DAN AND BEN
LOWERING THE TONE

BY DAN MARSHALL

>> BEEN THERE, DONE THAT.

Dan Marshall and Ben Ward are two real, actual human male men, who grew up together and wound up sharing a little flat in either the fashionable end of Shepherd's Bush, or the unfashionable end of oh-so-trendy Holland Park, depending on which tube station you'd used to get there.

It was an amazing flat. The 'brillo pad', we called it. It had floors and walls in all the right places, and a crazy old guy with a crazy old wife living in the flat opposite. They owned two insane dogs who were totally into 24-hour yapping and insane gay dog sex. One of them looked like the end of a mop and was blind. They are probably both dead now, come to think of it.

The dogs are probably dead, not the couple. Although actually I wouldn't put it past them to have popped off as well, which would be a shame because they told a mean old yarn about these large flagons of wine you could get at the shop round the corner for a quid.

From 2004 to 2006, I was writing 2D deathmatch shooter *Gibbage*. I'd decided video games were awesome, and I was going to write my own. The 'Making Of' for *Gibbage* was serialised in now-dead but legendary gaming mag PC Zone, and I had decided there was no way I wasn't going to be insanely rich when it came to release.

Gibbage **sales trickled in. It wasn't enough to live off by a long shot.** It probably paid for a few rounds of *Lion's Roar Real Ale*, nothing else.

Looking for something light and easy to make after the coding hell that had occupied my life for two years with *Gibbage*, I stumbled upon *Adventure Game Studio*, a freebie bit of kit that let you make games like *Sam 'n Max: Hit the Road* really quickly and easily. Ben and I had always discussed the idea of making a knockabout, madcap adventure game based around the two of us, and this seemed like an ideal opportunity to do it. It was to be short, have deliberately-shitty graphics, and would be used as a way to draw new customers towards *Gibbage*.

Ben There, Dan That!, which at times was called *Hello Worlds!* or *Londons Calling* wound up taking on a life of its own, and completely eclipsing *Gibbage* in terms of its reception.

Gibbage - fun for all the family!

>> *PROS* AND COMS

How do you wind up writing a game in which you're the lead characters, anyway? That's pretty fucking horrifically narcissistic, isn't it? That's the sort of game made by the sort of people who wank one away while looking in the bathroom mirror.

Ben and I went to 'school' together. The best lesson was History, because we were sat right at the back and Mr. Sparrow was one of those teachers who would sit and drone on at the front about wars and Hitler and whatever, but never ever ask questions.


Dan and Ben's first adventure...

So you were pretty much free to shut off and get on with something marginally more important. For Ben and I, that important thing was *The Coms*.

Here's how it works: you know how kids pass messages to-and-fro in class? Well Ben and I would pass comics. I'd do a panel, and pass it over. He'd do one, and pass it back. It's amazing, because you're trying to keep some semblance of a structured comic, but you're also desper-ately trying to screw over the other person with an impossible-to-get-out-of situa-tion. Hilarious. Invariably filthy. And 'starring' the two of us getting into all sort of scrapes with space aliens and bananas and loads of cocks OH SO MANY COCKS and what-have-you.
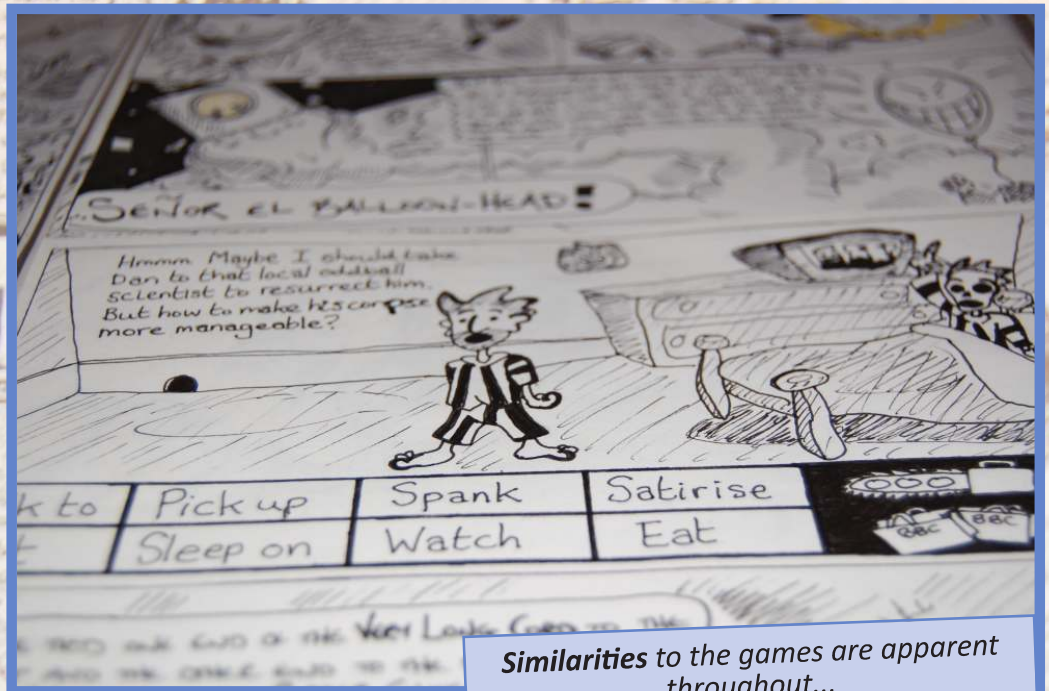
Similarities to the games are apparent throughout...
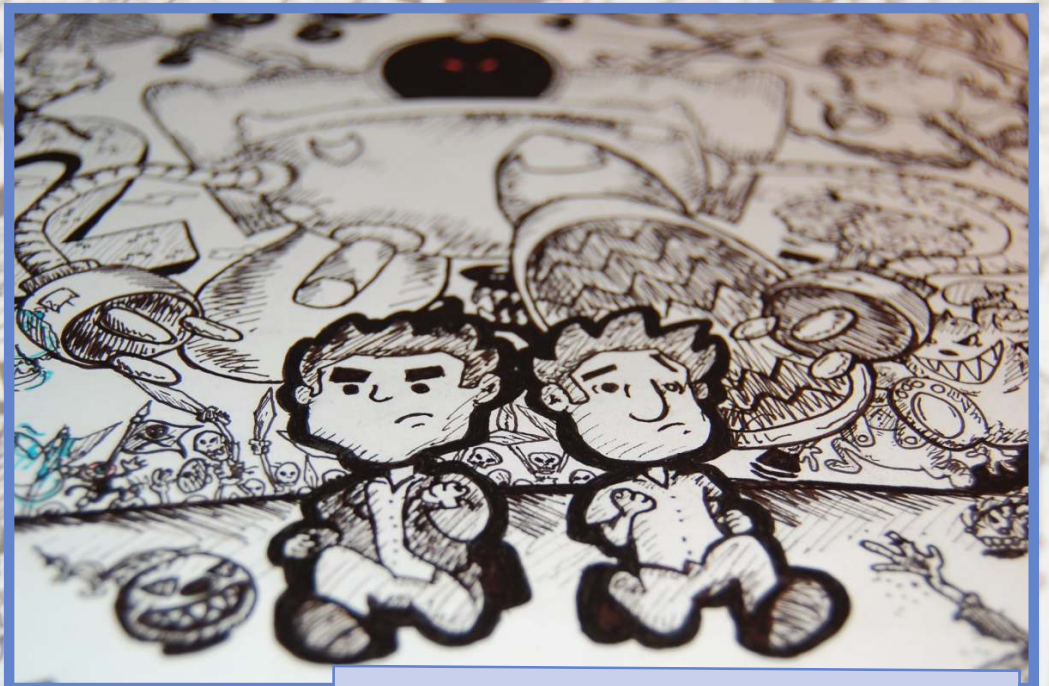
Dan and Ben *escape from notorious villain* **CAPTAIN MACHINO.**

After many years apart at University, when we started sharing a flat in 2003 (nearly put 'living together' there, but decided it sounded a bit fruity), we continued the 'com' tradition. On the kitchen table there was always a sheet of A4, and a tatty pencil case stuffed to bursting with pens and pencils and all the necessary comic-making paraphernalia.

It went on for years. *It was epic.* It was nonsense. It was very *very* funny. And invariably filthy.

Ben There, Dan That! was the extension of those bloated, pastiche caricatures of ourselves.

>> BEN THERE, DAN THAT!

The majority of the game's design happened round here somewhere: *The Kenilworth Castle* round the corner from our flat and just about out of earshot of those gay dogs. It was a thoroughly unique pub, in that it was almost inevitably completely, impossibly empty.

Ben and I would pull up a couple of chairs in the corner and start having these insane conversations about this crazy little game we were going to make, while the barmaid alternated between tried to look like she wasn't eavesdropping and trying not to look completely appalled. Still not sure whether her look was as a result of the rancid, inappropriate brainstorming going on, or that her only two customers ever were a right pair of fucking nerds.

The *Kenilworth Castle*

The original ideas were pretty madcap, my favourite being that it would revolve around *Monkey Island* creator Ron Gilbert having gone completely crazy and stomping on things in his giant robot suit. The title was "Ron Gilbert's Gone Rilbert", and all we needed to do was start sowing the seeds that our made-up word 'rilbert' was some sort of synonym for 'crazy'.

It's not, obviously. We failed in our mission, as you can probably tell if you haven't heard anyone using the word 'rilbert' recently. The first-and-only stumbling block was when urbandictonary.com rejected the submission out of hand, which we found to be pretty fucking rum of them.

Instead, we started having ideas about dimensions, because that'd keep things interesting. My favourite scrapped dimension was definitely the Realistic Heads Dimension, where you'd get scanned photos of Ben and I instead of the cartoony ones. WAY too much like hard work, that. We binned it nearly immediately at the very thought of people looking at my real face, which looking back is a shame.
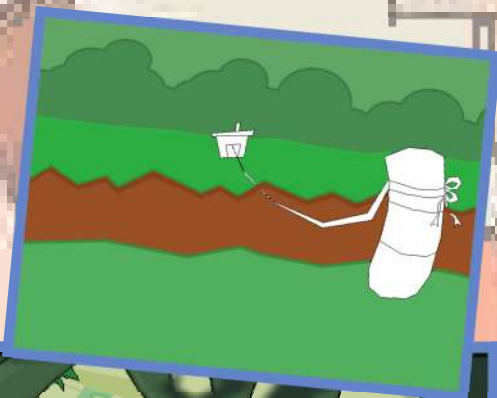

PERU - *old and new*

Ben There, Dan That! was developed as a sort of 'choose your own adventure' way of making games. The game's central mechanic of a room full of doors let us pretty much make things up as we went along – we'd think up an idea for a dimension, build a load of pretty-much self-contained puzzles into it, and move on to the next one. It kept things fresh and interesting, especially for me as I was doing all the code and art – knowing what's round the corner 'still to do' would have made it feel like a chore. Making shit up as you go along is much more fun.

So we'd sit in the pub and toss ideas round. As a rule of thumb, the first pint's worth of ideas were rubbish, but legend had it that a mere sip of The Second Pint was where the brillo ideas started flowing. I'm a firm believer that drunkenness leads to creativity. So much so that for a time, the company name was Second Pint Studios, before I scrapped that idea for being ooh, too 'shit'.

One of the ideas we were stuck on was that we knew we wanted to do a highly-satirical game development dimension, with all these nerds working on some game or other, but it just wasn't working as an interesting dimension. Too mundane, when you could have a dimension where everyone's shoes are made of brains and they float upwards every time they say 'monkey'. HOWEVER: one sip of Magical Pint Number Two and BAM! Dinosaurs! Dinosaurs make everything better, right? Dinosaurs making games is funny. We were on FIRE.

Dan and Ben *get zapped by 'aliens'...*
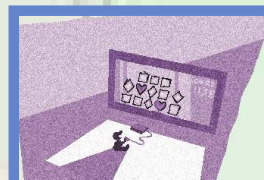
After a while, all the graphics and puzzles and gameplay were in, and the game was completely playable from start-to-finish. Only one thing remained: writing the damned dialogue.

I'm not sure where the idea for having a unique response for everything in the game came from. To me, it felt like that's how ALL adventure games were, back in the day. As though somehow that's how it always was. I was wrong and an idiot, of course. Replaying the likes of *Monkey Island*, I was shocked at how often Guybrush just says 'I don't see anything interesting about it'. Dammit.

I expect it was my own coding naivety that caused it – I wasn't particularly knowledgeable about these things, and I generally go about code in a long-winded way that makes extra work for myself. I don't think I even considered using 'if else' statements, which would have made the process exponentially easier, but would have removed one of our most popular features – that every action has a near-as-dammit unique response.

So, instead of:

```
 1   // script for Object 14 (Earth_window): Usermode2 object
 2
 3   // CROWBAR
 4   if(player.ActiveInventory == inventory[27])
 5   {
 6     cBen.FaceCharacter(cDan);
 7     cBen.Say("Ok. How's this for a plan?");
 8     cDan.FaceCharacter(cBen);
 9     cBen.Say("I chuck the crowbar at the window...");
10     cBen.Say("...it smashes...");
11     cBen.Say("...and we get sucked off all the way to Earth.");
12     cDan.Say("...");
13     cDan.Say("Sorry... did you miss out some steps or something?");
14     cBen.Say("Eh? No, that's the whole plan.");
15     cDan.Say("Really? Where do all the girls come from?");
16     cBen.Say("Eh? Well...from all their mummies' tummies...");
17     cBen.Say("...");
18     cDan.Say("What the hell are you talking about?");
19     cBen.Say("What the hell are YOU talking about?");
20     cBen.Say("I can't even remember.");
21     cBen.Say("Let's carry on adventuring.");
22     cDan.Say("Good call.");
23   }
24   else
25   {
26     cBen.Say("I can't do that!");
27   }
```

You got...

```
59   // MAX HEAD
60   if(player.ActiveInventory == inventory[9])
61   {
62     cBen.Say("'Use paper Max head with window'?");
63     cBen.Say("...someone's never played an adventure game before.");
64     cDan.Say("Or has never heard of 'logic' before...");
65   }
66
67   // PRIEST'S CROSS (he's livid!)
68   if(player.ActiveInventory == inventory[10])
69   {
70     cBen.Say("That's not a vampire.");
71   }
72
73   // BIBLE
74   if(player.ActiveInventory == inventory[11])
75   {
76   cBen.Say("That doesn't need bibling.");
77   cDan.Say("Is that a real word?");
78   cBen.Say("If only this were a dictionary, I could tell you.");
79
80   }
81
82   // GILBERT'S TOY
83   if(player.ActiveInventory == inventory[12])
84   {
85     cBen.Say("Gilbert's toy won't help here.");
86   }
87
88   // BAR KEY
89   if(player.ActiveInventory == inventory[13])
90   {
91     cBen.Say("I can't help but feel the PUB KEY would be better used somewhere in THE PUB.");
92   }
93
94   // TOP HAT
95   if(player.ActiveInventory == in
96   {
97   cBen.Say("A stolen top hat won'
98   cDan.Say("Obviously.");
99   }
00
01   // TEN Ps
02   if(player.ActiveInventory == in
03   {
04   cBen.Say("I could throw these 1
05   cBen.Say("...but they might brea
06   cDan.FaceCharacter(cBen)
07   cDan.Say("Pardon? Who'll suck us off, now?");
08   cBen.FaceCharacter(cDan)
09   cBen.Say("'Out', Dan. 'Suck us OUT'.");
```

For every object in the game there's code that handles what could potentially be used on it. In some instances, I'm sure, there's dialogue written for events that can't possibly happen – inventory items being used on objects that won't exist by the time you get there with that inventory item. But often, it was easier to knock out a silly one-line gag than to waste precious brain power stopping and working out if it's ever actually going to happen.

So the writing began. Ben had this crappy old second-hand PC that pretty much exploded under the pressure. Something went very very wrong with it. Presumably it just couldn't stand the constant wanking jokes any longer, and gave up the ghost.

We wrote and wrote for hours, each taking an in-game room and working our way through it until every conceivable interaction was catered for. People seem to think we had the luxury of sitting down together and jovially chortling up ideas about what would be funny if Item X was used right up Orifice Y – the reality is much, much more sweatshop than that. It's silent, keyboard-thumping mania until the job's done. Gag after gag after gag, by and large each interaction in both games is the first thing that popped into our heads, quickly typed up before moving swiftly onto the next one.

Once it was largely all 'in', the ending, where it's revealed that the alien menace is 'Us from the Future' remained one of the last things we thought up. As an over-the-top Back to the Future fan, Ben wouldn't allow any 'unrealistic' Time Travel shenanigans, bless him. He seems to think that Marty McFly's adventures are some sort of hard-and-fast audio-visual dissertation on time travel, and that anything else is intrinsically 'wrong'. My opinion is that Time Travel isn't really real, so you can do what you like with it.

The Pub- *old and new*

So it took a bit of wrangling to come up with a solution that he considered to be *completely realistic*. Relatively speaking, of course.

Once that was decided, we added in a few cutscenes during the action to set up the Aliens as characters, rather than just a means to get us into a funky purple dimension-hopping plot device, and *Ben There, Dan That!* was finished. All that remained to be done was a quick Saul Bass-inspired title sequence, and it was DONE. 2007, that was.

Then, Ben and I stopped sharing a flat, and I moved in with a GIRL and started finding pot pourri all over the place and buying all sorts of vegetables and shit. I own soap.

Ben There, Dan That! sat in a state of near-completion on my hard drive, untouched, unplayed and unloved for about a year. Once I'd written my block-dropping test game *Cruxade* and decided to set up an indie game studio proper, I dug it out and had a quick look.

It very much wasn't finished at all, the little fucker. It was riddled to High Heaven with bugs *a-plenty*. But it was clearly pretty fucking funny, and worth finishing off to add to the portfolio of games I'd have to shout about at launch.

It was (badly drawn) 2D, it didn't have voice acting, and it barely had any music. I pretty much decided if I couldn't shift copies of *Gibbage* which is genuinely BRILLIANT, no idiot would pay real life money for this rubbish. So it went up for free, with a request for donations.

Looking back, *I should have charged a couple of quid for it.*

The *'cut' museum shop. Can you get in?*

Just some *of Ben's animations*

People went kind of nuts for it. I spent a long time plugging it and trying to get sites interested, but it's (badly drawn) 2D, it didn't have voice acting, and it barely had any music. So a few people picked up on it, and we got a few donations through from some lovely people who really understood and appreciated what we were doing.

Eventually, there was enough buzz and enough praise for it that somehow, somewhere, talk was raised about it being worthwhile doing a sequel.

>> ABOUT TIME...
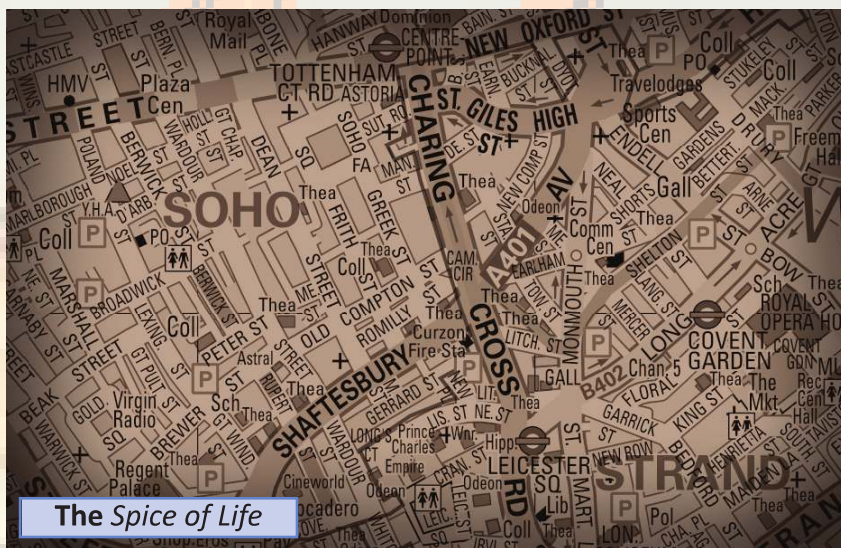
The *Spice of Life*

That somewhere was here: *The Spice of Life* pub slap bang in the centre of London. They pump out a little something called '*McMullen's AK*', a perfectly-drinkable but otherwise wholly unremarkable pint.

They also serve that gassy, fizzy yellow muck for idiots and ladies, like Ben. For a place in the oh-so-horrid touristy loud 'bustle' quadrant of London, England, it was a pretty sweet spot to dream up some nonsense.

We went in to discuss whether or not it was even remotely worthwhile doing a sequel, and to come up with a scenario we liked. We came out brimming with ideas, the main plot of the game sketched out and various cutscenes already decided.

The name '*Time Gentlemen, Please!*' was kicked around back when Ben and I were shacked up. The Time Travelling ending to Ben There, Dan That! was appealing, and a core mechanic of time zones instead of dimensions felt like a pretty natural hop.

The dilemma was giving the players the motivation necessary to undo the situation they found themselves in. Because when you're **SPOILERS** Kings of the World, no matter how nefariously you got there, in all honesty it's a pretty sweet deal and something pretty damned major would have to happen to get you to want to change things.

So yeah, we killed everyone off. *All of them.* Everyone else on the planet had to peg it, just so we could justify a little jaunt around time and some more hot object-on-object action.

The idea of trying to stop coathangers getting invented is one of those things that can only possibly have come about after a few drinks. I can still remember the 'Two Weeks Later (1945)' gag, with the dinosaurs marching in, and both of us crying with laughter over it. Two grown men wailing pathetically at their own jokes is when you know you're onto a winner.

The *TGP demo splash screen in all its glory*
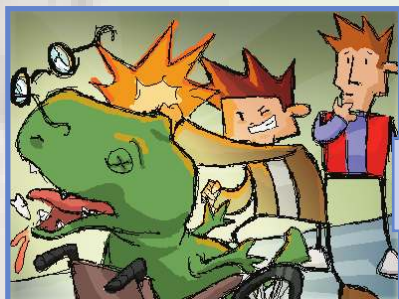
Dan *punches a disabled dinosaur*

Rules for the sequel:
1. *Make it feel necessary*
2. *Make it nicer-looking*
## 3. *Make it short*

We failed on the third count, obviously. Despite running from September 2008 to July 2009, *Time Gentlemen, Please!*'s development remains something of a total blur. The original idea was to have it finished 'by Christmas'. It wound up being in development for nine months or so, JUST LIKE A REAL BABY.

With Ben and I no longer living together, trips to the pub to dream up ideas were far too few and far between for comfort. Instead, the majority of the game's design was done over email, quite often during what were supposed to be grown-up working hours. Sssssh! Don't tell our old employers!

(it's alright really, we no longer work there and they can't read anyway)

EVIL *Ben*
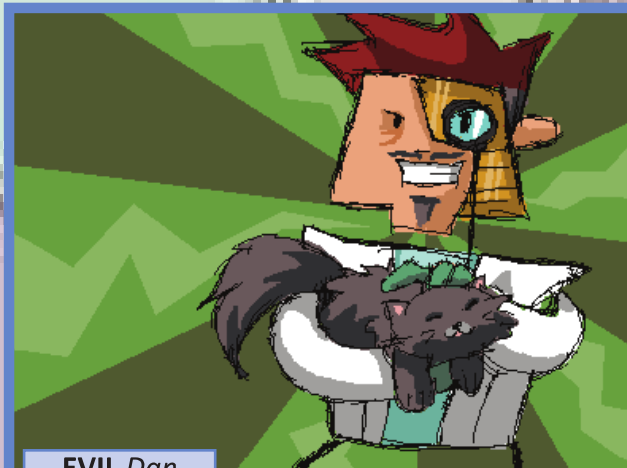
EVIL *Dan*

Actually, working by email turned out to be pretty damned effective – when pitching ideas to each other, you're forced to write it up really concisely, and think it through thoroughly. Ideas were then discussed, debated, chewed over and refined much more than we ever did with *Ben There, Dan That!*, which in retrospect was pretty much just us shouting in a pub and going "Yeeeeeeah! That'll do!".

We'd toss ideas around, the beauty of a Dan and Ben game being that unless the idea is half-baked or doesn't gel, pretty much anything can make it in. The Universe they live in is bound by very few rules (stringent Back to the Future Time Travelling notwithstanding, obv), so if we want a sentient robot in a top hat in 1945 there's no reason we can't have one.

So, *what was cut?* That's always the best bit of a retrospective.

>> Originally, the broken time wand would age-or-young pretty much anything in-game. Scrapped, obviously, because it'd be a pretty horrible pain in the arse to do, and nigh impossible to restrict the player with that sort of mechanic. Instead, we made PAL's time machine do that, as you presumably know by now. That way, we could restrict its usage to things you could be bothered to drag all the way over there and put into it, which I imagine meant not many people tried aging minor objects.

>> There was a whole section with Jon 'Log' Blyth and Steve Hogarty from PCZone dressed as animals in some sort of weird futuristic zoo.

>> We wanted to make the blueprints puzzle way more interactive – the original concept was that you'd be able to draw directly onto the page and that'd appear in-game. Brilliant, but ultimately pretty impossible.

>> During the end sequence, Dan and Ben were going to accidentally kill God before he could fix everything, leading to God's God turning up... and so on.

>> Talking of God, he was going to be voiced. We tried it, but it sounded WEIRD having speech all of a sudden.

>> Dan's Solo section, where Dan's suddenly in charge was originally planned to be much more manic – he was going to be difficult to control, bumbling all over the place, knocking things off shelves and trashing the entire area. Sadly, it wound up looking like too much work, and was cut right back.

>> We were going to call one of the dinos "Jerry", so he could say "Jerry by name, *Jerry by nature.*" Not sure why that didn't happen to be honest, I'm only mentioning it here because it's an amazing joke!

>> One of the original ideas for the plot was that it'd turn out it WAS aliens in Ben There, Dan That!, they were wearing double face masks. Aliens can be tricksy like that. We scrapped it because it undid the cool ending to the original game, despite being another great joke.
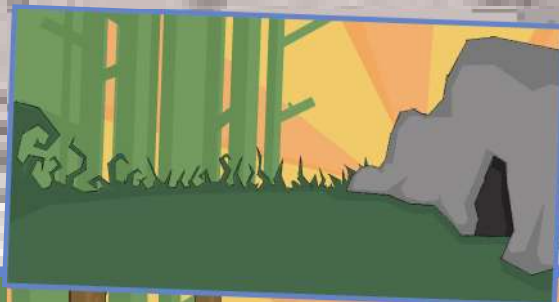
Early *and completed "Past" area*

So there I was writing *Time Gentlemen, Please!* in the mornings and evenings around my day job. It was horrific. As development spiralled horribly out of control, I was lying awake worrying that I was completely wasting my lovely lovely precious time – I could be making a funky little platform game about ROBOT PIRATES or something for Xbox and selling it for real money with which to make more games. Instead, I was making another freeware point and click adventure game which, I might remind you, is the deadest and least interesting of all the video game genres.

It wasn't until it was practically finished that we decided *Time Gentlemen, Please!* was totally worth the price of a pint – and that's how we marketed it. The price of a pint in overpriced pricey London, obviously, not those grim Northern pints where they're basically free so as to take everyone's mind off the fact that they're in the quite-breezy North.

>> ON HITLER

I'm still not entirely sure you're allowed to 'use' Hitler. He's a historical figure, right? He's got to be out of copyright, surely? Whatever: no one tell the police and I think we'll be alright.

>> GETTING RECEPTION

Time Gentlemen, Please! went down a storm. When Eurogamer gave it a **9/10**, I started to relax – it felt like everyone else would presumably pretty much follow suit. They did, and most scores were around the 8-or-9 mark. Not bad for a game in a dead genre without voice acting.

Sales were pretty good, it was just about paying my bills but I knew they'd tail off. It's pretty weird walking around a supermarket and picking up a pot of mustard and thinking 'hmmm... I've got to sell a copy of *TGP* in order to afford this'. Life became about plugging the game anywhere and everywhere – for every article written about it, there'd be just enough sales coming in to keep me going.

>> LANDING IN HOT WATER

I can't talk about Steam, Valve's amazing digital distribution network. I'm under all sorts of NDAs and I'd be lying if I said I'd read them thoroughly and/ or understood them. I've adopted a policy of just keeping quiet, so as not to anger them.

Every month or so, I get an email from someone asking how I got *Time Gentlemen, Please!* up on Steam. The truthful answer is that I have no idea – I can only speculate and fill them in on what I did.

Presumably the poor guys over there get sent a billion emails a day from every idiot who's made something resembling a game, and I expect their shit filter has to be set pretty high just to get through the day in one piece. So, assuming that, I waited until the game had been released and had some reviews, and spent far too long crafting some sort of opening sentence that would shriek THIS ISN'T THE USUAL SHIT.

I had a 9/10 from Eurogamer and a quote from Wired calling it an "Indie masterpiece". I'm assuming that's what got their attention. I set about filling in all sorts of complicated American tax forms - forms which required other forms to have been filled in, which in turn required a whole host of other forms to have been filled in, and so on. I was expecting the entire deal to crumble away from under me at any second.

Words can't describe the elation of seeing my games up on the Steam store. It remains one of my proudest moments.

Anubis

Rough *warehouse layout*

The *Past*

>> DEATH OF A BALLOON-HEADED MEXICAN

At the time of writing, the third Dan and Ben Point and Click game sits unfinished, rotting away, its little 1s and 0s unloved and unseen by human eyes, except our human eyes, obviously. It was to be the first in a series of mini 'episodes' featuring everyone's favourite unnecessarily-rude geeks. Also at the time of writing, it's never going to see the light of day. Here's why:

Time Gentlemen, Please! **feels to me like the ultimate Adventure Game satire.** It's so bent-double with references, nods, loving caresses and hearty back-slaps to Point and Clicks that it's sometimes difficult to see where original content ends, and pastiche begins. And I'm immensely proud of that. It's a unique, stand-alone Adventure Game in its own right, but it's one that mercilessly mocks the entire genre.

Writing *Revenge of the Balloon-Headed Mexican,* it felt like we were going over old, worn ground. We've done all this. We've seen it all before. There's nothing fresh or new and exciting about it – it's Dan and Ben using items and collecting things and being wry and cutting about them. It felt a little like making *Revenge of the Balloon-Headed Mexican* would only wind up diminishing the impact and memory of the first two games, and no one wants that, least of all us.

So, for now at least, it's canned. It'll never be released, and the images you see here pretty much sum up everything that'd been done on it.

We've got no idea who Balloon Head was, or why he's so Revenge-y (in one moment of inspired genius, we were going to do the ultimate Star Wars reference and actually release the game as *Return of the Balloon-Headed Mexican*).

Dan *and assorted Space Marines*

Revenge of the Balloon-Headed Mexican's *all-important GUIde*

Ben *takes on a sniper, and naturally gets him killed...*

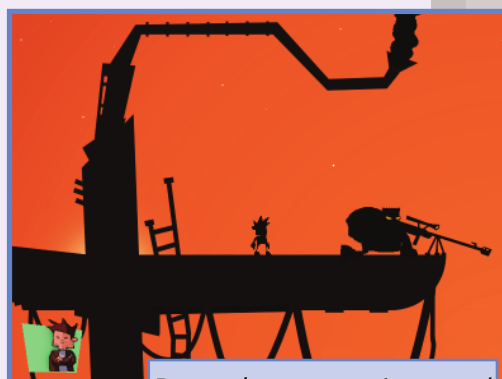**The plot was that you've snuck aboard his Evil Airship,** and then all these butch marines turn up – First Shooter Person, Second Shooter Person (who doesn't last long), and Third Shooter Person, stuck in a pitched gun battle with Balloon Head's evil Gorilla Pinata minons. You've been sent in by Adventure Corp, and the soldiers are from Shooter Corp. Naturally, being all about shooting and shouting 'hooah', they're really dismissive of what you do as Adventurers because, well, no one does that anymore do they? They consider themselves to be the de facto, popular way of sorting out menacing baddies. It was a wry and thinly-veiled satire on The State of the Games Industry which, ironically, we're now joining.

Being typical gruff, stupid space marines though, they won't take out an End of Game Baddy unless he's got all the obvious weaknesses and over-the-top signposting they've come to expect - indicated by a glowing spot for them to aim at, and is moving in a pleasingly-predictable attack pattern.

Which is where you'd come in – you need to trick old Balloon-Head into eating a lightbulb in order to get his balloon head all lit up, and pass Ben's pubic lice inventory item over in order to make him jiggle about.

Oh yeah, it's that last bit that was the best puzzle. Ben's carrying round Pubic Lice for the entire game, and the only way to get rid of it is to pass it on to someone else. In order to give Balloon Head the lice, Dan and Ben had to put on a sexy Piñata Pantomime Horse costume, and perform (sexy) Quick Time Events to arouse Balloon Head's little flaccid balloon willy so much he'd sex you right there on the spot. Ben being at the back end, naturally. There was even a little balloon willy icon to demonstrate your progress, and everything. It got bigger and bigger and bigger until eventually it burst, and Balloon Head couldn't help himself.

While it's brillo and I love it, it ultimately is one of the other reasons the project was dropped. It feels a little too try-hard, you know? "Oh, what's worse than Hitler's shit on a hand? I know, it's quasi-consensual rape!". Regardless of the fact it made it into the game because it was something we found funny, I can see people being justifiably critical of the whole franchise – moving to shock value for shock value's sake: "whatever next? How do you 'top' this?"

Dan fights a pinata bear

A SEXY PINATA takes a stroll through an unresearched 'Mexico'
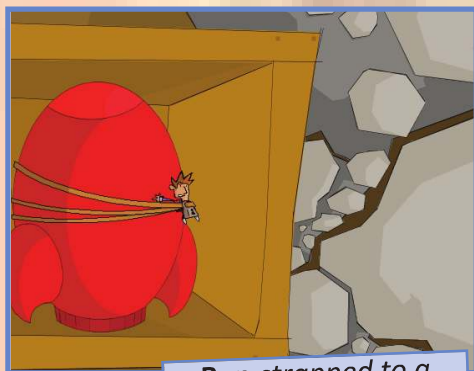
Ben strapped to a bomb, underground. Typical.

So there we have it. Balloon Head is dead.

Dan and Ben aren't, though. The fictional ones, I mean. Or the real ones. Look, no one's died! Except maybe those two gay dogs and those two old people we're not sure.

What I'm trying to say is there are plans afoot to do more with Dan and Ben, but it'll just have to be something as different and fresh and as clever-and-interesting as Ben There, Dan That! or Time Gentlemen, Please! were. We're looking into it. :)

>> IN SUMMARY, *THEN*

That's the story of why you can proudly exclaim why you've plunged Hitler's bloody stool down a toilet with a dead man's hand. That's why you know how Time Travel REALLY works. That's why you and I will always share a special something, because we've been there in the thick of it fighting Dinosaur Nazis and trumping Evil Future Dan and Ben with logic and brilliance.

I can't thank you enough for buying *Ben There, Dan That!* and *Time Gentlemen, Please!* You've helped realise my dream of making games full time. I have the best job, thanks in part to you, and the support of the community. You're brillo.

Dan and Ben *will* be back, I'm sure.