



Sato is shown into a strange new world in this quirky tale from GONZO.

Welcome to the NHK: 1st Conspiracy

STAYING IN Exploring what it means to be hikikomori

Distributor Lace **Certificate** 15 **Price** \$30 **Release Date** Out now

In this humorous social commentary that mixes comedy, paranoia and a romantic twist, we take a peek into the mysterious world of a hikikomori, a growing Japanese phenomenon where young adults refuse to leave their homes, work or go to school.

Based on a best-selling light novel and manga series, it was in part inspired by the experience of author Tatsuhiko Takimoto. Specifically, it looks into the world of Tatsuhiro Sato who has been a hikikomori for four years and has finally hit on the reason for his reclusive nature: a conspiracy by the Nihon Hikikomori Kyokai (Japanese Hikikomori Association).

Determined to at least try to rejoin society, Sato meets his guardian angel, Misaki, who offers to be his sponsor. But who said the road to recovery would be easy? Sato's next door



neighbour is an anime addict and game designer who shows him another world of models and maidens, porn and erotic games.

As you can expect from a GONZO anime, it looks pretty stunning and the quirky story is really attention grabbing, Sato's delusional moments

making it even more appealing but this isn't all doom and gloom, Misaki serves not only as Sato's beacon of sanity but also his romantic interest.

The voice acting is fascinating in either English or Japanese, there's a lot of realism and Welcome to the NHK is one of the few anime series that actively looks at a genuine social problem gripping Japan. It also takes a long, hard look at anime fandom, the otaku lifestyle and eroge (erotic visual novels), which is certain to fascinate hardened anime fans - if that's you, watch this!



Also look at...

Re-edited cyber punk and mecha madness in space



The Laughing Man OVA

Distributor Manga Entertainment

Certificate 15

Price £20

Release Date Out now



This release marks the first time you'll get to see the complete Laughing Man saga on one disc: Section Nine are racing against time to find the wizard hacker known only as The Laughing Man, who can hack people's cyber-brains in real time so all they see is his Catcher in the Rye inspired logo. Previously the main story arc of the first Stand Alone Complex TV series, the episodes have been pieced together to make one full-length feature.

Sounds good? It is, but unfortunately anyone who has seen the series will know a lot is missing. While the animation is stunning and the voice acting a tour-de-force, the storyline feels fragmented. It's obvious that the scenes have been lifted and so a lot of character development and continuity has been lost.



Gunbuster 2

Distributor Beez

Certificate 12

Price £25

Release Date Out now



Gunbuster 2 is a Gainax classic mixing sci-fi, must-have mecha and a lack of common sense. Yep, this is suspension of belief territory in which a plucky Martian android girl named Nono strikes to become a mecha pilot, known as Topless. We all know that the journey is half the story and Nono's is no walk in the park.

Handily collected, except the US release, on two discs, Gunbuster 2 is very much a cult hit. You'll either like it or you won't. It ticks all the boxes: girls, mecha, swarms of space-dwelling aliens, fragmented memories, references to more anime series than you can wave a stick at and plenty of comedy. If you like mecha, give this a go and even if you don't this is a classic series that deserves to become more than a cult hit. ●

