

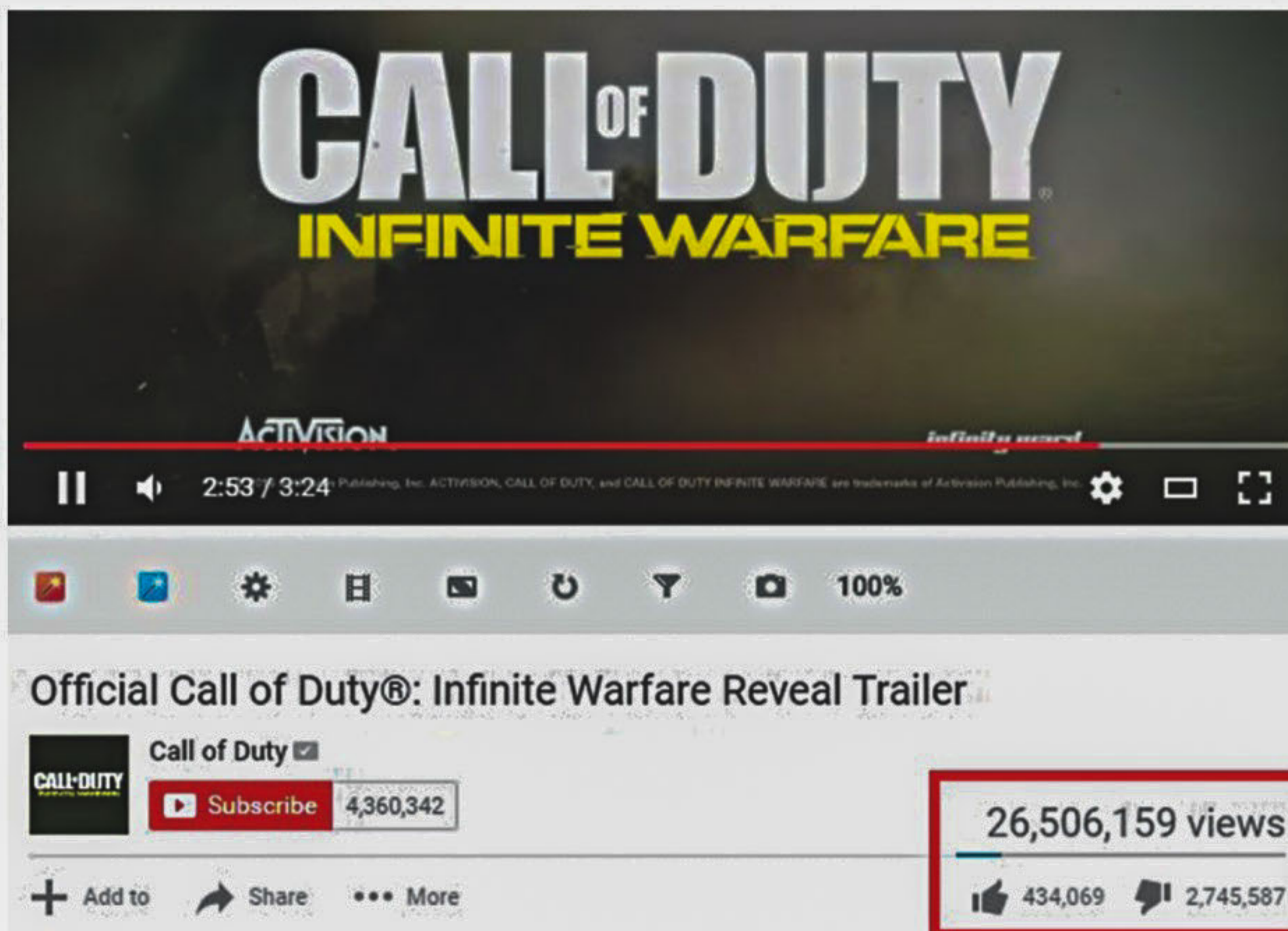
# EVIDENT DOWNFALL OF ACTIVISION

TAMIM BIN ZAKIR

In case you have been living under a rock, the Call of Duty: Infinite Warfare trailer has drawn over 2.6 million dislikes since its world reveal. As of now, it's the 2nd most disliked video on YouTube and wouldn't be anything great to look forward to if it becomes the most hated video of all time. What has caused such a prosperous billion dollar franchise to upset the community? Plenty can be stated but let's discuss about the ones responsible for providing it's developer and publisher a hard time in putting out the fire.

Familiarity breeds contempt. Call of Duty has been around since 2003. Therefore, there's no denying veteran gamers are getting tired of this annual franchise. Furthermore, it has sold over 200 million copies approximately worldwide, generating billions of dollars for its publisher Activision, a company that has not always been popular among videogame forum dwellers. Owing to its ridiculous success, the gamers felt rather annoyed.

Fans have been yearning for a return to the origins of the franchise, precisely to be more grounded on the modern day scenario. Although the sci-fi aspects of it are made to work in tune and resonate with the shooter, many believe the series is not equipped for it. "What I believe is that



Advanced Warfare completely shook the foundations of the Call of Duty formula. Newcomers clamored to the newer iterations because of this. Meanwhile, the veteran's opinions were enormously mixed. Some adopted it while others shunned it completely. Black Ops 3 refined the new futuristic setting and made it so that a large proportion of the disgruntled fanbase were satisfied with the tight-precision gameplay," says Shahrukh

Ikhtear, Sub-editor, Shout, when asked why the futuristic titles were the best sellers after harboring great resentment in the first place.

Although Modern Warfare was the first to make the leap away from that historical conflict, fans forgave it because it was really good. And while the last two titles, Advanced Warfare & Black Ops 3, have been critically well-received, a growing number of outspoken fans have made it

vivid that they absolutely do not want to shoot robots or drones.

Gamers tend to become frustrated and act enraged correspondingly when their voices aren't heard, let alone considered. While Activision sings the obligatory community praises, they continue to turn down feedback and ideas from its community. Although one cannot valiantly claim that it's noble had they listened, the outcome of the new Call of Duty: Infinite Warfare would be cordial if not immensely satisfactory before launch.

Gamers like to pick a side. After EA and Dice's more gritty, in-depth & authentic shooter, Battlefield 1, pulled off the greatest word reveal trailer in history; it's of no astonishment that Call of Duty has, from then onwards, garnered more & more hate from even the most hardcore Call of Duty players. They, themselves, disliked the Infinite Warfare trailer seeing how gloomy and tedious it pales in comparison. Even a scene containing with astronauts literally floating in space & fighting couldn't save its fame from incoming animosity. Come on, Activision! There is enough hatred in this world without pouring some more into it.

When asked about his take on the new title, Shahrukh added, "After a bunch of key developers left from Infinity Ward, they couldn't keep up with Treyarch. Now a mere shadow of their past, IW have a lot to validate regarding the new game."

## The Challenge of Realistic Melee Combat in Games

ZOHEB MASHIUR

The games industry is becoming increasingly diverse and the niches the so-called AAA developers ignore are being filled by outsiders: smaller companies and indie developers. Customers who demand realism in gameplay can now take their pick, from survival games such as *Rust* to modifications to existing games such *Skyrim*. Immersive combat systems are now quite common in the shooter genre, with tense, skill-driven battles in *Red Orchestra* and *ARMA* drawing in those jaded by *Call of Duty's* turn towards action cinema. Yet while shooty-shooty-bang-bang is being faithfully replicated we still remain left out when it comes to realistic melee combat.

There is reason for this, and it's not merely creative conservatism.

By 2016 the world has fallen in love with the *Souls* combat system which rewards quick and correct decision-making. Movesets varying from weapon to weapon make choosing the right tool essential. Yet those who imagined the 'Soulsborne' franchise would act as a balm to the relatively simplistic combat of *The Elder Scrolls* (the previous trendsetter in roleplaying games) by offering increasing realism were wrong. In the latest *Souls* game it is not unusual to do backflips while swinging blades larger than the human body.

However, the franchise will likely put pressure on other big developers to offer more intricate fighting systems, which is a necessary condition for realism. Ubisoft's upcoming *For Honor* is a very promising sign, even if it buys into the idea that knights, samurai and Vikings can fight on the same terms.

Examples of what the future could look like are available downmarket. *Mount & Blade* by Turkey's TaleWorlds Entertainment is the poster child for realistic medieval combat. There is a great emphasis in hitting the right bodyparts and blocking in the right direction, with a variety of weapons that broadly function as you'd expect

of them. While it is very down to earth it is undeniable that the simulation lacks a certain oomph, which one hopes the sequel's higher budget will provide.

Speaking of the future it'd be criminal to not mention



the Czech Warhorse Studios' upcoming title, *Kingdom Come: Deliverance*, which promises the same fidelity in its combat system as *M&B*. Too much fidelity, one may feel after watching a tech demo on YouTube. I am as interested in the different weapon types and armours as the next guy, but the intricacy of combat the game promises seems to be too much: either for Warhorse to be able to adequately pull off, or for any but the most hardcore players to engage in.

It may seem strange to complain about too much realism at this point, but the fact remains that this is entertainment. If you watch any medieval combat reenactors you will see that the movements are significantly more complex, fast and reserved than you'd imagine. It is rarely as satisfying to watch as a choreographed film battle.

A melee combat simulator will show the fighting clearly so that players can learn to react appropriately to moves and translate their knowledge to skilful fighting of their own, with the satisfaction of watching their blows delivered. Thus games require unrealistically telegraphed attacks and long recovery times in combat. Realistically brisk fighting, grappling and on-the-fly switching to pommel strikes and half-swording will be too much for the player to achieve with modern input technology, and will also extremely difficult to communicate to the player on screen. It will come out as noise as opposed to information.

Perhaps motion tracking and virtual reality technology will make truly realistic melee combat viable, though it'd be a real workout.

The challenge of realistic melee combat in games isn't merely about the will or ability to replicate it, it's deciding at what point the simulation becomes too real to be enjoyed.

*Zoheb Mashiur is a prematurely balding man with bad facial hair and so does his best to avoid people. Ruin his efforts by writing to zoheb.mashiur@gmail.com*