

I think we can all agree that Fallout 76 is not what we hoped a Fallout game to be. We expected some bugs. Bethesda games always have bugs. But they always have bugs because they are so vast in scope and content that finding every problem would be an impossibility. The games themselves are usually so charming we just don't care.

'76 is different. It's genuinely difficult to enjoy. At least that's my experience with it. Your mileage may vary.

I have a neat little conspiracy theory as to why this might be. It has no basis in reality, but we can have fun with it.

There's a company called Providence Equity Partners that [has invested nearly a half billion dollars in ZeniMax](#), the company that owns Bethesda Software.

This started back in 2007. So we have a dozen or so years where Bethesda has probably been pressed harder and harder for more and more profits. They're making incredible games, and almost certainly a bunch of money, but who knows what is considered enough.

So some group of people at Bethesda hatch a plan. "Let's promise everyone the world with the next Fallout game, and then lose so much money that P.E.P. divests themselves from us. Then we'll be our own masters again and can go back to making very good if very buggy games."

And so Bethesda stacks disaster upon disaster. They launch a barely functioning game with engaging content. They give out crappy bags. They delay actual good content and launch a premium update that is even more broken than the game itself.

Oh and the plastic rum bottles; we can't forget the plastic rum bottles.

At this point, it almost looks like they're hoping to be fired so they can start up their own game

company, free from the pressures they are currently under. It's hard to imagine this level of failure isn't deliberate.

I'm kidding, of course. It's always easier to assume sabotage when the reality is so much worse. I'm guessing the pressure from P.E.P. is a factor in the disaster we call Fallout 76, but I've no proof of that. Perhaps they're a bunch of easy going folks who just loved the same games we loved and wanted to be part of that.

Plus [Mel Brooks has already taught us what happens when you try to produce a flop.](#)

I wonder if the reality is, nothing has changed at Bethesda. They're quality control was always spotty, but it was enough for older games that weren't as complicated. Now they've got to step up their game for something as big as '76, and they don't know how. What was good enough just isn't now.

The conspiracy theory is more fun, but the truth is probably much more mundane. Isn't that how it always goes?