

## Exclusive Interview: "DEAD RISING 2"'s Rob Barrett

Written by Doug Norris  
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2006's DEAD RISING paired players with surprising hero Frank West as he fought for 3 days of survival in a zombie-infested mall, using anything and everything as weaponry. DEAD RISING 2 (available now on XBOX 360, PS3 and Windows PC) introduces the gaming world to Chuck Greene - extreme sports star, devoted father, and wizard of all things duct-tape – as he embarks on a 72-hour quest in Las Vegas inspired Fortune City to save his daughter from zombie-transformation...and bash, smash, slice and dice every lumbering mindless meatbag in his path.

We sat down with Rob Barrett, President of Blue Castle Games (Capcom's western partner in developing DEAD RISING 2) for a behind-the-scenes look at why a zombie-pocalypse seems like so much fun.

FANGORIA: What was it like taking the reigns of a title with such an avid fan-base?

ROB BARRETT: It was pretty daunting. Capcom fans are notoriously demanding and sticklers for detail. We knew we had to be very sensitive with the material to evolve the game where we felt it had to grow while respecting its roots. Fans were really vocal about their concerns that the game was being made in the West. We felt that we had to prove ourselves. It helped that Inafune (ed.note: Keiji Inafune, head of R&D at Capcom/all around video game god) and the production team from the first game were helping us from the start.

FANG: The original mall setting provided a real sense of abandon and survival. How does the new setting of the Vegas-inspired Fortune City continue that frightening solitude?

BARRETT: I think the sense of abandon in a lot of zombie lore comes from the total lack of consequences for your actions. With that in mind we just needed to imagine a setting where no rules would result in a lot of fun. It's that "what if" factor - like "what if I put on a miniskirt and goblin mask, stole that sports car, and raced down the mall crashing into everything" that gives you that sense of abandon. The "frightening solitude" comes from being the only uninfected person amongst thousands of zombies. There are plenty of moments where you can just stand and look out over the magnitude of the outbreak.

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FANG: Chuck seems to have more of an appealing look than Frank West — a hunkier-looking extreme sports star and devoted father — what was the decision to make Chuck more of an a commercial protagonist?

BARRETT: I hope he's not too commercial. Just like Frank, Chuck is intended to represent the "everyman". I don't think Chuck is GQ by any means. If we do another Dead Rising game we'll make sure to whack the hero with the ugly stick a bit more. The 'devoted father' part certainly rules him out as the 'reckless loner without a cause' sort of cliché and I think that makes him more down to earth.



FANG: Probably the biggest draw to this game lies in the "combining weapons" feature. How did you come up with the combinations?

BARRETT: The combining of weapons wasn't always intended to be the main hook but once it was in place on a small scale, Inafune quickly identified it and asked us to expand the scope. It was tricky coming up with all of the combinations, making sure to always keep players guessing and surprising them. The key to the design in many cases was instead of starting with a kick-ass weapon like a shot gun, think of some of the least effective items and see how we can turn them into deadly weapons. That's how we came up combo-weapons like the drill bucket; a bucket with drills taped in place poking into it that you can slam onto zombie's heads with gruesome consequences.

FANG: Did you test any out in real life, to keep the game "authentic?"

BARRETT: Some of the guys did end up making some as props to decorate the studio and

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keep us inspired. There was even a paddle saw made with a chainsaw and hedge trimmer but I don't think anyone had the guts to fire it up.

FANG: On par with the appeal of combining weapons would be the new co-op play feature. How did you arrive at the decision to simply have two playable Chucks as opposed to a second character?

BARRETT: Using two Chucks made sense to us right away, but I think it seems odd to fans, especially before they play the game. For us it's simple; we each spend a lot of time finding just the right outfit and weapons for our individual 'custom Chuck' and we don't want to lose it when we join a friend's game. It's a riot each time a friend joins to see what outfit they're wearing. For me, it's the superhero mask, one piece red pajamas, and the green rubber boots. For others it's the coconut bra and combat boots. Personalizing your character is a huge part of the game and adds an element of humor that hardly any other games have. We still giggle as we play the game even though we've seen it all.

FANG: The idea of Chuck competing on a game show killing zombies for money mirrors the gaming world's desire to smash and splatter. Was that the original intention?

BARRETT: The original idea came from Inafune. The game show is a centerpiece of the world that shows how the fiction of the DR world has changed since the first game. It shows how the public has evolved from total fear of zombies to a callous indifference to these infected people and sets up the events that bring everything back to horror.

FANG: How has the success of "Case Zero" held up to your expectations? Do you think this will set a trend for other developers – releasing a mini-game based on the actual title?

BARRETT: I don't think anyone guessed that "Case Zero" would break all the records it's broken. It's amazing. I don't know if it will set a trend but it certainly shows that fans can appreciate unique content as an "appetizer" for a game instead of just a chunk of the full game ripped out that they'll just end up playing again when they buy it. I think others will copy it based on "Case Zero"s success, but there are added costs so it won't make sense for every game.

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FANG: I know the game has just shipped, but can we get any hints at future DLC plans?

BARRETT: We're not revealing any specifics about more DLC but we did announce an epilogue at TGS. Just like our "Case Zero" prologue, the epilogue will be more unique content. It's actually bigger than Case Zero and features the return of Frank West and we know fans are dying to play him again and see what he's been up to in the last 5 years.

If you've ever wanted to affix chainsaws to a boat paddle and navigate a sea of clumsy, blood-thirsty zombies, all while wearing daisy-dukes, a bowling shirt, and a ladies' formal hat, then pick up DEAD RISING 2 (available now for XBOX 360, PS3, and Windows PC).

{jcomments on}