## WORTH A REINSTALL

## L.A. NOIRE

**AHNAF AKEEF**

**Release:** May 2011
**Developer:** Team Bondi
**Platforms:** PlayStation 3, Xbox 360 and Microsoft Windows

Set in 1947 Los Angeles, L.A. Noire follows the story of protagonist Detective Cole Phelps and his post-World War II career in the police department of the City of Angels. The game sets off with celebrated war veteran Phelps being instated in the police department with the endgame of utilizing his proficiency to wring LA's underworld. Phelps works on numerous cases in various departments to achieve that goal. The story of his personal life is also gradually unveiled as the game progresses. Overall, L.A. Noire combines Phelps' personal and professional life to produce a remarkable storyline which engrosses players in the game from its onset.

As for the gameplay, L.A. Noire is somewhat reminiscent of Mafia, which I suspect could be due to the similarity in timeline of the games. That aside, L.A. Noire is an open world game that allows for full-fledged free roaming besides pursuing the main storyline. The campaign missions require solving cases based on detailed backgrounds upon investigating clues (think The Witcher 3), at unique locations and interrogating possible suspects. Use of weaponry is comparatively minimal which makes for a more realistic detective experience.

What makes the game stand out though is its integration of distinct facial expressions in its characters. Through utilization of a technology called MotionScan, the facial expressions of the characters in the game were recorded off of actual human actors and then implemented in the game in animated form. This allowed for precise portrayal of even the most minute of shifts in facial muscle resulting in meticulous representations of the intended human emotions.This is what makes the interrogation experience of L.A. Noire truly unique. Players are required to scrutinize the facial expressions and body language of the suspects and dissect and analyse them to determine whether to trust the suspect or not and infer how to proceed with the interrogation.

The visual fidelity of the game is very decent for a 2011 game. PC gamers with powerful enough hardware are advised to downscale from higher resolutions such as 2560x1440 or 3840x2160 to achieve even crisper image quality. The main score is very befitting of a detective game and successfully captivates and immerses the player into the game.

Released in 2011, L.A. Noire is available for PlayStation 3, Xbox 360 and Microsoft Windows on PC. Being a four year old game, it is hardly taxing on modern computers. But fortunately, it runs smoothly on older machines as well. PC gamers should note that the PC version of the game has a 30 frames per second cap by default. But this can be eliminated via a quick fix that extends the cap to 60 frames per second. Google "L.A. Noire 60 FPS" to find the solution. I highly recommend this since any computer with a better-than-average discrete graphics card will run the game at 60 frames per second even at the highest settings, which results in a much more fluid gameplay experience.

Despite mixed reviews from the gaming community, L.A. Noire was an exceptional experience that has earned the game a soft corner in my heart and has me wishing for a second instalment. This game is definitely worth a reinstall in my books and a must-try for gamers unfortunate enough to not have played it yet.
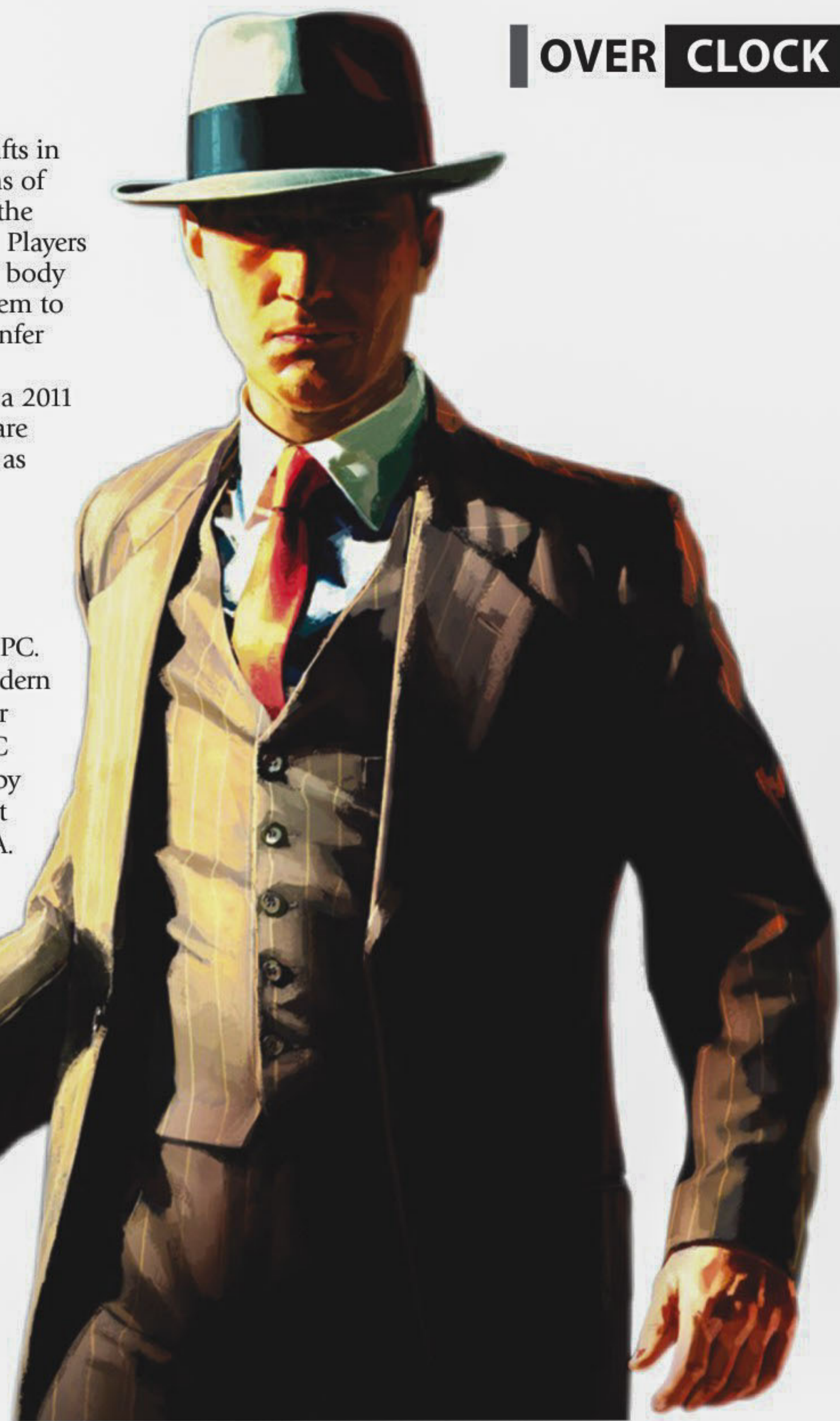
## GAME REVIEW

# WHEN PIGS FLY...YES



**MASK**

**Platforms: Windows, OSX**

*Do your part in destroying an age-old phrase in the English Language by helping pigs fly. Will your acts bring about Armageddon by rendering old pacts null and void? I don't know. I wasn't very successful at this game. Maybe you'll have better luck.*

What you're supposed to be trying in this game is to make your pig fly. You've got various apparatus which you to attach to the pig so that it can achieve lift-off and more. How you get your pig to the sky is completely up to you. You can build a sort of helicopter using multiple lawnmower blades. Or you could construct a regular airplane with leaf blowers to aid in propulsion. Or you could put together something resembling an early fighter plane, where chickens are your bombs.
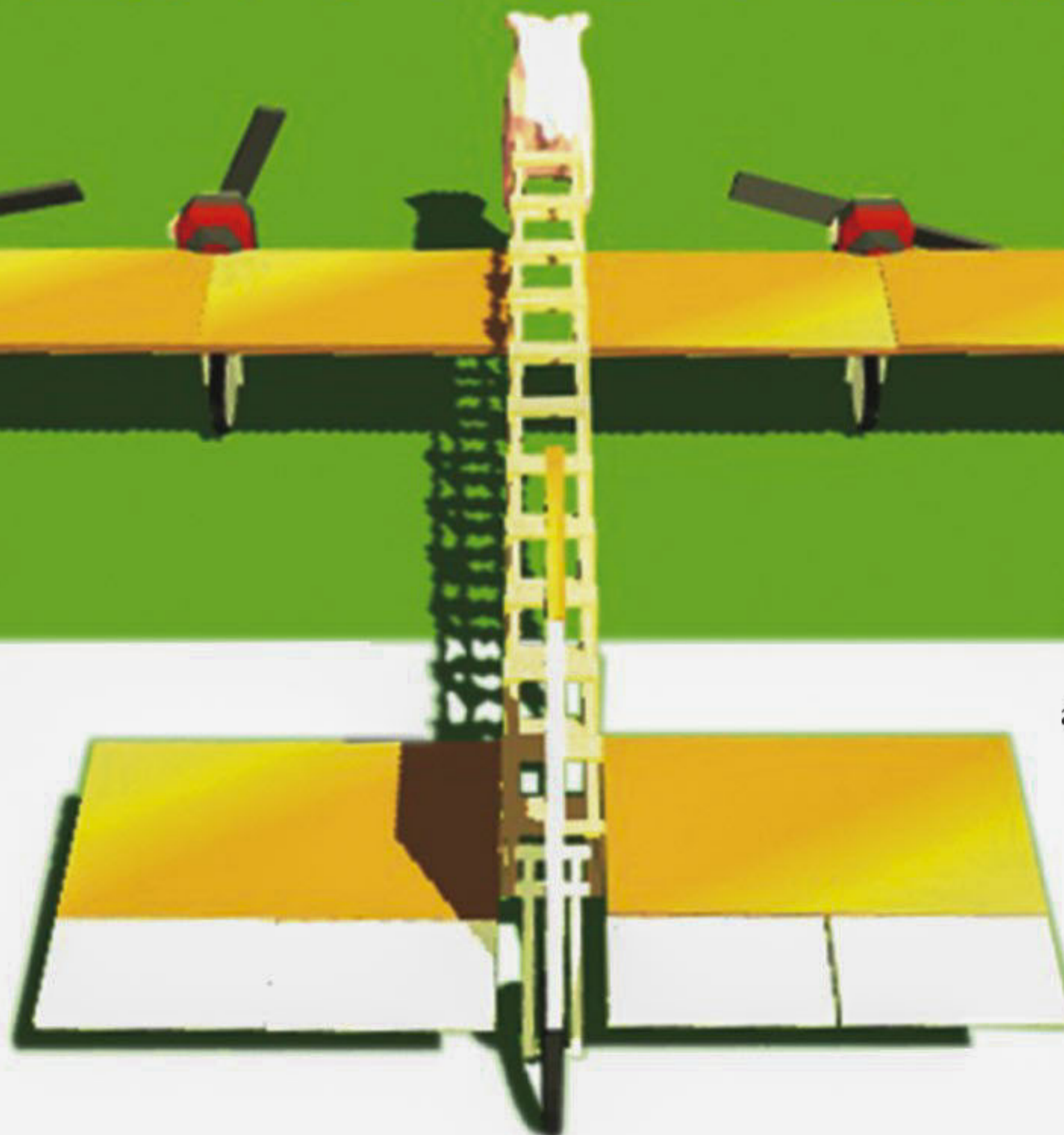
There are apparently five achievements you can get in the game but I haven't gotten a single one. I haven't even been able to successfully fly a pig for a few seconds without crashing and burning (minus the burning). For people like me with no imagination whatsoever, the game comes with three existing "Pig-flying contraptions." You can straight up choose to use those or you can use them as bases and then make alterations.

This game would particularly appeal to you if you're someone who understands aerodynamics (and other physics stuff) or you simply like freely building things. Otherwise, it's just got that novelty value of flying pigs and gets pretty boring pretty fast. There's no use in pointing out any negatives here because you will play this regardless. With the countless hours ahead you're inevitably about to spend behind this game, the question on everybody's lips is, *"How kosher is this?"*

When Pigs Fly runs on the Unity Engine, the same as Slender and most Game Jolt games. You can play it online or download it for free at http://gamejolt.com/games/strategy-sim/when-pigs-fly/39898/, only 25MB. The game is still a work in progress with maps and whatnot being added.

**Verdict: The pig can wear a hat. Everything else is just a distraction.**