

REVEALED: **GOLDENEYE 2!**

PLUS: RESIDENT EVIL 4, JAK 3, MECHASSAULT 2, AND MORE!

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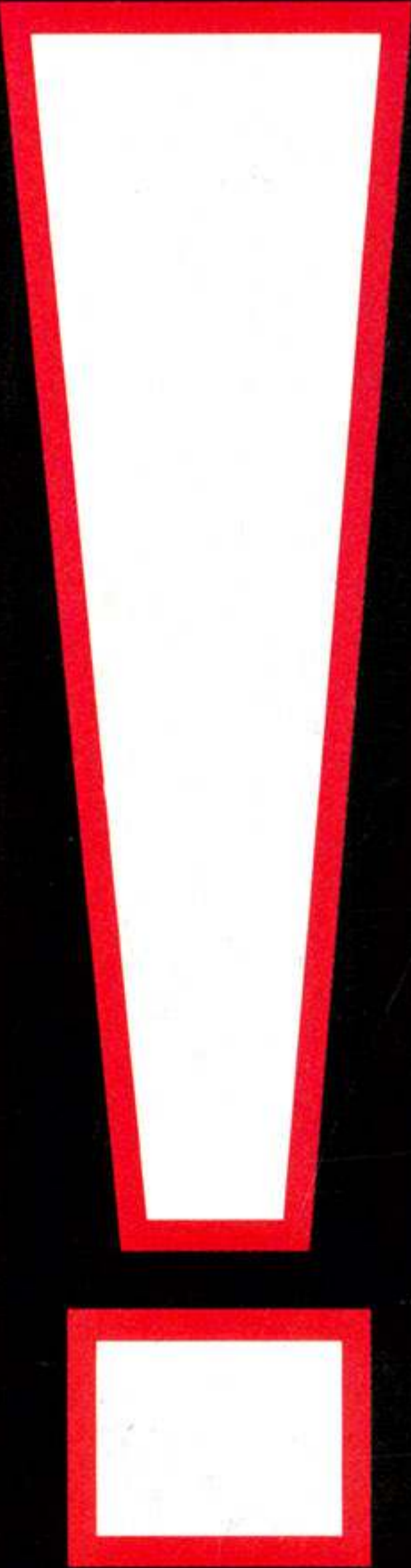
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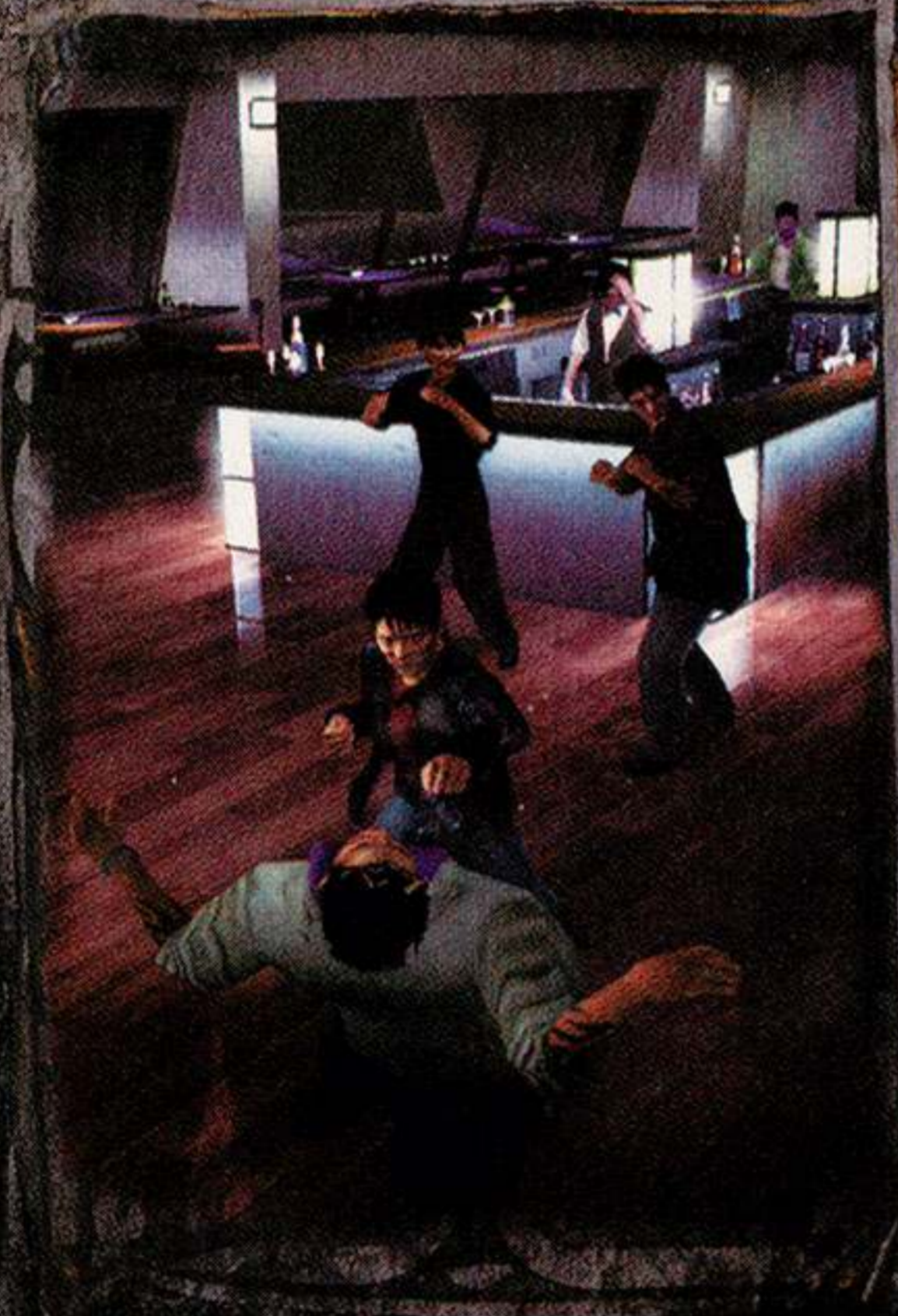
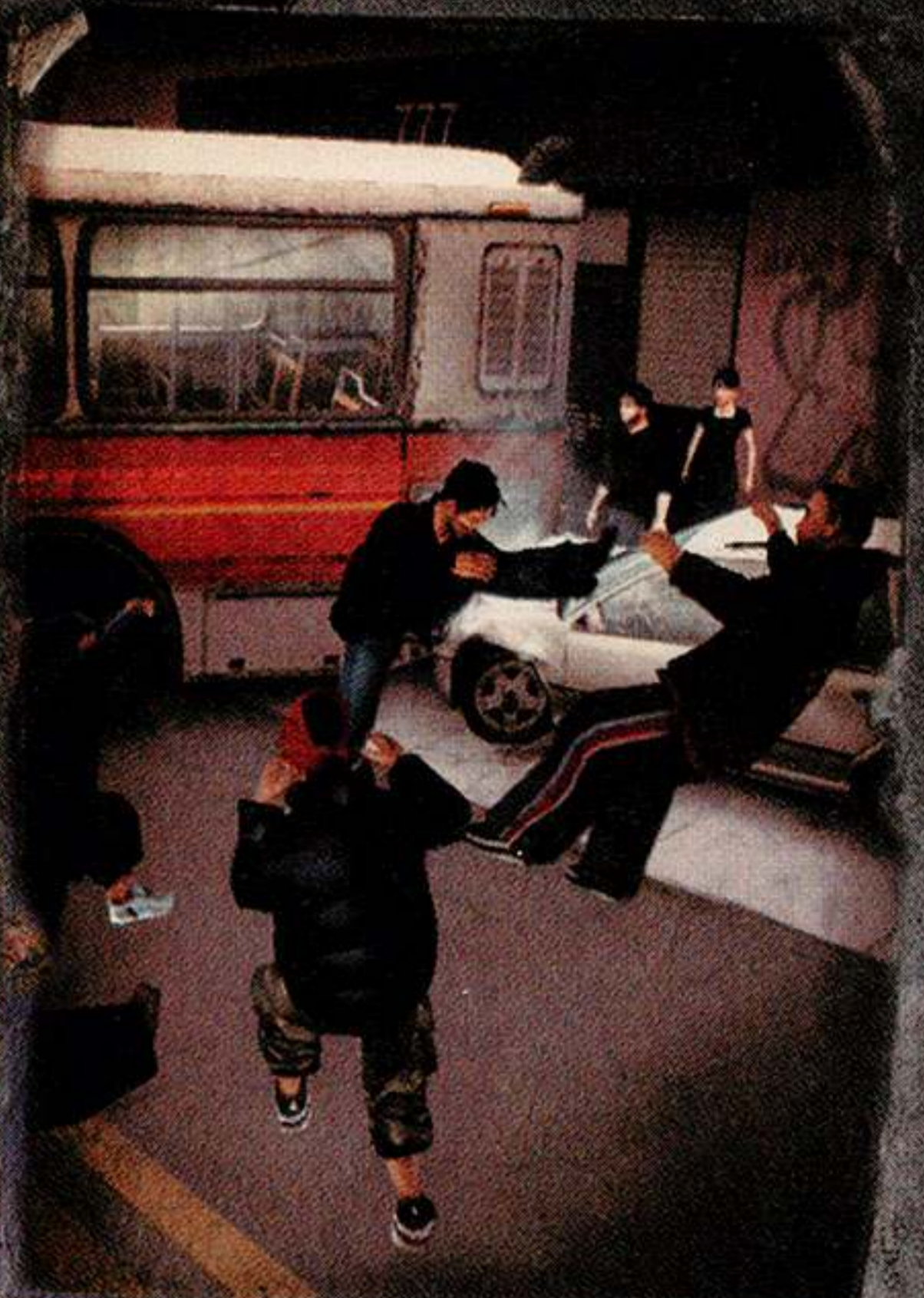
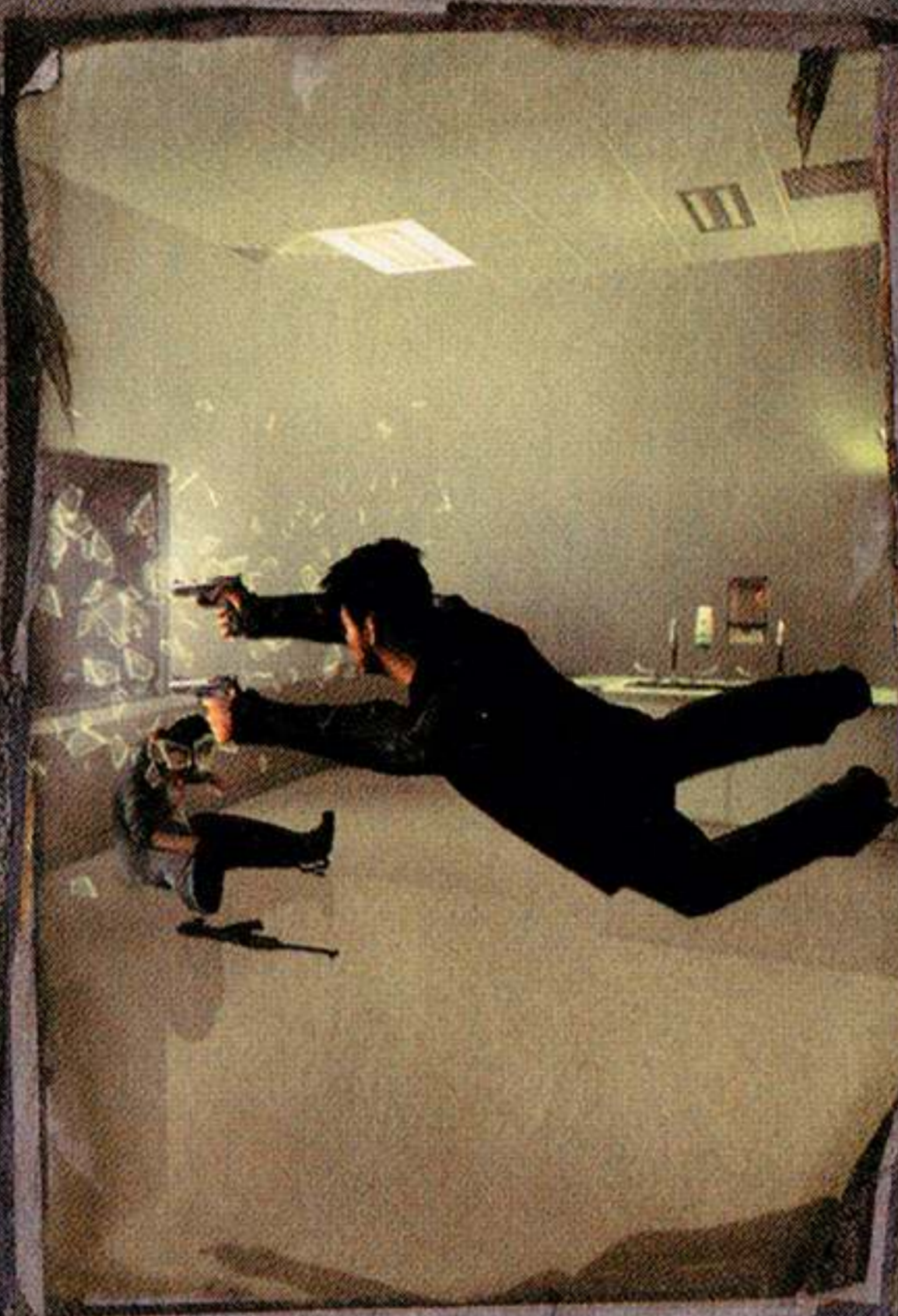
For Kit Yun, the  
only way out of the  
Hong Kong underworld  
is to go back in.



Violence

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# JET LI RISE TO HONOR 義氣



A dying man's last wish. An undercover cop who's running out of time. Jet Li is Kit Yun in Rise to Honor, the story of a cop sworn to fulfill his duty, yet bound by a promise to a powerful crime lord. Now Kit must enter a shadowy world where, to preserve his honor, he'll have to risk his life. But as his enemies will soon learn, sometimes the one who is most honorable...is also the most deadly.

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# Diplomacy Is Primary Weapon in America's Quest to End Indonesian Crisis.

By Eric C. Baldwin  
GLOBAL PRESS NETWORK

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Indonesia - A government  
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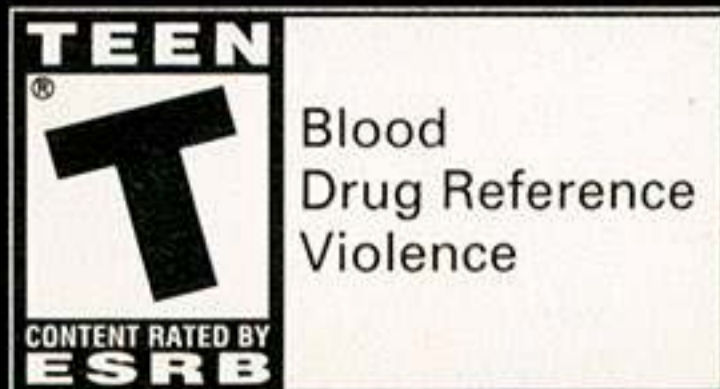
NEW STEALTH WEAPONS AND TACTICS

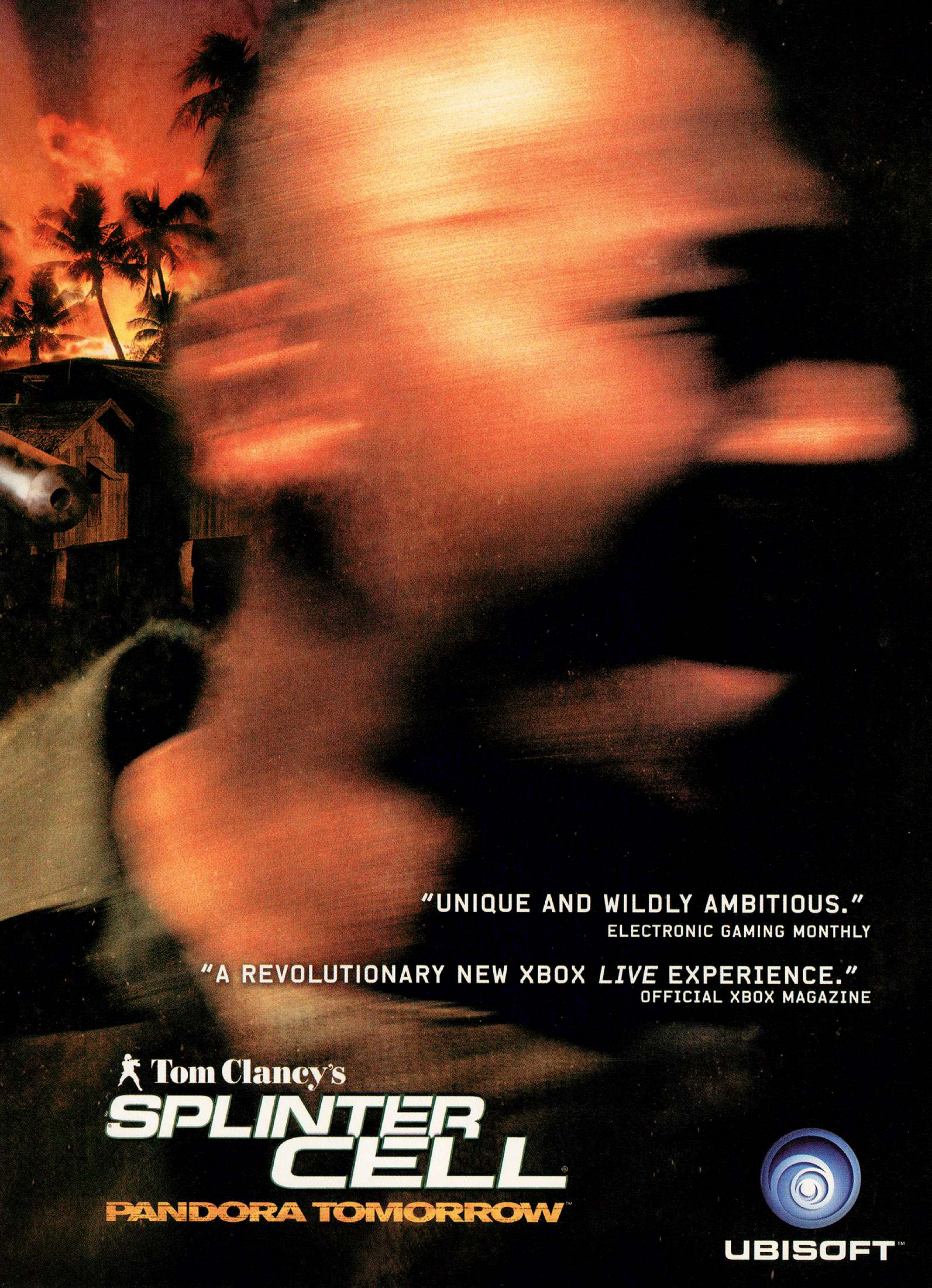


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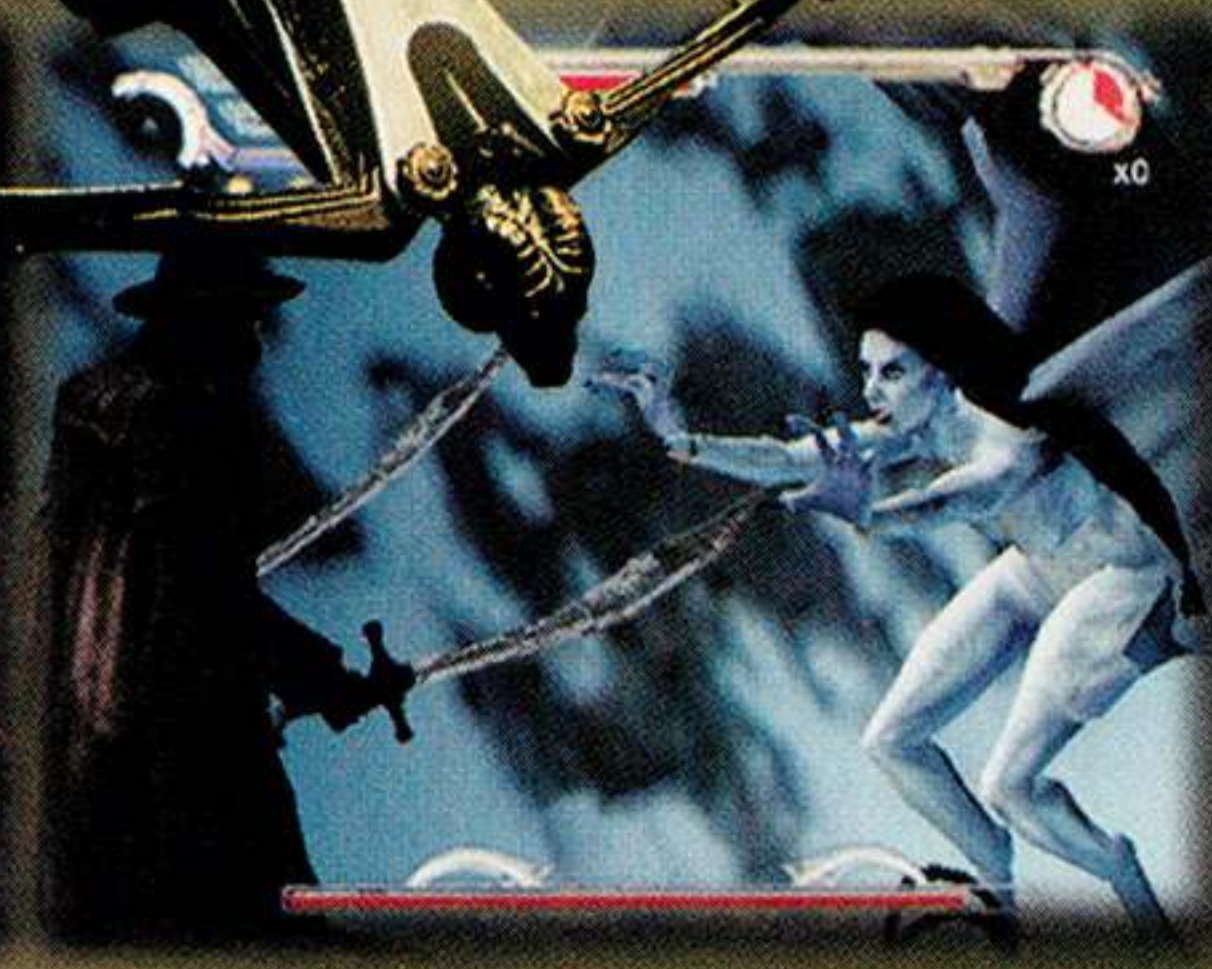
Battle Dracula, The Frankenstein Monster, The Wolf Man and 22 villainous creatures



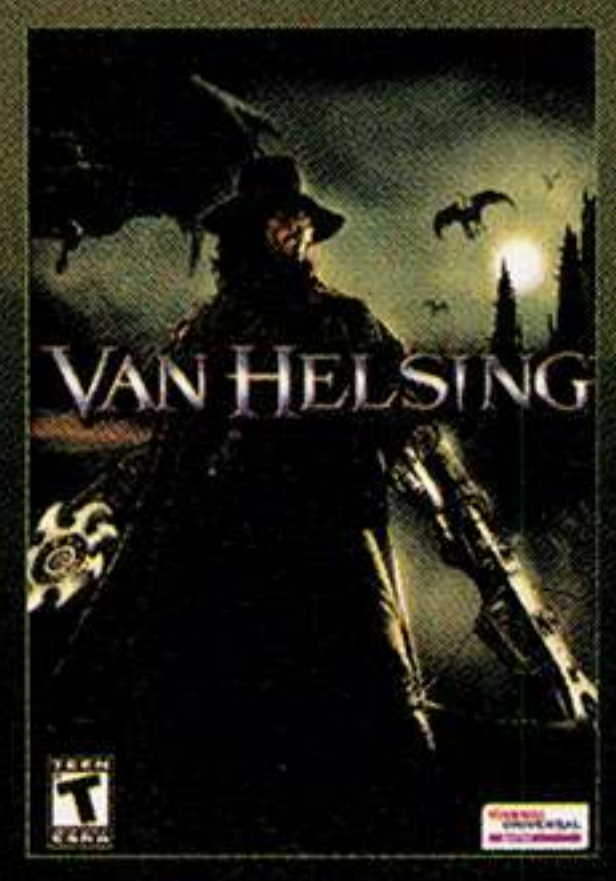
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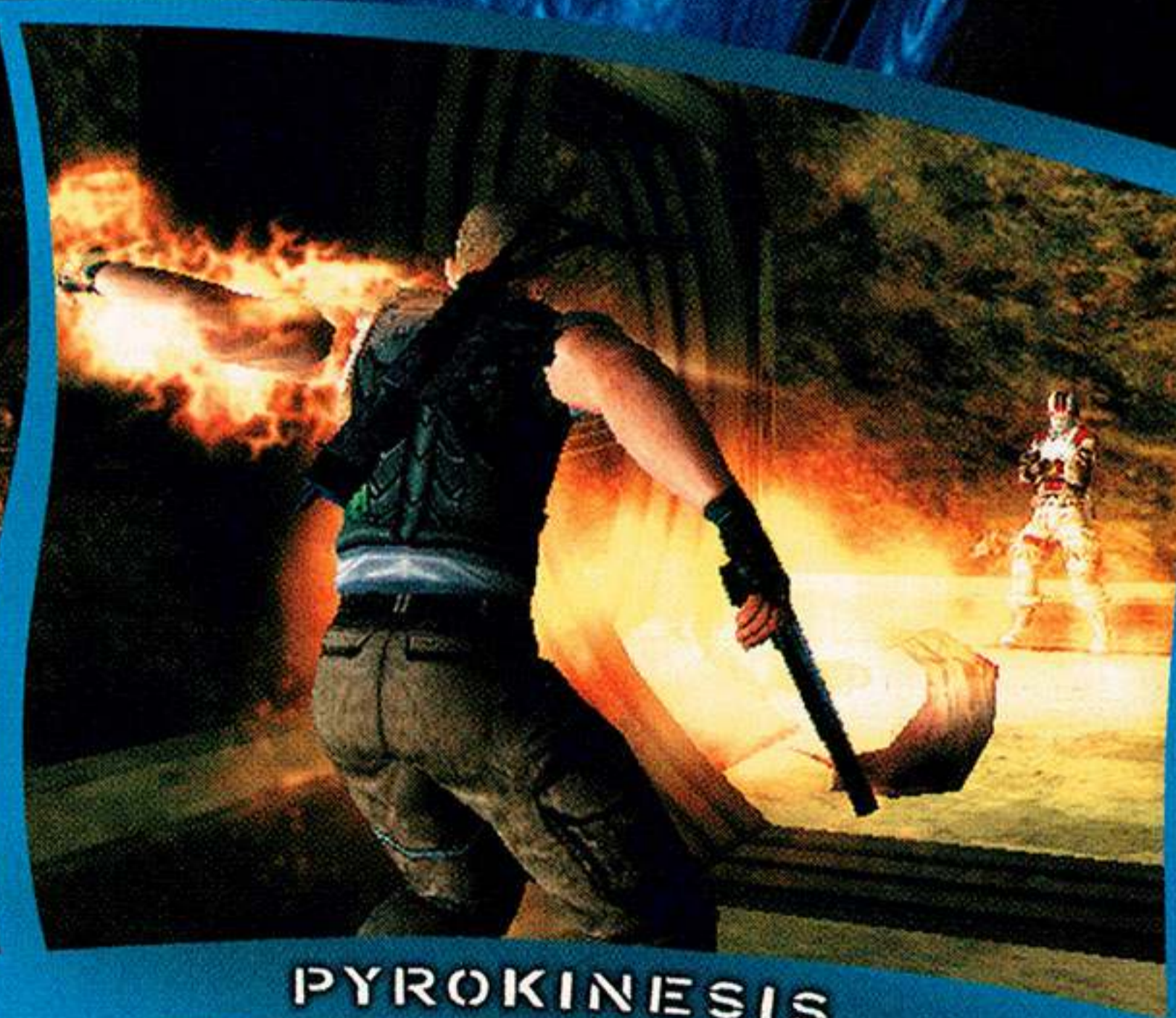
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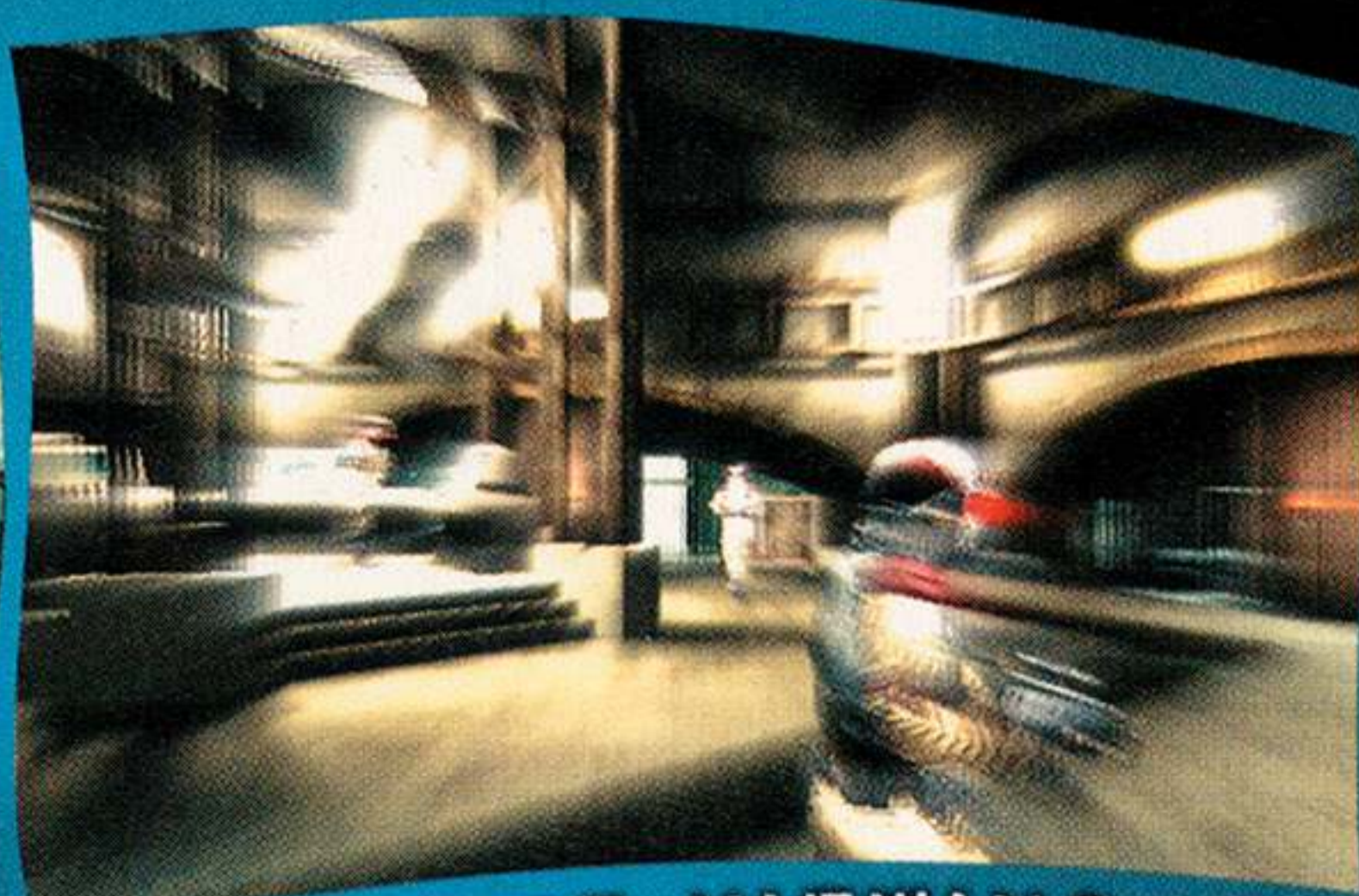


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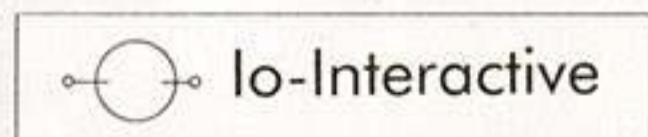
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Another month of limited choices



# 68

## COVER STORY:

# METAL GEAR SOLID 3: SNAKE EATER

Hide and go Snake—the most dangerous hero in videogames is the one you won't see in *Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater*, thanks to the lethally effective new camouflage capabilities of commando Solid Snake. Or does Snake even star in this game? We deliver the latest intel on this mega-hot PS2 sequel.



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**MECHASSAULT 2**  
Puny humans are no match for giant machines, right?



# 27

**GOLDENEYE 2**  
Our exclusive first look reveals that you don't even play as 007...seriously!

## REVIEW CREW

Not one, not two, but three reviews for each game

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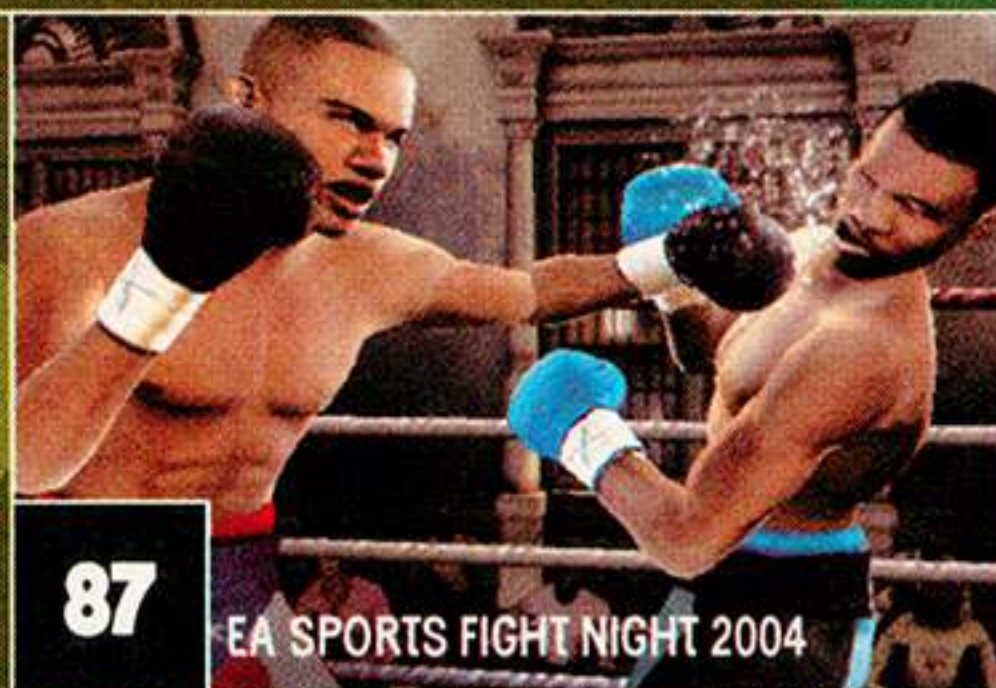
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**24** RESIDENT EVIL 4  
All-new screenshots and info—need we say more?

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Join us for a trip down memory lane



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### MAP QUESTS

A tour through 2004's RPG lineup, including *The Legend of Zelda: Four Swords*, *Jade Empire*, *True Fantasy Live Online*, and more



## editorial



We don't see many 10s 'round these parts. Even though we have a 10-point rating scale for games, our famously tough Review Crew doesn't like to give out the highest score very often. This month, one 10 (from me) snuck in there, the first in four months since *Tony Hawk's Underground* got one in *EGM* #174. The reason I'm bringing this up, besides not being able to think of anything better to write about for my editorial, is so I can take this opportunity to talk about our reviews in more detail.

First off, we're not jaded. We love our videogames during work, after work, night and day, every day...much to the dismay of our significant others. We just don't give out

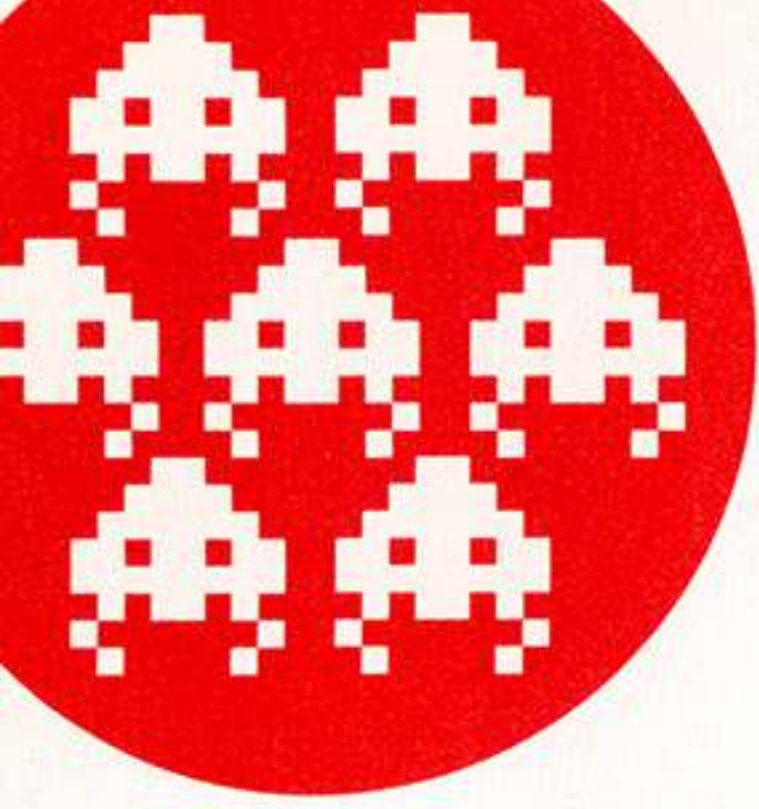
very many 10s because we don't like telling our friends (that's you) that a game is really that good unless we absolutely mean it.

The text is more important than the score. Hey, we put our game-playing fingers (our livelihoods) at risk every day when we type up the words in this magazine, so the least you can do is read them. I'm kidding, but what we have to say about the game tells so much more than the numbers. For example, this issue's Game of the Month got some crazy-high scores, but all the reviewers talked about how much multiplayer was a part of that. Don't like playing nice with friends? Then maybe you won't like this one as much as we do.

A 10 doesn't mean a game's perfect—someone can always find something wrong with the best of the best. If we saved our 10s for only perfectly flawless games, we'd never hand them out. Also, we like using the full range of the 10-point scale, which means a 5.0 is middle-of-the-road average and anything above that is above average. So while a 6.0 may sound like a failure to you, we're saying it's not that bad. Granted, you may not want to spend 40 bucks on something that's "not bad"....

So, enjoy our reviews, and as always, write in to let us know what you think of them.

—Dan "Shoe" Hsu



# staff

sore thumbs

## the review crew



**DAN "SHOE" HSU, Editor-in-Chief**  
Bad idea: Letting our editor-in-chief try multiplayer *Splinter Cell Pandora Tomorrow*. Now, *EGM* production is at a standstill while he's busy saving the world from terrorist gamers.  
**Now Playing:** *Splinter Cell Pandora Tomorrow* (Xbox Live)  
**Fave Genres:** Just about everything

**MARK MACDONALD, Executive Editor**  
Mark spent this month either playing multiplayer *Splinter Cell Pandora Tomorrow* or thinking about playing multiplayer *Splinter Cell Pandora Tomorrow*. Look for "EGM Mark" online.  
**Now Playing:** *Pandora Tomorrow*, *Ninja Gaiden*  
**Fave Genres:** Action, Adventure, Shooters, Homemade Pizza



**JENNIFER TSAO, Managing Editor**  
Stereotypes suck, and this month Jennifer decided to take on the biggest, baddest stereotype of them all—that girls don't play sports games. Beware all sportos...the chicks are coming!  
**Now Playing:** *Madden NFL 2004*, *NBA St. Vol. 2*, *Winning Elev. 7*  
**Fave Genres:** Adventure, RPG, Action Sports, Puzzle, Music

**CRISPIN BOYER, Senior Editor**  
Editing our cover story on *Metal Gear Solid 3* put Cris in a military mood, inspiring him to undergo tactical-espionage training and get totally ripped abs. Oh wait, that's just one of his dolls.  
**Now Playing:** *Pandora Tomorrow*, *Breakdown*, *SOCOM II*  
**Fave Genres:** Action, Adventure, RPG



**CHRIS "CJ" JOHNSTON, News Editor**  
After many hours of ninja training on *Ninja Gaiden*, CJ bought a pair of nunchakus. Only playing the game doesn't translate to real skill; it translates to multiple head wounds.  
**Now Playing:** *Metroid Zero Mission*, *Ninja Gaiden*  
**Fave Genres:** Action, Adventure, Puzzle, Music

**SHANE BETTENHAUSEN, Previews Editor**  
Shane's wanted to show off his toy menagerie for months now...and he doesn't want everyone to see how he disgraced his German heritage by losing the *EGM* beard competition.  
**Now Playing:** *Phantasy Star Online Episode III*, *Ninja Gaiden*  
**Fave Genres:** Fighting, Shooters, Adventure, Racing



**DEMIAN LINN, Reviews Editor**  
Demian's opted out of his coworkers' beard competition and opted in to a business-in-the-front-party-in-the-back hockey haircut competition. He's the only entrant, but he's still losing.  
**Now Playing:** *Fire Emblem*, *Midway Arcade Treasures*  
**Fave Genres:** Action, Hockey, Racing, Fighting

**PAUL BYRNES, Associate Editor**  
Despite his disdain of shaving (see picture, as usual), Paul declined to enter the beard competition. How can he compete with Sasquatches like Bryan and Crispin? He can't.  
**Also Playing:** *Zelda: Wind Waker* (again), *Metroid Zero Mission*  
**Fave Genres:** Adventure, Action, RPG, Fighting



**BRYAN INTIHAR, Associate Editor**  
Reviewing *EA Sports Fight Night 2004* this month had Bryan asking himself, "Does snacking on lightning and crapping thunder really make you a better boxer?"  
**Now Playing:** *Fight Night*, *Final Fantasy: Crystal Chronicles*  
**Fave Genres:** Action, Adventure, Sports

**SHAWN ELLIOTT, Associate Editor**  
Shawn's mom took one look at her son's last staff page pic of a *Kung-Fu* conga line and accused him of hiding on bad hair days. We made him pose real purdy this time.  
**Now Playing:** *Pandora Tomorrow*, *Battlefield Vietnam* (PC)  
**Fave Genres:** Fighting, Shooters, Action, Racing



## Guest Reviewers



**GREG FORD**  
*Fight Night* inspired G. Ford to start a boxing career of his own. Big mistake. Homer quickly takes care of business.



**JON DUDLAK**  
Bored with this month's lame-gameness, Jon took up smoking in a big way to truncate his sad, sad life.



**PATRICK MAURO**  
This syndicated radio guy has no trouble getting his Bosox to the promised land via video-game baseball.



**KEVIN GIFFORD**  
Kevin doesn't have a daughter to take to work, so he brought in "Flo" on his 1997 gold mini-van. Represent!



**JOHN RICCIARDI**  
When he's not being attacked by giant, inflatable Bullet Bills, John writes for us from his home in Tokyo.

Each month, a sinister cabal of fellow game journalists from **XBOX NATION**, **OFFICIAL U.S. PLAYSTATION MAGAZINE**, **GMR**, and **1UP.COM** convene in a secret volcano lair and hatch foul plots against the world's nations. Oh, and they help us write about videogames, too.

## The Contributors

- Computer Gaming World editor **JOHNNY LIU** gets his groove on in our ultimate game room....
- JON M. GIBSON** put a serious ass-shaped dent on his couch rounding up game-related video-documentaries....
- Strategy instructor **DAVID HODGSON** takes you to *Splinter Cell* spy school in *Tricks of the Trade*....
- 1UP.com's **NICH MARAGOS** studies the art of concealment in our *Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater* cover story....
- Halo* this, *Halo* that—you added *Fable* and *Final Fantasy XII* to our reader-rated Hot Ten, and **JUSTIN SPEER** couldn't be any happier....
- Pen-for-hire **MARC SALTZMAN** picks Korn frontman Jonathan Davis' brain in *Desert Island Gamer*....
- THIERRY "SCOOTER" NGUYEN** crashes Capcom's toga party in our *Shadow of Rome* preview....
- And cartographic **KEVIN CONVERTITO** maps a path to RPG heaven.

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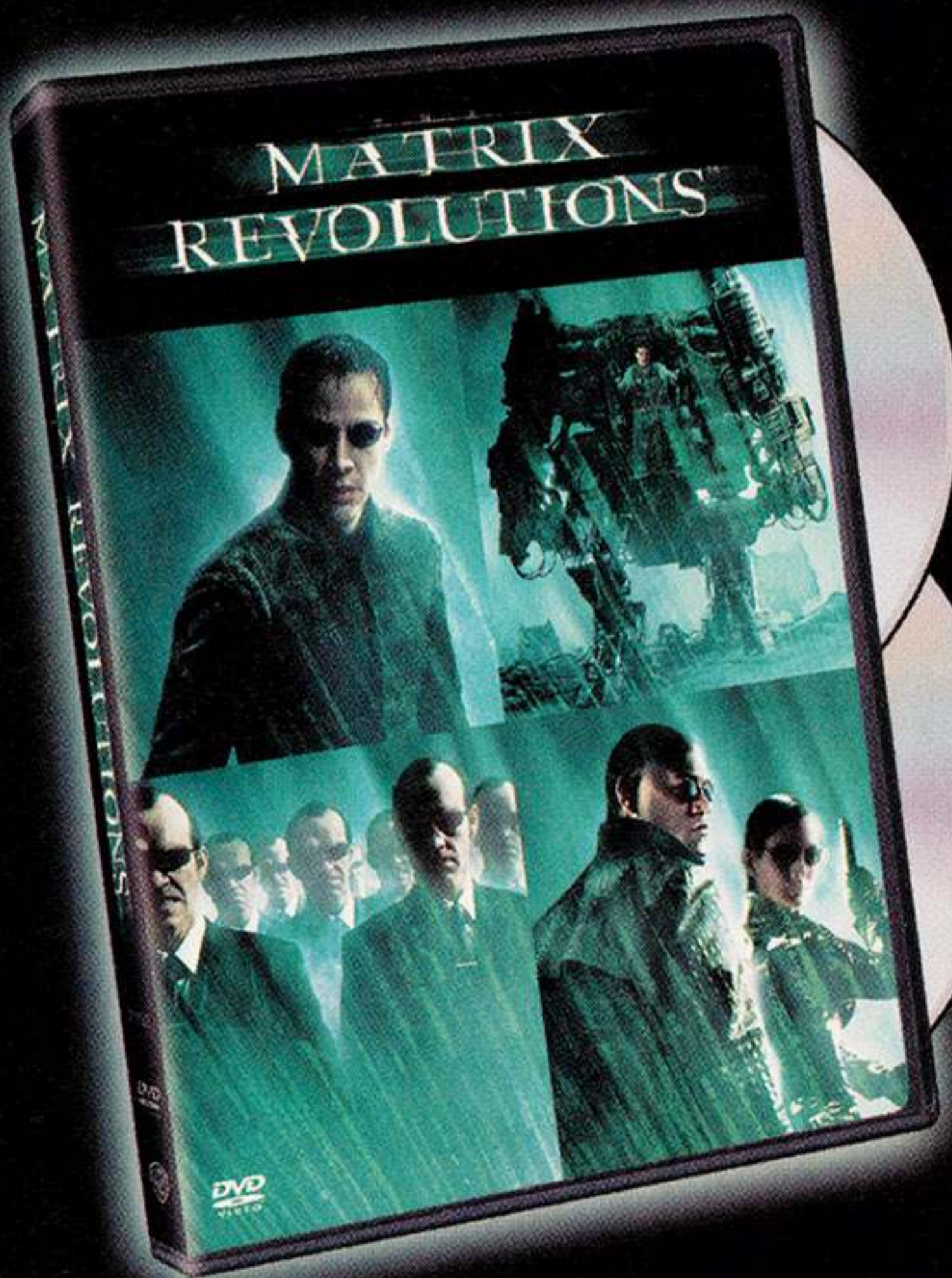
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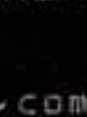
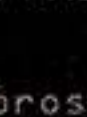
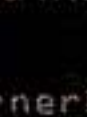
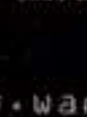
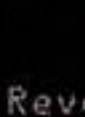
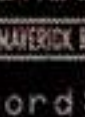
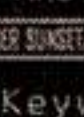
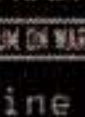
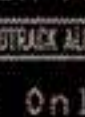
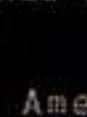
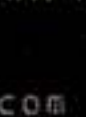
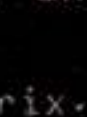
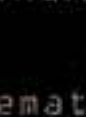
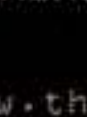
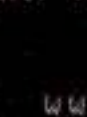
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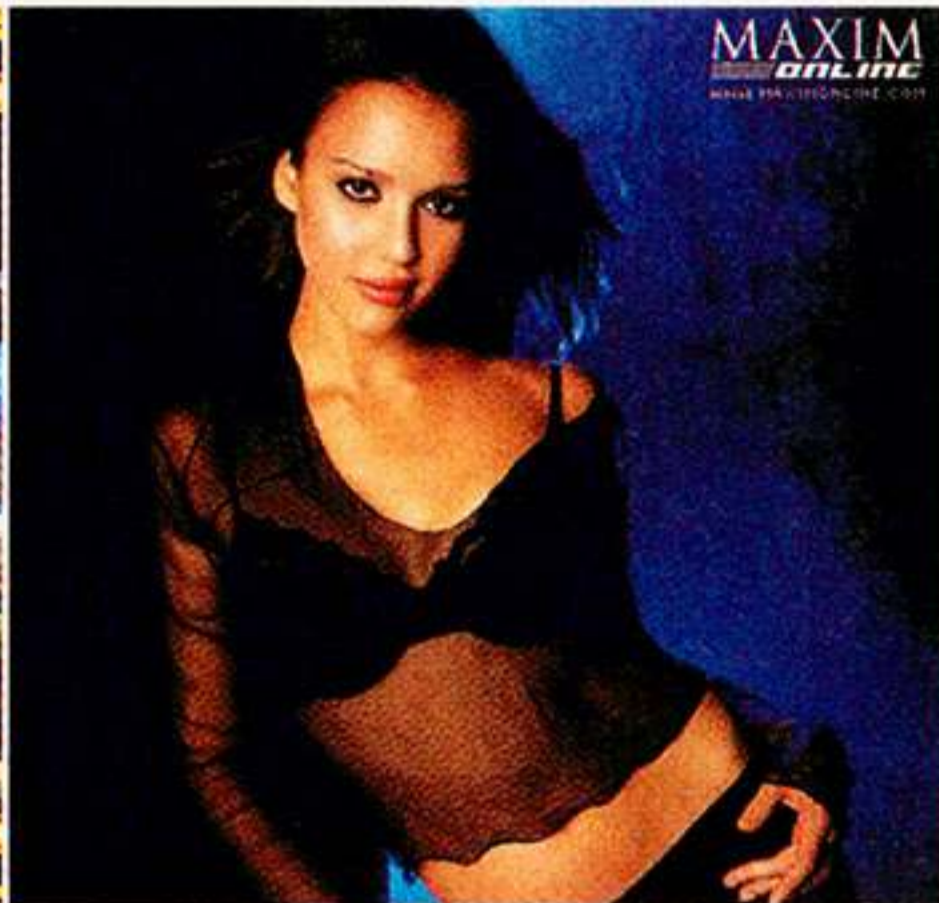
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# Letters

ranting, raving, and a celebrity makeover



■ Hey kids! Can you find five differences between these pictures? (Answers on page 125.)

## Painted Jezebel

The snakeskin-coat chick in *Lowrider's* loading screen is—get this—actress Jessica Alba. Apparently, someone snagged the picture from *Maxim's* October 2000 issue.

—Tom Thompson

As if we didn't have reason enough to fantasize about the Dark Angel.

## Get your learn on

Your info in Instant Expert: Game Schools (EGM #176) is slightly outdated for the University of Southern California. USC currently offers classes in video programming, game design, and 3D animation. As of next semester, USC will be the first major research institute to offer minors in the above disciplines.

—Mario Sanchez

Thanks for correcting our course catalog, Mario. Speaking of our popular Instant Expert section, we've run dry on topics and are opening the floor for suggestions. Have a game-related subject you'd like to master in 30 seconds, or your pizza's free? Send suggested topics to [EGM@ziffdavis.com](mailto:EGM@ziffdavis.com) with the subject "Instant Expert."

## Broadbandwagon

Gaming online with as few as eight to 16 players requires optimum broadband conditions, and even then, lag is still an issue. You've got to wonder how future games will deliver, what with bigger environments and more combatants. Can tomorrow's hardware surmount today's obstacles? Or will slow-changing standards keep hampering online play?

—Aaron Marshall

## Letter of the month

### Friends that slay together stay together

A year ago, I joined Xbox Live. When I joined my first game most folks laughed at me, but one fellow offered me a spot in his clan. Eager to join the big men on campus, I accepted. Before long, we were playing every day. Eventually, it escalated to the point where I'd get home from school, log on to Xbox Live and play till 10. After that, I'd go into voice chat and do my homework with my friend there to help. We now keep in touch via phone and e-mail, and I've discussed more things with him than I have with my parents or any of my other friends. Just goes to show you, games can be a doorway to everlasting friendship.

—Psycho Bob

Now that there's one charming story (assuming your special friend isn't a self-styled Peter Pan with a fridge full of "Jesus juice"). For showing the rest of us the plusses of playing nice—and because we don't have an official online peacemaker award to honor you with—you win our Letter of the Month prize!



Psycho Bob, come on down! As our Letter of the Month writer, you've scored a game from EGM's secret stash. We'll send you a li'l Xbox something to play with your pal.

We know what you mean. PC gamers regularly battle up to 60 players on the same broadband connection that barely supports a dozen in most online console games. Why the disparity? "Unlike their PC counterparts, dedicated Xbox Live servers, for example, are actual Xboxes—a smaller and less powerful hardware platform," says Ubi.com General Manager Jason Rubenstein. "Plus, PC servers can support more stable operating systems

like Linux. Another part of the problem is the quality of a game's coding. Some games are better coded, and at the end of the day, a game can only support what its code allows. But keep in mind that for some games, eight to 16 is an optimal player count in terms of both design and performance."

The future looks bright, however, and things should shape up as tomorrow's console networks begin to support standard PC configurations.

## POST OFFICE

Board as hell



■ EA vs. Marvel, courtesy of Neato\_Jinkins.

Chew the fat with other gaming curmudgeons at [egmmag.com](http://egmmag.com).

### EA vs. EGM readers

When word spread about EA's plans to pit its own characters against Marvel

Comics' in a forthcoming fighting game, the following conversation broke out: NotoriousNeo: "Which of its own characters can EA use?" Dragon\_Master: "There's that guy in *Medal of Honor*." PornToKill: "EA's making its own superheros to use in other games." Ziffstation1: "What? Like Port-Man, Dr. Sequel, and Movie-License Wonder?"

### Tomorrow comes too soon

With talk of a new generation of hardware on the horizon, we can't help but wonder if we're really ready for it. When it comes to five-year system cycles, Ragnarok\_32 is a skeptic: "Why don't developers do something new with what we have rather than settle for putting the same dirt in different piles (i.e., same game, new system)?" "But today's PC games are starting to make the current console crop look like complete s\*\*\*," counters EMANLIVE.

Clearly in the same camp, zeoavenger is "tired of hearing developers say they had to leave cool features out of games because of hardware limitations. Give 'em the tools they need."

### Final fracas

Another year, another *Final Fantasy* (or two). When we asked whether or not you still have faith in Square Enix's ability to keep the franchise fresh, Neato\_Jinkins was quick to sound off: "I'm tired of pastel colors, blobby foes, and pretty boys." "At least," replies the similarly sarcastic Xenoxenus182, "they've made the main character a girl."

Is it any surprise that someone named Tifa would stand up for the series? "I love how the series keeps evolving. For a group of people who always complain about developers sticking to the same old, gamers sure know how to throw a fit when someone toys with their favorite franchise."

## CONTACT EGM

E-mail us at [EGM@ziffdavis.com](mailto:EGM@ziffdavis.com). As long as your subject line doesn't promise to solve our debt with a dose of misspelled OxyContin, we'll read it! Or write to:

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### Suit yourself

I usually don't talk about works in progress, but this time unfairness hit me upside the head. Here's the deal: I've been posting pics of the Master Chief armor and weapons I've been building at [www.halo.bungie.org](http://www.halo.bungie.org), trying to get the developer's attention. Never got an answer, let alone a render to use for reference. Months later, Bungie officially recognizes another group of guys working on a similar project...as if mine never existed! Anyway, I'd like to share my work with you guys (and gal). Let me know what you think of it so far.



—Chris Bryan

You've got yourself one dignified cosplay getup, Chris, but promise us you won't take that gun outside. We wouldn't want to see you on *Cops*.

### Magic numbers

Most RPGs (cough, *Final Fantasy*, cough) have damage and health caps of 9,999 or something of the sort. Why the odd number instead of a nice and round 10,000? Is it easier to program four digits instead of five, or can we chalk it up to Japanese eccentricity?

—Alex Cutler

Why the famously weird 255 rupee limit in *The Legend of Zelda*? Why a max score of 999,950 in *Super Mario Bros.*? And for that matter, why is water wet?

### One life to live

Finally, with *Splinter Cell Pandora Tomorrow*, someone is tapping into the enormous potential of multiplayer espionage. My only problem is that players can respawn after making some radical, dumb mistake that should cost them what they deliberately

jeopardized in the first place: their lives. Respawns ruin a game's credibility with us gamers who actually want to be penalized for our reckless stupidity. So what if casual gamers cry foul when they aren't magically resurrected after some thoughtless endeavor to seize victory by blind luck?

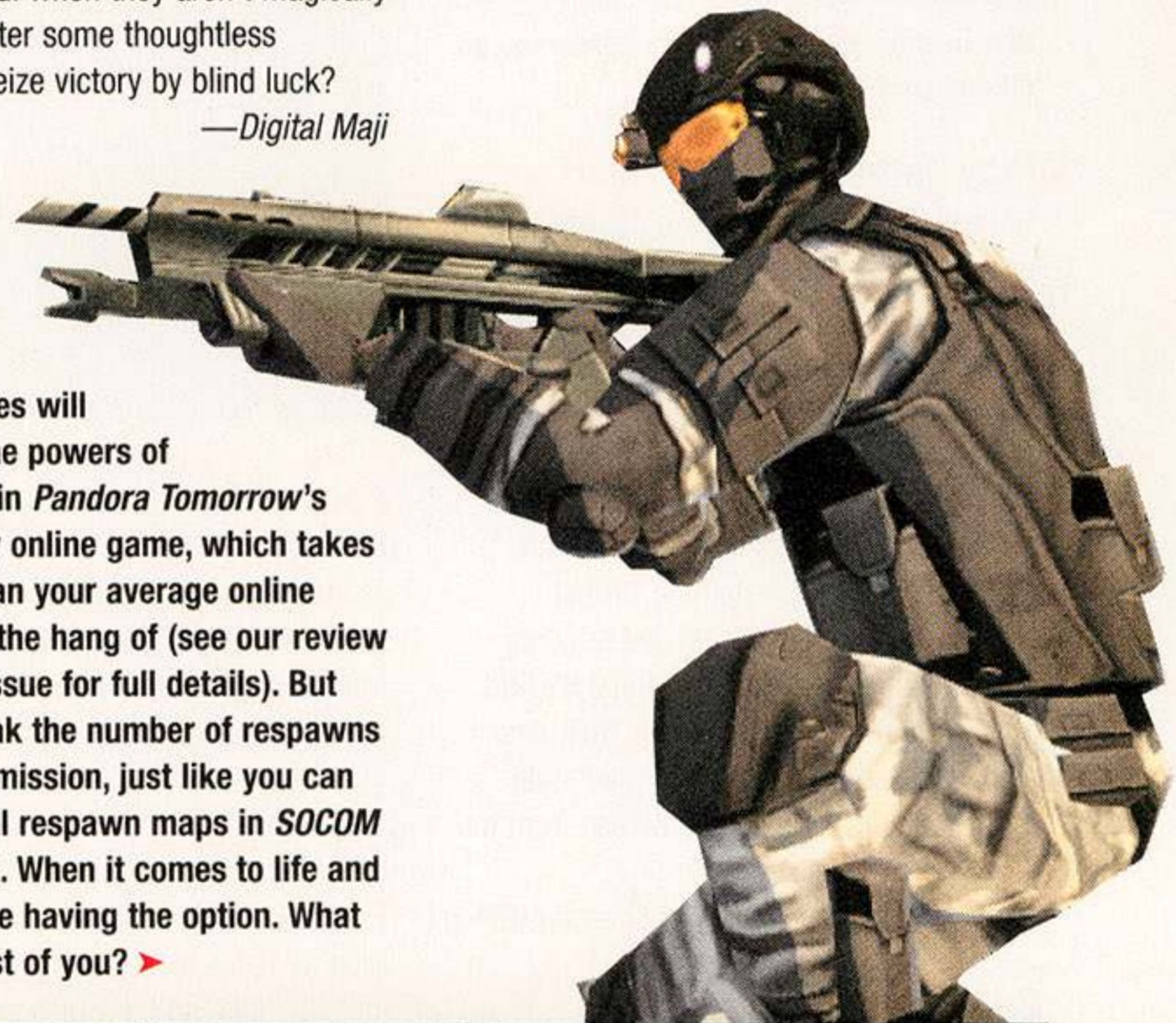
—Digital Maji

Trust us, Digital Maji—even hardcore wannabe spies will appreciate the powers of resurrection in *Pandora Tomorrow's* revolutionary online game, which takes far longer than your average online battle to get the hang of (see our review later in the issue for full details). But you can tweak the number of respawns before each mission, just like you can select special respawn maps in *SOCOM II* for the PS2. When it comes to life and death, we like having the option. What about the rest of you? ▶



### OOPS!

Last month we led you to believe that LucasArts is releasing the same game under two names. Jedi mind-trick? Nope: The Ugnauts at the printer mistakenly slipped shots of *Star Wars Battlefront* in our *Star Wars Republic Commando* (above) coverage.

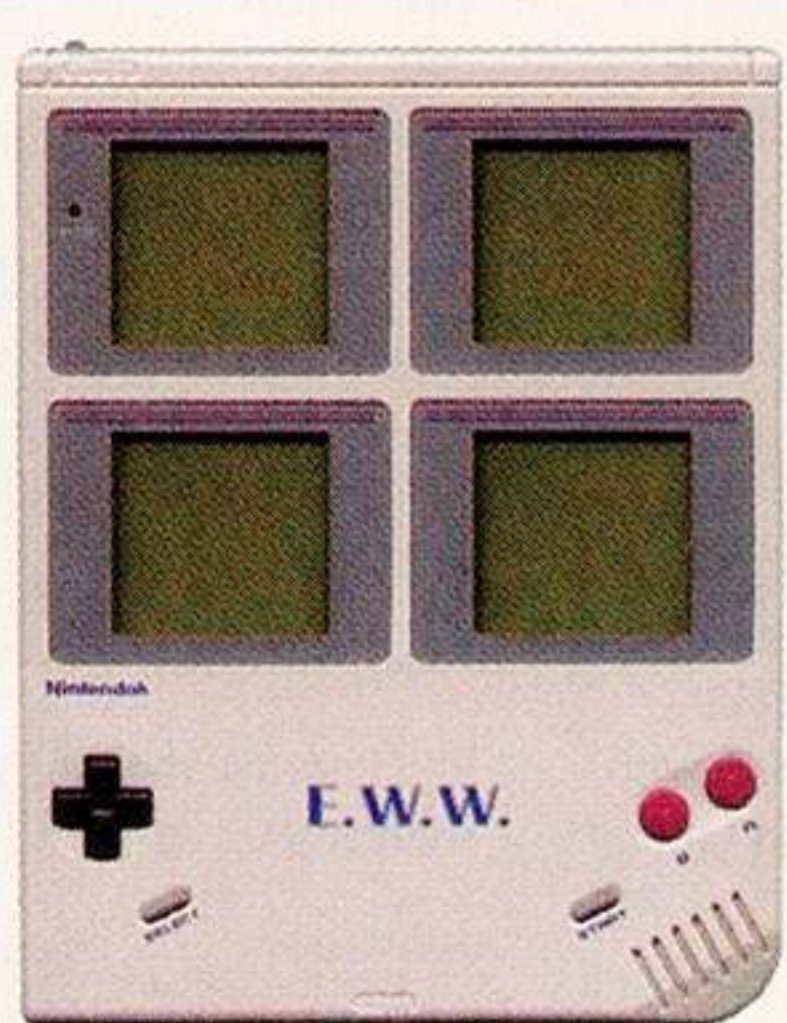


## GAME DESIGN-O-RAMA

Join us in our bizarro world of bad game ideas! Send a description (with art) to [EGM@ziffdavis.com](mailto:EGM@ziffdavis.com), subject: design-o-rama

### EYE WANDER WARE

Introducing an ingenious new idiot tax, the Eye Wander Ware from Nintendo! With its quadruple, 3.5-inch LCD screens and five-minute



battery life, the dictionary-sized Eye Wander Ware will have your eyes wandering and you wondering where the hell to look. Warning: This product is known to cause blindness, severe nausea, drowsiness, boredom, bloating, back pain, and massive IQ loss.

—Zak Knight and Beau Brown



### METAL GEAR SOLID: JANITOR MISSIONS

You made the mess, now it's time to clean up in the all-new, highly anticipated, heart-thumping spin-off that's sure to make you feel downright dirty: *Metal Gear Solid: Janitor Missions*. Revisit all-too-familiar locales and cleanse Alaska's crimson-colored nuke complex with your trusty mop and Spice Girls soundtrack. (Don't forget that ketchup stain you left in the cell block!)

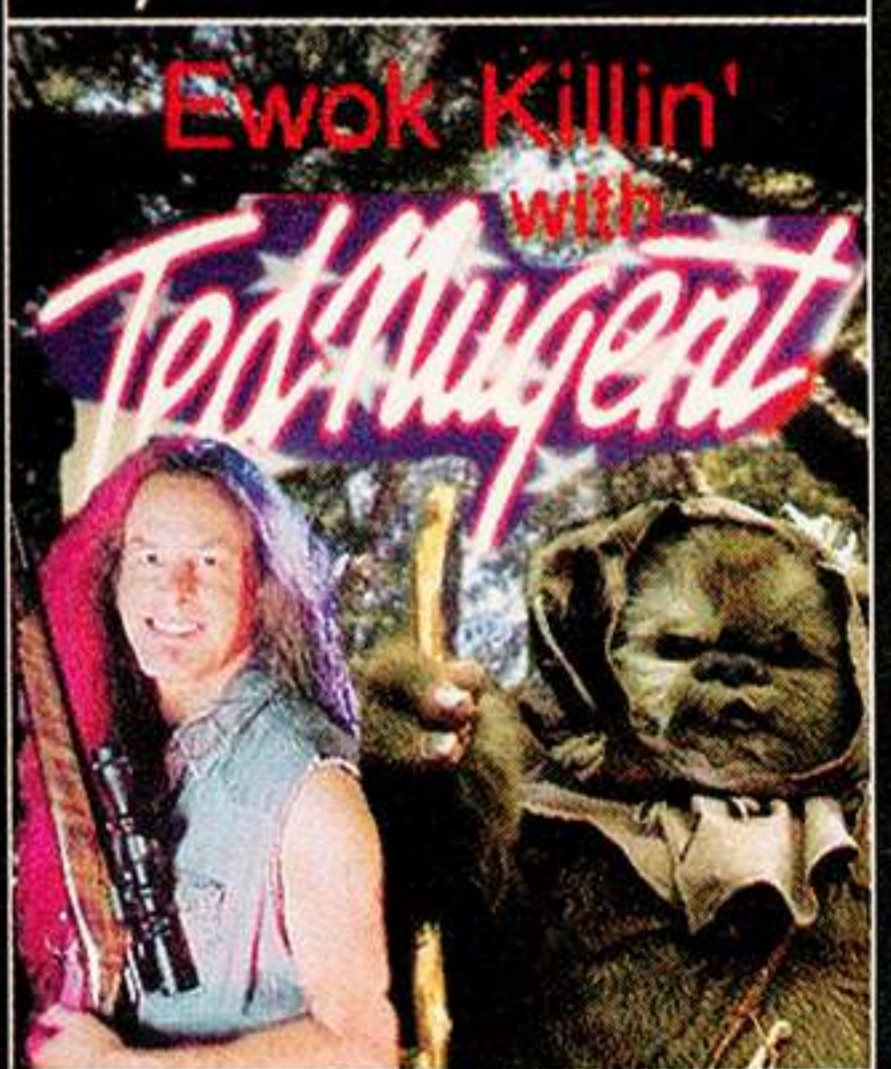
—Tony Georges

### EWOK KILLIN' WITH TED NUGENT

Welcome to hell, soldier! This fast-paced hunting sim drafts you to help the Nuge exterminate Endor's teddies. Tap into an arsenal that includes chain saws, shotguns, assault rifles, and the odd rocket-propelled grenade, or take it online with Xbox Live and coordinate napalm attacks on the sickeningly cuddly, C-3PO-worshipping heathens. Which side are *you* on in the war against fuzzy?

—John Sorensen

PlayStation.2





Remember to let mom know before you go off and get hitched online.

Play games with my heart

You asked for more stories of games that ended at the altar—well, here ya go...

Him: a purple "Fonewm" who's more than happy to heal fellow *Phantasy Star Online* Hunters (call him Wicked)

Her: a petite "Hunewearl" interested in light roleplaying (aka Angel)

After a long courtship and before an audience of 20 or so Hunters, virtual consorts Wicked and Angel tied the knot online. Then, after accumulating a \$2,500 phone bill in the here and now, their alter egos followed suit and exchanged state-recognized vows. Enjoy the screen from the game ceremony!

—Joshua and Suzanne Wilson

Baby hater

I have but one complaint about your otherwise well-crafted publication: Seanbaby. [Editor's note: See pg. 118.] How can an excellent group of hard-working writers allow each and every issue of their magazine to be tainted by his aimless musings? I empathize with whomever is given the daunting task of editing his copy, because there is no way someone with as limited a vocabulary as Seanbaby knows anything about punctuation. Please, inform him that tacking "ly" endings onto words in no way fools people into thinking that he is in any way eloquent.

—Patrick Coleman

Seanbaby responds: "I don't know why so many of these people think that they were the only ones listening during fourth grade, and feel the need to declare themselves Mayor of Grammar. Don't get me wrong, this kid is at least genius enough to notice I'm an idiot, but check out where he goes, 'tainted by his aimless musings.' That's not what smart people sound like. That's what people sound like when they're thanking their dry cleaners for getting the man marks out of their ballerina costume."



The lap time says it all.

Fool

Knowing it's the April issue, I started scanning the mag, looking for something that seemed like a joke. Bingo: the Nintendo DS with a fake-ass Letter of the Month to go with it. So what do I win?

—Russ Evans

The boot.

Fool part 2

Nice try fellas but I found your April Fools' joke: the fake ad for a Disney movie called *Going to the Mat* co-starring Wayne Brady. Now, c'mon. Wayne Brady? Employed? You can't fool me.

—Danny Provolone

Wrong again. The real joke was....

April foolery

Big ups to the brilliant minds behind the *Lord of the Rings: Mordor GP* mock-up. Never before has an *EGM* article made me laugh so hard, especially after fighting with my girlfriend all weekend. Every time I looked at it, I noticed something new (and hilarious). Fireworks in the backseat = pure genius.

—Stephen

April foolery part 2

April Fools' jokes work best when they give gamers false hope (I still have a friend trying to unlock the nude code in *Dead or Alive: Xtreme Beach Volleyball*). But who'd even want a poorly made kart racer thrown together in a rush to capitalize on a new system and the recent success of a license, what when racing karts in the Shire is as appropriate as pasties at the Super Bowl? At least Seanbaby won't have to play it.

—J. Nessus

April foolery part 3

I was patrolling the Web for more *Lord of the Rings: Mordor GP* info when I found out that that by beating the Mount Doom course in less than two minutes, you'll unlock the Gandalf nude code! I bet Grima's men will never forget the wizard's "staff" again.

—Ben Angstadt

across what was one of the mag's best segments. Where'd Letter Art go?

—Frank John

Well, Frank, when grannies across the country wrote us complaining about their bare refrigerator doors we really had no choice but to take it out.

"Grima's men will never forget the wizard's 'staff' again"

—Ben Angstadt

Pixel pushovers

Who cares if today's games are visually sexy when I can solve most of 'em in a few sessions? What ever happened to serious commitment and stiff challenges?

—Thomas George

We assure you there are plenty of potential long-term relationships out there for steadfast dudes like yourself—look up the girls of *Final Fantasy X-2* (PS2) or try your luck with *Viewtiful Joe* (GameCube) if that kind of action's your bag.

Still, several industry types insist that today's games actually demand too much of your time. According to Xbox cocreator Seamus Blackley, "Most gamers cite lack of time second only to social pressure as their reason for leaving gaming. Yet we make games that require 10, 20, 30, or more hours for the gamer to fully enjoy."

Do it for the children

I was rereading an older issue when I came

Hat trick

Hats off to the parents who named their children after videogame characters (*EGM* #175). I named my oldest Terry Joseph, after *Fatal Fury*'s Terry Bogard and Joe Higashi. Was anyone cooler than those guys? I still wear a cap, gloves, and jacket, and my friends know I'm taunting when I tip my hat at them.

—Avery Tingle

And here we thought you were trying to seduce us....



In a few years, expect to see support groups for kids named after game characters.

A full-page photograph of Tracy McGrady in a blue Orlando Magic jersey with the number 1. He is holding a basketball in his right hand and has a white milk mustache on his upper lip. He is wearing a white wristband on his left arm and white sneakers with blue accents. The background is a dark, textured grey.

Great for dunking.

My friends told me, "T-Mac, you're gonna be big some day." Must've been the milk. About 15% of your height is added as a teen and the calcium and vitamin D can help. Will drinking a cool glass of milk make you the hottest scorer in town? Hey, it couldn't hurt.

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# QUEER EYE FOR THE UNDEAD GUY

## Survival-horror gets a full makeover for Resident Evil 4

**G**rab the eagle key. Sigh. Stick the square-shaped crank into the square-shaped hole. Yawn. Use the blue key card. What, another crate-pushing puzzle?

Sure, we've loved each new zombie-filled *Resident Evil* adventure (not including the *Survivor* light-gun games of course—let us never speak of them again). But even fans would agree the series hasn't changed much

over the past eight years, right down to the obligatory self-destruct-countdown final boss battle. Hell, even the games' creators will admit it. "Some gamers might say, 'Hey, it's just another in the *Resident Evil* franchise...it's nothing new,'" says Producer Hiroyuki Kobayashi, himself a veteran of the series since *RE2*. "So we asked, 'How do we call the gamers back again?' To do that, we have to change."

And change they have for *Resident Evil 4*, due this fall exclusively on GameCube. Just take a look at these screens and a couple big differences should be immedi-

ately obvious: fully 3D graphics and a whole new view of the action. The camera has shifted from its usual detached third-person perspective to an over-the-shoulder

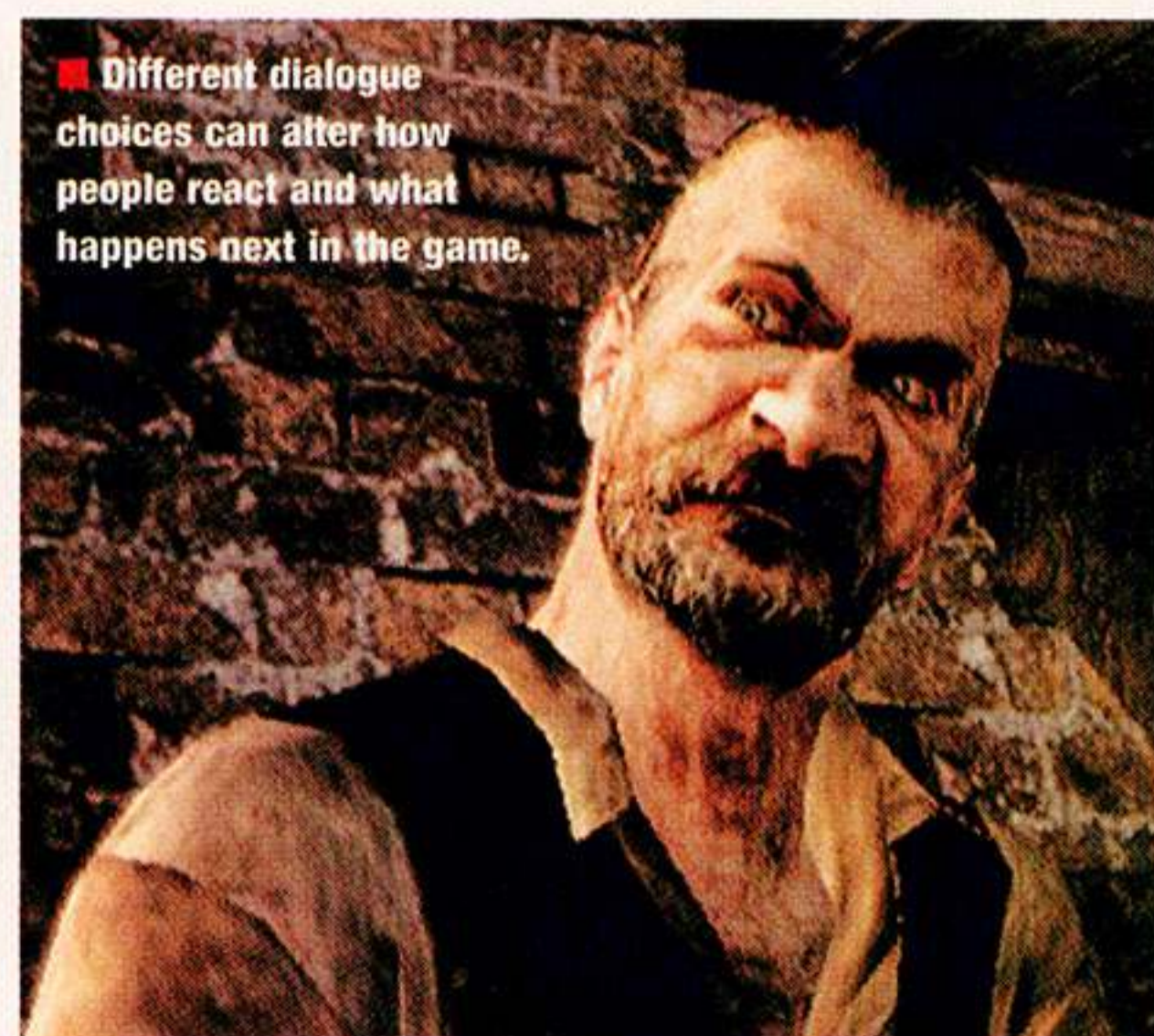
**"Zombies are slow and dumb. But these new enemies are smart."**

—Producer Hiroyuki Kobayashi



### License to Drive

Another first for *RE4*: controllable vehicles. Part of the demo we saw showed Leon zooming around on a fishing boat, fighting a giant sea creature with a harpoon. Later, he was knocked into the water, demonstrating his new swimming ability. Apparently, the boat isn't the only thing you can drive, either. "Yes, there will be other vehicles," says Producer Kobayashi, "but I'm not tellin' you what they are yet!"



■ Different dialogue choices can alter how people react and what happens next in the game.

>> MICROSOFT WILL LAUNCH THE FIRST FEATURES FROM ITS NEWEST XBOX LIVE UPDATE (CODE-NAMED TSUNAMI) IN LATE MARCH. AMONG THE PLANNED FEATURES ARE CLOSER





**The Story**  
 It's been six years since Leon S. Kennedy, the rookie cop from *RE2*, escaped the zombie-virus outbreak in Raccoon City. Now a secret agent for the U.S. government, Leon is assigned to rescue the president's kidnapped daughter from a shadowy organization (Umbrella?) holding her for ransom. Following a tip that she is being held somewhere in Europe, Leon heads to the village you see in these pics, where the local townsfolk are acting rather oddly....




● Watch out for traps—you can shoot the dynamite strapped to these trees or bear traps (right) to set them off without getting hurt.



or first-person view, your choice. Either allows precision aiming (especially with a laser-sight-equipped pistol), which in turn opens up a whole new field of gunplay gameplay. "If you shoot an enemy in the head, it'll stun him," says Kobayashi. "Shoot him in his knee once and he'll bend over and hold it; shoot his knee again and he'll fall. Enemies will carry axes and other weapons—you can shoot their hands to make them drop

their weapons." Wait a sec—zombies carrying weapons? That's another big change for *RE4*: no zombies. "Zombies are slow and a bit dumb," says Kobayashi. "You can't expect much from a zombie. But these new enemies are smart. They can use weapons, plan strategies to surround [you], and move a lot more quickly." So exactly who or what are these new enemies? Possessed people? Homicidal

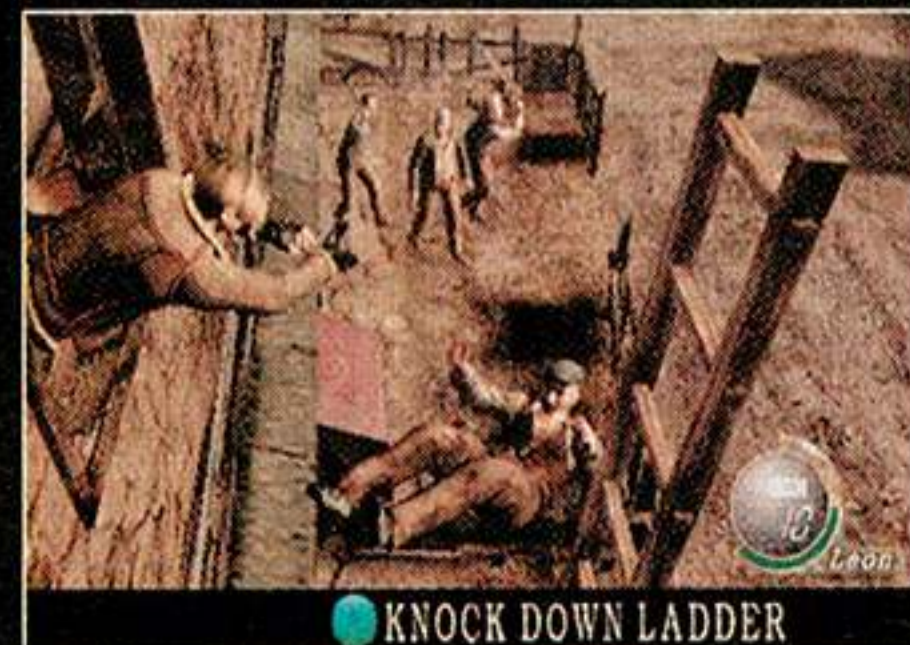
lunatics? We don't know, and Capcom isn't saying, but whatever they are, it's clear they're smarter than our old flesh-eating adversaries. In the short demo we played, these angry villagers dodged attacks, threw sickles, brandished chain saws—even set up ladders to climb into a house Leon (*RE4*'s main playable character) had barricaded himself in. At one point, as Leon sat in a tower picking them off, the new bad guys bombarded him

with Molotov cocktails. Other alterations and additions—controllable vehicles, booby traps, a context-sensitive action button—round out this rethinking of *RE*. Could all these changes possibly mean that, for the first time ever, a *Resident Evil* game won't end with a self-destruct-countdown boss battle? Kobayashi smiles, "Of course I cannot tell you the ending of the game."  —Mark MacDonald

**a is for action**

The A button can perform all sorts of different actions in *RE4*. Not pictured is Leon's melee attack: If he stuns a nearby enemy (say by shooting him in the head), you can tap A to whip around with a full Jean Claude-style roundhouse kick to knock your

foe over. Another sequence uses A to free a dog captured in a bear trap. It's not clear yet what purpose your canine compadre serves, but we did notice another button makes Leon whistle....





# MORTAL DECEPTION

## A look at the new face of **Kombat**

**T**he virtual blood will flow this fall—that's when Midway's notoriously hemoglobin-filled fighter *Mortal Kombat* is scheduled to return to Xbox and PS2 (sorry, Cube) in its sixth iteration, *Mortal Kombat: Deception*. The core fighting gameplay won't change much, but expect tons of new, value-added Kontent:



**Konquest Mode** — The single-player game now unfolds as a massive adventure game in which you explore towns, talk to characters, solve puzzles, and occasionally stop to decapitate someone in classic *MK* battles.

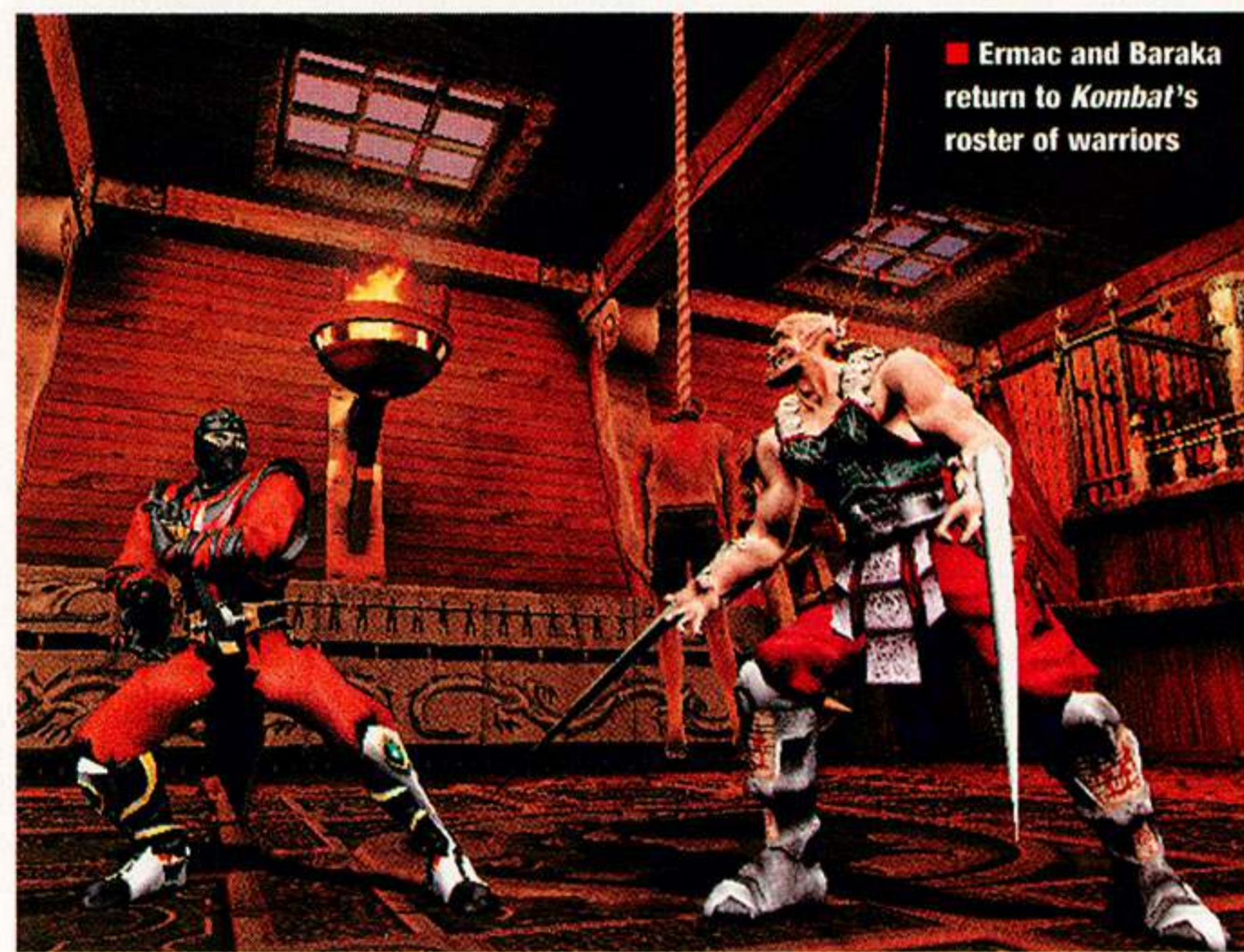
**The gang's all here** — *Deception* will offer a roster of 24 characters, featuring the return of old favorites like Baraka and Ermac. Plus, expect every character that's ever appeared in any *MK* to make a cameo in Konquest mode.

**Destructible environments** — Smash your foe through a wall and continue the fight outside. Some stages will have multiple tiers à la *Dead or Alive 3* (Xbox).

**Online Kombat** — One of the game's major new features is online play via broadband, so you'll always have a fresh selection of opponents.

**Mortal diversions** — Not in the mood to rip someone's spine out? Chill out with bonus modes *Kombat Chess* (an *MK* take on the game) and *Puzzle Kombat*, a blood-soaked dropping-gem mode. These are also playable online.

**More fatal than ever** — In *Deception*, every character will have two unique fatalities (the previous *MK* offered only one per fighter). Also, prepare for some grisly stage-specific murder animations. Just in time for election season....



■ Ermac and Baraka return to *Kombat's* roster of warriors

# GRUDGE MATCH

## A battle so viral you've probably already caught it



### OUTBREAK

### RE: OUTBREAK

*Resident Evil's* ubiquitous T-Virus is one bad mofo. But infected flick *Outbreak* showed us what a seemingly incurable African-monkey virus can do. Which strain packs the real pain? Read on and maybe we'll share the antidote....

#### THOSE RESPONSIBLE



One monkey, several humans, and the world's worst centrifuge operator

Multi-billion-dollar small-town corporation  
**Advantage:** RE: *Outbreak*



#### UGLIER SYMPTOMS



Fever, bleeding from the eyes, bad acting  
**Advantage:** *Outbreak*

Moaning, meandering, eating friends



#### BETTER CONTAINMENT



Establish Army-patrolled perimeter that's semipermeable by hayseeds in pickups

Just blow the damn place up and move on  
**Advantage:** RE: *Outbreak*



#### BADDER-ASSED BUG



Penis-shaped viral strain will liquefy your pancreas in a day  
**Advantage:** *Outbreak*

T-Virus replaces hectic work-a-day life with low-stress bloodlust



#### MORE EFFECTIVE ANTIDOTE



Monkey serum

Point-blank shotgun blast  
**Advantage:** RE: *Outbreak*



#### WINNER: RESIDENT EVIL: OUTBREAK

*Outbreak* offers plenty of comical medical impossibilities and low-caliber acting from its high-profile cast. But we didn't see any Lickers, Tyrants, or ginormous spiders created by its Motaba virus, so what's the big deal?

# TIDBITS ARE A SIGN OF THINGS TO COME



■ Early PSP mock-up

### Sony Delays PSP

Citing the need for time to complete more titles to support the system's launch, Sony says it will delay the release of its PlayStation Portable (PSP) in the U.S. and Europe to early 2005, before the end of its fiscal year in March. The unit will still go on sale in Japan before the end of calendar year '04.



### New GTA Coming This Fall

It's been rumored for months but now it's official: Rockstar will release *Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas* exclusively for PS2 on October 19. As with *Vice City* before it, Rockstar is mum on details. All they'll offer is a promise that *San Andreas* will again push the limits of open-ended gameplay and production values.



■ The roster of allies and enemies includes Oddjob, Xena Onatopp, Dr. No (left), and Rush Limbaugh dead ringer Goldfinger (below).



# GOLDENEYE OPENER

Smooth criminals—not Bond, James Bond—rule the world in shaken sequel **GoldenEye 2**

**I**f the name *GoldenEye* merely brings to mind the mediocre 1995 Jimmy Bond flick, then you're either a gaming neophyte or a victim of severe head trauma. Maybe both. After all, *GoldenEye 007* was *only* the best first-person shooter ever on a console when it hit Nintendo 64 back in 1997. And now that Electronic Arts owns the rights to all things Bond and is looking to expand the martini-chugging spy's universe beyond the films (hence the recent, non-flick-based *James Bond 007: Everything or Nothing*), it's working on a sequel to the Nintendo classic.

Er, sort of. Although this new first-person shooter—due for PlayStation 2, Xbox, and GameCube around Christmas 2004—is called *GoldenEye 2*, it's really more of a spiritual successor than a

direct follow-up. "We've made it a priority to build on the legendary mix of great shootouts, engaging A.I., and must-play multiplayer that fans of the franchise hold sacred," says Executive Producer Dave Davis, "while...delivering a fresh story line that was created from the get-go to play off those core features."

And this MGM-approved story line doesn't actually involve James Bond—or much of him. Instead, *GoldenEye 2* dives into the clandestine underworld of the Bond universe. You play as an aspiring double-0 agent turned evil who's recruited by classic villain Auric Goldfinger and implanted with an upgradeable golden eyeball. The peeper lets you customize your bad-guy persona as you battle the minions of Goldfinger's nemesis, Dr. No.

"This is the rock-star life that most bad guys can only dream about," says Davis. "On a typical ride to work, you'll ascend from the legendary volcano lair from the film *You Only Live Twice* in a \$20 million helicopter piloted by none other than Pussy Galore. How cool is that?"

None of the developers of the original *GoldenEye 007* is involved in *GoldenEye 2*'s design, so gamers will likely be skeptical that EA is just capitalizing on the *GoldenEye* name. To that, Davis says, "We've assembled an all-star group to pull it off, including some of the best first-person-shooter talent in the industry. When you're making a game called *GoldenEye 2*, you know you have to deliver the best first-person-shooter experience out there. That's what this team is passionate about."

## What About Multiplayer?

The *GoldenEye 2* team knows that it was the original game's four-player mode (right) that had players bonding over Bond's guns and gadgets for years. They're hoping to recapture that must-play magic in this follow-up by weaving multiplayer modes into every part of the game: its story-based campaign, deathmatch-style simulator trials, and objective-based team war games (only the PS2 version will feature online play). Despite our threats of laser beams to their groins, the team's not ready to talk about how all of this will work, except to say that "multiplayer is a significant part of the *GoldenEye 2* package," according to Executive Producer Dave Davis.

■ *GoldenEye 007* (Nintendo 64)



## DESERT ISLAND GAMES: KORN'S JONATHAN DAVIS



Each month, we abduct a celebrity or game designer and force him/her to answer the big question: If you were stuck on a deserted island, which three console games would you want to wash ashore? This month, we strand Jonathan Davis, Korn's lead screamer and a self-proclaimed vid-game junkie.

—Marc Saltzman



### The Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker (GC)

"The possibilities of the game are endless. There's so much to do, and it's entertaining the whole time."



### Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six 3 (XB)

"I'd have to bring this game because it's the best shooter I've ever played."



### Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance (PS2/XB/GC)

"Because I like that medieval *Dungeons & Dragons* kind of s\*\*\*...and all the chicks have big ole t\*\*s!"

# JAK AND RATCHET RETURN

## Two screenshots of each, no info, no problem

**S**ony's got new installments of its biggest PS2 platform franchises scheduled to hit

stores this fall (and yep, that'll be just one year after *Jak II* and *Ratchet & Clank: Going Commando* came out).

The company is mum on details right now, but at least we have two screenshots of each to show you and can

examine for some preliminary information. Here's a quick look, but stay tuned for more. —Chris Johnston

■ Hopping and bopping are officially passé: The weapons-based gameplay from *Jak II* returns in *Jak III*.



### JAK III

#### Shave and a haircut

Notice that Jak's goatee and long, flowing mane are gone in the screen to the left. In fact, he looks an awful lot like he did in the very first *Jak & Daxter*. Is it time travel or was Jak just tired of the grunge look?

#### Read him his rights

Below, we find Jak cuffed and escorted by some mean-lookin' guards. Pure speculation here, but prison rape would really up the game's "dark and edgy" quotient.



### RATCHET & CLANK III

#### New adventure, new suit

We may not know much about Ratchet and Clank's third adventure, but we do know this: Ratchet's got a stylish new spacesuit. Yep, that's all we've got.

#### Guns, guns, guns, etc.

It's good to see that Ratchet has not given up his ever-growing arsenal of ass-kicking weaponry in favor of stomping on his enemy's heads. This new weapon here looks like it's got some kick to it.

■ It's going to be tough to top the previous *R&C* games. Our suggestion? Killable Ewoks.





**Buckle up. Danger just called 'shotgun.'**



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game studios



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CHALLENGE



**it's good to play together**

[xbox.com/rallispport2](http://xbox.com/rallispport2)

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# EGM INTERNATIONAL

Lose that gut with help from these imports



## SAY YOU WANT A REVOLUTION

Forget that Atkins nonsense —join the **Aerobics Revolution**. Believe it or not, *Metal Gear* and *Castlevania* publisher Konami also owns of a chain of fitness studios in Japan. As such, its devotion to “exer-tainment” borders on the obsessive. Witness last year’s *Aerobics Revolution*, a Japanese PS2 release that uses *Dance Dance Revolution*’s dance pad to power a very serious exercise regimen. Every three-minute aerobics routine is performed by an onscreen instructor prancing about on her virtual *DDR* pad, and it’s your job to keep up with her by hitting the right buttons on your own mat. Your exercise schedule is saved in a diet diary on your memory card, and while you’re free to cheat and play with a regular controller, that’s not going to do much for your big fat ass now, is it?



## TEST YOUR MIGHT

The **Martial Beat** series is exercise at its most extreme. If *Aerobics Revolution* sounds a little frilly for your tastes, perhaps you’d prefer Konami’s Japan-only *Martial Beat* (PS2), a *man’s* fitness game if there ever was one. Using a special set of sensors you attach to your hands and feet, *Martial Beat* puts you through a series of Tae Bo–style martial arts routines—punches, roundhouse kicks, the whole bit. What makes it all so strange is the visual presentation. Whenever you pull off a successful move sequence, the onscreen instructor (either a cute-as-a-button lady or a scary tattooed dude) throws out fireballs, energy waves, and weird elemental attacks through the magic of computer graphics. Then you can impress your friends with your tiger fist.

## OLD SCHOOL

10 years ago in EGM

### On the Cover: Super Street Fighter II Turbo



If you need proof that fighting games were big 10 years ago, just take a gander at this cover. It’s packed with fighters, including *Virtua Fighter* and *Mortal Kombat II*.



### Game of the Month: Fatal Fury 2

— The Bogard brothers’ Super NES appearance did well enough to pummel a sorry pack of spring games for the GOTM title. (That’s what happens when your competition is Sega’s full-motion-video shooter *Tomcat Alley*.)



### Street Fighter vs. Fighter's History

In early '94 Capcom sued Data East over *Fighter's History*—a game Capcom felt was too similar to its *Street Fighter II* cash cow. The suit was later dismissed and players forgot about *History* by the time the next *Street Fighter* hit arcades.



### Play GB on Your TV

Five years after Game Boy’s release, Nintendo announced the Super Game Boy, a peripheral that made it possible to play Game Boy games on your TV. The device plugged into the Super NES and even gave some black-and-white titles a limited color palette.

## LI'L PREVIEW: TWO FREAKY GAMECUBE SHOOTERS

### SPACE RAIDERS

GC • Mastiff • May 2004 — When grotesque alien insects descend upon a metropolis, it’s up to a ragtag trio of heroes to fend off the otherworldly menace. A spunky biker chick, grizzled war vet, and sporty college kid join forces to shoot bugs with massive bazookas in this offbeat *Independence Day* meets *Starship Troopers* romp from the creators of *Space Invaders* (yes, seriously).



### KILLER 7

GC • Capcom • Fall 2004 — Contract killing just got a lot weirder: *Killer 7* puts you in the role of an ace hit man who manifests seven different personalities (ranging from a psychic assassin to a machine-gun-wielding schoolkid) to do his dirty work: exploring crime scenes and shooting up fools. Scope it for its unique cartoon-noir visuals, but stick around for gritty, ultraviolent gunplay.



**"9 out of 10 - THIS GAME IS A CHAMPION." - PSM**

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**"...offers up the deepest  
dungeon crawling experience in  
the console universe to date."**

**- GameInformer**

**4.5 out of 5 Stars**

**- Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine**

**4.5 out of 5**

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**"..endlessly replayable  
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**PlayStation 2**



# AFTERTHOUGHTS: METAL GEAR SOLID: THE TWIN SNAKES

What's new, what's different, and what's secret in Konami's new Cube remake

**M**aybe you've played the original PS1 stealth-action classic *Metal Gear Solid* and wonder what developer Silicon Knights (*Eternal Darkness*) added for its GameCube remake, *The Twin Snakes*. Or maybe *Snakes* was your first MGS experience and you're curious what secrets you missed. Or maybe you're like us, obsessive freaks who played both games and simply must know anything and everything *Metal Gear*. Whoever you are, our interview with Silicon Knights' president Denis Dyack awaits:

**EGM:** Parts of the game seemed easier in *Twin Snakes*, like the Hind helicopter boss battle and the final fight against *Metal Gear*. Did you intentionally alter the difficulty?

**EGM:** Extreme is pretty damn tough....

**DD:** It's extremely hard! [laughs] It took one of the master game players here, who had been playing the game for months, several days to complete it on Extreme. He played for days, literally 12 hours a day, just to see if it was possible [to beat it] and make sure the game wasn't broken.

**EGM:** Besides the graphics and cut-scenes, *Twin Snakes* seems very faithful to the original. Are there any changes people might not notice?

**DD:** The hallway where you fight Sniper Wolf the first time was tripled in size compared with the original. With the tech we're using now, the sniper scope zooms in so far compared with the first game that you could've finished that fight with a pistol. So we had to extend it significantly. Other small

Psycho Mantis too long in first-person view, Meryl will actually shoot at the screen, and that's a sanity effect from *Eternal Darkness* as well. Also, if you look really closely at my [portrait on the wall on the far right], when it looks like I'm burned, I'm looking very much like a [zombie] from *Eternal Darkness*.

**EGM:** Any other little secrets you can tell us about?

**DD:** Did you notice when you were fighting Vulcan Raven, the screen would actually start to freeze over? There's another secret [for heating up and cooling down] the key cards, where you can do them really quickly, for time racing and stuff, but that's an übersecret. It's pretty tricky and you gotta be looking around really carefully.

**EGM:** Why wasn't the VR training mode from the original included?

**DD:** It was just really a matter of where to put the effort. Was it toward the VR missions or toward more secrets? Right or wrong, we leaned toward more secrets.

**EGM:** Any chance of an add-on disc, like the PS1 game *VR Missions*, coming out later for the Cube?

**DD:** We haven't really talked about that or anything. I assume anything is possible, so I don't want to rule something like that out completely, but there are no immediate plans for it. 🐛

—Mark MacDonald

**“If someone ports *Metal Gear Solid 2* to the Cube, it won't be us.”** —Silicon Knights' president Denis Dyack

**Denis Dyack:** Well, yes. I think in the original game, the difficulty level was really hard at some points, and then it leveled off. When we were balancing it, subconsciously or consciously, we said, “Let's make sure the players have a flow where they can get through the game, and if they really want a challenge, we can give them that on Extreme [difficulty, which you unlock after beating the game].”

additions...when you're fighting the tank, we put a grill on the ground so that you can actually hide.

**EGM:** We noticed some changes during the Psycho Mantis boss fight....

**DD:** Did you notice some of the *Eternal Darkness* insanity effects in there? They're subtle. During the boss fight, the room will start to tilt, just like in *ED*. Or if you look at



■ “Ha ha! You'll never figure out how to get my dog tags!”



### Dis-connected?

What happened to the plans for GBA/GameCube connectivity features in *Twin Snakes*? “We had some really interesting concepts and some co-op mode play ideas,” says Dyack. “For example, you could have a special radar [on] the GBA. You could have some kind of spy camera that you could, say, drop down and monitor a certain area for guards. There are all kinds of things we talked about, but at the end of the day, we just looked at the amount of resources and time it would take, and unfortunately, we just couldn't do it. For the future, in another time, for sure. You know, something like that certainly is possible for a game in the future.”



■ Try different methods to get bosses to drop their dog tags. Liquid here will lose his if you knock him off the top of *Metal Gear*. D'oh!



■ That's Mr. Dyack on the right; watch his portrait closely.



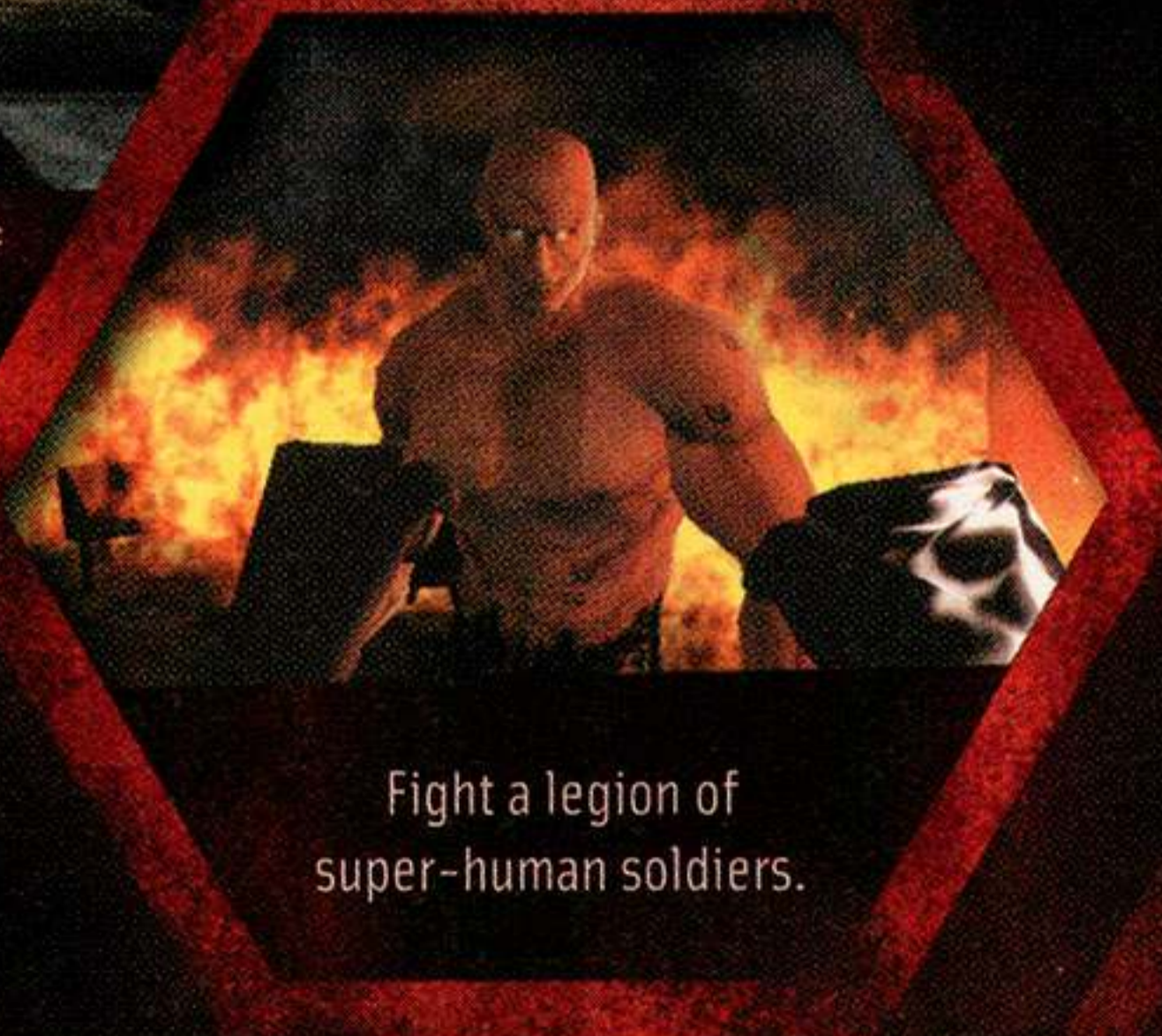
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**MATURE 17+**  
**M**  
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB  
Blood and Gore  
Intense Violence



# OMEGA SUPREME

## Sony Greeks out with God of War

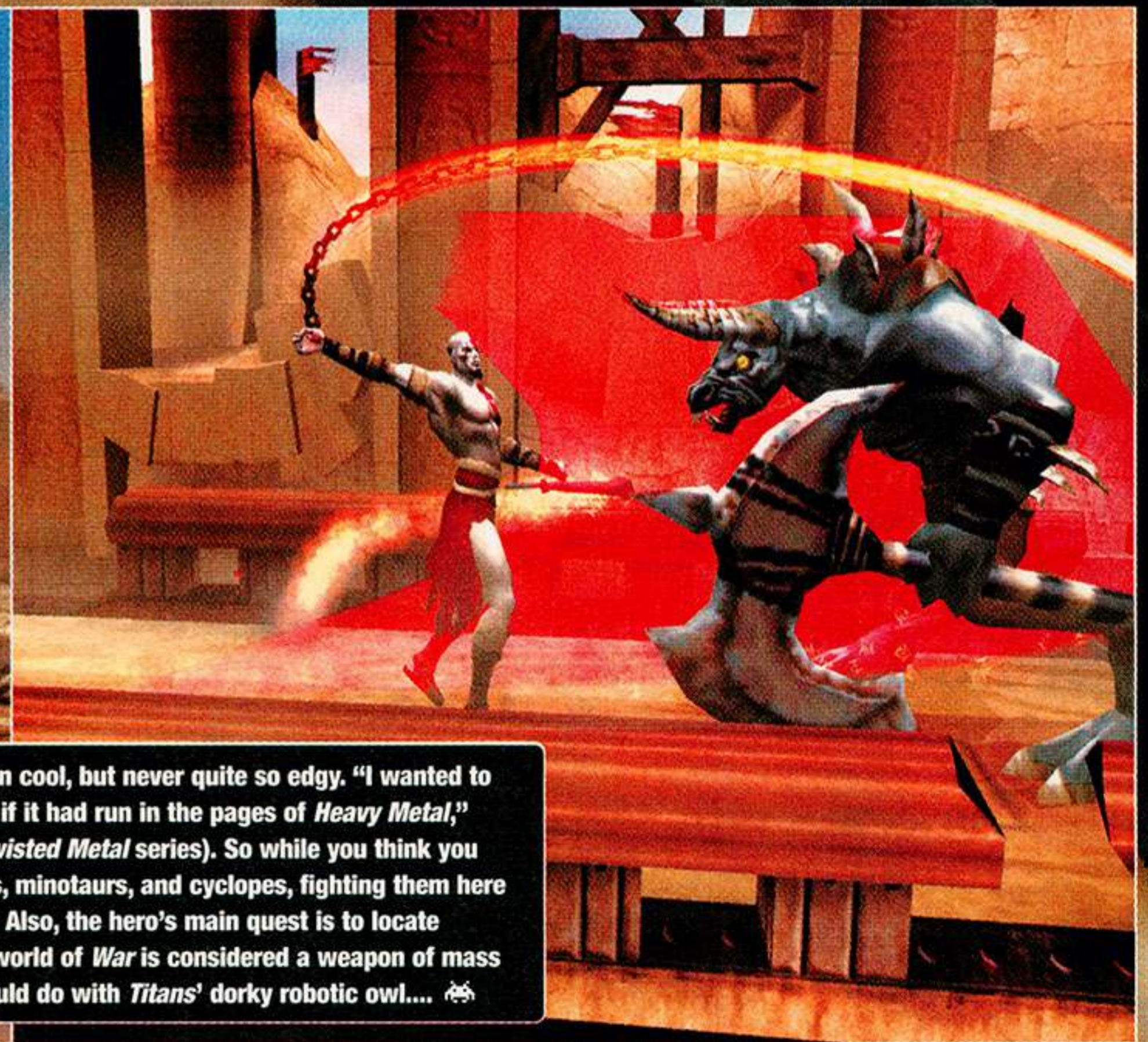
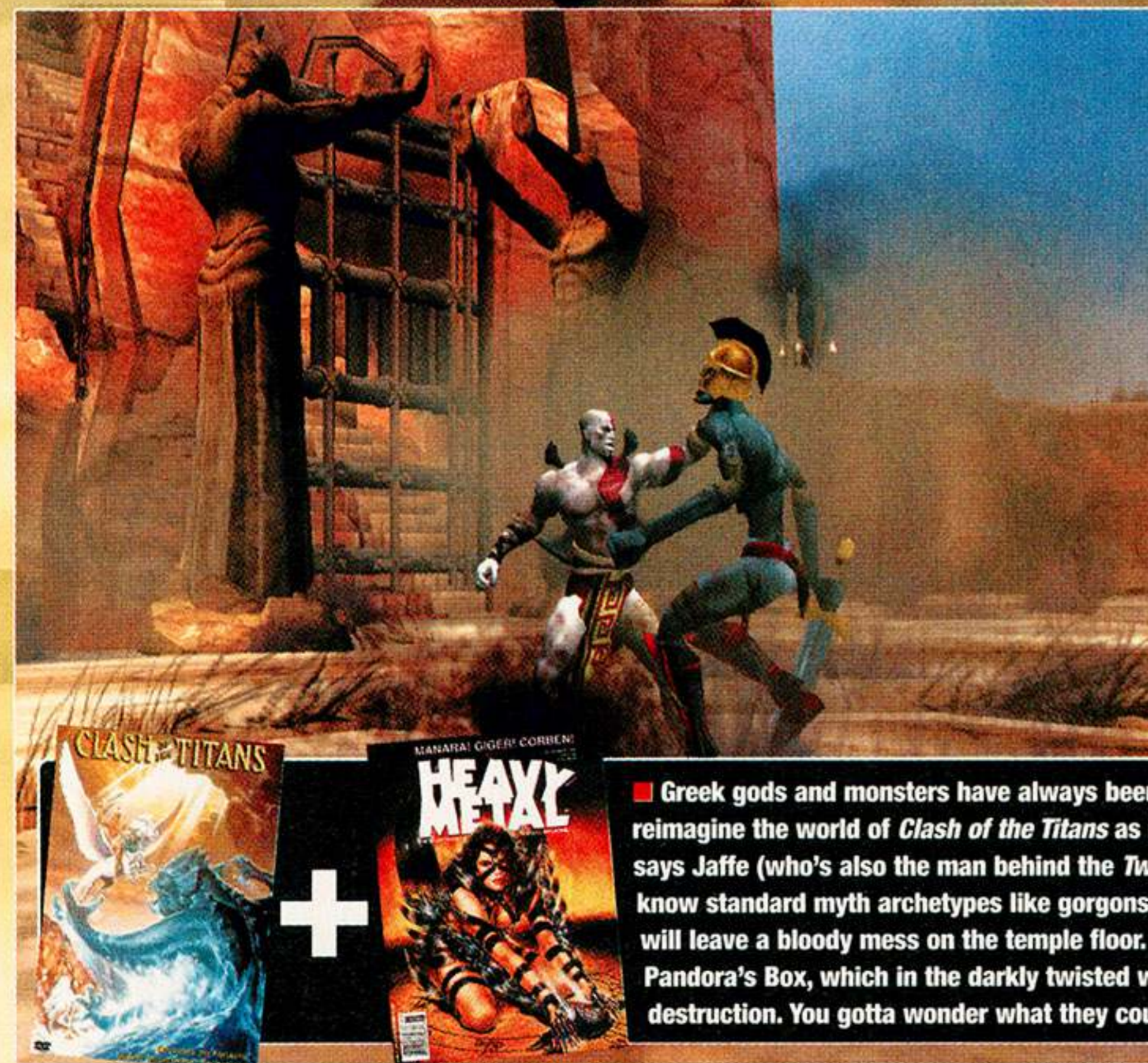
**W**e don't want to alarm you, but disgruntled history and literature professors may be secretly pulling the strings in the gaming industry. In this very issue, you'll read about Capcom's *Shadow of Rome* (pg. 51), a thinly veiled recruitment device for Classics 101, and this, Sony's new *God of War*, a PS2 action-adventure steeped

in a rich tapestry of Greek mythology. No doubt about it, they're clandestinely trying to teach you something. In this case, however, we'll let it slide since the game looks so promising. The game won't hit until 2005, but it's never too early to start studying....

—Shane Bettenhausen



■ *God of War's* gruff Spartan hero wields a unique weapon—twin knives connected by a long chain. It's basically a double-deadly whip, so it's no surprise that combat here closely resembles that of *Castlevania: Lament of Innocence*. You'll deftly mix up light and heavy attacks, tons of brutal combos, and airborne juggles. You'll even employ *Castlevania*-esque sub-weapons. Consider it homage, not thievery—Director David Jaffe cites both the *Castlevania* and *Metroid* series as design inspirations for *God of War*.



■ Greek gods and monsters have always been cool, but never quite so edgy. "I wanted to reimagine the world of *Clash of the Titans* as if it had run in the pages of *Heavy Metal*," says Jaffe (who's also the man behind the *Twisted Metal* series). So while you think you know standard myth archetypes like gorgons, minotaurs, and cyclopes, fighting them here will leave a bloody mess on the temple floor. Also, the hero's main quest is to locate Pandora's Box, which in the darkly twisted world of *War* is considered a weapon of mass destruction. You gotta wonder what they could do with *Titans'* dorky robotic owl....

>> THE CRASH BANDICOOT AND SPYRO THE DRAGON UNIVERSES COLLIDE WHEN THE MASCOTS GUEST-STAR IN EACH OTHER'S NEW GBA ADVENTURES FROM VU GAMES THIS JUNE.... >>

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PlayStation®2



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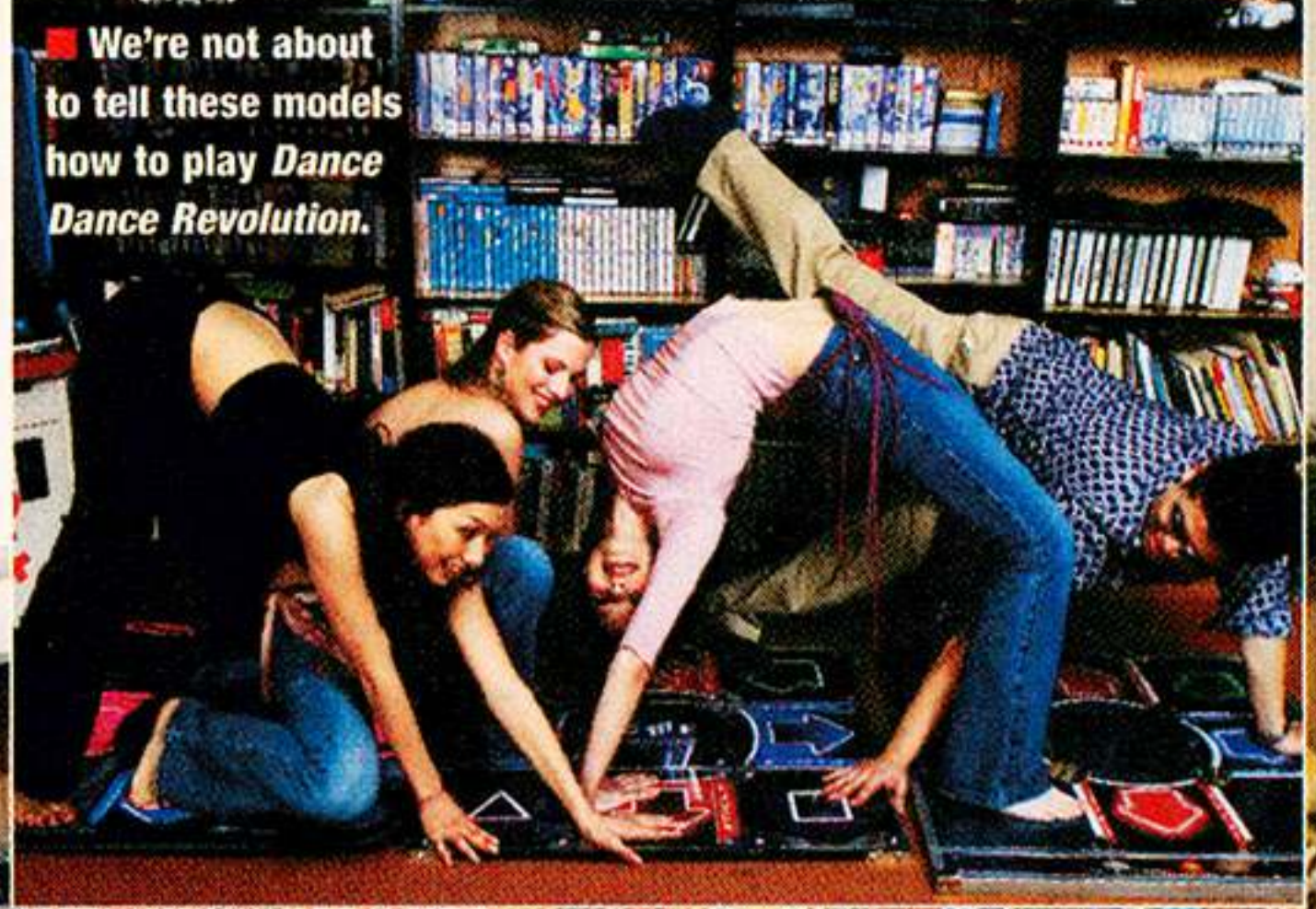
# THE ULTIMATE GAME ROOM

Why settle for milk crates and folding chairs when powering up your gamepad is cheap and easy? Here's what you need...

**Y**ou have every imaginable game system, piles of games, and a monster boob tube. Lucky you. But where do you rest your rear end? Or put all that stuff? And what if a trio of hot models stops by your gaming lair? (Hey, it could hap-

pen—especially if you hire a photographer and work for a magazine.) We consult experts from various furniture manufacturers to put together game-room options—right down to the decor—for every budget.

—Johnny Liu



We're not about to tell these models how to play *Dance Revolution*.



## TV Stands That Deliver

You love your game consoles to the fullest extent of the law. Why not give them a good, organized home right next to your boob tube in one of these slick entertainment centers....

**Level 1: Ikea Magicker TV stand (above)**

**Price: \$139 • [www.ikea.com](http://www.ikea.com)**

Since most readers have access to an Ikea and its unique style of cheap, Swedish furniture, we scoured their stores for this standout stand, which offers no less than nine possible shelves to fill up with every system you've ever owned.

**Power-up: Boltz TV stand (below)**

**Price: \$400 • [www.boltz.com](http://www.boltz.com)**

Boltz's Model TVX1 weighs a ton and is pricier than the Ikea option, but it has clean modern lines and raw steel strength—enough to support megaton 36-inch televisions.



## Have a Seat

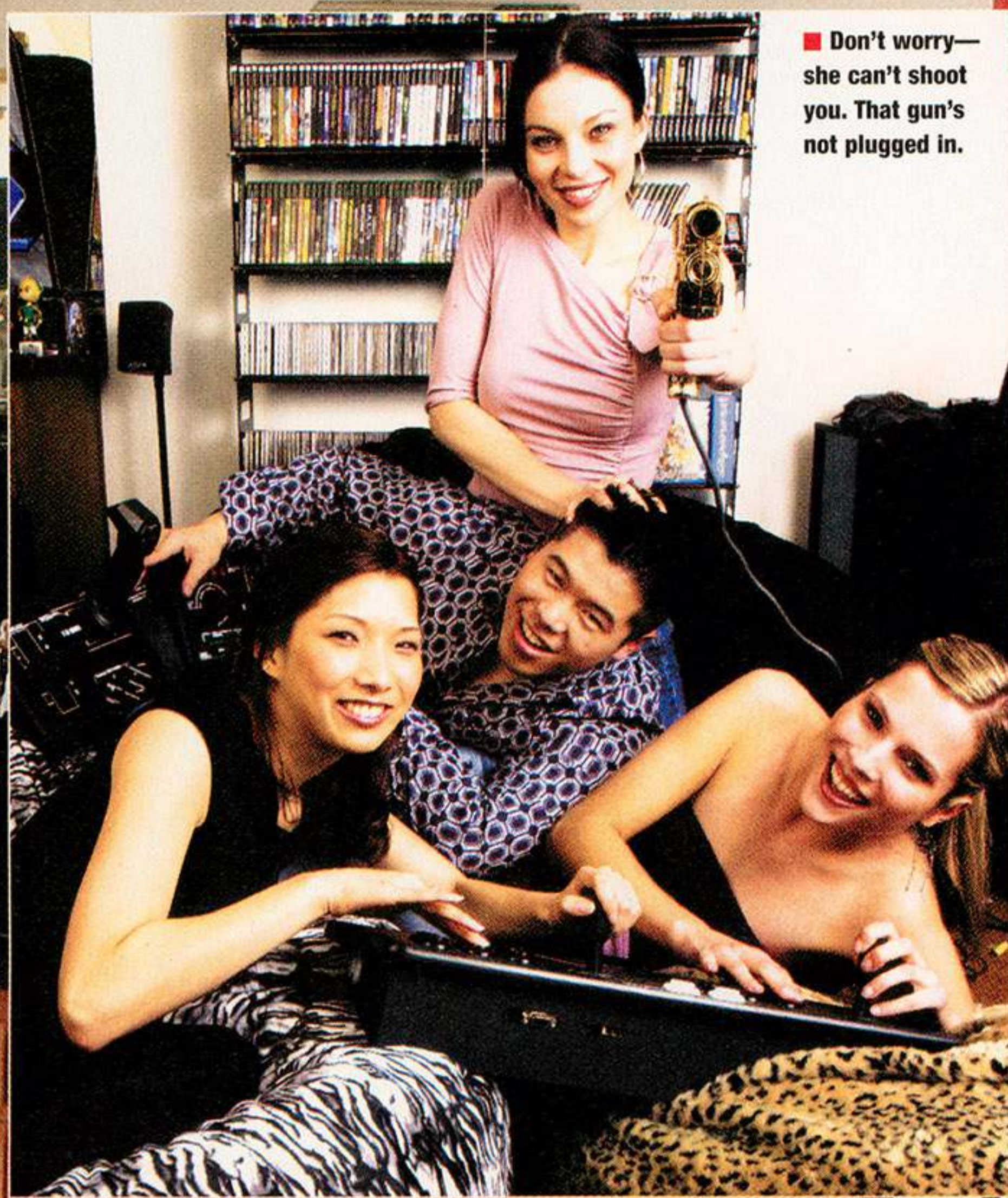
Foam chairs are a new kind of lounge seating—think of them as beanbags 2.0. They're like giant marshmallows that can be rolled out of the way more easily than a couch for those times you need to move in some *Dance Dance Revolution* play session. Here are three seating options you can really sink your ass into....

**Level 1: King Beany**

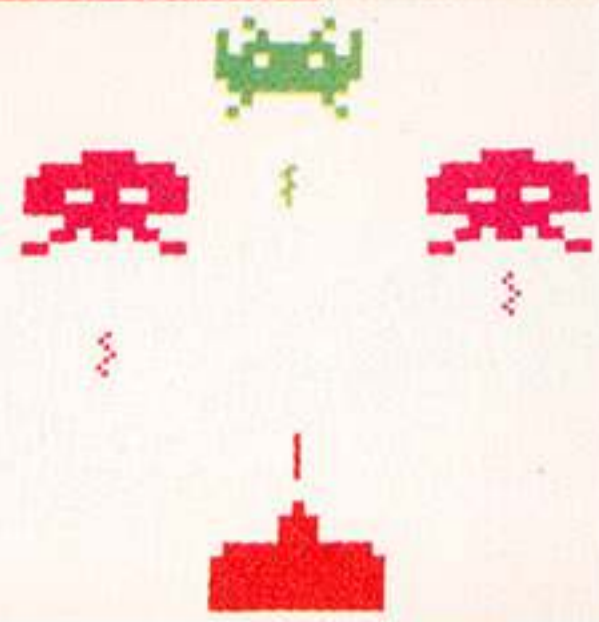
**Price \$148 for zebra-skin model (left) [www.kingbeany.com](http://www.kingbeany.com)**

King Beany offers a lickety-split two to three day turnaround time on all its foam-chair orders. The chairs have a watermelon shape and a comfy pillowy feel. True to its name, King Beany manufactures classic, less-pricey beanbags, too.

>> HERE'S ONE PIECE OF CRUCIAL GEAR FOR YOUR GAME ROOM—ESPECIALLY IF YOU OWN MORE SYSTEMS THAN YOUR TV HAS INPUTS. PELICAN'S \$100 PRO SYSTEM SELECTOR LETS



■ Don't worry—she can't shoot you. That gun's not plugged in.



### Wall Candy

**Blik Invaders • Price: \$45 • [www.whatisblik.com](http://www.whatisblik.com)**  
Sure, you could plaster your room with game posters (and, if you must, use frames and give each poster plenty of wall space), but if you want something more cutting edge, splurge on some Blik wall graphics like these space invaders here. They're easy to apply, plus they're removable if you're afraid of the commitment.

### Keeping It Neat

Who wants to dig under the bed for that rare copy of *Panzer Dragoon Saga* you bought four years ago? Show your stuff off—and have a place to keep your books and DVDs, to boot—with these shelving options....

#### Level 1: Cheapie bookshelves

**Price: \$30 • Available anywhere**

You can buy cheap, simple-to-assemble particle-wood shelving from chains like Wal-Mart and Ikea, then mod it to look more upscale, like our inexpensive woodgrain units over on the far page. Paint the edges a different color or put in some wood edging so that the shelves actually look like they can support some weight. It's also a good idea to put the lighter boxes up on top and secure your 15 years' worth of *EGM* on the bottom shelves.

#### Power-Up: Boltz steel furniture

**Price: \$249 • [www.boltz.com](http://www.boltz.com)**

If you're ready to take the geekiness out of how you hoard your games, then try Boltz's steel shelves, which sport clean lines accented by a strong industrial metal feel. The company's MM 252 floor-standing DVD shelf (shown here on this page) is a great place to start, and it gives you plenty of room to expand your grandiose collection with lower-price add-on shelving options.



#### Power-up: Foof Chair

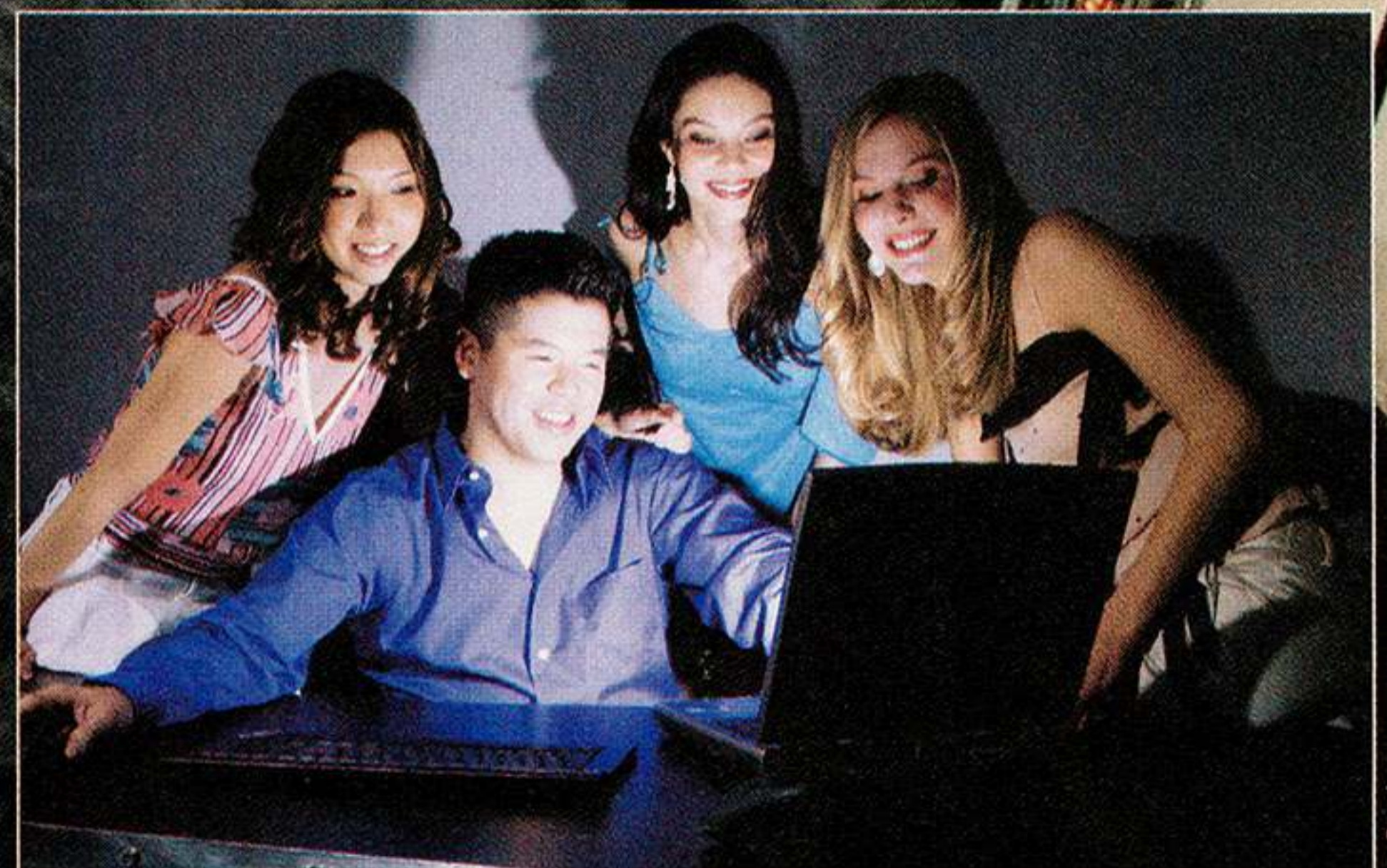
**Price: \$180 for large leopard-skin model (above) • [www.foofchair.com](http://www.foofchair.com)**

Our nimble models declare that the Foof is the springiest of the foam furniture here. You face a turnaround time of two to three weeks if you order from their site. Third-party sites will ship faster.

#### Max power: Love Sac

**Price: \$280 for 3-foot leopard fur Sac (left); \$364 for 5-foot denim model (right) • [www.lovesac.com](http://www.lovesac.com)**

These cushy chairs come in the widest range of sizes and materials—even velvet. Love Sac has outlets all over, so look for a store near you and take a test sit.



### What About Your PC Room?

Check the May issue of sister magazine *Computer Gaming World* for the accompanying article on how to build the Ultimate Computer Game Room. More lounging hotties included. You'll find extended versions of both stories at [gameroom.1UP.com](http://gameroom.1UP.com).

Photographs by Maurice Ramirez

YOU JACK IN UP TO EIGHT CONSOLES VIA EVERY INPUT TYPE (INCLUDING HDTV-COMPATIBLE COMPONENT) KNOWN TO MAN. IT EVEN HAS DIGITAL AUDIO AND BROADBAND INPUTS.... >>

■ Sure, Vin, your game looks good, but that doesn't mean we forgive you for XXX.

# SHOW AND TELL: THE CHRONICLES OF RIDDICK

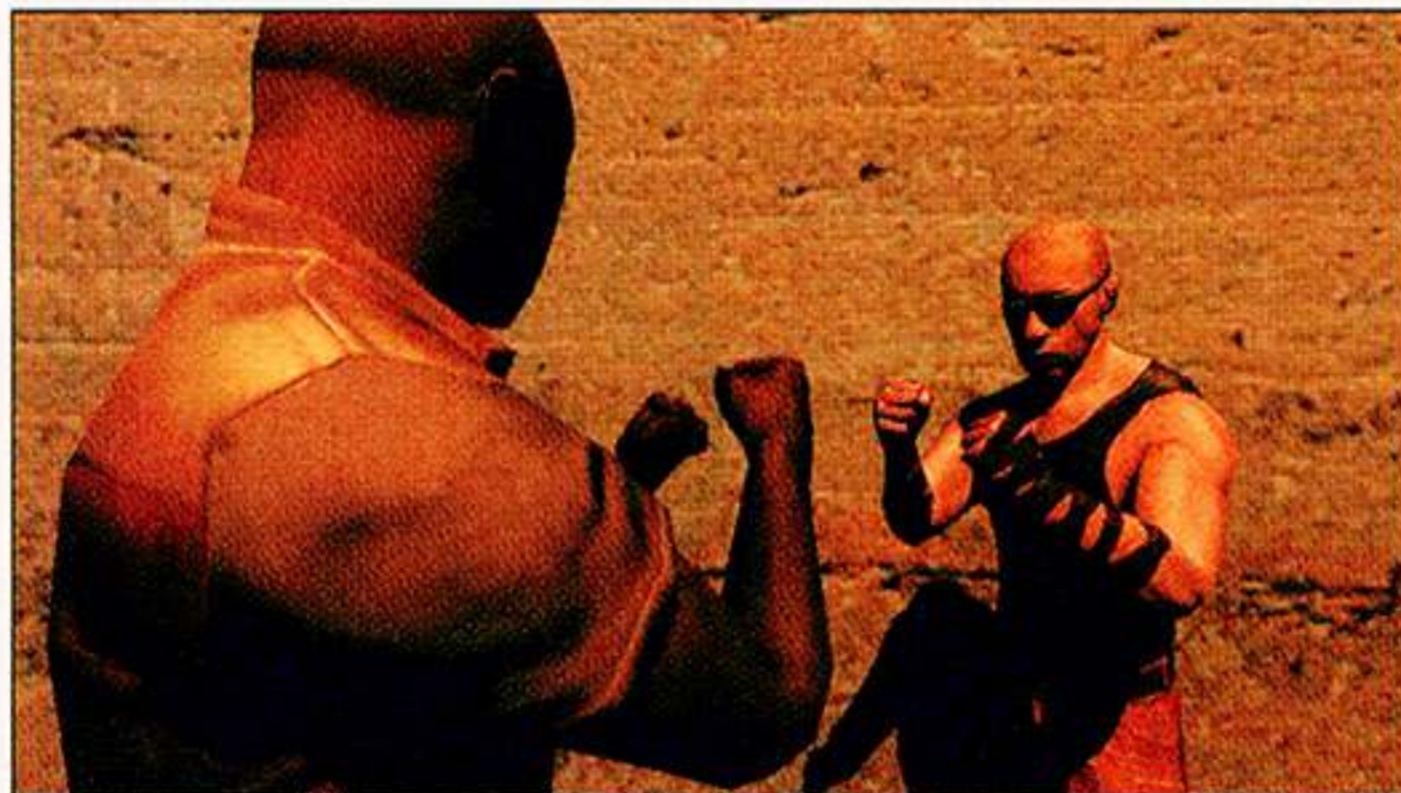
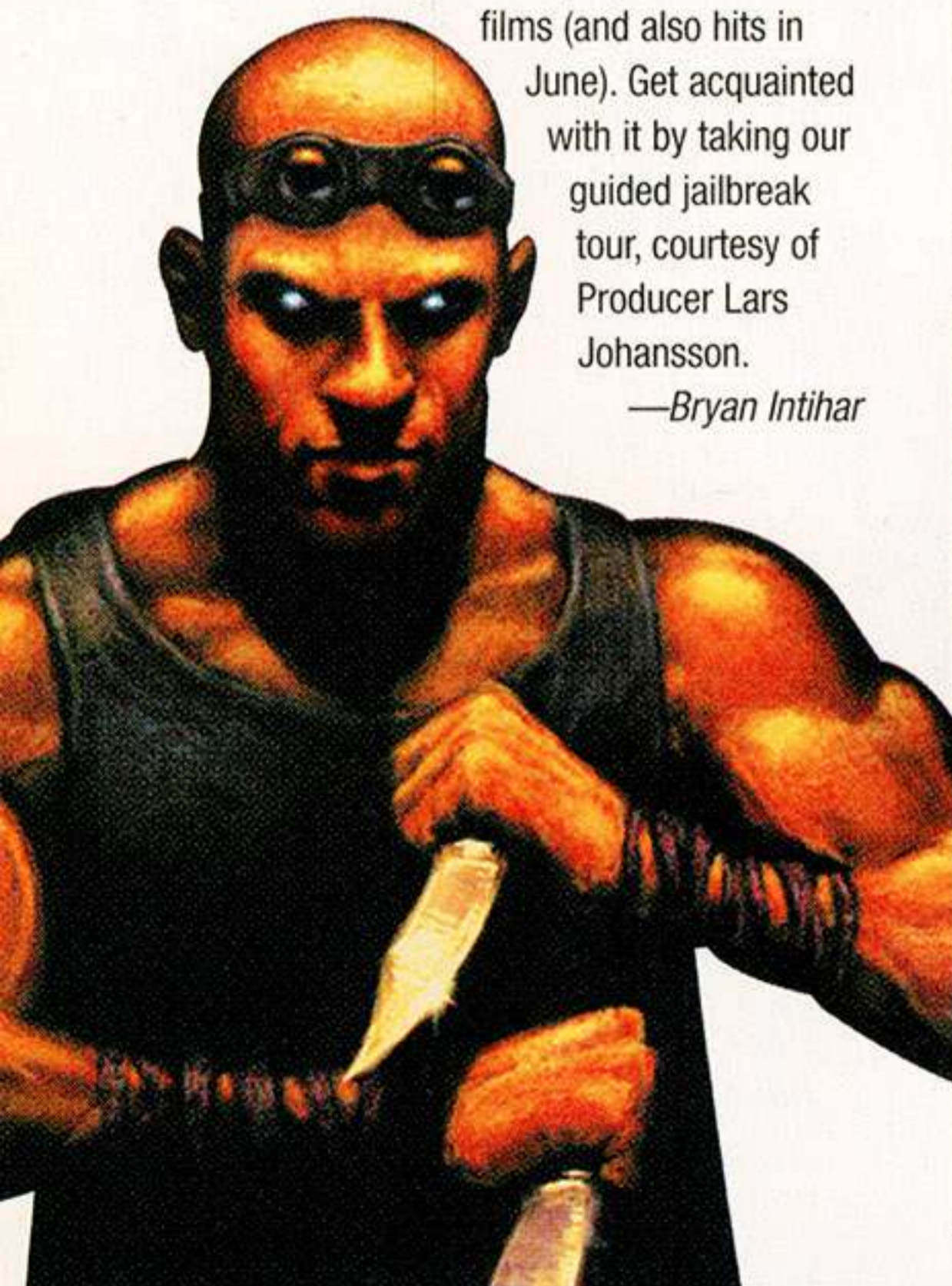
## The game's producer teaches a lesson in prison survival

**A**nd you thought Alcatraz was rough. A stay at Butcher Bay prison makes time spent on the Rock feel like house arrest. But one man, Richard B. Riddick, escaped its confines.

You might remember Riddick from the flick *Pitch Black*: He's the extrasensory badass played by Vin Diesel. Catch the film's big-screen sequel, *The Chronicles of Riddick*, this June, but also check out the ambitious first-person stealth Xbox game, *The Chronicles of Riddick: Escape from Butcher Bay*—it's a prequel to both

films (and also hits in June). Get acquainted with it by taking our guided jailbreak tour, courtesy of Producer Lars Johansson.

—Bryan Intihar



### Put Up Your Dukes

**Lars Johansson:** "Fighting inmates to gain respect and survive the harsh prison environment is one of the core elements of the game. And Riddick isn't limited to his fists. He can also use brass knuckles, clubs, and shivs to inflict lethal damage."



### Live to Fight Another Day

**LJ:** "In some places, brute force won't work. Players will have to rely on tactical use of shadows to sneak Riddick through more secure areas. Meeting a riot guard [like the one shown here] face-to-face is rarely a good thing."




### Cleaning House

**LJ:** "Players will have to hide bodies. If a guard finds a corpse, he'll try to determine how the victim was killed, but that could buy you the time you need to sneak around the new guard...or maybe even kill him. The choice is yours."



### Silent but Deadly

**LJ:** "Even if a guard has some serious firepower, it isn't over for Riddick. Shoot out the lights, sneak around in the dark, and then snap the guard's neck. If Riddick has a shiv, he can also stab the guard in the back or slit his throat." 

>> SEGA REVEALED A NEW VIRTUA FIGHTER 4 ARCADE GAME CALLED VF4: FINAL TUNED. IT FEATURES ENHANCED A.I., A NEW RANKING SYSTEM, AND TONS OF NEW WARDROBE OPTIONS.... >>



# Death from Above



Rain destruction on your foes from the back of a flying, fire-breathing dragon.  
Dogfight airborne enemies in 360 degrees within massive environments.



# WATCH AND LEARN

Four game documentaries make for must-see DVD

**S**ure, you *could* flip to the Discovery Channel and ogle animals making sweet love

after you've finished a marathon game session. But if you've still got pixels on the brain, why not "drop that joystick

and take a sec to find out where it all came from," suggests Atari game designer and documentarian Howard

Scott Warshaw. Here are four top DVD docs you can order off the Internet.

—Jon M. Gibson



### Once Upon Atari

**The gist:** An often tongue-in-cheek retrospective of the people, players, and pixels behind the industry's first major-league player, Atari.



**Why it's worth watching:** Creator Howard Scott Warshaw—the programmer for Atari 2600 classic shooter *Yar's Revenge* and infamous stinker *E.T.*—persuaded all his '80s work buddies to join him for this lovingly produced blast from the past. The result: a stunning, behind-the-scenes bonanza about the megacompany that once ruled the gaming world, complete with tales of financial woe, run-ins with Steven Spielberg, and all the recreational drug use that went on in between.

**Price:** \$30 from [www.onceuponatari.com](http://www.onceuponatari.com)



### Avatars Offline

**The gist:** An analysis of the *Evercrack*-addicted segment of society—you know, that special breed of gamer who eats, sleeps, and falls in love via his or her digital online-game persona.



**Why it's worth watching:** *Avatars* dives into the MMO (massively multiplayer online) kingdom and interviews the folk who play *EverQuest*, *Star Wars Galaxies*, and *Ultima Online* all night long. "I wanted to show the self-confessed addicts and the strained relationships," says Director Daniel Liatowitsch, "but also the very real and lasting impact of friendships forged within the game." It's shot guerrilla style, though, so don't expect Michael Moore-grade perfection.

**Price:** \$25 from [www.avatarsoffline.com](http://www.avatarsoffline.com)



### Gamers: A Documentary

**The gist:** A detailed look into the long-running *Counter-Strike* movement and the first-person-shooter fanatics who have foregone girlfriends for glocks.



**Why it's worth watching:** While it's another on-the-cheap production, *Gamers* gets access to bigwigs and fan-boys alike. It's a spot-on chronicle of one of gaming's crowning obsessions, from *Counter-Strike*'s roots as a student-made project to the international phenomenon it has become. "I hope my film makes people think of the impact their favorite games have on their lives," says Director Kiyash Monsef.

**Price:** \$15 from [www.thegamingproject.com](http://www.thegamingproject.com)



### Bang the Machine

**The gist:** A colorful portrait of one of gaming's most hardcore subcultures, the Dragon Punching *Street Fighter* crowd.

**Why it's worth watching:** Choi Boy, Cali Power, or Spider Dan may not have street cred in your hood, but in the über-competitive sport of button mashing, they are rock stars. *Machine* tracks these passive-aggressive nerds from the pizza-parlor arcades of suburbia to Las Vegas as they vie for a spot on a championship team, granting viewers a raw, insider exposé along the way. Oh, and you're guaranteed to hear the "shoryuken" war cry at least once.

**Price:** Depends on where you find it. *Bang the Machine* is kinda tricky to find on DVD, but it has an enormous cult following online. Google it and you'll come across downloadable clips and gamers willing to sell their copies.

## LI'L PREVIEWS: THREES ALWAYS COME IN THREES

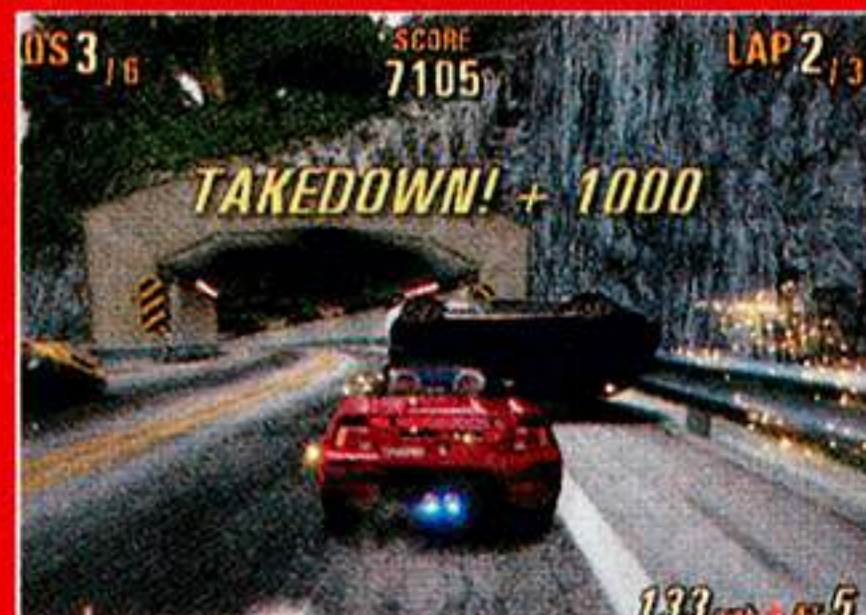
### METAL SLUG 3

**XB • SNK Neo•Geo • May 2004** — Turn your Xbox into a wayback machine with this classic Neo•Geo arcade port. Along with a handful of exclusive new missions, this old-fashioned *Contra*-meets-cartoon shooter receives a modern tweak—an Xbox Live leader board to track high scores.



### BURNOUT 3

**PS2/XB • EA Games • September 2004** — Like some sort of torrid Hollywood scandal, Acclaim's breakneck racing series has suddenly appeared in EA's boudoir. Forgive the infidelity and fantasize about the massively improved graphics, grueling crashes, and intense multiplayer action.



### SONIC ADVANCE 3

**GBA • THQ • Spring 2004** — Don't be put off by the resemblance to Sonic's past GBA adventures here—changes abound in part three. Now, you tackle the game with a partner (either computer-controlled or handled by a link-cabled buddy), and your paths through the stages differ based on which critter you choose.







Crush vast armies with the might of your steel and magic.  
As the legions fall, your strength, skills and spells will increase.



# Chaos Below



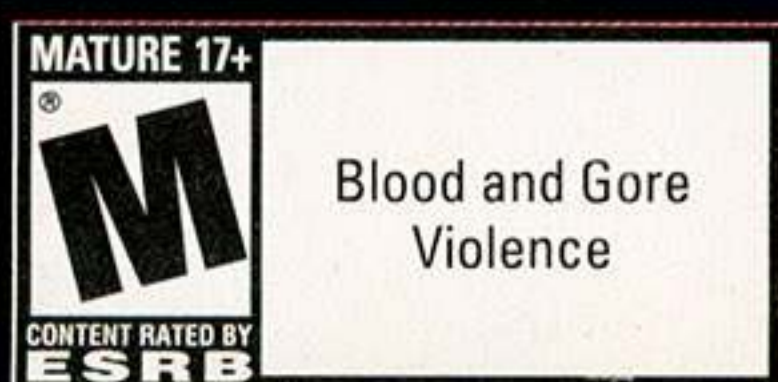


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PlayStation®2





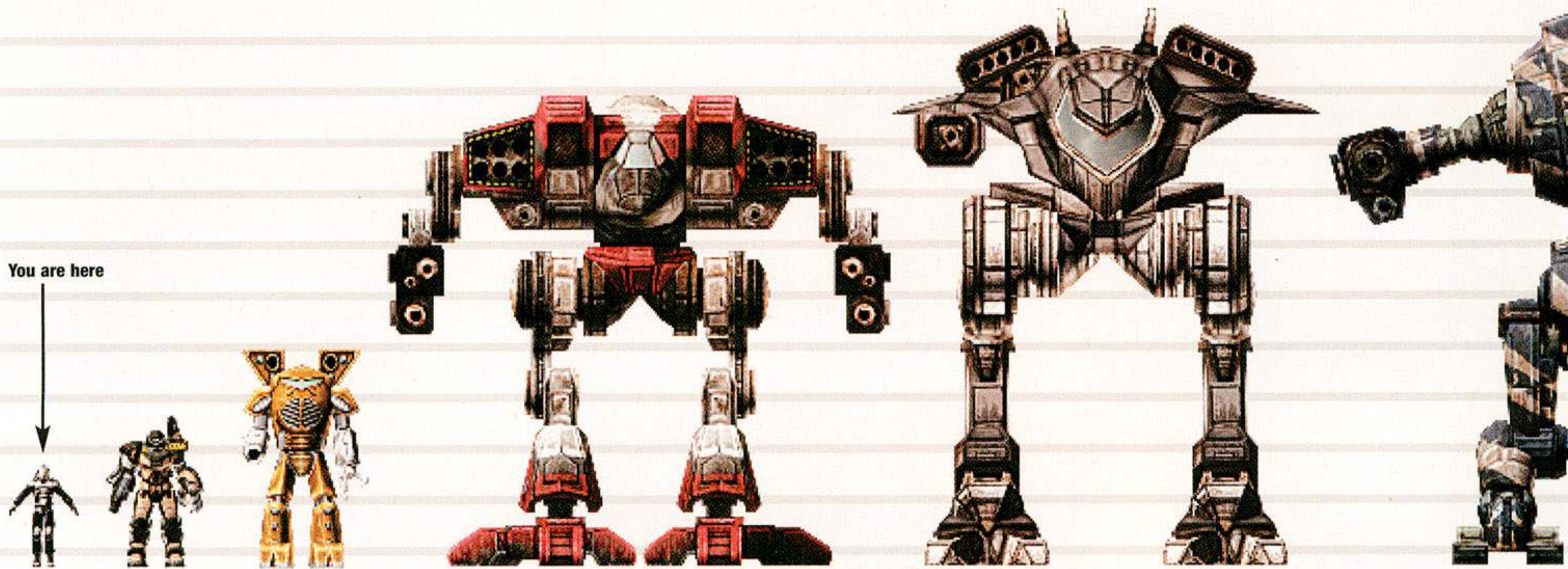
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# COMBAT DEVOLVED

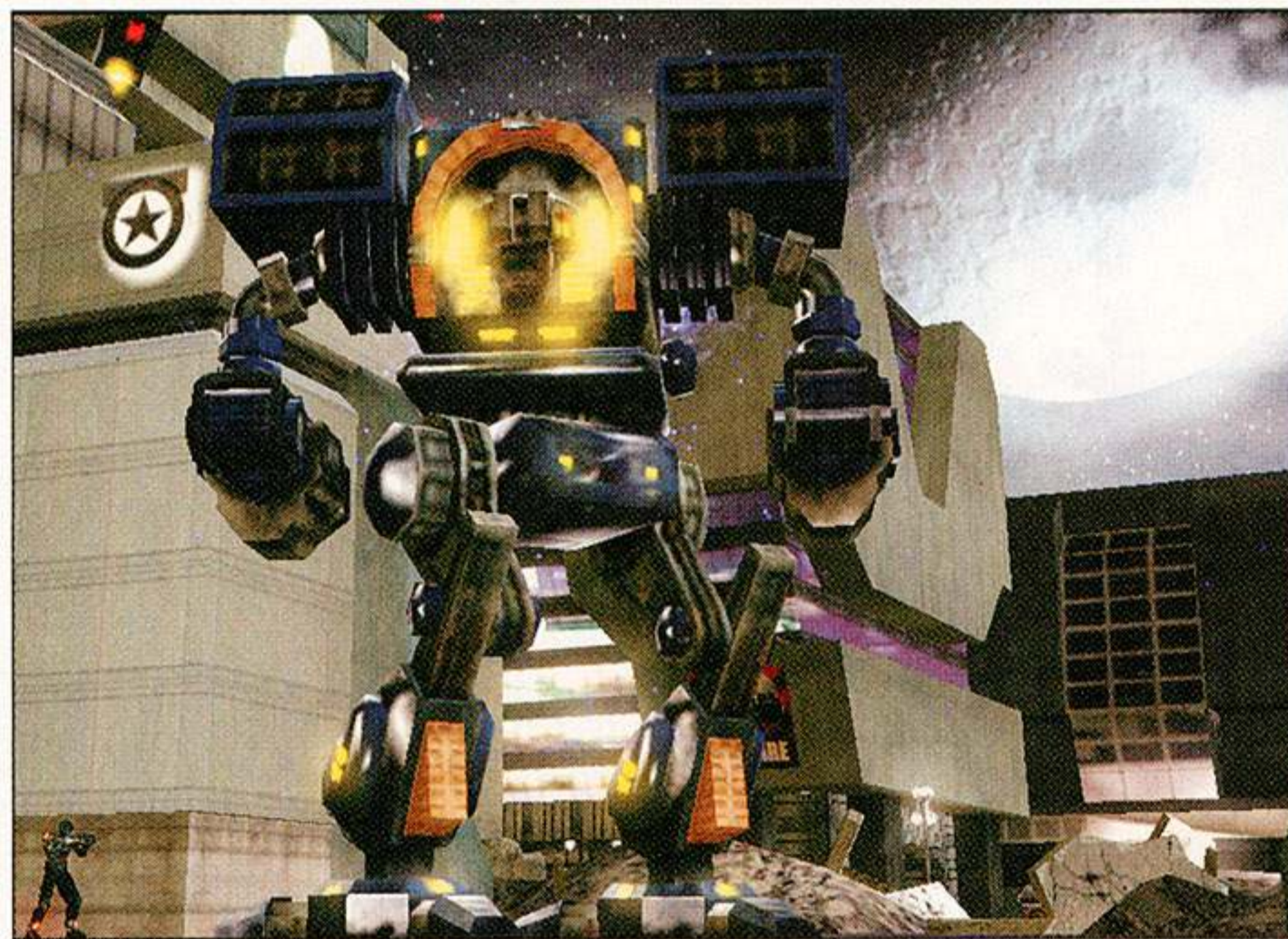
Giant-mech games get a little human touch in **MechAssault 2**



**W**hen you've spent the last 10 years building 40-foot-tall walking tanks capable of leveling entire cities, there's nowhere else to go but down. "I've always wanted to get the players [as human pilots] out of the mechs, so people can get a sense of the size and power of the things," says TJ Wagner, producer at developer Day 1 Studios and decade-long veteran of making games starring the giant machines. "One of the things that has always bothered me about mech games is that you start out from the point of view of the mech and you play the whole game as a mech. After a while, you're just assuming the skin of the mech, so it all scales down to be like any other shooter."

So now in *MechAssault 2*, Microsoft's third-person action-shooter due out holiday season 2004 for the Xbox, you'll be able to step out of your tin man of destruction and see just how gigantic those things really are. But where's the fun in that? Aren't people playing a *MechAssault* game in order to do some assaultin'...uh...in a mech? "You're a character with a story line now," says Wagner. "And you'll be able to run around, plant trip mines for enemies, or break into buildings to steal a mech." Even better, you can now hop into support vehicles for a different look at the battlefield. To see how *MechAssault* has gotten bigger (or is it smaller?), check out these screenshots.

—Dan "Shoe" Hsu



### Size Matters

Notice how much bigger even these medium-sized Mad Cats seem to be? *MechAssault 2* reminds you that you're nothing more than a puny human—road-kill for giant mech feet. You'll still pilot mechs for most of the game, but *MA2* gives a whole new perspective on the heavy-metal action.



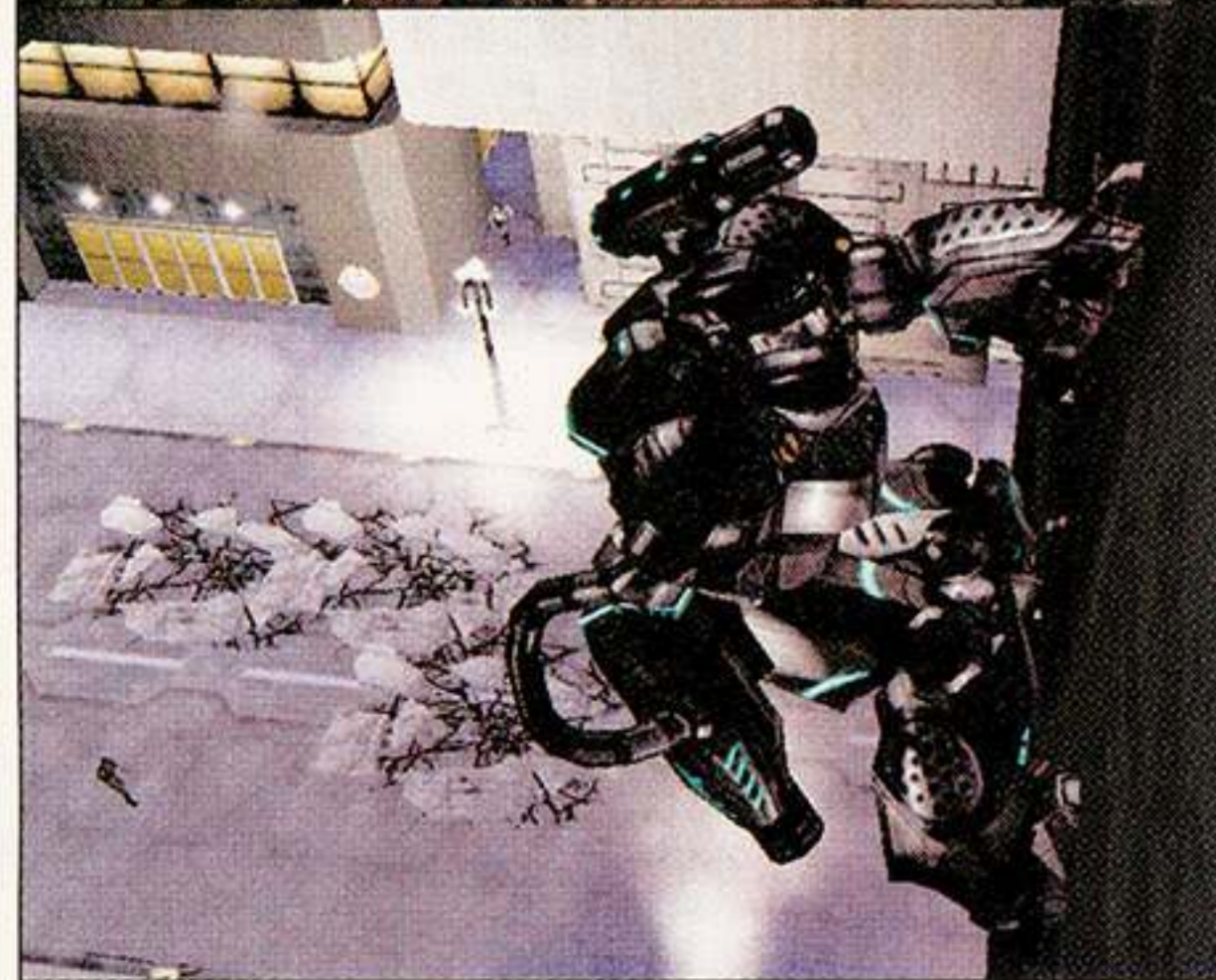
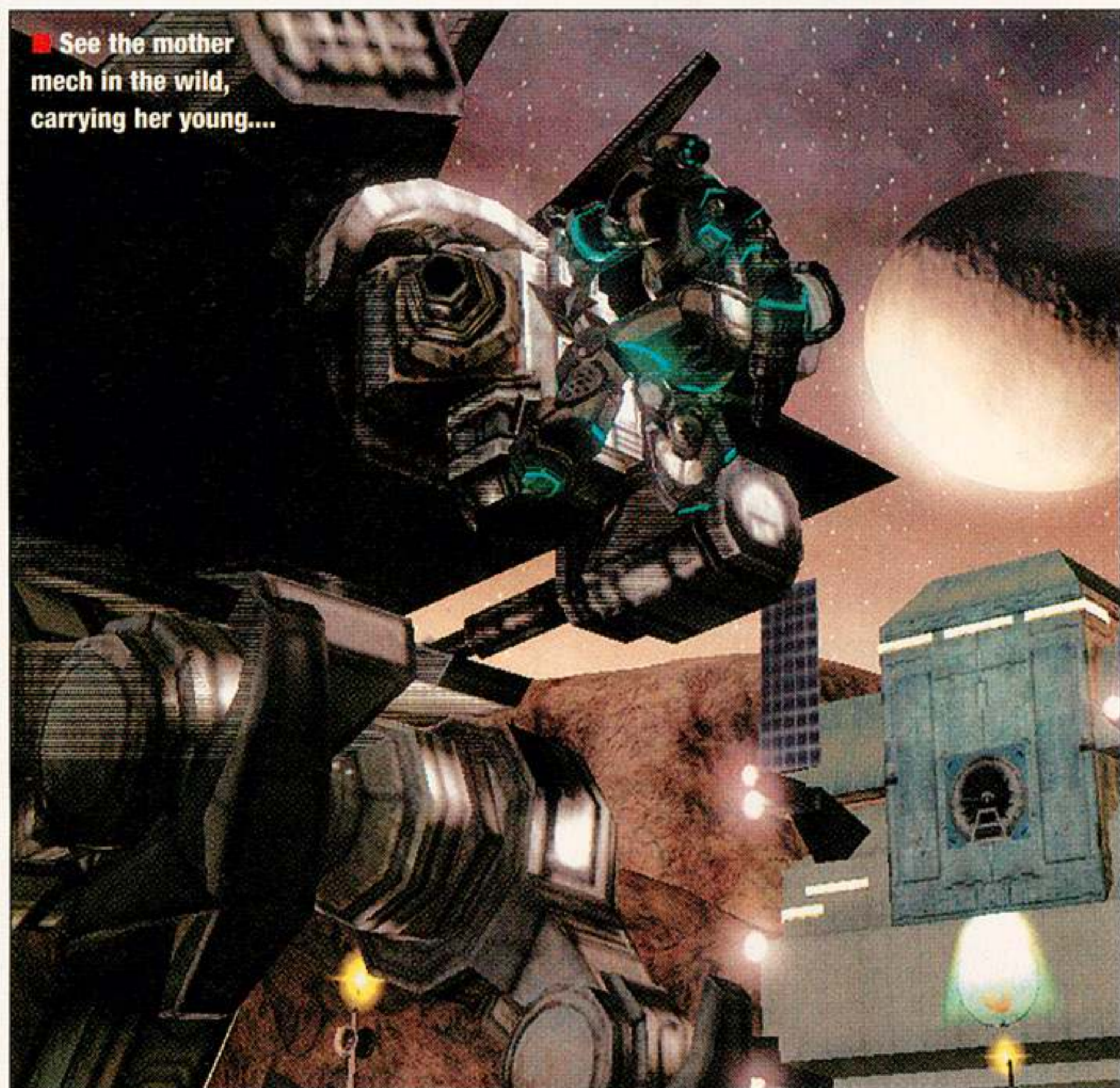
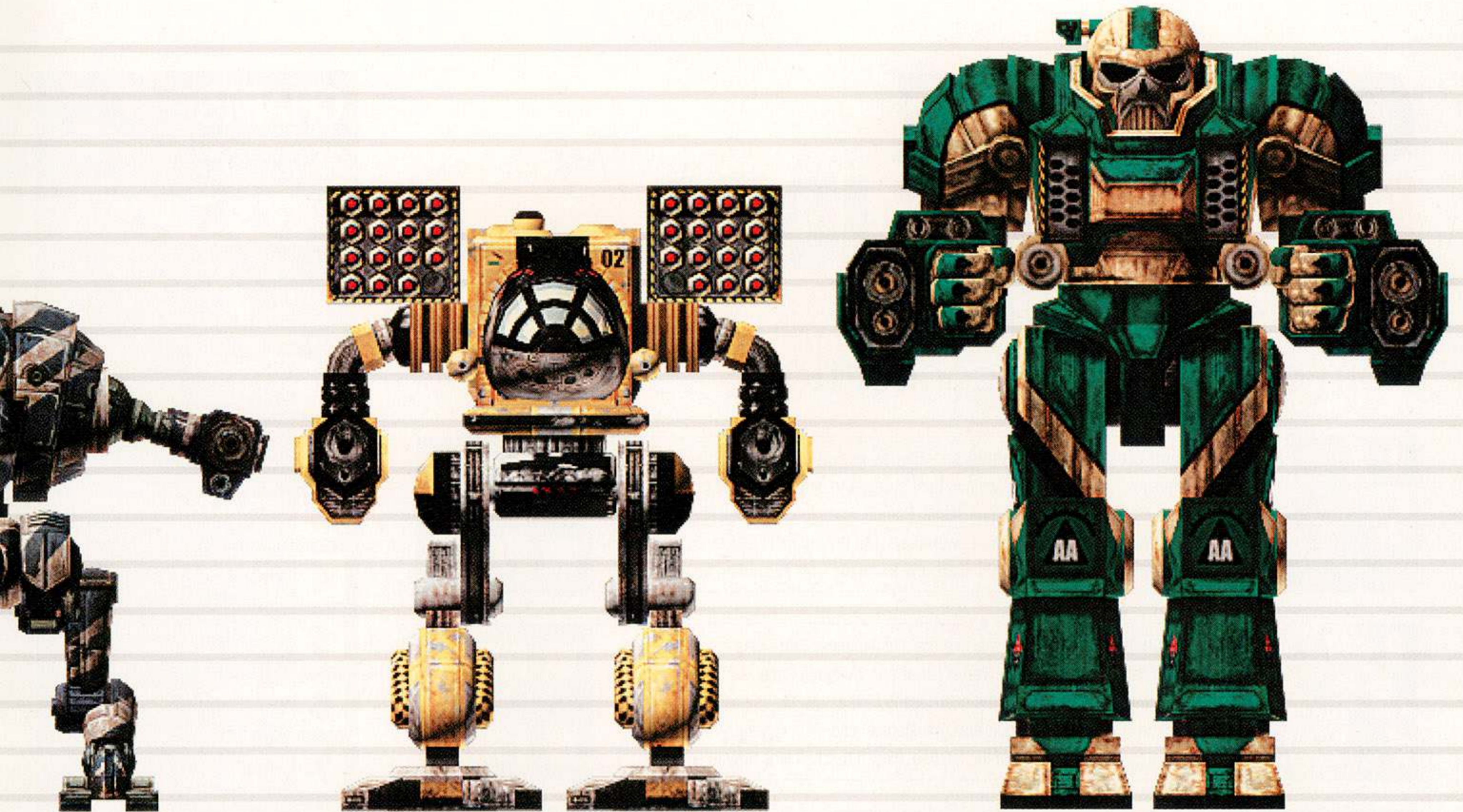
■ The Band of the Hand...here?

### Tanks for the New Vehicles

Being a puny human doesn't mean you're completely helpless. You can do things on foot that you couldn't do in a mech, like quietly sneak into a building. Or you can jump into support vehicles, such as a tank or a vertical takeoff and landing (VTOL) ship to ferry supplies or troops back and forth.



>> THE ORIGINAL MECHASSAULT SUPPORTED EIGHT-PLAYER COMBAT OVER XBOX LIVE. THE DEVELOPERS HOPE TO GET 10, 12, POSSIBLY EVEN 16 PLAYERS ONLINE FOR MA2... >>



See the mother mech in the wild, carrying her young....

### Li'l Mechs

No, this isn't *MechBabies*. These individual BattleArmor suits are fast and mobile, and they come with power claws that let you scale buildings or climb onto the backs of large mechs to hack-and-jack (squint hard at the big picture above). We'll spare you the *Grand Theft Auto* comparisons.



### Multiplayer Assault

Forget about your typical mech-on-mech multiplayer battles. Now, with support vehicles and BattleArmor, players will have much more to do and think about. For example, VTOL pilots can play a big role by setting up turrets at chokepoints or to defend a base.

# GUESS THE BAD GAME IDEA

See if you can tell the legit game pitches from our own crazy concoctions

- |                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                        |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|    | <p><b>1 Mount Crushmore Commandos</b> — Play as ex-presidents Washington, Jefferson, Roosevelt, and Lincoln in their struggle to defend the land of the free. Each has a unique talent (the muscular, Rambo-wannabe Roosevelt specializes in guns, Washington is a master of swordplay), and they rappel outta Lincoln's nose whenever enemies arrive at the fearsome foursome's Mt. Rushmore base.</p>                         | <p><input type="checkbox"/> REAL<br/><input type="checkbox"/> FAKE</p> |
|  | <p><b>2 Iron Chef</b> — A party game starring real-life Japanese Iron Chefs (and some Food Network celebrities like Jamie Oliver and Wolfgang Puck). As in the TV show, the goal is to prepare the best-tasting dish as quickly as possible. Players compete in a series of arcade-style minigames (chopping vegetables, frying, flipping, etc.) to become king of the kitchen. Plus, it teaches kids how to cook.</p>          | <p><input type="checkbox"/> REAL<br/><input type="checkbox"/> FAKE</p> |
|  | <p><b>3 Edward Gorey's Munchable Crunchable Creatures</b> — It's <i>Pokémon</i> meets Dr. Frankenstein meets the Donner Party. Train a Tribble-like puffball to feast upon anything that moves in this title inspired by the disturbing illustrations of Edward Gorey. Your pint-sized pet gains the attributes of its victims, eventually evolving into a freakish mutant that'll make children wet their pants. With fun!</p> | <p><input type="checkbox"/> REAL<br/><input type="checkbox"/> FAKE</p> |
|  | <p><b>4 Backseat Driver</b> — Bark voice commands at your driver, telling him to make wrong turns, run over pedestrians, drive on the sidewalk, etc. The more mercilessly you taunt, the more likely you are to upset your driver's otherwise law-abiding ways. You earn points for traffic violations, damage to other cars, and pedestrians killed. It's just like <i>Grand Theft Auto</i>, but more annoying.</p>            | <p><input type="checkbox"/> REAL<br/><input type="checkbox"/> FAKE</p> |
|  | <p><b>5 Knee Jerk</b> — <i>Frogger</i> with a political twist. As a young female intern, you take new bills from the congressional tables (bottom of the screen) and introduce them at the committee tables (top) while avoiding meddling members of Congress. The final stage pits you against Slick Willy, where your defense against the touchy-feely prez is performing the special "knee jerk" technique.</p>              | <p><input type="checkbox"/> REAL<br/><input type="checkbox"/> FAKE</p> |

Answers: 1-R, 2-R, 3-F, 4-F, 5-R

## BY THE NUMBERS

Astro-nomical data

**1951**

Year *Astro Boy* first appeared in creator Osamu Tezuka's *Captain Atom* manga

**80 million**

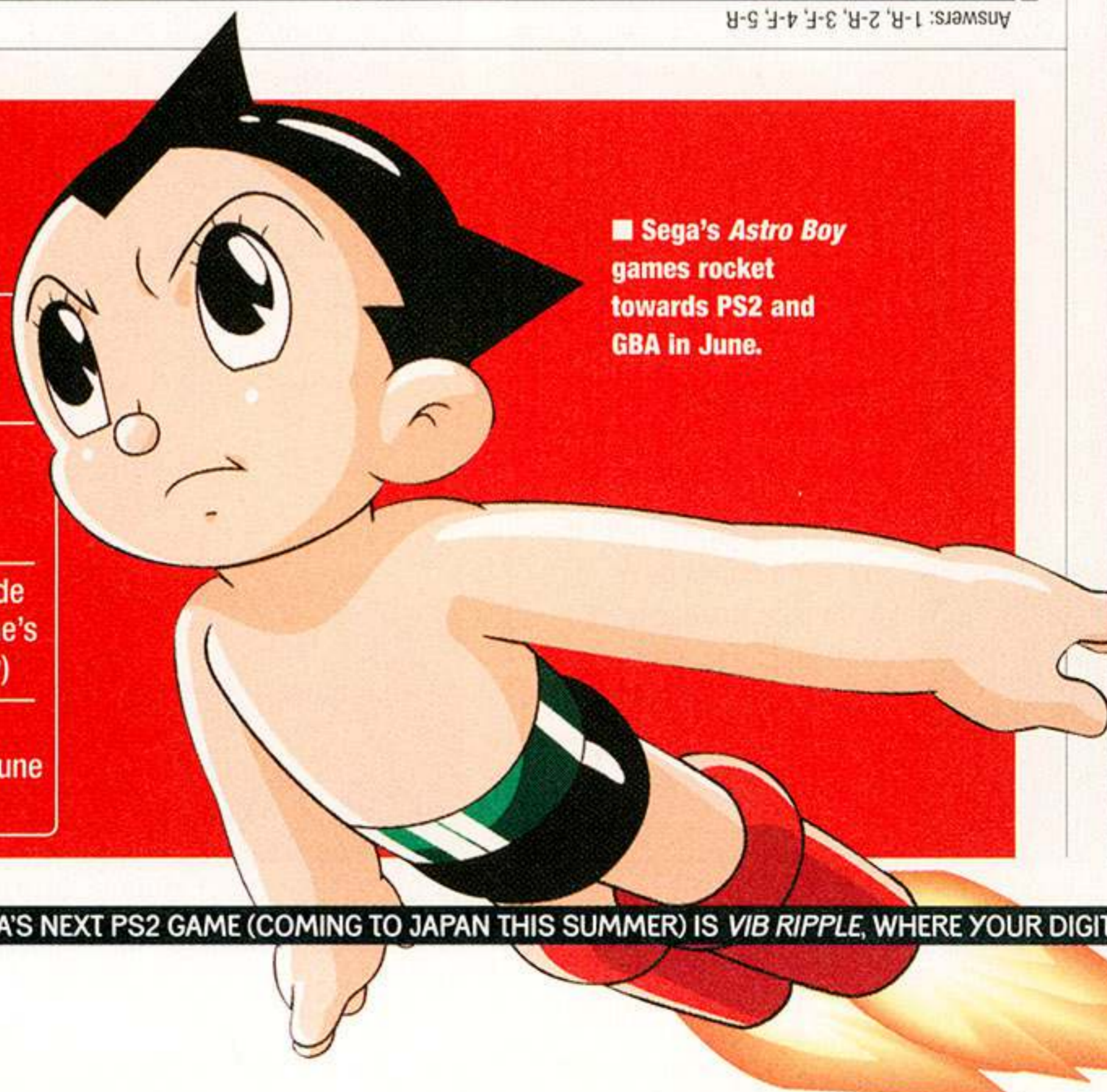
Copies of *Astro Boy* manga sold worldwide

**3**

Times *Astro Boy* has been made into an animated TV show. (One's running on Kids' WB right now)

**2**



Number of *Astro Boy* games Sega's bringing to the U.S. in June (one on PS2, the other on GBA)



■ Sega's *Astro Boy* games rocket towards PS2 and GBA in June.

## CHARTS

TOP 10 BEST-SELLING GAMES FOR JANUARY 2004

- |                                                                                       |                                                                       |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|
|    | <p><b>1 NFL Street</b><br/>PS2 • EA Sports Big</p>                    |
|    | <p><b>2 Sonic Heroes</b><br/>GC • Sega</p>                            |
|    | <p><b>3 Need for Speed Underground</b><br/>PS2 • EA Games</p>         |
|    | <p><b>4 NFL Street</b><br/>XB • EA Sports Big</p>                     |
|   | <p><b>5 Grand Theft Auto: Double Pack</b><br/>XB • Rockstar Games</p> |
|  | <p><b>6 Mario Kart: Double Dash!!</b><br/>GC • Nintendo</p>           |
|  | <p><b>7 Halo</b><br/>XB • Microsoft</p>                               |
|  | <p><b>8 True Crime: Streets of L.A.</b><br/>PS2 • Activision</p>      |
|  | <p><b>9 Madden NFL 2004</b><br/>PS2 • EA Sports</p>                   |
|  | <p><b>10 Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance II</b><br/>PS2 • Interplay</p>  |

TOP 10 GAME RENTALS FOR THE WEEK ENDING 02/22/04

BLOCKBUSTER

- |                                                                                       |                                                                          |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  | <p><b>1 NFL Street</b><br/>PS2 • EA Sports Big</p>                       |
|  | <p><b>2 Mafia</b><br/>PS2 • Gathering</p>                                |
|  | <p><b>3 Rise to Honor</b><br/>PS2 • Sony CEA</p>                         |
|  | <p><b>4 James Bond 007: Everything or Nothing</b><br/>PS2 • EA Games</p> |
|  | <p><b>5 True Crime: Streets of L.A.</b><br/>PS2 • Activision</p>         |
|  | <p><b>6 Tony Hawk's Underground</b><br/>PS2 • Activision</p>             |
|  | <p><b>7 Dragon Ball Z: Budokai 2</b><br/>PS2 • Atari</p>                 |
|  | <p><b>8 James Bond 007: Everything or Nothing</b><br/>XB • EA Games</p>  |
|  | <p><b>9 NFL Street</b><br/>XB • EA Sports Big</p>                        |
|  | <p><b>10 Mario Kart: Double Dash!!</b><br/>GC • Nintendo</p>             |

>> PARAPPA THE RAPPER CREATOR MASAYA MATSUURA'S NEXT PS2 GAME (COMING TO JAPAN THIS SUMMER) IS VIB RIPPLE, WHERE YOUR DIGITAL CAMERA PICS BECOME THE LEVELS.... >>>

He'll probably freak out.  
He's going to think  
I'm a loser.  
But it's not about me.

Office of National Drug Control Policy

www.freevibe.com

Give him a call. Send an email. Catch him after school.  
It doesn't matter how you do it. As long as you do it. If a  
friend has a problem with drugs or drinking, talk to them.  
It could make all the difference.

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# THE BEST SHOOTER

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**"THIS IS THE ONLINE TITLE YOU  
HAVE BEEN WAITING FOR."**

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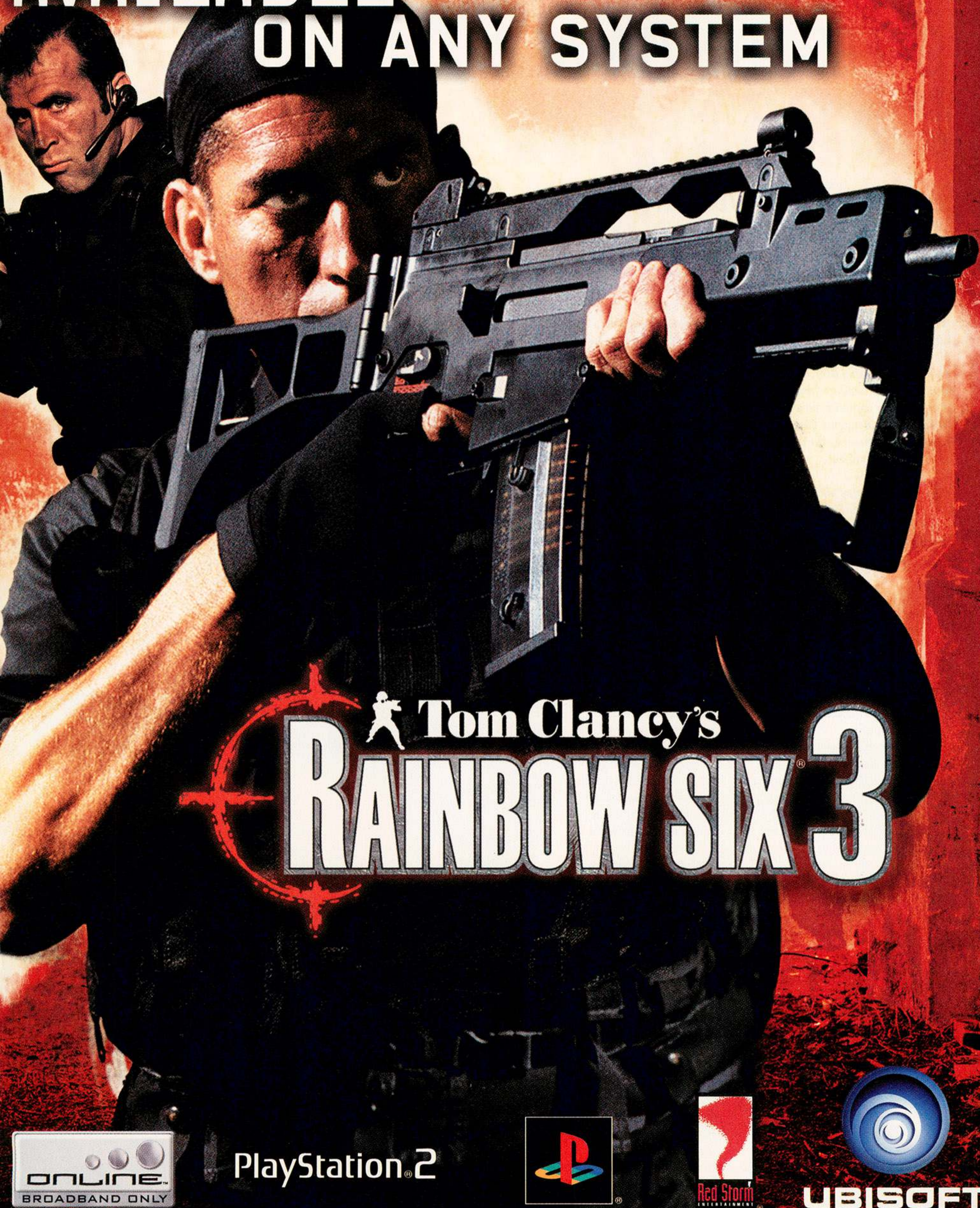


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AVAILABLE  
ON ANY SYSTEM



Tom Clancy's  
**RAINBOW SIX 3**



PlayStation 2



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# CELEBRITY GAMER:



# RACHEL DRATCH

Talking Pitfall with the voice of *Game Over*'s precocious teen

**S**he's made us laugh for five seasons on NBC's *Saturday Night Live*, playing such memorable characters as surly Bostonian teen Denise, as well as Virginia, "lover" to Will Ferrell's Professor Klarvin. But this spring, comedian Rachel Dratch takes on a new role in UPN's CG-rendered sitcom, *Game Over*. She voices Alice, the Smashenburn family's angst-filled teenage daughter, who's studying to become a videogame character. Does Dratch herself know the subject? We decided to find out.

**EGM: So do you play videogames?**  
**Rachel Dratch:** Funny you should ask. When they asked me to do this interview, I said, "OK, but I don't play videogames at all." When I was little, we used to have Atari.

**EGM: So you grew up with them?**  
**RD:** Yeah, and I remember that game *Pitfall*. That was my favorite. I heard there's a new one, too—so maybe I'll have to get back into it.

**EGM: We should warn you: It's not like the original, in which all you had to do was move right.**  
**RD:** Oh really? Hmm, then I'm not interested. There was this one game I played at my friend's house...I don't even know what it was called—but there's this woman, and she's going back to this medieval town or something, and you have to unlock all these weird doors and keys and stuff like that. Do you know what I'm talking about?

**EGM: You've just described about 50 percent of the games out there.**  
**RD:** [Laughs] You're probably right. I'm thinking, "You know *that* one, right?" But this was a woman in charge! That one was kinda cool.



■ Alice protests the bikini-clad beach volleyball antics of her classmates in *Game Over*.

**EGM: So...any other choice game-related memories from your youth?**

**RD:** All I remember is the last time I played a videogame, it was *Space Invaders*. I'm definitely not up-to-date on the high-tech videogame world. What's that one where you beat somebody up?

**EGM: That's the other 50 percent....**

**RD:** [Laughs] Yeah, exactly.

**EGM: Back in the Atari days, did you play well with others or were you a trash talker?**

**RD:** I'm a girl, so of course I play well with others—we're socialized. [laughs] Maybe that's why chicks aren't into those shooting violence games. I was a little girly, so no major competition was going on there.

**EGM: Old SNL cast versus new cast. Think you could beat them in some Halo deathmatch? Or maybe...Pong?**

**RD:** From what I hear, they were all on drugs all the time back then, so maybe we have better hand-eye coordination. We're a pretty clean bunch. But people tell me all the time on the street, "The first *SNL* was the best ever!" so they're hard to beat in *that* way....

**EGM: Our girlfriends won't stop talking about how hot Jimmy Fallon is, so can you please tell us he's a royal a-hole who wears a toupee and is lousy at Soul Calibur II?**

**RD:** Oh my God. Everybody always asks about Jimmy Fallon. I'm sorry to say that he's very nice and there's not much bad to say about him. I don't know if he sucks at videogames or not. I don't think he plays them, but he could have this whole secret life I don't know about.

**EGM: So in Game Over, why do you play the teenager while Lucy Liu plays the mom—when you're almost three years older than she is?**

**RD:** Oh my God, am I? You can't put that in your article! [laughs] This interview is over! 🐱 —Chris Johnston





■ Enemies here are so tender that the meat falls right off the bone.

# FIRST LOOK: SHADOW OF ROME

You will bring them death, and they will love you for it

**C**apcom's Keiji Inafune knows action—he's the man behind Mega Man's energy blasts and Samanosuke's (you know, the *Onimusha* guy) swordstrokes—but what does he know about history? Prepare for an interactive field trip: Inafune's next PlayStation 2 game, *Shadow of Rome*, kicks it really old-school, as in ancient Rome with heroic gladiators, epic violence, and, well, lots of togas.

Why gladiators? Inafune answers, "What defines an action game is one person fighting another. With gladiators, this actually was a game for them—the gladiators were really the first models for an action game." At its

core, *Shadow of Rome* offers intense 3D action/adventure gameplay not too far removed from that of *Onimusha*. You'll brandish fine Roman steel rather than samurai swords, but you'll still spill tons of gore as you slice limbs (and even hindquarters) off your enemies.

Besides straightforward arm-chopping combat, Agrippa, the game's star gladiator, will also participate in high-stakes chariot races (as dangerous as the famously morbid one in *Ben-Hur*) and scenarios in which he can use catapults to destroy fortresses. In addition to controlling the studly Russell Crowe-wannabe, you also play Octavius, his

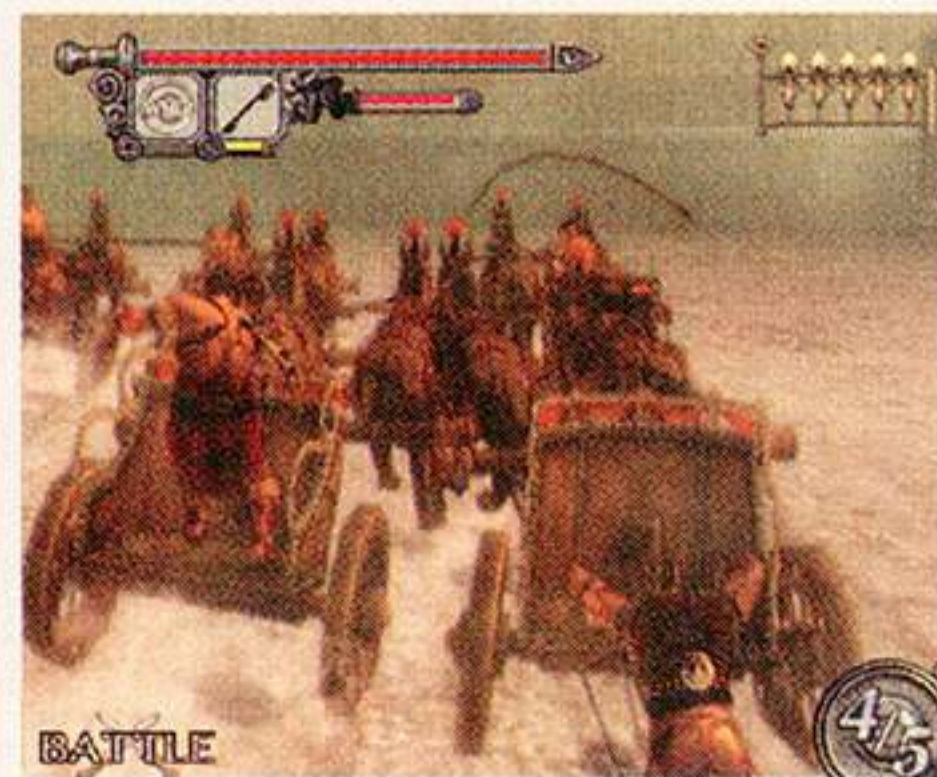
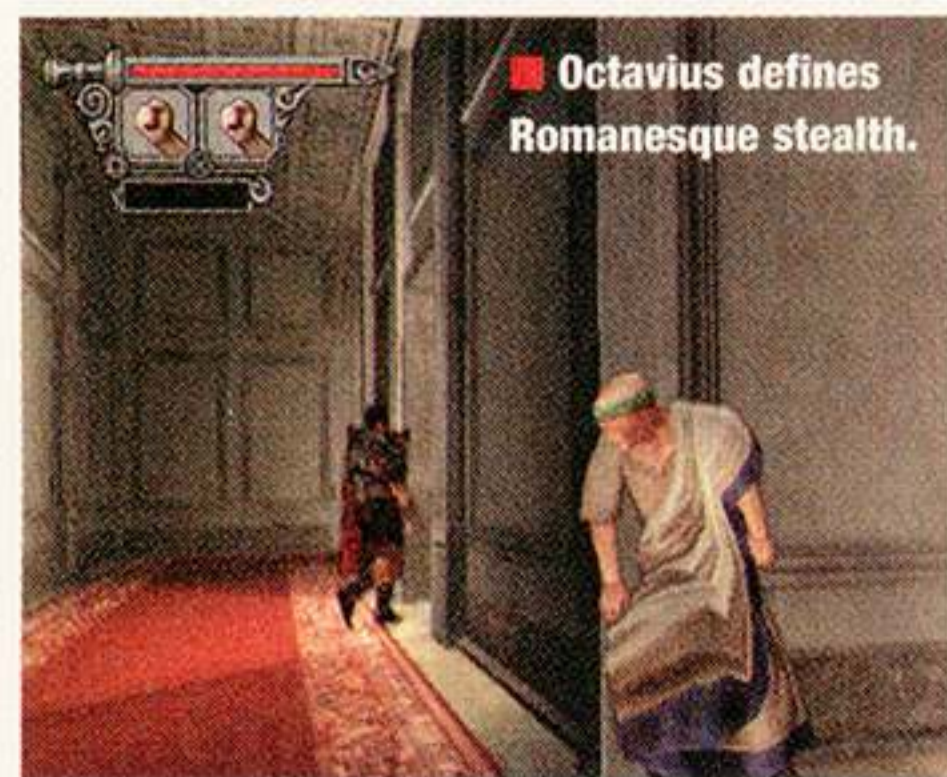
stealthy buddy (who, oddly enough, looks exactly like Owen Wilson in a toga). While Agrippa rocks the colosseum, Octavius sneaks around disguised as a guard in order to locate intel on Agrippa's imprisoned father.

Of course, this isn't the only Caesar salad period piece to surface lately, but unlike its competition, *Shadow of Rome* proudly offers only realistically Roman arena action. Inafune comments, "I remember in another game, you are a gladiator and you fight against a dragon. What is that? What does an ancient Roman gladiator have to do with fighting a dragon? A gladiator fights another man." 🐉

—Scooter Nguyen

## Hangin' With the Bard

Time to brush up on some fine literature: *Shadow of Rome* opens with the death of Julius Caesar. Check out Billy Shake's play (or the Cliffs Notes) for the whole back story, because *Rome* is sort of the sequel. Here, our hero's father, Uesnius, is accused of conspiring to kill Caesar, so Agrippa enters the gladiatorial games to free his pops. It's kinda like English class...except with lots more decapitation.





press start



■ Bored with *Final Fantasy XI* already? Don't worry, that hard drive won't be neglected for too long.

# ONLINE THIS MONTH

## The future of the PS2 hard drive

**M**aybe you plunked down the 100 bucks to buy the recently released *Final Fantasy XI* (which includes the PS2 hard drive), maybe you didn't. But the question remains—besides *FFXI*, what the hell are you gonna use the PS2 hard drive for? Lucky for you, an unnameable source close to Sony was able to give us some answers. Onward to knowledge!

**Q: I heard *SOCOM II* uses the hard drive. Is this true?**

**A:** Yes, *SOCOM II* uses it. Three downloadable levels are already planned for release in the coming months, and they're allegedly in new areas of operation, not in the "usual" locales.

**Q: Great. But I don't have *SOCOM II*. What else ya got?**

**A:** The only other title currently scheduled

to hook up to the drive is *Syphon Filter: The Omega Strain*. Rumor has it that some of *Filter's* single-player missions will later be adapted for online play (there isn't time to complete them before the game's May release). So stay tuned.

**Q: OK, I didn't buy *Final Fantasy XI*. But this other stuff sounds great. Will the drive be sold separately?**

**A:** 'Cuz *FFXI* is the only title that *must* use the hard drive, Sony has decided it's best to keep them packed together...for now. The two won't divorce at least until other titles that require the hard drive are out.

**Q: When will I hear about more titles that support the drive?**

**A:** Not 'til May's E3 trade show. Then you'll hear about at least two more hard-drive-enabled titles from Sony this year (one of which may be *Gran Turismo 4*) and a few from third parties.



■ Helpful hint No. 52: Bring this magazine to the store and point at this photo. The clerk will know exactly what you want.

### On egmmag.com

Type [extra.egmmag.com](http://extra.egmmag.com) into your browser for some supersweet extra *EGM* content this month. First up we've got more of our chat with **Rachel Dratch** (of *Game Over* and *Saturday Night Live*). We've also got our complete interview with **Miss Sexiest Gamer Ashley Jenkins** (remember her from last issue?) and a chat with *Final Fantasy* composer **Nobuo Uematsu**. Get clickin' already.

### must-hit websites



**sardius.fefea.org/reviews/jturbo**  
Back in the 16-bit days, a series of comic-book-style ads for the TurboDuo system starring pudgy superhero Johnny Turbo scarred us for life. Now you too can be scarred for the first time.



**encyclopedia-obscura.com** — A site with some of the most obscure (and hilarious) pop-culture info on the Net. Our favorites are entries on the stuff that slipped by Nintendo's 8-bit-era censors and a documentary on the search for Einstein's brain.



**generationkikaida.com** — If there's one thing that needs to come back in style in a big way, it's Japanese masked-hero shows from the '60s. Think *Power Rangers*, only older, cheesier, and ridiculously awesome. "Switch on!"

## PC GAMING UPDATE

### X-Com's heir



We are now firmly and resolutely entrenched in the worst time of the year for PC releases. How bad is it? The newest titles to hit our barren, joyless hard drives are console ports like the depressing *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* and a thoroughly incompetent version of *Gladiator* that steadfastly refuses to perform simple functions like, oh, actually running.

But like a single sugary beam of sunlight shot through a brilliantly hued stained-glass window, *Silent Storm* has brought a glimmer of hope to our otherwise bleak lives. Maybe it's not super-incredible, but this is a game that would be great any time of year, and it's making double the impact during this barren month. A squad-based tactical strategy with strong RPG elements, *Silent Storm* is a World War II version of the hallowed *X-Com*. Whether you're directing your squad through an enemy-packed village, performing perilous house sweeps, or frantically trying to fight your way from a desperate pinned-down position, the game constantly hits you with new challenges and insanely addictive gameplay. You'll need a high-end PC to run it well, but the payoff is worth it thanks to a game engine that creates a world where *everything* is destructible. Every bullet hole, bloodstain, tangled corpse, and shattered brick persists throughout each mission to create an environment that vividly and progressively reflects your impact on it. You'll find yourself blowing stuff up just to create a more beautifully war-torn world. Bottom line: This is the first must-have PC title of 2004.

—Robert Coffey,  
Computer Gaming World



>> FOR A PALTRY FIVE BUCKS, YOU CAN DOWNLOAD KAPALUA GOLF RESORT'S PLANTATION COURSE OVER XBOX LIVE FOR MICROSOFT'S *LINKS 2004*. CHEAPER THAN FLYING THERE.... >>

# YOU GONNA STEP IT UP, OR WHAT?

## out of the ordinary GAME



### NINJA GAIDEN

**XBX**

*Ninja Gaiden ain't your average ninja game. In fact, Ryu Hayabasa ain't your average ninja either. Gone are the days of sneaking on rooftops, dropping in on unsuspecting guards and slipping a blade into their backs for a stealth kill. Ryu is all about action, whether it be launching a foe into the air, jumping up after him, then piledriving him into the ground to inflict damage on his comrades.*

*Tecmo's highly anticipated Ninja Gaiden pushes the Xbox hardware to new limits with beautiful*



*graphics, cunning AI, powerful weapons and, enough shuriken to cut down a forest. Ryu's ninja magic lets him blast enemies with bolts of electricity, run along walls, flip through the air and take out foes before they ever knew what hit them. It's a true test of skill for even the most agile gamer, as enemies come from all directions, bosses fill the screen, and traps await hapless players who let their guard down even for an instant. Add revolutionary use of Xbox Live and you've got a title that will keep armchair ninjas busy for weeks.*



### sweet CODES

#### THE SIMS BUSTIN' OUT

ps 2 | xbx | gc

*BUTTON CODES: Enter these codes in Bust Out or Free Mode:*

*Complete Motives: L2, R1, Left, Circle, Up.*

*Free Money: Push L1, L2, Right, Square, click in the right analog stick.*



*Helper Gnome: R2, L1, R1, L2, Left, Circle.*

*Unlock All Locations: Push R2, click in the right analog stick, click in the left analog stick, L2, R1, L1.*

*Unlock All objects: Push L2, R2, Up, Triangle, click in the left analog stick.*



### break out TRICKS

#### MLB SLUGFEST: LOADED

ps 2 | xbx | gc

*Perform the following to unlock new ballparks:*

- The Coliseum - Hit a homer in Fenway Park*
- Rocket Park - Hit a homer in Minute Maid Park*
- Monument Park - Hit a homer in Great American Ballpark*
- Midway Park - Hit a homer in Wrigley Field*
- Empire Park - Hit a homer in Yankee Stadium*
- Forbidden City - Hit a homer in PetCo Park*
- Atlantis - Hit a homer to right in PacBell Park*



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**BREAK OUT OF THE ORDINARY**

Advertorial

# SIREN



Blood and Gore  
Intense Violence

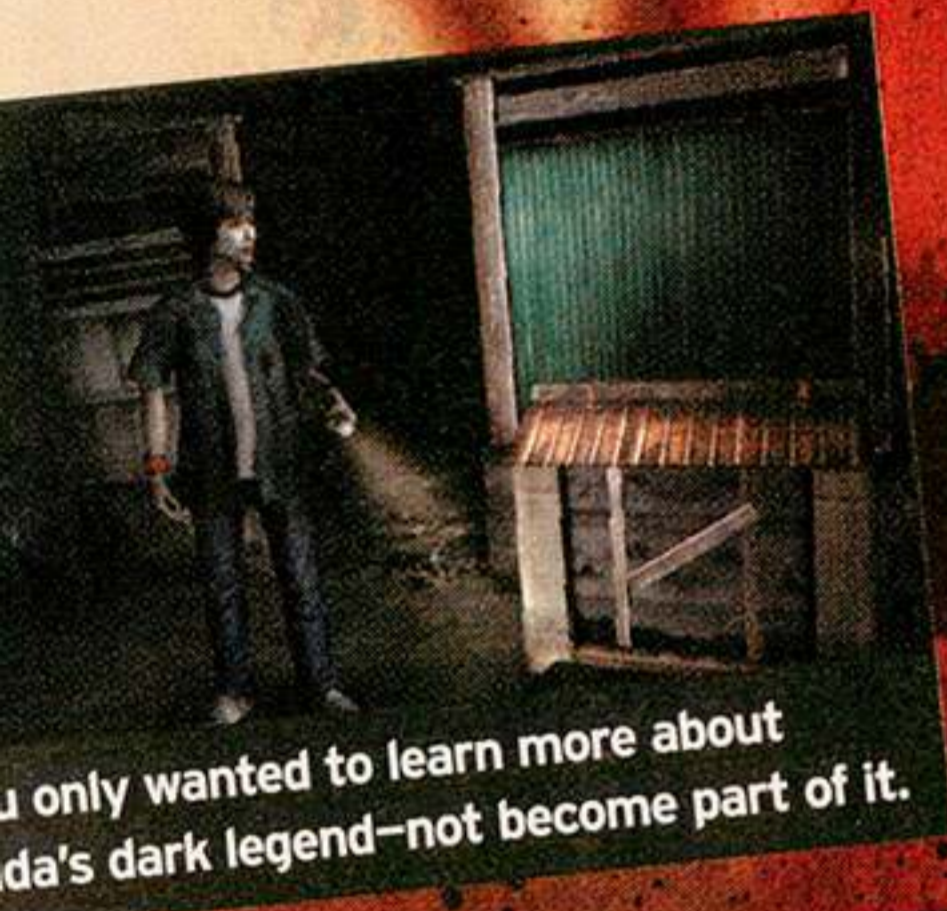


PlayStation 2

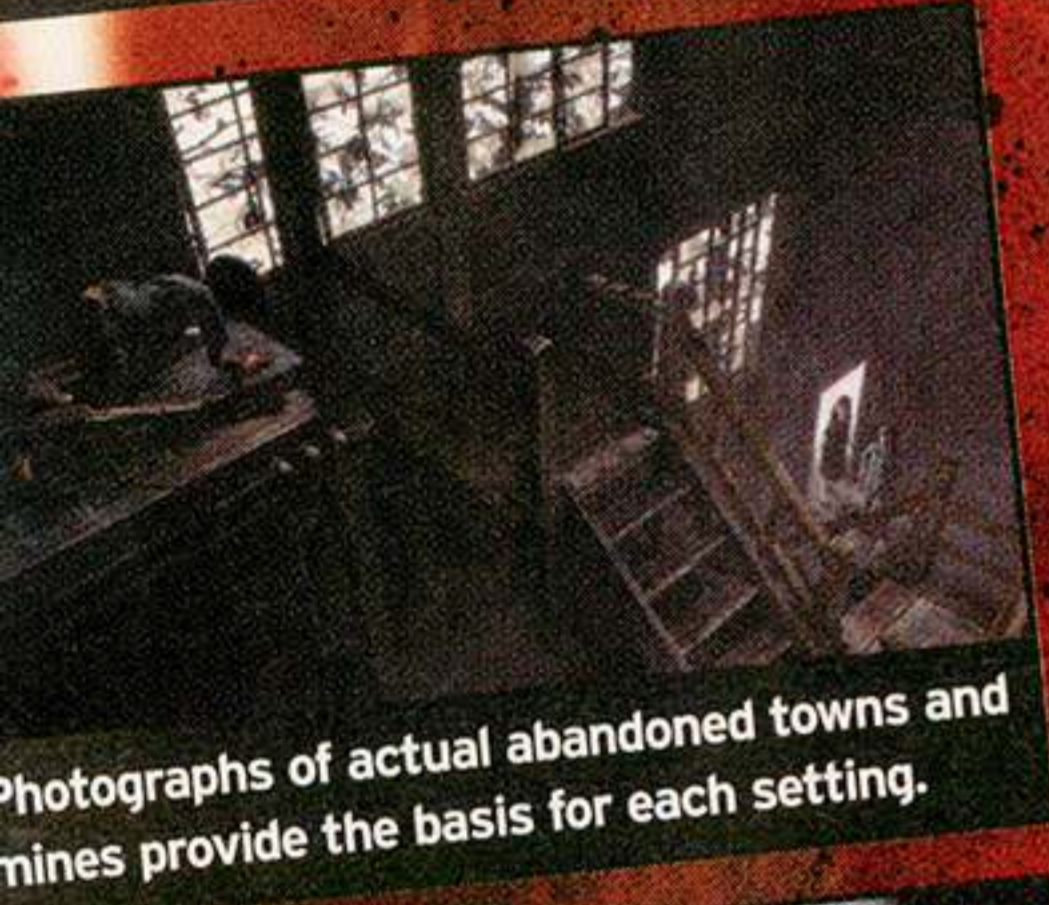
Siren © 2004 Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. "PlayStation" and the "PS" Family logo are registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. The ratings icon is a registered trademark of the Entertainment Software Association.

# ANSWER THE CALL

## CAN YOU RESIST THE CALL OF THE SIREN?



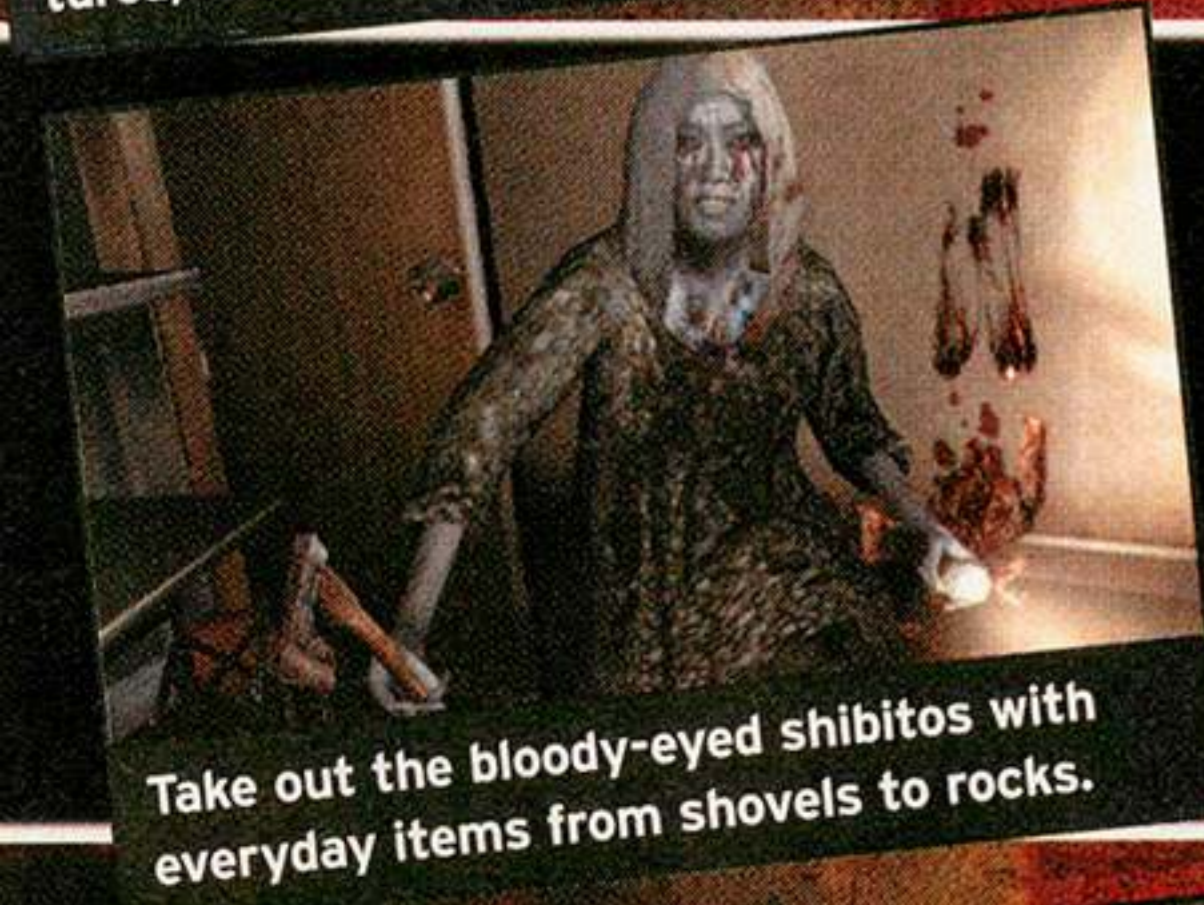
You only wanted to learn more about Hanuda's dark legend—not become part of it.



Photographs of actual abandoned towns and mines provide the basis for each setting.



To ensure realism, actors were motion-captured, facial scanned, and voice recorded.



Take out the bloody-eyed shibitos with everyday items from shovels to rocks.



### WELCOME TO HANUDA

Somewhere in Japan lies the small town of Hanuda. Well, at least it was *once* there. Before a terrible force enveloped the mountainous village. Before a blood-red sea inexplicably surrounded its borders. Before the Siren called and vanished Hanuda from the face of the earth.

Yet the village still exists. And trust us—you don't wanna be there. If the eerie force behind this mysterious turn of events hasn't yet transformed you into a bloody-eyed shibito, then you're on the run from these undead creatures fueled by evil and hate.

Either way, in *Siren* from Sony Computer Entertainment America, there is no hope.

### NO SINGLE HERO

What better way to illustrate the sheer terror of Hanuda's plight than to tell its tale through multiple perspectives? For *Siren*, the Japan-based developers at Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. offer no less than 10 playable characters—anyone from a local teenaged blind girl to a 34-year-old professor of folklore who's visiting town to solve the unexplained disappearance of his parents. As if finding out what's going on *around* him won't be hard enough!

### INNOVATIVE STORYTELLING

Nearly 80 episodes compose

the blood-curdling adventure—all of which occur out of sequence adding to the intrigue and suspense.

The first scene you play may actually occur near the end. A dead (rather...*undead*) character in an early sequence of events could turn out to be a great ally when his earlier, living incarnation helps you later on. Don't worry—with the help of the Scenario Link Navigator, it'll all make sense at the end of the three horrific days.

### CHILLING ATMOSPHERE

Darkness. It permeates each setting of *Siren*, but provides only the basis for the incessant spooked-out feeling you'll experience throughout your entire visit to Hanuda. Fog, rain, and dew combine to create an almost palpable sense of dampness, and haunting sound effects—wind, footsteps, screams, and more—mix with bone-chilling music to further the creepiness. Enjoy the brief respites offered by occasional light. But don't think for a minute it means you're safe.

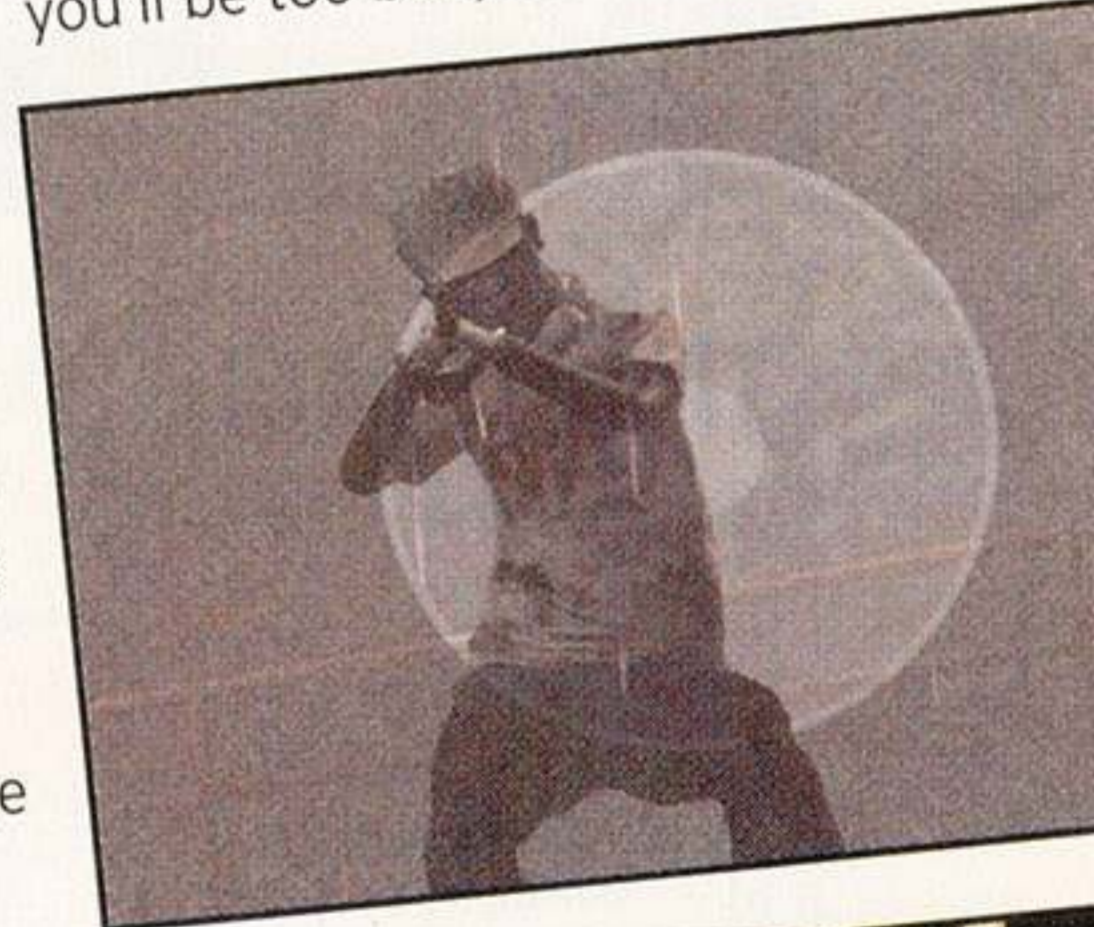
### SECOND SIGHT

Despite the terrible results of the inexplicable events at Hanuda, one benefit to the living has emerged. With a little thought, any given character has the ability to "sightjack." Using this gift, one can overtake another being's line of sight both to see what lies ahead and to try to discern where

one is on the game's vague maps. Be careful, though. Using this power leaves you vulnerable to attack. Sometimes it's wiser to examine your immediate vicinity than to check out what lies hundreds of feet ahead.

### SHIBITO INTELLIGENCE

Don't be surprised to see enemies that exhibit group behavior—a shibito is known to call upon comrades when it senses danger. Such scenarios might make you want to stop for a moment to admire *Siren's* great A.I. But more likely, you'll be too busy screaming.





# 15 YEARS OF EGM



Lock up your daughters—EGM's nearly legal and ready to reminisce

**G**eologically speaking, 15 years is no big whup (we've heard of mountain ranges nearly twice that old). But in the videogame biz—which sees tectonic upheavals in technology and game genres all the

time—it's an epoch. And now that *EGM* has been covering this molten landscape for 15 years, we figured it was time to sift through the strata for the good and bad events that rocked our favorite hobby's Richter scale.

## DIDJA KNOW...?



- Prior to *EGM*, founder Steve Harris tested the waters with black-and-white fanzine *Electronic Game Player* (above) in 1988.
- *EGM* proper arrived the following year, when toy store chain Kay-Bee paid Harris \$100,000 for 60,000 copies of the very first issue.

- In September 1989, game publisher Acclaim (yep, the folks who'd later create *Turok*) offered Harris \$50,000 to buy *EGM*. He passed.
- The heard-but-not-seen game assassin Sushi-X debuted in May 1990. The ninja's first review? *Bloody Wolf* for the TurboGrafx-16. (He gave it an 8 out of 10.)
- Our largest issue ever weighed in at a back-breaking 402 pages (*EGM* #65, December 1994).
- *Mortal Kombat 3* graced the cover five times during 1995—a record that we guarantee will never be broken.
- Up until June 2000 (#131), four—and, for a short while, even five—editors reviewed each game.



## STANDOUT COVERS

### Best cover

*EGM* #146: *Final Fantasy X*

### What went down?

We summoned famed *Final Fantasy* illustrator Yoshitaka Amano to paint a limited-edition cover. Less than 15 percent of our readers received the goods—the rest of you bid for it on eBay.

### Will it happen again?

It already did. To celebrate three new *Final Fantasies*, *EGM* #172 featured new amazing cover art by Amano.



### Worst cover

*EGM* #3: *Iron Sword: Wizards & Warriors II*

### What went down?

Remember in '89 when your mom took sudden interest in gaming? Blame it on this cover featuring romance-poster pansy Fabio. Who better to boost our post-menopausal readership than the guy who can't believe it's not butter?

### Will it happen again?

Word has it the bodice-ripper is holding his breath for another *Wizards & Warriors* sequel, but we'd rather he went looking for a state in need of a governor.



### What were we thinking?

*EGM* #23: *Hudson Hawk*

### What went down?

Someone based a game on a box-office flop, critical disaster, and cinematic punchline, and we put it on the cover! Truth be told, we're still sorry for helping crafty catburglar Hudson Hawk steal money from the stupid kid who bought this even stoopider game.

### Will it happen again?

No.



## THE BEST OF TIMES, THE WORST OF TIMES...

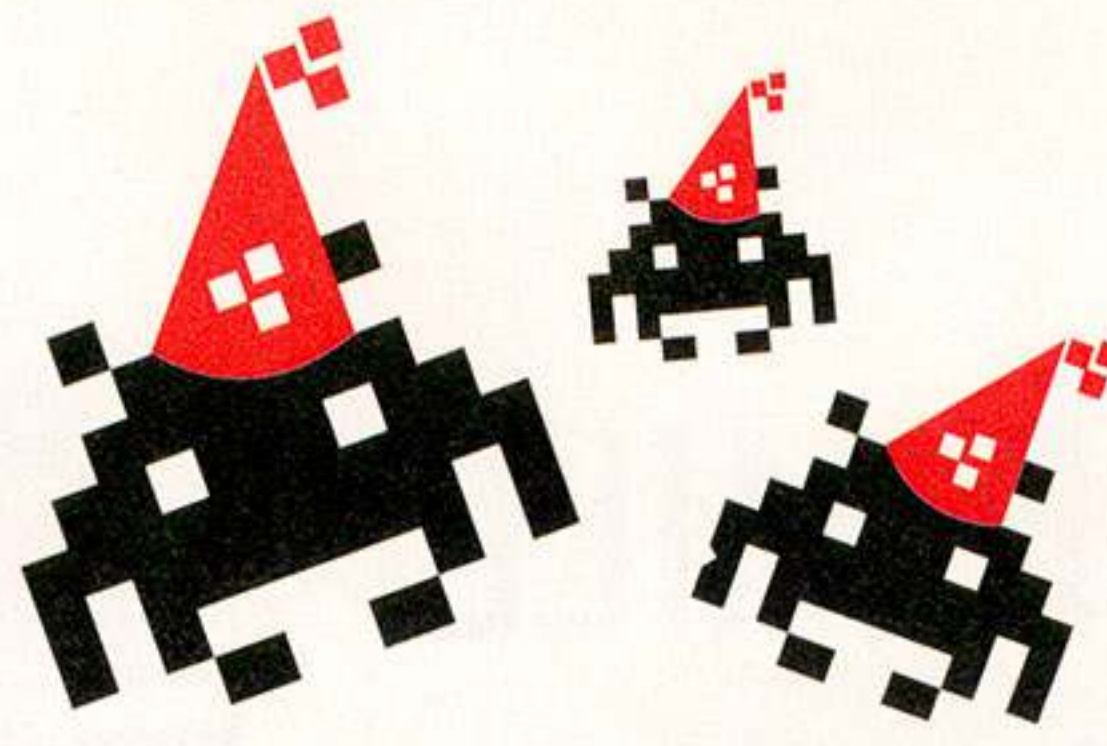
We chart the good and bad of our 15-year reign

|       |      |                                                                                                                                                                 |  |      |                                                                                                                                                                                                             |  |
|-------|------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| HIGHS | 1989 | Gaming gets 16 bits of power with Sega's Genesis and fits in your pocket with Nintendo's Game Boy. <i>EGM</i> arrives with an eye on the ensuing hardware wars. |  | 1990 | Angry at the low review scores we gave <i>Total Recall</i> (NES), publisher Acclaim says "Screw you!" by pulling ads for its games from the mag.                                                            |  |
|       | 1991 | Nintendo meets Sega's challenge with the Super NES. Meanwhile, <i>Street Fighter II</i> revolutionizes coin-op culture.                                         |  | 1992 | Cruddy games make Genesis' CD add-on the coaster holder du jour. Nintendo and Sony abandon plans for a joint CD peripheral, prompting the latter to begin work on what would become the PlayStation.        |  |
| LOWS  | 1993 | "Mortal Monday" brings <i>Mortal Kombat</i> into homes...                                                                                                       |  | 1994 | ...and with it, lots of fuel for the game-violence debate. More frightening: <i>Super Mario Bros.: The Movie</i> debuts in theaters on May 28.                                                              |  |
|       | 1995 | Nintendo releases <i>Super Metroid</i> for the Super NES. We declare it greatest game of all time eight years later.                                            |  | 1995 | Personal foul! Michael Jordan, Charles Barkley, Scottie Pippen, and Shaquille O'Neal star in four turds: <i>Chaos in the Windy City</i> , <i>Shut Up and Jam!</i> , <i>Slam City</i> , and <i>Shaq Fu</i> . |  |

>> JUST BECAUSE YOU READ IT SOMEWHERE DOESN'T MEAN IT'S TRUE: AFTER A PUBLISHED REPORT CITED THAT THE COMPANY WAS PLANNING TO GET OUT OF THE HARDWARE BIZ,



# QUARTERMANN'S TOP I-TOLD-YOU-SOS



Hits and misses from EGM's rumor raider



■ Q-Mann called it: Sony's PSP portable in concept form.

## Q-mann on the money...

- Months before the news was official, Q-mann called console maker Sega's decision to go strictly software.
- *Resident Evil* remade for the GameCube? You heard it first from EGM's gaming gossip hound.
- Q's spies suggested a portable Sony system in March 2000 (EGM #128). That's three years before the PSP became official.

## Q-mann missing the mark...

- In '97, the Q broke news of a secret Nintendo console cryptically titled LiDo-239. It was hardware hokum.
- Contrary to Quatermann's speculation, Nintendo still hasn't bought out struggling former competitor Sega.
- Still waiting for that Xbox version of *Final Fantasy XI* the Q-mann hinted at in 2001? Or *Ninja Gaiden* for PS2? It's called a rumor section for a reason.



■ The phony Mr. Long returned in an updated joke for *Street Fighter III* (above) years later.

# FOOLED YOU!

## Our best April Fools' gag: April 1992, EGM #33

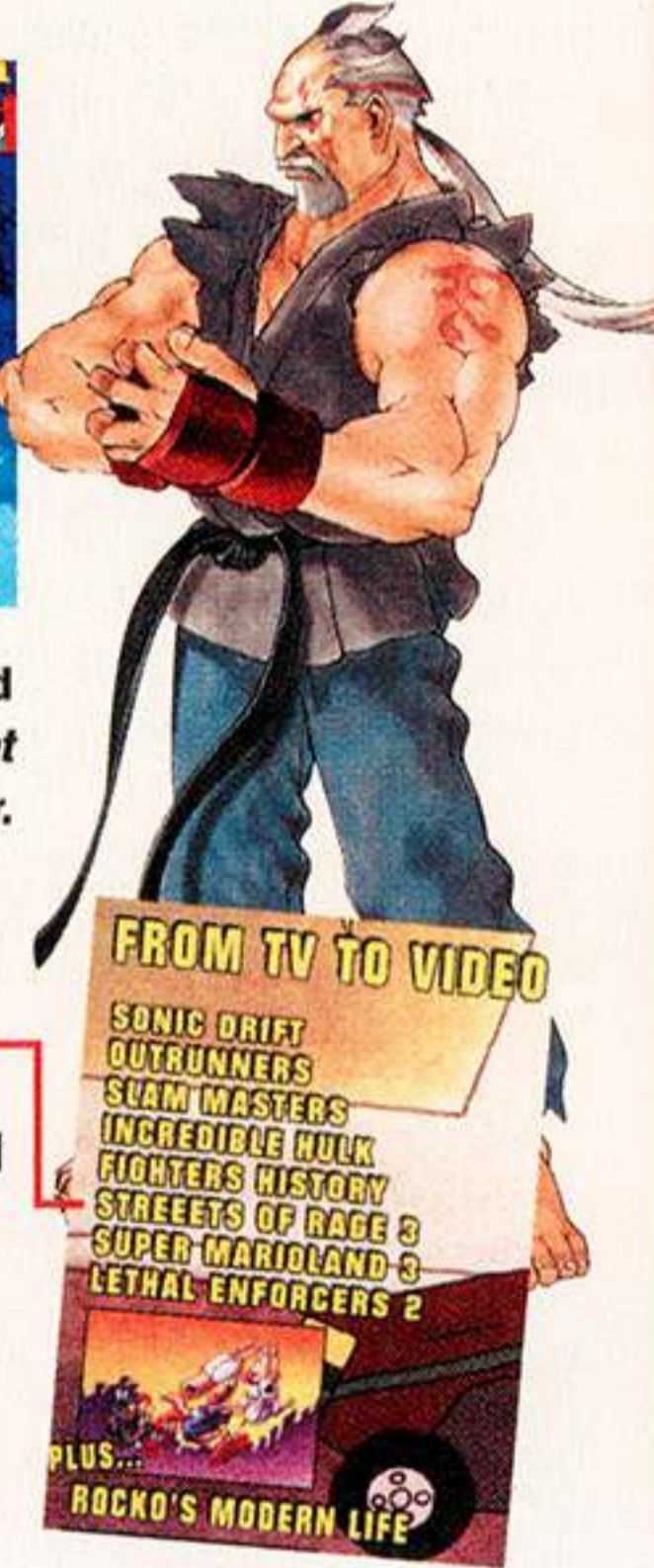
EGM's most infamous—and to some readers, most aggravating—April Fools' prank promised to pit *Street Fighter II* players against series mainstays Ken and Ryu's purported mentor, Sheng Long. We figured some chumps would waste their change trying to fulfill the insanely tough challenge

we cooked up, but we never imagined the joke might one day lead developer Capcom to create the suspiciously Sheng Long-like character Akuma.

## Our worst gag: April 1994, EGM #57

As our copy editor lay fast asleep at the keyboard, our April '94 cover went to the

printers hyping "*Streets of Rage 3*." Next month, we tried to pass off the misspelling as an April Fools' Day prank. Did you fall for it?



# REVIEWS IN REVIEW

After 15 years and 4,000 reviews, our crew of game-rating scientists has seen it all. For instance...



- The first game to earn at least one perfect-10 score was *Ninja Spirit* for the TurboGrafx-16.
- Exactly 10 games have scored straight-10 scores. Our fave five: *The Legend of Zelda: The Ocarina of Time* (N64), *Halo* (XB), *Metal Gear Solid* (PS1), *Soul Calibur* (DC), and *Metroid Prime* (GC).
- *Batman: Dark Tomorrow* (XB/GC) left bat droppings in the caped crusader's cave and took home our first Shame of the Month award in issue EGM #167...
- ...but its awfulness doesn't top *Mortal Kombat Advance* (GBA), the only game in EGM history to "earn" a zilch as one of its review scores.
- And, believe it or not, another game even managed a cumulative score lower than *Mortal Kombat's*. *The Flintstones: Bedrock Bowling* (PS1) got an average of 0.5, making it the lowest-scoring game in EGM history. Aiiieeee!



College students cut class in favor of studying *GoldenEye 007's* spy syllabus. The reason why most of you know what a chocobo is—RPG dynamo *Final Fantasy VII*—hits PS1. EGM cracks the 100-issue barrier (above).



Cries of "Gotta catch 'em all!" are heard across the globe; Poké-mania begins. Konami gets sneaky with *Metal Gear Solid* (PS1). Nintendo's elfish Link masters playing the N64's *Ocarina of Time*.



Sega delivers 128-bit dreams, which include visions of a 3D hedgehog (*Sonic Adventure*) and soul-burning combat (*Soul Calibur*).

Gamers camp outside stores eagerly awaiting the PlayStation 2's release. Sega hikes the first online football game with *NFL 2K1*.



Nintendo advances the Game Boy and launches GameCube. Bill Gates' billions fuel Microsoft's bid to rule gaming with Xbox.

Sony and Microsoft take console gaming online. Chick-of-your-dreams Samus Aran is back in *Metroid Prime* (GC) and *Metroid Fusion* (GBA). Kids beg moms for *GTA: Vice City* (PS2).

Nintendo lights up the portable market with its GBA SP model. Sony announces its own handheld, the PSP.

1996

Capcom finally, finally unveiled long-awaited sequel *Street Fighter III*, but fans griped that it just didn't play right.

1997

Tiger ships Game.com, a black-and-white handheld that plays crappy games. Our grandmas thought the built-in Solitaire "kicked A'."



1998

Nintendo officially pulls the plug on its plans to bring the bulky and scarcely supported N64 disk drive add-on to the United States.

1999

Sega throws in the hardware towel, becoming strictly a third-party game publisher. Genre-defining *Grand Theft Auto III* fuels the fire of videogame haters like Senator Joe Lieberman.

2000



2001

2002

Nokia's all-in-wonder gaming device, the N-Gage, is a complete dud. After piss-poor *Tomb Raider* reviews, Eidos moves Ms. Croft to another developer.



2003

NINTENDO ISSUED A STATEMENT CONFIRMING DEVELOPMENT ON A SUCCESSOR TO GAMECUBE. AND, NO, THEY'RE NOT TALKING ABOUT THE RECENTLY ANNOUNCED DS PORTABLE... >>>

# THE RUMOR MILL

Gossip that's always tax free

q-mann

## TAXMAN

Hi-ho, junior campers! It's your lifelong pal and rumor guy Q-Mann here



to once again lay his monthly bounty of gossip and speculation on your awaiting ears. Spring is The Q's favorite season—this time of year is filled with days of tiptoeing through the tulips and nights of playing ninja as Ryu Hayabusa (and trying not to break my controller). But enough about me, on to the gossip! As always, e-mail any comments you have to [quartermann@ziffdavis.com](mailto:quartermann@ziffdavis.com).

—The Q

### DS to play GBA games

First up this month, a little more news about Nintendo's upcoming DS portable. Quartermann's sources say that after you buy one, you won't have to worry about bringing a GBA along with you too. Word is, the dual-screened machine will be fully backward compatible with your existing Game Boy library. Sweet!



■ Artist's conception, now GBA-compatible.

### Tekken it up a notch

Rumors abound that Namco is working on a new *Tekken*. *Tekken 5* will reportedly be different from the series' previous outings in an effort to compete with the genre's current king of the hill, *Virtua Fighter 4*. As long as King's still in there, I'm happy.

### Superman takes a break

You may have heard a couple months ago that Electronic Arts scored the license to make *Superman* games. Well, you'll have to wait awhile to see the first fruits of those labors. Word indicates that the game is in a

holding pattern until the Man of Steel makes his return to movie theaters. If past attempts to bring Supes back to the big screen are any indication, we may be in for a long wait....

### Neversoft goes west

The Q hears rumblings that Neversoft, the developers behind Activision's highly successful *Tony Hawk* series, is hard at work on a new game that—GASP!—doesn't have any skateboards in it! None! Instead, this new project is an action game set in the Wild West. There seems to be a steadily growing stable of games that use the West as a backdrop. (And I couldn't be happier—I've always secretly wanted to be a cowboy, you know.)

### Grandia all over again

The RPG hardcore will be pleased to hear about the next item up for bid on The Q's docket this month: a third *Grandia* from Game Arts, rumored for a 2004 release in Japan. The good news is that a U.S. release is planned for early 2005.

### Pass the mic

I'll let you in on a little secret. The Quartermann is a karaoke ninja, and he has slain many hearts with his rendition of "You've Lost That Lovin' Feelin'." So the talk that a second volume of Konami's *Karaoke Revolution* is heading to PS2 this summer tickles my fanciest of fancies. Only drawback? No duets...yet.



■ Movie talks break down.

## OVERHEARD

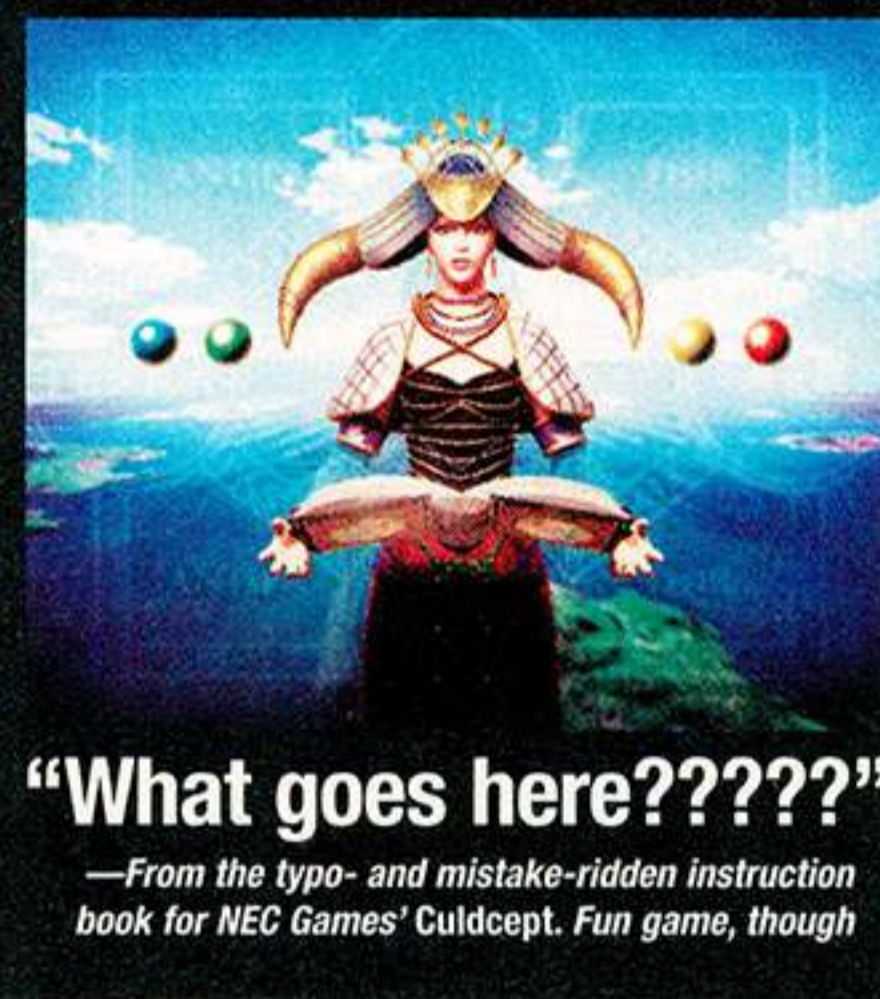
"Nintendo...still plans to launch [its] next home console in the same time frame as our competitors."

—Nintendo corrects a Japanese newspaper report that stated the GameCube's successor would not go on sale for two or three years



"You know what I hate about multi-player role-playing games? You miss a couple nights, maybe a week, and once you get back in, your friends are all riding dragons or wyverns or something, they're all level awesome and you're level bulls\*\*\*"

—Penny-arcade.com's Tycho, making a point about the beauty of *Final Fantasy: Crystal Chronicles* (GC)



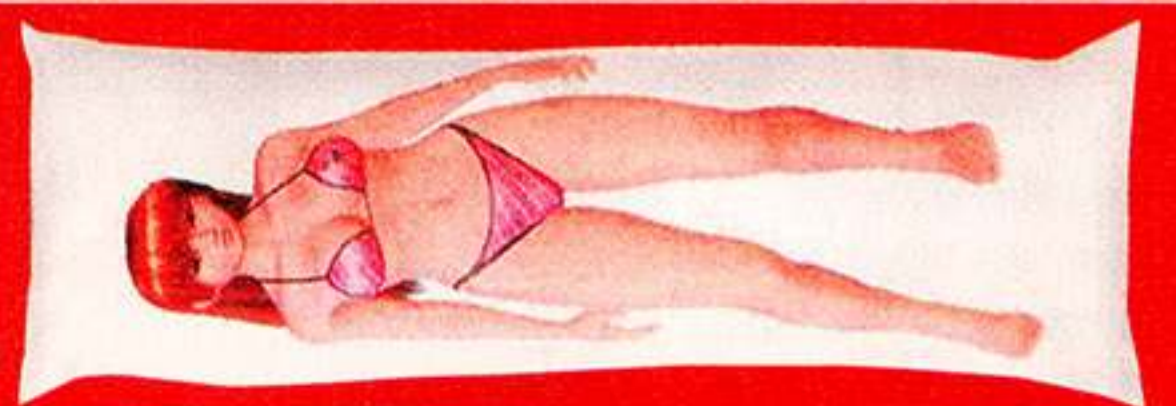
"What goes here?????"

—From the typo- and mistake-ridden instruction book for *NEC Games' Culdcept*. Fun game, though

## TIDBITS SO FRIGHTENING THEY MIGHT KEEP YOU AWAKE AT NIGHT

### Kasumi Snugglin'

Microsoft is pushing the upcoming Japanese release of *Dead or Alive Ultimate Collection* so hard that it's offering a limited-edition clear blue Xbox system that comes

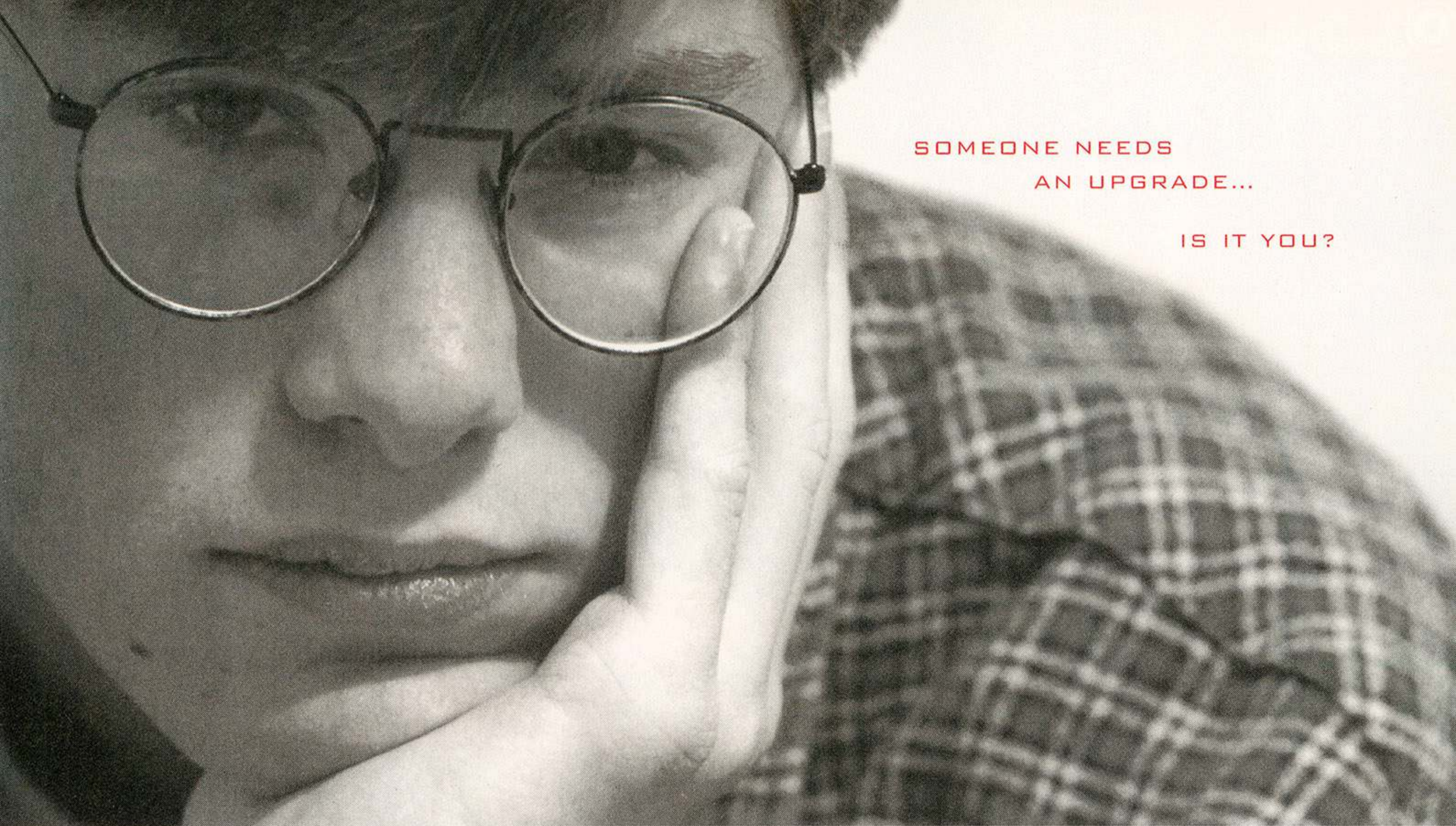


with this Kasumi body pillow. We'd tell you what we thought *DOA* fans are most likely to do with this item, but...you've already thought of it yourself.



### Galerians With None of the Game

Cinemas from the PS2 survival-horror game *Galerians: Ash* are available on DVD as a spliced-together CG movie called *Galerians: Rion*. Only now, the story of a supercomputer-gone-mad's intentions to destroy the human race using its silicon mind includes music from U.S. bands like Slipknot and Adema.



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■ The vile serpent evidently failed its saving throw against laser light shows.

# A FAMILIAR RING

Forgotten Realms attempts to one-up the one ring

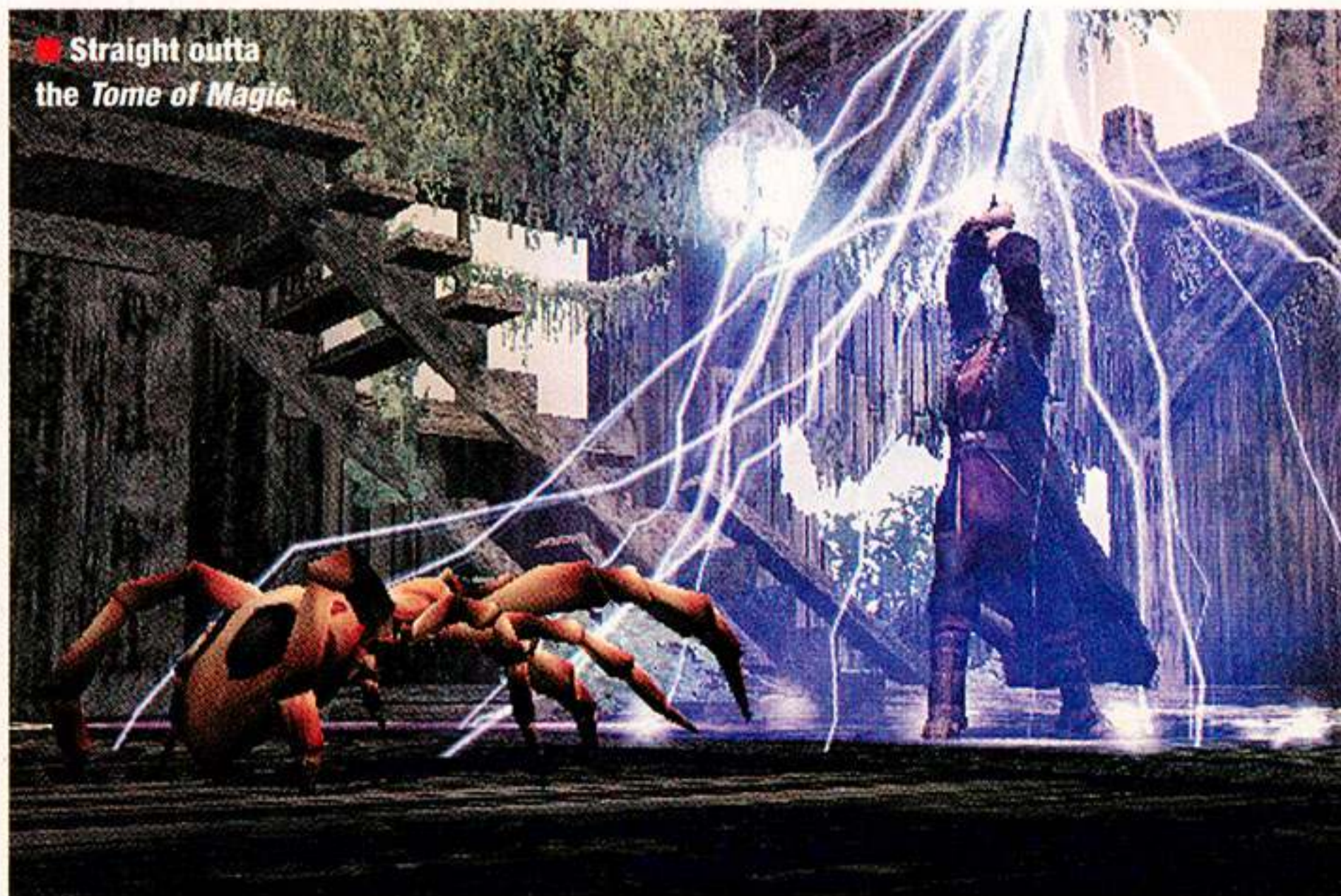
**T**he latest *Lord of the Rings* hack-em-up finds Gimli and Legolas knee-deep and shirtless in a writhing pile of swarthy orcs...hey, wait a second—this isn't *Lord of the Rings*! Nope, it's Atari's latest *Dungeons & Dragons* creation, *Forgotten Realms: Demon Stone*, slated for release on PlayStation 2 this September. The uncanny resemblance isn't accidental, given developer Stormfront

Studios' work on *The Two Towers* for EA. So on the surface, *Demon Stone* certainly looks like *Two Towers* with your favorite Neutral-Good human warrior swapped in Aragorn's shoes...and well, that's exactly what it is, but that's no bad thing.

Sharp visuals provide a stunning fantasy setting, but surprisingly deep gameplay offers the real draw. Unlike the *LOTR* games, *Demon Stone* allows you to swap

control of any of the three party members at any time, depending on whether you're feeling like a warrior, rogue, or mage. Each character also has a secondary ability, like the rogue's trick of turning invisible in deep shadows. These additions plus a healthy variety of objectives beyond "kill 'em all" make for a more versatile experience than you may have had in Middle-earth.

—Nich Maragos



■ Straight outta the *Tome of Magic*.

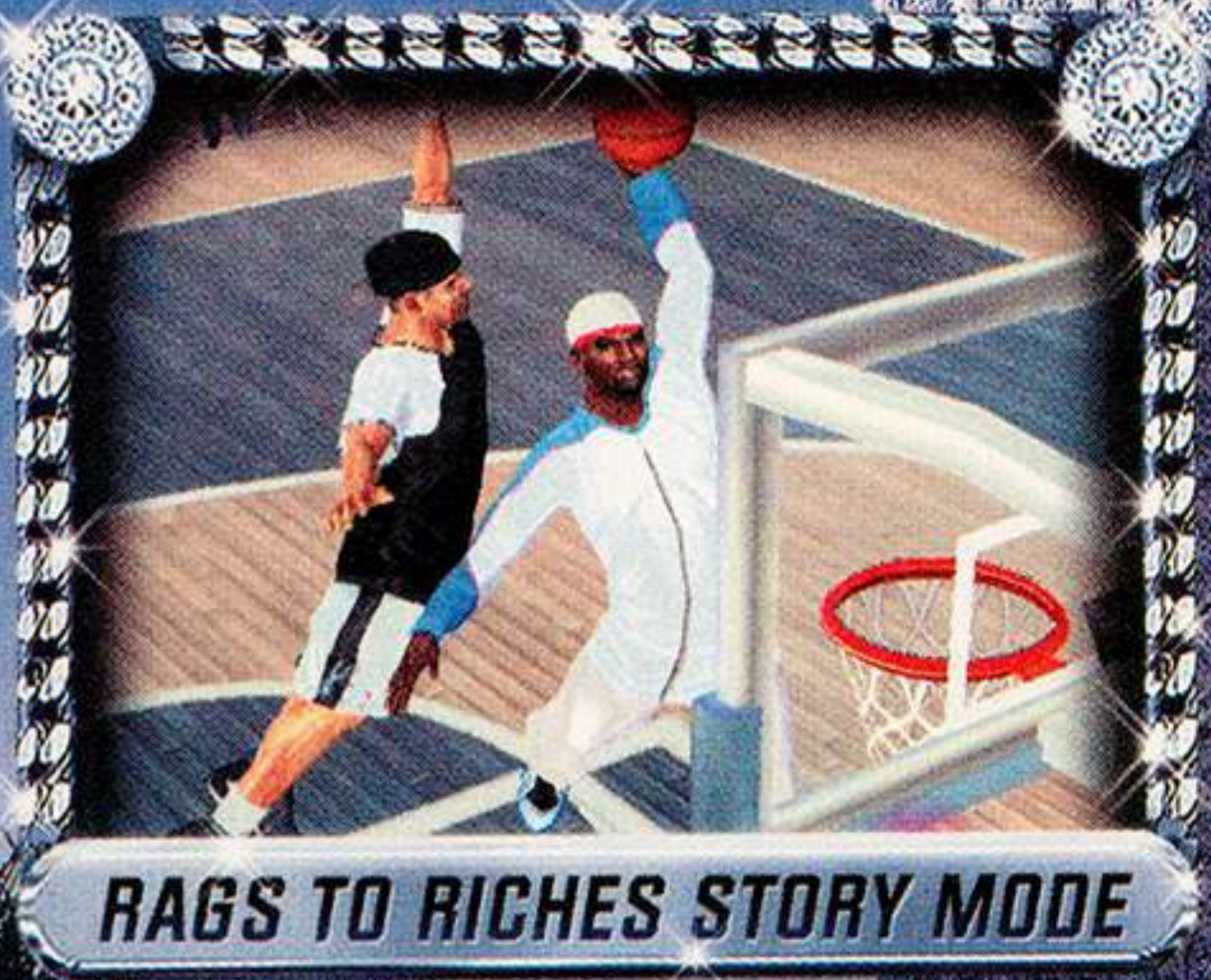
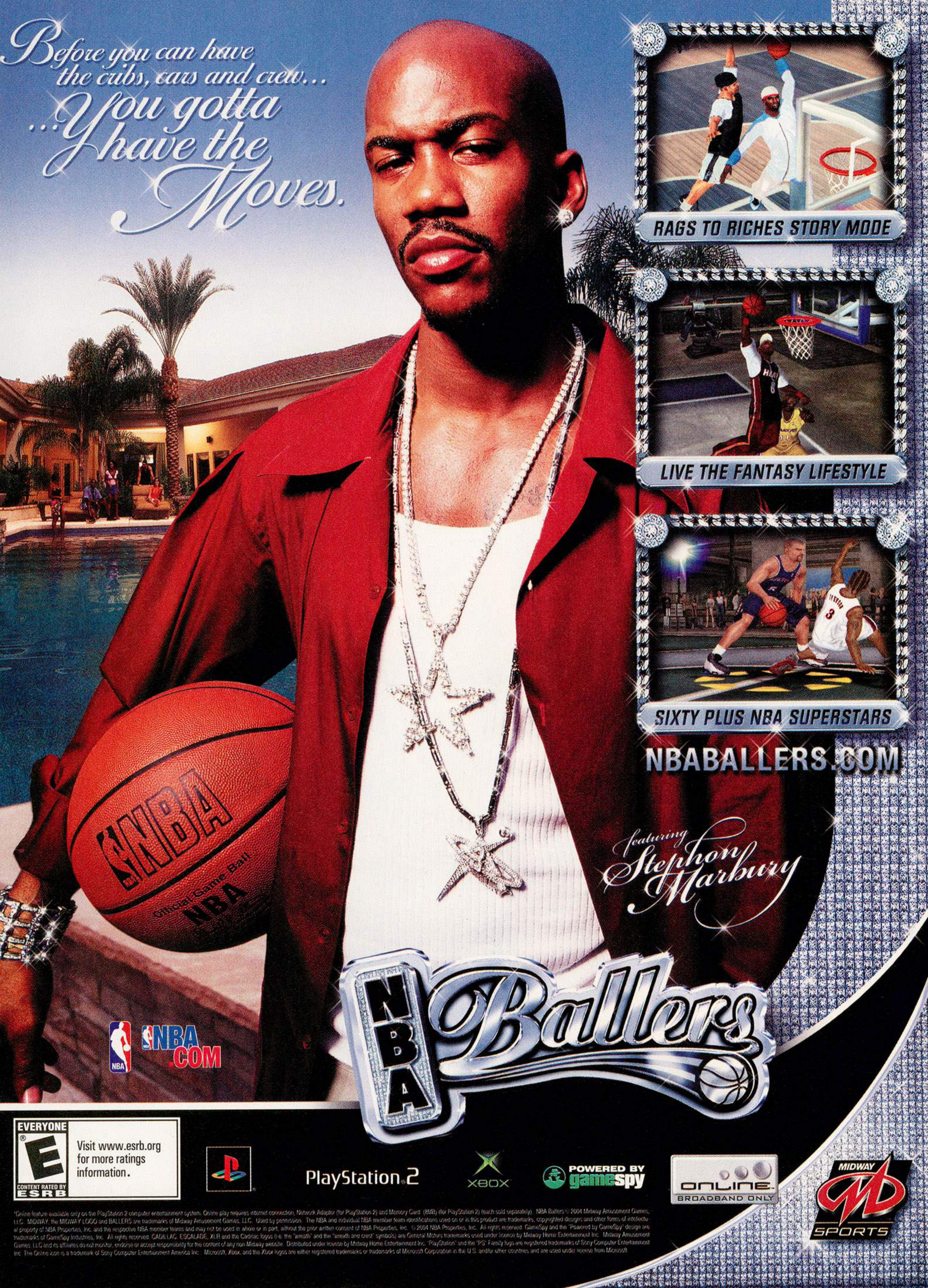


## Unfair Comparison

Obviously, comparing *Demon Stone* to EA's *LOTR* beat-em-ups is fair game. Comparing the respective movies spawned, however, is not. In fact, the *Dungeons & Dragons* movie is so fantastically bad that it's a must-see, if only for Marlon Wayans' heartbreaking performance as Snails, the bumbling thief.

▶▶ A JUNIOR-HIGH STUDENT IN TEXAS WAS TAKEN INTO CUSTODY AFTER BRINGING A "GAME BOY BOMB"—A HOLLOWED-OUT GAME BOY FILLED WITH GUNPOWDER—TO SCHOOL....▶▶

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PlayStation 2



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PlayStation 2

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# THE HOT TEN

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**1** Halo 2  
XB • Fall 2004

**2** Final Fantasy XII  
PS2 • Early 2005

**3** Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater — PS2 • Fall 2004

**4** Resident Evil 4  
GC • Fall 2004

**5** Fable  
XB • August 2004



**6** Kingdom Hearts II  
PS2 • Early 2005



**7** Doom 3  
XB • Fall 2004



**8** Star Fox II  
GC • Summer 2004

**9** Gran Turismo 4  
PS2 • August 2004



**10** StarCraft: Ghost  
PS2/XB/GC • Summer 2004



## HALO 2

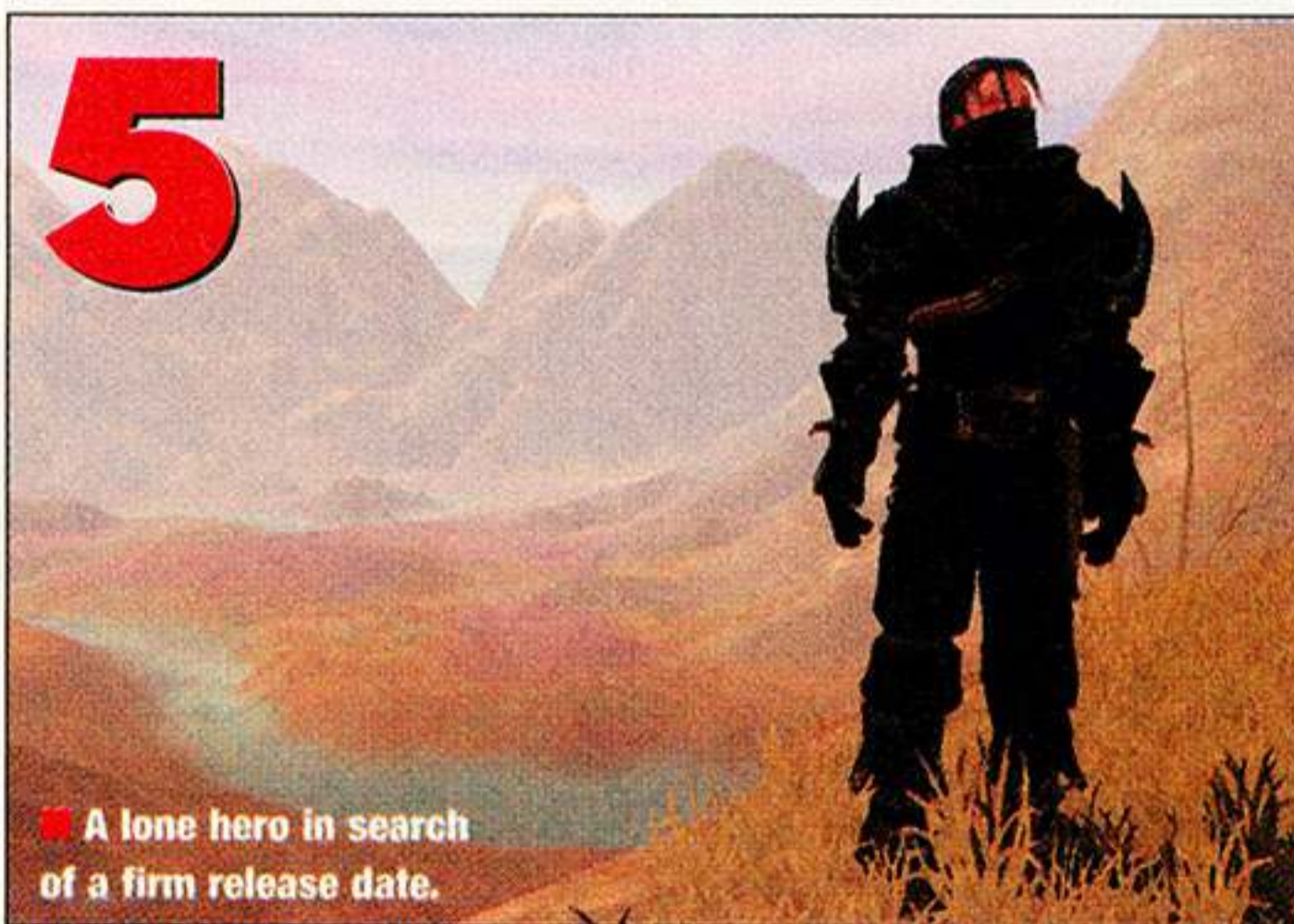
XB • Microsoft • Fall 2004 — We catch another thrilling glimpse of *Halo 2*'s multiplayer game in this brand-new screen. There's no juicy new info attached, but it does the heart good to see red and

blue Master Chiefs frolicking and fragging in their natural environment. It might also lift the spirits to check out the zany *Halo*-related antics chronicled on [www.redvsblue.com](http://www.redvsblue.com), if you haven't already.



## FINAL FANTASY XII

PS2 • Square Enix • Early 2005 — Square Enix's epic *FFXII* is still nearly a year away. Bummer. Luckily, our painstaking analysis of early footage reveals that ATB (active time battle, in which enemies keep attacking you while you choose combat moves) is back in full effect and multiple heroes can perform actions simultaneously. We're still not sure what the characters' three "gem slots" are all about, though. Is *FFVII*'s materia system coming back?



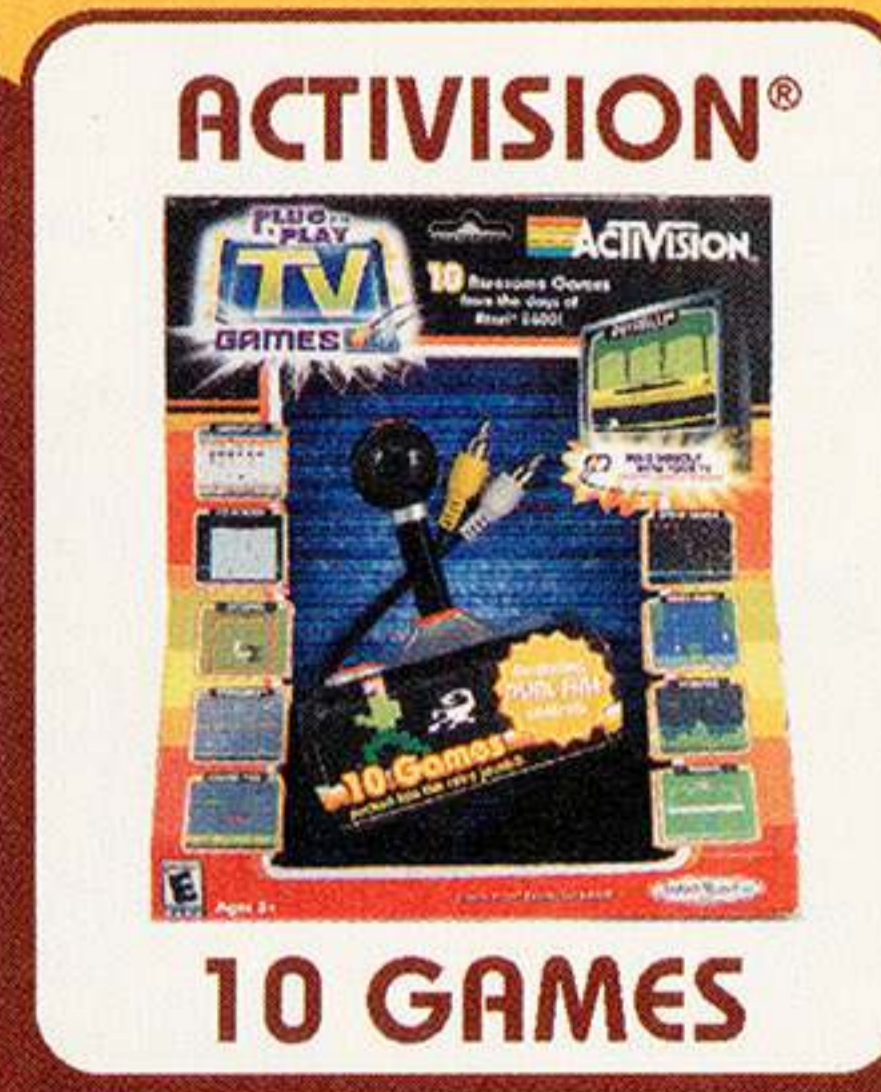
## FABLE

XB • Microsoft • August 2004 — Like the noble, plodding turtle, Microsoft's wildly ambitious life-simulating RPG, *Fable*, is moving slowly and steadily toward the finish line. Here's some good news: We hear that the game will hit in August. Also, we hear that award-winning composer (and former Oingo Boingo frontman) Danny Elfman (*Batman*, *The Simpsons*) will be scoring *Fable*'s main theme. Classy.

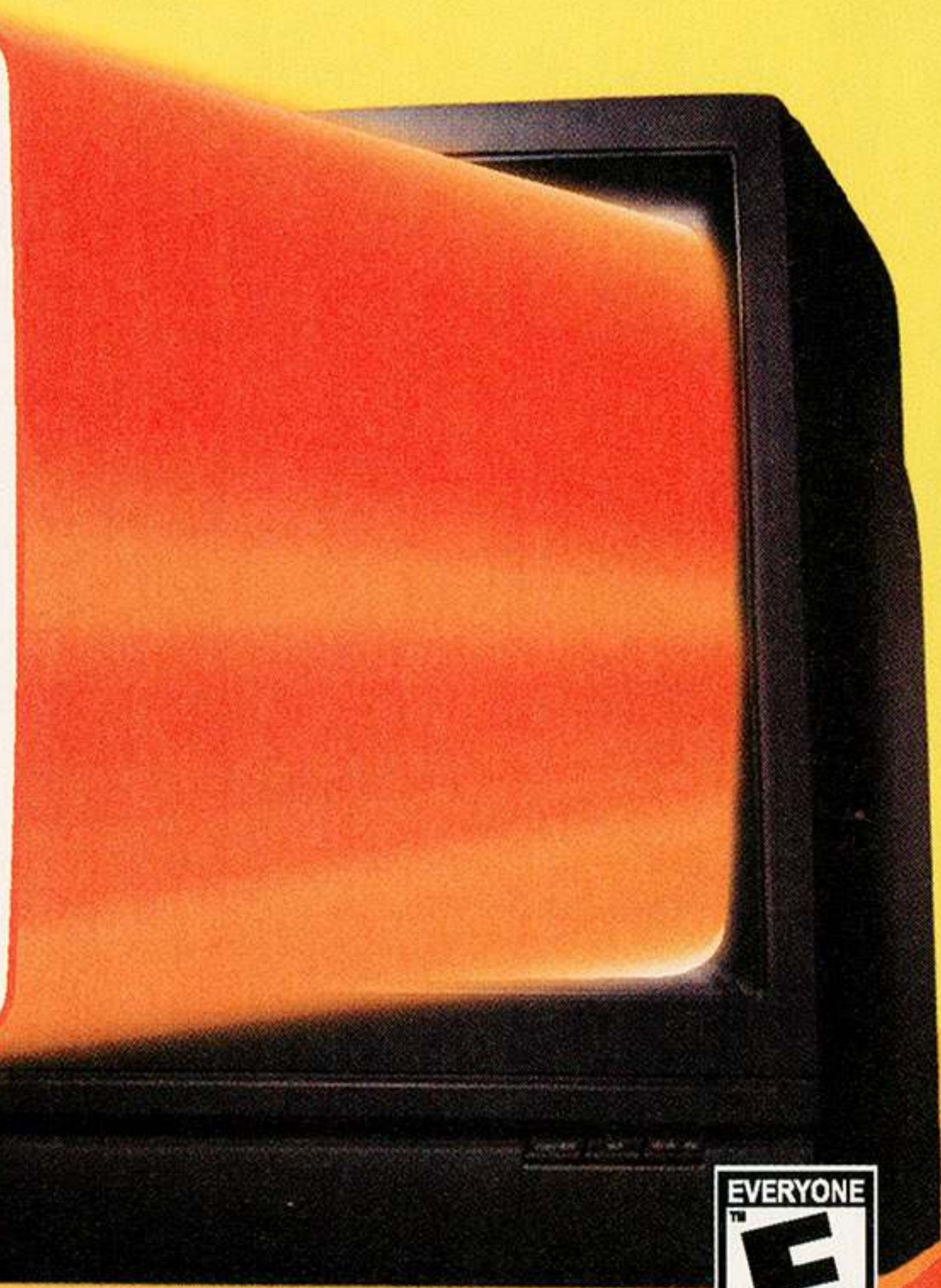
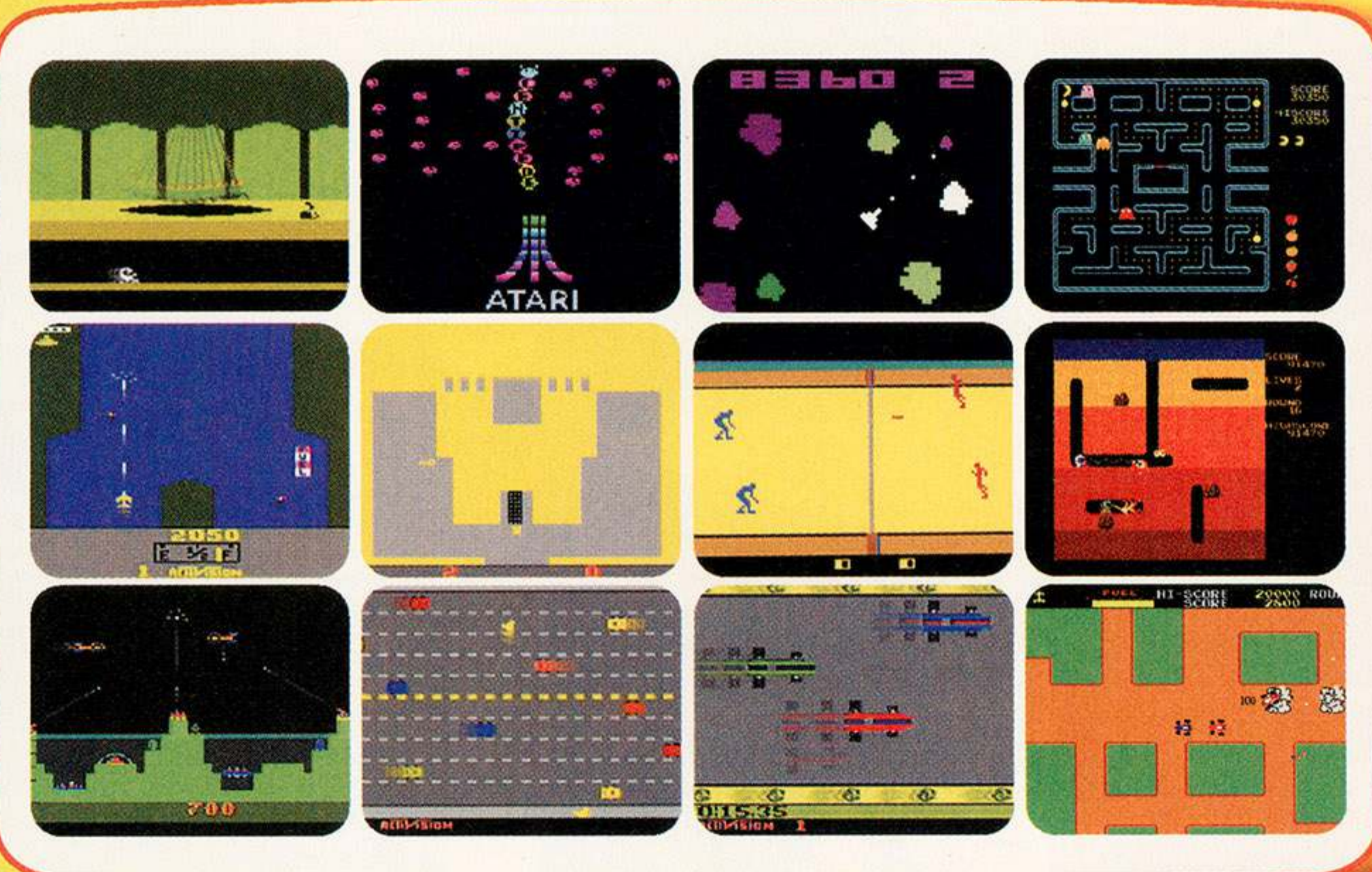


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■ Pink is a fashion faux pas even for a custom robo.

# COMING SOON

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**Custom Robo**  
GC • Nintendo — Educate yourself on issues of mechanical cruelty by forcing robots to do battle for human pleasure.



**Growlanser: Generations**  
PS2 • Working Designs — Tell us you're not the one kid who's willing to finish this game eight times just to see everything.



**Mario vs. Donkey Kong**  
GBA • Nintendo — Solve environmental puzzles to help Mario retrieve his stolen toys from Nintendo's famous ape.



**Mega Man Anniversary Collection**  
PS2/GC • Capcom — Celebrate the Blue Bomber's 15th birthday by playing 10 classic *Mega Man* games. We'll bring the cake.



**Metal Slug 3**  
XB • SNK — Take your Xbox slumming with this old-timey looking (but seriously fun to play) 2D shooter.



**Onimusha 3: Demon Siege**  
PS2 • Capcom — The look on Samanosuke's face says it all. The first *Onimusha's* main man never imagined that when he signed on to star in the series' finale, it would involve a field trip to Paris...or sharing the spotlight with a Frenchie (Jean Reno).



**RalliSport Challenge 2**  
XB • Microsoft — Additional cars and tracks are swell, but what really gets our motor runnin' is Xbox Live play.



**Sabre Wulf**  
GBA • THQ — The good doctor specializes in two fields: platforming and growing some mean-looking muttonchops.



**Samurai Warriors**  
PS2 • Koei — The feudal Chinese slash-em-up *Dynasty Warriors* series is turning Japanese (at least we really think so).



**Shrek 2**  
PS2/XB/GC • Activision — Here's hoping the troubled *Shrek* license lives happily ever after in Activision's hands.



**TOCA Race Driver 2**  
XB • Codemasters — The all-in-wonder racing sim features countless track styles, including street, rally, and ice.



**Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell Pandora Tomorrow**  
PS2/GC • Ubisoft — Check out Sam's Xbox mission performance on page 100.



**Transformers**  
PS2 • Atari — A talking big rig leads the resistance force against a robot clone army. Yep, this is *Transformers*, all right.



**Pro Fishing Challenge**  
XB • Atlus — So you don't have to feel guilty the next time you tell your chums you caught a fish "this big."



**Van Helsing**  
PS2/XB • VU Games — High stakes won't stop Hugh Jackman's big-screen vampire specialist from sticking it to Dracula.



**X-Men: Legends**  
PS2/XB • Activision — Engage in some social grooming with Beast and Nightcrawler.

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# SNAKE IN THE GRASS

In **Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater**, the most dangerous hero is the one you can't see

By Nich Maragos

**S**olid Snake has given us the slip again—and we're the ones controlling the freakin' guy. The one-man-army star of the *Metal Gear* series is right in front of us on the TV screen in Konami's *Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater*—we swear he's there—but we can't see him for the trees.

Looks like the new camouflage system in this killer-looking sequel, due for PlayStation 2 this fall, is working a little

too well. "It's very hard to play when you cannot see yourself," muses series creator Hideo Kojima, trying to work out the solution to this prickly game-design dilemma. "But we don't want to place a little cursor on [him], so we're trying to tweak that to where the camo works but you can still see yourself."

Kojima is back to work on the *Metal Gear* series after vowing never to return once he'd finished the excellent and off-

kilter *Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons of Liberty*. So perhaps it's to make life interesting for himself that he's made such drastic revisions for this sequel: For *Snake Eater*, players can look forward to "a new era, new gameplay, and a new setting," Kojima says. We've told you about the new era and shown glimpses of the new jungle setting in past articles, but Kojima has just revealed to us one of the sequel's main new gameplay features:

Hiding not behind trees or rocks, but in plain sight of your enemy. The secret? Careful use of camouflage.

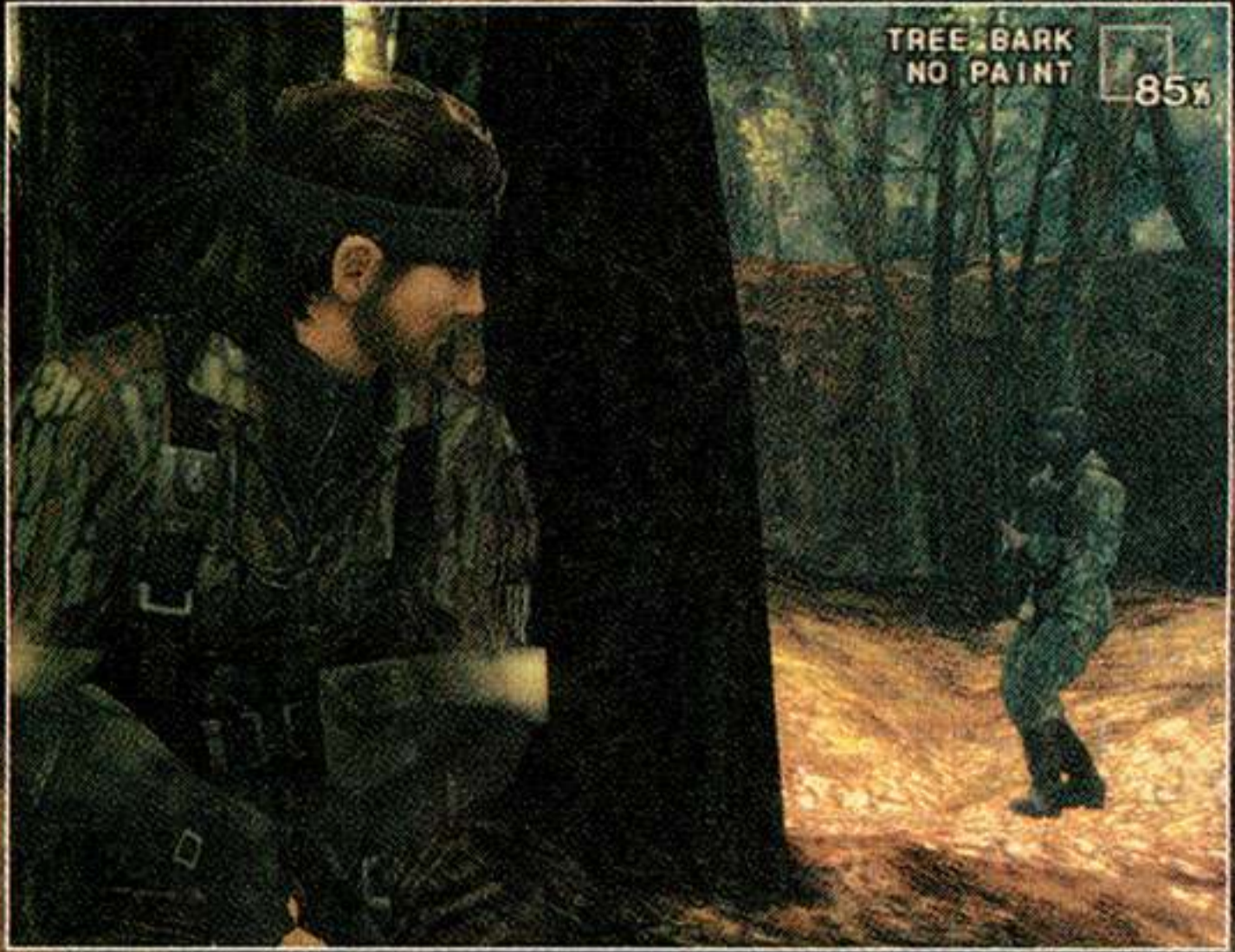
#### A new era

But before we get too deep into the new game's jungle, a quick refresher course: *Snake Eater* is set in the 1960s—an odd period considering that the Snake we know from past *Metal Gear* games would have been in kindergarten during that ▶



**Snake Egg #1:  
Random Intelligence  
About Snake's New Game**

The *Snake Eater* musical theme has little in common with the familiar stirring score used in *MGS1* and *2*. Instead, the vocal theme is based on the classic James Bond songs of the '60s, with the addition of some odd-ball lyrics about tree frogs.



■ You might get a taste of Snake sooner than you think. "There will probably be time for us to [release a demo]," says Director Hideo Kojima.

■ Now you don't see him, now you still don't: Even point-blank enemies will blunder past Snake if he's dressed for successful evasion.

▶ turbulent decade. "One thing I can say is that Snake is not going to hop on a time machine and travel back in time," Kojima quips. "There are games like that out there, but this isn't one of them." Instead, all signs point to the real protagonist of *Snake Eater* being Big Boss, the main bad guy in the original *Metal Gear* for Nintendo Entertainment System—and also the source of Solid Snake's DNA (as well as evil twin Liquid Snake's. Mullets run in the family, apparently).

*Snake Eater* begins with this mysterious character (for the sake of simplicity, we'll keep calling him Solid Snake) parachuting into the jungle on an unknown mission and losing his backpack. Once he's recovered his things, his mission proper—whatever it is—begins.

Fortunately, we know considerably more about the new game-

play and settings. "Survival" has been a hot concept in games since Capcom created the survival-horror genre with its *Resident Evil* series, but never has the literal meaning been applied to a game as heavily as in *Snake Eater*. With an objective that could (or could not) take days to complete, Snake has to survive the elements in addition to encounters with enemy forces. That means keeping himself well fed on fish and snakes he catches (hence the game's name), staying well sheltered, and—of course—remaining well hidden.

### New gameplay

The camouflage system in *Snake Eater* is so effective that Kojima challenged us to find Snake in certain screenshots, and at least one of them genuinely stumped us until he moved the commando from his position. ▶



### Snake Egg #2: The Intro

The intro movie will be interactive this time. "If you want to play around with it, you can use the controller and mash buttons and change stuff on the screen in the intro," says Director Hideo Kojima.

■ Fire bad: Snake's flame camo isn't the best type for tall grass, as this enemy trooper is about to teach our hero.



■ Anything *Splinter Cell*'s Sam Fisher can do, Snake can do...er, just as well—like hang one-handed and take out patrols with his pistol.

## PLAYING DRESS-UP: A KONAMI CONTEST LETS YOU DESIGN SNAKE'S DUDS

Ever since *Metal Gear Solid 2*'s campaign to put players' names on collectible enemy dog tags, series creator Hideo Kojima has tried to include fans in his games in a literal way. This trend continues with the Camouflage Campaign: a contest in which you can design your own *Sneak Eater* camo pattern. Contest entry details will be revealed in May at the annual Electronic Entertainment Expo game show, so you might want to start thinking about your entry now. And if you don't make it into the final product, don't give up: The campaign will extend beyond the initial release when Konami offers later patterns as online downloads, a first for *Metal Gear Solid*.

Keep in mind that you can't design an entire outfit like we have in these mocked-up Snakes here—designs are more like PC wallpaper in that you can either center or tile a small texture across the entire suit. Entries will be based on one of three criteria: effectiveness, humor value, or coolness.

"If [a pattern] seems to work really well, we'll pick it," says Kojima, "[although we'll choose] designs that look good whether or not they're effective." Kojima's example involved Snake wearing camouflage plastered with the face of Gakko, a toy duck manufactured by Konami Toyware. "If there are a lot of ducks in the game somewhere," Kojima jokes, "the enemies won't see you when you wear this pattern."

■ Our Snake duds here (left to right, Trippy Snake, Buck-naked Snake, J.Lo Oscar-dress Snake, and Supes) are too complex for the contest, but who cares? We just wanted to give you zany ideas.



### Snake Egg #3: What a Croc

Players will find other uses for dead animals besides chowing down on them. Take Snake's stylish new crocodile hat, for instance. Snake can don this thing and creep through shallows, giving guards the impression that a crocodile is stalking them. Watch 'em run away screaming.



### Snake Egg #4: Watch Your Step

Snake will have to worry about more than just enemy patrols in the jungle. We've seen him spend some quiet time 30 feet in the air after stepping directly into a tree snare. But it could have been worse—he could have been hit by the spiked bludgeon trap he dodged right before the snare.



### Snake Egg #5: Critter Du Jour

Snakes aren't the only things you eat in this game. Also on the menu: birds, frogs, rabbits, scorpions, and alligators. Furthermore, Director Hideo Kojima says, "I respect [*Mario* series creator] Shigeru Miyamoto, so there will be a lot of mushrooms in the game. But you cannot eat turtles."

➤ Snake can don different types of camo and face paint to match the terrain—snow, grass, forest, etc. (see sidebar)—in real time. Players will know how well camouflaged they are by checking the Camo Index in the screen's upper right corner. It changes in real time based on a variety of factors, including posture, terrain, amount of shadow, and the current camo and face paint Snake is wearing. The highest the index can go is 100 percent, meaning that enemies cannot see Snake no matter how close they are to his position, but it's possible to get the percentage down to a negative as well—for instance, by taking Snake out of cover and running him over crackling dry leaves. "When he runs and you see that negative five percent," Kojima says, "that's more like, 'Hey, see me! I'm here!'"

In fact, running anywhere is not to your

advantage in *Snake Eater*. It's better to mosey and better still to use a new type of motion called "stalking," created for this game. "This new technique is very useful when you want to sneak up on an enemy from behind," says Kojima. When stalking, Snake moves very slowly on tiptoe and can sometimes move without any penalty to his Camo Index, but it comes at a price. "Thing is, when you stalk, you lose a lot of stamina," Kojima says. "Basically, when you walk around in the mountains and you have to climb, you lose stamina, and you have to regain stamina by feeding yourself." That means it's time to chow down on some "wilderness sushi"—raw fish, snakes, and other high-protein foods.

Gung-ho players who'd rather not worry so much about staying hidden can go a little more Rambo if they like. "If you want to be a macho, hard-boiled guy like 'I'm ➤

■ You don't have to go all Tammy Faye with the face camo. Even subtle makeup can really help Snake blend in.

**SNAKE EGG #6:  
PLAY DEAD**

Not all the ideas for camouflage made the cut. One rejected pattern: "Camo with a lot of blood and fake sword wounds, so when you wear that and lie by corpses, the enemy thinks you're a corpse and leaves you alone," says Kojima.



## GROUND SUPPORT: RATING THE TERRAIN

Not all types of terrain are created equal in the world of *Snake Eater*. Each one has different properties to take into account, and each requires a different kind of camouflage, which Snake can change on the fly. Konami hasn't shown all the types yet, but the few revealed so far give an indication of how much you'll have to consider the environment.

### Type 1: Grass

**Pros:** It's the easiest type of terrain to take cover in; just lie prone and your Camo Index goes to 50 percent.

**Cons:** Moving through it makes it rustle, and tall grass can hide dangerous serpents as easily as it can hide you.

**Camo to use:** Tiger stripe



### Type 2: Dead Leaves

**Pros:** Almost none.

**Cons:** Plenty. Moving across dead leaves makes a nasty crunchy sound. And because leaves lie on flat land (you can't burrow under them), they don't offer the best cover.

**Camo to use:** Leaf pattern



### Type 3: Trees

**Pros:** In addition to providing some helpful shadows, trees are good hiding places all on their own, if you can keep the trunk between you and the bad guys.

**Cons:** None, if you can keep them between you and the bad guys' eyes.

**Camo to use:** Tree bark



### Type 4: Fire

**Pros:** We've seen a level set in an inferno, which would give enemies something else to worry about besides you.

**Cons:** To blend in, you'd have to be close to the fire, and that can be hazardous to your health.

**Camo to use:** Fire pattern



### Type 5: Snow

**Pros:** We figure it would be easy to slink through all that fresh powder...

**Cons:** ...but then, as anyone who has played *Metal Gear Solid* knows, nothing marks your hiding spot like footprints in the snow.

**Camo to use:** Snow pattern





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## HIDE AND GO SNAKE: THE ANATOMY OF A WELL-HIDDEN MAN

### Terrain

Take note of your surroundings because you'll have to change up your tactics accordingly. Grass provides cover, for instance, but you'll have to wear the right colored camo for it and rustling sounds could alert guards. Mud doesn't make noise, but you'll leave footprints, and you know the hassles that could create.

### Posture

Sit down? Stand up? Snake's basic posture and the way he moves makes a difference when it comes to being detected. Lying prone is the stealthiest, standing tall is the worst, so the trade-off between moving quickly and risking attention is up to you. Here, Snake tries his new stalk move.

### Face Paint

You can get up to 95 percent camouflaged without it, but for true invisibility, you'll need the appropriate face paint. An enemy can be two feet away and looking directly at you, but he won't notice a thing. Just don't belch.

### Camo

The right duds will do the most to help you blend into the background, but the wrong ones will be like a beacon when roving enemy patrols are near. Wearing the fire pattern in snowy areas will so get you on the worst-dressed list.

# TIGER STRIPE WOODLAND



## Radar

The radar, too, uses camouflage...OK, not really. Though you can't see one on this screen, that doesn't mean they're gone from the game. In *Snake Eater*, you'll have a couple of different radar types and can toggle between using them or not.

## Camo Index

This readout indicates how well hidden you are, and it's affected by all the other factors called out in this screen. The percentage refers to what degree you're hidden—not the likelihood that a soldier will see you. Even if you're 95 percent camouflaged, there's still a 100 percent chance that a guard will see you if he wanders within a few inches of you.

## Light

Snake's got it made in the shade, but his Camo Index decreases when he heads toward the light. Look for patches of shadow cast by trees, boulders, and other forms of cover to help you stay out of sight.

## Enemies

The enemies' distance from you affects how likely they are to notice your presence. If your Camo Index is at 100 percent, they can get within inches of you without knowing you're underfoot. If they're a little ways away, 80 percent on the index will be enough to keep you hidden.

► not going to wear anything,' then you don't have to wear any camo," says Kojima. "You can just walk around with no T-shirt and play it your way." The drawback—besides the obvious lack of cover—is that Snake will have a harder time staying warm and will lose stamina faster. But at least you won't have to worry about getting out those stubborn stains. "One thing about the camo uniforms," says Kojima, "is that if you get shot or wounded, there'll be bloodstains, and then your camo pattern will have red stuff on it, and your Camo Index will go down."

## The new setting

The first *Metal Gear Solid* is confined to an Alaskan military base and its immediate snowy environs, while *MGS2: Sons of Liberty* takes place entirely in industrial settings, such as an oil tanker and an overseas refinery. To contrast this and take the series back to its jungle roots, Kojima is going back to nature. "As I said before, most of the gameplay takes place in the wilderness," he says. "You've seen the jungle, but there are also mountains, rivers, and caves—basically the natural environment. [It's all to force you to] switch between different camo patterns anytime and try to pick a pattern that's the best match for where you are."

These outdoor settings make for some nifty visuals, including a torchlit cave filled with bats. But they also make for some changes in the way players must approach certain tasks, such as disposing of bodies. Now that you won't find lockers to stash corpses in, "you can hide them in the grass, hide them in holes or tree trunks, and you can also carry them to streams or rivers," Kojima says. It's a fitting end for these enemy troopers who—if you play the game right—will never even see you coming.

## Snake Egg #7: HALO

Snake begins the game by parachuting into his location wearing a gas mask. Why? It's a HALO (high altitude, low opening) jump. Such jumps are made to keep the enemy from seeing the parachute, but they're very risky.



## Snake Egg #8: Mystery Machines

We've seen two mysterious vehicles shown in silhouette. We figure one of them is probably the new (old?) model of the Metal Gear mech, the nuke-deploying walking tank from the original game. The other machine is a flying craft that seems to have tank treads and other strange accoutrements.



# HARVEST MOON

*A Wonderful Life*

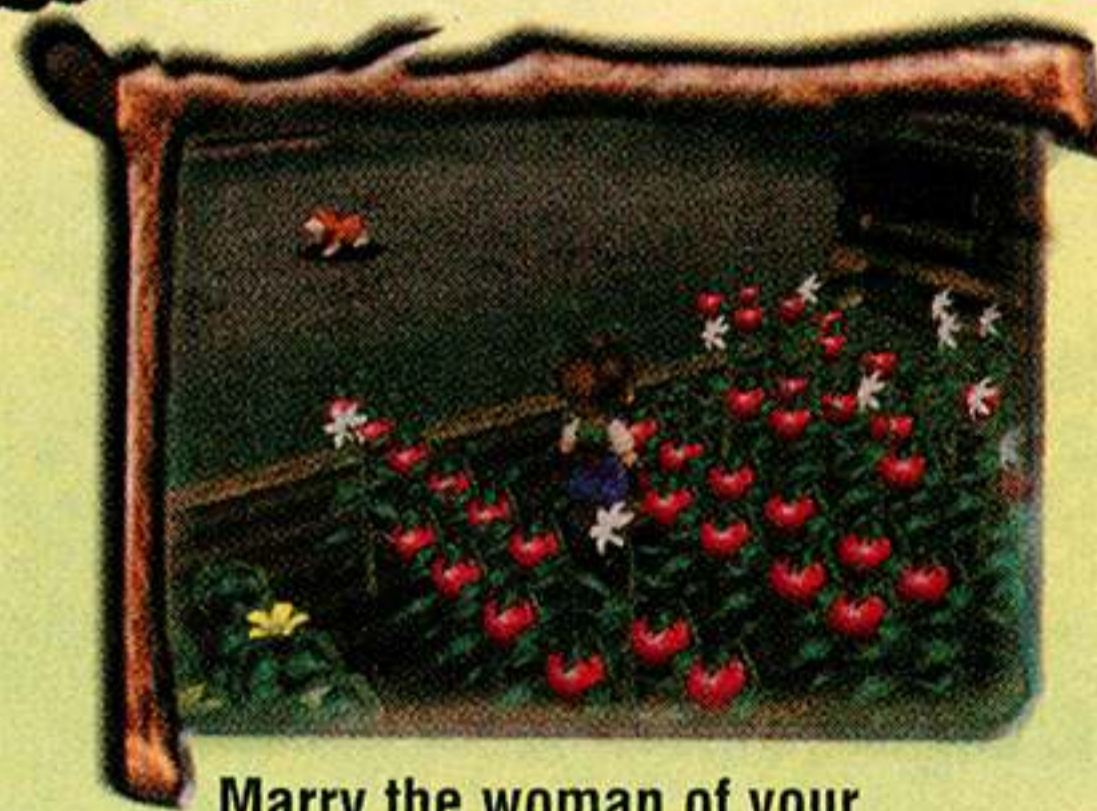
WELCOME TO THE WORLD OF

A Heartwarming

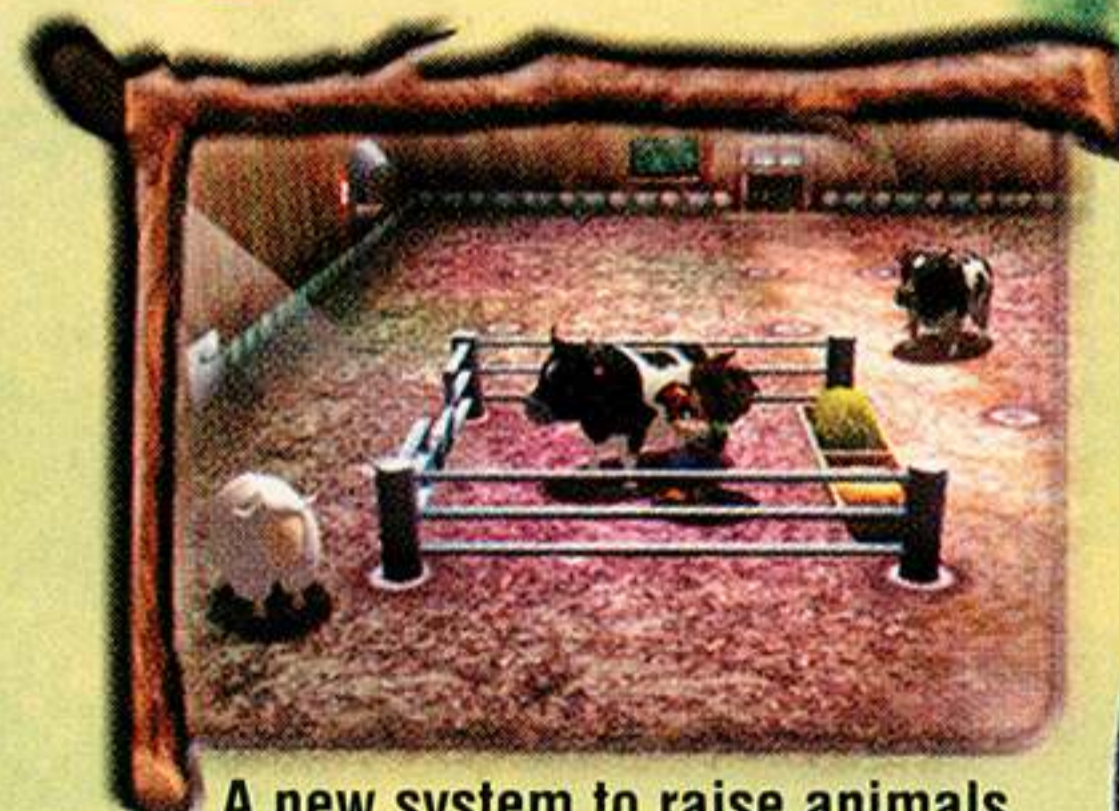
AVAILABLE NOW!



Experience a brand new Harvest Moon with new Characters!



Marry the woman of your dreams and raise a family!



A new system to raise animals and grow vegetables!



EVERYONE  
**E**  
 Alcohol Reference  
 Suggestive Themes  
 ESRB CONTENT RATING [www.esrb.org](http://www.esrb.org)

NINTENDO  
**GAMECUBE**

**NATSUME**<sup>®</sup>  
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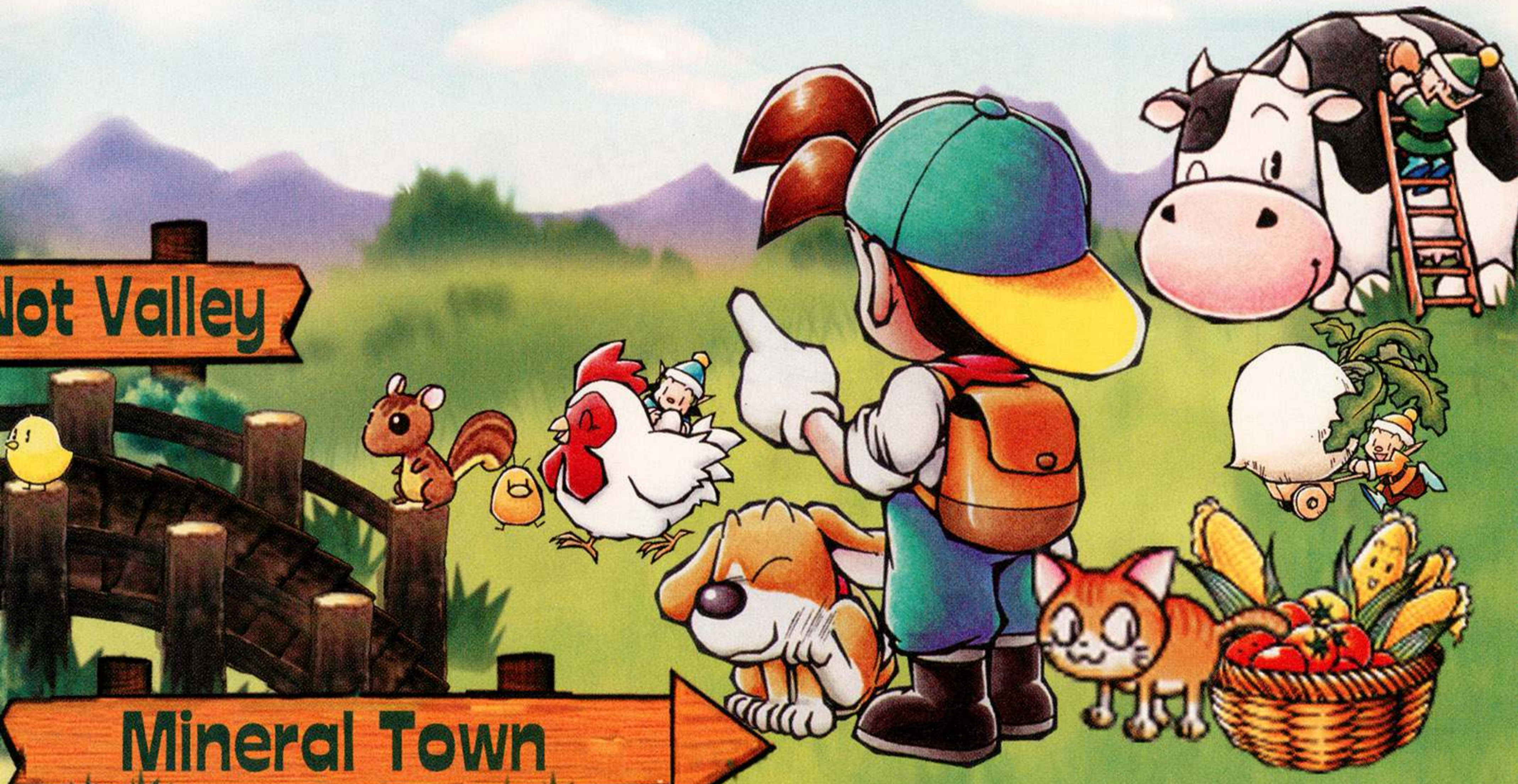
# HARVEST MOON

# HARVEST MOON

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Rejuvenate a farm and build a life for yourself with family and friends!



Traditional Harvest Moon gameplay with many new surprises!



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**GAME BOY ADVANCE**

EVERYONE

**E**

Use of Alcohol

ESRB CONTENT RATING [www.esrb.org](http://www.esrb.org)



# MAP QUESTS

Plan your fantasy vacation with this handy atlas of the hottest tourist traps of 2004. There's something for every taste: olde-world fantasy clichés, cutting-edge sci-fi epics, even the dazzling frontier of online adventure. Just remember to plan your pit stops in advance (those CG cut-scenes can get pretty damn long). ▶



## kingdom hearts

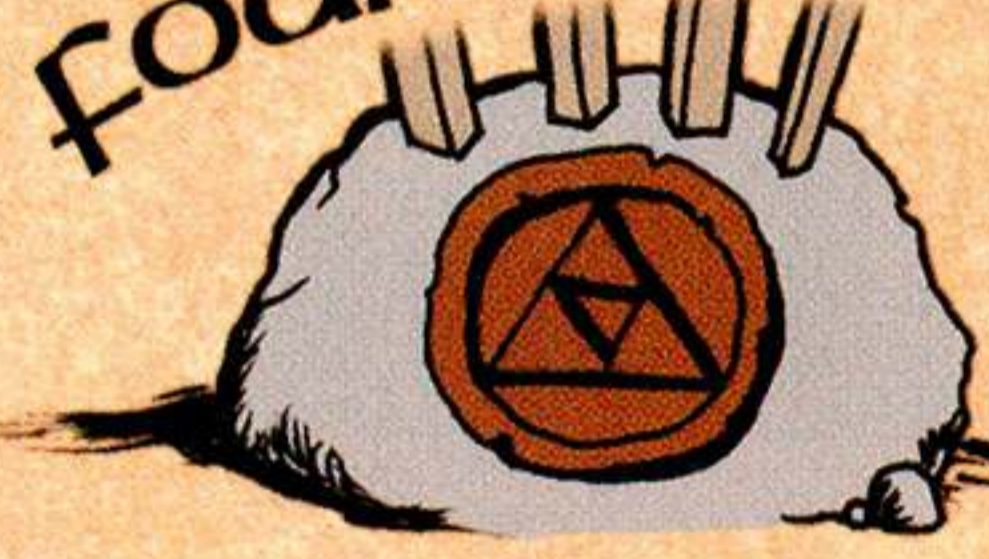


## sudeki

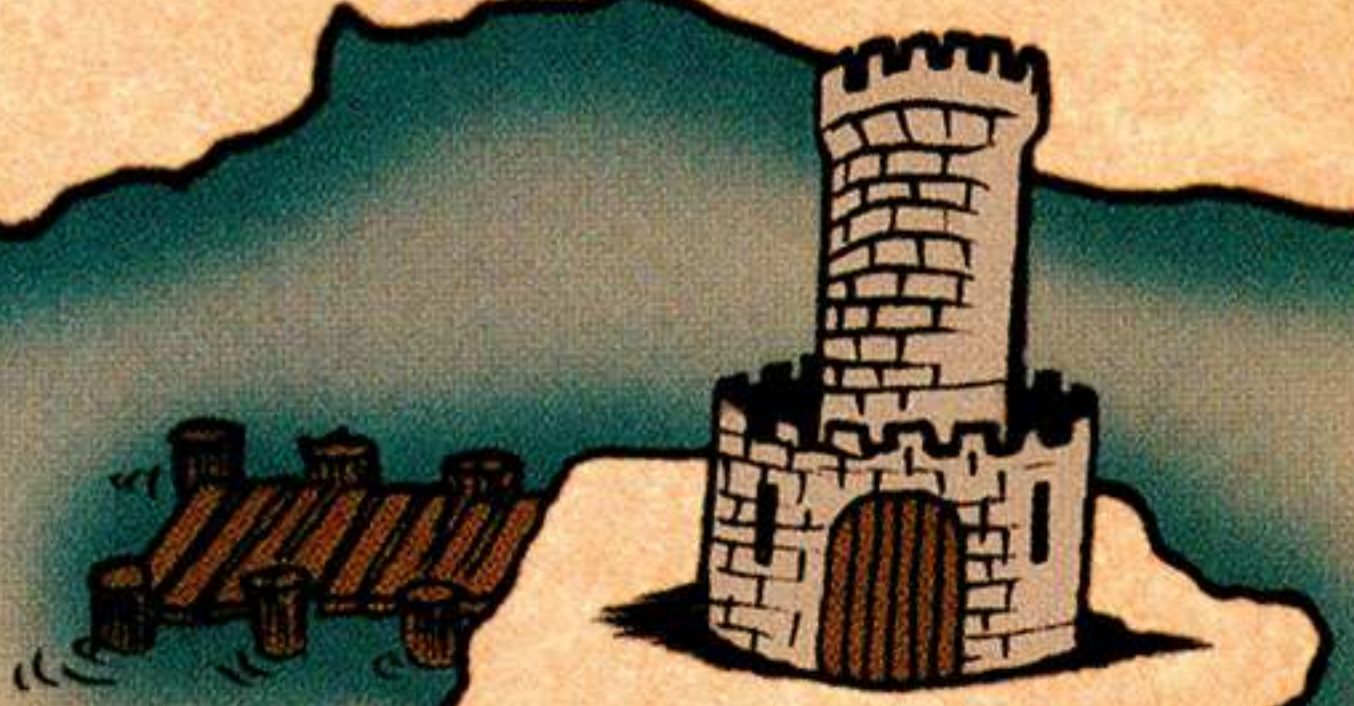
## growlanser generations



## zelda: four swords



## true fantasy live



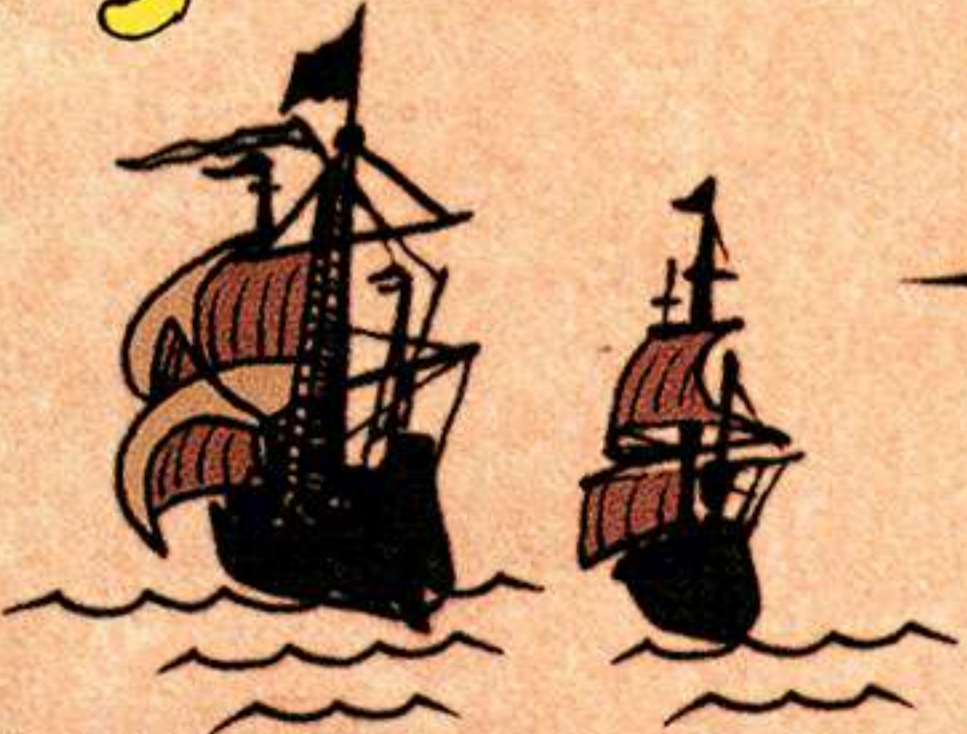
## land of ys

## the star ocean



**ye Legend**

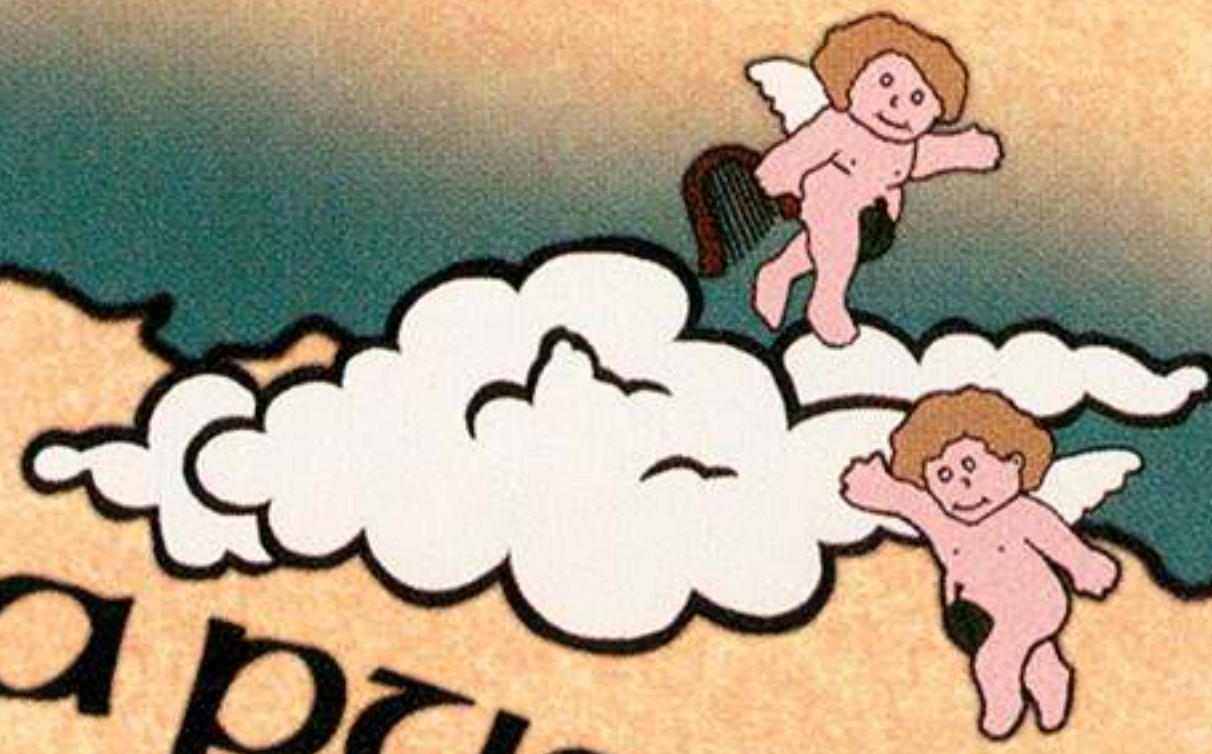
- online play
- lengthy cinema warning
- interstellar cruizin'
- strategising required
- hacking and/or slashing
- sexy elves
- possible aristocats sighting



Cartography by Kevin Connerito



symphonia



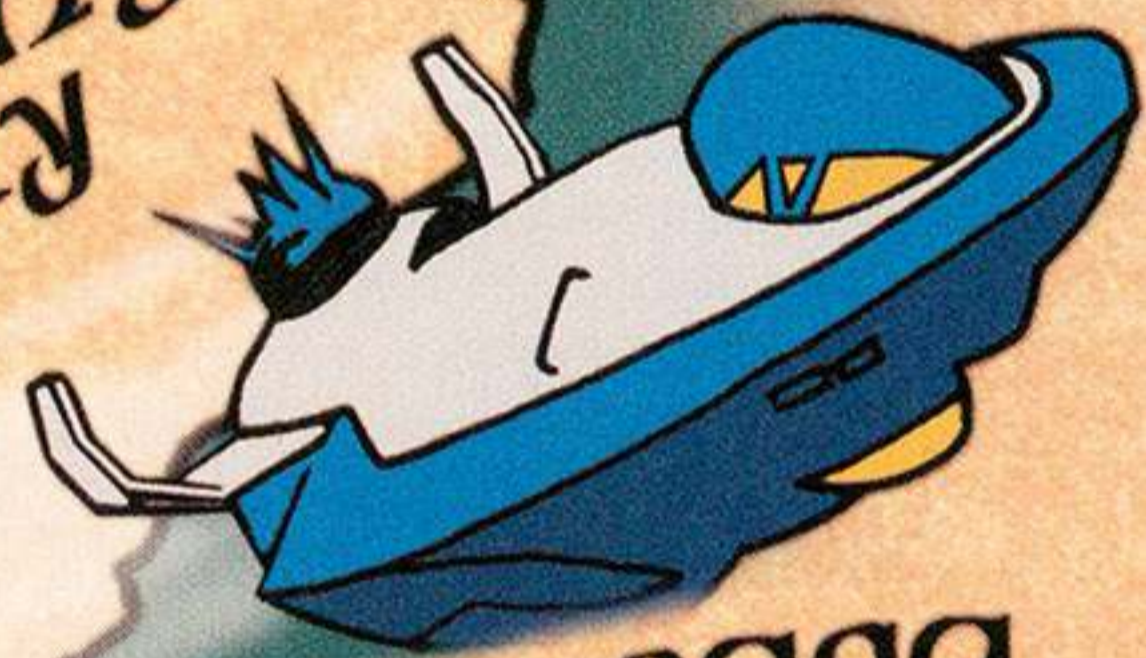
La pucelle



Memorial concert



shaman king cemetery



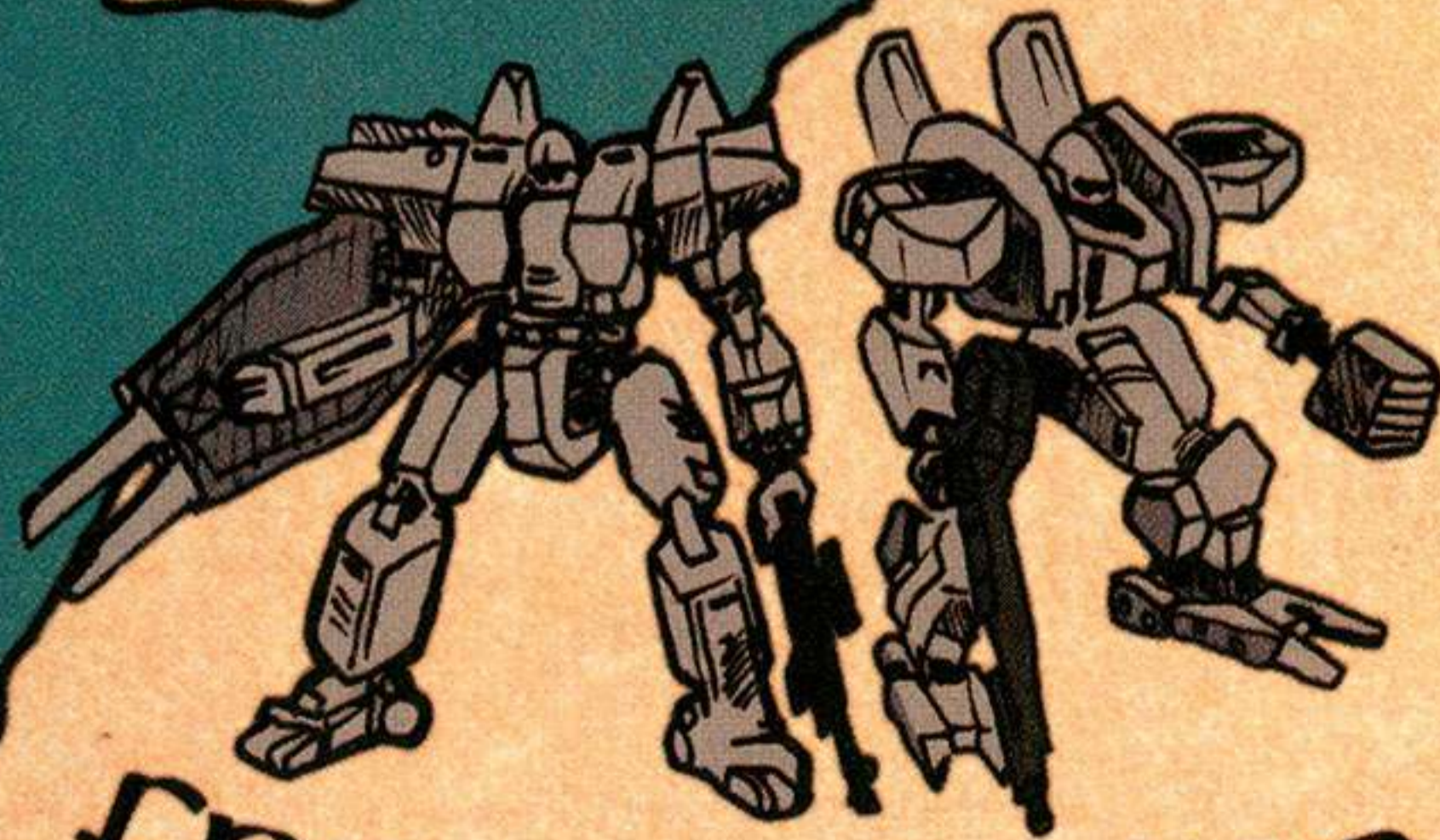
xenosaga



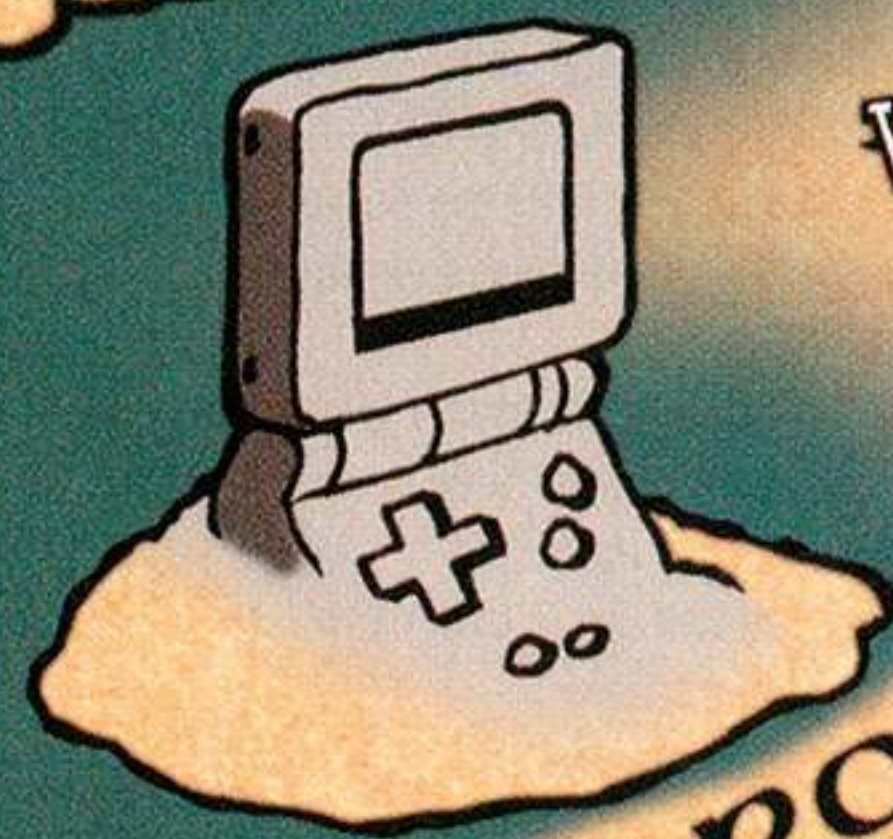
Jade empire



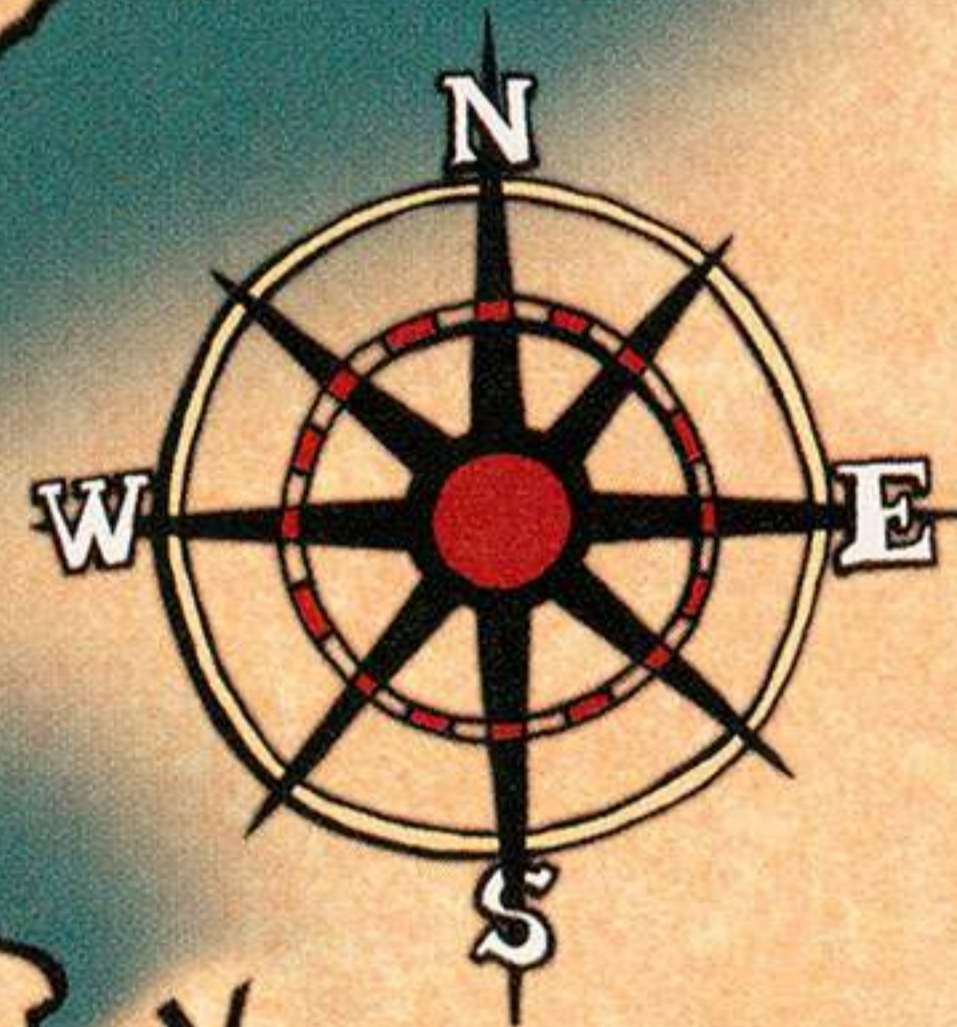
ye land of dairy queen

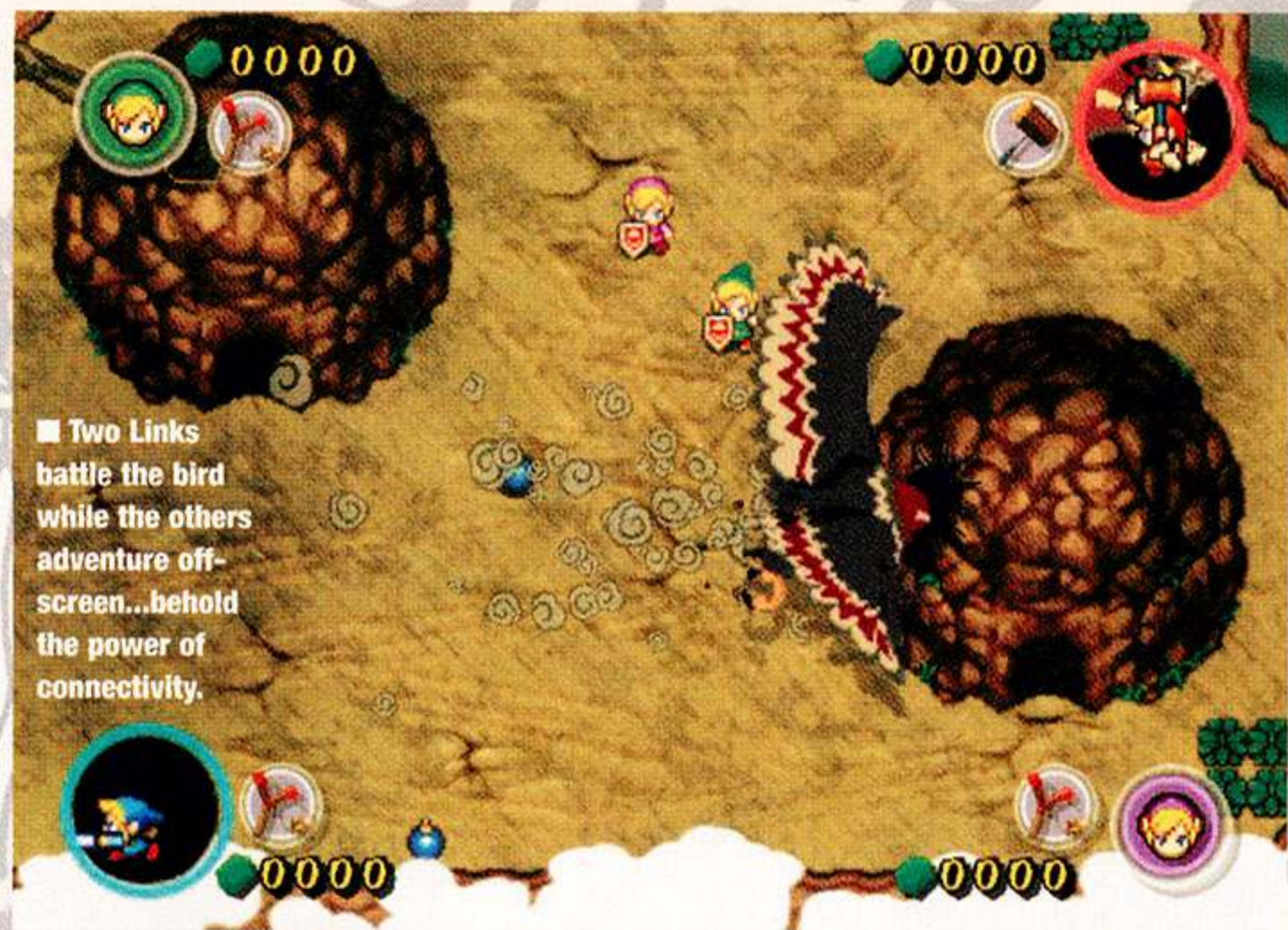


front mission



gba rock





■ Two Links battle the bird while the others adventure off-screen... behold the power of connectivity.

# THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: FOUR SWORDS

a whirlwind tour of Hyrule for you and three of your closest friends

GC • Nintendo • Summer 2004  
Here's the good news: Nintendo's two oddball GC *Zelda* offshoots (*Four Swords* and *Tetra's Trackers*) won't be sold individually, as originally planned. Nope, these two action-adventure games will come together in one nifty hodgepodge package, where they now

go by the titles *Shadow Battle* and *Navi's Trackers*, respectively. Here's even better news: A third game, entitled *Hyrule Adventure*, comes along for the ride, and it's an all-new, traditional *Zelda* romp for four players in the spirit of the Super NES classic *A Link to the Past*. Expect dun-

geons, overworld secrets, towns to explore...the whole deal. Now for the bad news: You'll need to bust out your Game Boy Advances (with those requisite-yet-sold-separately GBA-to-GC link cables) in order to even play *Trackers* and *Shadow Battle*. Curse you, foul connectivity!



# STAR OCEAN: TILL THE END OF TIME

(DIRECTOR'S CUT)  
the cruise of a lifetime atop a shimmering sea of adventure

PS2 • Square Enix • August 2004

*Star Ocean: The Second Story* (PS1) didn't quite set the fantasy world afire—it was a heartwarming sleeper hit but still struggled in the chilly shadow of *Final Fantasy VII*. Thankfully, the series' first PS2 installment, *Till the End of Time*, will likely fare better, although we've had to wait until the end of time for its U.S. launch: The game has faced some serious delays worldwide since it was originally announced in 2001.

Fortunately, all that time in galactic purgatory should be worth it. Americans will get the director's cut version, with new characters, locations, and cut-scenes not included in the original Japanese release. These additions will serve to expand an already enormous quest, with hero Fate Linegod searching for his family across multiple worlds. The real-time battles from *Second Story* are back, allowing for combos and synchronized attacks—sort of like *Final Fantasy X-2* but without all the waiting (or the slutty costumes).

■ Requisite blue-haired chick? Check.



# YS VI: THE ARK OF NAPISHTIM

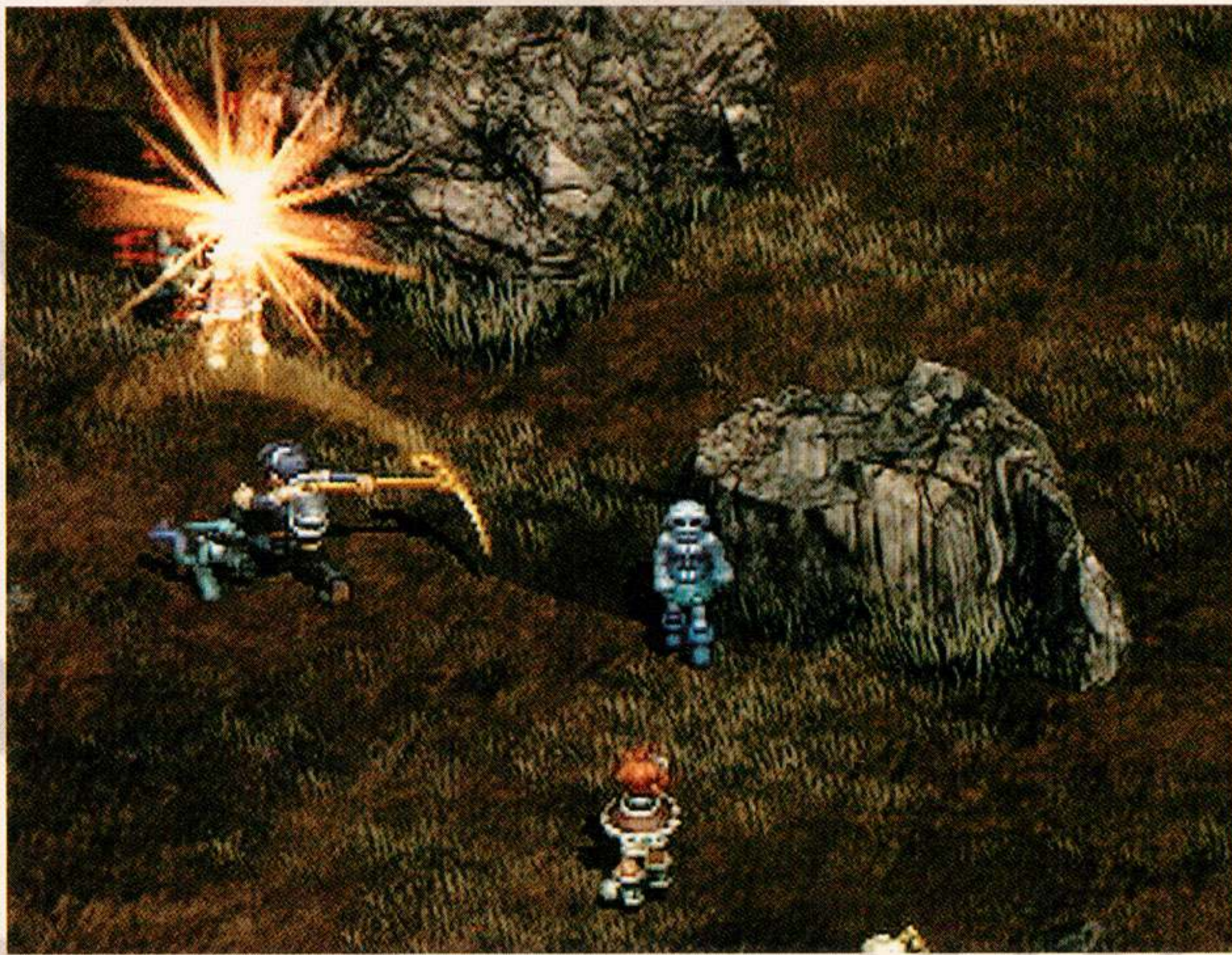
nostalgic tour through a tropical isle

PS2 • Konami • Fall 2004

Say what? Don't be embarrassed if you're at a loss about the title. The *Ys* series (pronounced "ease," if you're wondering...don't ask us how to say Napishtim, though) was hot stuff about 15 years ago, but it faded out of memory along with the TurboGrafx-16 console its games graced. Luckily, *Ys* gets a second shot on PS2 with improved control (you actually swing your sword instead of just ramming into enemies with your body), a complex plot, and legions of sultry elven lasses.







# GROWLANSER: GENERATIONS

two thrill-packed tours in one

PS2 • Working Designs • May 2004

Working Designs is hell-bent on getting its mammoth tactical opus, *Growlanser: Generations*, out here this year, and from what we've played, we're anxious to see the company succeed. With two full games in the collection and both boasting

lengthy quests with multiple endings, this could be the biggest time-suck of a strategy-RPG since, well, WD's own monstrously massive *Arc the Lad Collection* (PS1). Interruptible combat flow and nonrestrictive movement will help every hour go by in a flash; just don't forget to eat.



■ Not all of your foes are cute little dudes scrambling about on the battlefield—some are hideous, screen-filling monstrosities.

# TRUE FANTASY LIVE ONLINE

never-ending exploration—great for singles!

XB • Microsoft • Fall 2004

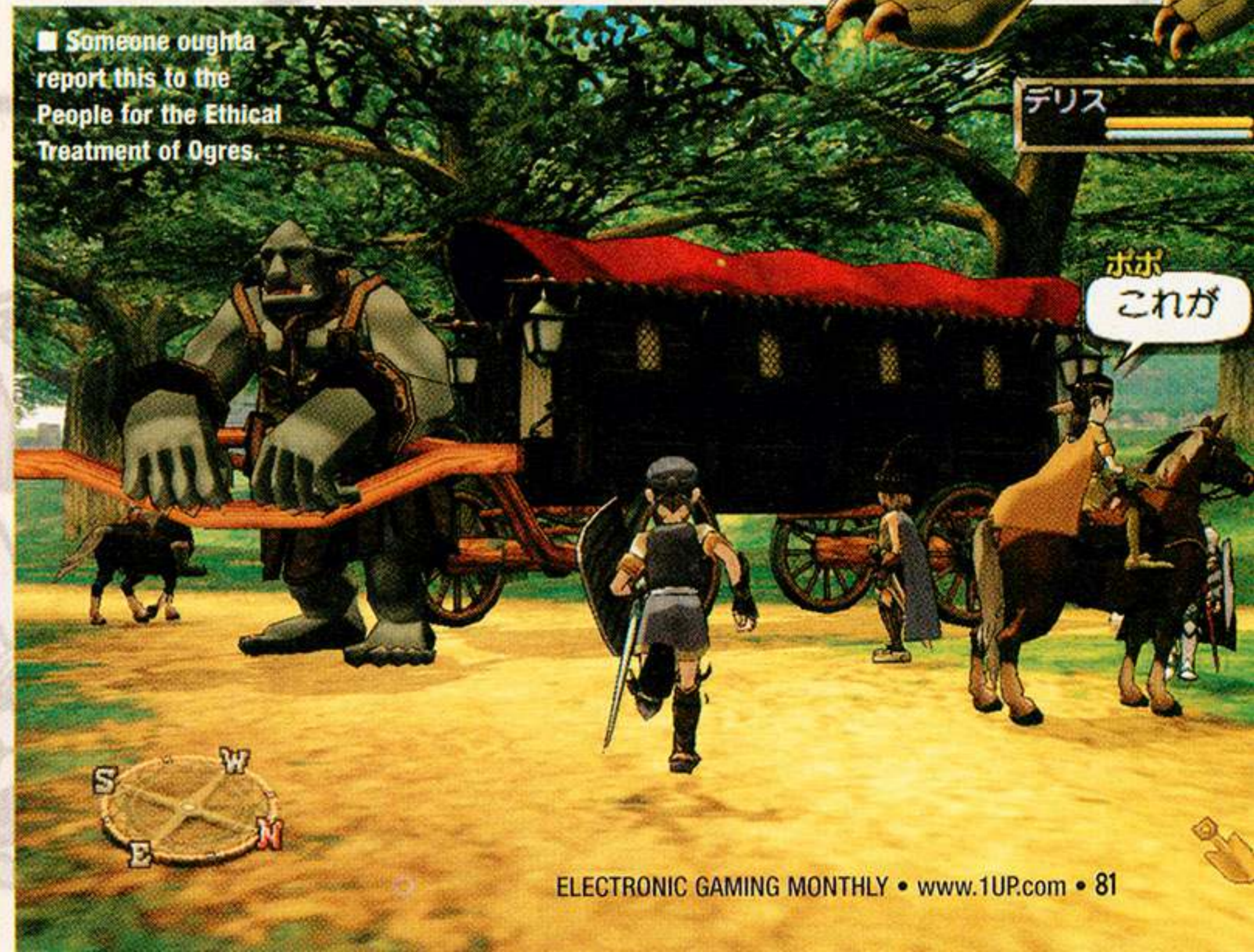
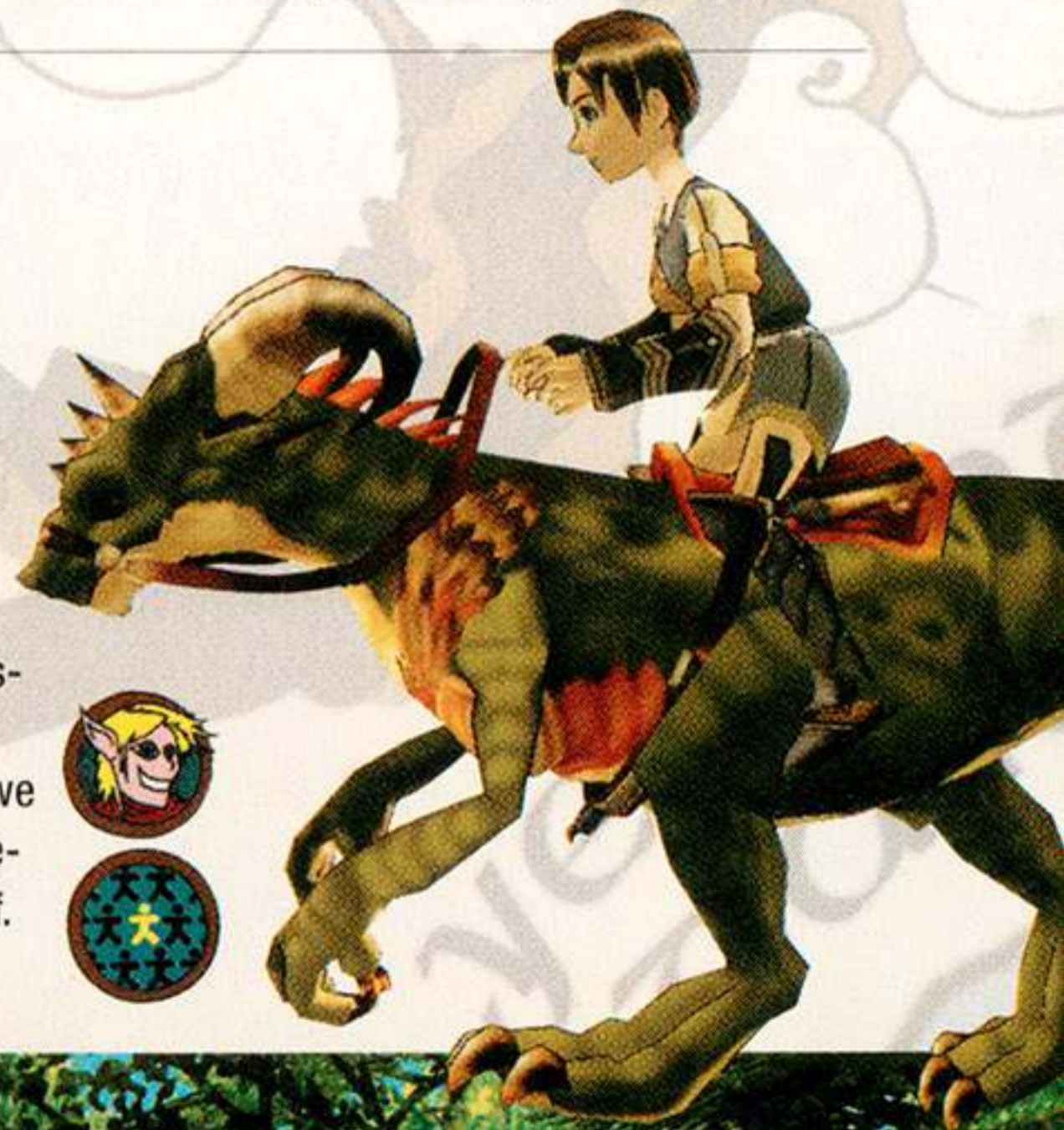
Akihiro Hino, producer of the two *Dark Cloud* RPGs for Sony, has something a little more laid-back in mind for Xbox Live users this fall. "We are working on creating the ultimate fantasy world," he says. "We want people to feel happy and relaxed just by being inside the world."

The way he puts it, *True Fantasy Live Online* (the console's first massively mul-

tiplayer RPG) is far from being an *EverQuest* rip-off. Instead of riding the level-up treadmill for hours on end, you'll raise your character by joining a guild and plying your trade in a series of quests. "These quests will only motivate players to venture halfway through the story," Hino claims. "The final goal will vary from player to player; you might want to be a legendary swordsman, or

you may become a famous blacksmith with your own store in the game."

*TFLO* also differs from the pack in its obsessive character-customization features. You'll be able to use a detailed customization system (similar to that of EA Sports' *Tiger Woods 2004*—with which we eerily re-created Michael Jackson) to create a sexy cartoon-elf version of yourself. Hey, it beats the real world... >



■ Someone oughta report this to the People for the Ethical Treatment of Ogres.



■ Sure, they're cuddly...but they still wreak critical damage on fools.

3 HITS  
120 DAMAGE

CRITICAL  
DAMAGE

70



■ During battle, you're in control of your characters' actions. No turn-based tedium here.



# TALES OF SYMPHONIA

explore a beautiful land of progress and promise

GC • Namco • July 2004  
In Japan, Namco's *Tales* franchise commands serious respect (and respectable sales numbers), but here, the two *Tales of Destiny* PS1 titles barely caused a ripple. Hopefully, the series can produce a bigger splash on the RPG-deprived GameCube.  
It'll surely help that *Symphonia* is the first chapter to sport 3D visuals.

"We tried to use the GameCube hardware to its fullest potential, while still keeping the essential elements that make the *Tales* series special," explains Producer Makoto Yoshizumi. His effort shows: The vibrant, lush visuals spruce up what's essentially an old-school RPG. You'll encounter tons of playable characters, massive towns to explore, dungeons to traverse, and dia-

bolical beasties to dispatch. The new-found third dimension also alters the previous games' Linear Motion Battle system (basically a side-scrolling morass of cute characters pummeling bad guys), since you now have two axes on which to move your characters. Don't worry about this new complexity mucking up the game's flow, though—combat is still as fast as ever.



**Chatty Cathy**  
One aspect that hasn't changed a bit, however, is your party members' incessant verbal banter. "The talkative characters help players connect with their party members and make it easier to really get into the game," says Producer Makoto Yoshizumi.



# SUDEKI

lovely ladies, spectacular vistas

XB • Microsoft • Summer 2004  
When Western developers try to make Japanese-style RPGs, terrible things often happen. Need evidence? Witness the eye-searing horror of *Shadow Madness* (PS1). Or actually, it's probably better if you don't. The *Sudeki* team wants to avoid the overt clichés with its game's design: "Male lead heroes with big sparkly eyes and feminine physiques do not necessarily conjure up a character you would want to control," explains Art Director James Brace. The gameplay's also nonstandard: It's less like *Final Fantasy* and more like *Phantasy Star Online*, with multihit hack-n-slash combos and all sorts of dazzling summon magic.



■ Potential dialogue: "Hark, yon mysterious distant light casts a warm, shiny glow upon my heaving bosoms."

# LA PUCELLE: TACTICS

pleasures off the beaten path

PS2 • Mastiff • May 2004

If you liked last fall's offbeat hit *Disgaea*, chances are you're some sort of demon fetishist. Odds are you'll also want its pseudo-prequel, *La Pucelle: Tactics*. Though it focuses on demon hunters rather than demons, the same risqué humor and quaint hand-drawn graphics will be there for those who fear change. For those who don't, expect a very different battle system that focuses on directing the flow of energy and enlisting monsters midbattle.



■ Wait a sec...this looks just like *Disgaea*! It's no accident—both games hail from the same developer, Nippon Ichi, also known for the weird PS1 musical RPG *Rhapsody*.



■ *Shaman King's* gameplay offers a heady mix of tactical strategy and action-packed combat: You move your dudes around the map in *Final Fantasy Tactics* style, but melees unfold in mini fighting games like this.

# SHAMAN KING

a fantastic journey for the spiritually inclined

PS2 • Konami • Summer 2004

If you went psycho for *Pokémon* and bonkers over *Yu-Gi-Oh!*, you're probably already stoked about *Shaman King*. (You're also probably 8.) It's a cartoon! It's a comic book! Hell, it's probably a popular trading-card addiction, too. Surprisingly, the PS2 RPG based on this anime phenom seems to stand on its own. The game will offer an all-new story line by the comic's creators, along with a unique blend of action and tactical combat.



# KINGDOM HEARTS: CHAIN OF MEMORIES

your dreams come true at the magic kingdom

GBA • Square Enix • Summer 2004

Square Enix won't deliver its PS2 *Kingdom Hearts* follow-up until early 2005, but fans can get their *Final Fantasy* meets Mickey Mouse fix with this GBA semisequel. *Chain of Memories* begins immediately after the end of the PS2 hit, bridging the gap between the original game and *KH2*.

Conceptually, this pint-sized progression closely resembles its big brother: You control spiky-haired punkster Sora, who, alongside his animated pals Donald and Goofy, explores various worlds inspired by classic Disney flicks. Of course, the visuals have taken a

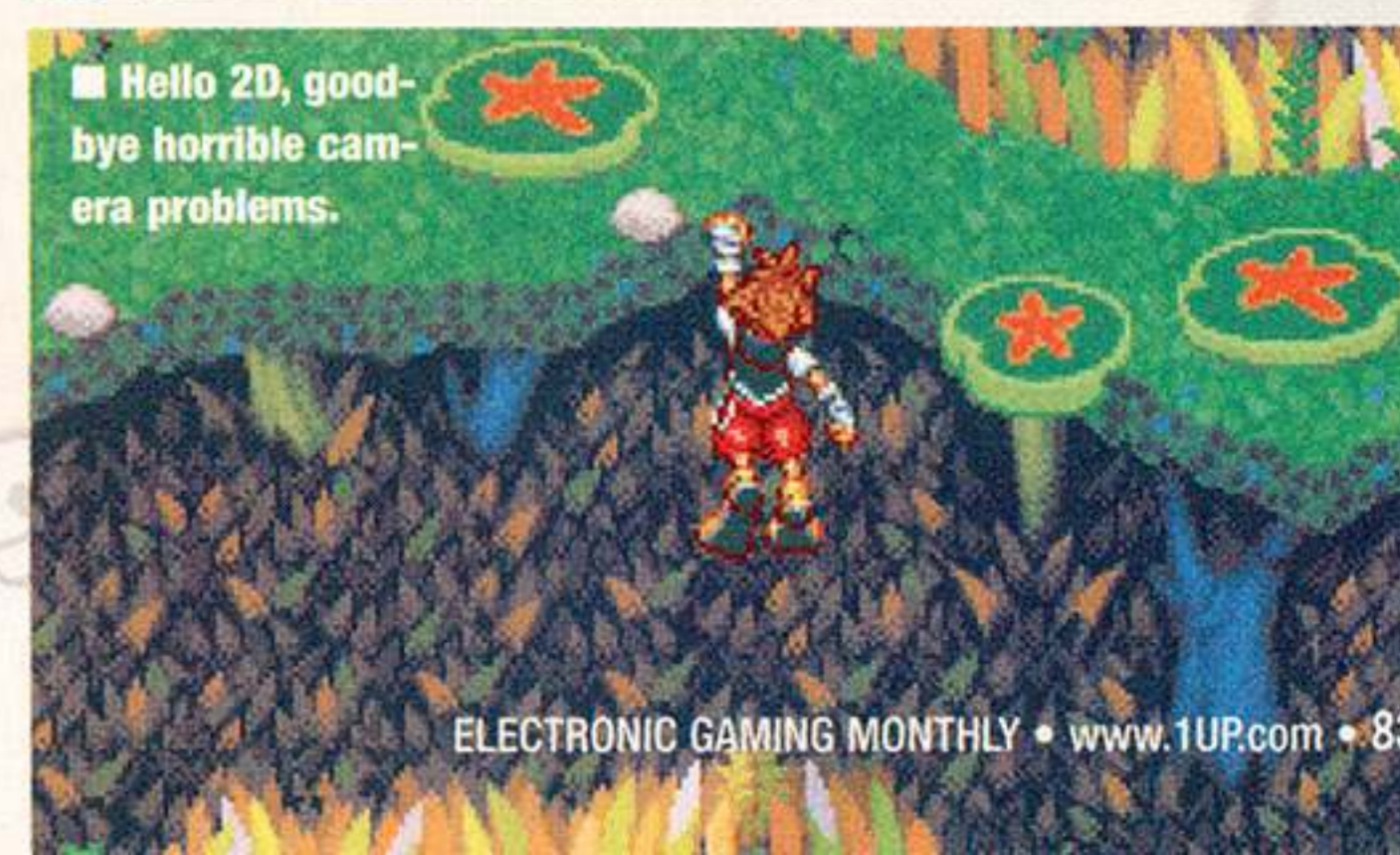
hit—you can't very well do full 3D on GBA—yet the static overhead view should eliminate all the nasty camera problems plaguing the original *KH*. That game's mash-happy battle engine also gets the heave-ho, replaced here by a simplified card-based combat system that could tip the action-RPG scales in the role-playing direction. Amazingly, though, you can still expect fantastic, *Final Fantasy*-style cinematics, as this cartridge will feature a special chip that allows it to pack in tons of PS2-quality cut-scenes. ➤



■ Sora's lookin' to give mad paper cuts.



■ Hello 2D, goodbye horrible camera problems.



# XENOSAGA EPISODE II: JENSEITS VON GUT UND BOSE

a soul-searching journey for the most ambitious of travelers

PS2 • Namco • Late 2004

*Xenosaga*, the reigning champion in the "Longest Cut-scenes in Any Game Ever" category, is back—and it's gotten a mammoth makeover.

The space epic's cast members have been redesigned with smaller eyes, more realistic proportions, and an almost total lack of anime fan-service. The battle system's under-

gone a retooling of its own, too—sexy robot KOS-MOS can now transform into several body types, and your party's capable of team attacks that should spice up the gameplay.



■ Why's the kid in a headlock? Eh, he deserves it. More important, what's the subtitle? It translates to "Beyond Good and Evil" and references a book by Nietzsche, not the Ubisoft game.



## PORTABLE PLEASURES

Bring adventure with you everywhere you go

Game Boy Advance continues to be a fertile breeding ground for quality RPGs. This year's crop already looks splendid: *Shining Force: Resurrection of the Dark Dragon*, *Mega Man Battle Network 4*, remakes of *Pokémon Blue* and *Red*, a *Boktai* sequel, and *Harvest Moon for Girls* will enchant your GBA by midyear.



# JADE EMPIRE

Behold the legendary allure of ancient China

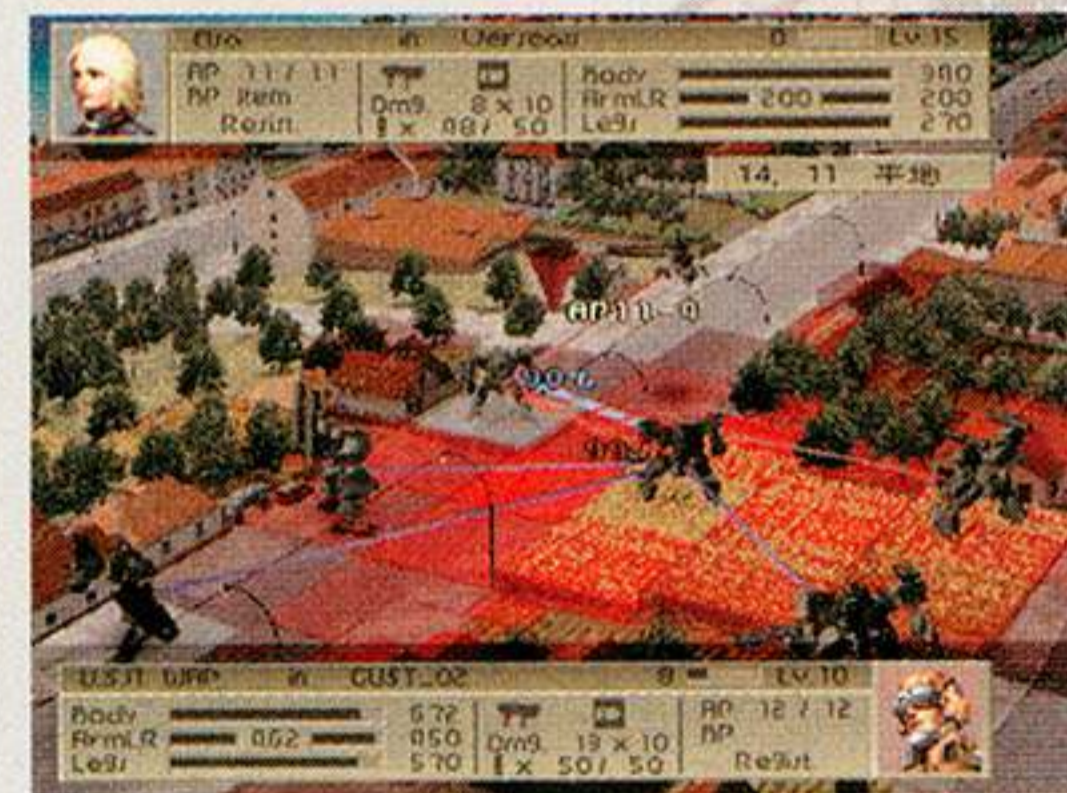
XB • Microsoft • Fall 2004

The mysteries of the Orient have long fascinated explorers, adventurers, and videogame fanboys. So while this game is being developed in not-so-mysterious Canada, its mythological Chinese setting will certainly interest action-RPG fans. You won't be planet hopping as in developer BioWare's other console outing, *Star Wars: Knights of the Old Republic*, but that doesn't mean you won't get to some exotic locales. Greg Zeschuk, BioWare joint CEO, credits the game's new graphics engine for the "lovingly rendered landscapes" and "surreal palaces featuring otherworldly layouts and geometry" that gamers will visit. "We've got a lot of freedom in the new engine," he says, "and we're really pushing it to the max."

*Jade Empire* is BioWare's first game based on an original intellectual property—meaning everything was built from scratch, including the nonlinear story and the rules set that powers everything from dialogue options to combat. So put away your *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons 3rd Ed.* rules; the team has created a bevy of new skills and options for every battle, conversation, and encounter. "We wanted to wait until we had the experience as a company to [build a completely original game] right," says joint CEO Ray Muzyka.



■ As in *KOTOR*, your success or failure in combat will greatly hinge on choosing the right tactics.

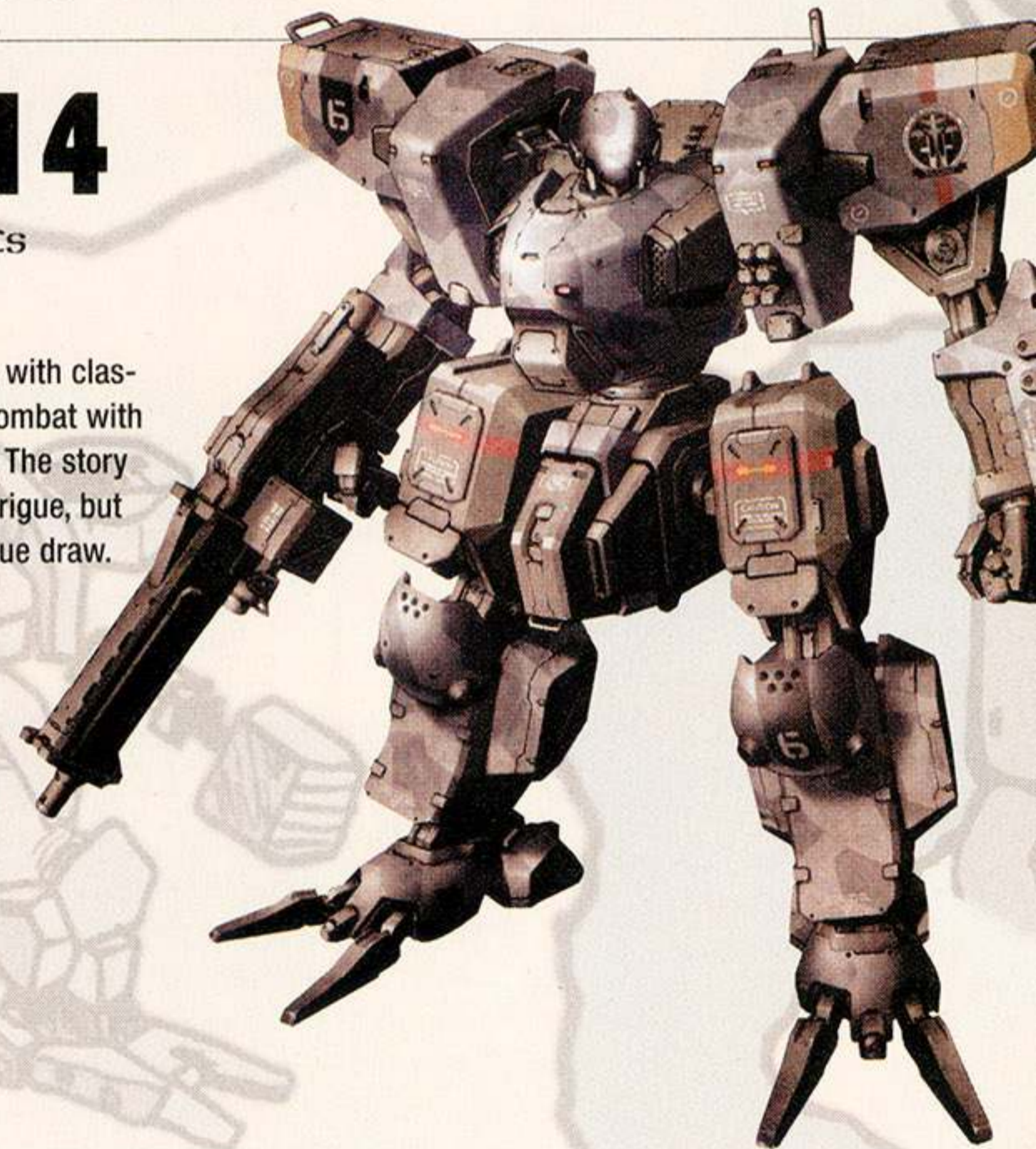


# FRONT MISSION 4

an unforgettable trek for war buffs

PS2 • Square Enix • June 2004

Most gamers don't associate stomping around in giant robots with classic roleplaying, but this blend of *Final Fantasy Tactics*-style combat with realistic, near-future war machinery somehow makes it work. The story line stirs a savory soup of political chaos and international intrigue, but the tense, turn-based mecha-on-mecha action provides the true draw.



■ Moshing will most likely not be tolerated.



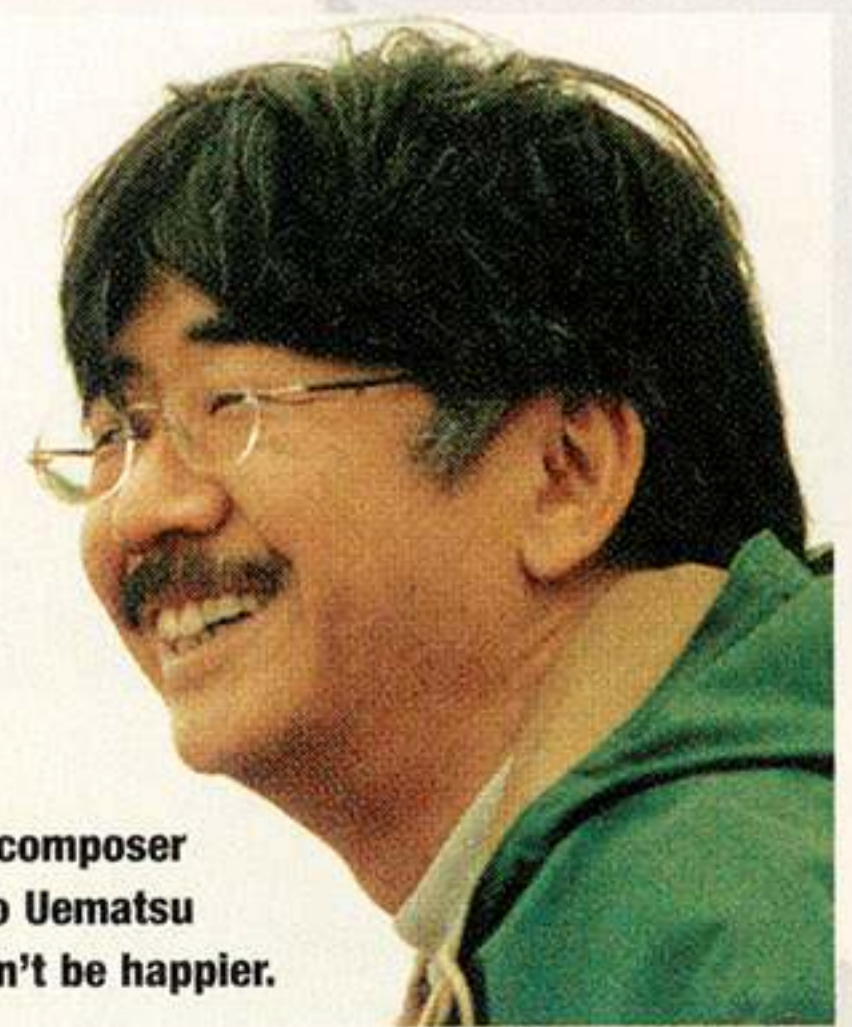
# FINAL FANTASIA

experience the haunting melodies of yore

If you've ever considered playing *Final Fantasy VI*'s "Techno de Chocobo" at a party, well...we hope that you didn't. In all seriousness, though, Square Enix's flagship series cranks out some spectacular tunes, and this May, you'll be able to hear them performed live by a full orchestra and chorale ensemble.

The event will take place in Los Angeles on May 10, 2004, at the Walt

Disney Concert Hall. Tickets range from \$15 (for nosebleed seats) to \$125 (if you want to smell the flutists). Check [wdch.LAPhil.com](http://wdch.LAPhil.com) for tickets and head over to [www.square-enix-usa.com/uematsu](http://www.square-enix-usa.com/uematsu) to vote for the song you'd most like to hear performed. Oh, and cosplayers, kindly leave your Yuna hot pants at home: A strict dress code will be enforced. 🐉



■ *FF* composer Nobuo Uematsu couldn't be happier.



# review crew

now with double the ninjas



## DIRECTORY

### MULTIPLATFORM

- |                                        |                                           |
|----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| <b>86</b> The Suffering                | <b>89</b> Samurai Jack: The Shadow of Aku |
| <b>87</b> EA Sports Fight Night 2004   | <b>90</b> All-Star Baseball 2005          |
| <b>88</b> MTX: Mototrax                | <b>90</b> ESPN Major League Baseball      |
| <b>88</b> Pitfall: The Lost Expedition |                                           |

### PLAYSTATION 2

- |                           |                              |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|
| <b>91</b> Eye Toy: Groove | <b>96</b> MLB 2005           |
| <b>94</b> Rainbow Six 3   | <b>96</b> Seven Samurai 20XX |
| <b>95</b> Crimson Sea 2   |                              |

### XBOX

- |                                        |
|----------------------------------------|
| <b>97</b> Tenchu: Return from Darkness |
| <b>98</b> Dead Man's Hand              |
| <b>98</b> Unreal II                    |
| <b>99</b> Breakdown                    |

■ First he bites Voldo's (*Soul Calibur*) style; now he's gonna bite the bullet.



■ The characters in this game mostly have closed-casket funerals.



■ PS2/XB

# THE SUFFERING

## Look! Look at me! I'm totally grossing you out!

**Monster Mash** Torque has an uglier, nastier side that shows only when he's killed enough enemies to completely fill his rage meter. Problem is, very few skirmishes arise in which transforming into the hideous beast is any more advantageous than letting off rounds with a firearm.

**PAUL:** Abbott State Penitentiary's executed convicts are staging a good ol' haunted prison riot—they're eviscerating guards, inmates, and any other lollygaggers on the premises. As the violent and laconic Torque, you slay your way out of prison, shooting demons and transforming into an abomination yourself now and then, if the mood strikes.

With layers of gore and lots of creepy sound effects, *The Suffering* creates an unrelentingly grim playground for bloody gun battles. The guns themselves are fun to wield: effective, accurate, and powerful. Each monster is based on a method of capital punishment—a gimmick, sure, but a very well-done gimmick, thanks to interesting character designs and convincing animation.

But what's with the paper-thin story? Torque

was convicted of murdering his ex-wife and two kids, but he can't remember if he did it. That's it. The monster transformation thing is also hokey as hell, but for those of you who don't care about the whys and wherefores—if you just want to blast your way through some viscera, here's your game.

**BRYAN:** Were I a member of *The Suffering's* parole board, I'd recommend a few more months of state-sponsored rehabilitation. While the haunted penitentiary setting and Sam Winston's (*The Thing*, *Predator*) creature creations are satisfyingly freaky, this horror show has a few key shortcomings: The story loses steam about two-thirds of the way through; solving puzzles, which are few and far between, requires little brainpower; and it's far too

easy to survive your sentence with so much free ammo and health lying around.

**XBN—GREG O:** This haunted prison epic doesn't drop the soap in the proverbial shower; it merely fumbles it and deftly recovers. A standard run-n-gun first- and third-person shooter, *The Suffering* drapes itself in gore and foul language, but there's hardly a sense that any of it means anything. As horror, the best the game can do is throw up grotesqueries in wave after wave. As an adventure, it demands switch pulling and crate shoving barely worthy of a haunted taco stand. It does, however, provide a modicum of challenge and hold enough intrigue to win it a well-deserved stay of execution.

**Good:** Superb sound effects  
**Bad:** Shallow story  
**Dumb Nickname:** Torque



THE VERDICTS  
(OUT OF 10)

**6.5** **6.0** **6.5**  
PAUL BRYAN GREG O.

Publisher: Midway  
Developer: Surreal Software  
Players: 1  
ESRB: Mature

www.midway.com



■ *Splinter Cell* spy to *Splinter Cell* merc: "We go to discotheque now, ja?"

## THE RATING SYSTEM



Here at *EGM*, we review only games that have been deemed final and reviewable by their publishers. Three editors review each game independently, and don't forget: **5.0 IS AVERAGE.**

## AWARDS



**Platinum** — for games that get all 10s. These games rule.



**Gold** — for games with an average score of 9.0 or higher.



**Silver** — for games with a mean score of 8.0 or higher.



This goes to the highest-reviewed game each month.



A rare dishonor for games with unanimously bad scores.

100 *Splinter Cell Pandora Tomorrow*  
104 *Ninja Gaiden*

### GAMECUBE

106 WarioWare, Inc.:  
Mega Party Game\$

### GBA

108 *Splinter Cell Pandora Tomorrow*

### ESRB KEY (Also check out [www.esrb.com](http://www.esrb.com))

**E-Everyone:** Wholesome fun for the whole family, devoid of hookers, head shots, or heroin use.

**T-Teen:** Like PG-13 movies, Teen games usually feature mild violence and "comic mischief."

**M-Mature:** Whereas these games typically offer all the gore, sex, drugs, and fun of R-rated fare.

■ PS2/XB

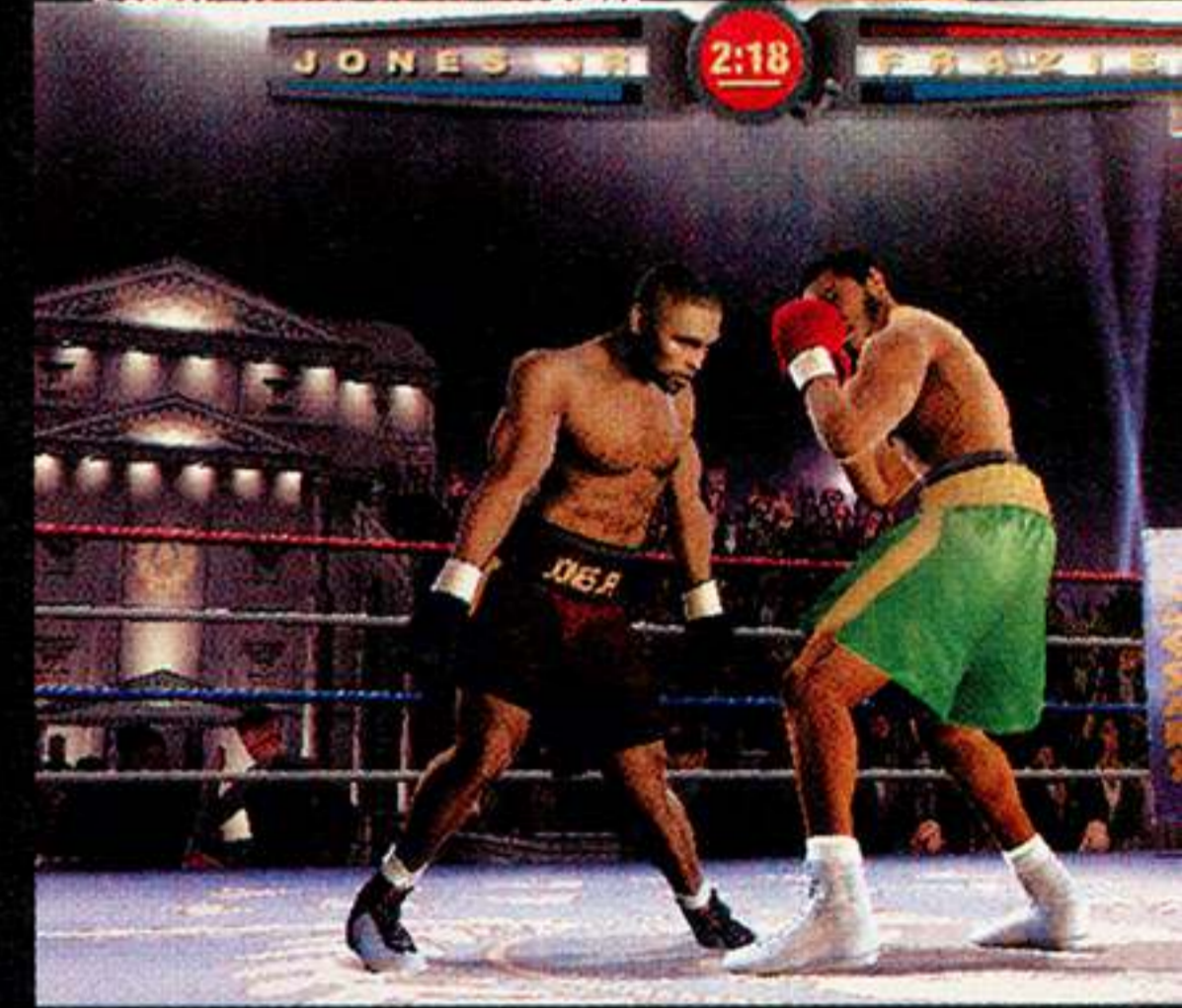
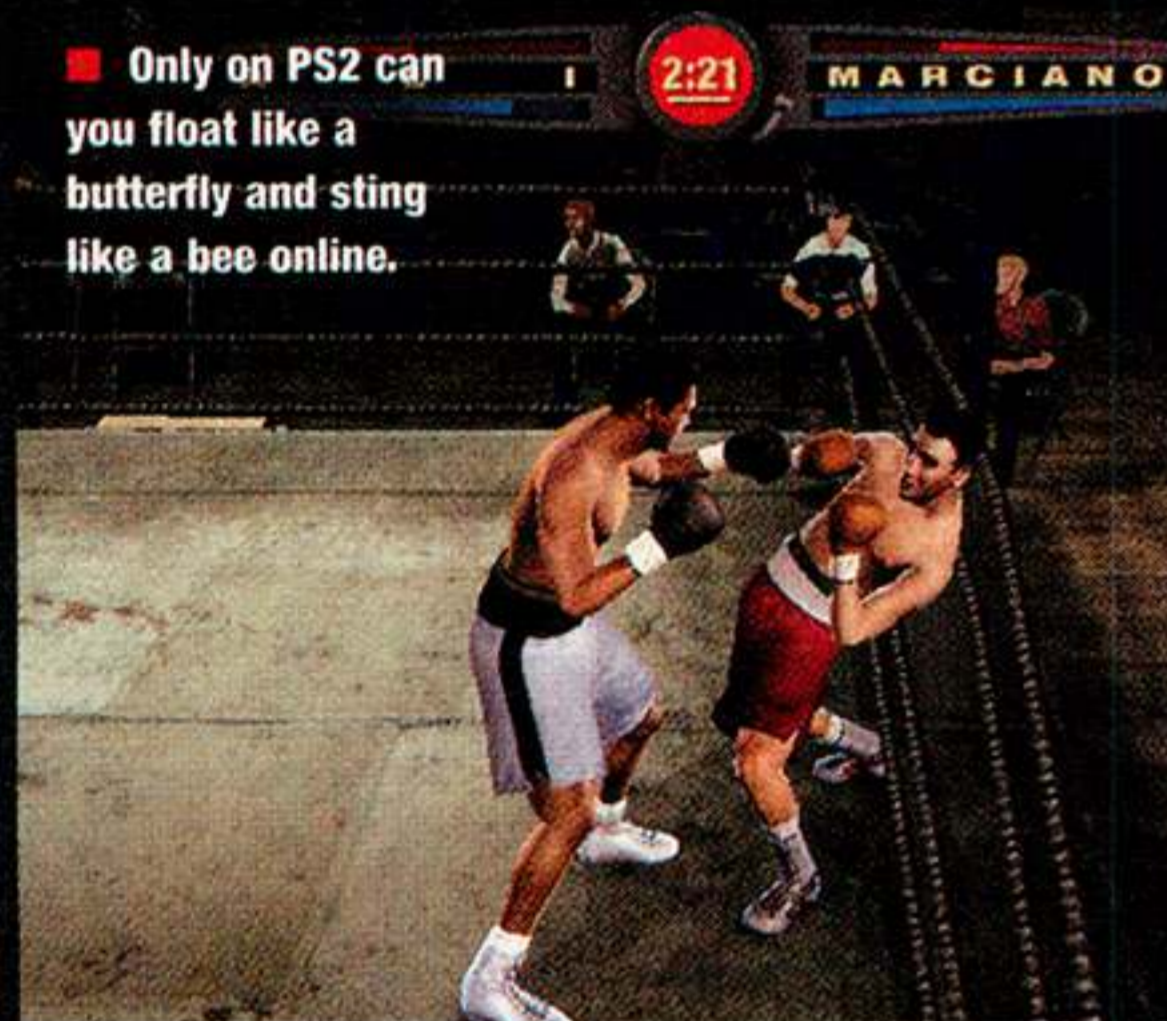
# EA SPORTS FIGHT NIGHT 2004



## Women weaken legs, Rock!



■ Only on PS2 can you float like a butterfly and sting like a bee online.



**BRYAN:** Baseball has homers, soccer (allegedly) has goals, but boxing's special moment is the against-all-odds comeback—Foreman, Holyfield, Rocky...and now, EA's return to the ring, *Fight Night*.

*Fight Night* is the first boxing game I'd label a true simulation. The days of button-mashing and sore thumbs are gone thanks to the intuitive analog punch controls—success comes from being patient with your blows (jamming on the stick with the subtlety of Mike Tyson at a beauty pageant will only land you on the apron). The career mode also aims for realism; challenging training minigames perfect your skills, and tough-as-nails A.I. pugilists keep you hungry. All the bloody noses pay off once you start earning rewards like new gear and customizing your boxer's entrance with music,

pyrotechnics, and bikini-clad hotties (hey, nobody wants *too much* realism).

My only gripes lie with the irritating announcer and that you can't practice the training exercises, which severely handicaps how fast you build up your fighter's attributes. But otherwise, EA's first bout outta retirement registers quite a knockout.

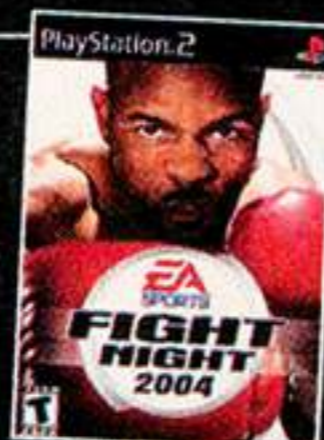
**KEVIN:** *Fight Night* does what any good "sports sim" should: It teaches you how to excel at the sport it sims while still remaining fun, somehow. Success in this game hinges entirely on mastering the fundamentals of real boxing—working the ring, deflecting punches, tiring out your opponent. This may sound boring, but the simple controls make it far easier, and far more addictive, than you'd think.

Also, the action only gets fiercer in the online ring (PS2 only). All my bouts against Bryan (or, according to his created boxer's nickname, "The Ladies' Man") were lag-free. Now let's get it on!

**G. FORD:** Outside of *Punch Out* (NES), I've never been a big boxing-game fan. But *Fight Night* has convinced me of just how great the genre can be. Granted, it infuriated me at first, due to its lack of a free training/open-gym mode. A couple controller-smashing matches later, though, I got the hang of the controls and really appreciated the level of depth the varied punches, defensive techniques, and fighting styles provide. While the intros, commentary, and modes are limited, the phenomenal gameplay does the sweet science justice.

**Pugilists MIA**  
Noticeably absent from *Fight Night* are both George Foreman and Mike Tyson. We suspect that George is too busy marketing kitchenware, while Iron Mike...well, boxing is best served ear-free.

**Good:** Innovative controls, realistic bouts  
**Bad:** Out of place hip-hop'd-up announcer  
**Replaces:** EA's previous boxing franchise, *Knockout Kings*



THE VERDICTS  
(OUT OF 10)

8.5 BRYAN    9.0 KEVIN    8.0 G. FORD

Publisher: EA Sports  
Developer: EA Canada  
Players: 1-2 (2 online)  
ESRB: Teen

[www.easports.com](http://www.easports.com)

■ Nobody likes a hot dog.



■ PS2/XB

# MTX: MOTOTRAX

ONLINE

In need of a tune-up

**Good:** Realistic career mode  
**Bad:** Tough handling makes for a bumpy ride  
**From the Makers of:** *Excitebike 64* (Nintendo 64)



**BRYAN:** *MX Unleashed*'s impressive (and EGM silver-award-winning) showing last month left me hankering for even more motocross. But sadly, *MTX: Mototrax* doesn't fill the void. Problems abound, starting with the handling; it's totally unforgiving, which makes riding off course (especially around turns) inevitable. Aside from the stiff controls, performing tricks and linking them together for big combos is challenging—but in an am-I-having-fun-yet way, not the good way. Visually, *MTX* could also benefit from a little more polish.

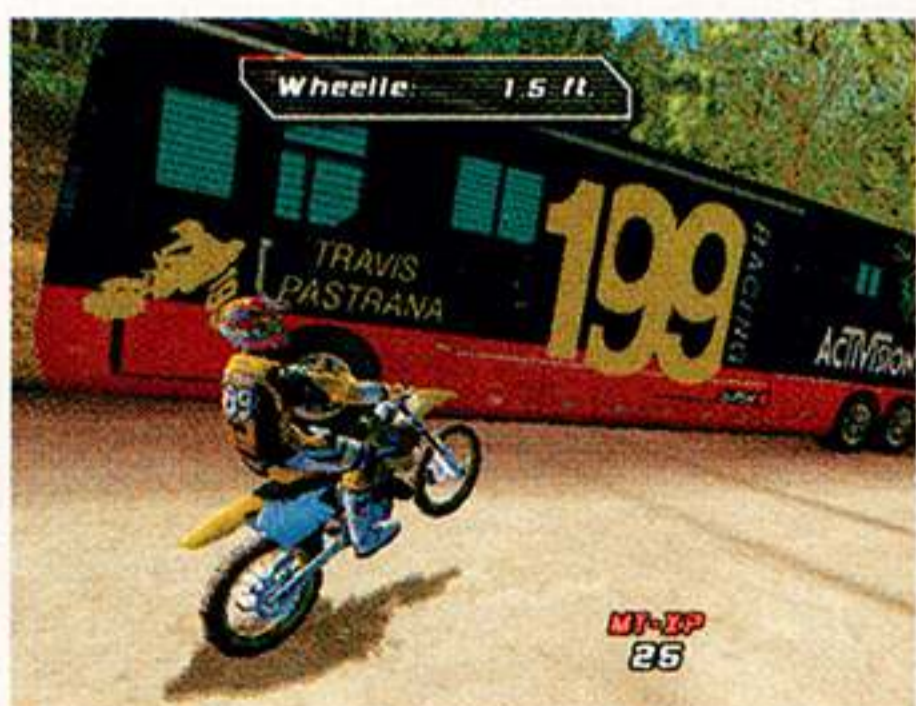
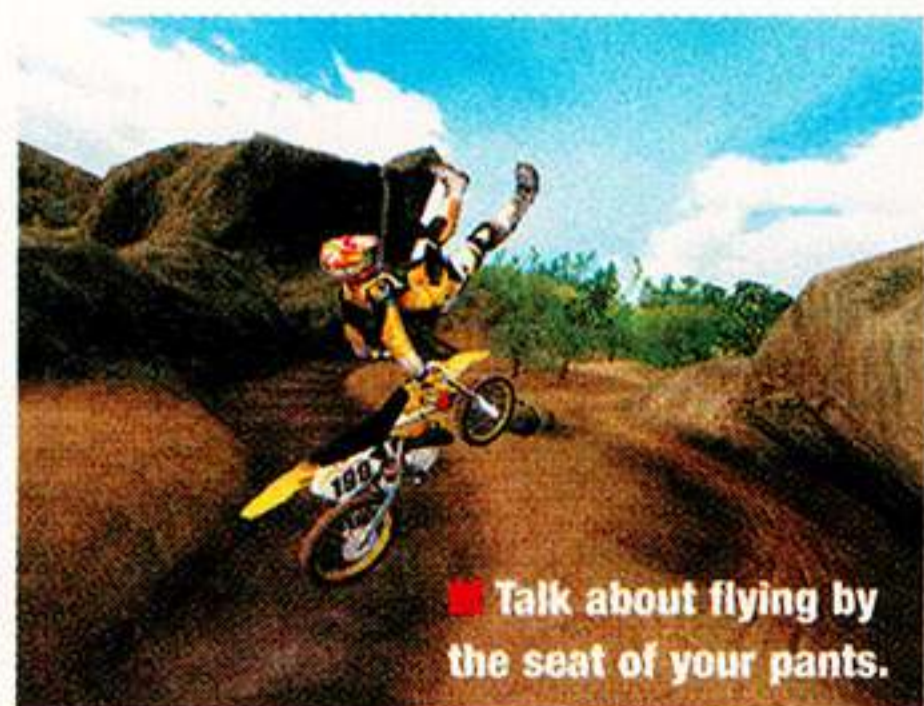
Luckily, a few key features keep this motocrosser from falling too far behind the pack. The meaty career mode is an accurate portrayal of what life is (probably) like as a pro rider, so along with racing in events, you'll decide which teams to join and what crap to endorse. The smooth online play and easy-to-use track builder provide *MTX* with unmatched replay value; still, *MX Unleashed* offers the superior off-road experience.

**G. FORD:** I really enjoyed *MTX* at first—the decent controls and varied levels got me into it, and the option to run races or

tackle missions in the open-ended free-ride mode kept things fresh.

The game initially strikes a good balance between challenging and rewarding but becomes extremely difficult in later stages (despite bike upgrades), ramping up the frustration factor considerably—and unnecessarily. Graphical glitches, a clunky trick system, and the not-always-apparent mission objectives also put a damper on the dirty racing thrills.

**OFFICIAL PS MAG—JOE R:** I thought the *Tony Hawkish* approach to motocross would work well, but it doesn't, mainly due to some terrible level and track design. One of the great things about *MX Unleashed* is that the challenges in its free-roaming levels are tough but never exasperating, because even just riding around is fun. Not so here: The handling is annoying, physics are questionable, and the tracks range from boring to frustrating. I do like the scrappy-youngster-moving-up-in-the-world career mode (see: *Tony Hawk's Underground*), but I couldn't help wishing I was playing *MX Unleashed* once it was time to hit the track.



|                          |       |         |        |
|--------------------------|-------|---------|--------|
| THE VERDICTS (OUT OF 10) | 6.0   | 6.5     | 5.5    |
|                          | BRYAN | G. FORD | JOE R. |

Publisher: Activision  
Developer: Left Field  
Players: 1-2 (PS2: 2-4 online, XB: 2-8 online)  
ESRB: Everyone

www.mtxmototrax.com

■ PS2/XB/GC

# PITFALL: THE LOST EXPEDITION

The original action-platformer gets unoriginal



■ Flaming jaguars drooling lava = run away.

**Good:** Amazing sound effects give you that jungle fever  
**Bad:** Bland combat and power-ups  
**So Not PC:** Little men in masks going "ooga-booga"



**JON D:** OK, my original goal going into this game was to unlock the classic Atari *Pitfall*, I'll admit. But this little sport surprised the heck out of me—it's loaded with platforming clichés and cheesy dialog, but *Lost Expedition* is simple fun that outplays scads of similar action titles. Extensive jungle and mountain environments afford lots of open-ended exploration. And though the power-ups are pretty uninspired, they're reason enough to comb the world, turning up missing party members and uncharted territory along the way. I could have done without any enemies at all—everyone from monkeys to evil explorer rivals hurls fruit, stones, and TNT with ridiculous accuracy. It's simply an annoying way to lose your modest life bar, which I would have replaced with the original points-for-health system as a nod to the old-school version. My personal edits aside, *Pitfall* is a kid-friendly rental that'll entertain more sophisticated gamers just as well.

**JENNIFER:** It's been some time since I endured a good senseless jumping puzzle...wait, is that a contradiction in terms? There are no good senseless jumping puzzles! Yet *Lost Expedition* gives us hours upon hours of them anyway. It also gives us inexplicably unintuitive controls (the triggers rotate the camera, but left turns you right and right turns you left—whose bright idea was that?) and a structure that requires continual backtracking. Jon D. calls that "open-ended"; I call it annoying. Try it if only to see what a functional but utterly generic platformer is like.

**XBN—GREG O:** Harry carved an empire atop the heads of thousands of crocs. Now, he's the straight man in *Pitfall: The Lost Expedition's* rather unfunny 3D joke. Here, the adventurer becomes the sum of his gadgets and acquired skills; players trudge through the game collecting idols to buy special moves so Harry can get to a new area so he can collect a particular tool or doodad to let him cross into a previously impenetrable location. Gone is the great adventure, lost to the simple need to collect stuff, and in its place is the carrot and the stick—which even the most dedicated mule will only chase so far.



■ You sure couldn't punch those scorpions in the old-school *Pitfall*, but hey, whatever.

|                          |        |          |         |
|--------------------------|--------|----------|---------|
| THE VERDICTS (OUT OF 10) | 6.5    | 5.0      | 5.5     |
|                          | JON D. | JENNIFER | GREG O. |

Publisher: Activision  
Developer: Edge of Reality  
Players: 1  
ESRB: Everyone

www.activision.com





Samurai Jack totally hates him some robots.

PS2/XB/GC

# SAMURAI JACK: THE SHADOW OF AKU

Have sword, will time-travel



**Good:** Stylized fighting, *Samurai Jack* "feel," excellent music  
**Bad:** Rehashes almost every action-platformer convention  
**Chance That Aku Is Up To Something:** 100 percent



**DEMIAN:** It's a classic story. Not unstoppable hero versus irresistible evil, although we've got that, too; the seen-it-a-million-times story here is great source material (*Samurai Jack* the cartoon) licensed to create a so-so game. But *Jack* isn't nearly as horrible as I feared. Yes, it's bursting with boring action-platformer standards like key puzzles, a samurai version of slo-mo "bullet time," and odd, glowing-green statuettes you've got to collect for no apparent reason, but it also does a decent job of re-creating the feel of the cartoon. The music is dead-on excellent, and the combat, though rarely challenging, looks pretty impressive at times.

Still, the developers could have taken it much further. A *Zelda: Wind Waker*-esque cartoony graphics style would have been perfect for Jack, who, now that he's 3D, looks kind of like Jay Leno or John Kerry what with his freakishly long chin. And the cut-scenes—often the only good part of a licensed game like this—are embarrassing. It ain't bad, but my favorite cartoon samurai deserves even better.

**PAUL:** *Shadow of Aku* employs all the standard platformer's mechanics—double-jumping, scads of items to collect—but deploys them well. Jack's strongest moves are too cumbersome to be useful, but his basic repertoire of sword slashes is more than enough to defeat Aku's robots, whose patterns are satisfyingly easy to exploit. Vibrant, distinct levels and excellent music prove the game's faithfulness to the cartoon. It's fun, a bit formulaic, and too short. But then, so is the show.

**SHANE:** Your younger sibling could certainly do worse than *Samurai Jack*. Visually, it's repellent, but tykes (and reviewer Paul—low blow!) will be able to overlook the hideous backgrounds, simplistic structures, and busting-at-the-seams character models in order to enjoy the shockingly decent gameplay. Jack commands a sizable arsenal of moves—chucking shuriken, bustin' out arrows, and felling foes in bullet-time Zen mode feels almost like *Ninja Gaiden*-lite. But formulaic levels and cake-walk difficulty will bore Jack's older fans.

|                             |        |      |       |
|-----------------------------|--------|------|-------|
| THE VERDICTS<br>(OUT OF 10) | 6.0    | 7.0  | 5.5   |
|                             | DEMIAN | PAUL | SHANE |

Publisher: Sega  
 Developer: Adrenium  
 Players: 1  
 ESRB: Teen

www.sega.com

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**Awards and Recommendations**

FastLaneHW.com

Perfect Score 10/10

"You feel like you are in the middle of the action. You can easily tell from which angle a sound is coming from."

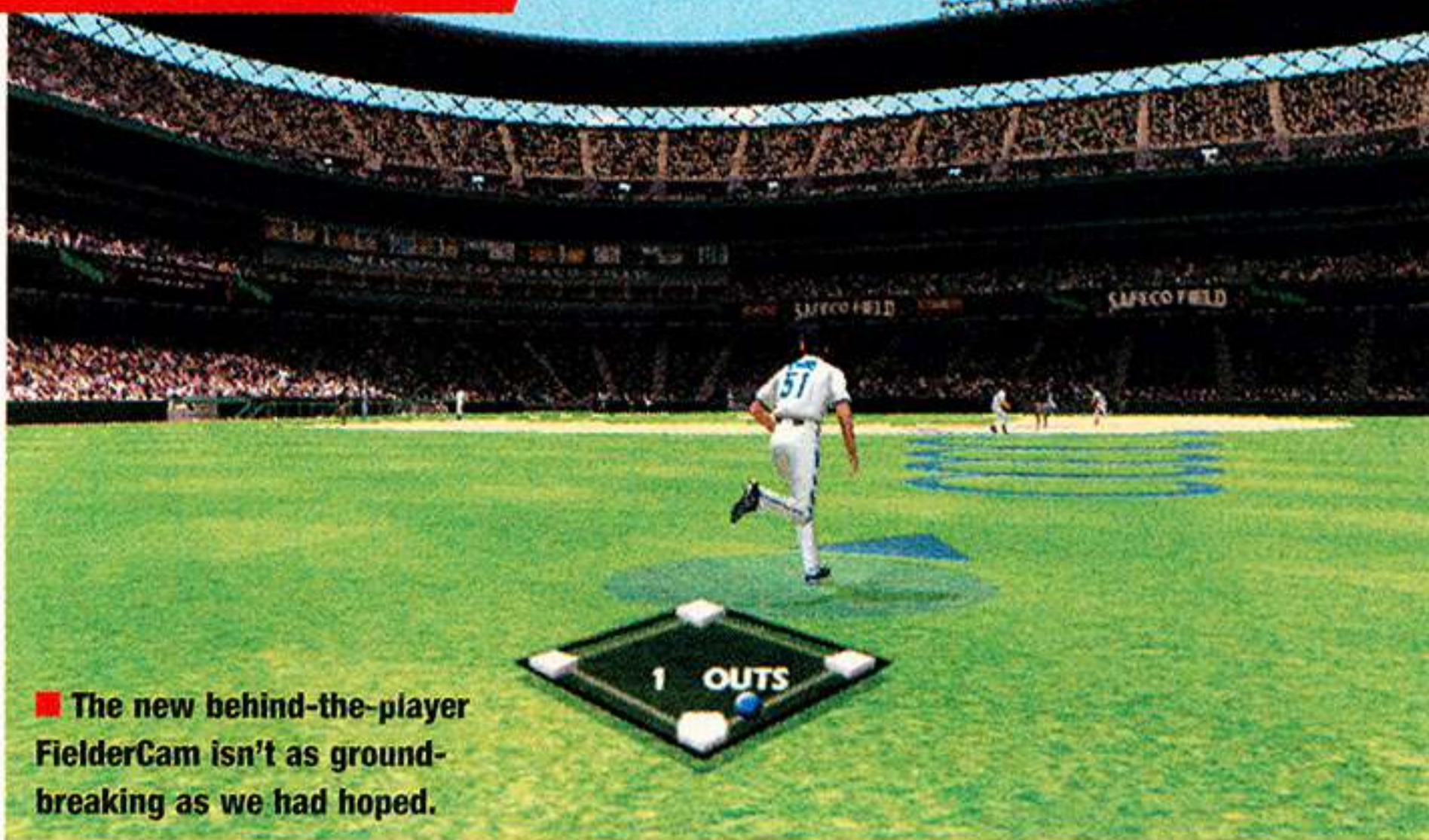
tom's hardware guide

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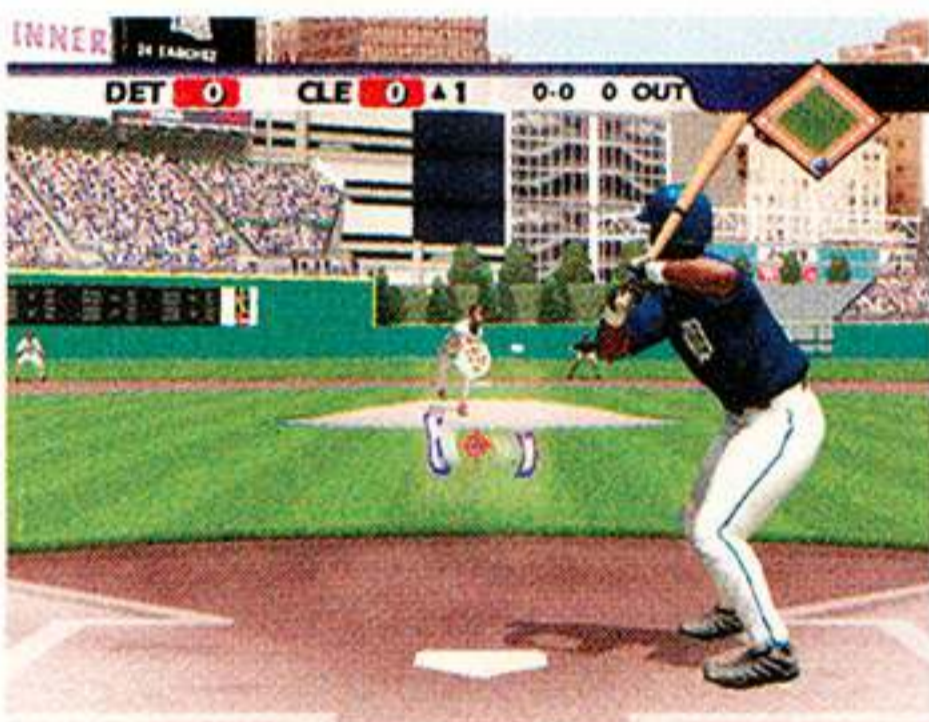
■ The new behind-the-player FielderCam isn't as groundbreaking as we had hoped.

PS2/XB

# ALL-STAR BASEBALL 2005

ONLINE

Not even in the wild-card race



**Good:** Franchise mode, plenty to do  
**Bad:** Mediocre gameplay, running the bases  
**Our Scouts Say:** Another year in Triple A



**G. FORD:** What a disappointment. While the *ESPN* and *MVP Baseball* series improve with each passing year, *ASB* seems content to just stick around...kind of like ol' speedster Rickey Henderson. It's not like *ASB* doesn't do anything right: The franchise mode is deep enough to keep egghead fans interested, the scenario mode lets you reverse the curses for both Red Sox and Cubs fans (as well as re-create or change other key 2003 moments), and the cards you earn while playing give you an additional incentive besides W's to play well.

But the series' much-ballyhooed new FielderCam is underwhelming—this behind-the-fielder view (as opposed to the traditional overhead angle) controls well enough, but it's virtually impossible to know the trajectory and speed of the ball, leaving you to rely on onscreen indicators. Other problems include unimpressive graphics and animations (including fielders running halfway into walls and facing one direction while throwing the ball in another) and frustrating baserunning controls. *ASB* isn't a complete disaster, but it's inferior to the league leaders in every way.

**BRYAN:** With Acclaim's rotation showcasing a robust franchise mode, improved batting, and Internet play, you'd think the *All-Star* series were back in playoff contention. Think again. Unfortunately, *ASB* still has too many holes in its lineup to compete with the top contenders. Aside from the game's washed-out visuals and lifeless ballparks, I have to agree with our resident Red Sox fan, G. Ford, about the FielderCam; *ASB*'s most original feature doubles as its biggest flaw. Go nine innings with EA's *MVP* instead.

**PATRICK:** Though cover guy Derek Jeter will likely be an All-Star, *ASB* is not. The FielderCam supposedly allows you to run one way while looking in another, but simply picking up the ball (especially ground balls) proves difficult. Acclaim did accurately capture the proper build of most players, but their faces and batting stances are off. With *ESPN* and *MVP* available, the plight of *ASB* is like that minor league prospect hoping for a call up to the show. Maybe next year, slugger.

|                             |         |       |         |
|-----------------------------|---------|-------|---------|
| THE VERDICTS<br>(OUT OF 10) | 5.5     | 4.5   | 6.0     |
|                             | G. FORD | BRYAN | PATRICK |

Publisher: Acclaim  
Developer: Acclaim Austin  
Players: 1-4 (2 online)  
ESRB: Everyone

www.acclaim.com



■ How many Little League coaches are cringing at this batting stance (above left)? 294.

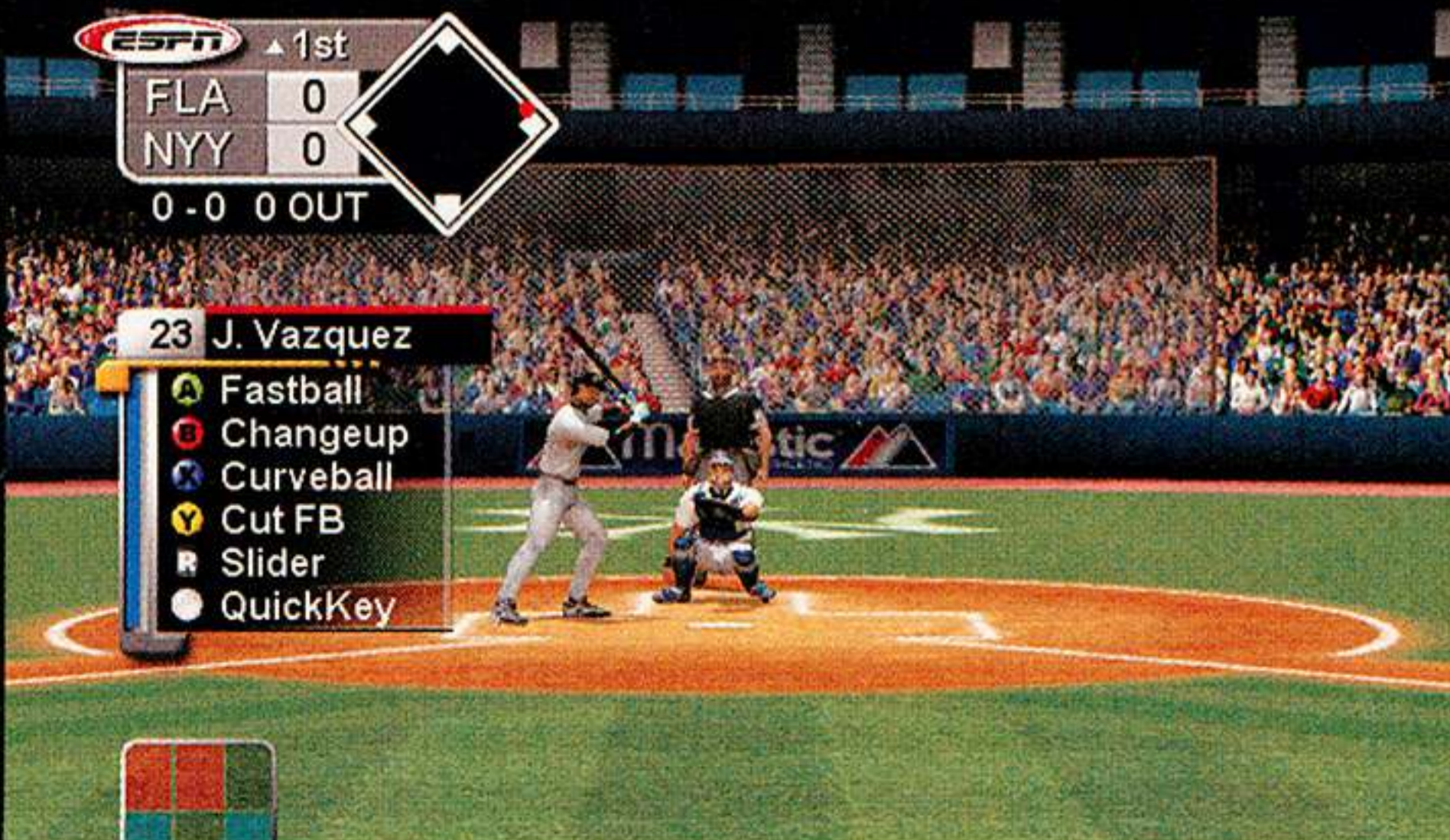
PS2/XB

ONLINE



# ESPN MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL

Take me out to the ballgame. This ballgame



■ After selecting a pitch, you can sacrifice control for velocity using *ESPN*'s new Effort meter.

**Good:** Impressive graphics and ESPN presentation  
**Bad:** Occasional fielding mix-ups of the nonhilarious variety  
**The Series Formerly Known As:** *World Series Baseball*



**G. FORD:** *ESPN Baseball* comes out swinging—its flawless ESPN presentation and squeaky-clean graphics (more so on Xbox) get you in the peanuts and Cracker Jacks mood. Then there's the plethora of modes—GM, franchise, season, playoffs, GameCast (in which you make lineup and bullpen changes during the ESPN.com-esque simulation), and duel (a power-hitting battle)—most of which you can tweak to a sick degree. The pitching, now with an Effort meter that sacrifices control for velocity, is solid, too. Even the new first-person mode is fun in a gimmicky way (and better than it was in *ESPN Football*).

But some nagging problems keep *ESPN* from the prime time. Fielding can be a pain, since the game sometimes selects the wrong fielder after the ball's hit; baserunning proves tricky when dealing with multiple runners; and the new Confidence meter, although a good idea, doesn't have a noticeable impact on gameplay. Still, these are relatively small knocks on a deep, solid game. *ESPN* may lack the innovations and overall polish of *MVP*, but it's otherwise a serious contender.

**PATRICK:** What a great baseball experience! A tremendous pitcher/batter interface makes for a solid foundation, and the presentation perfectly mirrors an ESPN broadcast (with John Miller on play-by-play and Karl Ravech—yes, sporting a "piece"—serving up the color). Fans of the first-person perspective introduced in *ESPN NFL Football* (anyone? Bueller?) can try their luck on the diamond; it's an acquired taste. But like the Yankees adding A-Rod, *ESPN* has all the tools to challenge *MVP 2004* for the pennant.

**OFFICIAL PS MAG—CHRIS B:** *ESPN* earns big points for its general manager mode, which delivers great depth without being overwhelming. And despite the occasional hiccup—which bothered me much less than it did G. Ford—fielding feels more responsive than in any other baseball title this year, with pitching and hitting earning my applause, too. Winning on anything but Rookie difficulty is tough to do on a regular basis, though—too tough. Still, *ESPN*'s fine gameplay, graphics, and addictive quality make it a solid runner-up to *MVP 2004*.

|                             |         |         |          |
|-----------------------------|---------|---------|----------|
| THE VERDICTS<br>(OUT OF 10) | 8.0     | 8.5     | 7.5      |
|                             | G. FORD | PATRICK | CHRIS B. |

Publisher: ESPN Videogames  
Developer: ESPN Videogames  
Players: 1-4 (2 online)  
ESRB: Everyone

www.sega.com



■ We haven't seen these people since high school! Even then, we didn't hang.



■ PlayStation 2

# EYE TOY: GROOVE

Shake your groove thang. Now!

- Good:** Seeing friends flail about on TV, ridiculing them
- Bad:** Seeing yourself flail about on TV, being ridiculed
- Best:** Watching the silly replay videos over and over



**JENNIFER:** When the Eye Toy camera first came out accompanied by a set of minigames called *Play*, I thought of it more as a novelty—a popular novelty, to be sure, but one that needed real games if it was going to have true staying power. *Groove* fits that bill, and it's just about everything I was hoping for. Dancing? Check. Cool licensed songs? Check. Seeing yourself and your friends look goofy on television? Big, priceless check. The solid single-player mode is essential for practice, but the multiplayer modes are where this game really gets its groove on. I almost died laughing during a round of battle sync mode, in which two people dance simultaneously doing coordinated moves. And with a song roster ranging from the Village People to Jamiroquai, everyone should find a song worth booty-shaking to.

The motion-sensing camera lacks the precision of a dance pad, unfortunately, so you can be good but still get dinged if you don't have the camera perfectly aligned for your frame. And how is it that choosing your mode, song, and difficulty level via frantic hand signals to the camera is *harder* than playing the actual game? Even with these faults, though, this game rocks—literally.

**CJ:** Someone at Sony must've loved Sega's classic music game *Samba de Amigo* (Dreamcast) as much as I did, 'cuz *Groove* is criminally similar. But prancing about in front of the camera is even more fun than workin' the maracas, and with *Groove*'s stellar song list and enjoyable multiplayer modes, you'll wanna shake it all night long. (Don't go too crazy—those snapshots and video of your spastic

dancing are primo blackmail material.) Using your body for *everything*—even entering your name—gets tiring quickly, but you'll be too busy groovin' to notice your arms have stopped working.

**SHAWN:** Don't let the fact that you'll look more like you're robbing a beehive than actually dancing deter you—getting into the groove is good fun, and like *Samba de Amigo* minus the maracas, the game reads movement remarkably well. Perfect for parties, it's also instantly accessible, even for your non-gaming pals. Unfortunately, it lacks the variety and lasting appeal of Eye Toy pack-in *Play*. But seeing how getting caught funking solo could guarantee you a spot alongside Internet celebroids like the *Star Wars* Kid, saving it for special occasions shouldn't be too hard.



■ The rest of the room might look at you like you're insane, but those floating smiley faces won't slap themselves.

|                             |          |     |       |
|-----------------------------|----------|-----|-------|
| THE VERDICTS<br>(OUT OF 10) | 8.0      | 8.0 | 7.0   |
|                             | JENNIFER | CJ  | SHAWN |

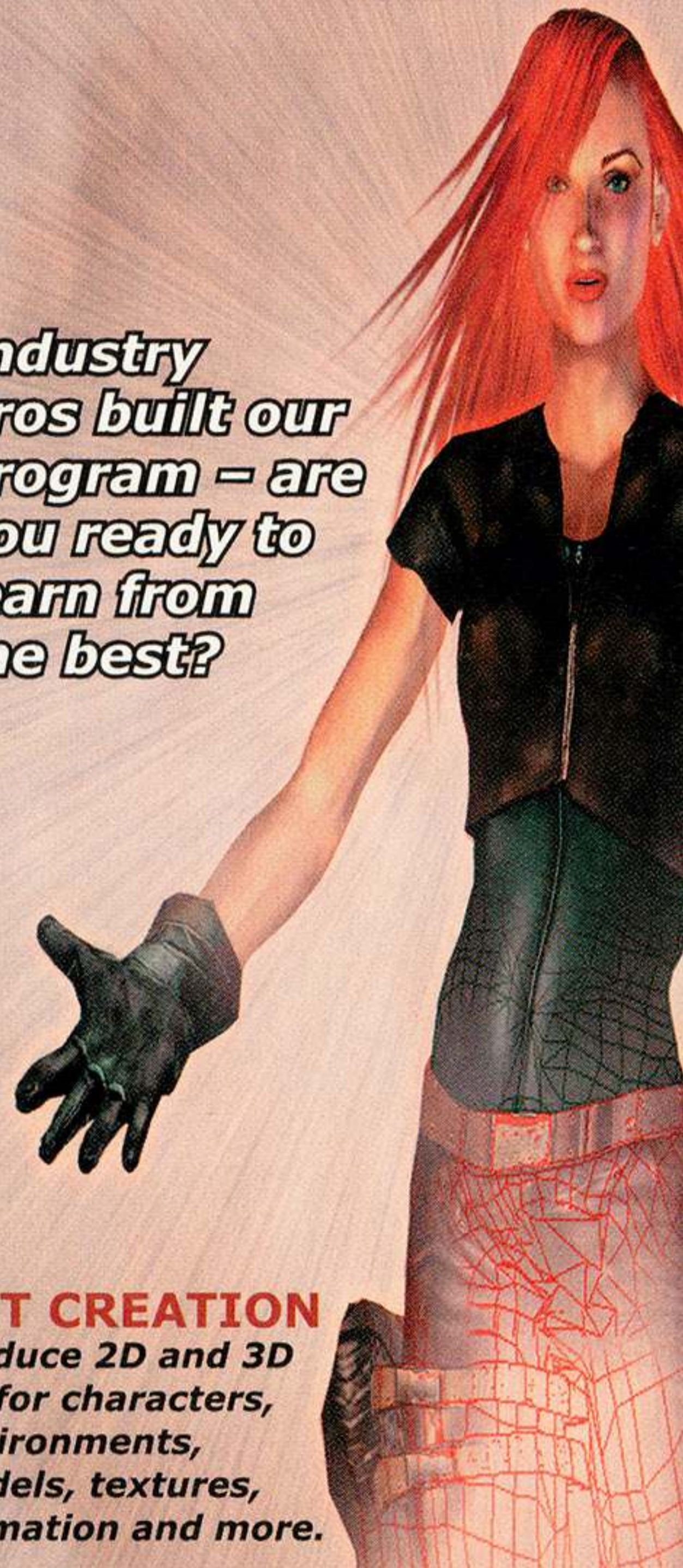
Publisher: Sony CEA  
Developer: Sony CEE  
Players: 1-2  
ESRB: Everyone

www.eyetoy.com

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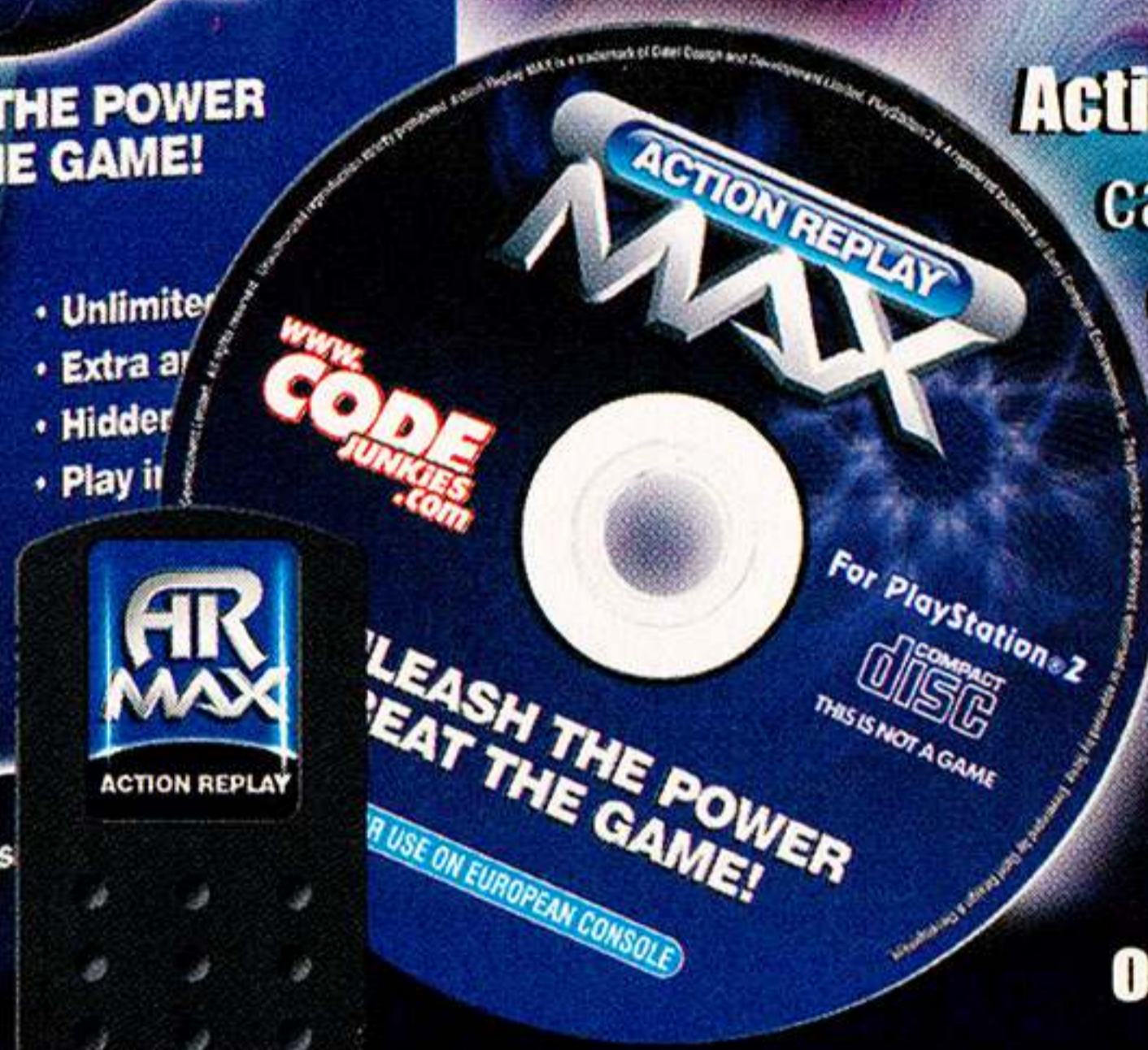
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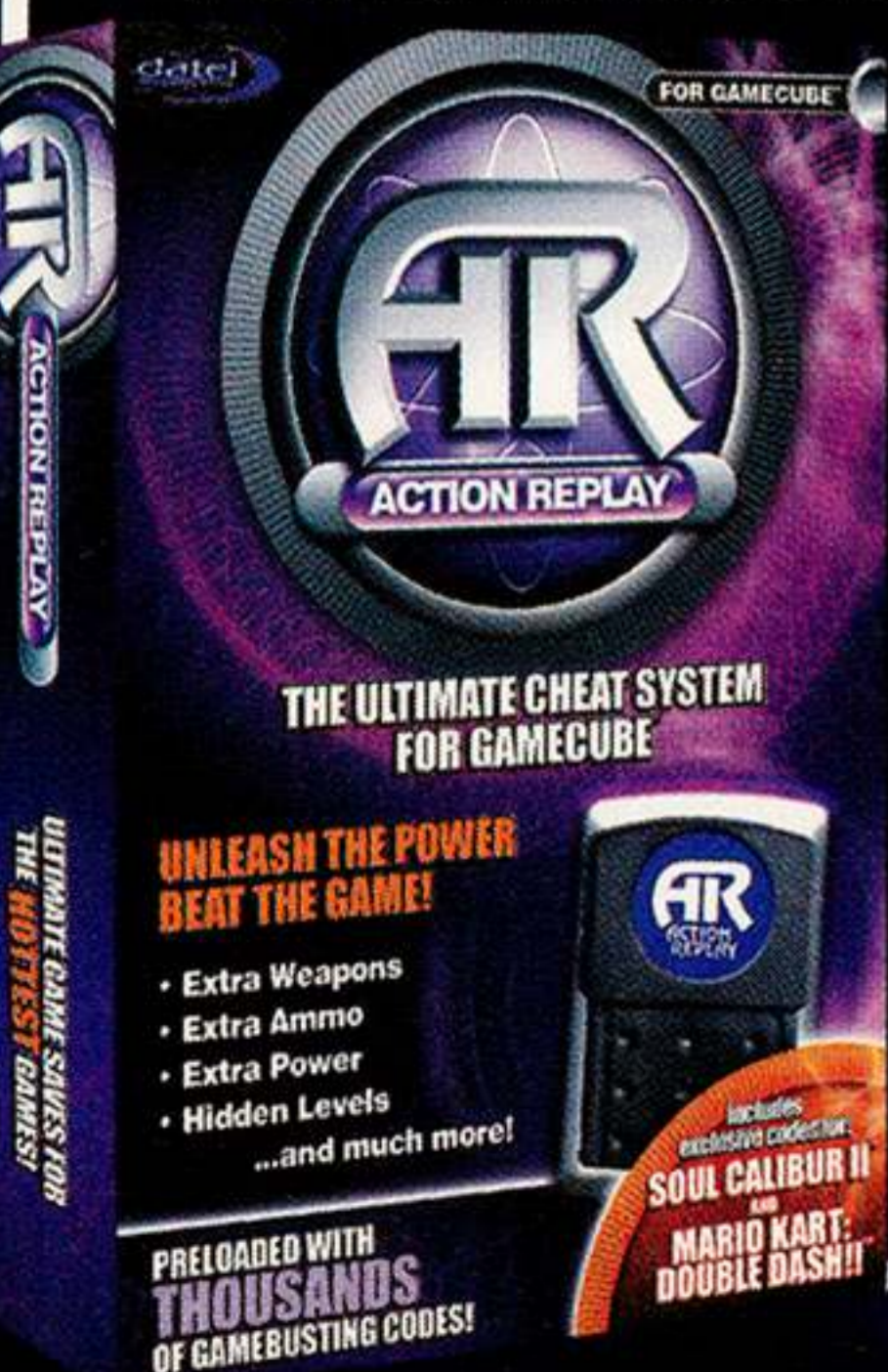


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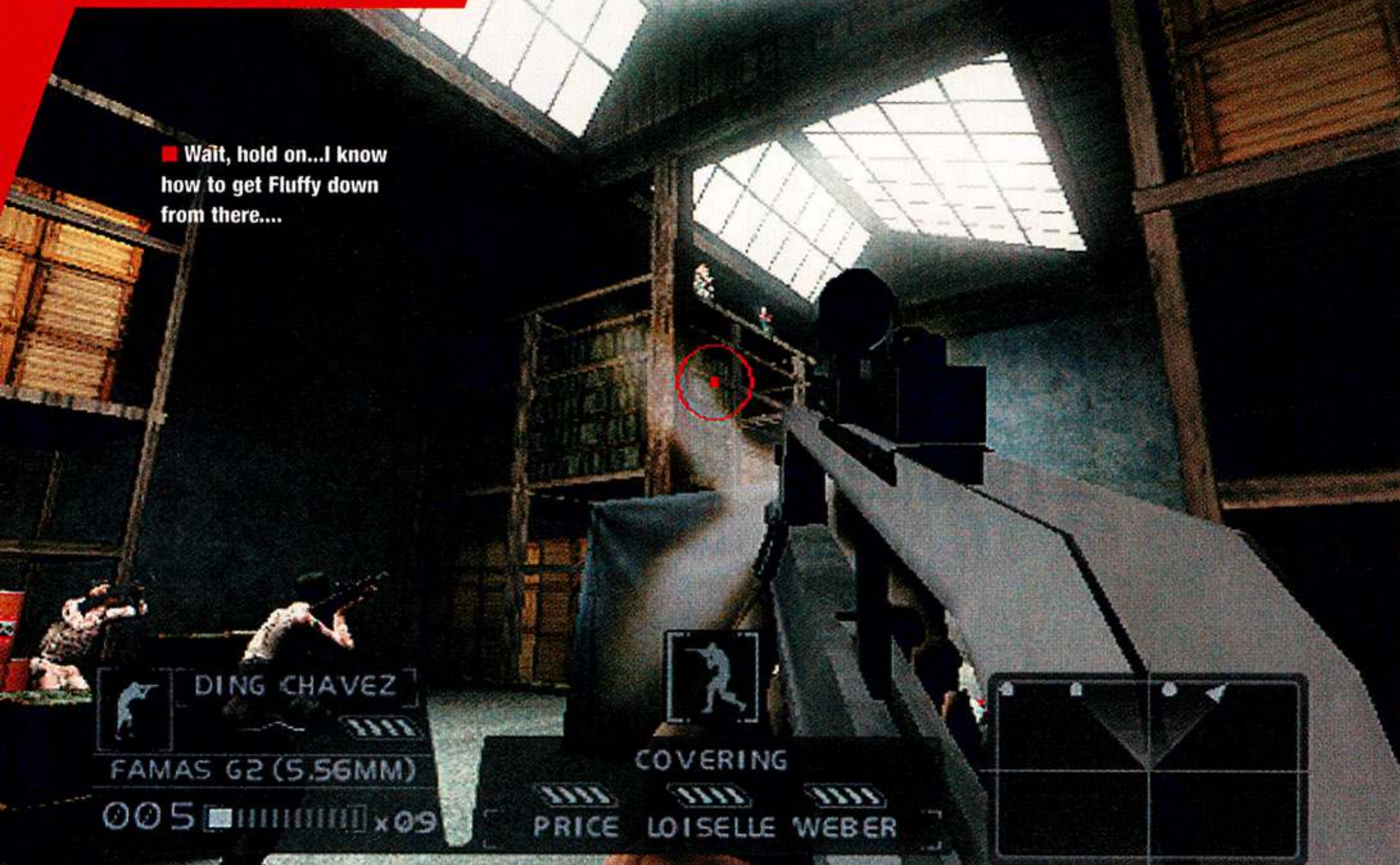


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■ PS2/XB

ONLINE

# RAINBOW SIX 3

## Could use a trip back to boot camp

**CJ:** PS2 owners waited patiently for months to get their *Rainbow Six* fix, but in the end, this version isn't as good as other PS2 shooters and is certainly not worthy of the pedigree that the *R6* series has forged on Xbox and PC. The disappointment begins offline as you work through a ho-hum single-player mode with short missions and uninspired maps, a checkpoint system that isn't all that useful, a radar setup that gives you only a vague idea of what's ahead, and dirt-stupid A.I. teammates.

Unfortunately, the online experience isn't much better. Say good-bye to the mayhem of 16-player *SOCOM* matches and a reluctant hello to a maximum of six players in any of *R6*'s game types. Its online maps are poorly designed, and because there aren't any doors to open and close, one of the offline game's key strategic elements—using your team to coordinate surprise attacks on an enemy's stronghold—is taken away. Plus, you have a limited selection of

weapons when playing online, and, disconcertingly, the bodies of fallen comrades disappear immediately instead of staying on the ground, making it harder to find out where all your teammates were recently slaughtered.

It's strange to see *R6* in such vanilla packaging, especially since I can't get enough of the very different Xbox version. When your main competition on PS2 is *SOCOM*, just showing up to the party doesn't cut it.

**DEMIAN:** I can see how CJ feels burned after all the giddy, bullet-riddled hours we've spent with the Xbox game, but compared with other PS2 shooters (especially online shooters), *Rainbow* really isn't that bad. It's not that great, either, but as long as you don't know what you're missing over on Xbox, you'll definitely wring some enjoyment out of "neutralizing" those dang terrorists, even if your squadmates are kinda dumb. Multiplayer would be a bit better if not for the

six-player max ceiling and occasional bouts of slowdown, even on tiny maps, but it's fun in a not-very-strategic sort of way. Ubisoft did a great job when it ported the first *Splinter Cell* to other consoles, so it's obviously possible—but for next time, here's a tip: Don't remove features from the game and make it actively worse in every respect.

**SHOE:** If you have a PS2 and are interested in a solid, addictive squad shooter...get *SOCOM II*. Oh, you say you really want to play *Rainbow Six 3*? Then buy an Xbox and play that version instead.

I can't say the PS2 *Rainbow* is bad, but it's lackluster compared with those other titles. Here, war ain't hell—it's a carnival shooting gallery with stiff, predictable enemies. Online won't thrill either with tiny maps, lack of modes, and all the other reasons these guys already mentioned. But if *SOCOM II*'s too intimidating for you, this game's simpler approach may do the trick.



### Team Tactics

If you wanna stay alive in three-on-three online team games, stick together. Here's the plan: One person (your best sharpshooter) takes the lead, peeking around corners and taking the first shots if you find your targets. Number two provides covering fire (especially grenade support) and watches the flanks for tangos who think they're crafty. And the last guy, well, he's got your back.



### Rainbow Split

New to the PS2 *R6* is a splitscreen mode in which you and a friend can play cooperatively through the single-player missions (but get no additional A.I. teammates) or through terrorist hunt, in which your only goal is to down tangos. Keep in mind that when your friend falls, you're left to finish the mission alone—no respawns. And since there are no health packs, you can't afford to take a few hits for the team. So don't just run into every room with guns blazin'.



**Good:** Nice lighting effects  
**Bad:** Feels like a watered-down *Rainbow Six*  
**You're Better Off Sticking With:** Both *SOCOMs I* and *II*



THE VERDICTS (OUT OF 10)

|     |      |        |
|-----|------|--------|
| 5.0 | 6.0  | 6.0    |
| CJ  | SHOE | DEMIAN |

Publisher: Ubisoft  
Developer: Ubisoft  
Players: 1-2 (2-6 online)  
ESRB: Mature

www.rainbowsix3.com



■ Lavender go-go boots—the only way to slay.



■ The titular crimson sea refers to the gallons of blood you'll shed in battle. At least, that's the theory we're working with.



■ PlayStation 2

# CRIMSON SEA 2

Awash in blood and kajillion-hit combos

**Good:** Varied missions and fun combat  
**Bad:** Nonstop fighting can get tiresome  
**Alternate Title:** *Dynasty Warriors in Space*

**JOHN R:** It seems a little weird for an Xbox-exclusive game to get a PS2-exclusive sequel, but that's exactly what happened with *Crimson Sea*, Koei's futuristic, sci-fi take on the *Dynasty Warriors* franchise. Don't worry if you missed the first game, though, because *Sea 2* is pretty much a bigger, better version of the original, with a bit more of everything: missions, moves, play modes, and, most notably, a second playable character.

*Sea 2*'s action-packed combat is surprisingly satisfying, and the new time-extend feature (basically a take on *Max Payne*'s bullet time) provides added incentive for racking up major league combos. But fortunately, it's not all mindless button mashing—you need to power up your weapons often to survive, and hardcore players will have a field day trying to achieve straight S

rankings on each mission.

My only gripe is that combat can feel a little repetitive after your gazillionth 100-hit combo, but the varied mission objectives help keep things fresh. If nothing else, it'll make for a great holdover until *Samurai Warriors* shows up in May.

**JON D:** Like most of Koei's games, *Crimson Sea 2* (not a submarine game, by the way) has a learning curve as steep as a black-diamond slope. But put in the training time, and *Sea 2* plays like a faster-paced *Phantasy Star Online*. It's solid in the face of intense mayhem, with tons of great-looking characters on the screen and no big slowdown problems. One substantial flaw: Camera control on the right thumbstick, far from the face buttons you're relentlessly riding to fend off baddies, is a bad idea—I had to

settle for target-lock to swing the view.

**CJ:** You'll drop a deuce in your long johns the first time a door locks behind you and hundreds of insect-like creatures descend from the ceiling, fixin' to carve you up like a turkey. (One of your missions should be to hunt down and kill whoever taught these bugs how to lock doors.) Thing is, once this happens for the 80th time, it starts to wear a tad thin. Still, there's a lot to like—beautiful graphics, a huge number of missions, well-designed environments, a hint of puzzle gameplay every so often, and that sweet *Dynasty Warriors* combat system. There's a bit of *Phantasy Star Online* flavor to *Sea 2* as well (always a good thing), only this is more of a bug hunt and the story's not quite as interesting.



■ Legs akimbo



■ Hit R2 or rack up a 30-hit combo to trigger time extend; your foes are slow-mo'd, but you're still quick and deadly (above right).



|                             |         |        |     |
|-----------------------------|---------|--------|-----|
| THE VERDICTS<br>(OUT OF 10) | 8.0     | 7.0    | 6.5 |
|                             | JOHN R. | JON D. | CJ  |

Publisher: Koei  
 Developer: Koei  
 Players: 1-2  
 ESRB: Teen

www.koei.com

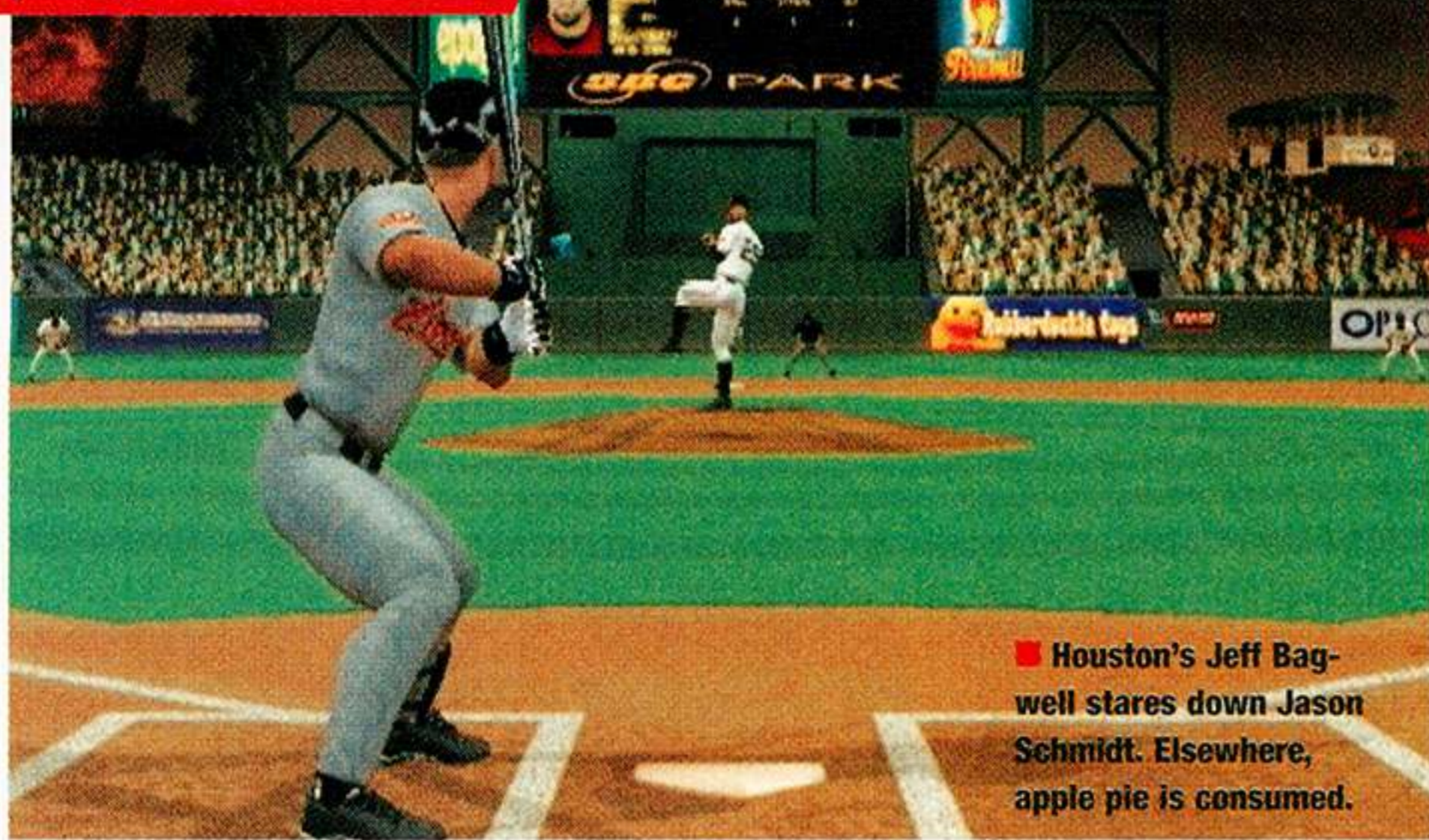


ASKA

SHE'S THE ARTISTIC TYPE. THOUGH HER ARTS ARE PURELY MARTIAL.

CY GIRLS

09:27:36



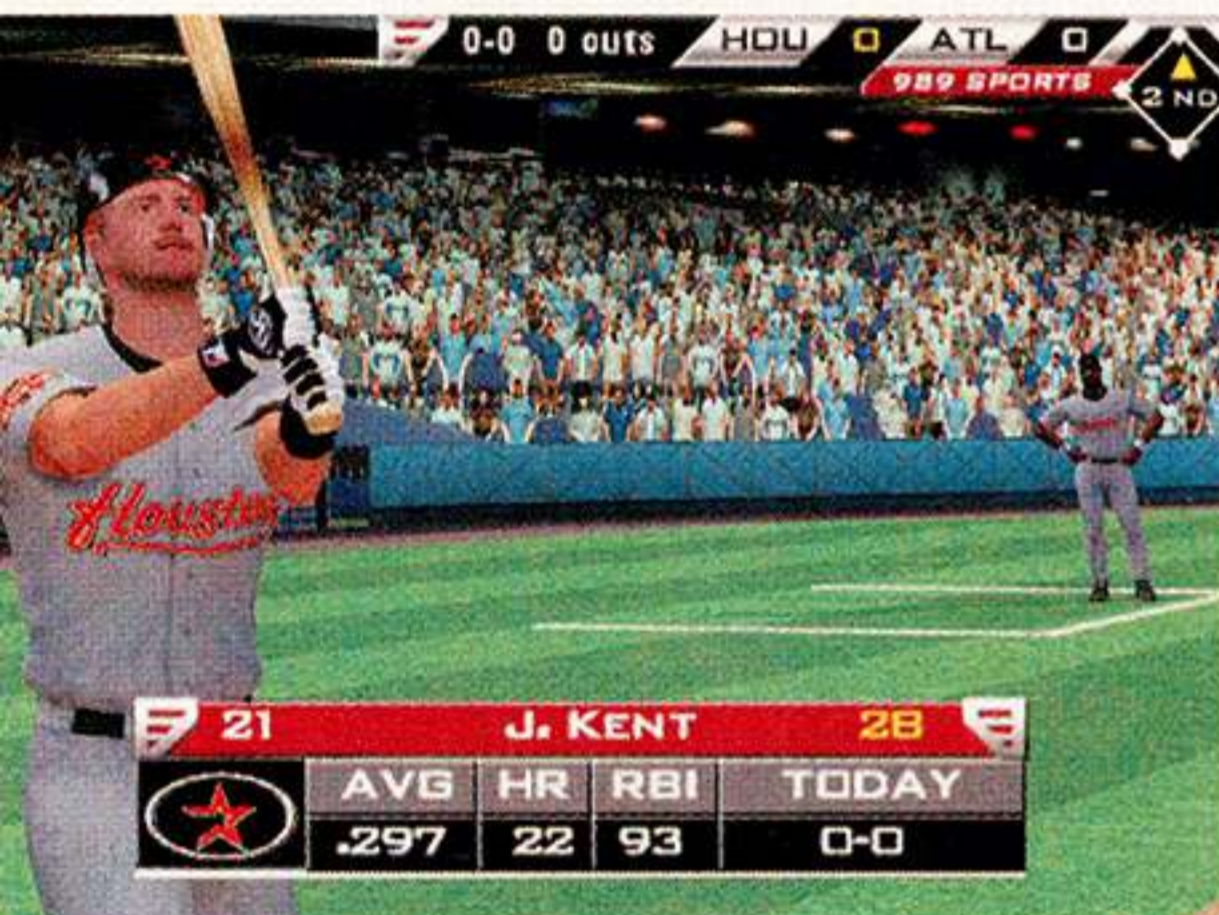
■ Houston's Jeff Bagwell stares down Jason Schmidt. Elsewhere, apple pie is consumed.

PlayStation 2

# MLB 2005

ONLINE

Off-season training is starting to pay off



■ Darin Erstad just hit a home run, or he's practicing his Village People dance routine.

**Good:** Tons of franchise options

**Bad:** Lackluster graphics

**Supports:** The PS2 Eye Toy (slap your mug on a created player)



**BRYAN:** Every pennant race has a team that falls just shy of reaching the fall classic. This season, *MLB 2005* is that squad.

Sony's virtual rendition of America's pastime leads off with a colossal franchise mode that's easily on par with *Madden's* renowned owner mode. Accompanying the year-after-year bells and whistles are features that let you set up stadium promotions, sign TV cable contracts, and even request bank loans; it's almost too much for one person to manage. Once you hit the field, the gameplay is pretty solid in every facet (just don't expect ground-breaking mechanics à la *MVP*). Plus, the seamless animations—from diving catches to turning a 4-6-3 double play—are the best I've seen from this spring's crop of big leaguers.

But the game steps up to the graphics plate and goes down swinging. The player models are stretched out and lack definition, and overall, *MLB 2005's* eye candy leaves a slightly bitter PS1 aftertaste. *MVP* and *ESPN* are still my top picks this season.

**PATRICK:** *MLB 2005* makes an exponential leap from its brutal PS2 debut a year ago,

although there wasn't anywhere to go but up. You'll immediately notice the improved graphics, though other games still do a better job of depicting players' faces, bodies, and batting/pitching stances. Responsive gameplay makes you feel like you're in control of every facet of the game, and the franchise mode is the deepest among all the baseball titles. Up from the depths of the minors a year ago, *MLB 2005* is starting to look like it belongs in the bigs.

**OFFICIAL PS MAG—CHRIS B:** Tilt your head *just* right and you can use the Eye Toy camera to import a decent-looking representation of yourself in *MLB 2005*. Like the excellent career mode (which follows your created rookie hopeful through spring training to the show), it's something you only get in *MLB*. However, actual play on the field just doesn't offer anything superior to *MVP* and *ESPN*. Nitpicks like the inability to check swings and quirky A.I. also annoy, but you really are getting a solid game of baseball with *MLB*—just not quite as solid as the competition's. Maybe next year, 989, you'll go all the way.

|                             |       |         |          |
|-----------------------------|-------|---------|----------|
| THE VERDICTS<br>(OUT OF 10) | 7.0   | 7.0     | 7.0      |
|                             | BRYAN | PATRICK | CHRIS B. |

Publisher: Sony CEA  
Developer: 989 Sports  
Players: 1-2 (2 online)  
ESRB: Everyone

www.989sports.com



■ Hit X. Faster. Keep going. Always hitting the X button...still hitting...



PlayStation 2

# SEVEN SAMURAI 20XX

Where's the seppuku button?



■ Hero Natoe slices the red-headed, gigantor stepchild of *Street Fighter's* Akuma. We assume.

**Good:** Elegant character designs

**Bad:** One-dimensional gameplay

**Most Awesomely Awful Enemies:** The Hip-Hop Boys



**JON D:** I expect *Seven Samurai* Director Akira Kurosawa's grave is equipped with some sort of industrial centrifuge to accommodate the amount of spinning he's doing right about now. This quasi-remake of the original classic—futuraized, robotized, and vaguely blessed by the great director's heirs—is a rote hack-n-slash fiesta (think PS2's *The Bouncer* meets *Dynasty Warriors*) that throws in some RPG elements as an artificial attempt at depth. You'll talk to a smattering of townspeople as you wander (but none offer useful information or helpful items) and pick up unique weapons from fallen bosses—weapons that you can view in a gallery but can't actually wield. Some levels offer either a big, lame arrow to blatantly illuminate your path or no direction at all. The game quickly devolves into busywork—running with sword sheathed toward triggered events, which are usually mindless battles against faceless robots. Bland, repetitive gameplay sends this one straight to the bargain bin.

**SHAWN:** Add 20-something to its title, and anything, including a cinematic fossil like

Kurosawa's *Seven Samurai*, is automatically cooler. For proof, look no further than *20XX's* boss battle with a rapping duo on rainbow-colored rollerblades. Sarcasm aside, this game sucks. Not only did I play through several levels without looking at the screen, but my sword finger nearly fell off from the fatigue of interminably tapping the same button. Without new killing tools and techniques to acquire or even the need to fight strategically, you're left with a sorry retelling of a classic story...which doubles as a stamina-building regimen for pro thumb wrestlers.

**OFFICIAL PS MAG—SCOOTER:** I thought I'd be offended by seeing one of my all-time favorite director's movies butchered into a futuraized remake. But the fact that the game is so simplistic and easy that I was able to finish levels without even looking at the screen at times damned it enough in my eyes. When I did pay attention I soon regretted it, as there's major slowdown when fighting a bunch of random thugs or space werewolves at once. Just watch Kurosawa's movies instead. Please.

|                             |        |       |         |
|-----------------------------|--------|-------|---------|
| THE VERDICTS<br>(OUT OF 10) | 3.5    | 3.5   | 4.0     |
|                             | JON D. | SHAWN | SCOOTER |

Publisher: Sammy  
Developer: Dimps  
Players: 1  
ESRB: Teen

www.sammystudios.com





Close-cropped assassin Teshu gives a guard a blow-drying he'll never forget.

Xbox

ONLINE

# TENCHU: RETURN FROM DARKNESS

A shuriken to the side of the Xbox

**Good:** More ninja-like than *Ninja Gaiden*

**Bad:** Enemies still dumb as bricks

**Cute:** Playing as Ninja Dog online

**KEVIN:** It's really a shame this port of *Tenchu: Wrath of Heaven* (PS2) comes out so close to *Ninja Gaiden*, which shares its main theme (ninjas loppin' heads off people) but hopelessly outclasses it in visual flash. This is a very different sort of ninja game, after all, and it deserves close examination by a larger audience.

*Return from Darkness'* story mode features a surprisingly small list of Xbox-only enhancements, most of which serve to make the game easier. Players no longer lose 20 minutes of progress after an unfortunate turn of events, like, say, falling into a bottomless pit (the bane of all ninjas), so that's nice. There's also a wealth of new items (the camouflage curtain makes stealth almost *too* easy), and the co-op missions on Xbox Live open the door for incredibly painful-looking two-way stealth kills.

Still, the enhancements seem a

bit paltry. Activision says the enemy A.I.'s been reworked, but they still seem pretty stupid to me, with guards forgetting about your presence at the drop of a hat. The Live modes could've been fleshed out more, too—two players isn't nearly enough in the versus matches. Still, the *Tenchu* foundation is strong, and the new bits make *Return from Darkness* one of the most accessible stealth games out there.

**PAUL:** A bunch of little improvements—Live multiplayer, new weapons—adorn this port of PS2's *Wrath of Heaven*, but it's basically the same game with the same flaws: dumb enemies, frustrating controls, and a recalcitrant camera. Performing devastating stealth kills is still thrilling, but getting spotted while you struggle with the camera is still lame. No worries—just run for

thirty paces in any direction, and the dude will forget you ever existed. (Classic ninja move.) If you're not a hardcore stealthnik with unflappable patience, sneak on by.

**XBN—CHE:** Stealthy action gets feudal on your ass with Activision's re-release of *Tenchu* on Xbox. Although the game lacks the Hollywood production values of the *Splinter Cell* series, *Tenchu* holds up well aesthetically, thanks to cool anime-inspired character designs and plenty of appealing idiosyncrasies. Hopping stealthily from rooftop to rooftop, then dropping in on an unsuspecting samurai for a brutal stealth kill is still a good time, but like its PS2 counterpart, controls in this game feel clunky. Add a few truly lackluster multiplayer modes on Xbox Live and you have a game that should, by all rights, be a budget release.



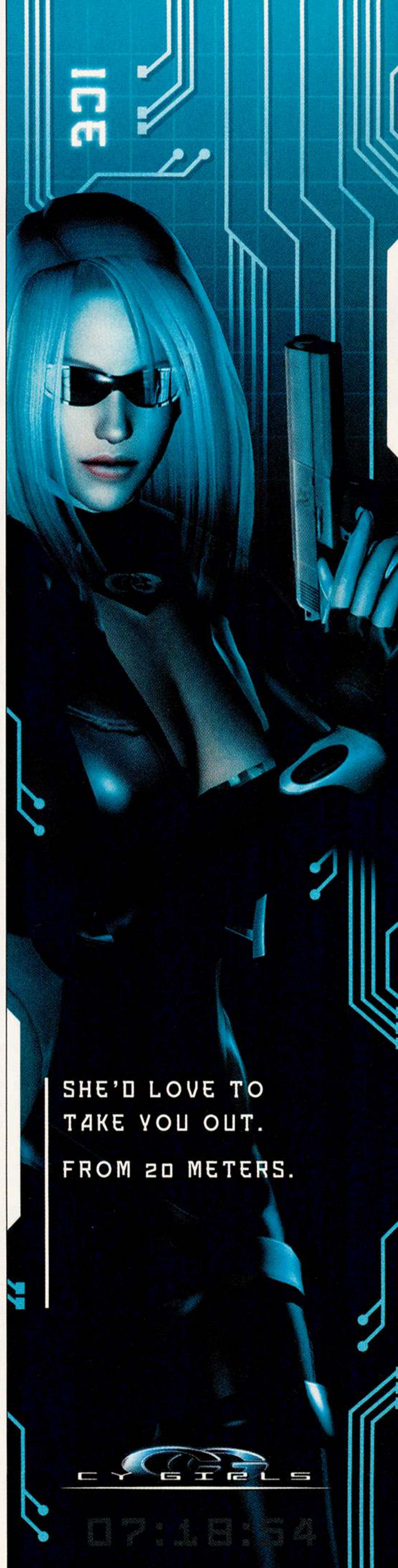
It's good to murder people together.



|                             |       |      |     |
|-----------------------------|-------|------|-----|
| THE VERDICTS<br>(OUT OF 10) | 7.5   | 6.0  | 6.5 |
|                             | KEVIN | PAUL | CHE |

Publisher: Activision  
Developer: K2  
Players: 1-2 (2 online)  
ESRB: Mature

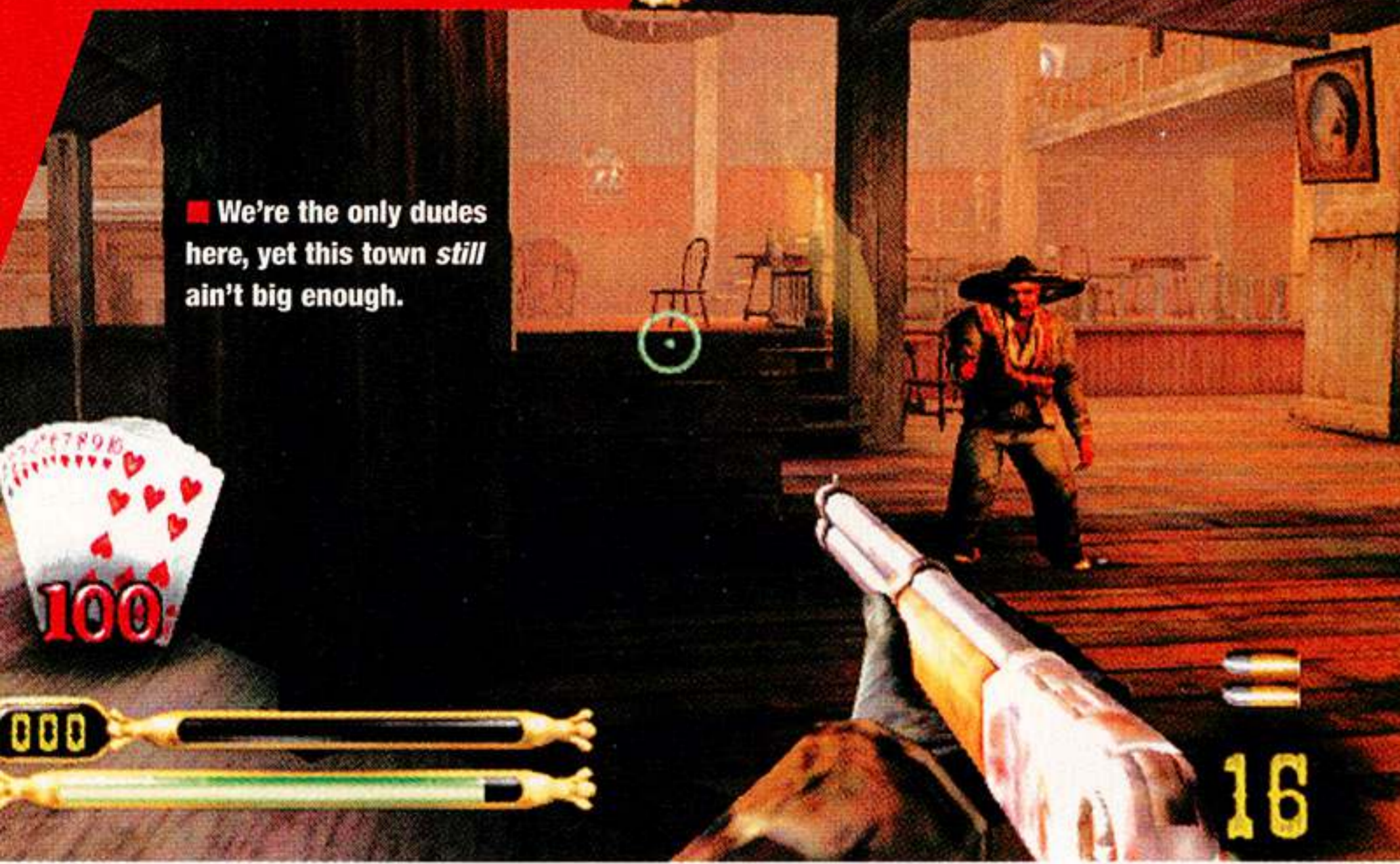
www.returnfromdarkness.com



SHE'D LOVE TO  
TAKE YOU OUT.  
FROM 20 METERS.

CYBERGIRLS

07:18:54



■ We're the only dudes here, yet this town still ain't big enough.



■ Xbox

ONLINE

# DEAD MAN'S HAND

How the West was dumb

**Good:** Every Western movie cliché in the book  
**Bad:** Every first-person-shooter cliché in the book  
**Silliest Villain:** Cannibal colonel Robert "Bloody Bert" Hixton



**KEVIN:** If you know who Sergio Leone is or remember which film made Clint Eastwood a star (*A Fistful of Dollars*, FYI), then *Dead Man's Hand* was made for you. Atari has taken a very standard first-person shooter and thrown in every Western reference imaginable—whiskey bombs, flaming stagecoaches, crazed hillbillies, guys flying through windows when shot, and desperadoes with quips like "It's dyin' time, boy." You even get a bonus for shooting hats off enemies' heads.

Unfortunately, the gameplay is a day late and a dollar short. There's nothing here that you haven't seen in other shooters. Couple this with uneven visuals and redundant level design, and a great idea turns into an average experience. *Hand's* worth a rent just for the tragicomic plot (*Unforgiven* this ain't), but real farmhands may want to hold out for *Red Dead Revolver* in a couple months' time.

**CRISPIN:** The West is actually more weird—and ridiculous—than wild in the oddball *Dead Man's Hand*, what with its unique brand of shooting-gallery silliness. Whoa, Nelly moments include earn-

ing boffo bonuses for shooting bad guys who fall from the sky and getting major "anvil" points for crushing evil gold miners in TNT-spawned cave-ins. (If only some of these zany antics made it into the dry multiplayer modes.) Granted, none of this stuff is actually much fun—I just had such a good laugh watching the awkward character animations that I figure this sucker's a must-rent for comedy value alone.

**XBN—GREG O:** Factually accurate, perhaps to a fault, this six-gun shooter painstakingly pieces together the American Old West. It's all here: ornery cowpokes stationed atop barrels of TNT; the bandidos who loiter under huge boulders, waiting to be crushed underneath tons of stone; steely-eyed A.I. killers slamming into walls while stuck in their run animations; and a Native American boss character who throws an endless supply of knives while you blast him with a shotgun because, apparently, firearms are for suckers. Deal us another hand, boys, because this one has too many jokers in it.



|                             |       |         |         |
|-----------------------------|-------|---------|---------|
| THE VERDICTS<br>(OUT OF 10) | 6.5   | 5.0     | 4.5     |
|                             | KEVIN | CRISPIN | GREG O. |

Publisher: Atari  
Developer: Human Head  
Players: 1-2 (2-8 online)  
ESRB: Teen

www.dmhgame.com

■ Xbox

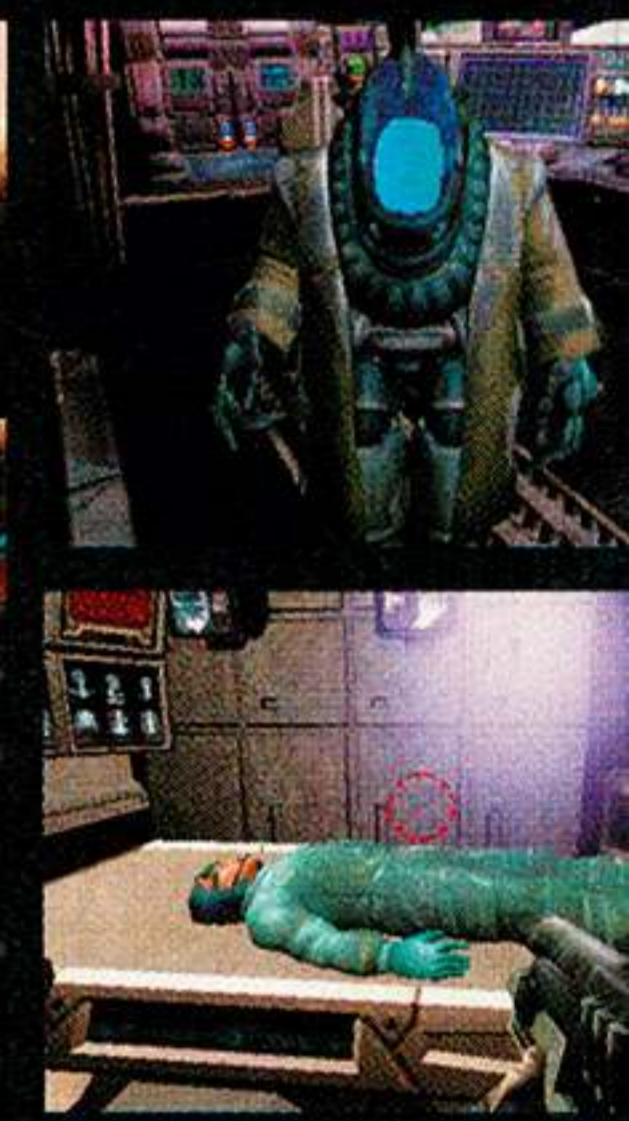
# UNREAL II: THE AWAKENING

ONLINE

Wake us up halfway through



■ The only good alien is an exploded alien.



**Good:** Fun online gameplay  
**Bad:** Bumpy single-player mode  
**Atonement For:** *Unreal Championship* (XB)



**KEVIN:** After a year of waiting (you *have* been waiting, right?), *Unreal II* finally hits a console. I'll try to ignore the fact that the PC version, which looks nicer and lets you play with more people online, is also cheaper. The question is, since Xbox is already so lousy with *Halo*-ish titles, can you be quite so unbiased?

The meat of *Unreal II* lies in its single-player game—a dozen missions that do little to advance the genre but do look very, very pretty while going through the motions. Ultimately, however, single player suffers from a too-short story and dumb-as-rocks enemies, who'd rather bum-rush than exhibit any sort of tactical acumen.

But things look up with the XMP multiplayer mode, *Unreal's* take on capture the flag—it's confusing at first, but get eight or 12 people going at once, and it's *Halo*-class chaotic fun. *Unreal II* is ideal if you need some Xbox Live sci-fi shooting *right now*, but if not...not.

**PAUL:** Here's what *Awakening* puts on the table: a whole lotta guns and a bunch of dumb, ugly aliens to shoot with 'em—take it or leave it. Sure, there's some mumbled story about a bunch of space bugs fixin' to get their misshapen claws on some ancient artifacts, but your role here is nothing more than glorified intergalactic exterminator. The co-op mode suffers from a bit of slowdown, but the Live mode's team-based sci-fi combat should hold you over until *Halo 2*.

**GMR—SIMON:** *Unreal II* plays like every first-person shooter pre-*Halo*. In fact, it

begins so poorly, in such spectacularly mediocre fashion, that were I not reviewing it, I'd have chucked it in a drawer until someone invented a way to retroactively make the first half interesting. But the threadbare plot begins to make some sense thereafter, and the reliance on sheer firepower gives way to more open-ended gameplay. Bringing up the rear, and saving the game from obscurity, is a solid multiplayer Live game and the now de rigueur co-op mode (OK, so maybe it was made after *Halo*). It's too short, and not exactly gaming genius, but it's medium fun while it lasts.



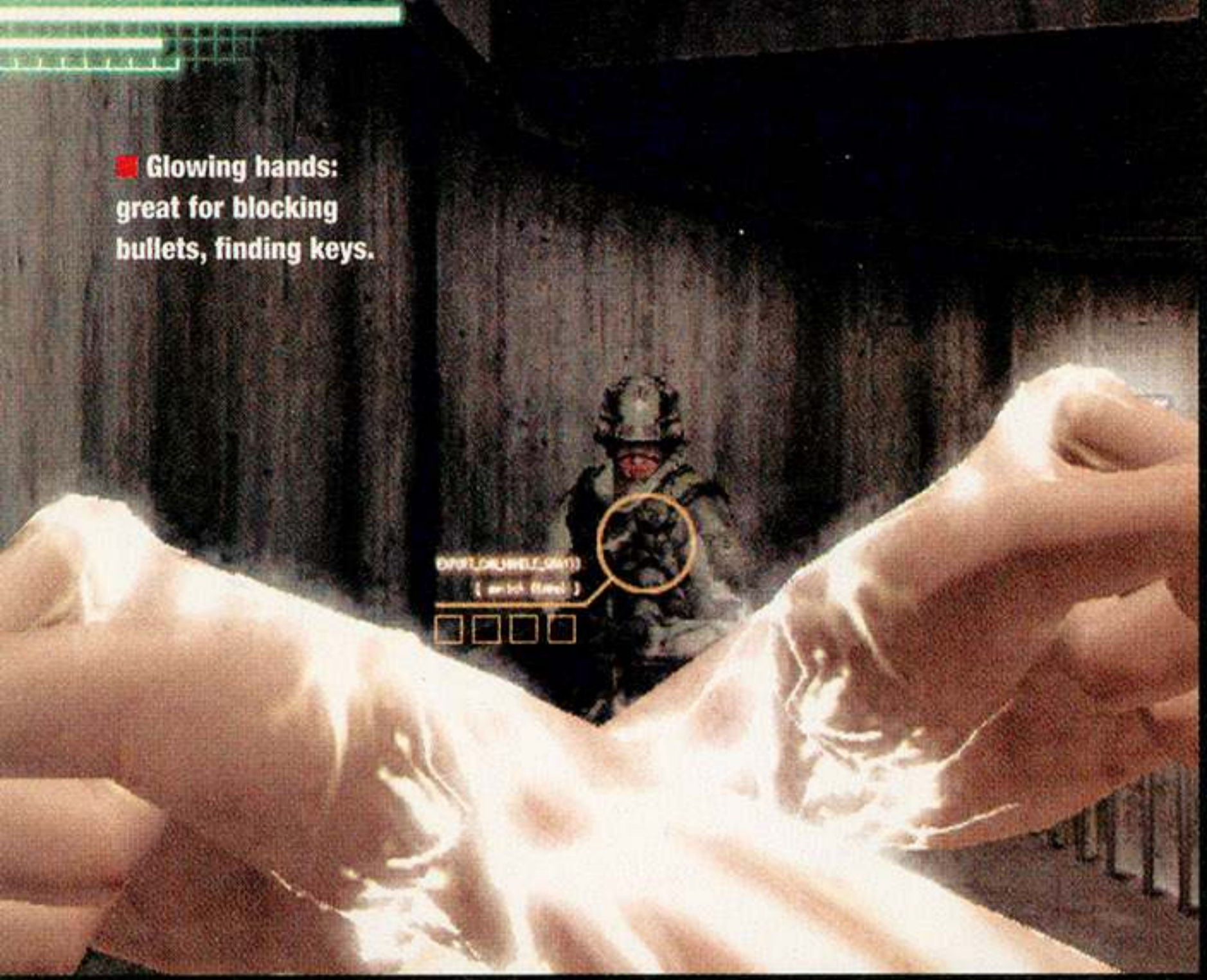
■ The catwalks of the future are much safer now that flamethrowers are street legal.

|                             |       |      |       |
|-----------------------------|-------|------|-------|
| THE VERDICTS<br>(OUT OF 10) | 7.0   | 6.5  | 6.5   |
|                             | KEVIN | PAUL | SIMON |

PUBLISHER: Atari  
DEVELOPER: Tantalus  
PLAYERS: 1-2 (4-12 online)  
ESRB: Mature

www.unreal2.com

■ **Glowing hands:** great for blocking bullets, finding keys.



■ **You don't earn niftier powers—like fireballs—until the game's second half, when things take a turn for the awesome.**



■ Xbox

# BREAKDOWN



Ain't that a kick in the head?

**Good:** Excellent story

**Bad:** Shooting lame. Punching good!

**We Would Have Loved:** A *mano-a-mano* versus mode

**PAUL:** Imagine the love child of pugilistic manga/anime *Fist of the North Star*, PC classic *Half-Life*, and *Akira*. Now imagine that, despite its parentage, this wunderkind tells a convoluted but ultimately coherent and satisfying story. Meet *Breakdown*, the new kid who'll knock your block off.

You play the entire game from the visceral perspective of Derrick Cole. On the one hand, your amnesia means it'll be a while before you have any idea what the hell is going on. On the other hand, literally, you're sporting potent, plasma-infused dukes, perfect for punching invading aliens. From the beginning, you're aided and abetted by Alex (think *Matrix's* Trinity with more personality), the most valuable computer-controlled ally you've ever had.

The first act suffers from a surplus of shooting, but once your fists

of fury come to the fore, *Breakdown's* combo-friendly combat system makes serving up knuckle sammiches a true pleasure. I won't spoil the story for you, but when you see a single tear slide down Alex's face—and later, when that scene is rewind, the tear erasing its trail across her bloody cheek—you'll know *Breakdown* is something special.

**CRISPIN:** You gotta figure that any first-person adventure with technicolor vomiting, screen-tumbling acrobatics, and a bona fide out-of-body experience deserves the tag "revolutionary." But *Breakdown* is also the most boring gripping game I've ever played. Its pacing is just off—especially in the first half, when you dart through lame environments for too long with nary a bulgy-veined monster to muss your

hair. Put up with all the game's dead air (and cruddy inventory system), and you're rewarded with the most fascinating head trip on Xbox. I can hear the cult following forming already.

**JOHN R:** Despite *Breakdown's* many flaws, which include drab level design, repetitive combat, brain-dead enemies, and sub-PS2-level graphics, I still recommend that every Xbox owner give it a try. Why? Because playing from a first-person viewpoint 100 percent of the time (even when puking!) rocks, and the intriguing (if a bit clichéd) plot will keep you hooked to the very end. A note to would-be quitters: The second half of the game is *much* better and more interesting than the first, so stick with it!



■ **Save your guns for the girlie soldier men and use your fists and feet on the freak-show mutants, all of whom are bulletproof.**

|                             |      |         |         |
|-----------------------------|------|---------|---------|
| THE VERDICTS<br>(OUT OF 10) | 8.5  | 8.5     | 7.0     |
|                             | PAUL | CRISPIN | JOHN R. |

Publisher: Namco  
Developer: Namco  
Players: 1  
ESRB: Mature

www.namco.com

2 GIRLS.  
2 WORLDS.  
1 HARDCORE MISSION.



2 DISCS - 2 ADVENTURES



**CHOOSE YOUR WEAPON:** ASKA, WITH HER LETHAL NINJA SKILLS - OR ICE, A FIREARMS EXPERT WITH NERVES OF STEEL. THEN TAKE THE FIGHT AGAINST EVIL FROM THE REAL WORLD INTO CYBERSPACE, WHERE THE RULES ARE RADICALLY DIFFERENT - BUT THE ACTION'S EVERY BIT AS HARDCORE.

CY GIRLS

PlayStation 2



**MATURE**  
**M**  
Blood  
Strong Language  
Suggestive Themes  
Violence  
CONTENT RATED BY  
ESRB

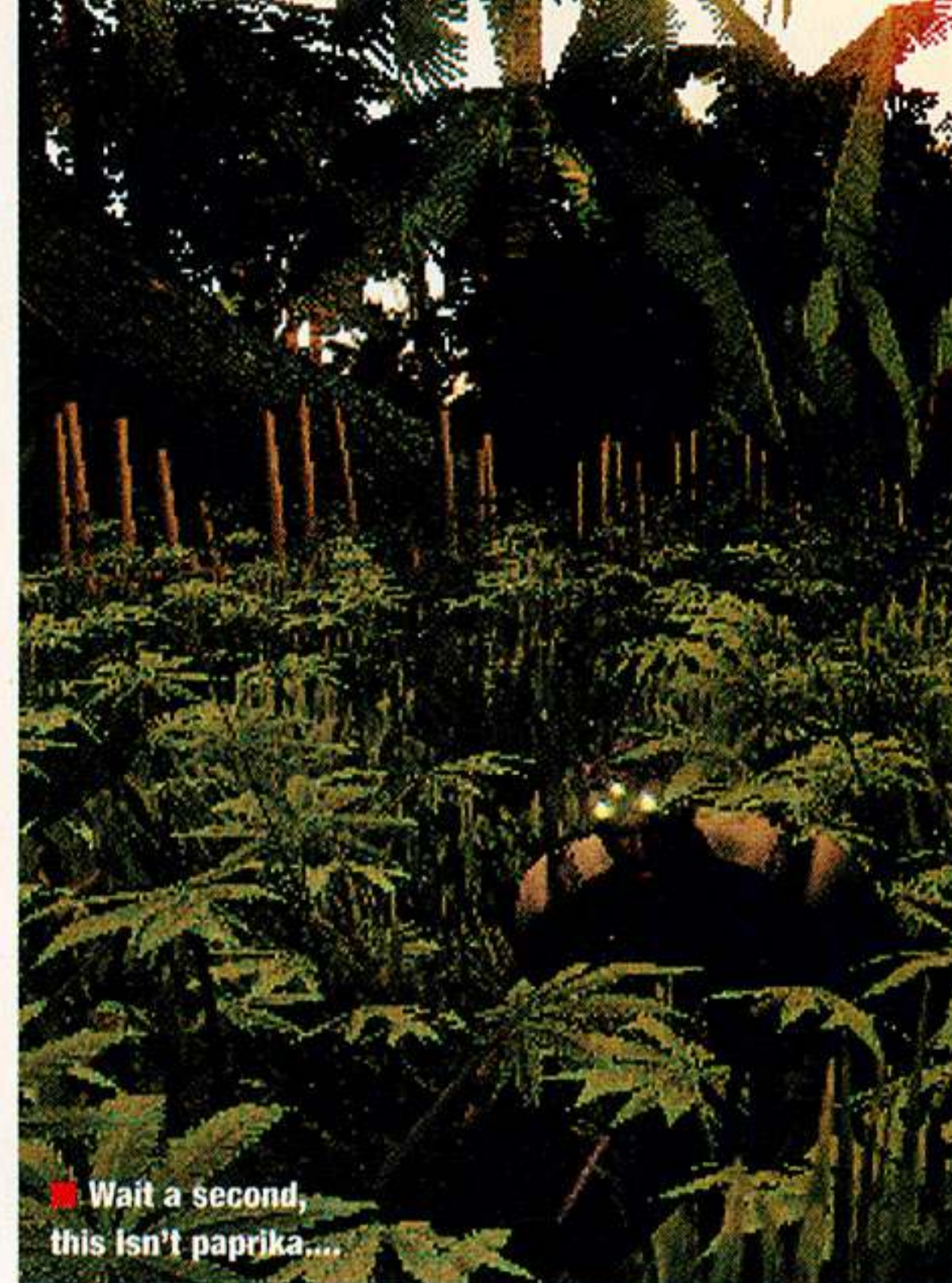
KONAMI

WWW.KONAMI.COM/USA

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■ Pandora features more outdoor, natural environments over the original Cell, especially in its later levels.



■ Wait a second, this isn't paprika....

**The Little Things**

For those of you who only played the Xbox version of the first *Splinter Cell*, you'll find a few minor but welcome improvements from the PS2 and GameCube versions incorporated into *Pandora*:

- The optical cable option appears automatically when you approach any doorway.
- The optical cable also includes thermal and night vision.
- The sticky cam can both whistle and gas enemies when they get close.

■ Xbox

ONLINE



# SPLINTER CELL PANDORA TOMORROW

“Tomorrow, tomorrow, I love ya, tomorrow”

**SHOE:** A game company once asked me why I “only” scored their game a 9 out of 10. Them: “You liked our game, didn’t you?” Me: “Yup.” Them: “Was anything wrong with it?” Me: “Nope.” Them: “So why didn’t it score a 10?” Me: “Cause it didn’t wow me.”

*Pandora Tomorrow* is that wow game and thus deserving of a 10—and I’m not just talking about a “damn, these graphics look fine” kind of wow (and damn, they do look fine). From the opening cinema to the last stage, from single- to multi-player, *Pandora Tomorrow* is the most incredible “stealthy soldier” game around. Sure, you may argue that, barring the *Metal Gear Solid* games, the genre isn’t that huge to begin with, but we’re talking setting-a-new-standard-while-smashing-the-old-one stuff here.

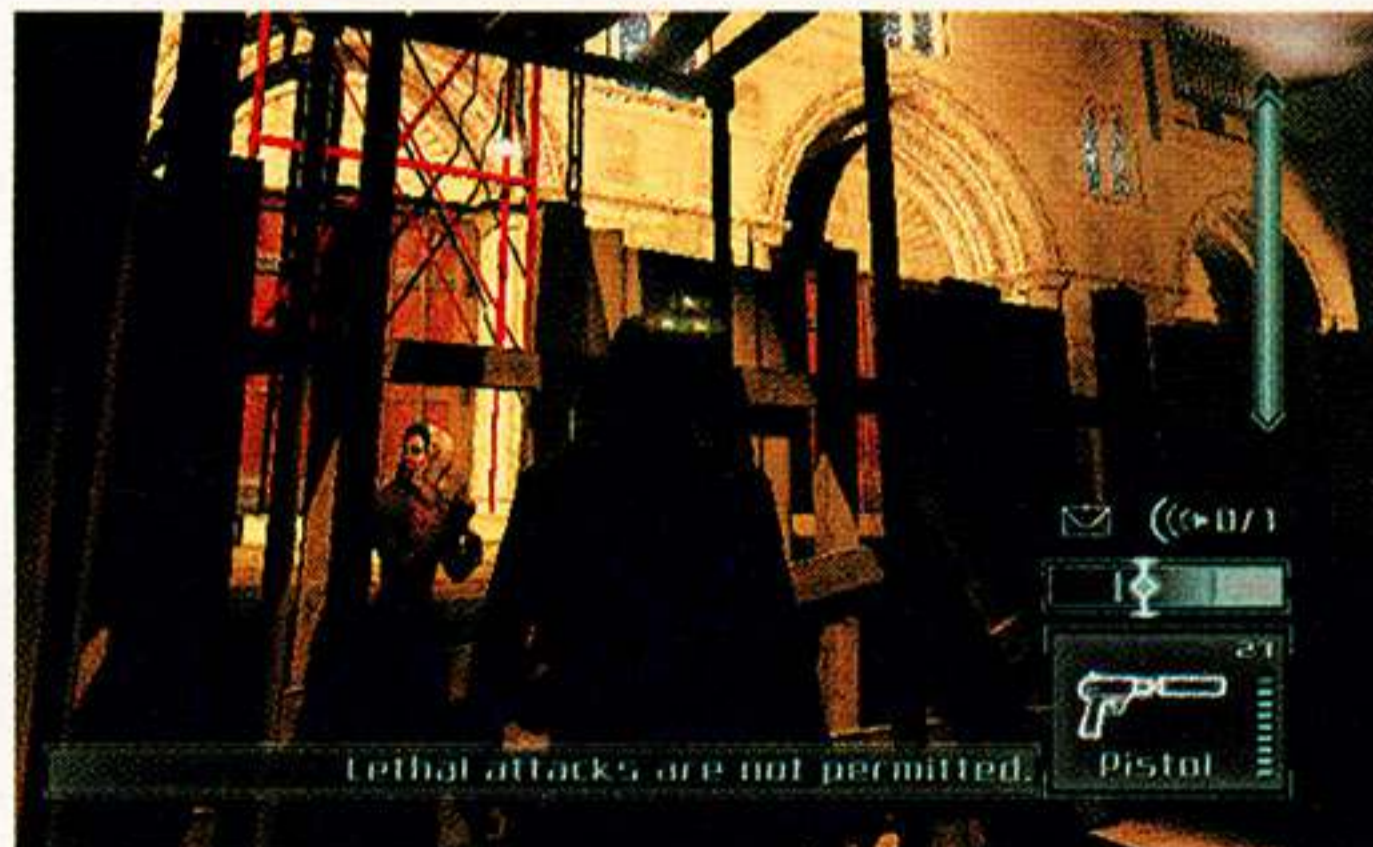
Of course, as a professional reviewer, I can always find something to bitch about, like how

this piece of #S@\*?! can be too frustrating (being a “wow” game does not preclude it from being cursed at). Some save points are way too far apart, and the A.I. is overly (and inconsistently) perceptive at times. Combine that with the slow, methodical pacing, and we’re talking dangerously high blood pressure when you’re reloading your last save for the 50th time. Weekend warriors need not enlist.

But wow is the single-player game regardless, even though gameplay hasn’t changed any from the original *Splinter Cell*. As a lone secret agent, you will see incredibly tense scenarios and a wide variety of realistically rendered environments to covertly operate in. From a passenger train speeding through the French countryside to the lush jungles of Indonesia to a superdetailed LAX airport, each stage is amazing to see and explore. The game’s pace takes a dramatic turn

for the worse halfway through when you reach Jerusalem, where the action slows down while the difficulty picks up and the checkpoints seem to disappear better than our protagonist. Try to stick with it, though—the final few stages are the best.

Even more wow is the multiplayer game. Folks, this is the reason to get on Xbox Live. I don’t care about the money for the subscription, for broadband, and for the cable dude to come out to your pad—you gotta play four-player *Pandora*. Here, two spies (who play in the traditional *Splinter Cell* third-person style) try to complete certain stealthy operations while two mercenaries (who are in first-person view) try to stop them. The two sides play completely different from each other, balanced with a variety of complementary weapons and gadgets. This innovative hunter/hunted gameplay is intense. Once you try a bit of this hot spy-



■ A couple of levels (like Jerusalem here) challenge you to follow an informant or enemy but stay out of sight at the same time.



■ Plant a spy bullet on a mercenary in multiplayer and you can follow him on your radar and listen in to everything he says over his headset mic.

**Good:** Gorgeous graphics, unique and addictive multiplayer  
**Bad:** Single-player game hasn’t changed much  
**Too Cool:** Listening in on the other team’s Xbox Live chat



THE VERDICTS (OUT OF 10)

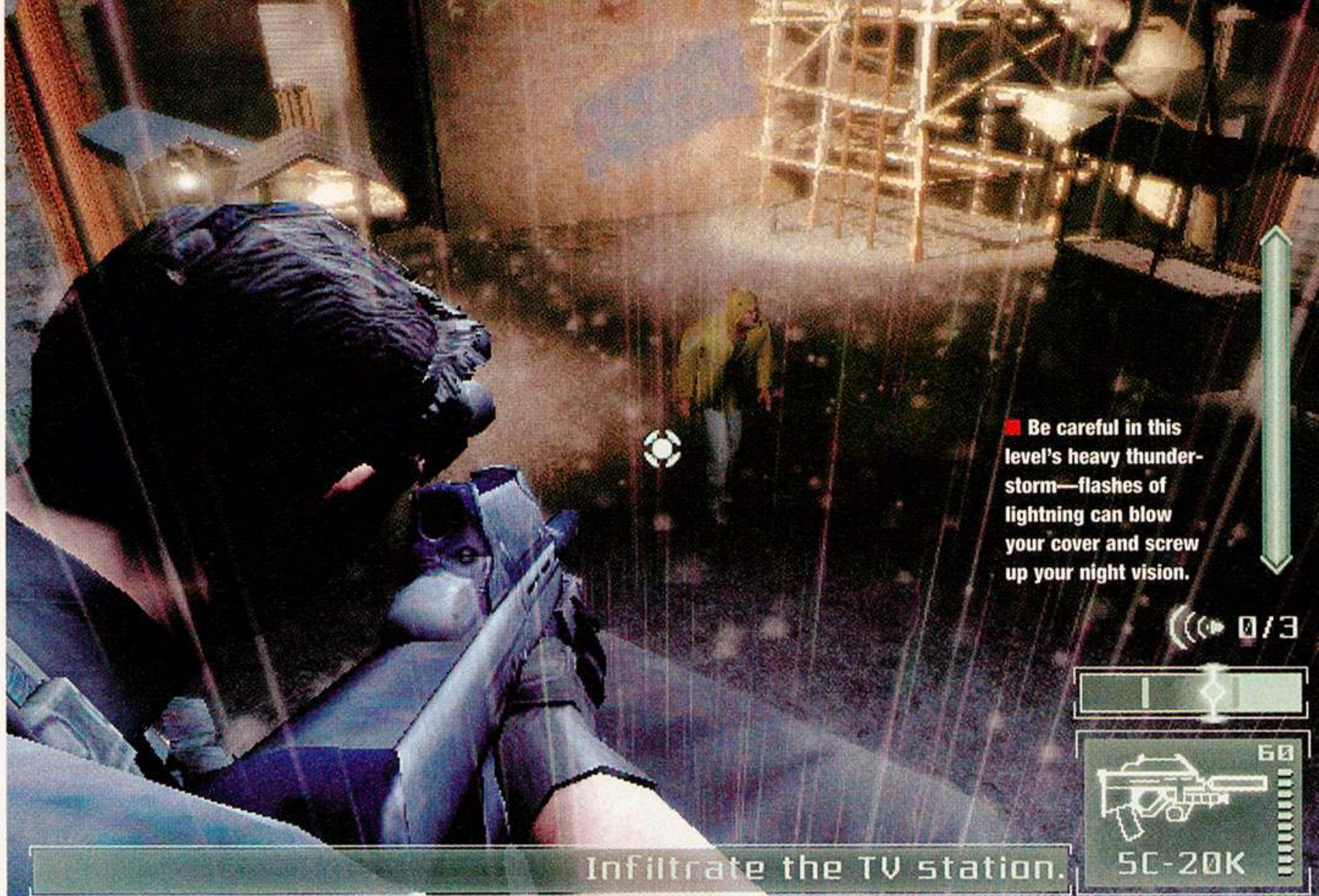
10  
SHOE

9.5  
MARK

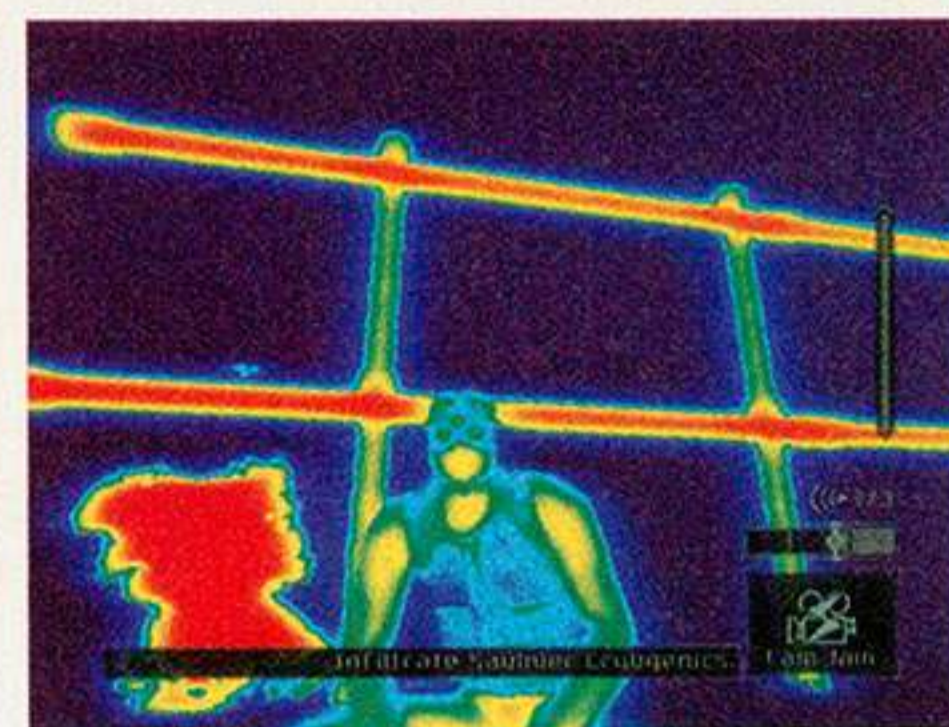
9.5  
CRISPIN

Publisher: Ubisoft  
 Developer: Ubisoft  
 Players: 1 (2-4 online or LAN)  
 ESRB: Teen

www.splintercell.com



■ Be careful in this level's heavy thunderstorm—flashes of lightning can blow your cover and screw up your night vision.



on-mercenary action, you'll never want to go back to boring ol' deathmatching again. On top of that, the multiplayer maps are some of the most cleverly designed in any videogame ever, offering spies multiple ways to hide and many paths from point A to B that their enemies can't access, while giving the mercs lots of tools—cameras, motion detectors, etc.—to catch them. Incredible stuff.

Get *Pandora Tomorrow*. After all, it will be the game all your Xbox Live'n friends will be talking about and playing until *Halo 2* comes out. You don't want to be left behind in the dark, do you?

**MARK:** Just as *Tetris* stuck in my noggin at the height of its popularity, *Pandora's* incredible online multiplayer mode has invaded my reality. I spot security cameras I never noticed before on my way to work. I instinctively note the placement of windows and air vents each time I enter a

room. While everyone else is watching the movie, I'm spotting the best places to mine the theater.

Sure, I'm obsessed. But who can blame me? *Pandora* nails every important aspect of multiplayer—intricate level design, cool gadgets and weapons, and most of all, a fantastic balance between the two very different types of gameplay. Games this innovative and polished at the same time are rare indeed. Setting traps, causing diversions, spying in on the other team's conversations, letting them spy in on yours to feed them false information—the possibilities for co-operation and strategy in multiplayer *Pandora* are so endless, it makes even a deep shooter like *Rainbow Six 3* seem like a simple *Doom* clone. All of this greatness does come with a price: a supersteep learning curve. You'll need to spend hours learning every nook of the huge levels and mastering the complicated controls before you

can enjoy multiplayer. But once you do, there is literally nothing like it.

Which I guess is why I can forgive Ubisoft for playing it safe with the single-player game. I have the same compliments (gorgeous graphics, cool gadgets, great controls) and complaints (guards who "cheat" to know where you are, confusing storyline) as I did with the original *Cell*, because this is basically the same game. Once again the missions where you can't kill or get spotted even once often devolve into frustrating trail-and-error gameplay. The stealth formula works best when it's the player who decides between going in quiet or guns-a-blazin', not the game. Luckily the overall experience is saved by the second half of *Pandora*, where you're granted more freedom in how you tackle the breathtakingly beautiful indoor/outdoor levels. Now, if you'll excuse me, I've got to get back online. ▶



**Four, No More?** Why only four for multiplayer *Pandora*? This isn't a frag-em-all affair, kids. The developers intentionally limited it to four players so you can really feel the intensity of multiplayer covert ops.



■ In multiplayer, you can screw up the mercenaries' vision by shooting them with a sticky shocker, dropping a chaff grenade (pictured here), or blowing open a fire extinguisher.



■ Phosphorous grenades make it easier to track down spies in the online game by revealing their footprints.

## The Spy Who Fragged Me

Embrace your inner geek and proudly don that Xbox Live headset. Your world's about to be rocked with the best

multiplayer game in quite some time. Try to find a partner who's willing to plan and coordinate strategies together.

Once you do, kiss your non-*Pandora Tomorrow* social life goodbye and say hello to online-gaming crack. Check out

this page to see why the spy vs. mercenary gameplay is so perfect, with well-designed checks and balances....

### Multiplayer — The Spy



Reason #259 to love *Splinter Cell Pandora Tomorrow*—multiplayer lets you play out the side events and missions told in the single-player story that protagonist Sam Fisher himself couldn't get to. Guide his fellow spies as they decontaminate various small-pox bombs set up by the terrorists. Vaccinations not included.

**Strengths:** Can hide in the dark and climb into areas that mercs can't go; open third-person perspective

**Weaknesses:** No lethal weapons; playing under the pressure of a time limit to complete all objectives

**Visions:** Thermal (to see heat signatures); night (to see in the dark...duh)

**Primary Weapon:** P190 (shock gun that knocks out security devices or temporarily stuns opponents)



### Key Spy Gadgets

#### Spy Bullets

**Pros:** Shot at a mercenary, these allow you to listen in on his Xbox Live headset communications with his teammate.  
**Cons:** Smart players will start speaking in code, to not give away vital positions or information, just in case they're being listened to. Cool...and geeky.



#### Smoke Grenade

**Pros:** Immobilizes mercenaries in a blurring, suffocating cloud of...well, smoke.  
**Cons:** That smoke won't stop no bullets.



#### Sticky Cam

**Pros:** This remote-controlled camera can release an incapacitating gas to knock out mercenaries.  
**Cons:** You're a sitting-duck fool while manning the camera.



#### Flash Bang

**Pros:** Temporarily blinds mercenaries.  
**Cons:** Tell the whole world where you're at, why don't you?



► **CRISPIN:** Listen to Shoe and Mark; don't listen to Sam Fisher. *Pandora Tomorrow's* crotchety superspy may gripe about his salt-and-pepper scruff and achy knees (we knew we smelled Ben Gay through that stealth suit), but this guy is definitely not getting too old for this...er, stuff. His outstanding sophomore mission—which improves on the breakout first game's specs in all the departments you'd expect—proves that Uncle Sam is just getting started. He gets slick new moves

(although you barely use 'em), players get the requisite convoluted spy-game plot, and the whole package is bathed in the wowie-zowie light-and-shadow effects that made the original famous. And if the single-player game still feels a little too similar to the original's, *Pandora Tomorrow* goes beyond the call of duty with the most novel multiplayer mode I've ever played.

But this black op isn't for everybody. Although a few single-player levels (the best ones in the game) offer multiple paths

to the objective, you'll still face lots of tedious trial and error. Even so, that palpable sense of tension—the very real fear of getting spotted—never falters. It makes for too many memorable moments: slinking past passenger windows on the wind-whipped side of a bullet train, diving for cover when lightning flashbulbs guard-patrol routes during a thunderstorm, going full-auto when Sam's handlers let him off his leash, and much more.

The revolutionary spooks-versus-guards

online game packs an Everest-steep learning curve likely to intimidate casual spies. In fact, I can guarantee that you won't have fun the first time you dive in. You'll stumble around in the dark, wrestle with the controls (which are different from those in single-player), and wonder if you'll ever get the hang of this. But stick with it: Once you master tactics and memorize a level's layout, you won't be able to log off—until you try a new level and have to figure out its intricacies from scratch.

### Multiplayer — The Mercenary



The mercs are the bad guys here—hired guns to protect the terrorists' precious small-pox canisters. They have the upper hand in terms of firepower, so they get fewer lives (respawns) than the spies do.

**Strengths:** Assault rifles, grenades, and other killer gear; full access to security equipment, like cameras and motion and sound detectors

**Weaknesses:** Limiting first-person view; no night vision; the onus is on mercs to find the spies

**Visions:** Motion-tracking; electromagnetic (which shows spies when they're using special vision)

**Primary Weapon:** M160 (assault rifle with spy-unfriendly bullets)



### Key Mercenary Gadgets

#### Mine

**Pros:** Set in laser-trip or proximity mode to kill spies.  
**Cons:** Can easily be disarmed if the spies know they're there. Lasers can be seen by spy thermal vision.



#### Frag Grenade

**Pros:** Spies tend to die when these go boom near them. You can launch these into areas you can't reach yourself.  
**Cons:** Watch that aim—launched grenades tend to bounce back when they hit a wall. Just ask our reviewer, Crispin.



#### Phosphorous Grenade

**Pros:** If a spy walks through a cloud of phosphorous gas, his footsteps will light up for you to track.  
**Cons:** So will a merc's, so don't get them confused or you'll be walking around in circles.



#### Spy Trap

**Pros:** Like a spy bullet, but set, not shot.  
**Cons:** Watch out for those nerd spies and their codespeak!





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What happened to the good ol' days, when ninjas just fought other ninjas?



Xbox

ONLINE



# NINJA GAIDEN

More like...Ninja *Goddamn!*

**SHANE:** It's as good as you hoped it would be. Hell, it's actually *better*. With one stylish katana slash, *Ninja Gaiden* slices its way to the top of the action genre. And it's not all about the graphics. Well, OK, it is, in part, simply because the visuals are just so awe inspiring. Each of the game's 16 amazingly cohesive chapters offers unforgettable sights—you can run on crumbling monastery walls, swim through flooded tombs, leap over oozing rivers of magma...I've never played a prettier game.

But gorgeous trappings aren't enough to keep me hooked. I need compelling gameplay, and *Ninja Gaiden* delivers en masse. Control feels tight—once you master your arsenal of moves, you'll be dispatching foes with ease and grace. Well, if you're really, really skilled, that is. I won't mince words: This game is hard. I'm no Johnny-come-lately gamer wimp, but I died...a lot. Normal, everyday enemies will eviscerate you in seconds if you're clumsy, and bosses will reduce players to tears. The challenge is rewarding, however, and

motivates you to actually *get better* at the game.

It's tough to even find faults with such a polished game, but I did suffer a few unnecessary deaths due to occasionally obtuse camera angles. Also, too many of the puzzles follow the absurd "find the handle to turn the crank" mold. Regardless, this is an unmissable instant classic that completely deserves your time and money.

**SHAWN:** "One who is a warrior," says the old proverb, "must keep constantly in mind, by day and by night, that he has to die." *Ninja Gaiden* doesn't argue. Your enemies will not stand by as you leisurely choreograph combos—allow them the slightest opening and prepare to be skewered. Make no mistake—slipping your blade between one's ribs, sticking shuriken in the skull of another, dealing and dodging death several times a second—you will cross swords in the most electrifying combat this side of *Soul Calibur*, because your survival depends upon it. Quicksilver pacing, white-

knuckle tension, and spit-shined effects put *Gaiden* among the most remarkable action games ever made, but it's every bit as hardcore. Even for the warrior with unflinching focus and hair-trigger reflexes, the way is found in frequent death.

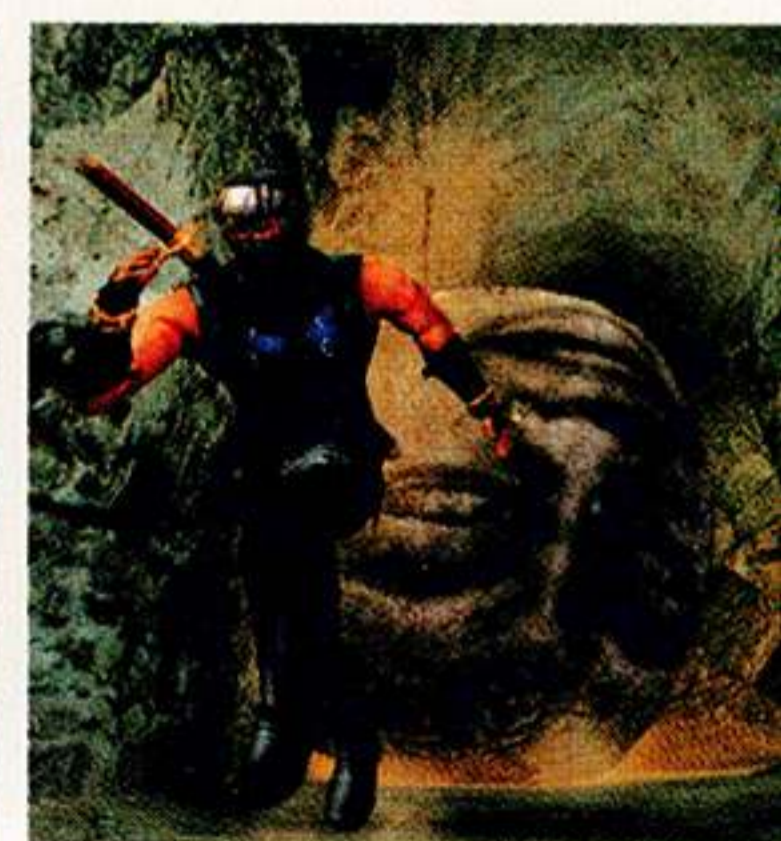
**CJ:** Merriam-Webster, it's time to revisit the entry for "kick-ass" and tack on "also see: *Ninja Gaiden*." The visuals strike the first blow—they're absolutely stunning. But the minute you decide to stop smelling (or staring at) the flowers and strike back (usually after a trio of ninjas appears to beat you about the kidneys), you begin to see this isn't just a pretty picture. *Gaiden's* gameplay is equally well crafted, with responsive control that demands fighting-game-caliber reflexes. It's nail-bitingly tough, but it's extremely rewarding, since it forces you to hone your ninja skills. The game's only flaw is its lame-duck camera, which makes battling groups of enemies more difficult than it should be. Even so, no Xbox should go without *Gaiden*.

**Later on Live**  
*Ninja Gaiden* offers an Xbox Live ranking mode in which you play through special Master Ninja trial levels, then post your best times to an online leader board. Sadly, this mode won't be activated when the game ships—look for it to function later in the year.



## Puzzling Developments

We expected certain things from *Ninja Gaiden*—slashing swords...flying shuriken...scantly clad ladies with double-D bosoms. It delivered. We didn't, however, expect to find a few challenging, nearly RPG-style puzzles. Take this one, for example: It's straight out of a *Zelda* game—Ryu's shooting arrows and dodging traps in wonderfully Link-like style.



**Good:** Phenomenal graphics  
**Bad:** Occasionally iffy camera angles  
**Casual Gamers:** Need not apply



THE VERDICTS  
(out of 10)

9.5  
SHANE

9.5  
SHAWN

9.5  
CJ

Publisher: Tecmo  
Developer: Team Ninja  
Players: 1  
ESRB: Mature

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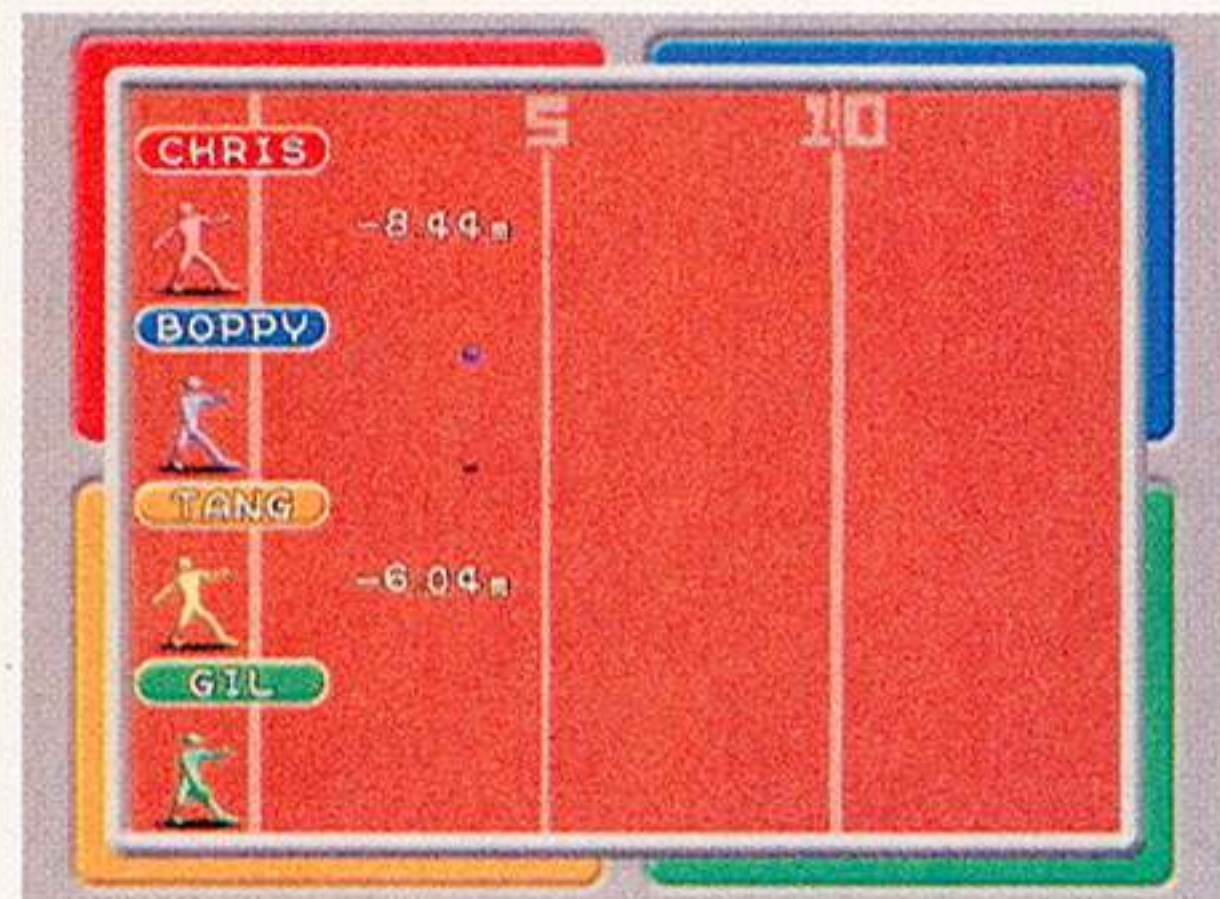
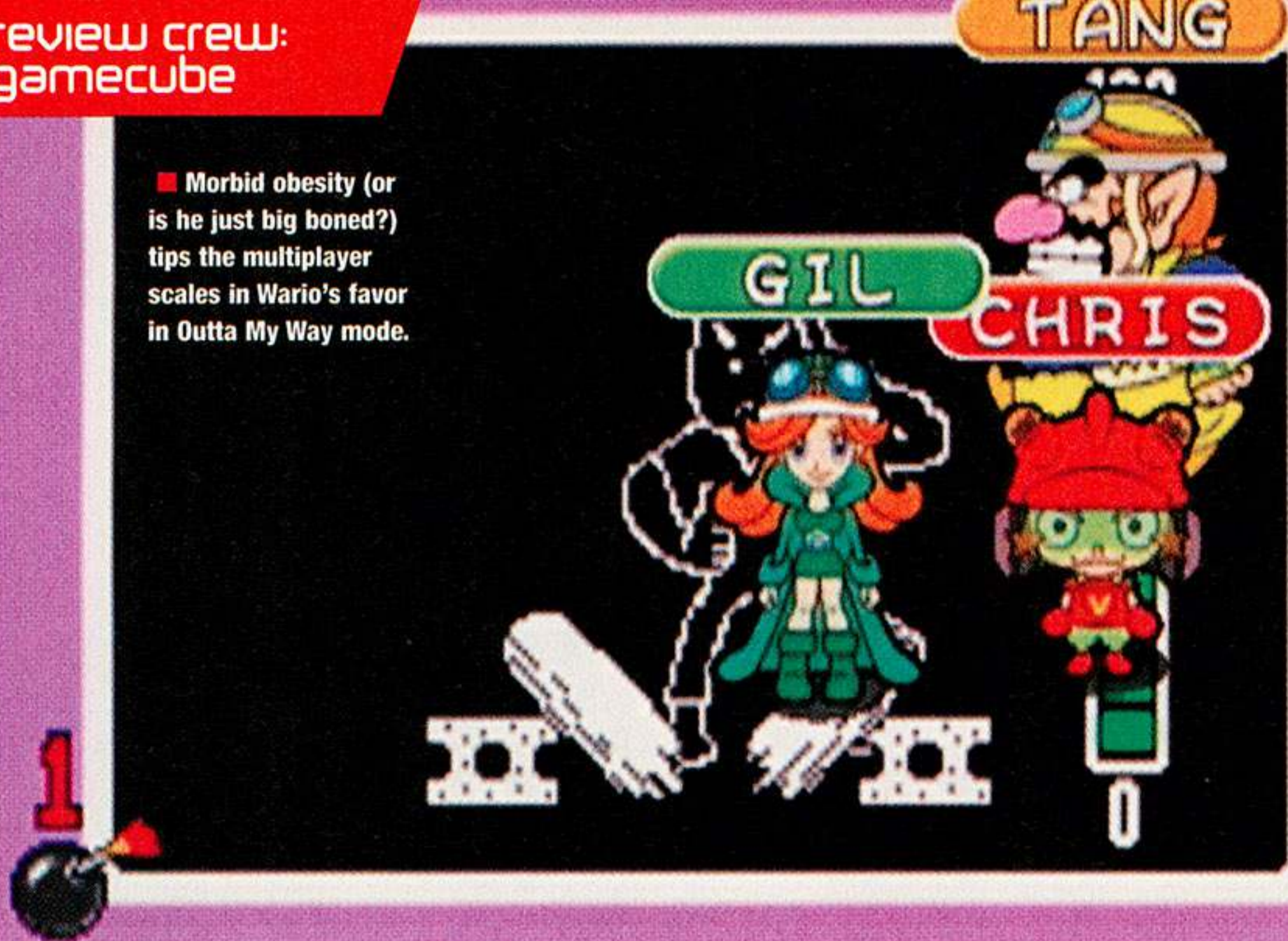


UBISOFT

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■ Morbid obesity (or is he just big boned?) tips the multiplayer scales in Wario's favor in Outta My Way mode.



■ Only a few challenges let four players compete at once.

■ GameCube

# WARIOWARE, INC.: MEGA PARTY GAME\$

## Too fast, too familiar

**SHAWN:** Graphics take a backseat to pure gameplay in *Mega Party Game\$*, which serves up more of the simple, sidesplitting challenges that helped *WarioWare* steal our 2003 Game Boy Advance Game of the Year award. Solo mode is, more or less, the same here as it was when you played it on the go (assuming you've already sampled Nintendo's ADD simulator), missing only a handful of unlockable bonus games and the element of surprise that helped make the original so charming. But the fun you'll have with three friends is more than enough compensation.

Leaping a wheeled hot dog is one thing, but evading said wiener while your opponents parade across the screen, blocking your view with their fat heads (down in front!) is video Valhalla. The best of *Ware's* eight multiplayer modes reward dirty play (see sidebar)—after all, laughing at someone else's expense is the Wario way.

With its \$30 price tag, the game is perfect for

pinchpennies, but there might've been more: more hilarity, more reflex testers, and more ways to tap Nintendo's rich history. I would've liked to have seen snippets of Nintendo 64 classics—imagine minute-long *GoldenEye 007* deathmatches—but, hey, maybe I'm just being greedy.

**CJ:** I wanted to love this, but alas, the console *Ware* isn't quite the breath of fresh air its portable sibling was. The biggest letdown: no new single-player minigames. If you played the crap outta the GBA game like I did, why even bother? It also lacks the setup and some of the unlockable games that made the portable title so much fun, so people new to *Ware's* insanity won't get a formal introduction. One area where *Ware* succeeds in a big way is its handful of enjoyable multiplayer modes, but they're not newbie friendly. Someone who never played the GBA *Ware* isn't gonna do well in *Outta My Way* mode, where other players block your view. It's still

good fun, but not the perfect excuse to stay home on a Friday night.

**DEMIAN:** Wha' happen'? I'm all for multiplayer *WarioWare* on the big screen, but whose idea was it to half-ass the single player? Adding exactly no new minigames is bad enough; making it even easier to unlock nearly everything just does not compute. Of course, playing with a bunch of friends is a blast, and there are a few (all-new) multiplayer modes to mix things up. But fun as it is, I can't help wishing for even more—*Ware* would really benefit from some kind of metagame to tie all the craziness together (like the board game part of *Mario Party*).

I may sound like a complainer, but I was hoping for perfection. *Ware's* still a must-buy if you really love the party games or don't have the GBA version...just a maybe-buy otherwise.



### Four Play(ers)

Our favorite delightfully devilish if not deliciously ribald multiplayer games:



■ **Outta My Way** — Walk around the screen as another player tries to not screw up.



■ **Card-e Cards** — Steal from your pals and try to amass the biggest stack of minigames.



■ **Balloon Bang** — Like hot potato...with an inflating balloon. When it bursts, party's over.



■ **Wobbly Bobbyly** — Win games or your wobbly turtle stack grows...and then tips....

**Good:** More fun than *Mario Party*  
**Bad:** The solo game is the same as the GBA version  
**# of Times We Successfully Shook Hands With a Dog:** 43



THE VERDICTS (OUT OF 10)  
**8.0** SHAWN  
**6.5** CJ  
**7.0** DEMIAN

Publisher: Nintendo  
Developer: Nintendo  
Players: 1-4  
ESRB: Everyone

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review crew: game boy adv.



■ Sam Fisher: not so good at the hiding.

## ■ GBA SPLINTER CELL PANDORA TOMORROW

Nothing exciting to see in this box

**Good:** Controls well  
**Bad:** Annoying camera scanning to see ahead  
**Get Some Exercise:** Play real-life hide-and-seek instead



**SHOE:** I'm an old and grumpy gamer. So even when punk kids are looking at me like I'm crazy, I'll still go on about how 2D games are the grooviest. But sho'nuff, the *Splinter Cell* formula works better on the big consoles in full 3D.

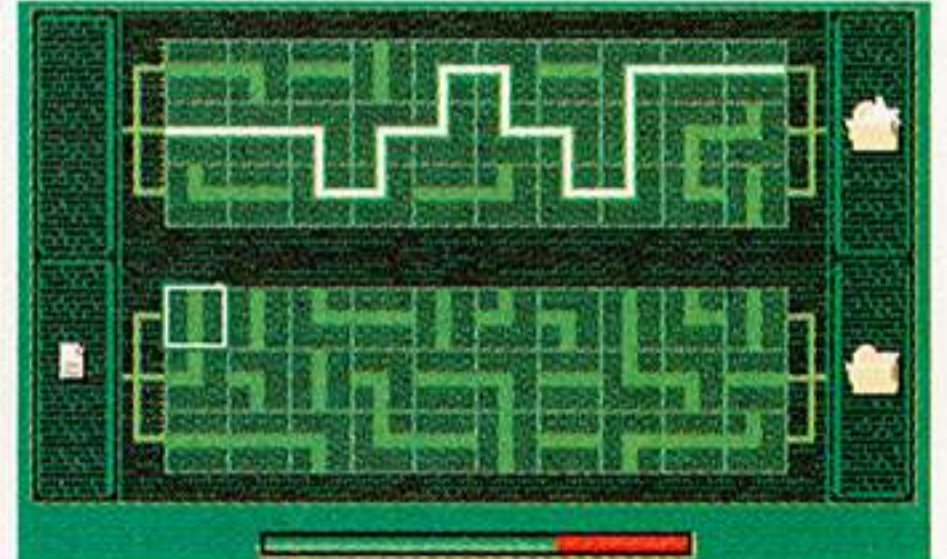
In GBA's *Pandora*, you're still covert operative Sam Fisher, and you still get hush-hush missions that require lots of sneaking and hardly any killing. That's not the problem, though—in 2D, your choices are limited, so in effect, you're playing a side-scrolling action game with very little action. A bigger problem is the screen's restrictive view. You can hold down a button to scan around in some nonsensical camera mode (what, Fisher has a magic floating camera?), but unfortunately, you need to use it all the time so that you don't accidentally run into some security camera's line of sight. It constantly interrupts the flow and is very annoying.

I'd say that kids may appreciate this one more than me, but with the one-mistake-and-it's-mission-over *Splinter Cell* law in effect here, I'm not so sure.

**CRISPIN:** This little soldier comes with the same black bag of tricks as its big-con-

sole commanding officer: You get the night-and-thermal-vision goggles, hide-and-sneak gameplay, superslick animation—even some of the same spy gizmos. The whole package seems kinda fun at first, in early levels that mix simple platforming action with just-as-bare-bones shootouts and fun little hacking minigames. But the more you play, the more you realize that that's all there really is. The killer visuals just can't disguise the repetitive levels and frustrating trial-and-error missions.

**MARK:** Crispin's right: As a platformer, this wee *Cell* isn't half bad. Sam has a ton of moves, and the controls are certainly solid. But *Splinter Cell* means stealth, and that's where the GBA version falls apart. I'm sure it'd be hard to translate the stealth formula into 2D, but forcing the player to constantly stop and scan ahead is *not* the way. It slows everything down to a slothlike pace, and half the time, there's nothing to see anyway. Even great animation and some fun minigames (picking locks, hacking computers, etc.) are countered by long sections of try-and-die gameplay and truly idiotic enemy A.I.



■ When picking locks or hacking, you'll solve simple minigames (above right). Very simple.

|                          |      |         |      |
|--------------------------|------|---------|------|
| THE VERDICTS (OUT OF 10) | 4.5  | 5.0     | 4.5  |
|                          | SHOE | CRISPIN | MARK |

Publisher: Ubisoft  
Developer: Ubisoft Montreal  
Players: 1  
ESRB: Teen

www.ubisoft.com

# REVIEWS WRAP-UP

The future is...expected to arrive next month

**W**e were beginning to believe it would never happen, but *Ninja Gaiden* finally showed up after three months of "It's coming—maybe next week?" and turned out to be as great as we'd hoped it'd be (though hard as hell). For nostalgia's sake, we're mentioning it here...again...for the last time!

Of course, some other games not called *Ninja Gaiden* either missed our deadline or had to be cut for space reasons. Here's the skinny:

## Destruction Derby Arenas

PS2 • Gathering — *Derby's* brand of vehicular violence has found a new



■ Hopefully, you won't always be turning left.

venue—online multiplayer. Fancy-pant Euro gamers have been playing *Arenas* since last December, and although the game will be on sale here by the time you read this, it showed up too late to make the Review Crew, which is slightly worrisome. Next month, we'll have a complete report....

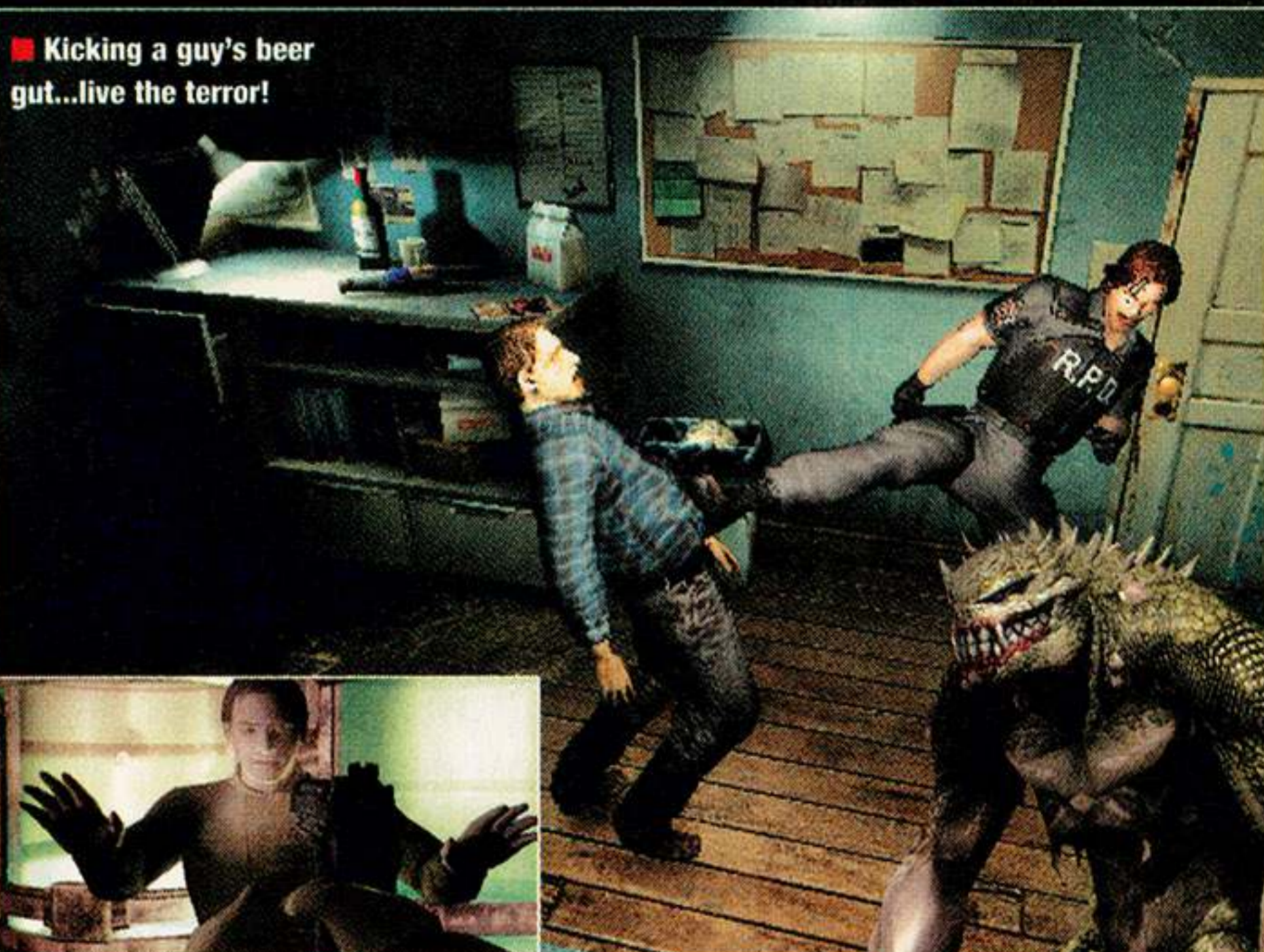
## Judge Dredd: Dredd vs. Death



■ Kill the cliché before it kills you.

PS2/XB/GC • VU Games — Yes, another B-level license becomes a first-person shooter when *Judge Dredd* hits the streets in late March. Arresting *Dredd's* perps is even less fun than executing them as they charge you head-on. But at least there's a lot of switch flipping. And elevators. We're yawning like snakes here, unhooking our jaws to show the enormity of our ennui.

■ Kicking a guy's beer gut...live the terror!



## Resident Evil Outbreak

PS2 • Capcom — By the time you read this, people all over the country will be trading green herbs, smacking each other with crowbars, and savoring the tangy flavor of human flesh. Other people will be playing *Resident Evil Outbreak*. Capcom couldn't get us a version we could play online, so we had to hold off on our review. The graphics look great, but not being able to talk or type in an online game? Now that's got us a bit scared.



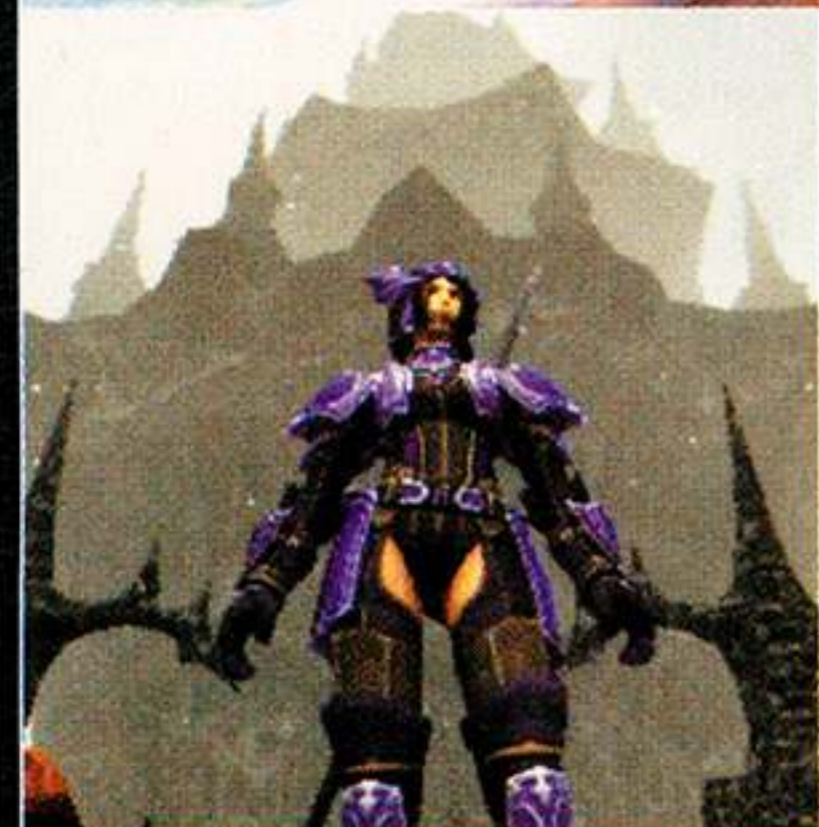
■ Some jolly adventurers chat with the friendly neighborhood Dread Dragon.

## FINAL FANTASY XI

PS2 • Square Enix — Square's first shot at a multiplayer online RPG arrived too close to deadline for us to give it the full review it deserves, so expect that next month. Sniff. Fortunately, we have some experience with the Japanese PS2 version (out for nearly two years now) and loads of stick time with the PC version (out here since last fall), so until *FFXI* gets the complete review treatment next month, here's a basic idea of what to expect.

Set in the sprawling world of Vana'diel, *FFXI* is at once just like *Final Fantasy* and nothing like it at all. You begin by choosing your character's class and race (everybody loves the hobbit-like tarutaru, trust us), and after that, you're really on your own—free to explore the countryside, level up, change jobs *Final Fantasy V*-style, level up, die horrible deaths at the hands of powerful monsters, and level up some more.

Like *EverQuest Online Adventures* and other online RPGs, *FFXI* suffers from treadmill syndrome—it takes literally hours of doggedly building your character's attributes before you can do anything *really* cool. Unlike *EQOA*, though, this process is actually fun, as the emphasis is on story and exploration rather than mundane rat extermination and finding devious ways to "work" the system. The audiovisuals are pure Square quality, too—not as high-res as the PC version, of course, but still among the best in the genre.



# REVIEWS ARCHIVE

Our guide to gaming's treasures and travesties

greatest hit  
or miss?



## ONIMUSHA 2: SAMURAI'S DESTINY

- PlayStation 2
- Released: August 2002
- Original Scores: 9.0, 7.0, 7.5

The second attempt at exterminating feudal Japan's undead infestation features five new playable heroes, yet retains the original's signature slice-and-dice action. An awkward camera will dull your sword, but only slightly.

## MAXIMUM BONDAGE

Wowing the ladies is never a problem for Britain's ruggedly handsome, cool-as-ice secret agent. Pleasing the *EGM* Review Crew, however, isn't so simple. Here's a look at 007's overall performance on the virtual screen, along with his career high and low points.



6.25—Average score for the James Bond games reviewed by *EGM*.



**BEST**  
GoldenEye 007  
(N64)  
9.5, 9.5, 9.5, 9.5



**WORST**  
007 Racing  
(PS1)  
1.0, 6.0, 1.0

| GAME                                   | SYSTEM    | VERDICT                                                                                            | SCORES<br>(out of 10) | AWARD  |
|----------------------------------------|-----------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|--------|
| 1080° Avalanche                        | GC        | ■ The straightforward slope riding is OK, but <i>Avalanche</i> can't compete with <i>SSX 3</i>     | 7.5 7.0 5.5           |        |
| Airforce Delta Strike                  | PS2       | ■ Slow-moving flight sim stalls before it reaches the danger zone                                  | 3.5 3.5 6.0           |        |
| American Idol                          | PS2       | ■ In our best Simon Cowell voice: "Bloody awful"                                                   | 1.5 2.0 1.0           |        |
| Amped 2                                | XB        | ■ An eye-pleasing boarder with very few patches of yellow snow                                     | 8.0 8.0 9.0           | Silver |
| Armed and Dangerous                    | XB        | ■ Looks like butt, but plays better than blasé blasters like <i>Brute Force</i>                    | 6.5 7.0 8.0           |        |
| Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance II        | PS2/XB    | ■ Painted with dated graphics and rife with dull level design                                      | 7.0 4.5 5.0           |        |
| Battlestar Galactica                   | PS2/XB    | ■ Launched before all systems were go                                                              | 6.0 6.0 5.5           |        |
| Beyond Good & Evil                     | PS2/XB/GC | ■ Plays a lot like <i>Wind Waker</i> (GC). That's a good thing. Real good                          | 8.5 9.0 8.0           | Silver |
| Boktai: The Sun is in Your Hand        | GBA       | ■ A portable gem in which playing in the sun is an enjoyable requirement                           | 9.0 8.0 8.5           | Silver |
| Champions of Norrath: Realms of EQ     | PS2       | ■ A <i>Dark Alliance</i> -style take on <i>EverQuest</i> , complete with online co-op              | 8.5 8.0 8.5           | Silver |
| Colin McRae Rally 04                   | XB        | ■ Rev your engines for <i>04</i> 's top-notch handling and wicked terrain                          | 8.5 8.0 8.5           | Silver |
| Conflict: Desert Storm II              | PS2/XB    | ■ Another flawed operation with a few moments of valor                                             | 5.5 4.0 6.0           |        |
| Counter-Strike                         | XB        | ■ A bare-bones first-person shooter that's expendable in the war of the war games                  | 5.0 5.0 7.0           |        |
| Crash Nitro Kart                       | PS2/XB/GC | ■ This kart needs a tuneup                                                                         | 5.5 6.0 5.5           |        |
| Crimson Skies: High Road to Revenge    | XB        | ■ A stellar and stylish shooter, <i>Crimson Skies</i> kicks the genre's tires and lights its fires | 9.0 9.0 8.5           | Silver |
| Cy Girls                               | PS2       | ■ Progress-impeding puzzles will make you feel like the butt of a bad blonde joke                  | 7.0 5.0 5.0           |        |
| Dance Dance Revolution Ultramix        | XB        | ■ Perfect your gimp step and build a pimp rep                                                      | 8.5 8.0 7.0           |        |
| Deus Ex: Invisible War                 | XB        | ■ <i>Invisible War</i> 's captivating story compensates for its technical shortcomings             | 8.0 9.0 7.0           | Silver |
| Dragon Ball Z: Budokai 2               | PS2       | ■ This time around, <i>Budokai</i> is best left to the most loyal breed of <i>DBZ</i> fan          | 5.5 5.0 5.0           |        |
| Dragon Ball Z: Taiketsu                | GBA       | ■ Sucks ballZ                                                                                      | 5.5 4.0 3.5           |        |
| Drake                                  | XB        | ■ A shooter so horribly busted that it's almost funny. It's mostly sad, though                     | 2.0 0.5 2.5           |        |
| Drakengard                             | PS2       | ■ <i>Dynasty Warriors</i> meets <i>Panzer Dragoon</i> , only not as good                           | 7.5 7.0 3.5           |        |
| Dynasty Tactics 2                      | PS2       | ■ Medieval Chinese generals put on their wildest headgear before going to war                      | 7.5 7.5 7.5           |        |
| ESPN College Hoops                     | PS2/XB    | ■ Our own NCAA investigation reveals that <i>ESPN</i> plays too much like a pro game               | 6.5 7.5 6.5           |        |
| ESPN NBA Basketball                    | PS2/XB    | ■ Even Kobe Bryant's star-studded legal team struggled finding fault with this one                 | 8.5 9.5 9.0           | Gold   |
| ESPN NHL Hockey                        | PS2/XB    | ■ If we were in Detroit, we'd be throwin' an octopus onto the ice. Goal!                           | 8.5 9.0 9.0           | Silver |
| EverQuest Online Adventures: Frontiers | PS2       | ■ Doesn't the front lawn constitute a new frontier to <i>Evercrack</i> -heads?                     | 6.5 6.0 7.0           |        |
| Fallout: Brotherhood of Steel          | PS2/XB    | ■ Repetitive critter hunting in a watered-down wasteland                                           | 4.0 4.5 4.0           |        |
| Fatal Frame II: Crimson Butterfly      | PS2       | ■ Scary game with a silly name                                                                     | 7.5 7.5 6.5           |        |
| FIFA Soccer 2004                       | PS2/XB/GC | ■ Responsive on-field controls make it a breeze to bend it like Beckham                            | 7.5 9.0 8.0           | Silver |
| Final Fantasy: Crystal Chronicles      | GC        | ■ Charming action-RPG so cute that it could give Hello Kitty a heart attack                        | 8.0 8.0 8.0           | Silver |
| Final Fantasy Tactics Advance          | GBA       | ■ Deep strategy for the on-the-go tactician. Complete with androgynous heroes                      | 9.0 9.0 9.0           | Gold   |
| Final Fantasy X-2                      | PS2       | ■ Yuna and her female friends rock Spira like never before, and we like it                         | 8.5 9.5 9.5           | Gold   |
| Fire Emblem                            | GBA       | ■ Deep tactical strategy, but your trip through fantasyland ends too quickly                       | 7.5 8.0 8.5           | Silver |
| Firefighter F.D. 18                    | PS2       | ■ Fight fires, fireman-hating robots, and trial-and-error gameplay                                 | 6.5 6.0 4.0           |        |
| Gladius                                | PS2/XB/GC | ■ Repetitive combat, but rich storytelling makes it worthwhile                                     | 6.0 8.5 7.0           |        |
| Goblin Commander: Unleash the Horde    | PS2/XB/GC | ■ The best original real-time-strategy game to grace a console                                     | 8.0 6.0 4.5           |        |
| Grabbed by the Ghoulies                | XB        | ■ Definitely more fun if someone grabs <i>your</i> ghoulies while playing                          | 5.5 4.0 4.5           |        |
| Harry Potter: Quidditch World Cup      | PS2/XB/GC | ■ Rugby, basketball, and nerds on broomsticks collide with thrilling results                       | 7.5 7.5 6.5           |        |
| Harvest Moon: A Wonderful Life         | GC        | ■ Would you really have more fun watching the grass grow? Find out                                 | 6.5 6.5 7.0           |        |
| The Hobbit                             | PS2/XB/GC | ■ Bilbo Baggins' journey just isn't as appealing as his young nephew's                             | 6.5 5.0 7.0           |        |
| James Bond 007: Everything or Nothing  | PS2/XB/GC | ■ With brains, brawn, bullets, and balls, Bond saves the world again. Splendid                     | 8.0 8.5 8.5           | Silver |
| Karaoke Revolution                     | PS2       | ■ Like real karaoke, except the audience actually boos you offstage for bad singing                | 8.5 8.5 7.5           | Silver |
| King of Fighters 2000 & 2001           | PS2       | ■ Deep and responsive, but only diehards will choose it over Capcom's 2D fighters                  | 5.5 5.0 7.5           |        |
| Kirby Air Ride                         | GC        | ■ Supremely easy for anyone to pick up and play, yet surprisingly deep                             | 6.0 8.0 7.0           |        |
| Kya: Dark Lineage                      | PS2       | ■ Profoundly mediocre platformer with aspirations of greatness                                     | 6.5 6.0 5.0           |        |
| Legacy of Kain: Defiance               | PS2/XB    | ■ Stunningly gorgeous. Let the blood sucking and soul reaving commence                             | 7.5 8.0 7.0           |        |
| Lethal Skies II                        | PS2       | ■ Not even the dull two-player modes earn <i>Skies</i> any frequent-flier mileage                  | 3.0 5.5 4.0           |        |
| Links 2004                             | XB        | ■ A shallow create-a-golfer mode keeps <i>Links</i> a few strokes behind <i>Tiger</i>              | 6.5 7.5 6.5           |        |
| LifeLine                               | PS2       | ■ Wanna play <i>Resident Evil</i> again, using speech recognition that doesn't really work?        | 4.5 4.5 4.0           |        |
| Lowrider                               | PS2       | ■ Multiplayer mode is the stuff drinking games are made of                                         | 5.0 5.5 2.0           |        |
| Lord of the Rings: Return of the King  | PS2/XB/GC | ■ Stick an orc in it, it's fun. Stick a thousand orcs in it, it's...er, funner                     | 8.5 8.5 8.0           | Silver |
| Lord of the Rings: Return of the King  | GBA       | ■ Doesn't quite rule them all, but offers enjoyable hack-n-slash action nonetheless                | 7.0 6.0 7.5           |        |
| Lupin the 3rd                          | PS2       | ■ Fanatically true to the anime, but fiddly controls and lame puzzles steal the fun                | 5.5 4.5 7.0           |        |
| Mafia                                  | PS2/XB    | ■ Jack jalopies and outdrive thugs in this glitchy 1930s gangster game                             | 6.0 5.0 7.5           |        |
| Magic the Gathering: Battlegrounds     | XB        | ■ The cards say you need a life                                                                    | 4.0 5.5 4.5           |        |
| Manhunt                                | PS2       | ■ Videogame-hating Senator Joe Lieberman's dream come true                                         | 7.0 6.5 7.0           |        |
| Mario & Luigi: Superstar Saga          | GBA       | ■ A polished, thoroughly enjoyable adventure in the same vein as <i>Paper Mario</i>                | 9.0 8.5 9.0           | Silver |
| Mario Golf: Toadstool Tour             | GC        | ■ When he's not saving the world from Koopa, Mario plays a mean 18 holes                           | 8.0 8.0 7.5           |        |
| Mario Kart: Double Dash!!              | GC        | ■ One of the reasons you bought a Cube. And it delivers beautifully                                | 10 10 9.5             | Gold   |
| Mario Party 5                          | GC        | ■ Buy it, call some friends, and let chaos reign                                                   | 8.0 8.0 8.0           | Silver |
| Maximo vs. Army of Zin                 | PS2       | ■ Despite the clean underwear, it's not as zesty as the original                                   | 6.0 6.0 7.0           |        |
| Max Payne                              | GBA       | ■ Bullet time in your back pocket                                                                  | 7.0 7.0 8.0           |        |
| Max Payne 2: The Fall of Max Payne     | PS2/XB    | ■ Slow-mo bloodshed at its hard-boiled best                                                        | 8.0 8.0 8.5           | Silver |
| Medal of Honor: Rising Sun             | PS2/XB/GC | ■ A few stunning set pieces can't save this rough-edged shooter from mediocrity                    | 5.5 5.0 5.5           |        |
| Mega Man Battle Chip Challenge         | GBA       | ■ Ol' Blue should've cashed in his chips for better gameplay                                       | 6.0 5.0 6.0           |        |

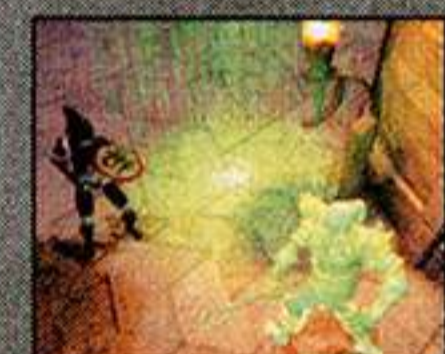


| GAME                                   | SYSTEM    | VERDICT                                                                                   | SCORES<br>(out of 10) | AWARD  |
|----------------------------------------|-----------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|--------|
| Metal Arms: Glitch in the System       | PS2/XB/GC | ■ A surprisingly good sci-fi shooter and contender for sleeper hit of the year            | 8.0 8.0 8.0           | Silver |
| Metal Gear Solid: The Twin Snakes      | GC        | ■ The stealth-action classic is still solid enough to make this remake a must-play        | 8.0 9.0 8.5           | Silver |
| Metroid Zero Mission                   | GBA       | ■ Samus blasts back to her first adventure in this surprise-filled remake                 | 9.5 9.0 9.0           | Gold   |
| Midway Arcade Treasures                | PS2/XB/GC | ■ With 20 timeless classics for a mere 20 bucks, there's no reason not to buy it          | 8.5 7.5 8.5           | Silver |
| Mission: Impossible—Operation Surma    | PS2/XB    | ■ Mr. Hunt could use less-cumbersome controls and quicker-witted foes                     | 6.5 6.5 6.0           |        |
| Monster 4x4: Masters of Metal          | PS2/GC    | ■ Subpar driving won't sate your hunger for mud-caked mayhem                              | 4.5 4.5 6.0           |        |
| Monster Rancher 4                      | PS2       | ■ Vast, empty, and repetitive dungeons didn't bother all of our reviewers                 | 5.5 7.0 6.5           |        |
| MVP Baseball 2004                      | PS2/XB/GC | ■ EA jacks another one outta the park with MVP's revolutionary on-field controls          | 8.5 8.0 8.5           | Silver |
| MX Unleashed                           | PS2/XB    | ■ Riding Unleashed's off-road crotch rockets is worth the sore coccyx                     | 8.0 8.0 8.0           | Silver |
| NBA Inside Drive 2004                  | XB        | ■ Should hire Knicks' president Isiah Thomas to help shake things up for ID 2005          | 6.0 7.5 6.5           |        |
| NBA Live 2004                          | PS2/XB/GC | ■ Not even the Laker Girls can compete with Live's stylish on-court moves                 | 8.0 8.5 9.0           | Silver |
| NCAA March Madness 2004                | PS2/XB    | ■ It's awesome, baby, with a capital A!                                                   | 8.0 8.0 8.0           | Silver |
| NFL Blitz Pro                          | PS2/XB/GC | ■ A Madden-like face-lift puts Blitz firmly back in the playoff race                      | 7.0 7.0 6.0           |        |
| NFL Fever 2004                         | XB        | ■ For yet another year, Fever is third-string on the pigskin depth chart                  | 6.5 6.5 6.0           |        |
| NFL Street                             | PS2/XB/GC | ■ The gridiron gods have Street-ified football, and, boy, is it good                      | 8.5 8.0 9.0           | Silver |
| NHL 2004                               | PS2/XB/GC | ■ Beefy dynasty mode, but plays and looks as ugly as a hockey player's smile              | 8.5 6.5 7.0           |        |
| NHL Hitz Pro                           | PS2/XB/GC | ■ Like a porn star's assets, Hitz isn't exactly realistic, but it's sure fun to play with | 7.5 8.5 8.0           | Silver |
| NHL Rivals 2004                        | XB        | ■ Our referees slap Rivals with a five-minute major for sucking                           | 3.5 4.0 6.5           |        |
| Nightshade                             | PS2       | ■ 3 Ninjas Kick Back on a scale of ninja-tude                                             | 6.0 5.5 5.0           |        |
| Onimusha Blade Warriors                | PS2       | ■ Think Super Smash Bros. (GC) with Bushido instead of butt stomping                      | 7.0 7.0 7.5           |        |
| Pac-Man Vs.                            | GC        | ■ Excellent multiplayer makes GBA connectivity worthwhile                                 | 8.0 7.5 9.0           | Silver |
| Phantasy Star Online: Episode III      | GC        | ■ This infectious fun card game got us hooked to PSO's world for a third time             | 9.0 8.0 9.0           | Silver |
| Pirates of the Caribbean               | XB        | ■ Suffers more glitches than the Disney ride in a thunderstorm                            | 6.0 5.5 4.5           |        |
| Pokémon Channel                        | GC        | ■ Good God, change the channel!                                                           | 3.5 2.0 6.0           |        |
| Pokémon Colosseum                      | GC        | ■ Story mode injects some life into this otherwise mediocre Poké-battler                  | 7.0 5.0 7.0           |        |
| Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time    | PS2/XB/GC | ■ An opium-induced vision in which time moves at the speed of your imagination            | 9.5 9.0 9.5           | Gold   |
| Project Gotham Racing 2                | XB        | ■ Buckle up for the best racer since Gran Turismo 3                                       | 9.5 9.5 9.5           | Gold   |
| R: Racing Evolution                    | PS2/XB/GC | ■ Looks fantastic, but it feels like you're driving on ice                                | 6.5 6.0 4.5           |        |
| Ratchet & Clank: Going Commando        | PS2       | ■ Everything you've ever wanted from an action game. And an absolute must-play            | 8.5 9.5 9.5           | Gold   |
| Rise to Honor                          | PS2       | ■ Look, it's Jet Li...in a kinda repetitive brawler with cheap enemies in Fubu gear       | 6.5 6.5 6.0           |        |
| Rogue Ops                              | PS2/XB/GC | ■ A shameless Lara Croft wannabe stars in a decent stealth-action game                    | 7.0 6.0 4.5           |        |
| RPG Maker 2                            | PS2       | ■ No matter how cool the concept, your RPG will look like crap                            | 5.5 3.5 6.5           |        |
| R-Type Final                           | PS2       | ■ Pure side-scrolling shooter bliss. Plus, it's only 30 bucks                             | 8.5 8.0 8.0           | Silver |
| Sega GT Online                         | XB        | ■ The addition of online play and a \$20 price tag gets our motor runnin'                 | 8.5 8.5 8.5           | Silver |
| Shining Soul II                        | GBA       | ■ A prettier soul for sure, but plays a bit too much like the original                    | 7.5 7.0 7.0           |        |
| Silent Scope Complete                  | XB        | ■ There's no better way to freak out America's politicians than with this sniper game     | 6.5 5.0 6.0           |        |
| The Sims: Bustin' Out                  | PS2/XB/GC | ■ Even your lady friend will bust out a controller and play                               | 9.0 8.5 9.0           | Silver |
| The Sims: Bustin' Out                  | GBA       | ■ Surprisingly rewarding for an errand-running simulator                                  | 8.0 5.0 8.0           |        |
| SOCOM II: U.S. Navy SEALs              | PS2       | ■ Cool missions and great multiplayer make SOCOM II the best game of its kind             | 9.0 9.0 9.5           | Gold   |
| Sonic Battle                           | GBA       | ■ Sonic and pals come to fisticuffs in this love-it-or-hate-it pseudo 3D brawler          | 7.0 5.0 4.5           |        |
| Space Channel 5: Special Edition       | PS2       | ■ Sensational style and a swingin' soundtrack meet simple Simon Says gameplay             | 8.5 6.5 8.5           |        |
| Spawn: Armageddon                      | PS2/XB/GC | ■ Among the better Spawn outings to date...which isn't saying much                        | 5.0 6.0 3.5           |        |
| Sphinx and the Cursed Mummy            | PS2/XB/GC | ■ A fun romp through ancient Egypt—playable mummy and sphinx included in box!             | 8.0 7.0 7.0           |        |
| Star Trek: Shattered Universe          | PS2/XB    | ■ We'd sooner play with the captain's log                                                 | 3.0 3.0 3.0           |        |
| Star Wars Jedi Knight: Jedi Academy    | XB        | ■ Takin' Lightsabers 101 is cool, but we'd rather cut class and hang with Boba Fett       | 6.0 6.5 3.0           |        |
| Super Mario Advance 4                  | GBA       | ■ Undoubtedly stands the test of time as one of history's greatest platformers            | 9.5 9.0 9.5           | Gold   |
| SWAT: Global Strike Team               | PS2/XB    | ■ Enemies so dumb that even Colin Farrell and LL Cool J could cap 'em                     | 4.0 5.0 6.0           |        |
| Sword of Mana                          | GBA       | ■ Managing your weapons requires a master's degree in metallurgy                          | 6.5 6.5 5.0           |        |
| Terminator 3: Rise of the Machines     | PS2/XB    | ■ No need to come back, Arnold                                                            | 3.5 3.5 2.0           |        |
| Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2004              | PS2/XB/GC | ■ As hot as Tiger's bride-to-be. Well, almost                                             | 9.0 9.0 9.5           | Gold   |
| Time Crisis 3                          | PS2       | ■ TC3 remains an uncontested crack shot among light-gun shooters                          | 7.0 7.0 8.5           |        |
| Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon: Jungle Storm | PS2       | ■ Online play is OK, but good God, these graphics are uglier than a colon polyp           | 4.5 5.0 6.5           |        |
| Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six 3             | XB        | ■ Squad-based shooting at its best                                                        | 9.0 7.5 9.0           | Silver |
| Tony Hawk's Underground                | PS2/XB/GC | ■ Oh my God...he is? Someone get him out!                                                 | 9.0 9.0 10            | Gold   |
| Top Spin                               | XB        | ■ Here's your only chance to ever score with tennis bombshell Anna Kournikova             | 9.0 9.0 9.0           | Gold   |
| True Crime: Streets of L.A.            | PS2/XB/GC | ■ A spot-on re-creation of Los Angeles. Too bad the ride is over so quickly               | 6.5 9.5 5.5           |        |
| Voodoo Vince                           | XB        | ■ Tedious jumping puzzles and pointless collecting plague the patchwork hero              | 6.0 6.5 7.0           |        |
| Warhammer 40,000: Fire Warrior         | PS2       | ■ A switch-flipping, key-finding, frag-em-all affair, oblivious to FPS innovation         | 5.5 5.5 6.0           |        |
| Wrath: Unleashed                       | PS2/XB    | ■ A half-assed strategy game plus a half-assed fighter make...well, you do the math       | 4.0 7.0 4.5           |        |
| Whiplash                               | PS2/XB    | ■ Goofy concept and humor compensate for crummy graphics and average gameplay             | 7.0 6.0 8.0           |        |
| Winning Eleven 7                       | PS2       | ■ Soccer action more intense than a David Beckham-Posh Spice embrace                      | 9.5 8.5 8.5           | Silver |
| WWE Raw 2: Ruthless Aggression         | XB        | ■ We willingly tap out                                                                    | 3.0 5.5 4.5           |        |
| WWE SmackDown! Here Comes the Pain     | PS2       | ■ Match types galore, improved story mode—pain never felt so good                         | 7.5 8.0 7.0           |        |
| WWE Wrestlemania XIX                   | GC        | ■ Better than years past, but a steroid injection or two away from main-event status      | 7.5 7.5 6.5           |        |
| Worms 3D                               | PS2/XB/GC | ■ That's an entire extra dimension of caricatured carnage! Great multiplayer fun          | 7.5 7.5 6.5           |        |
| Yu Yu Hakusho: Spirit Detective        | GBA       | ■ Shouldn't be allowed within 50 feet of anybody's GBA                                    | 2.0 1.5 3.0           |        |

■ LifeLine's Rio just does not listen.

## ALL MONSTERS MUST DIE

Why dost thou wade through the corpses of red orcs? To obtain the +15 scepter of Raghoul. And what will you do with it once you've got it? Wade through the corpses of blue and green orcs, of course. From *Fallout* to *Dungeons & Dragons*, action-RPGs are making a comeback, but precious few have the depth and variety for making the often-used formula fun. We run the gauntlet for you and find the genre's real treasures.



**Champions of Norrath (PS2)**  
8.5, 8.0, 8.5



**Final Fantasy: Crystal Chronicles (GC)**  
8.0, 8.0, 8.0



**Phantasy Star Online: Ep. I & II (XB)**  
9.0, 9.0, 9.0

## greatest hit and miss



## BRUTE FORCE

■ Xbox  
 ■ Released: August 2003  
 ■ Original Scores: 6.5, 6.0, 7.5  
 Silly character designs. Stupid story. Repetitive action. Check, check, and check. *Brute Force* is gaming's answer to the B movie, but that isn't such a bad thing so long as you're prepped to shoot first and think later. Managing your futuristic A-Team is a snap; plus, you can slay with your friends in every possible multiplayer configuration.



# tricks of the trade

more grammatically correct than the tips you'll find on the internet, we guarantee it

## trickster

This month, we've got more male Bonding than an episode of *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy*, a dash of dashing sneakery in our *Splinter Cell Pandora Tomorrow* tips, and even our first N-Gage button-pressing bonanza for the critically...er...criticized *Red Faction*. We top it all off with some tasty codes for *Max Payne 2: The Fall of Max Payne*. So recline in that recliner, dudes and dudettes, sip a beverage, and shun spring's gentle showers and blooming flowers: It's cheatin' time.

—David S. J. Hodgson  
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■ PS2/XB/GC

## 007: EVERYTHING OR NOTHING

There are plenty of unlockable bonuses and extras for players willing to go above and beyond the call of duty in *Everything or Nothing*. At the Mission Select screen, you can view a list of "unlocks" that catalog the gadgets, rewards, and cheats

you've earned—the ones you haven't yet unlocked will remain darkened, so you'll know what you're missing. The list below describes many of these goodies and their requirements.

### Rewards

Which rewards are unlocked is determined by the number of gold 007s you earn. Rewards include everything from bonus artwork and alternate character outfits to hidden levels. When viewing a reward, press the action button to activate or deactivate it.

### Underworld (bonus mission)

This optional mission takes place between The Kiss Kiss Club and Death's Door. Bond navigates the tunnels that connect Yayakov's club to the graveyard. Unlock it by earning 11 gold medals.

### Gallery (bonus area)

This is a virtual gallery of artwork and character models. Wander around and check out Jaws' teeth and Arkady's mechanical hand, among other attractions. Unlock it with 27 gold medals.

### Vehicle upgrades

Helicopter weapon upgrade: 6 golds  
Tank weapon upgrade: 10 golds  
Cayenne weapon upgrade: 12 golds  
Vanquish weapon upgrade: 15 golds  
Triumph weapon upgrade: 21 golds  
Nanotank weapon upgrade: 24 golds

### Production artwork

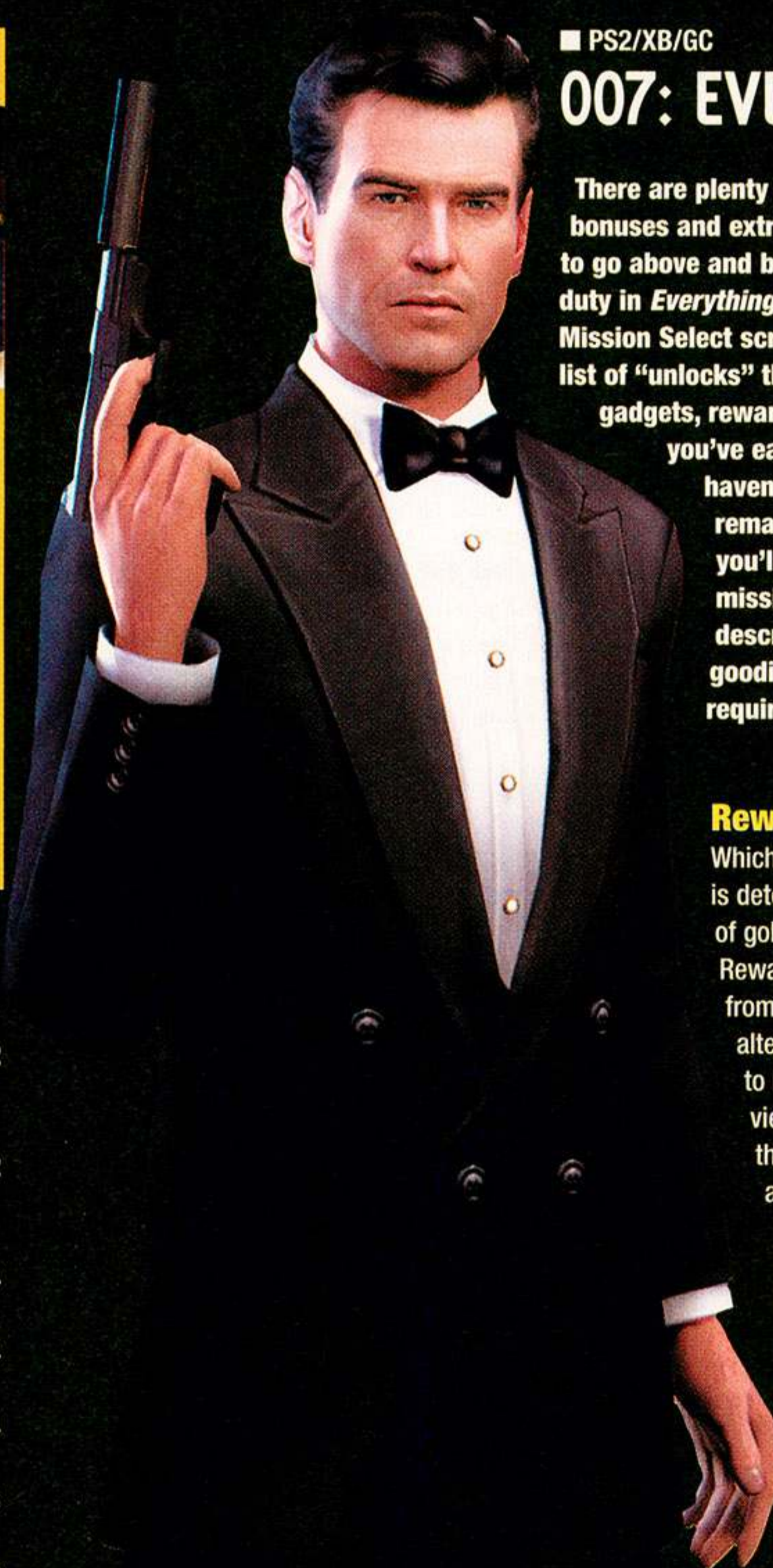
Production stills 1: 1 gold  
Production stills 2: 2 golds  
Production stills 3: 3 golds  
Production stills 4: 4 golds  
Production stills 5: 5 golds  
Production stills 6: 7 golds  
Production stills 7: 9 golds  
Production stills 8: 13 golds  
Production stills 9: 16 golds  
Production stills 10: 18 golds  
Production stills 11: 19 golds  
Production stills 12: 22 golds  
Production stills 13: 23 golds  
Production stills 14: 25 golds

### Alternate outfits (cinemas only)

Serena: 8 golds  
Mya: 14 golds  
Miss Nagai: 17 golds  
Katya: 20 golds

### Cheats

Which cheats are unlocked is determined by the number of platinum 007s you earn.



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■ PS2/XB

## MAX PAYNE 2: THE FALL OF MAX PAYNE

It was a dark and dismal night. The kind of night that tore open your being and started playing hacky-sack with your inner soul. The rain was dribbling down the cracked café window like an old man's snoozing drool. "Another cwaffee!" I mustered through the dim smoky haze of the diner's interior. The air had the consistency of an emphysema victim's lung. The withered waitress staggered over to my booth, varicose veins darting down her spindly legs like cracked porcelain china.

"Outta cwaffee!" she barked. "How 'bout some cheat codes instead, ya pretentious bastid? Save yer hackneyed prose for the dames! Yer inner

freakin' monologue's really detracting from the freakin' in-game carnage!"

I took my ill-gotten cheat codes and left, fading into the night like a self-important videogame scriptwriter. I knew that if I entered the codes during gameplay, then chose New Game from the Main menu, they'd unlock all bonus game modes.

**PlayStation 2:** Square, Square, Square, X, Left, Right, Left, Right, Square, Square, Square, X, Left, Right, Left, Right

**Xbox:** X, X, X, A, Left, Right, Left, Right, X, X, X, A, Left, Right, Left, Right





## TRICKS IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PRIMA GAMES

Look, even the pros need a little help now and then. We're talking information. Secrets. Hints. We're currently dancing our way through Prima's official guides to *Splinter Cell Pandora Tomorrow*, *Phantasy Star Online: Episode III—C.A.R.D. Revolution*, and *007: Everything or Nothing*. If you want to get the most from these games, you should read them, too.



Cheats are power-ups and hidden weapons (such as the legendary Golden Gun) that'll make it easier to complete a mission. To activate a cheat once it is unlocked, pause the game during any mission and enter the code listed underneath the cheat. A tone will play to confirm it has been activated. Check your status after unpausing to see your cheat in action!

Please note that using a cheat nullifies your score for that mission. So you cannot use a cheat to unlock the next mission or earn any medals. In addition, cheat codes won't work until earned and saved to a memory card or your Xbox's hard drive, and they don't work at all in multiplayer modes.

### Weapons

**Double damage:** 9 platinums  
**All weapons:** 17 platinums  
**Golden Gun:** 1 platinum  
**Platinum Gun:** 27 platinums  
**Full ammo supply:** 11 platinums  
**Unlimited ammo:** 23 platinums  
**Double ammo capacity:**  
7 platinums

### Vehicle improvements

**Vehicle cloaking:** 13 platinums  
**Slow-motion driving:** 25 platinums  
**Improved vehicle traction:**  
3 platinums

### Battery improvements

**Improved battery life:** 5 platinums  
**Full battery life:** 15 platinums  
**Unlimited battery life:**  
19 platinums

### Multiplayer unlockables

There is a separate Unlocks screen in multiplayer mode that you can access from the Level Select screen. Multiplayer rewards include hidden arenas and bonus characters (from the game as well as from previous Bond movies). To unlock these rewards, you must earn points by completing mission objectives in multiplayer mode. Each objective completed scores you 10 points.

### Arenas

**Cistern:** 30 points  
**Test lab:** 160 points  
**Burn chamber:** 370 points

### Characters

**Baron Samedi:** 50 points  
**Odd Job:** 70 points  
**Egypt commander:** 90 points

**Hazmat guard:** 110 points

**Mya:** 130 points

**Egypt guard:** 180 points

**South commander:** 210 points

**Moscow guard:** 230 points

**Le Rouge:** 260 points

**003:** 290 points

**Katya:** 320 points

**Serena:** 350 points

**Diavolo:** 400 points

**Miss Nagai:**

450 points

**Serena**

**(alternate outfit):**

430 points ➤



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GC  
**PHANTASY STAR ONLINE:  
EPISODE III—C.A.R.D. REVOLUTION**

**Building decks**  
Knowing the cards in and out will help you become a better deck builder. While mastering the phases of battle and learning all the cards will help you in a duel, half the battle is already fought before you even set foot on Ragol. That's because the true determinant of victory or defeat is your deck composition.



**Choosing a theme**  
If you build a better deck than your opponent's, you'll probably win the battle. The first step in building a good deck is recognizing what sort of deck you want to build. Do you want to use creatures or items? Do you want to be able to attack opponents from long range, or would you rather wade into battle with swords swinging? Do you want to overwhelm your foe with lots of tiny creatures, or try winning with one or two huge brutes? These are questions you have to ask yourself first. After you decide on a theme or direction, look at the cards that fit your theme and the story character that is best suited to lead such a deck.



**Choosing a story character**  
The second step in building a good deck is to choose a story character. All the story characters have different abilities that make them ideal for certain types of decks. Go through the cards that fit your theme and choose which ones to include in your deck.

**Adding cards to a deck**  
Each deck can only have 30 cards, and you can have no more than three of the same card in your deck. So you have to make a lot of tough choices; often there are too many cards and not enough space. Be ruthless in organizing your



deck. If you don't think you'll really use the card and are only putting it in there because it looks cool, dump it. Then, after you've created your deck, play with it a couple times alone to test it. Get rid of cards that didn't work and add some you need. For example, you might find that you need more guard items, or you might find that you don't have enough low-cost creatures, so you can't play anything when you roll low in the dice phase.

Also, as you play battles, take note of the cards you win and continually revisit the Command Center to replace old cards in your deck with better cards from the spoils of your battles.

Finally, take it online and play against better players. You'll know soon enough whether your deck is good enough or still needs work.



PS2/XB  
**WRATH: UNLEASHED**

The following four cheat codes dramatically change your *Wrath: Unleashed* experience. You'll know when you entered the code correctly—the screen flashes and a distinctive sound is heard. Pay attention to the cheat code descriptions to find out where to enter the code. Some cheats need to be entered at the Title screen, some at the versus mode Creature Select menu, and some at the team fighter mode Creature Select menu.



**Large creatures**  
This code makes creatures appear twice their usual size on the World Map. To see the overgrown beasts, enter the following at the *Wrath: Unleashed* Title screen:

**Xbox:** Left, X, Up, Y, Right, B, Down, B

**PS2:** Left, Square, Up, Circle, Right, Triangle, Down, Triangle

**Hyper-extended fighting**  
When enabled, this cheat gives creatures more than twice their normal health, and the game moves at more than twice its usual speed. This cheat only works in versus and team fighter modes. If you start a war game (battle or campaign), the cheat is disabled. Enter the following cheat at the Title screen:

**Xbox:** Down, Down, Up, Down, Left, Right, Down, Up, Up, Up, Right, Left, X

**PS2:** Down, Down, Up, Down, Left, Right, Down, Up, Up, Up, Up, Right, Left, Square

**Versus mode color schemes**  
Tired of the same color schemes for your creatures in versus mode? Enter the following code at the versus mode Creature Select menu to enable three

additional color combos for each realm's creatures; use "Cycle" (shown in the lower right corner) to change the color combinations.

**Xbox:** L-trigger, L-trigger, Down, Down, Black, White, Black, White, R-trigger, L-trigger, Black, R-trigger, R-trigger, White

**PS2:** L1, L1, Down, Down, R2, Select, R2, Select, R1, L1, R2, R1, R1, Select

**Team fighter color schemes**  
Like the character variation cheat in versus mode, this cheat code lets you customize the color combinations of your realm's creatures in team fighter mode. Enter the following code at the team fighter mode Creature Select menu:

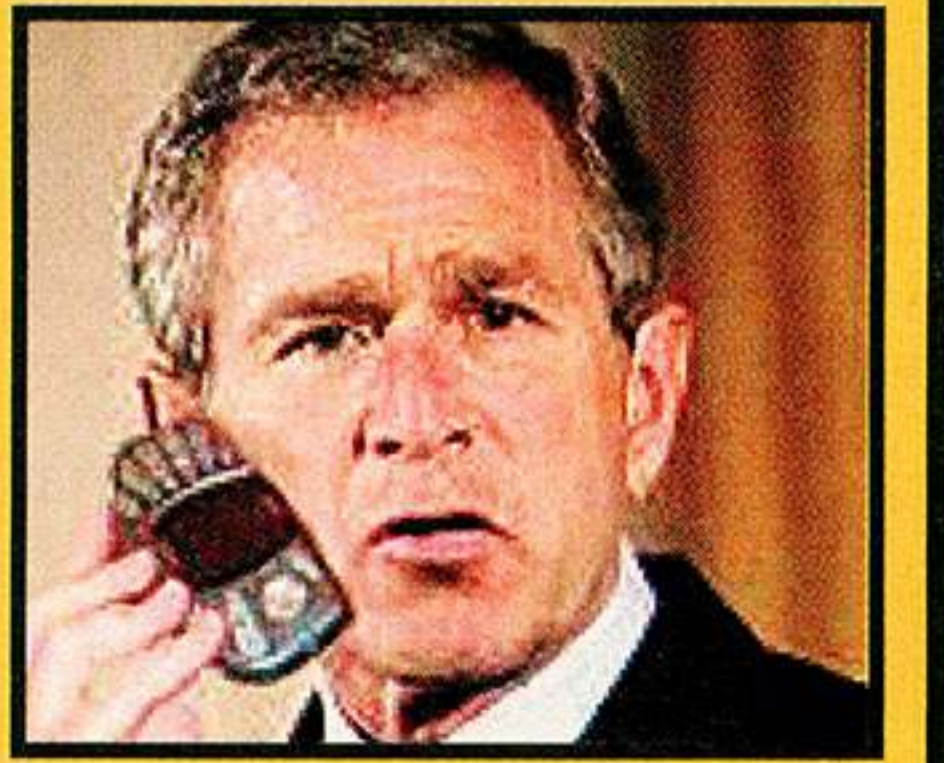
**Xbox:** L-trigger, L-trigger, Down, Down, Black, White, Black, White, R-trigger, L-trigger, Black, R-trigger, R-trigger, R-trigger, White

**PS2:** L1, L1, Down, Down, R2, Select, R2, Select, R1, L1, R2, R1, R1, R1, Select



N-Gage  
**RED FACTION**

As the phenomenon of side-talkin' ([www.sidetalkin.com](http://www.sidetalkin.com)) becomes as tragically unhip as the words "bling" and "fo-shizzle," we're still laughing at the Internet craze the "taco telephone" started. Look, even Dubya's in on it! What, that's a badly Photoshopped hand stuck near a picture of the Prez? Ah.



Still, we thought some ceremony was in order for this, our first-ever cheat code for an N-Gage title. We're proud to present this **100 percent armor** code for *Red Faction*. Simply tap in **#86642#** during gameplay (and we're using the

word "gameplay" in its broadest possible context) to activate the cheat. Now, isn't that faked picture of a side-talkin' President of the United States more amusing than a screenshot of *Red Faction* with "100" displayed in a corner? We thought so.



VS.



Both devices feature *Sonic Heroes* codes this month. Let us know which codes you preferred. Meanwhile, get your samurai on.

**Sonic Heroes (PS2)**

Enter this first  
9490B2BC 95E61BC8

**Exclusive!**

**Max rings for Team Sonic in challenge mode**  
24401A38 BE70013E

**Exclusive!**

**Rank A for Team Sonic in challenge mode**  
04501229 B67061AC

**Disable timer**  
24913674 BDBCD549

**Infinite flight gauge**  
249812AC B416C76D

**Infinite lives**  
24009368 3A34C76B

**Infinite rings**  
24009878 9AB4936F

**Infinite team blast gauge**  
249056E8 24B4D5EA



**Onimusha Tactics (GBA)**

Enter this first  
9452337277DD  
3B53A5B7A70C  
B2F0A6A9F3CA

**Exclusive!**

**999 damage [Use with Infinite Health code]**  
E4316A5AFF4  
C4216E7AFCC5  
36B100C8B3F0  
1FE501B8301D  
64B840C8FBF2

**Infinite attribute pts.**  
45AA0B19307E  
4E2E4A29785F  
12A7A6C724E1

**All Level 99 weapons and items**  
4E0832CAB1C7  
12A7A6C724E1  
4EA348297B55  
E977E1FB6C94

**Infinite HP (1st char.)**  
97EC692A7F5B  
B2986C3B7E1A

**Max HP (1st char.)**  
ECB50498302C

**Infinite SP (1st char.)**  
ECB104D8B0A4  
B2952C5BB5B0



That *Maximo* sequel can be pretty frustrating, right? That's nothin' a little cheatin' won't fix. Oh, look! More *Sonic* codes. Punch 'em in fast.

**Maximo vs. Army of Zin (PS2)**

Enter this first  
MPJ7-0JFH-XYU80  
T7TE-PXYP-3FC3R

**All weapons/upgrades**  
YDCY-Z9NJ-19AEW  
88MC-EZ5U-4HZQ1  
V966-T9N6-WMCFN  
2Q0E-30Y2-384N5  
7U9K-WPB1-EPHPX  
8U5V-ZFFF-RFA7F  
YHNC-UWW5-44HW7  
CXU0-NBQY-N2RUH  
G2R9-XB5T-8QZ4G  
DY36-A2J6-UJMDO

**Super jump [Press X]**  
15FH-XUPB-RNQB  
YQNM-KZBW-WWTF3  
D5PA-1YDG-UF9FM  
NC9P-XV0Z-CTZZ0  
JDOW-HFM8-UQREP

**Max death coins**  
1HMA-VOEB-OPTVN  
68XJ-XN04-ZPUBU

**Max coins**  
VPBU-6EBF-YDCWG  
J4C5-2EFE-HWQ58

**Max spirits**  
WN9P-R4EN-XH102  
2ZP6-54YZ-HW97G

**All hint scrolls**  
7APF-P1PZ-EG905  
QMN7-Z6QK-QD0QK

**Sonic Heroes (GC)**

Enter this first  
XZV6-JT1B-WRPN1  
3J4W-V0VG-PGY5E

**Infinite rings**  
BUGV-YEXD-D378X  
2ADK-BHCY-J5CXX

**Infinite lives**  
0CJ2-QA16-CUHY2  
PKAK-Z5XF-ZRR3K

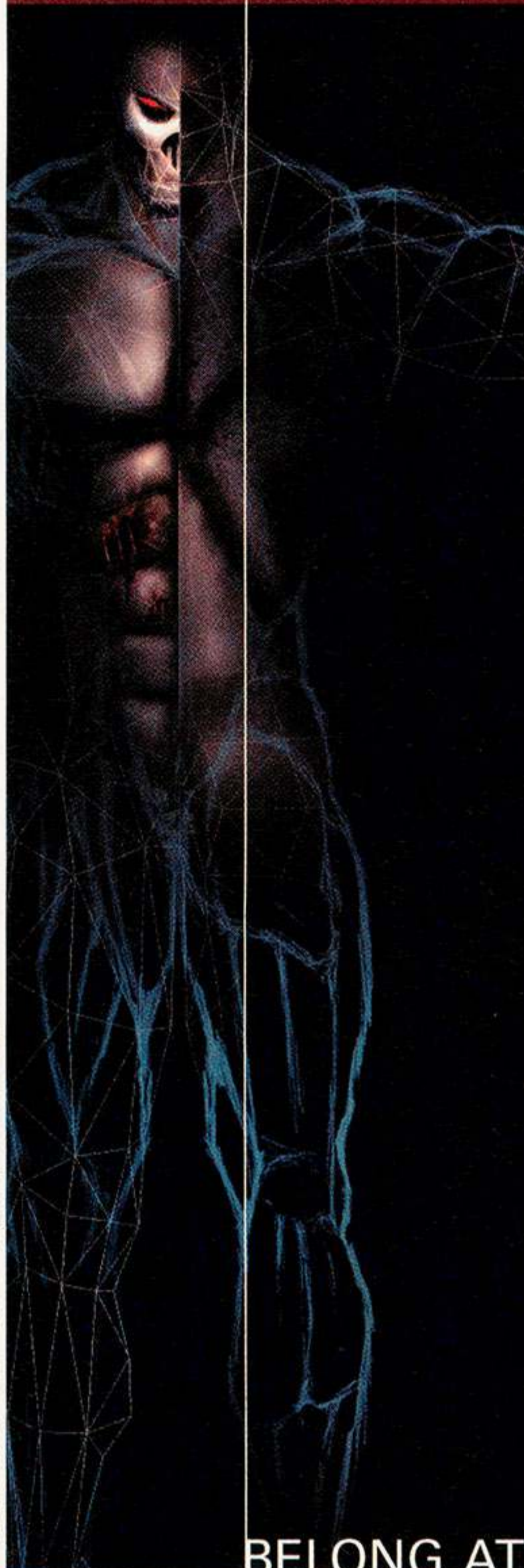
**Rising jump [Hold L+R+A]**  
3PCE-FWVB-TT5G4  
9372-FCV7-2JFE8  
EV5P-FKN4-WTTKN  
73T7-BEU9-9YJF9  
TNPW-GHEX-VCNKX  
E9FZ-A3QA-YCERP

**Super turbo [Press D-pad Up]**  
NQP8-1A59-QYHRX  
E1ZA-QCYK-RXQW8  
ZVPF-98HC-G06G7  
J9P2-8JQ4-WCQYE  
CUEZ-H9C9-WNQCW  
E9FZ-A3QA-YCERP



■ That dude is sooo high. No, he's literally high. In the air. Look, no drugs are involved. All right, forget it.

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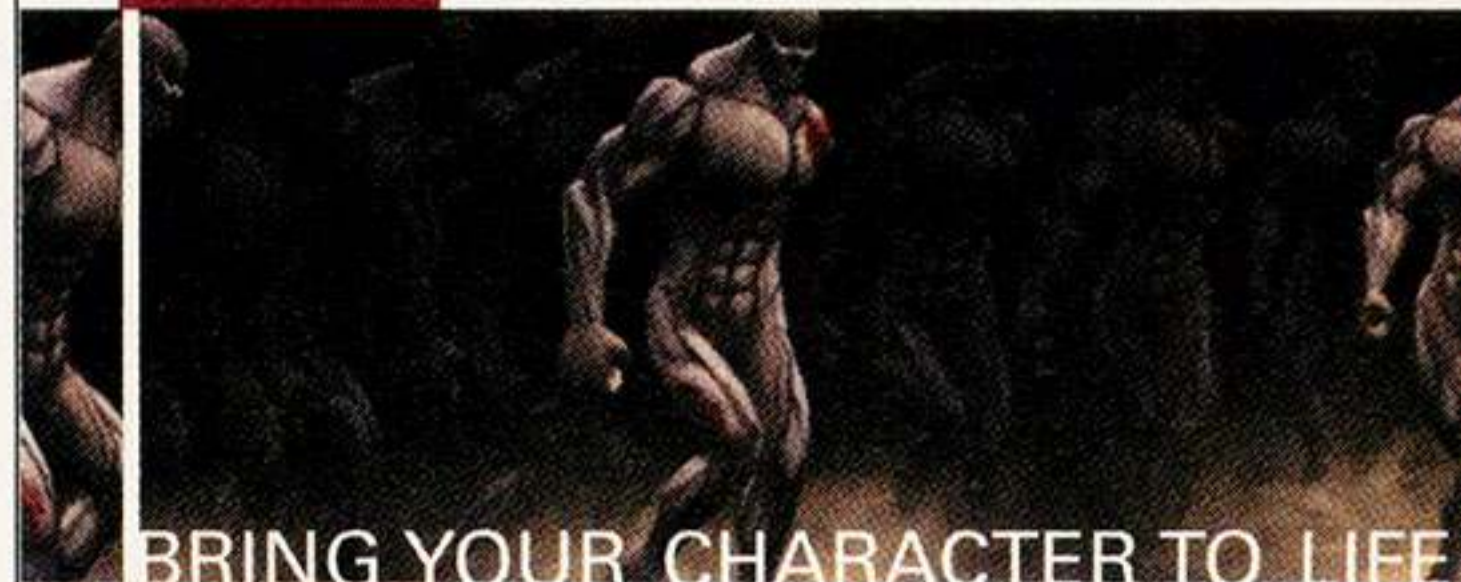
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■ Xbox

# SPLINTER CELL PANDORA TOMORROW

## I am Sam: weapons detail

With Sam Fisher's current stealth conflagration more than living up to the hype, and newly converted Xbox Live gamers everywhere learning exactly what the phrase "game rating content may change during online experience" means after listening to a 15-year-old punk swearing at them, we're back with a host of *Splinter Cell* tips and tricks for executing both enemies and this irritating online menace. We've got strategies for weapon use and a host of cunning tricks to employ for turning you from ass to assassin.

## Weapons and ammunition

You really have only two weapons to choose from on each mission (and sometimes only a pistol on the stealthier missions). A couple of different projectiles, though, will keep the enemy on its toes. Combined with your covert movements and superior tactics, your weapon setup proves more than reliable.

## SC-20K M.A.W.S.

When it comes time to slinging bullets with the bad guys, your SC-20K M.A.W.S. (Modular Assault Weapon System) provides lots of power in a compact package. The assault rifle comes with 60 shots, which might seem like a lot, but it goes real fast if you hold the trigger down and barrage the enemy with automatic fire. To conserve ammo and keep your accuracy high, fire quick bursts or single shots to the head.

In sniper mode, you can pick off targets at a distant range with just the soft hiss of a bullet. Lock on to your victim and then zoom in with your 4x or 6x scope for a closer shot. Depress the left trigger and hold your breath for about 3 seconds—long enough to steady your weapon and set up the perfect kill shot.

Your SC-20K also doubles as a launcher. It spits out special ammunition (like ring airfoil rounds), sticky shockers, diversion and sticky cameras, plus all types of grenades. It's like your own weapons locker slung across your back.

In stealth situations that require you to cross a lighted area to reach your enemy—or ones in which grabbing one enemy will alert another nearby guard—opt to



■ From the shadows, you can strike with brutal efficiency.

use your SC-20K's sniper mode. You may be quick enough to down your enemies without the alarm going up.

## SC pistol

Your handheld weapon usually shoots at light bulbs instead of skulls. Your pistol, equipped with 40 shots, can pick off lights as you move along to keep the shadow quotient high. It fires more slowly than your SC-20K, and it's tougher to get a long-range shot off since it doesn't come with a zoom feature, so use it on human opponents only at close range. If you play it smart, you can also shoot out cameras with your SC pistol, though it's probably more sensible to holster it in favor of the SC-20K when you have an option. For those split-second situations when you have only the pistol in hand, go for the head shot. One pinpoint slug to the skull can drop anyone—even enemies in full body armor.

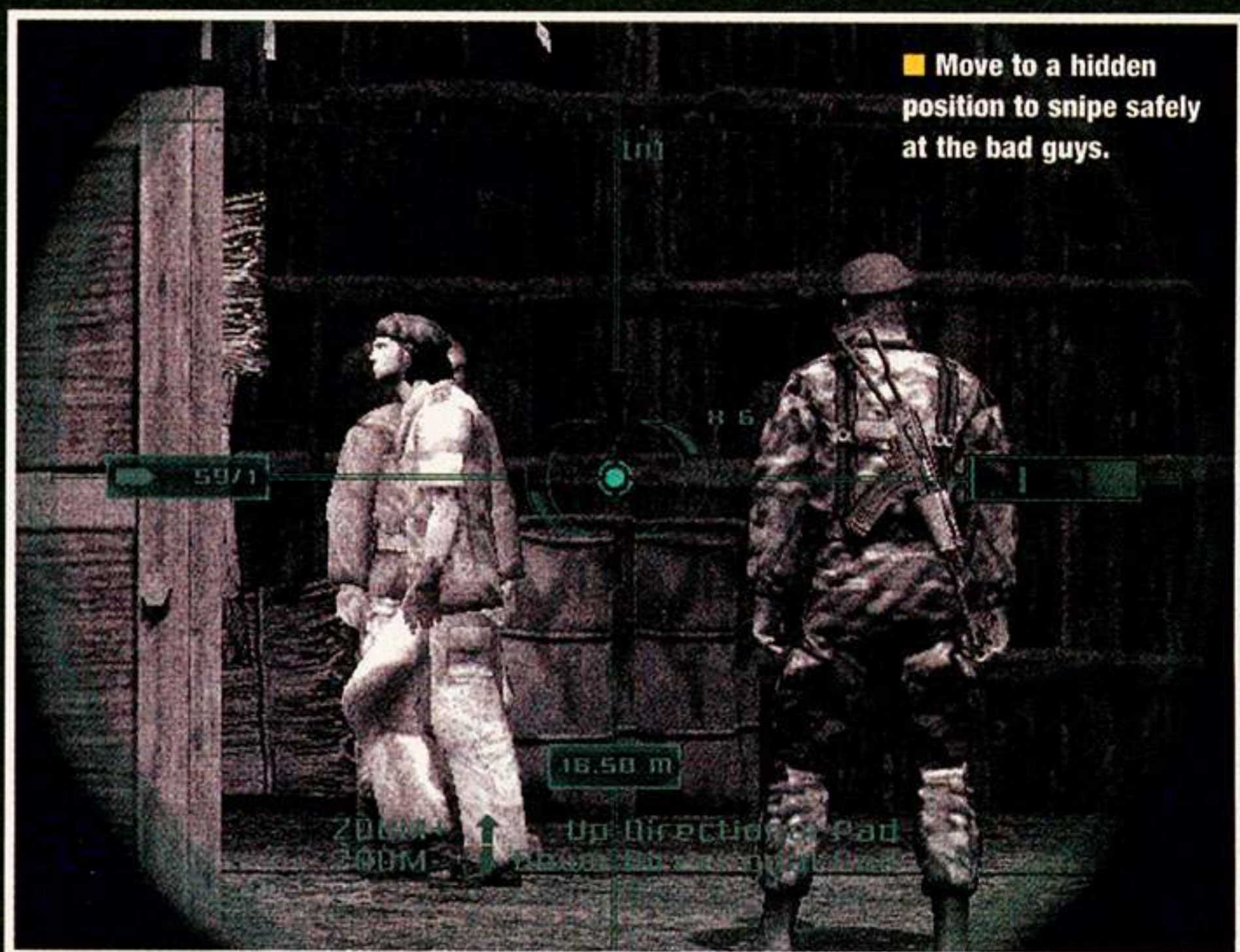
## Sticky shocker

Think of it as a "shock bomb." The sticky shocker is a high-voltage discharge device coated in adhesive resin. When you fire the shocker, it clings to your target and jolts the victim into unconsciousness. This fun little gadget is especially useful on nonlethal missions when you can't reach a guard with your bare hands. For maximum effectiveness, fire a sticky shocker into water and neutralize anyone touching the liquid.

When the mission calls for nonlethal force, Third Echelon means it. For those who are bored or trigger-happy, the sticky shocker lets you shoot your gun, and the ability to incapacitate works just as well as a deadly bullet.

## Spy bullets

They sound cool, and these multiplayer-only bullets perform some amazing tricks. You temporarily mark enemies with one so that they appear on your radar as well as



■ Move to a hidden position to snipe safely at the bad guys.



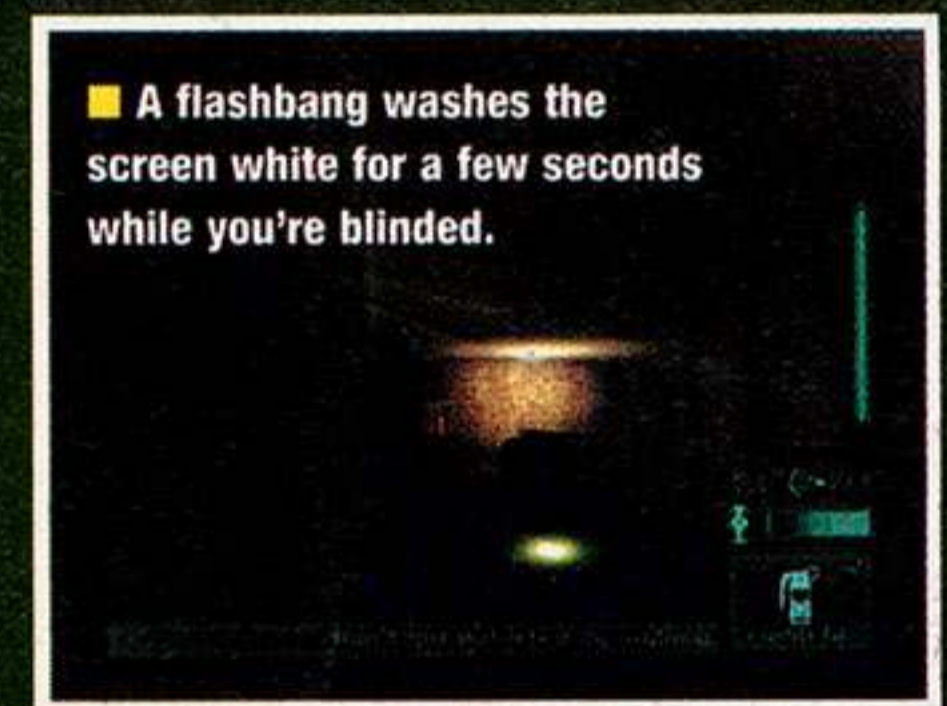
■ In multiplayer, a spy bullet hit can transmit your position to all enemy players.



■ Chaff grenades will knock out mechanical equipment.



■ A flashbang washes the screen white for a few seconds while you're blinded.



your teammates'. If you hit a room's wall, the spy bullet transforms the zone around the point of impact into a radar zone (making it possible to track any enemy entering this new zone). When you want your eyes in two places at once, rely on the spy bullet.

### Ring airfoil projectile

Like rubber bullets, the ring airfoils can neutralize people without killing them. (Aww, how very humane of you....) During nonlethal objectives, these high-impact, zero-penetration projectiles will stun if shot into the body and will knock an enemy out if connected with the head.

### Grenades

There are four types of grenade, each with a different function. The standard fragmentation grenade (called a "frag") detonates and sends deadly shrapnel out in a short blast radius. Optimally, you want to throw a frag into the midst of several enemies so that you catch multiple casualties. They explode loudly, so toss them only in secluded areas or where the alarm doesn't matter.

The smoke grenade shoots out a cloud that blankets an area in an obscuring mist. Switch to thermal vision to see heat signatures through the smoke. You can screen your moves with a smoke grenade.

Though guards might be alerted to your presence when the grenade goes off, they won't have a clue where you go if you move quickly. You can sometimes down a guard who sucks in too much smoke.



■ A frag can shred several enemies at once.

The special chaff grenade emits electromagnetic particles that disrupt and neutralize electronic devices in the area. You can heave one of these babies into a room to shut down surveillance cameras, motion detectors, and mines. Watch out—a chaff grenade doesn't last forever. When

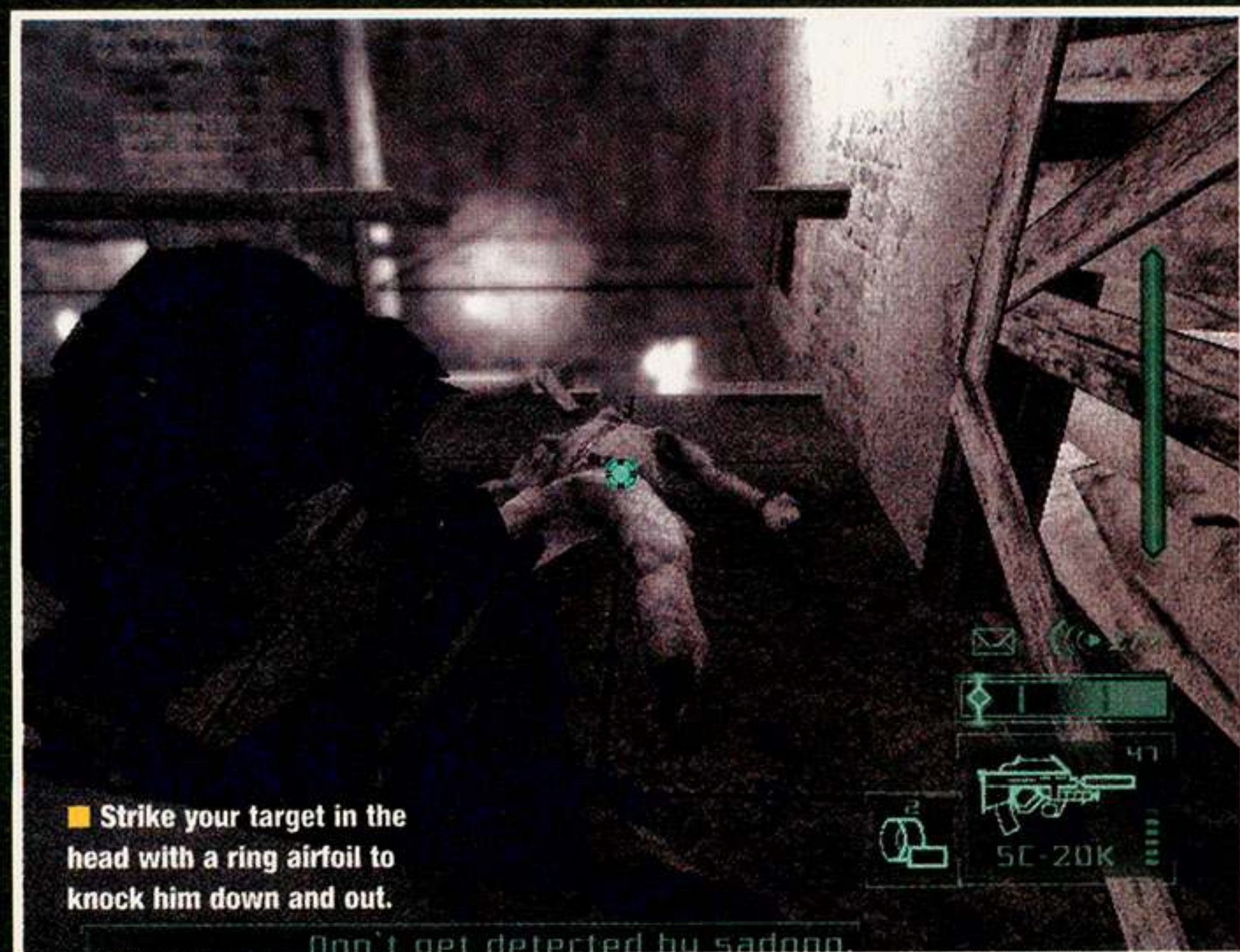
the grenade's particles have finished discharging, the neutralized devices return to normal. You don't want to be in front of a camera then—or worse, in the middle of a minefield!

The flashbang grenade blasts out a loud noise and brilliant light. It temporarily blinds characters who happen to be looking in its direction. Take advantage of a stunned character and follow up with another grenade or your SC-20K.

### Tactical checklist

Trusty tips for the true stealth assassin

- Tapping your R trigger to floor opponents is sometimes easier than grabbing them from behind; it's quicker and there's less chance of detection.
- If you aren't attracting turrets with it, ditch your emergency flare early into your mission so that you aren't accidentally lit up like a Christmas tree when you fumble an attempt at bringing your gun out quietly.
- Tag all the lights, using the pistol to conserve assault rifle ammo (unless you need the targeting scope). The enemies and innocents don't seem to worry about being plunged into darkness. This is particularly effective in the LAX stage, in which you can draw people from where you need to be in the gloom, with little chance of detection.
- The stages with an abundance of foliage usually have trip wires to flounder over. Prevent this stealth embarrassment by using infrared to spot them.



■ Strike your target in the head with a ring airfoil to knock him down and out.





# THE REST OF THE CRAP

## One man's struggle to save mankind

### help me

When you do something heroic, it's considered polite to tell the surrounding people that they're the real heroes for



going to work each day soaring on the dreams of eagles, or whatever they do. I'm trying to get in the habit of this, since playing Disney's *Hide & Sneak* just to make a couple jokes in a game magazine is the kind of selfless act ancient peoples would have written epic poems about, and I think the Best Buy clerk who sold the game to me should know the role he had in it. I might be the bravest man alive for playing *Hide*, but those men and women out there selling it with a straight face—they're the true heroes.

—Seanbaby

### CORVETTE: 50TH ANNIVERSARY



■ The Corvette performs a perfect 360 by ramming into a truck at 64 mph.

**GBA • TDK** — This game has got to be the worst birthday present ever given to a car. I once watched a magician kill himself while Deathblade the Clown laughed and mocked my father's manhood with balloon animals, and that was a better birthday party than the Corvette got. While the invisible walls that prevent you from leaving the highway showcase the Corvette's ability to ignore our primitive

### classic crap



#### SWAMP THING (NES)

Using nothing but his mighty punch, Swamp Thing must battle his way through the treacherous swamp. And since his mighty punch is more of a slight readjustment of his elbow, you probably won't make it past the third or fourth unidentifiable blob enemy. The good news is that since no one bothered to draw any animations for Swamp Thing's death, you won't even know you've failed—though not being able to punch anymore will be a big clue.

Earth physics, they also mean that someone accidentally sitting on a Game Boy Advance will be just as good a player as someone bothering to steer.

**My dare to the universe:** *Corvette* may well be the worst driving game of all time, and you can go ahead and consider that a challenge to any game designers in the future who think they can fail harder.

### RIPPING FRIENDS



■ I wasn't going to mention this giant turd in a diaper, but I mean, look at it.

**GBA • THQ** — Let me walk you through a *Ripping Friends* fight. First, you punch an enemy once to knock him down. This will take some practice, since you aren't close enough to punch anything until you've already run your face into it. Now wait patiently for him to get back up—then wait for him to stop blinking. At this point, all you have to do is repeat the process five to 10 times for each opponent. It's as if Satan appeared on a magic carpet of screaming babies and shouted to a game developer, "You shall relive your worst moment for all eternity!" and the guy figured that would make a great videogame.

**Mammary preference:** Thanks to the last 300 games based on stupid cartoons being awful, you don't need me to tell you that *Ripping Friends* sucks. So instead, I'm going to list my favorite of Janet Jackson's breasts: the right one.

### SLURP

**N-Gage • Airborne** — I confess, there are times when I feel guilty for mocking games that are clearly designed for children. Is it fair to hold *Barbie's Unicorn Something Something* up to my sophisti-



■ Precision sucking: Yeah, that looks like something you might play on a phone.

cated adult sense of unicorn entertainment? But when *EGM* gave me a Nokia N-Gage game to review, I felt like a total bully. This stupid thing failed so badly, Nokia would have had a better profit margin if it had just trained goats for money-eating contests. Plus, if I really had the free time and the electrical engineering degree required just to put a game into this damn space taco, I'd be reading to you what I think of *Slurp* from the cockpit of the android suit declaring itself Robomaster of the World.

**Here's the thing:** I didn't play *Slurp*, and who cares? Like you bought an N-Gage.

### TERMINATOR 3: RISE OF THE MACHINES



■ Two bored robots have an uninspired battle in the future. Who will win? I wonder.

**GBA • Atari** — In *Terminator 3*, you're a robot reprogrammed to help the humans in their spectacularly dull war against the machines. No matter how many door keys you've collected in your videogaming or how many sewers you've spelunked, *Terminator 3* will fascinate you with its ability to bore you. If the future is really just wandering from key card to key card, go ahead and keep it, robots.

On a related note, I was surprised that none of the people in the future have changed their names to "Admiral Future," since I'm totally doing that once the future rolls around, and I can't be the only one who has thought of it.

**Question for the ages:** If I were lit on fire while playing *Terminator 3*, would the game put me to sleep before the flames could burn me to death?

### DISNEY'S HIDE & SNEAK



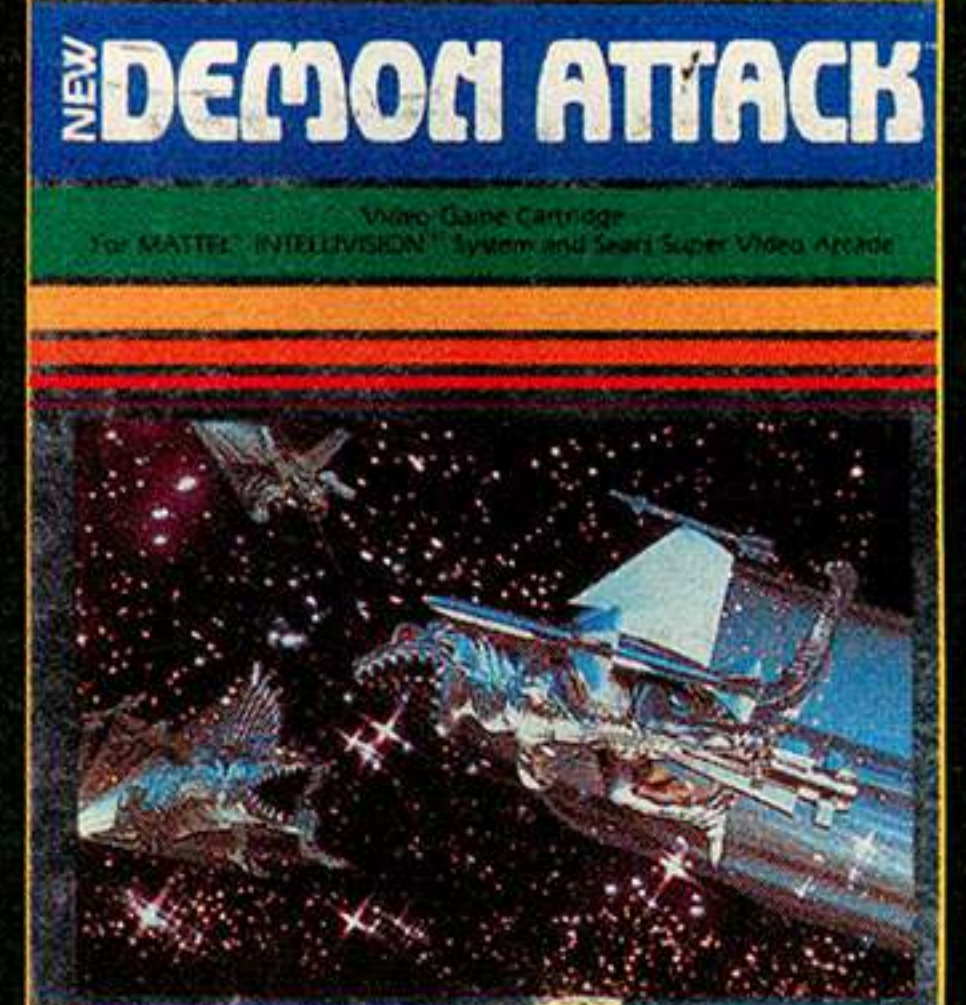
■ Ohhh, crates! Stare at this screen for a few minutes and it'll be just like you're playing.

**GC • Capcom** — You know how in some games if you leave your character idle, it'll do something stupid/cute, like pretend to take a nap? Well, in *Hide*, the dirty little rodents start in as soon as you let go of a button. They'll say, "SIGH\* Now what?" or "Where ARE you?" and repeat it until you want to kill, kill, kill. These mouthy, horrible rats would be obnoxious in a normal game, but roughly exactly 100 percent of *Hide* involves standing still and waiting for guards to look the other way. At a certain point, your brain's language center will go into shock. It can't happen soon enough. **To everyone who didn't think to remake *Metal Gear Solid* with Minnie Mouse:** No matter who you are or where you're from, at least one person out there is four times dumber than you.

### great moments in bad box art

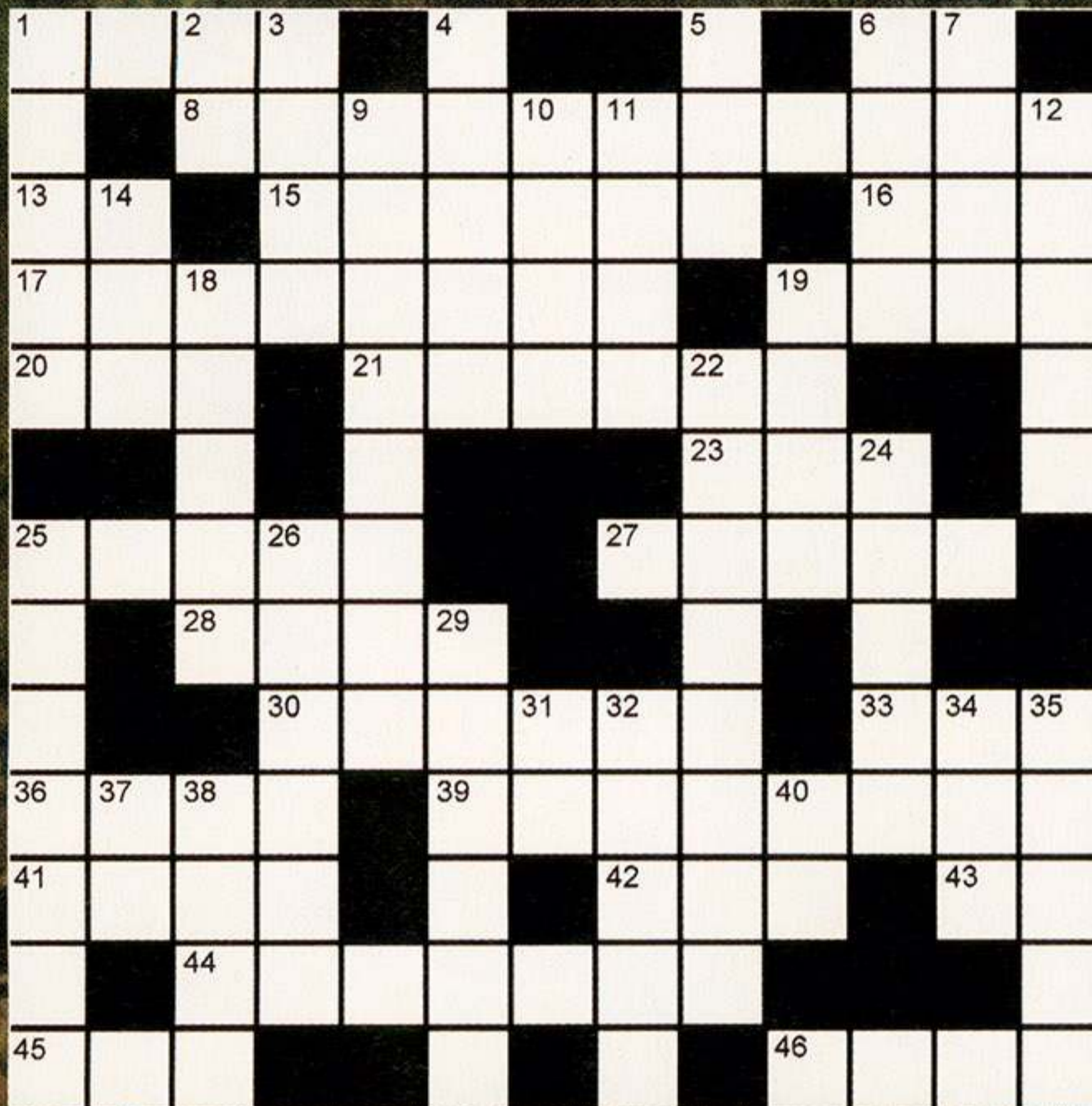
#### DEMON ATTACK (ATARI 2600, INTELLIVISION)

With a little imagination, a simple cardboard box can become a rocket ship to the stars! That said, it's going to take more than a layer of chrome paint, some tape, and a couple model airplane wings to make these dinosaur toys look like anything other than chrome-painted dinosaur toys with model airplane wings taped on.



# TACTICAL ESPIONAGE DICTION

(Solution on page 120)



## ACROSS

1. *Castlevania*'s keeper, for short
6. *Metal Gear* main man's initials
8. Metal Gear Rex's rapid-fire arms
13. Mega Man's initials in Japan
15. There are 120 of them in *Mario Sunshine*
16. Electronic Arts' war games, for short
17. *DDR* dance steps?
19. *Star Wars*' Jango Fett's son
20. *Blade* (PS2) or *Combat* (PS1)
21. Starred in a comic alongside pal Howard in the early days of *Nintendo Power*
23. One of Alucard's familiars in *Castlevania: Symphony of the Night*
25. Solid or Liquid
27. *Bonk's Adventure*'s (TurboGrafx-16) "punchy" boss
28. One hit of 39 ACROSS?
30. Solid Snake's *MGS3* locale
33. *Everything or Nothing* Bond girl
36. *King of Fighters* mainstay
39. Snake's sniper-aim-steadying drug
41. Groundbreaking first-person shooter

42. Something the *Resident Evil* series' lickers can't do

43. NCAA 2004 Badger state (abbrv.)
44. Like *Final Fantasy III*'s Realm
45. Rockstar's self-describing action game, for short
46. Like *Metroid GBA Missions*

## DOWN

1. Decoy Octopus posed as the chief of this organization in *MGS1*
2. When it's safe for Pikmin to come back outside
3. *Reel Fishing* activity
4. Hobbit home
5. Predecessor to SNES
6. E. Honda's *Street Fighter* style
7. Like *Harry Potter*'s Hermione?
9. Powerful *Star Control* (Genesis) race
10. *Morrowind* sleepover spots
11. What's on top of Bird's Peak Rock in GameCube *Zelda*
12. Something new that Snake can do in *MGS2*
14. Busty SNK fighter
18. *GTA3* gang
19. Dies at the start of *Resident Evil 3*
22. Cowboy Ekuban of *Madden NFL 2004*
24. Commodore side-scroller *Love* \_
25. Also knows as George Sears of *Metal Gear*
26. *Metal Gear* mastermind
29. The worst part of *MGS2*?
31. *Yu- -Oh!*
32. *Gradius* perennial power-up
34. *Sky Gunner* flight control
35. "Friend" of *GTA: Vice City*'s Hispanic gangs?
37. Bond's first two agent initials
38. *Wakeboarding Unleashed* towing essential
40. Hal Emmerich's *MGS2* sister

## INTRODUCING

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ON SALE MAY 4



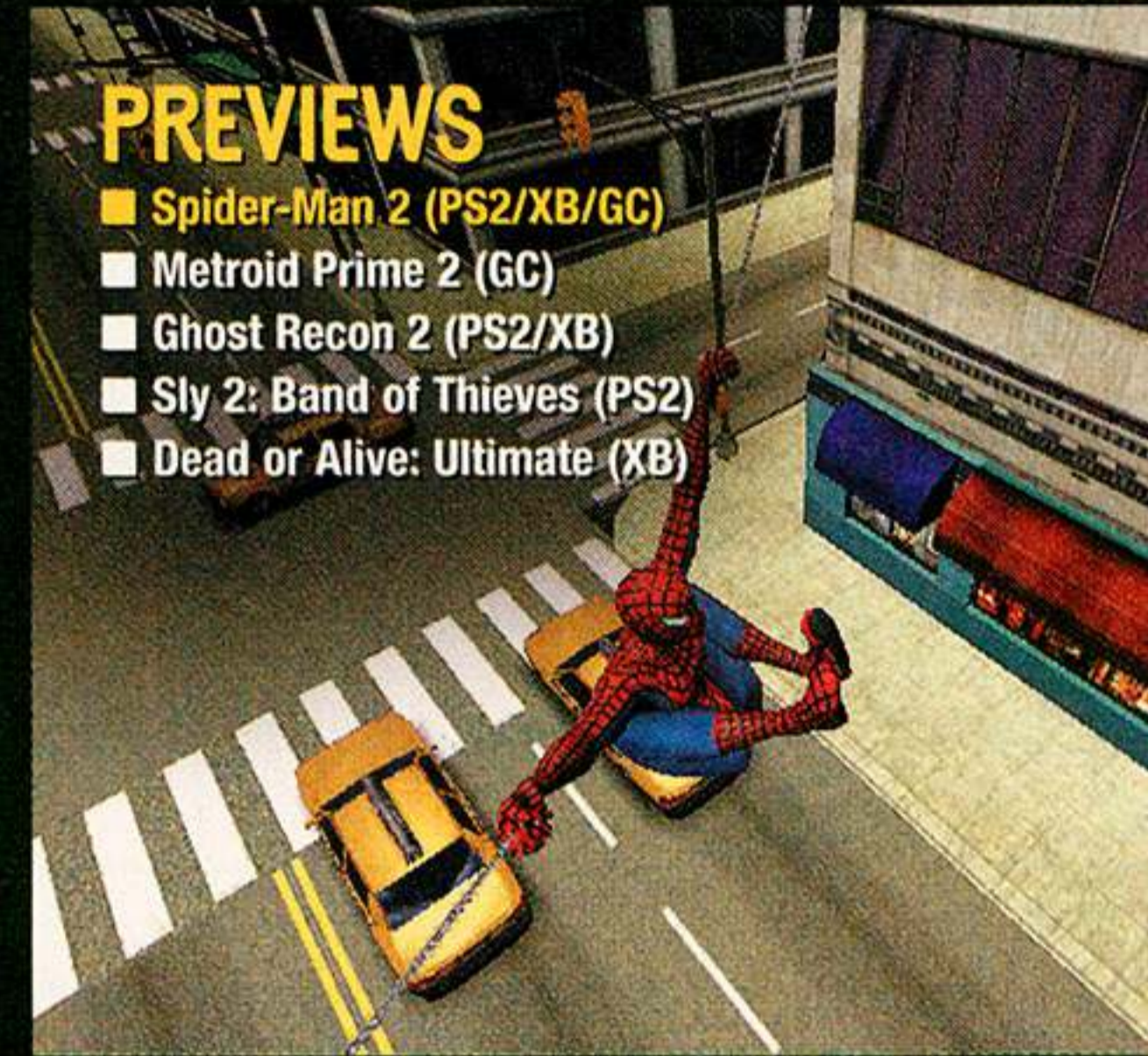
## STAR WARS: KNIGHTS OF THE OLD REPUBLIC 2

You'll find no Jar Jars in this corner of the fabled galaxy far, far away—even if you did, you could dabble in the dark side and strangle 'em with the Force. *Knights of the Old Republic*, the stellar Xbox RPG that restored *Star Wars'* sci-fi reputation, returns with a sequel, and we've got the world-exclusive scoop. Join us as our interrogation droid extracts top-secret screens, intel, a pull-out poster, and part one in a set of special collector's covers (complete the picture with *Computer Gaming World*).

Also, can the new crop of movie-inspired games match *KOTOR's* quality? Grab a seat for our sneak-peek showings of *Tron 2.0*, *Spider-Man 2*, *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*, *Van Helsing*, and more. Plus, we've got news that could save your life (or at least prolong your life as a gamer)! We'll run down a full doc-approved program that'll preserve your digits, eyesight, and reflexes.

### PREVIEWS

- Spider-Man 2 (PS2/XB/GC)
- Metroid Prime 2 (GC)
- Ghost Recon 2 (PS2/XB)
- Sly 2: Band of Thieves (PS2)
- Dead or Alive: Ultimate (XB)



### REVIEWS

- Samurai Warriors (PS2)
- Final Fantasy XI (PS2)
- Syphon Filter: The Omega Strain (PS2)
- NBA Ballers (PS2/XB)
- Mario vs. Donkey Kong (GBA)



(All planned editorial content is subject to change.)

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WE'RE LICENSED TO KILL, FISH, DRIVE, AND PEDdle HARD LIQUOR!

VODKA MARTINI, SHAKEN, NOT... COME TO THINK OF IT, JUST HAND ME THE BOTTLE.

I AIN'T DRIVIN'!

HELLO, VIDEO GAMERS! I'M HSU TANAKA, THAT'S MY BROTHER CHAN, AND WE ARE VIDEO GAME DESIGNERS! LOTS OF ADVENTURE, EXOTIC TRAVEL, AND WOMEN GALORE.

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YOU'RE RIGHT, BROTHER CHAN, IT IS A REWARDING CAREER! BUT IT'S NOT ALL FUN AND GAMES-- IF YOU'RE GOING TO MAKE A QUALITY PRODUCT, BY GOLLY YOU'D BEST BE PREPARED TO ENGAGE IN SOME FULL-ON, NOSE-TO-THE-GRINDSTONE, TAX-DEDUCTIBLE RESEARCH!

IN THE FACE OF INCREASING SALES IN THE SPY-GAME GENRE, HSU AND I HAVE PUT ON OUR RESEARCHIN' HATS TO DO SOME SERIOUS, PRACTICAL STUDY OF THE MASTER SPY/SUPERVILLAIN DYNAMIC!

WILL OUR FINDINGS SHOCK AND AMAZE YOU? OR JUST KILL A FEW MINUTES? WAIT AND SEE!

FOR PURPOSES OF THE EXPERIMENT, I, NATURALLY, HAVE TAKEN ON THE ROLE OF MASTER SPY...

...AND I AM NOW DR. CHAN, A SUPER-INTELLIGENT TYRANT WITH A HANKERIN' FOR SUBSUGATIN' THE CAPITALIST WORLD!

FEEL MY WRATH, YOU BIG MAC-EATING DEMACROMABOBS!

OUR CONTROL GROUP WILL BE REPRESENTED BY THIS POTATO WATCHING "OCTOPUSSY."

NICE GARBONZOS.

OH, JAMES!

LET'S BEGIN!

OUR FIRST EXERCISE WILL BE A STUDY IN REALISM--SPECIFICALLY, MEASURING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF A MASTER SPY ATTEMPTING TO INFILTRATE AN ENEMY BASE AFTER HAVING A NIGHT OF TORRID PASSION AND A GUT FULL OF HIGH-OCTANE VODKA.

YOU KNOW, THE LASER WEB ISN'T FOR ANOTHER 20 FEET.

I KNOW, I CAN'T STAND UP.

GIMME A MINUTE.

BLRGH...

I'LL JUST WAIT OVER HERE, THEN?

THAT'S FINE, I'M ON MY WAY.

ERGH...

SHOULD WE ATTACK?

HOLD YOUR HORSES, HIRED HENCHMAN. WE STILL HAVE HALF A PAGE.

THERE YOU ARE!

OH, CRIPES!

YOU SAID YOU WERE GOING TO CALL ME TODAY!

WHERE WERE YOU?!

EEEK! MY HIGH-SPEED ROMANTIC CONQUEST!

THIS IS PAINFUL TO WATCH, BOSS.

YOU WANT I SHOULD POP HIM ONE IN THE HEAD, JUST TO BE KIND?

NO, NO, THIS IS FOR SCIENCE.

MAKE SURE THE CAMERA'S RUNNING.

WE ARE GOING TO TALK ABOUT THIS RIGHT NOW!

HELP!

OKAY, I'VE SEEN ENOUGH. SEIZE THEM!

NO, JUST ME! LET HER GO! HELP!

ONE SEIZURE LATER...

SO, MR. TANAKA, IT SEEMS I HAVE YOU AT MY MERCY! ARE YOU PREPARED TO MEET YOUR MAKER?

BLARG... SURE, JUST KEEP IT DOWN. OH, MY HEAD.

UM... YOU SURE YOU DON'T HAVE ANY QUESTIONS? ABOUT MY NEFARIOUS PLAN, MAYBE?

SOME PEOPLE LIKE TO ASK FOR THE SAKE OF STALLING THEIR EXECUTION... YOU KNOW, WE'RE AT THE MERCY OF TRADITION.

BLECH. WHATEVER. TALK AWAY.

I'M NOT CURIOUS! CAN I SHOOT HIM?

WELL... ER... LET'S SEE... ACTUALLY, I GUESS I DIDN'T REALLY THINK MY NEFARIOUS PLAN OUT TOO FAR BEYOND CAPTURING YOU.

DON'T SUPPOSE YOU'RE COOKING UP ANY ACTION-PACKED ESCAPE PLANS, ARE YOU?

I'M GONNA BARE.

THE METHOD OF ESCAPE THIS EMPLOYED HAS BEEN DEEMED TOO INTENSE TO BE VIEWED BY GENERAL AUDIENCES, BUT I CAN ASSURE YOU OF ITS EFFECTIVENESS, AS WELL AS ITS DEVASTATING IMPACT ON WHITE SHOES AND UNFORTUNATE CATS.

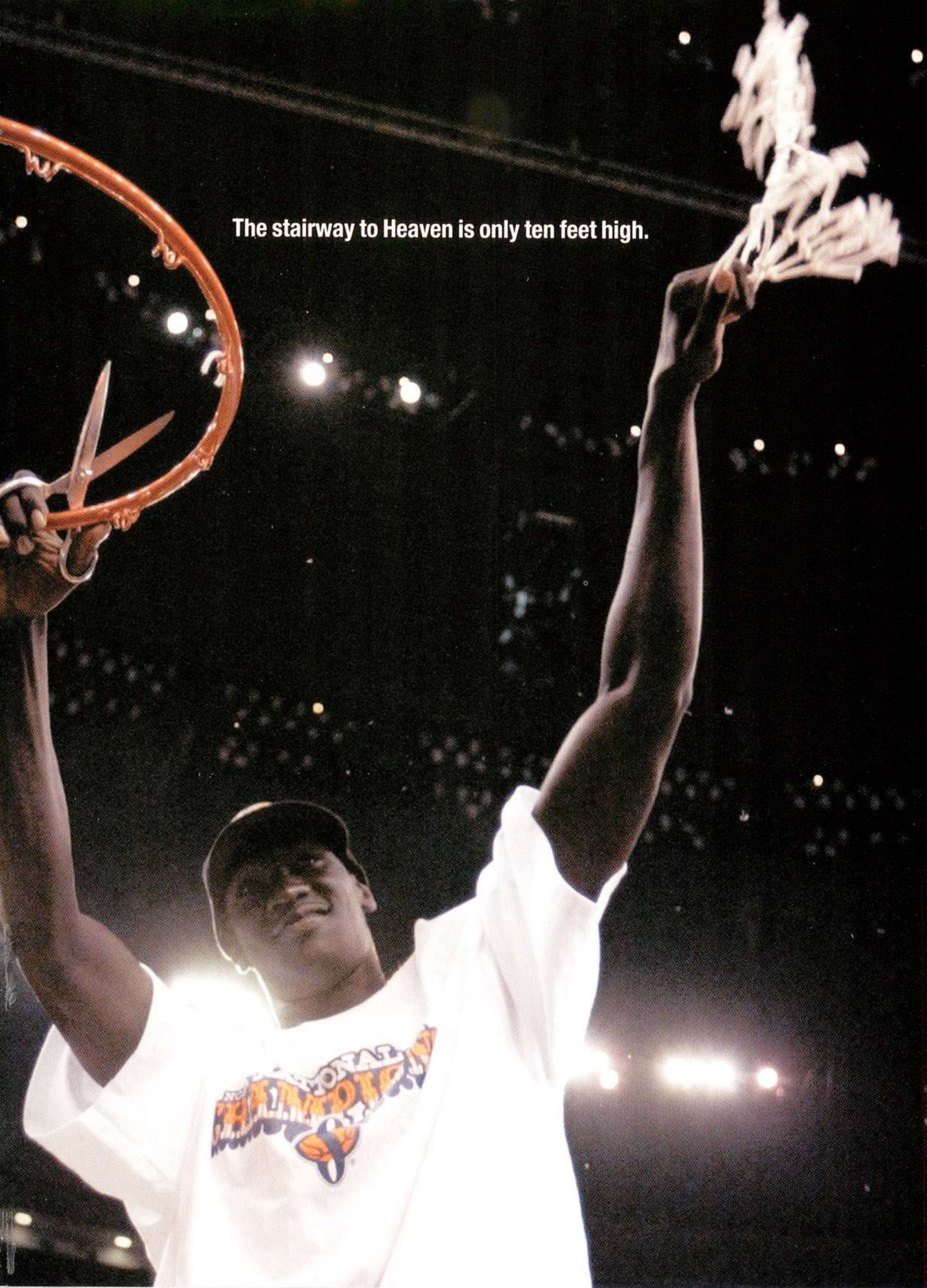
MEANWHILE, OUR CONTROL GROUP HAS BEEN BRUTALLY BAKED AND EATEN WHILE WE WEREN'T LOOKING.

I DECLARE THIS EXPERIMENT A SUCCESS!

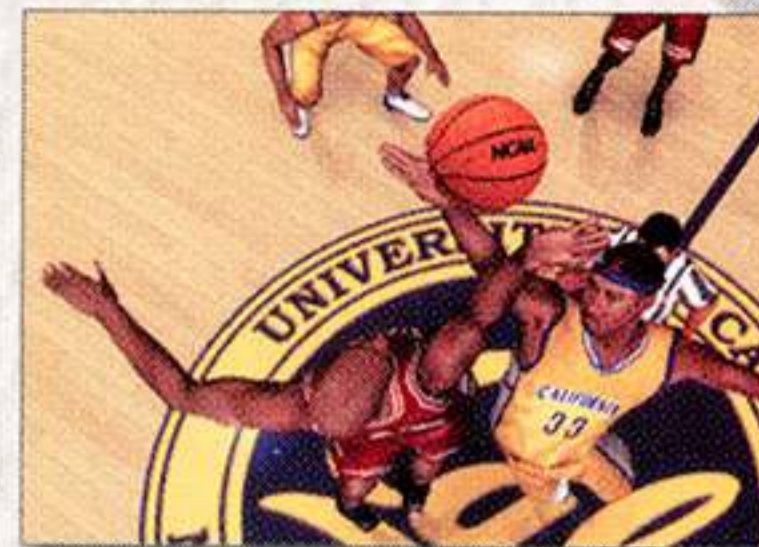
UNTIL NEXT MONTH, VIDEO GAMERS, I'M GONNA GO LAY DOWN.

ARR! POTATO!

END!



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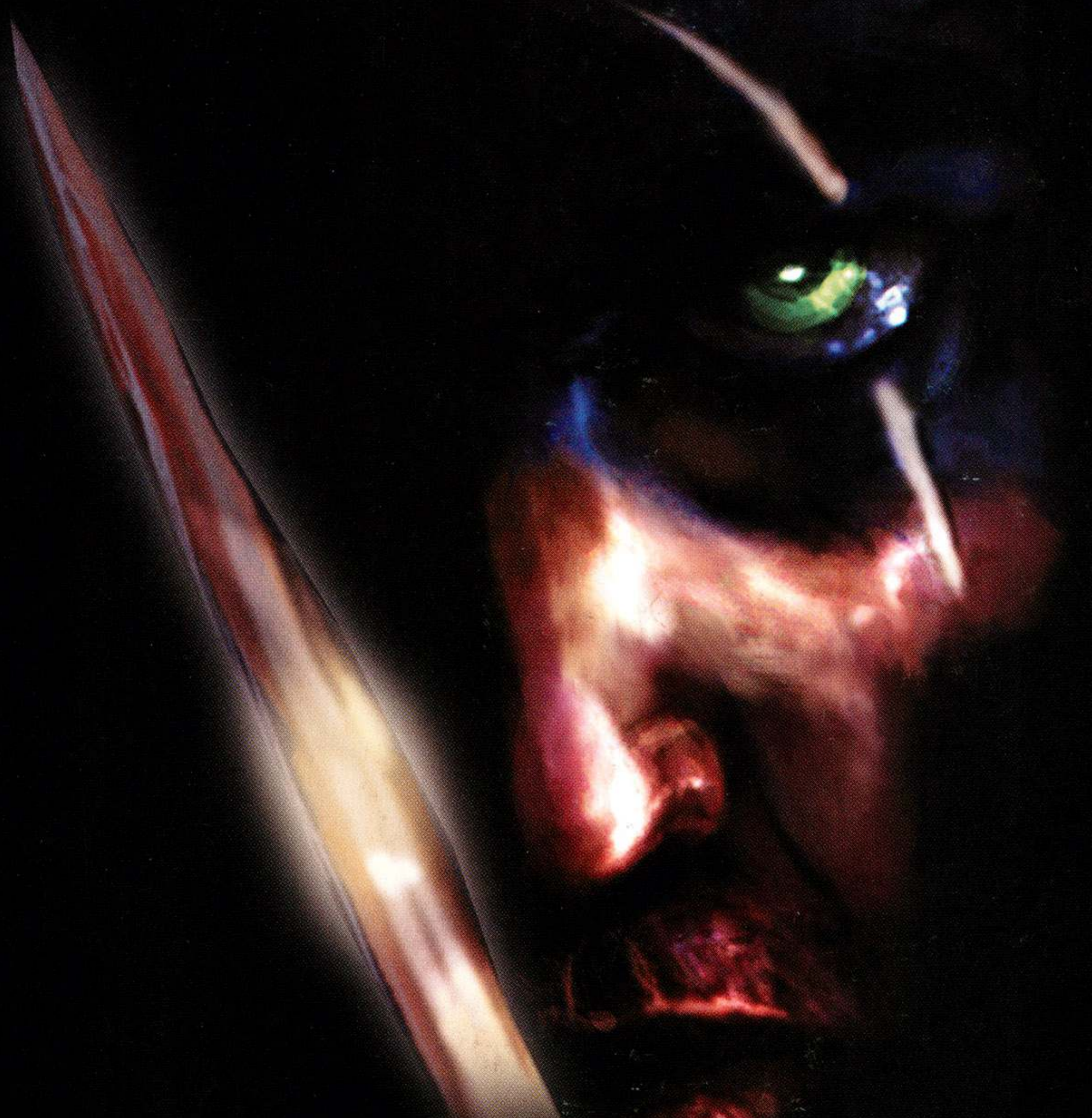


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