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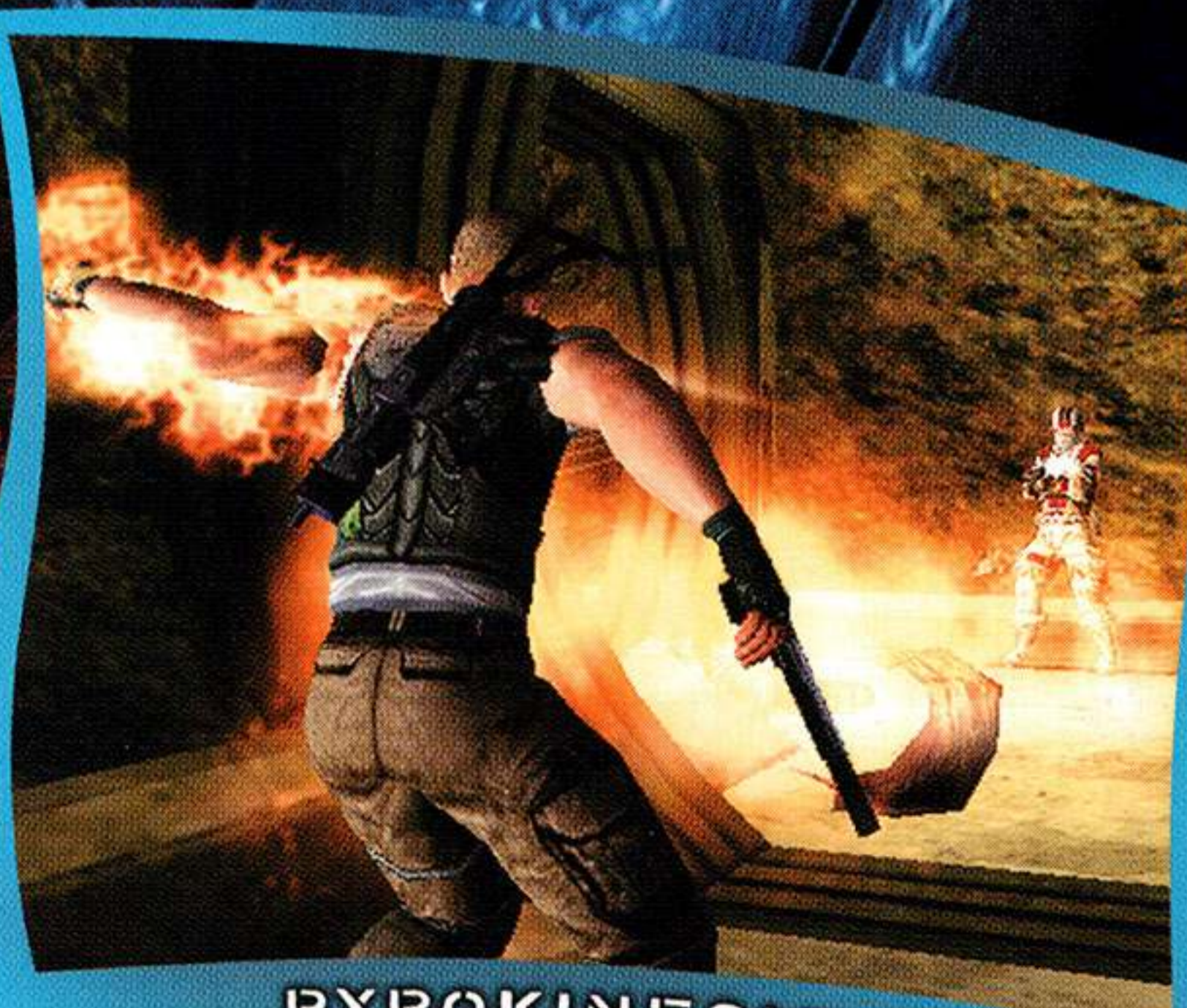
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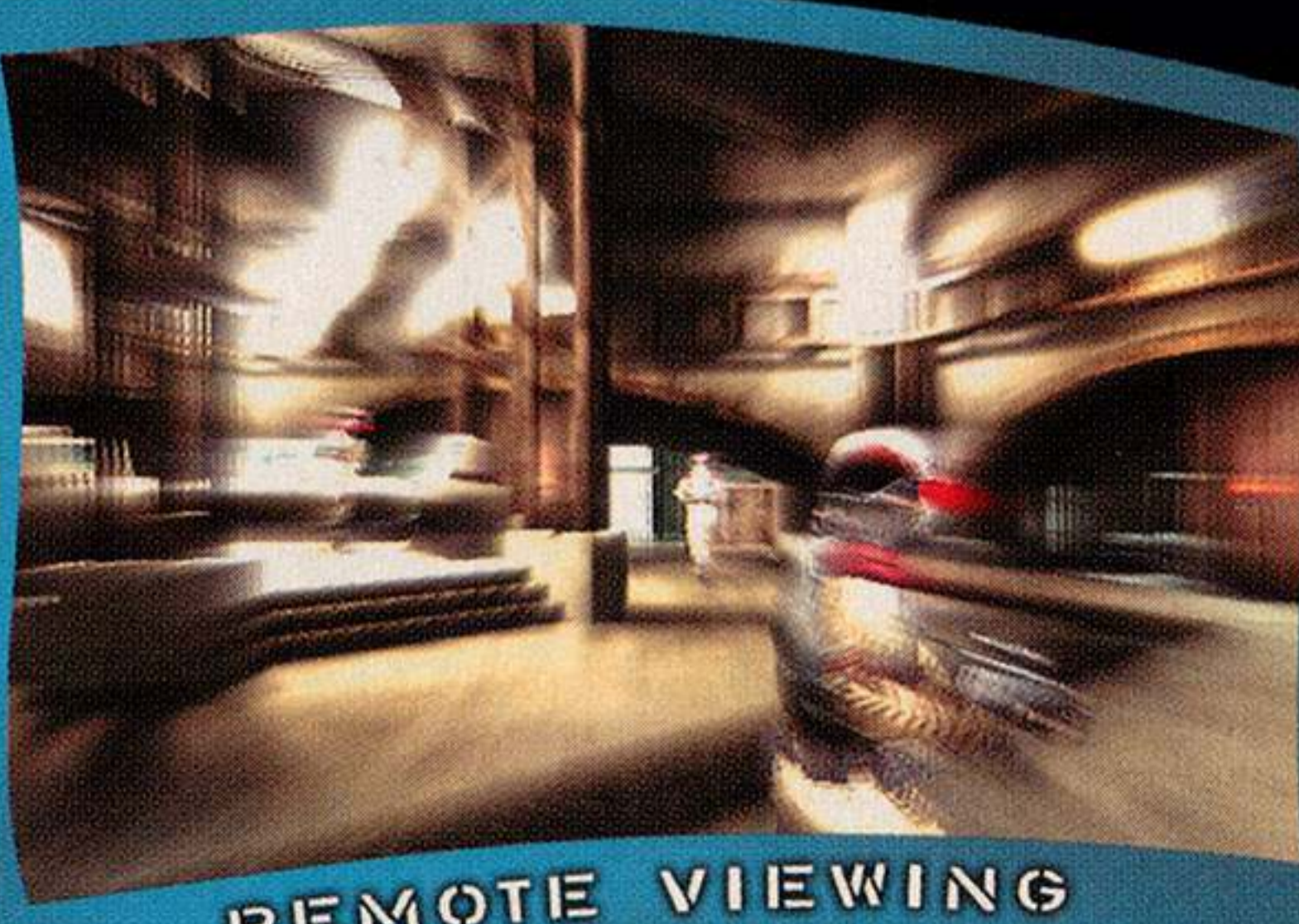


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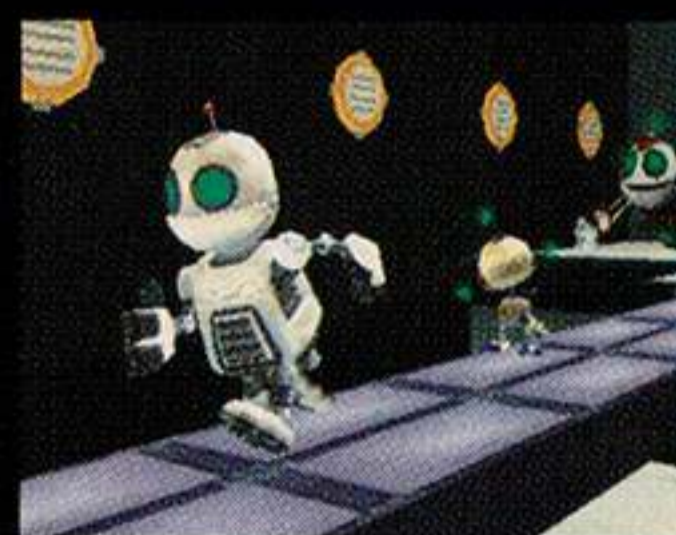
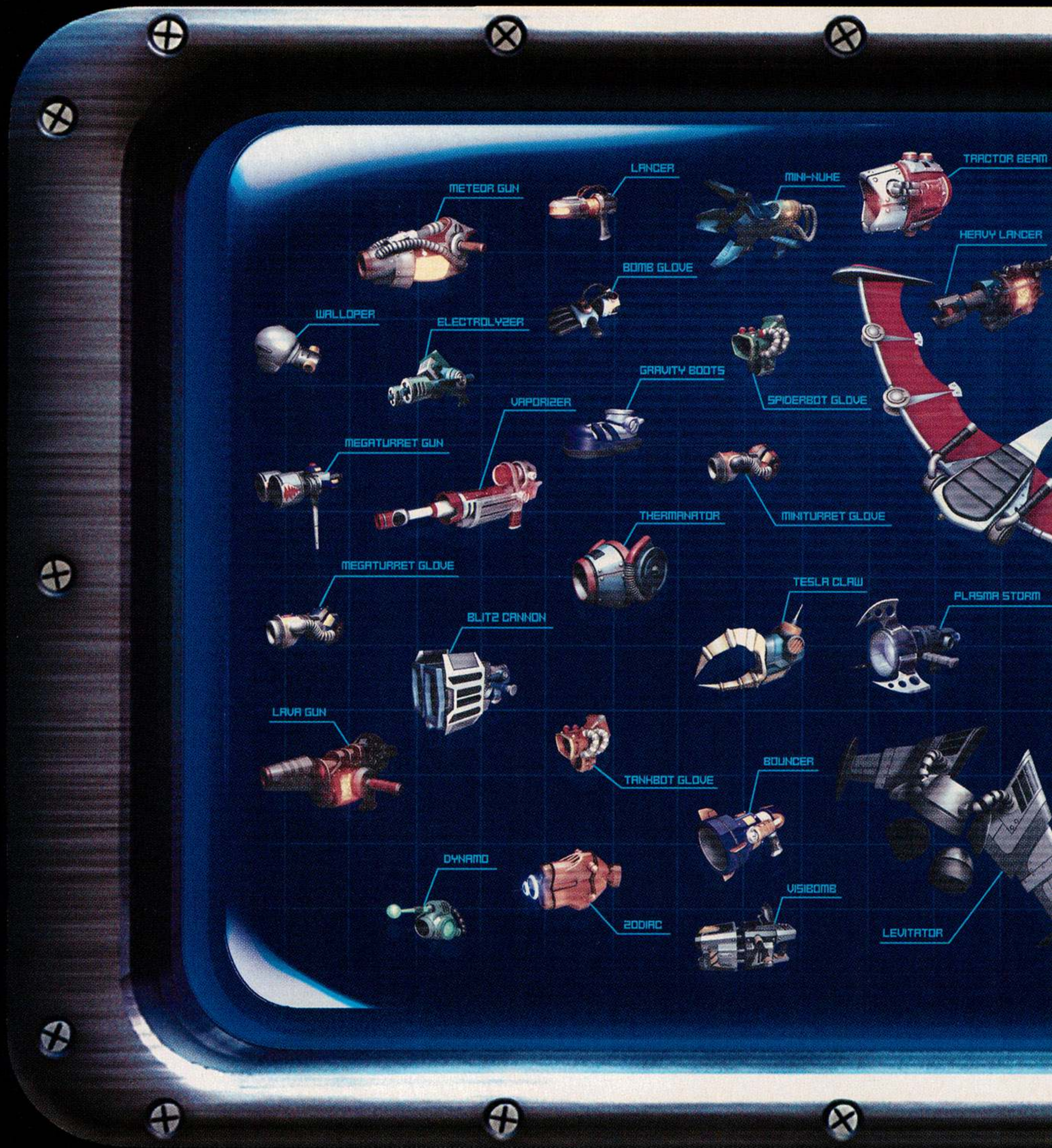


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MIND CONTROL

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1000 AD

1900 AD

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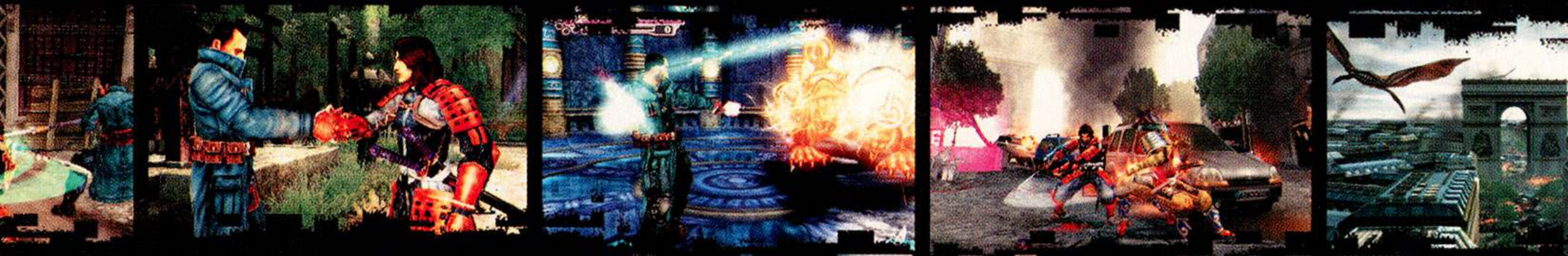
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1500 AD

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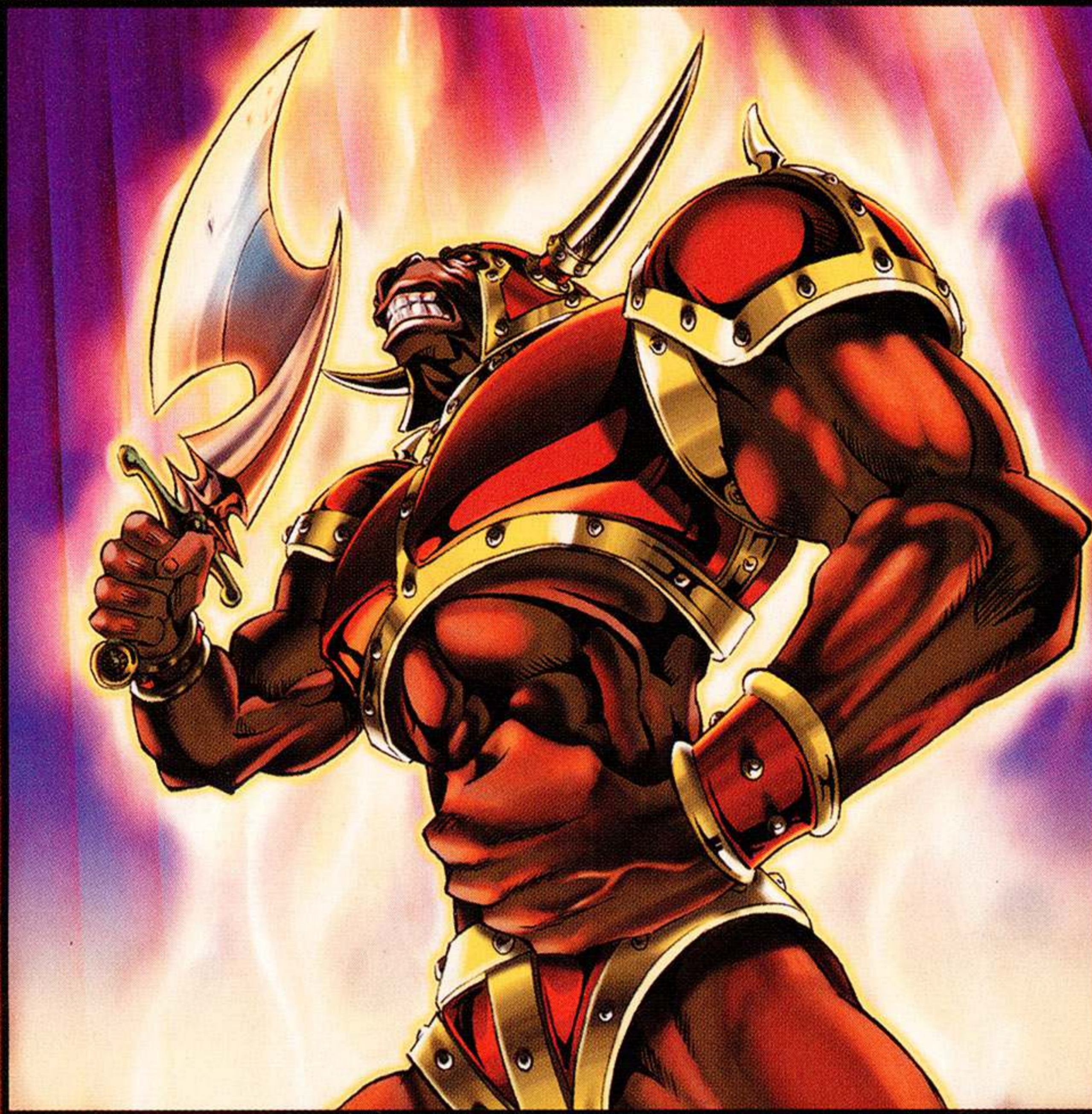
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GT4 for the PS2 is not only one of the most anticipated racing games of the year, but it's also one of the most anticipated games for any genre! Here's an inside look courtesy of the game's creator, Kazunori Yamauchi of Polyphony Digital.

34 Thief: Deadly Shadows

Thief: Deadly Shadows is about to steal its way onto an Xbox and PC near you. Eidos and developer Ion Storm have more than a few surprises in store for stealth action fans.

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40 10 to 1: The Weirdest Games Ever

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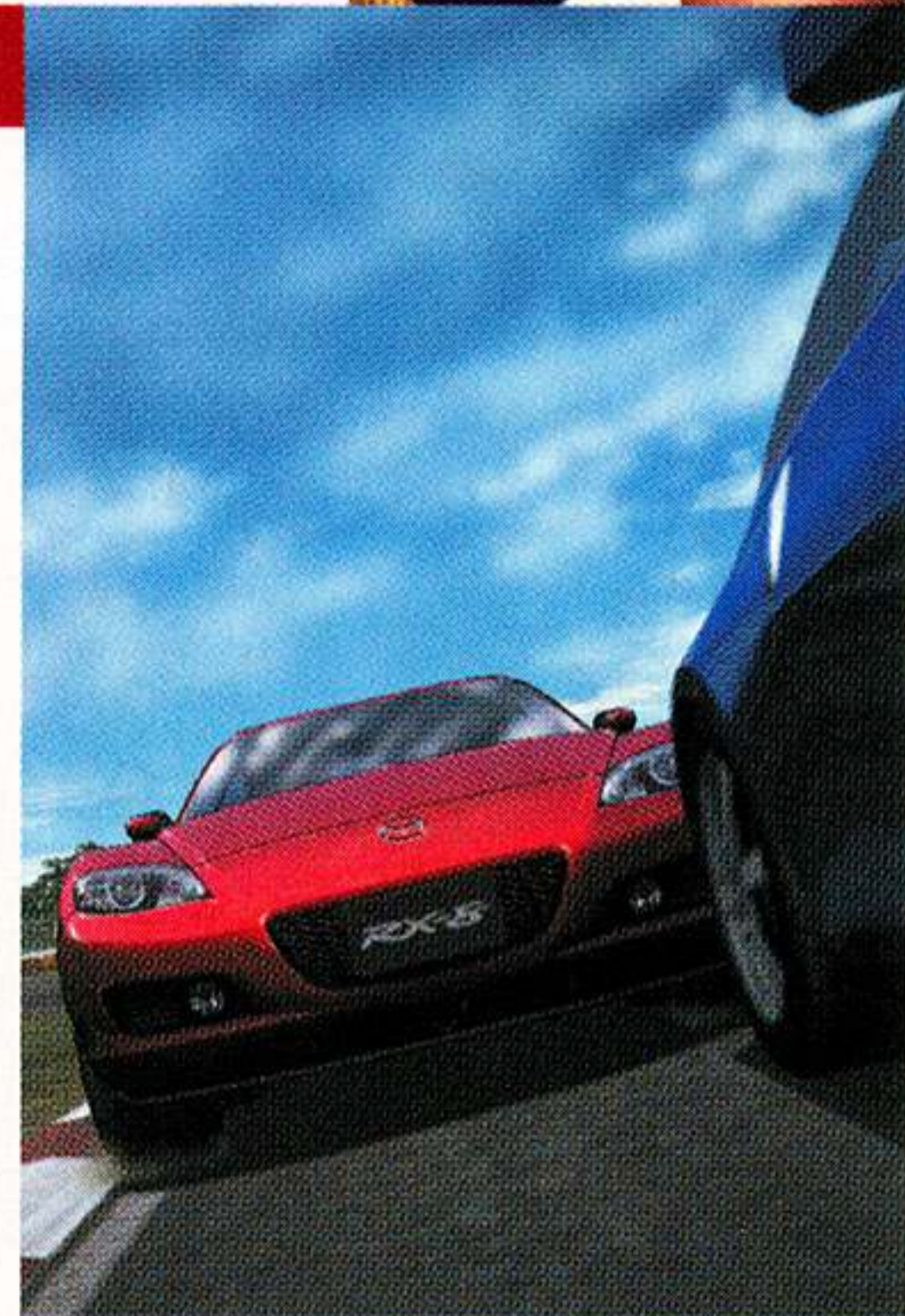
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Cover art courtesy of Sony and Polyphony

A full-page photograph of Tracy McGrady in a blue Orlando Magic jersey with the number 1. He is holding a basketball in his right hand, looking directly at the camera with a wide-eyed, open-mouthed expression. He is wearing a white wristband on his left wrist and white sneakers with blue accents. The background is a dark, textured grey.

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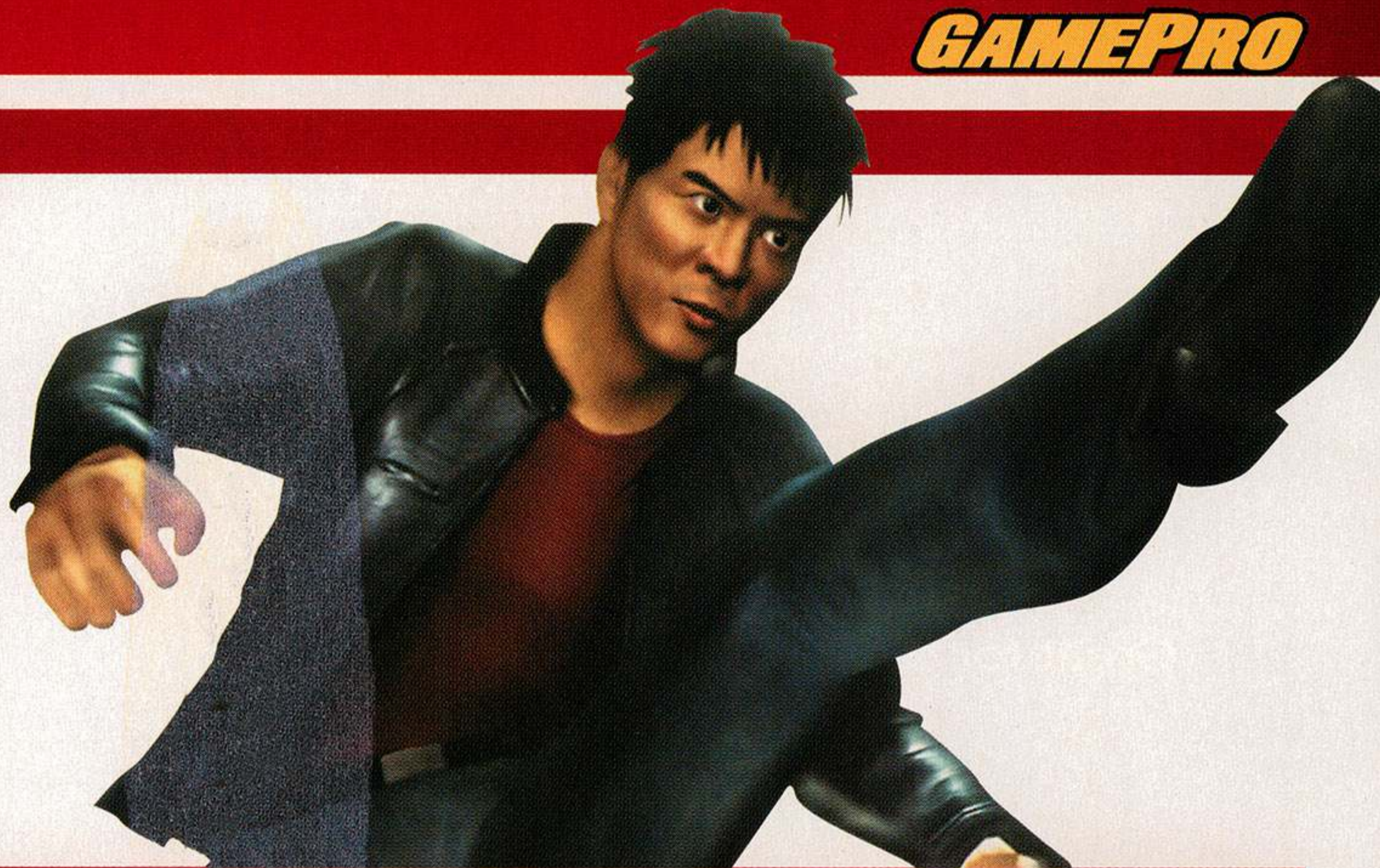
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94 Rise to Honor

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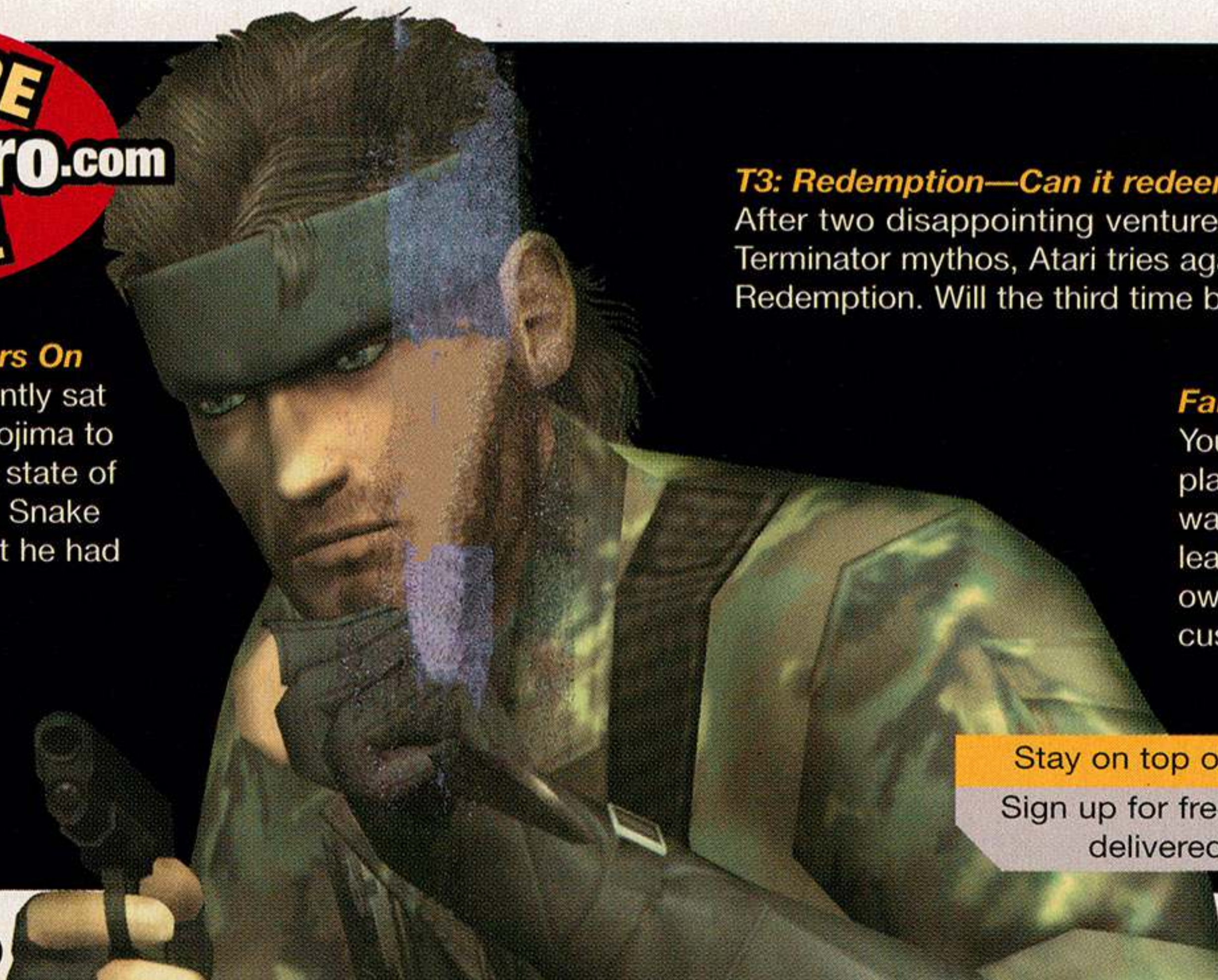
**Solid Snake Slithers On**  
 GamePro.com recently sat down with Hideo Kojima to discuss the current state of Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater. Find out what he had to say.

**T3: Redemption—Can it redeem the series?**  
 After two disappointing ventures into the Terminator mythos, Atari tries again with T3: Redemption. Will the third time be a charm?

Far-Out Levels

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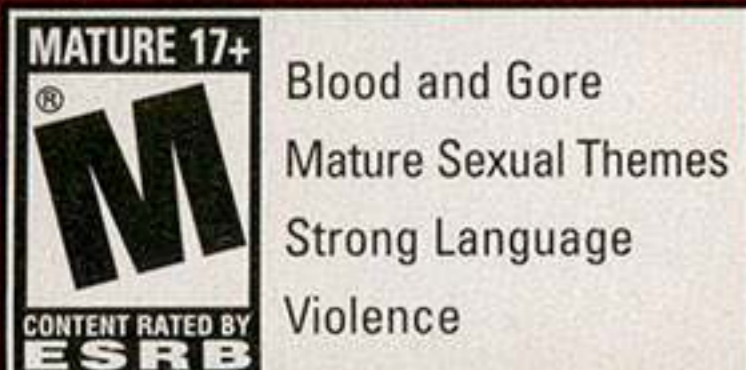
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## When Bad Things Happen to Good Games

There's no accounting for taste, and after reviewing the lists of top-selling video games for 2003, one can only conclude that there's *really* no accounting for taste.

What were we (that is, the video-game consuming public) thinking?

Oh sure, the great franchises like Madden NFL, Pokémon, Tony Hawk, Zelda, Mario Kart, SOCOM, and Final Fantasy all got their just due. And congrats are well deserved by "surprise" hits like Need for Speed Underground and True Crime: Streets of L.A.

But maybe if you've been sifting through the bargain bin at your local quick-stop or video-game shack lately, you've come across a gem of a game called Beyond Good & Evil. Currently priced at \$19.99, in one sense it's a steal as a great-playing, great-looking game with an imaginative science-fiction story line. But in another, it's a crying shame that such a nice piece of work didn't enjoy better public acceptance.

Other topnotch, critically acclaimed games also encountered a so-so turnout at the cash register at the end of last year. How about Prince of Persia, Castlevania: Lament of Sorrow, Deus Ex: Invisible War, or Viewtiful Joe?

Of course, one way to look at it is that there are a boatload of finely crafted games out there right now. And developers for the PS2, Xbox, and 'Cube are at the top of their games even as consumers reach the bottom of their piggy banks.

Video-game makin' is one hell of a tough business for sure, and there's no surefire way to tell what's going to make it and what won't. The bottom line is that we all vote with our dollars (and you all decided to vote for Manhunt over Silent Hill 3 and The Getaway over Max Payne 2).

Speaking of crazy voting schemes, this issue, *GamePro* presents its annual Readers' Choice Awards. If you didn't cast your ballot this year, take a serious look at what your compadres praised. If you disagree, maybe you'll put some thought into how you're going to see that your favorite games get their just due in 2004.

**The GamePros,  
Oakland, CA  
letters@gamepro.com**

### The Price Is...Wrong?

**My brother and I think games should be cheaper—somewhere around \$35 for a new game—because \$50 is too much. I know a lot of people who do not buy games. They just rent them because they do not feel like spending \$100 for just two games. How are the companies that make those games making any money off those people? What companies should do is stop dropping the price of game systems and instead drop the price of the games. Why drop the price of something the average family only buys once (a game system) rather than something bought over and over (games)? We thought the prices of games being reduced would help increase purchases of game systems. For example, I was talking to my friend's parents the other day, trying to convince them to buy a game system for their son. They told me they'll never buy any game consoles for him because after they buy the console they still have to buy the games, which are so expensive. They also knew that they (the parents) were going to be the ones buying everything for it. Well, if his parents think prices are unreasonable, then a lot of other parents, older gamers, or anybody else who knows a good deal from a bad deal probably thinks so, too. It made sense to us. What are the down sides?**

► **Hunter Beesch—Via Internet**

Hunter, have you ever heard the old sales adage about razors and razor blades? You don't make money on the former because people only buy it



once, but you can clean up on the latter because users need to keep buying them. The game industry works on a similar principle. Dropping the price of the hardware lures more and more consumers to the platform—and then they've "got you" as a potential consumer for multiple pieces of software. And you're right when you say that games sell game consoles—how many gamers saw GTAIII or Halo and said, "I gotta play that, even if it means getting a new machine"? Lots.

However, the desire and demand for cheaper software is there—hence rental outlets, budget-priced software, and used games. But could the industry lower prices and still make money? Sure. Would game quality suffer? Well, maybe—you generally get what you pay for, and large, high-quality games like Halo and GTAIII cost multiple millions of dollars to develop. Publishers and developers have to get that money back somehow or they can't make games like that any more (and hey, our industry's biggest and brightest minds deserve their financial rewards). So while nobody will doubt that games cost a good chunk of change and we'd all like to pay less, compare a movie (\$10 for two hours) to a video game (\$50 for dozens if not hundreds of hours), and it's a pretty good entertainment deal.

### How Big Is Your Cartridge?

I have recently been talking to many people at GamePro.com about the quality of handheld games. Games for the Game Boy Advance are the best they've ever been—but with a price, I think. GBA cartridges are half the size of original Game Boy games. I like the small cartridges, but I don't like how the games don't have any cinemas when it is fairly obvious that it's possible. Max Payne added dialogue at a cost as did Medal of Honor: Infiltrator. Games like Bomberman and DBZ featured mini-cinemas, but why isn't it possible to make them similar to those on a regular console? When Kingdom Hearts was announced, Nintendo said that it would make a bigger cartridge for the handheld. But why would Nintendo not just make a new Game Boy that uses a bigger cartridge if it meant better handheld games? I know I would sacrifice having bigger cartridges for a better game. I think smaller doesn't always mean better, and maybe it's time Nintendo came to its senses.

► **Adam "Jebs" Burnett—Roland, Manitoba, Canada**

Well, Jebs, you're assuming that a bigger cartridge or more cinemas automatically makes a better game—which is really a matter of opinion. Sure, GBA carts are smaller than original GB carts—such is progress. But it might help to separate storage capacity and physical size. One chip might be the same physical size as another but hold twice as much data. Naturally, that roomier chip is going to be more expensive to produce—and that's probably what factors into whether or not a game has fancy cinemas or not. Is the price worth the payoff? To do console-style cinemas, you would need far more storage capacity than would be financially feasible

## Loading...

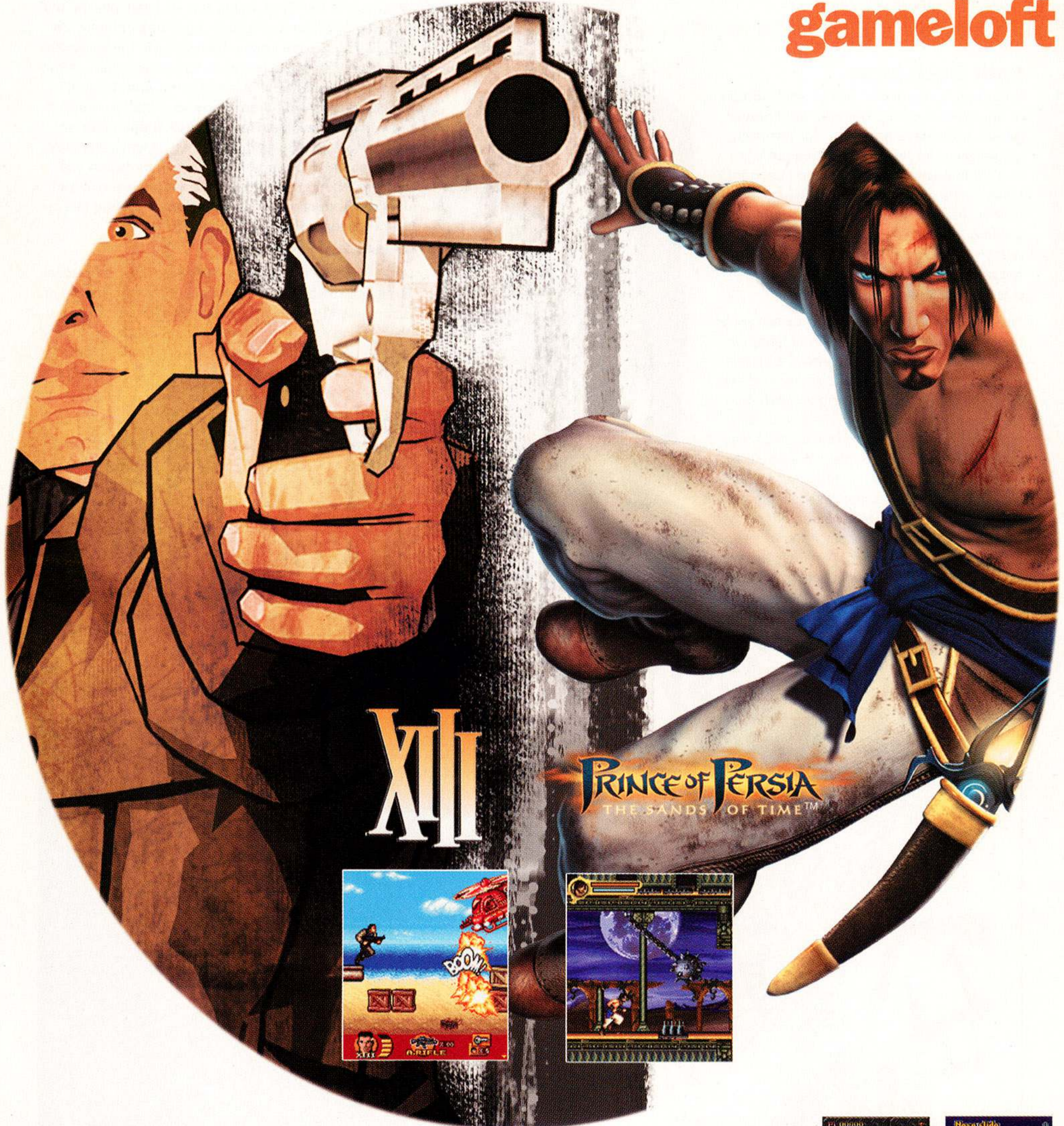
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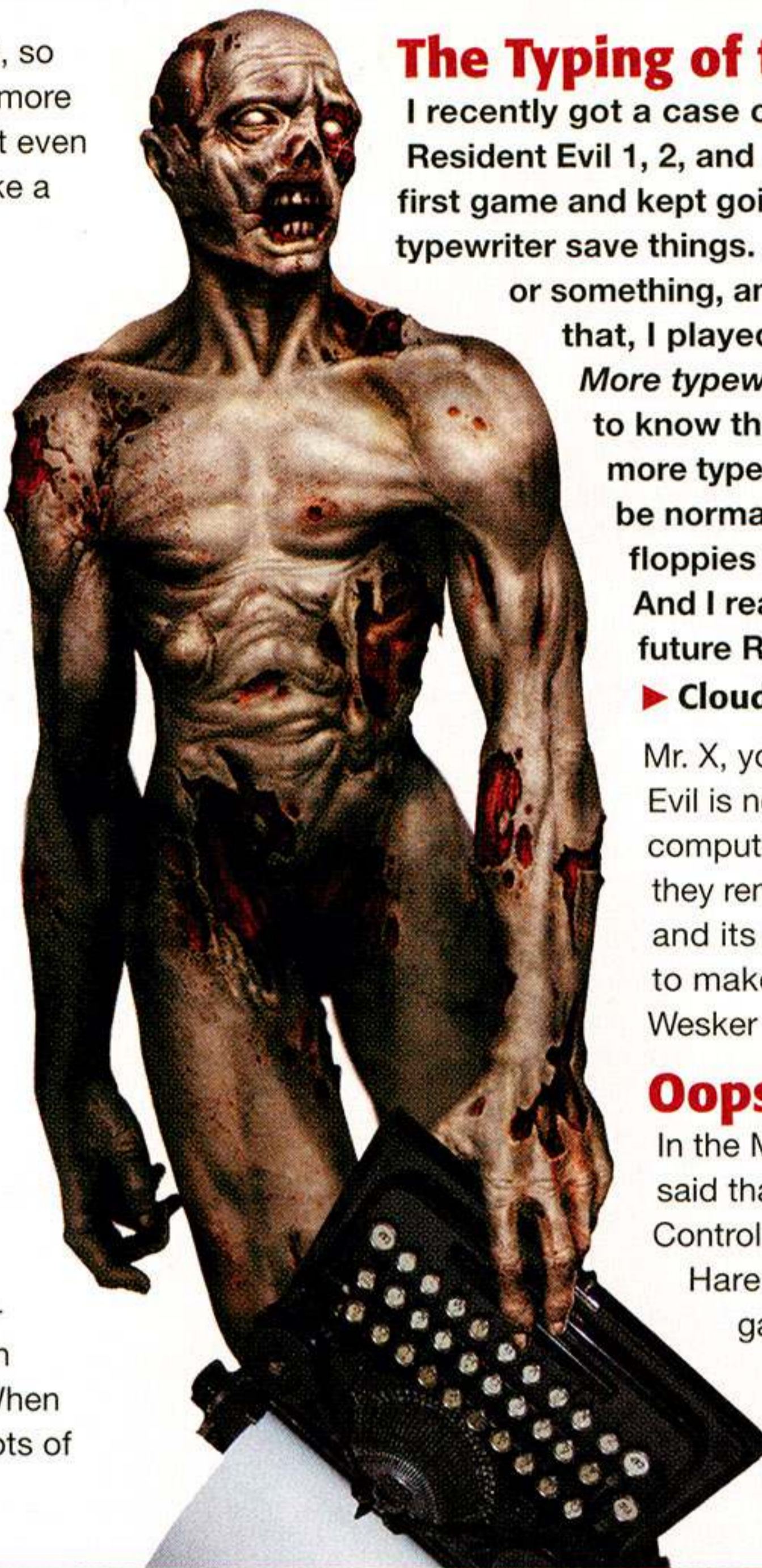
to include. Kingdom Hearts is a visually rich game, so maybe it will be on a larger cart to accommodate more and larger chips—sounds reasonable, and it might even be true. And as for why Nintendo doesn't just make a new handheld...give it time.

## Split Decisions

What has happened to all the split-screen multiplayer shooting games? Multiplayer games nowadays are either for Internet gameplay or for two players. I am not a fan of playing online. My friends and I used to enjoy sitting around and fragging each other; now we have to take turns playing. I hope the gaming industry does not forget about the gamers who do not have access to the Internet or who cannot link up two systems.

### ► Oscar Kawagley—Via Internet

There will always be a place for in-person social gaming—titles like Madden NFL, Mario Kart: Double Dash!!, Bomberman Jetters, and Halo are proof that four people huddled around one TV is still a great way to spend an afternoon. But for split-screen games, more and more developers feel it's not worth the trouble—their game no longer looks or plays the way they envisioned it when it's cut into quarters, and players are ultimately disappointed that they can't see detail in those tiny little boxes. Internet or networked play is much more satisfying for people on both sides of that equation. Think of it this way: When you get your broadband connection, you'll have lots of options waiting for you the day it goes live.



## The Typing of the Dead

I recently got a case of Resident Evil fever, which led me to buy Resident Evil 1, 2, and 3 for the GameCube. But, as I was playing the first game and kept going further and further, I got sick of those old typewriter save things. I mean, the games take place in the year 1998 or something, and they still used typewriters everywhere. After that, I played Resident Evil 2, and guess what I found? *More typewriters.* And I didn't have to think too much to know that in the other Resident Evil, there might be more typewriters. All I am trying to say is why can't they be normal and put computers at save points and use floppies or something other than ink to save a game? And I really wanna know if they plan to change this in future Resident Evils? Can you help me out?

### ► Cloud-X—Via Internet

Mr. X, you have figured it out: The real enemy in Resident Evil is not zombies. It's typewriters. Why them instead of computers? They're spooky. They're relics. In the game, they remind you of how far removed from modern society and its comfort and safety you really are. It's a device to make you feel even more ill at ease. Either that or Wesker got a bunch on sale.

## OopsPro

In the March 2004 edition of GamePro Labs, Bad Hare said that the Nuby Dragon Ball Z Super Saiyan Glow Controller lacked a rumble feature. Apparently, it's Bad Hare who lacks the ability to turn rumble on in his games—the Dual Shock-style feedback on this model works just fine when not used by an overgrown rodent. *GamePro* regrets the error.

For more letters, go to [GamePro.com](http://GamePro.com)!

# Final Fantasy X-2 Art Attack Contest



**Grand Prize Winner—Ages 13–17**



**Grand Prize Winner—Ages 18 & up**

# Final Fantasy Art Attack—more winners



**FFX-2 First Prize Winner  
Ages 13-17**



**FFX-2 First Prize Winner  
Ages 18 & up**

Thanks to everyone who entered Square's Art Attack Contest! We received tons of great submissions, and here's the cream of the crop!



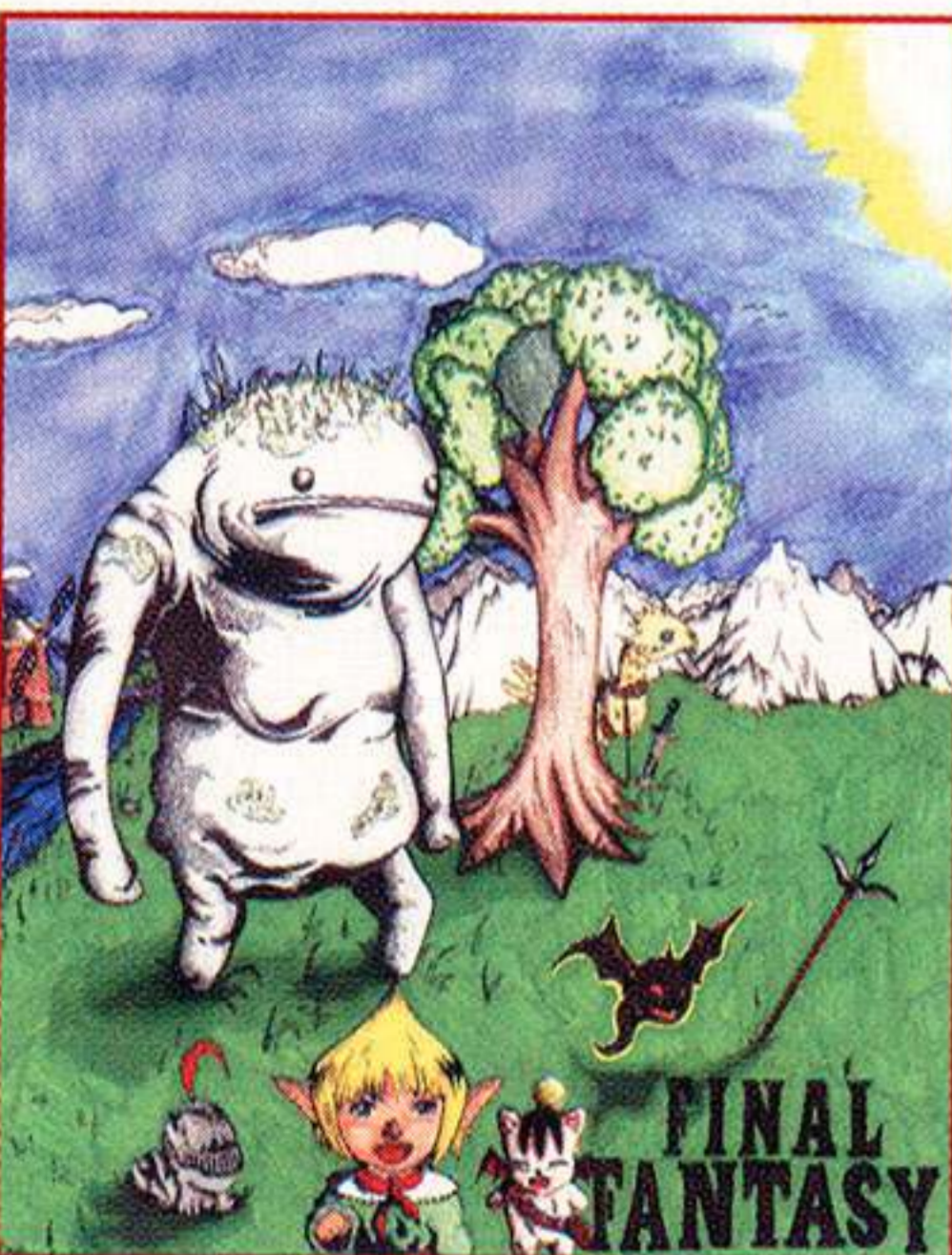
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Ages 13-17**



**FFX-2 Second Prize Winner  
Ages 13-17**



**FFX-2 Second Prize Winner  
Ages 18 & up**



**FFXI First Prize Winner  
Ages 13-17**



**FFXI First Prize Winner  
Ages 18 & up**



**FFXI Second Prize Winner  
Ages 18 & up**

Got a strange urge to communicate with the GamePro editors? E-mail them at "editor's name"@gamepro.com!

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**H**as mashing that B button in Tony Hawk's Underground taken a toll on your GameCube controller? They thought three pairs of weird-looking screws would stop The Watch Dog from getting his hands dirty with the GameCube controller. They thought wrong.

## Strange Screws and Sticky Buttons

My GameCube controllers have not been reacting as fast as they used to. This is probably due to the fact that they are getting old. I have taken apart my Super Nintendo controllers and cleaned them. After this, they have worked fine. I've cleaned them over and over again for about eight years, and they're still kickin'. It was easy; I needed only a Phillips screwdriver. However, I don't know where to find the screwdriver for the three-sided screws on the GameCube controllers. I would appreciate it if you could find out the screwdriver model and any tips on cleaning the controllers. Thanks.

► **Enzome H—Via Internet**



Warning! If you open your GameCube controller, you will void your warranty. There are always risks in opening up electronic equipment, so proceed with caution.

Nothing ruins the fun of taking stuff apart more than turning it over and discovering it has some funky screws. The GameCube controller is held together by six triwing screws that can be removed with either a flathead screwdriver or a triwing screwdriver.

The unpredictable but more widely available option is the flathead screwdriver. A very thin 2 mm Phillips flathead can work, but try it first on the screw behind the non-analog directional pad or the right yellow camera thumbstick to see if the screwdriver eats away at the screw (those screws are more visible than the others). Hold the screwdriver straight down and press down firmly on the screw, turning counter-clockwise to ensure that the screw won't get eaten away. If you see that it does, it's best to stop to prevent your screw from becoming, well, screwed.

Triwing screwdrivers are the surest bet—the right tool for the job. They can be purchased for as low as \$1 from the Internet; do a Google or eBay search for “triwing screwdriver,” and you'll find a whole slew of vendors. Chances are your local hardware store won't have triwing screwdrivers, especially the huge home improvement stores (for some reason, smaller hardware stores are more likely to carry special screws and screwdrivers). It's important to know that triwing screwdrivers come in two variations: one that has straight grooves shaped like a “Y” as on the GameCube controller and one that has slanted grooves. Be sure to get the straight Y-shaped screwdriver.

Once you unscrew all six screws, the controller should open with ease. If it doesn't, check to see that all screws are fully unscrewed.

Since the controller's open, you can address an issue that has plagued GameCube owners: the sticky B button. Although the button can be made unstuck by the “twist” method (grabbing each handle of the controller



with each hand and pulling up and down in opposite directions) without opening the controller, eventually this technique becomes less and less effective.

Separate the controller circuit board from the plastic housing. If you look at the grey rubber that covers the A, B, X, and Y buttons, you'll notice that part of the rubber slightly overlaps the circuit portion of the yellow camera stick. This is where the B button gets stuck. Take off the grey rubber and use a slightly damp lint-free cloth to clean the underside of the rubber where the B button is located by removing dirt or dust (that's what causes the rubber to stick to the controller). It is especially important to clean the underside rubber portion right below the B button. Make sure the rubber is completely dry before placing it back on the circuit board. Also, while making sure you don't touch any of the chips or circuits, carefully clean the circuit board area where the lower portion of the rubber comes in contact.

Put the controller back together and *voilà*—no more stickiness. For a while, anyway; you may have to repeat the process later.

## PS2 Bitten by Shark

I recently replaced my PlayStation 2 because it basically died. Now, the GameShark that I've been using doesn't work anymore. On my old PS2, I crushed save games to save space on the 8 MB card, and now it won't read the GameShark disc, and it tells me to insert a PlayStation 2 disc. Is something wrong with my PlayStation 2, or did something change with the newer PS2s? I used GameShark version 2.

► **Anonymous—Via Internet**

Sony implemented some minor changes to the latest 50001 series PlayStation 2s that prevent your GameShark from working. However, the most recent GameShark version 4 works fine on the newer PlayStation 2 models.

## Rabid Catz?

I am having problems with a Mad Catz controller for the GameCube. I was playing Sonic Adventure 2 Battle, and I needed to pause the game, but I hit the Macro button instead. Now every time I play a game, the controller won't let me hold my character still when I need to. My girlfriend says I need to buy a new one, but is there a way to fix the problem so I won't have to buy a new one?

► **Ivan—Via Internet**

A couple of other people had reported similar problems with their controllers flipping out when they hit the Macro button. The solution to this problem is to reset the Macro and erase any move you (accidentally or intentionally) programmed to that button. Most of the time, this will solve the problem, but if the problem persists, you can contact Mad Catz's tech support at its toll-free number, 800/659-2287.

## Submissions

At *GamePro*, listening is what we do best. When you have a problem with a product or feel you've been ripped off, we want to know. Write to:

**GamePro's Buyers Beware**  
P.O. Box 22210  
Oakland, CA 94623-2210

Or e-mail us at:  
[buyers\\_beware.gamepro@gamepro.com](mailto:buyers_beware.gamepro@gamepro.com)

## You Make the Call

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## Next Nintendo Console To Debut in 2005

According to Japanese newspaper *Mainichi Shinbun*, Nintendo's next-generation console will be unveiled at E<sup>3</sup> in 2005. Due to a misinterpretation of Nintendo CEO Satoru Iwata's statements about the company's console future, another newspaper, *Nihon Keizai Shinbun*, led several Internet sites in reporting that the console was going to be pushed back until 2007. Clarifying about the new machine, Nintendo spokesman Yasuhiro Minagawa assured people that the company "intends to show it at E<sup>3</sup> next spring."

Given that the first official unveiling may come in mid-2005, the system will likely see a release in 2006, the year Sony's PlayStation 3 is expected to be released. Microsoft's follow-up to the Xbox will see a release around the same time, but sources have hinted at the possibility of a late 2005 release. Microsoft was expected to unveil (a little more) information at the Game Developers Conference in March.

## Marvel/EA Team Up

Electronic Arts and Marvel Enterprises recently announced an agreement that will see EA develop and publish fighting games pitting Marvel Super Heroes against EA's own new and original set of heroes. Under the multiyear agreement, EA has the right to develop and distribute fighting games featuring the Marvel Super Heroes. In addition, Marvel will act as the worldwide licensing agent for all products and media pertaining to the new EA heroes. Marvel will publish new comic books introducing the EA characters.

"It's a unique opportunity, partnering with Marvel to bring their renowned Super Heroes into original video-game environments as well as providing us an opportunity to create new heroes that will live in games, comic books, and other licensing or media opportunities that Marvel presents," said John Riccitiello, president and COO for Electronic Arts. "Fans of both traditional Marvel comics as well as video games have a lot to be excited about as they will be able to fight it out between established Marvel Super Heroes and EA's new heroes in original scenarios," added Riccitiello. The superhero-based fighting games are currently under development for multiple game platforms at EA's EAC studio in British Columbia.

EA's announcement closely follows the formation of Marvel's own game studio (see ProNews, April), but more interestingly, Marvel is not the only comic publisher EA has forged alliances with. Electronic Arts also has the rights to the film version of DC Comics' Catwoman and has rather quietly acquired the video-game rights to Superman (if you missed it, don't feel bad—it flew under the radar in some financial reports). More deals with other DC heroes are expected to be announced in the future. How will this affect the Marvel fighting game—could EA be planning a comic company crossover? Or, after its success with Harry Potter, James Bond, and Lord of the Rings, has it simply decided that licensed properties are good for business and few have such long-lasting appeal as comic-book characters? Stay tuned, true believers.



## Game Pirate Gets Four-Year Jail Sentence

Still think that game piracy doesn't hurt anyone? Tell that to Sean Michael Breen. Breen, 38, pleaded guilty to two counts of copyright infringement and three counts of mail fraud at a U.S. District Court. Presiding Judge Sandra Armstrong ordered Breen to pay restitution amounting \$690,236.91 to Cisco Systems and sentenced him to 50 months of prison followed by three years of a supervised release.

Breen was the leader of a software piracy group called "Razor1911," which distributed "warez" (illegally pirated software) since the early 1990s. Software piracy groups, often comprised of crackers and distributors, compete with other warez sites on the Internet to try to put out full versions of software the fastest. The group was targeted by the U.S. Customs services in a 14-month undercover investigation, which nabbed over 40 suspects worldwide.

The ruling marks one of the most severe punishments ever given to an individual involved in warez with the stiff sentencing likely handed down to scare and discourage other piracy groups.



### Sammy CEO Takes The Reigns of Sega

Sega announced that Sammy CEO Hajime Satomi will take over the role of chairman, replacing current chairman Hideki Sato. Mr. Sato will now serve as vice chairman, and Hisao Oguchi will retain his position as president of Sega. The executive shuffle follows Sammy's purchase of 22 percent of Sega's stock. Sammy, which specializes in pachinko gambling machines in Japan, is currently stressing Sega's arcade plans; whether the coin-op concerns will mean an eventual removal of Sega from the home market remains to be seen. New developments in the Sega/Sammy soap opera are frequently announced; for the latest news, log on to GamePro.com.

### Full Spectrum Warrior Delayed

As part of issuing its fiscal year 2004 third-quarter results, THQ announced a three-month delay in the release of Full Spectrum Warrior for the Xbox. THQ said the game was delayed "in order to polish the game and provide it with every opportunity for success." Developed by Pandemic Studios, Full Spectrum Warrior is a tactical squad-based real-time strategy game that puts the player in control of two squads. Full Spectrum Warrior will be released on June 8 for the Xbox, while the PC version remains pegged for a September release.

### Xbox Live in Asia

Microsoft has announced plans to launch Xbox Live in Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore this April. Although Xbox Live was launched in Korea with expectations that the large base of online PC gamers would catch on to the Xbox, little more than 6000 people have subscribed to the service so far. The main issue with the Xbox is its smaller library of games, which Alan Bowman, general manager of Xbox in Asia, acknowledges. "One thing I hear loud and clear is that you need to build a portfolio of games that is appropriate for the Asian market." Most Xbox games are either available on the PlayStation 2 or are geared to the North American market—in particular, console RPGs have been sorely lacking (Sudeki, which is continually delayed, will attempt to break into this market segment). However, Microsoft currently has 30 projects in development specifically for Taiwan and Korea with the first games arriving later in the year.

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PlayStation®2



# The GP Interview: Game Over's David Sacks

What's so funny about video games? David Sacks, the creator of UPN's new animated sitcom *Game Over* (now airing—check your local listings), has a simple and straightforward answer: "Totally insane behavior is presented as normal." Count on it: The show follows the animated adventures of the Smashenburns, your everyday suburban family in the video-game universe. Clan patriarch Rip (voiced by Patrick Warburton of *Seinfeld* and *The Tick*) is a race-car driver with a penchant for hitting walls; wife/mom Raquel (*Kill Bill*'s Lucy Liu) is a sexy Lara-Croft-meets-Joanna-Dark secret agent who leaves for work every day via helicopter (not to mention the kitchen window). Socially conscious 15-year-old Alice (*SNL*'s Rachel Dratch) protests sexy volleyball games, while Billy (E.G. Daily—a.k.a. Powerpuff Girl Buttercup) is just your average awkward 13-year-old hip-hop wannabe, and the family pet, Turbo (voiced by Howard Stern sidekick Artie Lange), chomps cigars and robs parking meters. For gamers, it's great to see in-jokes and cameos—like when the entire cast of *Oddworld* shows up in the first episode. But is prime time ready for a gaming 'toon? Sacks has an answer for that, too.

**GamePro:** What are the main differences between the Smashenburns' gaming world and the "real" one?

**David Sacks:** One of the things that really intrigues me is that in *Vice City* (to name just one example), it's socially acceptable to walk down a sunny sidewalk by a beach and punch the next person who walks by you in the face. In the "real" world, that's certainly not alright. I wanted to see what it would be like to actually live and raise a family in a world where there are all these dysfunctional modes of relating to each other. Having said that, the differences between the gaming world and the real world are becoming more and more minor. On the plus side, this is an environment that is still nuttier than our world, and that's not a small thing.

**GP:** Is this intended more for mainstream sitcom viewers or enthusiast gamers? And how do you balance pleasing one audience without alienating the other? Have there been gaming jokes that were deemed "too inside" to make it into the show?

**DS:** So far, we've been thrilled to find that everyone—men, women, younger, older, gamers, nongamers—have been responding enthusiastically.



Our approach from the outset was to make jokes that everyone could get even if we have to "multilevel" them. For instance, there is a segment in episode two where Billy goes on this surrealistic date with an anime Japanese exchange student. In anime, if you get a nosebleed, it's a sign of being aroused. Now most people don't know this, so before he starts bleeding, a fish smacks him in the face—that is, before it kisses him on the lips. Truth be told, it's a bizarre moment either way, but everyone can get it. On further thought...you might have to actually see this one.

**GP:** Why go for CGI-rendered characters and environments instead of traditional animation, or even live action?

**DS:** The show is about the real life of video-game characters—so to sell that, it's really important for the show to look like a real video game.

**GP:** How do you decide which game characters are cameo-worthy, and then how do you go about getting permission to use them?

**DS:** We never want to sneak something in unless it fits, so mainly we wait for inspiration for a great crossover moment and hope we can get the

rights in time to do the joke. In the beginning, we had difficulty with that. We had a billboard of Ms. Pac-Man in lingerie as an aging prostitute that said "will work for fruit." Couldn't clear that one.

**GP:** Are there any you can reveal as coming up soon?

**DS:** How's Lara Croft? She's on tap....

**GP:** Everyone here really enjoyed the second episode more than the first, and we're eager to see how the show progresses and develops if given the chance beyond its initial six episodes.

**DS:** We feel like we're just scratching the surface. More than anything, we want a show that doesn't just have cool video-game references but is actually set in video-game reality. If we get more episodes, look for scenes set in the actual environments of *Halo*, *Ratchet & Clank*, *Blinx*, and a bunch of others.

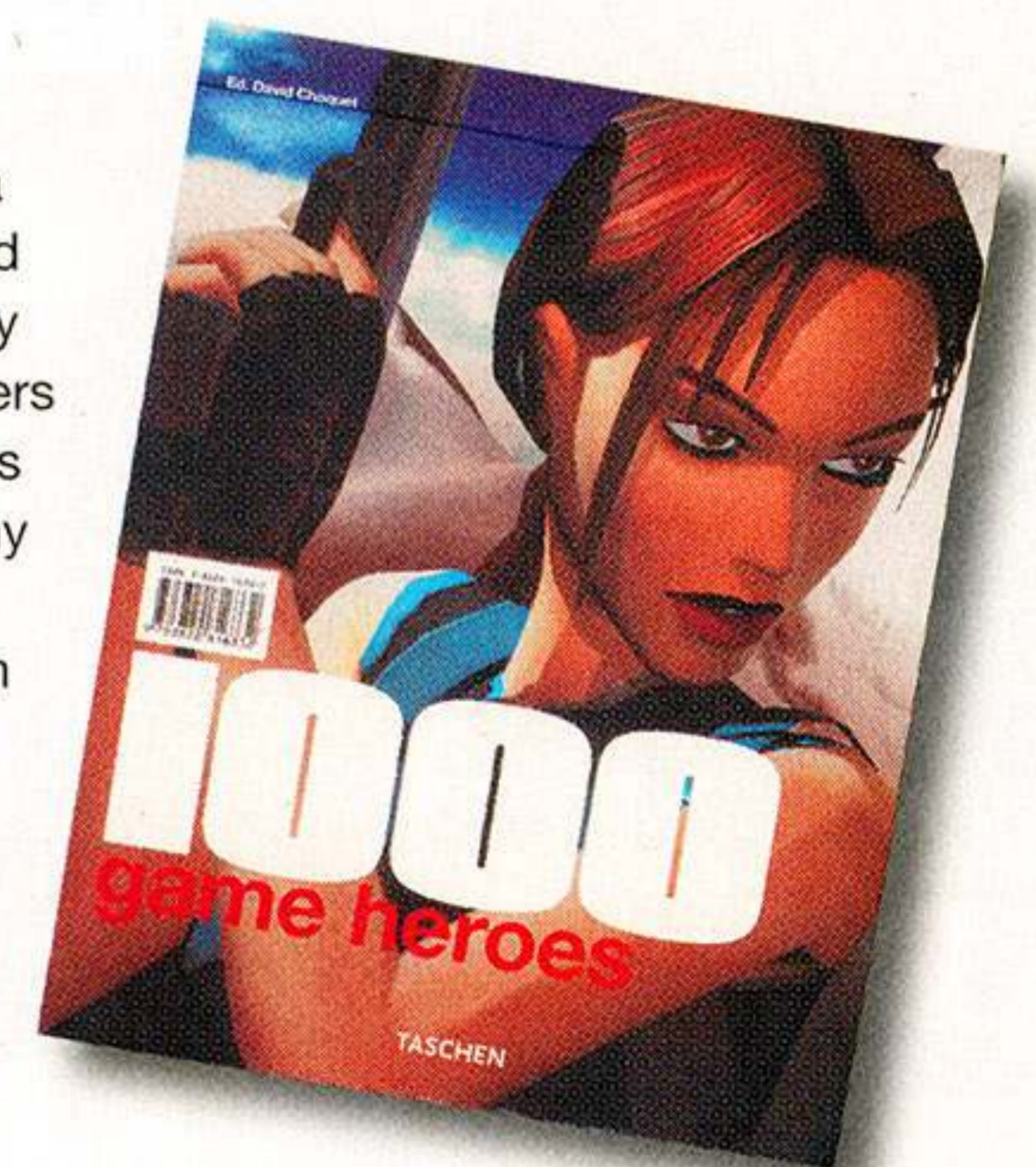
**GP:** You and co-developer David Goetsch boast Ivy League educations. So...do they play a lot of video games at Harvard and Yale?

**DS:** Those schools are pretty damn expensive, so if they are, they better get back to work. After all, someone's got to cure cancer.

## Tome Reader

Wanna waste 40 bucks? David Choquet's thick paperback tome *1000 Game Heroes* is no more than a compilation of artwork supplied to the gaming press. Literally, someone collected all the press kit CDs and printed them out, then threw in a few short introductions by famous game developers, which unfortunately do not justify a purchase. The "Heroes" title is a misnomer as there's almost no discussion of the characters pictured—but even if you take it as a book of art, it fails because there is no insight as to why these pieces of art were created or what the artistic intent was. This is the stuff that game magazines use to accompany features and reviews, and nothing more. If you've been following video games for a while (and why would you be interested in this book if you aren't a fan of video games?), you will quickly realize that you've seen this all before—renders of characters that appeared on the covers of magazines (including *GamePro*), concept sketches of characters in development, and other standard public-relations art. Sure, some of it is dynamic, but you won't get any context or appreciation for why these heroes look the way they do.

This might possibly prove useful to students of game creation seeking historical reference as they create their own characters, but even that's a long shot—and again, there's no depth here that others could learn from anyway. *1000 Game Heroes* looks and feels like a giant catalog of stock art—which it is!—and it certainly isn't worth the asking price.





# GamePro Labs

## Mad Catz SharkBoard

PlayStation 2, GameCube, PC  
Rating: 3.5

A profoundly necessary peripheral for online gaming, keyboards have been somewhat difficult to come by for GameCube aficionados in the mood for chatting. Thankfully, Mad Catz has heard the pleas of the neglected. Granted, while the only thing that separates the GameShark SharkBoard from virtually every other keyboard in existence is the fact that it is 'Cube compatible, its handy adapter allows it to do double duty as a PS2 keyboard (and triple duty as a PC keyboard). In fact, if the SharkBoard is not quite the keyboard of your dreams, the adapter can accept input from any other serial keyboard you happen to have lying around. Only a few snags might prompt SharkBoard owners to do this, however, including somewhat sticky keys and a propensity to cease functioning if any of the additional function keys are pressed (simply unplugging and replugging restores the keyboard to working order). While the SharkBoard has a few issues, its versatility and utility cannot be denied, and the adapter alone is valuable to those with a GameCube and a hankering to chat with their PSO pals.

—Strafe Maru

Price: \$29.99. Contact Mad Catz, 800/659-2287, madcatz.com



## Hori Katana: Soul Controller

PlayStation 2  
Rating: 4.0

Hori is the largest manufacturer of gaming peripherals in Japan; its first stab at the American market is the impressive-looking Katana: Soul Controller for use with Onimusha 3. You move the characters around with analog sticks located on the hilt of the sword and, similar to Konami's arcade game Mazan, swing the controller to activate the slashing action onscreen. The controller is conveniently wireless, and the blade is detachable so you don't knock over any valuables. Unfortunately, playing the game with the Katana is a bit of a chore, and you'll probably tire of its novelty after a few levels. Still, the Soul Controller is a unique, limited-edition collector's item that hardcore Onimusha fans will have to own.—Tokyo Drifter

Price: To be announced. Contact: Hori, 310/316-3038 (fax), <http://hori.ne.jp/onimusha3/index.html>



## Best-Selling Video-Game Titles: January 2004

TITLE	PLATFORM	PUBLISHER
1 NFL Street	PlayStation 2	EA Sports Big
2 Sonic Heroes	GameCube	Sega
3 Need for Speed Underground	PlayStation 2	EA Games
4 NFL Street	Xbox	EA Sports Big
5 Mario Kart: Double Dash!!	GameCube	Nintendo
6 Grand Theft Auto Double Pack	Xbox	Rockstar Games
7 Halo	Xbox	Microsoft
8 True Crime: Streets of L.A.	PlayStation 2	Activision
9 Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance II	PlayStation 2	Interplay
10 SOCOM II: U.S. Navy SEALs	PlayStation 2	Sony

Source: The NPD Group/NPD Funworld

**Static** The Movies...The Movies...The Movies...Almost all the mail lately has been about Nintendo—questions about the company's present and its future. Maybe it's just nostalgia as so many gamers grew up with an NES or SNES controller in hand. Want details on the past? Read the book *Game Over*. • Rejected names for Nintendo's upcoming console: Nextendo; Super Mario Box; The Purple Koopa Eater; and, of course, Probably Out in Japan for at Least a Year Before It Comes to America Anyway So Please Stop Salivating You Freakish Fanboys. • Funky Zealot traveled to Los Angeles to cover the XSN championships, where he got to meet apathetic superstar Shaquille O'Neal. Shaq was so impressed, he left early. • Remember the special "Kasumi Blue" edition of the Xbox that was released in Japan? Famitsu reports that it's even weirder—the "cushion" that was supposed to ship with it is actually a 5-foot body pillow with a full-length image of Kasumi in a pink bikini on it. Go ahead and laugh—but you can't hide that you want that huggable goodness. Photo on GamePro.com. • How many people wish the black and white buttons on the Xbox controller were shoulder triggers? • Vampire: The Masquerade—Bloodlines...Vampire: The Masquerade

# Internal Combustion



Babble: Auch 'n Amrich Doodles: Mao

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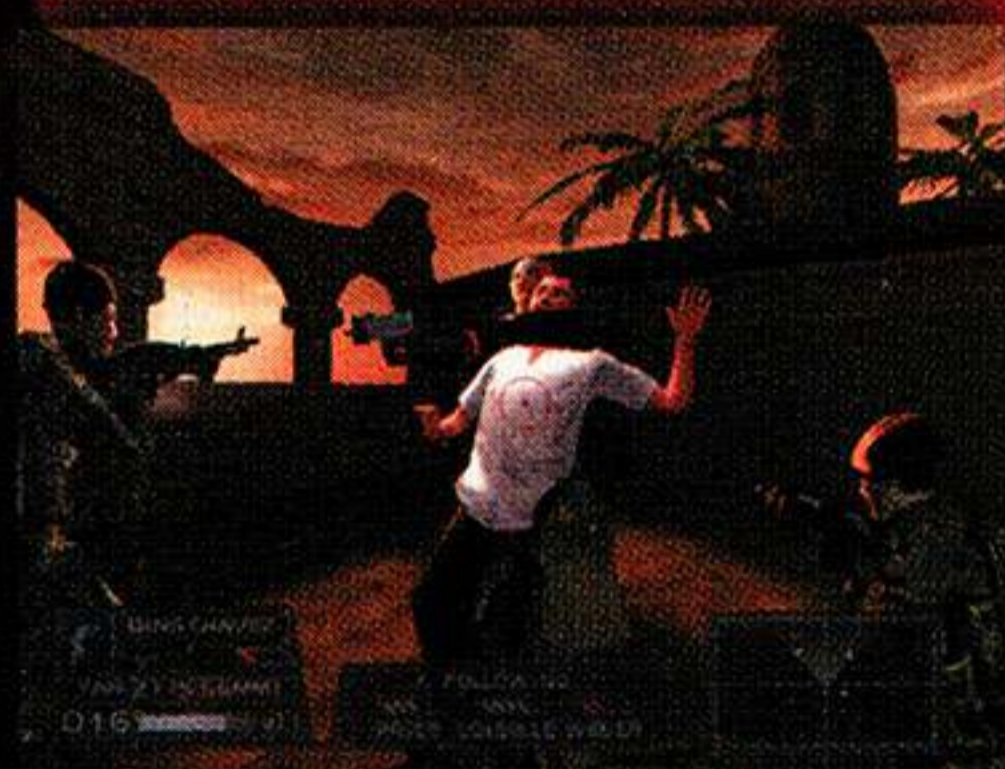
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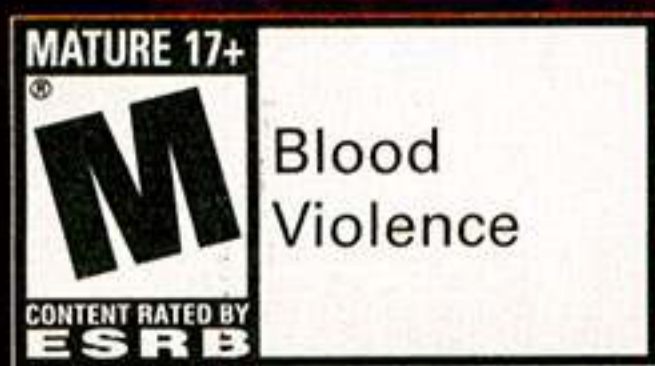
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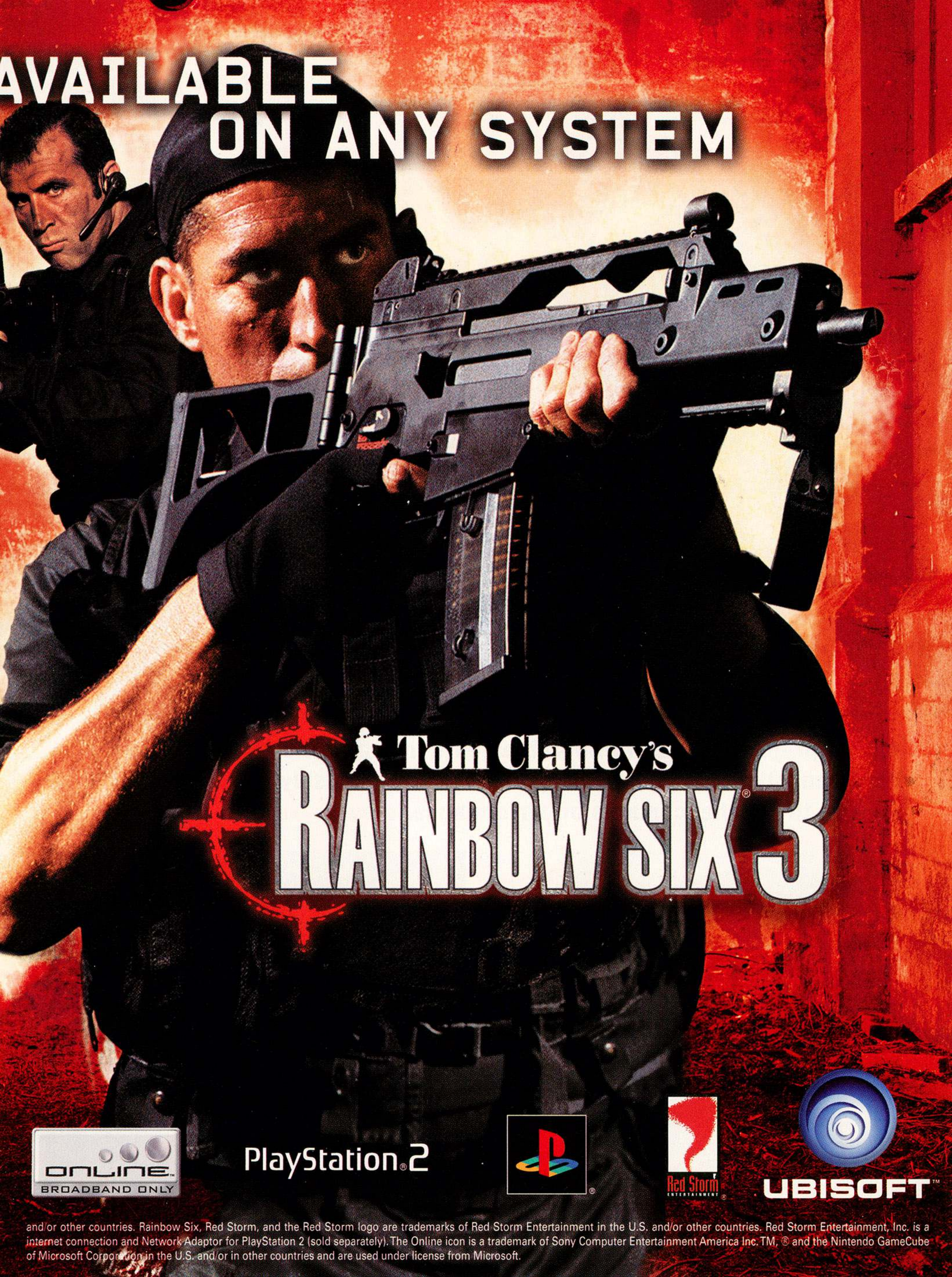
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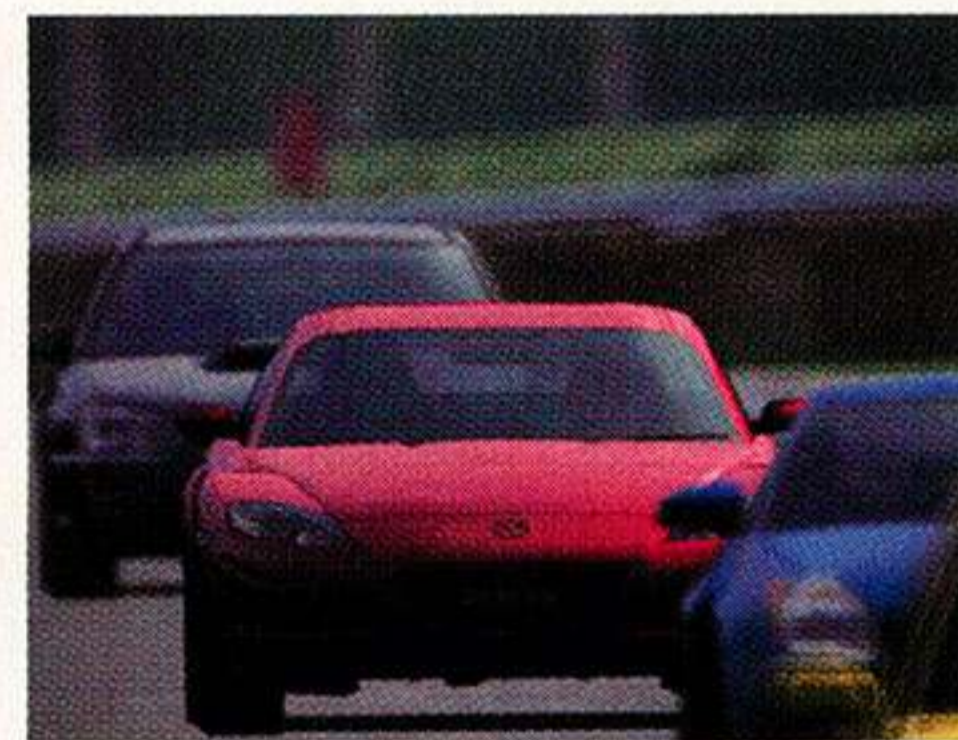
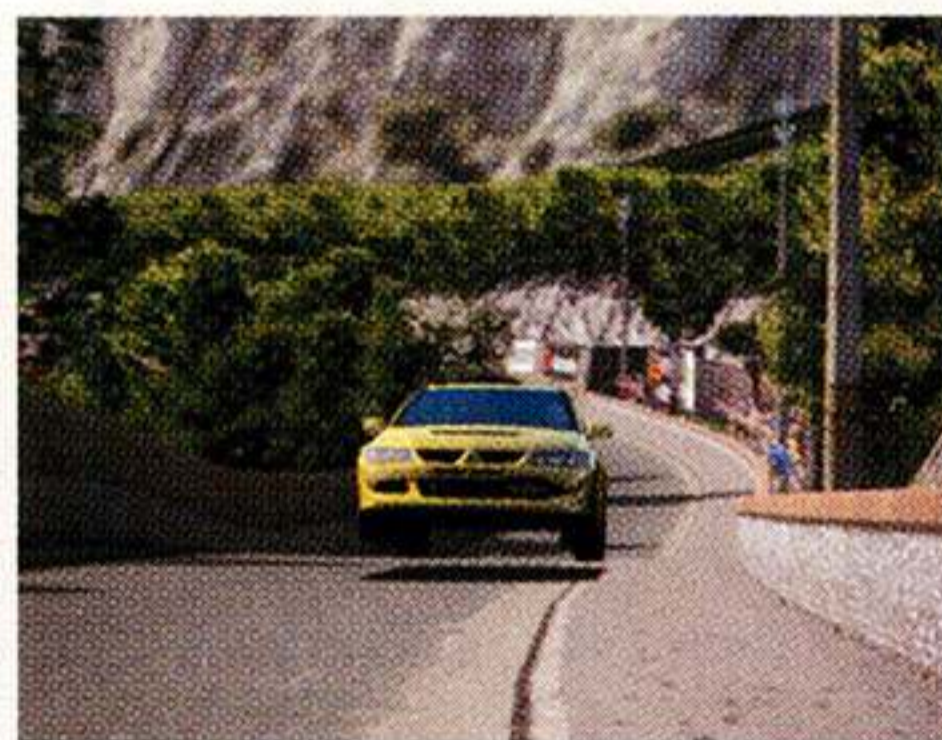
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# SEQUENTIAL SHIFT



As you prepare to flick through the gears in Gran Turismo 4, Sony and Polyphony Digital are elbow-deep in motor oil, feverishly tuning the series' realism to new benchmarks of performance. **BY AIR HENDRIK**



GT4's new third-person perspective pulls back on the action and elevates slightly, allowing a much better view of the pack and of the upcoming turns. The familiar third-person and first-person views remain in the game, too.



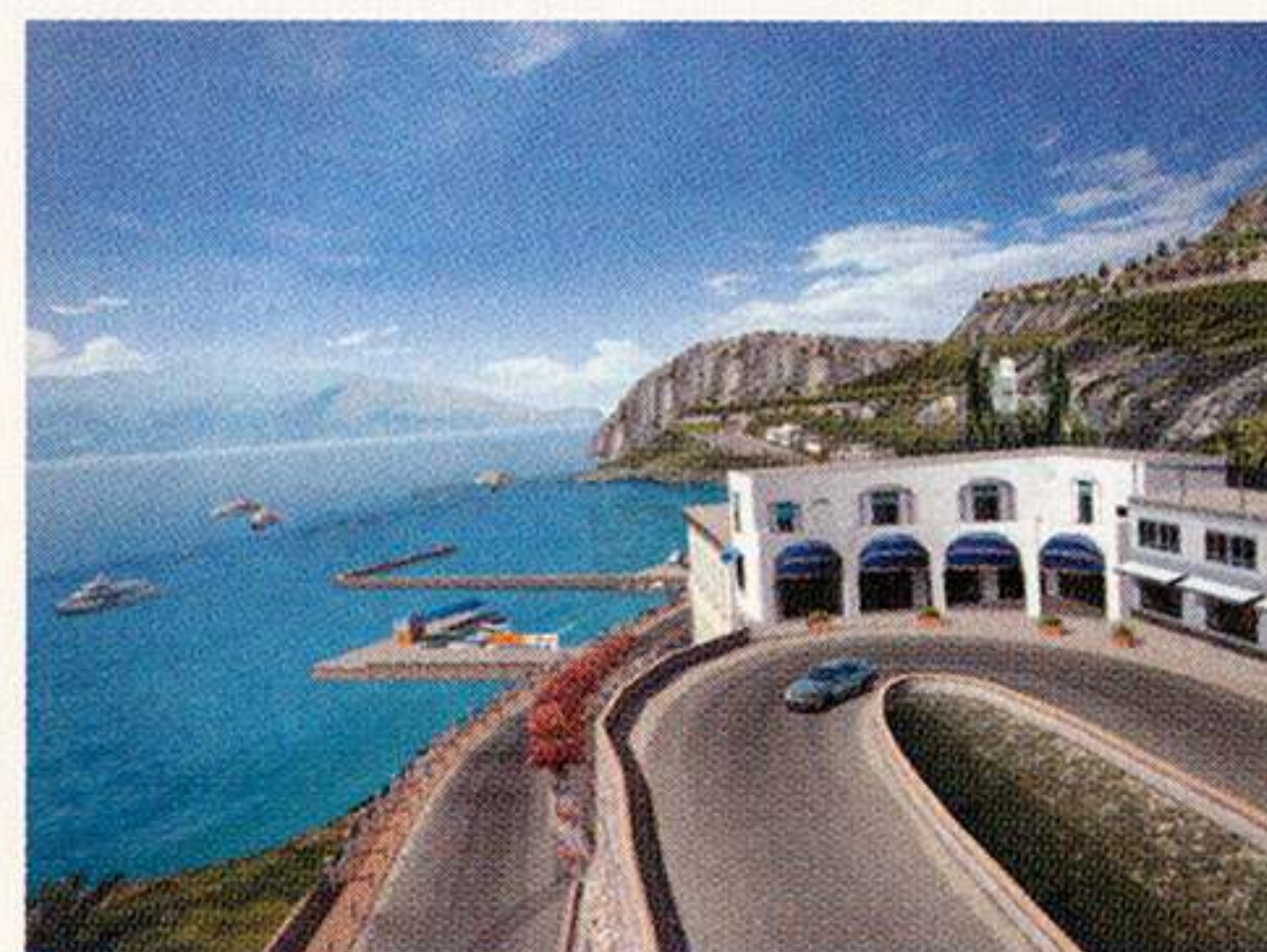
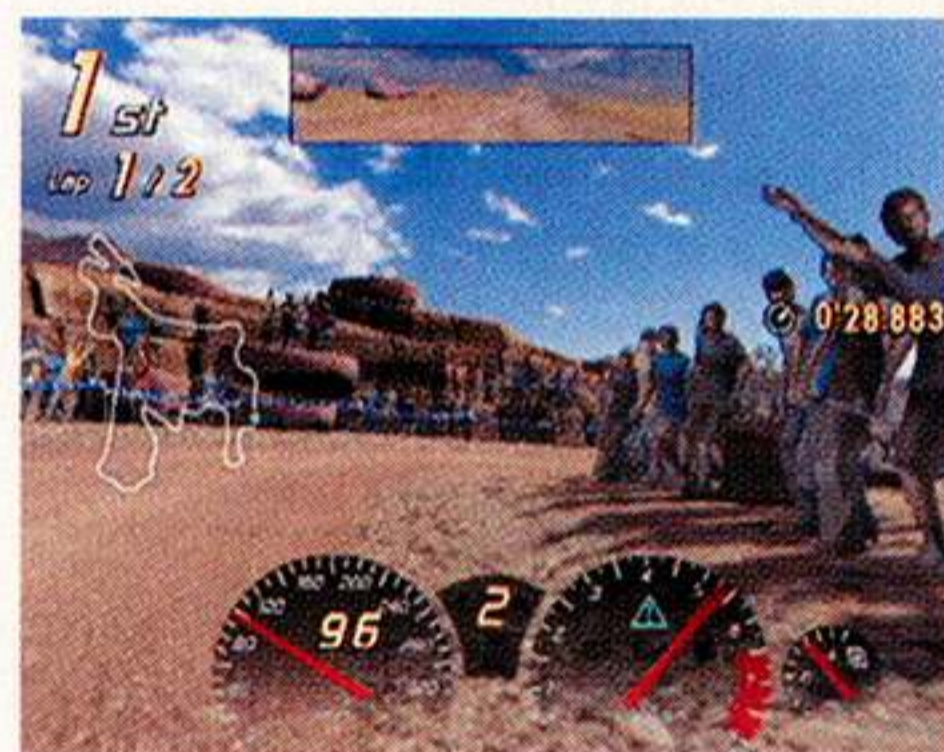
**C**ars have always been more than mere transportation, whether that means clustering around the open hood of a '69 Pontiac GTO, tuning a Lancer Evo with ARC spoilers and HKS turbochargers, or clattering proudly down a dirt lane in one of the first Model Ts. The Gran Turismo series blossomed because it taps so authentically into that vibe, and with their latest game, Sony and Polyphony Digital are striving to fashion "a manual on car culture and history" and "a real-life simulator." Will this focus keep the legions of Gran Turismo fans flashing past the finish line?

### TEN-SECOND CARS

While Gran Turismo 4 inches toward a projected fall release, the main innovations you can expect revolve around physics, course graphics, and online play—along with lots of new cars and tracks. More than 500 vehicles and 50 courses (in locations ranging from the Grand Canyon to Costa d'Amalfi to Hong Kong) will give GT4 plenty of ways to burn rubber.

"Our goal is to stop people from coming up to us on the street and saying, 'Hey, where's this car?'," says Taku Imasaki, producer at Sony's Santa Monica studio. While specifics remain under wraps, Imasaki reports that many European exotic cars that have been sorely missed **CONTINUED ►**

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In real life, GT series creator Kazunori Yamauchi drives a Nissan 350Z, but he favors it when playing GT4, too.

Previously unannounced, one of GT4's new tracks is set on the Italian island of Capri along the Costa d'Amalfi.

in the series, such as Porsches, will at last make their debut. All of the cars that were in previous GTs will return alongside new manufacturers, while used cars will be back after their disappointing absence from GT3. "We're tracking popular cars in the U.S., Europe, and Japan, and our database for the franchise is growing every day," Imasaki says. "[Some models] will be in GT5 if they're not in GT4."

Classic automobiles will also make their debut in GT4, appearing in museums, as bonus cars, and in other scenes. "Vintage cars will be positioned as an aspect that will add the 'aroma' to Gran Turismo 4," says Kazunori Yamauchi, president of Polyphony Digital and creator of the GT series. "I'm guessing that bringing them back to life will have



On rally tracks, fans cluster everywhere, leaping out momentarily to snap photos before you rocket past.



Rough driving will earn you a penalty—in GT4 Prologue, that meant 10 seconds of driving no faster than 30 mph. Ouch.



an influence on the visions of automotive culture that we, including myself, hold today." GT4 will reach back as far as the Model T Ford, and Imasaki adds that enough cars from each era will be included to stock a pack of opponents for themed races.

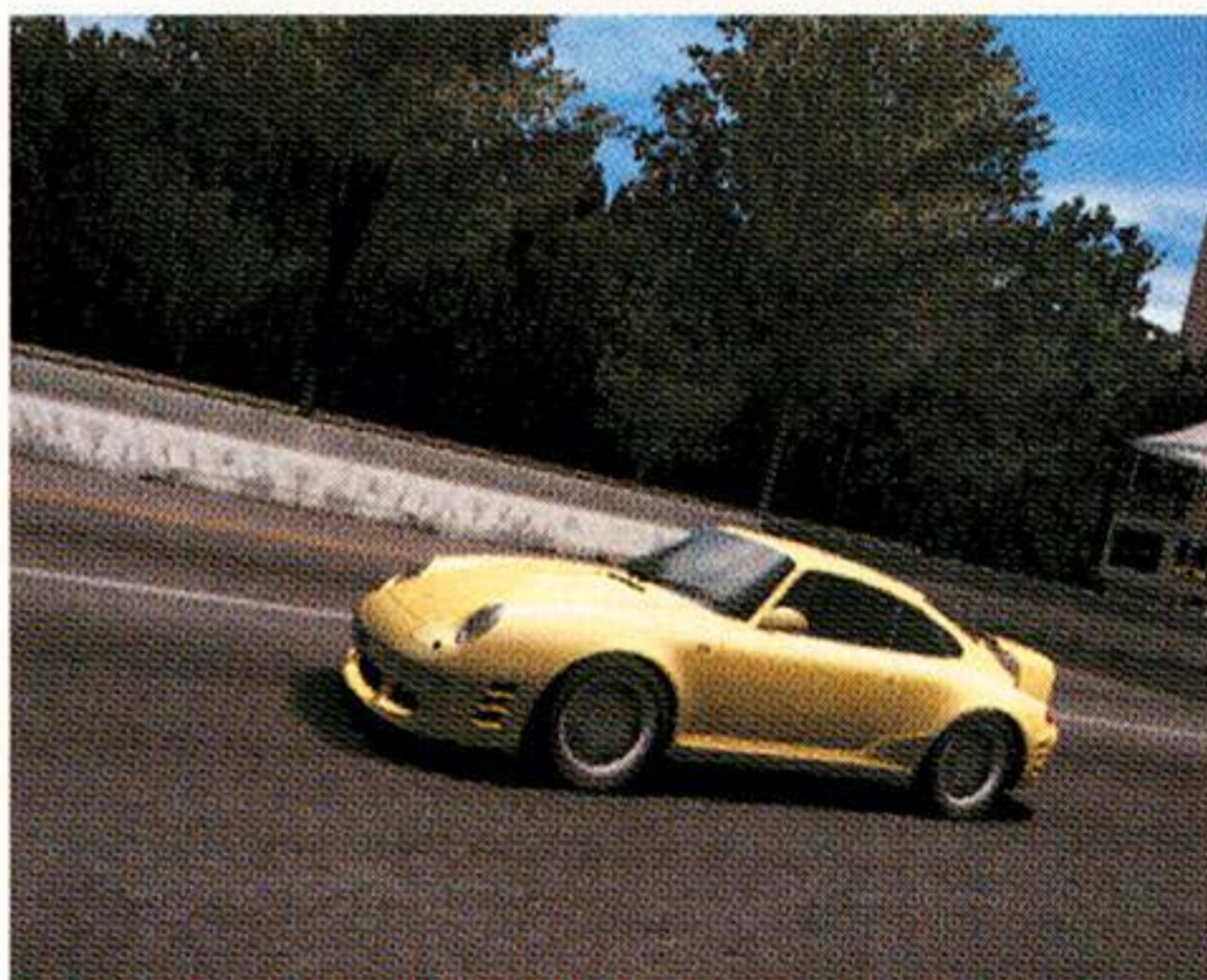
As far as the lineup of parts goes, the game will include more selections and more categories of parts. "GT4 will have a degree of options never before seen in the series, and our goal is to educate consumers on how to tune cars," explains Imasaki.

### WIN BY AN INCH OR A MILE

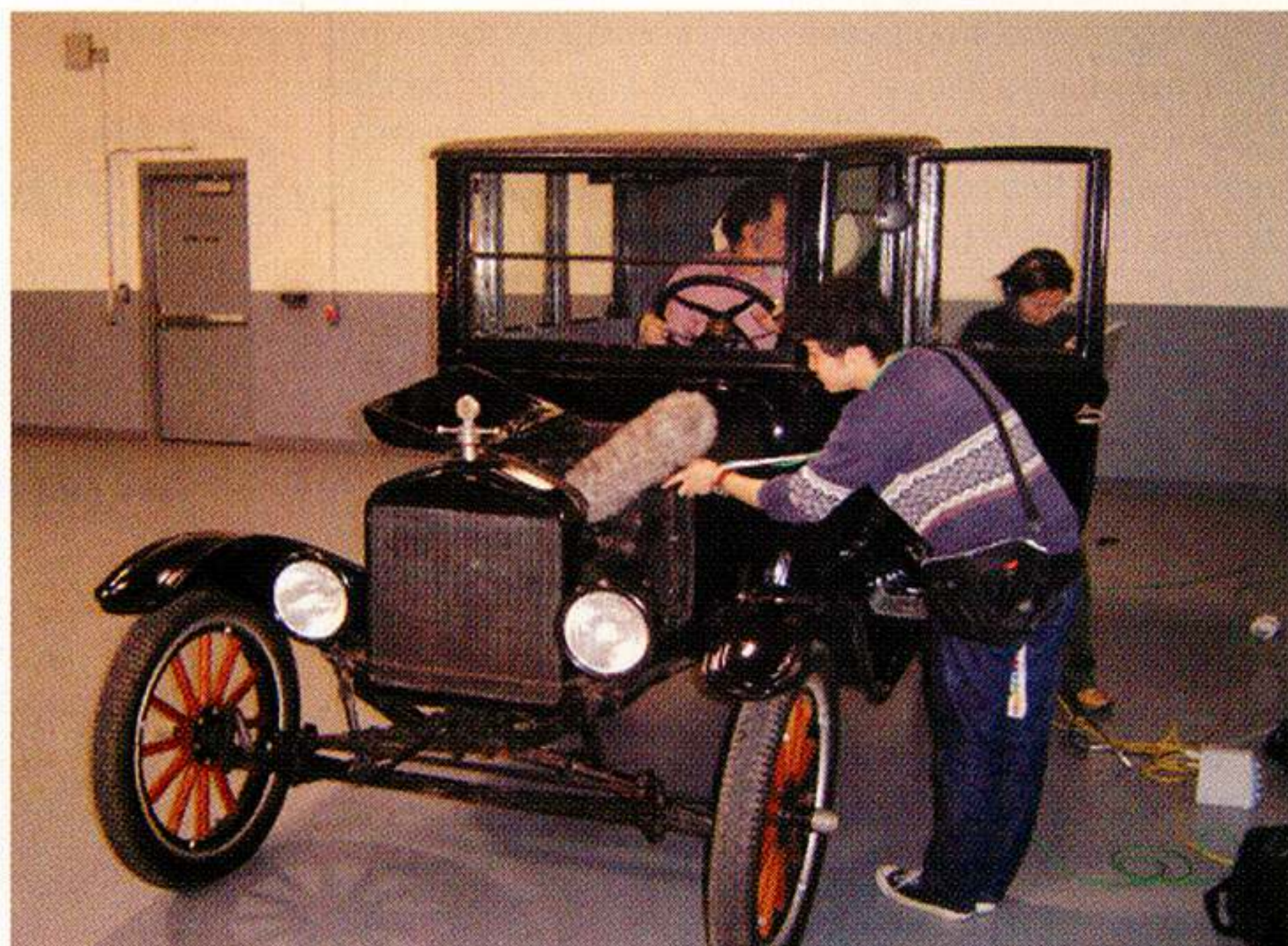
Online racing is probably the most hotly anticipated addition to GT4, and Polyphony is cooking up some substantial support. "Whatever you see offline in the game, our goal is to bring it online, but there are bandwidth barriers, and some may not make it," Imasaki says.

Races will include a maximum of six players, and you'll be able to create your own tournaments or enter Sony-sponsored events. A multilayer rankings board will track your success across the variety of events, and you'll be able to show off your cars in virtual showrooms. Chat rooms will be categorized by brands and models, and the PS2 hard drive will be supported in some fashion that Sony has yet to reveal, though downloadable cars or tracks seem likely.

CONTINUED ►



This Porsche Ruf will lead GT4's charge into adding the long-desired European exotic cars to its lineup.



Sound techs roll tape and photographers burn through film to bring modern and vintage cars into Gran Turismo 4. Polyphony's crew has even been known to scout unusual and exotic cars they encounter on the streets, pausing to take pictures and jot notes as preparation for possibly including them in the game.

# TALKING SHOP



With the worldwide success of the Gran Turismo series, Polyphony's president, Kazunori Yamauchi, has risen to that rarefied status of "star developer," deservedly taking his place in the pantheon alongside prominent names like John Carmack and Hideo Kojima. *GamePro* caught up with him to talk cars, collisions, GT4, and more.

**GAMEPRO:** I understand that a big focus for GT4 will be the world of car culture. What will this mean for the player?

**HAZUNORI YAMAUCHI:** Gran Turismo 4 will set the new standard in racing by providing various unique aspects that have never been seen before. Elements such as the massive quantity of cars, the large number of manufacturers, and a tuner's village consisting of numerous tuning shops will allow players to immerse themselves heavily into the world of car culture to levels surpassing Gran Turismo titles in the past.

**GP:** What aspect of adding online play is most exciting to you and why?

**HY:** Adding online features is a way that gameplay is multiplied. Even if, for example, the contents were the same as in the offline version, the gaming and playing style of the players will change, and the gaming experience and fun factor expands significantly.

**GP:** Since GT4 focuses on a highly realistic simulation, what sort of changes will the average GT3 fan notice when they start playing?

**HY:** Players are sure to realize the difference within three seconds after starting. The physics engine is so strong in GT4 that fans of GT3 will feel as if they are playing a whole new game, which I'm very excited about as we work to reach my goal of creating the ultimate driving simulator.

**GP:** Will gamers still be able to cheat by "bouncing" off other cars at high speed in order to send themselves in the right direction?

**HY:** We are preparing a penalty system for intentionally rough driving where players will be penalized for 10 seconds, and their car will not exceed a certain speed. We can adjust the sensitivity of this penalty system, and we will probably adjust it according to the difficulty of each of the races.

**GP:** Will damage modeling be included in GT4?

**HY:** I am not yet enthusiastic about visual damage to cars. However, perhaps including damage through physics—for instance, a car that cannot drive straight—is an aspect to consider.

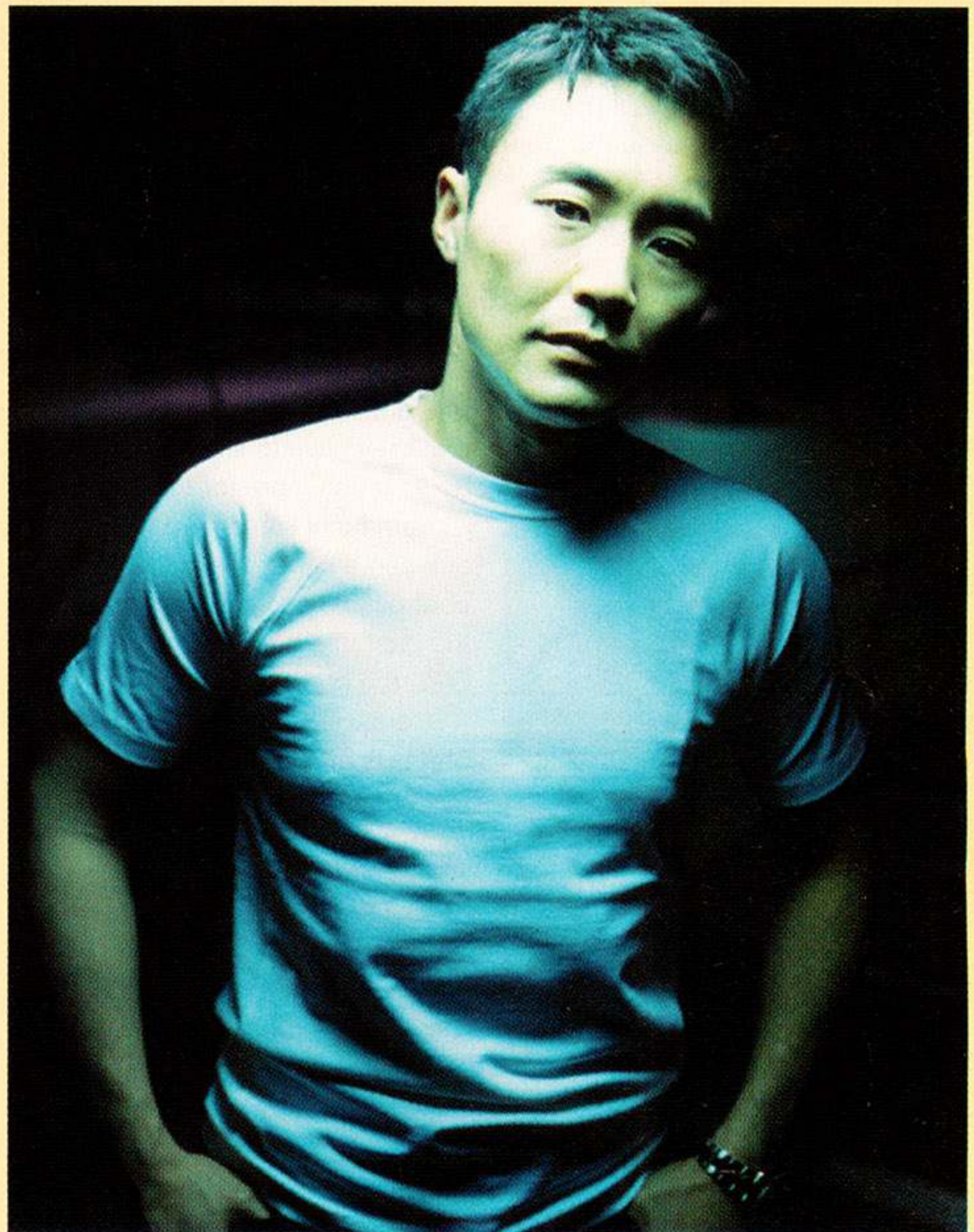
**GP:** Could you explain drift racing for our readers who haven't encountered it yet?

**HY:** Drifting was first introduced to the general public by the former race driver Keiichi Tsuchiya. Perhaps Japan had the advantage in this field as it had an early history of many low-cost rear-wheel-drive sports cars being available in the market, making it easier to approach and expand compared to other countries.

In the numerous winding roads found in Japan's mountains, you are sure to find lots of skid marks, all of which are made by drifting. This signifies that there are lots of youngsters who journey out to the mountains late at night.

**GP:** Will A.I. drivers now block you or cut you off from passing on the inside?

**HY:** If the objective is to simply block the player, this can be achieved easily. The areas of A.I. that need improvement are not aspects like this, which are easily recognized, rather the true basics of driving, which are closer to "breathing."



**GP:** What new car are you most excited to add to GT4 and why?

**HY:** The sports cars that are a bit old with high engine capacity and high horsepower. For example, the Chaparral will be very interesting to see and experience in the game. Cars from this generation usually have an immature chassis and have unbelievable power compared to the low-grip tires. It is easy to imagine the difficulty of driving cars like this, but at the same time, I would love to try to overpower such a car and drive it to my own will.

**GP:** What's your favorite car to drive in real life and in the game?

**HY:** In real life, my choice is the Nissan 350Z. In the game, I like cars with a good weight balance and rear-wheel drive. Examples would be the Honda S2000 and, of course, the Nissan 350Z. This is because the reaction to the driver's input is very natural, the controllability of the car has a good and wide range, and it can easily be made to match the driver's intentions.

**GP:** Will GT4 offer any changes to the process of buying new parts and upgrading cars?

**HY:** Please look forward to this. I am hoping to allow for more variety of tuning parts and for more ability or flexibility for adjustments. This also includes a new concept of the stability of the car's bodywork.

**GP:** Why do you think the GT series became such a big success?

**HY:** I am very happy to see the Gran Turismo franchise perform as well as it has, and perhaps this was because of our attempt to portray the beauty of cars—their appearance, the driving pleasures—as clearly and directly as possible.

Drag racing is also rumored to be in GT4's lineup, but drift competitions are a sure thing. "The idea is for players to be evaluated on how artistic their drifts are on the street," says Yamauchi. "We'll probably model them after the D1 competitions," adds Imasaki, "and make them look as cool as possible with replays." License tests are undergoing a minor facelift, too, and will probably appear in the game as a Racing School mode that focuses more on competitive racing techniques.

## A QUARTER-MILE AT A TIME

The heart of GT4, however, will be a new physics model that models driving so realistically that Imasaki expects it could be used as a simulator by "race drivers or driving schools."



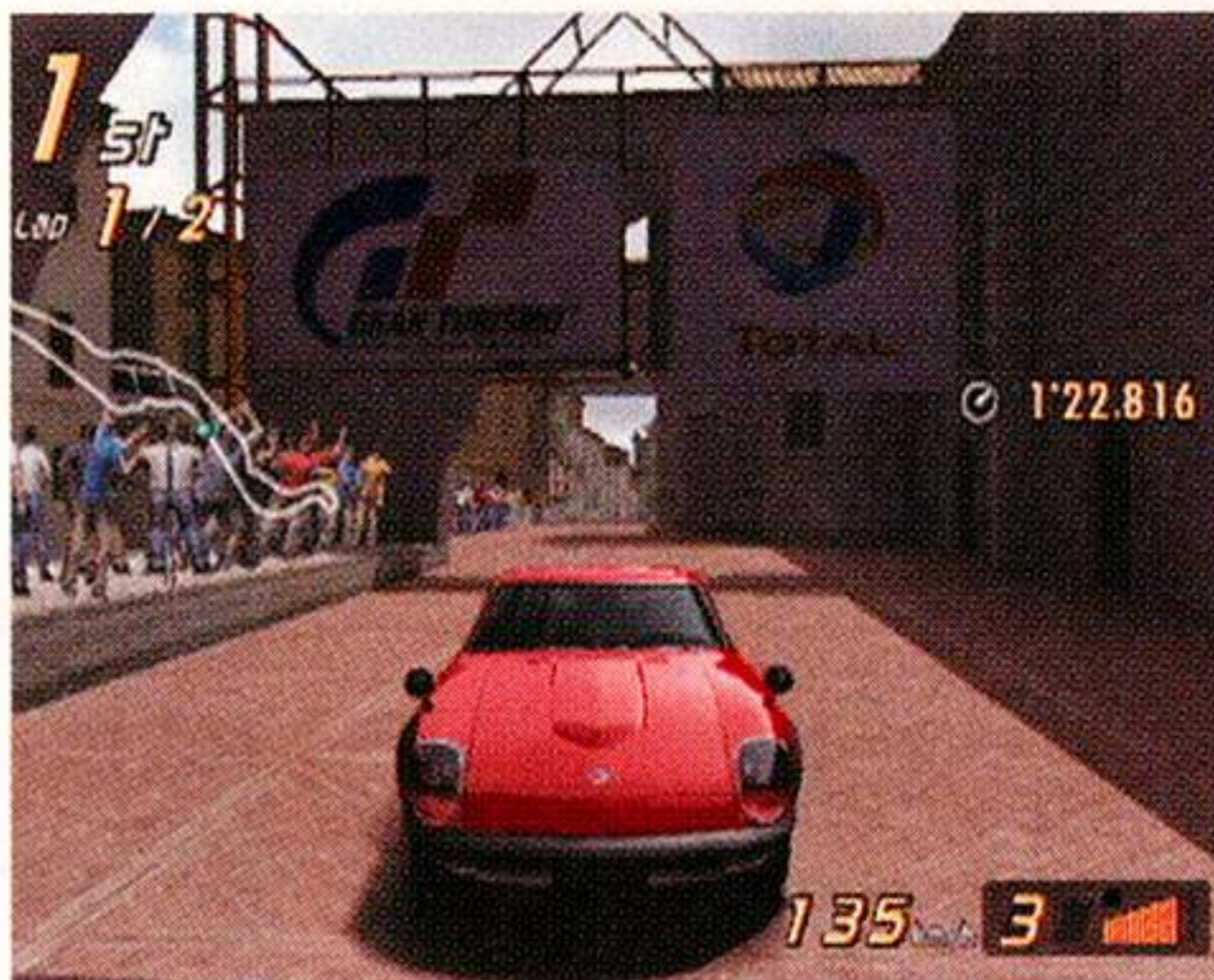
Players will notice that they have to slow down much more for turns and carefully monitor their speedometer.

Yamauchi sums it up well: "The new physics model balances the reality of when a car exceeds its limits and enters a situation where it's no longer controllable against the drivability of the car when it's within its limits. In the past, the border between the two was unclear—with the physics of GT3, the car maybe was difficult to handle, yet did not spin out easily."

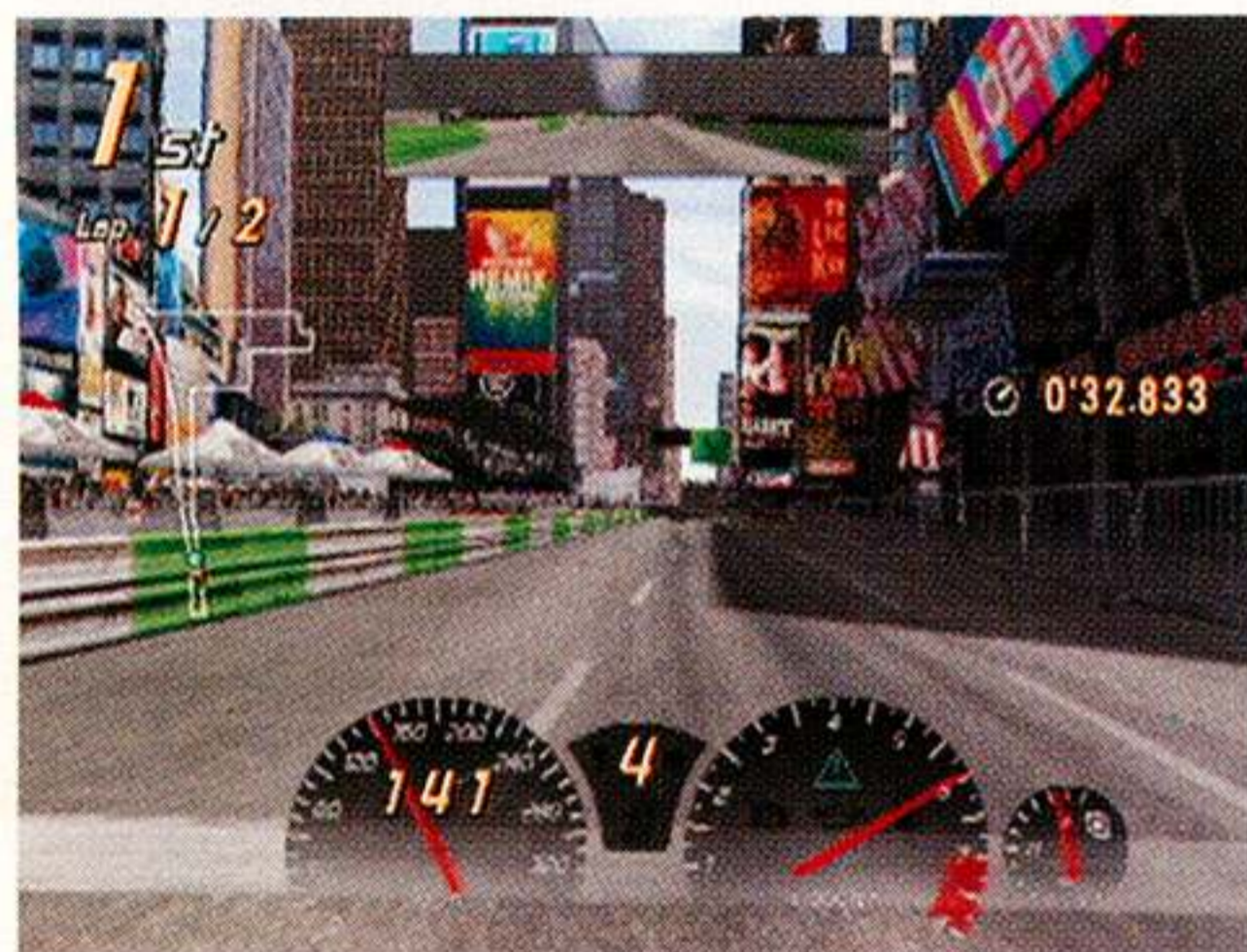
Cars will continue to be unscathed by any kind of collision, but Polyphony is at last addressing how this causes cheap tactics like bouncing off opposing cars. A penalty system will be employed that will limit your car to a slow speed for a set period of time, and the specifics of your sentence will be adjusted based on the difficulty level.

In response to the clamor of fans asking that damage be included in GT4, Imasaki replies that "some car companies don't want it, and we have to treat all of the cars the same. Another aspect is that Polyphony are perfectionists, and they wouldn't just do four crumpled corners—it would be 2000 patterns of damage. If we want to do it, we'd do it right, and it would involve a whole other level of graphics. Right now, the priority is on physics—and after all, the game sells because the cars look great."

As far as the graphics go, Yamauchi's goal is "to provide photorealistic rendering—the best in **CONTINUED** ▶



This vintage Fairlady is the only historical model yet revealed for GT4, and it's playable in the Japanese-only GT4 Prologue.



The level of detail in the New York track is really impressive, showcasing many of the recognizable billboards and mar- quees around Times Square.

## GT AND THE 350Z

To get a perspective from the automotive industry on the burgeoning power of Gran Turismo, *GamePro* talked with Ken Zapp and Dean Case, marketing managers at Nissan North America who work on the company's cars and its Nismo line of parts.

**GAMEPRO:** Why do you think the Gran Turismo series has taken off?

**DEAN CASE:** Part of it is the mystique of Japanese brands like Nissan. When people are customizing our cars, they put a Fairlady Z badge from Japan on their 350Z or a Silvia badge on their 240SZ. They love that whole Japanese mystique, and part of why they love Gran Turismo is that it has all the authentic Japanese parts.

**KEN ZAPP:** We've even collaborated on some parts with Sony. While Nismo actually developed our aero kit and did all the engineering and



aerodynamics, Sony provided input on the styling of it based on the game. There a few kind of cool pieces like that where they come in, and you'll be able to drive a Nismo-spec 350Z or Fairlady Z in GT4.

**GP:** What materials do you give Sony—specs, blueprints?

**HZ:** Most of that is done in Japan. For us, it's more like if Sony calls, we gather up a bunch of cars for photography and measurement. If we're talking about the physical dimensions of sway bars and things like that, their programmer in Japan talks to our engineer in Japan.

**GP:** So there's a lot of synergy between your products and Gran Turismo?

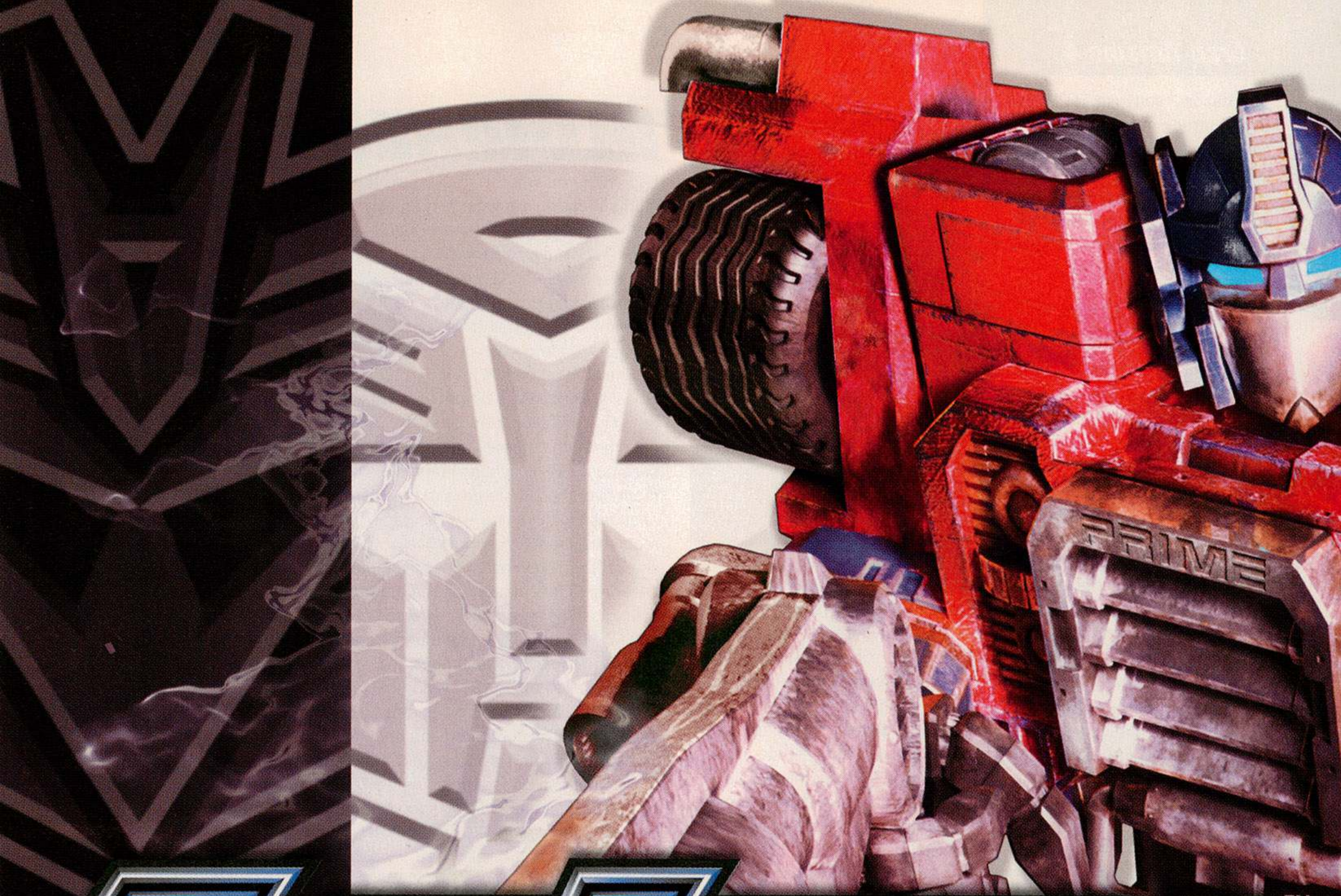
**HZ:** As Sony developed the game, they recognized that there a lot of aftermarket tuners in Japan that have quality stuff, and to be credible in the marketplace, they had to incorporate that into the game. So Nismo was brought on board. Now in the U.S. market, Nismo already has a fairly substantial following in the tuner community and in the performance-enthusiast community. A large part of that is based upon visibility in the game, where kids start playing the game, become aware of Skyline GTR, Fairlady Z, Silvia, Nismo—it's amazing the amount of knowledge that's out there.

**GP:** How accurately does Gran Turismo represent Nissan cars and Nismo parts? **CONTINUED** ▶



Nissan distributed a press kit for the U.S. launch of the 350Z that included a limited version of Gran Turismo 3, giving players the chance to take the 350Z for a virtual spin.





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PlayStation 2 software." GT3 pros will be struck most by improvements in the look of the courses and the road surfaces. The lighting also makes much more of an impact, and details in the distance seem more clear, while the cars sparkle as prettily as ever.

## LET'S GO FOR A LITTLE RIDE

Earlier this year in Japan, Sony released GT4 Prologue, which contains a handful of tracks and cars from the upcoming GT4. While a U.S. release was not planned at press time, some hands-on time with an imported Japanese copy paints a rosy picture for those of you trembling in anticipation. The new physics are immediately evident, and while Sony stresses that the feel of Prologue is not final, GT4 will probably be harder than its predecessor, requiring very precise braking. The upgraded lighting and course graphics really amp up the game's wow power, and a new, extremely useful third-person camera pulls back and up on the action—it could become the preferred perspective. The penalty system is set to 10-second delays at roughly 30 mph, a se-



vere punishment that sometimes knocks you out of the race. In rally races, the fans are interactive, leaping out to snap photos before scurrying back to safety—a cool touch.

Prologue's tantalizing preview definitely provided sufficient reason to etch GT4's fall release date on your calendar, and every-

thing seems to be coming together into a package that should keep fans busy until GT5 arrives. But the wait for GT4 shouldn't stretch out too long—when asked how the extended wait for GT4 affected the game, Yamauchi replied: "Anticipation of the upcoming launch of GT4, in terms of the title's quality, is obviously a plus. However, I also feel that it is not good to keep players waiting for too long." Grateful GT fans couldn't agree more.

# ALL-WHEEL DRIVE

Face it: If you want to get lost in "the ultimate driving simulator," you simply can't get full immersion with a Dual Shock controller. You need a steering wheel—and Logitech's Driving Force Pro was designed from the ground up for Gran Turismo 4.

The biggest perk is the wheel's 900 degrees of rotation. That's 2.5 turns from one extreme to the other—like a real car's controls. It's a huge improvement over the 200 degrees most steering wheels provide, and it definitely changes the dynamics of your game for the better. Controlling a skid (or recovering from an uncontrolled one) is now much more intuitive and life-like; rally racing in particular becomes a completely different experience. Steering in this manner is much more nuanced in comparison to other driving games and wheels, let alone when compared to a gamepad. Right now, GT4 is the only game that supports 900 degrees of steering; others will follow, but in the meantime, the wheel automatically defaults to 200 degrees for all other PS2 driving games.

The Driving Force Pro benefits from Logitech's years of obsessive experience. The contoured and textured-rubber-coated wheel itself measures a full 10 inches across, but the depth of the base isn't even eight—great for small coffee tables as well as practical concerns like storage. Large top-mounted screws keep the wheel clamped to the lip of a table or desk (for an extra \$20, you can get a lap attachment), while little plastic teeth pop out of the floor base, digging into your carpet to keep the pedals firmly in place.

The Driving Force Pro features all the PS2 buttons on the face of the wheel, plus both paddle shifters and a racing stick shift (you can use either or both during a race). Best of all, there's literally no setup—plug in the AC adapter, connect the USB cable to the PS2, attach the floor pedals via a small serial-style cable, turn on GT4, and watch the wheel automatically calibrate itself. You're ready to race.

Make no mistake: Combined with GT4, the Driving Force Pro is the best wheel ever designed for a game console. Yes, it's \$150. Yes, it's worth every penny.—Dan Elektro



**DC:** When we were launching the 350Z in the U.S., we were launching an icon car, and we wanted to have fun with the press kits. We struck a deal with Sony to include a special-edition version of GT3 that was condensed so that you only got to drive the 350Z on one track at Monaco. You didn't have to earn your way up to the 350Z like in the regular game! If we didn't believe that the game represents the car in the most favorable manner, we wouldn't have done it. We got a lot of feedback—they loved it. The press kit has become a collector's item on eBay.

The game is cool enough that [Polphony] has street credibility—they're hardcore enthusiasts. You run into their team at car shows and drifting competitions. The guys who work on GT are passionate about cars just like we are.

**GP:** Do you think the inclusion of drifting in GT4 will help that take off in the U.S.?

**HZ:** Absolutely, it's essential. The thing that's interesting about drifting is that rally has had a cult following for a while, but it never took off—it's



Nissan's S Tune 350Z

very hard to see. It's like watching a desert off-road race where you stick yourself out in the middle of nowhere and every once in a while a car goes screaming by. The thing that's cool about drifting is that it's actually in a closed stadium. You get to see a car on the ragged edge of control, tons of tire smoke and squealing.

**GP:** Why do you think some car manufacturers oppose damage modeling of their cars in Gran Turismo?

**HZ:** I certainly can't speak for any other manufacturer, but Nissan as a brand is confident enough to recognize that if a person happens to pop their car into a wall in a game and tear up the side, that's not a problem with the product. That's a cue that

the individual just needs to hone their skills a little bit better so they don't put the Darlington stripe on the side of it. I don't have a problem personally with our vehicles being in a damaged mode. Now if we're talking about something like a demolition derby where they start off beat up, I'm not sure I'd be a player for that. But that's certainly not what Sony's doing. I could see that maybe there are some manufacturers who have a slightly different view and who are perhaps less confident in their brand.

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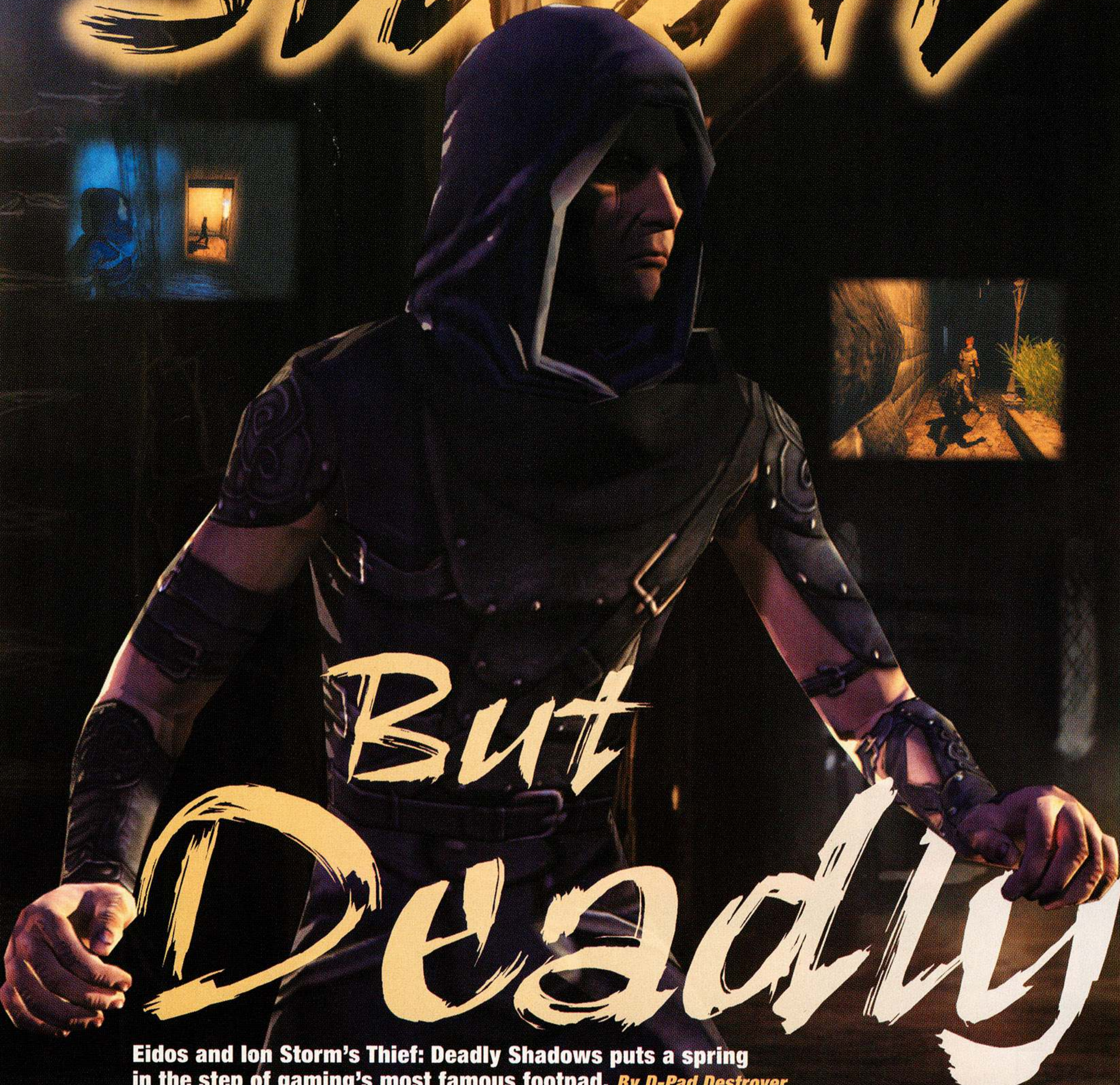
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# SILVERSTEIN



# But DEADLY

Eidos and Ion Storm's *Thief: Deadly Shadows* puts a spring in the step of gaming's most famous footpad. *By D-Pad Destroyer*

Sam Fisher and Solid Snake have enjoyed their days in the sun, but this summer will see the return of one of stealth gaming's most shadowy heroes. Thief: Deadly Shadows not only features the elusive master thief Garrett in his first console adventure, but it also rounds out the story line of the setting and grants players a little more freedom than any other stealth game on the market.

## A Calm Night

The original Thief (subtitled The Dark Project) launched in 1998, a scant two months after Metal Gear Solid revived subtle gameplay on consoles. Developed by Looking Glass Studios (and conceptualized by Irrational Games' Ken Levine, father of Freedom Force), The Dark Project was one of those games that when you play it, you just know you're playing something new and special. The sequel, Thief II: The Metal Age (2000), featured finely tuned gameplay and more of the sort of stealth action that Thief players wanted.

When Ion Storm got the rights to Thief for another sequel (Studio Director and Thief alum Warren Spector apparently went to great lengths for the right to make the game), they decided that they wanted to make a game that was true to the Thief legacy while also improving the series' good points and ditching the bad. "When you sit down to play Thief: Deadly Shadows," says Lead Designer Randy Smith, "you won't ever mistake that you're playing the latest and greatest game in the Thief series."

## A Whispering Wind

"When picking and choosing elements of the previous games," says Smith (no relation to Deus Ex: Invisible War Lead Designer Harvey Smith), "we've often said that we want to match Thief's dark, gritty mood and Thief II's emphasis on stealth gameplay." Ion Storm took a look at the strengths of the Thief games and highlighted them. For instance, Thief has never been about "playing the radar," as Spector has stated it, unlike games like Metal Gear Solid in which you spend as much

time watching "vision cones" in your radar as you do sneaking and looking for shadows. Instead, you can tell by the direction a guard is looking or by the dialogue he speaks whether he can see you or not. Realistic audio and visual feedback replaces the radar and vision cones, making for a more immersive experience.

Another strength of the series is that unlike other stealth-based games (and Ion's own Deus Ex), Thief's concept is very narrowly focused. "Thief is *the* stealth game. Most other games have multiple gameplay aspects, and only one of them is stealth," says Smith. Not having to code in a full fighting engine or combat model frees up the developers to think more deeply about the stealth game, which is what



You can use water arrows to douse torches and other flames, thereby putting out the lights. Nearby guards will notice this, however, so you'll have to be quick to take advantage.

Thief is all about. Smith explains, "Our guards have a wide range of suspicious states, a large number of evidence types they respond to, and a huge variety of ways they can respond." Compare this to the A.I. of Invisible War, which had to react to so many diverse situations (Has the player killed my friends? Is he a member of my group? Did he fulfill this particular mission? Is he pointing a gun at me?) that it wasn't quite so intelligent at reacting to stealth players. According to Smith, "Guards in Thief notice torches that go out, doors left ajar, missing valuables, **CONTINUED** ►



The light sources in Deadly Shadows are dynamic. Hitting this chandelier will cause it to swing, creating moving shadows for you to sneak through.



Garrett can finally climb walls to escape guards or get to out-of-reach places. Previously, he could only lift himself up onto high ledges.



Civilians in the city sections will start out neutral to you, but the guards will be suspicious from the get-go. Garrett's reputation precedes him.

## Consolidation

While some PC fans of the Deus Ex series are crying foul that Invisible War was "dumbed down" for the Xbox, concerns fly about Ion Storm's tactic of developing same-code versions of its games for both the PC and Xbox. Many claim that this technique, which involves working from one single code base to develop both versions so that they're functionally identical, leads to an in-the-middle product that uses the strengths of neither machine.

In the case of Thief, few know that the series was originally meant to be multiplatform to begin with. "Back at Looking Glass, we had documents describing how the interface would work on the consoles of the time," says Randy Smith. "Then once it became clear that we weren't going to make The Dark Project into a console game, we wound up making interface adjustments that only made sense for the PC. But in truth, it didn't take much revision of the interface or the gameplay to make it multiplatform-compatible once again."

With console games selling much better than PC games these days, it's almost a must to give a high-profile PC title an Xbox port. Developing the code simultaneously, as Ion Storm does, makes it so that neither version suffers from "just a port" syndrome.



The interface from Deus Ex: Invisible War evolved from a design process that took both the Xbox and PC into account from the beginning.



Attacks from hiding on unaware targets are much more effective than fighting enemies face to face. A head shot with the bow from the shadows will kill with one hit.



Leaning against a wall will make you that much harder to detect. Third-person view is helpful in these situations, and you can switch from first- to third-person perspective at will.



A slight gray halo will surround you when you are stealthed in third-person view as a visual confirmation that you're hidden.



If guards don't detect you, they'll go about their business and continue any conversations they're in. If you listen in, you might hear hints about alternate routes through a level or secret treasures you can take.

and broken furniture as well as blood pools, bodies, and other signs of recent combat. They will become alarmed if you bump into them, and they will notice if a guard is missing from his post for too long."

### Muffled Footsteps

So what about the stealth? Garrett is a master thief, so he has to be equipped with all the skills and tools one might need to break and enter with panache. Of course, you can sneak, shimmy along walls, and stab opponents in the back for a one-shot kill à la Tenchu, but you can also climb walls, douse torches (even ones carried by guards) with water arrows, wash away telltale blood stains, pickpocket keys from guards, put people to sleep with gas arrows, dissuade pursuers with slippery oil, light that oil aflame with fire arrows, manipulate light sources to create new shadows and hiding places, and so on. You can lure guards into rooms and lock them inside, club them unconscious with a sap (Air Hendrix's favorite), or strike them blind with flash bombs. You can also pick any lock you see, steal any object you can carry, and sneak past every enemy in the game without killing a soul. And you can do all of this in first-person or third-person perspective and even change perspective on the fly as Ion Storm has decided to fully support both view modes throughout the entire game.

As mentioned above, the sounds and visuals play a huge role in *Deadly Shadows*. Rather than having guards suddenly pop a huge exclamation mark over their heads when they see you, *Thief* has them bark out a few lines of warning or some verbal taunts as they begin looking for you. If you go unseen, you can sit in shadows and listen in on conversations that might give you clues to valuables you might not otherwise have found, and you'll know that the fact that they continued their conversation shows that they don't know you're there. *Deadly Shadows* boasts more in-game voices than *Deus Ex: Invisible War*, even considering that *Thief* doesn't have any interactive conversations at all. All of this voice work is designed to let you know what's going on in the NPCs' heads without resorting to odd icons or cluttering up the screen with meters and radars.

### Dark Camelot

The *Thief* series has quite a pedigree. Irrational Games Founder and President Ken Levine came up with the original concept for *Thief*, which was



first called *Dark Camelot* and cast you as a thief charged with bringing down an evil King Arthur. Warren Spector (who is often incorrectly given credit for the *Thief* series) came to Looking Glass in the middle of the project and helped guide it to its final vision. Levine went on to work as lead designer on *System Shock 2* and executive producer on Irrational's *Freedom Force* and the ill-fated *The Lost*.

*Thief II* was also developed by Looking Glass Studios, this time without Levine and Spector. Thought by many to be a much more polished game, *Thief II* still didn't sell as well as the original, and it was the last game shipped by Looking Glass Studios before it closed its doors in May of 2000.

When Ion Storm set out to develop *Deadly Shadows*, it sought out as many old *Thief* hands as it could, including Randy Smith, who worked as a designer for both previous titles and would become lead designer for *Deadly Shadows*.

### The Flash of a Blade

Now, *Thief II* wasn't exactly a huge seller. For *Deadly Shadows*, Ion Storm has decided to change a few things that may have held the previous *Thief* games down. For one, the developers have changed the "recovery game," or the way the game plays when you inevitably get caught. In the other *Thief* titles, your best bet was to run and hide until the A.I. got tired of looking for you, but Ion decided that's a bit boring. In *Deadly Shadows*, you're much better equipped to escape without the "wait-and-see" approach. Your flash bombs, gas arrows, mines, and other equipment exist almost primarily to help you fight your way free, and you can also stand up to combat better than you could before.

Another new feature is the city section, a hub of freedom in which you may break and enter your little heart out between missions. In these sections, the only goals are those you make for yourself: If you need money to buy more arrows, for instance, you might look for an apartment to rob or a mark to pickpocket. You might find clues in notes or conversations as to where you can find some serious loot, and you can search the city for a good fence to whom you can sell your ill-gotten goods. City sections don't have great impact on the story, but they do offer you the freedom to be a freelance thief when you're not off trying to save the world.

### And Then Silence Once More

With lessons learned from the past *Thief* games and the recent release of *Deus Ex: Invisible War*, Ion Storm is poised to strike with *Deadly Shadows*. With its sharp focus on stealth and its depth of gameplay, the new *Thief* could steal the stealth genre title out from under the likes of Sam and Snake this summer.



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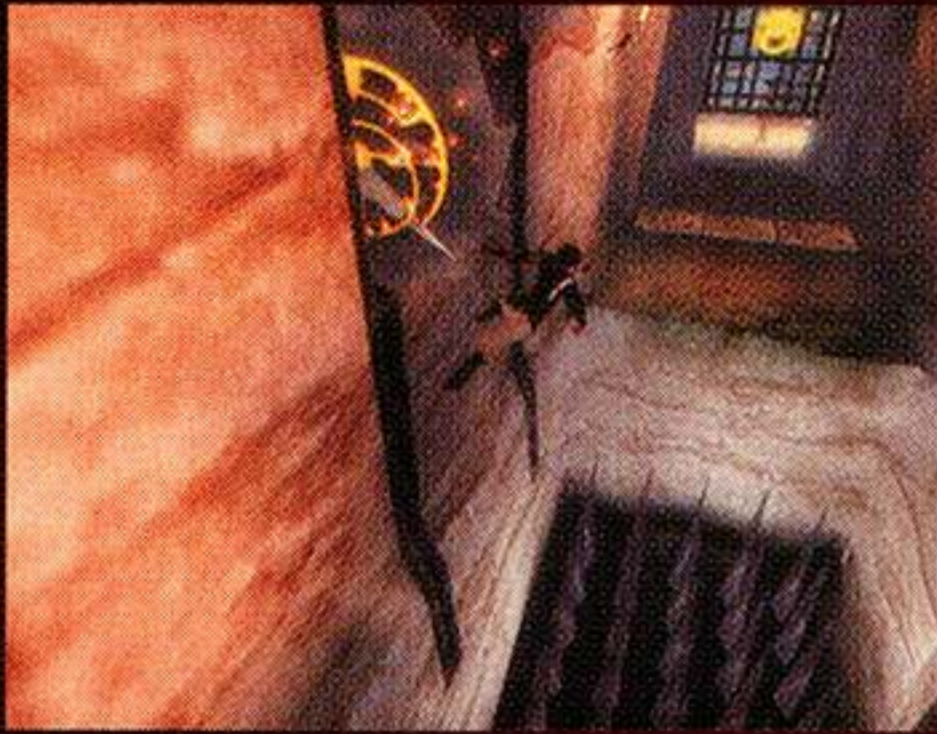


# 2003 GAMEPRO READERS' CHOICE AWARDS

Was your voice among those who made the choice? Check *GamePro* readers' picks for the best of the year and see.



## Best Action Game



### 1. Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time

By Ubisoft  
PS2/Xbox/GameCube

### 2. The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King

By EA Games  
PS2/Xbox

### 3. Viewtiful Joe

By Capcom  
GameCube

LOTR won this category last year, but in 2003, the resurrection of a Prince trumped The Return of the King. Joe's cult clout pulled a strong third.

## Best Combat Game



### 1. SOCOM II: U.S. Navy SEALs

By Sony  
PS2

### 2. Medal of Honor: Rising Sun

By EA Games  
PS2/Xbox/GameCube

### 3. Counter-Strike

By Microsoft  
Xbox

You know how everybody likes to say that the future of gaming is on-line? The future is now, at least for Combat—all three winners feature Internet play. Reach out and frag someone!

## Best Fighting Game



### 1. Soul Calibur II

By Namco  
PS2/Xbox/GameCube

### 2. Virtua Fighter 4: Evolution

By Sega  
PS2

### 3. Dragon Ball Z: Budokai 2

By Atari  
PS2

Talk about a lopsided fight. Soul Calibur II's three-platform onslaught packed a punch of 66 percent of all votes, the largest amount in any single category. DBZ wasn't far behind VF4, though.

## Best Racing Game



### 1. Need for Speed Underground

By EA Games  
PS2/Xbox/GameCube

### 2. Mario Kart: Double Dash!!

By Nintendo  
GameCube

### 3. Project Gotham Racing 2

By Microsoft  
Xbox

NFS won last year, too, but this year's entry (and its strong lead over the competition) arguably set the pace for future street racing games. After all, it was in the top five selling games last year.

## Best Role-Playing Game



### 1. Final Fantasy X-2

By Square Enix U.S.A.  
PS2

### 2. Star Wars: Knights of the Old Republic

By LucasArts  
Xbox

### 3. Morrowind: Game of the Year Edition

By Bethesda Softworks  
Xbox

The gap between perennial heavyweight Final Fantasy and those resourceful Jedi was fairly close. And it's not over—keep reading, and you'll see round two between these heavyweights.

## Best Platform Game



### 1. Jak II

By Sony  
PS2

### 2. Ratchet & Clank: Going Commando

By Sony  
PS2

### 3. Whiplash

By Eidos Interactive  
PS2/Xbox

Jak's dark remix pulled about 45 percent of the vote here with Ratchet garnering another 35 percent or so. Seems like the PS2 is the platform for platforms.

## Best Adventure Game



### 1. The Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker

By Nintendo  
GameCube

### 2. Grand Theft Auto Double Pack

By Rockstar Games  
PS2/Xbox

### 3. The Simpsons Hit & Run

By Vivendi Universal Games  
PS2/Xbox/GameCube

Seems like everybody said that "Cel-da" was going to ruin the series and they wouldn't buy it. Everybody changed their minds, huh? Meanwhile, The Simpsons edged out Silent Hill 3 by just two votes.

## Best Brain/Reflex Game



### 1. The Sims: Bustin' Out

By EA Games  
PS2/Xbox/GameCube

### 2. DDRMAX2 Dance Dance Revolution

By Konami  
PS2

### 3. Mario Party 5

By Nintendo  
GameCube

This was a close one—only about 50 votes between first and third place. DDR missed the top three by a hair last year, but it found its rhythm in 2003. And Mario still knows how to party.



## Best Football Game



### 1. Madden NFL 2004

By EA Sports  
PS2/Xbox/GameCube

### 2. (Tie) ESPN NFL Football 2K4

By ESPN Videogames  
PS2/Xbox/GameCube

### 2. (Tie) NFL Blitz Pro

By Midway  
PS2/Xbox/GameCube

Yes, that's right—ESPN and Blitz pulled exactly the same number of votes. But they each took just 13.9 percent of the vote. Guess where all the rest went? Hint: not to third-place NCAA Football 2004.

## Best Handheld Game



### 1. Final Fantasy Tactics Advance

By Nintendo  
GBA

### 2. Super Mario Advance 4: Super Mario Bros. 3

By Nintendo  
GBA

### 3. Mario & Luigi: Superstar Saga

By Nintendo  
GBA

Remarkably, Pokémon didn't even make the list, despite its stunning sales last year. Nintendo pulls an unsurprising threeppeat while Nokia reloads and Sony quietly builds.

## Best PC Game



### 1. Call of Duty

By Activision

### 2. Final Fantasy XI

By Square Enix U.S.A.

### 3. Halo

By Microsoft

As usual, the PC game market features a little something for everyone—World War II-era shooters, persistent online fantasy worlds, and console ports with lots of bugs (and patches, of course).

## Console of the Year

### 1. PlayStation 2

### 2. Xbox

### 3. GameCube

Same as it ever was, for the third year in a row—the order hasn't changed. The PS2 garnered just under half of all votes, which was less than last year but still a commanding and undeniable win.



## Best Basketball Game



### 1. NBA Street Vol. 2

By EA Sports Big  
PS2/Xbox/GameCube

### 2. NBA Live 2004

By EA Sports  
PS2/Xbox/GameCube

### 3. ESPN NBA Basketball 2K4

By ESPN Videogames  
PS2/Xbox/GameCube

Hey, maybe it really is in the game—EA claims the top spot with its spin on streetball, but the “legit” court franchise was right behind it. Sega's franchise topped the charts last year but slips to third here.

## Best Action Sports Game



### 1. Tony Hawk's Underground

By Activision  
PS2/Xbox/GameCube

### 2. SSX 3

By EA Sports Big  
PS2/Xbox/GameCube

### 3. Amped 2

By Microsoft  
Xbox

There's no stopping the ultimate skate franchise—this marks its fifth straight victory for the Tony Hawk series. Nothing against the snowboarding games, but really, they didn't stand a chance.

## Best Other Sports Game



### 1. Dead or Alive Xtreme Beach Volleyball

By Tecmo  
Xbox

### 2. Mario Golf: Toadstool Tour

By Nintendo  
GameCube

### 3. Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2004

By EA Sports  
PS2/Xbox/GameCube

This isn't a category, it's the opening to a joke: Didja hear the one about Tiger, Mario, and eight hot chicks in bikinis? Actually, DOAX doubled Mario's numbers...and that's “doubled” not “double-D.”

## Game of the Year

### 1. Star Wars: Knights Of the Old Republic

By LucasArts  
Xbox

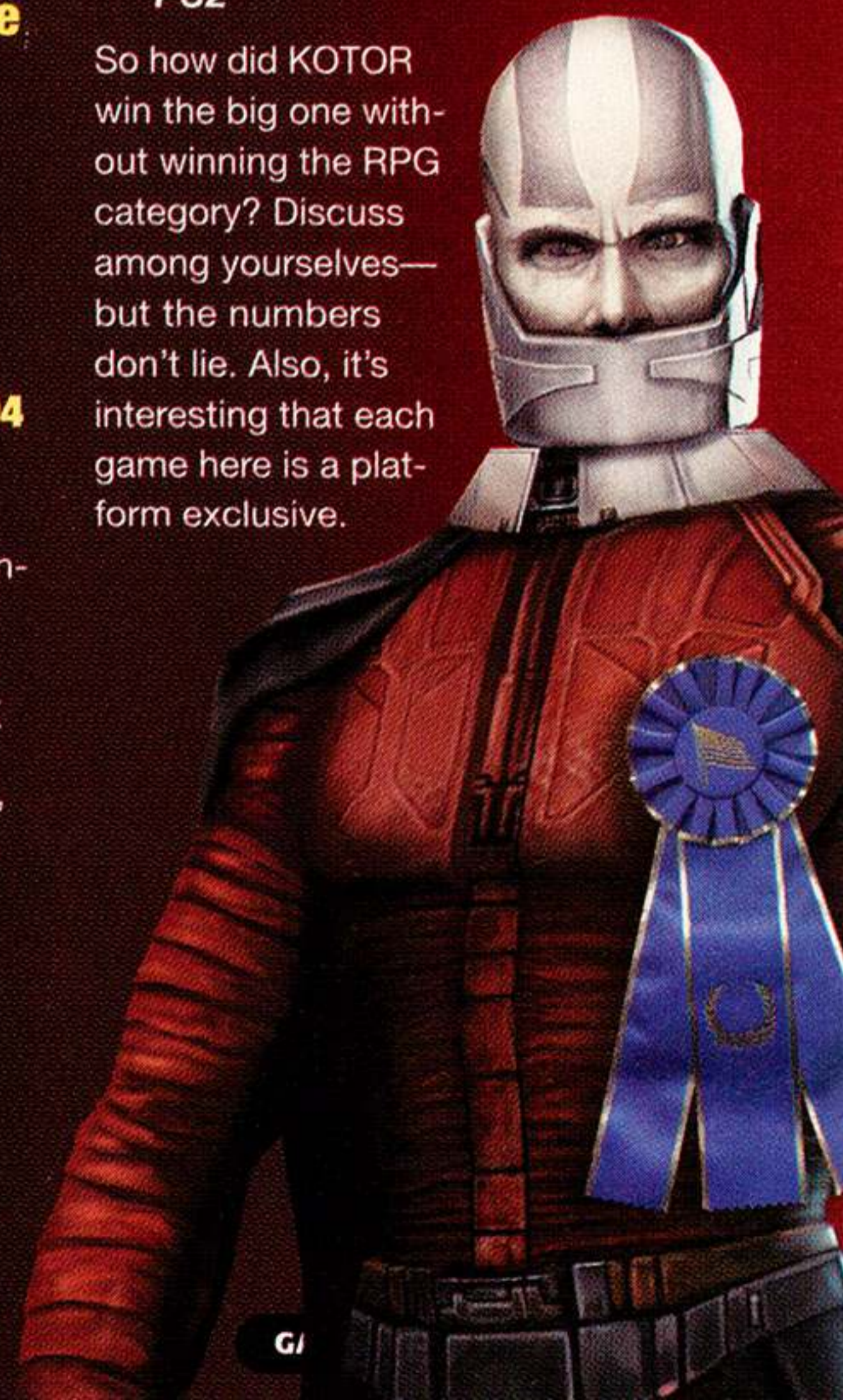
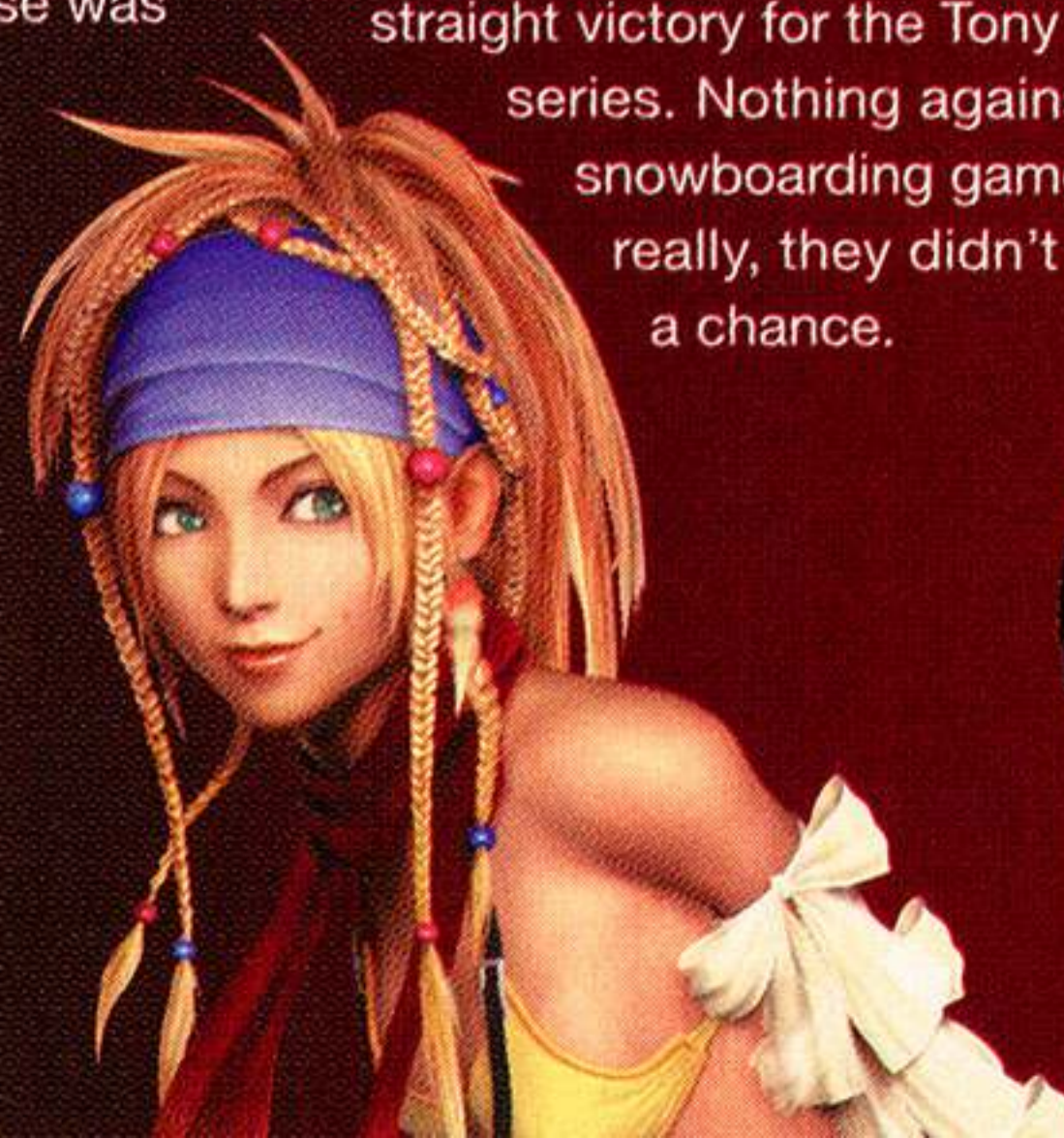
### 2. The Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker

By Nintendo  
GameCube

### 3. Final Fantasy X-2

By Square Enix U.S.A.  
PS2

So how did KOTOR win the big one without winning the RPG category? Discuss among yourselves—but the numbers don't lie. Also, it's interesting that each game here is a platform exclusive.





# THE WEIRDEST GAMES EVER

Most games are pretty much alike: Drive the car, shoot the gun, rescue the princess, save the world. And then there are the games that ask a little more: Suck the blood, evolve the tribe, teach the fish, pick the nose. Welcome to the world of weird games. And keep in mind that saying they're weird doesn't make them bad. If anything, these games should be applauded for challenging preconceived notions of what a video game can and should be—this is gaming outside the box.

## 10 Incredible Crisis

Titus for the PlayStation

It's Grandma's birthday, and she wants her businessman son Taneo to get home early from work to spend a little extra time with Mom. Simple enough, right? Naturally, everything goes wrong, unleashing a string of enormous disasters involving runaway elevators, giant teddy bears, explosions, dance routines, alien invasions, and other reflex-testing mini-games. Like a Buster Keaton movie come to life, it's a twitchy comedy of errors that hits all the right laugh lines accompanied by a wicked sound track by the Tokyo Ska Paradise Orchestra. But it's still intensely weird.



But it's still intensely weird.

## 9 No One Can Stop Mr. Domino

Acclaim for the PlayStation

Who among you believes that they can stop Mr. Domino? None, laughs notoriously whacked-out developer ArtDink. None of you can stop Mr. Domino. You can only hope to contain Mr. Domino, which, based on the gameplay, isn't that hard as Mr. Domino just runs around in laps on predetermined playfields (to the strains of synthesized dance harmonica music) and tries to trigger kinetic puzzles and traps by laying down dominoes in his wake and then tipping them over on his next go-round. As the player, you can adjust Mr. D's speed and direct him into different "lanes" on the playfield. But try as you might—and oh, will you try!—you cannot stop him. Didn't you hear, fool? No one can stop Mr. Domino.



## 8 Samba de Amigo

Sega for the Dreamcast

Most of the music-based games on the market are only logical extensions of real-life fantasies. Karaoke Revolution? Deep down, everybody dreams of being a pop star. Beatmania? Go ahead, DJ Wannabe—get into the groove. Guitar Freaks? Hey, becoming an instant six-string samurai sounds good. But...who, exactly, wants to be a monkey armed with maracas? Samba de Amigo puts players in just that position with their arms outstretched over a floor sensor that detects how high the special controllers are being held. Match the patterns on the screen, and score big. The system was expensive, unwieldy, and not terribly popular when it came out—which, of course, makes it a heavily lusted-after collectible among Dreamcast fans today.



## 7 Mister Mosquito

Fresh Games for the PlayStation 2

"You are a mosquito...the insect that bites people, makes them feel itchy." But hey, it's a battle of survival from your tiny, winged perspective—with such a short life span, the discomfort of humans is the least of your worries. For as the game tells you, "Blood-sucking is accompanied with much danger." As a cartoon skeeter hanging out in the house of the Yamada family, you have to fly around the rooms, avoiding hazards and

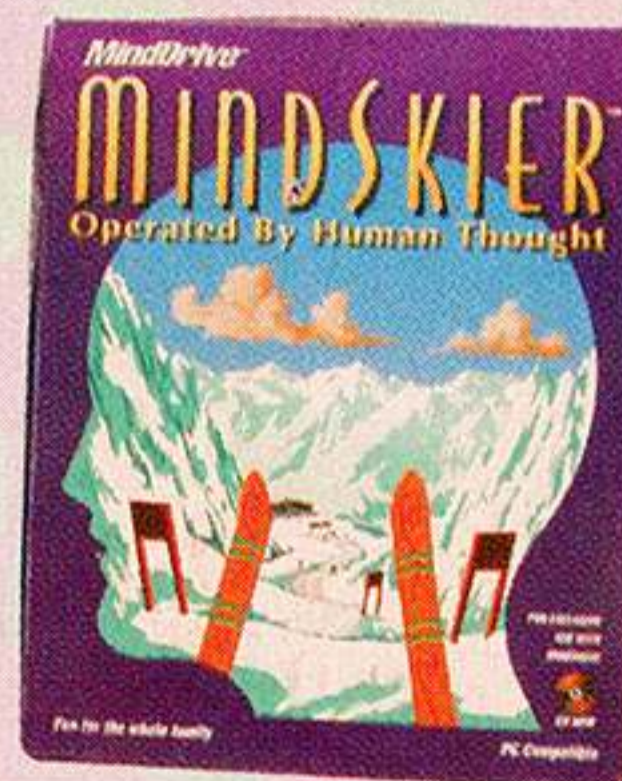


detection, then zero in on a nice vein and drain as much plasma from your human hosts as possible. Sometimes, it involves subterfuge and stealth techniques like turning on a light switch. Best of all, the more itchy you make the Yamadas, the more annoyed they get with each other.

## 6 MindSkier

The Other 90% Technologies for the PC

Gaming has seen no shortage of unusual controllers over the years—custom floor pads, orbs, gloves, the aforementioned Samba de Amigo digital maracas—but only one (so far) has actually been marketed to interface directly with your brain. Well, your finger, really—the Mind-Drive connects to a player's finger and detects things like heart rate and humidity to reverse-engineer what they're thinking to cause those biochemical events. The short version: You can ski down a 3D mountain with the power of your mind. Of course, your noggin can do more than that—there's also Mind-Bowling, PinballMind, and the sci-fi 3D shooter MindFlight, among others. This is a hit in Italy (opera star Luciano Pavarotti is a fan) and, although



it debuted all the way back in 1996, a Windows XP and USB upgrade is due shortly, despite a recent delay. Guess they gotta give it more thought.



## 5 Boong-Ga, Boong-Ga

Taff Systems for the arcade

While all other games on this list were released in the U.S., this Asian coin-op is so intensely bizarre that it simply must be included. Roughly translating to "Spank 'Em," Boong-Ga Boong-Ga offers a coin-op with buttocks sticking out of the front and a controller shaped like a hand. More specifically, a pointing index finger. The screen displays the kind of people you might like to get revenge on—ex-lovers, a con man, a child molester, your mother-in-law, and others. Each target is, uh, disciplined by the player by putting the pointing finger through a small hole in the bottom of the bottom. The machine actually extrapolates the player's "sexual behavior" at the end of the game based on their technique. Stranger still, the machine can be set up as a redemption game, dispensing prizes based on performance. Don't ask what comes out.



## 4 Tail of the Sun

Sony for the PlayStation

Why are there no caveman games anymore? Tail of the Sun may be the answer. In 1997, notoriously whacked-out developer ArtDink created this prehistoric simulation in which the goal is to build and evolve a tribe of cavepeople and teach them to survive, um, on a scrolling green hillock. As you explore the weather-variable, nonlinear world (take that, GTA), you hunt and

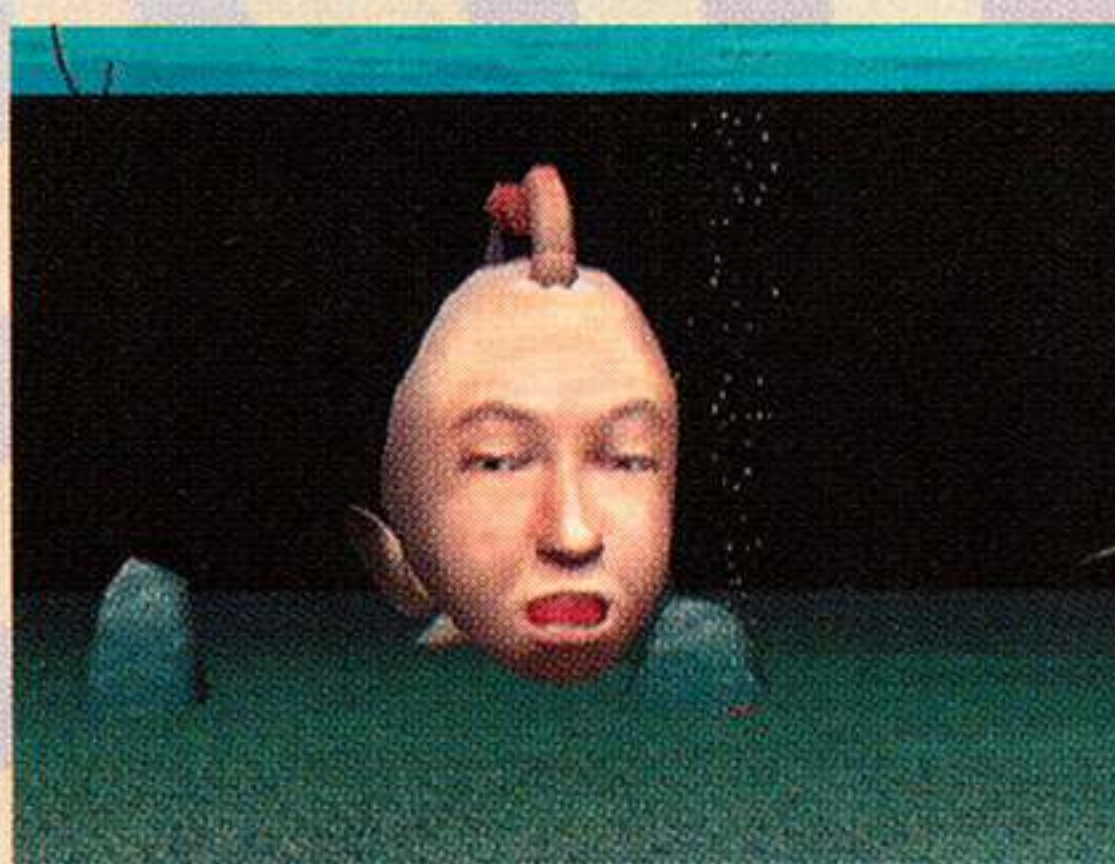


kill low-res polygonal monkeys, mammoths, and giant birds while trying to figure out which items to eat and which items to throw. Oh, and sometimes you just suddenly fall asleep and do a face plant, too. Creepy music and scary artistic menus only help to explain why this is one of Brother Buzz's favorite games.

## 3 Seaman

Sega for the Dreamcast

Okay, here's all you have to do: Raise a fish from birth (no small feat—you have to manage temperature and food supply, as well as be pretty patient), wait until it develops a man's face, and then teach it to talk using the included microphone. Unfortunately, when you do that, if he's not repeating, "Seaman! Seaman! Seaman!" over and over again, he's insulting you. Seeing a full-grown fish with the face of a man is disturbing enough, but when that creature is sentient and a smartass, well, that's getting into the realm of nightmare.



## 2 WarioWare, Inc.: Mega Microgame\$

Nintendo for the Game Boy Advance

Search! Detonate! Jump! Pinch! Fry! One-word instructions are about all you have time for in this collection of over 200 mini-games, all boiled down to their twitchy essences. You have a luxurious five seconds to identify, react, execute, and win each game—whether it's parking a car or picking your nose. Game-show-on-acid music and primitive visuals only accelerate the blistering pace. If you don't say, "What the hell is going on?" when playing this one, you're weirder than it is. And that's hella weird.



## Stretch Panic

Conspiracy Entertainment for the PlayStation 2

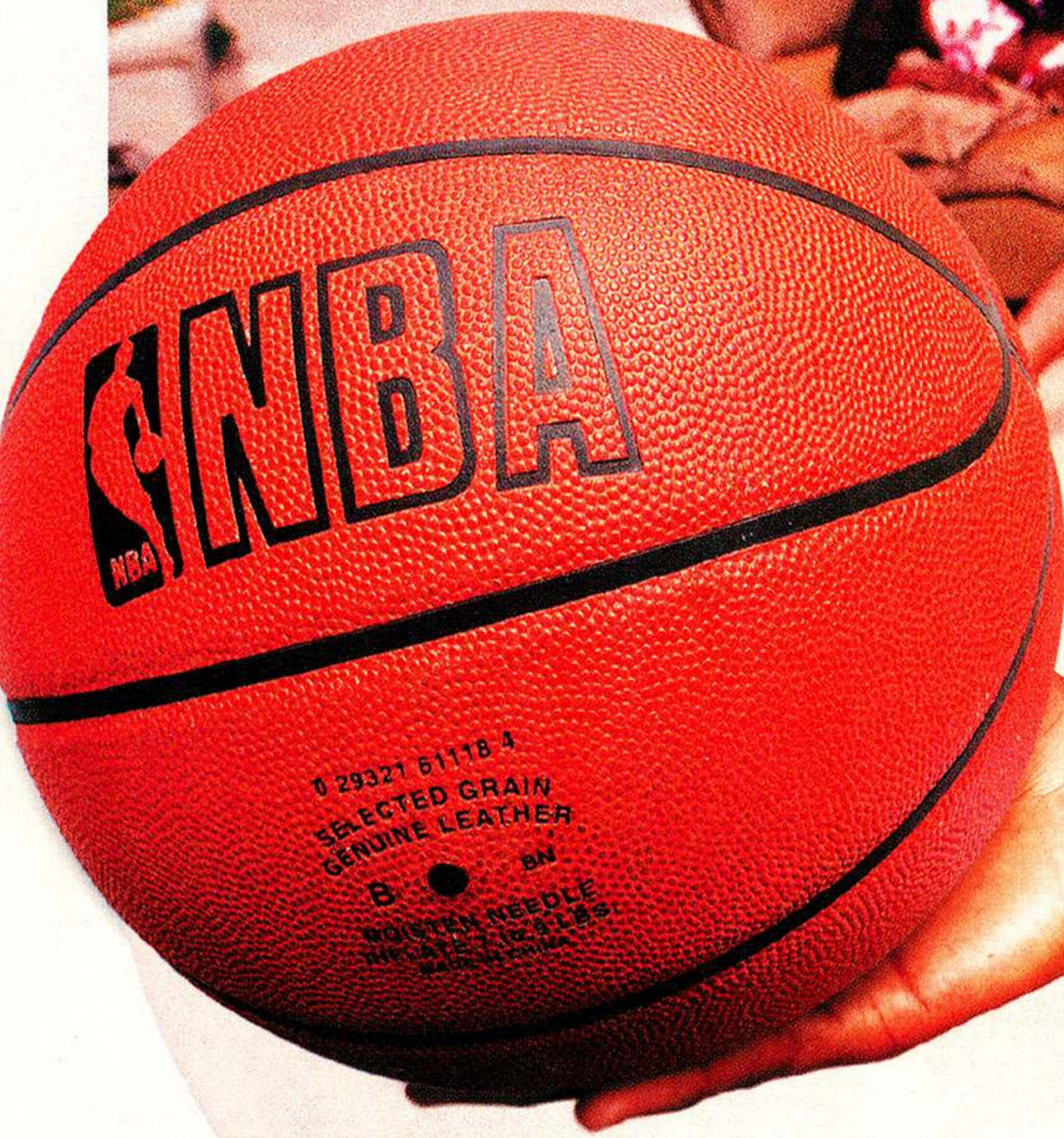
"This is the unusual story of an unusual little girl," says the opening cinema, and that's quite the understatement for a game that's almost entirely incomprehensible.



How many other games feature females with breasts four or five times the size of their bodies (besides Tomb Raider)? That's just one of the evil demonic vanity-based curses placed on Linda's 12 sisters. Armed with a demonic scarf that can make absolutely anything it touches super-elastic (including the environment), Linda must free her family and restore normalcy in the Tim Burton-esque world of Limbo. Trippy graphics, unique analog controls (the scarf is more like an extra hand), a frightening sound track, freakish characters, the way-out moralistic plot line...Stretch Panic takes the top spot simply because everything about the game is weird.



*Before you can have  
the cribs, cars and crew...  
You gotta  
have the  
Moves.*



*Featuring  
Stephon  
Marbury*

\*Online feature available only on the PlayStation 2 computer entertainment system. Online play requires internet connection, Network Adaptor (for PlayStation 2) and Memory Card (8MB) (for PlayStation 2) (each sold separately). NBA Ballers © 2004 Midway Amusement Games, LLC. MIDWAY, the MIDWAY LOGO and BALLERS are trademarks of Midway Amusement Games, LLC. Used by permission. The NBA and individual NBA member team identifications used on or in this product are trademarks, copyrighted designs and other forms of intellectual property of NBA Properties, Inc. and the respective NBA member teams and may not be used in whole or in part, without the prior written consent of NBA Properties, Inc. © 2004 NBA Properties, Inc. All rights reserved. GameSpy and the "Powered by GameSpy" design are trademarks of GameSpy Industries, Inc. All rights reserved. CADILLAC, ESCALADE, XLR and the Cadillac logos (i.e. the "wreath" and the "wreath and crest" symbols) are General Motors trademarks used under license by Midway Home Entertainment Inc. Midway Amusement Games, LLC and its affiliates do not monitor, endorse or accept responsibility for the content of any non-Midway website. Distributed under license by Midway Home Entertainment Inc. "PlayStation" and the "PS" Family logo are registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. The Online icon is a trademark of Sony Computer Entertainment America Inc. Microsoft, Xbox, and the Xbox logos are either registered trademarks or trademarks of Microsoft Corporation in the U.S. and/or other countries and are used under license from Microsoft.



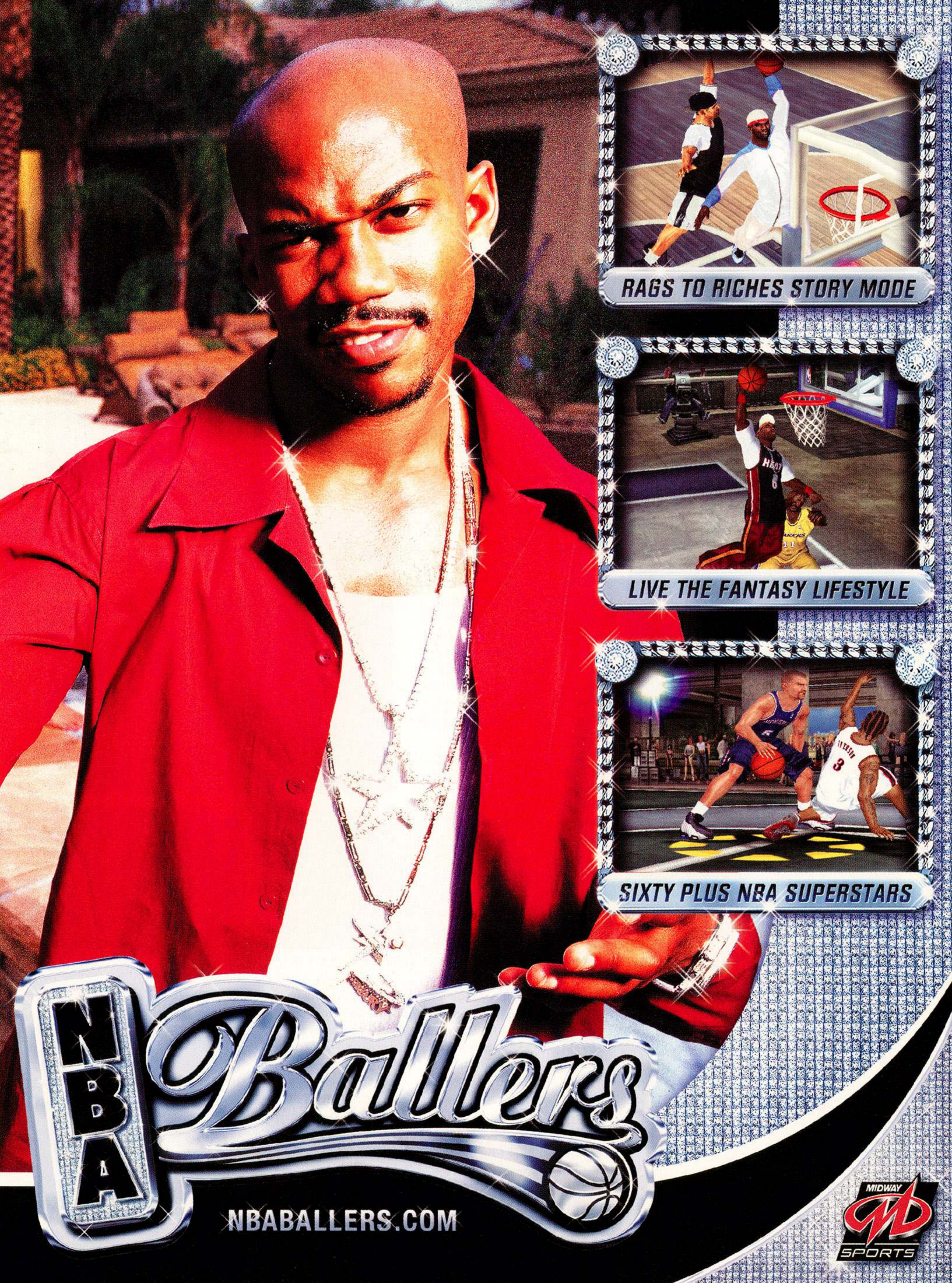
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## Resident Evil 4

**R**esident Evil 4 has been in top-secret development since it was first announced in 2002, but Capcom finally gave the gaming press a good look during its yearly press event in Las Vegas. From an early playable level and footage of the game, it looks as if Resident Evil 4 is going to be worth the wait.

### It Takes a Village

First off, RE4 has been completely revamped since it was last shown at E3 2003, and it's also vastly different from any previous Resident Evil game.



For starters, the prerendered environments are completely gone as RE4 uses a behind-the-character perspective (with a switch-to-first-person-on-the-fly option to aim weapons) to follow the action.

### Village of the Damned

Although the game features Leon Kennedy (from Resident Evil 2), the Umbrella Corporation is no longer the nemesis. As the game begins, Leon (now working as an agent for the U.S. government) is sent to Europe to find the president's kidnapped daughter. In the demo, the action took place during daylight in a village populated by demented townsfolk wielding handheld weapons (no slow-shuffling zombies here).

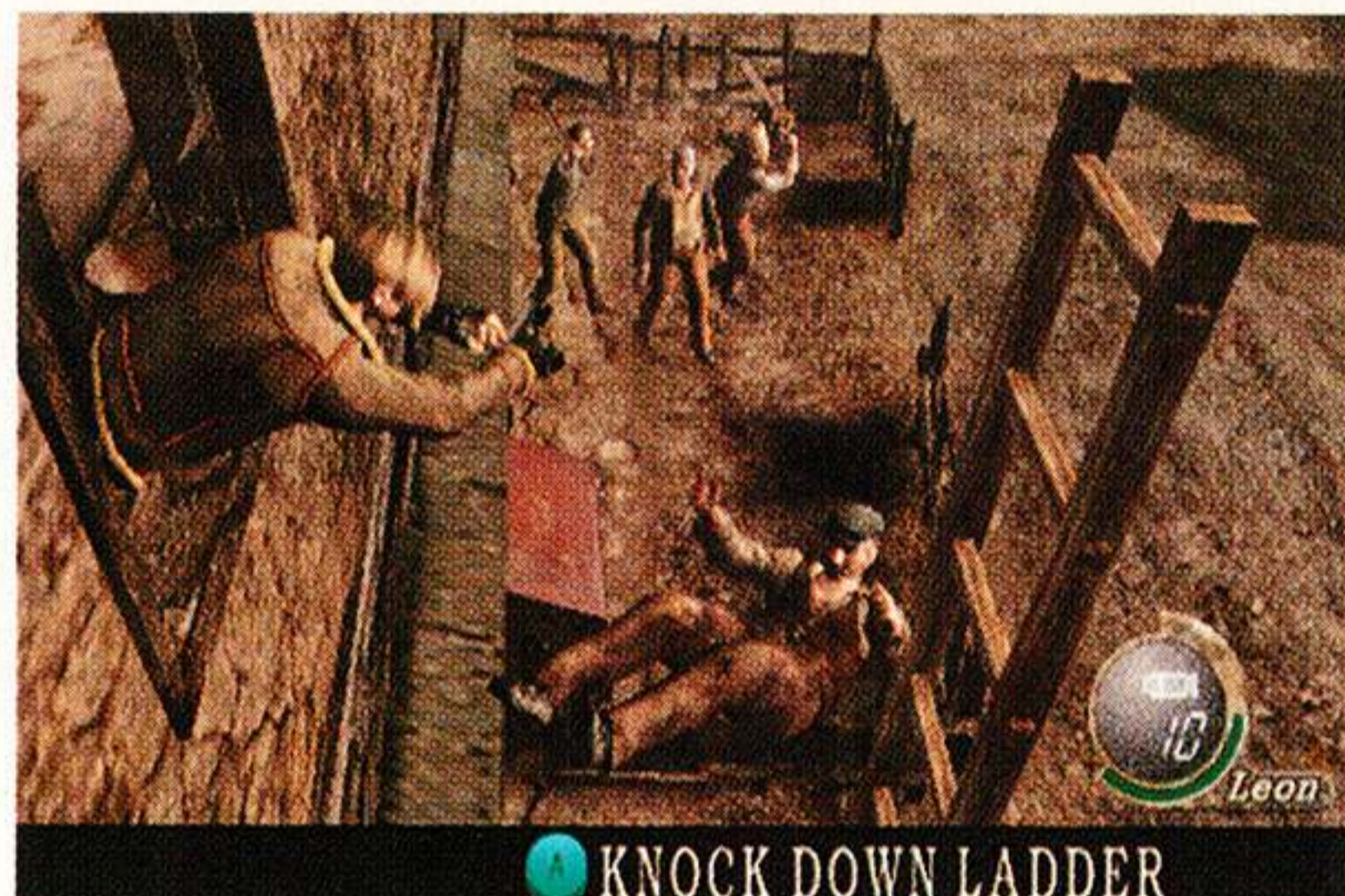
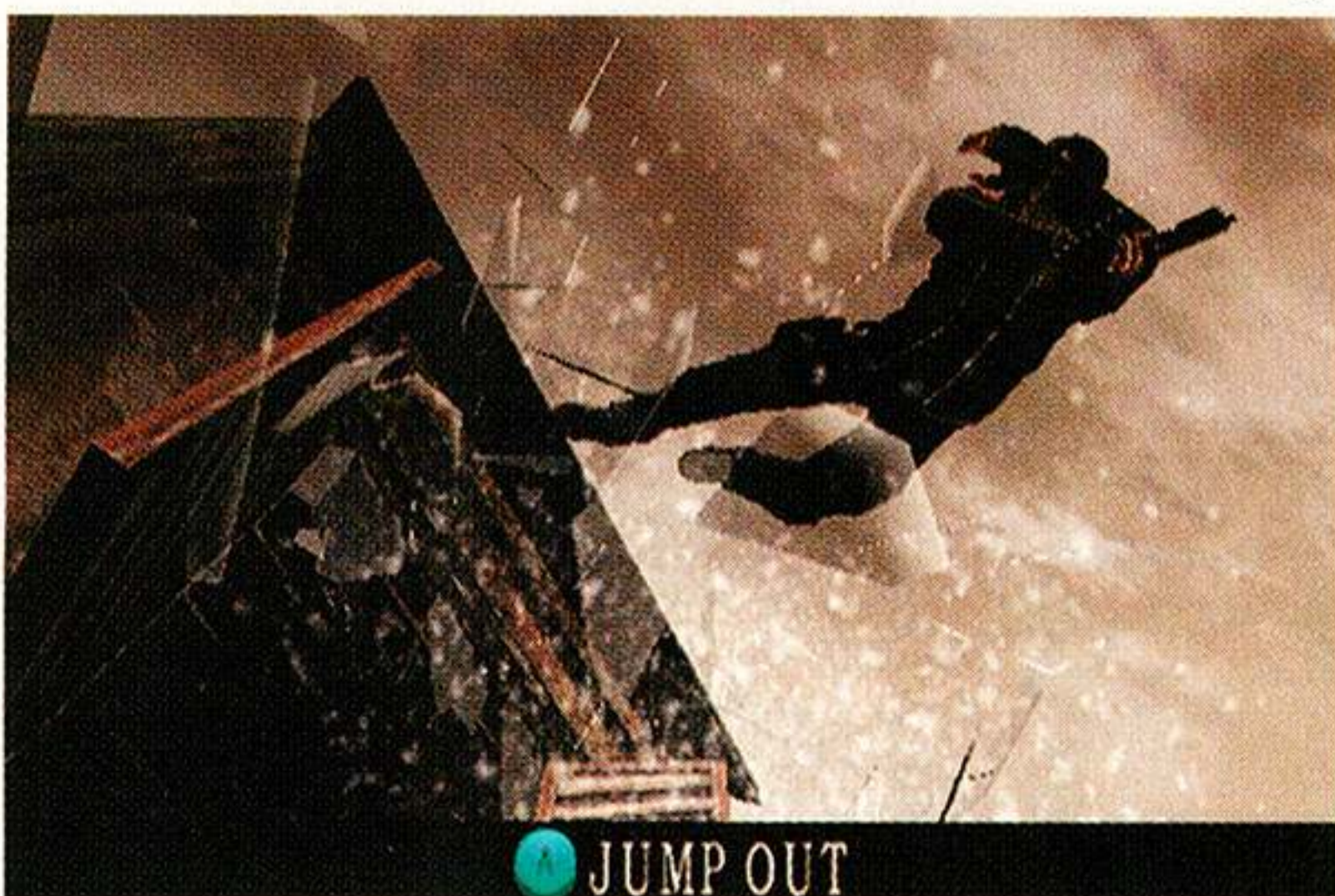
Leon was pursued through several houses until he eventually found a shotgun and proceeded to blast his enemies—even through doors and windows. The village itself was filled with all sorts of additional hazards, too, such as tripwires rigged to explosives, bear traps, and other lethal devices.

Highlights in the demo included a chainsaw-wielding maniac wearing a potato sack on his head and a scene where villagers used ladders to get to Leon when he tried to hide on a rooftop. Being able to push these ladders away as enemies are climbing them is just one cool touch RE4 offers; Leon can

also move heavy furniture against doors or windows to bar the bad guys from entering buildings. In another scene outside the village, Leon drove a motorboat while throwing spears at a gigantic aquatic monster before falling into the water for a little swim.

RE4 serves up plenty of gore with body chunks and blood galore as Leon can pinpoint his gunfire and enemies react accordingly (for instance, if he shoots an enemy in the foot, they'll hop or limp). If this is what happens during the light of day, one can only imagine how creepy things will get once the sun sets....—Major Mike

■ First Look ■ Developed and published by Capcom  
■ Target release date: Winter 2004

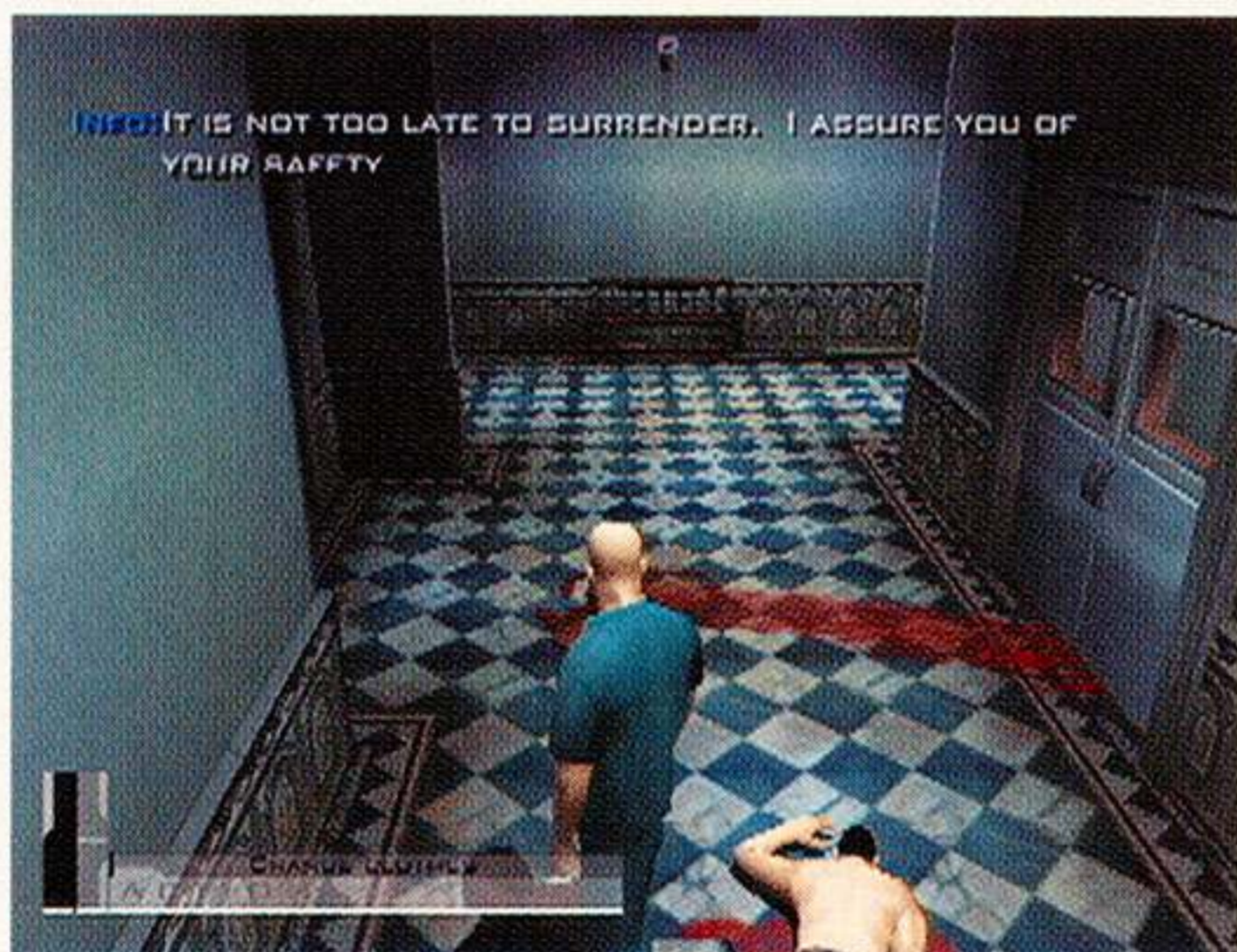
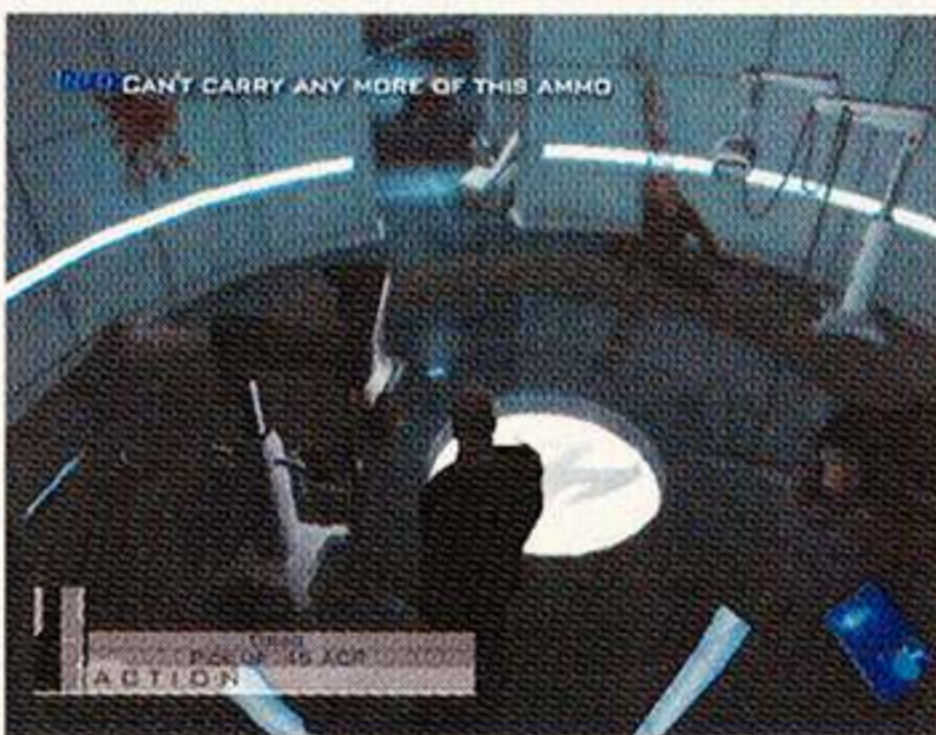
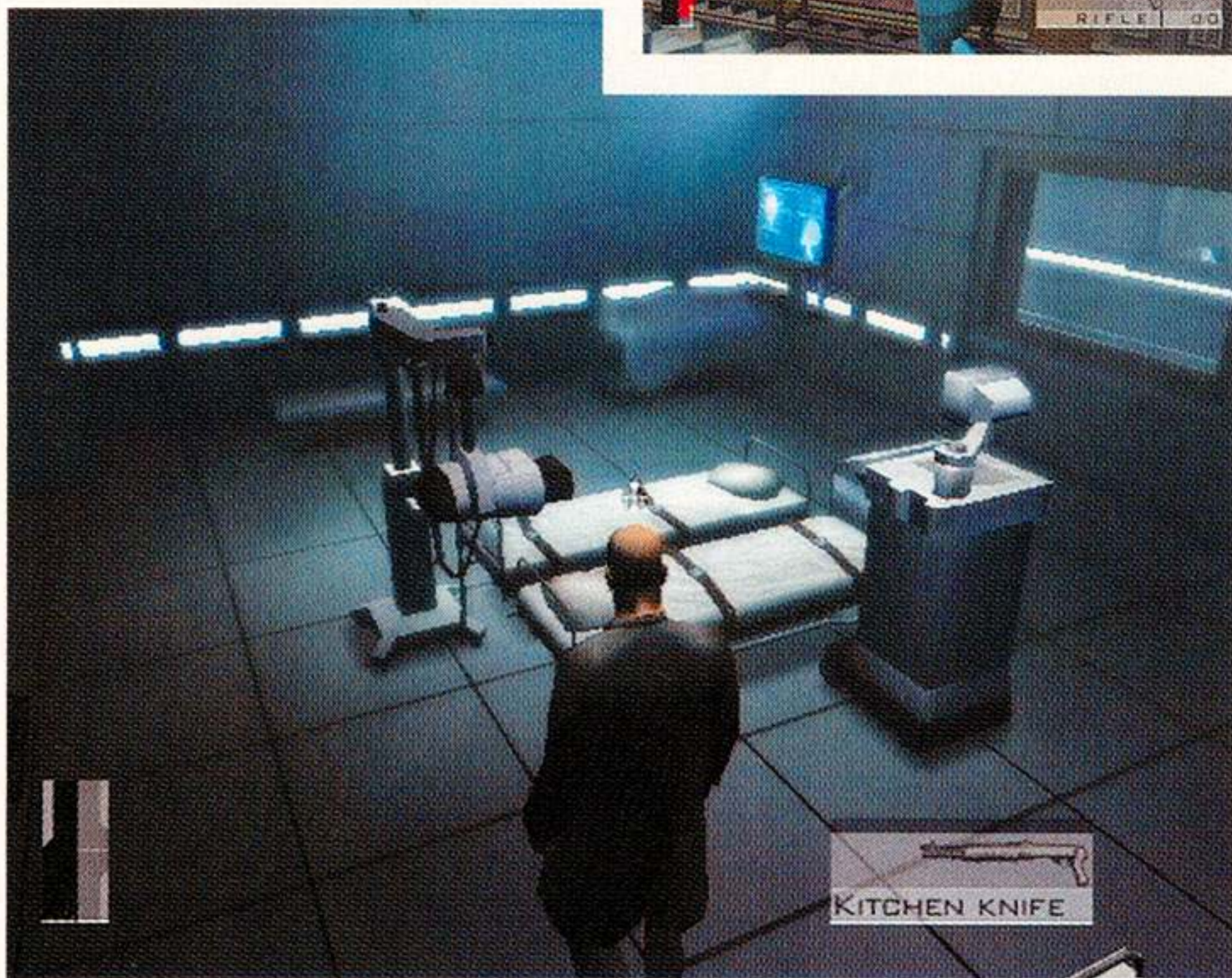
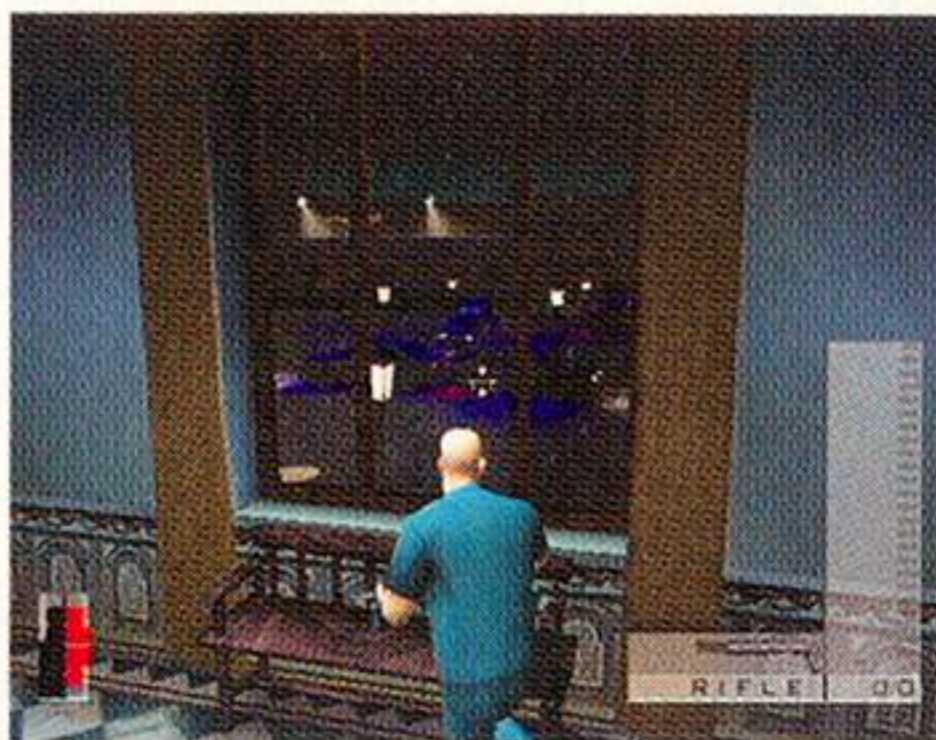


## Hitman: Contracts

**47** is a complicated man. Not only is his name a number, but he also begins *Hitman: Contracts* in a state of delirium, reliving past hits in a sort of hazy, fever-dream consciousness. Not so good for 47 but good for you because you get to play these hallucinogenic missions in a slightly altered Hitman fashion.

*Contracts*' missions begin in the sanitarium moments after the end of the first *Hitman* game, and the game's trippy nature is clear from the start. Developer Io Interactive has employed a postfiltering process that enables it to take final rendered graphics and apply effects, such as distance blur, soft-focus, and color correction, giving the game a look not unlike what you see after rubbing your eyes hard for a few seconds. Not only will the graphics appear blurry, but you'll also see surreal little touches—say, a mental patient chopping up a clone of 47 or strippers walking around with pig faces—that will subtly remind you that you're not just playing another of 47's typical missions.

Even considering that the missions are all whacked-out flashbacks, *Hitman: Contracts* doesn't change the successful *Hitman* formula too much. You still have several ways to solve any given problem, and you can still perform stealth kills, take fallen enemies' clothes, and poison beverages to get through a level. The PS2 preview version we played (the game is also coming to the Xbox and PC) showed a familiar (and still-clunky) control scheme and the same sort of try-it-til-you-figure-it-out gameplay style for which *Hitman* is famous, but the strange mood of the game was already evident. Mixing *Hitman*'s decidedly gritty and realistic world with a dash of the surreal ought to give the game the shot it needs to avoid being "just more *Hitman*."—*D-Pad Destroyer*



■ Hands-On ■ Developed by Io Interactive ■ Published by Eidos Interactive ■ Target release date: April

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## Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater

**PE** Since its introduction at last year's Electronic Entertainment Expo (see *GamePro*, September 2003), *Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater* has been under top-secret wraps, leaving fans scratching their heads: Set in the jungle? Eating snakes? Cold War era? Huh? *Metal Gear* maestro Hideo Kojima recently revealed more of Solid Snake's upcoming adventure, and based on what he showed, Snake Eater is taking a completely different approach from previous games in the series.

### Part 1: Camouflage

Because *Metal Gear* has always been about stealth, *Snake Eater* puts a new twist on the art of moving while not being seen: camouflage. Due to the jungle's lack of lockers, tables, and other structures, Snake must rely on different uniforms, face paints, and postures to conceal himself from patrolling guards and other enemies. Snake's surroundings dictate the most effective camouflage pattern, but the perfect uniform selection alone doesn't guarantee invisibility—applying face paint also helps. Camouflage and face paint combinations are displayed in the upper right-hand corner of the screen and accompanied by a percentage: 100 percent means you are invisible to enemies, but a guard will still detect you if he inadvertently touches or steps on you. Snake's posture is also important; slow movement (crawling, stalking, or walking) brings a higher percentage than running (that brings Snake to *minus* 5 percent). Sunlight, shade, and tall grass also affect the camouflage rating.

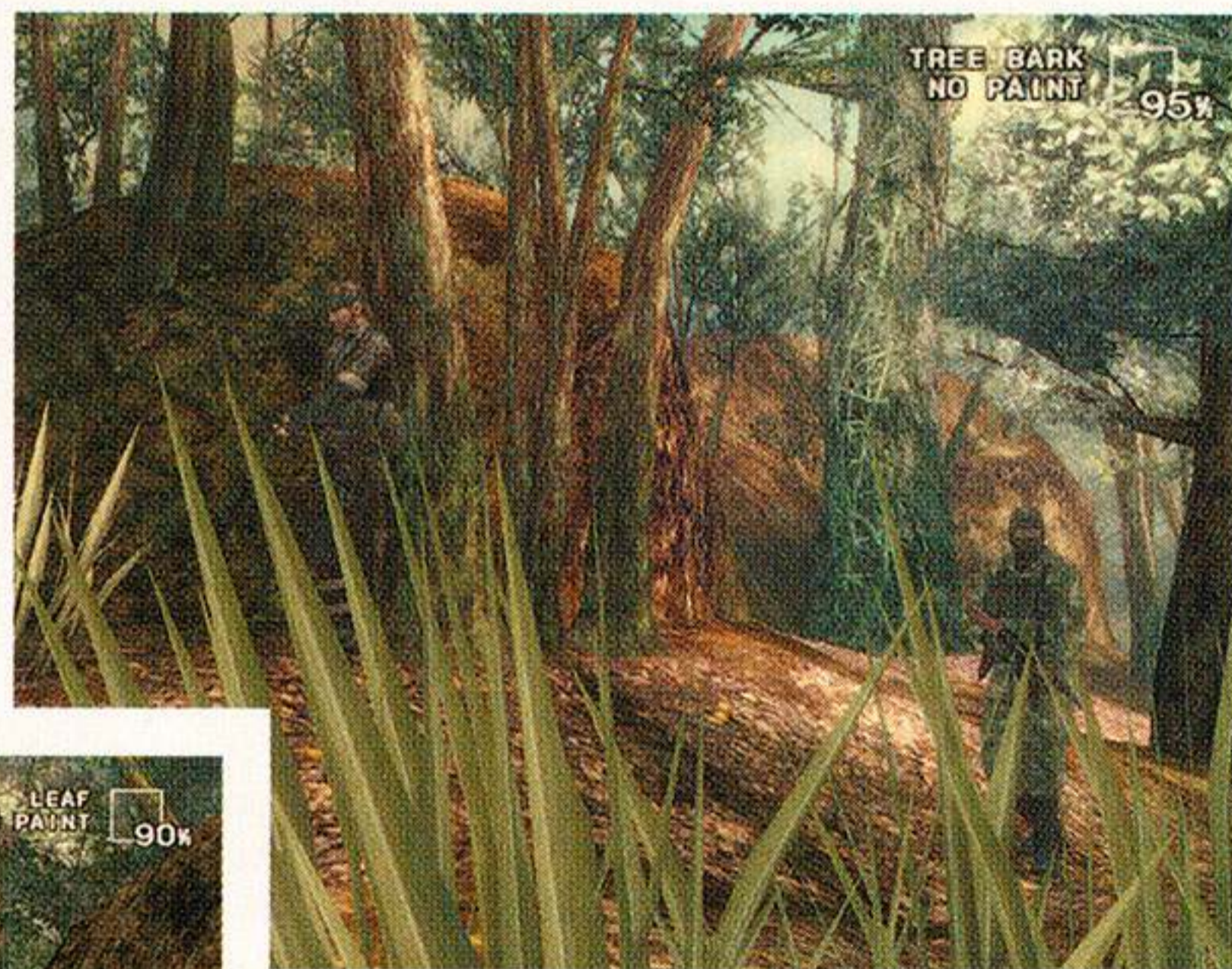
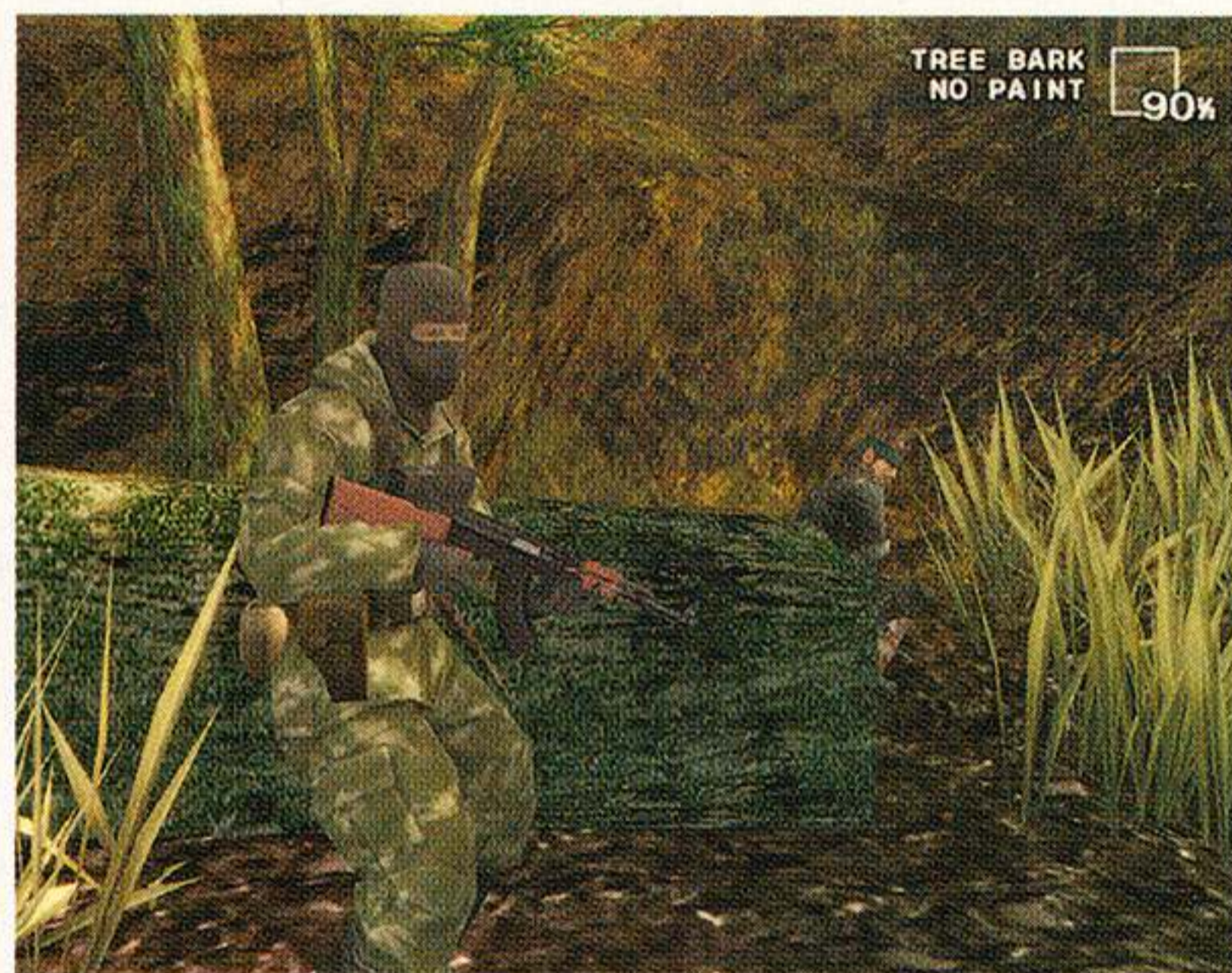
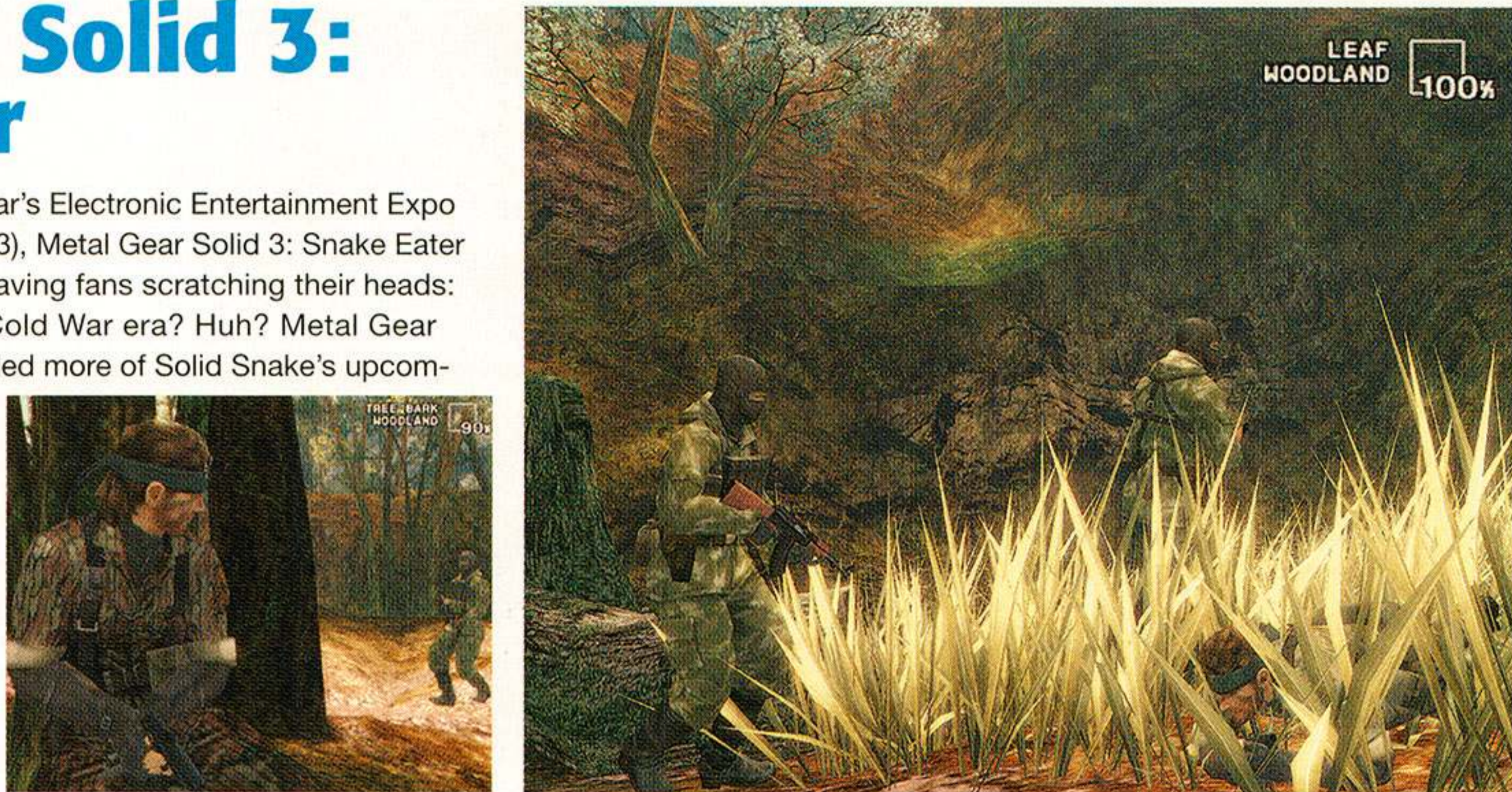
Snake can change his costume and face paint on the fly to accommodate his surroundings instantly. He can also use camouflage patterns when he stalks a different prey—the animals and reptiles that he needs to consume to maintain his stamina (a feature to be explained in detail at E<sup>3</sup> in May).

### The Art of Not Being Seen

Camouflage patterns include leaf, snow, tree bark, olive drab, and fire (Snake can start small blazes in certain areas and then blend in). Snake can also opt to wear no pattern—hence, no shirt—at all. *Snake Eater* will give *Metal Gear* fans a chance at video-game immortality as well; around the time of E<sup>3</sup>, Konami will be accepting camouflage pattern submissions, and winners will have their creations featured in the final version of the game. Additional patterns will also be available for download online after the game's release.

—Major Mike

■ First Look ■ Developed by KCEJ ■ Published by Konami ■ Target release date: 2004





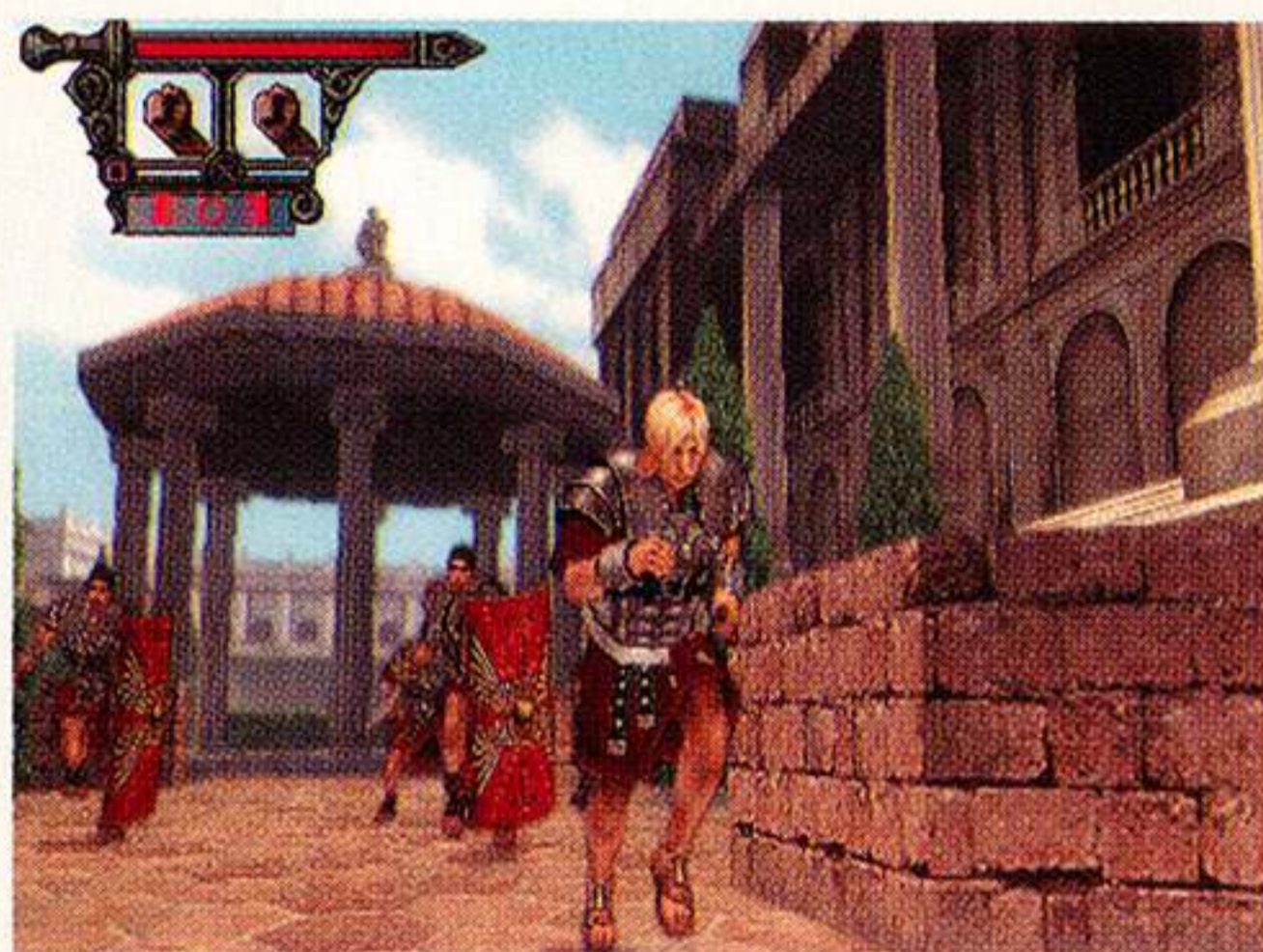
## Shadow of Rome

**FE** When in Rome, do as the Romans do: murder, lie, and participate in gladiatorial fighting. It's the year 44 B.C., and the Republic of Rome is crumbling with political corruption while the streets have been overtaken by unruliness and violence. In the middle of it all is Agrippa, a soldier who rushes back to Rome after finding out Julius Caesar has been killed. Upon his arrival, however, he's confronted with accusations that his father is the murderer. With the



help of his friend Octavius and a fearless gladiator named Claudia, Agrippa must prove his dad's innocence before he's publicly executed. In the game, you'll be able to seamlessly switch between Agrippa and Octavius as you help guide them through Rome in an attempt to find the real killer. You'll also find yourself in chariot races and tournament battles, plus, for added realism, you'll come across actual historical figures throughout your adventure.—*Four-Eyed Dragon*

■ **First Look** ■ **Developed and published by Capcom**  
 ■ **Target release date: Winter 2004**



## Monster Hunter

**FE** It's time to go back to man's core instinct: hunting. But forget the solo romp and spear-in-hand tactics. You're in Monster Hunter land, where cooperation is key to hunting the big game. You can team up with up to three other hunters online and work together to catch the monstrous prize. Join forces to create traps or have one person distract a monster while another sneaks up on it from behind. After each successful mission, you're rewarded with cash and special items that can be used to improve your weapons. Missions, however, aren't just about stalking big, bad creatures. You'll be asked to defend forts and steal items, too. And if you grow tired of pursuing animals, you can opt to just wander the countryside and search for rare items or go fishing at a nearby river. A-hunting we will go this fall.—*Four-Eyed Dragon*

■ **First Look** ■ **Developed and published by Capcom**  
 ■ **Target release date: Fall 2004**



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## Burnout 3: Crash & Burn

**PE X** The Burnout franchise has often been overlooked—especially in the shadow of *Midnight Club* and *Need for Speed*—despite its unique style of rewarding overly aggressive drivers with speed boosts for narrowly avoiding collisions. Even crashes are sweet, too, as you're treated to instant replay footage of the collision from different vantage points. These collisions will be spruced up for *Burnout 3: Crash & Burn* (working title) with doors flying open, glass shattering, and autos losing giant chunks as they roll and twist on the pavement.

### Turn and Burn

*Burnout 3* will continue the series' tradition of flashy, easy-to-pick-up-and-play arcade-style racing but with a brand-new graphics engine, extra play modes, and a new publisher (Acclaim published the first two *Burnouts*; EA Games will release *Crash & Burn*). The game will also feature true competitive online play but only on the PlayStation 2 (*Burnout 2* Xbox Live support only allowed posting high scores). Races will take place on tracks in the U.S., Europe, and Asia, and you can unlock additional tracks and cars depending on your performance in the different play modes.

### 3 Fast 3 Furious

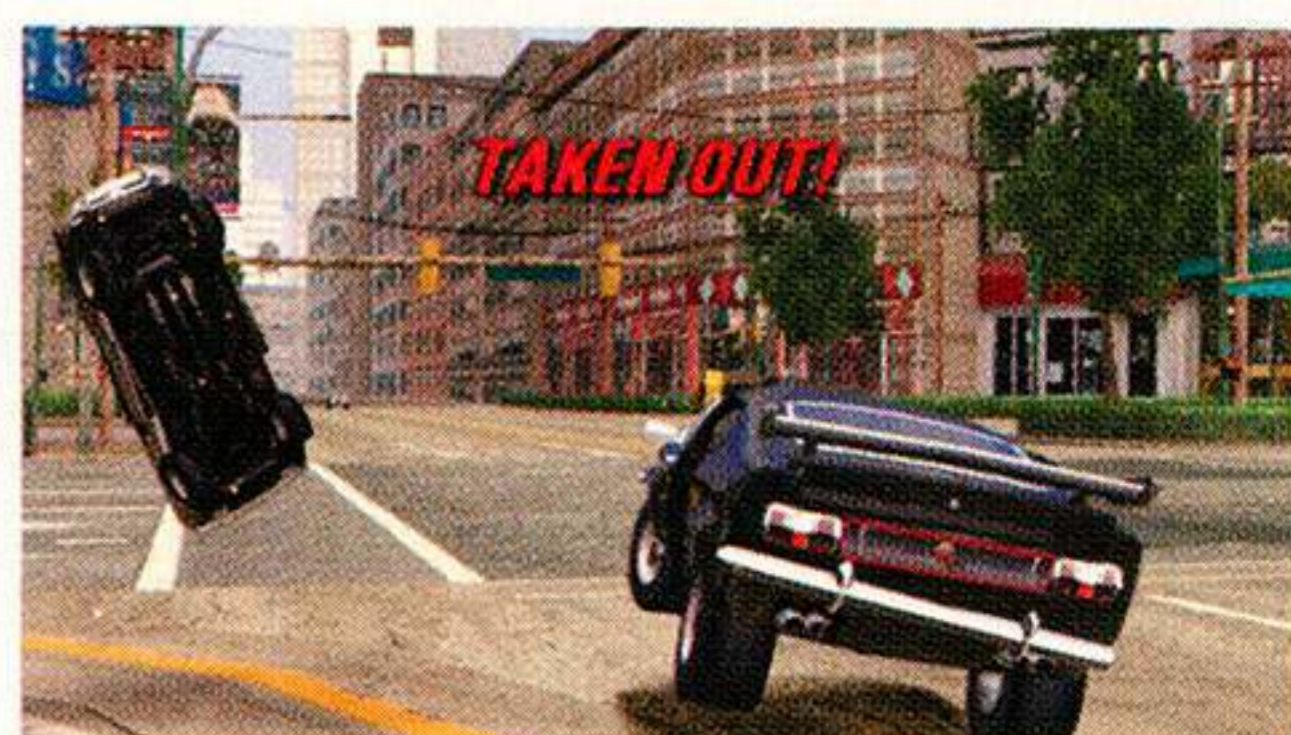
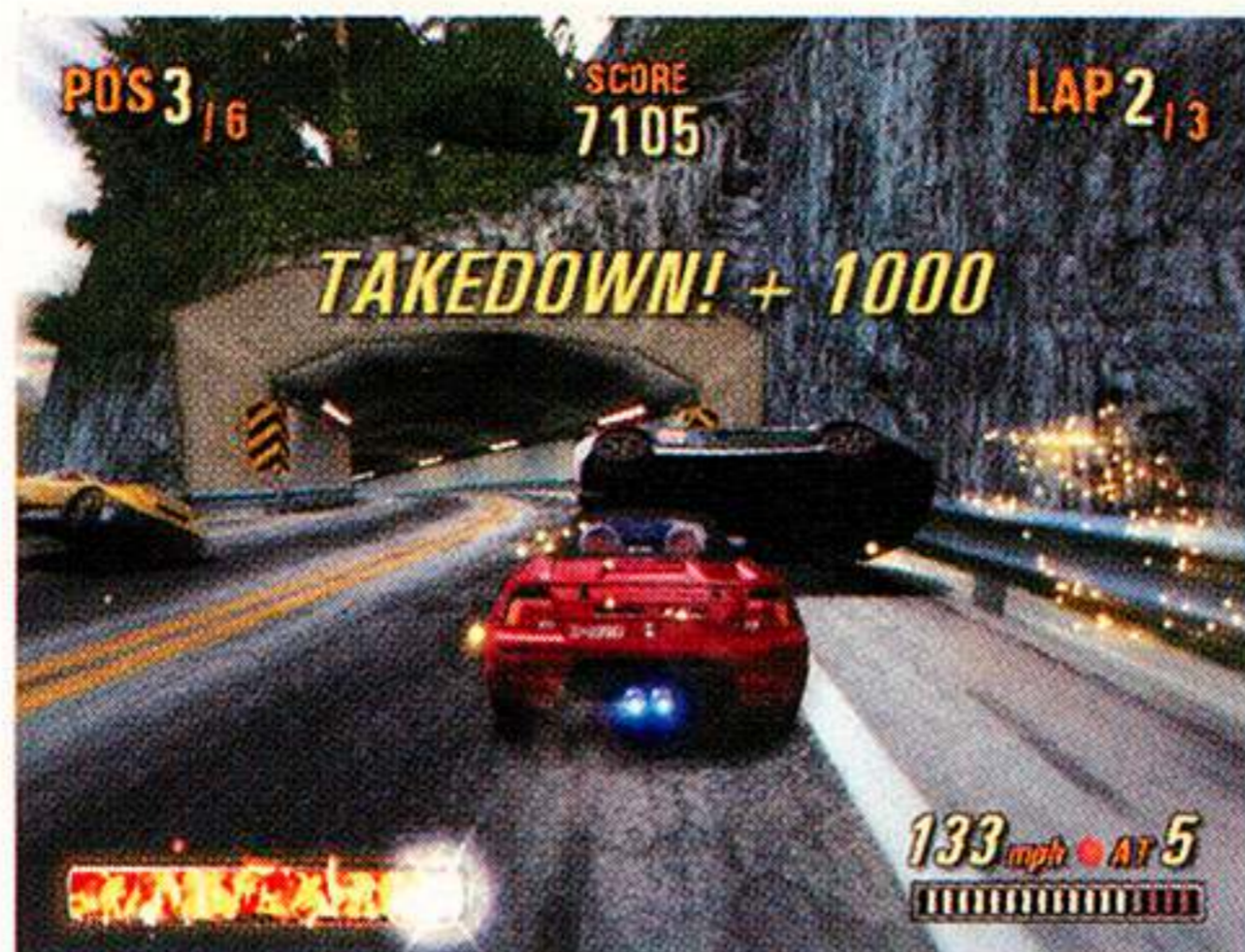
The third installment's emphasis will be more on dirty tricks and doing whatever it takes for your car to reach the finish line—hopefully in one piece. Racers will be rewarded points for striking opponents in one of three ways: Slam, Shunt, and Takedown. In

addition to various head-to-head racing modes, Crash Championship lets you rack up huge rewards for causing chain-reaction pileups (which to many was one of the best, if not the most addictive, features of the first two games). Based on these screen shots and Criterion's previous *Burnout* successes, *Crash & Burn* will probably be one sweet ride when it hits the streets this September.

—Major Mike

- First Look ■ Developed by Criterion Games
- Published by EA Games ■ Target release date: September

All screens shown here are from the PlayStation 2 version.



## The Punisher

**FE X** Even if Thomas Jane can't make *The Punisher* cool on the big screen, maybe the folks at THQ can. Needless to say, ultraviolent Marvel "hero" Frank Castle definitely lends himself to the world of video games...but then again, some of the world's best superheroes have gotten lost in the comic-to-movie-to-game translation.

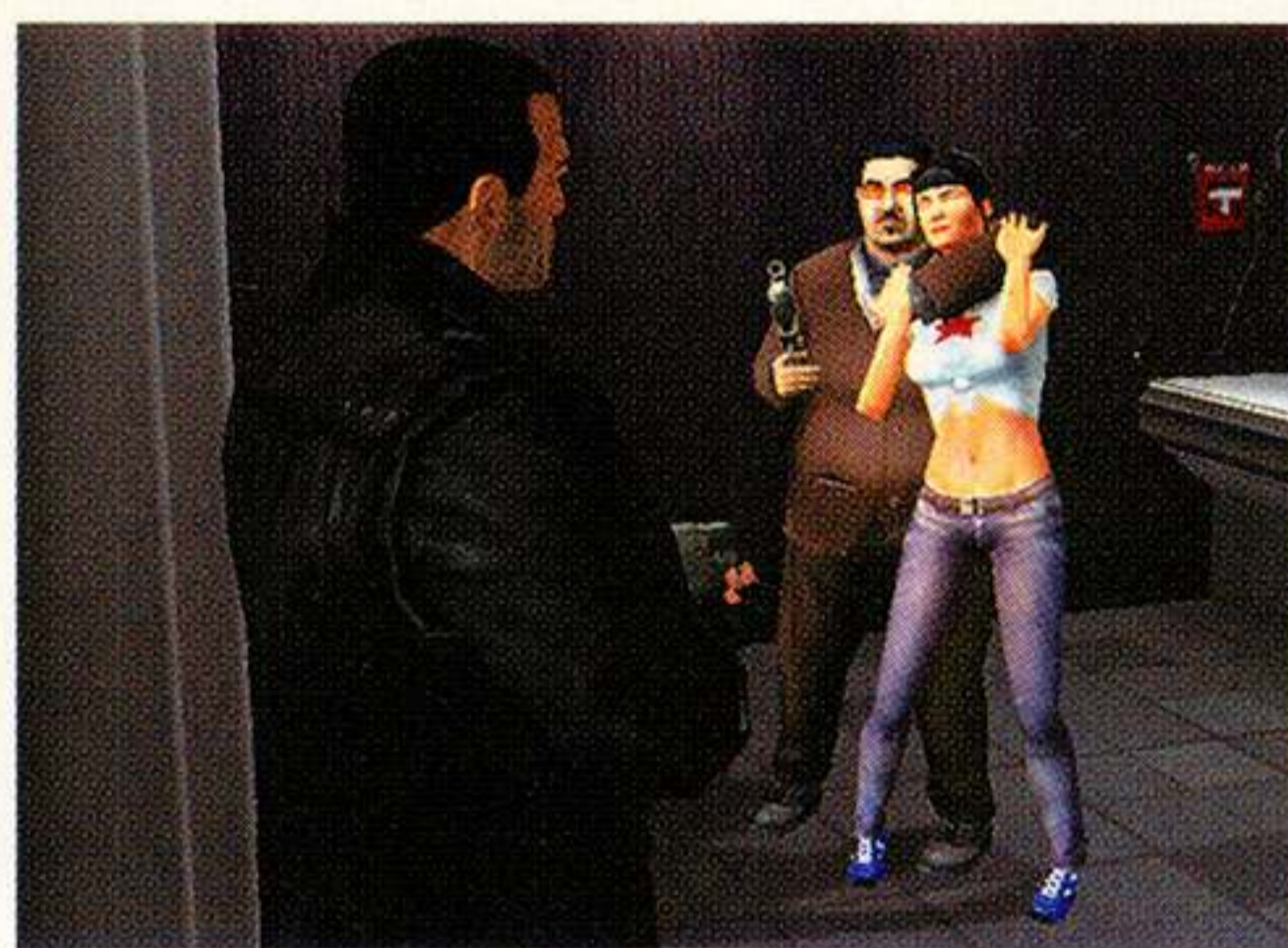
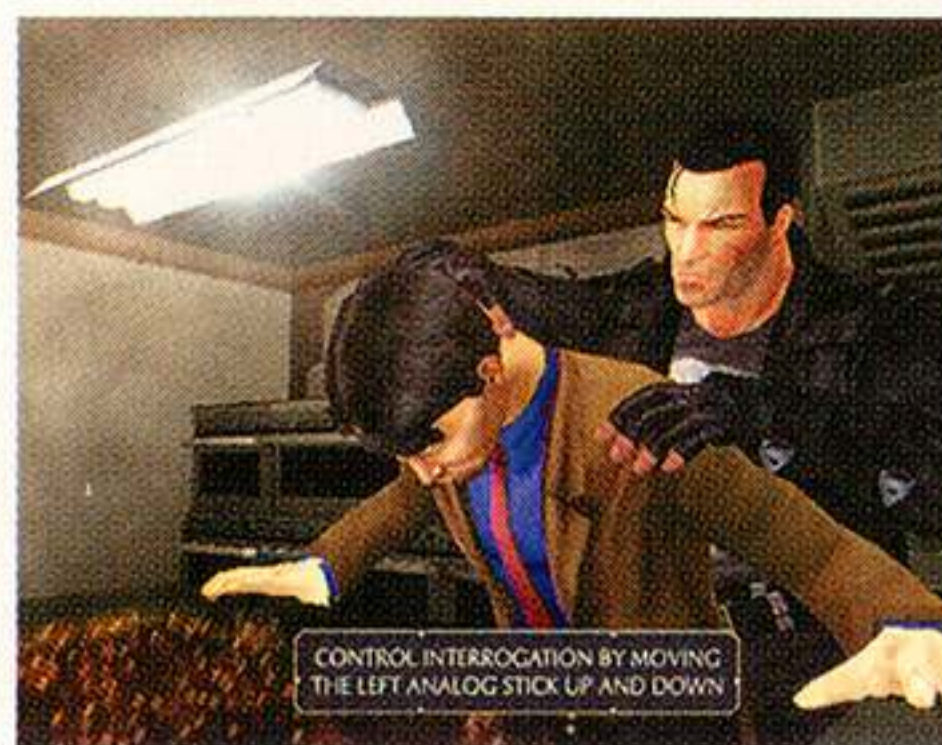
The Punisher is being developed by THQ's in-house studio Volition, the same group behind *Red Faction* and its groundbreaking (no pun intended) *GeoMod* technology. While the crux of *The Punisher's* gameplay should be obvious (shoot stuff—duh), Frank also has



a couple of distinctive antiheroic abilities to aide him, including using bad guys as living "meat shields" and "interrogating" foes with either his gun or fun stuff he finds in the environment (see if you can find the deep fryer in these screen shots). And, hey, even if the movie and game turn out to suck, at least you have those Garth Ennis comics to go back to.—*Star Dingo*

■ **First Look** ■ **Developed by Volition**  
 ■ **Published by THQ** ■ **Target release date: Fall 2004**

All screens shown here are from the PlayStation 2 version.



## Serious Sam: Next Encounter

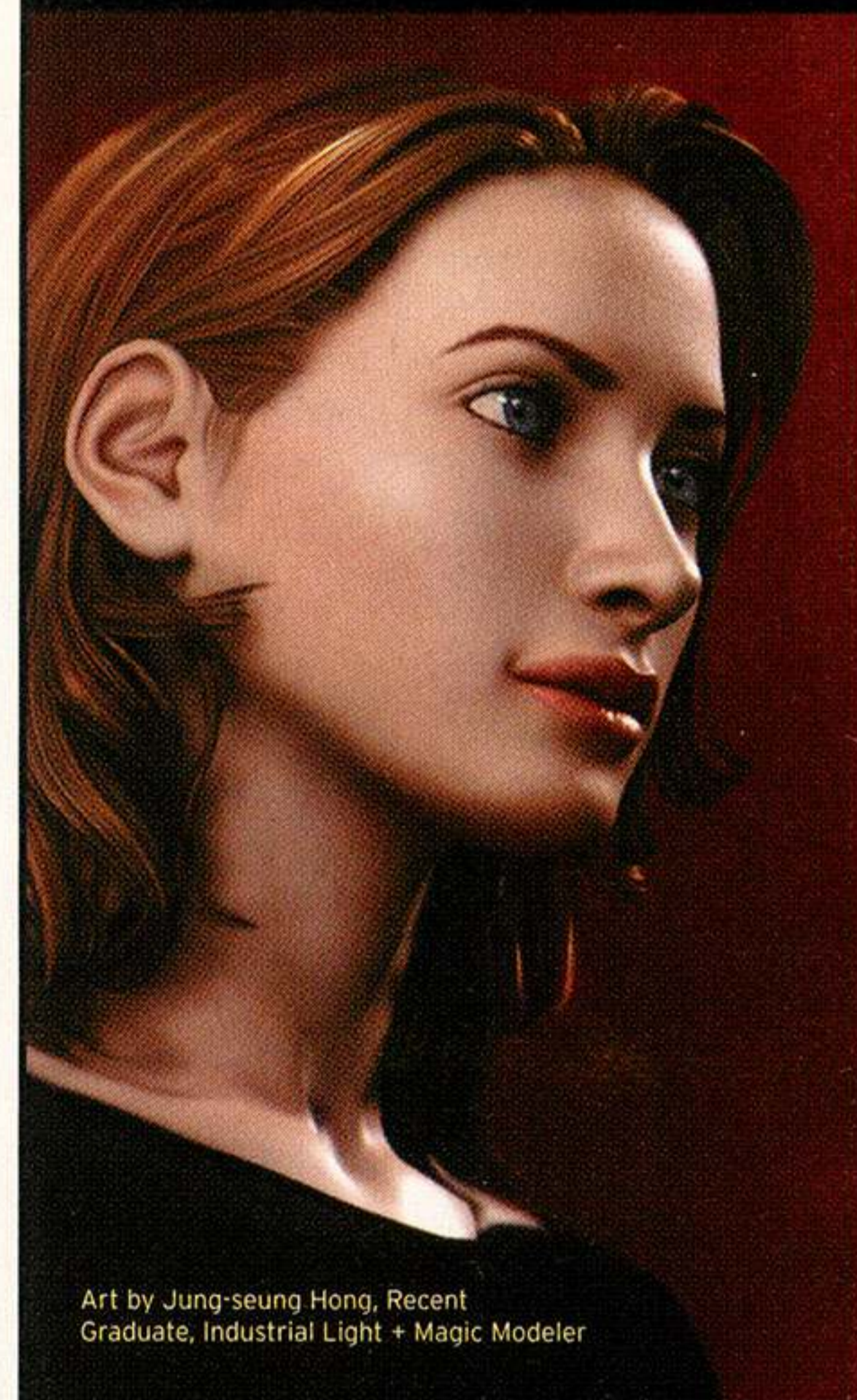
**FE G** Sam isn't nicknamed "Serious" for nothing. His first encounter with badass creatures resulted in some "serious" carnage, elevating Sam to an overnight success and the game to a classic among first-person shooters. His next run-in with evil aliens will show PS2 and GameCube owners just how solemn he really is in this genre. As before, you guide Sam through a bevy of stages with murderous monsters perpetually clamoring toward you. In *Next Encounter*, you'll venture through more than 40 levels that span ancient Rome, feudal China, and legendary Atlantis. To help eliminate his cruel opposition, Sam's army includes 12 zingy and destructive weapons, plus he can now drive behind the wheel of three monstrous vehicles. For shooting strategy, Sam can combo his kills, which when done enough times, will activate a Super Combo Killing Spree that enables him to move faster and rack up higher points. Anyone serious about first-person shooters should think seriously about Sam.—*Four-Eyed Dragon*

■ **First Look** ■ **Developed by Climax**  
 ■ **Published by Global Star** ■ **Target release date: April**

All screens shown here are from the GameCube version.



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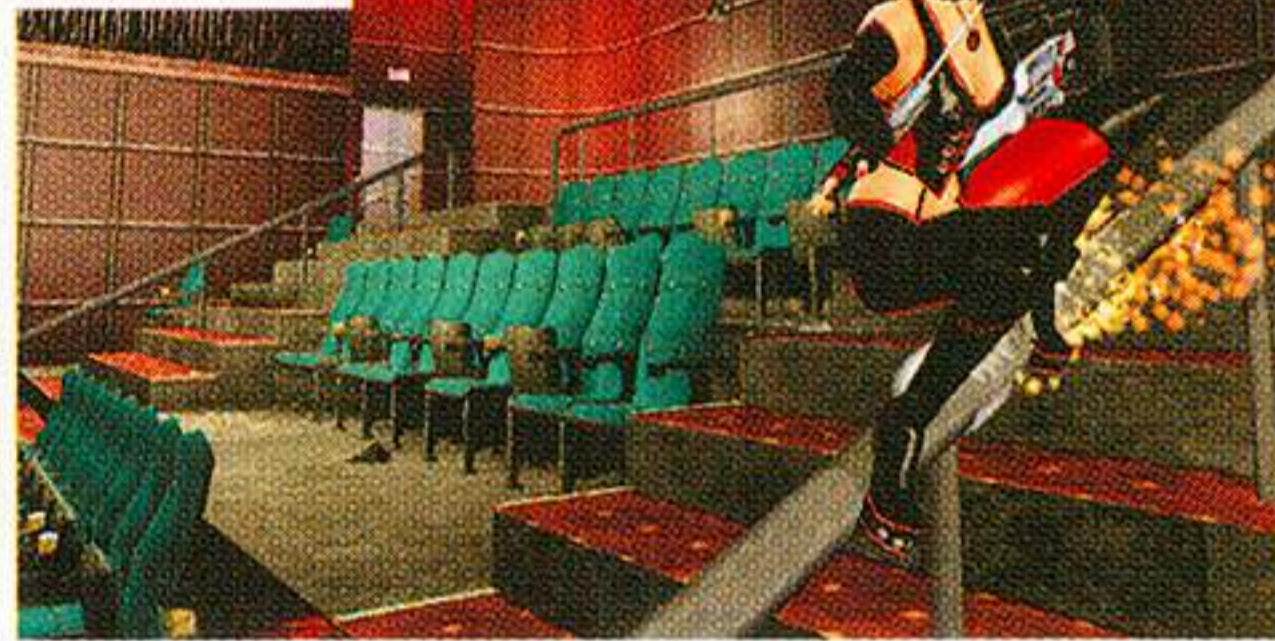
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# BloodRayne 2

**PE X** And you thought your family was dysfunctional. When we last saw BloodRayne, she had partnered with the Brimstone Society to destroy the Nazis and one of their most valued collaborators—her own father. She never got her hands on dad, but fortunately, he still died toward the end of the war.

Sixty years have passed, and BloodRayne is still focused on family values. In her attempt to weed out the bad...er, blood (or more specifically, her siblings), the half-vampire/half-human heroine will need to show off more of her messy talents. Apparently her brothers and sisters have banded together to form a group bent on carrying out their father's dream of vampire supremacy. To achieve this goal, they've created "The Shroud," a substance that makes the sun's rays harmless to vampires and turns nature into a horrible abomination.



Don't fret, though—BloodRayne has improved her ravenous, deadly skills to help win the fight. She can now perform 30 murderous combos and upgrade her abilities and weapons. Stylish kills are also in her repertoire with 12 fatality finishing moves at her disposal. Her unique aura vision plays a more integral part in the game, too. You can expect a memorable family reunion this October.—*Four-Eyed Dragon*

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- First Look ■ Developed by Terminal Reality
- Published by Majesco ■ Target release date: October

All screens shown here are from the Xbox version.



# Darkwatch: Curse of the West

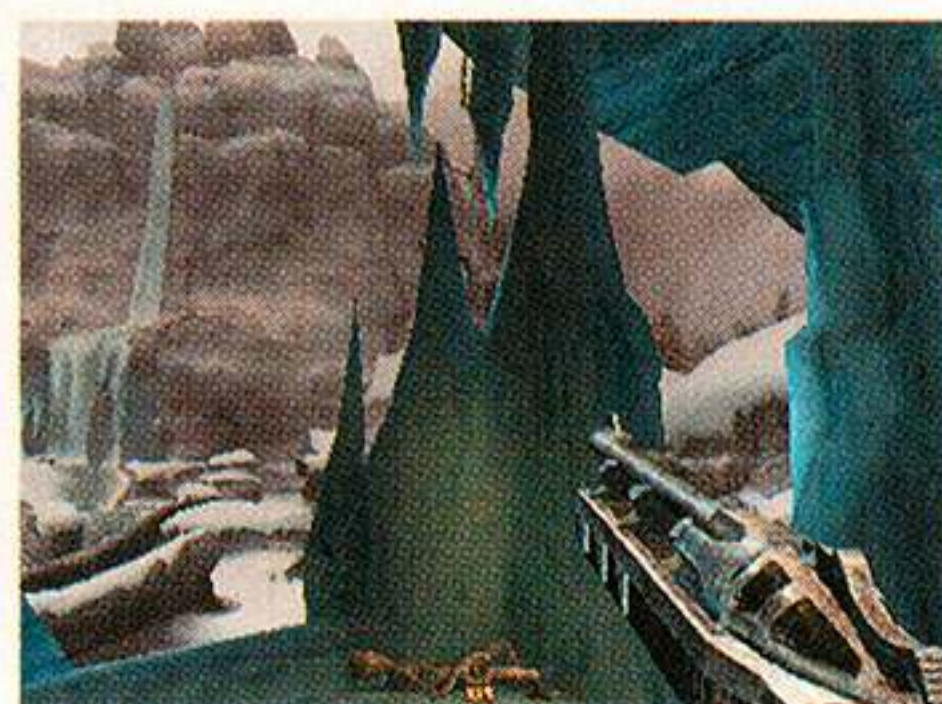
**PE X** Humanity may never be able to fully protect itself from evil. From the dawn of mankind, however, the secret group known as Darkwatch has attempted



to save humankind from the perils of the dark in any way possible. And we do mean any way—emulsifying enemies for fuel, using their own skin for protective cloaks, and designing weapons to eliminate entire groups of evil things at one time.

It's the Wild West, and you're Jericho Cross, an agent for the mysterious Darkwatch. Aside from being an outlaw gunslinger, you're also half vampire, thanks to a vampire lord that you're now hunting. Curse of the West is a first-person shooter in which you must use both frenetic firefights and undead special skills to defeat the lord's evil minions now damning the American frontier.

You'll traverse through nonlinear missions in a massive, dark, and seamless world inhabited by smart A.I. villains that act according to your reputation and experience. Additionally, a unique battle system, which includes using advanced vehicles and horse-mounted gun fighting, is sure to raise the bar in first-person gameplay variety. Precise gunplay is also a major key in overcoming the evil—location-specific damage enables you to taunt enemies by shooting off their hats, or if you feel that killer instinct taking over, rip them apart with shots to the head and heart. It's a part of the Old West you've never read in books or seen on TV.—*Four-Eyed Dragon*



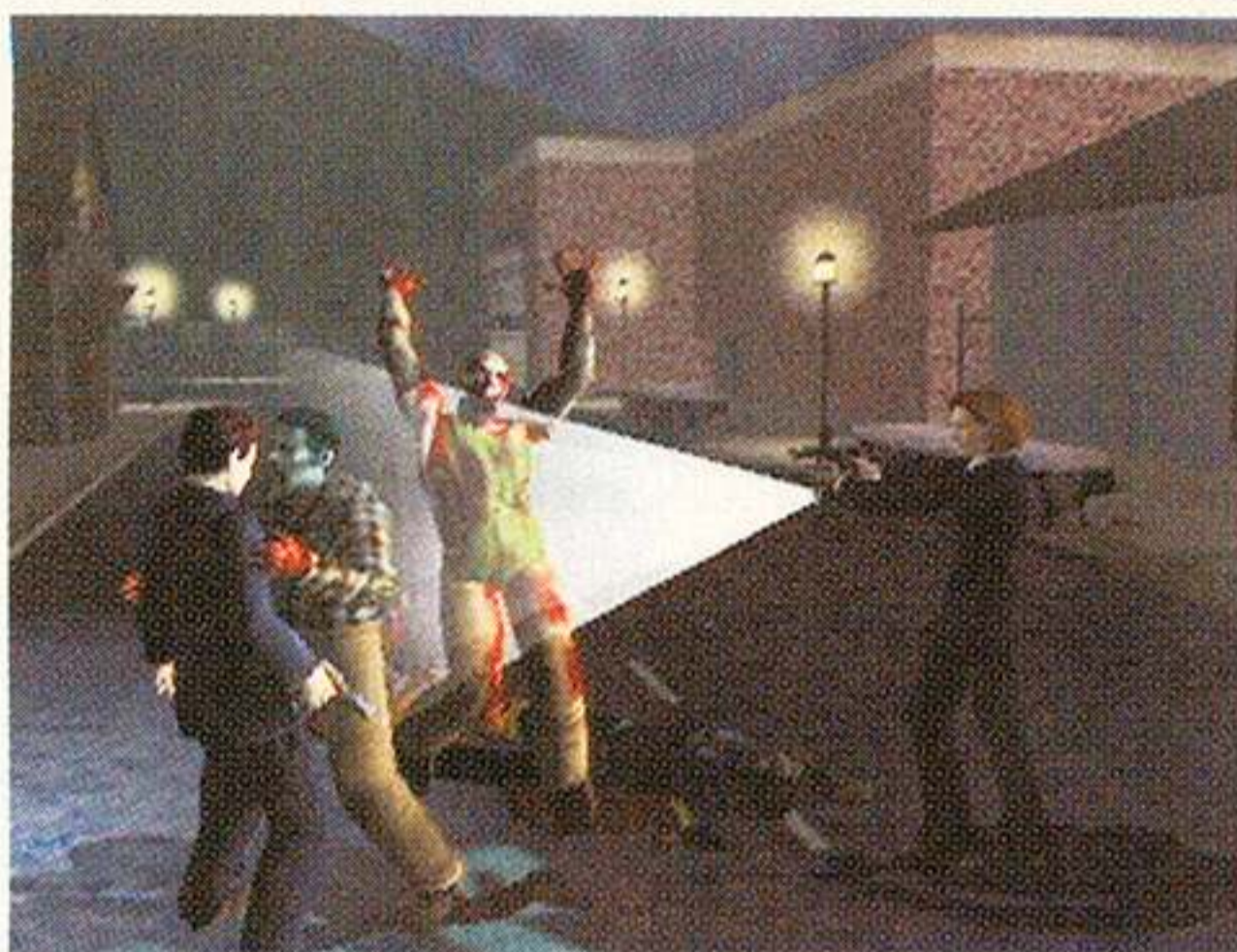
- First Look
- Developed and published by Sammy Studios
- Target release date: Winter 2004

All screens shown here are from the Xbox version.

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# X-Files: Resist or Serve

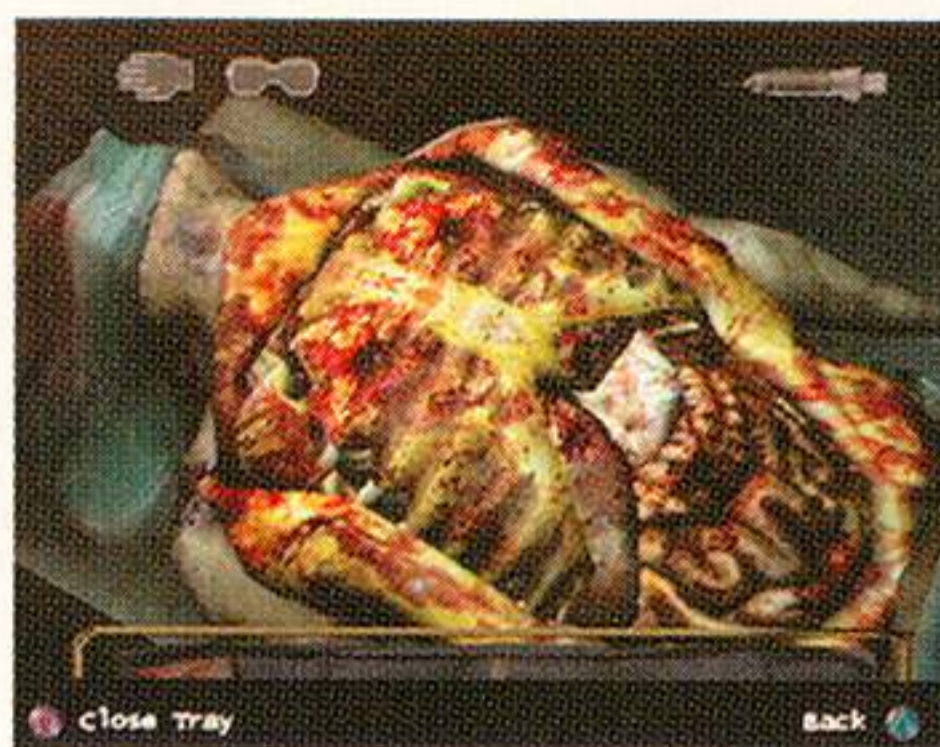
**PE** X-Files: Resist or Serve is a Resident Evil-style survival/horror game featuring the ambiance of the original television series combined with puzzle solving and zombie-escaping action. When Mulder and Scully are sent to Red Falls to investigate a witch hunt, they run into a town full of zombies, alien artifacts, and the cus-



tomary conspiracies. Both playable characters have alternate scenarios for a different gaming experience (Mulder's scenario is more action oriented, while Scully's has more puzzles).

The PS2 hands-on preview (the game is also coming to the Xbox and GameCube) sported some minor flaws. While the environments were vast, many of them were sparse in detail, and even with an icon indicating what you can interact with, it was still hard to tell. The directional controls were also squirrely when the camera automatically switched position. If these deficiencies are dealt with, X-Files could be a welcome addition to the meager survival/horror library.—*Rice Burner*

- Hands-On ■ Developed by Black Ops ■ Published by Vivendi Universal Games
- Target release date: Second Quarter 2004



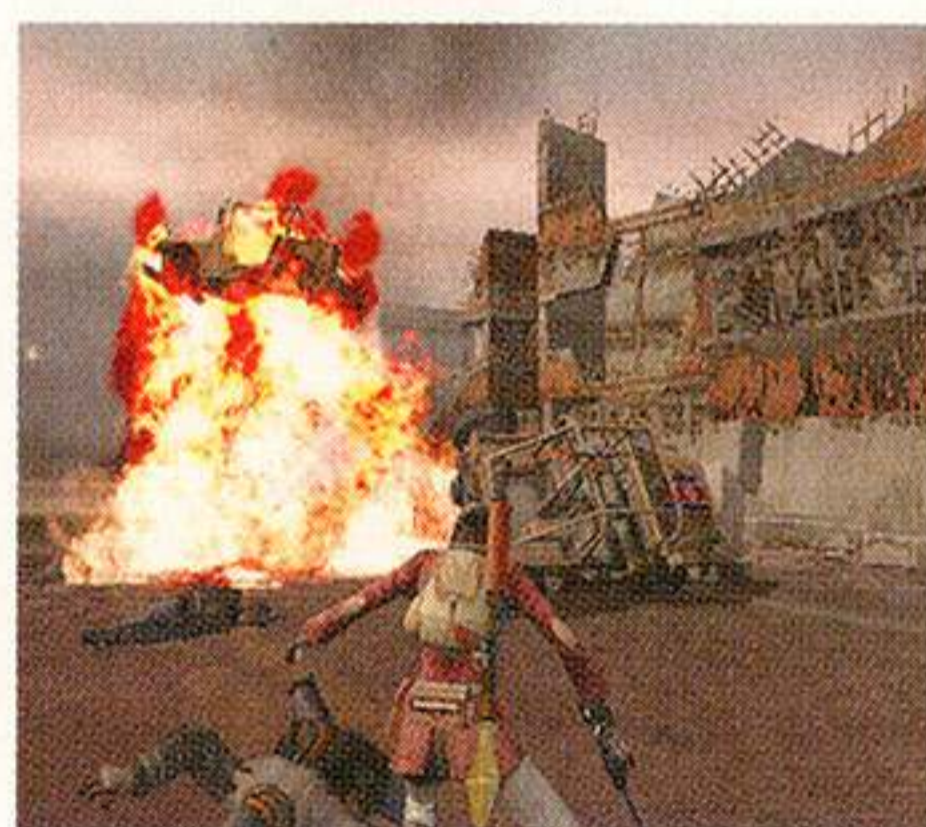
# Mercenaries

**PE X** Mercenaries is set to overcome its competition with sheer variety in gameplay. In a fictitious near future, a coup puts North Korea in chaos and makes it the perfect geopolitical environment for a mercenary to ply his trade. Players will be able to choose their alliances from among four feuding factions (North Korea, China, the Russian Mafia, and the United Nations) in 52 missions as three unnamed playable mercs (an American male, a Swiss male, and a British female).

The biggest attraction of Mercenaries is the fully interactive environments. If you see it, you can appropriate it or blow it up. With more than 30 authentic weapons and 20 vehicles to steal—including tanks and helicopters—Mercenaries is set to be a wild ride.—*Rice Burner*

- First Look ■ Developed by Pandemic Studios
- Published by LucasArts ■ Target release date: Fall 2004

All screens shown here are from the PlayStation 2 version.



# Shrek 2

**PE X G** The rambunctious green ogre returns with his merry gang of cohorts in his video-game sequel. Shrek 2 features squad-based gameplay fused with traditional platform action.

From an 11-character lineup, gamers can select a team of four personalities and visit supplemental and movie-inspired locations. Players will have unique skills to help their team overcome impassable obstacles.

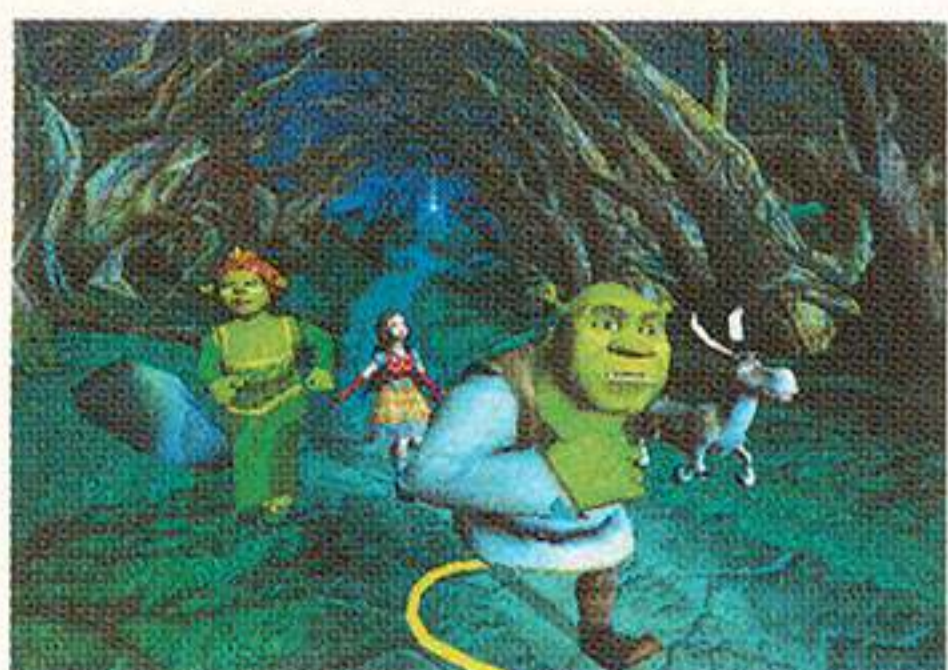
For instance, Shrek's ogre strength can remove heavy obstacles, Donkey's burro kick can open locked doors, and Princess Fiona's ability to slow time during combat helps her party kick butt. The

most revolutionary advancement in the Shrek series, though, is the addition of a multiplayer join-in function where up to three other people can instantaneously enter the fray.

With a diverse cast of characters and locations combined with the singular wit of the DreamWorks movie franchise, Shrek 2 is set to provide hours of multiplayer gaming fun.—*Rice Burner*

- First Look ■ Developed by Luxoflux
- Published by Activision ■ Target release date: May

All screens shown here are from the PlayStation 2 version.



# Blood Will Tell

**FE** Hyakkimaru is a samurai whose weapon of choice is more than the standard katana. In this modern-day take on the classic manga by Osamu Tezuka, *Blood Will Tell* follows a lone samurai in his quest to uncover his haunting past. As soon as he was born, Hyakkimaru's limbs were replaced with violent tools of war—piercing blades make up his arms, while a powerful bazooka is hidden inside his leg.

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Okay, so the story sounds a little outlandish (how does the ammo replenish for the bazooka?), but it does offer a premise that promises lots of intense fighting. The game is a 3D action epic where you guide Hyakkimaru in what Sega labels "extreme violence" against over 100 demons and monsters. During his soul searching, the bionic samurai will get guidance from Dororo, a friend who helps and fights alongside him. In two-player cooperative play, Hyakkimaru and Dororo can be controlled simultaneously.



Sega definitely knows the samurai hack-n-slash genre, and with one of Japan's major and most respected storytellers (Tezuka is best known for *Astro Boy*) telling this heroic tale of humanity, *Blood Will Tell* may certainly raise your blood at its release.  
—Four-Eyed Dragon

■ First Look ■ Developed by WOW Entertainment  
■ Published by Sega ■ Target release date: Fall 2004



# Red Dead Revolver

**FE X** What was seen of *Red Dead Revolver* over a year ago was impressive. Even in its early stages, the game demonstrated a creative take on the wild west by imitating classic spaghetti Western films and showed every sign of being a success. Unfortunately, Capcom couldn't finish its commitment to the game and quietly canceled the project.

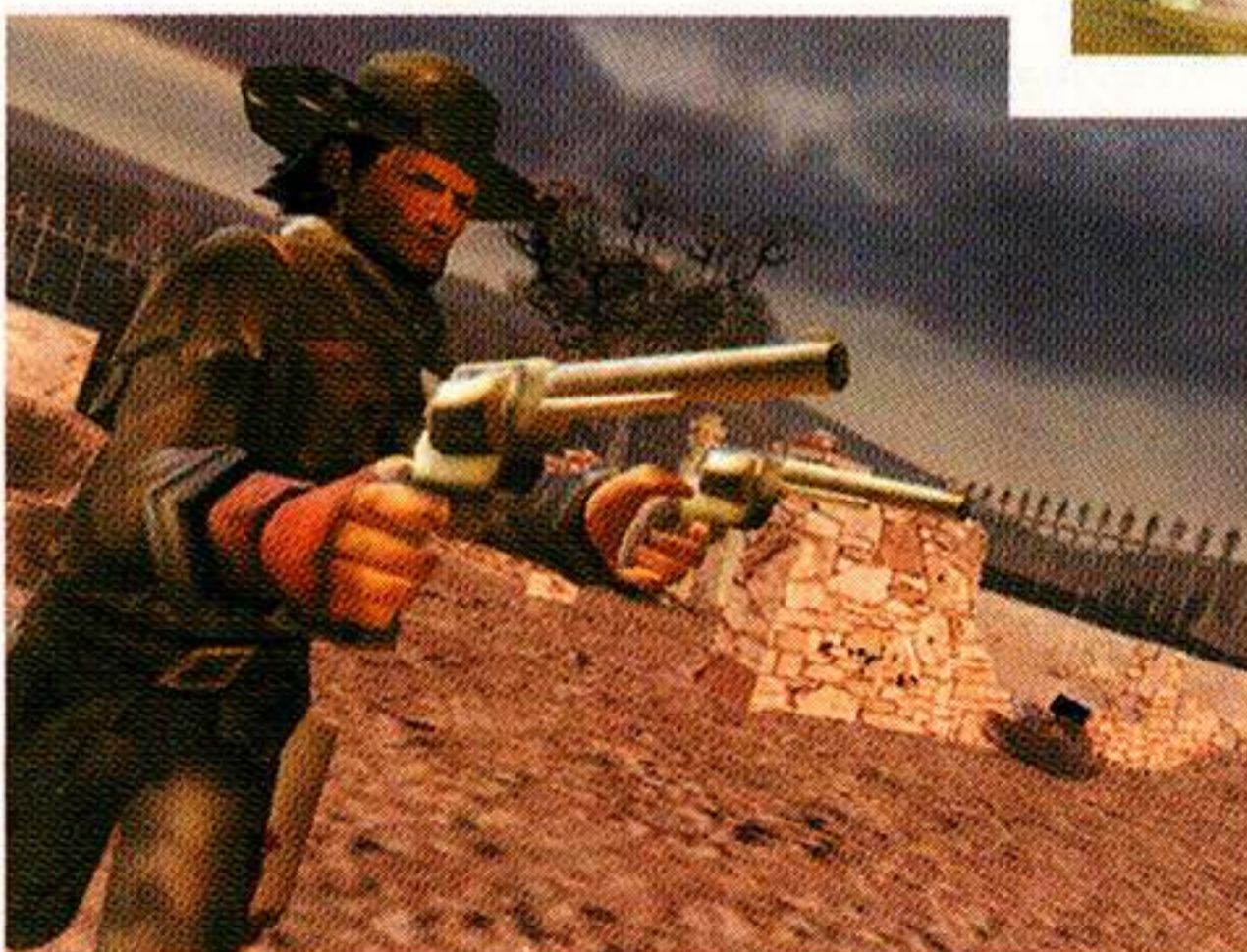
Fortunately, *Red Dead Revolver* is still being released, thanks to its new publisher, Rockstar. Although this ar-

cade third-person shooter will have many of the original features, it will showcase a few new elements, too. The story is much more gritty and highlighted with dark humor. It's the tale of Red Harlow, a bounty hunter who seeks closure to his nightmare past. Sadly, when he was a young boy, Red witnessed his family being slaughtered by a ruthless rogue general. Years have passed, and all Red wants now is revenge. He'll travel throughout the frontier to dusty towns, barren prairies, and wild saloons carrying out his brand of justice. Red's arsenal will include over 30 weapons with many variations of pistols, rifles, shotguns, and dynamite. To add an extra element of strategy and realism to the game, Red will be able to carry only one sidearm, one long arm, and one thrown weapon at any given time.

Let's hope all this waiting turns *Red Dead Revolver* into a classic Western in all respects.—Four-Eyed Dragon

■ Update ■ Developed by Rockstar San Diego  
■ Published by Rockstar Games ■ Target release date: April

All screens shown here are from the PlayStation 2 version.



# Destruction Derby Arenas

**FE** Certainly one of the classic games during the original PlayStation's glory days was Destruction Derby. It became a...er, smash hit, and a sequel quickly followed suit. Although the Derby is back under a new publisher and on a new system, the chaos that ensues promises to be just as fun as it is nostalgic. Your sole



objective in Arenas is to obliterate the competition by recklessly crashing into them with your tricked-out muscle car. Contributing to the



destruction are crazy interactive obstacles, such as speeding trains and hydraulic lifts, found in all 18 tracks. Online competition is where the most fun will be found. Up to 20 drivers can compete at once for total car annihilation, and besides bragging rights, top finishers win upgrades like spoilers and nitro boosts. This is one of the rare times where crashing your car is a good thing.—*Four-Eyed Dragon*

■ **First Look** ■ **Developed by Studio 33**  
 ■ **Published by Gathering** ■ **Target release date: March**



# TOCA Race Driver 2: Ultimate Racing Simulator

**X** Don't let the silly name fool you—TOCA 2 is a serious racer. So much so, in fact, that the game's ultrarealistic Terminal Damage Engine makes for a very challenging (and at times frustrating) racing experience. Unlike the popular Gran Turismo series, TOCA 2's real-life physics mean nudging other racers at 120 mph will probably send one of you spinning right off the track, and car damage will have severe and noticeable effects on your driving ability that you can see, hear, and even feel. Slam into a guardrail, and you'll hear the grinding metal in the gearbox and feel the car struggle as your transmission shifts from one gear to the next. Though only 80 percent complete, the preview build we played already sported an impressive frame rate, a highly responsive control system, and full multiplayer support (complete with head-to-head play on Xbox Live). With 35 licensed vehicles to choose from, you can test your skills in 15 racing styles in over 30 championship circuits.—*Bones*

■ **Hands-On** ■ **Developed and published by Codemasters**  
 ■ **Target release date: May**



# Maxxis Ultimate ATV

**X** Extreme off-road junkies may recognize the name Maxxis, but for the rest of us, it's one of the largest tire manufacturers in the world. That may not mean much, but with its name slapped on ATV stunt racing, it could make quite a difference. Ultimate ATV will be all about four-wheel stunt racing that takes place in 20 worldly areas like Easter Island, the Great Wall of China, and the pyramids of Egypt. While the courses may be all fantasy, everything else will mirror the real ATV world. Vehicles will be fully detailed, plus you'll be able to upgrade any of the 14 selectable ATVs with authentic parts, including steering, suspension, and, of course, Maxxis-licensed tires. Get ready to fling the dirt with extreme stunt racing this September.—*Four-Eyed Dragon*

■ **First Look** ■ **Developed by Maxxis Electronic Magic**  
 ■ **Published by Metro3D** ■ **Target release date: September**



## Killer 7

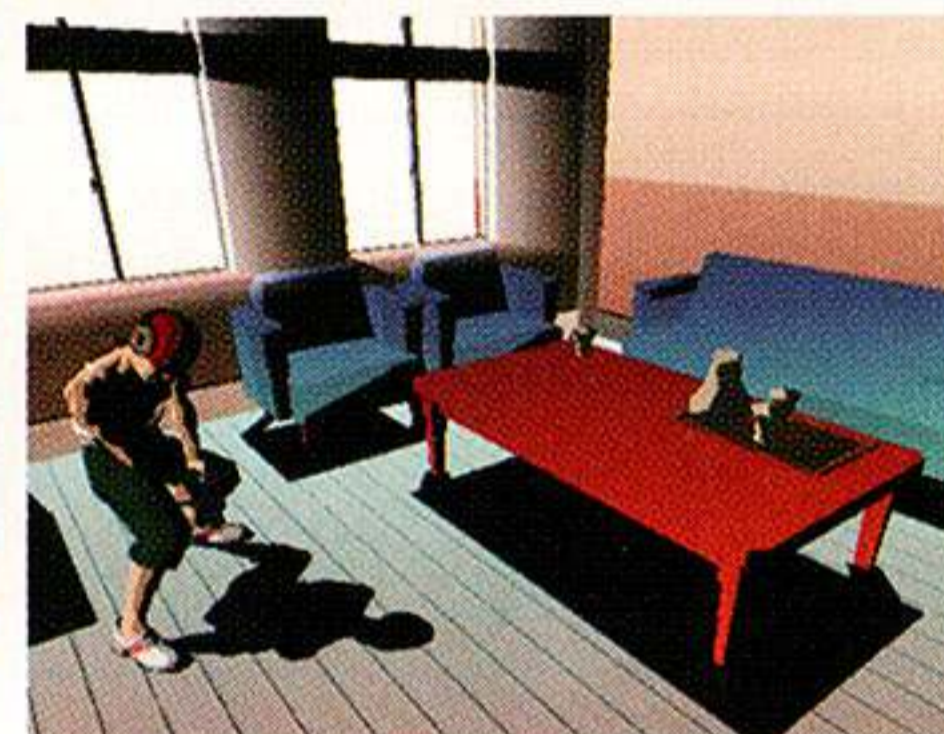
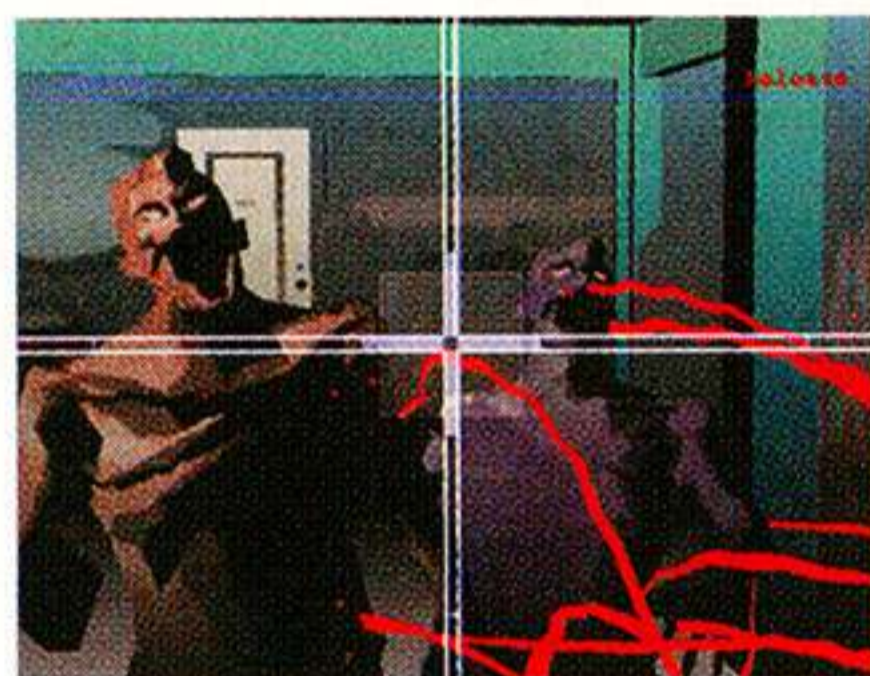
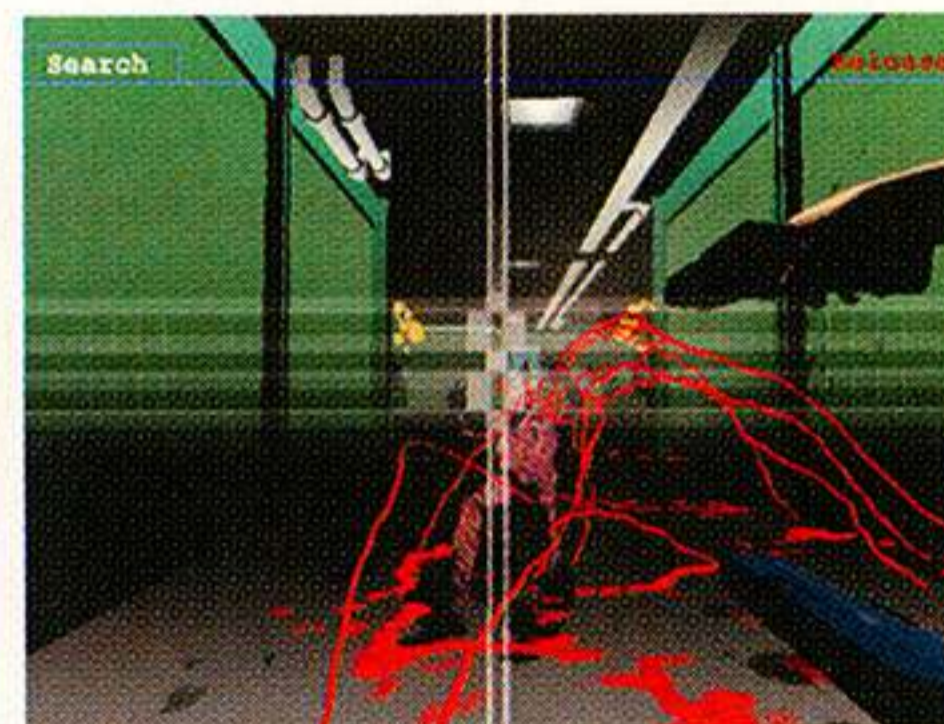
**C** If you had seven other personalities, how would you interact with them? Harman Smith uses his "partners" to assassinate those whom he deems "deserving to die." But now Harman faces a greater challenge in his life: He must sanction Kun Lan, a criminal overlord who has just unleashed horrific creatures in the city streets, wreaking havoc and taking over the minds of the innocent.

In this stylized, dark, and cel-shaded action/adventure, you must guide Harman and use his seven alter egos to finish Kun Lan once and for all. Each persona has its own strengths and skills: Garcian has the ability to turn invisible, Dan can slow time, Mask emits flames to counter attacks, Coyote's "gang kick" knocks down multiple enemies at one time, Kaede uses a deadly virus to overcome adversaries, Con has exceptional hearing, and Kevin is a master in knife techniques.

In addition to its intriguing gameplay, Killer 7's story line promises to be just as compelling. It's a tale of revenge and the connection between two men whose paths intertwine with deadly consequences. As one of the few Mature-rated games for the GameCube, Killer 7 should appeal to more than just one personality.

—Four-Eyed Dragon

■ **First Look** ■ **Developed and published by Capcom**  
 ■ **Target release date: Winter 2004**



## Transformers

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**FE** Past Transformers games left much to be desired (Beast Wars, anyone?), but Atari's latest effort is shaping up to be the game that bucks the trend. Set across eight sprawling levels, the game chronicles the latest battle between the Autobots and Decepticons.

Players take control of Optimus Prime, Hot Shot, or Red Alert in a quest to recover the missing Mini-cons. Introduced in the Armada story line, Mini-cons are small robots that can be added to a Transformer to enhance its power. Within the game, the Mini-cons serve as a way to customize your character.

While some of the jumping mechanics in the preview build still needed a slight bit of tuning, the core game has already taken form, and it truly is more than meets the eye. Developer Melborne House has done an excellent job of marrying two disparate gameplay styles and creating a world that is engaging as both a robot and a vehicle.

One of the most notable aspects is the ability to transform on the fly at any time. This makes it possible to execute some impressively slick combo attacks, such as plowing into a group of enemies as a vehicle, transforming, and then shooting the rest with your blaster—all in one smooth animation.

Whether you're an old-school Generation One Transformers fan or new to the fold, there is sure to be something appealing about the new game. With a few tweaks and a bit of polish, Transformers could easily become a surprise hit for Atari.—Syriel

■ **Hands-On** ■ **Developed by Melborne House** ■ **Published by Atari** ■ **Target release date: May**

*These screens were taken within the game engine, but they do not represent actual gameplay.*







# Death from Above



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



## Van Helsing



**FE** **X** Van Helsing returns to do what he does best—hunt monsters! Based on the upcoming movie by the same name, Van Helsing is a third-person action/adventure featuring reinterpretations of some of cinema's most infamous classic horror characters. Players will assume the role of Van Helsing, the original vampire hunter from Bram Stoker's seminal 1897 novel *Dracula*, as he is summoned to vanquish supernatural evil in 19<sup>th</sup> Century Transylvania.

Van Helsing features a menagerie of gruesome, well-known monster characters, such as Frankenstein, the Wolf Man, and Van Helsing's archenemy, Dracula, in multiple castle levels, which you'll fight using a generous arsenal of weapons, including melee blades, pistols, a hand-cranked gatling gun, and Van Helsing's signature grappling hook.

With hordes of ghastly creatures and a colossal cache of weapons, Van Helsing promises to be full of furious combat and nightmarish escapes.—*Rice Burner*

■ **First Look** ■ **Developed by Saffire Studios** ■ **Published by Vivendi Universal Games** ■ **Target release date: Spring 2004**

All screens shown here are from the Xbox version.



## The Chronicles of Riddick: Escape from Butcher Bay

**X** Ever question what life was like for Vin Diesel's career-making character Richard Riddick before the dark days of *Pitch Black*? Ever ponder what exactly made him into a murderer? Ever wonder where he got those cool eyes that enable him to see in the dark? In this video-game prequel (copublished by Diesel's very own video-game company, Tigon Games) to *Pitch Black* and the upcoming *The Chronicles of Riddick*, you play as the titular misunderstood psychopath, desperately trying to escape from the bowels of a high-security prison.

The gameplay is in first person with a healthy mix of brawling, grappling, sneaking, and shooting big guns. Darkness and shadows play a big part in Riddick's life as he uses the unlit nooks and crannies to play a game of hide and sneak against the guards, lunatic inmates, and strange creatures that inhabit the prison.—*Star Dingo*

■ **First Look** ■ **Developed by Starbreeze Studios**  
 ■ **Published by Vivendi Universal Games/Tigon Games**  
 ■ **Target release date: June**



## Bujingai

**FE** Inspired by such movies as *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* and other classic Hong Kong films, Bujingai is hoping to appeal to the martial arts fan...but don't look to the past as the setting of this third-person action/adventure. Instead, Bujingai takes place in a postapocalyptic Asia where you play as warrior Liu King Feather. His cause: to save his pal who has been possessed by a demon. Liu's lethal combination of frenzied fists and powerful magic promises to keep the game's pace fast and the play original. You'll be able to customize Liu with various skill sets, while a deep combat system and tons of unlockable bonuses should entice you to play more than once.—*Four-Eyed Dragon*

■ **First Look** ■ **Developed by Taito**  
 ■ **Published by BAM! Entertainment**  
 ■ **Target release date: May**

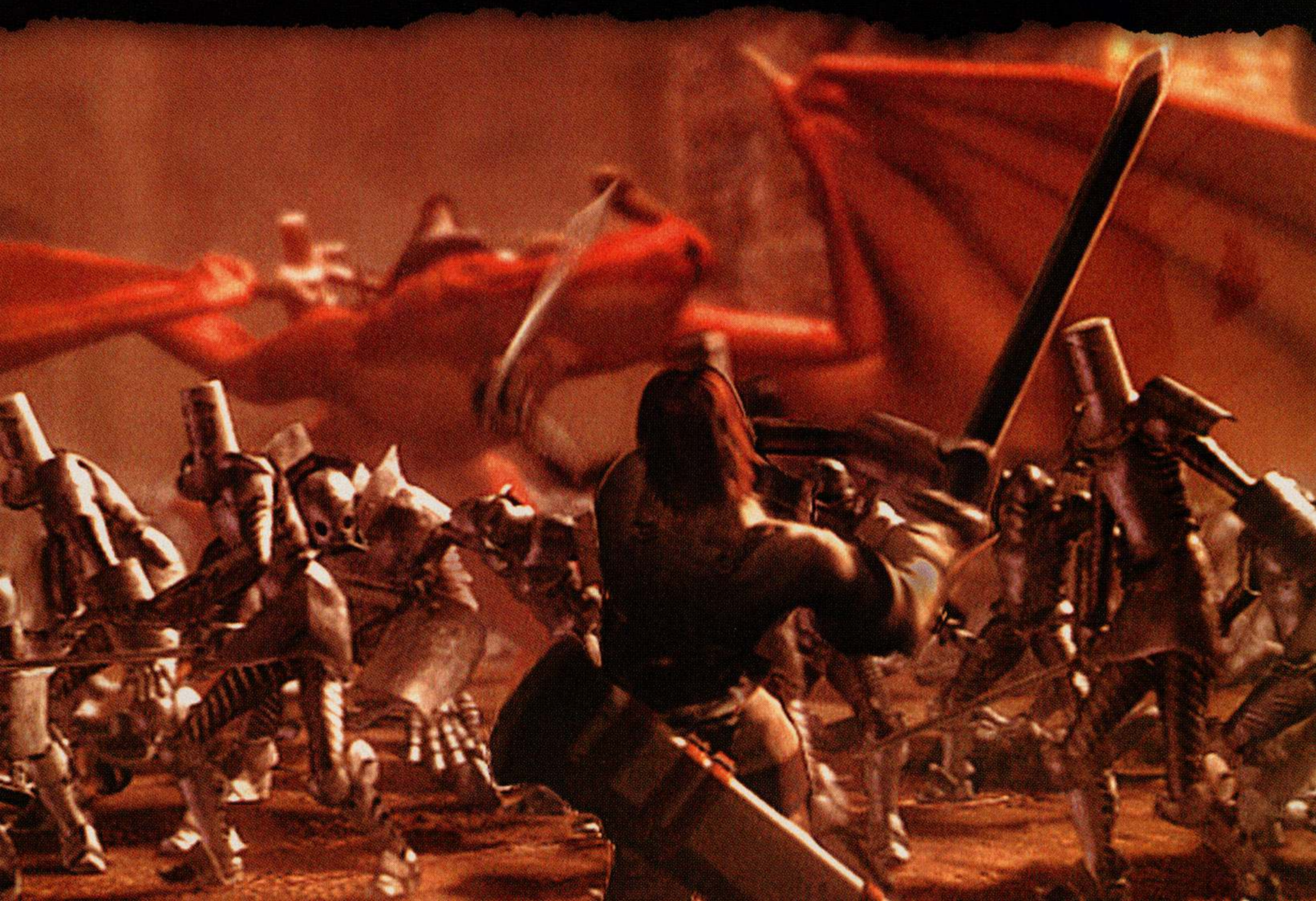




Crush vast armies with the might of your steel and magic.  
As the legions fall, your strength, skills and spells will increase.



# Chaos Below



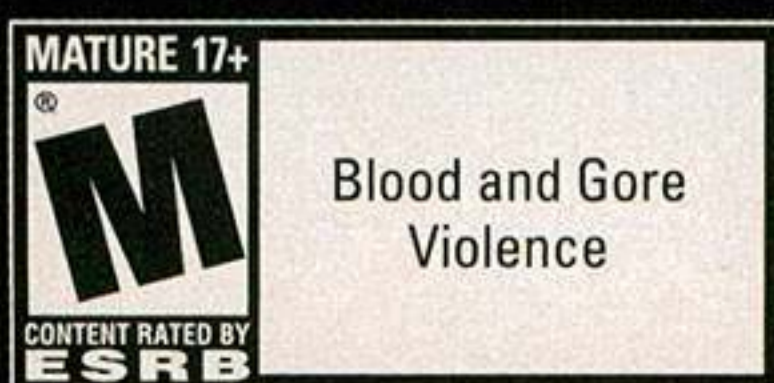


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PlayStation®2





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## The ESRB Ratings Guide

The interactive electronic entertainment industry utilizes a voluntary rating system developed by an independent organization—the Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB)—so consumers know what to expect before buying a video or PC game. The following is a quick key to the most common ratings; for a complete description, check out the ESRB's website at [www.esrb.org](http://www.esrb.org) or call 800/771-3772 for more information.

**EVERYONE (E)** Titles rated **Everyone (E)** have content suitable for persons ages six and older. These titles will appeal to people of many ages and tastes. They may contain minimal violence, comic mischief, or crude language.

**TEEN (T)** Games rated **Teen (T)** are suitable for ages 13 and up. These games could have violent content, strong language, and/or suggestive themes.

**MATURE (M)** Games rated **Mature (M)** are appropriate for older gamers, generally 17 and up. Mature-rated games may contain more intense depictions of violence, stronger language, and, on rare occasions, sexual themes.

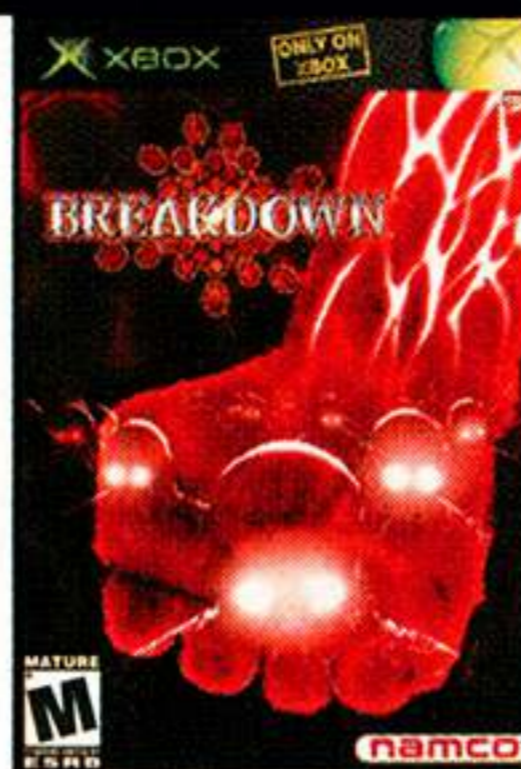
**RATING PENDING (RP)** The **Rating Pending (RP)** icon may appear in early reviews of soon-to-be-released products. Look for the actual ESRB rating icon on the game's package, check the ESRB's website, or call its toll-free phone number for updated rating information.

Maximize your video-gaming fun! Make the right purchasing choices by knowing exactly what kind of content is inside each game.

### Breakdown By Namco



Breakdown features a healthy dosage of bloodletting and carnage via hand-to-hand combat and various weapons—pistols, sub-machine guns, rocket launchers, grenades, and more. There's also plenty of foul language and profanity that's uttered by various characters.



### Mafia By Gathering



Set in the 1930s, Mafia finds you as an employee of the titular family as you engage in various illegal activities. Some of the game's many missions include assassinations, bootlegging, and bank robbery. There's plenty of blood and gunfire as you can use weapons that range from tommy guns to dynamite.



### Ninja Gaiden By Tecmo



The action is intense and stylized in Ninja Gaiden, and so is the violence. Although the heads and limbs of unearthly creatures and rival ninjas get chopped off at a steady clip, the bloodletting isn't glorified with slow motion or close-ups. However, it's still too graphic for younger players.



### The Suffering By Midway



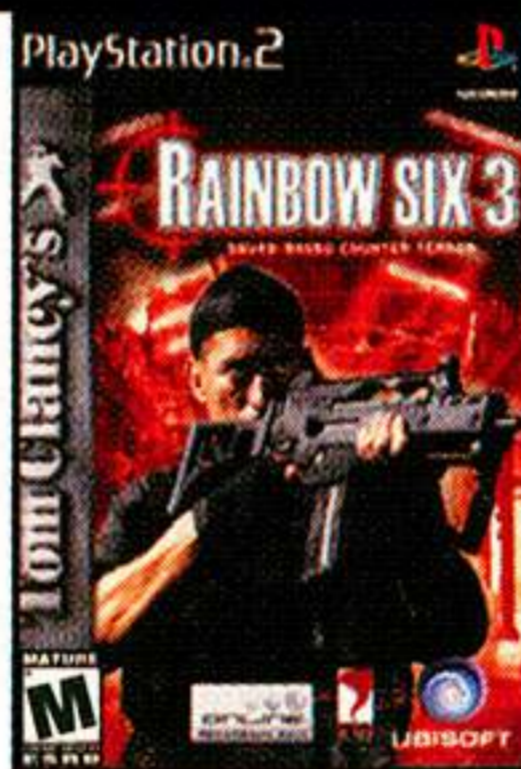
The Suffering is horribly sick, violent, nasty, and cruel. Everything in it quickly becomes soaked in blood, you can target (and explode) specific body parts, and the creature designs are downright disturbing. The language is particularly filthy—definitely not for virgin ears.



### Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six 3 By Ubisoft



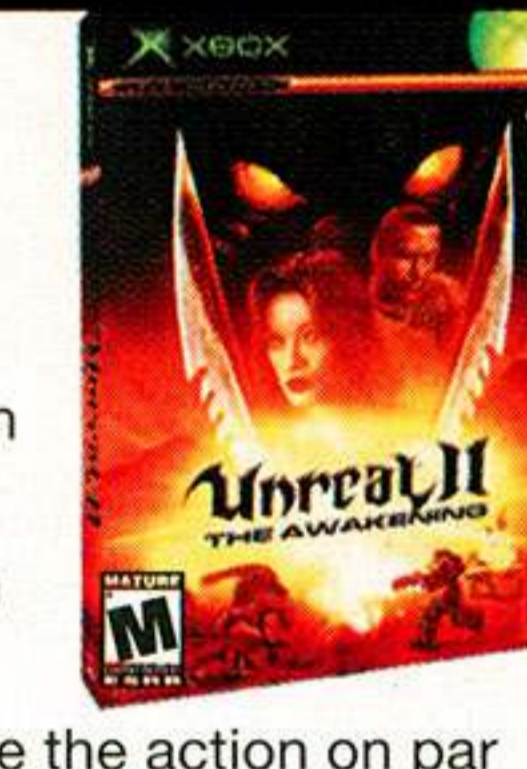
Not unlike the real world, the Tom Clancy universe is threatened by terrorists with realistic and deadly motives. The Rainbow Six series follows a military team to hunt down this threat using an armory of actual weaponry used by today's elite forces. Many times, this commando unit will exercise a kill-only policy, which means there's a lot of animated violence and deaths using very powerful guns.



### Unreal II: The Awakening By Atari



Scary alien monsters and bloody sci-fi weapon battles highlight Unreal II, which also features several human corpses (which the player discovers during exploration and creates during later gameplay) and the occasional head on a stick. The gore level is adjustable, which means you can make the action on par with an average R-rated sci-fi film or ratchet it down to merely PG. It's also dark and spooky.



## ESRB RATINGS FOR ALL GAMES REVIEWED IN THIS ISSUE

Breakdown.....	M	Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell Pandora Tomorrow.....	T
Mafia.....	M	All-Star Baseball 2005.....	E
Ninja Gaiden.....	M	Colin McRae Rally 04.....	E
The Suffering.....	M	ESPN Major League Baseball 2K4.....	E
Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six 3.....	M	MLB 2005.....	E
Unreal II: The Awakening.....	M	MVP Baseball 2004.....	E
Alias.....	T	Pitfall: The Lost Expedition.....	E
Dinosaur Hunting.....	T	Sabrewulf.....	E
Fight Night 2004.....	T	WarioWare, Inc.: Mega Party Game\$.....	E
Naval Ops: Commander.....	T	Yu-Gi-Oh!	
Samurai Jack: The Shadow of Aku.....	T	World Championship Tournament 2004.....	E



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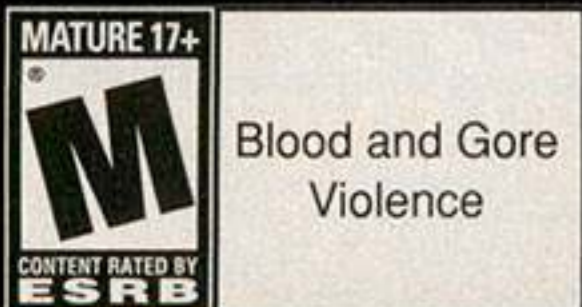


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## Ninja Gaiden

**Ninja Gaiden is not only the best ninja game in years but also a crowning achievement in action gaming as a whole.**

**X** The mysterious, black-clothed assassins have been making a video-game comeback recently, but the results have been lackluster so far. Ninja Gaiden changes all of that with a kick-ass effort that redefines the classic franchise.

### Code of the Ninja

When the original trilogy of Ninja Gaiden games was released on the NES, it set a standard for fast action and a high degree of challenge. This



**PRO TIP:** You can unlock this snazzy outfit and a plasma sword after beating the game.



**PRO TIP:** Trade in your Gold Scarabs frequently as you'll often get immediately useful items.



**PRO TIP:** This platform near Han's Bar in Tairon holds the Windmill Shuriken and a complete health and magic power-up.



**PRO TIP:** When trying to reach tough platforms, use the standard Shuriken throw to give yourself an extra jump boost.

Xbox revival manages to achieve those lofty goals but isn't happy with merely re-creating the past. Ryu Hayabusa, the hero from the previous games, is again the main protagonist, although there's no connection to the previous story line. Ryu's clan has been murdered, so bloody vengeance must be enacted and humanity saved along the way. While it's not the most original premise, the plot and voice acting add the required amount of motivation to keep you interested and move things along. Other audio elements like the sound effects and music are quite fantastic as every weapon features uniquely satisfying noises, and the heart-pounding main theme is incredibly catchy. The only drawback is that the overall soundtrack is a bit unbalanced with a few tunes that don't quite cut it.

### Focus

Most modern action games add driving levels or mini-games to keep the gameplay fresh. Ryu is required to swim at times, but the meat and potatoes focuses on acquiring and upgrading weapons and techniques, and simply learning to make full use of the resulting moves. While this may sound dull on paper, it's immensely rewarding in action. You'll be driven insane with glee at how many different ways there are to develop Ryu's arsenal and dispatch foes with style.

Be warned that there is plenty of tricky platform jumping that's a pain not because the timing is hard to master but because the camera angle can be wonky. In fact, the frustrating camera is really the biggest mark against Ninja Gaiden. With action this fast and levels so different from one another, it's remarkable that the viewpoint doesn't get in the way as much as it could. The rest of the visuals are just plain awesome—whether it's the shiny latches on Ryu's body armor or the detailed locations of each environment.

### Stamina

For those wanting to strut their stuff, Master Ninja Tournament is the global-ranking system accessed via Xbox Live (a feature that could not be tested at press time). Other extra features include unlockables like an alternate outfit, the original Ninja Gaiden Trilogy, and Theater mode, so you can watch those neat CG cut-scenes.

Highly skilled players may be able to finish the game quicker, but the majority of folks will clock in for a 20-plus-hour thrill ride. Few games are this good, for so long, and still keep you coming back for more. Ninja Gaiden is truly outstanding.—Tokyo Drifter

**M** ■ Developed by Team Ninja  
 ■ Published by Tecmo ■ \$49.99  
 ■ Available now ■ Action ■ 1 player

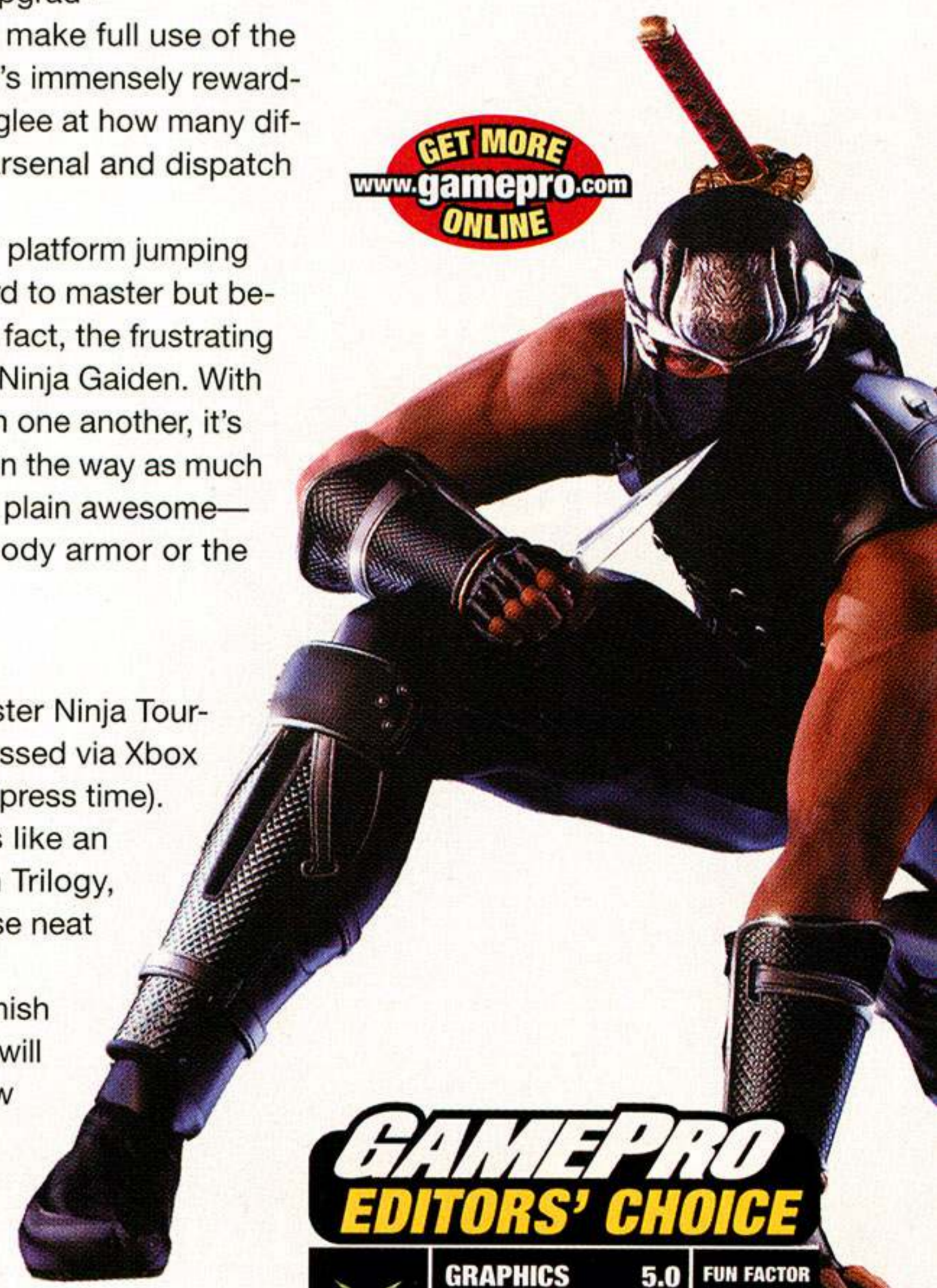


**PRO TIP:** It's always a good idea to try to get behind bosses during a fight as their most lethal strikes are grappling holds.



**PRO TIP:** Don't go for the furthest chest underwater without the Oxygen Tank, or you'll sacrifice health.

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**GAMEPRO EDITORS' CHOICE**

<b>X</b>	GRAPHICS	5.0	<b>FUN FACTOR</b> <b>5.0</b>
	SOUND	4.5	
	CONTROL	5.0	



# Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six 3

The game may carry the legendary name of Rainbow Six, but the gameplay has been reduced to a close-quarters combat shooter with training wheels.

**PE** Team Rainbow has gone through a lot of changes since it first set out terrorist-hunting years ago. And while many of those changes have been obvious improvements, Rainbow Six 3 has drastically departed from the series' original concept, begging the question of whether it's an improvement or not. For Rainbow Six enthusiasts, the answer is definitely no. But for newbies to the series, well, it doesn't really matter.

## Somewhere Over the Rainbow

Rainbow Six fans should be familiar with the overall scheme of RS3. You guide a team of highly skilled counterterrorists through dangerous close-quarters environments using precise shooting and unparalleled team tactics. From here, veterans of the series will immediately notice that the gameplay takes a different turn. Gone is the tedious plotting of your team's path and the jumbled



**PROTIP:** In Crespo Foundation, terrorists will use hostages as human shields if you're not fast enough in clearing a room.

timing of actually executing the predetermined plans. Instead, as team leader Ding Chavez, you issue simple commands in real time to three subordinates. Most of the orders are for different ways of entering a

room, such as flash bang and clear or breach and clear maneuvers. It's a simple concept, easy to carry out, and seems authentic enough for a crack commando team.



**PROTIP:** Place your team just outside of a doorway without letting them rush into the room. They'll automatically be positioned to take out terrorists without putting themselves in danger.



**PROTIP:** The M34 WP grenade has a slightly wider radius than a frag grenade. Use them to effectively flush out hiding enemies.



There are fewer members in the Rainbow gang, contributing to the streamlined gameplay.



**PROTIP:** To move and stay tilted at the same time, lean sideways and sidestep very slowly. It's the best way to look around corners.



**PROTIP:** In Island Estate at the first sight of a door opening, hostages will be executed. You can prevent this by breaching—not flash banging—the entryway to clear the area for a successful rescue.

What doesn't seem realistic, however, is the layout of each level. Along with simplifying group movements, the game also simplified the path that you take. You no longer have the option to choose from multiple paths and entry points. This time around, you follow one predetermined path with few chances to flank enemies. The result: a much faster, arcade feel that also eliminates team strategy. This is no longer a squad-based game; rather, it's a pick-up-and-play first-person shooter with teammates strictly as backup for your rear or if you make a mistake.

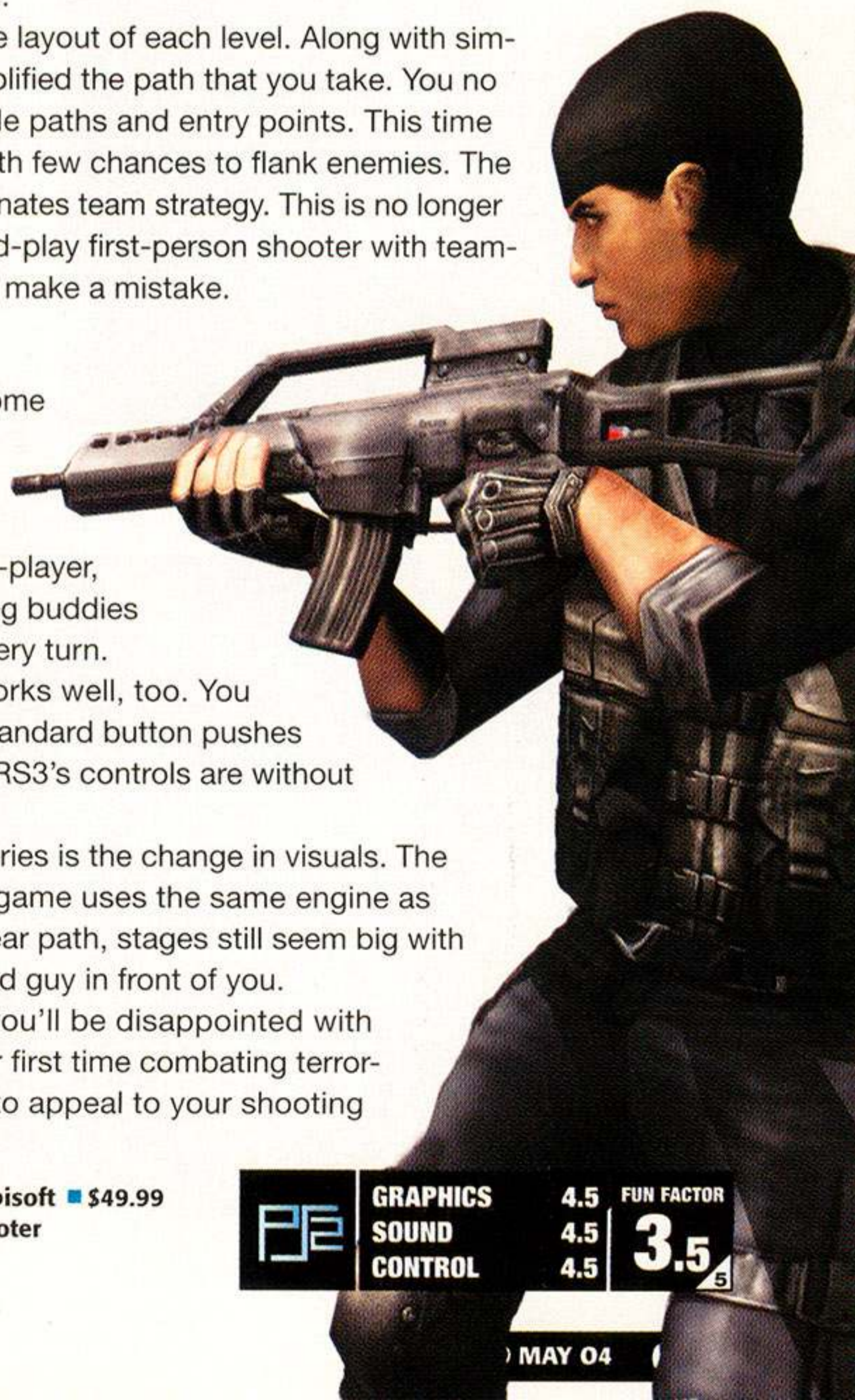
## In My Sights

Mixing up your time with other people is a welcome distraction from playing the game alone. The action is just as fierce online as in any other PS2 shooter, but unfortunately, only up to six people can play together at one time. The two-player, split-screen co-op mode is exceptional, making buddies effectively communicate with each other at every turn.

Talking to your computer-controlled A.I. works well, too. You can use the voice-command headset or the standard button pushes to direct your team's movements. Either way, RS3's controls are without fault and easy to use.

Another departure from the Rainbow Six series is the change in visuals. The graphics look great—and they should as the game uses the same engine as Splinter Cell. And even though you're on a linear path, stages still seem big with a lot to see as you "liberate" the gun-toting bad guy in front of you.

All told, if you're a Rainbow Six veteran, you'll be disappointed with the watered-down gameplay. But if this is your first time combating terrorists, you'll find that RS3 is adequate enough to appeal to your shooting instincts.—*Four-Eyed Dragon*



**M** ■ Developed Ubisoft Shanghai ■ Published by Ubisoft ■ \$49.99  
 ■ Available now ■ First-person squad-based shooter  
 ■ 2 players; 6 online

PE	GRAPHICS	4.5	FUN FACTOR
	SOUND CONTROL	4.5	
		4.5	

# Unreal II: The Awakening

Maybe The Awakening should have been allowed to sleep a little longer.

**X** When D-Pad Destroyer reviewed Unreal II: The Awakening (April 2003) for the PC, he said the game “succeeds with flair—as long as you have the system to run it.” Unfortunately for Xbox owners, Microsoft’s console is apparently not that system.

## Not the Gangster of Love

In Unreal II, you’re John Dalton, a space cowboy who gets shuttled around the galaxy’s danger zones, putting out fires and lighting up new ones. Aided and abetted by a crew comprised of an alien, an alcoholic, and a hot chick, you’re sent out to do the Terran Colonial Authority’s dirty work. With so many hostile species out there all looking for the same powerful artifacts, it does get dirty.

While it’s more or less a straight port of the single-player game, the Xbox version has one crucial feature the PC original didn’t: online multiplayer. The Xbox Live experience includes the team-based XMP mode (which has been made available to PC owners as a patch). If you prefer a split-screen gaming experience, you and a friend can play through the whole game in co-op mode.



**PROTIP:** Acheron’s floating defense creatures pop like balloons if you spray them with the flamethrower.



**PROTIP:** When fighting the Araknid Queen, seek cover behind the wall around the edge, then blast her with frag grenades.



**PROTIP:** No matter how you slice it, Skaarj are tough—but at least they make a large target. Keep moving and have some grenades handy.



**PROTIP:** The flamethrower is by far the most effective weapon against the Araknids of Elysium Labs.



**PROTIP:** The shock lance is one of the first weapons you’ll confiscate in the game. Use its excellent range for far-off targets like turrets, but skip it for up-close combat.



**PROTIP:** On Acheron, don’t head straight to the tooth pit and nail the dudes on the platform with a rocket launcher. They need to be alive to bring the platform back up, or you can’t take it back down.

## Lost in Translation

Unreal II features tight controls and a creative weapon selection—each boomstick features an alt-fire mode (an Unreal staple), which effectively doubles your arsenal. But other vital elements got messed up along the way. The game suffers from frame-rate issues, particularly in the area of character animation. Enemies and NPCs look stuttered, like they’re missing frames that would otherwise make them move smoothly. Plus, NPCs in tow don’t always follow you through doors, and they sometimes walk through closed ones. Cinemas are broken up into tiny chunks, so the scene will fade up and down several times over the course of one conversation. Presumably this is to make things load quicker on the Xbox, but it’s still distracting. Can’t complain about the particle system, though—the smoke effects look great, and the raging fires certainly do, well, rage.

On The Awakening review disc, the speech was mastered too “hot,” so the audio distorts even at low volumes. Worse still, dialogue often overlaps so that characters talk over each other unnaturally. The soundtrack befits an action movie, but less would be more; with the constant presence of building strings and booming bass echoes, you rarely get to enjoy the feeling of claustrophobia and isolation. Better to turn the music down and get chills the old-fashioned way.

## Unfinished Unreal

Various technical glitches and even some misspelled words mar a game that should have had plenty of time to get a final polish. If you can play Unreal II on the PC, do. Otherwise, rent this for the Xbox only while you wait for the other first-person heavyweights to show up later in the year.—Dan Elektro

**M** ■ Developed by Tantalus/Legend/Epic Games  
 ■ Published by Atari ■ \$39.99 ■ Available now  
 ■ First-person shooter ■ 2 players; 8 online

<b>X</b>	GRAPHICS	3.5	<b>3.0</b> <sub>5</sub>
	SOUND CONTROL	2.5	
		4.0	

# Mafia

**PE** Mafia is bound to be dismissed by PlayStation 2 owners as a mere Prohibition-era Grand Theft Auto clone, and though it suffers in comparison by not being nearly as open-ended, its carefully measured pace, compelling characters, and lofty narrative make it a unique animal. Unfortunately, it's also one of missed potential resulting from technical flaws suffered during the translation from PC to console.

As Tommy Angelo, chain-smoking cab jockey turned mob errand-monkey, you get to extort immigrants, collect graft money, run illegal booze, and crack skulls in back-alley brawls while making a name for yourself amongst spaghetti-slurping gangsters. Most of the time, you'll be jaunting around a vast, fictional city in slow-ass antique cars while listening to Django Reinhart and making stops for the occasional torch job and dodgy gunfight. Third-person controls are the first casualty of the port; getting a bead on enemies is so tough that it renders the gunfighting aspects frustrating if not nearly unplayable. Rampant autosaves and long loading interruptions kill much of the game's momentum, and the graphical presentation takes a kick to the ribs from dull textures, fog, and some mean pop-up. Still, Mafia's solid script, impeccable voice acting, and overall mood makes it worth a rental, though you're better off playing the PC version if you get the chance.—*Pong Sifu*



Al Capone liked baseball bats, too.

Also on the Xbox

**M** ■ Developed by Illusion Softworks ■ Published by Gathering ■ \$49.99 ■ Available now ■ Action ■ 1 player



**PROTIP:** Press L1 when driving to inhibit your maximum speed and avoid attracting the attention of the police.

<b>PE</b>	GRAPHICS	2.5	FUN FACTOR <b>3.0</b> <sub>5</sub>
	SOUND	4.0	
	CONTROL	2.0	



**PROTIP:** Aim for your target's weak points to bring it down faster and conserve ammo.

# Dinosaur Hunting

**X** The cleverly titled Dinosaur Hunting sets you loose on a safari in the wilds of the Amazon with nothing but a pet dog, a few tranquilizer darts, and a mission to stalk and shoot your prehistoric prey in the ultimate big game hunt. You play as part of an international effort to rescue a newly discovered population of endangered dinosaurs (which has somehow survived extinction for millions of years in the Guiana highlands).

Because it's a rescue mission and not a trophy hunt, all of your weapons are loaded with a variety of nonlethal tranquilizer darts—which is where both the fun and frustration of Dinosaur Hunting begin. In order to bag the big boys, you must synthesize specific darts for each species by examining the carcasses of their fallen comrades, the fragments of their eggshells, the remains of their meals, and even by sifting through gigantic, steaming piles of their feces. Discovering the data for each type of dart takes time, and because you can afford to make only a few darts, every shot counts. But if you happen to miss after an hour of painstakingly tracking down the main target, you can pretty much kiss your butt goodbye—the only save point you get is the one at your base camp at the start of the map.

But for all its flaws, Dinosaur Hunting is hard to stay mad at. The game boasts a stellar array of thundering dinosaur sound effects and some attractive visuals (especially the dinosaur movements). But sadly, sloppy close-combat controls, repetitive gameplay, and a few moments of teeth-grinding frustration keep this game from reaching its full potential.—*Bones*

**T** ■ Developed by Metro3D ■ Published by Microsoft ■ \$39.99 ■ Available now ■ Action/adventure ■ 1 player



**PROTIP:** When possible, try to avoid close combat with dangerous predators; use your rifle and a properly prepared tranquilizer dart instead.

<b>X</b>	GRAPHICS	4.0	FUN FACTOR <b>3.5</b> <sub>5</sub>
	SOUND	4.0	
	CONTROL	3.0	

# Naval Ops: Commander

**PE** The Naval Ops series, like P.T.O., has always catered to the type of World War II fans who will sit and identify the different ships and planes that appear on the History Channel. Naval Ops: Commander is no different. With the endless array of weaponry and familiar ship types to choose from, it brings to life every war geek's dream.

Much of the game remains the same as the first installment. There's the Strategy phase, where players can build ships and research technology, and the Battle phase, where players escort suicide-prone naive ships, sink whole fleets, and bombard hapless bases for money. The most notable difference is the bird's eye view of battle.



**PROTIP:** Note the aircraft carrier that has been pummeled by the battleship. Carriers have vulnerable decks and planes that quickly become antiaircraft fodder; use battleships instead.

Although this view makes it easier to see the surroundings, it leaves the graphics flat and unremarkable.

The freedom in designing a ship reveals the true virtue of the game, enabling you to tackle missions with a speedy jack-of-all-trades cruiser, a long-range-attacking aircraft carrier, or a battleship with impractically huge guns. Intense battles provide addictive fun, and diverse bosses force you to adjust strategies and building styles. However, getting into the game takes time with needlessly convoluted controls and interface. Also, the 80 stages seem excessive, and by the time half of the missions are done, the game falls into an all too familiar rhythm.

Despite its quirks and graphics that fall short of the original's, Naval Ops: Commander packs enough firepower to keep fans of the series stoked. Nonfans, however, may quickly get left in its wake.—*Funky Zealot*

**T** ■ Developed by Micro Cabin ■ Published by Koei ■ \$49.99 ■ Available now ■ Simulation ■ 1 player



**PROTIP:** The easy submarine boss in mission B-10 gives a lot of funds in a very short time. Repeat the mission to build up your technology levels.

<b>PE</b>	GRAPHICS	3.5	FUN FACTOR <b>4.0</b> <sub>5</sub>
	SOUND	3.0	
	CONTROL	3.0	

# Breakdown

Namco's innovative first-person action/adventure Breakdown has plenty to cheer about...except for the clumsy interface.

**X** Save a few innovative offerings, first-person titles rarely venture outside the safe boundaries of a straight weapon-based shooter.

Breakdown is an interesting attempt to add depth to the first-person perspective with weapons, fighting, platform hopping, magic, and a lengthy narrative, but it's frequently undone by clunky interface issues and other nagging details.

## Which Way Is Up?

Breakdown's narrative is like *The Matrix* crossed with *Total Recall* and *Memento*: Nothing is as it seems; trust no one; and pay close attention to every lengthy memo, file, and conversation along the way or the convoluted, multitiered plot will quickly become confusing. Most of the game plays out in real time, and it builds an excellent level of tension that's wisely uninterrupted by checkpoints or flashy high-end computer-generated cinema sequences. You play as Derrick Cole, the amnesiac main character of Breakdown, whose skills include using firearms, performing martial arts, driving vehicles, crawling through air vents, dangling from ledges, and wielding magic forces that gradually strengthen as things progress.



**PROTIP:** Use Grenades to destroy laser trip lines instead of jumping over them.



**PROTIP:** When confronted by multiple enemies, let Alex or nearby soldiers draw fire while you sneak up behind them.



**PROTIP:** Use your shadow as a guide when navigating narrow walkways.



**PROTIP:** You can replenish lost energy by drinking soda, and you can find soda in any soda vending machine.



Breakdown delivers a healthy dosage of first-person shooting, but hand-to-hand fighting becomes equally—if not more—important as you dive deeper into the game and learn a variety of punches, kicks, and even combo attacks. Sturdy controls keep the complex repertoire of actions under your command, although it's easy to lose your perspective when combating multiple enemies that advance from different directions. A fair amount of brainpower is also required, and getting stuck in a single location for an extended time as you try to puzzle your way out and get to the next section isn't uncommon. The steep difficulty should also make one adhere to the mantra "save early and often."

## Mind Melt

Breakdown is a visual and aural stunner, with smooth, colorful, and detailed surroundings, and aesthetic sound effects. The frame rate never falters, even when you venture from narrow spaces to wide, open areas, and the clean audio effects are a perfect match for the onscreen activity. As bold as the sights and sounds are, the interface is barely up to snuff and misses the mark in important ways. Obtaining even the simplest item is a tiresome multi-step process (stop, see item, pick up item, look at item, put item in inventory) and a true irritation when you're under fire or in the heat of battle. Other clumsy interface problems abound, especially the fact that you can't collect health items and retain them for later use.

Breakdown is an interesting attempt to expand the limits of a tried-and-true genre—just anticipate some frustration for the awkward interface and time-consuming stretches of trial-and-error.—Major Mike



**PROTIP:** Even the most innocuous item can be put to good use. For instance, you can jump in any jeep and drive it across long distances.



**PROTIP:** If you're faced with a seemingly impassible gap, look for nearby railings that you can use to cross.

**M** ■ Developed and published by Namco ■ \$49.99  
 ■ Available now ■ Action/adventure ■ 1 player

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<b>X</b>	GRAPHICS	4.5	<b>FUN FACTOR</b> <b>4.0</b>
	SOUND	4.5	
	CONTROL	3.5	

# Colin McRae Rally 04

**X** So what if the real Colin McRae hasn't been crowned champion of the World Rally Championship since 1995? In the virtual world, his rally racing series gets better with each release, constantly placing him as champion of off-road action. Number four improves many aspects of its predecessor, resulting in, once again, a near perfect drive.

## The Big Mac

Rally racing is perhaps the black sheep of the speed world. You don't drive in circles, you compete against the clock, and you have a navigator sitting next to you. The true challenge is maneuvering on ruggedly narrow roads that twist and curve through mountains, forests, and canyons in all types of weather conditions. It's a hair-raising experience fit for any kind of racing fan.

This year's McRae Rally finally makes you more accountable for the damage taken to your car. Slide too much, and your tires can blow. Dent the body, and the aerodynamics are shot. Scrape too low to the ground, and small rocks will stop you in your tracks. Between races, the limited amount of time to fix car ailments as well as determine vehicle adjustments that can shave off seconds provides a more realistic feel to the game.

**PROTIP:** Always, always fix your wheels during service. Without fresh tires, you are certain to lose valuable time and control.



**PROTIP:** You'll almost always lose control if you speed up a crest—you're literally driving into a blind spot. Instead, take your foot off the gas until you overcome the crest, then step on it.



**PROTIP:** There's very little danger in damaging a lowered car when racing on asphalt—there are few or no ground objects on this type of surface.



**PROTIP:** The best way to straighten out if you're still swerving after a turn is to let off the gas, don't use the brakes, and adjust your steering accordingly.



**PROTIP:** At the start, don't rev your engine all the way. If you do, you'll see a red light, which means you're already screwing up the engine.

The gas-guzzlers—there's a good selection of two-wheel-drive, four-wheel-drive, and classic-but-now-banned cars to choose from—all perform well, too. Just be prepared to slip and slide a bit if you're not used to drifting through turns.

## Talk Dirty to Me

Visually, Rally 04 looks much better than in previous versions. The environments are more detailed with a special attention to realistic road conditions, such as variations of mud, gravel, asphalt, and snow. Cars slowly get grimy as you progress, and vehicle damage looks genuine. The sounds, though sparse, add to the game's authentic experience. Your navigator steadily calls out the road bumps ahead, while the constant hum of the engine never goes off-key.

Rally 04 has some minor setbacks, though. Although the game carries the name of a real rally racer, none of the tracks are real, and it doesn't feel like you're racing in a rally championship where you'd see crowds of spectators on every side cheering you on. Some stages seem bland and without depth, too. Still, these are all just minor grievances that can easily be overlooked—especially if you're paying only \$20 for this quality racing game.—*Four-Eyed Dragon*

**E** ■ Developed and published by Codemasters  
 ■ \$19.99 ■ Available now ■ Rally racing ■ 4 players

**GAMEPRO EDITORS' CHOICE**

X	GRAPHICS	4.5	FUN FACTOR	4.5
	SOUND	4.0		
	CONTROL	5.0		

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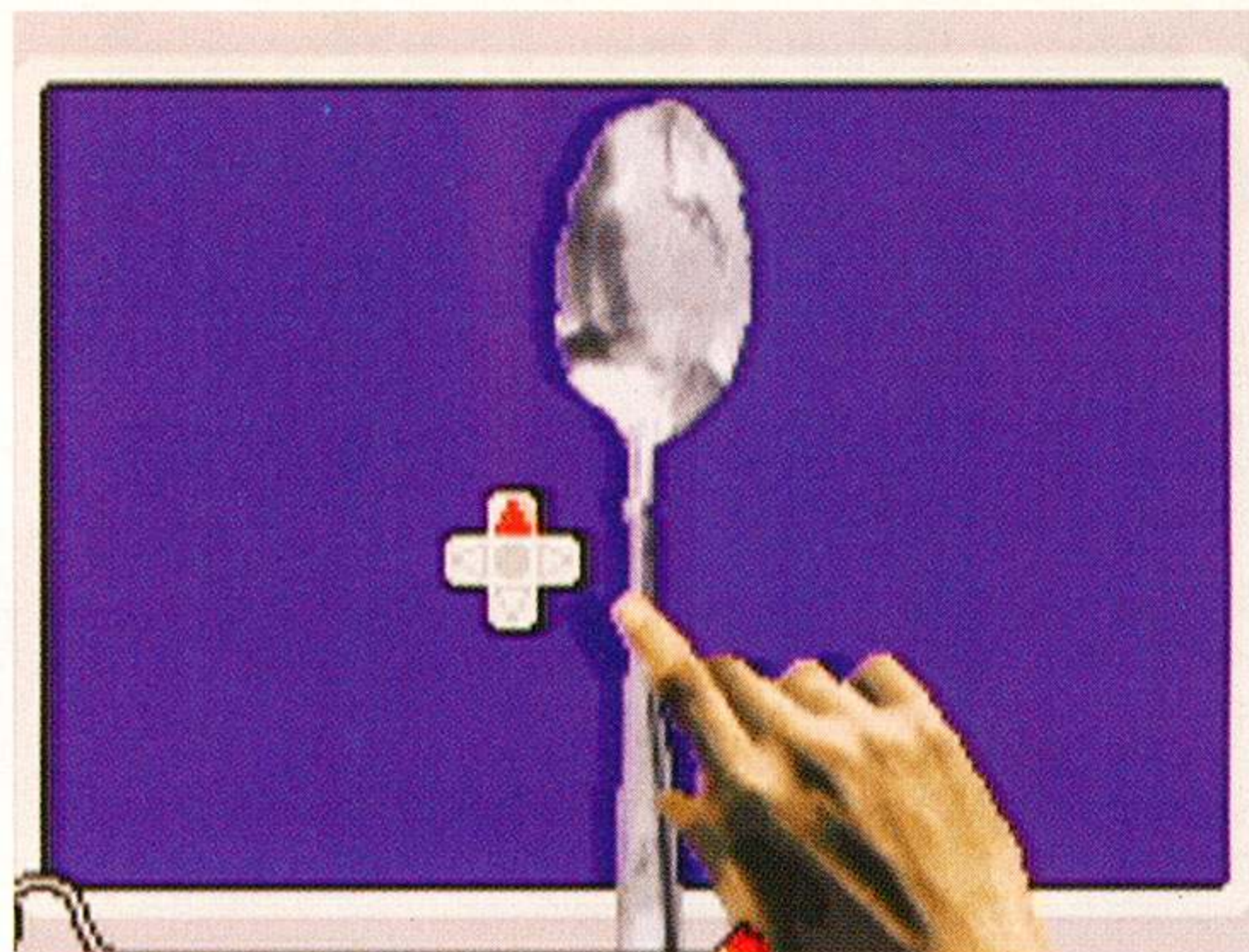
# WarioWare, Inc.: Mega Party Game\$

**WarioWare delivers the promise of playing your favorite micro-games against friends, but that's about it.**

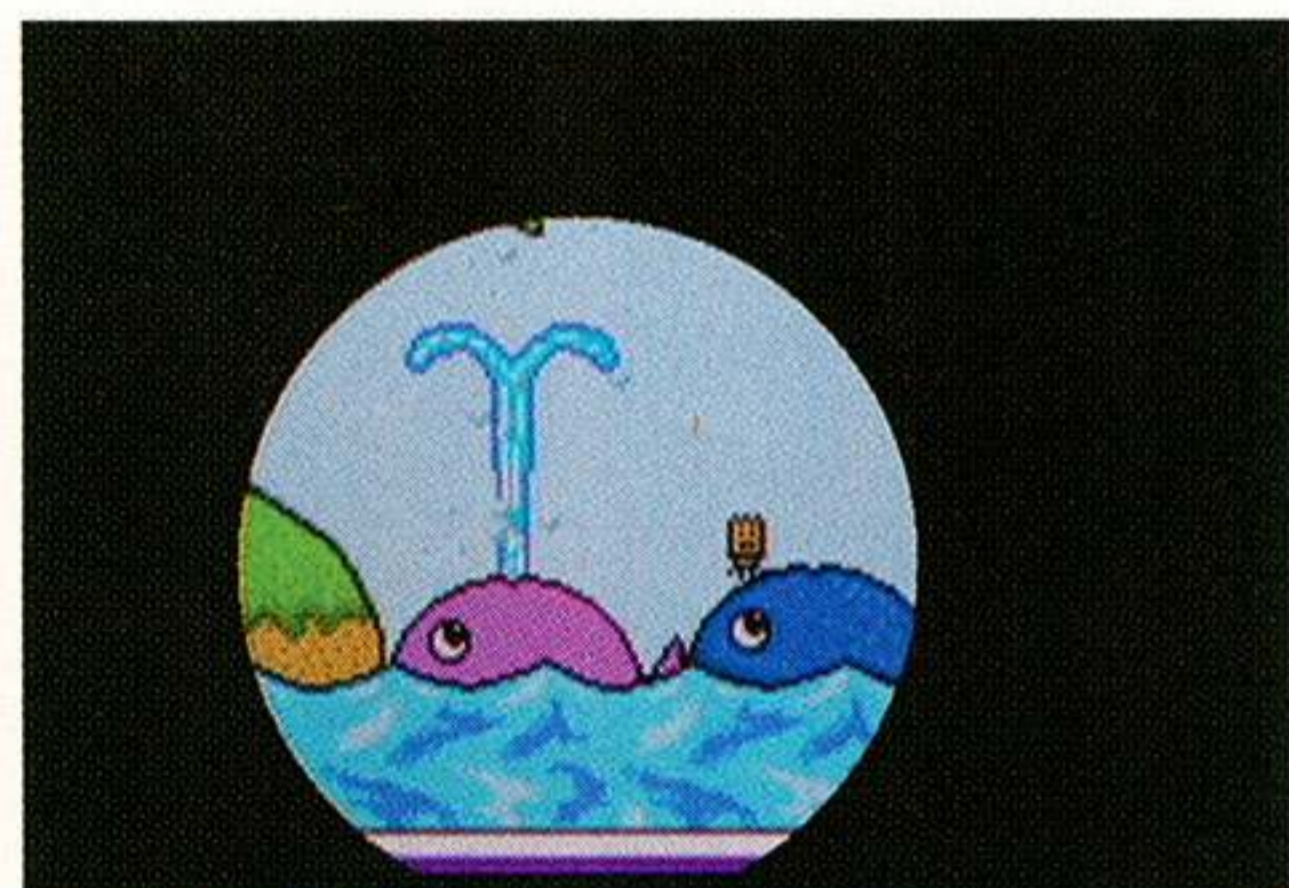
**W**arioWare, Inc.: Mega Party Game\$ serves as the pseudo-sequel to its Game Boy Advance forefather, Mega Microgame\$. Simply put, the exact same nerve-splintering gameplay is now in four-player form. This is certainly great news for gamers who are familiar with the original and eager to destroy their friends, but Mega Party Game\$ falls a bit short with rehashed content that brings the party to a halt too soon.

## WarioWare Won-Oh-Won

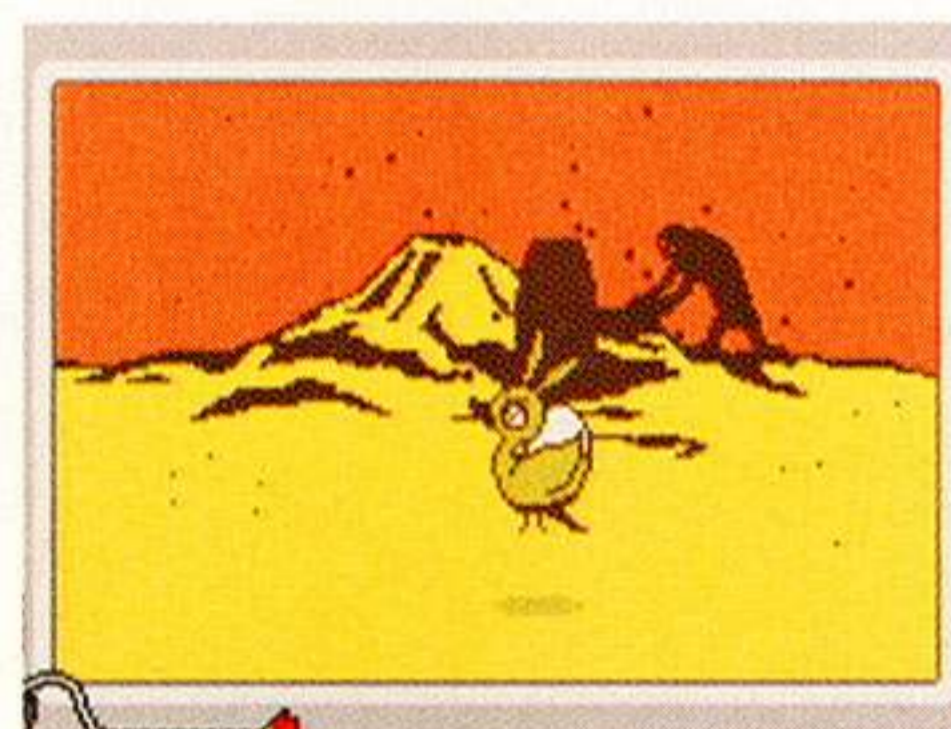
If you're not familiar with the revolutionary Game Boy Advance version of WarioWare, let's get you up to speed: First, forget everything you know about traditional video games, including the characters, the continuity, and the concept of mastering one set of controls. Second, understand that adapting to the various micro-games is the very game itself. Each micro-game, be it the capturing of an alien or the rapid brushing of plaque-covered teeth, lasts about only five seconds. One after another of these micro-games are hurled at the player's visual cortex, allowing barely enough time for their adrenaline-charged brains and quivering thumb muscles to react. While most of these micro-games are quite simple, the constantly increasing game speed coupled with the complete lack of instructions make for a unique experience and an undeniably compelling game. This is the world of WarioWare and the start of a new genre some are labeling "Neo Nintendo."



**PROTIP:** Each micro-game has about three different levels of difficulty. Learn to recognize each one.



**PROTIP:** When illuminating your teammate's screen, stick to using the perfect circle-shaped light.



**PROTIP:** Most micro games use the A button and the analog stick and/or directional pad, so if you don't know what to do, push them like a wild man. It works.



**PROTIP:** When playing Milky Way Delirium mode with friends, try to secure the corner squares early on.

## Wario, Where Are The New Micro-Games?

In this incarnation of WarioWare, gamers with up to three real-life friends can compete (and sometimes cooperate) in the very same micro-games that made the Game Boy Advance version so damn popular. One multiplayer mode forces players to balance atop a precarious stack of turtles between rounds; another features a doctor who commands the active player to perform silly tasks in real life, such as staring at your own nose while the other players clap to judge how well you performed.

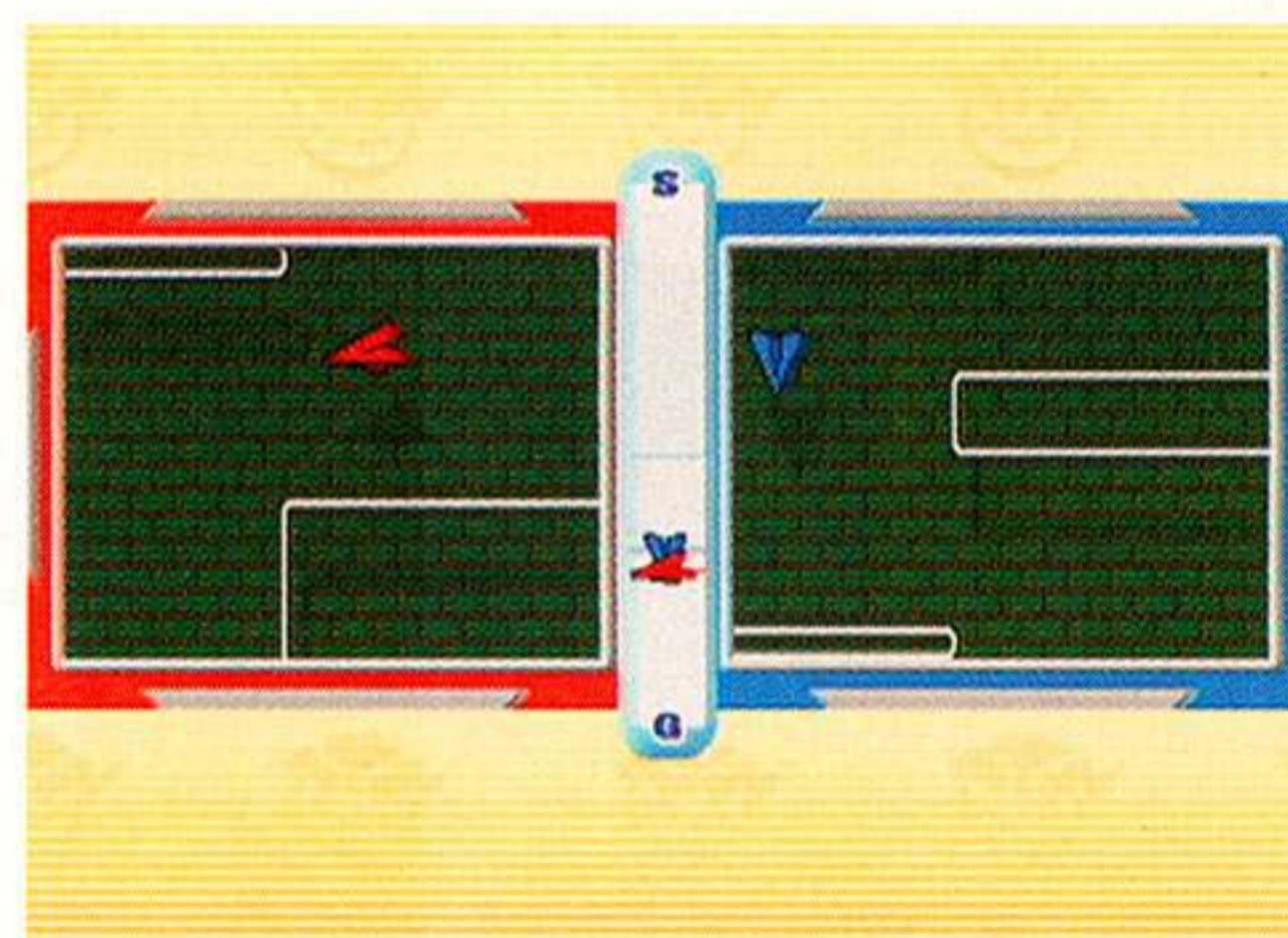
Unfortunately, these modes grow tiresome, and players will soon realize that each mode is just a slightly different way to serve up the same micro-games. In fact, the micro-games in Mega Party Game\$ look exactly like they do when you play the Game Boy Advance version via the Game Boy Player—the simplistic yet adorable graphics of the low-resolution original have not been spruced up nor the total number of micro-games increased.

Overall, the single-player mode lacks the charm of the portable edition, and, especially for those new to the series, the multiplayer can't compete with the welcoming embrace that the Mario Party series is known for. If you're new to the world of WarioWare, buy the Game Boy Advance version; I promise that you won't be disappointed—it was one of 2003's best titles. After that, pick up this one at its already low price.—Simon Limon

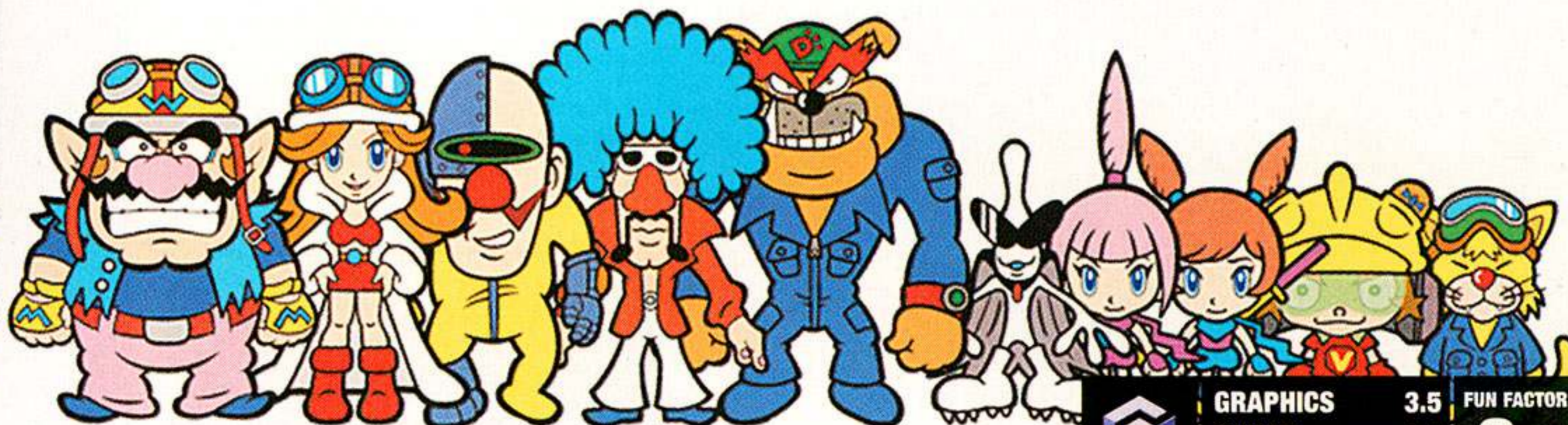
**E** ■ Developed and published by Nintendo ■ \$29.99 ■ Available April ■ Party ■ 4 players



**Some multiplayer modes require cooperative friends in order to be playable, so choose them wisely.**



**PROTIP:** When playing Paper Plane, turn your plane early. It's much safer.



G	GRAPHICS	3.5	FUN FACTOR	3.5
	SOUND	4.5		
	CONTROL	5.0		

# Pitfall: The Lost Expedition

**PE X G** Pitfall Harry is back for another rumble in the jungle in Pitfall: The Lost Expedition, a great action/platform game in the tradition of the classic series. Pitfall Harry returns to the South American bush, naturally, and he has about 50 levels in which to find a vanished scientific research team.



**PROTIP:** QuickClaw gives you Heroic Dash at the Flooded Courtyard. You need it to cross lava and to catch quick-footed bad guys.

## Pit and Polish

What's always made the Pitfall games fun are their refined controls, and if you get lost in this Expedition, it won't be because

of them. Developer Edge of Reality's Direct Control system works like a charm, enabling you to use dual joysticks for some cool maneuvers like climbing an ice wall with ice picks in each hand. The PS2 controller definitely gets the nod over both the GameCube and Xbox ones thanks to its dual trigger buttons, which Pitfall uses to great effect.

Standard Pitfall stuff like vine-swinging and platform-style jumping are all handled with the usual flair and precision that enable you to nail difficult acrobatics to reach any spot you can see...and some you can't see. Harry's fresh repertoire also includes slick tricks like swimming, a blazing sprinter's dash, and a super high jump/uppercut. Jungle gymnastics are the order of Harry's day, but there's a good degree of nonlethal hand-to-hand and slingshot combat.

Pitfall artfully manages all the standard game views, including close-ups, thanks to simple one-touch camera controls and a steady game camera that practically defy you to find a bad or blocked viewing angle. Wrap up the tight gameplay in gorgeous graphics and solid sounds, and Pitfall has never been better. The PS2's visuals rock the house, and the GameCube's appear a mite more refined than the Xbox's. The eye candy ranges from panoramic jungle views



**PROTIP:** You're going to want it sooner, but you won't get the torch until you rescue Nicole at the Mouth of the Inti.



**PROTIP:** You need Nicole's torch to find the gigantic Atari 2600. Wonder what game you can play?



**PROTIP:** You might get stuck at the Statues of Ayan without this vine-swinging move. Shorten up on the vine and swing up alongside the statue's arm. Aim at the armpit, release, and land on the arm.

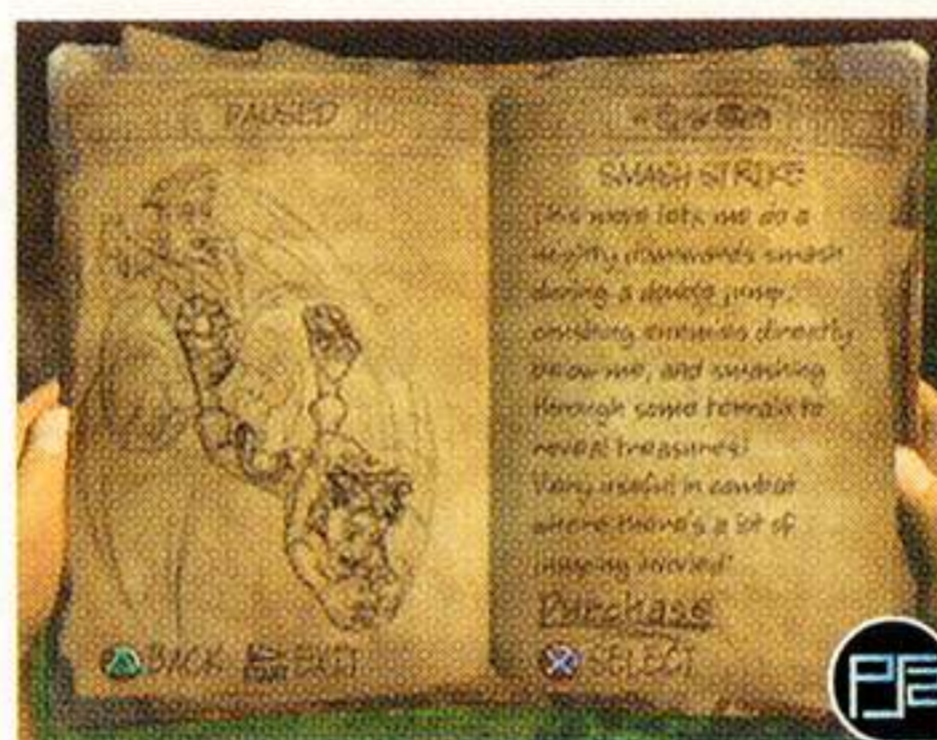
to intricate detail in the animal character designs. Atmosphere and artistic light-source manipulation add drama to diverse environmental effects like waterfalls, lava beds, or the dank interiors of caves. The sounds make a particular impact with detailed effects and vocals. In fact, the dialogue impressively expresses

the attitude in Harry and other characters, which goes a long way toward spicing up otherwise standard story scenarios.

## Harry Up and Play

You don't have to be old school to enjoy Pitfall: The Lost Expedition, but you do have to be prepared to exercise your mind as well as your thumbs. Take a hike with Pitfall Harry, and you'll discover a treasure of a game.—*Brother Buzz*

**E** ■ Developed by Edge of Reality ■ Published by Activision  
■ \$39.99 ■ Available now ■ Action/adventure ■ 1 player



**PROTIP:** Once you buy Smash Strike from the Shaman at the Battered Bridge, you can use it to unearth hidden goodies...or to find the Shaman again, who's hiding at the top of Mama-Oullo Tower.

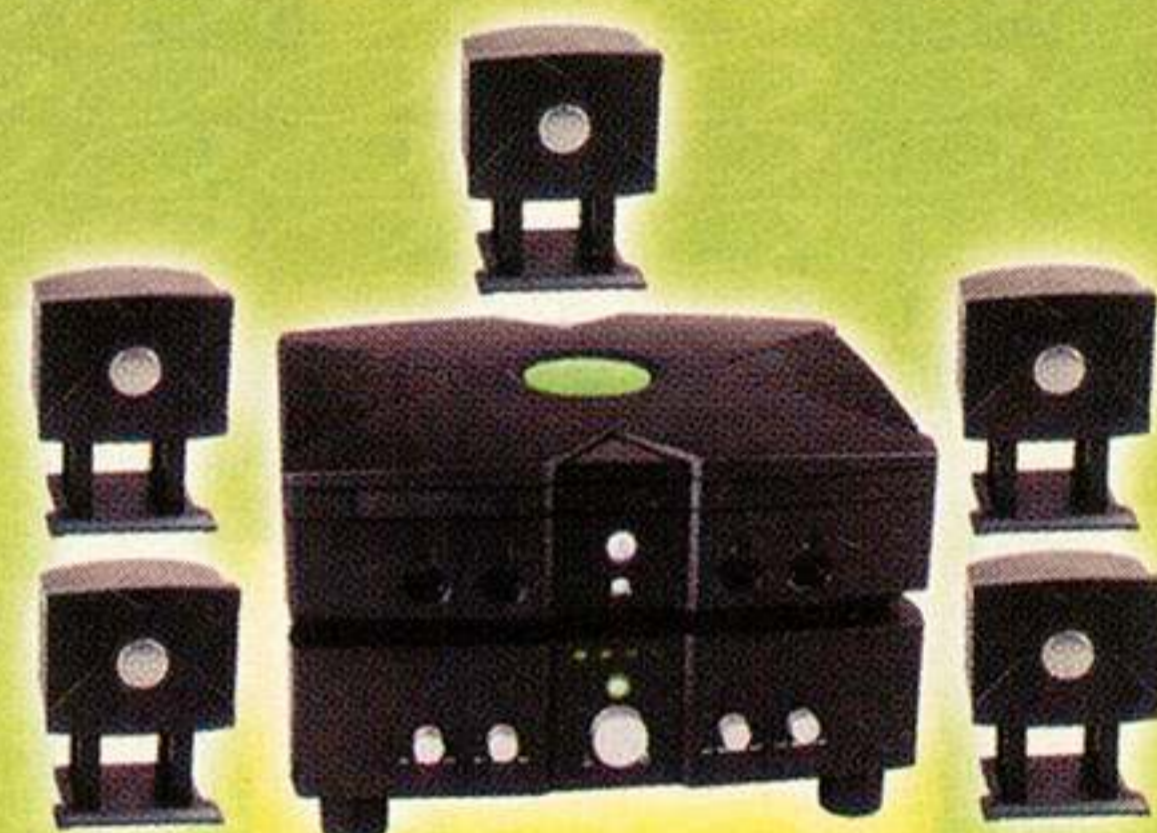
## GAMEPRO EDITORS' CHOICE

<b>PE</b>	GRAPHICS SOUND CONTROL	5.0 4.0 5.0	FUN FACTOR	4.5/5
<b>X</b>	GRAPHICS SOUND CONTROL	4.0 4.0 4.0	FUN FACTOR	4.5/5
<b>G</b>	GRAPHICS SOUND CONTROL	4.5 4.0 4.0	FUN FACTOR	4.5/5

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# Samurai Jack: The Shadow of Aku

**FE** *Samurai Jack* rules the Cartoon Network's action lineup with its great tale about a noble samurai who has been thrust by the demon Aku into the future. In this wondrous fantasy land, Jack wields his magic sword in a titanic struggle against Aku's robot armies. However, Jack's humor and heart make as much of an impression as the swordplay as he searches for a time portal to return to the past to destroy Aku.



**PROTIP:** Versus the Ro-Kra-Ka-Don, dodge its fist swipes and zigzag left and right to avoid its stalactite attack. After that, charge in and strike its exposed chest. Prepare to run again as it rolls into a stone ball.



**PROTIP:** Power up your Zen meter to use Sakai mode, a slow-mo effect that gives you a tactical advantages like moving behind your foes—a key move versus bosses.

## "The Future That Is Aku"

*Samurai Jack: The Shadow of Aku* lovingly re-creates the show's singular artistic style. In the game's 24 levels, the dark future appears at once ominous, bizarre, and eye-catching. Jack's animated fighting moves are spectacular, and fans will appreciate cameo combat with familiar characters like the Scotsman and Mad Jack. The sounds get a major-league boost from the TV cast with music that excellently reproduces the cartoon's energetic, Asian flavor. The controls are also tight overall. Jack unleashes a flurry of sword swipes in 24 singular moves, including multibutton-press combos, and he makes sure-footed leaps past platform-style obstacles.

However, Jack's Achilles heel is the fact that the game's strategy seems tuned for younger, less experienced action gamers as a sort of Shinobi-lite. The game features hordes of enemy sword fodder and reoccurring mid-level meanies that require one-time decrypting of their repetitive attacks. Plus, sword power-ups, shurikens, a bow and arrow, a magical slow-mo attack, and generous stockpiles of power-ups, ammo, and armor seriously diminish the challenge. It's all nicely crafted entertainment well and good for newbies, but seasoned samurai will too confidently prevail. Experienced Jack fans will long for what could have been.



**PROTIP:** During your journey, you amass Combo Scrolls. Combo Attacks work from your basic block position and are great against assaults by multiple opponents.

## A Cause That Is Righteous and Just

*The Shadow of Aku* is a tough game to rate for *Samurai Jack* aficionados. It's a mere...er, shadow of the cartoon, but it's also a lively workout. At least regular viewers can fill in the gaps in the story line. While this is far from *Onimusha*, *Shinobi*, or *Ninja Gaiden*, initiates fresh to the genre should find it a worthy first challenge. Bottom line: *Shadow of Aku* is a good-but-not-great action game, even if you don't know Jack.—*Brother Buzz*

Also on the Xbox and GameCube

**T** ■ Developed by Adrenium Games/Amaze Entertainment ■ Published by Sega ■ \$49.99 ■ Available now ■ Action ■ 1 player

FE	GRAPHICS	4.0	FUN FACTOR
	SOUND	5.0	
	CONTROL	4.0	
			3.5

# Alias

**FE X** *Alias*, ABC's conspiracy-filled drama in the world of spies, espionage, and double agents, is practically custom made for a video-game treatment—lots of gadgets, lots of close shaves, and lots of intrigue. Thankfully, they all translate quite well to Acclaim's interactive version, too.

## Syd Vicious

To summarize *Alias*'s complicated backstory would take much longer than this review—if you're reading this, it's probably because you already know the twisted plot (or maybe you just think Jennifer Garner, who plays lead character Sydney Bristow, is wicked hot). The game takes place late in the second season—SD6 is gone, Sloane and Sark are pals, everybody else is working for the CIA, and the hunt is on for Rimbaldi's "Machine." With the show's writers, seven actors, and series creator J.J. Abrams all on board, *Alias* is as authentic as a licensed game gets.

The gameplay feels a little *Splinter Cell*-ish, but it's certainly more forgiving than Sam Fisher's tasks; very generous save points make Sydney's mission enjoyable instead of mission impossible. Players will need to infiltrate locations with the help of various gadgets, vision modes (night, heat, etc) and, um, sexy outfits. Sooner or later it comes down to brawling, and the fight moves look gorgeous. With practice, Sydney backflips off walls and batters bad guys with amazing grace. Once you learn the controls, they respond sharply. The fully user-controlled camera can still leave you in a lurch, but locking onto one target in a group makes the frequent two- or three-enemy smackdowns winnable.



**PROTIP:** Sydney will regain health if you simply give her a little time to rest. Pace yourself to stay ready for combat.

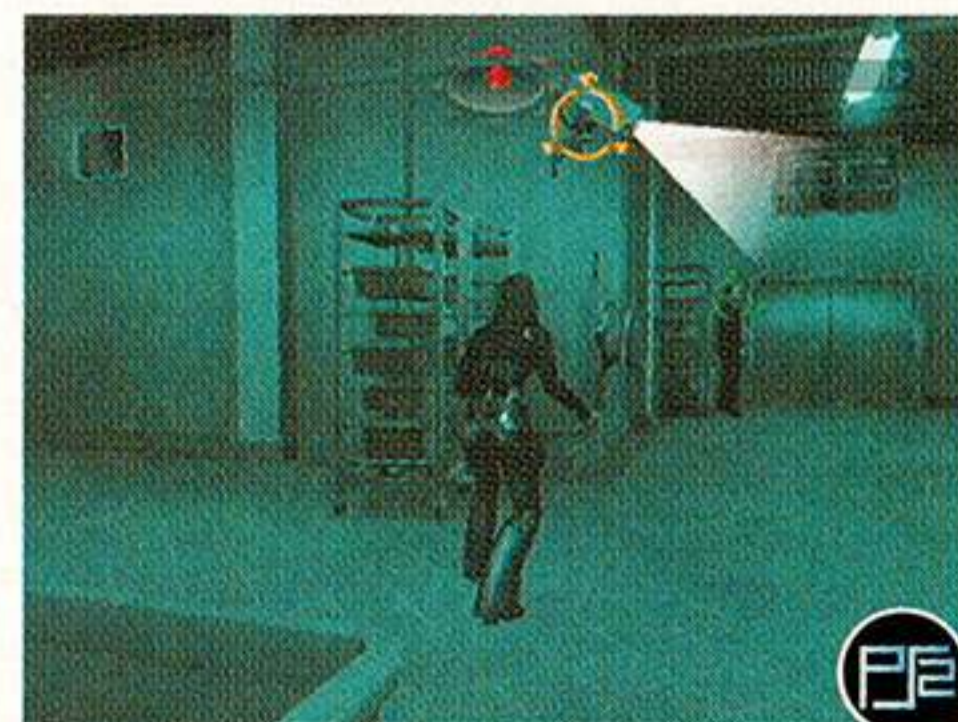


**PROTIP:** Holding Block while you press Special Attack will disarm a foe while taking him down. It's one of the most useful moves in your arsenal.

## Garnering Acclaim

Although the scriptwriters are straight from the show, Marshall and Vaughan's dialogue feels a little forced; otherwise, the large cast participation and television soundtrack give the game exactly the authentic audio flavor fans would want. Characters closely resemble their real-life counterparts, and the environments look lovely, but Syd's "nonreflective" spy suit quizzically shines. Still, *Alias* is a great-looking and easy-playing game that should make casual-gamer fans of the show very happy.—*Bad Hare*

**T** ■ Developed and published by Acclaim ■ \$49.99 ■ Available April ■ Action/adventure ■ 1 player



**PROTIP:** Activate your Enhanced Vision (press down on the directional pad) to better see the cones of vision on security cameras.

FE	GRAPHICS	4.5	FUN FACTOR
	SOUND	4.5	
	CONTROL	4.0	
			4.0

X	GRAPHICS	4.5	FUN FACTOR
	SOUND	4.5	
	CONTROL	4.0	
			4.0



## The Suffering

**PE X** There's a difficult balance to strike when you're making a horror game: Resident Evil has the scares, Silent Hill has the atmosphere and storytelling, but neither one has yet to nail the gameplay side of the triangle; the developers seem to think that clunky and plodding controls are worth the trouble if they make the game more scary. Maybe they're right: The Suffering is a worthwhile horror game that nails the action stuff but doesn't quite get under your skin the same way those other interactive dances of macabre do.

### Incarcerated/Eviscerated

The story of The Suffering goes like this: You're a prisoner in a maximum-security facility in which all hell has broken loose. Horrible creatures (mummies with swords for arms, corpses with hypodermic needles for eyes, massive hulks with machine-gun tumors, half-torsos on nooses, that sort of thing) have suddenly appeared for a round of supernatural vengeance; and you can transform into an evil horror of your own.

Yup, The Suffering is gruesome and gross, with bountiful amounts of violence and gore—the section of the graphics processor that makes red pixels is definitely working overtime. The creature designs are freaky, the lighting is balanced for maximum scare, and



**PROTIP:** The light...it buuuurrrrrnnnnssss!



**PROTIP:** If you switch to first-person view when you are using guns, the control scheme makes more sense.



**PROTIP:** Going insane (i.e. turning into a horrible mutant freak) is a good way to save ammo when you're overwhelmed, but be sure to turn back before your meter runs out.



**PROTIP:** The Mainliners (those things with needles) come out of puddles. Turn off water sources to stop them from teleporting and regenerating.



**Trippy visions are worked seamlessly into the gameplay—cut-scenes are few and far between.**

the game makes excellent use of ambient psychology as weird images flashing on the screen, crazed (and very potty-mouthed) voices argue in your head, and horrible visions come and go as you pass through rooms. If you see it only in bits and pieces, the game might seem a bit silly, but taken as a whole, it's a surprisingly complete and disturbing picture.

The Suffering's gameplay is basically straight-up first-person shooter/action game stuff. There are no real puzzles (no medallions, no statues, no herb-mixing, no crate stacking) either—the game really plays up the “survival” part of its genre namesake. The control scheme works rather clumsily in third-person mode but just fine later in the game when guns blaze more often and first-person becomes your viewpoint of choice. The game's biggest problem, really, is its “same-y” factor—the creature types are repeated too often, and there are only so many ways to decorate a prison.

### The Red Mile

There are only the usual trivial differences between the two versions—the Xbox lighting looks better, and it controls a teensy bit better than the PS2 version—but otherwise, both are worth your while if you're a fan of disturbing stuff. It's faster and nastier than most of the kindred of Resident Evil at the cost of losing a little bit of edge.—*Star Dingo*

- M** ■ Developed by Surreal Software
- Published by Midway
- \$49.99 ■ Available now
- Survival/horror/action ■ 1 player

All screens shown here are from the Xbox version.



<b>PE</b>	GRAPHICS	4.0	FUN FACTOR	4.0
	SOUND	4.0		
	CONTROL	4.0		
<b>X</b>	GRAPHICS	4.5	FUN FACTOR	4.0
	SOUND	4.5		
	CONTROL	4.0		

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# I Can't Get This Thing To Run!

Stop me if you've heard this one: You just ran out and plunked down \$50 for the latest big PC game, the one for which you've been waiting years and years. You probably upgraded your machine specifically for this game like many are doing for Half-Life 2 and EverQuest II, and so you watch hungrily as the game installs onto your hard drive. When you double-click the icon, expecting the gameplay experience of your life to begin, tragedy strikes: The game doesn't run.

This is an all-too-common occurrence with PC games, and one of the reasons the PC game audience has dwindled down to the most hardcore gamers. You have to know PCs to play. Maybe not as much as in the old days (who here remembers what an AUTOEXEC.BAT is?), but you still need some know-how.

If you're having trouble with your games, there are some fix-all you can try. First, simply try rebooting. It's amazing how many problems can be solved by turning your PC off and then back on again. If that doesn't

work, try reinstalling the game, and maybe even defragment your hard drive first to clean up and organize the files on your computer.

The biggest problem a lot of folks run into is that they don't have the latest drivers (the software that runs individual hardware like graphics and sound cards) for their system. Before you even install a game, check the manufacturers' websites for the newest driver package for your graphics card and make sure you're running the correct version of DirectX. Most games include the right DirectX version on the disc, so you should be okay there if you just keep it up to date.

PC developers have to take into account hundreds of possible configurations, so it's not always guaranteed that your specific system will be able to run a given game. If this is so, keep checking the game's developer's website for patches that might update the game to work with your system. Also, check the game's forums to see if anyone else shares your problem and can help you resolve it.—D-Pad Destroyer

## Tribes: Vengeance

**PC** Flying around in rocket-powered armor is cool. At least, that's always been the philosophy behind the Tribes franchise. For those unfamiliar, it's a first-person shooter series that straddles the line between Unreal Tournament and Battlefield 1942 with one major difference—everyone gets a jetpack that facilitates soaring and sliding along the z-axis, letting gamers reach places they could only dream of in other games of the type.

But the Tribes saga has been a notoriously rocky one. The original Tribes never really climbed out of its hardcore multiplayer online niche, and 2001's Tribes 2 was nearly classified as a franchise-killing disaster thanks to a super-wonky launch plagued with bugs, patches, and buggy patches. But apparently the Tribes philosophy (i.e.

jetpacks are cool) was a cause worth fighting for; and the folks at Vivendi Universal Games have somehow found it in their hearts to give the series another go with a new developer (Irrational Games, makers of the superhero tactical RPG Freedom Force) and a brand-new engine.

Among the big, important changes: much more accessible and fun physics (your jetpack accelerates faster), more interesting (and less empty) maps that take advantage of the jetpacks' unique physics, and "modular" multiplayer modes that let you craft your own hybrid game from pieces of deathmatch, CTF, "football," and other modes. Vengeance will also place a much bigger emphasis on the single-player mode than in previous games, crafting a complex morality gun-play around the war among the Blood Eagle, Children of the Phoenix, and Imperial tribes. Here's hoping Irrational can successfully revive the Tribes; their Vengeance could be sweet.—Star Dingo

■ **First Look** ■ **Developed by Irrational Games**  
 ■ **Published by Vivendi Universal Games** ■ **Target release date: Fall 2004**



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# Sam & Max: Freelance Police

**PC** "Sam and Max are the most beloved obscure cartoon characters hardly seen by a mass audience," says Steve Purcell, Sam & Max creator. With the upcoming release of the second PC tale featuring Purcell's psycho sleuths, LucasArts looks to not only bring back a popular franchise but also give adventure gaming an all-new comedic shot in the arm.

## The Second Sam & Max Game Ever

Sam & Max Hit the Road came out in 1993 as part of LucasArts' now-legendary roster of graphic adventure titles. Purcell, who had published a comic book entitled *Sam & Max: Freelance Police*, was using his characters in LucasArts' internal newsletters and heard that designers Michael Stemmler and Sean Clark had less than a year to come up with a new game. The rest was adventure-game history.

Purcell now works at Pixar (*Toy Story*, *Finding Nemo*), but he was more than happy to give LucasArts another go at his baby. Stemmler is back on board with years of titles, including *Jedi Outcast* and *Jedi Academy*, under his belt.

## Glazed McGuffins in 3D!

Purcell says that the game won't slavishly adhere to the world set up by the original. "It doesn't need to dovetail into any other Sam & Max material," he says. Sam (the dog) and Max (the naked rabbit) are known for their crazy cases, including one that led them on a road trip to the moon (which

was inhabited by giant rats and humungous cockroaches, natch) and another that found our heroes at a meeting of literary figures in 19<sup>th</sup>-Century England. As for the new game, Purcell assures us that "most of the locations are new but

will have that bizarre Sam & Max flavor."

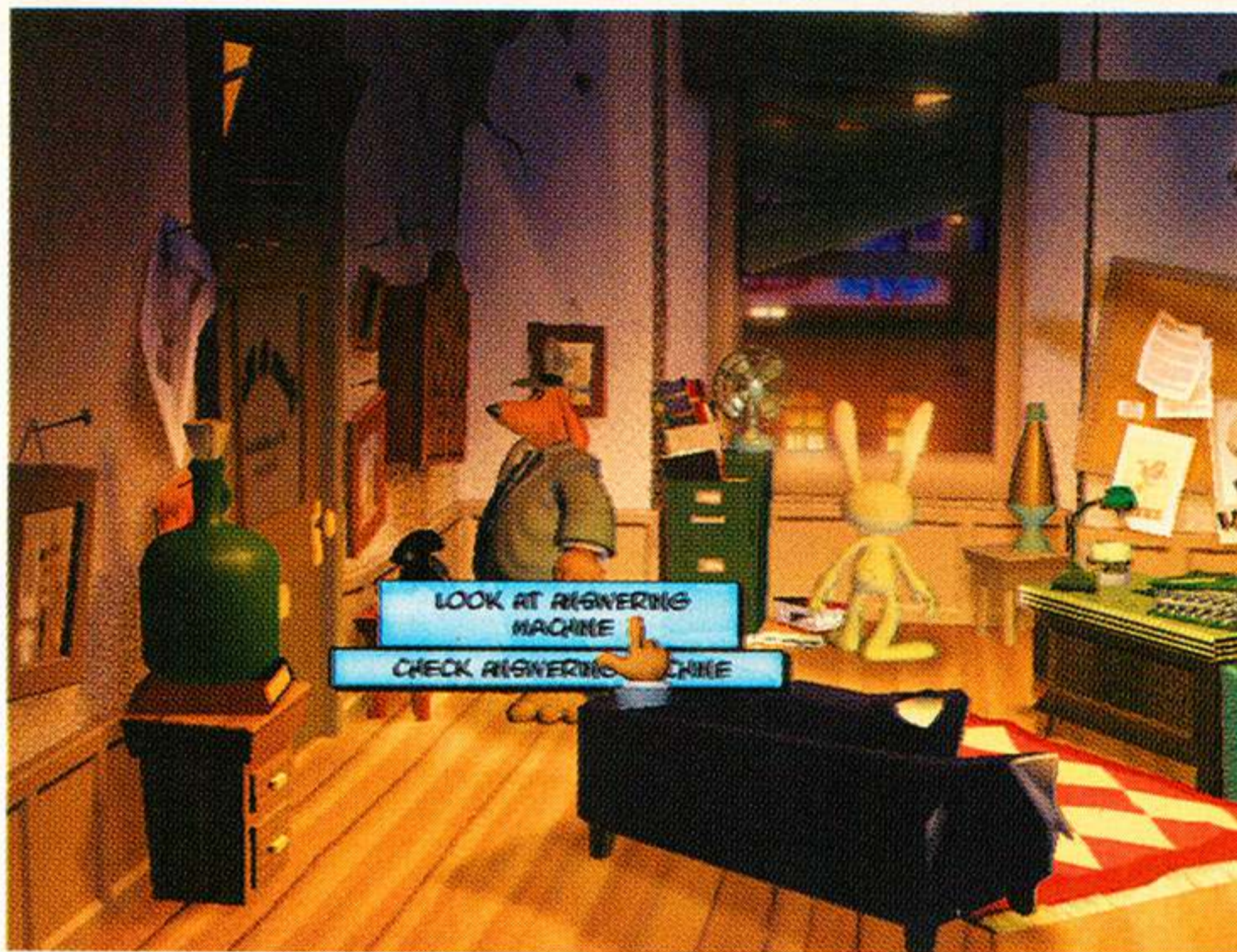
Freelance Police

uses a mishmash of engines from LucasArts' recent games, including bits of *Gladius*, *RTX*, and the recently canceled *Full Throttle 2*. The interface will be a traditional point-n-click control scheme that should seem familiar to PC adventure veterans. Of course, the insanity in the story will be the same as it ever was; if you've read the *Sam & Max: Freelance Police* comics, you'll know what we mean.

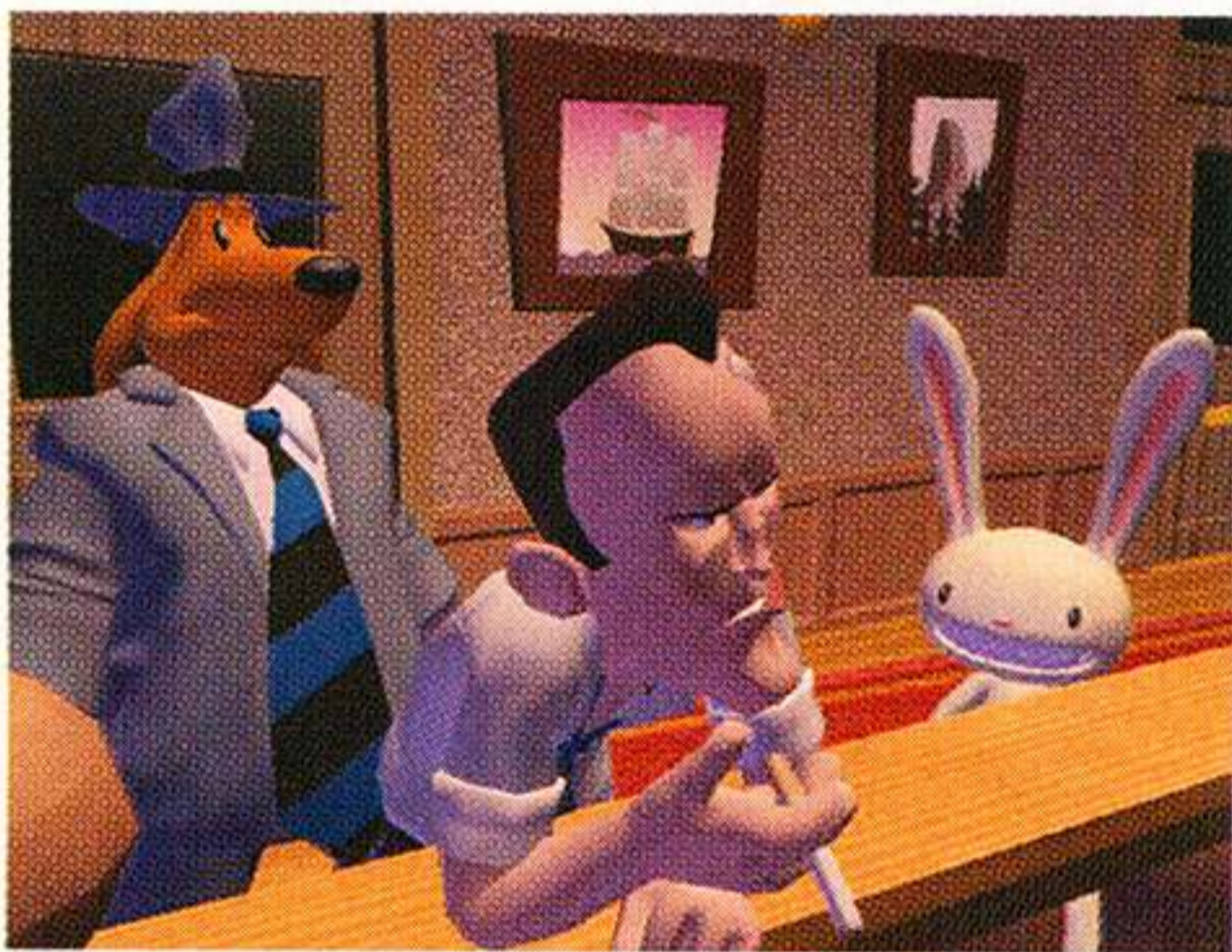
## The Game That Wouldn't Stop It

Say all you want about reviving a dead genre or returning PC gaming to its wacky roots—there's a tide of fans out there waiting to get their hands on this title. "It's always amusing to be sitting at a comic convention and have an adult come up and say, 'Wow! Sam & Max! I played that game when I was a kid!'" says Purcell. "What a great feeling, though, that people still have a warm spot for Sam & Max after all this time."—*D-Pad Destroyer*

■ First Look ■ Developed and published by LucasArts  
 ■ Target release date: Fall 2004



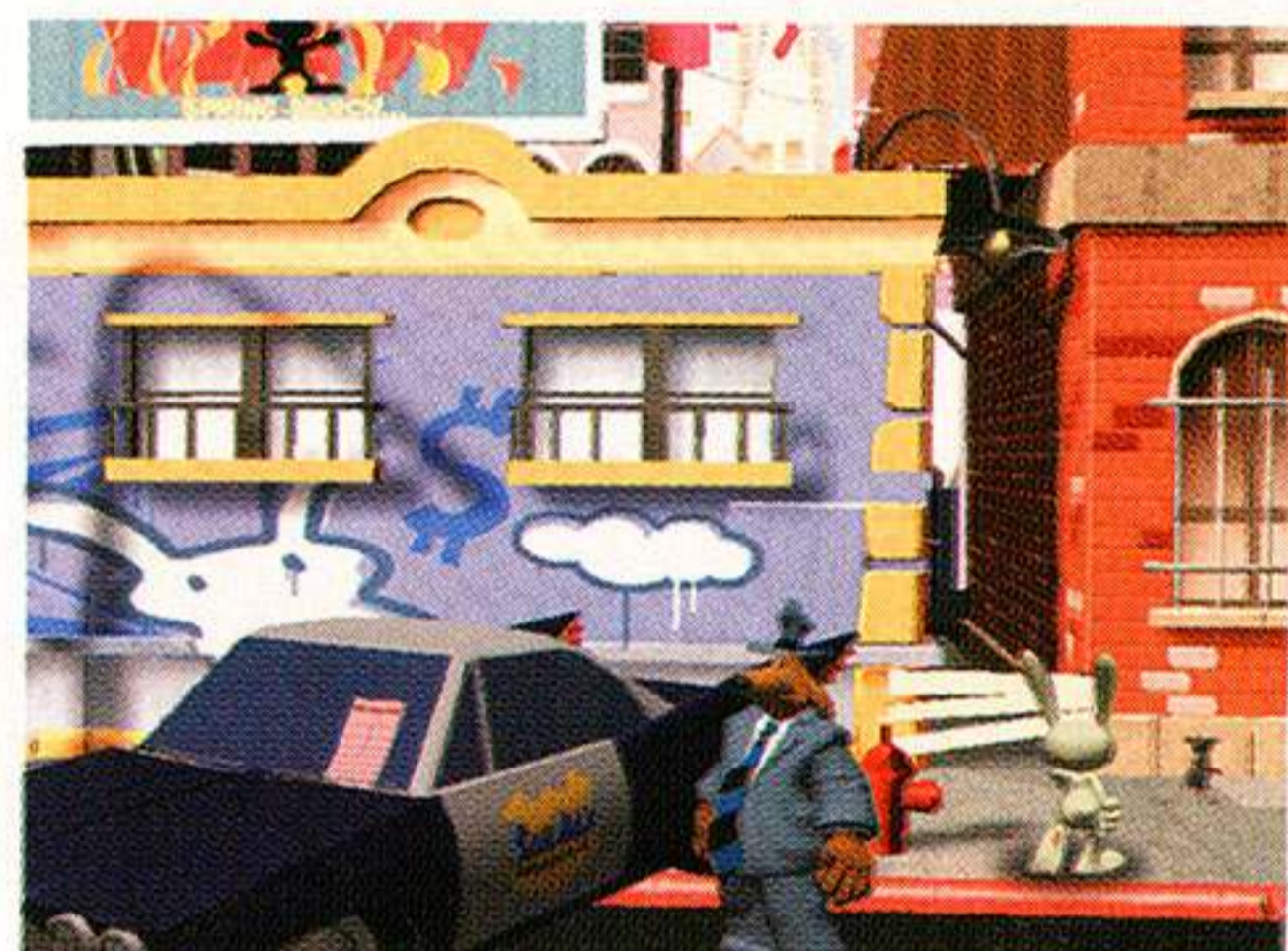
Freelance Police will use a familiar point-n-click interface to tell a story guaranteed to be unlike anything you've ever played.



Meet Flint Paper, our heroes' hard-boiled private-detective neighbor. "I always liked that there's a guy in the office next door to Sam and Max who is somehow even more insane than they are," explains Steve Purcell.



Here's a moment of gun-toting reverie. Sam and Max are not your typical cartoon characters, nor are they one-dimensional "bad fur day" reactions to cushy clichés.



Sam & Max: Freelance Police makes the jump to 3D while maintaining the colorful and loose art style of the comics and cartoon series.



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# City of Heroes

**PC** In a genre filled with leveling treadmills and numbers games disguised by fantasy-esque graphics, City of Heroes offers simple character development and gameplay that feels different from everything else out there.

First, you create a character, choosing your origin (magic, science, mutation, etc.) and heroic archetype (blaster, defender, scrapper, and so on) before selecting your powers from those available. Even a starting character can choose from tons of powers with multiple sets under each heading. For example, the controller archetype can choose mind control, illusion, fire control, and ice control, among others, and then select powers from within those groups. With your powers chosen, you then create your costume from a massive array of options that includes cyborg limbs, armored exoskeletons, and more traditional colorful spandex.



Once you're out on the street, the game begins. You start off with a contact who gives you a series of missions, and you meet new contacts as you go. Walking the streets of the city, you'll run into purse snatchers and vandals to beat up, and you'll see other heroes combating evil in vibrant battles filled with awesome special effects and insane leaping chases. You'll even

see flying heroes fighting aerial battles with enemies aloft. Even at low levels, the feeling of heroism is unmatched among the MMOs on the market today.—Dunjin Master

- Hands-On
- Developed by Cryptic Studios
- Published by NCsoft
- Target release date: April

# Vampire: The Masquerade—Bloodlines



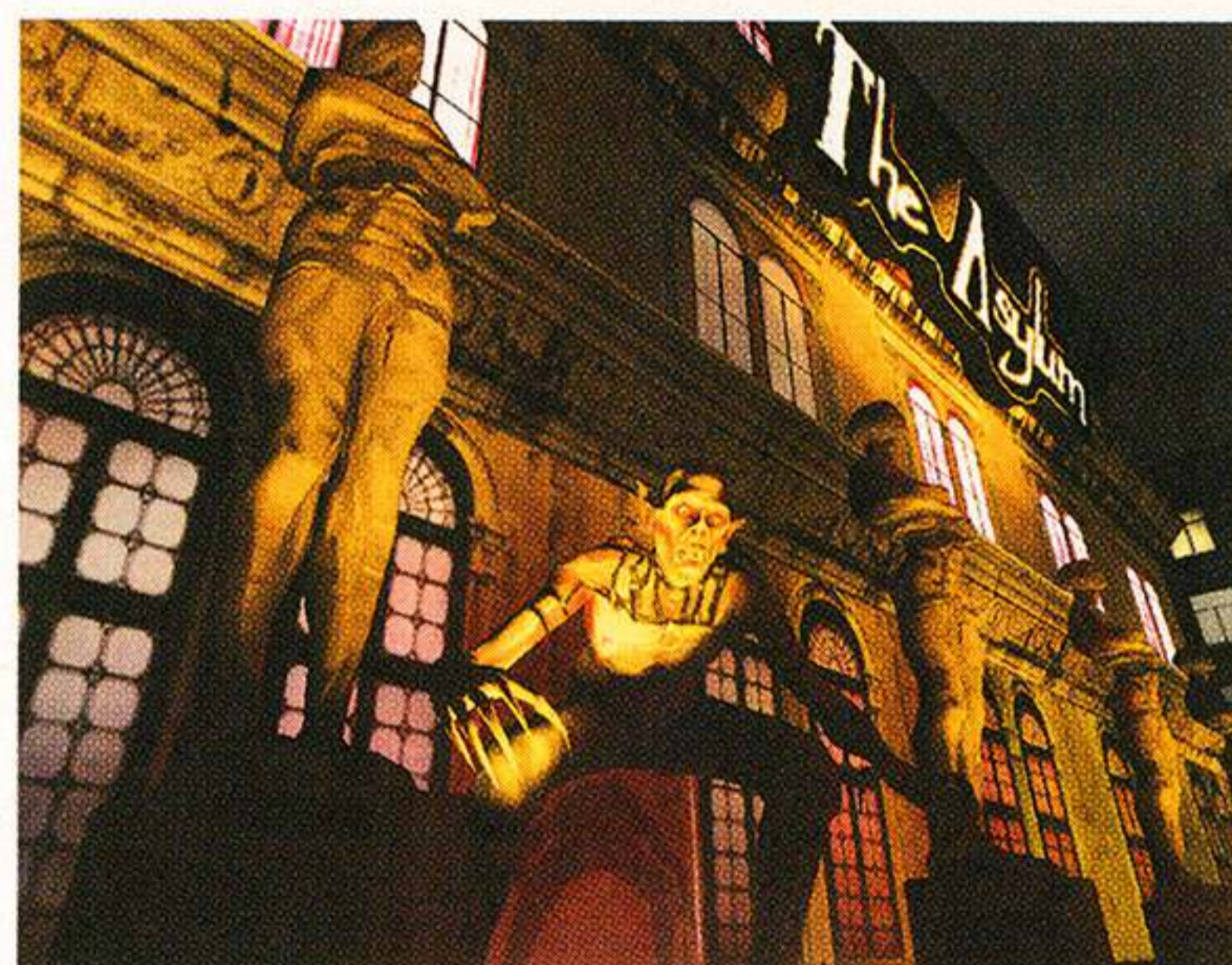
**PC** Bloodlines has gotten a fair amount of attention for being the first licensee of Valve's Source engine, the oft-praised (and once stolen) engine that powers the Half-Life 2 juggernaut. Little of that attention is for the things that look to make Bloodlines great: its Deus Ex-like RPG angle, its gritty goth story line, or its faithful respect of White Wolf's popular Vampire: The Masquerade tabletop role-playing series.

You play as an illegally created vampire who has come under the influence of the vampire prince of Los Angeles. The prince has a few favors to ask of you, and it's through these favors that you get involved in the seedy underworld of the City of Angels. You'll create your own character by selecting one of Vampire's seven clans and choosing your skills, abilities, and Disciplines (vampiric powers), thus customizing the way you play. Similar to Deus Ex: Invisible War, Bloodlines enables players to choose among several ways to solve a given problem depending on whether you'd like to talk, sneak, or fight your way through.

White Wolf fans got a Vampire game a

few years back that was, for the most part, disappointing and not terribly faithful to the source. Bloodlines looks like it will be the game to change Vampire's bloodied reputation.—Dunjin Master

- Hands-On ■ Developed by Troika
- Published by Activision ■ Target release date: Fall 2004



# Guild Wars

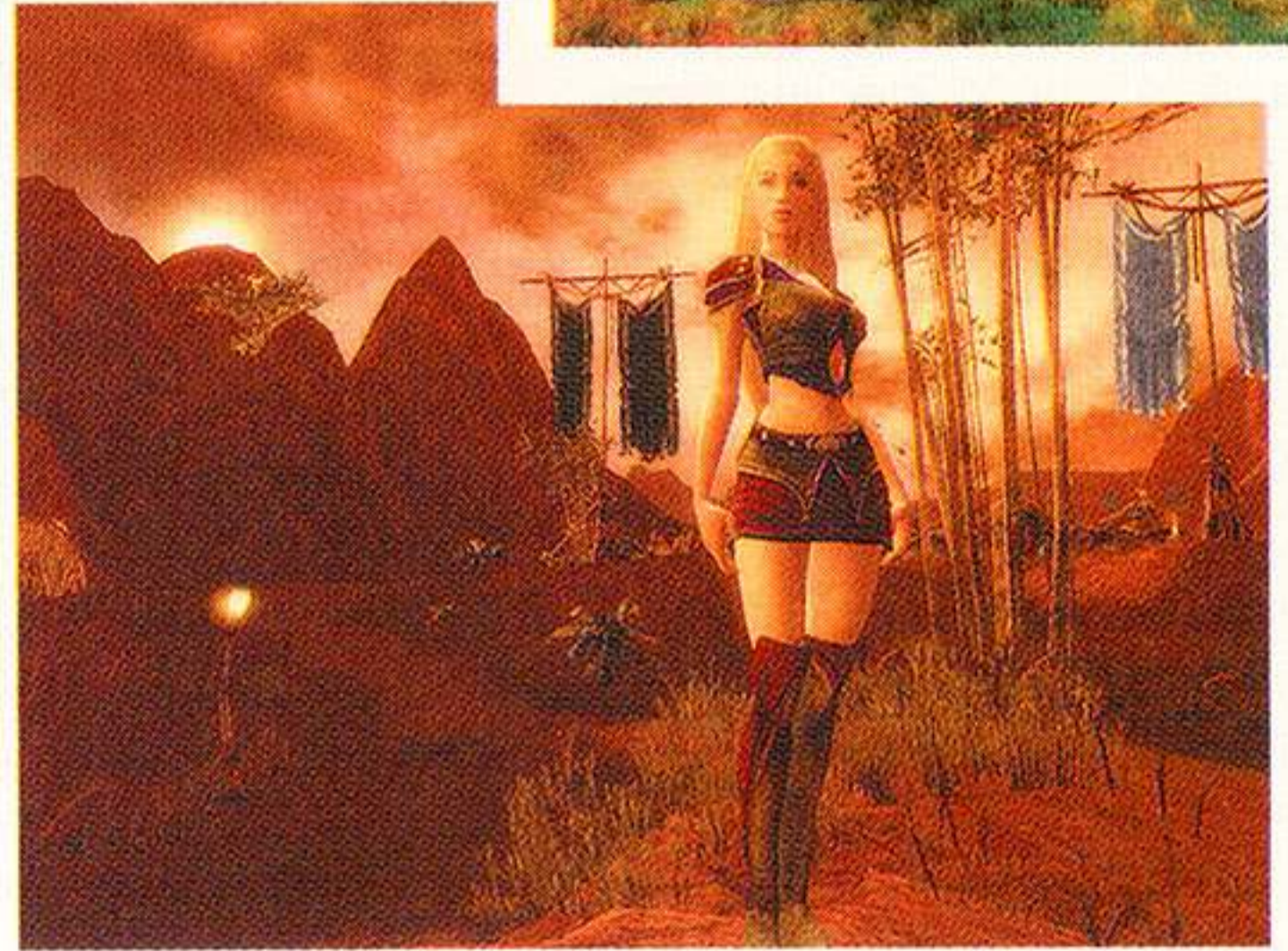
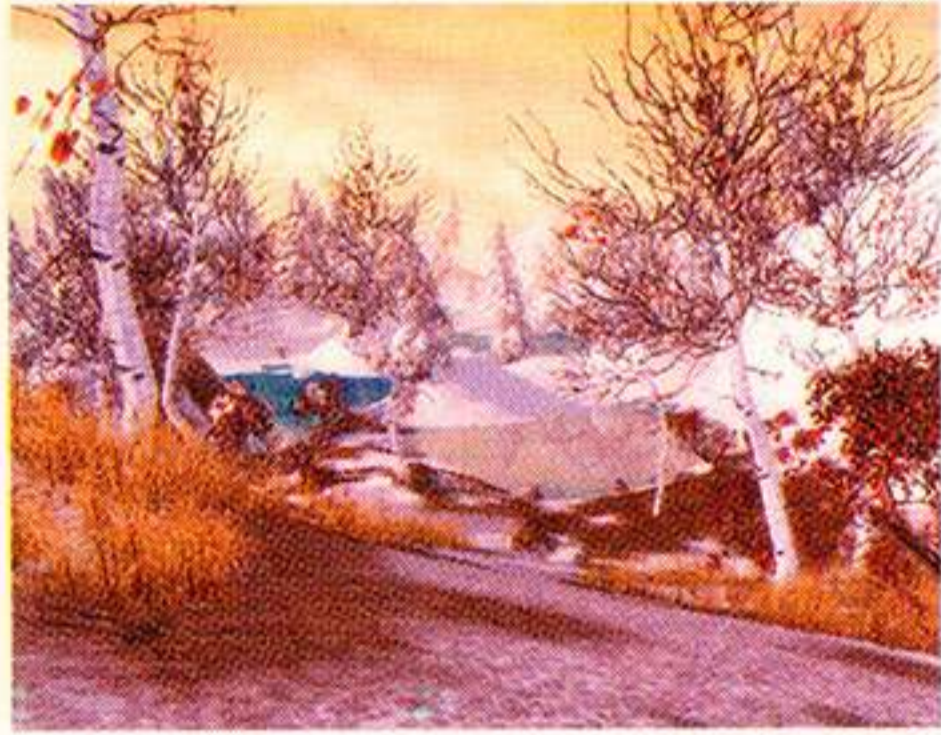
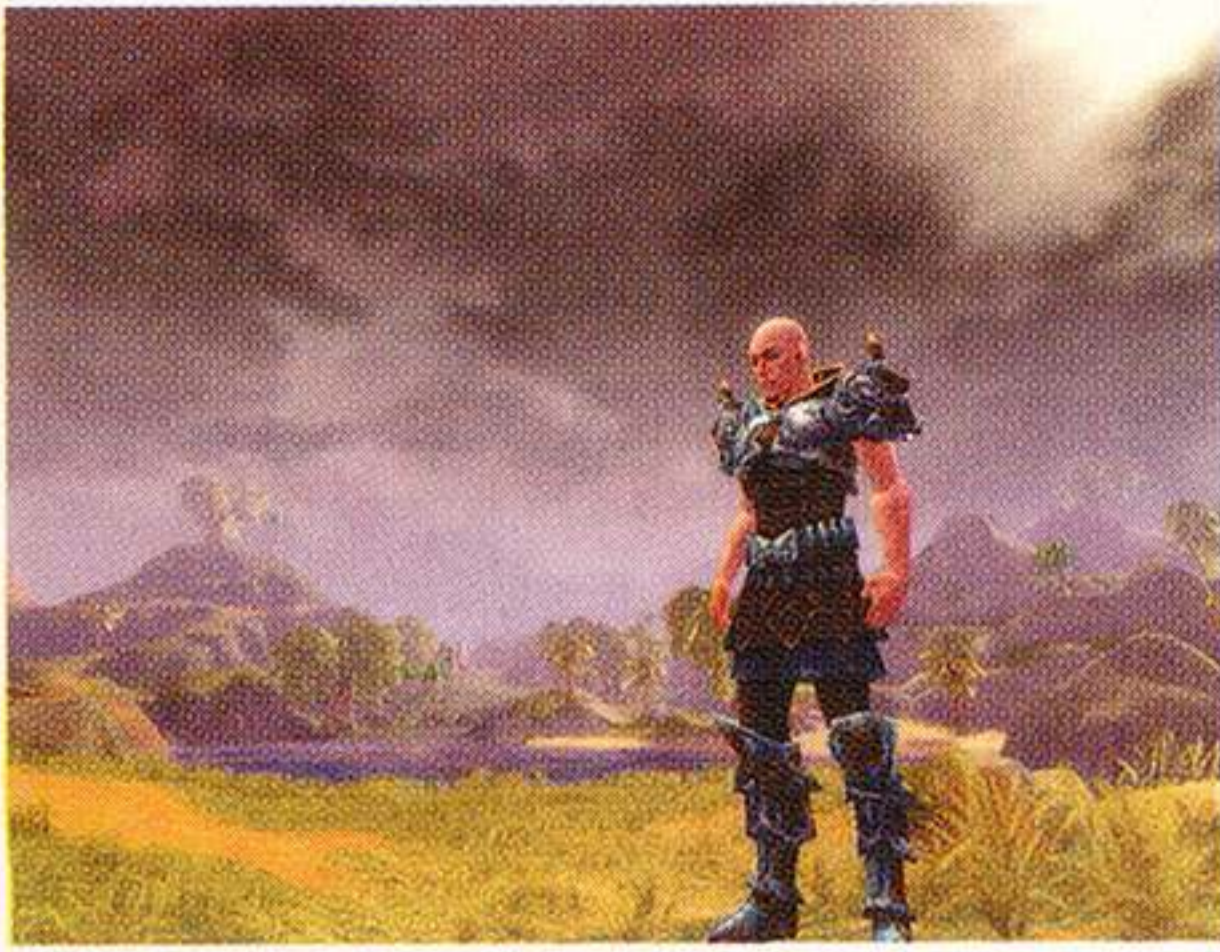
**PC** Built around a persistent world that branches off into private adventure zones, Guild Wars could offer the best of both massively multiplayer and smaller online games.

Guild Wars is set up to give players of all types a reason to play. If you have tons of free time (and who doesn't?), you can join guilds and enter into competitive adventures against other players. If you don't want to go quite so hardcore, you can choose quests for a single player or for a small team of players. Once you enter an adventure area,

that area exists for you and anyone else who embarked on that quest, and no one else. No spawn camping, no waiting for respawned monsters.

For players who want to go MMO but don't want adventures-as-usual, Guild Wars could offer a different way to play.—*Dunjin Master*

■ Update ■ Developed by ArenaNet  
 ■ Published by NCsoft ■ Target release date: Fall 2004



# Perimeter

**PC** Real-time strategy games could use a good shot in the arm, and Codemasters believes it has just the title to do it. Created by Russian developer KD Lab, Perimeter offers you more ways to affect the world while you play.

The main feature of Perimeter is the game's terraforming system, which enables you to alter the landscape to find energy, make room for your bases, and set up tactical situations. The landscape will also change



as a result of natural geological phenomena, so that flat area you thought was safe could suddenly become a crevasse without any warning.

In addition to terraforming, Perimeter also enables you to use nanotechnology to morph your units into other units. Not every unit is suitable for every situation, but when you can adapt a given unit to multiple conditions, your tactics become all the more flexible and unpredictable.—*D-Pad Destroyer*

■ First Look ■ Developed by KD Lab  
 ■ Published by Codemasters ■ Target release date: Spring 2004



# Pirates of the Burning Sea

**PC** The high seas have been shaky ground for games lately, but signs point to a pirate comeback. Flying Lab Software's Pirates of the Burning Sea promises an evolving ship-based adventure that ought to give desk-chair ship cap'ns a little buckle to swash.

Similar in many ways to EA's Earth & Beyond, Burning Sea will set you up with a ship and a crew, and let you do the rest. While most players will no doubt be pirates, you'll also be able to play as a simple merchant or join the Navy and fight against the rising pirate tide. Set in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, the game will place you at America's doorstep to forge your own destiny.

Flying Lab Software will publish the game itself, thanks to Valve's Steam online distribution system, and it has already planned several big updates, including the addition of avatars and land-based adventures.—*D-Pad Destroyer*

■ First Look  
 ■ Developed and published by Flying Lab Software  
 ■ Target release date: Winter 2004





**PROTIP:** Good newbie rule of thumb: If a card's attack is higher than its defense, place it faceup. If its defense is higher, place it facedown.

As a collectible card game, Yu-Gi-Oh is a picture of elegance: well designed, fun, addictive, cool to look at, and more strategic than it really has any right to be. As a cartoon, well, it's barely more than an ad for the card game. And as a Game Boy Advance video game, it's essentially a way to participate in the Yu-Gi-Oh! Collectible Card Game phenomenon without spending a fortune—one \$30 cartridge buys 1100 cards, free digital booster packs, and as many duels as you like.

Does it look and sound good? No, not at all. The board is dull, and the cards are simply bland, pale replicas of the real thing, but the visuals and audio are totally secondary in a game like this. The real shame is that the interface designers didn't take more time tightening up the game flow since the last iteration. The game really needs options to make the turns go faster (does the current phase really need to fade in and out every time?) or to speed up the time it takes to examine the cards in play. There's also a major problem with the save system, and you can't stop in the middle of a game if you suddenly have to shut off your Game Boy Advance, which is a bad thing when battles can take over 30 minutes.

Digital Yu-Gi-Oh, like the card game itself, is smart, challenging, and fun. Just imagine how cool Yu-Gi-Oh! World Championship Tournament 2004 would be if it were wrapped in a nicer package.—*Star Dingo*

**E** ■ Developed and published by Konami ■ \$29.99 ■ Available now ■ Strategy ■ 2 players



**PROTIP:** Always examine the details of an enemy duelist's card before making a decision. Sometimes, the fine print can catch you off guard.

	GRAPHICS	2.5	FUN FACTOR <b>3.5</b> <sub>5</sub>
	SOUND	2.5	
	CONTROL	3.5	

## Sabrewulf

Rare cranks up the quirk with Sabrewulf, a simple, unassuming, and hard-to-dislike platformer about an old British explorer with a giant safari hat and an ageless wolf that hides shiny things in 2D side-scrolling lairs.

Benefiting from the WarioWare philosophy of quick tidbits of varied gameplay, Sabrewulf offers tons and tons of levels that you can (mostly) blow through in under a minute each. Each stage consists of two halves: (1) avoiding monsters to get to the end, using the powers of various animals you've collected and bought; and (2) running back to the beginning as quickly as possible once you steal a treasure back from the 'Wulf. Level designs that would have been a bore in other 2D platformers don't seem dull in this quick-hit structure thanks to the animal-puzzle hook and the whole "racing" aspect.



**PROTIP:** Buy a Club creature as soon as you can from Cookie. It's one of the most useful monster-killers in the game.

The graphics are typical of other Rare GBA games (Banjo-Kazooie, Donkey Kong Country), providing well-conceived 3D-looking sprites that get a bit mushy once sliced through the GBA's visual mechanisms. The sound is good with funny grunts and mumbles, and the music is a treat, sounding (intentionally or not) like a whimsical version of the *Braveheart* soundtrack. The main character's jumping skills aren't the tightest in the universe, though, and the creature-selection menu presentation could have used a little more thought, but otherwise Sabrewulf really is a neat little game. It's light on substance but high on charm—a creative spin on the generic.—*Star Dingo*

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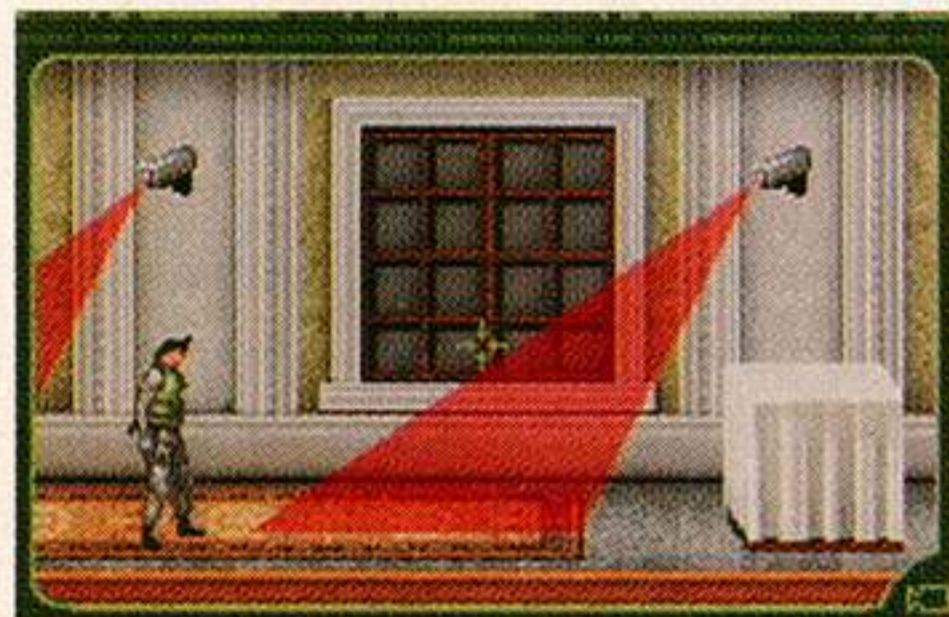
**E** ■ Developed by Rare ■ Published by THQ ■ \$29.99 ■ Available May ■ Action/adventure ■ 1 player



**PROTIP:** If you get caught by the Sabrewulf after snatching his treasure, don't worry; you restart right from the point where you picked up the treasure.

	GRAPHICS	4.0	FUN FACTOR <b>4.0</b> <sub>5</sub>
	SOUND	4.0	
	CONTROL	3.5	

## Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell Pandora Tomorrow



**PROTIP:** Holding down the L button not only lets you scout the area, but it also shows you the field of vision of security cameras.

Just like its predecessor, Splinter Cell Pandora Tomorrow for the GBA does a good job squeezing that ol' high-tech 3D Sam Fisher feeling into a 2D side-scrolling package. The crux of the game, not surprisingly, is stealth: hiding in shadows while soldiers walk by, ducking behind a curtain before a camera detects you, sneaking up behind soldiers and taking them down before they can trigger an alarm. It's not very realistic—the A.I. is *really* dumb; there are lock-picking, first-person "hunting," and code-breaking mini-games; and the levels are set up almost like a 2D side-scrolling puzzle game—so if trial-and-error gameplay turns you off, you might want to stay away.

All of Sam's moves and abilities are easy to wrangle; switching your vision type from night vision to thermal is one menu away, and scouting the area is a simple matter of holding down a shoulder button. If you screw up a mission, you never feel that it's because of the controls.

The graphics and sounds owe a lot to the original, composed of sharp, utilitarian visuals with semistiff character animation, terse vocal effects, rather pitiable gunfire effects, and a bare-bones soundtrack with occasional bizarre leanings toward jungle synth. In other words, don't worry if you forget your headphones.

Even though Pandora Tomorrow looks and feels a lot like Pandora Yesterday, that doesn't mean it's not a good game. A little slow, a little frustrating, sure, but still fun.—*Star Dingo*

**T** ■ Developed and published by Ubisoft ■ \$29.99 ■ Available now ■ Action/stealth ■ 1 player



**PROTIP:** Never leave a corpse lying in the path of a camera. If a camera sees a body, you instantly fail your mission.

	GRAPHICS	3.5	FUN FACTOR <b>3.5</b> <sub>5</sub>
	SOUND	3.0	
	CONTROL	4.0	



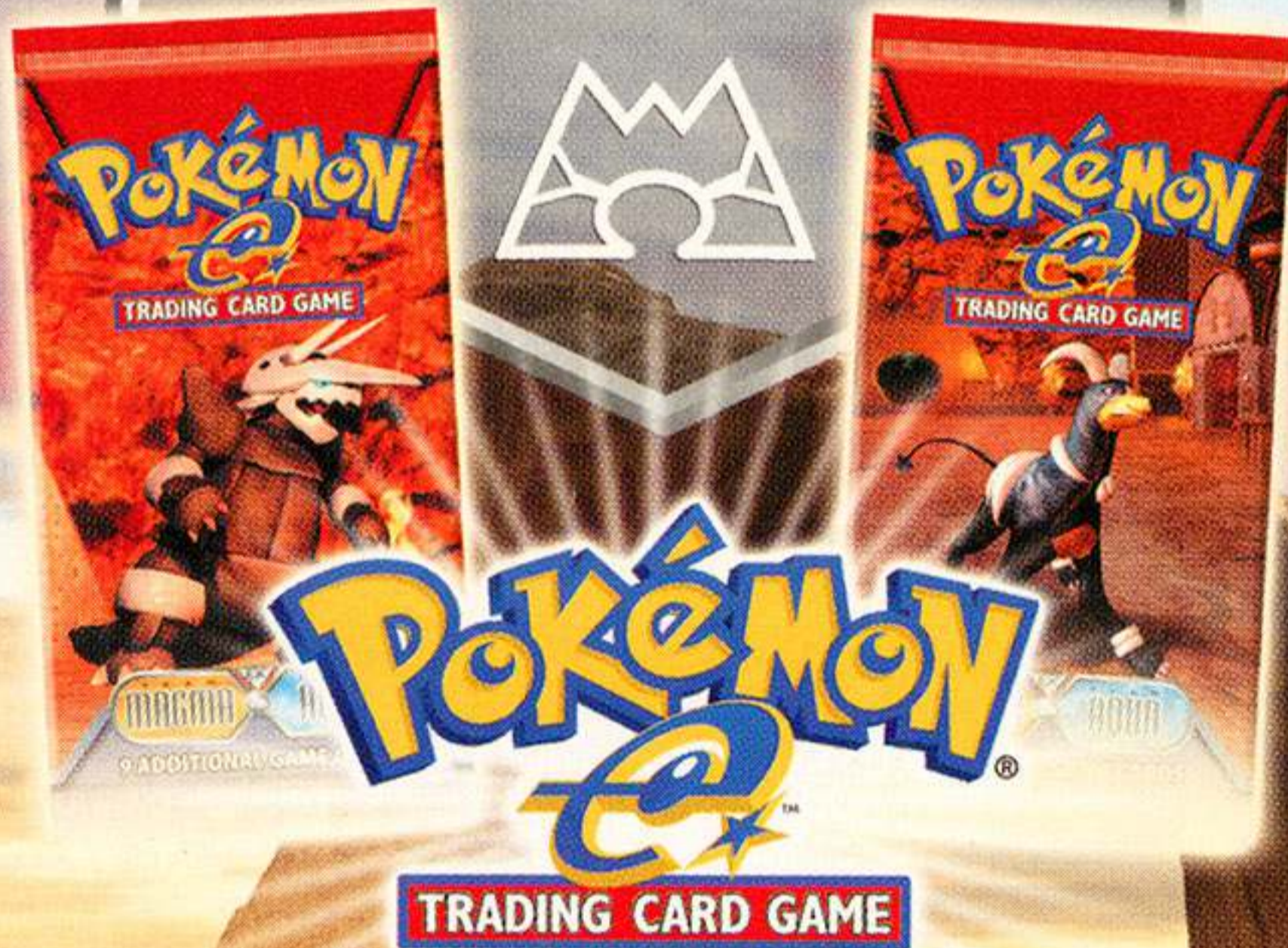


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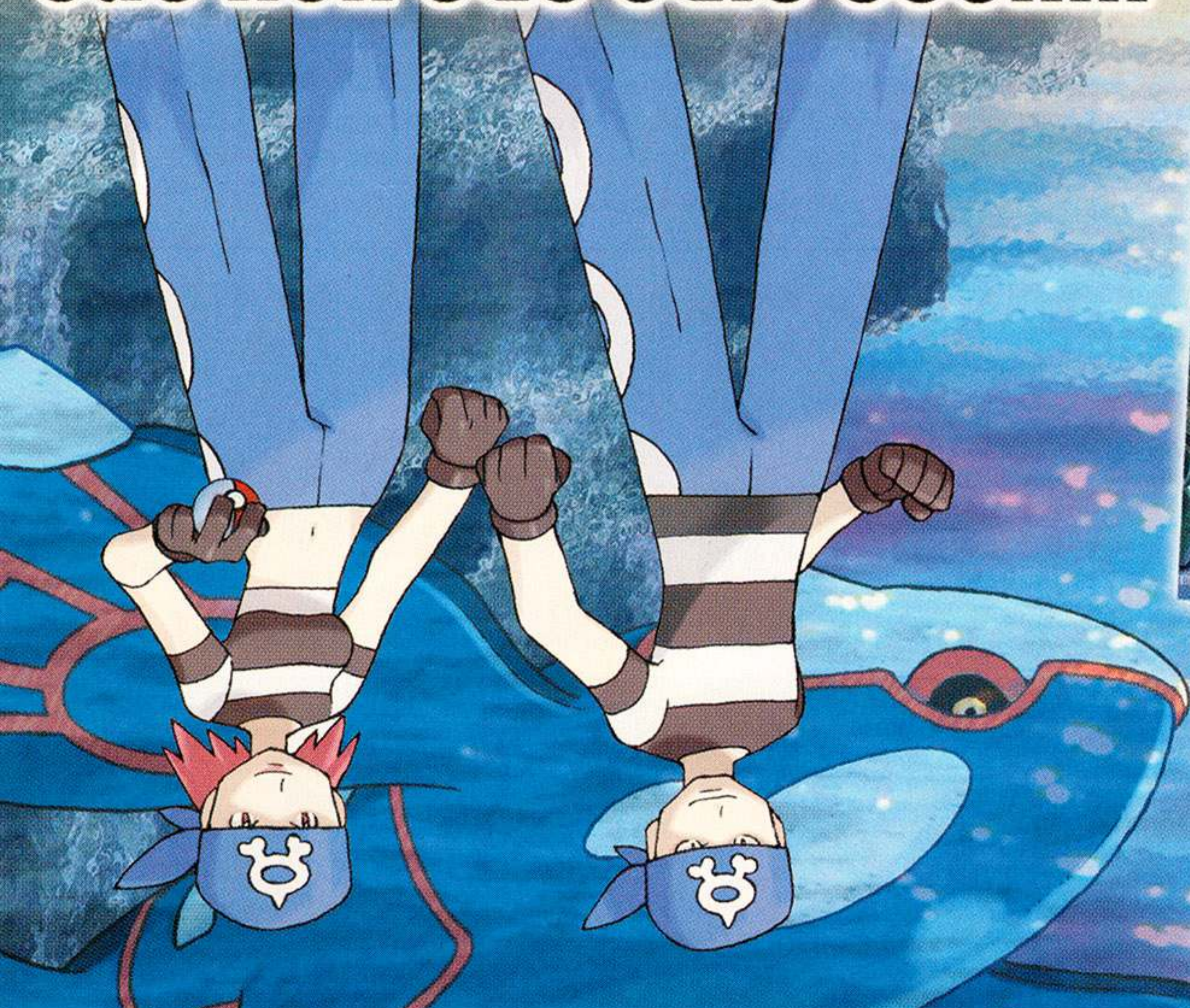
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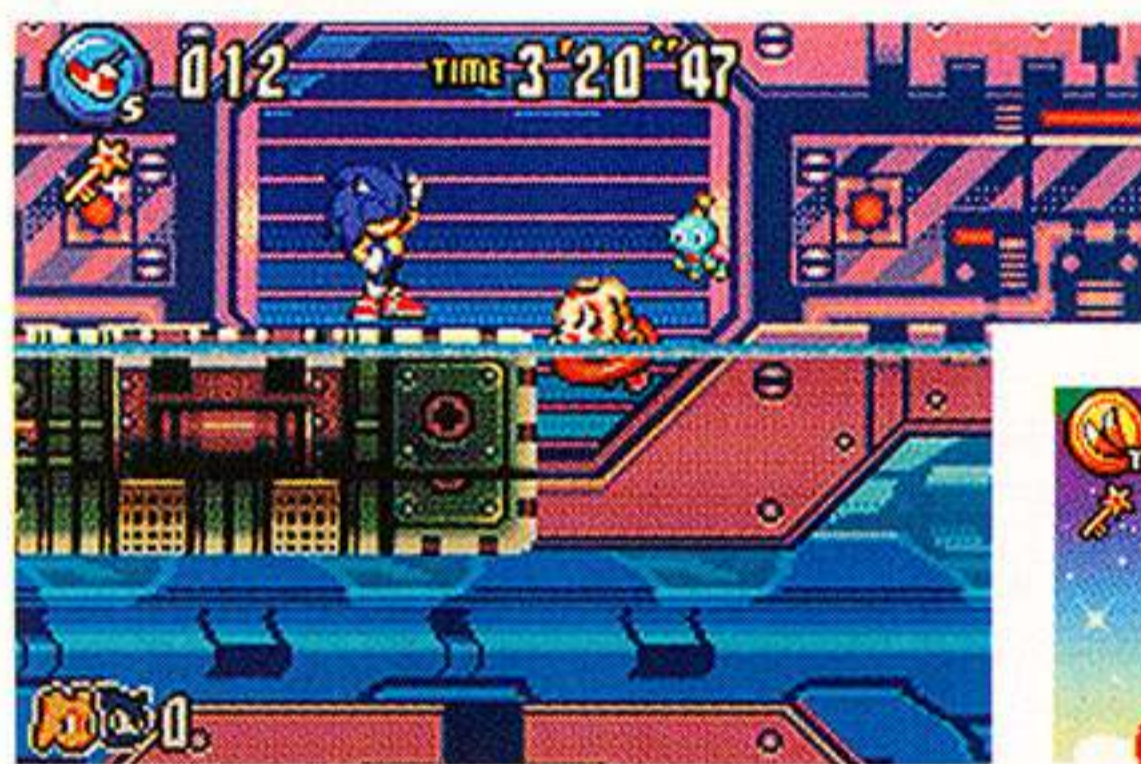
# Nintendo Makes Its Move

Ever since Nintendo's near-monopolistic dominance over the handheld market was challenged at last year's Electronic Entertainment Expo with the surprise announcement of the Sony PlayStation Portable (PSP), we've been anxiously anticipating Nintendo's response—and it seems like we got it (sort of) when Nintendo announced that its newest handheld system, code-named the Nintendo DS, would be released by the end of 2004. Though it's more of a complement to the Game Boy Advance than a full-fledged next-generation successor of it, the DS, at the least, sounds like an ambitious experiment that has some of us intrigued by its potential and others left with the taste of Virtual Boy in their mouths.

Information will continue to be scant until this year's E3 convention, but what we do know is that the DS will feature two vertically stacked 3-inch LCD screens, two separate ARM-based processors (the same type of CPU used by the N-Gage), and software that will not be disc-based. Though other details, such as the price and whether it will be backward-compatible with previous Game Boy hardware, will be forthcoming, there's already plenty of grist for the rumor mill circulating: that one screen will be touch sensitive, that the system will utilize wireless connectivity technology

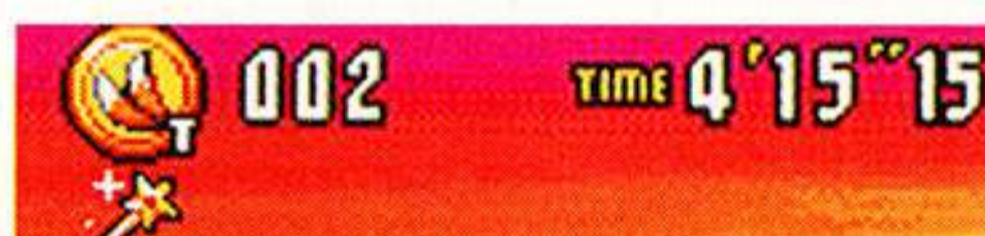
similar to that used by Motorola's chipset for the Game Boy Advance in Japan, and that the system's graphics will be 3D...or even holographic. Even if none of these theoretical features makes the cut, at the very least there is potential for some killer multiplayer possibilities with the dual screen technology alone, something that can open the handheld market up to ways of delivering gameplay experiences never seen before.

Competition breeds innovation, something Nintendo is renowned for, and without a doubt, the company has software in development that will take full advantage of the dual screen design—but will third-party publishers follow suit, or will the second screen mostly be relegated to cheap gimmick status? What about some practical concerns, such as the system's size and the extra battery power needed to run a second lit screen? And will the DS wind up competing with the Game Boy Advance (Nintendo says it's not meant to) or even replacing it in the long run? The jury's out until we can get some hands-on (much less eyes-on) time with the system, but most of us here at *GamePro* are very excited at the prospect of the potential to play handheld games in ways we never have before, and can't wait to see what Nintendo's next move will be.—Pong Sifu



## Sonic Advance 3

Sega's ubiquitous mascot returns to the Game Boy Advance for another blazingly fast side-scrolling romp through fantastical, loop-strewn lands in *Sonic Advance 3*, a brand-new adventure with that unassailable old-school gameplay. The first difference from



previous Advance games is that the Zone Map acts as a separate stage that you'll have to explore to find the entrances to the game's stages. You select a player character as well as a partner character, and whoever you choose determines which routes will be available to you, which abilities will be at your disposal, and how the overall game will be played. In addition to a competitive multiplayer mode as seen in *Sonic Advance 2*, the main game will also support multiplay, allowing you and a friend to tackle all of its Zones and Acts as a team.—Iron Monkey



■ First Look ■ Developed and published by Sega ■ Target release date: June

## Shaman King

Konami has snagged the licensing rights to produce games based on the critically lauded anime *Shaman King* just as the series is gaining steam in the U.S. with its own TV series. In this side-scrolling adventure, you play as Yoh, a laid-back junior high student who happens to be a link between the human and spirit worlds. After establishing a psychic connection with samurai ghost Amidamaru, Yoh embarks on a quest to participate in a fabled tournament held every 500 years. Out to thwart Yoh is a powerful telepath who shares a bond with an ancient Chinese warrior whose fierce skills in the art of war are unparalleled. Fighting as one, Yoh and Amidamaru will use their supernatural abilities to defeat their foes and lay claim to the coveted title of Shaman King.—Iron Monkey

■ First Look ■ Developed by KCEJ-E  
 ■ Published by Konami ■ Target release date: Fall 2004



# Digimon Racing

Oh my—now they're racing karts! Will the wonders of those little Digimon ever cease? Digimon Racing features eight characters, including Agumon, Palmon, Patamon, and Gomamon; more Digimon can be unlocked by completing the Cup Race and Time Trial game modes, and all racers vary in their speed, acceleration, and handling skills. Driving over power-ups bestows weapons, such as bombs, lightning, and bubble traps, while driving over electrified grids enables you to Digivolve and acquire new, character-unique power-ups. Besides giving you the ability to jump on top of and momentarily immobilize rivals, the playable build of Digimon Racing offered little that hasn't already



been done in Mario Kart and its imitators—not necessarily a bad thing as it's shaping up to be a fun, if generic, kart racer that you'll be able to play with three buddies via link cables.—Iron Monkey

■ Hands-On ■ Developed and published by Bandai  
■ Target release date: April

# Mega Man Battle Network 4: Red Sun and Blue Moon

Continuing in the new direction Capcom is taking with the Mega Man franchise, Mega Man Battle Network 4 will be closer to the recently released Battle Chip Challenge than previous Battle Network games with an increased emphasis on the battle tournaments. Network 4 will feature an identical memory map battle system and the same playable characters as in previous Networks, but will include some interesting tweaks.

New to Network 4 are the Soul Unison and Dark Soul systems. During a battle with the former, your Navi may be compatible with your opponents—in which case you can steal their skills and integrate them into your attack program. The Dark Soul system allows powerful Dark Chips to appear when you're losing, but using these may degenerate your Navi to become evil. Two versions of Network 4 will be released (Red Sun and Blue Moon) with alternate characters sets, chip sets, and Game Link compatibility.—Rice Burner

■ First Look ■ Developed and published by Capcom  
■ Target release date: Summer 2004

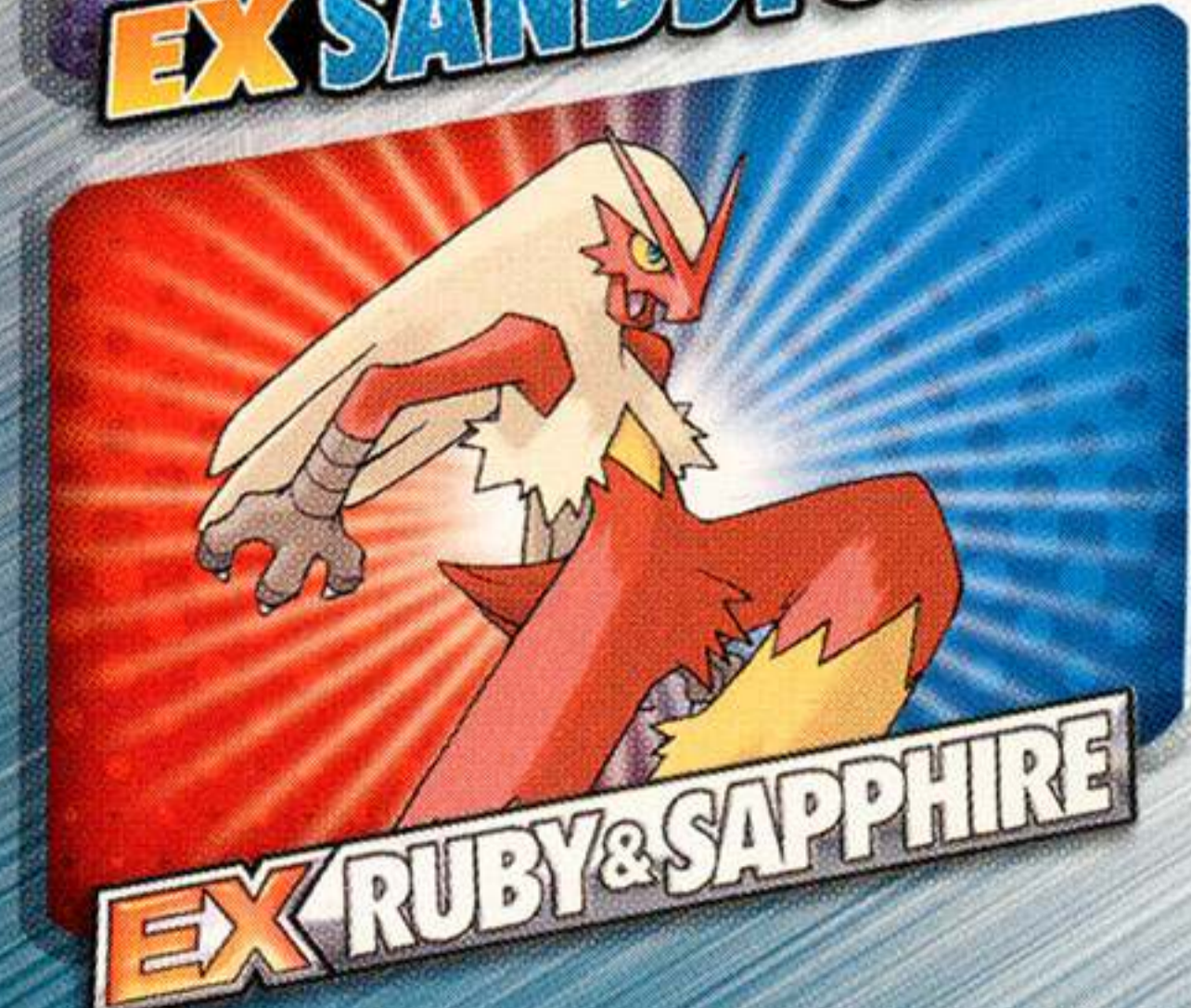
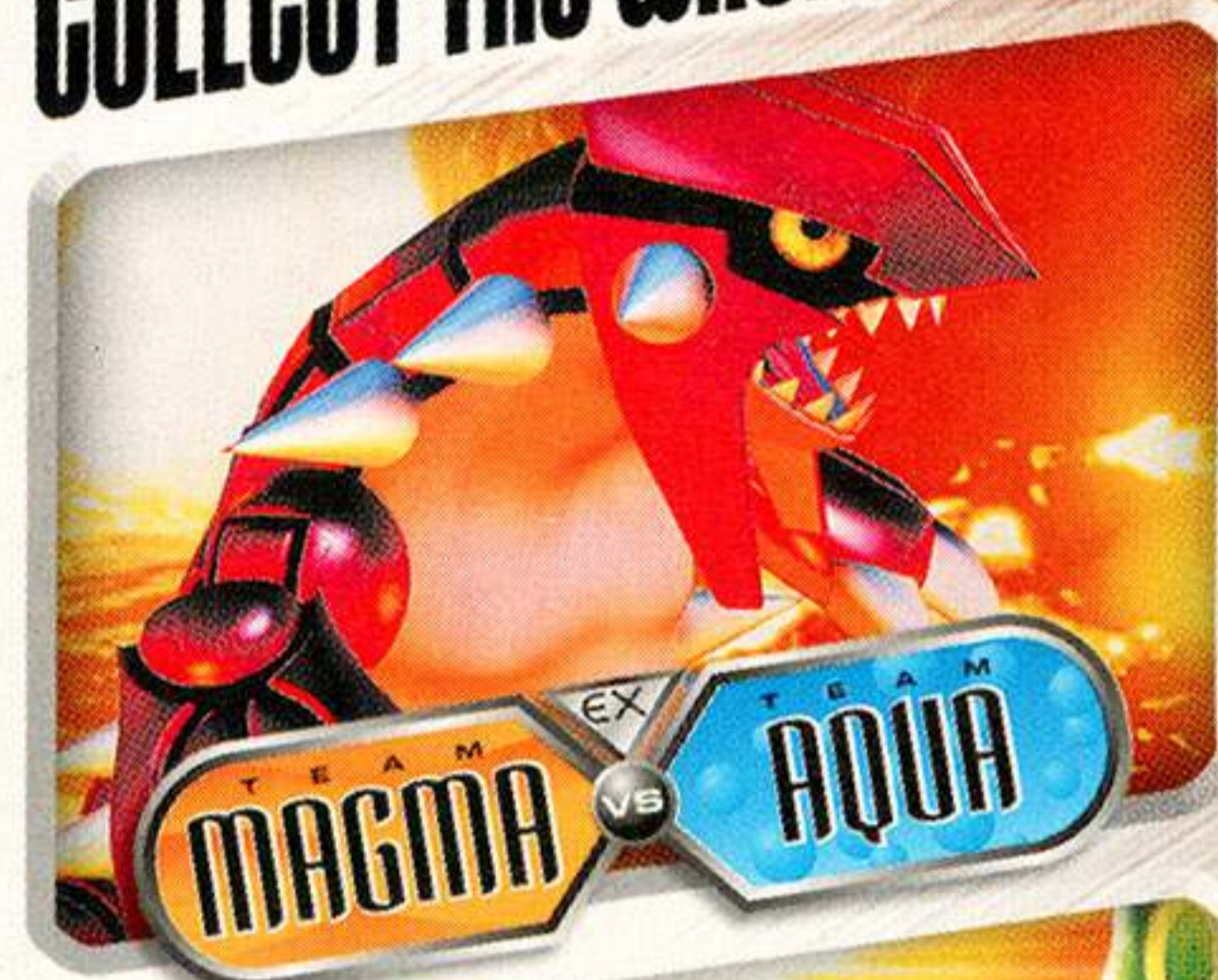


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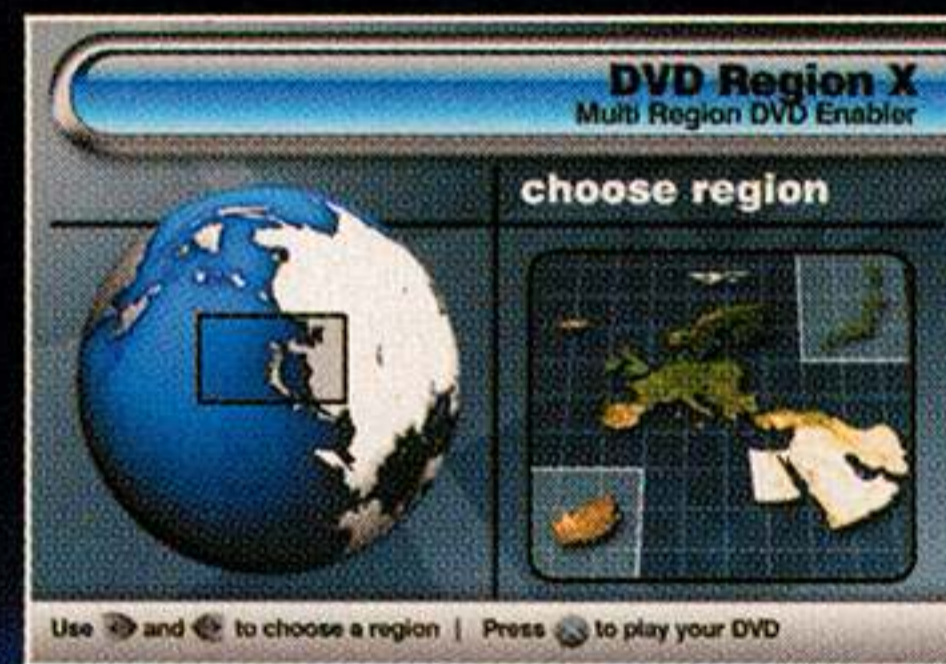
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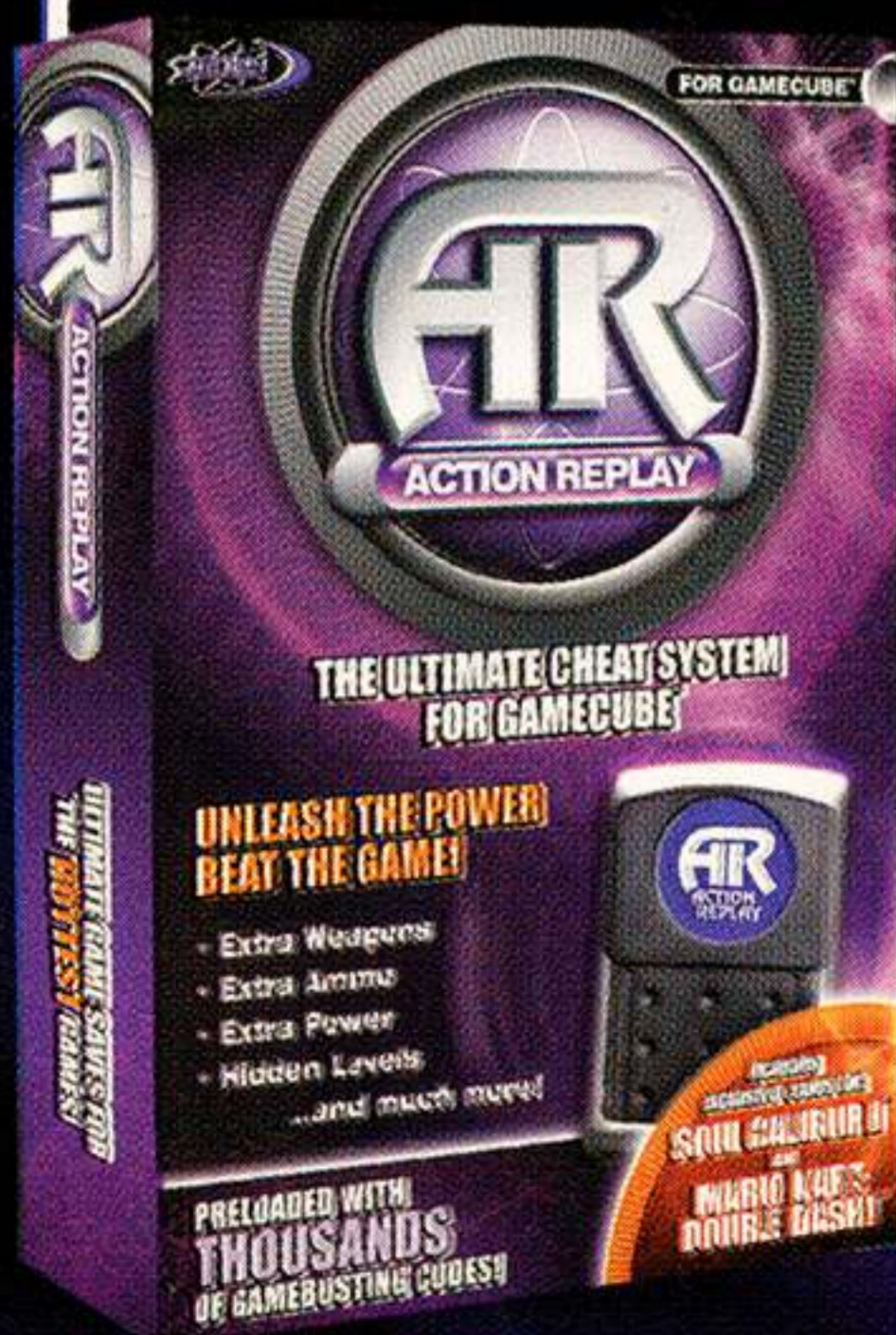


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# Fight Night 2004

The name's changed and so has the gameplay. Knockout Kings turns into Fight Night with more bang (literally) for the buck.

**FE** **X** The champ is back. It may have a new name, but make no mistake—after a long reign as a top contender, EA's boxer has successfully made the transition to the undisputed number-one rank in the world.



## It's a Knock Out

There was nothing wrong with the Knockout Kings series. Every year, it had all of the right combinations to make it competitive with other boxing games: real prize fighters, great visual presentations, and a worthy Career mode. The franchise, however, lacked the punching power (which relied on button mashing) to go the distance as a true standout pugilist. That's all changed this year. Like a boxer using new techniques, Electronic Art's brawler has changed its name and has become a born-again bruiser with features that undeniably make it the king of the ring.

Among those features in Fight Night is complete control over dishing out pain. The innovative and radical control scheme uses the right analog stick as the primary way of throwing both left and right punches. Push the stick forward quickly, and you get a jab; rotate it a quarter turn, and you produce a hook; and motion it in a half circle, and you swing an uppercut. Although the first few tries are awkward, you eventually begin to feel more connected with the controls, throwing counters, combinations, and even illegal blows with precision and ease. Wisely, EA also left in the traditional button pushing as an alternative if you can't get into the groove with the stick.



**PRO TIP:** Always, always stay in the middle of the ring. Up against the ropes, you won't be able to outmaneuver attacks.



**PRO TIP:** Fake a punch by not completely rotating the analog stick. By faking a throw, you can catch an opponent off guard, enabling you to find an opening for a real punch.



**PRO TIP:** Don't stop after the bell rings. You'll be able to throw in a few more punches before you're forced back to your corner.

## Unanimous Decision

Fight Night's absorbing Career mode should be the model that other boxing games follow. After creating a fully customizable brute who can be ordained with all of a boxer's necessities, including tattoos, hair color, and clothing types, the real training begins. You start at the lowest end of the totem pole (ranked 50th in the world) and work your way up to becoming number one—that is, of course, after defeating the top-ranked heavyweight, Muhammad Ali. The true delight in your path to glory is twofold. Instead of moving up a ladder with systematic predictability, you get to choose your fights in various venues against lower- or higher-ranked boxers. And the interspersed training not only enables you to build your skill meters but also helps discipline your fingers on the analog stick, developing an actual rhythm to swinging your boxer's fists.

Another area where Fight Night excels is its visual package. Every year, it seems that EA has found a better way to project old and new fighters on the screen with lifelike detail. This time is no exception, both on the PlayStation 2 and Xbox, where gloved warriors move, react, and taunt with unbelievable realism. Cuts, welts, and swollen body parts become evident in real time, while impressive character animations illustrate a falling opponent in various forms.

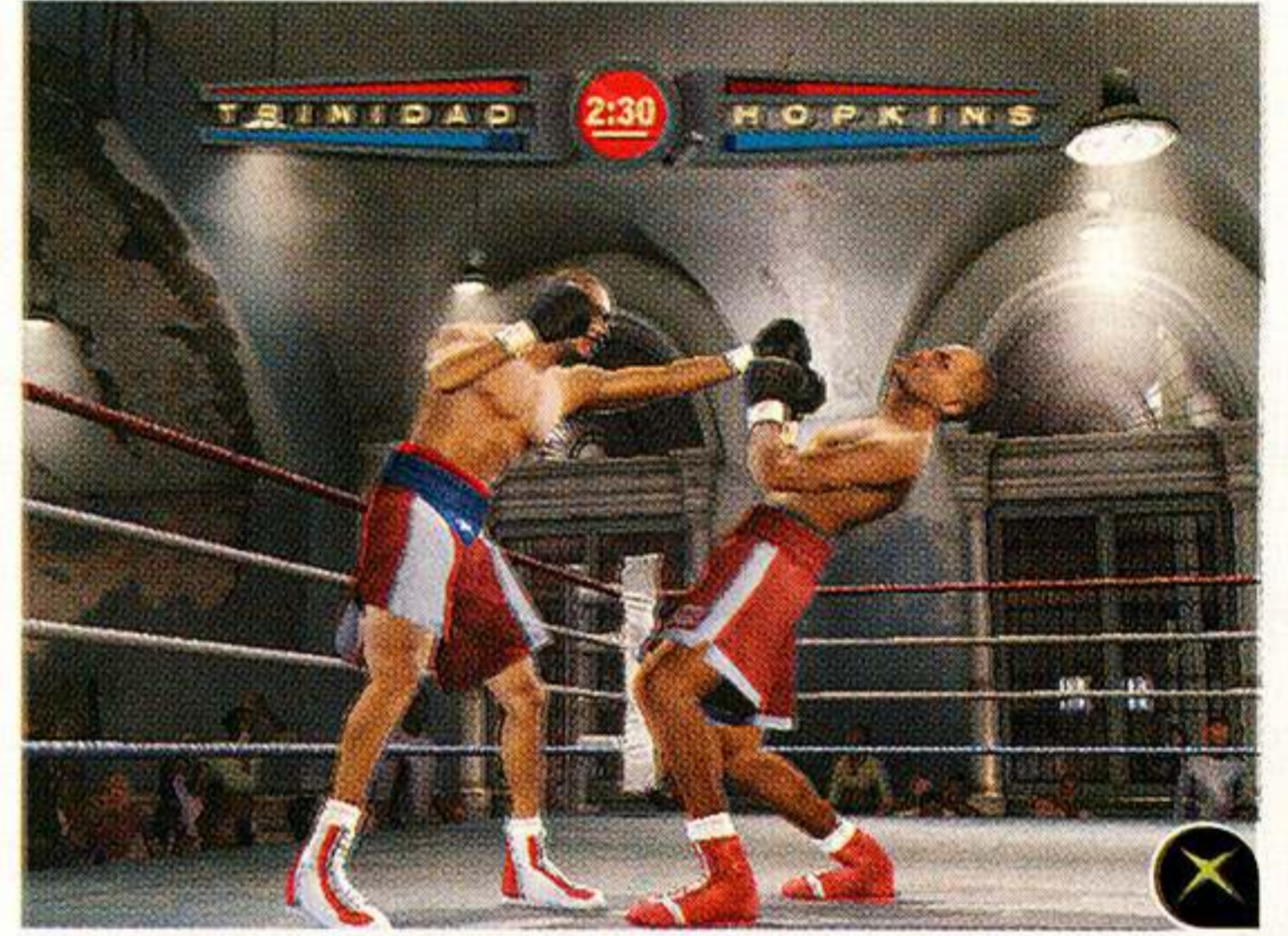
The sound isn't half-bad, either. The soundtrack is hip-hop heavy, which lends a good dosage of rhythmic beats to the action, helping you to be in a smashing-bodies-with-bruising-accuracy frame of mind. The commentary, however, can be a bit repetitious, but the babble from trainers in between rounds is worth listening to.

Hands down, Fight Night 2004 is the victor in all weight classes for this year. If you're into boxing, this should be the only game to pick up and play.—Four-Eyed Dragon

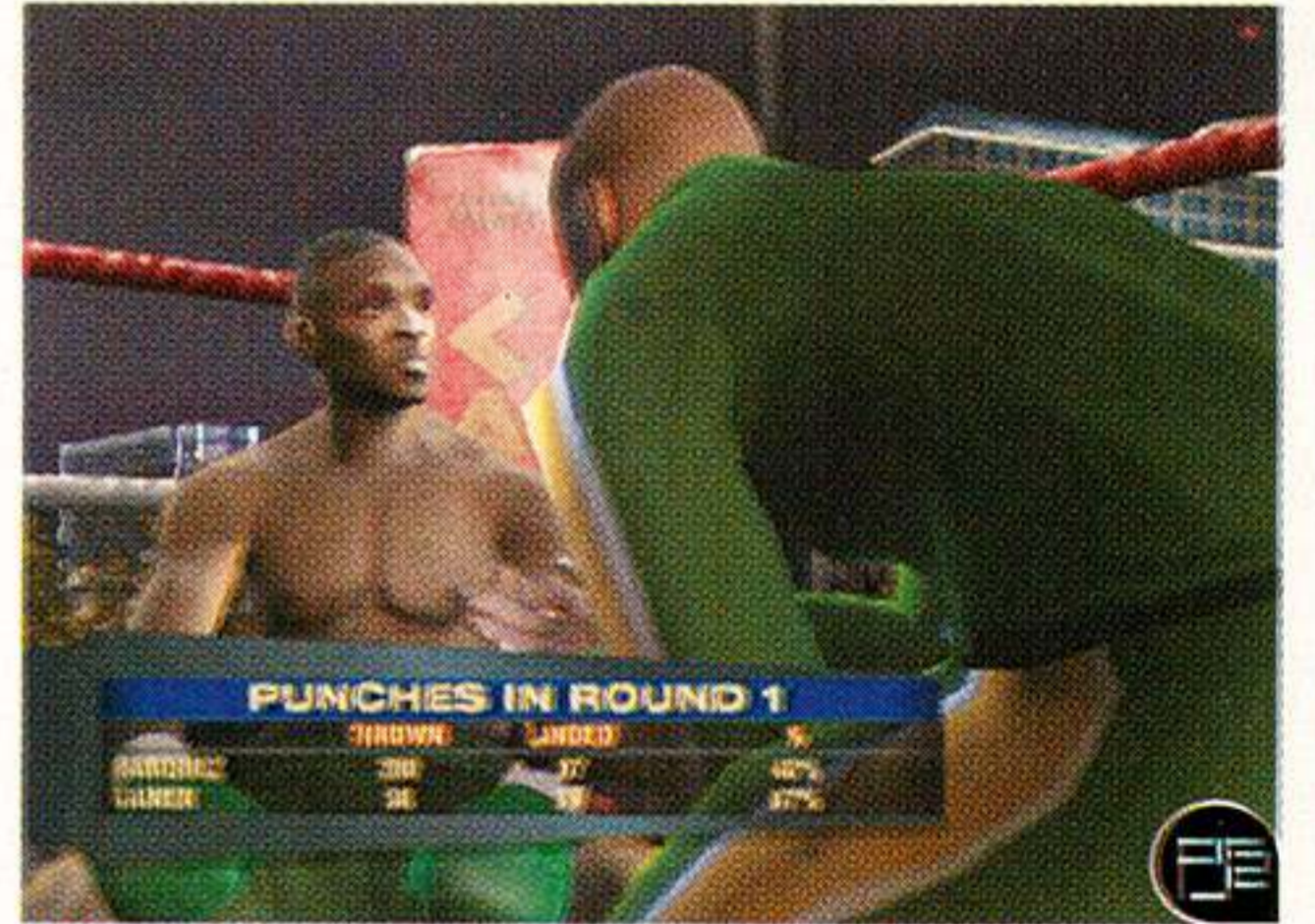
**T** ■ Developed by EA Canada ■ Published by EA Sports ■ \$49.99 ■ Available now ■ Boxing ■ 2 players



Superior graphics and smashing punching power make Fight Night 2004 the colossal heavyweight and undisputed champion of the boxing world.



**PRO TIP:** The jab is the most effective punch in boxing. Use it to keep an opponent at a distance; throw it often to immediately make your rival's nose bleed; and use it to start a combination.



**PRO TIP:** Don't get impatient and skip the cut-scenes in between rounds. Trainers on both sides offer great advice on what's going right and wrong during the fight.

**GAMEPRO EDITORS' CHOICE**

<b>FE</b>	GRAPHICS	5.0	<b>5.0</b>
	SOUND	4.5	
	CONTROL	5.0	
<b>X</b>	GRAPHICS	5.0	<b>5.0</b>
	SOUND	4.5	
	CONTROL	5.0	

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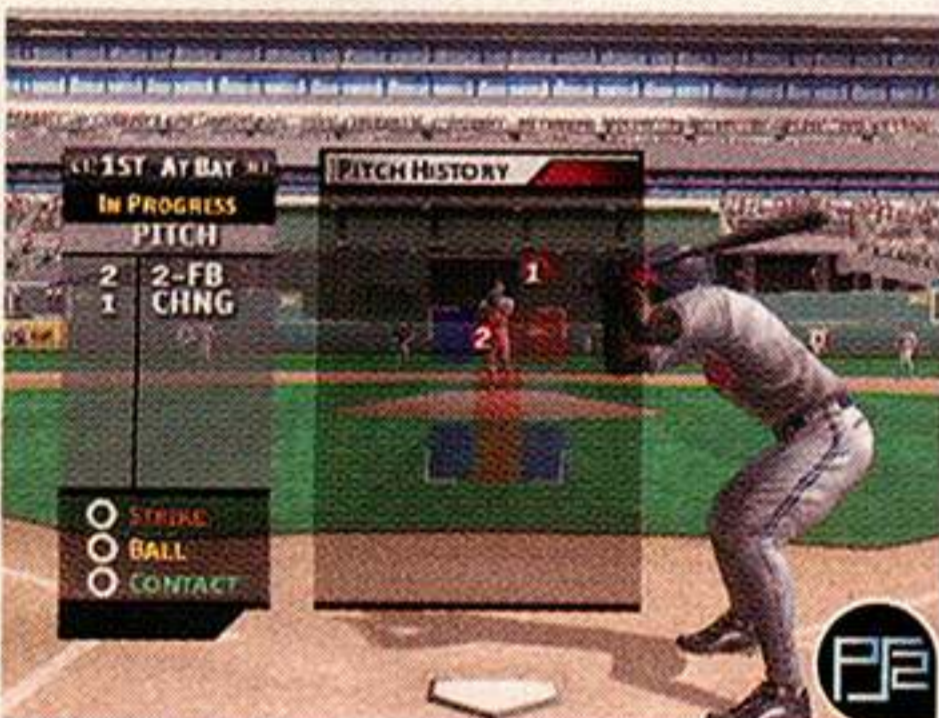
# MVP Baseball 2004

Instead of slumping in its sophomore season, MVP streaks to the top of the standings with an outstanding ball game.

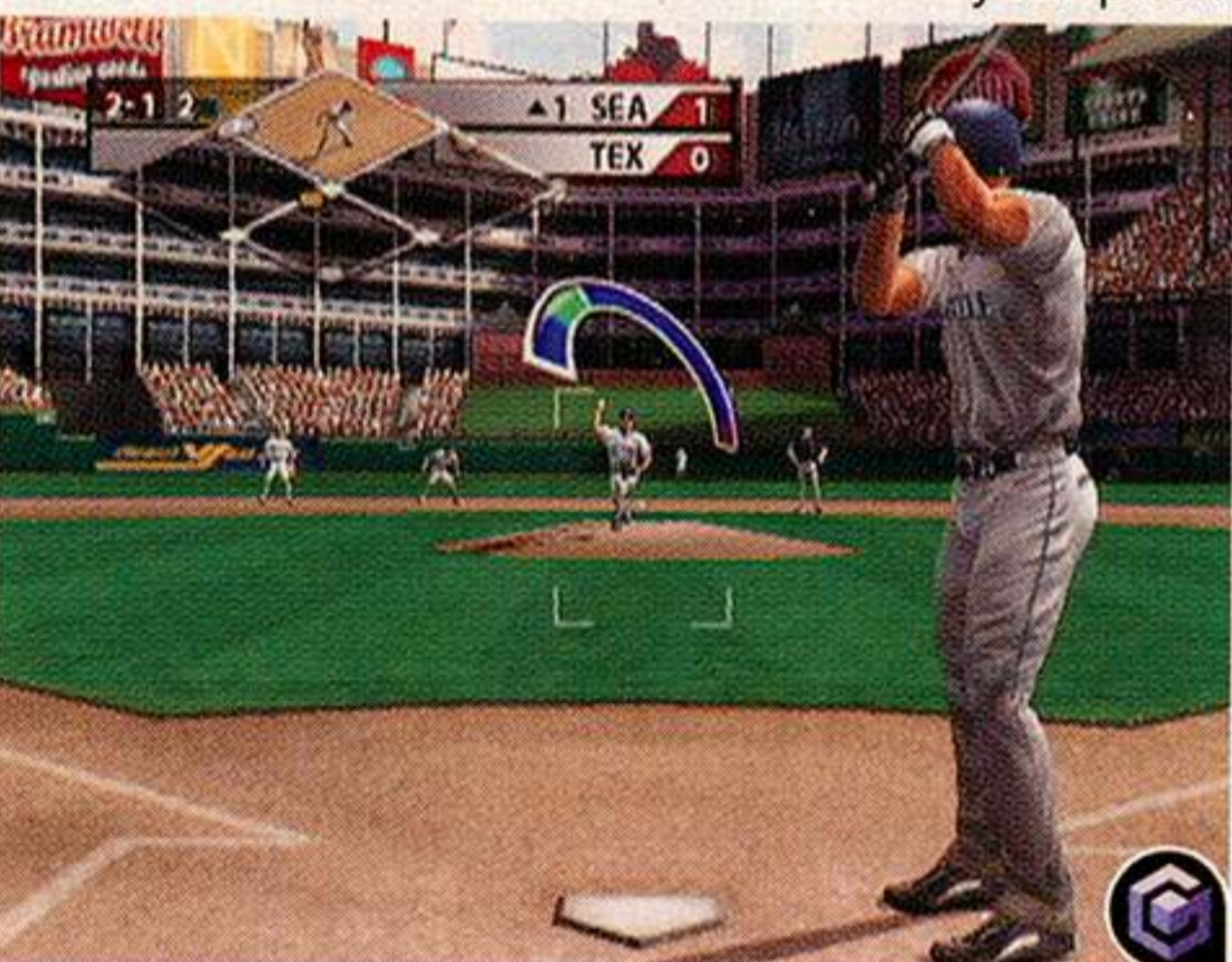
**PE** **X** **G** MVP Baseball 2004's development team at EA Canada must really need a vacation—never before has a sports game improved so much and added so many new features in a single season. It may not be the league-leader in every category, but excellent performances across the board make it the best baseball game of the year.

## Fall Classic

An avalanche of new features and sweetly refined controls ensures that MVP lives up to its name. The robust Dynasty mode is bursting with baseball goodness as EA Sports sprung for the licenses of every MLB team's real-life AA and AAA minor-league squads. The impressive Franchise mode in rival game MLB 2005 bests it in terms of overall depth and detail, but being able to play games at three levels of baseball is just really cool for serious baseball fans. The Dynasty mode also challenges you to achieve team goals and manage player salaries, team chemistry, player happiness, and trades.



**PRO TIP:** Use the pitch-history window to track previous at-bats and pitches, which can help you make a better guess on the next pitch you'll get in key situations.



**PRO TIP:** If a batter takes a high curve ball for a strike, you can often get him to wave futilely at a high change-up that's outside the strike zone.



**PRO TIP:** If you're looking to smack home runs, wait for a pitch you know you can draw a bead on—the "mistake" pitches are best. Position the left analog stick to aim your swing high and inside, and with good timing and the right batter, you'll jack it.



**PRO TIP:** If the runner on first starts stealing, don't max out your catcher's throw meter going for the out—you'll almost always pull the infielder off the bag at second base.



**PRO TIP:** Unless you're facing a godlike batter with no cold zones, there's no reason to throw to a batter's hot zones—work other areas of the strike zone.

On the flip side, managing a franchise across three leagues may be too daunting for the casual fan, and unfortunately, MVP lacks a straight-up Season mode that strips away these complexities. Several great tools streamline the details, leading off with the innovative sim options. You can switch between playing and simming any game at any point in the game, or you can blast through a game from the Manager screen in a couple of minutes by telling batters to bat or bunt, and pitchers to avoid, walk, or challenge batters. Slick depth charts, trading blocks, and detailed player types (ranging from AAA Starter to MLB Indispensable) also provide valuable aids.

Great little touches on the field help a lot too. A pop-up menu lets you warm up batters, pinch hit, or check your pitch history without wading through menus. Mound visits are more than a cut-scene, positively or negatively affecting your pitcher's performance. Overall, the gameplay benefits in a big way from this more realistic, true-to-baseball atmosphere.

## Gold Glove

MVP's pitching controls remain the best in baseball, using a golf-style meter that captivates by involving you in whether the pitcher nails his spots...or misses wildly. The right analog stick is now employed to control sliding and whether fielders jump or dive. Between deciding when you slide and the great picture-in-picture windows, the base-running is also topnotch.

The fielding has also improved greatly, most notably by allowing players to begin charging their throw meter before the fielder is ready to throw, eliminating those galling delays that plagued last year's game. Adding the ability to dive and jump is also huge, but confining it to the right analog stick is not—sometimes it's hard to move your thumb quickly enough to make a tight play, and a controller-configuration option would've been awesome. Lastly, the batting controls require a smart approach at the plate—if you don't adjust your swing to match pitch location, you'll get nothing—a setup that may discourage more casual players.

## Sparkling Diamond

Visually, MVP flat-out smokes the competition with lush lighting, colors, and details that richly portray each ball game. The players' faces are uncannily lifelike, and solid animations move them smoothly through each play. The Xbox version looks the best, of course, with the PS2 trailing behind the slightly more detailed GameCube version. As usual with EA, only the PS2 version supports online play, which nudges the prettier GameCube version into the third ranking. Tight, lively commentary by Giants announcers Dwayne Kuiper and Mike Krukow is paired with useful player chatter to deliver strong audio.

If one or another of MVP's minor flaws disagrees with you too strongly, 989 Sports' MLB 2005 offers an excellent alternative. But for most sports fans, the sizzling performance of MVP is enough to keep them satisfied all season long.

—Air Hendrix

**E** ■ Developed by EA Canada  
 ■ Published by EA Sports  
 ■ \$49.99 ■ Available now  
 ■ Baseball ■ 2 players

## GAMEPRO EDITORS' CHOICE

<b>PE</b>	GRAPHICS	5.0	FUN FACTOR <b>5.0</b> <sub>5</sub>
	SOUND	4.5	
	CONTROL	4.5	
<b>X</b>	GRAPHICS	5.0	FUN FACTOR <b>5.0</b> <sub>5</sub>
	SOUND	4.5	
	CONTROL	4.5	
<b>G</b>	GRAPHICS	5.0	FUN FACTOR <b>4.5</b> <sub>5</sub>
	SOUND	4.5	
	CONTROL	4.5	





Pokémon Colosseum



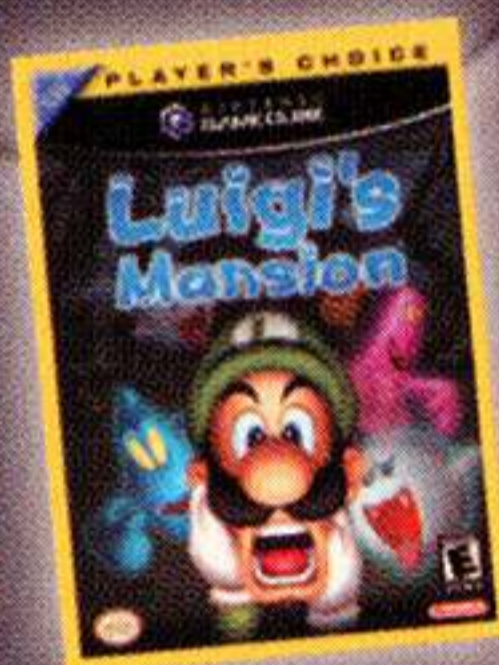
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## MLB 2005

There is joy in Mudville and San Diego, the home of 989 Sports, as MLB 2005 makes a quantum leap forward in quality.

**EA** Back in the PlayStation days, 989 Sports was locked in cutthroat competition with EA Sports, a struggle that has been parked on the back burner for quite some time. While it's too early to forecast 989's long-awaited return to form, MLB 2005 represents the publisher's best game yet on the PS2 and gives EA's MVP Baseball a serious run for its money.

## Swing, Batter!

Unique features, nice graphical polish, and smartly refined controls propel the MLB series back into the big league. The new Franchise mode is a baseball nut's delight, serving up a simulation that's so cavernously deep, it might even be a bit intimidating. Beyond the customary aspects like trades or contracts, you handle a vast number of business factors down to an extreme level of detail that includes training/rehab facilities, promotional "giveaway" nights, loans and banking, scouting, player-

skill development, and much more. It's truly "SimBaseball."

For those with shorter attention spans, MLB 2005 also offers a downright cool Career mode and a standard Season mode. In Career, you focus on one player that you create, striving for attention in spring training, haggling over contracts as you move between teams, and even demanding trades or more playing time.

The creativity doesn't stop there. You can use the EyeToy to photograph your face and map it onto a created player. Or plug in a USB headset to issue voice commands like "steal second" or "kick dirt at umpire." Players, ahem, seem to ignore that umpire command, but the headset otherwise works well if

you're not shy about mumbling to yourself. The hot/cold zones for batters aren't static, evolving over the course of the game in response to your patterns, while mound visits can help a flagging pitcher. An excellent Fast Play option trims the cut-scenes and otherwise makes for a quick game, while the online play includes tournaments, and two gamers can duke out a quick game by simming it as opposing managers. That's a lot of different and interesting ways to play ball.

## The Crack of the Bat

MLB 2005 has a great tactile feel—in your first trip to the plate, you'll notice right away how much the ball moves like it should coming off the bat. Retooled controls that steer clear of cursors also augment the game's serious, realistic style of gameplay. Pressure-sensitive pitching monitors how long and hard you jam the button to determine the heat and accuracy of the pitch. Three difficulty levels of batting controls let you build your skill at aiming the bat with the left analog stick, and you can also guess pitches or try for a fly/ground ball. Fielding and base-running are very smooth, but you can't check swings or control whether you slide, which count as significant shortcomings.

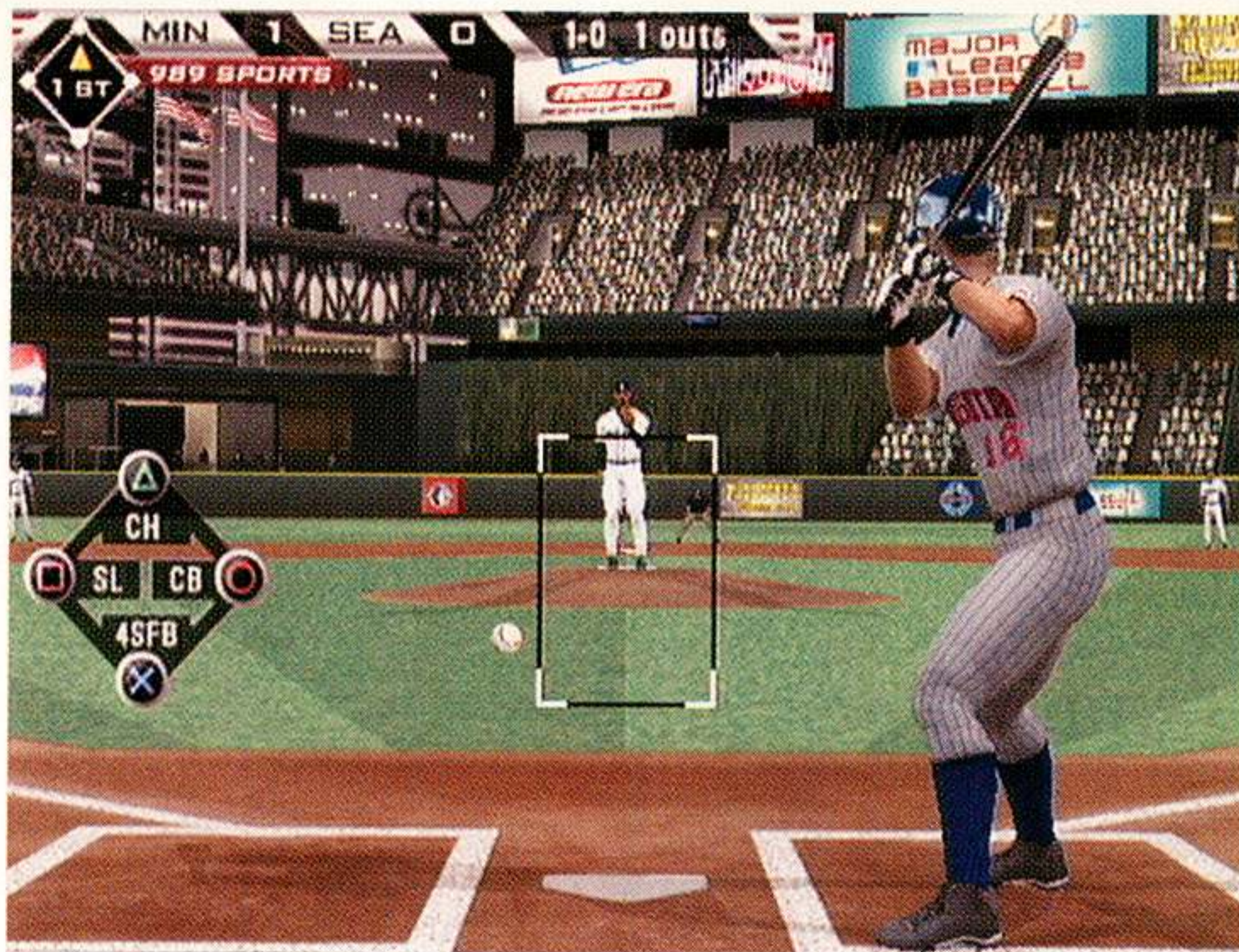
MLB 2005 has a few other quirks. There are some odd restrictions on the size of your bullpen and bench, and you work with inactive rosters, not minor leagues. It's also the only game that doesn't provide a fake player to represent Barry Bonds, who opted out of the MLBPA this season and appears in no baseball games.

## Fast Pitch

MLB 2005 also benefited from a solid face-lift. Between the remarkable animation and the well-proportioned player models, everyone on the field moves with uncanny, lifelike grace. Overall, though, the visuals are lower-res than those of competing games, which diminishes the impact somewhat. On the audio side, MLB 2005 provides three-man commentary, but only Vin Scully really soars—the color guy gets pretty grating, while the stat guy interrupts at awkward moments.

MVP Baseball 2004 remains the top overall pick this season, but MLB 2005 is an excellent alternative that will have strong appeal to diehard baseball fans. And it's great to see 989 Sports getting back in the game.—Air Hendrix

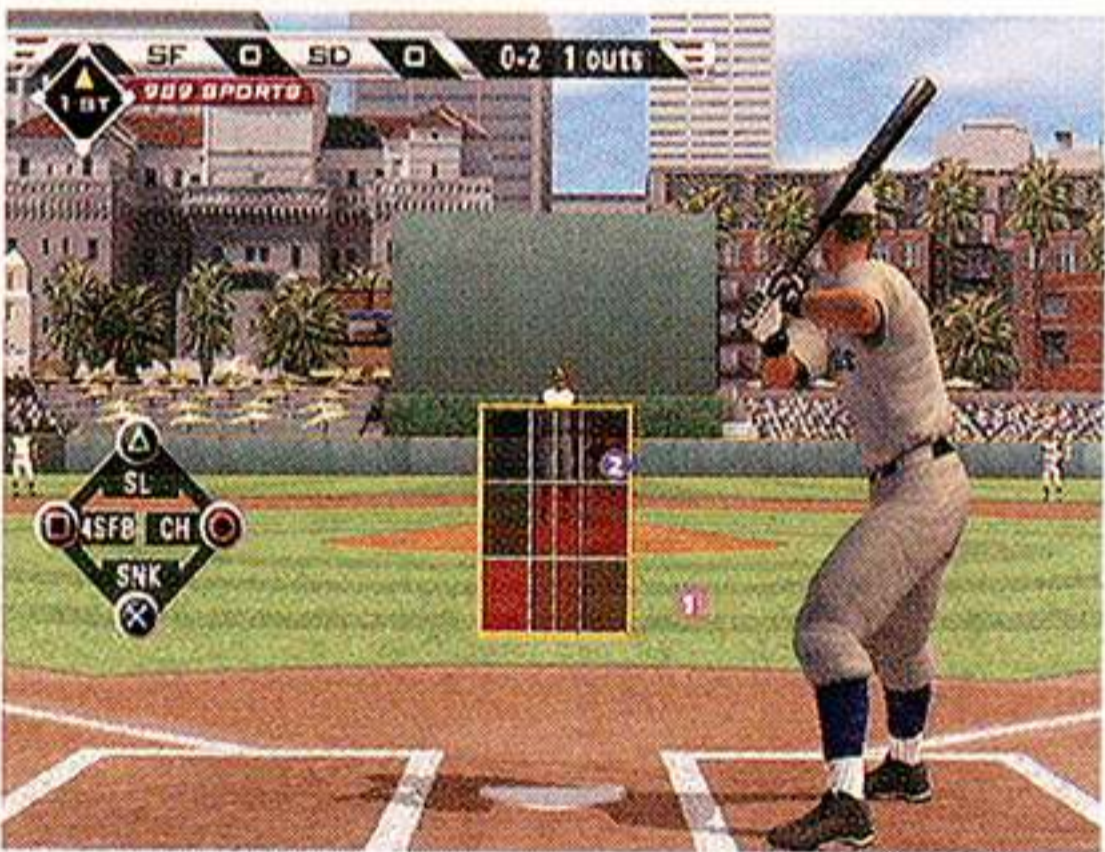
**E** ■ Developed and published by 989 Sports  
■ \$39.99 ■ Available now ■ Baseball ■ 2 players



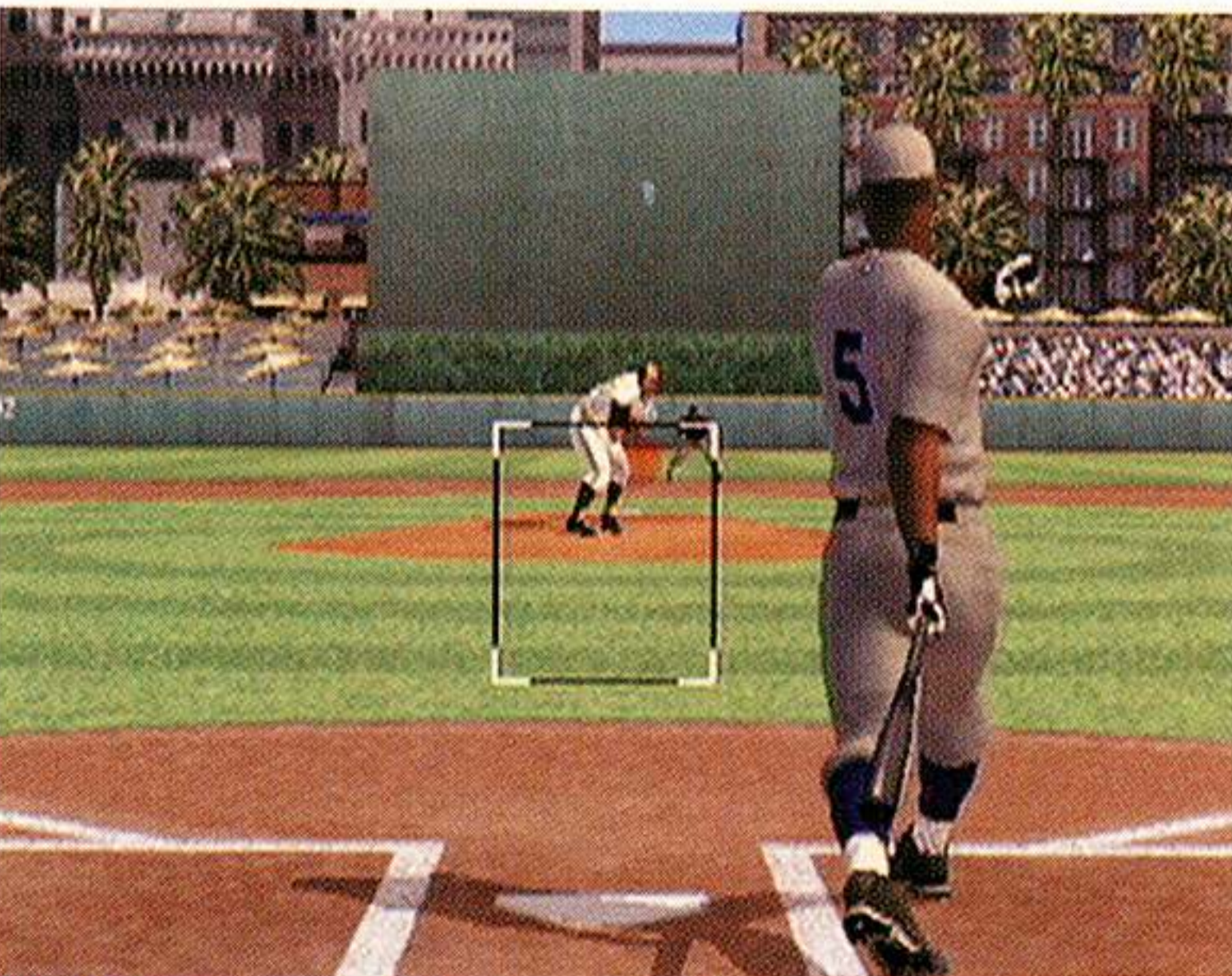
**PRO TIP:** The pitch cursor marks the spot where a pitch will start to break—not its final destination—so heed the controller vibrations to make sure you're not throwing junk when you need a strike.



**PRO TIP:** Even if you're not worried about a steal, pick-off throws can break up a batter's rhythm in a key at-bat.



**PRO TIP:** In the later innings when you feel like you have a pitcher pegged, start guessing pitch types—you can work the count and use pitch history to get more hits.



**PRO TIP:** When it's early in the count or when you're ahead, sit on your pitch by holding the analog stick to cover the location you hope the pitch will cross. If you guess right, crank it; if not, take it.



MLB 2005's impressively detailed Franchise mode even tasks you with managing details like your players' mode of transportation between games. And they'll make no bones about complaining if you scrimp!



# ESPN Major League Baseball 2K4

It may not fall under the World Series moniker anymore, but it's still a good baseball game...just not good enough to make the fall classic.

**PE** **X** ESPN Major League Baseball 2K4 is a good ball game, but there are at least two competing games that substantially outperform it. And that puts this successor to the renowned World Series franchise in the tough spot of scrambling for a spot in the playoffs.

## Starting Pitcher

ESPN MLB takes the field with a sturdy roster of features. Its modes

provide a range of intensity to match your level of interest, ranging from the straight-up Season mode to a Franchise mode that puts you behind the reins of the budget, coach and staff contracts, your minor-league team, and more. And the unique GM Career mode takes it one step further, putting you in the shoes of a GM who must also live up to his owner's demands—failure gets you fired, while success builds up the bankroll you're saving to buy your own team someday. Both the PS2 and Xbox versions support online play, though only the PS2 one supports forming and playing leagues online.

The game also incorporates a new Confidence meter that tracks every player, starting anew each game. Feats like homers boost confidence and consequently performance, while failures like striking out have the opposite effect, though you can attempt to pump up a pitcher with a mound visit. Other nice touches include 17 pitch types and good simulation options. All good stuff.

One of the big new features is first-person baseball, but it mostly comes off as gimmicky. It's almost too first-person to really be playable, and most gamers will briefly check out batting or fielding from the first-person perspective, then return to the regular action. All-Star Baseball 2005's FielderCam perspective is a much more effective and enjoyable take on the concept.

## Mound Struggles

Things start to fade a bit when your attention turns to the graphics and controls. The main problem with the visuals is the twitchy, unnatural animation—players generally don't look right when they're moving. Their body shapes are also lumpy and oddly proportioned. The Xbox version looks substantially better than the PS2 one, but both games would benefit from better lighting and richer textures.

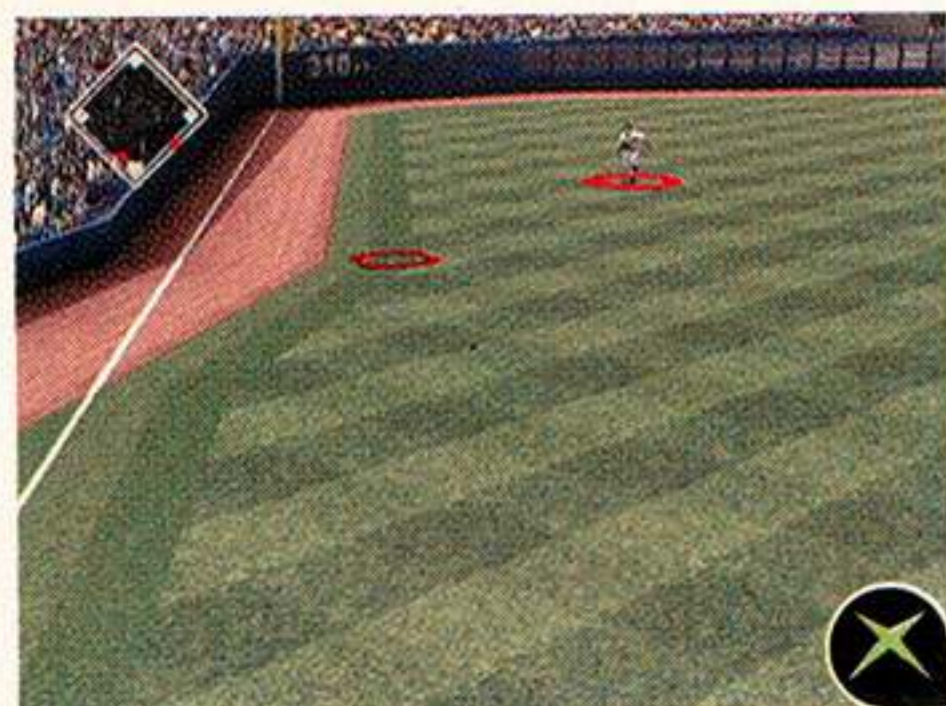
Fortunately, the audio is pretty strong. The voice of the legendary Jon Miller brings an undeniably cool sense of authenticity to the proceedings, while Rex Hudler ably provides the color.

The controls offer goods options. You can stick to World Series' old-school cursors, or check out the new batting that involves aiming your swing with the analog stick—both work great. The new pitching model is cool in concept but finicky in execution. You aim a cursor, then fill up an Effort meter as you pitch to determine how hard you hurl the ball. Continually maxing out the Effort tires pitchers more quickly, which makes sense, but the twitchy cursor is really tough to aim, requiring careful, overly precise moves. Fielding handles fine, and the turbo option is a nice touch, but you can't control your slides on the base paths.

## Warm Up the Relief

The ESPN presence pervades the game in a good way, giving it that broadcast feel, and the game is full of nice true-to-baseball touches like outfielders tossing balls into the stands as they head to the dugout. The gameplay is certainly realistic, but overall, the physics of how the ball moves feel a bit too floaty at times. In the final analysis, ESPN MLB trails after MVP Baseball and MLB 2005, making it a good choice only for those who aren't satisfied with those league-leaders.—*Air Hendrix*

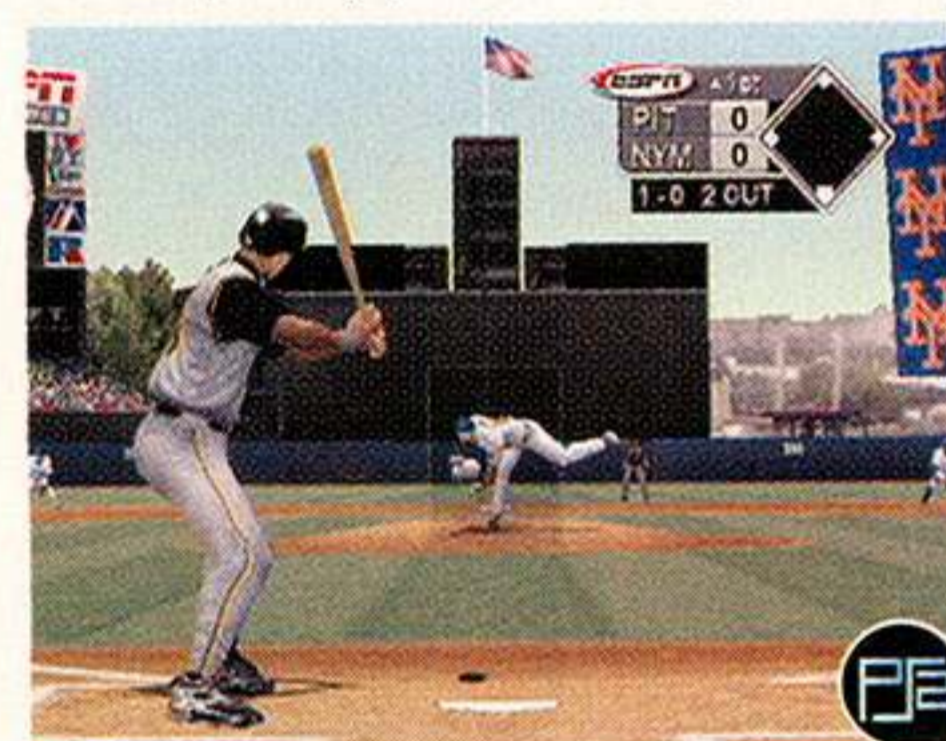
**PE** ■ Developed by Blue Shift/Visual Concepts  
 ■ Published by ESPN Videogames ■ \$39.99  
 ■ Available now ■ Baseball ■ 2 players



**PROTIP:** If you use turbo when fielding, be sure to make the play—if the ball gets past you, your player will be out of gas and you're looking at a triple or worse.

provide a range of intensity to match your level of interest, ranging from the straight-up Season mode to a Franchise mode that puts you behind the reins of the budget, coach and staff contracts, your minor-league team, and more. And the unique GM Career mode takes it one step further, putting you in the shoes of a GM who must also live up to his owner's demands—failure gets you fired, while success builds up the bankroll you're saving to buy your own team someday. Both the PS2 and Xbox versions support online play, though only the PS2 one supports forming and playing leagues online.

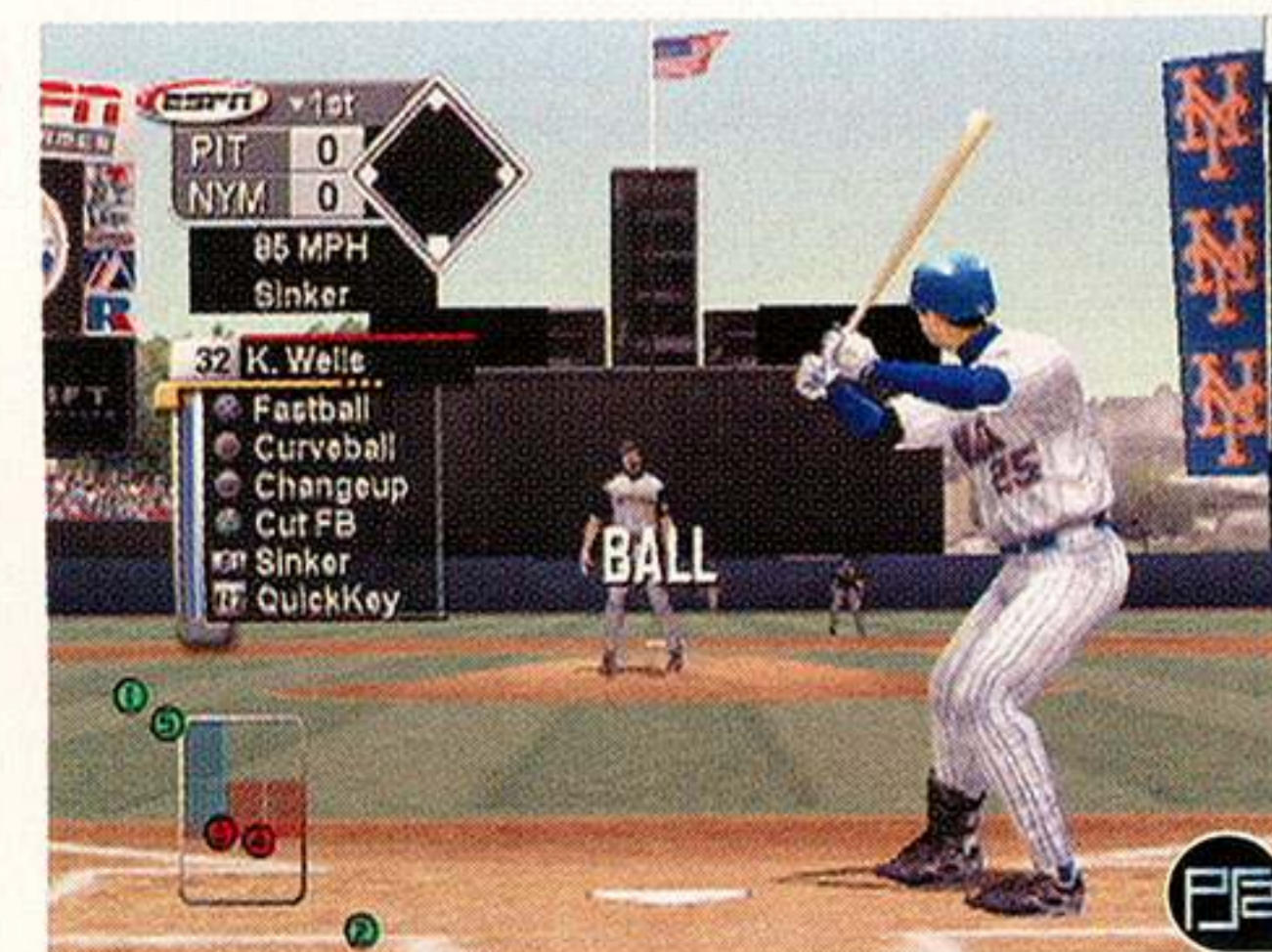
The game also incorporates a new Confidence meter that tracks every player, starting anew each game. Feats like homers boost confidence and consequently performance, while failures like striking out have the opposite effect, though you can attempt to pump up a pitcher with a mound visit. Other nice touches include 17 pitch types and good simulation options. All good stuff.



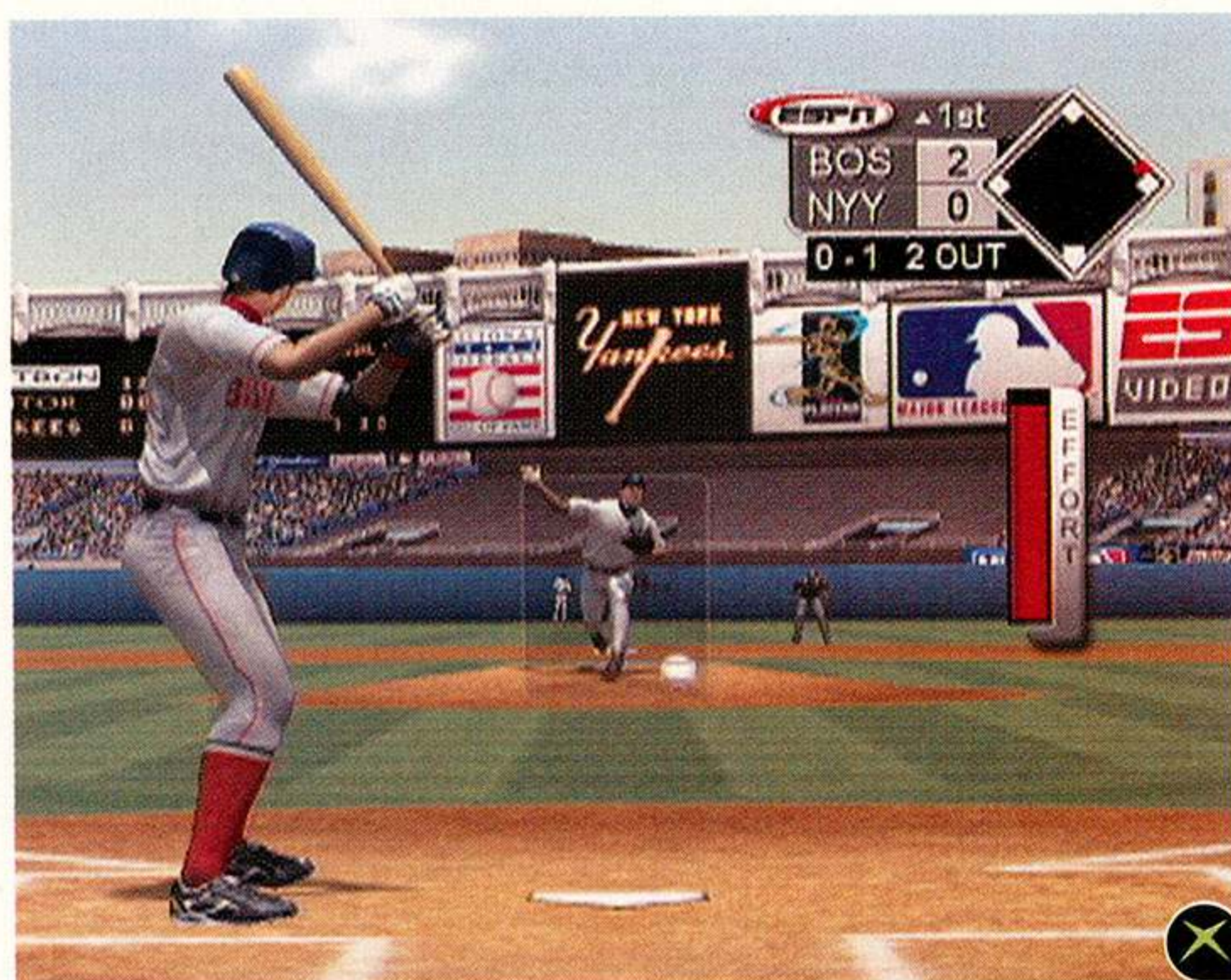
**PROTIP:** Whenever you're ahead in the count or think you know what kind of pitch is coming, switch over your thumb to the power-swing button and go for the fences.



**PROTIP:** Be really careful about leading off—the CPU is downright vicious about pick-off throws, and your runner usually freezes unless you send him back to the bag.



**PROTIP:** If the pitch cursor is causing the controller to vibrate at the edge of the strike zone even slightly, you'll almost always be throwing a ball.



**PROTIP:** Sliders that break down and away from the batter can be killer pitches if you use them sparingly and at key moments.



**PROTIP:** If you're striking out a lot, start taking pitches. Study the pitch types you can expect and wait for something you can hit, even if it means getting behind in the count to 0-2.

<b>PE</b>	GRAPHICS	3.5	FUN FACTOR <b>4.0</b> <sub>5</sub>
	SOUND	4.5	
	CONTROL	4.0	
<b>X</b>	GRAPHICS	4.0	FUN FACTOR <b>4.0</b> <sub>5</sub>
	SOUND	4.5	
	CONTROL	4.0	

# All-Star Baseball 2005

**ASB always shows up to play, and this year, it's looking good whether your view's at the plate or out in the field.**

**X** The battle of the baseball games is heating up with High Heat Major League Baseball taking a hiatus and all contenders making significant improvements in the off-season. All-Star Baseball has built an enthusiastic following over the years, and the 2005 edition shows enough new stuff to keep it in the running.

## Making Plays

ASB has made some nice improvements on the field. At the plate, you can tune the game to fit your batting preferences with some able options. If you're a fan of cursor batting, you get 2D and 3D batting mode. With 3D, you can angle the cursor to control your stroke, and a power mode enables you to swing for the fences. Timing and Zone modes are there for batting purists, and hitting by toggling the analog stick is a nifty extra, too.

Between the lines, ASB really makes an all-star play. The fantastic FielderCam option shifts the gameplay view behind the fielders when a ball's been hit. This provides a much more realistic ballplayer's view of the action than other games. From the outfield, for example, you have to pick up a fly ball off the bat just like you would in real life. The camera's tight and on the money. A new future-throw feature enables you to preselect where you want to throw a ball as you're fielding it.



**PROTIP:** Use the future-throw feature on defense by deciding ahead of time what you're going to do with a hit ball. Then, as you move your player toward the ball, hit a throw button to complete a smooth play.



**PROTIP:** Make a diving catch by running toward the marker that indicates the ball's landing spot and then hitting R1.

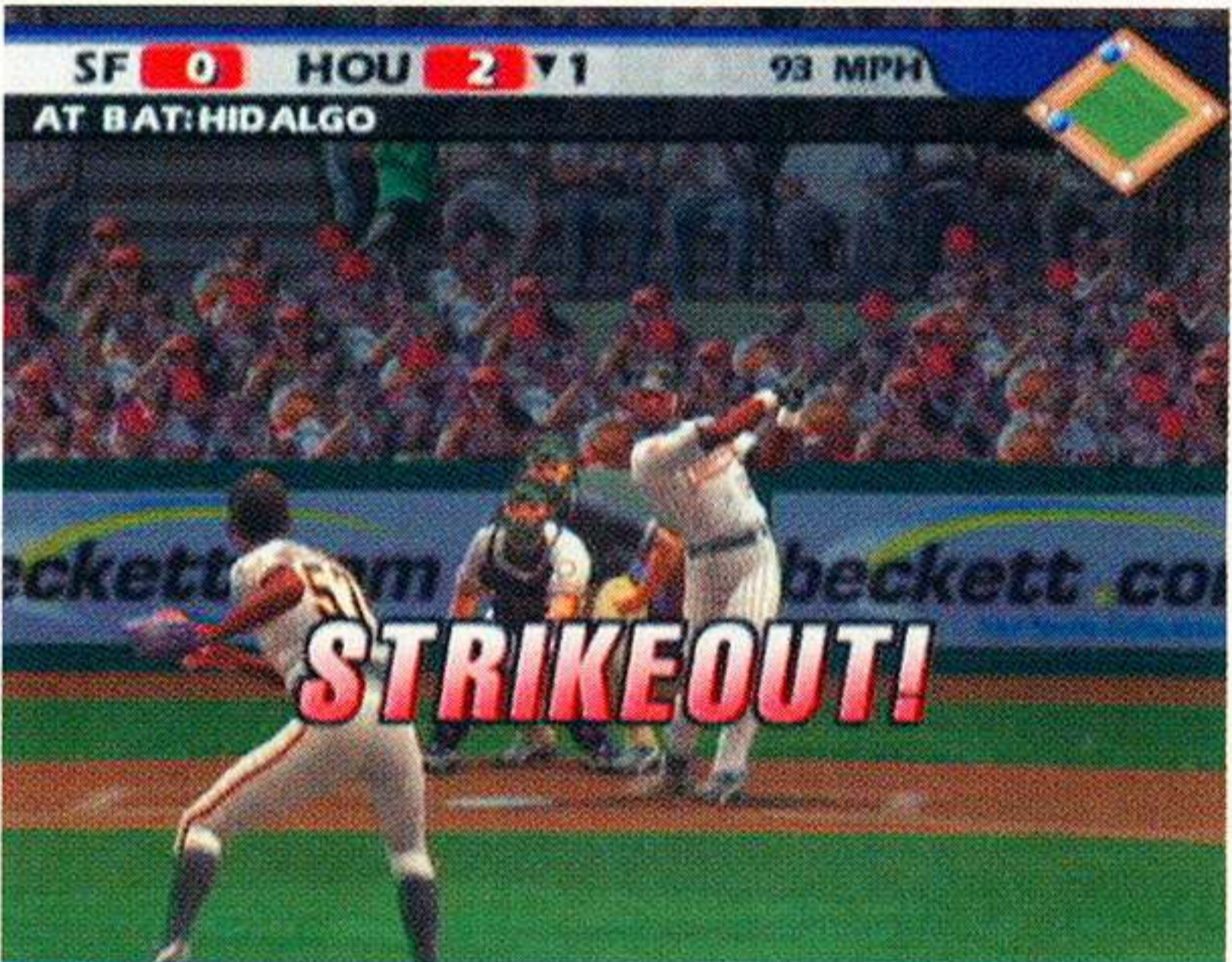


**PROTIP:** As you try to develop good location for your pitches, use the catcher as a literal target by placing the pitching cursor on various parts of his gear. He never changes his stance.

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**PROTIP:** When you're up at the plate, be sure to study the pitcher's pitch-selection meter. You might be able to anticipate how he's going to pitch to you.



**PROTIP:** Work the outside corner, especially if your pitcher has a good fastball or slider.

## Baseball Made Better

The graphics show is pretty standard stuff at this point. The player models are solid, but they'd benefit from more detailing and smoother skin textures. A few odd visual glitches pop up, too, like base runners intersecting catchers and fielders whenever there are plays at the plate or on base. Moreover, a home run into the bleachers revealed a side view of the fans that made them look like cardboard cutouts.

The sounds also enjoy good upgrades. The ambient crowd noise in stadiums remains topnotch, and this year, the announcing team of Steve Lyons and Tom Brenneman makes calls that are spot on with the actual onfield action. Plus, Lyons takes some great shots at you if you go too long without pressing any buttons.

## A Field of Dreams

All-Star Baseball has made good off-the-field additions, too. Franchise mode spans 20 seasons, and you can choose to

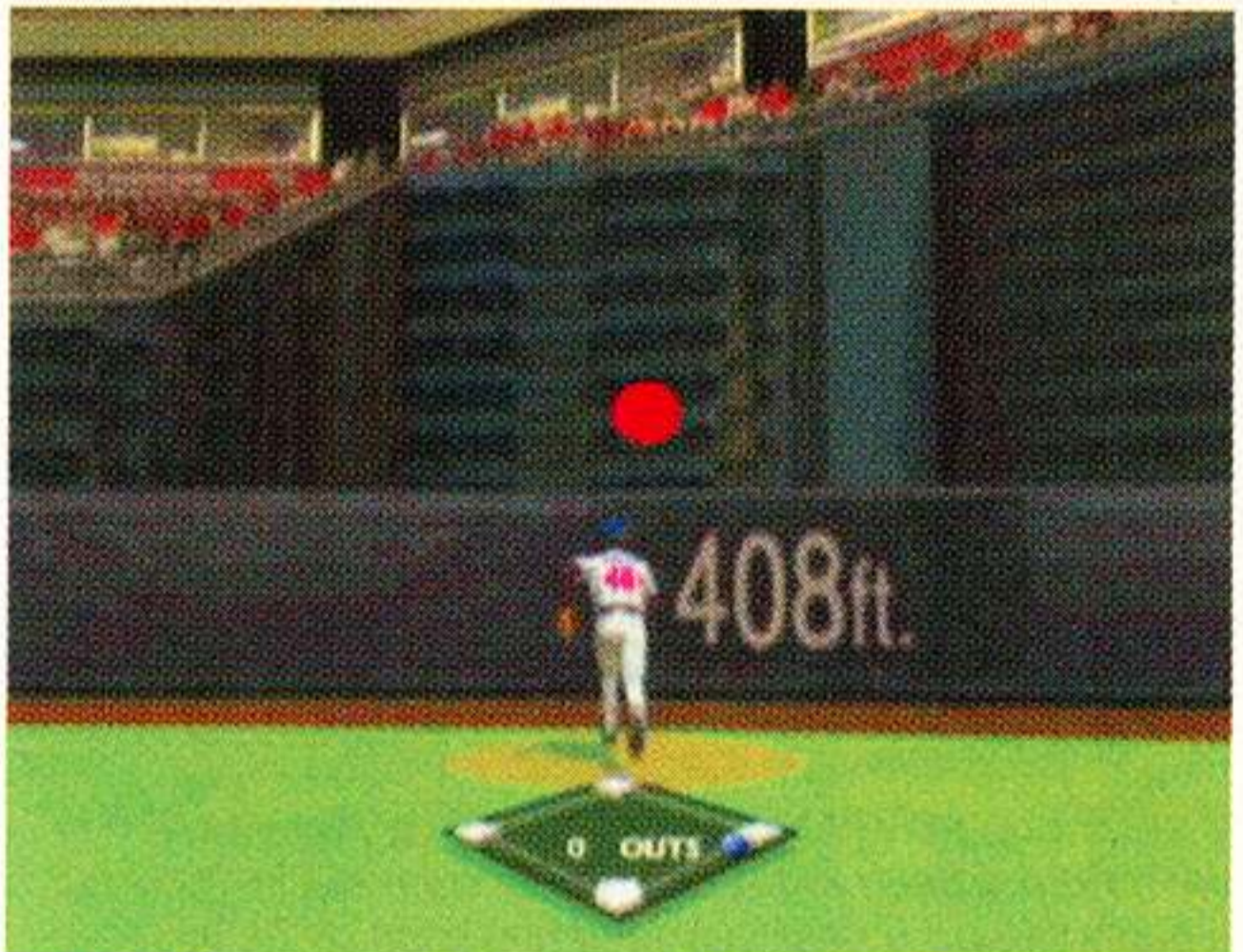
start each one from spring training where you can earn points towards player development. The game's franchise interface is straightforward and easy to manage whether you're managing your roster, making trades, hiring coaches, or trying to lock up players with long-term contracts.

Additionally, the This Week in Baseball Challenge feature is very cool. It's sort of a "do-over" mode where you take your shot at making controversial plays, standing in on critical at-bats or pitching key innings that turned the 2003 season for selected major league teams (hello, Red Sox and Cubs fans).

All-Star Baseball 2005 will feed the faithful. It's a solid game without a lot of drama, but the slick new gameplay view might even draw a few new fans. This team knows how to play the game.—*Brother Buzz*

Also on the PlayStation 2

**E** ■ Developed and published by Acclaim  
■ \$39.99 ■ Available now ■ Baseball ■ 4 players



**PROTIP:** It's rare, but it's possible to rob a hitter of a home run. If you see the red hit ball indicator on the wall, run toward it and press R1 at the warning track to dive.

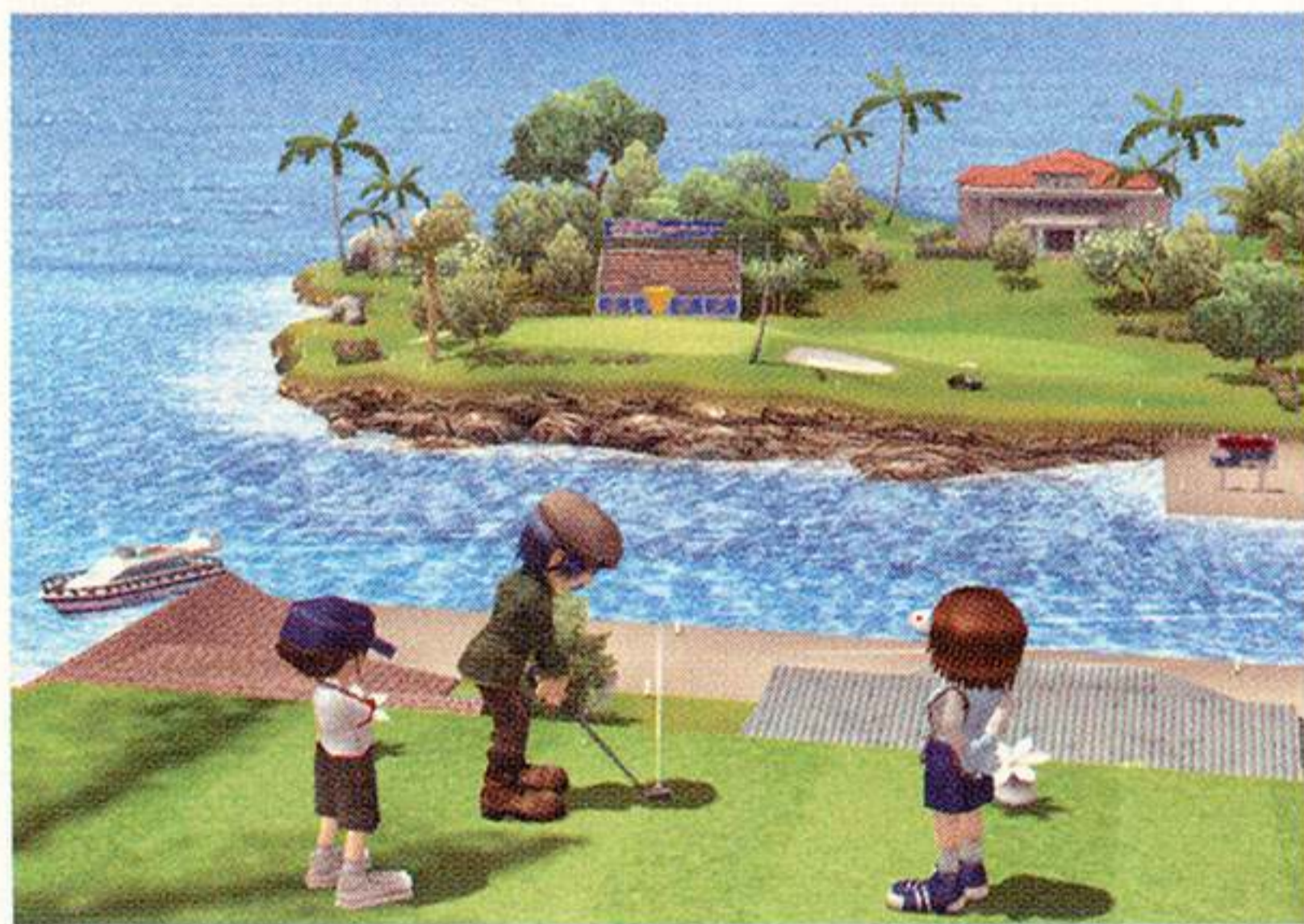
X	GRAPHICS	4.0	FUN FACTOR	4.0
	SOUND	4.5		
	CONTROL	4.0		

# Hot Shots Golf Fore!

**FE** If any sport takes itself a little too seriously, it's golf. Sony's Hot Shots Golf, however, has been on mission to bring a little lightheartedness to the course since 1997. In early form, it's already apparent that this fourth installment is adding just enough to the formula to keep things fresh.

## Hot Pro Shots

Already available in Japan, Hot Shots Golf Fore looks like it will continue to bring the whack along with the wacky. Developer Clap Hanz (in Japan) is comprised of members of Sony's original Hot Shots Golf team. The game will retain the true-to-form golf physics engine that has made the series famous. This time, however,



the gameplay controls will switch from a standard three-button-press system to an even easier two-button-press technique. HSGF will also retain the series' intricate stat-tracking system, which enables you to monitor the intricacies of your games right down to the course and hole.

And Fore will feature more courses, too—15—including five slick favorites from the previous games. In addition to regular 18-hole layouts, there will be an executive's Par-3 course and two mini-golf courses.

## Golfers Gone Wild

Thirty-four strange golfers and caddies will be on call in Fore. In the preview version, at least three returning Hot Shots favorites were due to tee up. Also, at press time, Sony was busy trying to create at least five new golfers to replace characters in the Japanese version that were deemed...well, a little *too* Japanese.

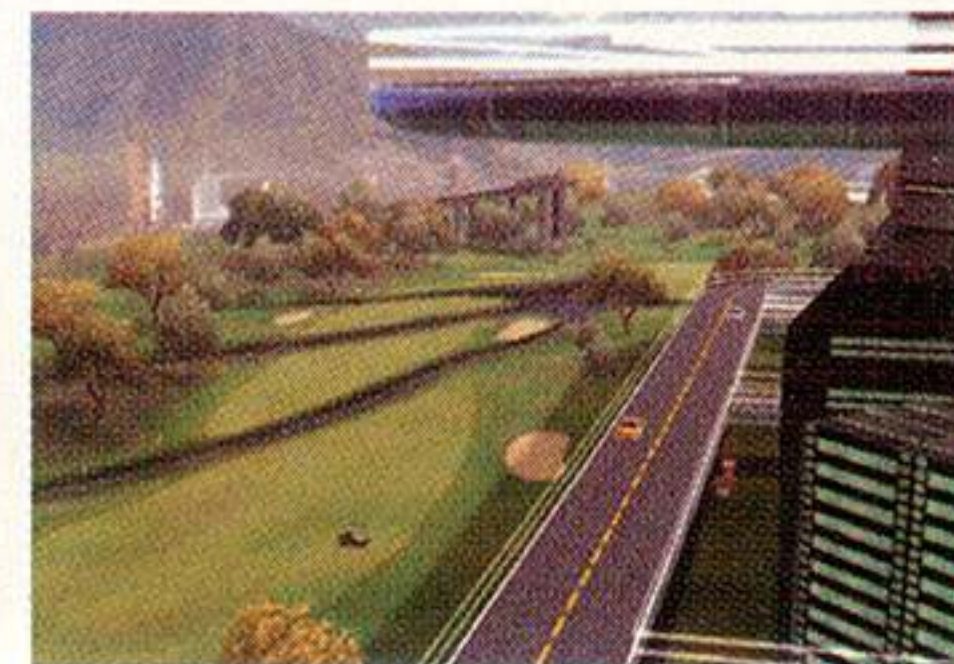
Oddly, however, Hot Shots Golf Fore may feature two-player match play rather than the familiar four-player contests in order to speed up your real-people playing. Online, however, you'll be able to find a partner for a head-to-head matchup or enter potentially huge, real-time tournaments. Tournament mode will be based on a leader board model from real-life golf, where you'll play your round and then see how you rank on the board against all the other competitors in the tourney.

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## The Fore-gone Conclusion

Underneath the way-out costumes, goofy personalities, and cartoony (but gorgeous) look, this game has always played an above-average round of golf. Besides, Sony says 7.5 million Hot Shots fans can't be wrong, and if Hot Shots Golf Fore manages to play just par with the rest of the series, it may be right.—*Brother Buzz*

■ First Look ■ Developed by Clap Hanz ■ Published by Sony ■ Target release date: Summer 2004



# Mega Man X Command Mission

There have been like 700 Mega Man games throughout the course of Capcom history, and those Mega Man Battle Network games replicate like little role-playing viruses on the Game Boy Advance. It was only a matter of time before a full-blown Mega Man RPG appeared on the console scene.

In Mega Man X Command Mission, the latest tale in X's saga, Mega Man and his mechanical cohorts take on the Liberion Army in an attempt to quell a rebellion on Giga City Island. The game's look is that of a more carefully polished Mega Man X7—cel-shaded and in 3D—even if the gameplay is worlds apart.

Throughout the course of his mission, Mega Man will gather six other allies—Axl, Zero, ninja-like Marino, healer Cinnamon, tank Masimo, and “card battler” Spider—and build them up using “force metals” to upgrade weapons and attacks. The battle system takes a note from Capcom's own highly original Breath of Fire: Dragon Quarter as you construct a team of three characters and engage in the “Cross Order System,” a highly tactical turn-based combat scheme that lets you steal enemies' energy and use it to power a “final strike” finishing combo.—*Star Dingo*



- First Look
- Developed and published by Capcom
- Target release date: Summer 2004

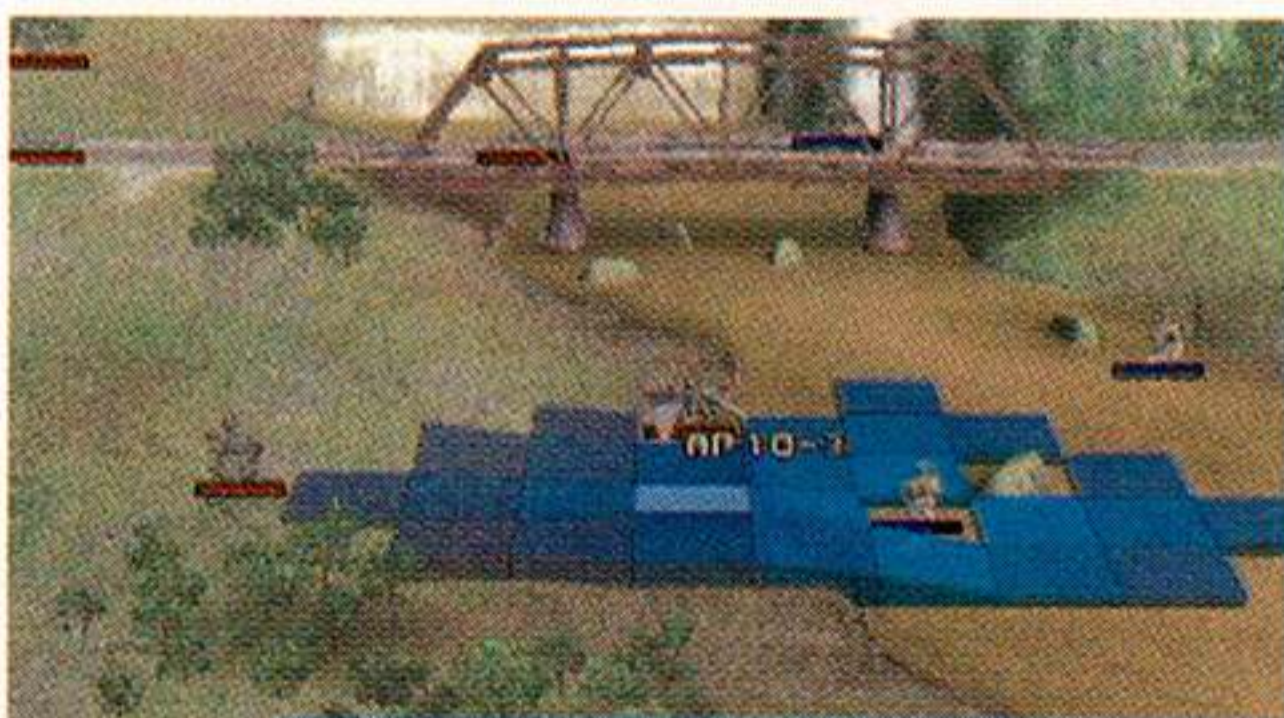
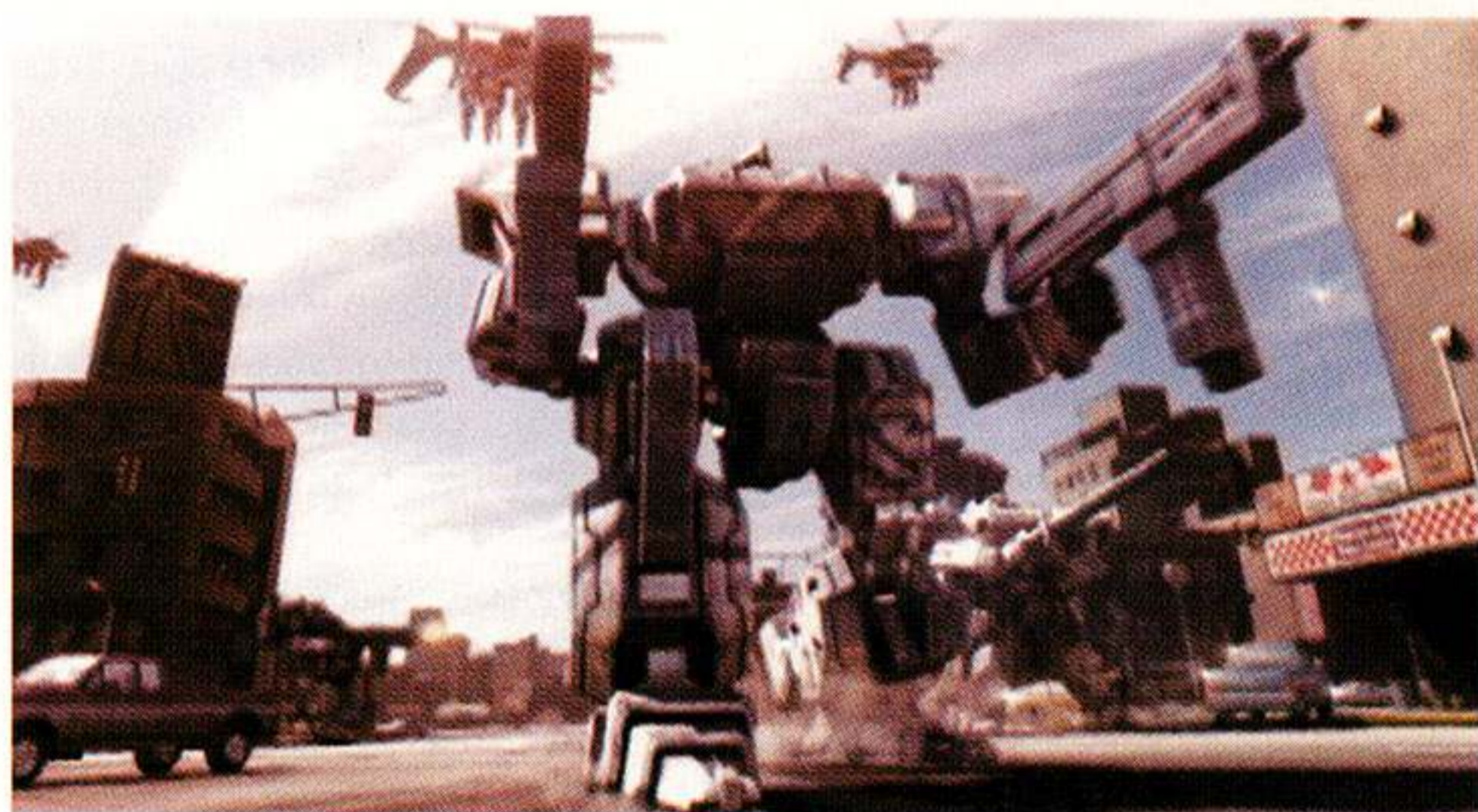


## Front Mission 4

Having taken a few years off since the last installment, Square returns to its other turn-based strategy series with Front Mission 4. Though on the surface FM4 may seem like a futuristic reimagining of Final Fantasy Tactics, the similarities end with the gameplay. Some hands-on time with a retail copy of the Japanese version (the U.S. version will be identical except for language) shows that the latest chapter in the Front Mission series is shaping up to be the best of the bunch.



The gameplay remains much the same since Front Mission 3 with players selecting their units (called “Wanzers”) based on their individual strengths and weaknesses, and deploying them onto a grid-map playing board. The player and the computer-controlled enemies take turns commanding their Wanzer troops until the level objective is completed or one of the armies is annihilated—rather like chess but with badass robots and lots of guns. Each unit gains experience as it fights, and you can use the experience points gained during battle to purchase new abilities and upgrades for each Wanzer, lending a snazzy touch of customization as the upgrades also alter your characters' appearance. You can even tailor your units' colors to your liking.

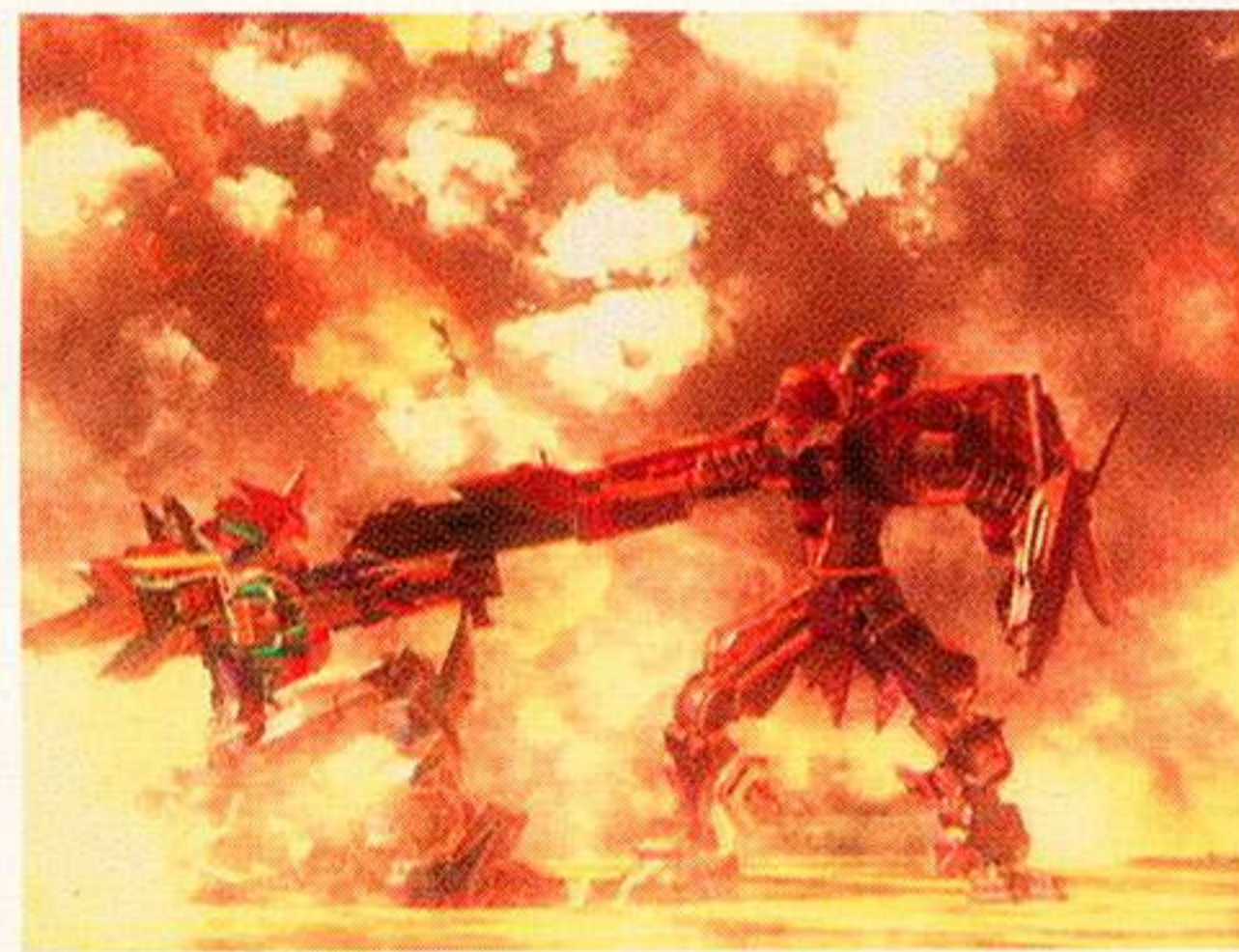


Even if you missed the first three installments in the series, you can still pick up Front Mission 4 and enjoy a solid dose of mech-on-mech violence without skipping a beat.—*Bones*

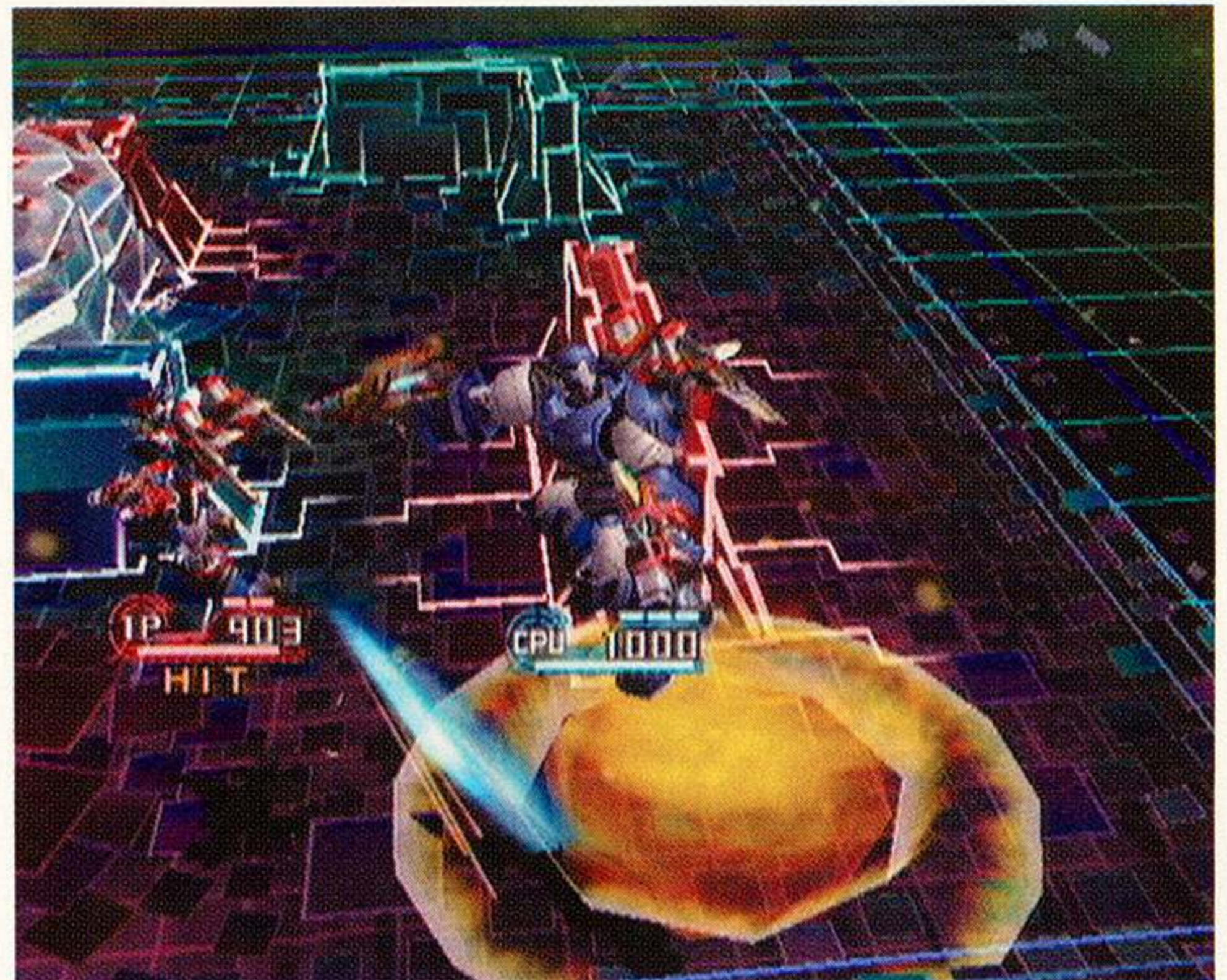
- Hands-On ■ Developed by Square Enix
- Published by Square Enix U.S.A. ■ Target release date: June

# Custom Robo

**C** Having recently spent time with a preview build of Custom Robo, it's safe to say that this game is shaping up to be an atypical action/adventure RPG. Rather than engaging enemies in random encounters on a world map or in a dungeon, fighting takes place in tiny, holographic stages known as "holiseums" where you face off against enemy robots in a virtual environment much like a competitive video game (your actual character does not fight as all combat takes place in the simulated world into which both you and your opponent upload your Custom Robos).



You play as a young wannabe bounty hunter with loads of heart and moxie but zero experience in the world of Custom Robo fighting. After joining up with a ragtag bunch of amiable mercenaries called the Steel Hearts, you and your pals embark on a series of bounty missions against Robo thieves and thugs while accidentally uncovering a deadly mystery that has the police baffled and in dire need of your assistance.



Linda  
Don't worry, BoneS.  
I'll talk to the chief.

Custom Robos come in all shapes and sizes, each with their own specific upgradeable attributes. As the game's title suggests, customization plays a big part in the success of your fighting machine. Though you don't level up in the usual fashion by collecting experience points, you will gain valuable Robo parts as prizes for victories in the holiseums that you can later redeem at parts generator—machines located throughout the city.



Assembling the perfect Custom Robo for each battle will be necessary for success as each enemy has specific vulnerabilities that you must exploit by selecting the best suited equipment for each round of fighting. At present, Custom



Robo features an arcade mode, a head-to-head versus option, and a story mode (which provides the meat of the gameplay).—Bones

- Hands-On
- Developed by NOISE
- Published by Nintendo
- Target release date: May

# Star Ocean: Till the End of Time

**R** Hailing from the "Enix" half of the Square Enix role-playing empire, Star Ocean: Till the End of Time is a galaxy-spanning sci-fi RPG—the third installment in a continuous series that began life on the SNES and grew into a sequel on the PlayStation.

While this third chapter was originally slated for U.S. release last year, the game got delayed until August of this year. The reason? Instead of releasing the original, Square Enix is releasing what in Japan is known as the "director's cut" of the game, a two-DVD monster with more party members (Mirage, Adlai, and the previously villainous Albel) and a brand-new Vs. mode that lets you set up team battles and fight a friend using the game's spiffed-up three-on-three real-time battle system—a potentially great feature that we wish more RPGs would throw into the mix.—Star Dingo

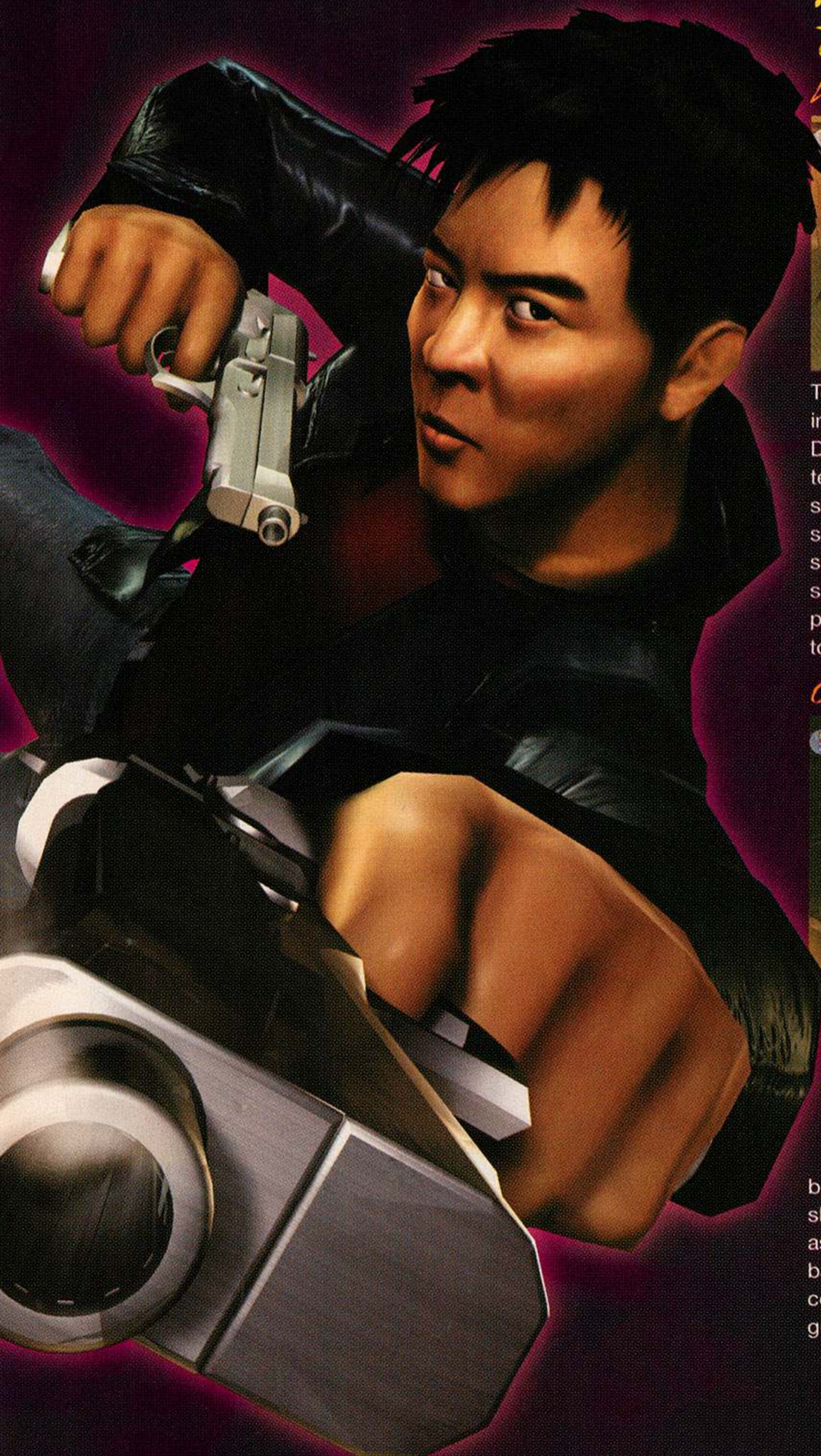


Update ■ Developed by Tri-Ace  
Published by Square Enix U.S.A. ■ Target release date: August



# JET LI RISE TO HONOR

There's a lot more to Rise to Honor than just pushing a joystick around...and if you don't want to be pushed around by assorted gangsters and thugs, here's how to rule with Jet Li in this out-of-the-ordinary action title. *By Atomic Dawg*



## Hand-to-Hand Techniques

### Avoid the Numb Thumb



To master this game, practice moving the right analog stick minimally. During the heat of battle, there's a tendency to slam the right analog stick toward an attacker, but this serves no useful purpose and it slows you down in multiple attack situations. Sometimes it helps to push from the side rather than the top of the analog stick.

### Combos



Carefully timed hits on an attacker (slap the right analog stick multiple times) will produce a combo. Regular attacks can be chained together into combos that are five moves deep. To perform chained combos, you may have to advance slightly toward your opponents as your blows often knock them backward. Create multidirectional combos by hitting several bad guys close to you continuously.

## Adrenaline Feels Good



Building up power in the red Adrenaline Meter enables you to unleash a powerful Adrenaline Attack by pressing and holding L1 (as long as the meter is at least one-quarter full). Adrenaline builds whenever you score on an offensive move or get hit; it drops when you perform a Counter or Adrenaline Attack.

## Adrenaline Combos



When the red Adrenaline Meter is full, you can ignite an Adrenaline Combo. Press and hold L1, and start punching with the right analog stick. You can chain up to eight Adrenaline Attacks together. Regular attacks can be chained together with Adrenaline Attacks to create huge (double-digit) combo strings.

## Flare Attacks



If you have Adrenaline in the meter, you can perform a 360-degree Flare Attack by quickly rotating the right analog stick. If your meter's flashing, press and hold L1, and then rotate the right analog stick for an Adrenaline Spin Attack. Use this cool-looking low move when you're surrounded; however, be sure to hit all your targets because one punch extinguishes the Flare.



## Block That Kick



Mastering blocks and counterattacks are the key to winning most gang fights. Press and hold R1 to block. Blocking enables you to fend off almost any assault, and from that position, you can release R1 and launch your own attacks. The blue Block Meter wears down as enemies beat you, but it replenishes quickly. Beware: Some guys can break through your block.

## Blocks and Counters



Simultaneously pressing and holding R1 and L1 also blocks any attack. If your Adrenaline Meter is at least one-quarter full, you can execute a Counter Attack by slapping the right analog stick toward an attacking opponent from this position. Sometimes you can beat a guy just by countering his moves; when you counter in a crowd, you're trying to create space between you and oncoming goons, so you can follow up with offensive moves of your own.

## Block and Grab



Press and hold R1 to block an attack. When a victim gets close enough to you, continue to hold R1 and then press the right analog stick toward him to grab him. Now as long as you hold R1, you can drag him around or use him like a human shield—as long as you have power in the Block Meter.

## Grab Combos



Once you grab someone, you can quickly press the right analog stick two or three times to execute a Grab Combo. Press the left analog stick toward your attackers, and when you perform the combo, you'll toss your victim into his pals to score damage.

## Grab Extras



Experiment with the grab. The beauty of Rise to Honor is that the locations throughout the levels enable different types of moves off the grab—like slamming an opponent face-first into a wall or dragging him across a bar. Grab your victim, then drag him around. If an Action Bar appears, press the right analog stick and watch what happens to your attacker.

## Two Hands Are Better



Wrenches, pipes, sticks, roast chickens...all of these are weapons for Jet Li. When you're in an area where you can pick up things, pick up two! Jet unleashes some cool two-handed weapon techniques. Use a counter to break down your opponent's defense and then rush in to strike quickly. The move's deadly.

## Throw Stuff



Throw things when you can—the Action Bar identifies throwable objects. Press and hold R1 to grab them, and then release R1 to throw. This is a good way to wear down gangs. If you're in a situation where there's only one opponent and you find something to throw, you probably need to throw it!

## Jump Up the Walls



Jet can jump back and forth upward between two flat surfaces to reach upper areas. Move into a likely looking spot to see if it displays the Action Bar. Press R1 to jump up and then quickly press R1 again for each successive jump up between the surfaces.

## Run Up the Walls



You can run up the sides of some walls that display the Jump prompt. This is a slick combat move when you're being chased. Let your opponents get close to you, then run toward the wall and press R1 to jump when the Action Bar prompts you. You can hit two goons at once this way.

## Attack Off the Wall



If the Action Bar prompts you to jump during a fight and you're near the corner of a room, make a spin kick off the wall to score a hit.



WINNING

## Multiple Opponent Attacks

### Hit the First Man



Basically, when you're surrounded, try to hit the first creep who moves into range and get as many hits on him as you can. When the next guy makes his move to charge in, immediately swing the right analog stick at him. The action is fast, so have your thumb at the ready; if you're timing's right, you can crack some mean combos by continuously hitting people.

### Survival of the Fittest



Keep an eye on your opponents' life bars. Concentrate your blows on the weakest man, and take him out first to create some breathing room for yourself.

## Make Some Space



If the circle of attackers is too confining, simultaneously press and hold R1 and L1 to operate from the Counter Attack position. Your counters create space for you to move and fight. From here, it's also easy to launch a Grab Combo. Just release L1 and push the right analog stick toward the opponent you want to grab, then toss him into his fellows goons with a well-aimed Grab Combo.

## Run Away



Sometimes, you need to establish a better position versus a group of attack. Run out of trouble and force the gangsters to try to contain you. Move up against a wall to protect your back.

## Collaborative Attacks



When Michelle shows up in Chapter 32, you two always draw a crowd. Team up for the Collaborative Attack by pressing R1 to grab Michelle. When you're surrounded, always aim Michelle at the closest attacker and be prepared for an attack from the opposite direction. If multiple foes approach you from the same direction, aim Michelle at them, and you can score a hit on all of them at once. You get five attacks before you have to grab Michelle again.

## Michelle Moves



When you're in a fight with Michelle, you must always use the Collaborative Attack. These encounters are tuned for teamwork, and you never emerge from the fight victorious without it. The key is to learn to quickly grab Michelle. However, you often have to beat back a bunch of guys in order to have time to hook up with her, and you must be sure to keep an eye on her health meter. If she gets beat, so do you.

## Two-Fisted Cunning

### Unlimited Ammo



Jet always uses two guns with unlimited ammo. Point the right analog stick at your target, look for the target-lock indicator, and then press R2 to fire. Press and hold R2 to lay down a continuous stream of fire, even with handguns.

## Targeting



There are two techniques for aiming guns—sweep targeting and slap targeting. To sweep target, push the right analog stick forward and use a side-to-side sweeping motion to target enemies. Slap targeting is accomplished by slapping the right analog stick in the direction of a desired enemy.

## Slap Targeting



Using the slap-targeting technique, you can lock on to two enemies at the same time; with one enemy already targeted, slap the right analog stick toward a second enemy.

## Advance and Fire



In most shooting areas, enemies appear and/or fire when Jet reaches a certain proximity to them. Learn to push the right and left analog sticks forward simultaneously to advance and aim; press R2 to blast anyone that appears.

## The Run and Shoot



To get a better firing angle, you may have to shoot on the run. Press the right analog stick to aim forward and the left analog stick to run left or right. Keep the indicator on the target as you move.

## The Adrenaline Dive



This is your basic bullet-time move. With a full Adrenaline Meter flashing, press and hold L1, and then press the left analog stick in the



direction you want to dive. While in flight, guns can be aimed in any direction by sweep targeting with the right analog stick.

**Object Targeting**



In some areas, objects explode or drop from heights when you shoot them. While holding the L2 button, slap the right analog stick in the direction of the object you want to target—a target indicator encircles anything you can shoot. Usually there's a bad guy hiding nearby whom you can disable.

**Long-Distance Shooting**



You can aim at and cap some guys from a distance even if no targeting indicator appears around them. Press and hold R2 to lay down a stream of fire, and use the path of your bullets to guide your aim.

**You've Got Nail!**



Among the unconventional weapons in the game are nail guns. Use them like a machine gun. They, too, have unlimited ammo and very good range.

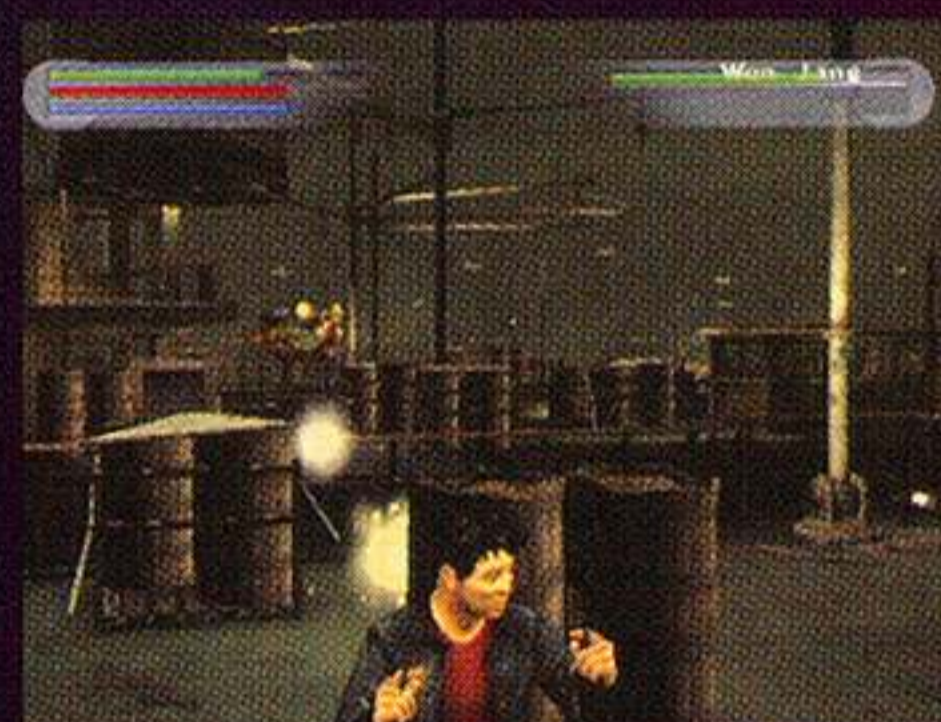


**Close-Ups**



Even if you're armed, waves of goons will charge you with all sorts of weapons. Press and hold R2, and use sweep targeting to mow them down. Some may get so close that you can spit at them.

**Hide Your Assets**



Sometimes, it's better to dodge the bullet rather than risk getting tagged. Locate spots to hide in in the environment and press and hold R1 to remove yourself from the line of fire until you have the opportunity to retaliate.

**Tough Guys**

**Chapter 18: Chung Mo Pao**



Chung Mo Pao fights with the deceptive drunken style of kung fu. He likes to grab and dunk you, but turnabout is fair play. You can open your attack with three straight Grab Combos. After each GC, Chung is vulnerable, so hit him with everything you've got. If you can trap him in a corner, use an Adrenaline Combo.



Then, you need to go into Counter Attack mode. Grab him when you can, but watch out for his lightning-fast (cheap?) grab and dunk move.

**Chapter 33: Sung Lung**



To best Sung Lung, you need to team up with Michelle for a Collaborative Attack (you can't defeat Sung without it). Use the regular grab to connect with her and then slap the right analog stick toward Sung to keep him at bay.



You can make five moves (hits or misses) before Michelle slips from your grasp and you have to connect with her again. Use the collaborative Adrenaline Combo whenever you can. Although Sung sometimes attacks Michelle when you let her go, he's most interested in pounding you.

**Chapter 43: Billy Soon**



Soon takes a cut at you with a single and then double scythes. You need to go into Counter Attack mode to defend yourself because it's almost

impossible to break through his relentless onslaught. Move toward the crates, and when Soon smashes them, you can pick up two fighting sticks.

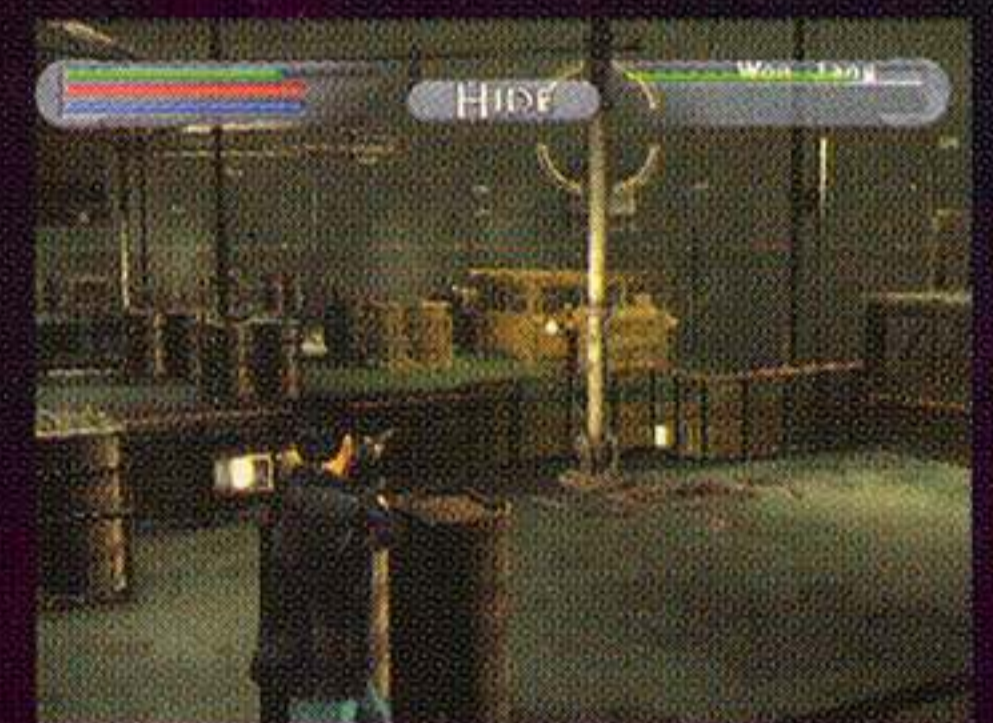


Whether he has one or two scythes, Soon is vulnerable only after he launches a combo at you. You can see that he is leaning forward and off balance. Hit him hard at that instant and then fall back into Counter Attack status to look for you next opportunity.

**Chapter 48: Won Jang**



It's tough to win against Won. During this long-running gun battle, your strategy is to be patient and hide until you get a clear shot at him. Won is invulnerable and uncannily accurate while he's flying through the air in his two-gun attack...but he's most vulnerable just after he lands.



When Won is hiding behind something, use Object Targeting to shoot anything hanging over his head. Watch out, though, because he can do the same to you. You're going to have to chase him across the ships.

## Chapter 50: Buzz



In the hospital you encounter a big, buffed musclehead. Beat him with pressure. You should be able to launch four Grab Combos right off the bat and then immediately use Adrenaline Combos and keep up a vigorous stream of punches.

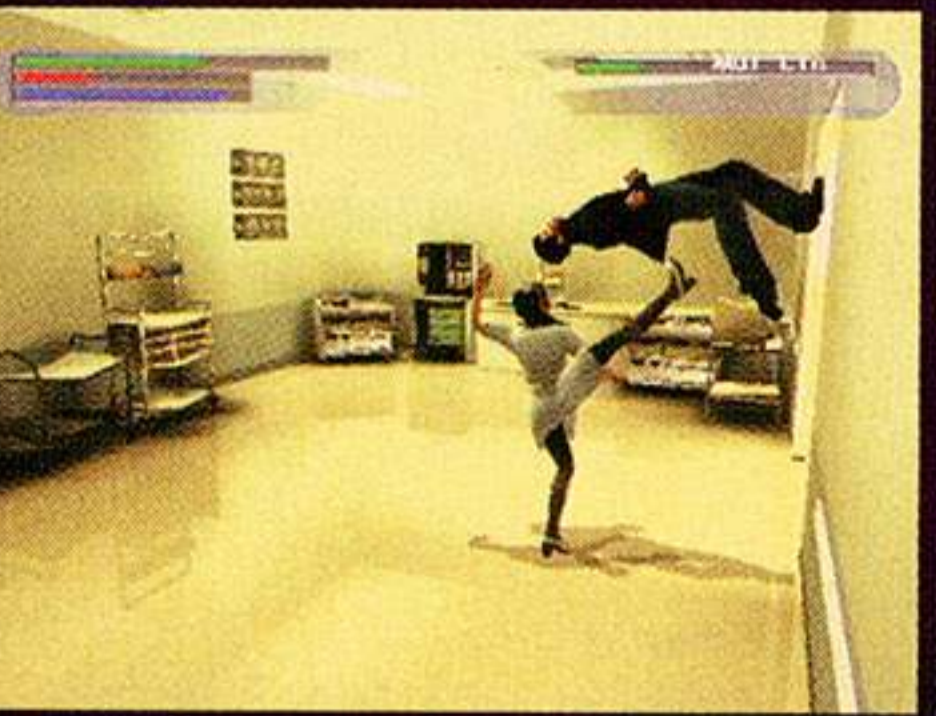


Don't go on the defense and allow Buzz to fight; his headbutt is unblockable, but you can use the Counter Attack to dodge it. If he rushes toward you, don't let him get close enough to grab you. Fight to keep him at bay. His body slam is unstoppable, and it causes major damage to you.

## Chapter 50: Mui Lin



This evil nurse has a vicious bedside manner. Toss every object you can find at her before she tosses them all at you. You can't block a thrown object.



Counter Attack her quick kicks. Each time you stun her, deliver as many Combo Attacks and Adrenaline Combos as you can. Also, watch out for her "off the wall" kicking techniques.

## Tough Chapters

### Chapter 17: Bar Room Brawl



In the first wave, look for pairs of enemies that are performing a coordinated attack on you and use a Counter Attack on them (the resulting move is one of the unique double-baddie Counter Attacks the designers snuck into the game).



No bar-room brawl would be complete without giving at least one thug a ride down the bar. To do this, perform a grab move on an enemy, drag them toward the bar (with Jet's back facing the bar); when the "drag" action icon appears, slap the right analog stick toward the bar.



Chairs are your friends. Not only are the chairs in the bar fun to smash over enemy heads, but the remnants of broken chairs can also be picked up and used as weapons.



Chi and the bartender will try to help you in your cause. When Chi is over by the sink, try to position an enemy near him. His intentions are better than his aim, so be careful.

### Chapter 27: Biker Encounter



In this chapter, an ill-tempered group of motorcyclists attempts to take down Jet. They're assisted by some troops on foot that can really hurt you, too.



You must Counter Attack the oncoming bikers to knock them off their cycles. Then, immediately follow up to subdue them, or they'll hop back on their wheels and make another run at you.



While in hand-to-hand combat, be sure to not lose track of new bikers entering the arena. Rush to attack gangsters who are on foot. If you're fast enough, you can cream them before the cycle dudes go after you.

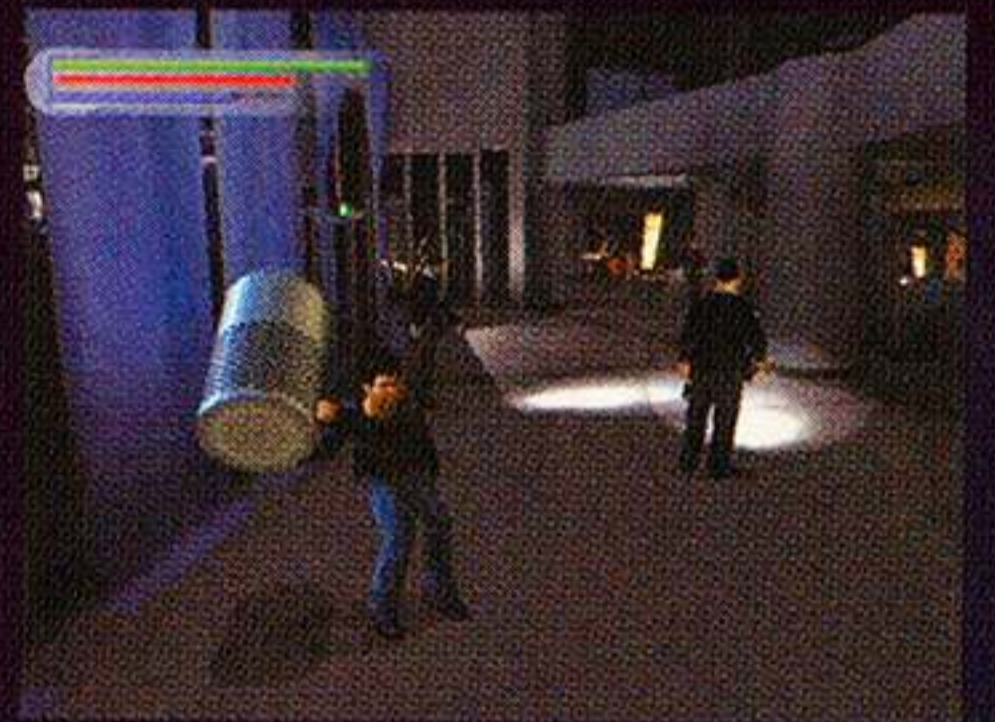
### Chapter 30: Security Breach



Inside San Francisco's Metreon shopping center, use the basic grapple to disable guards from behind. Press and hold R1, press the right stick toward the person you want to grab, and then press the stick again to subdue him. You can make frontal approaches, but stay out of flashlight range.



The toughest stealth grab to make is one where the guard is standing close to a structure. If you sneak up too close to the structure, when you press and hold R1 to prepare to grab, the A.I. will drag you down into hide mode. To make this grab, carefully approach your target directly from the front.



If you see a garbage can near a guard, you probably have to use it. Sometimes, when you're faced with two guards, you must attack one by tossing the can at him in order to sneak up on the other (it doesn't make sense, but it works).



Some sensitive guards will hear you when they have their backs to you if you move from a hiding place too soon. Let them walk a little further away from you before you sneak up on them to go for the grab.

### Chapter 31: Get to Her



Inside the Metreon, you have to run down your gal pal, Michelle. She's fast, but stick close to her and look for a short cut that you can use to get ahead of her. The Jump prompt shows you where.

**Chapter 35: Hell Breaks Loose**



This long chapter requires you to use all of the fighting skills you have acquired to this point, including the Jet/Michelle collaborative fight mode. Remember, to connect with Michelle, you have to grab her. You must quickly repeat this move after about five collaborative hits.



Get ready for the Big Down Jacket attack. Yield a back-crushing blow to the puffy-jacket dudes by countering their attacks (they feel this even through their heavy padding).



In the second section of this chapter, bad guys come at you fast and furious. Use multidirectional Combo Attacks and Counter Attacks to send them flying. When pounding on one victim, keep an eye out for the next guy to make his move and begin attacking in that direction.



Look for the out-of-shape acrobats—these guys can be lethal, but they also run out of gas quickly. Watch for these periods of vulnerability and “seize” the opportunity.



In the third section of this chapter, you encounter a vicious wave of enemies that are wearing boxer shorts. Counter Attack these style-challenged creeps.

**Chapter 41: Chopshop Shootout**



You must literally nail your enemies here. The first challenge is a squad of riflemen. Press and hold R2 to lay down a continuous stream of nails and then use the right analog stick to sweep target the gunners. Infrared beams let you know when you're in danger.



Next, the chopshop crew takes a swing at you. Your nail guns and sweep targeting should keep them at bay, but watch out for the second group of riflemen charging in behind them.



When the blowtorch dudes arrive, it's time for you to get moving. Run backward to the other end of the shop, firing nails at the torchers as you go. Let them get too close, and they hurt you when they explode.



At the other end of the shop, you can use sweep targeting to defend yourself, but watch out for those determined riflemen who can snipe you from afar. Move away from the infrared beams.

**Chapter 47: Out of Sight**



This dockside game of hide-and-seek is more tricky than difficult. You need to move across the upper walkway without being knocked over the side of it by the hidden assailants.



When you reach a suspicious-looking area, be ready to dodge by pressing R1 or simultaneously pressing and holding L1 and R1.



If someone knocks you to the deck below, you'll be in the sights of the sniper. Basically, be patient and hide behind everything you can—he can't zero-in on you unless you stay out in the open too long.

**Honorable Goals**



By now, you should have attained all the skills you need to guide Jet Li on his mission of revenge. Be ready for a few plot twists along the way—one does not earn honor without travail.



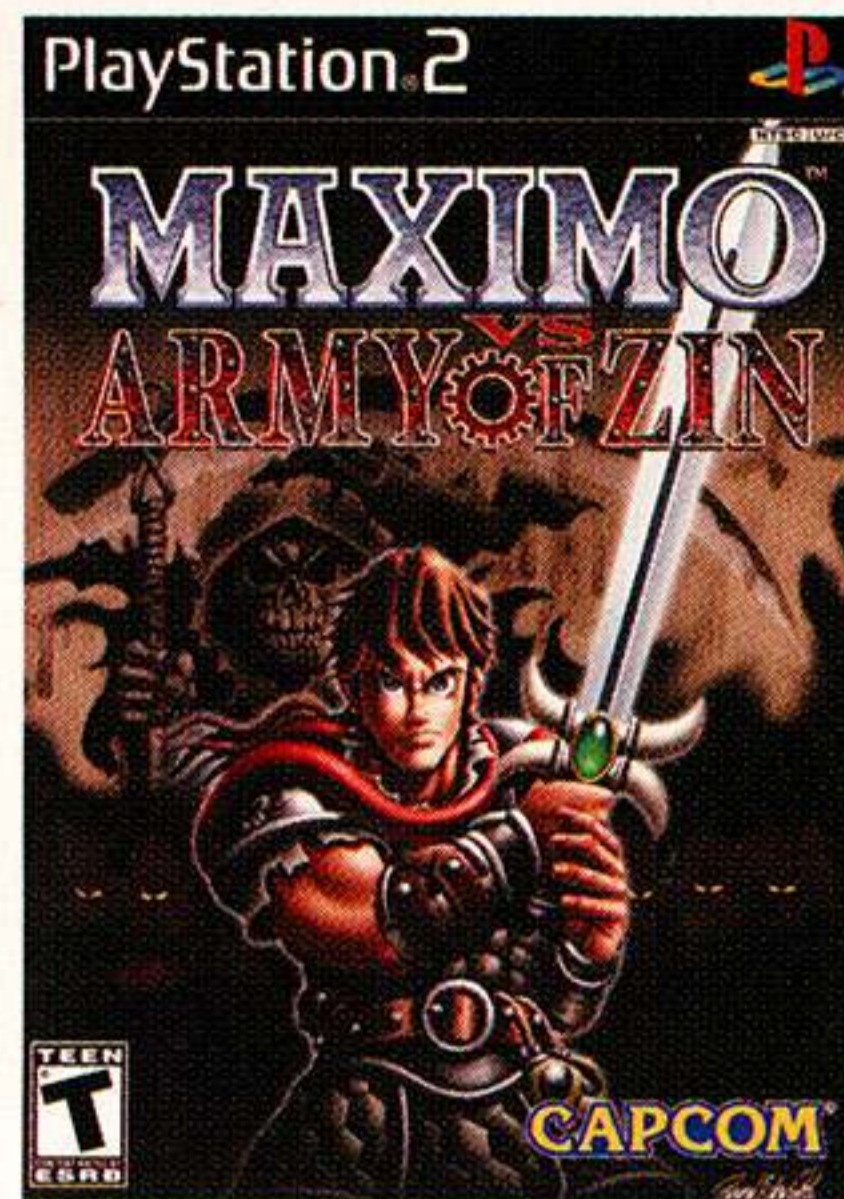
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# WIN!



## READER TIP OF THE MONTH

### SONIC HEROES



Metal Sheen



At the Main Menu, select 2P Play and then choose any mode and any team. At the stage select screen, press **X** and then simultaneously press and hold **X** and **△** until the game begins. If you entered the code correctly, your team members will be covered with metal.

Thany D' Almeida—Sacramento, CA

### CRASH BANDICOOT: THE WRATH OF CORTEX



Unlock All Levels



Start a new game, and at the name entry screen, enter **WOMBAT** as a profile name. If done correctly, the game will begin with 106% completed and all levels unlocked.

### SECRET WEAPONS OVER NORMANDY



All Levels and Planes



At the title screen, press **Y, Y, Y, X, X, X, L, R, Black, Black, White, White**. If you entered the code correctly, you'll hear "secret code accepted." Select Continue, and all levels and planes will be available.

### SWAT: GLOBAL STRIKE TEAM



All Campaign and Cooperative Missions



**All Campaign Missions:** At the Select Mission screen in Campaign mode, press **Up, L, Down, R, Left, L, Right, R, Up**. If you entered the code correctly, all missions will be available.

**All Cooperative Missions:** At the Select Mission screen in any Cooperative mode, press **Up, L, Down, R, Left, L, Right, R, Up**. If you entered the code correctly, all missions will be available.

**SPY HUNTER 2**



All Missions and Weapons, Infinite Ammo, and Invincibility



**All Missions and Weapons:** At the Main Menu, press L1, Black, White, R1, R1, White, Black, L1. If you entered the code correctly, you'll hear a confirming sound and all missions and weapons will be available.

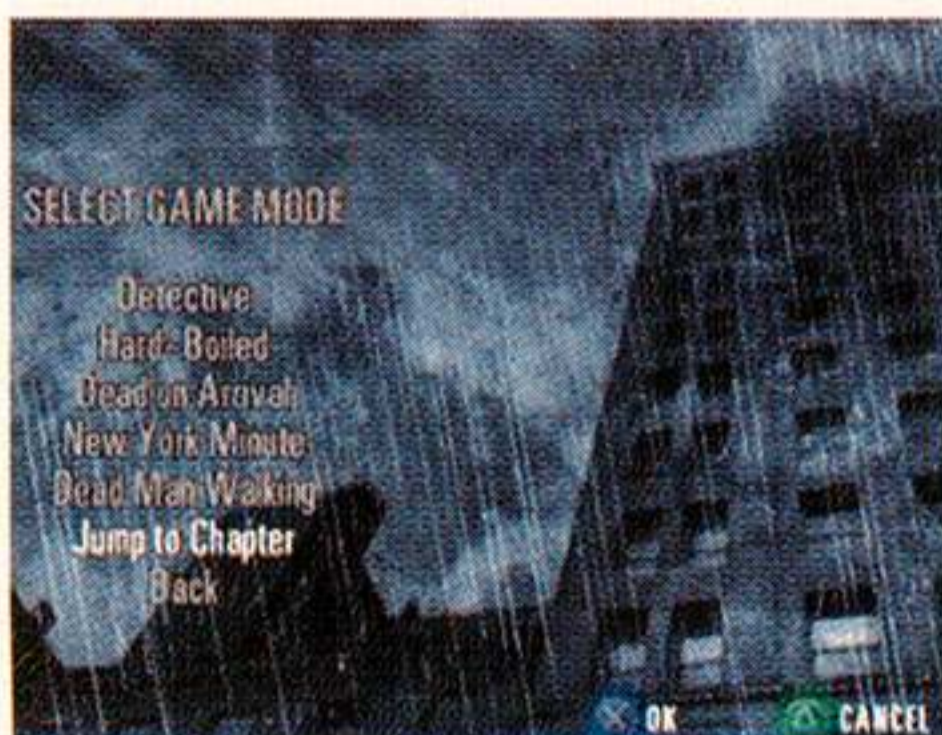
**Infinite Ammo:** Pause the game and then press R1, L1, Black, Black, White, R1, L1, Black, White. If you entered the code correctly, you'll hear a confirming sound and have infinite ammo.

**Invincibility:** Pause the game and then press L1, L1, L1, Black, L1, R1, R1, L1, Black. If you entered the code correctly, you'll hear a confirming sound and be invincible.

**MAX PAYNE 2: THE FALL OF MAX PAYNE**



All Game Modes and Levels



During gameplay, press □, □, ×, Left, Right, Left, Right, □, □, □, ×, Left, Right, Left, Right. Press Select to return to the Main Menu and then select New Game. If you entered the code correctly, all game modes and levels will be unlocked.

**NHL HITZ PRO**



Big Player Heads, Puck Glows, and More



At the Select Team screen, press X to select a Profile Name and then enter the following codes to unlock the corresponding cheats. If you entered the code correctly, a message will appear onscreen. Press B to return to the Main Menu and then select Settings. At the Settings screen, select Tuning and then select Visuals. At the Visuals screen, select Cheats and your unlocked cheat will be available.

Big Player Heads:	HERK
Big Team Heads:	INGY
Different Puck Shadow:	SASG
Different Puck Size:	211S
Puck Glows:	CARB



## NFL STREET

All Eight All-Star Division Teams, All Stadiums, and More



At the Select Controller screen, **press Up** to select Create a User ID and then enter the following codes to unlock the corresponding cheats.

Passwords are case-sensitive.

All Eight All-Star Division Teams:	AW9378
All Stadiums:	Travel
NFL Legends Team:	Classic
X-ecutioner Team:	Excellent

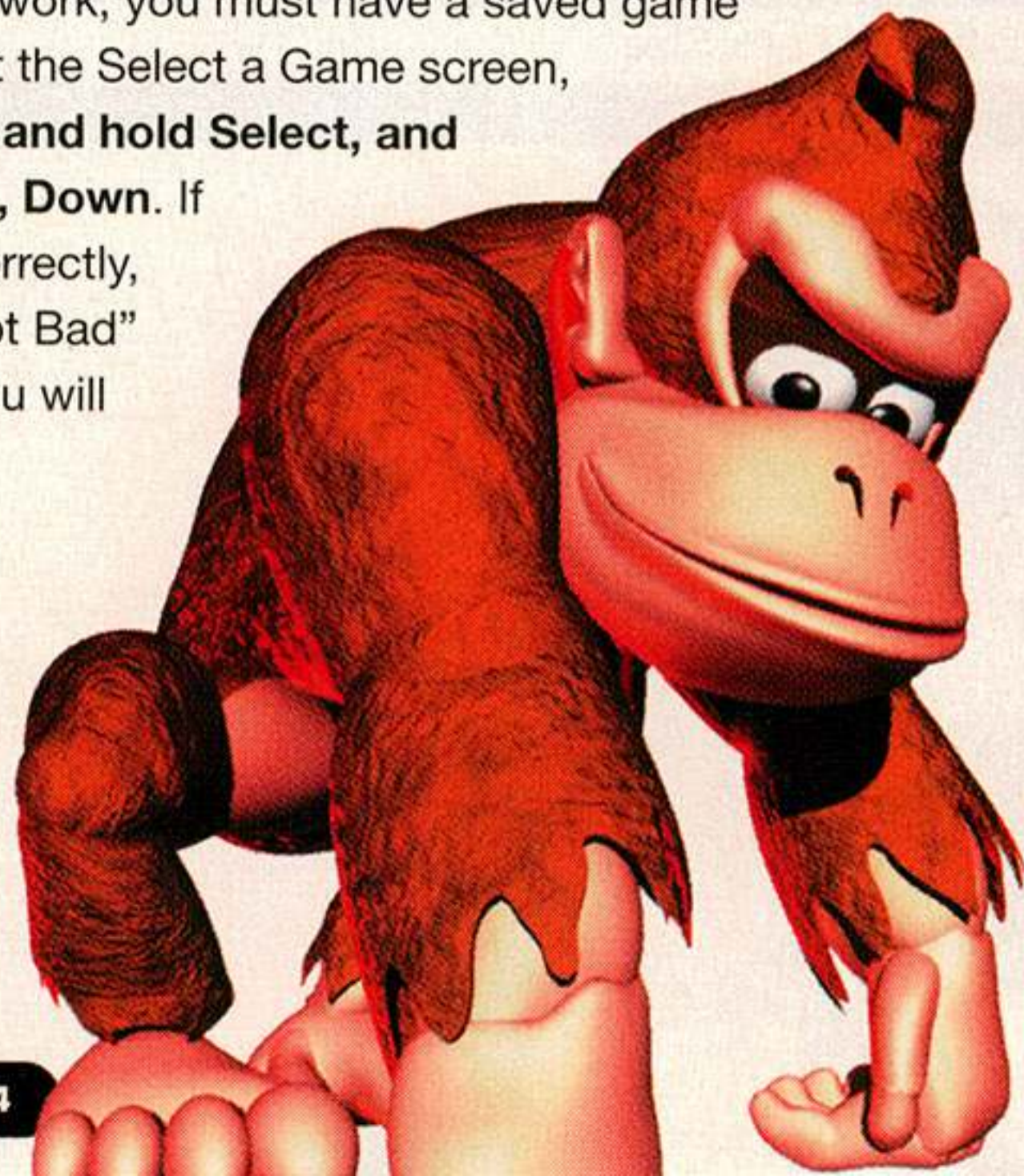
## DONKEY KONG COUNTRY



### Sound Test



In order for this code to work, you must have a saved game file. Start a game, and at the Select a Game screen, highlight "Erase," **press and hold Select**, and then **press B, A, L, L, A, Down**. If you entered the code correctly, Diddy Kong will say, "Not Bad" and the Sound Test menu will appear onscreen.



## I-NINJA



Big Heads, Mission Complete, And Sword Upgrade



**Big Heads:** Pause the game, **press and hold R1**, and then **press Δ, Δ, Δ, Δ**. Release R1, **press and hold L1**, and then **press Δ, Δ**. Simultaneously **press and hold R1 and L1**, and then **press Δ, ○, Δ**. If you entered the code correctly, a confirming message will appear.

**Mission Complete:** Pause the game, **press and hold R1**, and then **press □, □, □, ○**. Release R1, **press and hold L1**, and then **press Δ, Δ**. Release L1, **press and hold R1**, and then **press □, □**. If you entered the code correctly, a confirming message will appear.

**Sword Upgrade:** Pause the game, **simultaneously press and hold L1 and R1**, and then **press ○, □, ○, Δ, Δ, □, ○, □**. If you entered the code correctly, a confirming message will appear.

## CONFLICT DESERT STORM 2: BACK TO BAGHDAD



### All Cheats



At the main menu, **press Z, Z, Y, Y, X, X, B, B, Start, Start**. Select Options, and at the Options screen, choose Cheats. If you entered the code correctly, all cheats will be available.



I-NINJA



Big Heads, Mission Complete, And Sword Upgrade



**Big Heads:** Pause the game, press and hold R, and then press Y, Y, Y, Y. Release R, press and hold L, and then press Y, Y. Simultaneously press and hold R and L, and then press Y, X, Y. If you entered the code correctly, a confirming message will appear.

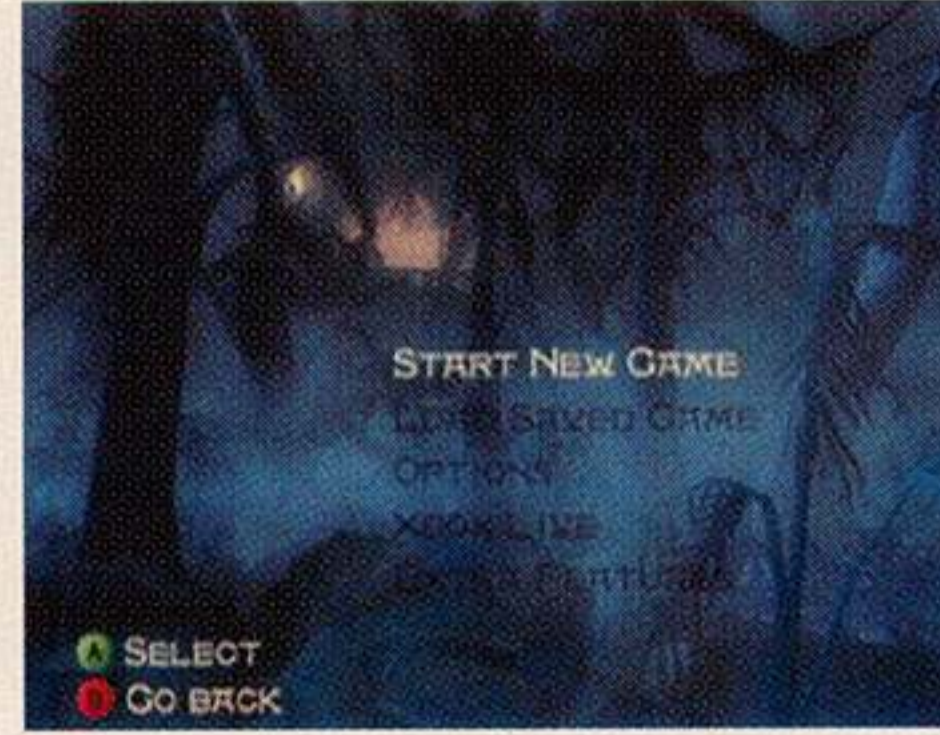
**Mission Complete:** Pause the game, press and hold R, and then press B, B, B, X. Release R, press and hold L, and then press Y, Y. Release L, press and hold R, and then press B, B. If you entered the code correctly, a confirming message will appear.

**Sword Upgrade:** Pause the game, simultaneously press and hold L and R, and then press X, B, X, Y, Y, B, X, B. If you entered the code correctly, a confirming message will appear.

PRINCE OF PERSIA: THE SANDS OF TIME



Play Original Prince of Persia in 3D



At the Main Menu, start a new game. When the Prince is on the balcony, press and hold the Left Thumbstick, and then press A, X, Y, B, Y, A, X, B. If you entered the code correctly, you'll see a load screen.

PRINCE OF PERSIA: THE SANDS OF TIME



Play Original Prince of Persia in 3D

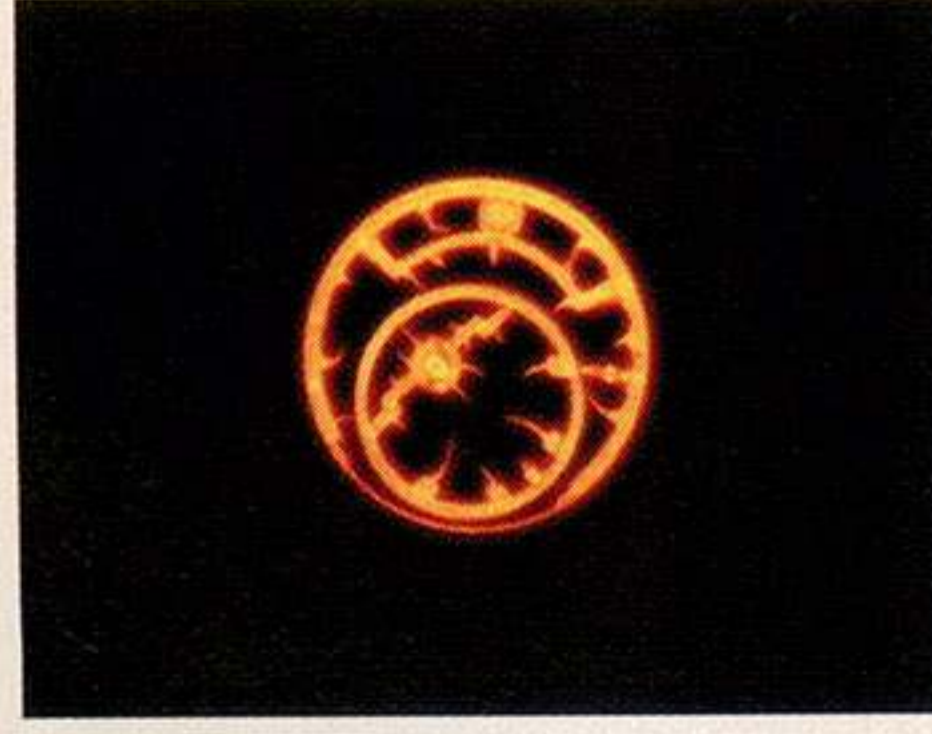


With one controller inserted into the first controller port, insert another controller into the fourth controller port. At the Main Menu, start a new game with the first controller. When the Prince is on the balcony, press and hold B on the second controller, and on the first controller press A, B, Y, X, Y, A, B, X. If you entered the code correctly, you'll see a load screen.

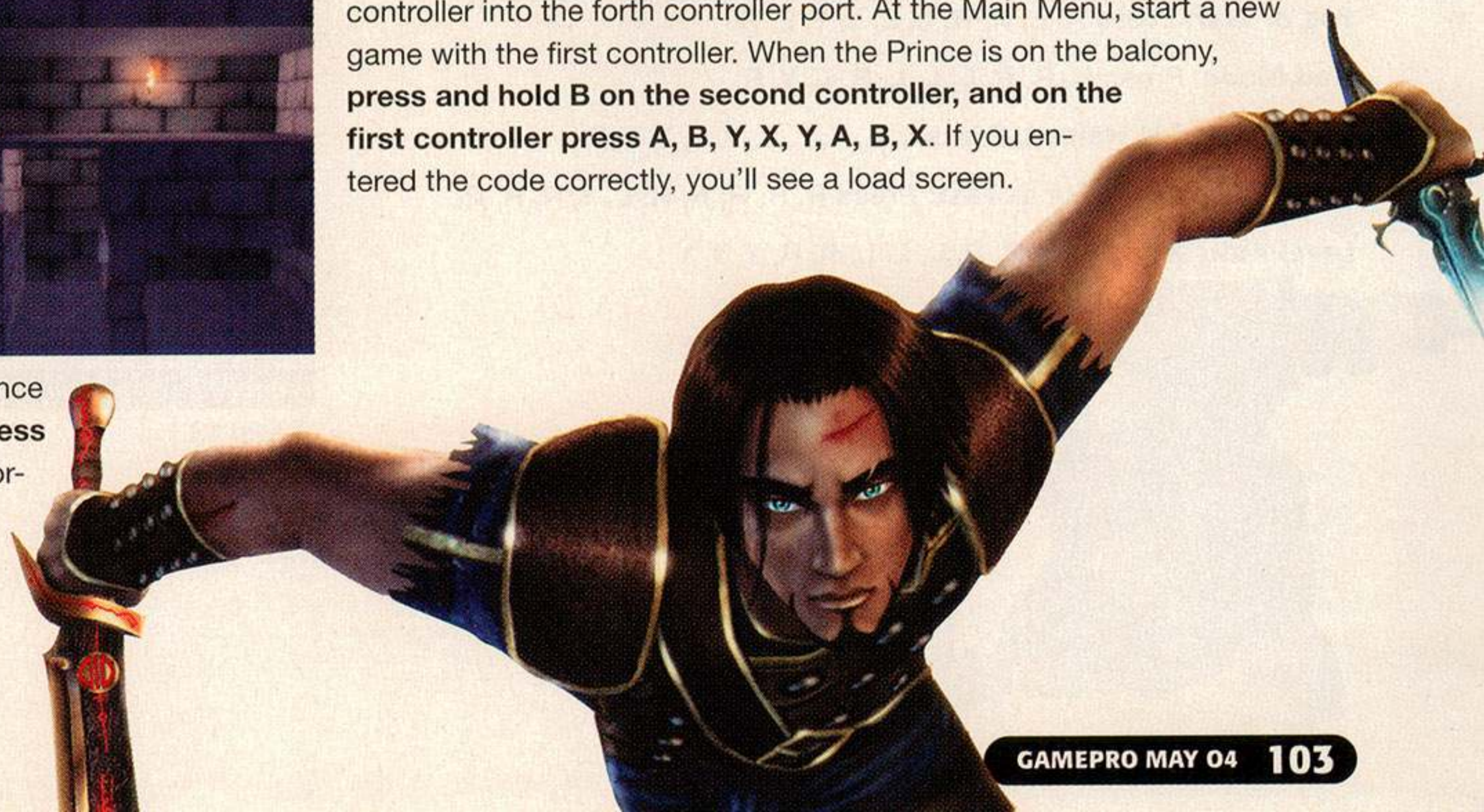
PRINCE OF PERSIA: THE SANDS OF TIME



Play Original Prince of Persia in 3D



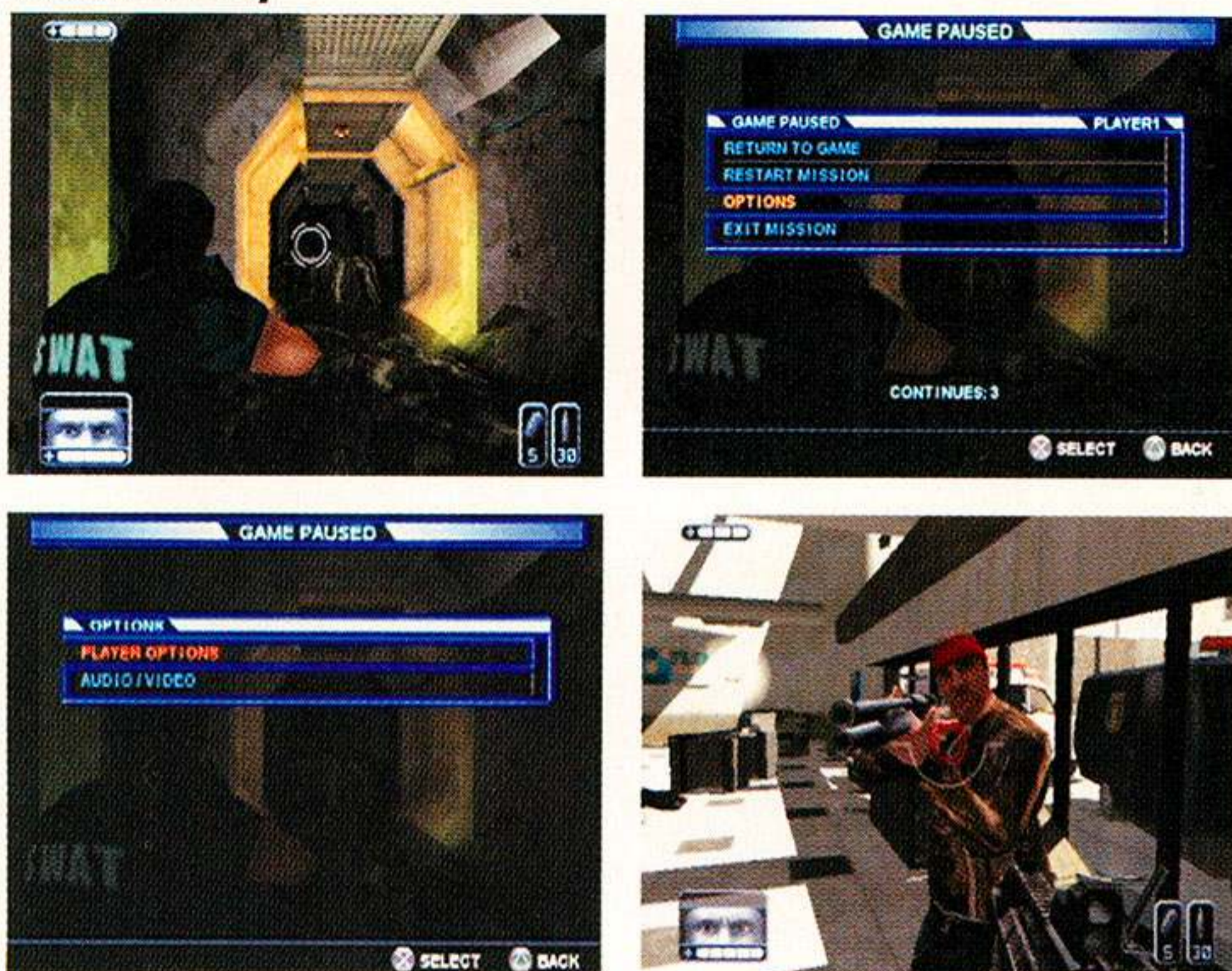
At the Main Menu, start a new game. When the Prince is on the balcony, press and hold L3, and then press X, □, △, ○, △, X, □, ○. If you entered the code correctly, you'll see a load screen.



## SWAT: GLOBAL STRIKE TEAM



### Invincibility

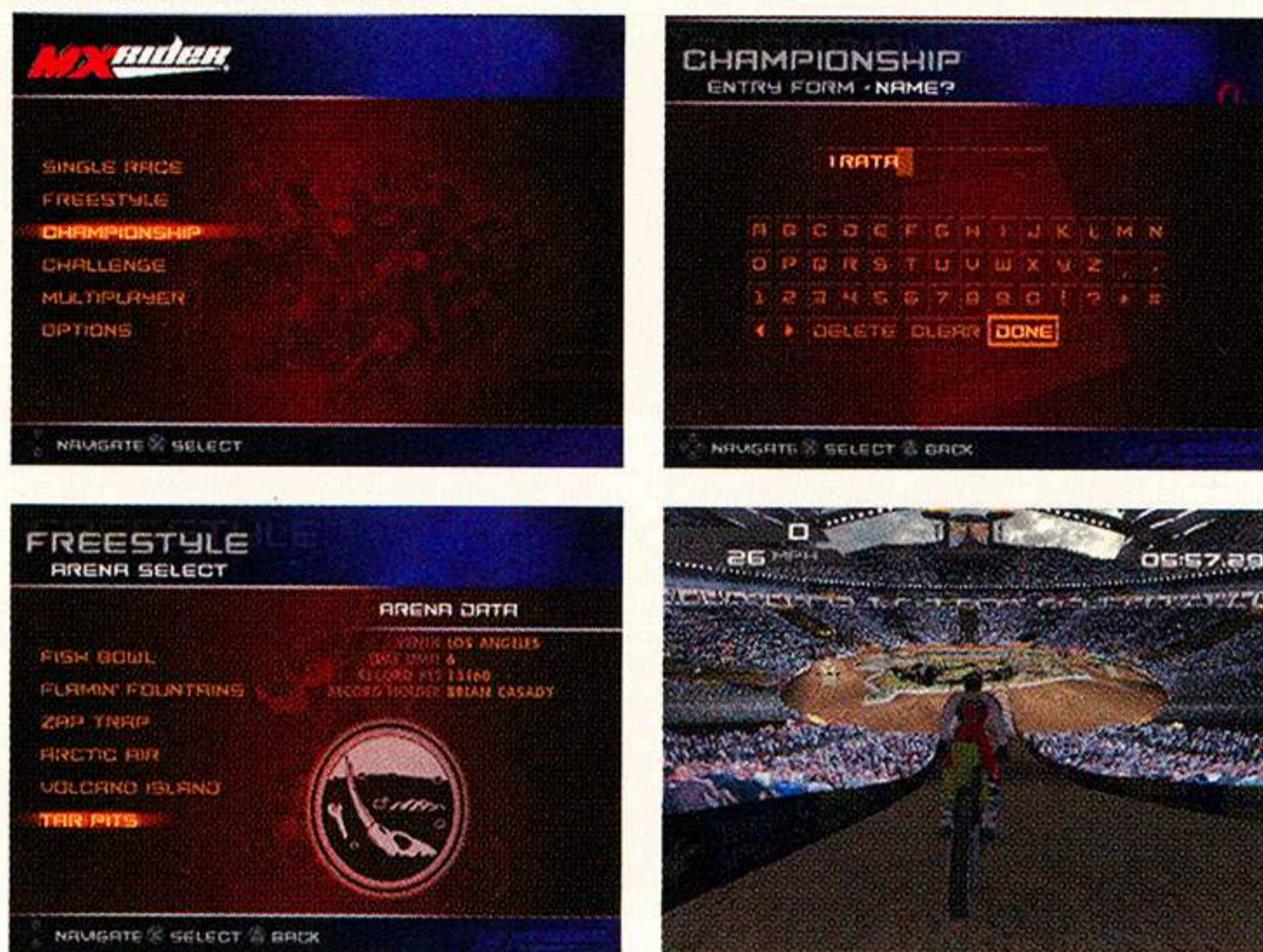


Pause the game, select Options, and at the Options menu, press **Up, Down, Left, Right, Left, Right, L2, R2**. If you entered the code correctly, you'll be invincible.

## MX RIDER



### Unlock All Tracks



At the main menu, select Championship, and at the Entry Form, enter IRATA as a name. Return to the main menu, select Freestyle, and if you entered the code correctly, all tracks will be available.

## GOBLIN COMMANDER: UNLEASH THE HORDE



### 100 Gold, All Level Access, and More



During gameplay, simultaneously press **L, R, Y, and Down** for three seconds to enable the cheats. Now, enter the following codes to activate these cheats. If you entered the code correctly, a confirming message will appear onscreen.

**100 Gold:** Press L, R, R, R, R, L, Y, L, L, L.

**100 Souls:** Press R, L, L, L, L, R, Y, R, R, R.

**1000 Gold and 1000 Souls:** Press R, R, L, R, R, Y, Y, Y, L, L.

**All Level Access:** Press Y, Y, Y, L, R, L, L, R, L, R, R, L, R, L, L, R, L, R, L, L, R, L, L, R, L, R, R, Y, Y, Y.

**Fog of War:** Press R, L, R, R, L, L, Y, Y, L, R.

**God Mode:** Press R, R, R, L, L, L, R, L, Y, R.

**Game Speed Is Halved:** Press L, L, L, L, L, Y, Y, Y, Y, R.

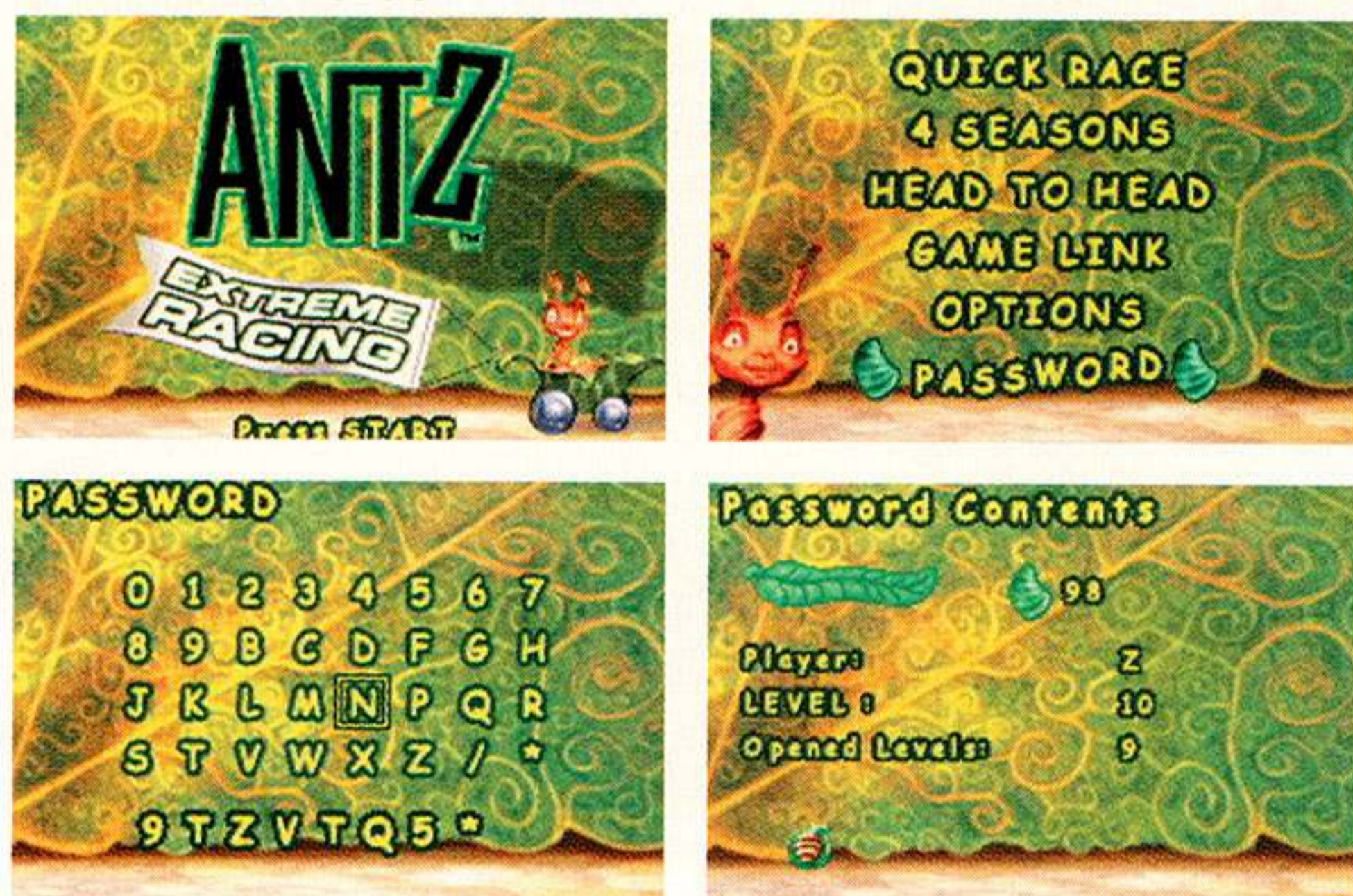
**Game Speed Is Twice as Fast:** Press R, R, R, R, R, L, Y, R, R, R.

**Level Auto Win:** Press R, R, L, L, L, R, R, Y, Y, Y.

## ANTZ EXTREME RACING



### Level Passwords



At the Main Menu, select Passwords. Enter the following passwords to unlock these cheats. If you entered the code correctly, you'll automatically go to the Password Contents screen.

Level 2:	CVWVC/4ZN
Level 3:	9SZVCW7*X
Level 4:	CV*VT*6*N
Level 5:	9SMSCL5*X
Level 6:	CSPS9Q6ZN
Level 7:	9WRVWL5ZX
Level 8:	CSTSCR4*N
Level 9:	8VWVTL7*X
Level 10:	9TZVTQ5*N
Level 11:	9V*SCQ7*N
Level 12:	1TTSWV5ZX
Level 13:	9STVCV5ZX





## POWER RANGERS: NINJA STORM

### Level Passwords



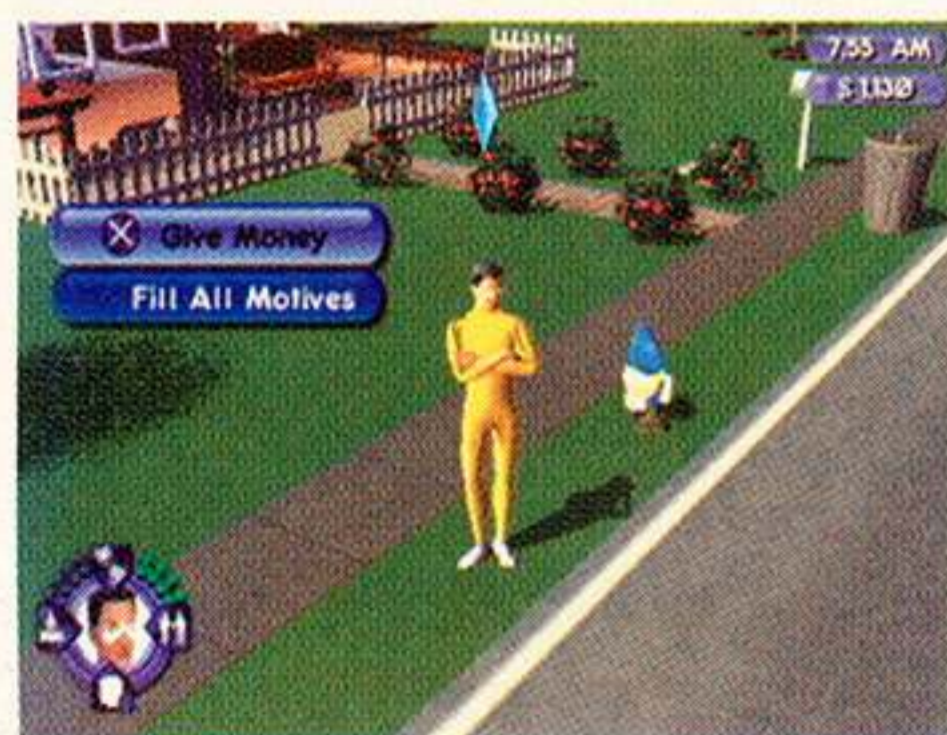
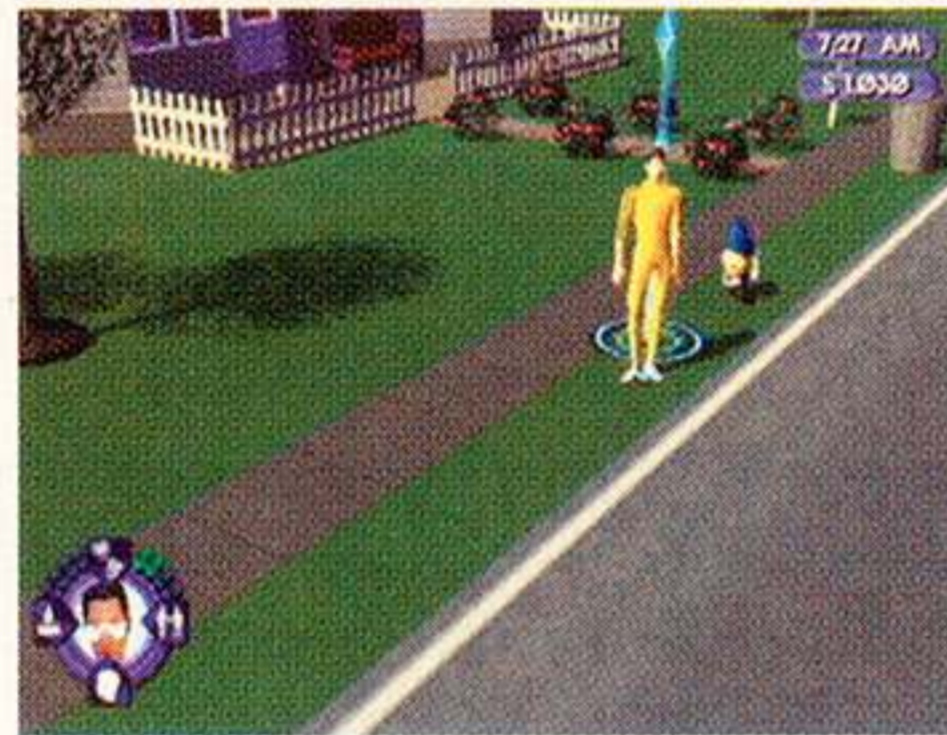
At the main menu, choose Password, and at the Password screen, enter the following passwords to unlock the corresponding levels. If you entered the password correctly, you'll automatically go to the unlocked level.

Green Samurai Ranger Level 2:	GDC
Green Samurai Ranger Level 3:	LJB
Green Samurai Ranger Level 4:	LDC
Green Samurai Ranger Level 5:	GNB
Thunder Rangers Level 2:	GBH
Thunder Rangers Level 3:	LGG
Thunder Rangers Level 4:	LBH
Wind Rangers Level 2:	GBW
Wind Rangers Level 4:	LBW
Wind Rangers Level 5:	GLV



## THE SIMS: BUSTIN' OUT

### All Objects, Give Money, and Team Photo



During gameplay, press R2, L1, R1, L2, Left, O to enable the cheats. If you entered the code correctly, a Gnome will appear on the lawn of your Sim's house. Now, enter the following codes to unlock these cheats. If you entered the code correctly, you'll hear a confirming voice.

**All Objects:** Press: L2, R2, Up, △, L3.

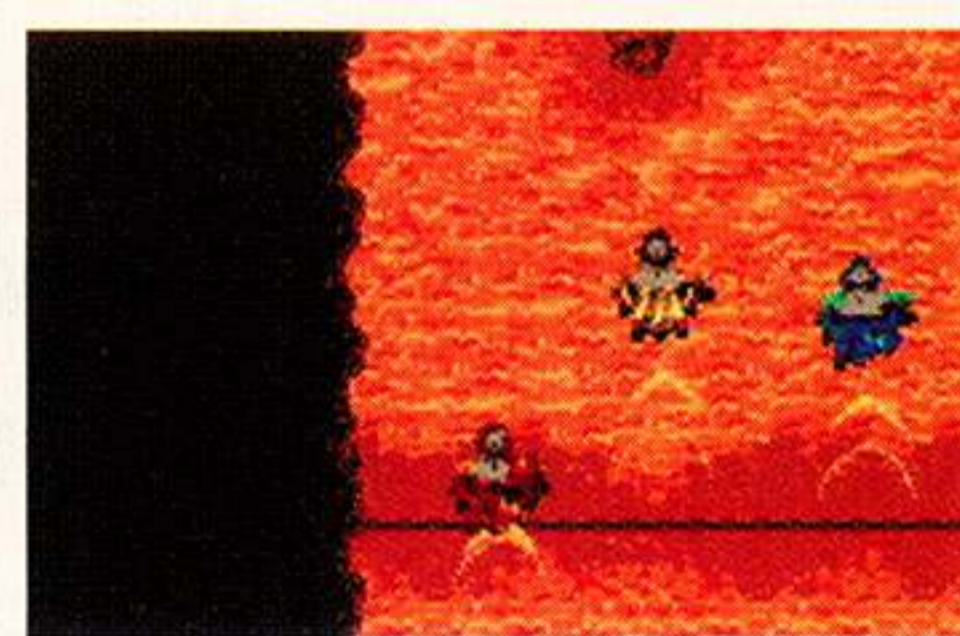
**Give Money:** Press L1, R2, Right, □, L3.  
Click on the Gnome to select Give Money.

**Team Photo:** Press L3, R3, R1, R2.



## BIONICLE: THE GAME

### Mini Games



At the main menu, select New Game and then enter the following codes as your Tribesman name to unlock these cheats. After the cinematic ends, press Start and then select Quit Game to return to the main menu where the Mini Game menu will be unlocked.

Passwords are case-sensitive.

Huai Snowball Sling:	V33673
Ignala Lava Surfing:	4CR487
Kewa Bird Riding:	3LT154
Koli Football:	5MG834
Ngalawa Boat Race:	9MA268
Ussal Crab Dig:	8MR472

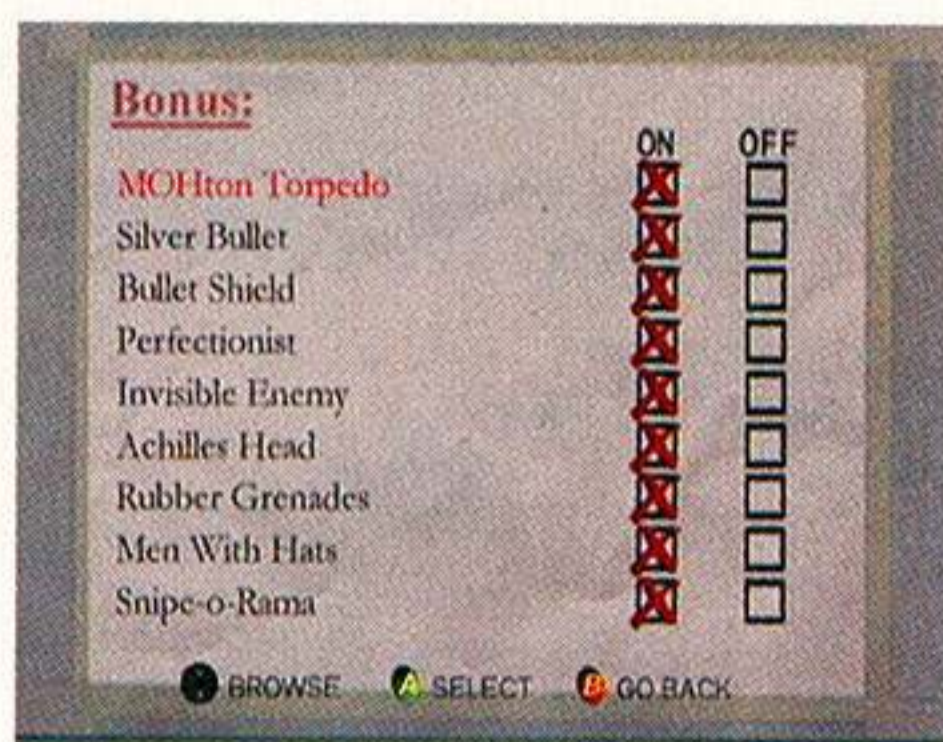


## MEDAL OF HONOR: FRONTLINE



### Invincibility and Password Cheats

**Invincibility:** Pause the game and then press **X, L, B, R, Back, Y, X**. If you entered the code correctly, the game will automatically resume and you'll be invincible.



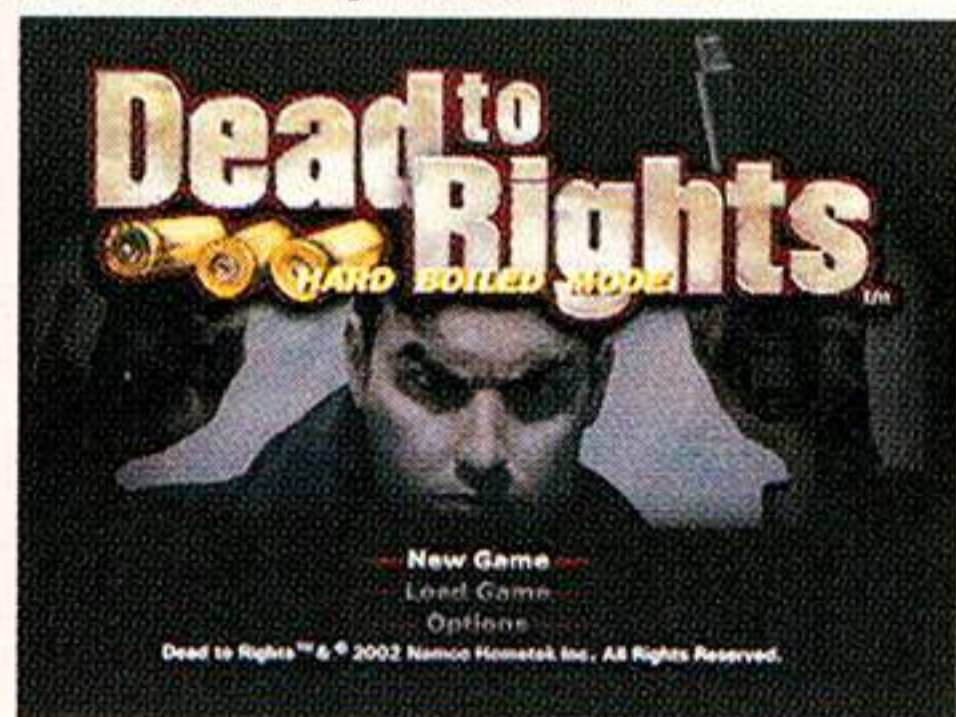
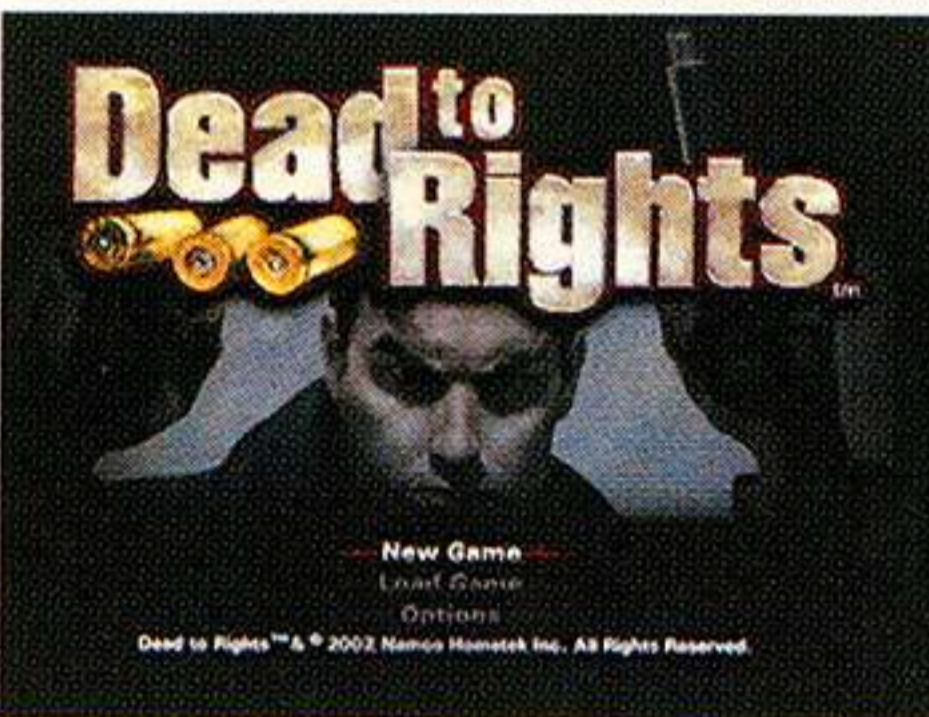
**Password Cheats:** At the main menu, select Options, and at the options screen, choose Password. Enter any of the following passwords to unlock the corresponding cheat. If you entered the code correctly, the green lights on the typewriter will blink. At the options menu, select Bonus to view the cheats you have unlocked.

All Cheats:	ENCHILADA
Animation Movie:	FLIPBOOK
Making of Mission 1:	XTRASCENEO
Making of Mission 2:	XTRASCENET
Making of Mission 3:	XTRASCENER
Making of Mission 4:	XTRASCENEF
Making of Mission 5:	XTRASCENEI
Making of Mission 6:	XTRASCENES
Next Level:	SALMON
Paintball Movie:	COTOBREATH
Unlock Mission 2, Level 1:	BASS
Unlock Mission 3, Level 1:	STURGEON
Unlock Mission 4, Level 1:	PIKE
Unlock Mission 5, Level 1:	TROUT
Unlock Mission 6, Level 1:	CATFISH

## DEAD TO RIGHTS

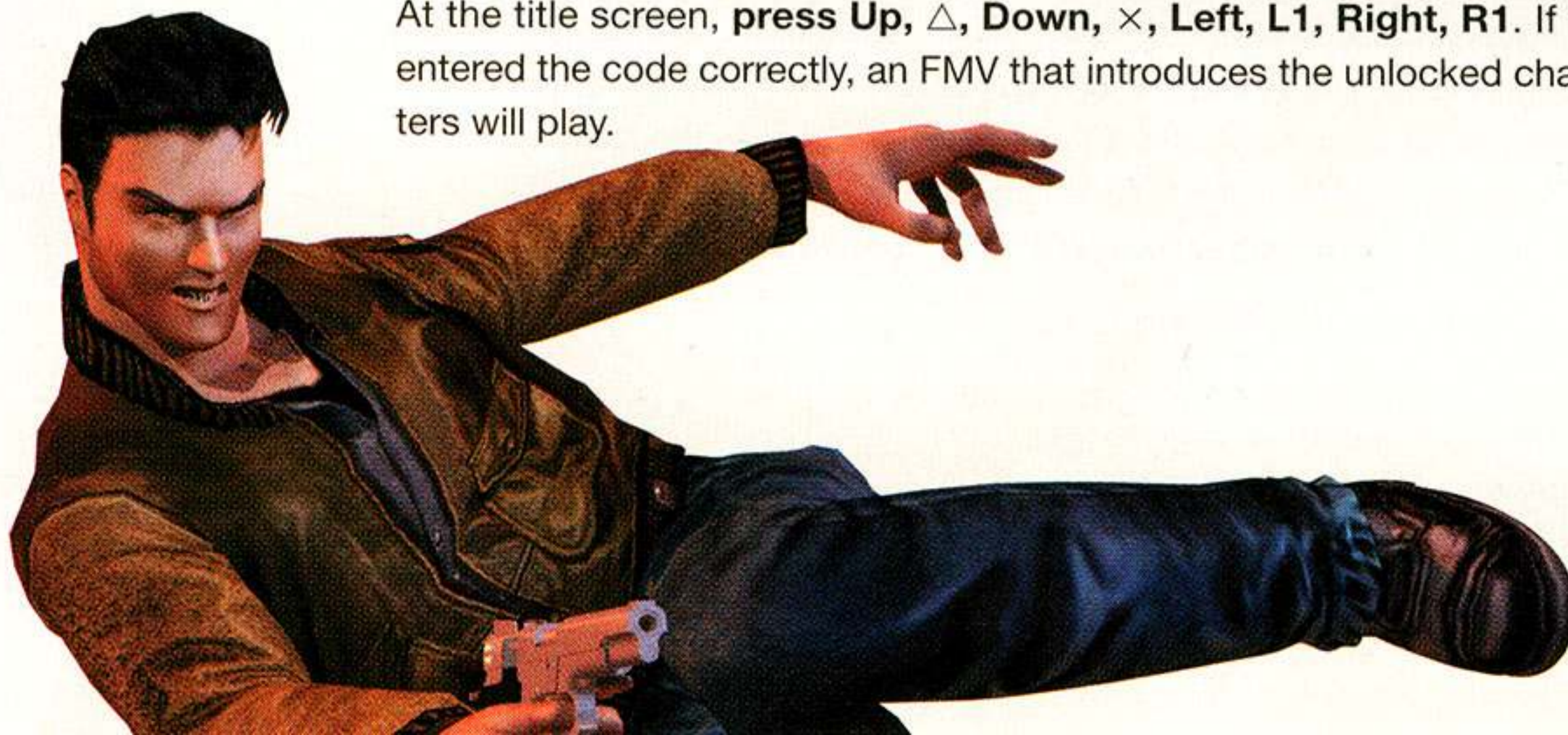


### Hard Boiled Mode, Unlimited Ammo, and More



At the main menu, **simultaneously press and hold L1, L2, R1, and R2**, and then enter the following codes to unlock these cheats. If you entered the code correctly, the name of the cheat will appear onscreen.

- All Chapters:** Press Down, Left, Down,  $\Delta$ , Down.
- All Disarms:** Press  $\square$ ,  $\square$ ,  $\circ$ ,  $\circ$ , Right.
- Hard Boiled Mode:** Press  $\Delta$ ,  $\square$ , Left, Left,  $\circ$ .
- Precursor Mode:** Press Up, Up, Down, Down, Up.
- Two Guns:** Press  $\Delta$ ,  $\circ$ , Up, Up, Up.
- Unlimited Ammo:** Press Up, Left, Down, Right,  $\circ$ .
- Unlimited Shotgun:** Press Right,  $\circ$ ,  $\circ$ ,  $\circ$ ,  $\square$ .
- Weaker Enemies:** Press  $\square$ , Left,  $\Delta$ , Up, Down.



## TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 4



### Always Special, Moon Gravity, and More



At the main menu, choose Options, and at the Options screen, select Cheat Codes. Enter the following codes to unlock the corresponding cheats. If you entered the code correctly, you'll hear a sound. During gameplay, pause the game, and at the pause menu, select Options and then Cheats, where you can activate the unlocked cheats.

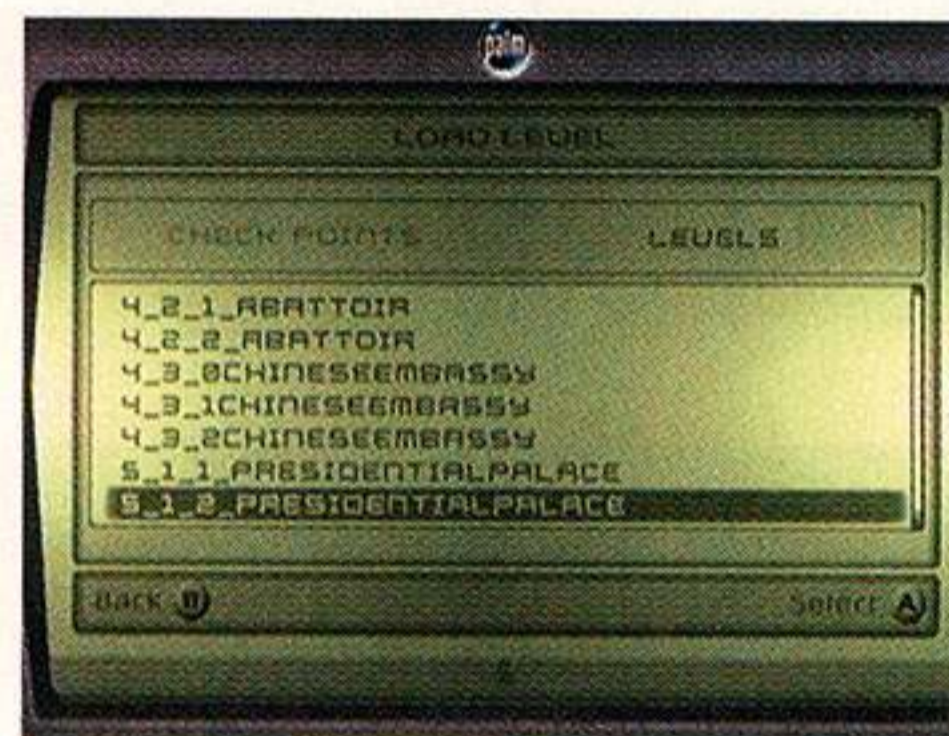
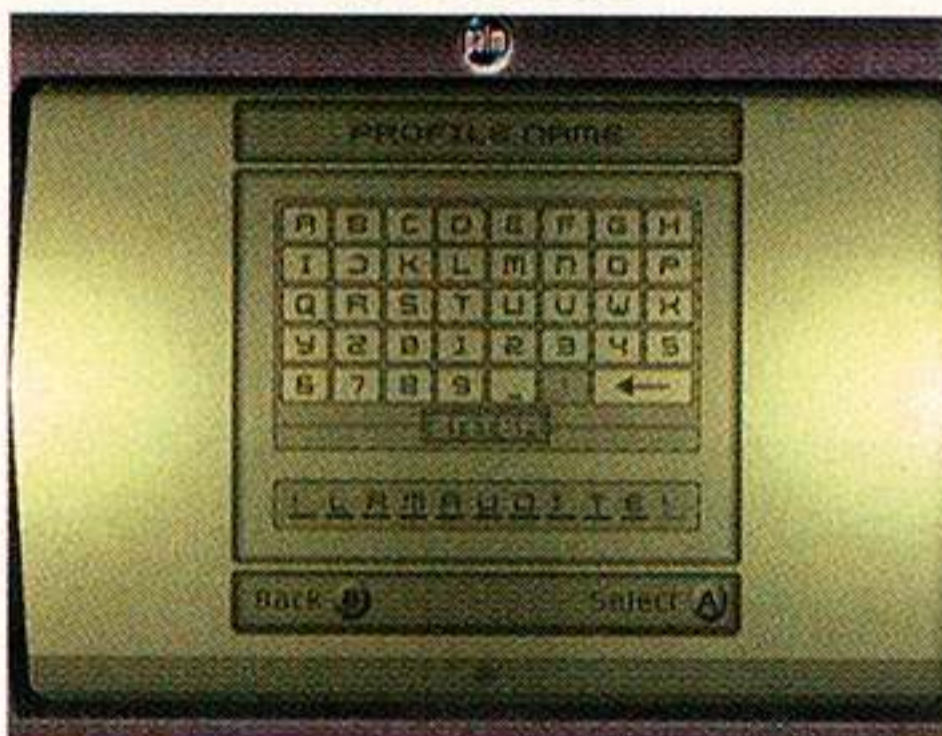
Passwords are case-sensitive.

Always Special:	i'myellow
Matrix:	fbiagent
Moon Gravity:	moonshot
Perfect Manual:	freewheelie
Perfect Rail:	belikeeric

## TOM CLANCY'S SPLINTER CELL



### Unlock All Levels

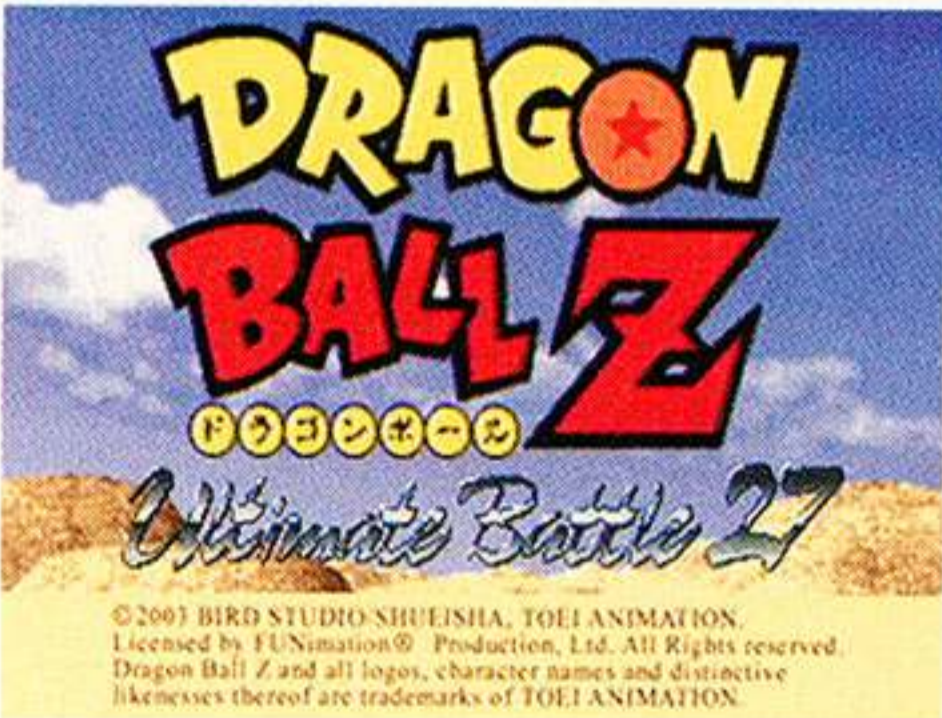


Start a game, and at the Profile Name screen, enter **!LAMAUDITE!** as a profile name. If you entered the code correctly, all levels will be available at the Load Level screen.

## DRAGON BALL Z: ULTIMATE BATTLE 22



### Unlock Bonus Characters



At the title screen, **press Up,  $\Delta$ , Down,  $\times$ , Left, L1, Right, R1**. If you entered the code correctly, an FMV that introduces the unlocked characters will play.



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



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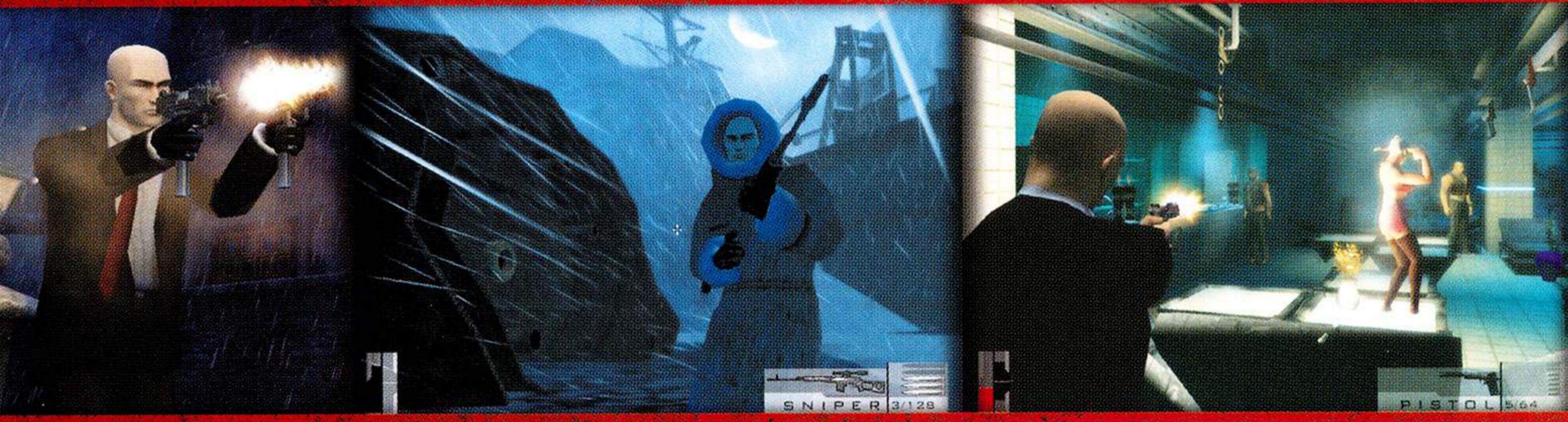
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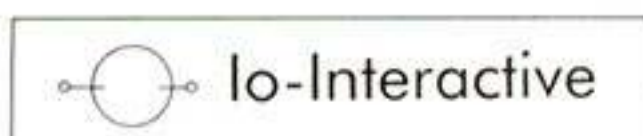
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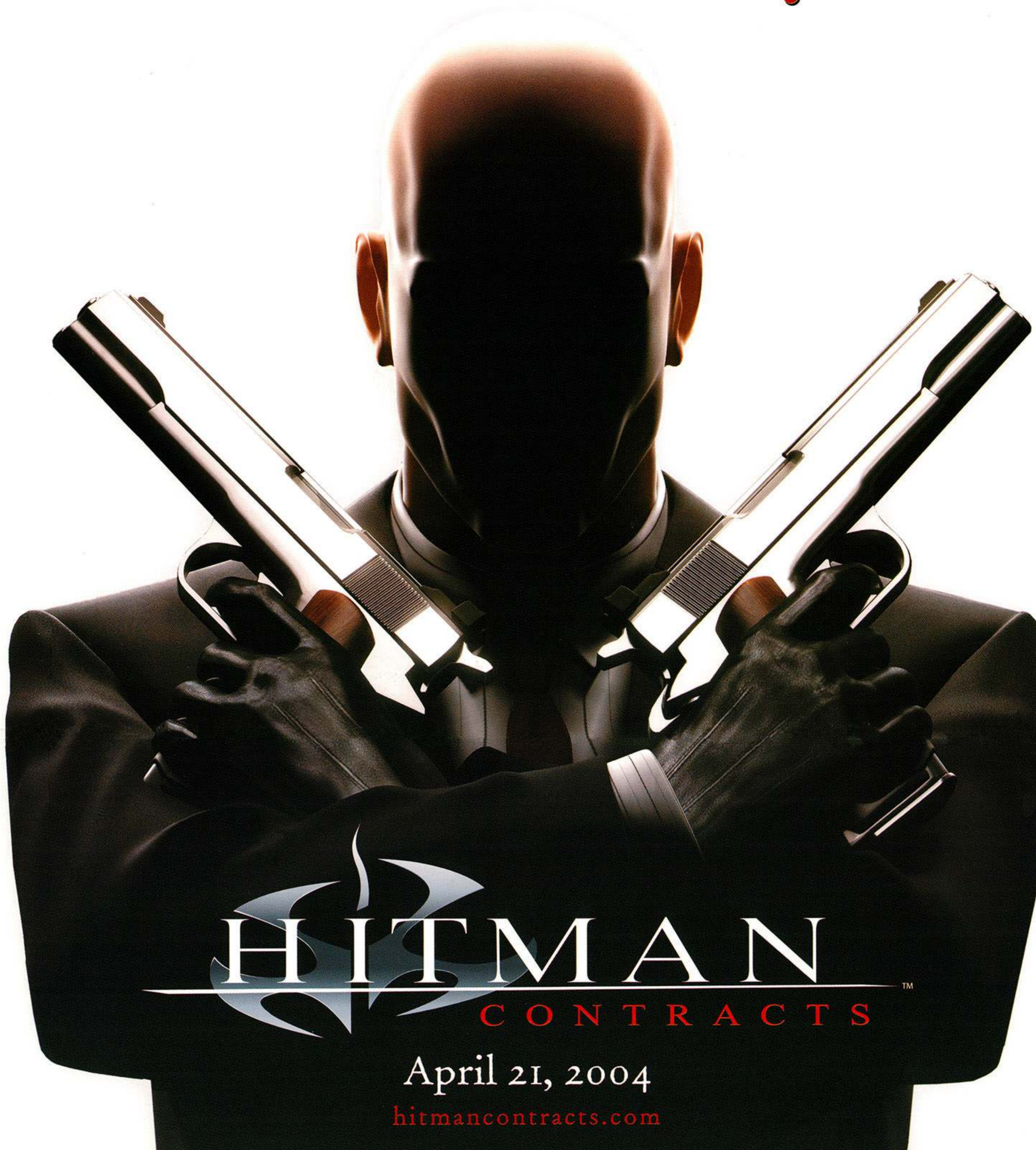
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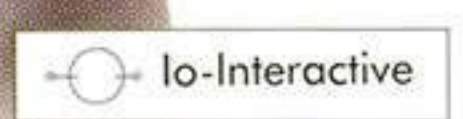
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PlayStation 2



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