

one else. It took me...  
to learn to ride it," he said. "I couldn't re-

# Pols rage as vid game takes shot at city

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THE LATEST version of an ultra-violent video game will unleash its murderous mayhem on the streets of New York.

And outraged political leaders say the rampant brutality of the game, "Grand Theft Auto IV," has little in common with reality.

"Setting 'Grand Theft Auto' in the safest big city in America would be like setting 'Halo' in Disneyland," said Councilman Peter Vallone, chairman of the Council's Public Safety Committee.

In its first trailers released this week, Grand Theft Auto is set in a mythical city that bears a striking resemblance to New York.

As the trailer shows well-known landmarks such as the Statue of Liberty, the Brooklyn Bridge and the Cyclone in Coney Island, a character voiceover warns: "Life is complicated. I killed people, smuggled people, sold people. Perhaps here, things will be different."

"It's despicable to glamorize violence in games like these, regardless of how far-fetched the setting may be," said Police Commissioner Raymond Kelly.

In previous incarnations, players advanced through the game by killing cops, selling pornography to children and killing prostitutes. Details of the latest version have not been released.

"The mayor does not support any video game where you earn points for injuring or killing police officers,"

said Jason Post, a spokesman for Mayor Bloomberg.

He noted that auto thefts have dropped 58% since Bloomberg took office, and so far this year New York City's murder rate is down 28%.

Jim Ankner, a spokesman for Take2 Games, declined to comment yesterday. Trailers from the latest version were released on the Internet Thursday. The game hits the stores in October.

New York was also the inspiration for an earlier version of the game, under the name "Liberty City."

"We've seen games that have been set in real cities, and that has been a weird route to take. By setting it in Liberty City they can get away with that satire," said Jeff Gerstmann, an editorial director from Gamespot.com.

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## Mayor's burning to increase cig tax

ALBANY — New York City would drag another 50 cents per pack from smokers and exempt higher-priced clothing from sales tax under two City Hall proposals, the Daily News has learned.

If Mayor Bloomberg succeeds in raising the combined state and local tax on cigarettes to \$3.50, the city would have the second-highest levy on smokes in the nation, trailing only Chicago at \$3.66.

City Hall sources said the mayor thinks the \$110 cap on garments exempt from 4% city sales tax should be eliminated.

The proposals, which require legislative approval, began cropping up as lawmakers raced to complete work by tonight on a state budget that the Spitzer administration said will result in many New York City property taxpayers qualifying for rebate checks averaging \$127.

Gov. Spitzer said the state spending plan, expected to approach \$122 billion when it is finalized, will achieve one of his top goals — providing public medical insurance to 400,000 kids who now lack coverage.

Joe Mahoney