

Confirmed: Sex minigame in PS2 San Andreas

By *srlinuxx*

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This week saw a Grand Theft Auto game once again at the center of a nationwide controversy. The point of contention this time was the so-called "Hot Coffee" mod for Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas, which had everyone from anti-game crusader Jack Thompson to US Senator Hillary Clinton (D-NY) percolating with outrage and/or calls for federal game regulation.

The Hot Coffee mod first surfaced last month, when the PC version of San Andreas was released. The mod, which is available on numerous Web sites, adds a bonus sex minigame as a reward for the numerous "girlfriend" missions in San Andreas.

Previously, when game hero Carl "CJ" Johnson successfully wined and dined one of several girlfriends a certain number of times, she would ask him into her house for "coffee." After entering, the game shows an external shot of the house with muffled sounds of a couple emitting moans in flagrante delicto. PC versions of San Andreas with the "Hot Coffee" mod installed show what goes on inside the house, treating players to a sexually graphic minigame of CJ fornicating with his girlfriend.

According to its creators, the Hot Coffee mod merely unlocks hidden, preexisting code inside San Andreas. The game's publisher, Rockstar Games, vehemently--but carefully--denied that charge in a statement earlier this week. "So far we have learned that the 'Hot Coffee' modification is the work of a determined group of hackers who have gone to significant trouble to alter scenes in the official version of the game," the company said. "In violation of the software user agreement, hackers created the 'Hot Coffee' modification by disassembling and then combining, recompiling and altering the game's source code."

Rockstar's statement also claimed that the mod was the product of complex technical tampering. "Since the 'Hot Coffee' scenes cannot be created without intentional and significant technical modifications and reverse-engineering of the game's source code, we are currently investigating ways that we can increase the security protection of the source code and prevent the game from being altered by the 'Hot Coffee' modification," read the statement.

However, Rockstar Games' argument has been undermined by an increasing number of reports that claimed the sex minigame is in the PlayStation 2 version of San Andreas. Since the PS2 version comes on an unmoddable DVD, it cannot have any content added to it, although cheat codes--created either by the publisher or third parties--can unlock preexisting code on the disc. While devices such as GameShark and Action Replay Max can tweak preexisting variables in system memory with cheats, they cannot inject new models, animations, and/or code into a game.

To prove or disprove rumors that the PS2 San Andreas contains a sexually graphic minigame, GameSpot decided to test the cheat codes circulating around the Web on a sealed, first-edition copy of San Andreas. After acquiring the

"Uncensored Hot Coffee" codes from the respected tech-blog Kotaku, we entered them into an easily obtainable Action Replay Max cheat device. After entering the "Enable all Girlfriends" cheat, we began the game and then gave CJ maximum sex appeal, via a cheat from GameFAQs that requires no external code.

After saving, our test editor had Carl visit the house of his nearest girlfriend, Denise in Los Santos. Carl then took Denise on a series of dates to the nearest bar. After a few complications--including being busted for two-timing by another of CJ's girlfriends--we completed a fourth date with Denise, after which she invited us into her house for "coffee."

The next screen proved that the PlayStation 2 edition of the game does indeed include a sexually graphic minigame, which plays almost exactly the same as the Hot Coffee mod. It begins inside a bedroom with Denise, wearing only a pink thong and a cutoff T-shirt bearing the Rockstar logo, performing simulated fellatio on CJ, who is fully clothed in jeans and a "wife beater"-style tank top.

After a few seconds, the minigame proceeds to semi-explicit simulated copulation. Although players can change the camera angle with the circle button, as well as cycle through three sexual positions with the square button, no genitalia are ever seen. To win, players must maintain a steady rhythm with the left analog stick to build up an "excitement meter" in the right-hand screen. Fill the meter and Denise becomes very excited, telling CJ he is "the man" before the game congratulates you with the words "Nice guys finish last!" Let the meter drop to empty and the game admonishes you with "Failure to satisfy a woman is a CRIME!"

Given that the minigame is about as raunchy as an episode of Sex and the City, cannot be accessed without entering a long string of cheat codes, and takes several hours of effort to access, charges that San Andreas is "pornographic" may seem extreme to some. However, its existence does appear to contradict Rockstar Games' carefully worded statement blaming hacker mischief for the existence of the Hot Coffee mod.

By Tor Thorsen

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