

# You Call That Aggressive? Not Compared to ‘Grand Theft Auto’!

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## *Pacific Standard:*

Early Tuesday morning, a Londoner bought one of the first available copies of the highly anticipated, just-released *Grand Theft Auto V*—and was mugged on his way home. While the K word (hint: It rhymes with “pharma”) immediately comes to mind, it’s impossible to know if the assailant who made off with the game—which, *The New York Times* reports, begins “with an extended bout of cop killing”—was a personal fan of the crime-heavy series, or simply a thug planning to sell it on the black market.

But over the past few years, a whole lot of research has found a link between playing violent video games and aggressive thoughts and behaviors. Although there are contrarians, most researchers in this field are convinced that these games have an impact on users’ brains—and when the games are violent, that impact is negative.

Precisely why sitting at a console and smiting virtual enemies should translate into real-life aggressiveness (as opposed to, say, being cathartic) has never been definitively established. In a timely new paper, one of the leading researchers in this field—psychologist Tobias Greitemeyer of the University of Innsbruck in Austria—presents evidence of one likely mechanism.

Read the whole story: [\*Pacific Standard\*](#)