by Costantino Oliva

OH, YOU DON'T NEED TO ORDER. YOUR PIZZA'S ALREADY DONE.

Hotline Miami

Production:
Dennaton Games
Platform:
Windows, Mac

PUSH START. Grab a weapon. Get shot. Repeat... *ad infinitum*. 'Punishing' hardly describes a session of *Hotline Miami*. Typically, within 10 seconds you could die three or four times. It is just as frustrating as it is challenging. Addictive-ly, you will not give up until you pass that sneaky little passage.

Hotline Miami is an ultra-violent, psychotic game, where your only aim is to kill all the 'bad guys'. Yet, every little move counts, and deciding which weapons to use or which door to open first will reveal the deep strategic possibilities of the game's intense experience. As you make your way through a pile of corpses, the suspense builds up to unbearable levels as you risk losing all in-game progress for just a little mistake. The massacre is only interrupted by brief moments that reveal details of our mysterious 'hero's' back-story. Keeping true to expectation, even these interludes are awkward if not disturbing, and hardly shed light on our displaced, faceless avatar.

The excellent game tops it all with an irresistible '80s aesthetics and a neurotic electronic soundtrack. You'll quickly find out why this game has stolen the show winning so many awards, and has hooked fans of *Grand Theft Auto* and of good old *shoot'em up* games. *Hotline Miami* is a joy in repetition, providing that being stuck in a *Clockwork Orange*-like scenario is your idea of joy. ●

www.hotlinemiami.com

FACT or FICTION?

Can AI ever become sentient?

Asked by Malcolm Bonnici

《›》 There is hope, there is fear, but no solid answers. Many bicker on the definition of artificial intelligence (AI), computers, robots, machines, and being sentient. If your definition of sentience includes being conscious, arguments can be bogged down in whether material objects can ever become conscious.

In 1950, Alan Turing circumvented the problem by suggesting the Turing test. If a human cannot distinguish between a computer and human then the computer has achieved sentience. The illusion of sentience is enough for Turing. The argument has its flaws, but with the US starting a brain-mapping project and the EU recently launching a billion euro project to simulate the human brain with supercomputers, artificial sentience could become reality. And, the next inevitable question would be: would they take over the world?

CAN YOU DIE OF BOREDOM?

《›》 A tricky question since boredom is a mental state. Usually it is triggered by an uninspiring, monotonous environment and/or certain brain chemicals like dopamine (for more on this chemical see page 36). People who produce less dopamine, or are less sensitive to it, are bored more easily.

People bored for a very long time can suffer from clinical depression, which surely reduces lifespan. Other boredom sufferers have ADHD (attention deficit hyperactive disorder) and extreme ways of combating boredom can be equally dangerous. They could abuse drugs and alcohol or seek thrills in risky sports. Others could become sexually promiscuous. All of these behaviours reduce lifespan.