

TOPICS

POST-NOTES

Potential order: (POST-NOTE)

1. Game intro (Namco's brawler experiments)
2. Sizzle reel video (very cool attract mode, it may not be a sizzle reel but this shit's hot).
3. Story intro. (The story of the can man)
4. Presentation (This is not jank, this game looks and *feels* exceptional, gameplay is smooth, for a brawler based heavily on high speed loosely context based inputs it reads player intent with absurd accuracy, the worst that can be said is lock on, not quite Z-Grade Z-Targeting, but it's not A-cing it either. "The first thing that hits you, besides (enemy) is just how nice this game looks")
(Part of the hook of getting good at this game, for me anyway, is played well, this game looks like a well choreographed action movie, it's just satisfying to watch)
5. Core Combat & Awkward tutorialising (mechanics)
6. Demons, defence, and difficulty! (First Jake encounter, story of why I finally played it (another two year game, but off and on, not a BE5 struggle, Jake is not really a roadblock, he's just the first hurdle (until Free Mode, where he truly is a roadblock all over again)

???. "Final" Boss, The Other half of the Moveset, and Freemode

As I get to the final boss talk about how it's only here I learned about the slide, then talk about all the moves I missed. (stream clip of learning the running grapple)

- There's a common idea with character action games that the first playthrough is merely the long tutorial, it's a dress rehearsal while subsequent skilled runs focused on more high scoring play is when the game really begins. Well I kinda had that, after beating Urban Reign I took a little break before going back through it, finally using my full moveset, making use of sprint attacks, air grapples and stun taunting.
- So think about this, while this game is hard, I beat it with half of the games moveset! Should I feel proud or dumb? Both, but hey, it goes to show you don't have to feel daunted by hard games, you can get through.
- Or well, have I beaten the game, after clearing the game there is free mode, this is where I learned the terrifying, not actually hidden but easy to miss fact, this was NORMAL DIFFICULTY!
- Explain Free Mode, this is the real test of mastery and it is a *TEST*
- Explain all of this before the actual final boss and story conclusion, save the funny gunman for last

Urban Reign is God Hand without its dues

- Post-Note: On the surface this game is a lot like God Hand, it's as tough as nails PS2 beat-em-up which came out very late in the systems lifespan to mixed reviews, only to gradually garner a cult following who appreciated it for what it was. While God Hand has gotten its dues and is seen as a cult classic of the beat-em-up genre nowadays. Urban Reign is more of a sleeper cult hit. It's a little less varied, a little more straight forward, and mastery does feel less rewarded, but this is still a great game. **(observation/history/post-note)**

Sparring with SPA

- SPA adds some extra strategy to fights, metre management is another skill, another consideration. You can spend them on guaranteed damage or hold them to escape bad situations or counter a foe's SPA (as special moves are undodgeable), they are good both for pressing an advantage and for forcing the fight back to a neutral state. **(observation/gameplay/metre/SPA)**

Structure: talk about how the early missions drip feed some of your mechanics, but how I wish we had all of them from the off, with later missions just informing us of their existence, which is also sort of done via Shun Ying's mission briefings, but given how de-emphasised they are, I don't mind the pop-ups. Considering a solid chunk of our attacks are left untaught, moves more useful than the wall attacks for that matter, I find this a really weird issue of poor teaching priorities.

(observation/post-note/controls)

Structure/post-note: Smooth animations!

- First fight note: Even with my bad gameplay, the first thing that hits me is just how good this game looks. It's got the Namco flare, the animations are slick, the moves are smooth, have a ton of personality but remain decently readable despite their high speed. The hits sound meaty, it's such a pleasing game to watch and when played well it can look like a choreographed fight scene in motion, when you're in a flow state this game flows right along with you. For now, there are plenty of breaks in the stream. **(joke/wordplay/animation/observation/gameplay)**

- Hits sound like explosions, cracks of thunder! This may not be Tekken but Urban Reign has heavy hitters!

Tatty Stats

- But the question is thus, on the left are offense abilities, how much damage your attack types do (basic strikes/grapples/regional attacks/specials / weapons (blocked off until weapons enter gameplay which is appreciated) and on the right are defense abilities (toughness (overall health) and regional endurances which boost regional health)

So do you want to do more damage and thus end fights faster? Or boost defense so you're allowed to make more mistakes in what is a tough game. With no ability to stock points, and a semi-linear conveyor of unrepeatable missions you're essentially betting on what you think you need. At best the system is pointless, despite the points, and at worst it can fuck you up. A struggling player may focus on defence! Don't do this! The best defence is a good offence! As timed missions and regional damage missions can become absurdly hard! If not outright unwinnable if your own skills are not up to the task!

I mean in the end these both do the same thing, they give you greater margin for error! Just think of greater damage as another way of allowing more room for mistakes, as every successful attack is greater progress. My suggestion is to up basic striking and regional attack to start.

(observation/post-note/RPG system)

Dodgy Thoughts

- Dodging is interesting, endlessly rewarding. Unlike games like Arkham or what have you, there are no big wind ups or screen prompts, we're not Batman, we're Bradman. But yeah dodging in this feels so stylish, it's slight but in a way which makes each dodge feel deliberate and individually satisfying. I will probably do a big Batman comparison. Remember that in that game the satisfaction isn't in beating the thugs, that's a given, it's how stylishly you do it, how much you can embody the skill Batman is lauded for. Here, just getting through the fight, just dodging one simple combo is just as satisfying by itself.

- And no, this isn't because of poor telegraphing, it's less telegraphed but it is very readable, it's just that reading it is less literally looking for big obvious wind ups, and more learning to read the game, the invisible signs, the enemy behaviours. You can still do it on reaction, attacks are still very readable with the Tecmotion magic, but you have to be very quick on that draw, you have to predict and gamble as with fighting games. **(combat/observation/post-note/defence)**

Super Deflection Post-Note

- Dodging has another neat mechanic, once you take a hit, the window for a deflection to count is much narrower, so dodging a full string is easier than recovering, it's a neat little mechanic, it feels intuitive, and it adds extra reward to a super deflection. Seriously escaping a chain and eating some damage feels better than evading the whole thing.

It makes escaping a string satisfying and pushes you towards using SPAs to buy room, but it also gives skilled or gambling players a chance to risk saving their metre incase of greater emergencies down the line. It also means when you burn a SPA move on escaping you do know you had other choices. **(decision making/deflection/combat/gameplay/SPA/post-note)**

An Idiot Can Win

01:10 Redirect foe! Horizontal combo into neutral to try and juggle Reggie, and he escapes with an air deflection! Like a super deflection, very tight timing! **(combat/moment)**

- Watching this footage before I knew sprint attacks sucks! Reggie is just backing up and I'm swinging at air! I don't know pivotal gap closers which are super important!

Topic potential: I did not know how deep the game is, despite its extreme difficulty, an idiot can bumble through with enough tenacity, and decent use of what mechanics they do understand.

(story/video story/topic/structure/post-note/tutorial)

Another SPA Note: Dramatic Pacing of Fights

01:20 I press the attack, flooring Jake, but he responds with a get up Spa, forcing me away, attacking downed opponents can be very dangerous, it's often prudent to let them get up, and reapproach neutrally.

- For better or worse (I'd argue better once you get over the frustration), Urban Reign coerces you into letting the fight reset very often. Why this is good I find is it gives the fights a lot of moments of tension, and it takes a great deal of mastery to never let go of the advantage, making such victories not feeling like cheesing the game. It lends the fights a lot of tense moments, highs and lows. **(drama/combat/strategy/observation/post-note)**

- The rhythm of a good martial arts movie has explosive bursts of action, followed by moments of pause, equivalent to natural in a fighting game. Where opponents start testing, looking for openings, before another burst of explosive action. **(observation/film/gameplay)**

POSTNOTE: Potential Opening / Sturgeons Law and 3D fighters

3D Fighter genre joke: My favourite fighter is a 3D game actually, and probably goes to show how much of a casual I am. I love Powerstone 2, and I've always been pulled more towards 3D fighters despite the genres generally lacking quality. This game from my childhood is hilariously racist. Everyone says you can't make Blazing Saddles today, but no one says you can't make Kung Fu Chaos today, but then judging by the reviews they couldn't make Kung Fu Chaos in fuckin' 2003 so who knows. Anyway these guys became Ninja Theory. **(joke/observation/topic?)**

- Sturgeon's revelation posits that 90% of everything is crap, the arena fighter genre is perhaps the greatest evidence of that phrase. In the past these games were often experimental attempts to bring the fighting game genre out of its 2D plane, many of these attempts crashed and burned and they beelined back to a straight line. Nowadays it's a genre which appears to be 90% IP slop, a foundation upon which you slap anime characters into to slap anime characters around.

- The good examples of the genre are few and far between, it seems like an experiment which died down which I've not seen many independent attempts to revive.

(post-note/topic/joke/observation/genre)

Skill Growth Demonstrated Via Repetition

00:20 So in this one, we fight a buffed Jake, he's now more aggressive and makes use of his Green buffing Special SPA, but I think it's also a really great fight to demonstrate growth, he is a bit tougher, but I overcome him in a measly 6 minutes! (well, 5 minutes 40), by repeating him as a foe a little tougher, it's repetitive, but I don't feel it as much because I'm revelling in feeling like I've come to grips a bit more with the game! (save this thought for the Golem section? Final marker of growth, Golem and growth?) **(topic/observation/structure/post-note)**

Mission Details

00:45 Dwayne stands still, he allows some time for the player to make the first move, then he pops RED SPA and runs in! **(boss/strategy/presentation)**

- Again, love how many fights have little presentational/characterful flourishes like this. It makes the fighters feel more like unique people, personality captured via fighting style and little behavioural quirks set by stage. **(observation/presentation/post-note)**

- Also no music, atmospheric. Sometimes fights have music, sometimes the music kicks in on the first hit landed, sometimes you're just left to make your own chin music **(joke/music/post-note)**

Cruel and Unusual Punishment

01:25 Very frustrating moment, I grapple break Dwayne and go to punish, but his AI perfect plays instantly to deflection me and go from a neutral grapple right into the move he wanted, a launching grapple, which he instantly transmissions into a running air grab powerbomb into a wall from.

- As much as I like this game, sometimes damage feels unavoidable, the dodge/defence system is simple and timing based, and so programming an AI that dodges just enough to feel challenging but not so much that it feels cheating is hard. But sometimes it feels like it just breaks out some unfair punishment! **(difficulty/post-note/AI/dodge/defence/deflection/running grapple/air grab)**

Post-Note: All Rounder & Other Characters

Brad, the lead character, is the one and only character to possess the 'all rounder' fighting style, which is at it suggests, an all rounder. He has decent access to basically every single option in the game. (only lacking some very specific moves) excelling nowhere but having a ton of tools to be good in every situation.

Getting to play as other leads in the form the game has is really funny because you suddenly learn under duress oh shit, characters have weaknesses and strengths! They control very differently and you have to learn to mitigate weaknesses and highlight strengths. Brad is a very easy to play character in comparison. **(observation/control/characters)**

- Everyone else has quirks
- Jake is absurdly good in the AI's hands, in mine, I have to relearn how to play the game, he has awkward combos and a slightly more complicated grapple system. Capable of a ton of damage, but it takes fine control to get there. Dwayne has awkward combos, Glen lacks some more nuanced techniques most have access to in exchange for power, meaning you have a more limited arsenal of ways to control the situation. Tong Yoon requires greater use of differing combo types and has shitty dive moves. Grimm is a boxer and as such has bad grapple game.
- Brad's true strength is he's built to counter any situation but truly excels in none.

POST-NOTE: Intro part attempt / Namco Beat-Em-Up history

Intro thought: Urban Reign comes out of this interesting period where Namco was doing bizarre experiments in the beat-em-up genre. We got Dead to Rights, a mixture of Max Payne and a Mid-brawler. Breakdown, AKA. Half Circle Half-Life, an insanely tough first person scrapper which I covered years ago, and Nina Williams Analog Adventures.

These experiments didn't all pan out, for me, this game Urban Reigns supreme as the most mechanically sound and downright enjoyable of these titles, but this is a king in exile, a game in a dying subgenre released in the twilight days of its console. Critically it was either seen as too slight for being "just a brawler", meanwhile that brawling was tough to the point of being seen as unfair and ill-balanced.

This is a cult object, not a critical darling, but unlike God Hand it has seemingly yet to find its people. So let me do my part. **(structure/example/opening/post-note)**

Post-Note: No No Damage

- The SPA system and the way the game goes makes no damage runs seem kinda impossible. That may be a big deal to some challenge runners. I mean maybe not. Odd as it sounds, I prefer watching a decently skilled run with some drama. No damage runs are insanely impressive shows of technical skill, but I prefer some uncertainty. Which is why Urban Reign's combat is primo for me. Plus it's not rigged, with skill I started consistently beating foes who once were like trying to take down a concrete wall with my skull. The game is hard, but I can be hardheaded!

(post-note/observation/difficulty/balancing)

Post-Note: Most Complicated String

- This game is, compared to a standard fighter, very simple on inputs, no quarter circles, no complex strings. The most intimidating series of inputs for this game was a slide tackle, to juggle combo, to running air grapple. That's the most daunting combo I found in the game, and it pales in complexity to a proper fighting game. It has tight timing and takes some mastery of positioning, but not much.

(observation/moveset/controls/genre)

Post-Note: Picky pick-ups

- Picking up objects is probably the worst the controls get in this game, they're a little particular and being a two button press definitely adds to how cumbersome it is. The fact Brad has butter fingers really compounds on this, making weapons feel like more trouble than they're worth.

(controls/post-note)

Post-Note: Golem is the final test

- Golem is the game's penultimate challenge, he is a deeply unfair opponent on first blush. He punishes a ton of behaviours the rest of the game ingrains and doesn't allow you to half-ass the ones it encourages. He has Napalm 99's buff of super armour, but combined with a moveset which is fast and highly damaging, and an AI that is deeply oppressive. Each fight with him is a genuine test, but he's also the game's final way of allowing you to really feel your own growth.

The first battle with him, you still have a partner, this is essentially a preview, when you face him alone. He feels nigh insurmountable, but by the final time you face him, even if he's slightly harder, if you've persevered, you're now someone who has been turned into a diamond via pressure. (use clips of first play versus my revisit) (Remember tweet about how the game punishes you)
- This is a trick the game has done really well over and over, steadily turning up the heat with challenges that seem insurmountable at first, but on revisit you curbstomp them, the growth is so satisfyingly pronounced. Golem is the ultimate version of that due to how downright unfair he seems, but how defeatable he really is when he's understood. He forces you to grow.

00:40 Highly intellectual resource from Wikipedia: *The most famous golem narrative involves Judah Loew ben Bezalel, the late-16th-century rabbi of Prague. According to Moment magazine, "the golem is a highly mutable metaphor with seemingly limitless symbolism. It can be a victim or villain, man or woman—or sometimes both. Over the centuries, it has been used to connote war, community, isolation, hope, and despair."*

- Well, Golem, uh, Urban Reign's represents despair... Then hope. It's made of game overs and wishes for you to get fucking good! **(joke/research/post-note)**

This isn't Like a Dragon, this is a whole different beast!

Early on, talking about why I beat the game this time: This is another title it took a couple years to beat, don't worry, while I am slow, this isn't a Brigade E5 situation, this isn't real time with pause for thought. I basically always broke this game out, hit a snag, and got pulled away by another project.

This time, I was going through Yakuza 7, and I was craving some brawling! Now, this game isn't Like a Dragon, this is a whole different beast! Using this game to satiate my need for street fights is like a sugar fiend cracking their craving with crack cocaine, it is, in many senses of the word, harder stuff! (joke/post-note/structure)

Spa learning joke

While I dislike the drip feed of mechanics, I am sort of okay with Brad getting his SPA moves gradually. He tends to learn one after facing an opponent with the skill, making it feel like he's watching his opponents like a Hawk. **(joke/post-note/tutorials)**

OBSERVATIONS

UR 037 Note - Thank god for allies

Having had to struggle against these guys makes them feel so reassuring as allies.

(observation/gameplay/tagteam)

UR 079 NOTE

Did you ever feel like fighting Saejima from Yakuza 5? You know, super armour, inescapable grabs, but also he's super aggressive and far more nimble? No? That sounds awful? Well bad luck, here's Golem! He's not only strong and sturdy, he's faster than you! **(observation/combat)**

UR 001 - M1, M2 - Intro - Nobody is innocent - City run by crime - Brad Hawk turns up

00:00 Namco splash, game is from the same studio as Pacman, Soul Caliber, and who can forget Death by Degrees! Okay I'm just Tekken the piss. **(joke/bad joke/observation)**

- From the creators of Tekken Force comes a good beat-em-up! **(observation)**

- Post-Note: On the surface this game is a lot like God Hand, it's as tough as nails PS2 beat-em-up which came out very late in the systems lifespan to mixed reviews, only to gradually garner a cult following who appreciated it for what it was. While God Hand has gotten its dues and is seen as a cult classic of the beat-em-up genre nowadays. Urban Reign is more of a sleeper cult hit. It's a little less varied, a little more straight forward, and mastery does feel less rewarded, but this is still a great game. **(observation/history/post-note)**

- NOBODY'S INNOCENT! A line I have to say to myself aping Brad's voice, it's such a strong and stupid introduction for a game in which story is a tertiary concern. **(observation/dialogue/story)**

- This intro is really fucking cool, and it's so funny to open this game with something of a thesis statement and character declaration from Brad, and he more or less becomes a silent protagonist beyond this point, it's good we know who Brad is because who Brad is beyond this point matters precious little until maybe the very last moment of story where whatever zero expectations I could have had of him were challenged. He's a pretty simple good guy who talks a big game of being a cynical loner and the result is more comedic than canny.

- but at least we know that he's uh, pretty pessimistic. **(observation/story)**

- I don't know if what just happened counts as a sizzle reel, but that shit was hot either way! **(story/observation/joke)**

02:00 Time to make our profile, the save screens have a pretty amusing grotty bathroom aesthetic, I wish the letters looked more like they were carved into the tilework. **(observation/menu)**

02:40 Electrical box main menu, with some graffiti and barbed wire, even the menu is hard **(joke)**

- And yes I did not look at the bottom text telling me difficulty could be customised. **(observation)**

- If I wanted people to be less scared I'd probably say that less ominously Billy Bordin. **(joke/observation)**

- Attacks are partly contextual, Brad has a reversal attack for when foes are behind him, a wide launching haymaker of a punch, a player can quickly face away from foes to intentionally trigger a back attack. The variety of attack options has been replicated in a 3D space in this fashion.

(gameplay/controls/observation/moveset/combat)

06:10 Popup for Special Arts (SPA) Circle + Triangle

- We only start with one SPA, the neutral SPA, a quick spinning jump kick, hits omnidirectionally, is quick, and has low cost. Its quick speed is both a boon and a hindrance at times, it is also not very damaging, it is a perfect panic move, used correctly it forces a situation back to neutral and gets off some damage. **(observation)**

- SPA adds some extra strategy to fights, metre management is another skill, another consideration. You can spend them on guaranteed damage or hold them to escape bad situations or counter a foe's SPA (as special moves are undodgeable), they are good both for pressing an advantage and for forcing the fight back to a neutral state. **(observation/gameplay/metre/SPA)**

Structure: talk about how the early missions drip feed some of your mechanics, but how I wish we had all of them from the off, with later missions just informing us of their existence, which is also sort of done via Shun Ying's mission briefings, but given how de-emphasised they are, I don't mind the pop-ups. Considering a solid chunk of our attacks are left untaught, moves more useful than the wall attacks for that matter, I find this a really weird issue of poor teaching priorities.

(observation/post-note/controls)

- If the single player is a tutorial for multiplayer, it's a bit of a lopsided one. **(observation)**

06:40 Do a "wall run" off of Real Deal, foes can be used as launch pads, it is quite risky however **(combat/observation)**

06:50 ground pound, grappling a prone foe will cause a beatdown. It's a slow, heavily damaging move. I leaned on it a ton during this first playthrough and dropped it. The move feels a bit of a crutch. It's big damage, but foes can easily punish you for spamming it and group fights HEAVILY discourage it. **(combat/observation/grabs)**

- You can get more damage off with a low kick into a wall, it's greater risk at first, but it's ultimately a controlled risk. So gamble on big damage? Or bet on your own skill. **(gameplay/observation)**

06:55 Camera cut to end of neutral combo to show foe flying away, pretty cool. Not sure if it's needed but I can handle it. **(gameplay/camera/observation)**

- First fight note: Even with my bad gameplay, the first thing that hits me is just how good this game looks. It's got the Namco flare, the animations are slick, the moves are smooth, have a ton of personality but remain decently readable despite their high speed. The hits sound meaty, it's such a pleasing game to watch and when played well it can look like a choreographed fight scene in motion, when you're in a flow state this game flows right along with you. For now, there are plenty of breaks in the stream. **(joke/wordplay/animation/observation/gameplay)**

- Hits sound like explosions, cracks of thunder! This may not be Tekken but Urban Reign has heavy hitters! **(joke/observation)**

- Get a big rising shot of Shun Ying, she's our mission control and head of the Chinatown Triad... I also think we're her only fighter given how this goes but hey, we're all she needs, that and unlimited retries. **(story/observation/joke)**

- Brad jokes if she wants to prove her innocence, get a lawyer. Shun bluntly says sure, if she was dealing with cops. So what's our job? Take out *every gang member in the area. Including the Zaps leader, Dwayne.*

- Shun really does put the brains in Urban Reign, and by that I mean her plan is a no brainer! Just hire the best fighter and beat literally the entire city up! Easy for her to say, says Brad, as he sets out into a game which proves that yes, this is much easier said than done! **(joke/observation/story)**

- Directional inputs turn them into moving dodges or redirects, pushing a foe, can be used to get into a back grab or start a combo, but as this takes longer is much riskier in group fights.

(combat/observation)

09:40 Sprint jump off foe, which is useless at this point as my air attacks have not been approved yet. **(gameplay/observation)**

10:40 Neutral grab on foe **(grapple)**

- Push enemy into wall, I don't think I've ever intentionally neutral grappled, which is a held grab from which you can strike or transition into a proper grapple attack. **(gameplay/observation)**

UR 002 - M3 - War were declared, beat up buster (again)

00:15 Cutscene: We join Dwayne hanging out at the junkyard, as noughties gangsters were wont to do.

- He angrily kicks a keep out sign, pissed Shun Ying hired a brawler instead of fight her own battles. He tells his gang to take the war to Shun Ying. They raise their weapons and cheer, heading off to fight us. Presumably they lost those weapons at one of the gates, as those won't appear for another 50 stages or so. **(joke/story/observation)**

01:15 Mission 3: 1V1, us VS Busta! Who we beat up when he had a mate, so this is a quick and dirty bar brawl **(mission/gameplay/observation/enemy)**

UR 003 - M4 - Friendly Gesture - Beat up one biker - Inbetween attacks unlocked

00:10 MISSION 04: HIDEOUT: "Friendly Gesture"

"Word on the street is that Dwayne has convinced the Hell's Legion bike gang to come after us. Their boss, Glen, thinks Dwayne will give him props if he takes us down. Rather than sit around here, we're going on the offensive. We already know where their hideout is, so go pay him a visit... and as a friendly gesture, put one of 'em in the hospital."

- Shun is not clearing her name, she's clearing names off a list! **(joke/observation/story)**

- In this level we're told about "Double Attacks", if we hit grab (triangle) inbetween or while facing two foes we'll get off a double grab. This is highly contextual and very tricky to set up or pull off, but is deeply cool, being a fast, hard hitting move which enemies cannot deflect, you can still be knocked out of it however. **(combat/double attacks/deflection/dodge/observation/contextual attack)**

01:00 upper region grab on Rod, for Brad, this is a slow powerbomb, lifting the foe before slamming them down. Decently damaging but more or less impossible in a group fight given its extreme move length **(combat/observation/grapple)**

01:00 Taught target lock, managing lock on is a valuable but sadly, as it often is, imprecise mechanic, capable of misreading what the player wants and doing its best in a contextual 3D space. **(mechanic/oversight/observation/lock-on/camera/issue)**

01:40 Neutral grab punching finish on Rod!

- Despite the 3V1, only one KO is required, I suppose we're allowed to leave after this. **(joke/observation)**

UR 004 - M5 - Child's Play - Beat Up One Gangster!

What's the deal with that guy over there? He a friend of yours or something? I get the feeling he's sizing you up for a one-on-one. Give him what's coming to him. That'll serve as a lesson for his friends." **(story)**

- Shun I hate to say it but I think you're going mad with power already. **(joke/observation)**

00:30 Gameplay begins, one-on-one with Nas-Tii, but what's really funny about this is there are three people on the map besides me, I could go and trigger those two as well, but they're basically just here to watch, passive yet viewing utterly impassively. **(wordplay/joke)**

- It's a weird bit of presentational flare, it adds a tiny absurd element of danger, if the fight somehow winds up near them they will get mad. For the most part they're set dressing. **(presentation/observation)**

UR 005 - M6 - Turf - Timed Fight against martial artist, clutch it out - Super Deflections

00:00 Three available missions on map! So you could, if you found one mission too difficult, back out and get some points elsewhere, it almost encourages this, with missions being unrepeatable.

(observation/gameplay)

- Not that there is much routing or strategy, having beaten this twice, linearly, the ability to occasionally choose from a handful of missions to do in differing order feels arbitrary and needless. **(observation/map/menu/mission)**

- As already said, once hit, the window to successfully deflect is significantly tighter which I think is a pretty solid way to do it. Dodging isn't super hard in this game but this keeps it from feeling trivial, it keeps the dodging on a knives edge. **(observation/satisfaction/dodge/gameplay)**

00:40 Enemy super deflects, escaping my combo and quickly retaliating! **(AI/combat)**

- Eat the full karate combo, Reggie hits slow, with big, inconsistent windows between his attacks, makes it hard to judge if this makes him a good or bad candidate for the level we're taught about super deflections, but hey, we're gonna be seeing the same guys a lot so learning can be a staggered process, not a one and done, with knowledge useless the moment it is gained.

(observation/gameplay/difficulty curve/asset reuse)

01:35 He redirects me, I redirect him, high kick floors, he gets up, redirects and I throw out a panic SPA to end the fight with one second left! **(combat/gameplay)**

- Watching this gameplay feels like watching a toddler, I am so clumsy, so uncoordinated, I'm not a brawler, I'm a scrapper, and a scrappy one at that! **(wordplay/observation)**

UR 006 - M7 - Retaliation - Gang fight, first loss - Run introduced - Foes gang attack me

- So, to sum up, the start of this story is getting hired to kick the shit out of the entire city, which naturally leads to Shun getting a ton more enemies, because her response to suspicion getting cast on her is to kick the shit out of everyone. All I can say is while her strategy sucks, she's great at picking people to carry out these bad strategies, or Brad strategies as it were. Brad doesn't mind, he just seems happy to fight. **(observation/story)**

- It is so funny she just sees a guy eyeing us and is like, yeah go beat him, what the hell. She's very filppant about this. **(character/observation)**

00:40 → 00:50 Decent crowd control, juggle combo, arm grab on foe approaching from rear

- Brad is sort of omnidirectional, contextually anyway, he can defend in any direction but obviously has an advantage when facing a foe, especially since front grapples tend to be slower and more telegraphed than relatively quick back attacks. **(combat/defence/dodge/observation)**

02:35 Ground pound gotten away with, foe isolated!

02:40 Ground pound interrupted! We do not have i-frames on grapple! **(observation/gameplay)**

03:30 Enemies will smartly back up if you're knocked down and have metre, they dodge my downed SPA get up attack thanks to this cleverness! **(AI/observation/SPA)**

03:50 Buy room and drink health drink! Struggle to drop it because I have yet to learn throwing! **(combat)**

- Mean to tell me how to pick a thing up but not how to pick it down! **(observation)**

UR 007 - M8 - New Kid on the Block - Countering grapples is hard

00:25 Interesting set up. This is a two on one against two slightly tougher foes, but one won't actually join the fight for 20 seconds unless prompted, meaning you can get a head start on damage against the more eager foe. It's a strange little nuance which makes the fight feel more dynamic and kinda real, it gives it a believable distinctiveness. **(combat/AI/set piece/observation)**

00:35 Tutorial for grapple breaking

- Square + directional input corresponding to region opponent is grappling. This is a feature I think is cool, but man it can be frustrating. I have gotten *more consistent* at it over playthroughs, but god I am unsure if it is.

- Issue is some grapples feel like misdirects, and the point in a grapple it can be broken is something only learned through trial and error. Some grabs also come out SO FAST they're less reactable than strikes! **(observation/gameplay)**

UR 008 - M9 - Eye for an Eye - Three martial artists - Dive attacks unlocked - 'I'm not worried' I am

01:55 Use of SPA spin kick hits shelf, sending boxes sprawling! Levels are super reactive and dense with cool details, they feel like miniature diaramas which keeps them fun to fight in for some time. **(observation/levels/stages/repetition/asset reuse)**

02:00 Detail: Damaged areas have big electrical surges, a non-diegetic and very effective way to make the strike look painful. I know that feeling of electricity when I hurt myself, the *shock* of pain. Punches leave little explosions to go with their booms, the combat is far from realistic but very visceral, with great visual signifiers to convey impact and pain. **(observation/visuals)**

- I love the dive kick, I really do, but man it's risky. Honestly its use has to be measured, the problem is it looks so cool I often use it when it is really not worth it! It's a big predictable move and as the game goes on enemies will punish it perfectly, letting you dive into a combo string, knowing the perfect range to wait at to let you land and then open up while you recover, and if you're diving into a crowd, it's like trying to dive into a thorny bush and not get hurt, and diving into these pricks is no wiser! **(joke/wordplay/gameplay/observation/crowd control)**

- So yeah, it's a move that's really flashy, and I wouldn't say is *less useful* than it seems, but you have to be prudent in its usage, but you give me an opportunity to fucking dive bounce kick an enemy and prudence is going to be low on my list of considerations. **(observation/gameplay)**

02:10 Case in point, I am quickly pounced on by the foes I just knocked down and double grappled/tagteamed, sent into a wall, then juggle kicked, later enemies would not let me go as easily as these two, but they drop the combo and let me get back to it.

(combat/enemy/AI/observation/crowd control)

UR 009 - M10 - Observer - Beat boss underling - Decent reversal in here

00:40 Opening cutscene, Glen tells his men "Let's tear it up", I'm "it" I suppose.

- Interesting little scenario. This is a 3 on 1 that will turn into a 4 on one if we take too long. Glen getting bored of watching and joining in the fight. But we still only need to take down Glen's men, and he'll let us go afterwards. **(objective/set piece/obstacle)**

- It's a cool little bit of pressure as Glen is a tough foe for me at this stage of development **(observation/boss)**

01:05 Neutral grapple push, I only ever do this in panic. **(move/grapple/observation)**

- This game punishes panicking more than any other, you stay calm and measured, the game gets easier, but it is *very good* at inspiring panic. **(observation/gameplay)**

01:25 Sprint kicked out of ground pound!

- While the game doesn't explicitly teach me about sprint attacks, I really should be learning right now! It's my own fault, still, early topic tutorialisation. **(structure/observation/moveset)**

01:40 Knocked out of juggle combo by Rod running in again! **(AI/combat)**

- This guy does have his own personality! Probably the weakest foe in terms of toughness, so he pulls hit and run tactics using his allies as bait, he crumbles the moment you focus him down however! **(combat/AI/tactics/observation)**

UR 010 - M11 - Proof - Jake Boss - Terrifying if he gets going

- Ah, cause it's a bar! **(joke/observation)**

- Man, they had to come up with 100 mission names **(observation)**

- On my first playthrough where I was just kinda trying the game out, this is where I stopped. I've revisited this game a few times over the years and slowly crept deeper and deeper towards Mission 30, stopping somewhere short of there. First time I won this I figured I was maybe a third done, I mean 30 missions, seems about right, right? Given the difficulty. Somehow failing to notice my completion progress tracker on the save screen was ticking up 1% per mission! Yeah, I can miss stuff (like the difficulty) **(joke/difficulty/observation)**

- Structure thought: Missions 1-10, presentation, animation, graphics, effects, game looks and feels amazing, and then we meet Jake, and this is where the game shows its true colours, this is where we talk basic gameplay. **(observation/gameplay/structure)**

00:40 We sprint into and bump off of each other, it's a comedic detail I love and adds to the sheer physicality of the game. **(observation)**

00:50 My attempt at a low sweep is deflected, low kicks have a unique counter deflection where the dodger rolls over their attacker and can instantly transmission into a grab, very satisfying to do. Opponents rarely do it, rendering most low attacks safe if not overly spammed.

(observation/combat/defence)

- With no SPA of my own, spent carelessly throughout the fight, my ability to escape or force neutral was greatly diminished. **(metre/SPA/observation)**

- I am then slide tackled, struck to juggle, and hit with an air grab to finish! A bit mean considering I don't have air grapples yet! But hey this combo would one whole playthrough later become my bread and butter! The more control you're able to exercise, the more you're able to strip from your opponents. **(foreshadowing/controls/observation/sprint attacks/moveset)**

- Within 15 seconds, my great lead over Jake had evaporated, but I do now have a heavy stockpile of SPA to spend to preserve my very little health, and utterly busted head. **(observation/combat)**

- For better or worse (I'd argue better once you get over the frustration), Urban Reign coerces you into letting the fight reset very often. Why this is good I find is it gives the fights a lot of moments of tension, and it takes a great deal of mastery to never let go of the advantage, making such victories not feeling like cheesing the game. It lends the fights a lot of tense moments, highs and lows. **(drama/combat/strategy/observation/post-note)**

- The rhythm of a good martial arts movie has explosive bursts of action, followed by moments of pause, equivalent to natural in a fighting game. Where opponents start testing, looking for openings, before another burst of explosive action. **(observation/film/gameplay)**

- An odd tangent, I love Yakuza's combat, despite its shallow nature, and I have a lot of respect for people who can pull off high-execution "advanced" gameplay, but I find it a lot less interesting to watch than a normal brawl. Advanced play in Yakuza shuts opponents down forever, it's about forcing the game to never allow itself to be played in a way, and that's interesting but not engaging to watch for me. An exciting story is one where the hero takes some lumps, and has to think through his opponent. **(observation)**

01:20 use of SPA kick to escape stun from a wall bounce. **(status/stun/SPA)**

- It's such a hilarious way to escape being dizzy, when Brad is lost and confused, he just does a giant spinning kick! **(joke/observation)**

01:30 Second attempt begins strong as I run right into a grapple from Jake, a head first powerbomb, an absolute fucker to escape. **(grapple/observation)**

- I am then SPA dropkicked, get to see the lock on in action as he pirouettes around me for it to land, only SPA can block SPA, he starts with a full bar, I start with none! **(observation/SPA/boss)**

01:50 Jake stuns me, taunts, but for whatever reason doesn't capitalise, I guess we're still only on mission 11 **(Observation/AI/Stun/taunt)**

02:20 With no health left, Jake's AI seems to flip and he becomes highly dangerous, juggling, air grappling, downed grapples, offering little chance of escape, I eek out a win with a downed SPA, not a dignified win, but a win on the second go, a far cry from my initial performance sadly lost to time. **(difficulty/SPA/observation)**

UR 011 - M12 - Unlucky One - 4 on 1

"Yesterday, some of our boys got jumped by the Zaps, and four of them spent the night in the hospital. We're going to get revenge for this. I've already figured out who the culprits are. One of them's not even a member of the Zaps but I'm pissed off so if he gets in the way... Well, that's his problem. They're gonna pay for what they did to our guys."

- Ahh, cycles of violence – Wait we have guys?! **(joke/story/observation)**

01:40 Air kick misses, it is at times unreliable, you are at the mercy of the games targeting and have to hope it will not only go for the foe you want, but that the foe it does go for isn't in the process of doing something which will make the kick not register. At times you fail the air kick for fair reasons, it's a medium risk medium reward move, sometimes, it just chooses poorly for you, and you have to suffer the consequences. **(observation/gameplay/moment)**

UR 012 - M13 - Paying the Price - Surprise attack surprise attack - Struggle with wall combos - dodge grabs - Clutch win

00:50 No intro cutscene, the four guys are hanging out, I love how they just turn and look at Brad as the mission begins. **(observation/level)**

01:30 Wall jump to get behind enemy

- Fail to juggle, I cannot begin to explain how weird it is to watch footage of myself playing this poorly, I look so slow, uncoordinated. This is returning to watching beginner footage, it's like watching another person. **(observation/combat)**

04:25 weird back grapple which is really a punch which acts as grapple, an opponent delivers a short, sharp fist right up the arse. **(observation/combat/back attack)**

04:35 Successful juggle combo on Miguel, pushed back by SPA, interrupted his charge with a deflection. He then launches into an absurdly punishing SPA combo and then juggled me with a follow up slide attack, occasionally the AI in early stages can't help but reveal its power level, you get a preview of the competence facing you in the late game and it's kinda terrifying.

(AI/observation/moment/difficulty)

UR 013 - M14 - Right Stuff- Fight Glen- Nightmare wake up boss- Do not anger Jake in corner (funny)

00:35 Unlike Jake this guy don't wait, he's out the gate with a running knee, sending me through a fence, and he chases it with a kick to juggle! **(combat/environment/sprint attack?)**

- It is a subtle escalation of difficulty. The game is more measured and sophisticated than its brutish exterior may seem. **(observation/difficulty/structure topic?)**

01:05 Grapple break Glen's leg grapple, it pivots into Brad delivering a powerbomb! Not only are attacks moveset specific but so are dodges and deflections, some characters deflections double as attacks or have their own properties with movement! **(moveset/observation/grapple break/moment)**

06:00 Dodge Glen's diving strike, big and telegraphed **(air attack/wall attack/dodge/observation)**

07:25 Bottles sent scattering on bar as we fight nearby, the world is reactive which aids physicality! **(map/world/observation)**

07:40 Glen's combo SPA string is longer than my only available starting SPA move, the spinning kick, making escaping/SPA'ing through it very hard. This does feel like a reason we should have maybe started with our full kit, as this is rather unfair. **(observation/difficulty/move unlocking)**

08:35 Leg grapple on Glen, these seem to be "safe", they're grapple broken less, but the trade off is often that a broken leg grapple is countered with a damaging deflection **(observation/moveset/strategy)**

UR 014 - M15 - Fury - Kadonashi Boss - Karate master easier than biker - Game punishes panic hard

00:50 Kadonashi pops his SPA buff.

- Some characters have a buff SPA (typically DOWN+SPA, guess cause they're grounding themselves)
- The pop itself has the same I-Frames as the other SPAs, and even causes enemies nearby or going for a hit to recoil which is awesome. **(observation/SPA block)**

01:05 → 01:15 Very slick sequence of dodges and grapple breaks on both sides, bit of a calmer fight, Kadonashi is more technical than Glen and Jake, which isn't an escalation of difficulty, I'd have put pissing off a karate dojo before messing with hardened gangsters. **(observation)**

- I suppose Kadonashi is an escalation as he introduces special SPAs? Even though Jake and Glen both have a Special SPA, they're just disallowed from using it until later (on normal difficulty, on hard and up they'll hit you with that shit right away) **(difficulty/observation/escalation)**

01:10 Kadonashi arm throws me to the ground and follows with a flip kick, sending me flying and dealing heavy damage! **(combat/moveset)**

- Kadonashi is pretty easy to evade, but when he hits he hits hard, big telegraphed attacks with a lot of power
- Structure: Go over the difficulty escalation, end by going over issues of how we're given our moves and how the boss order could maybe be rejiggered to put Jake and Glen later? **(structure/observation)**

UR 015 - M16 - Repercussions - Two boxers, Easy

"A boxer from the westside gym has a bone to pick with you. Apparently, he was among the thugs you roughed up along with Dwayne's men. Now he's brought some friends along to even the score. The boxers who hang out at the westside gym are nothing but a bunch of gangbangers when they're not in the ring. When you tangle with them, keep in mind that they're not going to use throws. Just concentrate on dodging their punches and timing your attacks"

- Shun I can't help but think you're just worsening your own position via liberal use of me **(joke/observation)**
- There's a guy in my area who I haven't seen in awhile, but for a time he'd just buy cheap lager, and hang out by a bin next to the church. He'd hope someone would bump into him so he'd have an excuse to pick a fight, the story is a lot like him. Urban Reign doesn't have a plot so much as it does an excuse to have 100 fights in a row. The only difference is this game is only drunk on bloodlust. I was sad to see the canman go but I'm happy Urban Reign has turned up! **(observation/plot)**

02:00 Win, very easy fight, lots of good clips to illustrate crowd control, keep missing with my new heavy punch as foes are smart enough to back the fuck up when it comes out, an enemy needs to be cornered, stunned, or surprised with it. **(combat/observation)**

UR 016 - M17 - Crashing the party - An easy FIVE on one

“Dwayne has called for the Zaps to assemble all the punks in the city to take us head-on in a united front. I want you to crash their party and rain on their parade. Take ‘em out. All of them. That’ll teach them not to mess with Chinatown.”

- I’m starting to wonder if Shun is actually asking for Brad to kill people and he just doesn’ get it. So he just keeps Urban Reigning on their parade and letting them come back. **(observation/story)**

00:30 FIVE ON ONE! Biggest fight so far but far from the hardest, I can easily say Jake or Glen have the strength of 10 men. **(observation/difficulty)**

UR 017 - M18 - Hit and Run - Timed fight two weak foes - Bar calls for help they sodding do not

01:30 Learn the grapple dash! (Which I totally failed to use during my first playthrough damnit)

- The grapple dash is an insanely powerful tool used right, so I really dropped the ball by failing to grasp it. **(observation/combat/moveset/grapple)**

UR 019 - M20 - The Hungry Wolf - Boss fight Tong Yoon - Get through easy enough

- Tong Yoon is a pretty forgettable battler **(observation/partner)**

01:10 Hit with a brutal combo ending with a SPA, big chunk of health evaporates, I burst SPA to force Tong away **(SPA/metre/AI)**

- Tong makes HEAVY use of dive attacks, using me as the springboard! And I keep falling for it! Enemies do fight differently! **(AI/observation)**

UR 020 - M21 - World Class Boxer - Grimm and Glenn DUO BOSS - NIGHTMARE HARD

- That said, this game may take place in the Tekken universe, since two characters from that series put in appearances. If it does, being a cruiserweight boxer seems almost quaint in a world with the King of Iron Fist tournament. Pretty sure Paul Fox could batter this Grimm guy. Meanwhile I am not Paul Fox, and this fight took 16 minutes so I don’t think I can talk. **(joke/observation)**

01:55 Get juggled by Grimm, sent into wall, SPA to escape! Need to keep some in the tank! **(combat/SPA/observation/Metre)**

03:10 Fucking unfair grapple, the enemies now have dive grapples which come out INSANTLY! I never figured out breaking these consistently! Which wouldn’t be so bad were they not also HEAVILY DAMAGING **(observation/grapple/sprint?)**

04:25 Failed SPA block on Grimm

- It’s a bit shit I do not have a SPA move which would counter this until later! **(observation)**

UR 021 - M22 - Ring of Fire - Grimm Rematch - Hard boy

02:40 Deflection on Grimm pushes him away, I try to follow, He SPA spins to immediately cut my offensive short, this can be frustrating at times. **(observation/SPA)**

04:05 SPA Block Grimm’s flurry with my own SPA FLURRY! I STOLE IT FROM YOU! **(Combat/observation/SPA BLOCK)**

UR 022 - M23 - Avenging the Honour - Break a Martial Artists Legs (regional damage test)

“Kadonashi’s disciples have come to avenge their master’s honor. Aww, it’s so nice to see such close unwavering devotion between teachers and their pupils. Break their legs so they’ll have to come crawling back. Let’s give the Kadonashi gang the shock of their lives. We’ll see if they’re so eager to show their faces around here anymore.”

- They will be, because Brad does not kill, and I guess he just gives them a charlie horse
(joke/observation/character)

00:30 the mission opens with a camera zooming in on my opponents legs, incase I’ve forgotten what legs are. **(joke/observation/camera)**

00:45 This is a one v one, but having to aim for a specific region can feel like a hindrance, as the AI gets better at defending against repetitious movements, and man I get mentally messed up.

(observation/objective)

- Also no, I can’t knock the guy out and then break his legs, if he gets KOed normally, that’s it!

UR 023 - M24 - Helping Hands - Tong Yoon Kadonashi combo boss - Nightmare, sick victory as IT CLICKS

00:00 MISSION 24: WAREHOUSE: “Helping Hands”

“I’m surprised to hear that the once proud Kadonashi has stooped to requesting support from someone outside his circle. I guess you’ve really gotten under his skin. Tong Yoon and Kadonashi are both deadly opponents. Taking both of them on at the same time won’t be a walk in the park so be sure you keep them apart while you fight.”

- Can I have some of those men you talked about? **(joke/observation)**

- Kadonashi launches me into walls and instantly chases down, I try to lock on to him and it decides despite the fact I AM HAVING MY SHIT ROCKED IT JUST WANTS TO LOOK AT TONG YOON INSTEAD! It’s like my in game camera is asking “You seeing this shit?”

(joke/observation/camera)

- Common issue far from unique to Urban Reign to be fair, but goddamn do lock on quirks hurt worse in games where a moment of imprecision or controls not acting as they should can be disastrous if the AI goes on a tear **(observation)**

05:00 Juggle combo into arm throw! Get knocked away by SPA Get up!

- Tong Yoon tries run up! SPA to reject that shit!

- Besides anything else, SPA is safer than deflecting/dodging/breaking certain moves. Sometimes its spent as assurance for getting out of situations with harder manual solutions. However pulling off the harder one often grants metre. So spend it liberally to limit difficulty? Or risk going without to hold it for big moments? **(risk reward/options/Metre/observation)**

05:25 I accidentally unleashed a fucking sprint upper and because I have no clue what I am doing drop the juggle chance! **(sprint attack/observation)**

- I wish the game had fucking taught me sprint attacks at some point! **(tutorial/observation)**

13:50 Good opening, dodge and grapple breaks! I can make myself look good in very small bursts!
(observation/joke)

14:25 Accidentally trigger sprinting strike, a punch with gut stun and some launch, a bit awkward to chase, especially if you have no idea it exists! **(sprint attack/observation/should be tutorialised)**

UR 024 - M25 - Outnumbered - Easy gang battle - No music it seems

02:05 Dodge guy running in, roundhouse him into a wall and pursue! Another guy runs in and gets me!

- It's like I'm playing a bizarro version of Way of the Samurai! **(joke/observation)**

UR 025 - M26 - Fist to Fist - Face Giga-Jake - Very tough, clutch out fight

00:00 MISSION 26: MOTEL: "Fist to Fist"

"I was wrong about Jake. While he was initially doing it for the money, he's now playing a deadly game with you. I have no interest in your machismo sword fights, but do what you have to do if he's going to be in our way. Go on and have fun."

- Am I getting paid for this? **(joke/observation/story)**

00:20 So in this one, we fight a buffed Jake, he's now more aggressive and makes use of his Green buffing Special SPA, but I think it's also a really great fight to demonstrate growth, he is a bit tougher, but I overcome him in a measly 6 minutes! (well, 5 minutes 40), by repeating him as a foe a little tougher, it's repetitive, but I don't feel it as much because I'm revelling in feeling like I've come to grips a bit more with the game! (save this thought for the Golem section? Final marker of growth, Golem and growth?) **(topic/observation/structure/post-note)**

03:10 This stuns me, Jake taunts, and I am instantly put into another grapple! **(Stun taunt)**

- This stuns me, and I am put in a fucking legbreaker grapple!

- In the end, I escape via a SPA, this shows its value for forcing the fight to reset to neutral! **(SPA/observation)**

03:35 My leg grab is broken by Jake, who transitions it into a running powerbomb! I essentially killed myself with that grab attempt! Game over! (31)

- You have to learn unsafe options, sometimes options turn into traps against certain characters! Do not play wrestle with the wrestler, don't play deity before god!

(observation/wordplay/difficulty/character matchups/is this unfair?)

04:10 Awesome grapple break on Jake! He runs up, uses me as a springboard, uses the fall for momentum into inertia, and I fucking turn that and slam him into the ground! **(grapple break/moment)**

- This fight is a question, the question is have you learned to break grapples? If you have not, you are fucked. **(observation/difficulty)**

UR 026 - M27 - The Blitz - Four on One with a boss level Glen - I HAVE NO CLUE HOW I WON BUT IT WAS A PANIC

02:25 Dodge into split combo, roll out of enemy ground **(context attacks/dodge/crowd control)**

- Another thing the game does not teach, how to roll! As it can be distinctly triggered and is very helpful later on! **(tutorial/observation)**

02:35 Hard to read grapple **(grapple break/observation)**

- Looks like a torso or potentially a head slam, but nope, it's a leg attack! Has to be learned through trial and error, even though many have similar start ups **(observation/animations)**

04:00 In this attempt I'm trying to stand toe to toe with groups, it's not wise, and it's not really working **(observation/strategy)**

05:10 Leg grapple reversed, get hit with a running powerbomb through a table for bonus damage! **(props/hazards/grapple break/map)**

- What looked like a winning run evaporates as Glen continues, bouncing me off the ground and air grabbing me, tossing Brad around like a ragdoll! **(observation/difficulty/air grab)**

UR 027 - M28 - Who's your Daddy - Fight Glen Again - Fight for the Pipe

00:00 MISSION 28: HIDEOUT: "Who's Your Daddy?"

"Once you've got Glen grovelling at your feet, it's all over for the Hell's Legions. But watch out. He's been know nto come heavy, so be careful of weapons. It doesn't matter what he does, though. He doesn't stand a chance against you. Go show him what you're made of."

- Game overs, restarts, and and fluctuating stubbornness **(joke/observation)**

- It can at times be advantageous to let a foe keep a weapon as it makes their combos more predictable and easier to dodge. **(observation/difficulty/weapons)**

00:50 Kicked in leg, staggered, and then battered with the pipe! **(weapon)**

- All the while I am getting tutorial prompts for the weapon Glen is holding! I have to learn myself how to disarm! This is what we call the school of hard, concussion dealing knocks!

(joke/observation/tutorial)

- Brad has the soapiest grip I've ever fucking seen in a game! One errant blow loses whatever you are holding! **(observation/weapons)**

02:10 Struggle to acquire pipe, if there are any issues with controls, it's that picking stuff up is kinda precise and cumbersome, which leads to frustrating moments of fumbling for an item. Which does not pair well with very aggressive, high pressure enemies! **(controls/observation)**

- Weapon attack still cannot be upgraded in ability development, because they're still not due to be commonplace for a good few missions **(progression/structure/observation)**

UR 028 - M29 - Small Fries - Easy three on one - Relaxing after the hell I just went through

- This is a nice, easy 3 on 1 to chill out after the hells I've fought through. **(observation)**

UR 029 - M30 - Showdown - Dwayne Boss - The story is beginning - Kidnapping at start was militant group causing disarray before beginning attack

Hmm... Wait just a minute, we'll be proven innocent, sure, but then who kidnapped KG to spark these gang wars in the first place?"

- Took you this long to ask? I mean I'm not sure how much that really matters but I've beaten up a lot of people for you to start questioning things now. **(story/joke/observation)**

- Rewatching my first playthrough is hard, I am only using a third of my toolkit and using it *badly* **(observation/gameplay/moveset/skill growth)**

00:45 Dwayne stands still, he allows some time for the player to make the first move, then he pops RED SPA and runs in! **(boss/strategy/presentation)**

- Again, love how many fights have little presentational/characterful flourishes like this. It makes the fighters feel more like unique people, personality captured via fighting style and little behavioural quirks set by stage. **(observation/presentation/post-note)**

04:40 With no health left, I manage to grapple break his run up! Get away with a groundpound, and launch into a SPA Flurry as he gets up, taking the win! We've cleared our name! Now we just need to wipe your blood off the pavement! **(joke/story/observation)**

- All the levels we've grown to love and a few we don't recognise are now in disrepair!

(maps/story)

- *This last one is actually kinda cool, along with gathering former bosses the next section of the game is neat, maps we knew are in disarray and former foes become fearsome allies* **(observation)**

UR 030 - M31 - Chaos - Outlaws are in! - Tag team ally! - Hell yes awesome finish

00:55 Fighter select screen! I now have partners! 10 slots are there, with Shun Ying Lee filling the first! Nice of you to finally muck in! **(joke/observation)**

- This is great fun, it does make the game a little easier, as we unlock new partners each battle does add a little bit of decision making to it, as certain partners are better matchups against certain types of enemies. Though Jake is absolutely my guy. As his high damage wrestling style holds enemies up for awhile and he's pretty tanky! But sometimes someone else is better! **(partner/team AI)**

UR 031 - M32 - Dual Strike - Tag team partners and orders unlocked - Bring Glen - I know what these boys can do!

If their track record is anything to go by, each one is a major threat in his own right, so you'd better take some backup just in case. My men know that you're calling the shots, so regardless of whether two of you are ganging up on the same guy, or whether you split up and go after them individually, issue your commands clearly and wisely."

- Nope, I can barely keep myself alive, you're just as much a punching bag as you are my partner! **(joke/observation)**

00:45 Glen, Kadonashi, and Dwayne have joined up with us! Man, having gone through hell fighting these guys, it was really, genuinely relieving to have them as partners!

- Now sure, this is like getting a bad guy on your team in a JRPG, they're not as strong as they appeared as a boss, but they're still plenty tough! And can soak up some damage meant for me! **(observation/partner/joke)**

UR 032 - M33 - The Mob - Kadonashi team up in downtown map, he gets Koed

00:00 We're heading north of the river! For what little that's worth in this game.

(observation/game map/level select)

00:00 Mission 33: CENTRAL SQUARE: "The Mob"

"The riot is spreading to the city center. (*sic*) There's even looting going on around Central Square. The mayhem is the handiwork of some scumbags being led by the Outlaws. They brought some Outsiders into their fold and are inciting the riots. We can't just let this unruly mob run about recklessly. Go out and crush them."

- Never would have guessed we'd be so civic minded. **(story/joke/observation)**

00:35 2v4 against some weak foes. The Central square map is a big open circle with a statue in the middle. Honestly much bigger than this game requires. No props and far away walls makes for a map focusing purely on fighting ability. **(map/observation)**

UR 033 - M34 - The Agitator - Take out boss to end fight - Grimm tag team

- Opening cutscene shows three gangsters, with Bain fair in the background. Bain becomes something of a rival to me over this first playthrough, he's a constant presence and a somewhat troublesome foe. Not quite boss level but tough so I developed something of a vibe that he and Brad were rivals of a kind.

- Though maybe it's because they look kinda similar and he constantly appears, and his name is Bain. He's the villains Brad in my mind. **(observation/story/my story)**

01:20 Get deflected by foe who then goes into a super long slow SPA Kick, I fail to SPA block it with the heavy punch **(SPA Block fail)**

- Part of me does feel that SPA is deceptively long, a big chunk of it in the middle is spent standing casually before lackadaisically booting whoever is in their way.

(animation/observation/deception)

UR 034 - M35 - The Hatchet Man - Fight caporera fighter - Dwayne tag team

“The Outlaws have recruited Chris, a brawler who’s worked as the bouncer at a bar and as an enforcer for a loan shark downtown. Word is, he’s got you in his sights. Brawlers have gotten by on their neutral status because they haven’t been affiliated with any gang turfs. But hey, that’s no reason why we shouldn’t take them out if they start giving us trouble.”

- Does that count as lore? **(story/observation)**

- Also the idea of a loanshark hiring a guy who uses capoeira is really fucking funny.

(observation/character)

00:35 Take Dwayne

Observation: These last few missions since the Dwayne fight have been easy. Despite the escalation in the story in gameplay terms the beginning of act 2 eases up a little, likely to give you time to get used to the Partner system and let players take a breath. **(difficulty/escalation)**

00:40 So we have Chris, he’s Urban Reign’s Eddie and he’s actually quite manageable!

- The one button defence system and heavy punishment on low deflections, along with the heavily telegraphed sweeps of capoeira style makes him actually not too difficult to keep on top of!

(joke/groundpound)

- Also in his character bio it’s pointed out one of Chris’s sore spots is his middle class upbringing so I think he’s picking fights by wearing a shirt that says ‘fundy’ on it. **(joke/observation/character design)**

- Tons of differing attacks which manipulate the victim in different ways, allowing for a lot of potential while still taking a good degree of control. **(observation/design/combat)**

- Air recovery! Deflection on foe interrupted as I get hit by Chris! It’s a bit unfair that I don’t have I-frames in a dodge! **(observation/i-frames)**

UR 035 - M36 - Despicable Ally - Defend Glen Mission - Oh no! Wait I will just play as him!

00:40 Tutorial popup: Attack Others: O button while holding R2 button

- For commanding allies to split off, draw attention elsewhere **(observation/strategy)**

00:40 Glen combo sends foe SCRAPING ACROSS THE FLOOR with a headbutt **(combo/hit effects)**

- So many ways to manipulate foes! **(observation/hit reactions)**

01:15 Brad defeats Bain offscreen! Very funny, turns out I am holding Brad back!

(observation/joke)

UR 036 - M37 - The Deal - Recruit Jake - If brad goes, you are out - Ultra aggressive normal foes now

00:35 4V2 in a very tight arena with a bit of clutter **(objective/map)**

- This game does look good though, they didn't skimp on details for these places.

(observation/graphics/detail/level)

00:40 Swap to Jake! Jake is hard to beat and just as hard to play! He's the grappler of this game, he is slow, his strike game is kinda weak, and he does not match my playstyle!

(gameplay/observation)

- But as a tag team partner, there is none better! He has great damage and survivability, as well as doing the most important job of holding up foes for a very long time! While there is a bit of a rock paper scissors to partners, having better matchups against certain bosses and fighting styles, Jake is the safest bet for me, someone to fight around! When the odds are low, I'll stake it on Jake!

(wordplay/observation/joke/partners)

01:00 Jake dive grapple is absurd! **(animation/wall/observation)**

02:10 Get fucking wombo combo'd and stun taunted by two foes **(crowd control fail)**

- The enemies in this stage are early game gangsters but with their competency cranked up, I like it, it's like the whole town is becoming better fighters, I'm making the local fighters work harder!

(joke/observation/difficulty/repeat enemies)

UR 037 - M38 - The Derelict - Timed beatdown - Glen is good

"The industrial district is a buffer district between the inner city and the residential area of respectable citizens. However, due to the recent downturn in the economy, it has practically become a ghetto. The outlaws have been going in and out of a building in that area. I'm guessing that's their hideout. Destroy it before they start running amok. Their hideout is located underground, so mop them up nice and fast before they can call in reinforcements, cuz if they do. You've got no place to run."

- Trap yourself in their basement and then start a fight, I mean I'd never see it coming!

(joke/observation/story)

- Also Shun goes from guessing to certainty in enviable time! **(joke/observation/dialogue)**

- That text was also a solid percentage of this mission!

Early game structure note/joke: One of the first things you'll notice even just looking at this game, you don't even have to play it. Is this game looks pretty awesome! Okay I'm sorry, we're not playing jank today! Sure it got generally middling reviews, but that's not because the game is rough, or ugly, or cryptic. It reviewed poorly because critics didn't realise just how awesome the game was... And a bunch of content reasons. **(joke/observation/animations/graphics/Structure)**

01:10 Juggle combo, enemy SPAs to escape cause this asshole generates SPA faster taking damage than I do dealing it! **(metre/observation)**

02:05 Funny finish, Glen gets launched and drop kicked, and I groundpound the enemy before he can get up! Taking the win!

- Glen proved a useful ally in tight quarters! **(observation/AI/partner)**

UR 038 - M39 - The Grudge - Tag team a boss - Need to work with AI to even get hits in, it is so cool

00:50 Park is an absurdly evasive fighter, with quick, hard to read strings and a super which makes him deflect nearly all attacks automatically. In this first encounter I hardly even land a hit on him, depending on exploiting my ally to sneak openings.

- This is how the game does difficulty for a lot of greater foes from here on. Fight with an ally, fight without ally, fight a buffer version, it's pretty decently handled escalation of challenge.

(observation/difficulty/design/structure)

01:10 Double attack, can't escape the team grapple! **(strategy)**

- The train rocks when Park collides with it **(level details/observation)**

02:20 As Park juggles me, Dwayne pops a SPA combo and takes Park out, in what is the least dignified first attempt win in this whole run. **(observation/teammate/SPA)**

UR 041 - M40 - Dead Run - Defend Mission - Swap to target and FIGHT

01:40 Try to regroup with Dwayne, only for two foes to once again gang up on and beat the hell out of me, this is a grapple heavy gang! **(observation/difficulty)**

02:00 Begin this next attempt swapping to Dwayne!

- Turns out a 4 on 1 is not an ideal time to learn a new character! **(observation)**

UR 043 - M42 - Lucky Error - Save the incredibly fragile Tong Yoon to get him on side - Very close win

03:25 Failed SPA block of the long SPA Wind up kick, deceptive animation. **(observation)**

- Repeatedly stun taunted and launched

UR 045 - M44 - Housecleaning - Super easy four on two

00:00 Mission 44: Warehouse: "House Cleaning"

"The Outsiders have been cornered by Kadonashi's disciples into a warehouse. The disciples want to give them a good beating, but they don't have sufficient numbers. Go and lend them a helping hand."

- You're a bad fighter and a worse teacher Kads **(joke/observation)**

- You're zero black belts and two black eyes Kads **(joke)**

- Naturally I bring Kadonashi on this mission **(partner)**

UR 046 - M45 - The Duel - Chris is an oppressive fighter - Bring Tong Yoon to Watch lol

00:55 So this is hilarious, I pick my partner to *watch* the duel, if I do attack the viewers, they'll aggro, and they are far harder than normal fighters, nearly boss level each, during a boss fight. It's hilarious this stage has that bizarre bit of set dressing, and you'll be dressed down if you interact with it! **(observation/joke)**

01:00 Chris immediately pops his SPA buff and starts dancing. Chris is a slow hitter, his moveset is less nightmarish here than in Tekken, but still has the property that basically every single hit is a tripper or a launcher. So he may have a harder time getting a hit off, but it will never be just one.

(observation/gameplay)

03:05 Luckily the lock on targetting a spectator doesn't trigger them, that's something you'd worry would get overlooked. Me mean mugging the guy mucking up the AI. **(observation/lock on/control issues)**

05:10 Poorly spaced dive strike punished by Chris, his attacks have great range, letting him easily punish dives! **(character/observation)**

UR 047 - M46 - Conciliation - Save Chris from two much harder normal guys I have beaten before now way tougher

00:05 Mission 46: Abandoned Basement: "Conciliation"

"The Outlaws are unhappy with their champion. They're going to punish Chris for losing the fight. That's the kind of shortsighted thinking you'd expect from these idiots. You should get back there and give him a hand to get on his good side. Just because the Outlaws used him and spit him out doesn't mean he's unredeemable. He'll be an asset for us down the line. Besides, given the option between jumping ship and certain death... What choice does he have?"

- Not that you're wrong, but it's funny you're calling them short sighted when your plan with me was to just beat the hell out of everyone in town which granted... It worked! **(story/observation)**

01:00 Enemy combos, juggles, and grapples me for a solid twenty seconds, finally escape with SPA combo, the full string barely dents his health! **(observation/health/stats)**

UR 048 - M47 - Setting an Example - Setting Bains bones - Horrific 4 on 2 where I need to break a leg (literally)

I want you to go and rough up the Shadow Platoon member who's leading the rioters. Break his legs as an example to the street gangs. That should put an end to their shenanigans."

- Bust up Bains lower body.

- This objective is hell. **(observation)**

01:45 Dive strike misses foe, doesn't feel like my fault, feels like it just aimed awkwardly. **(controls/observation/lock on)**

04:10 Another annoyance, I get a leg grapple and Bain grapple breaks it! As all fighting games go the more you do a move, the more the AI counters and punishes it!

(observation/difficulty/AI/objective)

UR 049 - M48 - Tooth for a Tooth - Help Kadonashi

01:25 Kadonashi grappled and getting fucking walloped by other foes, his health is tanking!

- You know they say when going for revenge, dig two graves? Well that's because they're pulling this fucker in half! **(joke/observation)**

UR 050 - M49 - The Lost Boy - take out separated shadow platoon guy - I did not deserve this win

00:00 MISSION 49: MOTEL: "The Lost Boy"

"A member of the Shadow Platoon has gotten separated from the rest of his gang and is apparently taking refuge in a motel. Go and convince him to take a long vacation, if you know what I mean."

- I sincerely doubt Brad does. **(character/observation/joke)**

Note: This was a great fight, I said I didn't deserve the win, cause it was a panicked move to snatch victory, but this showdown captured what Urban Reign does so well. These fights come off like action scenes, highs and lows, stand offs, drama! I figured bits of Anderson out, slowly started getting momentum, and overcame! It was like a cool action scene in a movie!

(observation/gameplay)

- The smoothness of the animations, catharsis of the hits, and sharpness of the defence systems make the gameplay feel cinematic, but not in that modern heavily automated sense, in a, this feels fucking awesome to play sense. **(observation/gameplay/animation/presentation)**

UR 051 - M50 - The Scoundrel - Meet Alex - Weapon boss - Sick rebound air throw - I am calmer it seems

“Alex is a brawler from the Green Hill area. This guy is a bad scene. Nobody wants to scrap with him because he doesn’t pull any punches and he’s got the skills to back it up. He’s been pretty mellow recently, but I think the rioters who have spread to that area have reignited his bloodthirst. It seems he came well-armed. To even the odds, you’ll probably have to use weapons when you take him on. Keep an eye out for dropped weapons, or grab his and give him a taste of his own medicine.”

- “The guy who is good at violence has become more violent in response to the riots, go fight him”, sure Shun. **(story/observation)**

00:50 SPA get up disarms Alex

- The problem with weapons is Brad has butterfingers, a light tap and he drops whatever he’s holding, I can only guess years of brawling has absolutely messed up his hands. **(observation)**

UR 052 - M51 - Close Combat - Weapons appearing more - Chris offscreens two-thirds of fight and wins

00:45 Fight opens with an attack I hate, big foes will just run up and bear hug you to the ground, it does a lot of damage and comes out fast, incredibly hard to defend against, pain in the ass!
(attack/observation)

01:00 Dodge and punish, thanks to no telegraphing, dodging even small blows feels immensely satisfying.

- Could compare to Arkham, make clear I like Arkham, but doing stuff here feels bigger than Batman to me. **(observation/comparison/structure)**

01:05 Homerun a foe, get some bat combos off, they do okay damage but have awkward range. Brad is clearly better with his fists. **(weapon combo/observation)**

02:05 Stand off moment, foe picks up baseball bat and charges, running right into my high sweep, sending him flying, the bat is dropped.

- I fail to dodge and start getting juggled, Chris comes in from offscreen and takes him out...

ENDING THE FIGHT! Chris won two thirds of this battle off screen!

- This is the biggest victory a partner achieves, and Chris isn’t even the strongest partner!

(observation/match up/gameplay)

- Use this fight to talk match ups **(structure/observation)**

UR 054 - M53 - Holed Up - Alex and Park two on two - Changing partners - I win by sheer luck (SA at right time)

01:25 Alex beat the absolute SHIT out of Glen, I’m on my own! **(partner)**

- This game does the JRPG thing where the boss joins you and now they’re not as impressive, granted that’s because actual monsters come to town! **(joke/observation/partners)**

07:35 Man it’s fucking mean how enemies start with near full SPA metres cause they can just force damage on you early on **(observation)**

UR 056 - M55 - Mop-Up - One on one, slower fight, easy take

00:40 We stand off for a moment, he doesn't move until I move

- It's another cool thing about this game, the fights all have a ton of little differences of enemy behaviour beyond just fighting, subtle differences which make each fight feel like an event rather than just a straight up brawler, lending personality to the foes. **(observation/set dressing)**

UR 057 - M56 - Soldiers - Take down some weapon wielding foes – Easy

00:40 Jake and an enemy sprint into and bump off of each other. **(collision)**

- This game has little bits of slapstick in it at times. **(observation/comedy)**

00:50 Launched into a turned over truck with a crowbar **(weapon)**

- Stun taunted, stumble towards enemy, they do not capitalise.

- While stunned, can mash to build metre, it's a great element, the one time the game "rewards" panicking. **(observation/mashing/stun)**

01:05 Bopping people with a wrench. **(weapon/stun)**

- Launch foe, then bop back down! You still have access to some standard combos, but this does make weapon use a little funky. They're not straight upgrades, they actually operate a little differently! **(observation/controls/weapons)**

- Also bonk a crowbar a million miles away

01:25 Jake battering a man with a pipe, we double team attack him

- Jake runs up and does a Dive drop kick off a foe **(animation/cool)**

- Jake uses me as a springboard for a DIVE GRAPPLE! I'm sorry Shun, you picked wrong, you should have hired Jake! We're real lucky things panned out this way. God I'm player two in the single player mode, to a bot! **(joke/observation/AI/partner)**

UR 058 - M57 - Precious Time - Timed three man takedown, taken easy

00:00 MISSION 57: MOTEL: "Precious Time"

"Some street gangs are rumoured to have taken refuge in a motel. Those morons are a complete waste of air. Get in there, and don't let them escape. Drag them out and make 'em see the light, one way or another."

- Sure and we're on the clock for some reason, are people waiting to check in or what?

(observation/joke/objective)

00:35 Intro cutscene lies, it only shows two guys, but there's three of them, one sneaks up on you. I have no idea if that's bullshit or clever. **(cutscene/observation)**

- Brad & Kadonashi vs. three weak foes (with time limit)

UR 059 - M58 - Object of Ire- Park boss - Expected hell, was in heaven

00:00 MISSION 58: SOUTHEND: "Object of Ire"

"The debacle at the bar has dealt a serious blow to Park's pride. I'm sure he realizes that his quarrel with us was just a misunderstanding, but he had gone too far to back out. Park wants to settle this old score man to man, so go now and honor that challenge. He'll probably come around to our cause if you slap him upside the head hard enough. Soften him up for me to go talk to him afterwards. Like they say, the more the merrier."

- Not sure why I still get the partner screen even when I can't pick on, I guess it's to emphasise the loneliness. **(menu/observation)**

02:25 Redirect Park, turning him away from me and then face slam him. This becomes a pretty standard attack for me as I get better, as the face slam is a very low risk follow up to a redirect. **(observation/grapple/contextual attack)**

03:50 This was one of the first times I felt really cool playing Urban Reign. Battered in the first round, figured him out in the second, calmed down. Exploited his moveset, tons of cool exchanges. It felt like an action scene, bursts of excitement with a lot of standoffs and strategy changes.

(observation/presentation/strategy)

- And the funny thing is, having now beaten the game another time, and digging some way into Free Mode, this was not an especially well executed fight, but it was far more dramatic for it!

(observation/skill growth)

UR 060 - M59 - Wrath - Beat up Miguel for pissing on Shuns car

“Out of all the Outsiders. Miguel Estevez is the only decent one in the bunch. He’s intelligent and industrious. He’s getting involved in shadowy dealings to earn cash for him to establish a territory to call their own so that his friends do not need to lose their lives on petty disputes. But he was a very bad boy yesterday. He pissed on a parked car and guess who was riding inside? Yours truly. Lets just say I saw something completely unimpressive. In every sense of the word. He got away at the time, but we got info on his whereabouts from our crew. Get over there and take him down.”

- Urban Reign, you know you don’t *need* to have 100 missions right? 99 is acceptable, even in a game where it’s a series of contrived excuses for fights, this one is especially piss weak.

(joke/story/observation)

00:50 2 on 1, I guess this is a break after the Park boss. **(objective/observation/difficulty curve)**

UR 061 - M60 - Truce - Help Park to win his allegiance, good

02:20 Me and Park both pop SPA BUFFs to cancel stun and push away foes

- Sad to say, he has gotten the JRPG Boss to Buddy debuff, he is nowhere near as much as a beast on my side, I guess he’s unmotivated, all my buddies are people I’ve beaten down.

(observation/joke/wordplay/partners)

UR 063 - M62 - End of the Outsiders - Easy brawl

00:05 MISSION 62: DOWNTOWN: “The End of the Outsiders”

“Miguel’s homies are panicking now that he’s no longer around to lead them. They’ve tried to hide out in downtown with the help of some old contacts, but I made sure nobody that area will give them any help. You shouldn’t have any trouble spotting them, they’re the amigos who look like headless chickens running around the streets. Help put them out of their miseries.”

- Wait is Miguel the first guy to actually die? For the crime of pissing on a car Shun was riding in. Seems kinda petty in the grand scheme. **(joke/observation/story)**

01:20 Thrown bat thwacks brad, stunning and flooring him. **(combat/weapon)**

- There are tons of differing hit reactions which can be reacted to in a ton of ways!

(combat/gameplay/observation)

UR 064 - M63 - Mr. Popularity - Alex rematch, VERY HARD

00:00 MISSION 63: SUBWAY STATION: “Mr. Popularity”

“Alex is looking to take you on. He’s been wanting to challenge someone on par with his fighting abilities, so he’s psyched to have found you. At first, I thought we should ignore him, but he’s been threatening to wage war on our guys if you don’t accept. He says that if you can beat him, he’ll join our ranks and help us out. Doesn’t sound like such a bad deal. Hmm... I’ve noticed that you’ve always been popular with the ladies, but now, it seems men are taking a liking to you as well.”

- What is Brad getting up to offscreen? **(observation/story)**

- You’re the only woman in this story. **(observation/joke)**

05:20 Reversal grapple break on me, that is part of the terror, you learn some options are very risky when opponents have deflections designed to instantly punish. **(moveset/observation)**

- Pretty much every groundpound is a dice toss as to who eats damage. Granted the initiator is taking the lesser risk. **(observation/gameplay)**

UR 065 - M64 - Lethal Weapon - Weapon brawl in square - Failing to grapple (still do not understand sprint grabs)

00:00 MISSION 64: CENTRAL SQUARE: "Lethal Weapon"

"The Outlaws are setting up an ambush for us in Central Square. They'll be packing heat for sure, so we're gonna have to play for keeps. Choose your partner carefully for this rumble."

- Alright, Park, you're in. Not much effort for this one. **(story/observation/partner)**

UR 066 - M65 - Nowhere to Go - Break 4 guys arms

"We're making good progress. The punks who've been tagging along with the shadow Platoon as well as the Outlaws are starting to feel the squeeze out there. They're afraid they won't have a place to call home after our clean up. But that'll be the last of their worries. Oh, they'll get bumped outta town alright, but only after they've been kicked in the dirt. Snap their arms like twigs to ensure they'll never use their weapons again."

- You can tell this is a Japanese game because snapping their arms doesn't mean we're breaking an M4 over our knee. **(joke/observation)**

UR 067 - M66 - Bleak Future - Hellish 2 on 3 with army guys with Boss level aggression and AI - Tons of partner swapping

00:00 MISSION 66: WAREHOUSE: "Bleak Future" (yeah, mine)

"As we started our clean up in the urban areas, a few shadow platoon guys have entered Kadonashi's turf. They were probably waiting for the right moment to launch their attack when Kadonashi's disciples found them and drove them into a warehouse. Go and crush their ambitions for the near future."

- Holy shit, Kadonashi's disciples didn't get battered for once! **(story/observation)**

01:20 Hit foe in back, get super redirected in front of him and punished **(combat)**

- This can be frustrating, there's far less difference in this game in hitting someone in the back given defence is practically omnidirectional. It does still feel like you get more attacks off if you hit someone in the back (and grapples are different/faster) but there's not as much advantage as you may expect. **(combat/observation/context/defence/deflection)**

Observation: This mission features three semi-boss level foes. Good health and damage and their AI is not holding back. **(difficulty)**

13:25 Redirect Bain and finish the fight with a combo! That was rough! **(difficulty/observation)**

UR 068 - M67 - Handle with Care - Team up with Alex against some scrubs - Foe catches thrown weapon, does not help

00:35 2 v 3, battle begins with them backed into a corner, they're now on the backfoot. But one hidden foe starts off screen, unmentioned, rude! **(story/observation)**

- So that's more than once the game sneaks another foe on you!

UR 069 - M68 - Sneak Attack - Ambush Napalm 99 - Stagger proof super mode foe

01:15 As AI gets better, my SPA Combo is thoroughly negated as Napalm 99 just walks backwards to stay out of range, then times a punish as it ends, luckily I dodge his low kick.

(AI/difficulty/SPA/spacing/observation)

02:05 Napalm pops another super armour buff, I run, fail a dive kick, and am punished, sent into a wall, stunned, and then hit by Napalm 99's worst move, his back grapple!

- A quick, nigh unblockable running tackle to the ground, some foes can do this from the front, making them terrifyingly hard to predict and defend against! **(moveset/observation)**

- As combat is sort of contextual and omnidirectional, getting behind a foe is not a guaranteed advantage as one might expect. It's often just as easy to hit a foe who is behind as is in front of you. Especially if such contextual attacks are heavy hitters or big sweeps. **(combat/contextual attacks/positioning/observation)**

03:35 A semi-whiffed dive grapple ends the fight, not so bad once I calmed down and just let Napalm 99 run into bait **(strategy/difficulty observation)**

- His AI gets far more capable as the game goes on.

UR 070 - M69 - Toe to Toe for Glory- McKinsie boss - Knife foe on rooftop, not too hard

00:25 Cutscene, sweeping shot of some nearby buildings, panning and orbiting down to reveal McKinzie, knife in hand "I'll cut you in pieces."

- Not to pieces? **(cutscene/dialogue/observation)**

01:00 Super deflection makes me spin flip *off of the floor* and then a rolling dodge puts me in good position to retaliate. **(punish/dodge/funny animation)**

- It is funny how you'll sometimes just gymnastically fly off of the ground to dodge in a beautiful pirouette. **(observation/animation/joke)**

01:05 Long string of back and forth dodging when McKinzie lands an absurd launching swipe with a KNIFE, classic launching weapon the knife. **(joke/observation/weapon/physics)**

UR 071 - M70 - Finishing Touches - Duo boss Napalm and Mkinzie - Very tough but tough it out

02:00 McKinzie's juggle combo is mean, quick shoulder barge to launch, perfectly timed slide tackle to catch me on the way down, and then a ground bound grapple, a neckbreaker which is quick and highly damaging! **(AI/moveset)**

- The AI are good at spacing, and I suppose this reveals the greatest weakness in Brad's moveset, his ground grapples are slow and laborious, leaving him open for long stretches, as well as being easily denied. **(observation/moveset/Brad's weakness)**

UR 073 - M72 - Killers - Sword wielding foes - Shun seems strong against, turns three on one to two on one

01:10 SPA Combo foe, then Park does his own SPA Kick combo and takes the guy away, a third of his health bar evaporates.

- I am then punished by a nearby foe

- The swords give them great reach, and having failed to learn to slide tackle like a dolt, I am unaware of the games greatest gap closing tech and best anti-sword move.

(observation/tutorialisation/combat)

01:30 Annoying thing, I dodge roll away from a sword attack, which puts me out of range to punish, but puts me in range of his fucking thrust attack, meaning I can fuck myself by dodging!

(observation/defence/weapons)

01:40 As I dodge one attack, a second one is allowed to collide, I only have I-Frames to the specific blow I defended against. **(observation/hitbox/moment/combat)**

- I guess this could be considered me failing to crowd control, but I am punished while successfully using the mechanic. **(observation)**

03:50 Sword slice on enemy, get SPA spin bursted away

- Then hit by SPA yanki kick, I kinda love the Yakuza (called Sword/Katana) moveset very punky **(observation/moveset)**

04:25 Swap Park for Shun Ying Lee **(partner)**

- Partners now start with weapons, and with a sword Shun is a bit more dangerous, having a unique-ish moveset around it **(observation/weapon moveset)**

05:45 Sword fight with enemy, space out their swing then punish, lose the second exchange **(weapons)**

- Weapons aren't just a straight upgrade, handling them feels distinct from fists, requiring greater care for spacing, they have advantages and disadvantages, especially in Brad's slippery ass hands. **(observation/moveset/weapons)**

UR 074 - M73 - Vicious Steel - That steel do be vicious - Ally starts with weapon - Have to gang up on foes

01:00 Kadonashi uses his stick like a baseball bat, clearly not a weapons man. **(moveset/observation)**

01:25 Enemies in this stage are highly aggressive, and they have a very annoying to deal with sword moveset. Filled with quick jabs to punish up close, as well as big wide spinning sweeps of the blade to make approach tricky. **(difficulty/observation)**

- And again, I do not yet have the slide tackle!

08:15 Me and Alex team up on final foe, still has most of his health. We juggle him and I air grapple powerbomb him! **(moveset/teamwork)**

- The air grapple powerbomb is unlike it's normal version, much faster, a reward for the greater set up and tighter timing to hit it. **(moveset/observation)**

UR 075 - M74 - Tit for Tat - Bunch of sword wielding foes - Not too bad

02:40 Grabbed by Riki, hit in nuts, SPA Combo to burst out and retaliate

- I'm hit with a thrown sword **(weapon)**

- The Katana moveset is very simplistic when without a weapon, with slow, laboured hits **(moveset/observation)**

UR 077 - M76 - Dogs of the Killers - Escort mission where escort does all the work

"Dwayne's Crew were ambushed downtown. I heard the guys behind the attack are headed towards the civic centre. They're just puppets of the Mushin-Kai, and they won't get away with this. Among the group of attackers was McKinzie, I guess each of the small-time captains are brown-nosing the Mushin-Kai big wigs. Go and take care of those dogs. Make sure you're watching your partners back. If people see you carrying your wounded partner around the civic centre, there's gonna be trouble from the cops."

- This city has cops? **(joke/observation/story)**

Odd note: The mission name on the loading screen is simply "The Dogs" and I'm not sure if I prefer it. **(observation/inconsistency)**

00:50 Game begins, this is an absolutely giant map, and it's hilariously used at times acting as two maps, just by spawning on the other end. **(map/observation/asset reuse)**

- Jake is the best! **(observation/partner!)**

UR 078 - M77 Collusion - Another escort on rooftop, easy

“... If your partner goes down, you’re gonna have a hell of a time getting outta there in one piece when their reinforcements arrive. In other words, make sure your partner doesn’t go down.”

- You can opt for no partner so it’s a toss up before you thrown down.

(tip/gameplay/objective/joke)

- Also it’s a unique way to increase difficulty. **(observation/difficulty/objective)**

- Take Jake, he’s my man

UR 079 - M78 - The Monster- GOLEM IS A MONSTER

01:00 I fruitlessly punch at Golem as he grapples Park, I cannot save him, Golem is super armoured... I guess I’m doing damage at least, good work Park! Fight on! **(joke/observation)**

01:15 Golem does a double attack, hoisting and SLAMMING me and Park together, Park is already almost dead. Golem has absurd damage output and even getting several free combos on him, I have maybe taken 5% of his life. **(Boss/health/damage/observation/grapple)**

01:20 Pop SPA combo and lay into Golem, it’s like Raiden laying into Armstrong, I’m getting nowhere! **(observation/reference)**

04:20 Absurd interaction. Alex grapples Golem, he grapple breaks and it reverses into his attack, I AIR GRAPPLE Golem as his grapple break is a jumping powerbomb, and then he grapple breaks me... So absolutely nothing was gained in the exchange! **(observation/moment/grapple break/grapple breaking)**

05:35 Start realising I should be grappling more, punching a guy with super armour is a quick way to die, grappling burns time on his metre! **(strategy)**

- Punch him off of Alex as he grapples! Get bursted away by a SPA get up, then we slowly re-approach and manage to get a double team attack!

- I have to imagine this is how bullfighters feel! **(joke/observation)**

- Granted before long it’s me seeing red! **(there’s the joke)**

06:45 Terrifying exchange of redirections as I can’t afford to take a hit, eventually I get off a SPA combo and take the win!

- Golem is actually toned down for this fight on top of it being a 2 on 1! **(observation/difficulty)**

UR 080 - M79 - He's back in town - Shun's brother Lin Returns - Defeat his men - Chris is getting outpaced

“That’s... that’s my brother, Lin Fong! So he WAS back in town. But why now... after all this time... ? When our father died. I was given control over Chinatown. That didn’t sit well with my brother so he skipped bail. So it seems Lin ong is the one in charge of the Tin Jiao now. Don’t take him on just yet. I’m sure he’s got something up his sleeve. We should wait and see what he’s up to. One more thing: he’s an expert when it comes to swords. Our father was, after all, Chinatown’s master swordsman.”

- Dun dun dun! Love this game trying drama in this format, at least it commits, also sorry but I’m more worried about the monster than the brother. **(story/drama/observation)**

- Seriously this format is less than ideal, but I think the game knows this is daft, it’s just doing whatever. **(observation/story)**

Objective: Take Lin Fong’s men down.

- Take Chris as partner

- Slight scene setting to make things interesting, he's present and will activate if you get close. So it's like a danger zone, adding a potential boss to the arena you have to avoid. Also adds to the story, gives him a legit presence. **(observation/gameplay/story)**

UR 081 - M80 - Watchdogs - Super close timed mission!

01:00 Hilarious failed SPA block, it's not only late, the attack wasn't even aimed at me. As Napalm 99 wipes out Alex! **(spa block fail)**

- Run up behind Napalm and get grapple kicked in the dick **(contextual attack)**
- How does this fucker have a grapple to a guy coming up behind him which is faster than a standard grapple? **(observation/grapple/moveset/contextual attack)**
- Get launched into a car, it wobbles **(environmental detail)**

05:35 Two foes suddenly die, for a winning run it doesn't feel all that... spectacular, I'm not sure how we beat them better than previous goes. **(observation)**

- I whiff an entire SPA combo as Alex juggles the final foe out of my height

UR 082 - M81 - City Under Siege - Yak and Mkinzie team up - Me and Alex have to stick together to win

- Take Dwayne as partner... Mostly cause I haven't used him in awhile. **(partner/observation)**

02:25 Throat slit by McKinzie **(grapple animation)**

- Oddly low damage for having my throat slit **(observation)**

UR 083 - M82 - Fists of Iron - Defeat Ting Jiao - Kadonashi kinda mid partner

00:00 MISSION 82: WAREHOUSE: "Fists of Iron"

"My brother, Lin Fong's men have hit Kadonashi Dojo's turf. Kadonashi's disciples are in way over their heads with Lin Fong's men so I'm sending you in to bail them out. The Tin Jiao don't appear to be armed, but they're masters of unarmed combat, so watch yourself."

- Back to their jobber status, I see. **(joke/story/observation)**

00:55 Get thrown violently into a shelving unit for big damage! **(hazard/prop/stage)**

- Kadonashi is already dead **(partner)**
- I'm starting to understand why your students are always getting the shit beaten out of them **(joke/observation)**

01:30 Launch foe through shelf for bonus damage

- Super deflection redirect, dodge one attack but get hit by another mid-dodge, I could be annoyed that I wasn't allowed to evade this given I was successfully dodging, but I am being punished for my positioning, allowing myself to get swarmed by three foes **(positioning/crowd control fail/dodge controls/observation)**

UR 084 - M83 - Limbering Up - Defeat Mushin Kai unarmed guys - The swords are holding them back!

MISSION 83: APARTMENT ROOFTOP: "Limbering Up"

"The Mushin-Kai is meeting in their urban district hideout right now. Lucky for us, they've assigned guard duty to a bunch of unarmed nobodies. Now's our chance to strike. Let's see how well they do without their swords."

- They're guarding the roof... Incase I come in by helicopter? **(joke/observation)**

UR 086 - M85 - Pursuit - Spotted by Lin Fong, fight!

00:00 MISSION 85: UNDERGROUND PARKING: "Pursuit"

"Lin Fong just entered this building. Hate to ask you this, but I'd like you to tail him and check the place out. Remember, the whole place is enemy territory, if you get spotted, abort the mission and fall back."

Objective: Take Lin Fong down.

- I think Brad is getting spotted and aborting Lin Fong... **(joke/observation)**

01:55 Powerbomb grapple broken

- Redirection into face slam, a strong option **(observation/moveset/good contextual footage)**

- *Good footage to show difference between front and back head region grabs (note)*

02:10 Another redirection into face slam **(grapple/contextual attack)**

02:35 Amazing hitbox moment, I slide tackle as Lin Fong jump attacks and we miss eachother! **(amazing hitboxes)**

- Then punish a slide tackle! He gets me with the next and goes into juggle

- Seemingly knowing my weakness, Lin Fong starts going for slides and leg grapples. I do feel I hate leg grapples, they're so fast! **(observation/moveset)**

UR 087 - M86 - Return of the Monster- AHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH

00:40 MISSION 86: BORDIN BLDG. MAIN GATE: "Return of the Monster"

"Just as I suspected, their headquarters is somewhere in this area. They're not gonna let us escape that easily. Golem's waiting to jump you as you leave the parking lot, and unfortunately, you won't be getting any backup on this one, you're going in solo. We'll figure out our next move once you take care of business."

- Plenty of time to plan then! **(joke)**

Objective: Take Golem Down. Tall. Fucking. Order. **(observation/difficulty)**

01:15 Terrifying opening cutscene, Golem stands before the Bordin Building door, axe in hand.

- He narrows his eyes at me.

- I feel like if Urban Reign got a movie adaptation this guy would be played by the Rock, the role would suit him cause like the Rock, Golem is not allowed to lose! **(joke/observation)**

07:15 Stunned by Golem popping his buff and killed with axe! Game over! (82)

- Menu tip telling me to just run away when he pops SPA, the game is wise. The game is telling you to fight smart, not nobley! **(observation)**

- Stupid as it is, part of me winning this fight was abandoning what dumb notions of honour and "earning the win" I hold to. **(observation/strategy/funny note)**

09:50 Attempt dive strike, the sprint system is so sticky I see Golem sprint across the whole screen. **(funny/sprinting/controls/observation)**

13:40 Golem staggers his axe combo to prolong it, smart AI, I restart! (58) **(AI/observation)**

- It's actually genuinely impressive that the AI plays to the games rules in such a way

UR 090 - M89 - An Unexpected Call - Lin Fong calls! Shun is captured - 4 VERY HARD ENEMIES OUTSIDE

- Golem took 23 minutes, this mission took 30, four uncompromising, highly aggressive foes with good health and damage, it's like fighting four minibosses simultaneously!

(difficulty/mission/observation)

00:45 Opening cutscene shows only two foes. Bain and a Yakuza, both armed, but two more foes are behind me, it's a cruel opener, an ambush, and it really does make you despise your enemies, it's a trick this game pulls a few times. **(cutscene/observation)**

01:25 Dive strike misjudged, punished, sword foes are very good at shutting it down!

(moveset/observation/rock paper scissors)

- The swords and heightened aggression makes controlling crowds far tougher, as they can spread out further while still covering each other, and this greater distance also makes my crowd clearing moves relatively weak. I have to pick my time, and when my time arrives, it is always scant!

(observation)

UR 091 - M90 - The Trap - Tough 3 on 1- not as bad as the last one

09:05 I PULL OFF A SLIDE TACKLE! I don't even think I register what I had done! **(sprint attack/observation)**

UR 094 - M94 - Enemy Stronghold - Tag match again finally - Jake got me through!

"My brother, Lin Fong. He's fled the city. He lived by the motto "might makes right." Which is why after being defeated, he probably won't show his face around these parts for awhile. From what I overheard when I was held hostage, the leader of the Mushin-Kai, the same guy who's trying to gain control of the city, goes by the name of Shinkai. I found out he's been sending out henchmen from a certain building near the civic center. Head over there, bust through the front door and take Shinkai down. Show no mercy to anyone who gets in your way. We're almost to the end now, just give me a little more of your strength."

- Lin Fong, a truly embarrassing arc... Also I kicked his ass *on sight*, but I guess Shun doesn't know about that run in in the parking lot. **(story/observation)**

- Also I'll lend you my strength, I genuinely have no idea if Brad is even getting paid for this. **(story/observation)**

02:10 Knock out of powerbomb

- Roll back towards foes and get double teamed while McKinzie piles on more damage.

- You know, McKinzie just feels like Bain if he went through a pokemon evolution.

(observation/joke)

04:15 Sledgehammer combo on McKinzie!

- Foe slide tackles, knocking me away, best move against weapons, as I would could to learn.

(observation/gameplay)

08:20 Attempt homerun with mace, get interrupted with a quick jab **(weapon use fail)**

- Weapons are hard **(observation)**

- Grapple break neutral grapple, shove him into mate who gets staggered **(collision)**

- Weapon somehow glides through enemy. **(i-frames?/glitch?)**

UR 095 - M95 - Forcing Through - Another tag match – Easier

00:20 Another 2 v 3 against easier foes.

- What's hilarious is this mission takes place on the same map as the previous, only we've been moved to the other side, closer to the parking lot entrance. It's amusingly ramshackle story telling and really goes to show how some of these maps are far bigger than their needs, they're effectively good for more than one stage! **(map design/observation/storytelling)**

UR 096 - M96 - Incursion - Breaking into garage - Same enemy again, he must have gotten up and chased us

00:25 New map, but some of the same guys we fought outside... I guess they got up and chased us in, round 2! **(observation/enemies)**

UR 098 - M98 - M99 - Golem tag match - EVIL JAPANESE WARLORD - Monstrous battle against a cheating swordsman

00:35 Golem and Napalm 99, N99 swings his hammer, through bloodshot eyes he screams "KILL 'EM NOW!" Very menacing cutscene, they know exactly how terrifying these two fuckers are, but by now, you're a monster all your own. **(observation/skill growth)**

- His large sword and the small arena means he has a wide zone of terror a player has to penetrate, and there's little room to evade. **(observation/gameplay/strategy/boss)**

- He also starts with full SPA, seems to generate it faster, meanwhile I generate it much slower, so I have to depend on rock solid fundamentals and can't just spam to win. **(observation/metre)**

06:35 Eating hits from the sword.

- The issue with the sword is there's a sweet spot where you can dodge it, its range is longer than that dodge spacing, meaning a player has to be extra careful, it forces you to get in and confront him, but many of his moves are very good at keeping you from getting close! So you need to force an opening and then stay on top of him, and it's not like he's safe up close, but at least you can react to the danger! **(boss/spacing/observation)**

07:05 SPA Combo to burst out, Shinkai will *always* punish this with a more highly damaging SPA uppercut. If you have been leaning on SPA Combo to clinch tough fights, it is now a crutch he'll cut out from under you. **(boss/final boss/strategy/observation)**

09:40 Shinkai's redirection also *deals damage automatically!* **(boss/final boss)**

- This is insane because it means that just a basic combo is technically *unsafe*, you can be punished if he just decides he's allowed to dodge! **(combat/observation/challenge)**

11:00 Me and the boss have a stand off, I taunt, which must be believable when I'm a hair follicle from death **(observation/taunt)**

- He has a ton of moves which force you to go... Okay, I must never be in this situation or I risk instant death, which is fine for a final challenge, but some of those situations are just, do not get punished for hitting him, and I feel if I've successfully bobbed and weaved my opponent and am punishing them, then I'm fighting a damage slot machine with very bad odds!

- What's funny is though, it is possible to work around him, it just takes a very long time to figure out. He's a good final boss even if instead of feeling like a culmination of your skills, he's reshuffling them into a new, but still recognisable form. **(observation/difficulty/bullshit?)**

15:30 Actually get away with SPA Combo as I hit Shinkai when he's already airborne, turning it into a juggle, he gets his revenge by letting me run into his SPA Uppercut
- Lose enough exchanges and die, game over! (103)

I am very curious by what Shun was thinking saying I'd be in my element in this fight. Is the element Carbon, is she turning my ashes into a fucking diamond ring or something?
(joke/observation/story)

- Besides anything else, Shinkai feels like he fights perfectly, and even punishes the player for playing correctly, in ways that have been rewarded up until now. On top of that, he has more health and defence than you. You not only need to play well, he can afford more mistakes than you, and he doesn't make mistakes! **(difficulty/challenge/observation/final boss)**

19:25 Fail to get in, restart! (152) Dodge roll away from dive strike, but before I even HAVE CONTROL AGAIN Shinkai has turned and already hit me! I could not escape that, I am punished FOR SUCCESSFULLY DODGING! What are my options? Restart! (153) **(observation/final boss/bullshit)**

Map note: The background is great, a dramatic sunset on one side, and a darkened cityscape on the other, it's a fittingly dramatic but not overblown spot, and the strong background lighting does not sacrifice readability in the arena, it's very tastefully considered. **(observation/art style/graphics)**

23:30 Slide tackle, air grapple, kick prone foe into wall and attempt to punish, SPA Uppercutted!
- As the boss starts with full SPA and his attacks aren't as costly, he can just *reset* the fight more often than you too! He has a ton of almost free damage on demand! **(final boss/metre/observation)**

45:55 Hit by tip of sword range **(spacing/weapon/final boss)**

- SPA Punch to disarm, and this activates Shinkai's pissed off mode as he starts SPA uppercutting, juggling, and not letting me get up!

46:10 Let Shinkai run in, time him jumping into a juggle combo and then air grapple!

- Grab his sword and start using thrust to poke him, keep him at distance, this works until he SPA Uppercuts through it, killing me! Game over! (118)

- *I cannot play this battle safely and slowly, he can force an opening, I need to match his aggression with perfect play, which is HARD!* **(STRATEGY/OBSERVATION/FINAL BOSS)**

UR 099 - M100 - The Mastermind - The Mayor was behind it all, Brad punches him and says he has no friends!

Brad: I see... You're right. And this piece of paper with your signature on it?

(Brad produces the envelope and taps it against his hand)

- Brad strikes me, well, and many others, but he strikes me as the kind of guy who hasn't made any back up of that. **(character/story/observation)**

02:55 The real final boss begins, and double taps me!

- This is the funniest final boss of all time! It's just a man with a gun, if you stand still, he two taps you, if you run, he lands a headshot which is instant death!

(challenge/boss/gameplay/observation)

JOKES

- I've returned to this game a few times over the years, always failing to beat it, but always digging a little deeper. 1st time my Urban Reign died around mission 15, then 20, probably never made 30. What brought me back is working on the Yakuza: Like a Dragon review had me missing fighting games so much I hit Urban Reign hard, and it hit back harder! I got utterly addicted.

Story opening: Don't tell her you work for free Brad! Those fists should be behind a paybrawl!

Game opening: But this isn't Like a Dragon, this is a whole different beast! **(jokes/wordplay/story)**

- This isn't Like a Dragon, this is a whole different beast!

Early on, talking about why I beat the game this time: This is another title it took a couple years to beat, don't worry, while I am slow, this isn't a Brigade E5 situation, this isn't real time with pause for thought. I basically always broke this game out, hit a snag, and got pulled away by another project.

This time, I was going through Yakuza 7, and I was craving some brawling! Now, this game isn't Like a Dragon, this is a whole different beast! Using this game to satiate my need for street fights is like a sugar fiend cracking their craving with crack cocaine, it is, in many senses of the word, harder stuff! **(joke/post-note/structure)**

UR 001 Notes

- Good thing he's not named Mike **(awful joke)**

- "I can smell some gangster action coming" No that's just me **(joke)**

UR 017 - Note the bar

I do find it funny that the bar "has a habit of calling when there is trouble" we've had two boss fights here. I guess they finally got their landline fixed. Then realised it just made us trash the place faster and disconnected it. Sorry bud I ain't gonna phone my fights in. **(joke)**

UR 035 Note- Defence Mission

The moment I saw it was a defence mission I was terrified! But the game had just taught me I could swap to my tag team partner! So this now no longer an escort mission, I'll escort myself thank you! And it turns out the computer is WAY better at playing Brad than I am! This is canon Brad, I've been holding him back all along! Oh wait, no he's still me. **(die/joke/gameplay)**

- I can hardly defend myself, how am I meant to defend someone else? Well, luckily I can just swap to my tag team partner! Unfortunately I'm not very good at defending myself.

(joke/gameplay/tagteam)

UR 001 - M1, M2 - Intro - Nobody is innocent - City run by crime - Brad Hawk turns up

00:00 Namco splash, game is from the same studio as Pacman, Soul Caliber, and who can forget Death by Degrees! Okay I'm just Tekken the piss. **(joke/bad joke/observation)**

(About intro)

- I don't know if what just happened counts as a sizzle reel, but that shit was hot either way!

(story/observation/joke)

02:40 Electrical box main menu, with some grafitti and barbed wire, even the menu is hard **(joke)**

- And yes I did not look at the bottom text telling me difficulty could be customised. **(observation)**

“As you all know, the crime rate in our city continues to rise each year. Today, I would like to announce a new crime prevention initiative that will stop this epidemic which plagues our city. Security cameras will be installed in over 2000 locations throughout the city, and sections of the city will be partitioned using large gates. We believe these measures will help us to prevent crime, as well as assist in gathering evidence in case a crime is committed. I would like to ensure you all that this new policy has been implemented solely for the purpose of maintaining public safety, and is in no way designed to invade your right to privacy.

I am here to ask for your support in taking back our beloved city from crime and fear!” **(joke)**

- If I wanted people to be less scared I’d probably say that less ominously Billy Bordin.

(joke/observation)

- I also love how he assures the audience about their right to privacy, what a suspicious thing to say.

(joke/dialogue)

- Funny how the security cameras have no impact on gameplay, meanwhile the gates, instead of preventing crime, give me a cool thing to do sick air kicks off of, so really this initiative has been a wash. **(joke)**

- Anyway I’m in town to make sure the cameras have something good to watch! **(joke)**

05:05 Real Deal is hype “I can smell some cool gangster action comin’ our way!” Nope, just me! **(joke)** Em Cee, for his part, is a bit more sensible, not excited by the war.

05:55 Gameplay begins! First fight is a 2V1 against two very easy opponents.

- Pop up tells us circle is strike and triangle is grapple.

- Graphic note: Now if this game looks wide it defaulted to widescreen but is actually running in 4:3, I just assumed this was a universe of incredibly wide people. By now you should know I don’t have the best eye for this stuff and I’ve beaten Kingpin, I’ve got a tolerance for this stuff, that Wide Putin meme from a years ago didn’t do it for me. **(really shit joke/graphics)**

08:15 MISSION 02: CHINATOWN “First Job”

- Get a big rising shot of Shun Ying, she’s our mission control and head of the Chinatown Triad... I also think we’re her only fighter given how this goes but hey, we’re all she needs, that and unlimited retries. **(story/observation/joke)**

- She asks if we’re ready to roll, Brad says he warmed up on the way, she’s pleased. Brad don’t tell her you do this for free! As far as she should know, those fists should be behind a paybrawl! **(joke)**

- Brad jokes if she wants to prove her innocence, get a lawyer. Shun bluntly says sure, if she was dealing with cops. So what’s our job? Take out *every gang member in the area. Including the Zaps leader, Dwayne.*

- Shun really does put the brains in Urban Reign, and by that I mean her plan is a no brainer! Just hire the best fighter and beat literally the entire city up! Easy for her to say, says Brad, as he sets out into a game which proves that yes, this is much easier said than done! **(joke/observation/story)**

10:30 Escape combo with super deflection, tight timing! Defeat Busta (Busta is busted!) **(joke/awful)**

UR 002 - M3 - War were declared, beat up buster (again)

00:15 Cutscene: We join Dwayne hanging out at the junkyard, as noughties gangsters were wont to do.

- He angrily kicks a keep out sign, pissed Shun Ying hired a brawler instead of fight her own battles. He tells his gang to take the war to Shun Ying. They raise their weapons and cheer, heading off to fight us. Presumably they lost those weapons at one of the gates, as those won't appear for another 50 stages or so. **(joke/story/observation)**

UR 003 - M4 - Friendly Gesture - Beat up one biker - Inbetween attacks unlocked

00:10 MISSION 04: HIDEOUT: "Friendly Gesture"

"Word on the street is that Dwayne has convinced the Hell's Legion bike gang to come after us. Their boss, Glen, thinks Dwayne will give him props if he takes us down. Rather than sit around here, we're going on the offensive. We already know where their hideout is, so go pay him a visit... and as a friendly gesture, put one of 'em in the hospital."

- Shun is not clearing her name, she's clearing names off a list! **(joke/observation/story)**

01:00 upper region grab on Rod, for Brad, this is a slow powerbomb, lifting the foe before slamming them down. Decently damaging but more or less impossible in a group fight given its extreme move length **(combat/observation/grapple)**

- The powerbomb powerbombs in most group fights **(joke/wordplay)**

01:40 Neutral grab punching finish on Rod!

- Despite the 3V1, only one KO is required, I suppose we're allowed to leave after this.

(joke/observation)

- The difficulty does have some ramp up, but that's to fling us into the wall of a canyon! **(joke)**

UR 004 - M5 - Child's Play - Beat Up One Gangster!

00:00 MISSION 05: SOUTHEND: "Child's Play"

"The street gangs are getting jumpy from all the recent activity in town. They're just a bunch of random punks, and way too disorganised to try anything ballsy like taking us on but I say we take 'em out just to be sure..."

What's the deal with that guy over there? He a friend of yours or something? I get the feeling he's sizing you up for a one-on-one. Give him what's coming to him. That'll serve as a lesson for his friends." **(story)**

- Shun I hate to say it but I think you're going mad with power already. **(joke/observation)**

00:30 Gameplay begins, one-on-one with Nas-Tii, but what's really funny about this is there are three people on the map besides me, I could go and trigger those two as well, but they're basically just here to watch, passive yet viewing utterly impassively. **(wordplay/joke)**

UR 006 CONT – First game over, big crowd control lessons

00:30 3V1, opening shot to emphasise it, this is a 3v1, we must defeat all three, Busta, Spider, and Pain Killah, and they're all slightly tougher

- Tutorial prompt telling us to run! Oh but there is no retreat! **(joke)**

UR 007 - M8 - New Kid on the Block - Countering grapples is hard

00:00 MISSION 08: SOUTHEND: "New Kid on the Block"

"Outsiders have been hanging around this neck of the woods lately. They're not exactly the touristy type. In fact, if they're not stirring up trouble on their own. They've been known to get mixed up with Dwayne's men on occasion. I want you to head over there and scope out the scene. If they think you're fresh meat and try to jack you. Feel free to introduce yourself."

- Yeah with Brad's demeanour you know what you're doing. This is bait Shun. **(joke/story)**

UR 008 - M9 - Eye for an Eye - Three martial artists - Dive attacks unlocked - 'I'm not worried' I am

02:05 triple dive kick combo (**moment/combat**)

- It always feels satisfying to get a home run in this game, downing every enemy with one of these feels so fucking good.

- I love the dive kick, I really do, but man it's risky. Honestly its use has to be measured, the problem is it looks so cool I often use it when it is really not worth it! It's a big predictable move and as the game goes on enemies will punish it perfectly, letting you dive into a combo string, knowing the perfect range to wait at to let you land and then open up while you recover, and if you're diving into a crowd, it's like trying to dive into a thorny bush and not get hurt, and diving into these pricks is no wiser! (**joke/wordplay/gameplay/observation/crowd control**)

UR 010 - M11 - Proof - Jake Boss - Terrifying if he gets going

00:05 MISSION 11: BAR: "Proof"

- Ah, cause it's a bar! (**joke/observation**)

- On my first playthrough where I was just kinda trying the game out, this is where I stopped. I've revisited this game a few times over the years and slowly crept deeper and deeper towards Mission 30, stopping somewhere short of there. First time I won this I figured I was maybe a third done, I mean 30 missions, seems about right, right? Given the difficulty. Somehow failing to notice my completion progress tracker on the save screen was ticking up 1% per mission! Yeah, I can miss stuff (like the difficulty) (**joke/difficulty/observation**)

01:20 use of SPA kick to escape stun from a wall bounce. (**status/stun/SPA**)

- It's such a hilarious way to escape being dizzy, when Brad is lost and confused, he just does a giant spinning kick! (**joke/observation**)

- It's like a wet dog violently shaking off water!

UR 011 - M12 - Unlucky One - 4 on 1

00:05 MISSION 12: BACK ALLEY: "Unlucky One"

"Yesterday, some of our boys got jumped by the Zaps, and four of them spent the night in the hospital. We're going to get revenge for this. I've already figured out who the culprits are. One of them's not even a member of the Zaps but I'm pissed off so if he gets in the way... Well, that's his problem. They're gonna pay for what they did to our guys."

- Ahh, cycles of violence – Wait we have guys?! (**joke/story/observation**)

UR 012 - M13 - Paying the Price - Surprise attack surprise attack - Struggle with wall combos - dodge grabs - Clutch win

00:50 No intro cutscene, the four guys are hanging out, I love how they just turn and look at Brad as the mission begins. (**observation/level**)

- You're about to have Brad time! (**joke/awful**)

UR 013 - M14 - Right Stuff- Fight Glen- Nightmare wake up boss- Do not anger Jake in corner (funny)

02:40 Look at tutorial screen, super deflection just says to hit square at "the right moment" while staggering from enemy attack to deflect the next... Well I gotta figure out when that right moment is. It'll take much longer than a moment. Una momento, una momento fucking mori. (**joke/bad joke**)

UR 015 - M16 - Repercussions - Two boxers, Easy

00:00 MISSION 16: BACK ALLEY: “Repercussions”

“A boxer from the westside gym has a bone to pick with you. Apparently, he was among the thugs you roughed up along with Dwayne’s men. Now he’s brought some friends along to even the score. The boxers who hang out at the westside gym are nothing but a bunch of gangbangers when they’re not in the ring. When you tangle with them, keep in mind that they’re not going to use throws. Just concentrate on dodging their punches and timing your attacks”

- Shun I can’t help but think you’re just worsening your own position via liberal use of me

(joke/observation)

- There’s a guy in my area who I haven’t seen in awhile, but for a time he’d just buy cheap lager, and hang out by a bin next to the church. He’d hope someone would bump into him so he’d have an excuse to pick a fight, the story is a lot like him. Urban Reign doesn’t have a plot so much as it does an excuse to have 100 fights in a row. The only difference is this game is only drunk on bloodlust. I was sad to see the canman go but I’m happy Urban Reign has turned up! **(observation/plot)**

- **Line thought:** This is a story we’re not meant to take too seriously, but it’s much funnier if you do, so we’re gonna make like a 2012 Youtuber and pretend we don’t know what the game is doing, being a cheesy thinly veiled excuse for some action, which is really all it needed to be. **(joke)**

UR 016 - M17 - Crashing the party - An easy FIVE on one

01:25 Attempts to dodge within a crowd disastrous **(dodge/no crowd control)**

- Bad crowd management, trying to take on a lot of enemies is dicey! The only bones getting rolled are mine! **(joke/bad joke)**

02:45 Groundpound downed foe while his friend ineffectually headbutts next to him, with us too low for it to do much.

- So you can get away with it, but only if enemies aren’t using their heads... Or aren’t using them right anyway **(joke/good joke)**

UR 018 - M19 - Chinatown Welcome - Four on One Vigilantes - Sprint grapples unlocked and not understood by me

00:00 MISSION 19: CHINATOWN: “Chinatown Welcome”

- Forget it Brad, it’s Chinatown! **(awful joke)**

“A crew of fine, upstanding young men from the Westside Gym would like to have a word with you. They’re acting like a bunch of righteous vigilantes, but in reality, they’re no better than your average street punk. They know the game, and they know it’s rules. If they set foot on this turf, then there’ll be a price to pay. Let’s give ‘em a warm Chinatown welcome.”

- dim sums a bitches **(joke/bad joke/I like it)**

UR 020 - M21 - World Class Boxer - Grimm and Glenn DUO BOSS - NIGHTMARE HARD

00:25 MISSION 21: HIDEOUT: “World-Ranked Boxer”

“Grimm’s currently a wrestler, but he’s an alumnus of the Westside Gym, and apparently, he even got pretty high in the world cruiserweight class rankings. I’ve heard that his old boxing buddies from the gym have asked him to take you on. I suspect Glen had something to do with this too. This Grimm guy’s a real monster, but I know you can take him. Just watch your back.”

- So now we’ve got proper boxers on our case too.

- That said, this game may take place in the Tekken universe, since two characters from that series put in appearances. If it does, being a cruiserweight boxer seems almost quaint in a world with the King of Iron Fist tournament. Pretty sure Paul Fox could batter this Grimm guy. Meanwhile I am not Paul Fox, and this fight took 16 minutes so I don’t think I can talk. **(joke/observation)**

05:45 Wrestling move performed on me by Grimm, Glen taunts as I am stunned, SPA spin kick as he charges me to escape!

- Go after Grimm who performs a dodge counter (a boxer move), which floors me due to my upper body being wrecked (regional damage), then finishes me with a ground pound for the 13th game over! Bad luck that one! **(joke/regional damage/dodge/deflection)**

14:55 Sweep kick both enemies, they collide off eachother in air! **(knockdown move/collision)**

- As Glen gets up, hit him with the low kick, fuck your shin!

- Joke idea: Shin Ryu Ga Gotoku wasn't doing it for me (as I kick someone in the shin), I needed some brawling. **(joke/structure/setup)**

UR 021 - M22 - Ring of Fire - Grimm Rematch - Hard boy

00:35 MISSION 22: BAR: "Ring of Fire"

"I think you must have loosened something in his head, because Grimm is back for more punishment. So be it. Let this bar be his final resting place. Throw him into tables and chairs to let him get his pain on. Up to now, Grimm's dominated within the safety of the ring. Show him you're a cut above when it comes to street fighting."

- What a Grimm tale **(joke/awful)**

UR 022 - M23 - Avenging the Honour - Break a Martial Artists Legs (regional damage test)

00:00 MISSION 23: BACK ALLEY: "Avenging the Honor"

"Kadonashi's disciples have come to avenge their master's honor. Aww, it's so nice to see such close unwavering devotion between teachers and their pupils. Break their legs so they'll have to come crawling back. Let's give the Kadonashi gang the shock of their lives. We'll see if they're so eager to show their faces around here anymore."

- They will be, because Brad does not kill, and I guess he just gives them a charlie horse **(joke/observation/character)**

00:30 the mission opens with a camera zooming in on my opponents legs, incase I've forgotten what legs are. **(joke/observation/camera)**

02:25 Two successful grapple breaks on Zach! Which doesn't help because he's near death but his legs are still fucking pristine! **(joke/regional damage/objective)**

03:45 Make Zach's legs yellow! Beaten the piss out of him! **(joke)**

UR 023 - M24 - Helping Hands - Tong Yoon Kadonashi combo boss - Nightmare, sick victory as IT CLICKS

00:00 MISSION 24: WAREHOUSE: "Helping Hands"

"I'm surprised to hear that the once proud Kadonashi has stooped to requesting support from someone outside his circle. I guess you've really gotten under his skin. Tong Yoon and Kadonashi are both deadly opponents. Taking both of them on at the same time won't be a walk in the park so be sure you keep them apart while you fight."

- Can I have some of those men you talked about? **(joke/observation)**

- Kadonashi launches me into walls and instantly chases down, I try to lock on to him and it decides despite the fact I AM HAVING MY SHIT ROCKED IT JUST WANTS TO LOOK AT TONG YOON INSTEAD! It's like my in game camera is asking "You seeing this shit?"

(joke/observation/camera)

13:50 Good opening, dodge and grapple breaks! I can make myself look good in very small bursts! **(observation/joke)**

UR 024 - M25 - Outnumbered - Easy gang battle - No music it seems

Joke idea: I really got into this game because Yakuza: Like a Dragons change left me kinda jonesing for combat. Now, as much as I liked Yakuza's brawling this is a whole different ballgame. What I did was like someone fixing a sugar craving with crack cocaine, it hits a whole lot harder!

00:15 MISSION 25: CHINATOWN: "Outnumbered"

- Oh, they're here again! **(joke)**

00:15 MISSION 25: CHINATOWN: "Outnumbered"

- Oh, they're here again! **(joke)**

"... Looks like we've been ambushed. They've got us totally surrounded. I guess we underestimated the Zaps this time. Or is it they who have underestimated us? Kick it up a notch and force them to tell you where Dwayne is hiding."

- Can you come outside and ask for me, Brad is clearly shy. **(joke)**

02:05 Dodge guy running in, roundhouse him into a wall and pursue! Another guy runs in and gets me!

- It's like I'm playing a bizarro version of Way of the Samurai! **(joke/observation)**

UR 025 - M26 - Fist to Fist - Face Giga-Jake - Very tough, clutch out fight

00:00 MISSION 26: MOTEL: "Fist to Fist"

"I was wrong about Jake. While he was initially doing it for the money, he's now playing a deadly game with you. I have no interest in your machismo sword fights, but do what you have to do if he's going to be in our way. Go on and have fun."

- Am I getting paid for this? **(joke/observation/story)**

00:55 We begin with Jake hitting me with three back to back leg grapples! My legs are not okay brozouf! **(joke/bad joke/grapple/regional damage)**

- I am stunt taunted, use a SPA punch to break out!

UR 027 - M28 - Who's your Daddy - Fight Glen Again - Fight for the Pipe

- Just one mission on the map!

00:00 MISSION 28: HIDEOUT: "Who's Your Daddy?"

"Once you've got Glen grovelling at your feet, it's all over for the Hell's Legions. But watch out. He's been know nto come heavy, so be careful of weapons. It doesn't matter what he does, though. He doesn't stand a chance against you. Go show him what you're made of."

- Game overs, restarts, and and fluctuating stubbornness **(joke/observation)**

00:50 Kicked in leg, staggered, and then battered with the pipe! **(weapon)**

- All the while I am getting tutorial prompts for the weapon Glen is holding! I have to learn myself how to disarm! This is what we call the school of hard, concussion dealing knocks!

(joke/observation/tutorial)

UR 029 - M30 - Showdown - Dwayne Boss - The story is beginning - Kidnapping at start was militant group causing disarray before beginning attack

00:00 MISSION 30: SCRAPYARD: "Showdown"

"At last, Dwayne has shown itself. He's only going to listen to what we have to say after he's been beaten into submission. You're in the clear now, and nobody can stop you. Finish him off. Once you've won, we'll have proven our innocence and can finally look towards the light at the end of the tunnel. Well, this is it, so don't screw it up.

Hmm... Wait just a minute, we'll be proven innocent, sure, but then who kidnapped KG to spark these gang wars in the first place?"

- Took you this long to ask? I mean I'm not sure how much that really matters but I've beaten up a lot of people for you to start questioning things now. **(story/joke/observation)**

- As I said, the story hardly matters.

4:40 With no health left, I manage to grapple break his run up! Get away with a groundpound, and launch into a SPA Flurry as he gets up, taking the win! We've cleared our name! Now we just need to wipe your blood off the pavement! **(joke/story/observation)**

06:45 We then get a cutscene, a bunch of army trucks roll through town. And a bunch of big, bulky blokes armed with pipes, sledgehammers, and crowbars climb out the back.

- Army man tells em "Let's rock and roll." As a marching drum plays.

- They set to wrecking the town, windows are smashed, the bar is destroyed (again, hey only I get to break that)

- Glasses are swept off counters, cars are tipped.

- One guys swerves an 18 wheeler and it falls just before a gate... Congratulations idiot, you've just made a bigger gate! **(joke)**

UR 030 - M31 - Chaos - Outlaws are in! - Tag team ally! - Hell yes awesome finish

00:55 Fighter select screen! I now have partners! 10 slots are there, with Shun Ying Lee filling the first! Nice of you to finally muck in! **(joke/observation)**

01:20 Tutorial for Double-Team Attacks, I can now pull double attacks on foes! **(tag team/partner)**

- These do good damage, build SPA for both, and unlike ordinary grapples have I-frames, making them insanely safe.

- You really are better hovering around your partner, using them for flanks and double-team attacks. They're not so much an ally as a lightning rod, and we strike twice! **(joke/wordplay/double team)**

UR 031 - M32 - Dual Strike - Tag team partners and orders unlocked - Bring Glen - I know what these boys can do!

MISSION 32: SOUTHEND: "Dual Strike"

"It appears the outlaws aren't the only ones we have to worry about. These guys call themselves the Shadow Platoon. They're ex-grunts led by some guy named McKinzie. They may have all been in the service, but there's not a shred of honor between the lot of them. They're nothing but a pack of psychotic meatheads who got kicked out of the army for being too unstable. But they're still a world apart from the typical goons you'd find roaming the streets.

If their track record is anything to go by, each one is a major threat in his own right, so you'd better take some backup just in case. My men know that you're calling the shots, so regardless of whether two of you are ganging up on the same guy, or whether you split up and go after them individually, issue your commands clearly and wisely."

- Nope, I can barely keep myself alive, you're just as much a punching bag as you are my partner! **(joke/observation)**

00:45 Glen, Kadonashi, and Dwayne have joined up with us! Man, having gone through hell fighting these guys, it was really, genuinely relieving to have them as partners!

- Now sure, this is like getting a bad guy on your team in a JRPG, they're not as strong as they appeared as a boss, but they're still plenty tough! And can soak up some damage meant for me!
(observation/partner/joke)

UR 032 - M33 - The Mob - Kadonashi team up in downtown map, he gets Koed

00:00 We're heading north of the river! For what little that's worth in this game.

(observation/game map/level select)

00:00 Mission 33: CENTRAL SQUARE: "The Mob"

"The riot is spreading to the city center. *(sic)* There's even looting going on around Central Square. The mayhem is the handiwork of some scumbags being led by the Outlaws. They brought some Outsiders into their fold and are inciting the riots. We can't just let this unruly mob run about recklessly. Go out and crush them."

- Never would have guessed we'd be so civic minded. **(story/joke/observation)**

UR 034 - M35 - The Hatchet Man - Fight caporera fighter - Dwayne tag team

MISSION 35: SCRAPYARD: "The Hatchet Man"

- When I'm about, it truly is a scrapyard. **(joke)**

"The Outlaws have recruited Chris, a brawler who's worked as the bouncer at a bar and as an enforcer for a loan shark downtown. Word is, he's got you in his sights. Brawlers have gotten by on their neutral status because they haven't been affiliated with any gang turfs. But hey, that's no reason why we shouldn't take them out if they start giving us trouble."

- Does that count as lore? **(story/observation)**

- Also the idea of a loanshark hiring a guy who uses capoeira is really fucking funny.

(observation/character)

- You ask him to shake someone down and he won't stop dancing for the next week **(joke)**

00:40 So we have Chris, he's Urban Reign's Eddie and he's actually quite manageable!

- The one button defence system and heavy punishment on low deflections, along with the heavily telegraphed sweeps of capoeira style makes him actually not too difficult to keep on top of!

(joke/groundpound)

- Also in his character bio it's pointed out one of Chris's sore spots is his middle class upbringing so I think he's picking fights by wearing a shirt that says 'fundy' on it. **(joke/observation/character design)**

UR 035 - M36 - Despicable Ally - Defend Glen Mission - Oh no! Wait I will just play as him!

01:15 Brad defeats Bain offscreen! Very funny, turns out I am holding Brad back!

(observation/joke)

UR 036 - M37 - The Deal - Recruit Jake - If brad goes, you are out - Ultra aggressive normal foes now

00:00 Missions 37-39 on map

00:05: MISSION 37: SLUM: "The Deal"

"Jakes' been laying low ever since losing to you in that fight, but he's just turned up. I'm ready to make him a deal, but it looks like he's gotten in deep with the street gangs on the outskirts of the city. I've already prepared the cash. Make short work of these scumbags and get Jake back here in one piece."

- And not three distinct bodily regions? **(joke/awful)**

00:40 Swap to Jake! Jake is hard to beat and just as hard to play! He's the grappler of this game, he is slow, his strike game is kinda weak, and he does not match my playstyle!

(gameplay/observation)

- But as a tag team partner, there is none better! He has great damage and survivability, as well as doing the most important job of holding up foes for a very long time! While there is a bit of a rock paper scissors to partners, having better matchups against certain bosses and fighting styles, Jake is the safest bet for me, someone to fight around! When the odds are low, I'll stake it on Jake!

(wordplay/observation/joke/partners)

01:50 This time, I'll let Jake be Jake, being Jake just let things go badly **(bad joke/partner)**

- Open with dive strike hitting two foes and rush over to assist Jake

01:55 Pull off a sprint upercut by accident! **(sprint attacks/tutorial)**

02:10 Get fucking wombo combo'd and stun taunted by two foes **(crowd control fail)**

- The enemies in this stage are early game gangsters but with their competency cranked up, I like it, it's like the whole town is becoming better fighters, I'm making the local fighters work harder!

(joke/observation/difficulty/repeat enemies)

UR 037 - M38 - The Derelict - Timed beatdown - Glen is good

00:00 MISSION 38: ABANDONED BASEMENT: "The Derelict"

"The industrial district is a buffer district between the inner city and the residential area of respectable citizens. However, due to the recent downturn in the economy, it has practically become a ghetto. The outlaws have been going in and out of a building in that area. I'm guessing that's their hideout. Destroy it before they start running amok. Their hideout is located underground, so mop them up nice and fast before they can call in reinforcements, cuz if they do. You've got no place to run."

- Trap yourself in their basement and then start a fight, I mean I'd never see it coming!

(joke/observation/story)

- Also Shun goes from guessing to certainty in enviable time! **(joke/observation/dialogue)**

- That text was also a solid percentage of this mission!

UR 037 CONT – Brad & Glen vs Three foes (Timed)

Early game structure note/joke: One of the first things you'll notice even just looking at this game, you don't even have to play it. Is this game looks pretty awesome! Okay I'm sorry, we're not playing jank today! Sure it got generally middling reviews, but that's not because the game is rough, or ugly, or cryptic. It reviewed poorly because critics didn't realise just how awesome the game was... And a bunch of content reasons. **(joke/observation/animations/graphics/Structure)**

UR 038 - M39 - The Grudge - Tag team a boss - Need to work with AI to even get hits in, it is so cool

00:00 MISSION 39: SUBWAY STATION: "The Grudge"

- I feel like I have 20+ people with grudges against me **(joke)**

"Park is a brawler in the industrial district. He knows Tae Kwon Do and specialises in conflict resolution. He has no affiliation with the Outlaws or the Shadow Platoon, but in an unfortunate turn of events, one of Dwayne's boys mistook him for a rioter and decked him. Park, understandably upset, has been attacking every Zaps crew he sees. He can't be left hanging around the industrial district like this, so take someone with you and sort him out."

- We're handling this so well. Just decking anyone we mistake for a rioter. **(joke/story)**

- I take Dwayne, he can take accountability! **(joke/partner)**

00:45 One look at Park, and I think he mistook him for a raver, not a rioter! **(joke/character design)**

00:50 Park begins the fight immediately popping his blue SPA, popping his blue doesn't make him hard but it does make him hard to hit. (ironically makes him hard to beat) **(joke)**

01:25 My attempt to save Dwayne from getting juggled just gets me enrolled into the damn circus! **(joke/boss/moment)**

UR 045 - M44 - Housecleaning - Super easy four on two

00:00 Mission 44: Warehouse: "House Cleaning"

"The Outsiders have been cornered by Kadonashi's disciples into a warehouse. The disciples want to give them a good beating, but they don't have sufficient numbers. Go and lend them a helping hand."

- You're a bad fighter and a worse teacher Kads **(joke/observation)**
- You're zero black belts and two black eyes Kads **(joke)**
- Naturally I bring Kadonashi on this mission **(partner)**

UR 046 - M45 - The Duel - Chris is an oppressive fighter - Bring Tong Yoon to Watch lol

00:55 So this is hilarious, I pick my partner to *watch* the duel, if I do attack the viewers, they'll aggro, and they are far harder than normal fighters, nearly boss level each, during a boss fight. It's hilarious this stage has that bizarre bit of set dressing, and you'll be dressed down if you interact with it! **(observation/joke)**

UR 049 - M48 - Tooth for a Tooth - Help Kadonashi

00:00 MISSION 48: WAREHOUSE: "Tooth for a Tooth"

"I've heard that someone's jumped Kadonashi's crew that were protecting the citizens from the rioters. Some of them have been hit so hard, they're completely incapacitated. It's probably the work of the Shadow Platoon. That area may descend into chaos once again. Word has it that master Kadonashi himself is out to get revenge for his disciples, promising that the culprits will "get what's coming to them." Kadonashi is not our enemy anymore. Go help him out."

- Wait hasn't this happened already? Kadonashi did you get dogshit disciples so you'd get to avenge them repeatedly? **(joke/story)**

01:25 Kadonashi grappled and getting fucking walloped by other foes, his health is tanking!

- You know they say when going for revenge, dig two graves? Well that's because they're pulling this fucker in half! **(joke/observation)**

UR 050 - M49 - The Lost Boy - take out separated shadow platoon guy - I did not deserve this win

00:00 MISSION 49: MOTEL: "The Lost Boy"

"A member of the Shadow Platoon has gotten separated from the rest of his gang and is apparently taking refuge in a motel. Go and convince him to take a long vacation, if you know what I mean."

- I sincerely doubt Brad does. **(character/observation/joke)**

01:10 Jesus christ my health is a traffic light **(joke/UI)**

UR 052 - M51 - Close Combat - Weapons appearing more - Chris offscreens two-thirds of fight and wins

00:00 MISSION 51: CENTRAL SQUARE: "Close Combat"

- Ironical for this map

"Our enemies are starting to play dirty. They know they don't stand a chance against you in unarmed combat, so they've started packing weapons. You've definitely got your own unique fighting style, but how are you with weapons? (slippery). You can hit someone with a weapon (woah), sure but keep in mind you can also throw it at distant enemies. Once you get into the groove, you'll be able to catch or kick away weapons thrown at you. It shouldn't be too hard for someone of your expertise."

- Sure thing Shun, I'll press the select button if I need any further tips. **(joke)**

- I think she thinks Brad a caveman, which honestly, not unfair. **(joke/story/character)**

00:35 I bring Chris, he can do some busking in the central square. **(partner/joke)**

UR 053 - M52 - Dependable Presence - Gang fight with weapons - Weapon trading with partner introduced

00:00 MISSION 52: DOWNTOWN: "Dependable Presence"

"When you've got a weapon in hand, you'll be tempted to do all the work yourself. But don't forget that you've also got your partner to back you up. Weapons can be passed back and forth between you and your partner. Once you've wiped out these weapon-wielding street gangs, we can really get to work on cleaning up the city. We'll start with our area first. Then head out into the city centre. The battle's not over until we've driven every one of them out of this city."

- I think she's found an old blackboard and can't help but lecture us. **(joke)**

00:45 Given the mission name, I take Jake **(joke)**

01:05 Me and Jake immediately pivot into a SECOND DOUBLE TEAM ATTACK! As the third enemy fruitlessly wails at us, we're fucking invincible! **(joke/i-frames)**

- We toss the enemy sky high and then both powerbomb their skull!

UR 054 - M53 - Holed Up - Alex and Park two on two - Changing partners - I win by sheer luck (SA at right time)

00:20 MISSION 53: BAR: "Holed up"

"The Hell's Legions have nearly wiped out all of the random stragglers around the busy shopping district, but Alex and Park have barricaded themselves in a bar, and several members of Glen's team have been wounded pretty badly. These two renegades are working tag-team style to take 'em out. You're the only one who can bring an end to this standoff. I'm counting on you."

- This isn't your typical lock in **(joke)**

01:25 Alex beat the absolute SHIT out of Glen, I'm on my own! **(partner)**

- This game does the JRPG thing where the boss joins you and now they're not as impressive, granted that's because actual monsters come to town! **(joke/observation/partners)**

02:20 Fight begins with Chris rushing Alex and getting cracked with a bottle, stunning him, I pursue and am repeatedly jabbed, taken into a running grapple, and I collide with Chris who is now being JUGGLED by Park... I think these guys are out of our league Shun. **(joke/moment)**

UR 055 - M54 - Extermination - take out boxers - Close quarter fight

00:05 MISSION 54: SCRAPYARD: "Extermination"

"The Zaps have gotten the boxers cornered in a scrapyard. If we can take them out, Dwayne's crew should be able to take the city outskirts. Right now, the boxers are like a bunch of rats in a sack with nowhere to go. But sometimes, an animal is at its most dangerous and unpredictable when it's cornered. Stay alert."

- Figure fighters ought to be happy in a scrapyard! **(joke/wordplay)**

UR 057 - M56 - Soldiers - Take down some weapon wielding foes – Easy

00:00 MISSION 56: SOUTHEND: "Soldiers"

"I've discovered the main force of the gang that's inciting the rioters is currently in Southend. They're former military guys, so they've all had extensive weapons training. Taking them on won't be a cakewalk. But if you can flush them out, we're going to see some real changes on the streets. Take your best partner with you."

- Good advice, I'd been picking based on making me look better until now! Jake, get in!

(joke/partner/tutorial)

01:25 Jake battering a man with a pipe, we double team attack him

- Jake runs up and does a Dive drop kick off a foe **(animation/cool)**

- Jake uses me as a springboard for a DIVE GRAPPLE! I'm sorry Shun, you picked wrong, you should have hired Jake! We're real lucky things panned out this way. God I'm player two in the single player mode, to a bot! **(joke/observation/AI/partner)**

UR 058 - M57 - Precious Time - Timed three man takedown, taken easy

00:00 MISSION 57: MOTEL: "Precious Time"

"Some street gangs are rumoured to have taken refuge in a motel. Those morons are a complete waste of air. Get in there, and don't let them escape. Drag them out and make 'em see the light, one way or another."

- Sure and we're on the clock for some reason, are people waiting to check in or what?

(observation/joke/objective)

- Take Kadonashi with me cause why not.

UR 060 - M59 - Wrath - Beat up Miguel for pissing on Shuns car

00:00 MISSION 59: SLUM: "Wrath"

"Out of all the Outsiders. Miguel Estevez is the only decent one in the bunch. He's intelligent and industrious. He's getting involved in shadowy dealings to earn cash for him to establish a territory to call their own so that his friends do not need to lose their lives on petty disputes. But he was a very bad boy yesterday. He pissed on a parked car and guess who was riding inside? Yours truly. Lets just say I saw something completely unimpressive. In every sense of the word. He got away at the time, but we got info on his whereabouts from our crew. Get over there and take him down."

- Urban Reign, you know you don't *need* to have 100 missions right? 99 is acceptable, even in a game where it's a series of contrived excuses for fights, this one is especially piss weak.

(joke/story/observation)

- That may also be one of the longest mission descriptions. **(observation/writing)**

- Bring Shun, who else could I take with me? **(partner)**

Joke: (Car pisser mission) You know Urban Reign, you didn't *need* to have exactly 100 missions. Even with a plot as paper thin as this this feels needless, ah well, at least this gang war isn't so hectic we can't take a minute to beat what little piss there is left out of this guy.

UR 061 - M60 - Truce - Help Park to win his allegiance, good

00:50 Shot of Park facing off against Bain, stood before a wrecked storefront. It's very funny to imagine this military backed guy wrecked a liquor shop with a wrench, and here we are to throw a wrench into their plans! **(story/joke)**

02:20 Me and Park both pop SPA BUFFs to cancel stun and push away foes

- Sad to say, he has gotten the JRPG Boss to Buddy debuff, he is nowhere near as much as a beast on my side, I guess he's unmotivated, all my buddies are people I've beaten down.

(observation/joke/wordplay/partners)

- BUT WE THEN WIPE OUT ALL THREE ENEMIES IN THE SICKEST TURNAROUND

UR 063 - M62 - End of the Outsiders - Easy brawl

00:05 MISSION 62: DOWNTOWN: "The End of the Outsiders"

"Miguel's homies are panicking now that he's no longer around to lead them. They've tried to hide out in downtown with the help of some old contacts, but I made sure nobody that area will give them any help. You shouldn't have any trouble spotting them, they're the amigos who look like headless chickens running around the streets. Help put them out of their miseries."

- Wait is Miguel the first guy to actually die? For the crime of pissing on a car Shun was riding in. Seems kinda petty in the grand scheme. **(joke/observation/story)**

- Take Park, in my head he is the strongest

UR 064 - M63 - Mr. Popularity - Alex rematch, VERY HARD

00:00 MISSION 63: SUBWAY STATION: "Mr. Popularity"

"Alex is looking to take you on. He's been wanting to challenge someone on par with his fighting abilities, so he's psyched to have found you. At first, I thought we should ignore him, but he's been threatening to wage war on our guys if you don't accept. He says that if you can beat him, he'll join our ranks and help us out. Doesn't sound like such a bad deal. Hmm... I've noticed that you've always been popular with the ladies, but now, it seems men are taking a liking to you as well."

- What is Brad getting up to offscreen? **(observation/story)**

- You're the only woman in this story. **(observation/joke)**

UR 066 - M65 - Nowhere to Go - Break 4 guys arms

00:00 MISSION 65: ABANDONED BASEMENT: "Nowhere to Go"

"We're making good progress. The punks who've been tagging along with the shadow Platoon as well as the Outlaws are starting to feel the squeeze out there. They're afraid they won't have a place to call home after our clean up. But that'll be the last of their worries. Oh, they'll get bumped outta town alright, but only after they've been kicked in the dirt. Snap their arms like twigs to ensure they'll never use their weapons again."

- You can tell this is a Japanese game because snapping their arms doesn't mean we're breaking an M4 over our knee. **(joke/observation)**

Objective: Bust up their upper bodies

UR 070 - M69 - Toe to Toe for Glory- Mckinsie boss - Knife foe on rooftop, not too hard

01:00 Super deflection makes me spin flip *off of the floor* and then a rolling dodge puts me in good position to retaliate. **(punish/dodge/funny animation)**

- It is funny how you'll sometimes just gymnastically fly off of the ground to dodge in a beautiful pirouette. **(observation/animation/joke)**

- That's why he's called Brad Hawk, because in my hands, he spends most of this game in flight. (getting juggled) **(joke/decent joke)**

01:05 Long string of back and forth dodging when McKinzie lands an absurd launching swipe with a KNIFE, classic launching weapon the knife. **(joke/observation/weapon/physics)**

UR 073 - M72 - Killers - Sword wielding foes - Shun seems strong against, turns three on one to two on one

00:00 MISSION 72: GREEN HILL: "Killers"

"I asked one of my contacts to help me investigate the recent attack. Apparently, we're dealing with an organized crime syndicate known as the "Mushin-Kai". These guys are professionals: fearless and cold-blooded contract killers. We've also uncovered that they've got connections that go up to some pretty high places at various corporations, so we know that they are well-financed as well. Looks like we've really kicked the hornets nest this time. But there's no way I'm gonna give in. I want to send them a clear message. We'll show those killers hanging out in Green Hill a world of hurt."

- Yeah, that's Sonic's turf bud. **(joke/bad joke)**

- Take Park with me **(partner)**

UR 074 - M73 - Vicious Steel - That steel do be vicious - Ally starts with weapon - Have to gang up on foes

00:00 MISSION 73: SOUTHEND: "Vicious Steel"

"Some new out-of-towners have moved into Southend. Since they're carrying swords, my guess is that they're not here as tourists. But they're not the Mushin-Kai's people either. I recognise them as the "Tin Jiao," a group that splintered off from Chinatown some time ago. But it doesn't matter, they're small time. Still, why have they returned? They were led away from Chinatown by... Anyway, now's not the time to worry about that. Get out there and show 'em how to really use those swords."

- Dropped on the floor like soap, got it. **(joke)**

07:50 Throw sword at distant foe, he's out of range

- He's floored, I kick him (and the sword) away, sword bounces off of him **(collision/weapon)**

- As Alex Groundpounds foe, I kick him to pile on bonus damage, Ye Wei is out the way!
(joke/wordplay/teamwork)

UR 075 - M74 - Tit for Tat - Bunch of sword wielding foes - Not too bad

00:00 MISSION 74: MOTEL: "Tit-for-Tat"

"A bunch of goons led by a killer from the Mushin-Kai have reared their ugly faces. It looks like they've received my message. Once they figure out we won't surrender, they'll send their men to force our hand. Well there's no way we're backing down. I have a feeling this is gonna be a bloody war of attrition. We'll figure out our next move after we whack those fools."

- Brad takes whack literally... **(joke)**

00:50 Opening cutscene, a bunch of goons from the Shadow Platoon (including Bain) are stood in front of a Mushin Kai member

- Cool detail, the yakuza will hang back for awhile before joining the fray, another little thing which makes this fight a little unique, more *real* **(event/story/details)**

- Also no music, atmospheric. Sometimes fights have music, sometimes the music kicks in on the first hit landed, sometimes you're just left to make your own chin music **(joke/music/post-note)**

UR 076 - M75 - Storming In - Take out Masa - Easy Enough

00:30 Three absolutely MASSIVE men stand before Masa, there is a joke in my mind seeing this image that will not make it to the video for a variety of reasons. **(joke/bad/cutscene)**

- Jake rushes into the fray, I circle around and charge Masa

- Get him in the corner, get some blows in before I'm redirected and hit with a confusing grapple
(mix-up)

UR 077 - M76 - Dogs of the Killers - Escort mission where escort does all the work

00:00 MISSION 76: BORDIN BLDG. MAIN GATE: "Dogs of the Killers."

"Dwayne's Crew were ambushed downtown. I heard the guys behind the attack are headed towards the civic centre. They're just puppets of the Mushin-Kai, and they won't get away with this. Among the group of attackers was McKinzie, I guess each of the small-time captains are brown-nosing the Mushin-Kai big wigs. Go and take care of those dogs. Make sure you're watching your partners back. If people see you carrying your wounded partner around the civic centre, there's gonna be trouble from the cops."

- This city has cops? **(joke/observation/story)**

UR 078 - M77 Collusion - Another escort on rooftop, easy

00:00 MISSION 77: APARTMENT ROOFTOP: "Collusion"

"The Mushin-Kai is using a room in that building as one of their bases of operations. Men brandishing Chinese swords are going in and out of there. Well just as I thought, the Mushin-Kai and the Tin Jiao are working together. Right now, the Mushin-Kai guys are nowhere to be seen. All that's guarding the building right now are a handful of goons and a couple of heavies. If your partner goes down, you're gonna have a hell of a time getting outta there in one piece when their reinforcements arrive. In other words, make sure your partner doesn't go down."

- You can opt for no partner so it's a toss up before you're thrown down.

(tip/gameplay/objective/joke)

UR 079 - M78 - The Monster - GOLEM IS A MONSTER

00:40 Highly intellectual resource from Wikipedia: *The most famous golem narrative involves Judah Loew ben Bezalel, the late-16th-century rabbi of Prague. According to Moment magazine, "the golem is a highly mutable metaphor with seemingly limitless symbolism. It can be a victim or villain, man or woman—or sometimes both. Over the centuries, it has been used to connote war, community, isolation, hope, and despair."*

- Well, Golem, uh, Urban Reign's represents despair... Then hope. It's made of game overs and wishes for you to get fucking good! **(joke/research/post-note)**

01:00 I fruitlessly punch at Golem as he grapples Park, I cannot save him, Golem is super armoured... I guess I'm doing damage at least, good work Park! Fight on! **(joke/observation)**

04:35 Golem SPA spins to burst away me and Alex

- A stun taunted Alex stumbles into me as I act as a club in Golem's giant swing **(collision/friendly fire)**

- Grapple break Golem trying to toss me around by the leg like a ragdoll

- Golem grapple breaks me and Alex back to back! Then pops his buff and hits... uh, back! **(joke)**

05:35 Start realising I should be grappling more, punching a guy with super armour is a quick way to die, grappling burns time on his metre! **(strategy)**

- Punch him off of Alex as he grapples! Get bursted away by a SPA get up, then we slowly re-approach and manage to get a double team attack!

- I have to imagine this is how bullfighters feel! **(joke/observation)**

- Granted before long it's me seeing red! **(there's the joke)**

UR 083 - M82 - Fists of Iron - Defeat Ting Jiao - Kadonashi kinda mid partner

00:00 MISSION 82: WAREHOUSE: “Fists of Iron”

“My brother, Lin Fong’s men have hit Kadonashi Dojo’s turf. Kadonashi’s disciples are in way over their heads with Lin Fong’s men so I’m sending you in to bail them out. The Tin Jiao don’t appear to be armed, but they’re masters of unarmed combat, so watch yourself.”

- Back to their jobber status, I see. **(joke/story/observation)**

- Take Kadonashi as Partner, avenge your students or join them in death. **(joke/partner)**

Spa learning joke

While I dislike the drip feed of mechanics, I am sort of okay with Brad getting his SPA moves gradually. He tends to learn one after facing an opponent with the skill, making it feel like he’s watching his opponents like a Hawk. **(joke/post-note/tutorials)**

00:55 Get thrown violently into a shelving unit for big damage! **(hazard/prop/stage)**

- Kadonashi is already dead **(partner)**

- I’m starting to understand why your students are always getting the shit beaten out of them **(joke/observation)**

UR 084 - M83 - Limbering Up - Defeat Mushin Kai unarmed guys - The swords are holding them back!

MISSION 83: APARTMENT ROOFTOP: “Limering Up”

“The Mushin-Kai is meeting in their urban district hideout right now. Lucky for us, they’ve assigned guard duty to a bunch of unarmed nobodies. Now’s our chance to strike. Let’s see how well they do without their swords.”

- They’re guarding the roof... In case I come in by helicopter? **(joke/observation)**

- Take Alex

00:25 Opening cutscene, they look peeved. I’d be sad if I didn’t have my sword too. **(joke)**

- 2 v 3, me and alex vs 3 Yakuza!

UR 086 - M85 - Pursuit - Spotted by Lin Fong, fight!

00:00 MISSION 85: UNDERGROUND PARKING: “Pursuit”

“Lin Fong just entered this building. Hate to ask you this, but I’d like you to tail him and check the place out. Remember, the whole place is enemy territory, if you get spotted, abort the mission and fall back.”

Objective: Take Lin Fong down.

- I think Brad is getting spotted and aborting Lin Fong... **(joke/observation)**

UR 087 - M86 - Return of the Monster- AHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH

00:40 MISSION 86: BORDIN BLDG. MAIN GATE: “Return of the Monster”

“Just as I suspected, their headquarters is somewhere in this area. They’re not gonna let us escape that easily. Golem’s waiting to jump you as you leave the parking lot, and unfortunately, you won’t be getting any backup on this one, you’re going in solo. We’ll figure out our next move once you take care of business.”

- Plenty of time to plan then! **(joke)**

Objective: Take Golem Down. Tall. Fucking. Order. **(observation/difficulty)**

01:15 Terrifying opening cutscene, Golem stands before the Bordin Building door, axe in hand.

- He narrows his eyes at me.

- I feel like if Urban Reign got a movie adaptation this guy would be played by the Rock, the role would suit him cause like the Rock, Golem is not allowed to lose! **(joke/observation)**

- Golem is fast and strong, his AI is highly aggressive and uncompromising, he forces you to make mistakes and permits none! **(difficulty/boss)**
- He has zero weaknesses beyond a slightly simple moveset. But this is the crack in his armour you have to break wide open. He's so unfair in a straightforward way he essentially forces you to abuse every little advantage you can create. Using the greater variety and leverage in Brad's moveset to wrangle control of the fight. The whole game has asked you to get good, this guy, he asks you get bad! **(joke/wordplay)**

03:30 Whiff an axe swing, get punished, fatal shin kick! Game over! (79) **(joke)**

17:15 Attempt to dodge a punish a motherfucker with super armour, I am very smart. **(joke)**

18:25 Successfully dive grapple golem, gets him to drop his axe, I grab it!

- Dodge low kick and punish with axe combo
- The axe is also the secret tool to this fight, it lets you space out Golem, you have to master it before you master yourself! **(strategy/gameplay/joke)**

UR 088 - M87 - Capture - Leg Breaker Mission

00:25 MISSION 87: ABANDONED THEATER: "Capture"

"Lin Fong has got to be up to something. I need to know where their hideout is located, and who's pulling the strings behind the scenes. Capture one of the Tin Jiao guys. We'll make him talk. Don't jack him too much or he won't be of any use to us but break a leg or two so that he won't be running off anywhere soon."

- Don't jack him off too much, got it. **(joke/story)**

Objective: Bust up Yan Jun's lower body.

- So am I jacking him or not? **(joke/objective)**

00:55 Cutscene zooms in on my sole enemies legs... Incase the player doesn't know what legs are. **(joke/cutscene/camera)**

UR 089 - M88 - Grilling - Stop ting jiao from rescuing friend - Shun off on business it seems

01:55 Accidentally trigger sprint attack, and it's redirected! And so is my ability to learn!

(joke/tutorial/sprint attacks/redirection)

UR 090 - M89 - An Unexpected Call - Lin Fong calls! Shun is captured - 4 VERY HARD ENEMIES OUTSIDE

00:00 MISSION 89: CHINATOWN: "An Unexpected Call"

"Hello, Mr. Brawler. (*Hawk, actually*). This is Lin Fong. What? Are you surprised to hear from me? Well, get over it. Do you have any idea where my sister, Shun Ying is? Well, I do... I bet you have a lot of questions for me right now... I've sent some of my boys over there. If there's anything you'd like to know, feel free to ask them. But I must tell you, they're not the most talkative types."

- Dun dun dun! In a shock twist, this game has another voice actor! Last thing I expected, oh, also Shun Ying has been kidnapped.

- Also I had more trouble with this mission than Golem. **(joke/difficulty)**

07:10 Hit foe with thrown energy drink, how ironic! **(joke)**

- As I juggle one foe, get stabbed by another!

07:25 Hit with SPA Yanki kick

- Punished on wake up and sent right back down to the ground
- Happens repeatedly, can't fight one foe without another cutting in, literally! **(joke/wordplay/crowd control fail)**

UR 091 - M90 - The Trap - Tough 3 on 1- not as bad as the last one

00:05 MISSION 90: GREEN HILL: "The Trap"

"Guess it was my bad to send over tongue-tied imbeciles to get the job done. Cut me a little slack. But you've still got questions, right? Well I've got your answers, but you'll need to get over to Green Hill. Alone, of course."

- You know, you're pretty cocky for a guy I've already kicked the shit out of once... After several attempts. **(joke/difficulty/story)**

UR 092 - M91 - The Monster Unleashed - NOT SO BAD GOLEM

00:00 MISSION 91: GREEN HILL: "The Monster Released"

"She's gone. I told Golem to kill her the moment he finds her. You probably won't see her again alive. Such a shame. If you want to save her, you'd better find a way to track her down before Golem gets his hands on her. There's probably not much you can do at this point, but... Let me wish you the best of luck."

- Thanks for the phonecall! **(joke/story)**

UR 094 - M94 - Enemy Stronghold - Tag match again finally - Jake got me through!

02:10 Knock out of powerbomb

- Roll back towards foes and get double teamed while McKinzie piles on more damage.

- You know, McKinzie just feels like Bain if he went through a pokemon evolution.

(observation/joke)

UR 095 - M95 - Forcing Through - Another tag match – Easier

00:00 MISSION 95: BORDIN BLDG. MAIN GATE: "Forcing Through"

"Looks like they've heard the commotion and sent out reinforcements. The entrance is blocked, but we may be able to get in from where they came out. We'll simply blow past anyone who gets in our way."

- Take Jake again, first boss, final bro! **(joke/partner)**

UR 098 - M98 - M99 - Golem tag match - EVIL JAPANESE WARLORD - Monstrous battle against a cheating swordsman

I am very curious by what Shun was thinking saying I'd be in my element in this fight. Is the element Carbon, is she turning my ashes into a fucking diamond ring or something?

(joke/observation/story)

21:25 Air grapple break

- Then get dive struck and restart! (155)

- When explaining restarts: Restarters are a little inflated cause I gotta a problem, I'm kinda like pringles, once I got popped I just couldn't stop... Actually it's more accurate to say I couldn't start.

(joke/wordplay)

UR 099 - M100 - The Mastermind - The Mayor was behind it all, Brad punches him and says he has no friends!

"... When it looked hopeless, the Mushin-Kai gangs moved in and quickly mopped things up. As a quid pro quo, he offered Shinkai the consultancy gig, it was all just a scam to get the mayor into the governor's office. Of course, you were the X factor. Guess what? The mayor wants to cut you a deal. A limo just arrived to pick you up. He's expecting you in his office."

- I'd have asked for way more than a quid to destabilise the city. **(joke/bad joke/funny)**

- Also damn can't be said Shun doesn't trust the shit out of us. I love how the bad guy is the one we see for five seconds in the intro, but honestly, as Rush Hour taught me, follow the rich white man.

(joke/reference/possible call back if I keep that other joke)

- Also Shun talks much faster than the text crawl, and there's hilarious bleak music playing underneath these reveals, the story may be more threadbare than a nudist beach, but it stays balls out! **(joke/wordplay)**

STRUCTURE

Structure: talk about how the early missions drip feed some of your mechanics, but how I wish we had all of them from the off, with later missions just informing us of their existence, which is also sort of done via Shun Ying's mission briefings, but given how de-emphasised they are, I don't mind the pop-ups. Considering a solid chunk of our attacks are left untaught, moves more useful than the wall attacks for that matter, I find this a really weird issue of poor teaching priorities.

(observation/post-note/controls)

- If the single player is a tutorial for multiplayer, it's a bit of a lopsided one. **(observation)**

Structure/post-note: Smooth animations!

- First fight note: Even with my bad gameplay, the first thing that hits me is just how good this game looks. It's got the Namco flare, the animations are slick, the moves are smooth, have a ton of personality but remain decently readable despite their high speed. The hits sound meaty, it's such a pleasing game to watch and when played well it can look like a choreographed fight scene in motion, when you're in a flow state this game flows right along with you. For now, there are plenty of breaks in the stream. **(joke/wordplay/animation/observation/gameplay)**

- Hits sound like explosions, cracks of thunder! This may not be Tekken but Urban Reign has heavy hitters! **(joke/observation)**

01:10 Redirect foe! Horizontal combo into neutral to try and juggle Reggie, and he escapes with an air deflection! Like a super deflection, very tight timing! **(combat/moment)**

- Watching this footage before I knew sprint attacks sucks! Reggie is just backing up and I'm swinging at air! I don't know pivotal gap closers which are super important!

Topic potential: I did not know how deep the game is, despite its extreme difficulty, an idiot can bumble through with enough tenacity, and decent use of what mechanics they do understand.

(story/video story/topic/structure/post-note/tutorial)

01:25 Sprint kicked out of ground pound!

- While the game doesn't explicitly teach me about sprint attacks, I really should be learning right now! It's my own fault, still, early topic tutorialisation. **(structure/observation/moveset)**

- Structure thought: Missions 1-10, presentation, animation, graphics, effects, game looks and feels amazing, and then we meet Jake, and this is where the game shows its true colours, this is where we talk basic gameplay. **(observation/gameplay/structure)**

00:35 Unlike Jake this guy don't wait, he's out the gate with a running knee, sending me through a fence, and he chases it with a kick to juggle! **(combat/environment/sprint attack?)**

- It is a subtle escalation of difficulty. The game is more measured and sophisticated than its brutish exterior may seem. **(observation/difficulty/structure topic?)**

- Discuss this steady increase in difficulty in the early portion. **(difficulty/topic)**

01:10 Kadonashi arm throws me to the ground and follows with a flip kick, sending me flying and dealing heavy damage! **(combat/moveset)**

- Kadonashi is pretty easy to evade, but when he hits he hits hard, big telegraphed attacks with a lot of power

- Structure: Go over the difficulty escalation, end by going over issues of how we're given our moves and how the boss order could maybe be rejiggered to put Jake and Glen later?

(structure/observation)

Opening thought: Unlike my favourite Hedgehog the beat-em-up genre had a rough transition to 3D, you know, if we ignore the good ones, it found its feet largely when it got off of them, developing into a new genre which no matter what I call I'll upset someone. These new Dante-likes left the ground and groundedness in the past. But a handful of 3D style beat-em-ups persisted and the genres influence is still widely felt even if its primitive form is long gone.

(structure/opening/genre)

- Wait is this an arena fighter or a beat-em-up? I'd call Urban Reign the middle ground between the two genres.

14:55 Sweep kick both enemies, they collide off eachother in air! **(knockdown move/collision)**

- As Glen gets up, hit him with the low kick, fuck your shin!

- Joke idea: Shin Ryu Ga Gotoku wasn't doing it for me (as I kick someone in the shin), I needed some brawling. **(joke/structure/setup)**

00:20 So in this one, we fight a buffed Jake, he's now more aggressive and makes use of his Green buffing Special SPA, but I think it's also a really great fight to demonstrate growth, he is a bit tougher, but I overcome him in a measly 6 minutes! (well, 5 minutes 40), by repeating him as a foe a little tougher, it's repetitive, but I don't feel it as much because I'm revelling in feeling like I've come to grips a bit more with the game! (save this thought for the Golem section? Final marker of growth, Golem and growth?) **(topic/observation/structure/post-note)**

- Weapon attack still cannot be upgraded in ability development, because they're still not due to be commonplace for a good few missions **(progression/structure/observation)**

Early game structure note/joke: One of the first things you'll notice even just looking at this game, you don't even have to play it. Is this game looks pretty awesome! Okay I'm sorry, we're not playing jank today! Sure it got generally middling reviews, but that's not because the game is rough, or ugly, or cryptic. It reviewed poorly because critics didn't realise just how awesome the game was... And a bunch of content reasons. **(joke/observation/animations/graphics/Structure)**

00:50 Park is an absurdly evasive fighter, with quick, hard to read strings and a super which makes him deflect nearly all attacks automatically. In this first encounter I hardly even land a hit on him, depending on exploiting my ally to sneak openings.

- This is how the game does difficulty for a lot of greater foes from here on. Fight with an ally, fight without ally, fight a buffer version, it's pretty decently handled escalation of challenge.

(observation/difficulty/design/structure)

POST-NOTE: Intro part attempt / Namco Beat-Em-Up history

Intro thought: Urban Reign comes out of this interesting period where Namco was doing bizarre experiments in the beat-em-up genre. We got Dead to Rights, a mixture of Max Payne and a Mid-brawler. Breakdown, AKA. Half Circle Half-Life, an insanely tough first person scrapper which I covered years ago, and Nina Williams Analog Adventures.

These experiments didn't all pan out, for me, this game Urban Reigns supreme as the most mechanically sound and downright enjoyable of these titles but this is a king in exile, a game in a dying subgenre released in the twilight days of its console. Critically it was either seen as too slight for being "just a brawler" because being focused can be seen as a detriment, or else its brawling was seen as too hard, too punishing. This is a cult object, not a critical darling, but unlike God Hand it has seemingly yet to find its people. So let me do my part. **(structure/example/opening/post-note)**

01:00 Dodge and punish, thanks to no telegraphing, dodging even small blows feels immensely satisfying.

- Could compare to Arkham, make clear I like Arkham, but doing stuff here feels bigger than Batman to me. **(observation/comparison/structure)**

02:05 Stand off moment, foe picks up baseball bat and charges, running right into my high sweep, sending him flying, the bat is dropped.

- I fail to dodge and start getting juggled, Chris comes in from offscreen and takes him out...

ENDING THE FIGHT! Chris won two thirds of this battle off screen!

- This is the biggest victory a partner achieves, and Chris isn't even the strongest partner!

(observation/match up/gameplay)

- Use this fight to talk match ups **(structure/observation)**

UR 055

00:35 Funny opening shot of our enemies. **(cutscene)**

- Could be a good opening shot for video **(structure)**

- This isn't Like a Dragon, this is a whole different beast!

Early on, talking about why I beat the game this time: This is another title it took a couple years to beat, don't worry, while I am slow, this isn't a Brigade E5 situation, this isn't real time with pause for thought. I basically always broke this game out, hit a snag, and got pulled away by another project.

This time, I was going through Yakuza 7, and I was craving some brawling! Now, this game isn't Like a Dragon, this is a whole different beast! Using this game to satiate my need for street fights is like a sugar fiend cracking their craving with crack cocaine, it is, in many senses of the word, harder stuff! **(joke/post-note/structure)**

19:50 SUCCESSFUL SLIDE TACKLE TO AIR GRAPPLE OPENER! **(Strategy/boss fight)**

- Talk about how I recalled slide tackling being a move most foes could do... Could I slide tackle? Is this the tool to break into his range quickly and safely? **(moveset/structure/story)**

- And from here, talk about the skill growth, beating Shinkai, and immediately playing through the game again, turning former roadblocks into rubble, and Challenge mode **(structure)**