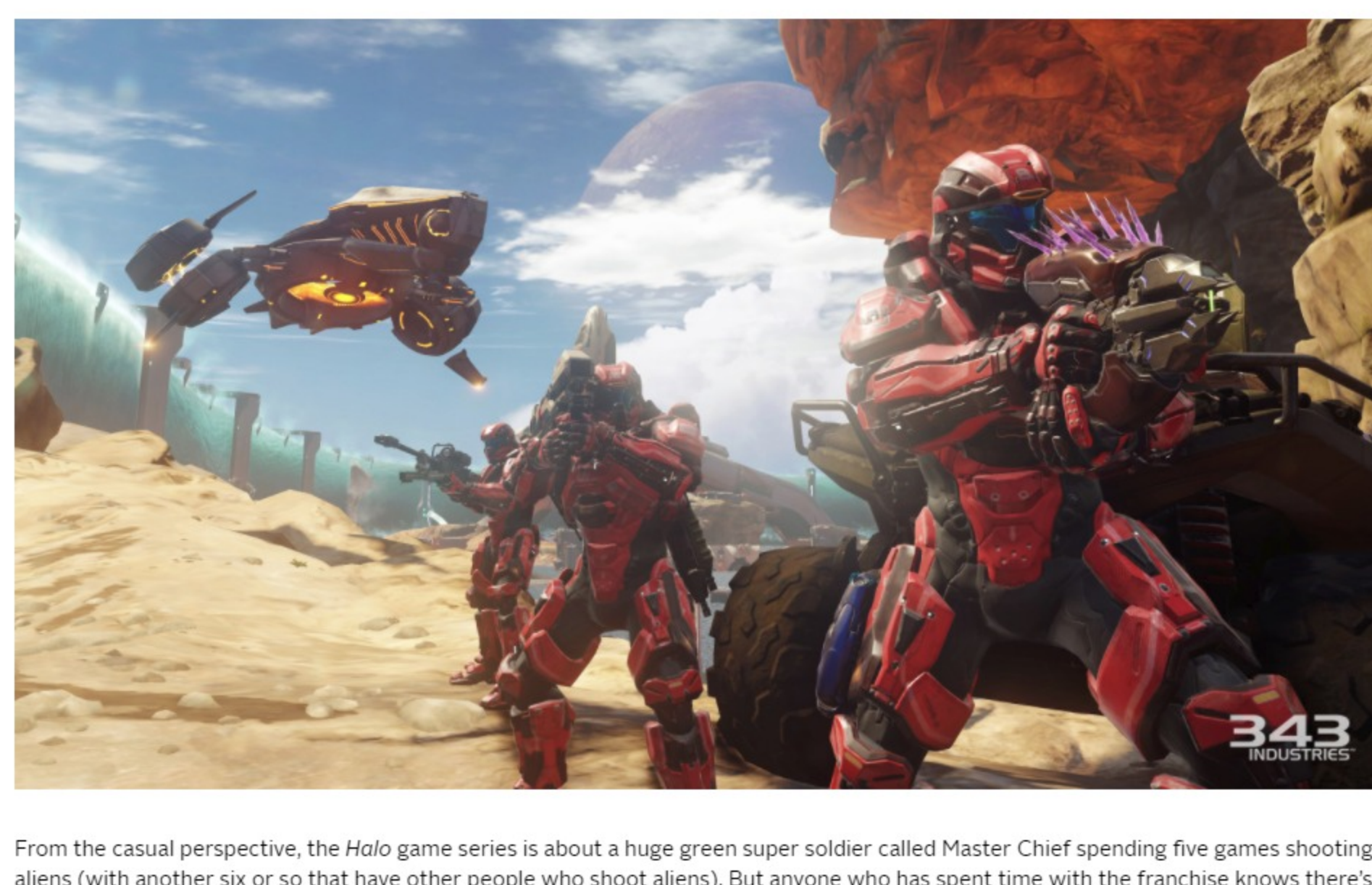


6 Ideas for the Next 'Halo' Game That Could be Better than 'Halo 5'

By [Phil Hornshaw](#)
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From the casual perspective, the *Halo* game series is about a huge green super soldier called Master Chief spending five games shooting aliens (with another six or so that have other people who shoot aliens). But anyone who has spent time with the franchise knows there's a lot more to it than exploring the galaxy gun barrel first.

Halo is actually an expansive franchise, steeped in tons of backstory, sidestories, history and lore that explain war between humans and various folks from space. The recently released *Halo 5: Guardians* isn't great about integrating all that backstory into its plot, but that doesn't mean it's not interesting. Much of it would just be more interesting with a little attention paid to flesh out the details beyond just "shooting" and "aliens."

That's where these six made-up *Halo* games come in. They could add to the franchise's story, round out its characters, and expand its universe. And only some of them are jokes—I swear!



6. 'HALO: SIM SPARTAN'
The most interesting and terrible thing in *Halo*'s extensive lore is SPARTAN-II, the supersoldier program responsible for creation of the eventual savior of humanity, Master Chief and his fellow Spartans underwent rigorous training and intense, often deadly medical augmentation. A lot of candidates died. Here's the really awful part: they were children, abducted from their homes and replaced with clones. The SPARTAN-II program was responsible for child murders in droves.

As Dr. Catherine Halsey, the scientist leading the SPARTAN-II program, your job in *Halo: Sim Spartan* is to "take care" of Spartan kids, The Sims-style. Make sure your Spartan child-soldiers are maximizing their training, so that when the time comes to surgically augment them with painful, life-threatening surgeries, at least some of them might survive. You also need to make sure they've got that killer instinct—and can specifically kill each other. Just not too many of each other. Be careful, though: if too many kids die, the whole program will collapse, but let morale drop too low (or train the kids too well), and you might find a bunch of augmented 12-year-olds staging a revolution in the cafeteria and trying to break down the door to your office.



5. 'HALO: INSURRECTION'
What if the good guys in *Halo* weren't the good guys? They probably aren't, honestly, since the United Earth Government and its military arm, the United Nations Space Command, were responsible for creating the kidnap-and-probably-accidentally-murder child-using SPARTAN-II program. But a group of alien races were about to annihilate humanity, so desperate times call for running children's lives. At least the UNSC had a good reason, right?

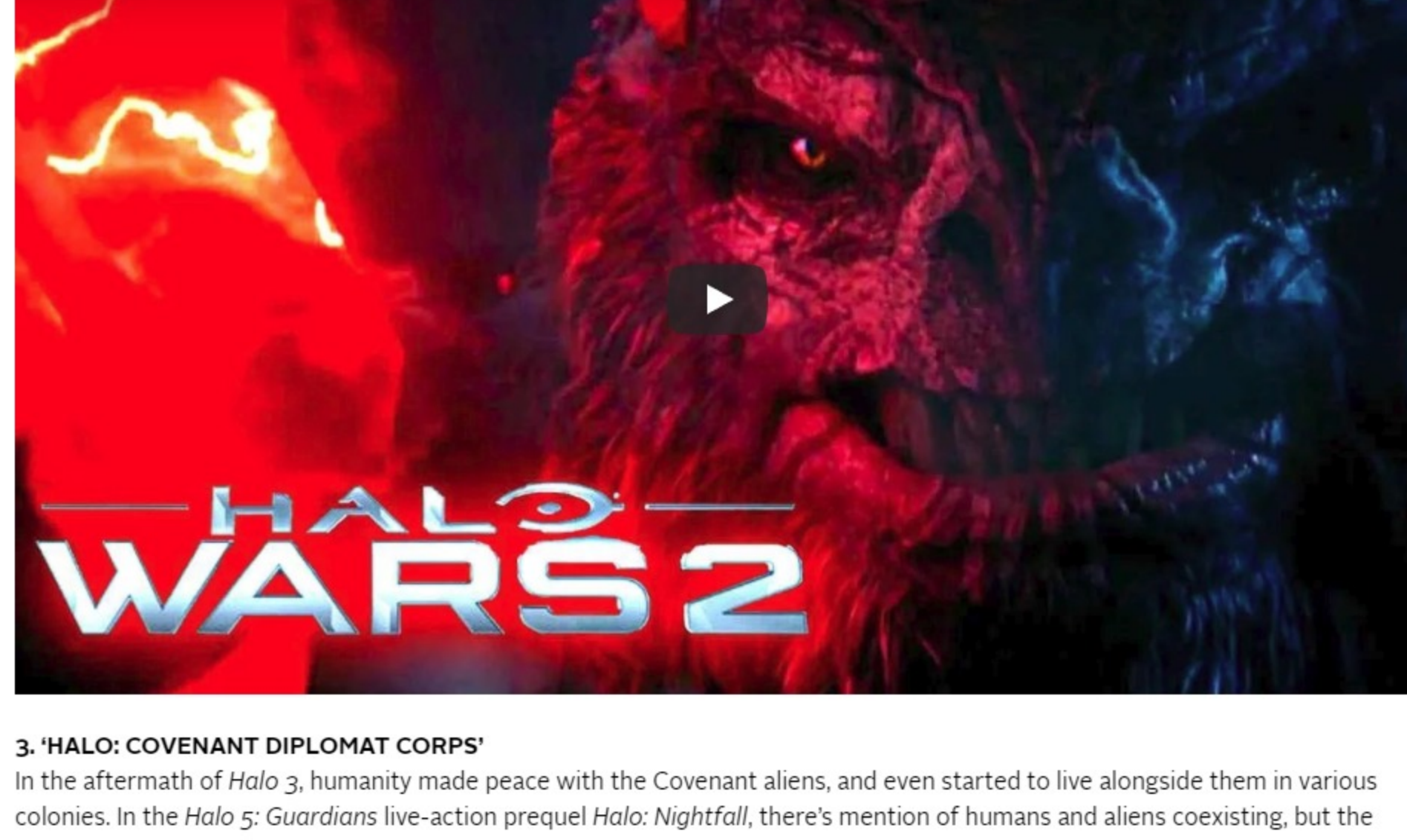
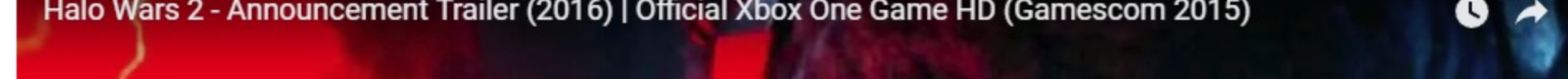
Uh, wrong, actually. The Spartans were originally created to fight human insurrectionists who wanted to be free of the centralized government of Earth.

Halo: Insurrection is the game to explore all these ideas, because in a universe where the good guys kidnap little kids and force them to be superheroes, the bad guys must be really bad. In *Insurrection*, you play as one such soldier on the side of freedom who gets swept up in the rebels' horrific tactics—like nuclear terrorism. But at least you didn't kidnap children and make them fight a war for you. A *Halo* shooter where you're not the seven-foot nearly invincible dude, but instead have to fight him, *Insurrection* would be the "tough moral choices" *Halo* game the lore has always supported but the series has never included.



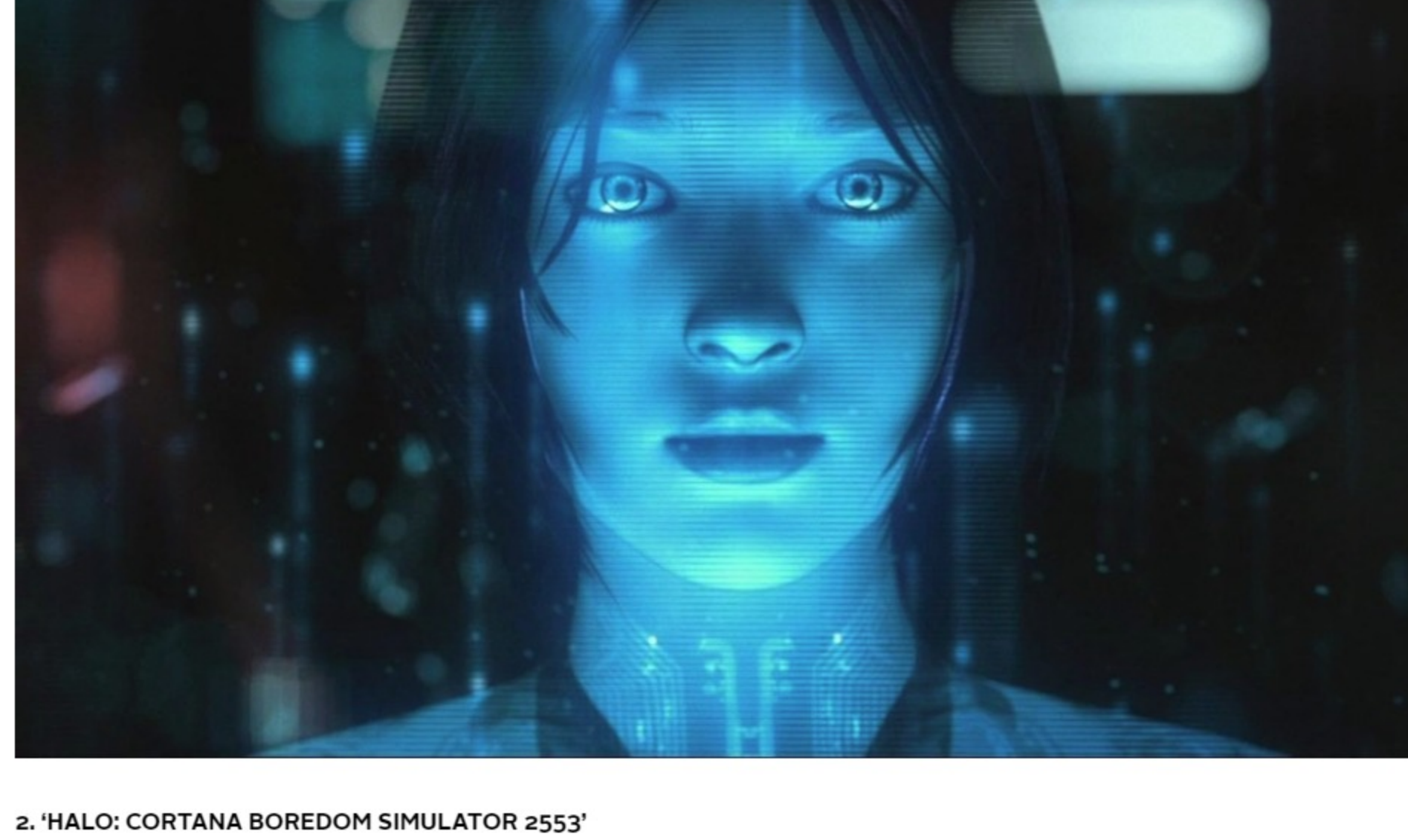
4. 'HALO: EVERYBODY LOVES CLONEKID'
The SPARTAN-II program didn't just steal children to make them wear sweet armor and enhance their muscles and bones—it also replaced those kidnapped kids with clones of kidnapped kids. After all, you can't have a ton of freaked-out parents notifying the press that all their exceptional child specimens just vanished at the exact same time. To keep anyone from being the wiser, Halsey seeded rushed, crappy clones with the families the kids were taken from (apparently these clones weren't good enough for the SPARTAN-II program, just good enough to fool families who had lived with the children literally those kids' entire lives). Oh, and all the clones degraded and died soon after, just in case this wasn't a sad enough story.

In *Halo: Everybody Loves CloneKid*, you play John, the clone who replaced the kid who would grow up to be the Master Chief. It's your job to keep you new family from wising up by doing your best to impersonate John: do regular stuff like go to school, do homework, and be a convincing Human Child, all while your body starts to shut down and rebel against you. Try to keep from dissolving into a puddle of clone-goo for as long as possible!



3. 'HALO: COVENANT DIPLOMAT CORPS'
In the aftermath of *Halo 3*, humanity made peace with the Covenant aliens, and even started to live alongside them in various colonies. In the *Halo 5: Guardians* live-action prequel *Halo: Nightfall*, there's mention of humans and aliens coexisting, but the plot concerns continued tensions and even a terrorist attack against a human colony. Suffice it to say, there's a lot of animosity still bubbling under the surface on both sides.

That's why *Halo* needs a game based solely on convincing people not to kill you and your whole species. Surely there are whole fleets of diplomats working overtime to make sure the technologically superior Covenant play nice with the many vulnerable backwater human colonies out there. As one such diplomat, you're constantly negotiating Covenant envoys, fighting to keep the peace and secure humanity's interests, while also hoping to keep the alien "diplomats" from getting pissed off, pulling out an energy sword and skewering you through the chest. Plus, this one could have multiple endings (and not all of them would have to be various potential kinds of dismemberment).



2. 'HALO: CORTANA BOREDOM SIMULATOR 2553'
How many times can you play Windows Solitaire before you go insane? That's the big question at the heart of *Halo: Cortana Boredom Simulator 2553*. At the close of *Halo 3*, the hulking wreckage of the human ship *Forward Unto Dawn* is floating through space, with only two survivors aboard: Master Chief and his artificial intelligence bestie, Cortana. With no engines and no way home, the pair settle in to wait for rescue. Chief goes into cryogenic freezing, and Cortana is left to ... sit around, waiting.

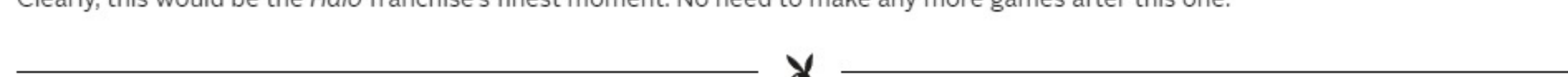
It'll be five years before the start of *Halo 4*. What's a superintelligent artificial intelligence to do with all that time on her hands? Why, play solitaire, of course! And chess, checkers, Minesweeper, and any other games that happen to be in the public domain. You can also look longingly at frozen Master Chief. Here's the rub, though: your boredom is slowly driving you mad. Carefully manage your boredom or risk split Cortana personalities overtaking you and flushing Chief into space. Players who make it all five years without committing computer program suicide will unlock a unique armor cosmetic in *Halo 5* multiplayer!



1. 'HALO: GRUNT SPY OPS'
Much of *Halo 5: Guardians* concerns a war not between humans and aliens, but between aliens of different ideological leanings (namely, whether they want to kill humans or not). The Covenant has splintered into two rival factions engaging in civil war, and in *Halo 5* you participate in some major battles to help one side of that conflict (the non-humanity genociding one) win out over the other.

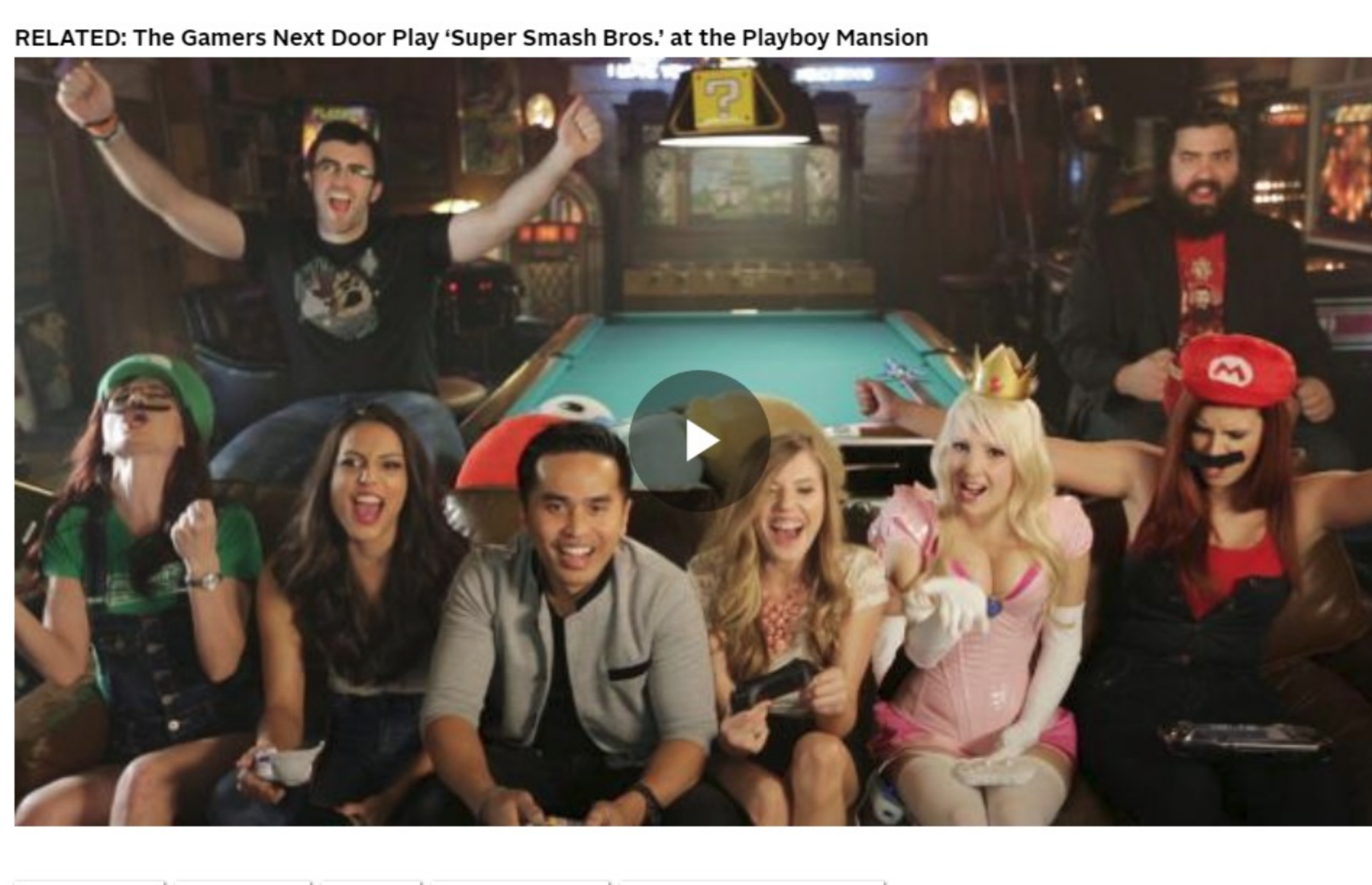
But there are other aspects to war. Stealthier, spy-ier aspects. And who better to infiltrate the ranks of an enemy but the most unassuming, Jar Jar Binks-ian characters of the *Halo* universe: Grunts. The little guys who go screaming in terror when you kill their commanders in battle also have some of the best *Halo 5* moments (just listen to this conversation between a grunt and his much larger Elite Friend). In *Halo: Grunt Spy Ops*, you play the not-very-smart grunt Grunty, who has the all-important mission of pretending to be a bad guy while learning vital intel about the bad guys. Splitting missions between sneaking around, listening in on your superiors, and trying not to blow your cover, most of the game would concern accidentally telling someone you're a spy and then trying to look as dumb as possible to cover up the slip.

Clearly, this would be the *Halo* franchise's finest moment. No need to make any more games after this one.



Phil Hornshaw is a freelance writer and the co-author of So You Created a Wormhole: The Time Traveler's Guide to Time Travel and The Space Hero's Guide to Glory. He was hoping the latter would help him get Han Solo hair, but so far he's been unsuccessful. He lives with his wife and annoying cats in Los Angeles.

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