= Max Payne 2 : The Fall of Max Payne =

Max Payne 2 : The Fall of Max Payne is a third @-@ person shooter video game developed by Remedy Entertainment and published by Rockstar Games . The game is a sequel to Max Payne and is followed by the game Max Payne 3 .

In Max Payne 2 , the player controls Max Payne , a DEA agent for the New York City Police Department (NYPD) . Reinstated after the events of the previous game , he reunites with Mona Sax , they set out to resolve a conspiracy of death and betrayal .

Video game critics gave Max Payne 2 highly positive reviews . Praise focused on its action and story , while criticism targeted its short length . Despite the positive reception , the game sold poorly , leading Rockstar Games ' parent company Take @-@ Two Interactive to cite Max Payne 2 's sales as a cause for the company 's reforecast finances of 2004 . Max Payne 2 received several industry awards , including Outstanding Art Direction at the Golden Satellite Awards 2004 , and Editors ' Choice Awards from GamePro , IGN , and GameSpy .

= = Gameplay = =

Max Payne 2 is a third @-@ person shooter , in which the player assumes the role of Max Payne , but also plays as Mona Sax in a few levels . Initially , the player 's weapon is a 9mm pistol . As they progress , players access other weapons including other handguns , shotguns , submachine guns , assault rifles , sniper rifles , and hand @-@ thrown weapons . To move the game along , the player is told what the next objective is through Max 's internal monologue , in which Max iterates what his next steps should be .

When first played , the game offers one difficulty level that is adjusted automatically if the game is too difficult for the player . For example , if the player 's character dies too many times , the enemies ' artificial intelligence is made less effective , while more health in the form of painkillers is made available . After completing the game once , other difficulty levels are unlocked . Two special game modes are also activated : New York Minute and Dead Man Walking . In New York Minute , the player is given a score based on the time taken to complete each level . The Dead Man Walking mode places Max in one of five scenarios , in which he must survive for as long as possible while fighting off endlessly respawning enemies .

Max Payne 2 allows the player to enable bullet time , a mode that slows time , while still allowing the player to aim in real @-@ time , to give the player more time to determine what they want to do . In this mode , the screen 's color changes to a sepia tone to act as a visual cue . When in use , the bullet time meter will decrease until it is either empty or the player disables bullet time mode . The meter will eventually increase when not in use , but can be replenished quickly by killing enemies . To simulate the bullet time effect , Max can also execute a shoot @-@ dodge maneuver . When the maneuver is performed , Max jumps in a direction specified by the player , and although Bullet Time is activated while Max is in mid @-@ air , this will not deplete the bullet time meter . The combat system has been improved for Max Payne 2 ; the player can now arm Max with a secondary weapon such as a grenade or Molotov cocktail , and when near an enemy , Max can perform a melee attack . AI players occasionally come to Max 's aid , although their death does not affect the gameplay or story .

= = Plot = =

Two years after the events of the first game , Max Payne has been reinstated as a detective in the NYPD . While investigating a series of murders by a group of hitmen known as the Cleaners , Max encounters Mona Sax , who was assumed dead at the end of the previous game . While following her lead , Mona is eventually arrested because of her crimes . She is taken in to the police station , despite Max 's protests . While at the station , Max overhears his new partner , Valerie Winterson , talking on the phone about Mona . Suddenly , the station is attacked by hitmen looking for Mona . Mona breaks out of her cell , and after fighting off the hitmen , Max and Mona begin hunting down

the people responsible for the attack . Their search leads them to a construction site , where he and Mona defend themselves against the same hitmen . After their foes leave , Winterson arrives and holds Mona at gunpoint . Mona claims that Max 's partner is there to kill her , while Winterson claims that she is simply trying to arrest a fleeing fugitive . After several moments of consideration , Max fatally shoots Winterson , allowing Mona to escape . Before she dies , Winterson shoots Max , leading to his hospitalization .

After Max leaves the hospital , he finds Mona , and together , they begin to look for answers . When Max is kidnapped by his old associate , Vladimir Lem , head of the Russian mob , he learns that the Cleaners work for Lem , who used them to eliminate competition to his businesses . Max then learns that Lem is part of the secretive Inner Circle ; Senator Alfred Woden , the leader of the Inner Circle , had ensured that the charges against Max were dropped at the end of the last game . Lem plans to kill Woden and gain control of the Inner Circle . Max also learns that Mona is a hired gun for Woden , with orders to kill Lem and himself . Finally , Max discovers that Winterson was Lem 's mistress ; to avenge her death , Lem shoots Max and leaves him for dead in a burning building . Mona rescues Max , and together , they go to Woden 's mansion to save him from Lem .

At the mansion , Mona knocks Max to the ground in an attempt to follow her orders to kill him , but discovers that her feelings for him keep her from doing so . Lem then shoots Mona , after realizing that she will not kill Max . Woden then appears in a wheelchair , and lunges at Lem ; Woden is killed during the ensuing struggle . Max and Lem then fight while the mansion burns around them . Eventually , Lem is killed and Max returns to Mona 's side as the police arrive , and she dies in his arms .

The alternative ending is unlocked on the highest difficulty of the game . In it , Mona Sax survives . As to its canonical merit , Mona Sax ' survival is neither confirmed or debunked in the series ' third installment , or its attached graphic novels .

= = Development = =

Take @-@ Two Interactive issued a press release on December 5 , 2001 that announced its acquisition of the Max Payne franchise from Remedy Entertainment and Apogee Software for US $ 10 million in cash and 970 @,@ 000 shares of common stock , and its plans to release Max Payne 2 . On May 22 , 2002 , Take @-@ Two announced that they agreed to pay up to $ 8 million as incentive payments to Apogee Software and Remedy Entertainment to develop Max Payne 2 . On September 3 , 2003 , Take @-@ Two officially announced a release date of October 15 , 2003 for the game .

Originally modeled in Max Payne after the game 's writer Sam Lake , Max 's appearance was remodeled after professional actor Timothy Gibbs for Max Payne 2 ; James McCaffrey returned as the voice of Max . The game 's plot was written by Lake , who decided to write it as a film noir love story , as he felt that it suited Max 's persona the best . Lake hoped that the story would break new ground , noting , " At least it 's a step into the right direction . I 'd like nothing better than to see new and unexpected subject matters to find their way to games and stories told in games . " Lake remarked that basic , archetypal film noir elements found in many classics of the genre " can go a long way " when telling a story , and gave examples that included a hostile , crime @-@ ridden city ; a story that takes place late at night with heavy rain ; and a cynical , hard @-@ boiled detective down on his luck . Lake considered writing a sequel to Max Payne an " art of it 's [sic] own " . Since the setting and characters were already established , Lake decided that the primary goal of the sequel was " to keep what 's good and fix what was not so good " , and to take the story in surprising directions . The screenplay for the sequel ended up being three times longer than the one for Max Payne . Lake predicted that the more complex story would add to the game 's replay value .

The story , sometimes told through in @-@ game dialogue , is pushed forward with comic panels that play during cut scenes . The developers found comic panels to be more effective and less costly to use in the cut scenes than fully animated cinematics . They also noted that comic panels forced the player to interpret each panel for themselves , and " the nuances are there in the head of the reader [...] it would be much harder to reach that level with in @-@ game or even prerendered

cinematics . " The developers also found it easier to reorganize the comic panels if the plot needed to be changed while developing the game .

Max Payne 2 uses the same game engine as the one used in Max Payne , but with several significant upgrades . Even though the game only supports DirectX 8 @.@ 1 , the graphics in Max Payne 2 mimic those generated by DirectX 9 by making optimal use of effects such as reflection , refraction , shaders , and ghosting . The developers considered one particular scene in which effects are used well : When Max has lucid dreams , the screen appears fuzzy and out of focus . Since Max Payne , the polygon count (the number of polygons rendered per frame) has been increased , which smooths out the edges of character models . In addition , characters have a much greater range of expressions . Previously , Max had only one expression available ; in Max Payne 2 , he often smirks and moves his eyebrows to react to different scenarios .

The game uses the Havok physics engine , which the developers chose because it was " hands @-@ down the best solution to our needs " . They found that a dedicated physics engine was vital to create Max 's combat scenes , which Max Payne was known for , " with increased realism and dramatic , movielike action " . The physics engine made several situations seem more realistic . For example , when in combat , the player can take cover behind boxes ; however , when enemy bullets impact the boxes , they will topple over , in which case the player will have to find another suitable object to use for cover . When an enemy is hidden behind a wall divider , the player can throw a grenade next to it to send the cover flying through the air , rendering the enemy unprotected . The Havok engine was tweaked to make weapons , bombs , and Molotov cocktails act more naturally , and the audio was updated to make them sound more realistic . The new physics engine allowed for certain actions that could not happen in Max Payne ; boxes can be moved and follow the laws of gravitation , and explosion detonations make enemy bodies fall realistically .

The bullet time mode that Max Payne was known for was improved ; the developers referred to it as " version 2 @.@ 0 " . The mode , which allows Max to move in slow motion to react and kill enemies more easily , was enhanced to give Max a refill of a portion of the Bullet Time gauge , as well as slowing down the passage time even further , as Max moves further " into the zone " with each consecutive kill . This was done to encourage players to aggressively dive head @-@ on into dangerous situations rather than crouching at a safe distance and waiting for enemies to come to them . A new reload animation was also introduced , which , when Max reloads while in Bullet Time , allows him to duck to avoid bullets , spin around to survey the combat situation , and briefly pause to give the player a moment to think of a strategy . Development tools were made available for Max Payne 2 by Rockstar Games and Remedy Entertainment to allow players to create modifications for the game . Modifications can perform several functions , such as the ability to add new weapons , skills , perspectives , surroundings , and characters .

Music composers Kärtsy Hatakka and Kimmo Kajasto returned to compose the game 's soundtrack . It features cello performances by Apocalyptica member Perttu Kivilaakso . The game 's end credits feature the song " Late Goodbye " by the band Poets of the Fall , the lyrics of which were based on a poem by Sam Lake . It was their first single and reached # 14 on the Finnish Singles Chart as well as # 1 on Radio Suomipop 's Top 30 chart . It is referenced many times in the game , usually by characters singing or humming it .

= = Reception = =

Max Payne 2 was released by Rockstar Games for Microsoft Windows on October 15 , 2003 , for Xbox on November 25 , 2003 , for PlayStation 2 on December 2 , 2003 , for Steam on January 4 , 2008 , and as an Xbox Original on April 24 , 2009 . It was critically acclaimed by reviewers . Praise focused on its action and story , while criticism targeted its length , which was considered short . Despite a positive reception , Max Payne 2 sold poorly , leading Rockstar Games ' parent company Take @-@ Two Interactive to cite the " continued disappointing sales of Max Payne 2 : The Fall of Max Payne " as one of the causes for the company 's reforecasted sales for 2004 . Max Payne 2 was the recipient of several industry awards , including Outstanding Art Direction at the Golden Satellite Awards 2004 ; Editors ' Choice Awards from GamePro , IGN , GameSpy , and GameSpot ;

and Game of the Month from Game Informer .

Steve Polak of the Australian The Daily Telegraph , who enjoyed the first Max Payne game , also praised Max Payne 2 , calling it an " outstanding " game that " keeps alive the sense of atmosphere and engaging gunplay @-@ oriented action that was so exciting in the first release . " He lauded the game for better production values compared to the first game , including its more polished story , more professional scripts , and better acting and graphics . The complexity of Max 's character was a welcomed element by Polak , who found that games often created heroes that were simplistic . The Sydney Morning Herald 's Dan Toose described the game 's experience as " brutal , yet beautiful gun @-@ blazing gaming " .

Jon Minifie of The New Zealand Herald appreciated the game 's story , calling it an " entertainingly dark third @-@ person shooter with a well @-@ crafted , noir storyline " . In particular , Minifie praised Remedy for what he deemed a successful port of the game to consoles , especially for the Xbox , noticing that the version features visuals that look similar to those on the PC . However , he found that the PlayStation 2 port was only " an okay job " that resulted in quality that was " considerably less easy on the eye " , and asserted that it is outperformed by more powerful platforms . The Sunday Times 's Steven Poole observed that Max Payne 2 does " exactly the same [things as the first game] , only better . " He found that enemies react convincingly to damage taken from bullets , thanks to the physics engine . Ultimately , however , Poole described the game as " entertaining but not earth @-@ shattering " .

The Toronto Sun 's Steve Tilley , who believed that Remedy did a " killer job " on Max Payne 2 , felt that the company kept what was great about the previous game , " while everything else has been tweaked , overhauled and juiced up " . He was a fan of the Bullet Time from the first game , and therefore appreciated seeing it return in the sequel , with " even more impressive " visuals . Tilley found that the game 's " lifelike physics engine " was easily its best aspect , and noted that while playing the game , he threw a grenade across a room , which resulted in an explosion that sent enemies flying through the air in a realistic fashion . In addition , Tilley applauded Remedy for listening to fan complaints and resolving issues from the previous game , including improved dream sequences in Max Payne 2 . He was , however , disappointed with the general linearity of the game , and noted that players who are not interested in film noir themes will not enjoy them in Max Payne 2 . Concluding , Tilley commented that the game " has enough polish , cinematic flair and outright mayhem to thrill those who like their Sopranos with a dash of John Woo and a touch of Frank Miller . "

The game 's action was praised by several reviewers . GameZone called it cinematic and action @-@ packed , noting that the final scene was worthy of the big screen . Similarly , GameSpy described the action as " adrenaline @-@ pumping " , and considered it comparable to what was available in film . The story was both applauded and criticized . Tom McNamara of IGN enjoyed playing in the film noir setting and believed that it adds dramatic depth to Max and Mona 's story , " somehow [making] what 's going on more important and interesting . Wreaking havoc is nice , but it 's great to also have a love interest complicating things , and Mona Sax is definitely up to the task . " However , he was turned off by some of the " hammy " dialogue . In contrast , 1UP.com cited the final boss as an ending that inadequately completed an otherwise excellent game , and the Sunday Times ' Poole called the story " pungently cheesy " . Max Payne 2 's length disappointed critics , including GameSpot and IGN , which complained about the short story . Toose of the Sydney Morning Herald was also critical of the short single @-@ player experience , but found that the higher difficulty levels and special " survivor " modes helped improve the game 's replay value .