

## Gaming's Critics Wave the White Flag

Jason Lomberg, Technical Editor

Gaming is a dependable scapegoat for all that's wrong with the world—violence, sexism, spousal abuse, teenage truancy, and even global warming. And while psychologists, critics, and politicians (none of whom have played a video game since Pac-Man) lob wildly-uninformed charges, gamers, ironically, play a game of non-violent resistance. But the war rages on, claiming many casualties along the way. Thankfully, the long fight may finally be over—gaming's leading critics have waved the white flag.



Carole Lieberman, M.D. is a psychologist and author of such literary classics as [Bad Boys: Why We Love Them, How to Live with Them, and When to Leave Them](#) [1], and [Bad Girls: Why Men Love Them & How Good Girls Can Learn Their Secrets](#) [2]. Dr. Lieberman recently [appeared on Fox News](#) [3] to discuss [Bulletstorm](#) [4], an over-the-top first-person shooter. She's since recanted some of her more egregious charges.

"When I [said](#) [3] 'the increase in rapes can be attributed to the playing out of sexual scenes in video games', I admit that it was based on one inconclusive study and my own conjecture," she told gaming website Bitmob.

The venerable psychologist recently got some hands-on time with *Bulletstorm*. "This is an extraordinarily entertaining piece of software!" she said. "I understand now the game's tongue-in-cheek humor...I can't believe I criticized this without ever playing it!" Dr. Lieberman told Bitmob that she has [Duke Nukem Forever](#) [5] on pre-

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order, and can't wait for Modern Warfare 3.



As you may recall, [Mass Effect](#) [6] caught flak for its optional romantic subplot. Conservative blogger Kevin McCullough [led the charge](#) [7], claiming that ME allows its players "to engage in the most realistic sex acts ever conceived." "With its 'over the net' capabilities virtual orgasmic rape is just the push of a button away," he said.

Self-help author Cooper Lawrence [joined the fray](#) [8], comparing Mass Effect to porn, asserting that it contained "frontal nudity and explicit depictions of sexual activity." When asked whether she'd played the game, Lawrence replied that she'd watched a 30-second Youtube clip spliced with Marvin Gaye's "Let's Get it On."

On Monday, Bitmob was able to corral up McCullough and Lawrence for an all-night gaming session, leaving the two bleary-eyed. McCullough admitted that he may have overstepped his bounds. "I'd heard about Mass Effect's 'explicit sexuality' from a friend of a friend of a friend, and accepted it at face value without playing the game or doing 5 minutes of research...how wrong I was," McCullough said. "In fact, the romance in Mass Effect is very much consensual, and no more graphic or explicit than network TV."

Even Lt. Col David Grossman, who labeled FPS's "[murder simulators](#) [9]," has backed off from prior statements. "Shooting a real firearm and playing Halo are two very different concepts," he said. "I don't see how playing a video game can possibly make you more proficient with firearms. Besides, have you seen the nerds who play video games? Tubby, uncoordinated, slovenly. They wouldn't last 5 seconds in the Army."

Grossman added that he'd be attending the Electronic Entertainment Expo (E3) this year. "I'm totally hooked," he said.

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- [3] <http://www.foxnews.com/scitech/2011/02/08/bulletstorm-worst-game-kids/>
- [4] <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bulletstorm>
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- [9] [http://www.larouchepub.com/other/2007/3417grossman\\_reprint.html](http://www.larouchepub.com/other/2007/3417grossman_reprint.html)