

= Sam & Max : Freelance Police =

Sam & Max : Freelance Police was a graphic adventure computer game developed by LucasArts from 2002 until its cancellation in 2004 , and the final game in the company 's adventure game era . Freelance Police was originally intended for release for Windows in early 2004 as a sequel to the 1993 title Sam & Max Hit the Road . The game was based on the characters Sam and Max : an anthropomorphic dog and " hyperkinetic rabbity thing " who debuted in a 1987 comic book series created by Steve Purcell . Freelance Police was announced in August 2002 , and showcased at the Electronic Entertainment Expo (E3) in 2003 . Like its predecessor , Freelance Police was designed as a point @-@ and @-@ click adventure game , but used a 3D game engine in place of the SCUMM and GrimE engines used in older LucasArts adventure games . The project 's development was led by Michael Stemmle , one of the original designers for Sam & Max Hit the Road , while Steve Purcell assisted in developing the game 's plot and providing artistic direction .

Although the game 's development appeared to be proceeding towards completion without difficulty , LucasArts abruptly canceled production of Freelance Police in March 2004 , citing economic and market conditions . The game 's cancellation was received poorly by fans of the series , Steve Purcell , and the video game industry media . Many journalists viewed this move as a culmination in the decline of the adventure game genre . LucasArts later terminated its adventure game development , and many of the Freelance Police design team left to create Telltale Games and continue development of such adventure games . Steve Purcell moved the Sam & Max franchise to Telltale Games in 2005 , prompting a revival of Sam & Max video games .

= = Overview = =

Sam & Max : Freelance Police was designed by LucasArts as a graphic adventure game and sequel to the 1993 title Sam & Max Hit the Road . The game was to feature 3D computer graphics rendered in real @-@ time . The game engine contained elements from other LucasArts games , including those from Gladius , RTX Red Rock , Full Throttle : Hell on Wheels and Star Wars : Obi @-@ Wan . Graphical features such as shaders , bump maps and lightmaps were used to give a 3D effect to 2D textures in the game . Little was revealed of the gameplay , other than that Freelance Police would not follow the same control scheme used in 3D LucasArts adventures Grim Fandango and Escape from Monkey Island , but would return to point @-@ and @-@ click mechanics used in the 2D LucasArts games . As in Sam & Max Hit the Road , Freelance Police would contain a mixture of optional and compulsory minigames , 19 in total . The game was designed so that the player character could not die or reach a dead end .

Few details were revealed about the game 's plot . In a January 2004 interview , lead designer Michael Stemmle provided a rough outline : the game 's story was " really six stories , loosely held together by a thrilling über @-@ plot " . Each individual story contained a separate case for the Freelance Police , taking place in a variety of environments , including a space station and a neopagan bacchanal , and featuring " freakish bad guys " . Stemmle stated that the intention was to keep the " über @-@ plot " concealed for a while , but noted that it contained " all the barely plausible grandeur that fans have come to expect from Sam and Max " . Steve Purcell , the creator of Sam & Max , assisted in the development of both the plot and the artistic direction , producing concept art of various characters and locales . Besides the return of the title characters , only one other character , Flint Paper , was confirmed for the game . Described by Stemmle as " the Freelance Police 's rough ' n ' tumble private detective neighbour " , Paper is briefly featured in Sam & Max comics and makes an offstage appearance in Sam & Max Hit the Road . Stemmle had Paper planned for a " critical role " in the game 's plot .

Due to the nature of the story , LucasArts considered releasing the game in episodic fashion and using digital distribution , an option favored by the development team but opposed by the management division , who preferred the more traditional methods of retail distribution . Post @-@ release bonus content was also considered ; Stemmle remarked that such content would include new power @-@ ups , minigames and " maybe even entirely new interactive Sam & Max cases [the

player] can download " .

= = Development = =

The development of a sequel to Sam & Max Hit the Road was announced by LucasArts on August 27 , 2002 . In their press release , LucasArts president Simon Jeffery stated that " the Sam & Max sequel , much like the recently announced Full Throttle II , perfectly complements LucasArts ' renowned adventure game legacy and lends further support to the company 's commitment to investing in and developing more of our original properties " . LucasArts revealed no additional details at the time beyond a projected release in the first quarter of 2004 . The game was officially announced for Windows at the Electronic Entertainment Expo convention on May 12 , 2003 , where the full title Sam & Max : Freelance Police was revealed . LucasArts reaffirmed the projected early 2004 release date at the convention . The game 's trailer was also presented at E3 , reintroducing the characters and confirming that the original voice actors for Sam and Max , Bill Farmer and Nick Jameson respectively , were set to reprise their roles . Over the following months , several minor media releases were made , revealing new information regarding the game 's developmental direction and graphical style . The game 's release was highly anticipated by journalists in the video game industry , who published various previews and interviews with the development team , particularly with lead designer Michael Stemmle , one of the original designers of Sam & Max Hit the Road .

In August 2003 , LucasArts halted production on the Full Throttle adventure game sequel Hell on Wheels , leading the magazine Hyper to speculate that Freelance Police might suffer a similar fate . LucasArts reassured the media that Freelance Police was still in production and was nearing completion , reiterating that the game would be released in 2004 . Media coverage continued ; for example , PC Gamer US ran an interview with Stemmle as a cover story in February 2004 . However , on March 3 , 2004 , LucasArts abruptly announced the cancellation of Freelance Police . In a short press release , LucasArts ' Acting General Manager , Mike Nelson , stated that " after careful evaluation of current market place realities and underlying economic considerations , we 've decided that this was not the appropriate time to launch a graphic adventure on the PC " .

The reaction to the game 's cancellation was overwhelmingly negative . Commentators in the industry media felt that the decision was representative of the diminishing relevance of adventure games , with many concluding that LucasArts was moving to maintain its position with low risk Star Wars @-@ themed titles instead of the adventure games that had brought them success in earlier years . Freelance Police 's cancellation is often cited as the culmination of the adventure genre 's decline . The decision came so suddenly that some magazines accidentally published favorable previews of the game after LucasArts ' announcement . A fan web site named " Save Sam and Max " presented a petition of 32 @,@ 000 signatures to LucasArts conveying the fans ' disappointment . Steve Purcell , the creator of the Sam & Max franchise , stated that he was disappointed by LucasArts ' decision :

According to Stemmle , the cancellation decision was prompted by the report of an external marketing analysis group hired by LucasArts , which claimed that the European market for adventure games " had simply disappeared . Not shrunk , not cratered , just ... disappeared " . A newly established German company , Bad Brain Entertainment , claimed to have entered negotiations with LucasArts to acquire the game , although nothing resulted from these talks . LucasArts subsequently dismissed many of the designers involved with developing their adventure games , and in 2006 stated that they did not intend to return to the adventure genre until the next decade . Some of the former Freelance Police development team formed Telltale Games in June 2004 to continue developing the sort of adventure games that LucasArts no longer wished to produce . Telltale Games later unsuccessfully attempted to buy the rights to Freelance Police from LucasArts , which would have enabled the team to finish developing the game . When the LucasArts license expired in mid @-@ 2005 , Purcell took the franchise to Telltale Games , where it was developed into an episodic series of games . However , very little of the work done on Freelance Police was carried over by the developers to Telltale Games ; LucasArts still held onto the game 's

assets and Telltale was wary about using similar design patterns . The new series debuted in October 2006 with Sam & Max Save the World .