



ALPHA

## Canceled: The Lost E3 Games

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Since 1995, the Electronic Entertainment Expo has been the largest and most influential event in the games industry. E3 is where new consoles are unveiled and acquisitions are announced.

E3 has also always been the host of major game announcements and reveals. While most games that are announced at E3 eventually see release, that isn't always the case. Here are a few titles that made their debut at E3, only to never see a release.

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## ***Project H.A.M.M.E.R., Nintendo, E3 2006***

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“Isn't it just fun to bash things?”

- Reggie Fils-Aimé announcing *Project H.A.M.M.E.R.*,  
*Nintendo Press Conference, E3 2006*

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*Project H.A.M.M.E.R.* was a game that was announced and then almost immediately forgotten. A beat 'em up exclusive to the Nintendo Wii, *Project H.A.M.M.E.R.* had players using the Wiimote to swing a giant hammer, battling robots in the near-future United States.

Outside of E3 2006, not much is actually known about *Project H.A.M.M.E.R.* Nintendo would eventually pause development on the game, and officially cancel it in 2009. It was only years later that *Project H.A.M.M.E.R.*'s troubled history would come to light, revealing that the game's Western developers often clashed with Japanese management when it came to design decisions.<sup>1</sup>

*Project H.A.M.M.E.R.* may have been too simple for its own good. The combat seemed lackluster and repetitive. After years of development, its quiet cancellation went relatively unnoticed.

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## ***Agent, Rockstar Games, E3 2009***

Rockstar Games rarely attends E3, often preferring to make their own announcements. But at E3 2009, Rockstar announced a PS3 exclusive, *Agent*. Set in the late 1970s, *Agent* was a spy thriller set during the Cold War. Washington D.C. would serve as an open-world hub, with levels set around the globe.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Nintendo's *Project H.A.M.M.E.R.*: The Untold Story - Unseen64, [https://youtu.be/2iMLRiwB\\_c](https://youtu.be/2iMLRiwB_c)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.polygon.com/features/2019/2/21/18118822/agent-rockstar-san-diego>

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"The game, like anything from Rockstar North, is going to be very, very cool. It's going to push the edge, it's going to be genre-defining and it's going to be a whole new way of experiencing videogames that we haven't really seen before."

- Ben Feder, CEO, Take-Two<sup>3</sup>

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Outside of the initial announcement, not much about *Agent* was revealed. Take-Two remained silent on the game for years, occasionally renewing the trademark. No trailer of *Agent* was ever released. No screenshots were released either, but a few were leaked over the years.<sup>4</sup> It appears Rockstar moved the *Agent* team on to other projects, such as *Red Dead Redemption* and *Grand Theft Auto V*.

It's important to note that *Agent* has not officially been canceled by Rockstar. However, after multiple trademark renewals, the *Agent* trademark finally expired in November of 2018, almost a decade after its announcement.<sup>5</sup> While Rockstar may never officially announce its cancellation, a lapsed trademark effectively serves as a pretty good indicator of a game's cancellation. To this day, many people would like to see what Rockstar's take on a 1970's spy thriller could be.

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## **Milo and Kate, Lionhead Studios, E3 2009**

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"I'd like you to meet a boy called Milo. He's a character that can recognize us, he can recognize our faces, he can recognize our voice, he can recognize emotions in us."

- Peter Molyneux, co-founder, Lionhead Studios  
announcing Project Milo at Microsoft's E3 2009  
Press Conference

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.gamesindustry.biz/articles/rockstars-agent-to-be-genre-defining-feder>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.eurogamer.net/articles/2015-12-22-leaked-images-of-rockstars-spy-game-agent-appear>

<sup>5</sup> <https://venturebeat.com/2018/11/26/rockstar-games-abandons-agent-9-years-after-reveal/>

*Milo and Kate*, originally called *Project Milo*, was an exclusive for Microsoft's Xbox 360. *Project Milo* was to use the power of the Kinect, Microsoft's new motion controller. Both the Kinect and *Milo and Kate* were unveiled at E3 2009. The game focused on the interaction between the player and Milo, a virtual boy who responded to the user's actions, recognizing them via the Kinect hardware. Milo was an ordinary boy that the player would interact with through the game's story

*Milo* remained an enigma. It did not return for E3 2010 and was not shown at other game industry events, leaving everyone to wonder what exactly was going on with the project. When would Microsoft reveal more details about *Milo* and what it was capable of? Who was the Kate in *Milo and Kate*, and what role would she play in the game? When would they announce a release date?

Unfortunately, we would never find out. *Milo* was quietly canceled. Microsoft Studios VP Phil Spencer would go on to say that the idea was compelling, but they struggled to make a full game out of it<sup>6</sup>. Despite the incredible possibility, *Milo and Kate* would be shelved, and the Kinect would be used for other software.

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## **Star Wars 1313, Lucas Arts, E3 2012**

First shown at E3 2012, *Star Wars 1313* was a gritty take on the Star Wars universe. The game was going for an M or Mature (17+) rating. *1313* was more than just a name, it was the setting: a complex, grungy subterranean metropolis called Level 1313. At its initial reveal, we were told that you would play as a bounty hunter within the Star Wars universe. Later it was revealed that it was not just any bounty hunter, but Boba Fett, arguably the most popular bounty hunter in the Star Wars lore.

Later that year, Lucas Arts would be acquired by Disney, along with their parent company Lucas Film, for over \$4 billion. It's not uncommon for projects to get shuttered and teams to get rearranged after a merger or acquisition. Naturally, fans were worried about the state of *Star Wars 1313*. Would development continue as planned? Would the game get delayed? Would Disney interfere with the development?

In an effort to squelch any rumors, Lucas Arts assured fans that *1313*'s development was proceeding as usual.

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<sup>6</sup> <https://twitter.com/XboxP3/status/439666049026256896>

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"For the time being all projects are business as usual. We are excited about all the possibilities that Disney brings."

- *Lucas Arts' statement to IGN on 1313's development*<sup>7</sup>

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Less than a year later, we got the final update on *Star Wars 1313*. In April 2013, the game was canceled in arguably the worst way possible - Disney shuttered all of Lucas Arts, save for a small skeletal crew.<sup>8</sup> Just like that, *Star Wars 1313* and long-time developer Lucas Arts was no more.

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## ***Scalebound*, PlatinumGames, E3 2014**

*Scalebound* was unveiled at E3 2014 as an exclusive for Windows and Xbox One. *Scalebound* was a third-person action RPG game. While at first glance it appeared to be a pure fantasy setting, *Scalebound* also had modern elements to it. The main protagonist was Drew, a character from a modern setting who found himself bound to Thuban, a fire-breathing dragon. Drew can attack and fight on his own, command Thuban to attack, or even assume direct control of Thuban.

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"Prepare to see action at a whole new scale."

- *Hideki Kamiya, Game Director for Scalebound, Microsoft Press Conference, E3 2014*

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.ign.com/articles/2012/10/30/disney-acquisition-will-not-affect-star-wars-1313>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.gamesindustry.biz/articles/2013-04-03-disney-shuts-down-lucasarts-development>

*Scalebound*'s focus on action intrigued many, especially with Platinum's reputation on previous character action games such as *Bayonetta*, *Metal Gear Rising: Revengeance*, *The Wonderful 101*, and *Vanquish*. A new game from them, but with a fantasy setting where you fought alongside a dragon partner seemed like a great mesh. Even better, four-player co-op was announced at Gamescom 2015. By all appearances, *Scalebound* was looking to be a great exclusive for Microsoft. Initially due for a 2016 release, *Scalebound* was later pushed back to 2017. Rumors swirled about its troubled production until Microsoft officially canceled the project in January 2017. Despite being highly anticipated, and one of their few console exclusives, *Scalebound* wouldn't live to see the light of day.

*Scalebound* is still sorely missed by the community. So much so in fact, that a rumor recently circulated that *Scalebound* would be revived as a Switch exclusive, although it appears to be just that - a rumor.<sup>9</sup>

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Which of these E3 debuts do you wish had made it to release?

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<sup>9</sup> <https://twitter.com/synaesthesiapp/status/1097584333500674049>

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