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GAME

ISSUE
88

PLAYERS

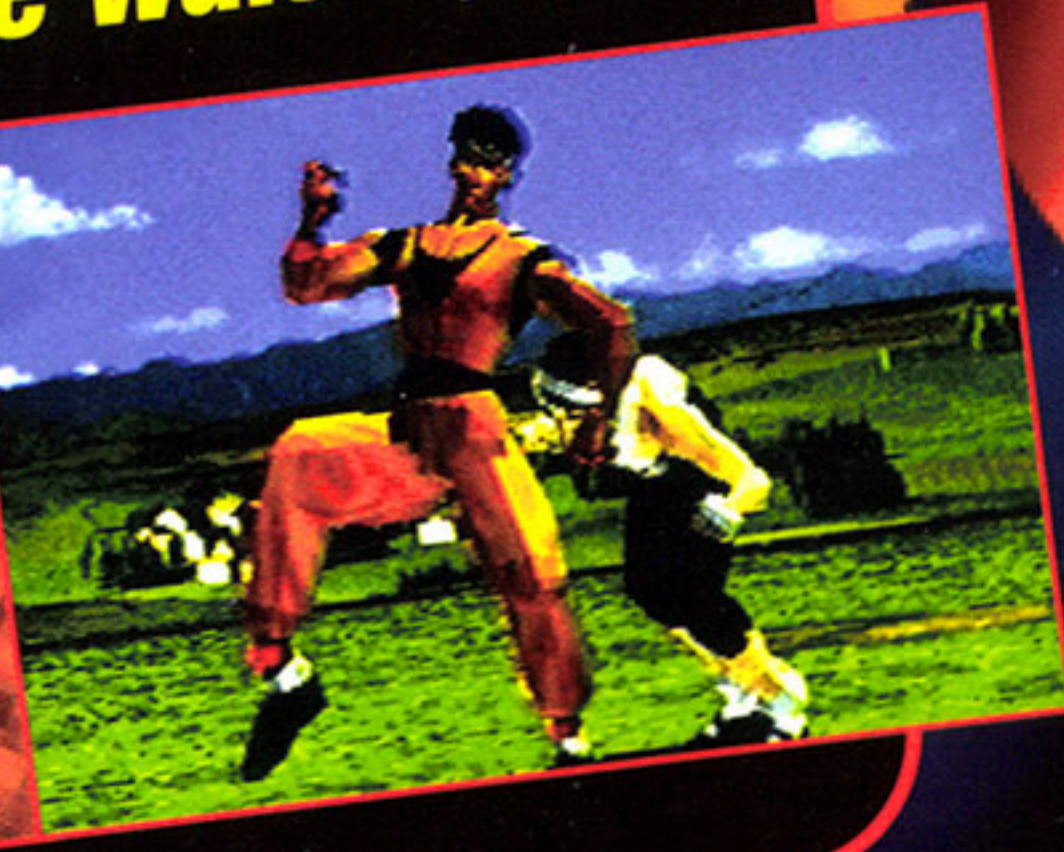
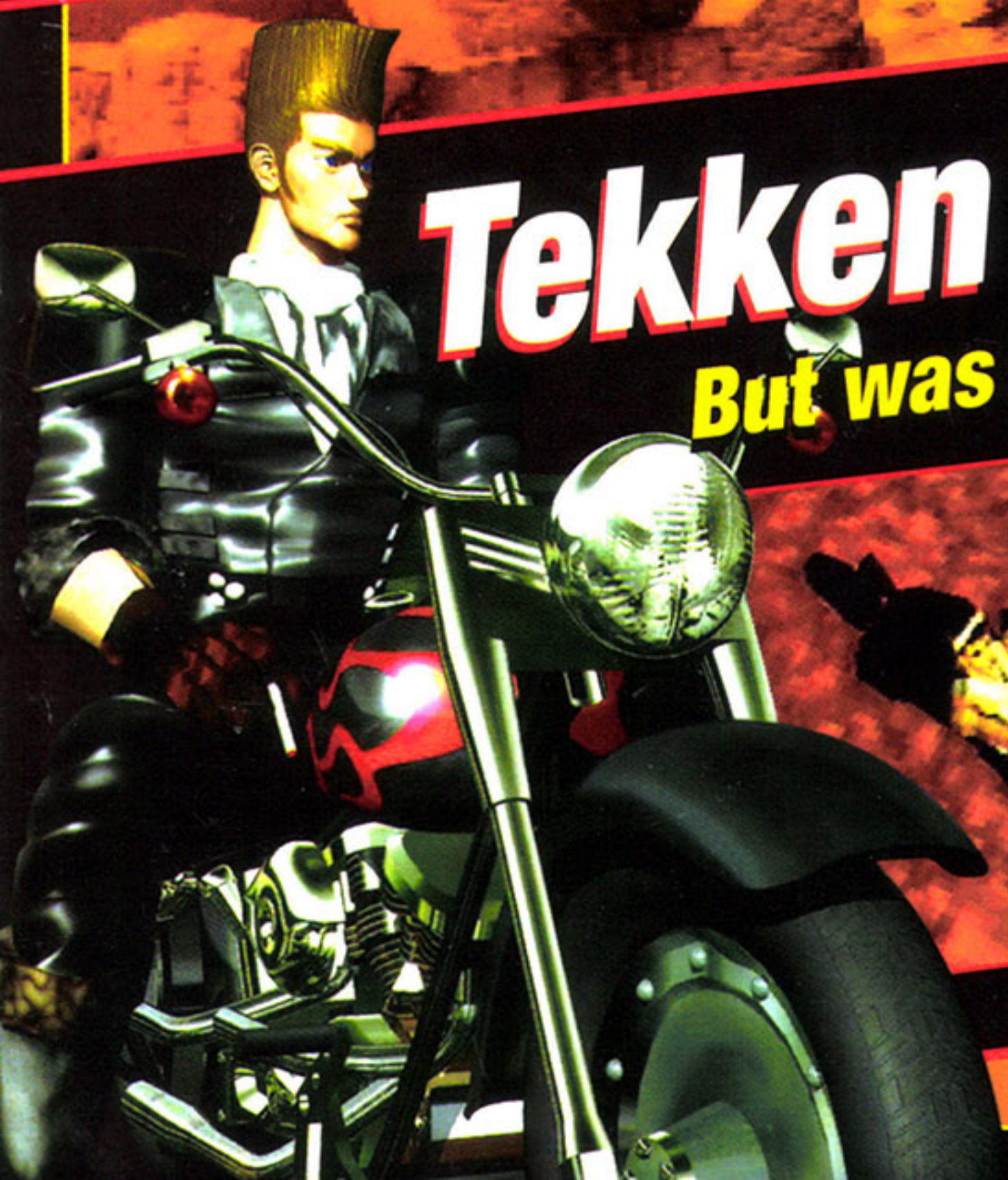
CRASH!!

We go straight to the designers for the real deal on PlayStation's new star! **Loads of exclusive info!**

Sonic X-Treme Blow-Out!
Tons of screens you won't see anywhere else!

Mortal Kombat Trilogy for N64 and PlayStation
The Best and Last Mortal Kombat?

Tekken 2 Is Here!
But was it worth the wait? pg. 68



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SEPTEMBER 1996 Vol. 9, No. 9



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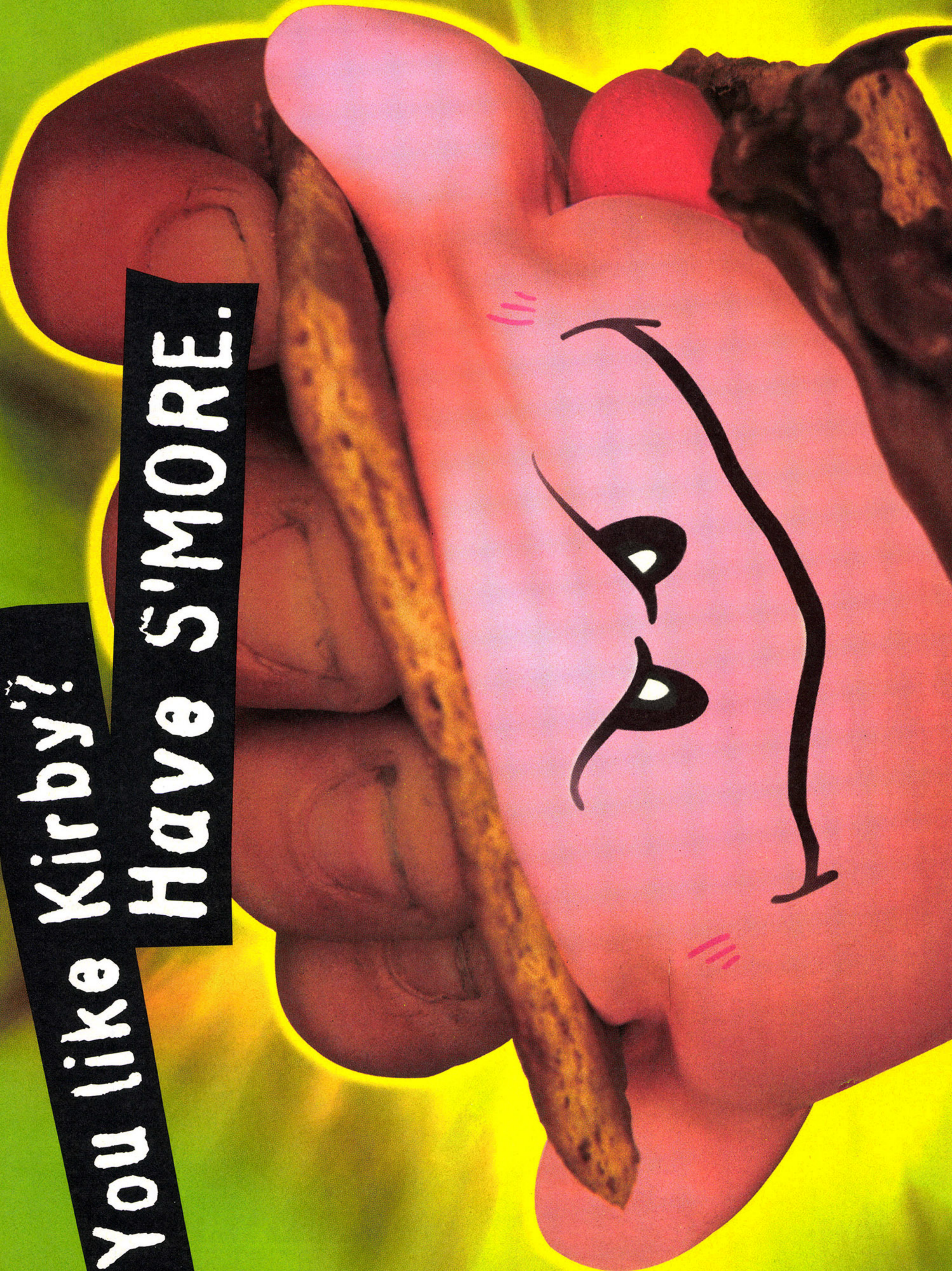


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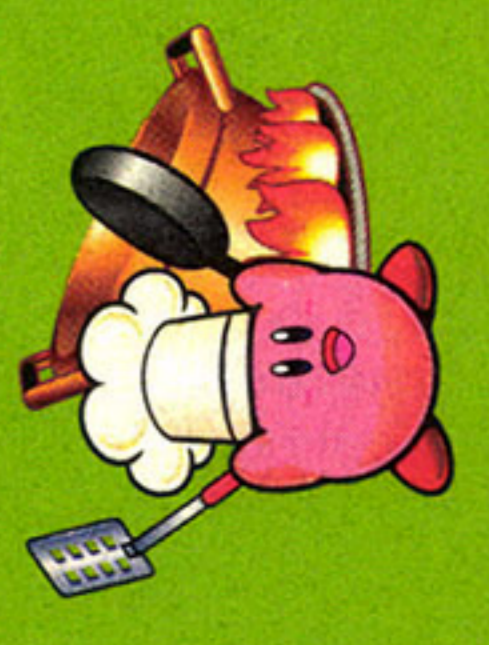
Kirby Super Star.^{TM*} Eight tasty games in one! And this time the softie has an edge: Now he not only eats his enemies, he can take their powers (23 to be exact).

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and use them as helpers. So prepare yourself. 'Cause this time, the marshmallow's doing the roasting.



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Swords, bombs, boomerangs, hammers. This is some serious marshmallow carnage!

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Well, this is it — the last 'old-style' issue of *GAME PLAYERS*. Next month we go *ULTRA*, and we're going to utterly destroy anything we've ever done before! But before we leave the past behind, I'd like to thank a few

key people, without whom we'd never have gotten this far: First, there's the *GP* team. After all, it's their broken backs that this whole thing's built on. I'd especially like to thank our art staff, who work way harder than they should have to and still turn out top-shelf work month after month. Secondly, I'd like to thank Gazuga. We've never had so much fun and laughed so hard. Thanks big fella, wherever you are. And last but certainly not least, you guys for taking the time out to hang with us.

See you next month in the brave new world!

Chris

MEET THE TEAM

Do you have any final thoughts for this last, funny 'Meet the Team' section?



Chris

Yes, I do! Let's set the record straight, OK? I do NOT have a Sonic or a Mario doll. Not one! However, I do have Sonic and Mario handpuppets and I put on plays with 'em!



Jeff

Contrary to popular belief, I don't drink fifty cups of coffee a day. I don't drink any! I actually eat the stuff raw! Why dilute it?



Mike

Well, since this is the last one, I guess I can let this out. I only cover sports games because no one's ever made a game about my favorite activity: ballet.



Patrick

OK, I gotta admit I was kinda lying about one thing. After work, I like to go home and throw two or three big, juicy steaks on the fire for a couple of minutes and grub out.



Chris C.

I really don't think that every thing in life is like *Doom*. Actually, everything in life is a lot like *Cosmic Race*! At least that would explain why a whole bunch of stuff really sucks...



Roger

I'm finishing up my doctorate on the quantum physics of the space-time continuum. I just need to add the part about the Monkey Men...



Bill

Uh... I don't drink, smoke or swear. Yeah... that's it. And I really like... uh... Country and Western music! Hoo boy! Gimme some of that... uh... knee-slappin' stuff every time... Hoedown... or something...

infotrack

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Where we ask you to imagine a whole bunch of teletype machines ticking away!

Infotrack 14

Actual events that may change your life... maybe!

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All the rumors you always wanted to believe!

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Dick Clark has absolutely nothing to do with these!



The PsychoPad helps you fight like a madman! It's on page 16!

reader's say

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Yeah, you can laugh now, but you'll be sorry when this is gone!

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Who needs a real life? None of OUR readers, obviously...

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Uh... there's been a slight drawback in our 'Win The Box' auction...

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Let's face it... We're never gonna see the end of this new stuff...

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Steamed, not boiled — and don't forget the soy sauce...



Fly the 3D skies with *Nights*! The dream begins on page 24.



Thunder Truck Rally is here and more like our commute than ever before! The action starts on page 28!

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We've got *Star Gladiator*, *Dream Team*, *Sonic X-Treme*, *Crash Bandicoot and Mortal Kombat Trilogy*, but we both know you don't deserve it!!!

GAME PLAYERS ONLINE

THE WEB SITE <http://www.gameplayers.com>

In a move guaranteed to drive Congressmen weeping into the streets and mothers everywhere crazy, *GAME PLAYERS* has gone online! Check out our web site, as well as our individual E-mail addresses over on the right!

CHRIS: Chris_Slate@qm.imagine-inc.com
BILL: Bill_Donohue@qm.imagine-inc.com
ROGER: Roger_Burchill@qm.imagine-inc.com
MIKE: Mike_Salmon@qm.imagine-inc.com
PATRICK: Patrick_Baggatta@qm.imagine-inc.com



Check out our final installment of *Sonic X Treme* on page 52!

52



You get all the mayhem you need with *Tekken 2*! It's on page 68!

68



Why play just one when you can play all three? *Mortal Kombat Trilogy* strikes on page 62!

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Where a whole bunch of guys you were warned about tell you about some things that Congress has warned you about! Scary, huh?

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Road Rash rocks on page 70!

Player 1 15 Pearl
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There's only one better way to beat these games and that's to bribe the guys who make 'em! We know, because we tried it...

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gp sports 80

Where we discuss the legal way to use a bat...

If we had any more sports coverage in here, the Olympics would be held in our parking lot! The games begin on page 80!

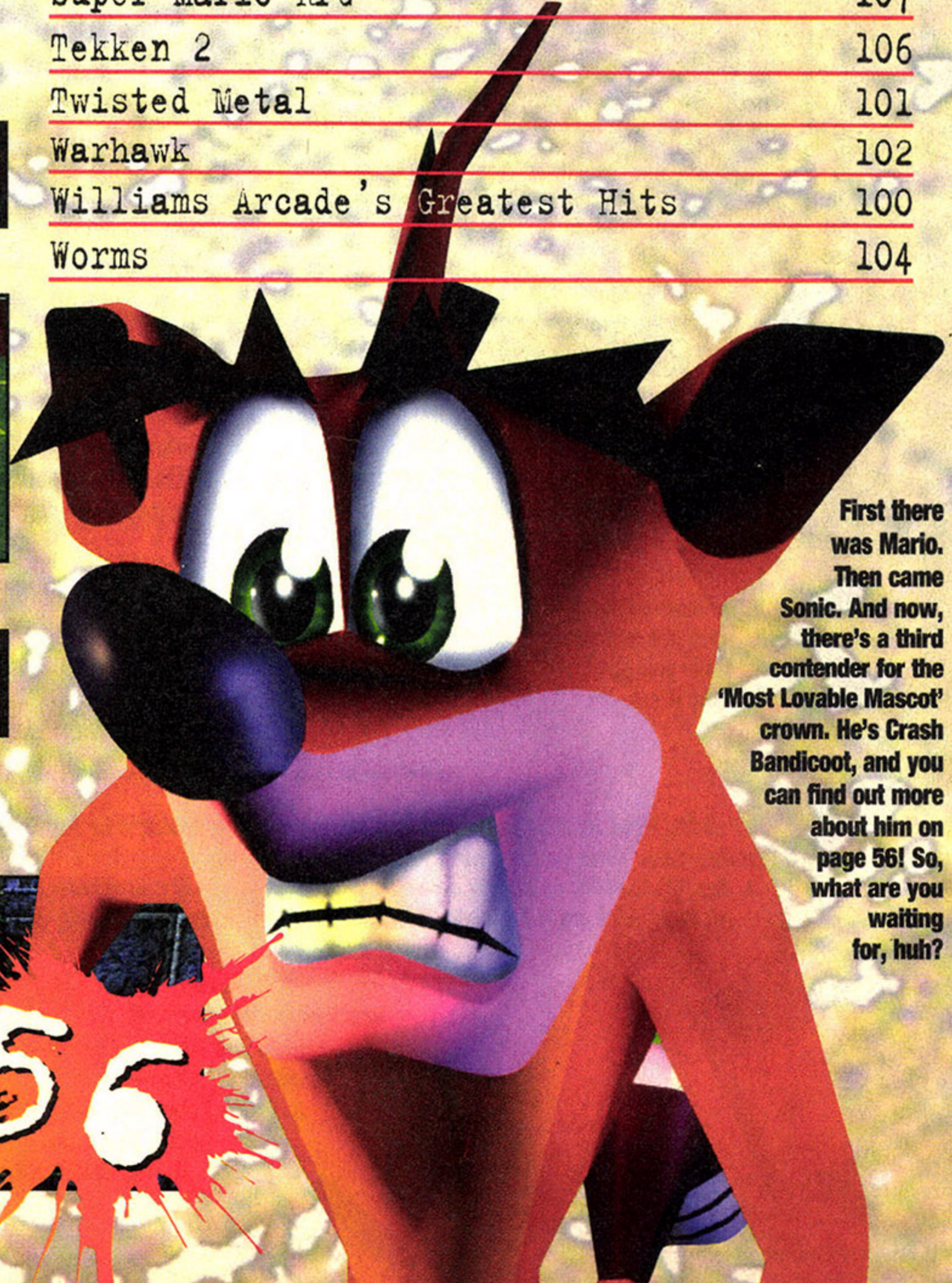


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There's a rumor out on the street that these issues are about to climb! Now's the time to expand your portfolio! Buy, buy, buy!!!



56



First there was Mario. Then came Sonic. And now, there's a third contender for the 'Most Lovable Mascot' crown. He's Crash Bandicoot, and you can find out more about him on page 56! So, what are you waiting for, huh?

Reader's NETWORK



This month, we've got dead snakes, the Dead Horse, rabid, crazed beavers, fire works, oatmeal, naked women (not really!!!) and Chris' vague attempts at ESP. Welcome to Readers' Network!



YEAH, HE'S NORMAL...

I have to tell someone this! I'm scared to death of the N64 controller! I swear it. Don't we all agree it looks a lot like a claw? I can just imagine it waiting for me to fall asleep at night, so it can team up with the beast in my closet to kill me!! It'll use its analog stick to drag itself across the room to my bed, its cord trailing behind like a tail. Then it'll climb onto my bed, and use its cord to disembowel me! I swear it! BEWARE the N64 controller! BEWARE!

Evan Shea
Scotch Plains, NJ

ROGER: You're right, Evan! I thought it was just my imagination playing tricks on me, but I've been noticing that every time I turn my back, the N64 controllers somehow seem to move closer! The other day I came in to work and found some reddish stains on the N64 controllers and no sign of Patrick! Oh sweet horror, they eat vegetarians! But seriously, Evan, N64 controllers are just another product of the Man, and the Man's more interested in eating another 70 bucks out of your pocket than eating your physical self, at least for now...

YOU ARE WHAT YOU EAT

Hi, I just got a copy of issue 83, the one with the *V.F. Kids* bit in it. I live in Japan and I just thought I'd let you know that *V.F. Kids* (or Big Head Virtua, as we call it) has been out and complete for about two months now. It's kinda hard to get used to. The reach is different and you tend to smack heads alot, but it's just as much fun as *VF2*, if not more so. I also have a couple of questions:

1. Is *Virtual ON: Cybertroopers* out in arcades in the states yet?
2. Is *Gundam* for Sony PlayStation in stores in the states yet?
3. Who put all this tapioca in my underwear?
4. Have you guys ever tried Habu-saki? Sucking on a dead snake has never been this much fun.

Terry 'lost in Tokyo' Lebermann
Yokusuka, Japan

PATRICK: First of all, glad to know we have some readers in the land of the *Rising Sun*. Now on to your questions:

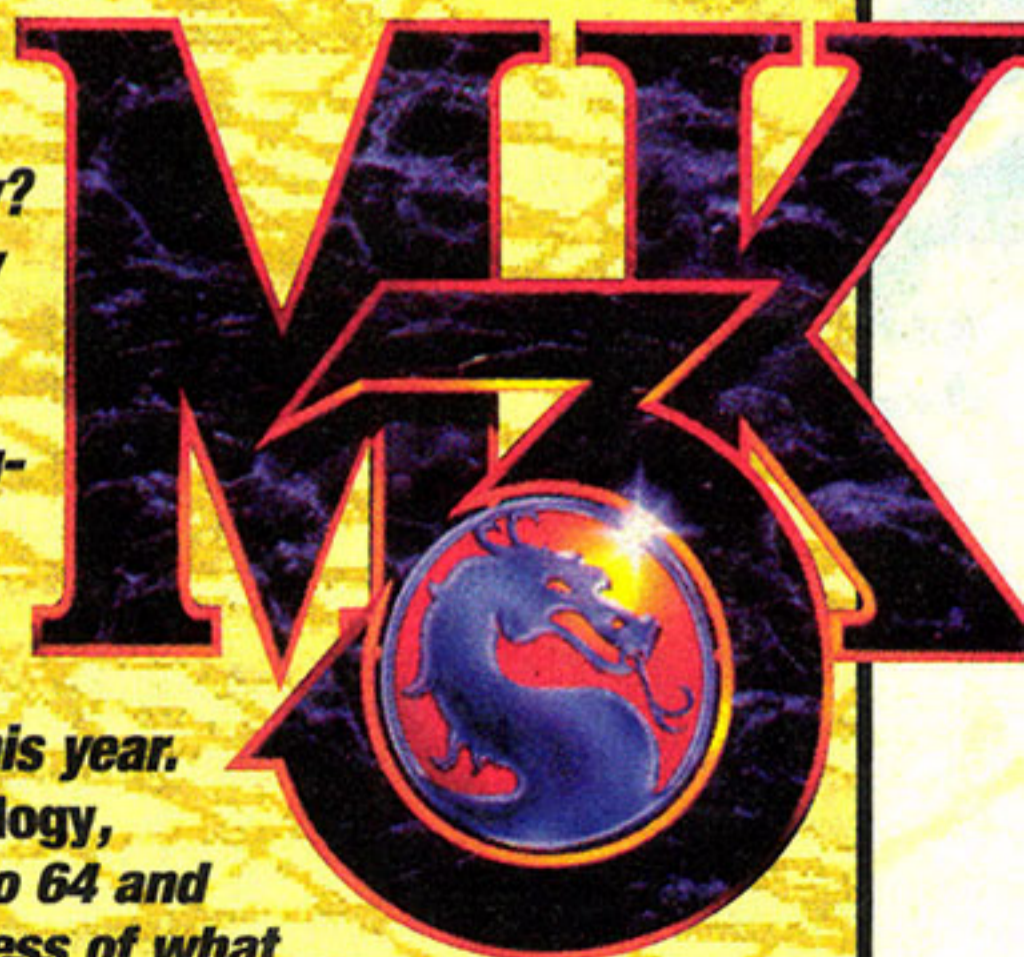
1. Yes, *Virtual On* is out in arcades here and while it's probably not doing as well here as it is there, it seems to have been fairly well received. I like it anyway.
2. No, *Gundam* is not out for PlayStation, and I doubt it ever will. The truth is, most people in the States don't know what *Gundam* is all about.
3. I did. I thought you said you liked Tapioca.
4. No, that's illegal here.

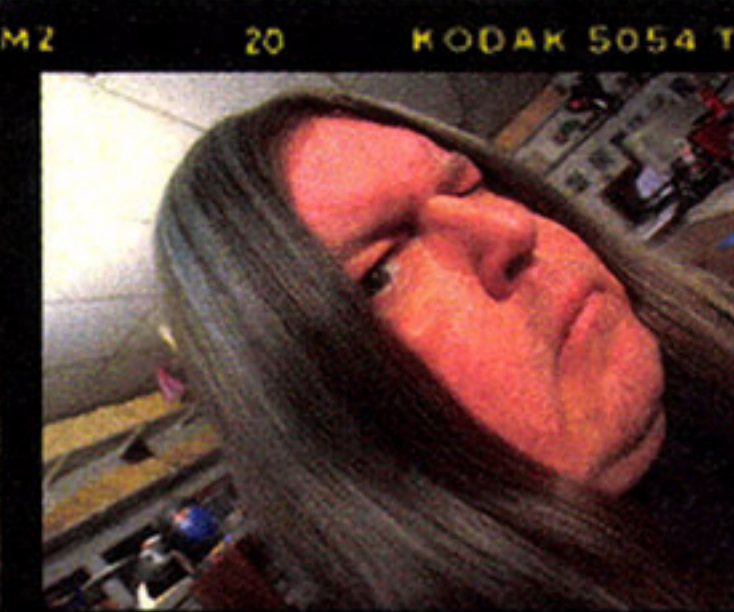
A COOL YULE

In the 84th issue, you guys said that by Xmas a new Playstation version of *UMK3* should surface. Well, I heard it will be called *Mortal Kombat Trilogy* and that it will consist of new characters and old and new backgrounds similar to the N64's *MK3+*. Is this true?

Bill Thomas
San Diego, CA

ROGER: What can we say? Things change like crazy in this biz. PlayStation got the jump on the MK series by snagging exclusive rights to *MK3* last year. Sega countered by snagging the exclusive rights to *UMK3* earlier this year. As for *Mortal Kombat Trilogy*, expect it for the Nintendo 64 and the PlayStation. Regardless of what system you own, there appears to be no need to worry since Williams seems intent on having a MK game available on every system.





PAPER CHASE

I have but one question for you!!! Don't take offense at this, but why don't you guys up the quality of the paper used your awesome mag? I would easily pay the extra dollar for such an awesome mag upgrading its picture quality. Please take my letter into consideration, thanks...

Dave Wilcox
Westport, CT

CHRIS: Hmm... better paper... sounds like a good idea to us, Dave! Check back next month for all sorts of cool surprises!

I'M CRAZY?

Bill, you are one crazy mojo. I like fireworks and oatmeal. Send me money.

Dean 'Richard Head' Troxell
Cincinnati, OH

BILL: Yo Dean, or is that Richard? You are one crazy mojo as well, if you think I'm gonna send you money just because you like fireworks and oatmeal. Hey, I like fireworks and nobody sends me money! Of course, that might be because I think oatmeal really sucks... unless you, like, wear it... or, uh... or something...

REALLY SANE

In your Previews and Japanese Previews section, I saw some very interesting games. *Grand Theft Auto* and *Wild, Pure, Simple* kind of reminded me of those games in Game Ideas. Maybe those readers who send in those ideas could get those people at BMG Interactive or Artolink to take a look at their wild, pure, and simple ideas. P.S. What the HELL were those two bears doing on page 49 of your *Tekken 2* Feature?

Matt Edwards,
Shipman, IL

ROGER: Well, it's about time game companies started paying attention to the delusional fantasies of our readers. Man, you thought *Resident Evil* was scary! And coming soon, you will start seeing some of the game ideas that get tossed around by the *GAME PLAYERS* staff. Be scared, be VERY scared! As for the bears, they were just having a daily affirmation. Of course, I don't know if they had to pay \$50 for their daily affirmation like I have to!

THE REAL DEAL

I had this dream where I was at my house reading *GAME PLAYERS* and Bill Bear popped out and chased me, like he or it was hungry. So I pulled a BFG out of my pocket and shot Bill Bear. The mask came off and I saw the real Bill's face and AAAHHHAAAAHHH...

Jim 'I'm not stupid' Campbell
Fairview Park, OH

BILL: Well, Jim, some people say that dreams are the mirror of the soul. Other people say that dreams of violence imply some kind of mental imbalance. And me? Well, shucks, Jim, I just think it's *Campbell season*. NOT DUCK SEASON, CAMPBELL SEASON. You say you live in Ohio?



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NEXT
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ONLINE

RUN FOR THE BORDER

You guys are some are a bunch of weirdos, especially Bill. Bill, some day, within the next couple months, I'm gonna come over there and hypnotize you, so the only games you play are RPGs and fighting games. I'll be in and out of your house like a burrito passing through the digestive system. So be very afraid and I hope you like Mexican food.

Dave 'Demented' D'mello
Canton, MI

BILL: Well, Dave, it could be a lot worse. You could be in and out of my house like one of those nutrition bar things. I'd have to start charging you rent! Bring on the salsa!

A TRUE FRIEND

Dear Chris, this is Brad. I know you can't hear me, but somehow, give me a sign.

Brad
Parts Unknown

CHRIS: How's that, Brad?

BILL: And people say I've got weird fans...

DIRTY PICTURES

I'm very Mad at you guys. Editor CHRIS SLATE!!!! Why did you allow that ad (the Sega Saturn Naked Girl ad) to be in this magazine? I know that a lot of people will send you letters on this, so make a section in the Reader's Network like you did on the 'Michael Pines' issue. I've known your mag for a long time, and I remember all the letters that wanted nudity and all responses from you guys saying NO!!!!!!!!!! Of course, it's not all your fault. Sega was the one who got the idea. I really like your mag and I still will.

Christopher Dela Cruz
Old Bridge, NJ

CHRIS: Aw, come on, Christopher. You can see more skin in a Sears catalogue. The truth is, I have nothing to do with what ads make it in the magazine, but I'd hardly refer to that

girl as 'nude' since she was wearing all those screen shots.

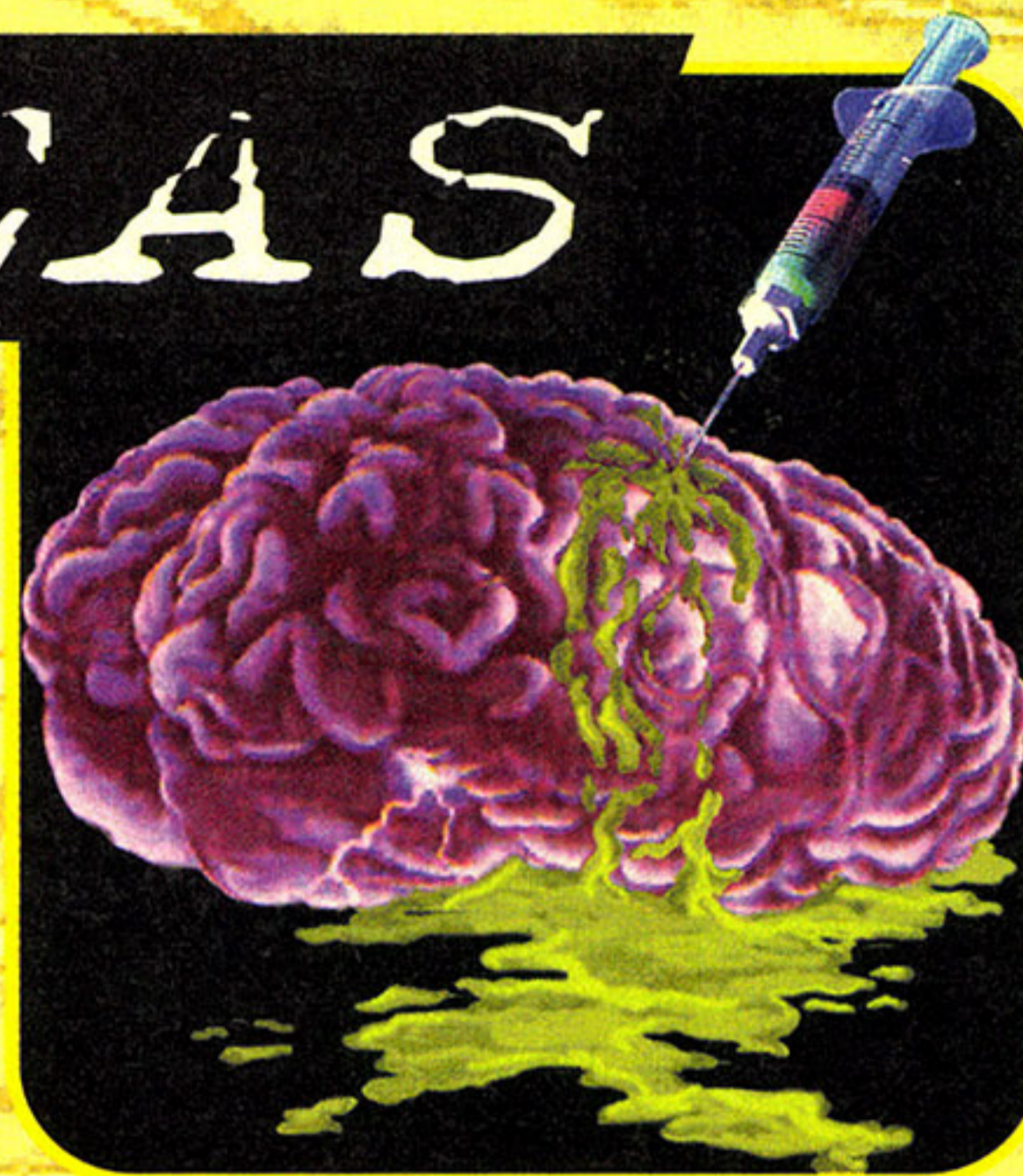
GAME IDEAS

PEACE ON YA!

My game is called *May 4th, 1970*. You get to protest the Viet Nam war on the commons at Kent State. Then, the National Guard shoots you and you die. Oh, well. Peace.

Katie Bubenik,
Worthington, OH

BILL: Gosh, Katie, it's not often that we get such an historically-inspired, thought-provoking game idea like this one! So do you wear a lot of tie dye clothes or did you just eat too much Granola this morning? Hey ho, way to go, Ohio!



NO MAIM NO GAIN

My game is called *High Velocity*. You play an unemployed mime named Cletus, who travels around the United States on a turbo goat. Your goal is to run into as many pedestrians as is humanly possible. For every pedestrian you hit, you get five pesos and the goat yells 'BOOYAH!'

John Hawthorne-Brown
Denver, CO

BILL: You know, John, we always look forward to just about any game idea that involves a mime. There's just something intrinsically hilarious about those little guys in the berets that makes you wanna maim 'em. And that's why you didn't win, John. No mime maiming. It's as simple as that. You did, however, get a few bonus points for the talking goat, even if his vocabulary was limited to the level of a Quantico boot camp drill instructor.

PLAIN AND SIMPLE

The slaps fly fast and furious in *Sissy Fighter*, the mother of all sissy fights! Nerds, geeks, dweebs and wimps all come together in this competition to determine who will be king of the sissies! In *Sissy Fighter*, there is only one rule: no crying before the other guy hits you.

Jimmy Mills,
Palm Desert, CA

BILL: Wow! Now here's an idea that really rocks! Jimmy, you darn near won the Big One, buddy, except for one small detail! What were all those small water marks scattered all over your letter? If my guess is right, those were... TEARS! Ya big sissy, you knew you wouldn't win, so you started crying, didn't you? What a girly boy! Ha, ha, ha! Run home to mommy, ya little baby! You didn't win, you didn't win, nyah, nyah, nyah! You didn't win!

THAT'S ALL, FOLKS!

This month's Mystery Prize goes to **Marcus Ranucci**, of Oak Park, IL, who is soon to take up residence in The Box. Please don't send anymore Game Ideas. We're not going to run this particular section in *Ultra GAME PLAYERS*. Thanks for all the great laughs!

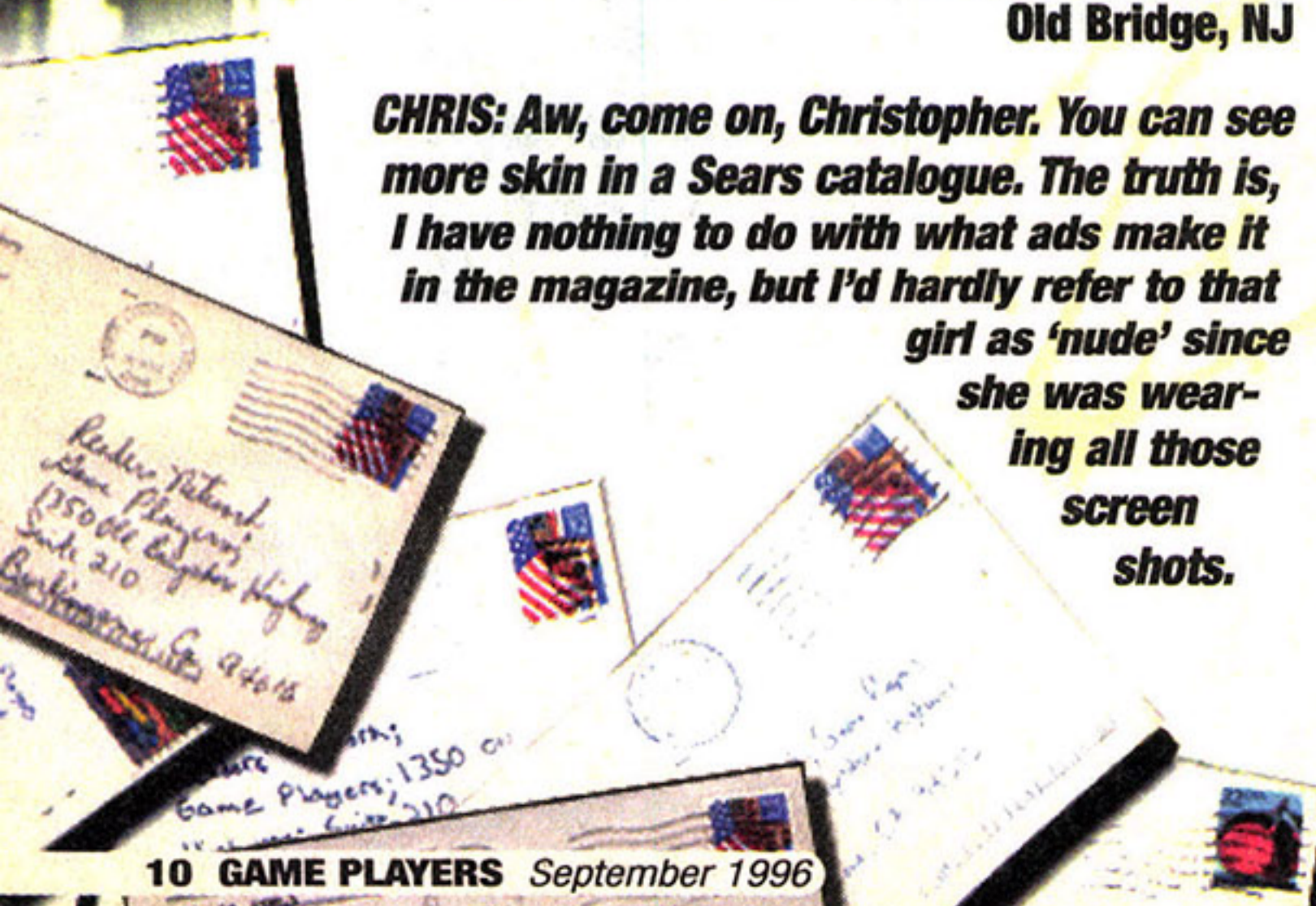
WINNER

Enjoy The Ride!

The name of my game is *Hired Prey*. The point of the game is to get some dumb-looking people and tell them that they've won a wonderful free weekend at a forest resort. When they show up, you hunt them for sport. So, Bill, guess what? You've won a wonderful free weekend at our beautiful resort. You'll be able to relax and just enjoy the sights. Oh yeah, don't forget to bring your running shoes!

Marcus Ranucci,
Oak Park, IL

BILL: Alright! Thanks a lot, Marcus! Since you're the Big Winner, we're not only gonna send you a Mystery Prize, but we're also gonna throw in a tour of the GAME PLAYERS office! Imagine the thrill of meeting me in person! Gasp in awe as I show you my very own SkullBat! You'll also meet all the new staffers as you sit in the dark, scary Box for a couple of months, or longer!!! So... when can we expect you, Marcus? Heh, heh, heh...



WATTA SPORT!

I'm a 14 year-old male basketball and baseball freak and I own a Saturn. What's up with the basketball games for the Saturn? There's only *NBA Jam T.E.*, and *College Slam*, which are boring. Where is *NBA Live '96*? Where's *NBA in the Zone*? And where is *NBA Action*?

1. Is *NBA Live '96* coming out for the Saturn? If so, when?
2. When will *NBA in the Zone* be released for the Saturn? Will it be just like or any better than the Playstation version?
3. When will *NBA Action* be released for the Saturn?
4. Is it true that Sega is make a sequel to *World Series Baseball*? If so, do you have any idea when it'll be released for the Saturn?

Allen Walker
Nashville, TN

MIKE: 1. As of right now, EA has no plans for an *NBA Live '96* for the Saturn. However, if Saturn sales pick up soon, expect EA to quickly put it out.

2. *NBA In The Zone* is not going to be on the Saturn, but there is still hope that *NBA In The Zone '97* will appear on the Saturn.

3. *NBA Action* has been released. I reviewed it last issue. It isn't the best basketball game, but is the only NBA licensed game on the Saturn.

4. Yes, Sega is making *World Series Baseball '97* for the Saturn and it should be out real soon, if it isn't already out. I'm hoping to review that game in the next sports section, so stay tuned.



SAY WHAT???

Hey Bill, gimme back my socks!

Count Spankula
Prospect, N.S. Canada

BILL: Look, Spanky, for the last time, I don't have 'em! I did hear a news story about rabid, crazed beavers building dams out of underwear up there in Canada. Why don't you check with them? Maybe they've got 'em, if the smell hasn't killed 'em yet...

Connections

I'm 13. I'd like to have a penpal of any age, boy or girl. I have a Genesis and Gameboy, but it doesn't matter what system you have.

Marina Zogalis
4678 Neo
Pierrefonds, Quebec
H9H 2S2 Canada

I am a 37 year old male. I have a Super NES. I would like to swap codes or strategies.

Kevin Billerbeck
502 Lee St.
Marshalltown, IA
50158

I'm a 13 year old boy looking for someone 12 or 13 to talk about Sega dna exchange tips with. I would prefer a girl but a guy is okay.

Darien Fernandez
Box 4152 NDCBU
La Loma Plaza
Taos, NM 87571

I'm 14 and I own a SNES, NES, Genesis, Sega CD, and Game Gear. I would like a boy to share tips. I have lots of game magazines so I can tell lots of codes and stuff.

Chris McDonald
1105 S. Delaware
Irving, TX 75060

I'm a 12 year old boy who has a Sega. I have codes for lots of games. I will respond to all.

Michael Torbert
3916 Plum Lane
Chesapeake, VA 23321

I'm 14 and I like movies and everything Sega makes. Want someone to write to about anything and everything. I'd prefer a girl between 12-16, but a guy would work OK.

Michael Hartke
9574 Cooper Ln.
Cincinnati, OH 45242

I'm a 14 year old boy who is looking for a boy or girl between 13-17 to talk about Super NES and GameBoy games.

Matthew Grenier
13 Morningside Dr.
Dover, NH 03820

B.K. here. I drastically need codes. Any code. Any game. Any system. I'm 15.

B.K. Gold
825 Partridge Rd.
Lanesboro, MA 01237

My name is Ninja-X, and my bro's name is Kobra. We're both in our 20's and would like to interact with anyone and everyone about all games and systems.

#60-795, 122nd St.
Surrey, B.C. V3W 4T4
Canada

I'm 12 and I have a Super NES and NES. I'd like a penpal who likes *MKII* and is 11 or older. I'd prefer a girl but boys are okay too.

Brian Banes
3443 Mennifield Ct.
Cincinnati, OH 45239

I'm a 13 year old boy looking for a girl, around my age, to talk to. I own a Sega Genesis and a Game Gear.

Patrick Combs
7529 Appalachian Tr.
Harrisburg, PA 17112

I'm a 15 year old male interested in the new stuff. I own a 32X and Sega CD.

Vincent Chiera
5738 Buchanan St.
Hollywood, FL 33021

I'm 13. I love most RPG's. I have Super NES and Genesis. Girl or guy, 13 or older.

Daryl Huynh
22 Valley St.
Everett, MA 02149

DON'T WORRY,
WE WON'T

I've noticed that Sega commercials constantly degrade Nintendo. I don't exactly agree with that completely crazed psycho who put the letter out in March 1995, but I think that Sega should not be bad-mouthing Nintendo, even though Nintendo's a little slow in releasing things. I'm a die-hard Nintendo freak and I would like you to send your opinions to: (censored out). PS. Don't make fun of my name. I have your address.

Vicky Anastassiou
Vancouver, BC

CHRIS: I agree with you, Vicky. When Sega first started to take shots at Nintendo, it was kind of funny and showed a lot of spunk. But now they've taken it a little too far, appearing instead to be a whining, bad-tempered child. At the *E3* show last May, Sega's big line was 'Mario who?' — come on. Come September 30th, they'd better know damn well who Mario is, 'cuz he's got the best game I've ever seen.
BILL: Why would I make fun of your name? Just because it's a little bit...
CHRIS: Shut up, Bill.

GET OFF
YOUR @\$\$!

Write to *Game Players* at the following addresses:
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For general Network letters, write to:
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<http://www.gameplayers.com>

At this time, Game Ideas, Reader Art, and Connections are being discontinued.

We're sorry, but Connections is being discontinued.

Reader Art



He may not know art, but *Bill Donohue* knows, uh... something... we think...

Marcus Dillard, Hollywood, FL



⊕ Forewarned is forearmed!

Ronan Leyesa, Bloomingdale, IL

Never underestimate the power of chili! ⊕



Andy Owens, Grundy, VA

What it's really like to work here... ⊕



⊕ It was cheaper to make his own hand puppets!

Sinclair Schuller, Gilboa, NY

HE LIKES US...



I have a few things that I would like to know:
1. How come cartridges can't handle FMV? Is it because it uses up too much memory or space or something?
2. Is *Resident Evil* going to be for a PC?
3. In the June issue, Ashley 'Sensational Gravity Girl' Harter sent in a letter. She said, 'Now There's A Frood Who Really Knows Where His Towel Is.' What the hell is that supposed to mean? Also, Mike and Roger suck. Bill And Chris should beat the crap out of Mike and Roger and slap their asses into The Box.

**Paul Pollack
Coconut Creek, FL**

MIKE: 1. Each Meg of memory that is added to a cart costs the developer more money. FMV eats up Megs and frankly, it just isn't worth it, since it adds zero to the gameplay.
 2. Doesn't look like it, but it's always possible with some of the new 3D cards for the PC.
 3. The reference is to a Douglas Adams novel *Hitchhikers Guide To The Galaxy*. It basically means you know what's up. I hope your miserable uneducated brain can comprehend the translation I provided for you. Perhaps reading a book might inspire you to start contemplating things greater than *The Box* and some brawling Editors.

S.O.S.

I'm writing this letter to praise the powers that be at Sony. Recently, I had major technical problems with my PlayStation. After an unusual amount of B.S., outright lies, and red tape, two individuals at Sony in San Mateo came to my rescue. They listened to me and helped get my PlayStation fixed. Within two weeks, I had sent my PlayStation in to the service center, had it fixed, and had it back in my game-addicted hands. So, I'd like to thank Sean O'Connor, who is a supervisor at SCEA, and a customer rep, named Maurice. (I never got his last name.) They really did their best to help me out, and more importantly, they didn't lie to me, as a few others did. So, I'd like to say hats off to Sony for having the good judgement to hire these two guys, and I just wish all of their employees were as honest. Thanks Sean and Maurice!!!!!!

**Ken Wilson
Seaford, DE**



PATRICK: Hear, hear! Thanks for writing to us about these two fine fellows. It's always nice to hear about someone doing their job in such a spirited manner. Now, if we could just get some folks like them at the DMV.

SO SMART

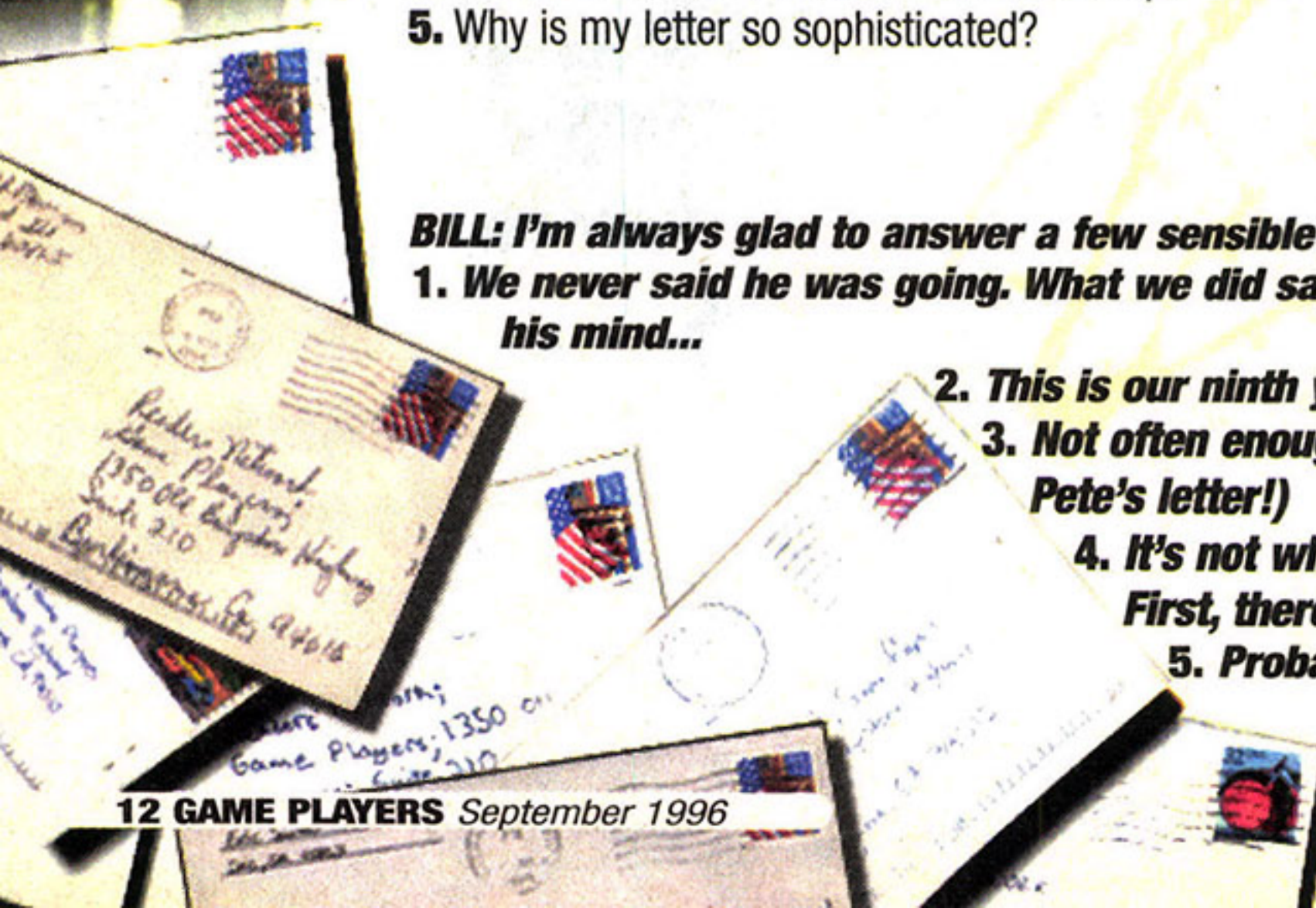
Hey **GAME PLAYERS**, I've got some questions:

1. When is Chris leaving the staff?
2. How long has **GAME PLAYERS** been around?
3. When does Bill get a raise?
4. Where does the next dead horse show up?
5. Why is my letter so sophisticated?

**Pete Miszewski
miszewski@execpc.com**

BILL: I'm always glad to answer a few sensible questions from a normal fan:

1. We never said he was going. What we did say was that he was going out of his mind...
2. This is our ninth year, but sometimes it feels like 900.
3. Not often enough... (and no, I didn't add this part to Pete's letter!)
4. It's not where he shows up, it's how he shows up. First, there's this smell...
5. Probably because I fixed all your spelling, grammar, and punctuation mistakes before I printed it!



THEME SONG

I've been holding on to my money and now have enough to give to Bill. There's just one problem. I can't fit all the damn nickles in the envelope. Maybe I'll just send a few cases of beer.

Nickle Man
Stevensville, MD

BILL: I think you've got the wrong idea here, Nick. What I'm looking for is \$500 in small, unmarked BILLS. It's kind of a theme thing, you see. Bills for Bill. If I was looking for nickles, I'd have to change my name to something stupid, like, uh... Nickle Man... or something. You can send the beer, but don't forget the money, OK?

MR.

THREE TO ONE

Why did *D* take up three discs while *Resident Evil* only took up one? I thought the graphics and control in *Resident Evil* were better than *D*, plus the game was longer and the story was better. P.S. Is Capcom going to make a sequel to *Resident Evil*?

Rob Britton
Stevensville, Maryland

CHRIS: The reason that *D* took up so much space is simple — it had loads and loads of FMV, which is notorious for eating up disc space. Will there be a *Resident Evil 2*? You betcha. Capcom is hard at work on it right now, and it may even be out in Japan before the year's end.



dangerously concealed
in shrouds of darkness,

evil awaits you

... and you're all alone
alone alone

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INFO TRAK

We got the lowdown on what everybody in the videogame biz is up to! Don't believe us? Well, just take a gander at this here News section, pardner!

The Cat Has **NINE** LIVES

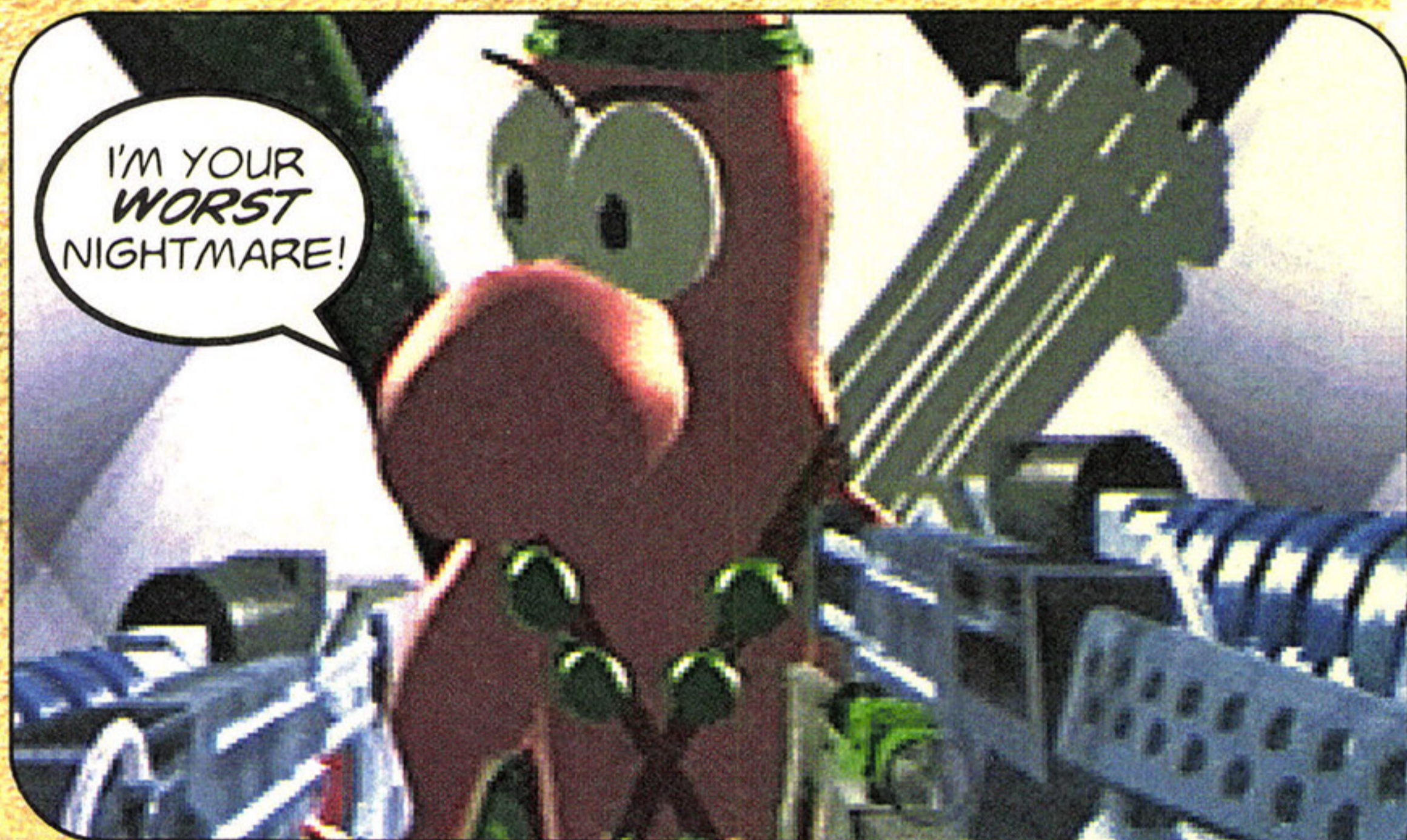


Even though Atari's offerings have dwindled, third-parties still have a few titles left

New reports from third-party Jaguar developers have been springing up. The latest news is that the smash hit *Worms*, from Ocean, will be making an appearance shortly on the Jag. As a side note on this story, Ocean offered *Worms* to Atari over nineteen months ago as the first console version of this best selling game. Atari passed on the title as they weren't sure if it would sell. It really makes you wonder, huh?

Also recently announced for release is *BattleSphere* from 4Play. The outstanding space combat title, which has been in development for over two years, is in the last phases of development. 4Play, who will be publishing the title themselves, is hoping to have the title on store shelves by September.

There has also been talk of Telegames considering publishing additional finished titles that Atari has turned down the opportunity to publish. The first of these titles will be *Towers 2*, a real-time RPG in the tradition of the *Ultima Underworld* series

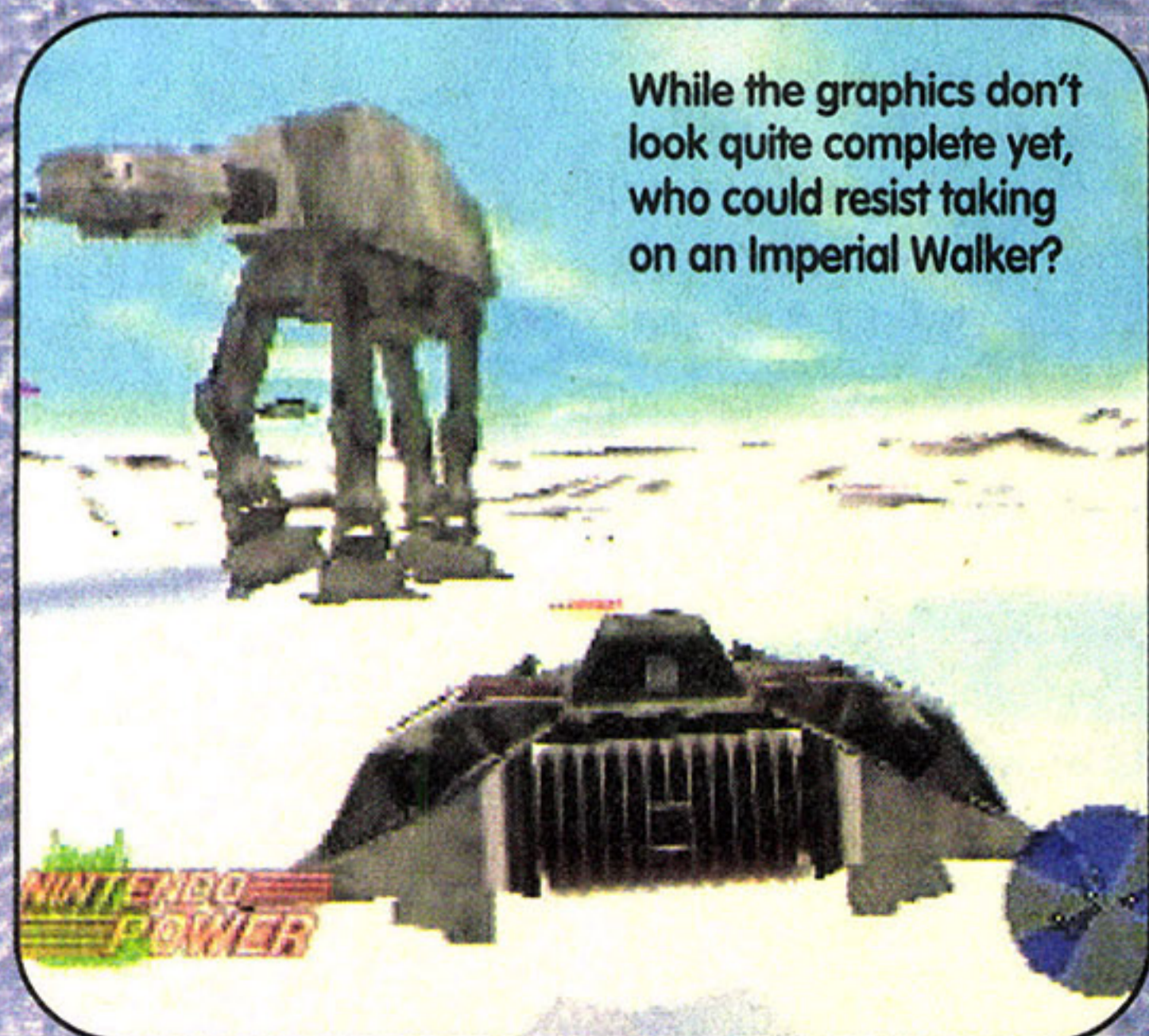


Shadows From Nintendo Delayed Until December

Slow development pace is cited

Officials at Nintendo have commented that development has not progressed at the pace they had hoped for and, as a result, *Shadows of the Empire* will not be

ready for the US launch as originally hoped. LucasArts is doing the development of *Shadows of the Empire* while Nintendo themselves is publishing the title.



While the graphics don't look quite complete yet, who could resist taking on an Imperial Walker?

Doing Things 'Buy' The Numbers



Sales are up for both Sony and Sega

Both Sega and Sony are reporting massive increases in sales at their new \$199 price point. Sony and Sega reps have both reported that the sales of both PlayStation and Saturn have jumped dramatically since the drop in price to \$199. Sony is claiming increases of two and a half to three times its pre-E³ sales numbers, and

Sega has claimed two and a half to three and a half times its pre-E³ sales numbers.

Of the retailers we spoke to, the sales rates of both Sony and Sega were virtually identical at this point in time. It is obvious that both Sony and Sega are hoping to get thousands of more machines in US homes before the launch of the Nintendo 64 this September.

Just Mad About Nintendo 64

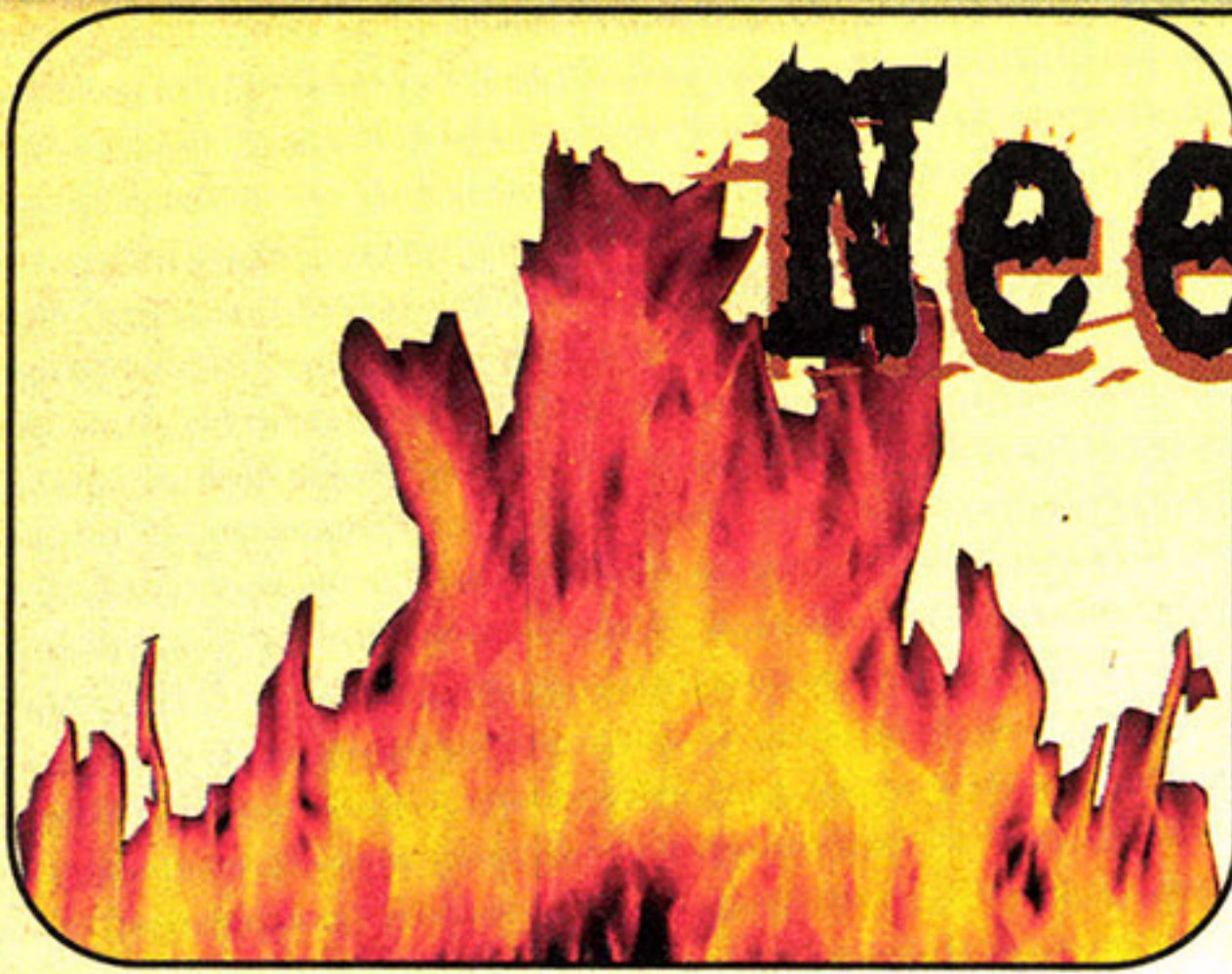
Mad Catz introduces its Nintendo 64 Product Line up

Mad Catz, which has designed controllers for the Super NES, Genesis and PlayStation in the past, has now made moves to support the Nintendo 64. The two main items for the Nintendo 64 will be the 'Advanced Controller for Nintendo 64' and the 'Mad Catz Analog Steering Wheel for Nintendo 64'.

The Advanced Controller features a turbo button, Mad Catz's patented floating directional pad and a three pronged design similar to the original N64 controller. The Analog Steering wheel controller is identical to their PlayStation steering wheel, which features an analog wheel with 270 degree rotation, two analog foot pedals, eight digital buttons and two-way stick shift.

In addition to these two controllers, Mad Catz will offer other Nintendo 64 accessories such as: RF converter, AV cables, 256K memory carts, a flight stick and controller extension cables.





Need More FIREPOWER?

PsychoPad programmable joysticks make victory certain

While programmable pads have been around for a number of years, few are as flexible and powerful as the PsychoPad Joystick. If you're having a hard time hitting Akira's 'spod' triple strike combo, simply program the twelve move combo into one of the



PsychoPad's twelve programmable buttons and execute it at the push of a button. Is it fair? Well... not really, but then again, it is nice to use to get past that one character in a fighting game (or any game for that matter) that gives you the most trouble.

The joystick itself is of solid construction, and the buttons can take some punishment as well. While all of this is well and good, probably the best feature of the PsychoPad is that the same stick works on Sega Saturn, Sony PlayStation and Super Nintendo. This is all accomplished by means of three different cords that plug into the pad itself: one for each system. In this way, you can purchase one joystick, and use it on most of the systems you own.

Is This For REAL?

Matsushita Announces New M2 Specs

The M2 has been shrouded in mystery almost since its announcement a year and a half ago. Now Mr. Masao Itoh of Matsushita subsidiary, Panasonic Wondertainment, has indicated M2 will contain not one, but two Power PC 602 chips running at 66 Mhz, 8 MB of RAM and two expansion slots. The first slot will be for a memory card, while the second is a stock PCMCIA slot for use with modems, sound input devices or many other possible uses. Matsushita is still claiming an under \$300 price point.

All of these additions are in the hopes of being able to generate one million polygons per second, however, as yet there have been no real indications of how close Matsushita is to that goal.

Without a doubt, Matsushita appears to be trying to create a new high end console market. Even conservative estimates place the machine at a \$500 price point, which no machine, regardless of manufacturer, has achieved widespread success with in the US market. It should also be noted that a company of Matsushita's financial power has never been a player in this market.

KISS AND MAKE UP

Nintendo and Square have re-established discussions

Sources at Square LA have revealed that high ranking executives from Nintendo have been to the offices recently to reestablish the possibilities of Square developing for the Nintendo 64 once again. While Square has made no official comments on the visits, after Nintendo's impressive showing at E³, Square will most likely begin work on some Nintendo 64 projects once again.

X Marks The Spot

X-Band and PC to play together?

Shortly after announcing plans for their Japanese Saturn network, X-Band seals a deal with Sega of America.

Catapult Entertainment, which has created and maintained the X-Band network for 16-bit consoles for many years, have finally made a move to the next generation of consoles. The US Saturn X-Band network will provide Saturn owners with the capability to play games with other Saturn owners around the country and is slated to begin operation by Christmas of this year.

In addition to playing other Saturn owners, the X-Band network will allow Saturn owners to play against PC owners in certain titles that are written to take advantage of the forthcoming X-Band PC network. For example, Catapult is currently in discussions with Westwood Studios regarding the possibility of

including the necessary code to allow the forthcoming Saturn version of *Command and Conquer* to play with PCs on the X-Band PC network.

Such developments could allow for more than two machine networking (a la Saturn Link Cable) for many titles. The X-Band network will require the forthcoming Saturn NetLink Peripheral which was developed by Sega and Catapult.

This is XBAND!

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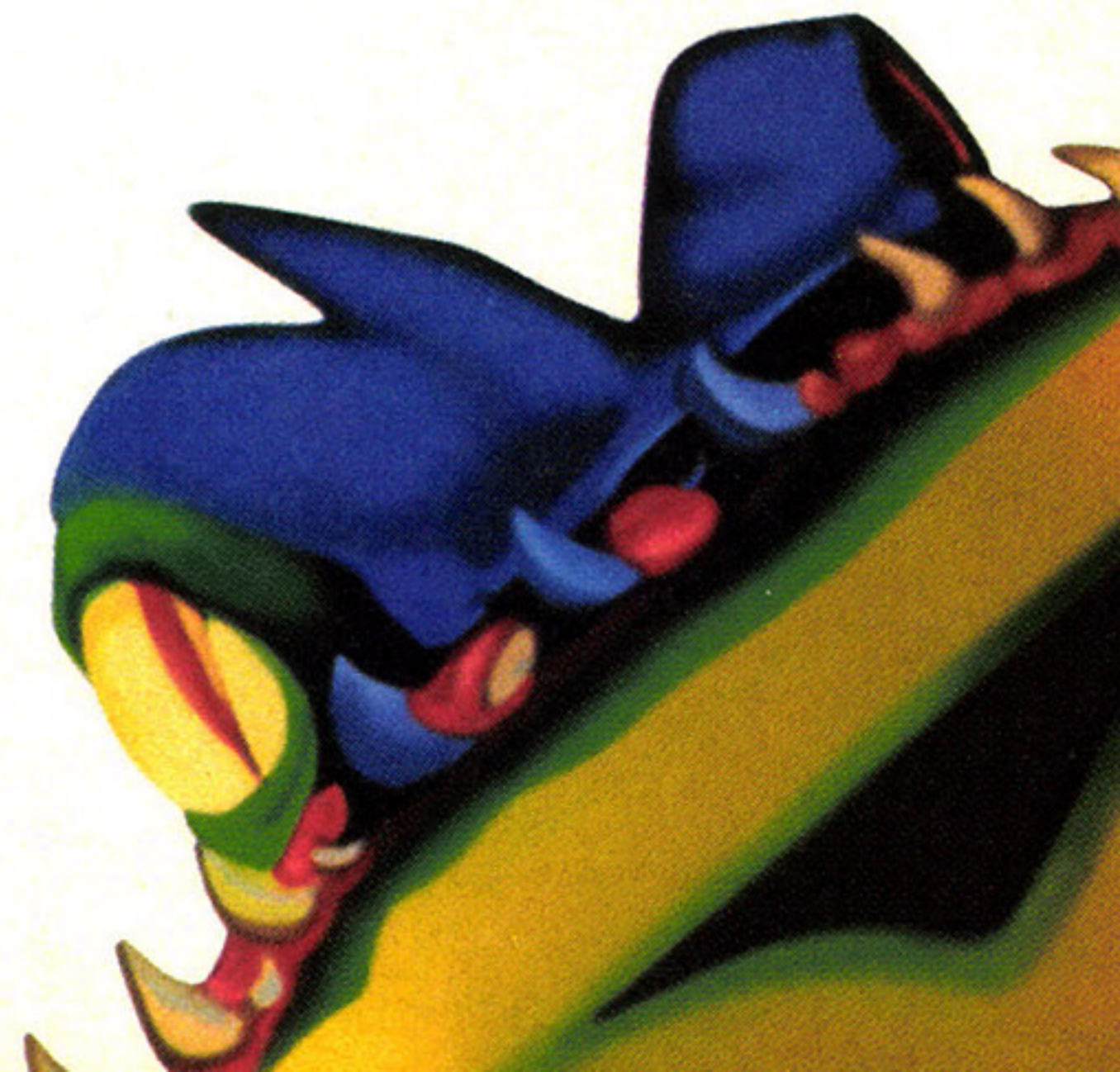
into dreams ...

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GAME GOSSIP...

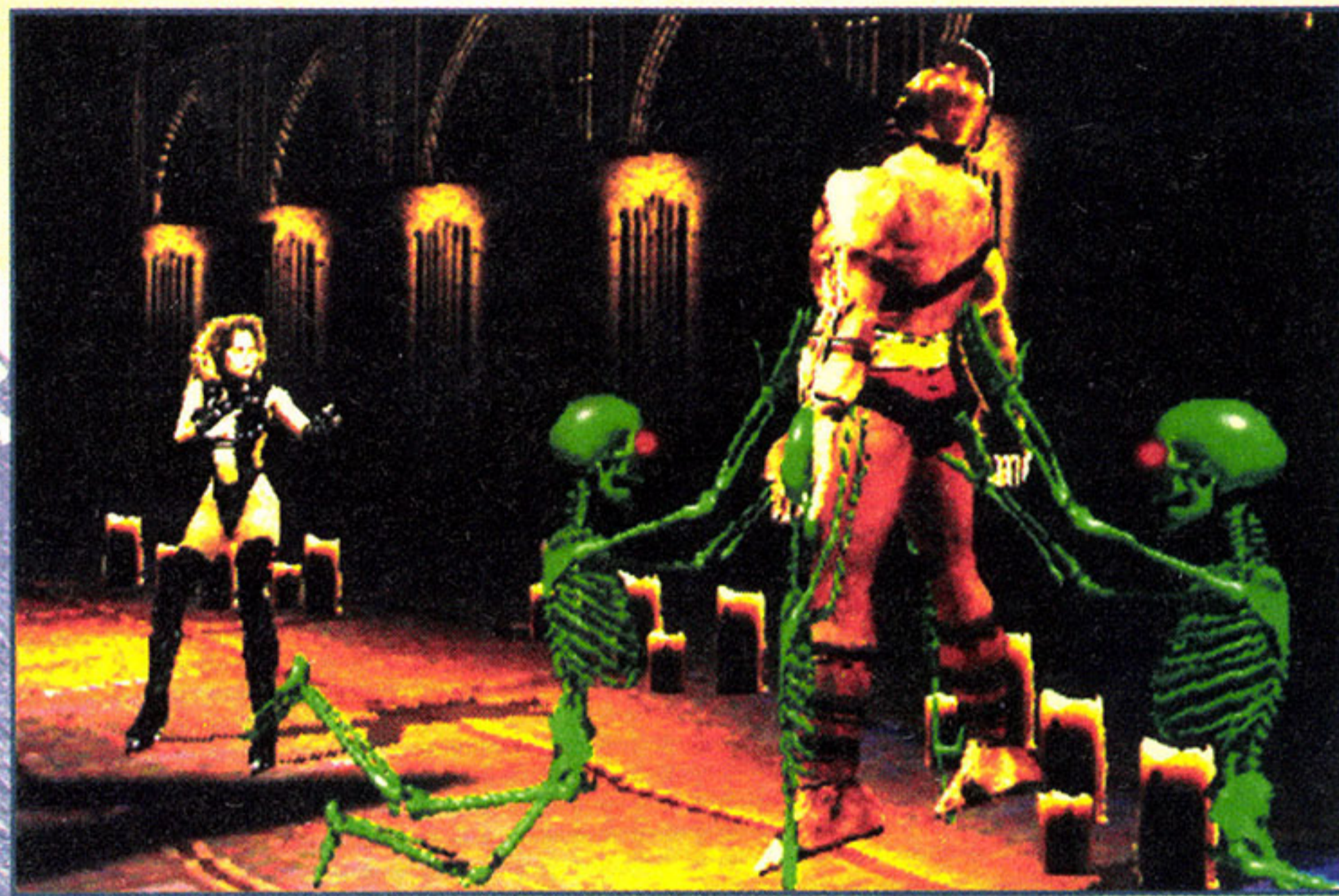
It's time to fire up the grill and throw another bunch of tidbits on the rack — we're cookin' up some tasty gossip for those hot summer cook outs ahead!

Bits and Bytes

A rumored PlayStation handheld is said to be in development. The unit, should it come out in the US, looks like it will suffer a fairly hefty price tag, somewhere to the tune of \$400. • Square is currently working on two Saturn-exclusive titles, and one is rumored to be a new *Secret of Mana* RPG. Square is also supposedly opening a marketing division near Square LA to help maintain publishing control over its PlayStation line-up. Apparently, games like *Final Fantasy VII* were in jeopardy of not coming to the states if this didn't happen. • Boss Games is rumored to be developing a Nintendo 64 title, an eye-popping SGI demo shows rally cars barreling over jungle-like terrain. Look for a well known Nintendo-only third party to bring the game home (maybe as Kemco's *Top Gear*? Hmm...) • Of the 250 products currently in development by Sony and third parties for the PlayStation, only 100 games will hit store shelves by

Christmas. Take, for example, a game like *Tomb Raider*, to which Sony says 'we have ten games just like this', so as an incentive to Sony not to drop

the title, the Saturn version of *Tomb Raider* is rumored to have been cancelled. • Cool PlayStation games to look for the first half of '97: *War Gods*, *Resident Evil 2* and *Soul Edge*. All these games are looking great from early development previews. • Management shake-ups



at T•HQ and Crystal Dynamics are still rumored, as both companies are restructuring from bad losses. Crystal Dynamics was supposed to go public, but apparently lacks the capital to do so. One rumor suggests that the company will leave publishing behind and simply develop. On a larger note, could Acclaim be buying Psygnosis? (Let's all say it together) Hmmm... • Over on the other side of the world, Japanese developers are finding the Nintendo 64 to be just as cryptic and confusing as we had reported. 'If it uses a 3D engine, add anywhere from 6 to 12 more months (of development time)' claims one Japanese product manager at a well-known Nintendo 64 third party. Aggravated developers are hoping Nintendo will offer more technical support, something that currently doesn't happen. • Finally, longtime Nintendo-loyal third party Kemco is rumored to be talking with Sony about bringing a game or two to the PlayStation, but nothing has been confirmed. • Join us back here in thirty days when Bill will say, 'I needed that strategy yesterday — now beat that game or you're fired!'



Nintendo 64 News

Who knows hardware better than Sega? I mean, the discarded 32Xs and Sega CDs alone could fill a small third-world country, and now we've heard a rumor that Sega is working on another hardware gadget with PC Accelerator Card manufacturer 3DFX. While little is known about the new hardware, it's rumored that it may go head-to-head with M2, or work exclusively as a PC Card. • Sega is also reported to be working on an attachment that will turn your 32-bit Saturn into a 64-bit monster. The Saturn add-on is rumored to increase the processing speed of the machine. • Finally, Matshushita is still in a holding pattern on M2. Some developers claim that they've seen 'absolutely nothing' from 3DO or Matshushita on M2.

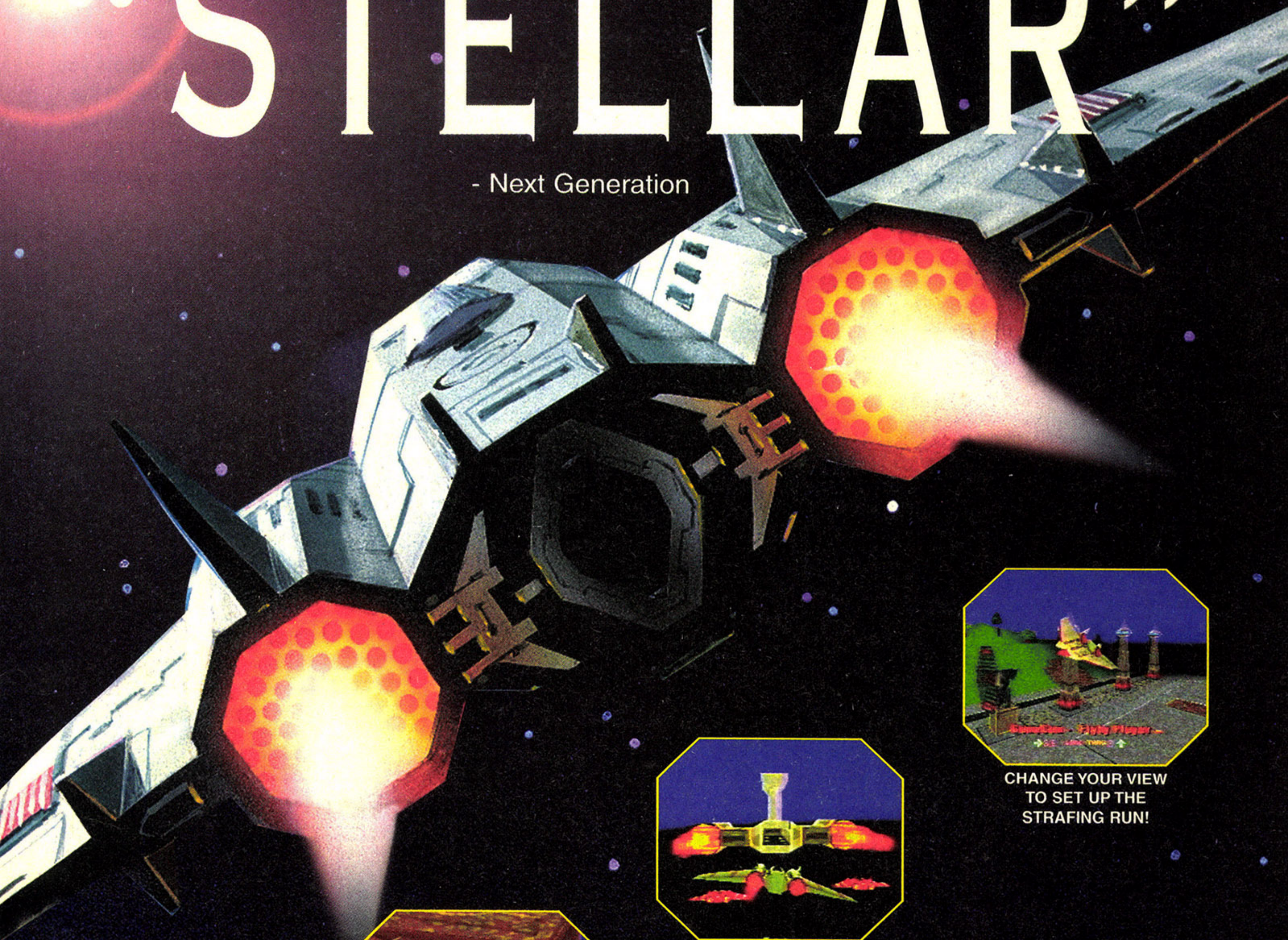
Hardware Heaven

News that Japan will see the fabled 64DD optical disk-drive late this year has just flown across the Gossip Desk. While many developers claim that the \$200 price tag is too expensive for the average gamer, they admit that the drive is 'essential for playing the really cool games', especially RPGs. The first 'really cool game'? *Zelda: The Legend of Link!* • In other Nintendo 64 gossip, look for *Kid Icarus* and *Metroid* to make appearances on the N64. While these titles have been talked about in previous installments of the gossip section, it has been confirmed that both will come to the N64 before Spring of '97. Also look for several third-party N64 games, such as Capcom's *Street Fighter Alpha Arcade* and Kemco's *Top Gear*. • Remember the early screens of *WaveRace* that came out of the Shoshinkai show late last year? They showed *F-Zero*-looking race boats instead of the jet skis that the

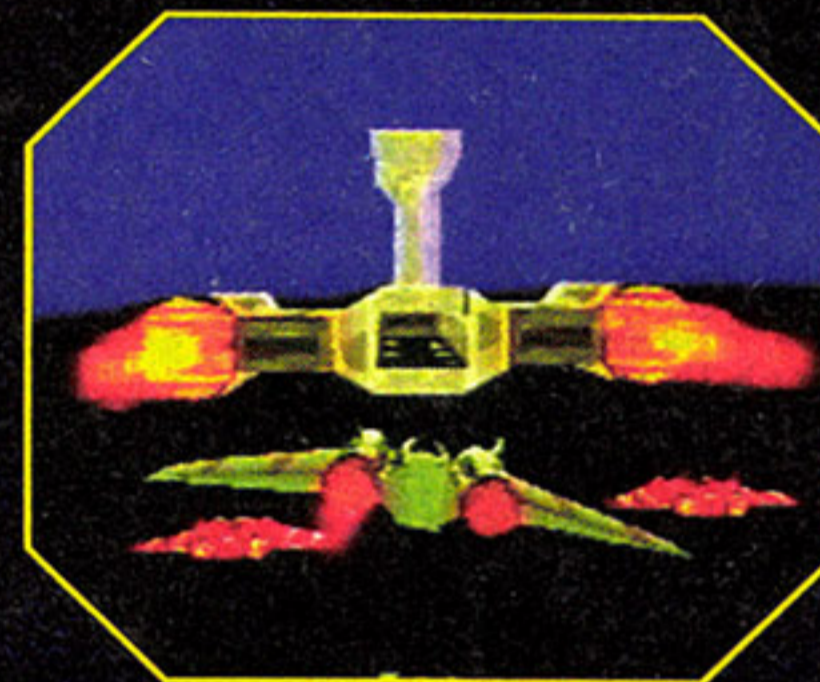
game now features. Well, since those first pictures were published, a N64 version of *F-Zero* has been in development over that same graphics engine. The version of *WaveRace* that was shown at E³ is an entirely new game. • Finally, Microsoft is rumored to be talking with Nintendo about bringing its current PC line-up to the N64 in some form, however, no titles have been confirmed by either party. Not to be outdone by the PC giant, Nintendo is also researching the PC marketplace, as one insider commented, 'we've got many great licenses and game concepts that would easily translate to the PC platform — and the machines aren't going away.' Hmmm...

"STELLAR"

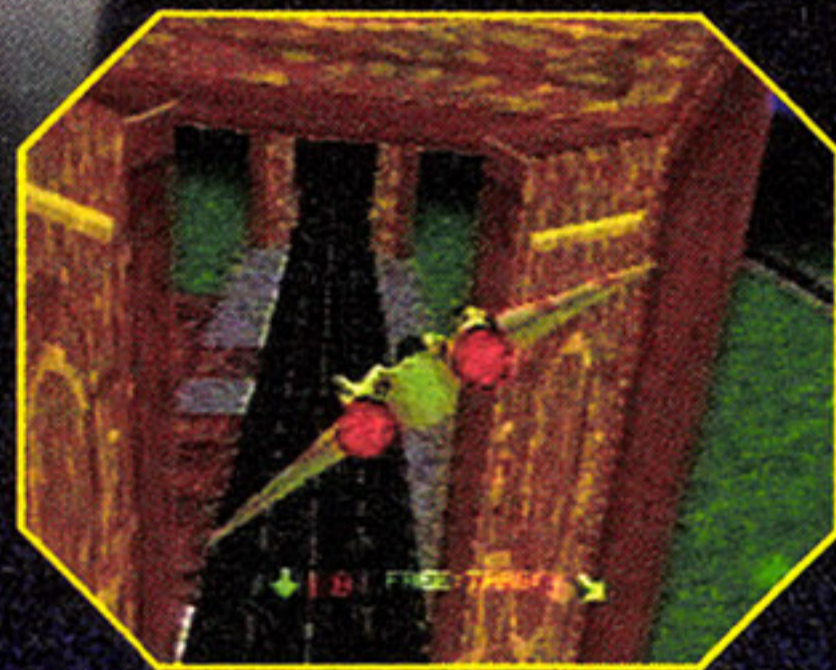
- Next Generation



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WEB STUFF...

Seeing as how we tooted NG Online's horn all last week, we figured it was time to

tell you all about our own, brand-new, way cool, all encompassing website — *ULTRA GAME PLAYERS* Online! It's THE place to be if you're a serious gamer with an insatiable need to know everything about the

videogame industry. So what are you waiting for? Start reading up on the hottest new online site that ever will be — *ULTRA GAME PLAYERS* Online! You don't want to miss this!

Ultra Game Players Online

The new and completely exciting way to bring you great stuff online. And did we mention it's new?

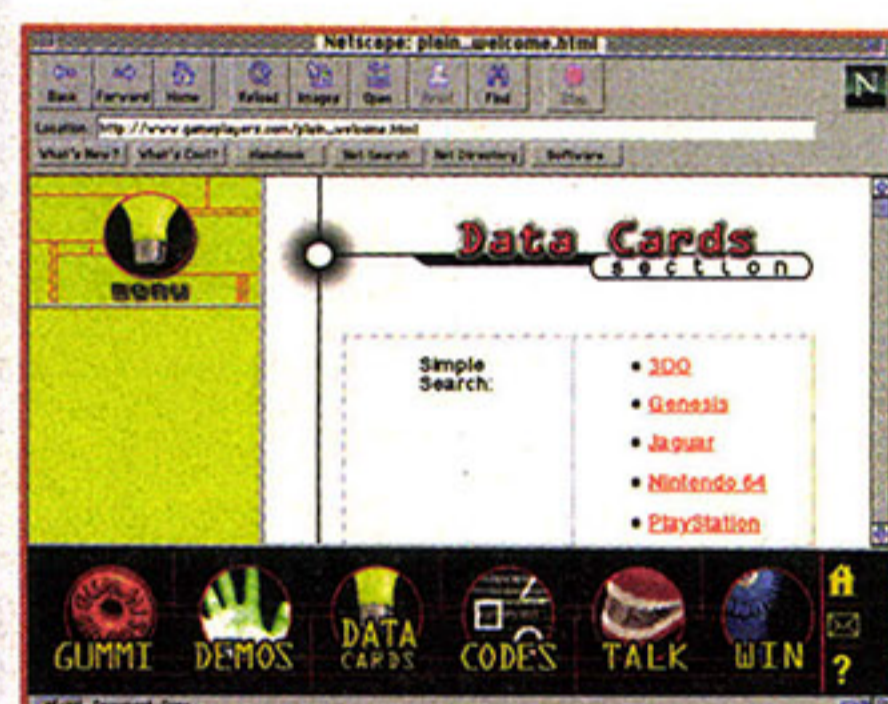
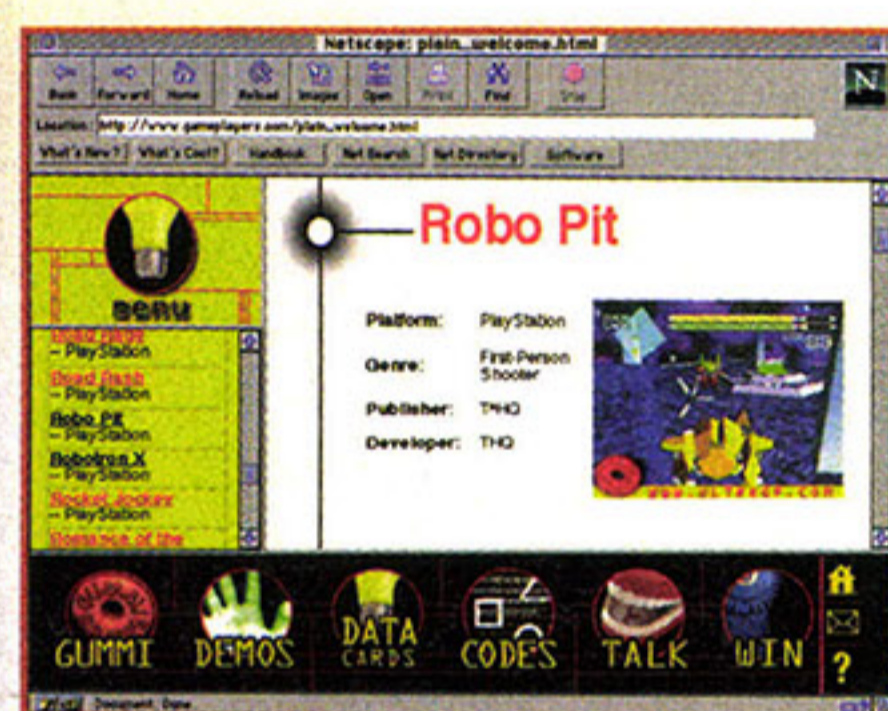
Hopefully by now you've caught wind of the big changes that are about to hit *GAME PLAYERS* magazine and, in keeping with our promise to present a great complimentary presence on the World Wide Web, we are proud to present our new and much improved *ULTRA GAME PLAYERS* Online. While we expect you'll recognize the extra effort put into the presentation of *ULTRA GP* Online almost immediately, the fancy new graphics are only the beginning. New features include: the ever-popular Free Stuff, where all sorts of great prizes will be given away at a frantic pace; PC Demos — tons of them; and downloadable QuickTime movies of all the hottest new games in all different lengths. Also, expect all the videogame news that matters to appear each and every day on

the new and improved website. You will definitely be well informed — we promise!

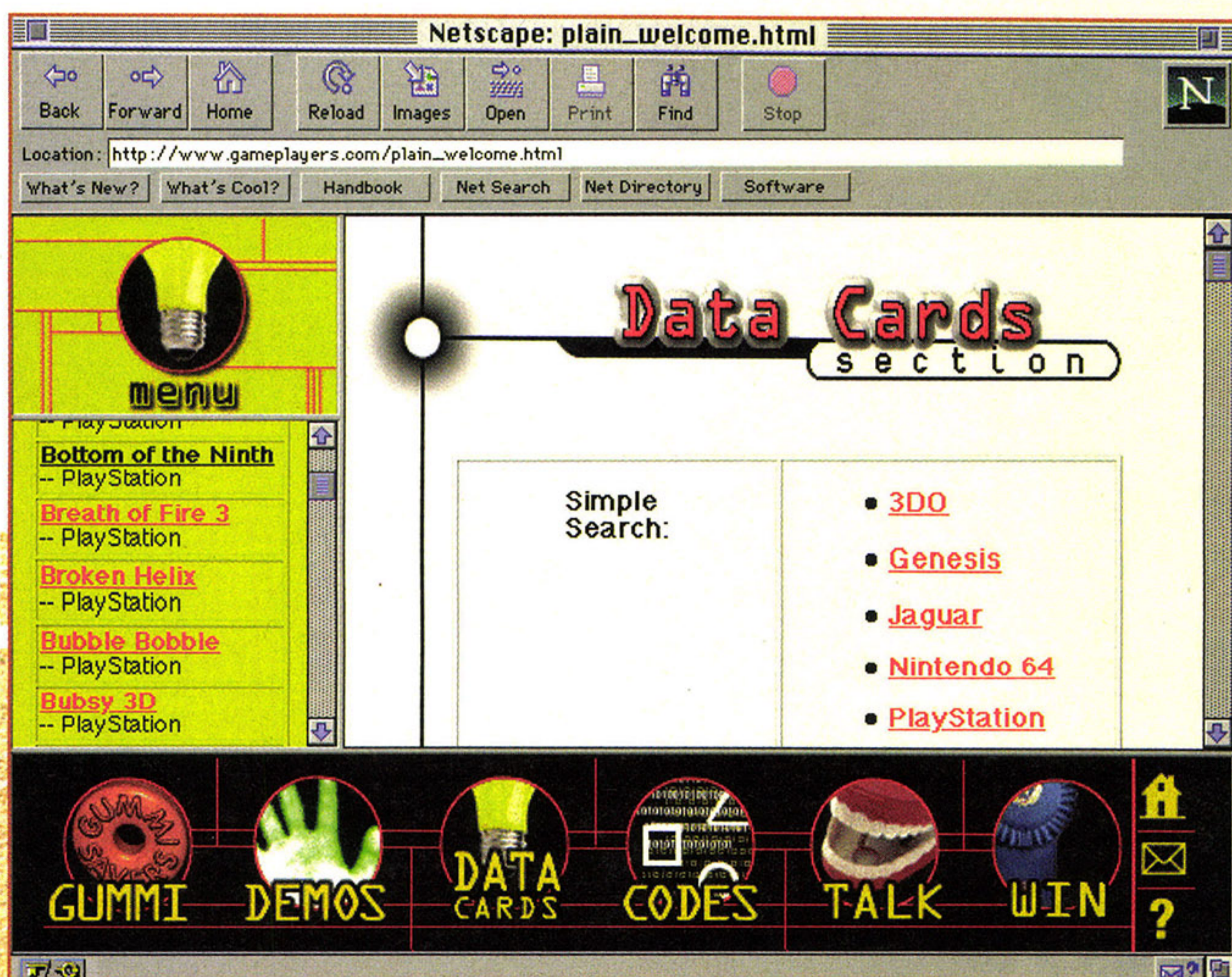
Perhaps the most exciting feature of our new website, however, is its close ties to the print version of *ULTRA GP*. After all, the best way to really plug into the magazine is to let your voice be heard online. How else are you going to experience instant access to our exciting contests, surveys and discussions? Be sure that we'll be demonstrating our commitment to online every chance we get. Getting involved with our site will, in effect, take you to the next level of interaction with what we hope is already your favorite print magazine and that simply has to be a good thing.

Finally, it's important to note that our website is a living entity. We not only make it

possible for you to voice your opinions, we demand them of you. Don't like something about the new magazine or the new Web site? Let us know. Of course, you're also free to tell us that we're doing a hell of a job with everything we touch and your life just wouldn't be the same without us. We here at *GAME PLAYERS* encourage both kinds of comments about the work we're doing — good and wrong. So get online and get involved, we're tired of just assuming we know what you really want. Hopefully we've been doing a pretty good job so far, but we want to know from you!



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Codes, codes, codes, codes, codes — We got 'em! Codes, codes, codes, codes, codes — You want 'em. Codes, codes, codes, codes, codes, codes, codes — You can have 'em, but you got to check ouour website to get 'em. Oh yeah, and you can even give them to us, if you got some that we don't know about. Check by game, by system, by psychic suggestion, any way you like. We got your codes!



Yes, we actually do want to hear all your crazy ideas about games. So get on board.

Talk

What **ULTRA GAME PLAYERS** Online wants more than anything is to get you involved in our site. That's why we devoted an entire

section to hearing what you got to say. Our 'Talk' section features gamer's forums, reader polls and real-time chatting in what's known as a palace. Let's face it, when serious gamers want to get together and talk shop this is where they're going to go, and since we know that games are your passion, it would be foolish to miss even a minute of it. Can't wait to hear from you.

What's New

Check in here first every time you visit the site for the latest updates to the site itself. And to make things even easier, we've got platform specific news and updates at the ready. Want to know about all the latest Saturn reviews, pre-views and features, check them out here.

Free Stuff & Win

Get on board with free issues of **ULTRA GP**, candy and videogames. Check in from time to time to see what else we're just giving away. And remember, no one beats our crazy website's rock-bottom prices! Tell 'em BoBo sent ya and get an extra 100% off the price. Also, because we just can't stop giving stuff away, you might want to keep your eyes open for great prizes such as Arcade units and home consoles like PlayStations, Saturns and N64s.

NICE PUNCH.

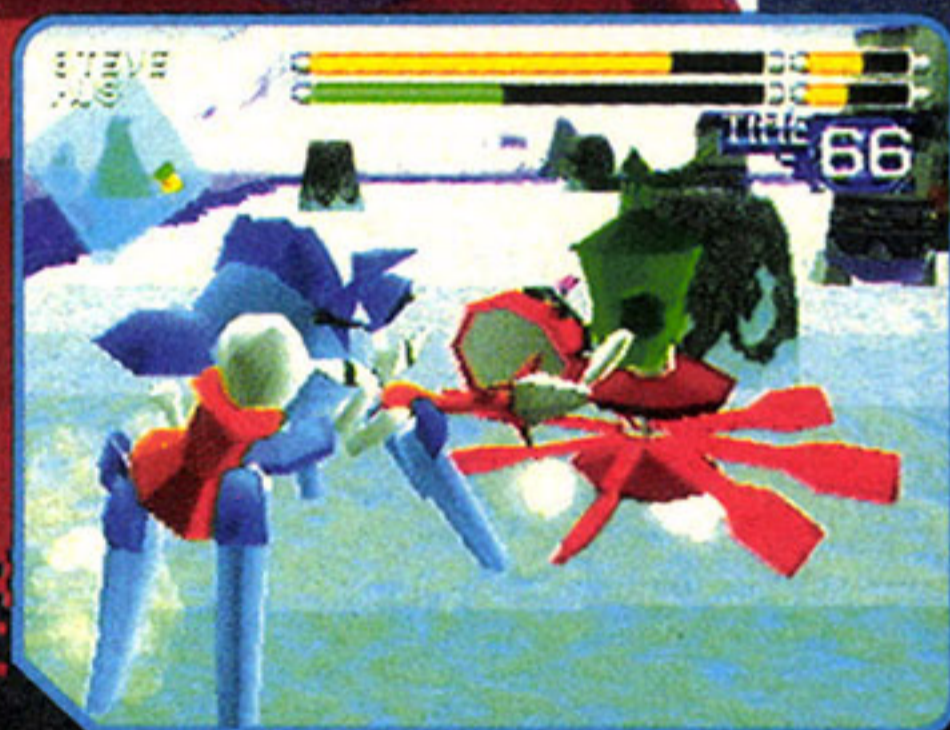
Unfortunately, he has an iron jaw (and a rocket launcher).

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"...a rare
achievement."

--Next Generation



"The 3D engine
is first rate."

--Next Generation

"...a real winner!"

--EGM



For a sneak peek check out Alien Trilogy at
<http://www.acclaimnation.com>

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HIT LISTS...

Hey, you! What's your five favorite games? Why don't you write 'em down and send 'em in to *GAME PLAYERS*? We'll count 'em up and show the results here. You might even get lucky, just like *Zac Cropper-Alt*, of *Philmont, NY*! His Mystery Prize is on the way! Send in your top five games. You could see your name here next month!!!

OUR READER'S TOP TEN

Based on our reader mail!



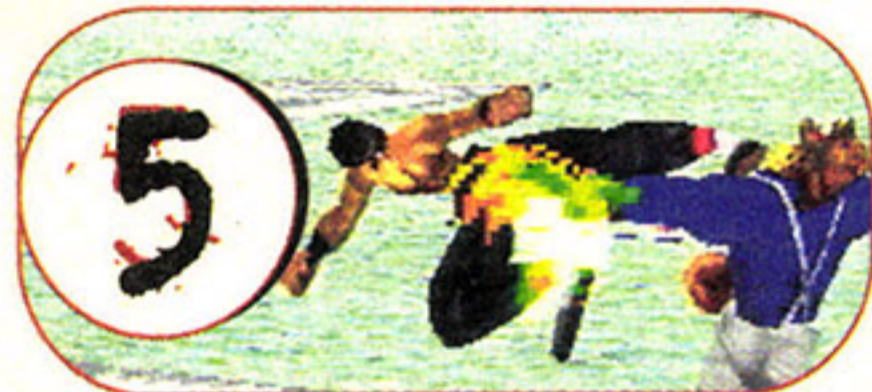
Resident Evil
PlayStation
Capcom



Chrono Trigger
Super NES
Square



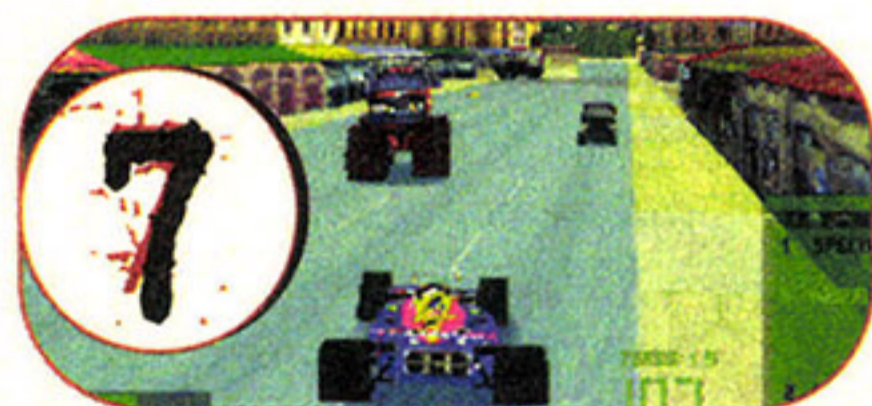
Final Fantasy III
Super NES
Nintendo



Tekken
PlayStation
Namco



Super Mario RPG
Super NES
Nintendo



Twisted Metal
PlayStation
Sony



WipEout
PlayStation
Sony



Panzer Dragoon II Zwei
Saturn
Sega



Virtua Cop
Saturn
Sega



Virtua Fighter 2
Saturn
Sega



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Based on what we play when we should be working!



Super Mario 64
Nintendo 64
Nintendo



PilotWings 64
Nintendo 64
Nintendo



Crash Bandicoot
PlayStation
Sony



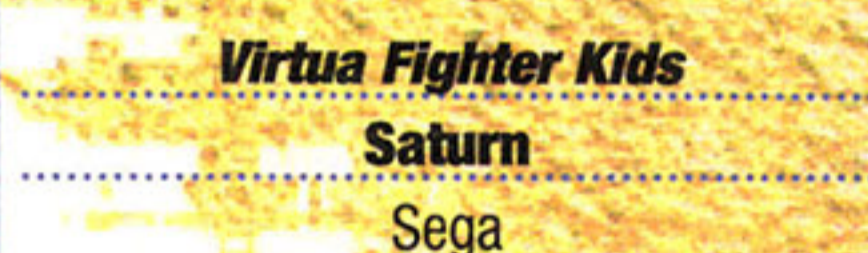
Worldwide Soccer II
Saturn
Sega



Bust-A-Move 2
Playstation
Acclaim



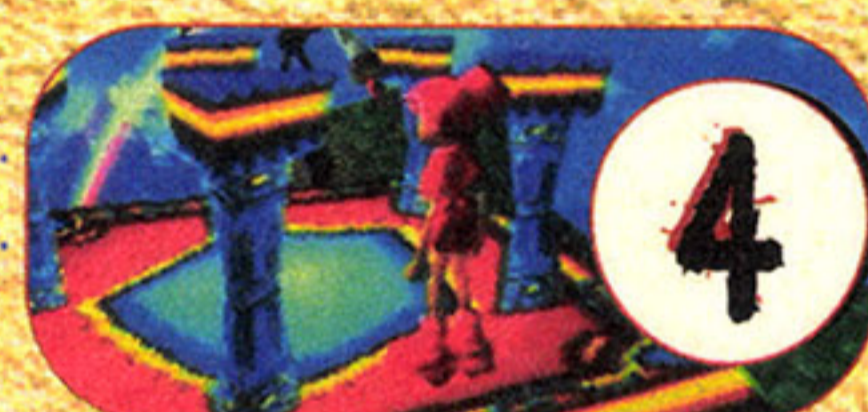
International Track & Field
PlayStation
Konami



Yoshi's Island
Super NES
Nintendo



Super Bomberman 2
Super NES
Hudson Soft



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PREVIEWS

NIGHTS

With each new boss offering a different challenge, there is plenty to be excited about when finishing a level.



Once upon a time, there was a battle between two comparable videogame systems. Those systems were Nintendo's Super Nintendo and Sega's Genesis. All looked lost for the Genesis, with stiff competition from games like *Mario* and the like, but then

came a little blue hedgehog named Sonic and suddenly the Genesis and, indeed, Sega on the whole, was back in the race in a very big way. The man that created this not-so-small miracle was named Yuji Naka and now, five years later, Naka is set to do it for us all over again with a little game known as *Nights*.

In *Nights*, you have your choice of playing as either Claris or Elliot, two children

on opposite ends of the world, who both share the same dream. In the dream, each character can assume the role of Nights, a magical flying character with all sorts of special abilities. As Nights, you'll have to recover special gems to advance through the game and get the opportunity to battle the boss characters. The entire game carries a very dream-like atmosphere, wherein all sorts of bizarre characters and landscapes begin to seem commonplace after a while. As Claris or Elliot, you are bound to the ground, a fully 3D environment which can be explored in its entirety. The only problem is that, on the ground, you are being pursued by a flying alarm clock bent on waking you

up and returning you to the real world. The key therefore is to maintain your role as Nights for as long as possible.

Nights is without question an action/adventure game like *Sonic* in several ways, but there are many differences as well. First of all, *Sonic* never looked this



Since the game is such a new experience for gamers, each character's first level is set up to be an easy place to get the hang of the gameplay.



By the time you've reached the later levels, you're likely to be flying around like a pro.

good and, though there is a 3D *Sonic* title currently in the works, Naka's little blue hedgehog never knew 3D like *Nights*, either. Finally, it's important to note that Sonic never flew like *Nights*, who spends all of his time soaring through the air with the greatest of ease (I've always wanted to use that saying.) These, however, are only the obvious differences. It's the details in the gameplay that make this game really stand on its own.

What's perhaps even more important to note, however, are the similarities between Naka's two greatest creations. One, both games are extremely fast

(Sonic may actually get the nod in pure speed, but *Nights* is no slouch) and demonstrate everything that is great about videogame control. In fact, the control is so precise in *Nights*, Naka demanded a custom analog controller to be bundled with the game (the controller is completely awesome as well, but that's another story). You'll also see cutting-edge graphics, first-rate play mechanics and tons of action-gaming fun in *Nights*, just as in the original *Sonic*. When it comes down to it, if you don't already own a Saturn, *Nights* is a damn good reason to rush out and pick one up.



In an effort to offer even more variety of gameplay, the perspective changes, on occasion, from the traditional side-view to overhead.

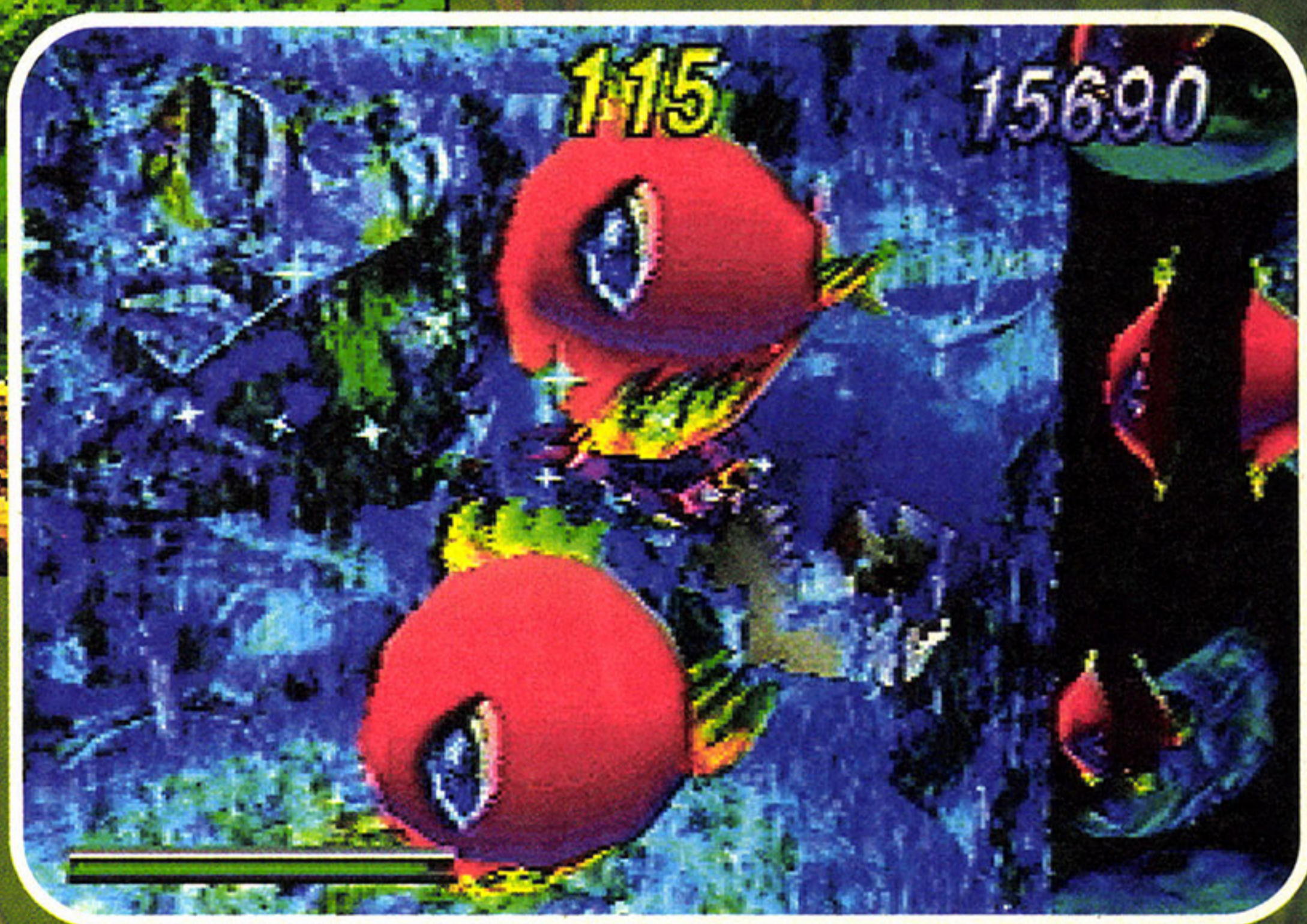
The underwater scenes, are yet again, another variation on the typical gameplay, not to mention just plain beautiful.



With true 3D environments and dazzling visual effects, *Nights* is sure to impress even the most stubborn Doubting Thomas.



The level design is nothing short of first-rate, but what else would you expect from the creator of the game that revolutionized the art of level design.



Boss levels such as this one simply defy explanation, but to play it is to love it.



Special effects like the warping ground textures, are just the kind of touches that put this game over the top.

Perhaps the greatest thing about *Nights* is that the game never lets you forget that you're playing inside a dream-world. And oh, is it dreamy in here.

Destruction Derby

There were a few key games that, from the beginning, made the PlayStation the success it is today. One of those games was undoubtedly *Destruction Derby*, from Psygnosis. With its ultra-realistic graphics, physics, and reckless gameplay, a smashing good time could be had by all. This year marks the return of the *Destruction Derby* name to the PlayStation and, in true second generation fashion, this game is bigger and better than the original. So much so, in fact, that you might immediately

Psygnosis for PlayStation

not even recognize this game as a sequel. Adding what seems to be the final piece of the real physics puzzle, *Destruction Derby 2* allows the cars to actually leave the ground this time, which inevitably leads to plenty of flipping and rolling. Though the original had plenty of bone-crushing action, it was impossible to actually force a car off the ground, a feature which makes a big difference in the sequel.

Beyond the extra crash physics, *Destruction Derby 2* also takes huge strides in realism when it comes to the game's graphics. It was hard to imagine the look getting much more realistic than the original, but they've done it, and in a dramatic fashion. There is also a noticeable improvement in the game's speed,

with more of a focus on racing. The tracks have also been made much bigger and with more variation than the original. Again, this is to shift the focus away from the bottle-necked pile-ups of the original and more towards fast-action racing. Of course, there is still plenty of crashing and the results are even more exciting at high speeds. Look for this to be one of the top PlayStation games of the year!



Making your way through the pack won't be easy, but it sure is fun!



The realism of the graphics has damn near gotten out of control in *Destruction Derby 2*.

If it's crashes you want, it's crashes you shall get!



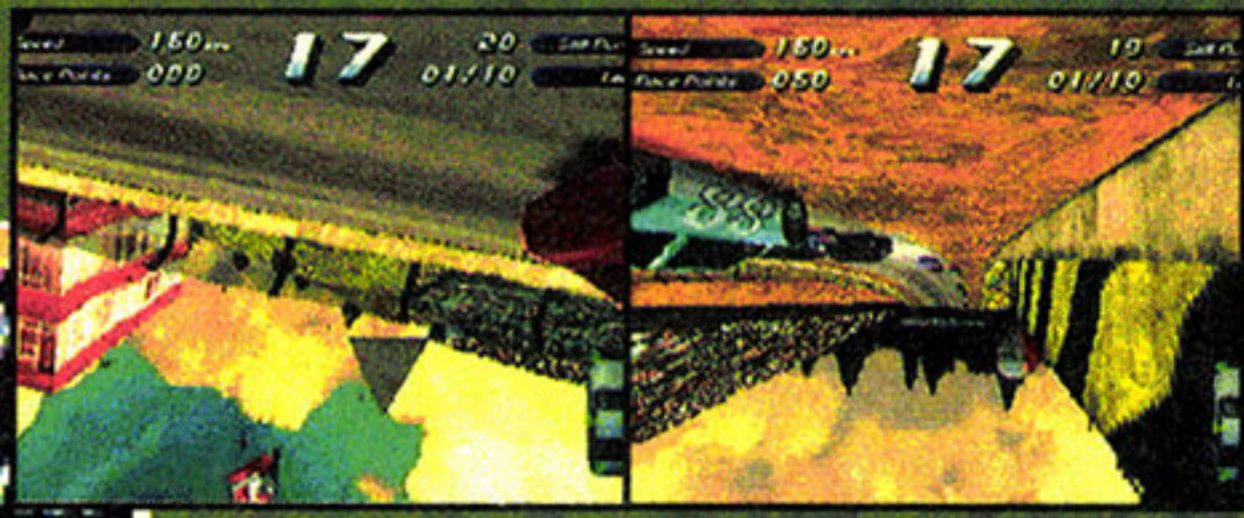
Simply adding the ability to leave the ground has added a whole new dynamic to the gameplay.



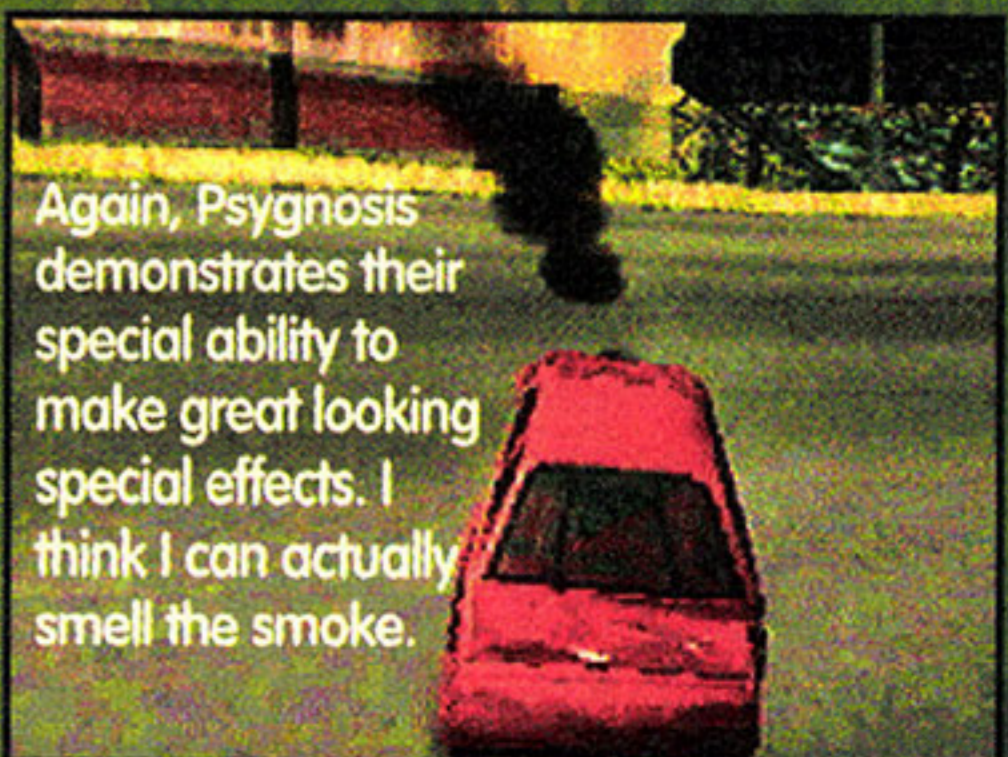
No, these screen shots are not upside down, but you are!



Get some air! I don't really know what that means, but it seems appropriate for this screen shot!



From the inside-the-car view, every crash is an adventure. Buckle up!



Again, Psygnosis demonstrates their special ability to make great looking special effects. I think I can actually smell the smoke.

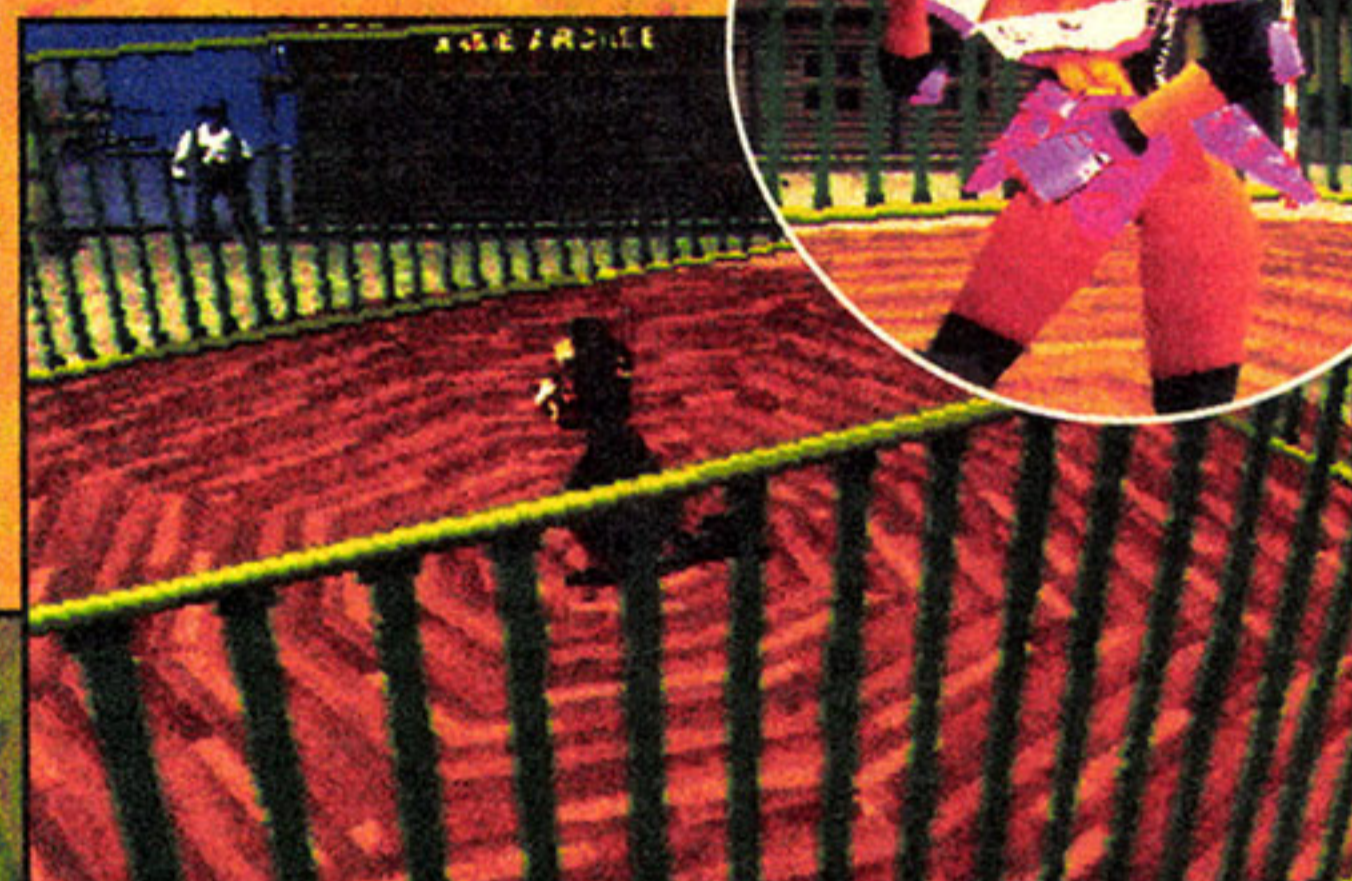
High-speed battles are the new name of the game!

Fighting Vipers



Looking remarkably close to the arcade version, *Fighting Vipers* for the Saturn is a game to get excited about.

Sega for Saturn



If the rest of the characters turn out as good as Tokio seems to have, we are all in for a big treat.

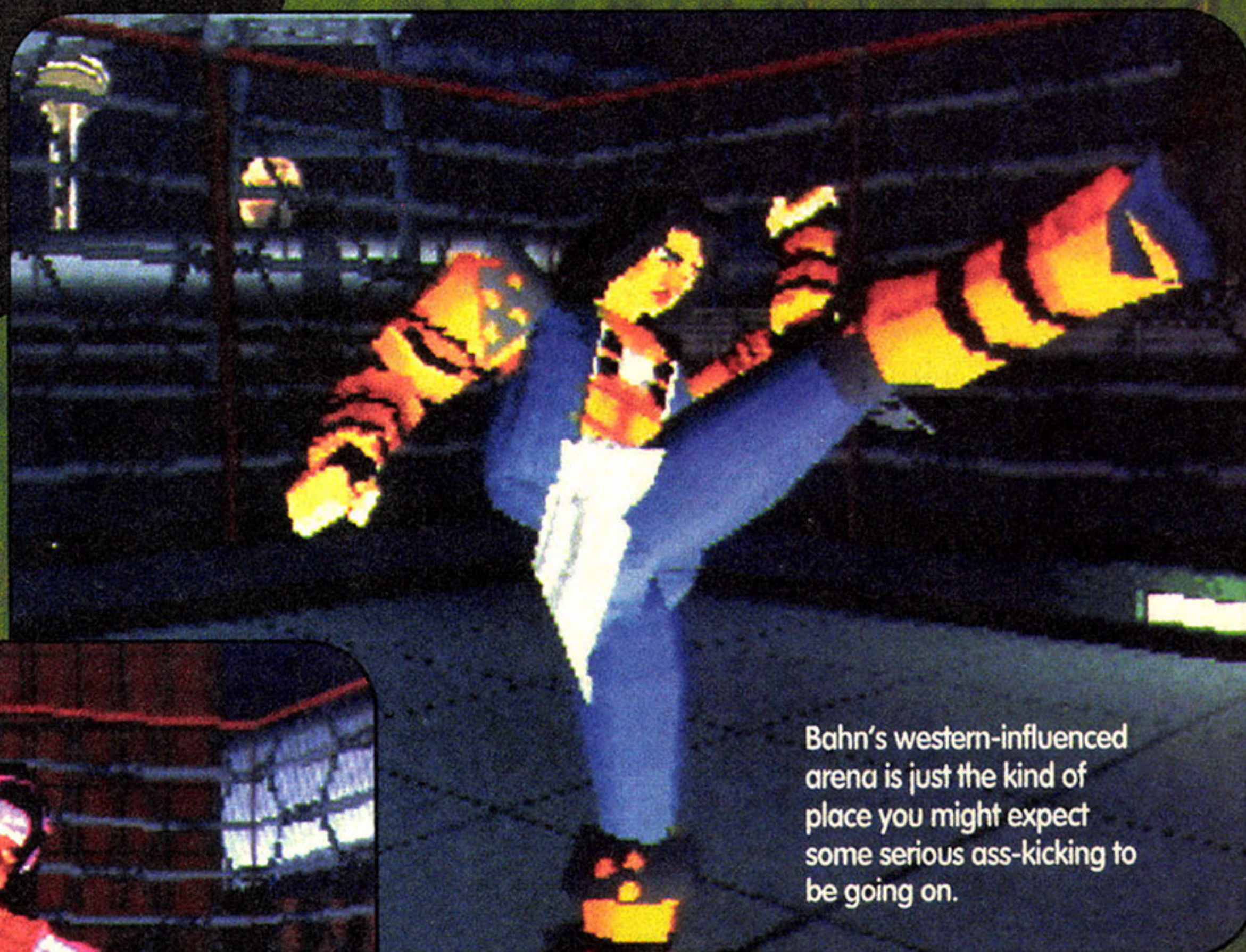
Reason enough to buy a Saturn? Only if you have any sense in you at all. While we've not actually seen the Saturn version of *Fighting Vipers* up-and-running just yet, these early screen shots are enough to suggest that AM2 has done it again! Saturn owners are about to be treated to yet another awesome translation of yet another awesome arcade game. For anyone not yet familiar with *Fighting Vipers*, the gameplay is pretty similar to that in *Virtua Fighter 2*, but with brand new characters and a few very important gameplay differences. The addition of walls surrounding the arena is, by far, the biggest difference. At first, you may have fun just by slamming people into the walls, but you'll soon find out that's only the beginning. Soon you'll be juggling opponents off the wall, dragging their faces against the wall, or even climbing on top to set up a giant body slam in the center of the ring.

Also added to the traditional *Virtua Fighter* gameplay mix is the use of protective armor. Through the use of special armor-breaking moves, you can knock the armor right off your opponent, piece by piece, making them more vulnerable to your attacks. If you do manage to break your opponent's armor in the first round of a fight, he/she will have to fight the second round without it. Add these great features to some really great characters and moves and you're guaranteed a great game. Not that you should ever doubt the greatness of an AM2 game anyway. Can't wait to get my hands on the first playable rev, which should be here any day. Watch next month for tons more info on



Tokio's stage is a little on the industrial side, all the better for industrial-style fighting.

what promises to be one of the year's best games.



Bahn's western-influenced arena is just the kind of place you might expect some serious ass-kicking to be going on.

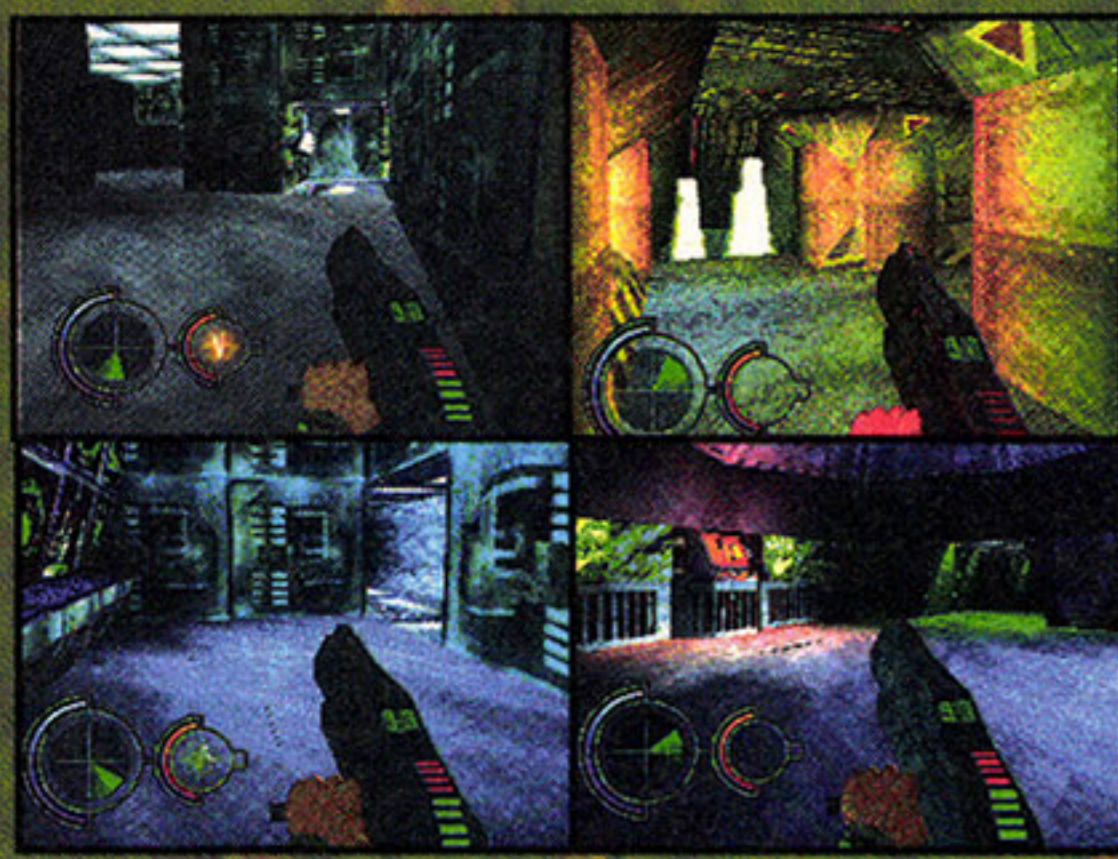
I bet you've never done battle on roller blades before. The possibilities are interesting, to say the least.



The caged arena creates a whole new kind of fighting action.

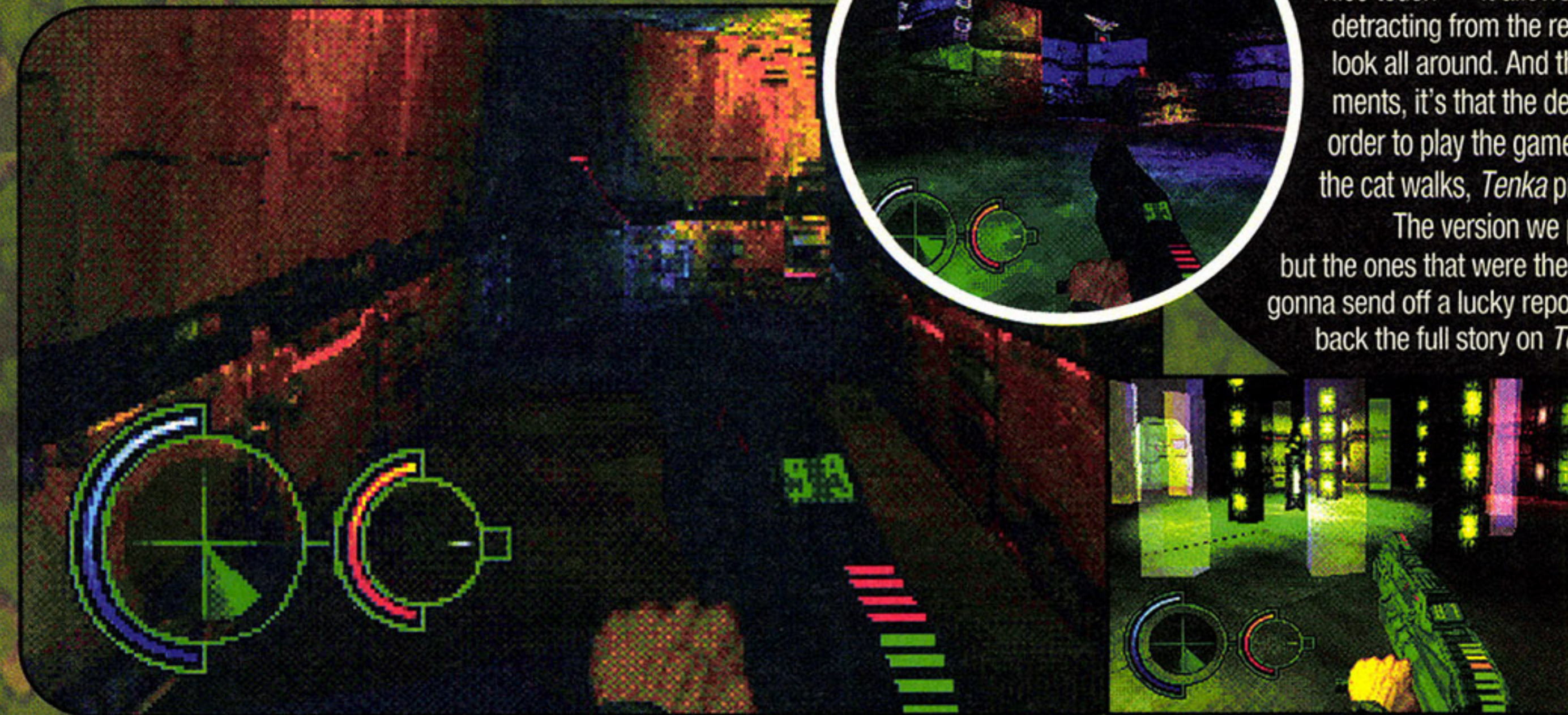
Tenka

Psygnosis For PlayStation



Not many enemies were in place, but exploring the stylized corridors was an experience in itself.

Many of the levels have a surreal futuristic dark look, and check out the infrared sight on that massive gun.



Psygnosis' products led the way in the first generation of PlayStation titles and at E³ they were the only company that really showed off some true second generation PlayStation titles.

Tenka is definitely one of those titles. Just by looking at the screen shots you're likely to say, 'Whoo-hoo, another *Doom*-clone!', but be warned that *Tenka* is much more than another drone. Instead, Psygnosis has taken the 3D shooter and added touches that couldn't have been developed on the PC. The sharp texture-mapped polygons are a huge improvement from the flat enemies in *Doom*. The dark corridors are brilliantly designed, with some amazing light-sourcing around every corridor. Even the gun and hand are affected by the light-sourcing, which makes that element look not so pasted-on.

Another area where *Tenka* takes the genre to a new level is in the true 3D environment. Instead of blindly blowing away guys upstairs, you have to hunt them down with your infrared sight and blast away. The infrared sight is definitely a nice touch — it allows you to know exactly where you're aiming without detracting from the realism of the game. You can duck, jump, run, strafe, and look all around. And the key isn't just that you can perform these 3D elements, it's that the developers have made sure that you have to use them in order to play the game. With floors that slope upwards and enemies up in the cat walks, *Tenka* promises to be an exhilarating 3D experience.

The version we played didn't have many enemies in place yet, but the ones that were there had tricky AI and a real 3D look. We're gonna send off a lucky reporter to the land where Lager rules to bring back the full story on *Tenka* in our first issue of *Ultra GAME PLAYERS*.

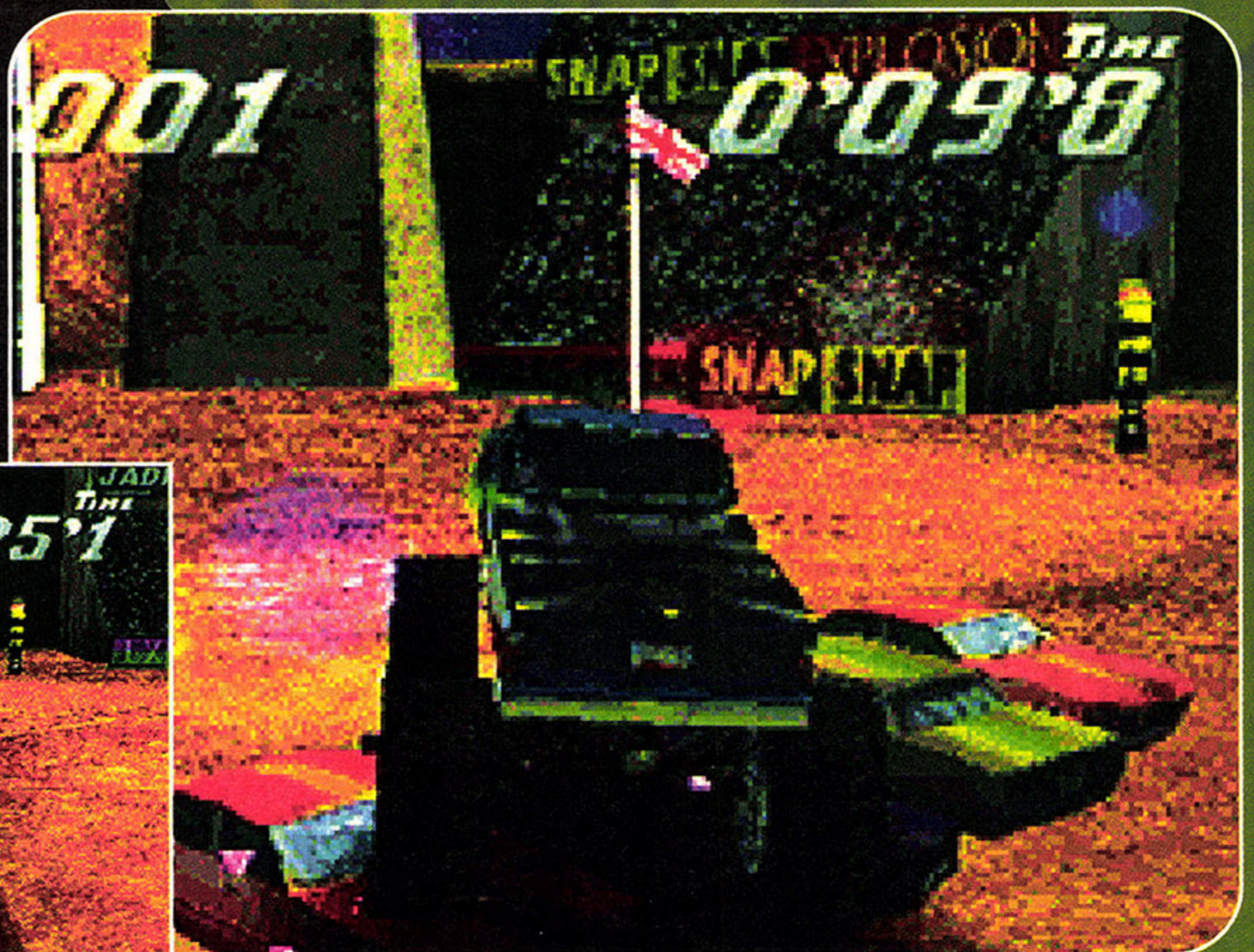
The light-sourcing in this game is amazing — even the hand and gun are affected.

Thunder Truck Rally

Psygnosis for PlayStation

Formerly called *Monster Truck Rally* (until MicroSoft pulled the plug on that particular name), *Thunder Truck Rally* is step two in Psygnosis' one-two crunch! Along with *Destruction Derby 2*, this year's line-up will also have a little smashing of the 'driving over your opponent' kind. All the fun of a real monster truck rally (not that I've ever been to one) with its bowl competitions and open road racing, *Thunder Truck Rally* really lives up to its name. The true test for this game will be how realistic the crunching can get. With Psygnosis' background, I think it is safe to say 'Look out below!'. Not much more to report on this one just yet, but it seems almost inconceivable for this one to end up as anything less than great fun!

If destruction is your game, then welcome to heaven's gate.



Virtua Fighter Kids

Sega for Saturn

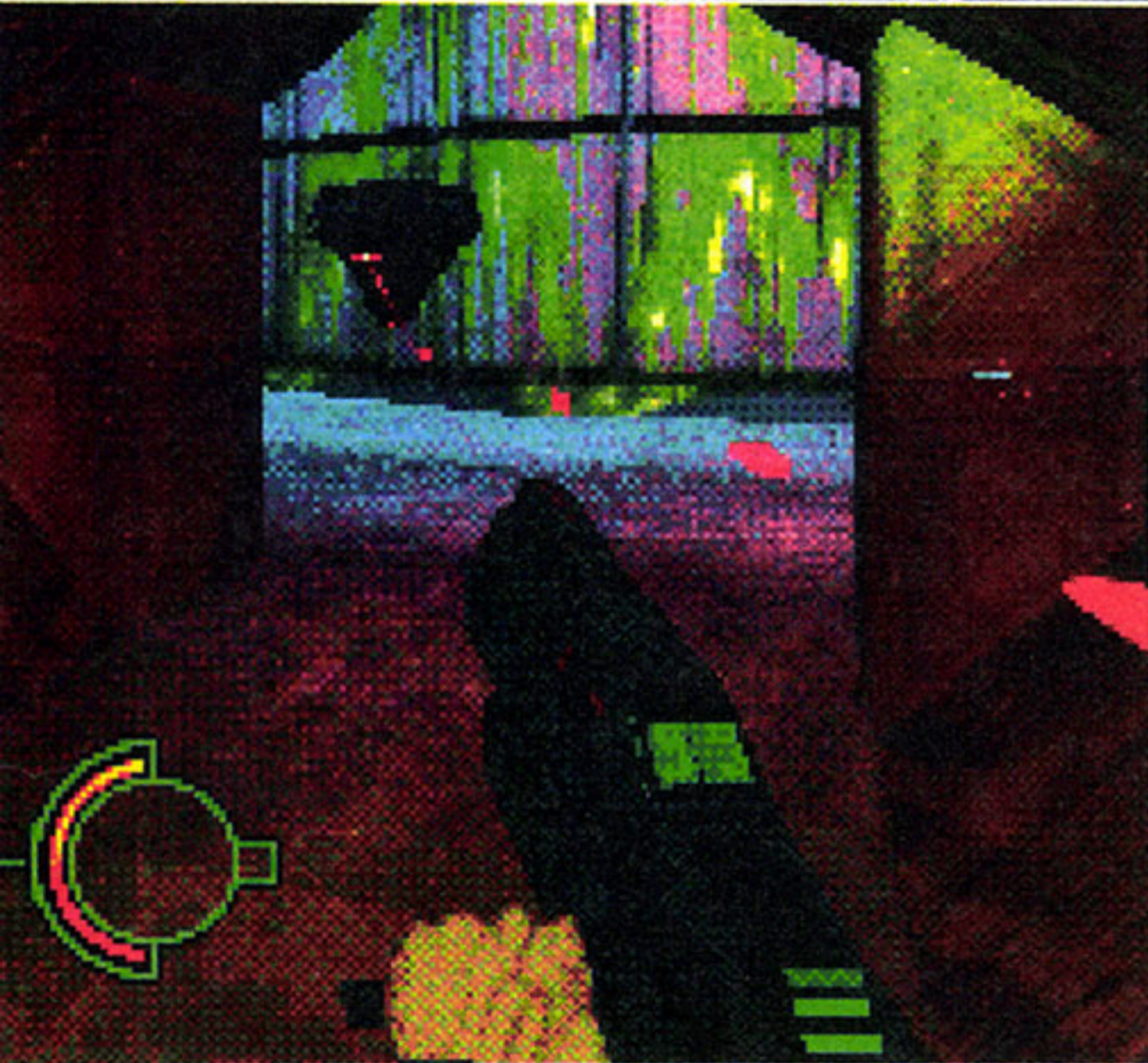
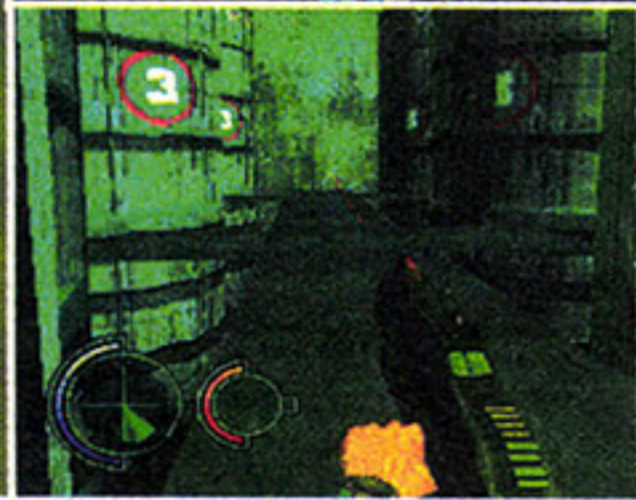
Using effects like these transparencies, that only Psygnosis can seem to do right, make *Tenka* a visual treat that makes PC games look real drab.



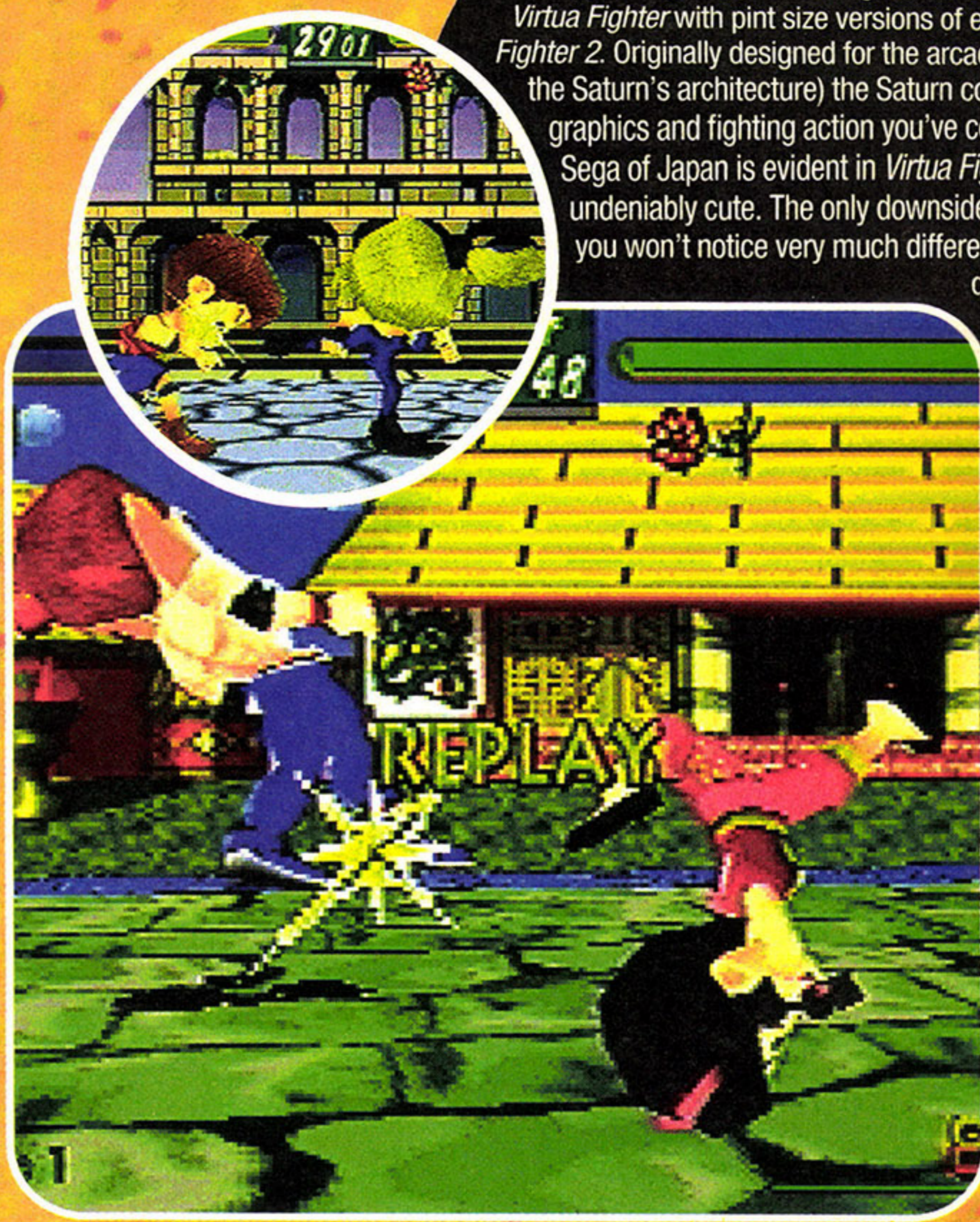
The awe-inspiring explosions make destroying every enemy robot that much more satisfying.



Sloped floors and hidden crevices make the easily controllable up and down movements vital.



The only enemies present in the early demo were these floating robots — they look awesome and are real tough to hit.



The backgrounds are almost all cartoon versions of the backgrounds in *VF2*, but they still look good.

Lighter side of fierce fighting action, the masters of 3D brawlers have given us something a little bit smaller, almost child-like, you might say. *Virtua Fighter Kids* is exactly what it sounds like — *Virtua Fighter* with pint size versions of each character featured in *Virtua Fighter 2*. Originally designed for the arcade's Titan board (a very close match to the Saturn's architecture) the Saturn conversion so far is flawless. All the great graphics and fighting action you've come to expect from the AM2 team at Sega of Japan is evident in *Virtua Fighter Kids* and, let's face it, they are undeniably cute. The only downside is that if you already own *Virtua Fighter 2* you won't notice very much difference in the fighting action. There are some distance in range moves and gravitational balance due to the oversized heads but, for the most part, the gameplay is pretty similar. Then again, if you've never been able to get into the realistic approach of *VF2*, *Virtua Fighter Kids* may just be what you've been looking for. In the end, it may not be *Virtua Fighter 3* for this Christmas, but it should still be pretty fun.



The intro sequence is absolutely awesome. Just seeing Big Jacky pop Lil' Jacky in the head is enough to get you in a fighting mood.



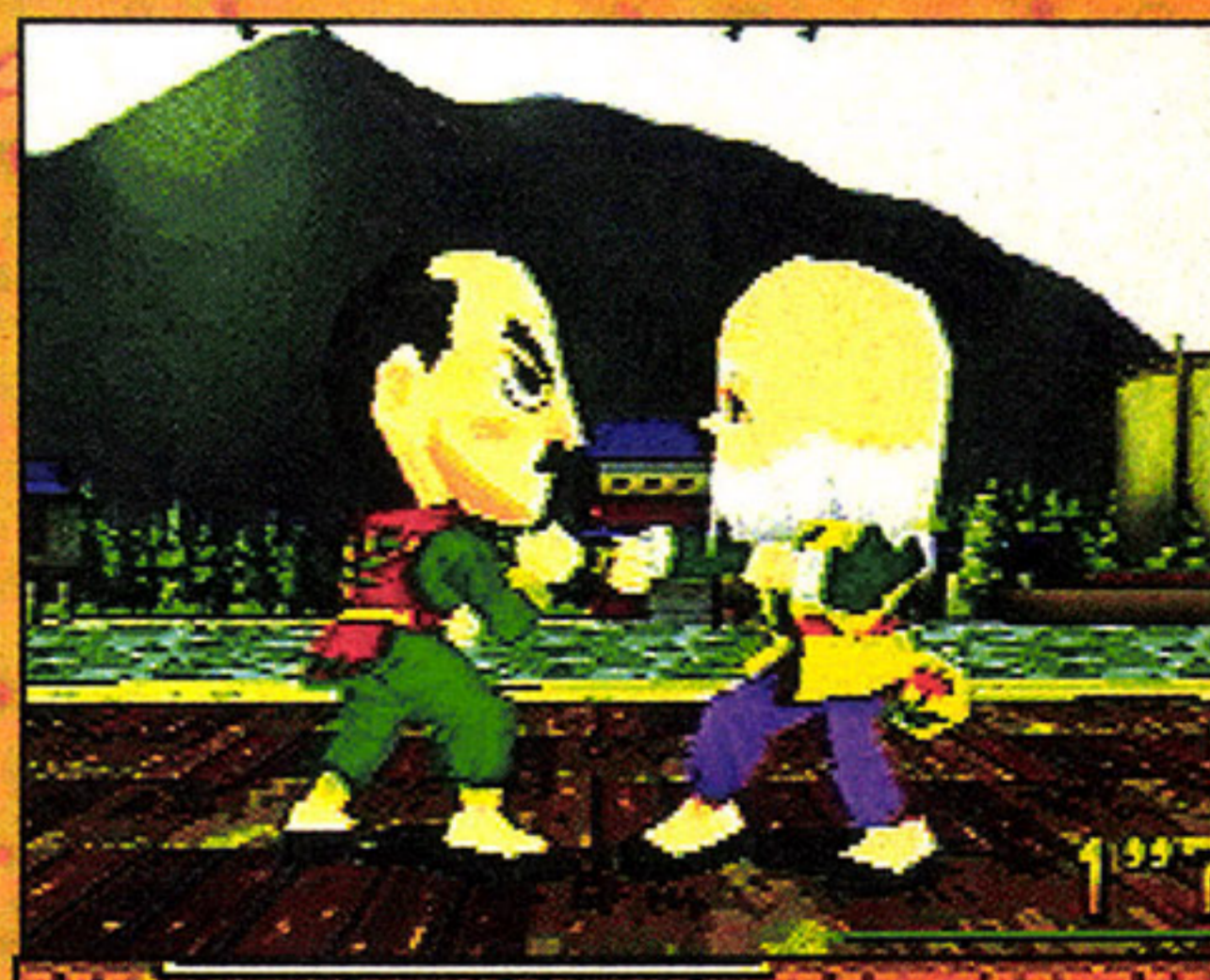
Check out the realistic camera lens flare. It just doesn't get much better than this.

Go ahead, take it off-road, if you like!



Meet your competition!

On the open road, it's all about power racing!



All your favorite characters are ready for fighting.

BLONDES?

OR BEASTS & BEHEMOTHS.

IS THAT A BABE
IN LEOTARDS
GIVING YOU AN
AEROBICS WORKOUT...

OR IS IT A FLAMING FIEND
FRESH FROM THE PIT
WHO WANTS HIS CLAWS
IN YOUR CHARRED CORPSE?



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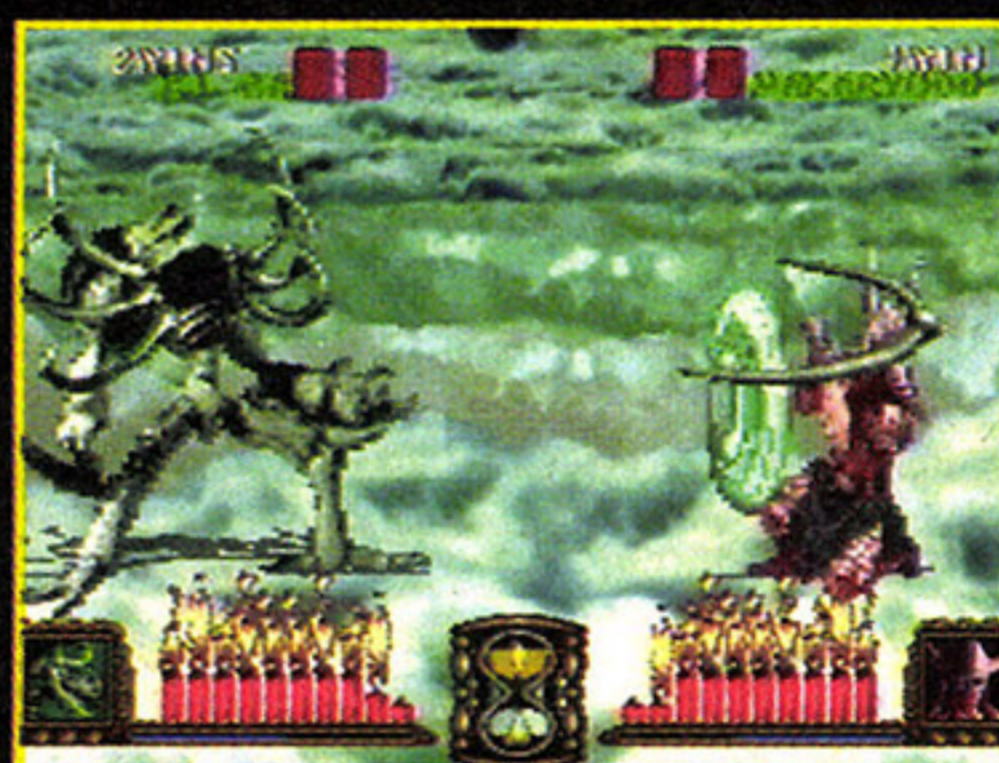
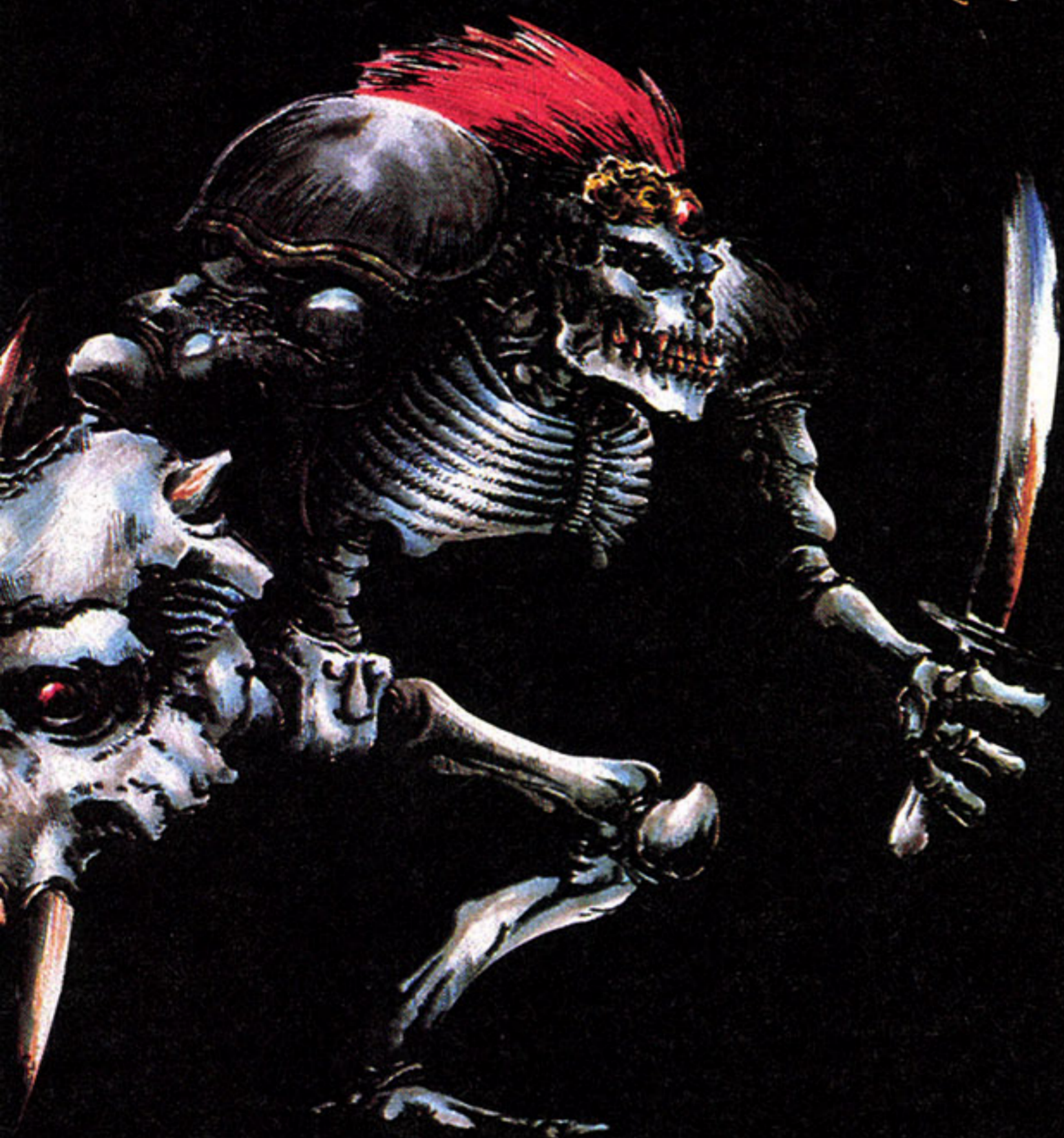
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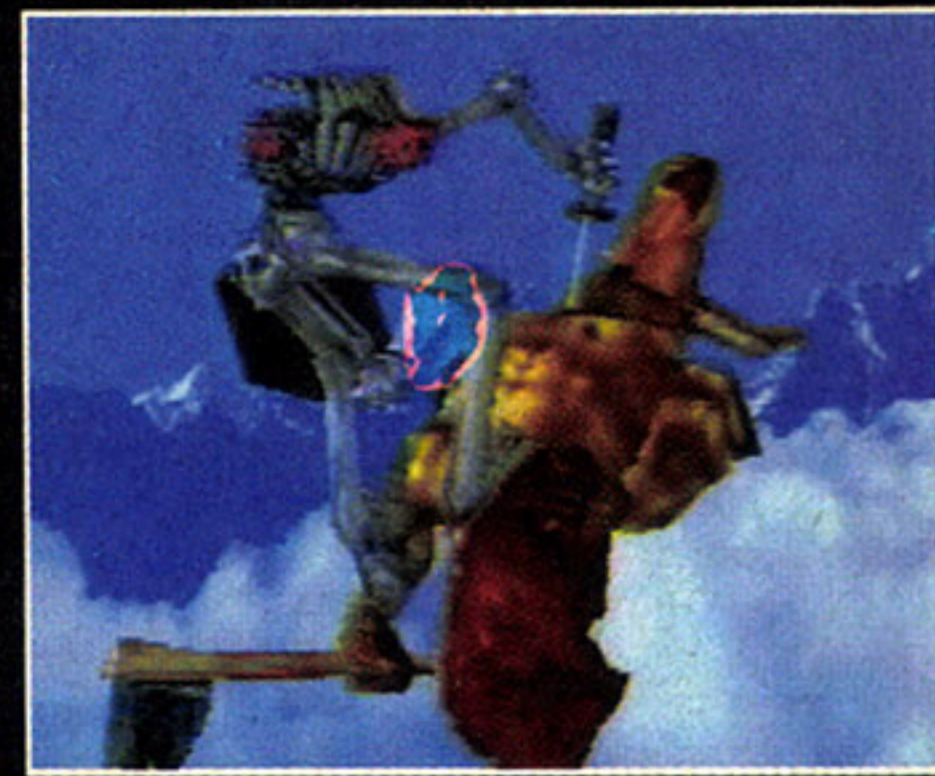
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NO MERCY!



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THE STRONGER, FASTER AND
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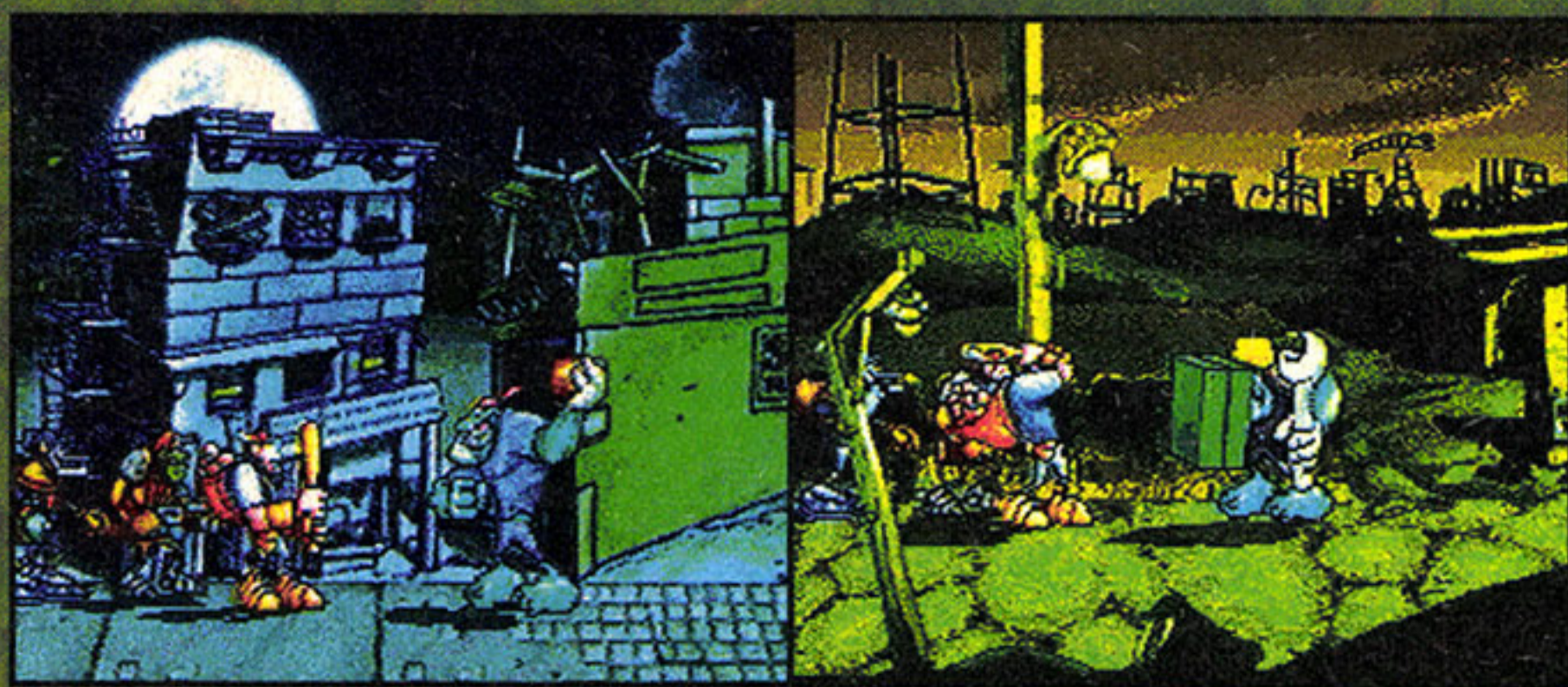
DIE LIKE FREAK



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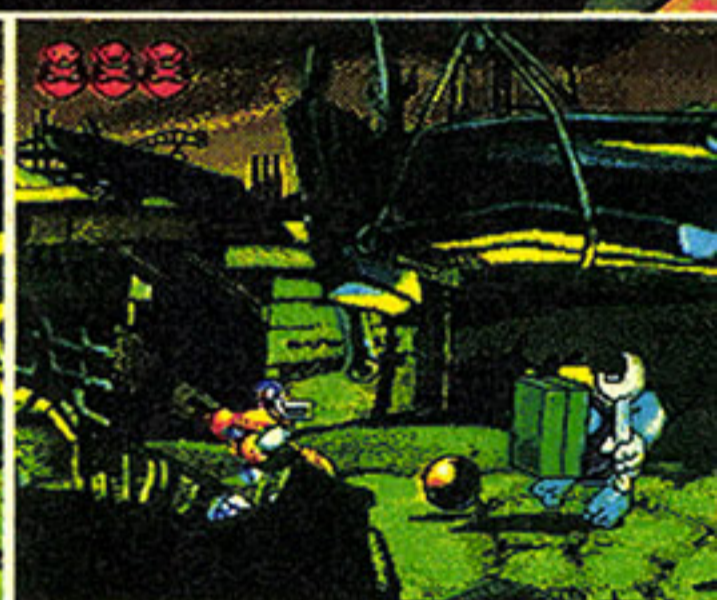
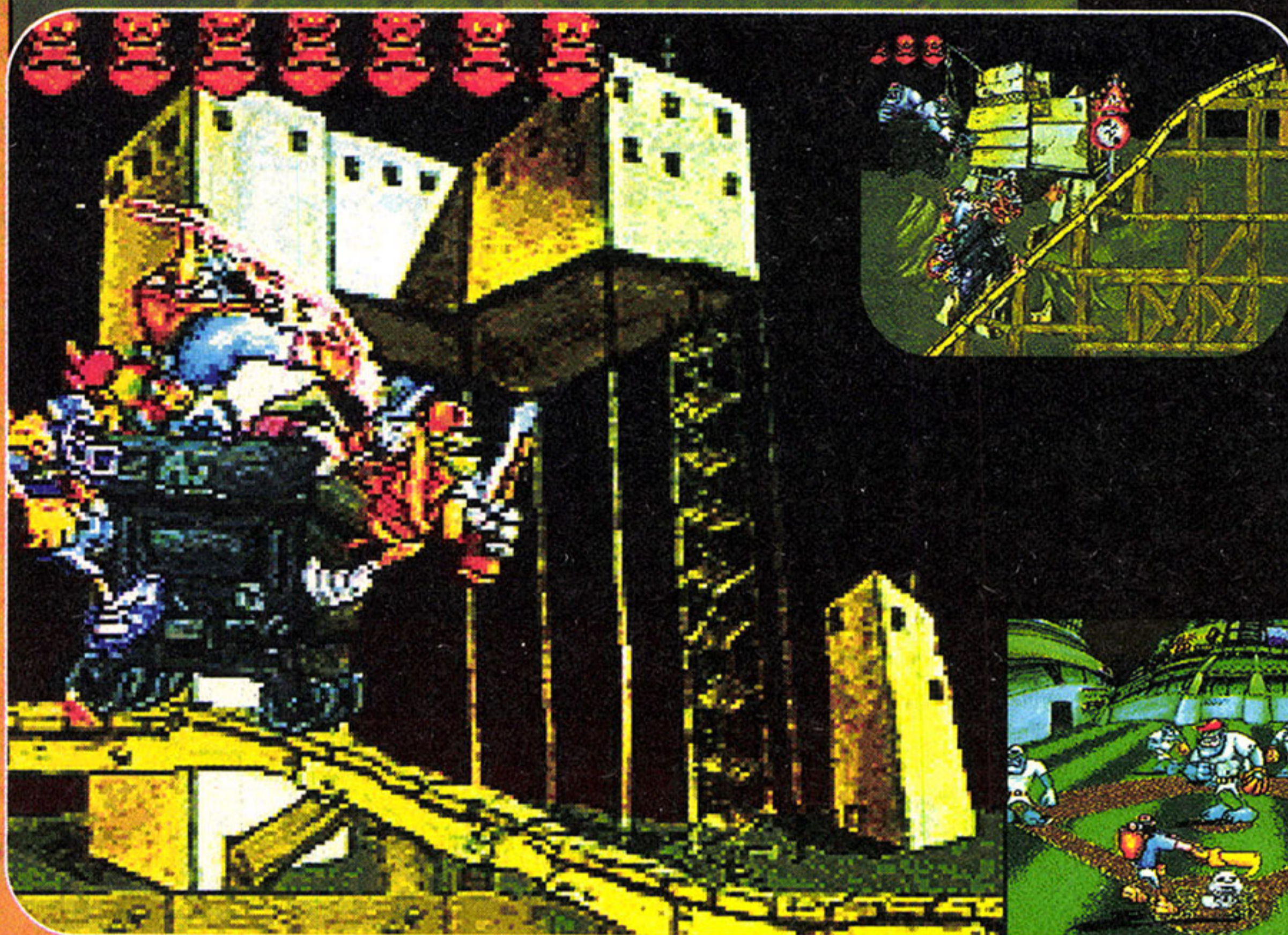


Though sprite-based, *Three Dirty Dwarves* allows a certain amount of 3D freedom of movement.

Three Dirty Dwarves

SegaSoft for Saturn

Falling into the category of 'more than meets the eye', SegaSoft's *Three Dirty Dwarves* is looking to be a bizarre little release for the Saturn. Primarily a side-scrolling action game with 3D depth of play, the game is peppered by unique little bonus-type rounds, adding a good bit of variety to the action. Essentially the game is done in *Final Fight* style, as you battle your way through various different levels and enemies. What's immediately different about this title, however, is the fact that, instead of controlling just one character, you're actually in charge of a team of three, hence the name. Each character has different skills and weapons and therefore a big part of the challenge is to use the right character for the right situation. In the end, the charm of this game is in the attitude and animation. With all the irreverence possible in a side-scrolling action game, *Three Dirty Dwarves* is an interesting game, to say the least.



Expect to meet all sorts interesting enemy characters along the way. This is a guarantee.



Though most of the game is side-scrolling action gaming, there are quite a few bonus-type rounds to keep the variety level high.

Virtua Cop 2

Sega for Saturn

Buddy, if you loved the first one, then prepare for an even better game this time around. All the great gameplay elements of the original *Virtua Cop* are back, as well as some hot, new sequences like high-speed car chases and subway hostage situations. From what we've seen so far, the Saturn version is yet another dead-on conversion of the arcade game. We all know what a great thing it is to have near-perfect AM2 arcade titles running right in your own home. Dust off that Stunner, *Virtua Cop 2* is on its way and looking awfully damn good!



This time around, the game plays much more like a Hollywood cop movie.



Keep your trigger finger at the ready, since *Virtua Cop 2* plays even faster than the original.



FREE PLAY



FREE PLAY PRESS

With even more detailed graphics than the original, *Virtua Cop 2* is sure to be another huge hit for Sega this year.

Incredible Hulk

EIDOS for Saturn/PlayStation

Some of the rendered art gives you an idea of the characters that are going to be in the game.



Domark recently purchased U.S. Gold and all its holdings to form EIDOS Interactive. Easily, the best thing Domark got in the whole deal was Core Design (makers of *Tomb Raider*). The *Incredible Hulk* is another game that the very busy Core team is working on. The version we were playing the other day is way too early to make any judgements. The one thing that is clear by the demo is the type of game it's going to be. The *Incredible Hulk* features a green guy running, jumping, and generally grunting through a series of 3D levels. Kind of like a *Final Fight* in 3D, the Hulk gets to pick up boxes and toss them at his poor, defenseless foes.

The game definitely has a 32-bit look, with some real clean texture-maps, and the Hulk moves extremely smooth. Once we get a more finished version, we'll do a more in-depth preview of Core's latest effort.



Now here's the big green guy running and jumping around a 3D background. It doesn't look as good as the SGI version, but it's still nice.

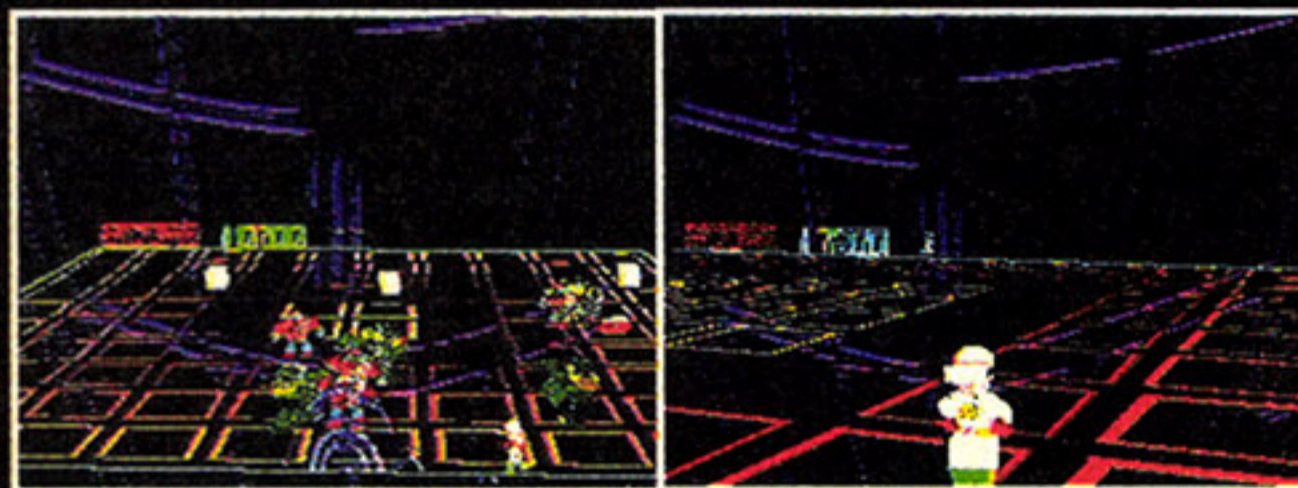
Robotron X

Williams for PlayStation/N64

Filed under retro-gaming, *Robotron X* is the latest in a series of revamped arcade classics. The difference between this one and most of the other revamps, however, is that this one is on the right track for being pretty good. Released first as an arcade title from Williams, *Robotron X* takes all the great overhead shooter action of the original *Robotron* and shines it up with

some great techno tracks, fancy new lighting effects and, of course, hot new action. If you loved the original, you're sure to think this game is the cat's pajamas, otherwise, you may be tempted to think of as just another pretty good overhead shooter. Either way, the PlayStation version and the soon-to-come N64 version are both guaranteed to bring a smile to the faces of gamers, young and old alike.

With its techno soundtrack and fancy lighting, this is definitely a '90's version of the arcade classic.



The original *Robotron* may have seemed fast at the time, but compared to *Robotron X*, the original is stuck in slow-motion.

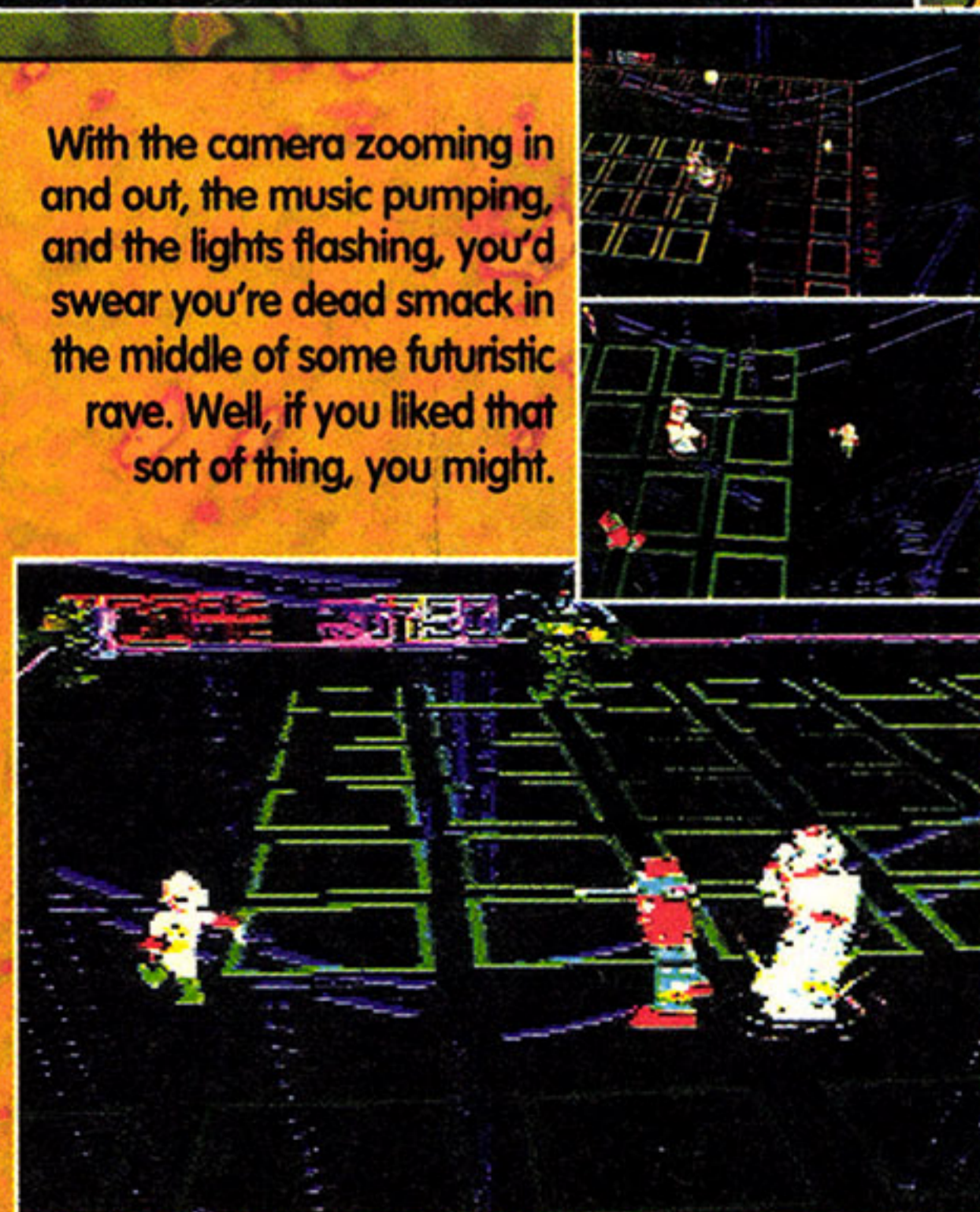


The car-chase scene is one of the most dramatic scenes ever in a light-gun game.



Wasn't there some saying about God sorting them out?

With the camera zooming in and out, the music pumping, and the lights flashing, you'd swear you're dead smack in the middle of some futuristic rave. Well, if you liked that sort of thing, you might.





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Japanese PREVIEW

これが長〜い2画面!

Darius II

Taito for Saturn



▲ワイドスクリーンの映画を見ているような感じ

The wide screen mode truly enhances the experience of this side-scrolling action game for those ready to take advantage of the technology.

Enemy Zero

Warp for Saturn

From the creators of the spooky masterpiece, *D*, comes the next step in graphic adventure gaming. When *D* was first released on the 3DO and later on Saturn and PlayStation, the impact it made was made even more exciting by considering the tools used in creating it. Starting out with extremely limited funds, Warp set out to create the ultimate horror game with little more than simple Amiga hardware — and what a job they did. *Enemy Zero*, on the other hand is being done with the benefit of high-end graphic workstations. The difference is clear from these early screen shots.



From the masters of the spooky graphic adventure, Warp, comes the futuristic stylings of *Enemy Zero*.

Another feature shared by both *Enemy Zero* and *D* is the main character Laura Louis, although the setting is as far from the original as one could imagine. This time around, instead of being locked in a haunted mansion, the setting is a space station and the time is far in the future. Also added to *Enemy Zero* are first-person (*Doom*-like) passages used to explore the game's 3D environment. This new feature, added to the already-proven pre-rendered sequences of a game like *D*, should make for something truly special. Of course, this is the kind of game that will have to be experienced as a whole to be truly appreciated, but considering the recent history of this particular developer, we could be in for something really exciting.

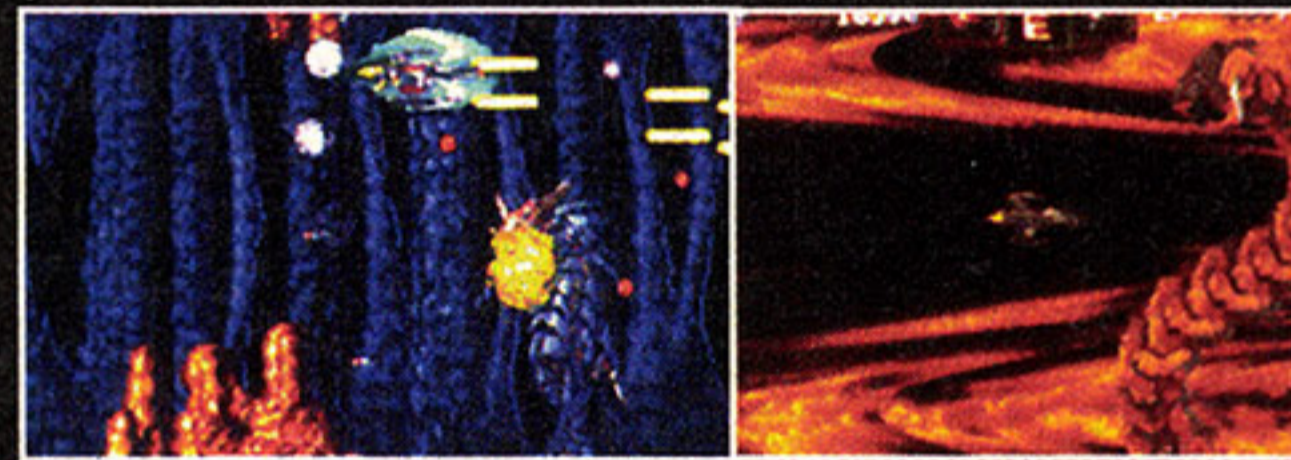


Though the main character in *Enemy Zero* is shared with that of *D*, this is not a direct sequel.

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Starting out with extremely limited funds, Warp set out to create the ultimate horror game with little more than simple Amiga hardware — and what a job they did. *Enemy Zero*, on the other hand is being done with the benefit of high-end graphic workstations. The difference is clear from these early screen shots.

Another feature shared by both *Enemy Zero* and *D* is the main character Laura Louis, although the setting is as far from the original as one could imagine. This time around, instead of being locked in a haunted mansion, the setting is a space station and the time is far in the future. Also added to *Enemy Zero* are first-person (*Doom*-like) passages used to explore the game's 3D environment. This new feature, added to the already-proven pre-rendered sequences of a game like *D*, should make for something truly special. Of course, this is the kind of game that will have to be experienced as a whole to be truly appreciated, but considering the recent history of this particular developer, we could be in for something really exciting.



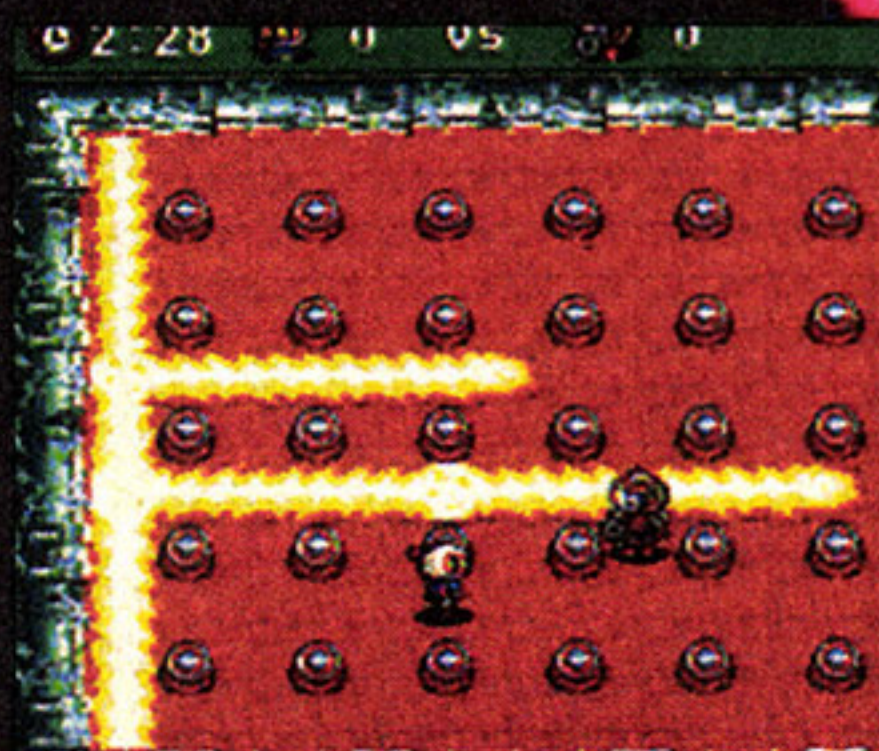
You know the drill — fly from left to right with your finger glued to the fire button! You've got to have the love, I guess.

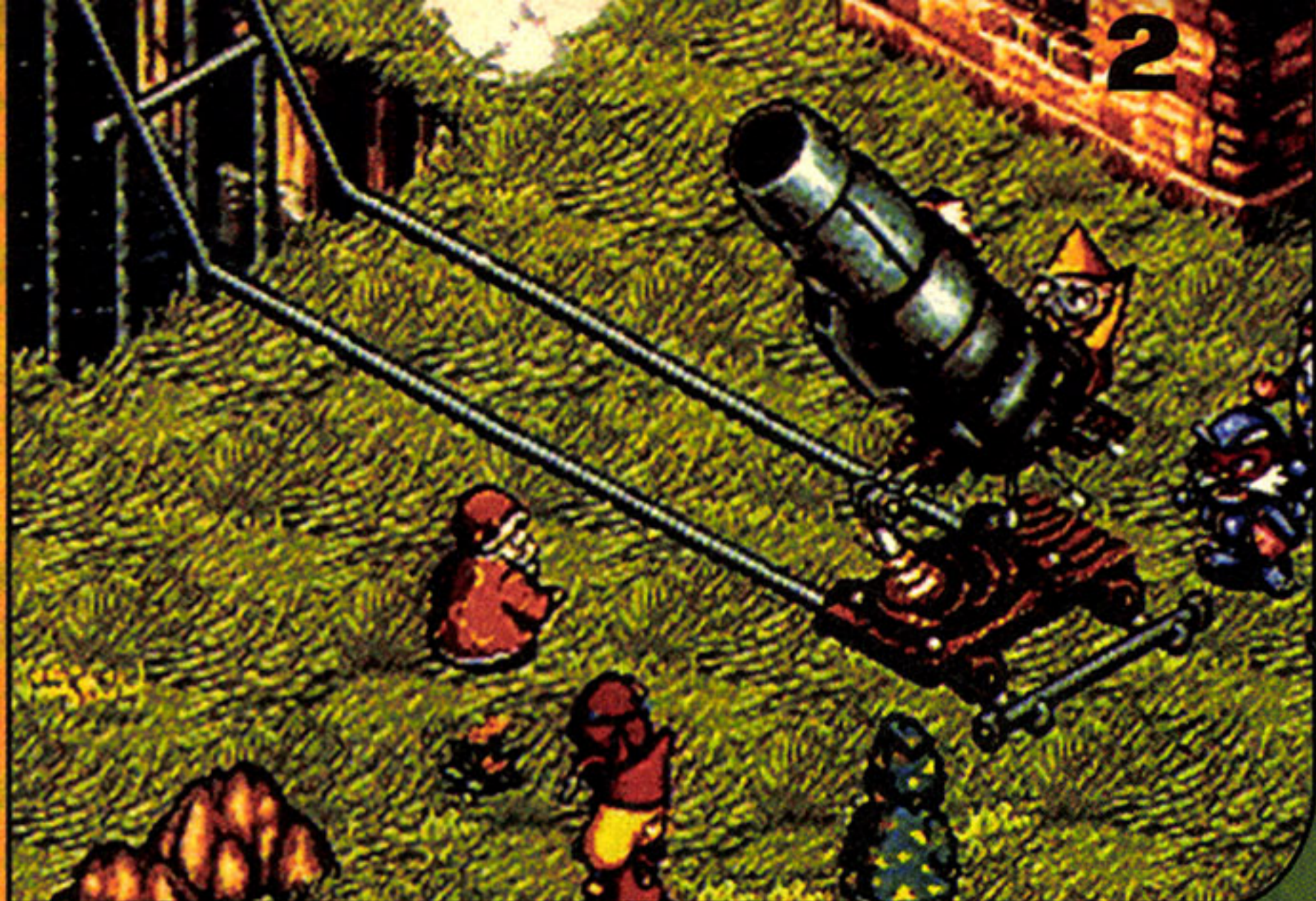
Super Bomberman 4

Hudson Soft for Super Famicom

We all knew it was coming. *Super Bomberman 4*, for Super Famicom (SNES) is finally here (or in Japan anyway). Of course, after *Super Bomberman 3* met with only lukewarm response, it's not certain that the fourth installment is going to create much more excitement than the last. The point is, after you achieve perfection with the first sequel (*Super Bomberman 2*), where are you going to go?

From what we've seen so far, we're in store for even more fun with *Super Bomberman 4*, but don't expect any great departures.





Popolo Crois

Sony for PlayStation

Though the waiting continues in the US for great RPGs on the PlayStation,

the situation is significantly different in Japan, where great-looking games like *Popolo Crois* are being developed at an alarming rate. What is strange about the 32-bit RPG movement in Japan is the fact that most of the titles in development are sticking pretty close to the traditional RPG strategy and design. Though Americans as a whole may never understand Japan's fascination with Super-Deformed characters doing battle with giant dragons and the like, there is little doubt that when it comes to crafting a masterful adventure, the Japanese well is very deep, indeed. Considering this history, the success of *Popolo Crois* will not depend so much on technical prowess, but rather on good solid story-telling fundamentals.

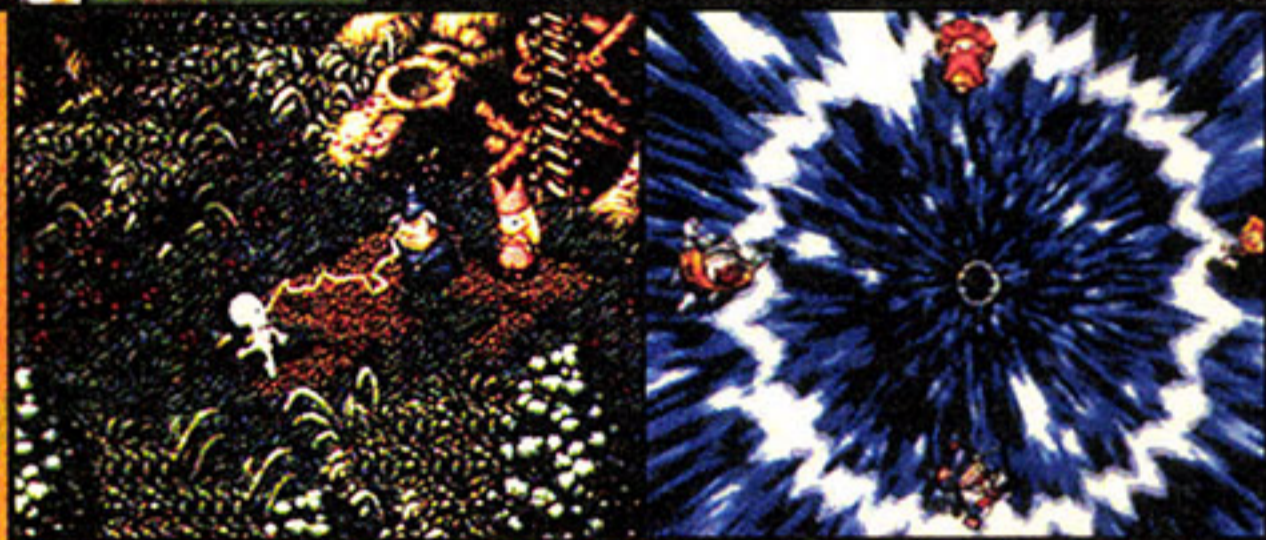
As far as the graphics go, this one actually seems to skew a little young even by Japanese standards. With brighter colors than usual and younger characters in general, this title does not look to be taking itself very seriously. However this game turns out in the end, it's still likely to be one more quality RPG title for the PlayStation that is not likely to be available in the States. As we



Bright colors and young characters make *Popolo Crois* a likely candidate for younger gamers.

anxiously await the long-delayed arrival of *Beyond the Beyond* and *Arc The Lad*, development on the second and even third wave of Japanese RPGs continues full speed ahead!

Utilizing an isometric, overhead view, *Popolo Crois* strays just slightly from the typical overhead approach.

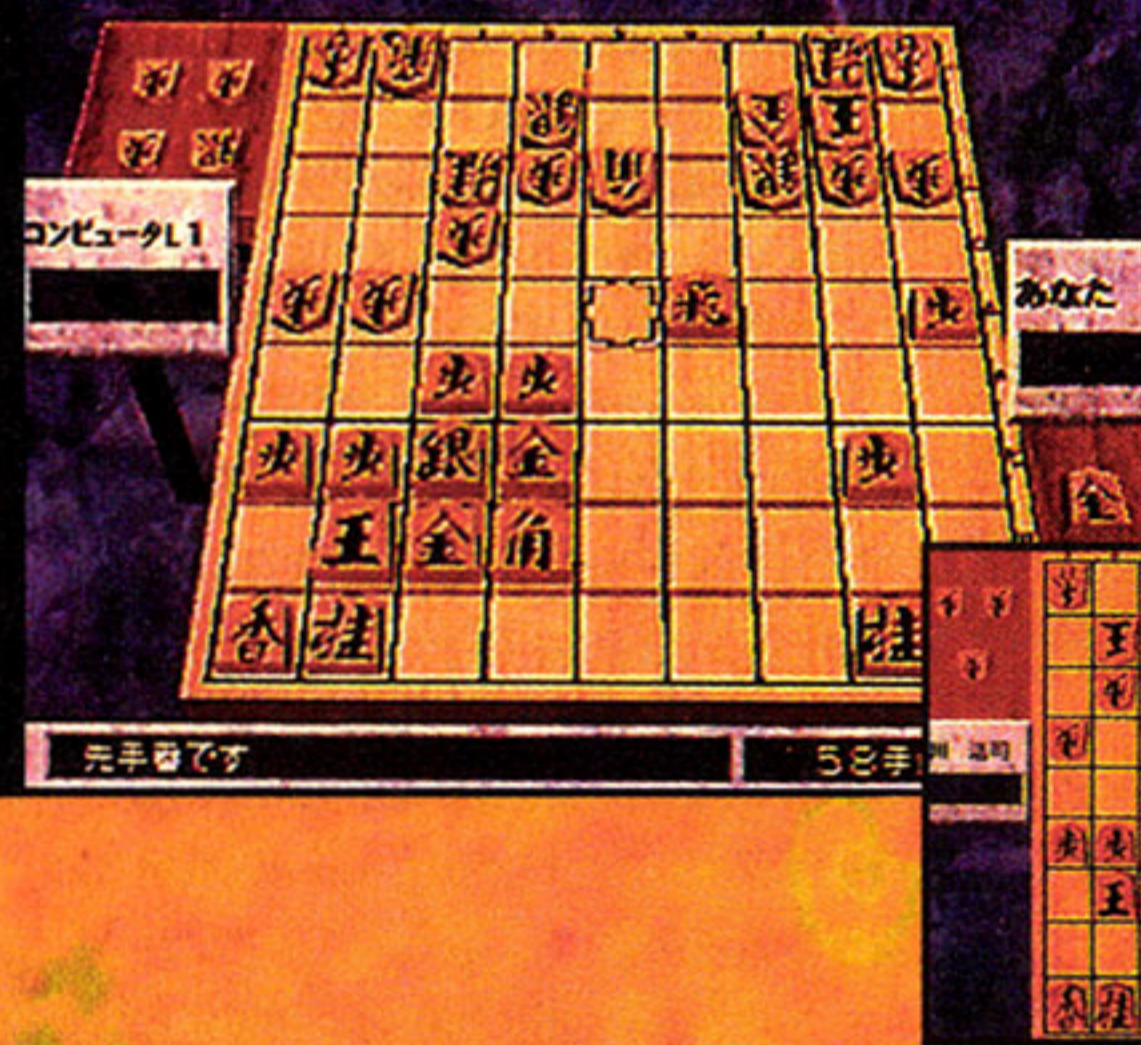


Don't let the cuteness of the game fool you though, there's still some deadly work to be done if you expect to get anywhere.

Habu Nanakano no Saikyo Habu Shogi

Seta for Nintendo 64

Well, if the name doesn't get you, then the fact that it's never coming to the US will. *Habu Nanakano no Saikyo Habu Shogi* is, as close as we can gather from early development reports, a chess-like game of sorts. And before you even ask, no, this game is not meant to demonstrate the power of the Nintendo 64, but rather to create a simple way to enjoy a timeless strategy game.



It's not exactly chess, but that's as close as our American comparisons are going to get you.

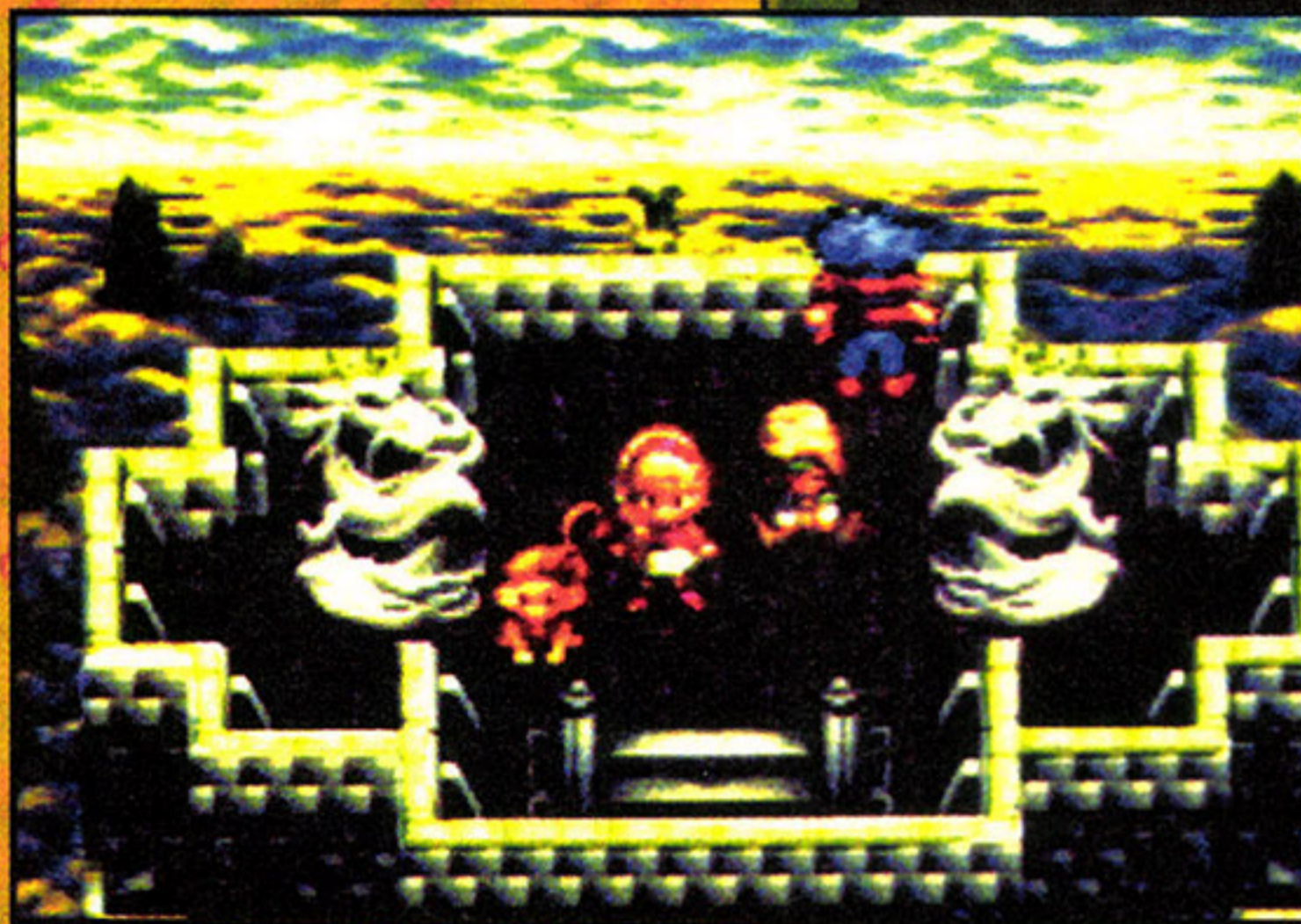
Treasure Hunter G

Square for Super Famicom

From the makers of some of the greatest RPGs of all times, such

as the *Final Fantasy* series and *Chrono Trigger*, comes perhaps the last great RPG for 16-bit.

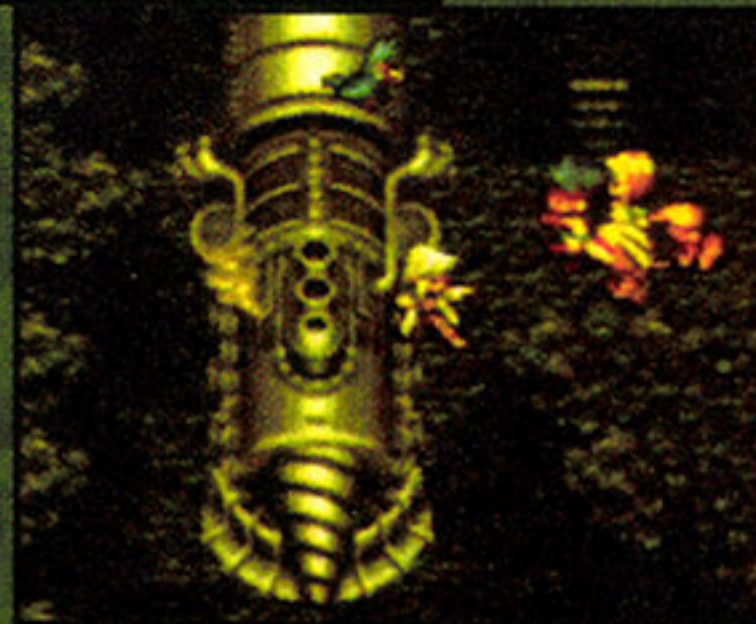
Treasure Hunter G is certain to follow the Square formula pretty closely. Expect all the top-notch character design, story development and adventurous fun for which Square has become known. It should also be noted that with Square allegiances shifting to Sony and the PlayStation, this could be the last time for die-hard Nintendo fans to experience Square's magic touch!



I've said it before and I'll say it again — if it's got a monkey in it, you just know it's going to be good!

Adding new graphics, new obstacles and new attacks can do little more, at this point, then emphasize the fact that this game has already been done to perfection!

Who needs a new system when you can still get great-looking games like *Treasure Hunter G* on 16-bit?





STAR GLADIATOR

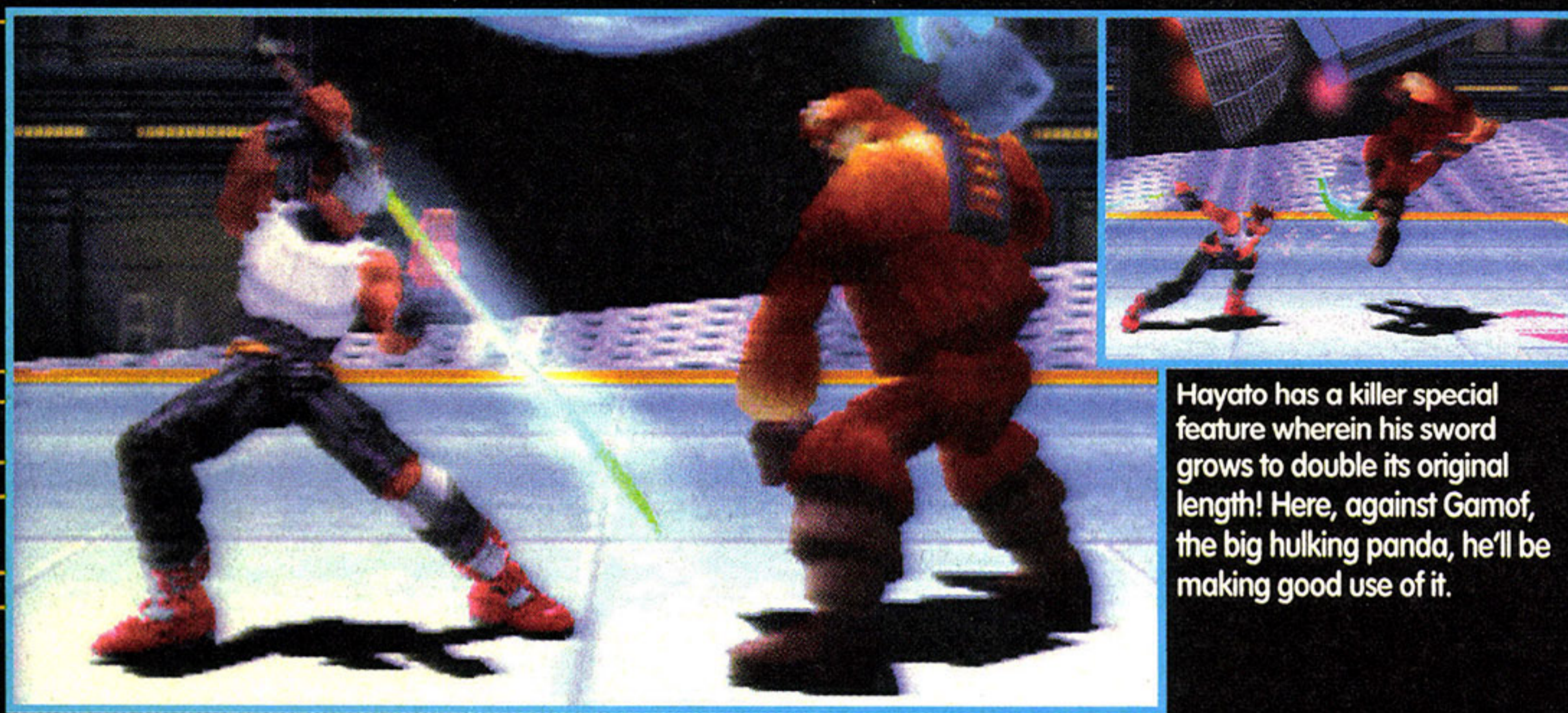
So often when considering Capcom's future, one finds oneself asking the question 'when?' When will Capcom develop in 3D, when will Capcom make a fighting game in 3D, when will Capcom make *Street Fighter* in 3D?

Rather than plumb the depths of history, as did Namco with its phenomenal weapon-based beat-'em-up *Soul Edge*, Capcom plunged into a science fiction-influenced future, where the single agent, Plasma, will determine the fate of the earth.

have created wonderful, likable, anime-styled characters for *Star Gladiators*. These stylish polygonal, texture-mapped fighters range from June, who looks like a fashion model of the future, to Vector, a robotic arsenal; Zelkin, a birdlike humanoid; Saturn, a Cool Pop-green, cone-headed alien; Gamof, a massive panda; Hayato, a modern sword fighter; Rimgal, a raptor with a mean bite; and Gore, a brainy looking chemist who's the only character in the game who's able to grow 10 times his original size.

Unlike Midway's bizarre *War Gods*, which enables many of its characters to have large range of very similar special moves, *Gladiators* provides more individuality in the moves of each fighter, lending the game a solid sense of depth and playability. Besides his ability to grow, Gore spurts sleepy bubbles and paralyzing mist out of his hand gun. Both munitions take full advantage of PlayStation's library of special effects. Zelkin can

fly, and enjoys one of the game's better special moves, an aerial slam which takes full advantage of the active panning camera, as he is shown shooting into the blue sky with his assailant (shown from ground level), and then plunging down to crush his opponent's head into the ground. Gamof sports a sweet 'home run' move, in which he picks up the opponent and then uppercuts him like he was hitting a grand slam; and Saturn, the silliest of all the group by far, is armed with a gratuitous Michael Jackson moon walk dance move and extremely large, sharp yo-yos, which can be brutal.



Hayato has a killer special feature wherein his sword grows to double its original length! Here, against Gamof, the big hulking panda, he'll be making good use of it.

When will Sakura turn 18? *Star Gladiators* is the answer to each of these queries. Well, almost.

The newest arcade fighter from one of the leaders of cult fighting is a strong first entry into the 3D fighting arena, employing everything from freaky characters, attacks and defense in 3D, aerial moves, killer chain combos, and special throws. Capcom's developers have approached the world of three dimensions with interesting care and intuitive design, and the attention to detail shows up best in the game's interface, its strategic fighting design, and in the peculiar moves with which each character is saddled.

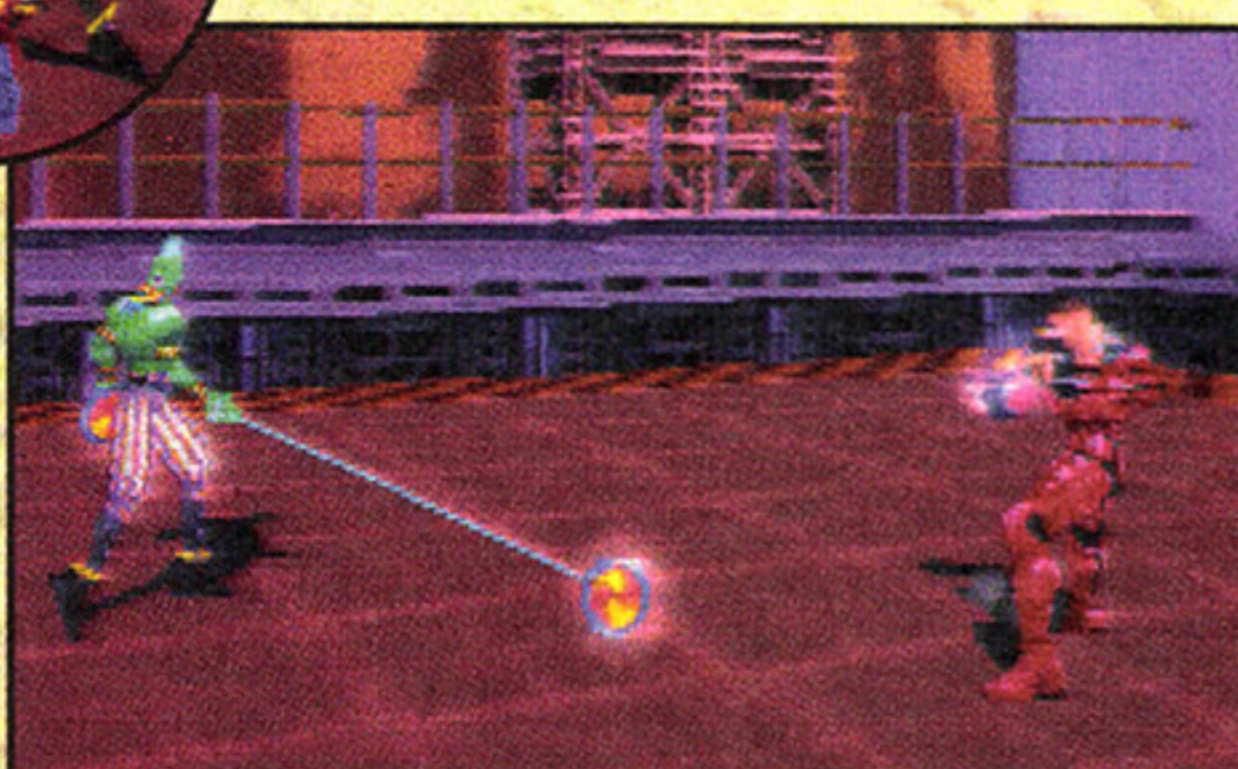
In the year 2348, humans and aliens cohabit and emigrate from planet to planet. Edward Bilstein, a Nobel-winning physicist, discovers humanity's 'sixth sense' (the nebulous Plasma), and discovers how to use it as an energy source for his own purposes. Bilstein, in short, becomes mad with power and means to take over Earth. The blue planet's reigning Federation finds a rag-tag group of plasma-fighters, former Bilstein followers, to battle the loony plasma putz for dominance of Earth. Sound kinda like Saturday morning cartoons?

Let's not answer that one. As with all Capcom games, the designers





June and Geralt meet in the battle of plasma. June is super quick and agile, and her 0-ring, while initially appearing to be a silly little weapon, wreaks certain havoc on her enemies. Her flip kick is also quick, surprising and lethal.



Saturn, the cone-headed alien in green, is one of our favorite characters, and surely is the most annoying to his opponents. Saturn, here, walks the dog. His double yo-yos can stretch out to extreme lengths, and when one of his special moves is engaged, he flips on his head and the yo-yos cover about half of the arena. As Geralt's attacks whollop Saturn, beautiful crackling beams of light fly forth.



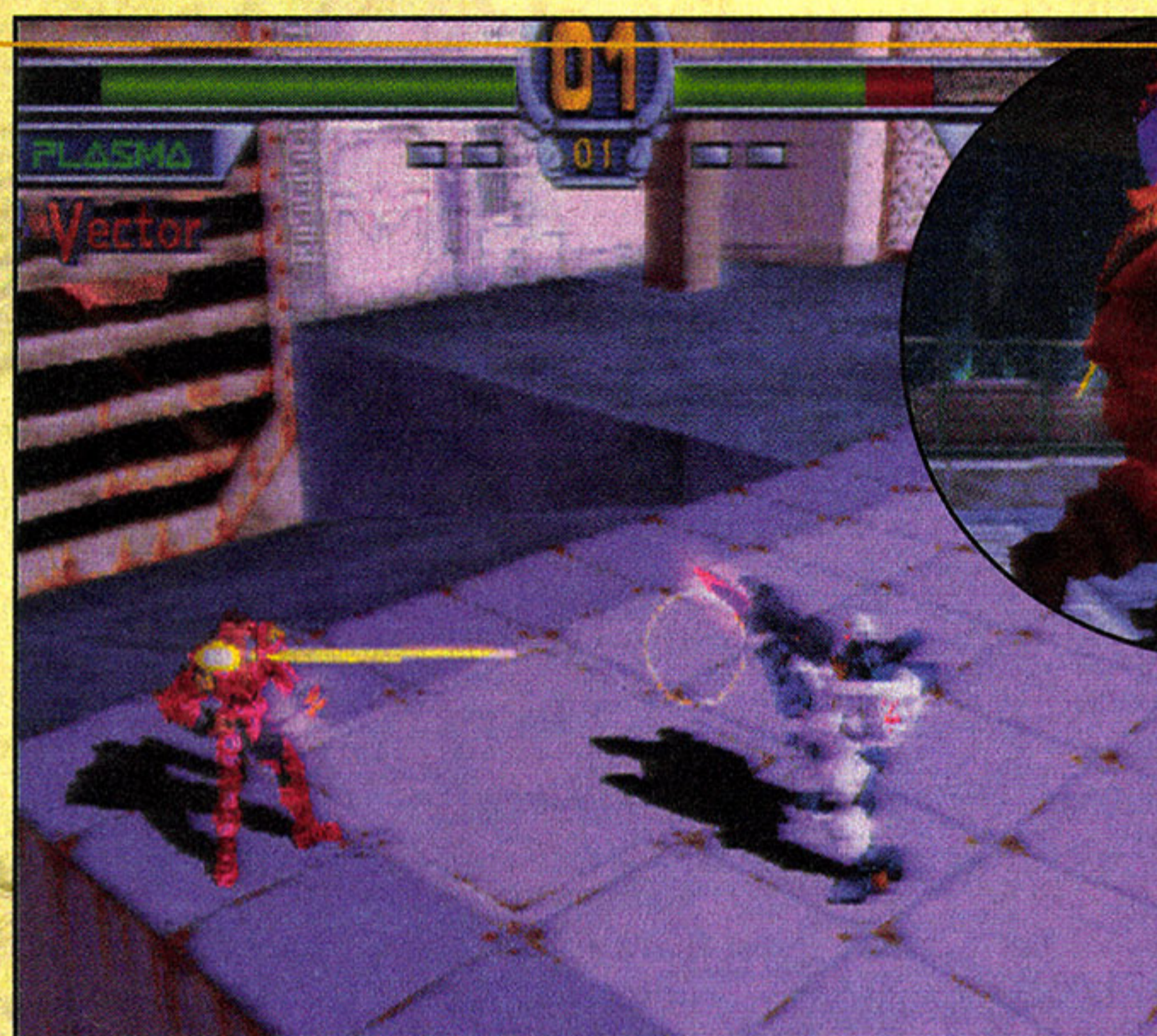
Building on the large array of 2D fighters in its illustrious past, Capcom equipped *Gladiators* with a linking feature that takes advantage of learning various combinations, which, if executed correctly, lead to a six-move Plasma Combo, far more powerful than any single move. A meter in the screen's right-hand corner actually shows the linking in effect when the correct moves are made, so they can be memorized. In addition, when done correctly in the chain, these moves are different than they would be if just executed by themselves, adding more moves to the list. And, as if to change

things around for the typical *Street Fighter* fan, this title challenges players with four buttons, instead of the Capcom's standard six. Defense in 3D works extremely intuitively and enables gamers to see that playing in 3D doesn't necessarily mean more buttons. Hold Guard and tap once left or right and your fighter will move into or out of the arena's depth. This may be the best use of a defensive move in 3D we've seen yet, due its sheer ease of use. Extra cool features also include energizing moves like Plasma Revenge and Plasma Reflect. Plasma Revenge is a single move, built-in counter. Plasma Reflect also is used when defending, but instead of being a built-in counter, this move will blow open your opponent's offense and will enable a chain combo to be built directly after.

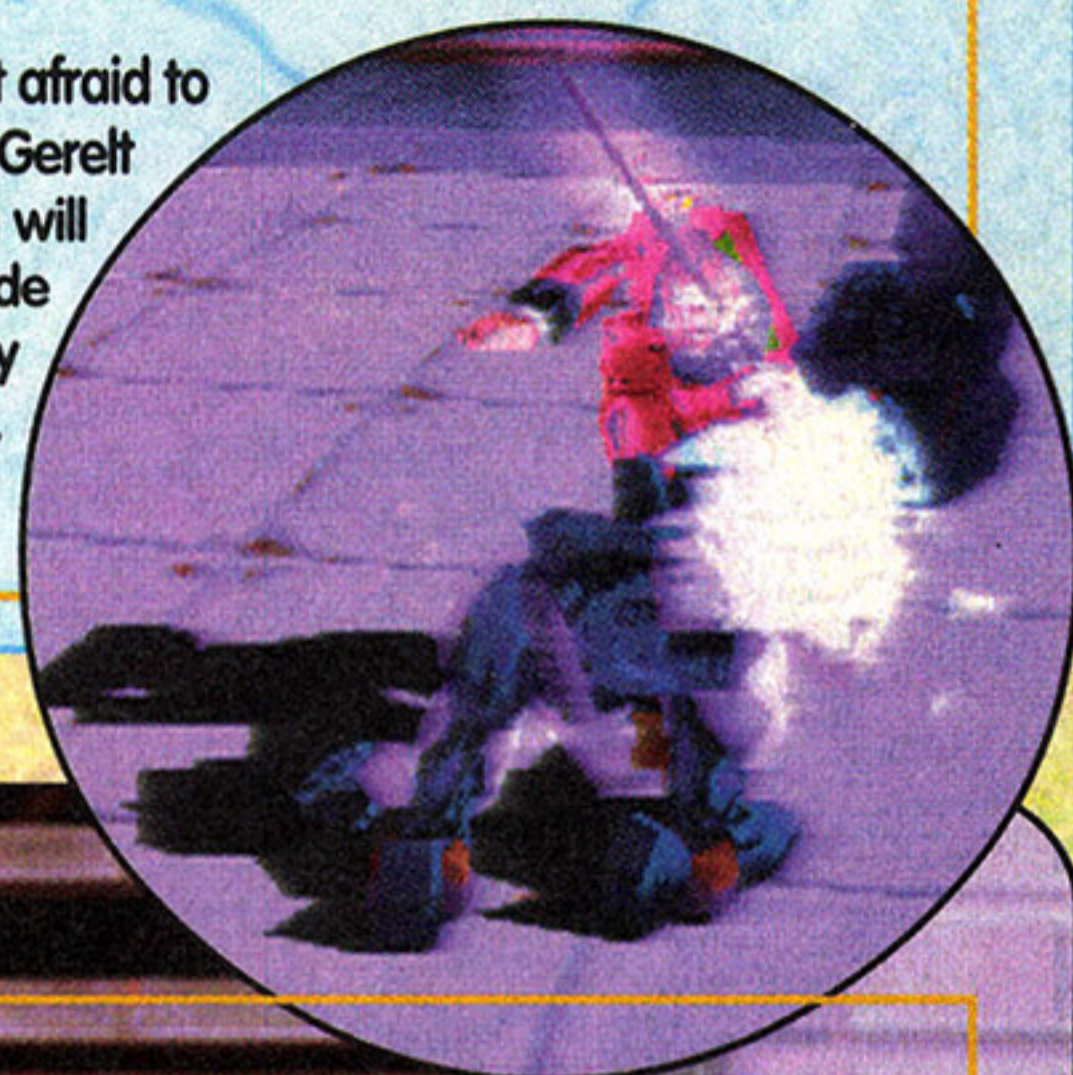
This is Capcom's second game (the first was the relatively lame PlayStation-to-arcade port *Battle Arena Toshinden*) to hit the arcades using the PlayStation-compatible arcade board, which is equivalent to Namco's System 11. This not only means that *Gladiators* will come to PlayStation, but it guarantees that the look and feel of the game will resemble other PlayStation fighters, like *Soul Edge*. This isn't to say that any of these games are alike, it just means that despite their individual differences, there is a certain look that's recognizably similar in each, like slight button delay, the ability to portray elaborate costume and character design, special effects, and texture-map shapes.

All in all, this new coin-op indulges gamers who love skill-based fighters and will whet the appetites of those who are prone to move memorization. Either way, Capcom's *Star Gladiators* is an excellent direction for the company's future line of fighters.

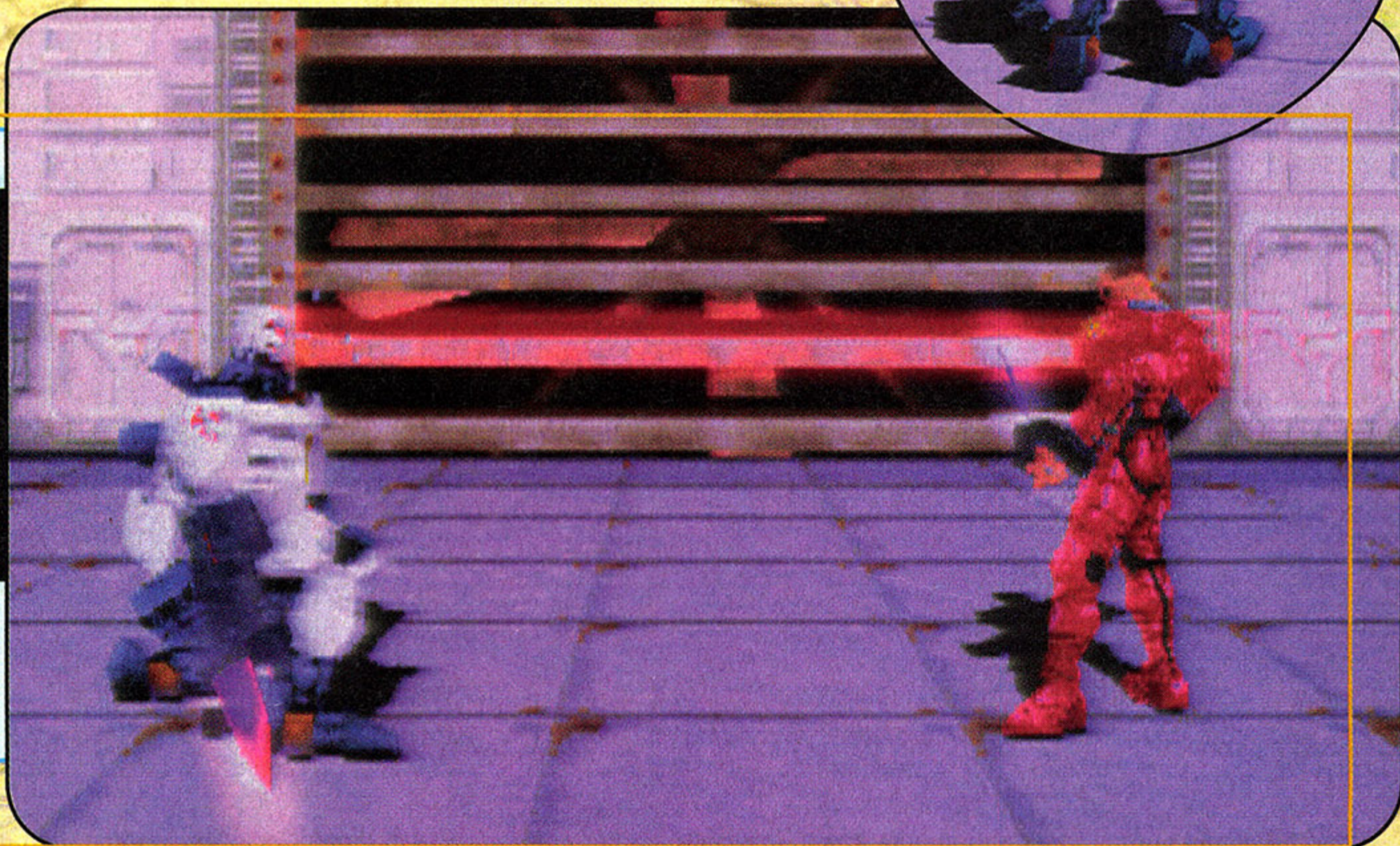
Gamof isn't the fastest panda around, but he's got a nice little plasma axe, which does the trick almost every time. Gamof may have been a baseball player in his previous life, because in this life, he's got a serious batting average. Will they let players use axes instead of bats in the future?



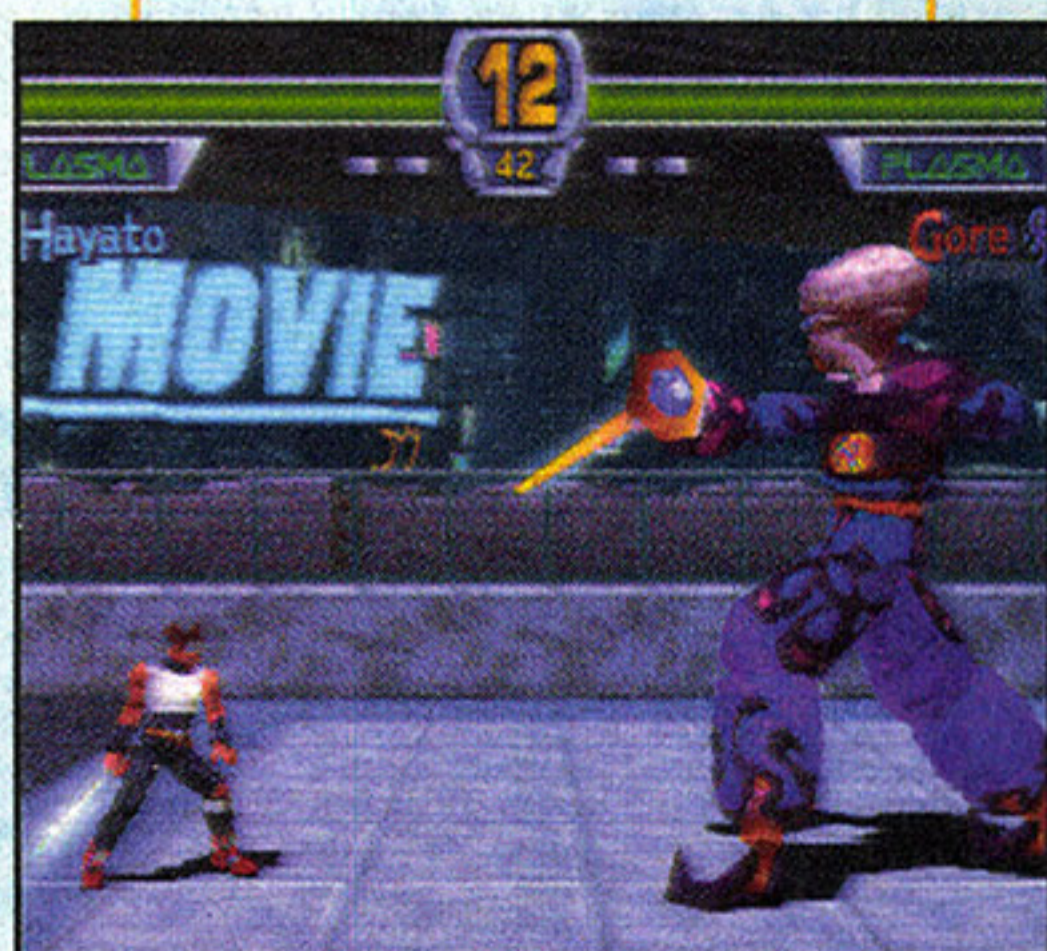
Gerelt spears his opponents, and isn't afraid to use other bizarre special moves. Gerelt must be defeated or the Earth will become his. Backgrounds include futuristic urban settings, like back alley streets and back lot industrial areas.



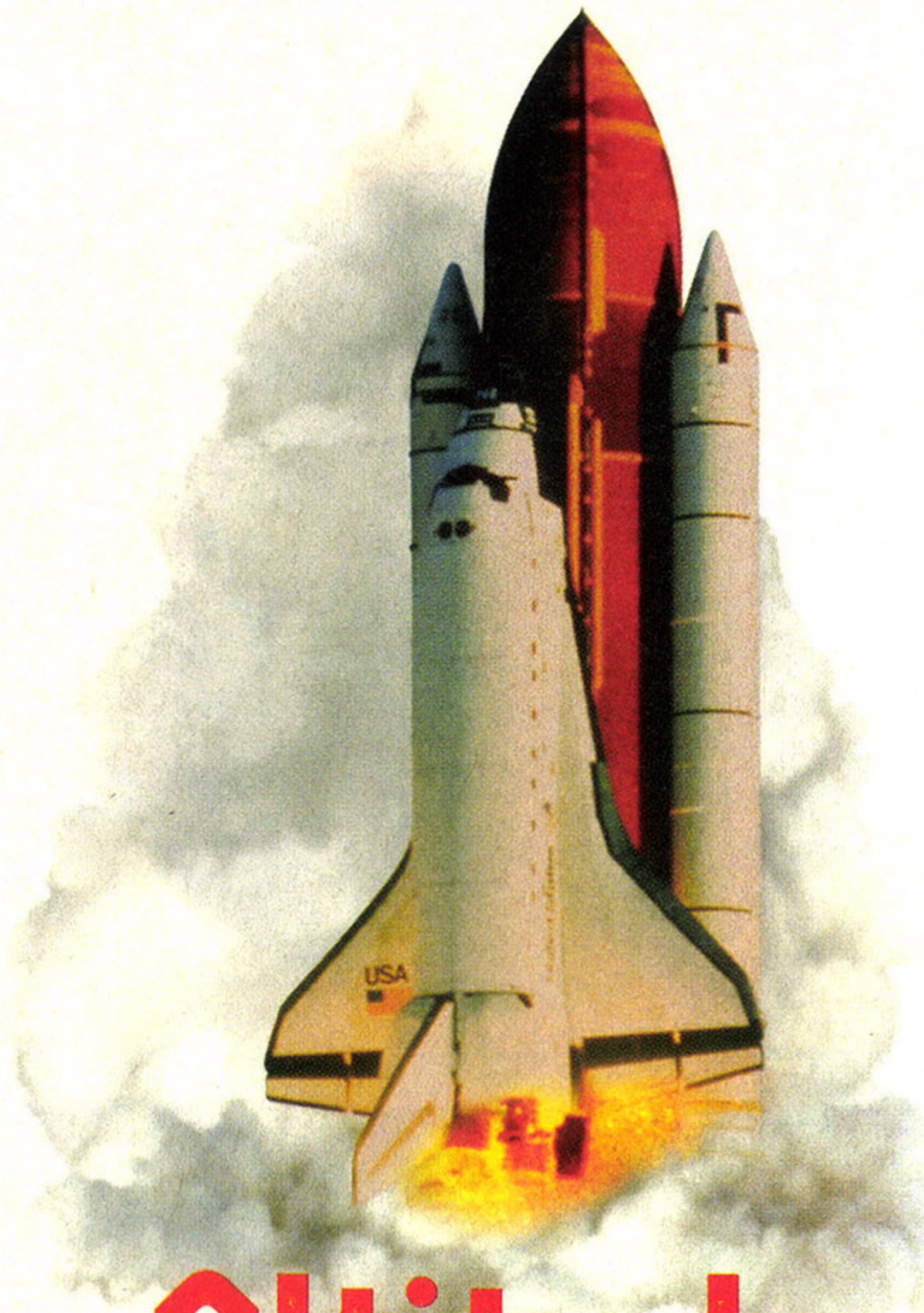
Vector has quite a few special effects. He and Gore are the weapon-meisters, and if you liked Ironman in Marvel Super heroes, then you'll like these two. Here Vector uses his eye beams to annihilate Gerelt.



Gore is the brainy type. By pulling down the joystick three times quickly, Gore grows to about ten times his original size. Unfortunately, with the exception of one pretty cool move, in which Gore stomps his opponent flat, the brainy big guy is just a better target at this size.



Hayato and Gore play 'kill the guy in the arena.'



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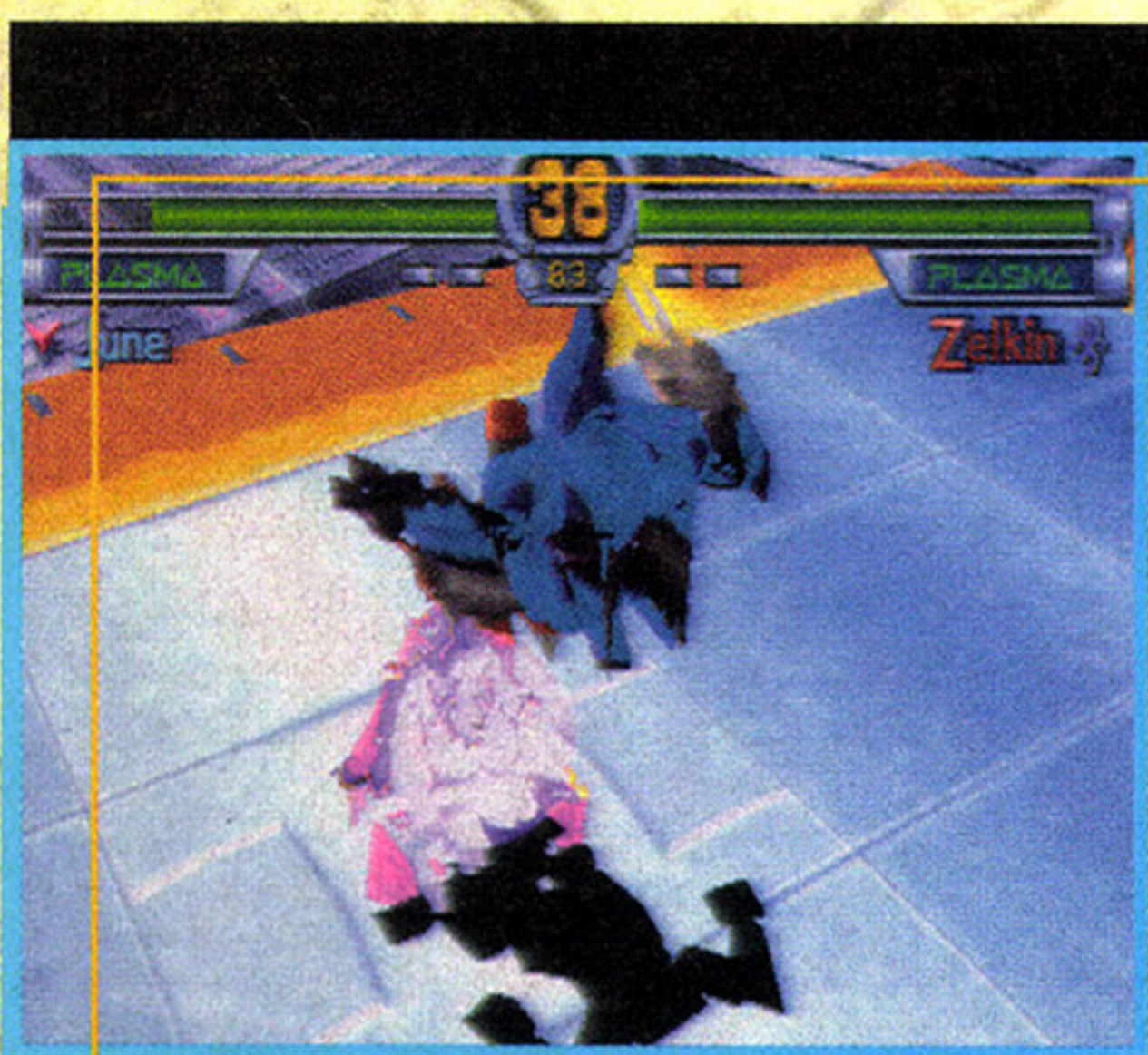
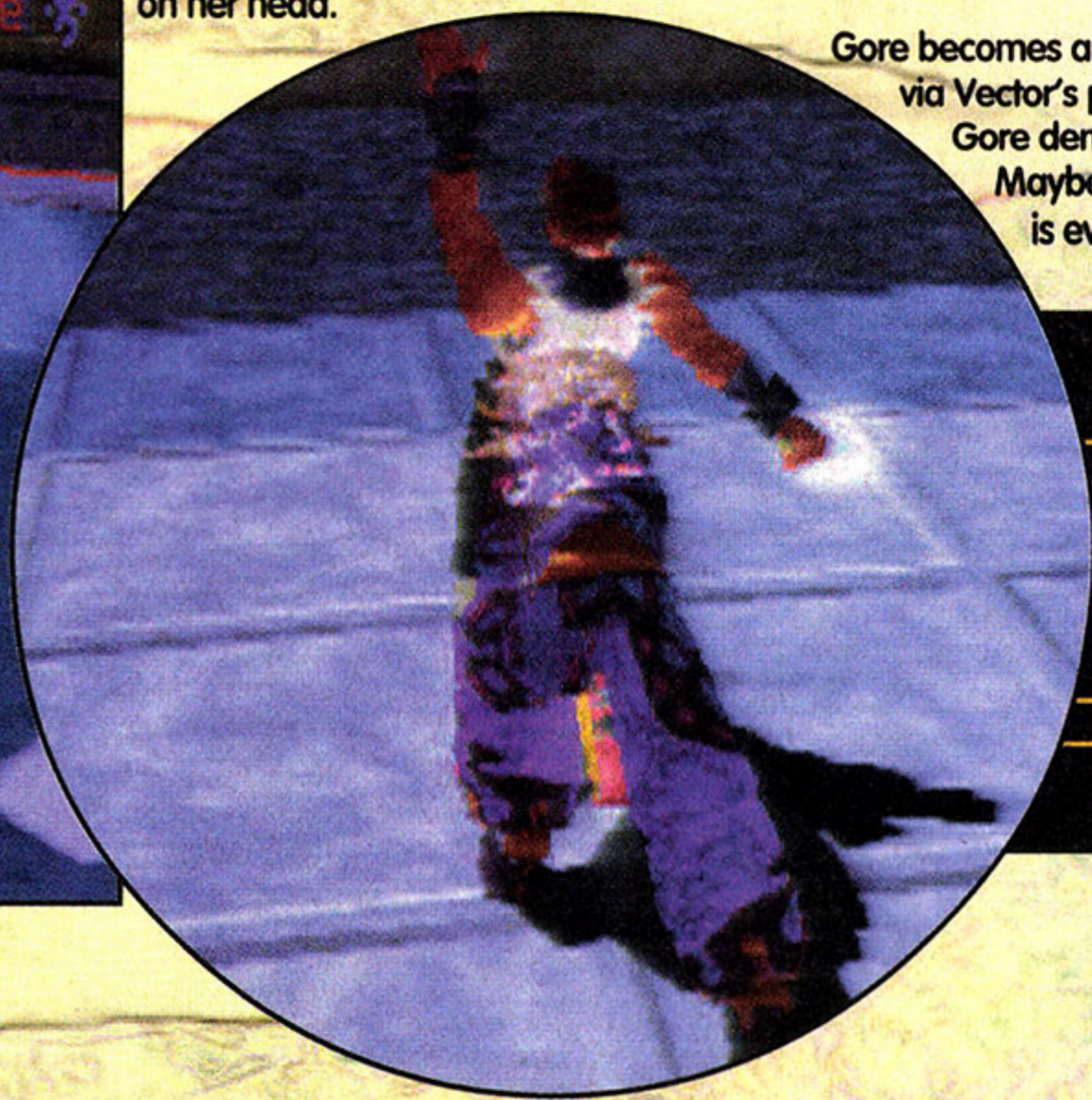


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Zelkin, the bird-man, takes little fashion girl June for a ride and plants her on her head.

Gore becomes a nice shish-ka-bob via Vector's pulse projectile. Gore demolishes Vector. Maybe size is everything...



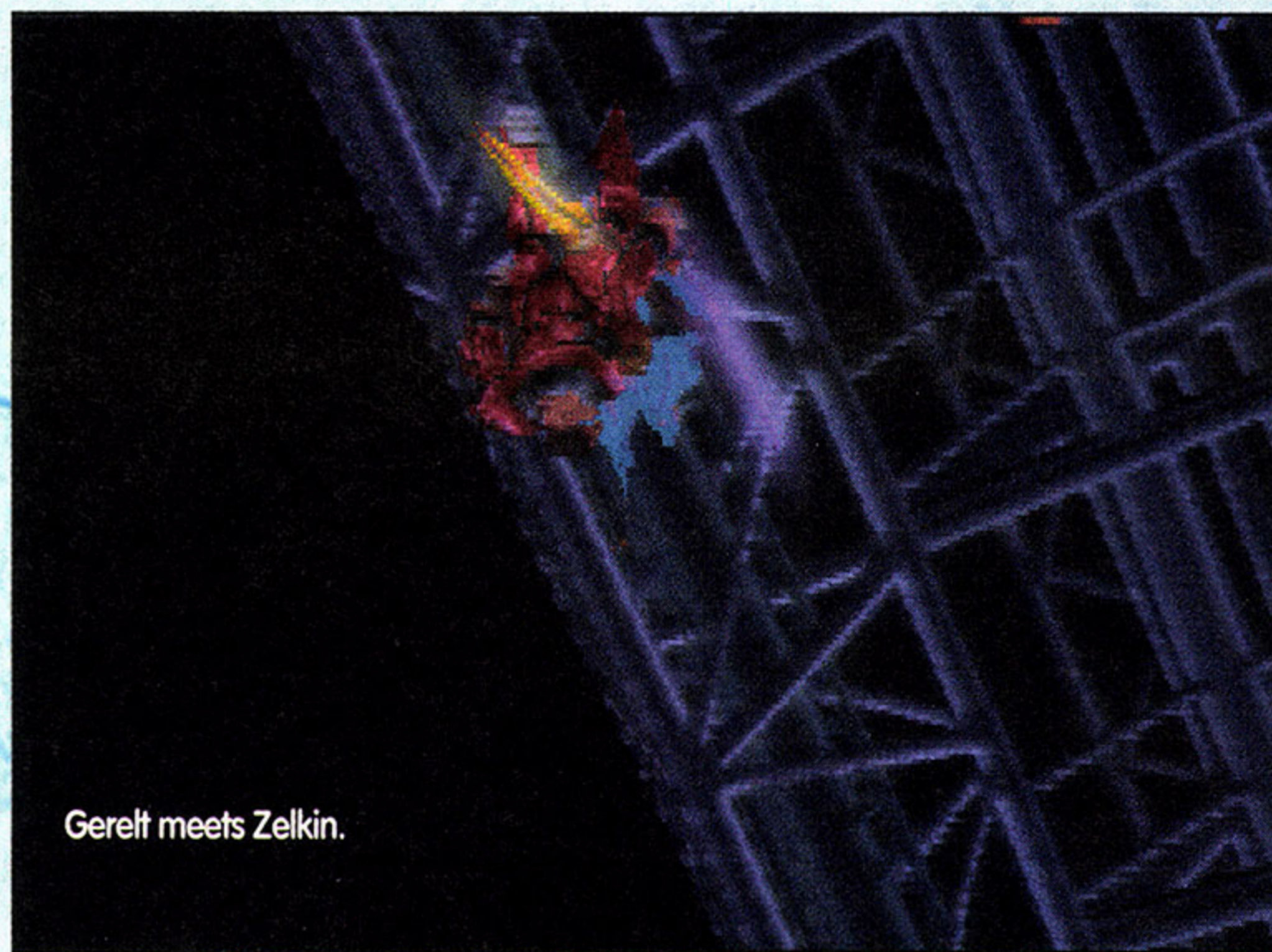
Does anyone think Zelkin looks anything like a blue Big Bird from Sesame Street? Nah, we didn't think so, either.



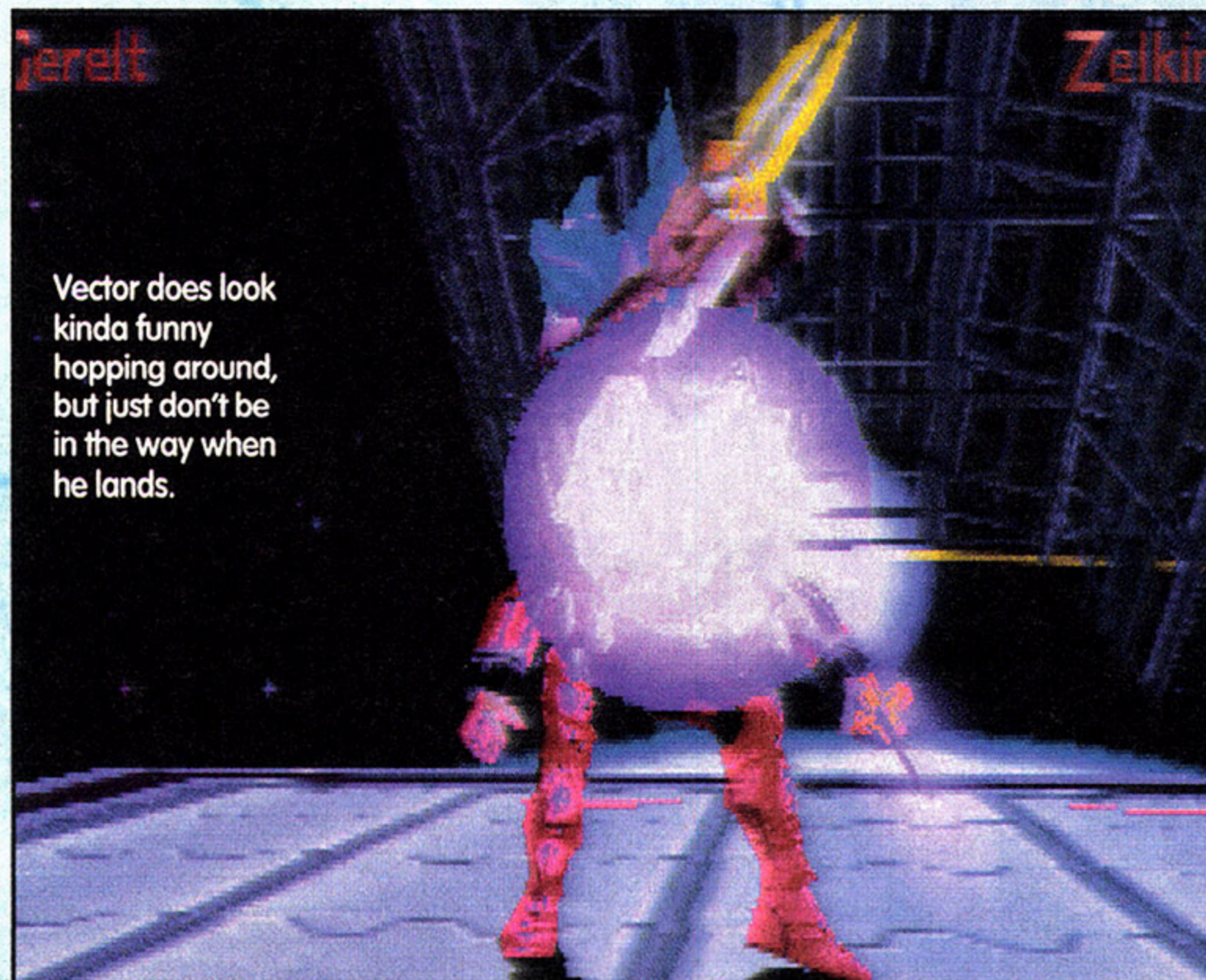
Zelkin flies into the air and can stay there for a few seconds, and is capable of at least two moves from that point. Here, he comes down for a sword slash, which can be defended against with a regular block.



Here is the biggy. Zelkin picks his opponent up, brings them into the air, and zooms them head-first into the pavement. Ouch, that's gotta hurt.



Gerelt meets Zelkin.



Vector does look kinda funny hopping around, but just don't be in the way when he lands.

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camera angles, CD stereo sound. You know, icing on the cake stuff that makes World Series Baseball™ II so real, you expect to see commercials between innings. But you won't. Thank goodness.

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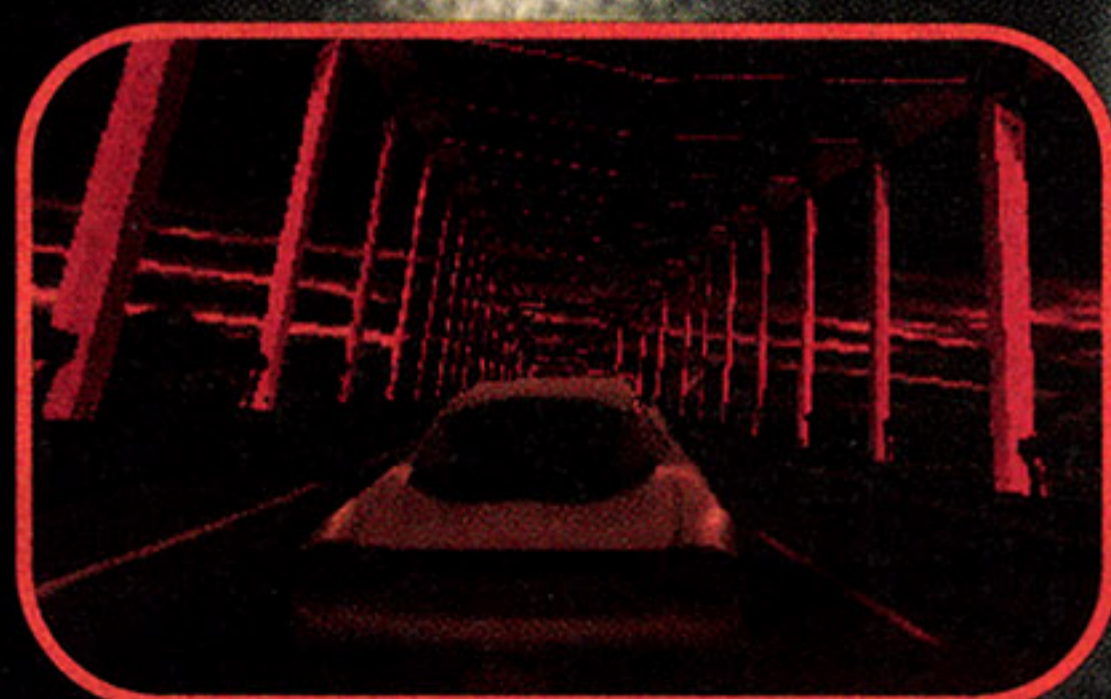
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All of which erupt, depending on you, with fiery crashes. And yeah, you can replay each one instantly. Sicko.



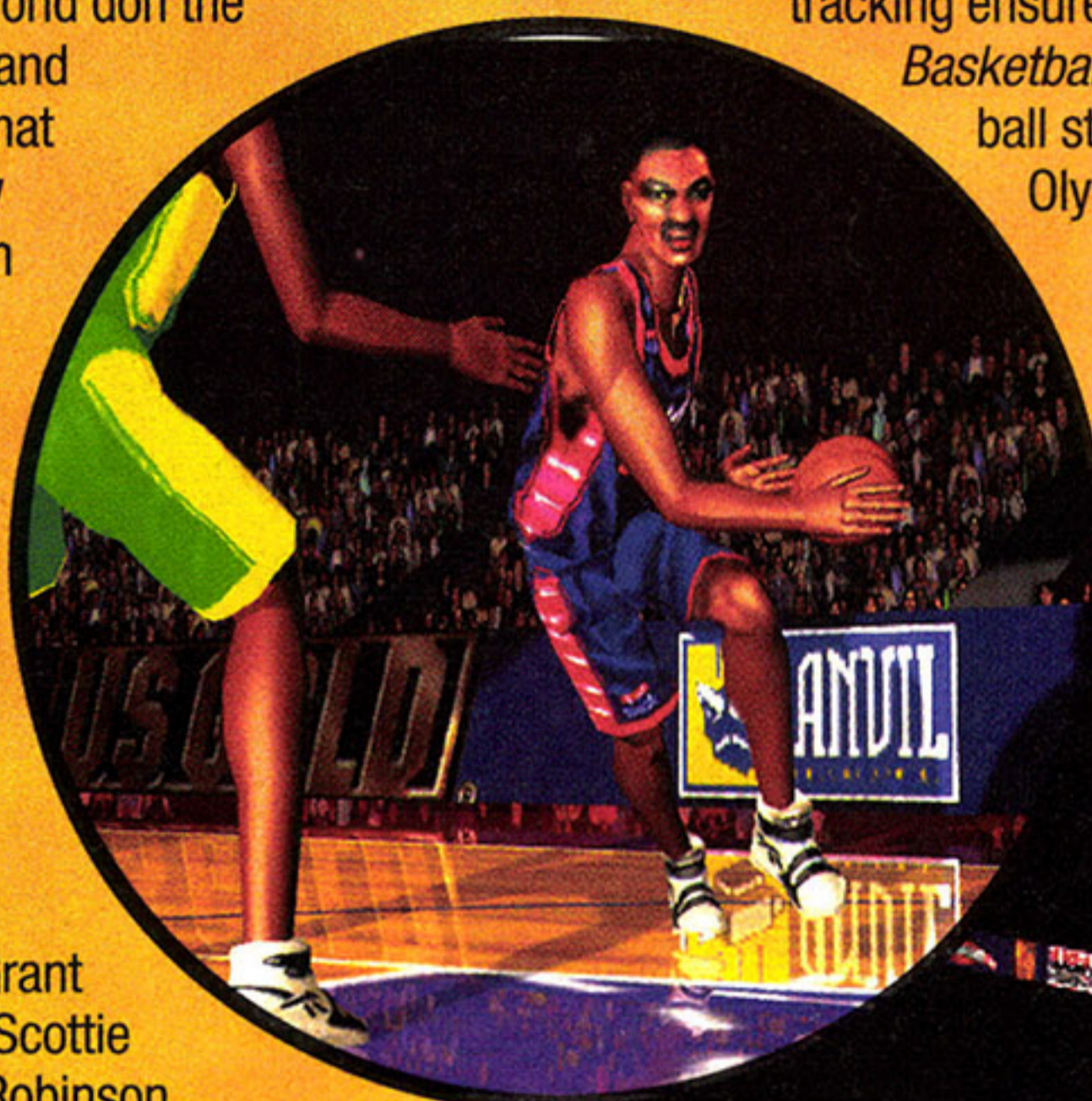
Dream Team Basketball

The greatest collection of basketball stars on one team may have been the first Dream Team, but there is no doubt that this year's Dream Team is no weak link. Twelve of the best basketball players in the world don the red, white, and blue and destroy any country that

gets in their way. US Gold (now EIDOS Interactive) has now given the player a chance to lead the slaughter. The Dream Team comes to life on the PlayStation and Saturn this summer with 3-D rendered graphics and all the stars of America's best international team.

Dream Team Basketball features today's greatest court heroes: Shaquille O'Neal, Penny Hardaway, Hakeem Olajuwon, Grant Hill, Karl Malone, Reggie Miller, Scottie Pippen, Glenn Robinson, David Robinson, John Stockton, Charles Barkley, and Mitch Richmond. The game includes 32 international teams, with the 12 Olympic qualifiers and 20 extra international teams. With a multi-tap, the game supports up to four players for a vicious two-on-two showdown or a four vs. the computer battle. Ron Barr (the old anchor of EA Sports games) provides the broadcast style commentary that, coupled with the

multiple camera angles, brings the game home like a network broadcast. The two modes of gameplay allow the player a chance to partake in the Olympic tournament or just scrimmage against any one of the international teams. Features like on-the-fly play-calling, signature moves, and complete stat-tracking ensure that *Dream Team Basketball* will satisfy basketball strategists as well as Olympic fanatics.



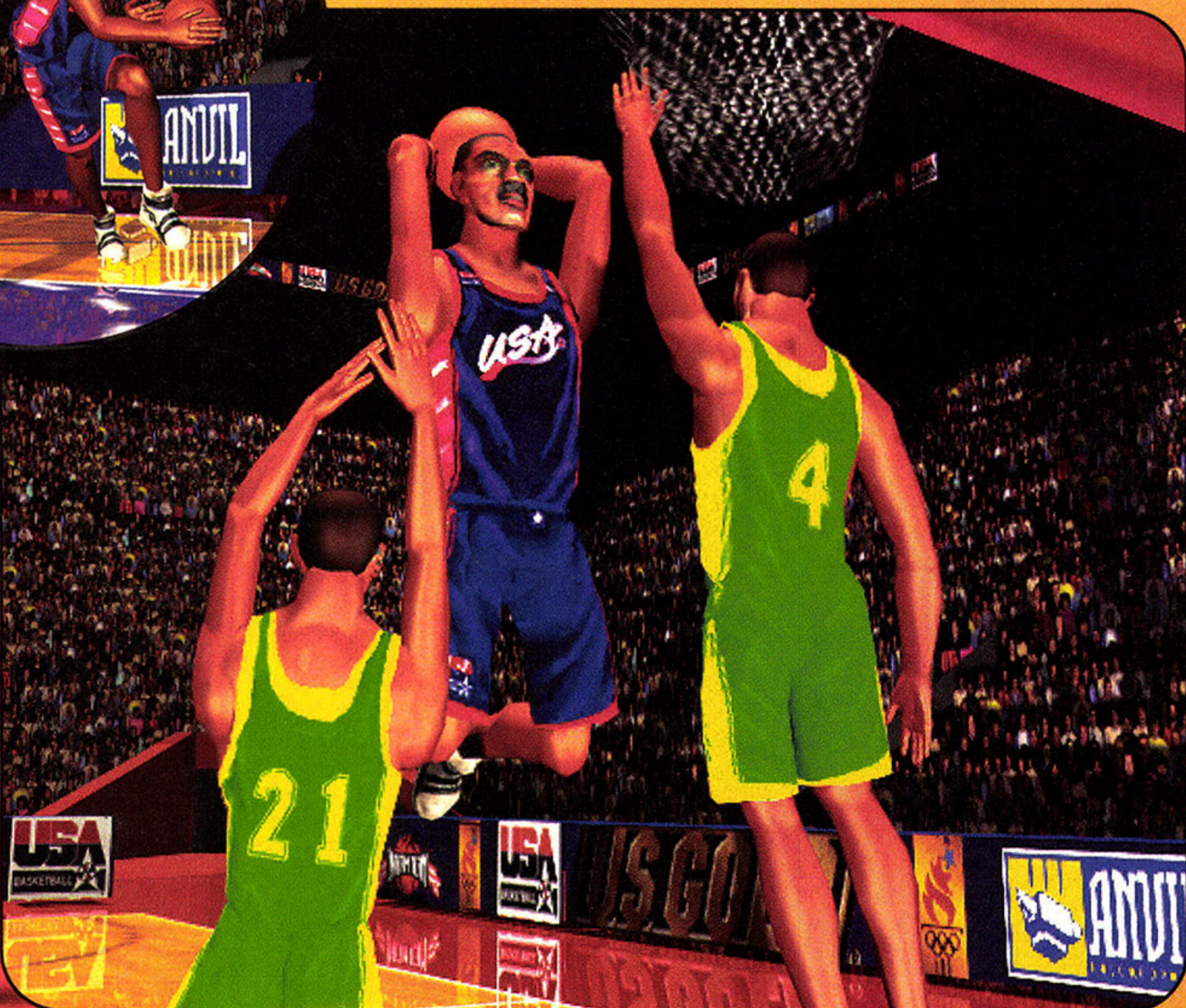
The CG animation is a thing of beauty. Watch in awe as Scottie Pippen drives to the hole and slams one home!



The multiple camera angles show off some crisp 3D graphics, complete with the reflections on the floor.



Take the Dream Team against Croatia, Russia, Canada, or Japan. It doesn't really matter, because none of them have a chance.



Shaquille O'Neal

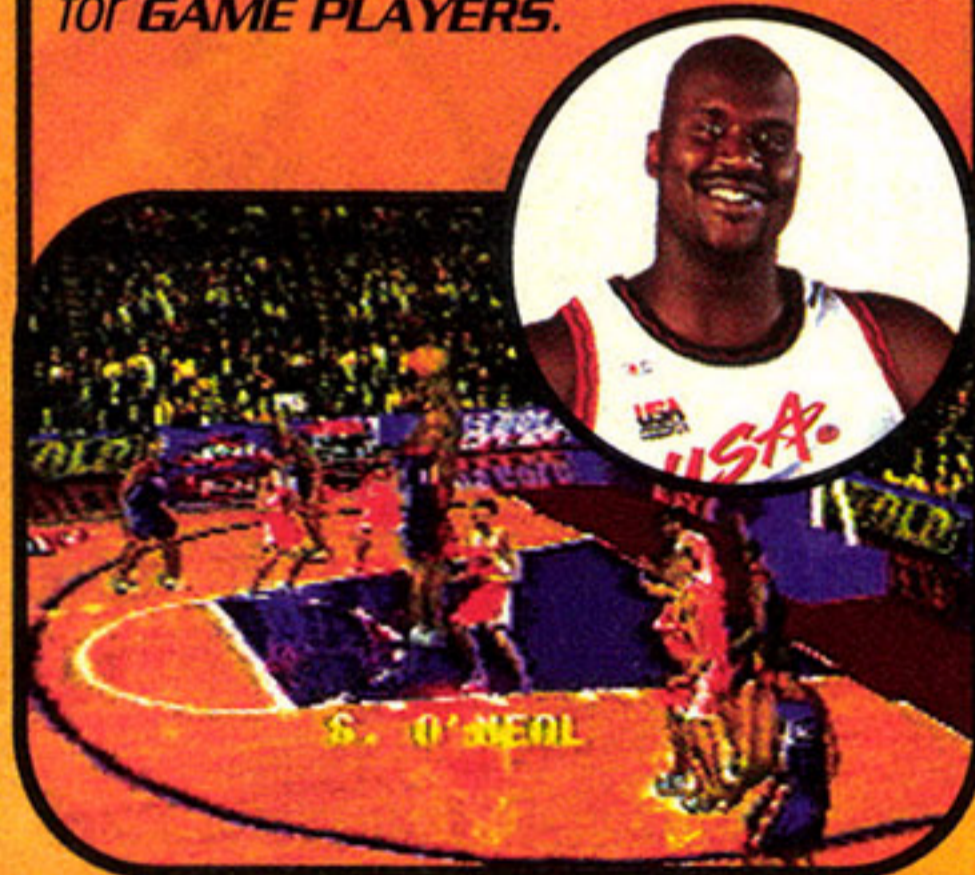
Height: 7'2"

Pro: Orlando Magic

Position: Center

**Nickname: Shaq
(or Shaq-Fu, for us video
game fans)**

The center of attention wherever he goes, the 7-foot+ behemoth makes other large humans look like kids. Watching him bounce around other centers with ease is just plain frightening. When it comes to international competition, there isn't a team around that can match up with Shaq's pure power. Although no one would ever say Shaq had great touch, he still manages to dunk down near 30 points a night. Perhaps the highlight of Shaq's non-basketball career were his scintillating reviews of *Urban Strike*, *NBA Live '95*, and *Super Street Fighter* for *GAME PLAYERS*.



Shaq playing large in *Dream Team Basketball*. 'Take it to the hole, big fella!'

Scottie Pippen

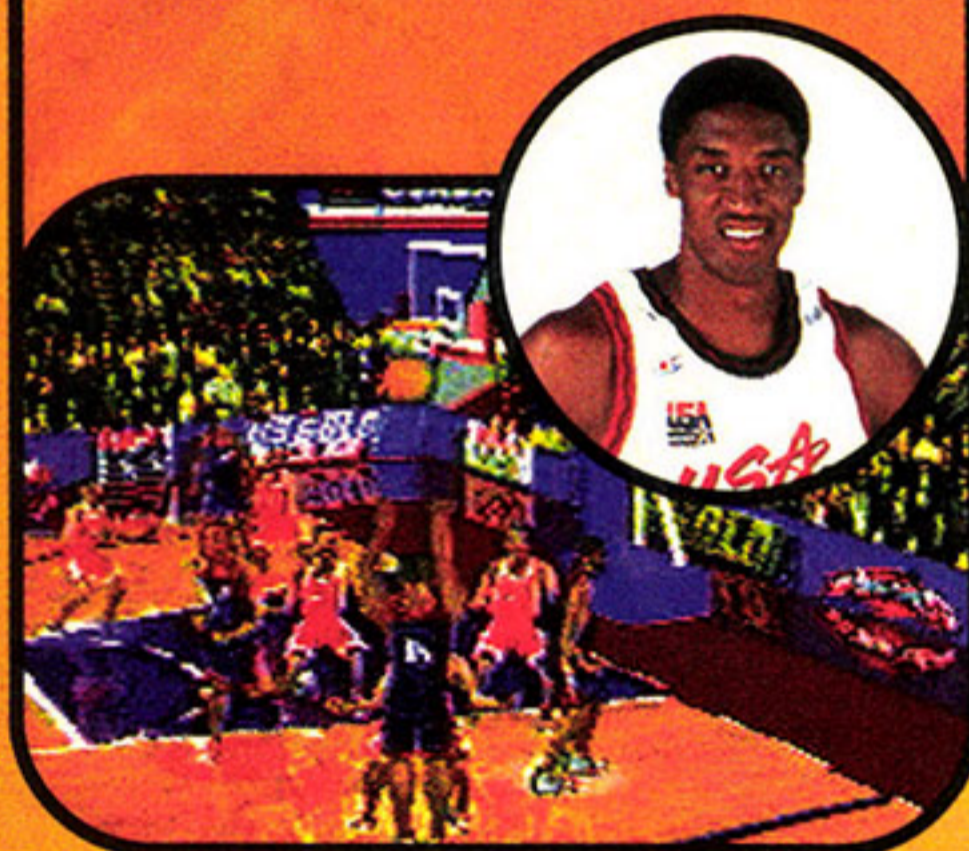
Height: 6'7"

Pro: Chicago Bulls

Position: Small Forward

Nickname: Pip

The other half of the Dynamic Duo in Chicago, Scottie Pippen is one of the best overall players in the world. The strange thing is he's not even the best player on the Bulls, thanks to Michael. On the Dream Team, he gets a chance to escape Jordan's shadow and show the world what a talent he is. At 6'7", he handles the ball like a point guard, plays tenacious D, and rebounds with the best power forwards. Scottie Pippen is the second member of the dream team to appear in *GAME PLAYERS*. We consider him part of the team, but in the final seconds we're giving the ball to Slate.



Pip wearing the red, white, and blue and taking the trey. Swish! Another three-points added to the Dream Team's victory margin.

Hakeem Olajuwon

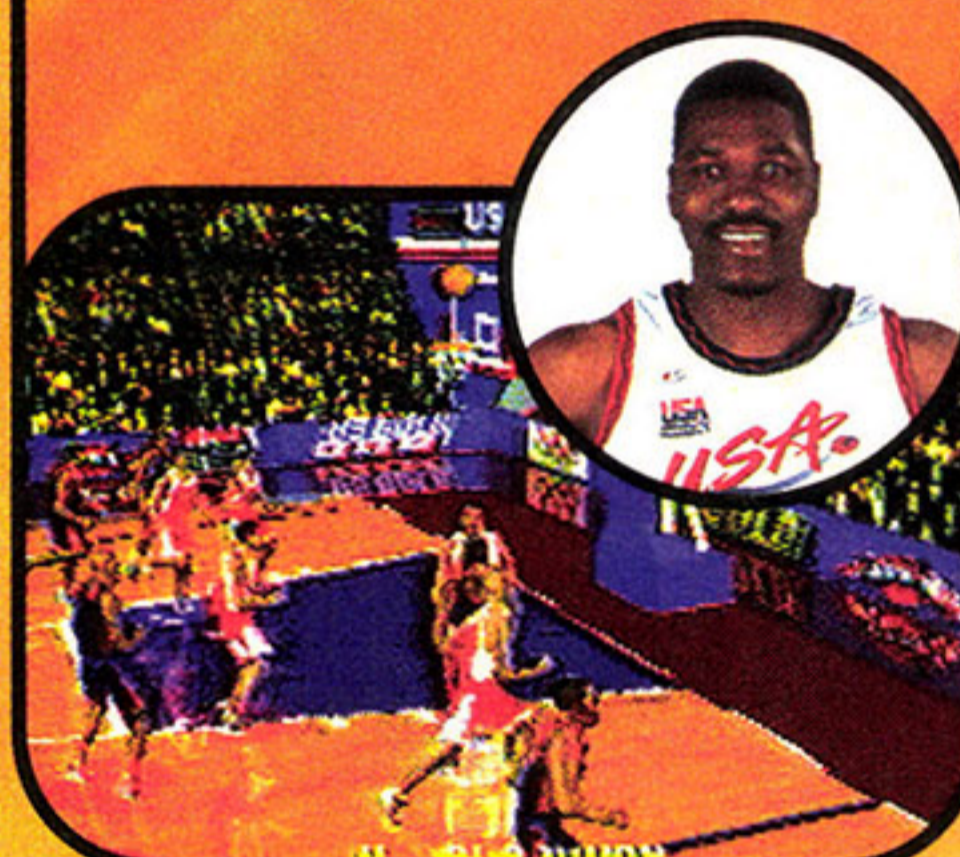
Height: 7'0"

Pro: Houston Rockets

Position: Center

**Nickname:
Hakeem The Dream**

Born in Nigeria, Hakeem has found a home in the US and a spot on the world's greatest basketball team. His quick feet, patented fade-away, and shot-blocking skills helped lead his Houston Rockets to consecutive NBA Titles and strike fear into the rest of the world. Hakeem also offered to buy everyone's lunch in a Visa add, when he was supposed to say, 'We're going to eat you for lunch'. For the first time since Hakeem was five years old, he might have trouble finding playing time with the likes of Shaq and David Robinson both vying for time in the middle.



Hakeem working it in the low post, no one can defend that.

Anfernee Hardaway

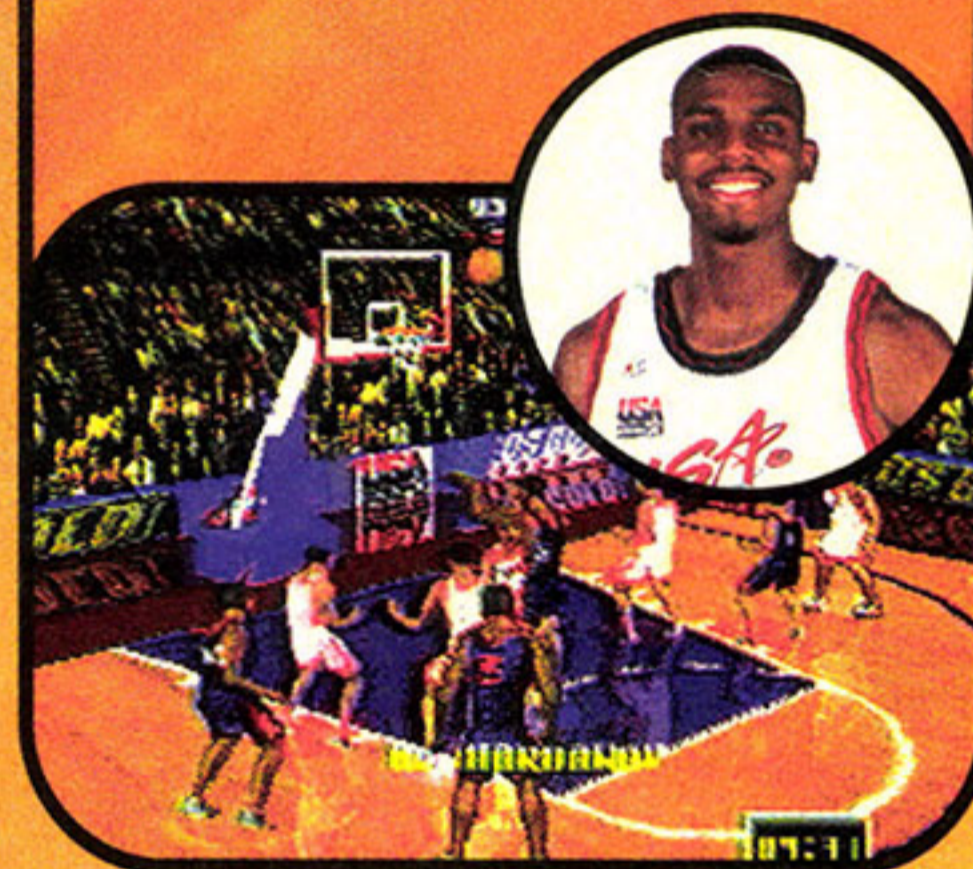
Height: 6'9"

Pro: Orlando Magic

Position: Point Guard

Nickname: Penny

Penny teamed up with Shaq to lead the young Orlando Magic to two spectacular seasons in a row. Unfortunately, both seasons ended with a sweep of the Magic. Penny should be confident that the same fate doesn't await him in the Olympics. It is still uncertain whether Lil' Penny is going to make the trip to Atlanta, but if Nike has anything to say about it, you can bet Lil' Penny is going to be up to his usual antics. Penny's silky smooth play is sure to open the eyes of all the international teams. There aren't many players in the NBA who are better at the clutch shot.



Penny looking smooth in his Dream Team jersey and looking to get the ball to Shaq — something he's used to doing.

The Team

Well, if this team were allowed to compete in the best-team-ever debates, the Chicago Bulls, 72 wins and all, wouldn't even be mentioned in the same sentence. This team has size, speed, depth, and more combined income that most countries in the world. *Dream Team Basketball* manages to get each and every one of these superstars in the game, complete with their real faces and signature moves.

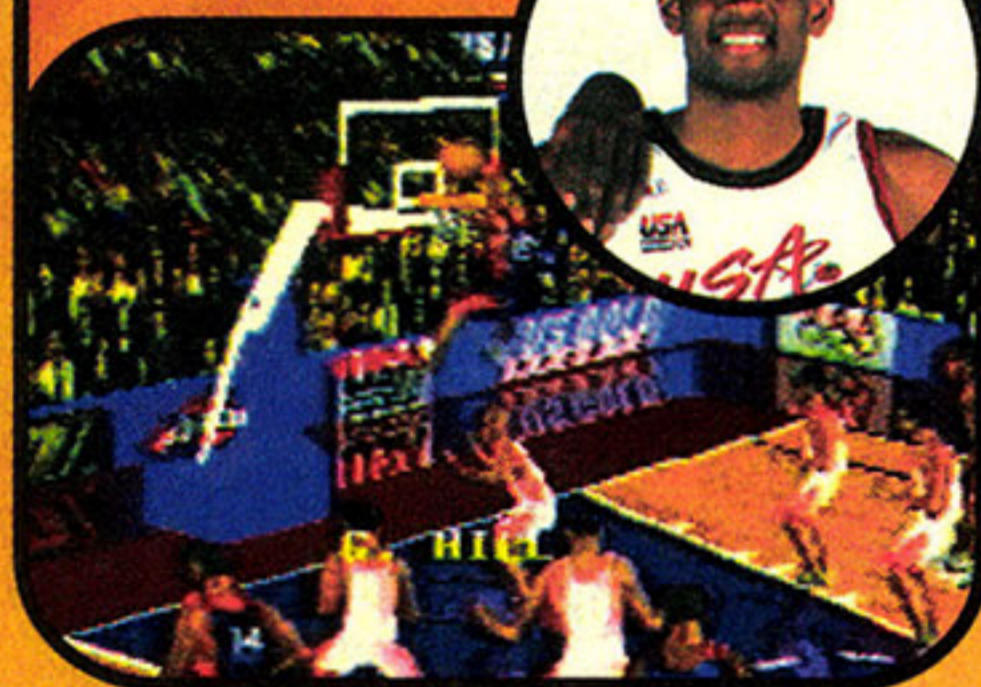
The multi-million dollar team has combined for more dunks than the rest of the international teams combined.



Grant Hill

Height: 6'7"
Pro: Detroit Pistons
Position: Small Forward
Nickname: The Hill

Public Relations dream Grant Hill combines spectacular leaping ability with a winning smile and the right thing to say. He may not be the next Jordan talent-wise, but he is definitely the next Jordan PR-wise. When it comes to the international competition, Grant Hill is certain to be the perfect ambassador for the US and should provide plenty of high-flying highlight material. Rumor has it that the Sprite-drinking team from Canada is already trash-talking the mild-mannered hoops star with taunts like, 'You're in my world now Hill, eh'. We all know what happened to the last person that said that.

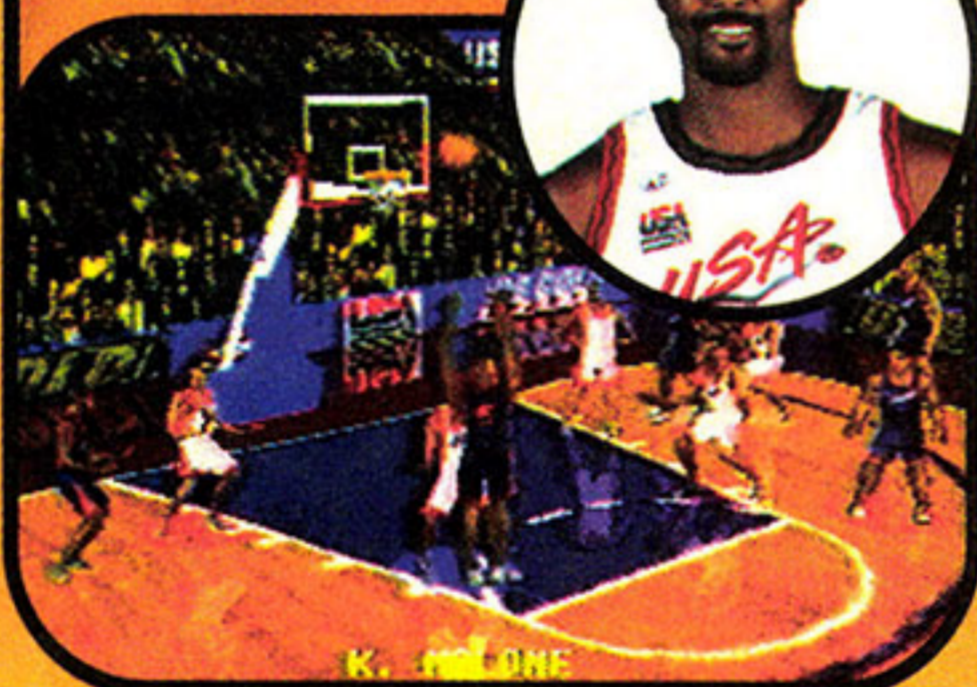


Hill getting airborne in Dream Team Basketball. If he was wearing FILA's, that would be detail.

Karl Malone

Height: 6'8"
Pro: Utah Jazz
Position: PowerForward
Nickname: The Mailman

In the playoffs, the mail didn't show up on Sunday, so the Jazz lost their opportunity to be Bull-whipped. Come Olympic time, rest assured, the Mailman is going to show up. Malone's powerful upper body and classic knowledge of the game make him a throwback to the era of Dream Team I. The young players today just don't have the same type of attitude and work ethic that players like Stockton, Malone, Barkley, and Jordan show up with every day. Malone is sure to inspire the rest of the squad with his pure hunger.

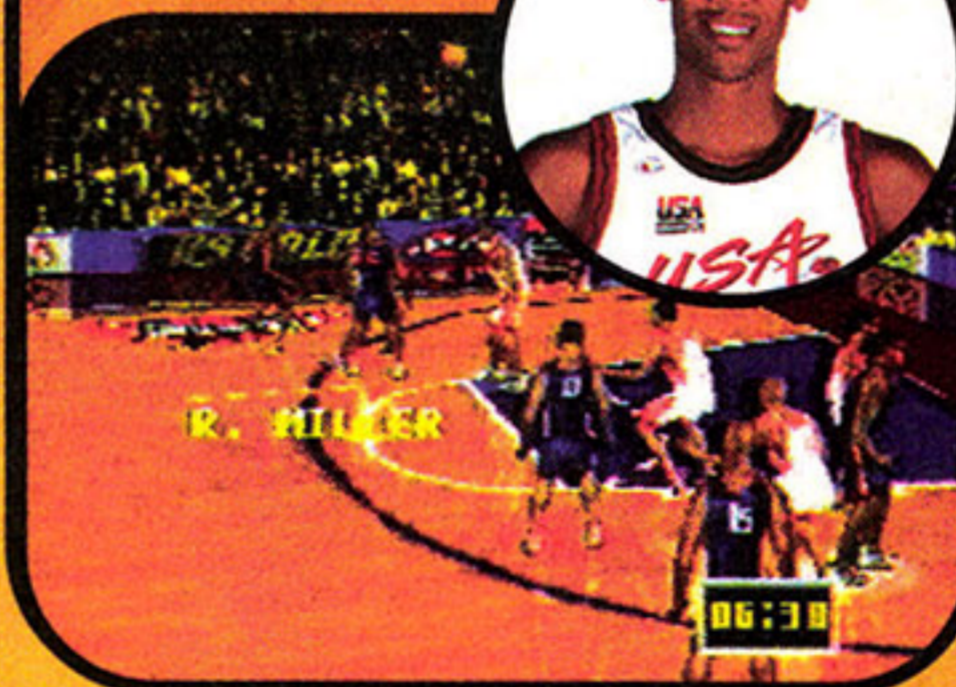


The Mailman delivers another rebound for the Dream Team and then puts it back up for two.

Reggie Miller

Height: 6'7"
Pro: Indiana Pacers
Position: Shooting Guard
Nickname: Captain Clutch

Reggie's pure shooting stroke and three-point bombs have been the key to the Pacers' strong showing the last few years. His showdowns with Spike Lee in New York have provided more entertainment than any of the playoff series this year. On the Dream Team, Reggie will thrive from the shorter three-point line and is sure to be a key deterrent to doubling down on the big centers. In the video game, spotting up Reggie at the three-point line is the easiest way to rout.



Reggie for the three! Cha-ching! The court isn't big enough when you've got a shooter with Reggie's range.

David Robinson

Height: 7'0"
Pro: San Antonio Spurs
Position: Center
Nickname: The Admiral

The most versatile big man in the NBA, David Robinson combines strength, speed, and agility that men his size shouldn't be capable of. His intense defense, smooth jumping, and powerful post-up moves just mean trouble for the rest of the world, especially because he isn't even a starter. He's already played for the Navy, now he has a chance to play for the US and show the rest of the world why basketball is our sport.



With power moves like The Admiral has, you can expect him to get to the free throw line on a regular basis, but if he isn't fouled then how can he be stopped.

For a real challenge you can try to take on the Dream Team with some of the international scrubs, but the only way to win that contest is with some serious cheat codes.



Glenn Robinson

Height: 6'8"
Pro: Milwaukee Bucks
Position: Small Forward
Nickname: Big Dog

Big Dog is one of the best young talents in the league, but wallowing in Milwaukee's talentless organization has done nothing for his game. A chance to play with some real talent is sure to bring Big Dog's game to a new level. Many people feel that this slot on the team should've gone to Shawn Kemp, but our bet is that Big Dog is going to show everybody he deserved this shot. Oops, just before press time we found out that Big Dog will miss the Olympics with an injury and 'The Glove' J1 (Gary Payton) steals his spot on the roster.



Big Dog with the rim racker! Zoom in close and you can even see the players faces.

John Stockton

Height: 6'1"
Pro: Utah Jazz
Position: Point Guard
Nickname: (Only his wife knows for sure)

His steady point guard play makes it that much easier for all the super-stars to play together as one team. There's still a question whether he can pass to anyone besides Karl Malone, but we're confident that won't be a problem. Stockton's easily the smallest, least athletic player on the team, but what he lacks in physical skills he more than makes up for with basketball smarts and a deep hunger for winning.

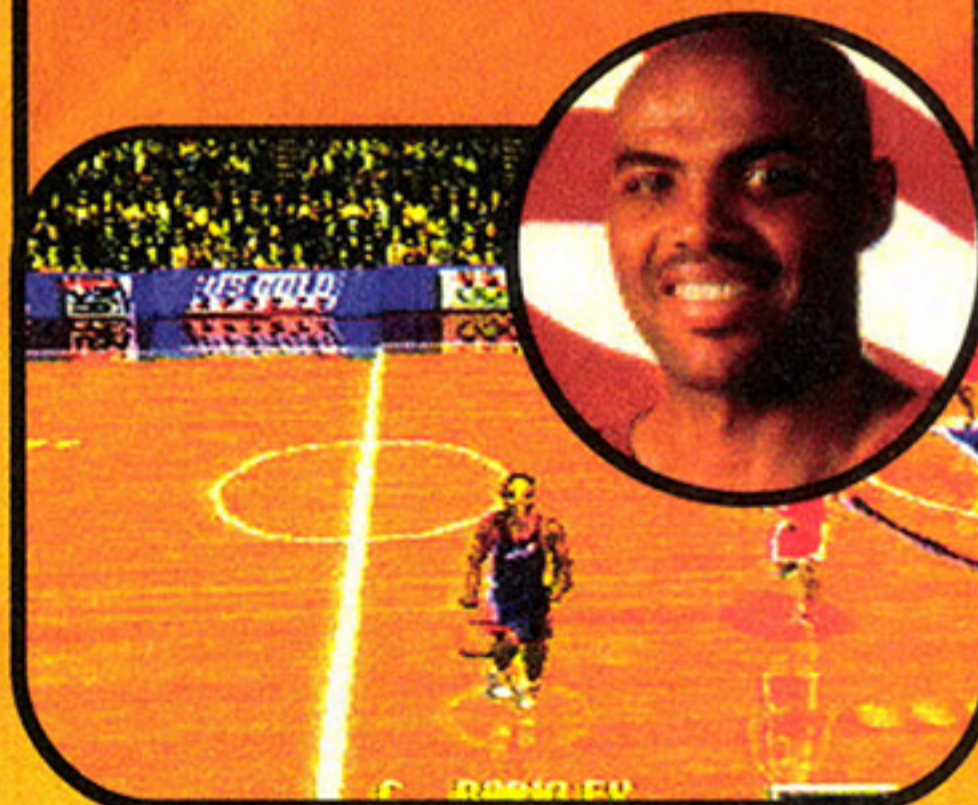


Stockton isn't known as a scorer, but leave him open from the outside and he'll make you pay.

Charles Barkley

Height: 6'6"
Pro: Phoenix Suns (so far)
Position: Power Forward
Nickname: Round Mound of Rebound, Sir Charles

A veteran of Dream Team I, the always controversial Sir Charles is hungry for another Olympic Gold. Last time he played in the Olympics, he welcomed a player with a patented Barkley elbow to the head. In an interview recently, he promised to bring the same intensity to Atlanta, so watch your head. Sir Charles' unbelievable ability to intimidate and dominate have deteriorated a bit with age, but there's not another player on this team that thrives better in the big game.

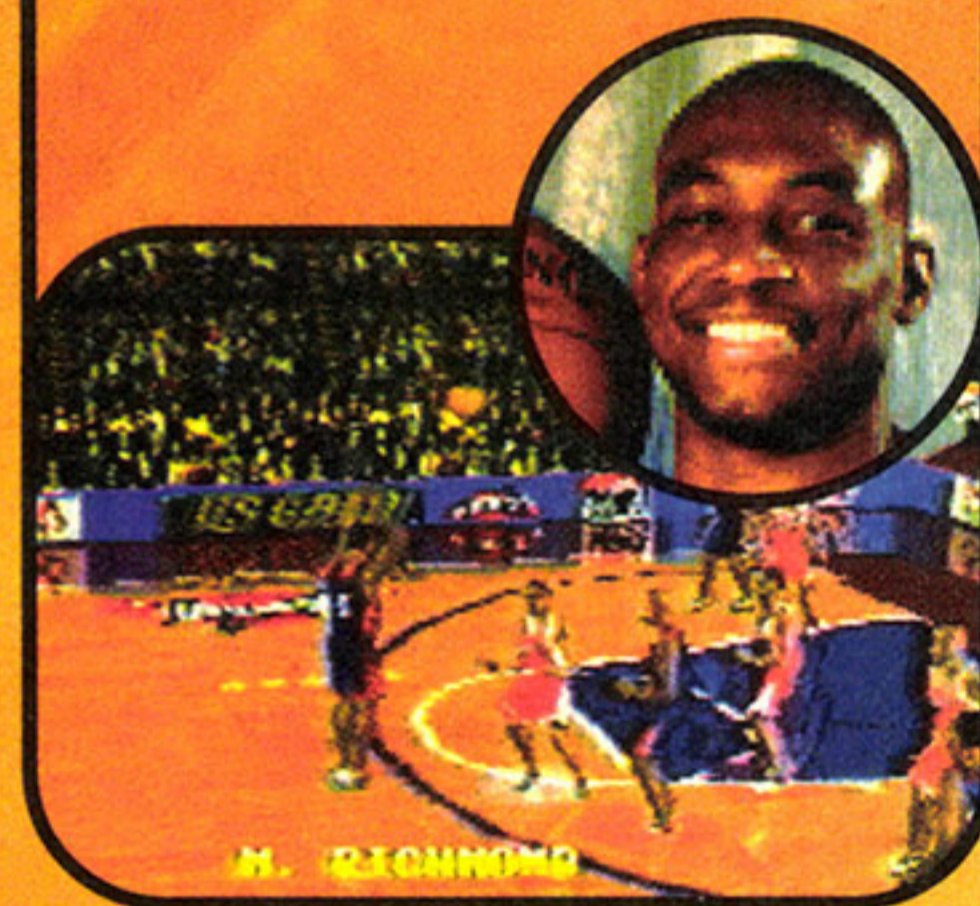


The familiar shiny dome and patented smile of Sir Charles are both in the game.

Mitch Ritchmond

Height: 6'3"
Pro: Sacramento Kings
Position: Shooting Guard
Nickname: The Rock

From the desert of talent in Sacramento, to the Dream Team has to be one of the more pleasant developments of Mitch Ritchmond's career. The Rock has been shooting lights out in Sacramento and Golden State to no avail in his NBA career. Now, thanks in part to Michael Jordan's blessing, Mitch Ritchmond gets a chance to win a gold medal. His streaky outside shooting and small powerful body make him a pure scorer.



The short three-point line just means even a better percentage on three-pointers for one of the best in the league.

More high-flying, high-scoring Dream Team action. The PlayStation version is on display and hoping to be the best hoops game yet.



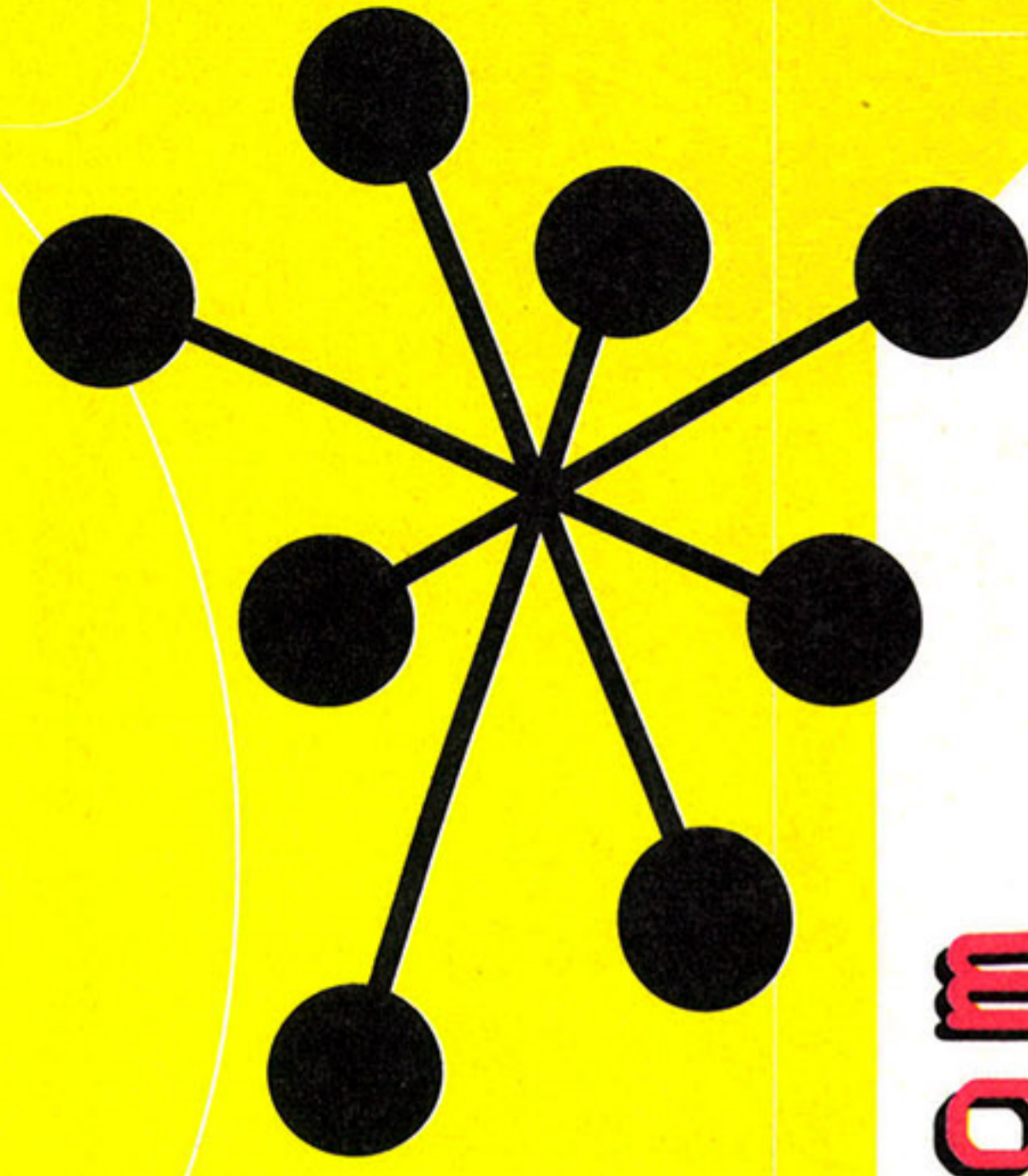
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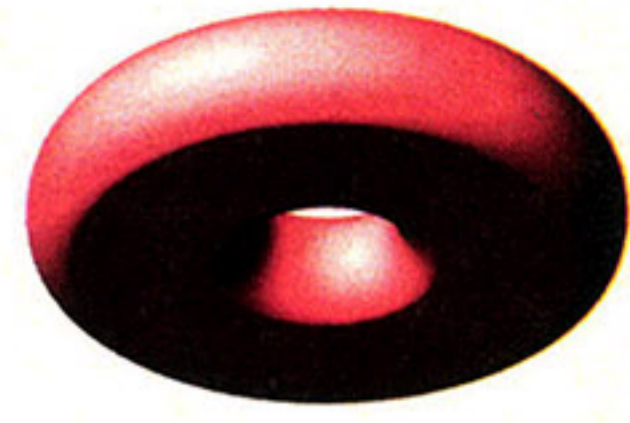
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SONIC'S

RED SHOE DIARIES

The last of an ongoing series documenting the development of Sonic for Saturn

Part III

Bringing it all together!

Over the past couple of months, we've been leading you through the development process of one of the biggest games in the works for this year. Of course, we're talking about *Sonic X-Treme* for Saturn. If you've been following our progress, you've read all about the early conceptual elements of the game, seen test-screens and learned all about the overall design approach. This month, we begin to tie it all together for you, as

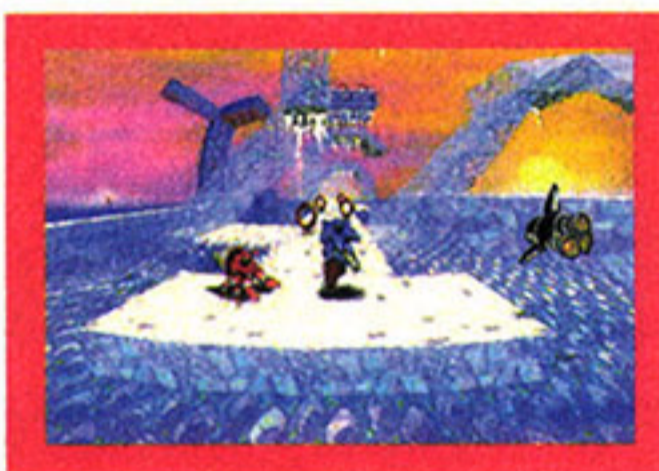
well as taking a closer look at a few new elements in the game's evolution. As the process begins to approach its later stages, we can now see how each element is beginning to come together to create the great game we've all been holding our breath for over the past couple of months.

This month, you'll get the full scoop on how the game's artwork is put to use to create the lush level environments, deadly enemies and, of course,

our favorite blue hero, Sonic! Also, you'll get the low-down on the technical end of the game's creation — from the powerful game editor used to create the intricate levels, to the advanced lighting and shading effects used to bring the bosses to life in a big way! All in all, this month marks a very exciting time in the game's development. The team was eager to share their experiences with *GAME PLAYERS'* readers.



Note the multiple lighting effects, texture maps and intricate structure designs all readily handled by the well-designed game editor.



Main Game X-Treme

Though certain elements, such as the backgrounds, are still in test, the game is really starting to take on the polished look of a truly exciting game.



With elements such as the rotating levels working in the game, it's time to start getting a real idea for the gameplay in *Sonic X-Treme*.



Sonic's True Colors

You've seen some of the great art work for the game, now see it in the game!

Bringing *Sonic X-Treme* to life is the responsibility of every team member, but when it comes to actually creating the look and feel of the game, the success depends on certain key members of the art team, namely Chris Senn and Ross Harris. In talking with these two members of the *Sonic* Team, it's revealed that bringing a traditional side-scrolling action game into the third dimension is both challenging and filled with all sorts of exciting new opportunities. Whether they're working to get just the right expression on Sonic's face or the perfect color scheme for each level, the importance of the artwork in a game like *Sonic X-Treme* can simply not be overestimated.

Probably the most important thing to consider in creating the general look of a 3D game like *Sonic* is the creation of texture maps. In a lot of ways, explains Ross, creating texture maps is similar to creating tiles in a 2D platform game, except that you have to account for more angles. Thus, the textures are used as a kind of wallpaper for the polygonal environments. While the structures may be nothing more than a rectangle or a wall of some sort, when a detailed grass-like texture or metal texture is applied, the rectangle or wall begins to show some character. There are several things to consider when creating the textures for the game and the team has, in fact, created an entire library of textures which can be manipulated to fit each section of the game by changing elements, such as the colors or certain details of the pattern. These techniques are also applied to the enemy characters (of which there are currently 28 — not including the bosses), which are easily changed to

fit a given section of the game.

In creating artwork for a project as ambitious as *Sonic X-Treme*, the members of the art staff readily confess that there is only so much you can plan for. The project has gone through many twists and turns since its inception and, with each new direction, the artwork must meet the new challenges. It's at this point, when the artwork is actually being applied to the game, that all the hard work of each artist is truly tested and thus further defined to fit the game perfectly. For example, the team is currently juggling options for creating a background to each level. The original plan was to simply create a flat backdrop to enhance the depth of the 3D environment, but with the implementation of the Reflex Lens came new and exciting ideas for creating innovative new background techniques. Possible techniques include dual background maps, one for the horizon and one for the ground, or some kind of sphere-like background to match the angle of the Reflex Lens. The final background issue is far from settled, but the team is excited about the opportunities.

Another possible example of the game's artwork having to be modified to match the progress of development could be adding new enemy sprite animations to meet the specific requirement of a particular stage. Since the enemies are all created as rendered sprites, every

applicable angle must be saved off to allow the character to exist naturally in a 3D world. This kind of utilitarian pre-planning is considered heavily in the original character designs, but since the project is always growing, there are always changes to be made.

When asked about how the game's artwork stacks up to the original *Sonic* game's, Ross replies that there are significant advances, because there are more possibilities when working on the Saturn. For example, there are more colors used in Sonic's design than ever before. Beyond the obvious graphic enhancements possible with the Saturn, which according to the team give the game and Sonic himself more personality than ever before, the team wanted to create a look that paid homage to the original games but definitely took Sonic to new places. In the end, Harris suggests, the new game will not clash with the earlier titles, but it will not be slavish either.



Developer's Dictionary

AI — A set of computer instructions designed to simulate the actions of an intelligent being.

Coding — Creating from scratch the program instructions that run a computer or console.

Gouraud Shading — A form of shading used to create a smooth transition between different colors at each vertex.

Graphics Library — A set of graphics tools shared between developers for a particular console.

Light Sourcing — A realistic representation of a light and its real world properties.

Texture Maps — A bit-map texture wrapped around polygons in a 3D environment.

Transparency — A technique used in video games, where one sprite or polygon can be seen through another.



The Technical Approach

The unsung heroes finally make it to the forefront. Meet the programmers.

That's right, we're going to take the magic right out of your favorite videogame and replace it with cold, hard, technical facts. No, actually we're just going to reveal a few tricks of the trade that are sure to deliver some truly hot gameplay in *Sonic X-Treme*. The first of which is something we touched on in our last installment of Sonic's Red Shoe Diaries, the game editor. Created from scratch by lead programmer Ofer Alon, the editor used in making *Sonic X-Treme* is, according to several team members (not just Ofer), an invaluable tool.

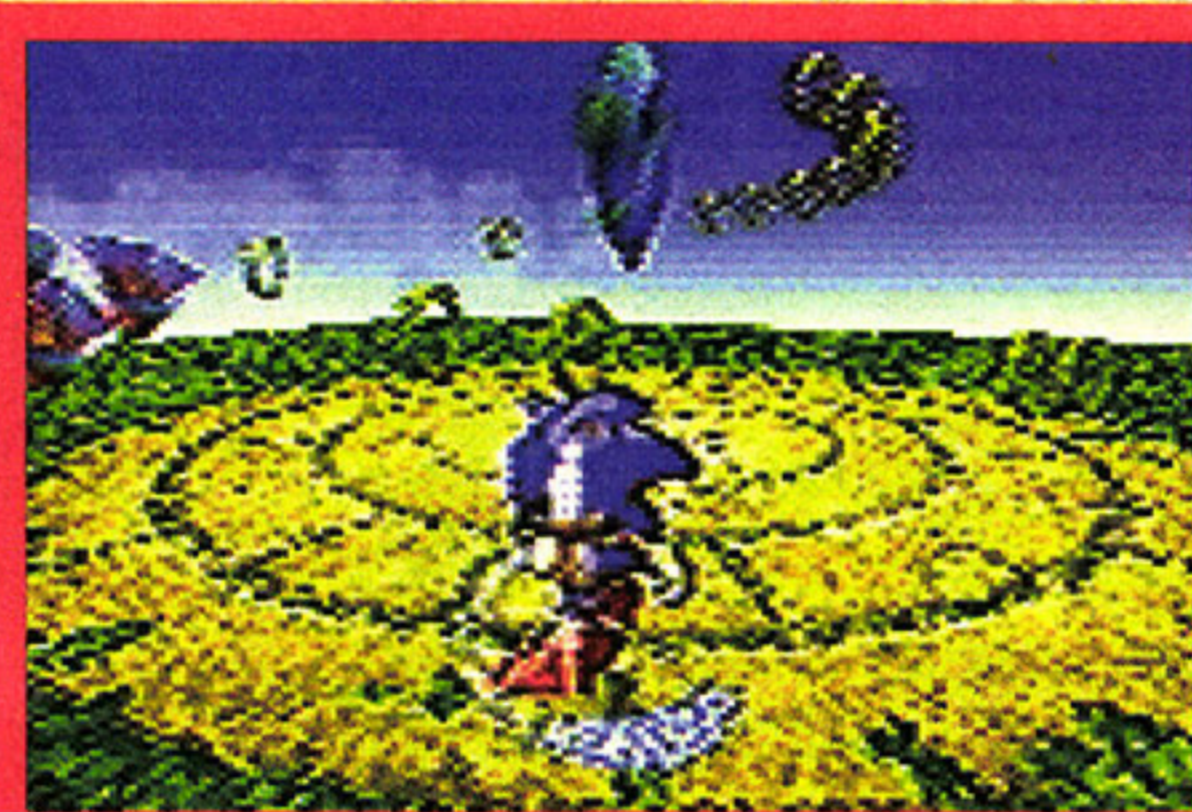
To recap, the game editor used in the development of *Sonic X-Treme* is a program designed specifically to create, in a broad-stroke fashion, the environments and general gameplay of *Sonic X-Treme*. Within the editor, 3D structures can be constructed on the fly, structures can be animated, textures can be applied, enemies can be placed and animated, physics can be controlled and gameplay can be tested. Of course, there are plenty of other functions the editor can perform, such as

scratching that one unreachable spot on your back, picking you up at the airport and making a two-minute egg, but the team tries not to abuse its power. The true beauty of the editor, however, is that if built properly (which it most certainly has been), a single editor will not only support the game it's designed for, but also potential sequels. When done right, according to Ofer, an editor can be built-on to support future projects and new gameplay elements. The mind boggles.

Another argument for putting a significant amount of time and effort into creating an extremely powerful editor is because, according to Ofer, the games market has changed quite a bit in the past few years. Gamers are now expecting much more quality from the games they buy. Where a game used to take five or six months from start to finish, the time requirements have been forced to grow beyond what the market is really willing to accommodate. Therefore, in taking the extra time to create a great editor, it's possible to get faster production of quality elements through the time invested in the editor. This also applies to sequels. In working to reduce the production time, the team feels they are getting a more true repre-

sentation of their original game ideas, as a project is apt to change considerably with extended production cycles. The team has always welcomed the idea of letting the project grow as it's being created, but they also referred to a point of diminishing return when the project starts to lag and grow stale. The editor, in the end, helps to steer the team away from that possibility.

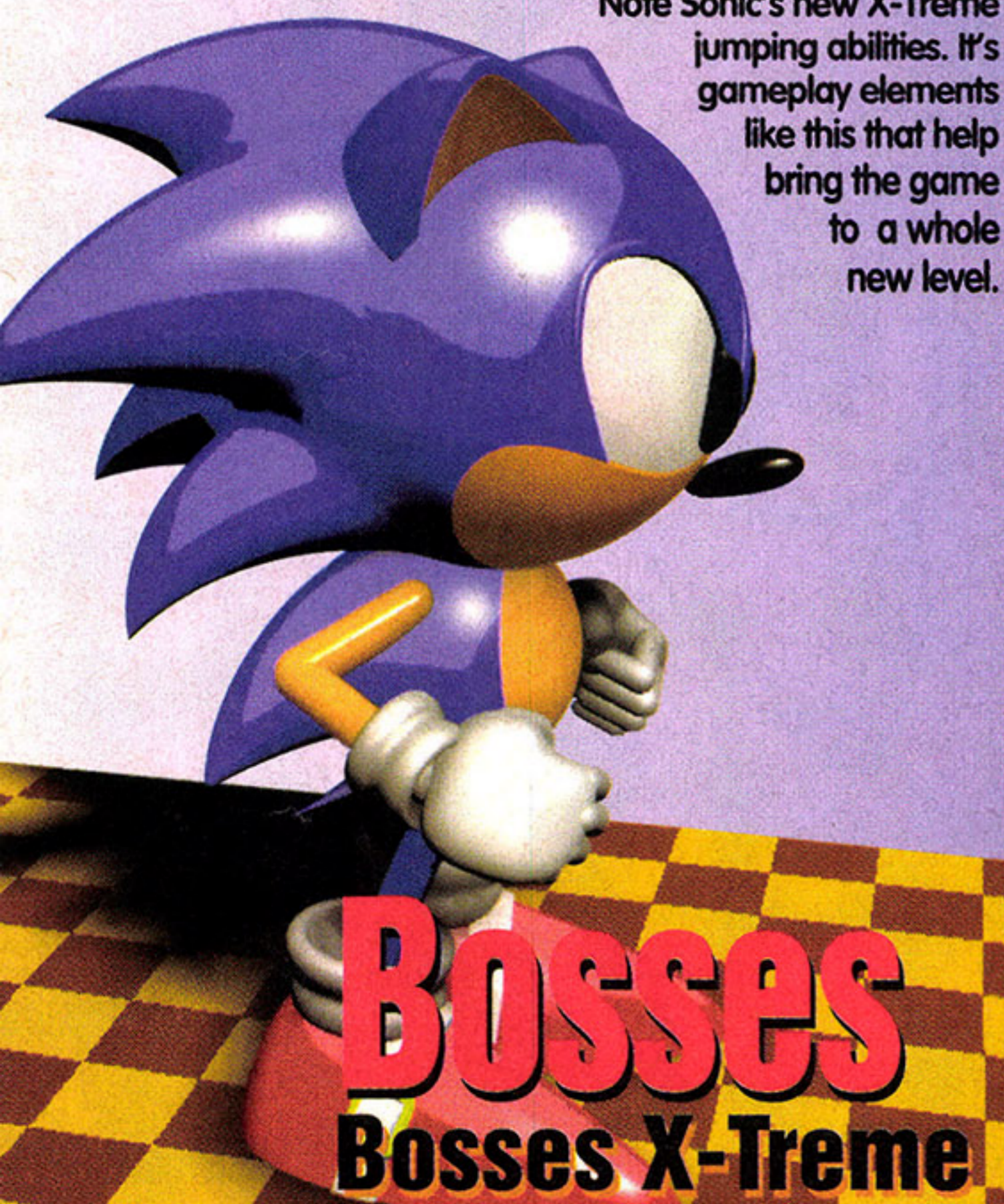
A final major advantage to using this technique is since most of the 'hard-coding' has already been done in developing the editor, the rest of the production time can be used in implementing different game ideas without the hassle of programming complications. The editor also allows instant testing of several different gameplay ideas all running concurrently. It's nearly impossible to think of everything that will happen when combining different gameplay elements but, with the editor, the potential problems are identified in an instant by simple play testing. There are a few things which are not handled by the editor, such as music and backgrounds, but these and other elements can be specifically coded once everything else is in place. Often the reason the editor is not



With plenty of wide-open space in the boss levels, this is a great place to really test out Sonic's legendary legs.



Note Sonic's new X-Treme jumping abilities. It's gameplay elements like this that help bring the game to a whole new level.



Still experimenting with different camera options in the Boss Stages, the Team has promised a variety of approaches, each matching the action for that particular stage.



From this birds-eye view, it's easy to appreciate the true 3D nature of the boss levels.





It's not until you inch your way right up beside Fang that you can really appreciate his menacing nature. Of course, this is also a great time to note the complex shading and lighting effects used to highlight these awesome stages.



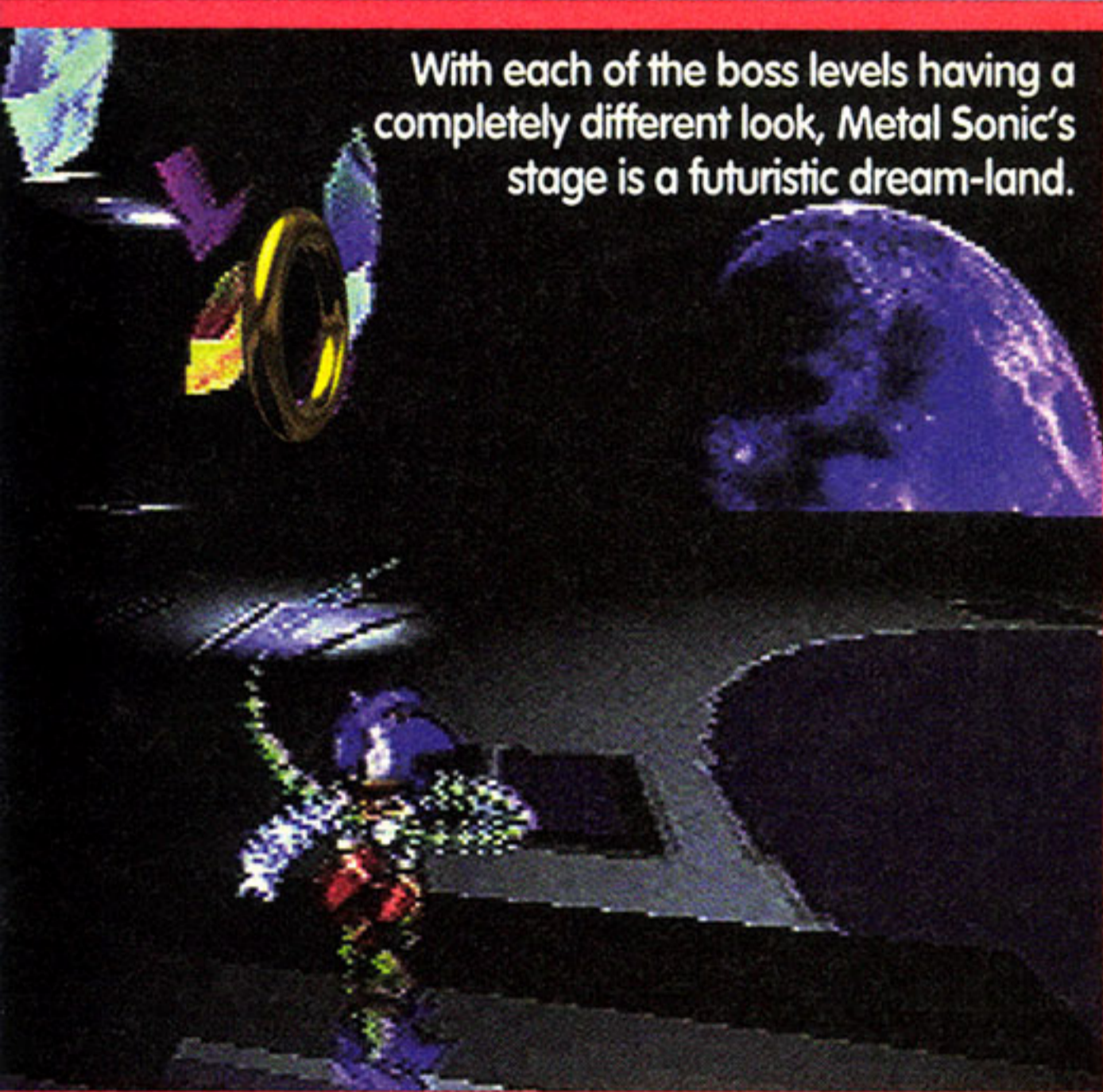
Demonstrating the boss' complex AI, Fang quickly covers his head to defend himself against Sonic's overhead attack. You didn't think it was going to be that easy to beat him, did you?



Just as in the awesome *Virtua Fighter 2*, the bosses in *Sonic X-Treme* demonstrate amazing head-tracking abilities. Of course, this is made even more impressive when considering Sonic's amazing speed.



All the work that goes into making bosses like Fang so tough is worth it when the player finally manages to leave him sprawled out on the ground.



With each of the boss levels having a completely different look, Metal Sonic's stage is a futuristic dream-land.



With dramatic light-sourcing and an enormous boss character, Metal Sonic's stage is one to anticipate with great eagerness.

used in handling certain elements of the game is because of the different capabilities of the PC and the Saturn. While everything done on the PC editor translates perfectly to the Saturn, there are some special functions on the Saturn, such as an advanced sound technology, which can not be matched on the PC. These elements must be created directly on the Saturn (the Target system, as the team calls it).

Beyond the use of the editor, which is being used primarily for the main levels of the game, Boss Level Programmer Chris Coffin relies not only on his own original technical expertise, but also on various tools available to Saturn developers. For example, in creating the boss stages, Chris has used tools developed in the creation of such games as *Nights* and *Panzer Dragoon 2 Zwei*. Referring to

his frustration with the media's perception that the Saturn is not able to perform certain visual effects available to other machines such as the PlayStation, Chris proudly demonstrates in his works that the Saturn can do effects such as transparencies, Gouraud Shading and multiple lighting effects. Though Chris admits that utilizing these techniques takes a little more work than on other systems, the payoff is well worth the effort, and from the boss stages that are up and running, it is indeed!

A perfect example of such techniques is the colored light-sourcing employed in Fang's (one of the bosses near completed in *Sonic X-Treme*) stage. Since one of his key attacks is grenade tossing, Coffin set out to do something special with the effect. Thus, when Fang prepares to toss his

grenade, the colored glow shines off his own body and then, as he tosses it, the glowing effect travels through the air with the grenade, lighting anything it passes and finally ending in an explosion on impact. It's truly awesome to see the effect put to use so well.

Beyond the use of graphics libraries and other development tools, such as lighting and shading effects, the team also uses programs such as SoftImage which, for example, helps Chris to create realistic animations, such as Fang's walk and grenade toss. Since the bosses are actually being created as fully polygonal characters, as opposed to the rendered sprite enemies, the techniques for bringing characters like Fang and Metal Sonic to life are a little different. Created first as skeleton characters on high-end Silicon Graphics machines (computers known throughout the industry as the ultimate in graphics capabilities), the bosses are then texture-mapped in high detail to give the character its menacing nature. They are then finally animated with the use of programs such as SoftImage. Chris is also working on custom tools which will streamline his own work and possibly other's in the future. In creating such tools and effects, Coffin cites his stacks of programming notes ready to be tested at all times.

One feature which Coffin is eager to point out concerning the bosses is that, since they are fully 3D, he is able to play with several different camera angles and gameplay concepts until he finds just the right combination. Potential scenarios made possible by the fully 3D nature of the boss stages are a boss which chases Sonic, as opposed to squaring off with him; a carousel-style approach, where the arena would wrap around the action or possibly even a bizarre boss character who throws his own head at Sonic, then promptly grows another. Of course, these are nothing more than possible concepts which may not ever reach the actual game, but it's nice to have such opportunities. Chris admits that his main competition and inspiration are the bosses in *Nights*. The focus will be different with more of an emphasis on boss AI, but to create characters and environments as stunning as those in *Nights* would be an impressive achievement indeed.

It's refreshing to find out that, in the end, though programming a game like *Sonic X-Treme* is an extremely complex matter, the tests team members such as Ofer Alon and Chris Coffin consider most important are the play tests. If it doesn't feel right, then it isn't — it's as simple as that. This emphasis on play testing is what helps the teams make essential gameplay decisions, such as gravitational effects, how characters will relate to each other according to distance and what effect certain attacks will have on each enemy. Chris goes on to suggest that the method of breaking up responsibilities the way the team has done helps immensely in getting each element just right. Referring to the method as 'maximum parallel development', team members maintain enough focus on a singular task to truly perfect every detail, a task which may be impossible if each member's responsibilities were more varied. This is not to say that each team member doesn't help out in other areas, but each has his own responsibilities.



CRASH 'N THE PARTY!

On September 9, 1996, the first anniversary of the PlayStation release, Sony makes its bid for market dominance in the platform genre with its very own mascot game. Step aside, Sonic! Move over, Mario! Ready or not, here comes Crash Bandicoot!

Traditional, yet innovative

Aiming to be the next evolution in platform gaming is *Crash Bandicoot*. The developers of *Crash* serve notice that the term used in the previous statement is 'evolution' and not 'revolution', but that is the way Naughty Dog conceived *Crash Bandicoot* should be.

Despite all the hoopla about 'true 3D' environments, solid gameplay consists of a series of challenges of ever-increasing difficulty presented to the videogame player. This is the backbone of what made such classic 2D platform games like *Mario Brothers* and *Sonic the Hedgehog* so entertaining and successful. Naughty Dog's intention was to create a game that retained that traditional and proven game formula. In addition, fast-moving action, fun play mechanics, and hidden



secrets couple to give the game a familiar platform game goodness.

But even though there are familiar gameplay elements in *Crash Bandicoot*, there have also been refinements. Different levels in *Crash* feature different play perspectives, which range from running into and out of the screen, to levels that have a distinctly 2D-ish side-scrolling nature. However, all of these different perspectives allow for full 3D movement, although the movement is restricted by the pathways in the game. Critics may dismiss this limited 3D feature as arbitrary, but the ability for this type of movement is instrumental in conquering some of the challenges designed into the game. There are even secret paths that Crash can take only by utilizing this freedom of movement. Although the gameplay in *Crash Bandicoot* may be highly reminiscent of 2D platform games, the 3D elements of gameplay have not been ignored.

To complement the gameplay, Naughty Dog's intention was to utilize the power of the PlayStation to create a visual environment that would allow for a gaming experience never before encountered.

From all indications, it appears that Naughty Dog has succeeded. *Crash Bandicoot* features some of the best

Thousands of sketches, like the one on the left, were drawn, reviewed and combined with others, in a 'boiling-down' process that resulted in *Crash Bandicoot*.

graphics ever featured on any PlayStation game. The vivid textures utilized with the polygon graphics give the visuals a vibrancy that has seemed lacking in previous PlayStation titles. If nothing else, *Crash Bandicoot* has achieved the graphical look of a true, second generation PlayStation game.

But perhaps the biggest obstacle facing *Crash Bandicoot* is its competition. There is a perception among the media and the public that the forthcoming *Sonic* and *Mario* games are set to redefine the platform game genre. From what has been seen of *Super Mario 64*, the nature of the gameplay seems to have changed from challenge-based to exploration-based. But whether this change in game focus is as fulfilling an entertainment experience as the traditional formula remains to be seen. But Sony, Universal Interactive Studios, and Naughty Dog are betting it won't be.

Teamwork

What makes *Crash Bandicoot* a serious competitor in the mascot game market are the considerable resources behind it, not the least of which is that Sony has licensed the game and is handling its distribution. But despite Sony's power, *Crash* wouldn't get far if it wasn't an entertaining game. The credit for the creativity and superior gameplay in *Crash* can be directly attributed to its publisher, Universal Interactive Studios, and its developer, Naughty Dog.

Jason Rubin

-Naughty Dog - Cofounder and Chief Administrator.

A graduate of the University of Michigan, Jason Rubin has a wide variety of classic videogame art skills, and a talent for pushing games to the limits of current technology. Jason entered the videogame industry with partner Andy Gavin as JAM Software in 1984 and had published four titles by the age of 20. The pair continued collaborating in college, during summers and semester breaks, producing several titles for Electronic Arts under their new name, Naughty Dog Software. Among the games Jason and Andy Rubin developed were *Keep the Thief*, *Rings of Power*, and *Way of the Warrior*. Naughty Dog set up shop at Universal Interactive Studios in Los Angeles in mid-1994 and began assembling the *Crash Bandicoot* team in early 1995.



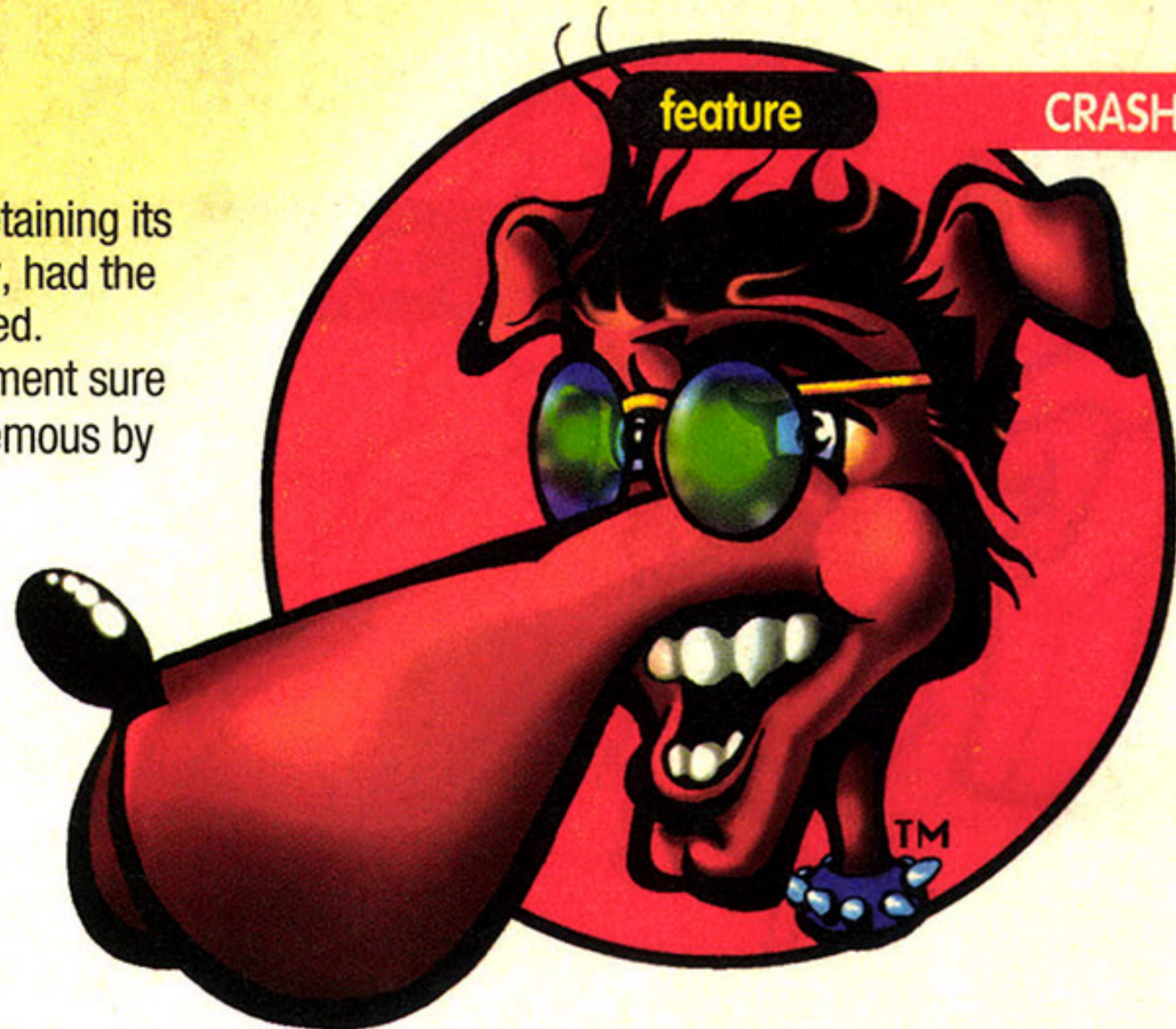
3D OR NOT 3D?

The one aspect of *Crash Bandicoot* that will be consistently second-guessed by the media and videogamers alike is the nature of the 3D environment in the game. The pathway-restricted nature of the game was either initially criticized as less than revolutionary gameplay or a sign of the restrictions presented by the PlayStation architecture. But in response to these accusations, Naughty Dog stresses the decision to go with the track-based gameplay was purely one of good game design and not a means of working within any limitations set by the hardware. The nature of the 3D environment exists to retain the high speed, reflex-oriented, challenge-based gameplay of classic 2D games like *Sonic* and *Mario*. As impressive as *Super Mario 64* may appear, the ultimate satisfaction derived from roaming freely about a 3D environment (and thus, being able to avoid gameplay challenges) remains to be seen. If anything, *Crash Bandicoot* can be considered the first 32-bit platform game that truly captures the feel of the classic platform games while incorporating the graphical and 3D capabilities of the next-generation systems.

When queried as to whether *Crash Bandicoot* had stretched the technological capabilities of the PlayStation to its limit, Mark Cerny of Universal Interactive Studios assured **GAME PLAYERS** that there were games currently in development for the coming year that would dispel any notion that the PlayStation had reached the limits of its architecture. In fact, Mark went as far as to say that *Crash* could have incorporated a free-to-roam total

3D environment, while retaining its superior graphical quality, had the game designers so desired. Additionally, with a statement sure to be proclaimed blasphemous by Nintendo 64 fans, Mark Cerny felt certain that the PlayStation architecture was up to the task of handling the demands of *Super Mario 64* had it been designed for the system.

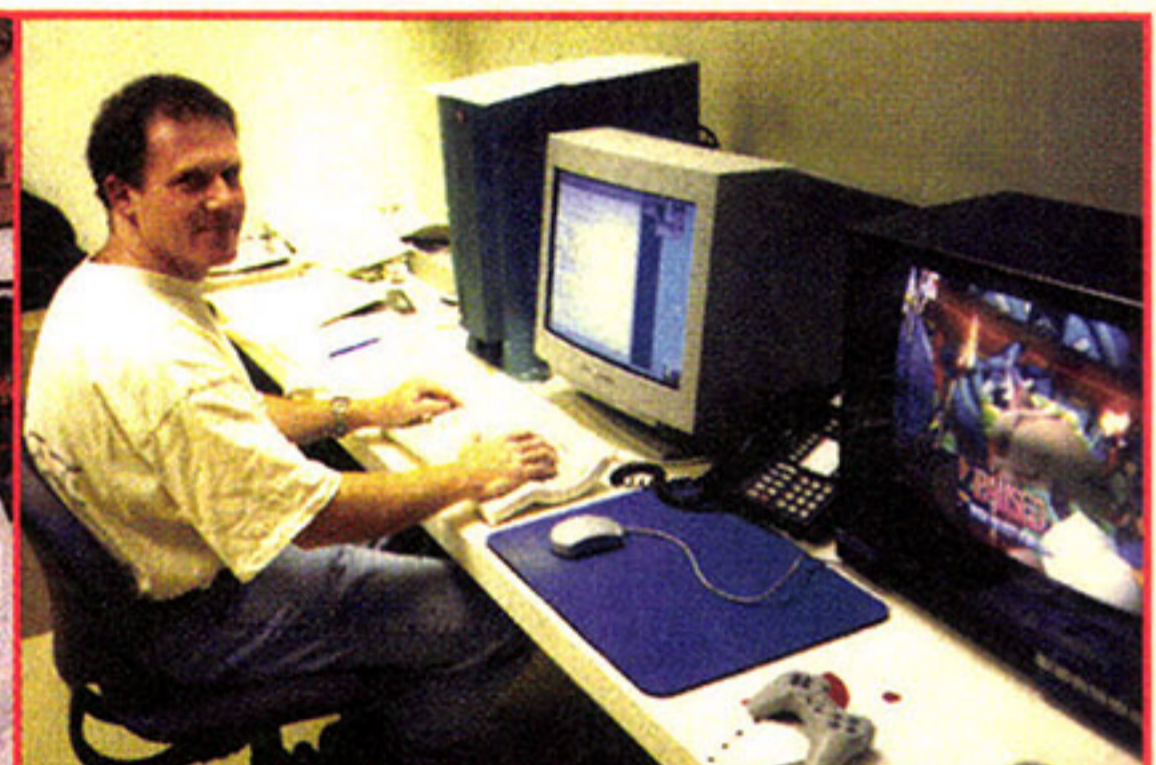
Ultimately, the gameplay decisions that Naughty Dog made while designing *Crash Bandicoot* will be judged by the consumer. Is Crash cool enough to be THE videogame mascot of the nineties? Will the gamer appreciate the traditional, yet innovative, platform gameplay over the explorative nature of its competition? Whatever the case, *Crash Bandicoot* IS Sony's attempt to create a signature mascot game title. The court of public opinion convenes on September 9th as to whether solid gameplay, coupled with cutting-edge graphics, will be enough for a market that increasingly demands a revolutionary new vision in game designs.



Here's a few of the many early animation sketches that show Crash going through his emotional paces.

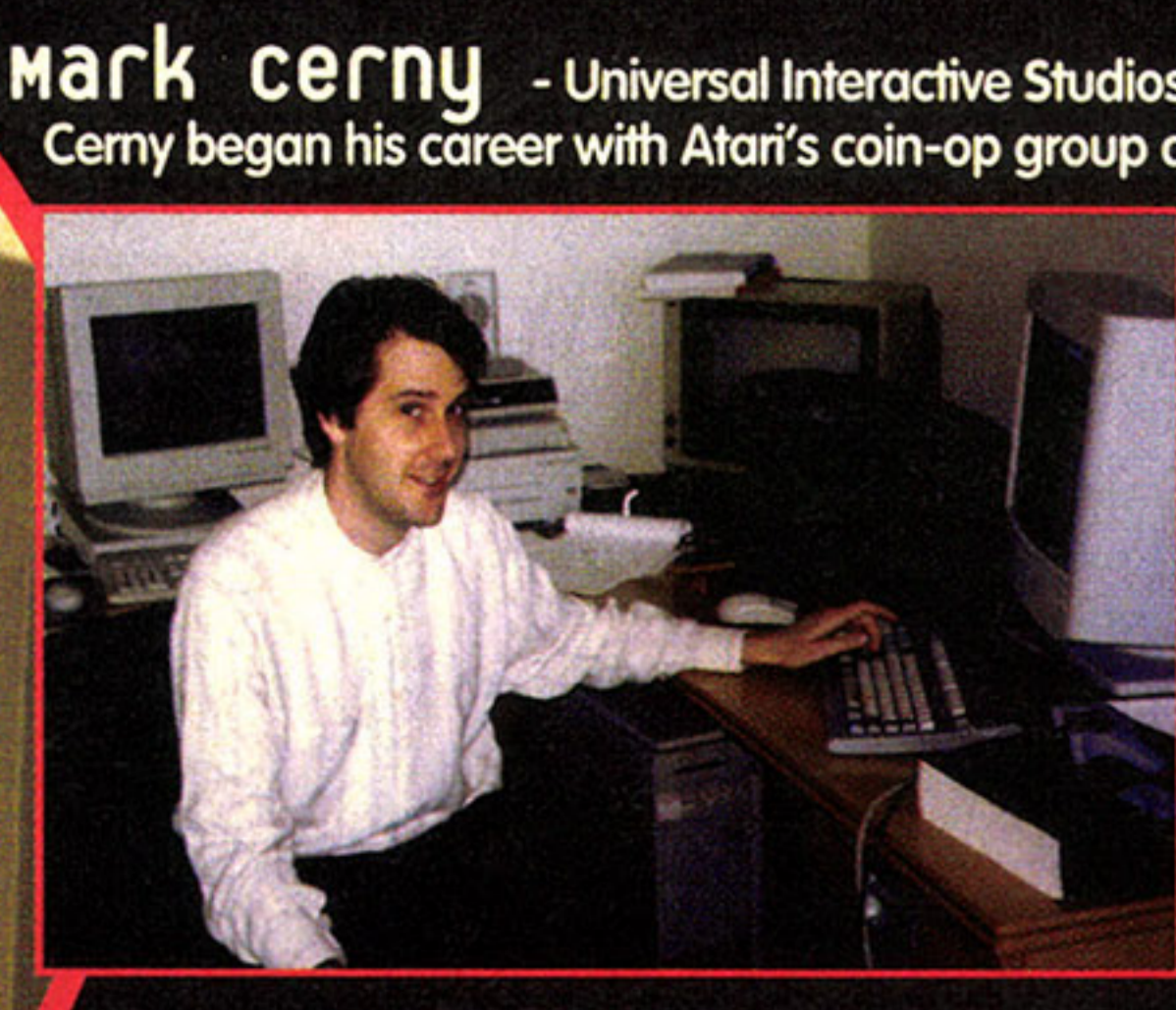


Morgan - Naughty Dog - Company Canine Mascot. The one and only original naughty dog, Morgan's primary responsibility is to use her supernatural canine powers to compel visitors to feed her an endless supply of Snausages.



The naughty dog Team
 (Standing, from left to right) Justin Monast, Charlotte Francis, Andy Gavin, Dave Baggett, Bob Rafei, Taylor Kurosaki, Mark Cerny. (Kneeling, from left to right) Jason Rubin, Morgan. (Not pictured: Dan Kollmorgen)

Andy Gavin - Naughty Dog - Chief Technologist and Programmer. In addition to being a Cofounder of Naughty Dog, Andy was responsible for writing much of the C and Lisp code in *Crash Bandicoot*. Furthermore, he created a new programming language called GOOL (Game Oriented Object LISP), which allows for the very rapid prototyping of the widely varying behaviors Crash's creatures and objects exhibit.



mark cerny - Universal Interactive Studios - President of Production. Verging on 'Legend' status in the videogame industry, Mark Cerny began his career with Atari's coin-op group at the age of seventeen. In 1985, he hit the big time as game designer, graphics programmer, and project leader for the arcade classic *Marble Madness*. After working for several years as an independent contractor for Sega, working on 8-bit software and coin-op game hardware, Mark founded the Sega Technical Institute in 1989. It was there that he led the creation of *Sonic II* for the Sega Genesis, which was released in December 1992 and was a multi-million unit seller world-wide. In 1992, Mark Cerny joined start-up Crystal Dynamics as Chief Technologist and, in 1994, he started at Universal Interactive Studios as Vice President. He was recently promoted to President of Production and is responsible for all aspects of game development at Universal Interactive Studios. In addition to his creative and technological input on *Crash Bandicoot*, Mark Cerny is responsible for what can be described as a 'Nintendo-like' development atmosphere at Universal Interactive Studios. This working environment led to the long development period for *Crash Bandicoot* in which game quality was stressed over arbitrary deadlines.

interview with jason rubin

Despite the significant technological and gameplay achievements in *Crash Bandicoot*, there are some serious questions about how well Crash will compete against his rivals from Sega and Nintendo. **GAME PLAYERS** sat down with Jason Rubin, cofounder and chief administrator of Naughty Dog, to get a first hand account of the design, technology, and thinking that went into *Crash Bandicoot*.

Q: Being the premiere platform game for the PlayStation, *Crash* will naturally be compared to the forthcoming *Mario* and *Sonic* Games. Do you feel this is a fair comparison?

A: I think that the comparisons are inevitable, and certainly they are not 'unfair' per se, but the comparisons are not necessarily beneficial either. *Yoshi* and *DKC2* sat on shelves at the same time and peacefully coexisted in print. They were both excellent games, and their reviews stated so. They were also very different. Yet nobody has done comparisons of those games the way they have, and will, with *Crash*, *Mario64*, and *Sonic X-Treme*. Had *DKC2* and *Yoshi* been on different platforms, as

opposed to both being on the Super NES, I think the comparisons would have run rampant.

Crash, *Sonic X-Treme*, and *Mario 64* are caught up in the hardware wars being fought around them. I believe that *Crash* and *Mario 64* are both good games. And, although what we saw at the show of *Sonic X-Treme* was too early in its production cycle to judge, *Nights* was definitely good. All of these products have different goals, different gameplay, different strengths and different weaknesses. Often the comparisons that are done are too narrow to adequately reflect these differences.

I also think that Crash gets his share of the 'new kid on the block' syndrome. It's almost like he's trespassing

on somebody else's territory. We all have to remember how rough Sonic had it when he first arrived. I guess it's just a rite of passage.



From ancient pyramids to desert isles, *Crash's* world is beautifully diverse.



Q: Although the game is not yet complete, there have already been some reservations stated by some jaded industry-types about the restricted pathways gameplay in *Crash*. Why wasn't a true 3D environment created for the game?

A: Good question. I find it unwarranted to call *Crash* anything but 'true 3D.' The argument that is made is: anything less than open worlds with following cameras is not 'full 3D.' I disagree with that assessment...

Crash started as a much more open game. As open, it turns out, as *Mario 64*, which we wouldn't see until many months after we abandoned that look. We found, however, that players were spending too much time wandering, and too little time on anything that could be called 'gameplay'. We also found it impossible to capture the steadily increasing difficulty the classics depend on in a 'go anywhere, whenever' type of environment. If we put an obstacle somewhere, the player would just go around it. If we put three creatures in a row, the player might come at them from the side, ruining the challenge (and fun) of disposing of them three at a time.

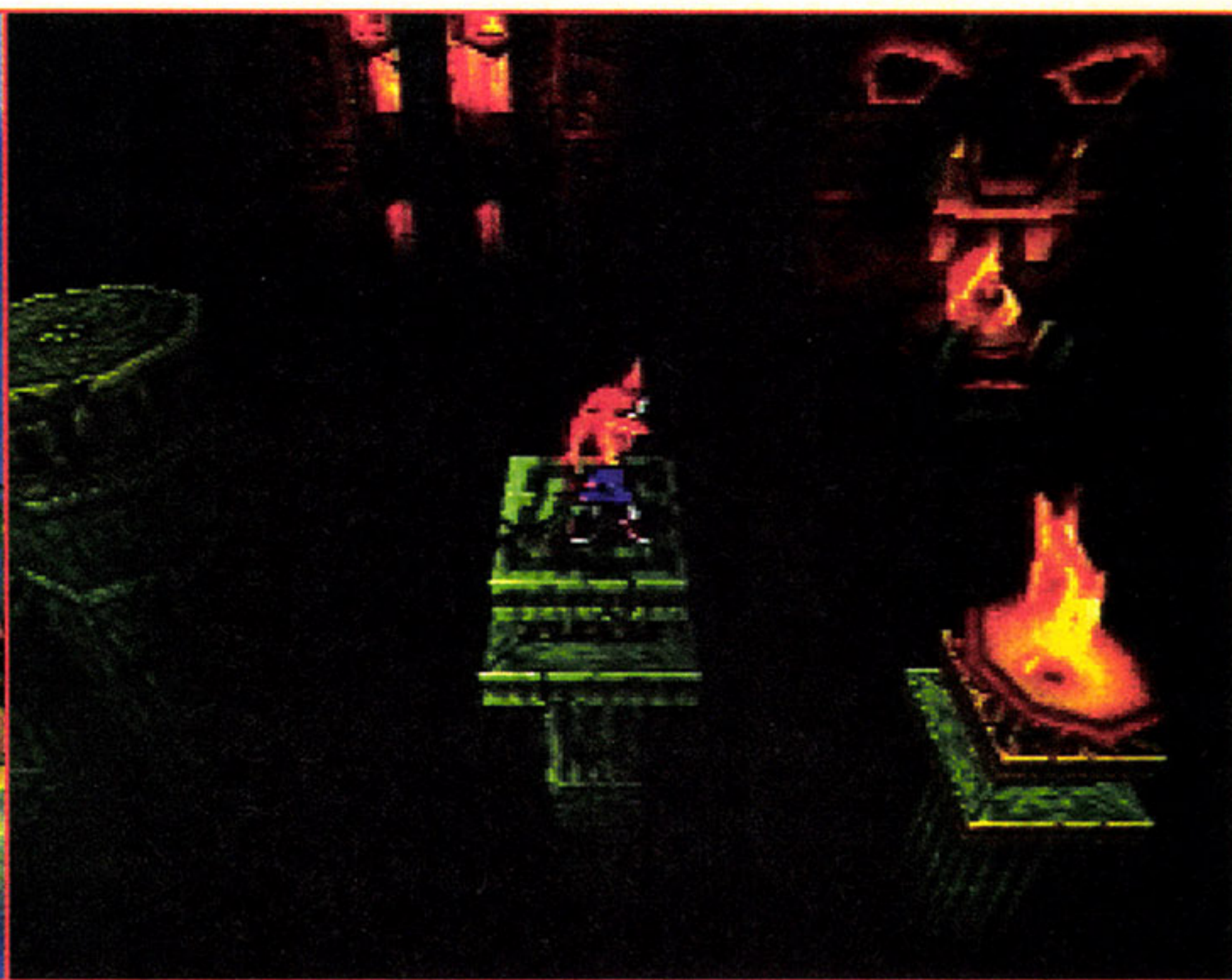
So we began to place obstacles to guide the player in the areas where we were trying to set up specific gameplay. The world started to look more and more like a path.



The more often we focused the player, the more focused the gameplay became.

But it still wasn't playing like the classics. Having the player move the camera was getting in the way. The player would come around the corner and get killed because the camera was facing the wrong direction. Or it would be difficult to judge the width of a pit because the camera angle was too low. So we locked the camera to Crash. It trailed him at a specific angle behind his head. The gameplay got better, but not perfect. So we gave the camera some intelligence: lower here to go under something, raise here to show the width of pits better, stay far here so the player can see more, close-up here for tension. We tuned the camera so that in every scene it gave you the best viewpoint for one thing, and one thing only: the gameplay. It worked. *Crash* began to play like the classics, but in a 3D world.

This topic can be argued endlessly. I guess it boils down to this: Imagine yourself in a field. Your world is 3D. Now let's say you go home and walk down a hallway in your house. You can still move in all directions but there are walls. Is your world suddenly 2D? Is it anything less than 'true 3D'?



Q: Since both *Mario 64* and *Sonic X-Treme* have true 3D environments, do you feel that *Crash* could lose some appeal when compared to the competition?

A: No. As I have said, it is my opinion that *Crash* is a 'true 3D environment' as well.

Answering instead the question: 'do I think that restricting the openness of the game, as we have in *Crash*, as opposed to letting the player wander will make *Crash* lose some appeal when compared to the competition?' I would answer as follows...

Sonic X-Treme has sprite characters. Sonic, as well as his enemies, are not made of polygons. They are sprites and by definition sprites are 2D. Because of this, it can be argued that *Sonic X-Treme* is not 'true 3D.' However, I do not believe that this will make *Sonic X-Treme* lose appeal if it has good gameplay when it is finished. It does mean that they can't show Sonic from arbitrary viewpoints — a nice visual feature we take advantage of in *Crash* (for example, when he's standing on a smoothly rotating leaf on one of the river levels).

Nights restricts your movement in and out of the screen in flying mode. You can move up, down, left and right, but not in or out. The same is true of *DKC*, *Sonic Genesis*, and *Mario Super NES*. In these games, you can't move in all directions. This is what is commonly called 2D gameplay. *Nights*, therefore, has 2D gameplay during the flying modes. It can be argued, then, that *Nights* is not

'true 3D.' Again, I do not believe that this will make *Nights* lose appeal, because it has good gameplay.

Mario 64 has what everyone seems to call the most 'true 3D environments'... but does it? The trees are 2D 'flats.' As the camera rotates, they turn to face the camera, creating the illusion of 3D. *Doom* does the same with its corpses and stim-packs. *Crash* has 3D trees. The fences and other items in *Mario 64* are 2D elements in 3D space. There is an angle at which they lose the appearance of depth, and instead look paper-thin. 'True 3D' fences would have depth from all angles. Everything has 3D depth in *Crash*. Again, it can be argued that a lot of the elements in *Mario 64*'s background are not 'true 3D.' Will this make *Mario* lose appeal? Of course not! *Mario 64* is fun, and that is really the only thing that matters.

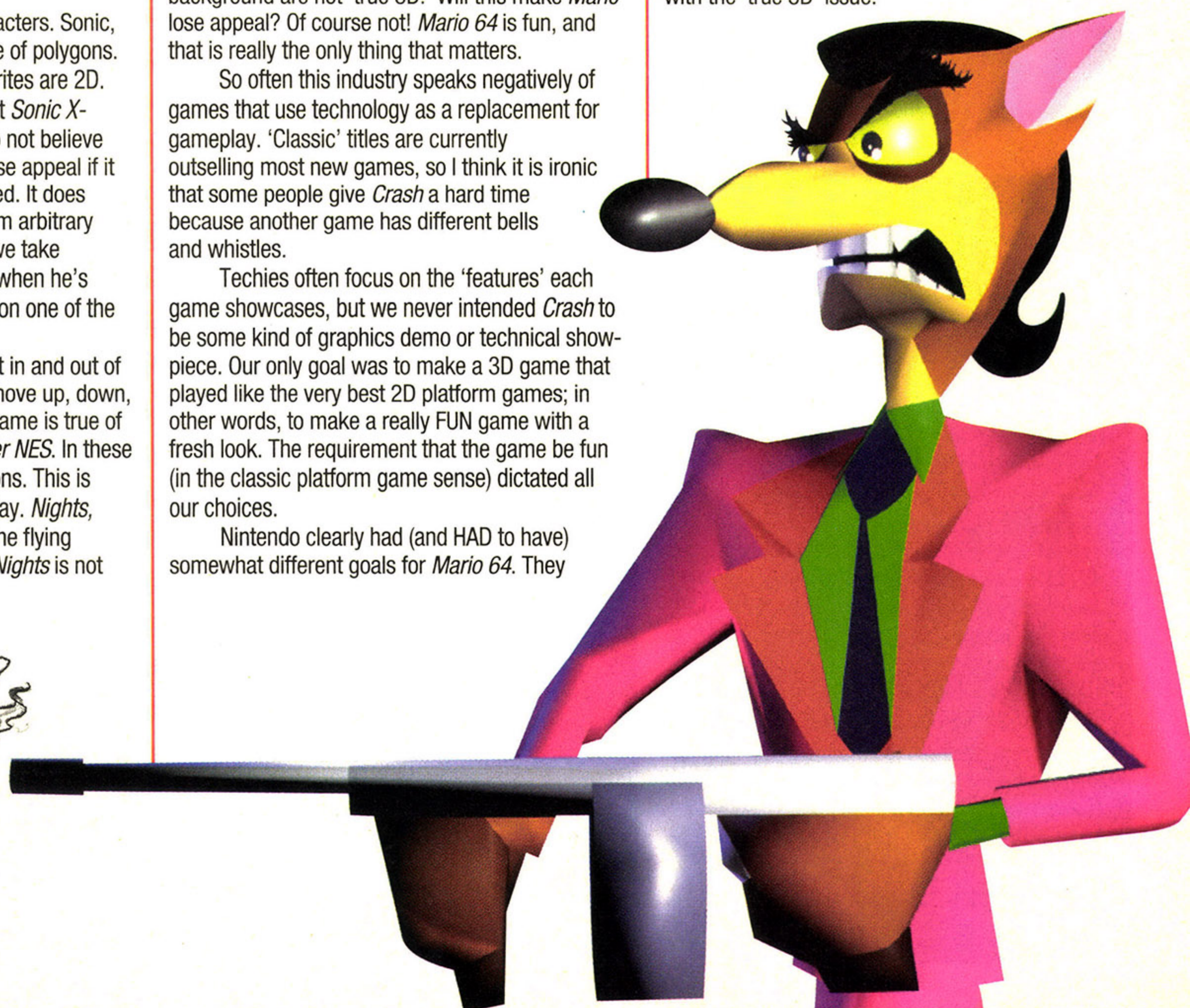
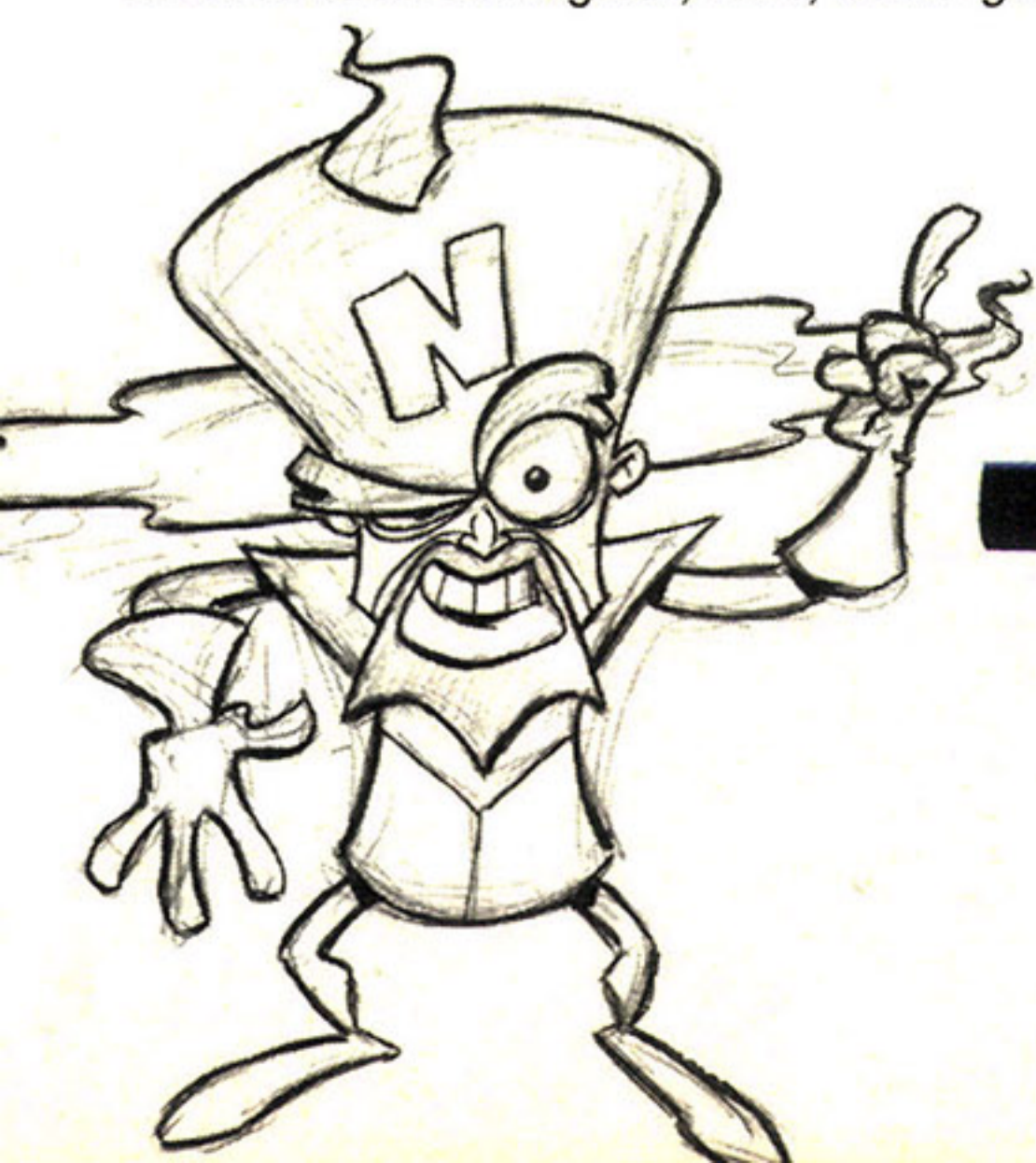
So often this industry speaks negatively of games that use technology as a replacement for gameplay. 'Classic' titles are currently outselling most new games, so I think it is ironic that some people give *Crash* a hard time because another game has different bells and whistles.

Techies often focus on the 'features' each game showcases, but we never intended *Crash* to be some kind of graphics demo or technical showpiece. Our only goal was to make a 3D game that played like the very best 2D platform games; in other words, to make a really FUN game with a fresh look. The requirement that the game be fun (in the classic platform game sense) dictated all our choices.

Nintendo clearly had (and HAD to have) somewhat different goals for *Mario 64*. They

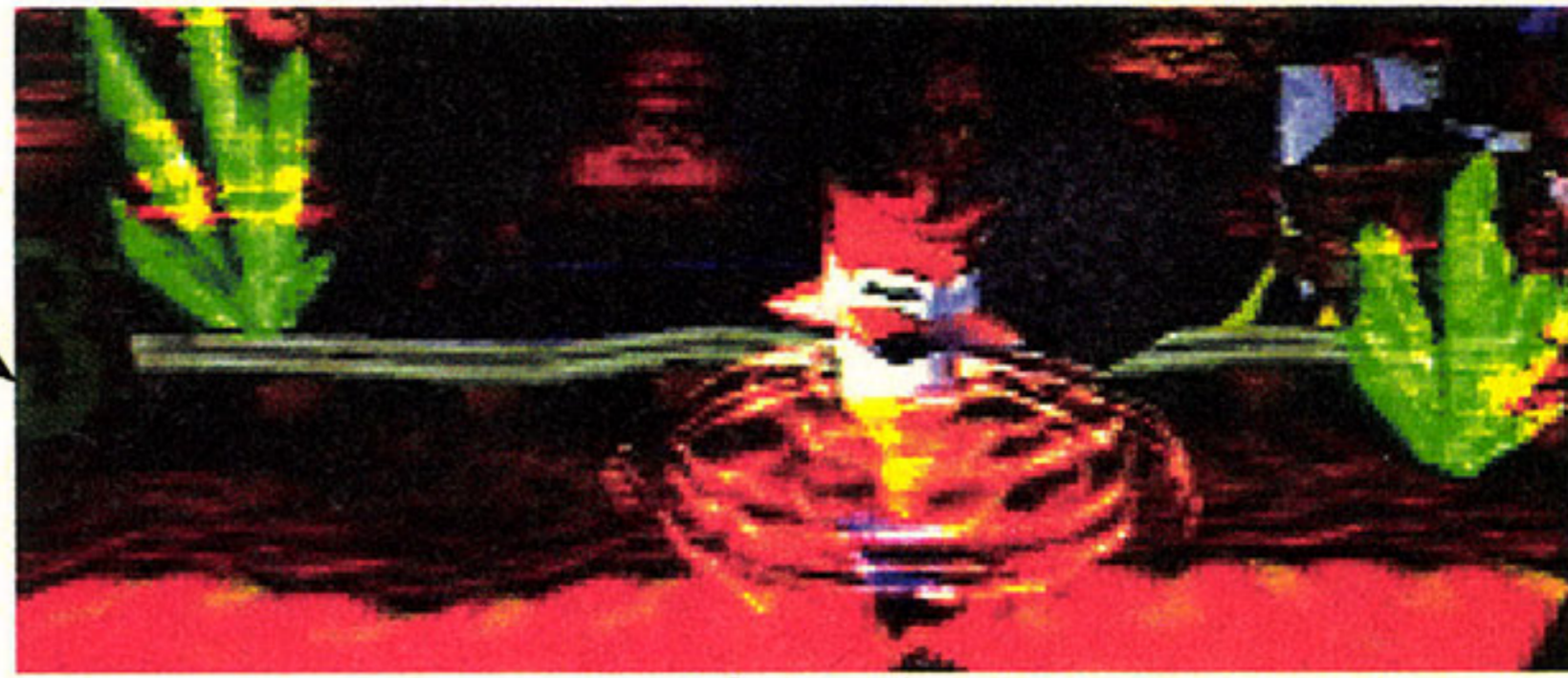
needed to come up with a game that would grab people's attention — a Nintendo 64 graphics demo of sorts. The free camera is a real crowd pleaser; we found that out ourselves back when *Crash* had one. But does it result in the same kind of gameplay that made previous *Mario* games blockbusters? Naughty Dog decided that open worlds and user-controlled cameras were NOT the way to create classic platform gameplay.

I think it's telling that Dave Perry, who's noted for his own platform game design talent, picked *Crash* as the best game of E³ recently, according to a French gaming magazine. Europe is abuzz with the news. Dave Perry obviously is not obsessed with the 'true 3D' issue.





With his baggy shorts and stylin' high-tops, Crash is a true 3D fashion plate!



Q: Regardless of the game-play format, *Crash* is one of the best looking PlayStation titles ever. What techniques and technology were used to achieve the look?

A: Thank you for the compliment. I'll let Dave Baggett, one of our programmers, answer the Technology Questions:

Dave: Creating a game like *Crash* involves solving many different problems; that's what makes game programming so interesting. The obvious problems are things like calculating, drawing and sorting polygons quickly. But things like unrestricted 3D collision detection, intelligent camera tracking, and even managing when data should be loaded from CD to RAM and back out again are all tricky.

How creative (and obsessive) you are in your solutions to these problems determines how much your game can do. We had high hopes for *Crash* from the start, and got very creative and focused. We kept improving our code until it did what the artists envisioned.



We tried to choose the right tool for each task. Code that needed to be incredibly fast, for things like polygon drawing and collision detection, had to be written in assembly. We had to cleverly design these algorithms so they wouldn't hit memory too much and the more clever we got, the better they performed. (Memory is much slower than the internal registers, but keeping everything in registers can be tricky, because there are only 32 of them.)

On the other hand, we wrote all the creature and object AI in GOOL, a dialect of Lisp that Andy Gavin invented for *Crash*. Most AI researchers write all their code in Lisp, because implementing and refining complicated algorithms is very easy (and therefore, quick) in Lisp. This meant we could write a dozen or more different versions of a creature like the turtle, and keep the one that played the best. It also meant we could have a wide variety of interesting object behaviors — dozens of different platform mechanics, for example.

Beyond that, we tried to view the CD as a resource rather than a handicap. What does all that storage space let you do? Well, for one thing, it lets you write a game that uses more data than will fit in RAM, or even on a cartridge. Some of *Crash's* levels are upwards of ten megabytes. We're constantly loading data of all kinds: textures, geometry, even the GOOL code for creatures and objects. That means that our game plays like a game running on a machine with 12 megabytes of memory instead of two. SGI workstations create this illusion with what's called 'virtual memory'. We do it with the CD and some smart load management code.

Back to Jason...

Q: Besides the graphics, one of the strongest elements of the game is the character of *Crash*. Who came up with him, and what was the inspiration?

A: Crash was created by the eight members of Naughty Dog, Dave and Mark from UIS, and two cartoon designers. The designers were brought in to let us tap into the 75+ years of character design in their industry.

It took two and a half months, and tons of sketches. We sort of bred the drafts we liked together until they boiled down into one image. We were left with Crash.

We were inspired by Warner Brothers classic cartoon characters. Personally, I love Wile E. Coyote and the Roadrunner. We also have a manga contingent at Naughty Dog. I think that all of the characters' eyes and overall shape are somewhat manga inspired.

Q: There has been talk that the superior graphics in *Crash* could not have been achieved if the game featured a true 3D environment. Is there any validity to this notion?

A: No. *Crash* is as 'true 3D' as any of the other titles, and there is no technical reason why we couldn't open the world up. In fact, we started that way.

Mario 64 doesn't have shadowing in the background, or have true light-sourcing; it could have. *Mario 64* doesn't have 3D trees, plants, and boulders; it could have. *Mario 64* doesn't have flowing ground surfaces like *Crash's*; it could have. *Mario 64* doesn't darken Mario himself when he is in shadow; it could have. *Mario 64* doesn't use the bit depth and detailed textures that *Crash* uses; it could have.

Sorry to belabor the point, and I am not trying to take pot shots at *Mario 64* (which I have said is a world-class game), but the flip

side of saying that *Crash's* graphics restrict it from having open worlds is saying that having an open world precludes *Mario* from having better graphics. *Mario 64* could have had our graphics; they don't.

Crash could have had an open world, with the same graphics we have now. We chose to restrict the path for the gameplay reasons I discussed previously. It's not a trade-off for us any more than it was for Nintendo.



Q: The character animation of Crash really brings the character alive. How was this achieved?

A: Actually, there is a good deal of technology in Crash's construction. Historically, video game characters' (in fact, all 3D characters') joints are created by intersecting different geometries. Think of it as making a character of sausages, if you could place sausages inside each other. To make an arm, you would use two sausages. One for the upper arm, which would be shoved into the torso at the shoulder, and one for the lower arm, which would join with the upper arm at the elbow, allowing for a bend. The hand would require more sausages, but the construction is similar. And of course, you can shape your sausages to look more like the part of the body we are creating, but they still must overlap at the joint. Otherwise, a gap forms when the joint bends.

If you don't have a z-buffer, which determines what is in front of what on the screen, then the joints flicker, because the graphics engine can't decide what order to draw the overlapping polygons in. This flickering is evident in the character's joints in *Tekken*, and *Virtua Fighter*, both in the home versions and in the arcade.

If you do have a z-buffer, then you won't get popping, but you will get a 'sausage in sausage' joint appearance. Mario, in *Mario 64*, has this look. Mario's nose is just a sphere on the front of his face, which is itself a separate sphere, and his arms are made of elongated spheres of one type or another stuck into his body. To animate Mario, his joints are rotated, but no shoulder bends, and no skin stretches.

In *Crash*, we use a technology created for the movies for Crash's construction. *Jurassic Park*, for instance, would have been terribly unconvincing if the dinosaurs were made out of separate parts. The technology that allows

their hides to look like a single surface, and move like muscles and flesh is called 'weighted single mesh polygon surfacing.'

Simply stated, the entire body is made of a single sheet of polygons with no overlap, and each vertex is given an amount of stretch movement and twist that it can take. Although it seems like a simple idea, doing it at 30 frames per second real-time has never been achieved in a videogame before. For every animation frame, you have to do complex math for each vertex, as opposed to simple rotational math for the whole sausage. *Jurassic Park's* dinosaurs often took hours to render each frame — Crash takes 1/30th of a second. Crash's mesh skin took three months to perfect, and it took a good deal more time to implement in code. It is also far more time consuming to animate Crash, then characters made out of simple objects.

Some people say that Crash is too smooth to be polygons, and must be a sprite. This is 'weighted single mesh polygon surfacing' at work. The technology also allows us to squash and stretch like they do in Warner cartoons, allowing us to create more interesting animations. And, at every frame, Crash has animations of the mesh on his face that allow him to smile, blink, look in shock, etc.

In the end, the technology allows us to create animation for the character that looks more like animation than computer graphics, and that is the technology's greatest benefit. We used it to create thousands of frames of animation for Crash.



Q: Crash has attitude and style, but does he have enough appeal to match the popularity of Sonic and Mario?

A: Only the consumer can answer that question. I have heard that over ten execs turned down the *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* before someone was found who believed in it. The consumers burned those execs! Who would have thought that Cabbage Patch Kids, which are little more than stuffed stockings, would be so popular that mothers would fight each other at Toys-R-Us for the last one? And who could have guessed that a plumber (who started as a carpenter) or a blue hedgehog would represent two of the largest video game companies out there?

We tried to create an interesting character with a range of emotions, and an engine that would allow him to express them. Focus tests on Crash have been extremely positive, and some pretty influential people in toys and animation have voiced their approval for Crash.

I think that Crash will do just fine.

Q: Assuming Crash is embraced, are there plans for the full scale merchandising of the Crash character?

A: In terms of licensing, I think that Universal Interactive Studios and Sony should be answering that question. Universal Interactive is a division of MCA, which owns among other things (no kidding): Universal Pictures, Universal Pictures marketing, MCA Television Group, Universal Television, MCA TV international, Universal Cartoon Studios, MCA home video, Universal Pay TV, Universal Pay-per-view, MCA records, Geffen Records, UNI distributions, MCA concerts, Universal Amphitheater, Winterland Merchandising, Putnam Publishing, Berkeley Publishing, Universal Studios theme parks, Universal Citywalk, Victoria Station Restaurants, Spencer Gifts, 50% of the USA network, Cineplex Odeon, and a significant minority interest in Interplay (yes, the video game company), among many other things.

Sony owns just as much. If Universal Interactive and Sony aren't connected, I don't know who is.

If the consumer likes Crash, they will get plenty of him!

Q: This question may be a bit premature, but has work started on the development of Crash Bandicoot 2?

A: No comment!

Q: And if so, can we have screen shots?

A: Absolutely! If there is a *Crash Bandicoot 2*, I promise that *Ultra GAME PLAYERS* can have screen shots the day we first give them out! Stay in touch and remind me of my promise.





Just look at this screen in AWE. Not counting the hidden characters and other goodies, *MK Trilogy* offers 26 kombatants and about 27 backgrounds. Wow!



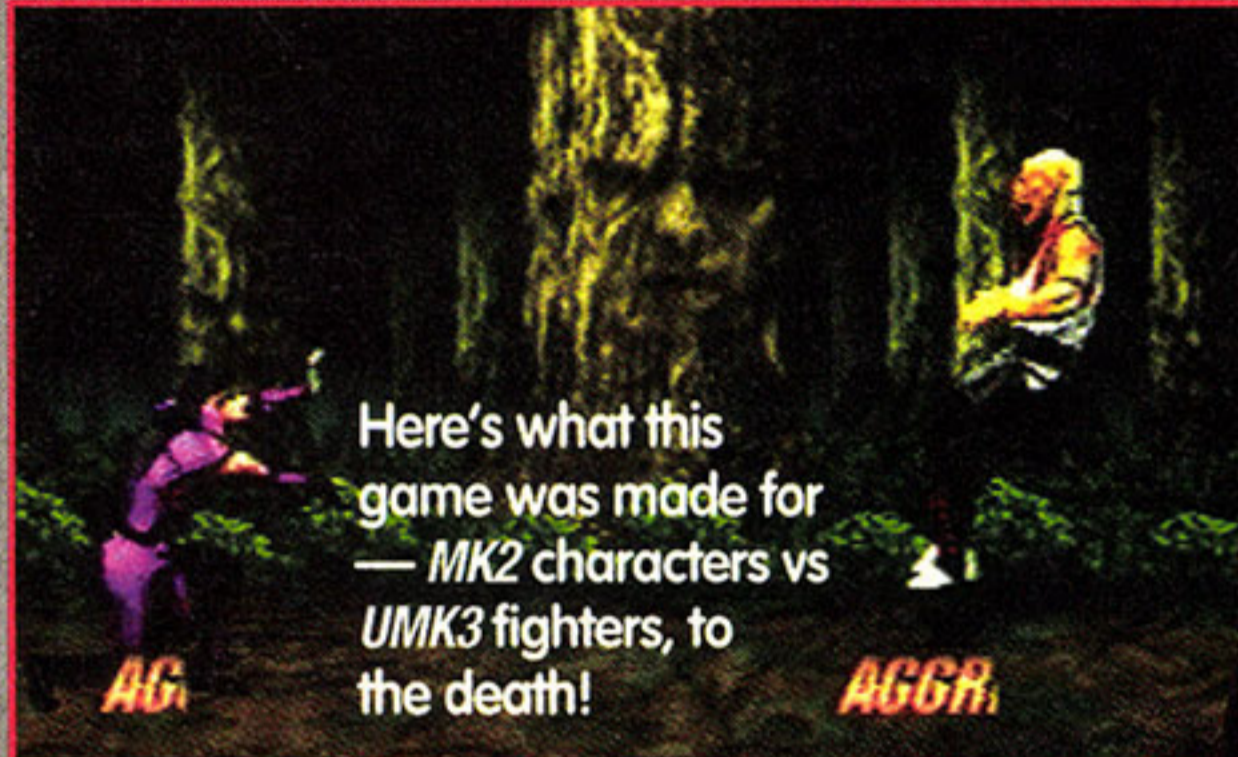
The overall presentation of the game takes on *Ultimate MK3's* more up-to-date look.



YES — Baraka is BACK!!!



'Get over here!' Scorpion and Kabal can now duke it out in *MK2's* worlds.



Here's what this game was made for — *MK2* characters vs *UMK3* fighters, to the death!

Williams' latest bloodfest combines all three games into one!

You know what really sucks? They took Rayden out of *MK3*. I mean, that just bites. I'll bet that Rayden could whup up on any of the new characters, easy. Sigh. I guess we'll never know... Or, maybe we will! Thanks to Williams, now all those great *Kombat* questions can finally be answered with *Mortal Kombat Trilogy* for PlayStation and Nintendo 64!

It's as simple as this: ALL the *MK* backgrounds, ALL the secrets, ALL the characters, and ALL the bosses from every version of Williams' classic arcade series, together for the first and last time in one god-like version of *Kombat*! It's all here, except for one tiny exception — no Johnny Cage. The actor that played him isn't exactly on the best of terms with Williams right now. Still, some sources indicate that Cage might make his way into the game as a hidden trick of some sort...

MK Trilogy also includes loads of new tricks and features. Wanna play as Noob? Now he's selectable from the main menu! Ever wanted to play as the bosses? Go right ahead! Want more *Kombat* Kodes? They're in there, too. There's also new Fatalities and Babalities, four Towers of Challenge, and the four-player mode is included as well. But perhaps the best thing of all is that, on the N64's cartridge format, Shang Tsung's morphs are finally free of CD access time! Are you *MK* blood-mongers drooling yet? Thought so.

With the eventual release of the 3-D *Mortal Kombat*

4, *MK Trilogy* may very well end up being the best, and last, version of 2-D *Kombat*. That means that if you're an *MK* fan, you HAVE to get this one. You simply have no choice in the matter. Other Kombatants will find you, and you know what THAT means. So without further ado, take a look at all these cool screen shots! We just got this one in to play for ourselves, and it totally rocks! (BTW, most of the screens are taken from the Nintendo 64 version, except where otherwise indicated.)



Noob Saibot is finally a selectable character, and boy, can he be tough to spot!



New moves, like Baraka's spin shown here, are currently being tweaked.



The acid's a-flyin' when *UMK3's* improved Reptile takes it to Rain!

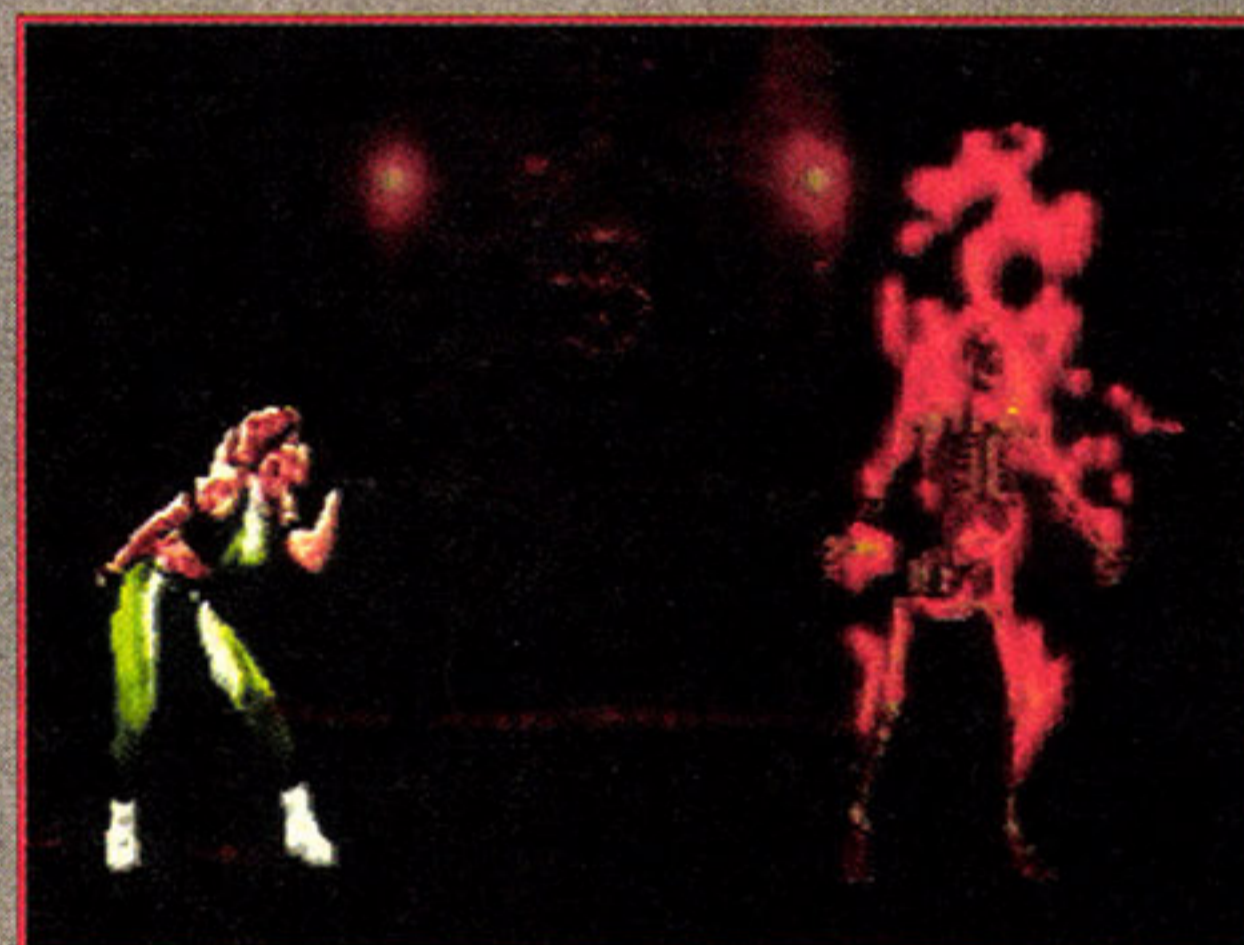
MORTAL KOMBAT TRILOGY



Does this look weird or what? New characters battling it out in old *MK1* scenes — too cool!

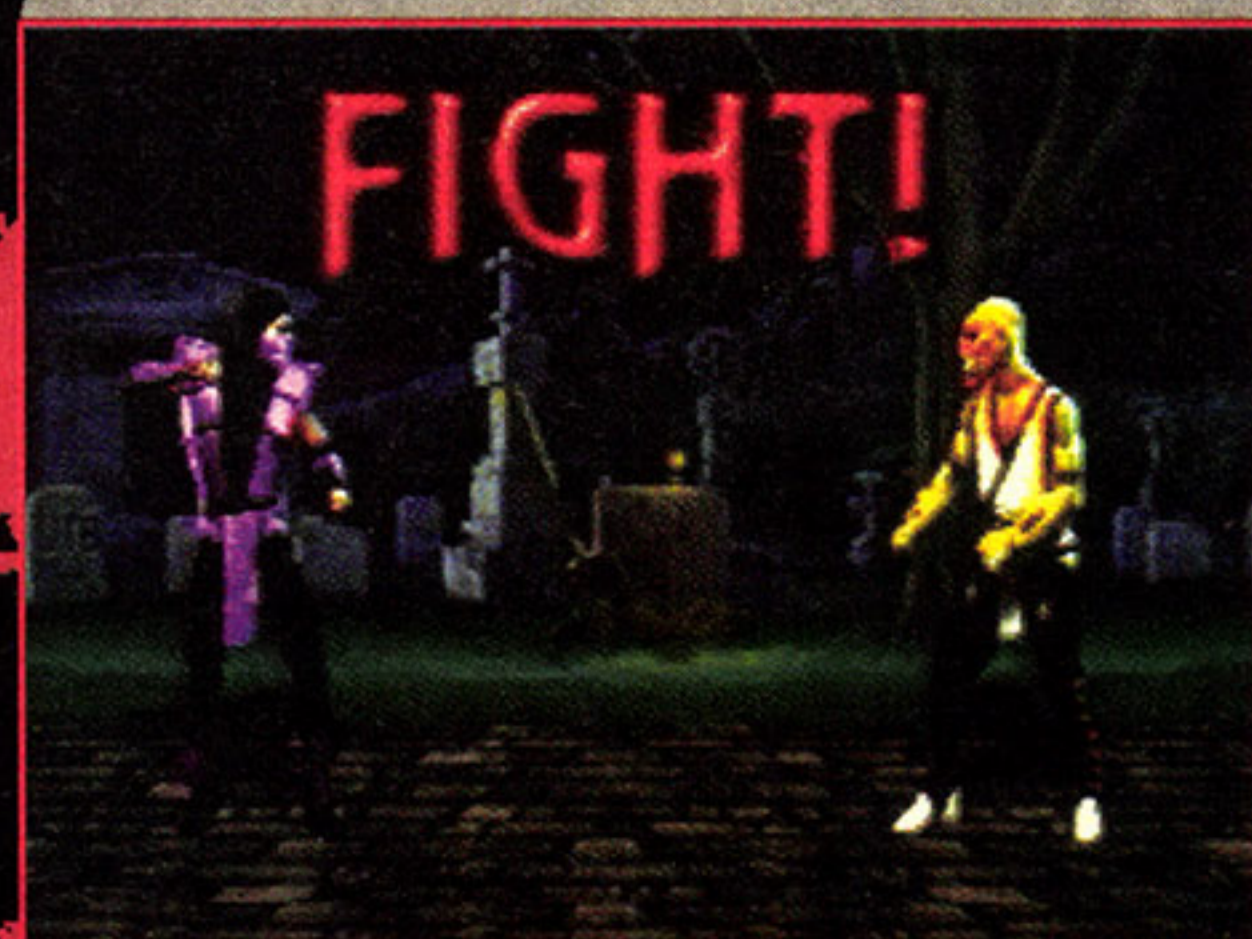
A Bloody Mess!

MK Trilogy uses Fatalities from all of William's previous arcade games, plus they're adding new ones! You can even choose to watch a demo of them all, one after the other — you WILL be desensitized.



Hey, what about the PlayStation?

You Sony fans shouldn't worry, *MK Trilogy* is also heading for PlayStation! Although the N64 version is said to have a couple of extras that haven't been nailed down yet, the PS version is nearly identical, but with that nasty load time and near-unplayable Shang Tsung. At this point, there's still no Saturn version planned — sorry, Sega fans...





Crash in Early and Get a Free Alternative Music CD.

Go to your participating retailer before September 9th and reserve your copy of the incredible, soon-to-be-released Crash Bandicoot.™ You'll get a free music CD – a 12 track alternative mix that you won't find anywhere else – while supplies last.



www.sony.com



REVIEWS

Cosmic Race	74
Fade 2 Black	66
GP Sports	80
Jumping Flash 2	78
Legend of Oasis	76
Now Playing	88
Road Rash	70
Shockwave Assault	73
Tekken 2	68
X-Perts	71

Life is about change. Look at the dinosaurs. They were changed right out of existence. Napoleon changed the face of Europe, while Marie Antoinette changed drastically above the neck. This page is gonna change, too!



THE GAME PLAYERS ULTIMATE AWARD

We hope you realize just how hard it can be for a game to get one of these things! When a game has one of these, it means it scored at least a 90% with our reviewing staff. That ain't easy!

INFO

If the dinosaurs had had some information about that really big comet, maybe they could have launched a missile to deflect it and... uh... never mind.

REVIEWER

Unlike Napoleon, this guy is a veritable font of gaming knowledge, although it is rumored that Napoleon played a mean game of Pong.

OPINION

You can always trust our opinion on any game! After all, it's not like we tell you to eat cake all the time!

The Rocket Science:

Each category of our scoring boxes is given a 'weight' — the higher the weight, the more important the category. We multiply each category's score by the weight, total them up and divide the answer by 18, which is the total of all the weights combined. The resulting number is multiplied by ten to compute the final score for the game.

Graphics:	Weighted by a factor of two.
Music & Sound FX:	Weighted by a factor of one.
Innovation:	Weighted by a factor of one.
Gameplay:	Weighted by a factor of eight.
Replay Value:	Weighted by a factor of six.

SCORE

Well, for what it's worth, here's the last review intro page of its kind. It's been fun...

100% Flawless	60-69% Good	20-29% Heinous
90-99% Ultimate	50-59% Average	10-19% Putrid
80-89% Excellent	40-49% Lacking	1-9% Shoot Me
70-79% Very Good	30-39% Crap	0% Cosmic Race

PLAYSTATION review

PLAYSTATION MATURE

GENRE / adventure
PLAYERS / 1
PUBLISHER / Electronic Arts
DEVELOPER / Delphine Studios
AVAILABLE / now
PRICE / \$59.99

FADE TO BLACK

8 This game reminds me of my youth, especially the prison part — *Christian Svensson*

Does anybody remember the game Flashback? It was on just about every system imaginable and became an instant classic with its fluid retro-styled graphics. Well, *Fade to Black* is the sequel to that best-selling game, and Conrad's back... and he's in 3D... and he's pissed.

The game starts with Conrad being held prisoner by the evil Morphs, an alien race that is able to replicate any shape at will. While being held on the prison moon, Conrad meets John O'Connor, a leader of Madragora, the resistance movement that seeks to overthrow the Morph regime. After escaping the prison, Conrad joins the resistance as a saboteur, where he destroys factories, rescues important personnel and more.

From a gameplay standpoint, the engine of the game itself is more like *Resident Evil* than any other recent title. The camera follows Conrad in an 'over the shoulder' fashion very smoothly. Just about every surface in the game is feature-mapped. The environment consists primarily of octagonal walls with extremely high ceilings and the frame rate of the game is smooth, even though the pace of the action is usually quite slow with treacherous.

To say that the game is a shooter would be incorrect, even though the use of your gun is very important. The real challenge lies in navigating the numerous puzzles and traps that seem to be everywhere. Save your game often or you will often suffer the misfortune of having to redo parts of a mission you've just spent the last two hours working on.

The dynamic soundtrack of the game provides an ominous atmosphere and the audio samples used also add to the feeling of foreboding. One particular sound that deserves specific mention is the dying sound of the Morphs, which was lifted almost directly from the movie *Kristi*. Quite cool indeed.

The game itself carries the atmosphere and challenge of *Flashback* to the next level and is a worthy successor to the game. If you liked the gamier elements of *Resident Evil*, you will very likely enjoy *Fade to Black*. **GP**

8 Graphics

Going up! These are the elevators in Conrad's universe.

8 Music & Sound FX

9 Innovation

8 Gameplay

6 Replay Value

75% VERY GOOD

8 Motion captured characters are nicely animated.
8 Low-res textures and mostly octagonal walls become a little monotonous.
9 The soundtrack changes whether you are under fire or just scouting around.
9 Sound effects fit very well with the atmosphere.

9 This title was the inspiration for several others, including *Resident Evil*.
8 Translates Flashback play faithfully to 3D.

8 Conrad has a wide array of actions available to him.
8 Lots of missions that are truly challenging.

6 The game is fun to play and offers many missions for hours of play.
6 The game is very predictable the second time around.

PLAYSTATION



GENRE / adventure
 PLAYERS / 1
 PUBLISHER / Electronic Arts
 DEVELOPER / Delphine Studios
 AVAILABLE / now
 PRICE / \$59.99

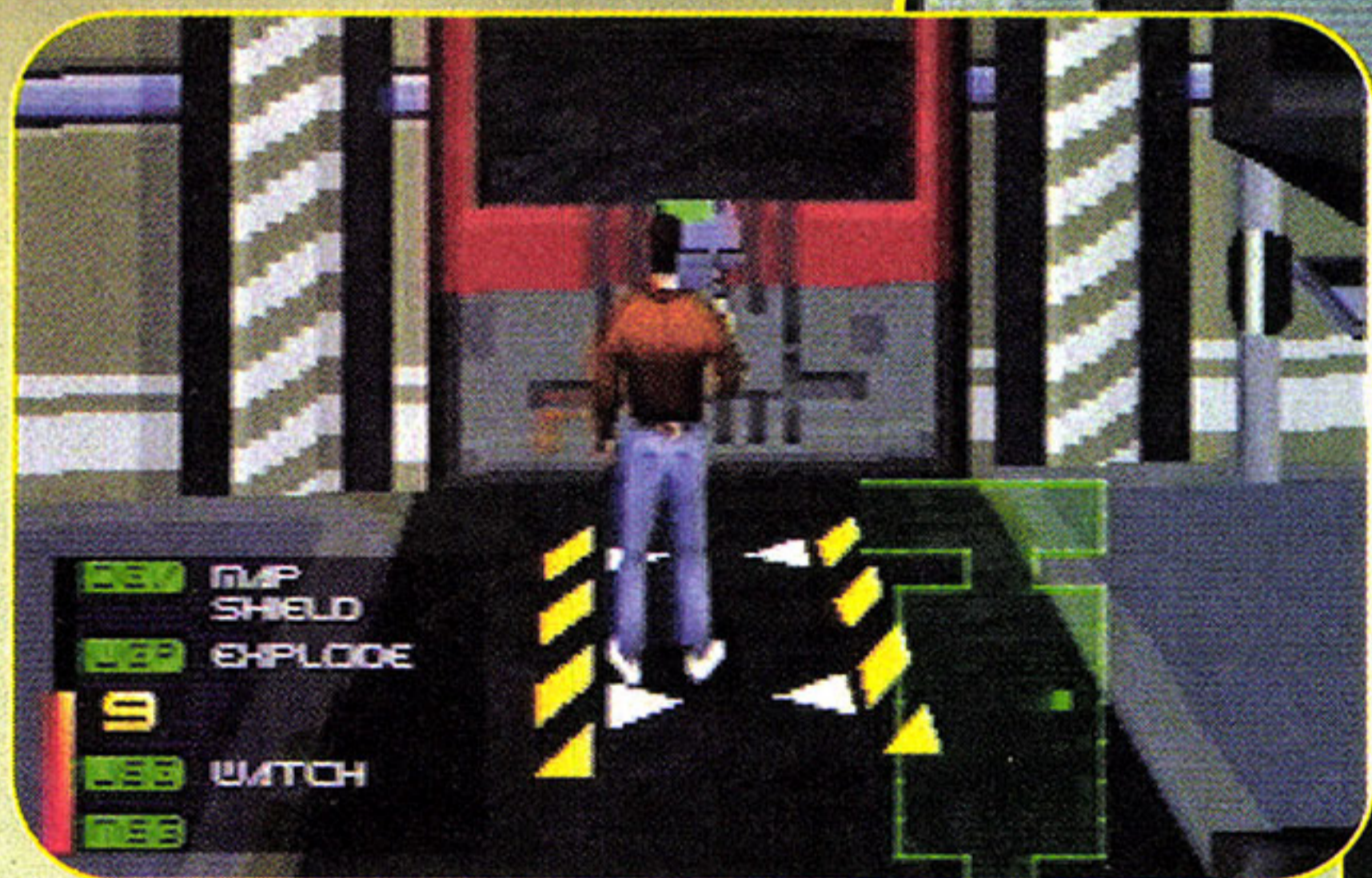
FADE TO BLACK



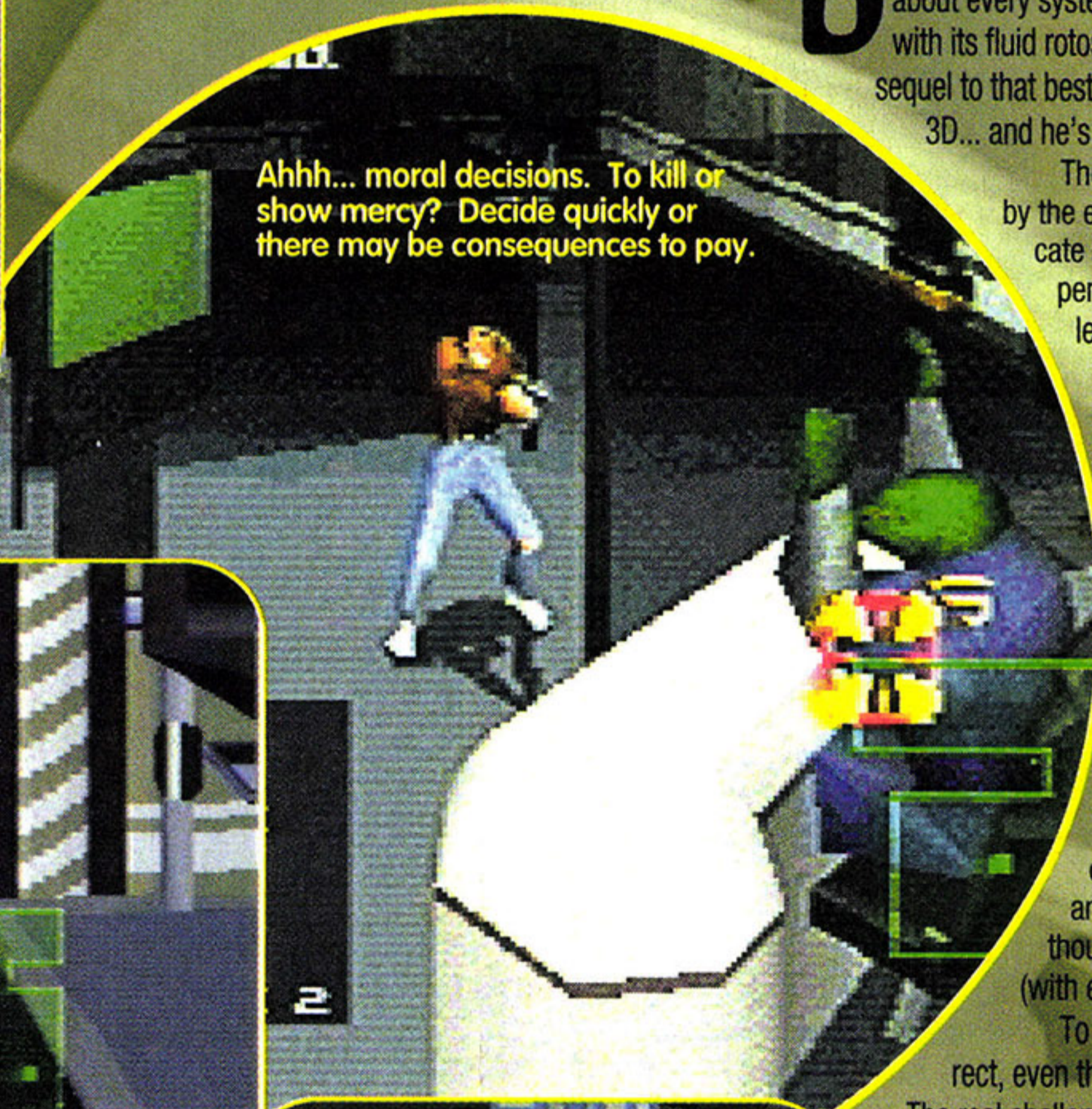
This game reminds me of my youth, especially the prison part — *Christian Svensson*



Raiding the cafeteria yields some excellent additions to your arsenal. Get the exploding bullets and kick some ass!



Computer literacy is a requirement. You'll have to use terminals frequently to blow stuff up, unlock areas that are inaccessible or to communicate with your base.



Ahhh... moral decisions. To kill or show mercy? Decide quickly or there may be consequences to pay.



Going up! These are the elevators in Conrad's universe.

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8 GRAPHICS

- ✔ Motion captured characters are nicely animated.
- ✘ Low-res textures and mostly octagonal walls become a little monotonous.

8 MUSIC & SOUND FX

- ✔ The soundtrack changes whether you are under fire or just scouting around.
- ✔ Sound effects fit very well with the atmosphere.

9 INNOVATION

- ✔ This title was the inspiration for several others, including *Resident Evil*.
- ✔ Translates *Flashback* play faithfully to 3D.

8 GAMEPLAY

- ✔ Conrad has a wide array of actions available to him.
- ✔ Lots of missions that are truly challenging.

6 REPLAY VALUE

- ✔ The game is fun to play and offers many missions for hours of play.
- ✘ The game is very predictable the second time around.

VERY GOOD
75%

16-bit

the Past

Present and Future.

32/64-bit

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ULTRA GAME PLAYERS

PLAYSTATION



GENRE / fighting
PLAYERS / 1 or 2
PUBLISHER / Namco
DEVELOPER / Namco
AVAILABLE / October
PRICE / \$59.00



I usually don't have to wait this long to get my butt kicked, but it was worth it
— Christian Svensson

TEKKEN 2

When *Tekken* first came out, it was a smash hit both in Japan and the US. Is it any wonder that *Tekken 2* has enjoyed similar success in the arcade? Of course not. Unfortunately, US gamers had to wait an additional six months to get their hands on the PlayStation version.

So was it worth the wait? Most definitely. More new bosses, better graphics and cool hidden stuff make this among the best 3D fighters on the market, and by far the best for the PlayStation. The addition of stunning light-sourcing and high-resolution textures, while still maintaining the original *Tekken* framerate and smooth motions, makes the game one of the most graphically stunning titles for any platform.

The original play mechanics of *Tekken* return in the sequel and yet again, they work quite well. Each of the four buttons controls one limb of the character, however, special moves may be accomplished through special joystick and button combinations.

All of the original characters are back. In addition to these guys that you know and love, the mid-bosses for each of them have also returned. And yes, there are new characters: Lei Wulong is a policeman who is reputed to be patterned after monster Asian (and now US) action star, Jackie Chan. The second new character is Jun Kazama, a school girl with incredible hand speed and an amazing array of crazy kicks.

And while you're at it, perhaps you will stumble across some of the hidden characters, like Roger the Kangaroo or Alex the Raptor. One is the alter ego of the other, but there is definitely something cool about being a six foot marsupial beating the snot out of some winged devil (or angel, when you get to actually play Devil Kazuya).

One of the nicest additions to the PlayStation version of the game is the practice mode. In the practice mode, your opponent is little more than a punching bag with limitless life, and the button combinations of your last attack are shown on the screen. It also counts the number of hits in any combo string you perform and tracks the largest combo you've hit that session.

While not adding anything to the gameplay, *Tekken 2* sports some beautifully prerendered full motion video of each character in the opening as well as his or her own ending cinema. The soundtrack to the game is almost identical to *Tekken* and as such was quite good, but it could have used a little more new material. But why nitpick? *Tekken 2* is here and we say 'It's about time!' **GP**



Never judge a book by its cover. The female fighters in *Tekken 2* are more than a match for their male counterparts.



Devil Kazuya tends to pull off throws at the least convenient times. Be sure to keep him at a distance.



Roger the Kangaroo provides some comic relief with his bolo punch.



Ganryu's power charge is difficult to stop. Try to jump over him as he charges by.



Jack-2 about to give Paul a... encounter of the... crete kind.

You're outta there! Paul sends Jack-2 running home to mommy after his killer shoulder slam.



Wang is one of the playable mini-bosses who returns in Tekken 2.

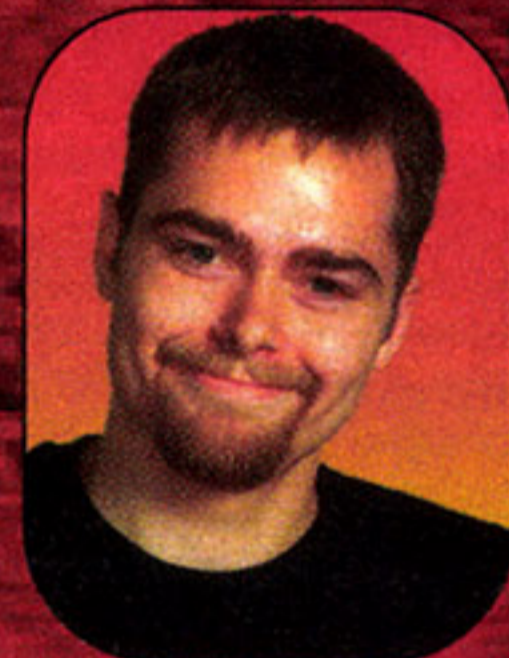
A SECOND OPINION

How do I feel about *Tekken 2*? Well, let me put it to you this way — we got this game in the office just as soon as it launched months ago in Japan, and I'm still addicted to it!

It goes without saying that this is one of the most beautiful videogames to ever grace the TV screen. The bright, colorful backgrounds and detailed characters make *Tekken 2* the most realistic fighter you can get for the PlayStation. Oh yeah, and the actual fighting is good, too. There are tons of special moves and fighting styles to choose from, along with a massive selection of some of the coolest (and most bizarre) characters around.

Are you getting the point yet? *Tekken 2* is THE can't-miss PlayStation game of the year!

I'm not lyin'! — *Chris*



Original characters, like Heihachi and King, are back in full fledged rib-crackin' form.

All of the joint busting throws from the original are still in there... and a few new ones for good measure.

In addition to throws, throw-breaking is possible by executing the same throw combination at the same time as your opponent.



GRAPHICS

10

MUSIC & SOUND FX

8

- ✔ Satisfying bass thump on impacts.
- ✘ Could have used original music instead of a remixed

- ✔ Ultra smooth motions.
- ✔ Awesome special effects and amazing light-sourcing.

INNOVATION

8

- ✔ Slight improvements over the original engine.
- ✘ Doesn't add much that hasn't been seen before in other fighters.

GAMEPLAY

9

- ✔ Solid mechanics through and through with excellent combo system.
- ✔ Practice mode is a wonderful addition.

REPLAY VALUE

9

- ✔ As with most fighters, get a buddy and play till you develop calluses.
- ✔ Tons of moves and lots of characters.

ULTIMATE
91%

SATURN

GENRE / racing
 PLAYERS / 1 or 2
 PUBLISHER / Electronic Arts
 DEVELOPER / Electronic Arts
 AVAILABLE / now
 PRICE / \$59.95



There's nothing more satisfying than knocking a cop off his motorcycle! I mean, in this game. Yeah, that's right... In the game... — Adam Douglas

Road Rash



Avoid oncoming cars like the plague...



...or you'll end up with a bad case of asphalt face!



The best part of the game is the combat! Go on, run that scum into oncoming traffic!

Some games just won't go away. You loved them when they were 16-bit, when they were the cutting edge of the gaming experience. Many of these get upgraded to 32-bit for the various systems, which can be great, if the new technology is utilized to the full, enhancing an already stellar game platform.

Unfortunately for Electronic Arts, the word 'stellar' doesn't come up too often when describing *Road Rash* these days. The Saturn version is almost exactly like the PlayStation's, annoying FMV and all. There are five tracks to work your way through, from city to countryside, getting longer as the levels increase. It's fairly easy to get out in front, even with your relatively slow Rat bike and, once you're out ahead of the pack, there isn't much competition, which is a shame. It's the combat with the other riders that makes *Road Rash* enjoyable and sets it apart from other racing games. Kicking and punching your fellow racers (and policemen) is a great rush, as is forcing your opponents into pedestrians (yes!) and

oncoming cars. A little more combat (and a little less mindless cruising) would've gone a long way.

While the game does have some fun elements, such as flying along at top speed and slamming into some wayward person crossing the street, the game begins to grow tedious after awhile. The basic track layouts remain the same from level to level, and while they do get longer, they don't necessarily get harder. Perhaps if you could trade up weapons as well as bikes, or play head to head, there would be more of a challenge.

If you love racing games, and enjoy beating up other motorists while you do it, then give *Road Rash* a go. But if you've already played the PlayStation version and know what to expect, motor on by. **GP**

6

GRAPHICS

- Nicely rendered backgrounds keep your interest while you're out in front.
- All the levels begin to look the same after awhile.

7

MUSIC & SOUND FX

- Rock soundtrack keeps the FMV sequences from being totally annoying.
- The bike's engine can really grate on your nerves.

4

INNOVATION

- Just like the other *Road Rash* versions.
- Let's have less FMV and more game improvement.

7

GAMEPLAY

- Smashing racers with a chain is great fun.
- The delay in combat reaction makes for tricky timing.

6

REPLAY VALUE

- Trading up bikes and longer tracks keep you racing.
- See one track, and you've seen 'em all.

GOOD
63%



Ahh, victory is sooo sweet.

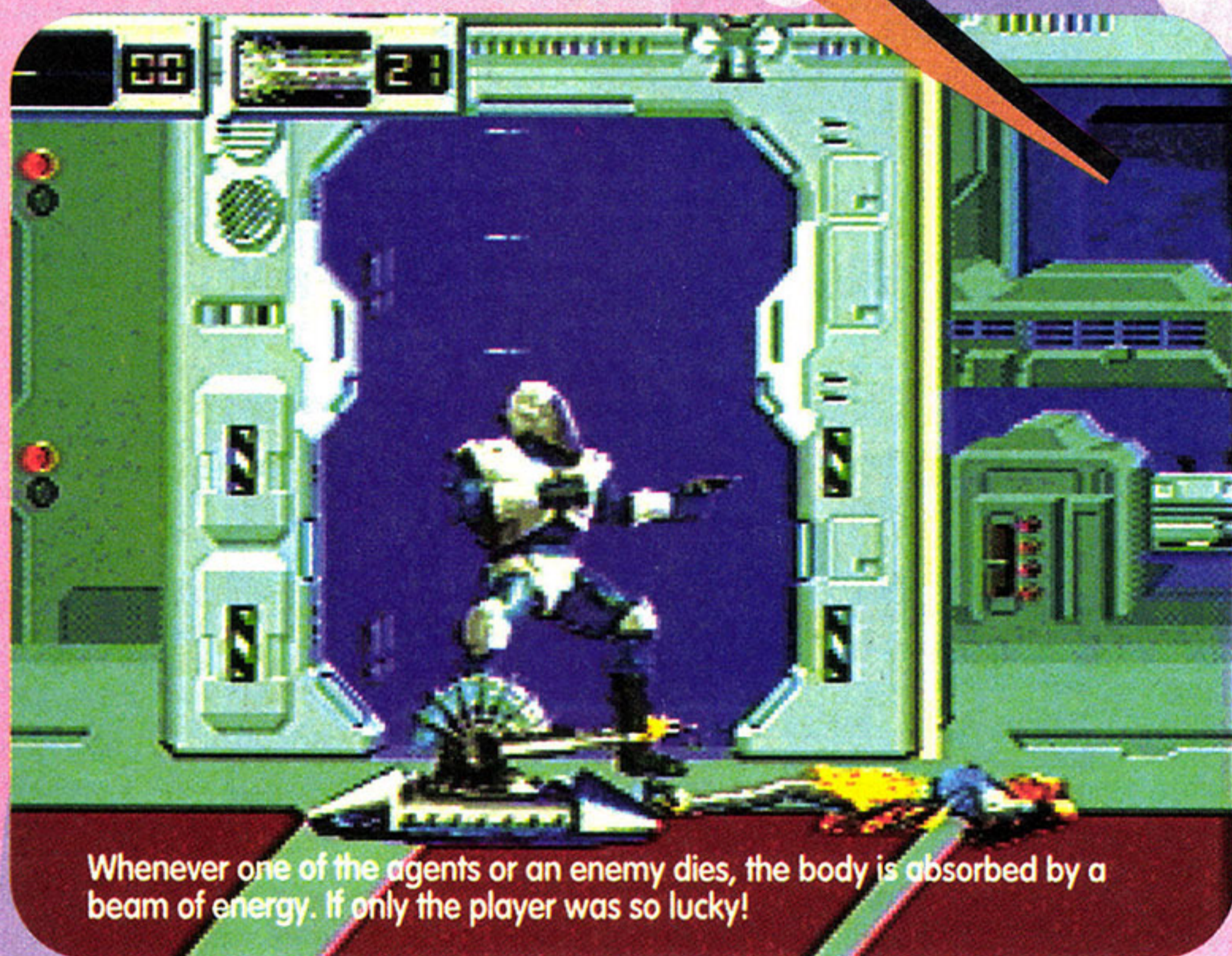


GENESIS

GENRE / action
PLAYERS / 1
PUBLISHER / Sega
DEVELOPER / Abalone
AVAILABLE / now
PRICE / \$69.99

X-PERTS

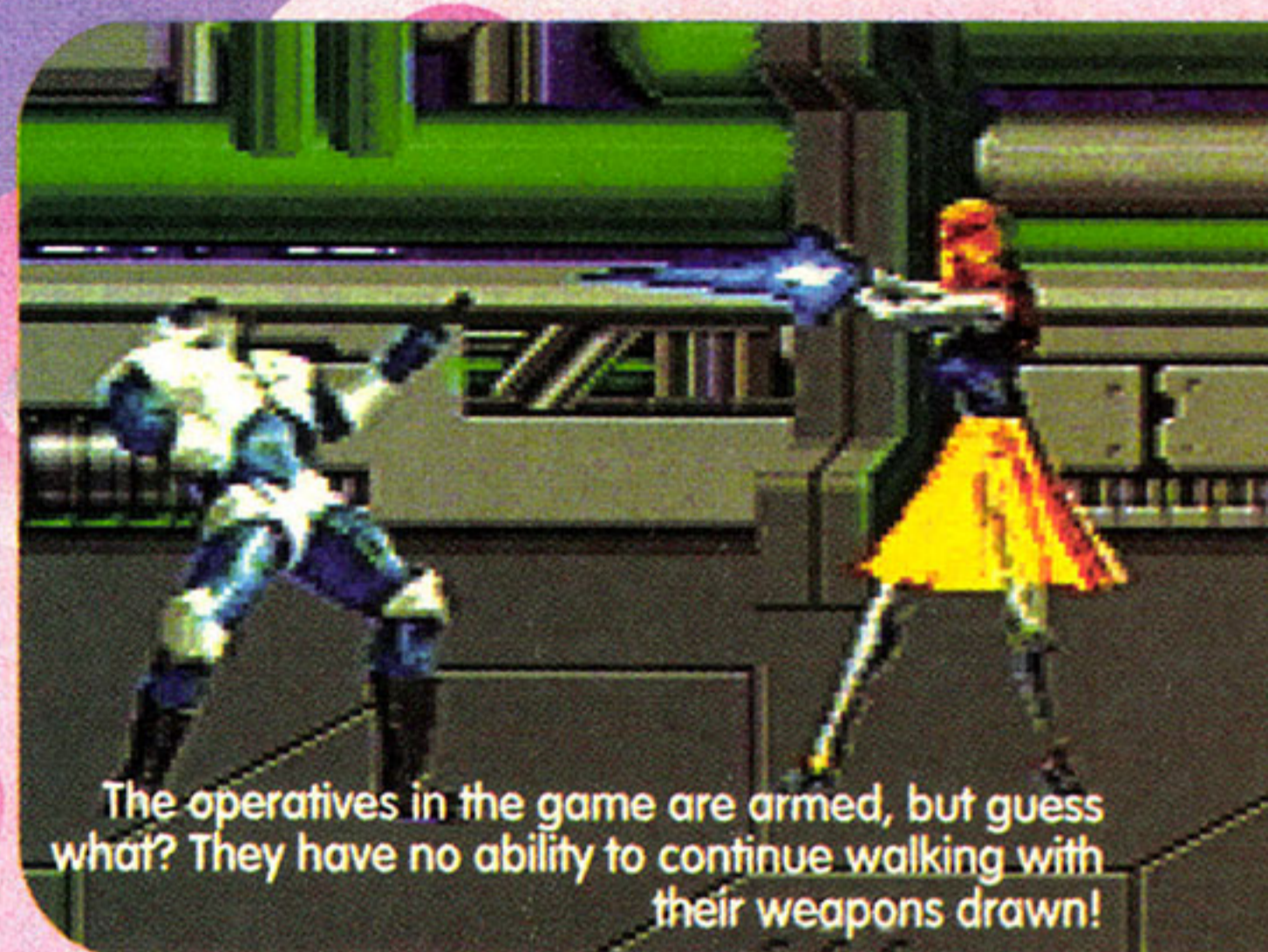
Finding Shadow Yamato from *Eternal Champions* in *X-PERTS* is like discovering Shirley Temple doing nude scenes in some cheap B-movie because she 'needs the money'.
— Roger Burchill



Whenever one of the agents or an enemy dies, the body is absorbed by a beam of energy. If only the player was so lucky!

guilty of being rushed to the market or merely a bad implementation of a good idea, the end result verges on disastrous.

What entertainment value that resides in the game lies in its graphics and the strategy of managing three agents performing different tasks in the field. The graphics are decidedly above average for a Genesis game, but the likes *Toy Story* and *Donkey Kong Country* have proven that even better can be squeezed from 16-bit hardware. The strategy elements are nice but, ultimately, they are overshadowed by



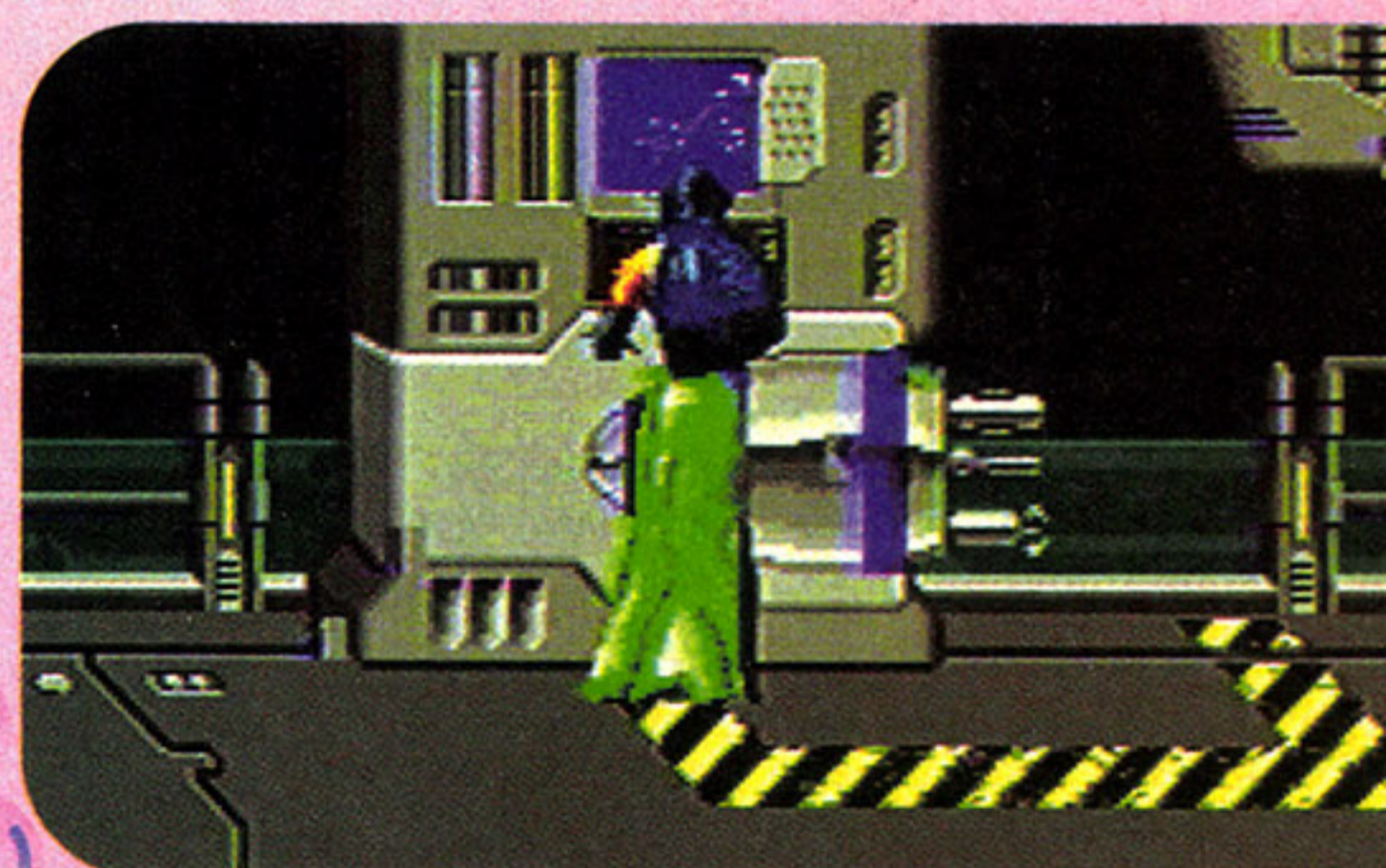
The operatives in the game are armed, but guess what? They have no ability to continue walking with their weapons drawn!

Despite Sega's contention that the Genesis market is alive and kicking, the decidedly substandard quality of 16-bit software seems to indicate otherwise.

X-PERTS certainly had a concept that seemed to promise an above average gaming experience. The prospect of controlling an elite trio of special agents (Shadow Yamato, Tashile Claudel, and Zachary Taylor), each with their own unique capabilities, in order to thwart a terrorist takeover of an under-sea research station does seem to hold some appeal. But whether *X-PERTS* was

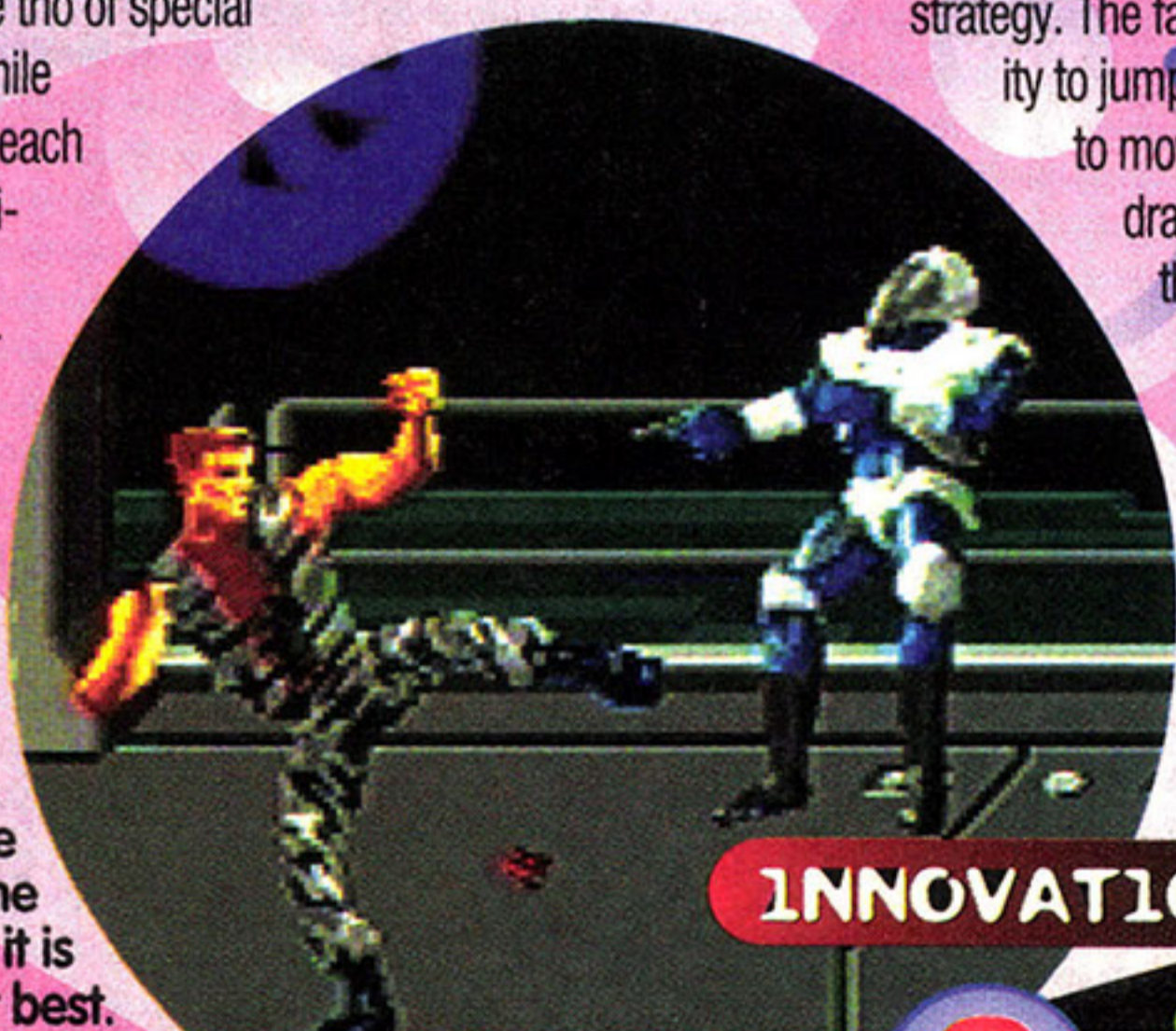
the embarrassingly bad character control and monotonous gameplay. Yawn...

But the element that makes the game insufferable is the slow, unresponsive control structure. Every fight is reduced to a mindless mashing of buttons with no necessity for technique or strategy. The fact that the characters lack the capability to jump and are further reduced to no ability to move around when their weapons are drawn are the types of lapses in gameplay that are inexcusable. Ultimately, *X-PERTS* is not only definitive proof that the 16-bit machines are dying, it is an incentive to put them out of their misery. **GP**



There has never been a game with more control panels than *X-PERTS*. Get used to the idea of waiting for something (anything!) to happen.

X-PERTS boasts some of the most boring and inept fighting sequences ever. There is some blood, especially with the torture moves, but it is gratuitous at best.



INNOVATION

2

- ⊕ Strategic management of agents is intriguing.
- ⊖ Otherwise, it's just a crappy side-scrolling, action/fighting game.

REPLAY VALUE

1

- ⊖ I'd be surprised if you even bothered to finish this game once.
- ⊖ Maybe, after extensive therapy, you'll be able to admit you paid money for this game.

GAMEPLAY

- ⊖ Slow, simplistic control system results in frustration and boredom.
- ⊖ You can't even make the characters jump!

MUSIC & SOUND FX

4

- ⊕ There nothing especially grating about the sound.
- ⊖ But on the flip side, there's nothing really memorable about it either.

GRAPHICS

7

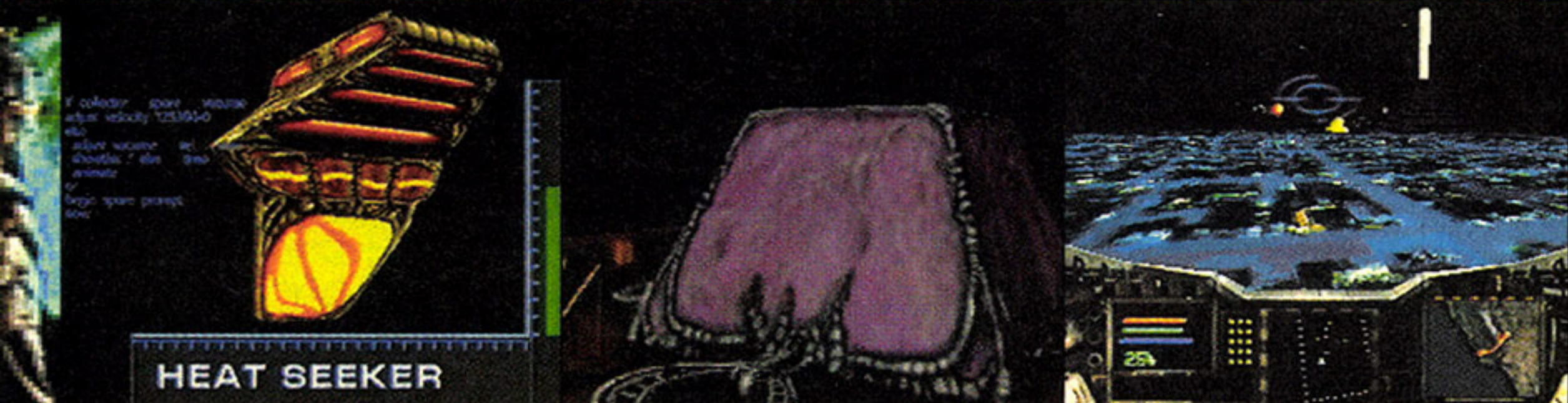
- ⊕ The game looks pretty good for a Genesis game.
- ⊖ Backgrounds are uninteresting and lack any real variety.

HEINOUS

24%

SATURN

GENRE / action
 PLAYERS / 1
 PUBLISHER / Electronic Arts
 DEVELOPER / Paradox
 AVAILABLE / now
 PRICE / \$59.95



HEAT SEEKER

ShockWave

Assault

Must shoot aliens. Must shoot aliens! Must turn off boring game!
 — Adam Douglas



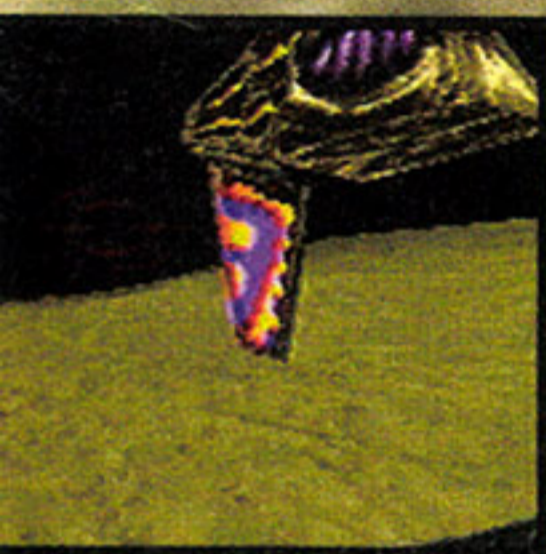
Flying around and shooting things is about as basic a premise for a videogame as you can get. From *Asteroids* to *Zaxxon* to *Raiden*, the shooter genre has been exploited into the ground. The early shooters relied on simplistic gameplay that drew us in and hooked us with challenging foes and difficult maneuvers. Now we demand more. More targets, more power-ups, more fire power! And more polygons.

Originally released for the 3DO a few years ago, *Shockwave Assault* fails to deliver on any of these demands. Apparently, aliens have invaded the Earth. You must pilot your lone ship into heavily occupied cities and towns, destroying these aliens and liberating the people of Earth. Once this is complete, you get to do the whole thing again in outer space. Basically, you fly around and shoot aliens, over and over. Get the picture?

The polygon count is staggeringly low. The terrain is very lackluster, just basic hills and blocky houses, with the texture mapping kept to a minimum. The cities and towns are interchangeable; the only difference between Riverside and Las Vegas is a laughably basic polygon Luxor Pyramid and Sphynx. The aliens, sort of H.G. Wells meets Buck Rogers kinda guys, pose little threat, the only challenge coming from the

airborne ships who fly around you like buzzing mosquitoes. They even have that freaky buzz that keeps you up all night, swatting at your head.

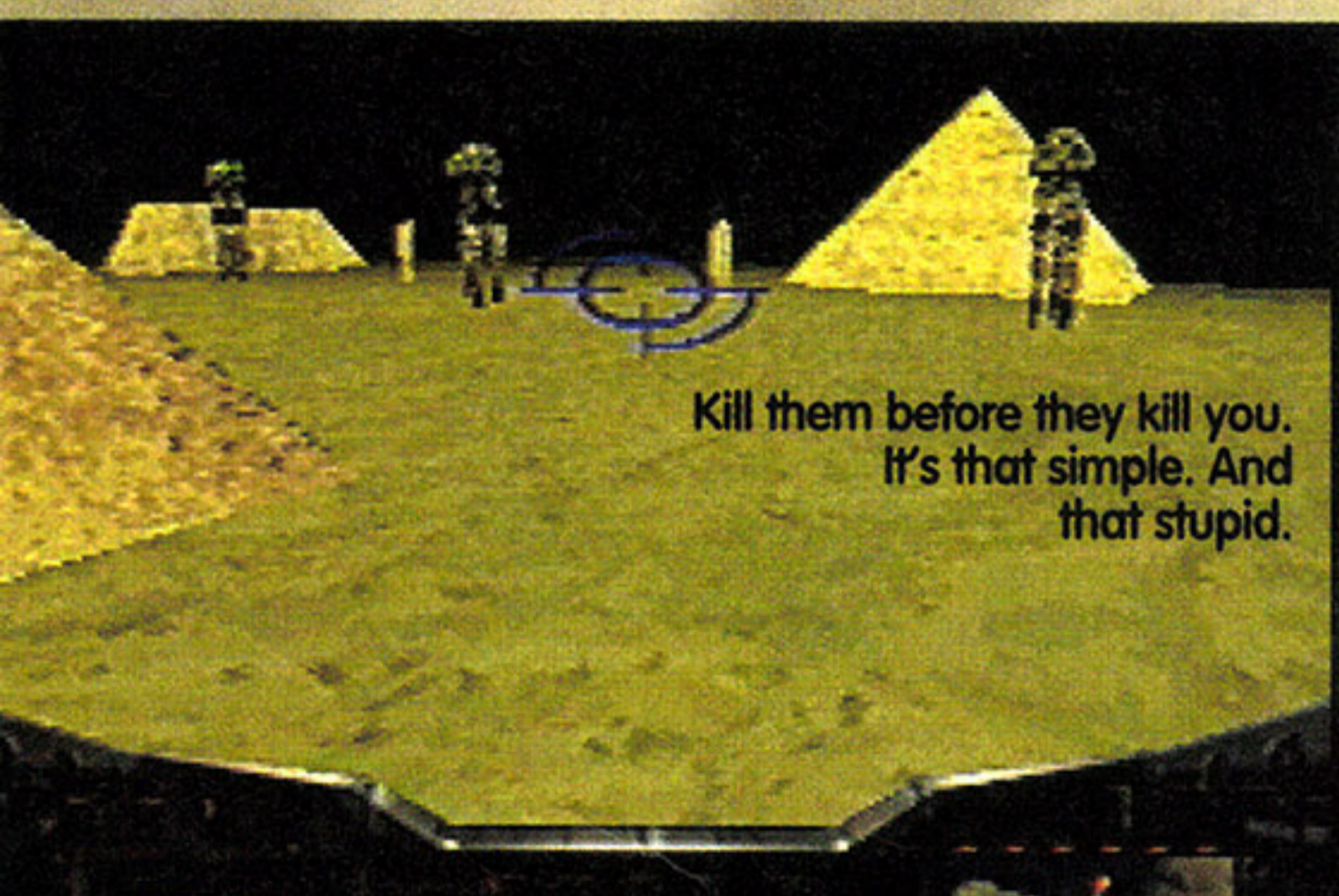
The bulk of the game's memory is tied up in badly acted FMV sequences and prerendered cutshots that add little to the actual gameplay, which could've used some beefing up from the original 3DO version. FMV alone is not enough to carry a mediocre game. Perhaps if more time had been spent on the actual game, and less on the (overly long) introduction, *Shockwave Assault* could have been a decent game. Does anyone even really like FMV anyway? **GP**



These flying mosquito aliens are quite annoying, and hard to kill.



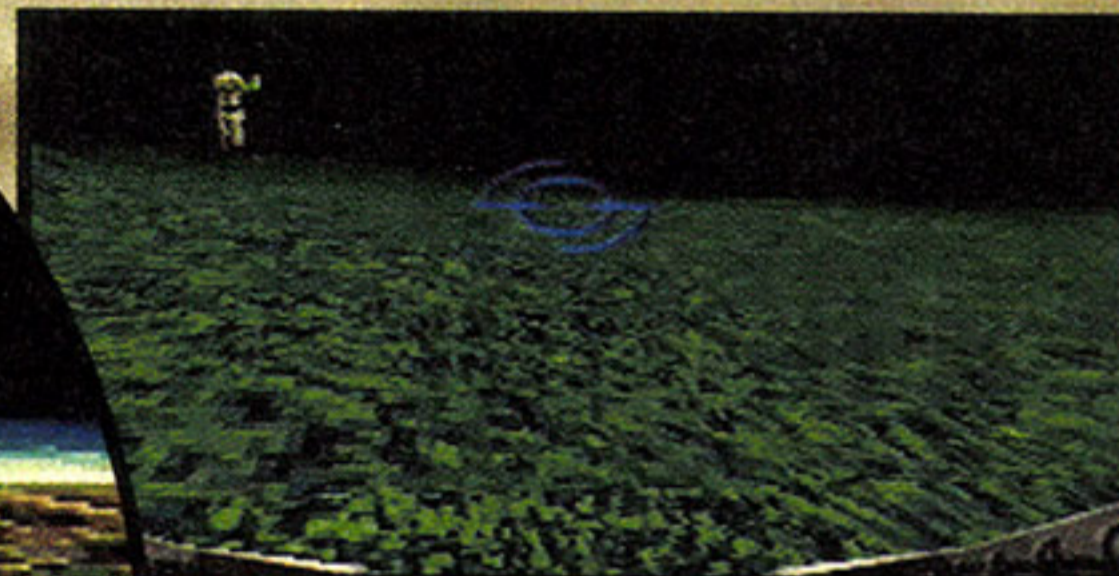
Fly under the refueling drone to power up your depleted energy and fire power.



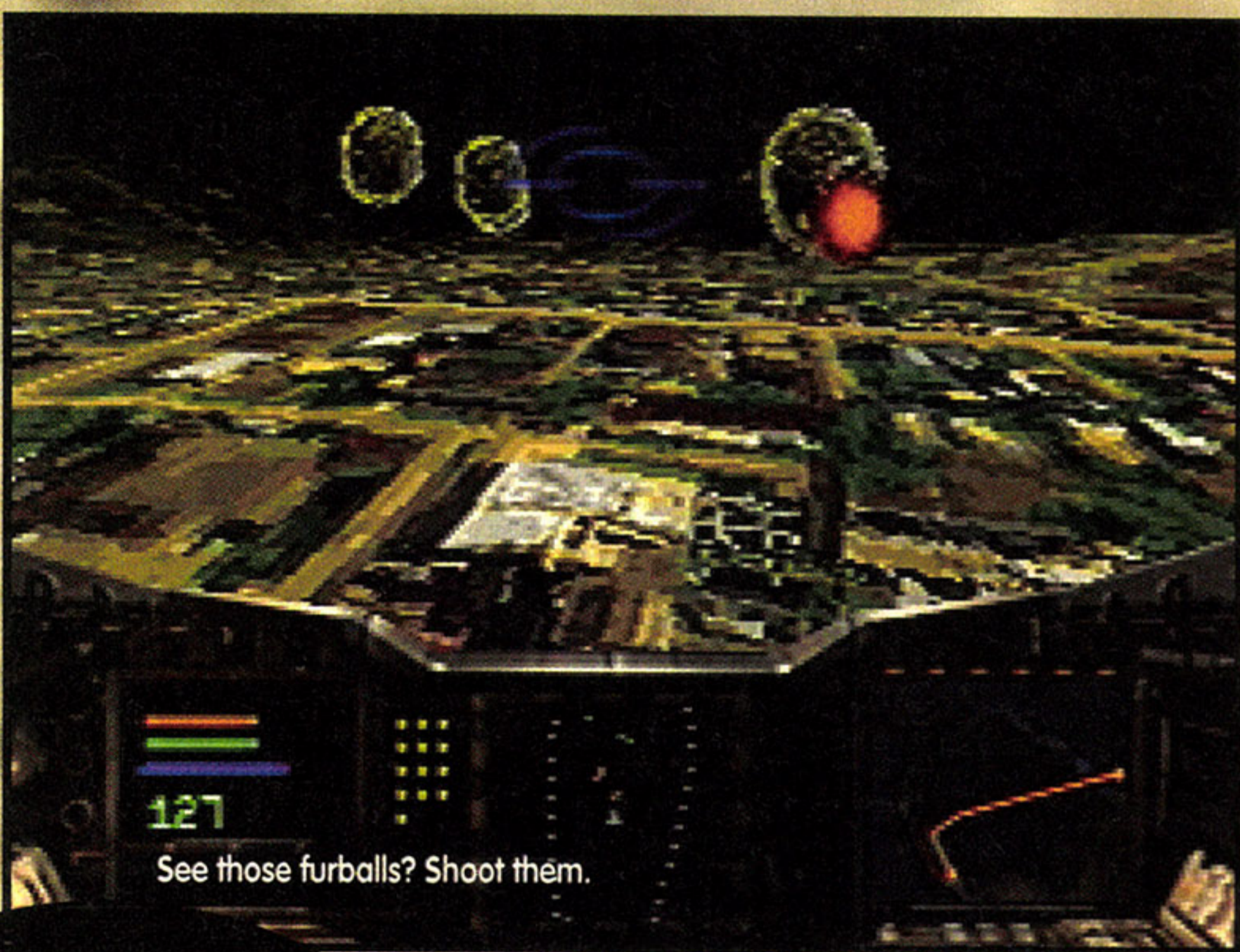
Kill them before they kill you. It's that simple. And that stupid.



See that purple polygon? That's an alien prison. Guess you better shoot it, too.



Peru looks a lot like Egypt, except one's green, and the other's orange.



See those furballs? Shoot them.

GRAPHICS

7

- Some of the aliens are actually pretty cool.
- Unfortunately, the graphics are as polygon-simple as you can get, next to *I, Robot*.

MUSIC & SOUND FX

5

- There's no music during the gameplay.
- The sound effects are totally uninspired.

INNOVATION

3

- It's a first-person shooter in a ship. No new concepts here.
- Nothing to make it stand out.

GAMEPLAY

6

- Shooting things is always fun.
- The FMV is really hard to sit through.

REPLAY VALUE

5

- Multiple levels and two game sections give you a lot to shoot at.
- Doing nothing but mindless shooting grows old fast.

AVERAGE

55%

PLAYSTATION



GENRE / racing
 PLAYERS / 1
 PUBLISHER / NeoRex
 DEVELOPER / NeoRex
 AVAILABLE / now
 PRICE / \$80



You know, it just doesn't get any worse than this baby.
 — Chris Charla

COSMIC RACE



The basic race — try to fly an ugly car down an ugly track.



Did I mention there's tons of load time? Get used to staring at this guy between almost any action in the game.

You may have noticed that the rating '0' in **GAME PLAYERS** scoring formula was named *Cosmic Race*. Well, with **GP** changing its review style next month (among other things), we thought we'd let you know why, with a review of the Japanese game that we humbly submit as the worst game of all time.

The basic point of *Cosmic Race* is to race a bunch of other ships along a track, trying to finish first. Pretty simple, except they forgot a few things, like the collision detection. Want to fly through the track, the trees, under the world? No problem. Second, the control. What control? Try to stay on the track — the control sucks so bad that you can't, no matter what. All this adds up to a big zero in gameplay. Not only is the game almost unplayable, it's also wicked boring — the level design is stupid and there is almost no AI in your competitors.

Of course, the gameplay isn't all that's wrong here. The graphics look like they were taken straight from the PlayStation development kit graphics library, which, of course, they were. Your mom could do better graphics than this — seriously.

Basically, the worlds you race in were created with stock graphic elements. Someone did about ten lines of code to get the ship to move, some exceptionally tinny, crappy music was created, and then it was all slapped together with absolutely no care. The end result — pure hell, or pure *Cosmic Race* — take your pick.

A team of experts with an unlimited budget, Cray supercomputers, hundreds of playtesters, and thousands of hours of consumer focus group studies couldn't make a game this bad if they tried. If you ever have some extra dough in your pocket, and you want to see just how bad things can get, pick this one up on import. Just don't say we didn't warn you. **GP**

Oh, the textures! They're gre- oh, no, wait... why, they're terrible!



It's like tag, with all the fun removed.



If the whole game was as good as the graphics in the character select screen, it would still be the worst game of all time.

GRAPHICS

- Well, I guess these might be 3D polygons.
- It's the ugliest thing I've ever seen.

MUSIC & SOUND FX

- You'll play for such a short time, you won't have to listen to the music much.
- Sounds like, well, crap.

INNOVATION

- Constructed with code examples found in a 'How to program C' textbook.
- 'Innovation' is a dirty word at Neorex.

GAMEPLAY

- It's nice if the game can actually be won..
- It's also nice if a game is fun, instead of totally boring.

REPLAY VALUE

- You may show it to your friends, so they can see how terrible it is...
- ...but you won't play it more than once.

COSMIC RACE
0%

DRAGON FORCE™

8 Awesome Warlords!
8 Different Storylines!
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When Magic Was Young,
And Swords Carved Laws Of Blood,
Eight Warlords Forgotten To Time
Rose to Shape Order From Chaos.



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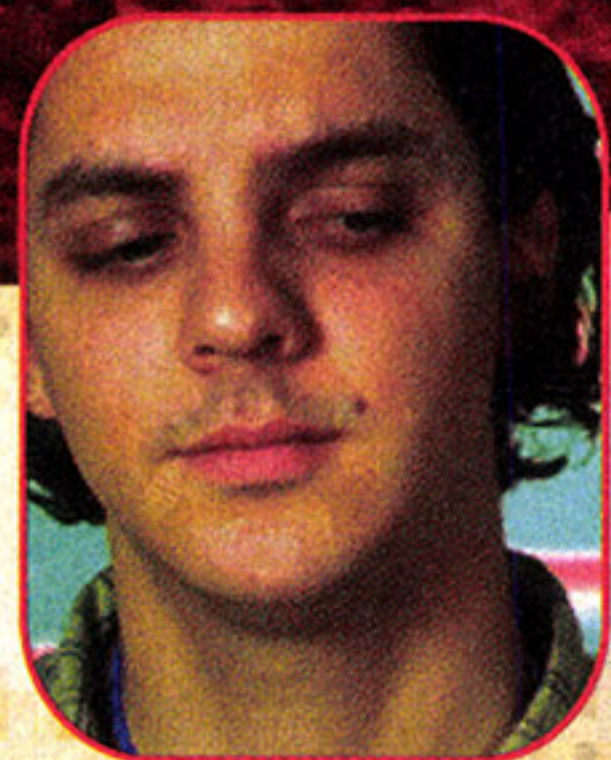
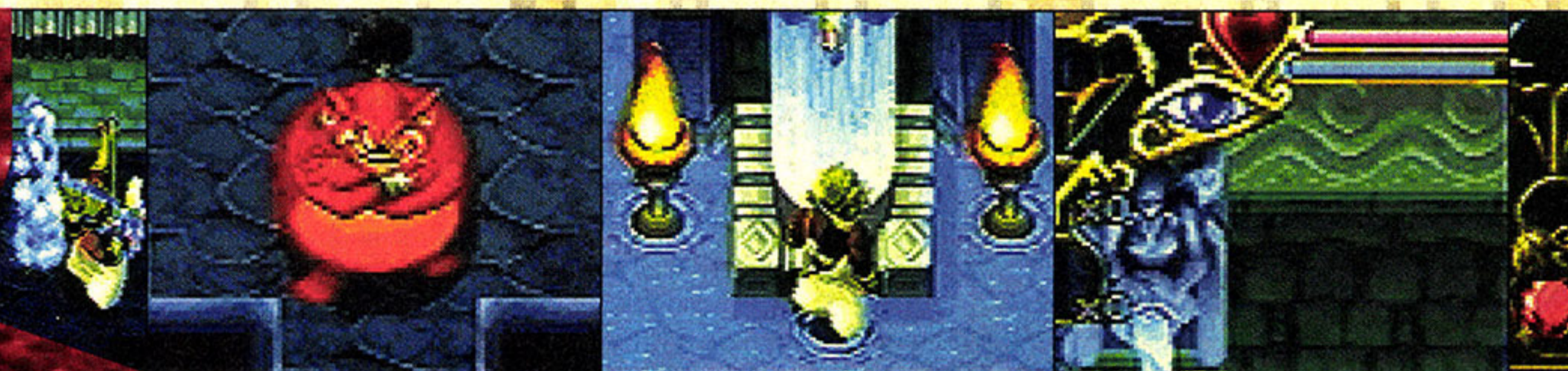
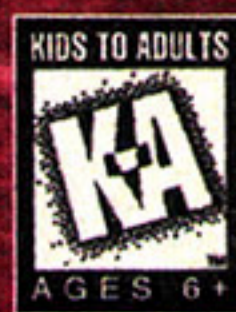
SEGA SATURN™



Our games go to 11!™

SATURN

GENRE / adventure
PLAYERS / 1
PUBLISHER / Sega
DEVELOPER / Ancient
AVAILABLE / now
PRICE / \$59.00



I've always liked the idea of brandishing a sword while wearing MC Hammer pants — I guess that's why I liked this game so much! — Patrick Baggatta

LEGEND

of

OASIS

Released in Japan as *Thor*, *Legend of Oasis* is the 32-bit follow-up to the 16-bit *Beyond Oasis*. Combining RPG, action and puzzle elements, *Legend of Oasis* is truly a unique and satisfying gaming experience. What's perhaps most rewarding about the game is the fact that all three main ingredients have been given the attention they deserve and the storyline, action and puzzles are all top-notch. For fans of *Beyond Oasis*, expect a significant graphic upgrade, giving the game a whole new immersive quality. The graphics are still a bit on the cartoonish side, but there has been a notable jump in realism and the improvement has a meaningful effect on the finished product. Also expect even deeper puzzle-solving elements, giving the game a definite 'thinking gamer's' feel. There is plenty of action to please more aggressive gamers, but you'll have to do some thinking to get to the really hot battles.

PUZZLING

Meant to tease your brain a little, *Legend of Oasis* is challenging in a number of ways. Here's a perfect example.



The problem is getting up on this high ledge.



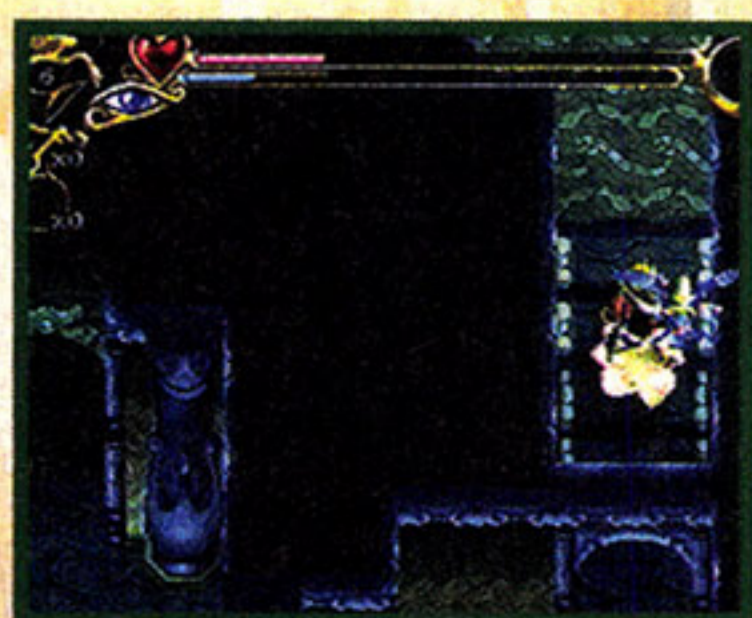
Begin by shooting an arrow to reveal a switch beneath the bush.



Then, fire an arrow to turn the switch and reveal the floating platform.



Next, uncover the glowing orb to gain access through the locked door.

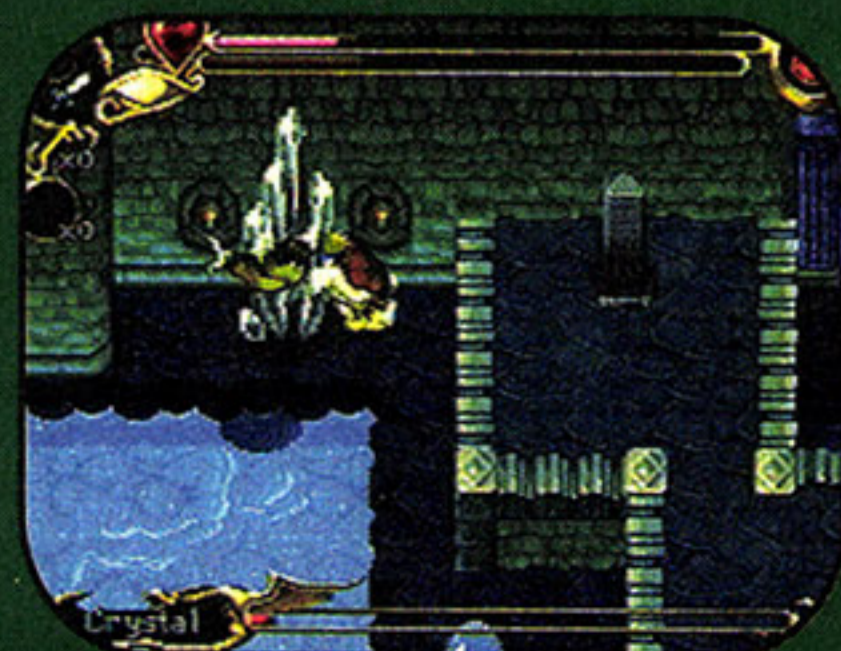


Finally, follow the corridor to find the treasure chest with essential items.

ACTION-PACKED

You're not carrying that sword for nothing!

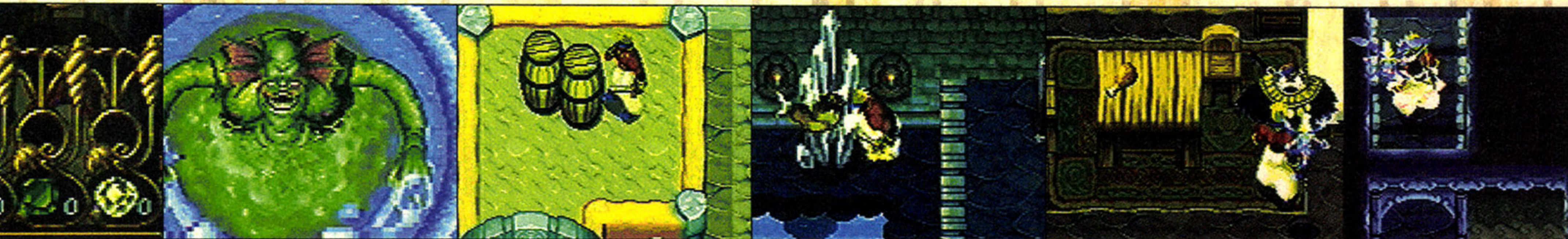
With multiple weapons available throughout the game, you'll never be at a loss for fire-power.



Each weapon carries with it a variety of attacks.



In the tradition of classic RPGs, your enemies come in all shapes and sizes.



EXOTIC LOCATIONS

In playing *Legend of Oasis*, you're likely to find yourself in some pretty interesting places.



Water, water, everywhere, but not a drop to drink! I guess they left that animation out.



Don't be afraid to test the limits of the background elements. If it's there, you can probably stand on it.



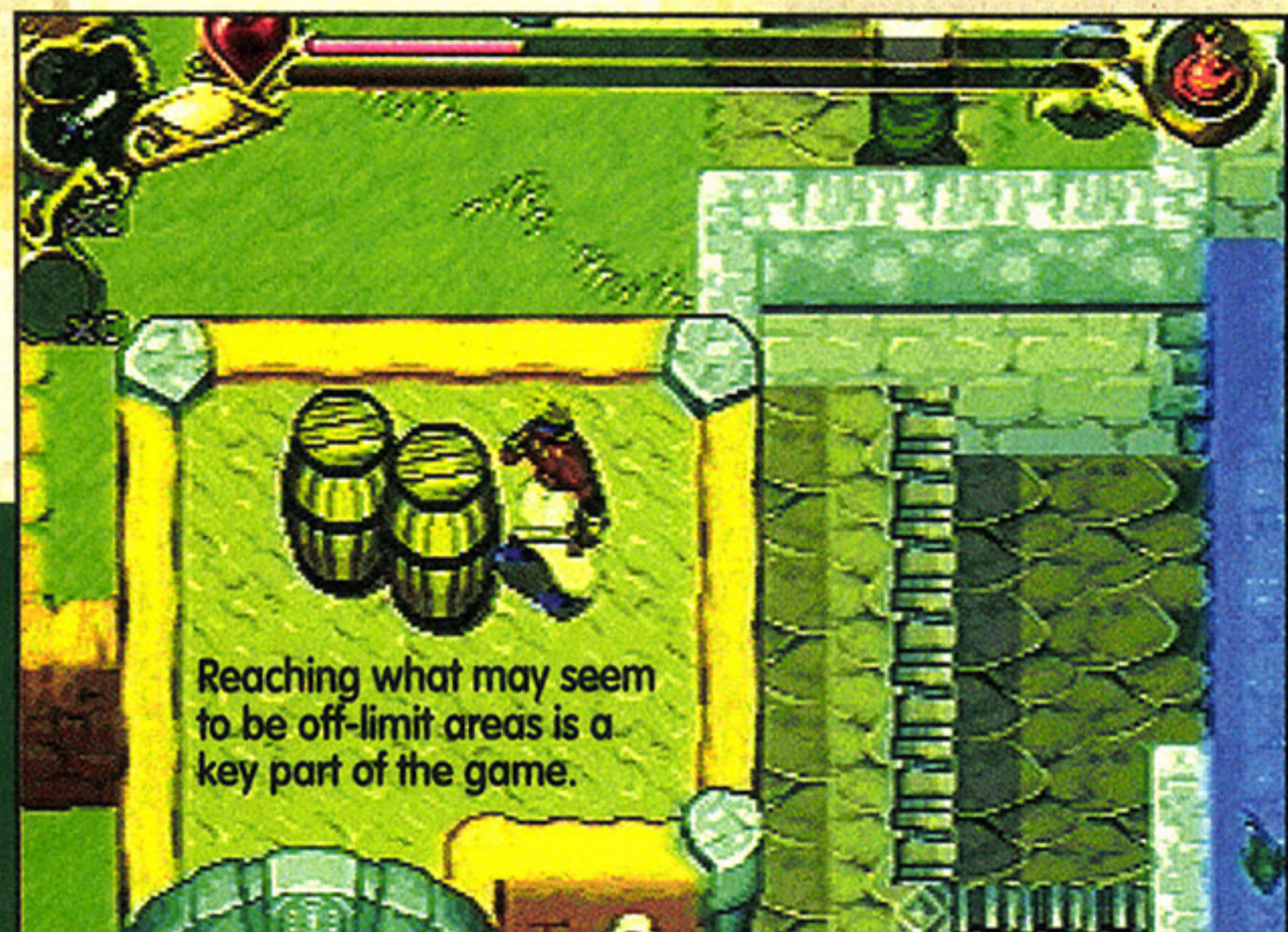
Play nice in the house.



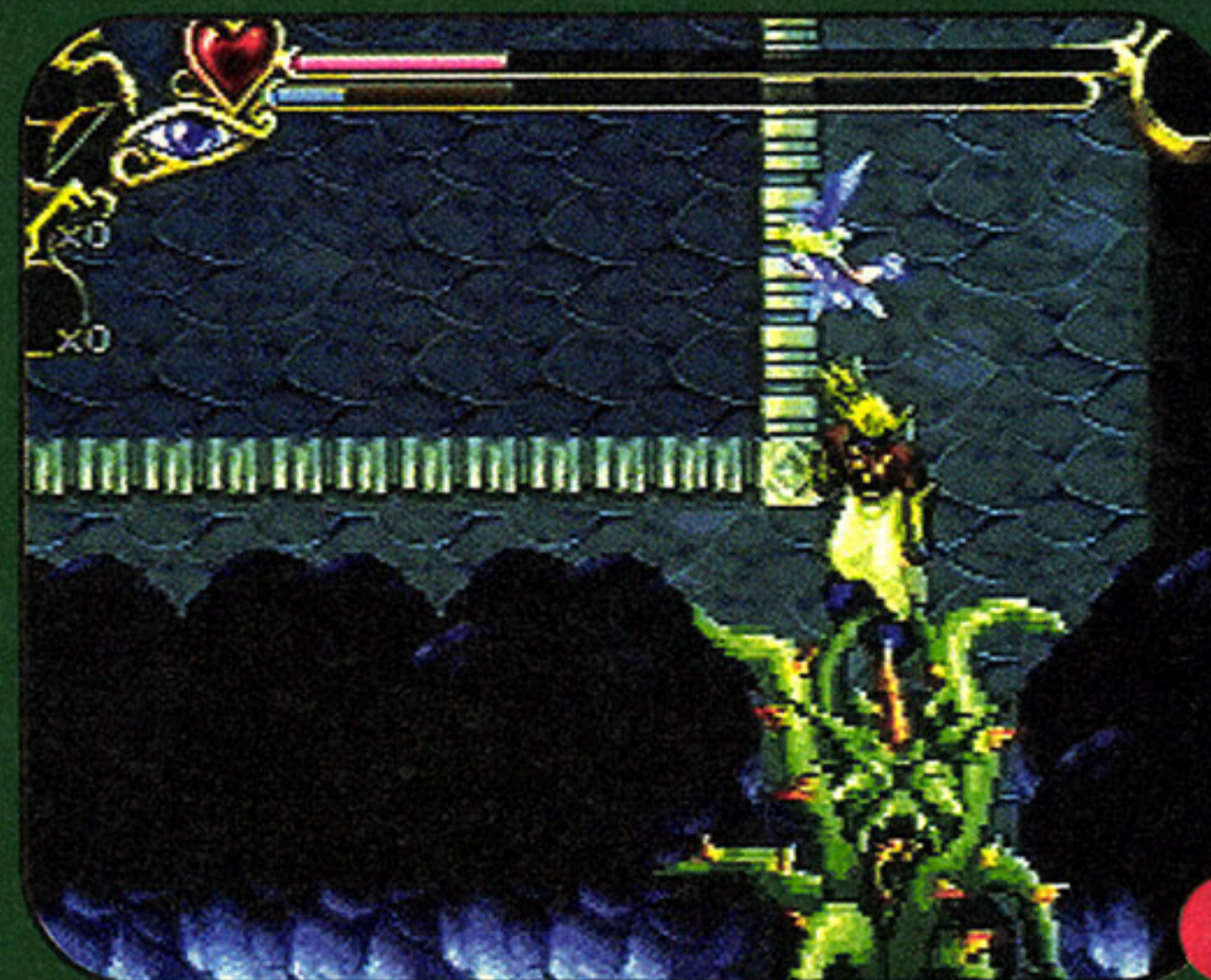
At times, you may find yourself in a room that doesn't seem to make very much sense, but that's the nature of the game.



The intuitive interface makes getting into the game a sheer pleasure.



Reaching what may seem to be off-limit areas is a key part of the game.



Not all enemies can be taken care of in the same manner — some will require a bit of ingenuity.



Though the game is designed to be somewhat non-linear, you will be forced to battle boss characters along the way.



A SECOND OPINION

I am one of the world's biggest fans of the original *Beyond Oasis*. The only thing wrong with that game was the fact that it was so short — I remember beating it in about three days. Thankfully, *Legend* has everything that made the original great, plus a surprisingly long and detailed story. In short, I loved it. The play control is smooth, the graphics are drop-dead gorgeous, and there's actually a few hidden surprises this time around. I would have liked to have seen the game take a little more advantage of the available hardware — actually be in 3D instead faking it, for example — but taken on its own terms, I can't say the game disappointed me. Besides, there are too few 32-bit RPGs to complain too much, and I'll take what I can get. — Jeff

GAMEPLAY

REPLAY VALUE 8

- Highly defined characters and settings.
- May still be a little too cartoonish for some tastes.

- The action is fast and the strategy deep.
- Character control is the quality factor in any great action game.

INNOVATION

- Seamless integration of action and strategy.
- Unique 3D approach adds to overall gameplay.

MUSIC & SOUND FX

- Rich musical score really adds to the overall feel of the game.
- Realistic sound effects keep you in the action.

GRAPHICS

EXCELLENT 84%

PLAYSTATION

KIDS TO ADULTS
KA
AGES 6+GENRE / action
PLAYERS / 1
PUBLISHER / Sony
DEVELOPER / Sony
AVAILABLE / now
PRICE / \$54.95GAME
PLAYERS
ULTIMATEThe only drawback to this game is that it creates an insatiable desire for carrots.
— Jeff LundriganJUMPING!
FLASH! 2

Oh yeah. The original *Jumping Flash!* was one of the PlayStation's early surprises. It showed up with no advance hype and little warning, then turned out to be one of the best games in the PlayStation's lineup, effort-

lessly combining a 3D world with platform game mechanics. The best game ever to feature a giant mechanical attack rabbit, it freed first-person gaming from the glut of dungeon-bound *Doom* clones, enabling the player to soar over landscapes with wild abandon. OK, sure, it was plastered with that annoying brand of wacky cuteness the Japanese can't seem to get enough of, and it wasn't that challenging, but somehow, none of that mattered, while bounding and leaping over each of the game's levels, and I

never sailed so high. I guess we've all been good little boys and girls, because now we've got a sequel, and I'm pleased to report the magic still works.

Which doesn't mean it's perfect, of course. The level of challenge is still pretty low, especially when fighting the bosses — just save up a few special weapons and you can destroy most of them in less than a minute. Also, most of the character and background design still seems like something put together by hallucinating eight year olds, although there has been some effort to break with cuteness, and one or two levels are quite breathtaking.

The biggest letdown was in not seeing any effort go into updating the gameplay. To be fair, the levels are appreciably larger this time, and there are actually some hidden bonuses scattered around that make it worth exploring. However, the mecha-bunny doesn't have any new features, and the overall structure and game mechanics are almost exactly the same.

But hey, for now, that's good enough. Those thrill-a-minute leaps still give me a dizzying rush, and I freely admit I had a hard time putting the controller down. If *Jumping Flash!* 3 turns out to be just more of the same, well, I guess I'll think about getting mad and jaded then. Right this minute, I'm too busy jumping with joy. **GP**

WHAT'S NEW

Again, not much, but what a blast.



There's also a few 'hidden' bonus stages and other goodies, which makes it worth hunting around.



While the game is almost exactly the same, the areas are larger, and some, like the distinctly Japanese Stage 2, are mighty purty — it begins to snow as the time runs down.





BUNNY TALES

So what's our hero been up to since last time? Not much, but other folks have been busy...



Hence the thrust of the story: rescue the Muu Muus and free each area from its collection bottle, grab the planetoids and run for it.

Baron Aloha is back, but in even deeper trouble. His planet, Little Muu, has been shredded and bottled by an even stranger threat, Captain Kabuki.



A SECOND OPINION

While you'll never find me arguing against this game getting an Ultimate Award, I must confess that *JF2* had a little bit less of an impact on me than the first. While the original game really knocked me out with its complete originality and new gameplay experiences, its sequel doesn't strive to be anything more. There are some cool new bits here and there, but after spending so much time with the first game, this one just couldn't hold my attention.

Don't get me wrong, it's still great fun — I guess I'm just being a little greedy in wanting even more. If there is ever a *Jumping Flash! 3* (and I certainly hope there is), maybe the developers can recapture that same enthusiasm that made the first game such a refreshing gaming experience. — Chris



Later, there's even some underwater sections!



In spite of the water though, Moby here seems to be OK swimming through the air — weird, huh?

FIGHT ON!

These bosses are wimps!



How many other games let you fall for miles and land safely on mechanical bunny feet? Great stuff.



The bosses are impressive looking, but sure keel over quick — a few special weapons and you're done.



GRAPHICS

10

- ◉ Incredibly gorgeous, detailed level design — clear and sharp.
- ◉ Gotta love those odd-ball enemies.

MUSIC & SOUND FX

10

- ◉ Lots of variety to the music, and it sure fills the room.
- ◉ Two words: 'Muu Muu... Muu Muu...'

INNOVATION

8

- ◉ No other game looks or plays like this series.
- ◉ Pretty much the same as the first one.

GAMEPLAY

10

- ◉ You need skills here you just don't see anywhere else.
- ◉ Big time vertigo-inducing power leaps.

REPLAY VALUE

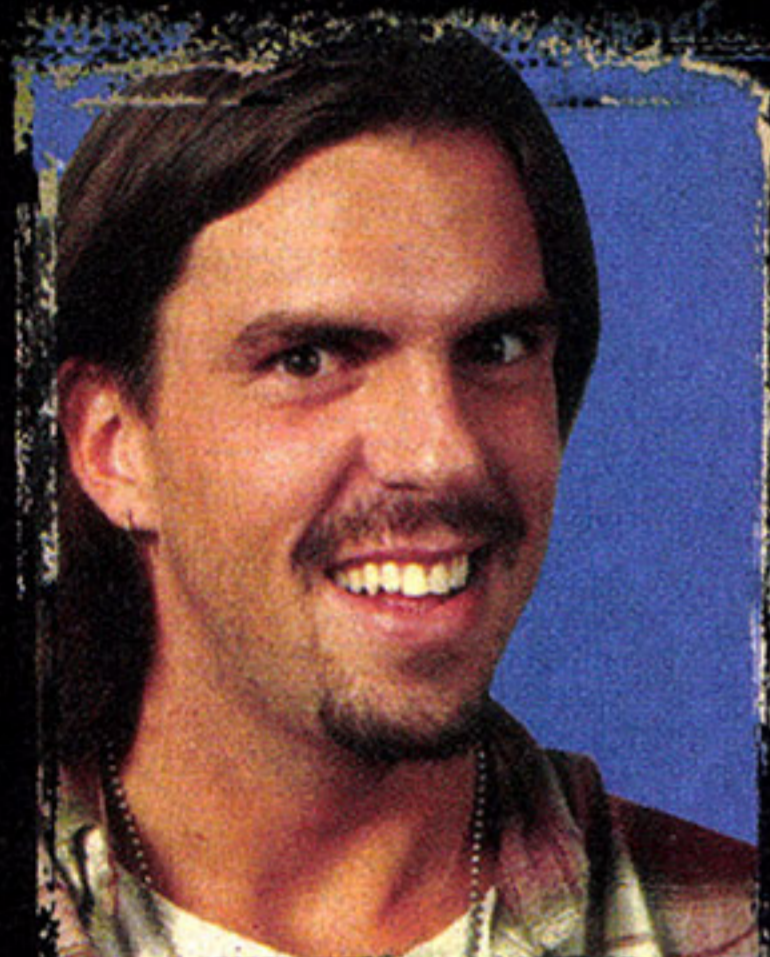
8

- ◉ Hidden stuff here and there, and man, it's a blast!
- ◉ Not a high level of challenge, and over too soon.

ULTIMATE
92%

GP SPORTS

WORLD SERIES BASEBALL II



Man, I never thought I'd say this, but this is the end of *GP Sports*. This is the last time that you'll see that horrible smiling picture of me, but it's certainly not the last you'll hear from me. Next month, an all new sports section is going to be unleashed in the all-new and improved *Ultra GAME PLAYERS* (now with bleach), but for now, we move on with another stellar edition of *GP Sports*.

The baseball games are still coming in for review, with *World Series '96* (Genesis) and *Frank Thomas* making this issue and *3D Baseball*, *World Series II* (Saturn), *MLB Pennant Race*, and *MVP Baseball* coming in next month. Each game is shaping up with its own strengths and weaknesses, but so far, I see *Triple Play* as the best sim and *Bottom Of The Ninth* as the superior arcade baseball game. As the reviewable versions of the other hardball titles come in, these opinions could change, so check back in next month's revamped sports section for a more detailed look.

Despite all these baseball games coming in to the office, the sports game I've been spending hours and hours on is *Worldwide Soccer II*. I gave you a quick preview last month and another look at it this month for good measure. If you even kind of like soccer, then *WWSII* is a game you're going to need.

Next month is going to be an amazing issue all around, especially in the sports section. Expect major reviews like *Madden* and *MLB Pennant Race* for the PlayStation, a complete breakdown of all the baseball games, piercing editorial, thicker paper, crisper screen shots, and the most amazing sports gaming section ever created (hope that isn't too much of a buildup). See you next month, but you won't be seeing that damn picture of me ever again.

Mike

Sega For Saturn

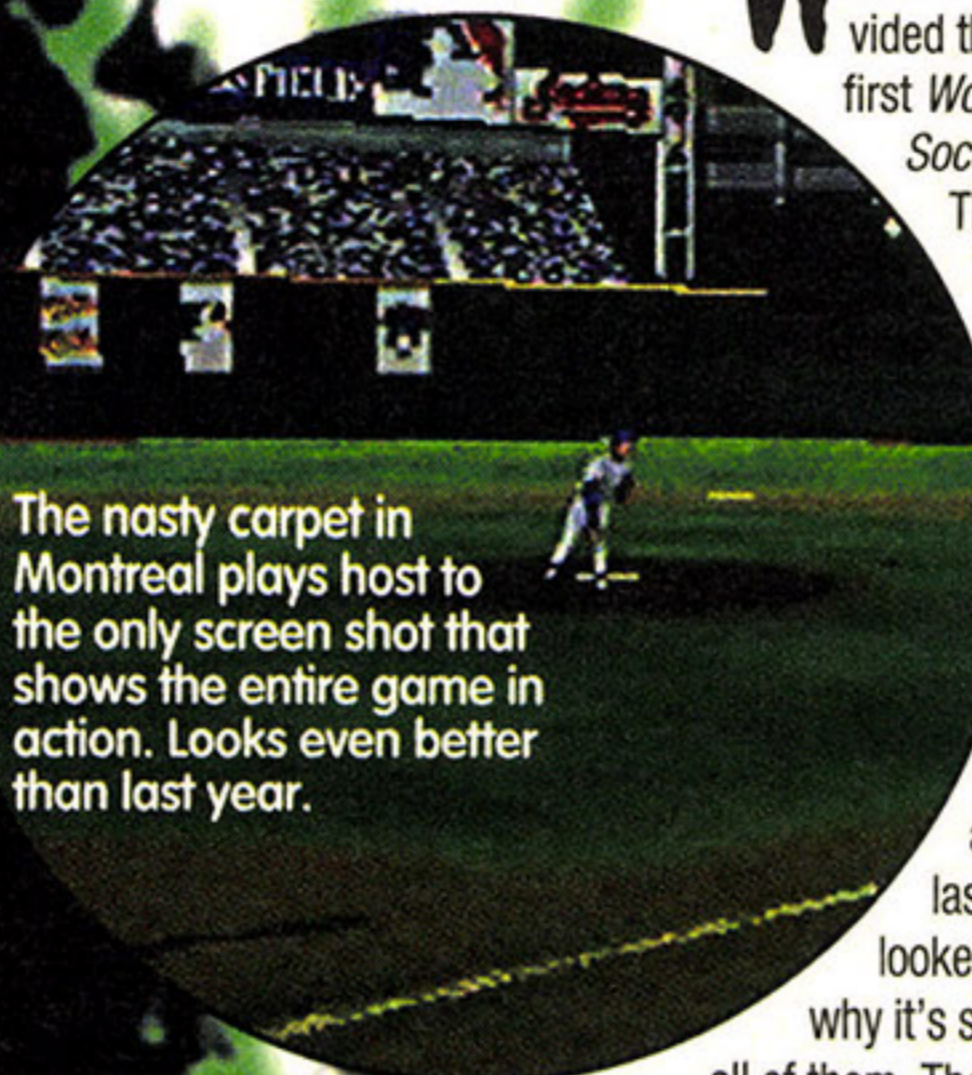
While Sega's entire sports line has been lagging behind the PlayStation, Sega of Japan has provided the only quality sports software, with the first *World Series* on the Saturn, *Worldwide Soccer II*, and now *World Series Baseball II*.

The biggest difference in the game is going to come in the form of some gameplay and graphic tweaking. More realism is promised, with a ball off the wall actually resulting in a double and a little less curve to the pitches.

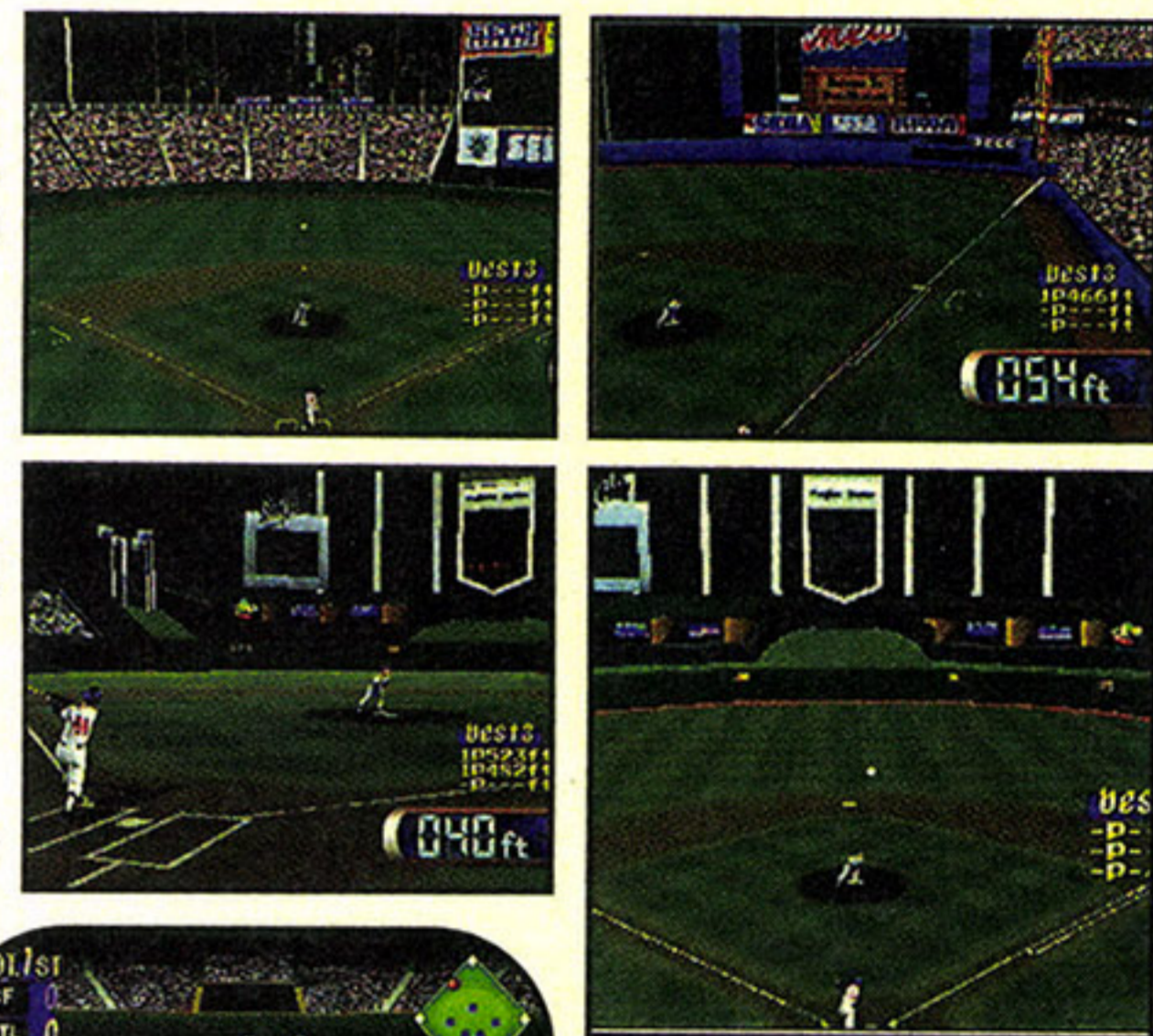
Probably the most exciting element is the inclusion of all the real stadiums. If you remember how awesome the few stadiums in the last *World Series*

looked, then you'll know why it's so exciting to have all of them. The ones I've seen look mighty impressive, with huge outfields. This title is definitely reason for Saturn owners to rejoice.

Even realistic player numbers have been added to the back of the uniforms.



The nasty carpet in Montreal plays host to the only screen shot that shows the entire game in action. Looks even better than last year.



Some shots of the homerun derby give you a good look at Shea Stadium, County Stadium, and the home of the Royals and Indians.

GRETZKY 64

Williams For Nintendo 64

The *Gretzky* hockey series from Time Warner (now Williams) has never enjoyed much success or critical acclaim, but being the first sports game for the Nintendo 64, *Gretzky 64* is certainly going to receive plenty of attention. Williams stopped by recently and let us play around with the three-on-three arcade mode. It looked incredible, moved at blazing speeds, and kept us entertained for far too long.

The game supports four players and has to be the fastest hockey game I've ever seen. The rink is real small and the players are a bit large, but for the arcade mode, it works real well. What's especially nice are the effects on the glass and goal light — they really show off some of the 64's muscle. Despite how enjoyable the arcade mode was to play, what I'm really looking forward to is the simulation mode. Williams is going to be making two separate games in one. Usually sports games have arcade and simulation modes that just turn off and on and allow for higher scoring. With *Gretzky 64*, Williams is planning on having two completely different games. The rink is going to be larger, the players a little smaller, and it is going to be five on five in the simulation mode. This is a major step in sports video games, if it's done correctly. Finally, you can have that great arcade-style party game and the full simulation in one game.

If *Gretzky 64*'s simulation mode looks as good as the arcade mode and plays something like *Power Play '96*, then Williams could be delivering the best hockey game ever. However, until I see the simulation game up and running, *Gretzky 64* is just a real enjoyable arcade game. More on this one later.

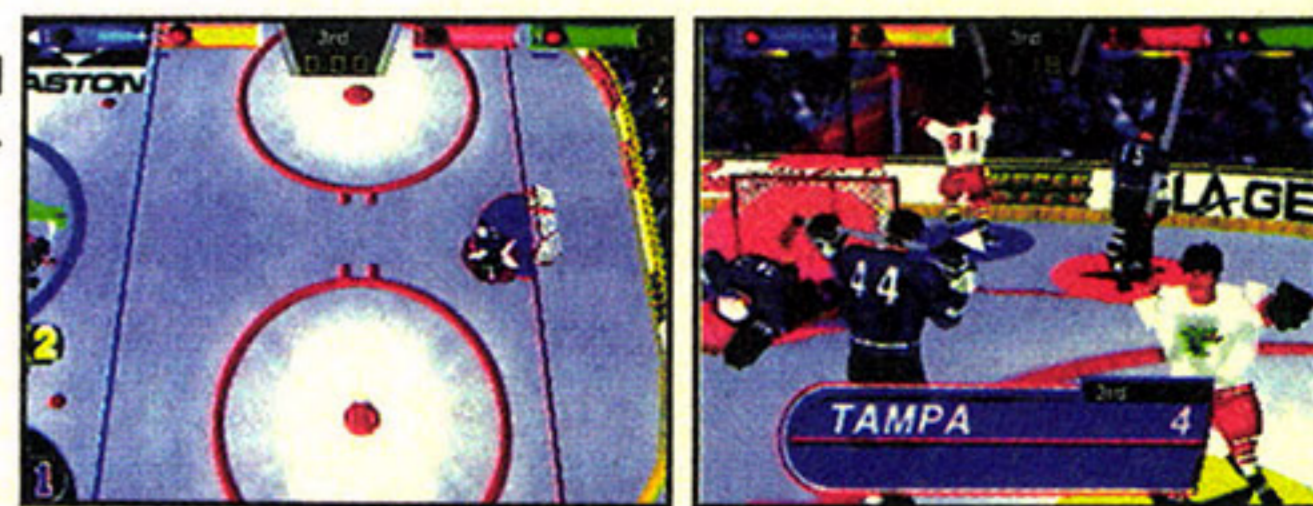
The N64 really flexes its muscle, with special effects like the glass and the goal siren.



The views are easily switched and each one provides a crisp playable environment, but for seeing the checks better, I always go in close.



As promised, when the N64 goes in close, it's seamless and sharp. Even the players' faces are there.



What arcade hockey game would be complete without fights? The ones in *Gretzky 64* are a bit on the brutal side.

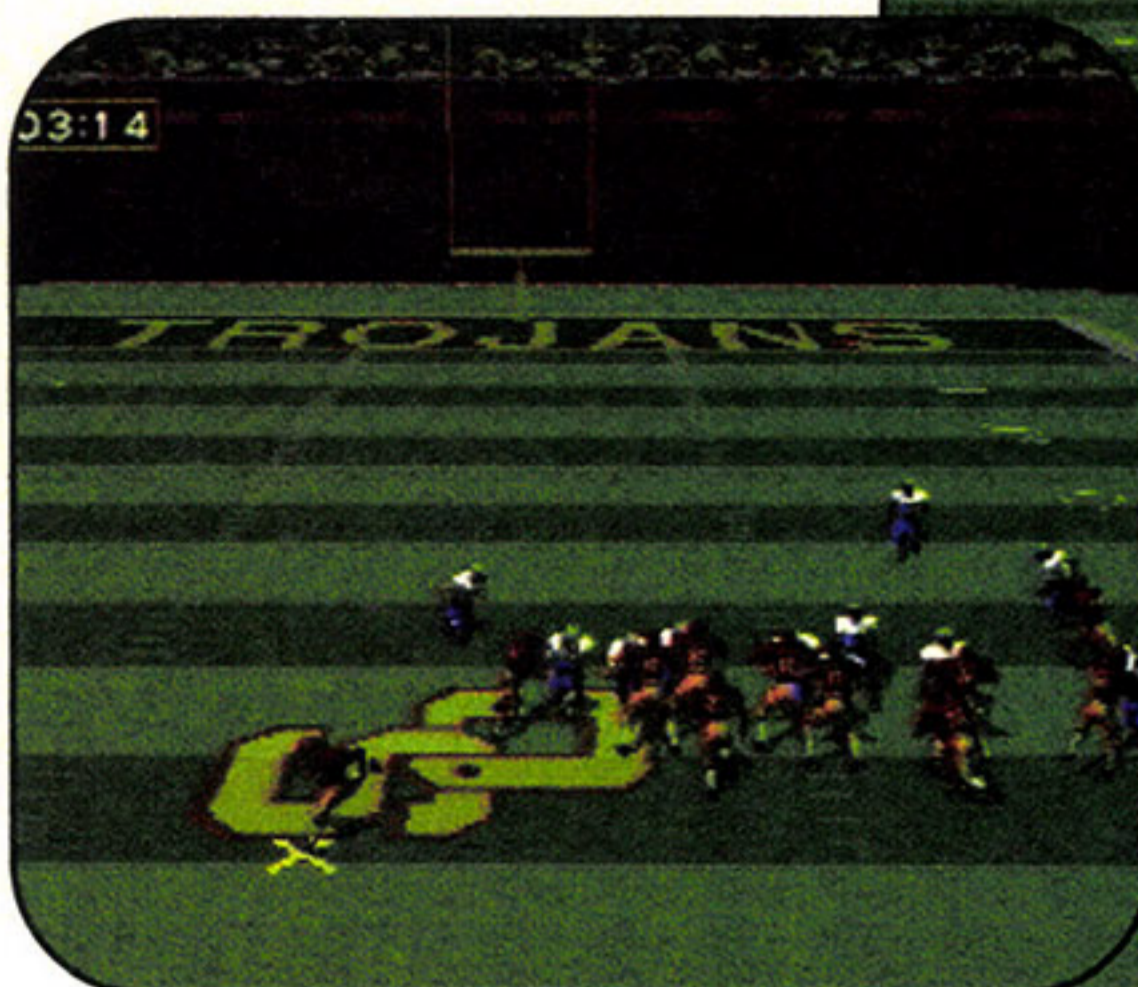
GAMEBREAKERS

Sony For PlayStation

Just last month, I showed you a couple screens on Sony's latest sports effort. This time around, I'm going to let you take a look at a bunch more screens, so you can get a better feeling for what could be the best college football game to date.

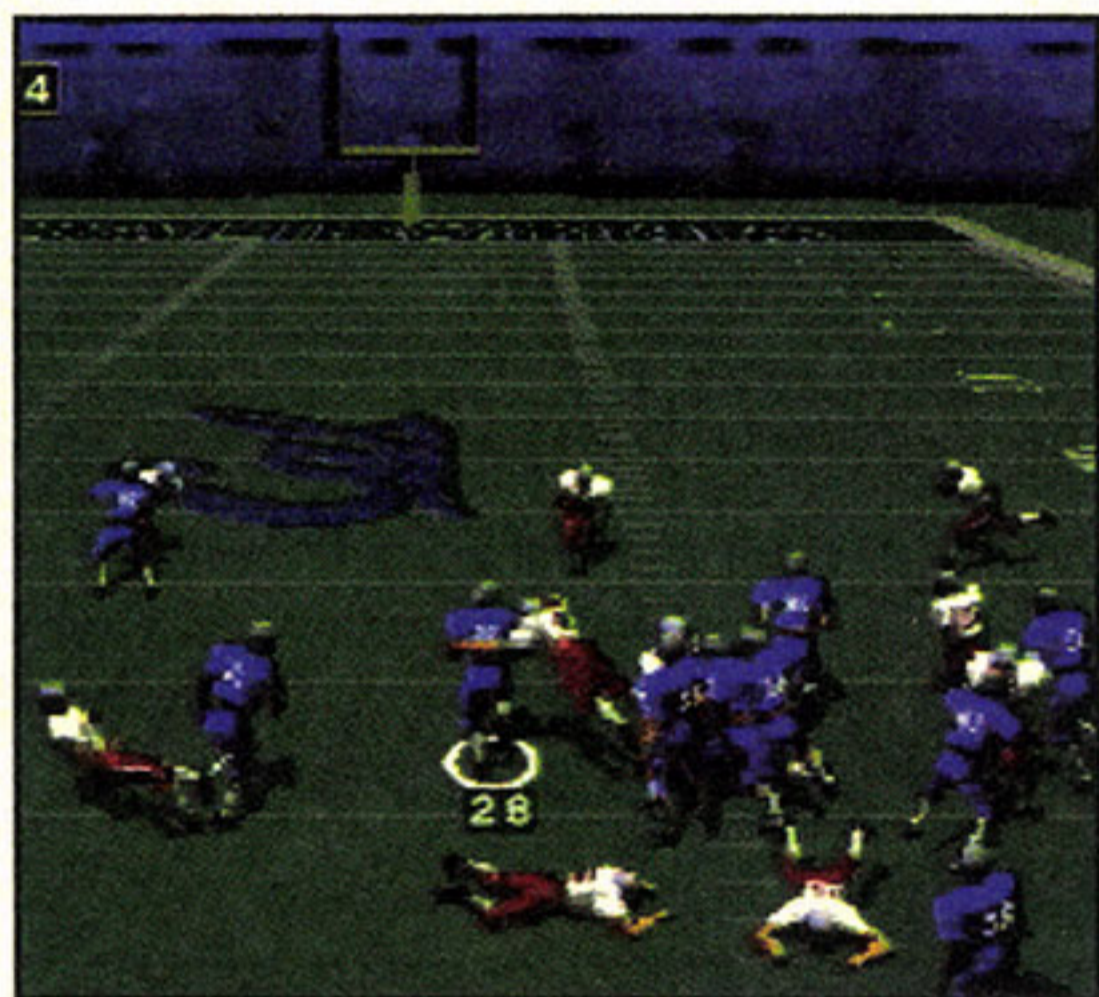
The reason *Gamebreaker* is such a promising title is simple — the smooth engine and graphics of *Gameday* have been tweaked, along with having 117 college football teams and all the options (including the triple-option). If you've never played college football games, then you are definitely missing something. There aren't any real player names or professional teams to lead through a season, but the option play is, in my estimation, the single most entertaining play in any football video game.

Whether you're a fan of the Buckeyes, The Horned Frogs, or even the Zips, *Gamebreaker* gives you a chance to lead them to the national title (good luck with the Zips). I'm waiting for the reviewable on this game and I'll let you know exactly how good or bad it is.

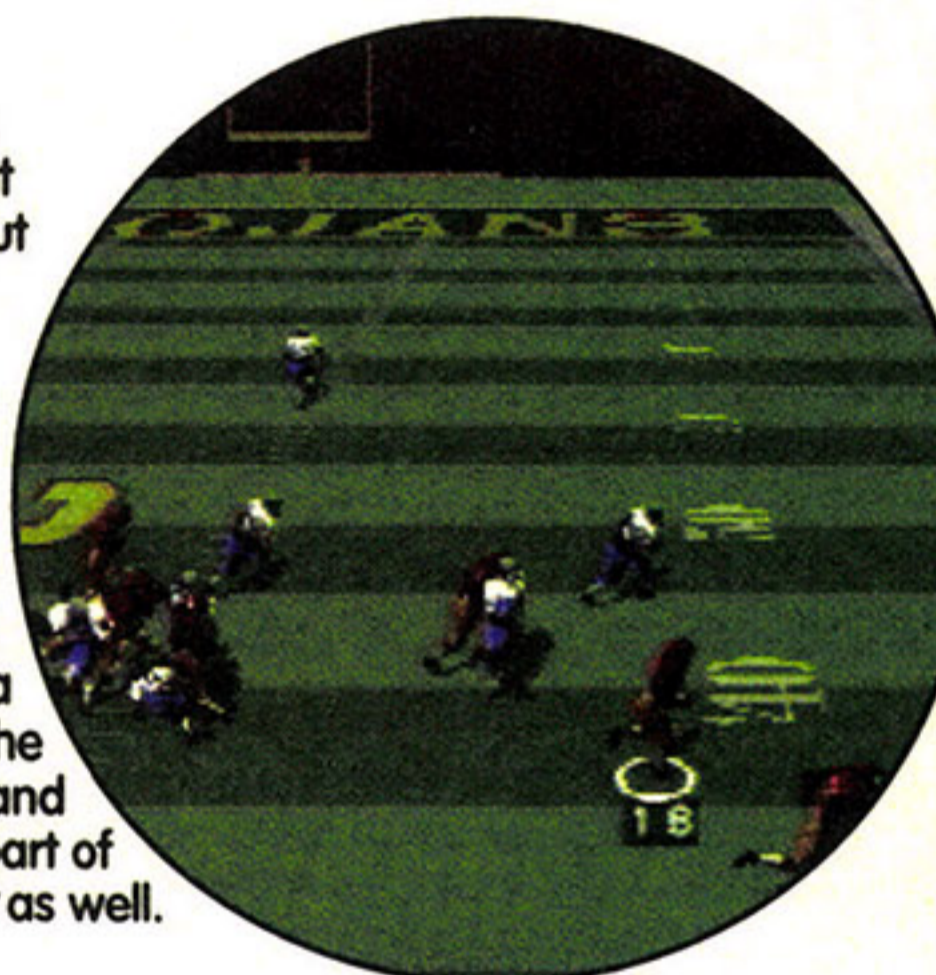


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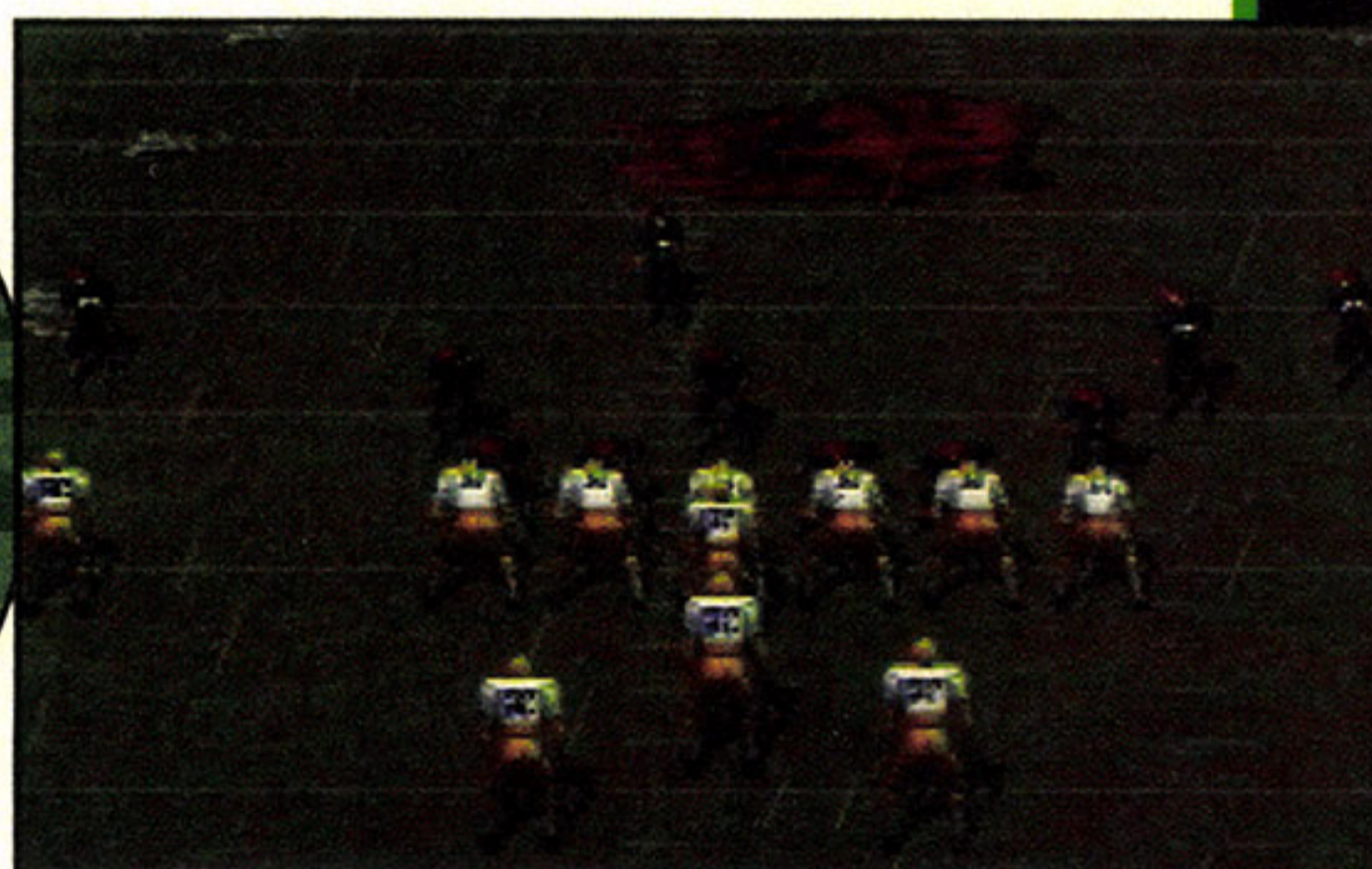
Teams like USC and Notre Dame come with accurate home and away uniforms and the same sweet moves of *Gameday*.



The big diving tackles return in *Gamebreaker*, but not a word about bringing down the thunder.



Wishbone formation and pitchouts are a big part of the college game and they are a big part of *Gamebreaker* as well.



WORLDWIDE SOCCER II

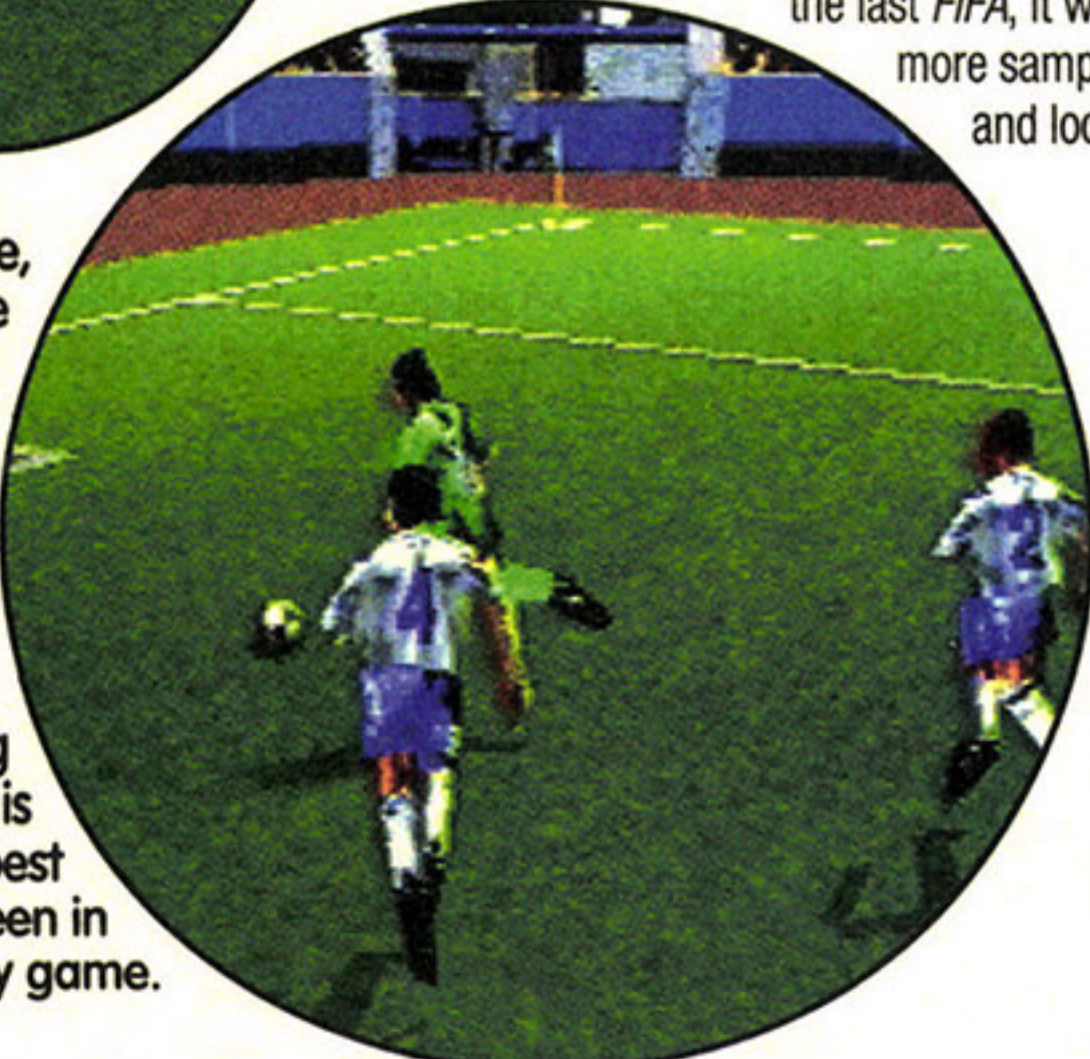
Sega For Saturn

You got a glimpse of this awe-inspiring game last month, but it's so darn good that I'm going to give you more (plus, I needed a reason to justify playing it all month long). Upon even further play of the 60% version of *Worldwide Soccer II*, I can only say that it just keeps getting better. The passing, the headers, the scissors kick, the sprawling saves, and strategic action are simply unbeatable. Until you see this game in motion and spend some time playing it, you will never understand how great a soccer game can be.

The license that the U.S. is going to have is still unclear, but sources at Sega are hinting towards a FIFA license. If they could get the same kind of license that EA got for the last *FIFA*, it would be a big victory for Sega. Enjoy some more sampling of the FIFA-beating *Worldwide Soccer II* and look for more on this in the new sports section.



Even up close, the graphic detail is perfect, and the running motion is the best I've seen in any game.



Great collision detection and some more smooth animation allow for players to take one on the chin and fall to the ground in style.



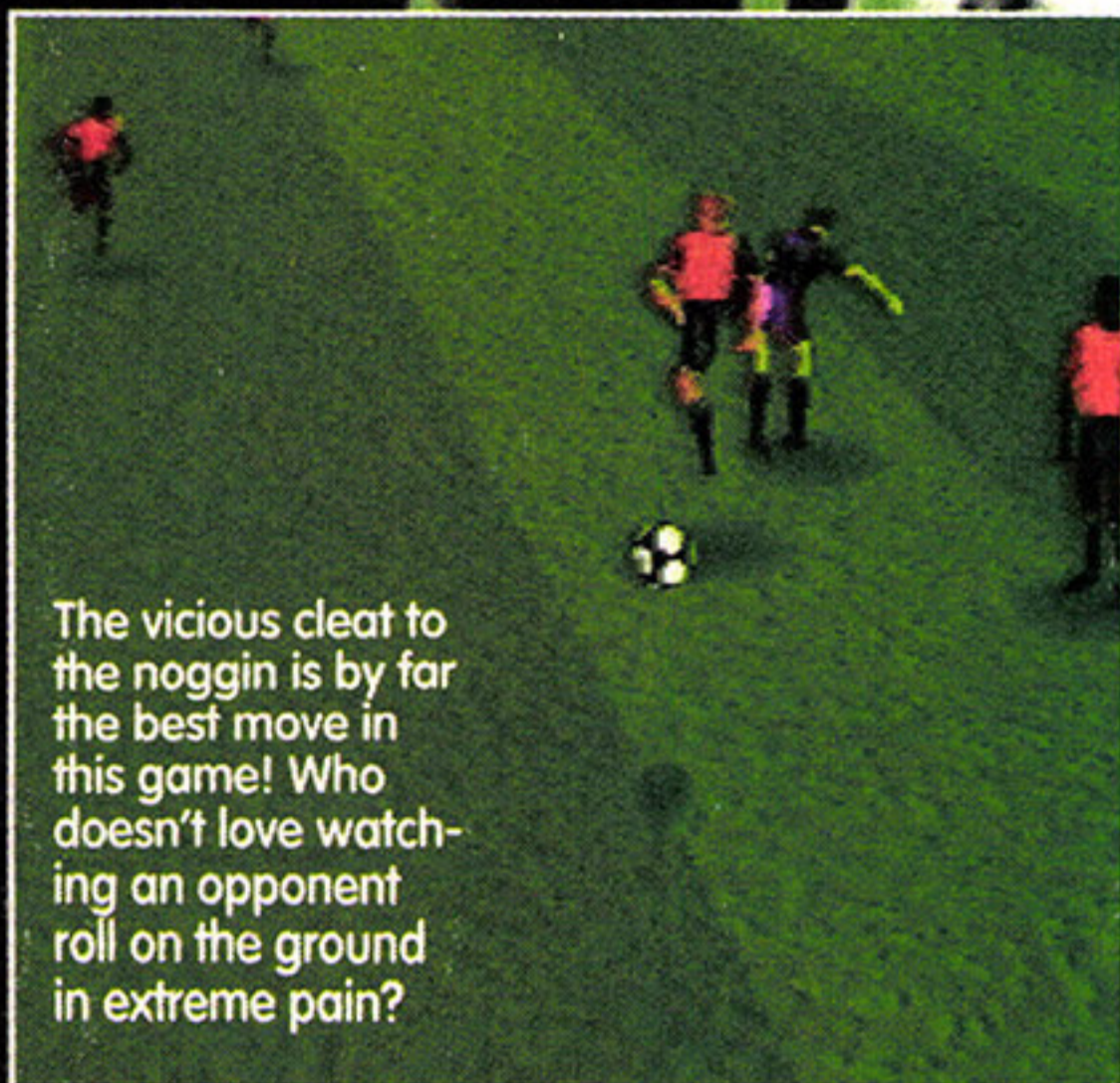
The shadows change depending whether it's a night or day game. The accurate shadows from the stadium lights are amazing.



They call him 'Speedy'. The little red-head can fly! Individual skills really make a difference in this game.

ADIDAS POWER SOCCER

System: **PlayStation** • Publisher: **Psygnosis**
 Developer: **Psygnosis** • now available • \$55



The vicious cleat to the noggin is by far the best move in this game! Who doesn't love watching an opponent roll on the ground in extreme pain?



How many soccer games can be made? I mean, I know it's the world's most popular sport, but I've never seen this many soccer titles before. The amazing thing about the plethora of soccer games is the fact that most of them are 'A' games. Which means one of the only ways to stand out is to do something completely different. *Striker* from Acclaim tried to be different, but the biggest difference was that *Striker* stank. *Adidas Power Soccer* takes a real arcade approach, along with a good solid game engine to really offer some variety in the soccer field.

The game features some gorgeous motion-captures and a large, well-done stadium to make it one of the prettier soccer games. But what makes *APS* special is the *Street Fighter*-esque nature of the game. If you play in simulation mode, there is a very solid soccer game that features real players from teams in the German, Italian, and English leagues. You can play through a season or in a cup, but as a simulation, *APS* can't compare to the likes of *FIFA* and *Worldwide Soccer II*. Where *APS* separates itself is in the arcade mode, where kicks to the head, super speed bursts, flaming goalkeepers, and pulling a player down by his shirt can all be done with relative ease and a rare foul. The animations for these special moves are marvelous, with Psygnosis quality smoke, flames, and sparkles leading into the sometimes vicious moves. Now playing against the computer like this isn't much fun, but against another person, there aren't many things more satisfying than a cleat to the head.

When in the arcade mode, the realism is completely gone, but there is definitely a load of fun in its place. It's not the best soccer game on the market, but with four-players, there aren't many more games that'll get more laughter and trash talk. Definitely worth the purchase, if you're into some far out arcade action, but if your looking for the perfect soccer sim, I'd wait for *Worldwide Soccer II*.



No matter which angle the camera is on, it's always pretty close to the action. The problem is that the radar is real tough to use, making it hard to pass down field.



Some real nice motion-capture catches the headers and bicycle-kicks real well.



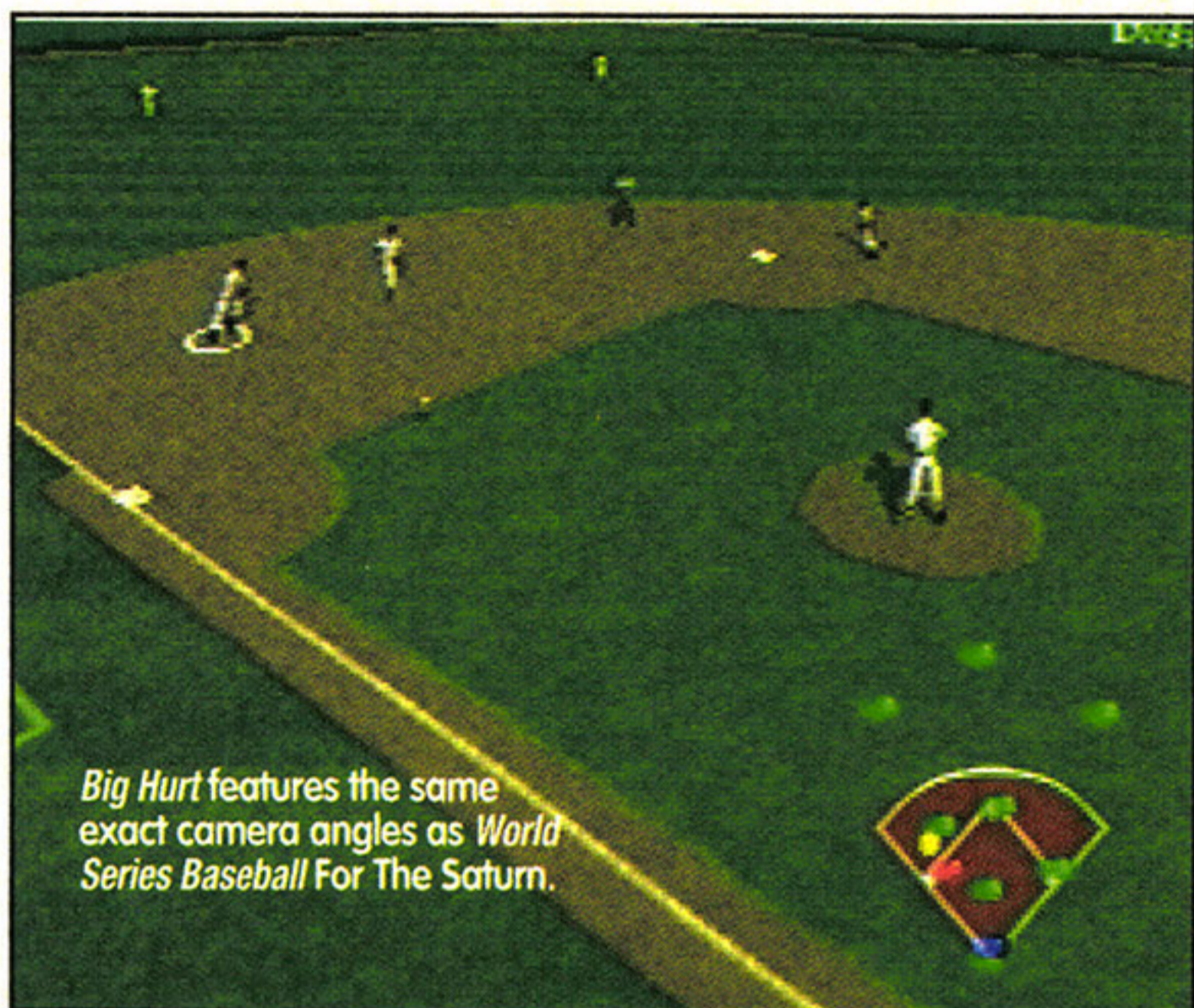
The super dash may look like something out of *Toshinden*, but it's actually a very effective way to get the ball down the pitch.

- 8** GRAPHICS
- 7** MUSIC & SOUND
- 9** INNOVATION
- 8** GAMEPLAY
- 7** REPLAY VALUE

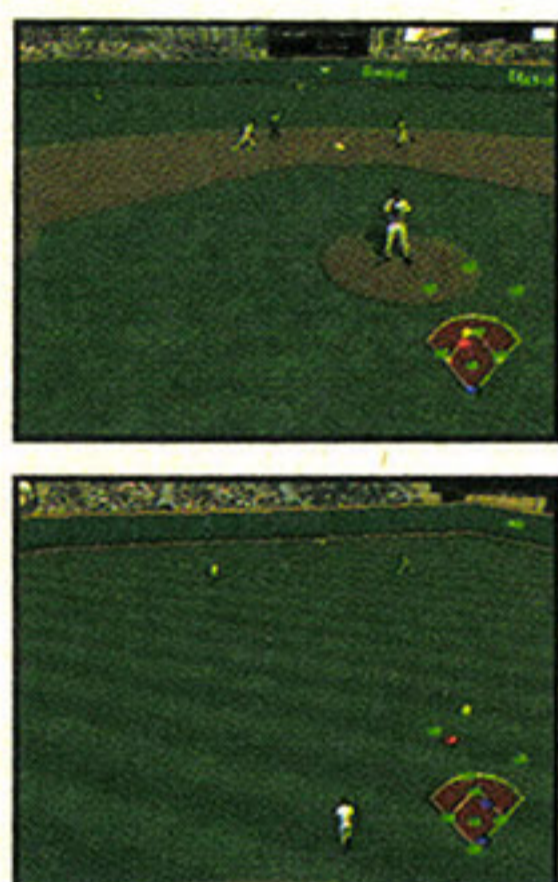
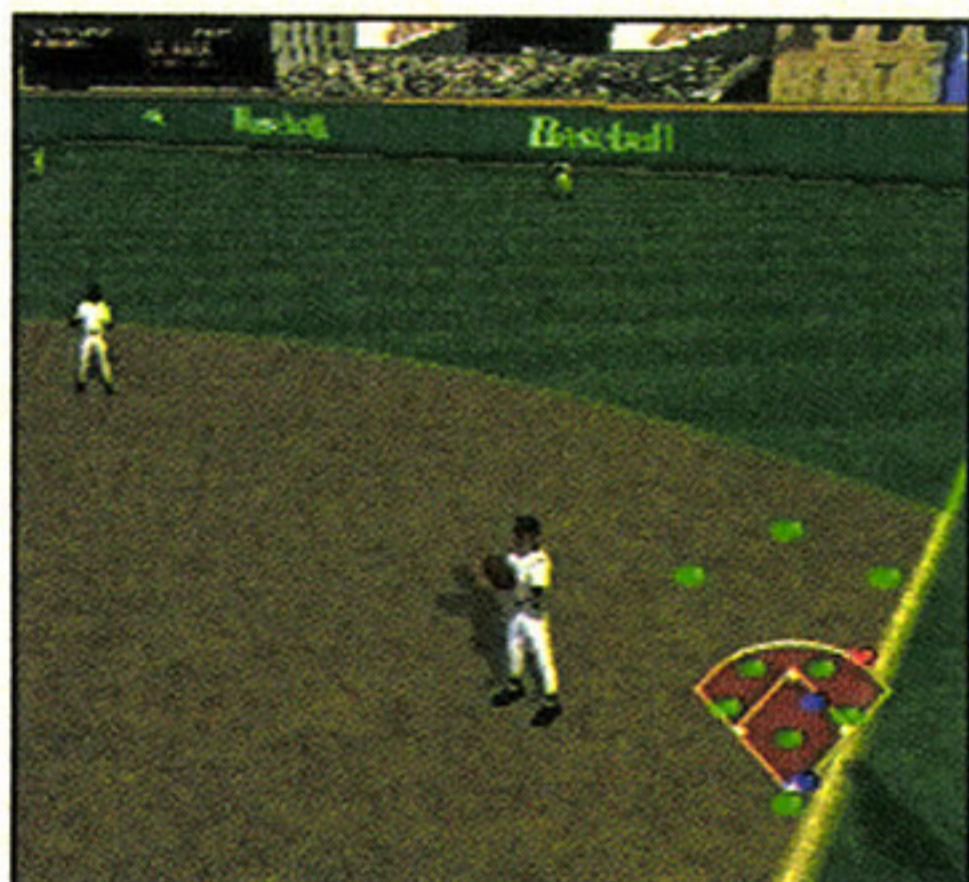
77%
VERY GOOD

FRANK THOMAS' BIG HURT' BASEBALL

System: PlayStation/Saturn • Publisher: Acclaim
 Developer: Iguana • now available • \$55



Big Hurt features the same exact camera angles as World Series Baseball For The Saturn.

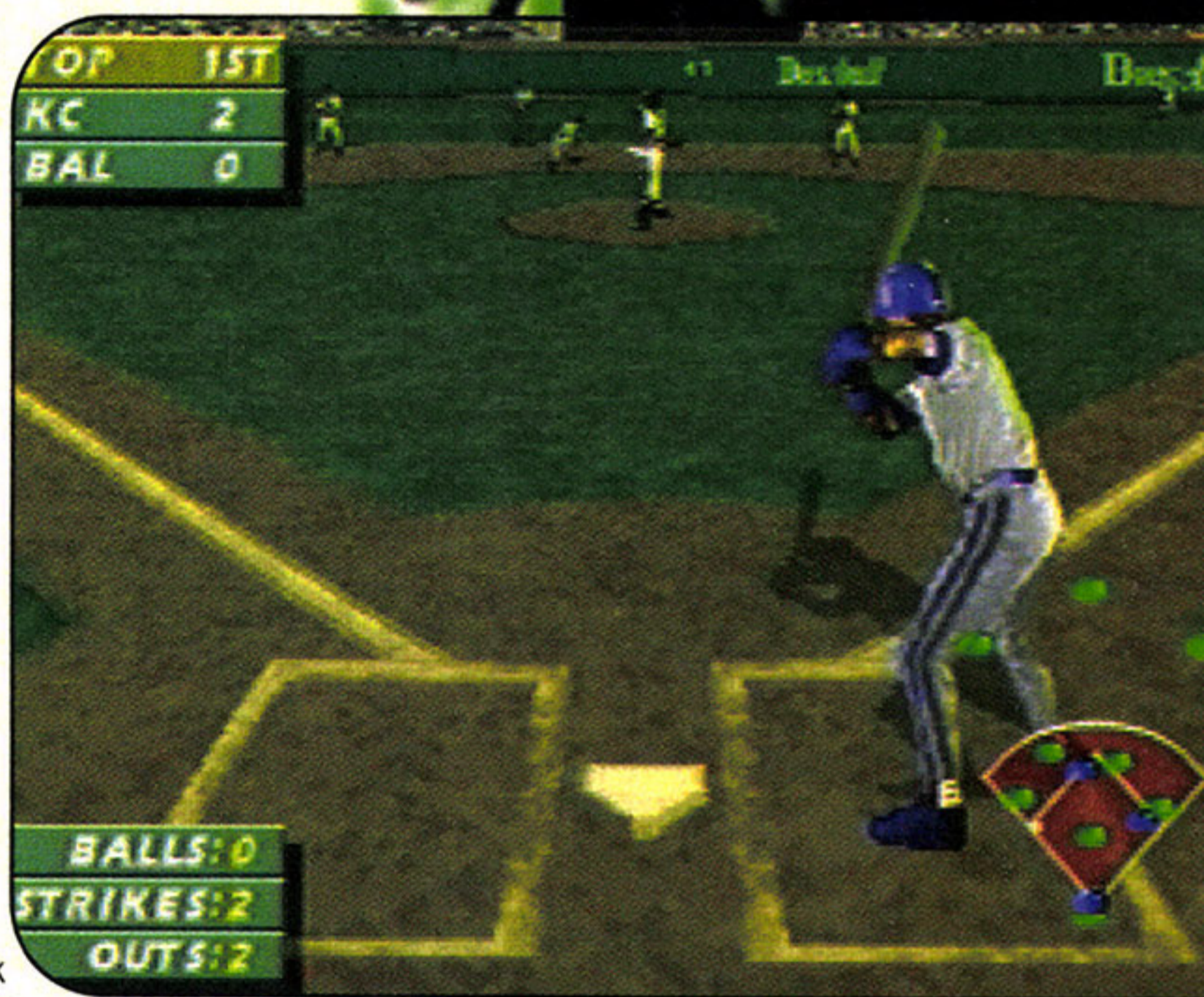


Have you ever played a game or been to a movie that should've been entertaining, but for some reason, you just didn't enjoy it? Well, that's how I was feeling about *Big Hurt* when I first saw it. The graphics are extraordinary and the batters look better than in any game available. There's a full player's license, all the stadiums, stat-tracking, an announcer, and a season mode. Despite all these winning ingredients, *Big Hurt* just never got under my skin. It's a lot like the New York Yankees in the '80's — all the best ingredients money can buy, yet the game (team) just never gels together. I'm reviewing both the PlayStation and Saturn versions together because they are virtually identical and the differences between them are negligible.

While the graphics are gorgeous and all the camera angles are right on the money, there's a few essential flaws. The stadiums all look great, but the camera never pulls back at the right angle to let you see the detail in the buildings behind the stadium. The players are crisp and perfectly animated, but there are only two kinds of batters, which makes it really hard to believe that a new batter is coming to the plate each time up. While the game has a season mode and all the stats, they just aren't done in an easy to use interface, like that in *Triple Play*. These are all little elements that really could've been fixed for the final game. Unfortunately, it's the little things that make the difference between a good game, which is what *Big Hurt* is, and a great game.

When it comes to gameplay, *Big Hurt* again is solid through and through, but some timing errors keep the gameplay from being anything but good. The biggest problem is in the batting where, after you press the swing button, it takes a fraction of a second before the batter on the screen actually starts his swing. That kind of timing could be compensated for, if the pitches weren't so fast. Basically, against a fastball, you have to swing as the ball is released, having no idea where the ball is going to go. It's not such a problem against the computer, because he generally throws strikes, but against a purposely errant human opponent, it's just strikeout after strikeout. The other problem is the speed of the game. Instead of speeding up one of the slowest sports around, *Big Hurt* actually slows it down at times. There's big loading time between innings and lengthy announcing of the batter before each plate appearance.

Big Hurt is an extremely solid game with little flaws that keep it from being great and, with the plethora of baseball titles coming out this year, it's going to take a lot more than good to impress me.



These are the only two batting stances in the game. A palette change makes them racially correct, but at least seven more are completely necessary.

9 GRAPHICS
 8 MUSIC & SOUND
 6 INNOVATION
 7 GAMEPLAY
 7 REPLAY VALUE

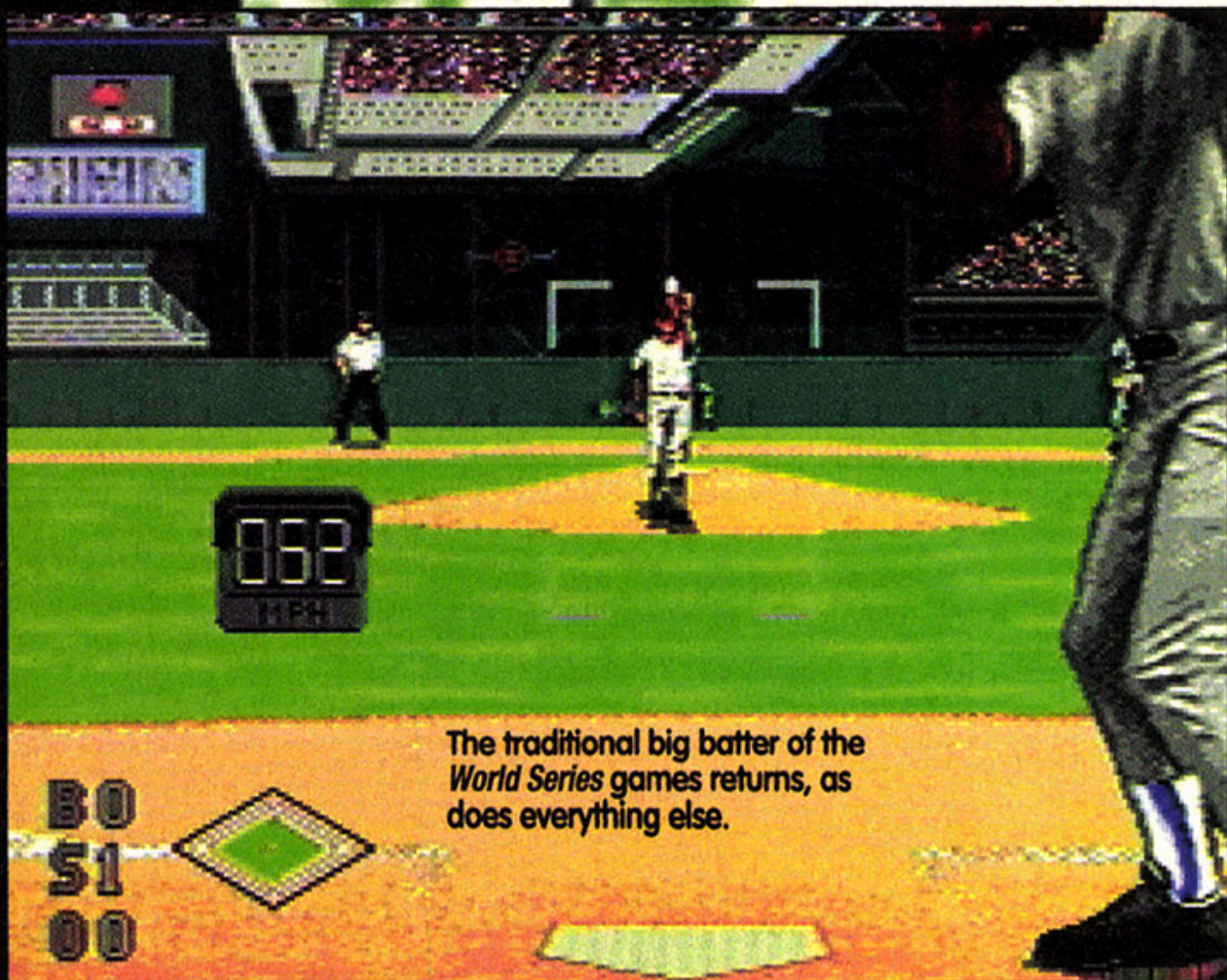
72%
 VERY GOOD

The fielding is real smooth and easy to handle, but sometimes getting the right player to control isn't easy enough.

Big Hurt did speed up the home runs, which jump out of the yard at an alarming rate! That's the one thing you wouldn't mind the game slowing down for.

WORLD SERIES BASEBALL '96

System: **Genesis** • Publisher: Sega
 Developer: Sega • now available • \$55



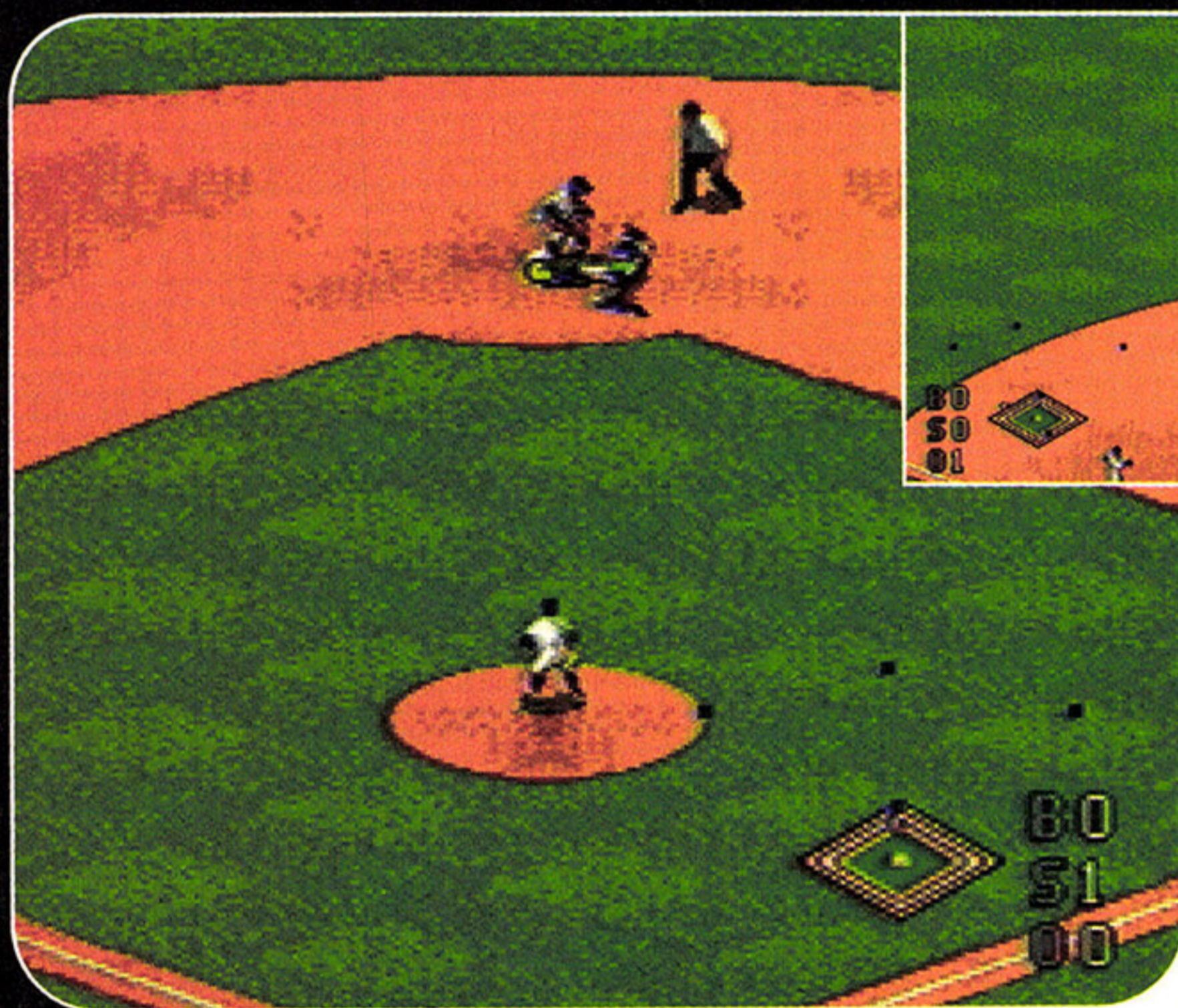
The traditional big batter of the *World Series* games returns, as does everything else.

The one game that developers and media still look at as the most complete baseball simulation is *World Series '95* for the Genesis. The developers of that title are Blue Sky, who quickly hooked up with Data East to make *MVP Baseball*. So that left Sega with no proven developers to crank out *World Series Baseball '96* for the Genesis. So what Sega did was take the engine Blue Sky crafted for them, update the players and churn out one more 16-bit baseball game.

What this guarantees is that *WSB '96* is a solid game from start to finish, with every possible feature you could want in a baseball game. You can bat using a cursor like in *Bottom Of The Ninth*, or just time your swing, like in *Frank Thomas*. The players are animated superbly and the graphics couldn't be any better on the Genesis. Playing through a season is easy and rewarding, with realistic results and games

that are fun and fast. Owners of *WSB '95* know exactly what to expect from '96 because nothing has changed except for the players.

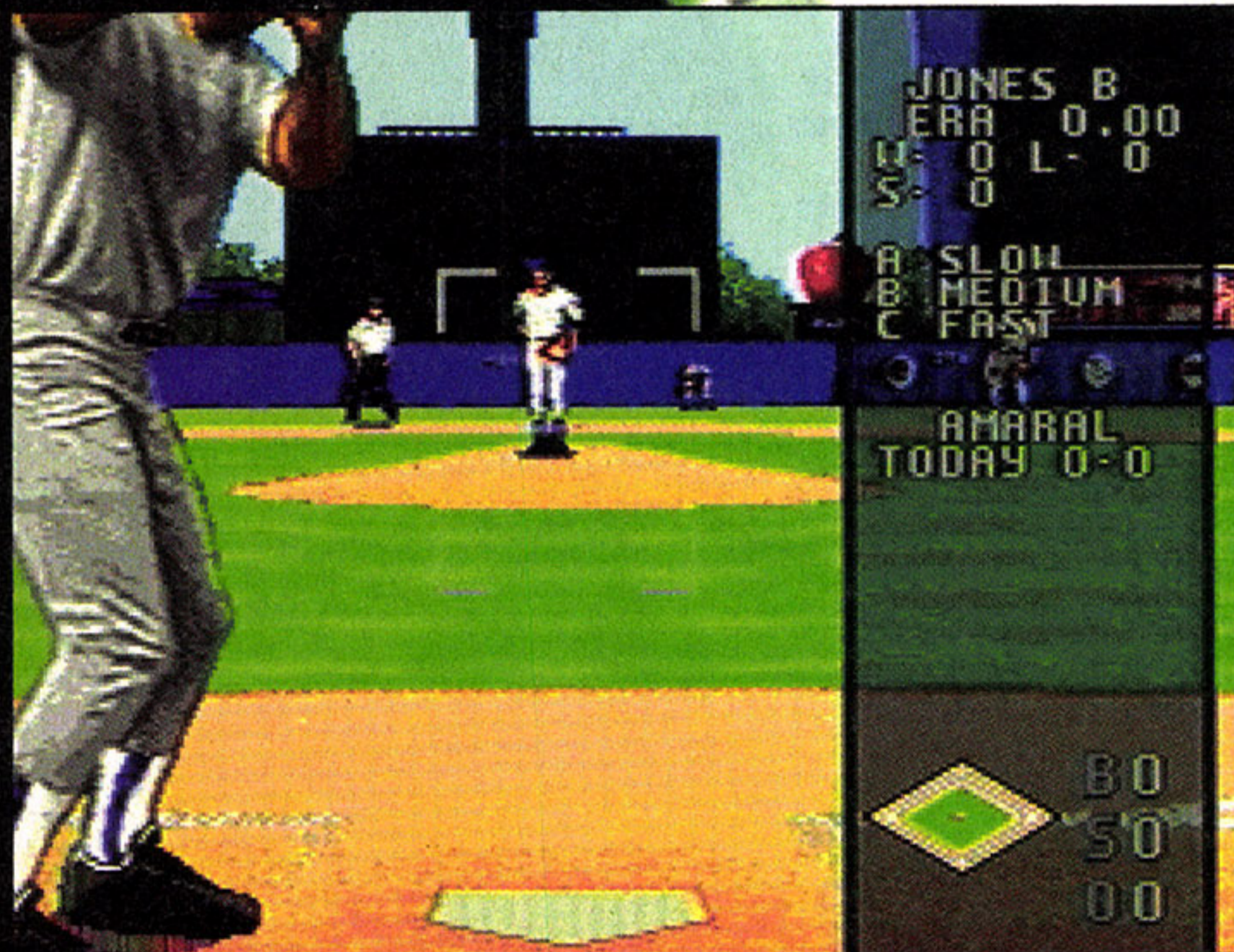
Everything from the fielding, to hitting, pitching, and sliding is done superbly, making sure that each part of the game is re-created well. The only thing that takes away from *WSB '96* is that the 32-bit systems have pushed the envelope of baseball games to a new level that a two year old game just can't match. The Genesis isn't likely to have another baseball game of this quality ever and, unless some more gameplay elements are added during the 32-bit era, *WSB '96* could still be one of the best 16-bit baseball games available. This is a must buy for the baseball fan who owns a Genesis.



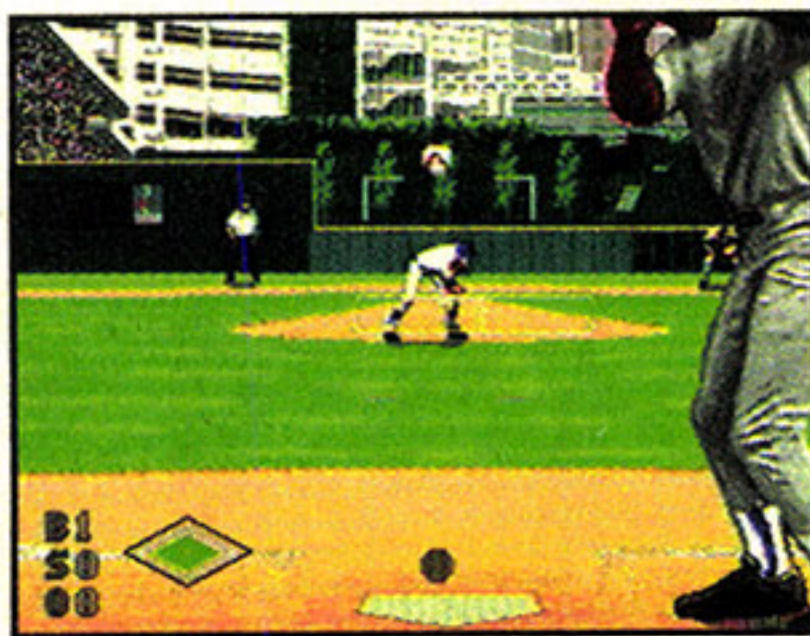
Diving into second, jumping up for a catch, and diving into the hole for a grounder are all animated wonderfully and really make this game tick.



This game must have done something right, since all of the elements are being included in every other baseball game coming out.



If it gets too easy to win games, then you can try out the batting cursor. This game originated what is sure to be the future of baseball games.



- 9 GRAPHICS
- 8 MUSIC & SOUND
- 2 INNOVATION
- 8 GAMEPLAY
- 9 REPLAY VALUE

81%
 EXCELLENT

W*HEN I WAS A CHILD,
I SPOKE AS A CHILD,
I THOUGHT AS A CHILD,
I UNDERSTOOD AS A CHILD...*

BUT WHEN I GREW UP, I PU

GamePlayers is about to get even better!

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THE GAM

ON SALE EVERYWHE

GET AWAY CHILDISH THINGS.

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RE SEPTEMBER 3RD

NOW PLAYING

Keep your eyes peeled for some exciting, new changes to these pages with the very next issue! Changes that we feel will make this resource an even more accessible source for info on all the games we've covered in the past few months. You can be sure it's gonna rock!

WIPEOUT
SONY INTERACTIVE
FOR PLAYSTATION
Review, 8#11



From sizzling start to frantic finish, *Wipeout* is a joy to behold! This game is, by itself, reason enough to own a PlayStation. You need this game!!!

OVERALL 96%

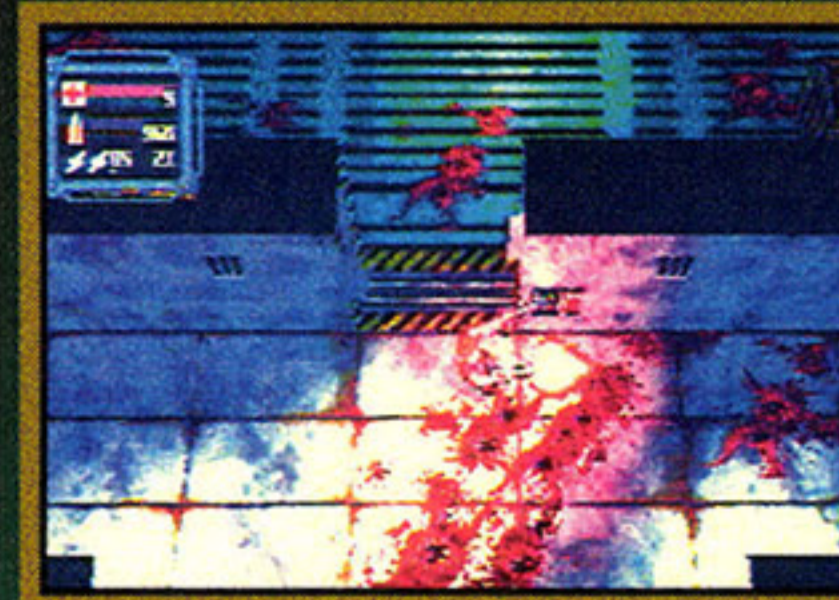
BLADEFORCE
STUDIO 3DO FOR 3DO
Review, 8#12



Strap on your heli-pak and fly around a huge city, blowing stuff up! Great graphics and gameplay make this one a must-have! What a game!

OVERALL 95%

LOADED
INTERPLAY FOR
PLAYSTATION
Review, 9#1



OK, so you're locked in this asylum and all you've got is a really big weapon! So you just do what comes naturally! KILL 'EM ALL! YES! This game rocks! Get it!!!

OVERALL 91%

Do you agree with our reviews? If not, we want to hear from you. Write to: You Got it Wrong; *Game Players*; 150 North Hill Drive; Brisbane, CA, 94005 and tell us what you think was wrong with the review, the score the game should have received, and why. You won't win anything, except 15 minutes of fame. Oh, well... GP

● denotes games reviewed last month

ALIEN TRILOGY

Acclaim for PlayStation; review, 9#5

This is Acclaim's first entry into the 3D genre. How'd they do? Pretty darn good! The game has a great camera swing, that makes it look like you're really there. ALIENS RIPPED MY FLESH! (Oops...)



OVERALL 91%

ALONE IN THE DARK

T*HQ for Saturn; review, 9#7

While this is actually *Alone In The Dark 2*, consider it the first, since the original never came out for Saturn. However, if you compare this with *Resident Evil*, this game begins to show its age. While the graphics may be new, the game isn't.

OVERALL 79%

ARCADE CLASSICS

Sega for Genesis; review, 9#7

Probably the best point one could make for this game is that when you want to play it, you don't have to shove a quarter into your Genesis. Basically, this is a tragic attempt to cash in on the current retro craze. Shine this one...

OVERALL 32%

ASSAULT RIGS

Sony Interactive for PlayStation; review, 9#3

Hey, do you remember *Tron*? Well, this game is kinda like that movie. Drive your tank through a whole bunch of different mazes, shooting up the bad guys! The only bummer is that the mazes aren't very interesting at first. Oh, well. This is still really cool.

OVERALL 78%

● **BAKU BAKU ANIMAL**

Sega for Saturn; review, 9#8

Here's a really cute puzzle game, where you stack up animals and their favorite foods. Do it right and a 3D animal head pops out and starts chowing down. No, we are NOT kidding... If you like puzzle games, give this one a shot.

OVERALL 85%

BASS MASTER CLASSIC: PRO EDITION

T*HQ for Super NES; review, 9#7

Surprise, surprise, surprise! This fishing sim is really fun to play, and does have its challenging moments. All this game is missing to make it perfect is a cold six-pack! The Mode 7 is very well done and the graphics are beautiful.

OVERALL 80%

BATTLE ARENA TOSHINDEN 2

Playmates for PlayStation; review, 9#6

While this sequel is definitely a step in the right direction, it never generates quite the level of excitement that the original did. It plays well, but does suffer from choppy animation and occasionally sluggish controls. Still well worth it, though!

OVERALL 83%

BATTLE ARENA TOSHINDEN REMIX

Sega for Saturn; review, 9#6

This version of the astounding fighting game does have a few drawbacks. The graphics suffer from heavy pixelation at times and the sound effects aren't really all that convincing. The game does have one new character named Cupido.

OVERALL 81%

● **BOGEY DEAD 6**

Sony for PlayStation; review, 9#8

Fly the unfriendly skies in this air combat game that could have been great, except for a few flaws, like jets that are too slow and a really annoying backseater who screams at you every 30 seconds. Still, it's a lot of fun. Get your kicks with *Bogey Dead 6!*

OVERALL 72%

WHAT YOU THINK

How the hell could you guys give ESPN Extreme an unfair 73%? Where is your brain located? Extreme should have gotten at least a 93%!

— Alex Fisher, Naperville, IL

● **BUGS BUNNY: DOUBLE TROUBLE**

Sega for Genesis; review, 9#8

Here's a game that's about as much fun as being locked up in a Turkish prison. Annoying music, sloppy controls and low-grade sound effects guarantee this game won't be much fun. This game could have maybe been fun about 10 years ago...

OVERALL 30%

● **BUST-A-MOVE 2**

Acclaim for PlayStation; review, 9#8

This puzzle game is extremely addicting, for some reason. I mean, you shoot colored gems at other colored gems that are hanging from the ceiling. I know it sounds weird, but it's really, really fun! You can trust us! This game is fun!!!

OVERALL 86%

CLOCKWORK KNIGHT 2

Sega for Saturn; review, 9#4

Here's an extremely well done game with only one problem: there are only 12 types of enemies in the whole game! Other than that, this disc has a lot of goodies on it, including the original *Clockwork Knight* game. How can you lose?

OVERALL 79%

COLLEGE SLAM

Acclaim for Super NES; review, 9#4

OK, what we got here is *NBA Jam*, only with college players. While you can enter your own names for players and edit their stats, the players pictures aren't available to change, so you never quite get the feeling of being the actual college team. It's your call...

OVERALL 69%

CONGO

Sega for Saturn; review, 9#6

What you got here is possibly the ugliest 32-bit game ever devised. Add to that the fact that the frame rate is poor and the controls are really sloppy. I seem to recall playing this game as a graphic adventure on my old Commodore 64 about ten years ago.

OVERALL 59%

CREATURE SHOCK

Data East for PlayStation; review, 9#5

Since this game is a track-based shooter with lots of FMV sequences, we guess that all you'd want to say about this title is RUN AWAY! RUN AWAY! This game could have had some potential, but what little it had was destroyed by a lackluster effort. Avoid this one!

OVERALL 28%

CYBERDILLO

Panasonic for 3DO; review, 9#5

While this game does have a sense of humor that will keep you amused for about five minutes, the control is really loose and the graphics are far from being on the cutting edge. If you like plungers and bathroom humor, then this is for you.

OVERALL 63%

CYBERIA

Interplay for PlayStation; review, 9#3

This graphic adventure is a kind of transition point between what this type of game was and what they can be someday! While the graphics are really sweet, having to follow a linear storyline kinda sucks. Someday, these games will rock! This one just kinda rolls.

OVERALL 70%

D

Acclaim for Saturn; review, 9#3

This version of the ever-popular scary game has been 'improved'. What that means is that they've tried to fix some of the problems inherent in the 3DO version, and pretty much failed at it. It's still a really scary game, though it's just a bit slow!

OVERALL 79%

DARIUS GAIDEN

Acclaim for Saturn; review, 9#4

This is a totally un inventive 2D shooter. If it weren't for the fact that you get to pick which level you get to play next, and those really big, fish-like bosses, this game would be a total loss. If you like 16-bit-style shooters on your 32-bit system, go for it, otherwise...

OVERALL 53%

DESCENT

Interplay for PlayStation; review, 9#4

If it weren't for the fact that the graphics really hadn't been updated from the PC to a 32-bit console, this game might have gotten an ultimate award. This claustrophobic, disorienting game is really a hoot! The mazes will drive you crazy! Get this one!

OVERALL 84%

EARTHWORM JIM 2

Playmates for Saturn; review, 9#5

While this game doesn't do anything to remind the player that this title is on a Saturn, all of the original zany humor is still here. If you haven't got this one yet, then it's definitely worth a shot, but if you own the 16-bit version already, pass it by.

OVERALL 81%

NOW PLAYING NOW PLAYING NOW PLAYING NOW PLAYING NOW PLAYING NOW PLAYING

VIRTUA FIGHTER 2

SEGA FOR SATURN

Review, 9#1



There's many very good reasons why this game has been given our highest score ever! If you own a Saturn and you don't buy this game, you're just plain stupid!

OVERALL 99%

BUYING BY MAIL

Buying by mail is dead cheap. But to make mail-order as painless as walking into a store, take a few precautions and follow these tips...

- First, read the ad carefully, including the small print. Check to see how long it takes for delivery. Mail-order companies often take 4-6 weeks to fulfill orders, so make sure you give them that much time.
- Check out the company. Have any of your friends used it before? What kind of service did they get at the time? If nec-

essary, contact the Better Business Bureau (use the one located in the same city as the mail-order company). Better Business Bureaus log complaints against companies and can tell you the types of problems — if any — that have been encountered. Look in the Yellow Pages for the BBB's telephone number.

- Contact the company to check on availability. They may be offering *MK II*, but that doesn't mean they're expecting it next week. Companies never get products before they're available in stores unless they're selling foreign versions. Don't send your money without giving them a call.
- If possible, pay by credit card. For one reason, credit cards aren't charged until the

merchandise is sent. And if you don't receive your goods, the credit-card company is responsible for refunding your money or crediting your account. If you don't have a credit card, use a personal check and consider mailing it by recorded delivery so it can be traced. Never send cash through the mail. Be wary of money orders, — they can be hard to trace.

- Once you've ordered your game, relax. It'll be sent out within the stated delivery time. DON'T call the mail-order company every day to find out what's happening.
- Inspect your order as soon as it arrives. If it's incorrect or the product(s) is defective, file a complaint with the mail-order company immediately. If it has been damaged in shipping,

contact the postal service that delivered it. Use recorded delivery on any returns.

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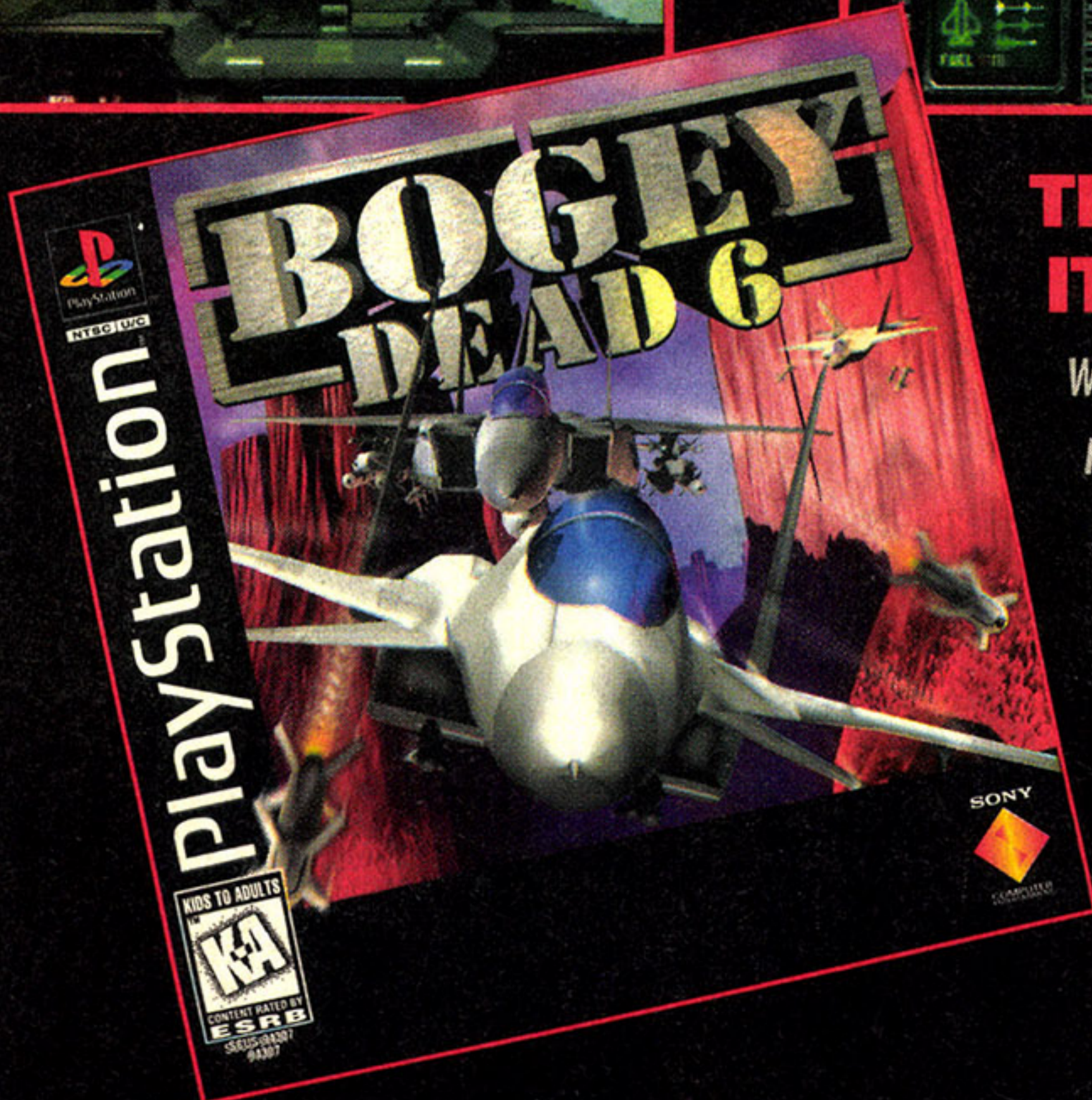
<p>PSYCHIC DETECTIVE Electronic Arts for 3DO; review, 9#3 Trent Ward said this game was about as much fun as a Love, American Style marathon. Actually, this game is only slightly more fun than a multiple root canal. You'd be better off just leaving this one all alone on the shelf, OK? OVERALL 28%</p>	<p>SHELLSHOCK US Gold for PlayStation; review, 9#6 While this game does have kind of a 'Boyz in the Hood' meets 'Patton' mentality, there is a lot of fun to be had here, blowing stuff up real good! This game has it all — great explosions, awesome sound effects, and lots of levels! Yee-haw! OVERALL 78%</p>	<p>STREET FIGHTER ALPHA Capcom for PlayStation; review, 9#3 Here's that game again, for the millionth time. Frankly, there are better fighting games out there, but if you feel happy giving the same company your money for basically the same game, with a few changes, then go right ahead... OVERALL 87%</p>	
<p>RAVEN PROTECT Mindscape for PlayStation; review, 9#6 Before you start to play this game, get yourself a bag of popcorn and a big Coke. You're gonna need the supplies to get through the very long, poorly acted FMV intro sequence. The list of what's wrong with this so-so game is kinda long. OVERALL 52%</p>	<p>SHINING WISDOM Sonic! Software for Saturn; review, 9#5 Well, this game isn't so much an advance in the 32-bit RPG genre, but it's still a pretty good game. The music and sound effects are kinda lacking, but the storyline makes this one worth the price of admission. Give it a shot! OVERALL 73%</p>	<p>SUPER MARIO RPG Nintendo for Super NES; review, 9#5 Here's a really big RPG that stars Mario. Nintendo and Square worked together to bring this magical universe to life. It combines the best elements of RPGs and Mario action games! It's a must have!!! OVERALL 91%</p>	
<p>RESIDENT EVIL Vic Tokai for PlayStation; review, 9#4 Sing along, everybody! Blast those zombies in the head. Do-dah, do-dah! Make sure that they're good and dead! Oh, do-dah day! Now, repeat after me! I NEED THIS GAME. I NEED THIS GAME! This rocks! OVERALL 92%</p>	<p>WHAT YOU THINK <i>KI for Super NES should have gotten a lower rating. It's nothing like the arcade version, at all. You could have more fun meeting your date's parents than playing this game!</i> — Aaron Miller, Greenfield, IN</p>		<p>TIME KILLERS T*HQ for Genesis; review, 9#7 Let's get right to the point, shall we? This game stinks on ice. 8-bit style graphics, annoying sound, choppy animation and poor control all point to the fact that this title, like Frankenstein's monster, would be better off dead. This belongs dead... OVERALL 19%</p>
<p>RETURN FIRE Time Warner Interactive for PlayStation; review, 9#5 Remember when you used to play with those little toy soldiers? Well, this is just like that, only it's more fun! You can spend hours blowing your friends to kingdom come! Heck, even the one-player game is a ton of fun! Yes!!! OVERALL 83%</p>			<p>ULTIMATE MORTAL KOMBAT 3 Williams for Saturn; review, 9#6 What we got here is another 2D fighter in a time when 3D fighting games rule the roost. While the developers have added four new characters, it still remains a case of 'Who cares?'. It remains to be seen how well this will sell. OVERALL 73%</p>
<p>RISE 2 RESURRECTION Acclaim Entertainment for PlayStation; review, 9#6 OK, here's what you can do: get yourself a couple of toasters. Electric can openers will do, also. Take one in your left hand and one in your right. Bash them together as hard as you can. You will now be having more fun than if you played this sorry sequel. OVERALL 37%</p>	<p>SILVERLOAD Vic Tokai for PlayStation; review, 9#4 Yeee-haw! What could be cooler than a horror/western game? Try to keep body and soul together as you try to find out who's been stealing all the settlers' children. Kick-ass graphics and really great creepy atmosphere make this a winner! OVERALL 83%</p>	<p>WILLIAMS ARCADE'S GREATEST HITS Williams for PlayStation; review, 9#6 Journey back to yesteryear, when games like <i>Defender</i> and <i>Joust</i> were the kings of the arcade. This classic collection also features <i>Bubble</i>, a game which no one here could even remember playing. Oh well. It's a blast from the past! OVERALL 71%</p>	
<p>ROAD RASH Electronic Arts for PlayStation; review, 9#3 If you've never played this game on any of the millions... Oh alright, hundreds, of systems that it's been on before, then you should definitely go out and get it! Otherwise, it might be a good idea to just pass this one by! OVERALL 73%</p>	<p>SKELETON WARS Playmates for Saturn; review, 9#3 This is really weird... You've got a 2D, side-scrolling game, but the world that it takes place in is 3D! In fact, the graphics are really beautiful and the music and sound effects really set the mood. It might even be fun! Give it a shot... OVERALL 79%</p>	<p>WIPEOUT Psygnosis for Saturn; review, 9#7 Aside from the fact that there's no link option for the Saturn, this port over offers all of the excitement of the PlayStation version. If you own the PlayStation version, don't switch it for this one, but this still rocks! OVERALL 91%</p>	
<p>ROBO PIT T*HQ for PlayStation; review, 9#7 Build yourself a robot, include the latest in weaponry and then send your little tin buddy out to do battle. The really cool part is that, if you win, you get to rip off your opponent's arms and use 'em yourself! This is great fun! OVERALL 76%</p>	<p>SPIDERMAN: WEB OF FIRE Sega for 32X; review, 9#3 OK, let's get things off to a good start... THIS GAME SUCKS! Man, that felt good! There isn't one thing in this game that hasn't been done before somewhere else — and better, too! So everyone repeat after me... THIS GAME SUCKS! OVERALL 36%</p>	<p>WORMS Ocean for Saturn; review, 9#5 Did you ever wonder what worms did when they weren't riding a fishing hook or grossing out a little girl? Well, the truth is — THEY WAGE ALL-OUT WAR! Yes! Open up this can of worms and start blowing stuff up real good!!! OVERALL 94%</p>	
<p>ROMANCE OF THE THREE KINGDOMS IV Koei for PlayStation; review, 9#6 This is Koei's first attempt at a 32-bit game. While there is no great leap in gameplay, there are some very nice beginner-friendly features, as well as the usual devotion to detail that Koei always brings to the gaming table. Go for it! OVERALL 82%</p>	<p>SPOT GOES TO HOLLYWOOD Acclaim for Genesis; review, 9#3 Wow! Here's a game about a bottle cap! How... uh... cool. Yeah, that's it. It's... cool. Actually, the game does have a nice control system and the graphics and sound are pretty good for the Genesis. But the hero is... uh... a bottlecap. Yeah... OVERALL 63%</p>	<p>X-MEN: CHILDREN OF THE ATOM Acclaim for Saturn; review, 9#3 What happens when you port a 2D fighting arcade game over to a new 32-bit system? Well, you get a 2D fighting game... And what's wrong with that? If you need the sweet action of the arcade hit in your home, then get this game! OVERALL 72%</p>	

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NO PAIN, NO GAIN

AND IF YOU DON'T WATCH YOUR TAIL

NO PLANE!

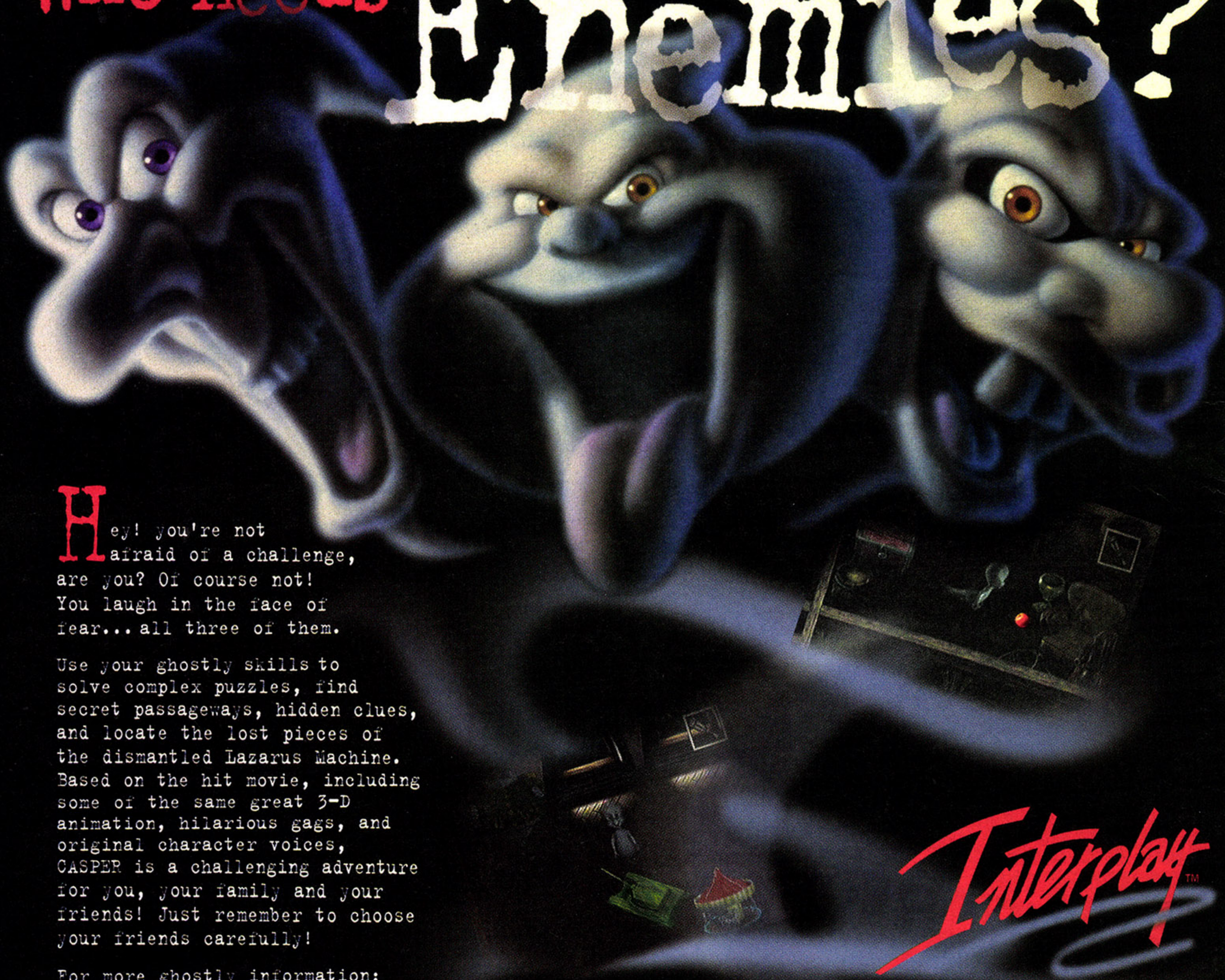


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With
Friends like these,
who needs **Enemies?**



Hey! you're not afraid of a challenge, are you? Of course not! You laugh in the face of fear...all three of them.

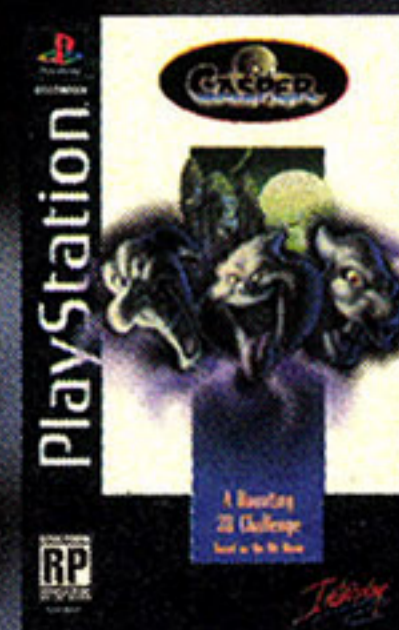
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GREAT SHEETS

GOLDEN AXE: THE DUEL

Axe all the questions you want! We got the goods on page 98!



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INTERNATIONAL TRACK & FIELD

Why lose, when you can go for the gold on page 94!

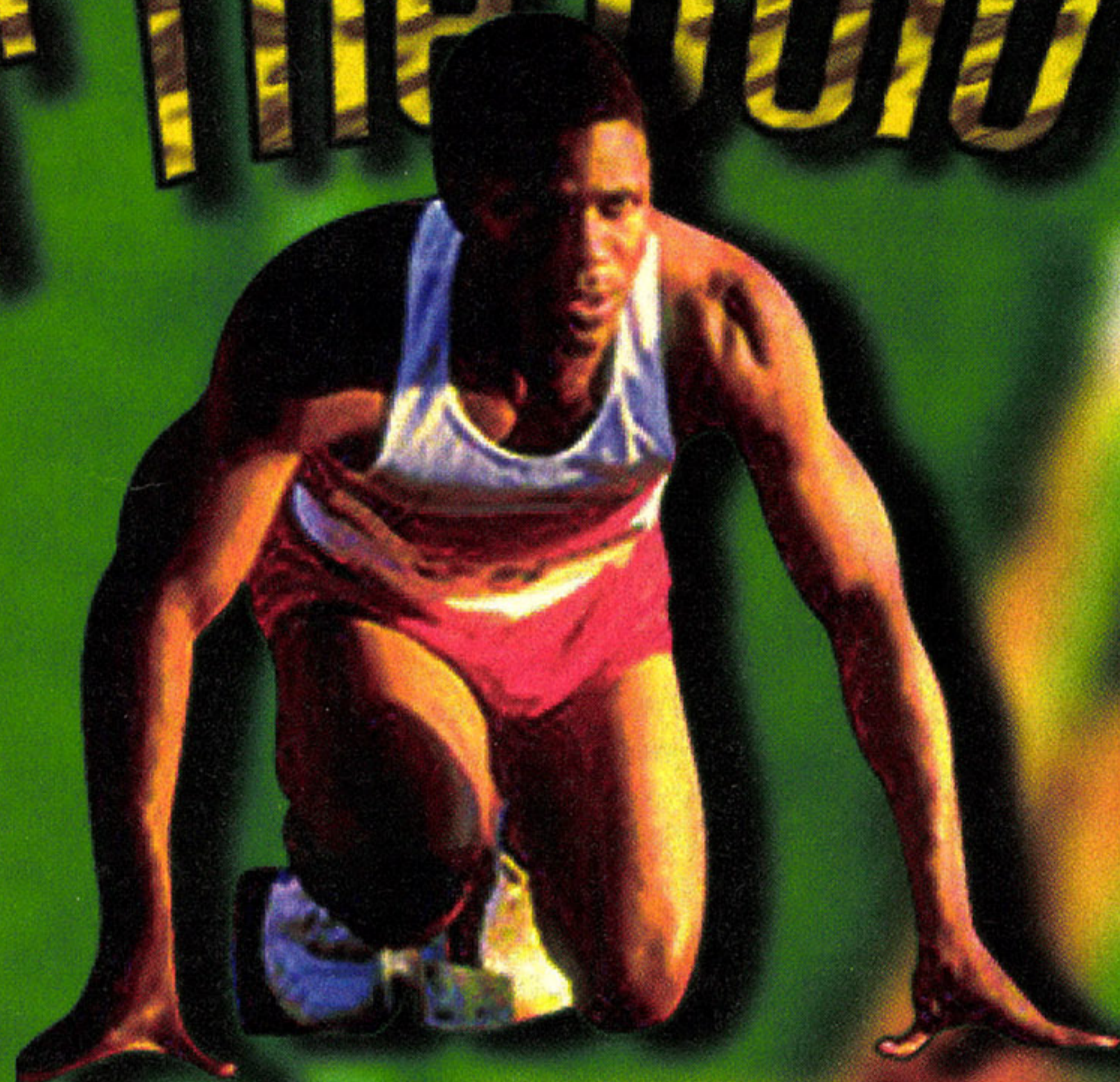
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International Track

Strategies for The Gold



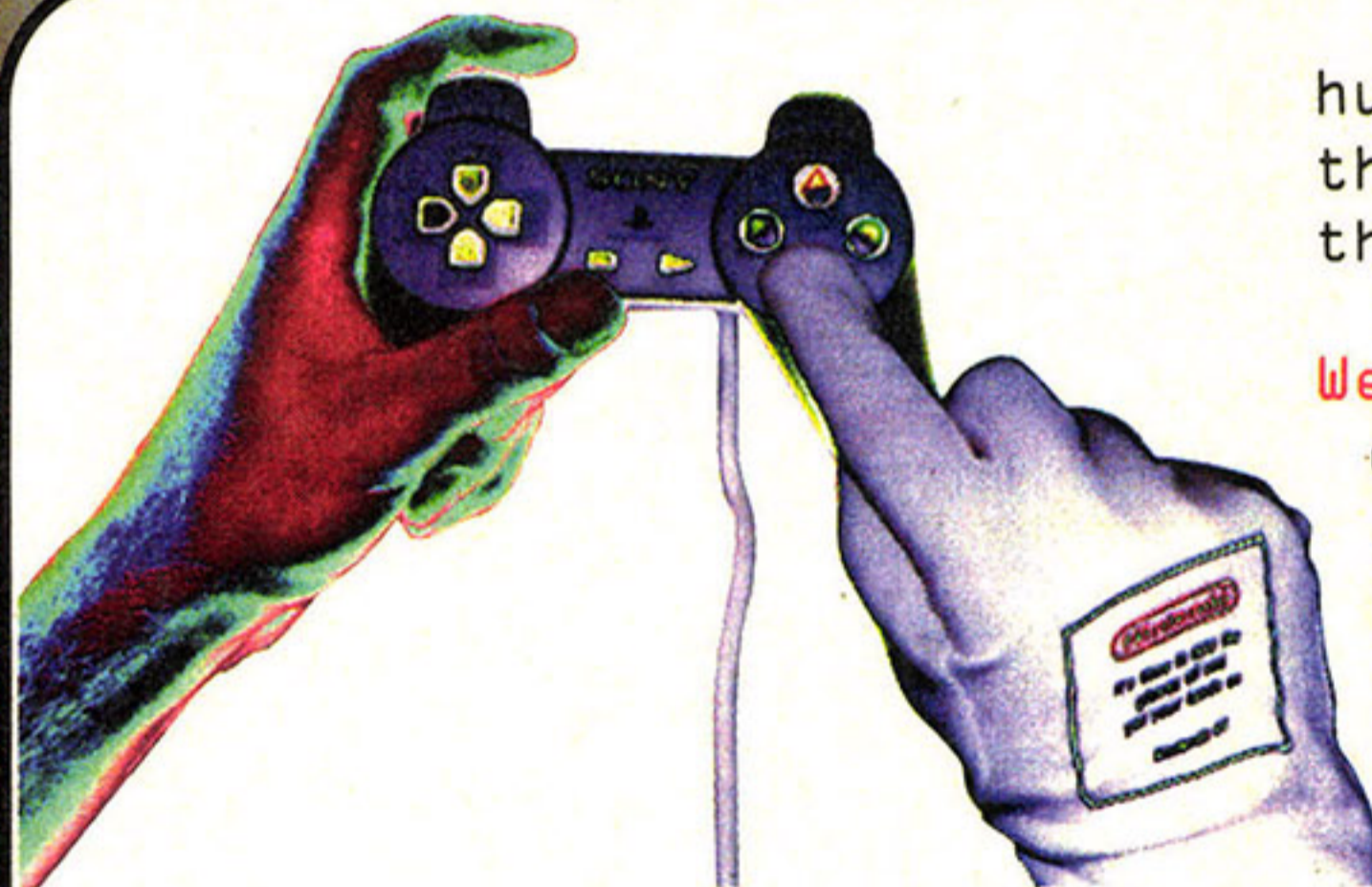
Getting to grips with International Track & Field

Yee-haw! Konami brings back its classic arcade game with flashy graphics and a load of four-player fun. You may think that a simple button-mashing game requires no strategy, but that's where you're wrong. Not only is there a strategy for each event, but choosing a button configuration and style to compete can be crucial.

Everyone around the office has experimented with nearly every style possible and we found the only three methods that work decent in competition. Some of the crazy efforts that didn't make the cut were the band-aid on the finger, rubbing the controller against the leg, licking the controller, using toes, using pencils, and surgically fusing two-fingers together for more power (now Roger can only count to 9). Each of the styles has their own strengths and weaknesses, but ultimately it's who can get the buttons mashed the fastest who wins.

Button Configuration:
Run Buttons: X and O
Action Button: L1

Method One



How it works:

Use a shirt-sleeve, a glove, or something to cover your index finger, then rub the buttons as fast as you can, being careful not to slide off. The action button is L1 and can be easily accessed.

Strengths: Speed and power is good to great, depending on proficiency. The action button is in an easy-to-use location, which facilitates quick control. Events like

hurdles and Javelin toss are the best events for this style.

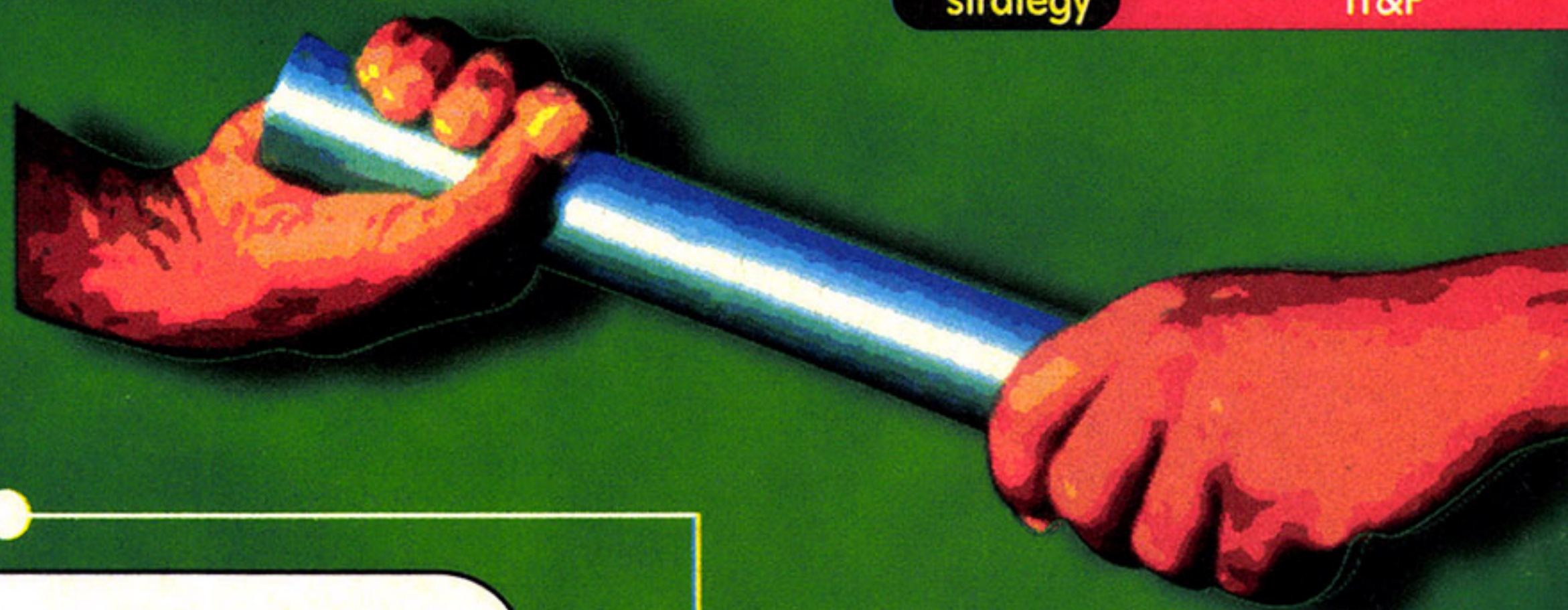
Weaknesses: Finger can slip off and ruin a race. There's also a problem with fatigue and soreness of the finger. Don't plan on going through the events three times a day — by the third time, you will be useless.

Side effects: Dirty gloves or shirt sleeves, coupled with the inevitable blister, make this the most painful method.

You'll look stylish in gloves, but beware of the grime factor after only a few events.



and Field



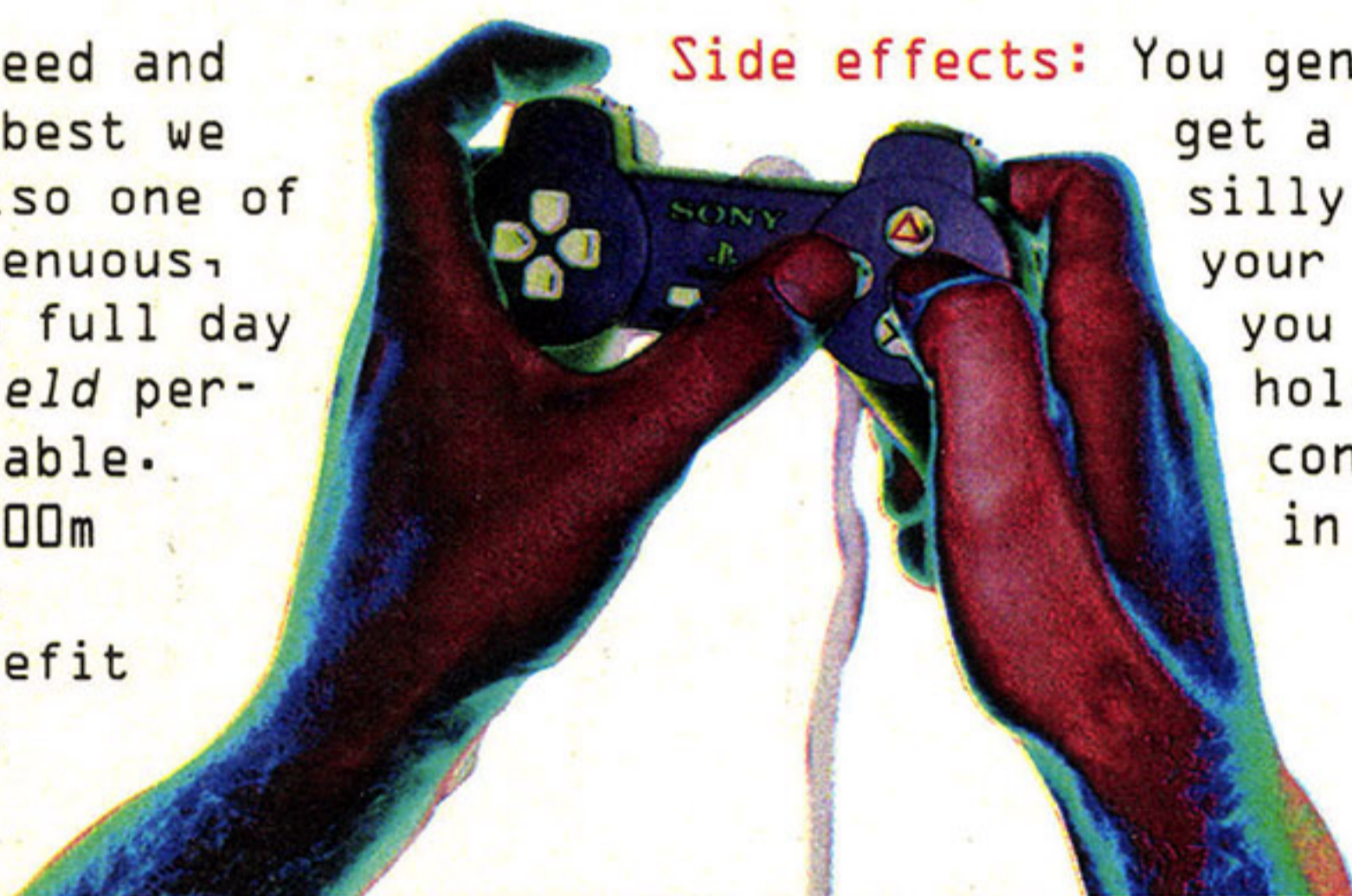
Method Two

How it works: Place your hand on the controller like this, with your thumbs on the run buttons. Rapidly move the controller back and forth, letting your wrists do the work. Keep the thumbs still and move the buttons into your thumbs with the rest of your hand.

Strengths: Speed and power is the best we found. It's also one of the least strenuous, which makes a full day of *Track & Field* perfectly achievable. Events like 100m dash and 100m freestyle benefit the most from this style.

Weaknesses: Since you're moving the controller, it can be real tricky to operate the action button. It's kind of like rubbing your stomach and patting your head. This isn't a big problem in most events, once you've mastered it, but controlling the action is definitely a challenge.

Side effects: You generally get a real silly look on your face and you have to hold the controller in the air.



Button Configuration:
Run Buttons: Square and Circle
Action Button: L1

100M Dash



Be patient! It takes a while for the gun to go off. After they say 'Get set', it's a one-one thousand, two-one thousand, and go! You only get one false start — try not to use it! Getting a quick start is definitely crucial.

The 100m is definitely one of the more intriguing events, especially when you're playing with four people. This event is definitely one of the more taxing events and can often lead to blisters and other side effects.

After the start, just mash away down the track, being careful not to let up.

Just before the finish line, hit the action button to lean over the tape.



110M Hurdle

Speed and timing make this event a real challenge. Pure speed isn't enough, because if you don't get the timing down, this one is impossible to win.



About right here is where you should press the action button to jump over each hurdle.

Get the timing down and keep the speed up to blow by the other competitors.

As in all running events, an action button at the finish line makes the racer stretch for the tape.

Method Three

How it works: This is the method most people start with. Just alternate pushing the buttons with your fingers.

Strengths: Real easy to do and it doesn't cause any scarring of body tissue. It's also the only way to do it with the standard configuration. Court stenographers could actually get some good power out of it.

Weaknesses: Easily the slowest and least powerful method. If other competitors have mastered Method One or Two, then you're screwed.

Side effects: Carpel Tunnel Syndrome. Ouch!

Button Configuration:
Run Buttons: X and O
Action Button: LL



Shotput

The shotput is real similar to the discus except that, instead of spinning, the character leans back and shoves forward. The key is to recognize

when the character is moving forward so you can time the toss. If you keep pressing the buttons after the toss, the shotput will go even farther.

Discus

The discus is similar to the hammer, except you don't spin as many times and don't need to power up as long. If you can do the hammer, then the discus toss is a piece of cake.

You power up the player and he does one full spin before the release.

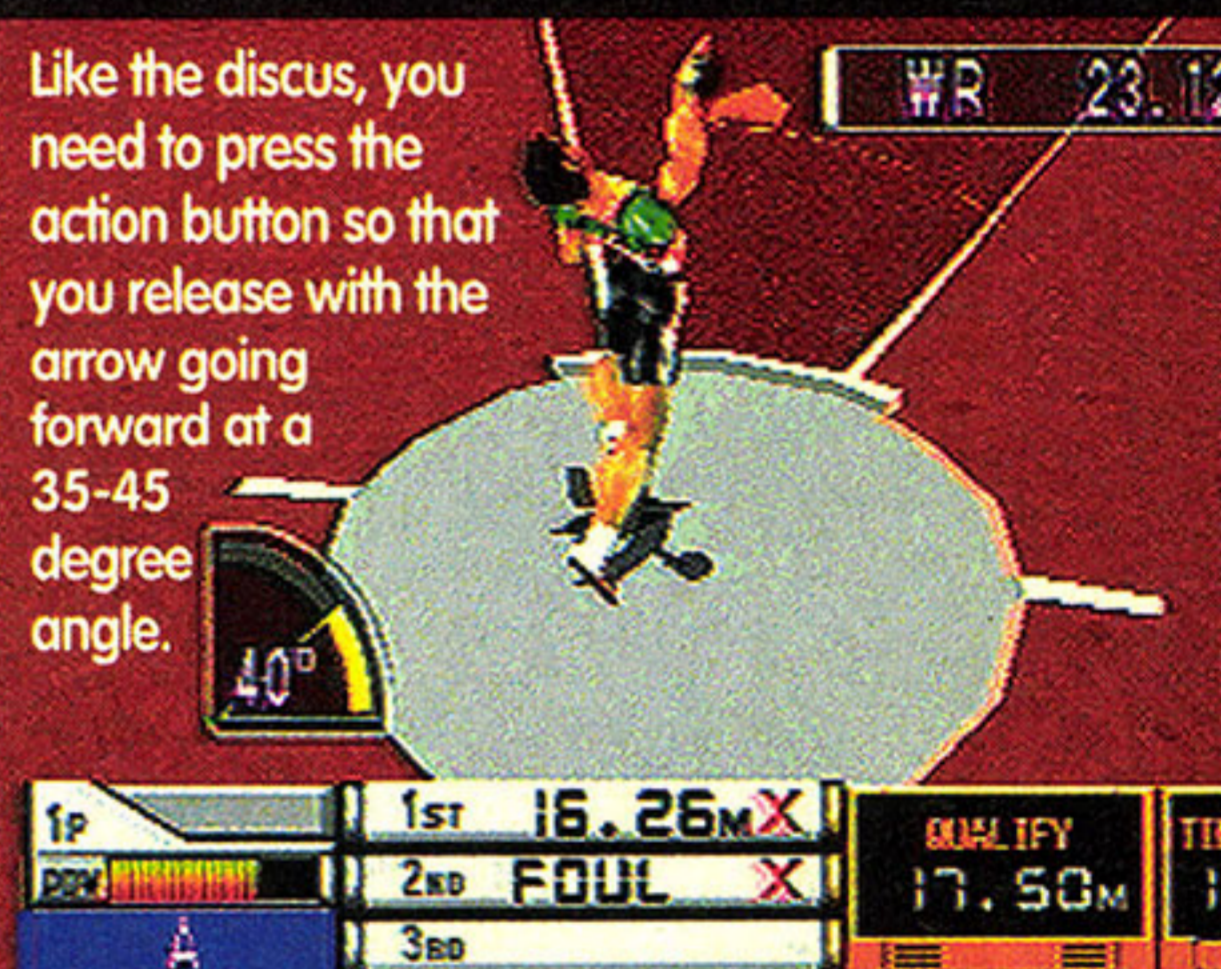


You need to press the action button and release it very quickly to get in the 35-45 degree range that you want, since the meter moves very quickly.

When the player leans back on his leg like this, then he is ready to go forward.



Like the discus, you need to press the action button so that you release with the arrow going forward at a 35-45 degree angle.



Triple Jump

The triple jump is the most difficult event in this game because it requires so much power and some impeccable timing on three occasions.

Power up the player all the way and launch close the line. Then, at the very moment his shoes hit the ground, press again for another jump.

You have to hold the button on the last jump until you come to a near 45 degree angle.



● Javelin

The javelin is one of the tougher events and easily the slowest meter of all the throwing events. Using Method Two, this is the most difficult

event. The key is to hold the meter down until it gets to 40-50 degrees, then release the button without getting a foul.

● Long Jump

The long jump requires a lot of power, the perfect launch, and a great angle — that's the only way to do it.



If you jump as close to the line as you can, at a 37 degree angle and nearly full power, you will set a new record.

Right when the camera switches to this angle, start holding down the action button.

Release it right before the line, avoid the foul and watch it fly.



● Hammer Toss

The throwing events may not have the pure head-to-head excitement of the racing events, but if you don't do well in the four throwing events, you have no chance of competing. The hammer toss is definitely the most difficult throwing event, because the timing has to be impeccable.

You start powering up the player and he starts spinning...

...and spinning...



● High Jump

The high jump is the easiest event to power up, making it so that any method can compete. The key here is finding the point to press and release the action button.



At this point, you need to press the action button. Release it once you're over the bar to kick your legs out of the way.

● Pole Vault

The pole vault isn't a difficult event, but the key strategy to this and the high jump in a four-player competition is to correctly plan the heights of your jumps. The most important thing is to qualify in the first round, then keep setting a decent height for the other competitors to aim for. It definitely helps going last.

Just power up as much as you can and then press the action button right about here to throw the player over the bar. Release the button to clear the bar.



Finally, on his last spin, you have to press the action button down until you get to a throwing angle of 40-50 degrees. Release the button when the arrow is pointing straight down the field.

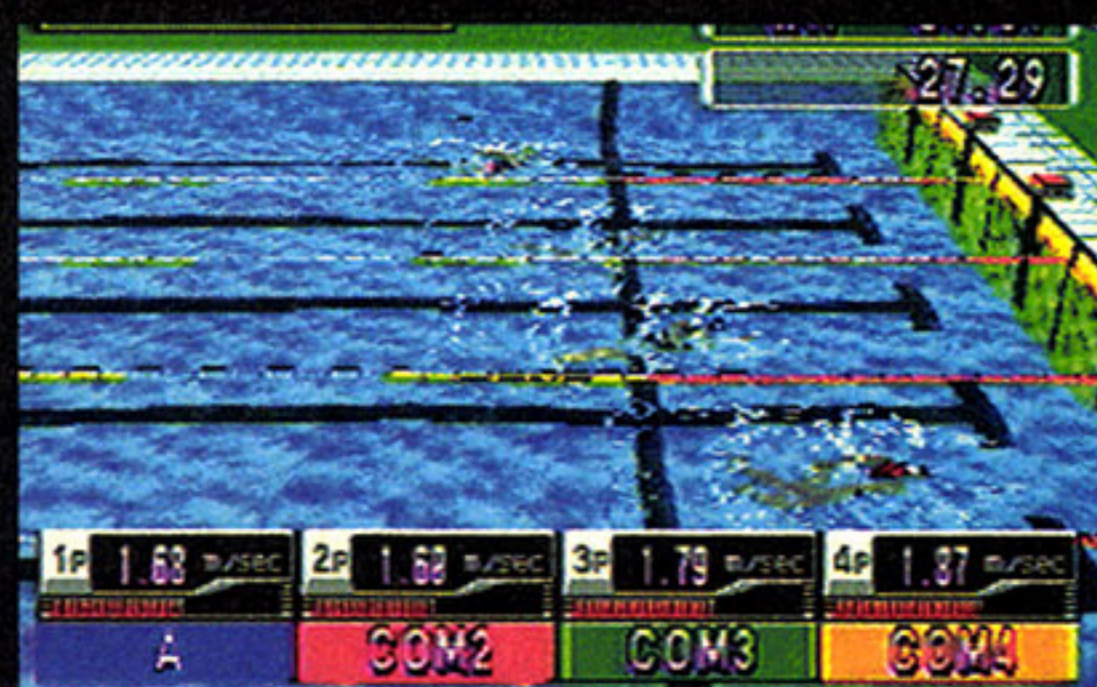


The key is to press the action button slightly before the white line on the right, then release it in the middle.

● 100m Freestyle

The longest of the pure button mashing events, the 100m Freestyle requires speed and stamina. Method Two seems to work best at this event, since there isn't much strain, while Method One seems to fall out of the race after half a lap.

Just mash as fast as you can and hit the action button for the turn — it's not a strategy-packed event.



Golden Axe

The Duel

The third game in the *Golden Axe* series, *Golden Axe: The Duel*, differs from its previous counterparts in that it is a one-on-one, 2D fighting game, rather than a side scrolling, action/fight game. The game is set many years after the last war with Death Adder. The Golden Axe which was used by

Gillius Thunderhead to slay Death Adder has resurfaced and legend has it that whoever possesses the Axe will have anything he desires. Many are drawn to the power of the sword, but only ten fighters remain from the thousands who seek the Golden Axe. Each of the fighters are uniquely talented, but only one will prevail...

PANCHOS

Bombs are your most effective weapons with Panchos, but vary your bomb attacks with an emphasis on the Super Dangerous Dynamite Attack. Also, the D. D. Knee move is a good deterrent for opponents that like to perform jump-in attacks.

- Danger Dynamite** . . . ○○○+X or Y or Z
- Super Dynamite** . . . ○○○+ Hold A or B or C, release
- Dynamite Knee** . . . ○○○○ +A or B or C

- Hyper Magic Attack**
- TNT Bridge** . . . ○○○○ +A or B or C

Combos

- 1 X X Z
- 2 ○+Y, X, X, ○+C
- 3 ○+Y, ○○○+Z
- 4 ○+B, ○+B, ○+C

KAIN BLADE

Incorporate the Hell Flame as a main foundation of your attacks. If your opponent is jump happy, use the Fire Edge for maximum effect. For basic punch and kick combos, the flying kick is good way to initiate an attack.

- Hell Flame** ○○○+X or Y or Z
- Fire Edge** ○○○+X or Y or Z
- Rush Kick** ○○○+A or B or C

Hyper Magic Attack

- Deadly Flare** ○○○○ +X or Y or Z

Combos

- 1 ○+Y, ○+B, ○+C
- 2 ○+Y, ○+Z, ○○○+Z
- 3 ○, ○, ○+C, ○○○+Z
- 4 ○○○+C, ○○○+X, ○○○○+Z

DEATH ADDER

Combine high and low attacks and use the Garos Burner (with shield only) to ward off aggressive attacks by the enemy. For opponents that stay away from Death Adder, use the Death Wave.

- Garos Burner** ○○○○ ○+X or Y or Z (with shield)
- Death Wave** ○○+X or Y or Z

Special Technique

- Death Sentoun** . . . (In midair) ○+C

Hyper Magic Attack

- Death Burn** (In close) ○○○○ ○+X+Y+Z

Combos

- 1 ○+X, ○+X, ○○ ○○○+Y
- 2 ○+A, X, X, Z
- 3 ○+X, ○+A, ○+Z
- 4 ○+X, ○+X, C

GREEN

This character is relatively slow, so timing is all important when performing your attacks. A nice attack is jumping in with a medium slash, then 'windmill' the D-pad while pressing Z or C to throw your opponent. But keep in mind that the weak kick for Green is virtually unstoppable.

- Windmill Breaker** . Full Circle with D-Pad+A or B or C
- Ducking** ○○+A or B or C
- Giant Hook** Ducking move, ○○ +X or Y or Z
- Hammer Press** . . . Hold down any 3 buttons, then release.

Special Technique

- Brain Crush** Diagonal jump, ○○ ○+Z

Hyper Magic Attack

- Hecaton Special** . . Full Circle +X+Y+Z

Combos

- 1 ○+X, ○+X, ○+Z
- 2 ○+X, A, A, ○+Z
- 3 ○+A, B, ○+C

KEEL

The Ice Arrow makes for a good projectile attack to keep your opponent at bay. Use Crazy Splash to confuse the enemy and then rush him with the Ice Crush. Remember, Keel's Hyper Magic Attack is somewhat easy and should be used as often as possible.

- Ice Arrow** ○○○+X or Y or Z
- Ice Crush** ○○○+X or Y or Z
- Ice Reaper** ○○○+A or B or C
- Bolt Freezer** ○○○+X or Y or Z
- Crazy Splash** ○○○+A or B or C

Hyper Magic Attack

- Insanity** 100°C - ○○○○ ○○+X or Y or Z

Combos

- 1 ○+Y, B, ○○○+C
- 2 X, ○+Z, ○○○+C
- 3 ○+B, ○○○+Z
- 4 ○○○+Z, ○○○+Z
- 5 B, ○○○+Z, ○○○+Z
- 6 B, ○○○+Z, ○○○○○○+Z



COMMON MOVES

- Forward Dash ⊕ ⊕
- Backstep ⊕ ⊕
- Defend (Standing) ⊕
- Defend (Crouching) ⊕

JAMM

Del Beast is an excellent attack to keep your opponent at a distance. If your opponent does attack, use the Rising Horn as an effective counter move. Jamm's Hyper Magic Attack can be performed twice during a power up — take advantage of this.

- Del Beast ⊕ ⊕ ⊕ +X or Y or Z
- Beast Cannon ⊕ ⊕ ⊕ + Hold X or Y or Z, release
- Rising Horn ⊕ ⊕ +X or Y or Z
- Cat's Burst Hit A or B or C repeatedly

Special Technique

- Snapping Tail ⊕ +B
- Fuffust Rush ⊕ +C

Hyper Magic Attack

- Ulga Papadegas ⊕ ⊕ ⊕ ⊕ +X or Y or Z

Combos

- 1 ⊕ +X, ⊕ +A, ⊕ ⊕ +Z
- 2 ⊕ +X, ⊕ +X, ⊕ +Z
- 3 ⊕ +B, ⊕ +A, Z



ZOMA

Use Dark Play and Dark Dancing to keep your opponents off balance. Dark Circle is good move to use while jumping, but the key is to vary your attacks between slashes and kicks.

- Dark Play ⊕ ⊕ ⊕ +X or Y or Z
- Dark Dancing Hit X or Y or Z repeatedly
- Dark Smash (In midair) ⊕ ⊕ +X or Y or Z
- Dark Jump ⊕ ⊕ ⊕ +A or B or C

Special Technique

- Dark Circle Jump, ⊕ +Z

Hyper Magic Attack

- Dark Carnival ⊕ ⊕ ⊕ ⊕ +X or Y or Z

Combos

- 1 ⊕ +C, ⊕ +B, ⊕ +Z
- 2 ⊕ ⊕ ⊕ +Z, ⊕ +C, ⊕ +Z
- 3 ⊕ +C, B, ⊕ ⊕ ⊕ +Z, ⊕ +C
- 4 X, A, ⊕ +Z



GILLIUS ROCKHEAD

Rock Roll is an excellent jumping attack, but the first punch of the Powerstone must make contact in order to complete the entire move. Solid Shoulder is a good move to finish multi-punch combos. Finally, Thunderhead is a devastating move, but use it sparingly, since a miss will leave you quite vulnerable.

- Gash Stone ⊕ ⊕ ⊕ ⊕ +X or Y or Z
- Solid Shoulder ⊕ ⊕ ⊕ +A or B or C
- Thunderhead ⊕ ⊕ ⊕ +X or Y or Z
- Powerstone ⊕ ⊕ ⊕ +X or Y or Z
- Beat Kick (In close) ⊕ ⊕ ⊕ +A or B or C

Special Technique

- Rock Roll jump, ⊕ +Z

Hyper Magic Attack

- Geobreak ⊕ ⊕ ⊕ ⊕ +X or Y or Z

Combos

- 1 ⊕ +Y, Y, ⊕ ⊕ ⊕ +C
- 2 ⊕ +B, A, C
- 3 A, ⊕ +B, ⊕ ⊕ ⊕ +C
- 4 A, ⊕ +B, ⊕ ⊕ ⊕ ⊕ +Z



DOC

Use Doc's speed to mix up his various sword attacks, and use the Rising Three-Kick Combo to keep your opponent honest.

- Rekkuzan ⊕ ⊕ +X or Y or Z
- Raitessen ⊕ ⊕ ⊕ ⊕ +X or Y or Z
- Combo Raitessen ⊕ ⊕ ⊕ ⊕ + Hold X or Y or Z
- Rising 3-Kick ⊕ ⊕ ⊕ +A or B or C
- Raigekishou (In close) ⊕ ⊕ ⊕ +X or Y or Z
- Ryuusuisen ⊕ ⊕ ⊕ ⊕ +A or B or C

Special Technique

- Sankaku Tobu Jump to edge, D-pad away from wall +A or B or C
- Sankaku Geri Jump to edge, D-Pad toward wall +A or B or C

Hyper Magic Attack

- Tenchiraimeiha ⊕ ⊕ ⊕ ⊕ +X or Y or Z

Combos

- 1 ⊕ +X, ⊕ +Y, Z
- 2 X, ⊕ +B, ⊕ ⊕ ⊕ +Z
- 3 X, X, ⊕ ⊕ ⊕ +A
- 4 ⊕ +A, ⊕ +Y, ⊕ +Z



MILAN FLARE

Use the 'hold' attacks (Rotor Sword, Air Strike, and Gyro Sword) as a mainstay of your attacks and learn to use the moves off the Search Jump (Air Knuckle and Milan Special) for variety. Using the Gyro Sword attack is a good way to initiate combos.

- Rotor Sword ⊕ ⊕ +X or Y or Z
- Air Strike ⊕ ⊕ +A or B or C
- Gyro Sword ⊕ ⊕ +X or Y or Z
- Search Jump ⊕ ⊕ +A or B or C
- Air Knuckle Search Jump, then X or Y or Z
- Milan Special Search Jump, then ⊕ +X or Y or Z

Hyper Magic Attack

- Bloody Tempest ⊕ ⊕ ⊕ ⊕ +A or B or C, then ⊕ +X or Y or Z while above opponent

Combos

- 1 ⊕ +X, ⊕ while in air, ⊕ +A, ⊕ +Z
- 2 ⊕ +Y, ⊕ +B, Z
- 3 X, X, ⊕ +Z
- 4 ⊕ +X, ⊕ while in air, ⊕ +C, then ⊕ +Z while above opponent
- 5 ⊕ +X, ⊕ while in air, ⊕ +A, ⊕ ⊕ ⊕ +C, then ⊕ +Z while above opponent



Jumping attacks are a great way to initiate combos, as Milan Flare just found out.



Panchos is decidedly the Unabomber's favorite character. Check out the nuke action!



In a scene straight from the WCW, Milan Flare administers her patented thigh-lock!

CODE

BREAKERS

WILLIAMS ARCADE'S GREATEST HITS

Williams Entertainment for PlayStation

Secret Options

Once upon a time, videogames used to cost a quarter to play and no matter how good you became at them, you could never win, because there were no endings in them. Now, Williams has

decided to introduce a whole new generation of gamers to the unique brand of frustration inherent to these 'classics'. Fortunately, there's a handy code that will let you even the odds a bit...



The secret options menu is available in any of the games in Williams Arcade's Greatest Hits. Just pick a game and enter it.



Once you're in the game, it's just a matter of holding down the **L1** and **L2** buttons and pressing **SELECT** and **START** simultaneously. First, a game status screen will come up. Just press **X** to skip to the options screen, where you will be able to adjust the difficulty and the number of lives, as well as other things. Once you've stacked the deck in your favor, just hit **START** to return to gameplay.



When asked about this month's codes, Roger Burchill replied 'Aieeee!!! Codes!!! Argh! Burning codes! Ack! Gasp! @\$&%! Hellish codes!!! Nooo... ', but he says that every month.

As you can see from this month's strapline, I have begun to lose what little grip on reality I had. After spending days scouring the Earth for the best codes available, I have managed to come up with this motley collection. Actually, this month's codes are a marked improvement over what's been out there in recent months. The slow, painful death of the 16-bit market and the less-than-consistent growth of the 32-bit market combined to force this Code Master to scrape the sludge from the bottom of the Code Barrel. But with the loads of games set to flood the market in the next few months, the code drought of 1996 finally seems to be coming to an end. If you've been paying attention as you read this issue, I'm sure you've seen some hints about changes coming to **GAME PLAYERS** soon. Without a doubt, I think these changes will exceed your wildest expectations. As is common with change, some of you are bound to love it and some of you will hate it. But screw you all! We're doing what we want, so don't bother writing if you've got a complaint! Besides, all you Code Minions need to know is that Code Breakers will continue to give you the latest-breaking, hottest codes in our own inimitable style. Don't even think that you're going to be free of this code hell. Just remember, if you ain't with us, get the hell out of the way, because **GAME PLAYERS** is looking to administer some serious whup ass!

THE HORDE

Crystal Dynamics for Saturn

Power Codes

Apparently, this is one of those games that requires careful planning and judicious use of your brain power. Since I know the audience I'm writing for, here are some codes to help you guys out!

The hardest thing about *The Horde* is resisting the temptation to turn the game off when Kirk Cameron comes on the screen during the FMV sequences. Now, if the gameplay was designed around hunting Kirk down and submitting him to perverse tortures (like making him watch reruns of his show), then we'd have a game!



Here's a list of codes that will help to take all that irritating strategy crap out of the game! Just pause the game and enter the code.

Level Warp.....	Down, A, Left, Left, Down, A, A, Right
Maximum Loot (30,000 Crowns)	Left, A, A, B, Left, A, Right, Down
See Complete Habitat Map	Left, A, Up, Down, B, A, A, B
Play After Village Destroyed	A, Down, Down, Right, A, Down
Watch FMVs.....	Right, A, Left, Left, A, Up, B
All Items For Purchase	B, Right, A, Left, Left, Down, Right, A, A, Left
Double Speed.....	B, Right, A, B
Invulnerability	B, Up, Right, Down, A, Down, A, Right

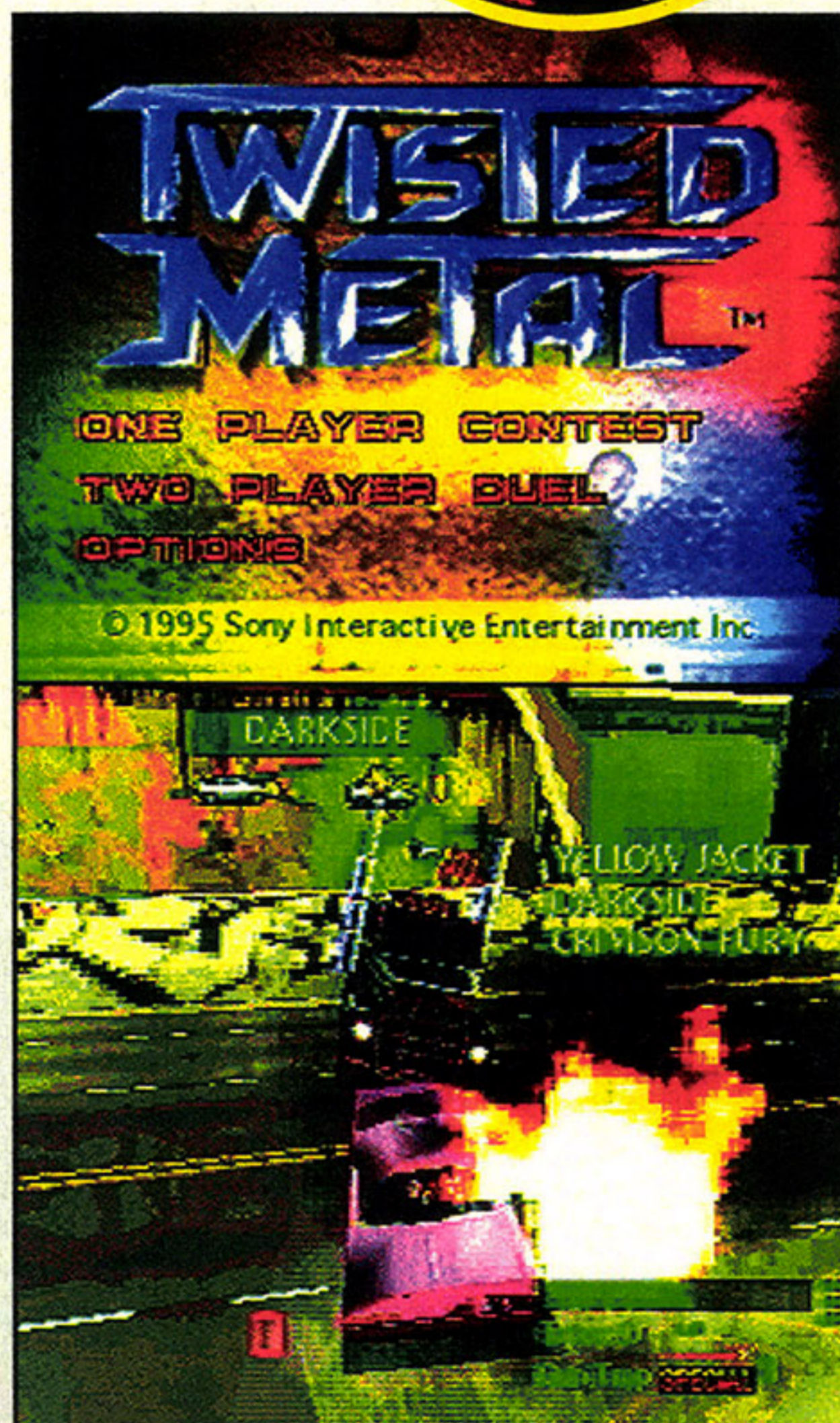
TWISTED METAL

Sony CE for PlayStation

Enemies List

This is one of those codes that you really question the usefulness of, but what the hell, it's there!

To bring up a list of surviving enemies, just press **START+X** any-time during gameplay. Press **START+X** a second time and the list will disappear from the screen.

**GUN GRIFFON**

Sega for Saturn

Unlimited Ammo

Okay, okay! I know there aren't that many Saturn codes this month, but I just report what I find. If you want more Saturn codes, you're going to have to find some! As for this unlimited gun ammo code, it's not much, but it'll have to hold you over until next month. There certainly seems to be an opportunity here for more codes for this game. I mean, this code certainly isn't the only one that can be entered in this manner, so earn your bananas and find me some *Gun Griffon* codes!

Gun Griffon is one of those great Saturn games that somehow doesn't get as much credit as it deserves. But for those of you who are wise to this superb Battle Mech game, this unlimited main gun ammo code should make it a tad easier to survive. To initiate the code, press **B, B, B, C, START** at the Title screen.



WARHAWK

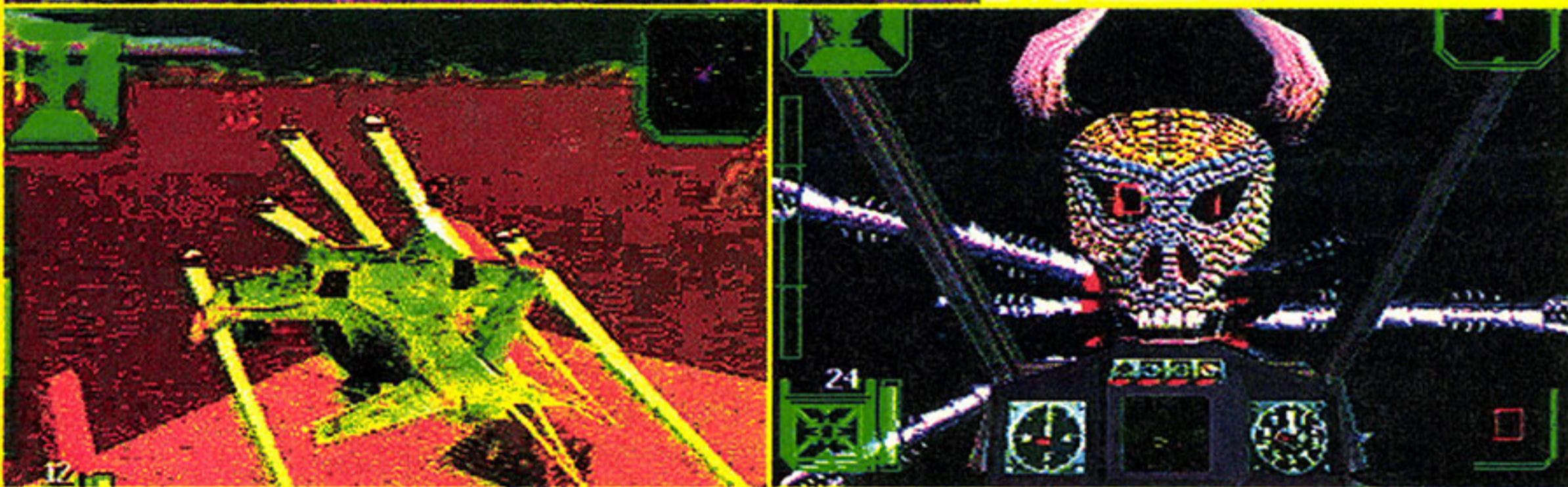
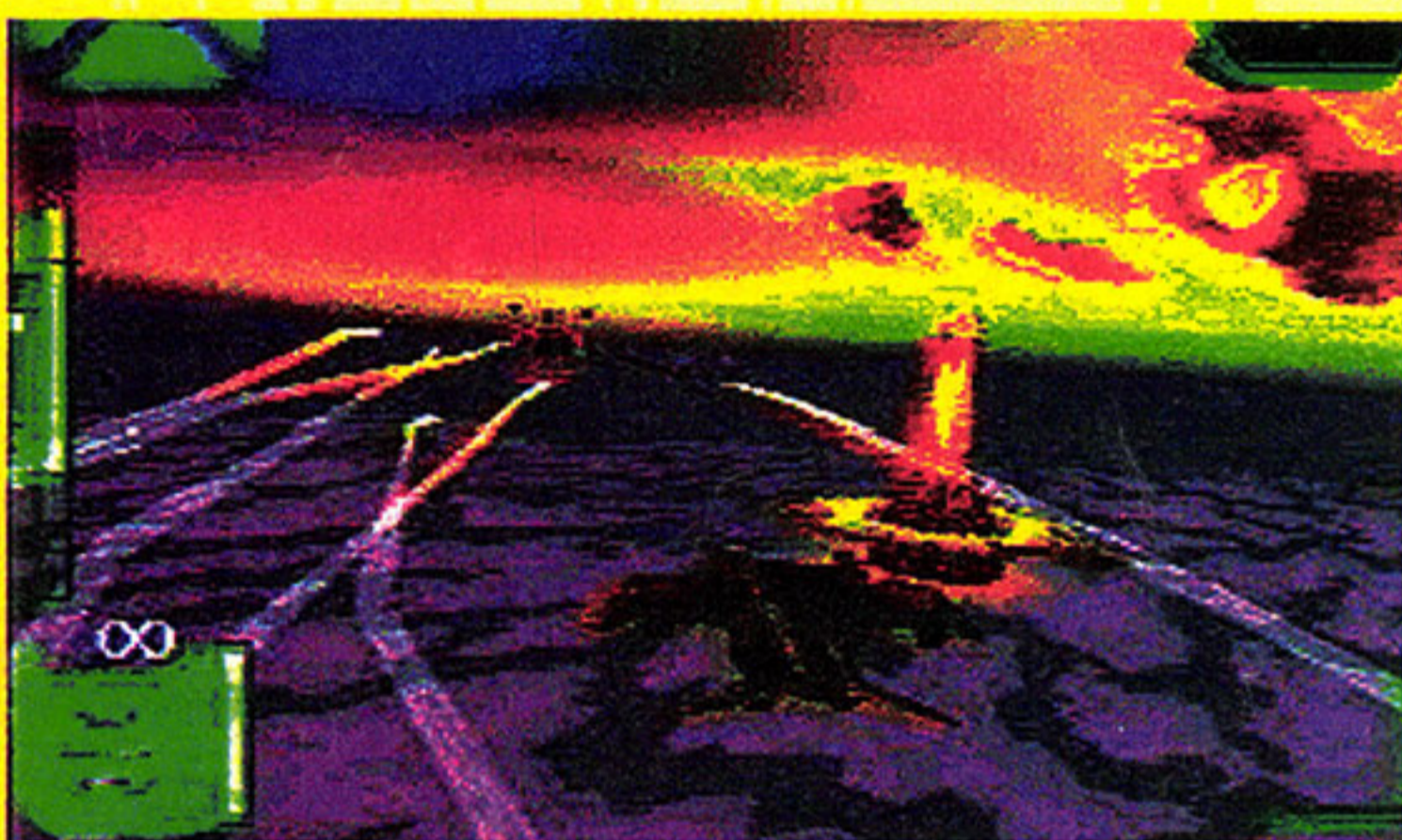
Sony CE for PlayStation

Codus Completus

Sure, you've had the really great codes for this super shooter for a while. But now, with the 'rest of the codes', you'll have an opportunity to dissect this game!



All of the following codes need to be entered at the Password screen. Enter the Preview Epilogue code (Square, Square, Right, Circle, Square, X, Square, Triangle) and you won't have to do that pesky 'play the game' bit to see how it all ends!



The following codes don't just take you to each individual level, they let you decide where in the level you want to be. Now, which enemy was it that annoyed me the most?

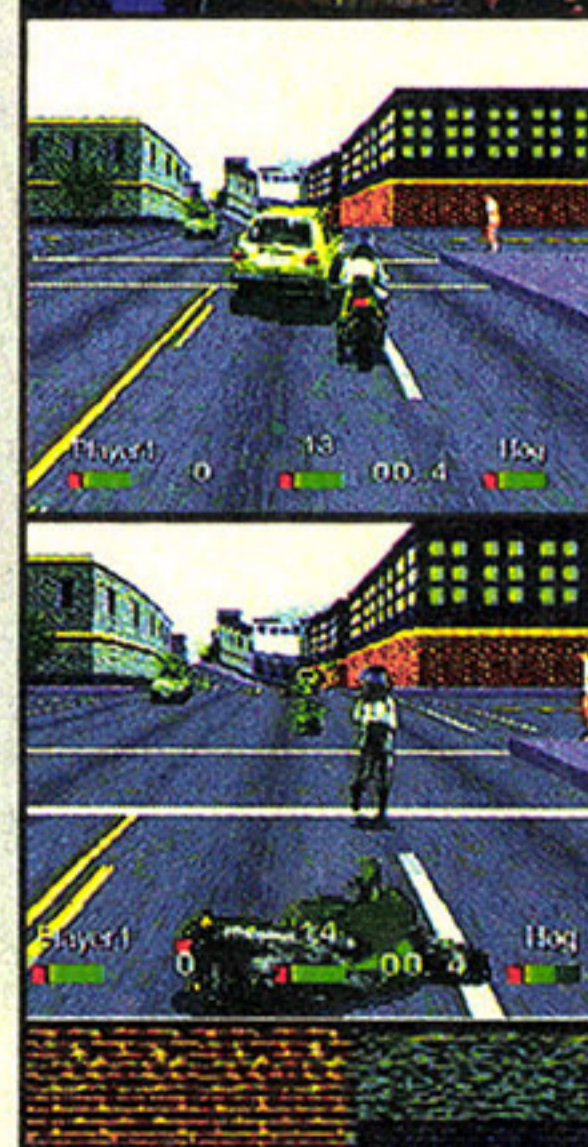
- Desert Level..... Triangle, Square, X, Triangle, X, X, Square, Square
- Pyramid Has Risen..... Triangle, Square, X, Triangle, Circle, Square, Circle, X
- Desert All But Done..... Triangle, Circle, X, Triangle, Circle, Circle, X, Square
- Canyon Level..... Circle, Triangle, Triangle, X, Circle, Circle, Square, Circle
- In Canyon With Amber..... Circle, Square, Circle, Square, X, Circle, Circle, Triangle
- In Canyon With Belle..... Circle, Triangle, X, Square, Circle, Circle, Triangle, Triangle
- In Canyon With Crystal..... Circle, Square, Triangle, Square, Triangle, Triangle, Triangle, Square
- Approaching Uma..... Circle, Circle, Circle, Square, Triangle, Triangle, Circle, Triangle
- Airship Level..... X, Triangle, X, Square, Square, Triangle, Square, Triangle
- Post Transformation Airship..... X, Circle, Triangle, Triangle, Circle, Circle, Circle, X
- Airship Rear Hangar Open..... X, Square, Triangle, Circle, X, Triangle, Square, Square
- Volcano Level..... Square, Triangle, X, X, X, Triangle, Circle, Square
- Volcano Boss is Active..... Square, Square, X, Circle, Triangle, Circle, Square, Triangle
- Gauntlet Level..... Triangle, Circle, Triangle, Circle, Triangle, X, Square, Square
- East Gauntlet Boss..... Triangle, Circle, X, Triangle, Circle, X, Triangle, Square
- West Gauntlet Boss..... Triangle, Circle, Circle, Square, Triangle, Circle, Circle, X
- In With The Gatekeeper..... Triangle, Circle, Circle, Triangle, Triangle, X, Square, Triangle
- Stormland..... Triangle, X, Triangle, Square, Circle, X, Circle, Circle
- Above 1st Force Field..... Triangle, X, X, Square, Circle, Square, Circle, X
- Above 2nd Force Field..... Triangle, X, Triangle, Triangle, Triangle, X, Circle, Triangle
- Above 3rd Force Field..... Triangle, X, Square, Circle, Triangle, X, Triangle, Square
- Kreel's Door Is Open..... Triangle, X, Square, Triangle, Circle, Square, X, X
- Face To Face With Kreel..... Triangle, X, Triangle, Square, Square, Square, X, Triangle

ROAD RASH

Electronic Arts for PlayStation

Walk The Walk

Okay, I know this game has been out forever, but I swear I never knew that you could actually hop off the motorcycle at anytime and just walk around. This gives you a great opportunity to explore the surrounding landscape. I wonder if there are any hidden secrets out there?



To dismount your motorcycle at any time, just bring the bike to a complete stop and push Up+L1+R1. This will give you an opportunity to roam, but you'll find you really can't go too far. Still, there must be a reason why this little trick is in the game...

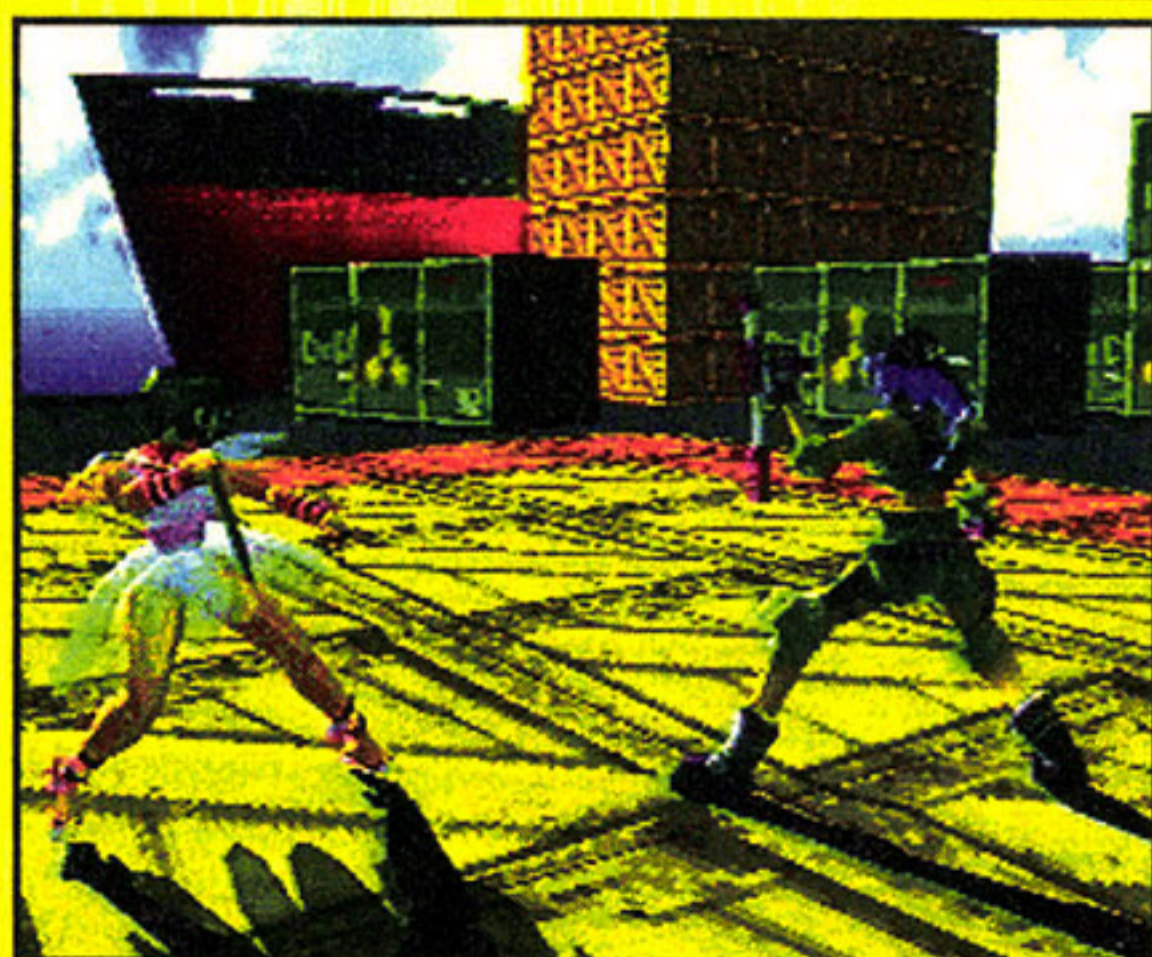


BATTLE ARENA TOSHINDEN 2

Playmates Interactive
for PlayStation

Remove Screen Meters

There's been a lot of debate around here recently on whether *Toshinden* has withstood the test of time. Some make the point that whenever VF2 is on the screen, we all take time to play a few rounds, whereas that isn't always the case when BAT is on the screen. The nay-sayers further whine about the lack of significant gameplay improvements in BAT2. As for me, I can't get enough of Sophia's pimp slap! With this code, I'll be able to get an even better look at it (and her).



To get an unobstructed view of the screen without all those irritating power meters, just **pause** the game during any match and press **SELECT** twice while holding down the **Circle**, **Triangle**, **Square**, and **X** buttons. Of course, the only way you'll know how much energy you have left is if you use the Force. No problem, Obi Wan!

NBA LIVE '96

Electronic Arts for PlayStation

Superstar City

If there's one thing that irritates the hell out of basketball and videogame fans, it's the absence of some of the NBA's best players (namely Jordan, Magic and Barkley) from these supposed sports simulation games. Thankfully, programmers usually find a way to sneak these players into the games despite licensing restrictions. *NBA Live '96* is no exception to this rule.

The trick to mixing the men back in with the boys is to go to the Roster Screen before you start your game. You'll notice that some teams have more players on their rosters than are active in a normally selected game team.

By going into the Re-order Roster Screen, you will notice that the Chicago Bulls have some-one simply named **'Player'** on their team. Despite the lack of an actual photograph, **'Player'**, by some strange coincidence, seems to have many attributes similar to one Michael Jordan. Simply replace one of your active players with **'Player'** and you'll be astonished at the results.



Gee, these **'Players'** seem to have remarkable similarities to Barkley and Magic. Co-inky-dink?

Just another day at the office for his Airness.

WORMS

Ocean for PlayStation

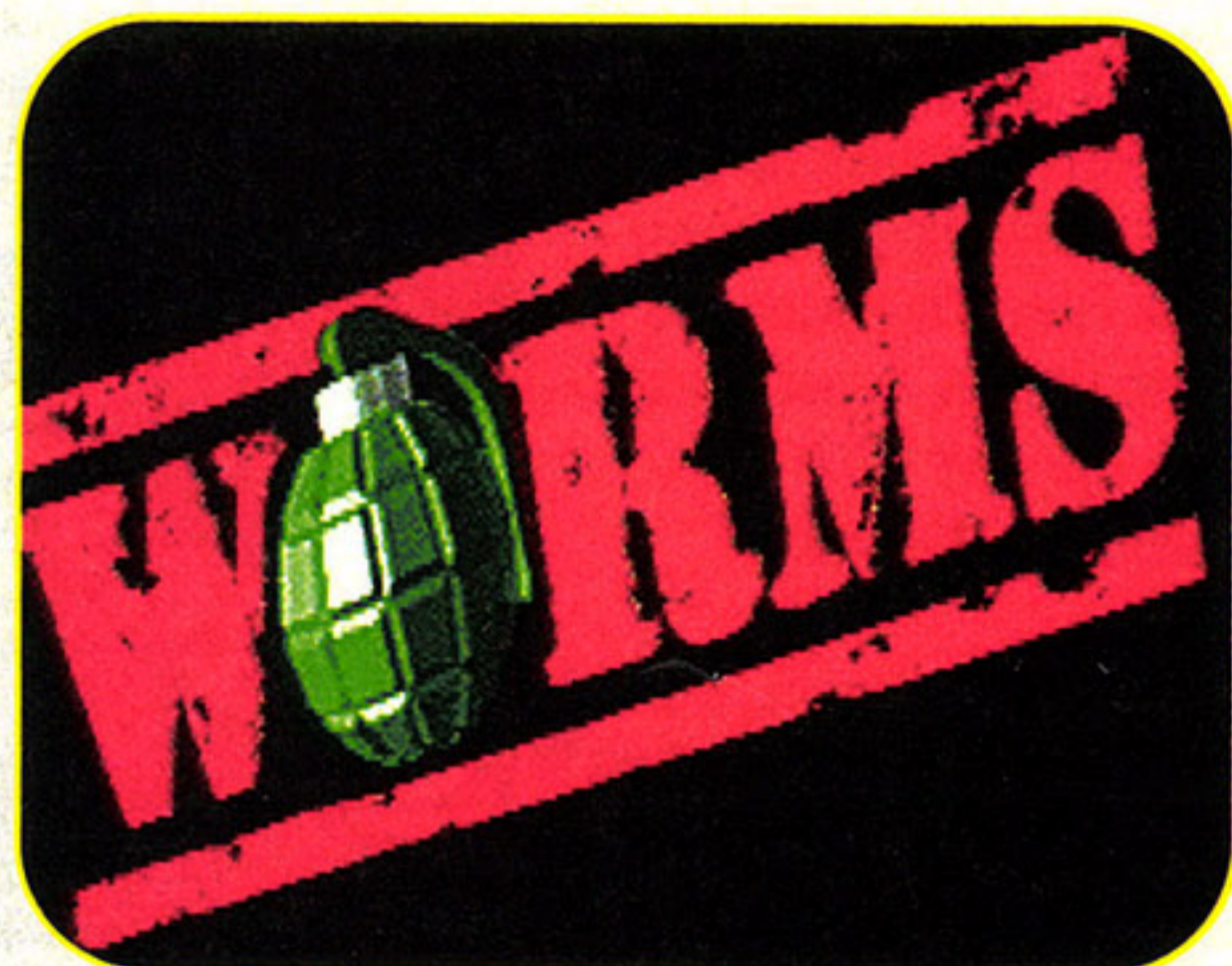
Wormscapes

Here's a code that makes one of the greatest strategy games of all time even better! Every time you play Worms, a new landscape is randomly generated. However, if you're a bit more particular about what neighborhoods you frequent, check out these codes.

To enter a new landscape code, press **X** to clear the preset code when a landscape is being generated at the start of a game. Using the Directional pad, push **Up** or **Down** to cycle through the letters and numbers. Press **Right** to go to the next slot in the code and, when the code is entered, press **X** again to generate the new landscape.

Landscape Codes:

- 00956 Desert Storm
- 29726 Low Bridge
- 46463 Martianscape
- 57805 Another Martianscape
- 70345 Lollipop?
- 97155 Three's A Crowd
- 149147 Kill Smiley
- 208041 Alternate Jungle
- 326576 Crowded Alienscape
- 436642 Hell
- 4802043 A Bridge Too Far
- 5154527 Lollipop Bridge
- 7007230 Snow Joke
- 7841228 Beach
- 13410325 Life's A Beach
- 23418990 All Beached Up



- 39054687 Beach Weather
- 56439996 The Tide Is High
- 62332782 Forestscape
- 77004498 Alienscape
- 99426730 Cliffs of Hell
- 203953110 Alien Bridge
- 223981979 Christmas Time
- 309072302 Jungle Island
- 635199159 Cliffs And Lake
- 733737544 Another Alienscape
- 742182075 Another Forestscape
- 954338916 Bless You
- 1408066876 Another Candyscape
- 3329407250 Snorkel Island
- 7373888390 Fires Of Hell
- 8902118313 Jungle
- CHEZZY Hollow Mountain
- THORAHIRD Dig Carefully



IN THE HUNT

T•Hq for PlayStation

Depth Charged

A shooter from the traditional mold, *In The Hunt* has its proponents because of its frenzied and destructive gameplay. I've already run a code for unlimited continues, so just consider this Level Skip code as icing on the cake.



To initiate the Stage Select, code go to the title screen and, with the cursor on **Start**, press **Up/Left+Circle+SELECT**. The stages will now appear at the top of the screen. Just press **Right** or **Left** on the directional pad to scroll through the choices. Press **START** to chose the desired stage or even just to check out the ending.



One of the more interesting features that can be accessed by using the Stage Select code is a two-player Battle mode.



Another neat little trick in the one-player mode to ward off your ultimate demise is to push the **START** button on the Player-two controller before you die. You will now control the Player Two submarine and continue from where you had died as Player One!

Here are a some more surprise landscape codes that show that programmers do have a sense of humor, I think.

More Landscape Codes:

- 33926 37637177 BRITISH
- 70345 43629833 KIG IS COL
- 80765 223981979 DOOM SUCKS
- 304768 903172603 WORMS RULE
- 4802043 6786876866
- 7267896 7373888390



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TEKKEN 2

Namco for PlayStation

Namcodes!

For those of you who've experienced *Tekken 2* in the arcades, rest assured that Namco has done the game right for the PlayStation version. But if great gameplay isn't enough for you, here are some of the first codes available to spice up this

brawler. Please note that these codes have only been tested on the Japanese version of *Tekken 2*. However, Namco assures us that the U.S. version of *Tekken 2* will be identical. Therefore, these should work!

Before any of the codes for *Tekken 2* can work, you must first acquire all of the characters. This is accomplished by playing and winning with each character (set the game on easy with one round battles to expedite matters). As you win with each character, the mid-level bosses you faced will become available as selectable characters. Continue playing through using these mid-level bosses. After using Kazuya to obtain Devil Kazuya, the only character you will not have obtained is the Roger/Alex character. To get Roger/Alex, start an Arcade Mode game using Heihachi (this is the only character that I know works for sure). When you get to the third match, let your opponent beat you until you have only about 5% energy in the deciding round. Now, comeback and knock out your opponent. If you've done this correctly, the announcer will say 'Great!' The fourth match will now be against Roger/Alex. Continue on and win the remaining 6 matches and Roger/Alex will be available for your selection!



Kazuya is the only character with a third selectable color/outfit. To be Purple Kazuya, use the **START** button to select the character.



To access the Big Head Mode, press and hold the **SELECT** button while choosing your character. Continue holding the **SELECT** button down until the match begins and your character will have a bigger head. For an even bigger head, win a match in big head mode and then begin holding down the **SELECT** button during your victory pose. Keep holding the **SELECT** button through out the character selection process until the next match begins.

The first-person perspective mode in *Tekken 2* is about the coolest code/feature that has ever been hidden in a game. Not the most useful, but definitely one of the coolest. To access the first-person perspective, hold down the **L1** and **L2** buttons while selecting a character. Keep holding down the **L1** and **L2** buttons until the match begins. Your character appears as a green, wire-framed fighter. Your fighting perspective will actually be from behind, looking through your character. Replays and throw moves will give you an opportunity to see your wire-framed character from a traditional outside view. Awesome!



SUPER MARIO RPG

Nintendo for Super NES

The Missing Link

This month's Code Monkey code paves the way for a special guest appearance by Link from the *Legend of Zelda* in *Super Mario RPG*. What's even cooler is that Samus from *Super Metroid* is also hidden in the game somewhere. Here's

a hint, she'll appear in the Princess' bedroom. Hmmm, find the code to access her and we just might have a future Code Monkey award winner...



CODE MONKEY OF THE MONTH

Special Guest Star Appearances!

Okay, here's a little something for all of you who've been whining about the lack of codes for 16-bit games. Sure, it's a little code, but since it's the kind of cool thing that seems pretty unique to Mario games, it wins **Kenneth Syring of Bakersfield, CA** this month's Code Monkey award. But the real reason it wins is that it'll get all you 16-bitters off my back for a while!



Ahhh, *Super Mario RPG*! Despite ongoing allegations of ties with the Mafia (Yeah right, he makes all that money from plumbing!), Mario continues to give us the best in gaming goodness.

After acquiring the third star piece from the Forest Maze, go to Rose Town and take a nap at the Inn. When the screen fades to black press Up, Up, Down, Down. When Mario wakes up, Link, from the *Legend of Zelda*, will be sleeping in the bed across from him! The bad part of this code is that it does nothing else. You can't even talk to Link, because he won't wake up. Oh well, it's still a nice touch.



Rose Town



Hi Mario. Staying for a nap
 (Sure)
 (Maybe next time)



CODE DONKEY OF THE MONTH

Good news, my Code Minions! This month we have our first truly deserving Code Donkey winner since the rebirth of the auspicious award. **D.J.** (and yes, that was all the name he wisely chose to reveal to me) of **Rockland, MA** is hereby designated as an official Code Donkey winner for having the audacity to actually make photo copies of pages from some of our competitor's magazines and send them in for consideration for Code Breakers. First of all, D.J., the mere fact that you actually buy some of the swill published by our competition earns you some serious lashes from the Monkey Whip in the Code Dungeon. Secondly, if you're actually going to steal some codes and submit them, at least make the effort to type them up again so it won't be so blatant! Every month, *GAME PLAYERS* publishes the definitive guide to cheating in this country and then something like this happens! Ohhh, I need a drink...



PO'ED

Accolade for PlayStation

PO'ed? Codes!

Sure, I already gave you the level select code, but I know your never-ending hunger for more codes! Selfish bastards! Well, just be happy that neither Accolade, nor I, disappoint.



Still, even if you have all the weapons, you could still die. That doesn't seem quite fair! To remedy the situation, you must first have the Drill in your possession (if you did the Full Inventory code you'll have it). Then, find some quiet corner in the game and press **Triangle** to bring up the weapons menu. Use **L1** or **R1** to scroll to and select the Frying Pan by pressing **Triangle**. Now, press **Triangle** again to bring up the weapons menu once again. Press **Circle+R1** until you get a flashing '999' in your health counter which indicates that you are now invulnerable. Press **Circle+R1** again to cancel invulnerability.



Let's see, you've got all the weapons and you're invulnerable, but you still don't have enough ammo for your weapons. Let's fix that, shall we? First of all, make sure you're in Foot mode (if you've got the jetpack on, double click on **Square**). Then, do a backflip by pressing **Square+L2**. Now, while you're backflipping, press **Right+X+Circle** simultaneously. If done correctly, all your weapons will now be full.



Still, even with all these codes, you still need to actually play the game before you can see the ending. That won't do at all! To see the final sequence, select 'Load Game' from the Main menu. Press **Right** on the directional pad and while holding it, press **Circle**. Now, press **Triangle** to cancel and then press **Square+Left** at the same time and let go. Once again, press **Triangle** to cancel. The screen will now show the final Kitchen scene!

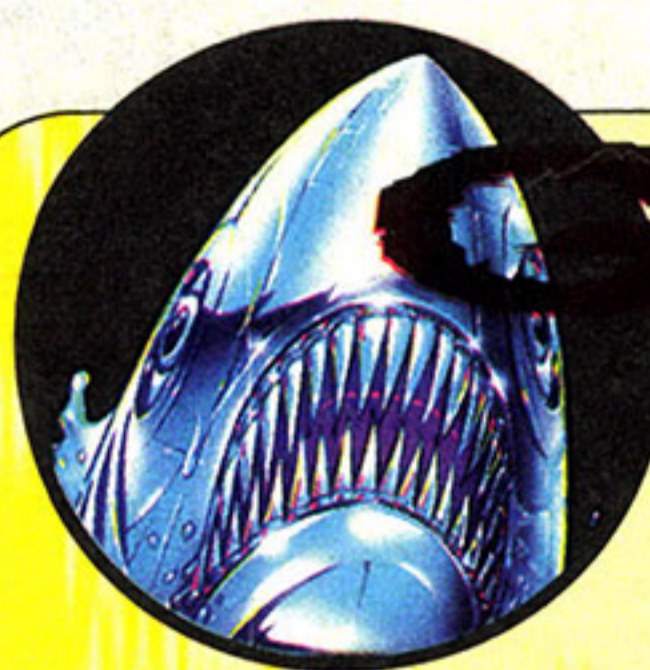


Finally, here's a code that may not be too useful, but is probably the most entertaining of the bunch. To turn off all the collision detection in the game, make sure you have your jet pack on. Locate a dead body of any kind and stand on it. Then, press **Triangle** to bring up the weapons select screen and press **L1+Right/Down** (it's usually best to hold **Right/Down** and then press **L1**). If the code works, you will immediately fall through the floor. Just use your jetpack to travel around this collision-free world. To turn the collision detection back on, hit **Triangle** and press **L1+Right/Down** while in the weapons select screen again.

To have a full inventory of weapons at your disposal, you must first enter the Map mode by pressing **Square+SELECT**. Now, press **Left** on the directional pad until the arrow is pointing at you. Press **START** to return to standard view and, while the camera is rotating, press **L1+Square+X+Circle** simultaneously. Then, press **SELECT** to get out of Map mode and, when you press **Triangle**, you will see that you now have all of the weapons!



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GAME SHARK

Game Shark Codes

Once again, here's a choice selection of Game Shark codes from our buddies at Interact Accessories. Last month's list of Game Shark codes was quite comprehensive, but many of the codes were of the home-grown variety. This month, the codes come straight from the folks at Interact, so if you had any gameplay problems arise from last month's codes, try the official ones listed below.

PlayStation Codes

NBA SHOOTOUT

Away Team Scores 0
80096ed40000
800b4e680000
Home Team Scores 0
80096ed00000
8004e6400000

PO'ED

Infinite Health
80075c400064
8009aba00064
Have Drill
8009abba0101
Have Missile Cam
8009abc20001
Infinite Rockets
8009abb403e7

RESIDENT EVIL

Infinite Health
800c51ac0060
Rocket Launcher in First Position
800c8784ff0a
Flame Thrower in First Position
800c8784ff06

Saturn Codes

GALACTIC ATTACK

Master Code
F600914 C305
B6002800 0000
Infinite Ships Player One
160EAC30 0003
Infinite Lives
160EAD30 0003

IRON STORM

Master Code
F600914 C305
B6002800 0000
Infinite Cash
1603BCB2 FFFF

WING ARMS

Master Code
F600914 C305
B6002800 0000
Infinite Armor
16065936 0035
Infinite Missiles
16065932 0064

SHELLSHOCK

Infinite Armor
80087c1e0300
Reloader
800855ba0004
Air Support
800855b40004

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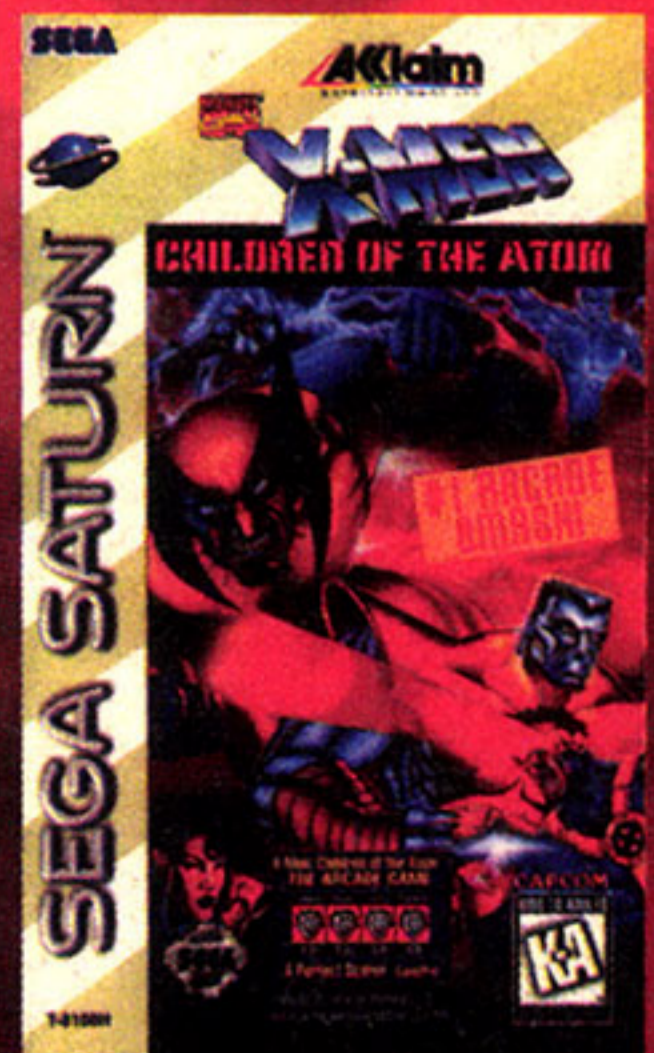
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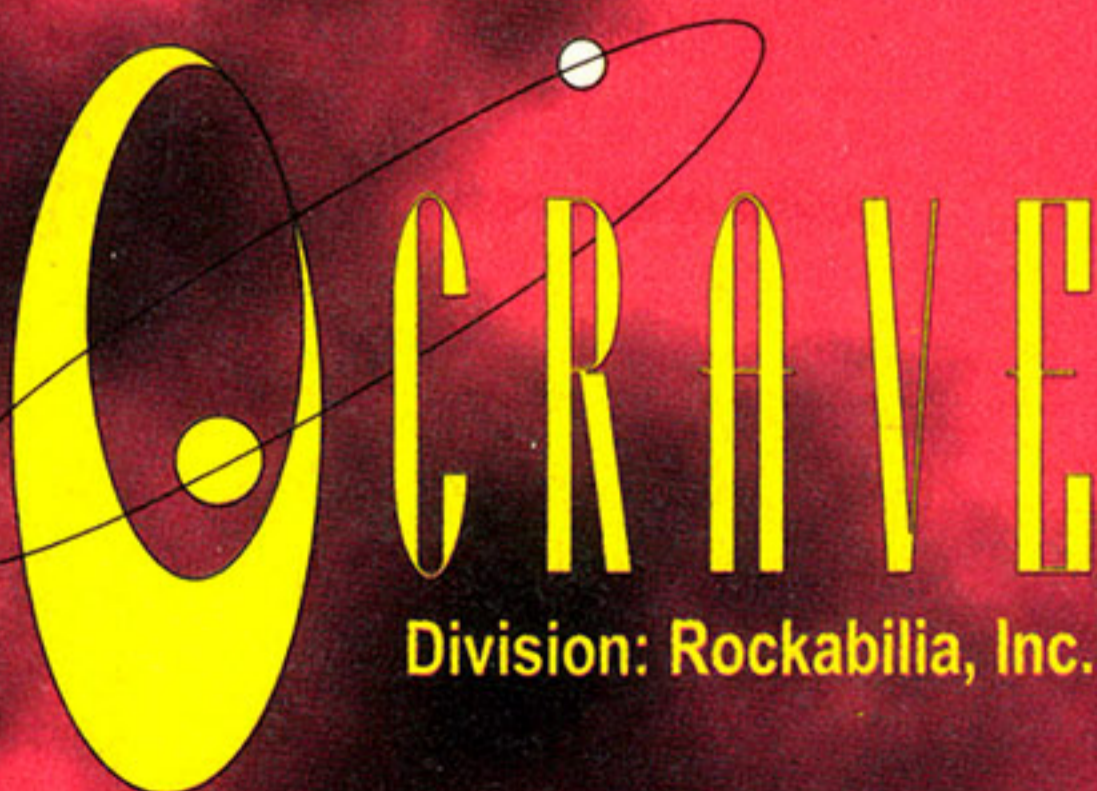


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Back Talk

HI,
GANG!
IT'S ME...
BOBO!

**SO LONG,
SUCKERS! SEE
YOU IN ABOUT TEN
YEARS OR SO!
HA, HA, HA!!!**

I KNOW
A LOT OF YOU
THOUGHT I DIED
LAST ISSUE, BUT...
WELL... I LIED!
HA, HA!!!

I JUST
WANTED ALL YOUR
ADDRESSES, SO I
COULD LOCK YOU ALL
IN THE BOX, JUST
LIKE EVIL BILL!

SO MANY OF
YOU HAVE BEEN
ASKING ABOUT THE
BOX AUCTION. WELL...
I LIED ABOUT THAT,
TOO! HA, HA!!!

It's Ultra, man!

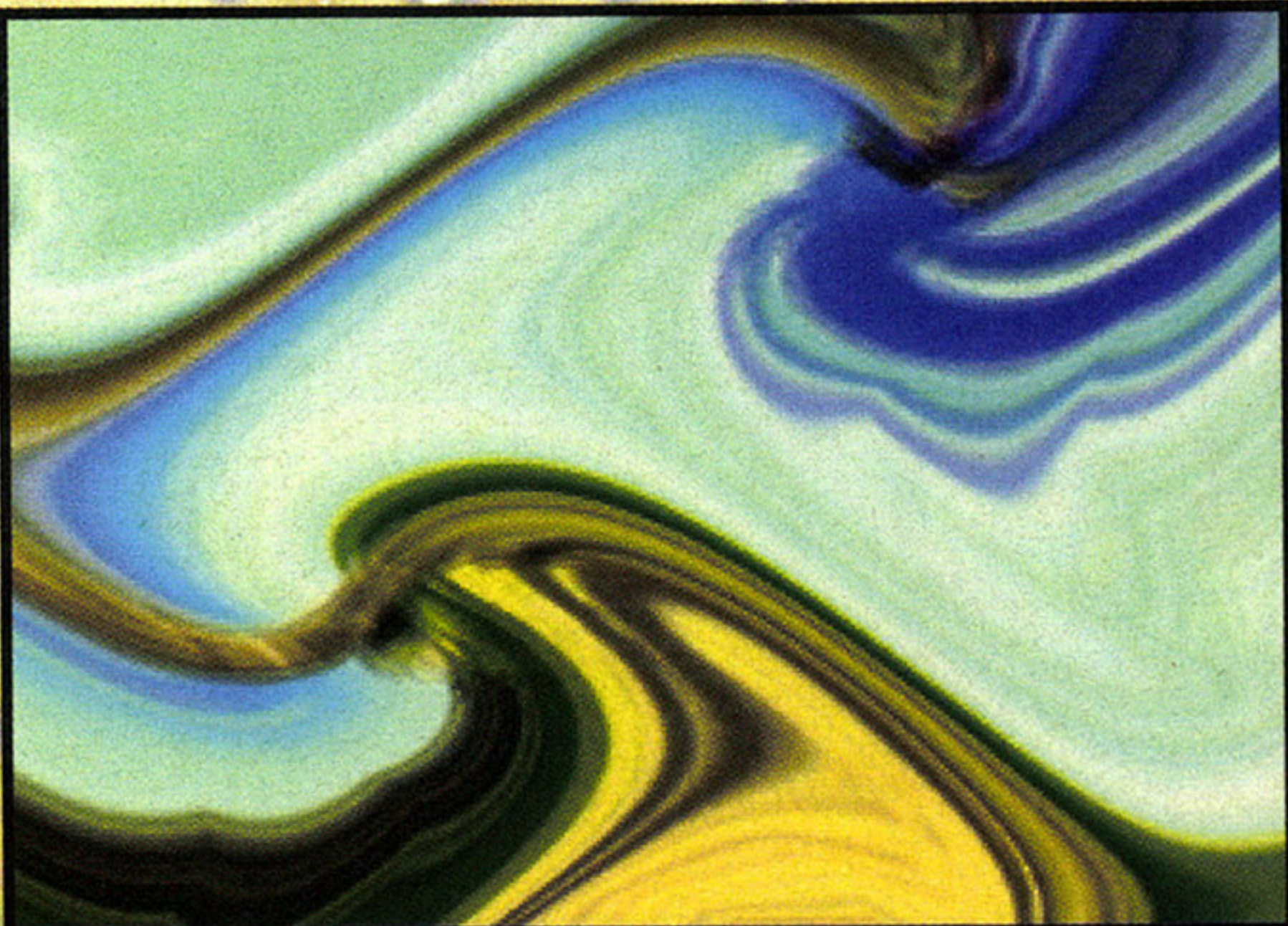
Look for something completely new and different this October! That's right, we're changing! Starting with the October issue, *GAME PLAYERS* is now going to be known as *Ultra GAME PLAYERS*, and we're changing the whole shooting match! What you'll see next month will blow your mind! We'll have a new look, a new layout, and even new paper! We'll be running new contests (there's even a rumor of an arcade machine giveaway!), and every one of our sections will be updated to reflect

the impact that 32- and 64-bit game systems have had on the videogame universe. So fasten your seatbelts and get ready for the launch of the century! *Ultra GAME PLAYERS* is on the way and, buddy, it's gonna be one sweet ride! Get on board at your local newsstand September 3rd! And don't forget to check out the new *GAME PLAYERS* website at <http://www.gameplayers.com>. It's where all the action is!!! See ya next month!

Either we're drowning in the ocean or here's the September Scrambled Mess. Can you find this screen somewhere in the magazine? Write the name of the game on the back of a postcard and mail your entry to:

**September's Scrambled Mess,
GAME PLAYERS;
150 North Hill Drive;
Brisbane, CA 94005.**

The first entry we pick out of the box on the day we lay out this page, wins the Mystery Prize. Remember to include the system you own. All the usual rules apply. The winner of our May's Scrambled Mess Contest was **Ian Megginson, of Richmond, VA.** He correctly identified the scrambled picture as a screen shot from *Iron Storm*. Your Mystery Prize is on the way, Ian, and should reach you soon, assuming that the bridges haven't all been bombed!



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You can't just run away from your problems any more. From now on, you'll have to think on your feet.



Jumping, ducking and dodging have always been a critical part of any button-bashing Mario



in return. Without you, Mallow will never find his true family. Geno will never become a real boy. And Booster will never find a bride. • You'll also



adventure. But with the new Super Mario RPG you'll also be pushing every brain cell you've got. • That's right. You and the world's most



You'd never want to be on the bad side of your new pal Mallow. His thunderbolt Special Attack brings a blast of lightning down on any enemies in sight.

heroic plumber will have to battle through all the twists, turns and thumb-numbing action of a clas-



bump into all kinds of new bad-dies, plus classic goons from every Mario game in history. Only now, they're rendered in ACM with a 3-D, three-quarter overhead view. • So get ready

for all kinds of new Nintendo the mental challenge as the story unfolds in



You want a new kind of Mario action? Try the Yoshi races. But here's a tip. If you don't hit the buttons to the beat, you'll get beat.

action and brain-bending Square Soft adventure.



Whether you call it more action or more RPG, the fact is you'll have to use every trick in both books to beat these bad guys.

this fully-rendered role-playing game! • It's the best of both worlds. One minute you're neck and neck at the Yoshi Races. The next you're gambling the night away at the

Remember, running and jumping is a great start.

But this time around you'll also

Grate Guy's Casino. And, in between, you'll have to test your brains on mind-

need plenty of brains to finish.



Finding Frogfucius is a wise move if you want to know more about your future quest.

puzzles. Of course you'll find plenty of new friends who can help out. But they'll need your help





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