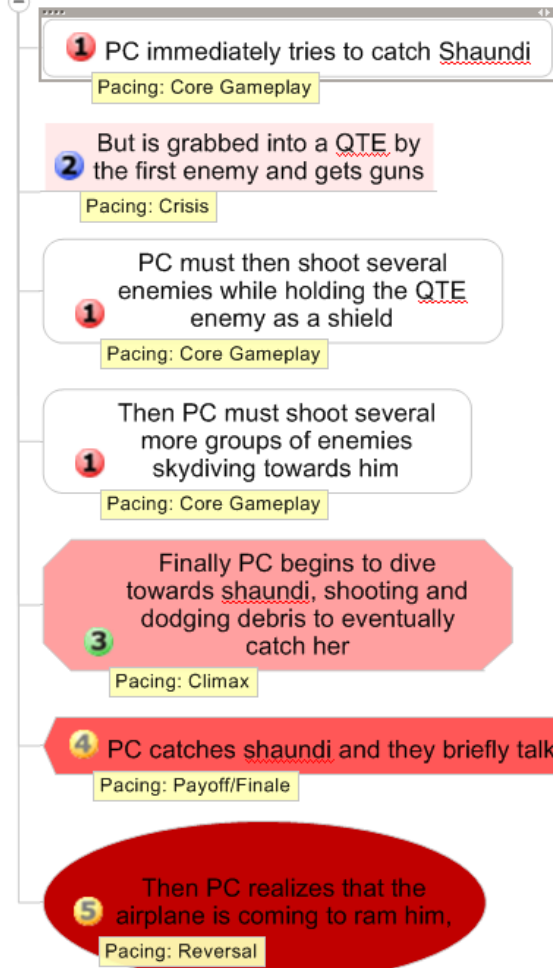


SOLUTIONS - S

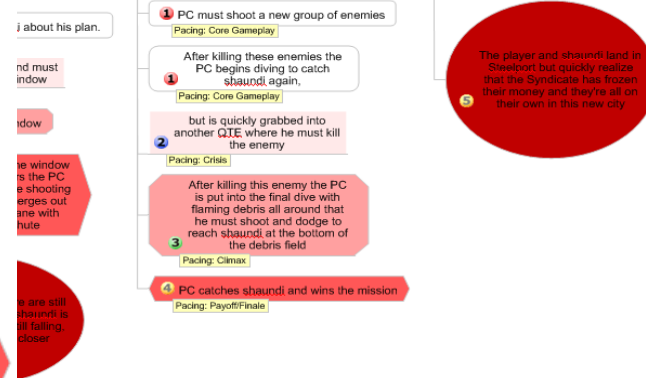
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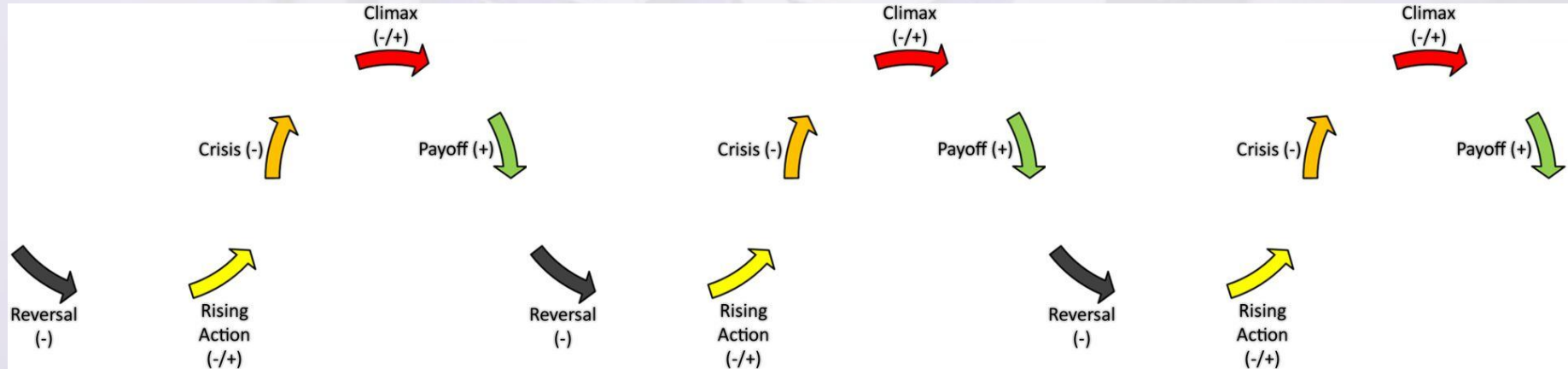
3. First Skydiving Section



5. Second Skydiving Section



THE FUTURE OF PACING



RAISING THE QUALITY BAR: **PLAYTESTING**

METHODS OF TESTING

	12/1/10	1/1/11	2/1/11	3/1/11	4/1/11	5/1/11	6/1/11	7/1/11	8/1/11	9/1/11
Cross Project Critiques										
Team Wide Playthrus										
Local Playtests										
Larger Scale Playtests										

LESSONS LEARNED



SCOPE CONTROL

THE PROBLEMS

- SR2's philosophy:

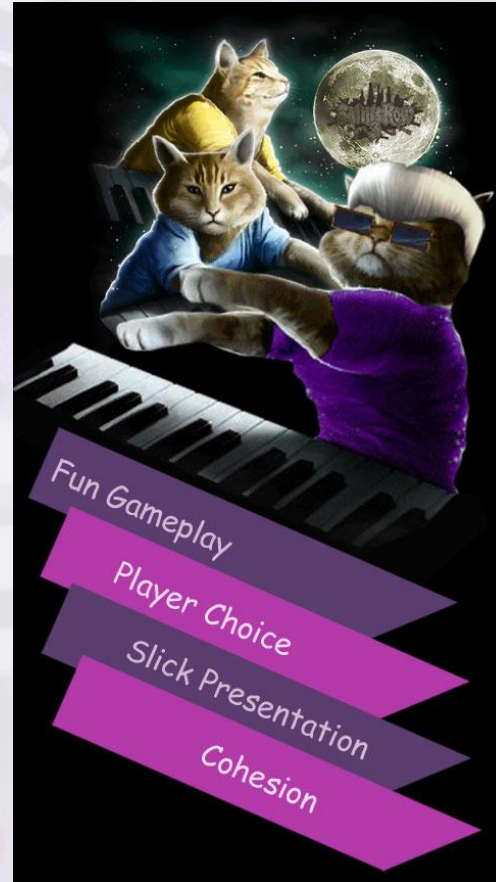


THE SOLUTIONS

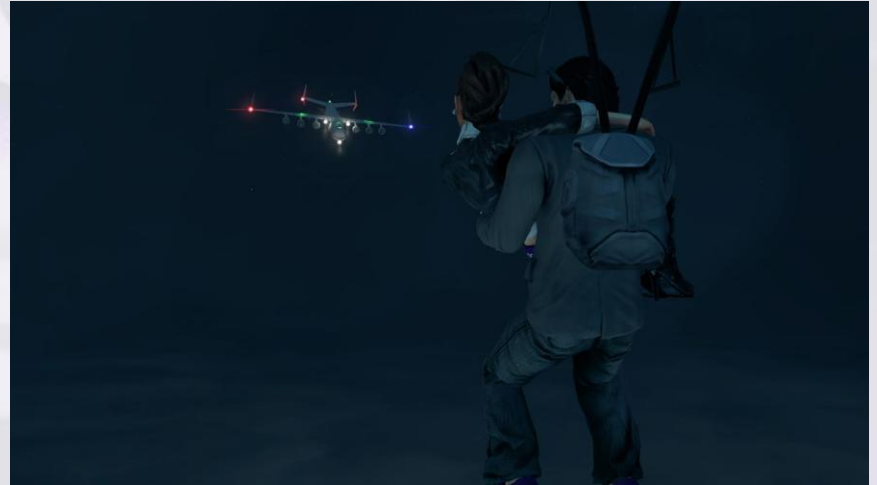


CUTTING CONTENT
Scary, but necessary

THE SOLUTIONS



THE SOLUTIONS



THE OUTCOMES





THE OUTCOMES



LESSONS LEARNED

- **Focus**
- **It's F@*king hard!**
- **Cut. Then Cut More.**

WHAT I LEARNED

- **Lock down high level vision/tone/etc. ASAP**
 - The sooner the team is on the same page, the better
- **Look before you leap**
 - Pre-Visualize before Prototyping
- **Find+Resolve your game's weaknesses**
 - It's never too late to fix a problem (until you ship)
- **Trying to do too much is easy**
 - It takes effort to control and not do every cool idea you have
- **Don't fear - Embrace your content**
 - Sometimes the shark is there to be jumped

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scott.phillips@thq.com



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QUESTIONS?