

## Video Game Review: ‘Prison Break: The Conspiracy’

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on April 13, 2010 - 4:20pm

- [Brian Tallerico](#) [2]
- [Dominic Purcell](#) [3]
- [FOX](#) [4]
- [HollywoodChicago.com Content](#) [5]
- [PlayStation 3](#) [6]
- [Prison Break](#) [7]
- [Prison Break: The Conspiracy](#) [8]
- [PS3](#) [9]
- [Television](#) [10]
- [Video Game Review](#) [11]
- [Wentworth Miller](#) [12]
- [Xbox 360](#) [13]
- [Theater, TV, DVD & Blu-Ray](#) [14]

CHICAGO – Movie tie-in games have a reputation for being subpar at best and sometimes downright horrendous but the legacy of the blockbuster companion is nothing compared to the cavalcade of gaming crap that has come with our favorite TV shows. Games based on great shows like “The X-Files,” “Lost,” “24,” and “The Sopranos” have been absolute disasters. We can now add “Prison Break” to that list.

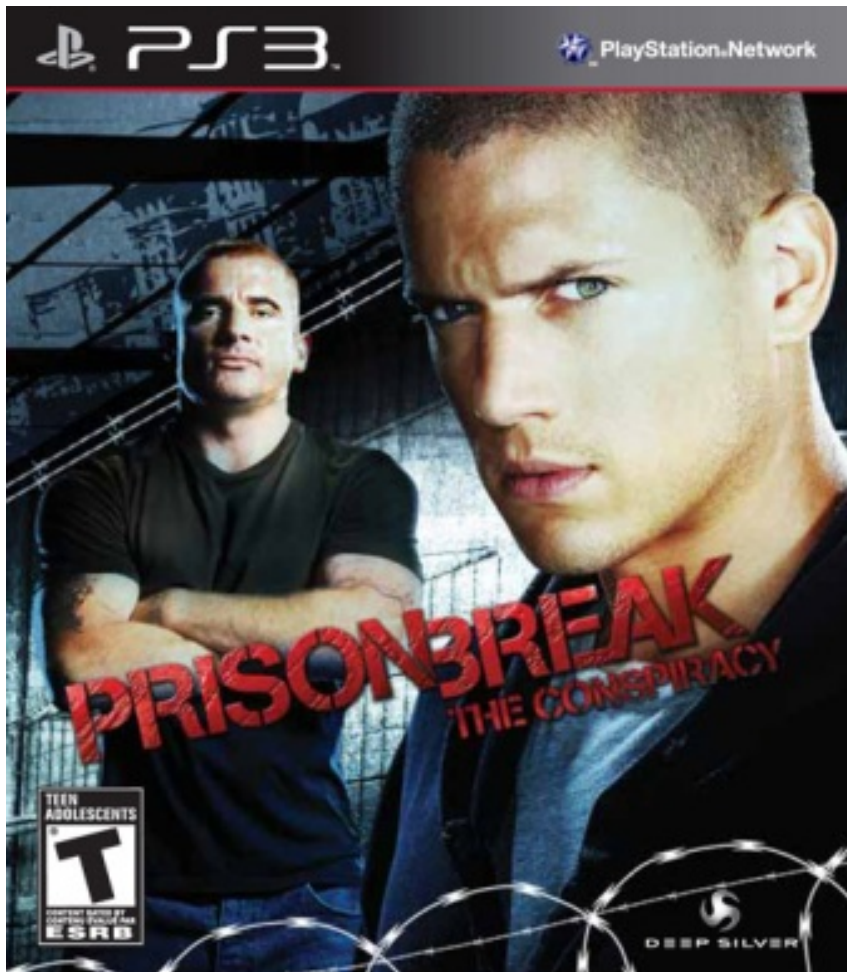


The press materials that accompanied our review copy of “Prison Break: The Conspiracy” emphasized the fact that the game was made for the fans; as if that would be enough to give its significant flaws a pass. Personally, I think when a game is so clearly intended for hardcore fans that it almost sets the bar higher. This is a companion to something they love and they’ll feel easily ripped off if it doesn’t create the same level of entertainment as its inspiration.



Prison Break: The Conspiracy  
Photo credit: Deep Silver

For the sake of disclosure - I used to be one of those fans and I’ve seen every single episode of “Prison Break” all the way up to the bitter, ugly end. I even reviewed the atrocious Blu-ray epilogue “[Prison Break: The Final Break](#) [15]” that put the nail in this once-great show’s coffin. In a smart move, the creators of “Prison Break: The Conspiracy” use the height of the show - its first season - as its timeline. That’s one of the few smart moves.



Prison Break: The Conspiracy

*Photo credit: Deep Silver*

The arc of the game mirrors the arc of the first season in that you play a prisoner at Fox River Penitentiary who arrives just as the action of Michael Scofield (Wentworth Miller) breaking out innocent brother Lincoln Burrows (Dominic Purcell) is about to go down. So, fan favorites are plentiful including Sucre (Amaury Nolasco), T-Bag (Robert Knepper), Bellick (Wade Williams), C-Note (Rockmond Dunbar), and Abruzzi (Peter Stormare). Wondering which one you play? None of the above.

In the first of many bad decisions, the player takes on the role of a boring new face, a Company agent named Tom Paxton. You have been assigned to infiltrate Fox River and keep an eye on Scofield and Burrows as the action of the first season unfolds. Naturally, keeping an eye on the real action of the show makes for a rather unexciting experience. You loosely become related to the characters of "Prison Break," interacting with them as they plan out their escape, but you're mostly an errand boy, reduced to collectible-based missions and horribly designed stealth mechanics that make up the majority of the gameplay in the roughly 8-hour experience.

Instead of scheming with Michael, you spend almost the entirety of "Prison Break: The Conspiracy" skulking around the prison, trying to stay out of sight of the guards or cameras, to find items to take back to T-Bag, Abruzzi, C-Note, etc. The stealth dynamic is annoying in that it creates a game that constantly feels like it's stopping and starting. You sneak in, get spotted, restart two seconds earlier, and try again. It's a very deja vu experience not just in the herky-jerky storytelling that it creates but in that it feels like a style of game they stopped making a decade or so ago.



Prison Break: The Conspiracy

*Photo credit: Deep Silver*

There are some non-stealth elements but they're no more successful. During the course of the game's action (or just randomly if you're bored in the yard), a fight will start up and you'll be introduced to some of the worst fighting gameplay in years. Hard punch, light punch, block - the gameplay during fights look like something out of last generation's consoles even more than the stealth elements of the title. And you never develop another weapon or fighting style. This guy can't even make a shiv?

Most of the game's graphics are just as hideous as the fighting scenes. "Prison Break: The Conspiracy" is straight-up ugly to look at with



horrible facial models and some of the most awkward camera angles of the year to date. Movement is jerky and unrealistic (making the fighting even more annoying) and the environments are repetitive and dull. Who knew there were so many yellow ledges in prison letting you know where to climb and jump?

Worst of all are the quicktime events which are so poorly designed that they seem nearly incomplete. It's almost impossible to tell when one moment ends and another begins. You know how in "God of War III" or "Heavy Rain," each quicktime button push feels like it's tied to an actual character action? Not this time. It's just random button pushing.

What works about "Prison Break"? Well, it is nice to see some of the characters again, especially voiced by most of the show's stellar cast. But that's about it. You need to desperately miss the boys of Fox River to really want to go behind these bars again.

*'Prison Break: The Conspiracy' was released by Deep Silver and developed by ZootFly. It is rated T (Teen). The version reviewed was for the PS3, but the title is also available for the Xbox 360. It was released on March 30th, 2010.*



[16]

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