

= Barret Wallace =

Barret Wallace (バレット・ワルレス , Baretto W?resu) is a player character in Square Enix 's role @-@ playing video game Final Fantasy VII . Created by character designer Tetsuya Nomura , he has since appeared in the CGI film sequel , Final Fantasy VII : Advent Children as well as other games and media in the Compilation of Final Fantasy VII series . As of Advent Children , Barret is voiced by Masahiro Kobayashi in Japanese and Beau Billingslea in English localizations .

Barret is first introduced in Final Fantasy VII as an eco @-@ terrorist , leading the group AVALANCHE to bomb Mako reactors in the fictional city of Midgar , so as to avenge the losses dealt him by the megacorporation Shinra , the Planet 's de facto world government , who operate under the pretense of saving the Planet . As the story progresses , Barret re @-@ examines his efforts and focuses on pursuing the villain Sephiroth in an effort to protect the Planet and the future of his adopted daughter , Marlene . Elements of the Compilation of Final Fantasy VII would later expand upon his character , detailing the character 's history before and after the events of the original game .

The first dark @-@ skinned playable character in the Final Fantasy series , Barret 's appearance and sometimes profane speech has been heavily compared to that of actor Mr. T , earning much praise , but also criticism and accusations of racism by some .

= = Conception and design = =

Designed by Tetsuya Nomura , Barret was present in Final Fantasy VII from its early development . Initially , the game was to have only three playable characters , with Barret one of those three , along with the protagonist Cloud Strife and the heroine Aerith Gainsborough . During a phone call to project director Yoshinori Kitase , it was suggested that at some point in the game , one of the main characters should die , and after much discussion as to whether it should be Barret or Aerith , the producers chose Aerith , as they felt Barret 's death would be " too obvious . "

Barret 's name is based on the Japanese transliteration of the English word " bullet " , and he was developed with the " Gunner " character class in mind . Standing 6 feet 5 inches (197 cm) tall , he is the first black playable character in the series , and has a high and tight haircut and full beard , and an earring in his left ear . His attire consists of a jacket with torn sleeves , dark green pants , boots , a fingerless glove on his left hand , and metal bands surrounding his abdomen and left wrist . His left upper arm is covered by a bowgun ; this was later changed by replacing his right hand with a prosthetic Gatling gun (called a " Gimmick Arm ") which he refers to as his " partner " in @-@ game . He was originally planned to have a medallion around his neck , described as a gift from his deceased wife , but this was later changed to a set of dog tags .

When developing Advent Children , Nomura stated that because of the comparisons between Barret 's original design and Mr. T , they decided to take it in a different direction for the film , implementing co @-@ director Takeshi Nozue 's suggestion to give him cornrows for his hair , while Nomura designed his face . Artist Yusuke Naora influenced the design as well , developing his attire , which originally consisted of white overalls , before instead having him wear him a down vest . Barret 's arm tattoo was changed as well , although it retained the " skull and fire " motif of the original . Other aspects of his design included the loss of the metal bands around his body , a white sleeve extending from the middle of his right forearm to his elbow fastened by straps , a black band on his left forearm surrounded by a pink string and bow , and a fishnet shirt that ends in torn fibers below his waist . The dog tags were altered to a bullet and medallion supported by a chain around his neck , and three rings covered his left hand . His Gimmick Arm was modified into a robotic prosthetic hand , developed by Nomura , with the only guideline being " a huge , over @-@ the @-@ top gun that transforms in a huge , over @-@ the @-@ top way . " Nozue stated that these specifics made it difficult to work with , and decided to conceal the hand 's transformation sequence into the gun as much as possible . His Advent Children design was also planned to be used for the Final Fantasy VII remake . However , the staff later decided to give every character in the party a new look .

When choosing a voice actor for the film , Nomura was initially unsure of whether to have Masahiro Kobayashi do the role of Barret or another character , Loz . Kobayashi described his performance as treating Barret as " unrefined [...] but also dependable and unique , " trying to keep his " upbeat character and good outlook in mind . " He tried to give him a booming , confident sounding voice , though at times was instructed to " take it up a notch . "

= = Appearances = =

= = = Final Fantasy VII = = =

First seen in Final Fantasy VII in 1997 , Barret is introduced as the leader of the eco @-@ terrorist organization AVALANCHE . Situated in city of Midgar , his group opposes the ruling company , Shinra , and their use of " Mako " energy as a power source , believing it to be killing the Planet . To this end , AVALANCHE bombs their Mako reactors , with the specific goal of saving the Planet . When the game begins , they have just hired the mercenary Cloud Strife at the behest of his childhood friend and AVALANCHE member Tifa Lockhart , nicknaming him " Spiky " in reference to his hairstyle . After the deaths of several members of AVALANCHE , Barret follows Cloud out of Midgar in pursuit of the game 's villain , Sephiroth .

Along the way he encounters a former friend of his , Dyne , armed in a manner similar to him , who forces Barret to fight him . Upon Barret defeating Dyne , Dyne kills himself . Through flashbacks it is revealed that Shinra had wanted to build a Mako reactor in his home town of Corel , an idea Barret advocated . However , due to an accident at the plant , Shinra razed the town , killing Barret 's wife in the process , and causing Barret and Dyne to flee with Dyne 's daughter , Marlene . Cornered , Dyne slipped off a cliff and Barret grabbed his hand , but Shinra soldier 's opened fire , and destroyed Barret 's and Dyne 's right and left hands respectively , causing the latter to fall to his presumed death . Barret adopted Marlene as his own daughter , had an " adapter " graft to his arm to interface with prosthetic weapons to aid in his combat against Shinra , and founded AVALANCHE . Dyne 's death causes him to admit his grudge with Shinra is solely for revenge , with his earlier claims of " saving the world " meant only to convince himself he was fighting for the greater good . Barret eventually shifts his goal to actually wanting to save the Planet , doing so for Marlene 's sake , and he helps Cloud and his allies defeat Sephiroth to prevent the Planet 's destruction .

Early drafts of Barret 's background featured subtle differences , such as Marlene intended as Barret 's biological daughter , and his wife executed in front of him by a then @-@ undecided Shinra executive . The attack on Corel was initially written to be due to the discovery of Mako energy and Shinra 's desire to keep its existence a secret . His reunion with Dyne was also different , written to culminate in a duel between the two in Corel 's ruins , while Cloud and the others fought investigating Shinra soldiers .

= = = Compilation of Final Fantasy VII = = =

Barret appears in Before Crisis : Final Fantasy VII , a 2005 mobile phone @-@ based prequel to the events of Final Fantasy VII , which shows the events prior to Corel 's destruction . He helps the game 's protagonists , the Turks , defend the Mako reactor , believing it to be the town 's future . It is revealed that the reactor is under attack by the original AVALANCHE group , who are the cause of Shinra 's attack upon the town . Unaware of their involvement , Barret uses their ideals to form his own branch of the group .

In 2005 , Barret appeared in the CGI film Advent Children , which details the events two years after Sephiroth 's defeat . Barret places Marlene in Tifa 's care , travelling the world to rebuild the planet 's infrastructure and find alternate power sources to replace Mako . He returns later to assist in combating the film 's villains , the Remnants and fight the summon creature Bahamut SIN . He later appears in a small role in the 2006 video game Dirge of Cerberus : Final Fantasy VII , set one year after Advent Children , where he helps the protagonist Vincent Valentine prevent Omega WEAPON

from destroying the planet .

A novella entitled " Case of Barret " was released in 2007 exclusively for the " Limited Edition Collector 's Set " DVD edition of Advent Children . Written by Kazushige Nojima as part of the On the Way to a Smile series , it details the events between Final Fantasy VII and Advent Children , examining Barret 's reaction to his weapon and his belief that it made him a monster . At the conclusion of the story , Barret visits the creator of the adapter on his wrist and receives the prosthetic hand / gun combination seen in the film , reasoning that although he needs a hand , he also still needs a weapon to prevent others from having to fight . He then decides to return to Marlene .

= = Critical reception = =

Barret 's comparisons to Mr. T in the media has resulted in both praise and criticism , with most of the criticism accusing the character of serving as a negative racial stereotype of African Americans . IGN argued in favor of this point , citing his use of " stilted slang , " and stating that the character stands out amongst the cast because " his dialog is written as if it was run through a broken ebonic translator , " further noting a trend in Japanese games to apply such dialogue to characters based on their skin color . Journalist Jeremy Parish agreed that the character was racist , although he argued that cultural gaps between Japan and the United States , plus the lack of American translators for Final Fantasy VII may have been contributing factors , arguing that the likeness between Barret and Mr. T was possibly an attempt to make a character that appealed to Americans , as the actor did .

In contrast , on 1UP.com , Parish argued in favor of Barret , noting that while on the surface he appeared to be the " worst kind of stereotype , " he was a great character with complexity , having made " difficult decisions in his life , and agonized over his losses . " Parish went further to describe Barret as the " first true father figure the [Final Fantasy] series had ever seen , " noting his relationship with his adopted daughter . RPGamer 's content manager Shawn Bruckner took the discussion further , arguing that claims of Barret 's presentation being racist was oversimplification of the character 's portrayal , and stated that while he was in some aspects a stereotype , in others , such as his compassion towards his daughter or guilt regarding his past actions , he was not . He added that Barret " shows us that a black man speaking in ' ebonics ' is not something to fear , " and that his portrayal was not racist , but instead the opposite .

Despite their criticism , IGN ranked Barret fourth on their 2006 list of best sidekick characters in video games , stating that he " took the videogame world by storm " when introduced and noting that his portrayal was also appealing , adding that his past made him a visibly loyal character . Joystiq named him one of twenty characters from the Final Fantasy franchise they wished to see in Square Enix ' crossover fighting game Dissidia Final Fantasy , noting a preference for his use of profanity and citing his combat abilities as easily suitable for the game . Edge praised Barret 's introduction as something " new " in the series , citing both his use of a gun and his " distinctively black " character , and further describing him as a " pseudo @-@ nod " to similarly armed characters , such as Mega Man or Samus Aran , who in contrast were either robots or encased in armor .