

# Great cast can't save drowning 'Mystic River'

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A & E EDITOR

Despite much fanfare, the latest abomination of Warner Bros. called *Mystic River* caused this reporter many sleepless nights since its nationwide release on Oct. 15, due to fits of projectile vomiting.

It's not that I don't enjoy a good projectile vomit now and again, and everything about the movie was great, but there was a little something missing.

So I was minding my own business, sitting amongst the numerous like-minded moochers yearning to watch a film without paying \$7.50, when all of a sudden my train of thought was interrupted by 140 minutes of mindless drivel.

The story opens during the incident that would come to define three young boys. They are in the middle of some harmless defacing of public

property when a car pulls up. A shady character steps forth claiming to be a police officer and insists that for the crime of writing their names in wet cement, one of the boys must come along to become his pommel horse. Reluctantly, the tallest of the three children unwittingly volunteers for the position and their lives are forever changed.

Years later when the child of one of the three gets murdered, the former friends are forced into contact once again through a bizarre string of coincidences. One friend, a policeman, must search frantically for the real killer before the crime-boss father of the deceased strangles the first suspect his cronies can abduct. And thus a generic crime drama ensues, complete with a dramatic plot twist at the end. How unpredictable!

The acting, however, was great. The star-studded cast, including such

veterans as Sean Penn, Kevin Bacon and Tim Robbins, performed up to their "A-list" expectations. Even Lawrence Fishburne managed to avoid being typecast as "Morpheus" through superb acting and an excellent Baaahston accent (that's Boston to you non-Bostonians).

The cinematography was also excellent, and director Clint Eastwood deserves kudos, but not even his grasp of cinema was enough to save a regurgitation of a plot. Done to death!

The same story could be seen on television during prime time. Police stories are all the rage, and haven't gone out of style since their spawning. The only way to stop seeing the same horribly formulaic concepts played out over and over is to write a letter to the president.

I give *Mystic River* an 8 out of 10 on the I-can't-believe-its-not-CSI-o-meter.



Kevin Bacon and Lawrence Fishburne in "Mystic River." Photo Courtesy of Warner Brothers Pictures

# 'Gunbound' unleashes sweet mayhem online

Robb Egan

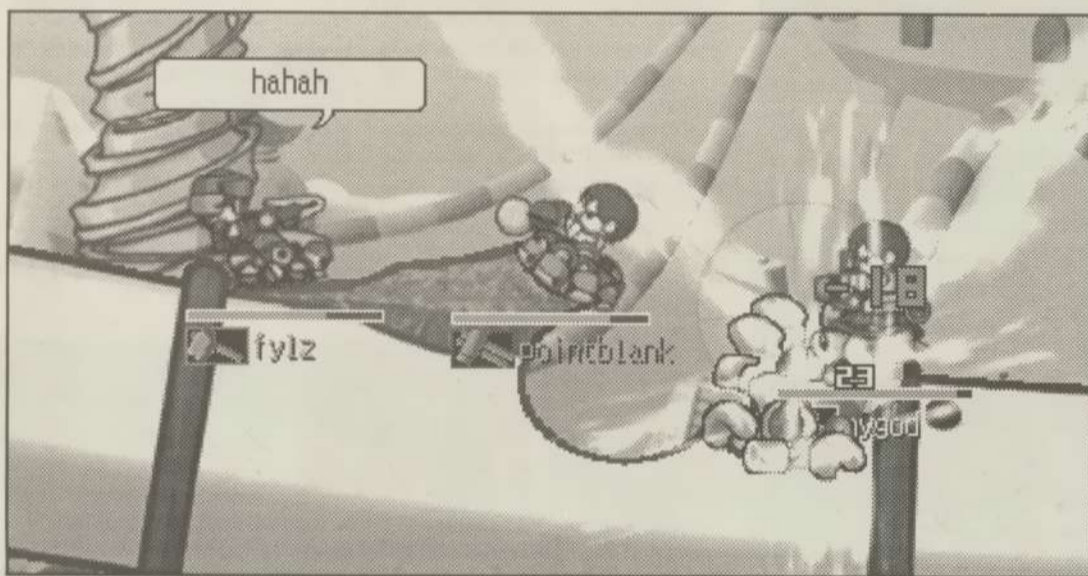
THE CLACKAMAS PRINT

From the Korean game company Softnyx comes "Gunbound," a game that pits player versus player in an online artillery battle-royale reminiscent of "Worms" or "Scorched Earth."

"Gunbound" has a lot going for it. First and foremost, it's free, both to download and to play. Players need only download the game, install it and sign up for an ID before they are ready to unleash sweet, sweet mayhem on each other.

Gunbound is also cute, almost obnoxiously so. Fans of Gravity Corps' "Ragnarok Online" will feel right at home with the cutesy player avatars, complete with customizable appearance via the ability to buy and equip new gear. Each piece of equipment will affect an avatar's stats, increasing attack, defense and more.

Adding to the RPG-esque play is the ability to earn experience points and gold, called GP and G respectively, by winning battles, making good shots or doing exceptional amounts of damage in-game. Conversely, shooting one's teammates or oneself will cause one to lose GP and G, which helps to increase the challenge



GUNBOUND SCREEN SHOT

"Ha Hah" yells Fylz as Mygod feels the burn. Thrills like these await you in the wonderland that is 'Gunbound.' Typical user response to 'Gunbound' is "OMFGWTFMAO!"

of the game and discourage that scourge of all multiplayer games, the TK'er (team killer, for all you noobs).

But it's in actual gameplay that "Gunbound" really shines. From the game lobby, players choose in which zone to play, then are shown a list of all the rooms currently being hosted. Each room shows the game mode, the number of players allowed and

which map and game mode the room is set on. There are four different modes of play ranging from Solo (a sort of last man standing mode) to Score (teams share a set number of lives, which members can use to respawn after they are destroyed).

Players can choose from more than a dozen vehicles, called mobiles. Each mobile has its own unique appearance, eccentricities,

characteristics and weapons. A player can also select from a list of powerups available.

When the game starts, the game randomly decides player turn order and placement on the map. The player then proceeds to destroy the opposing team members by either knocking them off the terrain or through the old-fashioned system of knocking out all their health. Which

method one chooses to kill the opponent is often a matter of which mobile one uses, as some are excellent diggers, while others deal a lot of damage.

The cutesy characters create an illusion of innocent mischief. Each mobile has its own whimsical personality augmented by sound effects attuned to their persona. The triceratops, Trico, has one of the cutest corpses available, complete with animated tears.

The graphics themselves are some of the best seen in a free online game, and the replay value exceeds many pay-to-play games. Titles such as "Dark Age of Camelot" or "Star Wars Galaxies" spring immediately to mind.

The music and graphics just add to the overall cuteness and lighthearted feel of "Gunbound," proving that death and destruction can be dished out just as effectively in an upbeat and happy environment as it can in a gloomy, black dungeon full of death. Huzzah!

So those who like super-cute mayhem and don't mind super-addictive Asian games full of "Engrish" should check out "Gunbound." It can be downloaded free of charge and registered for at [www.gunbound.net](http://www.gunbound.net).

# Cover band puts fresh punk spin on pop hits



Album Art

Cover band "Me First and the Gimme Gimmes" puts an alternative spin on pop hits of the '80s and '90s. With great dance moves and sweet bow ties, these fellows rule the punk-rock scene.

Michael Cooper

THE CLACKAMAS PRINT

The 2003 release of *Me First and the Gimme Gimmes* is by far their best album to date.

Five guys from well-known punk bands NOFX, Lagwagon, Swingin' Utters and No Use for a Name have come together as "Me First and the Gimme Gimmes," a group that has chosen the alternate route of music: the cover band.

Their newest album, released just this year, is entitled "Take a Break." The material is semi-recent, mostly pop hits from the '80s and '90s. Unlike many tracks on their three previous works, most of the songs on the new release are kept at their original speed.

The best song on the album is their rendition of "Save the Best for Last," a Vanessa Williams song. Slowing adding bass, drums and then guitar, this song gets exciting even before the lyrics start. Like many of the songs on this album, the vocals are not sung to copy the original artist, but to give the song a punk

twist. It sounds as if the band is feeling the song as if they had written it.

The album really takes off at track five, "Nothing Compares 2 U," originally by Prince. The song starts out simple, adding another layer as each line goes by. While the usually tender song is performed in an almost-yelling, vowel-slurring voice, it doesn't lose its emotion. This version is quite a contrast when you think of previous covers of the song, like Sinead O'Connor's.

One track that all can appreciate on this album is R. Kelly's "I Believe I can Fly." The song begins with the sound of ocean waves and a ukulele. Vocalist Spike actually carries a tune until the chorus where he graciously half-growls, half-screams the lyrics.

Another notable song is "Mona Lisa," a '50s hit made famous by Nat King Cole. The cover first imitates the original, where Spike shows his talent in singing once more. Wood and stringed instruments accompany him in the first part of the song.

The second time around, they turn up the volume and quicken the pace, making this into a true punk-

rock song. As another plus, it even features an awesome guitar solo near the end.

As is the Gimme Gimmes' custom, they end the album with a song that makes fans want to play it all over again. Carole King's "Natural Woman" is played with an incredible amount of energy. It starts out loud, then takes it down for the first verse. One will probably recognize the song from the first thirty seconds of guitar, even if only from the 'Herbal Essences' commercial. Something that's different from any other song on this album, the rest of the band harmonizes with a series of "ooo"s throughout the second verse. It's a fantastic end to a great collection of songs.

Most covers try to copy the artist; *Me First and the Gimme Gimmes* have chosen instead to reinvent the music. In the words of a fellow fan, "This album reminds you that you don't listen to the Gimme Gimmes because they cover well-known songs in a quirky way; you listen to them because they play great punk rock."