

**THREE VIEWS FROM
2018**
(IN FOUR MOVIES)

INDEPENDENT MMO GDC

30TH MARCH 2008

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INTRODUCTION

- SO, THIS IS A **KEYNOTE** PRESENTATION
- WHAT DO YOU **EXPECT** FROM A KEYNOTE?
- WELL, KEYNOTES HAVE TO:
 - Inform
 - Entertain
 - MAKE YOU THINK
- **EASY!**
 - I CAN DO THAT IN **ONE SLIDE**
- HERE'S A PICTURE OF DEBBIE **HARRY** (AKA **BLONDIE**) WITH SOME **MUPPETS**

ENJOY



A QUESTION

- SO, WHAT I'M GOING TO TALK ABOUT TODAY COMES A QUESTION I AM **OFTEN** ASKED BY JOURNALISTS:
- "HOW DO YOU SEE VIRTUAL WORLDS **10 YEARS** FROM NOW?"
 - AT LEAST IT'S BETTER THAN "I GUESS YOU'RE **SURPRISED** AT HOW **FAR** VIRTUAL WORLDS HAVE COME?"
 - YES, I **AM** – I THOUGHT WE'D BE MUCH **FURTHER AHEAD** THAN THIS BY NOW...

DIFFERENCES

- THE THING IS, HOW I SEE VIRTUAL WORLDS 10 YEARS FROM NOW **VARIES**
- IT DEPENDS A LOT ON WHICH **CONFERENCE** I'M AT WHEN THE JOURNALIST **CORNERS** ME
- WITH **DESIGNERS** AND DEVELOPERS, I'M **EXCITED** AND **UPBEAT** ABOUT THE FUTURE
- WITH EDUCATORS AND **BUSINESS** PEOPLE, I'M **FRUSTRATED** AND **DEPRESSED** ABOUT IT
- WITH ACCOUNTANTS AND **LAWYERS**, I WONDER IF WE EVEN **HAVE** A FUTURE

2018

- ONE OF THESE THREE VIEWS IS ALMOST **CERTAINLY** CORRECT, BUT **WHICH ONE?**
- SO, SUPPOSE IT'S **2018**
 - THE YEAR, NOT THE TIME
- HERE'S MY **LEVEL 170** *WOW* PALADIN, AS PROOF
- LET'S LOOK **BACK** AT HOW THINGS **WENT** FROM THESE THREE POSSIBLE VIEWS



VIEW ONE

- **VIEW FROM
2018
#1**

LEE VAN CLEEF

- THIS IS A STILL OF ACTOR **LEE VAN CLEEF** IN THE CLASSIC WESTERN, ***HIGH NOON***



- IT WAS VAN CLEEF'S **FIRST** MOVIE ROLE
– PRIOR TO TAKING IT, HE WAS AN **ACCOUNTANT**

HIGH NOON

- *HIGH NOON* WAS ABOUT **ONE** BRAVE LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER (GARY COOPER) TAKING ON A GANG OF **RUTHLESS OUTLAWS** WITH **NO** HELP FROM THE **VERY PEOPLE** HE WAS TRYING TO **PROTECT**
- THIS IS **ALMOST** WHAT WE SAW IN THE 10 YEARS LEADING UP TO 2018, EXCEPT...
- EXCEPT IT WAS A GANG OF RUTHLESS **LAW ENFORCEMENT** OFFICERS TAKING ON THE VERY PEOPLE THEY WERE TRYING TO **PROTECT** WITH NO HELP FROM THE **BRAVE OUTLAWS**

MAIN ISSUES

- THE MAIN LEGAL ISSUES THAT BROUGHT DOWN MMOS WERE:
 - APPLYING THE LAWS **WRONGLY**
 - UNFAIR **CONTRACT** LAWS
 - INTELLECTUAL **PROPERTY** LAWS
 - GAMBLING/**GAMING** LAWS
 - ANTI-**MONEY-LAUNDERING** LAWS
 - **TAXATION** LAWS
 - MAD **PATENT** LAWS
- LET'S LOOK AT THESE ONE AT A TIME

WRONG LAWS

- 10 YEARS AGO, PEOPLE THOUGHT **GAMES** AND **NON-GAMES** SHOULD BE TREATED **DIFFERENTLY** BY THE LAW
 - THEY STILL **ARE** FOR BOXING, FOOTBALL AND OTHER SPORTS, BUT THEY'RE **NOT** FOR VIRTUAL WORLDS
- IT ONLY TOOK **ONE** WELL-MEANING JUDGE TO THINK WHAT APPLIED TO *SECOND LIFE* APPLIED TO *WORLD OF WARCRAFT* AND **WHAM!**
- "IT'S JUST A GAME" WAS **NO LONGER** A DEFENCE

CONTRACT LAWS

- THE ROT **STARTED** WHEN PART OF LINDEN LABS' **EULA** WAS STRUCK DOWN IN **2007**
 - THIS SHOWED THAT EULAS **WEREN'T** BULLET-PROOF
- GROUPS OF PLAYERS COMPLAINED THAT **OTHER** PARTS OF THE EULA WERE UNFAIR **TOO**
 - **PARTICULARLY** THOSE PARTS THAT SEEMED TO SIGN AWAY THEIR "**RIGHTS**"
- THE CRITICAL POINT WAS WHEN PLAYERS WON **OWNERSHIP** OVER "THEIR" VIRTUAL GOODS
 - THIS BROUGHT **PROPERTY** LAWS INTO PLAY

IP LAWS

- IF PEOPLE **OWN** THINGS, YOU DON'T GET TO **DESTROY** OR **ALTER** THOSE THINGS
 - IN DESIGN TERMS, YOU DIDN'T GET TO **NERF** THEM
 - PLUS, YOU DIDN'T GET TO DENY PEOPLE ACCESS TO THEIR PROPERTY BY **BANNING** THEM
- ALSO, YOU CAN'T STOP PEOPLE **SELLING** STUFF
 - SO REAL-MONEY TRADING BECAME **SUPPORTED** BY THE LAW
- AND AS FOR PUBLISHING **WORKS OF ART** WITHOUT THE OWNER'S PERMISSION...

GAMING LAWS

- WITH RMT **ENDEMIC**, VIRTUAL OBJECTS COULD CLEARLY BE SEEN TO HAVE REAL-WORLD **VALUE**
- THAT MEANT KILLING **MOBS** FOR **DROPS** WAS EFFECTIVELY A **GAME OF CHANCE** WITH A **CASH** REWARD
- THIS BROUGHT THE **GAMBLING** LAWS INTO PLAY
- MIDDLE AMERICA WAS **UP IN ARMS!**
 - PEOPLE COULD **GAMBLE** ONLINE? DIDN'T THEY **BAN** THAT IN **2006?!**

MONEY LAUNDERING

- HERE'S HOW IT WORKED
 - STEP ONE: **STEAL** MONEY
 - STEP TWO: HAND MONEY TO **FRONT**
 - STEP THREE: FRONT BUYS **GAME GOLD** FROM **FARMERS**
 - STEP FOUR: FRONT TRANSFERS GAME GOLD TO YOUR **ALTS**
 - STEP FIVE: SELL ALTS' GAME GOLD FOR NOW FRESHLY-**LAUNDERED** MONEY
- THE FINANCE AUTHORITIES DEMANDED AN AUDIT TRAIL THAT RAN TO **PETABYTES** EVERY DAY

TAXATION LAWS

- YOU KILL A **MONSTER**, YOU GET **2GP**
- BUT NO! THAT'S **NOT** 2GP, THAT'S **8 CENTS**
 - 8 CENTS YOU HAVE TO PAY **INCOME TAX** ON
- YOU SELL YOUR **SWORD** OF KILL-IN-ONE-HIT FOR **800GP?**
- BUT NO! THAT'S **NOT** 800GP, THAT'S **£32**
 - £32 YOU HAVE TO PAY **SALES TAX** ON
- THAT'S WHY TAX RETURNS RUN TO **200 PAGES** THESE DAYS

MAD PATENTS

- YOU CAN PATENT **OBVIOUS** STUFF FOR A **PITTANCE** YET IT COSTS THE BLOOD OF **12 FRESHLY-SLAIN VIRGINS** TO GET THE PATENT REVOKED
- THIS **STIFLES** INNOVATION SOMEWHAT
- FEAR NOT, THOUGH! THE GOVERNMENT **KNOWS** THAT THE PATENT LAWS ARE IN NEED OF AN **OVERHAUL**
- THEY'RE **WORKING** ON IT...

SUMMARY

- WHEN I GO TO **LAW** CONFERENCES, THIS IS THE FUTURE THAT APPEARS BEFORE ME
- IN PART, IT'S BECAUSE **LAWYERS** ARE LIKE **PROGRAMMERS**
 - PROGRAMMERS SEE BUGS IN **CODE**
 - LAWYERS SEE BUGS IN **LAWS**
 - **ACCOUNTANTS** SEE BUGS IN **EVERYTHING**
- THUS, THEY'RE **BOUND** TO HIGHLIGHT THE **PROBLEMS** – IT'S THEIR **JOB**
- IT SCARES THE **WILLIES** OUT OF ME, THOUGH

VIEW TWO

- **VIEW FROM
2018
#2**

DOOMED

- THIS IS A PUBLICITY SHOT FROM THE CLASSIC MOVIE, ***THE MISFITS***.



TRAGEDY

- *THE MISFITS* WAS THE **LAST** MOVIE MADE BY CLARK **GABLE** AND MARILYN **MONROE**
- OF THE FIVE TOP-BILLED ACTORS:
 - GABLE HAD A **HEART ATTACK** 3 DAYS AFTER FILMING STOPPED, AND DIED **11 DAYS** LATER
 - **18 MONTHS** AFTER THAT, MONROE DIED OF A **DRUGS OVERDOSE**
 - MONTGOMERY CLIFT DIED **4 YEARS** AFTER FILMING
 - THELMA RITTER DIED **8 YEARS** AFTER FILMING
- ONLY **ELI WALLACH** SURVIVED

THE MISFITS

- THE PLOT OF *THE MISFITS* CONCERNS FOUR **COWBOYS** STRUGGLING TO MAINTAIN THEIR **ONCE-ROMANTIC** LIFESTYLE IN 1960S NEVADA
- THE COWBOYS' TIME HAD **COME AND GONE**, BUT THEY DIDN'T **ACCEPT** THE INEVITABLE
 - THEY WERE **TRAPPED** IN THE PAST
- THIS IS WHAT HAPPENED TO **MMOS** IN THE PERIOD 2008 TO 2018
 - THE WORLD **MOVED ON** LEAVING THE GAMERS BEHIND, THEIR IDEALISTIC DREAMS **IRRELEVANT**

PIONEERS

- GAMERS WERE THE **PIONEERS** WHO TAMED **NEW LANDS**
- HOWEVER, BUSINESS FOLK AND EDUCATORS WERE THE **SETTLERS** WHO FOLLOWED
- THEY WERE **DRAWN** TO VIRTUAL WORLDS BECAUSE OF WHAT WAS **SPECIAL** ABOUT THEM
- THEY THEN PROCEEDED TO **REMOVE** THIS AND GO WITH THEIR **OWN** IDEAS OF **FUN**©
- WHAT WE HAVE IN 2018 IS A **PALE SHADOW** OF WHAT ONCE WAS

GAMES & NON-GAMES

- BACK IN 2008, THERE WAS A **DISTINCTION**
 - GAME WORLDS: **IMAGINARY** PLACES OF AWE, EXCITEMENT AND THE **FREEDOM TO BE**
 - NON-GAME WORLDS: ADJUNCTS TO **REALITY**
- SO, WAIT, AM I SAYING THAT MMOS **DIDN'T** USED TO BE PART OF THE REAL WORLD?!
- YES INDEED: THEY **USED** TO BE **SEPARATE**
 - IT'S WHAT MADE THEM **SPECIAL**
- REPEATED INCURSIONS BY REALITY WERE FINALLY **TOO MUCH** TO STAVE OFF, THOUGH

FACTORS

- WITH TOO MUCH **REALITY** IN THEM, MMOS BECAME UNSUSTAINABLE AS **FANTASIES**
- THERE WAS NO **SINGLE** FACTOR THAT INTRODUCED TOO MUCH REALITY
 - IT WAS A GRADUAL **ACCUMULATION**
- EXISTING PLAYERS' EXPECTATIONS WERE **LOWERED**
 - NEW PLAYERS' EXPECTATIONS WERE NEVER HIGH IN THE **FIRST** PLACE
- I'LL GIVE SOME EXAMPLES OF HOW IMAGINATION WAS GRADUALLY **CHIPPED** AWAY

CASUAL PLAYERS

- IF YOU WANT TO START A **NEW** MMO, WHERE DO THE PLAYERS **COME** FROM?
 - **OLD** MMOS - BUT THEN YOU'RE ACQUIRING **DISLOYAL** CUSTOMERS
 - UTTER MMO **NEWBIES**
- HOW DO YOU **ATTRACT** MMO NEWBIES?
 - IF THEY LIKED THE CONCEPT OF MMOS, THEY'D BE PLAYING **ALREADY**, WOULDN'T THEY?
- YOU AIM FOR **CASUAL** PLAYERS
 - MAKE YOUR MMO'S **GAMEPLAY** MORE CASUAL

ADVERTISING

- HOW DO YOU MAKE **MONEY** FROM CASUALS?
 - “THE INTERNET IS FREE!”
- ONE WAY IS TO USE **ADVERTISEMENTS**
- **Warning! Warning!** ADVERTISEMENTS ARE **REALITY!** MMOS ARE **VIRTUAL!**
- OUT-OF-CONTEXT **REAL** ADVERTS SEEN IN VIRTUAL WORLDS **PRICK** THE VIRTUAL BUBBLE
- INITIALLY, PEOPLE PAID **NOT** TO SEE THE ADS
 - STRANGELY, ADVERTISERS DIDN'T **LIKE** THAT...

MICRO-PAYMENTS

- ANOTHER "LET'S PRETEND IT'S FREE" BUSINESS MODEL IS **MICRO-PAYMENTS**
 - POPULAR AMONG **INDIES**
- SELL PEOPLE **VIRTUAL** GOODS AND SERVICES FOR **REAL** MONEY
 - 10% PAY FOR THE OTHER 90% TO PLAY
- SO ... THE **RICHER** I AM IN **REAL LIFE**, THE MORE **SUCCESSFUL** I AM IN THE **GAME**?
- REMOVES ANY SENSE OF **FAIR PLAY**
 - IS IT A **GAME** IF YOU CAN **BUY** SUCCESS?

CHILDREN

- MICRO-PAYMENTS MADE IT **EASY** TO GET **MONEY** FROM **CHILDREN**
 - THEREFORE, VIRTUAL WORLDS WERE CREATED **AIMED** AT CHILDREN
- REMEMBER THE **FIRST** MMO YOU PLAYED? HOW IT WAS A WONDERFUL, **GLORIOUS** EXPERIENCE?
- THOSE OF YOU WHO PLAYED YOUR FIRST MMO AGED **8** MAYBE **WON'T** RECALL THAT...
- WHEN **CHILDREN** FIRST PLAYED, THEY SAW THE EXPERIENCE AS **MUNDANE**

EDUTAINMENT

- GAMES = **fun!**
- EDUCATION = unfun
- IDEA: EDUCATION+GAMES = **fun education!**
- ACTUALITY: EDUCATION+GAMES = unfun games
- GAMES WERE USED BY EARNEST **NON-GAMERS AS TEACHING TOOLS**
- THE **SANCTITY** OF GAME SPACES AS **RETREATS** FROM REALITY DISAPPEARED
 - PLAYING WAS TOO MUCH LIKE **HOMEWORK**

SUMMARY

- WHEN I GO TO **BUSINESS** OR **EDUCATION** CONFERENCES, THIS THE FUTURE THAT APPEARS
 - MMOS AS WAYS TO **SELL** PEOPLE THINGS OR TO PAPER OVER CRACKS IN THE **SCHOOL** SYSTEM
- MMOS **AREN'T** REGARDED AS WORTHWHILE IN THEIR **OWN RIGHT**
- BLANDNESS AND **DILUTION** OF THE PARADIGM COULD **REMOVE** ALL THEY HAVE TO OFFER
 - SOME CORPORATES THINK **FACEBOOK** IS A VIRTUAL WORLD!

VIEW THREE

- **VIEW FROM
2018
#3**

DIRTY HARRY

- HERE'S A PUBLICITY STILL FROM THE MOVIE

DIRTY HARRY

– ACTUALLY, IT'S FROM
DIRTY HARRY 2, BUT
LET'S NOT BE PICKY...



CLINT EASTWOOD

- IN *DIRTY HARRY*, CLINT EASTWOOD PLAYS INSPECTOR "DIRTY" **HARRY CALLAGHAN**
 - TRACKING DOWN A SOCIOPATHIC **SNIPER** WHO'S HOLDING A **CITY** TO **RANSOM**
- HE'S ON THE SIDE OF **GOOD**, BUT
 - HE'S AN INSUBORDINATE **MAVERICK**
 - HE HAS **NO PATIENCE** WITH BAD GUYS
 - HE SEES THE LEGAL SYSTEM AS **OUT OF TOUCH**
- BUT HE **WINS** IN THE END
- **WHY** DOES HE WIN?

BECAUSE

- HE **WINS** BECAUSE HE HAS A

**BIG
FUCKING
GUN**



BFG

- BACK IN **2008**, MMO DESIGNERS HAD A **BFG**
- THE 2008 US PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION WAS THE **LAST ONE** IN WHICH BEING CRITICAL OF GAMES WAS REGARDED AS A VOTE-**WINNING** STRATEGY
- THE NEW PRESIDENT **SOON** FOUND THIS OUT



DEMOGRAPHICS

- THE **MEDIAN** AGE OF AMERICANS IN 2007 WAS **36.6**
 - HALF OF AMERICA WAS BORN **1970** OR AFTER
- THESE PEOPLE
 - **PLAYED** COMPUTER GAMES
 - DIDN'T FEEL **ADDICTED** TO THEM
 - WEREN'T **PSYCHOPATHIC KILLERS**
 - **RESENTED** POLITICIANS WHO IMPLIED THEY **WERE** PSYCHOPATHIC KILLERS
- AS FOR MMOS' BEING ANTI-SOCIAL – **HA!**

VICTORY

- THE **BFG** THAT MMO DEVELOPERS WIELDED WAS THE FACT THAT THEY'D **ALREADY WON**
 - THEY ALREADY HAD THE **NUMBERS** ON THEIR SIDE
- OLDER POLITICIANS WERE **OUT OF TOUCH**
 - THEY WERE **ASTONISHED** TO FIND THAT ANTI-MMO LAWS WOULD **COST** THEM VOTES!
- BUSINESS AND EDUCATION **WASTED** MONEY TRYING TO **COMMODYFY** IMAGINATION
 - IF YOU MAKE THE IMAGINARY **REAL**, IT **CEASES** TO BE **IMAGINARY**

FLOWERING

- THE FLOWERING OF **BIJOUX** MMOS THAT BEGAN 10 YEARS OR SO AGO BROUGHT IN ACTUAL **NEW** PLAYERS
 - **DIFFERENT** PEOPLE LIKE **DIFFERENT** THINGS
 - **NOT EVERYONE** LIKES ELVES/RAY GUNS/ZOMBIES
- **CASUAL** DOESN'T MEAN **CAUSAL**
- MMO DEVKITS AND LOW-COST ART/ANIMATION **ASSETS** OPENED VIRTUAL WORLD CREATION UP TO **ALL AND SUNDRY**
- THE **REAL** WORLD BECAME A BETTER PLACE

SUMMARY

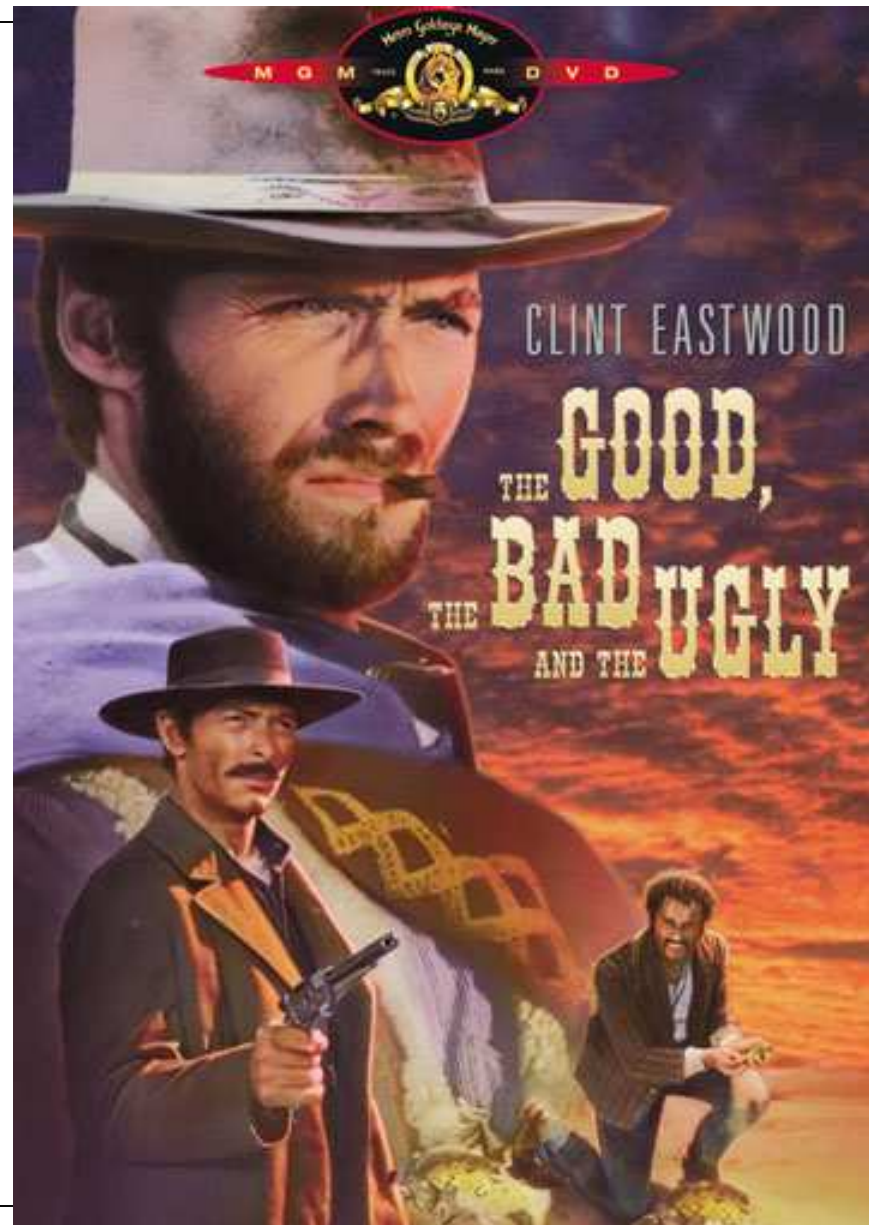
- **THIS** IS THE FUTURE THAT OPENS UP BEFORE ME WHEN I SPEAK TO **DESIGNERS** AND **DEVELOPERS**
 - THESE PEOPLE BRING SUCH **PASSION** TO THEIR WORK – HOW CAN THEY POSSIBLY FAIL?
- IMAGINATION AND FREEDOM OF SPIRIT ARE **TREMENDOUS** DRIVERS
- MMOS GIVE PEOPLE SOMETHING THEY JUST **CAN'T GET** ELSEWHERE
 - THE ABILITY TO **BE THEMSELVES**

BACK IN 2008

- SO, WHICH OF THESE **THREE POSSIBLE FUTURES** ARE WE MOST LIKELY TO SEE?
- I GUESS I SHOULD THINK OF **CATCHY NAMES** FOR THEM FIRST...
- HMM, MAYBE SOME OF THOSE **ACTORS** I MENTIONED MIGHT HELP?



AAAAAAAAA!



- YES, THAT WORKS...

SO WE HAVE

- **THE GOOD**
 - VIRTUAL WORLDS GIVE **HUMANS** A PLACE TO BE **HUMAN**
- **THE BAD**
 - VIRTUAL WORLDS STIFLED BY REAL WORLD **LAWS**
- **THE UGLY**
 - VIRTUAL WORLDS BECOME **MUNDANE**
- LET'S HAVE A SHOW OF HANDS: WHICH IS **MOST** LIKELY TO HAPPEN?

I THOUGHT SO...

- WHAT DO **I** THINK WILL HAPPEN?
- WELL, THIS IS AN **MMO CONFERENCE**, SO I ALREADY **TOLD** YOU

- NO, REALLY, I **DID** ALREADY TELL YOU!
- CLINT EASTWOOD – “THE GOOD”: WHAT WAS THE NAME OF HIS **CHARACTER** IN THAT MOVIE?

AND THE ANSWER IS...

- **BLONDIE!**
- REAL NAME **DEBBIE HARRY**
 - CLOSE ENOUGH TO **DIRTY HARRY** TO BE SPOOKY...



SO YES

- SO YES, I **DO** THINK MMOS WILL WIN
- BASICALLY, ALL THERE IS STANDING IN THE WAY IS A **BUNCH OF MUPPETS**



CONCLUSION

- THE FUTURE MAY NOT LOOK LIKE THIS **10** YEARS FROM NOW, BUT IT **WILL** LOOK LIKE THIS
- MMOS PROVIDE **TOO MUCH** THAT PEOPLE WANT FOR THEM **NOT** TO SUCCEED
- IF THEY **DO** FIND THEMSELVES **LEGISLATED** AWAY OR CONDEMNED TO **OBSCURITY**, IT'LL ONLY BE A **TEMPORARY** SETBACK
- THEY'RE JUST TOO DAMNED **GOOD** NOT TO WIN IN THE END