



FIRST LOOK:  
JEDI KNIGHT 3

SPY HUNTER 2 UNVEILED

# GAMENFORMER<sup>®</sup>

The Final Word On Computer & Video Games



IN A YEAR WITHOUT HALO 2...

# COUNTER-STRIKE

# ...IS XBOX KING

EXCLUSIVE COVERAGE INSIDE



## ONIMUSHA 3

Jean Reno Stars In The Final  
Installment Of The Trilogy pg. 60

ISSUE  
121

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MAY 2003



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Just one of seven games you can play  
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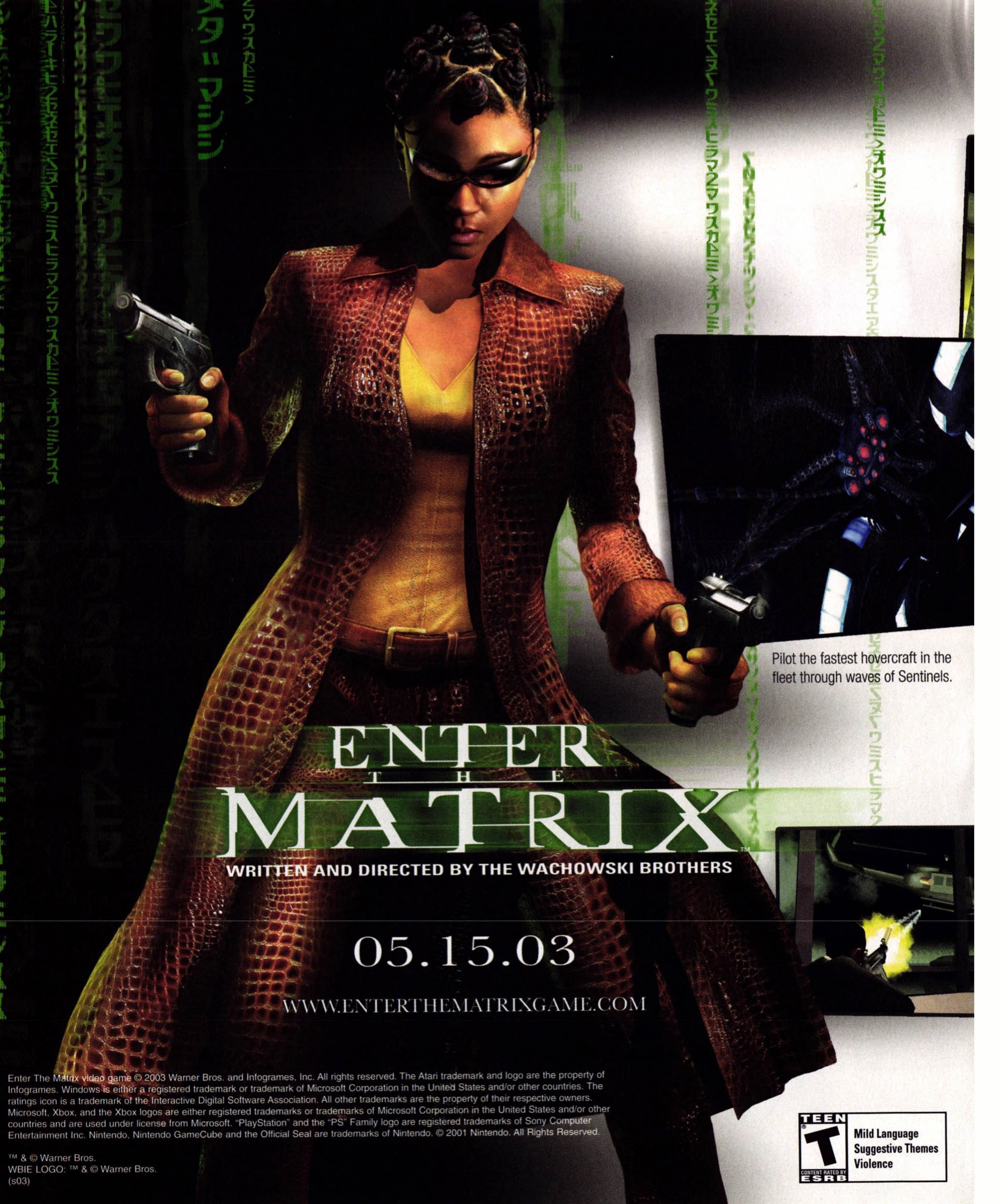


PlayStation 2

[www.us.playstation.com](http://www.us.playstation.com)



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# ENTER THE MATRIX™

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY THE WACHOWSKI BROTHERS

05.15.03

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Pilot the fastest hovercraft in the fleet through waves of Sentinels.

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Suggestive Themes  
Violence

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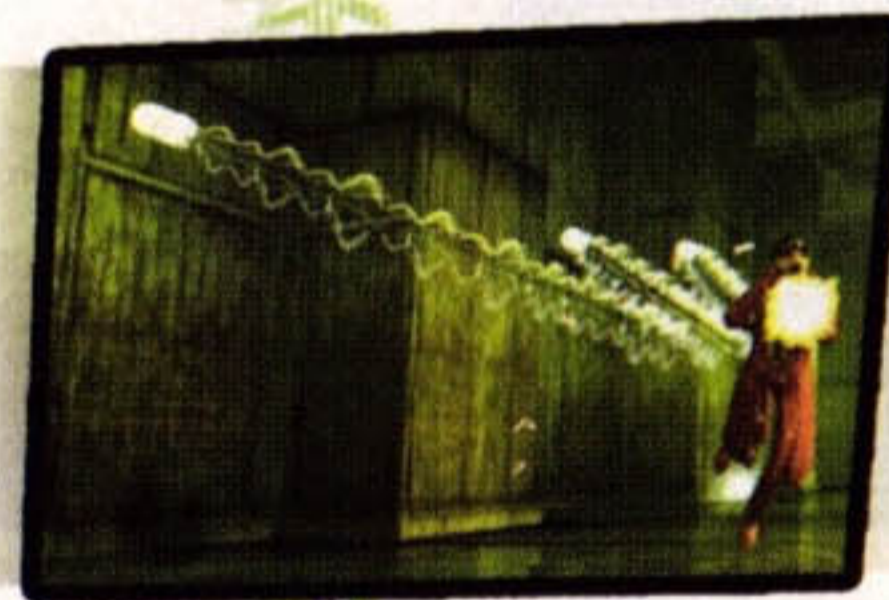
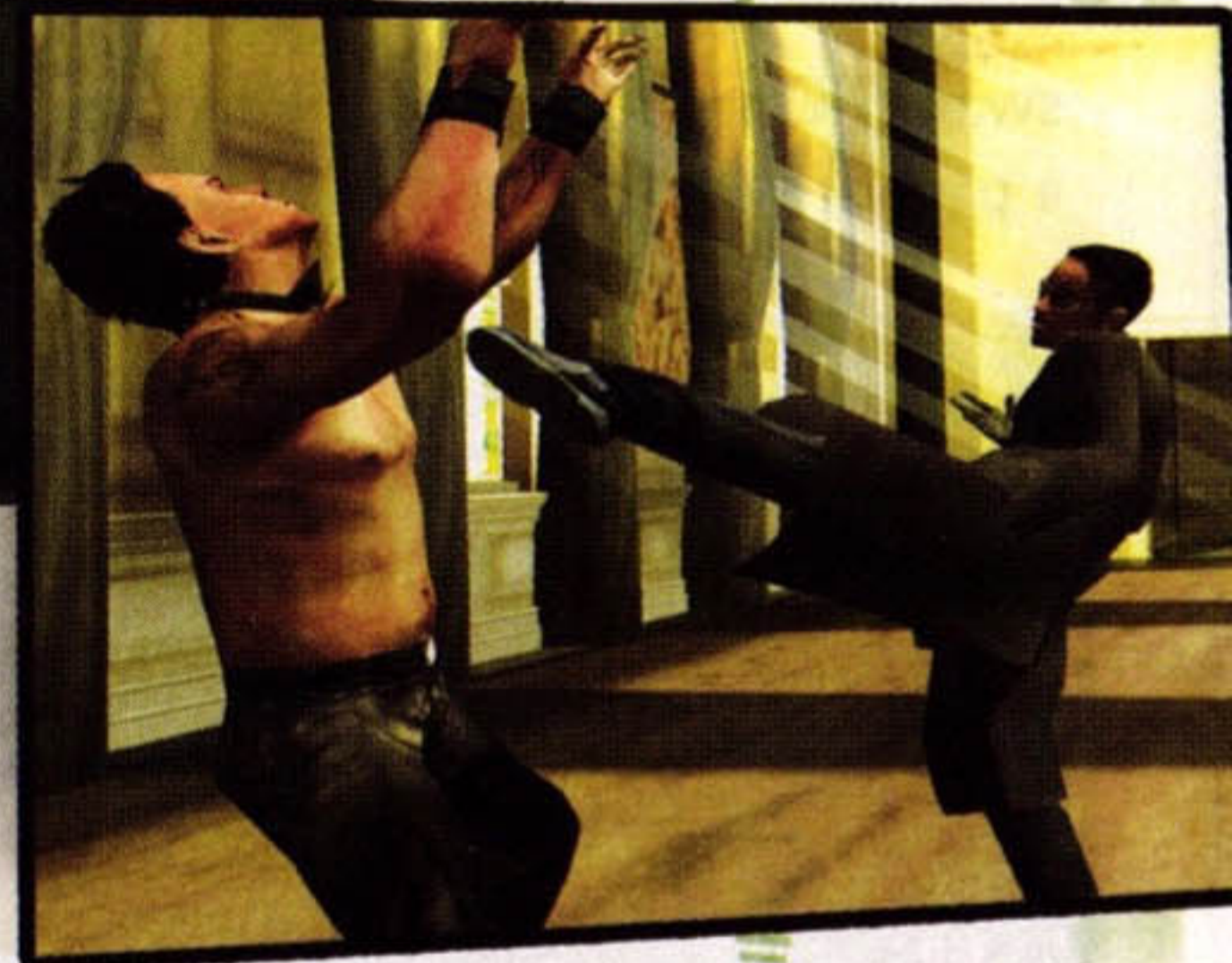
Be introduced to the cast from *The Matrix Reloaded*™



Battle alongside the original motion picture cast.



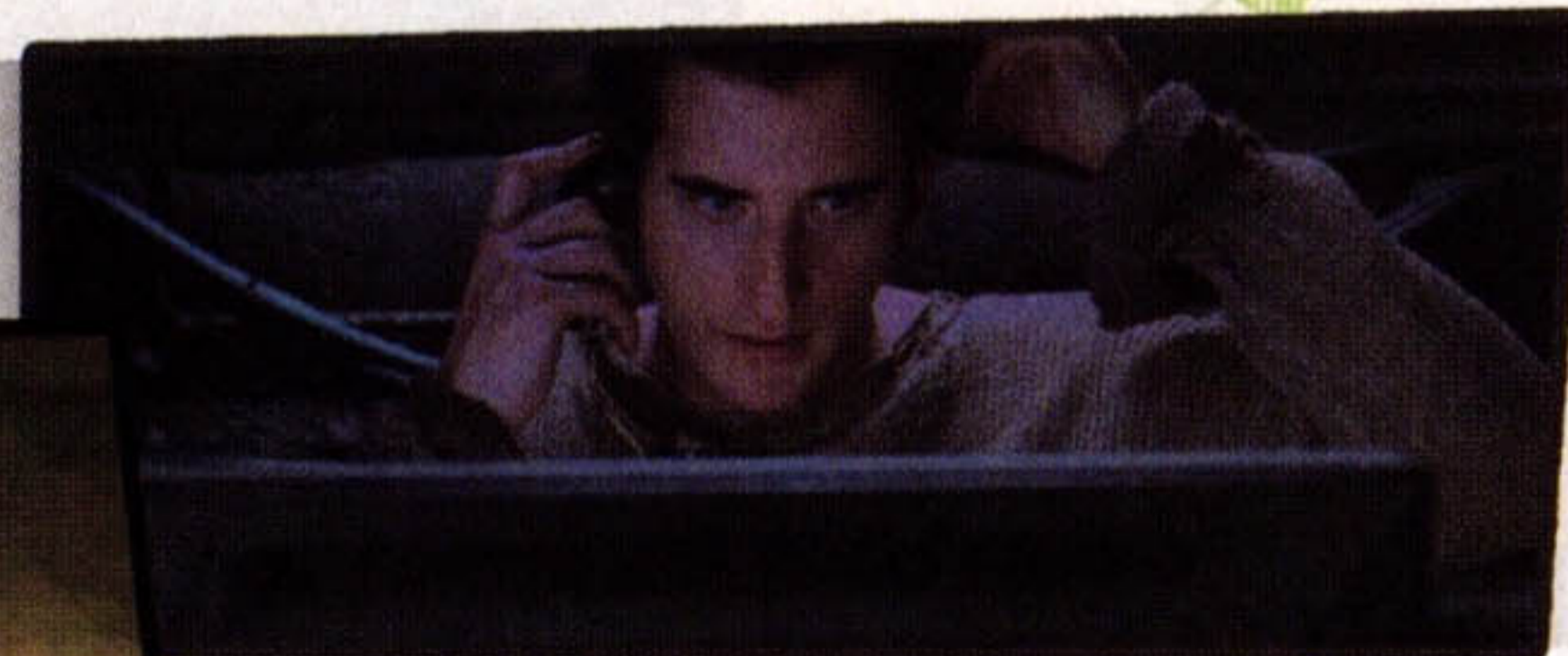
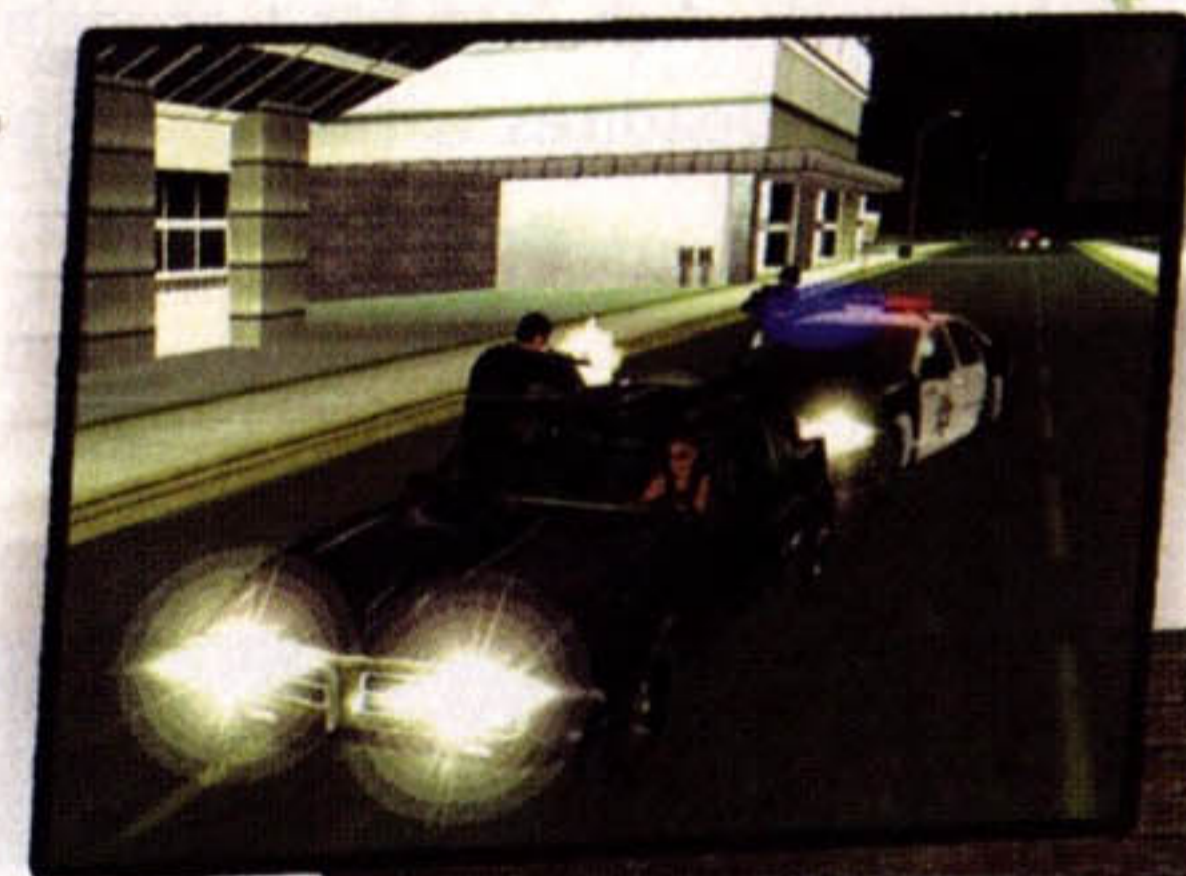
The Wachowski Brothers wrote the game script and directed original *Matrix*™ footage exclusively for the game.



In-game fight sequences were choreographed by Master Yuen Wo Ping (*The Matrix*™; *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*; *Iron Monkey*) and his expert wire team.

There's a hard line exit across town. Get there by any means possible.

Unparalleled film collaboration with *The Matrix Reloaded*™ crew, resulting in a truly authentic "Matrix" look and feel.



Meet Sparks – your wish is his keystroke, colon, double backslash, execute command.



PlayStation 2



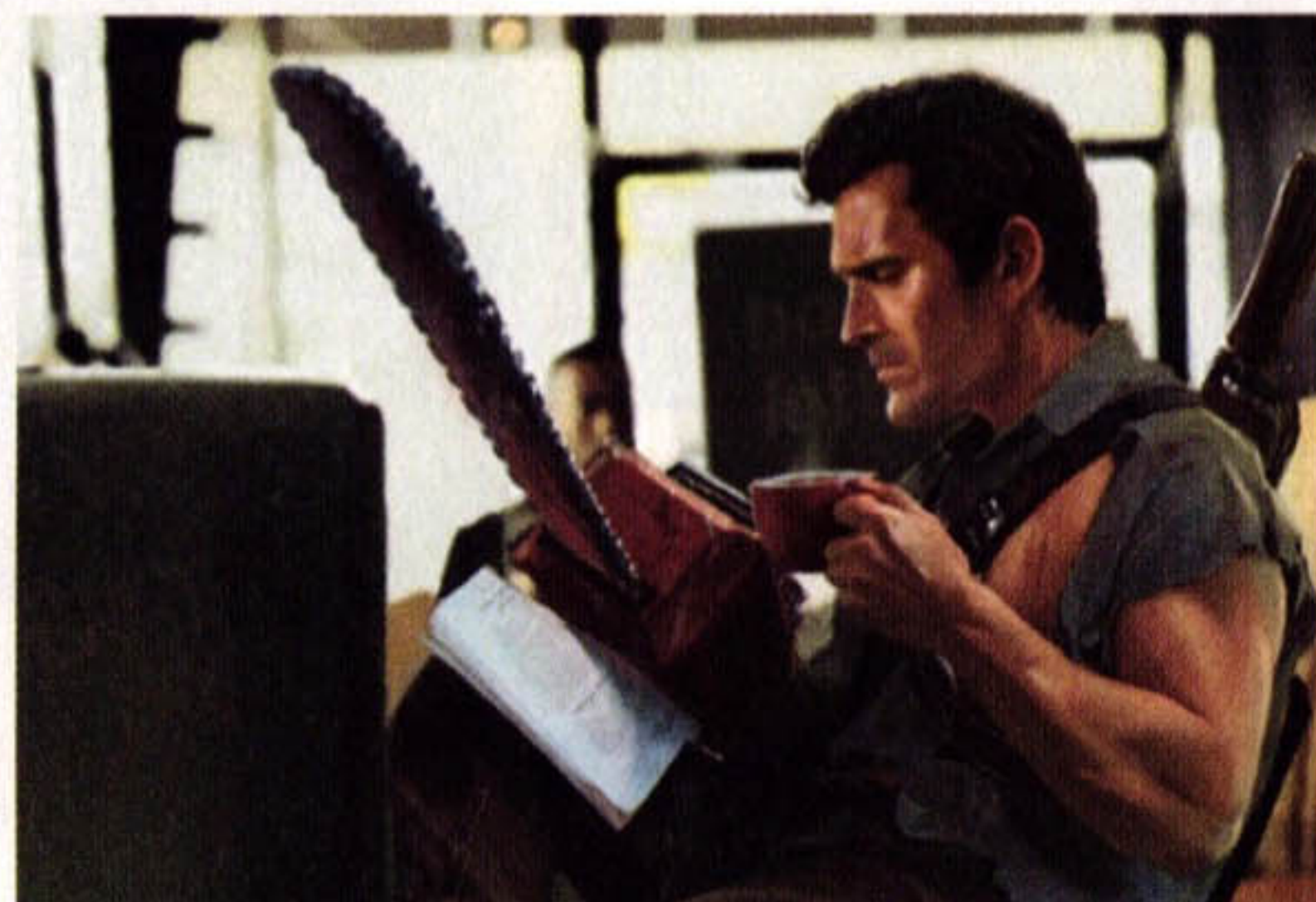
# 24 HOURS WITH ASH



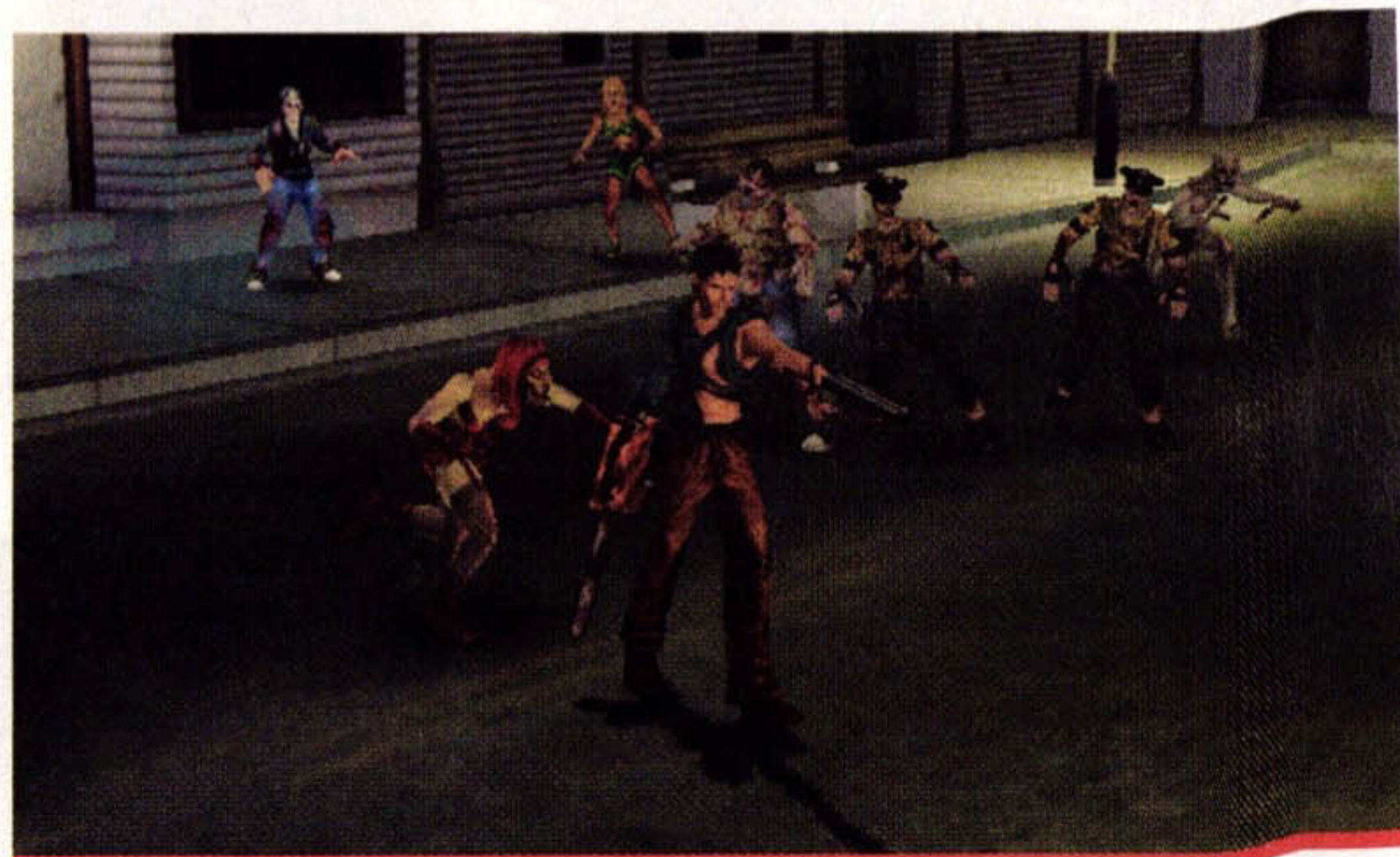
8:22 a.m. Ash arrives at the swanky Dearborn Hotel wearing a pair of wrap-around shades.



11:23 a.m. In a rush. Ash, late for a meeting with his agent, fends off Deadites with a chainsaw.



10:56 a.m. We caught Ash sipping a cup of Sri Lankan Chai Latte at a trendy local bistro.



12:44 p.m. Ash switches from the trusty chainsaw to a boomstick just for kicks.



## QUOTE OF THE DAY

**"Stop following me!!"**

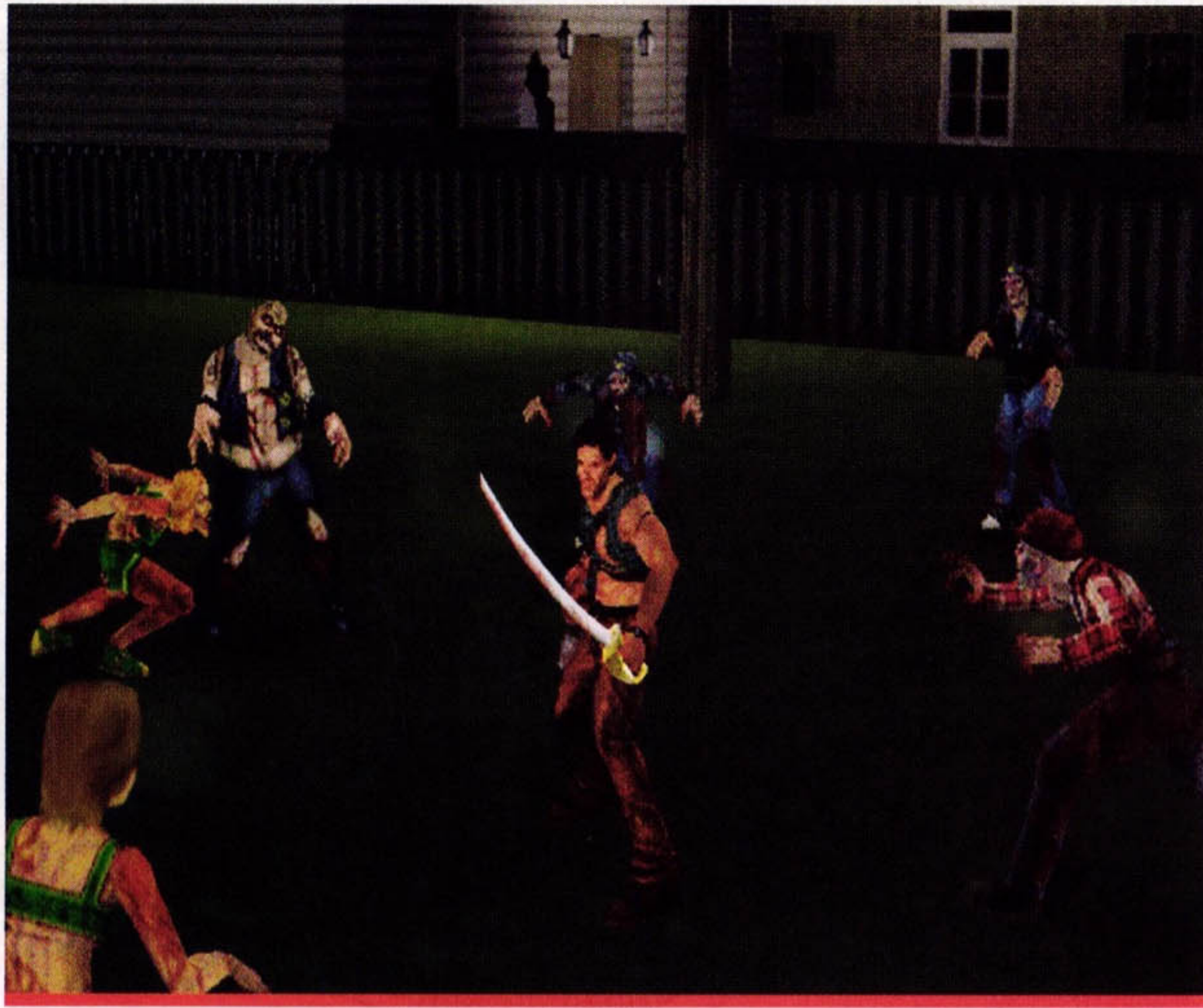
-ASH, to our photographer during an encounter in a public restroom.



Blood and Gore  
Violence



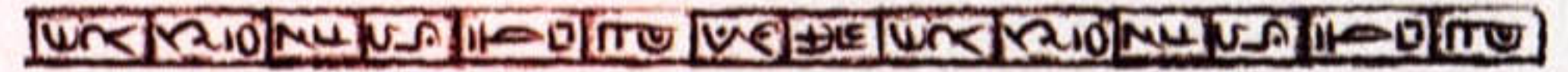
PlayStation 2



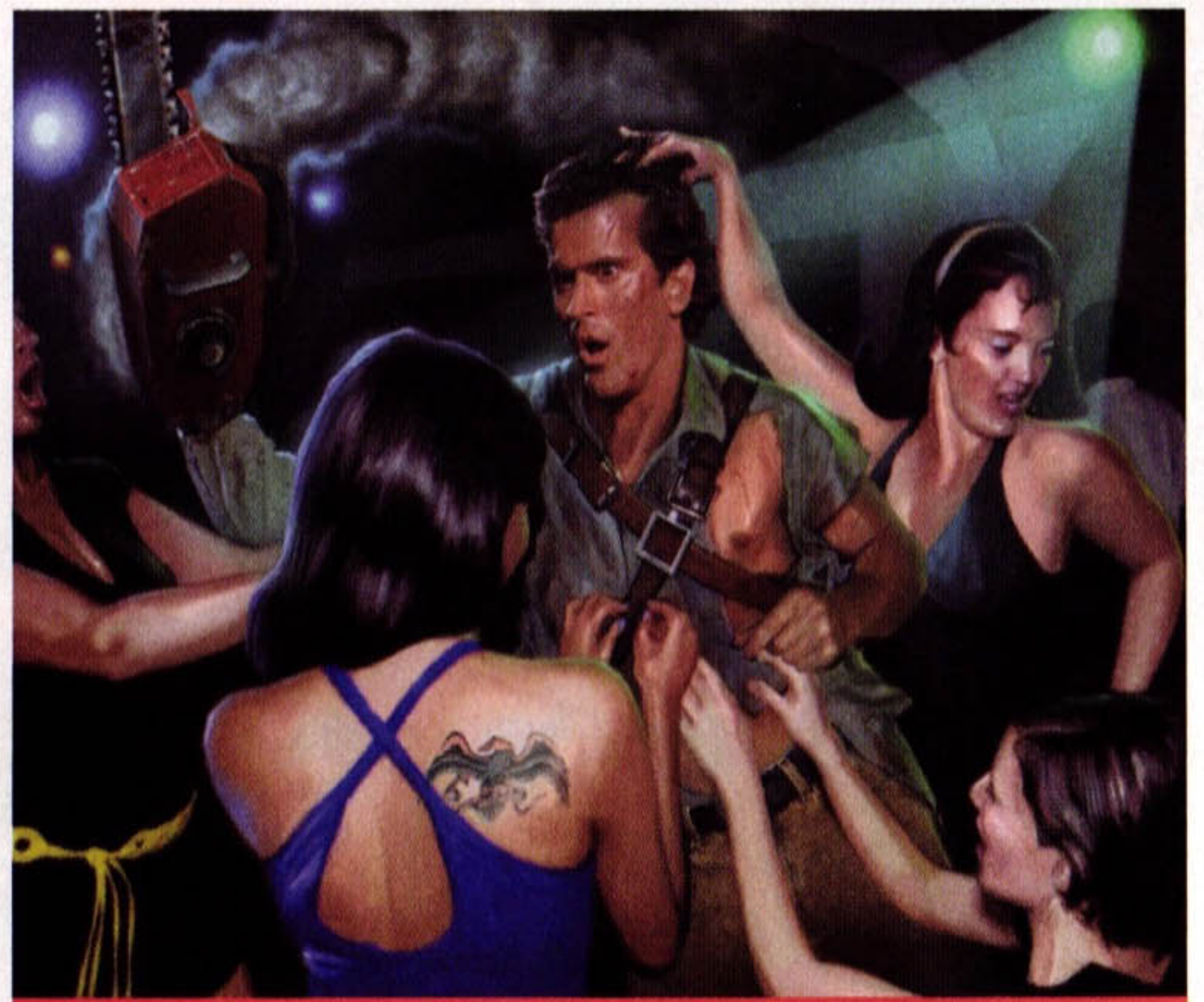
2:31 p.m. Friends in low places. An angry Ash tells a slew of pesky Deadites to stop bothering him by killing them.



5:32 p.m. Ash getting a little R&R on a friend's boat in Lake Michigan.



7:46 p.m. Presto chango! Ash throws a little magic spell on those darned Deadites.



11:34 p.m. Killing is hard work. Ash takes advantage of the Dearborn nightlife after a job well done.

# EVIL DEAD

## A FISTFUL OF BOOMSTICK

For more snapshots of today's featured star,  
visit [evilddeadgame.com](http://evilddeadgame.com)



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

# THE FUTURE OF ONLINE



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NISSAN

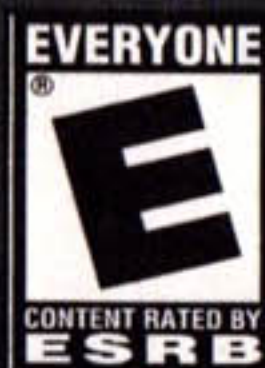
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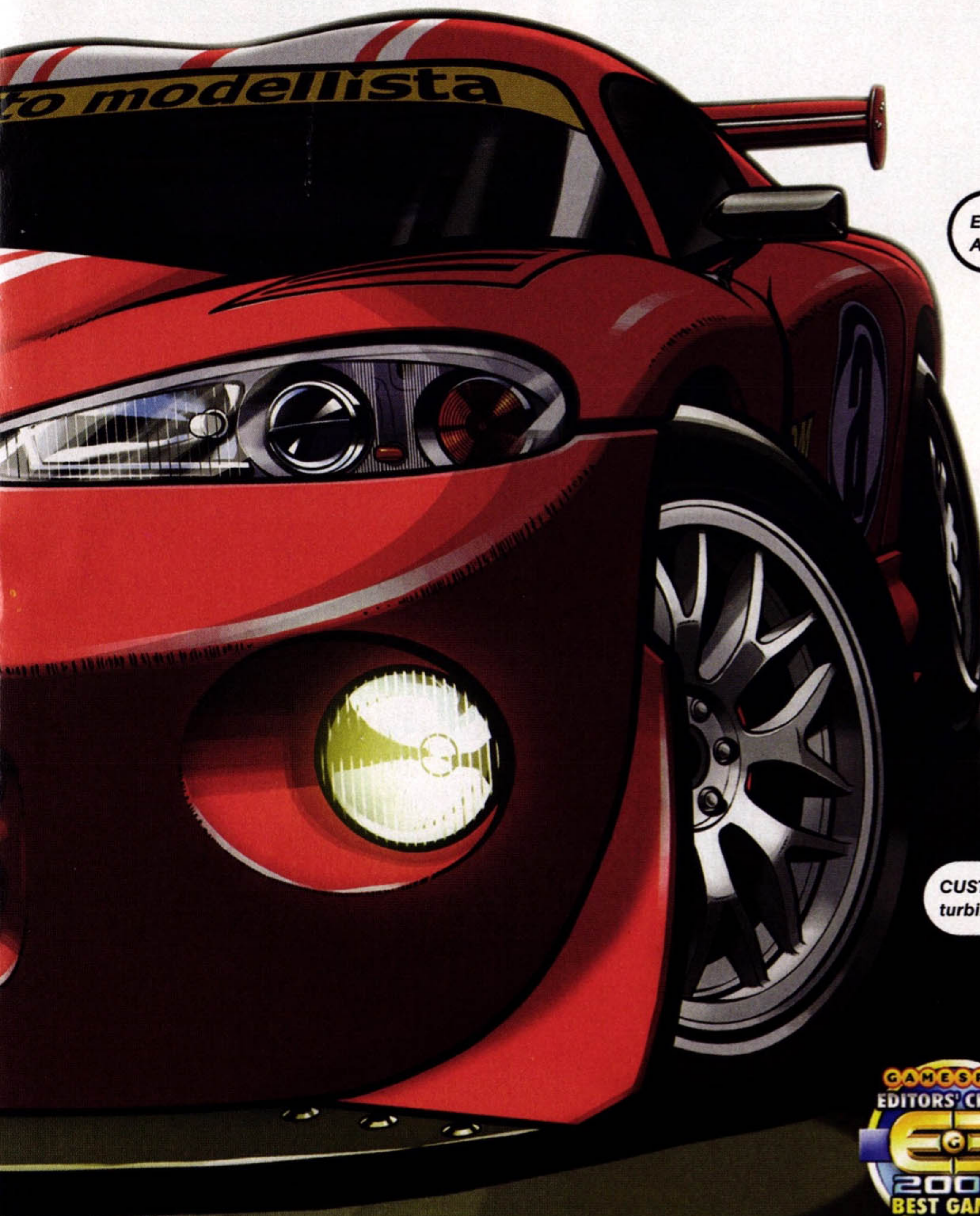
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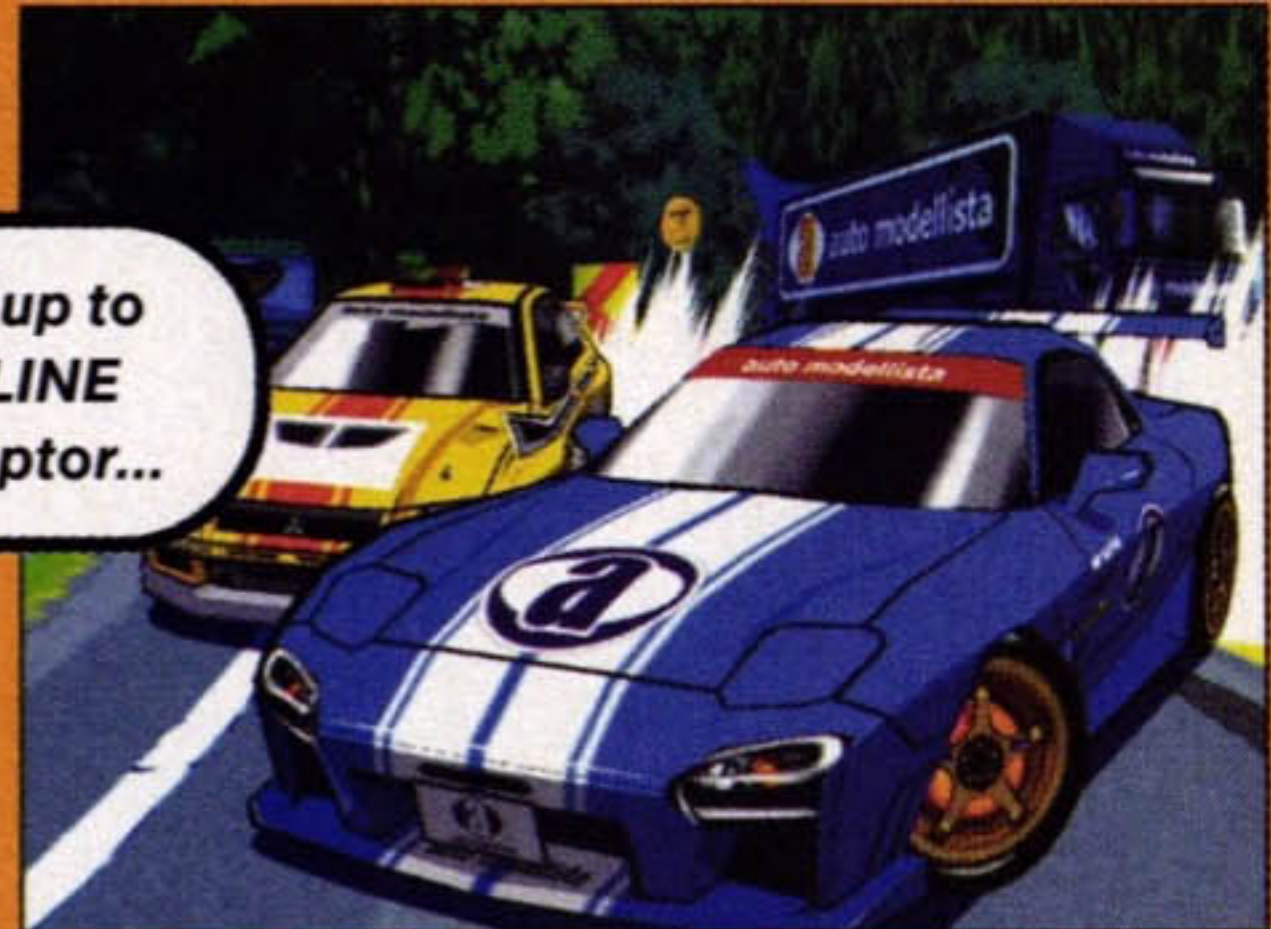


# RACING IS NOW!

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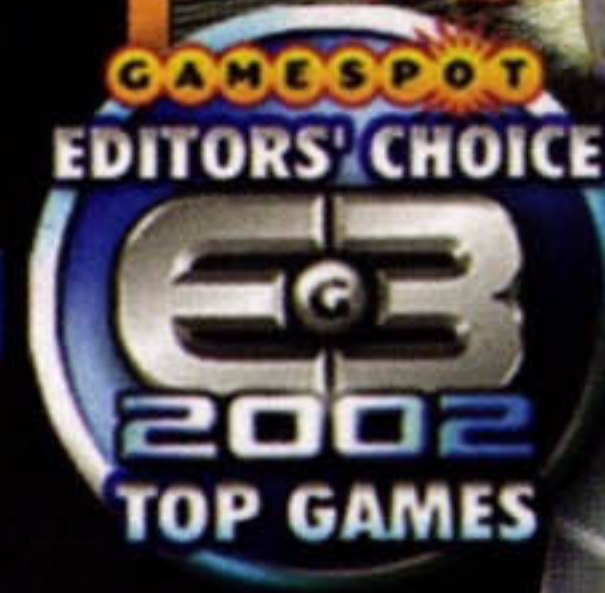
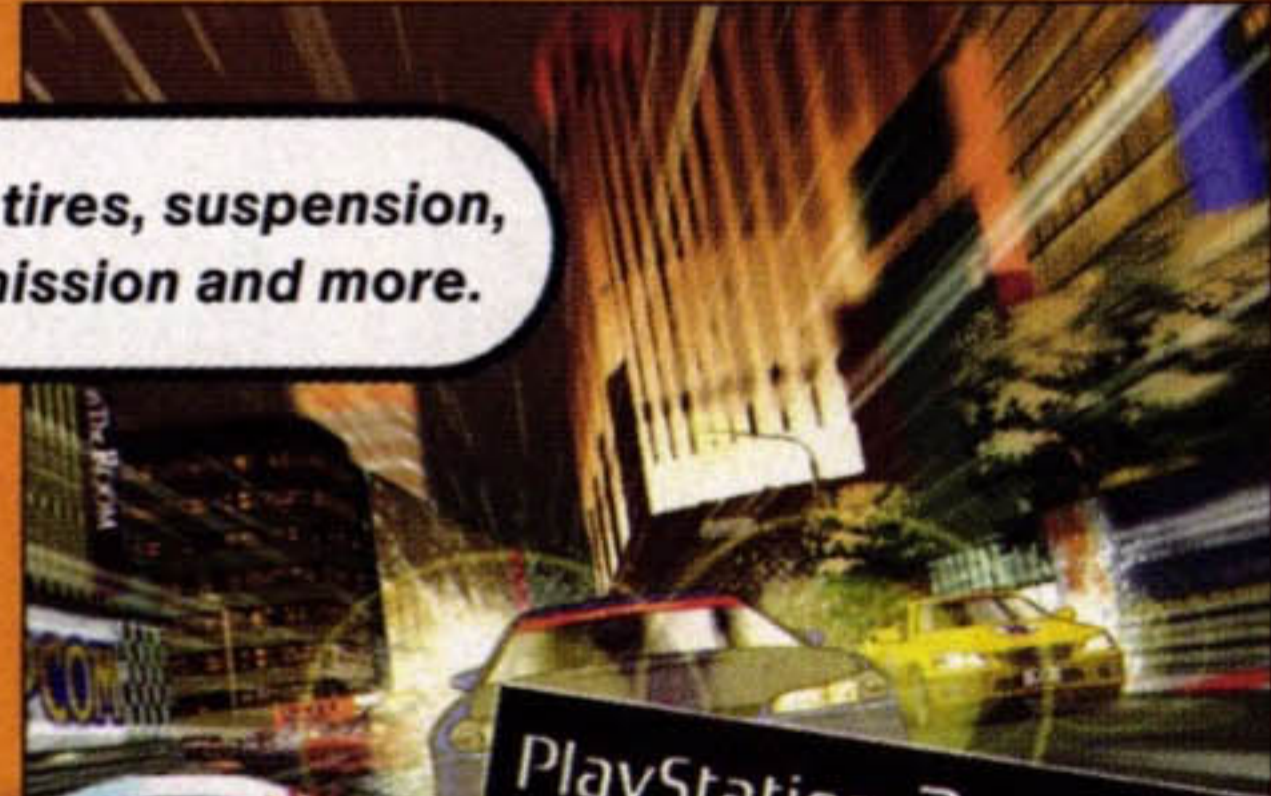
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NETWORK  
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PACKAGE

PlayStation 2



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*Electronic Gaming Monthly*

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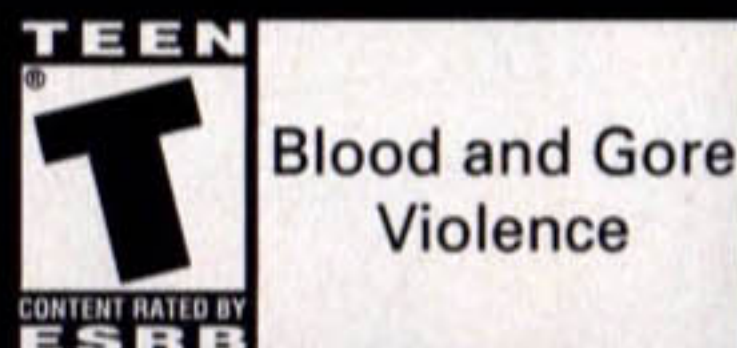
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# GAMEINFORMER

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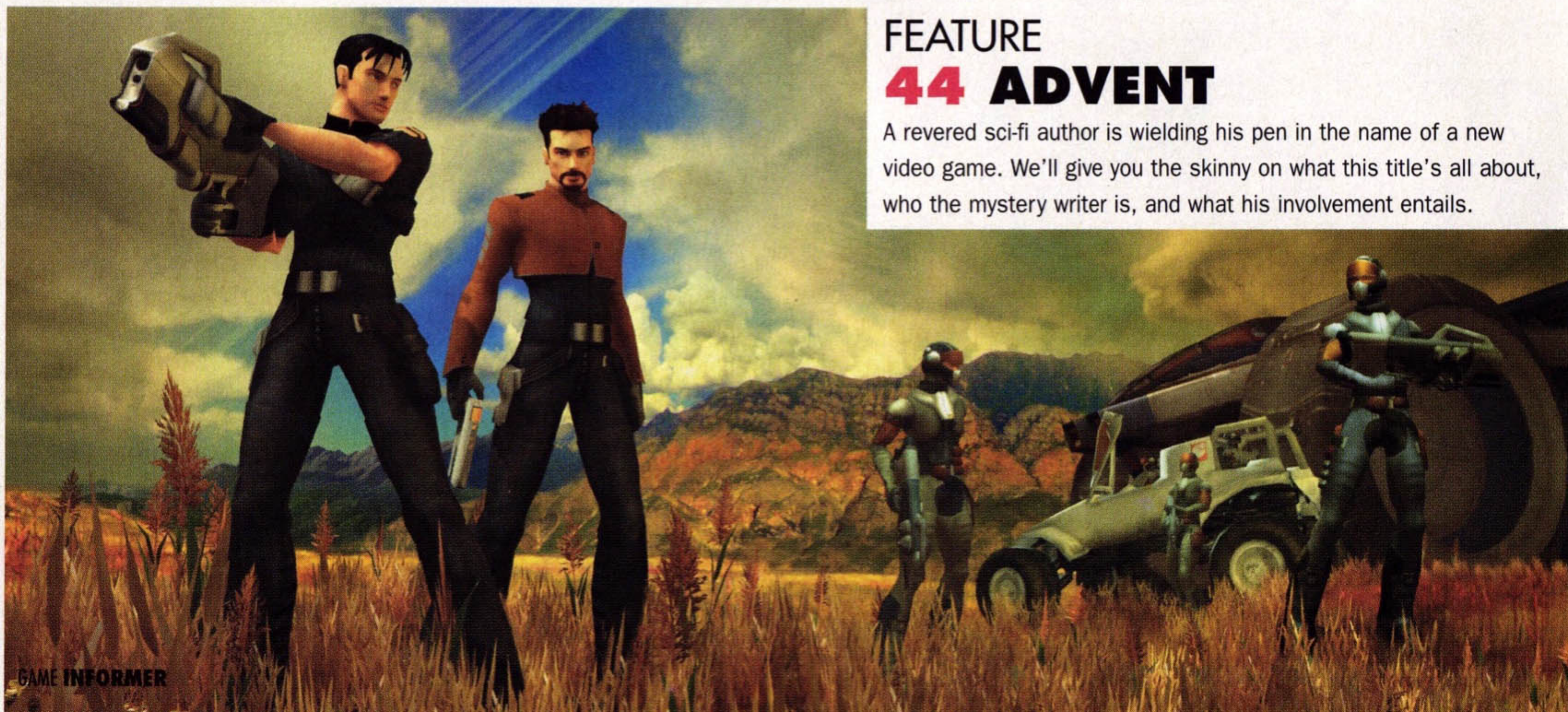
### 34 COUNTER-STRIKE

With Halo 2 delayed (which isn't really a delay because Microsoft hadn't announced an actual release date, blah, blah), what is the faithful Xbox minion to do? GI comes to the rescue and is delivering the Counter-Strike lowdown to lift all the sweet gamers' spirits in this time of need.

## FEATURE

### 44 ADVENT

A revered sci-fi author is wielding his pen in the name of a new video game. We'll give you the skinny on what this title's all about, who the mystery writer is, and what his involvement entails.





# GameSpy 2002 PS2 Game of the Year!

*"A rare must own title."*  
-EGM, Editors Choice Gold Award



*"Funny, smart, richly entertaining and superbly crafted."* -OPM, 5/5

*"Still the Best!"* -GamePro, 5/5

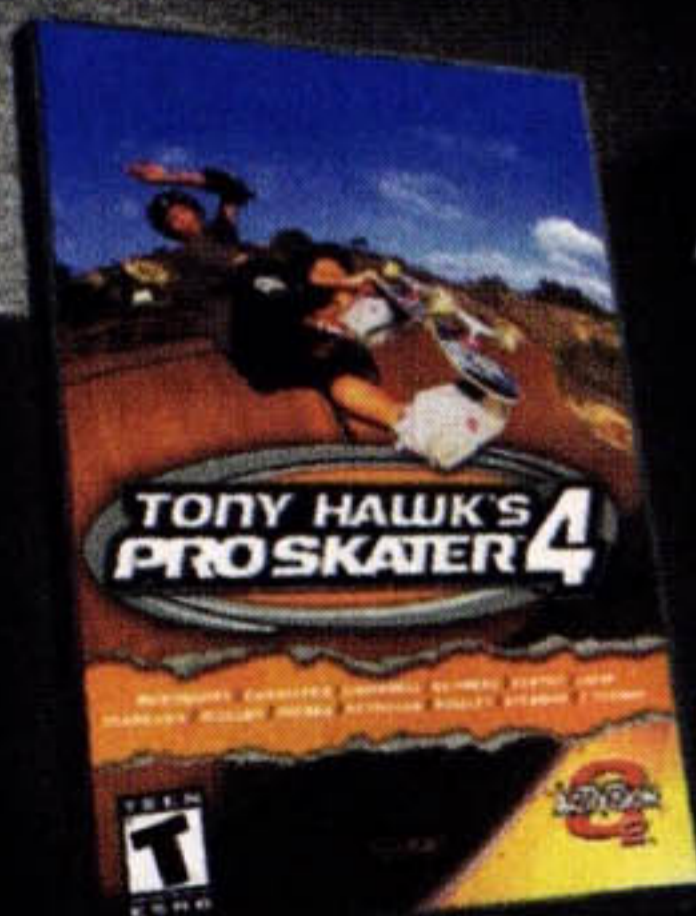
**2002 Best Alternative Sports Game of the Year**  
**PS2, Xbox and GameCube.**



*"Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 4 is easily the best game in the series..."* -IGN.com

## THE CRITICS HAVE SPOKEN...

# TONY HAWK'S PROSKATER 4



Featuring songs by N.W.A., Offspring, and System of a Down.

Official Strategy Guide available from Brady Games.

\* Online play exclusive to PlayStation®2 computer entertainment system.



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Suggestive Themes

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PlayStation®2 computer entertainment system screenshots shown.



SPORTS REVOLUTION

ACTIVISION02.COM

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No one likes to come home with a shiny, new game just to struggle with the packaging...why doesn't it come off?! Damn that packaging! Anyway, you could find out that the disk inside holds megabytes of compiled horse dung. If only you'd read our reviews, you'd know what to steer clear of.

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An expansive and complete rundown of major sports' classic titles (yes, all the favorites are well represented) is the Classic Feature of the month. And, a fistful of nostalgia gets laid on ya with reminders of gone-but-not-yet-forgotten titles.

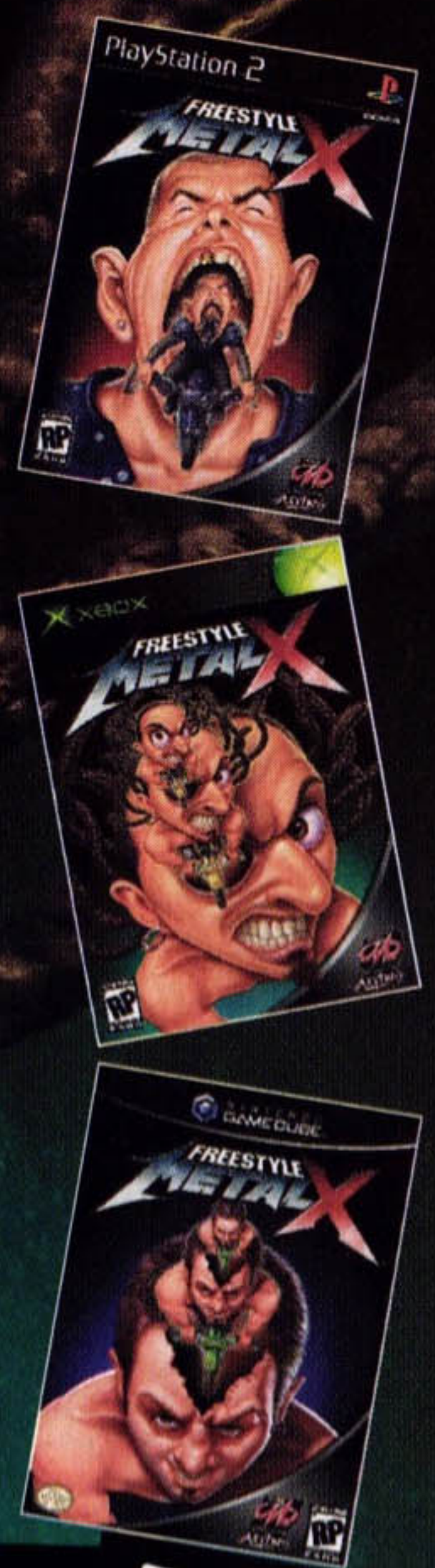
## 108 ETC

We like accessories. Especially Lisa, but she's a girl and gets to care about shoes that can't be worn very often and certainly not in the winter. We digress - accessories and toys are good.



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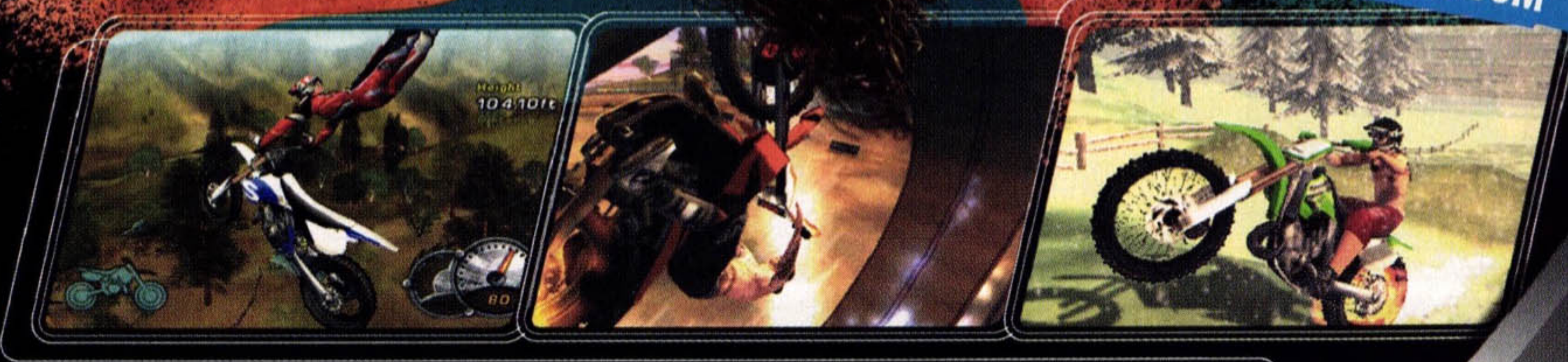
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PlayStation 2



# GAME LIFE

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Thu. Apr-10 Auburn University  
Mon. Apr-14 Florida A&M University  
Tue. Apr-15 Florida State University  
Wed. Apr-16 Tulane University  
Fri. Apr-18 University of Texas-Austin  
Tue. Apr-22 Arizona State University  
Thu. Apr-24 Cal State Long Beach  
Fri. Apr-25 UC Santa Barbara  
Mon. Apr-28 University of California Berkeley  
Tue. Apr-29 Chico State University

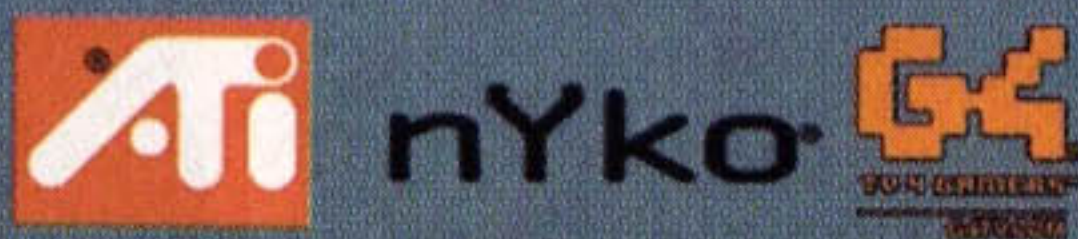
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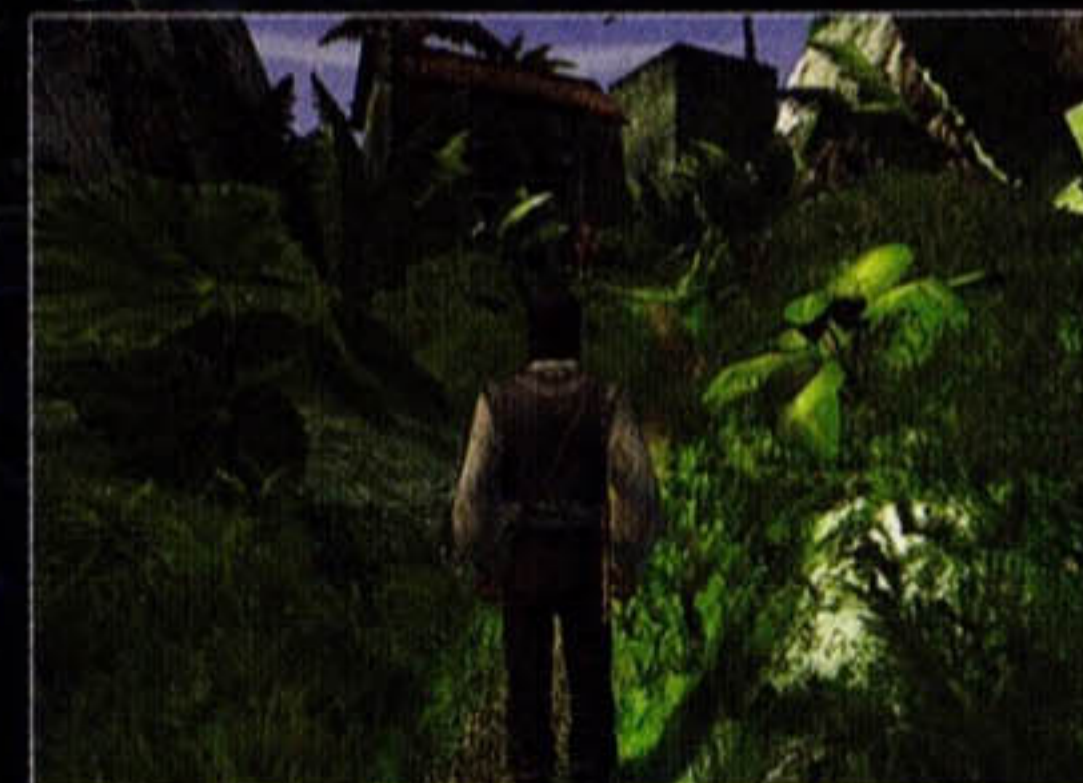
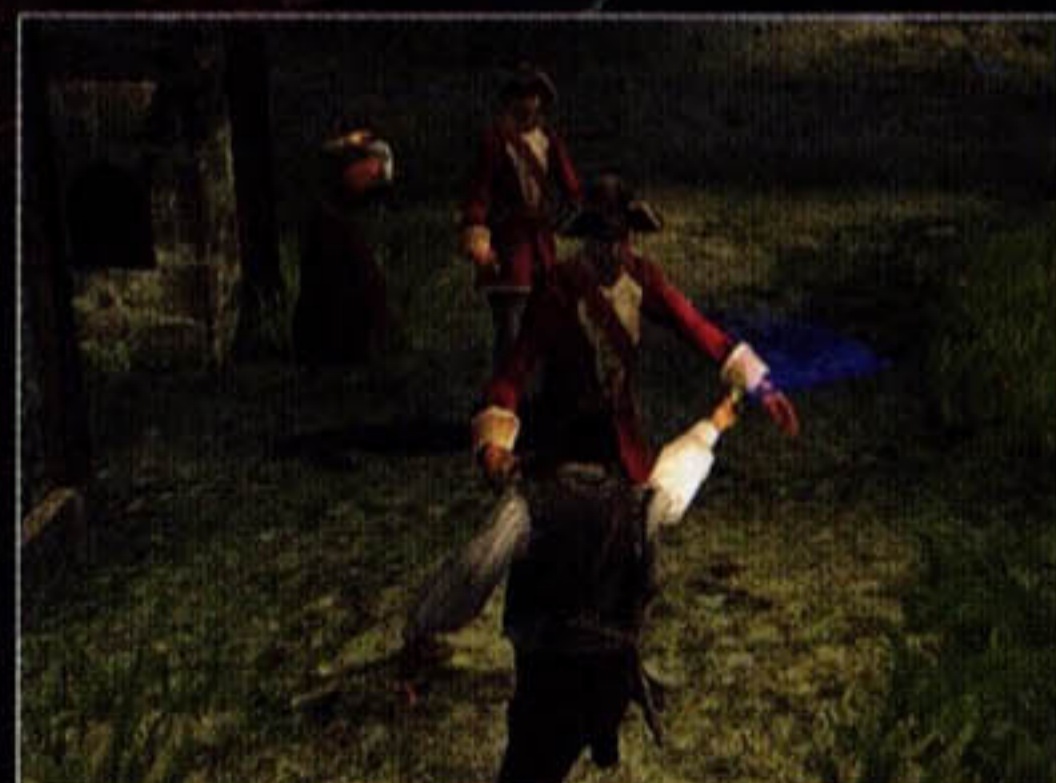


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# EDITORS' FORUM

## ARGUMENT OF THE MONTH



The other day Chet peeked his head in my office and said to me, "Dude, we would be so hardcore if we picked Ikaruga as the Game of the Month!" quickly followed by a "that game is sweet," and cackles of glee as he headed back to his desk.

This, as you may have guessed, is not the first time that an editor has campaigned his or her favorite vid for the illustrious Game Of The Month title. From Kristian screaming "Freelancer!" whenever the issue is discussed, to Justin mocking (in a rather silly falsetto voice, I might add) whatever game doesn't have what it takes, the race for GoTM is always a heated one.

We even went as far as to make up some

simple rules like "PC games can't win, unless all the console ones stink," or "Any game that uses the same name and just changes the date can't win unless we're really desperate." We are a pathetic bunch, we know, but those were our rules.

Well, we finally figured out how to work around at least one of them. From this issue onward, Game Informer will have both a console and PC Game of the Month. While that doesn't fix Chet's "hardcore" problem or the fact that we don't know what the heck to do with Madden each and every year, it is a start. If nothing else, at least we have one less completely arbitrary rule to remember.

Andy McNamara  
Editor-in-Chief  
andy@gameinformer.com

### REINER, THE RAGING GAMER

reiner@gameinformer.com

I don't know about you guys, but I'm really getting sick and tired of tutorials. I can honestly say that if I play one more platform game that insists on teaching me how to jump, I may give up video games, pack my bags, and move to India to become a Hari Krishna. I can understand the importance of easing a player into a game, but what about the people who already know how to operate a controller? It's such a redundant and unnecessary action. I pray that developers hear my cry and make a conscious effort to leave all training exercises on the side as additional modes, or are at least courteous enough to let people skip the damn things. After all, isn't that why games come packaged with manuals?

### MATT, THE ORIGINAL GAMER

matt@gameinformer.com

It's funny how we start to outgrow things like favorite games or bands. Just like you reach a point where you say, "Hey, I don't think I'm going to buy the next Busta Rhymes CD," sometimes you find yourself becoming less interested in a franchise that has been one of the staples of your gaming diet. For example, Tony Hawk 4 was the first in the series that I didn't complete. Some of you may feel the same way about titles in the Street Fighter, Mario Bros., or Tomb Raider franchises. You'll always love them, and always give the next one a shot, but – barring some massive overhaul of the formula – it'll never be the obsession that it once was. I'm not giving up on Tony yet, though, as I know Neversoft has the creativity to bring me back into the fold.

### KRISTIAN, THE VIDEO VIKING

kristian@gameinformer.com

I have just had one of the best gaming months in recent memory. I've been playing so many good releases across such a broad spectrum of genres, it's unbelievable. Amplitude started off my month, Freelancer wowed me in the middle, and Gallop Racer 2003 closed it out. There was some crap thrown in here and there, but those three had me on cloud nine. Who would have thought that a rhythm game, a space exploration/combat title, and a horseracing simulator could whip me into such a frenzy? In closing, I'd like to urge those of you who have your driver's license to get the hell out of the left lane if you're not going to pass people. Fair enough?

### JUSTIN, THE DIGITAL DEVIANT

justin@gameinformer.com

Many of my gaming wishes have been granted in the current console generation. Metroid Prime and Jak and Daxter are helping abolish load times. Both racing and action games are getting more nonlinear. Eternal Darkness and Metal Gear Solid 2 mess with our minds in ways TV and movies can't. Red Faction II and Tao Feng are upping the ante for interactive environments. Developers are finding out what works to increase replay through Franchise modes, Quest modes, and unlockables. I want to see more customization in games, though. I want more control over how I play and what skills I have. I'm looking for Deus Ex 2 to handle that area nicely.

### KATO, THE GAME KATANA

kato@gameinformer.com

This month, I got the chance to replay an old favorite of mine – Xevious. I spent more than a few quarters on it back in the day, but that doesn't mean I was any good. My oh my, how some things never change. Unlike walking and talking at the same time, I haven't gotten better at that title as I've gotten older. Still, I guess it's good that I never felt the computer got in some cheap deaths – rock-solid gameplay can still be king. On a different note, for those who thought my blurb last month was crazy talk, check out the news story regarding Electronic Arts and NASCAR. Is this the start of a trend?

### CHET, THE JOYSTICK JOCKEY

chet@gameinformer.com

Certain titles deeply offend me, simply because they are a game. One such example is the Medal of Honor series. In a way, they mock the reality of the situations that they mimic. Take, for instance, the raiding of Normandy Beach. Players are actually meant to enjoy this scenario, and without the horror of that situation properly expressed, most players get the wrong impression. Compare this with *Saving Private Ryan*, and you can see my point. As games continue to permit more artistic freedom, they should strive to be true art; that is, to convey meaningful emotions like film. Perhaps the fact that games are inherently supposed to be fun make it impossible for them to reach a level on par with others.

### LISA, LA GAME NIKITA

lisa@gameinformer.com

I like video games with scores. Not scores as in point value, but scores as in soundtracks. This might be part of the reason that some genres (survival horror and point-and-click puzzle in particular) take up so much space on my list of all-time greats. For example, with Chris Vrenna's assistance, the Alice soundtrack is certainly a decent piece of music outside the game experience. Adding to the NIN member pool, Trent Reznor is no stranger to the video game score, either. Looking for a listening recommendation whether or not you dug the game? I liked the *Myst III: Exile* score quite a bit.



1. Thinking there's hidden money in brick ceilings, Justin knocks himself unconscious. 2a. Attempting to match the height of his idol, Yao Ming, Matt eats wild mushrooms and has the best eight hours of his life...2b....then mounts Andy thinking he's Yoshi. 3. In the hopes that they could fly, Chet and Reiner sew a raccoon tail on their pants and jump off the Empire State Building. 4. Kato gets stuck in a random pipe trying to reach a warp zone. Lisa tries to help. 5. On a recent visit to Reptile Gardens, Kristian reduces the turtle population by throwing flaming newspaper balls at them.

**#1 SELLING  
BASEBALL  
GAME!**\*

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*Better Than Real.*

**MLB  
SLUGFEST  
2004**

game preview at [midwaysports.net](http://midwaysports.net)

*The top-selling exclusive adrenaline-style baseball videogame is back with a ton of new features.*



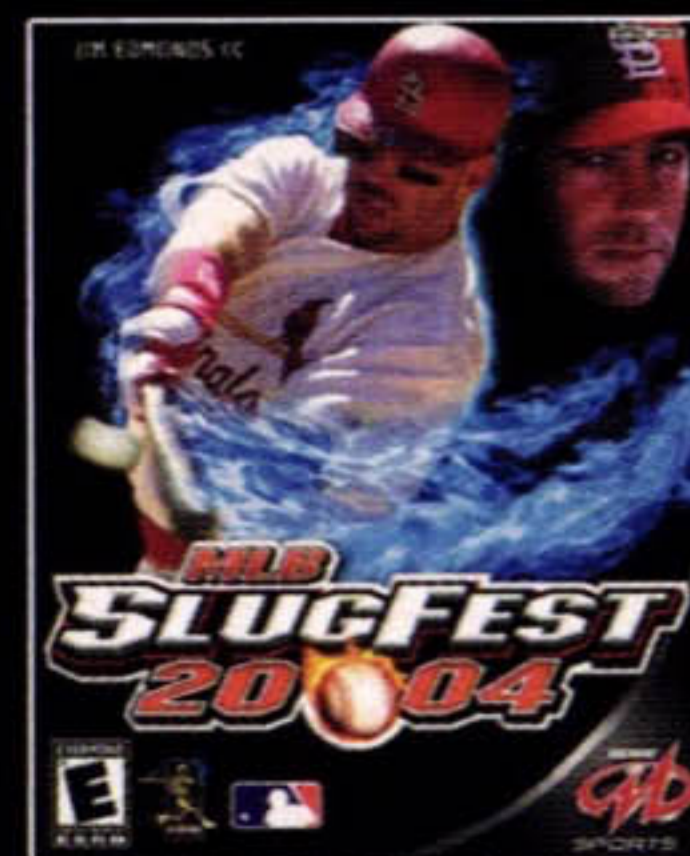
Loads of ALL-NEW features like individual MLB™ player batting stances and pitching deliveries.



Ferocious adrenaline-style play lets you go in spikes high; then, relive it from any angle with the new customizable instant replay.



Pit your favorite MLB™ players in an ALL-NEW Home Run Derby® and square off against the most feared long ball hitters in the league.



**EVERYONE**  
**E**  
CONTENT RATED BY  
**ESRB**  
Comic Mischief  
Violence

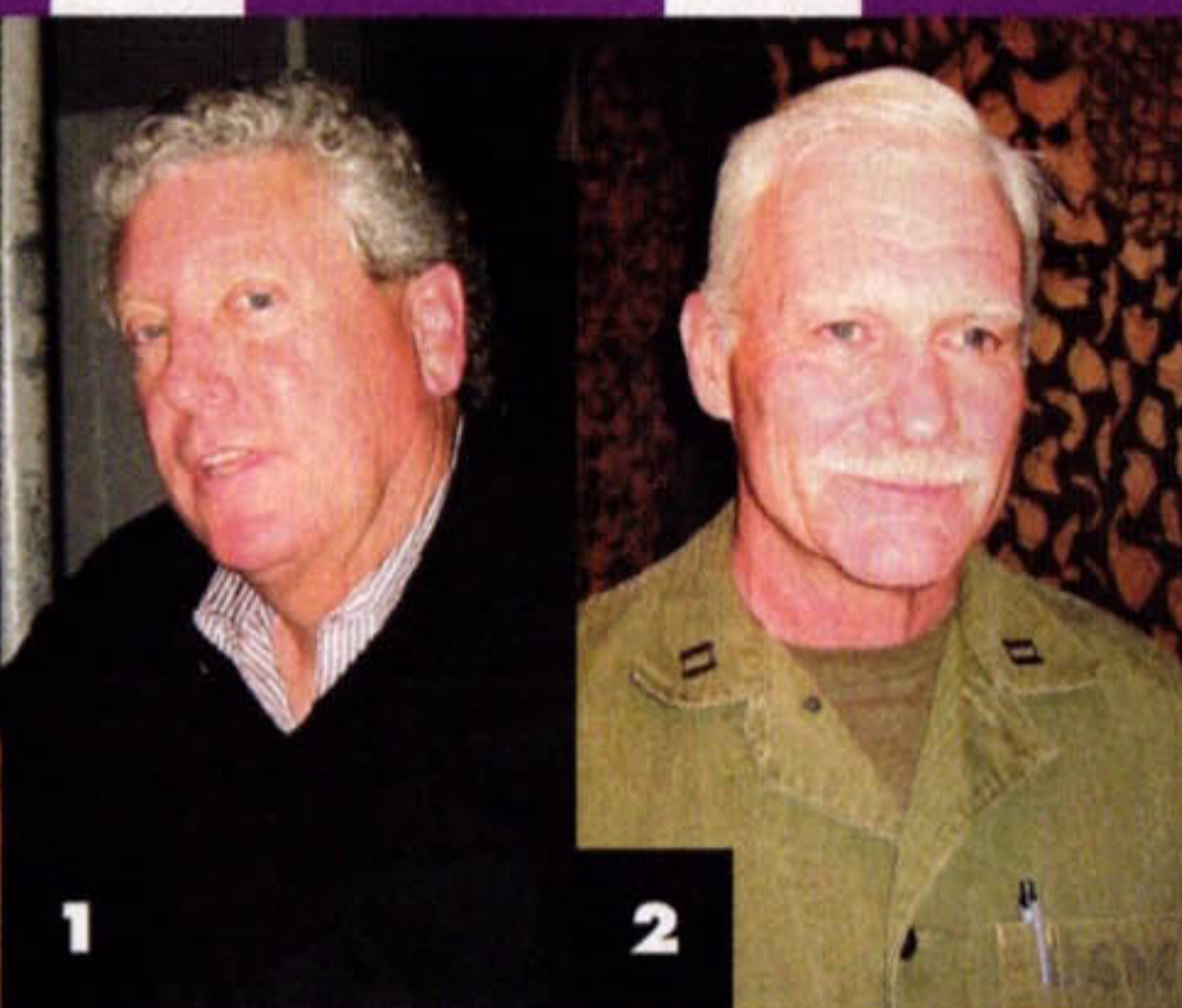


PlayStation 2

GAME BOY ADVANCE

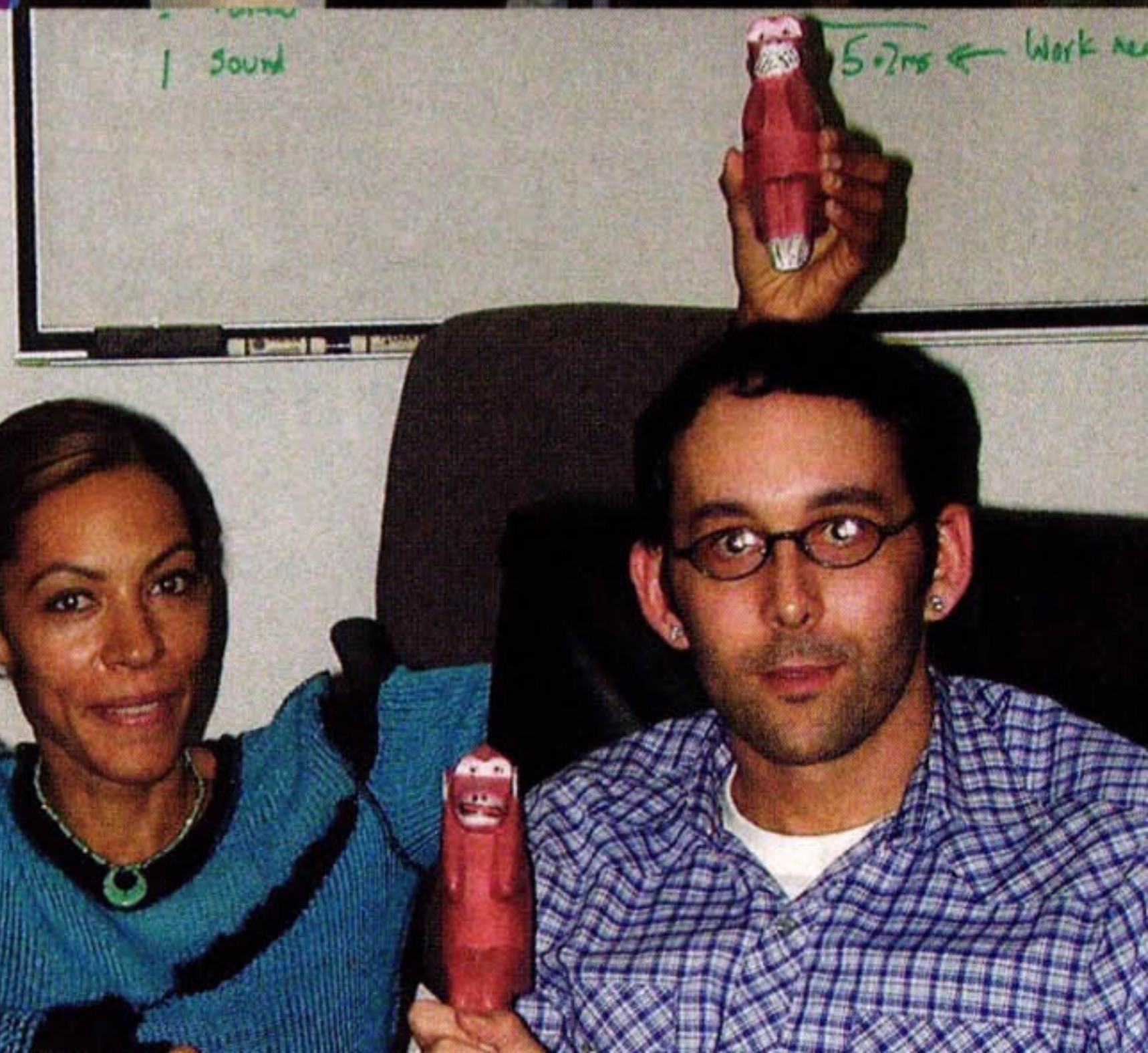


# GI SPY



**CANDID PHOTOS FROM THE SEAMY UNDERBELLY OF THE VIDEO GAME INDUSTRY**

**1** Capcom senior vice president of sales and marketing Robert Lindsey thinks you're a girly man. **2** So does Medal of Honor/*Saving Private Ryan* consultant Capt. Dale Dye. He did two tours in Vietnam and has three Purple Hearts, so we're not going to argue with him! **3** So-Cal pop punkers Unwritten Law entertain the crowd at the Interactive Achievement Awards with a spectacular set of Dashboard Confessional covers. Now, if you'll excuse us, we've got to go make a mix tape for the girl we dated in 7th grade. **4** Kristen Dalton, from USA Network's *The Dead Zone*, presents an award at the Interactive Achievement Awards with Chris "Mr. Happy Pants" Taylor from Gas Powered Games. **5** Midway's Tim Cummins, Marci Ditter, and Aaron Grant: Doing their part to ensure that plastic monkeys get the attention they deserve. Thankfully, bipartisan support is very strong on this issue. Democracy totally rules!! **6** Amber Alert! Nintendo's Julia Roether has kidnapped G4 Television's (and former *Next Generation* editor-in-chief) Tom Russo! **7** At the annual D.I.C.E. convention in Vegas, Shigeru Miyamoto falls asleep while Yu Suzuki discusses Shenmue III. **8** Sean Kauppinen and Michael Lustenberger of Sony Online chill in the Game Informer conference room.





LIVE FROM A GALAXY FAR, FAR AWAY....



Single player battles rage across six worlds.

# STAR WARS THE CLONE WARS

The Clone War is up and running on Xbox Live. Wreak havoc on the ground and in the air of six different worlds. Boot up and battle it out with other troopers on Xbox Live in four multiplayer modes: Duel, Conquest, Control Zone and Academy. And see if you have what it takes to dominate the battlefields in a galaxy far, far away.

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



Multiplayer mayhem with up to 8 players.



VIOLENCE

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Official Star Wars® Web Site  
[www.starwars.com](http://www.starwars.com)

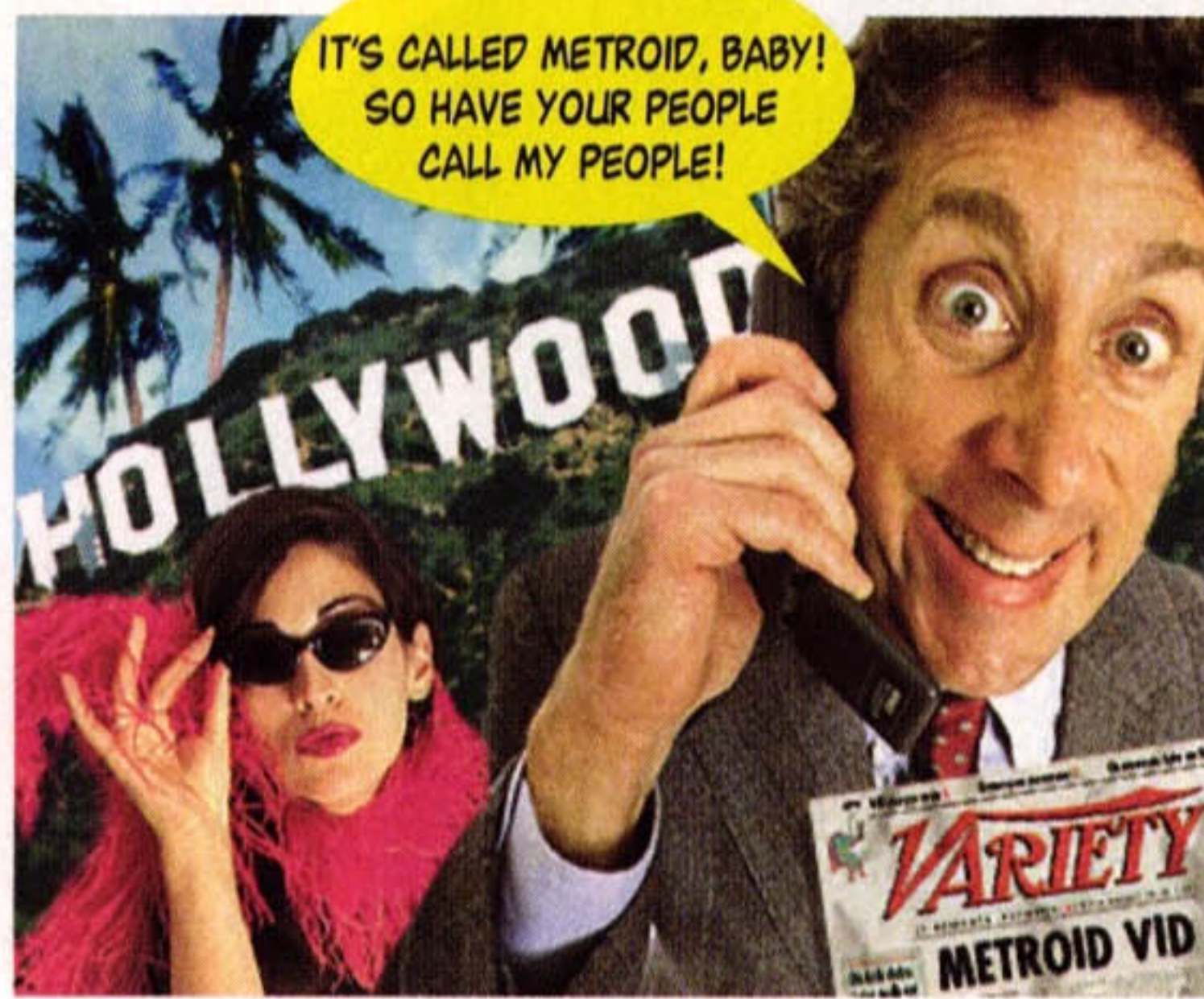


# DEAR GI

## ADAPTATION

I stumbled across an article online a couple weeks ago regarding the fact that a Hollywood production company had acquired the rights to make a movie out of Metroid. My friends seem to think that this is a bad thing. I, for one, am partially excited at the prospect of a movie made out of my favorite video game. I just don't want the movie – if it is ever made – to suck.

Megun-chan  
via aol.com



**Variety** recently reported that the creators of *Final Destination* and *American Pie* have acquired the rights to make a *Metroid* movie. This is the latest franchise to be picked up in Hollywood's mad dash to suck up the best video game licenses for movie translations. *Fatal Frame*, *State of Emergency*, *Grand Theft Auto*, *Crazy Taxi*, *Dead or Alive*, *American McGee's Alice*, *Crimson Skies*, *Max Payne*, *Oni*, *Perfect Dark*, and *Silent Hill* have all been purchased in the last year or two. We covered the *House of the Dead* movie in issue 111; and *Doom*, *Quake*, and *Duke Nukem* are still stuck in different stages of development hell.

While the film adaptations of classic game franchises haven't always fared well at the box office, the powers that be must see *Tomb Raider*-like potential in the properties to justify this much interest. Hopefully, they'll keep gamers in mind on their way to the cineplex.

## TURNING JAPANESE

I am disappointed. I was reading your March issue and turned to the ETC page and saw the Game Informer editor standees. Those are a great idea! I knew they weren't real but I had to try. I hopped online, but [www.chick-phil-a.com](http://www.chick-phil-a.com) doesn't exist. Too bad; I could really use a room full of Game Informer standees watching over me at night. I see it now – Reiner is there, Chet is there, and...and you, Kato, are there, too! If only....ahhh.

Dan  
Via aol.com

**Just like a bevy of other standees that should not exist (Clown from *Spawn*, Pinhead from *Hellraiser*, Martha Stewart), life-size recreations of the Game Informer editors hovering over unsuspecting sleepers is a horror too great for the U.S. government to allow on these shores. But, we've heard that Japanese versions will be available for import in the third quarter of 2003.**

## SCREWING THE POOCH

I ordered *All-Star Baseball 2004* for the PS2 after I read your preview of the baseball games [Basewars: The Battle for Cooperstown in Issue 119]. You raved about the game and tend to be dead on, especially when it comes to sports. But, I have one complaint: ASB 2004 is not an online game, like your preview said. The only online option is to download updated rosters. I just spent \$50 in shipping and pre-orders to go online! What's the deal?

Stephan Gog  
Via yahoo.com

Despite the short time between our article and the launch of the title, *Acclaim* removed the online play options we reported in Issue 119. We always try to give the most up-to-date information, and the omission of online play was covered in the review of *All-Star Baseball 2004* in Issue 120.

## GOT MILK?

I just wanted to comment on milk expiration dates, I think they should make milk last exactly 2 days longer.

Gray Boy  
Via hotmail.com

**We're totally in agreement. The state of milk longevity in this country is abhorrent.**

## PHONICS ROCK

You guys are the greatest. Since I ordered your mag, my grades in reading have gone up, which means I get more vids for good grades (SCORE!). I just want to give you guys a sincere thank you, and keep up the good work.

Brian Boyd  
Via msn.com

**We're here to make the masses literate...and put tutors out of business. Someday, we hope to learn how to read and write ourselves!**

## ROBOT WARS

Your last words in the *Steel Battalion* review were, "...and that, my friends, will be utter bliss." That is exactly what I'm experiencing right now. All my life I've lived for robots. In elementary school I kept a design notebook of them. The book was so diverse and inventive that it influenced several of my classmates to start their own. I had always lived for the day when robot jocks would meet with opposing mech pilots on the field of battle to determine the fate of nations.

Well, the school of the world's first mech jockeys is now open and *Steel Battalion* is our trainer. As I set up the huge controller this afternoon with my 11-year-old daughter, I shared with her the vision of a future where people are needed to pilot robots to determine world politics instead of bloodying battlefields. I told her that if she really got good at this game there might come a day when her skills would become valuable. If the U.S.R.P.C. (United States Robotic Pilot Corp) is ever formed, Xbox Live will surely be the pool it recruits from!

Well I say, let's have a cockpit peripheral that you actually sit in with force feedback and swivel (lateral as well as up and down) actuators for the real feel of a battle mech! Hell, I say where's the real deal?! Bring on the big boys, I'll take a Decider M-7 with a couple of Madcats on the side! C'mon Goliath, I got your David right here!!!

PhiSchmo  
Robot Jox, Inc.

While it's true that game peripherals have always been an important part of the industry, a cockpit that you can actually sit in may be a little cost-prohibitive for most companies. We suggest reveling in the joy of *Steel Battalion's* commanding controller and hope that more mech games of the same caliber arrive on store shelves.

As a side note, we must also state that the training regimen you've set up for your 11-year old daughter is a little disconcerting. What about playing catch?

## SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST?

Games have come a long way in their short history. When a notable game comes around, say *Diablo II*, I judge others by it for some time – at least until another landmark vid is released. I did it with *Final Fantasy VII*, *Soul Calibur*, and now with *Vice City*. Certain characteristics make them distinct; like gripping personalities, replay value, stunning visuals, or non-linear gameplay. With a combination of feelings from so many great games over the past few years, I expect more from developers in upcoming titles.

Little by little, I am noticing more art in video games. I love cel shading and the direction it is taking. As for the soundtrack department, I don't know if any game will ever compare to *Vice City*. Also, dialogue is definitely getting more involved. Something that I have grown quite fond of is the amount of creative control that gamers are given now. I can't help but be impressed with *WarCraft III's* world editor or *Vice City's* non-linear missions. Also, games like the *Sims* allow players to completely create the main character. Why can't more games follow suit?

Alan DeHaven  
Via hotmail.com

**Why can't more titles light the world on fire by revolutionizing gameplay, graphics, soundtrack, and storytelling? As Andy pointed out recently in the Editors' Forum, games are made that generate profits. The best way to show companies what we want to see in stores is to buy the ones that we like, regardless of their marketing budget. Go out and pick up a title that strikes your fancy. Maybe it's your new favorite game of all time, and maybe it isn't stellar all the way through. Either way, the publisher sees that there's interest in titles using cel shading, games that contain a world generator, or have kick-ass soundtracks.**

## MASTER QUEST

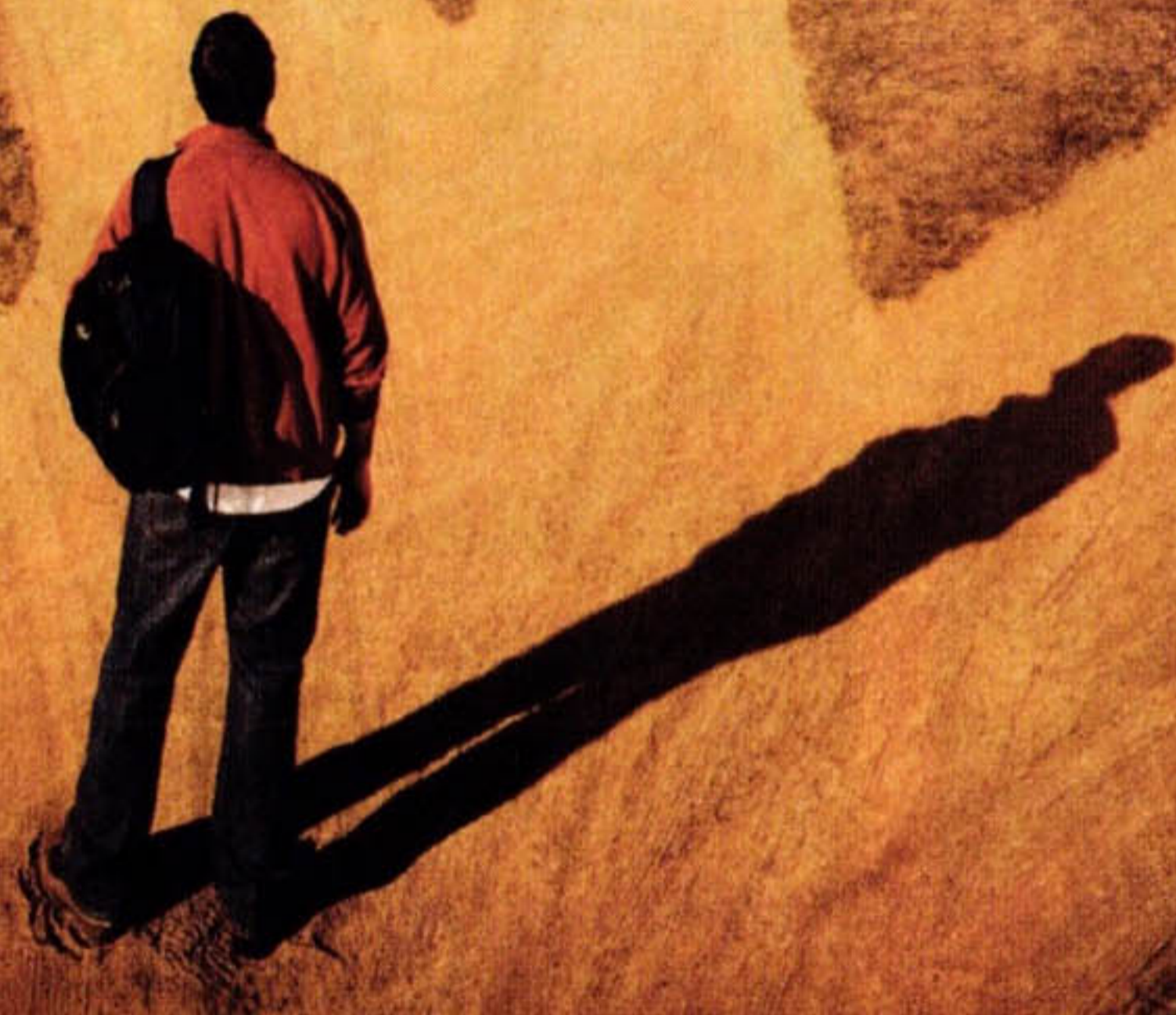
In the history of the magazine, which games have gotten perfect 10s?

Evan Kirkpatrick  
Via comcast.net



Of the nearly 3,000 games reviewed in the hallowed pages of this publication, only five have received a perfect 10. However, keep in mind that, in our old review format, the main score was based on an average of the three editors that reviewed a title. Therefore, games like *Super Mario 64*, which received a 10 from one – but not all – of the three reviewers are not recorded as 10s in our score archive. [Cue trumpet fanfare and drum roll] So, without further ado, the highest-scoring games in Game Informer history are:

when you can do everything, the hardest part is doing anything.



# DARK CLOUD 2

PlayStation 2



Violence

Take the first step in the sequel to one of the most epic quests ever: Dark Cloud 2. Create weapons. Invent gadgets. Restore the future by rebuilding the past with an enhanced Georama system that puts the fate of the world in your hands. Customize homes, surroundings and towns with virtually infinite possibilities, then see how they affect the future. But beware: Every action has a consequence.



LIVE IN YOUR WORLD.  
PLAY IN OURS.

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

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- Grand Theft Auto: Vice City (PS2)
- The Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker (GC)
- Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons of Liberty (PS2)
- Metroid Fusion (GBA)
- Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2 (PSone)

A few (but not all) of the games with the "Close But Still No Freakin' Cigar" award of 9.75 include:

- Donkey Kong Country 2: Diddy Kong Quest (SNES)
- Final Fantasy VII and IX (PSone)
- Final Fantasy X (PS2)
- Half-Life: Counter-Strike (PC)
- The Legend of Zelda: Majora's Mask (N64)
- The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time (N64)
- Madden NFL 2001 (PS2)
- Madden NFL 2002 (PS2)
- Master of Magic (PC)
- Medal of Honor: Allied Assault (PC)
- SimCity 4 (PC)
- Super Mario 64 (N64)
- Super Mario Sunshine (GC)
- Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3 (PS2, GC, and Xbox)
- Xenosaga Episode 1 (PS2)

### GET NEW FRIENDS

I have a problem: My best friend doesn't like your magazine. He thinks it's dumb. We actually stopped talking for a while because of this disagreement. What should I do to make him like your magazine?

Jon  
Via aol.com

I STILL HATE  
GI MAGAZINE!



Obviously, we don't condone violence of any form, so the knee-jerk reaction of cutting off fingers until he agrees with your correct opinion is out of the question. As a secondary recommendation, have you tried an intervention (the kindest and most loving thing a friend can do)? It may go something like this:

**YOU:** "You know [insert friend's name here], we, your friends and family, are growing increasingly concerned for your well-being. We feel that you are just plain silly. How can you not like Game Informer? This has gone on for much too long."

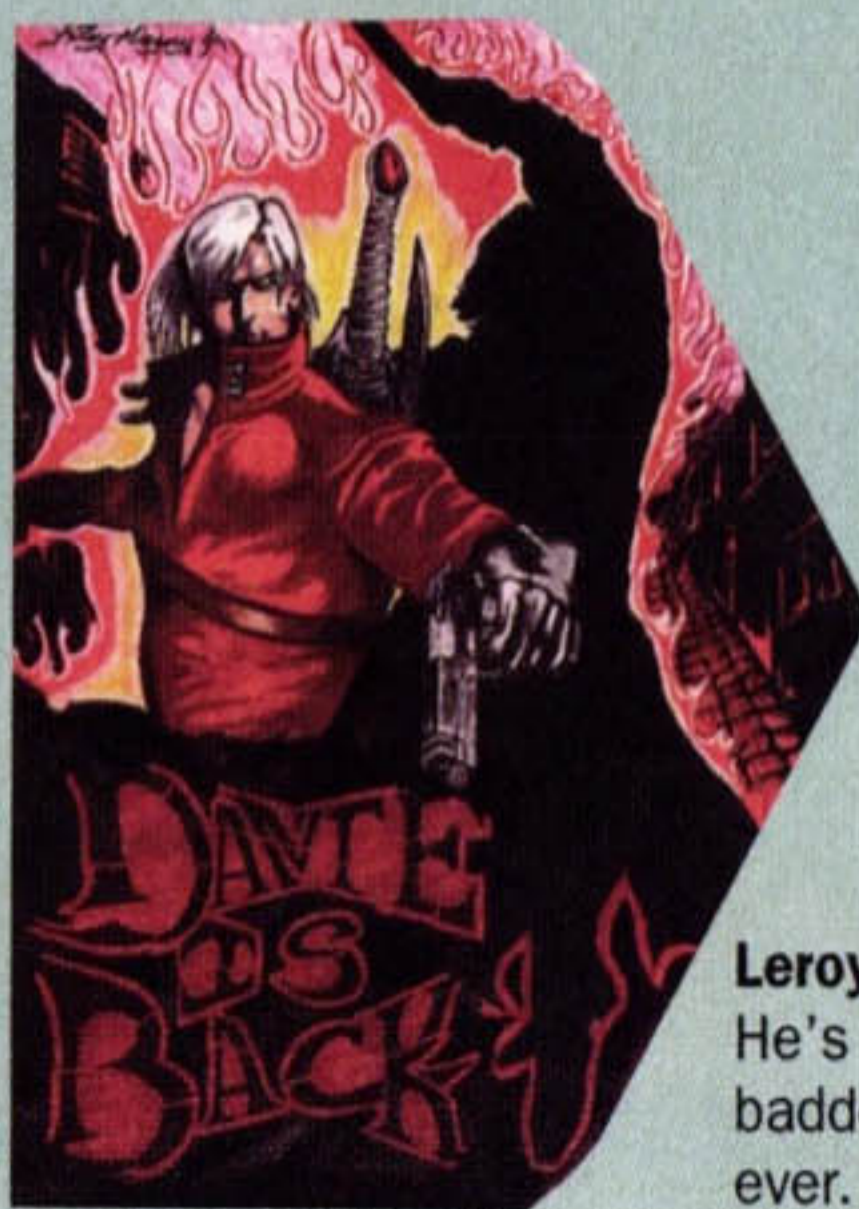
**FRIEND:** "I don't need your approval!"

**YOU:** "But, [insert friend's name here], how can you not appreciate the timely cover stories, insightful reviews, and witty coverage of the gaming industry? That's only the tip of the GI information iceberg that comes to your mailbox each month."

**FRIEND:** "No! GI is crap and they have poor math skills. Now I'm going to cut off your fingers until you agree with me!"

Sadly, the situation would then disintegrate into the aforementioned violence that we don't condone. Maybe you should just start with the fingers.

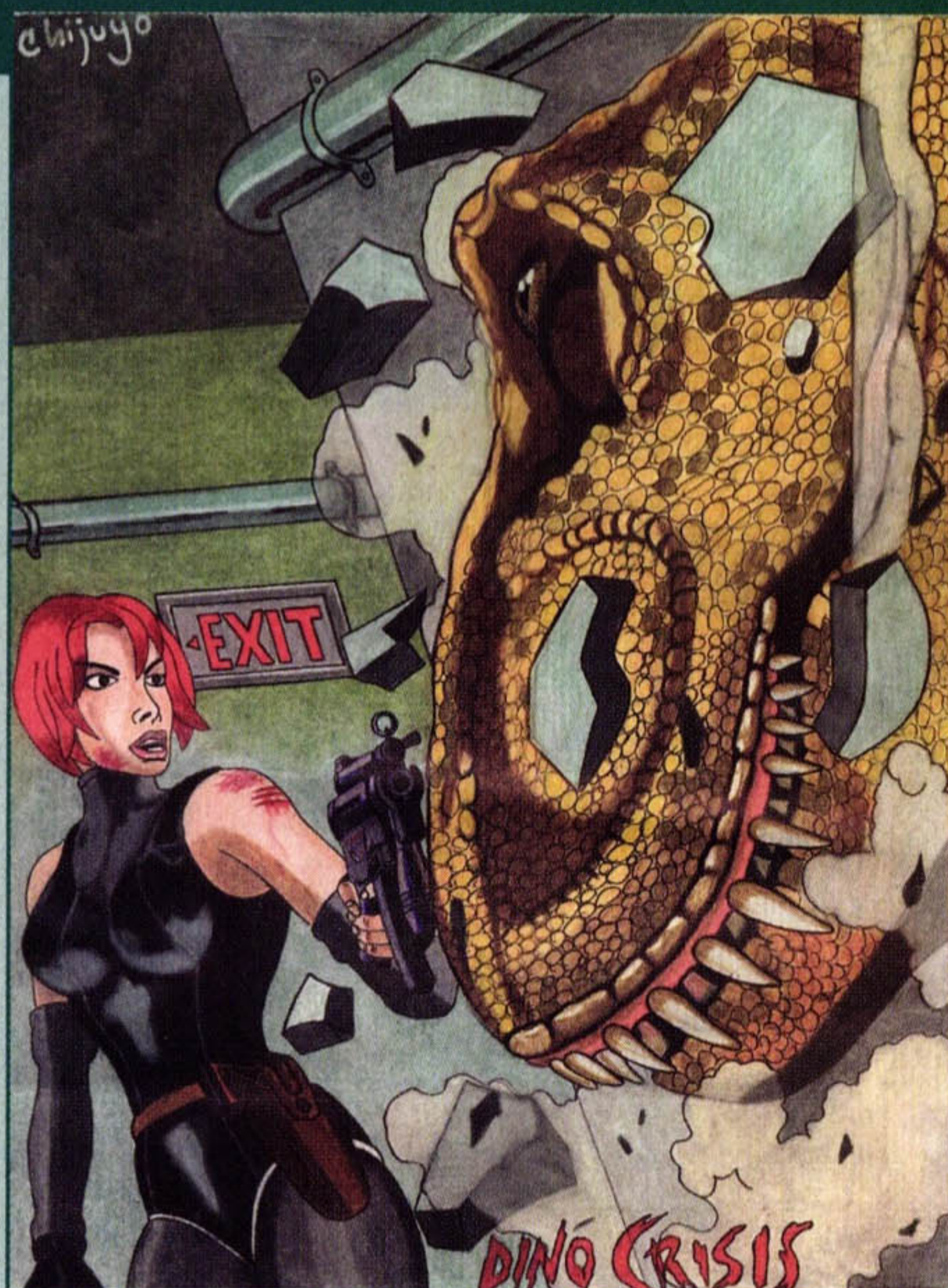
## ENVELOPE ART



**Leroy J. Gregory**  
He's back, and badder than ever. And by badder we mean not gooder



**Charles M. Atkins**  
"My my, Ico. You're hefting some heavy lumber for a kid your age."



### MAY WINNER!

**Chijuyo**

"I'm sorry, sir. You'll have to sit in the dentist office waiting room just like everyone else."

Enter the Game Informer Envelope Art Contest. All you need to do is draw, paint, scratch, spit, or carve the best darn envelope art you can think of and send it to us. Please include your name, phone number, and return address on the back of the envelope. If you're the monthly winner, we'll feature your work in GI and you'll receive a video game prize from the Game Informer vault. Sorry, art cannot be returned.

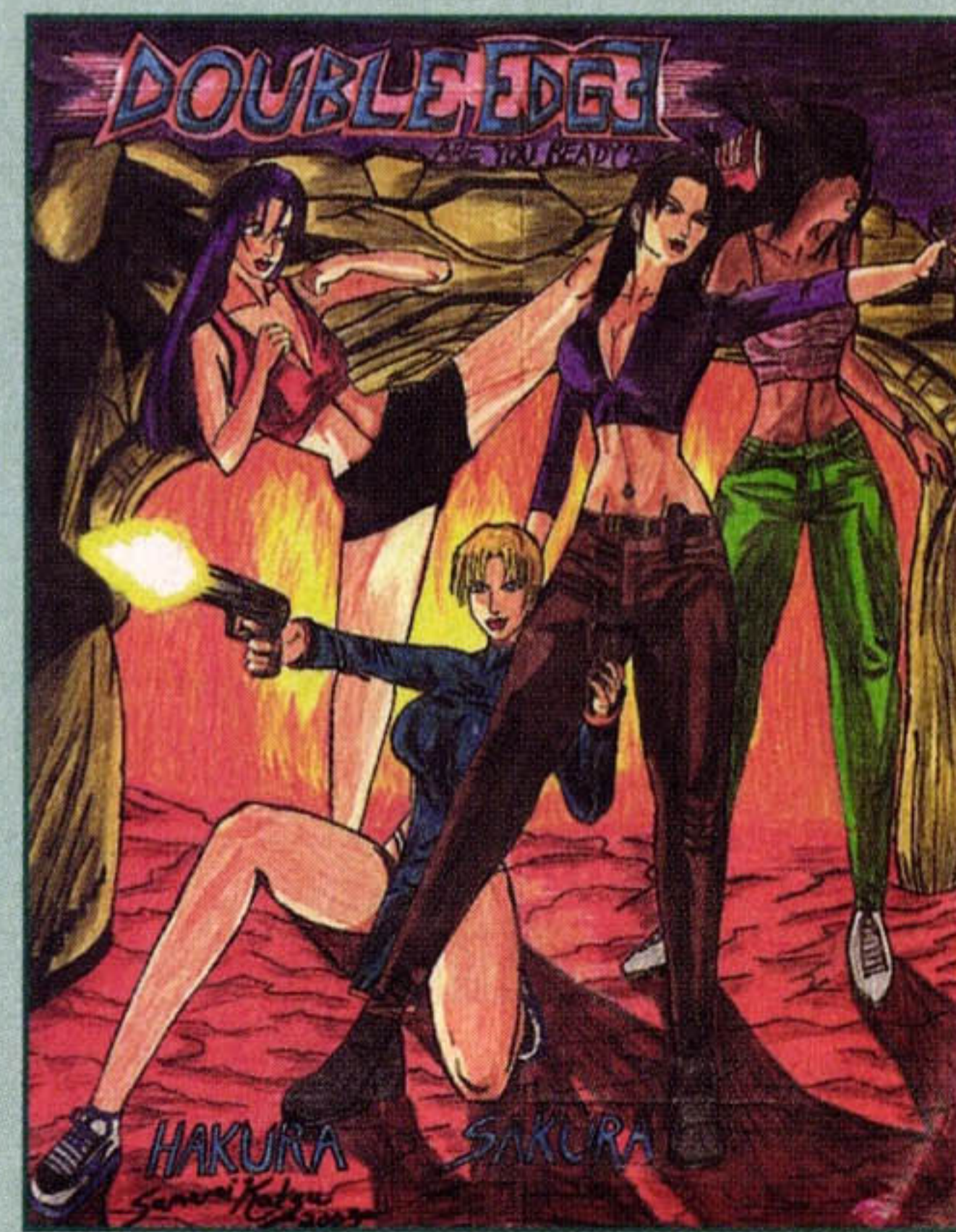
**Send to:**  
Game Informer  
Envelope Art Contest  
724 North First St., 4th Floor  
Mpls, MN 55401



**Hubal Coffman**  
Do you think his spider sense tingles when someone leaves the toilet seat up?



**Jason Osborne**  
It's a ménage à trois with Staryu from Pokémon!



**Luis G. Cabera**  
We don't know who these other girls are, but they sure are purdy



ONLY  
FOR

12.2001

*Space epic storms  
Japanese arcades...  
becomes #1 shooter  
of the year*

09.2002

*The phenomenon  
hits home on Sega®  
Dreamcast™...overseas*

04.2003

*The cult hit comes  
to the U.S. for the  
first time...*

# 斑鳩

# IKARUGA™

*“Our frothing demand  
for this game increases.”*

*—IGN.com*



EVERYONE  
**E**  
CONTENT RATED BY  
ESRB

VIOLENCE

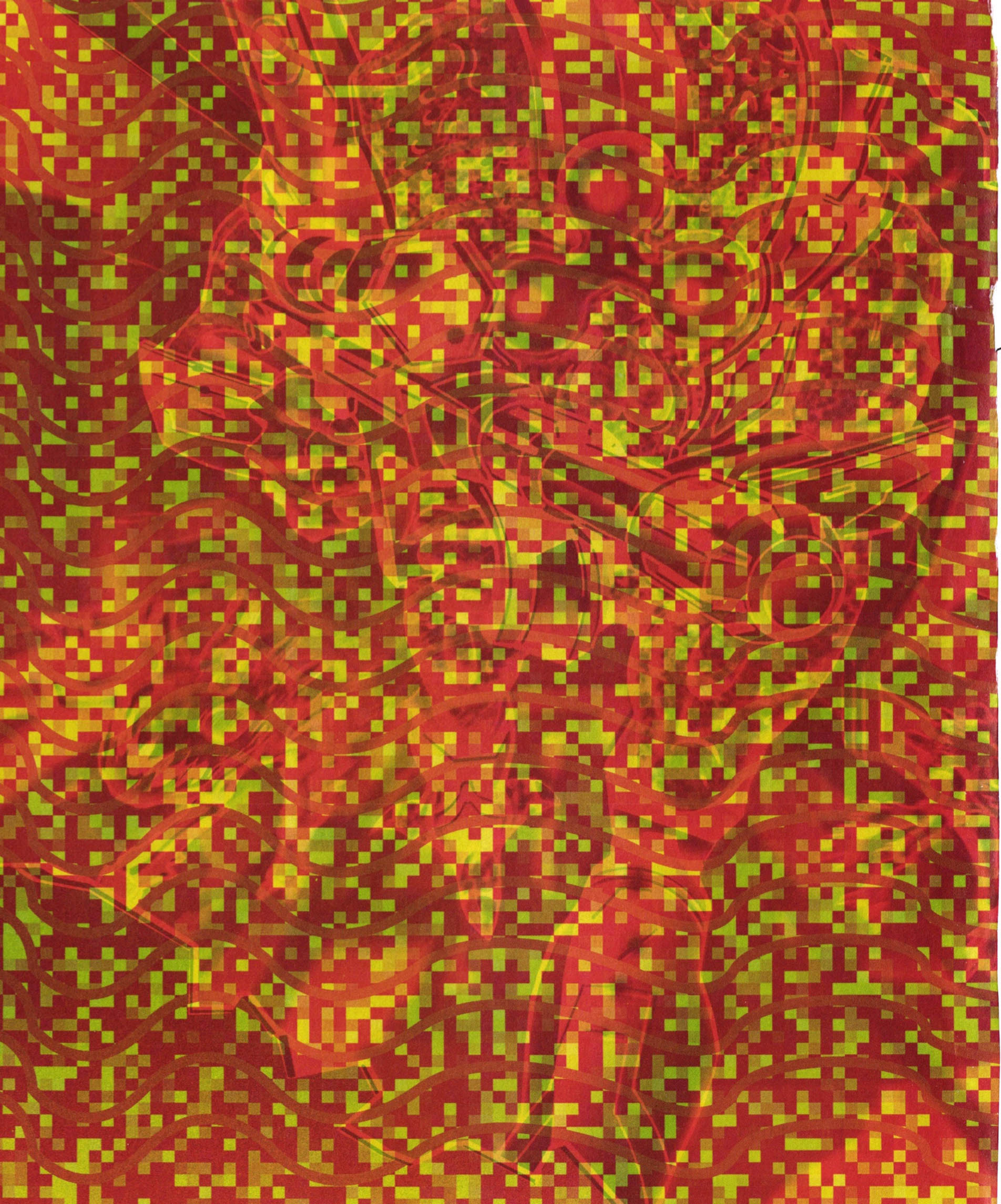


**TREASURE**  
VIDEO GAMES

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ATARI



IF YOU COULDN'T SEE  
THROUGH WALLS  
YOU'D BE DEAD NOW.

# GI NEWS

## MEDAL OF HONOR BEGINS PACIFIC CAMPAIGN

"How fitting it is that we should gather here today on this hallowed ground," said Rick Giolito, the executive producer of *Medal of Honor: Rising Sun*, at a recent event unveiling the game in San Francisco. "The Presidio: the staging ground for the Allied fight against the Japanese imperial war machine. Think of the hundreds of thousands of men and women who came through this [place] on their way to levels of heroism and sacrifice that most of us can only imagine." That's exactly what **Electronic Arts** is attempting to duplicate as it follows American soldiers into the Pacific theater this fall with *Rising Sun* for the **PlayStation 2**, **Xbox**, and **GameCube**.

This title ushers in many changes for the first-person series. Apart from inserting us into the war in the Pacific, *Rising Sun* will be the first of two episodes following the Griffin brothers. Players will start out as Marine corporal Joseph Griffin while he mans the guns and fights off the attack on Pearl Harbor. As the game progresses through Guadalcanal, the Philippines, and Burma, the brothers will become separated – enabling you to follow Donny's whereabouts in a future edition of *Medal of Honor* to appear next year.

The series has been retooled with a new graphics engine, animation system, and AI. "We just did not feel that the context and base that we had from [*Medal of Honor Frontline*] was sufficient to take on this challenge, so we have raised the bar there as



well," says Giolito. During the title's 10 missions, players will find other surprises such as the freedom to maneuver off rail levels, find secret paths, garner plenty of rewards, complete secondary objectives, and more. In a first for the series, cooperative multiplayer will be available through the single-player campaign. Also, custom maps and weapons, as well as a four-player split-screen mode, are included.

**PC** owners shall be called upon to do their duty, too. **Medal of Honor: Pacific Assault**

will also start out at Pearl Harbor, but will consist of different locations and missions from *Rising Sun* when it releases this winter. Furthermore, **Medal of Honor: Allied Assault Expansion Pack 2** will cover the events in Italy and North Africa come summer.

All screens are from the PS2 version of Medal of Honor: Rising Sun



## HALO 2 DELAYED INDEFINITELY

**Halo 2** developer **Bungie** has officially quashed any possibility that the **Xbox** game will hit store shelves this year. In a prepared statement, a spokesperson for the company said, "This game is a vast undertaking, considerably more complex than any of our previous efforts, and there is just no way to squeeze all of the necessary work into this calendar year." The exact nature of the hang-up is unknown. **Halo 2** will be **Xbox Live** compatible, which may have played a role in the delay. Regardless, the developer says that it will give gamers a quick glimpse of the title next month at **E3** in Los Angeles.

What does **Microsoft** think of this? *Game Informer* asked **Ed Fries**, the head of Microsoft Games Division, who said he was behind the decision all the way. "I don't want to give those guys false deadlines. We're not going to ship this game until it's perfect."



## EA STEALS NASCAR'S THUNDER

**EA Sports** and its **NASCAR Thunder** franchise will be the only car left on the track this year. The stock car racing organization's contract with all the video game companies expires this year, and EA rivals **Infogrames** (**NASCAR: Dirt to Daytona**) and **Sierra** (**NASCAR Racing** series) will not release new versions of those games this year or for the foreseeable future.

Although exact details on the negotiations between NASCAR and the three publishers are not being divulged, *Game Informer* has learned that part of the reason both Infogrames and Sierra may be withdrawing from the talks is that EA Sports may have simply outbid its competitors.

We spoke with **Owen Justice**, producer for **NASCAR: Dirt to Daytona** with developer **Monster Games**.

"I think NASCAR would have liked to have had multiple companies running with the product," says Justice. "But there is a point at which EA offers up enough money – and nobody [else] is willing to offer that kind of dough – that NASCAR had to look at it and say, 'This is a better deal for us.' I think they're just looking for the best business deal."

Publishers Infogrames and Sierra were both reserved on the matter. The former simply said, "There are currently no plans to renew our NASCAR license," while the latter told us that it planned to move from **PC** to multiple consoles with a new, non-NASCAR racing product.

**Ed Martin**, Director of NASCAR production for **Thunder** developer **Tiburon**, says that even EA Sports is still negotiating with the organization to secure rights in the future. "Anything beyond **NASCAR Thunder 2004** [to release in calendar year 2003] for us or whatever Infogrames may be doing is speculation, because nobody has an agreement signed with NASCAR to go beyond 2004." Martin went on to say that the publisher is currently in negotiations for a contract extending past the next iteration.

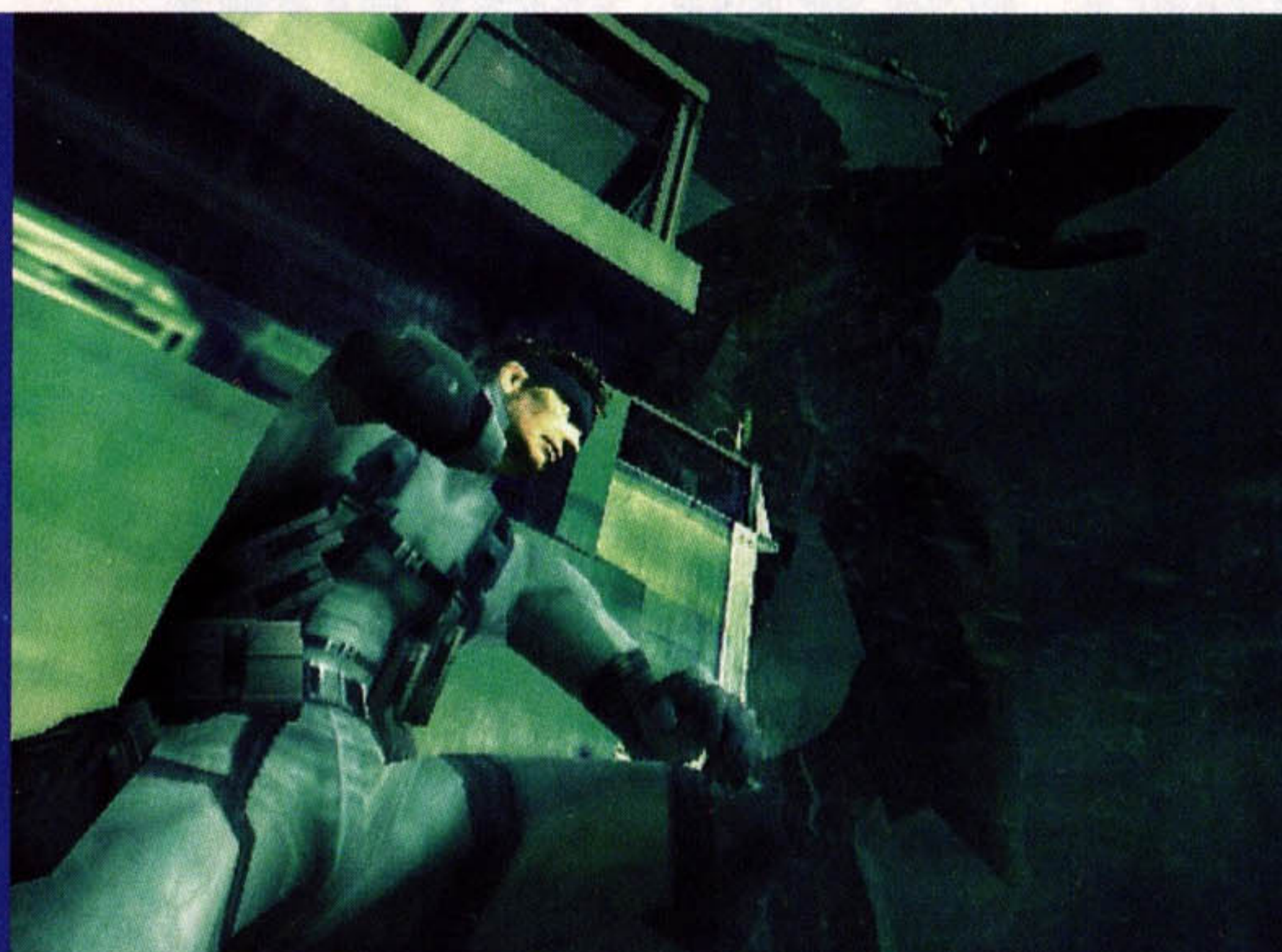
The bottom line is this: The expenses of maintaining a popular sports license and the competitive market of the video game genre has forced out two viable competitors. What effect will this have on the quality of **NASCAR Thunder**? Will we see similar events occur with sports like football or basketball? One thing is certain: A lack of competition will likely not serve us, the consumer, or even EA Sports, very well.



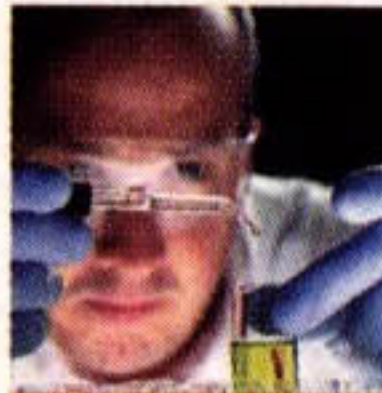
## NINTENDO SOLID WITH SNAKE & OLD FRIENDS

At a joint interview, **Konami** producer **Hideo Kojima** and famed **Nintendo** mastermind **Shigeru Miyamoto** shared plans to bring the epic espionage franchise **Metal Gear Solid** to the **GameCube**. Konami is expected to show the third installment in the series at **E3**, but it is unclear if the GameCube release will be the all-new, third **MGS**, or merely another port of **Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons of Liberty**. Details of the agreement between the two companies, such as whether it encompasses future titles in the franchise, are unknown at this time. Currently, there are rumors of an exclusive deal between the two, but this is unconfirmed.

Around the same time, Miyamoto leaked plans for new GameCube installments of **Mario Kart**, **Donkey Kong**, and **Pokémon Stadium**. He said that the forthcoming **Stadium** title may be released in two versions, similar to the recent **Pokémon Sapphire** and **Ruby** titles for **Game Boy Advance**; and that the **Mario Kart** game promises several new innovations. Finally, he has also stated that Nintendo will be showing at least one new franchise at **E3**, along with a GBA title that allows players to capture and animate their own images – much like the original Game Boy Camera.



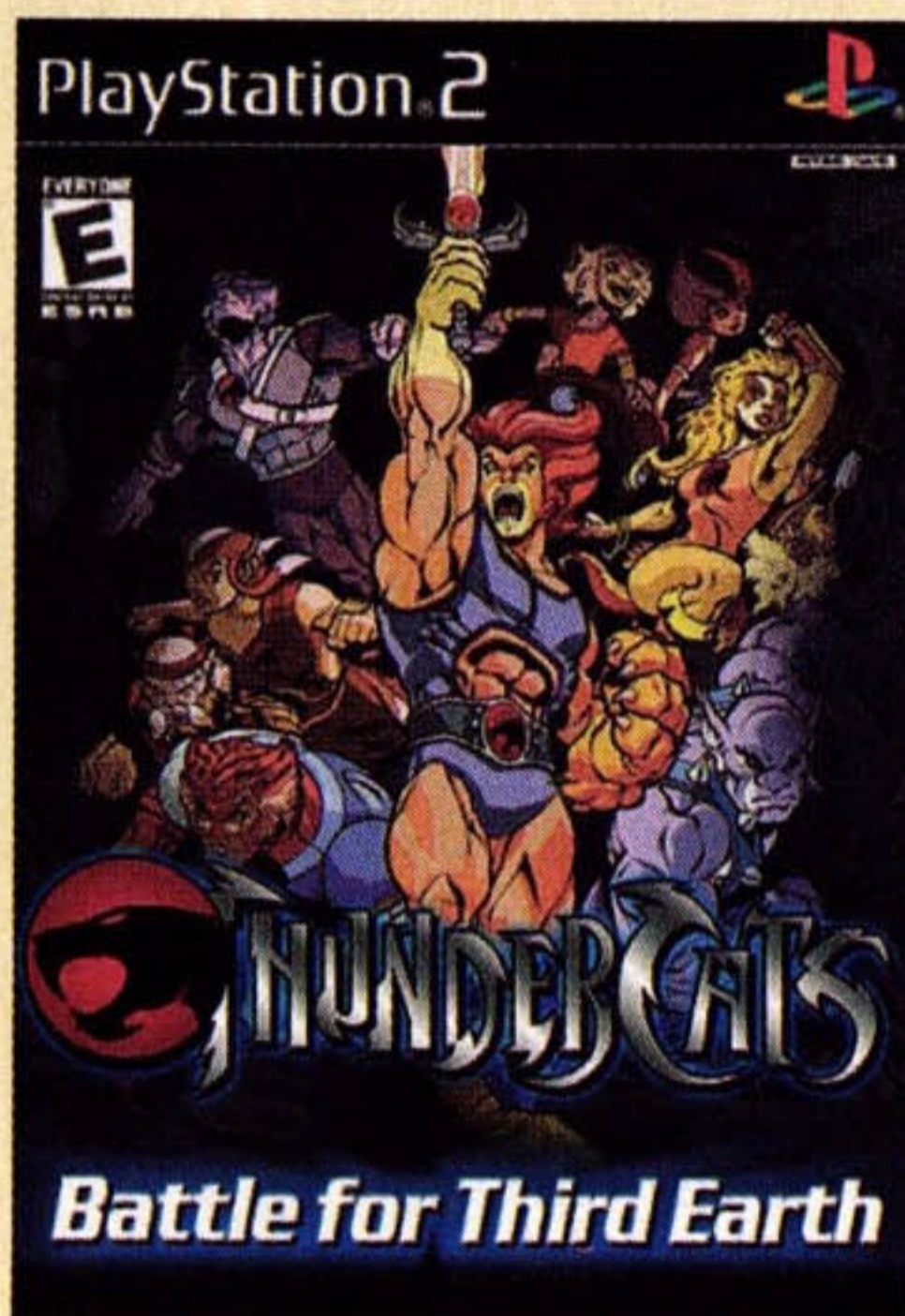
*Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons of Liberty* for PS2



R&D

Game Informer's research and development operatives search the globe, seeking out the untapped licenses that will become tomorrow's killer games. If you have any great ideas for games of the future, be sure to drop us a line. Maybe we'll use our godlike power over the video game industry to turn you into a millionaire – or just steal your idea.

## THUNDERCATS: BATTLE FOR THIRD EARTH



With Konami investing in the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles license and Japanese developer Takara laboring away on a generation one Transformers game, it's only a matter of time before a company snags the rights to the '80s cult clas-

sic, *Thundercats*. Of course, given the content of the show, it's the perfect candidate for a combat-driven action/adventure theme and stylistic cel-shaded graphics. Players could suit up as a variety of familiar characters. Lion-O would specialize in hand-to-hand combat. Tygra's ability to turn invisible would come into play where stealth is needed. Cheetara's Psionic power could view events in the future – which would create a very unique gameplay element where players could preview an action and see the outcome before engaging in it. As for Panthro? He would pilot the Thunder Tank in a special stage where the team assaults Mumm-Ra's base. If you can picture Metal Gear Solid with a feline kick, you have a good idea as to what a Thundercats game would be like.

## NAME THAT GAME

While the idea of three Canadian doctors joining forces to cure the world of sub-standard video games sounds like the premise for some



crazy-ass TV show, it happened in real life. In 1995, MDs Muzyka, Zeschuk, and Yip banded together to form Bioware, and went on to release the Baldur's Gate series and Neverwinter Nights. Before these hits, what was the company's first game?

(Answer on page 32)

## TOP 10 EXCUSES FOR WHY HALO 2 WAS DELAYED

- 10 Developer Bungie got sidetracked putting in a pillow fighting minigame
- 9 Bungie has been trying to steal ideas from Brute Force
- 8 Halo 2 requires the power of Xbox 2. And Blast Processing
- 7 Bill ran out of money
- 6 Microsoft didn't want to risk going up against Piglet's Big Game II this Christmas
- 5 Just fixing the driving physics on the vehicles has taken this long
- 4 Reiner stole the final code
- 3 Sony objected to having the game feature Jak and Daxter as shootable characters in the multiplayer arenas
- 2 Work is being done to add a Gomer Pyle voice to Xbox Live
- 1 The Master Chief ran off with one of the DOA: Xtreme Beach Volleyball girls

### DEVELOPER TOP 5

**JONATHAN CHMURA**  
Associate Producer, Infogrames



(Jonathan is currently working on Kya for PS2)

- 1 Halo – Xbox
- 2 The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time – N64
- 3 Resident Evil – PSOne/Eternal Darkness: Sanity's Requiem – GC
- 4 Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons of Liberty – PS2
- 5 GoldenEye 007 – N64

### READER TOP 5

**MERVIN STODDART, JR.**  
Indianapolis, IN



- 1 Super Bomberman 2 – SNES
- 2 Rock n' Roll Racing – SNES
- 3 Tennis 2K2 – DC
- 4 Jet Grind Radio – DC
- 5 Metal Gear Solid – PSone

Game Informer is looking for your Top Five favorite games. Please send your Top Fives and a photo of yourself to:

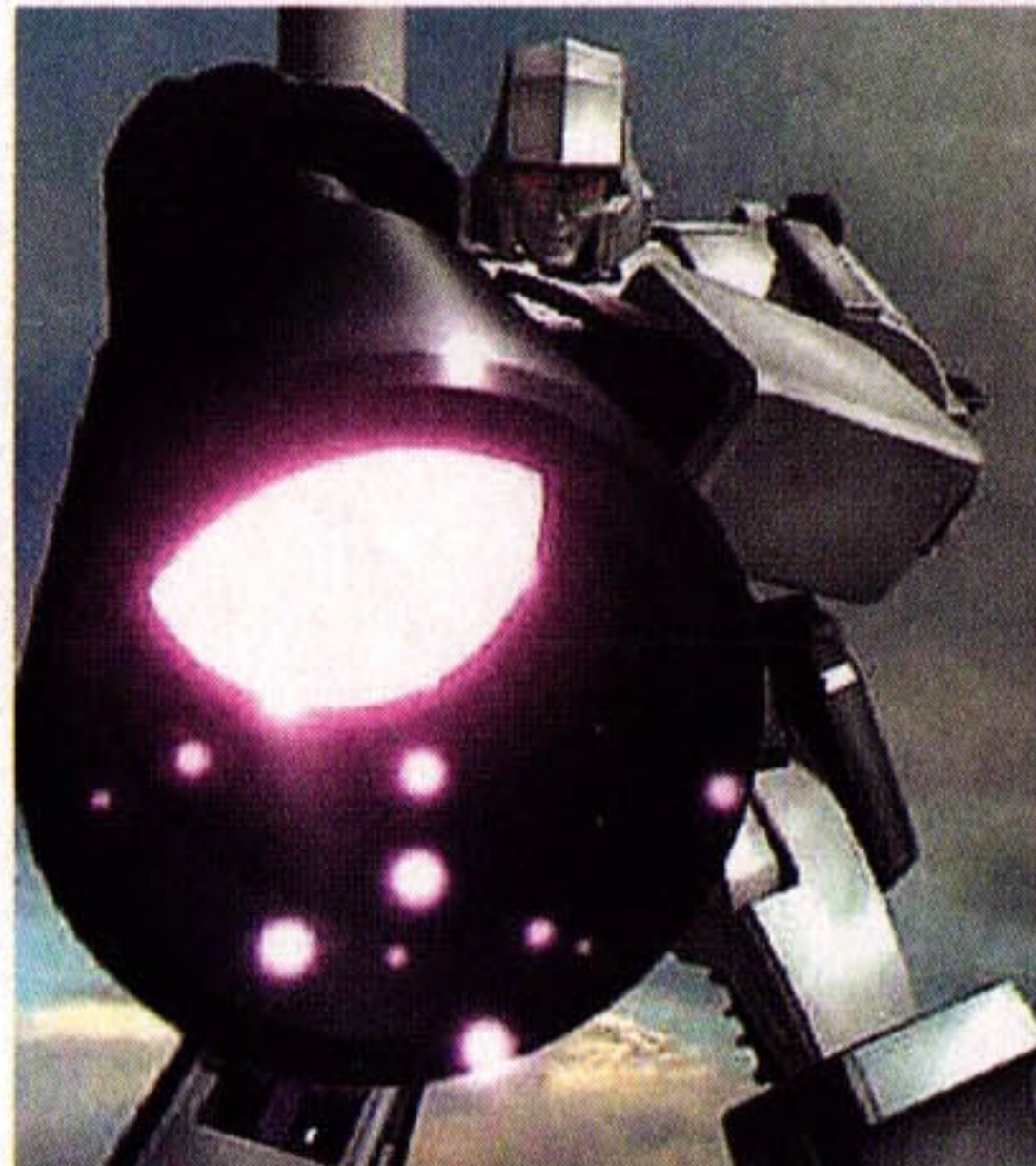
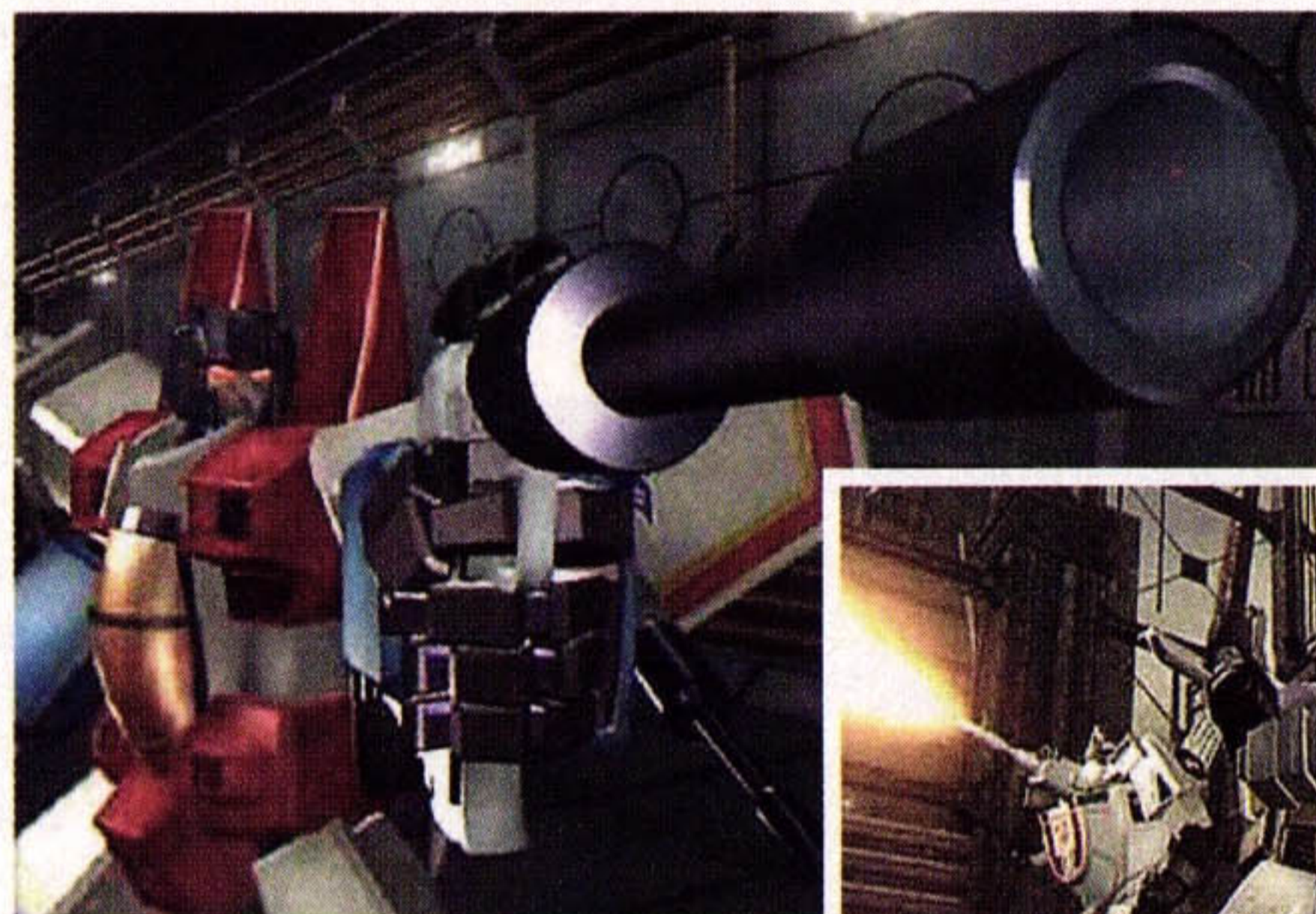
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(attach digital picture)

Everyone that enters each month will be entered in a drawing to win a GI T-Shirt! So get writing!

# TRANSFORMERS MEETS THE EYE

Takara, a company that already manufactures Transformers toys, is publishing this PlayStation 2 game in Japan this fall. Transformers is being developed by WinkySoft, and these first screens show that things appear to be going quite smoothly. Where's Bumblebee, you ask? On the other end of Star Scream's gun, we hope.

Transformers does not have an American publisher at the time of this writing, although Game Informer has heard that the property is close to being picked up. E3 should disclose more about this exciting title.



## FIRST LOOK: RATCHET & CLANK 2

Check out this first shot of Sony's *Ratchet & Clank 2*. The sequel is again being developed by Insomniac Games. Of course, *Ratchet & Clank 2* will feature new worlds, weapons, and adventures for the pair. We can only hope

that the pacing problems from the first can be ironed out, and then we'll be as happy as clams! Look for an official announcement regarding the game at E3. Where's Clank? Well, we imagine that separate adventures will again be the norm for the two, but we'd like to think he's actually a can of tuna now!



## GOD IS RETURNING - LOOK BUSY!

**Peter Molyneux's Lionhead Studios**, in conjunction with **Electronic Arts**, is once again handing you the reins of the world in **Black & White 2** for the **PC**. While Kristian seems to remember the first *Black & White*'s logo screen the most, the rest of us were impressed with what a deep and complex game it was. The sequel is set to stretch the envelope even further when it releases this fall.

Now you can truly play the role of an angry god, as your creature will lead its followers into battle against heathen forces. Your people are also more independent, as their civilization and technology can reach greater heights. If all else fails, you can avail yourself of the new Epic Miracles. Earthquakes will rock the land, volcanoes can rise up and bathe your enemies in lava – you know, all the good stuff that **Charlton Heston** only wishes he could do.



## THE GOOD, THE BAD, THE UGLY

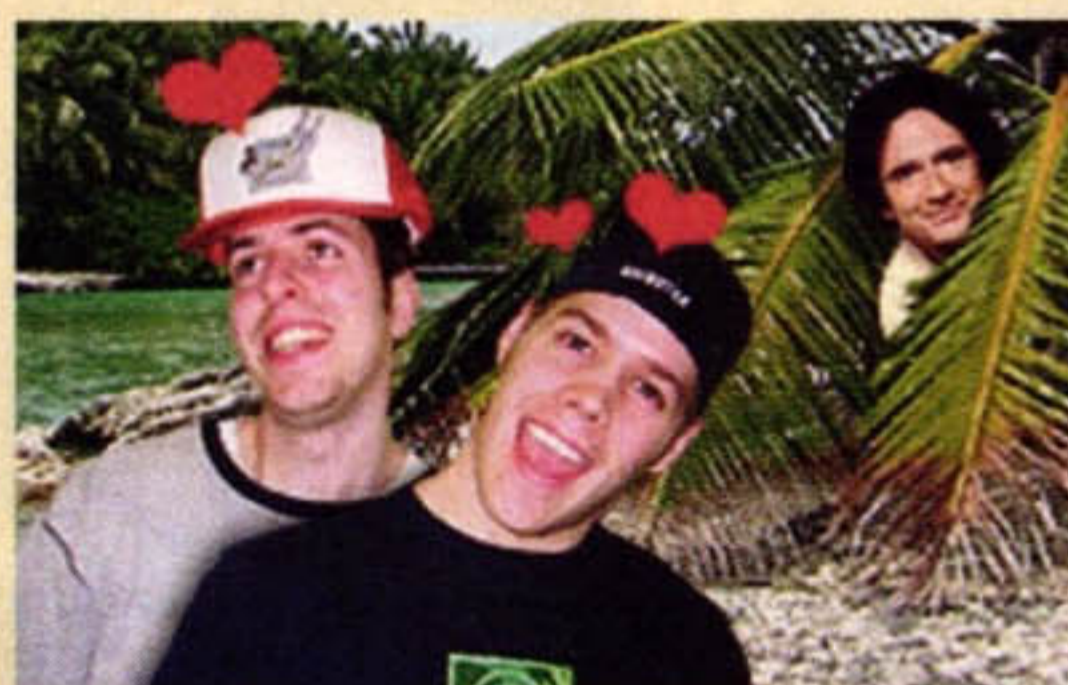
**GOOD** – **Nintendo** has confirmed that it is already working on a successor to the **Game Boy Advance** handheld. No release date or system specs are known yet.

**BAD** – After weaker-than expected holiday sales, **THQ** and **Activision** have reevaluated their priorities and cancelled several future projects. For THQ in particular, **GameCube** titles were the first to go. In this bad economy, other companies could follow suit and start to dis the console.

**UGLY** – Believe it or not, ex-**2 Live Crew** front man **Luke Campbell** is concerned about **Grand Theft Auto III**. The rapper is mad that his real-life community of Liberty City (a suburb of Miami) is in the game. Of course, he's mainly pissed because, "I guarantee no one in Liberty City is making any money off this." Well, Luke, we know you're not getting dough making hit records anymore, either.

**BAD** – **LucasArts'** online adventure **Star Wars Galaxies** has been delayed from its April release due to the postponement of the third beta test. The game is now expected to come out for the **PC** sometime in June.

**GOOD** – Since spending some quality time together last issue while writing *Game Infarcer*, **Justin** and **Kristian** have decided to elope. Their contributions this month were actually ghost written by **Richard Kline** – better known as Larry from **Three's Company**. Enjoy!



## LOOSE TALK

Whenever there's a juicy rumor in the industry, *Game Informer* experts are on it like a fly on stink. If loose lips are spraying hot gossip, we're sucking up the secret saliva and drooling it all over this section. These leads may turn out to be 100% untrue, but then again, they could also be dead honest, and you've just learned about them months before anyone else! In the industry and need to get back at the boss who fired you by spilling some secrets? Email us at [loosetalk@gameinformer.com](mailto:loosetalk@gameinformer.com) and we'll be your shoulder to cry on.

Developer **Rare** is already hard at work for its new master, **Microsoft**. What's the **Xbox** buzzword? **Xbox Live**. What's one of Rare's biggest properties? **Conker's**. These two seemingly dissimilar tastes will be brought together as the uncouth squirrel goes online for his next installment. You can bet that **Perfect Dark** online is also in the pipeline.

**Gran Turismo 4** has been talked about for a while now, but what few know is that the series is going where it has never gone before – vehicle damage. The game is already heading online, and **Sony** hopes that – manufacturer's gripes aside – it can satiate fans' wishes with smashable rides. Developer **Polyphony** is also working on a secret project.

**Midway's** preparing a new lineup for the year, and guess who's not invited? **Dr. Muto**, **Haven**, and **Defender** were three retail disappointments that won't be asked back to the table.

Developer **Zipper Interactive** is plowing full steam ahead with **SOCOM: U.S. Navy SEALs II**, which will feature more urban environments, among other things. What's more, the studio has a first-person project up its sleeve that will take gamers into the future, and might even bump off **Halo** as the FPS console king.

Updating last month's *Loose Talk* on **Sony's Arc the Lad: Twilight Spirits**, word is that the game could go online – which would be an exclusive feature for us American gamers.



# VIDEO GAME TRIVIA

May 12 is Mother's Day, people. We're telling you in advance, so you can go out and get her a well thought-out present for once. After all, she birthed you, cooked for you, and kept you from sticking pencils too far up your nose. Let us take a moment to remember her and all she's done. What's your fondest memory of your mother? Take this month's trivia to find out!

**QUESTION 1: Which 8-bit wrestling game features an announcer at the bottom of the screen who constantly barks out match commentary?**



- A. World Championship Wrestling
- B. Tecmo World Wrestling
- C. Tag Team Wrestling
- D. M.U.S.C.L.E.

**QUESTION 2: Dead or Alive: Xtreme Beach Volleyball may not feature full-frontal nudity, but it has some very revealing swimwear. One suit costs a million and merely consists of a few well-placed jewels. What is this bikini called?**

- A. Venus
- B. The Family Jewels
- C. Athena
- D. Tuna

**QUESTION 3: Before home computers and MIDI were commonplace, bands like DEVO had to use something else to craft electronic music. This device, created in 1978, used a cassette drive to store 12,500 notes, which had to be entered numerically. What was its name?**



- A. Jock 8-B Synthesizer
- B. Casio Mark 12.5
- C. Roland MC-4 Sequencer
- D. SP-78 ElectriCord Pro

**QUESTION 4: In the Dreamcast's Sonic Adventure, Sega put some new characters to costar with the speedy blue mascot. Of course, people farted at this idea, because they bought a Sonic release for Sonic. Which of these was not a playable character in the game?**

- A. Big the Cat
- B. Amy
- C. Millie Pede
- D. E-102



**QUESTION 5: Super Mario Bros. 2 is one of the few entries in the blockbuster platforming series where Bowser/King Koopa wasn't the main antagonist. Who was the big meanie final boss that Mario and friends battled in this classic?**

- A. Tri-Clyde
- B. Zapper
- C. Shaman Shyguy
- D. Wart

**QUESTION 6: In Animal Crossing, pelicans run the post office. Pete delivers mail and the ladies trade shifts in the office. The sweet one is Pelly. Who is her grumpier, grouchy co-worker?**



- A. Grizzelda
- B. Phyllis
- C. Pazley
- D. Mrs. Poole



**QUESTION 7: NBA Street has an outspoken announcer who presides over the courts. He was originally going to be toned down in NBA Street Vol. 2, but ended up being replaced altogether. What is this mouthpiece's name?**

- A. Airball
- B. MC Brains
- C. Tommy "Hoops" Hooper
- D. Joe the Show

**QUESTION 8: The Nintendo e-Reader isn't the first gaming accessory to involve the scanning of coded cards. In this portable console from the early 1990s, gamers scan ordinary barcodes off everyday objects. It would then craft a fighting character based on the random numbers in the UPC symbol. What was this failed device called?**

- A. Barcode Battler
- B. UPC Swapper
- C. Consumer Fighter
- D. ScanTron 5000

**QUESTION 9: Working Designs' Magic Knight Rayearth, one of the last Sega Saturn games, starred three anime heroines summoned to save the world. You can switch your control between them at the tap of a button. Which name is not one of the sweet trio of warriors?**

- A. Fuu
- B. Geki
- C. Hikaru
- D. Umi

**QUESTION 10: Nintendo's two most popular NES games teamed up for the Nintendo Cereal System. The commercial jingle went, "Nintendo, it's for breakfast now. Nintendo, it's a cereal - wow! Nintendo, Super Mario jumps. Nintendo, in a fruit-flavored crunch. Nintendo, there's Zelda, too." What was the next line?**

- A. It's berry good news!
- B. Link's good for you!
- C. In marshmallow goo!
- D. Cure your NES blues!

### Score & Rank



**0** Giving her a surprise "baby shower" while she changed your diaper



**1-3** Being your date to the junior prom



**4-6** Buying you that pair of moonboots you always wanted



**7-9** Helping you escape from prison



**10** Giving you a big hug when you really needed it

# EIDOS HAS AN ITALIAN JOB FOR YOU

Eidos has revealed that it has snagged the rights to make next-gen video games based on the film remake of *The Italian Job*. The original film featured **Michael Caine** as cockney crook Charlie Croker, but now the role has gone to **Mark Wahlberg**. The new movie is expected in theaters this summer, while the vid should be out during the same time. Gameplay details are scarce right now, but maybe there's a minigame where you can tip those wee-little cars over, or use their sunroofs as a late night urinal.

Meanwhile, Eidos' **Crystal Dynamics** studio is also preparing *Spanx* and *Soul Reaver 3*, both for the **PlayStation 2**. The latter game is rumored to feature both Raziel and Kain.



## BREAK DOWN

**73%** of the office's cookies were eaten by Kristian - not that he'd ever admit it. He also won't confess that he sometimes eats half a cookie, and leaves the rest - knowing nobody else will eat the other half

**9%** of the country's Internet traffic is due to online gaming, according to a recent survey by a technology analyst

**31%** of this month's Gallop Racer 2003 horses were put out to pasture or given cushy jobs at the local glue factory

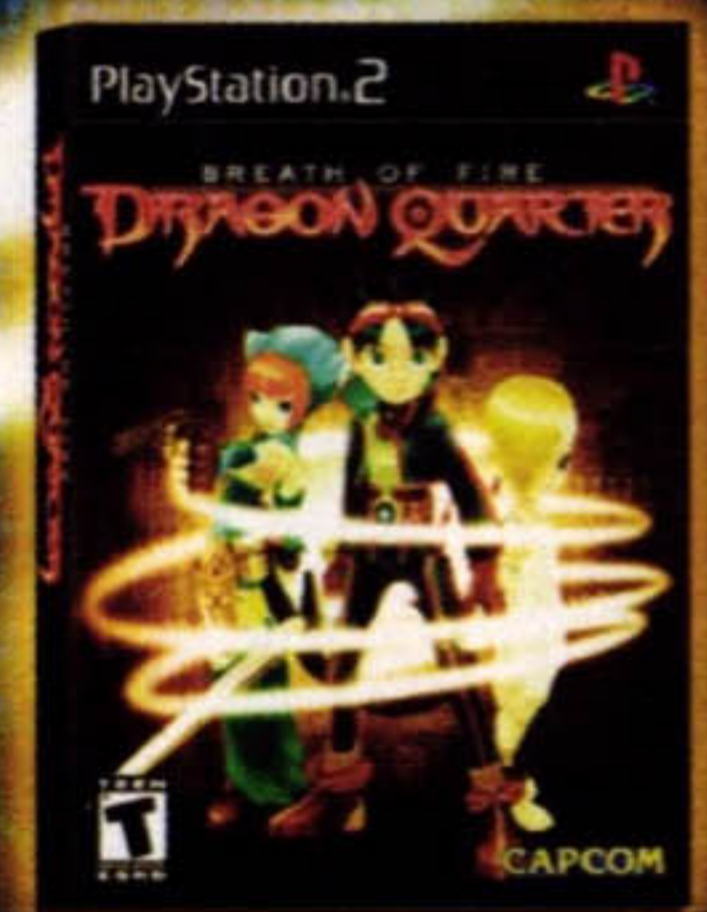
**85%** of games by publishers who refuse to send us early review copies are usually stinkers. They'd rather us not play them in order to avoid bad press

**10%** of Xbox owners have hooked into Xbox Live



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# SEGA SPREADS LOVE

Game Informer is here to give you a sneak peek at some of the goodies that **Sega** has in store for you this year – including tasty exclusives for each console. Perhaps the most intriguing of them all is **Yuji Naka** and **SonicTeam's** newest brainchild, **Billy Hatcher and the Giant Egg** for the **GameCube**. Here you collect, carry, and hatch eggs to defuse traps and to unleash each creature's special power.

The **Xbox**, meanwhile, will be treated to the **From Software**-developed **Otogi: Myth of Demons**. Similar to other titles from the studio, Otogi will be a mix of action-intensive combat and RPG customization. To this end, the game features 25 destructible environments, 30 weapons, and 12 types of magic.

Also appearing on the Xbox, as well as the **PlayStation 2**, is the return of **Jack Wade** in **Headhunter: Redemption**. He's got some company with him this time, and we're not just talking about the return of the motorcycle (although that's back and capable of more exploration than ever). **Leeza X** is his apprentice, and she'll help split the adventure into two distinct storylines.



Billy Hatcher and the Giant Egg (GameCube)



Otogi: Myth of Demons (Xbox)



Virtua Fighter 4 Evolution Greatest Hits (PS2)

Exclusive to the **PlayStation 2** are **Virtua Fighter 4 Evolution Greatest Hits**, **Virtual On Marz**, **Altered Beast**, and **Vectorman**. The VF series returns with two new characters, as well as a Quest mode, additional moves, and 1,500 costume items. The latter two games, meanwhile, are blasts from the past that are receiving some major facelifts this side of the year 2000. **Vectorman** returns to his third-person shooting ways, while we can only hope this new **Altered Beast** keeps the haunting "RISE FROM YOUR GRAVE!" soundbite.

## SEGA'S UPCOMING LINEUP

- **Sonic Pinball Party** (GBA) – June 3
- **Virtua Fighter 4 Evolution Greatest Hits** (PS2) – August
- **Otogi: Myth of Demons** (Xbox) – September
- **Virtual On Marz** (PS2) – October
- **Headhunter: Redemption** (PS2/Xbox) – Fall
- **Altered Beast** (PS2) – Fall
- **Billy Hatcher and the Giant Egg** (GameCube) – Fall
- **Vectorman** (PS2) – January 2004

## DATA FILE

➤ Developer **Luxoflux** is currently busy with **Activision's True Crime: Streets of LA**, but *Game Informer* has been told that another unnamed project is also in the works. Could this be a next-gen version of **Vigilante 8**?

➤ A movie is in the works based on **Onimusha** from **Capcom**. Will it star **Onimusha 3** hero/actor **Jean Reno**? We don't know, however, producer **Keiji Inafune** promises us that the film won't be "just some bad video game-to-movie conversion."

➤ Fresh out of wowing gamers with **Xenosaga Episode 1**, developer **Monolith Soft** has stated that it is already planning an all-new RPG adventure for the **PlayStation 2** and **GameCube**.

➤ **Ubi Soft** has stepped up and snagged the rights to **Sony of Japan's Ape Escape 2**. The French company plans to have the title ready for release this summer.

➤ Flying high off of **Grand Theft Auto, Take 2 Interactive** is definitely letting success go to its head. The company is considering adding children's games, sports titles, and even a wireless division to its plate.

➤ U.K. developer **Sci Games** has been given the green flag to produce video games based on **Quentin Tarantino's Reservoir Dogs**. You can bet your black suit that you'll be able to play as Mr. Blonde.

➤ **Sony** is giving developers a helping hand in creating and maintaining online games. Through a deal with **Butterfly.net**, it will be cheaper and easier for game makers to produce online titles for the **PlayStation 2**. Currently, there are nine games being developed through Butterfly.

➤ **ATI Technologies** has struck a deal with **Nintendo** to produce a graphics chipset for future products. Currently, ATI makes the "Flipper" chip used in the **GameCube**.

➤ The game formerly known as **Sea Dogs II** is now opting for the more sea-worthy moniker of **Pirates of the Caribbean**. Arr! Dat blows!

➤ **Final Fantasy** producer **Yoshinori Kitase** revealed that **Final Fantasy XII** is nearing completion, but he did not set a release timetable. Meanwhile, the notion of a second spin-off for **Final Fantasy X** was shot down.

➤ **Acclaim's I, Gladiator** has changed its name to **Gladiator: Sword of Vengeance**.

Name That Game Answer:  
Shattered Steel

# LARA'S NEW LOOK

Here's an early glimpse of Tomb Rai...umm...**Lara Croft: Tomb Raider: The Cradle of Life**. That's better. The summer movie has **Angelina Jolie** reprising her role as video gaming's famous relic hunter.

We don't know a lot about the actual plot, but if these pictures are any indication, maybe she's gone to find out where it all went wrong between her and **Billy Bob Thornton** (she's frantically searching on bike). It looks like she gives up her futile quest, however, and stops by a local plastic surgeon (turn left at Angkor Wat) to contemplate getting some more work done. Finally, it all ends in tears when a stray poodle (not the miniature kind, mind you) bites her arm. We kid, we kid. Enjoy.



# EA HOOKS UP NINTENDO

**Nintendo** is trying to get more **GameCube** games to utilize the **Game Boy Advance**, and it has struck gold with **Electronic Arts**. EA has agreed to provide at least 20 titles using the platforms' unique connectivity feature. The first properties will be **Madden NFL 2004**, **Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2004**, and **FIFA 2004**. Future games will not only be EA Sports franchises, but EA BIG and EA Games properties as well.

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# STATE OF EMERGENCY

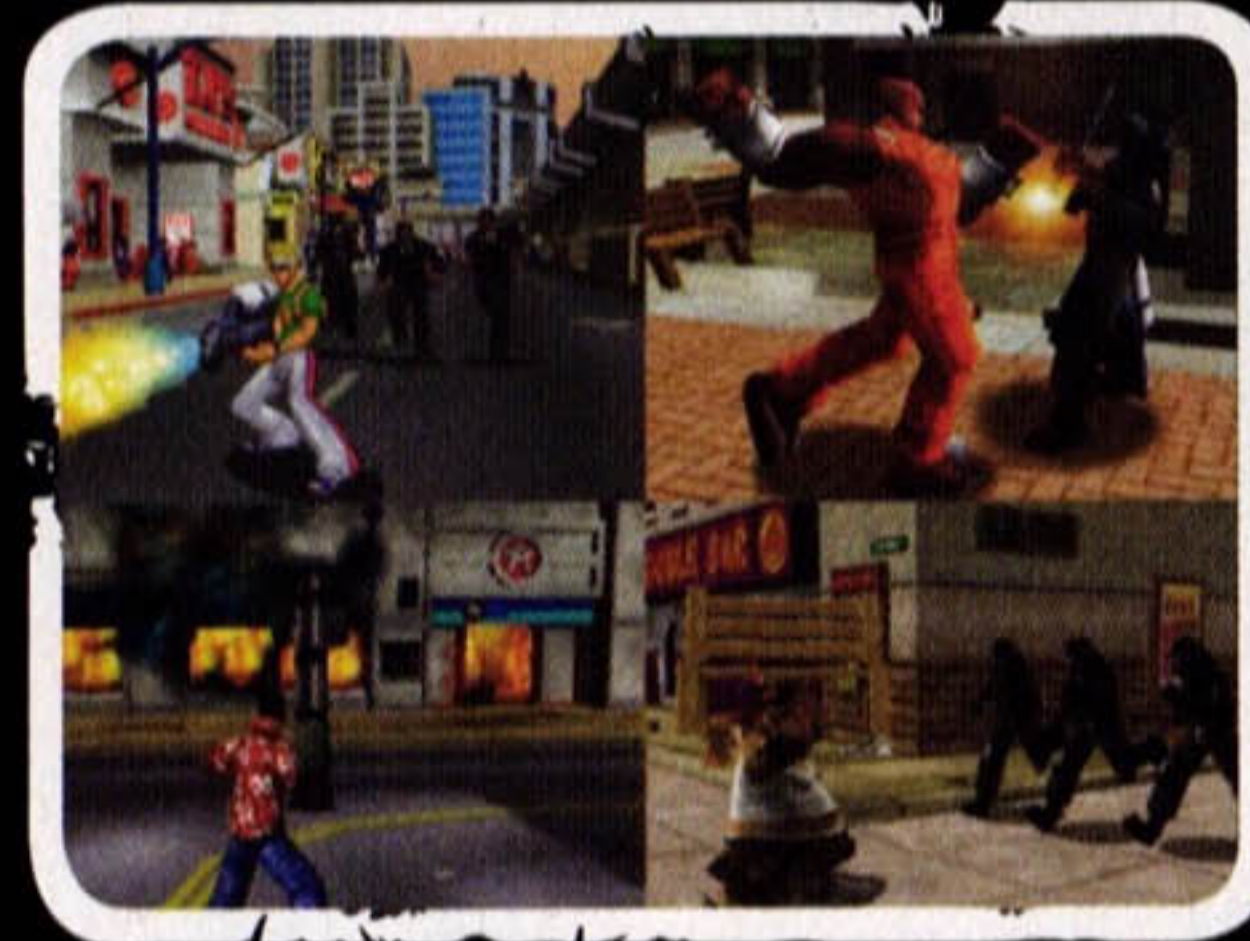
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# CALL OF DUTY: MW2



# COUNTER STRIKE

■ **FORMAT** XBOX/PC ■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION (EXACT MULTIPLAYER TBA) ■ **PUBLISHER** MICROSOFT ■ **DEVELOPER** VALVE/RITUAL ENTERTAINMENT ■ **RELEASE** MAY (PC), FALL (XBOX)

## The Organic Game

**O**rganic game development – the idea of constantly evolving a title online for little or no profit – would seem to require a dedication of time and resources that most companies lack. It sounds ridiculous, but this has been Valve's approach to its online hit Counter-Strike for the PC. You might be curious as to how developer Valve can afford to do this and what it possibly gains. First, it doesn't directly hand out its product to anyone. Counter-Strike is a mod based on Valve's classic first-person shooter Half-Life, created by a fan named Minh Le – who now happens to work for Valve (and is interviewed on pg. 40). So, in order to enjoy Counter-Strike, you must own a version of Half-Life. But once you make that initial purchase, everything else can be downloaded for absolutely free. So far, sales of Half-Life have been enough to sustain the company's work towards perfecting Counter-Strike's online experience.

Second, much of CS's content is generated by the community, which is the true driving force behind the game's constant growth

and appeal. The quality is therefore dictated by the fan base to a great degree. Valve representative, Doug Lombardi, states, "This is the community's game, not ours." That said, Valve does police the content to some degree, removing certain additions that may have initially seemed like good ideas, but don't end up working out. Lombardi continues, "We've gone through a countless number of additions that simply never catch on. We are not afraid to remove something if the players don't like it."

Valve's "community-first" ethic also earns it something far greater than immediate monetary profit. Its investment in the fans has gained it respect and loyalty. Counter-Strike gets two-and-a-half million players monthly, a figure that stands as indisputable proof of the game's lasting appeal.

## Xbox Magic

**C**ounter-Strike has clearly proven itself on PC, but the question remains: Will the Xbox version be able to duplicate that magic? At first, most of us would guess that Microsoft is silly if it thinks CS will

garner similar attention. These critics would claim that the Xbox lacks the versatility of the PC. That is true in some ways, but Valve, Microsoft, and Ritual (the developer of the new Xbox and PC versions) are emphatically dedicated to keeping CS a title for the hardcore fan, giving it a flexibility that's unprecedented in online console gaming. Tools for standard PCs will be available to the public to create and design mods and maps. Once you complete a project, you submit it to Valve, who will ensure its legitimacy (meaning it isn't a cheat) and quality. If your creation passes the test, Valve will post it as an available download for any Xbox user.

Valve and Ritual also want to extend the software to include the ability for online teams (known as clans on PC) to create their own symbol. During matches, each player can spray-paint his or her team's symbol on anything in the environment. It's nothing particularly pertinent to gameplay, but it certainly heightens the sense of camaraderie felt within communities.

Unfortunately, Counter-Strike's community will be hindered on Microsoft's end. The networking component will be





New enemies also sport new kinds of weapons. These guys will suddenly emerge from behind objects

limited to Xbox Live's current features, which means that networking between teams and other clans will prove cumbersome for players, but only for a short while. Representatives from Microsoft revealed that it didn't design Live as a static entity. Rather, it too will be enhanced.



The single-player game will feature vehicles which you can ride and sometimes shoot from

Although they couldn't officially elaborate, they shot us a sly smile when questions regarding the possibility of chat rooms arose, like the PC's IRC (Internet Relay Chat). An IRC program (complete with headset capabilities) would empower console gamers with the final tool they require to establish the online gaming community that PC owners have enjoyed for years.

## One's Enough

**B**y now you're probably tired of hearing about peripheral features that don't speak directly of the gameplay that's so competitive and addicting that some unfortunate clans have actually met to fight in reality! Unless you count Half-Life, Counter-Strike has traditionally been an online-only title that pits a terrorist team against a counter-terrorist group in different types of maps and game modes. But before we explain the wonders of CS's enhanced multiplayer action, we must disclose even more exciting news. Ritual is developing a new sort of CS – one that even the most rabid players have yet to experience:



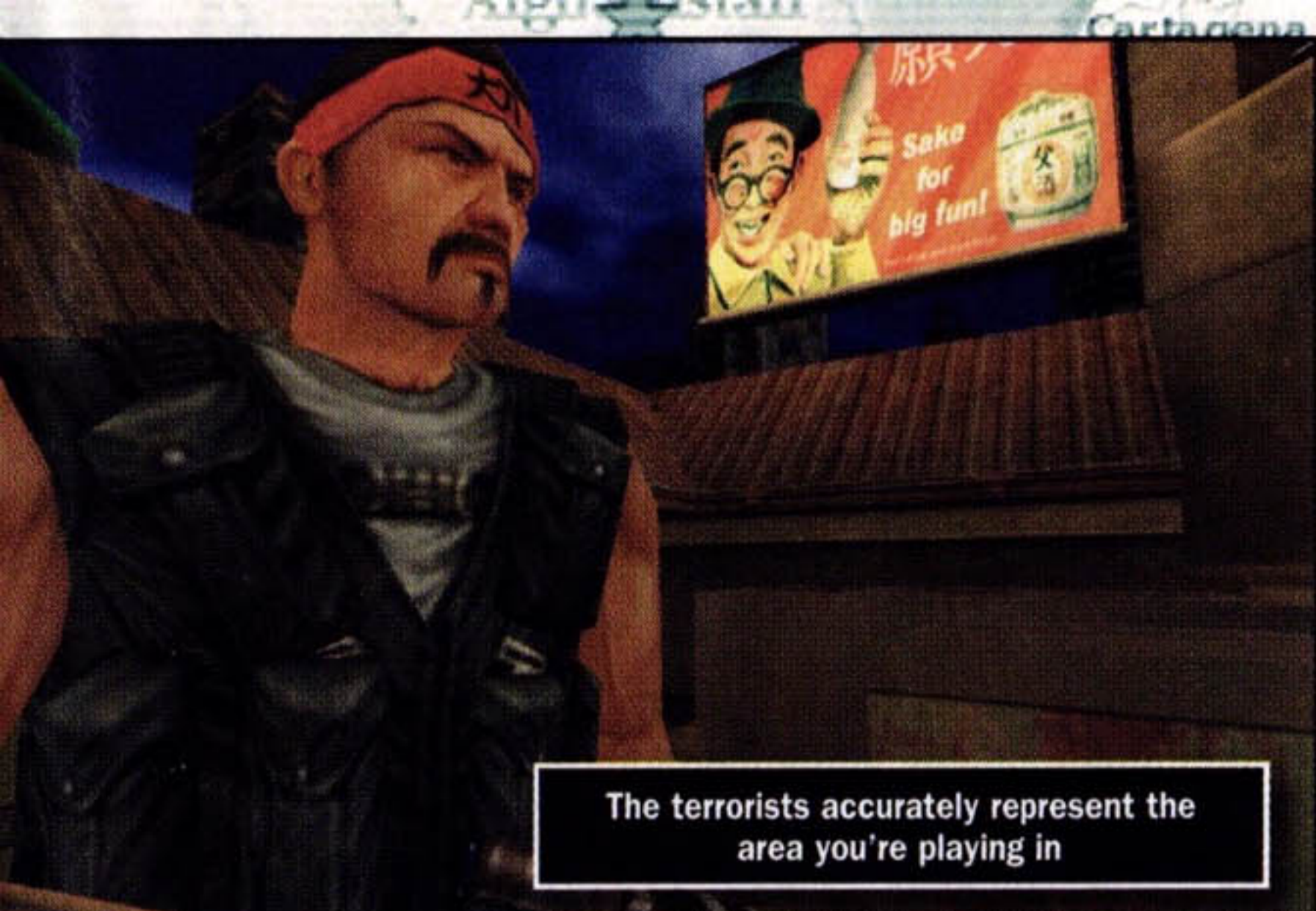
a single-player game.

Although this new version, dubbed Counter-Strike: Condition Zero, will appear first on PC in May, Ritual will release an enhanced and renamed Xbox iteration this fall. Essentially, Xbox owners will receive all of the previous online material, Condition Zero's single-player content, two new solo missions, exclusive multiplayer maps, significantly improved graphics, and standardization (that is, all gamers are on equal footing, since there's only one hardware format).

The game will consist of over 20 missions taking place in numerous countries against unique terrorists. Furthermore, players will assume the role of no specific character or team. You'll play as an anonymous person in seven different counter-terrorist groups from the SAS (British) and GSG9 (German) to American and French special forces. Indeed, your suspicions are correct: There's no predominant plot that cohesively ties each scenario together. So, you might perceive the entire game as composed of individual cells with congruent themes.



Each single-player mission might have its own story, but it will also have unique gameplay features



The terrorists accurately represent the area you're playing in

Ritual understands and accepts that the lack of an all-encompassing story will expel the player from the experience upon completion of a mission. However, divesting itself of this typically necessary element grants the team the freedom to focus on creating a product that's engaging almost solely through everyone's favorite component: gameplay. Since each cell will feature different environments, protagonists, enemies, and objectives; boredom will be kept to a minimum.

## Counter Terror-ific Gameplay

Ritual has endowed each setting with extreme amounts of detail. So when you're in the subways of Japan, you'll be exposed to a believable atmosphere, both visually and aurally. Japanese businessmen, uniformed school children, the special bumpy walkways for the blind, and terrorists speaking in Japanese will help lend the game a convincing level of detail.

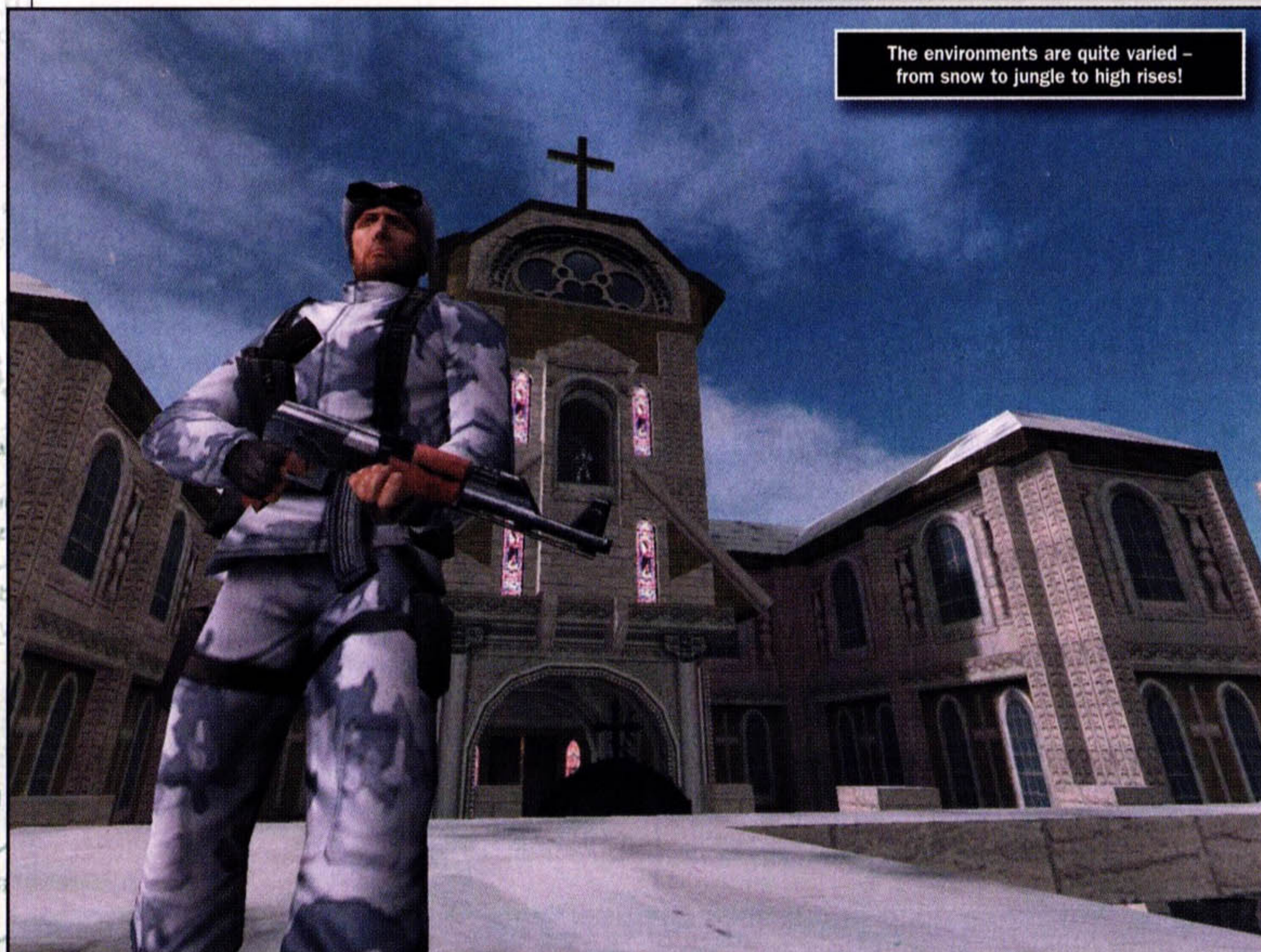
The environment type also dictates your objectives, and in many cases, your arsenal and special gadgets. For example, the Miami bank robbery places you in a squad of SWAT troopers who must secretly infiltrate the bank via underground tunnels and quietly proceed to neutralize the criminals individually to prevent any loss of civilian life. Up until the exciting finale, this scenario mostly requires stealth, so you'll have a limited arsenal of weapons, but a host of high-tech goodies like a fiber-optic camera. Other maps, like High Rise, focus on overcoming obstacles and puzzles such as jumping from ledge to ledge around the periphery of the

building and riding on zip lines. Of course, Ritual will make certain to include sections that are all about mayhem. The levels featuring a runaway cargo ship and the Colombian jungle exemplify just how insanely chaotic CS can get. In the former mission, players must stop a ship armed with a nuclear bomb before it crashes into the North American coast. Obviously inspired by games like Doom, you're thrust into close-corridor combat and given a diverse set of weapons, as well as plenty of health pick-ups and targets to obliterate.

To further diversify gameplay, Ritual has devised a few levels with content that will



In a standoff, directing your allies to strategically take out enemies is required



The environments are quite varied - from snow to jungle to high rises!

surprise even diehard, longtime fans. The most interesting of these puts you in the role of an undercover agent who must close a deal with a drug lord in a very disgusting Modesto crack house! Similar to the cargo ship, the pacing of this stage is frantic, as you must chase down the lord, while carefully disposing of his henchmen along the way.

## The Little Things

If you're even remotely familiar with the PC product, you know that certain subtle, yet integral, aspects of gameplay are incompatible with a one-player experience. Ritual promises that it will address these issues. First, damage taken from enemies isn't realistic; body armor, health, and other items and weapons are sprinkled around without the usual purchasing interface. Lombardi emphasizes, "This isn't about showing how tough we can make our game. We want the player to have fun."

Second, and most importantly, Ritual has already spent considerable time balancing ally and enemy AI.





Enemies have customized AI routines to put up a challenge

Based on our time with this new Counter-Strike, we can confirm that allies fight adeptly without too much direction, which, in juxtaposition, is often a headache in many of Ubi Soft's Tom Clancy titles. So, when you encounter a situation, your comrades usually understand their role and execute it properly. However, they aren't impervious bots. If you completely neglect them, one or two will sometimes perish.

Fortunately – or unfortunately – your enemies aren't dumb, either. Ritual has actually written many AI routines for a wide variety of situations. Sometimes, enemies will quickly roll across an opening, fire, and then continue their roll for cover. Other times, they'll blindly shoot around corners, exposing only their arm. If you encounter a terrorist head-on, you'll quickly realize that they even aim based on a specific routine that lead designer, Tom Mustaine, describes as a cone. He'll start to shoot in a pattern that encircles your protagonist, with the

apex being at the gun's nozzle. As time passes, the imaginary cone grows progressively more narrow until it eventually becomes a straight line centered on your character. The game's difficulty setting determines, in part, how fast the cone closes.

Most interestingly, fellow terrorists will actually aid each other to an extent that opens the game for more strategy. We know this sounds slightly sadistic, but let's take a stalemate encounter as an example. If you can manage to draw a

terrorist into the open and injure him, another enemy will sometimes attempt to rescue the fallen comrade. When he does, you have free reign to dispose of both.

As you can see, Valve and Ritual have gone to great lengths to make CS a legitimate single-player FPS on par with any others in the genre. However, both companies realize that this title's staying power lies in its online component, which Ritual has sought to enhance for console players and newbies, while preserving the hectic action that devoted PC players expect.

## Multiplayer Mayhem

*For newbies only: If you're a veteran, skip this section.*

As you can infer from previous sections, the online portion features some notable differences. Players choose either the side of terrorists or counter-terrorists, who each have certain objectives depending on the type of game you select. The more successful you are at completing objectives while avoiding death and maximizing kills, the more money you earn; which you then spend on weapons, items, and armor at the beginning of matches.

There are four main games: Hostage Rescue, Bomb Defuse, Assassination, and Escape. However, the first two are by far the most

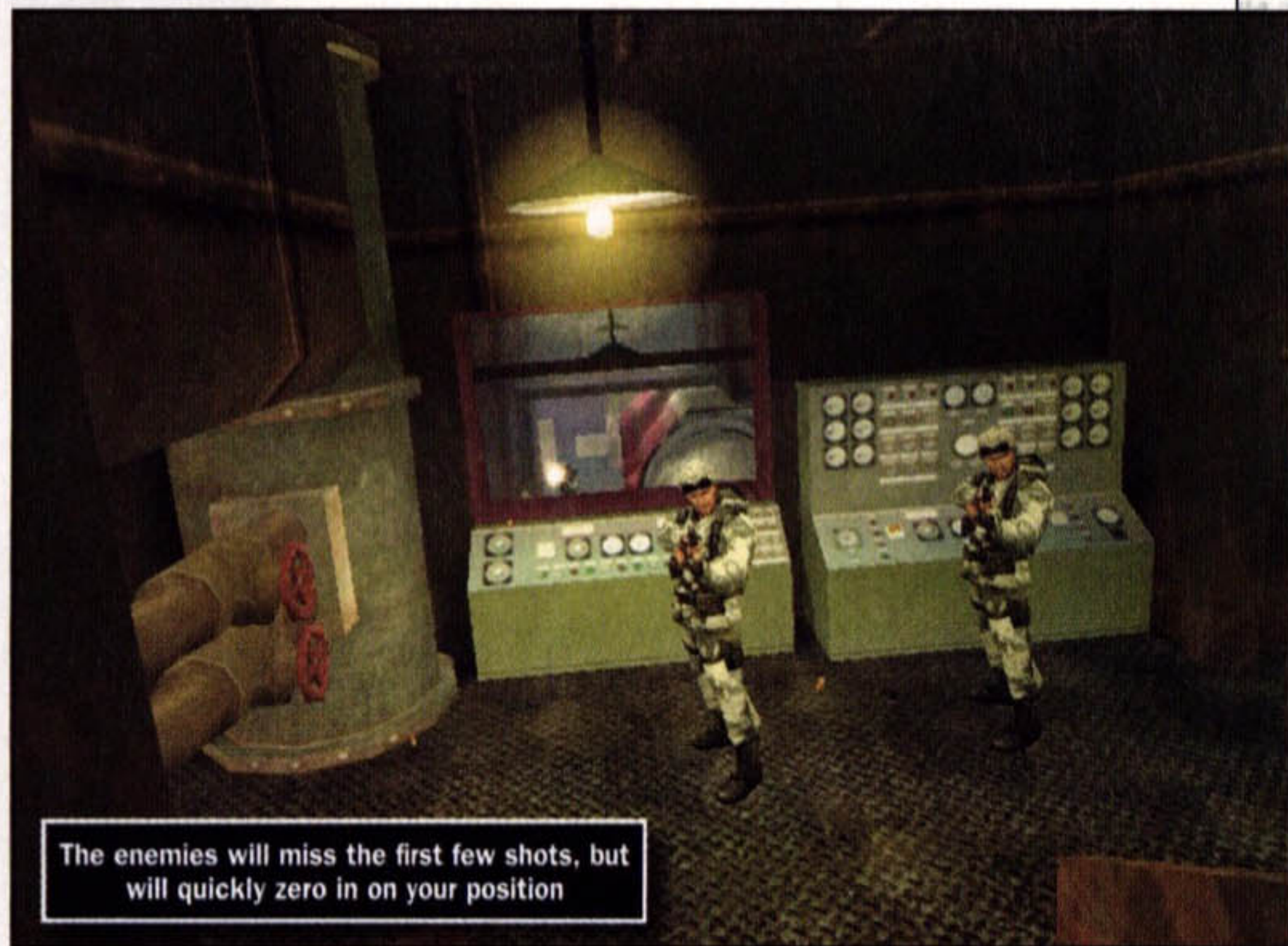
popular among PC players. Hostage Rescue requires the counter-terrorist group to locate hostages and lead them to predefined rescue points; killing all of the terrorists will also result in victory. If the terrorists stop you first, they win.

Bomb Defuse charges terrorists to plant and detonate a bomb, while the opposing team must either off each terrorist or defuse the explosive device. At the start of a match, one terrorist is randomly assigned the role of bomb carrier. That player must locate the designated area with his or her team and ensure that it explodes. If the carrier dies, another team member can pick up the bomb and continue the objective.

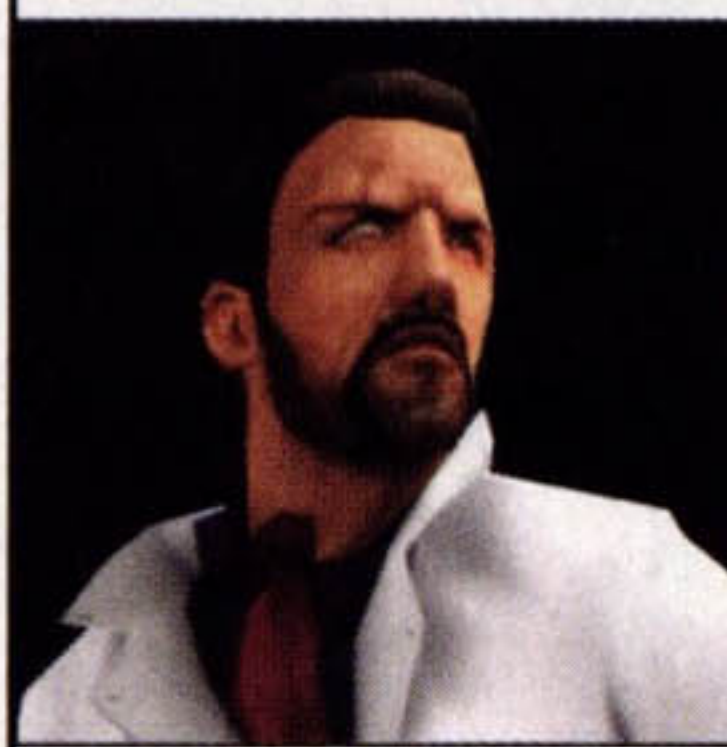
In Assassination, one counter-terrorist is designated the VIP. He possesses a limited arsenal and cannot acquire any weapons within



The counter-terrorists are varied in single-player. Hopefully, you can use them in multiplayer, too



The enemies will miss the first few shots, but will quickly zero in on your position



Ritual is also kicking around the idea of making the bosses, like the drug lord, available online

the environment. The VIP must successfully reach an extraction point under the protection of other counter-terrorists. Of course, this isn't an easy task, as every terrorist in the game is gunning for a clean headshot.

The final mode, Escape, is quite basic and boring; and as a result, receives the least attention. In short, this simple game has only one objective: Terrorists must flee to an evacuation area, while the counter-terrorists simply need to prevent this from happening.

As previously stated, Valve encourages creative players to program their own mods, so numerous other games exist for the PC Counter-Strike, such as Knife Arena, Grenade Fight, Close Quarters, and Sniper. Ritual won't include any of these with the retail package on Xbox.

But, since it and Valve will also permit fans to mod the console Counter-Strike, you can rest assured that even if they only gain a modest following, all sorts of imaginative game modes will spring up.





Not having a specific identity at least opens the door for variety



**“...this is a different kind of shooter on the Xbox. I think that it’s something that people have been looking for.”**

**TOM MUSTAINE**



## INTERVIEW: Tom Mustaine Lead Designer at Ritual Studios

### How did Ritual start?

Initially, the founders of the company were all developers. No one really had a management role. We worked on a game called Scourge of Armageddon, which was

an add-on pack for Quake. We then made a single-player game called Sin. After that, we worked on Heavy Metal F.A.K.K. 2 for Gathering of Developers. Next, we started doing projects for EA, some of which didn't make it. We most recently helped them with Agent Under Fire. From that point, we went to work on Star Trek: Elite Force II and Counter-Strike: Condition Zero. The team has grown from a mere seven people to about 53 in seven years. We've come quite a way.

### What is the most significant change you made to Counter-Strike for the console audience?

We have made a lot of considerations for Xbox, but especially how the gameplay in the levels flow. There is less of a vertical playfield and more of a horizontal one.

### What do you think that the PC version's biggest flaws are, and did you address these for Xbox?

I think that from a gameplay perspective, the PC is pretty solid. One of the hardest problems on the PC was our

software limitation. We actually couldn't push as much visual fidelity as we would have liked on the PC. The Xbox version is going to be a lot better because we can guarantee our target. That helps.

### As gamers, have you learned anything from other first-person shooters that will make this game better?

When it comes to other shooters, they tend to raise the bar across the board – for gameplay, visual fidelity, immersion, and all that stuff. We like to push the bar two or three times beyond that.

### What kind of a success do you think that Counter-Strike will be on the Xbox?

Counter-Strike on Xbox will be a success because of the mixture of single-player and multiplayer elements. Also, in general, this is a different kind of shooter on the Xbox. I think that it's something that people have been looking for. It offers some of the realistic, tactical flare; yet at the same time, it's not so tight-knit into that realistic universe, so you can still have fun with it.

### Do you think that it will be bigger than the PC version?

I think that depends on the number of Xbox Live players. If more Xbox Live subscriptions get up there, we can get a decent number of people to pick up Counter-Strike. I'd like to say that we're going to be one of the killer apps

for Xbox Live. That's been our target and that's been our goal.

### How do you feel about this game's huge popularity and people who've actually fought over the game in real life?

Working on a product this big is interesting, especially when you realize that there's a community who takes it very seriously. There are tournaments with prizes of two and three hundred thousand dollars! People are playing for keeps. It's tough from a developer's perspective not to blame your game when people go out and do stupid things. People have been doing stupid things since the beginning of time, and I know that I can't take responsibility for those actions. As far as having this many people to answer to, it's actually a good feeling. You know that there's a lot of people out there that – regardless of whether they like what you do – are still going to say something. But I think that, in general, people are going to be pleased with our work.

### Do you ever feel any pressure from the fan base?

I don't think that kind of pressure's bad. I think that pressure helps raise the bar. Having that many people to answer to makes us pay close attention to certain things. We don't want to alienate our audience, but at the same time we're trying to add new members.



Coordinating attacks will be made easier, thanks to a standardized headset

**WEAPONS**

Here are the weapons; some are new and some are old



**INTERVIEW: Minh Le** *Creator of Counter-Strike*

**Why did the first iterations of Counter-Strike require players to shoot left-handed?**

Being a left-handed person myself, I find it much more intuitive to model and animate my weapon models

as left-handed. In the earlier versions, we didn't have a system of mirroring the models effectively, so players were forced to see the world from the perspective of the true dominant species of the world – that is, left-handed people! [Laughs]

**What inspired you to create the mod? Why use the Half-life engine?**

I was inspired by various sources such as video games like Virtua Cop and movies such as Air Force One, The Professional, and Ronin. Half-Life was the definitive

choice for me because it offered a lot of great features that were lacking in other games (like skeletal animation), and it had a semi-realistic setting so I didn't have to overhaul all of the graphics.

**What is it like doing this job as a career versus a hobby?**

There are many more responsibilities. The fact that I get paid for what I enjoy doing is a definite plus.

**How far do you want to take Counter-Strike? What are you currently working on for it?**

I'd like to take it as far as I'm interested in the concept. I just enjoy designing games on the latest engines, with all the new technological advances, and seeing how much more immersive I can make the experience with better graphics, sound, animation, and game design.

**Can you give us some of your personal history in gaming?**

I'm 25 years old and I got into gaming when I was about seven or eight. My dad bought us a Vic-20, and ever since

then we've been upgrading computers as newer systems became available.

**What are some of your favorite games of all time?**

That's a hard one to answer, but some that stick out in my mind are Rambo (Commodore 64), Beachhead (C64), Karateka (IBM XT), Ultima 7, Betrayal at Krondor, the Police Quest series, Doom I and II, Quake I and II, Duke Nukem, and Metal Gear Solid.

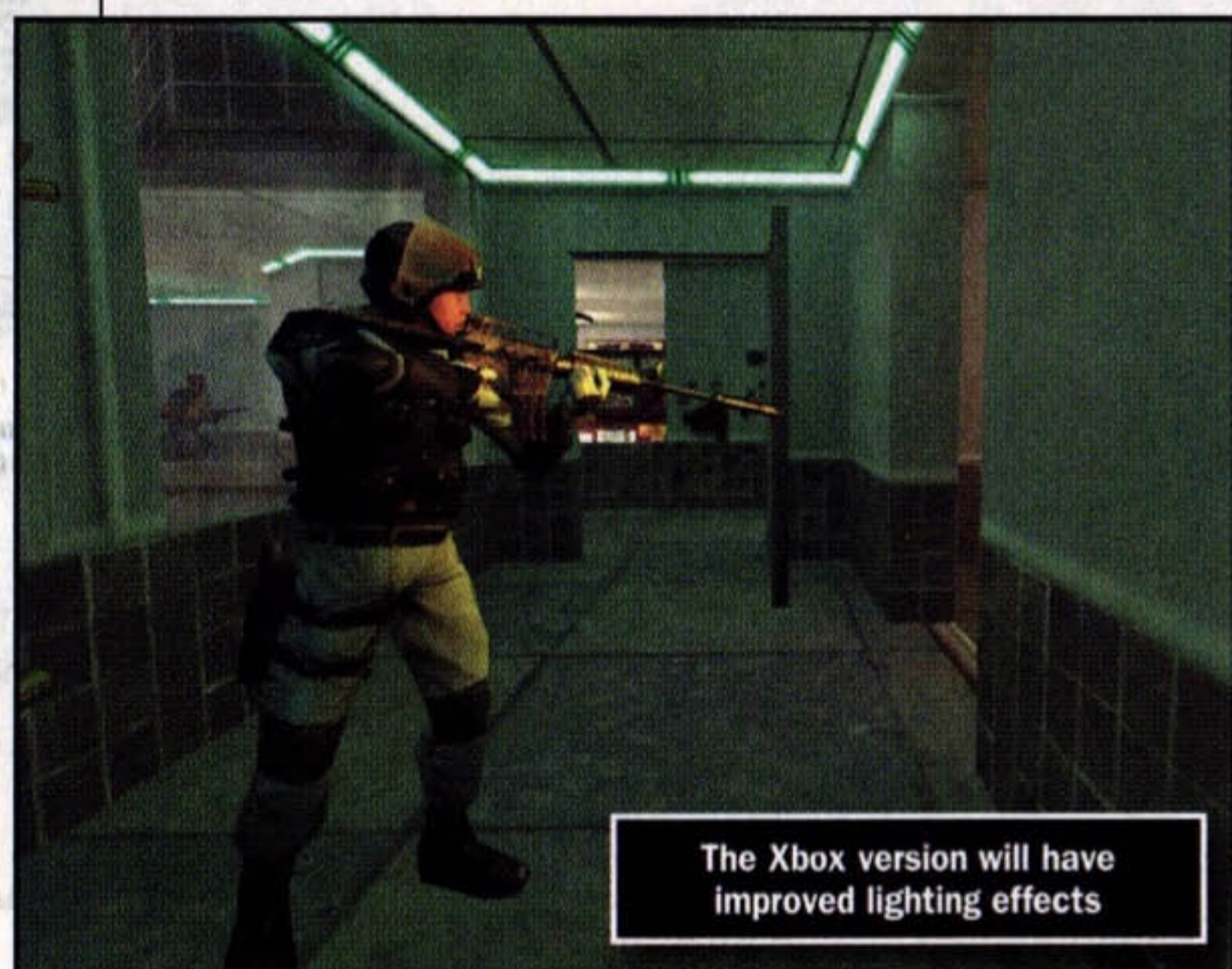
**Have you ever been recognized by any CS fans? How does that make you feel?**

Yes, a couple of times. I was at a Club Monaco, a clothing store, and one of the guys recognized me from a television interview that I did. It turns out that the guy also graduated from my high school as well. It was pretty embarrassing, yet flattering at the same time. I've also walked into some LAN cafes and received some odd glances. I reckon they might have recognized me, or just thought I looked odd or something. It's hard to tell.

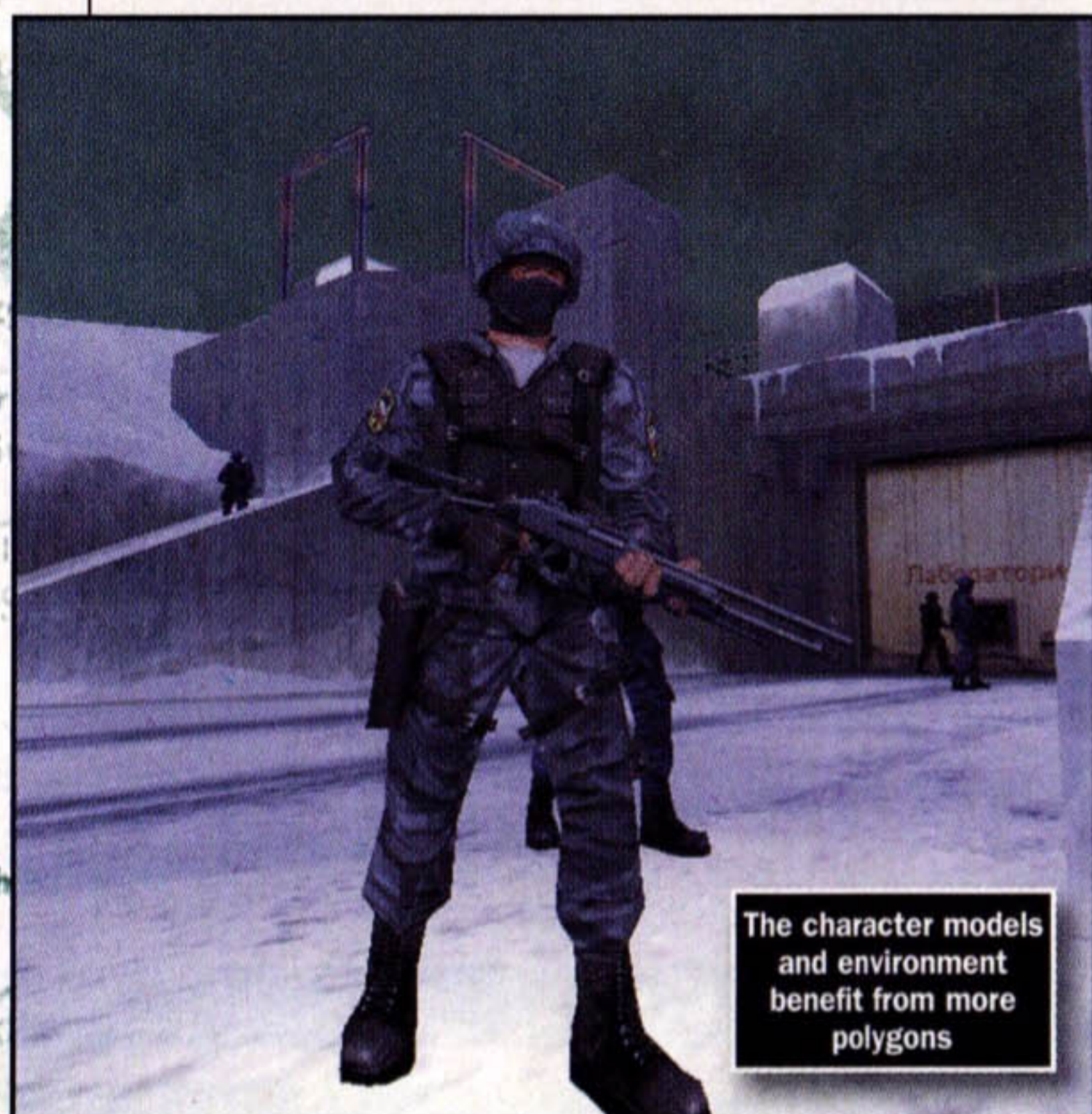
## Multiplayer Advanced

If the solo missions spark little interest, current CS players should consider Condition Zero yet another update in an already expansive PC game. Like previous mods, much of Condition Zero's multiplayer material will be available through a patch. Remember, however, only the retail version will offer the mission mode and the myriad graphical enhancements. The new features include 10 maps, the ability to attach a flashlight on the assault rifle and shotgun, and four original weapons (M60 machine gun, Famas Rifle, Galil Rifle, and Ballistic Shield) – the most exciting of which is the shield. When you engage it, you can deflect bullets, but only from the player's front side! This nifty device obviously greatly affects gamers' approach to Bomb Defuse and Assassination, since teammates can now devise battle plans around defensive tactics. Shields are also used in conjunction with a pistol, hopefully making one-on-one showdowns an intense trial of skill and grit. Although, two timid players could potentially make such encounters more of a test of patience.

As previously mentioned, Xbox owners will receive a Counter-Strike that contains all the previous material and Condition Zero, as well



The Xbox version will have improved lighting effects



The character models and environment benefit from more polygons

480 P for HDTVs will be offered in the Xbox version as well as Dolby 5.1!

as new weapons and maps. The exclusive Xbox weapons merely consist of the Syringe (accessible only in single-player) and Machete. Ritual promises it will compensate for its lack of exclusive weapons by adding at least five multiplayer maps.

Ritual will even alter many of the levels that are already present. Because the analog sticks simply cannot match the precision inherent to the mouse/keyboard configuration, the geometry of levels will focus players on horizontally-oriented action, rather than a combination of horizontal and vertical – thereby completely alleviating the controller issue for the console-only audience. The developers will also address the controller's lack of keys to make accessing menus and items more practical. First, users can configure their weapon preferences based on those they employ most. Second, hotkeys will be available through analog functionality; that is, you'll access a weapon or menu by completely depressing a button and waiting a split second. Ritual admits that it hasn't yet worked out every kink in the interface, but guarantees it will. Mustaine assures, "It's a shame. So many games could've been great if the developers just eliminated that one nagging issue. We will not let this happen to our product."

Although the developers will also need to redesign the online network for Xbox, for the most part, this actually benefits the end product thanks to standardization. Since everyone will possess the same hardware (CPU, controller, and headset) and use a broadband connection, nobody can complain about an unfair advantage, assuming that each player is within a reasonable distance to the host. Plus, all will play over the same closed network, which eliminates many of the headaches – like cheating – that constantly plague the PC. Most types of cheaters that are normally able to gain access and ruin games (PC users call them idlers and PKers) will be kept in check. Valve has written programs within the software that automatically kicks these nuisances from servers. If, for example, you shoot your teammates or stand still for too long, your butt's out!

The only disadvantage to playing on Xbox is server size. Ritual will strive to make 10-versus-10 matches possible, but it'll most likely limit games to a maximum capacity of

16. However, in reality this isn't a significant disappointment, as most professional clans only participate in matches with teams of five.

## Graphical Flair (Or Lack Of?)

A game's appearance is the least important aspect of its quality. Still, many gamers place considerable value in graphics; and for that audience, they might be disappointed in Counter-Strike. Instead of diverting time and resources to creating the best-looking Xbox software ever, Ritual wants to ensure that the game A) plays well, and B) runs fast over the Internet. But to say that the graphics are bad is an insult to Ritual's art team. The environments, weapons, and character models feature 60 to 70 percent more polygons than previous iterations. To further enhance the characters' realism, Ritual added thousands of new action animations and tens of thousands of frames! The Xbox version, in particular, will receive 24-bit texture quality, significantly better lighting and particle effects, and flashier color schemes.

Surprisingly, the developers will even go a step further, creating scripted events that are meant to satisfy players by dazzling them with graphically exhilarating scenes. These "payoffs," as Ritual likes to call them, range from a terrorist realistically tumbling down stairs to entire buildings crumbling before your eyes. One of the grandest spectacles places the player in a helicopter flying above a line of enemy vehicles. If you manage to destroy the lead truck, you'll cause a chain reaction that creates a massive explosion!

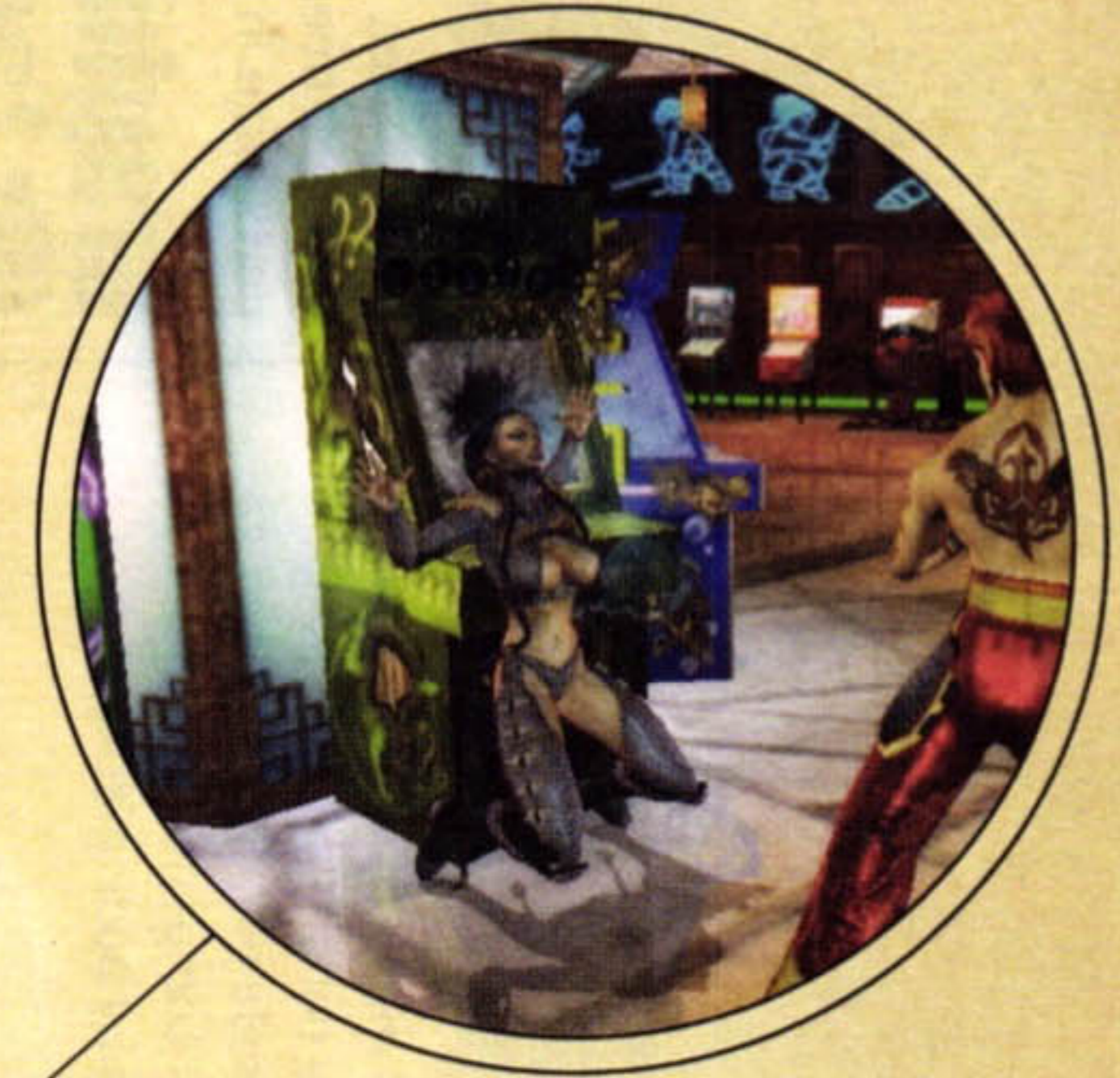
Whether this graphical trickery and the other single-player goodies impress you, or the online component enraptures you so deeply that CS becomes your first virtual sport, one thing is certain: Counter-Strike for Xbox will break many of the barriers so tightly enforced by the PC. Never before have console gamers been able to participate in creating their own mods and designing new levels, or take part in a virtual community of hundreds of thousands of people. If the Xbox version can garner enough support, this will mark the beginning of a new era.

# The Human Anatomy

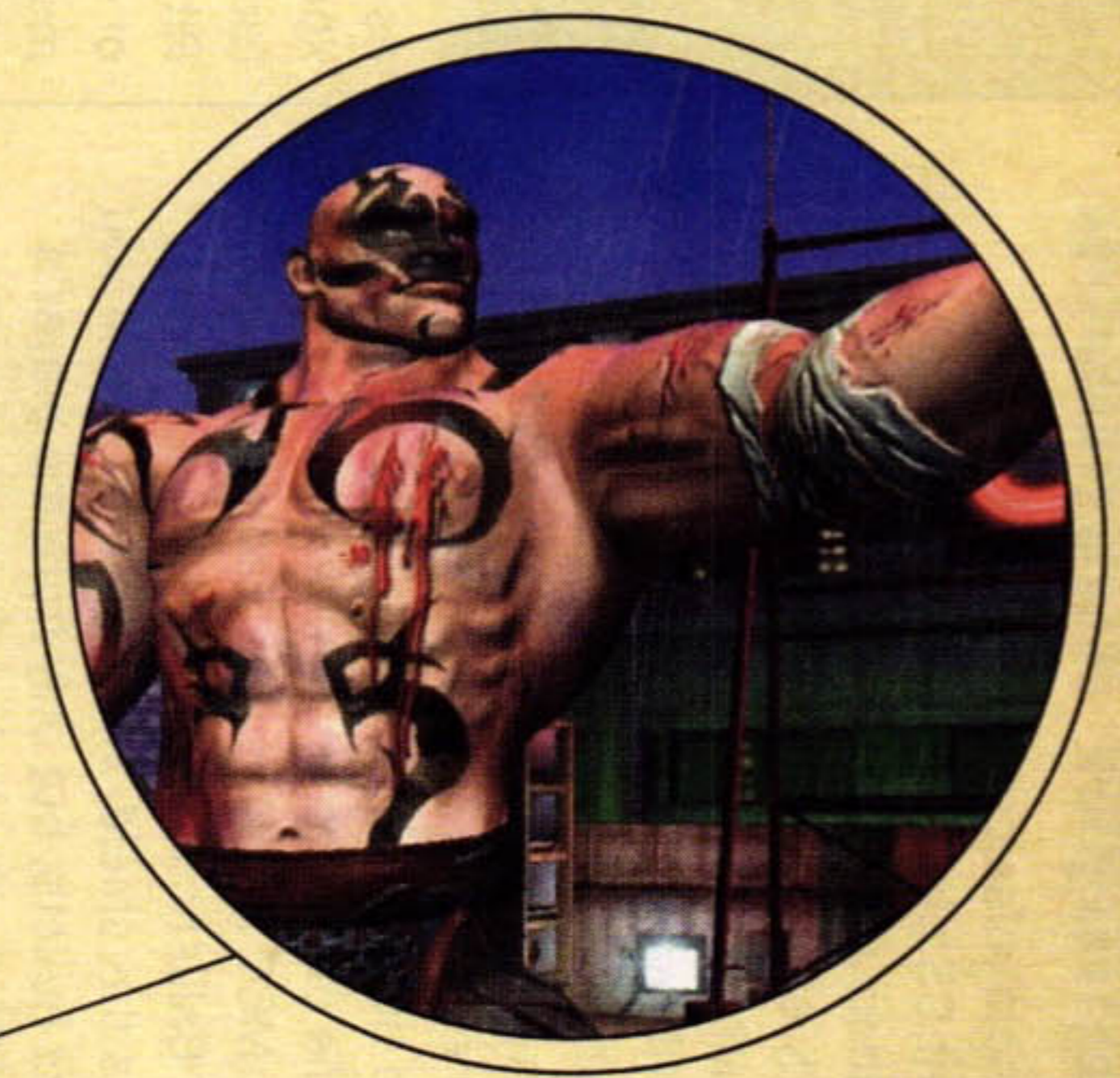
*as deconstructed by Tao Feng*



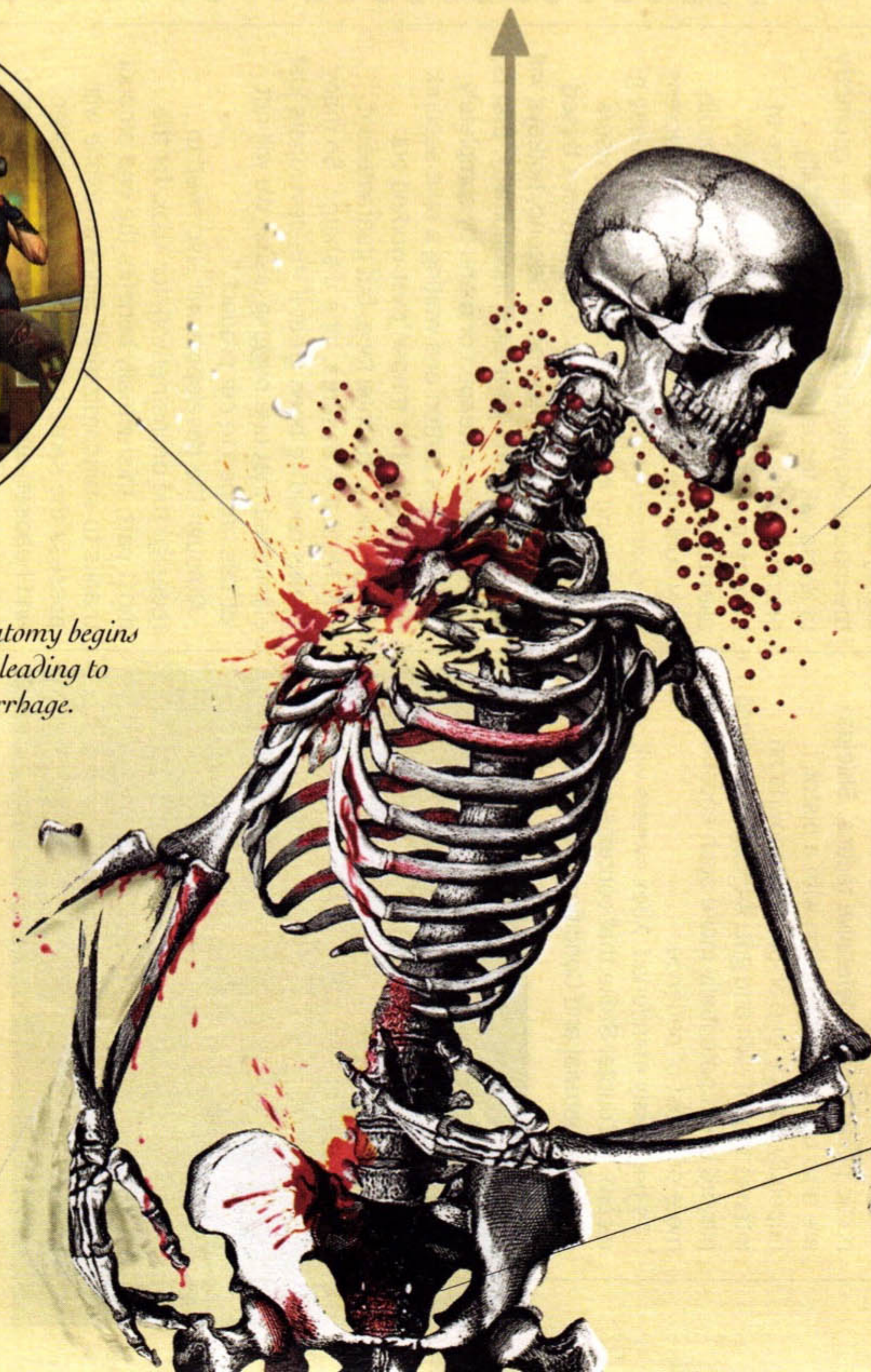
**FIG. 1. – Considerable Pain**  
*The process of deconstructing the anatomy begins with bruising at the point of contact, leading to bloody contusions and cerebral hemorrhage.*



**FIG. 3. – Environmental Destruction**  
*Opponents are often hurled into walls and glass situated nearby, resulting in injuries of variable depth and size.*

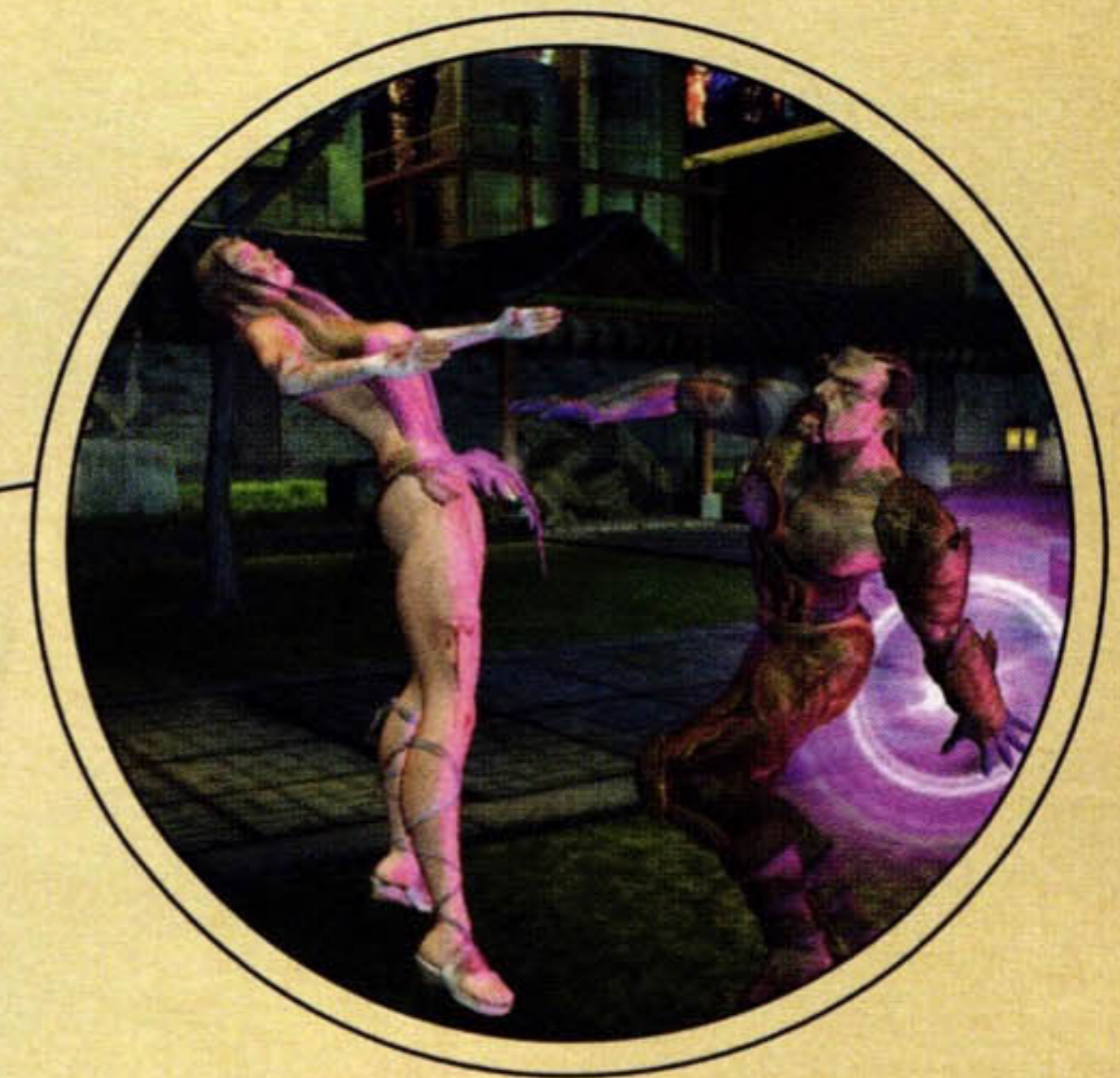


**FIG. 4. – Hurtful Words**  
*Insults are unloaded regularly to further humiliate an opponent already suffering from repeated blows to the head.*

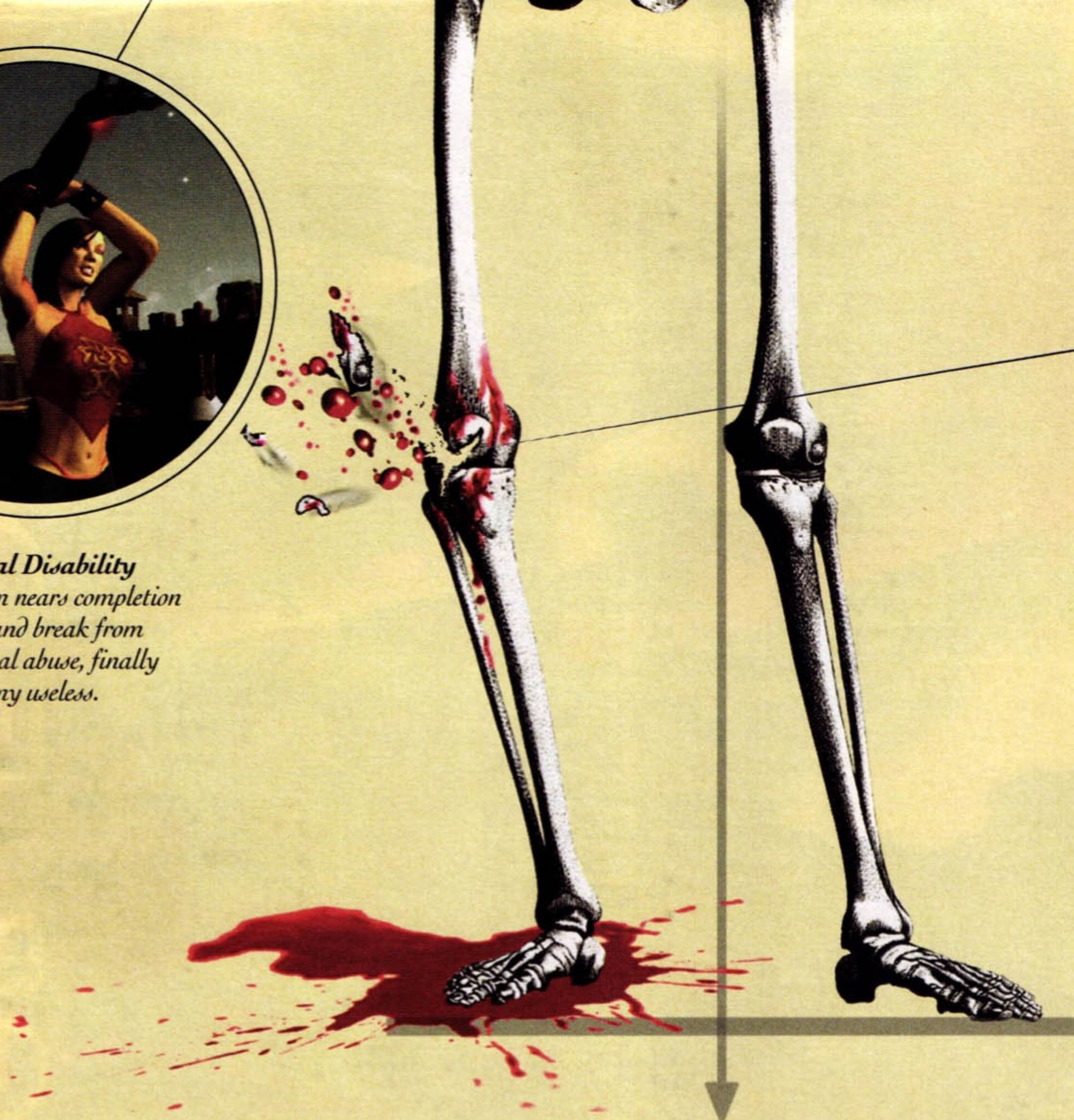




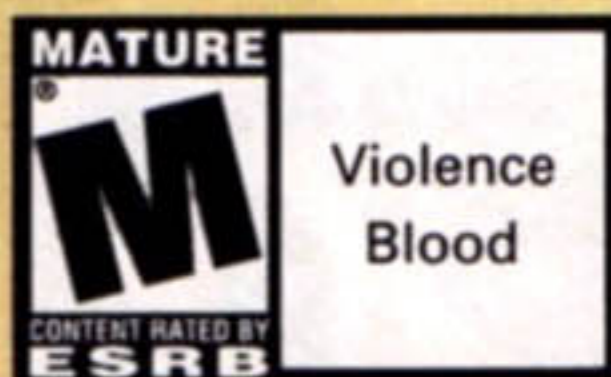
**FIG. 2. – Physical Disability**  
*The deconstruction nears completion as limbs weaken and break from continuous physical abuse, finally rendering the enemy useless.*



**FIG. 5. – Harm or Heal**  
*Once supernatural Chi reaches full capacity within the body, the powerful energy force can be unleashed to harm enemies or used to heal the damage they have inflicted on you.*



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# NEW DAY

# ADVENT

*Sometimes, great video games come from the most unlikely places. Advent is the story how a small, first-time developer came together with one of America's greatest living science fiction writers to create what could be the most exciting Xbox game you'll see next year. You might not have heard of Advent before, but trust us – this game will be generating more than its fair share of excitement in the coming months.*

■ PLATFORM XBOX/PC ■ STYLE 1-PLAYER ACTION ■ PUBLISHER MAJESCO ■ DEVELOPER GLYPH ■ RELEASE MARCH 2004



# RISING



Glyphx is promising at least one amazing chase scene with these hoverbikes

**V**ideo games are an art form, though probably the most hard to intellectually pin down. Music is music. Books are books. Video games, however, are the product of a dizzying array of disparate influences, technologies, and aesthetics. Taking equally from the fields of art, comic books, computer science, film, and the often-overlooked tradition of arcade games of skill like pinball; video games represent, in some ways, the last evolution of entertainment. All major forms of media – from stirring orchestral scores to movie-quality visuals – can be found in games, but with one unprecedented difference: The audience actually takes part in shaping the experience for themselves. Characters move at your command; and, in some cases, the player actually makes decisions that alter the outcome of

the story at hand. Balancing consumers' seemingly contradictory demands for both greater freedom of choice and compelling narrative is no small task – and this is perhaps one of the reasons that so many games simply fail to deliver a story that matches even a B-grade Hollywood film in terms of coherence and emotional impact.

While there are exceptions (ICO comes to mind, as do numerous sequences from Square's Final Fantasy series), most games simply don't make you feel anything in particular, apart from a sense of general excitement and satisfaction in having vanquished whatever obstacle had been standing in your way. This dearth of good storytelling can be attributed to a number of circumstances, the most important being the fact that, for the bulk of gaming's 25-year history, there simply wasn't the technology available to allow for anything more than plot exposition told through static cutscenes and text-based dialogue. Although this changed as the CD-ROM era ushered in games like Resident Evil and Metal Gear Solid – which were explicit in their cinematic ambitions – these titles' stilted scripts and wooden voice-acting illustrated what happens when people that were hired primarily as graphical and gameplay technicians attempted to emulate film genres that Hollywood had been perfecting for decades.

But, in their defense, at least they tried. Even today, as cutscenes continue to grow ever longer and more visually striking, many developers don't seem to have a clue how to make a plotline that

succeeds in anything other than ushering the player between action sequences. And that's usually enough for many gamers. It was not in jest that Doom creator John Carmack once observed, "Story in a game is like story in a porn movie. It's expected to be there, but it's not that important."

Glyphx, a Utah-based company well known in the industry for its background in 3D modeling and CG artwork, is looking to change all this with Advent, its first foray into the treacherous waters of game development. In crafting this project, an engrossing story has been a paramount goal; and talking with Glyphx's Todd Sheridan and Donald Mustard, the guiding forces behind Advent, you'll find that the word "emotion" comes up as often as the usual developer terms like "polygon performance" or "bump mapping." Far from an afterthought, Advent's story is a central part of the potentially mind-blowing experience that Glyphx is working feverishly to bring to the Xbox and PC early next year. Mustard makes their intentions clear: "Most games don't elicit much emotion. The basic emotions that you feel are fear and adrenaline, or just fun. Our [intent] is to evoke emotion, and a full range of emotion. Yes, we want people to feel terror in certain parts of the game, but we also want people to feel joy. I want people laughing; I want people crying; I want people laughing and crying at the same time. I want them to be so wrapped up in the story and the characters that they're totally immersed in this epic experience. I kind of want to take *Star Wars*, *Indiana Jones*, and Jane Austen; and stick them together."



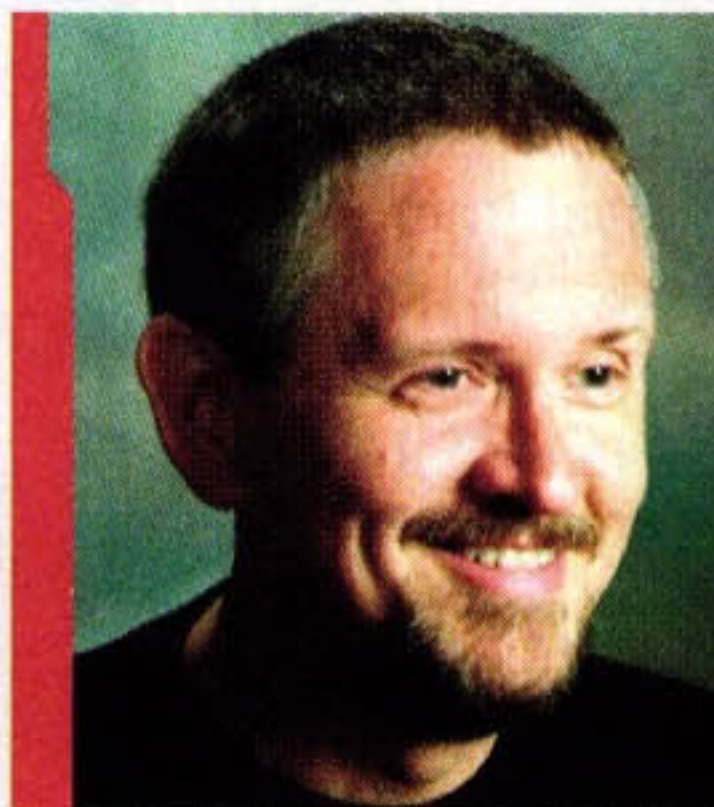
f the guys at Glyphx don't talk like typical developers, it's probably because they haven't actually been game developers for very long. Todd Sheridan founded the company in 1995 as an art house to serve the needs of the video game industry, which was just coming to grips with the increased creative demands of PlayStation development. Starting out with a focus on 3D modeling, Glyphx gradually expanded its reach to include everything from character design to box art to fully rendered FMV cutscenes. Along the way, the company worked with many top publishing firms, doing the box art for games like Spider-Man and Vigilante 8, and creating all of the acclaimed CG cutscenes for Eidos' The Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver I & II.

Even as Glyphx reached new heights of success, the team yearned to do more than simply create art assets for other people's games. Sheridan, who has an earnest, clean-cut demeanor more akin to a young, conscientious high school teacher than an artist, recalls, "We got to the point where a lot of our clients were coming to us for conceptual work, for help in designing their characters and art assets. We were more involved in actually designing the animation for the games, the

cinematics, and story.... We knew everything we needed to know to actually develop an entire game ourselves, minus the coding. At one point, we just decided that we're going to drop all our high-end animation stuff and just focus on development." In this spirit, the company created a new team focused solely on games, allowing them to venture into uncharted territory while still maintaining their profitable art division.

Fate intervened in the form of Epic Games' masterful Unreal II engine, which provided Glyphx with the perfect tool with which to create Advent, a franchise that they were already planning on making into a trilogy of games. "When Unreal II came out, we saw the leap in quality between the first engine and the second one," comments Sheridan. "We said, 'Wow, now we're at the point where we can do the kind of high-quality visuals that we love to do in real-time – and without so many limitations.'"

With the Unreal II engine in hand, the company began recruiting staff members that had a background in programming and game design to start transforming the engine for the third-person game they envisioned, including both the lead programmers for Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six and the StarCraft Brood War expansion set.



AN INTERVIEW WITH **ORSON SCOTT CARD**

*Orson Scott Card, along with Ray Bradbury and William Gibson, is widely hailed as being one of America's greatest living science fiction writers. As the author of the classic Ender's Game series and the winner of numerous Nebula and Hugo awards, he is among the few that can actually be considered legendary in the field of literature. An avid gamer and former reviewer for Compute magazine, Card has worked on games in the past, crafting the dialogue for LucasArts' Escape From Monkey Island and The Dig. Now, he is lending his talents to Advent in a truly unprecedented partnership between a literary heavyweight and a game developer. To help promote Advent, which he obviously believes is going to be a groundbreaking moment for gaming, Mr. Card was kind enough to grant us this interview.*

**You've worked on some games in the past. How did you come to be involved with Advent, and do you play games in your free time?**

They're actually my life, and I do my writing in my spare time [laughs]. Of course, the games that I'm interested in are the old fogey-type games. I'm way too old for the quick-twitch games that require instant reflexes. When my eight-year-old left me in the dust, I realized that my time's done for that. I've been addicted to anything Sid Meier's done for years. Top-down, map-based games are more my style.

**What attracted you to this project? What made Advent stick out to you?**

Well, they approached me; it's not as if I woke up one morning with a plate of 25 game designers to choose from. But, I have been approached by quite a few different groups over the years, and I can't really make much of a contribution to a story that I don't care about or believe in. What they had was a terrific story and a terrific group of people who knew what they were doing. They handle graphics beautifully, they understand good gameplay, and they wanted to tell a story that meant something. Of course, there is the twitch aspect to the game – it wouldn't be fun if you didn't have that – but as you explore the story you're getting something a great deal more than in the average shoot 'em up game.

**Could you tell us about Advent's story? What are some of the key themes that you would like the audience to take away from the game?**

Well, if I start talking about "themes," you're getting into an area that makes my skin start to crawl. I have to admit I'm sort of anti-English department on this sort of thing. I don't want to talk about themes; what you come away with is characters. One of the problems in any kind of interactive game is that it's

(continued on page 51)



Advent's intelligent control scheme will allow you to switch between melee and gun combat on the fly

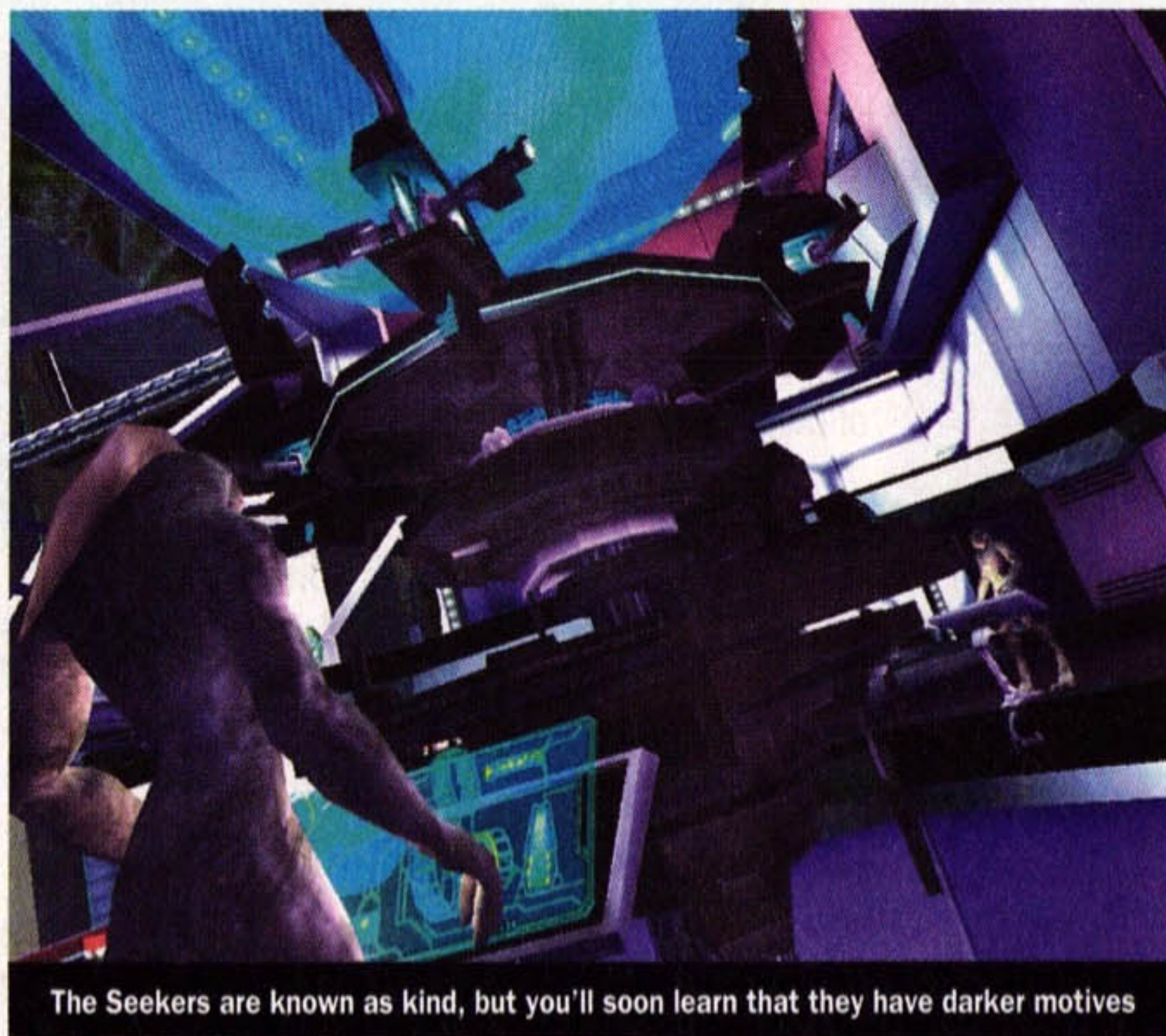
# A

fter a brief Advent demo earned approval from Epic Games, Sheridan and Glyphx felt confident that they could deliver a top-flight game-

play experience. However, they still harbored some doubts about their ability to accomplish their goal of achieving a new standard in video game storytelling. With a basic plot structure in place, the decision was made to seek outside help in writing a script. The help would come in the form of one of the most respected writers in the world of science fiction, Orson Scott Card, the author of the classic *Ender's Game* series.

"At this point, we feel like we have all the talent necessary to do a really strong game," comments Sheridan. "We have an awesome concept, but what we need now is to fill in the gaps where we don't have strong talent. Writing was really the last big hole we felt we had. Plus, the game was never meant to be a one-off game; it was meant to be a franchise. When we decided to find a writer for our stuff, we said, 'Instead of starting at the bottom and moving our way up, let's just go all the way to the top and see what happens.'"

Even though Glyphx was not a highly recognized name, Card agreed to a meeting with the company. Shockingly, this long-shot gamble proved to be a wild success. "He came into our offices and we pitched the story to him, and he just sat and asked questions about the story," remembers Sheridan. "Then, when we were done, he sat back and said, 'This story doesn't need me; you guys have developed this to the point where you don't need me.



The Seekers are known as kind, but you'll soon learn that they have darker motives

That's why I want to do it, because you've got it to the point where it's not a matter of me coming in and salvaging a wreck; it's me coming in and making something good, great.' That got him really excited about it." [For more on Card's involvement in Advent, see our interview with the author on page 47.]

Although he wouldn't reveal all of the game's dramatic twists and turns, Sheridan did give us Advent's basic premise, one that seems to offer up an intriguing twist on some well-worn science fiction themes. The story is set during the dawn of the era of intergalactic travel, which has resulted in the universe's many planets coming together to form a ruling governmental body. As these alien races come to learn more about each other, they begin to notice an odd similarity in their respective cultural and religious mythologies: rumors of a mysterious people

called humans. No one has ever claimed to have seen a human in the flesh, but many cling to the belief that these strange beings will one day play a part in saving the universe.

In theory, every planet has an equal voice in the universal government, but a race called the Seekers wields an enormous influence over most important matters. The Seekers are viewed as benevolent and are admired for their work in helping less-developed civilizations become technologically self-sufficient. To do this, newly discovered planets are placed in a 1,000-year program, in which they are ruled in a form of indentured servitude by the Seekers until they reach the point when they can become full members of society.

Advent's story hinges on the Aurelians, a noble alien people that are a few years from completing their millennium-long apprenticeship. Through a surprising series of events, the

Aurelians discover that not only do humans actually exist, but that the Seekers have been exploring the far reaches of the universe in an effort to exterminate the last remaining human beings, using their charitable work with poorer planets as a cloak for their true motives.

Concealing their efforts, the Aurelians come in contact with a small band of humans who have been in hiding on Mars after surviving the Seeker's deadly attack on Earth. The humans are led by Ethan Wyeth, a brave pilot who was instrumental in fending off the first alien onslaught more than 20 years ago. Players will assume the identity of Gideon, Ethan's brother, a reluctant hero who is thrown by fate into the difficult role of saving the last vestiges of humankind, while also coming to the aid of the Aurelians.



This concept art shows Gideon escorting his injured brother



Running on walls is just the start of the amazing maneuvers you'll pull off

**T**hat's a lot to chew on, but it really only scratches the surface of a story that will be every bit as deep and thought-provoking as you would expect from a project being guided by a writer the caliber of Orson Scott Card. Even more intriguing is Glyphx's promise that the story will actually change and evolve according to choices the player makes. For instance, in one scene, Gideon will fight with a space marine. After whipping him soundly, you can decide whether to kill him or show mercy. Later in the game, when you meet up with some military men who served with him, your decision will become key in whether they lend a helping hand or coldly turn their backs on you. Moral decisions like this are going to be crucial in determining the path that your characters take.

Although Card and Glyphx have done much work towards constructing a complex backstory to set the events of Advent against, Sheridan cautions that their goal is to create a story that enhances, rather than detracts from the gameplay experience. "When it comes to cutscenes, given the fact that we have all this experience in that area, you would assume that we were going to be spending a lot of time doing cutscenes for the game," he comments. "But, our philosophy is a little different; we want the cutscenes to be things that you play and experience, and not so much things that you sit back and watch."

Donald Mustard adds, "One of the things we like about Card was that he has a talent for capturing characters concisely, which is perfect for a game. You can't have this long exposition – that's what is killing games right now. That's the problem with Final Fantasy and Metal Gear; they don't know how to tell a story for an American audience in a way that's short and concise, yet still has power and impact."

To make sure that his vision is perfectly

realized, Card will be on-hand to oversee the recording of the game's voiceovers. While giving his input on casting choices, he will also direct the studio sessions, making sure that the performances are true to the meaning and the emotional pitch of every line. In addition, he is working on a novel that will act as a companion piece to the game. If successful, more books will follow – each corresponding to a chapter in the planned Advent trilogy.



After being burned in the past by developers that put their directorial aspirations over the demands of solid gameplay, we naturally questioned whether Advent would have the gameplay to equal its cinematic scope. Suffice it to say that these doubts were more than put to ease by Advent lead designer Donald Mustard.

Mustard, who looks youthful enough to pass for one of the teenage boys that he hopes will purchase his game by the thousands, speaks about Advent with a passionate enthusiasm that sometimes borders on mania. Perhaps "speak" isn't exactly the right word, as Mustard doesn't so much talk about games as act them out. During our conversation, he was rarely able to sit down for more than a few minutes at a time, frequently jumping up to imitate the main character's arsenal of combat maneuvers.

His excitement is infectious, and we couldn't help but be impressed by the sheer level of variety that is being attempted here. Think about almost any title – be it Max Payne, Devil May Cry, Jedi Outcast, or Halo – that has pushed the boundaries of gameplay in the past few years, weave them together with a surprisingly intuitive control scheme, and you'll begin to get an idea of what Advent is all about.

"We wanted to create a game that had a full range," said Mustard. "You'll have a full set of weapons like in Devil May Cry. Our targeting system, because of this, allows us to have full dynamic animations like pulling weapons off guards and targeting multiple enemies. We [also] have a full range of hand-to-hand, so when guys come in close you'll be kicking and punching."

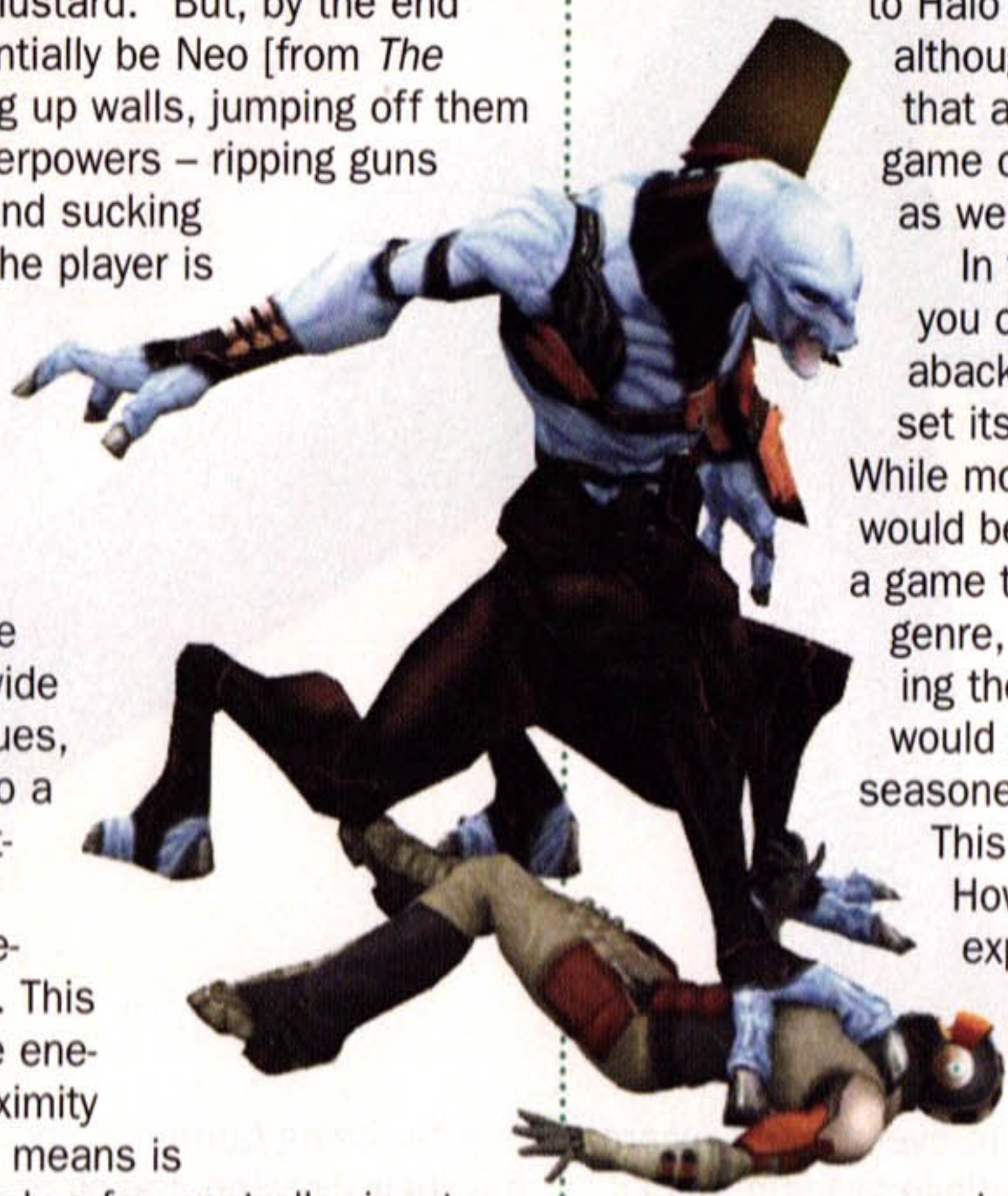
Impressed? Well, stand back, because that's just the tip of the iceberg. Even as you begin to master the art of combat, Gideon will realize that he has unstable telekinetic powers that he is only beginning to understand. As you become more adept at tapping into these mental forces, Advent's gameplay will make a sharp turn away from gunplay.

"You'll start the game with all these sweet weapons, and play

through it," describes Mustard. "But, by the end of the game you'll essentially be Neo [from *The Matrix*]. You'll be running up walls, jumping off them and using all these superpowers – ripping guns out of people's hands and sucking them into your hands. The player is so much better than any weapon. You're punching guys and they're flying back 30 feet and slamming through walls."

In giving the player the freedom to embrace a wide array of combat techniques, much work has gone into a dynamic, AI-driven targeting system that sets up multiple "zones of awareness" around the player. This allows the AI to prioritize enemies based on both proximity and threat. What all this means is that – through the use only a few controller inputs – you'll be able to quickly switch between acrobatic moves, shooting multiple targets, and levitating and throwing environmental objects with your mental powers. For those who wish to be more hands-on, you can manually toggle between targets using the left analog stick. In essence, it's an extremely versatile, more action-oriented variation on the control scheme Nintendo has used in the last three installments of *The Legend of Zelda*.

To make matters even more interesting, Glyphx also plans to include a host of vehicles into the mix – including futuristic hoverbikes, giant military assault rigs, and smaller all-terrain units. Control during these sections of gameplay will be similar



to Halo's fixed-pivot turning, although there is a possibility that a more traditional racing-game option will be available as well.

In the final assessment, you can't help but be taken aback by how high Glyphx has set its sights in making *Advent*. While most first-time developers would be happy to simply make a game that's competent in its genre, the *Advent* team is rolling the dice on a project that would challenge even the most seasoned company's abilities.

This begs the question:

How can Glyphx reasonably expect to pull off a project of this magnitude?

"We're just that good!" jokes Donald Mustard. More seriously, he adds, "Actually, the

only way it's possible is that we

started with so much pre-production and had such a strong engine. We had two years [to prepare], and that allows us to spend all our time just making the game. Unless you're a very established developer, and you've done tons of games, you don't have the time or budget to write your own engine. So, either you're going to write your own engine and have a crappy game, or take someone else's engine and maybe you'll have the chance to actually focus on making it good."

You certainly can't help but root for them. By all appearances, this is a bunch of nice, hard-working guys trying to make the game they've always



Targeting is automatic, but easily switched

dreamed of playing, and getting a chance to collaborate with one of their heroes while they do it. In many ways, it's just another variation on the American Dream – and another reason why video games are still one of the few entertainment industries left where less-established companies can sit down and play their hands at the high-stakes table. If Glyphx succeeds, gamers around the world will be rewarded with one of the defining games of the Xbox era. Here's to hoping.

Orson Scott Card will be directing the voice acting for all of *Advent*'s cutscenes

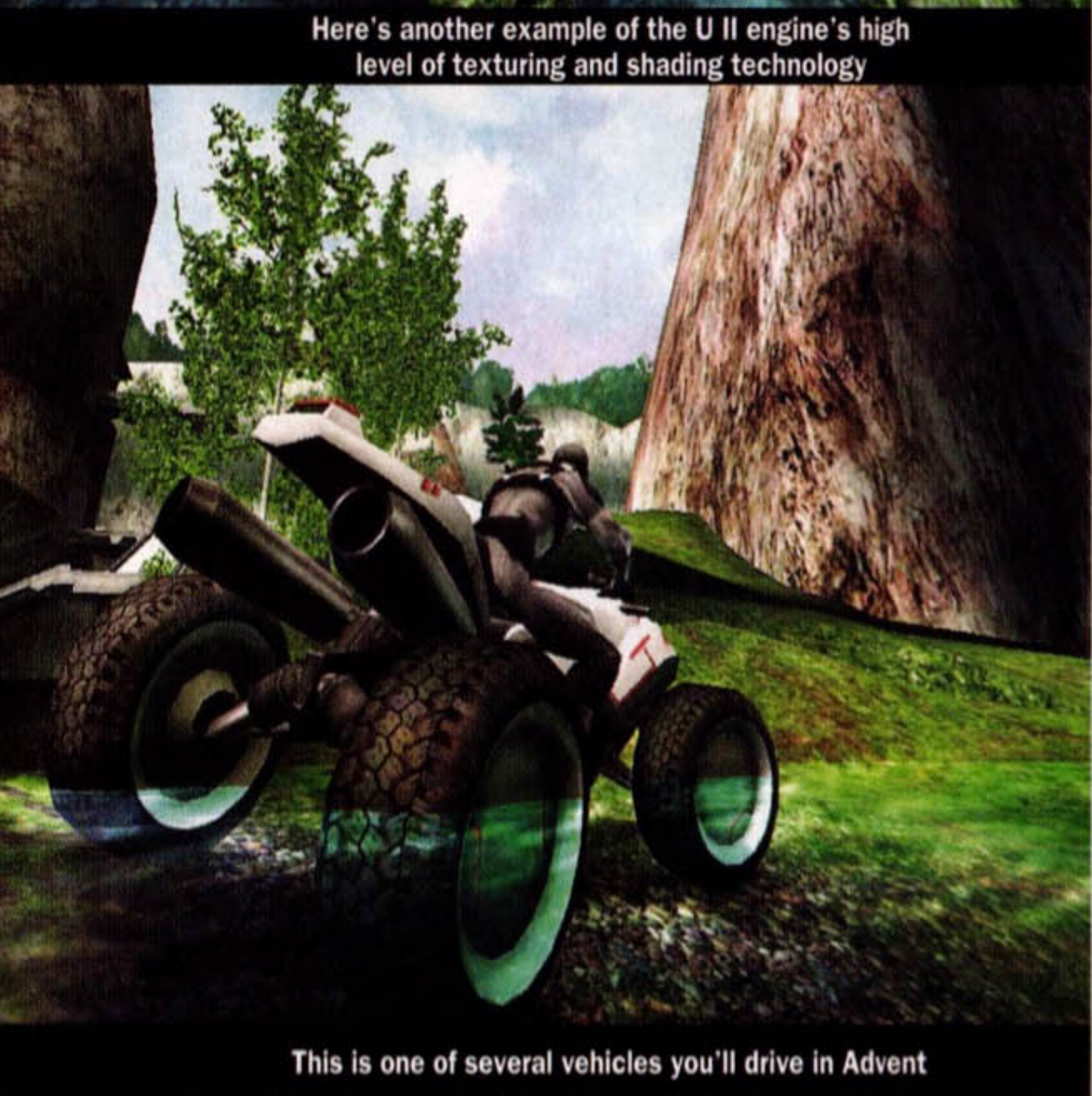




Using the Unreal II engine has made it easy for Glyphx to render grand, detailed vistas like this



Here's another example of the U II engine's high level of texturing and shading technology



This is one of several vehicles you'll drive in Advent



We also expect that you may be piloting some drop ships as well

(continued from page 47)

very hard to have the hero have any kind of character because the hero is the player. So, there's not much motivation other than the fact that you've got to kill everybody as fast as you can and solve all the puzzles and problems.

What Glyphx has managed to do is they have made it so the main character actually has some important ethical dilemmas, and you have to live with the consequences of the choices you make. They're not the kind of dilemmas that I think are easy. The good versus evil thing – that's a piece of cake. Nobody has much difficulty choosing between Sauron and Gandolf in *The Lord of the Rings*. Here, you have [situations] where no option is actually very good, but you still have to make a choice.

**What are the challenges of storytelling in a video game? Obviously, there are certain constraints, and players have a great degree of free choice. How does this change your creative approach, as opposed to doing books or movies?**

Well, there are games where there is a lot of free choice; games where you recreate the game board as you go. However, in [an action game], there is no practical way to allow anything more than the illusion of free choice. You can make choices up to a point, but you're always going to be funneled through certain doors into the next scene that has been prepared. When you're playing, because you can move the character in any direction you want, shoot at anything you want; you feel free, but you're being shaped and guided. That makes it so that, as a writer, when I'm writing game dialogue, I only have a limited number of possibilities to deal with. It's not that different from the other dramatic writing I've done.

**Let's talk about Advent's storyline. How many changes did you implement into what the developers had already conceived?**

They've given me a great deal of freedom to change what things mean – to change characterization and so forth. The overall storyline has to follow what the game's going to do. They're developing the settings and the flow of the game, and I really can't mess with that too much. And I don't really want to, because it's excellent. What I have room to do [is change things like] what events mean to characters, what their attitude is, and what their relationships are. Those are things Glyphx has essentially handed to me, and they're very cooperative with that – nobody's married to any one idea. It's as lovely a collaboration as I could imagine.

**We've heard that you are planning to write a series of books that will be companion pieces to the Advent trilogy of games. Is this true?**

There will be as many books as there are games. I am on board to write the first one. As the dialogue writer for the game, I can make sure that the novel and game agree with each other. We're hoping that the book comes out at the same time as the game.

**A lot of video game plots have traditionally been pretty clichéd; do you think that partnerships like the one between you and Glyphx are the future? How can authors help to improve the overall quality of games?**

It depends, because novelists don't always think like gamers. I really have been involved with games for many, many years, and I understand what games require to a greater degree than many novelists do. It depends on who the novelist is. I imagine that [Sandman comic creator and author] Neil Gaiman, for example, would do a brilliant job, because he's worked in different media. He knows how to think like a non-novelist. I can think of others – not to speak ill of them at all – that simply aren't prepared to step in and do this kind of collaboration. If you think like a novelist and only like a novelist, you're not going to be much help, because the way things flow is different.

**We know you don't like to get too much into discussing themes, but video games have been criticized in recent years for being overly violent and teaching children immoral behavior. How do you feel about games like Grand Theft Auto III? Do you agree that some games are potentially harmful?**

Well, when you're talking about moral issues in storytelling, which gaming is certainly one means of doing, there are different things. There's the level of decorum: What's going to offend somebody? I think that's the most trivial issue, and the most easily fixed. Anybody that thinks they're doing something important by putting bad words, nudity, or really vicious violence in a game – they're not doing much, and I'm not terribly impressed by those that want to be edgy by doing cheap effects. I also don't think it does that much harm. It's just impolite and pointless.

At the same time, there is a level where there are moral choices involved in games. I don't know what it does to people; and I worry about what it does to people, when you're in a game that rewards you for basically killing anything that moves.

**In talking to the Advent developers that we met, they said one of their goals was to make sure that your character's choices and behavior have consequences in the outcome of the story and how other people react towards you. Is this an intentional reaction to the ways that many games seem to pile on senseless or purposeless violence?**

I know that I'm happy that this is not a story of mindless killing. This is a story where, yes, you fight when you need to fight, but your goal is not simply to wipe out every living thing. Instead, you have allies; you have people on your side, people that you need to befriend and trust in order to accomplish your purpose. These are things that don't usually show up in video games. So, in some ways, this will be far more like real life. You don't just blast away.

# PREVIEWS



PLAYSTATION 2/XBOX/GAMECUBE

## SPY HUNTER 2

### TRANSFORMATIONS

**Midway hopes to** beat the odds a second time. There were more than a few people who thought that bringing back Spy Hunter could have disastrous consequences. As with *Star Wars*, for example, people don't like their happy memories toyed with. Fortunately, Midway and developer Paradigm were hitting on all cylinders, as *Spy Hunter* perfectly fit the bill for anyone looking – not so much for the original – but for an all-new high octane take on a property we all knew and loved.

Now, Midway has the beast of its own success to wrestle with. If "pleasantly surprised" could be said about the first *Spy Hunter*, such a term won't suffice this time around. The publisher is aware of this and is not about to rest on

its laurels. Change is the operative word for SH 2. Producer Michael Gottlieb would promise us only one thing: The logo would probably be the only element that remains from the first *Hunter*. Enter, Angel Studios (now known as Rockstar San Diego). If you ask Gottlieb, Angel's involvement makes all the difference. "Everything has been redone," he says. "If [Spy Hunter developer] Paradigm had not been bought out by Infogrames, [SH 2] probably would have been the same game. We pretty much took the finished product to Angel and said, 'This is what we did with the last game, what should we do with it next?' Everything about this feels different; plays different. Everything under the hood is different."

While gamers will notice the influence of Angel in the way your redesigned *Interceptor* feels on the road, more wholesale changes are taking place. Boss battles are being introduced, and this is just one of the new objectives. Apart from having these larger-than-life baddies pester you throughout a level, players will face *Twisted Metal*-style arena interludes that you must complete before moving on. To address the length concern with the last *Spy Hunter* and to add some beef, secondary objectives have been added. While these don't progress the plot, they are there so you can earn vehicle upgrades and kick some more ass while you're at it.

*Spy Hunter 2* will also throw some new curves at you – some of which are even female. A special character (so far named Agent X) will be introduced. While Midway was very tight-lipped about this spy babe's actual involvement in the game, we did find out that she will show up for some co-op play on certain levels. Your one true love – the *Interceptor* – is also taking

new forms. An offroad vehicle mode has been added, as has a snowmobile variation. Furthermore, you can now use the *Escape Cycle* when you please, as it's no longer just your last level of damage. This bike can even trigger a projectile proximity bomb to waste all in its radius.

As if these changes weren't enough to bump the franchise's action quotient up a notch, Midway also plans to have more branching paths in levels, as well as simply more ways to get around the landscape. "Each mission is going to have lots of different 'moments.' Moments are anytime where you say the word 'cool' without even trying," declares Gottlieb. It seems very clear that, for its part, Midway has already tried hard to make *Spy Hunter 2* yet another title that will take gamers by storm.



Developer Angel Studios brings a new graphical sheen



"Let's see that uptight, English pansy James Bond do this!"



Check out the upgrades available

■ STYLE 1-PLAYER ACTION/RACING ■ PUBLISHER MIDWAY ■ DEVELOPER ANGEL STUDIOS ■ RELEASE FALL



There is now more than one way to go through a level



This is the notorious warehouse where all the video game crates and boxes are stored



The infamous "Crazy Train," ladies and gentlemen



Apart from battling enemies, players will often have to think their way around environmental problems



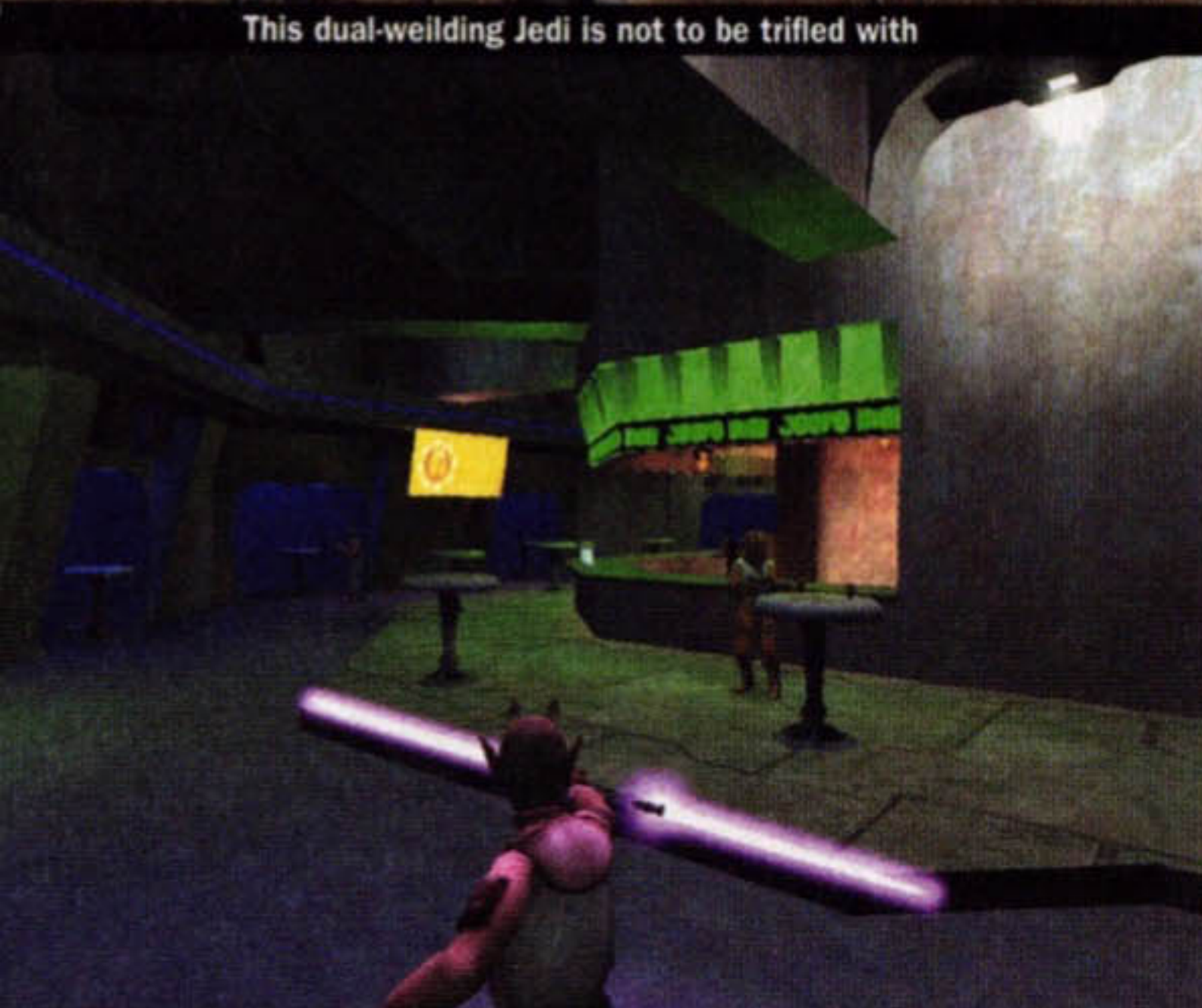
Wanted: Someone to man watchtower. Those with no friends/relatives and who like seclusion urged to apply



Seeing your bike will no longer be a sign of trouble



This dual-wielding Jedi is not to be trifled with



"Hey Bossk! Bounty this!"



You can smell his Gamorrean breath from here

XBOX/PC

# STAR WARS: JEDI KNIGHT III

## YOUR HIGHNESSNESS

**There are a few settings** in the video game world that have become institutions, and the Star Wars universe is first among them. Some attempts to capitalize on the popularity of the premise have given us complete garbage – but we're not going to name names (Battlegrounds, Bounty Hunter).

On the other hand, our imaginations and free time have been completely engrossed by a number of hard-hitting, eye-popping titles, and we keep coming back for more. One series that has yet to let us down is Jedi Knight (née Dark Forces). With each installment, gamers have been awed and enthralled by what LucasArts has seen fit to provide them with, and by the look of Jedi Knight III, the best has yet to come. In an exclusive interview with Raven Software veteran and JK III co-leader Jon Zuk, Game Informer has mined some tasty morsels that you won't find anywhere else.

The story will pick up immediately following the close of Jedi Knight II, as Kyle has made his peace with being a Jedi, and will act as your teacher at the Academy. "The player will start as a new recruit to Luke Skywalker's Jedi Academy," explains Zuk, "and will be sent on many missions across the galaxy as he or she trains to become a Jedi Knight. The player will actually have the ability to select the missions he or she wishes to undertake." Could this signal a non-linearity that fans of the series have always been looking and hoping for? Quite possibly.

We, like you, are very curious about sabers. They were undeniably the best part of Jedi Knight II, so it stands to reason that the team at Raven would expand on what they had – and expand they have. "As the player progresses through the game, he or

she will earn the right to wield either a saber staff like Darth Maul, or one saber in each hand like Anakin. This is in addition to the three saber styles for the single saber from JK II, which have been expanded." That's what we're talkin' about. As if that isn't enough to give you a tent-pole, try this on for size: "Saber combat will work similarly to Jedi Outcast, through a combination of mouse and keyboard movement. Each new saber style will have its own unique moves, and we have added some new single saber and acrobatic moves as well."

Coupled with this exciting information comes an updated Force ability forecast: "There are several new Force powers. This time around, we've given players the option to use their lightsaber in conjunction with specific Force powers to create new special saber moves." While this all sounds good, the following is even better: "As players progress through the game, their neutral Force powers will increase in strength naturally, but after most missions, they'll have the option to choose to improve their abilities in one of the light or dark powers," says Zuk.

Dark Jedi? We doubt it, but we've been surprised before, so who knows. On top of all of this, we've learned that there will be new rideable and driveable vehicles, an updated scripting assemblage for both the single and multiplayer segments, an expanded terrain system, and even completely new online components that are too early in development to talk about. We have a feeling Jedi Knight III will not disappoint, and Raven still has a long time to pound out a PC masterpiece, which Vicarious Visions will then port to the Xbox. Let's hope it'll play as good as it sounds.

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION (MULTIPLAYER TBA) ■ **PUBLISHER** LUCASARTS ■ **DEVELOPER** RAVEN SOFTWARE (PC), VICARIOUS VISIONS (XBOX) ■ **RELEASE** FALL



Players will be able to fully customize not only their wardrobe, but also their facial appearance and choose from a number of different races. Oh, and did we mention you'll be able to construct your own lightsaber?





Some incredible battles are in store for you



Two sabers means twice the death!





PLAYSTATION 2/XBOX/GAMECUBE/PC

# XIII

## RUTHLESS CAP ASSASSINS

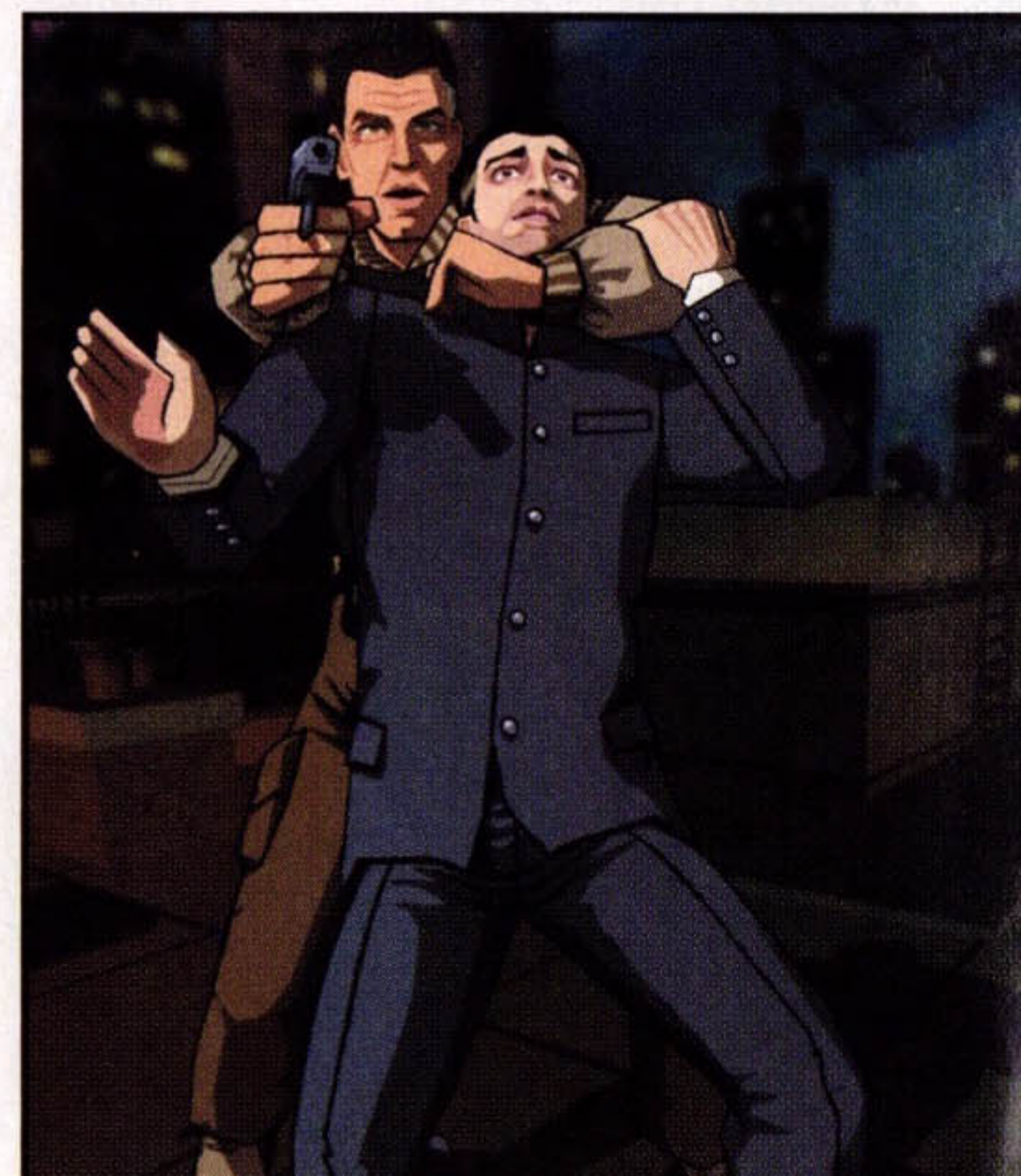
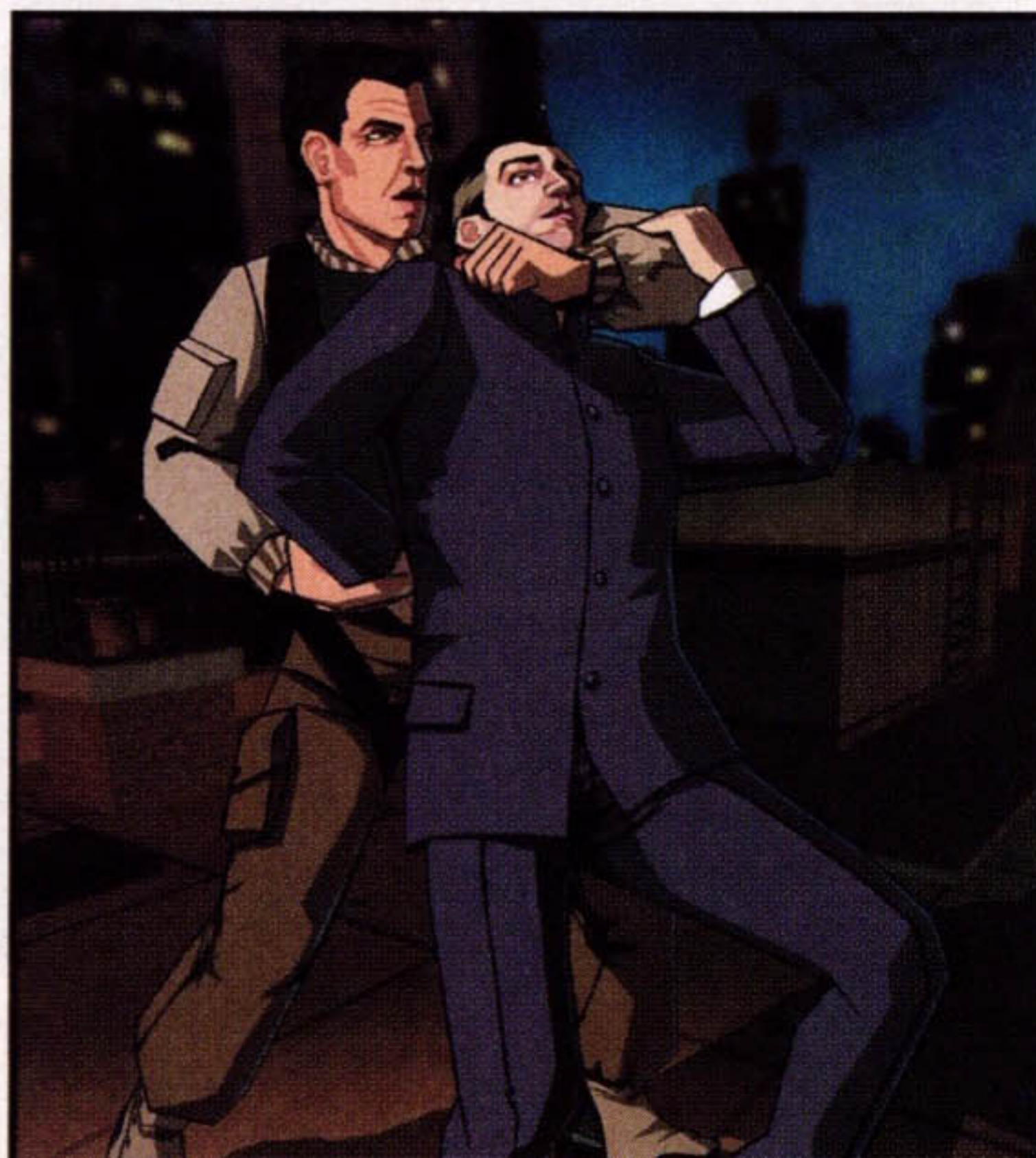
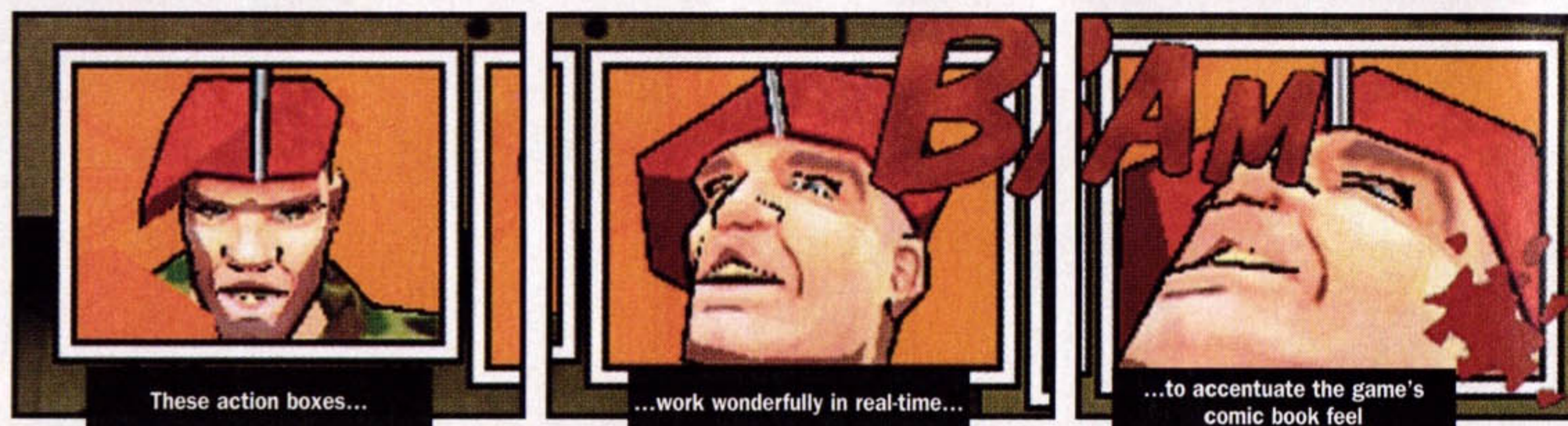
**Waking up on a beach** one morning without any recollection of how you got there is an experience most of us have had. But instead of being a video game about a great night out drinking with your pals (it must have been good if you can't remember anything, right?), XIII is about amnesia – specifically the kind that leads to implicating you in the assassination of the President of the United States. Haven't had that happen very often, have you?

You are probably more familiar with this game's graphical style, cel shading. For brand manager John Coghlan, however, its usage is going to pay off real dividends for gamers above and beyond the cool factor. "The decision to go with the cel shading was actually made before [it became] very fashionable," he states. "The decision was made to encourage an attachment to the graphic novel series and really communicate [its] vibe, which it does, not only through the cel shading, but also through the use of a number of other gameplay features."

XIII is based on the comic book series by Jean Van Hamme, and this influences the vid beyond just its surface appearance. The game uses comics' panel style through pop-up windows in the upper portion of your screen. A particularly nasty headshot using your crossbow, for example, will be rewarded by showing a close-up of the guard and the subsequent impact in three boxes. XIII's stealth capabilities are augmented by text. Sentries' footsteps will be audible as well as being projected through the appearance of "tap, tap" onomatopoeia. More outrageous "booms" and other comic book staples highlight the action, and your screen will even shake and the audio drops out when large explosions blow through.

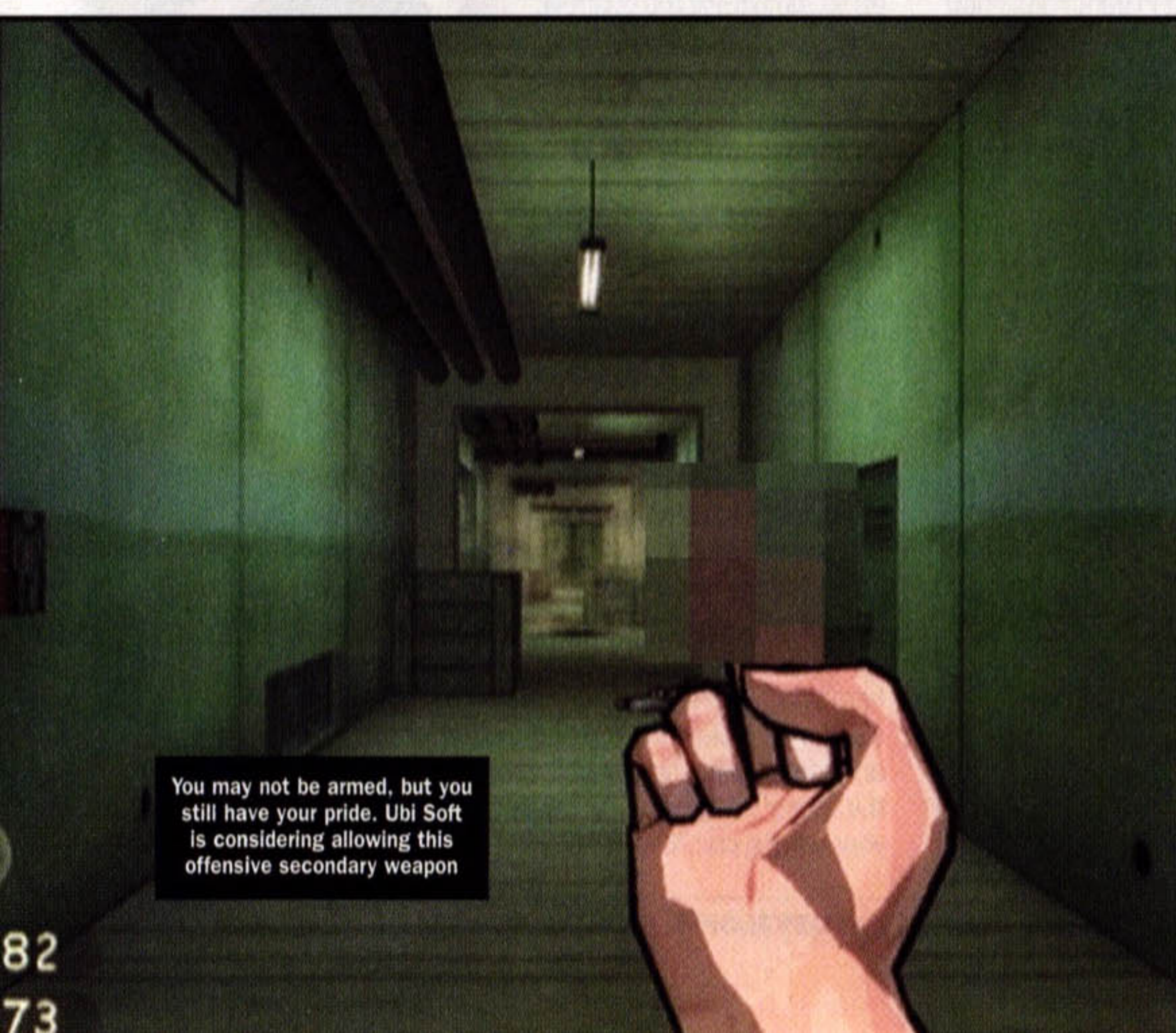
Apart from toying with the conventions of graphics, Ubi Soft hopes to imbue your normal first-person shooter with a little something extra. "I don't think it's a breakout genre by any means," says Coghlan, "but we're calling it an action/shooter rather than a first-person shooter." From your ability to utilize your environments by being able to pick up objects like shards of glass, chairs, and bricks as weapons; to the ability to use enemies as human shields, there are some gameplay features that are more akin to a third-person action title. These possibilities also help free XIII up from some of the problems that hampered Ubi Soft's Splinter Cell. There is more than one way through a level, alleviating the frustrating trial-and-error approach. Explains Coghlan, "The guards don't have a sixth sense of their own that they immediately know where you are. They have very logical, natural detection senses."

Online play and traditional multiplayer features are on tap for XIII, and rounding out this shapely package is exclusive content for each system. Coghlan wouldn't elaborate on exactly what this will entail, but there are plenty of options on the table at this point. For your sake, we suggest you don't get amnesia and forget about this game's fall release.

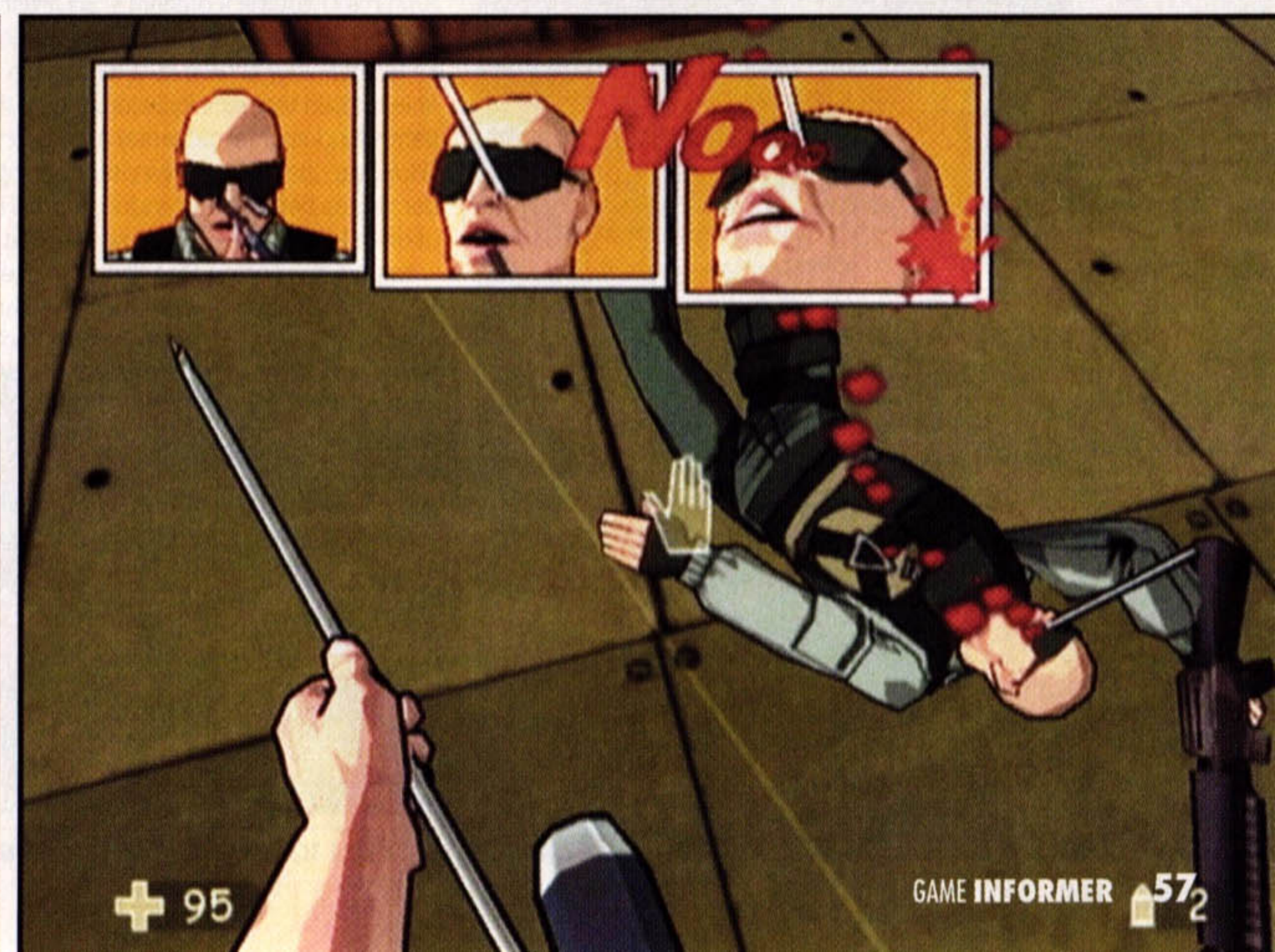


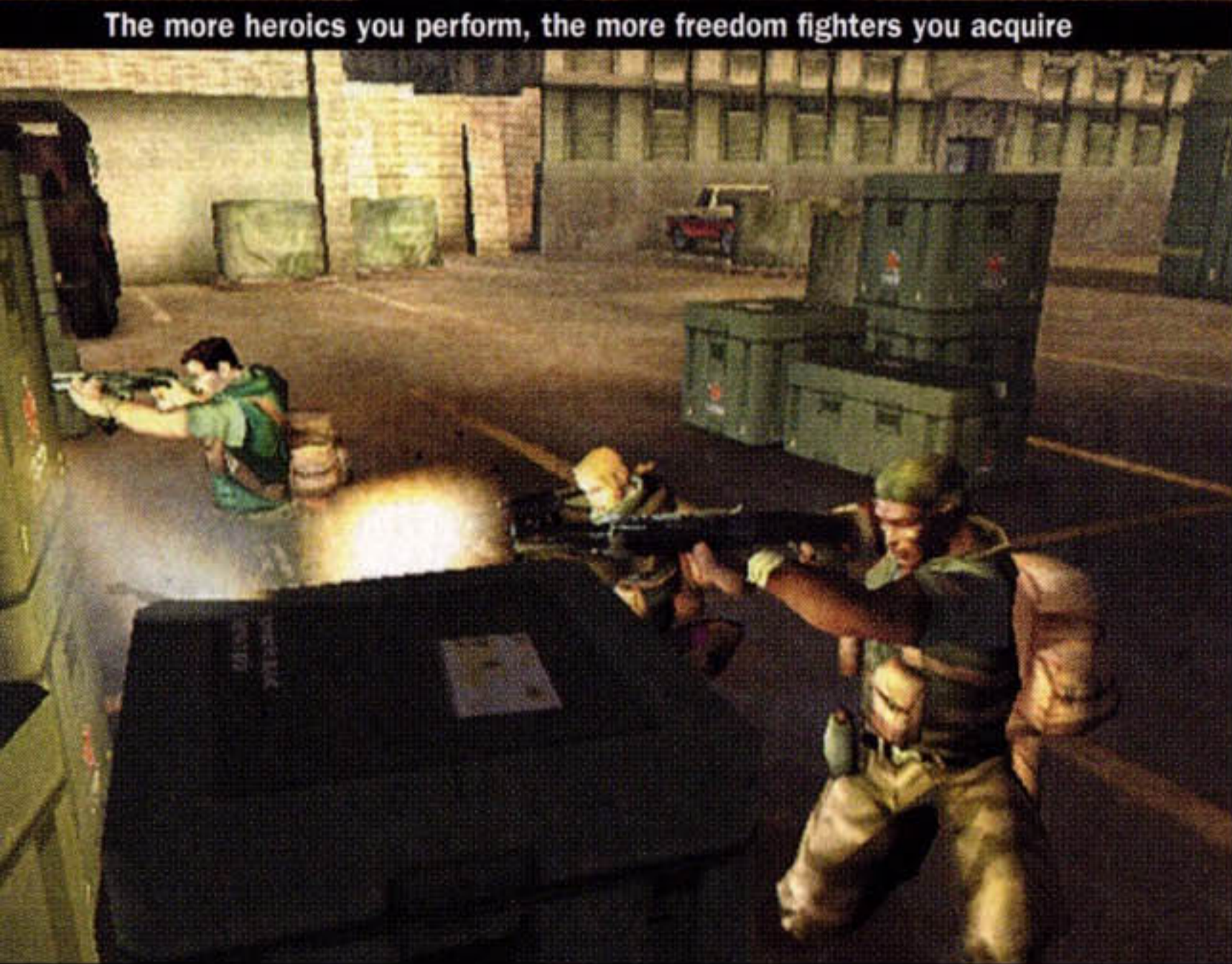
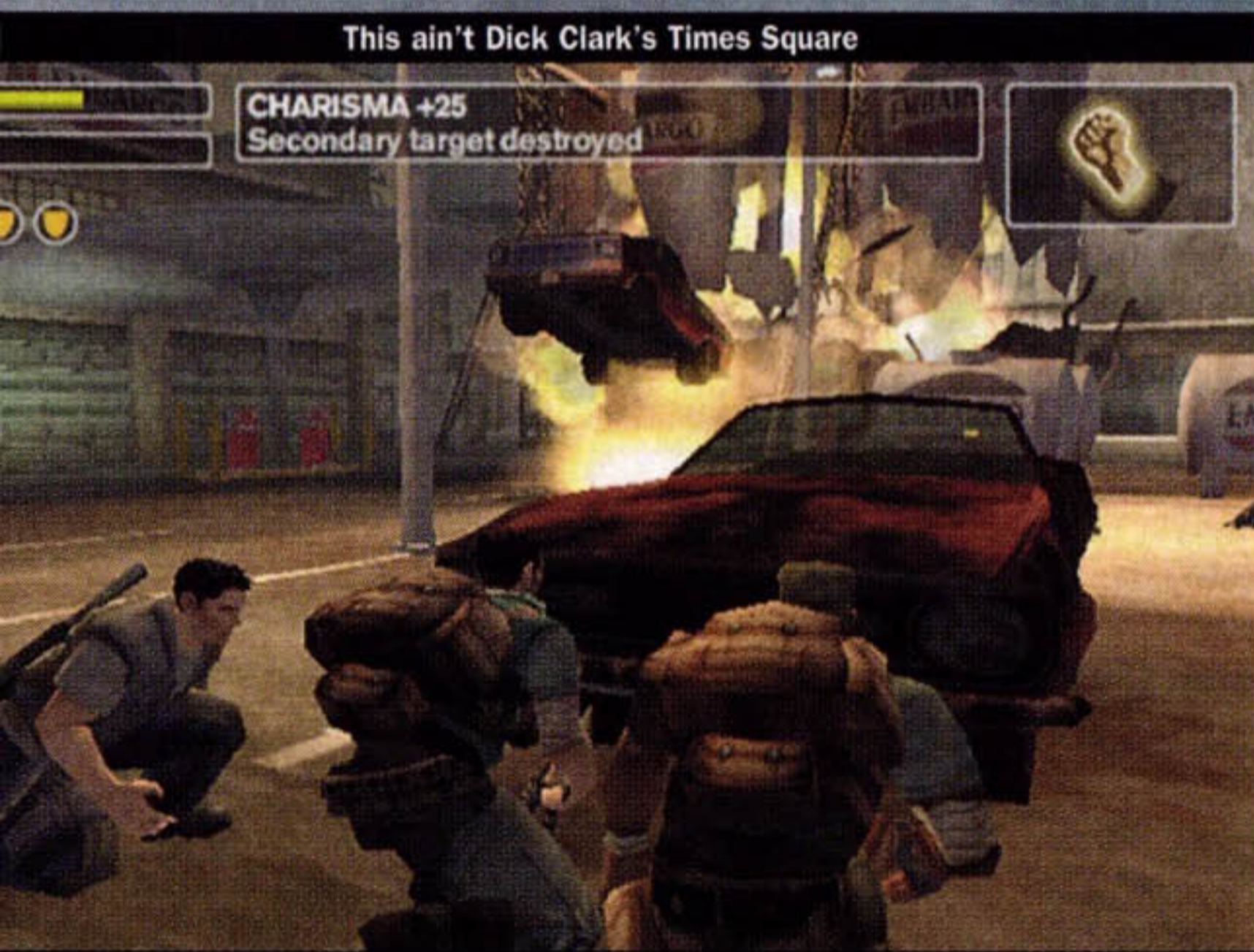
■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION (EXACT MULTIPLAYER TBA)

■ **PUBLISHER** UBI SOFT ■ **DEVELOPER** UBI SOFT ■ **RELEASE** AUGUST 16



You may not be armed, but you still have your pride. Ubi Soft is considering allowing this offensive secondary weapon





PLAYSTATION 2/XBOX/PC

# FREEDOM: THE BATTLE FOR LIBERTY ISLAND

THE COALITION OF THE WILLING

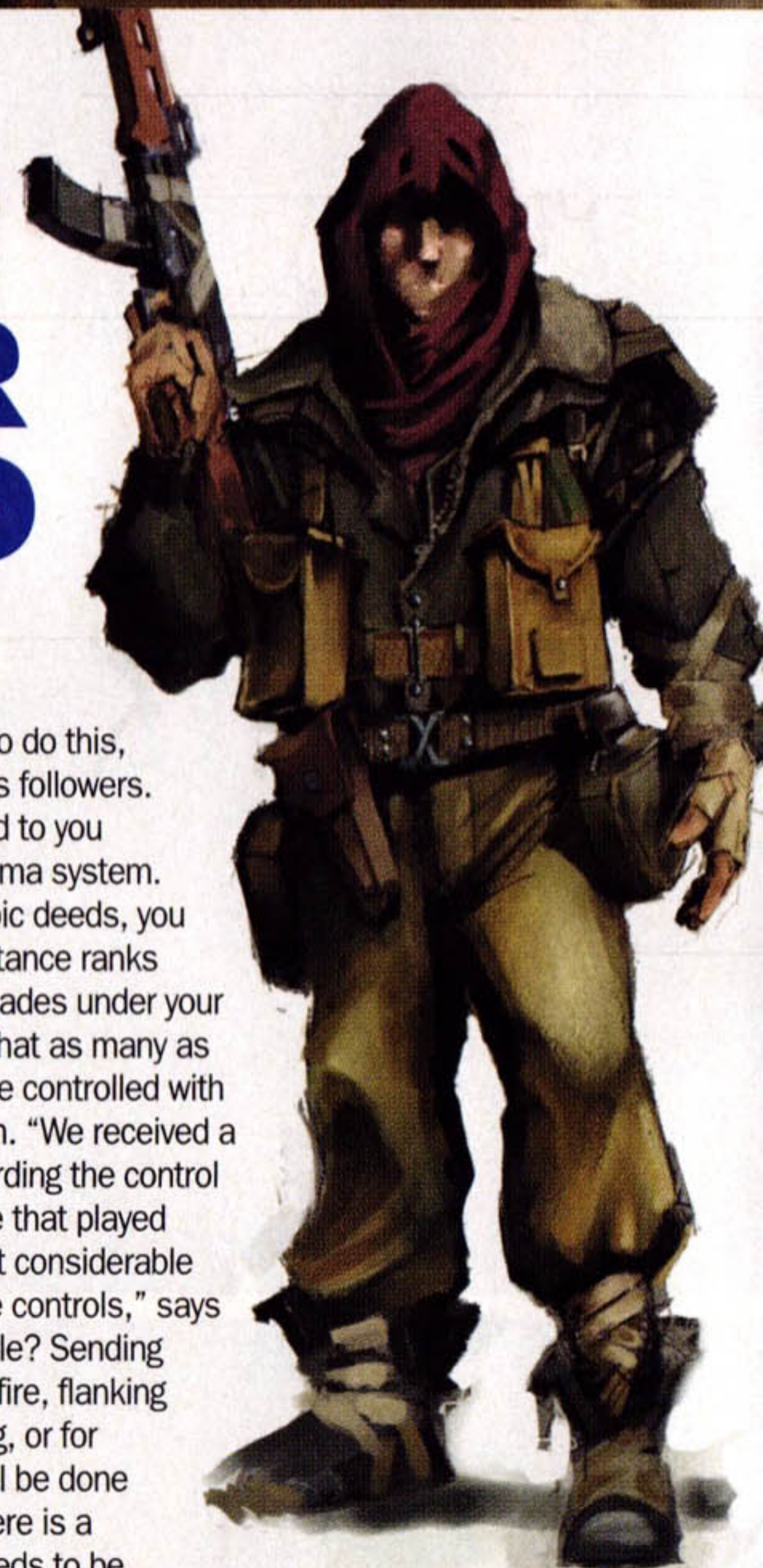
**Given the current state** of the world, this game's timing is eerie. However, the enemy is not who you might think. In an alternate world where America lost the Cold War against the Soviet Union, the communists have come to finish us off. Similar to *Red Dawn*, the forces from the east have landed on our shores – specifically New York City. The president is dead, presumably in the nuclear blast that leveled Washington DC. Believe it or not, the future of the nation is in your hands. Where the hell's C. Thomas Howell when you need him?

The masterminds of this bleak future are IO Interactive, the Danes behind the *Hitman* series. Although this title's action mantra is different from that of *Agent 47*, Martin Kramme Guldbæk (Freedom's 3D artist and game designer) told us that the franchise has taught them well. "The *Hitman* series definitely served as a foundation upon which we were able to build the technical elements of the game as well as derive fundamental gameplay mechanics," Guldbæk told us. "However, the engine is constantly being upgraded to make our games better." This engine, named *Glacier*, will be called upon to keep up with the game's squad system.

You are an average New Yorker whose initial mission is to rescue your captured brother. From here, you become involved in the guerilla army fighting back against Soviet

occupation forces. To do this, you must first amass followers. They will be attracted to you based on the Charisma system. As you perform heroic deeds, you will rise up the resistance ranks and gain more accolades under your command. IO says that as many as a dozen NPCs can be controlled with the touch of a button. "We received a lot of feedback regarding the control scheme from people that played the game, and spent considerable effort simplifying the controls," says Guldbæk. How simple? Sending out orders for cover fire, flanking maneuvers, scouting, or for an all-out assault will be done without menus. "There is a fine balance that needs to be achieved between your combat skills and your command skills, but you'll use them both in the heat of the battle," explains Guldbæk. "You simply look in the direction you want your fighters to go, and press the button to execute the command." Wow, that sounds easier than a Soviet strumpet full of cheap vodka!

Perhaps the most intriguing component of *Freedom* is the underground tunnel system. We've been told that at any point in a level, you can access certain manholes that bring you into the NY sewer network. Here, you can skip to different missions, among other things. One area will be comprised of several tasks. For example, say a sniper is harassing you from a far-off tower. You can duck into the sewers, complete the mission that takes out the nuisance, and return to the first objective worry-free. Think you can bear the fate of America on your shoulders? Guldbæk already has your rallying cry: "Lead or die!"



Managing cover for your squad is integral to success

■ STYLE 1 TO 4-PLAYER ACTION ■ PUBLISHER ELECTRONIC ARTS ■ DEVELOPER IO INTERACTIVE ■ RELEASE AUGUST 29



Russkie 'copters that can fly – who'd have thunk?



Molotov cocktails. Now that's a cultural exchange



"I claim this dumpster and all its used needles in the name of the US of A!"



# PREVIEWS

PLAYSTATION 2

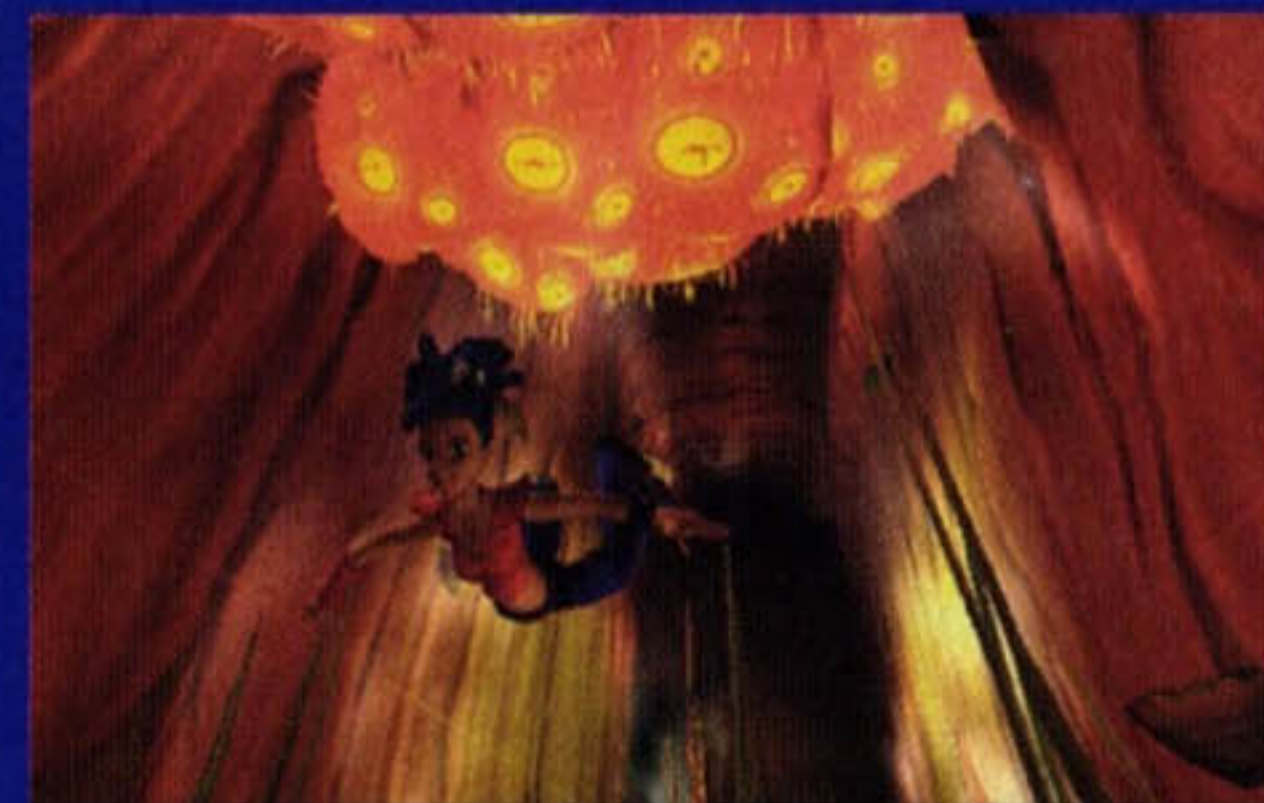
## KYA

### THE NATIVS ARE RESTLESS

**Platform games don't always need** to have damsels in distress. In Kya (pronounced kai'a), sister's doing it for herself. Magically transported to a strange land, Kya find herself surrounded by Nativs, peaceful creatures begging her to rid the world of the evil Brazul and his clan of Wolfen. Things get a little personal when Kya discovers her brother is held under Brazul's tyrannical rule as well.

The game's engine, created by developer Eden Studios, is an impressive sight. It's designed for smooth physics transitions without load times – even with the varying gameplay styles Kya throws at you. The combat is filled with combo moves and is much more action-oriented than the one-hit kills that accompany most platformers. It's even got a Zelda-style lock-on, which is sure to come in handy. Kya can leap on the shoulders of Wolfen foes and ride them around, hitting other enemies. More attacks, weapon power-ups, and skills can be purchased with Nuties – money you collect on your quest.

At times, Kya will take to the skies. In this dazzling display, she floats up on air currents. These may lift her high above the level's surface, or help her navigate extensive underground tunnels. Another dynamic is a snowboard-esque sliding element, where our heroine speeds along a smooth surface, avoiding danger. While having elements from Jak and Daxter, Vexx, and others, Kya is shaping up to be a unique and original title with enough to set it apart from the platform herd.



Kya's use of air currents will take her to some interesting places



Don't try this at home, kids – unless you put Crisco on your shoes



Kya will have to contend with several Wolfen baddies at once

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION/PLATFORM ■ **PUBLISHER** INFOGRAMES  
■ **DEVELOPER** EDEN STUDIOS ■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER



Samanosuke uses many of his classic weapons, but Jacques' arsenal includes an energy whip and a snake sword (like Ivy's from *Soul Calibur*)



Capcom tried to make the game look as much like real Paris as possible



The game does use Jean Reno's face and he did the motion capture for the acting scenes, but currently he is not doing the voiceover work for his character

PLAYSTATION 2

# ONIMUSHA 3

## TO HELL, ER, FRANCE AND BACK

As part of Capcom's new global strategy, it recently held press conferences in Paris, Tokyo, Hong Kong, and Los Angeles to announce the final installment in the Onimusha series. Introducing a new dual-hero system, Onimusha 3 features both the return of Samanosuke Akechi (played by Japanese actor Takeshi Kaneshiro) and the addition of new hero, Jacques Blanc (played by Jean Reno of *The Professional*, *Big Blue*, and *La Femme Nikita* fame).

In reference to the series' new star, Onimusha 3 producer Keiji Inafune stated that he wanted to "create a game that would appeal on a worldwide level," and that Reno was a perfect fit as he "is famous in all three territories."

Using big name actors isn't Onimusha 3's only key to success. Inafune has also enlisted many other big names to help push it to the top. For starters, Donnie Yen was hired as action director. He is best known for starring in the films *Iron Monkey*, *Blade II*, and most recently opposite Jackie Chan in *Shanghai Knights* and Jet Li in *Hero*. Mikitaka Kurasawa was also brought on as the CG movie producer. He was in charge of the Onimusha: Warlords movies and had a hand in *Parasite Eve*, *Resident Evil 0*, and *Clock Tower 3*.

Another interesting choice for Onimusha 3 is that the original team for Onimusha: Warlords, who perhaps tellingly, did not work on Onimusha 2, has been reunited to

produce this title. Add up all the pieces (and the dollars), and it is easy to see that Onimusha 3 is Capcom's most ambitious project to date.

Game Informer got a chance to see the opening sequences of the game and we're happy to report that it looks fantastic. This comes as quite a surprise, as the title has transitioned to complete 3D and no longer uses prerendered backgrounds. We were unable to see how the use of 3D environments changed the gameplay at this point, but Inafune assured us that the control and character interaction is much improved.

The game starts off with a peaceful France being overrun by demons that are slaughtering civilians and soldiers left and right. This is all part of Onimusha 3's time-travelling twist, in which the players find themselves zapped back and forth between 16th-century Japan and present-day Paris. How and why the two cities and characters are intertwined we have no idea; but these matters should become clearer when the game is released in March 2004 in Japan. A U.S. date has yet to be announced, but a source at Capcom told us to "anticipate a simultaneous release for the U.S., or at least shortly after." We can only hope.

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION/ADVENTURE ■ **PUBLISHER** CAPCOM ■ **DEVELOPER** CAPCOM  
 ■ **RELEASE** MARCH 2004 (JAPAN), TBA (U.S.)



Here is a sample of the opening CG sequence where Genma demons are unleashed on Paris



PLAYSTATION 2

# ONIMUSHA BURAIKEN

## FOUR-PLAYER FIGHTING FRENZY



**Just about everyone** in the video game world knew there would be an Onimusha 3 coming to PlayStation 2; but few could have predicted that Capcom would also unleash Onimusha Buraiden, a fighting game based on the franchise.

Game Informer was unable to get any hands-on play with this upcoming four-player fighter, but it is easy to see that Onimusha Buraiden does bear a close resemblance to Nintendo and Hal Laboratory's classic Super Smash Bros. The likeness is especially obvious when the characters jump back and forth between the foreground and background, and to different tiers of a building or structure.

The fighting takes place on a 2D plane, but characters can double-tap up or down to move around in the 3D environment. Signs fall off poles, roofs collapse, and various other items in the environment react to the fighting. According to our sources, the playcontrol is almost exactly the same as other Onimusha titles, but with some interesting additions; including lunges, evades, and Street Fighter-esque techniques resembling Ryu's

patented fireball and Guile's Sonic Boom.

Onimusha Buraiden producer Keiji Inufune also promises that the game will deliver "tons and tons of characters." We only got a glimpse of Onimusha 2 star Jubei Yagyu and Onimusha: Warlords hero Samanosuke Akechi fighting against a band of Genma demons. Game Informer would guess that Oyu, Ekei, Magoichi, Kotaro, and Kaede from the original two titles will also make an appearance. Plus, what would an Onimusha fighting game be without the big, bad boss Nobunaga Oda as a playable character?

One of the more interesting aspects of Buraiden is the fact that it will award experience to your characters as you play so you can improve them. For example, human-based characters will get strange armor and powered-up weapons, and Genma-based characters will mutate as they advance.

Currently there is no U.S. release date, but expect it to be close to the Japanese launch this November.



Capcom would not confirm or deny the presence of Kaede as a playable character, but the woman in the orange sure looks like her

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER FIGHTING ■ **PUBLISHER** CAPCOM ■ **DEVELOPER** CAPCOM ■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER (JAPAN), TBA (U.S.)



Hmmm, where have we seen that move before?



There are tons of particle effects for a game so early in development



Various power-ups and health spheres can be found within each level



In total, Maximo will face off against six different bosses - one of which is a rampaging, demonic house



"You won't like me when I'm naked!"



Capcom made every effort to make the gameplay more user friendly

PLAYSTATION 2

# MAXIMO VS. THE ARMY OF ZIN

## A BRIEF LOOK AT THE BOXER MAN

"All of the underwear now has functionality," comments Maximo's lead designer, Scott Rogers. "So, rather than the boxers just being there for cosmetic purposes, there's a reason to get different pairs, swap them out, and maybe wear some for a short period of time and then change them." While it may seem like we're breaking down a game based on Jim Palmer's modeling career, we're actually talking about one of the most intriguing enhancements planned for the Maximo sequel.

One of the top priorities for the development team - other than expanding on the BVD factor - is to rework the way that the game flows. "We wanted to create a more compelling story this time around and give the player a reason to care about where they are going and who they are fighting," adds Rogers. The gameplay is still divided into numerous levels, but you'll no longer visit a hub screen. Each level flows into the next, which alleviates confusion as to where you'll need to go, and also allows the development team to piece together a more detailed plot and fluid story arc.

The first game concluded with Maximo abandoning his kingdom to scour the world for his lost love. The sequel picks up right where this tale left off. In searching for his girlfriend, Maximo and his undead ally Grim stumble upon a mysterious clockwork army that has awakened after being imprisoned for 500 years. More disturbing yet, each of the clockwork soldiers is fueled by a stolen soul. It's up to Maximo to figure out where these things

are coming from, and why they are powered by stolen souls.

This harrowing quest will span across six distinctly different environments which break down into 26 mammoth levels. If the overly aggressive difficulty level from the first game prevented you from reaching the end, Capcom is doing everything it can to make the sequel more grab-and-go. "We wanted to make this game a lot more accessible. It has a better [learning] curve and balance to it. It's not such a brutal blow to the head," notes Rogers.

For instance, you'll no longer need to balance which power-ups you keep in your inventory. You won't lose any weapons this time around and will be able to switch them on the fly. The gameplay also leans more toward combat than it does platforming.

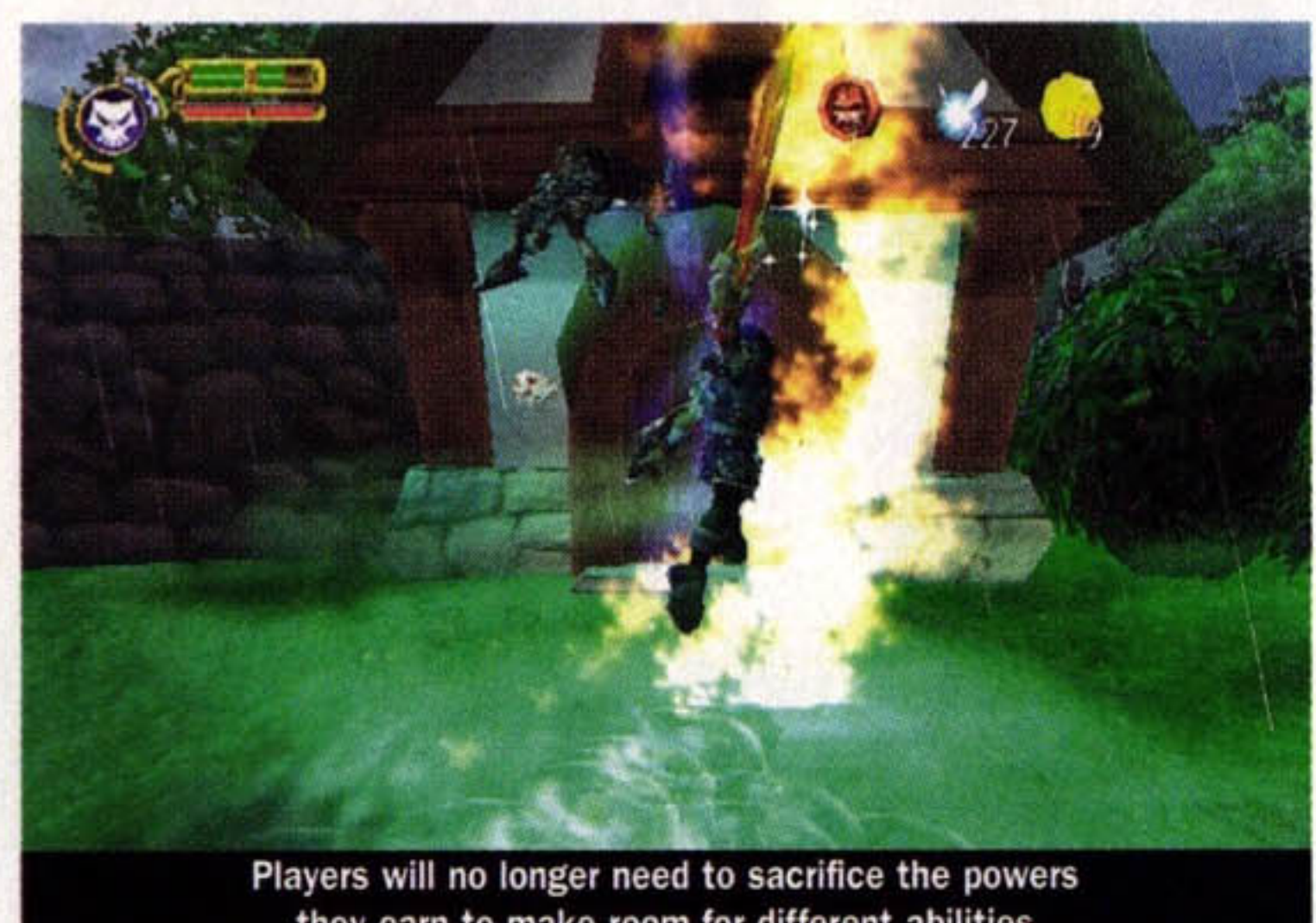
Many of the staples from the first game make a return, such as the crumbling terrain and the hidden chests that can only be detected by jumping. In addition to a much broader arsenal of sword attacks, Maximo will be able to transform into Grim for a limited amount of time. Being the Grim Reaper, he is invulnerable and can level adversaries with a mere touch.

Maximo vs. the Army of Zin should have a wider appeal than the first game due to its improved learning curve and dynamic story presentation. As of now, Capcom hopes to have it on retail shelves this fall.

■ STYLE 1-PLAYER ACTION ■ PUBLISHER CAPCOM ■ DEVELOPER CAPCOM ■ RELEASE FALL



The clockwork army is Maximo's primary foe in this adventure



Players will no longer need to sacrifice the powers they earn to make room for different abilities





XBOX

# WWE RAW 2

TIME TO GET THINGS COOKIN'

**Last year's Raw** game wasn't that great. We know it. You know it. The Rock knows it. Its foundation was not hopeless, however, and THQ and developer Anchor are dedicated to making the sequel something every mat rat would love to play.

Vital to every wrestling game's success is replay factor, and Raw 2 will feature the Career mode it deserves. Expect storylines to be an ever-changing cornucopia of deceit, alliances, and feuds. After all, a wrestling game without drama is like a sundae without hot fudge – it's just plain ice cream. Up to four human players can compete in this mode at once, which is tremendous news.

Simple, one-on-one contests are all well and good, but people don't chant "Tables!" because they need a place to set their chili dogs and foam fingers. Gimmick matches of every kind will be here, including TLC matches, Hell in a Cell, Cage matches, and Ladder matches. We're hoping to see Eric Bischoff's outlandish Elimination Chamber, but we doubt it will show up.

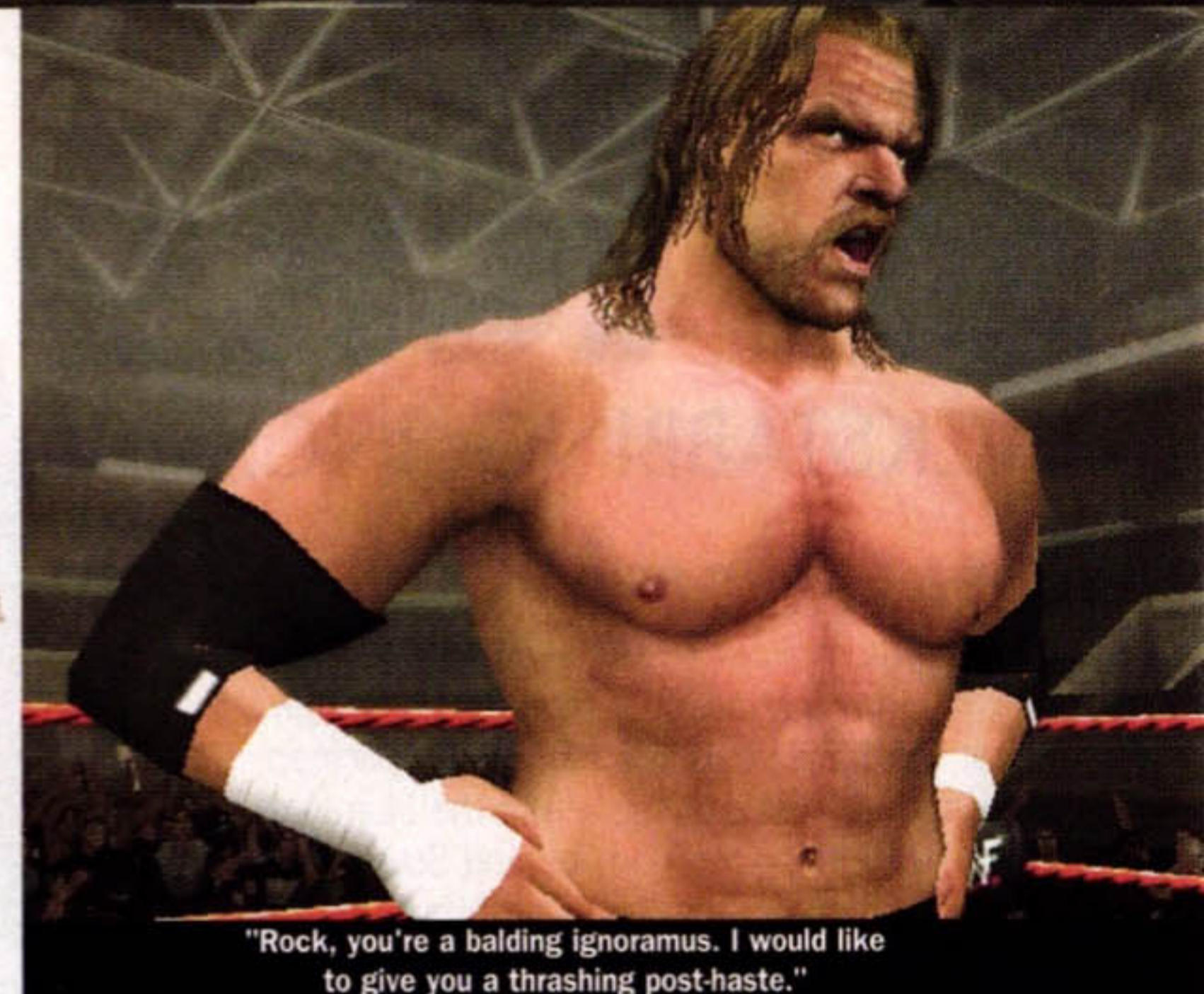
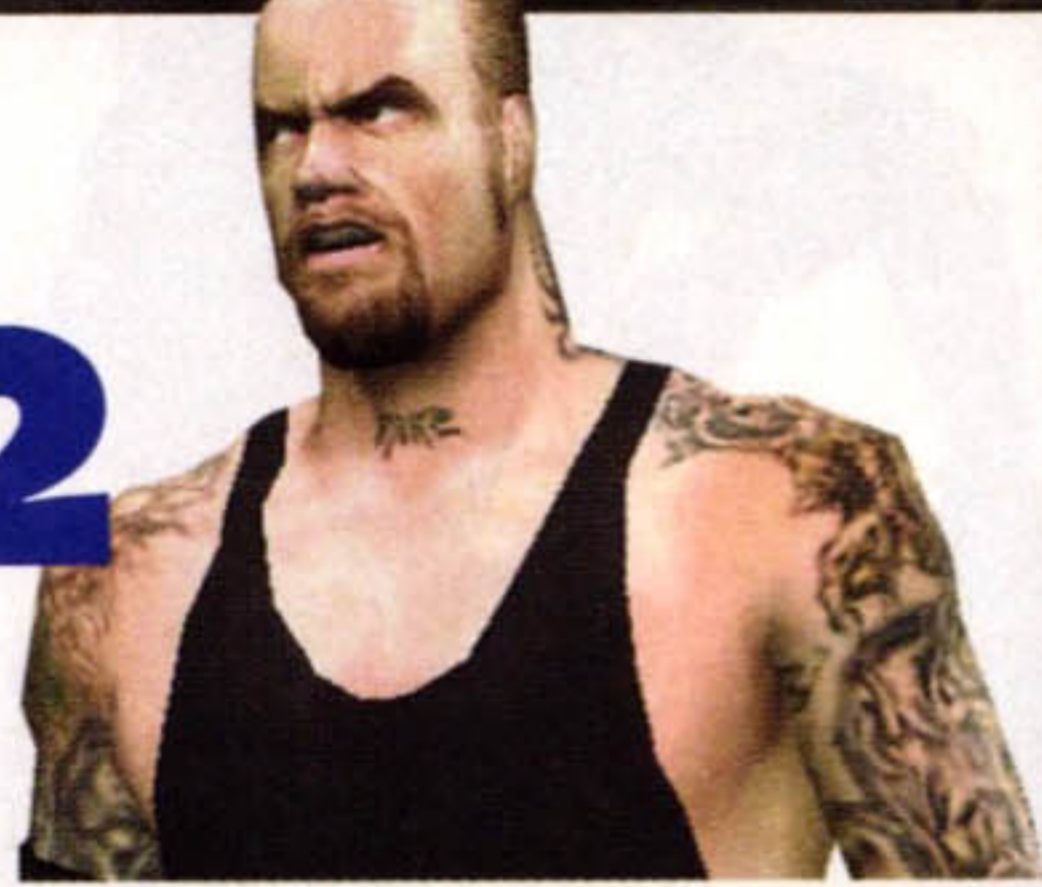
Raw 2's engine has received a lot of attention, and rightly so. Finishers will be pretty easy to pull off at any time, but a momentum meter will dictate how much damage they, and other moves, will cause. Reversals and counters will flow smoothly, thanks to reverse kinematics. With a name like

that, it's gotta be good! The game's AI has also been re-balanced for better bouts.

As you can see from these screens, Raw 2 juiced up its graphics like nobody's business. Expressions are very...well, expressive, and hands show advanced articulation. You can see every one of the Undertaker's tattoos and each ripped pectoral muscle on Triple H's chest (just don't look for needle marks). The number of arenas has climbed to eight (including Royal Rumble, Summer Slam, and No Way Out PPV sets), and each one is fully modeled in 3D. The backstage areas that are a highlight of the SmackDown series are here, so feel free to take the fight away from the ring.

In the presentation department, this game aims to be even closer to faithfully duplicating the experience of seeing Raw on television. The snazzy pre-match intro screen will show wrestlers striking animated poses just like the show. Menus will follow Raw's style, much like Sega Sports games' ESPN motif.

We trust THQ, which has delivered good wrestling games in the past. We trust Anchor, which drew accolades for its UFC titles. With more time and resources (which they seem to have in spades), we're certain they can make the Raw series into a winner. If not, we're going to put them through a table. Testify!

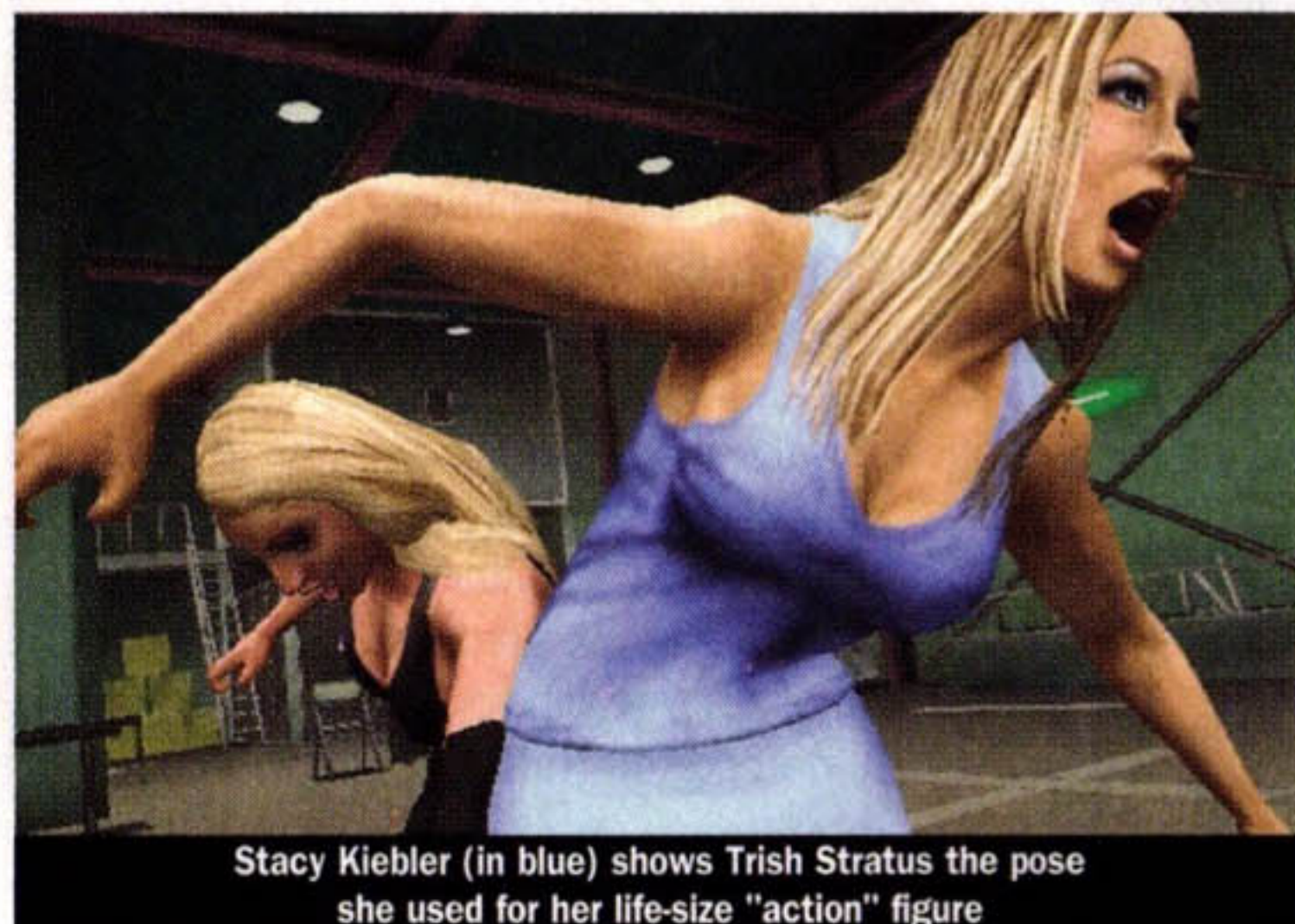


"Rock, you're a balding ignoramus. I would like to give you a thrashing post-haste."

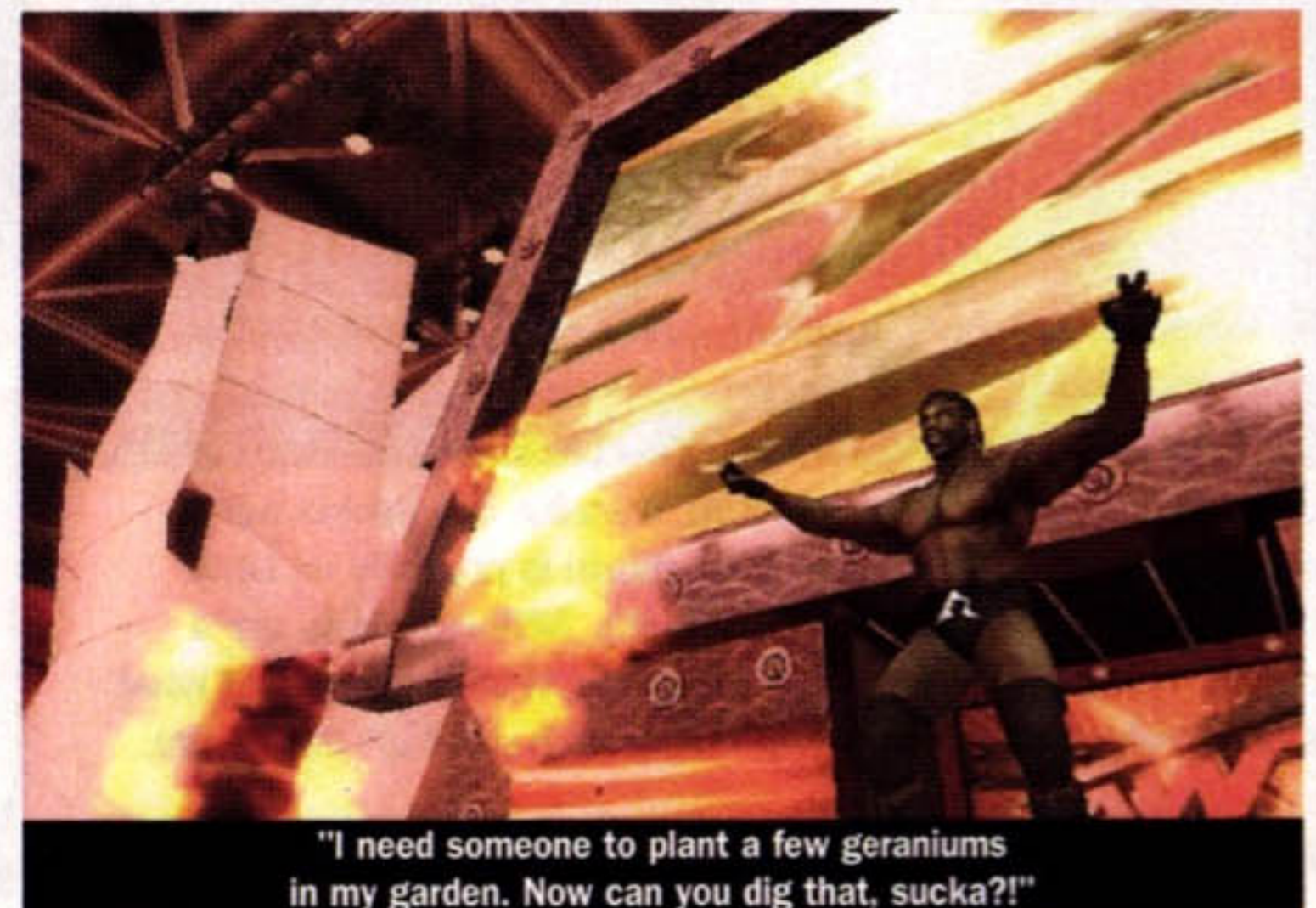


"Well, Triple H, you're an oft-injured buffoon who smells not unlike the posterior of a yak!"

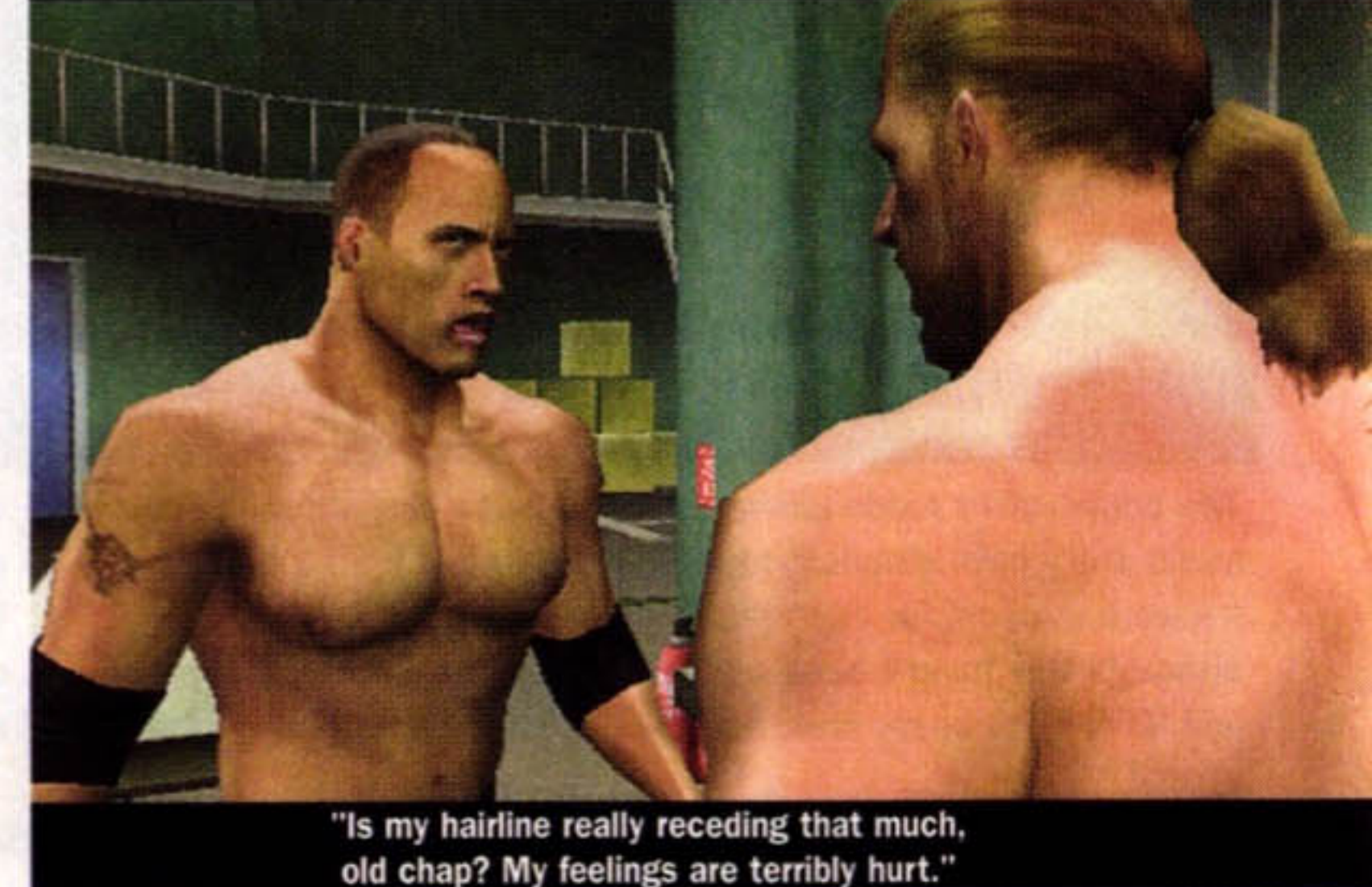
■ STYLE 1 TO 4-PLAYER FIGHTING ■ PUBLISHER THQ ■ DEVELOPER ANCHOR ■ RELEASE SEPTEMBER



Stacy Kiebler (in blue) shows Trish Stratus the pose she used for her life-size "action" figure



"I need someone to plant a few geraniums in my garden. Now can you dig that, sucka?!"



"Is my hairline really receding that much, old chap? My feelings are terribly hurt."



PLAYSTATION 2/XBOX/PC

# BLACK9

BACKSTABBING, INC.

In the year 2080, nine separate organizations referred to as "illuminati" are in control of Earth and any space that humans can easily access. You have been hired for an unspecified mercenary mission against one of the illuminati.

The development company behind Star Trek: Starfleet Command II and III is stepping up to the plate with a new third-person action game aptly titled Black9. In the name of intrigue, Taldren has also composed a tome of backstory on each group and their mythology. Most of the organizations have a public face – usually a large corporation, but a few are more elusive. For instance, the Tea-Drinking Society (started in 1302 B.C.) is an order of monks and genetic engineers that is dedicated to advancing human longevity. It is rumored that they can revive the dead, and that some members live for 140 years before a "natural" death.

Most of the rest of the world is aligned with one of the other illuminati, although many don't know what their favorite corporation is really all about. Genesis, for instance, makes its dough through computer science and mathematics



research. However, its real focus is on creating an artificial intelligence that can evolve and replicate itself to the point that the human species is obsolete.

The relationships, histories, and dependencies between these illuminati makes the Corleone family look simplistic. Each organization is out to destroy the others in a quest to rule humanity and will use any means necessary to achieve their goals – including hiring you.

Utilizing the Unreal Warfare engine (which will be used in an upcoming Unreal title) with MathEngine's Karma physics support, the title promises a treasure chest of features. The mission portion is extremely plot-driven and can be mastered alone, or with the help of a friend through the game's cooperative mode. Network support will be offered for each of the platforms and is going to allow up to 16 players to shoot one another to smithereens. In addition, PC mod junkies will have the ability to design new levels with Black9's built-in UnrealEd support.

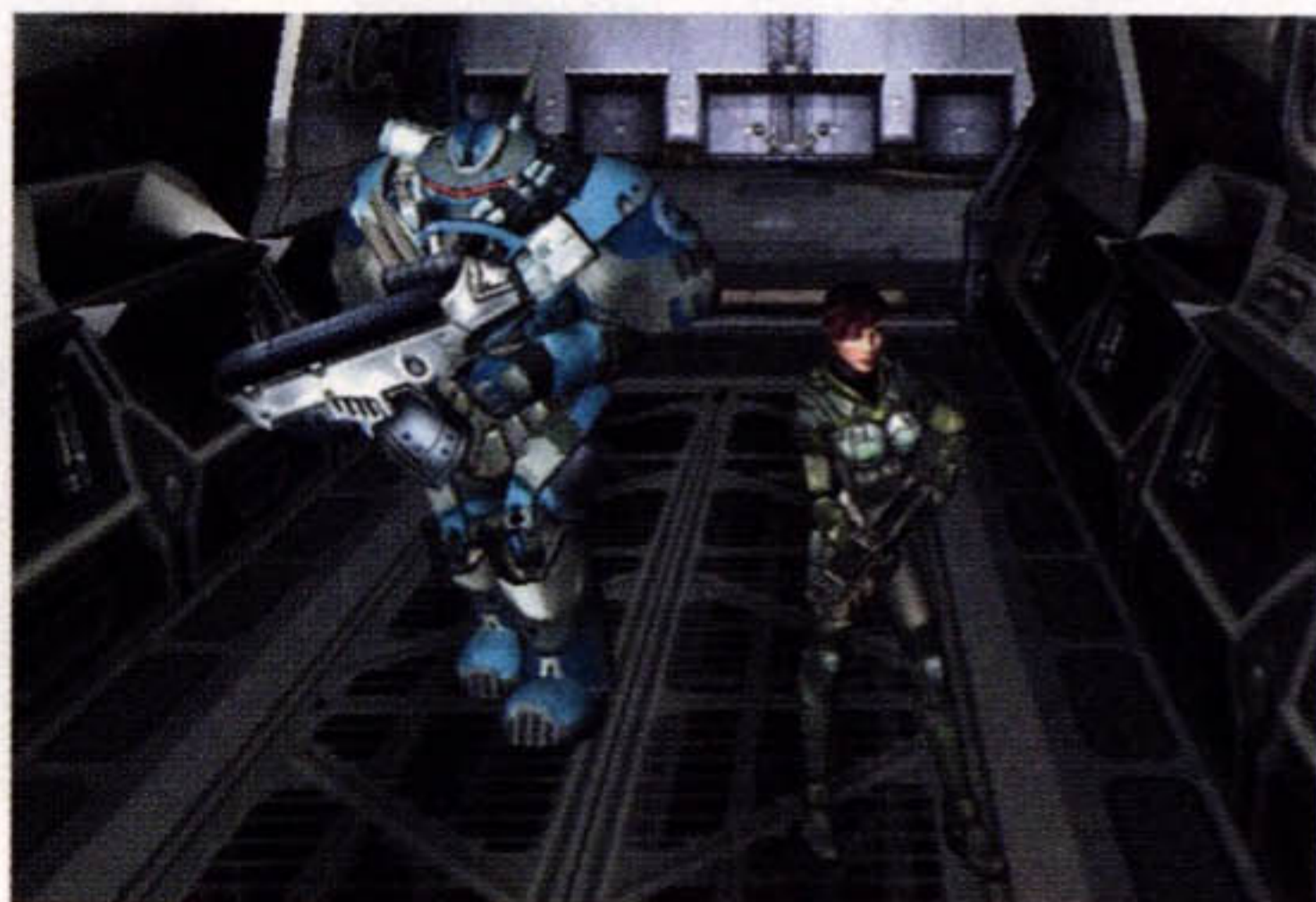
Taldren is also patting itself on the back for the title's Deus Ex-style character development. Throughout the game; mercenaries, their skills,



A nice arsenal is planned for the mercenaries

and their weapons can be upgraded. Nanotechnology lets the average soldier-for-hire pump up their skills, and new weaponry can be purchased...for a price.

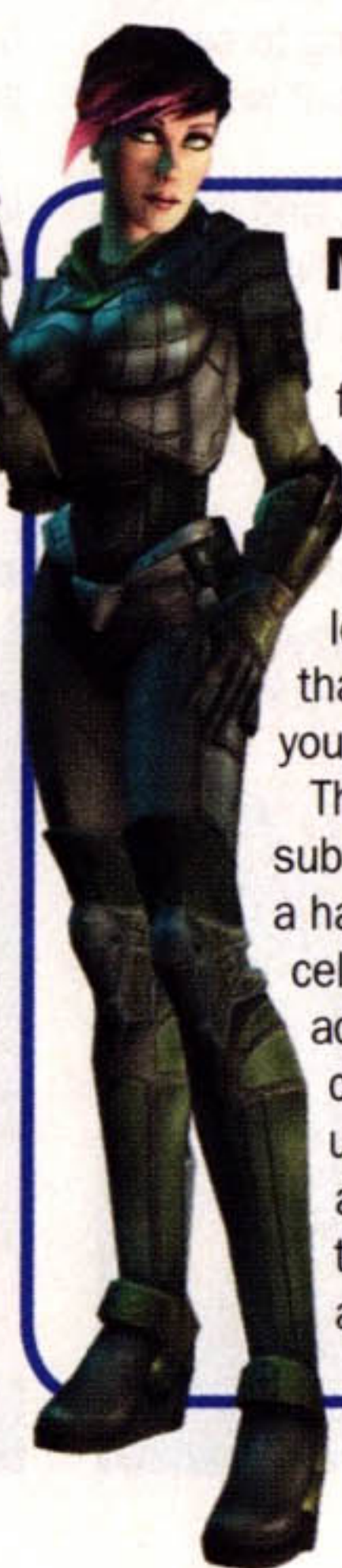
Black9 is scheduled to release in the fall of this year, and looks to be an in-depth action game with enough backstabbing in the storyline to keep things interesting and enough features in the online realm to build up a sizeable following. Can you say "franchise?"



The cooperative mode allows two people to play through the same story path simultaneously. Taldren has implied that network support for each platform will be broadband-only, although this hasn't been confirmed yet. The UnrealEd support will let the PC users create new environments to play online.



Over the course of your adventure, a stable of vehicles will be made available. The speeder bike shown is probably on Luna II (Genesis' office space on the Moon). Although there are a decent number of locations in the game, it isn't known yet what kind of vehicles will be at your disposal on good ol' terra firma.



## MERCENARIES

Your selected character will be from one of four mercenary classes, each having different skills and weaknesses. Taldren has made the sects so dissimilar that when confronted with a door that won't open, one may pick the lock while another kicks it open. This means that Black9 is a whole new experience each time you play with a different character.

The mercenary arsenal includes crossbows, submachine guns, grenades, flamethrowers, and a handful of other goodies juiced up with energy cells or plasma. In addition, nanotechnology has advanced to the point that no good hired gun can be without it. Over the course of the game, upgrading the micro machines gives them the ability to jam cameras, generate a force field, throw fireballs formed in your hand, or execute an attack named the Heaven Blast.

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER ACTION (UP TO 16-PLAYERS ONLINE) ■ **PUBLISHER** MAJESCO GAMES  
 ■ **DEVELOPER** TALDREN ■ **RELEASE** FALL



PLAYSTATION 2

# RISE TO HONOR

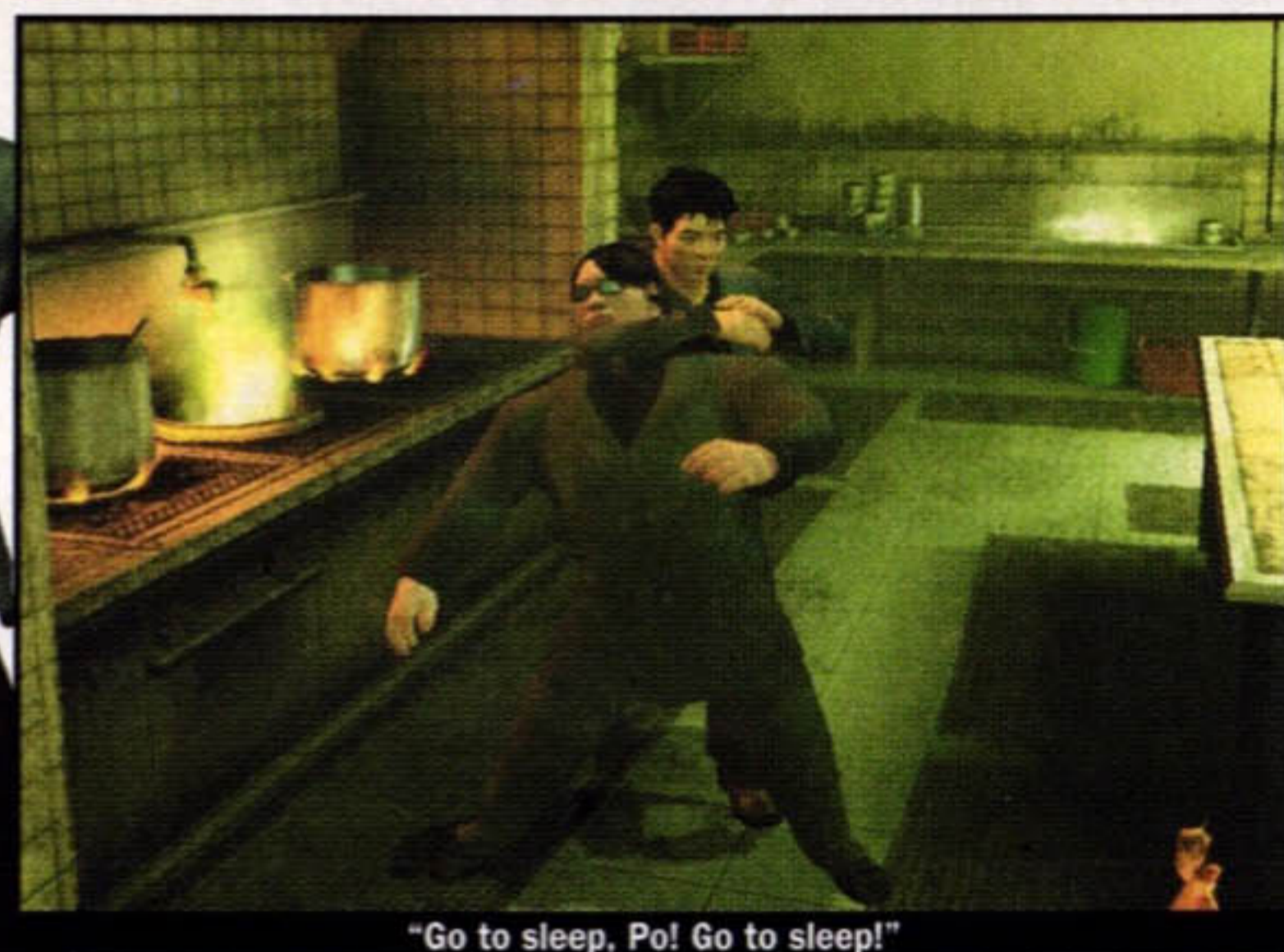
## HONORABLE DISCHARGE...OF PAIN!

**There is no** doubt that Jet Li is a cinematic legend. But every guy with a flexible groin and a few flippy moves can do that, and Li knows it. It takes a lot more to become a video game superstar, and the man behind *Cradle 2 The Grave*, *The One*, and *Lethal Weapon 4* knows it. Still, he's ready to give it the ol' college try, and *Rise to Honor* is the perfect vehicle for his goal.

Deep within the development of *Rise to Honor* is a storybook romance. Sony's Foster City Studio set to work on an action game with a Jet Li-inspired main character. Then, the team got word that Li himself was looking for a digital starring role. A few crossed "t's" and dotted "i's" later, a deal was in place! After that, it was right to the mo-cap studio to record a bunch of Li's signature

acrobatics. Like last year's hit, *Dead to Rights*, *Rise to Honor* features both hand-to-hand combat and gunplay, so Li busted out both sets of moves. The game's cinematic feel is complete with dramatic camera angles and special effects.

Li plays bodyguard Kit Yun, who's in the service of Boss Chiang – a powerful Hong Kong crime lord. On his deathbed after an assassination attempt (maybe Yun isn't that great of a bodyguard after all), Chiang asks Yun to deliver a message to Chiang's daughter in San Francisco. During the course of your quest, you'll encounter a total of 10 levels. By the title of this game, we assume Yun may leave his criminal past behind for the greater good.



"Go to sleep, Po! Go to sleep!"

### GOTTA HAND-TO-HAND IT TO YA

The fighting in *Rise to Honor* is highlighted by 360 degrees of martial arts insanity. Enemies will attack

in hordes and from every angle, but they have no idea of the fury they're about to confront. If they did, they may have not gotten out of bed this morning. Li has a wealth of combos, blocks, counter-attacks, and special super strikes at his disposal. After all, he's Jet freaking Li! Everything in the environment can be used as a weapon, from pots of boiling water to dead poultry.

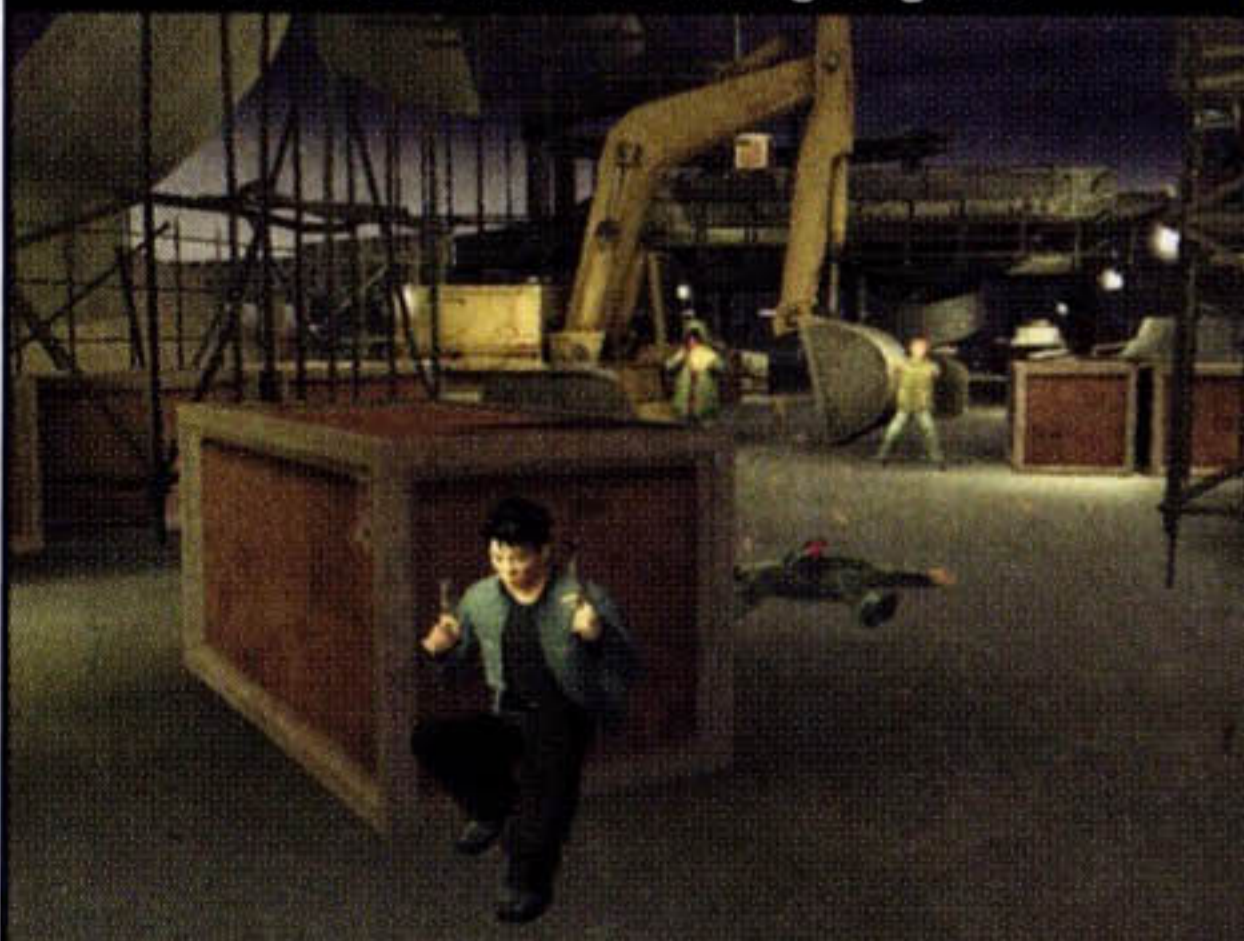
■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** SONY COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT AMERICA  
 ■ **DEVELOPER** SCEA FOSTER CITY STUDIO ■ **RELEASE** FALL

### JET, GET YOUR GUN

Jet Li's movements have been "lifted" into other games for years now, so it's not quite as exciting to see someone dive to the side with guns blazing, even though the originator is doing it this time around. Ducking around corners and behind boxes is another status quo move you'll be able to execute here. These may not be totally original to gaming, but they're always fun to do, and we can only imagine that *Rise to Honor* has a few more tricks up its sleeve than it's showing us at this time. All we have up our sleeves are scrawny girl-arms, so we won't press the issue too much.



Here Jet Li hides from a barrage of gunfire



Look, Jet's hiding again! Doesn't he ever get to shoot people?



Now he's just plain running away. Grow some cojones, man!



Taking on two guys at once: \$50



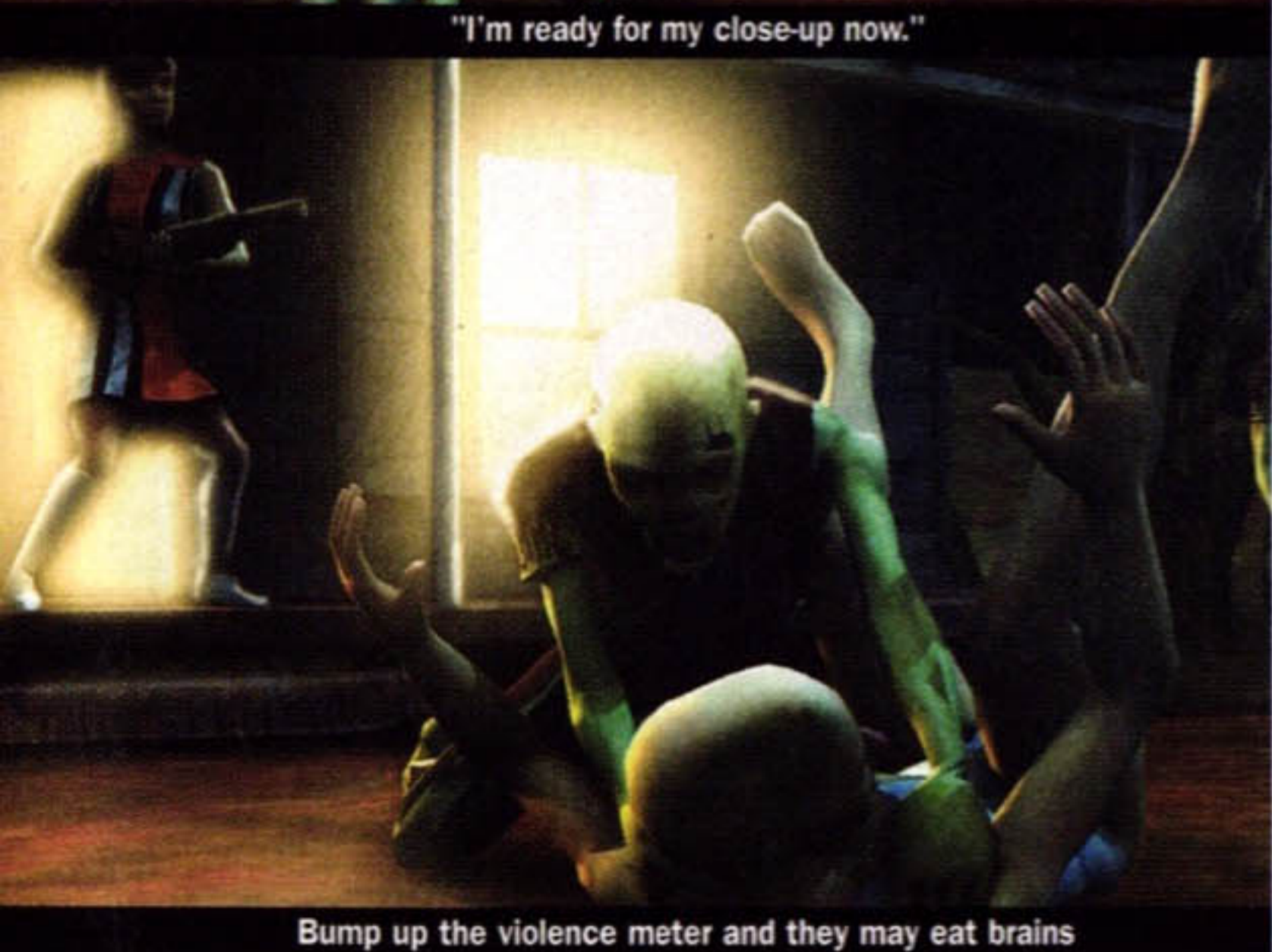
Beating up an entire gang: priceless



Recycle sets to stay under budget



"I'm ready for my close-up now."



Bump up the violence meter and they may eat brains

PC

# THE MOVIES

## I'D LIKE TO THANK THE ACADEMY

**You go to movies, right?** Do you leave the theatre and bicker amongst your friends about where Tom freakin' Bombadil went or why they took Gwen Stacey out of *Spider-Man*? Luckily, Peter Molyneux (of *Populous* and *Black & White* fame) is making a title that lets you be the studio big cheese.

But why make a game about making movies? Molyneux tells us, "It's a subject which most people know about. There can't be many people in the world who have never watched a movie."

Starting out by building sets on an empty back lot in the early 1920s, you need to pick the right scripts for the era and the backdrops that you have available. A handful of genres can be chosen over the course of the game including the western shoot-em-up, horror, romantic comedy, and *Lost in Space*-style sci-fi.

Your studio will follow the history of cinema as your first feature will be a black and white talkie. Even though we live in the next millennium, your actions as the director must cater to the tastes of the times. This is where the real-time directing feature (regulated by a slider bar) comes into play. Although you won't be responsible for setting up camera angles or lighting, you will be given a bar that represents the mood of the scene you're shooting. For instance, during a western poker match gone awry, a violence meter will be available. Keeping it in the middle means that the actors will land a few punches; but slide it to one extreme, and the cast literally breaks their limbs to bits.

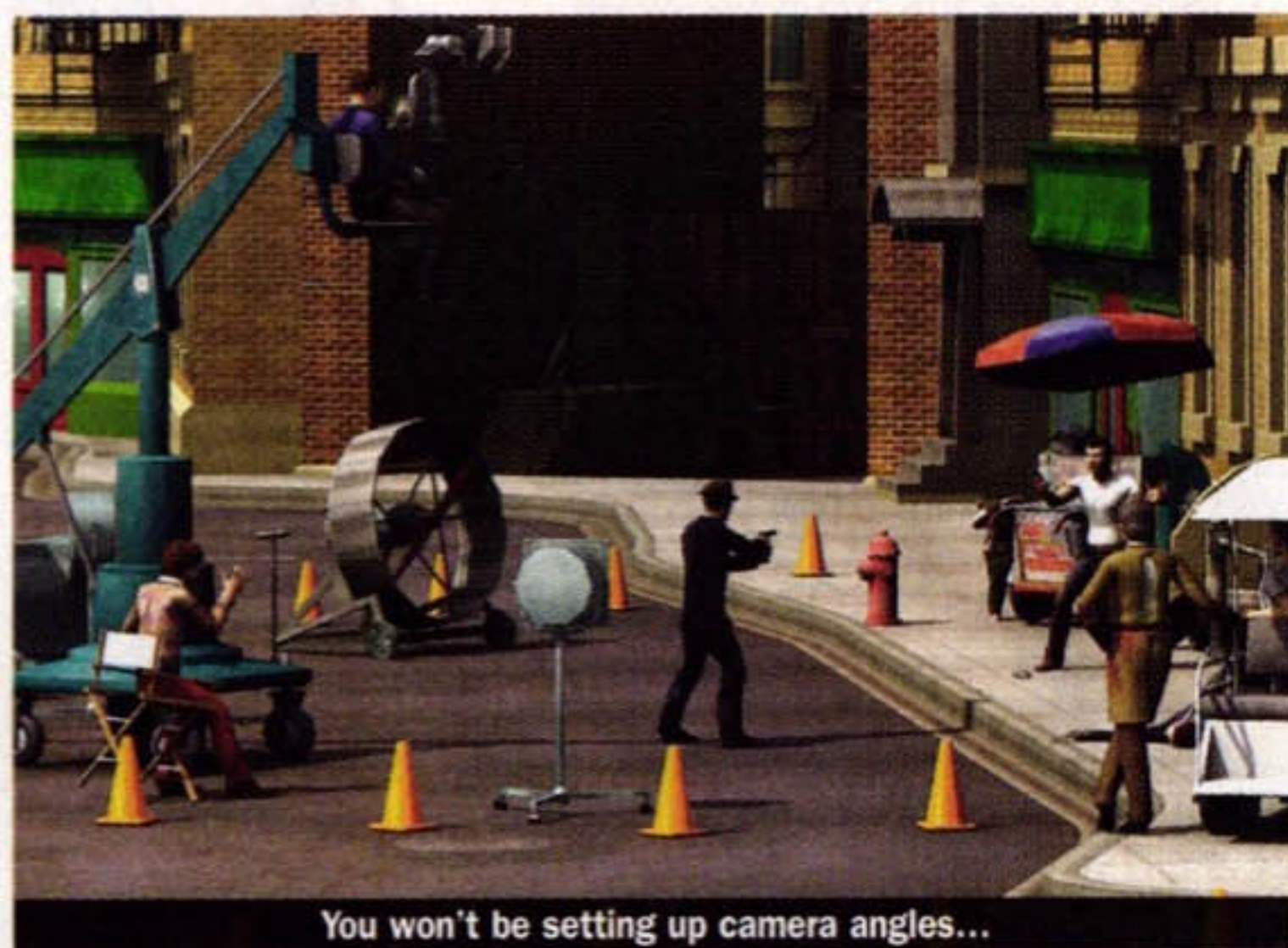
You also have to deal with the big egos and epic problems of casting the latest stars and freshest faces. Do you take a chance and hope to launch a J.Lo-sized juggernaut from nothing, or stick with the tried and true Tom Hanks approach? Molyneux comments, "You can choose anyone from a member of the public to someone in acting school, and decide to turn them into a star. You'll be able to design their look and training, and they can then become part of your studio."

After your movie debuts, the studio is sent reviews from those pesky critics. Pushing the envelope too far by releasing a salacious romance flick in 1936, or making all of the scenes too similar, will garner two big, fat thumbs down. Now you've got a bankrupt studio on your hands.

What happens with the movie you've put all of this work into? Molyneux answers, "We're including the option to record your own dialogue for your film with a computer microphone. You'll also be able to choose your own soundtrack." After the game's release, Lionhead plans to take the Oscars to the people. "We want to set up an awards site where players can show their movies. We hope to set up a mechanism where the public can vote on a weekly basis for the movies they think should get awards."

Obviously, *The Movies* has an ambitious and unique premise going for it. The plan is to release the title on PC in early 2004. For those that can access the web, upgrades and additions like new scripts or genres are intended for future release.

■ STYLE 1-PLAYER STRATEGY ■ PUBLISHER ACTIVISION ■ DEVELOPER LIONHEAD STUDIOS ■ RELEASE 2004



You won't be setting up camera angles...



...but you will control the mood of scenes



PLAYSTATION 2/XBOX/GAMECUBE

# GOBLIN COMMANDER: UNLEASH THE HORDE

CONSOLE STRATEGY'S NEXT EVOLUTION

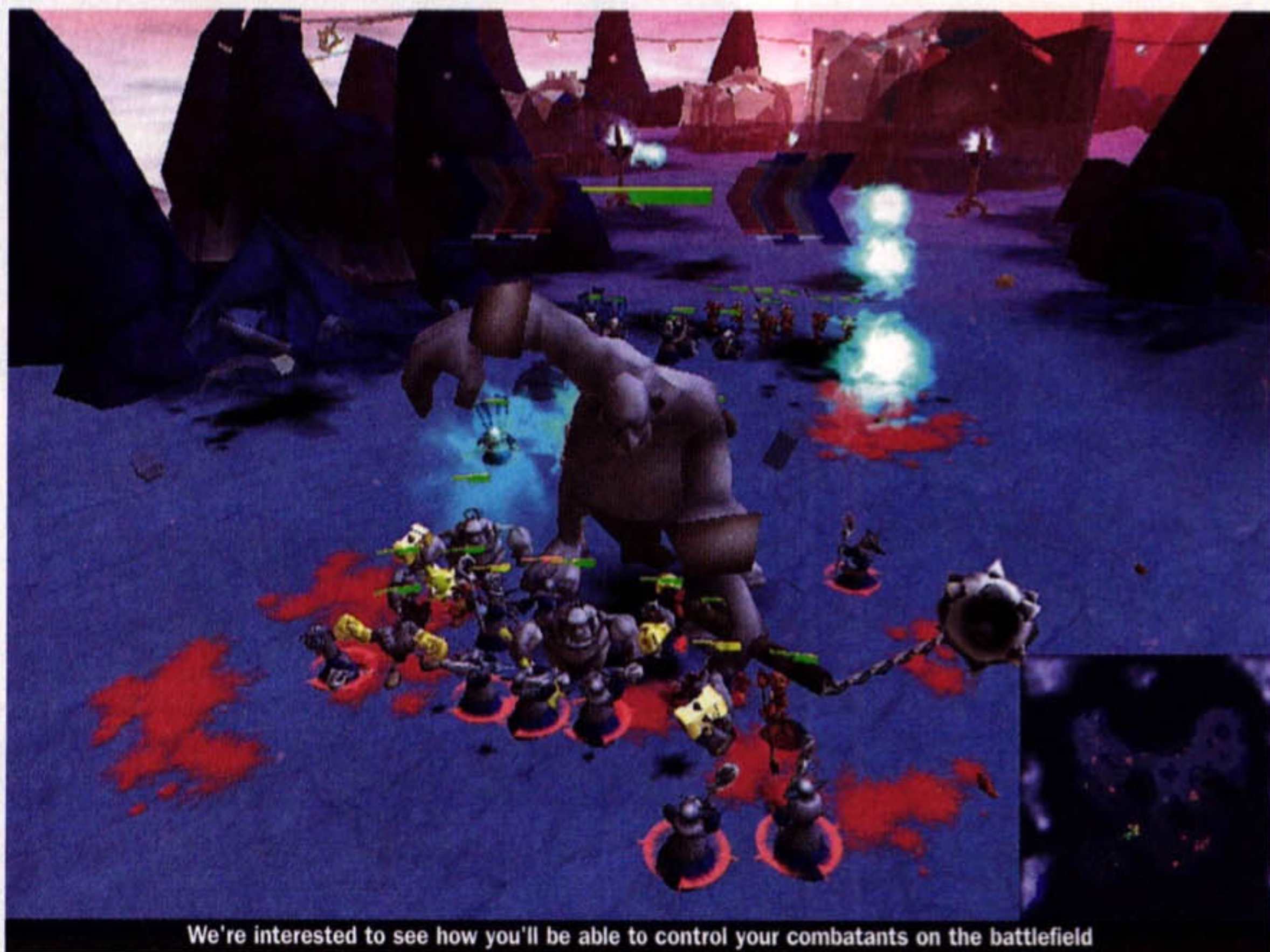
**Jaleco has never** been a major player in the U.S. video game market, although you may remember some of the company's NES-era hits like *Astyanax* and the *Bases Loaded* series. However, recent developments have suddenly made it one of the most talked about entities in the industry. Most of this notoriety is due to the fact that Jaleco is the new home to Chris and Ron Millar, the brothers that played a huge role in making Blizzard Entertainment the most respected name in PC strategy games. At Blizzard, Chris served as the producer for both *WarCraft III* and the still-unreleased *StarCraft: Ghost*, while Ron's lengthy track record includes design duties on such classics as *WarCraft I & II*, *StarCraft*, *Diablo*, and *Rock n' Roll Racing*. With a resume like this, it's obvious why Goblin

Commander, the brothers' new entry into the console strategy genre, is so highly anticipated.

Having already mastered the world of PC gaming, the Millars have their sights set on the console audience and are intent on making *Goblin Commander* what Chris Millar terms "[the] perfect blend of brains and brawn." To this end, the game will place a strong emphasis on raw action, while incorporating the more complex dynamics of real-time strategy titles.

The title is set in the fictional fantasy world of Ogriss, where (get this!) an evil wizard named Frazier has corrupted many of the goblin race and is laying waste to the realm. To stop the menace, you'll select one of several clans (all of which have different abilities and weaknesses) and battle your way through numerous missions spread over a wide variety of environments.

It's always hard to balance the oftentimes-conflicting aesthetics of brawling and tactical strategy; but, if there is anyone that can do it, it's the Millar brothers. While we haven't had the opportunity to get any hands-on time with *Goblin Commander*, we have been assured that one of the primary goals of the development team is creating a control scheme that, while easy to master, can incorporate the full range of options and techniques that fans of the genre expect. We can't wait to see how this one turns out.



We're interested to see how you'll be able to control your combatants on the battlefield

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER ACTION/STRATEGY (1 TO 8-PLAYER VIA LAN OR INTERNET) ■ **PUBLISHER** JALECO ■ **DEVELOPER** JALECO  
 ■ **RELEASE** WINTER



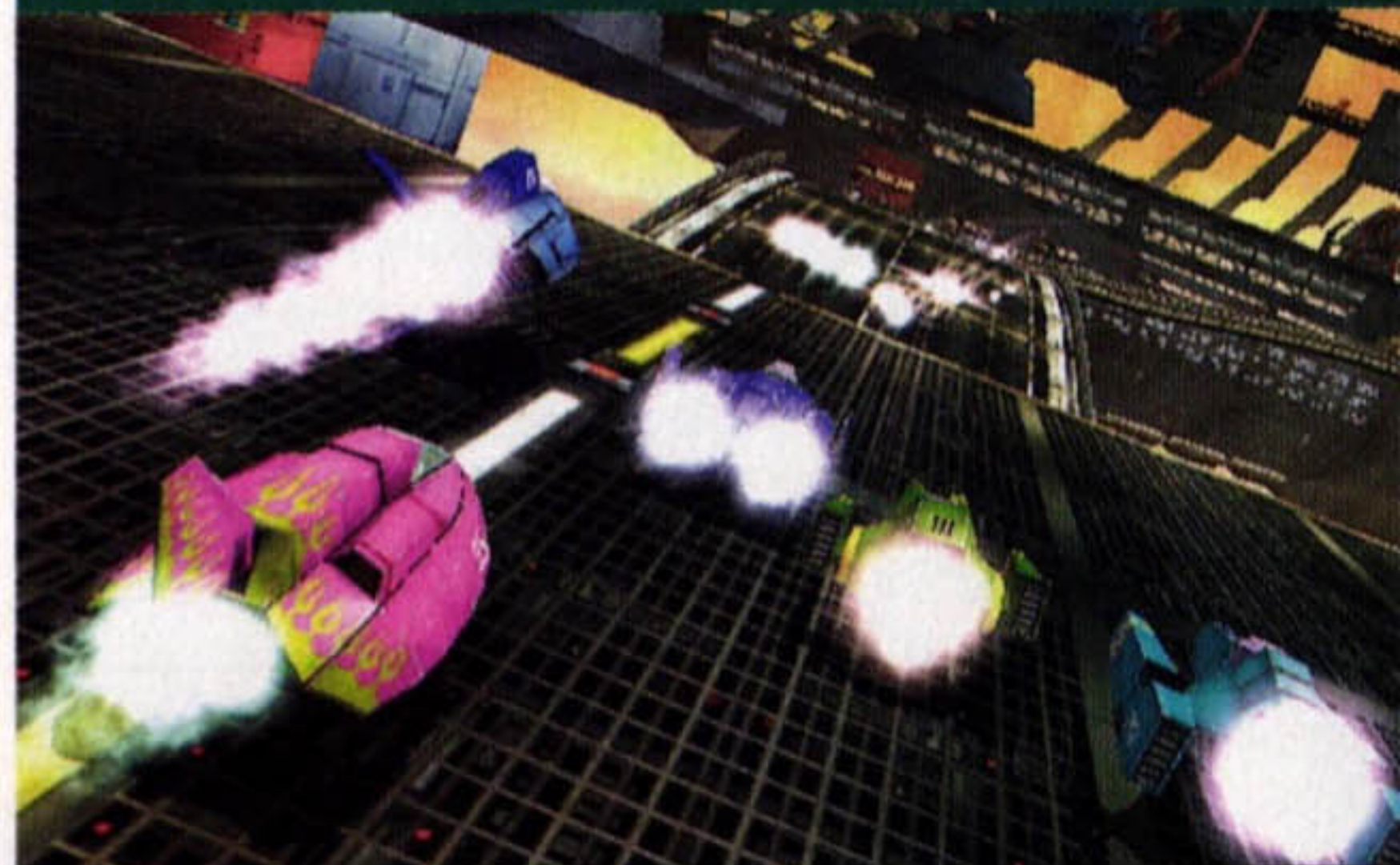
GAMECUBE

## F-ZERO

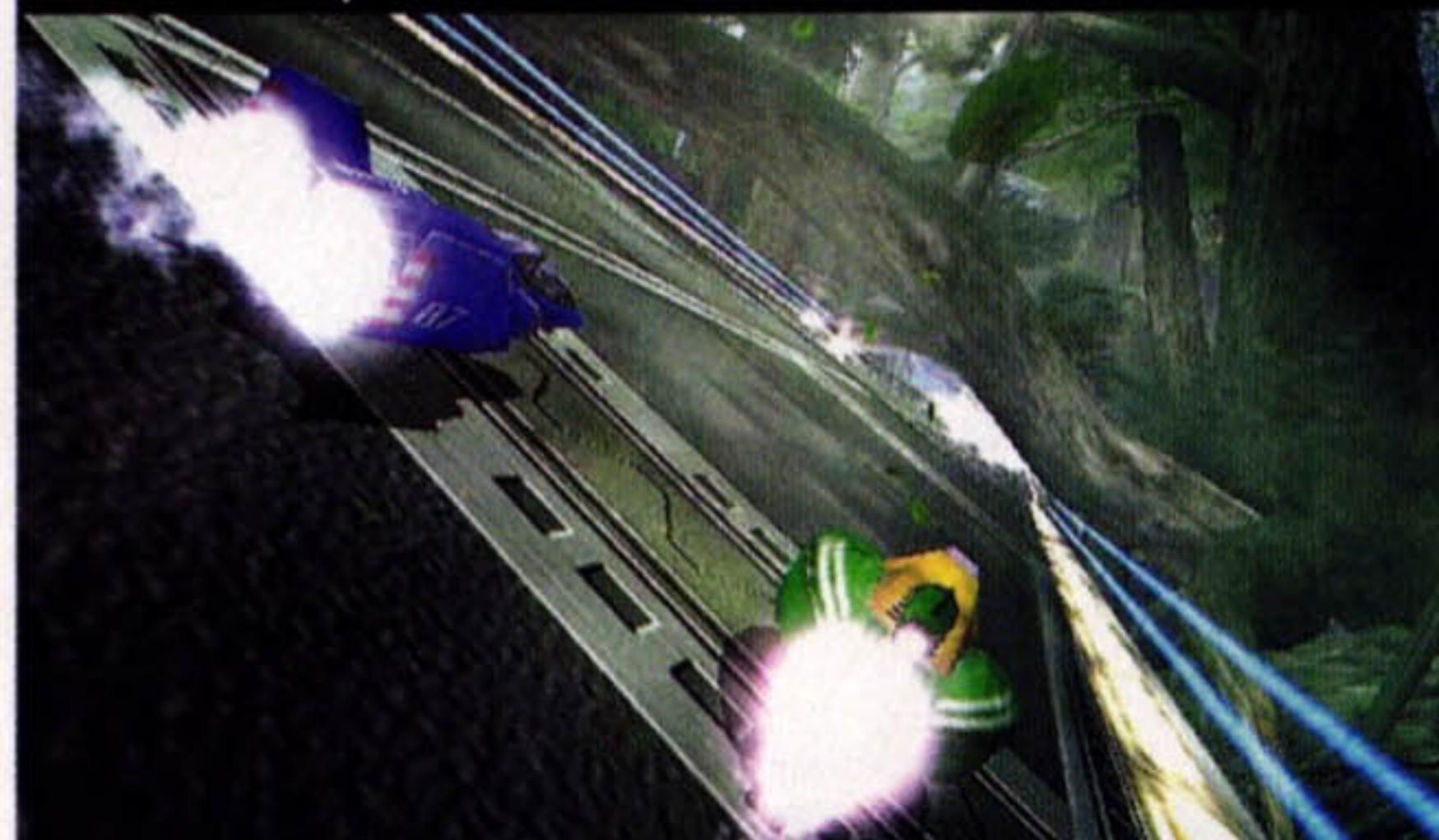
THE F IS FOR FAST...OR FUN

**There can be** no doubt that *F-Zero* is one of the most highly anticipated GameCube titles on the horizon. After everyone has finished beating the latest *Zelda*, this time-honored futuristic racer will be just the thing to cleanse the palette and energize Nintendo's anemic racing lineup.

The sense of speed as your vehicle rips around the assorted tracks is terrifying, and the courses themselves look absolutely gorgeous. Mute City, for instance, leaps to life with impossibly large dips and hills, as well as death-defying turns and eye-popping ambient scenes. Some of your favorite vehicles are also available in updated form. Blue Falcon is now Captain Falcon, Dr. Stewart will pilot Golden Fox, and a host of other familiar body types will take to the tracks. Look for more info on *F-Zero* later this summer.



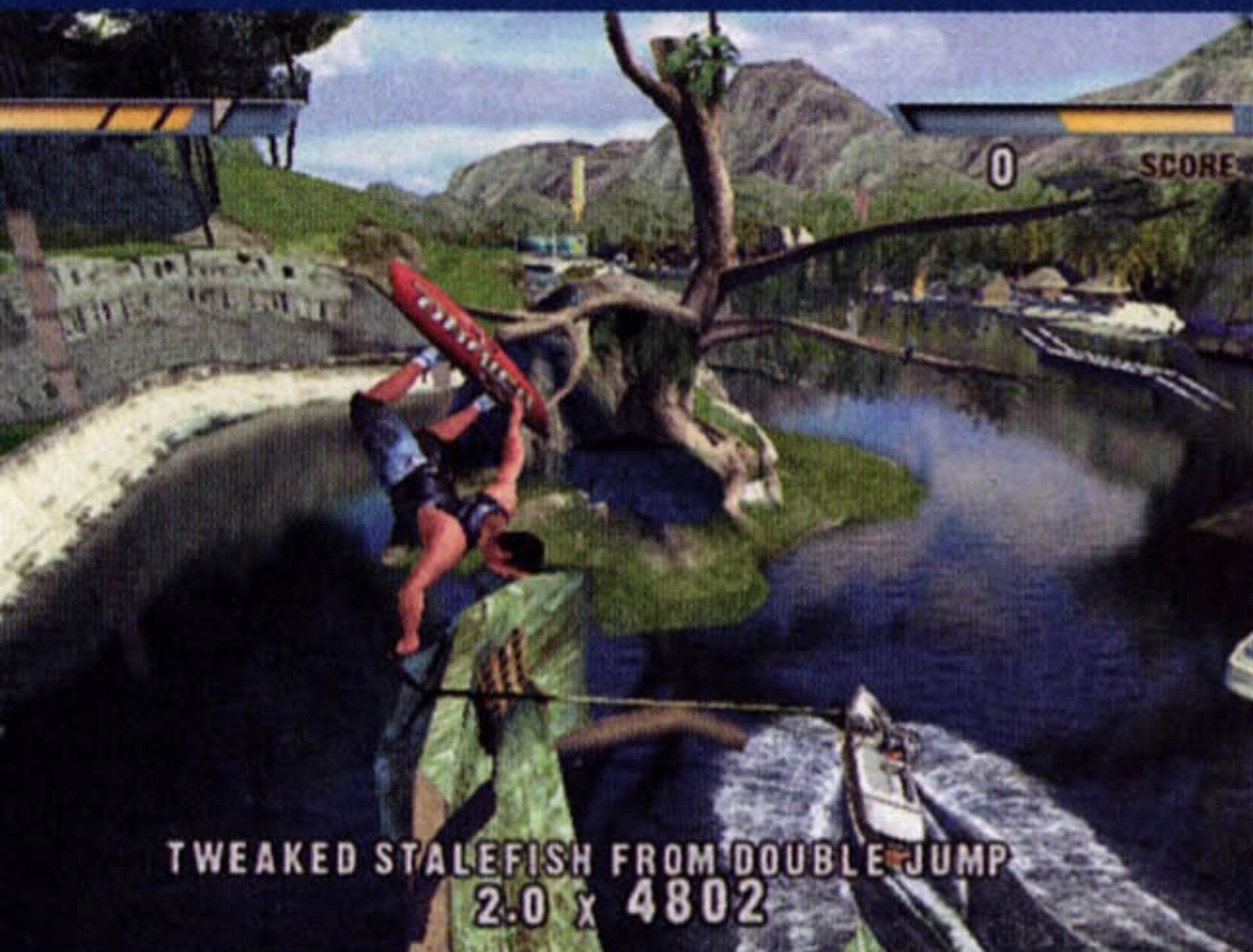
The updated look is a welcome addition to the series



This forest course looks to have some interesting environmental possibilities

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER RACING ■ **PUBLISHER** NINTENDO  
 ■ **DEVELOPER** AMUSEMENT VISION ■ **RELEASE** AUGUST 25

## PREVIEWS



PLAYSTATION 2/XBOX

# WAKEBOARDING UNLEASHED FEATURING SHAUN MURRAY LONGEST TITLE EVER!

**Activision is aware** that it has overused the Tony Hawk formula in recent years, which is one of the main reasons for this game's change of name (formerly called Shaun Murray's Pro Wakeboarder). While developer Shaba is hoping to distance the title from the hordes of Tony clones that have proliferated over the past years, Wakeboarding Unleashed still exhibits many of the gameplay and objective methods that action/sports fans have become accustomed to.

That said, this game definitely has a vibe all its own. The first thing you'll notice is the emphasis on the interplay between the boarder, boat, and rope. The rope physics are extremely accurate, forcing you to use tension and release to bust the biggest tricks. Also, by pressing L2, you can let go of the rope to explore secret areas of the levels, then grab it again to continue your run. This technique will be key to conquering the large environments, which are filled with level-specific challenges (some of which are non-boarding-related contests like boat races) and numerous alternate paths.

The two-player modes are equally exciting; allowing you to drive the boat for a buddy or compete in a "tug-o-war" mode in which each stunt you perform shortens the length of your opponent's rope. Even better, we have confirmed that the soundtrack includes the best Van Halen song ever: "Unchained"! Consider our first and fourth fingers extended from our fists.



■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER ACTION/SPORTS  
 ■ **PUBLISHER** ACTIVISION ■ **DEVELOPER** SHABA GAMES  
 ■ **RELEASE** JUNE 3



PLAYSTATION 2/XBOX/GAMECUBE/PC

# THE FOUR HORSEMEN OF THE APOCALYPSE

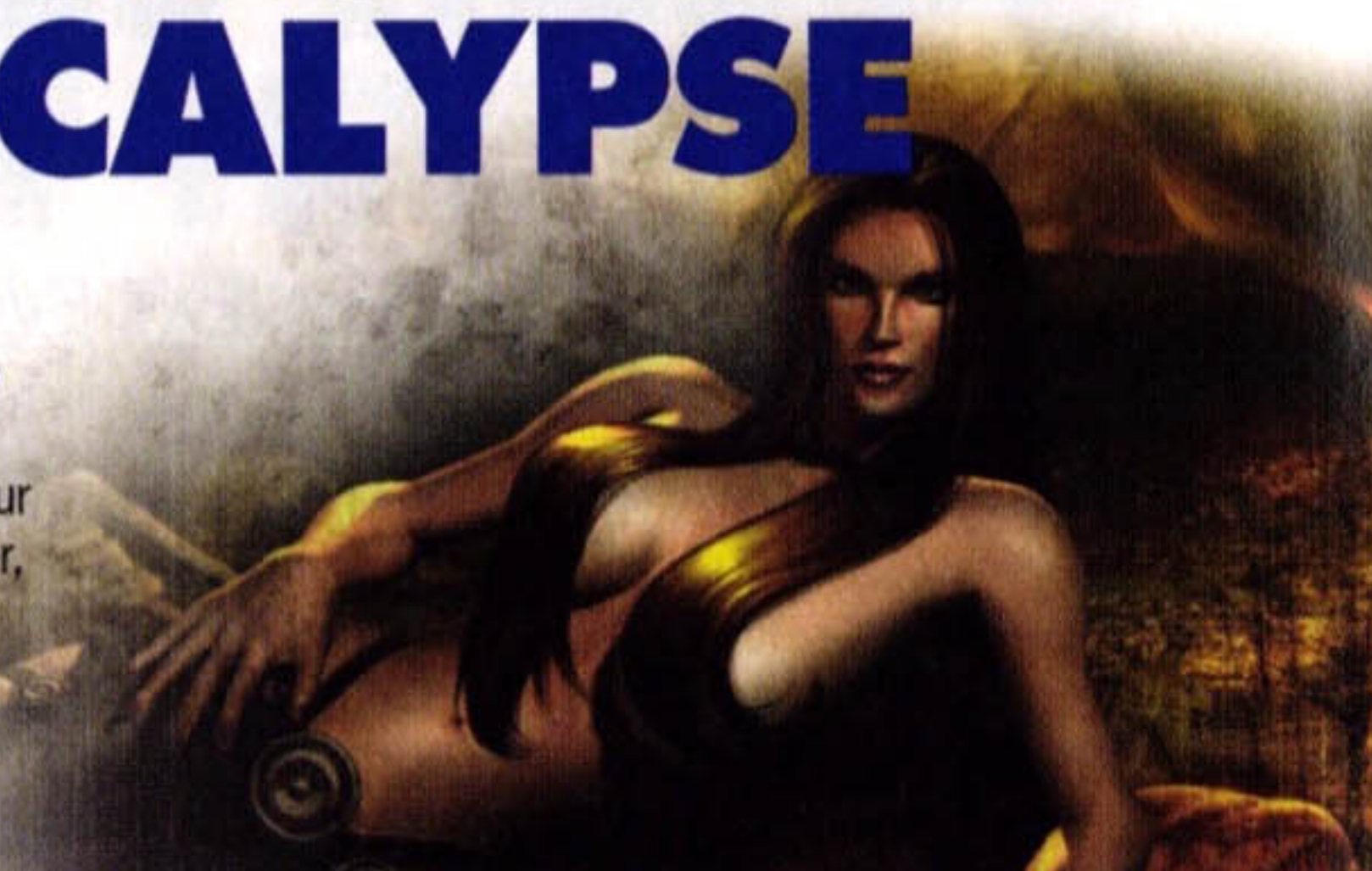
BEHOLD, A PALE HORSE

**In a surprising** move, the much-maligned 3DO company is about to take a step towards the darker side of gaming with its introduction of the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse. Presently, Four Horsemen looks to be a Devil May Cry-style game, but with a darker, more biblical premise.

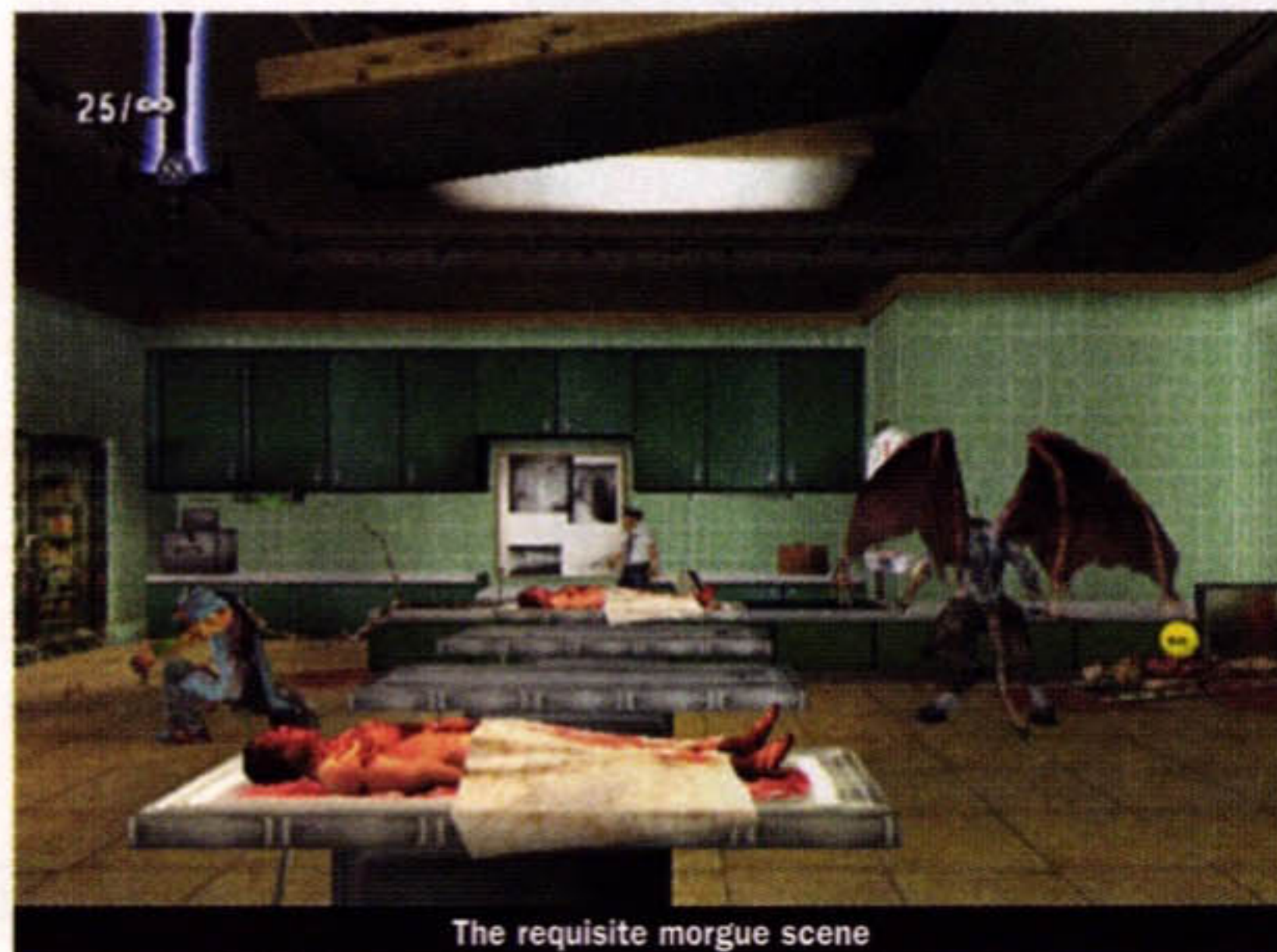
As the game begins, you'll take on the roll of the archangel Abaddon and attempt to save the world from Armageddon. Why an archangel, who has been battling demons for millennia, would need pistols to administer punishment is beyond us, but it looks really damn cool, so who cares? While battling the Horsemen (Pestilence, War, Famine, and Death), you must find and protect the Chosen – the three humans key to the survival of the Earth – while mowing down countless enemies with a combination of projectile and melee weapons. Once you've got a foe where you want him, activate a finishing move and watch him fall to pieces in spectacular fashion.

Speaking of fashion, 3DO has enlisted some very interesting voice talent for their new baby. Tim Curry, Lance Henriksen, and Traci Lords have signed on the dotted line and are sure to add to Horsemen's style and presentation. Another Hollywood connection is the involvement of the Smashcut Action Team (*The Matrix* trilogy, *Fight Club*, *The Crow*) who are choreographing and performing the combat moves.

This is definitely a different direction for 3DO, considering the adult themes and ultra-violence, but we're quite interested in how this one will turn out.



Did Tonya Harding call in this hit?



The requisite morgue scene



This environment looks to be appropriately creepy

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** 3DO ■ **DEVELOPER** 3DO ■ **RELEASE** FALL



PLAYSTATION 2

# ICE NINE

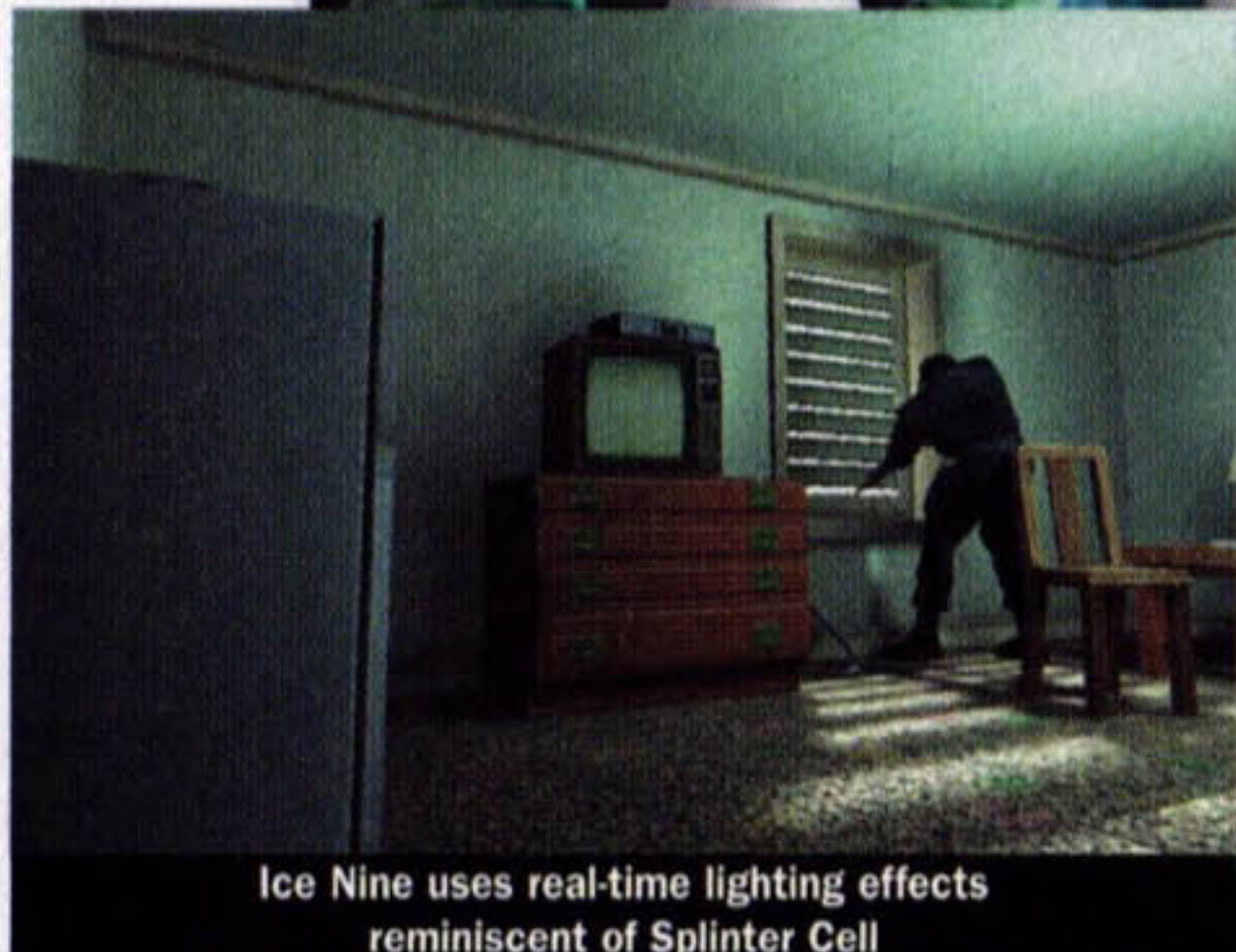
ICE NINE BABY!

**Hey, check out** the Vanilla Ice pun in that headline! Hilarious pop-culture references like that are just one of the ways that Game Informer puts the "fun" in "video game fun." Gosh, we are such a hoot.

While our trademark wit is guaranteed to keep you in stitches, Ice Nine, a promising new tactical action game for the PlayStation 2, is no laughing matter. These screens might lead you to believe that this is just another military FPS, which is far from the case. Rather than being yet another Counter-Strike knock-off, Torus Games is crafting Ice Nine as a first-person answer to popular console stealth titles like Splinter Cell and Metal Gear Solid 2.

Ice Nine focuses on the saga of Tom Carter, a young CIA trainee at the agency's top-secret training facility called "The Farm." Soon after arriving, he stumbles upon a conspiracy to release the Ice Nine virus into the general population. If this sounds a bit familiar to those who saw the Al Pacino/Colin Farrell vehicle *The Recruit*, it's not just a coincidence. The game was originally based on the film; but as the developers concocted a plot that veered far from the movie script, Ice Nine was spun off as an independent property.

Obviously, this title is no slouch in the graphics department, but there will be a good deal of depth beneath the pretty facade. Instead of sheer firepower, a player's success will largely revolve around how well they use sneaky techniques such as stealing an adversary's clothing for a disguise, and gradually learning enemy weaknesses while undercover. To aid in the struggle, you'll have a comrade-in-arms, Hannah Stone, who you can command to help in accomplishing level goals and killing the bad guys. Of course, this is just the tip of the iceberg. We could go on for days about the assortment of 20 weapons, your digital PDA/tazer gun gadget, the realistic object physics, and the complex enemy AI – but we wouldn't want to ruin the surprise for you.



Ice Nine uses real-time lighting effects reminiscent of Splinter Cell



What would a first-person game be without sniping?  
Like a day without sunshine, we say!



Hannah is a fierce warrior, and not too hard on the eyes, if you know what we mean (We mean she's pretty! Please don't tell her we said that!)

■ STYLE 1-PLAYER ACTION ■ PUBLISHER BAM ENTERTAINMENT ■ DEVELOPER TORUS GAMES ■ RELEASE JUNE



GAMECUBE

# FINAL FANTASY: CRYSTAL CHRONICLES

REUNITED AT LAST

**If the recent** torrent of rumors hold true – which we're 99.9 percent certain they will – the video game industry will once again be blessed by the collaborative efforts of a Nintendo-published and Square Soft-developed game. The two companies worked well together in the 16-bit era, and we're confident that they'll be able to rekindle that old flame for the games of today. The first title to emerge from this soon-to-be-announced union will more than likely be Crystal Chronicles – a simultaneous four-player action/RPG for the GameCube.

While the story and world thrive off of the traditional Final Fantasy vibe, the gameplay is quite different – relying more on the team dynamic than it does individual heroics. For instance, when assembling a party, it'll be in your best interest to mix character classes. If you bring a warrior, a nice complement is someone with healing abilities. As you may have guessed, the gameplay will push players to rely on each other's abilities to progress through the game.

The battles unfold in real-time and can best be compared to the likes of Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance and Gauntlet. Square is also planning to include optional Game Boy Advance connectivity. The GBA unit will display the player's statistics or current location on the field map, among other things.

The Japanese release date is currently slated as late summer, and while Nintendo won't confirm it directly, the U.S. street date should take place shortly thereafter.



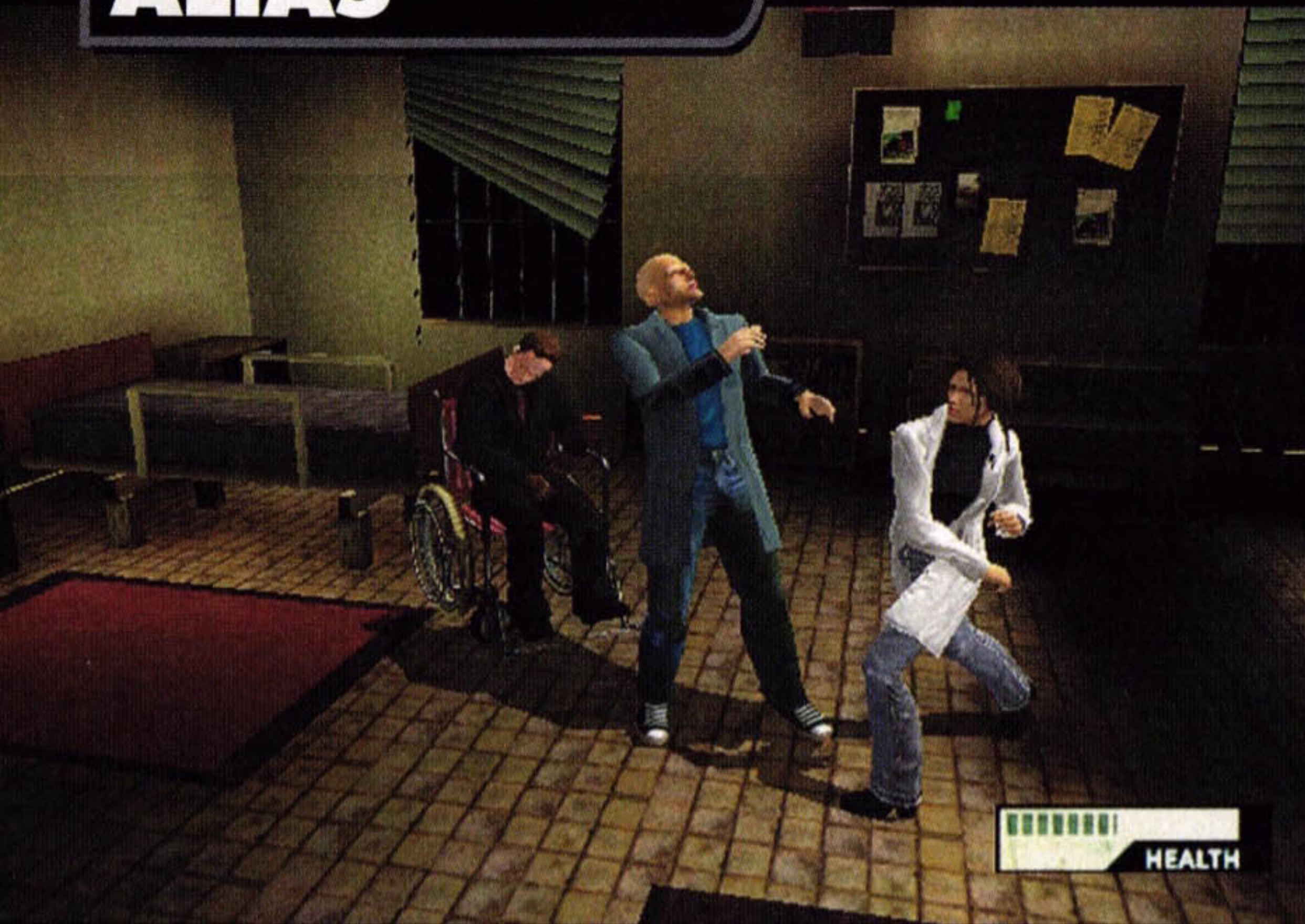
Through simultaneous four-player gameplay, Crystal Chronicles ushers in a new way to play Final Fantasy

■ STYLE 1 TO 4-PLAYER ACTION/RPG  
■ PUBLISHER NINTENDO ■ DEVELOPER SQUARE SOFT  
■ RELEASE TBA

# PHOTOPHILE

PLAYSTATION 2/XBOX/PC

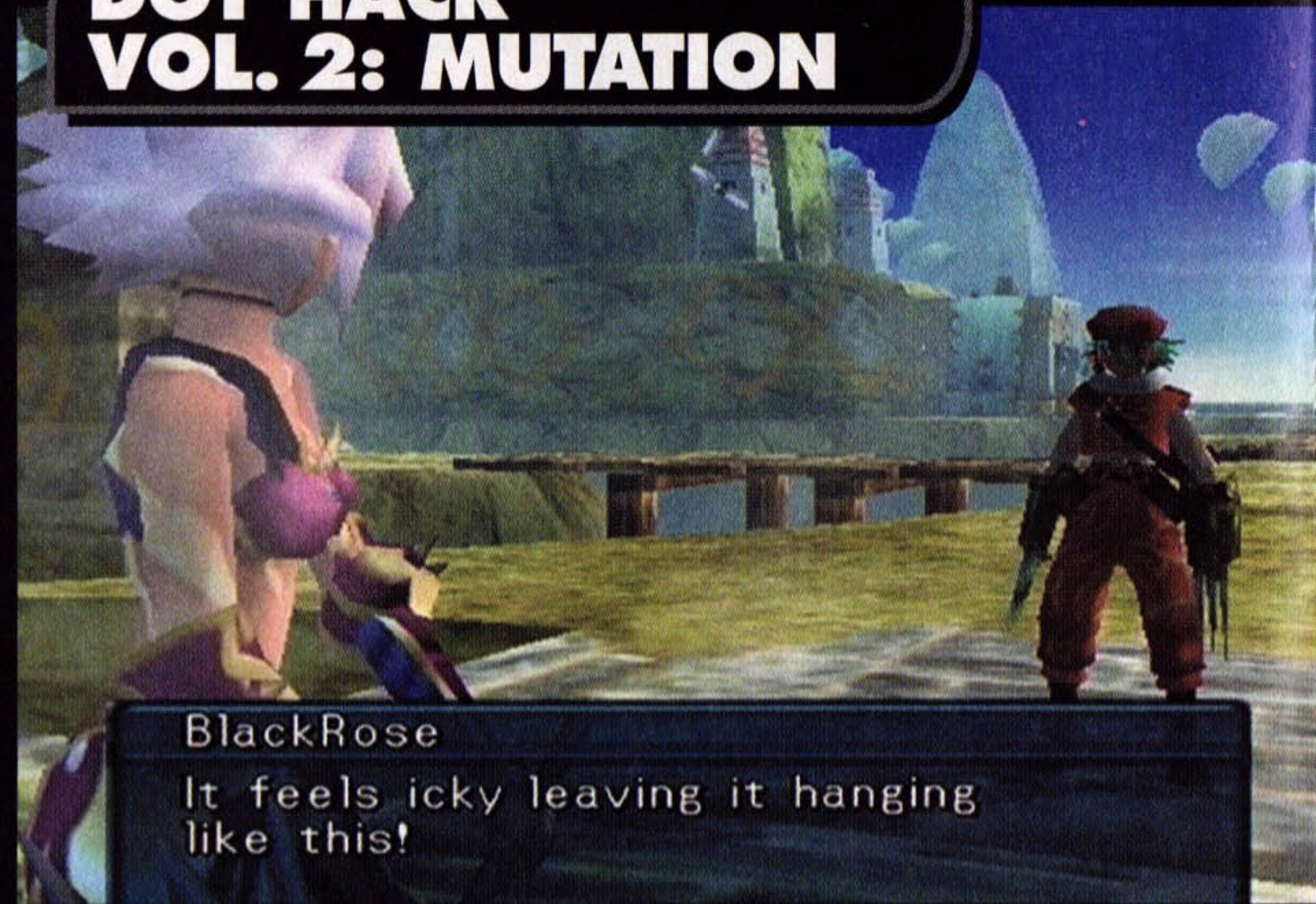
## ALIAS



Anyone who's seen the ABC series knows the plot: Sydney Bristow was recruited to be a spy for SD-6 and told that it was a black-ops division of the CIA. After finding her fiancé dead in their bathtub, she realizes that the government doesn't sanction the agency and she works for the bad guys. Enter a plethora of gadgets, intrigue, double-crossing and exotic locations. With a storyline supplied by J.J. Abrams (series creator) and crew, hopefully this title will live up to the show's pedigree.

PLAYSTATION 2

## DOT HACK VOL. 2: MUTATION



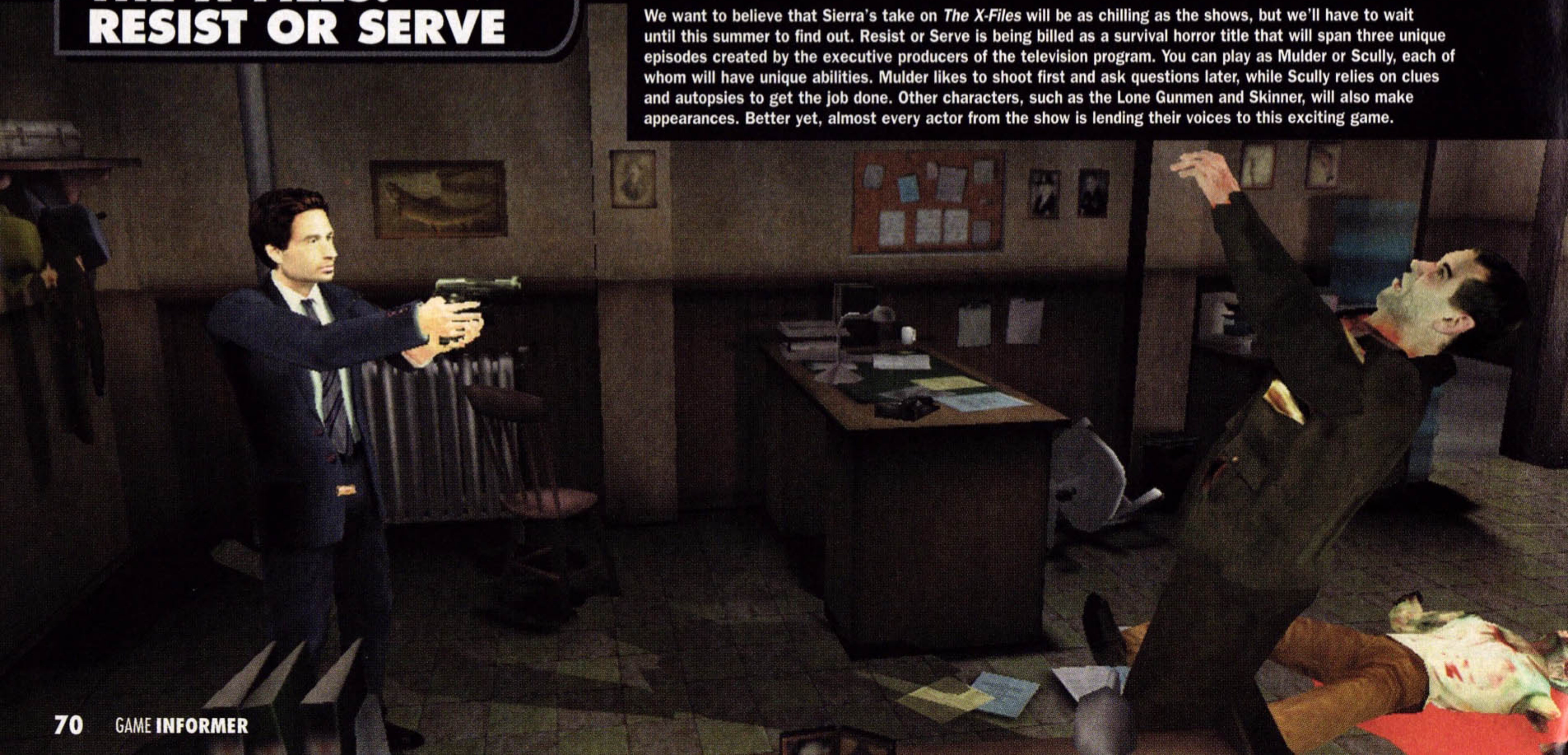
BlackRose

It feels icky leaving it hanging like this!

This May, Bandai is coming back at you cats and kittens with the second volume to the surprise best seller Dot Hack. While it seems a little much to have to pay almost \$50 per game for this episodic series, fans will no doubt be hankering to continue their adventures after having gobbled up the first one. Of course, you can transfer your character over (newbies can still dive in, however), and the game's robust trade system – and exclusive Lamda server – will yield even more goodies as the plot twists and turns. Want to know a secret? Bandai plans to give you future volumes at the tune of a new release about every three months. You are now officially hooked.

PLAYSTATION 2/XBOX

## THE X-FILES: RESIST OR SERVE



We want to believe that Sierra's take on *The X-Files* will be as chilling as the shows, but we'll have to wait until this summer to find out. Resist or Serve is being billed as a survival horror title that will span three unique episodes created by the executive producers of the television program. You can play as Mulder or Scully, each of whom will have unique abilities. Mulder likes to shoot first and ask questions later, while Scully relies on clues and autopsies to get the job done. Other characters, such as the Lone Gunmen and Skinner, will also make appearances. Better yet, almost every actor from the show is lending their voices to this exciting game.



# MEGAMAN KICKS OFF HIS 15th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION



Join Mega Man and Bass's fight for humankind as you face off with the newest menace in town, Robot King. He's captured all of the data plans for Dr. Wily's creations in order to crush and dominate all humans. Mega Man and Bass set out separately to stop him, but only one may succeed!



Play as Either Mega Man or Bass



Unique Battle Moves & Weapons: Double Jumps & Charge-Up Buster



Defeat Robot Masters to Open More Paths



VIOLENCE

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GAME BOY ADVANCE

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GAME BOY ADVANCE

# SECRET OF MANA



Although most gamers might not recognize it, this is a remake of an old Game Boy title called Final Fantasy Adventure, which was actually set in the Secret of Mana universe. The story focuses on a gladiator forced to fight for his livelihood. When he hears of an item that can bring amazing powers to its owner, he sets out on a quest to retrieve the relic and free himself from his oppressors. The gameplay is carried out in real-time, like others in the series, but from an isometric perspective. Hopefully, given the jump in technology, Square will enhance combat and flesh out the plot to create a deeper experience. Check out future issues for more info on Square's latest GBA title.

PLAYSTATION 2/XBOX

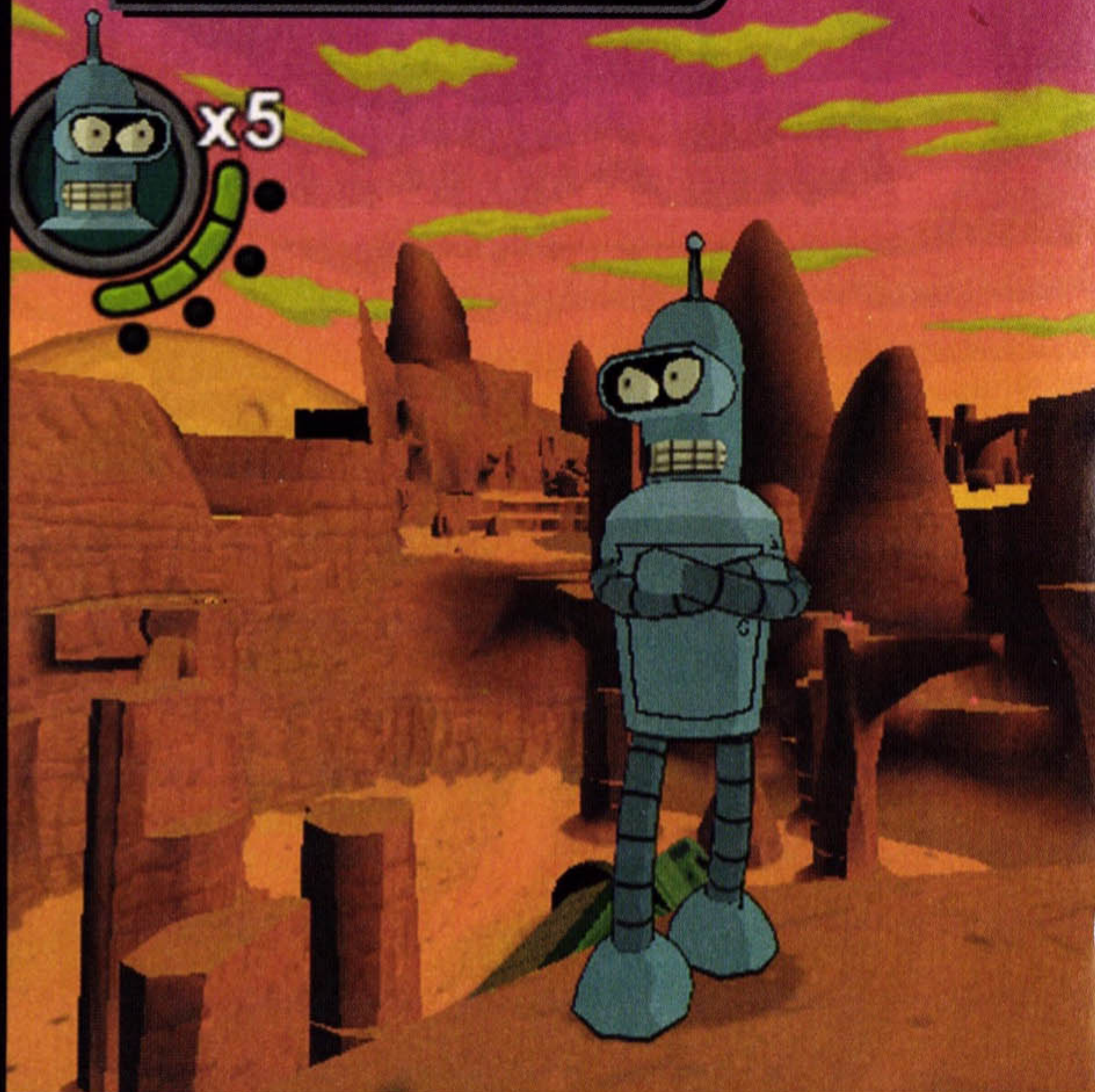
# SWAT: GLOBAL STRIKE TEAM



SOCOM copycats are to be expected, and SWAT is certainly one of them. Set to release near the holidays this year, Sierra will give Xbox and PS2 owners another microphone peripheral to monkey with. Global Strike Team follows the exploits of a few military experts (sniper, assault, demolitions, etc.) as they contract their services to companies and countries around the world that need help. Simultaneous co-op modes are expected in the multiplayer section, and a dumbed-down control scheme will be available for FPS initiates. Look for more SWAT info in the coming months.

GAMECUBE/PLAYSTATION 2/XBOX

# FUTURAMA



With the show being further thrust into oblivion, fans will soon be able to take solace in a shiny new piece of Futurama wackiness come June of this year. The title features three playable characters; a plot pitting Planet Express against forces bent on ruling the world; two mini-games; and design consultation by the king of wit, Matt Groening. The icing on the proverbial cake is the voiceover work done by the cartoon's cast.

PLAYSTATION 2

# MAGIC PENGEL: THE QUEST FOR COLOR



Being a great example of "the sum is greater than its parts," Taito's future release of Magic Pengel has a soundtrack reminiscent of the Teletubbies, narration that screams of Blue's Clues, and battle dynamics that are more than a little like Rock-Paper-Scissors. In May, this Mario Paint/Monster Rancher/Pokémon hybrid will hit the shelves; and strangely enough, we're honestly really excited about it.

PLAYSTATION 2/XBOX

# FALLOUT: BROTHERHOOD OF STEEL



Interplay is calling on one of its best series, Fallout, for a console debut. Brotherhood of Steel will release this winter on the PlayStation 2 and Xbox, and we're looking forward to how it turns out. By taking on the role of a post-nuclear hero, you'll encounter countless mutants, ghouls, and radioactive creatures as you attempt to defeat a mutant army and allow humanity to prosper once again. With over 50 weapons and simultaneous co-op play on both the single and multiplayer segments, BoS is looking to be a hot property for both systems.

PLAYSTATION 2

# LOWRIDER



Remember Dr. Dre and Snoop cruising around in their Impalas in the video for "Nuthin but a G Thang"? So do we, and now we're going to be able to have lowriders of our very own, courtesy of Jaleco Entertainment. Aside from the expected features that allow you to tweak the mechanics and appearance of your hoottie, we were shocked to learn that you'll actually have to compete in "car dancing" competitions in which you make a vehicle groove to the beat through timed button presses. It's wild, wild stuff, people.

XBOX

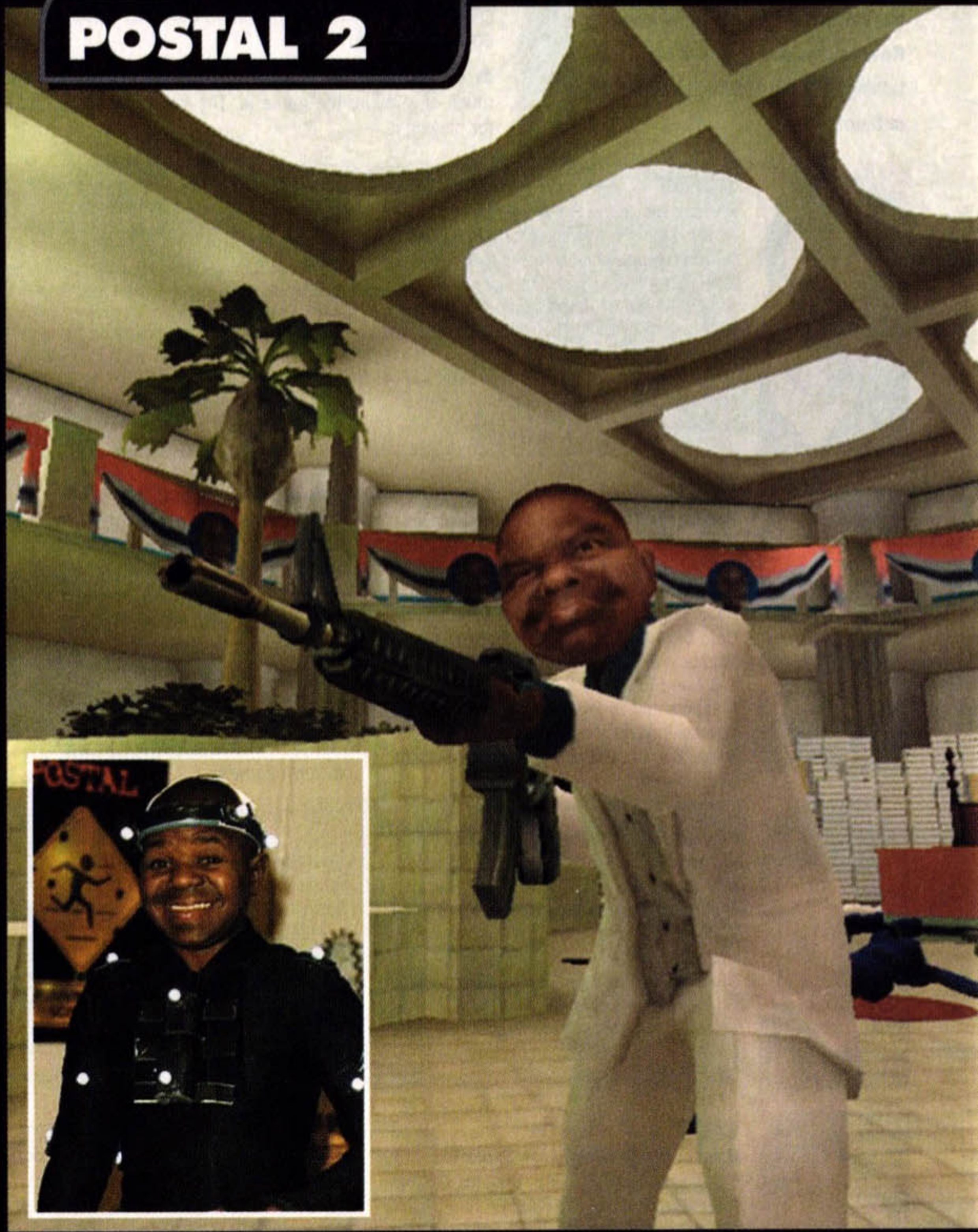
# AMPED 2



Here's what Microsoft wants you to know right now: Amped 2 will be Xbox Live enabled. You'll finally be able to run hand-to-hand against other Livers, as well as being able to trade replays, post scores, and download new mountains and equipment. The trick system has been revamped, and the graphics, as you can see, will be quite impressive when the game releases this winter.

PC

# POSTAL 2



"Whatchoo talkin' about, punk?" Postal 2, which may be the most violent game in existence, is nearly upon us. Coming out in April and published by Whiptail Interactive, this M-rated bloodbath is as gratuitous as star Gary Coleman is a jaded, angry little man. Using the Unreal II engine and as many shades of red as your computer monitor can handle, Postal 2 will be a hotbed of controversy. Will people laugh at this first-person parody, or will they picket video game retailers in record numbers? We think developer Running With Scissors doesn't care, as long as it gets a reaction.

# REVIEWS

Our crack (or crackhead, we can never decide which) review team rates games in a number of categories to help you sort out the great from the stuff you hate. Each game is reviewed by at least two staff members, and you will find both their opinions on each review. To make things a little easier we have put together some definitions of what the numbers mean, what the reviewers are like (so you can find the reviewer most like yourself), what we look for in a game, and also a cheat sheet so the newbies can understand our advanced video game jargon. Read on and soon you will be talking FPS and FMV with the best of them.



## THE SCORING SYSTEM

Game Informer's rating system ranges from 0 to 10, and is similar to school grading. 7 is average, 9 and above is exemplary work, 5 and below is a failure. Aside from concept, entertainment, graphics, playability, sound, and replay value (all explained to the right), other factors that influence a game's final score are how much game you get for your money and how all the game's elements come together.

**10** – Perfection. One of the best games of all time, if not THE best game of all time. This game has no flaws, and thus this rating is rarely given out.

**9** – Worth owning. Fans of the genre should definitely enjoy this game, but even those who don't normally like this type of game may find themselves getting hooked.

**8** – Worth playing. Still a great game, but arguably so. It may not be the best ever, but there's enough to keep your fingers wrapped around the controller for some time.

**7** – Worth renting. Unless you're a fledgling gamer, you've probably seen everything this game has to offer before. Still, just checking it out won't ruin your weekend.

**6** – Limited appeal. There are always a few people who will fall in love with a game of this caliber, but for the most part, those playing it will be yearning for something more.

**5 & BELOW** – Garbage. From this point down, it's just a matter of how much of a failure the game is. The lower the score, the more you're hating life for playing it.

## CONCEPT

What new ideas the game brings to the table and how well old ideas are presented.

## GRAPHICS

How good a game looks, taking into account any flaws such as bad collision or pop-up.

## SOUND

Does the game's music and sound effects get you involved or do they make you resolve to always play with the volume down?

## PLAYABILITY

Basically, the controller to human interface. The less you think about the hunk of plastic in your hands, the better the playability.

## ENTERTAINMENT

Flat out, just how fun the game is to play. The most important factor in rating a game.

## REPLAY VALUE

The longevity of the title.

- **High** – You'll still be popping this game in five years from now.
- **Moderately High** – Good for a long while, but the thrills won't last forever.
- **Moderate** – Good for a few months or a few times through.
- **Moderately Low** – After finishing it, there's not much reason to give it a second go.
- **Low** – You'll quit playing before you complete the game.



Content suitable for persons ages 3 and older.



Content suitable for persons ages 17 and older.



Content suitable for persons ages 6 and older.



Content suitable only for adults.



Content suitable for persons ages 13 and older.



Product is awaiting final rating.



### ANDY

**Handle:** The Game Hombre **Expertise:** RPGs, Action/Platform, Driving, First-Person Shooters **Interests:** Interpol, My New Link Bobblehead Doll...Er...Action Figure, *The Animatrix*, *FHM's Review Of Ninja Gaiden* **Dislikes:** Halo 2 Delays (Even Though I Know It's The Right Call), My Fat Greek Anything, Zwan, *Waiting For Doom III* **Current Favorite Games:** *Midnight Club II*, *NBA Street Vol. 2*, *Freelancer*, *Xenosaga Episode 1*

*Now retired from the rock scene, Andy spends endless hours locked in his home office; enjoying the benefits of high definition television and surround sound far away from those scary things he has often heard referred to as people. A longtime fan of Metroid, Andy has been reviewing video games professionally since the days of the 8-bit NES. While a big sports fan in real life, Andy isn't the first to line up for sports titles, but is always willing to put in the extra hours to play a good RPG or strategy game.*



### REINER

**Handle:** The Raging Gamer **Expertise:** RPGs, Fighting, Action/Platform, Strategy, Sports **Interests:** Being The First Person In The World To See Halo 2's New Graphical Technologies, Takara's Transformers Game, Perfect Unicorn (My Gallop Racer Hopeful) **Dislikes:** Having To Wait Seven Months For Square Soft To Translate Final Fantasy X-2, *SOCOM Cheaters*, *Framerate Debates* **Current Favorite Games:** *The Legend Of Zelda: The Wind Waker*, *Midnight Club II*, *Dark Cloud 2*, *Xenosaga Episode 1*, *NBA Street Vol. 2*

*Reiner considers himself the biggest Star Wars fan in the world. Along with his impressive collection of Star Wars action figures, he has seen the trilogy 646 times. A fan of all game types, role-playing games are his strong suit. In his nine years as a professional gamer, Reiner has achieved the impossible. Penetrating the pixel boundary, he not only plays games, he's in one, and can be shot daily in the epic N64 release, Perfect Dark.*



### MATT

**Handle:** The Original Gamer **Expertise:** First-Person Shooters, Puzzle, Action/Adventure, Action/Sports **Interests:** Killer Mike, *Our Band Could Be Your Life* By Michael Azzerad, *Recording Things Backwards*, Orson Scott Card **Dislikes:** Home Depot, Glacier Bay Plumbing Products, Meth Addicts Who Feel The Need To Talk To You In Bars, Being Disappointed By Primal **Current Favorite Games:** *Indiana Jones And The Emperor's Tomb*, *Burnout 2: Point Of Impact*, *Midnight Club II*, *Apex*

*While record collecting, watching reality television, and playing video games might sound like a state of retarded adolescence, Matt manages to scrap together an almost meaningful existence out of these activities. His encyclopedic knowledge of pop culture is either amazing or annoying, depending on how close your desk is to his. Less esoteric than his colleagues, Matt prefers traditional action and platform games.*



### KRISTIAN

**Handle:** The Video Viking **Expertise:** RPGs, Strategy, Sports, First-Person Shooters **Interests:** New Cars, Tetherball, *The Bernie Mac Show*, The Question Mark (?) **Dislikes:** The New Subway Guy (Enough With The Eye Liner, Buddy!), Creed, Creed Again **Current Favorite Games:** *Gallop Racer 2003: A New Breed*, *Freelancer*, *Amplitude*, *Super Mario World*

*Kristian enjoys opening a can of whoop-ass on his buddies at the ping pong table, then running off to the driving range for a lesson in humility and anger management. The original text-driven Zork started Kristian on the gaming road; Ultima 6, NES Baseball, and Zelda made sure he stayed. Still an avid RPG fan, he can always find time to pound out a good sports game.*



### JUSTIN

**Handle:** The Digital Deviant **Expertise:** Action/Sports, Action/Adventure, Fighting, RPGs **Interests:** Xbox Games That Support Hard Drive Songs, Terry Pratchett's *Night Watch* (My 13th Discworld Book), Christopher Guest Films, Bad Brains' *Black Dots* **Dislikes:** Waitin', Anticipatin', .38 Special **Current Favorite Games:** *Amplitude*, *NBA Street Vol. 2*, *Gallop Racer 2003: A New Breed*, *Midnight Club II*, *Mario's Picross*, *Metroid Prime (I Admit I Was Wrong)*

*Unlike most gaming jabronis, Justin knows there's life outside video vegetation. He's a former GVAR slave and moonlights as wrestler Justin "Violent" Lee in the Minnesota independent scene, where he violently bonds with other sweaty males – a practice that just gets blank stares when attempted on other GI reviewers. Justin's gaming tastes are highly old-school, and he plays 16-bit classics as often as he plugs into the latest titles.*



### KATO

**Handle:** The Game Katana **Expertise:** Sports, Racing, Action/Adventure, Action/Platform **Interests:** The Return Of KFC's Hot Wings, Steve Coogan, *Throwing Muses*, Listening To Old Bands From "Back In The Day" **Dislikes:** Ninja: They Are Honorless Dogs, Weaning Myself Off Of Whole Milk, It Being Warm When Out-Of-State Visitors Come **Current Favorite Games:** *Midnight Club II*, *Star Wars: Jedi Knight III*, *Xevious*, *10-Yard Fight*

*When not buying copious amounts of records, Kato can be found exercising good taste, feeding the goats, and trying in vain to update his wardrobe into the 21st century. Like other young men of his generation, he quickly found out that the one true real world application of good grades was the free arcade tokens that were given out as a reward. With allegiance to none, he takes on every game with an equal eye.*



### CHET

**Handle:** The Joystick Jockey **Expertise:** Fighting, Action, RPG, FPS, Shooter, Platform **Interests:** Stephen Hawking's *A Brief History of Time*, *Lupin The 3rd*, *House of 1,000 Corpses*, Buddhist Thought, *Cowboy Beebop*, Vegetarianism, Japanese Culture **Dislikes:** iPod's Crappy Battery, Big Budget Horror Movies, Epididymitis, Country Music **Current Favorite Games:** *Ikaruga*, *Ikaruga*, *Ikaruga!!!*

*Chet considers gaming to be a lifestyle, which means that he spends a ridiculous amount of time with his games. When he's not in an intense session of UT, or relaxing with one of his consoles, he's hopelessly seeking out arcades where fighting games still rule. Although he places all other activities at a distant second, he realizes the importance of society. Unfortunately, mimicking the motions for Dragon Punches and Fireballs only confuses and scares most people.*



### LISA

**Handle:** La Game Nikita **Expertise:** Puzzle, RPGs, Action/Platform, Action/Adventure **Interests:** Middle Earth Maps, Spinach And Accompanying Dressings, Getting A New Computer For My House, Breakfast **Dislikes:** Stinky Feet, My Home Computer, Not Enough Episodes Of *Good Eats* On FoodTV, Canned Food Of An Indeterminate Age **Current Favorite Games:** *The Legend Of Zelda: The Wind Waker*, *Magic Pengel: The Quest for Color*, *Clock Tower 3*

*Barring a brief and ill advised "I want to be popular, so I'll stop playing games" phase in late junior high, Lisa has been subjecting her friends to drawn out boss battles since age 8. She has been known to wax philosophically about why Jigglypuff is desperately under-appreciated and wish that some "big" games were more fun, even if that means less pretty.*

## NEWBIE CHEAT SHEET

For our newer readers, here is a glossary of terms and acronyms that commonly appear in the magazine. Video game veterans should move along (these aren't the droids you are looking for).

**action** – A term we use for games like *Zone of the Enders* and *Gauntlet*

**adventure** – A term we use for games like *Myst* and *Escape From Monkey Island*

**AI** – Artificial Intelligence. Usually used to refer to how well the computer reacts to a human opponent

**board** – A term we use for games like *Jeopardy!* and *Mario Party*

**bump-mapping** – A technique where varying light effects simulate depth on textures

**cel shading** – A technique used to create 3D rendered objects that resemble hand-drawn animation cels

**CG** – Computer-Generated graphics

**E3** – Electronic Entertainment Expo. The world's largest convention for video games

**fighting** – A term we use for games like *Street Fighter* and *Dead or Alive*

**FMV** – Full Motion Video. Usually refers to an animated CG cutscene

**FPS** – Frames Per Second. How many animation frames happen in one second. Also used to denote First-Person Shooters like *Doom*, *GoldenEye*, & *Unreal Tournament*

**framerate** – The frames of animation used to create the illusion of movement

**frontend** – A game's menus and options

**GBA** – Game Boy Advance

**GBC** – Game Boy Color

**GC** – GameCube

**isometric** – Three-quarters top down view, like *StarCraft* or *Red Alert 2*

**ISP** – Internet Service Provider. The company that provides you with access to the Internet

**jaggles** – Graphical lines that are jagged when they should be straight

**LAN** – Local Area Network. Connecting computers or consoles together within a small space to allow communication between them. Provides fast, simultaneous gameplay

**minigame** – A small, simple game within a larger one

**motion-capture** – Using human models and infrared cameras to record movement for game animation. Also mo-cap

**motion blur** – Phantom frames follow an object to give the impression of realistic speed

**N64** – Nintendo 64

**NES** – Nintendo Entertainment System

**NPC** – Non-Player Character. Those people and creatures you see wandering around in games that are not being controlled by actual humans

**platform** – A term we use for games like *Super Mario* and *Crash Bandicoot*

**pop-up** – When onscreen objects, usually distant, suddenly appear

**PS2** – Sony PlayStation 2

**PSone** – Sony PlayStation

**particle effects** – Things like smoke or sparks created in real-time

**PKer** – Player Killer. This is a person who thrives on killing newbie or vulnerable characters in MMORPGs or shooting their teammates in games like *Counter-Strike*

**puzzle** – A term we use for games like *Tetris* and *Chu Chu Rocket*

**racing** – A term we use for games like *Gran Turismo* and *Mario Kart*

**RPG** – Role-Playing Game. A game that involves character improvement through collecting and spending points. A term we use for games like *Final Fantasy* and *Dragon Warrior*

**shooter** – A term we use for games like *Mars Matrix* and *Gradius*

**Shomer Shabbos** – Someone who fully observes the Jewish Sabbath. That means no bowling

**SNES** – Super Nintendo Entertainment System

**sports** – A term we use for games like *Madden NFL*

**strategy** – A term we use for games like *Command & Conquer* and *Fallout Tactics*

**third-party** – Something made for a console by a company other than the console manufacturer

## REVIEWS

# 湾岸 MIDNIGHT CLUB II

## GAME OF THE MONTH MIDNIGHT CLUB II

Midnight Club II...that's just another game about cars, right? Wrong, poindexter! What you don't know about Rockstar's newest sensation will have you floored. With three massive city environments, online compatibility, a track editor, and some of the most tricked-out, NOS-guzzling hotrods this side of *The Fast and the Furious*; *Midnight Club II* hits the streets as one of the PlayStation 2's sweetest rides. Page 76

## PC GAME OF THE MONTH FREELANCER

After jettisoning Chris Roberts into the sun and spending several years in development, Digital Anvil's epic space combat game has finally touched down on Earth. With inventive flight controls that use the mouse to its fullest extent, a story so moving that you may shed a tear when the credits roll, and graphical details that are more realistic than life itself; *Freelancer* has proven to be the sure-fire hit and genre-defining game that we had always hoped it would be. Page 92





In the game, split-second decisions like this take place all the time



Particles will often light up the screen like the fourth of July



Getting up on two wheels will save your hide many times

PLAYSTATION 2

# MIDNIGHT CLUB II

## THE SOUND OF THE STREETS



I was very doubtful that *Midnight Club II* was going to be anything out of the ordinary. To tell the truth, I thought the first MC's sales were aided by the PlayStation 2 launch, and that Rockstar was going to have to do something pretty damn spectacular to make this sequel a hit. It did. Point-to-point racing sounds rather passé compared to some of the things you can do behind the wheel these days. Whether it's *Pro Race Driver* or even *Grand Theft Auto: Vice City* itself, people want more when they put the pedal to the metal. This game gives you that extra something – that something that has been missing from other fast-paced racers. Although there are things about *Midnight Club II* that certainly aren't new, when you play the game, you feel as if screaming down the boulevard and almost giving yourself a heart attack is suddenly fun again.

The highest of praise must go to developer Rockstar San Diego (formerly known as Angel Studios). It has made this game brilliant on several fronts. The first *Midnight Club* was all about street racing, but here is where the fun really begins. Having only three cities (Tokyo, Los Angeles, and Paris) may sound like there is a lack of quantity, but nothing could be further from the truth. These locales aren't merely big because you can race in different, isolated sections of the city. I'm talking about contests that span from one end of town to the other. Imagine starting in downtown LA, then cruising up to the curvy streets of the Hollywood hills. You may lose some ground once you hit the traffic of the freeways, but a couple shortcuts at the Staples Center gets you back in the thick of things. That's until all the commotion and split-second decisions become too much and you choke, crumpling your ride at the base of a mighty tree. I'm amazed at the speed that the game exhibits, even as it throws loads of traffic, towering skyscrapers, and no pop-up in my way. Add in the new ball of wax that is the motorcycle, and you've got an awesome time.

Unlike the trial and error of a *Stuntman*, for example, *Midnight Club II* keeps things fresh in a number of ways. First of all, as hokey as it sounds, the street racing component is cool. I love the progression of upgrades inherent in winning rivals' rides, the varying objectives, and the Tokyo Xtreme

Racer-esque prowling for high-beam battles. My favorite variable, however, is the AI. This element is magnificent, both for the traffic and my competitors, which adds a striking amount of variety each and every race. Trust me, you'll appreciate this when it's the tenth time you're trying to win a race, and you can never figure out which way that truck's going to swerve or how cutthroat the other drivers are going to be. The best example of the chaos this can cause is during an unordered checkpoint contest. Here, every car goes its own way to hit the gates, meaning that you'll often be sideswiped by rivals or find yourself getting into head-on collisions during the mad scramble, as everyone takes a different route to the finish line.

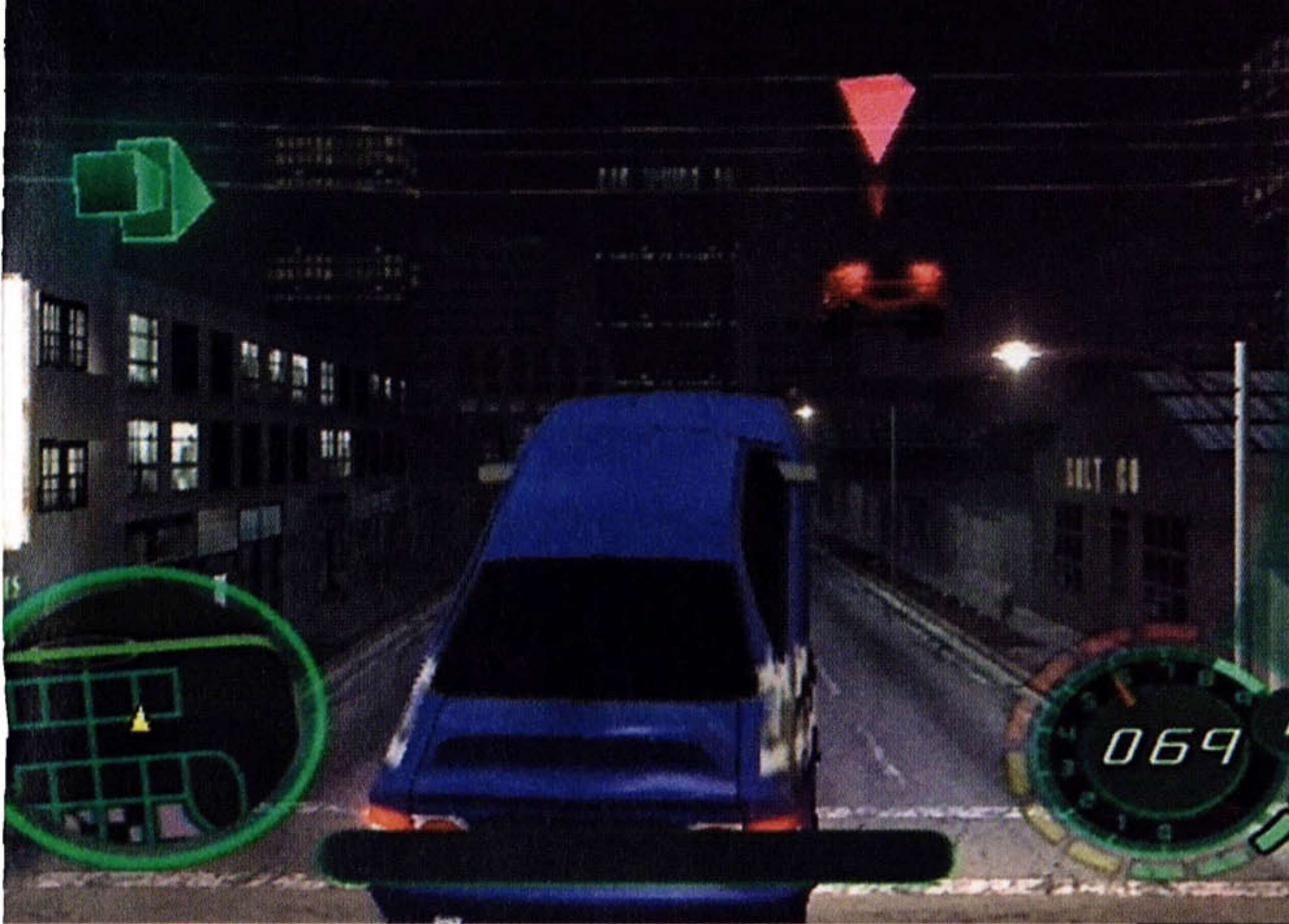
The NOS-flavored cherry on top of this title is the graphics. Sparks will fly, whether it's from light poles you've torn from the ground, or from you trying to wedge your ass between a retaining wall and a bus at over 100 mph. The road textures are amazing, as is the fact that I never noticed the game slow down – even while playing online. MC II is broadband-only, and lets you do everything from making your own checkpoints to having everyone race with just motorcycles, for example.

Games like *Burnout 2* and the *Need for Speeds* do a good job of being fast-paced, fun titles. *Midnight Club II* kills them not only because it exceeds their thrills, but because of the way it makes its cities come truly alive. When you add online play to this combo, it makes you understand the art of racing like never before. – KATO



Yes, let's bomb Paris (in a car)

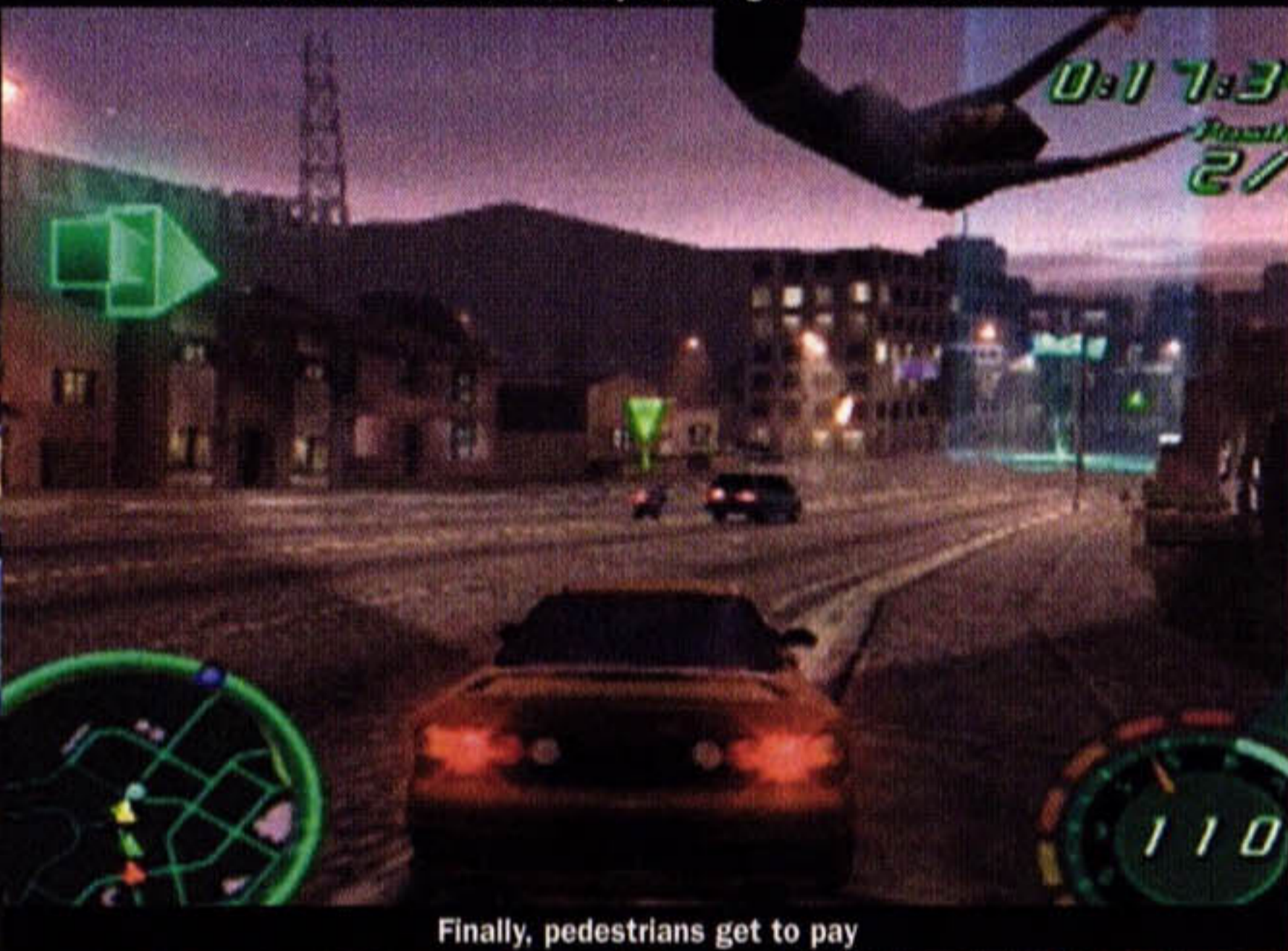
■ STYLE 1 OR 2-PLAYER RACING (1 TO 8-PLAYER ONLINE) ■ PUBLISHER ROCKSTAR GAMES  
 ■ DEVELOPER ROCKSTAR SAN DIEGO ■ RELEASE APRIL 8



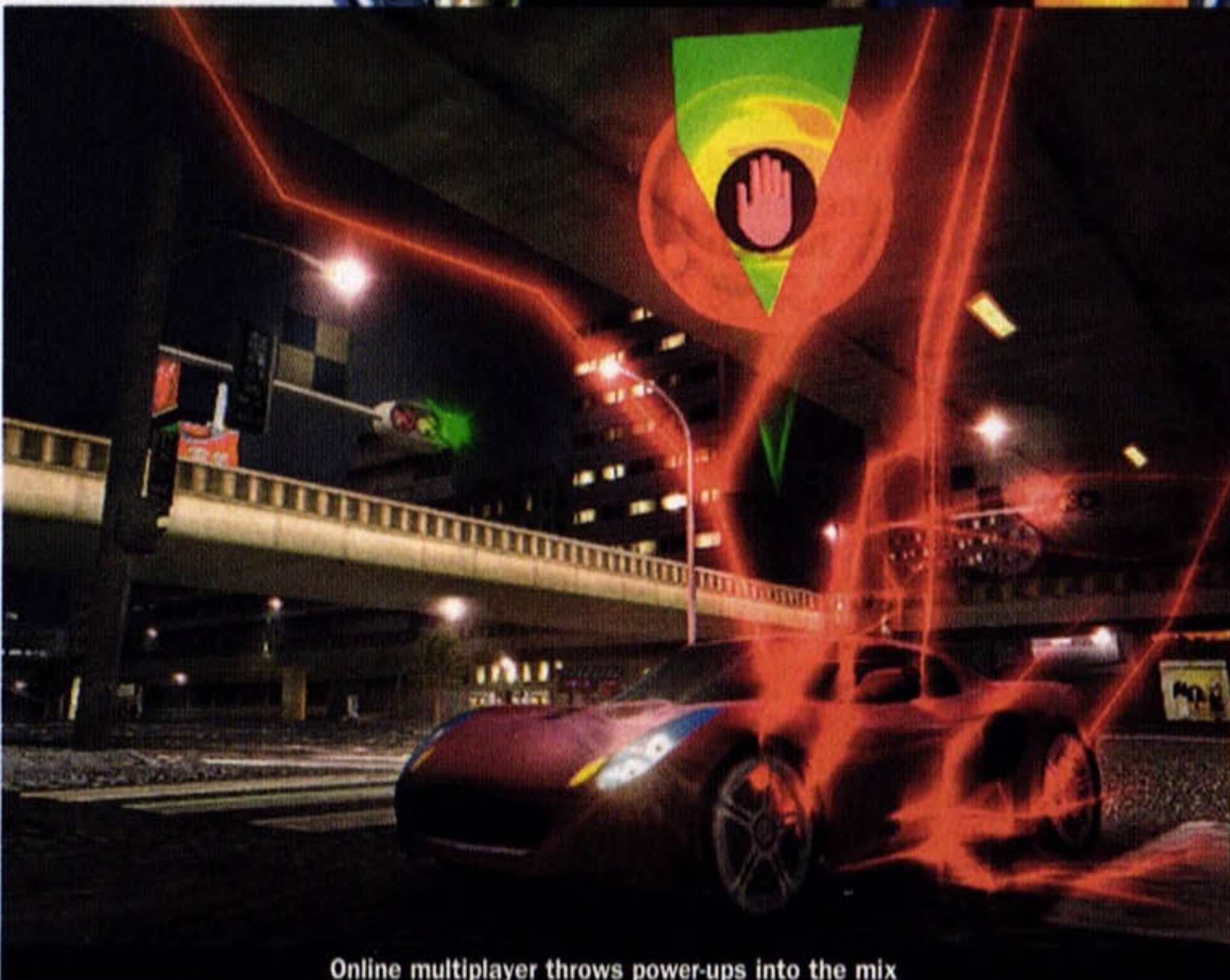
**"...screaming down the boulevard and almost giving yourself a heart attack is suddenly fun again."**



No matter what it throws at you, this game never slows down



Finally, pedestrians get to pay



Online multiplayer throws power-ups into the mix



Cars in love, blissfully jumping through a concrete wonderland

**THE BOTTOM LINE**

TEEN  
**T**  
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

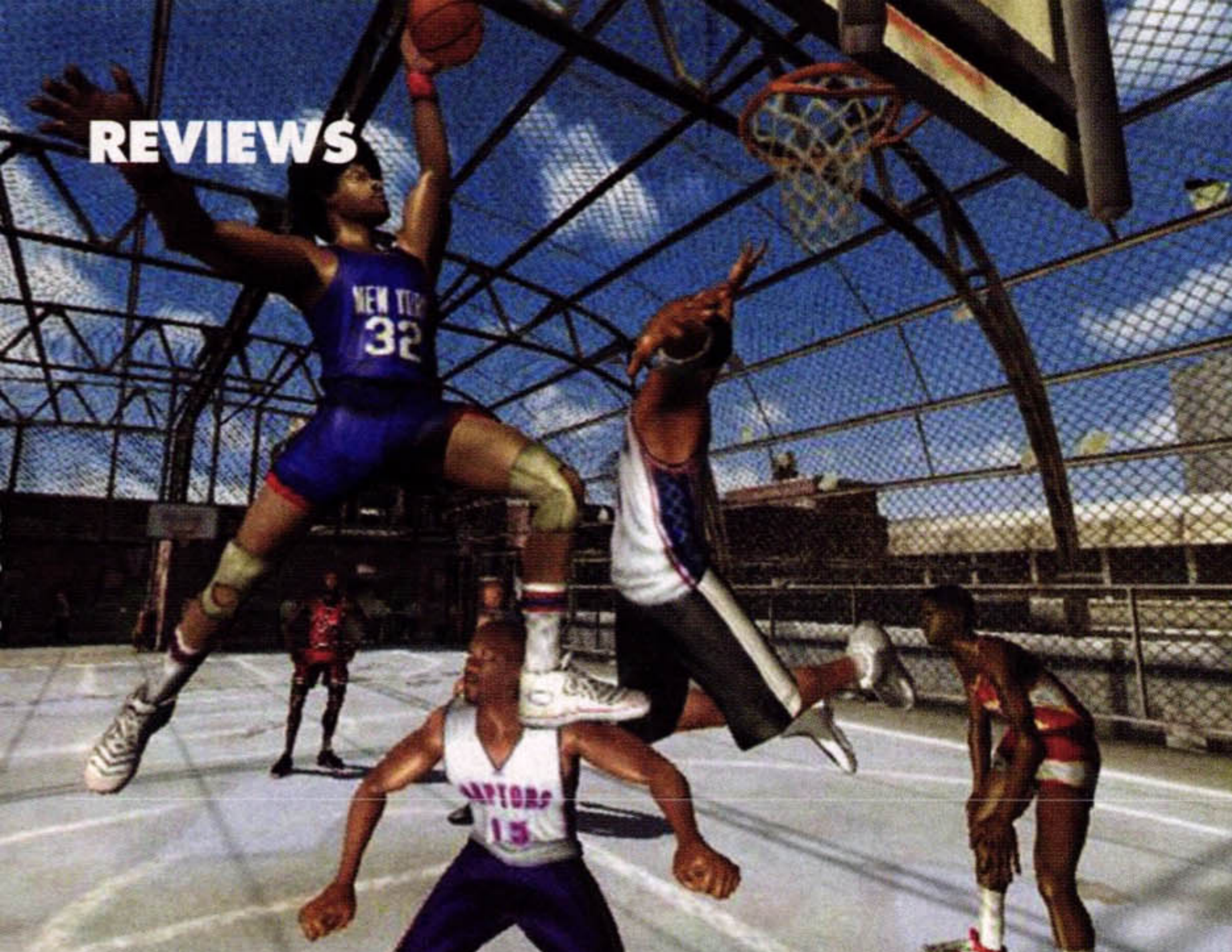
**9**

- **Concept:** Blows checkpoint racing away with online play, blistering speeds, and massive environments
- **Graphics:** It is simply amazing what Rockstar San Diego has done with this game on several levels
- **Sound:** Songs are anonymous, but the voiceovers can be helpful and amusing
- **Playability:** The learning curve is perfect. MC II gives you all you can handle. Think it's fast? It gets faster
- **Entertainment:** Is a straight line the fastest way between two points? I don't know, it's all been a blissful blur
- **Replay Value:** High

**SECOND OPINION**

Midnight Club II has been reworked, enhanced, and pimped out to such an extent that it makes its predecessor look like a '78 Pinto with four flat tires. With gorgeous visuals that showcase the smallest of details like quarters flying through the air when you smash into a parking meter, and gameplay that delivers non-stop intensity, this game fires on all cylinders and is a continual pleasure to play. It also achieves speeds that, up until now, you could only dream about. To tell you the truth, I didn't expect much going in; but I ended up walking away completely amazed and addicted to the point that it was next to impossible to put the controller down. I haven't been this hooked on a racing game since Gran Turismo 3: A-Spec. I'll even go as far to say that, bolt for bolt, Midnight Club II is a more enjoyable game.

**REINER - 9.25**



"[NBA Street Vol. 2] proves to be a more mature and skilled iteration of fast-paced hoops."

PLAYSTATION 2

# NBA STREET VOL. 2

PAVED WITH GOLD

**N**BA Street is the definitive arcade sports game and my favorite title from the PS2's first year. It still gets a lot of at-home play for me. Thus, I was obviously excited to get my hands on Street Vol. 2. It proves to be a more mature and skilled iteration of fast-paced hoops.

The game takes a decidedly retro feel in both presentation and the addition of NBA legends and throwback jerseys. The audio, which was once commentary-centric, now lets you choose between play-by-play or listening to a great – albeit too brief – list of hip-hop jams. Not much has changed visually, but that wasn't an area that needed much improvement anyway – however, the models don't quite live up to NBA 2K3's.

Street Vol. 2 ups the ante on moves, which I didn't think was possible. You can customize them like a skater in Tony Hawk, and do things like bounce passes off the backboard or your foot. I like being able to run without the ball to set up alley-oops, even though their Trick Point value has diminished. However, it's generally easier to string high-scoring combos together. Gamebreaker 2s, which require you to withhold your regular Gamebreaker and fill up the meter a second time, are even more creative. These can incorporate all three of your players and really change the course of a game.

The new mode, Be a Legend, is great and offers the same

level of longevity that a sim game's franchise mode would. You start with a created baller and are forced to work up from the basement. It's no easy task, because your generic teammates blow. You have to play to your strengths and weaknesses, especially when going against NBA players. Parameters range from pick up games to Street Challenges – like a contest to 12 points where only dunks count, or one where you play to 250,000 Trick Points. Be a Legend is extremely lengthy, and you're going to want to see it all.

In the original Street, I kept building up my created character, making him the largest, most statistically perfect baller I could. Here, height and body type are permanent once set. Thankfully, there are more appearance options, with more added as you progress. It's a fair tradeoff.

NBA Challenge pits your team against all other NBA squads. Unlike last year, you can't update your roster with defeated players – so choose your crew carefully. This makes every game a challenge, but I honestly miss this feature from last year. You can craft a custom squad of your five favorites, but it's not the same.

My few complaints are minor, like the shot clock resetting incorrectly and generic players sometimes looking too similar. I don't feel the same elation as I did playing the first Street, but Vol. 2 advances the series and gives fans more than enough reason to pick it up. – **JUSTIN**

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER SPORTS ■ **PUBLISHER** EA BIG ■ **DEVELOPER** NUFX/EA CANADA ■ **RELEASE** APRIL 29



The Create a Baller mode is much improved



Wilt and Shaq play one-on-one over who could get the most honeys



Gamebreaker 2s are CRAZY!



"You all make fun of my mullet! [sniff] I'm taking my ball and going home!"



The Chicago court is one of the game's cooler venues

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE  
**E**  
CONTENT RATED BY  
ESRB

**9**

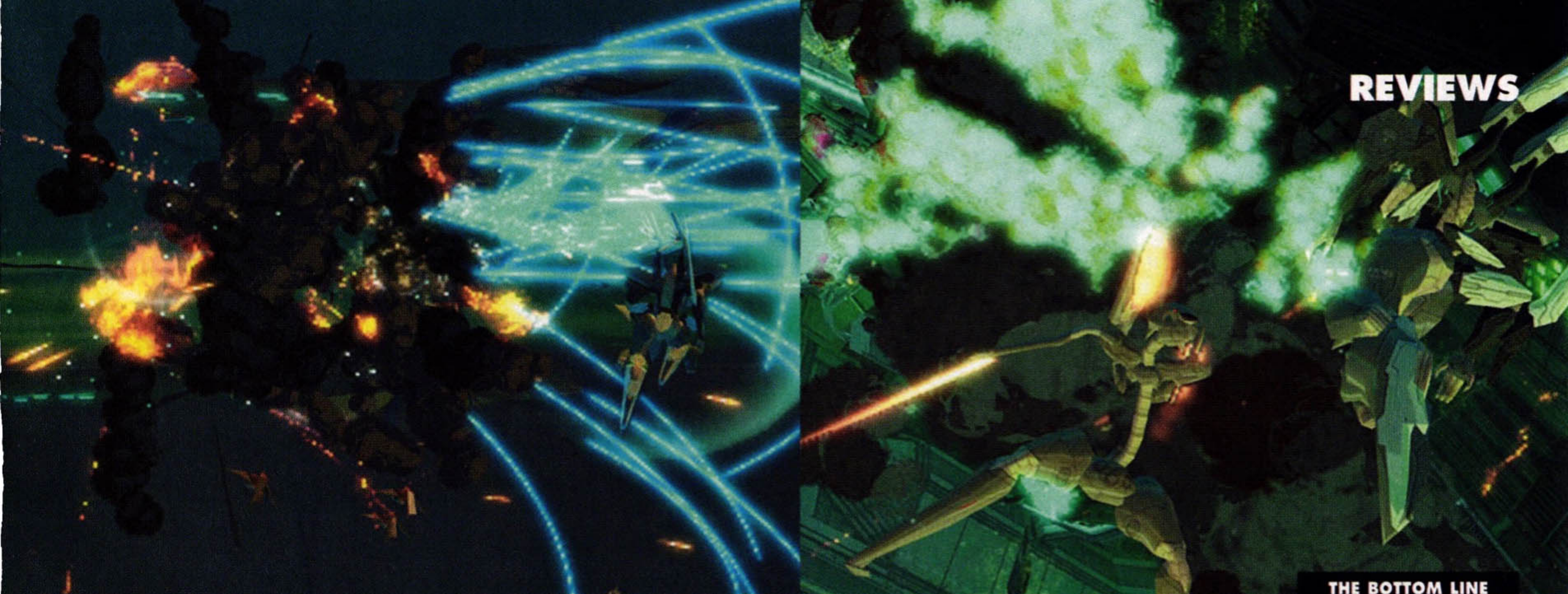
- **Concept:** One of the most anticipated sequels on PS2 finally shows up, and it's still got game
- **Graphics:** Similar to the last edition, with a few more effects
- **Sound:** Pick between semi-annoying commentary or sweet hip-hop. No contest, even if there are only nine songs here.
- **Playability:** Great new moves and a few added control options. Still like butter
- **Entertainment:** Be a Legend is a great mode, and the gameplay alone is enough to keep you busy for hours
- **Replay Value:** High

SECOND OPINION

Vol. 2 is bigger, but not necessarily better. Along with the implementation of a sizeable roster of legendary players, EA has gone out of its way to introduce a number of interesting new features. The innovative Be a Legend mode is easily the most exciting and rewarding addition to this sequel. With varied gameplay parameters, the ability to enhance custom character attributes, and tons of new players and secrets to unlock, this mode will keep you playing for months on end. As expanded as the experience may be, however, very little has changed on the court. Outside of the Gamebreaker 2 and a host of new dunks and ballhandling maneuvers, the gameplay is basically the same. In such, rebounding remains a terribly frustrating action. It's still a wildly addictive and entertaining game, but EA focused more on the venues of play rather than the play itself.

**REINER – 9**





"...an explosive and highly fevered gameplay experience that will keep you on the edge of your seat."

PLAYSTATION 2

# ZONE OF THE ENDERS: THE 2ND RUNNER

SHORT, BUT SWEET

**W**hen Zone of the Enders released on March 28, 2001, bedlam ensued in the gaming community. Very rarely has a game received such decidedly different reactions from consumers. There were people who praised the product for its lightning-quick combat, fluid controls, and ability to single-handedly turn the traditionally clunky mech genre on its head. Others, however, couldn't overlook the fact the game was comprised of only a few enemy types and could be completely conquered within a measly six hours.

While I'd like to say that Konami has gone out of its way to appease everyone with the sequel, it has, in fact, done nothing of the sort. The 2nd Runner is as true of a sequel as one could imagine. Like its predecessor, this game can be finished in a lazy afternoon. Konami stuck to its battle plan and opted to make the missions and enemy encounters more interesting as a whole instead of making them longer. The arrival of the closing credits will once again bring a tear to your eye, but rather than just kicking players out as the first game did, The 2nd Runner is loaded to capacity with a slew of interesting bonuses. Replay stems from the new Versus mode, tons of different EX Missions, and a handful of unlockable Jehuty forms. There's plenty of game here, but you really have to be an avid fan to enjoy the rewards that Konami has included.

If you didn't have any complaints with the first game,

believe me when I say that you will be floored by the enhancements that have been implemented into the gameplay. Little has changed in the way of control, but the play mechanics have been fleshed out to generate new strategies and combat options. The sub-weapons are more diverse in nature; you can now lock-on to numerous adversaries, à la Panzer Dragoon; and you'll also be able to lift objects.

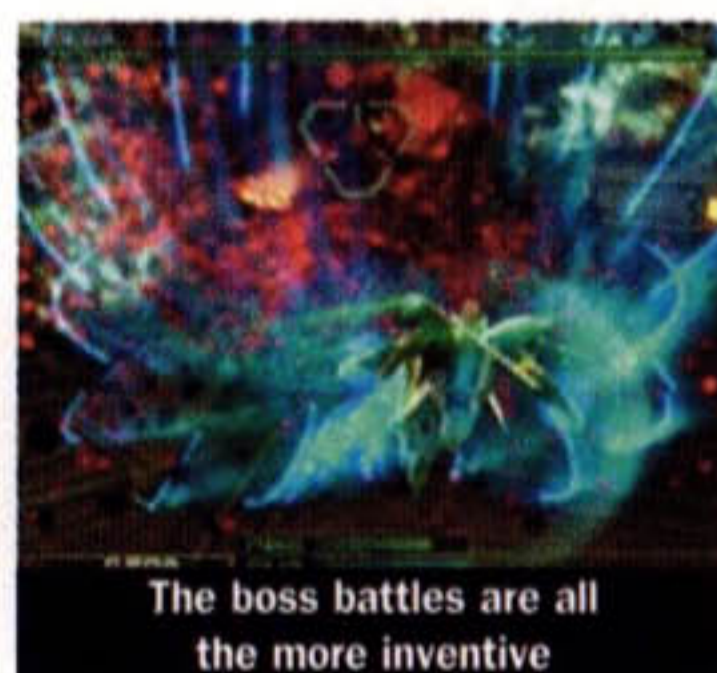
Konami has not only raised the intensity level, it also opened up the doors as to what players can do. Unfortunately, the beleaguered camera that plagued the first game remains a nuisance, but it's a fairly minor complaint in an otherwise outstanding gameplay package.

As far as the presentation is concerned, I personally enjoyed the story; but, much like Metal Gear Solid 2, I have a feeling that people will quickly become disinterested with Hideo Kojima's longwinded and deeply cryptic messages.

The gameplay is as rock solid as can be, but this title's most impressive aspect is actually the graphics. I'll even go as far to say that the visuals – primarily the extensiveness of the particle effects – are just as awe-inspiring as the shadowing in the Xbox version of Splinter Cell.

Again, if you can accept the fact that the playtime is shorter than the running time of a Kevin Costner film, The 2nd Runner offers an explosive and highly fevered gameplay experience that will keep you on the edge of your seat. – **REINER**

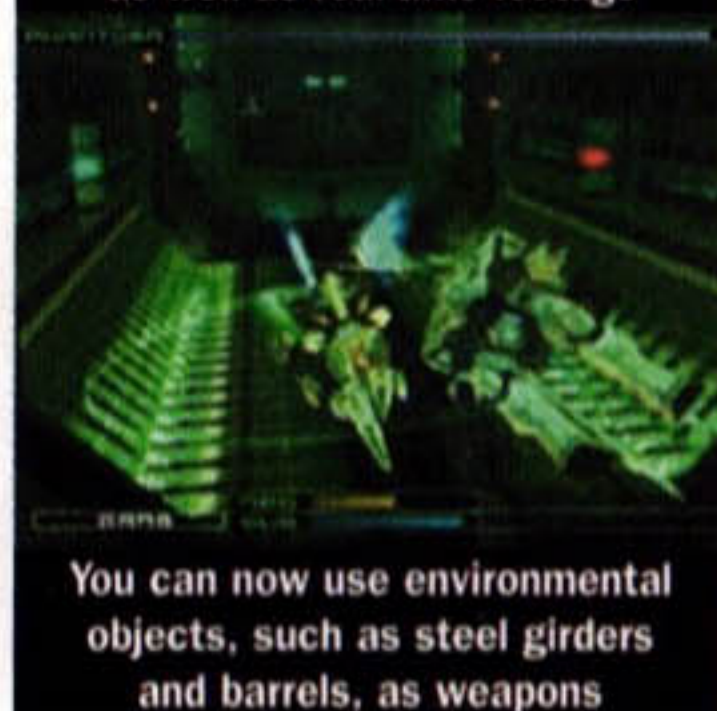
■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** KONAMI ■ **DEVELOPER** KONAMI ■ **RELEASE** MARCH 11



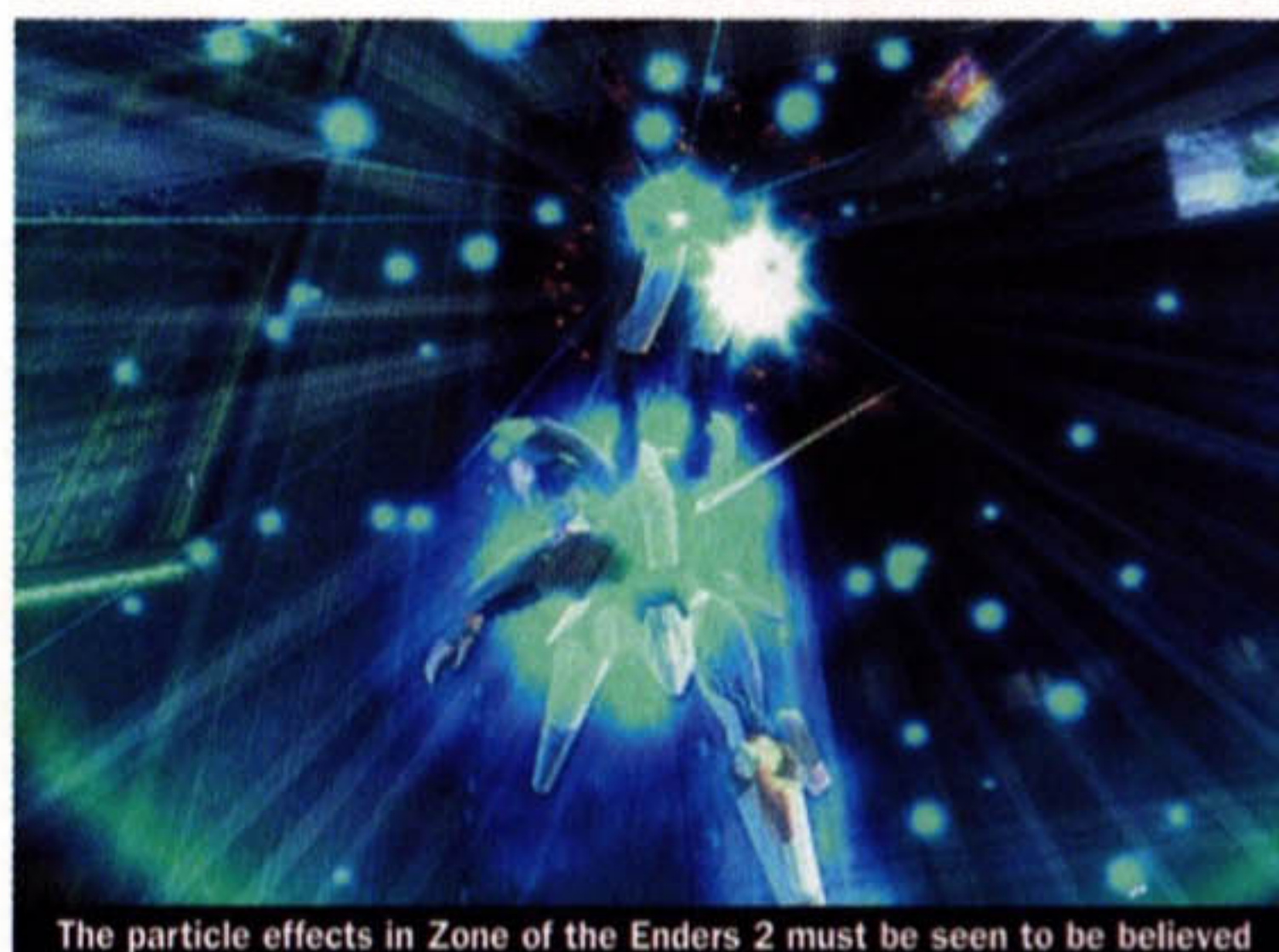
The boss battles are all the more inventive



The storytelling consists of hand-drawn animated sequences as well as real-time footage



You can now use environmental objects, such as steel girders and barrels, as weapons



The particle effects in Zone of the Enders 2 must be seen to be believed



Much like Panzer Dragoon, players can now lock-on to multiple targets

**THE BOTTOM LINE**  
**M** **8.5**  
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

- **Concept:** A straightforward sequel with improved boss battles, enhanced controls, and a slew of bonus materials
- **Graphics:** This visual knockout boasts some of the best – if not the best – particle effects in all of gaming
- **Sound:** The soundtrack is absolutely horrendous, yet Konami did a good job of casting voice actors
- **Playability:** As fluid and tight as a game can get, but the camera is still a problem
- **Entertainment:** It can be beaten fairly quickly, but the assortment of bonus items give it some legs
- **Replay Value:** Moderate

**SECOND OPINION**

Like the original, ZOE 2's chief asset remains fluidity of control coupled with intense action in 3D space. Performing elaborate combos and special techniques while dodging a barrage of enemy attacks is the core element of enjoyment. Konami even manages to keep battles from growing monotonous, thanks to a redesigned mission structure. Ironically, ZOE 2's fast-paced combat is perhaps the cause of its biggest problem. The camera often has difficulty keeping up with the action, making it easy to get disoriented in heated encounters. Players will also be disappointed with length; it's shorter than the original. However, the EX Missions and the Versus mode do add replay value. Although serious fans might have a hissy fit because of these faults, the high quality presentation and engaging combat will keep most happy.

**CHET – 8.75**



**"In the end, this would-be epic is nothing more than a series of lock-and-key puzzles."**

PLAYSTATION 2

# PRIMAL

## MY BUDDY AND ME

**G**iven the amazing track record that Sony's in-house titles have established over the past few years, and the fact that SCE Cambridge Studios is the brain trust behind the beloved PSone cult classic *MediEvil*; I had extremely high hopes for *Primal*. These expectations were only raised when I kept seeing new batches of comely screenshots of the game released in the last couple of months. Unfortunately, my time with *Primal* left me thinking more about the game that could have been than the actual result.

One thing is sure: Those pretty screens did not lie. *Primal* is a visual masterpiece. The texturing and lighting effects are some of the best that you'll see on PS2, and the character models (especially during the real-time cutscenes) rival some of Square's best work. The dramatic musical score is also noteworthy. All these strengths make it possible for *Primal* to succeed in terms of storytelling and atmosphere, even if the tale at hand is a bit ponderous and almost devoid of humor.

*Primal* is a technical marvel; but, like so many games, falls short in the design and gameplay departments. Most of this is due to the design technique I like to call the "my buddy" formula. Jen, the game's heroine, is accompanied by a stone gargoyle named Scree, and players can switch control between the two at any time. Sounds cool, right?

Not exactly. You see, the "my buddy" system works a little something like this:

Jen: "Hey, that tower is really high and the door is locked. I can't get up there, but I bet my buddy Scree can!"

Then, after Scree has used his ability to climb on walls and thrown a rope down to Jen, you'll come to another obstacle or barred door of some sort.

Scree: "Oh no! I can't jump high enough to get over this obstacle. It's a good thing that I have my buddy Jen with me, because she can leap up there and figure out a way to open this gate! Yay Jen!"

This is essentially the entire game. Go somewhere; encounter a locked door/obstruction; pull lever or find key; open door – repeat. There is some fun to be had in the simple but effective combat engine, exploring all the different beast forms Jen can take on, and gasping at the grand worlds that the development team has created. Sadly, it's not enough to make *Primal* an essential video game experience. In the end, this would-be epic is nothing more than a series of lock-and-key puzzles – the same outdated concept that developers have been shoving down our throats since the first *Prince of Persia*. As much as I admire the level of care that went into this product, I'm just very tired of this style of game. – **MATT**

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION/ADVENTURE ■ **PUBLISHER** SONY COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT AMERICA  
 ■ **DEVELOPER** SCE CAMBRIDGE STUDIOS ■ **RELEASE** MARCH 25



The game showcases some gorgeous particle effects



You can use Scree's ability to climb on walls to solve puzzles and access new areas



The combat system isn't terribly deep, but it changes with each new form Jen takes



In this cool battle, Scree becomes a giant stone statue to battle a demon beast



The real-time characters models are among the best we've ever seen

THE BOTTOM LINE

MATURE  
 M  
 CONTENT RATED BY  
 ESRB

6.75

■ **Concept:**

A shape-shifting hottie traverses enormous occult realms to find her boyfriend

■ **Graphics:**

Stunning – dynamic lighting, sharp textures, and detailed characters are among the best that PS2 has to offer

■ **Sound:**

The symphonic score is first rate, but the industrial metal that pops up during combat is jarring

■ **Playability:**

Average hack n' slash combat equals an unexciting experience

■ **Entertainment:**

Ambitious, but doesn't have *Drakan's* spell and inventory system, or *Summoner 2's* complex group tactics

■ **Replay Value:**

Moderately Low

SECOND OPINION

With development spearheaded by the same team responsible for *MediEvil*, the wildly entertaining PSone game, I honestly couldn't wait to get my hands on *Primal*. As luck would have it, after spending a few hours with the product, I found myself on my hands and knees praying to the gaming gods that my PlayStation 2 would burst into flames – thus melting the disc that was capable of inflicting such pain. In stomaching *Primal's* dreadfully slow and overly tedious gameplay, I often found myself contemplating whether or not the true purpose of this "killer" app is to gauge the level of torture that gamers can endure. Never before have I seen so many hackneyed "how-do-I-open-this-door" puzzles, or uneventful, drawn-out, button-mashing battles. As you've probably gathered by now, the gameplay design is simply atrocious, testing your patience and sanity every step of the way.

REINER – 6

# EVERQUEST ONLINE ADVENTURES



Customize your character's name, face, armor, abilities, race and class—from barbarian warrior to elfin wizard.



Master spells, combat skills and special moves, growing in power as your character progresses.

## The Reviews Are In!

*"There has never been anything like it for consoles in the U.S., so enjoy this nice little taste of the future."* 4 out of 5

- GAMEPRO

*"This is a gaming revolution."*

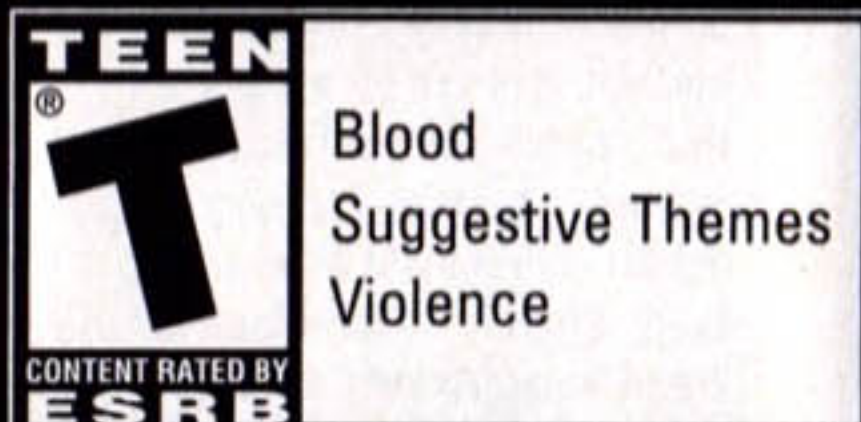
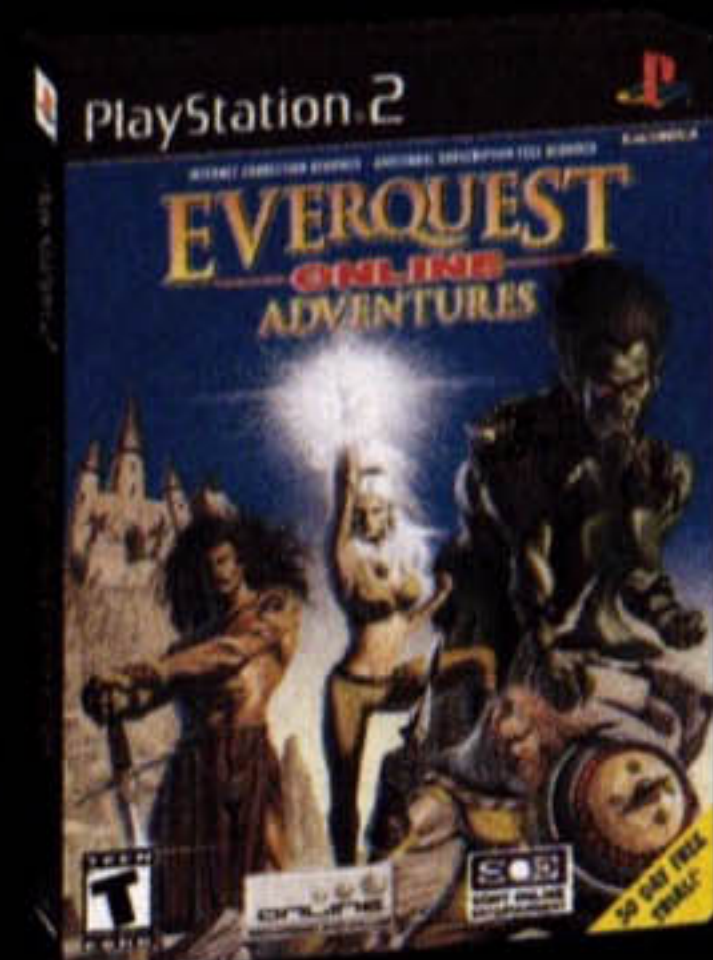
Totally Sweet 8 out of 10

- GMR



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## REVIEWS



PLAYSTATION 2

# BIG MUTHA TRUCKERS

GOT MORE SENSE THAN TEETH

**T**his is the best trucking title. Is that possible? Yes, it is. Big Mutha Truckers isn't a marquee game, but it does make this sub-genre (are truckers a demographic?) more interesting.

Key to the game's success is the economics model that dictates how much money you get for hauling goods. Bartender tips help, but the game's steep price on upgrades makes for a good challenge. Once on the road, preventing cops and bikers from depleting my load and managing my gas and damage meters are also considerations.

BMT runs into problems because I don't think that the driving is its most interesting aspect. Apart from some pop-up and uneven damage issues, there's nothing wrong with it – besides the fact that trucks are just slow. Eutechnyx tries to make up for this by demanding careful handling, but until it can combine skill with speed, the racing won't blow anyone away. Also, while there are side missions, more story diversions such as these are needed to break things up.

Saying that Big Mutha needs more freedom and faster driving may sound damning. However, the game's got a great head of steam going already, and it's definitely got more teeth than the other slack-jawed truckers already on the road. – **KATO**

THE BOTTOM LINE

TEEN  
**T** 7.5

■ **Concept:**

BMT has some very cool elements, but it's still a big fish in a little pond.

■ **Graphics:**

Barring a few hiccups, it's a very sharp title with some nice details.

■ **Sound:**

From the radio stations to the script, Eutechnyx invested a lot of quality time in the audio.

■ **Playability:**

They say life on the road can be a grind. I'm beginning to understand what they mean.

■ **Entertainment:**

It takes Sega's arcade fun and gives it depth.

■ **Replay Value:**

Moderate.

### SECOND OPINION

Conceptually, Big Mutha Truckers has it all over King of Route 66. Instead of simply completing races, you've got to manage your own business by buying and selling goods in order to transport them to cities where you'll get the best price. Too bad the driving itself is so dull – sometimes there's such a thing as being too realistic. Still, this is a quality sleeper that's well worth a rental.

**MATT – 7.5**

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER RACING ■ **PUBLISHER** EMPIRE INTERACTIVE  
■ **DEVELOPER** EUTECHNYX ■ **RELEASE** JUNE 23



PLAYSTATION 2

# CLOCK TOWER 3

TRUE SURVIVAL HORROR

**I** can't think of a game more deserving of the moniker "survival horror" than Clock Tower 3. Unlike Resident Evil, where players must partake in a fair amount of killing, here you'll spend 80 percent of your time fleeing from ghosts and grotesque bosses.

Capcom, in inheriting this series from ASCII, has devised a few play mechanics around this premise to make gameplay more interesting. For example, Alyssa (the 15-year-old protagonist) can hide behind curtains and doors, or inside bathroom stalls and lockers. Also, she can interact with certain objects that activate scripted events. In one case, Alyssa encounters a boss while standing in front of an oven. If she initiates the event, Alyssa opens the door just as the boss lunges at her, temporarily stunning the enemy by frying its face.

Unfortunately, this refreshing approach doesn't come without a few hitches. In particular, hiding in designated spots always permits at least one escape, even if the enemy clearly watches you retreat to that location. Other problems include suspect controls when the camera changes perspective, and the brief time it takes to complete the adventure (roughly seven hours).

Fortunately, these flaws don't seriously detract from the experience. If you like the genre or really graphic material (the first three hours are especially disturbing), Clock Tower 3 is a no-brainer. – **CHET**

THE BOTTOM LINE

MATURE  
**M** 8.5

■ **Concept:**

A Capcom horror title with a unique premise and graphic presentation.

■ **Graphics:**

Most of the environments are appropriately scary, with a decent level of detail.

■ **Sound:**

The terrifying effects and creepy music enhance the overall presentation.

■ **Playability:**

Solid most of the time, but sometimes suspect when the camera changes.

■ **Entertainment:**

The story is done well, and the presentation and bosses are unsettling and violent. I just wish it were longer.

■ **Replay Value:**

Moderately Low.

### SECOND OPINION

If Clock Tower 3 had come out three years ago, this would have been one of my favorite games of all time. As it didn't, it is now held up to the high standards of comparison. Remember Resident Evil 3: Nemesis? Clock Tower 3 has taken more than a few cues from its sister franchise. Bad guys chase you with the fervor of Nemesis, stationary cameras make for the same control scheme, and quickening music with great cutscenes up the ante in regard to player's pulse rates. Honestly, I think I screamed like a schoolgirl on more than one occasion, and you have to love a game that scares you to the point of peeing a little. The only drawbacks for the title are jaggly graphics and somewhat bland backgrounds. Despite the sometimes-suspect presentation, Clock Tower 3 is a must to play in the dark, but probably not by yourself.

**LISA – 8.25**



If the Panic meter fills, you lose control

Players can hide from enemies in certain places

It is packed with many horrific scenes

You get to shoot arrows during boss fights

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** CAPCOM ■ **DEVELOPER** CAPCOM  
■ **RELEASE** MARCH 18

## AERO ELITE: COMBAT ACADEMY

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER ACTION  
 ■ **PUBLISHER** SEGA  
 ■ **RELEASE** MARCH 19



Aero Elite is an excellent flight simulator, but a poor action game. The controls tend to be quirky, and at times, unpredictable. I like the idea

of building up your flight knowledge and graduating to different and better craft, but the levels can be tediously slow. The inclusion of a mini-map would help things, as well as an objectives screen. As it stands, only serious flight fanatics will enjoy this title. — KRISTIAN

**E 6.75**

## CHOPLIFTER: CRISIS SHIELD

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION  
 ■ **PUBLISHER** XICAT INTERACTIVE  
 ■ **RELEASE** APRIL 15



You have to really, *really* like helicopters to get into this game. It's extremely difficult to control the assorted choppers, and the actual rescuing doesn't begin

until after you've jumped through a number of arduous training missions. Although I did like the purchasing system which uses the points you accumulate throughout an assignment to apply towards upgraded craft, there's simply too much emphasis on the flying, and not enough on the fun. — KRISTIAN

**T 6.5**



## COLIN MCRAE RALLY 3

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER RACING  
 ■ **PUBLISHER** CODEMASTERS  
 ■ **RELEASE** APRIL 22

Take the phone off the hook. Tell your friends to go home. Once you put this game in, it's going to demand your complete attention. As soon as you get into the groove, you don't consciously process the co-driver's directions — you simply feel the road and go with the flow. Mountain paths that at first seem no wider than a toothpick will soon be chewed up by precision powerslides without a second thought. Although the game's career mode is a little dry (compared to V-Rally 3) and the damage is forgiving, Colin McRae Rally 3 contains some stunning graphics and is a powerful, mesmerizing experience. — KATO

**E 8.75**

## WWE CRUSH HOUR

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER ACTION/RACING  
 ■ **PUBLISHER** THQ  
 ■ **RELEASE** MARCH 18



The storyline is Mr. McMahon now controls all TV. If that's not scary enough, Crush Hour tries to mix wrestlers with car combat. As awful as this sounds, the

game only ends up being pretty lame, instead of being crowned the Lame World Champion. The AI is decent, the graphics aren't bad, it's only \$20, and there are a bunch of weapons and drivers. On the negative side, the levels are weak (miniscule interaction), damage seems random, and Jim Ross' commentary is laughable: "Trish Stratus has grabbed the twisty rockets!" Crush Hour is still a jabronie, but it could've been worse. — JUSTIN

**T 5.25**

## GRAND PRIX CHALLENGE

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER RACING  
 ■ **PUBLISHER** INFOGRADES  
 ■ **RELEASE** MARCH 5



This F1-er is pretty anonymously titled, and so is the game within. You know what? That's fine with me. Grand Prix does what most formula one titles can't — it has a

wide range of skill levels that fit your particular ability to look like a drunk-driving S.O.B. on some world famous course. There are extra modes, but it's pretty much the same tracks repeated. Compared to other F1 games, and sports titles in general, Grand Prix Challenge needs more frontend and glitz. Then again, this is one game where you can actually enjoy driving, so I guess that's a pretty good start. — KATO

**E 7.5**

## AMPLITUDE

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER ACTION  
 ■ **PUBLISHER** SONY COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT AMERICA  
 ■ **RELEASE** MARCH 25



Amplitude has blown the doors off its predecessor with more tunes and power-ups, better control, and crazy new background graphics. Add to the mix a

robust online section and a surprisingly entertaining multiplayer option, and you've got one of the most entertaining rhythm games to hit shelves since Gitaroo Man. Amplitude requires a bit more finesse, but the entertainment garnered by piecing together assorted tracks of (mostly) cool singles cannot be denied. — KRISTIAN

**E 8.75**



PLAYSTATION 2

## GALLOP RACER 2003: A NEW BREED

IT'S A WIN-WHINNY SITUATION

I guess I'm just weird. A few months back, I heralded a deep-sea diving game (Everblue 2). Now, I'm inclined to tell you all about the joys of digital horseracing. Trust me on this, people. I shall not lead you astray.

This is the sequel to Gallop Racer 2001, which most of you have probably never heard of. As a jockey, each horse you race is unique and demands a different philosophy. Some like to be in the front, others have good stamina, and many have automatic power-ups. You must avoid blowing your wad early, or the pack will pass you by. However, placing isn't the most important thing — advancing the attributes of your jockey (one of six new riders) is. In this way, Gallop Racer resembles Hot Shots Golf, and the breeding alludes to Monster Rancher. Both of these are good things. The races are short enough that you'll be telling yourself, "I'll go to sleep/work/court after this race!" for at least a few hours. Plus, you can do all the side-betting you want — even in races you're in!

Rent Gallop Racer 2003; I dare you. If you have an open mind and a little time, you won't want to bring it back. Sure, looking at horse arses isn't as nice as watching bikini babes play volleyball; but with a near-limitless plethora of horses, tons of strategy, and loads of gameplay extras, this is a sure bet. — JUSTIN

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE  
**E 8.5**  
 CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

■ **Concept:**

The Gran Turismo of horseracing, but possibly more fun

■ **Graphics:**

Lots of horses' butts here, but it's mesmerizingly detailed. Improved over Gallop 2001

■ **Sound:**

The music and sound effects are pretty laid back. Might I recommend cranking some Bad Brains?

■ **Playability:**

Simple, yet packed with strategy

■ **Entertainment:**

The new season mode is a great addition, and the addictive nature of Gallop Racer is not to be denied

■ **Replay Value:**

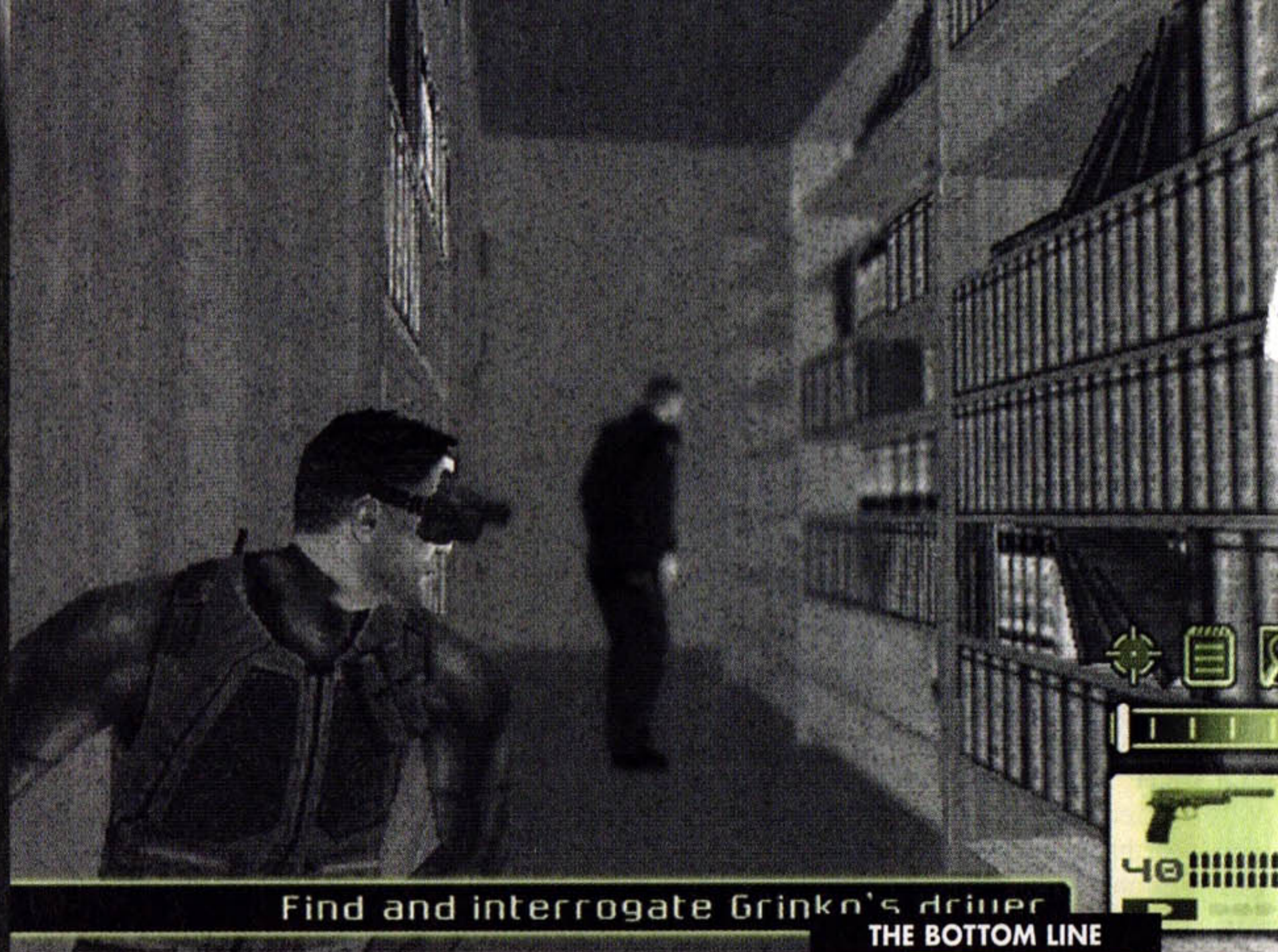
High

SECOND OPINION

Gallop Racer 2003 signifies the best of what the PlayStation 2 can offer in terms of quirky gameplay, as well as being simply too bizarre to pass up. After playing this game for a number of hours, with essentially no previous knowledge of horseracing, I'm shocked at its depth and addictive qualities. From breeding foals to pouring over jockey and horse statistics, I could hardly put this one down.

KRISTIAN — 9

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER RACING ■ **PUBLISHER** TECMO  
 ■ **DEVELOPER** TECMO ■ **RELEASE** MARCH 25



"...there's no denying Splinter Cell's brilliant level designs, countless gameplay innovations, and seamlessly integrated storytelling."

GAMECUBE

# SPLINTER CELL

## THE STEALTH CONNECTION

**A**fter many months of listening to your friends brag about how cool Splinter Cell is on the Xbox, PlayStation 2, and PC, the minority in gaming will finally have the chance to return the favor and trumpet the exclusive content built into the GameCube version. Unfortunately, to access the new material that has been added, you'll have to rely on connectivity – which means you'll need a Game Boy Advance. And if you truly want to see everything, you'll also need the handheld version of Splinter Cell.

Once connected to the GameCube, the Game Boy Advance transforms into an ever-useful extension of the OPSAT – allowing Sam to eye his surroundings on a mini-map and interact remotely with computers and specific weapons like wall mines. I actually found the map to be quite useful. Not only does it give away enemy locations and movements – much like Metal Gear's tracking system does – it expands upon the strategies that can be applied for sneak attacks.

Connecting the Game Boy Advance version of Splinter Cell to the GameCube yields the exclusive and wildly amusing Sticky Bomb weapon, as well as five new levels on the handheld game. Unlike most titles boasting the connectivity feature, Splinter Cell's shared gameplay is entirely functional and significantly expands upon the experience.

Sharing many of the traits of the PlayStation 2 version, this incarnation is void of the impressive shadow casting and

dynamic lighting found in the Xbox and PC versions. Whether or not the lighting differences had anything to do with it, Ubi Soft decided to rearrange the level maps. For instance, rather than staring at the front lawn in the CIA Headquarters mission, you begin inside the complex – thus skipping a few gameplay segments. Changes along these lines occur quite frequently, but never affect the overall quality of the game. Sometimes a level is a little shorter; sometimes it's a bit longer. It's still the same game, yet with subtle differences around the side.

If you've been biding your time and have opted to wait for the GameCube release before playing Splinter Cell, some of the best stealth gameplay ever created awaits. You'll find yourself using human shields; scanning environments with night vision/thermal goggles; and doing the splits between two walls in hopes of dropping on a guard patrolling directly below you. It's basically a highly realistic version of Metal Gear. However, the control isn't as fluid, the AI is often inconsistent, and targeting proves to be wildly off at times. These flaws do cause numerous headaches and frustrating moments; yet there's no denying Splinter Cell's brilliant level designs, countless gameplay innovations, and seamlessly integrated storytelling. It really is a beautiful title, and since the GameCube hasn't seen anything even remotely close to it, it's an absolute must-have. – **REINER**

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** UBI SOFT SHANGHAI STUDIO/UBI SOFT MONTREAL ■ **DEVELOPER** UBI SOFT ■ **RELEASE** APRIL 8



Splinter Cell's gameplay functionality is as creative as it is complex



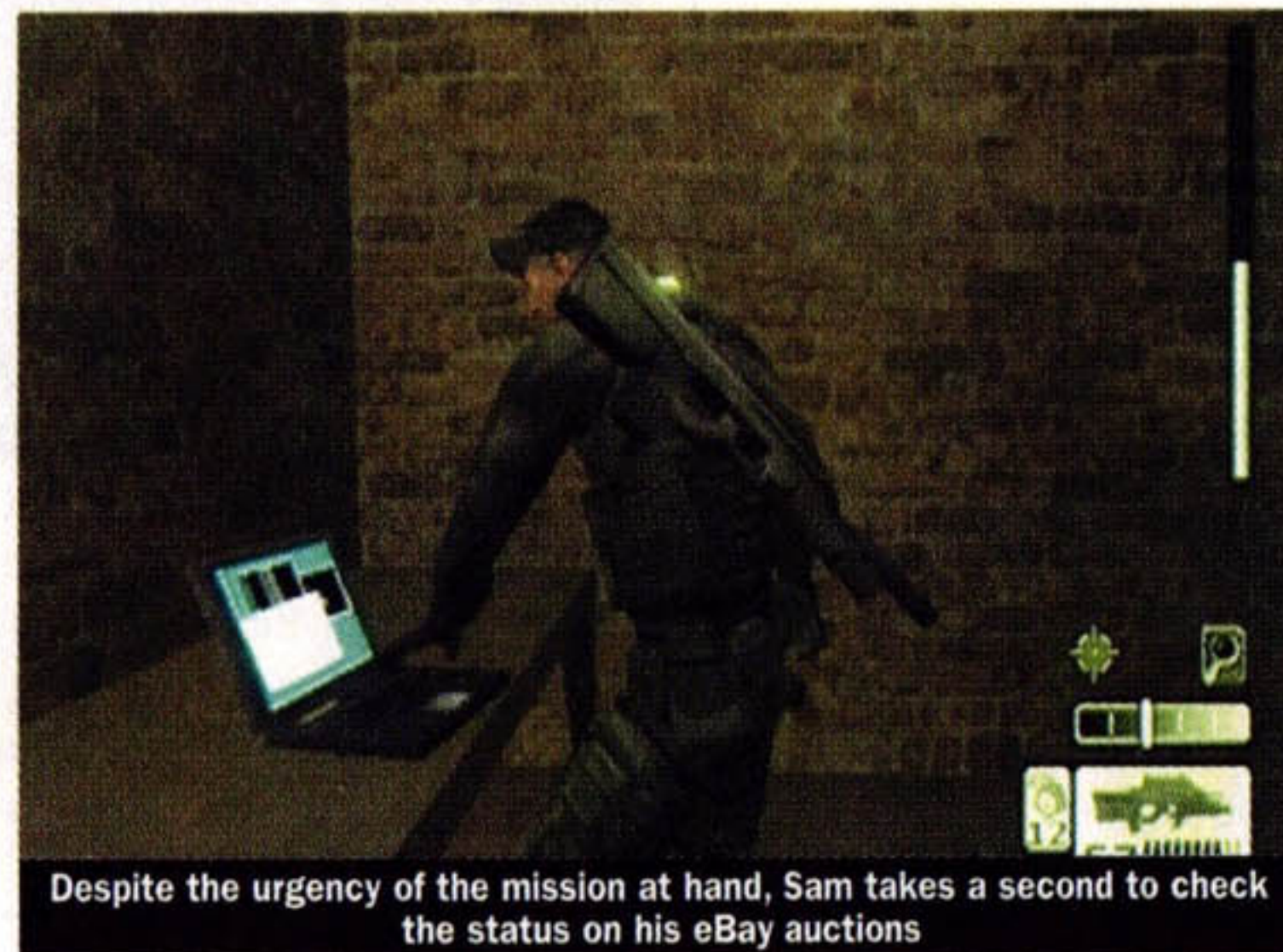
The amazing cloth technology is still intact



Sam's high-tech arsenal will allow you to get the drop on an enemy



"Let's see if their fortunes come true."



Despite the urgency of the mission at hand, Sam takes a second to check the status on his eBay auctions

THE BOTTOM LINE  
**T** 8.5  
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

- **Concept:** The same great stealth gameplay with subtle graphical limitations and enhanced connectivity gameplay
- **Graphics:** Absent is the Xbox's gorgeous shadow technology, yet it's still a visual knockout
- **Sound:** Recorded music by the Prague Orchestra and amusing spoken dialogue voiced by Michael Ironside
- **Playability:** Works just as well on the GameCube controller. The GBA functionality adds even more depth
- **Entertainment:** Stealth gameplay doesn't get much better than this
- **Replay Value:** Moderate

SECOND OPINION

GameCube owners who love this type of game have been waiting a long time for something decent, and here it is. Everything seems to be appropriately crisp in the visual sense, and interestingly enough, this incarnation controls a bit better than the PlayStation 2 version. A few of the Xbox annoyances also seem to have been worked out, such as the "shooting-at-a-light-bulb-59-times-before-it-finally-blows-out" phenomenon; but lackluster AI still rears its ugly head from time to time, and the annoying trial-and-error mission layout can be tiresome. Aside from these things, Splinter Cell is a game worth owning; no matter which system your parents' basement currently holds. This especially goes for 'Cube owners, because let's face it people, our libraries aren't exactly overflowing with titles of this ilk.

**KRISTIAN – 8.5**

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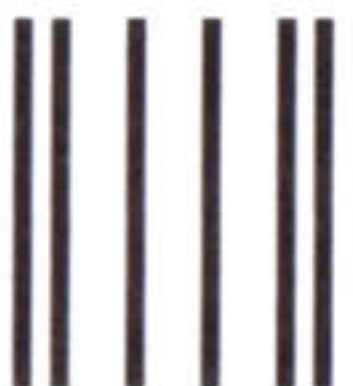
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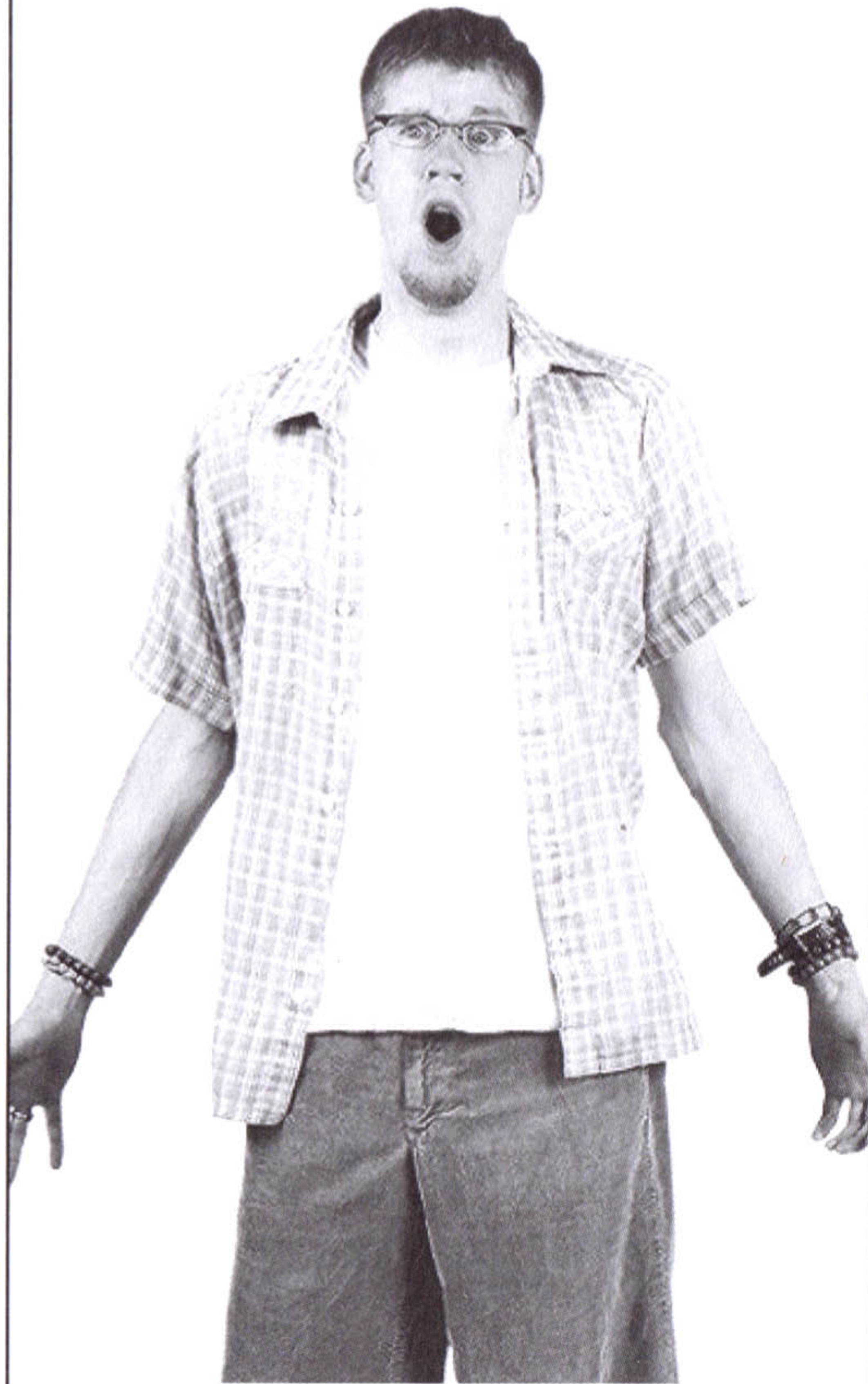
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GAMECUBE

# BURNOUT 2: POINT OF IMPACT

BURNING MUCH HOTTER THIS YEAR

**W**ith the big bully of the racing block (Gran Turismo) still missing in action, strong driving games have been popping up like weeds in the last year. After finally getting a chance to try Burnout 2, I'm adding this franchise to my list of recent favorites, alongside Pro Race Driver, Need for Speed: Hot Pursuit 2, and Apex. Hardcore sim fans won't be too impressed, but I would argue that this game's balls-out mayhem is just what you stodgy, gear-ratio-calculatin', downforce-tweakin' fools need.

Eschewing strategy and realistic driving techniques; Burnout 2 rewards players for driving on the wrong side of the road, narrowly averting collisions, and wildly skidding around turns. Basically, if it's reckless, it's in your interest to attempt it. Each risky maneuver increases your Boost meter, which is absolutely necessary for success. Although this sounds like a gimmick, it actually forces you to pull off things that you wouldn't dream of trying in most racing games. That sense of danger, for me, is what sets Burnout 2 apart from the pack.

On top of the excellent circuits, Burnout 2 throws in Pursuit missions, which let you knock baddies off the road in a police cruiser; and the very addictive Crash mode, which gives you a series of short runs where the purpose is to cause the biggest pileups possible. Trust me — you'll take perverse pride in tallying up the total of the vehicular carnage you've caused. When you put all of this into one attractive package, you've got a must-play title for GameCube owners. — **MATT**



Powersliding around turns earns you more Boost

It's awesome to see the chaos you cause in Crash mode

Thank God for driver's side airbags!

Pursuit mode lets you become the fuzz

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE  
**E**  
CONTENT RATED BY  
ESRB

**8.5**

- **Concept:**  
A blazing arcade racer that places an emphasis on dangerous driving techniques
- **Graphics:**  
Uses the Renderware engine to great effect — it's fast, detailed, and crisp
- **Sound:**  
Pretty generic, but it does react to the action. Sometimes sounds like an instrumental version of "So Lonely" by the Police
- **Playability:**  
Tight where it should be; loose and forgiving where it should be
- **Entertainment:**  
Unfrozen Caveman Game Reviewer says: "Look good. Drive fast. Crash. Fun. Ug."
- **Replay Value:**  
High

SECOND OPINION

I was a big fan of this game on PlayStation 2, and while it may be a little late in coming to GameCube, Burnout 2: Point of Impact still packs a lot of intense racing. There are a couple of nice additions to this version, like a better framerate and some added challenges, but not enough to make it worth buying if you already played it on PS2. However, if you have never had a chance to play Burnout 2, its edge-of-your-seat racing and blazing speeds are worth a test drive. While I'd put Hot Pursuit 2 a notch above it, Burnout 2 is no slouch and is a blast to play. Heck, the amazing crashes are worth the price of admission alone.

**ANDY — 8.5**

GAMECUBE

# IKARUGA

A GEM WORTHY OF TREASURE

**O**ne could attribute Treasure's gradual loss of luster to its awkward transition to 3D and the lack of interest in the old-school shooter. Nevertheless, Treasure trudges on with yet another classic that strengthens its resume. Initially, Ikaruga looks like a cosmetically enhanced Gadius. But after you realize the effect of Ikaruga's apparent gimmick, the game transforms to innovative. Each enemy shoots either black or white bullets, which your ship can safely absorb to charge a special attack. However, if your ship is black and collides with a white bullet, you die. Only a white ship can absorb white fire.

Since players can change colors on the fly, most situations include a staggering number of white and black projectiles. The ensuing experience is frantic and exhilarating; yet, because only half of the objects onscreen can actually damage you, you never feel too overwhelmed.

The game's flaws are few, and for the most part, forgivable. However, Ikaruga was originally a vertical arcade shooter, which means that players must flip their TVs sideways or settle for a crummy letterboxed view. Nevertheless, Ikaruga remains one of the best shooters to date. Let's hope it sells well enough to warrant this genre's continued existence. — **CHET**

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE  
**E**  
CONTENT RATED BY  
ESRB

**9**

- **Concept:**  
A seemingly standard shooter with a bit of innovation
- **Graphics:**  
The graphics are good for 2D standards, and feature plenty of objects onscreen without slowdown
- **Sound:**  
The music is okay, but the explosions are sweet
- **Playability:**  
The control is precise with the analog stick
- **Entertainment:**  
It seems short with five levels, but the challenge is high, and the other modes add some replay value
- **Replay Value:**  
Moderately High

SECOND OPINION

I like what Treasure and Infogrames have done to innovate in a seemingly tapped genre. The shift between dark and light keeps you alert, and the environments are gorgeous. You'll either have to crook your neck or tilt your TV to play the intended perspective, but Ikaruga is worth the effort. I still prefer Mars Matrix on Dreamcast, though.

**JUSTIN — 8**

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER RACING ■ **PUBLISHER** ACCLAIM ■ **DEVELOPER** CRITERION STUDIOS ■ **RELEASE** MAY 21

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER SHOOTER ■ **PUBLISHER** INFOGRAMES ■ **DEVELOPER** TREASURE ■ **RELEASE** APRIL 15

# REVIEWS



GAMECUBE

## NBA STREET VOL. 2

JUWANNA PLAY

The adage "more bang for your buck" is exemplified to its fullest degree within NBA Street Vol. 2. Judging by the extensive new content that has been added, the developers obviously made a conscious effort to expand upon the longevity and replay value. The inaugural release followed the traditional arcade mold fairly closely, whereas the sequel steers clear of this design in favor of a deeper, sim-like experience. This new approach is best exemplified by the inventive Be a Legend mode, where you follow the day-to-day happenings and progression of an upstart player. As your baller gains respect; new teammates, uniforms, and attribute points will become available. You'll also run headlong into a number of Street Challenges with unique parameters – such as a match where only dunks count.

Above and beyond the introduction of the Gamebreaker 2 and an assortment of new dunks and dekes, very little has changed in terms of gameplay. That's not to say that it needed much work, however. The rebounding still lacks a degree of user control; but otherwise, it's the same fast-paced, intensely addictive, arcade-styled phenom as before. It played well to begin with, but now it has depth. – REINER

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE  
**E**

**9**

■ **Concept:**

The same rim-rocking gameplay with legendary players and a revamped frontend

■ **Graphics:**

The courts are littered with polygonal onlookers, and the animations are over-the-top and fluid

■ **Sound:**

Annoying commentary and only nine commendable songs

■ **Playability:**

The arsenal of moves has expanded significantly, but the basics haven't been altered a bit

■ **Entertainment:**

Little has changed gameplay-wise, but thanks to Be a Legend mode, there's reason to keep playing

■ **Replay Value:**

High

SECOND OPINION

Street Vol. 2 puffs the afro of arcade hoops even higher than the first game did. The shot clock doesn't reset when it should, and I wish you could recruit opponents in NBA Challenge mode. However, the new Be a Legend mode, multitude of original tricks and passes, and the addition of old-school hoopsters makes this a worthy sequel. Game on.

JUSTIN – 9

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER SPORTS ■ **PUBLISHER** EA BIG ■ **DEVELOPER** NUFX/EA CANADA ■ **RELEASE** APRIL 29



GAMECUBE

## ARMY MEN: SARGE'S WAR

A BRIGHTER SHADE OF GREEN

It's no secret that the Army Men franchise has been about as popular as herpes among the *Game Informer* staff. Still, 3DO promised that Sarge's War was to be a rebirth for the series, so I tried to put my preconceptions aside when I booted up my GameCube for this review. While I can't say that we're on the cusp of an Army Men renaissance, this title does represent a step in the right direction.

Sarge's War dispenses with most of the gimmicky toy-themed settings of the past in favor of grittier, real-world war environments. The action follows suit, with most of the missions revolving around commonplace tasks like blowing up enemy transport vehicles, taking out air support spotters, and the like. The control scheme is equally familiar, using a dual-analog/auto-targeting system that doesn't work nearly as well as it should. Basically, if you've ever played a third-person action game, you've seen it all before. Sadly, for all the improvement Sarge's War shows over its predecessors, it's still only average at best. Hopefully, 3DO can use this as a foundation for the future. – MATT

SECOND OPINION

According to my stopwatch, Sarge's War held my interest for approximately 53.5 seconds. That's 41.7 seconds more than any other Army Men game! I love the detail in the CG movies and appreciate the direction 3DO is trying to go; but as improved as the gameplay may be, it still has a ways to go to be a serious contender for your dollar.

REINER – 5.5

THE BOTTOM LINE

TEEN  
**T**

**6**

■ **Concept:**

Bring the Army Men up to date with an "edgy" new entry in the series

■ **Graphics:**

Hey, at least it looks like it belongs on this generation of consoles

■ **Sound:**

Music: nice. Dialogue and weapons sounds: cheesy

■ **Playability:**

The auto-targeting is not up to par, marring an otherwise decent control scheme

■ **Entertainment:**

A big improvement over Green Rogue and Sarge's Heroes 2, but that's not saying much

■ **Replay Value:**

Low

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** 3DO ■ **DEVELOPER** 3DO ■ **RELEASE** MARCH 25



GAMECUBE

## WWE CRUSH HOUR

GIVE ME KING SLENDER

First and foremost, WWE Crush Hour is cheap – as in it retails for about \$20 most places. Then again, it's cheap – as in it sucks harder than an industrial strength Hoover. Believe me, I'm all for giving less expensive games the benefit of the doubt, but releasing this trash is tantamount to slapping someone full across the face and saying, "Hey, it wasn't my fist! That makes it better, right?"

It's unfortunate that wrestling fans have to put up with software like this, especially given the fact that the medium itself is in what looks to be one of its worst popularity slumps in recent memory. In fact, I couldn't find any correlation between wrestling and the action taking place onscreen whatsoever, aside from the fact that the annoying announcer spouts out different names from time to time and the vehicles are named after assorted WWE personalities. As a vehicle combat title, Crush Hour is bad; and as a wrestling game, it's doubly bad. It doesn't matter that it's cheap – you're still throwing your money away if you end up buying it. – KRISTIAN

SECOND OPINION

Hear that, WWE fans? That's the sound of 20 dollars going down the pooper. Although it's not the worst game I've ever played, Crush Hour is a marginal car combat title at best. Even worse, it's barely even a WWE game, as the only real tie-in with the league is the fact that these generic vehicles are painted with wrestler logos and the arenas are named after pay-per-view events.

MATT – 5

THE BOTTOM LINE

TEEN  
**T**

**4**

■ **Concept:**

Race around ugly environments shooting at ugly car models while thinking about wrestling

■ **Graphics:**

Every part of the graphical presentation is poor – even for a cheap game

■ **Sound:**

Comparable to something you would have heard on the N64

■ **Playability:**

The vehicle strength balancing is horrible

■ **Entertainment:**

Not in 1,000 years would I wish this game upon either wrestling or car combat fans

■ **Replay Value:**

Low

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER ACTION/RACING ■ **PUBLISHER** THQ ■ **DEVELOPER** PACIFIC COAST POWER & LIGHT ■ **RELEASE** MARCH 18

## GHOST RECON

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER ACTION  
 ■ **PUBLISHER** UBI SOFT  
 ■ **RELEASE** FEBRUARY 12



Ghost Recon is a great game – on PC and Xbox. Unfortunately, the GameCube version is pretty far removed from those two, lacking in online, system link, and other key

features. The core gameplay is still here, however, and is very cool. Missions require a good amount of both planning and action, and switching characters on the fly really helps (especially when teammate AI breaks down). This is a tolerable fix for Medal of Honor fans, but Ghost Recon will struggle to find a place with GameCube's core demographic. – **JUSTIN**

**M 7.75**



## SUPERMAN: SHADOW OF APOKOLIPS

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION  
 ■ **PUBLISHER** INFOGRAMES/ATARI  
 ■ **RELEASE** MARCH 26

The PS2 version of this game seemed solidly mediocre, especially in comparison to the dreadful Superman: The Man of Steel for Xbox. Now, after experiencing it all over again on GameCube, I'm beginning to think Superman's tights are filled with more Kryptonite than I originally thought. I still appreciate the comic book-style visuals, but I also see how they're an excuse for some very bland texturing. The gameplay itself isn't terrible, but it still assigns way too many functions to the A button. C'mon developers, Superman deserves better than this! – **MATT**

**E 6.5**

## TRANSWORLD SURF: NEXT WAVE

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER ACTION/SPORTS  
 ■ **PUBLISHER** INFOGRAMES  
 ■ **RELEASE** MARCH 12



Next Wave looks good. It has a worthy soundtrack, though I'm a bit partial since it's got so many Fat Wreck Chords songs and NOFX in it. There are a

bunch of extras you can unlock, too. About the only thing missing is gameplay. You don't have to be Tony Hawk, extreme game developers, but you do need to throw us gamers a bone or two by letting us do more tricks, and ride the barrel longer. A little leeway on wipeouts would help, too. If it's not fun straight out, most people won't continue. – **JUSTIN**

**T 5.5**

## CONFLICT: DESERT STORM

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER ACTION  
 ■ **PUBLISHER** GOTHAM GAMES  
 ■ **RELEASE** APRIL 22



Conflict's graphics weren't that spectacular to begin with, so it doesn't come as much of a surprise that I can detect very little degradation in its journey

from the Xbox to the GameCube. Additionally, the control is still bad, the missions are static, and the tracer fire looks like placeholder material. Yeah, it's a small thing; but the devil's in the details, as they say. If you want a good wartime shooter, Medal of Honor: Frontline is far superior to Desert Storm. Look at that – I just saved you \$40. – **KRISTIAN**

**M 6**

## BATMAN: DARK TOMORROW

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION  
 ■ **PUBLISHER** KEMCO  
 ■ **RELEASE** MARCH 19



The beginning of the game showcases the finest of craftsmanship within its pre-rendered cinematics, orchestrated score, and

attention to recreating the details from the comic book series. Unfortunately, once gameplay commences, Dark Tomorrow shows just how dark it can be. Saying that it's mostly unplayable almost seems like too kind of a gesture. The action that unfolds is so incomprehensible and littered with bugs that you can't help but wonder if your GameCube or television is on the fritz. – **REINER**

**T .75**



## THE SIMS

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER SIMULATION  
 ■ **PUBLISHER** ELECTRONIC ARTS  
 ■ **RELEASE** MARCH 24

Like other consoles in the last few months, the diminutive GameCube is playing host to The Sims. While the missions, items, structure, and options are the same for each system; the 'Cube version is a nice addition to a library lacking in simulation titles. A word to the wise – saving your game takes 60 blocks, which means that you're going to need a big motha' memory card. – **LISA**

**T 8.75**



GAMECUBE

# SONIC ADVENTURE DX

## SORRY SONIC

Sega's re-release of the mascot's 1999 Dreamcast launch title with enhanced graphics, sound, and a boatload of extra features doesn't make up for the fact that Sonic Adventure was certainly not his most shining moment in an otherwise noble career.

This director's cut offers six playable characters, GBA connectivity for Chao raising on the go, the all-new Mission mode with 60 mini-missions, and unlockable versions of the hefty Sonic Game Gear library on a pretty little platter for gamers to lap up.

My problem is that the pumped-up graphics look pretty mediocre at best; the soundtrack still includes those hair-metal rock/ballad interludes; the plot is stinky like doggie poo; and the game mechanics are bland and simplistic – like the worst of the Genesis era. Don't call me a hater, I just really want to see the blue hero evolve.

The included Game Gear library is the only redeeming factor for this title. Most of the bounty is unlocked as special prizes during regular play of Sonic Adventure. Trust me, all the favorites are included, and some still hold their nostalgia value; unlike the main event in this release, Sonic Adventure. – **LISA**

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE  
**E 5**  
 CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

■ **Concept:**  
 The "Ultimate Director's Cut" of an old title. Throw in some extra features and unlockable classics

■ **Graphics:**  
 Enhanced texture maps and smoothed-out polygons from the first edition. Still, it really doesn't look good and the framerate chugs

■ **Sound:**  
 One of the most painful experiences imaginable

■ **Playability:**  
 Keep the blur going along the designated path, and all will be well

■ **Entertainment:**  
 Like reliving the Dreamcast era without the benefit of it being new and nifty

■ **Replay Value:**  
 Moderate

## SECOND OPINION

Does Sonic look like a cow? Then why is Sega trying to milk him like one? This game seriously has 10 minutes of cutscenes and wandering for every minute of real gameplay. And the gameplay isn't even any good to begin with – though it's better than the camera, music, and level design. I like a few of the Game Gear games, but most were lame when they came out originally, and continue to be. This should've been titled Sonic SuX.

**JUSTIN – 4.5**

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION/PLATFORM ■ **PUBLISHER** SEGA  
 ■ **DEVELOPER** SONIC TEAM ■ **RELEASE** MAY 10



"...Run Like Hell is the *Alien* game we never had."



XBOX

# RUN LIKE HELL

DON'T GET DEAD

**S**imple and to the point, *Run Like Hell* is the *Alien* game we never had. With the plot revolving around a space station under siege by Geiger-inspired extraterrestrials (who adopt the attributes of the species they are annihilating), voice talent with a sci-fi pedigree, and straightforward action, the title is a nicely tense ride.

The PlayStation 2 version showed up a handful of months ago. With the extra time on Xbox, the developers have upgraded the graphics, switched the sound to a 5.1 scheme, and added the ability for downloadable content via Xbox Live. Skins, minigames, and a few extras are planned at launch, with more promised soon after.

You play as exiled military man Nick Connor, who returns to the station after a short scientific mission to find (surprise, surprise) that it's all a bloody mess. Voice work was the only piece of the PS2 version to receive universal acclaim, and the cast is impressive. Lance Henriksen (Bishop from *Aliens* and *Aliens III*) talks for Nick Connor and Kate Mulgrew (Captain Janeway from *Star Trek Voyager*) shows up as Dr. Mek. Trusty sidekick Daq is voiced by Clancy Brown of *Highlander* fame, and Brad Dourif (Grima Wormtongue in *The Two Towers*) has a brief appearance as Fred.

Some will surely complain about the admittedly simplistic combat scheme, which employs one button to shoot, one to

push, and one to switch targets. That's it. It doesn't get boring though, because it's fun to just shoot the crap out of anything moving in your field of vision. Then again, I'm a simple creature.

For the obligatory bit of RPG styling, weapons have multiple slots to insert upgrade cards. Since the chips only combine with one type of weapon, there's very little strategy involved. The developers shouldn't be patting themselves on the back for the puzzle design, either. Almost all of the missions involve gathering the pieces of a door code or finding a random object in a distant section of the level. The design doesn't feel entirely like busy work, though sometimes you just want to move on.

Lightening the load between intense boss battles (complete with Breaking Benjamin-supplied rock soundtrack) are minigames to execute some key maneuvers. For instance, after a big baddie does in your buddy, a duck and jump timing section pops up. Execute it correctly, and the monster is sucked safely outside the station.

Some say that shoddy graphics, a repetitive soundtrack, a low number of enemy types, and thrown-together cutscenes plague the PS2 version of RLH. Gladly, each of these issues has been touched up, making the Xbox version a simple escapist title that's worth picking up. — LISA

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION/ADVENTURE ■ **PUBLISHER** INTERPLAY ■ **DEVELOPER** DIGITAL MAYHEM ■ **RELEASE** APRIL 8



Kate Mulgrew provides the voice of Dr. Mek



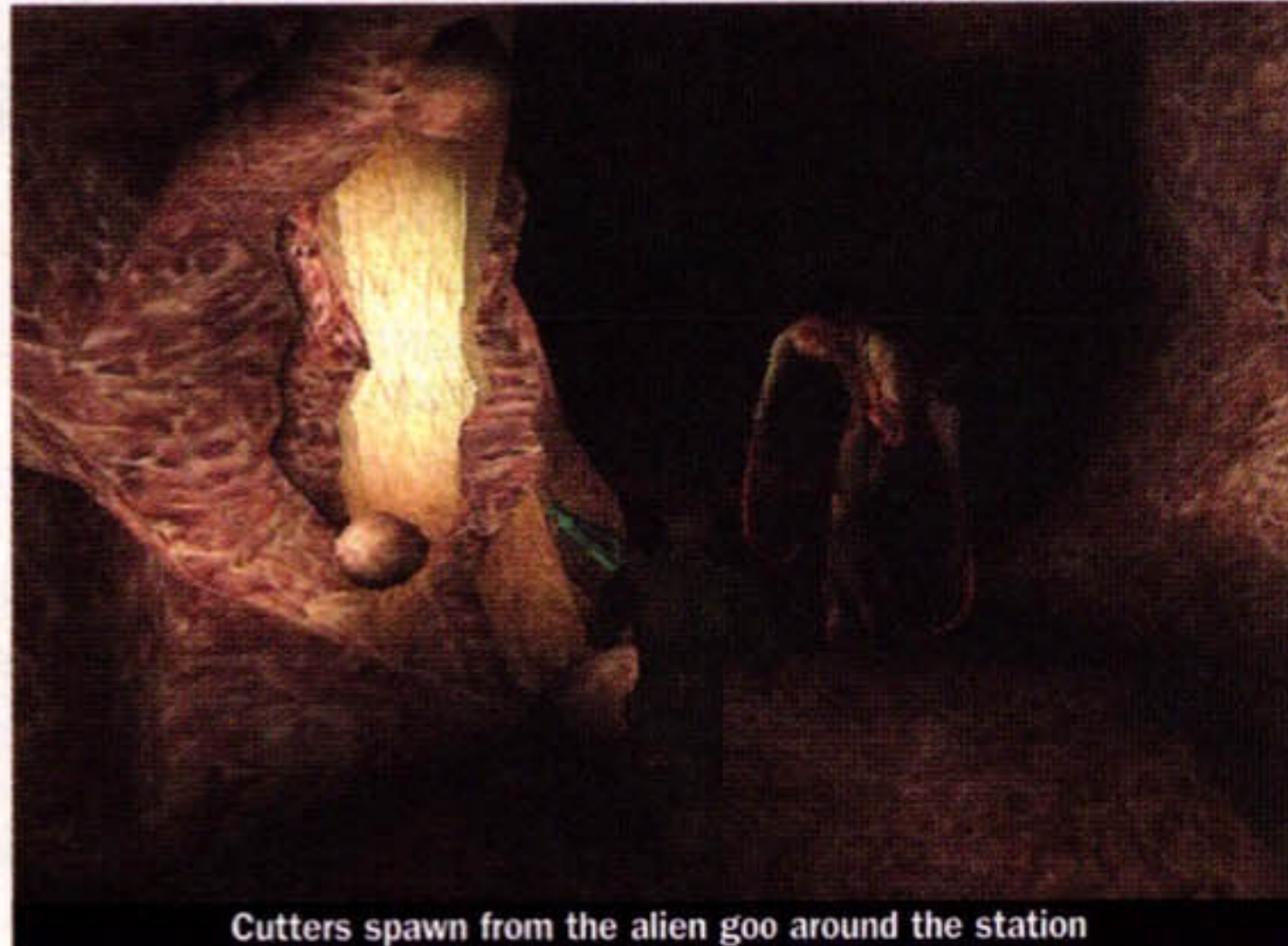
The Inventory screen showing chip modifications



A laid-up cutter



Scout aliens drop from the ceiling and attack en masse



Cutters spawn from the alien goo around the station

THE BOTTOM LINE

MATURE  
CONTENT RATED BY  
ESRB

8

■ **Concept:**

Make the *Alien* game that everyone's always wanted, but don't use the *Alien* franchise

■ **Graphics:**

Without the use of pre-rendered graphics, RLH still has clean backdrops and nice character models

■ **Sound:**

5.1 sound to creep you out with subtle, ambient noises

■ **Playability:**

A simple combat scheme, but the menus take some getting used to

■ **Entertainment:**

Scary creatures, big guns, and a passable story are all you can ask for in a survival horror game

■ **Replay Value:**

Moderately Low

SECOND OPINION

While not blazing new trails, RLH is an entertaining survival horror title. Tensions are high throughout the game, and I even jumped a few times. The alien-infested space port angle is overused, but it's still compelling here — aided in part by great voice-acting (Michael Ironside is a personal favorite). In fact, I give props to the bulk of the RLH's audio. Battling larger minions requires some thinking on your feet, and the regular monster blasting is far from boring. I especially like running into a room full of cutters (scaly, blade-sporting baddies) and being treated to some hard rock as I blast butt. The camera bugged me a few times, and the inventory screens are clunky. Seeing a continue option pop up immediately upon death sort of neuters the drama. RLH's graphics are below Xbox standards, in my opinion. In all though, it's a good time for fans of this genre.

JUSTIN — 7.75



"Why should I worry about getting the best car when just about anyone can race to the front regardless?"

**XBOX**  
**APEX**  
 SOME ASSEMBLY REQUIRED

**A**t its face, everything about Apex says that it's just another racing game. As a matter of fact, the name alone makes me cringe. In a genre stuffed to the gills with the status quo, however, Apex does a good job at piquing interest in that done-to-death profession of going 'round and 'round the track.

Apex takes your standard car selection/upgrade process and basically makes chicken salad out of chicken-\$%!#. While in other games you pick a car and be done with it, Apex has you starting up your own car company. You must choose an initial concept design for your first set of wheels – right down to the company logo. With this you race to earn Research Funds to expand your business and produce other cars. Although I would like a little more hands-on, nitty-gritty approach with my creations – à la Dreamcast's Sega GT – the game's premise is a nice bit of smoke and mirrors that does enough to keep you interested. If there's a downside to it, it's that I miss being spurred on by always racing in competitions and having to worry about my place in the standings in relation to other drivers. Apex does feature racing challenges and organized events, but its role-playing structure is different than Pro Race Driver, for example.

The other aspect of Apex that will have casual racers

riveted is the graphics. True to the system, road textures and reflective lighting will leap out at you immediately. Above and beyond this are the environments themselves. Not only are the locations alluring, but they are brimming with background details. Metropolitan areas showcase overhead freeway traffic and electronic billboards (with animated ads), while snowy mountain ranges have helicopters dropping in on you from time to time. Unfortunately, these flourishes reduce the sense of speed you get, and the tracks themselves are not lengthy.

Despite its perks, Apex's main flaw is the racing itself. While more than adequate, I want more depth. My main concern is the catch-up AI. With no chance to qualify for the pole position, racing is a constant back and forth where your place in the contest is ever-changing. This is exciting, but to me it undermines my upgrades and natural skill. Why should I worry about getting the best car when just about anyone can race to the front regardless?

Some of my gripes are undoubtedly from a more hardcore racing perspective, but I'm sure that anyone who likes to get behind the wheel will find that this is just the kind of game that you've been waiting to sink your teeth into. – **KATO**

**THE BOTTOM LINE**  
**EVERYONE**  
**E 7.75**  
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

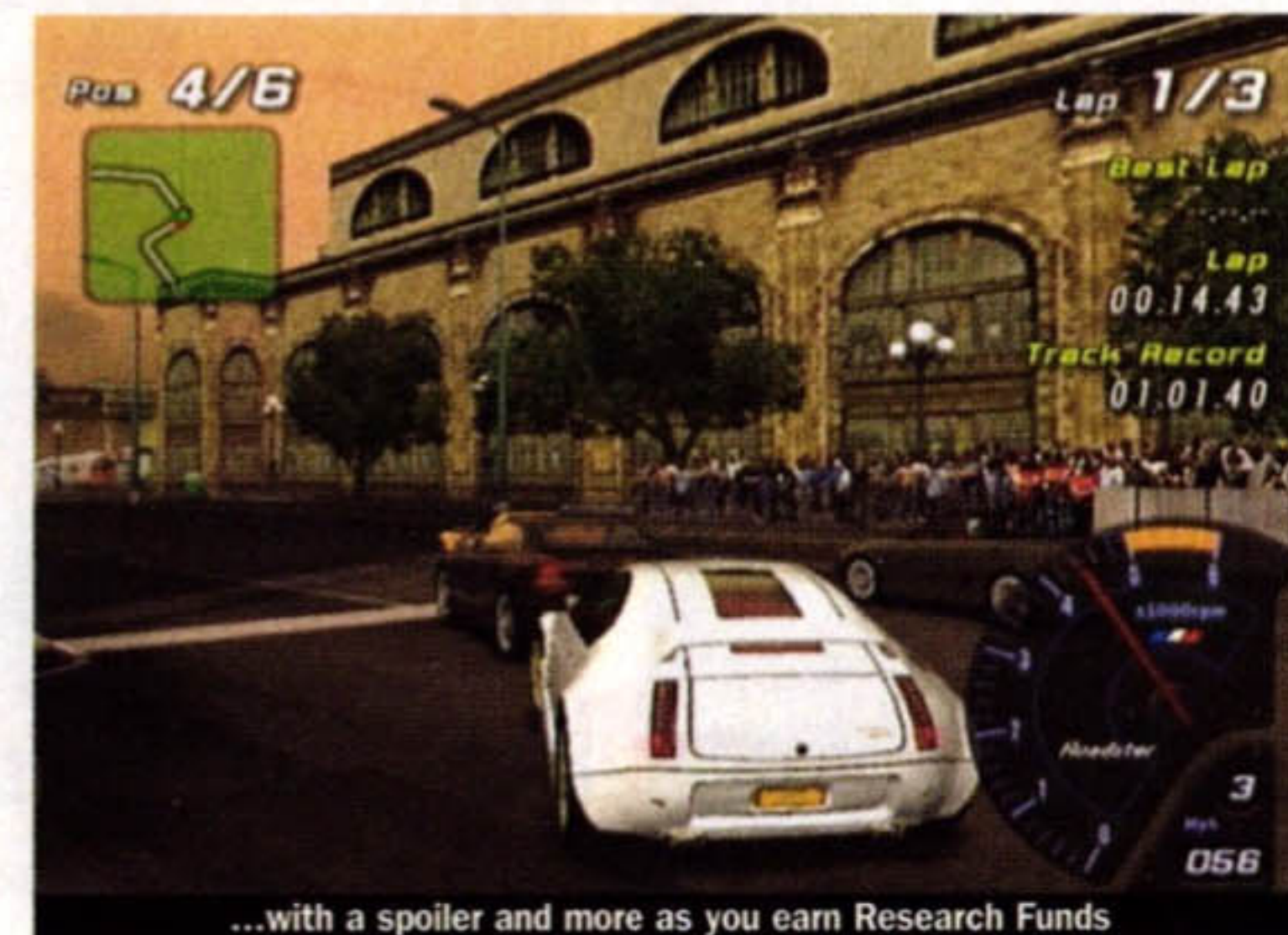
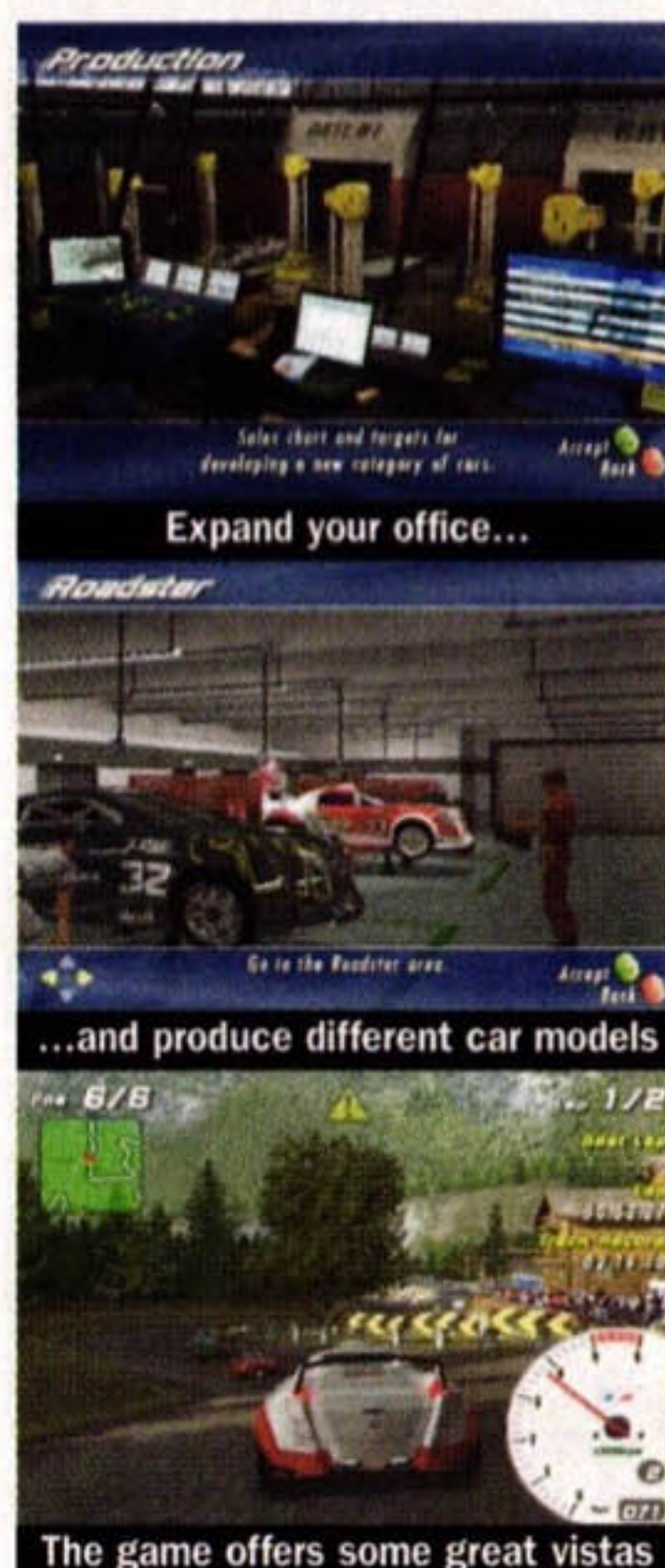
- **Concept:**  
A novel approach and Xbox-tastic graphics lead an above-average racer
- **Graphics:**  
Apex shows a high sheen and includes extras like damage and moving drivers
- **Sound:**  
Rudimentary and very average compared to some other racing titles
- **Playability:**  
Although no huge drawbacks, the driving is basic
- **Entertainment:**  
This game will be a hit for casual racing fans for numerous reasons
- **Replay Value:**  
Moderately High

**SECOND OPINION**

Like Pro Race Driver, Apex adds a new dimension to the genre by putting you at the head of a newly formed auto company that specializes in high-tech concept cars. As silly as this sounds, I got a big thrill out of naming my company (Sashimi Motors), picking my customized hood emblem, and seeing new models roll out of my R&D department. Thankfully, the gameplay itself is just as compelling – striking that perfect balance between realistic physics and arcade playability. Also, Apex is just a step behind Project Gotham and Gran Turismo in terms of graphics, which are especially notable for the level of environmental detail exhibited. My only complaints are the fact that Apex doesn't have a wide variety of racing styles like Pro Race Driver and the fact that car damage doesn't seem to affect handling. Overall, though, this is really good stuff.

**MATT – 8.5**

■ **STYLE 1 OR 2-PLAYER RACING** ■ **PUBLISHER INFOGRAMES** ■ **DEVELOPER MILESTONE** ■ **RELEASE FEBRUARY 20**



## REVIEWS



XBOX

# UFC: TAPOUT 2

A GLASS JAW

I've played a lot of UFC games in the past year and a half. To me, Tapout 2 seems like the worst of the lot. Maybe, like Pedro Rizzo, I've lost my passion for MMA (mixed martial arts); but I kind of doubt that. This game just doesn't do anything to elevate the sport or the series.

I wish you Xbox owners could play PS2's Pride FC, since it makes this game submit with ease. Tapout 2 has no gameplay advances. You can't even feign punches from a mounted position anymore, let alone do the laying-down tactics introduced in Pride. I'm irked that the Xbox controller has eight buttons, but this game only uses four. Many moves force you to contort your finger or thumb in uncomfortable ways. You can re-map the four buttons, but isn't there a better solution?

Tapout 2 offers a Career mode, though it's far from revolutionary: Build a character from a paltry list of options, spar to raise skills, then compete in tournaments. Getting your guy in fighting shape takes a painfully long time, and I've done this in so many other similar games. At least the other modes are still fun with a crew of buds.

So, what went wrong? Tapout 2 has both a new developer and publisher than the original – both rookies in MMA. Thus, it's as much a first effort as it is a sequel. No ambition equals low score. That's just the way it goes. – **JUSTIN**

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER FIGHTING ■ **PUBLISHER** TDK MEDIACTIVE ■ **DEVELOPER** DREAM FACTORY ■ **RELEASE** MARCH 20

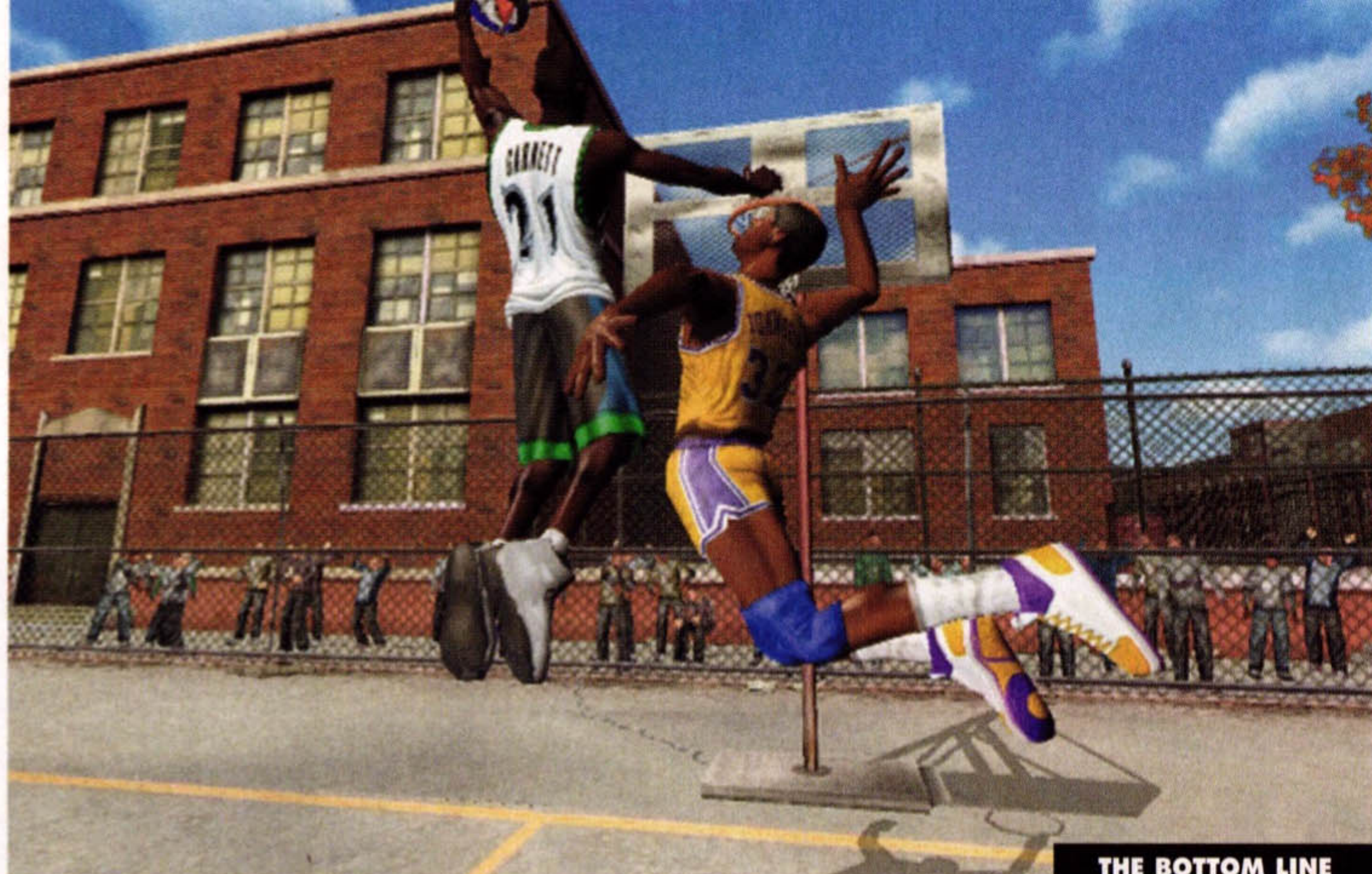
THE BOTTOM LINE  
TEEN  
**T** 6.25  
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

- **Concept:** TDK buys UFC license, gets new company to make it. Pain ensues (and not the intended kind)
- **Graphics:** In some ways, this looks worse than its predecessor
- **Sound:** Lame licensed rock, but you can use your own tunes from the hard drive
- **Playability:** Too many odd button combos, especially since there are four other buttons going unused
- **Entertainment:** If you haven't played a UFC game before or just do multiplayer, you may get into it
- **Replay Value:** Moderate

### SECOND OPINION

Tapout 2 is but a fraction of what it should be. The Career mode is incredibly shallow; the combat sticks to the basics; and there really is nothing to character customization. In every possible way, the series has taken a gigantic step backward. To tell you the truth, this follow-up performs more like an early predecessor. If only TDK could create a time machine to travel back into the past. If only...

**REINER – 6.25**



XBOX

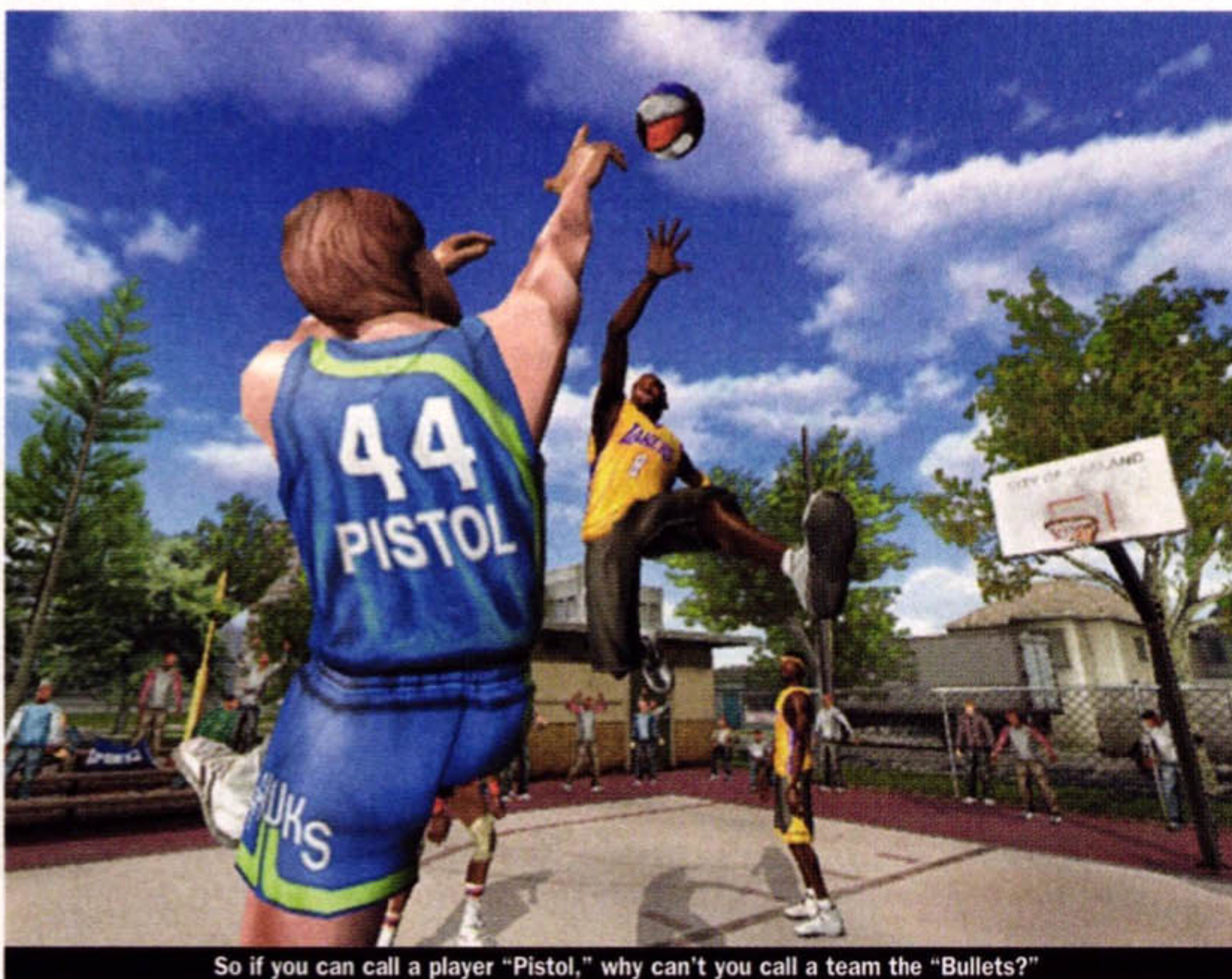
# NBA STREET VOL. 2

IT'S LIKE BUTTA

There is no denying that NBA Street owes its very existence to NBA Jam; but when you look at what EA BIG has done to the original blueprint, you can't help but feel that this is a completely different game. Vol. 2 – which marks Street's Xbox debut – makes the differences even more pronounced by adding the ability to pass the ball off opponents' heads or the backboard, and you can call for a pick or double-team when extra help is needed.

The improvements don't stop there either, as you can also pass the ball to a teammate while maintaining control of your player so you can create an easy give 'n go or be the oop in the alley-oop. All told, the new control options, like the kick pass, give you more opportunities to score trick points (which equals more Gamebreakers), and a chance to pull off the Gamebreaker 2 – which is even bigger and badder.

There are a couple of little things that bother me about this edition, but they are minor. For example, the NBA team ratings are basically worthless; and since the game is releasing past the trading deadline, it seems a shame to me that all the recent acquisitions are missing. In the end, it may not be a true five-on-five simulation, but no other game captures the sport like NBA Street Vol. 2. Like KG, it's this year's basketball MVP. – **ANDY**



So if you can call a player "Pistol," why can't you call a team the "Bullets?"

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER SPORTS ■ **PUBLISHER** EA BIG ■ **DEVELOPER** EA BIG ■ **RELEASE** APRIL 29

### THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE  
**E**  
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

**9**

- **Concept:** Finally bring the popular series to Xbox
- **Graphics:** Not all the Xbox extras I would like to see, but a nice package nonetheless
- **Sound:** Bass pumping tunes, and voice talent that exceeds the first game
- **Playability:** The basics are the same, but the updated moves add a whole new dimension
- **Entertainment:** If you like basketball, you'll love this game. Especially the Create a Baller and Be a Legend modes
- **Replay Value:** High

### SECOND OPINION

Vol. 2 ushers in a series of improvements: a substantial career mode, fantastic presentation, and four-player capability! Being able to play with three other friends is exactly what the original title needed to make it the most enjoyable basketball game for a diverse audience. Despite these very welcome additions, Vol. 2's flaws mostly hinder gamers playing solo. Your team's AI is suspect, the rebounding often seems skewed for the computer, and the so-called cheat factor often imbalances gameplay to a degree that causes frustration. I simply lack enough space to relate the amount of cheap crap the computer pulls towards the end of a match. Still, given its overall high quality in every other area, most gamers will overlook these problems and champion Vol. 2 as the best b-ball product on the market.

**CHET – 8.75**



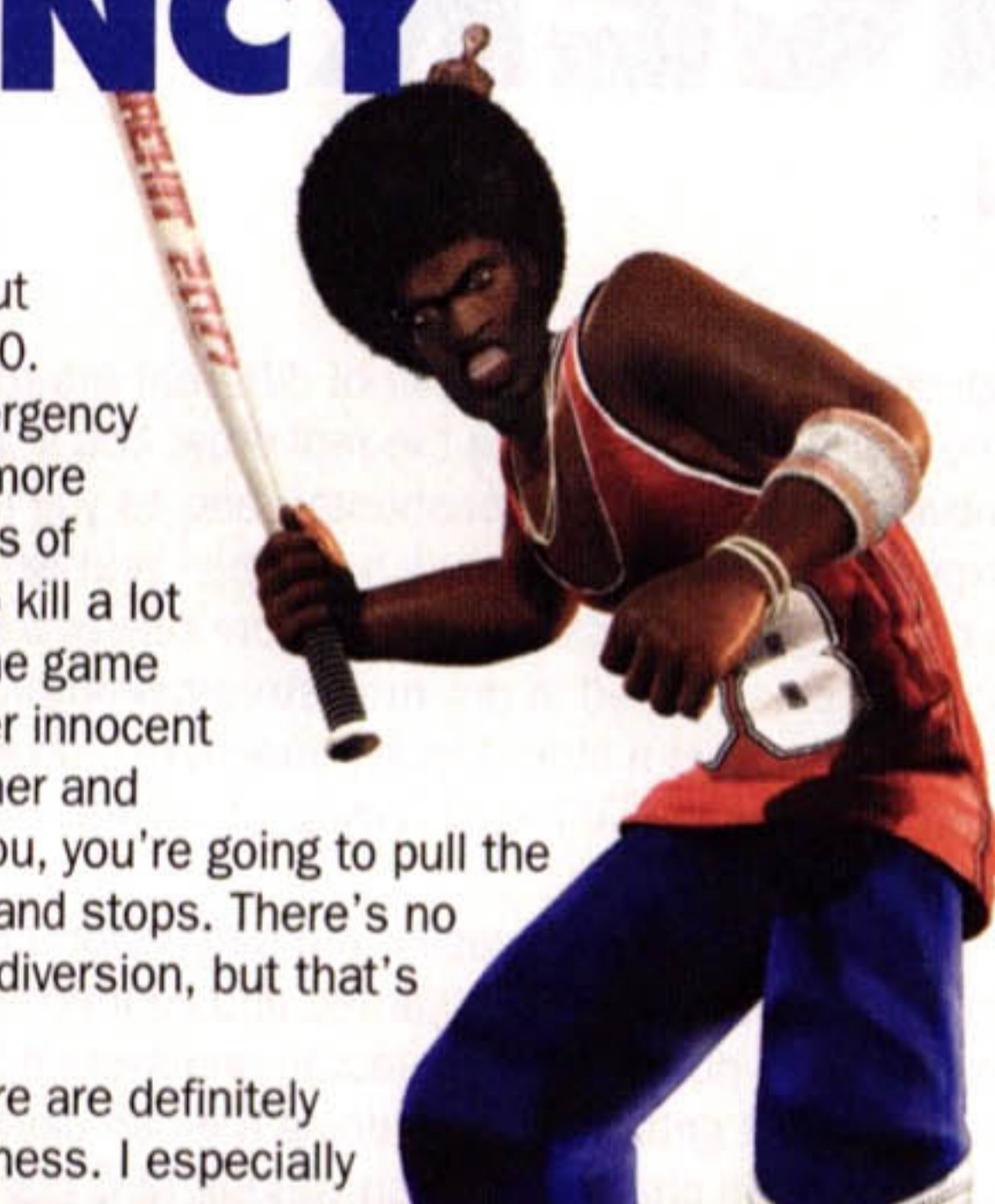
XBOX

# STATE OF EMERGENCY

GONE CLUBBIN'

The most important thing to know about this game is that it will release for \$20. That's not too bad – but State of Emergency is definitely a title where hype drove sales more than actual quality. SoE's gameplay consists of little more than assorted ways to get you to kill a lot of people in as short a time as possible. The game tells you that you're not supposed to murder innocent civilians; but when you have a rocket launcher and there's a gaggle of 100 people in front of you, you're going to pull the trigger – and that's where SoE's fun starts and stops. There's no denying that causing mayhem is a fun little diversion, but that's the crux of the entire game.

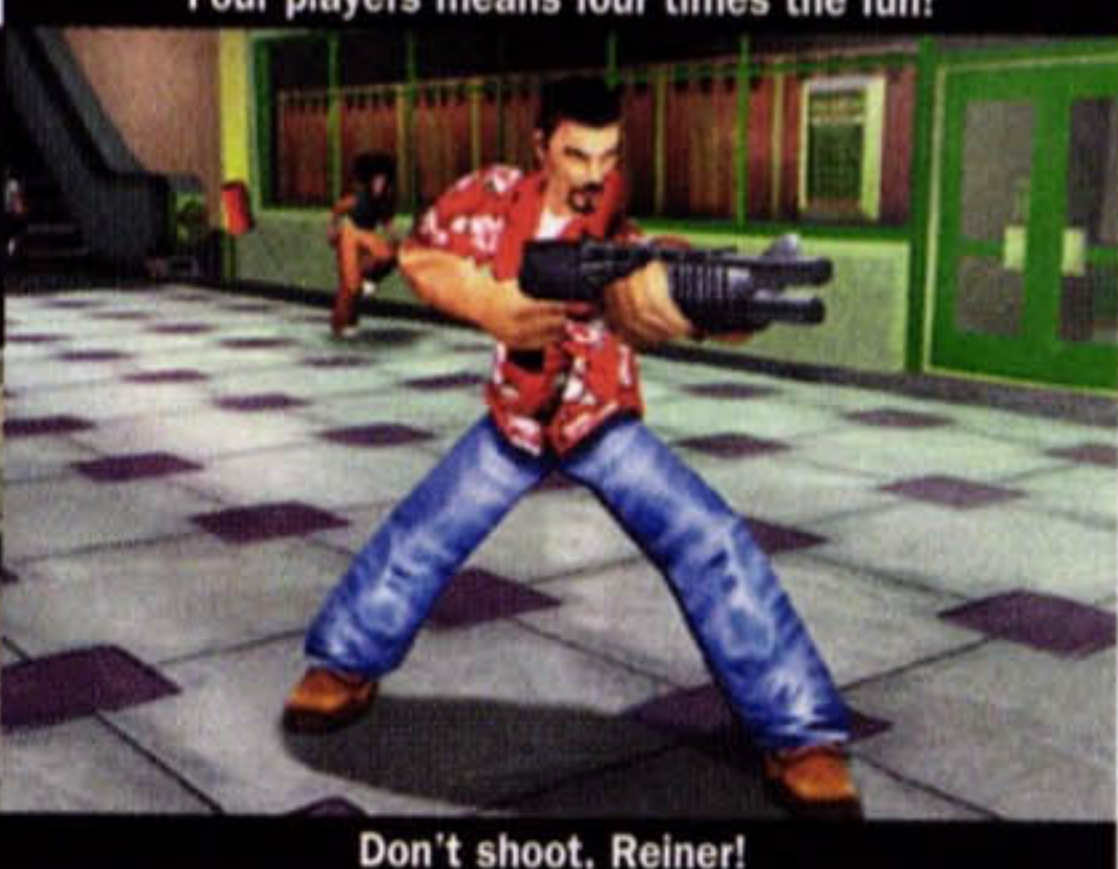
As far as multiplayer enjoyment goes, there are definitely some fun modes and a lot of room for craziness. I especially like the Survivor portion that allows you to take down your buddies with a slew of different weapons, and even recruit gang members by hitting the white button when you pass by civilians. These people will then attack your opponent and serve as human shields. Plus, being able to play with three other people can make for some hilarious situations. So, if you're in the mood, snap this one up for the multiplayer component. If you tend to play alone, you can feel secure in the fact that you're not missing anything. – KRISTIAN



Four players means four times the fun!



Spanky settles a score



Don't shoot, Reiner!

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** ROCKSTAR GAMES ■ **DEVELOPER** VIS  
 ■ **RELEASE** MARCH 25

THE BOTTOM LINE



- **Concept:** Shoot people, blow stuff up, look at a bunch of characters onscreen at once
- **Graphics:** There's a lot of activity going on at all times, and some nice explosion effects
- **Sound:** Turning off the volume you won't be able to hear the innocent scream in horror, but is that a bad thing?
- **Playability:** The camera control is seriously lacking, especially when you're battling in tight spaces
- **Entertainment:** It's okay as a multiplayer title, but fails to stand on its own
- **Replay Value:** Moderate

SECOND OPINION

Truth be told, I probably bought into SoE's hype a little heavily on PS2, so that's why this superior version actually gets a lower score. VIS definitely addresses some of the flaws in the original and has added multiplayer features, while changing some of the more frustrating single-player missions. Graphically, it's even better; I'm still astonished by how many characters this engine can put onscreen. One weakness that wasn't fixed is the targeting, which remains as inaccurate as ever. I know the idea is to shoot willy nilly, but I would have liked a little more control. However, the multiplayer goes a long way towards making this the great social experience that it should have been in the first place. I would suggest that SoE's mindless violence is a little too mindless; but, for 20 bucks, it's a great title to have around for when you have friends over.

MATT – 7.75

XBOX

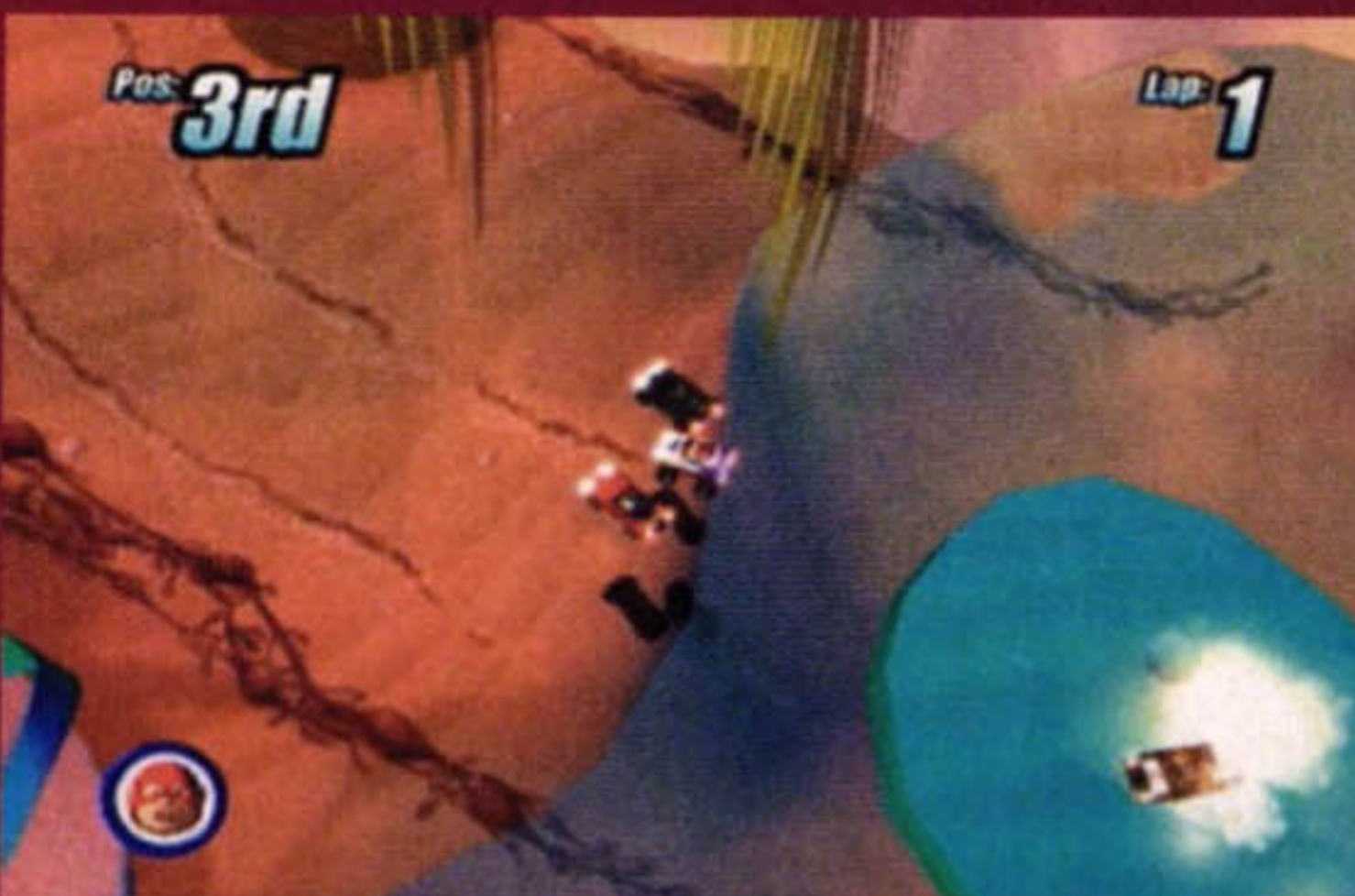
## ROBOCOP

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION  
 ■ **PUBLISHER** TITUS SOFTWARE  
 ■ **RELEASE** APRIL 14



And you thought Robocop 3 was bad? To be fair, Titus definitely made a conscious effort to incorporate every element from the Robocop universe, but no matter how

authentic the material may be, it doesn't come together to create an interesting gameplay premise. Even the most menial of things, like the menus, are unfit. It pretty much fails on every conceivable front and can't hold a candle to 99 percent of the games currently in the Xbox library. To serve, protect, but more realistically, to suck. – REINER



XBOX

## MICRO MACHINES

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER RACING  
 ■ **PUBLISHER** INFOGRAMES  
 ■ **RELEASE** MAY 1

Here we have the quintessential mediocre racer. It's got bright colors; goofy, stereotypical characters; boring courses; ho-hum power-ups; a bad camera; and a generally uninteresting play scheme. If you're seven years old, and you're playing a racing game for the first time, you will probably enjoy Micro Machines. Then again, the 8-bit NES title, R.C. Pro-Am, puts this game to shame – and that isn't nostalgia talking, either. – KRISTIAN



XBOX

## MARVEL VS. CAPCOM 2

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER FIGHTING  
 ■ **PUBLISHER** CAPCOM  
 ■ **RELEASE** MARCH 27



After blowing the dust off of my Dreamcast game and pulling away the cobwebs from the arcade version, I can say, without reservation, that the Xbox incarnation is identical. For

a game that has been around for three years, it still performs admirably and stacks up well against today's most sophisticated of fighters in terms of graphics and replay value. With tons of characters, a unique shopping feature, and combos that can rack up 300 hits, it's still one of the best 2D fighters around. The character sprites are a tad pixelated, but otherwise, it looks fantastic. – REINER



**PC** GAME OF THE MONTH  
**FREELANCER**



**"Freelancer will serve to delight and enrapture."**

**PC**  
**FREELANCER**  
THE NEW SHERIFF IN TOWN

**T**here are precious few games that have been released which make me want to run out and buy a new PC. Freelancer is definitely one of them. I actually had dreams about this game in between the days I spent with it – how sad is that? For whatever reason, this title completely mesmerizes me. Even as I sit here and write this, I'm fighting an almost irrepressible urge to fire up my save and dive back in – but no. Must...write...review....

Freelancer roars out of the starting gates with an incredible intro movie and keeps on firing with its tight gameplay and lush visuals. Of course, graphics and control can only take you so far. To that end, the Digital Anvil team has crafted a complex and engaging plot that keeps you guessing and playing. You start off as a survivor of an attack on a remote trading post. As you try to get your feet under you and start anew, you're given some help. While the story begins to take shape (I won't ruin it for you), the open-ended portion starts with a thinly veiled tutorial, and eventually you're left alone to make money however you see fit. Your character will level-up through the amount of cash you've earned, and when you've hit a certain level, the main story will kick back in with new additions to your quest.

Calling it a quest is a little misleading; it's more of a journey really, but whatever it is, it finds you piloting a vast

spectrum of craft in a number of different environments. The ships themselves are the real draw. You start (obviously) with a little peashooter; and as you earn experience and money, you'll buy bigger and better ships. A casual player will be able to procure one of a few widely sold vessels offered in any mainstream shipyard. But, for those who delve a little deeper, superior components and craft are available in the strangest of places – which is awesome.

Speaking of strange places, the setting for this game is colossal, but expertly segmented and connected. Travelling from port to port, sector to sector, and system to system is as easy as it gets. As you're doing this, an almost constant ambient radio chatter between various NPC craft lends an aura of realism that I have rarely experienced. Although I wanted the land-based exploration to be a little beefier (it's just point and click), the combat and probing portions of space flight are second to none. Even the flight control is smooth as silk. If you're even remotely in the market for a space exploration/action title, Freelancer will serve to delight and enrapture. The online portion alone is worth the purchase, but I'd be shocked if you didn't spend at least 50 to 60 hours on the single-player campaign. This has definitely been worth the wait. – **KRISTIAN**

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 16-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** MICROSOFT ■ **DEVELOPER** DIGITAL ANVIL ■ **RELEASE** MARCH 4

**THE BOTTOM LINE** 50  
TEEN  
**T** **9.5**  
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

- **Concept:** Explore an enormous galaxy while taking part in a masterfully written storyline
- **Graphics:** If you've got a system that can run this thing all-out, the game looks absolutely fantastic
- **Sound:** Excellent scoring, voice work, and an impressive effects pallet give Freelancer one of the strongest sound sections in video games
- **Playability:** Although the flight portion of the game is as easy to pick up as a shuttlecock, there's much more than meets the eye for those who want it
- **Entertainment:** This is what PC games are all about: vast environments, incredible spectacles, and untold hours of gameplay
- **Replay Value:** High

**SECOND OPINION**

I'm going to have to disagree with Kristian a little bit on this one. While Freelancer is certainly gorgeous and the new mouse control is ingenious; the gameplay can be repetitive, and I often find myself completely bored whenever the game breaks from the story and leaves me to do random missions for cash. I wouldn't have a problem with these side quests if there were more to them. Sadly, they are often too easy and are all basically the same. Travel to point A, kill bad guys, maybe use the tractor beam, rinse, wash, and repeat. That said, this is perhaps the most compelling space game I have played in quite some time, especially since the story is so well developed. In the end however, it's not enough to put it up there with the greats.

**ANDY – 8**



The weapon you see on the wing will change according to what you install on that hardpoint



Every asteroid is fully modeled and can be run into if you're not careful



These Liberty fighters are tough, but slow



"What did you say about my mama?"



This game looks absolutely gorgeous





PC

# RAINBOW SIX 3: RAVEN SHIELD

HALF PAST DEAD

**THE BOTTOM LINE**  
**M 7.25**  
CONTENTS RATED BY ESRB

- **Concept:**  
Begin a level that looks great, then restart it multiple times as your teams die from idiotic AI
- **Graphics:**  
Incredible character models and crisp environments, but I see a fair amount of polygon drop-out
- **Sound:**  
A lot of voice work and ballistic attention went into this one, and it shows
- **Playability:**  
The AI is bad. How bad, you ask? It's so bad, I had to constantly switch between teams so people didn't walk headlong into fire
- **Entertainment:**  
The numerous inconsistencies are inexcusable and too much of a burden to overlook
- **Replay Value:**  
Moderately High

**SECOND OPINION**

This game requires some tough loving. Raven Shield's frontend creates a deep sense of realism, and the gameplay attempts to follow through on this promise—which any hardcore fan will certainly appreciate. However, the game's flaws turn this attempt at immersion into a tedious experience. First, the dense team AI often lags behind awaiting orders even when objectives are clear, requiring you to backtrack to their position. Second, they randomly like to act unresponsive. In one case, an enemy burst through a door while I was reloading, waited two seconds for his announcement to sink in, and then killed me. This happened while my teammates just watched in awe! Finally, since one-hit kills are the order, levels mostly involve trial and error, making gameplay all the more frustrating. However, the graphical enhancements and new game types make RS, as one online player puts it, "The Rainbow Six title fans have been waiting for."

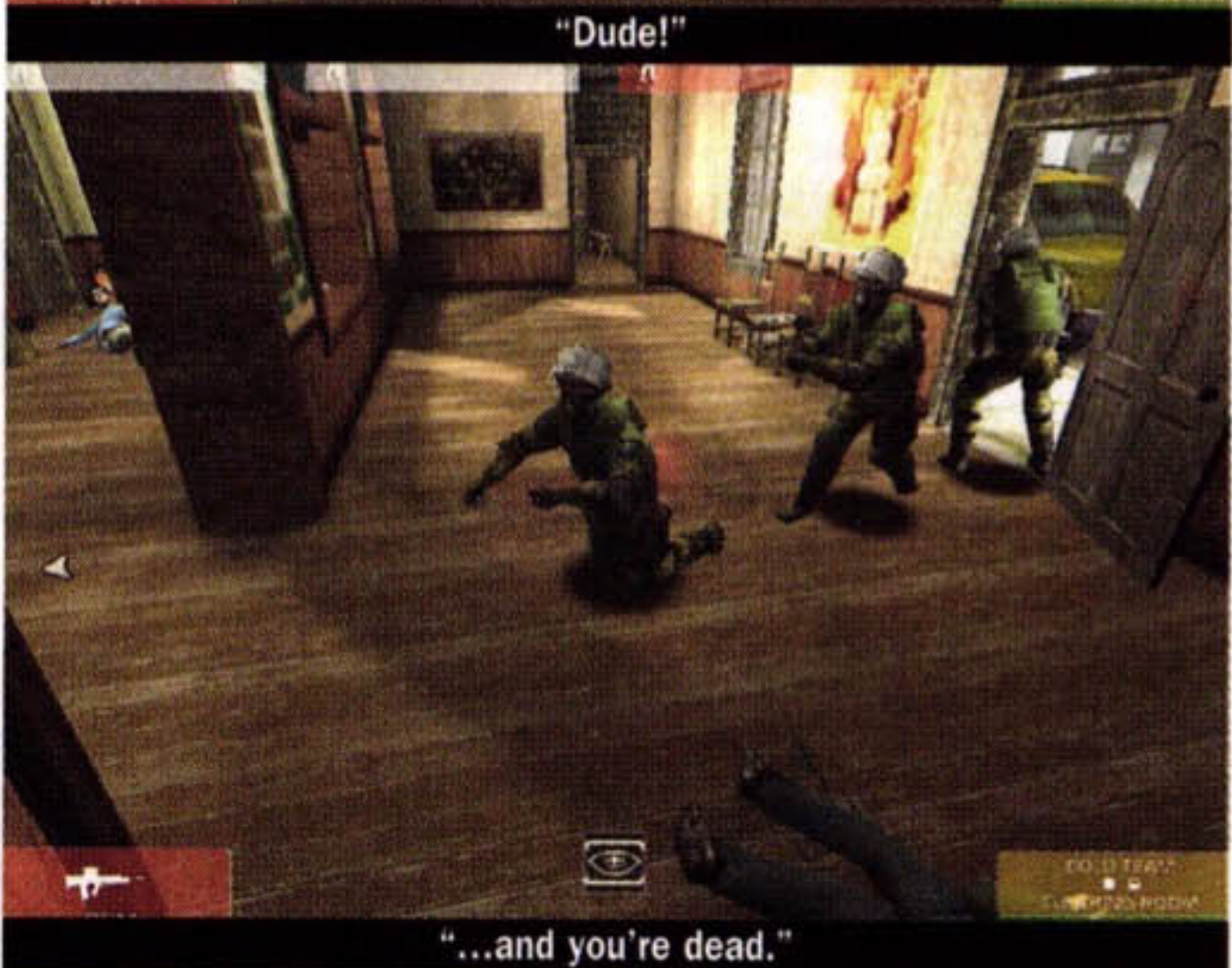
**CHET - 7.5**



"Dude! Look to your right!"



"Dude!"



"...and you're dead."

This game makes me yearn for Ghost Recon, with its on-the-fly command structure and passable NPC intelligence. Rainbow Six 3 not only lacks these two very important features, but it also penalizes gamers who play by its own rules. Let me explain. This is a close-quarters assault simulator with multiple teams. More often than not, your main objectives involve rescuing hostages, and if any of them die, your mission is over. Because of this, the AI becomes an even greater hindrance due to the bungling nature of your "best of the best" troopers. For example, I witnessed my best sniper sit in one spot and look at an enemy through his scope, and do nothing. Squeeze the trigger, jackass! That's what you're paid to do!

On the other hand, Raven Shield looks fantastic. The character models are easily the best this, or any Ubi Soft series, has ever seen; and their animations are exquisite. Even the seemingly innocuous environmental texturing like grass and dirt is well implemented. While the gameplay may suffer from some questionable programming, there's still a decent amount of entertainment here for people who are willing to look for it. — **KRISTIAN**

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 16-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** UBI SOFT ■ **DEVELOPER** UBI SOFT MONTREAL ■ **RELEASE** MARCH 18



PC  
**HARBINGER**  
 PSY-FI

I have to commend DreamCatcher for attempting to elevate the sci-fi RPG playing field, but this offering comes up short. Isometric role-players know that the Baldur's and Icewind Dale series have set a near-unattainable mark for excellence, but Harbinger takes on the challenge nonetheless. At the game's outset, it looks like it could hang with the big boys in the graphical department; but then you realize that the same textures are used over and over again from level to level. There are some nice models and intricate scenery, but I just got tired of looking at it after a while.

On the plus side, the story is interesting and quite different depending on which of the three characters you choose at the outset. But, there's very little exposition, and I was left about as involved with my character's storyline as Ghandi is in beef industry advertising. Secondly, the control system leaves much to be desired. There needs to be a vastly different targeting system, the skill building (arguably the most important part of any RPG) is abbreviated at best, and the weapon upgrade method needs some fleshing out. I wouldn't be sad if an RPG initiate tried his hand with Harbinger, but for hardcores like myself, it's definitely forgettable. — **KRISTIAN**

**THE BOTTOM LINE**  
**T 6**  
CONTENTS RATED BY ESRB

- **Concept:**  
Point, click, move; repeat ad nauseam. Oh yeah, go through the motions of leveling up your character as well
- **Graphics:**  
Nice and crisp, but they'd better be with the lack of background differentiation
- **Sound:**  
Underwhelming, but at least the music wasn't as terrible as I thought it would be
- **Playability:**  
A better targeting system would have helped this game immensely
- **Entertainment:**  
You've got to be pretty hard up in your RPG-ing to sink your teeth into this game
- **Replay Value:**  
Moderate

**SECOND OPINION**

I would like to sum this game up in two words, like the famous review of Spinal Tap's *Shark Sandwich*. Unfortunately I am unable to repeat those words in these hallowed pages. I can, however, point out that this game is perhaps the second-worst PC title I have ever had the displeasure of reviewing. The production is awful and the gameplay is even worse. Blech.

**ANDY - 2**

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ROLE-PLAYING GAME ■ **PUBLISHER** DREAMCATCHER INTERACTIVE ■ **DEVELOPER** SILVERBACK ENTERTAINMENT ■ **RELEASE** MARCH 1

# REVIEWS

## GAME BOY ADVANCE

### GODZILLA DOMINATION!

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER ACTION  
 ■ **PUBLISHER** INFOGRAMES  
 ■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 13, 2002



Godzilla Domination is a pint-sized Destroy All Monsters that sadly lacks the wit of its big brother console version. There's no old-school black and white lizard, no cheesy voiceovers, and no Technicolor mode.

What's left is a sub-par fighting game whose action plods along with the raging speed of an awards show. Multiplayer is fun, but does require a cartridge for each player. — **LISA**

**E** 4.5



## GAME BOY ADVANCE

### CRAZY TAXI: CATCH A RIDE

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION/RACING  
 ■ **PUBLISHER** THQ/SEGA  
 ■ **RELEASE** APRIL 18

You can pick up Crazy Taxi on any console for under \$20, so expecting people to pay \$30 for a bastardized GBA version is something I take offense to. The only positive is that there are no Offspring songs. Everything else, from collision to control to having only three different cars as traffic, adds up to this game biting the big one. Under all the negativity, the scope (a nonlinear city) is ambitious for GBA, but it's like trying to find Hall & Oates tickets in a swimming pool full of manure. — **JUSTIN**

**E** 4

## GAME BOY ADVANCE

### IRIDION II

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER SHOOTER  
 ■ **PUBLISHER** MAJESCO  
 ■ **RELEASE** MAY 9



This series is no longer called Iridion 3D, and I couldn't be happier. Iridion II has switched to faux-3D in a vertically scrolling screen. Unlike the hollow gameplay experience of the first, this title gives fans more classic shooter action. It's a little slow, but given the added challenge of environmental obstacles, the title still demands some precision flying. Each world is replete with vibrant colors that only further endear this release to old-schoolers. Add to this a variety of weapons for your ship, and you'll find that Iridion II's changes equal a pretty tidy sum. — **KATO**

**E** 8



## GAME BOY ADVANCE

# SONIC ADVANCE 2

NEVER WAS AN EPIC

**T**he brave little hedgehog-that-could certainly is renowned for one thing — speed. Sonic Advance 2 delivers that in spades. Solo gamers can take advantage of a multi-level quest that goes by alarmingly quickly. In all honesty, I had half of the game taken care of in less than 45 minutes. Lacking in serious challenge, Sonic 2 does feature decent level design, imaginative graphics, and impressive velocity.

Also along for the single-player ride is a Time Attack mode where you pick the character (Sonic, Cream, Tails, Knuckles, or Amy), the area, and whether you want to cruise through a level or demolish a boss.

Strangely enough, my favorite part of the game is the Tiny Chao Garden. This simple mode lets you raise your little guy as he learns new skills, noshes some fruit, and takes part in minigames akin to Memory and Breakout.

While the wee cartridge is heavy on the one-player adventures, the multiplayer is no slouch, either. With one game pack, up to four players can race against each other. If everyone in the crew has his or her own cartridge, a head-to-head battle of ring collecting is also an option. Confucius says, "You will encounter an old friend today, but one should always evolve." — **LISA**



■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** THQ ■ **DEVELOPER** SONIC TEAM  
 ■ **RELEASE** MARCH 10

## THE BOTTOM LINE

**E** 7.5

- **Concept:** Cruise through a small handful of worlds at blazing speeds
- **Graphics:** Bright colors, good animations, sharp characters, and easily distinguishable themes for each level
- **Sound:** Ding. Ding. Get a ring. Get a ring. Repeat
- **Playability:** Controls are minimal — just go forward really, really fast
- **Entertainment:** One-player mode is quick (as in short), but a hefty portion of extra features keep it interesting for much longer
- **Replay Value:** Moderately High

## SECOND OPINION

Sega actually managed to improve Sonic 2 by employing a new technology: Blast Processing 2! All joking aside, the little blue buggler still cooks. Unfortunately for Sonic, he's been using the same ingredients for far too long. Players can still speed through levels within minutes, and are free to ignore any secrets or extra content the areas may contain. To its credit, Sonic 2 does offer a bit more variety than its predecessor. Five characters are available for use, all of which play differently. Also, you have the option to enjoy a few minigames and a Versus mode. If you've grown out of the franchise, Sonic Advance 2 won't compel you to return. But, if you're still a loyal fan, you're going to think Sonic's latest soirée on GBA is the coolest thing since tempah sandwiches.

**CHET — 8**

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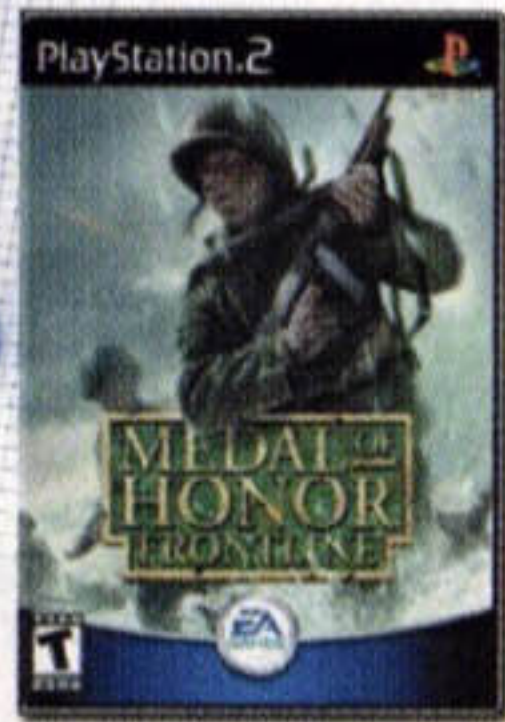
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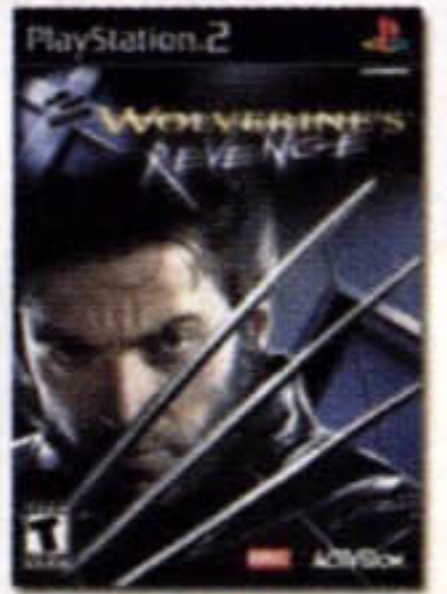
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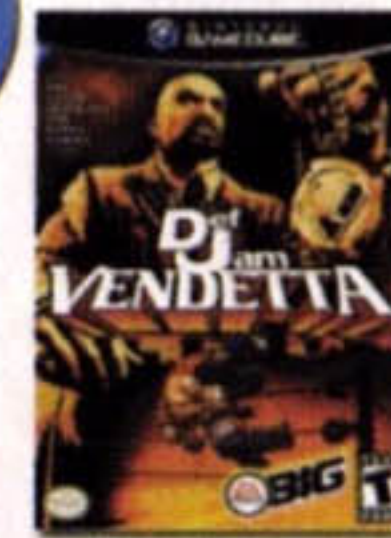
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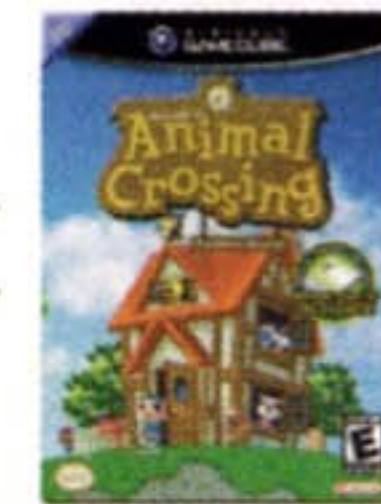
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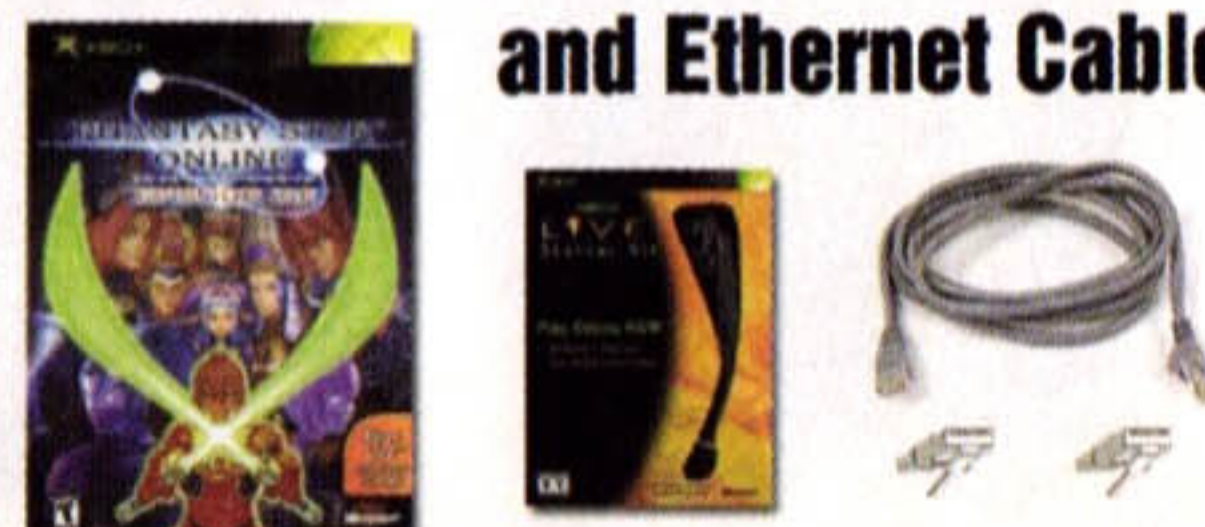


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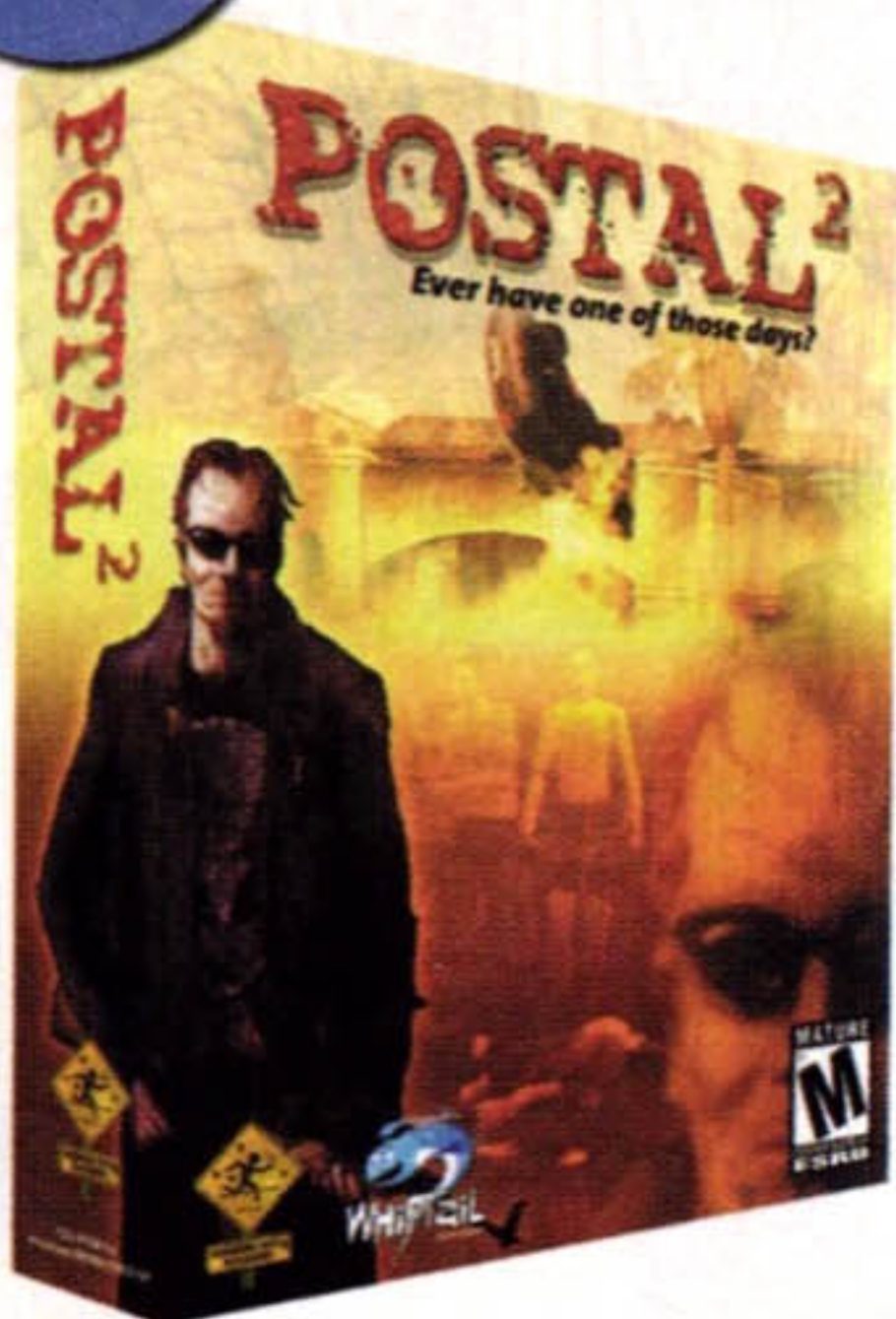
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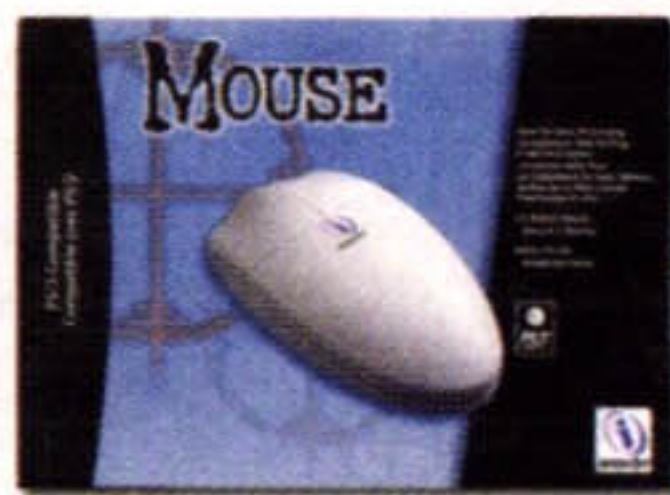
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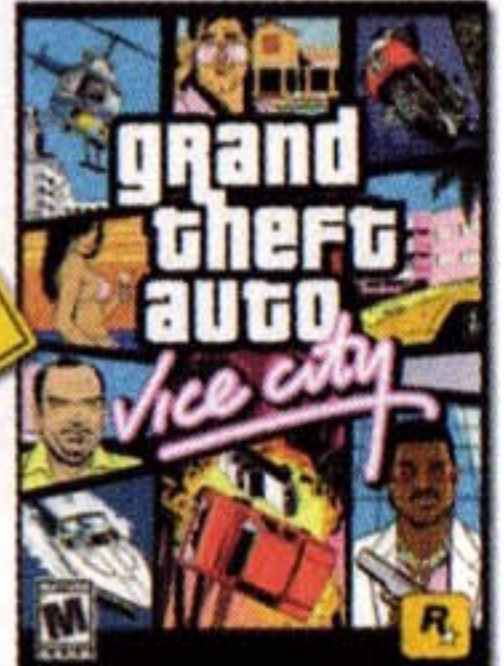


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# CHARTS

In association with the NPD TRSTS Video Games Service, Charts presents an in-depth listing of the best-selling software on a month-to-month basis. Are the games you spend your hard-earned dollars on top sellers? Take a look below to find out. We've also compiled a listing of the top-selling Japanese software, and, of course, we included a Top 10 list of the games the GI staff is currently enjoying.



## NPD TOP 20

Listings Based Upon NPD Data For February 2003 Based On Units Sold

RANK	L. MO	GAME	SYSTEM	SCORE	RELEASE DATE	PRICE POINT
1	2	<b>The Getaway</b>	PS2	9	Jan-03	\$40
Sony's gritty U.K. gangster hit has made it to the top of the sales chart hill. People were nervous that this might be a poor GTA rip-off, but word of mouth has spread that it's an adult blend of cinema-style storytelling and interesting gameplay. Plus, it's got swears. Lots of swears. Here's some trivia: How many times do you hear the F-word in the first 10 minutes of the game? The answer: Count your damn self, you @!\$ #*@ wanker!						
2	3	<b>Grand Theft Auto: Vice City</b>	PS2	10	Oct-02	\$50
Local news affiliates did a slew of reports on video game violence a few months back. Some "experts" claim that one of your "missions" in Vice City is to sleep with hookers. Said "experts" then revealed you'll get more points for killing them afterwards. That proves the news is dumb. Except for <i>The Daily Show</i> . At least that's dumb on purpose.						
3	1	<b>The Sims</b>	PS2	9	Jan-03	\$50
Even without 46 expansion packs, a bunch of hacked items, or the comfort of mouse/keyboard control of the PC game; people are still gobbling up the Sims by the thousands. Save your receipts, people. Someday, some loser may sue EA, claiming the game sucked up all of their social life with its dangerously addictive tendencies. You may be able to get a cut of the settlement. Cha-ching!						
4	N/A	<b>Yu-Gi-Oh! The Duelists of the Roses</b>	PS2	8	Feb-03	\$50
Can you believe this game outsold Xenosaga, Dark Cloud 2, and Metroid Prime? It's called Duelists of the Roses, for goodness' sake! Have you ever seen anybody fight with roses? If you have, we bet you didn't see them do it twice - because they're DEAD now!						
5	4	<b>Devil May Cry 2</b>	PS2	7	Jan-03	\$50

Obviously, people who didn't read our review of Devil May Cry 2 are still getting suckered into buying this title. Boo-hoo for them. We know something they don't, right? Let's stop talking about what a disappointment DMC 2 is and start talking about quantum physics and its applications to the George Foreman Rotisserie Grill. You go first.

RANK	L. MO	GAME	SYSTEM	SCORE	RELEASE DATE	PRICE POINT
6	N/A	<b>Xenosaga Episode 1</b>	PS2	9.75	Feb-03	\$50
7	N/A	<b>Yu-Gi-Oh! Dungeon Dice Monsters</b>	GBA	8	Feb-03	\$30
8	N/A	<b>Dot Hack Vol. 1: Infection</b>	PS2	8.25	Feb-03	\$49
9	8	<b>ATV Offroad Fury 2</b>	PS2	9	Nov-02	\$40
10	6	<b>Dragon Ball Z: Budokai</b>	PS2	7.25	Dec-02	\$48
11	7	<b>Madden NFL 2003</b>	PS2	9.5	Aug-02	\$50
12	13	<b>Ghost Recon</b>	PS2	N/A	Dec-02	\$47
13	N/A	<b>Metroid Prime</b>	GC	9.5	Nov-02	\$30
14	N/A	<b>NBA Live 2003</b>	PS2	8.75	Oct-02	\$50
15	N/A	<b>Dark Cloud 2</b>	PS2	9.25	Feb-03	\$40
16	9	<b>Yu-Gi-Oh! The Eternal Duelist Story</b>	GBA	N/A	Oct-02	\$30
17	14	<b>Ghost Recon</b>	Xbox	8.5	Nov-02	\$48
18	N/A	<b>Mario Party 4</b>	GC	3	Oct-02	\$33
19	5	<b>SOCOM: U.S. Navy SEALs</b>	PS2	9.5	Aug-02	\$60
20	15	<b>The Legend of Zelda: A Link to the Past</b>	GBA	9.25	Dec-02	\$30

Source: NPD Interactive Entertainment Service • Kristin Barnett-Von-Korff (516) 625-2481

## JAPAN TOP 10

Source: Game Japan Based On Monthly Units Sold

POS.	L. MO	GAME	SYSTEM
1	N/A	<b>Shin Sangoku Musou 3</b>	PS2
2	N/A	<b>Star Ocean 3: Till the End of Time</b>	PS2
3	N/A	<b>Sakura Taisen</b>	PS2
4	N/A	<b>Highway Battle</b>	PS2
5	N/A	<b>Dragon Ball Z: Budokai</b>	PS2
6	N/A	<b>Shin Megami Tensei III: Nocturne</b>	PS2
7	N/A	<b>Metroid Prime</b>	GC
8	4	<b>Pokémon Ruby</b>	GBA
9	3	<b>Pokémon Sapphire</b>	GBA
10	N/A	<b>Final Fantasy Tactics Advance</b>	GBA



## GAME INFORMER TOP 10

The Staff's Favorite Picks

POS.	L. MO	GAME	SYSTEM
1	1	<b>The Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker</b>	GC
2	N/A	<b>Midnight Club II</b>	PS2
3	N/A	<b>NBA Street Vol. 2</b>	PS2
4	5	<b>Dark Cloud 2</b>	PS2
5	2	<b>Xenosaga Episode 1</b>	PS2
6	4	<b>The Getaway</b>	PS2
7	6	<b>Tenchu: Wrath of Heaven</b>	PS2
8	9	<b>Metroid Prime</b>	GC
9	N/A	<b>Zone of the Enders: The 2nd Runner</b>	PS2
10	7	<b>Grand Theft Auto: Vice City</b>	PS2



## PC TOP 10

Based On Monthly Units Sold. Source: NPD Interactive Entertainment Service Kristin Barnett-Von-Korff (516) 625-2481

POS.	L. MO	GAME	MONTH	PRICE
1	N/A	<b>Command &amp; Conquer: Generals</b>	Feb-03	\$48
2	N/A	<b>Battlefield 1942: Road To Rome</b>	Feb-03	\$19
3	1	<b>SimCity 4</b>	Jan-03	\$48
4	N/A	<b>Unreal II: The Awakening</b>	Feb-03	\$46
5	N/A	<b>Ultima Online: Age of Shadows</b>	Feb-03	\$30
6	2	<b>The Sims Deluxe</b>	Sep-02	\$42
7	3	<b>The Sims: Unleashed</b>	Sep-02	\$27
8	N/A	<b>Master of Orion III</b>	Feb-03	\$49
9	N/A	<b>Battlefield 1942</b>	Sep-02	\$45
10	N/A	<b>Splinter Cell</b>	Feb-03	\$47



## ONIMUSHA 2: SAMURAI'S DESTINY

■ **FORMAT** PLAYSTATION 2 ■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION  
 ■ **PUBLISHER** CAPCOM ■ **REVIEWED** SEP-02



Early on, Onimusha 2 showed promise and appeared to be the innovative follow-up that it so desperately needed to be. However, as the game went on, and the entertaining gameplay aspects disappeared, my enthusiasm for the title withered. Of course, even with this unfortunate design, it's still a decent game and a worthy sequel for the series. At the same time, it's nothing new and a generation behind the current trends of gaming. — **REINER**

**M 8.75**

### PLAYSTATION 2

All-Star Baseball 2004	8	Apr-03
Armored Core 3	8	Sep-02
ATV Offroad Fury 2	9	Jan-03
Barbarian	6	Aug-02
Battle Engine Aquila	7	Feb-03
Black & Bruised	7.5	Mar-03
Blade II	6	Nov-02
BloodRayne	8	Nov-02
BMX XXX	7.75	Jan-03
Breath of Fire: Dragon Quarter	8	Mar-03
Burnout 2: Point of Impact	8	Nov-02
Cabela's Big Game Hunter	7	Mar-03
Contra: Shattered Soldier	8.25	Dec-02
Dark Cloud 2	9.25	Mar-03
DDR Max	7.5	Dec-02
Dead to Rights	9.25	Jan-03
Def Jam Vendetta	8.5	Apr-03
Defender	7.75	Nov-02
Devil May Cry 2	7	Mar-03
Dino Stalker	7.25	Oct-02
Disaster Report	8	Mar-03
Disney Golf	7.75	Oct-02
Dot Hack Vol. 1: Infection	8.25	Mar-03
Dr. Muto	7.75	Dec-02
Dragon Ball Z: Budokai	7.25	Jan-03
Drome Racers	7	Jan-03
Droship: United Peace Force	7.5	Aug-02
Dual Hearts	8.5	Oct-02
Dynasty Tactics	8	Nov-02
Dynasty Warriors 3: Xtreme Legends	6.75	Jan-03
Dynasty Warriors 4	7	Apr-03
Everblue 2	8.75	Mar-03
EverQuest: Online Adventures	9	Feb-03
Evolution Skateboarding	5	Dec-02
F1 2002	8	Aug-02
Ferrari F355 Challenge	7	Nov-02
FIFA 2003	8	Dec-02
Fighter Maker 2	6.5	Feb-03
Fisherman's Challenge	7.5	Mar-03
Getaway, The	9	Feb-03
Grand Theft Auto: Vice City	10	Dec-02
Grandia Xtreme	7.5	Nov-02
Gravity Games Bike: Street, Vert, Dirt	2	Sep-02
GTC Africa	6.5	Sep-02
Guilty Gear X2	8.75	Mar-03
Gungrave	7	Oct-02
Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets	6	Jan-03
Haven: Call of the King	8.25	Jan-03
Headhunter	8	Jun-02
High Heat 2004	7	Apr-03
Hot Wheels: Velocity X	6	Feb-03
Hypersonic Extreme	7.25	Mar-03
Island Xtreme Stunts	6	Feb-03
James Bond 007: NightFire	7.75	Jan-03
James Cameron's Dark Angel	5.25	Jan-03
Jet X20	7.5	Dec-02
Jurassic Park: Operation Genesis	8.75	Apr-03
Kelly Slater's Pro Surfer	7	Oct-02
King of Route 66, The	7	Apr-03
Kingdom Hearts	9.5	Oct-02
Legaia 2: Duel Saga	7.5	Oct-02
Legends of Wrestling II	7	Feb-03
Lego Soccer Mania	7	Sep-02
Looney Tunes Space Race	7	Aug-02
Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring, The	3	Dec-02
Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers, The	9.25	Dec-02
Madden NFL 2003	9.5	Sep-02
Mark of Kri, The	9	Aug-02
Marvel Vs. Capcom 2	8.5	Dec-02
Mat Hoffman's Pro BMX 2	7.25	Sep-02
Men in Black II: Alien Escape	7.5	Sep-02
Metal Gear Solid 2: Substance	8.5	Apr-03
Minority Report: Everybody Runs	6.75	Feb-03
MLB 2004	6.5	Apr-03
MLB Slugfest 2003	7.5	Aug-02
MLB Slugfest 2004	6	Apr-03
Mobile Suit Gundam: Federation Vs. Zeon	8	Oct-02
Monster Jam: Maximum Destruction	6.5	Sep-02

Mortal Kombat: Deadly Alliance	9.5	Jan-03
MotoGP 3	7	Apr-03
MVP Baseball 2003	9.25	Apr-03
MX Superfly	7.25	Aug-02
Myst III: Exile	7.5	Oct-02
NASCAR: Dirt to Daytona	8.75	Nov-02
NASCAR Thunder 2003	9	Oct-02
NBA 2K3	9.25	Nov-02
NBA Live 2003	8.75	Nov-02
NBA Shootout 2003	6.75	Nov-02
NBA Starting Five	6.25	Dec-02
NCAA College Basketball 2K3	5.75	Jan-03
NCAA Final Four	1.25	Jan-03
NCAA March Madness 2003	8	Jan-03
Need For Speed: Hot Pursuit 2	8.75	Oct-02
NFL 2K3	9.5	Sep-02
NFL Blitz 2003	9.25	Oct-02
NFL GameDay 2003	7.5	Sep-02
NHL 2003	7.75	Nov-02
NHL Hitz 2003	8.75	Nov-02
Ninja Assault	6.25	Feb-03
Onimusha 2: Samurai's Destiny	8.75	Sep-02
Pac-Man Fever	7.5	Aug-02
Pride FC	8	Feb-03
Pro Race Driver	9.25	Nov-02
P.T.O. IV	7.75	Mar-03
Rally Fusion: Race of Champions	8	Dec-02
Ratchet & Clank	8.75	Dec-02
Rayman 3: Hoodlum Havoc	8.5	Mar-03
Rayman Arena	6.5	Nov-02
Red Faction II	8.75	Dec-02
Reign of Fire	6.25	Dec-02
Robotic Alchemic Drive	7.75	Dec-02
Romance of the Three Kingdoms VII	7	Aug-02
Run Like Hell	8	Nov-02
Rygar: The Legendary Adventure	9	Dec-02
Scooby Doo: Night of 100 Frights	6.5	Aug-02
Shinobi	8	Dec-02
Shox	7.25	Nov-02
Silent Scope 3	7.75	Nov-02
Simpsons Skateboarding	1	Dec-02
Sims, The	9	Feb-03
Sly Cooper and the Thievius Raccoonus	9.25	Nov-02
SOCOM: U.S. Navy SEALs	9.5	Sep-02
Splinter Cell	8.5	Apr-03
Star Wars: Bounty Hunter	5.75	Jan-03
Star Wars: The Clone Wars	7.75	Feb-03
Street Hoops	5.5	Sep-02
Sub Rebellion	7.5	Jan-03
Suikoden III	9.5	Dec-02
Summoner 2	9	Nov-02
Super Bust-A-Move 2	7.5	Dec-02
Superman: Shadow of Apokolips	7	Nov-02
Tekken 4	9	Oct-02
Tenchu: Wrath of Heaven	9	Apr-03
Tennis 2K2	9.25	Sep-02
Terminator: Dawn of Fate, The	6	Oct-02
Thing, The	8.25	Nov-02
TimeSplitters 2	8.25	Dec-02
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 4	9.25	Dec-02
Treasure Planet	7.75	Jan-03
Tribes: Aerial Assault	8	Nov-02
Turok: Evolution	7.5	Oct-02
Twisted Metal: Black Online	8.75	Sep-02
Ty the Tasmanian Tiger	7.75	Nov-02
Vexx	6.75	Apr-03
V-Rally 3	8.75	Jan-03
War of the Monsters	6	Feb-03
Way of the Samurai	7.5	Jul-02
Wild Arms 3	7.75	Nov-02
Winning Eleven 6	9	Apr-03
World Series Baseball 2K3	6.75	Apr-03
World Tour Soccer 2003	8.5	Feb-03
Wreckless	7.75	Dec-02
WWE Smackdown: Shut Your Mouth	7.5	Dec-02
X-Men Next Dimension	7.75	Dec-02
Xenosaga Episode 1: Der Wille Zur Macht	9.75	Mar-03
Yu-Gi-Oh! The Duelists of the Roses	8	Apr-03

### GAMECUBE

4X4 Evo 2	8	Oct-02
Aggressive Inline	8.75	Sep-02
Animal Crossing	9.5	Oct-02
ATV: Quad Power Racing 2	8	Mar-03
Beach Spikers	5	Sep-02
Big Air Freestyle	6	Nov-02
Black & Bruised	7.5	Mar-03
Blood Omen 2	7.5	Jan-03
BloodRayne	7	Dec-02
BMX XXX	7.75	Feb-03
Bombberman Generations	8	Aug-02
Capcom Vs. SNK 2 EO	7.5	Nov-02
Cubivore	7.5	Nov-02
Darkened Skye	6.75	Dec-02
Dead to Rights	8.75	Jan-03
Def Jam Vendetta	8.75	Apr-03
Die Hard: Vendetta	6	Jan-03
Disney Sports Football	6.75	Mar-03
Disney Sports Soccer	8	Feb-03
Disney's PK: Out of the Shadows	4.75	Mar-03
Dr. Muto	7	Feb-03
Dragon's Lair 3D	7.75	Feb-03
Egg Mania	7.75	Nov-02
Eternal Darkness: Sanity's Requiem	9.5	Aug-02
Evolution Worlds	7	Dec-02
FIFA 2003	8	Jan-03
FreeStyle	8.75	Sep-02
Godzilla: Destroy All Monsters Melee	8	Nov-02
James Bond 007: NightFire	8	Jan-03
Knockout Kings 2003	7.5	Nov-02
Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker, The	10	Apr-03
Legends of Wrestling	7	Aug-02
Legends of Wrestling II	6.75	Feb-03
Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers, The	9.25	Jan-03
Madden NFL 2003	9.25	Sep-02
Mario Party 4	3	Dec-02
Medal of Honor: Frontline	8.75	Dec-02
Metroid Prime	9.5	Jan-03
Minority Report: Everybody Runs	6.75	Feb-03
MLB Slugfest 2004	6.75	Apr-03
Monsters, Inc. Scream Arena	5	Dec-02
Mortal Kombat: Deadly Alliance	9	Jan-03
MX Superfly	7	Sep-02
Mystic Heroes	7.75	Oct-02
NASCAR Thunder 2003	9	Oct-02
Need For Speed: Hot Pursuit 2	7.5	Nov-02
NFL 2K3	9	Sep-02
NHL Hitz 2003	8.75	Nov-02
Outlaw Golf	7.75	Dec-02
Pac-Man Fever	7.25	Nov-02
Phantasy Star Online Version I & II	8	Jan-03
Rayman Arena	7	Nov-02
Red Faction II	8.75	Apr-03
Resident Evil 0	9.25	Dec-02
Resident Evil 2	8	Apr-03
Resident Evil 3: Nemesis	7.75	Apr-03
Robotech: Battlecry	8.5	Dec-02
Scorpion King: Rise of the Akkadian, The	3	Oct-02
Shrek: Extra Large	3	Jan-03
Skies of Arcadia Legends	9	Feb-03
Smuggler's Run: Warzones	7.75	Sep-02
Sonic Mega Collection	8.75	Dec-02
Spyro: Enter the Dragonfly	4.75	Jan-03
Star Fox Adventures	8.75	Nov-02
Star Wars: Bounty Hunter	5	Feb-03
Star Wars: Jedi Outcast	8.75	Jan-03
Star Wars: The Clone Wars	8.25	Dec-02
Sum of All Fears, The	5.5	Apr-03
Summoner: A Goddess Reborn	9	Apr-03
Super Bubble Pop	8	Feb-03
Super Mario Sunshine	9.75	Sep-02
Super Monkey Ball 2	7.75	Oct-02
Swingerz Golf	7.75	Jan-03
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2003	8	Nov-02
TimeSplitters 2	8.5	Dec-02
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 4	9	Dec-02
Top Gun: Combat Zones	6.75	Nov-02

Turok: Evolution	7.75	Nov-02
Vexx	8.25	Mar-03
Whirl Tour	7.5	Nov-02
Wreckless: The Yakuza Missions	7.75	Jan-03
WWE Wrestlemania X8	6.5	Aug-02
X-Men: Next Dimension	7.75	Jan-03
Zapper: One Wicked Cricket	8.75	Dec-02
Zoocube	8.75	Aug-02

### XBOX

Aggressive Inline	9.25	Sep-02
All-Star Baseball 2004	8	Apr-03
Antz Extreme Racing	5.5	Dec-02
ATV: Quad Power Racing 2	7.5	Apr-03
Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance	8.5	Dec-02
Barbarian	7.25	Nov-02
Battle Engine Aquila	7	Feb-03
Black Stone: Magic & Steel	3	Feb-03
Blade II	6	Nov-02
Blinx: The Time Sweeper	7.75	Nov-02
BloodRayne	7.75	Dec-02
BMX XXX	7.75	Jan-03
Bruce Lee: Quest of the Dragon	1	Sep-02
Buffy the Vampire Slayer	9	Oct-02
Capcom Vs. SNK 2 EO	8.5	Jan-03
Chase: Hollywood Stunt Driver	7	Oct-02
Colin McRae Rally 3	8.75	Dec-02
Commandos 2: Men of Courage	6	Nov-02
Conflict: Desert Storm	6	Nov-02
Crazy Taxi 3: High Roller	8.5	Aug-02
Crimson Sea	7.75	Feb-03
David Beckham Soccer	5.5	Aug-02
Dead or Alive Xtreme Beach Volleyball	7.5	Mar-03
Dead to Rights	9.25	Sep-02
Deathrow	5	Jan-03
Defender	8.25	Feb-03
Dr. Muto	8	Dec-02
Dragon's Lair 3D	7.75	Jan-03
Dynasty Warriors 3	7.25	Oct-02
Enclave	7.5	Aug-02
Fatal Frame	9	Jan-03
Ghost Recon	8.5	Dec-02
Gun Metal	6	Oct-02
High Heat 2004	7.25	Apr-03
Hitman 2: Silent Assassin	8.5	Dec-02
House of the Dead III, The	6.5	Nov-02
Indiana Jones and the Emperor's Tomb	8.5	Mar-03
James Bond 007: NightFire	7.75	Jan-03
Jurassic Park: Operation Genesis	8.25	Apr-03
Kakuto Chojin	6.25	Jan-03
Kelly Slater's Pro Surfer	8.5	Oct-02
Kung Fu Chaos	6.5	Mar-03
Legends of Wrestling II	6.75	Feb-03
Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers, The	9.25	Feb-03
Madden NFL 2003	9.5	Sep-02
MechAssault	8.75	Dec-02
Medal of Honor: Frontline	8.75	Dec-02
Metal Dungeon	6	Feb-03
Metal Gear Solid 2: Substance	9.25	Jan-03
Minority Report: Everybody Runs	6.75	Feb-03
MLB Slugfest 2004	6.75	Apr-03
Monopoly Party	4	Dec-02
Mortal Kombat: Deadly Alliance	9.5	Jan-03
Murakumo	5.75	Mar-03
MVP Baseball 2003	9.25	Apr-03
NASCAR Thunder 2003	9	Nov-02
NBA Inside Drive 2003	7.5	Nov-02
Need For Speed: Hot Pursuit 2	8.5	Nov-02
NFL 2K3	9.5	Sep-02
NFL Fever 2003	7	Sep-02
NHL 2003	7.75	Nov-02
NHL 2K3	9.25	Dec-02
NHL Hitz 2003	8.75	Nov-02
Nightcaster II: Equinox	5.75	Feb-03
Panzer Dragoon Orta	8.25	Jan-03
Phantom Crash	7.5	Jan-03
Prisoner of War	7	Nov-02
Pro Race Driver	9	Apr-03
Pulse Racer	3	Feb-03

Quantum Redshift	6	Nov-02
Rally Fusion: Race of Champions	8	Jan-03
Red Faction II	8.25	Apr-03
Robotech: Battlecry	8.5	Nov-02
Rocky	7	Dec-02
Seabla	4	Jan-03
Sega GT 2002	8.25	Oct-02
Serious Sam	9	Dec-02
Shenmue II	8	Jan-03
Shrek: Super Party	3.25	Jan-03
Sims, The	8.75	Apr-03
Soccer Slam	7.25	Sep-02
Splashedown	9.25	Aug-02
Splinter Cell	8.75	Jan-03
Star Wars: Jedi Outcast	9	Dec-02
Steel Battalion	9.5	Dec-02
Street Hoops	5.5	Sep-02
Superman: The Man of Steel	4.75	Jan-03
Tao Feng: Fist of the Lotus	7.25	Apr-03
Terminator: Dawn of Fate, The	6	Oct-02
Thing, The	8.25	Nov-02
TimeSplitters 2	8.5	Dec-02
ToeJam & Earl III: Mission to Earth	6	Nov-02
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 4	9	Dec-02
Total Immersion Racing	6.5	Jan-03
Toxic Grind	6.25	Feb-03
Transworld Snowboarding	6.5	Jan-03
Turok: Evolution	7.5	Oct-02

### GAME BOY ADVANCE

Aero the Acrobat	9.25	Sep-02
Aggressive Inline	7.75	Dec-02
Airforce Delta Storm	6.75	Dec-02
All-Star Baseball 2004	6.5	Apr-03
Altered Beast: Guardian of the Realms	7.5	Feb-03
ATV: Quad Power Racing	6	Dec-02
Bombberman Max 2: Red & Blue Advance	8	Aug-02
Castlevania: Harmony of Dissonance	9.5	Oct-02
Contra Advance: The Alien Wars EX	6.75	Dec-02
Crash Bandicoot 2: N-Tranced	7.5	Jan-03
Daredevil	5	Mar-03
Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX 3	8.25	Mar-03
Defender	2	Feb-03
Disney's Lilo & Stitch	8	Aug-02
Doom II	8.5	Dec-02
Driver 2 Advance	7.75	Nov-02
Duke Nukem Advance	8.5	Oct-02
Dungeons & Dragons: Eye of the Beholder	5.5	Mar-03
Earthworm Jim 2	6.5	Sep-02
Egg Mania	8	Oct-02

# NEW RELEASES ALL DATES SUBJECT TO CHANGE. CALL YOUR LOCAL RETAILER FOR MORE DETAILS

Release Date	Title	Publisher/Distributor
<b>PLAYSTATION 2</b>		
8/12/03	Alter Echo	THQ
5/27/03	Arc the Lad: Twilight of the Spirits	Sony
9/23/03	Battlestar Galactica	Vivendi Universal
9/16/03	Celebrity Deathmatch	Take 2
6/25/03	Charlie's Angels	Ubi Soft
4/22/03	Colin McRae Rally 3	Infogrames

## TRUE CRIME: STREETS OF LA

■ **FORMAT** PLAYSTATION 2/XBOX ■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION/RACING ■ **PUBLISHER** ACTIVISION ■ **RELEASE** SEPTEMBER 16



We're not going to accuse anyone of trying to jump on the GTA bandwagon, but it would be safe to say that the success of Grand Theft Auto III has not gone unnoticed in the world of video game publishing. Activision, a company known

for such mega-franchises as Tony Hawk's Pro Skater, the Wolfenstein series, and Spider-Man; is looking to round out its portfolio of game properties with True Crime: Streets of LA, an action/racing title chock full of wild car chases and bloody shoot-outs. The good news is that Activision has tapped Luxoflux, the developers of the pioneering vehicular combat series Vigilante 8, to create a more arcade-oriented spin on the rapidly expanding hard-boiled action/racing formula.

8/19/03	Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon	Ubi Soft
9/15/03	Daredevil	Encore
5/13/03	Dot Hack Vol. 2: Mutation	Bandai
8/12/03	Dot Hack Vol. 3: Outbreak	Bandai
7/8/03	Downhill Domination	Sony
6/2/03	Dragon's Lair 3D	Encore
6/17/03	Dungeons & Dragons Heroes	Infogrames
5/15/03	Enter The Matrix	Infogrames
5/26/03	Evil Dead: A Fistful of Boomstick	THQ
5/19/03	F1 Career Challenge	Electronic Arts
5/5/03	Finding Nemo	THQ
7/28/03	Freaky Flyers	Midway
9/29/03	Freedom: The Battle for Liberty Island	Electronic Arts
6/23/03	Freestyle MetalX	Midway
7/22/03	Fugitive Hunter	Infogrames
9/15/03	Gladius	LucasArts
7/22/03	Great Escape	Take 2
6/2/03	Grooverider: Slot Car Thunder	Encore
6/2/03	Gunfighter 2: Return of Jesse James	Ubi Soft
9/9/03	Highway to Hell	Midway
9/23/03	Hobbit, The	Vivendi Universal
5/27/03	Hulk, The	Vivendi Universal
8/19/03	Hunter Wayward	Vivendi Universal
5/15/03	Indiana Jones and the Emperor's Tomb	LucasArts
7/1/03	Jacked	3DO
9/23/03	Jeopardy	Infogrames
7/15/03	K-1 World Grand Prix	Konami
6/2/03	Kengo 2	Ubi Soft
8/4/03	Konami's MotoX	Konami
6/2/03	Lowrider	Jaleco
6/10/03	Mace Griffin Bounty Hunter	Vivendi Universal
6/2/03	Mission Impossible: Operation Surma	Infogrames
4/29/03	NBA Street Vol. 2	Electronic Arts
9/2/03	NFL Blitz: Pro	Midway
9/22/03	NHL Hitz: Pro	Midway
9/2/03	Nickelodeon Party Blast	Infogrames
9/9/03	Rainbow Six 3: Raven Shield	Ubi Soft
5/6/03	Return to Castle Wolfenstein	Activision
9/9/03	Risk	Infogrames
6/2/03	RPG Maker 2	Tommo
5/15/03	RTX Red Rock	LucasArts
8/1/03	Shaun Palmer's Pro Snowboarder 2	Activision
8/5/03	Silent Hill 3	Konami
5/15/03	Smash Cars	Metro3D
8/26/03	Soul Calibur II	Namco
5/13/03	Speed Kings	Acclaim
9/25/03	Sphinx	THQ
8/11/03	Splashdown 2	THQ
7/1/03	SRS: Street Racing Syndicate	3DO
9/1/03	Star Trek: Shattered Universe	TDK Mediactive
6/10/03	SX Superstar	Acclaim
4/22/03	Tomb Raider: The Angel of Darkness	Eidos
8/1/03	Travis Pastrana's Pro MotoX	Activision
9/16/03	True Crime: Streets of LA	Activision
7/1/03	Unlimited SaGa	Electronic Arts/Square
6/3/03	Wakeboarding Unleashed Featuring Shaun Murray	Activision
9/10/03	Warhammer 40,000: Fire Warrior	THQ
9/23/03	Wheel of Fortune	Infogrames
9/16/03	World's Scariest Police Chases	Vivendi Universal
6/10/03	X-Files: Resist or Serve	Vivendi Universal
9/16/03	XIII	Ubi Soft

PSONE		
7/22/03	ATV Mania	Take 2
5/1/03	High Heat Baseball 2004	3DO
4/29/03	MLB 2004	Sony
6/17/03	Motocross Mania 2	Take 2
4/22/03	Patriotic Pinball	Take 2
8/26/03	SUV Mania	Take 2

GAMECUBE		
9/1/03	1080 White Storm	Nintendo
5/1/03	Army Men: Sarge's War	3DO
5/20/03	Burnout 2: Point of Impact	Acclaim
9/16/03	Celebrity Deathmatch	Take 2
6/25/03	Charlie's Angels	Ubi Soft
6/2/03	Chessmaster	Ubi Soft
4/22/03	Conflict: Desert Storm	Take 2
6/24/03	Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon	Ubi Soft

6/2/03	Cubix Robots for Everyone: Showdown	3DO
6/17/03	Dakar 2: The World's Ultimate Rally	Acclaim
6/17/03	Dungeons & Dragons Heroes	Infogrames
5/15/03	Enter The Matrix	Infogrames
6/23/03	FZero	Nintendo
5/5/03	Finding Nemo	THQ
7/28/03	Freaky Flyers	Midway
6/23/03	Freestyle MetalX	Midway
9/15/03	Gladius	LucasArts
6/2/03	Grooverider: Slot Car Thunder	Encore
9/9/03	Highway to Hell	Midway
5/13/03	Hitman 2: Silent Assassin	Eidos
5/27/03	Hulk, The	Vivendi Universal
7/1/03	Jacked	3DO
05/21/03	Mega Man: Network Transmission	Capcom
5/1/03	Motor Trend Lotus Challenge	Xicat Interactive
4/29/03	NBA Street Vol. 2	Electronic Arts
9/2/03	NFL Blitz: Pro	Midway
9/22/03	NHL Hitz: Pro	Midway
9/9/03	Rainbow Six 3: Raven Shield	Ubi Soft
6/2/03	Rally Championship	Encore
5/15/03	RTX Red Rock	LucasArts
4/22/03	Shrek: Super Party	TDK Mediactive
8/26/03	Soul Calibur II	Namco
5/20/03	Speed Kings	Acclaim
5/27/03	Splinter Cell	Ubi Soft
6/10/03	SX Superstar	Acclaim
5/26/03	Wario World	Nintendo
9/16/03	XIII	Ubi Soft

XBOX		
8/12/03	Alter Echo	THQ
9/23/03	Battlestar Galactica	Vivendi Universal
5/27/03	Bloody Roar Extreme	Konami
5/27/03	Brute Force	Microsoft
5/20/03	Burnout 2: Point of Impact	Acclaim
9/16/03	Celebrity Deathmatch	Take 2
6/2/03	Chessmaster	Ubi Soft
6/6/03	Crimson Skies: High Road to Revenge	Microsoft
6/17/03	Dakar 2: The World's Ultimate Rally	Acclaim
9/15/03	Daredevil	Encore
6/17/03	Deus Ex 2: The Invisible War	Eidos
8/5/03	Dino Crisis 3	Capcom
6/12/03	Dronez	Metro3D
6/17/03	Dungeons & Dragons Heroes	Infogrames
5/15/03	Enter The Matrix	Infogrames
5/26/03	Evil Dead: A Fistful of Boomstick	THQ
5/27/03	Fila Tennis Champions	Xicat Interactive
5/5/03	Finding Nemo	THQ
7/28/03	Freaky Flyers	Midway
9/29/03	Freedom: The Battle for Liberty Island	Electronic Arts
6/23/03	Freestyle MetalX	Midway
9/1/03	Fuel	Dreamcatcher
9/15/03	Gladius	LucasArts
7/22/03	Great Escape	Take 2
6/2/03	Grooverider: Slot Car Thunder	Encore
9/9/03	Highway to Hell	Midway
9/23/03	Hobbit, The	Vivendi Universal
5/27/03	Hulk, The	Vivendi Universal
7/1/03	Jacked	3DO
8/19/03	Last Ninja, The	Vivendi Universal
6/2/03	Loose Cannon 1	Ubi Soft
6/10/03	Mace Griffin Bounty Hunter	Vivendi Universal
5/27/03	Midnight Club II	Take 2
6/3/03	Midtown Madness 3	Microsoft
7/1/03	Mission Impossible: Operation Surma	Infogrames
5/20/03	MLB Inside Pitch 2003	Microsoft
5/20/03	MotoGP 2	THQ
8/4/03	MotoX	Konami
4/29/03	Motor Trend Lotus Challenge	Xicat Interactive
4/29/03	NBA Street Vol. 2	Electronic Arts
9/2/03	NFL Blitz: Pro	Midway

## THE HULK

■ **FORMAT** PLAYSTATION 2/XBOX/GAMECUBE ■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** VIVENDI UNIVERSAL ■ **RELEASE** MAY 27



Marvel's big green weenie is one hyped-up up mofo, and he's set to put a hurtin' on all three major consoles this May. So far, we've been very impressed with this game's visual look, which utilizes a technique that blends 3D modeling and cel shading in a way similar to The Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker. On the gameplay side of things, The Hulk isn't just a smashfest (although you will do your share of scenery shredding). When you're Bruce Banner, the action morphs into more of a stealth/action game, as "Bruce the Juice" tries to avoid his inner rage through all manner of sneakiness.

9/22/03	NHL Hitz: Pro	Midway
9/3/03	Ninja Gaiden	Tecmo
6/17/03	Operation Flashpoint	Infogrames
6/10/03	Outlaw Volleyball	Vivendi Universal
4/22/03	Phantasy Star Online Episodes I & II	Microsoft
6/24/03	Pirates of the Caribbean	Bethesda Softworks
9/9/03	Rainbow Six 3: Raven Shield	Ubi Soft
5/6/03	Return to Castle Wolfenstein	Activision
5/13/03	Revolt	Acclaim
8/1/03	Shaun Palmer's Pro Snowboarder 2	Activision
7/1/03	Shayde	Metro3D
6/2/03	Sniper: Path of Vengeance	Xicat Interactive
6/17/03	Soldier of Fortune 2: Double Helix	Activision
8/26/03	Soul Calibur II	Namco
5/13/03	Speed Kings	Acclaim
7/1/03	SRS: Street Racing Syndicate	3DO
5/1/03	Stake: Fortune Fighters	Metro3D
6/16/03	Star Wars Knights of the Old Republic	LucasArts

8/4/03	Suikoden III	Konami
6/10/03	SX Superstar	Acclaim
5/6/03	Top Angler	Xicat Interactive
8/1/03	Travis Pastrana's Pro MotoX	Activision
9/16/03	True Crime: Streets of LA	Activision
5/23/03	Unseen, The	Microsoft
6/3/03	Wakeboarding Unleashed Featuring Shaun Murray	Activision
9/16/03	World's Scariest Police Chases	Vivendi Universal
9/1/03	WWE Raw 2	THQ
6/10/03	X-Files: Resist or Serve	Vivendi Universal
9/16/03	XIII	Ubi Soft

## PC

6/2/03	Age of Wonders: Shadow Magic	Gathering of Developers
4/30/03	Blitzkrieg	Hip Interactive
4/29/03	BloodRayne	Majesco
6/17/03	BMX: Team DK	Infogrames
6/16/03	Call of Cthulu	Fishtank Interactive
6/2/03	Celebrity Deathmatch	Take 2
6/3/03	Dark Age Of Camelot: Gold Edition	Vivendi Universal
6/16/03	Dark Khan	Take 2
6/30/03	Deus Ex 2: Invisible War	Eidos
7/15/03	Dragon's Lair II Time Warp	Digital Leisure
6/2/03	Duke Nukem Forever	Take 2
5/15/03	Enter The Matrix	Infogrames
5/15/03	Enter The Matrix: Special Edition	Infogrames
7/29/03	Epic Chess	Vivendi Universal
5/6/03	EVE Online	Vivendi Universal
6/2/03	Evil Twin: Cyprien's Chronicle	Ubi Soft
4/17/03	Gothic II	JoWood Productions
5/13/03	Grand Theft Auto: Vice City	Take 2
7/1/03	Half-Life 2	Vivendi Universal

## CASTLEVANIA: ARIA OF SORROW

■ **FORMAT** GAME BOY ADVANCE ■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** KONAMI ■ **RELEASE** MAY 6



Castlevania has remained relatively immune to the advances of next-gen technology. In fact, when the series tried to go 3D on the N64 in 1999, fans decried it as sacrilegious and a blight on the Castlevania lineage. Not surprisingly, the franchise has found a home on the 2D prairies of the Game Boy Advance. Does that mean that Aria of Sorrow has nothing new for us? Not quite. Koji Igarashi, the series' mastermind, assures us, "We certainly made a lot of strides forward in the game system and what's available in the game, but we also left it very much a Castlevania game so that fans of the series will enjoy playing it."

7/1/03	Halo	Microsoft
5/6/03	Harpoon IV	Ubi Soft
7/22/03	Homework 2	Vivendi Universal
5/27/03	Hulk, The	Vivendi Universal
4/22/03	Inquisition	Strategy First
6/25/03	Lock On: Modern Air Combat	Ubi Soft
5/19/03	Medal of Honor: Allied Assault Platinum Edition	Electronic Arts
5/6/03	Medieval: Total War Viking Invasion	Activision
5/26/03	Midnight Club II	Take 2
5/20/03	MotoGP 2	THQ
5/27/03	Neverwinter Nights: The Shadows of Undrentide	Infogrames
5/19/03	Planetside	Sony Online
4/22/03	Rise of Nations	Microsoft
5/6/03	RollerCoaster Tycoon II: Wacky World	Infogrames
6/9/03	Savage	IGames
6/4/03	Serious Sam Gold	Global Star Software
5/19/03	Sims: Superstar, The	Electronic Arts
7/15/03	Space Ace	Digital Leisure
6/24/03	Star Trek: Elite Force II	Activision
5/1/03	Starsky & Hutch	Vivendi Universal
6/2/03	State of Emergency	Take 2
6/2/03	Team Fortress 2: Brotherhood of Arms	Vivendi Universal
4/22/03	Tomb Raider: The Angel of Darkness	Eidos
6/24/03	Warcraft III: Frozen Throne Expansion	Vivendi Universal
7/15/03	Who Shot Johnny Rock?	Digital Leisure
6/3/03	Will Rock	Ubi Soft

## GAME BOY ADVANCE

9/9/03	A Sound of Thunder	Bam Entertainment
6/23/03	Advance Wars 2	Nintendo
7/1/03	Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance	Electro Source
5/21/03	Buffy the Vampire Slayer	THQ
5/6/03	Castlevania: Aria of Sorrow	Konami
8/19/03	Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon	Ubi Soft
6/9/03	Donkey Kong Country	Nintendo
6/24/03	Dragon Ball Z: Legacy of Goku II	Infogrames
5/5/03	Finding Nemo	THQ
4/29/03	High Heat Baseball 2004	3DO
5/27/03	Hulk, The Incredible	Vivendi Universal
6/10/03	Ice Nine	Bam Entertainment
6/23/03	Jet Grind Radio	THQ
9/9/03	Lizzie McGuire	Disney Interactive
4/22/03	Lufia: The Ruins of Lore	Atlus
5/12/03	Rugrats Go Wild	THQ
5/19/03	Sega Arcade Gallery	THQ
8/1/03	Sim City	Electro Source
5/13/03	Simpsons Road Rage	THQ
6/10/03	Space Channel 5: Uiala's Cosmic Attack	THQ
5/27/03	Splinter Cell	Ubi Soft
7/15/03	Spy Kids 3	Disney Interactive
5/26/03	Wario Ware, Inc: Mega Microgames	Nintendo
7/29/03	Woody Woodpecker: Crazy Castle 5	Kemco
6/2/03	Worms Blast	Ubi Soft

# SECRET ACCESS

PS2 NINTENDO GAMECUBE XBOX **PLAYSTATION 2/GAMECUBE/XBOX**

PS2 **PLAYSTATION 2/**  
XBOX **XBOX**

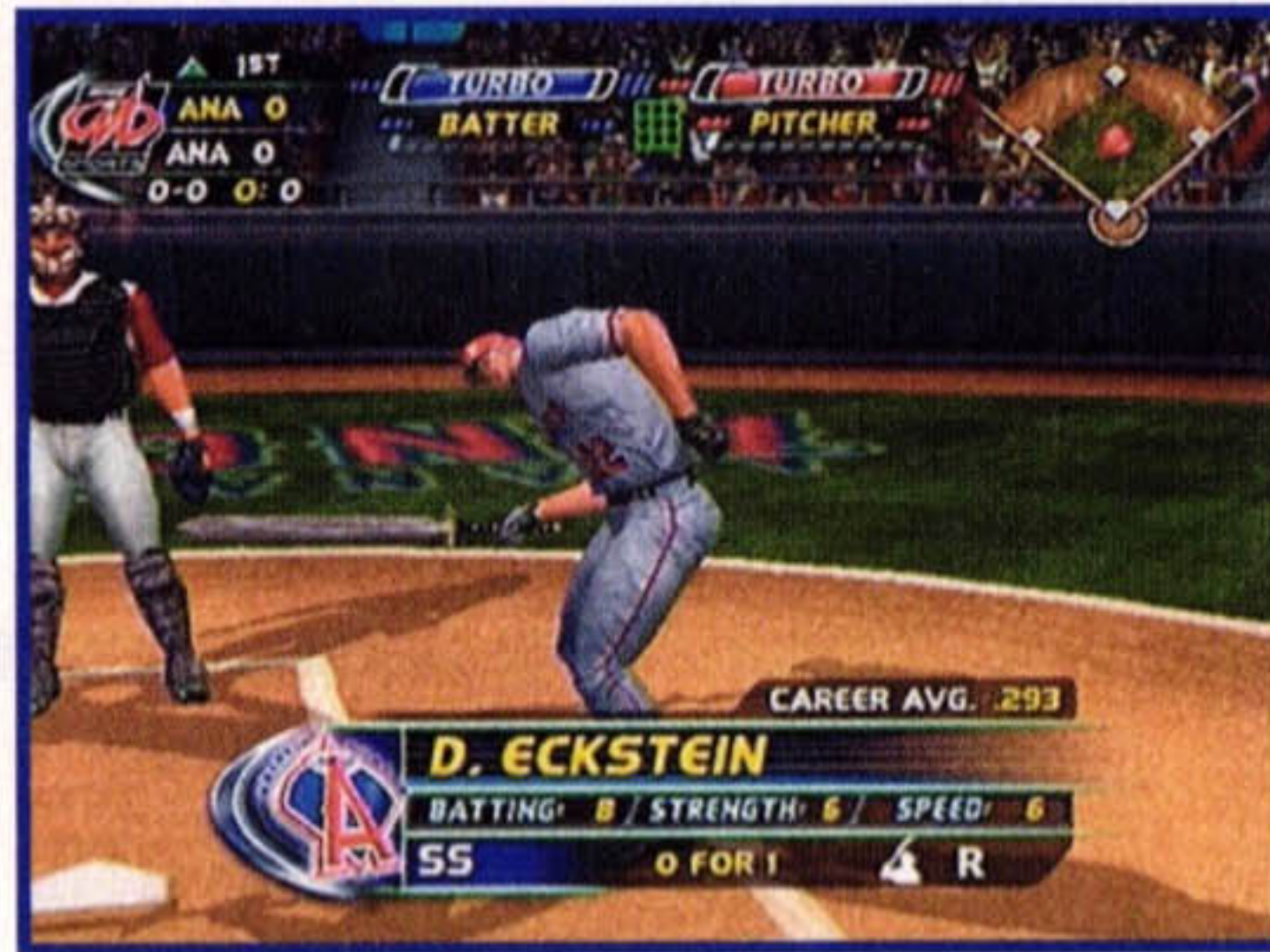


## ATV QUAD POWER RACING 2

Enter any of the following codes as the name of your profile to unlock the corresponding cheat.

- All ATVs – GENERALLEE
- All Riders – BUBBA
- All Tracks – ROADKILL
- All Tricks – FIDDLERSELBOW
- Challenges – DOUBLEBARREL
- Champs – REDROOSTER
- Maximum Stats – GINGHAM

*"GI Droid"*  
(location unknown – last seen in DC eating Freedom Fries)



## MLB SLUGFEST 2004

The numbers indicate the number of times you should press the first, second, and third buttons. Finally, the directions tell you which way you should press the d-pad.

- Alien Team – 2, 3, 1, Down
- Atlantis – 3, 2, 1, Left
- Big Head – 2, 0, 0, Right
- Blade Bat – 0, 0, 2, Up
- Bobble Head Team – 1, 3, 3, Down
- Bone Bat – 0, 0, 1, Up
- Casey Team – 2, 3, 3, Down
- Cheats Disabled – 1, 1, 1, Down
- Colosseum – 3, 3, 3, Up
- Dolphin Team – 1, 0, 2, Down
- Dwarf Team – 1, 0, 3, Down
- Eagle Team – 2, 1, 2, Right
- Empire Park – 3, 2, 1, Right
- Evil Clown Team – 2, 1, 1, Down
- Extended Time For Codes – 3, 0, 3, Up
- Forbidden City – 3, 3, 3, Left
- Gladiator Team – 1, 1, 3, Down
- Horse Team – 2, 1, 1, Right
- Ice Bat – 0, 0, 3, Up
- Lion Team – 2, 2, 0, Right
- Little League – 1, 0, 1, Down
- Log Bat – 0, 0, 4, Up
- Mace Bat – 0, 0, 4, Left
- Max Batting – 3, 0, 0, Left
- Max Power – 0, 3, 0, Left
- Max Speed – 0, 0, 3, Left
- Midway Park – 3, 2, 1, Down
- Minotaur Team – 1, 1, 0, Down
- Monument – 3, 3, 3, Down
- Napolitano Team – 2, 3, 2, Down
- Olshan Team – 2, 2, 2, Down
- Pinto Team – 2, 1, 0, Right
- Rivera Team – 2, 2, 2, Up
- Rocket Park – 3, 2, 1, Up
- Rodeo Clown – 1, 3, 2, Down
- Rubber Ball – 2, 4, 2, Up
- Scorpion Team – 1, 1, 2, Down
- Softball – 2, 4, 2, Down
- Spike Bat – 0, 0, 5, Up
- Sub-Zero Team – 1, 2, 2, Down
- Team Terry Fitzgerald – 3, 3, 3, Right
- Team Todd McFarlane – 2, 2, 2, Right
- Tiny Head – 2, 0, 0, Left
- Unlimited Turbo – 4, 4, 4, Down
- Whiffle Bat – 0, 0, 4, Right

*"The Rhino"*  
Toledo, OH

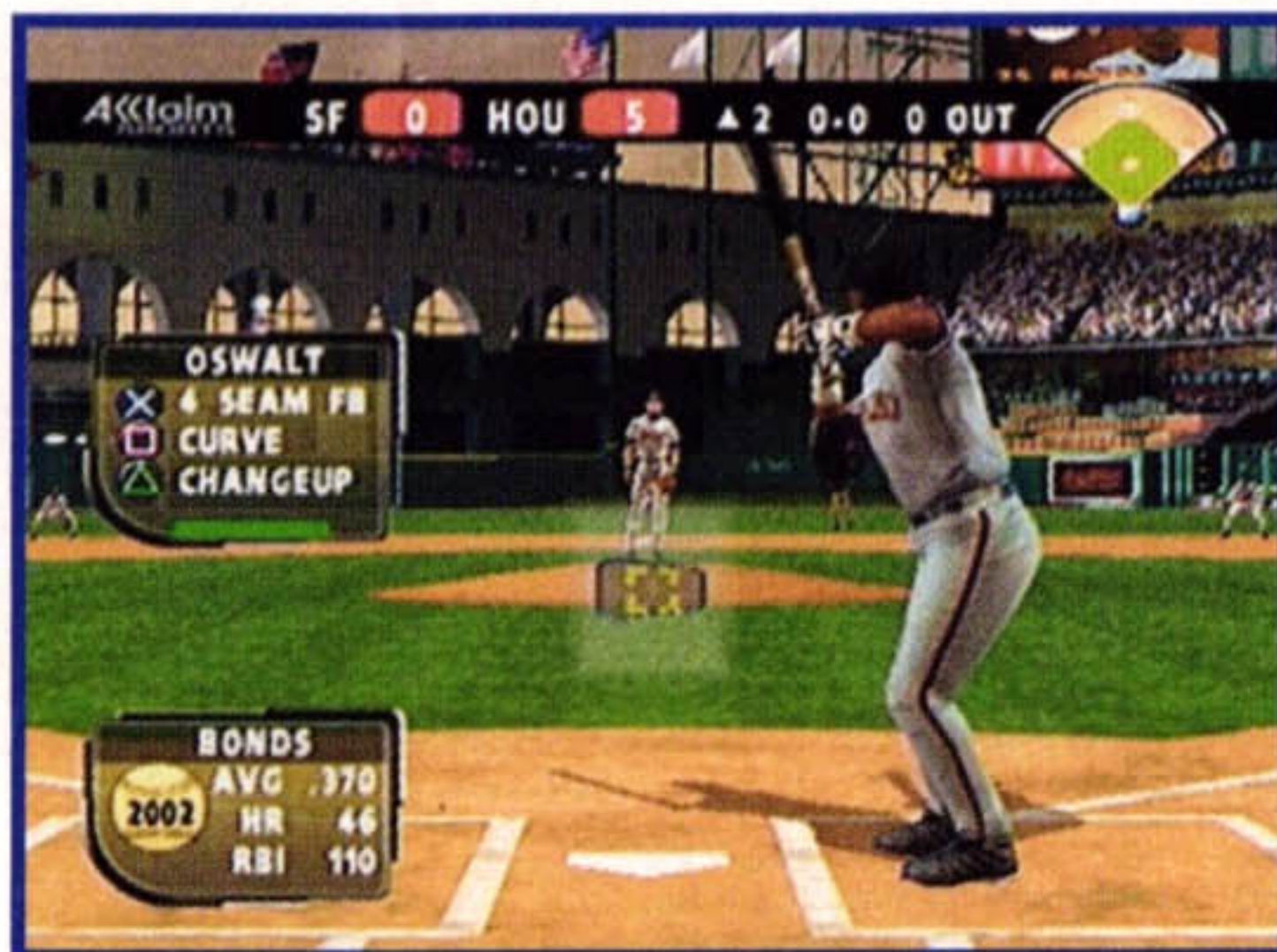


## BIG MUTHA TRUCKERS

The better the codes, the better the magazine. We've got the latest cheats for you directly from our secret code supplier. Enter all of the following codes in the Options screen.

- 10 Million Dollars – LOTSAMONEY
- Level Select – LAZYPLAYER
- Master Code – CHEATINGMUTHATRUCKER
- Save Money – If you still take a lot of damage on your trails and have not used a cheat, use the following trick to save some cash. When you enter the garage, switch trailers. The new one will be damage free. If you switch back to your old trailer, that will also be free of damage. Note that if you've taken only minor damage, it is better simply to repair it.

Tara Nitz  
Minneapolis, MN



## ALL-STAR BASEBALL 2004

Cheating is fun. Companies should realize that codes extend the life of a game, rather than shorten it...maybe.

**Easy Card Points** – Begin a two-player game with only one actual player. Now, throw a perfect game, striking out every batter. In the bottom of the ninth, save with two strikes and two outs. Finish the game, get your points, and save your options. If you reload the last saved game, you can quickly earn points again. Repeat the process until you're satisfied.

*"Captain Howdy"*  
Georgetown

## MVP BASEBALL 2003

**16:9 Anamorphic Cheat** – This cheat mode will widen the field of view on all cameras so that the game renders a larger horizontal wedge of the world while rendering the same sized vertical wedge. This is analogous to anamorphic mode rendering. On a 4:3 aspect ratio TV, it will display the game's world as slightly squished horizontally. This cheat mode does not change resolution or display modes in any way.

**PS2** – Press and hold the L2 and R2 triggers for more than 3 seconds. Now, press Left on the d-pad to enable this cheat. Press right on the d-pad to disable the cheat.

**XBOX** – Press and hold the L and R triggers for more than 3 seconds. Now, press Left on the d-pad to enable this cheat. Press right on the d-pad to disable the cheat.

**Broken Bats Cheat** – If you create a player with any one of these names, the player's bat will always break whenever he makes contact with the ball: Keegn Patersn, Jacob Patersn, or Ziggy Patersn.

**Home Run Cheat** – If you create a player with the name Erik Kiss, he will always hit a home run.

Lucio Fulci  
Venice, Italy



**COLIN McRAE RALLY 3**

Codemasters makes you pay in order to access any codes. If you go to the codes menu, you will find that the game assigns you a Bonus Code. This dictates the cheat codes. For example, if you want to use the Jet cheat, and your Bonus Code is 0976, then enter GOBUUR. If you don't receive any of the Bonus Codes listed below, erase the save on your memory card or hard drive and start another game. This usually works within about eight attempts as there are only about eight different bonus codes.

**All Cars**

MKCLLB – Bonus Code 0976  
WWACNU – Bonus Code 1154  
FMGUOT – Bonus Code 1432  
OQJHOK – Bonus code 1866

**All Difficulties**

WSNXZU – Bonus Code 0976  
AUNAMA – Bonus Code 1154  
UXNKFB – Bonus Code 1432

**All Parts**

FHPCNU – Bonus Code 0976  
UZVLLB – Bonus Code 1154  
KEZIPE – Bonus Code 1432  
FHPIWQ – Bonus Code 1866

**All Tracks**

ODIATU – Bonus Code 0976  
XWUDBU – Bonus Code 1154  
RVNUUR – Bonus Code 1432  
ODIFCS – Bonus Code 1866

**Baja Buggy**

NQFIPE – Bonus Code 0976  
PHOUOT – Bonus Code 1154  
VURCNU – Bonus Code 1432

**Battle Tank**

LHZWOH – Bonus code 0976  
ZIIUUR – Bonus code 1154  
ZSSDBU – Bonus code 1432  
LWXEIF – Bonus code 1866

**Ford Super Focus**

OQJZZY – Bonus code 0976  
UYNFVA – Bonus code 1154  
LPGXUE – Bonus code 1432  
WSNBSB – Bonus code 1866

**Hovercraft**

IURUOT – Bonus code 0976  
MHXIPE – Bonus code 1154  
NXDLLB – Bonus code 1432  
BKQBAU – Bonus code 1866

**Jet**

GOBUUR – Bonus Code 0976  
LOWWOH – Bonus Code 1154  
YJBATU – Bonus Code 1432  
RUGSSH – Bonus Code 1866

**R/C Cars**

WWBDBU – Bonus code 0976  
AQVATU – Bonus code 1154  
GBPWOH – Bonus code 1432  
PFKXCQ – Bonus code 1866



**Italy Classic Team** – Play as Italy and win the European Cup.



**World All-Stars Team** – Win the International League.

Nick Andros  
Boulder, CO

**WINNING ELEVEN 6**

Feeling like a loser? Well, these codes won't help you become better; they just reveal how to unlock all of the hidden teams.

**Argentina Classic Team** – Play as Argentina and win the American Cup.

**Bonus Players** – Complete the Master League and all of the training challenges to unlock new players that you can sign. Note that this can be done up to three times for more players.

**Brazil Classic Team** – Play as Brazil and win the American Cup.

**England Classic Team** – Play as England and win the European Cup.

**European All-Stars Team** – Play as a European team and win the International Cup.

**France Classic Team** – Play as France and win the European Cup.

**Germany Classic Team** – Play as Germany and win the European Cup.

**Holland Classic Team** – Play as Holland and win the European Cup.

**Italy Classic Team** – Play as Italy and win the European Cup.

**World All-Stars Team** – Win the International League.

"The Armchair Quarterback"  
Canton, OH

**BATTLE ENGINE AQUILA**

Start a new game and enter the following codes as case-sensitive names to unlock their corresponding function.

**All Bonuses** – 105770Y2  
**Invincibility** – B4K42  
**Level Select** – IEVAH!

Hayao Mizasaki  
Tokyo, Japan

**EVERBLUE 2**

We've found some cool secrets in this kick-ass underwater adventure to make it a bit easier to breath. Enjoy!

**Item Combinations**

**Aspirin** – Acetic Anhydride + Acetyl Acid  
**Carnelian/Sardonyx/Chrysoprase** – Diamond Knife + Calcedony  
**Cement** – Limestone + Gabro  
**Citrine/Crystal** – Diamond Knife + Quartz  
**Disinfection Liquid** – Water + Oxidized Alcohol  
**Infinite Rebreather** – Titanium Alloy + Rebreather 10  
**Ion Ring** – Ring + Tourmaline  
**Limestone/Marble** – Beryl Knife + Calcite  
**Magnetite/Jade/Augite** – Beryl Knife + Basalt  
**Magnetite/Titanium Ore/Apatite** – Beryl Knife + Gabro  
**Mega-ade 500** – Water + Mega-ade 300  
**Mega-ade 1000** – Water + Mega-ade 500  
**Mega-ade 2000** – Deep Sea Water + Mega-ade 1000  
**Mega-ade 4000** – Deep Sea Water + Mega-ade 2000  
**Mega-ade 8000** – Deep Sea Water + Mega-ade 4000  
**Mega-ade 10000** – Deep Sea Water + Mega-ade 500  
**Mineral Water** – Deep Sea Water + Tourmaline  
**Negative Ion Water** – Water + Tourmaline  
**Orthoclase/Quartz** – Beryl Knife + Granite  
**Royal Ampoule** – Negative Ion Water + Mega-ade 4000  
**Ruby/Sapphire** – Diamond Knife + Corundum  
**Scorpions Tail** – Snake Bite + Killer Spider  
**Supertonic** – Negative Ion Water + Mega-ade 500  
**Supertonic Dash** – Negative Ion Water + Mega-ade 1000  
**Supertonic Extra** – Mineral Water + Mega-ade 4000  
**Supertonic Turbo** – Mineral Water + Mega-ade 2000  
**Titanium Alloy** – Vanadium + Titanium Ore  
**Yellow Paint** – Beryl Knife + Opiment

**Unlimited Air Supply** – Combine Vanadium and Titanium Ore to get Titanium Alloy. Combine the Titanium Alloy and the Rebreather 10 to gain an Infinite Rebreather.

Jean Martin Carrer  
Madrid, Spain

**DEVIL MAY CRY 2**

Beat the first mission and then exit out to the Main Menu. Enter the following codes at the "Press Start" screen. Now go to the menu to load your game. If you press R1 before you load your game, you can change costumes.

**Diesel Bonus Costume** – L3, R3, L1, R1, L2, R2, L3, R3  
Ken Masters  
Los Angeles, CA

**ENTER TO WIN**

Send in your codes and passwords, and if we choose your entry as Code of the Month you'll win a wonderful prize from the Game Informer Vault! All other entries printed within these hallowed pages will receive a Secret Access t-shirt.

Send To:  
**Secret Access**  
Game Informer Magazine  
724 North First Street, 4th Floor  
Minneapolis, MN 55401  
secretaccess@gameinformer.com

## DARK CLOUD 2

Here's a comprehensive list of inventions that can be forged throughout the course of the game. As you probably know, you'll need to snap a photo of each of the three components needed for an invention. If you snap a photo that can be used, a little yellow light bulb will appear in front of the picture name. We've also included which chapter each invention can first be forged in. Those inventions highlighted in red are for the Ridepod. A big thanks goes out to James Reese, Kyle Tremble, Marcus Finely, and Laura Waters for helping us compile this ever-expanding and time consuming list.



Invention	Picture 1	Picture 2	Picture 3	Chapter
Albatross	Fire Squall	Tree	Geyser	[5]
Antidote Amulet	Bed	Dell Clinic Sign	Holy Emblem	[3]
Antidote Drink	Dell Clinic Sign	Well	Bottle	[3]
Anti-Curse Amulet	Hmmm! Jurak	Saint's Writing	Holy Emblem	[3]
Anti-Goo Amulet	Laundry	Ruler of the Pond	Waterfall	[3]
Anti-Petrify Amulet	Jurak's Eye	Morning Sun	Clock	[2]
Aquarium	Window	Wooden Box	Fountain	[1]
Bandit Brassard	Gold Store	Show Window	Clock	[1]
<b>Barrel Cannon</b>	<b>Barrel</b>	<b>Fountain</b>	<b>Mushroom</b>	<b>[2]</b>
<b>Barrel Cannon 2</b>	<b>Barrel</b>	<b>Fountain</b>	<b>Well</b>	<b>[3]</b>
<b>Barrel Cannon 3</b>	<b>Barrel</b>	<b>Water Tank</b>	<b>Waterfall</b>	<b>[4]</b>
<b>Barrel Cannon 4</b>	<b>Barrel</b>	<b>Air Cleaner</b>	<b>Fire Squall</b>	<b>[5]</b>
Bell Trigger	Phone	Tree	Fountain	[1]
Bomb	Pot	Weapon Shop Sign	Candle	[1]
Bone Rapier	Bone	Cloth	Withered Jurak	[2]
Bread	Polly's Bakery Sign	Wheat Flour	Fireplace	[1]
Bucket Leg	Trashcan	Watertank	River	[3]
Bucket Pack	Mailbox	Warehouse	Trashcan	[3]
Buggy	Belt	Car	System 5WP2	[4]
Cannonball Arm	Manhole	Old-Style Robot	Post	[1]
Cannonball Arm 2	Post	Constructor	Rock	[1]
<b>Cannonball Arm 3</b>	<b>Post</b>	<b>Constructor</b>	<b>Moon Crystal</b>	<b>[3]</b>
<b>Cannonball Arm 4</b>	<b>Constructor</b>	<b>Rock</b>	<b>Egg Chair</b>	<b>[4]</b>
<b>Caterpillar</b>	<b>Wheel</b>	<b>Cart</b>	<b>Car</b>	<b>[1]</b>
Cheese	Lao Trademark	Café Sign	Milk Can	[3]
<b>Cleaner Pack</b>	<b>Vacuum</b>	<b>Belt</b>	<b>Air Cleaner</b>	<b>[4]</b>
<b>Clown Body</b>	<b>Paints</b>	<b>Parasol</b>	<b>Cup</b>	<b>[1]</b>
<b>Clown Foot</b>	<b>Clown Robo Attack</b>	<b>Egg</b>	<b>Scale</b>	<b>[1]</b>
<b>Clown Hand</b>	<b>Clown Robo Attack</b>	<b>Parasol</b>	<b>Pipe</b>	<b>[1]</b>
<b>Clown Hand 2</b>	<b>Clown Robo Attack</b>	<b>Parasol</b>	<b>Scale</b>	<b>[3]</b>
<b>Clown Hand 3</b>	<b>Clown Robo Attack</b>	<b>Flag</b>	<b>Work Arm</b>	<b>[4]</b>
<b>Clown Hand 4</b>	<b>Clown Robo Attack</b>	<b>Power Arm</b>	<b>Paints</b>	<b>[5]</b>
Clown Shoes	Clown Robo Attack	Parasol	Cloth	[1]
Cubic Hammer	Gold Store	Dresser	Work Equipment	[4]
Dark Viper	Puppet Shingala	Rifle	Night Stalker	[4]
Digi Hammer	Computer	Constructor	Decorative Lights	[5]
Double Pudding	Find the Golden Egg!	Wheat Flour	Milk Can	[2]
Dragon Shoes	Runaway Dragon	Waterfall	Cloth	[3]
<b>Drill Arm</b>	<b>Book Reader</b>	<b>Windmill</b>	<b>Fan</b>	<b>[4]</b>
<b>Drill Arm 2</b>	<b>Work Arm</b>	<b>Horn</b>	<b>Electric Sesame</b>	<b>[5]</b>
<b>Drill Arm 3</b>	<b>Work Arm</b>	<b>Luna Stone</b>	<b>Ixion</b>	<b>[5]</b>
<b>Drill Arm 4</b>	<b>Work Arm</b>	<b>Flower of the Sun</b>	<b>Deer Horn</b>	<b>[7]</b>
<b>Drum Can Body</b>	<b>Drum Can</b>	<b>Lamp</b>	<b>Chair</b>	<b>[5]</b>
<b>Energy Pack</b>	<b>Belt</b>	<b>Milk Can</b>	<b>Pipe</b>	<b>[1]</b>
<b>Energy Pack Urn</b>	<b>Energy Pipe</b>	<b>Generator</b>	<b>Pot</b>	<b>[5]</b>
Escape Powder	Elevator	Ancient Mural	Trans. Device	[5]
Falcon	Hammer	Withered Jurak	Large Crane	[5]
Final Bomb	Cinders	Oven	Candle	[5]
Flamingo	Palm Tree	Tiny Hammer	Light of Luna Stone	[4]
Gift Capsule	Letter	Bone	Pot	[1]
Grenade Launcher	Fountain	Chimney	Egg	[1]
<b>Hammer Arm</b>	<b>Barrel</b>	<b>Post</b>	<b>Work Robot</b>	<b>[4]</b>
<b>Hammer Arm 2</b>	<b>Hammer</b>	<b>Work Arm</b>	<b>Post</b>	<b>[5]</b>
<b>Hammer Arm 3</b>	<b>Hammer</b>	<b>Chimney</b>	<b>Earth Gem Alter</b>	<b>[6]</b>

Invention	Picture 1	Picture 2	Picture 3	Chapter
<b>Hammer Arm 4</b>	<b>Tiny Hammer</b>	<b>Moon Column</b>	<b>Power Arm</b>	<b>[7]</b>
Heavy Hammer	Power Arm	Drum Can	Pazos	[5]
Holy Water	Bottle	Sun	Holy Emblem	[3]
Improved Bomb	Egg	Coal	Candle	[2]
Iron Leg	Saw	Phonograph	Constructor	[1]
<b>Jet Hover</b>	<b>Relaxation Fountain</b>	<b>Fire House</b>	<b>Candle</b>	<b>[7]</b>
<b>Laser Arm</b>	<b>Barrel</b>	<b>Geyser</b>	<b>Energy Pipe</b>	<b>[5]</b>
<b>Laser Arm 2</b>	<b>Energy Pipe</b>	<b>Ixion</b>	<b>Crescent Light</b>	<b>[5]</b>
<b>Laser Arm 3</b>	<b>Relaxation Fountain</b>	<b>Energy Pipe</b>	<b>Search Light</b>	<b>[7]</b>
<b>Laser Arm 4</b>	<b>Blue Lantern</b>	<b>Legend of Moon</b>	<b>Energy Pipe</b>	<b>[7]</b>
Leather Shoes	Cloth	Chair	Gyumo Roar	[2]
Level Up Powder	Sun	Sun Chair	Sun Table	[7]
Lightspeed	Candle	Rock	Flower	[1]
Lure Rod	Fish	River	Lafrescia Stem	[2]
Knight Boots	Shield	Belt	Moon	[1]
<b>Machine Gun Arm</b>	<b>Runaway Dragon</b>	<b>Rifle</b>	<b>Fan</b>	<b>[3]</b>
<b>Machine Gun Arm 2</b>	<b>Fan</b>	<b>Telescope</b>	<b>Windmill</b>	<b>[4]</b>
<b>Machine Gun Arm 3</b>	<b>Hammer</b>	<b>Chimney</b>	<b>Earth Gem Alter</b>	<b>[5]</b>
<b>Machine Gun Arm 4</b>	<b>Drum Can</b>	<b>Wind Gem Alter</b>	<b>Propeller</b>	<b>[6]</b>
Magic Gun	Moon Crystal	Fountain	Moon	[3]
Metal Boots	Drum Can	Work Robot	Belt	[5]
<b>Milk Can Body</b>	<b>Chimney</b>	<b>Milk Can</b>	<b>Peeping Pole</b>	<b>[3]</b>
<b>Missile Pod Arm</b>	<b>Wooden Box</b>	<b>Rotating Sign</b>	<b>Mushroom</b>	<b>[3]</b>
<b>Missile Pod Arm 2</b>	<b>Luna Lab Symbol</b>	<b>Fountain</b>	<b>Wooden Box</b>	<b>[4]</b>
<b>Missile Pod Arm 3</b>	<b>Gold Store</b>	<b>Generator</b>	<b>Deer Horn</b>	<b>[5]</b>
<b>Missile Pod Arm 4</b>	<b>Gold Store</b>	<b>Mount Gundor</b>	<b>Fire Gem Alter</b>	<b>[6]</b>
<b>Multi-Feet</b>	<b>Post</b>	<b>Work Robot</b>	<b>Deer Horn</b>	<b>[4]</b>
Non-Stop Amulet	Clock	Starglass	Monument	[3]
<b>Nova Cannon</b>	<b>Sun</b>	<b>Rapper</b>	<b>Generator</b>	<b>[5]</b>
<b>Nova Cannon 2</b>	<b>Sun</b>	<b>Fire Gem Alter</b>	<b>Streetlight</b>	<b>[6]</b>
<b>Nova Cannon 3</b>	<b>Sun</b>	<b>Stove</b>	<b>Moon Column</b>	<b>[7]</b>
<b>Nova Cannon 4</b>	<b>Sun</b>	<b>Pot Torch</b>	<b>Flotsam Revived</b>	<b>[8]</b>
Panther Boots	Bone	Ultimate Gaspard	Moon	[5]
Poison Wrench	Mushroom	Deer Horn	Sulfur-Colored Juice	[5]
Premium Chicken	Burning Dragon Fire	Special Peking Duck	Pork Dumpling	[3]
Princess Boots	Waterfall Curtain	Flower Chandelier	Moon Flower Palace	[7]
<b>Propeller Leg</b>	<b>Cart</b>	<b>Fan</b>	<b>Windmill Feather</b>	<b>[4]</b>
Question Shooter	Linda	Fountain	Neo Projector	[4]
<b>Refrigerator Body</b>	<b>Refrigerator</b>	<b>Self-Powered Gen.</b>	<b>Traffic Light</b>	<b>[4]</b>
Resurrection Powder	Hot Springs Spirit	Fruit	Lotus Flower	[7]
Ridepod Fuel	Luna Stone Shards	Stardust Pond	Mud	[7]
Roller Foot	Wheel	Ventilation	Freight Train	[3]
Ruler's Sword	Figure	Iron Maiden	Pazos	[5]
Samurai Arm	Barrel	Crescent Light	Weapon	[3]
Samurai Arm 2	Work Crane	Runaway Dragon	Weapon	[5]
Samurai Arm 3	Moon Column	Deer Horn	Weapon	[7]
Samurai Arm 4	Soldier Survivor	Legend of Moon	Flotsam Revived	[8]
Samurai Body	Telescope	Cedric Shop Sign	Crescent Light	[3]
Sand Breaker	Silk Flag	Horn	Spinning Ivanoff	[3]
Sexy Panther	Rifle	Flower in Light	Elana's Picture	[7]
Smash Wrench	Star Lamp	Constructor	Rock	[3]
Soap	Palm Tree	Laundry	Waterfall	[3]
Soul Breaker	Energy Pipe	Trans. Device	Geysers	[5]
Spike Boots	Pumpkin	Parasol	Moon Crystal	[3]
Stamina Drink	Bottle	King Mardan	Chinese Lantern	[3]
Star Breaker	Firehouse	Phantom Memo	Chimney	[3]
Steal Gun	Work Crane	Book	Fountain	[5]
Stinger Wrench	Air Cleaner	Pipe	Wheel	[4]
<b>Sun &amp; Moon Armor</b>	<b>Sun</b>	<b>Moon</b>	<b>Electric Sesame</b>	<b>[5]</b>
<b>Super Alloy Body</b>	<b>Work Equipment</b>	<b>Gold Store</b>	<b>Search Light</b>	<b>[4]</b>
Swan	Tree	Boat	Tiny Hammer	[1]
<b>Triple Urn Pack</b>	<b>Flower Chandelier</b>	<b>Pot</b>	<b>Light of Luna Stone</b>	<b>[7]</b>
Trumpet Gun	Rapper	Fountain	Tree	[1]
Turkey	Tree	Special Peking Duck	Windmill Feather	[4]
Twin Buster	Jurak's Nose	Rifle	Flower Chandelier	[7]
Wild Cat	Charging Ram	Rifle	Work Equipment	[4]
Wing Boots	Weather Vane	Windmill Feather	Belt	[4]
Wing Shoes	Parasol	Cloth	Windmill Feather	[3]
Wise Owl Sword	Grass	Charging Ram	Tree	[3]
<b>Wooden Box Body</b>	<b>Wooden Box</b>	<b>Hmmm! Jurak</b>	<b>Giant Yorda Tree</b>	<b>[3]</b>
Work Shoes	Ladder	Constructor	Cloth	[1]

"GI Staff"  
Minneapolis, MN

## CODE OF THE MONTH



### TENCHU 3: WRATH OF HEAVEN

The Mission-related cheats should be entered at the mission selection screen. The-item related cheats should be inputted at the screen where you choose items. Enter the Recover Health code during gameplay; pause a game and enter it. The rest of the codes should be entered at the title screen.

- All Characters** – L1, R2, L2, R1, Right, Left, L3, R3
- All Missions** – L1, R1, L2, R2, Right, , L3, R3
- All Mission Layouts** – R3, L3, R2, L2, R1, L1
- Bonus Stage** – L1, Up, R1, Down, L2, Right, R2, Left
- Hidden Level** – Up, Down, Right, Left,  (x3)
- Increase Items** – Hold R2 + L2 and press  (x3), Up, Left, Down, Right
- Recover Health** – Up, Down, Right, Left,  (x3)
- Unlock All Items** – Hold R1 + L1 and press Up,  (x2), Left,  (x2), Down,  (x2), Right,  (x2)

Corin Tucker  
Olympia, WA

### HIGH HEAT MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL 2004

The GI police (lead by superstar, Justin Lee) will turn on the heat if you even attempt to cheat just a little.

**Cheat Mode** – During a game, pause and press  (x2),  (x2), L1, R1. A sound will confirm a correct code entry. Now press L1 + L2 + R1 + R2. The Ball Cannon (set pitch physics) and Game State (edit game parameters) options will be unlocked.

Ren Bacon  
Chicago, IL

### ZONE OF THE ENDERS: THE 2ND RUNNER

**All power-ups (Zoradius)** – Pause during gameplay and press Up (x2), Down (x2), Left, Right, Left, Right, L1, R1.

**Zoradius Minigame** – Choose Extra Missions, Boss Battle Mode, and battle Vic Viper. Pause during gameplay when you're against Leo and press Up (x2), Down (x2), Left, Right, Left, Right, L1, R1. A sound will confirm correct code entry. If you return to the Extra Missions screen, you'll find the game.

Emily Sailor  
Athens, GA

### YU-GI-OH! DUELISTS OF THE ROSES

All of you fans will certainly be happy to see all of these succulent cheats. Yu-Gi-Oh, yaaaay!

#### Card Passwords

At the Build Deck screen, press R3 to bring up the menu to enter the following passwords.

- Ancient Tree Of Enlightenment** – EKJHQ109
- Aqua Dragon** – JXCB6FU7
- Barrel Dragon** – GTJXSBJ7
- Beast King Of The Swamp** – QXNTQPAX
- Birdface** – N54T4TY5
- Black Hole** – UMJ10MQB
- Blast Sphere** – CZN5GD2X
- Change Of Heart** – SBYDQM8B
- Crush Card** – SRA7L5YR
- Dragonseeker** – 81EZCH8B
- Earthshaker** – Y34PN1SV
- Elf's Light** – E5G3NRAD
- Exodia's Head** – 37689434
- Fairy King Trusdale** – YF07QVEZ
- Fairy's Gift** – NVE7A3EZ
- Goblin Fan** – 92886423
- Gravity Bind** – 0HNF99WX
- Greenkappa** – YBJMCD6Z
- Harpy's Feather Sweep** – 8HJHQPNP
- Horn Of The Unicorn** – S14FGKQ1
- Left Arm Of Exodia** – A5CF6HSH
- Magician Of Faith** – GME1S3UM
- Meteor Dragon** – 86985631
- Mimicat** – 69YDQM85
- Mirror Wall** – 53297534
- Mystical Capture Chains** – N1NDJMQ3
- Robotic Knight** – S5S7NKNH
- Royal Decree** – 8TETQHE1
- Seiyaryu** – 2H4D85J7
- Serpentine Princess** – UMQ3WZUZ
- Slate Warrior** – 73153736
- Swordsman From A Foreign Land** – CZ81UVGR
- Swordstalker** – AHOPSHEB
- Tactical Warrior** – 054TC727

**Duel Master S** – Go to the memory card maintenance menu and copy the saved game from Yu-Gi-Oh! Forbidden

Memories to a PS2 memory card. When you go to Custom Duel mode, it will show Duel Master S with a Goddess of Whim Deck Leader.

#### Fusions

- Aqua Dragon** – Kairyu-Shin + Aqua
- Black Dragon Jungle King** – Dragon + Grass
- Black Meteor Dragon (3500/3000)** – Red Eyes Black Dragon + Meteor Dragon
- Black Skull Dragon** – Red Eyes Black Dragon + Summoned Skull
- Blackland Fire Dragon** – Dragon + Spellcaster
- Clown Zombie** – Crass Clown + Zombie
- Crimson Sunbird** – Warrior + Winged Beast + Pyro
- Cyber Saurus** – Dinosaur + Metal
- Cyber Soldier** – Warrior + Machine
- Dark Elf** – Gemini Elf + Dark Spellcaster (ATK 1500 or less)
- Dragon Zombie** – Dragon + Zombie
- Flame Swordsman** – Any Pyro + Warrior
- Harpie's Pet Dragon** – Any Dragon + Harpie Lady
- Koumori Dragon** – Dragon + Fiend
- Magical Ghost** – Spellcaster + Zombie
- Metal Dragon** – Dragon + Machine
- Metal Zoa** – Zoa + Metalmorph
- Meteor Black Dragon (3500/3000)** – Red Eyes Black Dragon + Meteor Dragon
- Nekogal #2** – Beast + Female
- Pumpking** – Zombie + Plant
- Pumpking 2** – Zombie (ATK 1100 - 2000) + Plant
- Punished Eagle** – Warrior + Winged Beast
- Red Eyes B. Dragon** – Tyhone #2 + Koumori Dragon
- Red Eyes B. Metal Dragon** – Red Eyes B. Dragon + Metalmorph
- S. Dragon** – Dragon + Rock
- Thousand Dragon** – Time Wizard + any Dragon (ATK 2400 or less)
- Thunder Dragon** – Dragon (ATK 1600 or less) + Thunder (ATK 1600 or less)
- Twin-Headed Thunder Dragon (2800/2100)** – Thunder Dragon + Thunder Dragon
- Twin-Headed Thunder Dragon** – Dragon + (Grass, Thunder, Rock, Zombie, or Machine) + Thunder Dragon
- Wood Remains** – Zombie (ATK 1000 or less) + Plant

Jack Burton  
Chinatown

## XBOX

### RED FACTION II

Go to the extras option and then head to the cheats area. Input the following codes to get the desired effect, cheater!

- Director's Cut** – Y, X, Black, White, Black, X, Y, White
- Extra Chunky** – Black (x4), White, X, Black (x2)
- Gibby Ammo** – X (x4), Y, Black, X (x2)
- Gibby Explosions** – White, Black, X, Y, White, Black, X, Y
- Infinite Ammunition** – Y, White, X, Black, Y, Black, X, White
- Infinite Grenades** – Black, X, Black, Y, X, Black, X, Black
- Level Select** – Black, Y, X, White, Y, Black, X (x2)
- Master Code** – White (x2), X (x2), Y, Black, Y, Black
- Rain Of Fire** – Y (x8)
- Rapid Rails** – Black, Y, Black, Y, X (x2), White (x2)
- Super Health** – X (x2), Y, White, Y, White, Black
- Walking Dead** – X (x8)
- Wacky Deaths** – White (x8)

"The Game Molester"  
Washington D.C.

### CAPCOM VS. SNK 2 EO

Pair the following characters against each other to see an interesting interaction between the two before the fight.

- |                      |                    |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| Bison and Geese      | Rock and Geese     |
| Chun-Li and Yamazaki | Rock and Terry     |
| Geese and Terry      | Ryu and Ken        |
| Hibiki and Haohmaru  | Ryu and Kyo        |
| Iori and Bison       | Ryo and Yuri       |
| Iori and Kyo         | Terry and Ken      |
| Joe and Dan          | Terry and Yamazaki |
| Kim and Chang        | Yun and Chun-Li    |
| Mai and Joe          | Yuri and Sakura    |
| Maki and Yamazaki    | Zangeif and Eagle  |
| Raidan and Zangeif   |                    |

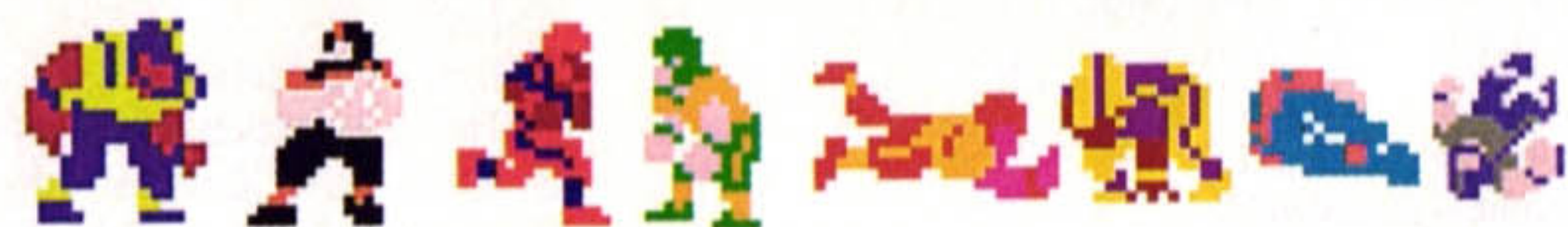
Ian MacKaye  
Washington, DC

# CLASSIC GI

## CLASSIC SPORTS FLASHBACK

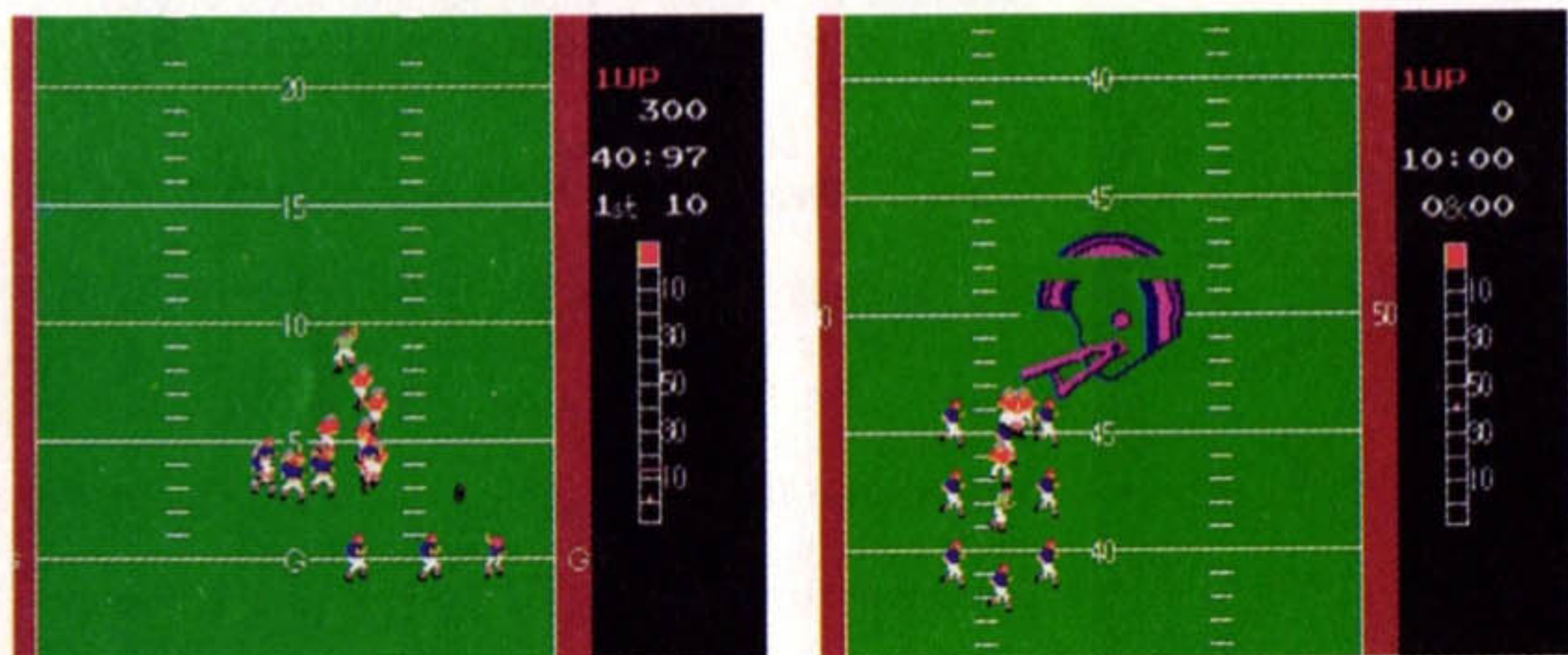
Sports have been a staple of video games since the beginning. Every early system had their own incarnation of football or baseball. In the 16-bit days, sales of sports titles were nearly half of all video games sold. Nowadays, we have cyber-scanned faces, thousands of polygons per player, endless statistics, and motion-captured animations. While much simpler, the following games influenced the big hits of today, and stand up to the test of time. These are indeed history's defining console sports video games.

### FOOTBALL



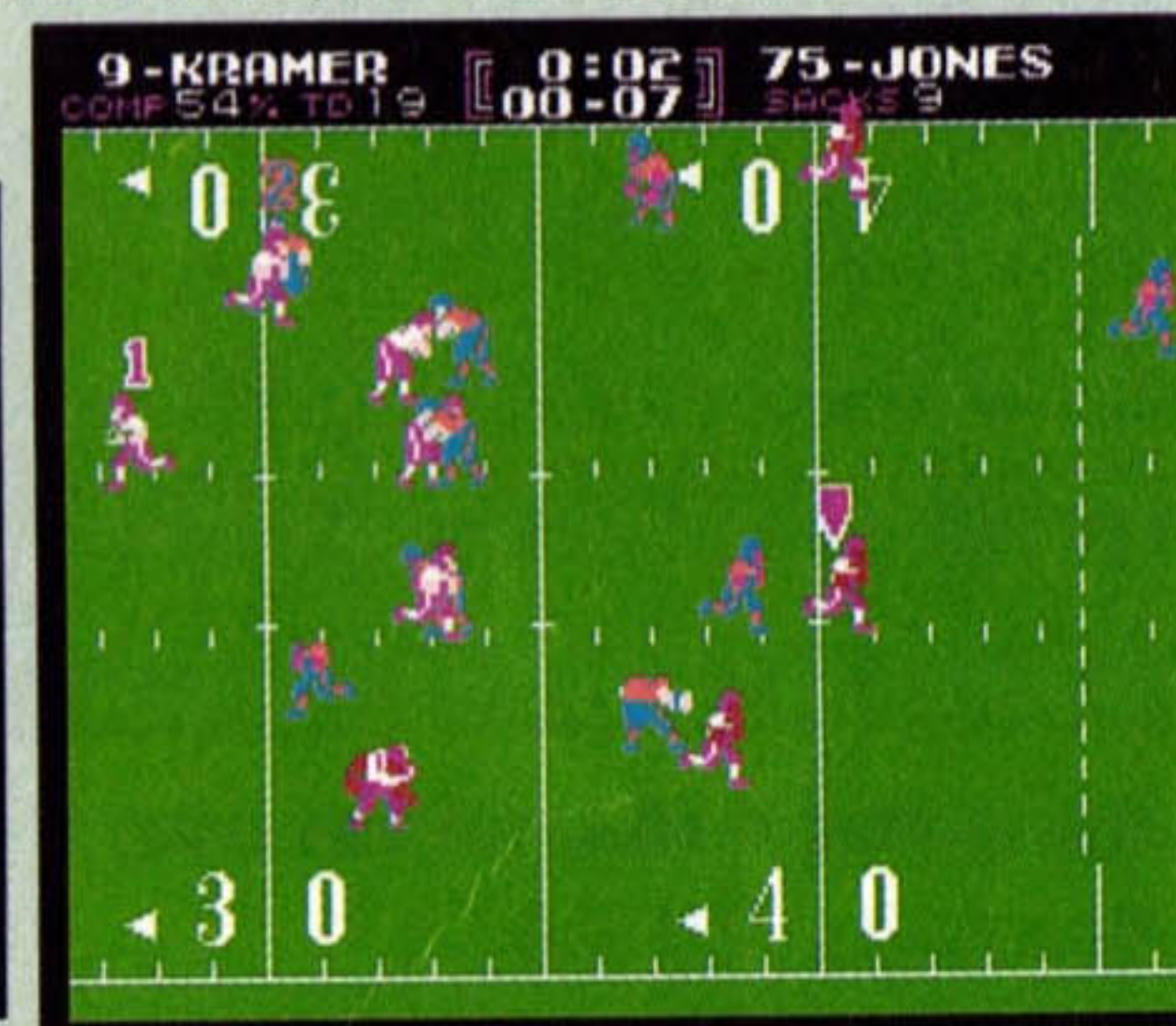
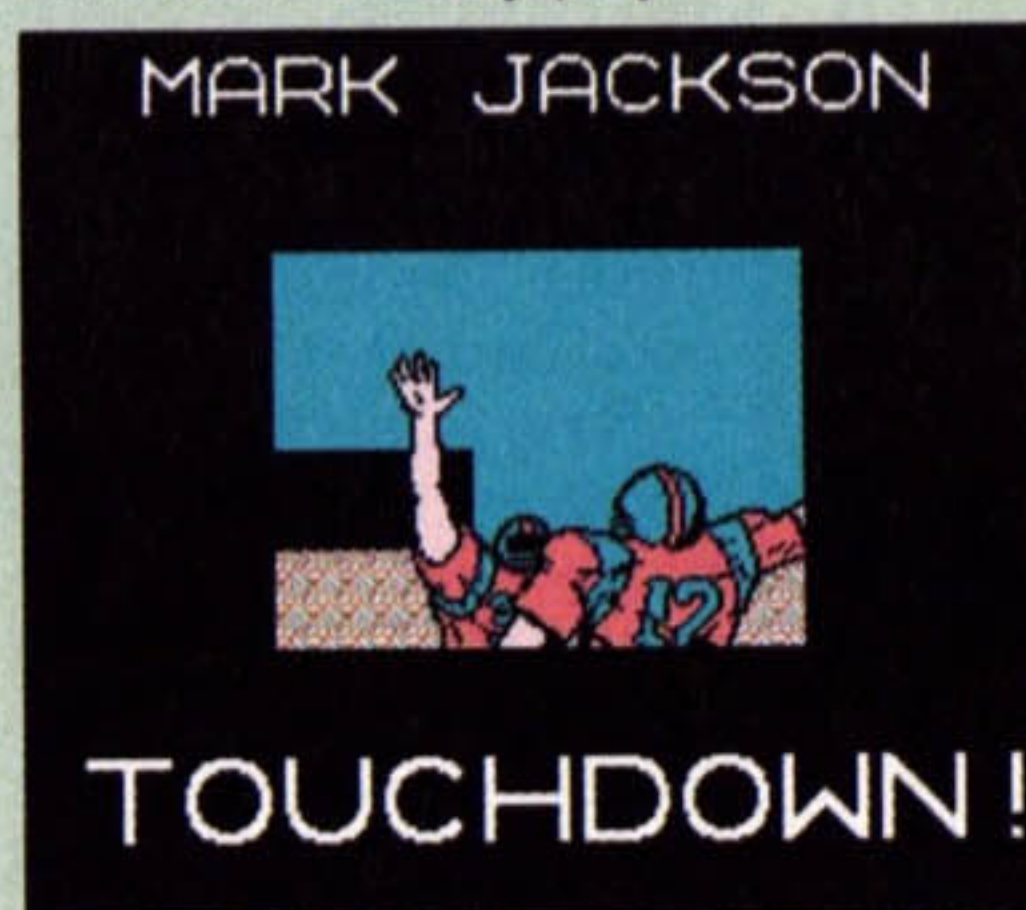
#### 10-Yard Fight - NES

You wouldn't know it at first glance, but this 1985 Nintendo arcade port gave us a lot of indispensable football staples. From sending guys in motion to being able to shake off tackles to even the HB option pass, this title supplies something more complex than simply having the QB run with the ball. Although it only features nine-on-nine play, it lets you select from two defenders before the snap. Nintendo has yet to make a better football game!



#### Tecmo Bowl - NES

Lawrence Taylor. Phil McConkey. Walter Payton. These are just some of the names that are forever famous, courtesy of this 1989 title. Tecmo Bowl was the first football game to snag the players' license, and that itself is worthy of praise. It seems like a small thing, but when your friend keeps rubbing Mark Duper in your face, it gets personal. Otherwise, it's a flat-out fun title that is easy to play – even if it did invent the term "money play."



#### John Madden Football - Genesis

From this 1990 console beginning, Electronic Arts' Madden series has been defining video game football. This includes everything from the playbooks to making the game as intense as possible. The godfather of Madden, Scott Orr (now CEO of the wireless game company Sorrent) explains, "Madden's philosophy was that football is all about one-on-one confrontations, and we really designed the game to reflect that. I think we came up with something that 10, 12, 13 years later still really stands out amongst a crowd of football games."



#### NFL GameDay 98 - PSone

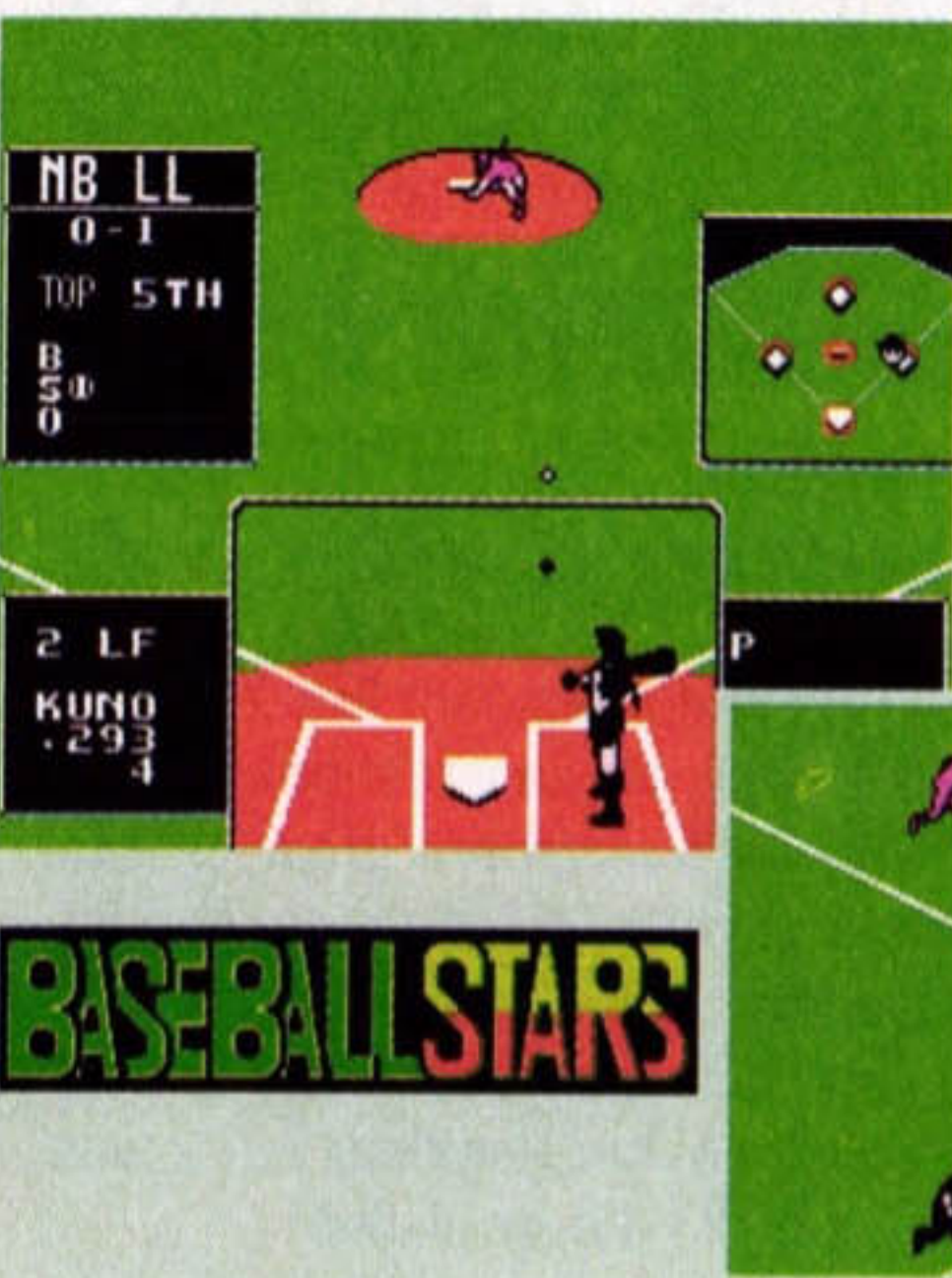
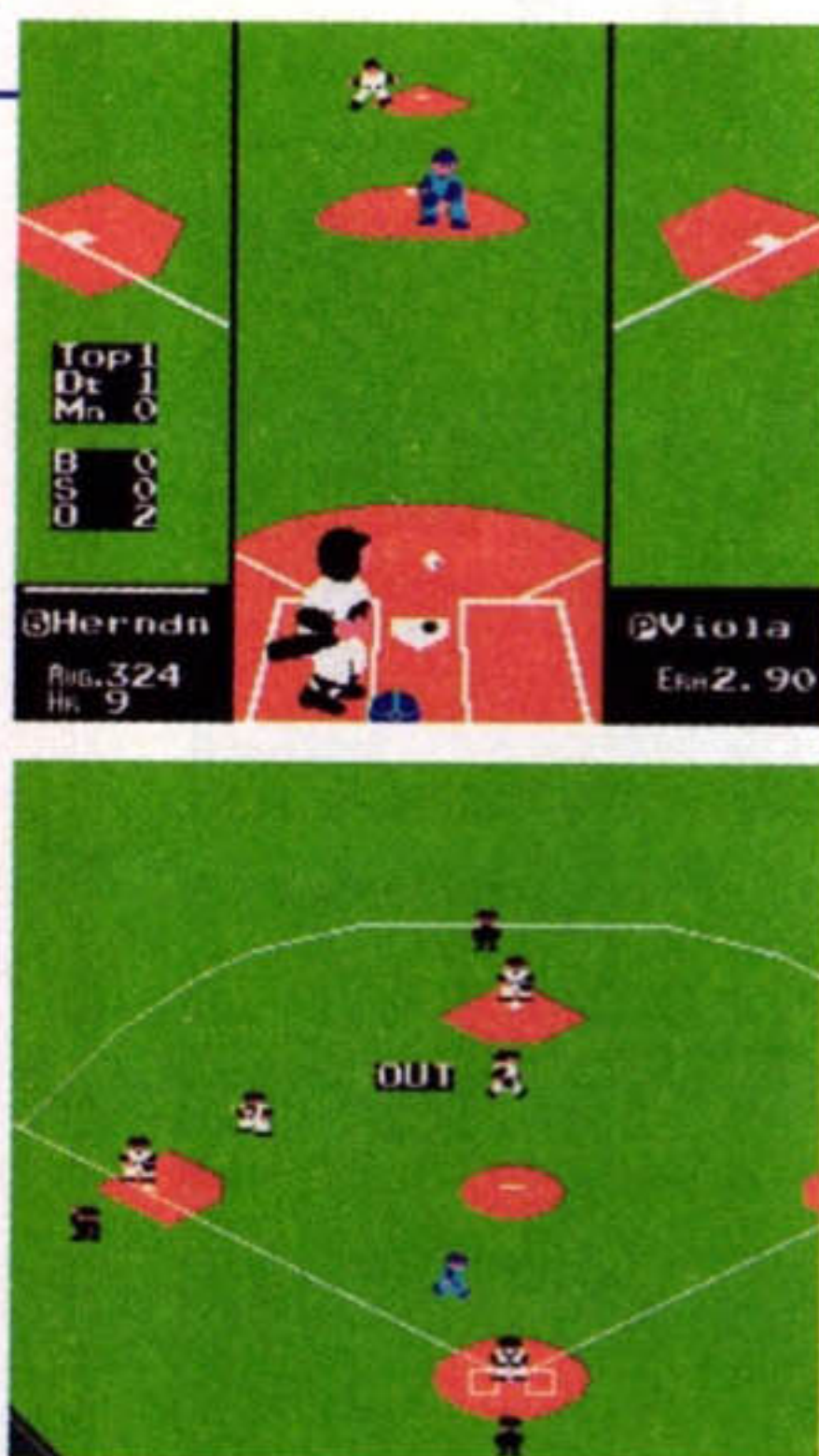
Sony's 989 Studios went up against Madden and won when this game came out in 1997. The reason: having the first fully polygonal players. With EA's Madden team at the time, Scott Orr recalls, "We actually had been working on a poly game ourselves, but we couldn't get a fast enough framerate. [Sony] certainly gave us a lot of motivation to deliver something the following year that was bigger and better." Unfortunately, it's been all downhill since. Humorously, some at 989 still hold on to this memory, remembering it like it was yesterday.

# BASEBALL



## RBI Baseball - NES

Real players, moving around the batter's box, and control of pitching direction – these things were but pipe dreams until Tengen's 1988 RBI Baseball arrived. Players look squatty, but the names are there: Nolan Ryan, Kirby Puckett, and Reggie Jackson. You can even play a season against the other teams in the league, and who could forget the theme song? World Series 2K3 producer David Parkinson accuses, "[RBI is] singularly responsible for me missing thousands of dollars worth of college classes."

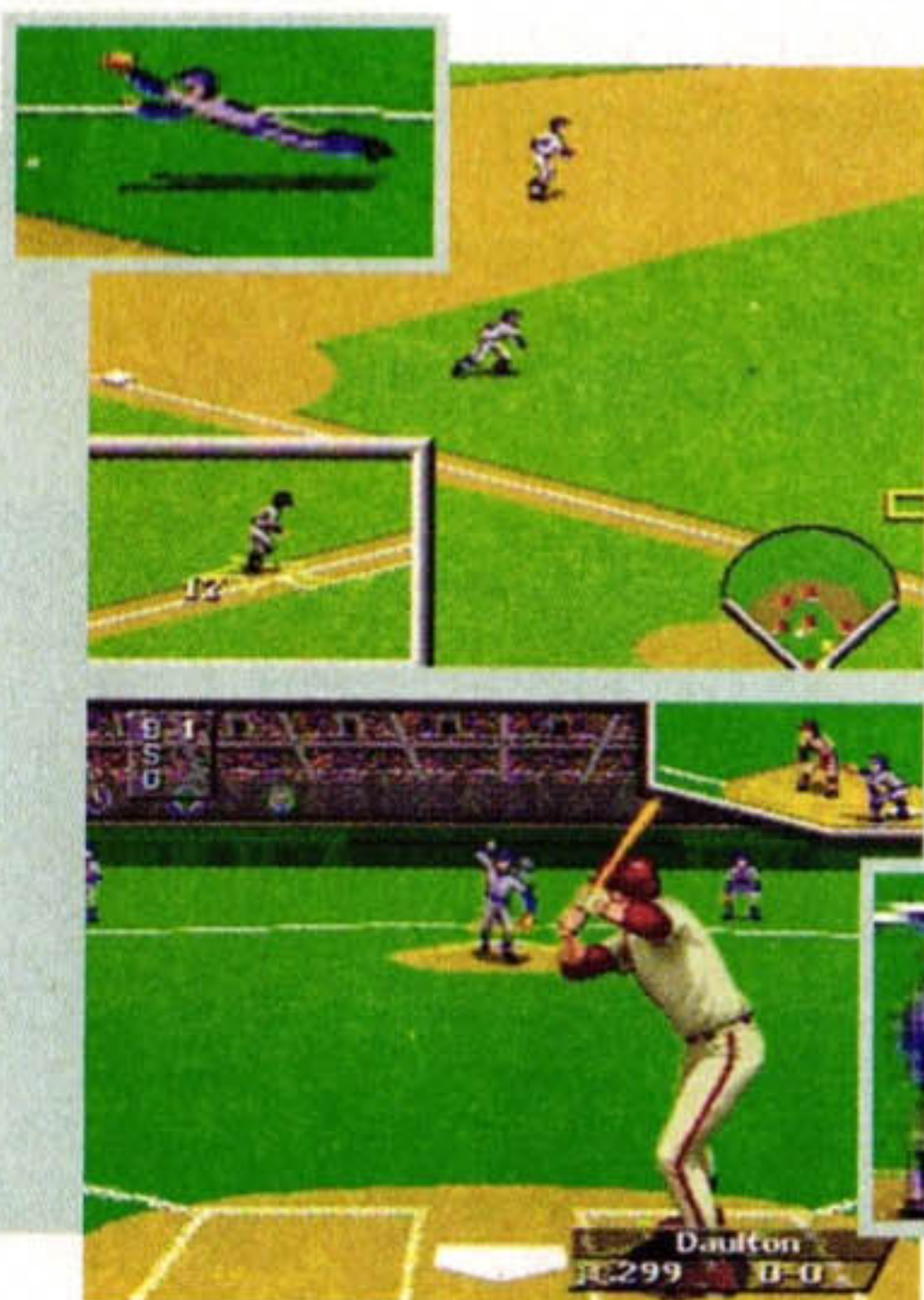
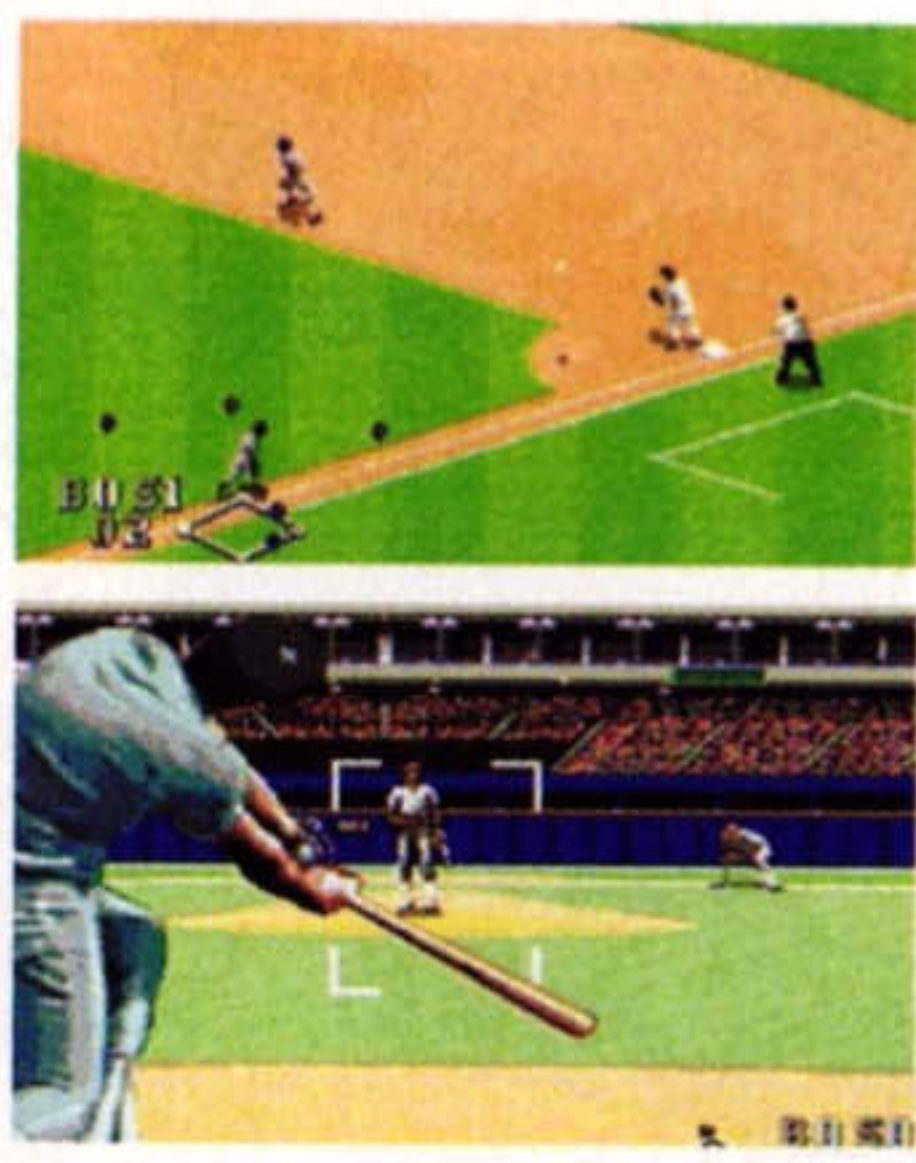


## Baseball Stars - NES

This is where customization and real season play started. SNK's 1989 game, Baseball Stars, lets you build up your team your way. Entire seasons are saved to the internal battery, and simulating games is possible. Though void of real players, an option allows you to rename anyone in the league and modify their skills – even women played in this liberated cartridge. P. J. Snavely, producer for Acclaim's All-Star Baseball 2004, says it's "still my favorite all-time baseball game."

## World Series Baseball - Genesis

One needs only to look at the screenshots to tell that Sega's World Series was ahead of its time in 1994; the unique perspective and graphics are unbelievable. It is almost a catcher's point of view, and the ball comes straight towards you. This game helped Sega become a major player in America's pastime. David Parkinson, now-producer for World Series 2K3, was actually a tester for this game. He tells us, "Playing a game in Fenway Park or Wrigley Field felt like playing a [real] game in one of those legendary places."



## Triple Play 96 - Genesis

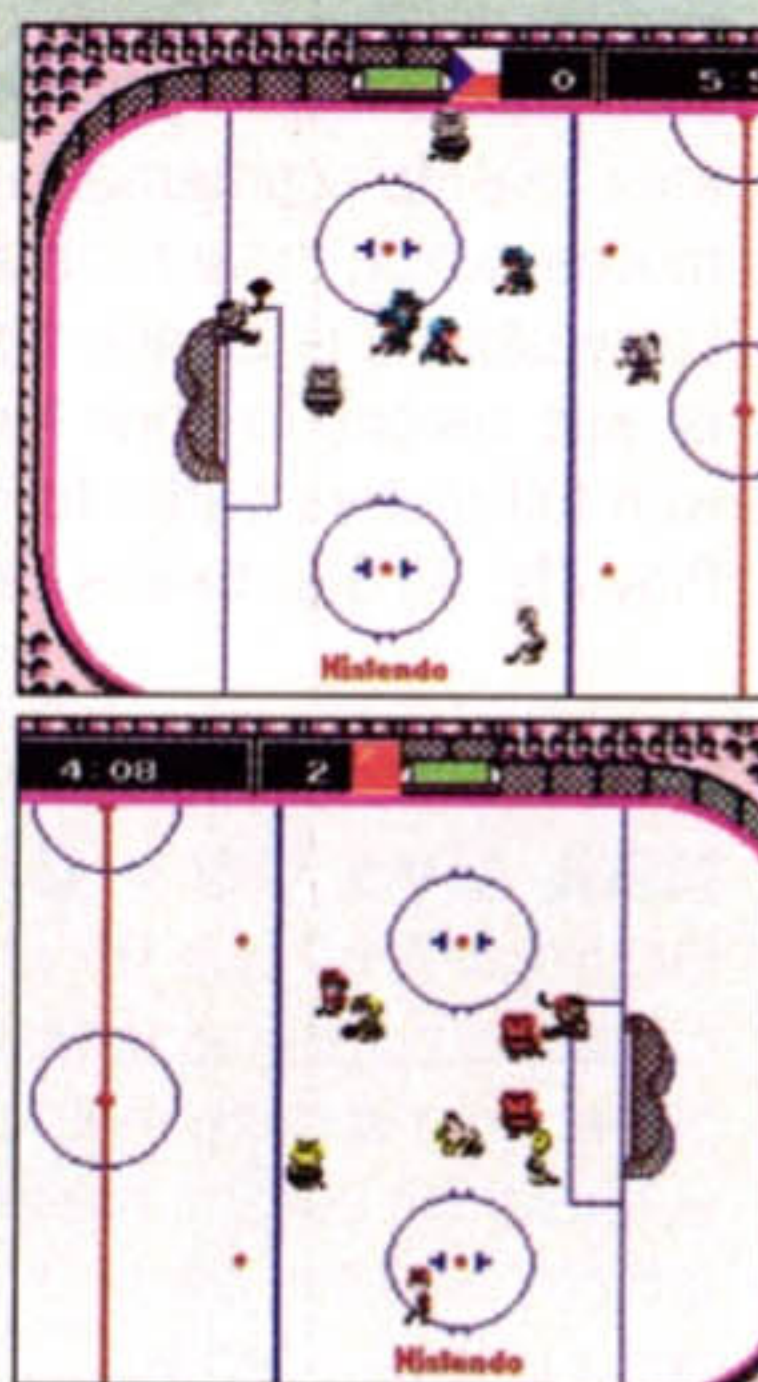
This game is all about the details. Electronic Arts wanted to emulate the real feelings of the game of baseball, and it succeeds – pitchers spit, on-deck batters itch, and umps dust home plate between innings. The animations are silky smooth, from outfielder dives to bat swings. All the sounds of the ballpark are here. The zoomed-in batter view is still the default on today's games. Statistical tracking had never been so detailed. In 1995, you couldn't get any more realistic than this.

# HOCKEY



## NHL Hockey - Intellivision

"A classic, one of the first hockey games that actually had characters. It wasn't the fastest of games, but it was the best sports game after [Intellivision's] baseball," recalls EA Sports' Dave Warfield (producer of NHL 2004). That might not sound like much, but at the time of NHL's release in 1979 by Mattel, relatively realistic versions of the sport were totally absent. Instead, you were often saddled with some lame adaptation of Pong. NHL also helped make the Intellivision the place for sports gamers, despite the overall sales dominance of the Atari 2600.



## Ice Hockey - NES

Rarely heard up until then, the phrase, "I want to be the fat guy" was popularized courtesy of this 1988 Nintendo title. While having skinny, regular, and large players is worth it just for a laugh; it is important to sports in general because it gives you a rough attribute system for your players. This matters in everything from the face-off to who shoots on goal. Line changes are also noteworthy. Games these days couldn't do without either of these features, and none of us would have a youth without Ice Hockey.



## Blades of Steel - NES

Konami gave us real hockey in 1988 – right down to the fights. Scuffle long enough with another player, and the game will cut away to a whole separate screen to let you and your opponent go at it. The fighting is simple, but is incredibly fun with the health meter and screaming fans in the background. Gameplay-wise, Blades is no slouch due to its speed and handy arrow interface for shooting. Alright, repeat after us at the top of your lungs, "BLADES – OF – STEEL!"

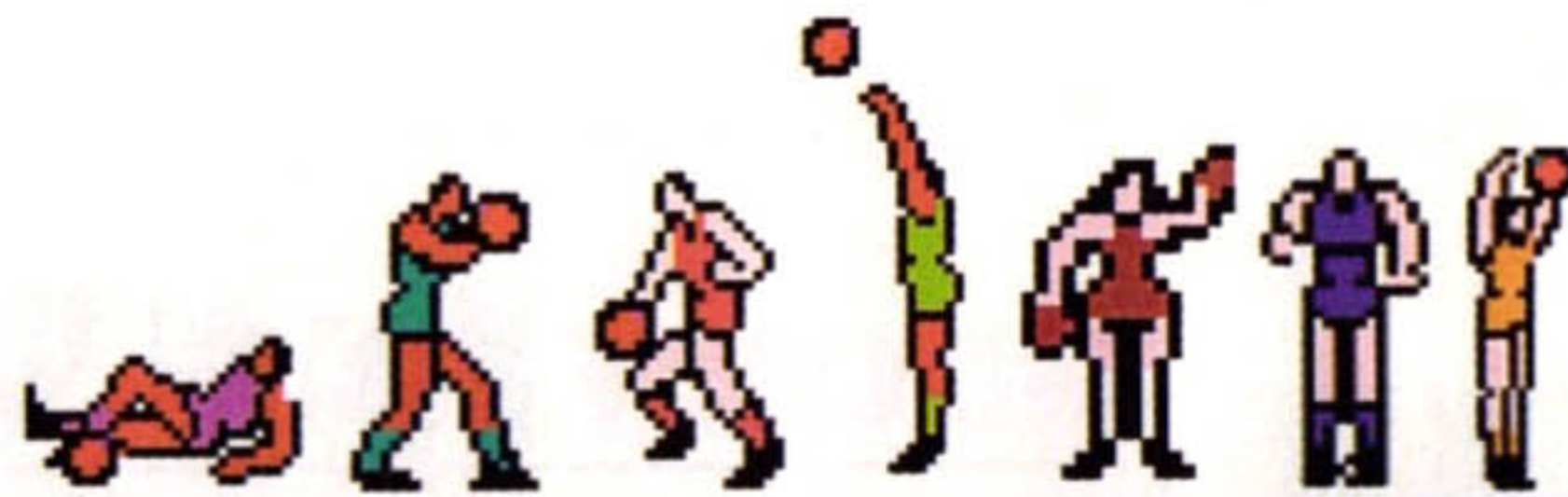


## NHLPA '93 - Genesis

"I wish we could get blood back in hockey. There's something special about nailing a guy and getting a little bit of blood on the ice that was so gratifying," recalls Jody Kelsey, producer for Sony's NHL FaceOff series. In this 1992 Electronic Arts release, you can open the skull of golden child Wayne Gretzky – it's about friggin' time! These antics were even replicated in the movie *Swingers*. The NHL series' current producer, Dave Warfield, exclaims, "The speed, the hits, and the gameplay combined for a great experience."

# CLASSIC GI

## BASKETBALL



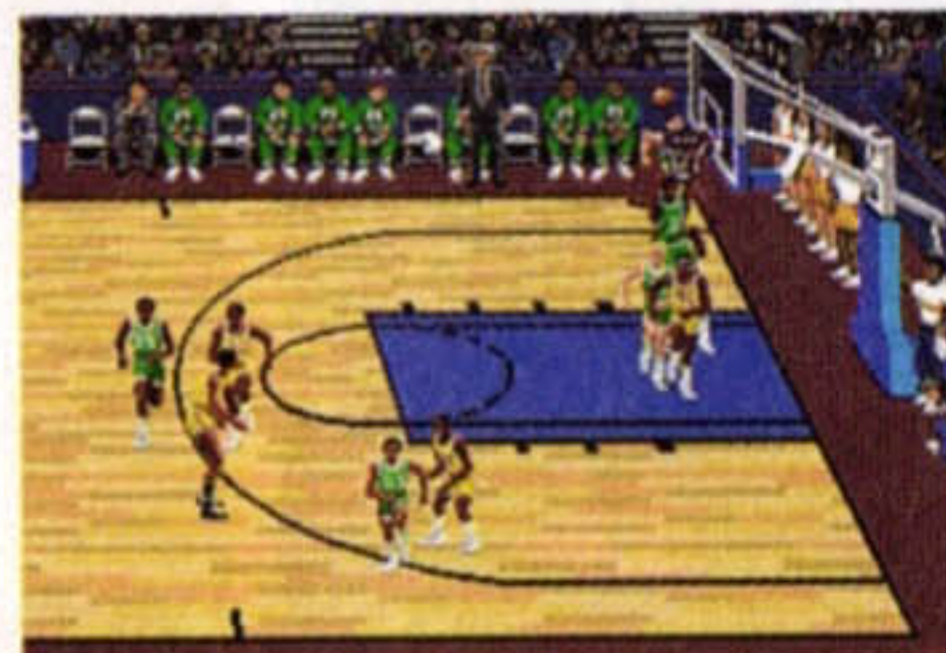
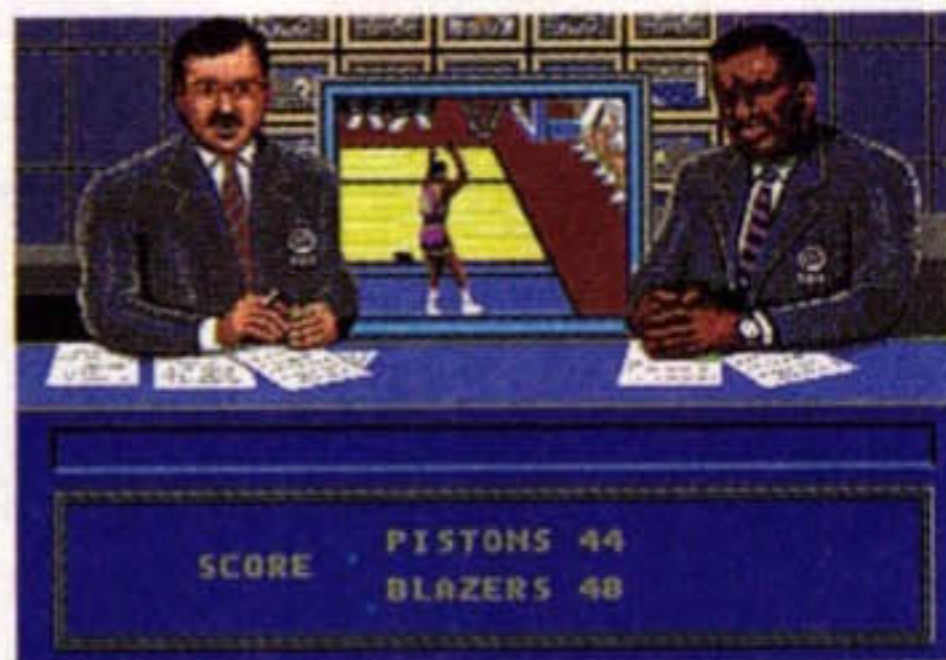
### Double Dribble - NES

This game came out in 1987 – the glory days of Konami's 8-bit run. It was one of the first to feature five-on-five action. Seeing the close-up cutscene of dunks is a very memorable gaming moment, and a graphical highlight on the NES. Double Dribble put automatic replays on the map. Greg Thomas, head of Visual Concepts (developers of Sega's NBA 2K series), tells us, "[Double Dribble] is a classic! A very fun, simple to play, and high-scoring b-ball game that killed many of my controllers."



### Lakers vs. Celtics - Genesis

Compared to the simplistic, primitive looking hoops games that preceded its 1990 release, Electronic Arts' Lakers vs. Celtics dropped many jaws. For the first time, players (Magic, Barkley, Isiah, etc.) looked like their real-life counterparts. They even have signature moves, which meant Jordan dunks like Mike, and Larry Legend is an ace from three-point land. The AI is also second to none for its time. Eight real teams with full rosters battle for the title in the NBA Playoffs. All-Star teams can be used, too.



### NBA Jam - Genesis/SNES

Acclaim's 1994 port of Midway's coin-op brought arcade sports to the mainstream. It's fast-paced, two-on-two action with the NBA's best. Nothing quite compares to being on fire, or doing a quadruple somersault to the rafters before coming down with a backboard-shattering dunk. Record-keeping means you can challenge your friends for the most wins, dunks, points, or other categories. Visual Concepts'

Greg Thomas reminisces, "It had it all: awesome graphics/animation, super moves, and a ton of fun."

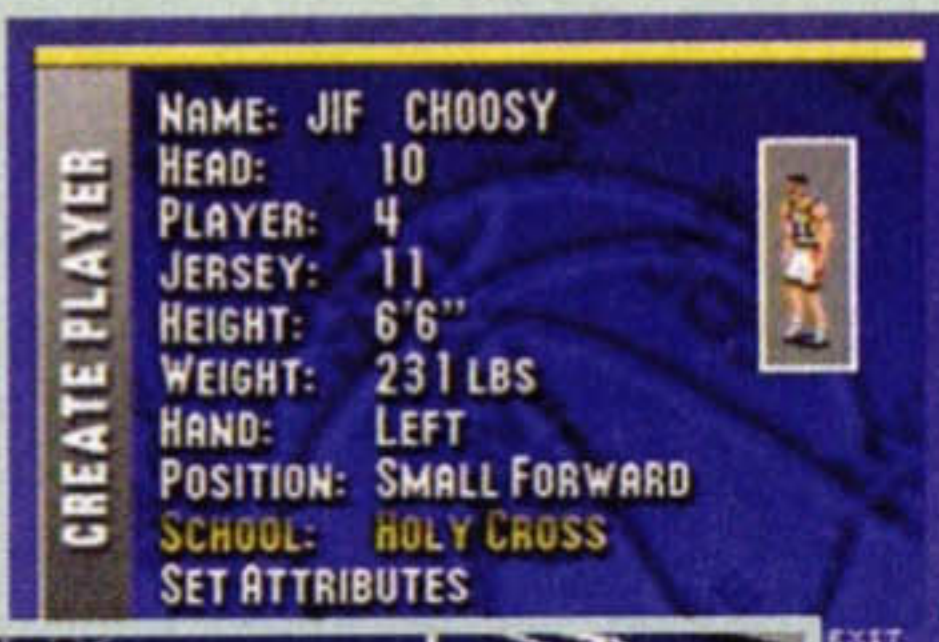
#### 60 FINAL GAME STATS: 58

	FG: 5/11 3 PTS: 10 POINTS: 23 DUNKS: 16 ASSISTS: 18 STEEALS: 4 BLOCKS: 1 REBOUNDS: 6		FG: 3/10 3 PTS: 20 POINTS: 20 DUNKS: 11 ASSISTS: 2 STEEALS: 1 BLOCKS: 1 REBOUNDS: 1
	FG: 5/11 3 PTS: 10 POINTS: 23 DUNKS: 16 ASSISTS: 18 STEEALS: 4 BLOCKS: 1 REBOUNDS: 6		FG: 3/10 3 PTS: 20 POINTS: 20 DUNKS: 11 ASSISTS: 2 STEEALS: 1 BLOCKS: 1 REBOUNDS: 1



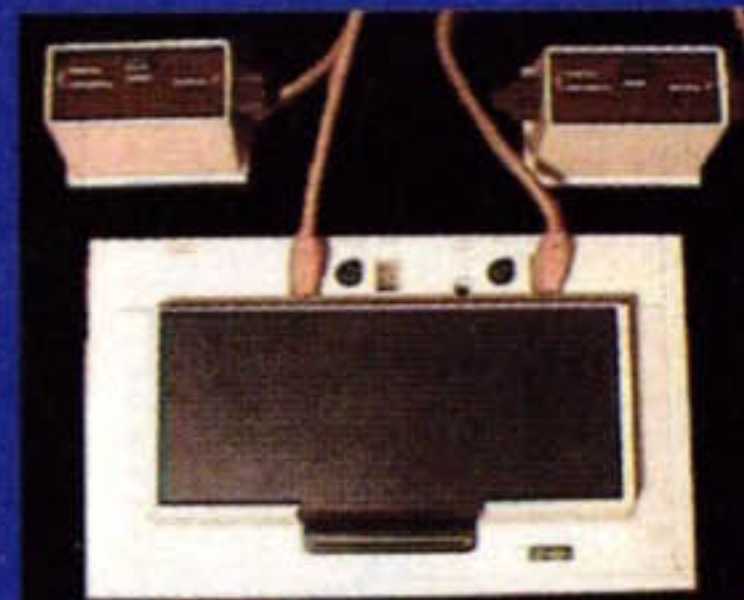
### NBA Live 96 - Genesis/SNES

Electronic Arts' Live 95 was great, but this sequel caused a huge leap in features. Create your own player from scratch, both physically and skill-wise; edit existing ballers; make all the trades you can fathom; and see all the stats for your player, team, and the league leaders. You can call both offensive and defensive plays in real-time, use spin moves, and turbo boost past your opposition to score. These are things we take for granted now. This is the ultimate simulation.



## THIS MONTH IN GAMING HISTORY

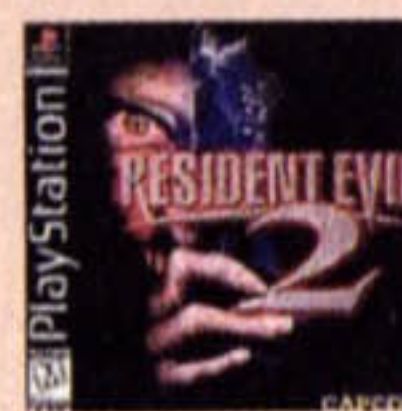
The first video game system ever released to the market, Magnavox's Odyssey, went on sale during May of 1972. Spearheaded by Ralph Baer, renowned as the father of video games, the Odyssey came packaged with six cartridges – including Table Tennis, Hockey, and Football. These games were played with controllers that featured a dial at both ends, and required an overlay to be placed over the television screen. These overlays concealed the simplistic graphics and made the games' objective obvious. A light gun accessory could be used for titles like Dogfight and Prehistoric Safari. This, gamers, is where it all started.



# GREATEST GAME OF ALL TIME

By Cyphrus13

Every month one of Game Informer's readers picks his or her personal choice for Greatest Game Of All Time.



### RESIDENT EVIL 2

■ **FORMAT** PSONE  
■ **PUBLISHER** CAPCOM

A couple years ago, I received Resident Evil 2 for the Sony PSone for my birthday. My hands shook as I watched the intro. The terrific cutscene graphics were luscious and crisp, the voice-acting made me feel like I was in the game, and the first appearance of the zombies made me jump out of my seat. I have never felt so frightened by a game, but Resident Evil 2 was different from anything else I'd ever played.

As I first controlled the character, I was hooked on the gameplay and graphics of this masterpiece. Entering each new environment, I simply marveled at the backgrounds and character models. Truth be told, it plays as well as it looks.

With each passing moment, I prayed that the next room would not contain any more zombies or creatures to extract, as I was low on bullets and life. Being conservative is the best tactic, but blasting creatures is hard not to do.

As you progress, you learn more of the awesome story. You'll never know what will happen next or where you'll end up. As you finish the last bit of this work of art (the final boss encounter is an indescribable and glorious moment in gaming history), you feel that all your hard labor finally pays off – but that's where you're wrong! You must also finish it with the other character to uncover what really happens within the story.

From start to finish, you'll be hanging on the edge of your seat. I still play RE 2 to this day, and if any title can do that to a gamer, it should be remembered as one of the best of all time. With all the pretenders out there that try to incorporate puzzles and suspense, the Resident Evil series still does it best, and RE 2 is the only game that executes it perfectly.



SNES

## RAPJAM: VOLUME ONE



RETRO RATING

1



If there's one good thing about RapJam (which is rather doubtful), it's that a sequel was never made, despite the "Volume One" moniker. Not only has the team at developer 64WD never released any other games, chances are they never played any games before making this plastic nightmare. Somebody just showed them a drawing of NBA Jam, and said, "Make this, but with rappers." Of course, the characters don't even look like their namesakes, as Queen Latifah appears more like Lil' Kim, and the team of Public Enemy are indistinguishable on-court. The controls are inexplicably awful for a game where all you do is jump, shoot, and pass. For no reason, the ball will sometimes shoot upwards of 50 feet in the air. What words describe RapJam best? Let's pull out the dictionary, shall we? It's abhorrent, bad, crappy, dreadful, execrable, frightful, ghastly, etc. There are no get-rich schemes in video games, kids. Thankfully, Motown Games learned its lesson and was never heard from again.

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 5-PLAYER SPORTS ■ **PUBLISHER** MOTOWN GAMES ■ **DEVELOPER** 64WD CREATIONS ■ **YEAR RELEASED** 1994

SEGA GENESIS

## TECHNOCOP



RETRO RATING

5



RazorSoft's Technocop could be viewed as the direct ancestor to recent blockbusters like Grand Theft Auto III, The Getaway, and Mafia. The game was the subject of some controversy, mostly for its gruesome death animations in which baddies explode in a pile of blood and guts. Today, these come off as more goofy than gory, but they are still somewhat amusing. The game presages GTA in more than just mature content – it also mixes driving and third-person gun combat. The mission structure has you racing to a crime scene before a timer runs out. You then exit the car and pursue the criminal through a multi-level building. While ahead of its time, Technocop sounds a lot better on paper than it is in your Genesis. The driving just plain sucks, forcing you to press up on the d-pad to accelerate. The out-of-car action isn't much better, showcasing simplistic combat, stiff animation, and a HUD that takes up half the screen. All in all, Technocop is an interesting footnote in video game history, but nothing more.

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION/RACING ■ **PUBLISHER** RAZORSOFT ■ **DEVELOPER** RAZORSOFT ■ **YEAR RELEASED** 1990

NES

## XEVIOUS



RETRO RATING

8.5



A quarter never means so much as when you play Xevious. Back in the day, this arcade classic would eat them up as you died repeatedly. On the NES, you don't have to worry about running out of pocket change, but life is still precious. The game's difficulty is intact, although its simple looks date it considerably. To its credit, Xevious must be appreciated for the fact that it was the first vertically scrolling shooter, and that it added land-based targets you could destroy with bombs. This dual challenge is admirable, but the game isn't frantic like Time Pilot, for instance. Still, it does ask for that Zen-like state that all good shooters demand. Best of all, an element of maddening chance is thrown in by the fact that the better you do on a stage, the harder it becomes – thus always giving you surprises and making board memorization less effective. Xevious definitely lacks the flash and frenzied pace of shooters released both before and after it, but it's worthy of its place in the genre.

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER SHOOTER ■ **PUBLISHER** BANDAI ■ **DEVELOPER** NAMCO ■ **YEAR RELEASED** 1988

PSONE

## TREASURES OF THE DEEP



RETRO RATING

8.25



Quintessentially an underdog, the deep sea setting hasn't produced too many noteworthy video games; but Treasures of the Deep is original and entertaining enough to make it worth digging out of your collection, or picking up at a used software store. Pilot an underwater craft from either a first- or third-person perspective; blast enemy divers and subs; gather treasure; look out for sharks; and just have fun exploring the world set out before you. The missions are long and challenging, and there is plenty of equipment to stock up on before you get your feet wet. Treasures' gameplay has an arcade feel and varies depending on the depths you're required to plunge to. The graphics have aged, as is typical of PSone titles today, but they're good enough that you will feel guilty if you accidentally spear a stingray and have to watch it flee with a trail of blood behind. In all, Treasures of the Deep does what is asked of any good action/adventure game, and it does so in an unlikely location.

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION/ADVENTURE ■ **PUBLISHER** NAMCO ■ **DEVELOPER** BLACK OPS ■ **YEAR RELEASED** 1997

# ATC

## XA VIDEO GAME SPEAKERS

Manufacturer: Altec Lansing  
Website: [alteclansing.com](http://alteclansing.com)  
List Price: \$99.95-\$199.95



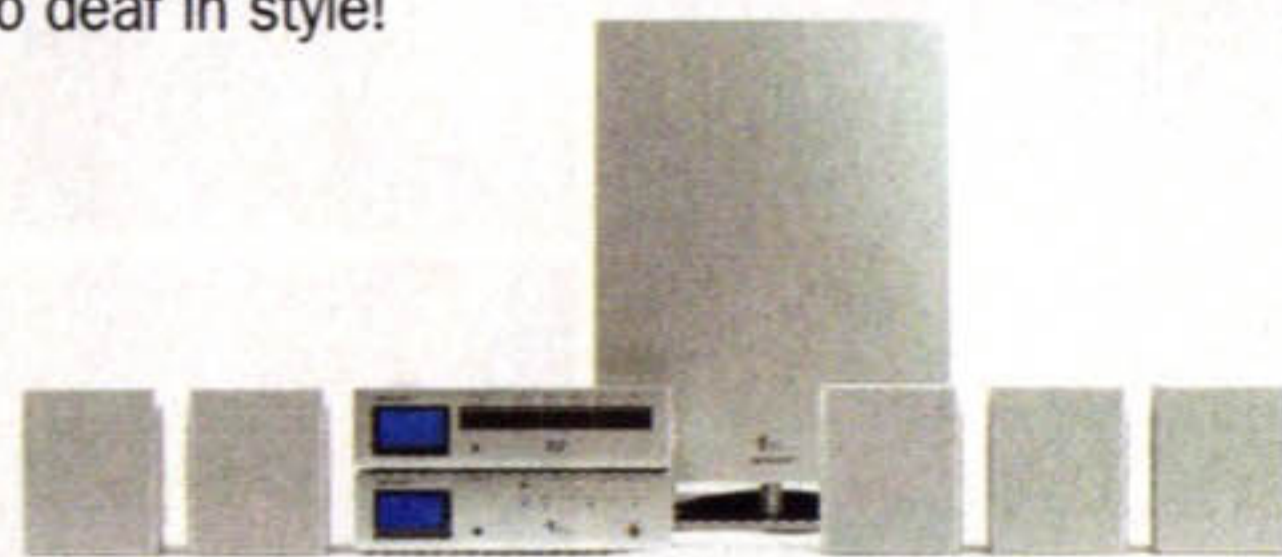
## SD-AT50DV DIGITAL HOME THEATER SYSTEM

Manufacturer: Sharp • Website: [sharpusa.com](http://sharpusa.com)  
List Price: \$799.95

Playing games using your television's speakers is like playing football naked: You're definitely missing something. You need to hear where the enemy is creeping from, the reverb of your weapon, or the cheer of the crowd. No matter what your budget, there is an audio system out there for you. Altec Lansing has a pair of XA Speaker packages to give you good quality sound at an affordable price.

The 3021 model, retailing for less than 100 bucks, is 40 watts with a subwoofer and two speakers. The \$199.95 3051 version adds three more speakers, bumps up the power to 56 watts, and gives you that surround sound feel. Both have attached remotes; varying bass and treble settings; and are great for games, movies, or TV watching.

If you're looking for something a little more "intense," Sharp's new SD-AT50DV has a list of features even longer than its name – including Dolby Digital and DTS surround sound, a 1-bit multi-channel digital amplifier that samples signals at 2.8 MHz, and an integrated CD/DVD player. It pumps out 50 watts for each of its six channels. It's small, it's sleek, and it does everything except whisper sweet nothings into your ear while you play. Go deaf in style!



## SOUL CALIBUR II FIGURES

Manufacturer: McFarlane Toys  
Website: [spawn.com](http://spawn.com) • List Price: TBA

Welcome to the stage of history – a tale of Spawn and sword. Namco's amazing fighter, Soul Calibur II, is being honored by McFarlane Toys in this set of figures. The detail that went into the video game models is even more vivid in tangible, molded plastic. The first series features Voldo (with his classic bondage motif), Ivy (revealing more skin than a bag of pork rinds), Astaroth, Nightmare, and Necrid – the McFarlane-designed beast that will appear in each console's port of the arcade brawler. Use their weapons to pick your teeth clean after you polish off a rack of ribs, or put them on guard to keep baby rats away from your celery sticks. You can even have them be guests at your tea party! Any of these bad boys could make GI Joe call them "Daddy," so grab the whole set this June.



## ACTION REPLAY GAMECUBE

Manufacturer: Dattel Design • Website: [codejunkies.com](http://codejunkies.com) • List Price: \$39.99

The cheat device world was turned on its ear when Intec, the company which provided Game Shark content, went over to aid Dattel with the Action Replay. Who cares about that, right? We just want to cheat! This device has both a cartridge that goes in your memory card slot and a disc to boot up with. It comes preloaded with thousands of codes for GameCube titles like Mario Sunshine, Metroid Prime, and Pikmin. There's even a code to use on Animal Crossing that unlocks rare NES games like Super Mario Bros. and Legend of Zelda (which can then be used for Advanced Play on your GBA)! The CodeJunkies site is constantly updated with new entries, so you'll never run out of shortcuts to take or levels to warp to. If you have to cheat, do it in style with the Action Replay.



## THEAGO DT-200 PROJECTOR

Manufacturer: Sharp • Website: [sharpusa.com](http://sharpusa.com) • List Price: \$3,499.95

Nothing can prepare you for piloting a helicopter in Vice City on a 6-foot screen. Watching a lifelike bikini-clad vixen taking a nosedive in sand during DOA Volleyball is every gamer's dream. Playing NBA 2K3 can be like having courtside seats. These things are possible with Sharp's Theago DT-200 Projector. This eight-pound unit is easily transported anywhere you want to game in XL; and can use any flat, clean surface for a massive, high-resolution picture. You'll need a good light source, but that shouldn't be too hard since you live in your mom's basement. The keystone correction means you'll get a perfect picture even if the projector isn't centered. Aside from your games; you can hook up computers, DVD players, or just about anything with video plugs to the Theago. It's an experience you won't soon forget.



## HULK CONTROLLERS

Manufacturer: Naki • Website: [nakiusa.com](http://nakiusa.com)  
List Price: \$24.99-\$29.99 PS2, \$29.99 Xbox, \$19.99 GameCube

What's green, chunky, and incredible? No, it's not the world's largest booger; it's Naki's line of Hulk controllers! Approved by Marvel and insanely designed, Naki is bringing the mammoth mutant to all three next-gen consoles in April – well before the Hulk movie or game comes out! You'll feel a little weird wrapping your hands around the ripped, bulging green flesh plastered all over these pads, but soon you will feel the urge to SMASH! The PS2 model boasts "radiation glowing" effects and is even marketed as "breathing!" Be afraid. Be very afraid.

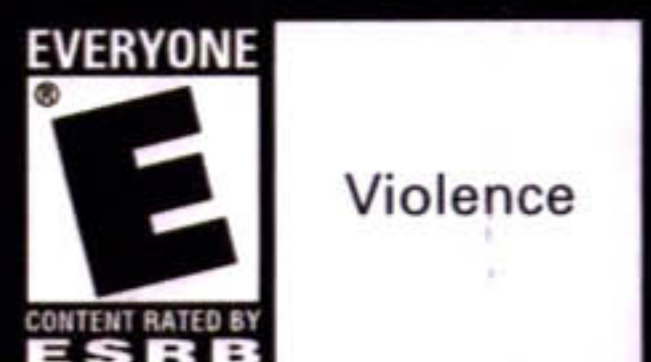




# POWER TO THE PEOPLE.



Harness the power of the elements, summon great forces and bring magic back to Weyard in Golden Sun: The Lost Age. Only for Game Boy Advance.



# THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE HELL

SUMMON YOUR NERVE. CONTROL THE FATE OF ALISSA, AN ORDINARY GIRL AS SHE FIGHTS THE FORCES OF EVIL AND UNLOCKS THE MYSTERY OF HER ANCESTRY IN THIS CHILLING EXCURSION INTO TERROR! YOU'VE NEVER PLAYED ANYTHING LIKE THIS BEFORE!



## CLOCK TOWER 3



Blood and Gore  
Violence

**CAPCOM**  
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PlayStation 2

