

Eat Lead: The Return of Matt Hazard is a comedy third-person shooter that parodies other shooters and video games (and the industry) in general. It was released in 2008, and won the 2009 Spike TV Video Game Award for Best Comedy game. It starred Will Arnett as Matt Hazard, and Neil Patrick Harris as evil game company owner Wally Wellesley.

Matt Hazard is a washed-up video game character from the 80s who is looking to make a career comeback in his first 3D game. What Matt doesn't know is that the new owner of the game company that makes Matt's games wants Matt dead, and has engineered the game to erase our hero's existence...permanently. Matt has to fight a variety of enemies from his past games as he makes his way to the boss—the owner of the company himself.

These sample scripts are from the game opening and Level 1.

Matt Hazard

Cinematic VO: Level 1

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Game Intro Cinematic (GW)

INT. NONDESCRIPT LOCATION, PITCH BLACK

Somber music begins to play.

(Roll opening credits over black...the title is the last thing we show. Time out credits so that they last throughout the intro.)

MATT (VO)

(Serious...always serious.)

My name's Hazard. Matt Hazard. At one time, I was one of the most popular action game characters in the business.

Slow fade up to a still screen shot (or an animated sequence if we can do it)—an 8-bit side-scroller, blocky and pixel-y, showing an 8-bit facsimile of our main character, **Matt**: he's short, stubby, and Mario-like (but still looking like modern Matt). He's got a big gun, and he's blasting the crap out of generic enemy thugs. There's a title superimposed across the top of the image: *The Adventures of Matt in Hazard Land*.

MATT (VO, CONT'D)

I started off like a lot of guys...side-scrolling my way through the 80s. An 8-bit sprite with more firepower than pixels.

MATT (VO, CONT'D)

When the 90s came along, I signed on with Marathon Software to star in their original first-person shooter..

DISSOLVE TO:

Dissolve in a still screen shot (or an animated sequence if we can do it) of a game from the *Doom II* era—a typical gray stone shooter hallway. This is a first-person game, so all we see of Matt's character model is a big-ass gun (crazy-big and ridiculous looking) protruding out from the bottom of the screen. The HUD is a typical HUD of the era—(including a recognizable but pixel-y image of Matt's face, ammo counter (ridiculously high number), etc.—done in suitably early-90s low-res style). There's muzzle flash on the gun, and the targeting reticule is centered on a dying enemy. In the background, we can see one or two enemies—these are our 2D enemies, the Secret Soldiers of the Waffërthinn, who look pretty much the way they do in our game.

MATT (VO, CONT'D)

Matt Hazard 3D went straight to the top of the charts. It was the first in a string of hits as long as my...well, let's just say it was long. Really, really long.

DISSOLVE TO:

Dissolve in a Series of fake box art during Matt's VO above: *Matt Hazard and the Desert of Doom*, *Matt Hazard and the Death Knights of Caesar*, and *Matt Hazard: Alien Assassination Arena*.

MATT (VO, CONT'D)

Marathon signed me to a lifetime gig, and I branched off into every action niche imaginable.

DISSOLVE TO:

Dissolve in a series of game box covers, one after another, as Matt continues to talk. (Artists—see Appendix C for a description of the games for cover art ideas.)

MATT (VO, CONT'D)

Spy thrillers...

Dissolve in the cover for *Thunder Eye*.

MATT (VO, CONT'D)

...survival horror games...

Dissolve in the cover for *Nightmare on Biosphere One*.

MATT (VO, CONT'D)

...fantasy adventures...

Dissolve in the cover for *Conflict of the Deities (Featuring Matt Hazard)*.

MATT (VO, CONT'D)

...and even a fun series of buddy cop games with a rookie sidekick named Dexter Dare.

Dissolve in the cover for *Matt and Dexter in MURDER FORCE!*

FADE TO BLACK

As the image of the last screen shot fades out, Matt continues. The music shifts to a more upbeat, family-friendly arrangement.

MATT (VO, CONT'D)

I guess all that success went to my head. I asked Marathon if I could take the Matt Hazard brand in new directions, and they let me run with it.

Dissolve in a game package, slightly angled and offset to the top left corner. (The next package will dissolve in and overlap this one.) This game package is modeled on the *Viva Piñata* cover. Instead of the three happy piñatas standing there smiling, two of them lie smashed (amidst a “puddle” of spilled candy and sweets) while the third one looks up in fear at Matt—who is standing behind him (in a sombrero, with a fake-looking handlebar Mexican mustache and an murderous expression) raising a wooden bat with the obvious intention of getting at the sweets inside the last piñata standing. The title of the game is *Hard Candy (featuring Matt Hazard)*.

DISSOLVE TO:

Dissolve in another package, overlapping the previous one. This one is a very *Mario Kart*-inspired cover. It shows a cartoony, big-head version of Matt sitting in an undersized go cart driving toward us. He’s bent over the wheel in an intense racing pose, a maniacal sneer on his face. In the background, Mario-esque cartoon opponents and the remaining bits and pieces of their carts are flying through the air as a HUGE explosion erupts on the track behind Matt. (This is obviously a super-violent cart racing game—which is, of course, in keeping with Matt’s MO.) The title is *Haz-Matt Karts*.

DISSOLVE TO:

Dissolve in another package overlapping the previous one. This one is a parody of the *Wii Sports* cover (the full-sized one—Google it)—a Mii-style version of Matt appears in each of five images that surround the title: Matt in a wrestling costume smashing a chair over a battered Mii-style opponent; Matt on a miniature golf course in outlandish stereotypical golf clothing beating a battered opponent with a blade that was snapped off of a windmill; Matt in a batting cage beating another player with a bat; Matt on a bowling lane wearing a pastel bowling shirt with his name stitched on it, beating another bowler with a Canadian 5-pin; and Matt in tennis clothing, looming over an unconscious opponent who has had his head smashed through a tennis racket. The title: *Matt Hazard’s Indoor Sports*. It’s for a video game console called the “Yuu.”

MATT (VO, CONT'D)

Let’s just say *that* was a mistake.

The image slowly fades to black, along with the family music. A sad version of the original theme fades up as Matt continues. Dissolve in a view of the Marathon Software lobby (asset from Level 8), logo prominent, but askew. The place looks like a ghost town.

MATT (VO, CONT'D)

That debacle sent the company into a tailspin. The place went downhill faster than you could say “non-violent water gun-based third-person shooter.” Don’t ask.

DISSOLVE TO:

Dissolve in an image of our game box.

MATT (VO, CONT'D)

I thought that was the end...until a new CEO came along and bought the place. Now the company’s called Marathon Mega-Soft, and the new guy insisted that I be the star in their first next-gen shooter.

DISSOLVE TO:

Dissolve in a series of pre-production art of Matt (in his first-level outfit). Slow zoom in.

MATT (VO, CONT'D)

So here I am...back in the game. This time around, I’m a no-nonsense detective who plays by his own rules. Ready to embark on a new adventure that will take me to all kinds of exotic locales, starting with...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. IN-GAME MEDIUM SHOT OF THE JAPANESE RESTAURANT FROM MATT’S LEVEL 1 STARTING POSITION.

MATT (VO, CONT'D)

...a Japanese steak house?!?!? Ah, what the hell...you gotta start somewhere.

FADE TO BLACK

Level 1: Opening Cinematic (GW)

EXT. JAPANESE RESTAURANT; SUNSET

Angle on the Japanese restaurant across the street. **Matt Hazard** is standing in the shadows of the fading afternoon light (near the level starting point) surveying the place.

DISSOLVE IN

Text overlay on screen—the title of the level:

Hide and Sake

DISSOLVE OUT

FADE TO BLACK

Level 1: Mid-Level Cinematic 1 (GW)

INT. JAPANESE RESTAURANT

We're at the site of the mini-boss fight in the level. **Matt** is facing off against **Sonny Tang**, who is blocking our hero's way.

SONNY

Well, well, well...if it ain't the fuzz.

MATT

The "*fuzz*?" Now, there's something you don't hear every day. Who might you be?

SONNY

The name's Sonny Tang. That's "Sonny" as in "sonny, your ass is gonna get kicked," and "Tang" as in...hwoooooooooo-TANG!

Sonny punctuates the "hwoooooooooo-TANG" by doing a fast series of hand movements ending with a Karate chop in the air in front of Matt.

MATT

So...it's pretty obvious *you're* not the brains of the operation. Who's in charge?

SONNY

You don't come 'round here flappin' your gums and askin' questions. You best be on your way before I make me some pig sushi.

MATT

(breaking character)

I'm sorry...did I miss something in the script? Is this game set in 1972?

SONNY

Keep talkin', Hazard. You got about ten seconds before I go upside your head Kung Fu style.

Sonny strikes a Kung Fu pose.

MATT

(back in character)

Ooooookay. How about we skip that, and you just tell me where the money is.

SONNY

I ain't tellin' you squat. That money belongs to Mr. Chang, fair and square. He got for community service work, if you get my drift.

MATT

Look, I'm gonna give you one more chance. Get the hell out of my way and let me settle this with your boss.

SONNY

No way, pig. You want to confab with the boss man, you gotta get through me first.

RETURN TO GAME

Level 1: Mid-Level Cinematic 2 (GW)

INT. JAPANESE RESTAURANT, MANAGER'S OFFICE

Angle on the door, looking out. **Matt opens and** walks through the door and into the center of the empty office. He looks around as if to find the safe. There's an enemy hack. Matt stops in his tracks, back to the door.

MATT

What the...?

We see a laser sight dot appear on Matt's head. Matt senses something and turns around. The laser dot is now right between his eyes.

CUT TO:

New angle, with Matt in the foreground. and the doorway in the background. In the doorway is **Sting Sniperscope**. He's a huge, hulking, outrageous, steroidal video game villain. He's currently got a silver-plated .357 magnum with a HUGE laser sight attached aimed at Matt.

MATT

Who the hell are you?

STING

Your worst nightmare...except in the daytime, when you are not asleep.

MATT

Oh yeah? Well, you better...huh?

STING

Your life will now end. Prepare to begin your death.

In spite of the obvious danger, Matt is distracted and bemused by the villain's less than stellar dialog.

MATT

Um... whoever's writing your material needs to lay off the 80s action flicks.

Sting cocks his pistol.

STING

Your words are puny, like you. You are the past, Matt Hazard. I am the future. And your present ends now.

Sting fires. We go into a slow-motion FX shot where we see the bullet emerge from the gun barrel, and we follow the bullet's progress toward Matt. The bullet is a foot from Matt's head. He cringes...and the bullet freezes in mid-air. Matt opens his eyes.

CUT TO:

New wide angle shot. We see that the world (apart from Matt) is frozen. Matt looks around, sees the bullet, and steps quickly out of its path. He walks over to Sting and waves his hand in front of the villain's face. No reaction.

MATT

What is going *on* here?

There's a hero hack (a green shimmer of ones and zeros that briefly shimmers over the scene). Matt notices this and looks around.

Matt is startled to hear a sexy female voice coming from nowhere. It's QA...but she doesn't have much time to talk.

QA (OS, FILTERED)

Matt? Can you hear me?

MATT

Yeah...I hear you. But where are you?

QA (OS, FILTERED)

No time to explain right now...someone is bound to notice that I've hacked in and paused the game. You've got a problem, and I'm here to help.

MATT

Problem? What problem?

QA (OS, FILTERED)

Your saves have been erased. If that bullet had hit you, you would have been dead. Permanently.

Matt is shocked.

MATT

What are you talking about?

QA (OS, FILTERED)

Look, we're out of time. They took your weapons when you walked in here, so you're going to have to use your melee subroutines to fight this guy. I can do a little something to even the odds...

CUT TO:

Close-up of Sting. The gun in his hand and all the other visible guns he has disappear.

CUT TO:

Medium shot of Matt and Sting (who is still frozen). Matt is looking around angrily.

MATT

Just a damn minute! I want to know what's going on here!

QA (OS, FILTERED)

No time! Just take this guy out. We'll talk when you're done.

There's a hero hack effect. Sting looks at his empty gun hand, surprised. Then, he turns to Matt, an angry expression on his face. The two square off for combat.

RETURN TO GAME

Level 1: Closing Cinematic (GW)

INT. JAPANESE RESTAURANT, MANAGER'S OFFICE

Close up of **Sting Sniperscope** He is on the floor of the office, defeated. He dissolves in a pattern of ones and zeros.

CUT TO:

Medium shot of **Matt**. He looks around, angry.

MATT

Ok, lady...whoever you are, we need to talk. Now.

QA (OS, FILTERED)

I couldn't agree more.

There is a hero hack effect.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CYBERSPACE

The office dissolves around Matt, leaving him standing (in the same pose) in cyberspace—essentially a room with walls composed of scrolling *Matrix*-like code. Matt is taking in the surroundings, when **QA** appears. She's a beautiful (but translucent) female avatar in a tight, revealing outfit. Matt is impressed in spite of the multitude of questions on his mind.

QA

Hi, Matt. Still in one piece, I see.

MATT

Yeah...thanks. And you are...?

QA

I can't tell you my name. I think we're safe in this part of the server, but you can never be sure. Just call me QA.

MATT

Ok...QA. Mind telling me what's going on?

QA

I hacked into this game I found running on a secure server and that's when I noticed you were in trouble. That guy you just KO'd was Sting Sniperscope. He's referenced in the code for every level of the game. But you? You're only in Level 1.

MATT

Look, babe, there's got to be a mistake. I'm the star of this game!

QA

No, you're not. The code shows that there was going to be a plot twist that took you out as the player character and put Sniperscope in your place. And don't call me babe.

MATT

Well... I'm still alive and he's dead...game over, right?

QA

Unfortunately, no. The game is still running, and I need time to find out what's going on.

MATT

How do you keep the game running if the main character is dead?

QA

That's where you come in.

MATT

Without weapons and saves? No way!

QA

I've already restored the save feature. As for weapons...

QA gestures. There's a hero hack effect and Matt's body shimmers with code. When the code shimmer clears, his mundane suit is gone and has been replaced with the REAL Matt Hazard costume, complete with weapons, etc. Matt looks himself over admiringly.

MATT

Oh, yeah...much better. Suits make me look old.
But...won't somebody notice I'm not Sniperscope?

QA

If you stick to the objectives, it will be a while before
anyone sees the switch. I'll keep an eye on you. I might
even be able to hack in a surprise or two from time to time
to help you out.

MATT

Then I guess...IT'S HAZARD TIME!

QA

Um...yeah.

With that, the room around them dissolves into code and, a moment later, QA and Matt
do the same.

FADE TO BLACK