Video Game Review: Truly Awful 'Rogue Warrior' Fails on Every Level

Submitted by BrianTT [1] on December 16, 2009 - 12:44pm

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CHICAGO – We've become spoiled by the next generation of gaming. Most high-profile games have gone through enough research and development during their production and are made by such experienced developers that they rarely come out of the industry machine with little to no redeeming value at all. Sure, there are disappointments, but you don't see as many complete bombs in the gaming world as you do in film, music, or TV. The exception to the rule is the truly awful "Rogue Warrior".

Video Game Rating: **1.0**/5.0

Challenging the abysmal "Eat Lead" and the worst movie tie-in of the year in "Terminator: Salvation" for the title of worst major game of 2009, "Rogue Warrior" is a complete failure on every level. Where do we begin? The script would be laughably bad if it wasn't just cringe-inducing, the enemy A.I. is reminiscent of the original Playstation, the graphics are inexcusable, and the controls are some of the most inconsistent in years.

Rogue Warrior
Photo credit: Bethesda Softworks

Continuing an odd trend where celebrity voice work seems to result in lackluster games (Will Arnett in "Eat Lead," Eliza Dushku in the relatively disappointing "Wet"), the great Mickey Rourke voices the title character in "Rogue Warrior," a killing machine that looks a bit like Billy Mays reimagined as a super-soldier. A sample of Rourke's dialogue - "F**k. Goddamn. Bullsh*t." There are no words omitted and no literary exaggeration has been made. That's a direct quote. I love listening to Rourke spout profanity as much as the next guy, probably more, but the dialogue in "Rogue Warrior" sounds like it was written by a 13-year-old. It makes you appreciate the relative subtlety of other testosterone-driven games like "Call of Duty: Modern Warfare 2".
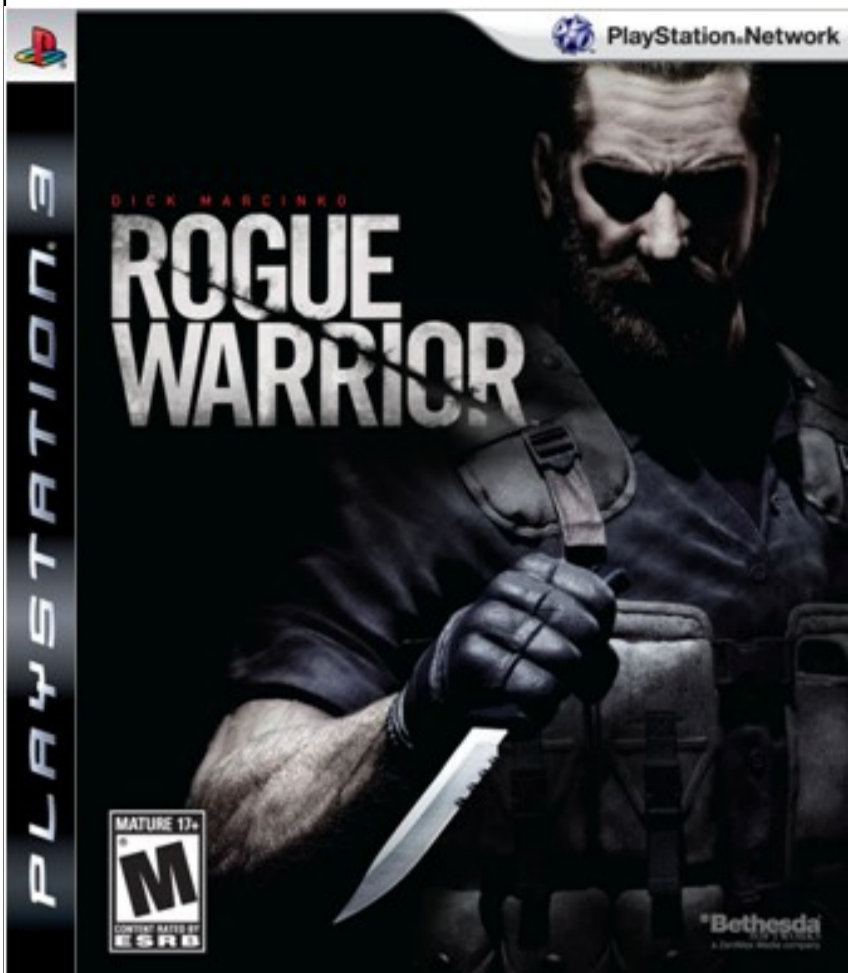
Rogue Warrior
Photo credit: Bethesda Softworks

The plot of "Rogue Warrior" is a laughable excuse for the lead character to work his way through faceless, personality-less enemies with one of two weapons that he can carry (standard stuff like AKs, Dragunovs, etc.) or his amazing stealth skill that typically involves a human jugular meeting the sharp end of his knife. The game takes place in 1986 (and often looks like it was developed then as well) and features your character trying to blast his way through North Korea and Russia in an attempt to stop missiles from being aimed at the United States. He ignores orders and saves the world in a shockingly brief eight-mission story (about 3 hours of playing time).

Of course, the bulk of "Rogue Warrior" is a shooting experience, one that frustrates far more often than thrills. The enemy A.I. and targeting are wildly inconsistent. Shoot one guy kind of near the head and he dies. Riddle the guy next to him with bullets and he keeps firing back. There's no rhyme or reason to the targeting, making the very foundation of the game unsatisfactory. And the A.I. is downright humorous. Almost all enemies seem to be looking the other direction from the door you're coming through, making stealth kills stupidly easy. And the ones who do see you don't fare much better. When the game goes into "stealth kill" mode to show a close-up of necks breaking or blood spurting, your poor victim's allies apparently just stand around and watch. It leads to a hilarious strategy where upon you can just run into a group of enemies and hit the stealth kill button repeatedly.

Rogue Warrior
Photo credit: Bethesda Softworks

For a great example of horrendous A.I. and inconsistent controls, take the following anecdote: I opened an elevator door to be greeted by three personality-less baddies. The door stayed open. They stared at me. I threw a grenade into the elevator. They didn't respond. It blew up. Only the one on the left died. How does something like that get past a development team? It's mind-boggling.

And it's ugly. I know that coming out so quickly on the heels of beautiful titles like "Uncharted 2," "Rogue Warrior," and "Modern Warfare 2" would no titles any favors when it comes to comparing graphics, but "Rogue Warrior" is shockingly poorly developed with characters whose heads go through walls, repetitive environments, and design that looks borderline incomplete.

Bad graphics, a stupid script, and frustrating gameplay. What's left? Oh yeah, there's a multiplayer with two modes - Deathmatch and Team

Deathmatch - but good luck finding anybody online still playing arguably the worst widely-released game of the year.

'Rogue Warrior' was released by Bethesda Softworks and developed by Rebellion. It is rated M (Mature). The version reviewed was for the PS3, but the title is also available for the XBox 360 and PC. It was released on December 1st, 2009.

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