John Reviews Jetpack Joyride

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https://youtube.com/watch?v=h0fNBwnIhAU
https://nerdfighteria.info/v/h0fNBwnIhAU

Today I'm reviewing the mobile game *Jetpack Joyride* which, let me tell you, is no joyride if you happen to be a scientist. The premise of the game is this: Your name is Barry, you have access to a jetpack which is also a machine gun, and you must fly your machine gun jetpack all around a laboratory while dodging missiles and electrified zappers which, if you are struck by one, will kill you. If you make it through the lab you're magically thrust into other locales: a warehouse, a forest, an undersea tunnel, a volcano, et cetera.

Along the way, even inside the volcano, strangely, there are little scientists scurrying about who are slaughtered by the bullets from your machine gun jetpack. The death of these scientists seems to be neither good nor bad news to Barry, you don't get points for killing them or anything. They're simply collateral damage in Barry's desperate attempt to stay alive and collect enough coins to purchase items from The Stash which include a teddy bear jetpack that shoots hearts instead of bullets and which is nice if you want to avoid massacring scientists.

There's a lot more about the game that I won't get into in detail like if you fly over a mystery box you can acquire one of several vehicles; a teleporter, say, or a dragon, or a motorcycle, but the basic concept of *Jetpack Joyride* is not too different from the gone but never forgotten mobile gaming classic *Flappy Bird*. You try not to run into anything for as long as possible and then eventually you die.

In *Flappy Bird* you die many, many, many times before eventually getting good enough to beat the game. In *Jetpack Joyride* there is no winning. You may have some fun along the way, you may experience a brief jolt of delight when collecting Lil Stomper or seeing your own name spelled out in coins, but in the end it won't mater how many coins you collect. Like life, *Jetpack Joyride* has just the one ending: You die and your corpse is sprawled out on the ground surrounded by frantic scientists. Well I guess it isn't that much like life actually.

So why does Barry find himself in this lab/volcano/undersea tunnel? It's not clear. Why is Barry willing to sacrifice the lives of so many scientists so that his own life can be extended by, at most, three or four minutes? Also unclear. And why is victory impossible for Barry? Presumably the game developers are trying to tell us through Barry something about ourselves, right? Like is Barry in the end a tragic figure doing whatever he must to survive as long as he can? Or is there something heroic about Barry? Is there something noble in his pursuit of a victory even though he knows that none exists? Is flying via machine gun jetpack in the face of unbeatable odds folly or a strange kind of courage? Can a joyride that invariably ends in failure still be joyful?

Like many great works of art, *Jetpack Joyride* asks more questions than it answers, but I've always enjoyed a measure of ambiguity in my entertainments. In fact, I quite like this game. I rate it 8 out of 10. See you next week.