

## BioGamer Girl: Inside "ALAN WAKE'S AMERICAN NIGHTMARE"

Written by Amanda Dyar

Tuesday, 21 February 2012 08:36

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One of the great things about survival horror is that it hasn't been around all that long. Considering the genre wasn't really born until the release of RESIDENT EVIL back in 1996—it's only been around for about half the time of most gaming genres—this allows game developers to introduce new, innovative titles. Most recently, Remedy's ALAN WAKE comes to mind, and a great looking spin-off is coming to Xbox Live Arcade on February 22, 2012.

When sucked into an alternate reality that he created, ALAN WAKE'S AMERICAN NIGHTMARE essentially allows you to play as the best-selling writer Alan Wake in an episode of the fictional show "Night Falls." Now, Alan must try to stop his doppelganger, Mr. Scratch if he ever hopes to escape back into the real world.

Remedy Entertainment's head of franchise development, Oskari Häkkinen explains, "It is a stand-alone, spinoff experience of ALAN WAKE. This allows anyone to jump into the gameplay even if they have never played ALAN WAKE before. There is a new puzzle mechanic as well where you can rewrite reality and make big things happen. This will prove to be a valuable tool against the bad guys in the game. In addition to this, we will have an arcade action mode set in spooky, deserted locations and you have to "Fight Till Dawn." You will be armed to teeth with new weapons to fight all new enemies, and if you survive until dawn, you win."



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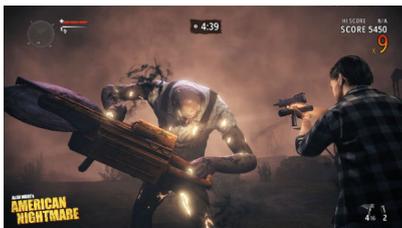
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ALAN WAKE'S AMERICAN NIGHTMARE focuses much more on delivering fast action combat, rather than a compelling storyline when you're not using survival horror tactics to stay alive. You'll encounter larger groups of enemies on a more consistent basis than you did in the original game; however, weapons have received significant upgrades and powerful new weapons have been added to the game to counteract this problem. You can still gain more insight into the storyline by finding and recovering missing pages from Alan's work, and they can also be used to unlock weapon cases for better guns once you've collected enough of the scattered pages.

The other new aspect is the aforementioned "Fight Till Dawn," an arcade survival mode that tasks you with surviving until a timer expires and the sun rises, effectively taking away all of the enemies with its light. Awarding points depending on how fast you can eliminate enemies, the online leader boards will allow you to see how you stack up against the rest of the world.



Remedy has done an excellent job at recapturing a world that is in a constant struggle between light and the darkness from the original game, and in fact, ALAN WAKE'S AMERICAN NIGHTMARE might look and sound better than its predecessor. When we asked Oskari Häkkinen about the game's new presentation he told us that, "People really loved the score and licensed music from the first one, so we have carried that over and also added some custom tracks. Also, the graphics get a reboot, since we have built all of the technology and tools from the ground up for ALAN WAKE. We are evolving the engine constantly and ALAN WAKE'S AMERICAN NIGHTMARE is already looking a lot better, because the engine is going forward. This technology has allowed us to add in tons of new features; the environment is destructible now. This means you can't really trust things in the environment, as rocks may fall on you."

ALAN WAKE'S AMERICAN NIGHTMARE may not be the frightening adventure you remember from the first game, but it sure is a lot of fun to play. It should easily be the best title offered in this year's Xbox Live Block Party promotion and one of the best games of the year. And for only

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1,200 Microsoft Points, this is a deal you won't want to pass up!