This past week, the FANGORIA staff descended upon San Diego for the 2010 Comic-Con. Armed with my trusty messenger bag, awesome Fright Rags gear, and handy dandy Creative Labs VADO HD mini-video camera, I set out to join the crew as we invaded the biggest pop-art convention in the world.

We had a smooth trip out west considering you always seem to time-travel going from Eastern to Pacific, and when you arrive they're still serving breakfast. After about six hours of amping myself up with a mixture of early 90's hip-hop, airline jack-n-cokes, and several hundred useless product descriptions in SkyMall (what kind of a-hole carries around a portable air-purifier??), the San Diego airport became the starting line to our race to see anything and everything possible that had to do with comic-con. On a side note, the crosswalks at the airport talk to you, and they sound like the voice from Marty McFly's auto-drying jacket in BACK TO THE FUTURE II.
Where's my hoverboard?

Tuesday was setup day for the exhibitors, which meant "setup your booth as quickly and shoddily as possible so you can roam around and check out the big show before the crowd." We weren't too far from the Stan Winston School of Character Arts booth, which was setup surprisingly quick considering they had several suits from IRON MAN and a mech from AVATAR on display.
I'm pretty sure they flew to SDCC in the suits and just landed at the booth…the props were that realistic.
Seriously, I spent the better part of the evening staring at the detail on Iron Monger, forming a slight puddle of drool at my feet.
Once I pulled myself out of the tractor beam at the Winston booth, I strolled down to videogame corner to check out what seemingly was the bloodiest showing possible for comic-con.
Games like GEARS OF WAR 3 and DEAD RISING 2 boomed from the giant PA systems, but nothing compared to the gore-fest SPLATTERHOUSE.
Friend of FANGORIA Dan Tovar let the staff step inside the Namco-Bandai digs and take a tour through the eyes of the Terror Mask, as we took turns bashing demon skulls and marveling at the 6-foot Rick statue done by SOTA Toys.
Between the shredding metal and blood spraying combat, we pulled ourselves away and pleaded with the convention staff to make us Namco's new neighbor.

Wednesday started off with a staff meeting over pancakes, then we hit the booth to polish the setup and prepare for preview night. In the past, preview night was a chance for press and exhibitors to take a spin around the floor before the hordes of fandemonium took over.
Now they sell “exclusive” preview night tickets to the public, so as we frantically tried to ensure a complete and show-ready booth, we took turns scoping out the rest of the floor, getting caught up at the ALIEN hibernation chamber and THE WALKING DEAD living room murder-suicide zombie invasion.
As the PA boomed overhead “Welcome to the 2010 San Diego Comic-Con,” the thundering herd plowed through the aisles, scooping up every possible piece of free and exclusive swag possible.
We held our own at the booth, dishing out free DVDs, demanding email addresses, and showing (and selling) off issue #295 in all its splattery beauty.

The official con began on Thursday, which meant a day of splitting up booth duty, panel presence, and press interviews. For me personally, my dance card began with a trip to Konami’s suite at the neighboring Hilton. After celebrity spotting by the elevator and getting pushed around by a guy with an earpiece, I soaked in some good playtime on two of their future titles, an update of RUSH-N-ATTACK and SAW II.
In the spirit of recent HD re-imagining of classic games, the update of RUSH-N-ATTACK is a fun bloody side-scroller full of stealthy attacks and Systema-inspired brutal knife kills.
And yes, it still has the classic ’87 alarm system, and it’s still as annoying and tension-inducing as the old version.
As for SAW II, the game plays out with more of a puzzle and mini-game fueled escape from the clutches of Jigsaw and his lesson-teaching house of horrors.
The new venture takes a less melee-combative approach to the style of gameplay and forces players to adapt puzzle-solving skills while surviving several rushed button-sequenced quicktime events.
Not only did Tobin Bell return to do voice work on this game, he provided his likeness, so the player frequently receives taunts from his cloak-shrouded mug.
The demo opened with me having to cut a key out from behind my character’s eye, and Konami spared no bloody detail in creating this setting.

I also got to take in Capcom's DEAD RISING 2 panel for all the exclusive details on the upcoming romp through a zombie infested Vegas clone.
I had snuck in a little playing time the night before, and I can't wait to get my hands on the finished product, even if they tried to give me the boot for filming.
I couldn't help it - I had this sweet CREATIVE LABS VADO HD at my disposal!
At the panel, fans were treated to a preview of Capcom director Keiji Inafune's upcoming DEAD RISING 2 inspired movie ZOMBREX: DEAD RISING SUN.
Everyone left ready to grab a spiked bat, hop on their chainsaw motorcycle and put in some zombie slaying work.
That night we somehow found ourselves in a party for the movie starring every action star possible, THE EXPENDABLES, at the Hard Rock.
People lined up, pleading to get in the VIP entrance for their chance to drink beers with a cardboard cutout of Sylvester Stallone.
I think I saw the entire Ed Hardy t-shirt collection on display.
And if you have to ask, you're not allowed to sit on the couch.
Somehow, a case of Tecate and a hotel Jacuzzi seemed far more enticing.

The scene on Friday was one of the bigger days for me, as I had an exclusive meeting with EA and Visceral Games to preview the upcoming DEAD SPACE 2. EA had a booth setup at the Hilton across from the convention center, so after battling the legions of swooning fan girls at the SCOTT PILGRIM VERSUS THE WORLD exhibit, I found myself in the shadow of a giant dragon outside the DRAGON AGE 2 demo.
I quickly turned into the DEAD SPACE 2 tent, where I met several real-life elements of the game: darkness, blasting cold air, eerily soft string music, stools from the not-too-distant future.
In the company of Visceral Games' director Steve Papoutsis, I took the helm of guiding our returning hero Isaac Clarke through another trip into the madness of space and fought a flock of necromorphs, all scarier, faster, and bloodier than before. After a quick stop for $4 bloody marys (at $4 it became longer than a "quick" stop), we returned to the main convention floor for prize giveaways at the booth and an interview with Danny DeVito for THE BLOOD FACTORY.
The evening capped off with some fantastic sushi, even if it was served with a soundtrack of dance-remixed Eminem songs.

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