

**SPECIAL FALL PREVIEW ISSUE**

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# GRAND THEFT AUTO:

## SAN ANDREAS

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW

Nov. 2004 ISSUE 184  
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ALRIGHT, FELLAS, LET'S GET  
DOWN TO BUSINESS. HIT THE  
LIGHTS, MURRAY.



CHECK.



SO WE STILL NEED ONE  
MORE MEMBER TO PULL OFF  
OUR BIGGEST JOB YET.  
WE NEED A FAST LEARNER...

EVERYONE  
**E**  
CONTENT RATED BY  
ESRB

Comic  
Violence

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SOMEONE  
FEARLESS...



WITH QUICK REFLEXES.

WHO CAN THINK  
ON THEIR FEET...



AND SOMEONE WITH A  
PLAYSTATION 2.



COME ON.  
ARE YOU WITH US?

# Sly 2

BAND OF THIEVES™



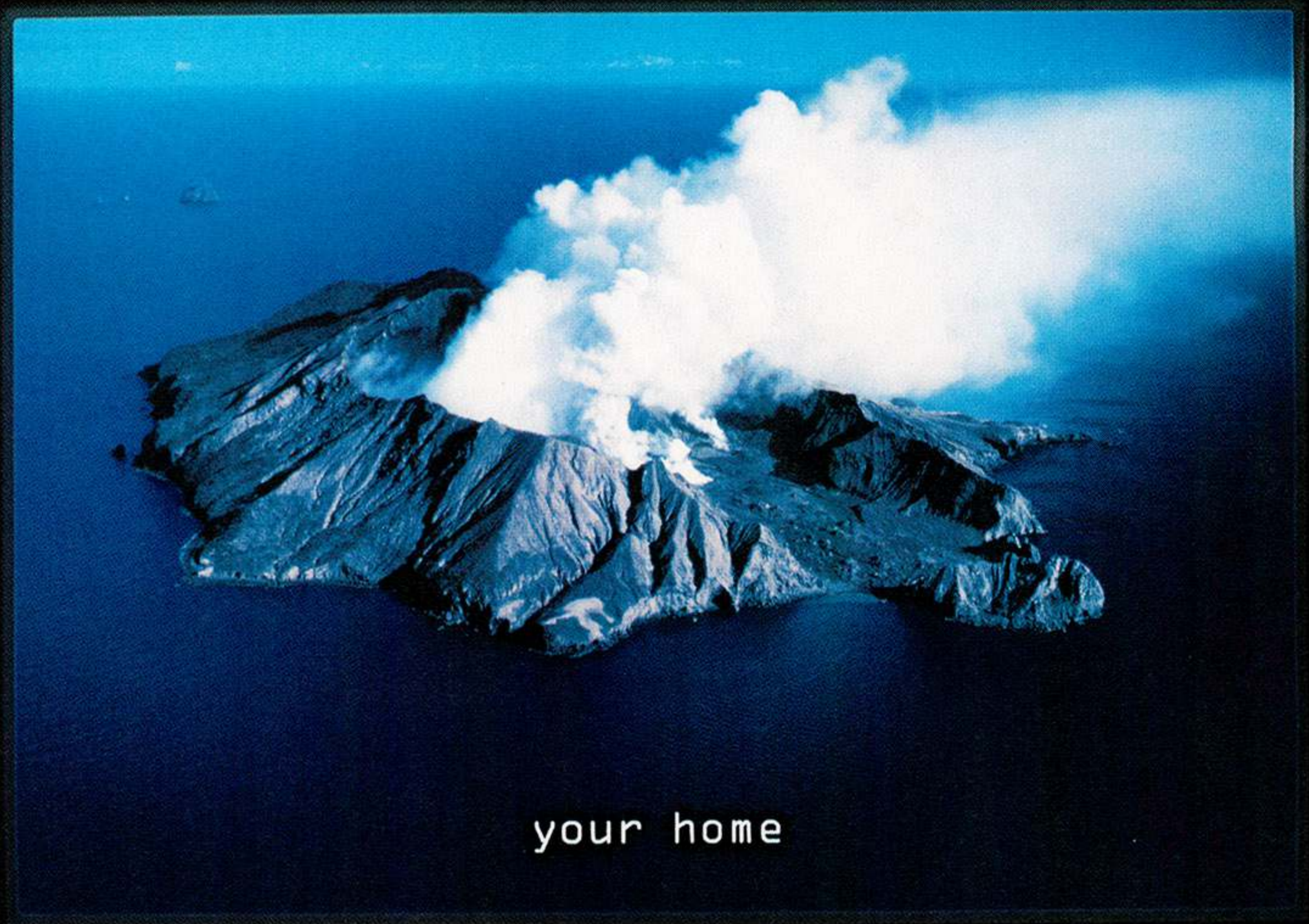
PlayStation 2

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your home



your ride



PlayStation 2



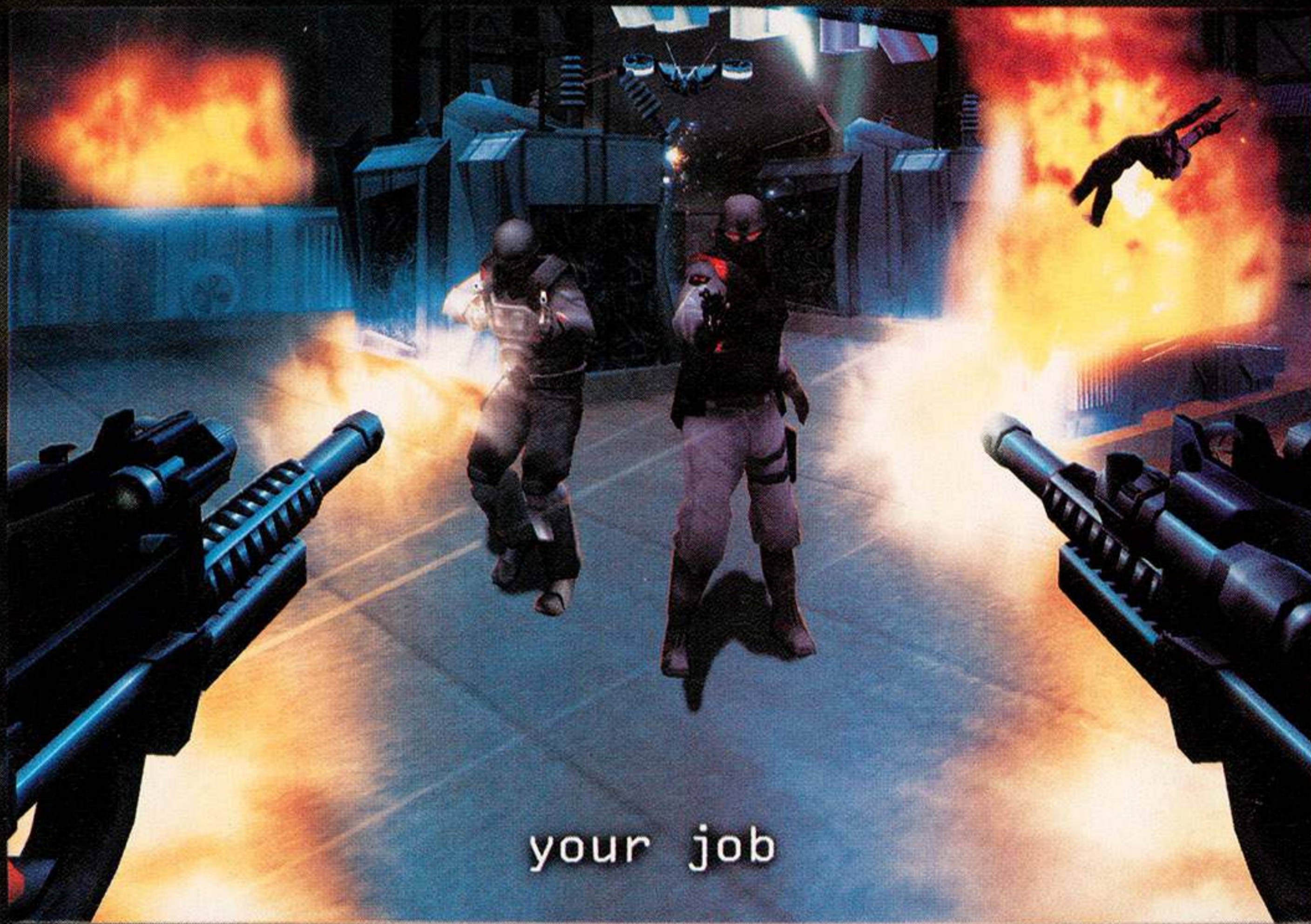
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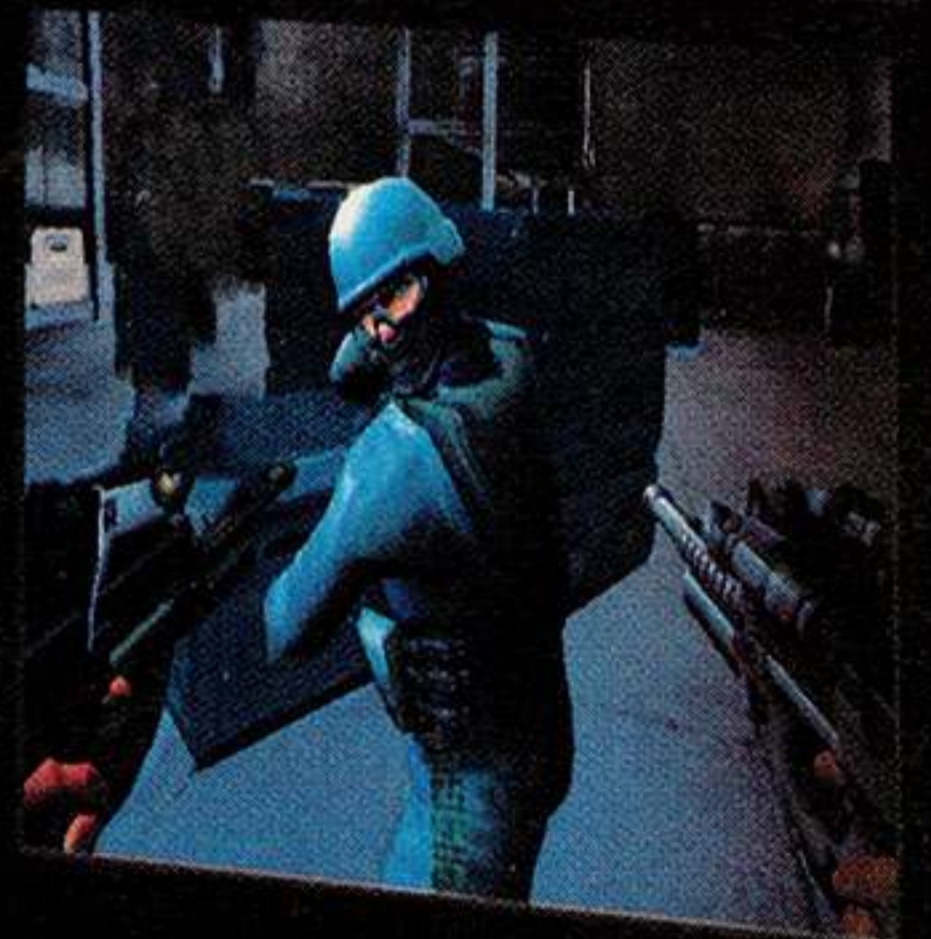




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This battle doesn't  
call for a hero.

It calls  
for a savior.



BUNGIE



Blood and Gore  
Violence  
Language

[halo2.com](http://halo2.com)



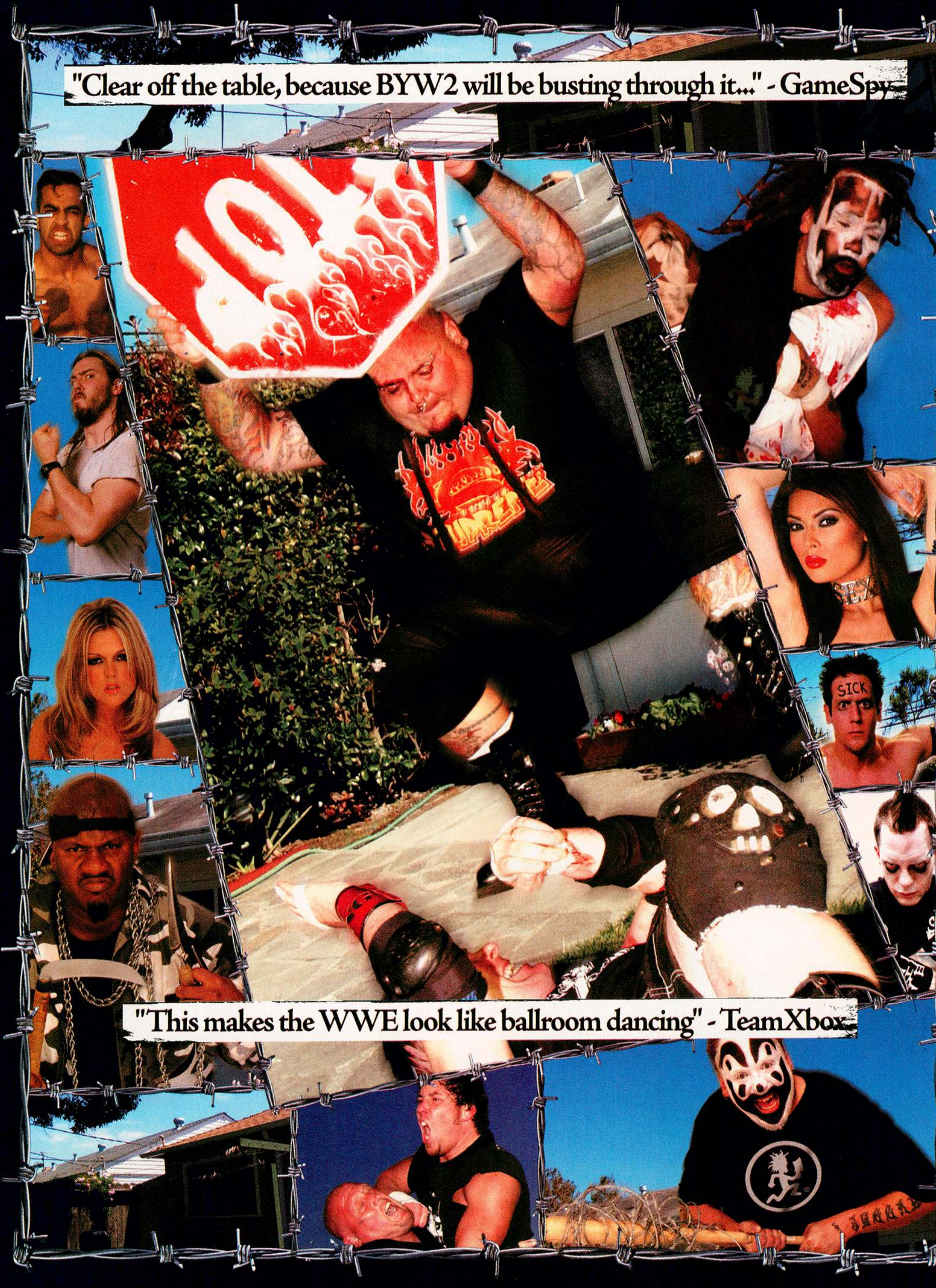


HALO

On November 9th  
Earth Will Never Be The Same



"Clear off the table, because BYW2 will be busting through it..." - GameSpy



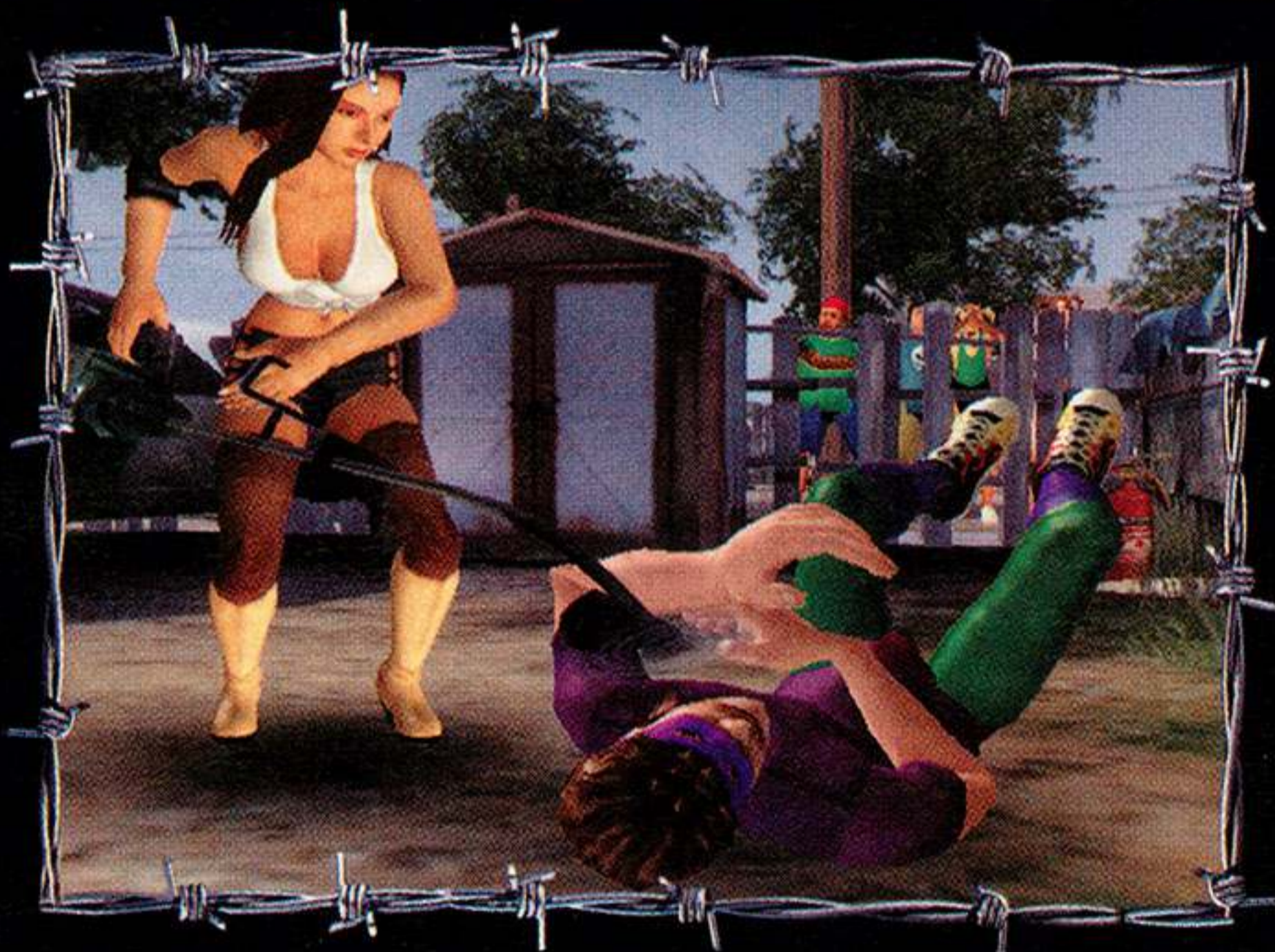
"This makes the WWE look like ballroom dancing" - TeamXbox



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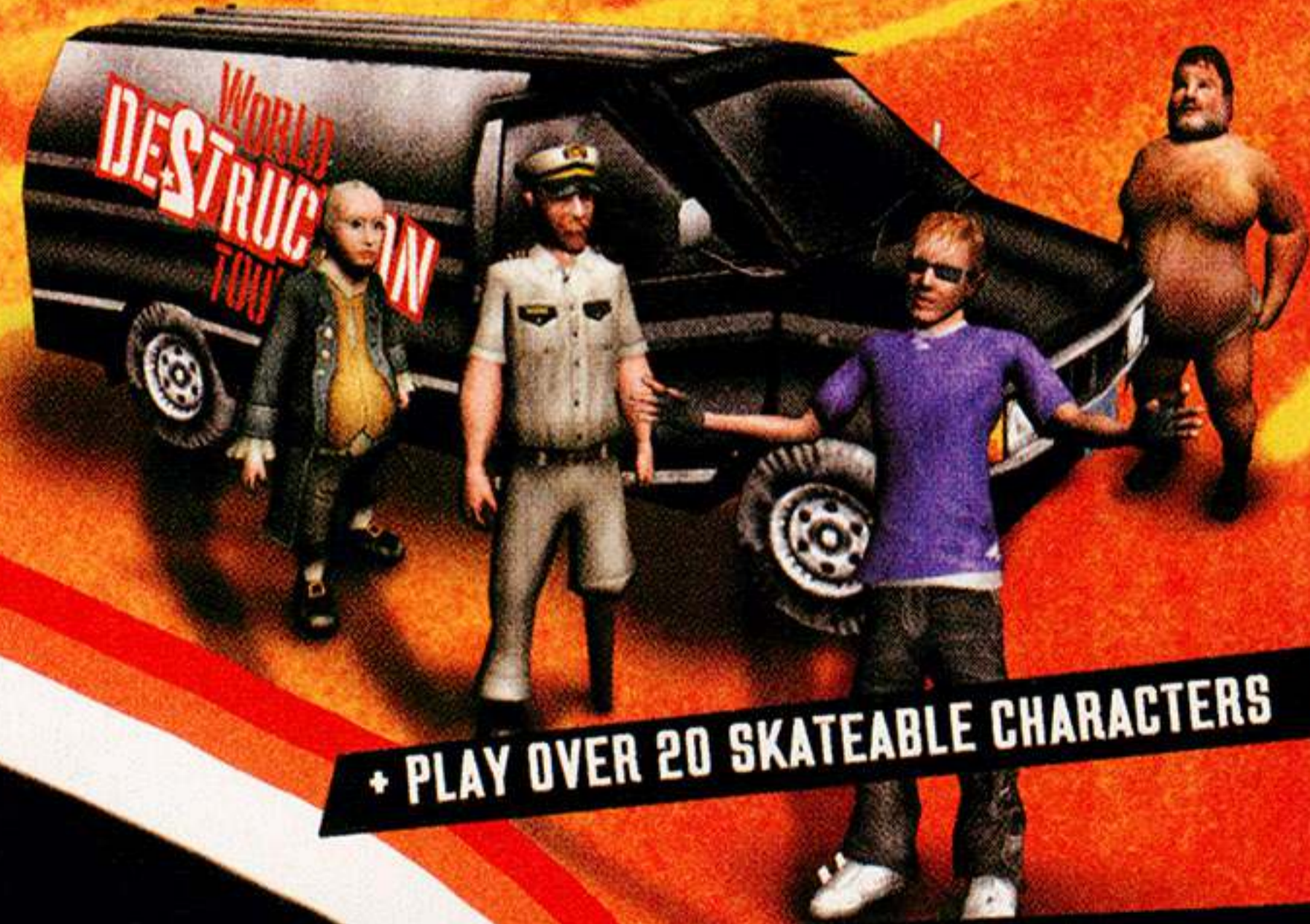
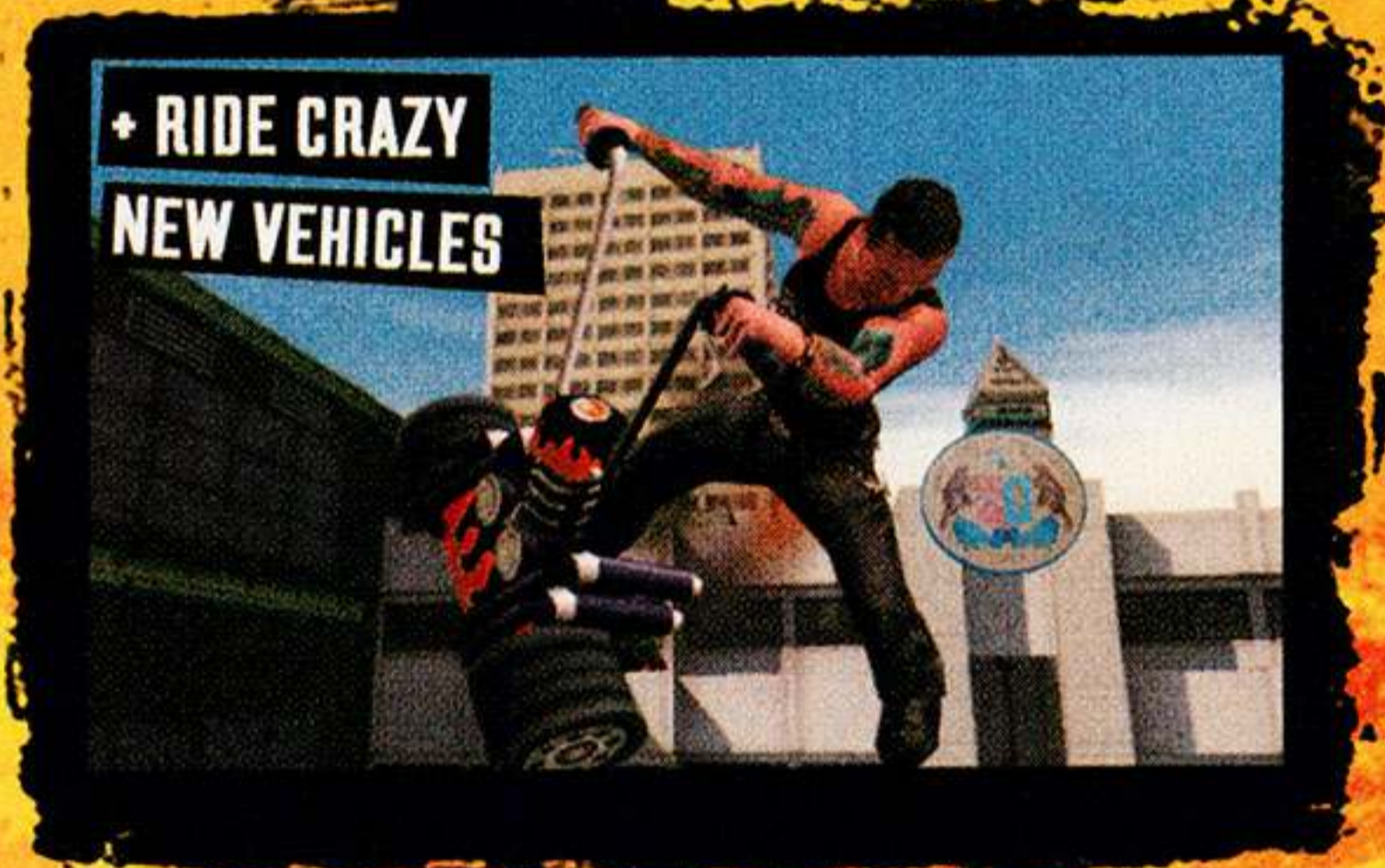
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# WHAT ARE YOU GET IN



PlayStation®2



GAME BOY ADVANCE



TEEN



Blood  
Crude Humor  
Language  
Suggestive Themes  
Use of Alcohol  
Violence

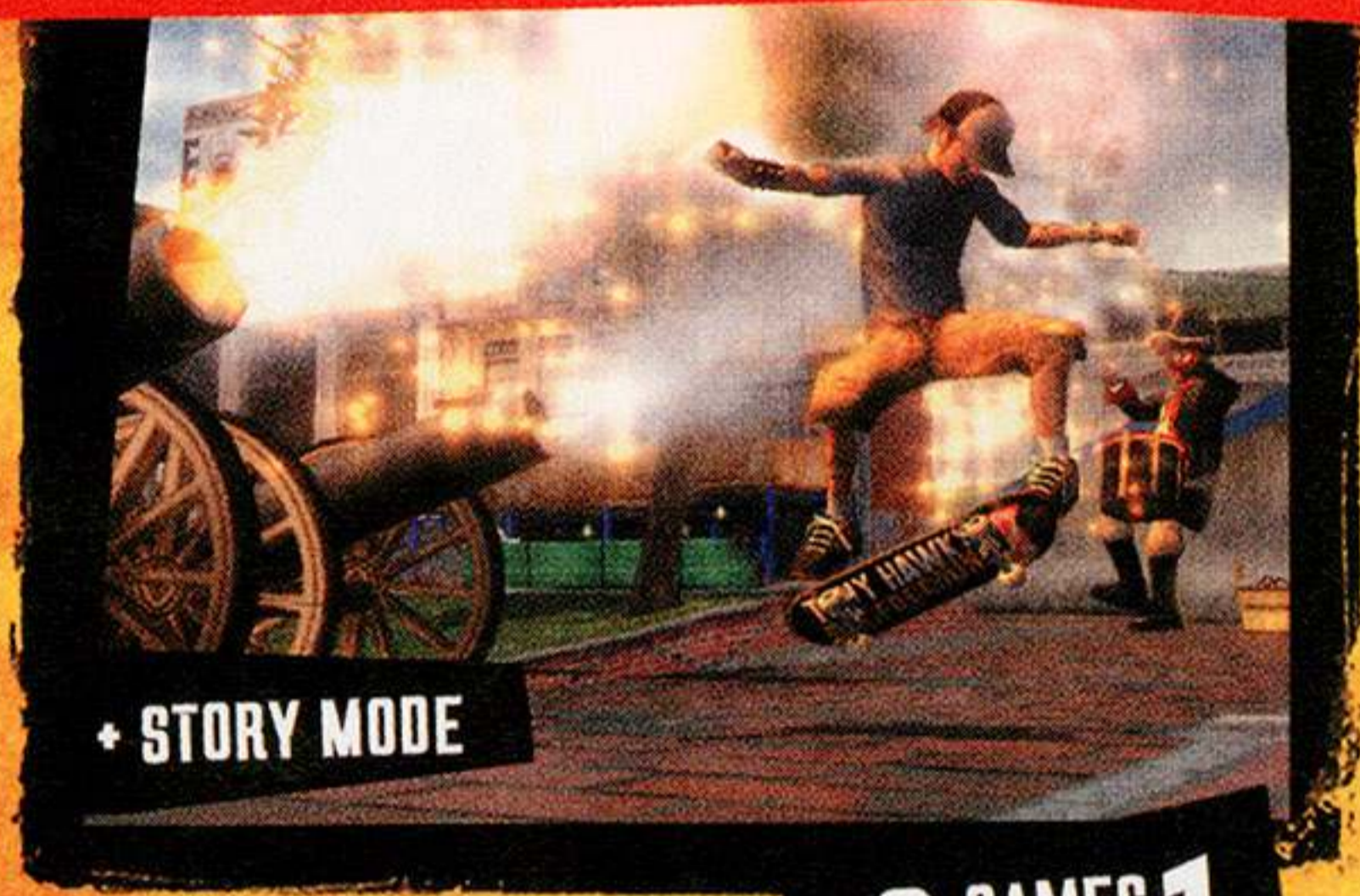
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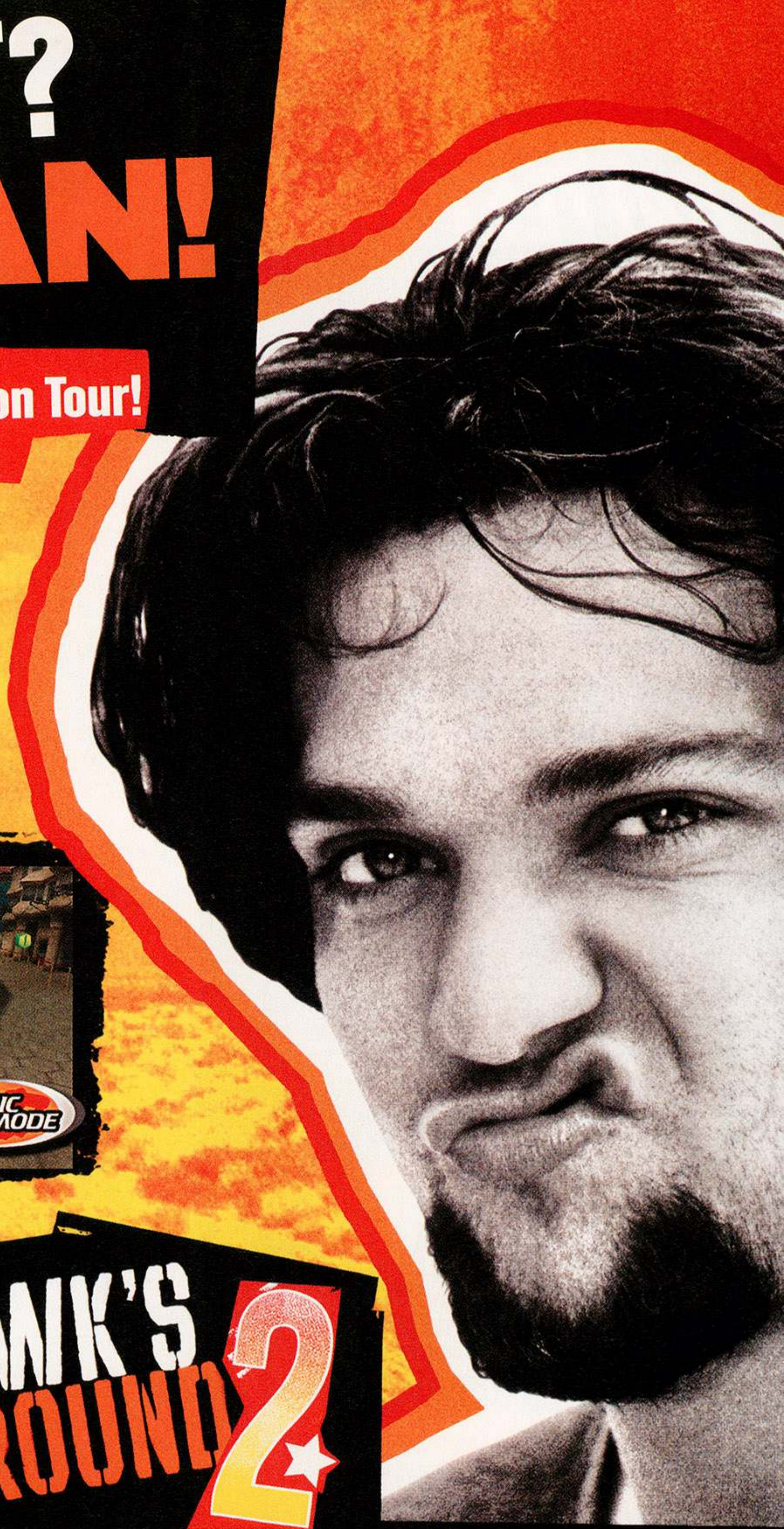


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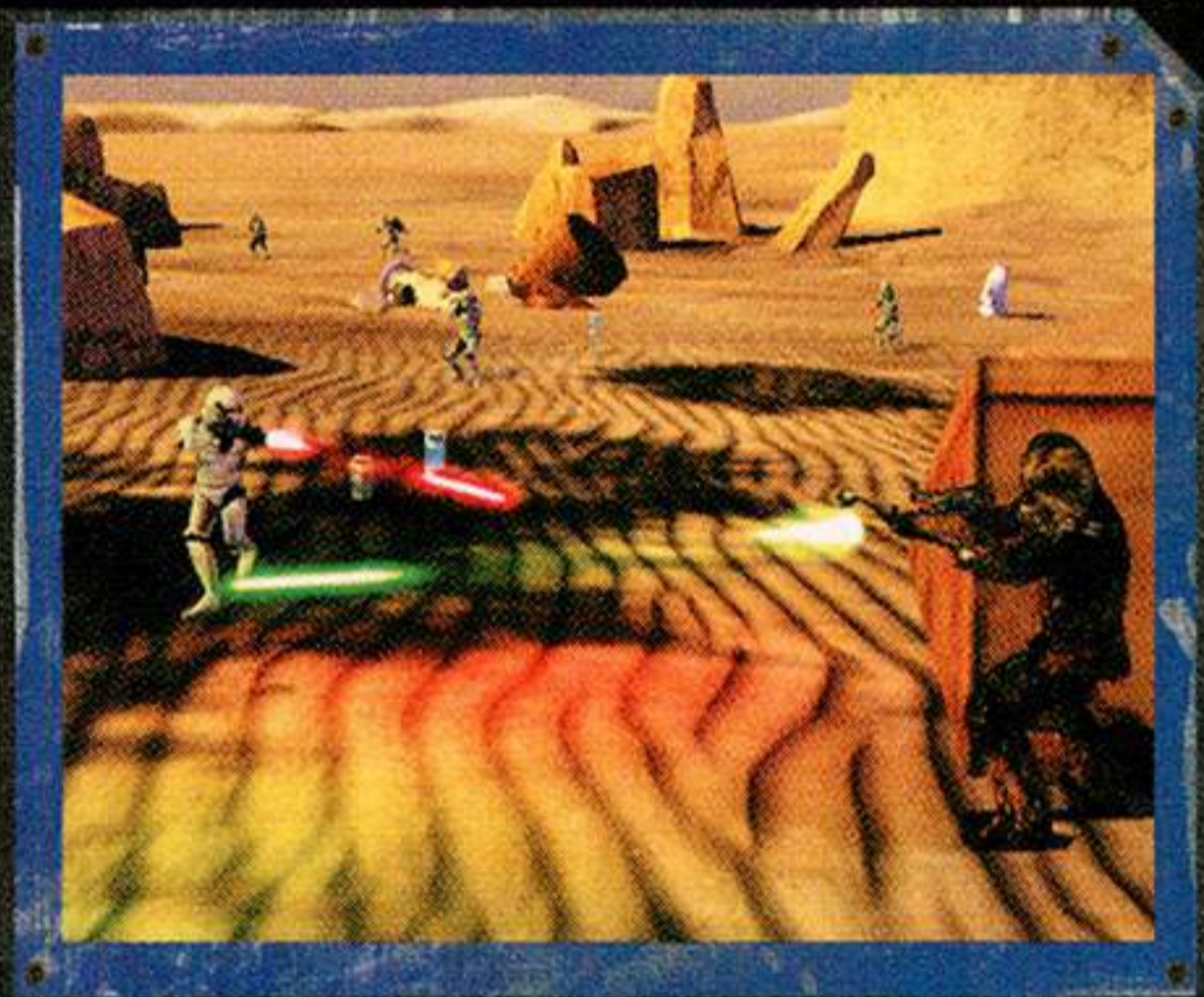
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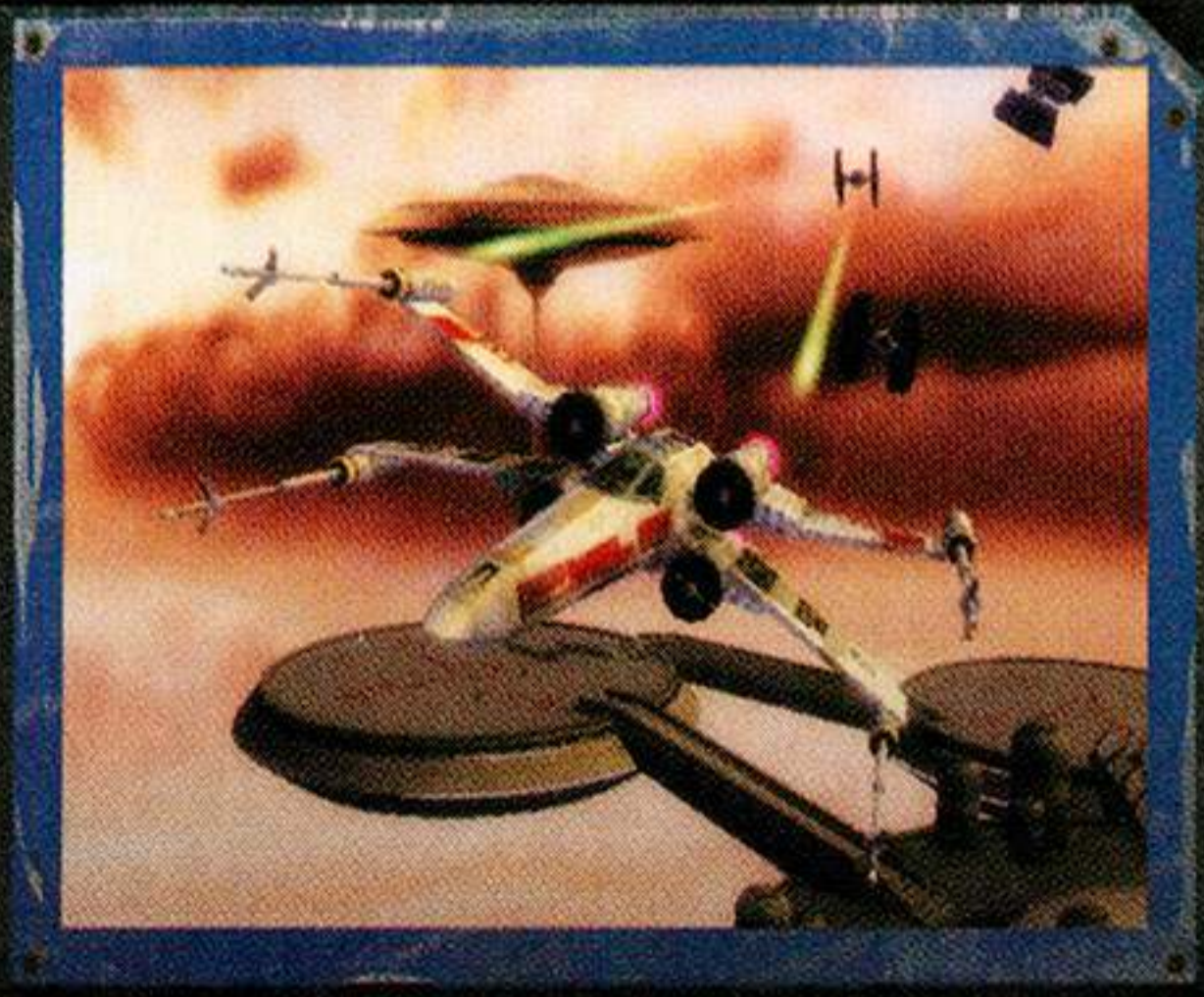
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A promotional image for the Star Wars: The Clone Wars video game. The scene is set on a snowy, mountainous planet. In the upper portion, two Republic gunships fly across the sky. In the lower portion, a Republic soldier in a black uniform is captured mid-air, performing a kick. In the background, several Clone Troopers in white armor are engaged in combat. A large, multi-limbed alien creature is visible in the distance. The overall atmosphere is one of intense action.

SEE THE MOVIES ON DVD.  
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PlayStation 2



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# 112

## COVER STORY:

# GRAND THEFT AUTO: SAN ANDREAS

We've hit the jackpot on the year's biggest game, scoring the first look at Las Venturas, *San Andreas'* glitzy Las Vegas-style city of sin. Plus, we ante up lots of other surprises: gang wars, kung fu dojos, and...basketball?



**70** **FALL PREVIEW GUIDE**  
Your invaluable guide to the deluge of holiday gaming releases



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We played our little hearts out so that you don't have to

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## editorial



aren't more of us in the industry.... It's like, if someone would just pull the curtain

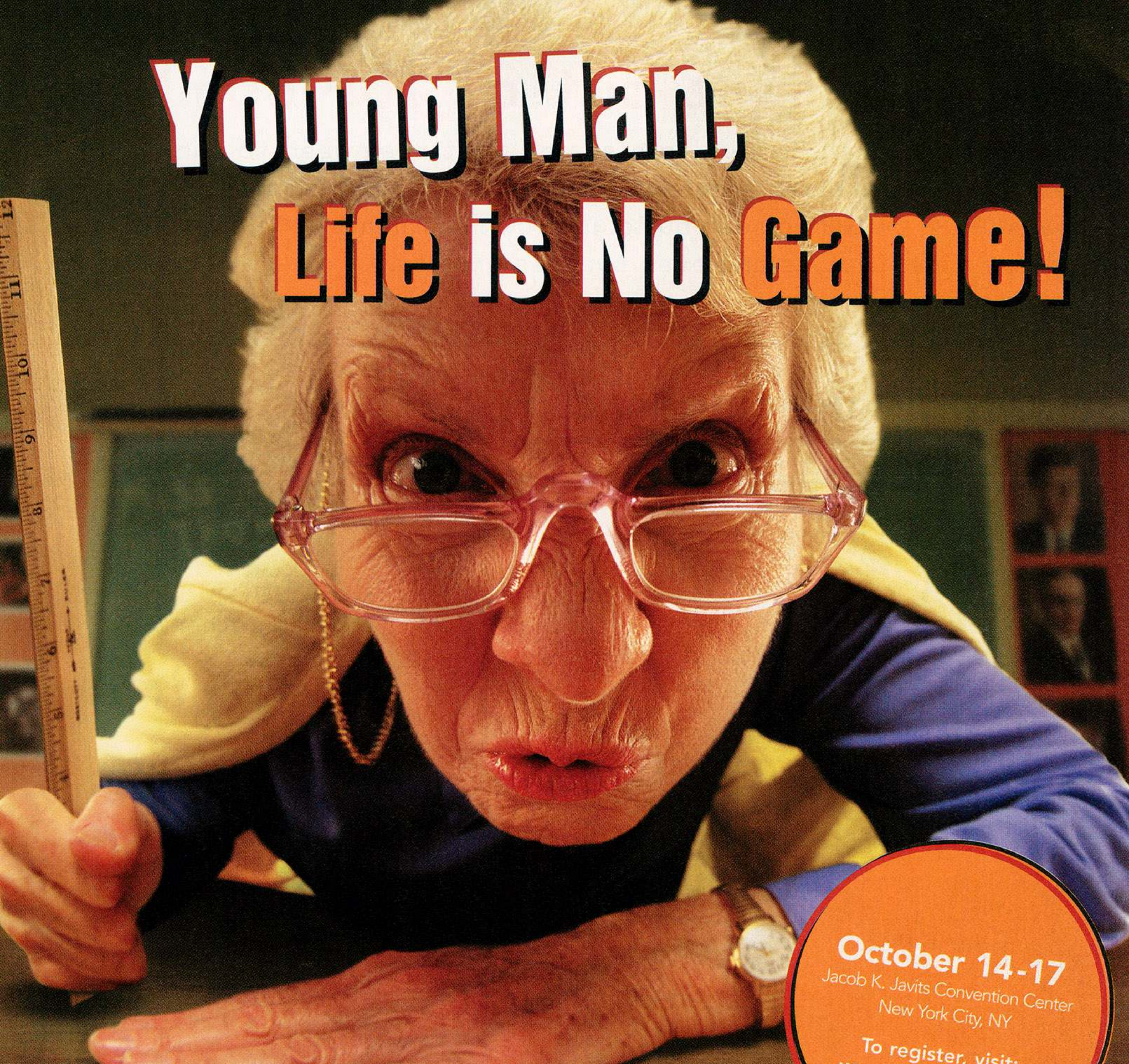
As a real, live "woman gamer," I'm often asked to tell people everything I know about our rare species—what we like to play, why we don't game more, how come there

back and unveil the magic formula for capturing us wily creatures, then publishers would run right out and buy fatter wallets for all the extra money they'd be making. Yet the formula remains elusive, and I think I know why: It doesn't exist. Sure, addictive gameplay, interesting stories, solid tutorials, accessible difficulty, etc. all need to be in there. But successfully applying a good formula doesn't necessarily attract more women—

it should attract more gamers in general. That's the key: Stop focusing on women as weird and different and start thinking of them as gamers just like you and me. Then we can focus on what really matters—good games and getting more people to play them. You can help the cause: See p. 46 for tips on how to get your girl gaming (if she isn't already). Won't it be cool when she's as psyched for *GTA: San Andreas* as you? —Jennifer Tsao, Managing Editor



# Young Man, Life is No Game!



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### Halo 2

EGM's Dan Hsu played the Xbox's biggest game ever, and he'd like to tell you all about it.

Platform: **Xbox**  
Publisher: **Microsoft** Developer: **Bungie**  
Rating: Mature Genre: Action

by Dan Hsu  
07/15/2004

#### Halo, nice to meet you

The level Bungie's allowing the press to play is called Zanzibar, and it represents a contested African beachfront between the human race and the alien Covenants. (Yes, the multiplayer action now has a backstory.) The game of choice was four-on-four Capture the Flag. In Halo 2's version of this mode, one team's on offense, trying to capture the enemy's flag while the other team defends. After three minutes, the sides switch.

The very first impression we got is how floaty Halo 2 feels. Remember those early screenshots, featuring multi-hued Master Chiefs jumping way up into the air? Those pics were no exaggeration. A simple press of the A button sends you flying high, prompting us to ask two different product managers whether we were playing on a low-gravity stage (we weren't). It felt so airy that we tried fidgeting with the look sensitivity to adjust for the seemingly sluggish movement. But after a few rounds, we got used to the air up there and were able to use it to our advantage, jumping over walls you wouldn't think you'd be able to jump over. The developers attributed the new vertical leap on the Spartans (the armored-warrior units of which main protagonist Master Chief is a member) to their "improved Mark III suits."

#### Halo... have we met before?

Next, we see some reminders that we're still in Halo's world. Except for the new submachine gun in our right hands, it all looks very familiar. On offense, we see a Warthog jeep and two Ghost single-pilot hovercrafts on the beach, waiting to take us into the enemy base. After we climb in, we see all the changes. The Ghost, for example, now has a turbo boost, activated by the left trigger. Hit it and you'll go zoom-zoom -- but you can say goodbye to quick handling, or your forward-firing lasers, while boosting.

### User Hype

Average Member Rating: Write Your Own Hype!

**drywallis** (05/03/2004)  
anticipation

Warning dont go into halo 2 with high expectations, people are jedded especially with video games, if you go into halo 2 reading all these reviews of people drooling over the game its only gonna do 2 things, 1) Its just gonna make you itchey for release of a ...

**XBMasta04** (08/01/2004)

...full hype >

**haloman92** (07/22/2004)  
halo 2 :)

halo 2 sounds even better than i thought. it rocks, but will they ever send put a playable demo?...

...full hype >

See All User Hype >

- Rate This Game
- Create Club
- Message Board
- Find a Gamer
- Add to a Collection
- Track this Game
- Add to Wishlist
- Add to Faves
- Declare Yourself an Expert

#### PEOPLE WHO OWN THIS GAME

- Halo Champion 117  
Invite this person to be your friend
- TBminator  
Invite this person to be your friend
- dpepper  
Invite this person to be your friend
- ivillanueva1  
Invite this person to be your friend
- XxsupersizeX  
Invite this person to be your friend
- Solid Cloud  
Invite this person to be your friend
- FOUR-20  
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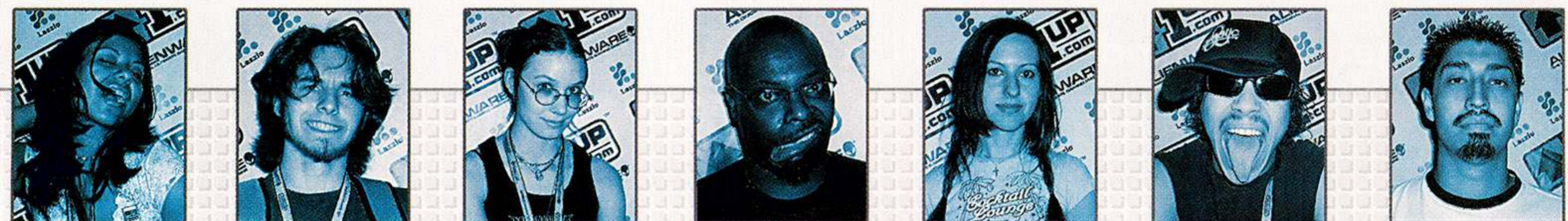
Than we have place for in print.

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### MORE OPINION

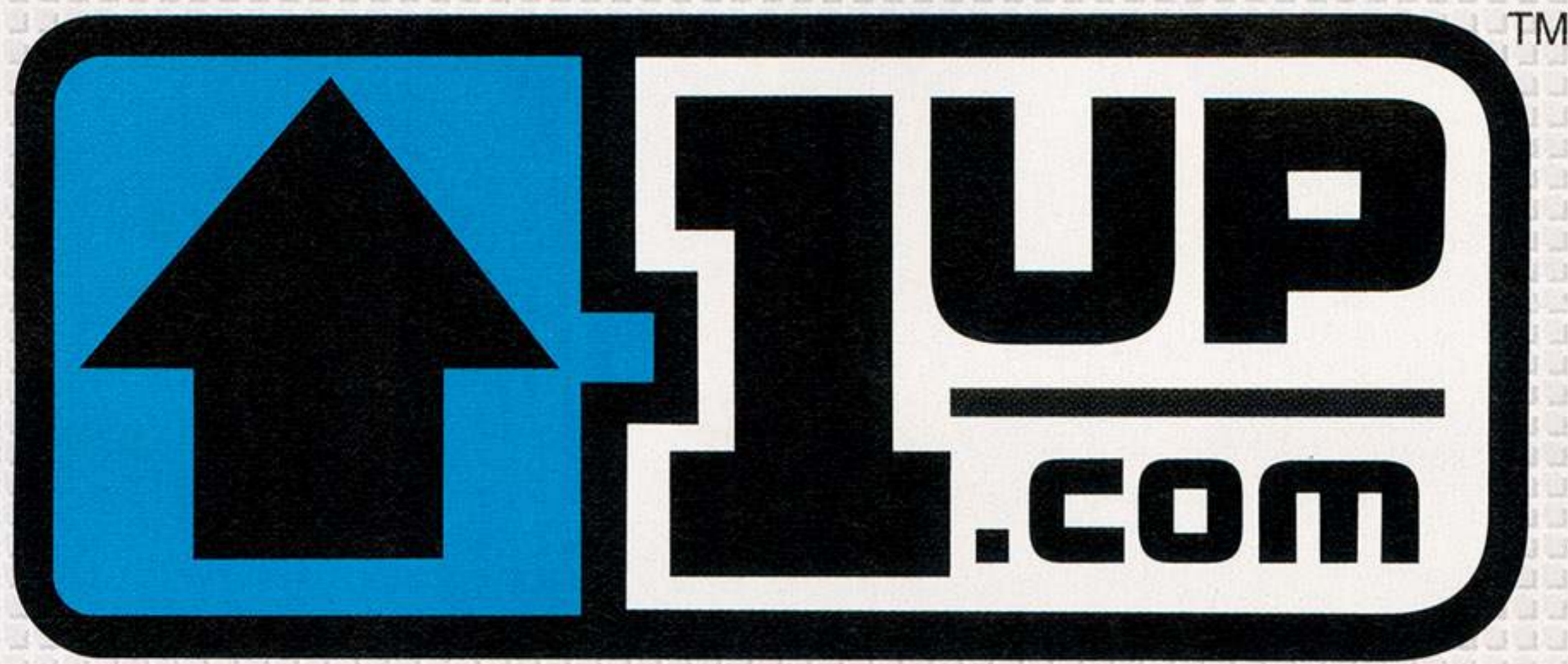
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- John Davison San Rafael 59225
- Jennie Sue San Francisco 39260
- Sam Kennedy San Francisco 80885
- Mike Ng San Francisco 99630

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**Dan Hsu**  
 "EGMShoe"

Rank: Linker  
 Current Points: 12555  
 Total Points: 12555

Personal Website

About Dan  
 Gender: M  
 Status:  
 Age: 33  
 Location:

Dan's Faves  
 Favorite Music: Beastie Boys, U2, Missy Elliott, Beatles, Amon Tobin

Favorite Books: The Ultimates, The Sandman

Favorite TV Shows: Aqua Teen Hunger Force, Jamie Kennedy Experiment, Arrested Development, Seinfeld, The Simpsons, Futurama

Favorite Movies: Spider-Man 2, Heat, Last of the Mohicans, Shawshank Redemption, Aliens, Matrix, The Empire Strikes Back, Garbage Pail Kids

Dan's Interests  
 My Interests: snowboarding, soccer, college football, Michigan Wolverines, Detroit Red Wings, Splinter Cell Pandora Tomorrow, Soul Calibur II

Where I work: Electronic Gaming Monthly

Dan's Desktop Picture

Dan's Journal  
 Check out that Splinter Cell contest...  
 ...the one I've been blabbing about in my blog. [HERE](#).  
 08/05/2004 03:15 AM EDT

Money plays...so not money?  
 Recently, a friend of mine at Midway, in his annual effort to tell me why EA Sports football games aren't as good as everyone thinks they are, brought up this point: You can beat just about anyone in NFL Street with some money plays. Does this constitute a bad game?

I found this argument ironic, as this friend used to be a big NFL Blitz rival of mine--we both loved that series. I remember falling in love with the first Blitz for arcades. That game rocked--and I only used 2-3 player tops for both offense and defense. I ended up office Blitz champion twice (two interoffice tourneys: one-man team then two-man team). Money plays? Yup, we both used 'em, but that didn't lessen our love for the game.

Dan's Games

Collection	Tracked Games	Wish List	Faves				
	PC (12)	1UP Rank	Trade	Play Online	Expert	Value	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ultima VIII: Pagan (Add to Faves)	0	N	N	N	\$49.95	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ultima VII: The Black Gate (Add to Faves)	0	N	N	N	\$49.95	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ultima VII Part II: Serpent's Isle (Add to Faves)	0	N	N	N	\$49.95	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ultima VI: The False Prophet (Add to Faves)	0	N	N	N	\$49.95	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ultima V: Warriors of Destiny	0	N	N	N	\$49.95	

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PlayStation®2



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“...Right Now, There Is No Other Game In The Genre That Looks Remotely As Good.”

- PSM

“...It Has Skyrocketed To The Top Of My Most-Wanted Games List.”

- Gamespy

“Turning RPG Clichés On Their Head.”

- Electronic Gaming Monthly

“...Intelligent Scriptwriting And A Well-Developed Sense Of Humor.”

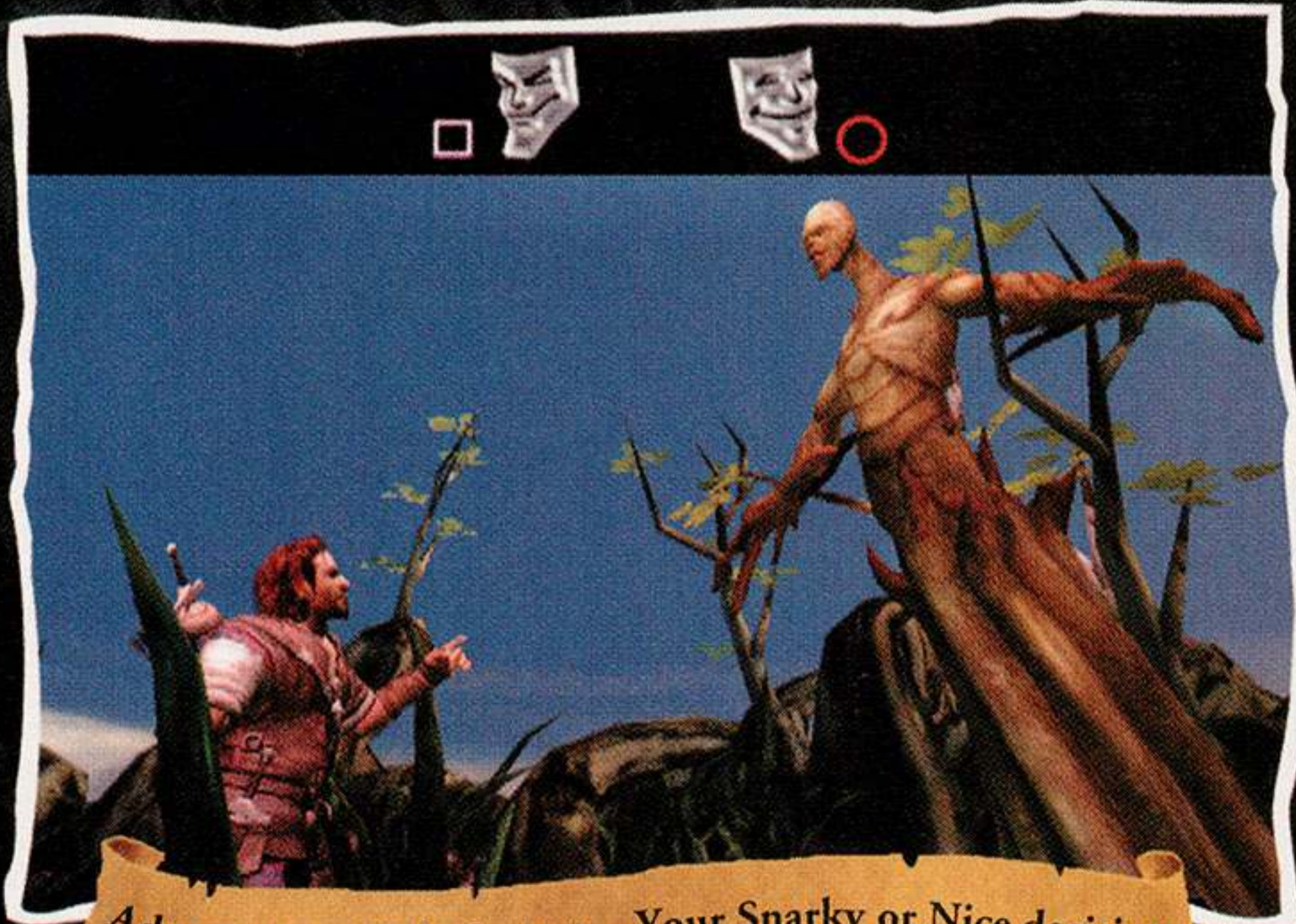
- GamePro



Summon Eccentric Characters To Do Your Dirty Work, Like This Poor Old Bastard Who Finds Traps...the Hard Way

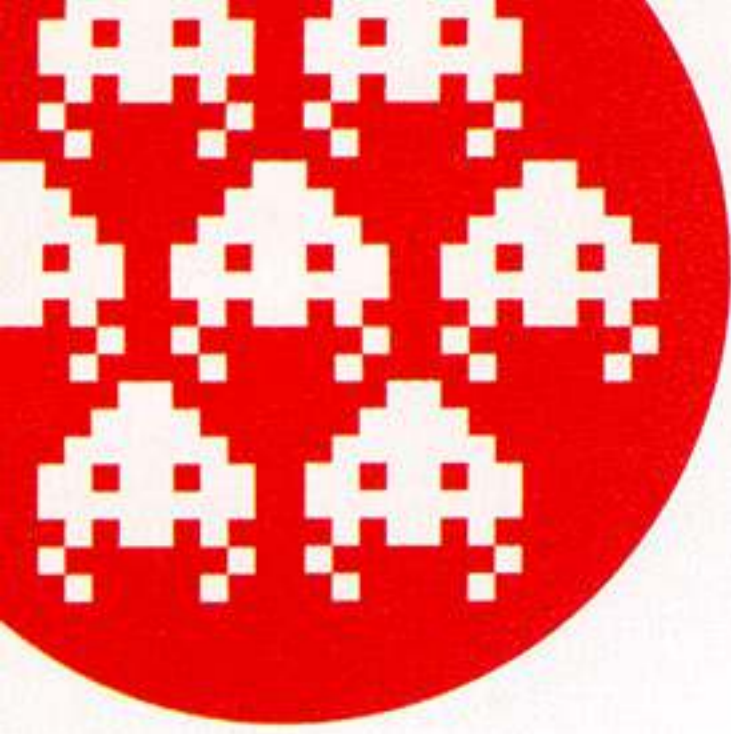


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# staff

we crunk

## the review crew



**DAN "SHOE" HSU, Editor-in-Chief**  
Shoe has to bid farewell to friend and associate editor Shawn Elliott...for now. He's secretly scheming to dock the other editors' paychecks so that he can afford to bring Shawn back.  
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**Now Playing:** *The Chronicles of Riddick, Star Wars Battlefront, Phantom Brave, Advance Wars 2, Soul Calibur II, Slay (PC)*  
**Fave Genres:** Just about everything

**MARK MACDONALD, Executive Editor**  
After being locked inside playing games all summer, Mark was profoundly disappointed by the lack of terrorist guards and giant explosions on his recent camping trip.  
**1UP.com Blog:** egmmark.1UP.com  
**Now Playing:** *Katamari Damacy, Fable, Tetris, Gradius V, Monster Hunter, Doom 3 (PC), Samurai Shodown II*  
**Fave Genres:** Action, Adventure, Shooters



**JENNIFER TSAO, Managing Editor**  
Jen was all set to review *Under the Skin*, but then the Feds stepped in and ruled that after playing the rolling blob game, the bongo drum game, and the dancing EyeToy game, she was legally prohibited from playing any more weird titles this month.  
**1UP.com Blog:** egmjennifer.1UP.com  
**Now Playing:** *Katamari Damacy, Burnout 3, Doom 3 (PC)*  
**Fave Genres:** RPG, Adventure, Action Sports, Rhythm-Action



**CRISPIN BOYER, Senior Editor**  
After his doctor prescribed a 10-day break from videogames, Crispin went to the only game-free spot left in the world: an undersea cave. When he returned, he learned that his good pal Shawn was leaving *EGM*. Life was easier in the cave.  
**1UP.com Blog:** egmcrispin.1UP.com  
**Now Playing:** *Star Wars Battlefront, Shadow Hearts: Covenant*  
**Fave Genres:** Action, Adventure, RPG



**SHANE BETTENHAUSEN, Previews Editor**  
After working like mad to finish the big Fall Games Preview, Shane enjoyed a brief trip to Amsterdam, where he rekindled his love for art, film, and music. He suggests rewatching *Star Wars Episode I* for a second look at Jar Jar's comedic genius.  
**1UP.com Blog:** egmshane.1UP.com  
**Now Playing:** *Shadow Hearts: Covenant, Viewtiful Joe, Killzone*  
**Fave Genres:** Action, Adventure, RPG, Fighting, Karaoke



**DEMIAN LINN, Reviews Editor**  
Demian tried to give his Heihachi Mishima King of Iron Fist combination trophy/coin bank to Shawn, whose savantlike fighting game mastery earned it many times over, but the big lug said no thanks.  
**1UP.com Blog:** egmdemian.1UP.com  
**Now Playing:** *Burnout 3, Kingdom Under Fire, Katamari Damacy*  
**Fave Genres:** Action, Hockey, Racing, Fighting



**BRYAN INTIHAR, News Editor**  
As it came time to assign the big *Def Jam* review, we looked for the hippest, most stylish *EGMer* around. So obviously, Bryan was elated when he got the nod. But what he doesn't know is that everyone else turned it down. What a sucka!  
**1UP.com Blog:** egmbryan.1UP.com  
**Now Playing:** *Def Jam Fight for NY, Paper Mario 2*  
**Fave Genres:** Action, Adventure, Sports



**SHAWN ELLIOTT, Associate Editor**  
This is Shawn's last month as a full-timer. We'll miss his dry wit, jokes, and work ethic. We won't miss his postlunch gas...or his writing! 'Cause he'll be back as a contributor...  
**1UP.com Blog:** egmshawn.1UP.com  
**Now Playing:** *Def Jam Fight for NY, Burnout 3, Doom 3 (PC), Star Wars Battlefront, Katamari Damacy*  
**Fave Genres:** Fighting, Shooters, Racing, Action



## Guest Reviewers

**JON DUDLAK**  
This month, *Terminator 3* inspired Jon to microwave tin foil in the hopes of an untimely demise.



**GREG FORD**  
Good platformers like *Sly 2* make Ford happy and generous. Who benefits? Raccoons worldwide.



**KEVIN GIFFORD**  
Kev knows that no mix CD can go without at least one McDonald's tune on it. Shame no one else does.



**DAN LEAHY**  
Dan's in therapy after seeing his swing imported into *Tiger Woods' Create-a-Swing* feature. Painful.



**PATRICK MAURO**  
We know him as Sporto, but on his radio show, Pat goes by "Video-game Sports Specialist."



**JOHN RICCIARDI**  
Just when John thought he was out, they pull him back in. Damn Pikachu and his cuddly friends!



■ Ever read such illustrious gaming magazines as *GMR*, *OFFICIAL U.S. PLAYSTATION MAGAZINE*, *XBOX NATION*, and *1UP.COM*? If not, you're doing yourself a gross disservice. We oughta know—we hijack their finest editors to help out when we're shorthanded.

## The Contributors

■ A former *OPM* editor, game developer, and American resident, **TODD ZUNIGA** left retirement in the Canuck wilderness to write just one more story—our *Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas* cover feature.

■ Naughty Dog's lead production designer and co-character animator, **BOB RAFFI**, honed the look for every series from *Crash Bandicoot* to *Jak and Daxter*. And this month, he made *EGM* its very own mascot for our "Building Character" story.

■ Writer **SCOTT STEINBERG** went all midwife this month, assisting in the birth of aforementioned mascot.

■ New York-based freelancer **LAUREN GONZALEZ** mined the annals of pop psychology for six strategies guaranteed to turn your girlfriend on to videogames.

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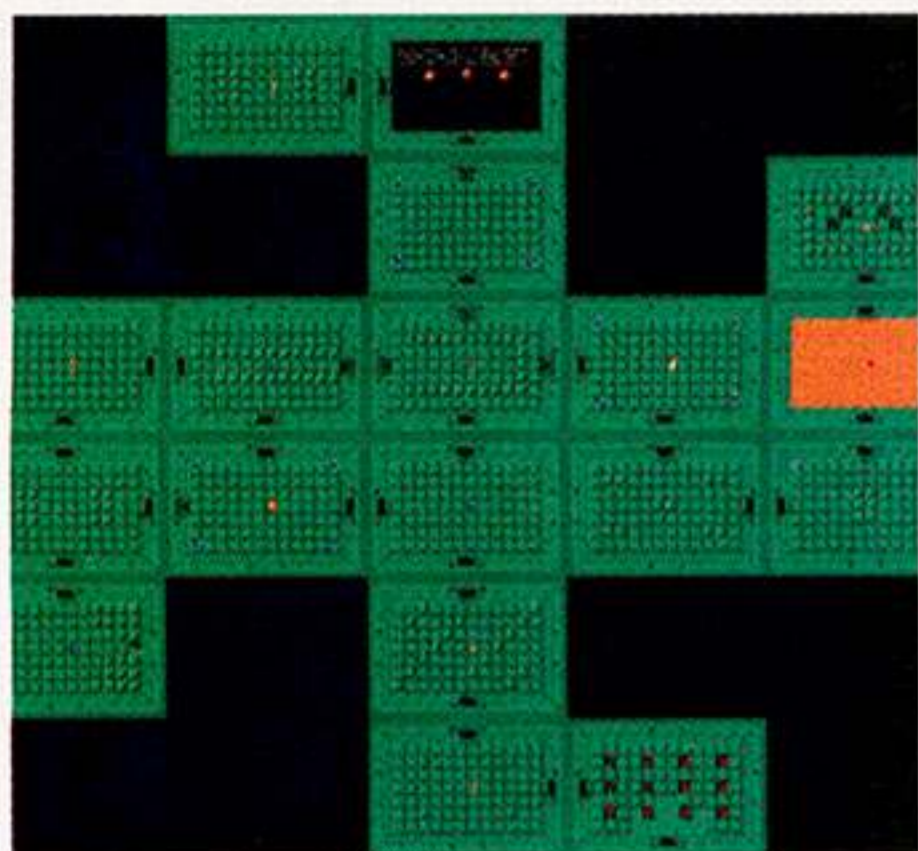
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# Letters

ranting, raving, and...wait, is that what we think it is?



■ It's totally not what you think.

## Foul play?

The third dungeon's floor plan in the NES Classics *The Legend of Zelda* forms a swastika. What's this Nazi crap doing in a Nintendo game?

—Kenny Thomas

As a symbol for prosperity, the swastika was widely used throughout the ancient world, including Mesopotamia, Asia, and the Americas. Japanese Buddhists use the version you saw, which moves in a counterclockwise direction and is called the "manji." In other words, we're pretty sure there's no anti-Semitic or pro-Nazi intent behind *Zelda's* use of the sketchy symbol.

## Just say no

Last issue, *Scarface's* Senior Producer Peter

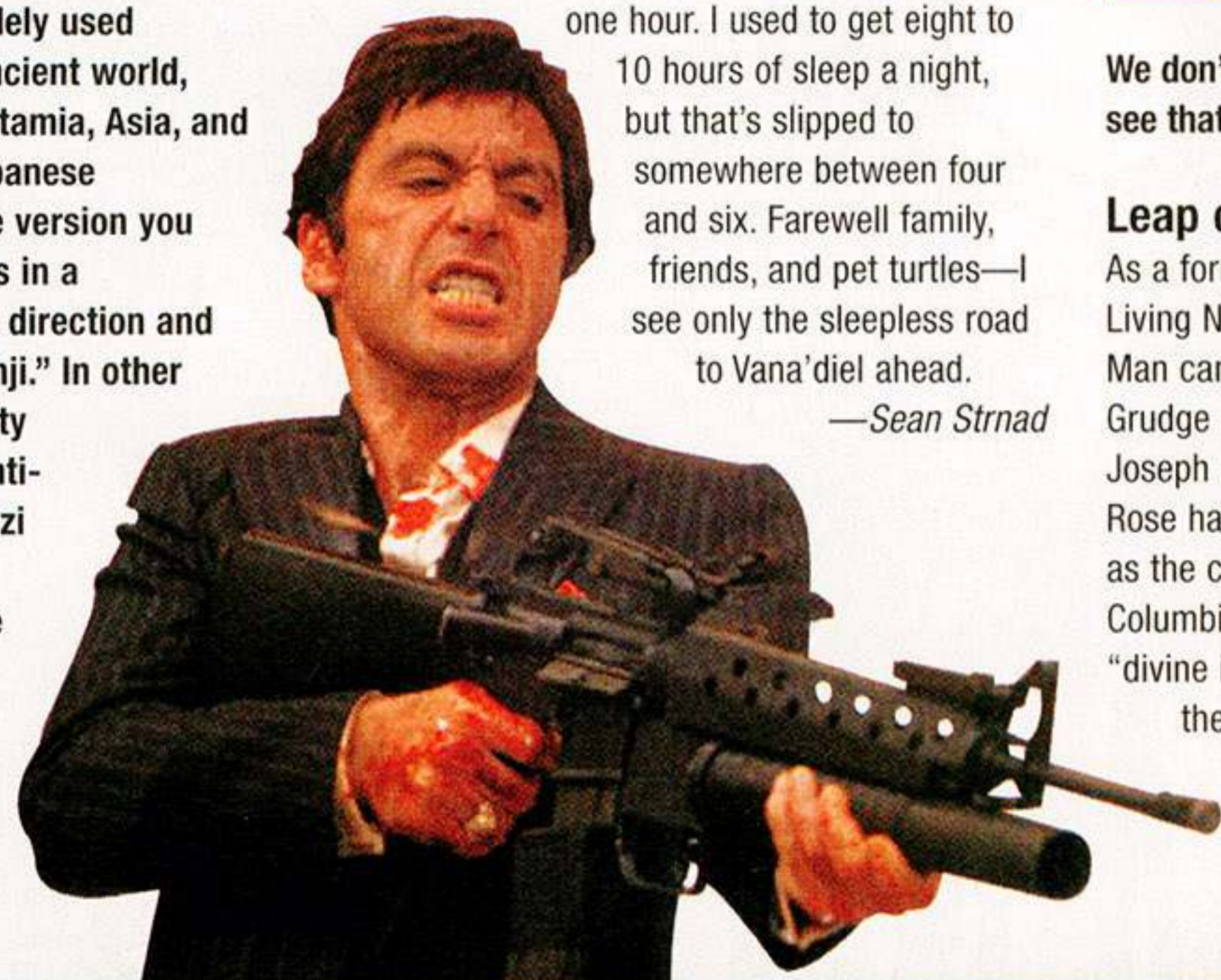
Wanat claimed that "the only thing we will not do with [the game] is puss out." This after you explained that, even though illegal substances are the cornerstone of the Montana empire, Tony will never actually use dope in the game. Why base a game on a drug-taking drug kingpin if you aren't going to depict it properly? And what's this about a "rage mode"? I'm sure Tony's ability to rampage through a barrage of bullets had something to do with the heaps of coke he helped himself to, so why not have him take a fat hit before a firefight?

—Klaydoggy

## All the day and all of the night

I might need gaming therapy, if such a thing exists. Out of the 19 days I've had *Final Fantasy XI* (456 hours to be exact), I've already logged in 130 hours for a ratio of 3.5 to 1. In other words, for every three and a half hours, I've played it for one hour. I used to get eight to 10 hours of sleep a night, but that's slipped to somewhere between four and six. Farewell family, friends, and pet turtles—I see only the sleepless road to Vana'diel ahead.

—Sean Strnad



## Letter of the month

### You must assimilate

With a single DVD player, I can watch every movie imaginable. I don't need a Paramount player to see *Mission: Impossible*. The same goes for CDs. So why can't the gaming industry settle on a standard console? Skeptics will contend that without competition, companies won't strive to outperform one another. Bulls\*\*\*, I say. As with DVDs, hardware manufacturers would still have to compete in terms of quality and price (e.g. sell cheap consoles that are prone to break and have few options or costlier top-of-the-line models with attendant bells and whistles).

—Cara

**Here's the problem: Console manufacturers make too much money with the current business model. If, for instance, you want to make a PS2 game, you have to buy Sony's development kit and pay licensing fees. Someone must be willing to share technology they've invested serious money in for a single open platform to work.**



Congratulations, Cara! As our Letter of the Month writer, you've won a copy of some game or another for Electronic Arts' new all-in-one entertainment system. (Of course, we're kidding about that last part.)

We don't even have to check your math to see that you're in need of a shrink, Sean.

## Leap of faith

As a former marketing director for the Total Living Network, I'm glad to see that Mega Man came out on top in *EGM* #182's Grudge Match. Like curmudgeon Senator Joseph Lieberman, TLN evangelist Jerry Rose has a habit of fingering videogames as the cause of violent crimes such as the Columbine shooting. And don't worry about "divine intervention." I was on the inside of the network, and intervention from below seems far likelier than from above, if you catch my sulfuric drift.

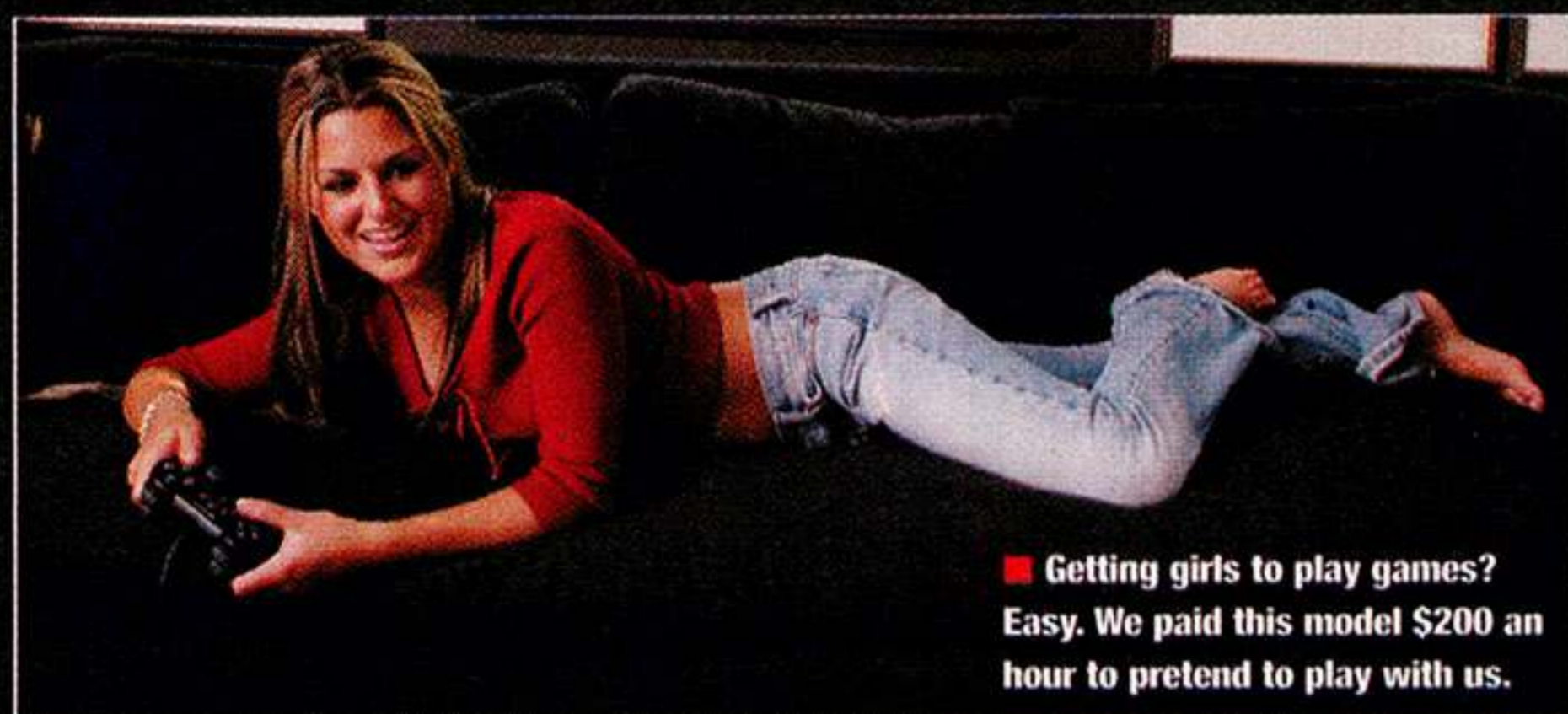
—Dean Pappas

## Tastes like Spam

Hey dude, it's been awhile since I've written, so I just thought I would take a sec to catch up with you. Kara left me a couple months ago, and our divorce is final tomorrow. She soaked me for child support and alimony. Whatever, though, life goes on. At least I don't have anyone bitching at me over my shoulder all the time. I spend most of my time online now—it's pretty cool how much \*\*\*\* you can see and learn. OK, OK, so I spend most of my time surfing for porn. It's so screwed up how people don't cover their asses, though. You'd think with the kind of investment they have to make that these idiots would pay more attention to their stuff. Like this one: [Internet link deleted for decency's sake]. ▶

## POST OFFICE

Ranting and raving from our message boards, [boards.1UP.com](http://boards.1UP.com) (look for *Electronic Gaming Monthly's* forums)



■ Getting girls to play games? Easy. We paid this model \$200 an hour to pretend to play with us.

## The love game

How'd you turn your gal on to gaming?

KloneBoi: *Animal Crossing* all the way. I guess she prefers uncomplicated games with simple controls.

Disappeared: Never had one. Ever try conversing with a girl when all you can talk about is how you spent 80 hours leveling up your entire party in *Final Fantasy*? Or how you memorized the guard patrol routes in *Metal Gear Solid*?

Shockgn'r: My girl says games are childish and then flips out when I don't invite her to play with me.

Morf: Try the multiplayer *Pac-Man Vs.* It's fun to eat each other.

Chixdiggit: My girlfriend won't play games, but she loves getting on the headset while I'm on Xbox Live. She pretends it's her playing and talks trash to the guys about being schooled by a girl.

Nba2ksteve: I got her to play *Tekken*, but she quit because I'm cutthroat.

Gamer113: Simple: Stick with cute characters (*Animal Crossing*) and stuff you can play together (*Donkey Konga*).

## CONTACT EGM

Carrier pigeons, smoke signals, string and styrofoam cups, messages in bottles, and the Pony Express won't cut it. Contact us at [EGM@ziffdavis.com](mailto:EGM@ziffdavis.com) or:

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**THINK  
OUTSIDE  
THE BUN** 





**Spider-sense couldn't save him**

Screw *Spider-Man 2*. After a spastic Doc Ock's swinging tentacles threw me every which way for half an hour, I snatched the game out of my system and went to work. Thing is, I went about it with a serial killer's style—all calm and cool-like.

—P.D.

**“Where strict adherence to Subway’s low-cal sandwiches couldn’t cut the mustard, *DDR* worked wonders.”**

—Mike Staub

► Dude, they didn't even bother to password protect the thing! And I'll bet they are wondering why they can't sell anything. All right bro, I've gotta run...nice talkin' to you again, and say hi to Kristin for me.

—Steve

Steve is a bad, bad man. Clicking his link unleashes an Armageddon of human growth hormone and penis enlargement offers. Imagine that.

**Not the sharpest sword in the rack**

I am pissed. In *Missing in Action* (*EGM*)

#183) you claimed that the *Kill Bill* game is as “dead as Bill and the rest of his assassins.” Way to ruin the ending for those of us who haven't seen *Vol. 2* yet and are waiting for the DVD.

—Kbern

At least we didn't tell you that there are aliens in *Aliens*, the boat sinks in *Titanic*, and Japan bombs Pearl Harbor in *Pearl Harbor*.

**We draw straws**

Who decides which games an editor reviews? I ask because I'd love to hear

what Managing Editor Jennifer Tsao thinks about shooters and sports franchises.

—Tailpipe

That's the job of one Demian Linn, *EGM* Reviews Editor. Whiny and/or demanding editors can, of course, request to be on particular games, but Demian makes the final assignments, and he usually does so based on an editor's expertise. That's why you don't see Jennifer reviewing the latest *Madden* or *Medal of Honor*. But maybe if she really wanted to be on the next *Madden* review....

**Must be the money**

Good news: A new *EGM* arrived in the mail. Bad news: A few weeks later at a local newsstand, I found the same issue with a plastic cover and a DVD. The secret's out, so why are you slighting us subscribers?

—Josh Marks

Where newsstand buyers have to cough up extra cash for the added content, we weren't about to charge existing subscribers more for something they didn't ask for. However, if the DVDs do prove popular enough, we'll look into offering slightly pricier special subscriptions with the grab bag of goodies.

**Chronologically speaking**

Any word on a sequel to Square Enix's classics *Chrono Trigger* (SNES) and *Chrono Cross* (PS1)? Please say yes.

—Jim Hackler

Square Enix issued an expected “no comment” on the subject, but we've heard rumblings about the future of the *Chrono* franchise. A few years back, Square registered a trademark for “*Chrono Break*,” but so far, nothing has come of this project. Also, Square recently surveyed Japanese players, asking if they'd like to see a remake of *Chrono Trigger* for the Nintendo DS. If you're in serious need of a *Chrono* fix, though, check out Namco's *Baten Kaitos* for GameCube: It's the work of the director and scenario writer of *Chrono Cross*, and the similarities are all too obvious.

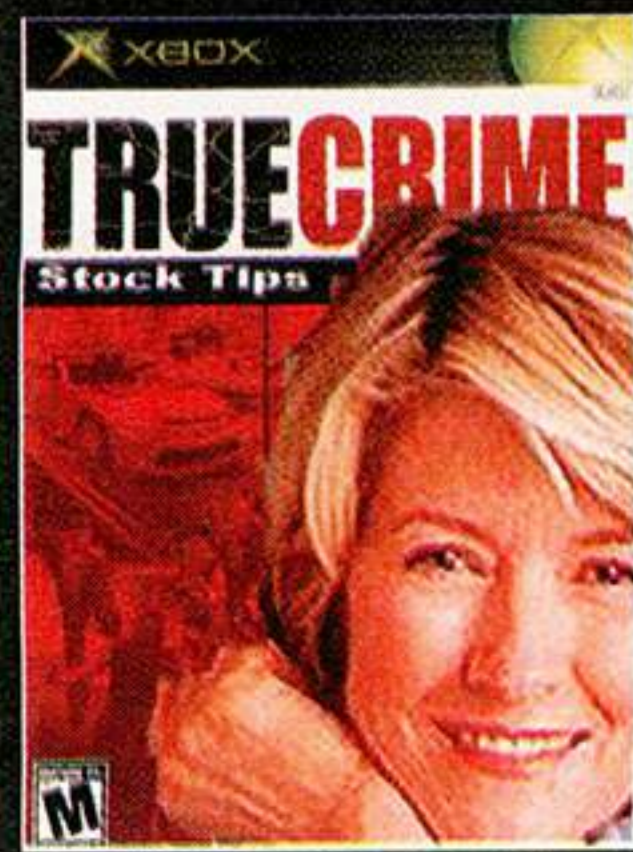
**Everybody dance now**

I'm a recovering fat guy. Thanks to *Dance Dance Revolution* I've lost 20 lbs in as many days (and without leaving the house). Sure, I've broken a few dance mats, but that's a small price to pay for a healthier physique. Seriously, where strict adherence to Subway's low-cal sandwiches couldn't cut the mustard, *DDR* worked wonders.

—Mike Staub

**GAME DESIGN-O-RAMA**

Got proof that game design is best left to the pros? Send your concept (with art) to [EGM@ziffdavis.com](mailto:EGM@ziffdavis.com), subject: design-o-rama



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—Prince Howard



■ Old-school doughboys wishing they had *Dance Dance Revolution*.



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PlayStation 2





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MG4-2 OSE-GH: 658



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FJ-5 OSE-GH: 65833



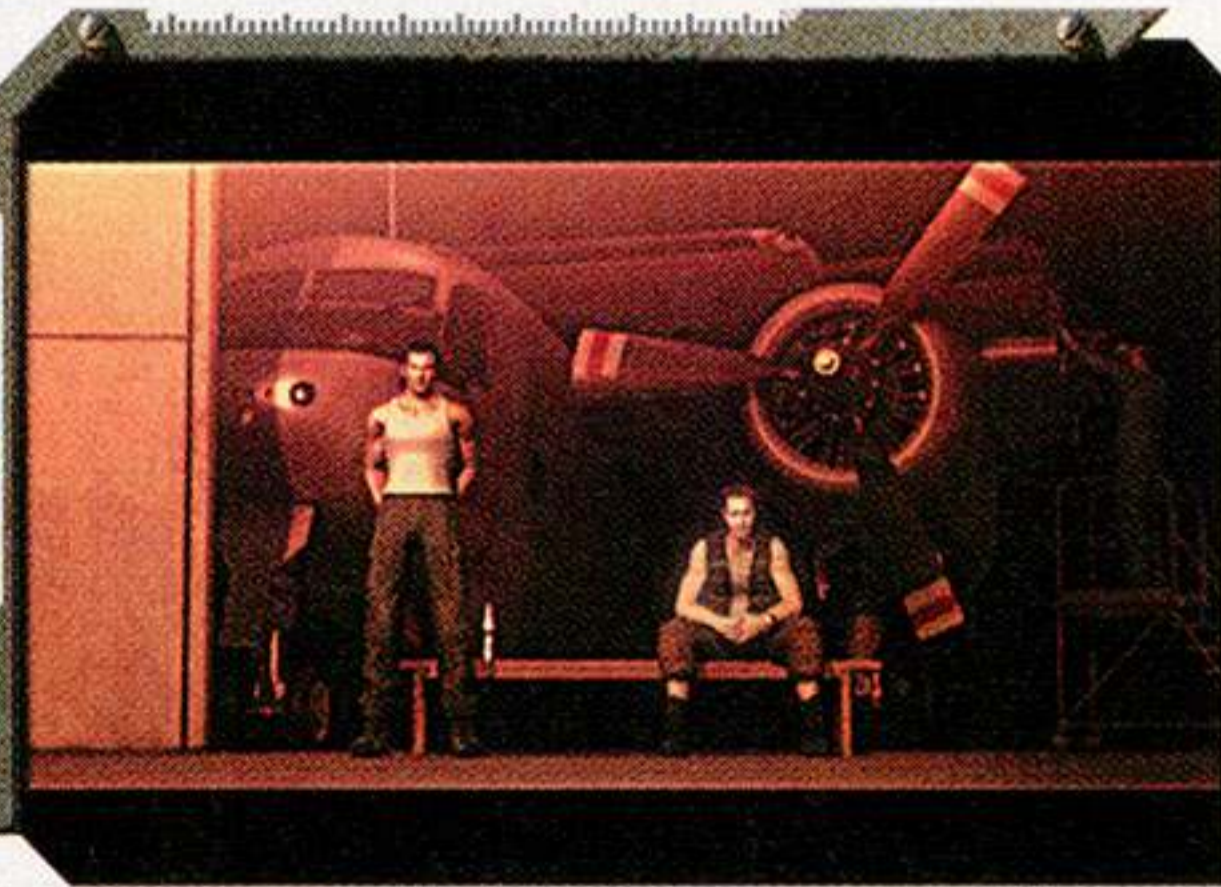
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AL-2 OSE-PH: 67334



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# DOUBLE TAKE

## Look again—Nintendo's new handheld gets a name and a redesign

**R** Reggie Fils-Aime is one cocky Nintendo executive. "If you maintain dominance for five years, it's called amazing," he says. "If you succeed for a decade, it's called unprecedented. But if you do it for 15 years, you can only call it one thing: Game Boy." But who could fault

him for being so brash? Nintendo's family of handhelds has KO'd every competitor, and leading it into the next round is a two-headed...er, make that a two-screened monster.

So what's the official name of this portable beast? You can call it Nintendo DS. (Yeah, yeah, we know that's been its

moniker since day one.) While the name stays the same, the unit itself has changed dramatically since its unveiling this past May. After some very necessary nips and tucks, the DS looks, and should play, better than before. (Peep all the details below.)

Unfortunately, Nintendo still won't share

two crucial pieces of information: a launch date and a price. The company swears the DS is on target for a year-end release (we hear November), and most in the financial community predict the machine will cost between \$150 and \$180.

—Bryan Intihar



■ Before and after: The original DS design (above) lacked the polish of the current unit.

### Trimmer, but Bigger

The loss of baby fat gives the DS a thinner base and an angular platinum flip-top cover. The face and shoulder buttons, however, are now larger to accommodate those with adult-size paws.

### Go Ahead, Touch It

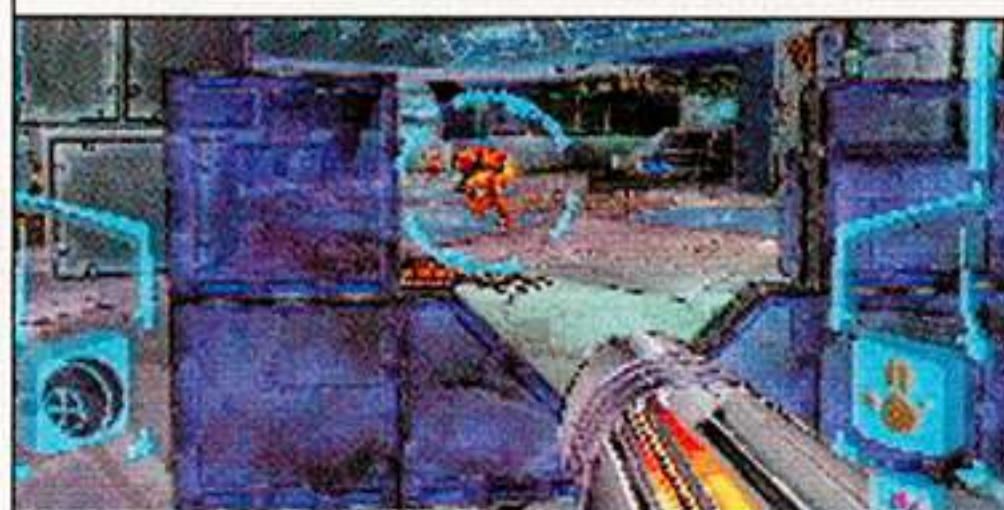
As you may know, the DS's 3-inch lower screen doubles as a touch pad. And thanks to the redesign, the unit will also include a storage slot (supposedly in the back) for the trusty stylus.

### Sounds About Right

Nintendo engineers have also gone ahead and tweaked the machine's speakers so that they broadcast in stereo sound whether or not you're using headphones.

### Control Yourself, Samus

On the DS games front, we hear first-person shooter *Metroid Prime: Hunters* will feature an alternate (and less awkward) control setup that doesn't use the touch screen for looking around and shooting.



### Secret Square

A Nintendo rep says the function of the mysterious square slot (next to the headphone jack on the bottom right of the unit) will be revealed soon, along with alternate color schemes for the DS shell.

### Shot to the Heart

A leaked DS test report claims that you should keep a distance of nine inches from anyone with a pacemaker while playing networked DS games. What will happen? We double-dog dare you....



## Bring on the Games

Check out some of the more than 120 DS titles currently in development. Want to know when they'll be coming to a game store near you? Well, so do we....

### Activision

Spider-Man 2

### Atlus USA

Snowboard Kids DS

### Bandai

Mobile Suit Gundam Seed

### Capcom

Mega Man Battle Network  
Viewtiful Joe



### Electronic Arts

GoldenEye, Madden NFL, Need for Speed Underground, Tiger Woods PGA Tour, **The Urbz: Sims in the City** ▲

### Konami

Boktai, Castlevania, World Soccer Winning Eleven, Vandal Hearts, Yu-Gi-Oh!: Nightmare Troubadour



### Majesco

Moonlight Fables, **Nanostray** ▲

### Namco

Mr. Driller, Pac 'n Roll, Pac-Pix

### Nintendo

Animal Crossing DS, Mario Kart DS, Metroid Prime: Hunters, New Super Mario Bros., Pictochat, Super Mario 64x4, WarioWare Inc. DS

### Square Enix

Secret of Mana, Dragon Warrior, Final Fantasy: Crystal Chronicles

### Sega

Sonic DS

### Ubisoft

Rayman



# GAME BOY ADVANCE GETS VIOLATED

## Grand Theft Auto jacks Nintendo's ride

**A** handheld version of *Grand Theft Auto* has been rumored for what seems like forever, but given what will finally come out this October, Rockstar might be forgiven for taking its sweet ol' time. Surprisingly, *GTA Advance* isn't a port or a compilation of the games that started the controversial landmark franchise back on the original PlayStation. Rather, the old-school top-down view and 2D graphics hide an original game (codeveloped by Digital Eclipse—makers of the upcoming cutesy actioner *Death, Jr.* for PlayStation Portable) that's as ambitious as any of its flashier predecessors.

A new story of crime in Liberty City, driven by cinematics and digitized voice clips, begins one year before *Grand Theft Auto III* takes place (the PS2 and

Xbox game is also set in this fictional Manhattan). Young Mafia runner Mike has seen his mentor killed in a car-bomb double-cross, leaving him broke and on the run from the cops and the Mob. A straightforward enough setup, but ensuing missions offer real twists. A simple protection pickup for Asuka's yakuza clan (familiar *GTA3* characters are back with new roles in the story) can end in different ways, depending on choices made at a midmission branch point. If a casino owner can't pay up, just burn his joint to the ground...or take him up on a job whacking the corrupt cops shaking him down.

The old town has also grown since your last visit. "Liberty City in *GTA Advance* is actually larger than the one in *GTA3*," says a Rockstar rep. "It's

twice the surface area." The metropolis is broken down into familiar divisions, though—Portland, Staunton Island, and Shoreside Vales, each with a different visual style and selection of landmarks—and they unlock progressively in the same old way.

As for how to get around, well, nothing's changed there. If it has wheels, you can jack it. Or treads, for that matter—on top of a vehicle lineup numbering in the dozens, somewhere there's a tank with your name on it.

—David Smith

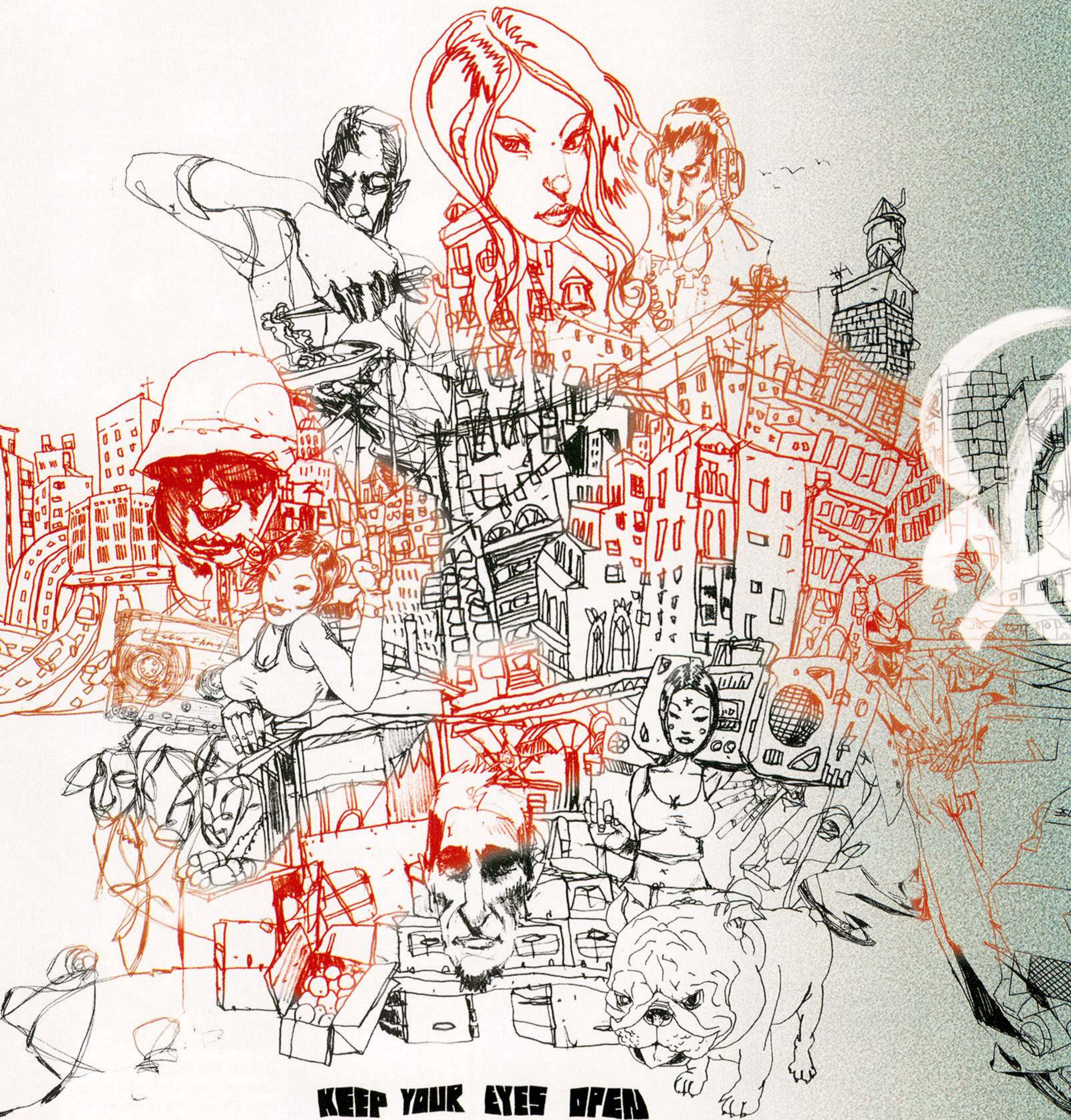


■ Not the most artful dialogue, but succinctly put, nonetheless.

### Out on the Town

Rampage missions have been part of every *GTA*, but vehicular side quests didn't show up until later. The GBA game features the whole package. Expect more than 300 diversions, including taxicab schlepping, vigilante missions in squad cars, ambulance rescue missions, firefighting in a hook-and-ladder, plus the odd spot of unrestrained violence.





**KEEP YOUR EYES OPEN  
AND YOUR FEET DOWN.**

PRODUCTS RANGE FROM  
RATING PENDING TO EVERYONE  
**RP-E**  
CONTENT RATED BY  
**ESRB**



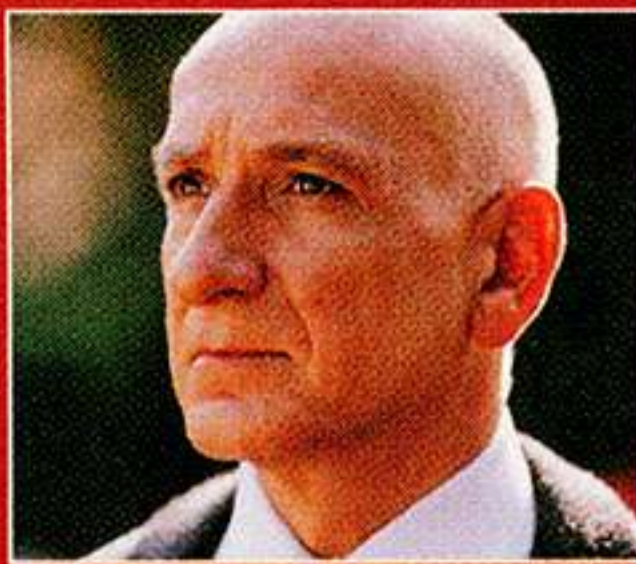
Go Anywhere. Go Anywhere fast. Go Anywhere fast looking like a DAMN PIMP. [NeedForSpeed.com](http://NeedForSpeed.com)



Challenge Everything™

actual game screen





■ Kingsley (top) and Loken are out for blood in this game-based flick. AB positive, mostly.

## BITE ME

### Ghandi and the Terminatrix join the cast of the BloodRayne movie

**W**e've known for a while that Brightlight Pictures was bringing Majesco's horror-action franchise to the silver screen sometime in late 2005, but now the *BloodRayne* film finally has some Hollywood star power behind it.

Kristanna Loken, the actress who made California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger look like a girly man in *Terminator 3: Rise of the Machines*, has signed on to play bloodsucking heroine Rayne. Opposite her will be Sir Ben Kingsley, who starved himself to an

Academy Award for his performance in 1982's *Ghandi* and more recently (and embarrassingly) appeared in this summer's belly flop *Thunderbirds*. He'll take on the role of Kagan, Rayne's vampire father and main adversary. Other additions to the cast are expected soon (rumors persist that *The Fast and the Furious*' Michelle Rodriguez will join).

The film takes place in 16th century Romania (maybe they can reuse parts of the *Van Helsing* set? We hear it rents out for cheap) and details the ongoing feud between Rayne and her poppa.

#### And in Other News Out of Hollywood...



■ Production continues on *SpyHunter*, starring WWE wrassler The Rock, with *Face/Off* director John Woo behind the camera. Look for it to race to theaters next summer.



■ Speaking of the People's Champ, The Rock has expressed interest in Universal's film adaptation of Id Software's *Doom*. We're still holding out for Bruce Campbell....



■ Visit [www.boll-kg.de](http://www.boll-kg.de) for a sneak peek at the *Alone in the Dark* movie. Judging from the trailer, the flick looks...uh...well...*Alone in the Dark* was a great game, wasn't it?

## GRUDGE MATCH

Is it better to burn out than fade away?



**BURNOUT 3**

**A BURNOUT**

The third *Burnout* is an absolute speed demon, but there's just something about the smell of incense and unwashed body mass. Dim the lights and load up *Yellow Submarine* while the letters from parents pour in following this matchup.

#### CHIEF CHARACTERISTICS



Lots of car crashes and generally fast movement  
**Advantage: Burnout 3**

Lots of sentence fragments and generally slow movement



#### NOTEWORTHY ACHIEVEMENT

Maintaining a speed of 200 mph  
**Advantage: Burnout 3**

Finding half of yesterday's Subway Club in couch cushions

#### FUELED BY



Fossil fuels  
**Advantage: Burnout 3**

Future fossils



#### GAMING IMPACT

Has come a long way since the Atari 2600 racer *Pole Position*

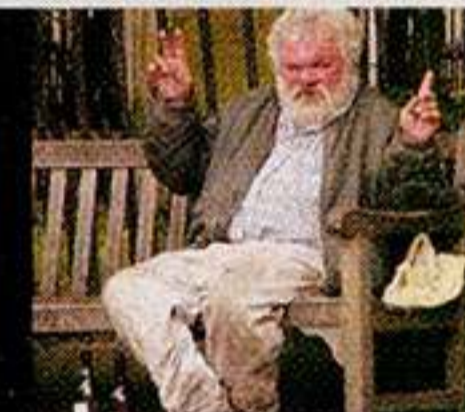
Spent all day trying to finish *Pole Position*  
**Advantage: A Burnout**

#### POTENTIALLY CONFUSED WITH



*DRIV3R*

An alcoholic  
**Advantage: A Burnout**



#### FUTURE PROSPECTS

The coveted fourth installment  
**Advantage: Burnout 3**

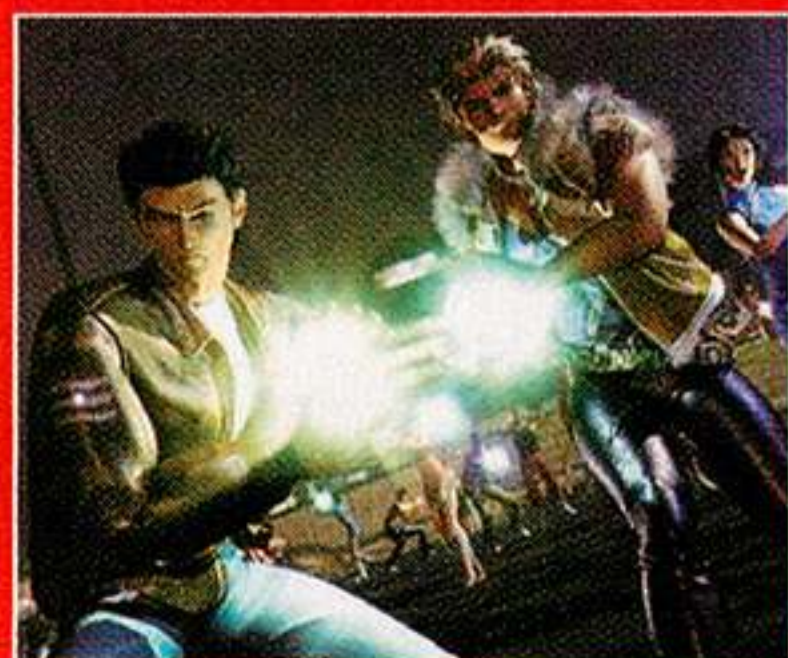
Phish show in Des Moines. After that, whatever



### WINNER: BURNOUT 3

See kids? Only losers use drugs. Now get back to playing those videogames—your couch full of supermodels and fellow Pulitzer Prize candidates await your new high score in *Super Mario Bros.*

## NEWS TIDBITS: RATED E FOR EVERYONE



#### Shenmue's Back...Sort Of

Sega is teaming up with Korean developer JC Entertainment to create a massively multiplayer online role-playing game based on its *Shenmue* series. But don't go rushing to the Lucky Hit tables just yet—*Shenmue Online* will be released only in China and Korea, exclusively for the PC.



#### Metroid: A Look Back and Ahead

Nintendo has put together a special bonus disc that includes a history of the *Metroid* franchise and a playable demo of this November's *Metroid Prime 2: Echoes* (GC). You can get the disc one of three ways: Purchase the *Metroid Prime* GameCube bundle, sign up for a subscription to *Nintendo Power*, or register your GameCube and five games at [nintendo.com](http://nintendo.com).



**JUST LOOK AROUND, MAN.**

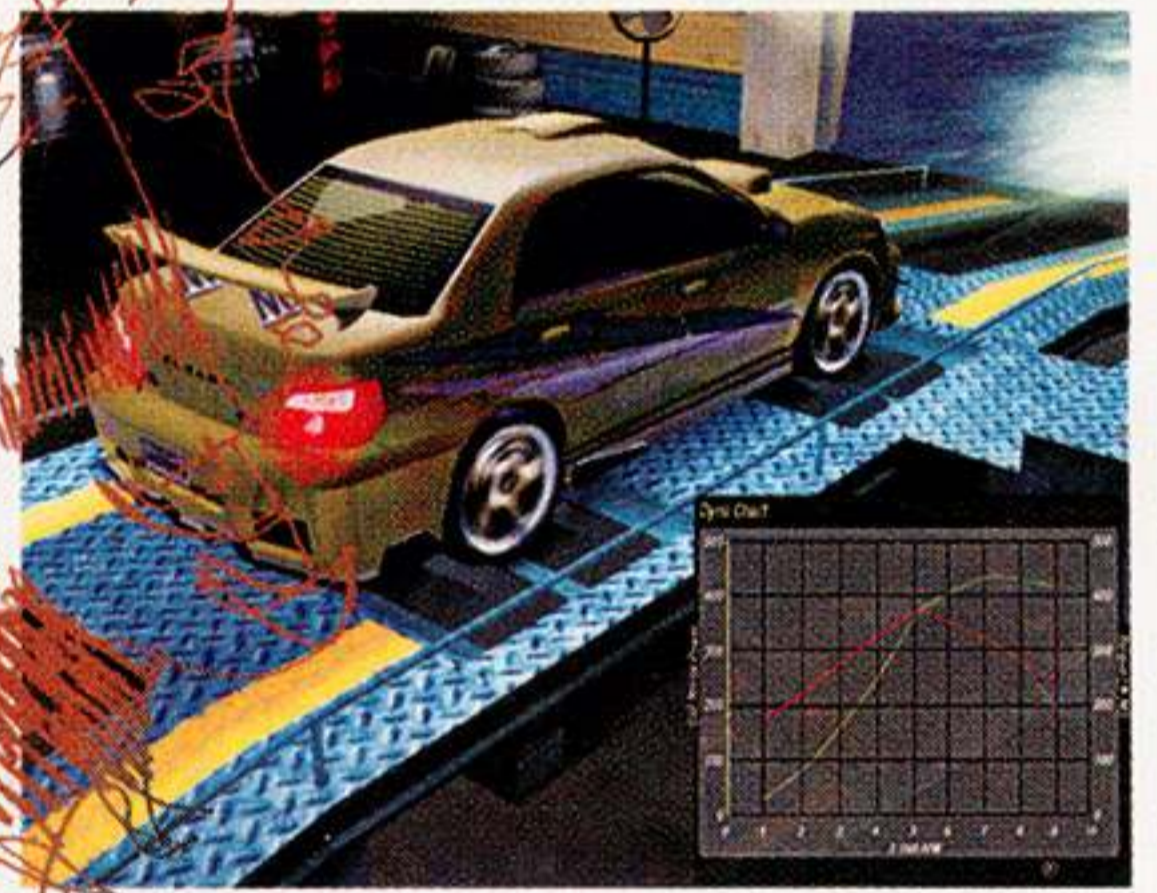
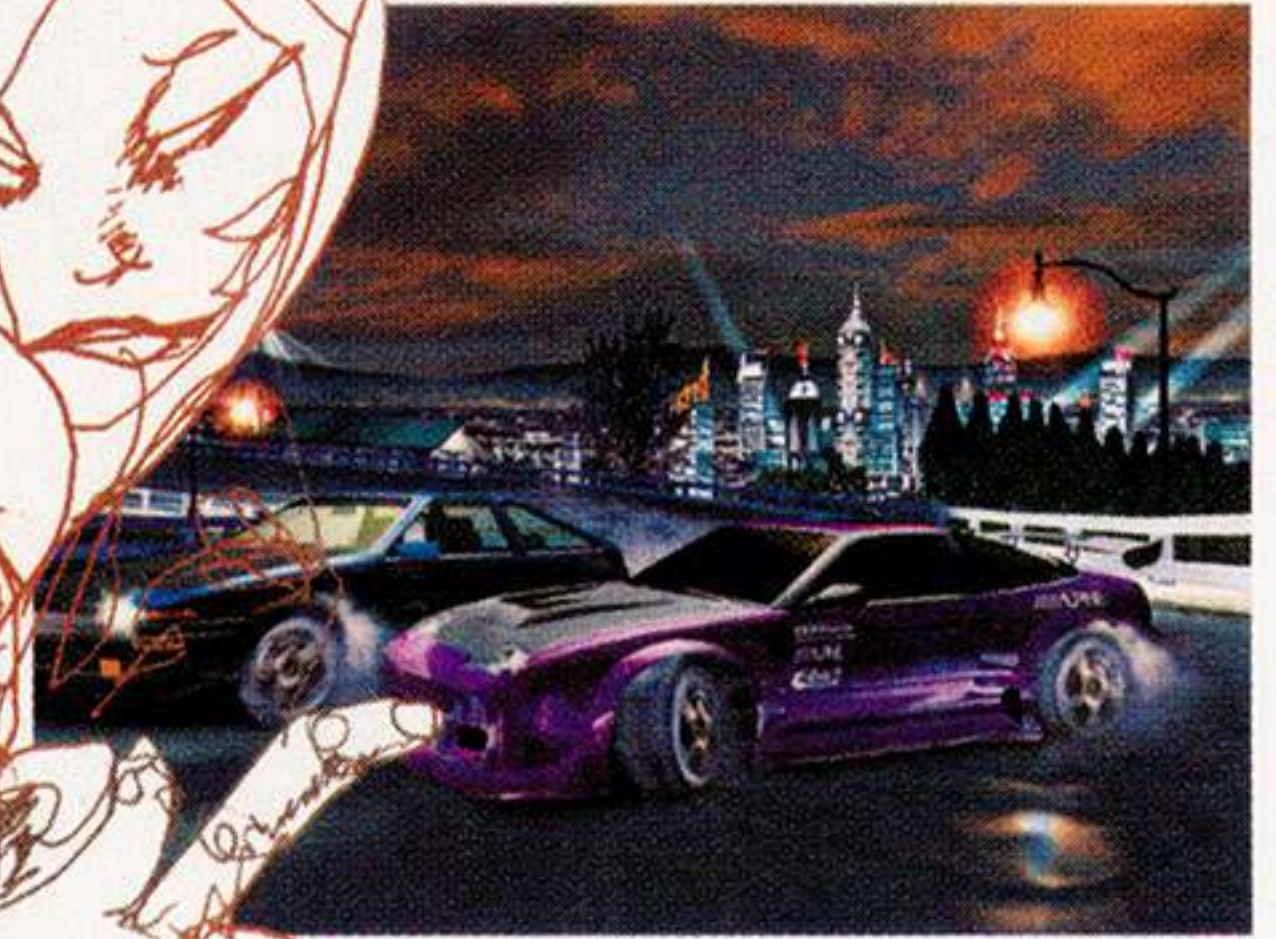
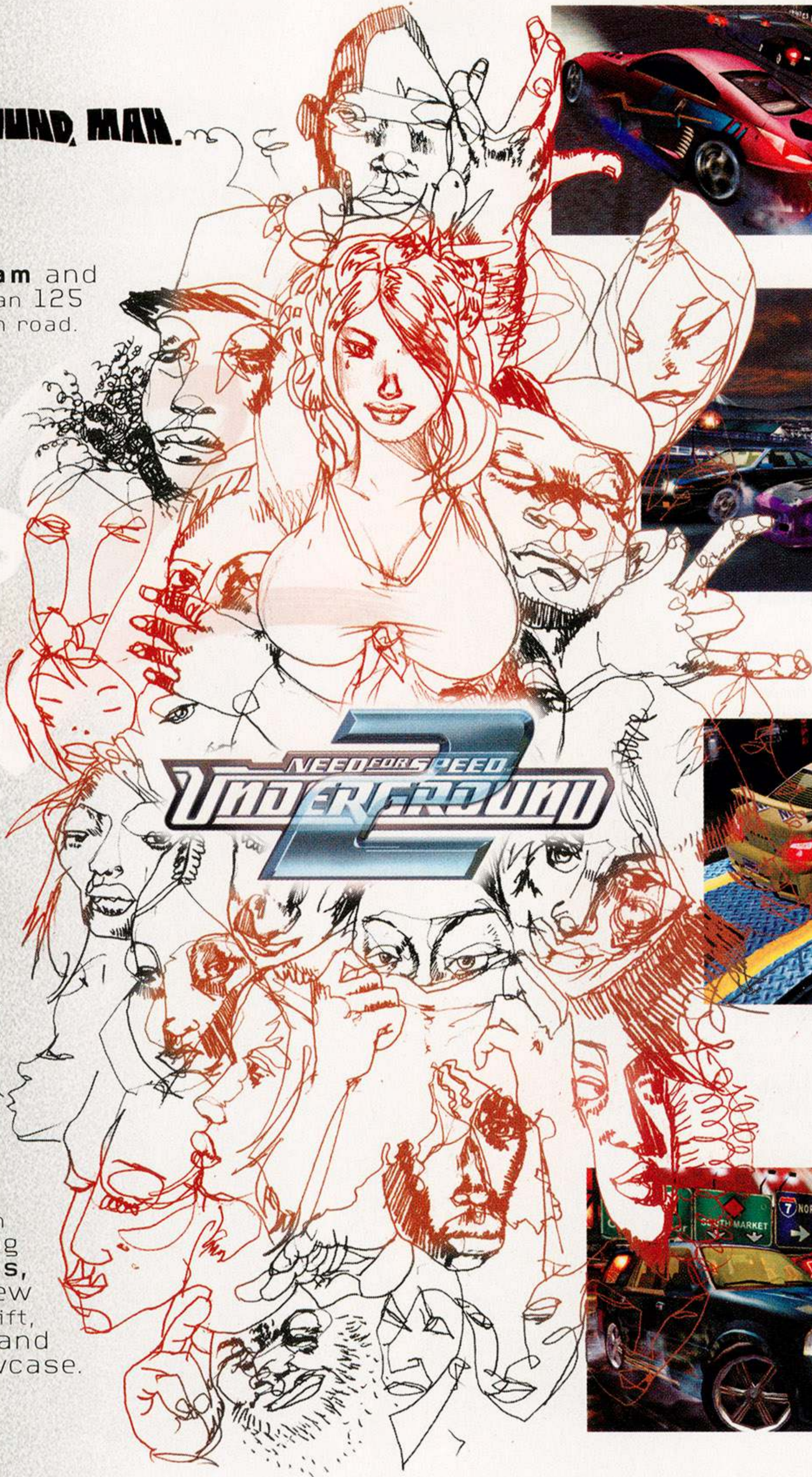
**Roam** and race on more than 125 miles of open road.

**Encounter** underground races, secret specialty shops and unexpected challengers.

**Customize** your ride inside and out—spinners, scissor doors, audio upgrades and detailed performance tuning.

**Choose** from hundreds of authentic aftermarket parts for endless expressions of style.

**Compete** in eight exciting game modes, including all-new Outrun, Downhill Drift, Street-X and Showcase.



# NEED FOR SPEED UNDERGROUND 2



PlayStation 2



DeLuxe

HKS

GRenDy

sparco

INTERNET CONNECTION REQUIRED for online play. PlayStation 2 online play requires Internet Connection, Network Adaptor (for PlayStation 2) and Memory Card (8MB) (for PlayStation 2) (each sold separately). The Online icon is a trademark of Sony Computer Entertainment America Inc. See product pack for details. Not all features available on all platforms.  
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# BUILDING CHARACTER

It's alive!  
We have an expert make our own mascot in six easy steps

CHARACTER NAME: **HELZ BELLS**  
OCCUPATION: **HALF DEMON**

**C** all it construction work: Naughty Dog cofounder Jason Rubin has made a name for himself helping to create timeless icons like Crash Bandicoot and more current mascot material Jak and Daxter. But with so many equally forgettable game characters—Sphinx, Vexx, that goateed gimp from *Haven*—we couldn't help but wonder what separates the winners from the polygonal poseurs. Follow the steps for the sketch here, ballparked by Rubin on the spot and drawn by Naughty Dog Art Director Bob Rafei, for a god's eye view of character creation. Just don't blame Rubin—who provides the color commentary—if it sucks. "We usually spend more than 15 minutes putting these guys together," he says.

—Scott Steinberg

### Step 1: Build the body

**Jason Rubin:** "The base every character starts from. It defines what a character can do. Want a fast character? Make him narrow and windswept. Want to go crazy? Make a fat character who jumps really high. Here, we've got a scrapper—he's a fighter, so he needs to be midsize and mobile."

### Step 2: Accessorize!

**JR:** "Don't load personalities up with accoutrements—let players do that optionally.... Just add enough features that are instantly recognizable. We'll go with black pants, no shirt, and a massive red tribal tattoo. Killer glasses—silver with rose-colored lenses—and dangling jewelry work, too."

### Step 3: Give him legs

**JR:** "Two's usually enough for anyone. But use them in interesting ways. Let's say this guy's got a Jekyll-Hyde thing going. When he gets angry, he grows a foot and his legs go double-jointed. It becomes obvious then that he can run at a faster pace and leap farther."

### Step 4: Make him dangerous

**JR:** "Helz deserves a weapon, and when designing, stick with slight extensions of reality. A shotgun's good...one that's slightly larger and has four barrels is even better. [Weapons] should instantly convey a character's background by connecting just enough with the past to offer a brief but self-explanatory glimpse into his personal history."

### Step 5: Add the head

**JR:** "Another key characteristic. Let's make our face chiseled, [because] our subject's angry at the world. We'll skip the token beard, though. You should avoid using obscuring facial hair: It can make the character look like Santa Claus. Some neck tattoos work, though, but nothing too weird—our man shouldn't scare the ladies."

### Final step: The collectibles

**JR:** "Tie them into the narrative. Helz has a dark side—let's make him drink potions to turn into a demon. Which presents a new set of design challenges: What does becoming a monster mean from a gameplay standpoint? It's worse when marketing is involved. Try explaining why a demon is drinking Mountain Dew!"



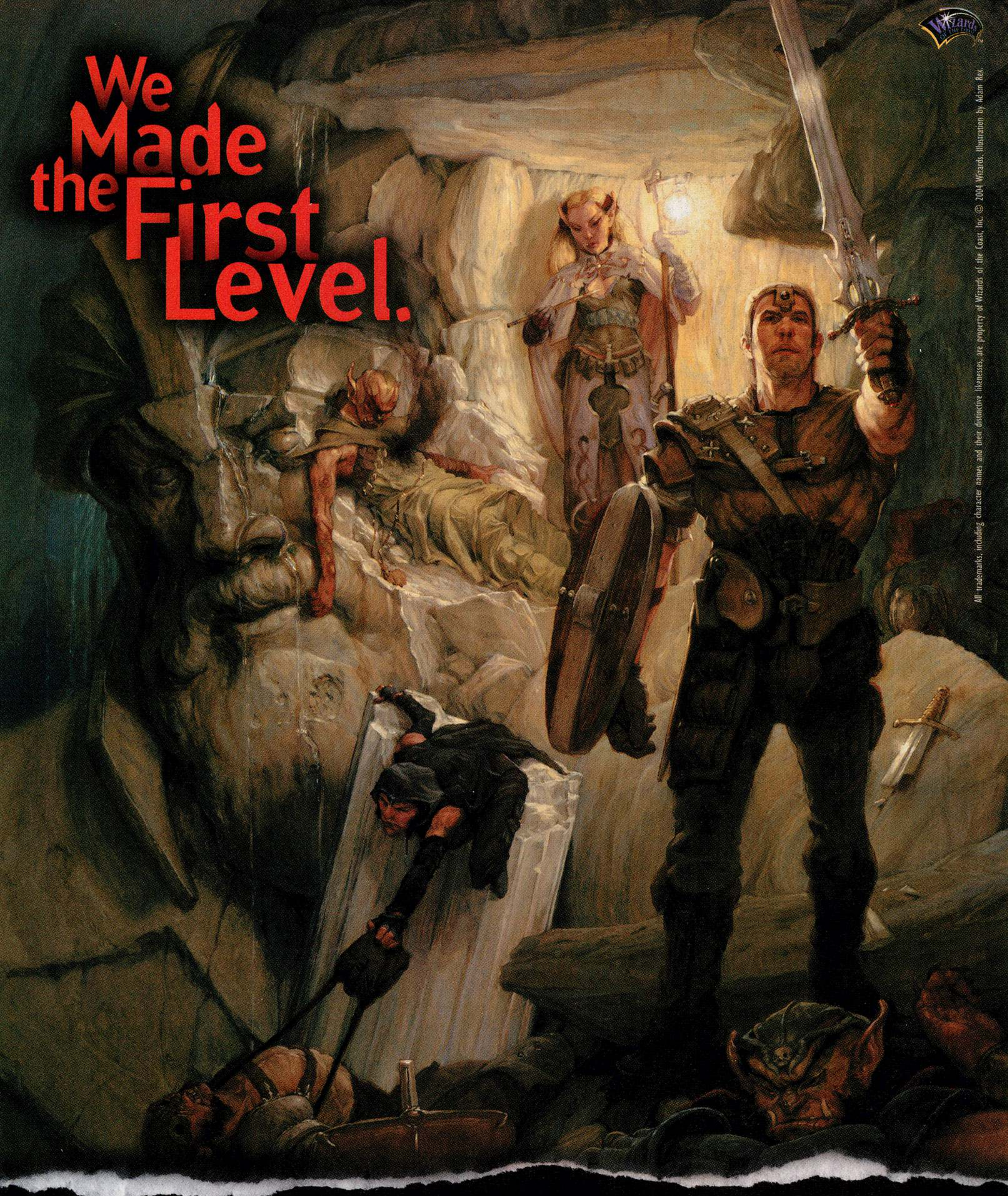
>> ELECTRONIC ARTS HIRES A BUNCH OF BURNOUTS—YEP, THE THIRD-PARTY PUBLISHER RECENTLY PURCHASED CRITERION, THE DEVELOPER OF THE SMASHING BURNOUT SERIES....>>



# We Made the First Level.



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Clearing out monsters and racking up experience points started with the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® roleplaying game. And with an endless number of spells, skills, and special abilities to choose from, it's still the best way to level up and take on whatever comes next.

We did it first. We still do it best. [playdnd.com](http://playdnd.com)



EXPERIENCE COUNTS



PSP/DVD

# FFVII: ADVENT CHILDREN

More eye candy  
from the **Final Fantasy**  
movie worth watching

■ Cloud comes to the aid of his ladyfriend Tifa, and then ponders whether he used enough hair spray.

**T**he release of *Final Fantasy VII: Advent Children* may not be until next year, but you still could've caught a lengthy glimpse of the stunning CG-animated movie—if you lived in Italy. Yup, Square Enix recently gave attendees

of the 61st Venice International Film Festival a look at roughly half of the 70-minute flick, which is set two years after the events of the role-playing masterpiece for the original PlayStation.

But don't be too disappointed. We've

got a batch of all-new images that should hold you over until *Advent Children* arrives here on PSP and DVD. And try eating some spaghetti and meatballs while checking 'em out—you'll feel just like you were in Venice. OK, not really.



■ Shameless plug: The same cellular phone you'll see characters using in the movie will be released in Japan later this year. Maybe Cloud's chatting about the film's top-secret plot....



■ See you at the movies? Square Enix President Yoichi Wada told a Japanese gaming mag that a *Final Fantasy VII: Advent Children* theatrical release isn't entirely out of the question.

## FAMILIAR FACES

More Final Fantasy VII heroes return to Midgar



**Aerith Gainsborough:** Fanboys still weep over her tragic death. But does this mean she's back from the grave?



**Cid Highwind:** Hopefully by now, this middle-aged, tech-savvy pilot has defeated his greatest enemy: nicotine.



**Red XIII:** You too would be branded unlucky if you were a one-eyed feline whose tail was always on fire.

## DESERT ISLAND GAMES: STEVE-O



Every so often, we ship a celebrity or a bigwig game designer off to a desert island and ask what three console games he'd want us to cast away with him. Now on the beach: Professional jackass Steve-O, whom you can see molesting animals on MTV's *Wildboyz* and gallivanting on a mechanical bull in *Tony Hawk's Underground 2*. (Or just stop by his virtual crib in *ESPN NFL 2K5*.) Here's the surprising pacifist's picks.

—Marc Saltzman



### NFL 2K (Dreamcast)

"I was raised in a household where it was a requirement to love the game of football. So you can bet that my first choice would be this Dreamcast classic."



### Tony Hawk's Underground (Multi)

"No question about it—I have to bring this game."



### Crash Bandicoot (PS1)

"The only other choice I would feel strongly about would be to not bring along any games involving violating or murdering others, so let's go with the first *Crash Bandicoot*."





# We Gave BOSS Monsters Their First Job.

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Cracking skulls on the way to fight the Big Bad Guy started in the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® roleplaying game. And with thousands of monsters and countless ways to customize them, it's still the best way to go to work.

We did it first. We still do it best. [playdnd.com](http://playdnd.com)



EXPERIENCE COUNTS



# EGM INTERNATIONAL

Culture schmulture. Bring on the girls!



PS2

## THE CATFIGHT

**You mean, like, Lindsay Lohan and Hilary Duff dukin' it out?** Nope, no feuding teenyboppers here (your dream of a Lohan-Duff showdown will have to stay just that). Instead, *The Catfight* features 10 rockin' bikini babes beating the crap out of one another with fists, folding chairs, and the occasional samurai sword. This is no mindless brawl, though—you need to mix regular punches and kicks with kinky slapping and groping to raise your "sexy meter" (no really, that's what it's called) and unleash brutal finishing moves.

**My God, I want this right now.** Please, try to control yourself. *The Catfight* is part of a series of PS2 games in Japan that cost only 2,000 yen (about \$18). The result? Pretty boring gameplay and the occasional game-crashing bug.

## OLD SCHOOL

10 years ago in EGM

### On the Cover: Doom

The editors went to hell and back to give readers an exclusive first look at *Doom*, the demonic first-person fragfest for Sega's 32X Genesis add-on.



### Game of the Month: Donkey Kong Country (SNES)

With competitors like a 7-foot-tall martial artist (Shaq-Fu) and a snot-filled superhero (Boogerman), it's no surprise that the popular primate's visually astounding side-scroller swung away with the top honor.



PS2

## XENOSAGA FREAKS

**Xenosaga really is for freaks, isn't it?** Now, now. There's nothing wrong with liking a role-playing game, even if it does have a female robot with enormous bosoms on the cover. *Freaks* is a "fan disc" for *Xenosaga*—a collection of minigames and other bonus stuff for people who just can't get enough of the original. It's got an encyclopedia of characters and locations, a *Scrabble*-ish word puzzle, and an adventure game where KOS-MOS, the robotic cover girl, grows cat ears and begins clawing at her pals (trust us, it's very scientific).

**Do fan discs ever come out here?** Rarely, but *Freaks* should—the *Xenosaga* sequel isn't coming here until 2005, and the first game sold better in North America than it did in Japan.



### Seeing Red

The mag revealed the first specs for Nintendo's Virtual Boy, the so-called 32-bit virtual reality system that launched nearly a year later. Too bad the stink from its disastrous showing can still be smelled today.

## PREVIEW GALLERIES: CURIOUS AND CURIOUSER

### ALIEN HOMINID

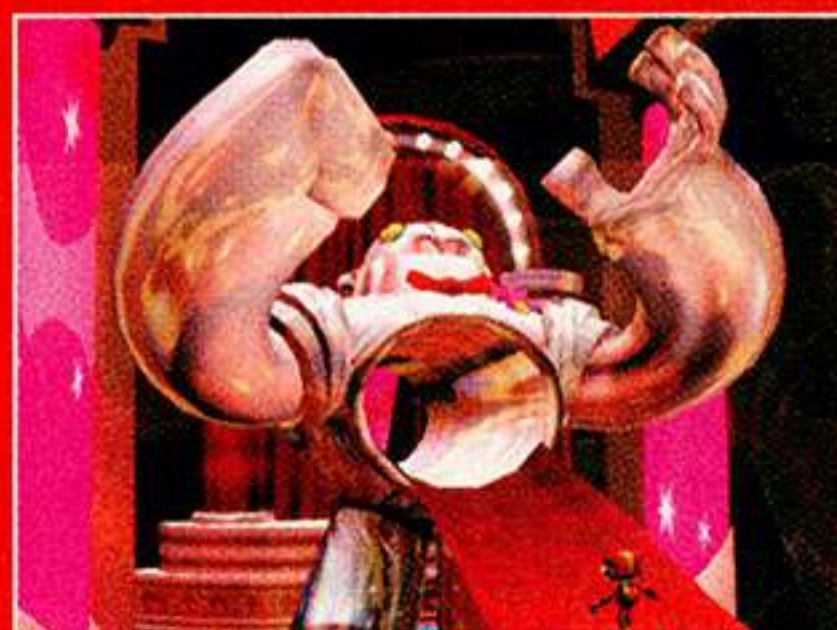
PS2/GC • 03 • November 2004 — This oddball side-scroller already has a substantial grassroots following: Over 6 million people have checked out a free PC demo from the Internet, making it one of the most-downloaded games of all time.

Now, this extraterrestrial is crossing over into the mainstream with creative hand-drawn visuals, old-school *Metal Slug*-style gameplay, and quirky humor.



### PSYCHONAUTS

XB • Majesco • Spring 2005 — Psychic summer camp is back on track: Majesco has picked up the rights to this bizarre hop 'n' bop adventure (after Microsoft dropped the project earlier in the year). Trippy graphics, clever mental powers, and crazy levels where you explore the inner workings of people's whacked-out neuroses should set this one apart from the rest of the platformer pack.



### A Knuckle Sandwich

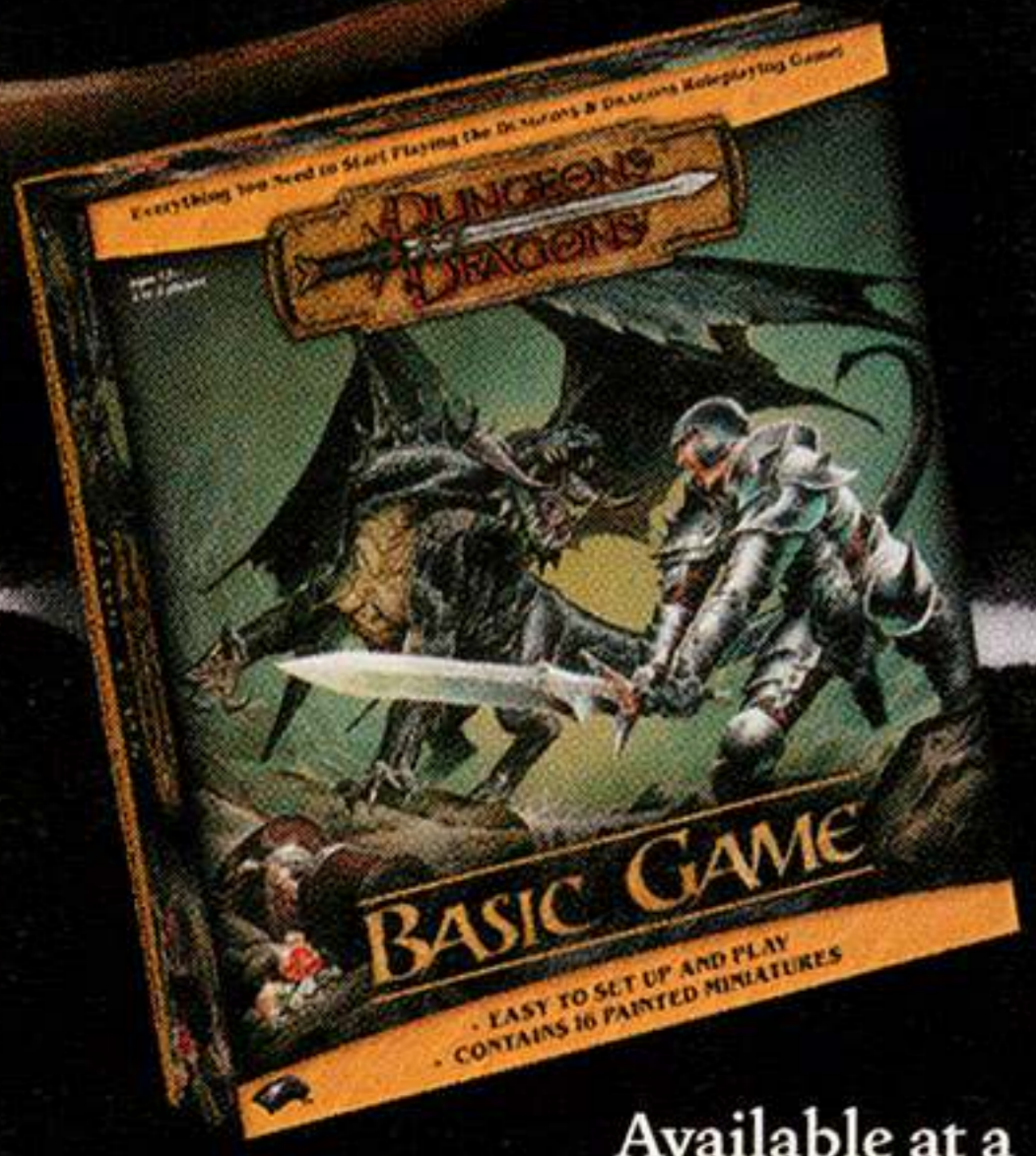
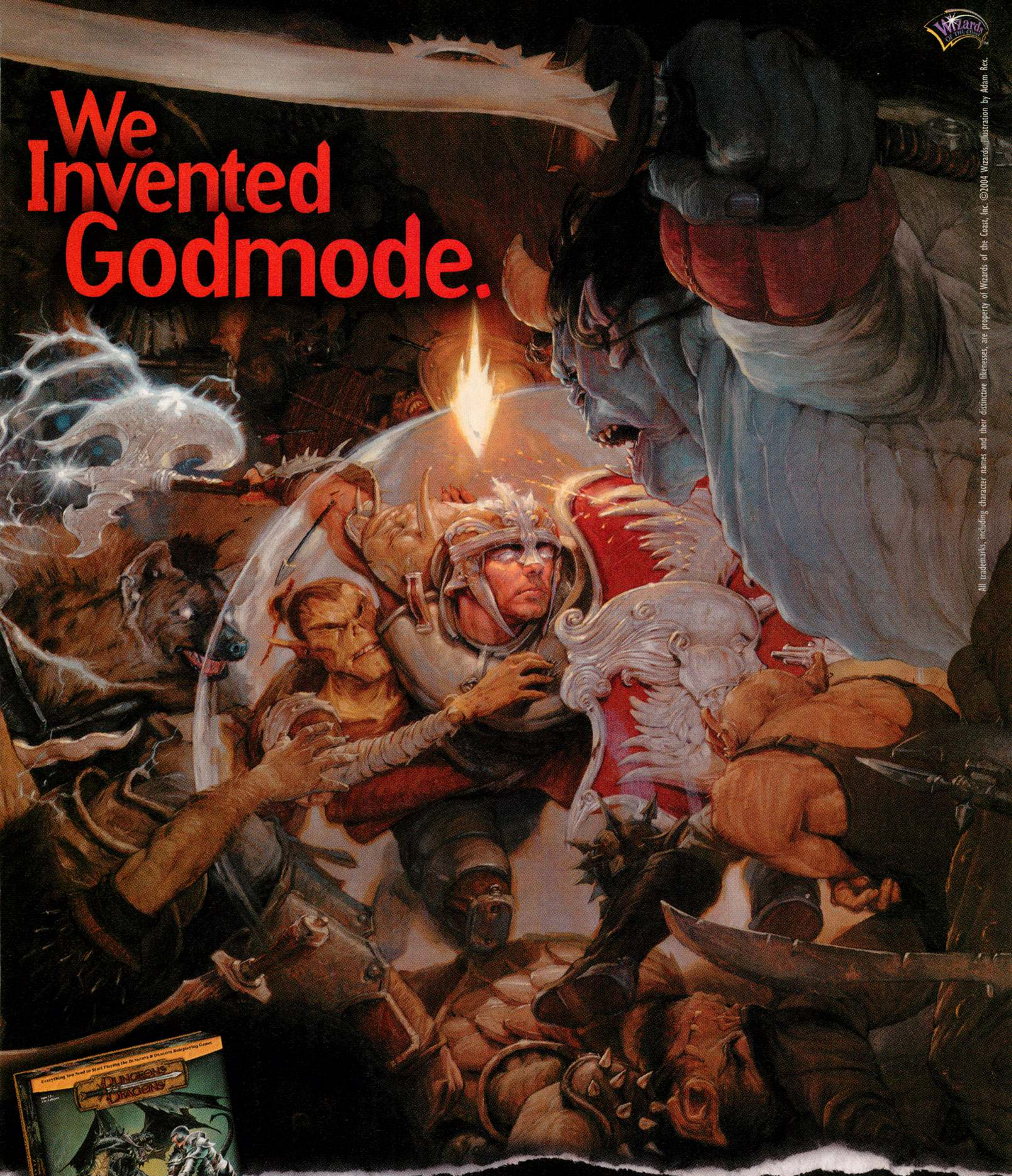
EGM broke the news on *Sonic & Knuckles*' lock-on technology, which allows players to plug *Sonic 2* or *3* into the cart to open up all-new areas and play the Genesis classics as Knuckles. Score!





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# We Invented Godmode.



Powering up your character to take out everything in sight started with the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® roleplaying game. And with the D&D® Basic Game, you've got everything you need to start blowing through level after level of monsters.

Available at a Game Store Near You

We did it first. We still do it best.  
[playdnd.com](http://playdnd.com)





# Join the Next Movement

All players are not created equal. Some big men look for the open 19-footer, others crash the boards like a wrecking ball with an afro. That's what Next Movement with IsoMotion<sup>2</sup> technology is all about. Every player performs with the same skills and style as he does in real life, which makes ESPN NBA 2K5 the most complete, most authentic NBA video game you can buy. Check out ESPN NBA 2K5... and let the Next Movement begin.

**"...the most complete hoops game on the market."**

-IGN.com



PlayStation<sup>®</sup>2

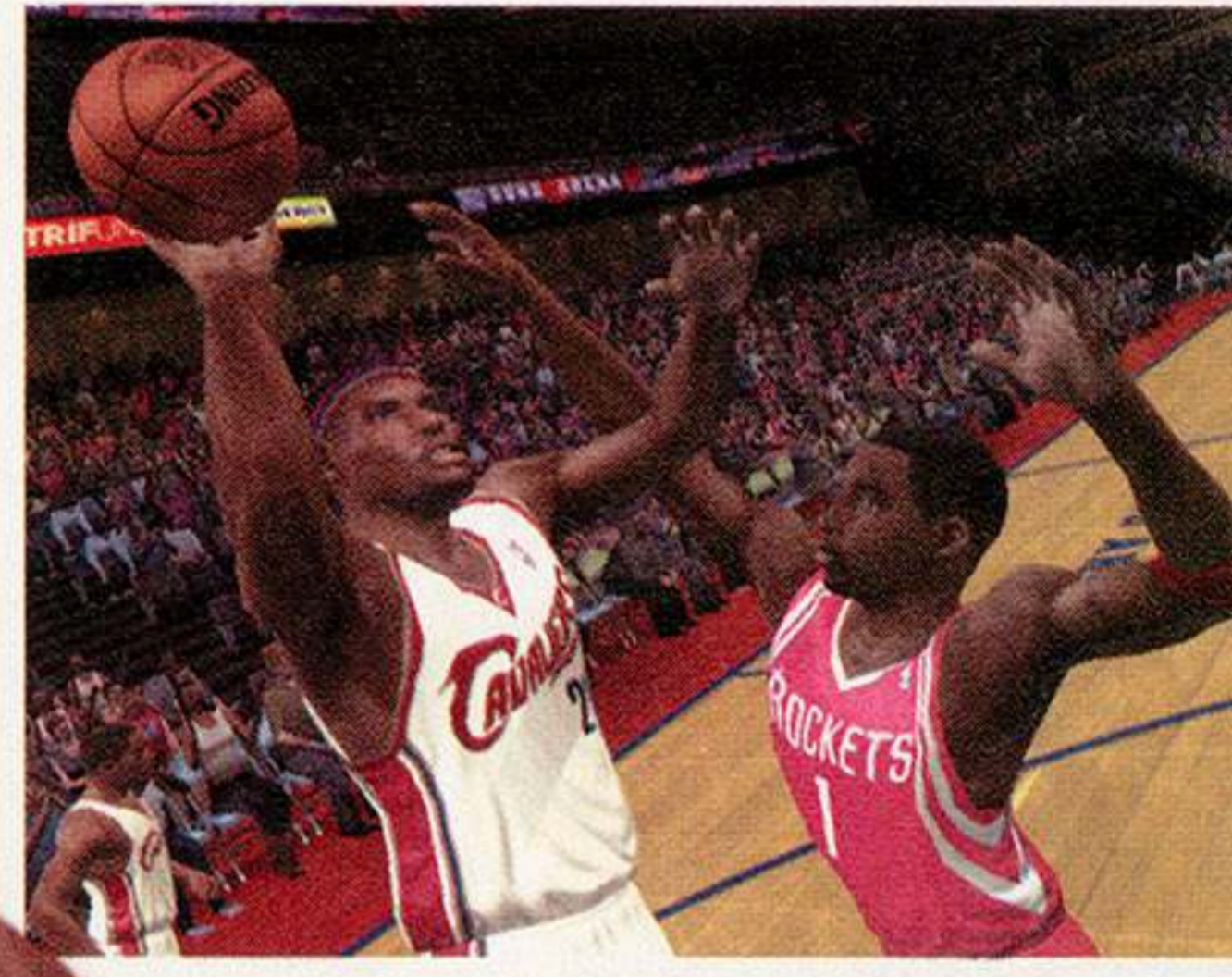
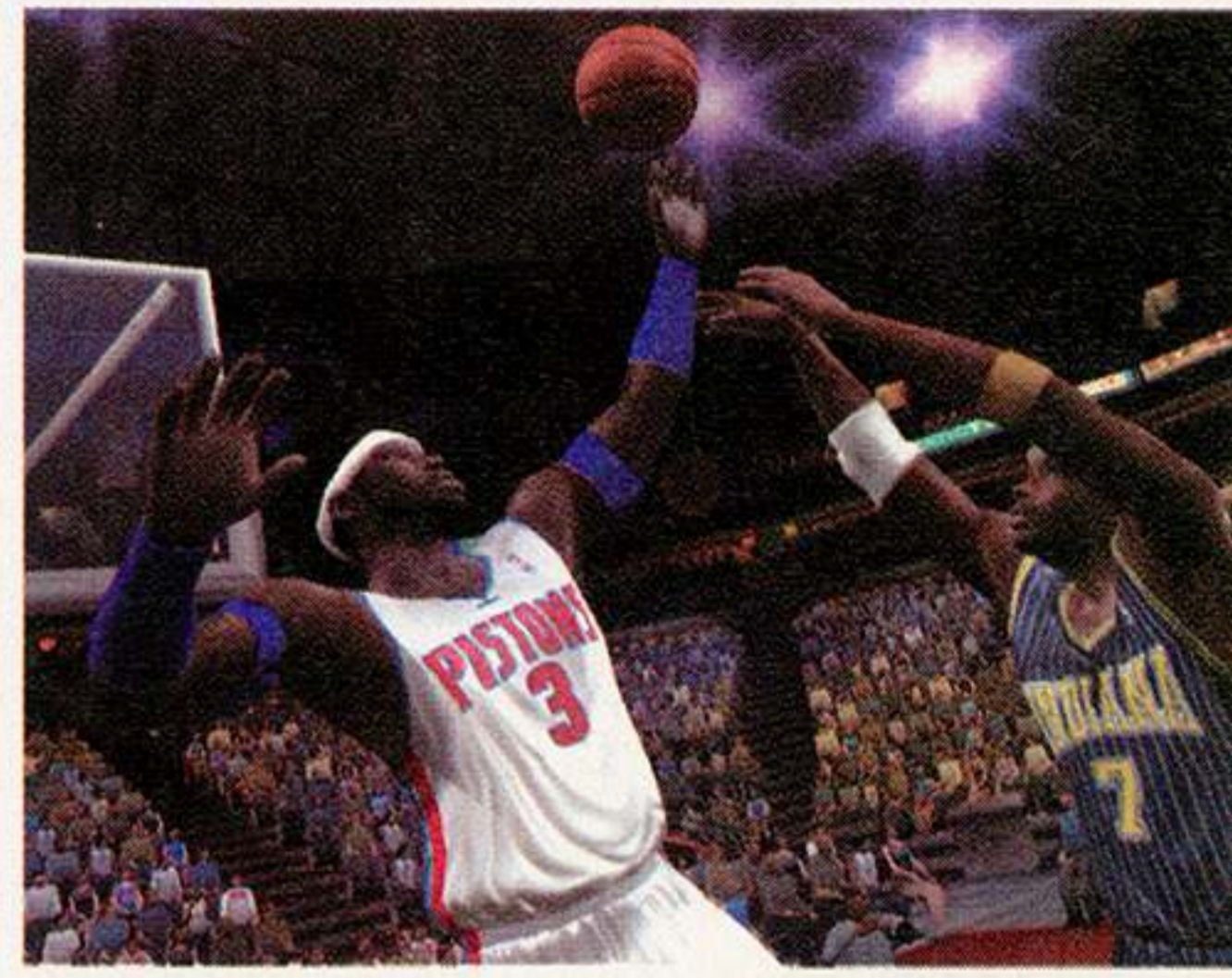
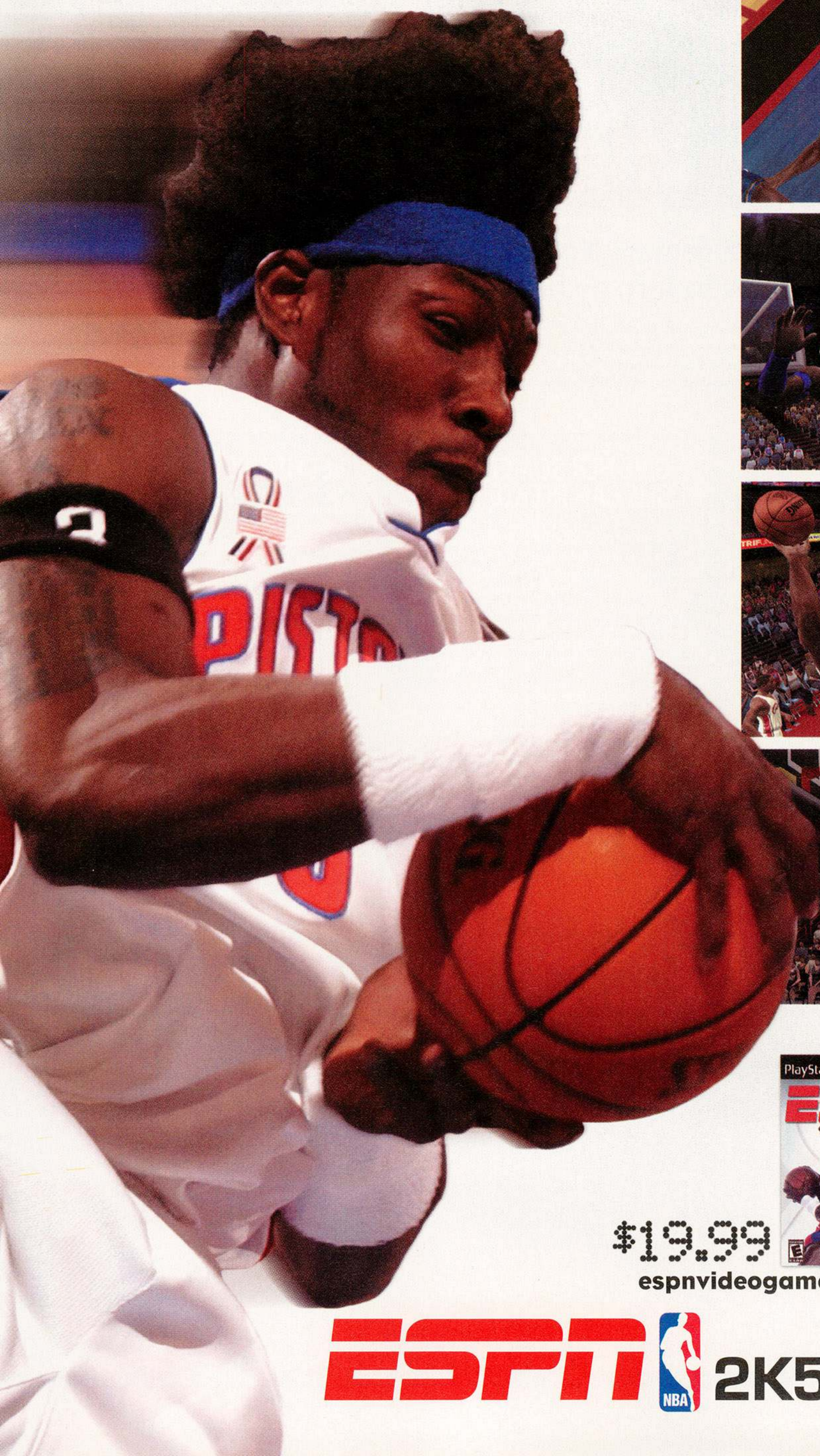


XBOX LIVE ONLINE ENABLED

SEGA<sup>®</sup>

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[NBA.COM](http://NBA.COM)



# HIT HER GAME SPOT

Your girlfriend not a gamer? Not for long. Top shrinks tell how to turn on her digital addiction

**I**t's Friday night and you and a pal just powered up *Halo* for some cooperative blasting, but then your non-gaming girlfriend

crashes the party, blowing a hole through your plans faster than a Covenant plasma rifle. Don't switch the channel to TLC just yet. *EGM* con-

sulted a panel of "experts"—actually, six top psychologists, psychiatrists, and anthropologists from the past century—and translated their theories on

what makes women tick into games that'll kickstart their videogame cravings. Some of these games even have a gun or two. —Lauren Gonzalez

STRATEGY #1:

## LET HER SKIP THE STUFF SHE HATES

**Shrink rap:** Philosopher/psychologist Carl Jung wasn't troubled by a girlfriend who refused to play videogames in 1921. Probably had something to do with games not being invented for another 50 years, but we'd like to give credit to his understanding that women are "extroverted intuitives" who jump from one thing to the next without solving the prior problem.

**How does that help you?** Jung's theory suggests you can lure your girlfriend into play with nonlinear titles; if she can't get through a frustrating level three, choose games where she can skip level three and go straight to four. Just don't test this theory on a first date.

### Enabling Games



**Super Mario Sunshine (GC)**—No need to commit to one stage here. She can skip to lots of levels from the game's hub world.

**Knights of the Old Republic (XB)**—This epic roleplayer packs a galaxy of planets she can visit in any order. Satisfies her bad-boy fantasies, too.



**SSX 3 (PS2/XB/GC)**—Right from the get-go, she'll have an entire mountain of open-ended, big-air runs to choose from.

STRATEGY #2:

## GIVE HER SOMETHING SHE CAN RELATE TO

**Shrink rap:** Pop psychologist John Gray wrote in *Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus*, "Just as a man is fulfilled through working out the intricate details of solving a problem, a woman is fulfilled through talking about the details of her problems." In other words, ladies dig the whole interpersonal-relationship thing, solving problems via conversation and building alliances rather than with a grenade launcher.

**How does that help you?** Level after level of solo missions with little character interaction just grates on a gal's nerves. Role-playing and story-driven games give her a return on her emotional investment. Just don't tell her she's *too* emotional.

### Enabling Games

**Way of the Samurai 2 (PS2)**—Talk ain't cheap in this samurai-lifestyle sim. How you talk to people and whom you work for shape your destiny.



**Final Fantasy X (PS2)**—Square Enix's *Final Fantasy* series has character development to spare.

**Paper Mario 2 (GC)**—This RPG's colorful cast and cutesy art style will give her multiple Nintendogasms.



STRATEGY #3:

## LET HER BE A BAD GIRL

**Shrink rap:** If you're convinced your partner will never actually play the kind of evil-hearted games you like, guess again. Camille Paglia wrote in her 1990 book, *Sexual Personae*, "Tragic woman is less moral than man." Translation: Don't underestimate her desire to be wicked once in a while.

**How does that help you?** Paglia isn't advising that you ditch your true love for an emotional train wreck. Rather, celebrate your girlfriend's bad days by sticking her behind the controls of a tragic game hero or heroine, or behind the wheel of a visceral smash-em-up. Crime pays and everyone's happy. Just don't make cracks about her driving later.

### Enabling Games



**Burnout 3 (PS2/XB)**—All the fun of a horrific drivers' ed film without all the blood on the highway.

**Fable (XB)**—As in *Knights of the Old Republic*, she can take her character down the dark path in this medieval adventure.



**Grand Theft Auto: Vice City (PS2/XB)**—Satisfy her need to speed, shoot, and start a criminal empire all in one go.



## STRATEGY #4: TURN ON, PLAY, REPEAT

**Shrink rap:** OK, so Margaret Mead is more of a famous anthropologist than a psychologist, but she still sets the sexes straight with her uncanny observations. "Women have a capacity for monotonous work that men do not share," Mead said in 1949, adding that guys are more capable of sudden spurts of energy followed by a need for rest and a "reassembly of resources."

**How does that help you?** Your girlfriend will respond to puzzle games, sports games, fighters—really any title in which the basic function is repeated and minor goals are met. Monotony might get her hooked. After all, she puts up with you.

### Enabling Games



**Soul Calibur II (PS2/XB/GC)**—If you're gonna woo her with a fighting game, it might as well be the best.

**Harvest Moon: A Wonderful Life (GC)**—Simulates the simple life of a farmer, complete with—cha-ching!—horse grooming. She's so there.



**The Sims Bustin' Out (PS2/XB/GC)**—Because what could be more monotonous than a game that simulates real life?

## STRATEGY #5: HAVE IT HER WAY

**Shrink rap:** Sigmund Freud more or less said in 1905 that women might like videogames in which they can explore cautiously and act when they're ready, while men may like games that let them "assertively" conquer their surroundings. Freud says that at puberty, guys begin to push forward to complement girls' desire to "hold back" or show "repression."

**How does that help you?** To get her to play without scaring her off, introduce her to games that let her discover at her own pace, without time limits and other restrictions. Be sure, however, to choose those that require her to do *something*, eventually, to progress the game.

### Enabling Games

**Animal Crossing (GC)**—This town is plenty big enough for her to gossip with neighbors, craft clothes, gussy up the house—whatever she wants.



**Tony Hawk's Underground (PS2/XB/GC)**—She can skate and/or die at her own pace in this game's sprawling 'hoods.

**Spider-Man 2 (PS2/XB/GC)**—Let crime sort itself out—she'll have a blast just web-swinging around the Big Apple.

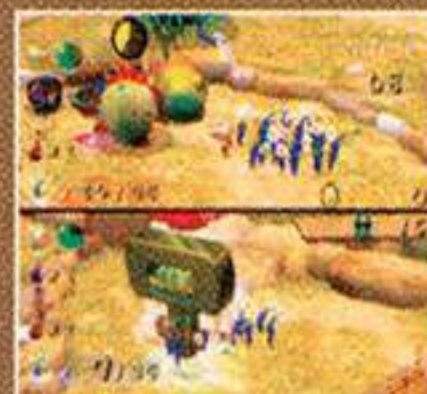


## STRATEGY #6: TALK THE TALK

**Shrink rap:** All other traits aside, communication is the feature most likely to intrigue your girlfriend. Deborah Tannen supports this in her book, *You Just Don't Understand*, in which she argues that women use conversation to "establish closeness," while men use conversation to gain information.

**How does that help you?** Keep your eyes open for games that allow group participation or strong character interaction in co-op mode. Use any information she divulges during play to your advantage later.

### Enabling Games



**Pikmin 2 (GC)**—Help her flora battle evil fauna in the two-player challenge game, but be prepared to console her if her plantling army eats it.

**Phantasy Star Online: Episode I & II (XB/GC)**—Cooperate, tour exotic lands, slay alien critters—playing *PSO* with her is like going on a vacation...in spaaaaace!



**Final Fantasy XI (PS2)**—She'll find hundreds of pals in this online RPG. Just make sure some elvaan lothario doesn't steal her virtual heart.

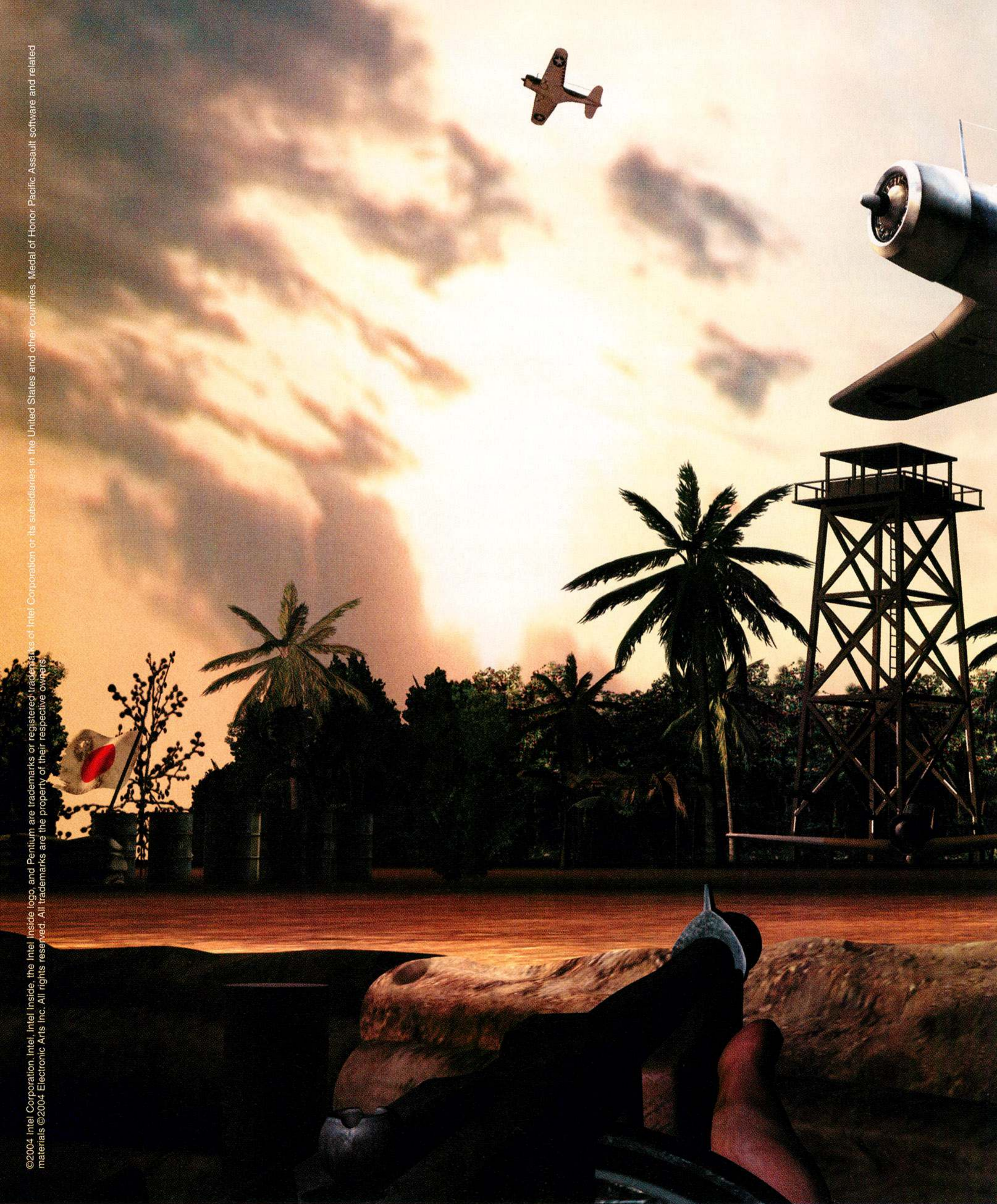
## ONE MORE THING...

Can a century of psychology be wrong? Maybe. But if one of these six strategies isn't getting her hooked, mix and match them. Sooner or later she'll find something she likes. Just don't get frustrated when your girl starts beating you at your own games. And if all fails and she refuses to touch your joypad, the least you can do is feed her some lines the next time you're geeking out with your gaming pals. All she's gotta say is, "Gaming just hasn't been the same since the Super Nintendo days," and she's in. Or, even better: "I'd do Chun-li."

Photography by David B. Ivo



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PlayStation 2

# FIRST LOOK: MARC ECKO'S GETTING UP: CONTENTS UNDER PRESSURE

## Get up with the get down

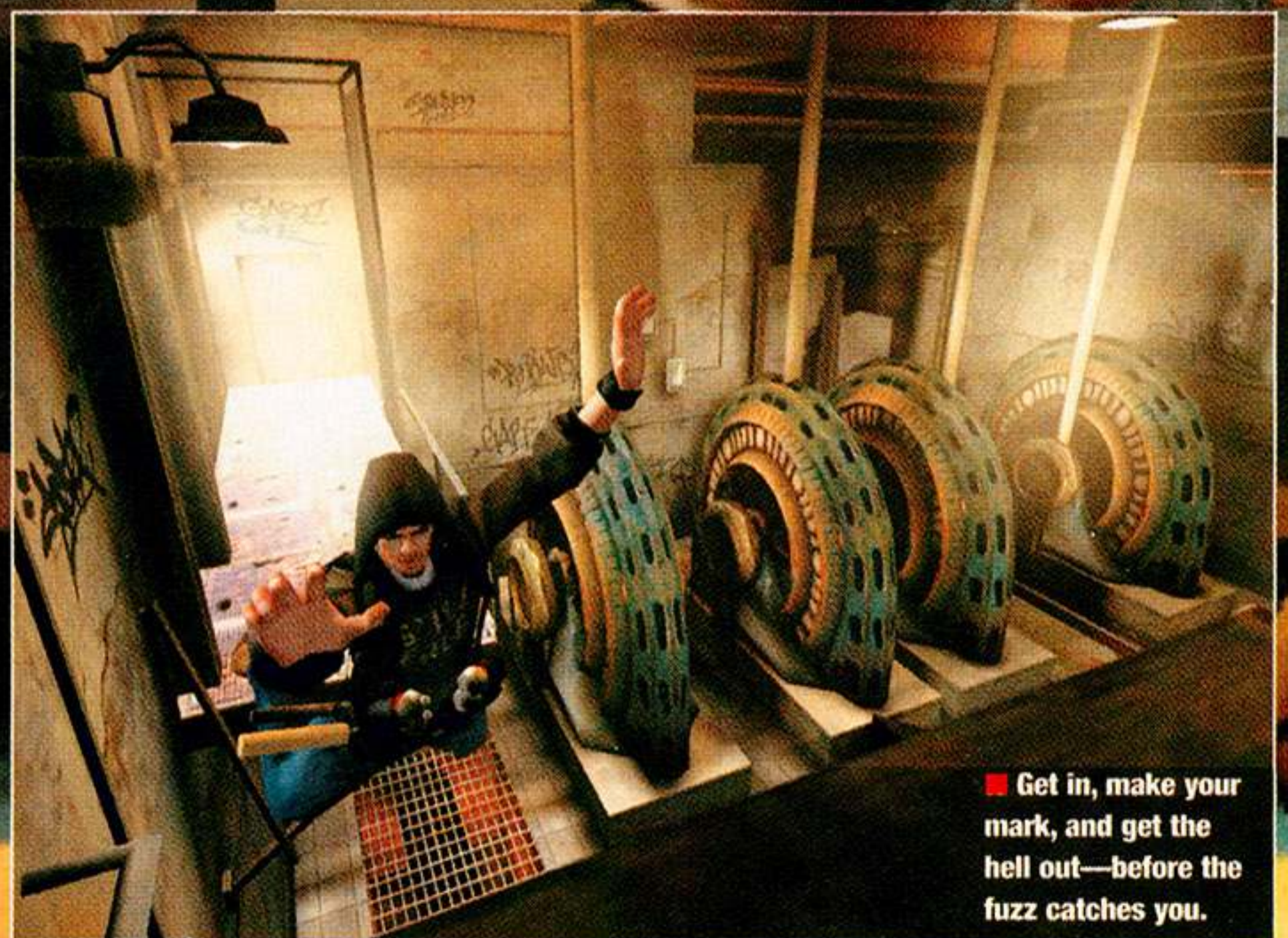
**S**orry, it's not a game about erectile dysfunction. Atari's *Getting Up: Contents Under Pressure* tackles a completely different, yet nearly as thrilling (and potentially messy) pastime—graffiti. "Making a game has been a personal goal of mine since I was in my early 20s," explains NYC graffiti-artist-turned-urban-fashion-designer Marc Ecko. "I dream about gaming...it's one of the most exciting mediums to tap in to popular culture." His dream game? *Under Pressure*, an urban action project being developed by The Collective for PS2.

What exactly is an "urban action project"? Imagine the spray-can artistry of Sega's *Jet Grind Radio* series (Dreamcast, Xbox), minus the roller skates but with a hearty dose of *Grand Theft Auto*-esque go-anywhere freedom. "The gameplay is designed to enhance the real-world graf experience, but not to be solely dependent on that," according to Ecko. "[It's about] quickly assessing a situation or location to tag, getting the piece up, and getting the hell out...undetected!" So before your character, Trane, can make his mark on the oppressive cityscape of

New Radius, he'll have to sneak or fight his way to a location, then find a way to reach the magic spot—a subway wall, huge propaganda billboard, and the side of a bridge make prime locations. Once you take your tag, your clever ass had better figure a quick way out of there. Getting it up doesn't mean much if you just end up getting shot down, yo.

Ecko feels that *Getting Up* will actually benefit the counterculture realm of graffiti art by building an immersive world around tagging. "We have the chance to finally tell the urban narrative the right way," he says, "with soul and sincerity in the real voice of our culture. We're going to shatter cliché stereotypes and create the first truly authentic urban videogame experience."

The game's subversive nature isn't bothering corporate America, though. "The Man" was not directly available for comment, but Bruno Bonnell, chairman and CEO of publisher Atari, claims the project "speaks directly to urban youth culture, which has rapidly emerged as one of the most influential social groups of our time." We'll find out who gets up on who when the game hits in 2005. *—Justin Speer*



Get in, make your mark, and get the hell out—before the fuzz catches you.

>> READY FOR ANOTHER MOVIE BASED ON A GAME? NEITHER ARE WE. REGARDLESS, LOOK FOR A BIG-SCREEN ADAPTA-





## WHAT'S PLAYING IN THE

# COMPUTER GAMING WORLD

### Doom 3



Hey, guess what? *Doom 3* is finally out...for PC, that is. And you might actually enjoy it—provided you're a fan of riveting action, mind-blowing graphics, scaring tactics, and state-of-the-art gaming.

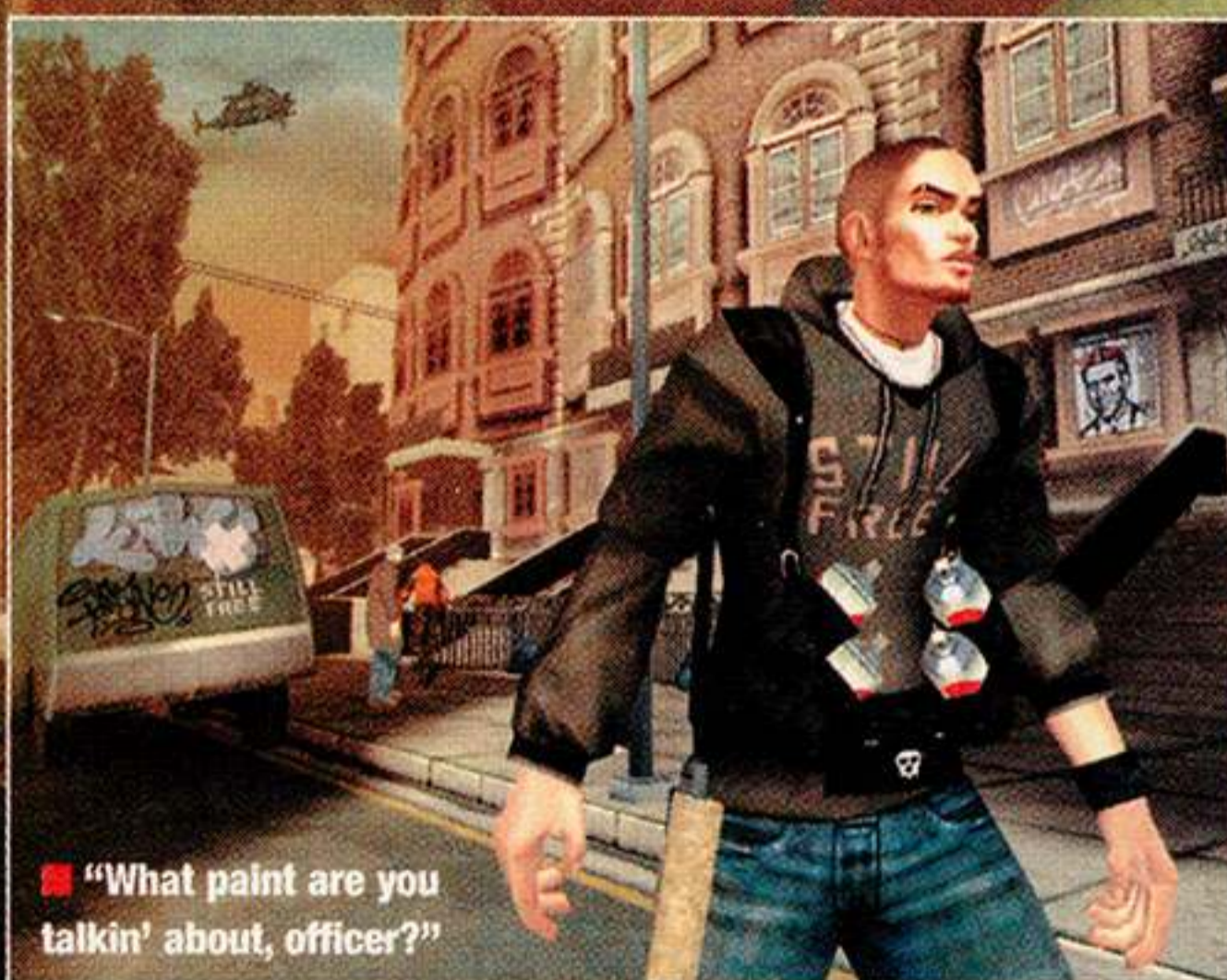
The single-player experience is simply the most frightening thing since the original *Half-Life*. For the majority of the time, this first-person shoot-em-up forgoes the "bazillions of bastards" design philosophy of the previous *Doom* games for a tight, nightmarish series of intimate life-and-death struggles; it's just you and a couple of bloodthirsty freaks going head to head. The game engine is precisely the technological marvel you'd expect, but you'll be too busy dealing with its handiwork—the flickering lights, the suffocating darkness, the insanely detailed models and environments—to slackjaw much about all that programming genius. From the moment the first hellspawn appear in the game's claustrophobic Martian mining station, you're knee-deep in the dead, fighting one vicious battle after another.

The multiplayer action, however, is a whole different beast. Making the adjustment between the nerve-wracking, deliberate progress of playing solo and the higher-speed stalking of multiplayer is one of *Doom 3*'s more interesting challenges. Some may frown at the small number of maps (six) and player support (four), but it still rocks. Sound has never meant so much in a deathmatch, as a heavy shroud of darkness is draped over every map, creating not the nonstop mayhem of an *Unreal Tournament* or *Quake III* but a tense cat-and-mouse struggle punctuated by delirious episodes of soul-satisfying savagery.

So is *Doom 3* the game of the year? Maybe. Best game of the year so far? Undoubtedly.

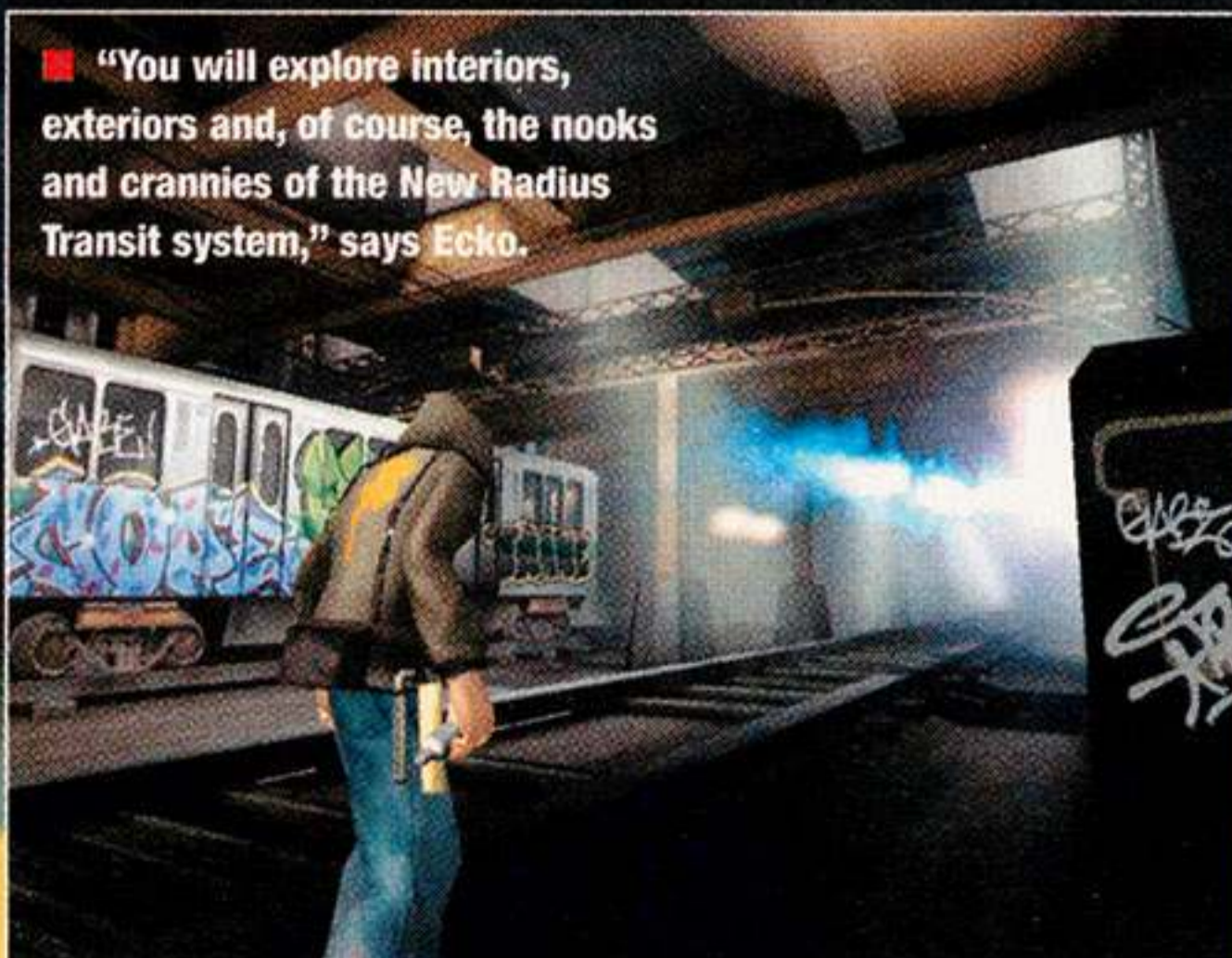
—Robert Coffey,  
Computer Gaming World

■ Prepare to fight for your right to paint: Futuristic cops will rough you up if you're caught while "getting up."



■ "What paint are you talkin' about, officer?"

■ "You will explore interiors, exteriors and, of course, the nooks and crannies of the New Radius Transit system," says Ecco.





# SERVICE DISTINCTIONS

Find your way through the fog of forthcoming war games

**W**as that *Men of Honor* or *Medal of Valor*, *Brothers in Duty*, or *Call to Arms*? Enough war games are on the way to make even born killers consider giving peace a chance, and to tell the truth, sometimes even the pros have a tough time telling 'em apart. We let the propaganda ministers of each war effort say their piece, then put in our own two cents. (Note: With the exception of *ShellShock*, all impressions are based on early intel. —Shawn Elliott

GAMES	WHAT THEY SAY	WHAT WE SAY	MOVIE IT'S MOST LIKE	LIKELY AWARD
<b>MEN OF VALOR</b> XB • VU Games 	<b>John Whitmore, director of development:</b> "High production values, mature story line, and intense combat distinguish it from the competition. With an innovative combat system, lush jungle environments, and authentic scenarios, plus co-op and online multiplayer support, <i>Men of Valor</i> raises the bar for the genre."	With its smart scripting and first-person perspective, <i>Men of Valor</i> hopes to put you inside the troubled head of its real African-American hero. Plus, we have high hopes for its hard-hitting multiplayer modes.	 ■ Full Metal Jacket	 ■ Army Distinguished Service Medal
<b>CONFLICT: VIETNAM</b> PS2/XB • Globalstar 	<b>Lee Singleton, producer:</b> " <i>Conflict: Vietnam</i> is a squad-based game that portrays the paranoia soldiers felt during this war. Trapped behind enemy lines with little training and dwindling supplies, knowing hidden VC and booby traps are all around, players will feel their hearts pumping as they creep through the deep jungles."	The series that started with the first Gulf War ( <i>Conflict: Desert Storm</i> ) has always had potential, but Gomer Pyle-caliber A.I. kept it on the reserve list. Friends and foes alike are allegedly smarter this time, and four player co-op always helps minimize casualties.	 ■ Rambo: First Blood Part II	 ■ Purple Heart
<b>SHELLSHOCK: NAM '67</b> PS2/XB • Eidos 	<b>Clayton Palma, producer:</b> " <i>ShellShock: Nam '67</i> is the most true-to-life depiction of the bloody Vietnam conflict. You'll witness the horror and brutality of war as you try to survive your first tour of duty in the steamy jungles and killing fields of Southeast Asia."	<i>Nam '67</i> proved a bit too short and too straightforward to awe all of our reviewers this month (page 130), but it certainly shocked 'em with its unflinching take on the war's hard-to-stomach aspects.	 ■ Apocalypse Now	 ■ Vietnam Service Medal
<b>VIETCONG: PURPLE HAZE</b> PS2/XB • Gathering 	<b>Phil Mikkelson, producer:</b> " <i>Vietcong</i> was the first PC first-person shooter to tackle the Vietnam War. <i>Vietcong: Purple Haze</i> brings the same atmosphere and realism to PS2 and Xbox. Via Xbox Live, players can battle in customizable multiplayer modes and keep it fresh by downloading new maps and missions."	Scorchin' '60s soundtrack, a squad of specialists, deadly booby traps to disarm—check, check, and check. It's all here, but we're wondering whether <i>Vietcong</i> will have the necessary production values to pull its parts together.	 ■ Platoon	 ■ Vietnam Service Medal
<b>BROTHERS IN ARMS</b> XB • Ubisoft 	<b>Mike Jeffress, brand manager:</b> " <i>Brothers in Arms</i> is the only WWII shooter that tells the true story of Sgt. Matt Baker and his squad of 101st Airborne paratroopers during the most critical missions of the D-Day invasions."	Matt who? Unerring historical accuracy aside, it's the game's <i>Full Spectrum Warrior</i> -meets- <i>Medal of Honor</i> angle that's got us standing at attention. Much like the former, you'll issue orders to two fire teams, but you'll still control an individual trooper like you would with the latter.	 ■ Band of Brothers	 ■ Medal of Honor
<b>CALL OF DUTY: FINEST HOUR</b> PS2/XB/GC • Activision 	<b>Jeff Matsushita, producer:</b> "Experience the chaos of battle as never before, taking the role of a variety of ordinary soldiers fighting as a tight-knit squad through the epic moments of World War II."	<i>Call of Duty</i> is the first game in the genre to let you enlist with the Brits in the Mediterranean and the Red army on the Eastern Front. (See our preview on page 99 for a full briefing).	 ■ Enemy at the Gates	 ■ Hero of the Soviet Union

>> JUST WHEN YOU THOUGHT IT WAS SAFE TO GO BACK IN THE WATER, A GAME BASED ON THE MOVIE JAWS SWIMS TO PS2 AND XBOX NEXT SUMMER. AT LEAST YOU'RE THE SHARK.... >>



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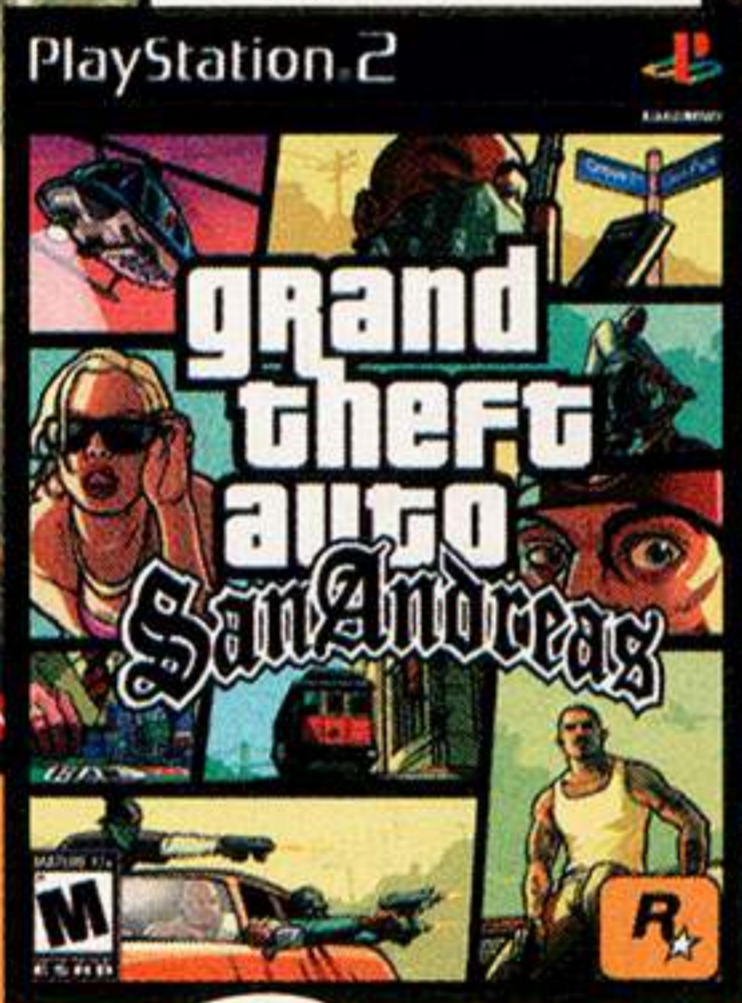
And your girlfriend thought being  
a football widow sucked.



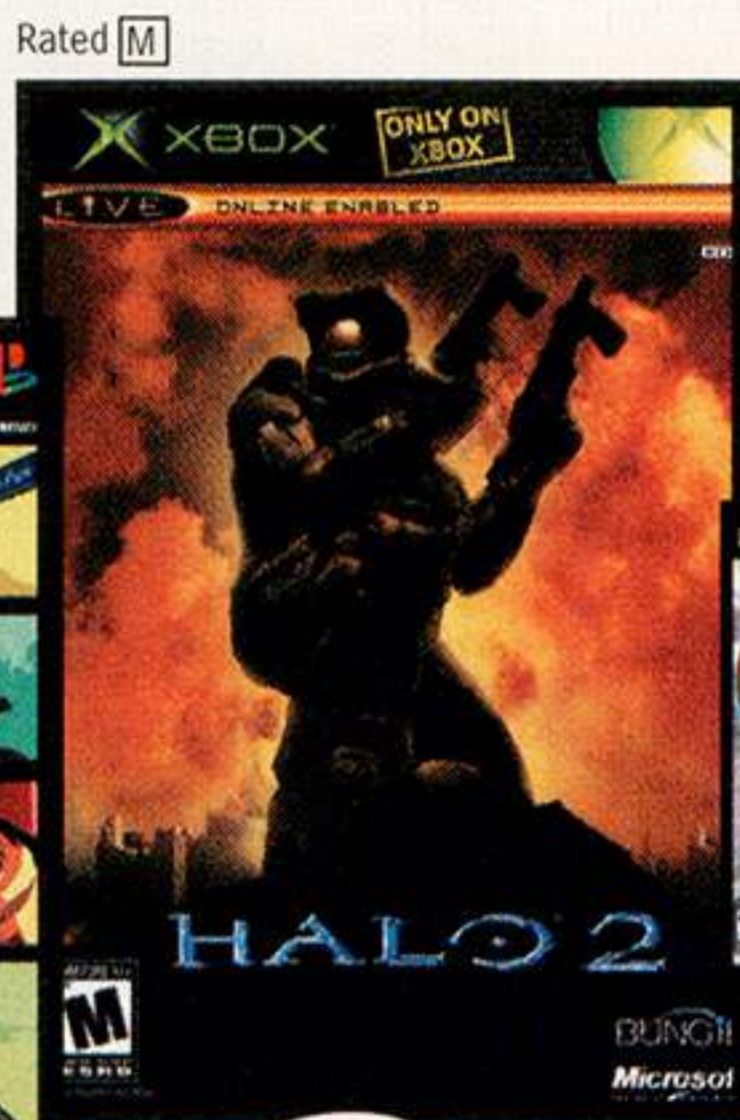
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PS2/XB

# AFTERTHOUGHTS: SILENT HILL 4: THE ROOM

We revisit the freakiest home in town

**I**f there were a "What the f\*\*\*?" award in gaming, the *Silent Hill* franchise would have no space left in its trophy case. Konami's survival-horrorfest has continually found new terrifying ways to screw with our minds, and *Silent Hill 4: The Room* (PS2/XB) is no exception. In an effort to avoid weekly visits to a shrink, we called upon Producer and Sound Director Akira Yamaoka to cleanse our psyches and discuss the game's new perspective, the lack of *Silent Hill* in *Silent Hill 4*, and how he sleeps at night.

**EGM:** With *The Room's* relatively quick release and its references to *Silent Hill 3's* Cult and Claudia, it almost seems



■ No UFOs: *The Room* doesn't include that perplexing, albeit traditional, series ending.

like you planned the two games to tell a larger story.

**Akira Yamaoka:** We developed them almost simultaneously but had no intention of the stories overlapping. Rather, my main goal in *Silent Hill 4* was to convey the different game style as early as possible.

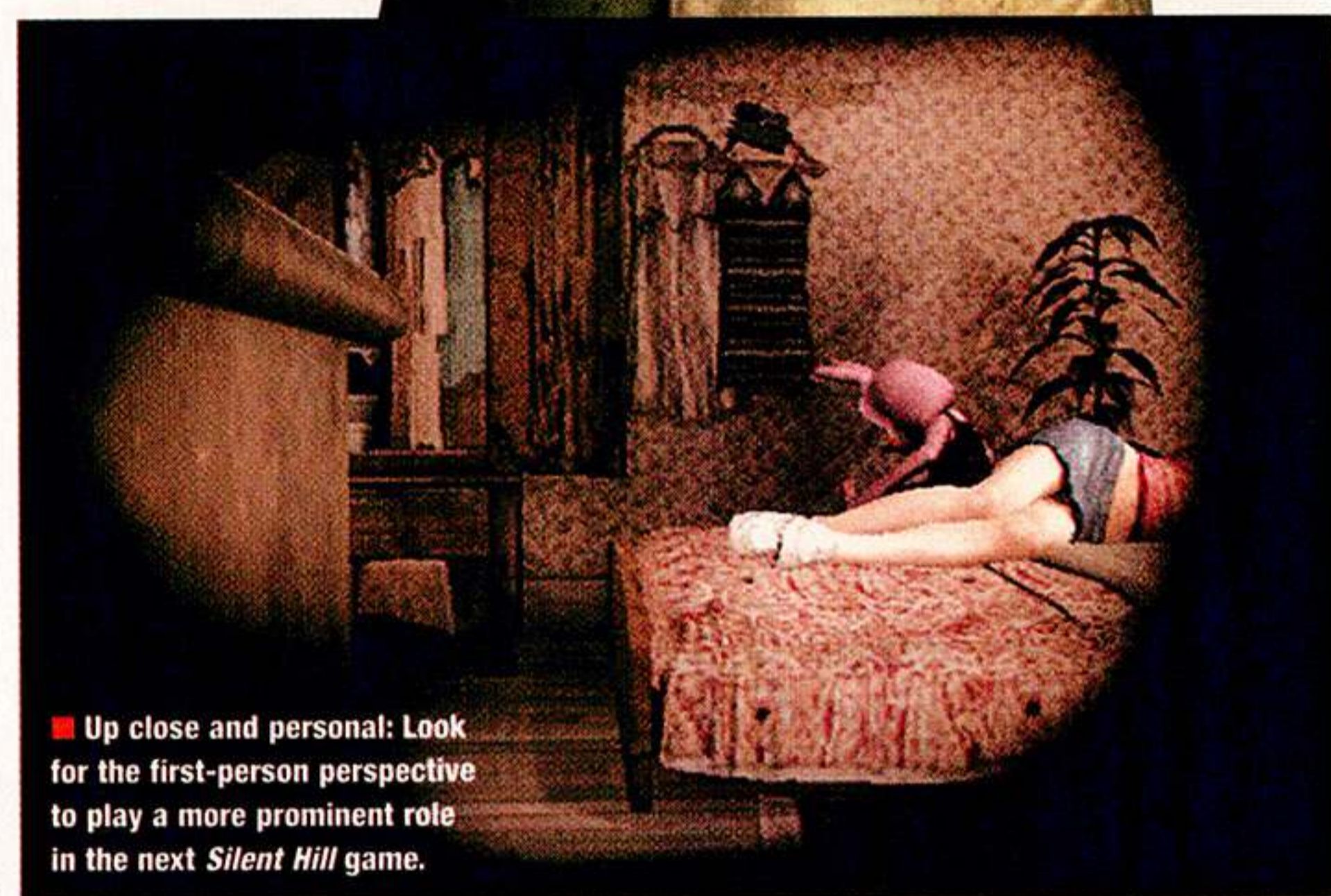
**EGM:** Speaking of which, the new first-person sections in the apartment are extremely effective and scary. Do you think that viewpoint is the future of the *Silent Hill* series?

**AY:** Thanks for the compliment, and, yes, you can look forward to new *Silent Hill* titles using the first-person perspective as effectively as other games today.

**EGM:** Some of us were bummed with the lack of bosses. Was that a conscious choice?

**AY:** I didn't intentionally stay away from boss fights. I simply thought that having too many of them would be odd in this story concept. But you might see more bosses in future games.

**EGM:** It seems incredibly difficult to get the best ending in this game. Do you have any tips on how to purify your room completely?



■ Up close and personal: Look for the first-person perspective to play a more prominent role in the next *Silent Hill* game.

**AY:** Well, I would like you to think hard about what really is *Silent Hill 4's* best ending. [Laughs]

**EGM:** Uh...OK. But what about the usual head-scratching UFO ending—every game in the series has included one....

**AY:** Unfortunately, there's no UFO ending in *Silent Hill 4*.

**EGM:** Oh well. We found it strange that you really never go to *Silent Hill* in this

game, only near it. Will future games also take place outside the town?

**AY:** Maybe, maybe not. [Laughs]

**EGM:** Last thing: Your games have given plenty of people (including us) nightmares. Do you ever have scary dreams about *Silent Hill*?

**AY:** Not really, but one of my staff members told me that he recently had a dream where he was sleeping while somebody's hand was in his chest.

## WHOSE GAME IS IT ANYWAY?

Match the title to its story line. C'mon, use that brain of yours....

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>A</b> Viewtiful Joe (PS2/GC)                   | <b>1</b> Our hero travels through a monster-filled world, using a sword and sailboat to rescue a damsel in distress.           |
| <b>B</b> The Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker (GC) | <b>2</b> Our hero travels through a monster-filled world, using a giant yo-yo to rescue a damsel in distress.                  |
| <b>C</b> Super Mario Bros. (NES/GBA)              | <b>3</b> Our hero travels through a monster-filled world, using action-movie moves to rescue a damsel in distress.             |
| <b>D</b> Rygar: The Legendary Adventure (PS2)     | <b>4</b> Our hero travels through a monster-filled world, using the power of mushrooms (uh-oh) to rescue a damsel in distress. |



Answers: A-3, B-1, C-4, D-2  
Illustration by Eneone

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PlayStation 2



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# CELEBRITY GAMER: BROOKE BURKE

## One of Hollywood's hottest goes wild on consoles

**W**e can't decide which is easier on the eyes: one of the slickest upcoming street racers or a gorgeous actress whose life is devoted to the pursuit of adventure. Thankfully, it's a moot point, as this November you'll get to check out both when former *Wild On* host Brooke Burke makes a cameo in Electronic Arts' *Need for Speed Underground 2* (PS2/XB/GC). We recently took a spin with the buxom beauty and chatted about her role as *Underground 2*'s racing coordinator Rachel.

—Scott Steinberg

**EGM:** What made you wanna get involved in this project?

**Brooke Burke:** You may have noticed I'm into trying new things. And I'm really into gaming. Kitting out cars is awesome, too. It's what I do for fun in real life.

**EGM:** You mean to tell us videogames get you all fired up?

**BB:** Of course! I'm a huge fan of *Pac-Man* and *Tetris*, just like every other celebrity. [Laughs] Seriously, though, the title I'm most addicted to right now is *Need for Speed: Hot Pursuit 2*. I play it in my home theater. It's amazing how cool the game looks on a giant screen.

**EGM:** Any particular consoles get your motor purring?

**BB:** I'm a big fan of PlayStation 2, but I just got Xbox and I love how the machine shows off the capabilities of my audio-visual setup.

**EGM:** Think you're Hollywood's most hardcore gamer?

**BB:** No way! Look at guys like Christian Slater, David Spade, and all the musicians who play while they are on tour. I don't even come close to claiming that title.

**EGM:** But you do know your stuff. So tell us why a serious enthusiast would bother with EA's latest racer?

**BB:** The same reason I would—because of all the options it offers. I'm shocked at how true to life the game is. For instance, I own a Mercedes and the first thing I did was trick out the car.

**EGM:** All right, which showcases sexier

**hardbodies: *Underground 2* or *Wild On*?**

**BB:** Ooh, that's a tough one. I'm impressed with the caliber of cars and girls they've got in this game, but *Wild On* has thousands of beautiful women each season. I guess I'm torn....

**EGM:** OK, time to fess up: What's the worst moving violation you've ever gotten in real life?

**BB:** I once got two speeding tickets driving from Arizona to Los Angeles. The open freeway is hard to resist. I've also racked up two fines at one stop sign. And the worst part is that it all happened in one year's time. Lame, huh? 🚗



■ Even Brooke would be proud to drive in this pimped-out ride.

Photograph courtesy of neriakdavisphoto.com

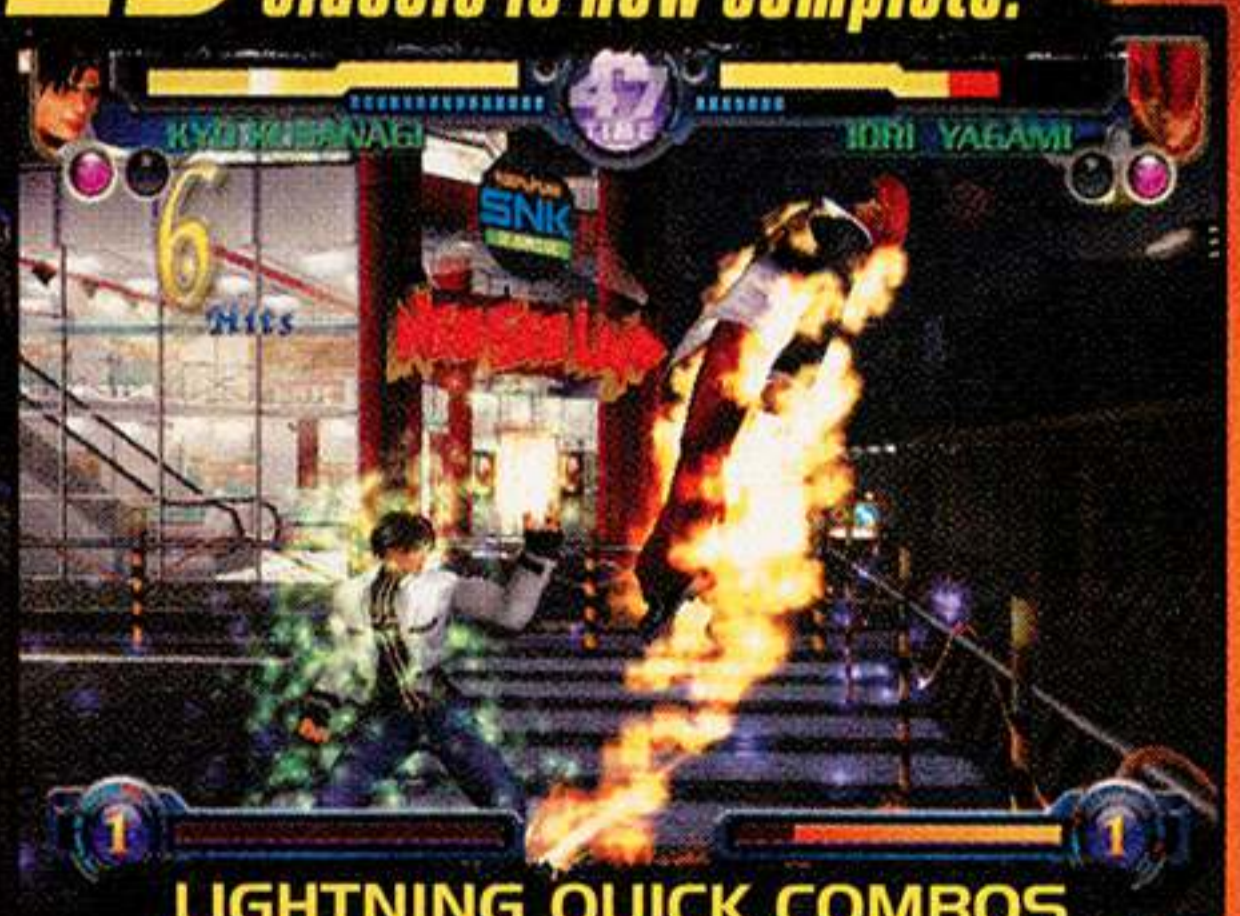
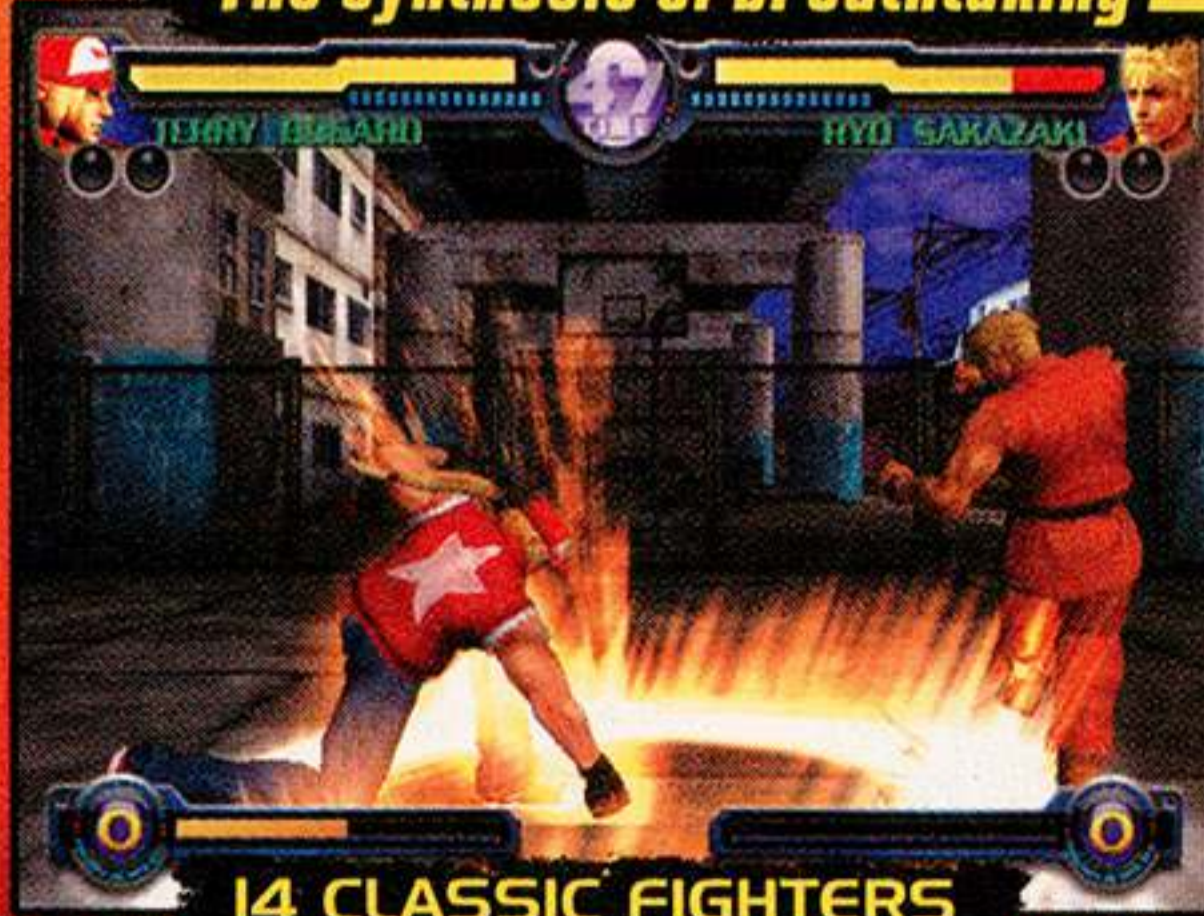


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Final Fantasy XI—where hot-to-trot metrosexuals, female felines, beastly giants, and even cute versions of Mini Me can all live in harmony.



# ONLINE THIS MONTH

## Is it too late to join Final Fantasy's online party?

The prospect of playing a massively multiplayer online role-playing game can be daunting, especially one that launched on PlayStation 2 six months ago like *Final Fantasy XI*. So is it possible to join the game now after thousands of players have already spent the better portion of '04 getting to the upper stratosphere of the level cap? Most definitely.

### Dipping your feet in

Newcomers to *FFXI* should understand a few things. First, everyone already playing the game got all of their equipment and spells the hard way—they earned them.

Don't begin as a level 1 warrior and immediately stand around town begging for money or help. In fact, expect your character's first 20 levels to be somewhat tedious. There's a reason for this, though—it's to introduce you to things like soloing, partying, performing weapon skillchains, and growing comfortable with the menu system. So the sooner you come to grips that there's no quick rise to the top, the sooner you'll enjoy the process.

### Getting up to speed

At level 18, you can activate the quest to acquire a subjob, which, depending on how you mix and match, can double your

skills, abilities, and powers. Once your character reaches that point, beef up a subjob immediately, as many dedicated *FFXI* parties will only consider new members with a fully developed subjob. Level 20 is when you'll be strong enough to start making your way to Jeuno, the central city that binds all three starting nations. It is also the place where you can earn your chocobo license, which enables you to ride those giant yellow birds safely between nations and unlock all-new quests and leveling opportunities. By the time you hit level 30, you can go on missions to gain exotic advanced jobs such as samurai, ninja, summoner, ranger, dragoon, and bard.

### The prognosis

Don't be intimidated by all the advanced players. There's always a fresh batch of people joining every day, and you'll continually find *FFXI* vets willing to tag along with your wet-behind-the-ears character as they build up an additional subjob. And who knows, the next person you meet could be your future spouse (*FFXI* features virtual marriages). —James Mielke

### The Not-So-Old Ball and Chain

New adventures await *Final Fantasy XI* players at the end of September with the release of the *Chains of Promathia* expansion pack. This one will feature three huge environments and over 40 subregions to explore, and although the *Chains* development team remains mum on full details, new summons and job classes are also expected.



## must-hit fansites



**bainst.com** — Apparently, *Soul Calibur*'s Voldo is a big fan of hip-hop artist Nelly. Don't believe us? Then peep this video of the blind brawler and his twin cutting a rug in an insanely choreographed dance routine using the Dreamcast game.



**mega64.com** — Looking for the videogame equivalent of MTV's *Jackass*? Well, here you go—watch Rocco, Derrick, and Shawn terrorize the San Diego locals as they film hilarious game parodies. (They've even made some exclusive bits for the *EGM* DVD, available now at newsstands.)

## WHAT'S UP AT



### Hear All About Halo 2



Check out [egmextras.1UP.com](http://egmextras.1UP.com) to read how smashing cantaloupes with a metal pipe is just one small part of designing *Halo 2*'s audio. Plus, don't miss our complete Afterthoughts Q&A with the producer of *Silent Hill 4*.

### What Time Is It?



Photograph by Scott Gries/Gatty

Yeeeeehhh boyyyy! Also posted on the the above-mentioned site is an interview with hardcore rapper and *Def Jam Fight for NY* grappler Flava Flav, who tells us which game he considers public enemy No. 1.

### 1UP.com Club in the Spotlight: GTA: Nice City



I noticed you just ate some potato salad. You should really wait at least one hour before going swimming or you'll get cramps something awful.

Someone should tell game-hatin' Sen. Joe Lieberman about this ever-growing club ([nicescity-club.1UP.com](http://nicescity-club.1UP.com)). These guys and gals are cleaning up the streets of the *Grand Theft Auto* series by designing naughty-free minigames.

### Must-Hit Blog

Brutal honesty—that's what you can expect from *EGM* alumnus and current *Xbox Nation* editor Che Chou's online journal ([chespace.1UP.com](http://chespace.1UP.com)). So if a game bites the big one, Che will surely mention it in his daily rants.





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# THE RUMOR MILL

Putting the scuttle back in your butt

**I**t happens every fall—The Q's social life drowns in a sea of triple-A titles, each one more delicious than the last. And to borrow a phrase from KC and the Sunshine Band: That's the way, uh-huh, uh-huh, I like it, uh-huh, uh-huh. Anyhoo, here's what my gossip-hounds sniffed out this month—I have no doubt you'll be pleased. And, as always, feel free to shoot me a message at [quartermann@ziffdavis.com](mailto:quartermann@ziffdavis.com)...and try to keep 'em clean, people. —The Q

## Gimme two, please

Let's start this round of rumors off with a bang: When it comes to PlayStation Portable software, I hear that several big-name companies are simultaneously

developing titles to go out on both the PlayStation 2 and the PSP. Why should this interest you? Well, if my sources are correct, game saves will be compatible between the two versions. Imagine: You can begin playing a game on the handheld, then transfer saves to the console and pick up right where you left off (or vice versa). Sounds like a plan. And hey, while you're at it guys, why not include a discount coupon in one version of the game for the other?

## X marks the spot for sequels

Sure, several folks at Microsoft may have Xbox 2 on the brain, but that doesn't mean the company has forgotten about its current console. A handful of new Xbox titles remain in the works, including sequels to the squad-based sci-fi shooter *Brute Force* and the online dogfighter *Crimson Skies*.

## A soul-sucking handheld

If there's one thing I've learned about this biz, it's never to trust developers when they say, "This is the last game in the series." Case in point: Word around the campfire is that *Onimusha*, Capcom's demon-slaying action franchise, is returning to the gaming scene for PlayStation Portable. And speaking of Sony's upcoming handheld, that guy making the tasty s'mores tells me *Killzone* will bring its fraggin' prowess to PSP.

## A voice from the grave

A while back, I spoke of a certain company (cough, EA, cough) creating a game based on *The Godfather* film trilogy. Well, here's more gossip that may land me sleeping with the fishes: I hear the late Marlon Brando, who played the "boss" of the Corleone family in the films, did some voice work for the game before passing away.

## Whip it good



■ "Man, I'm getting too old for this s\*\*\*."

Will a fourth *Indiana Jones* movie ever happen? The Q sure hopes so (*Raiders of the Lost Ark* is still one of my all-time faves). But either way, I'm hearing that LucasArts is planning yet another videogame expedition for the tough-as-nails archeologist. Look for Dr. Jones to travel to the land of next-generation consoles in 2006.

## The final countdown

I began this column with a bang—now let's end it with a nuclear explosion. Three: LucasArts and a team of Jedis have already started on a third installment of its RPG series *Star Wars: Knights of the Old Republic* (most likely for Xbox 2). Two: *Gran Turismo 5* development has begun for PlayStation 3. One: Square Enix's *Final Fantasy XIII* is also well under way for Sony's next console. BOOM!



■ "Hi, remember me? Not really? Well, I'm coming back anyway."



■ Sammy's ready to slice through PSP.

## BY THE NUMBERS

Massively multiplayer online figures

**1.2** Million Active characters in the *Final Fantasy XI* community

**140,000** Users during peak hours

**850** Virtual marriages in *Final Fantasy XI*

**90** Percentage of virtual marriages ending in divorce due to the eventual revelation that both partners are men in real life



■ Looks like they drank the Kool-Aid.

## OVERHEARD



"I'm glad I'm not on the cover of *Madden* this year, so good luck to the next guy."

—Atlanta Falcons quarterback Michael Vick speaking on ESPN's SportsCenter about the "Madden curse." He was the fourth NFL star to have a bad season (in his case due to injury) the same year he appeared on the game's box

"It's better with boobs, right?"

—Prince of Persia 2 Producer Yannis Mallat, when asked if the game's new sidekick character would be male or female

"I turned 40 this past year. My dream right now is to keep on creating games until I die."

—Metal Gear Solid creator Hideo Kojima



"For the next 15 years—just like the last 15—handheld gaming will be known by one name: Nintendo."

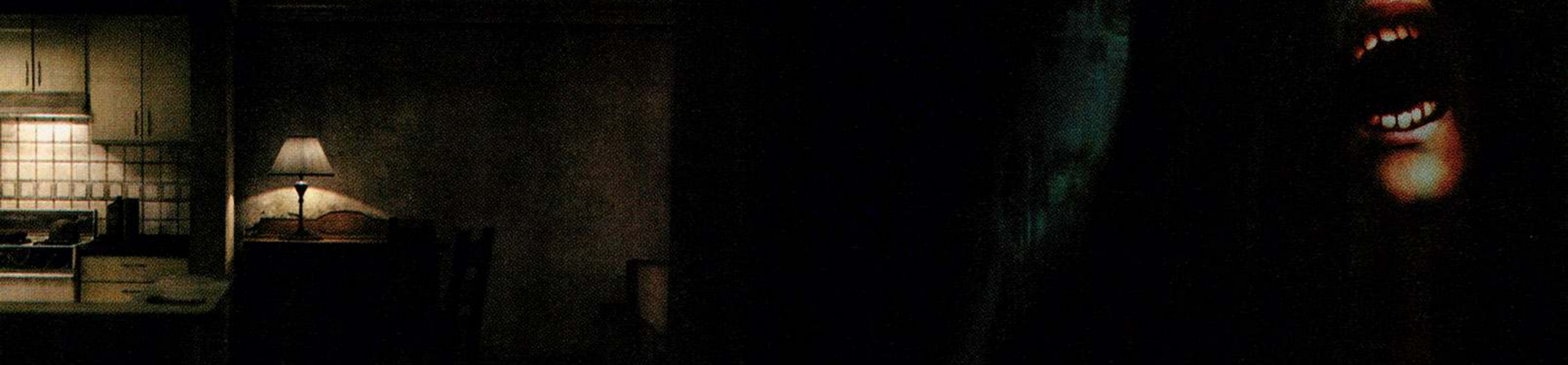
—Nintendo Executive Vice President Reggie Fils-Aime fires a shot over the bow of Sony's PlayStation Portable, due early next year





WELCOME TO AN ENDLESS NIGHTMARE OF  
PAIN AND SUFFERING

WELCOME TO AN ENDLESS NIGHTMARE OF  
PAIN AND SUFFERING



Home is definitely where the heart is.

Along with some spleen. And a little chunk of liver in the hall.

"Best Adventure Game of E3" - *IGN.com*

"Forget about pushing the envelope. Silent Hill 4 tears it to pieces." - *XBN Magazine*

"In the end, Konami's game will, without a doubt, be the preeminent scare fest of 2004." - *IGN.com*

# SILENT HILL 4 THE ROOM™

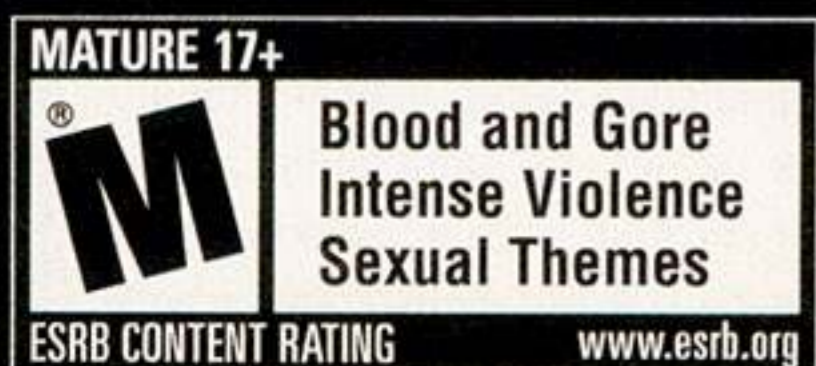


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■ Ghostly New Creatures

■ Grisly Environments



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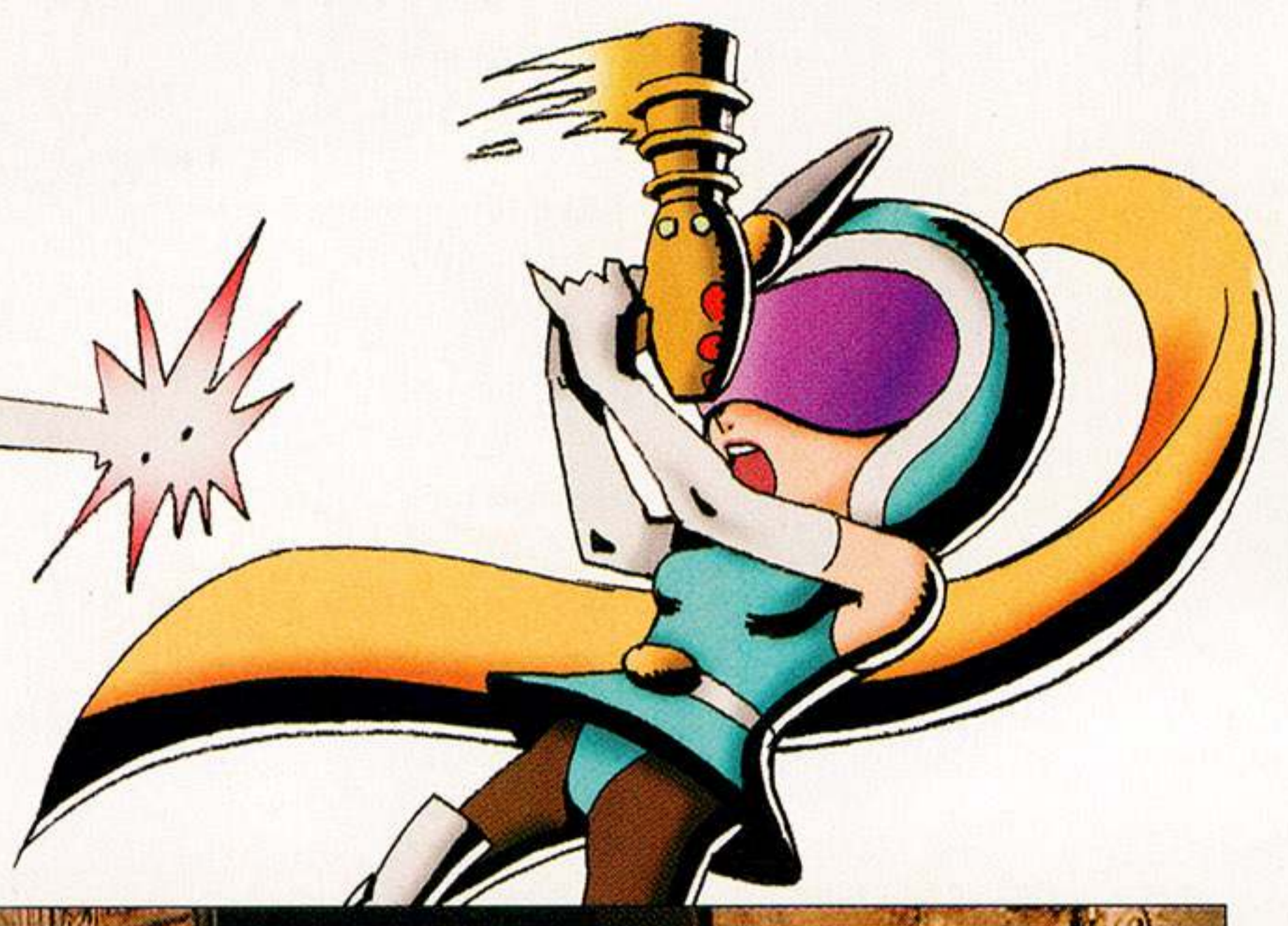
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# THE HOT TEN

Your most-wanted games seem oh so far away. Ah, summer love

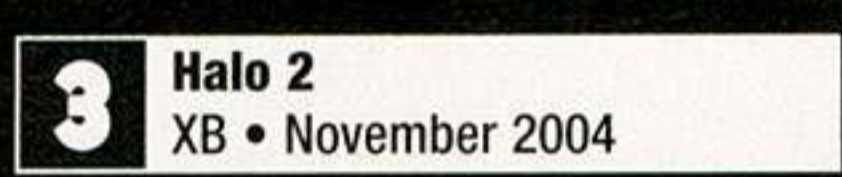
Disagree with the list? You're the ones who created it. Rock your vote at [egmmag.1up.com](http://egmmag.1up.com).



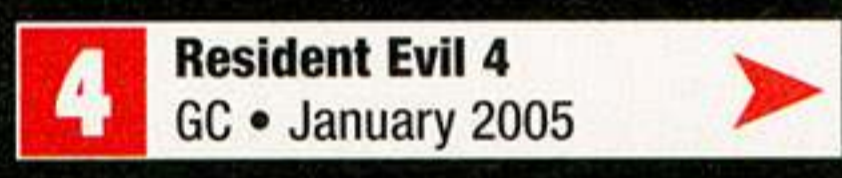
**1** **The Legend of Zelda**  
GC • Fall 2005



**2** **Metroid Prime 2: Echoes**  
GC • November 2004



**3** **Halo 2**  
XB • November 2004



**4** **Resident Evil 4**  
GC • January 2005



**5** **Final Fantasy XII**  
PS2 • Summer 2005



**6** **Super Mario 64x4**  
DS • November 2004



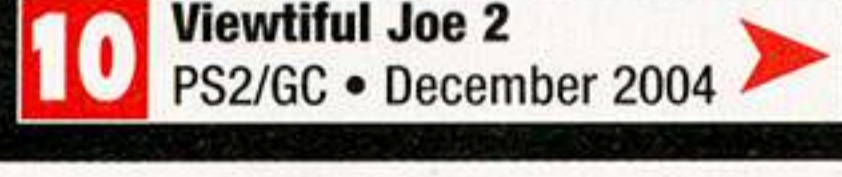
**7** **Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater**  
PS2 • November 2004



**8** **Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas**  
PS2 • October 2004



**9** **Kingdom Hearts II**  
PS2 • September 2005



**10** **Viewtiful Joe 2**  
PS2/GC • December 2004



## RESIDENT EVIL 4

GC • January 2005 — At this very moment, Leon S. Kennedy is making his way through an incomplete version of a creepy rural area and discovering the horrors that lurk in sleepy European hamlets—like the black-robed figures, bloodthirsty townsfolk, and *Shrek* rejects pictured here. What's even spookier is how



damn cute Ashley—the presidential daughter Leon is charged with rescuing—is in that fetching skirt. Will she and Leon hook up? It won't be too long before we can find out for ourselves—Capcom has announced an official release date for their survival-horror sequel. Expect *RE4* to move in on January 11, 2005.



## VIEWTIFUL JOE 2

PS2/GC • December 2004 — The second coming of *Joe* is nearly upon us, and while *VJ2* doesn't stray too far from the original's action-packed, side-scrolling formula, expect wild vehicles, startling new powers, and lots more Silvia (Joe's cheerleader girlfriend). Also be on the lookout for the next game



from Clover Studio, the Capcom visionaries behind *Joe*. It's called *Okami*, and it looks like an action game...well, if action games were painted on bamboo scrolls. It's more mythical than "viewtiful," but the latest trailer shows the game looking incredibly slick and very, very fast. Scope it at [www.cloverstudio.co.jp](http://www.cloverstudio.co.jp).

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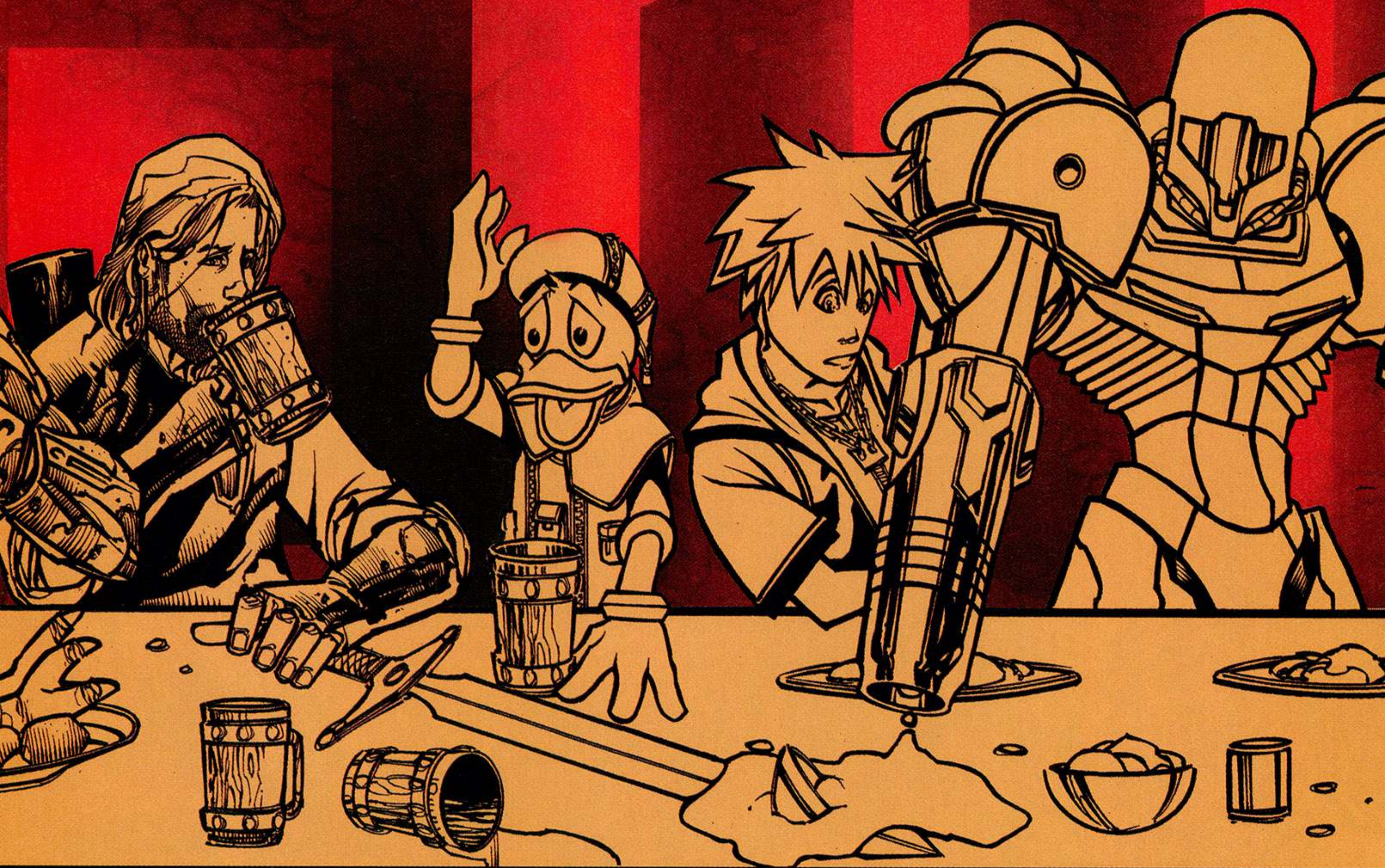
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## EGM's guide to the fall's bountiful gaming harvest

**T**he gaming industry's annual harvest festival is about to commence. It's no coincidence that year after year, a massive avalanche of titles descends in October and November, battling for mindshare and shelf space.

By the time you're gobbling turkey and slurping down cranberry sauce this Thanksgiving, a veritable flood of major releases will be calling out for your gaming dollars. Hey, we don't like looking for mall parking any more than you do, but publishers aren't about to miss out on all that holiday

shopping traffic. So buckle down, weigh your options, save your pennies, and try to make some informed buying (or begging) decisions this year. We're here to separate the must-have blockbusters from the shifty-looking wannabes that will leave you wishing you'd kept the receipt. >



### November

- |   |  |  |  |
|---|--|--|--|
| <b>88</b> Halo 2  | <b>99</b> The Lord of the Rings, The Third Age<br>Fullmetal Alchemist<br>Call of Duty: Finest Hour | <b>104</b> Shadow of Rome<br>Kingdom Hearts: Chain of Memories           | <b>110</b> Capcom Fighting Evolution<br>Forgotten Realms: Demon Stone<br>Dragon Ball Z: Budokai 3<br>Godzilla: Save the Earth<br>Guilty Gear Isuka<br>Mega Man X8<br>Predator: Concrete Jungle<br>Prince of Persia 2 |
| <b>94</b> GoldenEye: Rogue Agent<br>The Urbz: Sims in the City<br>Metroid Prime 2: Echoes     | <b>100</b> Jak 3<br>Digital Devil Saga<br>Forza Motorsport   | <b>106</b> Midnight Club 3: Dub Edition<br>Suikoden IV                   |  |
| <b>96</b> Blinx 2: Masters of Time & Space<br>Ghost Recon 2                                   | <b>102</b> WWE SmackDown! vs. Raw<br>Need for Speed Underground 2                                  | <b>108</b> ATV Offroad Fury 3<br>Neo Contra<br>Karaoke Revolution Vol. 3 |  |
| <b>98</b> Ratchet & Clank: Up Your Arsenal<br>Baten Kaitos<br>Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater |  |  |  |



# OCTOBER



■ No stranger to pain, motocross ninja Cyrax also strained his groin in the '01 X Games.



## MORTAL KOMBAT: DECEPTION

PS2/XB • Midway

**The buzz:** Death in a fighting game has never been swifter or surer. In Hell's Foundry, mechanical presses stamp out slabs of molten steel. Flung your hapless foe into the hazard, and the moving parts will reduce him to a red smear. *Mortal Kombat: Deception's* other multi-tiered arenas include a sinister slaughterhouse with

massive meat grinders and the soaring Sky Temple, where smacking a rival through the rooftop railing sends him plummeting to platforms below. What sounds easy on paper, however, is harder to put into practice, as maneuvering into position takes perfect timing even with free-flowing 3D movement.

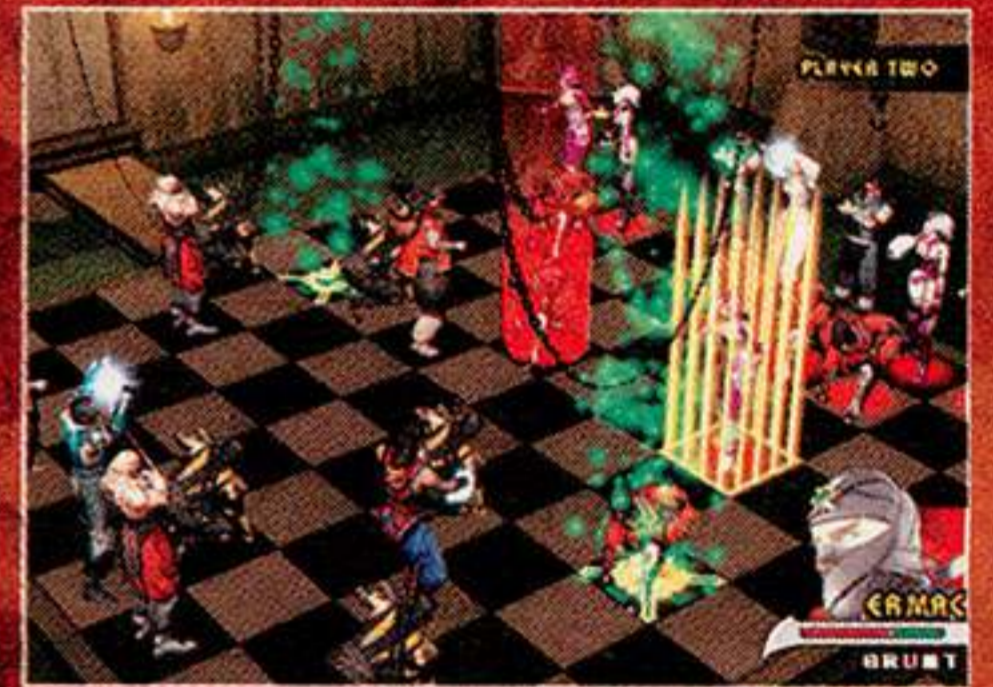




■ Look for the return of nearly forgotten MK stars, like Ermac.

### Kollect 'Em All

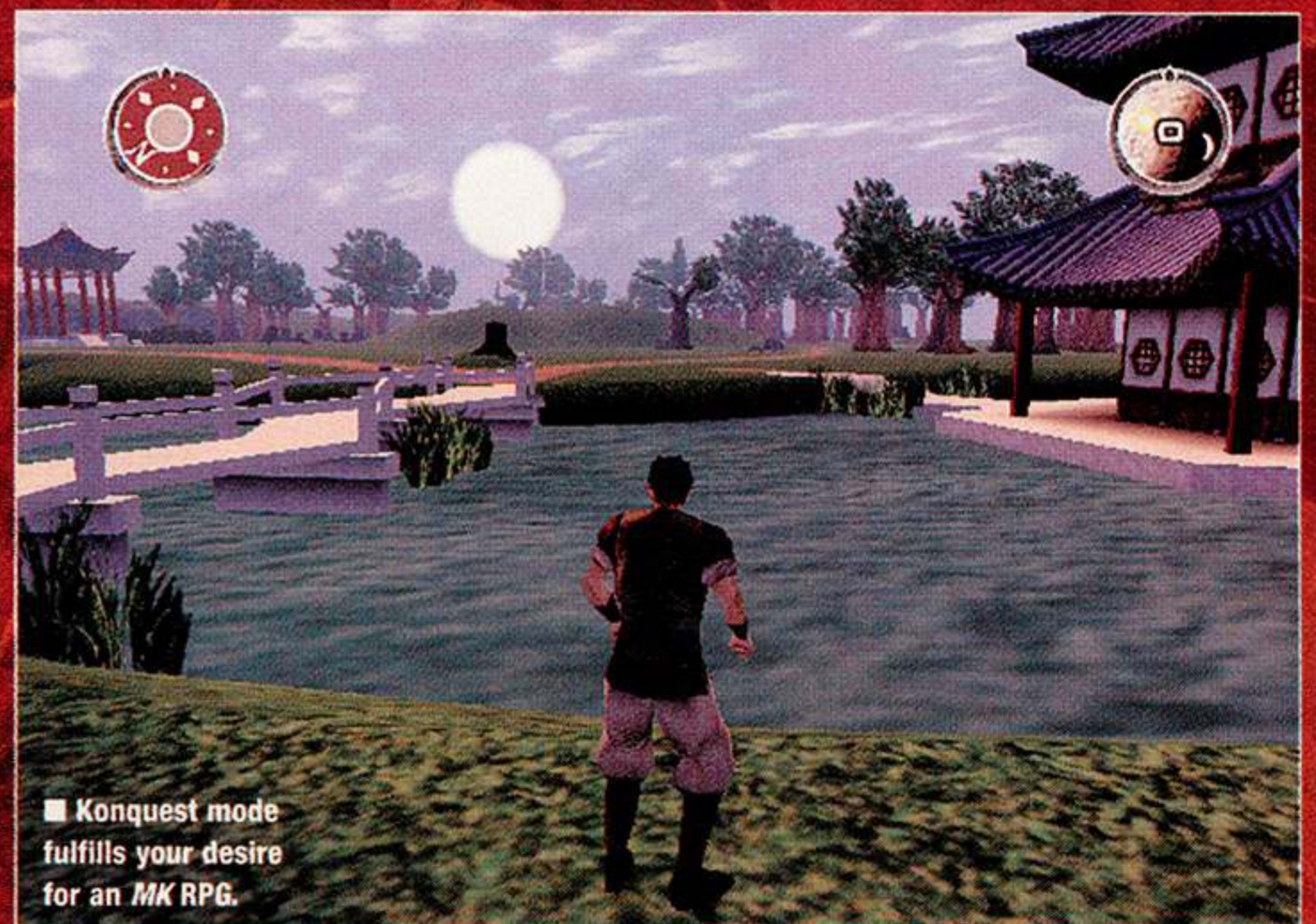
Available at select stores for \$59.95, special Xbox Collector's Editions come in one of four packages and feature an arcade-perfect port of the original *Mortal Kombat*, more than 40 minutes of bonus DVD content (including a movie that chronicles the history of the franchise), and an embossed metal card. The Premium Pack, unique to PS2, comes with the same swag and a cool Sub-Zero cover.



■ When you tire of spilling spleens, relax with minigames—chess (above) and puzzles (below).



■ *Deception* will also assault the GameCube in early 2005.



■ Konquest mode fulfills your desire for an MK RPG.

Death has never had as many faces, for that matter. Classic characters such as Ermac, Baraka, and Mileena cross paths with an assortment of returning *MK: Deadly Alliance* characters, as well as all-new assassins, for a total of 24 combatants. But this *MK* "is much more than a fighting game," insists series co-creator Ed Boon. "It's also a puzzle game, a board game, and an adventure game." In puzzle

combat, players stack and clear blocks, creating space to work in while crowding out the competition (think Capcom's *Super Puzzle Fighter* for PS1 and GBA with fatalities). Chess combat combines strategy with sharp reflexes. "Like chess, the goal is to kill your opponent's king before he kills yours," Boon explains. "But when one player tries to take territory from another, both tangle in a round of standard *Mortal*

*Kombat* to determine who wins the square." The new single-player Konquest mode serves up blood-soaked adventure, allowing you to customize your own fighter as you traverse towns pummeling opponents one at a time.

Three modes (versus fighting, puzzle, and chess) work online for both PS2 and Xbox. "The '90s arcade experience was so exciting because you were able to com-

pare your skills with complete strangers. Online play promises to bring all that back, but on an even bigger scale."

**What could go wrong?** *Deception* pioneers online 3D fighting, and it remains to be seen how smoothly it'll perform over cross-country connections. Also, the new modes seem cool, but the fighting itself hasn't changed much.... —Shawn Elliott ▶



# OCTOBER



■ Real or fake? Only Vampiro knows for sure.



## BACKYARD WRESTLING 2: THERE GOES THE NEIGHBORHOOD

PS2/XB • Eidos

**The buzz:** It's back to the...er, backyard for another rumble in Eidos' white-trash jungle, and surprisingly, this neighborhood will play host to a bit more traditional wrasslin' action. "The original *Backyard* was more of a brawler," admits Lead Designer Kevin Gill. "For the sequel, we went under the hood and built a proper wrestling game." Gill says to expect a

beefier grappling system, plus submission moves—a series first.

But in no way does the game neglect those who favor a wilder affair, as *Neighborhood* will include all sorts of new, over-the-top environment interaction. Gill explains: "In one area you can slam your opponent into a fence," Gill explains, "then pick up a broken fence

post, light it on fire, and either torch your opponent or burn the yard." And the fight should really get a whole lot nastier once you take it online (also new this year), which will feature 1-on-1 matches, voice chat, and rankings.

**What could go wrong?** With such a crowded ring this fall (*Def Jam Fight for*

*NY, WWE SmackDown! vs. Raw, Rumble Roses*), *There Goes the Neighborhood* faces intense competition from other, more socially acceptable wrestling games. Porn starlets body-slaming clowns into thumbtacks will play well in trailer parks, but might be a bit too chaotic and wacky for mainstream crowds.

—Bryan Intihar

## ACE COMBAT 5

PS2 • Namco

**The buzz:** Ground-bound vehicle sims like *Gran Turismo 4* can brag all they want about their licensed cars, but how many games offer licensed multimillion-dollar fighter planes? *Ace Combat* packs more than 50 of them, from the A-10 tank killer to stealthed-out 21st-century superjets. And all of these brilliantly detailed plane models had to pass muster with their real-life manufacturers, who even supplied developer Namco with cockpit data.

It's all for show, of course—the series is still about arcadey thrills rather than realism. But Namco is ramping up the immersion factor by adding new noninteractive

taxi and takeoff sequences and making landings and midair refueling more crucial. But the slickest addition is this: You can issue orders to four wingmates, telling them to attack bogeys and ground targets ahead, unleash special weapons, cover your six, or just do their own thing. "It becomes critical how you use these guys to complete some missions," says Producer Hiroshi Tanaka.

**What could go wrong?** We got to fly a few of the game's 30 missions, and they had us humming Kenny Loggins (in one we blasted parachuting tanks from the sky),

but they also weren't much different from what we've seen in past *Ace Combat* games. Plus, we've said it before and we'll say it again: Where are the online modes?

—Crispin Boyer



■ Relive your *Top Gun* fantasies, sans the Ray-Bans.





## OUTRUN 2

XB • Microsoft

**The buzz:** Ever since *Ridge Racer* took a vacation (and no, *R: Racing Evolution* doesn't count), it's been hard to find good arcade racing, the kind rife with powerslides and crazy drifts around corners. Everyone wants to tune this, tweak that, and change their shock absorbers, but we just want to race.

Well, *OutRun 2* heralds not only the return of one of the most famous racing games in history (who hasn't played *OutRun*?), but the return of turning your

Ferrari (yes, your Ferrari) sideways and scraping rubber off your tires at 100 mph. The sensation of going perpendicular in *OutRun 2* is essentially perfect, and with tons of special modes and online play, it offers more replay than your average arcade racer.

**What could go wrong?** Folks looking to adjust gear ratios (i.e., *Gran Turismo* fans) will scoff at this game's simplicity.

—James Mielke



## THE BARD'S TALE

PS2/XB • VU Games

**The buzz:** It's a bold concept—take an action-RPG à la *Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance* but replace the superserious gravitas with goofball humor. Now, if you're a fan of the ancient PC *Bard's Tale* games, you might be shocked by the direction of this laff-a-minute hack-n-slasher (you might also be 40), but this self-satirizing romp might rope in a whole new generation of fans.

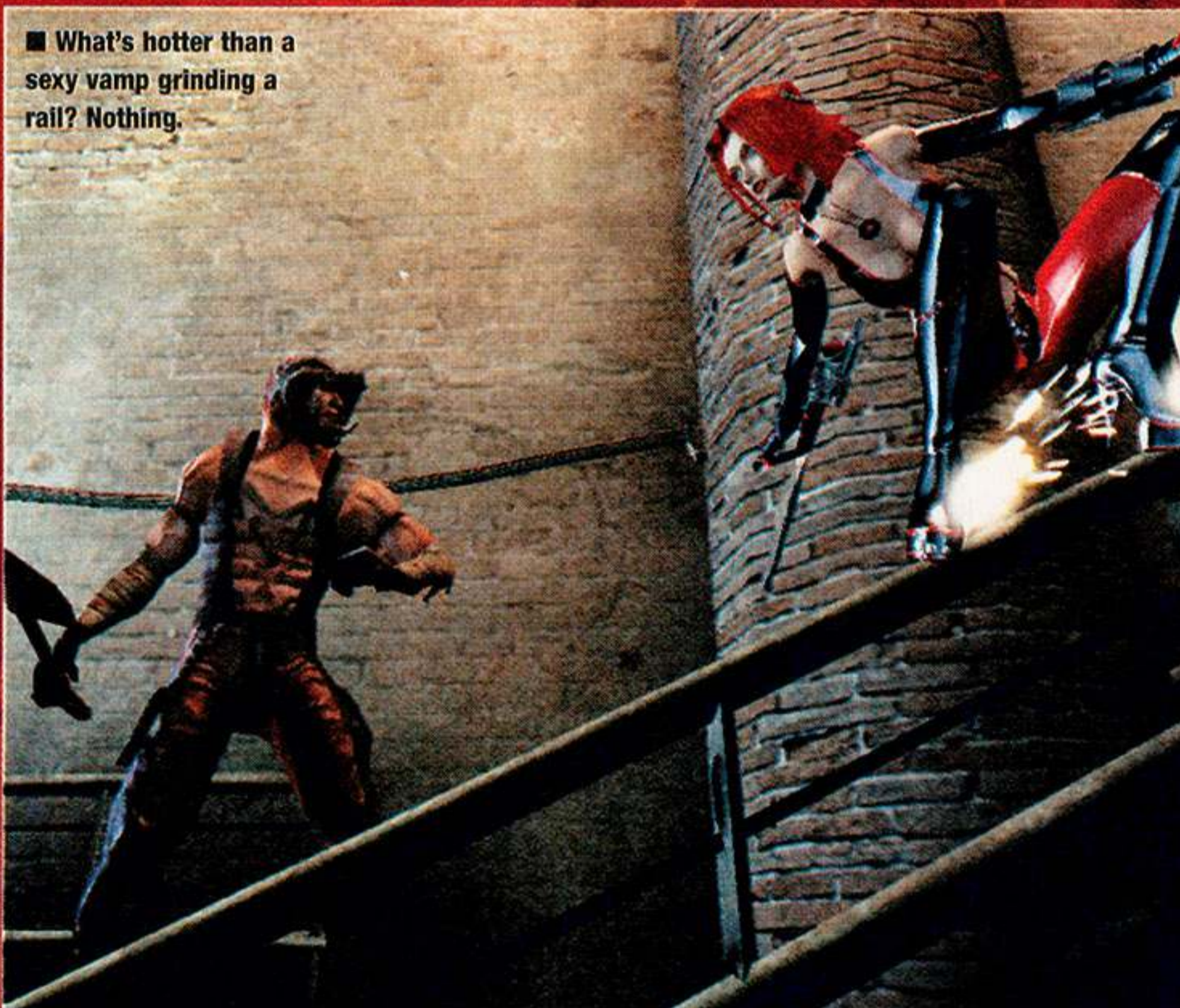
Get ready for a bawdy Bard hero who argues with the narrator and wonders

why killing a rabid wolf yields a shiny suit of plate mail. It's postmodern meta-gaming at its wackiest, and the expert voice work of Cary Elwes—the heroic Westley in *The Princess Bride*—adds a lot.

**What could go wrong?** It's a damn funny game, but the looks aren't all there: So far, we've seen lots of awfully similar-looking trees and hills.

—Thierry "Scooter" Nguyen

■ What's hotter than a sexy vamp grinding a rail? Nothing.



## BLOODRAYNE 2

PS2/XB • Majesco

**The buzz:** If you want to see an enemy being split in half from head to crotch, screaming victims spouting blood from severed limbs, or a red-haired vampire femme hanging upside down from a lamppost and exposing inverted cleavage while rapidly firing dual blood-powered

pistols, this may be your game.

Other than violence and an erotically lethal (or lethally erotic, or possibly both) antiheroine, *BloodRayne 2* lets you partake of an involved combo system—or harpoon bad guys and sling them into fatal set-pieces.

**What could go wrong?** Will *BloodRayne* suck more than just blood? The first game had a killer premise and a dangerously hot heroine, but faltered with crummy control and chunky visuals. Hopefully, this vamp has changed her former ways.

—Justin Speer





# OCTOBER

■ Of *Killzone*'s four playable characters, Rico gets to play with the biggest, nastiest firearms.



■ And no, this isn't the biggest gun in *Killzone*.



## KILLZONE

PS2 • Sony CEA

**The buzz:** *Killzone* has just about broken the buzz-o-meter—Sony's maiden voyage into the realm of PS2 first-person shooters earned the nickname "Halo killer" immediately after being announced in 2003. Will it actually spell doom for Microsoft's killer app? Probably not, especially with the unstoppable juggernaut that is *Halo 2* landing mere weeks after *Killzone*'s launch...but expect it to rule the PS2

shooter market with an iron fist.

On paper, *Killzone*'s stats impress—11 gargantuan levels (each with three distinct subsections), 26 weapons (most of which feature creative alternate firing modes), and 16-player online multiplayer combat. A suitably epic story line wraps all the action together. "*Killzone* tells the story of a savage conflict between the ISA, a native force protecting planet

Vector, and the Helghast, a sadistic, militaristic faction bent on colonization," explains Managing Director Hermen Hulst. "We want to capture the most evocative elements of real wars—like the trench combat of WWI, the close-proximity warfare of WWII's Stalingrad, and the sweaty jungle combat of Vietnam—and translate them into our own unique world."

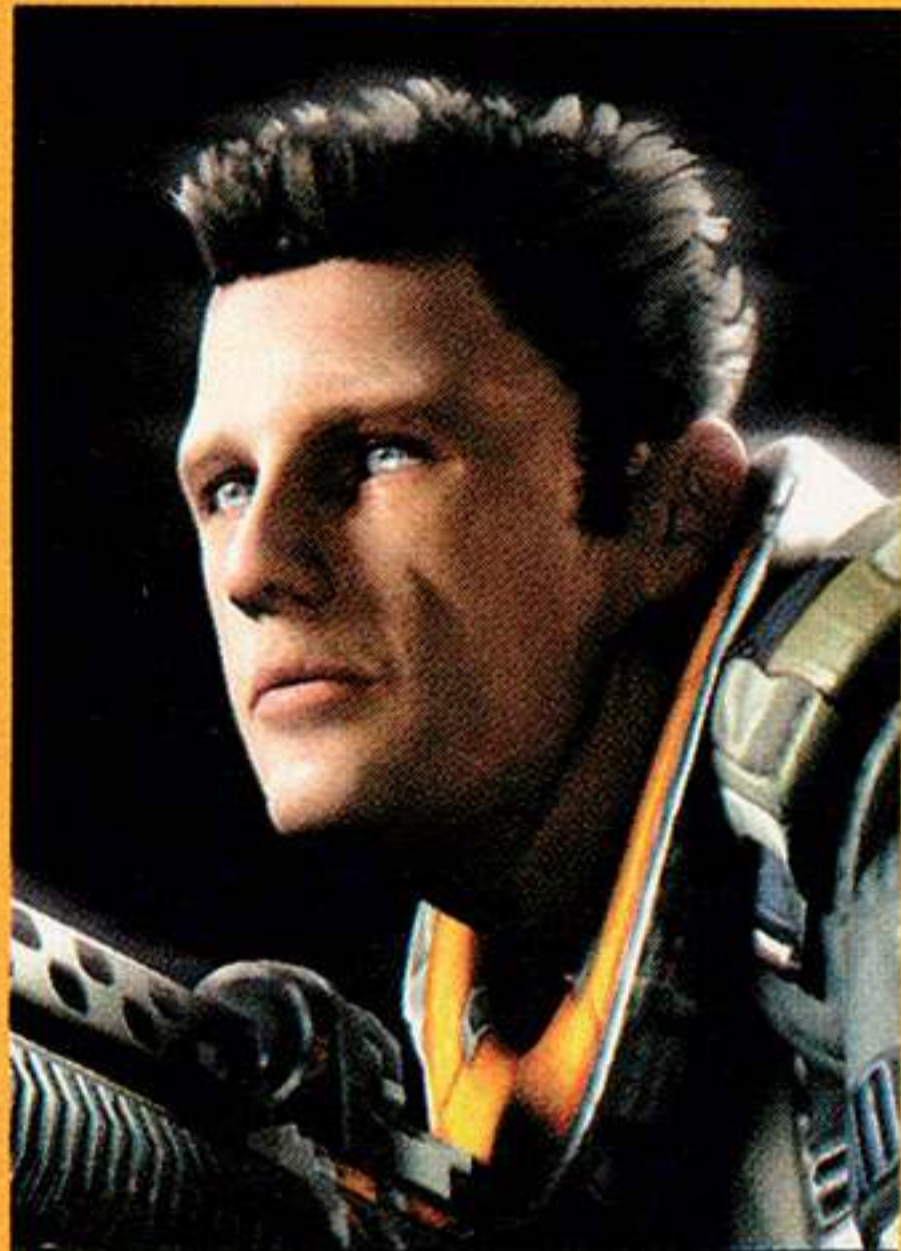
The single-player game begins with

one playable character—Templar, an ISA grunt who's a well-rounded jack-of-all-trades. As the levels progress, however, you'll uncover some other soldiers eager to enter the fray (see sidebar). "We've got four playable characters, each with distinctive weapons, their own special abilities, and unique way through the levels," Hulst reveals. "Expect a hell of a lot of replayability: If you're feeling particularly



## YOUR RAG-TAG GROUP OF MISFITS

*Killzone's* heroic quartet runs the gamut of gameplay variety. The first time through a level, you have to use a specific character, but you can then replay it with any ISA hero.



### Templar

#### Specialty: Ground warfare

The first playable character you'll encounter in *Killzone*, Templar is an infantry grunt with a balanced arsenal of high-tech, multifunctional ISA firearms, average running speed, and dashing good looks.



### Luger

#### Specialty: Stealth

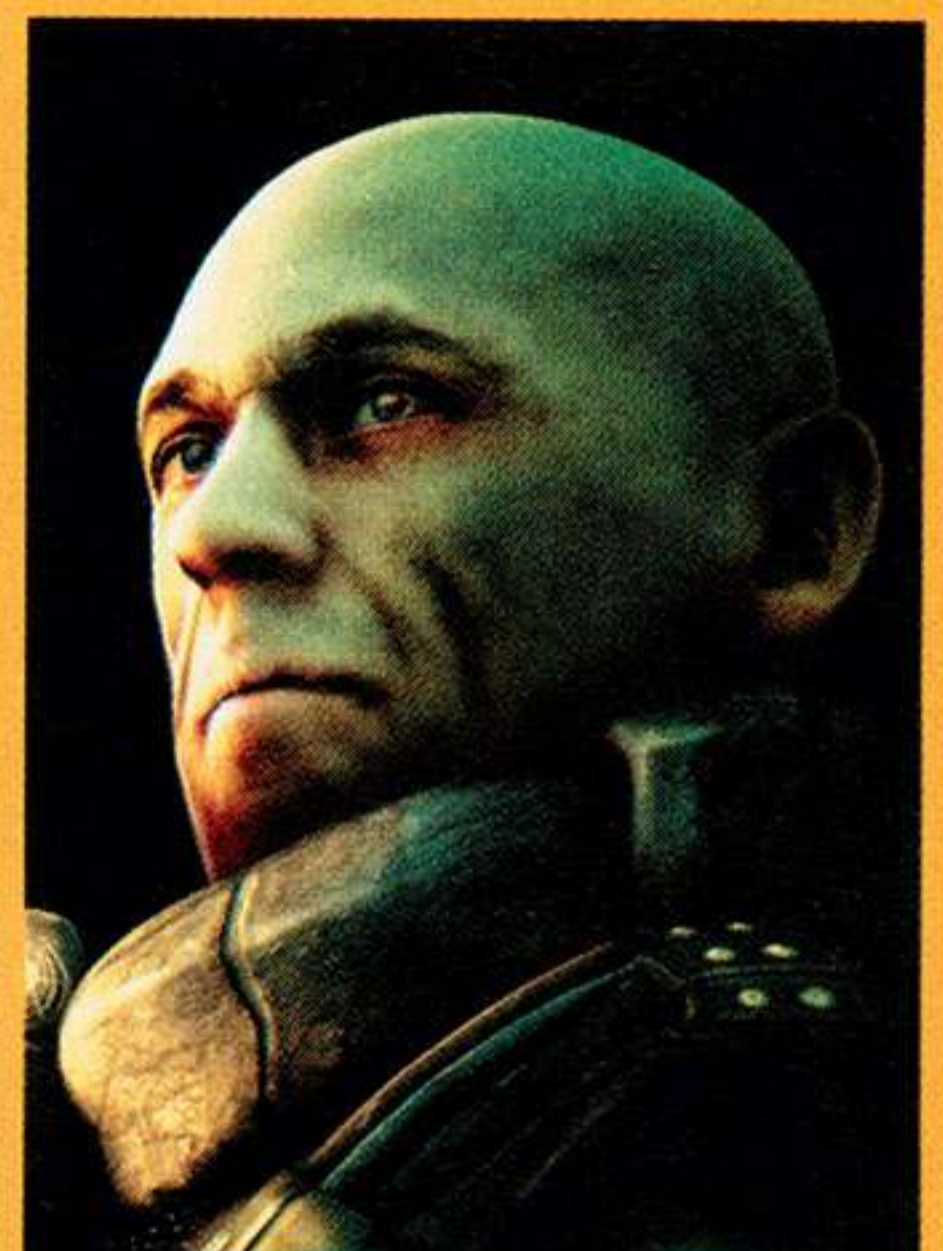
Imagine if *Splinter Cell's* Sam Fisher went through with that gender reassignment surgery. You'd get Luger, a sneaky gal with heat-vision goggles and less-lethal weapons designed to quietly subdue foes.



### Rico

#### Specialty: Heavy weaponry

He's big, slow, and deadly. If you want to plow through the battlefield taking out massive enemy garrisons with machine guns the size of small cars, this is your man. He's also adept at manning all sorts of scary turrets.

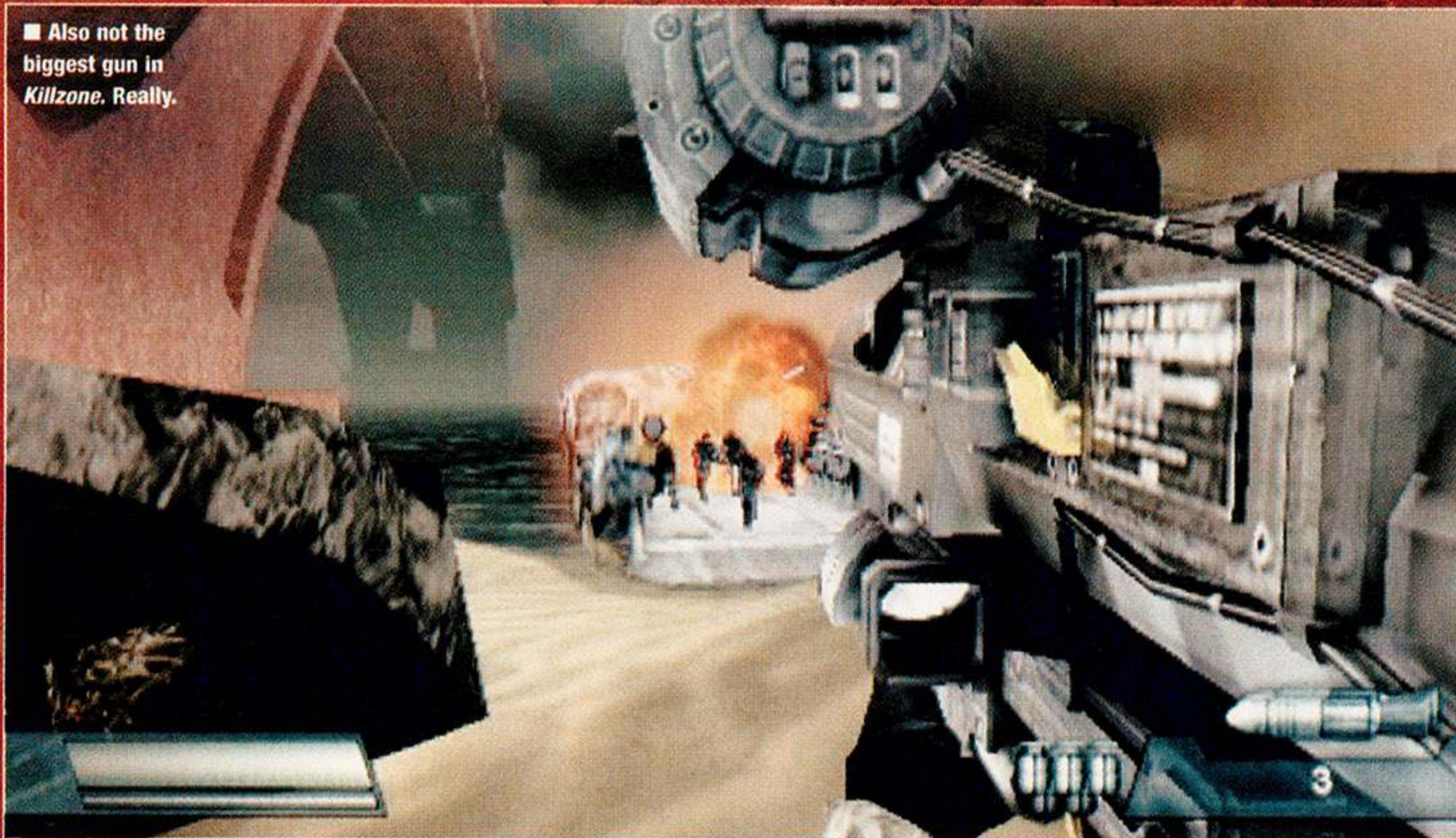


### Hakha

#### Specialty: Subterfuge

This mysterious soldier has infiltrated the Helghast army as a spy, so he has access to an arsenal of various Helghast weapons—cheaply produced, simple guns that carry massive amounts of ammo.

■ Also not the biggest gun in *Killzone*. Really.



intelligent one day, play as Luger, the stealth character...or if you've had a s\*\*\*ty week and you want to just blast your way through, pick Rico, our walking tank." Once you've amassed the four-man squad, your three A.I. comrades will fight alongside you, but don't worry about keeping them alive—they'll react to changing battlefield situations on their own. "You don't have to issue commands or anything," says Hulst. "We didn't want to make a first-person baby-sitter."

The inspired-by-real-war setting and four-character dynamic should keep the

inevitable *Halo* comparisons in check, but look closely and you'll find a few elements lifted directly from the Xbox classic: limited weapon inventory and regenerating shields. "We allow you to carry three weapons in your arsenal at any given time," says Product Manager Alastair Burns. "We want players to experiment with different combinations while keeping it realistic and believable." Including a health meter that slowly recharges itself became a necessity, given how dangerous *Killzone's* levels are. "We have so many bullets flying

around that a stray shot could hit you very easily, ruining the player's roller-coaster ride through our world," Burns muses. "So we allowed for the health recharge to give you a fighting chance."

**What could go wrong?** *Killzone's* single-player campaign redefines "ambitious," and it's unclear whether developer Guerrilla will be able to pull everything together in time for an October launch. Some of the levels we saw chugged along at a slow clip, and massive pieces of the scenery would suddenly pop into

view. Godspeed, programmers.

Thankfully, *Killzone's* online multiplayer action should prove a soothing balm for PS2 players yearning for *Halo 2*. Beautiful maps, creative weapons, and six different game types will make this the first killer PS2-only online experience since *SOCOM II*. *Killzone* still has room to grow, of course—controllable vehicles, unique character types in multiplayer (it's just divided into basic Helghast and ISA troops), and a wider map selection are already at the top of the sequel wish list.

—Shane Bettenhausen





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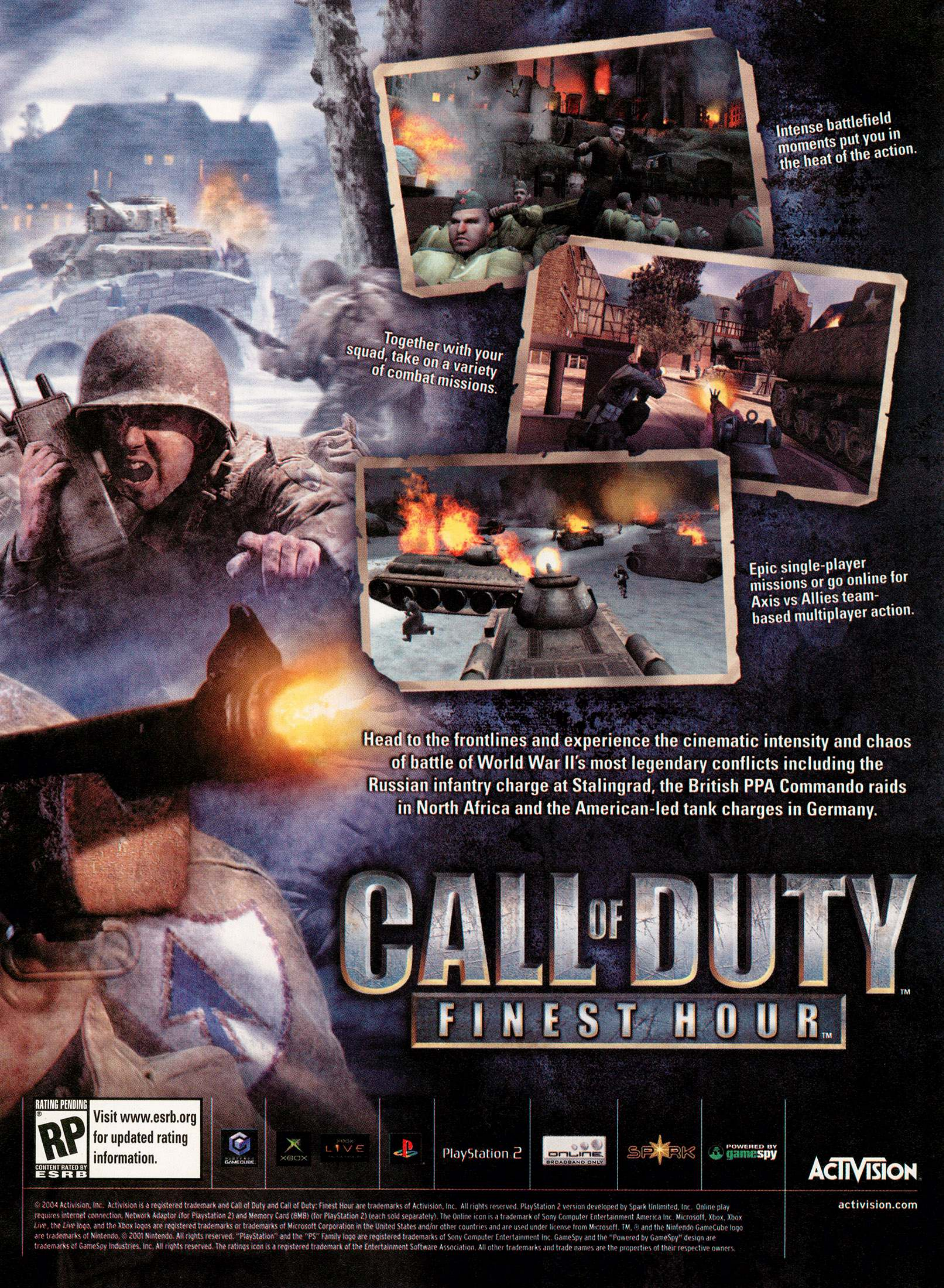
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PlayStation 2



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# OCTOBER



## BLOOD WILL TELL

PS2 • Sega

**The buzz:** You've probably never heard of *Dororo*, the old-school manga by legendary comic scribe Osamu Tezuka (the dude behind *Astro Boy*) that *Blood Will Tell* is based on. So this story line is going to seem even weirder: You play as Hyakkimaru, a mysterious samurai who has to battle demons to recover his stolen body parts. With the help of a brave young kid named Dororo (and the razor-sharp blades that he has in lieu of hands), Hyakkimaru whips up a satisfy-

ing barrage of *Devil May Cry*-style sword-swinging mayhem.

**What could go wrong?** Although anime and manga are hotter than ever, this particular series has never come Stateside in any form. Sure, you don't have to be familiar with the comic to enjoy the frantic action, but will anyone bother to check out this unknown property in a sea of big-name releases?

—Shane Bettenhausen



## BOKTAI 2: SOLAR BOY DJANGO

GBA • Konami

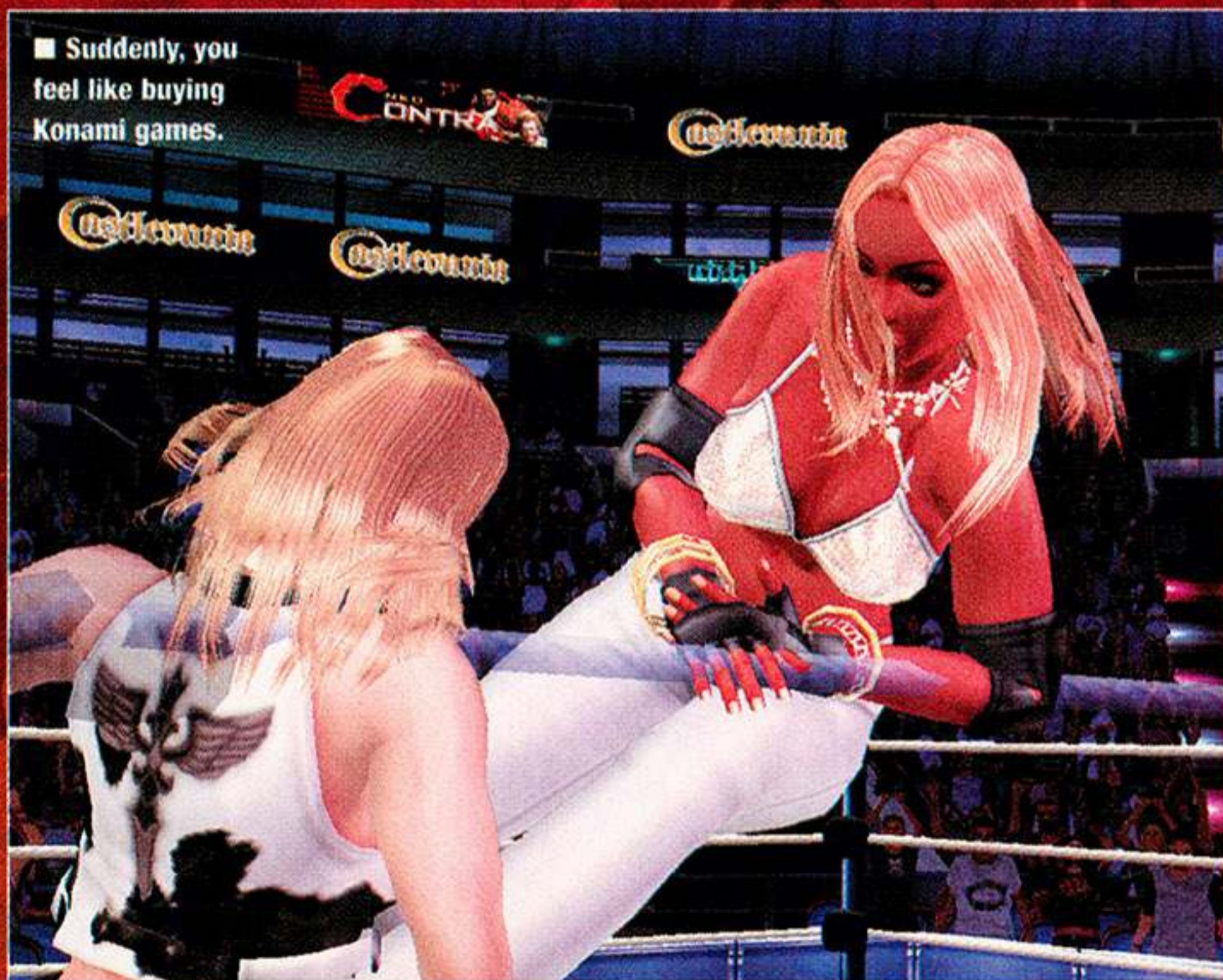
**The buzz:** It may look identical to last year's solar-powered portable adventure, but beneath those graphics *Boktai 2* is a very different creature. A deeper plot and RPG mechanics make it more involving, while the loss of the sunbeam-shooting Gun Del Sol (and about 99 percent of Django's inventory slots) makes it far more difficult.

One thing that hasn't changed is the need for tanning lotion—expect the cartridge's sun sensor to play an even larger

role not only in battles but in solving puzzles as well. Once again, players near the Arctic Circle might get royally screwed.

**What could go wrong?** Change is good, but *Boktai 2*'s numerous tweaks make it a fundamentally different experience than the first game—and a much more ambitious one at that. Fans expecting a straight-up repeat may be frustrated, but at least they'll have a nice tan.

—Jeremy Parish



■ Suddenly, you feel like buying Konami games.

## RUMBLE ROSES

PS2 • Konami

**The buzz:** Konami's inaugural foray into the wrasslin' realm doesn't rely on greased-up WWE studs to win your vote. Instead, it offers a bountiful stable of fictional ladies eager to lock limbs and throw down on the mat. They're sexy but also tough: "I'm sure that the Roses could beat any male opponents," says Producer

Akari Uchida. "Our characters have more power and cooler moves than any real-life wrestlers...they could easily beat me up."

Each of the gals has a deep story mode to grapple through, and you'll reap sizable rewards for doing so—you can unlock a bad-girl "heel" version of each of the nicey-nice "face" gals. "The "heel" gals'



moves, manner of speaking, and story lines are all totally different from their "face" personas, so you can enjoy playing through again with each girl.

Bad girls get really dirty in the game's most buzzworthy mode: mad mud match—mud wrestling in bikinis. "There's no way we could go for a Teen rating,"

laughs Uchida. And we thank him for it.

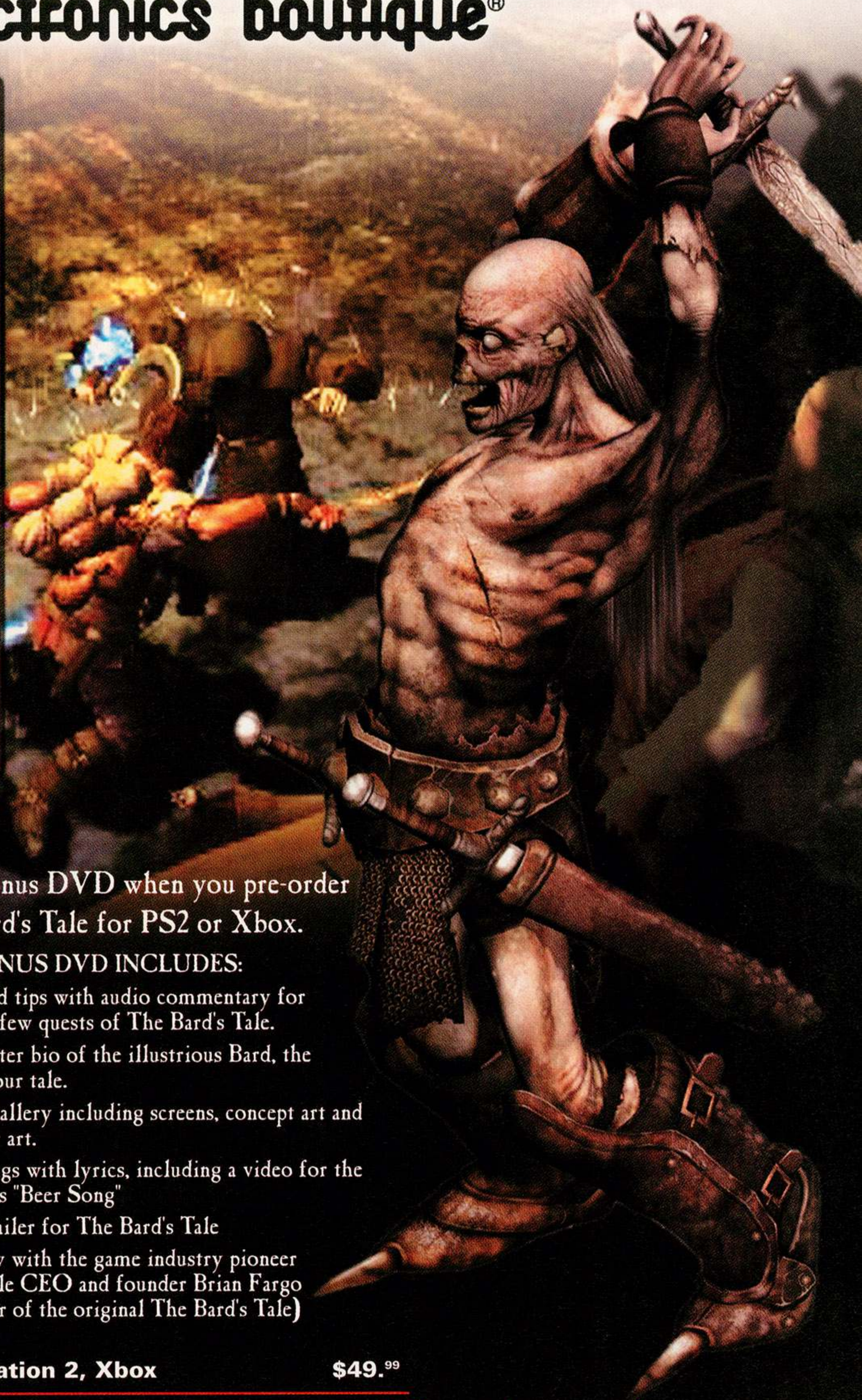
**What could go wrong?** WWE fans weaned on real-life WWE "Divas" might turn their noses up at these entirely made-up (and unrealistically megahot) ladies in silly costumes.

—Shane Bettenhausen

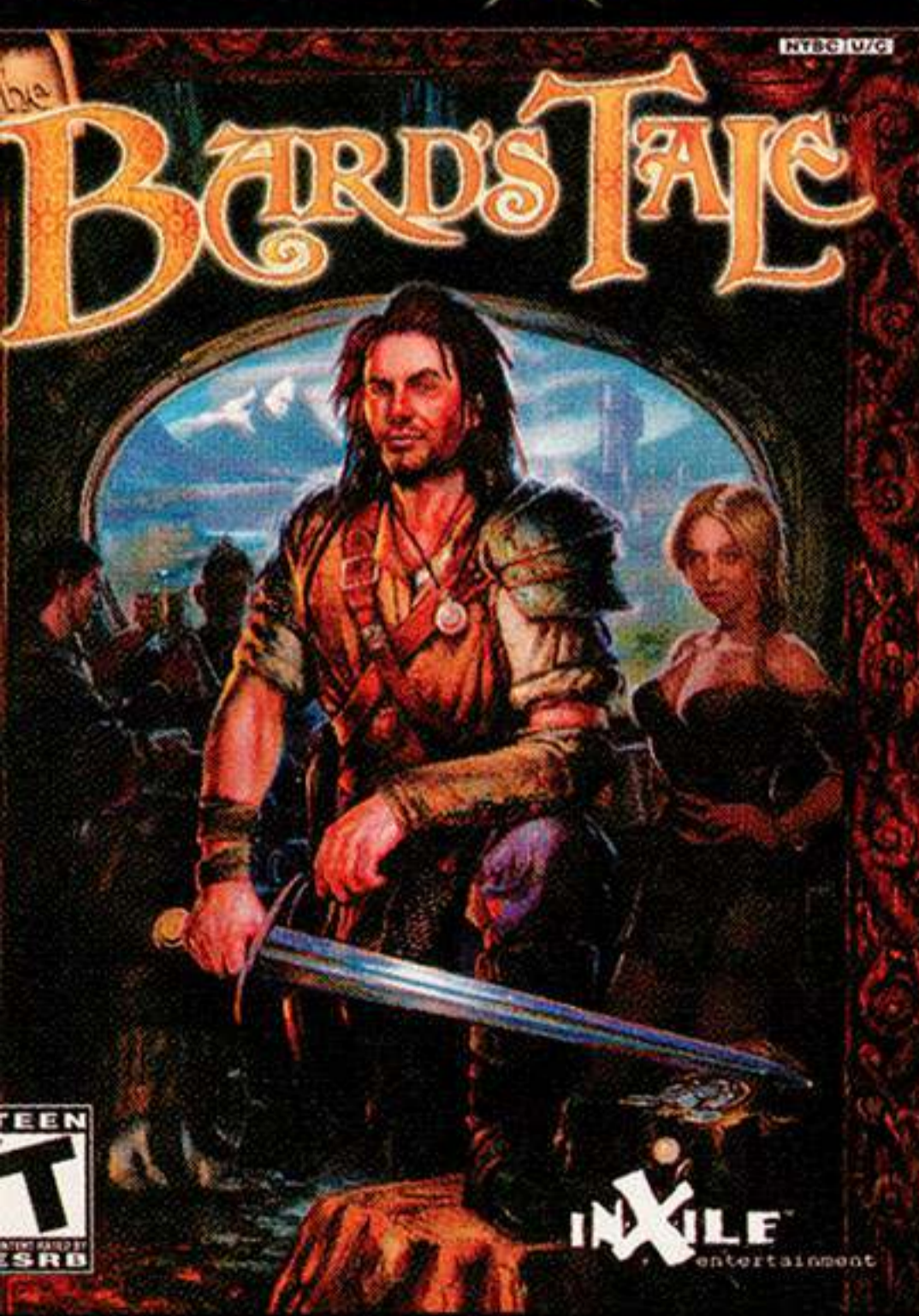


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# OCTOBER

## DOOM 3

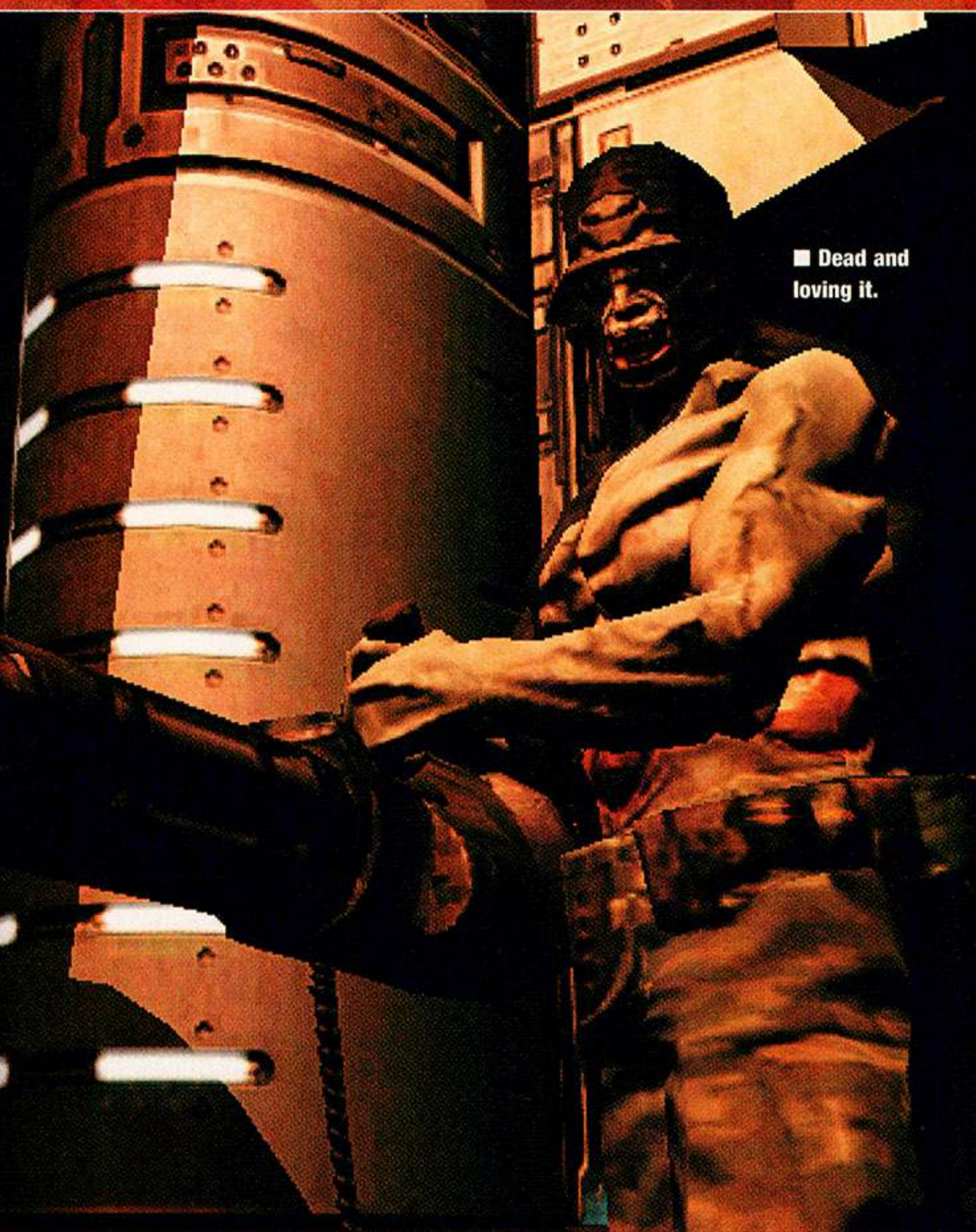
XB • Activision

**The buzz:** It may be hard for gamers who never experienced *Doom* on the PC to understand the anticipation surrounding this blockbuster sequel. We'll try to explain it. For one, the sequel has been about ten years coming, and nostalgia has just about deified the original, genre-defining *Doom*. But more importantly, the developers know exactly what they're doing when making an impact with their first-person shooters.

Whether or not you find the flaming skulls and devilish imps in *Doom 3* frightening on a conceptual level, you will be scared when one comes out of nowhere and tears your flesh off. This intense challenge, coupled with a visceral audiovisual punch and tense scripted events, makes

*Doom 3* the hottest Xbox shooter this side of *Halo 2*.

**What could go wrong?** Even though the graphical capability of the Xbox doesn't quite compare to the monstrous rigs PC gamers have put together to run the game, the hell-in-outer-space ambiance should come through fine unless the company handling the port (Vicarious Visions) slips up bad. Another potential pitfall: We hear rumors of a delay to next year. —Justin Speer



■ Dead and loving it.



## TONY HAWK'S UNDERGROUND 2: WORLD DESTRUCTION TOUR

PS2/XB/GC • Activision

**The buzz:** *Tony Hawk's Underground 2* is keeping skateboarding light, destructive, and fun. The story mode has you globe-trotting to the tune of wanton destruction. Classic mode brings back old-school goals, levels, and the 2-minute timer. Those addicted to the *Tony Hawk* formula should be pleased with the numerous additions.

**What could go wrong?** Wrong? That's a relative word when it comes to this

series. Maybe the levels won't be classic. Maybe the developer will run out of ideas...or maybe not. Says developer Neversoft President Joel Jewett: "Now every year we just wanna keep it fresh. We listen to everybody out there who's playing the game." By listening to fans and keeping tabs on the skateboarding world, the ideas keep coming. Unless you're burned out on the series, chances are you'll have a good time here.

—Greg Ford



■ Uh-oh. Better get Maaco.

## CRASH 'N' BURN

PS2/XB • Eidos

**The buzz:** If rubbin' is racin', then expect a lot of irritation after touring the *Crash 'n' Burn* circuit. And forget about always taking the checkered flag—it's hard enough just keeping your vehicle in one piece with oil slicks and flaming car parts littering the track.

The metal gets even more twisted online, as the game will support up to 16 drivers on both PS2 and Xbox. But the rewards are plenty; victories will earn you additional ways to pimp out your

ride, including new gaudy paint jobs, spoilers, and longer nitrous boosts.

**What could go wrong?** *Burnout 3*, that's what. Gamers may be—pardon the pun—burned out on this type of high-octane racer by the time *Crash 'n' Burn* smashes into your local game store. Also, the latest PS2 entry in the once-popular *Destruction Derby* franchise met with tumbleweeds at retail.

—Bryan Intihar



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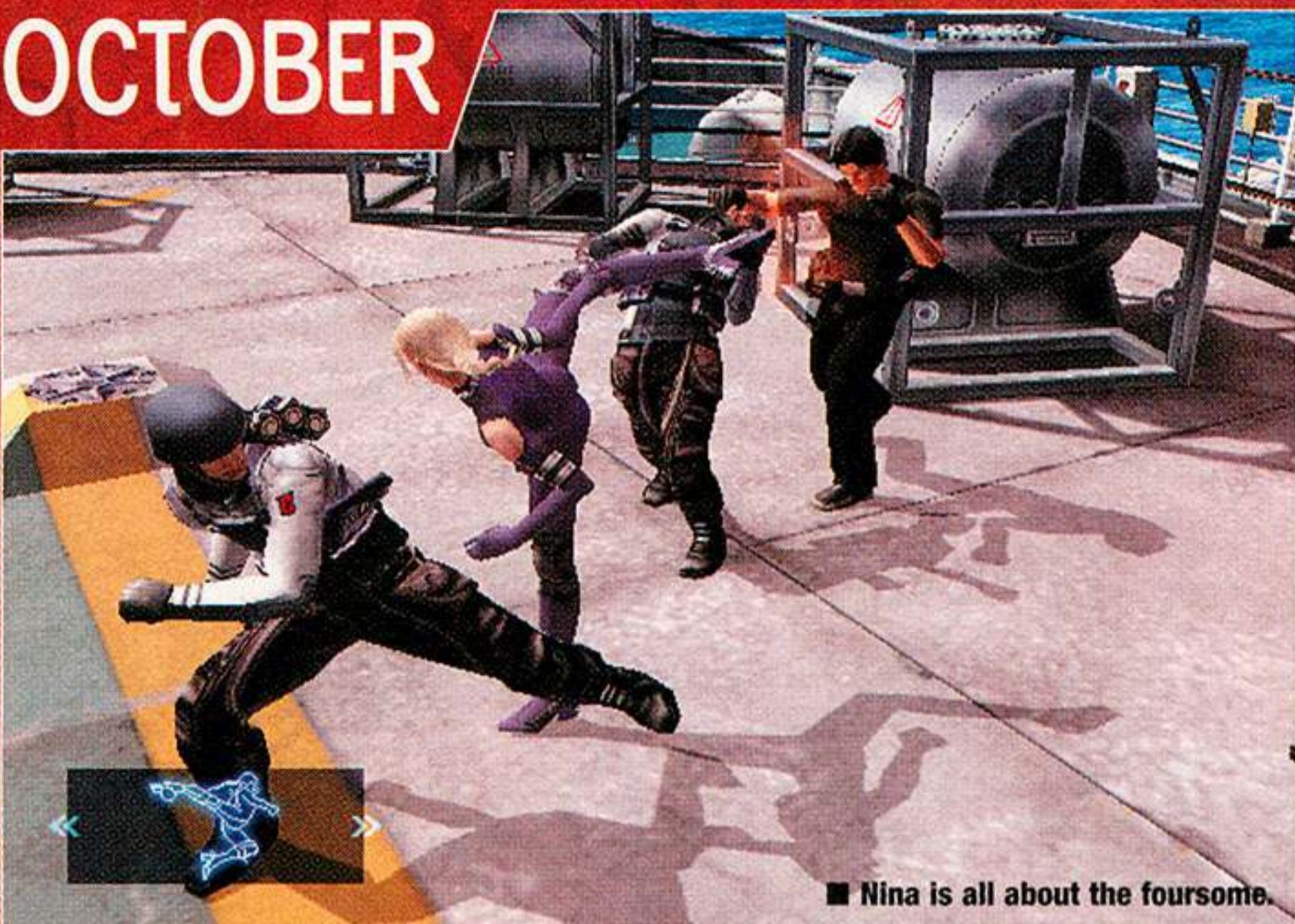
PlayStation 2



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# OCTOBER



■ Nina is all about the foursome



## DEATH BY DEGREES

PS2 • Namco

**The buzz:** *Tekken* starlet Nina Williams strikes in all directions with punishing juggle combos and bone-shattering focused strikes during this simulation of her day job—a stint as a sexy international assassin. The femme fatale gets her spy on by collecting fingerprints and finding other ways to break and enter on a swanky cruise ship. Namco is sure to add at least a few of its skillfully rendered signature cut-scenes for gamers with hungry eyes.

**What could go wrong?** *Death by Degrees* could end up having very cool combat if the dull, stiff enemies get a sizable artificial-intelligence injection before this thing hits shelves. Attacking enemies using only different flicks of the analog stick feels surprisingly sharp, but sketchy adventure sequences and weak side-events could derail the project unless the developers do a 180°.

— Justin Speer

## OTOGI 2: IMMORTAL WARRIORS

XB • Sega

**The buzz:** The original *Otagi* was the coolest game of 2003 that absolutely nobody played—a shockingly beautiful action-adventure steeped in the mythology of ancient Japan. Upping the ante with six unique playable characters, deeper role-playing elements, larger levels that extend high into the sky, and tons of massive bosses, this sequel builds upon every aspect of the debut.

While the gameplay isn't quite as frantic (or difficult) as that of *Ninja Gaiden*,

fans of Ryu's quest will not come away disappointed. The jumping is a little floatier and the girls aren't as buxom, but it's a fine holdover till *Gaiden 2*.

**What could go wrong?** The same tragic fate that met its predecessor could easily happen here: What if Sega released an awesome Xbox game and nobody noticed? Let's hope the company actually gets the word out on this one....

— Shane Bettenhausen

# OCTOBER GALLERIES

ALSO DUE IN OCTOBER



**Conflict: Vietnam**  
PS2/XB • Gathering — In a sea of similar Vietnam shooters, this one, well...is made by the *Conflict: Desert Storm* guys.



**The Incredibles**  
PS2/XB/GC • THQ — Relive your favorite moments from the latest sure-to-be-huge Pixar CG-animated flick.



**Leisure Suit Larry: Manga Cum Laude**  
PS2/XB • VU Games — Get naughty with this lowbrow update to the classically lowbrow PC adventure series.



**Paper Mario 2**  
GC • Nintendo — Everybody's favorite plumber trims down to the second dimension for another role-playing jaunt.



**Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles 2**  
PS2/XB/GC • Konami — The pizza-lovin' amphibians return for another beatdown, this time with four-player action.



**Time Crisis: Crisis Zone**  
PS2 • Namco — Who wants a lightgun when you can have a fully automatic light machine gun?



**Tron 2.0: Killer App**  
XB • Buena Vista — Race light cycles, toss killer discs, and feel your inner geek in this sequel to the cult 1982 flick.



**Ty the Tasmanian Tiger 2: Bush Rescue**  
PS2/XB/GC • EA Games — Boomerangs fly, indigenous animals scurry, and Vegemite gets consumed in this sequel.



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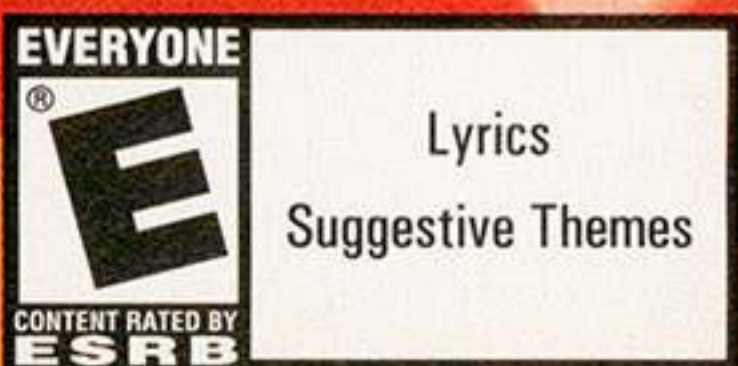
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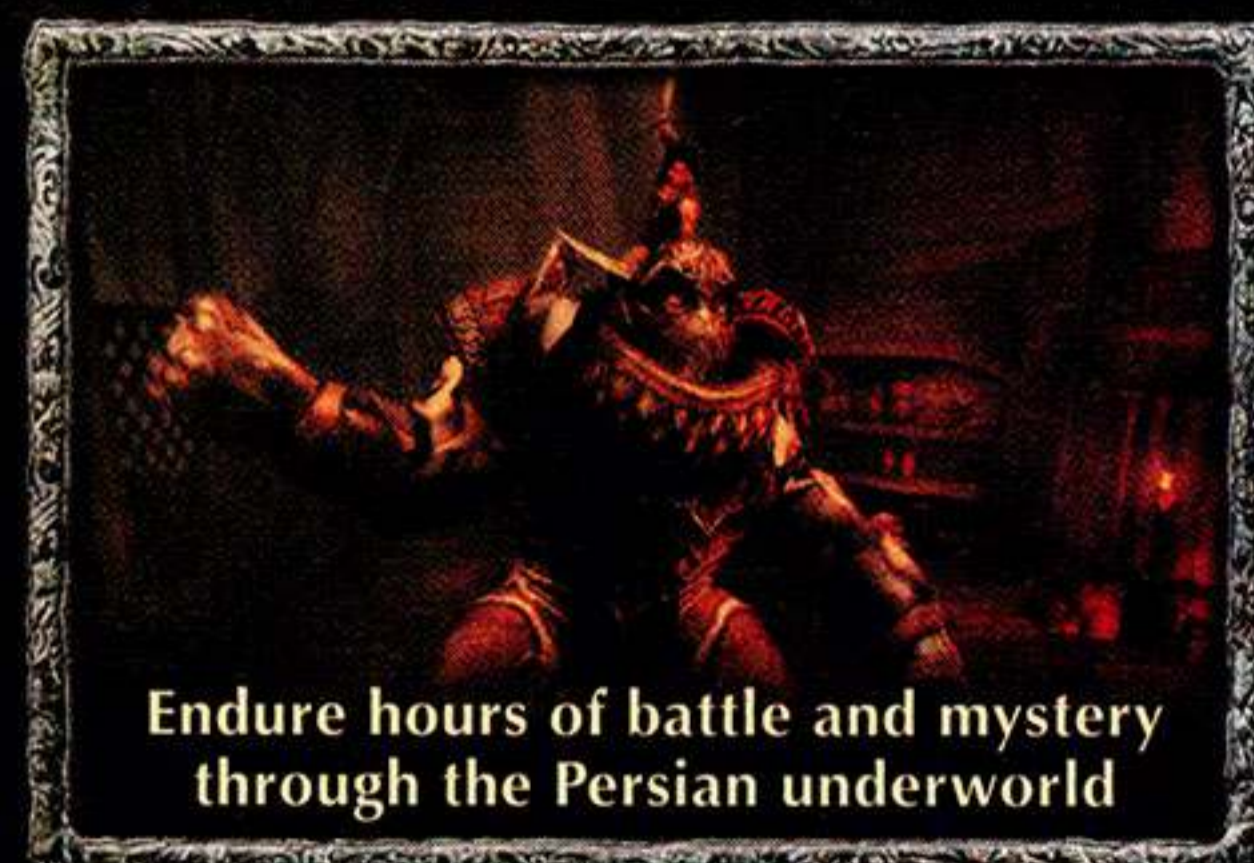
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\*Game of the Year: Academy of Interactive Arts & Sciences, U.S. Official PlayStation Magazine, Electronic Gaming Monthly, Official Xbox Magazine (Staff Pick), PSE2

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# NOVEMBER





### Instant Replay

No one saw when you jumped off that rock 15 feet into the air, killed two red guys midflight, and then landed on a third? Good thing you recorded it. A disabled option in the early version of *Halo 2* we played read "Saved Films." Though Microsoft wouldn't confirm it, a spokesperson hinted that you might be able to record games to your Xbox hard drive to watch later.



## HALO 2

XB • Microsoft

**The buzz:** A word of advice to the Kerry and Bush campaigns: Forget the soccer moms and NASCAR dads—the voters you should be courting this November are the *Halo* gamers.

Consider the facts: Almost 3 million Americans bought the original sci-fi first-person shooter—that's *six times* the difference in the popular vote of the last presidential election. These are passionate supporters; just take a look at all the *Halo* novels, toys, fan-fiction, artwork, films, costumes, and message boards devoted to even the most obscure bits of *Halo* trivia. Big-name celebrities like Justin Timberlake and Julia Roberts support the cause, publicly pledging their love for the Xbox's best-selling game. And with the sequel's November 9 release date (*Halo 2*esday, let's call it) just a scant four days after the election, the *Halo*-gamer demographic shares many of the same concerns as the rest of the country this fall. For example:

**Unite the people:** In the case of *Halo 2*, via Xbox Live for 16-player online battles (with as many as four playing online from a single Xbox) with added weapons and vehicles, plus game modes both old (deathmatch, capture the flag, kill the man with the ball) and new (like one where you try and plant a bomb in the enemy's base).

But just as interesting as what you get online is how you'll get it—*Halo 2* uses a clever new method to replicate a decidedly simple, old-fashioned style of game. "One of the most popular things [about

*Halo*] was the System Link LAN games," says Brian Jarrard, community manager at developer Bungie. "We wanted to recreate that experience on Xbox Live...to be able to pretend like you're in the same room [with your buddies]."

Enter *Halo 2*'s party system. Once friends (up to 15 of them) accept an invite to join your party, they are "attached" to you. If you join a game, they join with you. If you move to another game, they move with you. If you turn off your Xbox, leadership automatically transfers to the next party member. Basically, if you want to play with your friends all night, you play with your friends all night—no multiple invites, text messaging, or phone calls necessary.

**A fair shake for the haves and have-nots:** Simplicity is the driving force behind another of *Halo 2*'s breaks with online tradition. Instead of scrolling through a massive list of different games to join, you give a vague game type you are looking for (say, a large team game or a capture the flag match), and the game sets you up with opponents automatically. "There's no scrolling through 30,000 games," says Jarrard. "The whole system is meant to be, 'I want to play with my buddies, I want to hop in a game now, I want to do that quickly.'" And since *Halo 2* chooses opponents based on their relative connection speeds and skill levels, this also allows the game to maintain a detailed ranking system that actually means something. Level 40 veteran players won't gain any points by

■ Charlie Heston would be proud: *Halo 2* lets you separately control two guns at once.







■ When online, hold the White button to chat with your team or speak normally for everyone nearby to hear (in this case, the sound of the red flag-carrier laughing).



### Ready, Headset, Go!

This fancy *Halo 2* edition headset will sell for \$50 this October. It worked fine in our playtest, but not \$50 fine, if you know what we mean.



▶ beating up on wide-eyed level 5 newbies because *Halo 2* will never pit them against one another. But Bungie also supports a gamer's right to choose—players are always free to create their own nonranked games to fight whomever they want with whatever settings they desire (and as in the original *Halo*, they are plentiful).

**A vision for the future:** Rounding out *Halo 2*'s ambitious online design is the promise of extra downloadable content down the line. "It's not just about downloading a couple of things here and there," says Bungie Studio Manager Pete Parsons. "Once *Halo 2* is on Xbox

Live, we want to always keep it fresh and cool and changing for our fans."

**Terrorism:** The bad guys in *Halo 2* are a band of religious fanatics (a league of alien races known as the Covenant) attacking our homeland (Earth), bent on destroying our way of life (well, the entire human race, actually). Sound familiar? Amidst all the multiplayer hoopla, let's not forget it was primarily the incredible A.I. and breathtaking indoor/outdoor environments of the single-player game that made the original *Halo* such a hit. Unfortunately, the notoriously secretive crew at Bungie is protecting the solo-campaign

details like a mama bear with her cub. "The Covenant attack on and Master Chief's defense of Earth are the central parts of the story," says Cinematics

and Bungie's promise to rebalance weapons (make the needler more powerful, the pistol and rocket launcher less so) and nix the repeating level bits that

**"We want to always keep Halo 2 fresh and cool and changing."**

—Bungie Studio Manager Pete Parsons

Director Joe Staten, "and that's about all we can say there."

**What could go wrong?** We already know multiplayer kicks major behind,

marred the first game makes us optimistic about solo play. Honestly, the biggest question might be whether they can press enough copies by November 9 to satisfy demand.—Mark MacDonald

## THINGS THAT MAKE YOU GO BOOM

A few of the new weapons you'll see in *Halo 2*. And yes, that was a C+C Music Factory reference you just read.



### Brute Shot

An alien grenade launcher. "It's a fun explosive weapon, between a rocket launcher and a grenade," says Community Manager Brian Jarrard. "Something you can use to shoot around corners—that sort of thing."



### Covenant Carbine

Basically, it's the alien equivalent of the human battle rifle (which in turn is an upgraded version of *Halo*'s assault rifle). The carbine features a high rate of fire and a scope for more precise zoomed-in shots.



### Particle Beam Rifle

Also known as the Covenant sniper rifle, this rail-gun-type weapon can zoom in at two different levels and packs an extremely powerful punch. Just don't get caught with one in a close-quarters fight.



### Energy Sword

Bring a knife to a gunfight? Sure, when it can kill in a single hit. Hold your crosshair over a target long enough to unleash a deadly charge attack. "The sword is very fun to kill with," says Jarrard. "Very satisfying."



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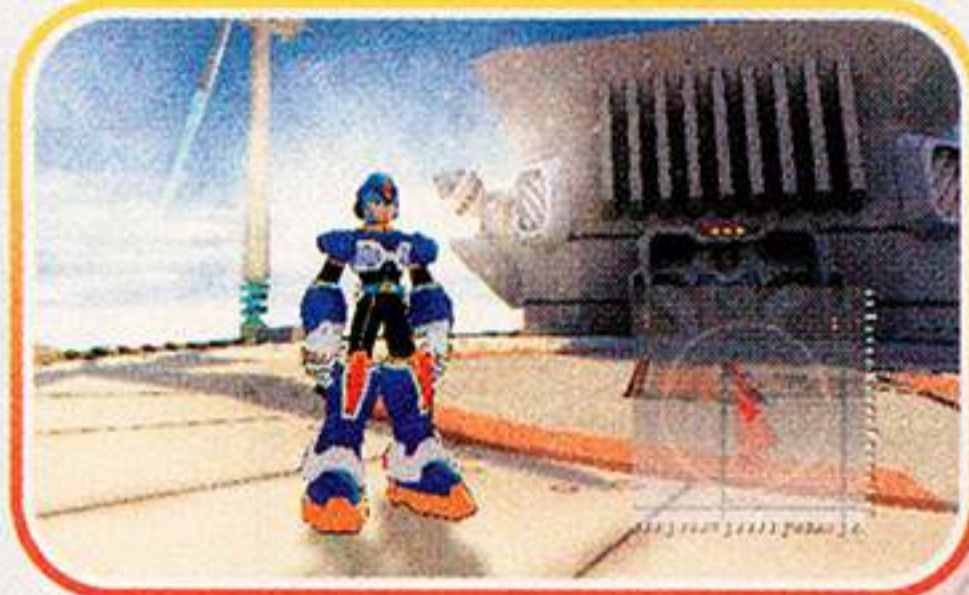
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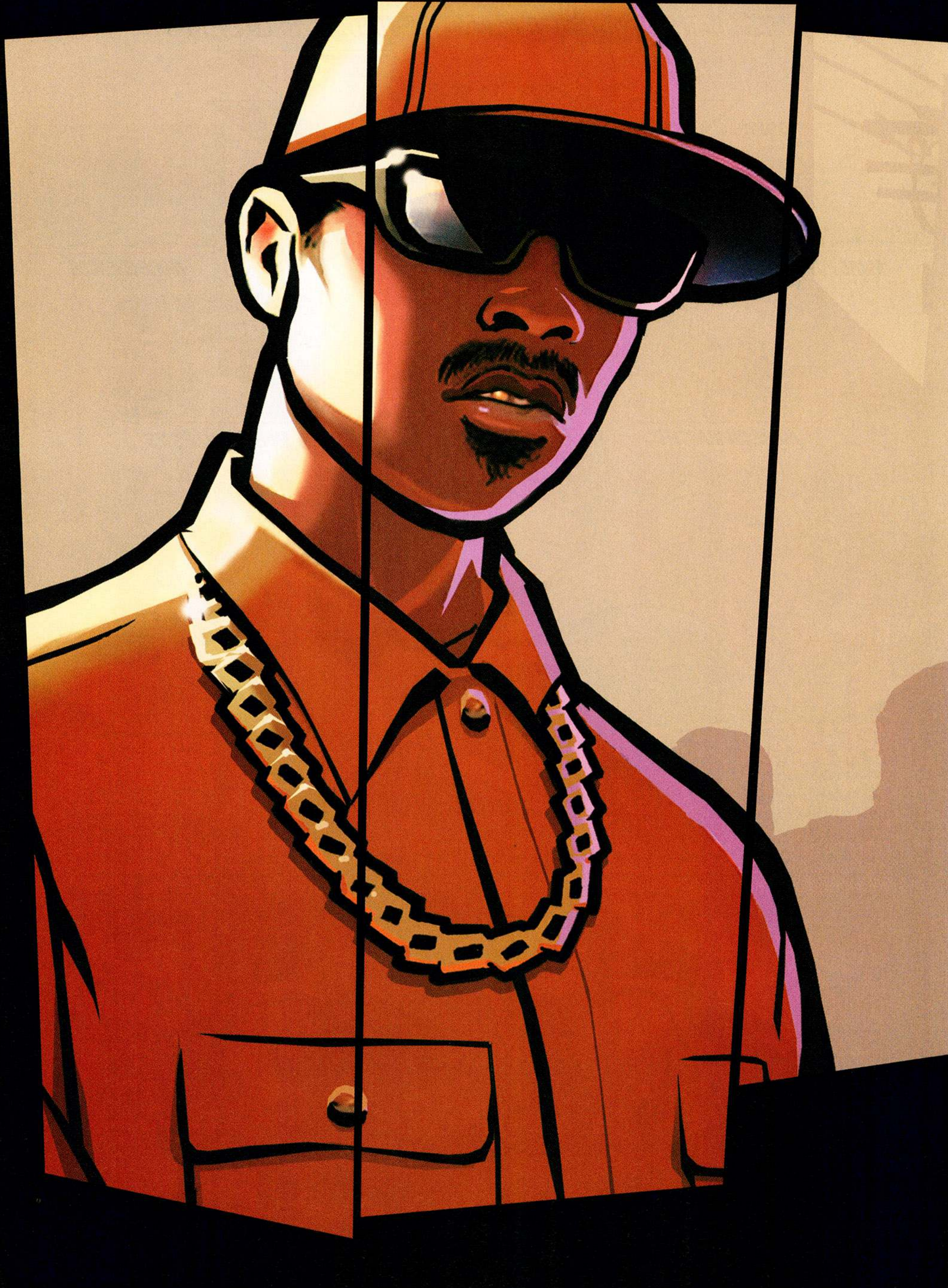
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# NOVEMBER



## GOLDENEYE: ROGUE AGENT

PS2/XB/GC • EA Games

**The buzz:** Any game with Pussy Galore in it is an immediate buy among the randier members of *EGM's* staff, but first-person-shooter nuts should keep an eye on this one simply for its bizarre take on the *Bond* universe.

You're a failed secret agent who joins Goldfinger's army as he wages war against Dr. No for control of the underworld, and your methods—shooting grenades out of enemies' hands, spilling gasoline on the floor and lighting a

match—are nothing short of villainous.

**What could go wrong?** *GoldenEye's* name was obviously inspired by the original *GoldenEye 007*, a classic Nintendo 64 shooter that sold more than 5 million copies in the U.S. alone. Whether *Rogue Agent* will transcend the first *GoldenEye*, though, is still up in the air—remember, this one's from the same studio that gave us the lackluster *Medal of Honor: Rising Sun* last year. —Kevin Gifford

■ These Urbz chug-a-lug to better face city life.



## THE URBZ: SIMS IN THE CITY

PS2/XB/GC • EA Games

**The buzz:** Apparently, Mom was wrong—what people think of you does matter. At least it does in the latest console version of life simulator *The Sims*, where the game is now all about building a hip reputation across town. Will you have the hippest jobs, coolest clothes, and wickedest tattoos? Can you break out of the hood and get your face on T-shirts, billboards, and JumboTrons throughout the city? Or will people laugh in your face when you try to bust out

your power dance moves? Such are the trials and tribulations of a Sim in the city.

**What could go wrong?** *The Urbz* has a revamped motives system, so it should be less tedious maintaining your Sim's hunger, energy, hygiene, etc. If the new formula gels, this could be the version that wins over new hordes of console gamers. If it doesn't, the console audience could dwindle.

—Jennifer Tsao

■ This suitable-for-framing art heralds the return of Samus' famous Screw Attack, allowing her to smash through obstacles and spin to otherwise unreachable areas.



## METROID PRIME 2: ECHOES

GC • Nintendo

**The buzz:** "Please don't call it a first-person shooter," producer Kensuke Tanabe reminds us, after yet another member of the press refers to *Metroid Prime 2* as a FPS. "It's a FPA—first-person adventure."

As anyone who played the original *Prime* can tell you, it's an important distinction—everything from the one-of-a-kind control setup to the platformer-style

level design reflects *Metroid's* traditional emphasis on puzzle-solving and exploration. In *Echoes* players will have twice the ground to cover, as they bounce back and forth between light and dark versions of the planet Aether, killing enemies and grabbing items unique to each. At least two new weapons (Light and Dark Beams, naturally) should come in handy, as well

as new "visor" vision filters, including one that detects sound (which ties into the *Echoes* subtitle nicely). Other changes? "We're trying to make the environments larger," says Mark Pacini, director at developer Retro studios, "and we're [devoting] an extensive amount of time to the cinematics, to infuse *Prime 2* with more of a cohesive story."

**What could go wrong?** We're not worried about the undoubtedly great single-player experience, but the new multiplayer combat seems sketchy. The grapple beam and ability to morph into a ball promise something different, but with the game's "unique" control setup and lack of online play, will anyone care?

—Mark MacDonald



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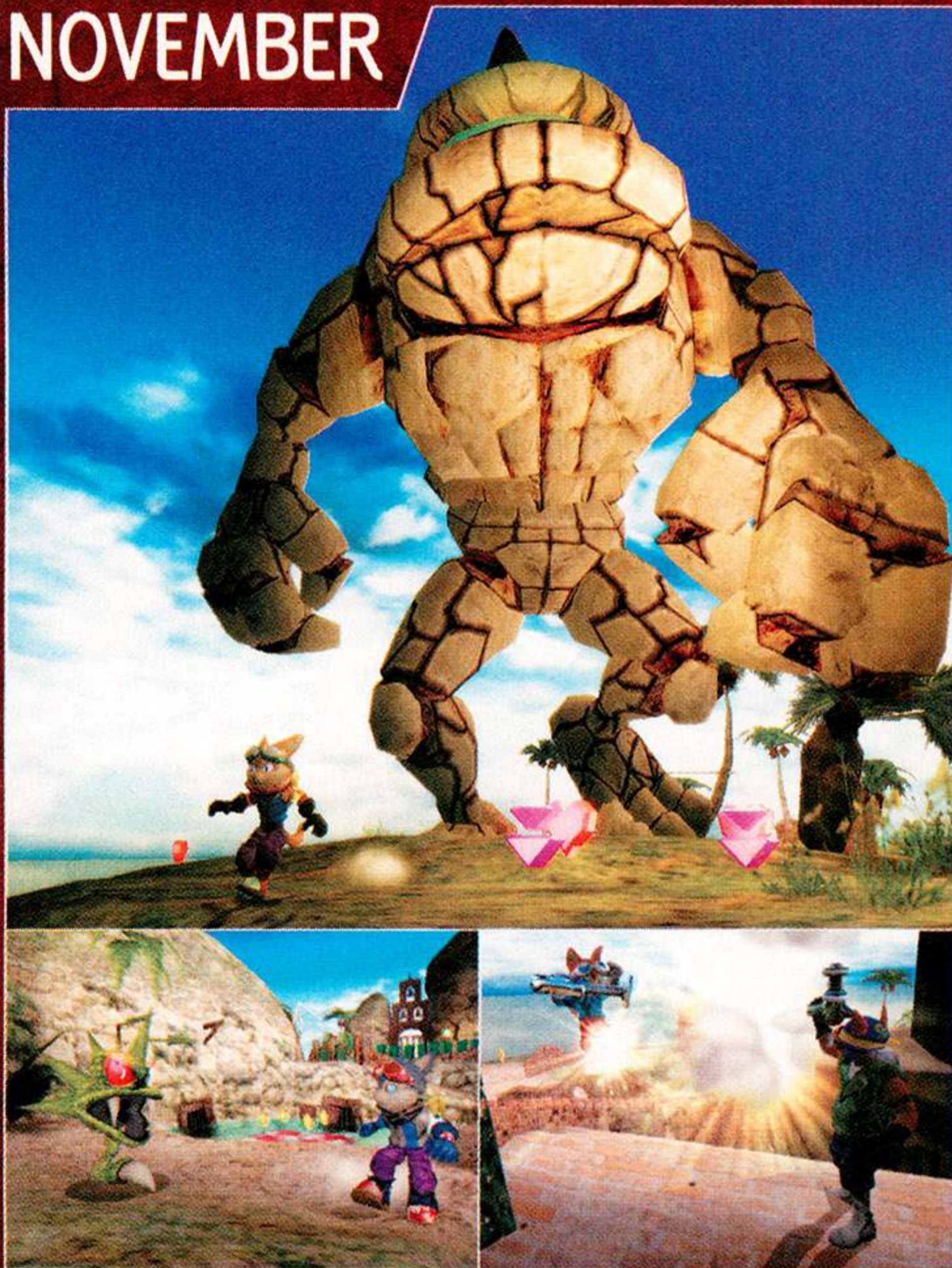
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# NOVEMBER



## BLINX 2: MASTERS OF TIME & SPACE

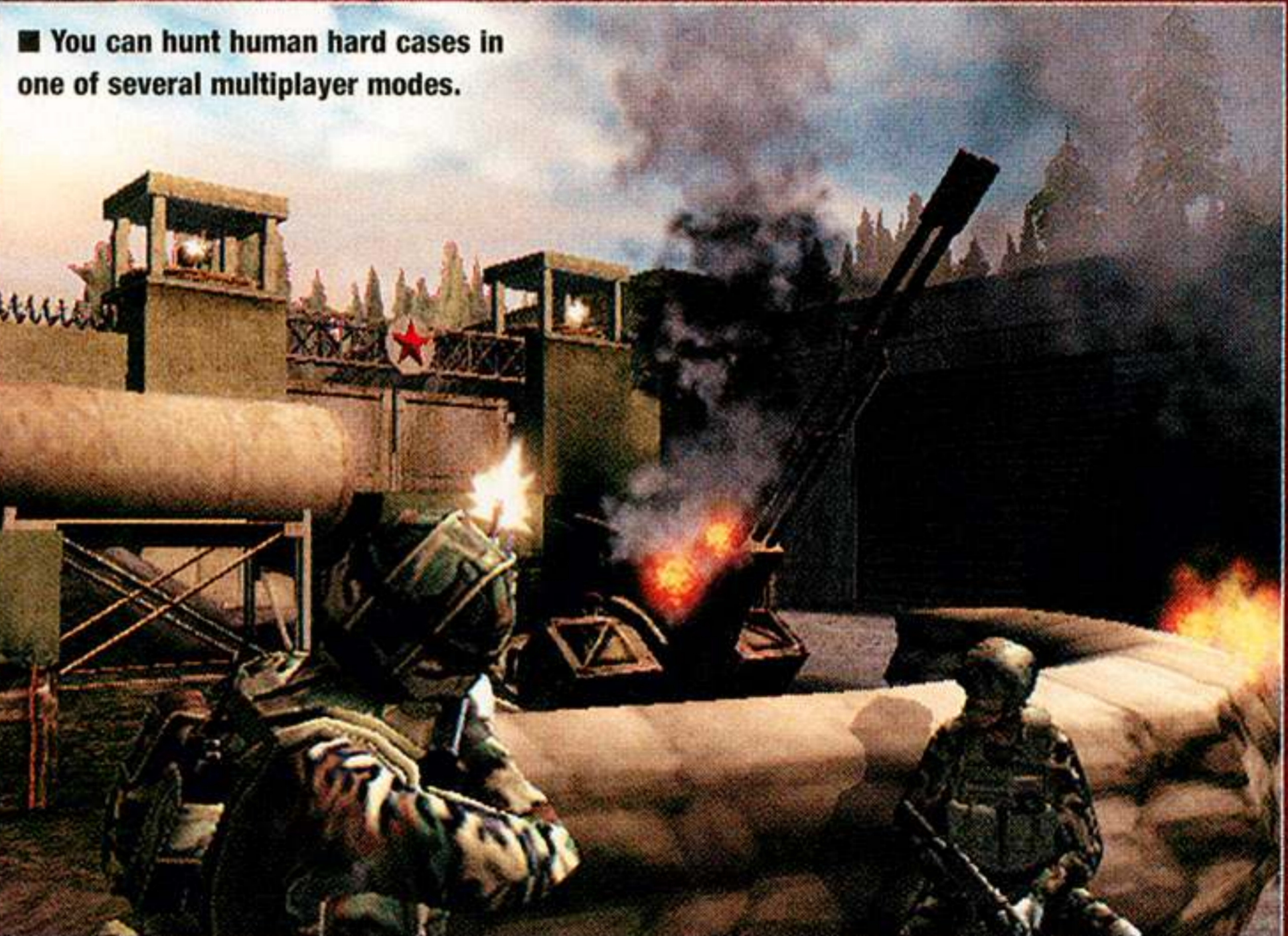
XB • Microsoft

**The buzz:** Xbox fanboys saw 2002's *Blinx: The Time Sweeper* as the cutesy platformer that would send systems flying off shelves and prove that Mario was more old hat than Pogs. Things didn't quite work out that way for Microsoft's 'tude-ridden, time-controlling cat, but this sequel seems to address nearly all of the first *Blinx*'s major faults.

The basic idea's unchanged—hip feline messes around with the fourth dimension to help defeat evil (but really misunderstood) space pigs—but the gameplay receives a major refit. "We revamped the inventory system, made Blinx walk faster, gave him more animations than before, created larger worlds, and expanded [the] story line," explains Director Naoto Oshima. "But we didn't

stop there: We're also adding a second playable race, the Tom Toms, and multiplayer action." These lanky hogs screw around with space, opening warp escapes and putting Bugs Bunny-style portable holes on the floor—making combat versus the cats an all-out special-effects war.

**What could go wrong?** The single-player experience looks like a step up from the original, and the multiplayer action offers tons of originality...but wait, you can't play it over Xbox Live. Huh? "We carefully examined legal, marketing, and development considerations but ultimately decided not to include Xbox Live in *Blinx 2*," says Oshima. Seems like a bad move to us.... —Kevin Gifford



■ You can hunt human hard cases in one of several multiplayer modes.

■ Who needs friends? Take on the enemy solo in the new Lone Wolf mode.

## GHOST RECON 2

PS2/XB/GC • Ubisoft

**The buzz:** Christian Allen cringes when we drill him about *Ghost Recon 2*'s plot and the North Korean newspaper column that called it "propaganda." "They accused us of warmongering and said we'd die gruesome deaths," claims the lead designer. The story that started the saber rattling: An insidious general seizes control of the communist Korea, and the U.S. military

must defuse the disaster. Uncle Sam gives you the tools—an assortment of peacemakers, including the Army's M8 prototype assault rifle, and a squad to push around—but leaves the tactics up to you. Sometimes issuing a simple, context-sensitive command is all it takes. Other circumstances call for more complex procedures, and you'll want to

use either your headset or secondary menu to have, for instance, half of your squad put suppressing fire on one flank of an enemy position while you sneak to the other side with your sniper. "Not only can you give your guys more orders than was possible in past *Ghost Recon*s, but the interface itself is more accessible and intuitive," says Allen.

**What could go wrong?** Bland and blocky scenery didn't ruin previous *Ghost* missions, but it sure curbed the realism. The good news: *GR2* ramps it up with graphics that rival the gorgeous *Rainbow Six 3*'s, as well as a snazzy new over-the-shoulder view of the action. Hopefully, *GR2* won't get lost in the shooter-heavy shuffle this fall. —Shawn Elliott



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# NOVEMBER



## RATCHET & CLANK: UP YOUR ARSENAL

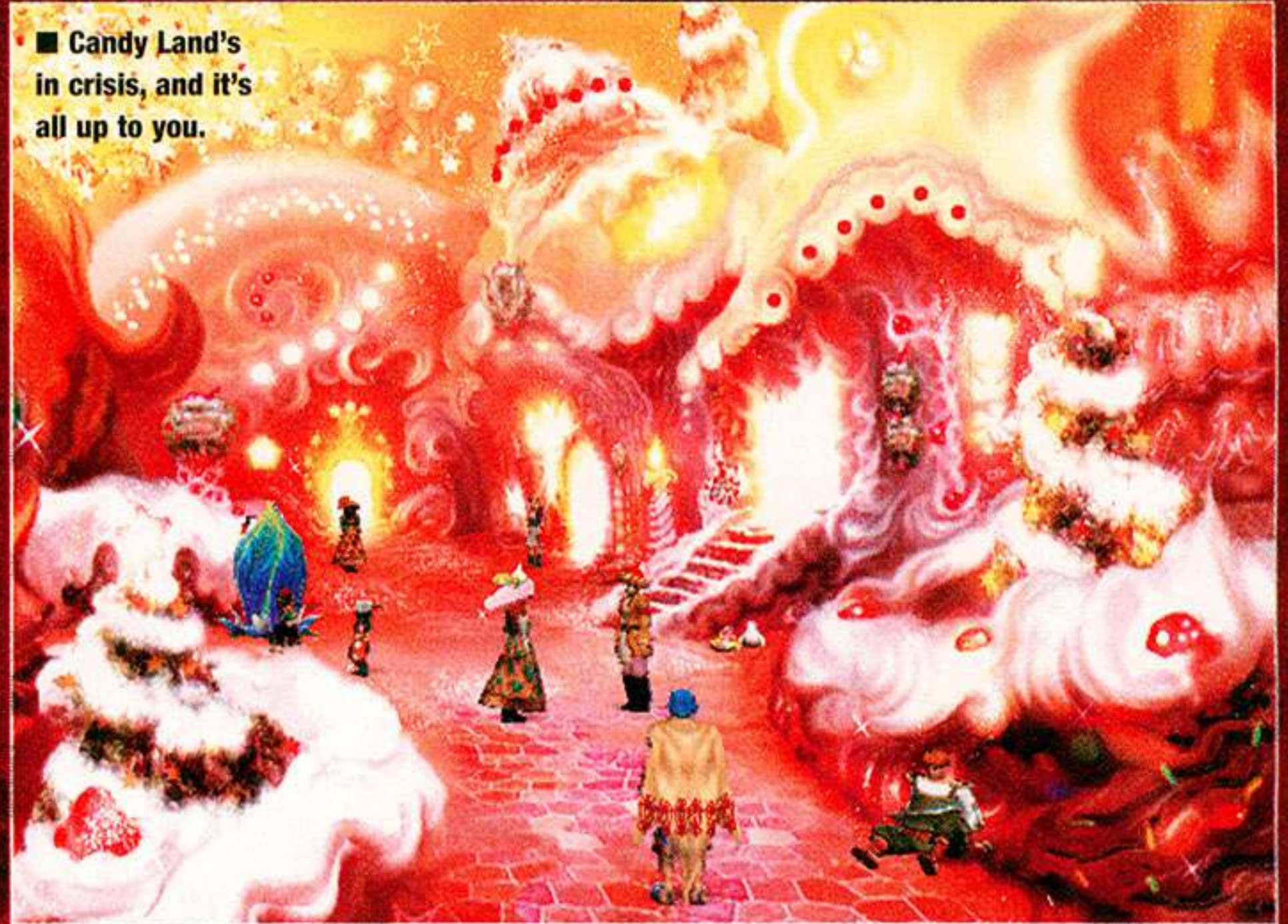
PS2 • Sony CEA

**The buzz:** Talk about being over-worked—Ratchet and his pint-sized metallic mate Clank will star in their third platformer in as many years. And aside from zanier weapons and more upgrades, look for Clank to take a more active role in this romp through the galaxy. But the biggest change by far is the addition of multiplayer. Developer Insomniac has stayed up all hours of the night to include both four-player offline and eight-player online action with

modes such as deathmatch, capture the flag, and siege (two teams battle for control of each other's base). It'll even support full stat tracking and the formation of clans. So frag away!

**What could go wrong?** With such a short development cycle and the new emphasis on multiplayer, we hope the single-player campaign will still blow our pants off like *Going Commando* did.

—Bryan Intihar



■ Candy Land's in crisis, and it's all up to you.

## BATEN KAITOS

GC • Namco

**The buzz:** Namco recently proved that "GameCube" and "role-playing" don't have to be mutually exclusive with the excellent *Tales of Symphonia*. Get ready for another round of magic and monsters with *Kaitos*, an epic adventure that takes place across a world made up of giant airborne islands. The story line, characters, and dungeons sparkle with old-school RPG charm, but the game's inventive battle system dares to make card-based combat fast, fun, and simple.

Also, you might notice that *Kaitos* feels a bit like a pseudosequel to Square's PS1 hit *Chrono Cross*...not too surprising since the games share the same director and scenario writer.

**What could go wrong?** The confusing name certainly won't do the game any favors (Baten Kaitos is a dying star in the Cetus constellation), nor will the hand-drawn 2D backdrops in dungeons and towns.

—Shane Bettenhausen

## METAL GEAR SOLID 3: SNAKE EATER

PS2 • Konami

**The buzz:** It's *Metal Gear Solid*, only in lush outdoor environments and with promises that the guy you see in the screenshots really is the hero of the game. Oh, and it's set in the past: "Since I was born in the '60s, I still have memories of this time period from my early childhood," says head *MGS* honcho Hideo Kojima. "However, we did our fair share of research during the development process, incorporating real historical events and information." It also apparently wraps up the whole *Metal Gear* story line for the time being—according to Kojima, "The *MGS* series has always been planned to be a three-part story."

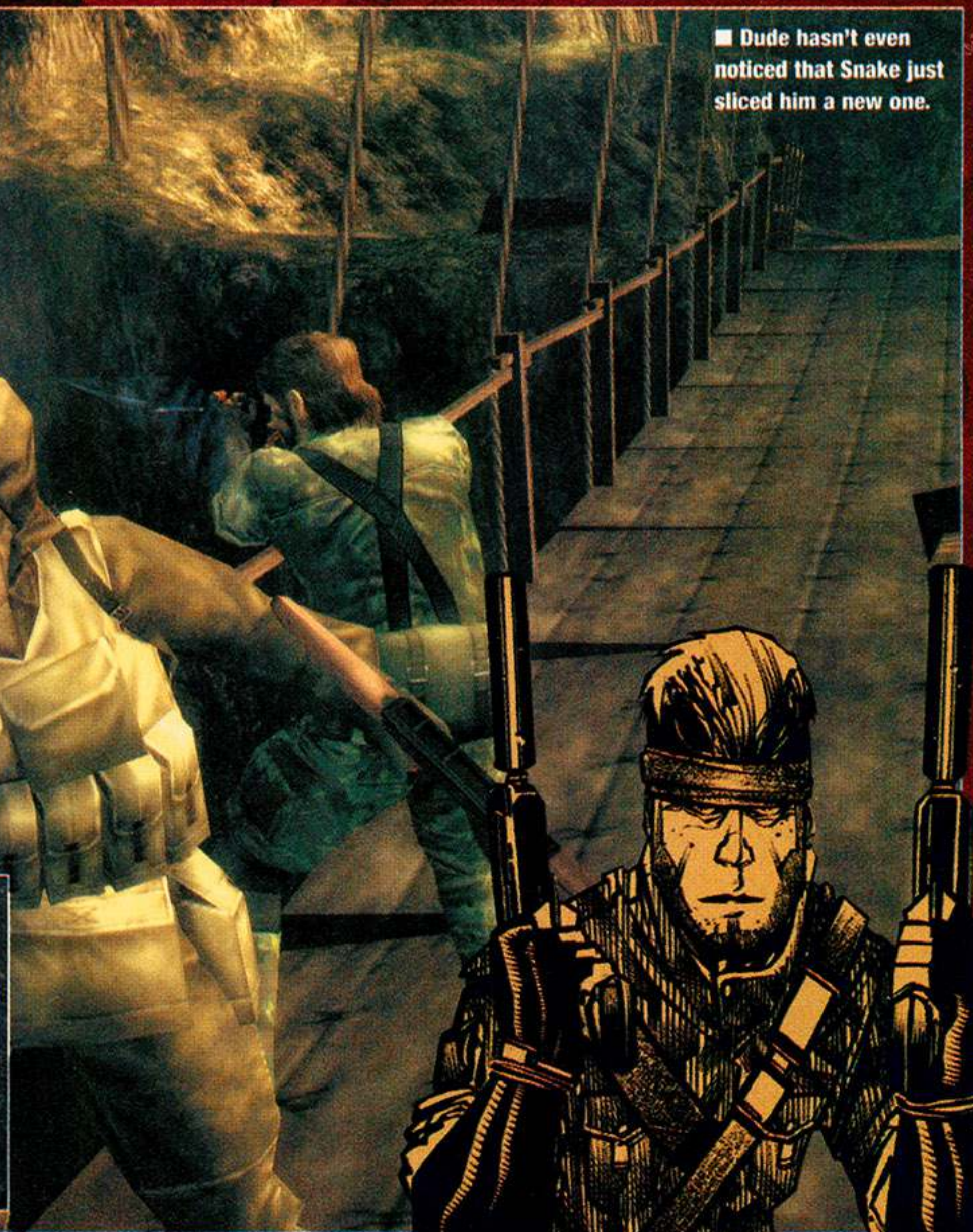
**What could go wrong?** Though the camera is more adjustable than in past games, it might not go far enough for gamers who've been gorging themselves on *Splinter Cell*. "The *MGS* series has always combined first- and third-person view perspectives," says Kojima. "There were benefits to both perspectives that enhanced the overall gameplay, but since 3D games

give me motion sickness...I don't think I will create a first-person shooter myself." Apart from that, the only realistic obstacle is Kojima himself—not many took well to *MGS2*'s convoluted story, and if *Snake Eater* is similarly long winded, word of mouth could be bad.

—Nich Maragos



■ Dude hasn't even noticed that Snake just sliced him a new one.







■ "Stay away from our beloved art installation!"

## THE LORD OF THE RINGS: THE THIRD AGE

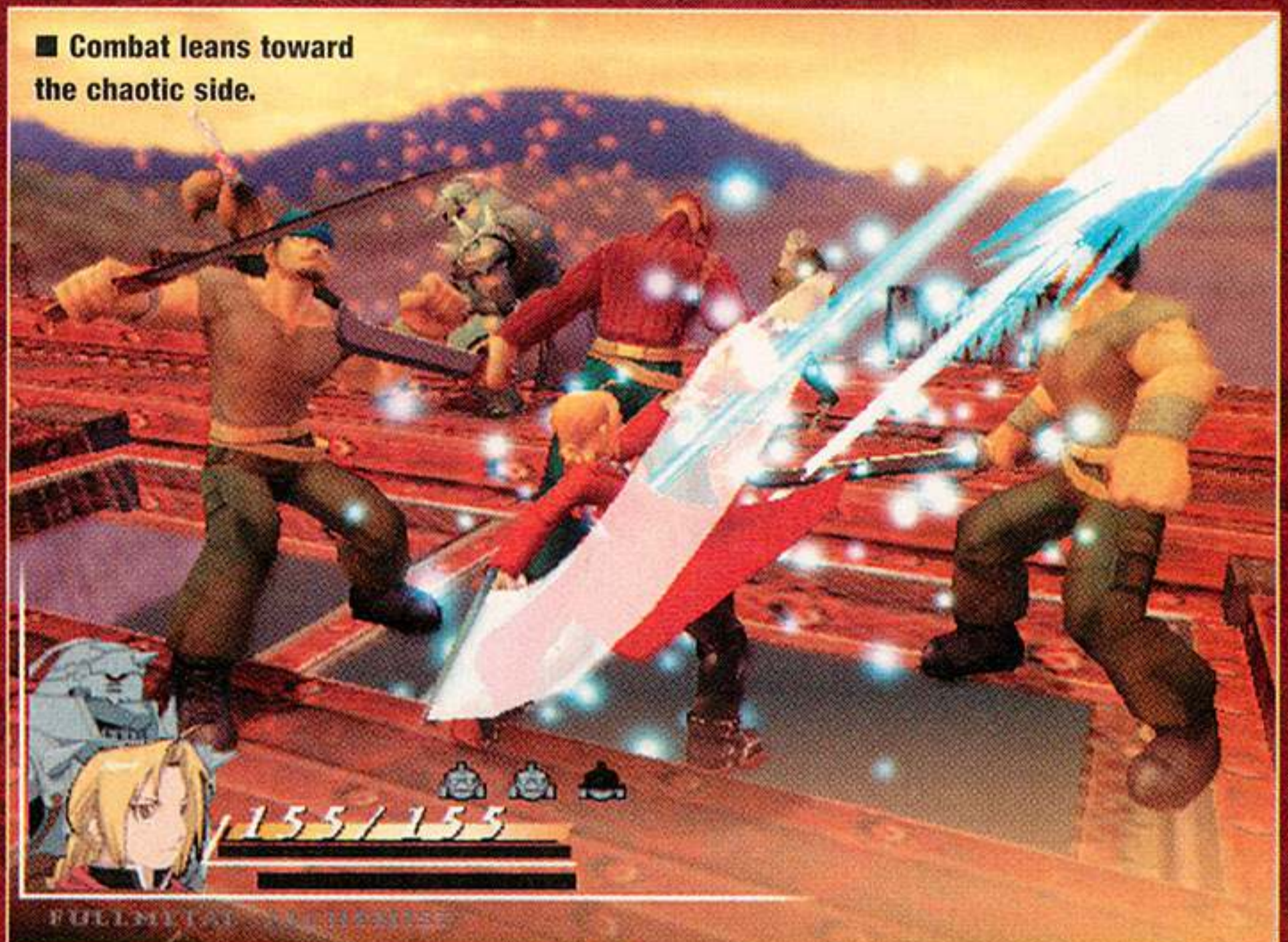
PS2/XB/GC • EA Games

**The buzz:** It's the best of both worlds for EA—another *Lord of the Rings* game to capitalize on the extended edition of *Return of the King* DVD, and a solid RPG underneath to appease the genre fans. *Third Age* will also breathe some fresh life into the *LOTR* gaming canon—EA's previous two hack-a-thons were slick, but a meatier quest seems more in line with the epic feel of the flicks. It's complex enough in its skill and ability trees to reward customization, and it's acces-

sible enough so that you can just play the game if the words "final fantasy" mean nothing to you.

**What could go wrong?** If the words "final fantasy" do mean something to you, there's a chance you might feel that you played this once before when it was called *Final Fantasy X*. Also, the fact that the game's main characters aren't from the movies/books might be a hard sell.

—Nich Maragos



■ Combat leans toward the chaotic side.

## FULLMETAL ALCHEMIST AND THE BROKEN ANGEL

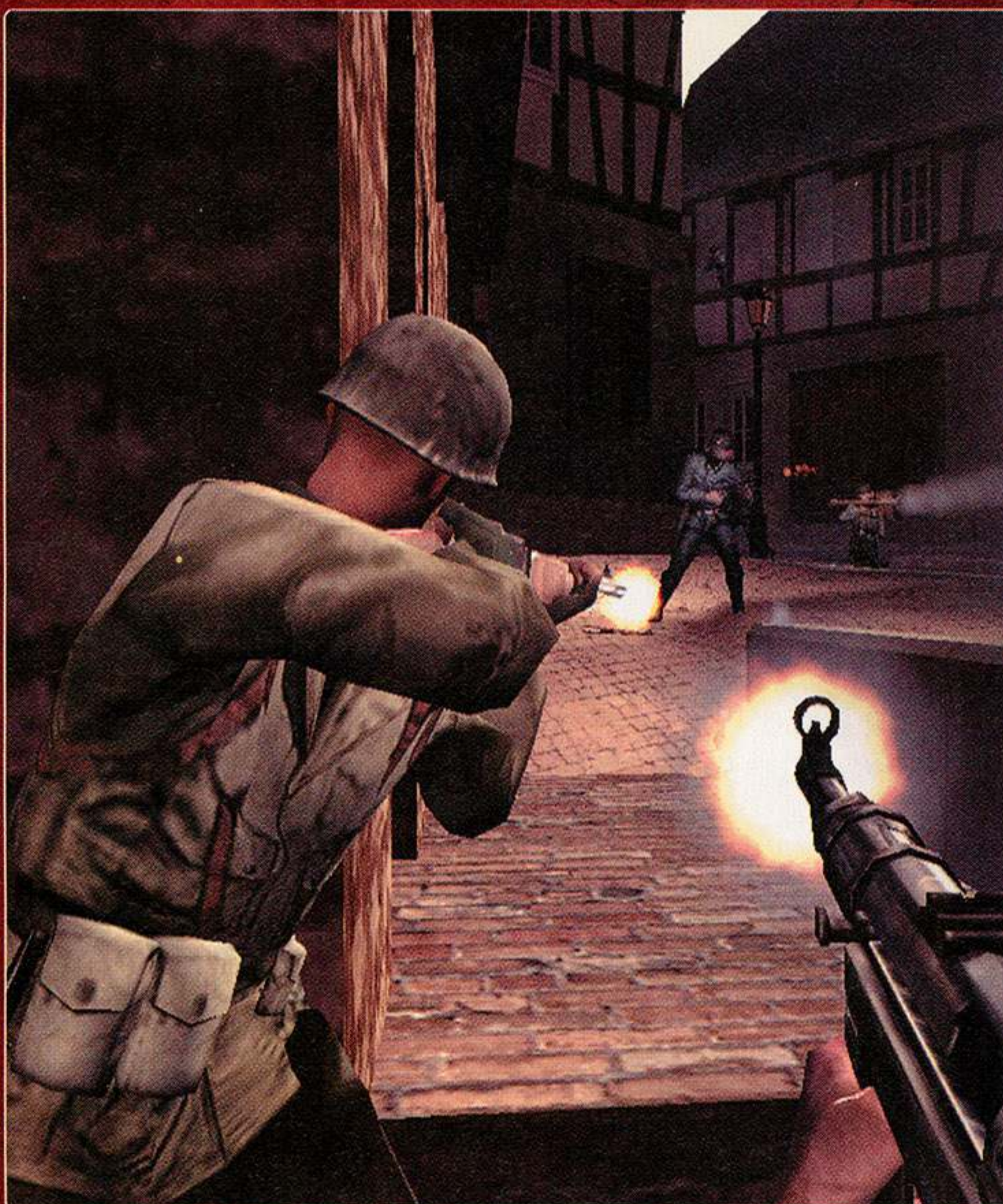
PS2 • Square Enix

**The buzz:** Games based on anime usually run the range between "forgettable" and "God, why," but the originality behind this action-RPG could help it rise above the surface. The premise: Edward, the spiky-haired hero, can use the dark art of alchemy to transform almost anything in the game into something more useful, from pogo sticks to machine-gun turrets. His brother, whose soul's been trapped inside a metallic suit of armor (don't ask), also tags along to help beat on your fight-

er-cum-chemist foes. It'll probably make more sense once Cartoon Network starts showing the anime in October.

**What could go wrong?** A better question could be "Where have anime games gone right?" Whether *Fullmetal Alchemist* manages to be a great game on its own will depend on how engaging it is to nonfans—something few games like this manage very well.

—Kevin Gifford



## CALL OF DUTY: FINEST HOUR

PS2/XB/GC • Activision

**The buzz:** As undeniably daring as D-Day was, fighting on the Eastern Front dwarfed it in sheer scale and sacrifice (several thousand tanks clashed in Kursk, and Stalingrad's infernal cauldron claimed as many as a million casualties). This reworking of the hit PC first-person shooter *Call of Duty* remembers the Reds along with unsung heroes of WWII, including women snipers and the Black Panther Battalion.

But don't fret if you flunked history: *Finest Hour's* curriculum takes a very hands-on approach. "We're delivering the most intense and gritty wartime experi-

ence ever," claims Producer Scott Langteau. "Players will feel like true soldiers, fighting alongside squadmates, taking orders, and simply trying to survive during grueling and harrowing battles."

**What could go wrong?** *Call of Duty* could get lost in the fog of war games, but the PC version inspires confidence. It made you feel as though you were fighting through fluid battlefields rather than moving through mazes, and even its scripted chase scenes were so seamless that you forgot you were on rails. —Shawn Elliott





# NOVEMBER

## JAK 3

PS2 • Sony CEA

**The buzz:** Last year, *Jak II* took the previously cheery action-adventure series in a darker direction by adding a liberal dose of carjacking, heavy ammunition, and rebellious facial hair. This grand experiment wasn't a total success: Frustrating, repetitive missions and uneven difficulty leached much of the game's fun. *Jak III* hopes to perfect the cocktail by properly balancing the challenge and offering more diverse mission types.

Plus, a new setting will make it easier to wash away the ill memories of backtracking through Haven City 6,000 times. In *Jak III*, Jak (and his wiseacre sidekick Daxter) get exiled to a desolate desert

colony, where they must battle renegade road warriors straight outta *Mad Max*. Along the way, he'll uncover secrets of the planet's ancient civilization, realize his own destiny, amass some formidable powers for both his Dark Jak and new Light Jak transformations, and eventually return to a radically altered Haven City to kick the asses of his detractors.

**What could go wrong?** Keep the difficulty in check and things should be fine.

—Shane Bettenhausen

■ What's even more hardcore than a goatee? A bandana covering a goatee.



## DIGITAL DEVIL SAGA: AVATAR TUNER

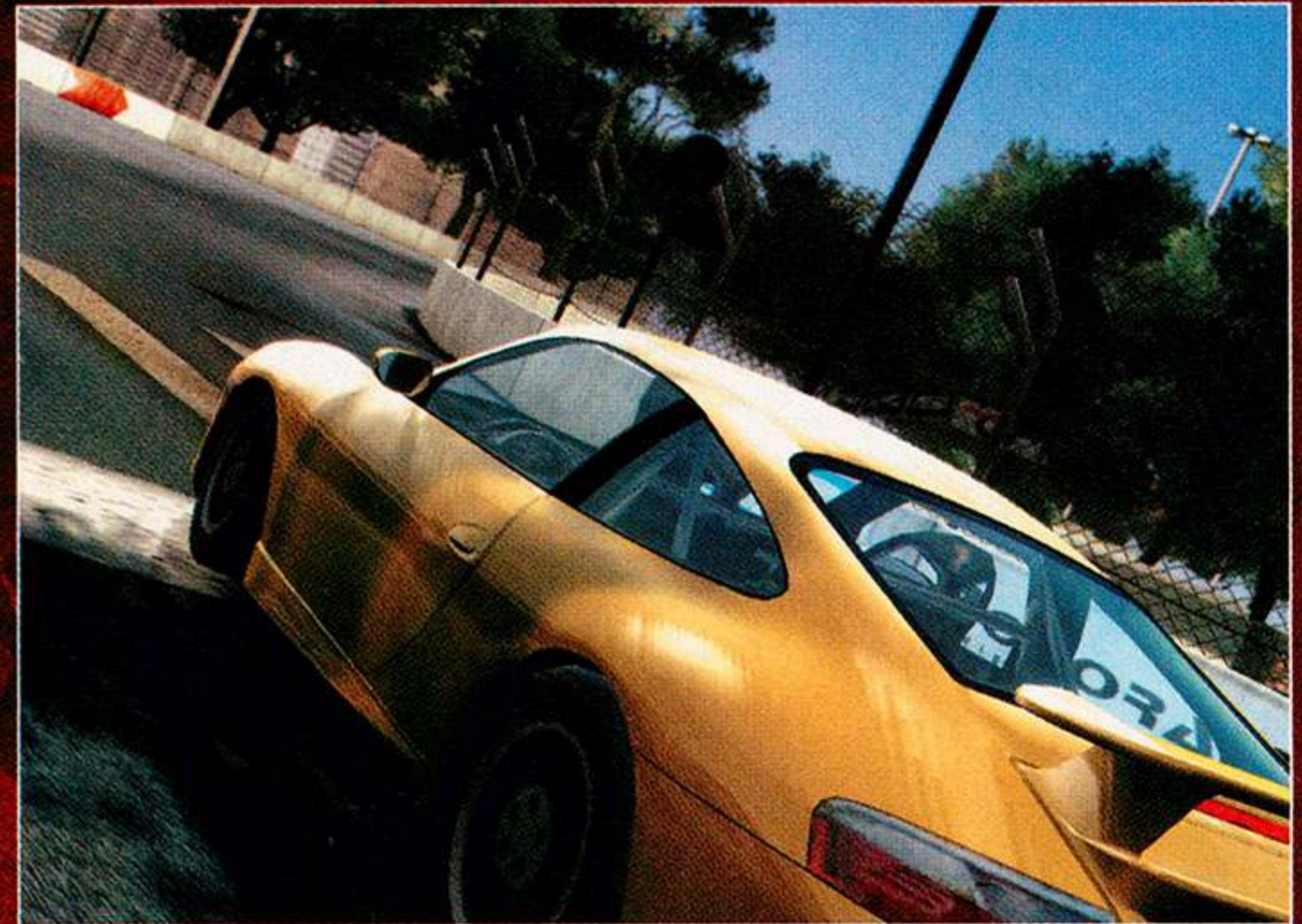
PS2 • Atlus

**The buzz:** This quick follow-up to the PS2 RPG *Shin Megami Tensei: Nocturne* (out in September) adds a big-budget cinematic flavor to the turn-based demonic summoning. Expect lavish cinema sequences (directed by the guy behind the original *Robotech* anime) and full voice acting. The whole package, including the uniquely stylized graphics, makes this the perfect gift for an RPG fan longing for a

game with the high production values that a company like Square Enix usually brings to the table.

**What could go wrong?** Up against an intimidating number of highly anticipated games, *Saga* might be lucky to get the table scraps...and there aren't a lot of scraps when you're sitting at a table this densely populated.

—Nich Maragos



## FORZA MOTORSPORT

XB • Microsoft

**The buzz:** *Gran Turismo* to Microsoft's big black box, *Forza* looks to outrun the competition with the most robust racing engine ever digitized. "There are three core things we aim to deliver with *Forza*," says lead programmer Garrett Young, "realistic graphics, [simulation] physics, and car customization." Based on our test drive, *Forza* is definitely firing on all cylinders—on and off Xbox Live.

**What could go wrong?** *Forza* faces competition from the other titles in Xbox's expansive racing library, and quality doesn't always equate to success—last year's fantastic *Project Gotham Racing 2* withered at retail. And we're a little worried about the Xbox's lack of a good force feedback wheel. Microsoft promises that deals for a quality wheel are definitely in the works.

—Che Chou



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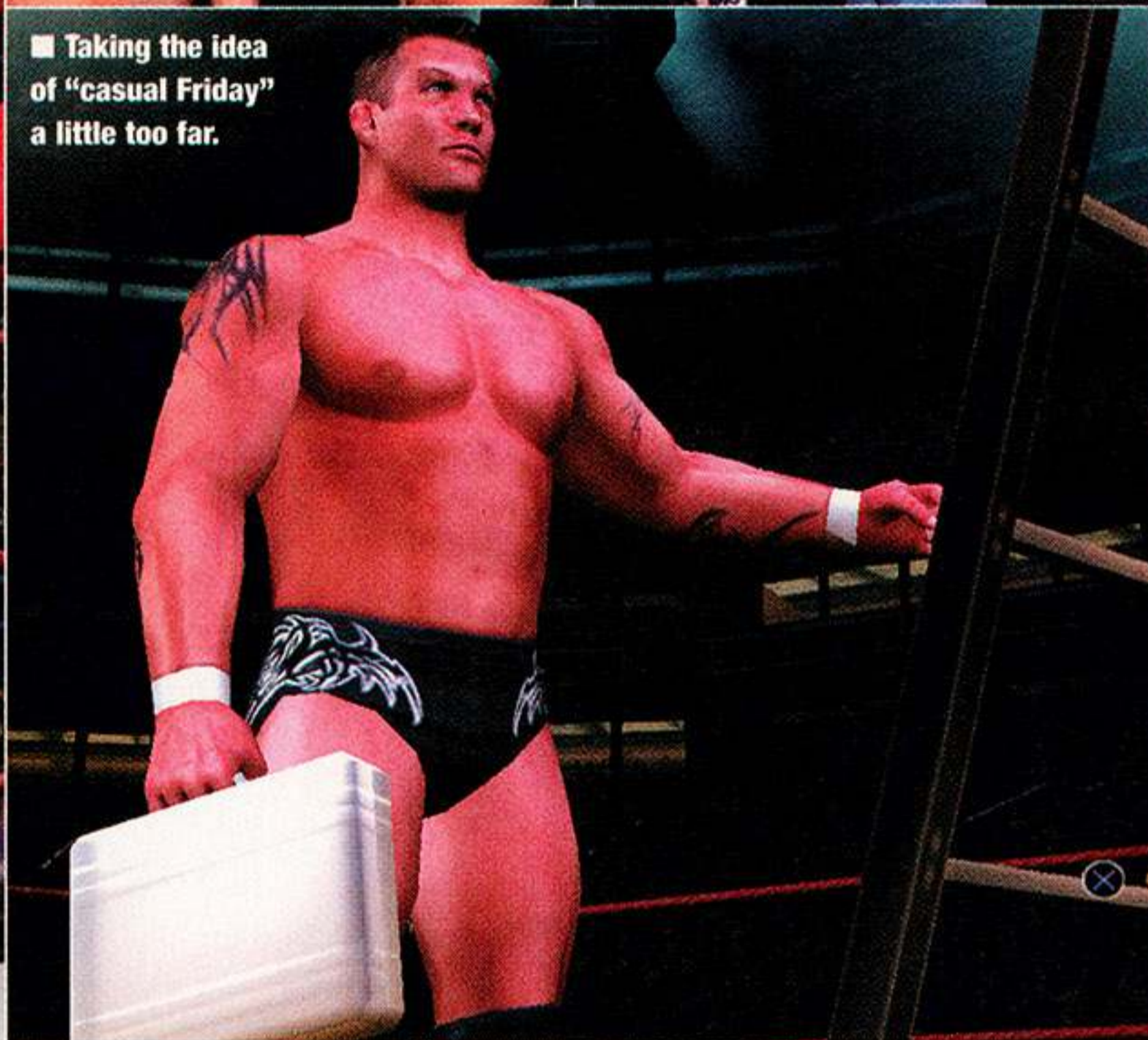
# NOVEMBER



■ That one guy down in front is really digging it.



■ Taking the idea of "casual Friday" a little too far.



## WWE SMACKDOWN! VS. RAW

PS2 • THQ

**The buzz:** THQ's goal with a new *WWE* title is always the same: Make it look and feel just like the televised world of sweaty man-pretzels, half-naked divas, and story lines more risqué than those of *Days of our Lives*. *SmackDown! vs. Raw* is poised to deliver the goods on the PS2 like never before, grappling with some serious game-

play innovations. The changes start in the ring—whether you fight a clean fight or resort to underhanded tactics dramatically affects your wrestler's status—just like on actual *WWE* programming. "If you decide to play dirty, you will then follow the villain path throughout that particular segment of story mode," explains *WWE* product man-

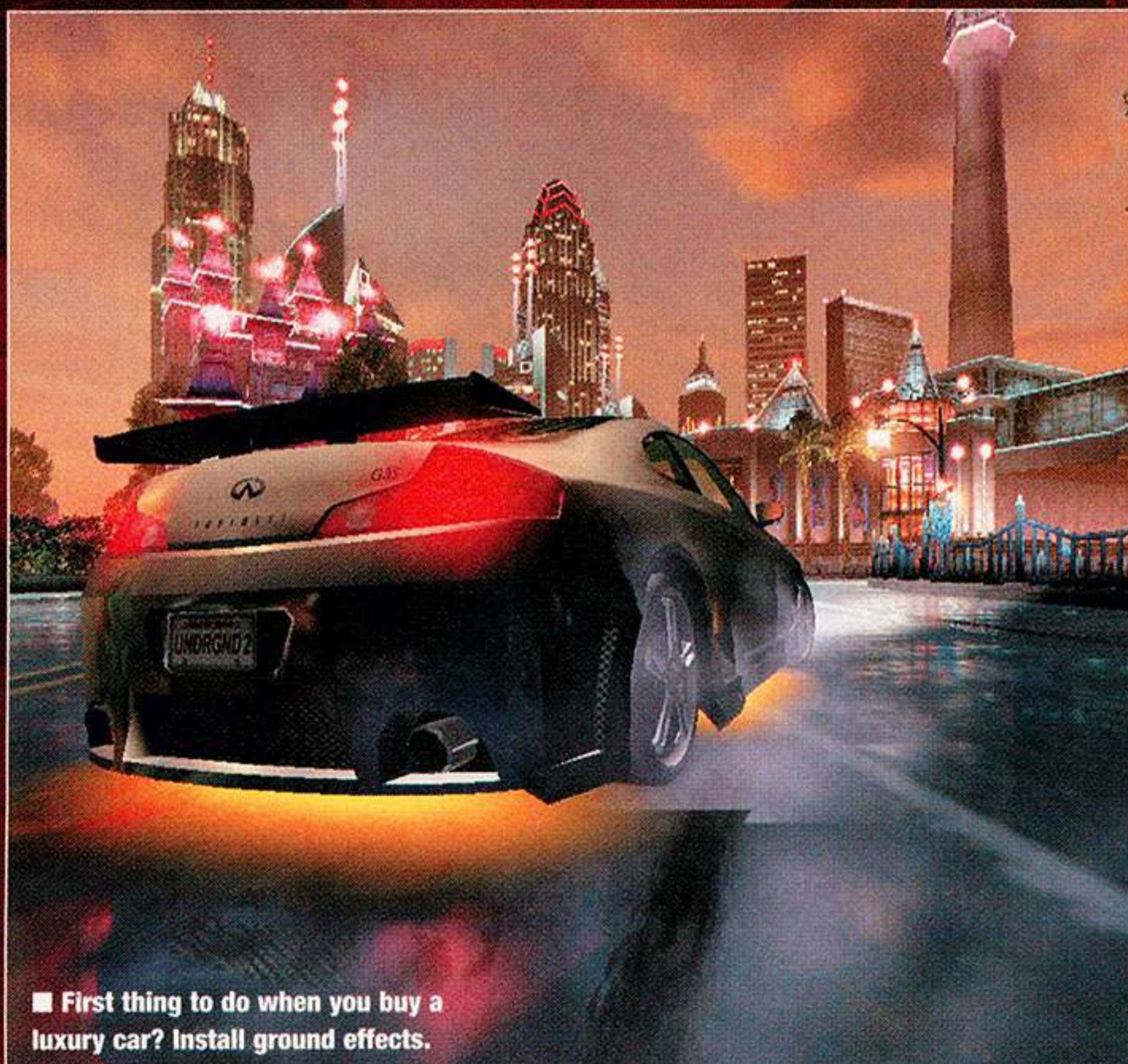
ager Devin Knudsen. "Ultimately, it's up to you to decide which road you go down; it's all about cause and effect."

Also helping in the game's realism (can you really use "realism" when referring to professional wrestling?) is the addition of voiceovers. Knudsen says every *WWE* superstar—including head honcho Vince

McMahon—has recorded lines for the game's ever-growing story mode.

**What could go wrong?** The only question mark is the new online play—it's currently going through rigorous stress tests to see if it has enough muscle for the main event.

—Bryan Intihar



■ First thing to do when you buy a luxury car? Install ground effects.

## NEED FOR SPEED UNDERGROUND 2

PS2/XB/GC • EA Games

**The buzz:** Have you ever driven down a residential street, seen some donut tire tracks on the ground, and thought, "Man, I wish I could do that with my 1983 Buick Electra"? EA is listening to you. The next *Need for Speed* is all about letting you do whatever you want with your car—whether drag-racing it down the highway, slinging it around mountain roads, or crashing it into hapless SUVs.

Like Rockstar's *Midnight Club* series, *Underground 2* presents you with a full-sized city where you're free to drive around and explore to your heart's content. You'll get a little guidance on race locations and such from your buds, but it'll be up to you to find secret parts

shops, get into the unsanctioned events, and make a name for you and your rice-mobile. The whole shebang's online on the PS2 and Xbox, so you can race your friends anywhere in the city you like. We suggest outfitting your car with some rockin' gullwing doors before meeting up with your crew. They'll be so impressed.

**What could go wrong?** *Street Racing Syndicate*, which hit stores in August, has a big city of its own to cruise around in...problem is, it gets pretty boring to drive from race to race after a while. Hopefully EA will find ways to spice up the exploration aspect a little.

—Kevin Gifford



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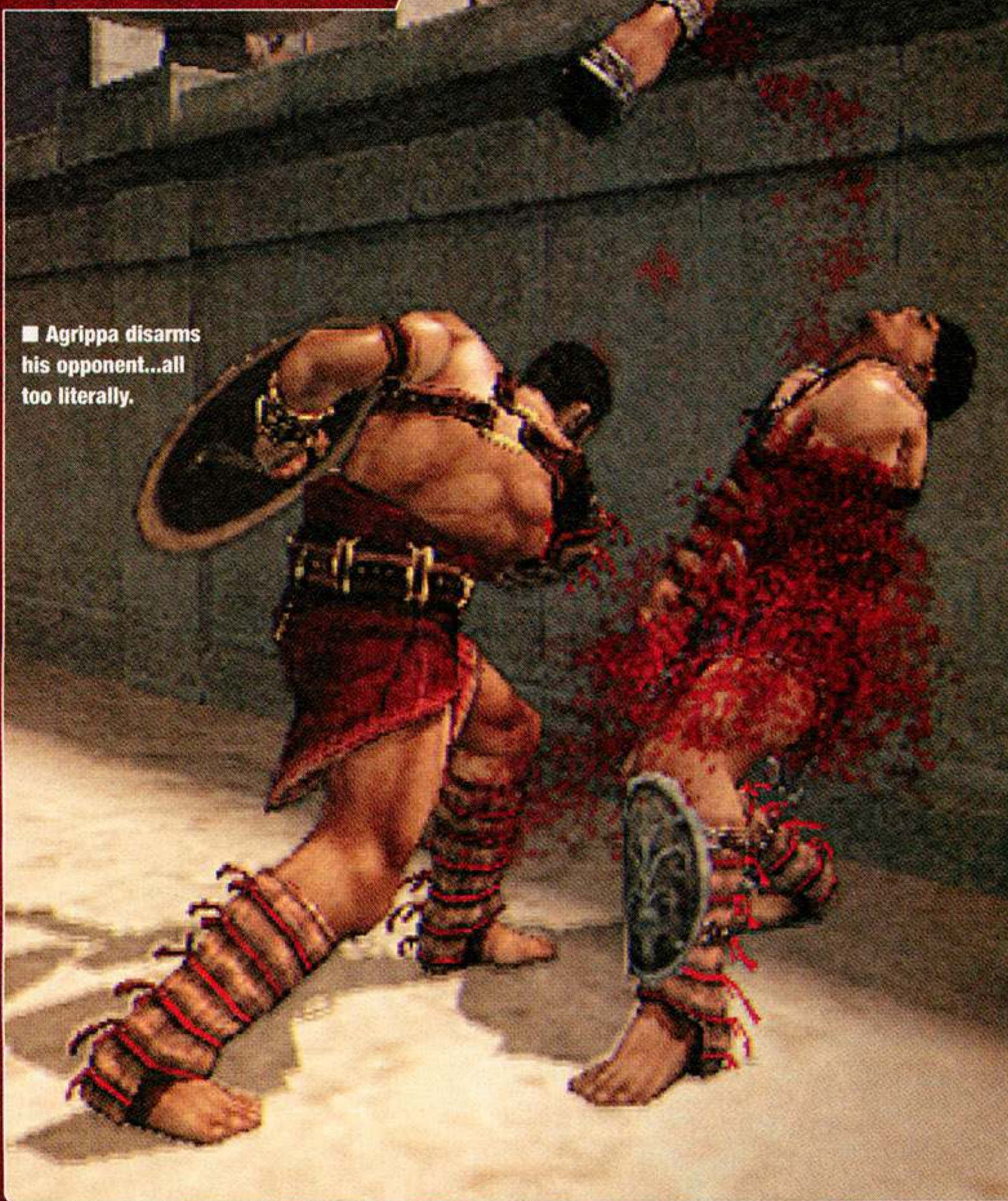
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# ▶ NOVEMBER



## SHADOW OF ROME

PS2 • Capcom

**The buzz:** In 44 B.C., a centurion's father stands accused of killing Julius Caesar himself. Not believing it could be true, his son, Agrippa, sets out to smash a few skulls. Nobody is going to be saying "et tu Brute?" after you've splattered his head with a spiked club. People might scream a bit after you chop off their arms, though. *Shadow of Rome* imparts a heavy, deliberate feel to its gladiatorial fighting as you hold down a button to build power for a mighty strike. The game actually has terms for 170 different ways to maim opponents for the crowd's pleasure, including the artsy "meat-sculptor"—cleaving more than one limb from an enemy before he falls.

It's not just all gladiator games,

though: A stealthy subcharacter named Octavius injects *Metal Gear Solid*-style gameplay, and you can also engage in some *Ben Hur*-style chariot racing.

**What could go wrong?** *Shadow of Rome* is a completely new property for Capcom, but it may try to re-create a successful formula. Kenji Inafune, creator of the internationally popular *Onimusha* series, brings his expertise to this franchise. Judging from the character interaction and impressive cut-scenes, Capcom seems intent on pleasing Western crowds with a bloody spectacle. After seeing Agrippa raise a severed head for the crowd, the game definitely has our attention.

—Justin Speer



## KINGDOM HEARTS: CHAIN OF MEMORIES

GBA • Square Enix

**The buzz:** *Kingdom Hearts* for PlayStation 2 deftly merged the worlds of *Final Fantasy* and Walt Disney, creating an action-RPG hybrid starring Goofy and Donald that grown adults didn't have to be ashamed of enjoying. Now, that unexpected hit gets a sequel in an unexpected place—the GBA.

"*Chain of Memories* is the direct sequel to *Kingdom Hearts*, and *Kingdom Hearts II* (due in 2005 for PS2) is the direct sequel to *Chain of Memories*," explains Producer Tetsuya Nomura. "This GBA game fills in the missing link of what Sora does in the two years between the two PS2 games." Sounds like this

top-down, 2D quest will be required playing for all fans of the original title....

**What could go wrong?** *Chain of Memories'* dense story line and lush Disney-flick settings remain true to its console big brother, but an original card-based combat system might overcomplicate matters. Also, kids with GBAs might never have played the PS2 game, thrusting them into the midst of a complex tale.

—Shane Bettenhausen ▶





Cut off behind enemy lines with no way to contact help, four young, barely trained soldiers realize their only hope for survival is to head into the heart of darkness. With few rations and dwindling ammunition, the only thing separating them from freedom is 100 miles of ruthless terrain, crawling with unseen enemies and filled with hidden booby traps. Welcome to Vietnam.



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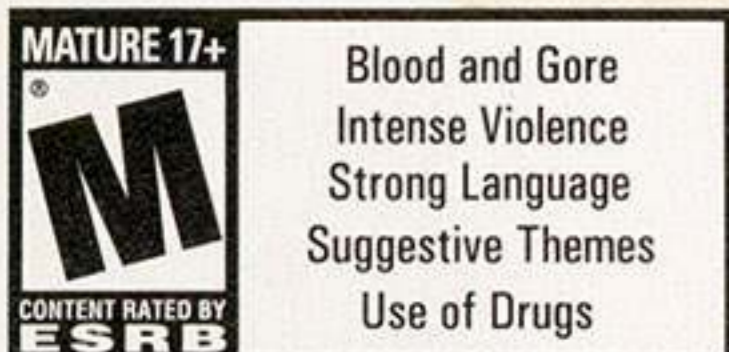
14 enormous missions in jungles, villages, temples, and underground tunnels.



Paranoia inducing enemy AI pits you against foes in the environments they are the masters of.



PlayStation®2



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# NOVEMBER



## MIDNIGHT CLUB 3: DUB EDITION

PS2/XB • Rockstar

**The buzz:** It's illegal open-city street racing (in Atlanta, Detroit, and San Diego), but this time it's for really, really rich people. You've probably heard that *Dub Edition* (named after *Dub* magazine, giving rappers and rapper wannabes high-end automotive wank material since 2000) is movin' on up to include swank rides like Escalades and Hummers, cus-

tom choppers, and concept cars—but you may not know that it's also aiming to deliver more tuning and tweaking options than any other racer (previous *Clubs* offered only stock unlicensed cars).

How's that gonna work? "Take a '64 Chevy Impala," says Producer Mark Garone. "You think, I want something with a West Coast, lowrider vibe. OK, drop

some classic Davin spoke rims on there, add hydraulics, chop the top, add an insane multicolor paintjob. Or you may be into more of a drag-racer-type car. Take that same '64 Impala, jack up the back, put on some really wide tires in the rear and some smaller ones up front, add a wheelie bar, and install a blower [for] extra horsepower. Now you're tearing up

opponents off the line with a completely different style."

**What could go wrong?** *Club* pretty much started this tuner-culture, street-racing stuff, but now everybody's doing it. And in some cases, doing it really well. Will *Dub's* spinner rims and pricey rides be enough to catch your jaded eye? —Demian Linn

■ In this fantasy realm, the turkeys eat you for Thanksgiving.



## SUIKODEN IV

PS2 • Konami

**The buzz:** Like *Suikoden III*, but bigger, better, faster, and with 100 percent fewer talking ducks. As usual, the story line centers on a quest to unite the 108 Warriors of Destiny to smite an almighty evil, with lots of fun minigames and town-building to offset all the drama.

Some improvements are obvious, such as slicker visuals and full spoken dialogue (a series first). Other changes run deeper: The battle system blazes past the pokey pace of *Suikoden III's* and comes close to

the swift speed of the first two games. Expect more towns and locations to explore than the paltry few from the third game, and the world is overall larger, since you go by sea and not by land.

**What could go wrong?** If people are still interested in *Suikoden*, there shouldn't be a problem. Then again, part three might mean there are fewer people interested in *Suikoden* than there used to be.

—Nich Maragos



**BETTER BRING YOUR BEST**

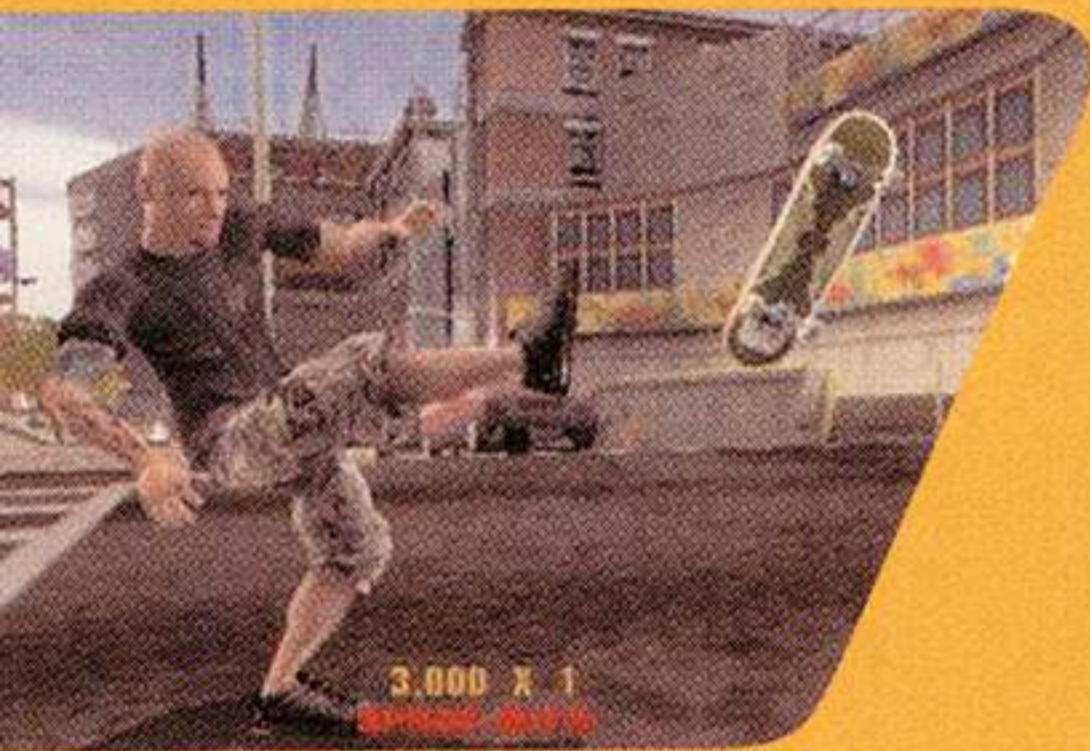
*out of the ordinary* **GAME**

**TONY HAWK'S UNDERGROUND 2**

**PS2 | XBOX | GCN**

Two Teams. Hardcore Skating. Wild Stunts. World Destruction. You've been chosen by Tony Hawk to take on Bam Margera as your teams go globetrotting on an insane road trip: the World Destruction Tour. THUG 2® grinds in with a hilarious story mode, an unprecedented level of customization, and more moves than the Skate Gods could dream of. Make the world your own skate park, as you spray your custom tag, slap stickers, and even create new skate lines as you wreak havoc.

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**break out CODES**

**DRIV 3R**

**ps2 | xbox**



**sweet TRICKS**

**BURNOUT 3: TAKEDOWN**

**ps2 | xbox**



Enter the following at the Main Menu to unlock the desired code.

**All Weapons:** R1, L2, Square, Circle, R1, R2, L2.

**Immunity:** Circle, Circle, L1, L2, R1, R2, Square.

**Invincibility** (Doesn't work in Story mode): Square, Square, L1, R1, L2, R2, R2.

**Unlimited Ammo:** R1, R2, R1, R2, Square, Circle, Square

**Unlock all Missions:** L1, R1, L1, L2, Square, Square, Circle.

**Unlock all Vehicles:** L1, L1, Square, Circle, L1, R1, Circle.

**Race Tips:**

- Tailgate your opponents to psyche them out, and earn boost in the process.
- Slam your rivals into traffic to take them down, and expand your boost bar.
- Each track has signature Takedown points, e.g. the pillars under the El in Downtown—these will earn you special rewards.

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**BREAK OUT OF THE ORDINARY**



# NOVEMBER



## ATV OFF-ROAD FURY 3

PS2 • Sony CEA

**The buzz:** Who knew that zipping around on four-wheelers had such broad appeal? Sony has managed to transform its seemingly niche *ATV* series into a substantial hit, creating a colossal fan base by packing a playable demo with every PS2 Network Adaptor (and the full game with PS2 console/Adaptor bundles).

We didn't expect new developer Climax to mess with success, but this third offering dares to be different—looser control, more powerslides, and a deep-

er trick system (think *Tony Hawk*-style reverts) give the gameplay a distinctly more arcadey feel. Don't expect major changes to the well-regarded online play, though: You'll still be able to get all muddy with your buds on the Net.

**What could go wrong?** With a new developer and some noticeably reworked gameplay, *ATV3* might strike die-hard fans as too much of a departure from the established norm.

—Shane Bettenhausen



## NEO CONTRA

PS2 • Konami

**The buzz:** Buffed-up muscles constantly flexed and powered-up weapons perpetually blazing, *Contra* was once considered pure action incarnate. After reliving its 2D glory days with 2002's *Shattered Soldier*, the furious shooter is born anew with a shifting 3D perspective and a strategic take on run-n-gun gameplay. Three sets of weaponry (meaning nine different weapons to choose from) indicate serious depth, and screen-filling boss monsters look primed for the killing. A good 3D *Contra* at last? Odds look good.

**What could go wrong?** The tough-as-nails *Contra* series has always emerged victorious in its one-man/two-man simultaneous war against alien invasion, yet it continually loses ground in a guerrilla struggle against the mainstream. Director Nobuya Nakazato hopes *Neo Contra* can succeed on all fronts. "I want the *Contra* franchise to be accepted by a wider audience, but I want everyone who plays it to be fully satisfied." It's radical thinking, but it's unlikely to spark a revolution.

—Justin Speer



## KARAOKE REVOLUTION VOLUME 3

PS2 • Konami

**The buzz:** The name doesn't overstate: This karaoke series, with technology that can tell when you're singing off pitch, broke new ground in the rhythm-action genre. Now, with one simple innovation—duets—*Volume 3* should do an even more outstanding job re-creating the silly, increasingly popular American pastime of making a fool of yourself singing your favorite songs to your friends.

Roping in a pal to share the glory (or shame) should provide the real draw here. "Players can sing traditional duets and harmonize together," says Michael

McHale, senior producer at Konami. "We actually support two microphones with a number of new game modes, including Duets and Sing-Off."

**What could go wrong?** The game will still offer only a few dozen songs, which is too bad; whatever your taste in music, the catch-all assortment of songs gets old pretty fast. "We've been talking about music-genre-specific releases for some time now," says McHale. "I hope [*Karaoke Revolution*] grows large enough to allow us to do this."

—Jennifer Tsao



### Music 'Box

The problem of limited song selection could be solved when *Karaoke Revolution* hits Xbox. This reworked version of the first PS2 *KR* will come with a much larger initial set of songs (including 10 remastered Motown classics). But better yet, you'll be able to download additional song packs via Xbox Live. ▶





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Strong Language



PlayStation 2



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# NOVEMBER GALLERIES

ALSO DUE IN NOVEMBER



**Capcom Fighting Evolution**

PS2/XB • Capcom — After doing battle with various X-Men, Marvel superheroes, and SNK scrappers, Capcom's quick-to-anger stars are fighting amongst themselves. Look for characters from *Street Fighter Alpha*, *Street Fighter III*, *Darkstalkers*, and *Warzard*.



**Forgotten Realms: Demon Stone**

PS2/XB • Atari — This *Dungeons & Dragons* adventure dispenses with the intricacies of roleplaying, ditching the dice in favor of visceral hack-n-slash action. It's kind of like EA's *Lord of the Rings* brawlers, but Drizzt is a way tougher elf than that pansy Legolas.



**Dragon Ball Z: Budokai 3**

PS2 • Atari — This third fireball-tossing installment promises to offer the beefiest, spikiest combat yet.



**Godzilla: Save the Earth**

PS2/XB • Atari — Tokyo's misunderstood monster (and friends) returns for another round of rubber-suited beatdowns.



**Guilty Gear Isuka**

PS2 • Sammy — A case study to see whether chaotic 2D brawling with four players causes insanity.



**Mega Man X8**

PS2 • Capcom — It's actually impossible for this to be dumber than *MMX7* (which featured an evil robotic onion boss).



**Predator: Concrete Jungle**

PS2/XB • VU Games — The Predator lives for the hunt. Apparently, no prey is more rewarding than a 1920s-era bootlegger about to break into a cask of moonshine. Yeah, you heard us—*Jungle* has the Predator fighting crime during Prohibition times. Really.



**Prince of Persia 2**

PS2/XB/GC • Ubisoft — *EGM*'s 2003 Game of the Year returns for another stab at stardom. Get ready for a substantially darker tone (the Prince is pursued by Death itself), deepened combat, and all-new locales to prance around in.



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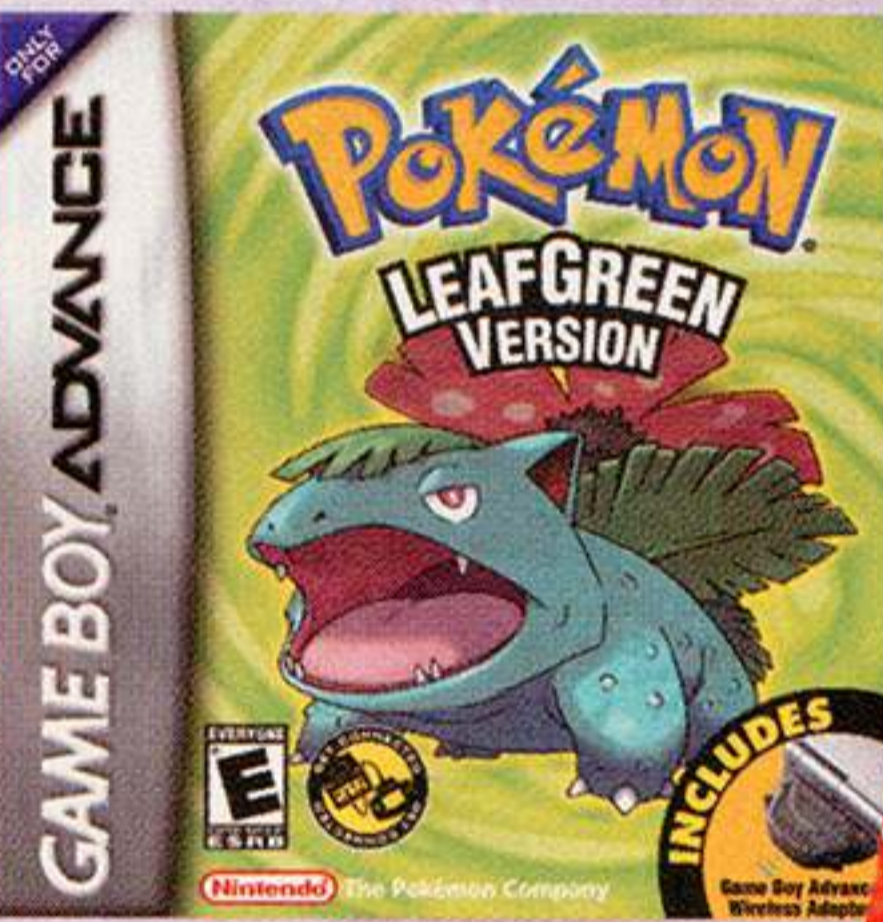
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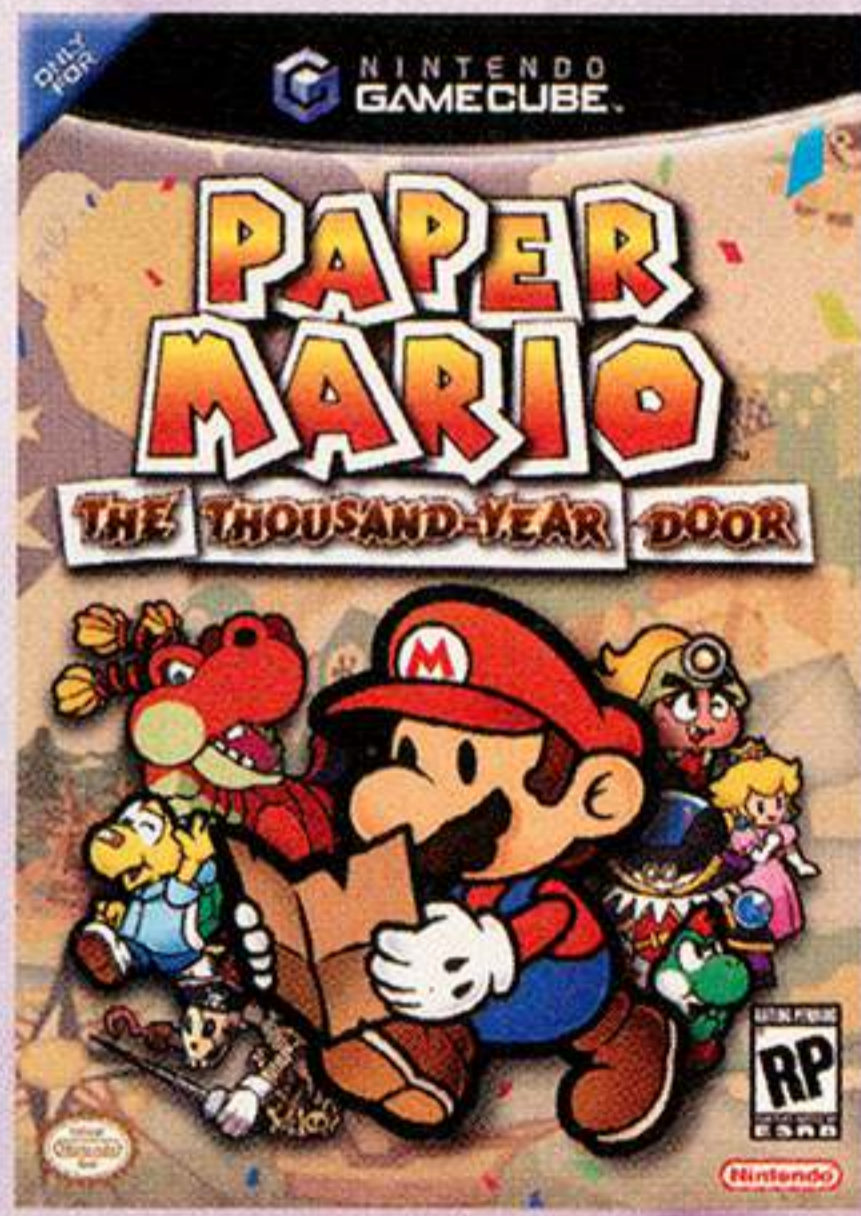
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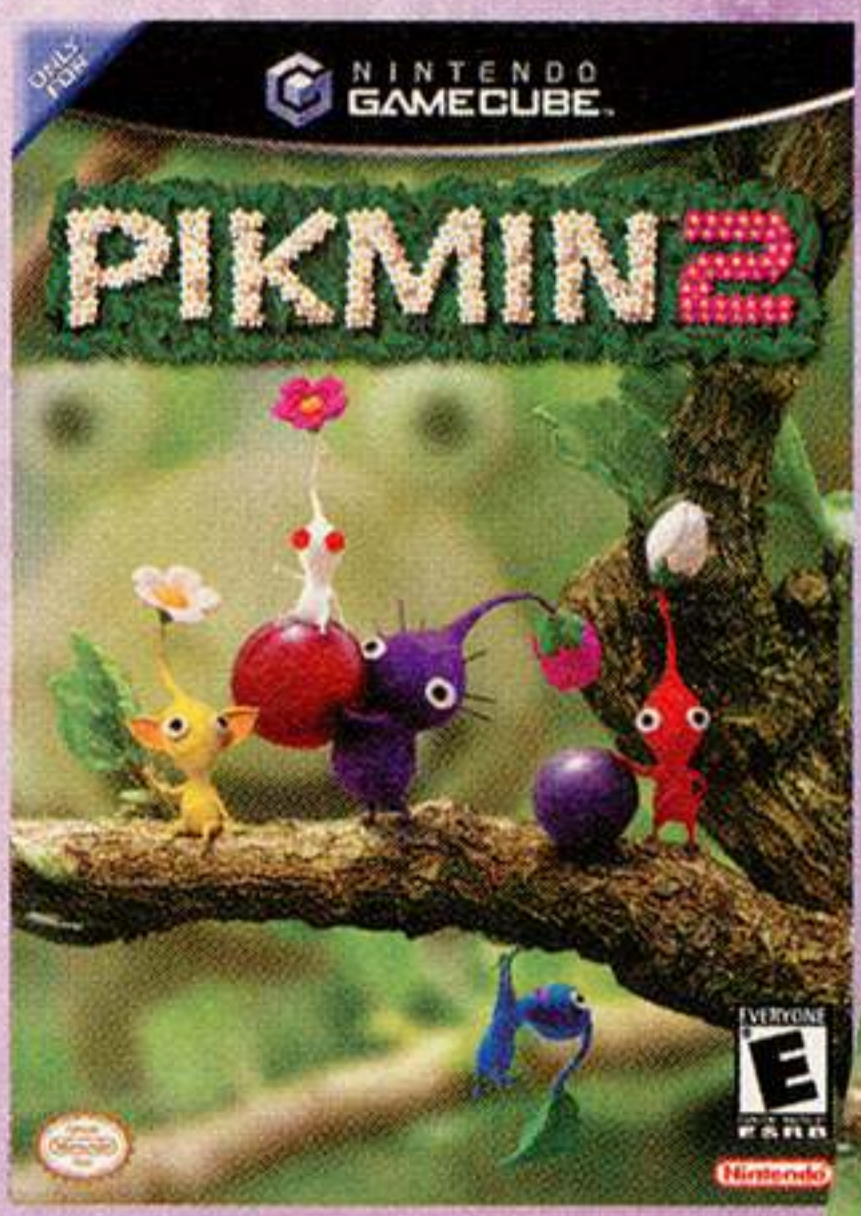
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By Todd Zuniga

# UPPING THE ANTE

Jackpot! GTA sequel **San Andreas** goes to Vegas—and to a turf war! We show you when to hold 'em and when to run

**D**on't say *Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas* is the final slice of the *GTA PlayStation 2* trilogy. *San Andreas* is a trilogy all by itself: One state, three cities, and all the wilderness in between. But Rockstar's latest epic not only replicates the West Coast's most celebrated spots—it also tells an early '90s thug tale hardcore enough to make the Hughes brothers blush.

On Oct. 19, the journey begins in the smogged-out Compton clone of Los Santos, winds through the hills of upscale San Francisco replica San Fierro, and leads to the sin and slot-machine din of Las Vegas facsimile Las Venturas. "This is the single biggest playing area in videogame history," says Sam Houser, president of *GTA* publisher Rockstar. "I can say that with absolute confidence." We can say—with as much aplomb—that our cover story reveals more of this

altered state than you'll find anywhere else. It all begins with our exclusive tour of heretofore uncharted Las Venturas, a glitzy sprawl of Day-glo casinos that by itself raises the stakes in terms of the series' selection of minigames. Later, we duck for cover in the turf wars of Los Santos, where main man Carl "CJ" Johnson conquers enemy gangland and recruits thugs, adding a sick twist of *RISK*-style gameplay to the series. Roll the dice, turn the page, and respect, fool. ➤



**This story is rated TL...**

..for **Thug Life**, meaning you're reading about a game that has you waging turf wars, breaking and entering, stealing wheels, dealing drugs, shooting the sheriff and the deputy, and a doing a dozen other dirty deeds you'd never try in real life. But then *San Andreas* isn't real; it's just a game—one that only adults can buy and play.

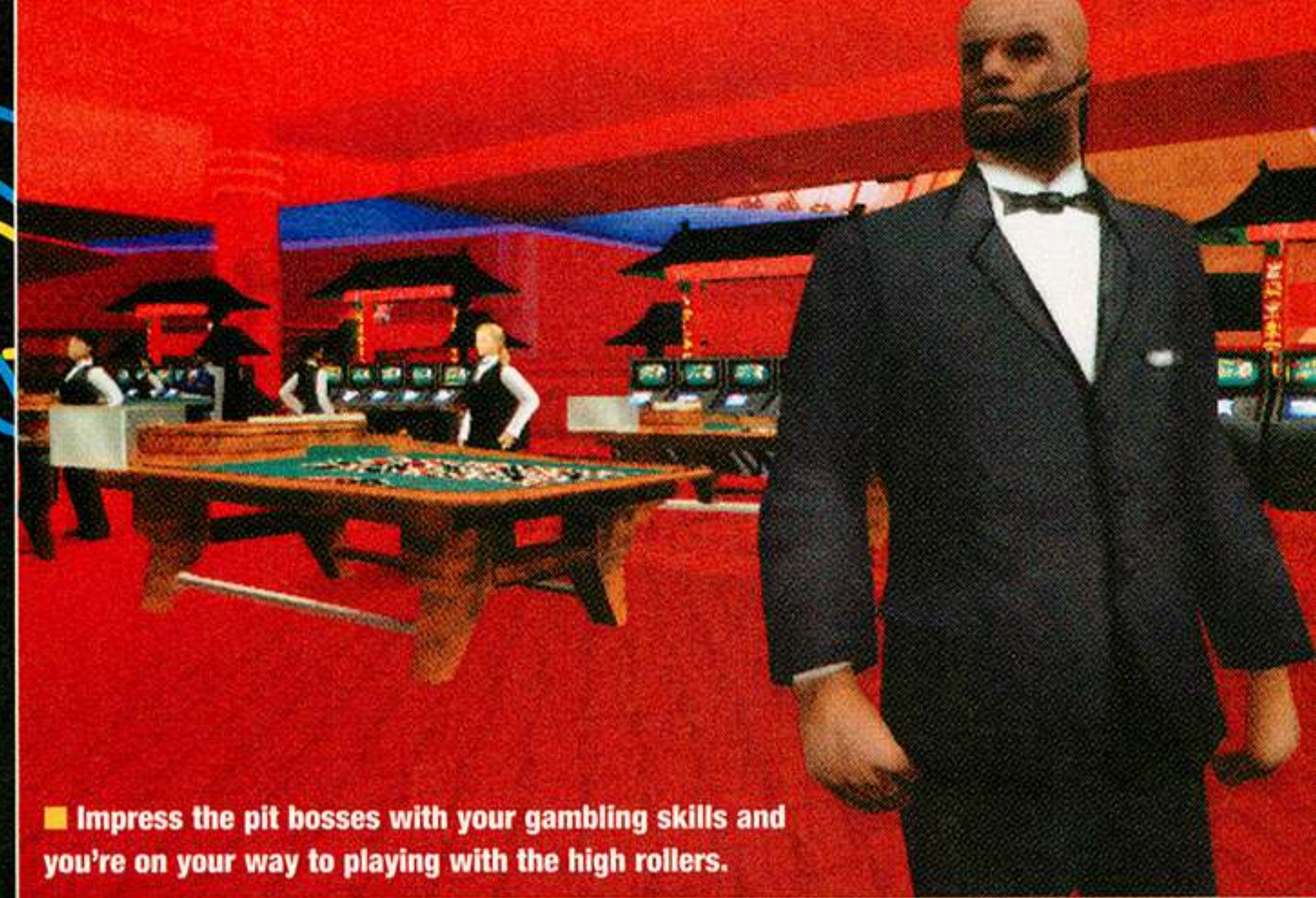
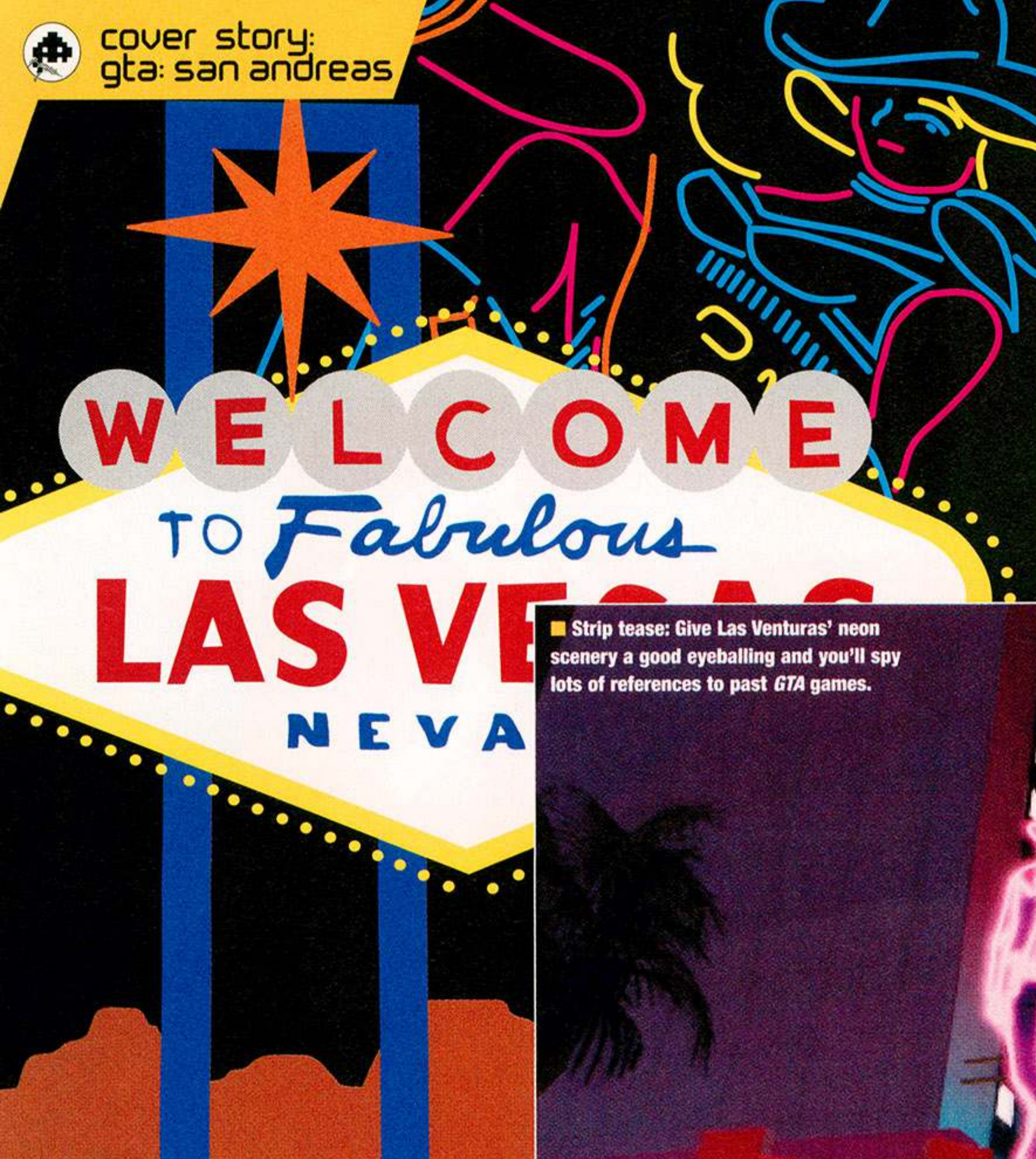


**LET IT RIDE...**

Detour to the San Andreas location of your choice:

- **Las Venturas** (based on Las Vegas) — Page 114
- **San Fierro** (based on San Francisco) — Page 119
- **Los Santos** (based on Los Angeles) — Page 120
- **The countryside in between** — Page 122





■ Impress the pit bosses with your gambling skills and you're on your way to playing with the high rollers.

■ Strip tease: Give Las Venturas' neon scenery a good eyeballing and you'll spy lots of references to past *GTA* games.



**Name:** Carl "CJ" Johnson  
**His role:** Main character  
**His deal:** After a five-year hiatus in Liberty City, CJ returns home to Los Santos to avenge the death of his mom and build a street-gang empire.



► **Welcome to Las Venturas**

You first see it as a smudge of apocalyptic pink on the desert horizon. But cruise closer to Las Venturas on your soft-seated Wayfarer—*San Andreas*' version of a classic lux-

star Candy Suxxx.

But Las Venturas' sites and decor reflect not only series in-jokes but also real places in Sin City. The V-Rock Casino takes the place of Vegas' off-the-Strip Hard Rock Cafe. Naturally, the V-Rock isn't

**"We really worked to...capture the spirit of Las Vegas."**

—Rockstar's Jeff Castaneda

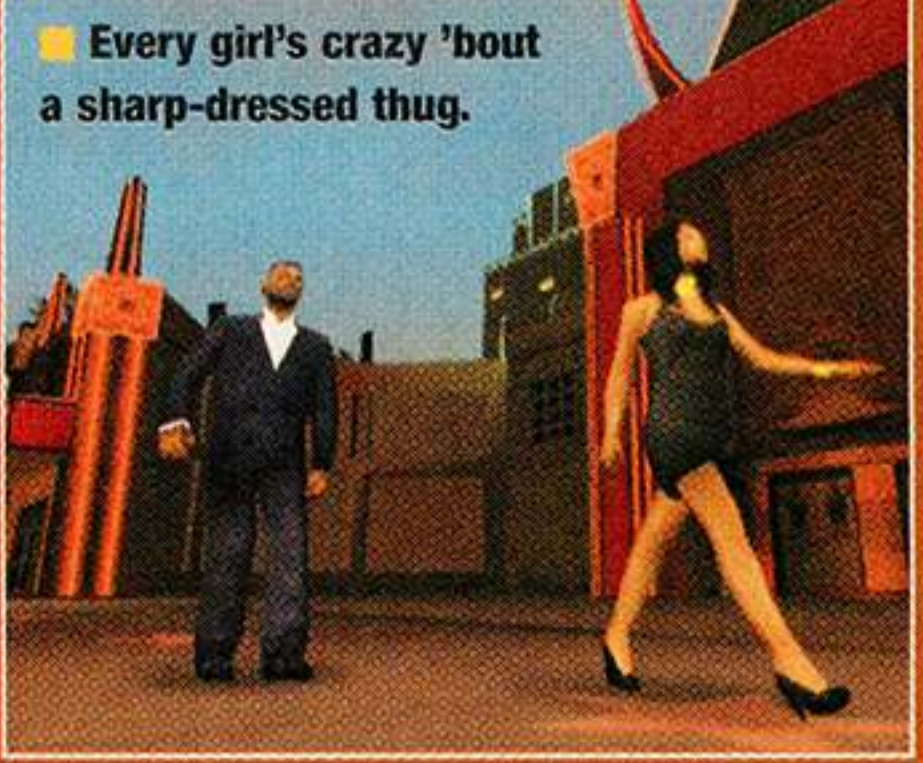
ury touring cycle from the early '90s—and the smoldering simmer resolves into sprawling neon boulevards decked with nods to past *GTA*s. The famous waving neon cowboy figure you spy lighting the desert sky is not the animatronic cowpoke in the real Vegas—it's *Vice City*'s very own southern-fried real-estate dealer Avery Carrington writ large in glowing light. Around the corner is a bigger-than-life billboard featuring the bigger-than-life endowments of the leggy *Vice City* porn

the only action in town. It was one of the many casinos we glimpsed, most of which were recognizable from our own forays down the Strip: Caligula's Palace (Caesar's Palace), the Visage (the Mirage), Pirates in Men's Pants (Treasure Island), and the Pink Swan (the Flamingo), to name a few. The game mimics the Luxor, Excalibur, Circus Circus, Bally's, and plenty of others, along with scores of other old-school casinos if you want to yank on one-armed bandits while kibitzing with blue hairs. "We've really worked on the details to make this city come alive," says Rockstar PR guy ►

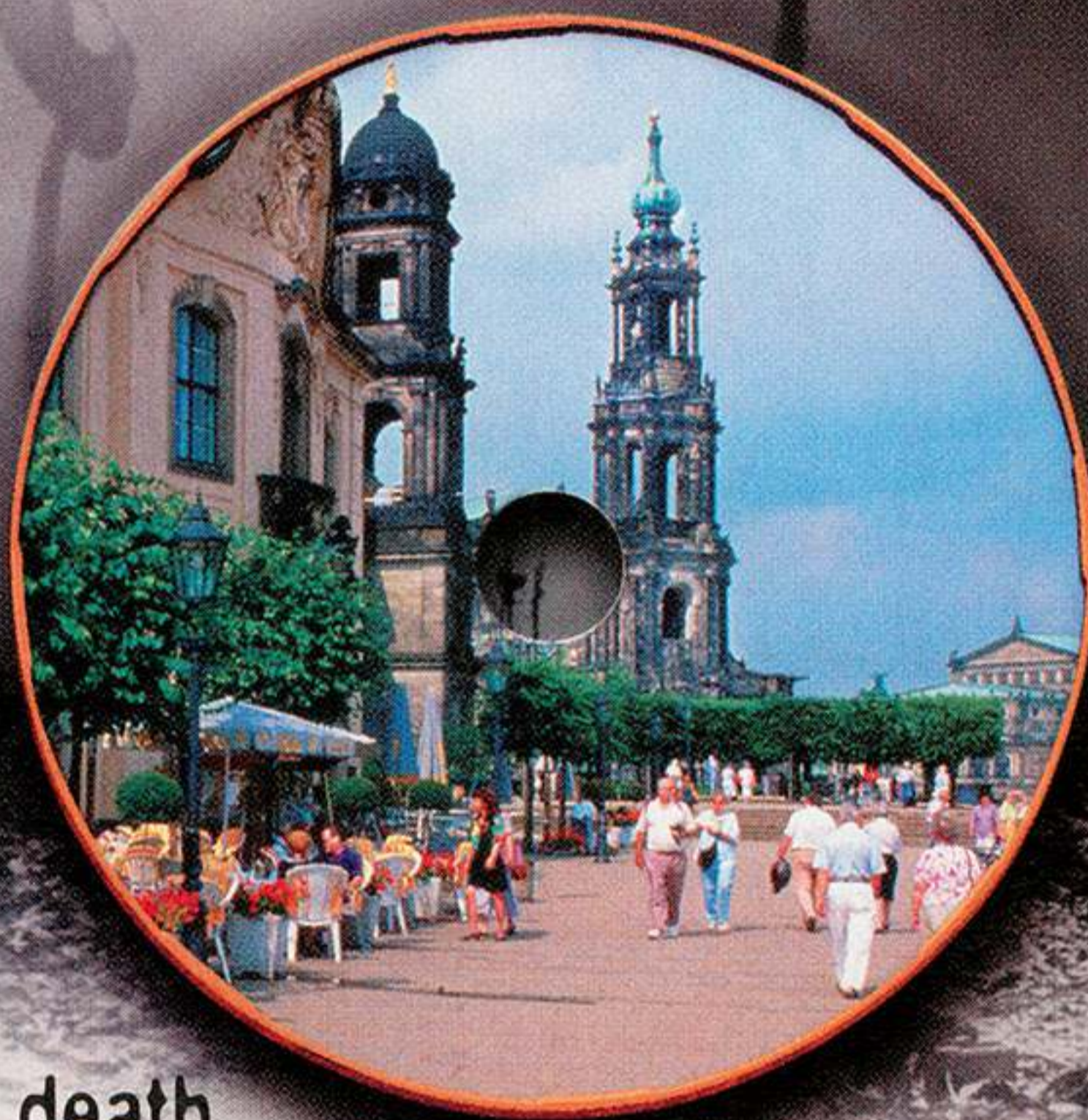
**New in Town: Respect**

Respect in *San Andreas* is everything—a vital new character trait that you can tweak and boost throughout the game. It decides who'll follow you, what story lines are open to you, what you can buy, and what casino tables you can sit at. How do you earn it? It all depends on the quality and color of your clothing, your physique (flab is bad), your haircut, whom you've capped, whom you've robbed, what areas you've taken over, and other factors. Without respect, you're going nowhere.

■ Every girl's crazy 'bout a sharp-dressed thug.



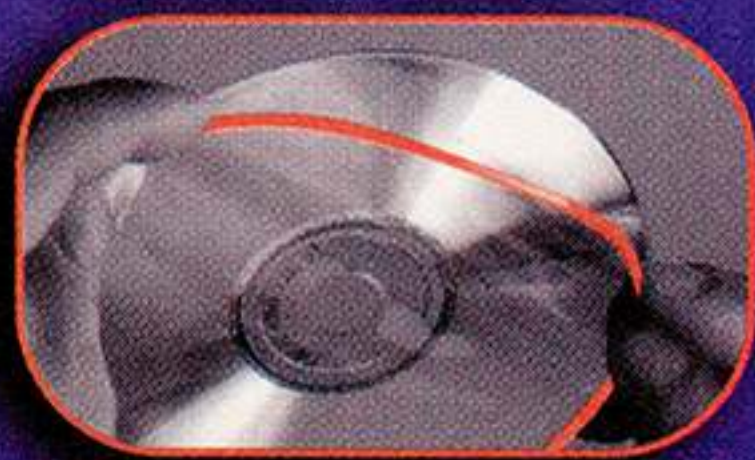




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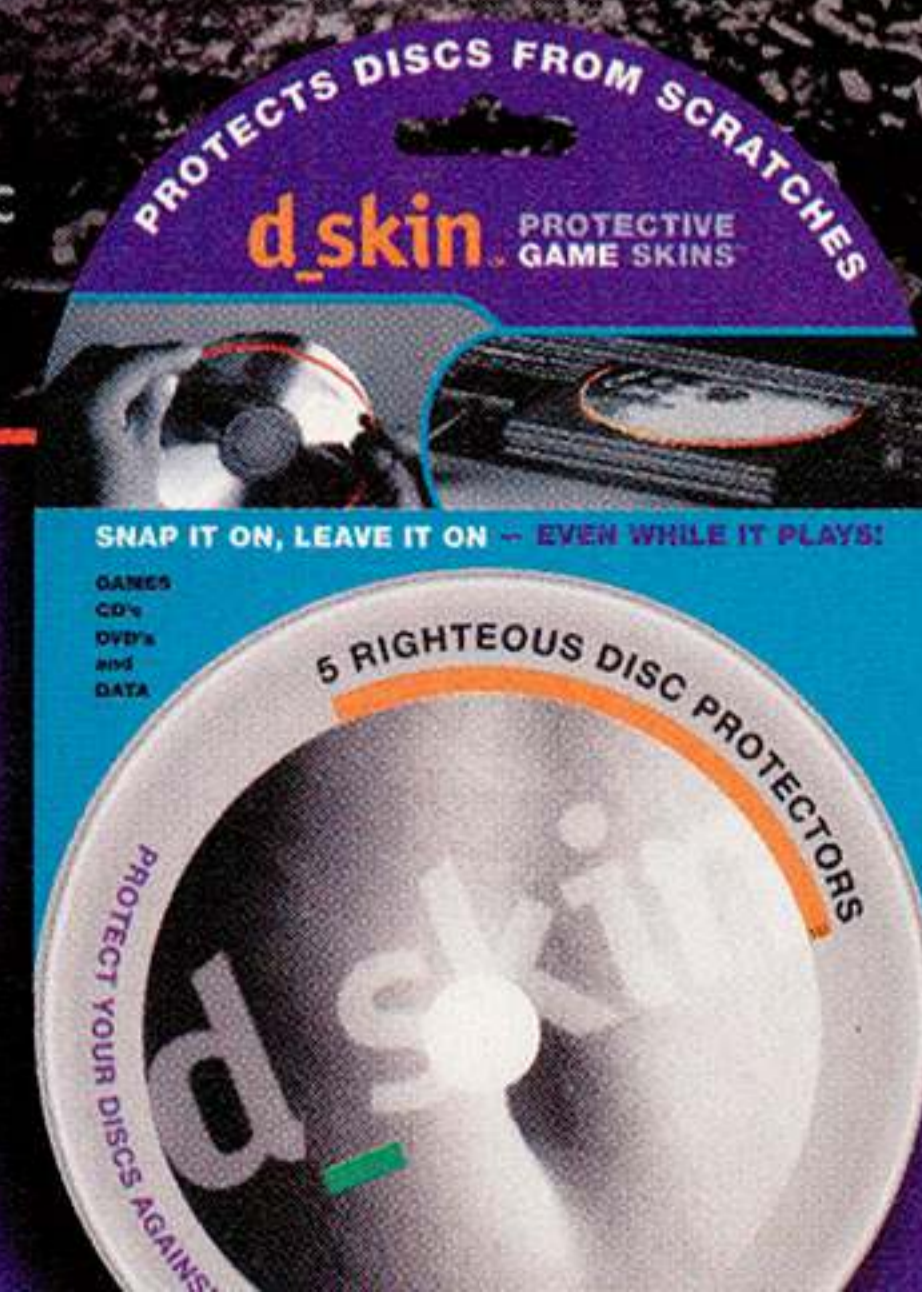


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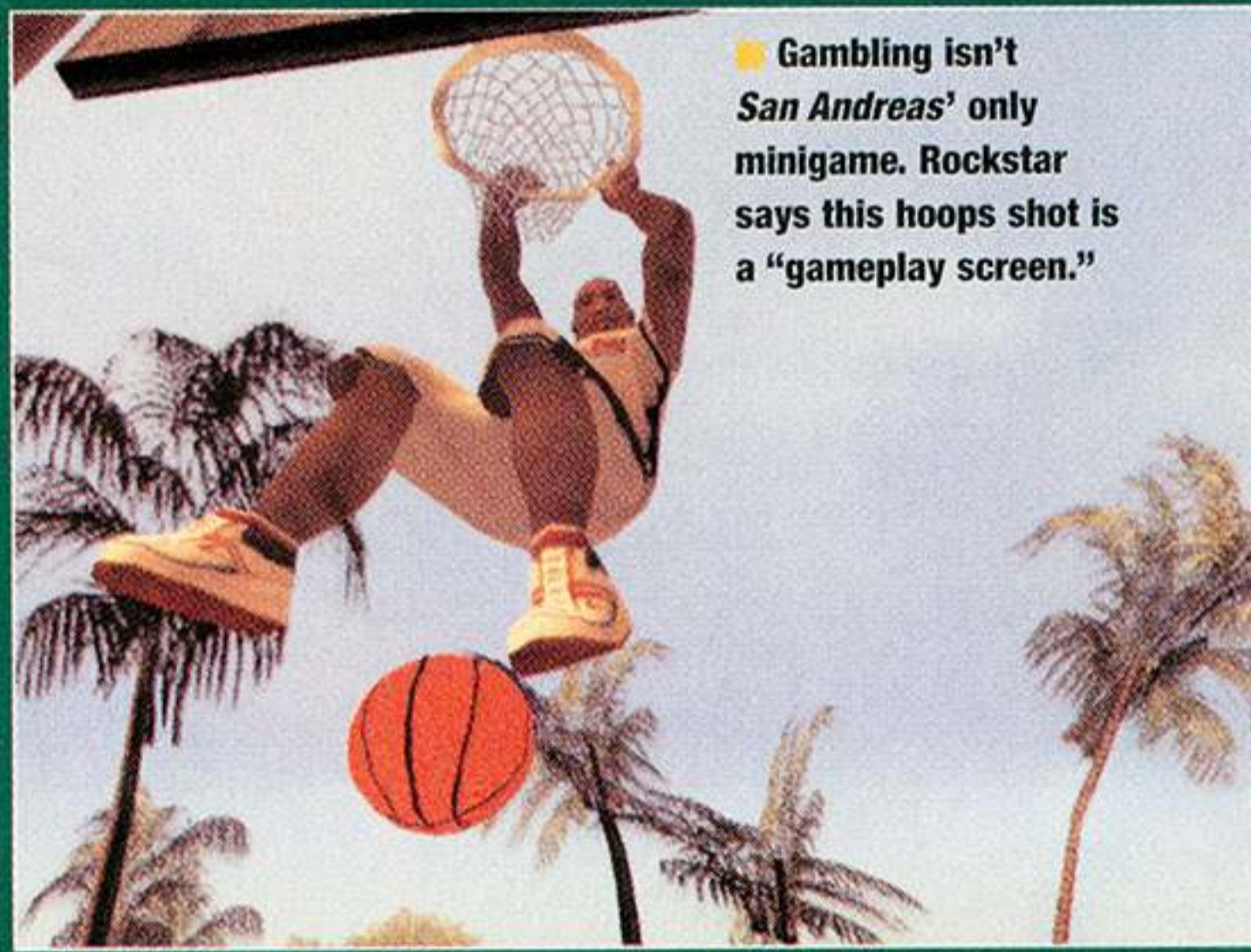
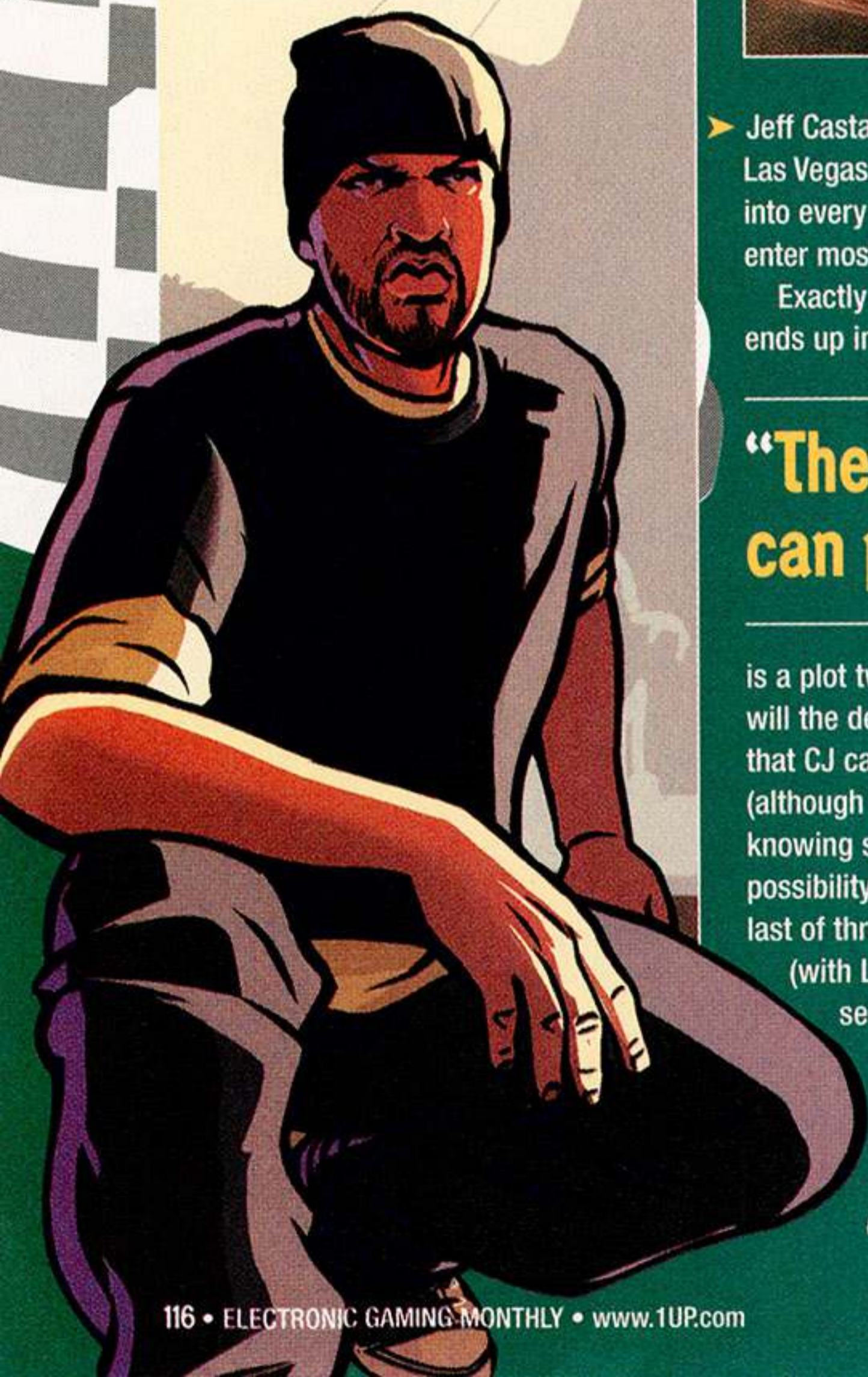






■ What happens in Las Venturas stays in Las Venturas, unless you take your stolen ride off the Strip and out of town, of course.

**Name:** Sweet Johnson  
**His role:** CJ's brother  
**His deal:** Sweet still blames CJ for the death of their youngest brother, Brian, five years ago. Now he has to reconcile with CJ and help lead the Orange Grove Families back to prominence.



■ Gambling isn't *San Andreas'* only minigame. Rockstar says this hoops shot is a "gameplay screen."

► Jeff Castaneda, "to capture the spirit of Las Vegas." And while you can't saunter into every casino you see in town, you can enter most of them.  
 Exactly why from-the-hood hero CJ ends up in this Vegas-inspired metropolis

says. "There are tons of games you can play." Among them, blackjack, craps (best odds in the house!), slots, roulette, video poker, and even wheel of fortune.  
 While different casinos have different gaming options, one thing is consistent:

**"There are tons of [casino] games you can play."**

—Rockstar's Jeff Castaneda

is a plot twist Rockstar won't reveal. Nor will the developers come right out and say that CJ can buy and run his own casino (although Rockstar reps exchanged a knowing smile when we asked about the possibility). We know Las Venturas is the last of three cities he'll visit in the game (with Los Santos first and San Fierro second). And we certainly know what CJ can do here when not completing the story missions: "The casinos are like nothing we've ever done in *Grand Theft Auto*," Castaneda

You're not going to be a high roller unless you've earned enough respect—a major ingredient in your character's development this time. You'll get skill points for gambling, just like you do for gunning down rival gangs earlier in the game. Your max bet is based on that skill. If you gamble like Tom Cruise in *Rain Man*, you'll get access to the high-rollers' tables, easy. If you stick with minimum bets, you'll be stuck with the table of unshowered truck drivers from Kansas. So if you want to drop the hammer and put 10 large on the roulette wheel on lucky number 47, ►

**New in Town: Completing the Look**  
 Sporting a crusty wife-beater and a nappy 'do just ain't right, and your respect will suffer until you clean up your act and your wardrobe. Stop by a barbershop to get your top cropped. Hairstyles vary in each city, but in Los Santos, you can score an Afro, Jheri curl, or cornrows—or go hair free. As for new duds, you'll find lots of stores and clothing options, depending on what you can afford. Victim, our personal blood-stained favorite, is in Los Santos' trendiest area.







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**GF GAMEFLY**





■ Hit the slots if you want to leave your chances to Lady Luck. Otherwise, go for skill games like poker, blackjack, or craps.

**Name:** Cesar Vialpando

**His role:** Boyfriend of CJ's sister, Kendi

**His deal:** A proud member of the Varrrios Los Aztecas gang from the south side of Los Santos, Cesar's all about hot rods. He often rolls with CJ.



► you'll have to get the attention and respect of the guys pulling the strings. And when it comes to the look of the casinos...well, it was a dirty job, but developer Rockstar North had to do it, racking up mondo frequent-flier miles on research trips to the real Vegas to capture the city's sights, sounds, and surliness. Consequently, you'll find drunken multicultural Elvis impersonators itching for fights in the gambling pits. Mosey

mirage-causing heat. It's also the sculpted interior. You'll find marble walls, detailed carpeting, dazzling chandeliers, huge archways, and sky-scraping ceilings. The presentation is as epic, as breathtaking, as over-the-top, and as magnificently tacky as a bona fide casino's.

And much like its real-life counterpart, Las Venturas never rolls up its sidewalks; you can belly up to the blackjack table any time, day or night. It's just one of the many new diversions that has Rockstar claiming that *San Andreas* will take persistent

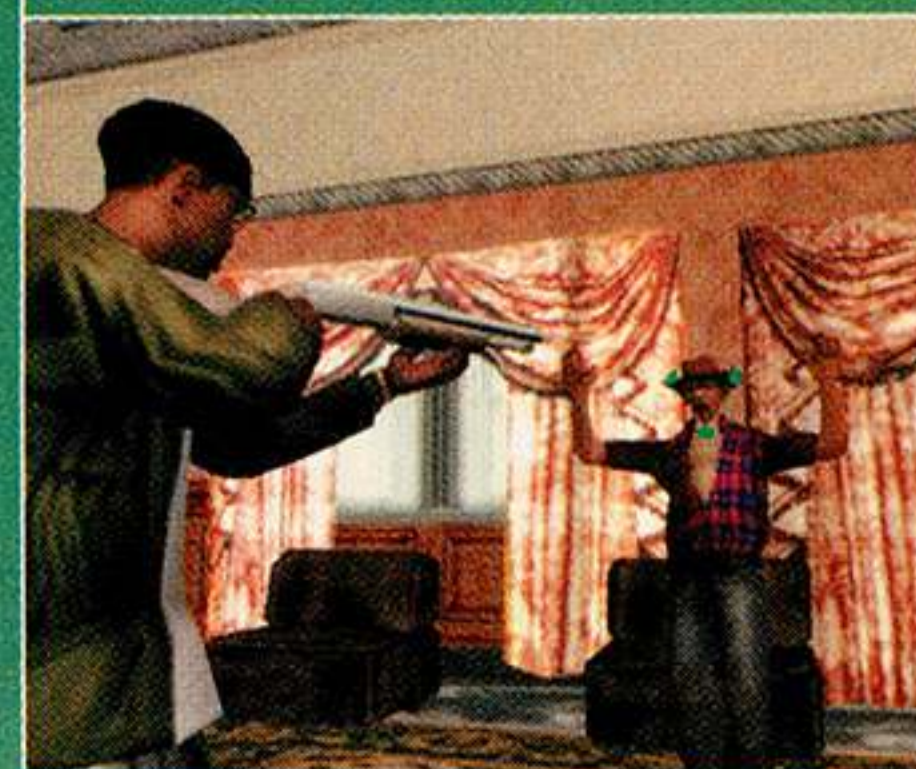
### New in Town: Shooting Straight

Mowin' down haters in the cities of San Andreas is a blast. The new targeting system lets you pick off perps when you're on the move, and you can even roll to dodge cross fire. If you're in desperate need of a kill shot, you can crouch down for accuracy. The more death you dish out, the more accurate you'll be, since successful kills build your shooting skills. If stealth is your game, you can even pull off silent kills if you master the fine art of tiptoeing.

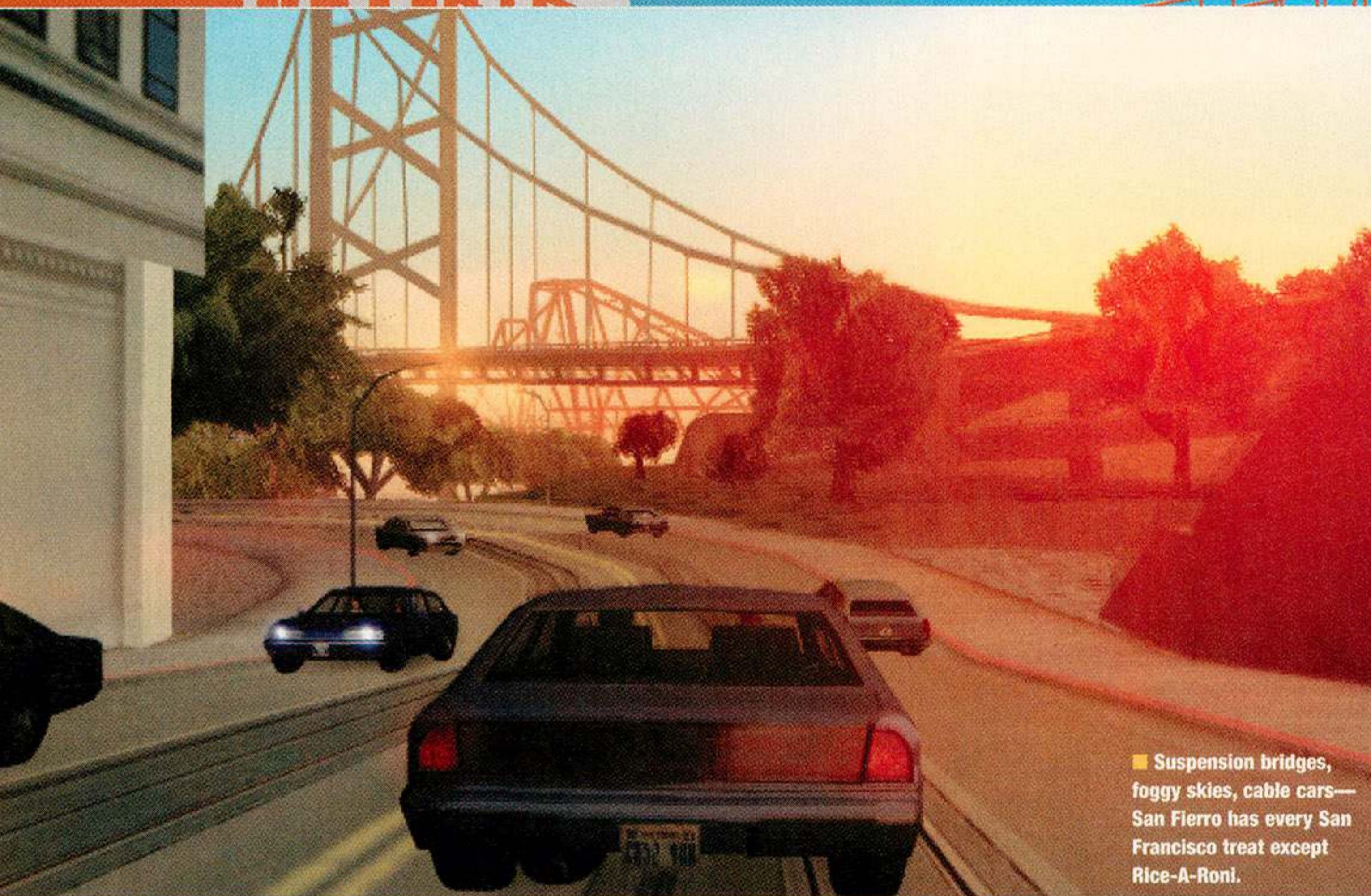
**"If you want to take your time, the game could never end...."** —Rockstar President Sam Houser

into Caligula's Palace and you'll be treated to the ensnaring ring-ding-ding of casino noise before your Timberlands hit the pillow-soft plush carpet. But it's more than the atmosphere that'll keep you inside, away from the sun-dappled sidewalks, the pestering big-bellied tourists, and the

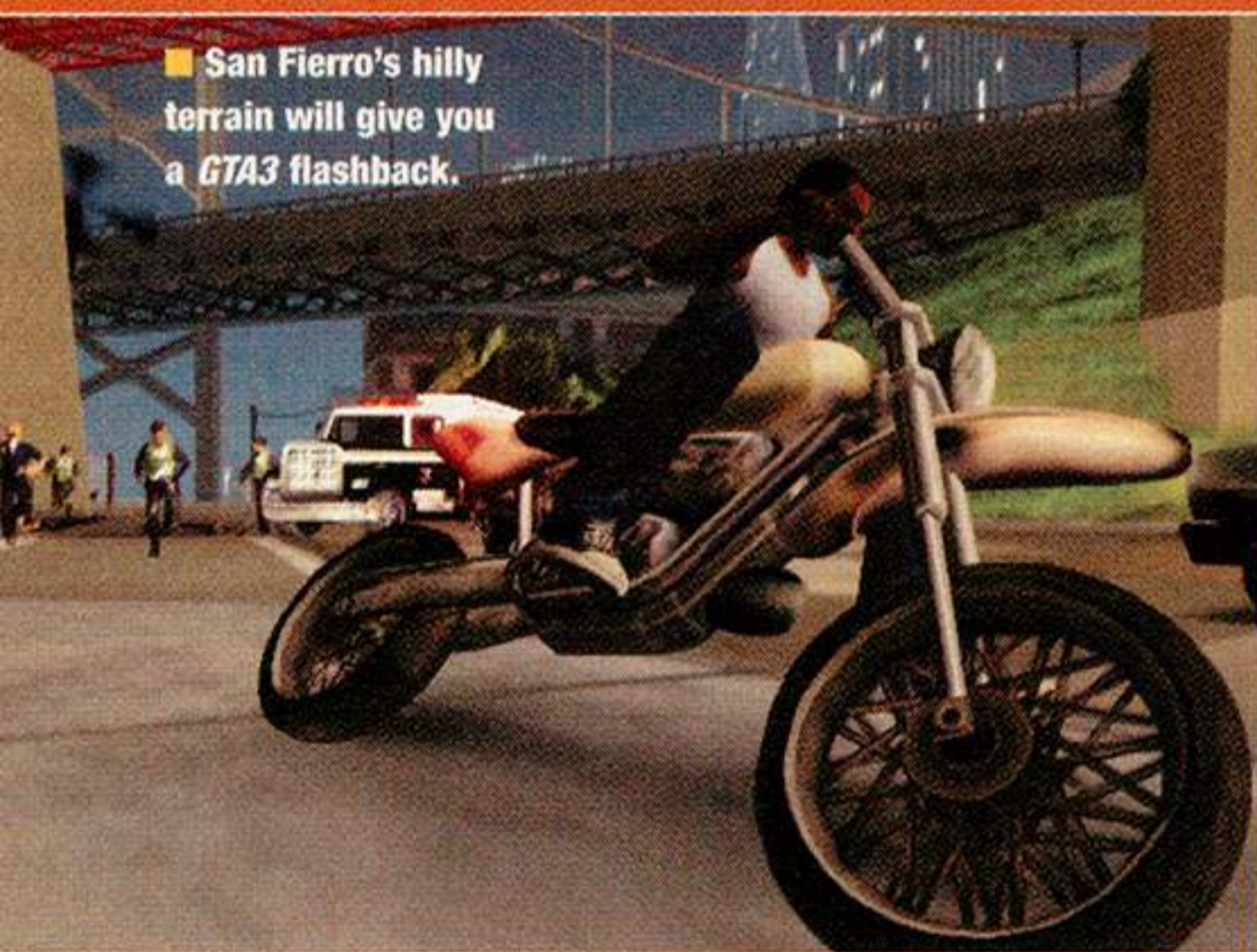
gamers more than 150 hours to complete. "It totally depends on your style," Houser says. "If all you want to do is play missions really quickly, it will take a long time because there are a lot of them. But if you want to take your time, the game could never end, in some ways."



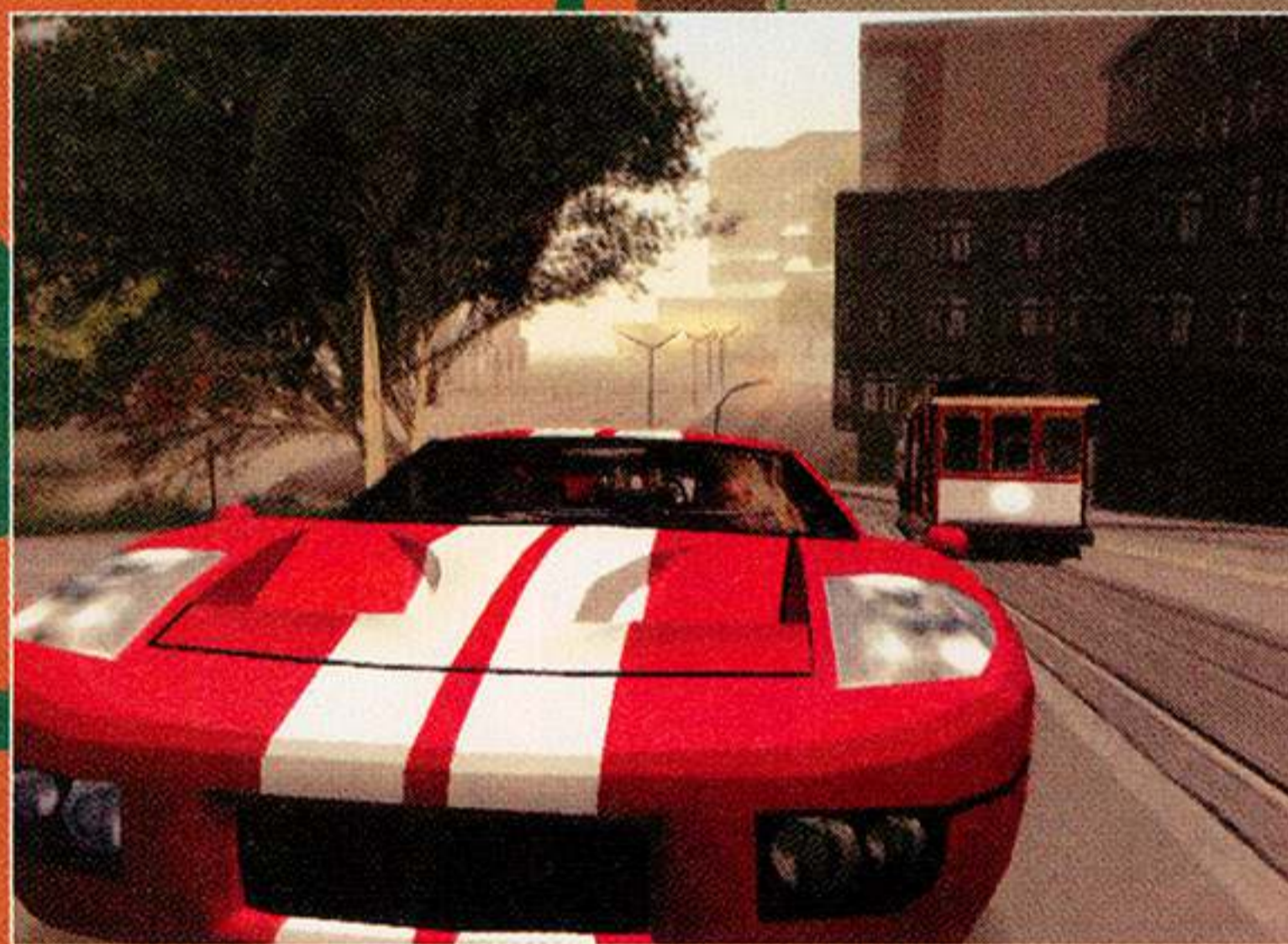




■ Suspension bridges, foggy skies, cable cars—San Fierro has every San Francisco treat except Rice-A-Roni.



■ San Fierro's hilly terrain will give you a *GTA3* flashback.



## Welcome to San Fierro

Unfortunately, our tour of Las Venturas does have to end—time to head north to San Fierro, based on San Francisco and the second town CJ visits in the game. While he'll be clear of his hometown hood of Los Santos and all of its Crenshaw Blvd.-style gangbanging, he'll still find plenty of Triad-gang thug life in the scenically pristine San Fierro. By far the prettiest municipality in the *GTA* universe, San Fierro features Victorian houses, rolling hills, a switchbacking Lombard Street

shout-out, and carbon copies of the massive Golden Gate and Bay bridges. "San Fierro was built to be more driving focused, because of the hills," Houser says. "It's all about car chases and more vehicle-based stuff."

Take some downtime from driving, however, and San Fierro is the perfect setting in which to brush up on your hand-to-hand. CJ can now do more than standard right-left-right fisticuff combos. Scoot to the Cobra Martial Arts Dojo in Chinatown and he'll get schooled by a sensei in the

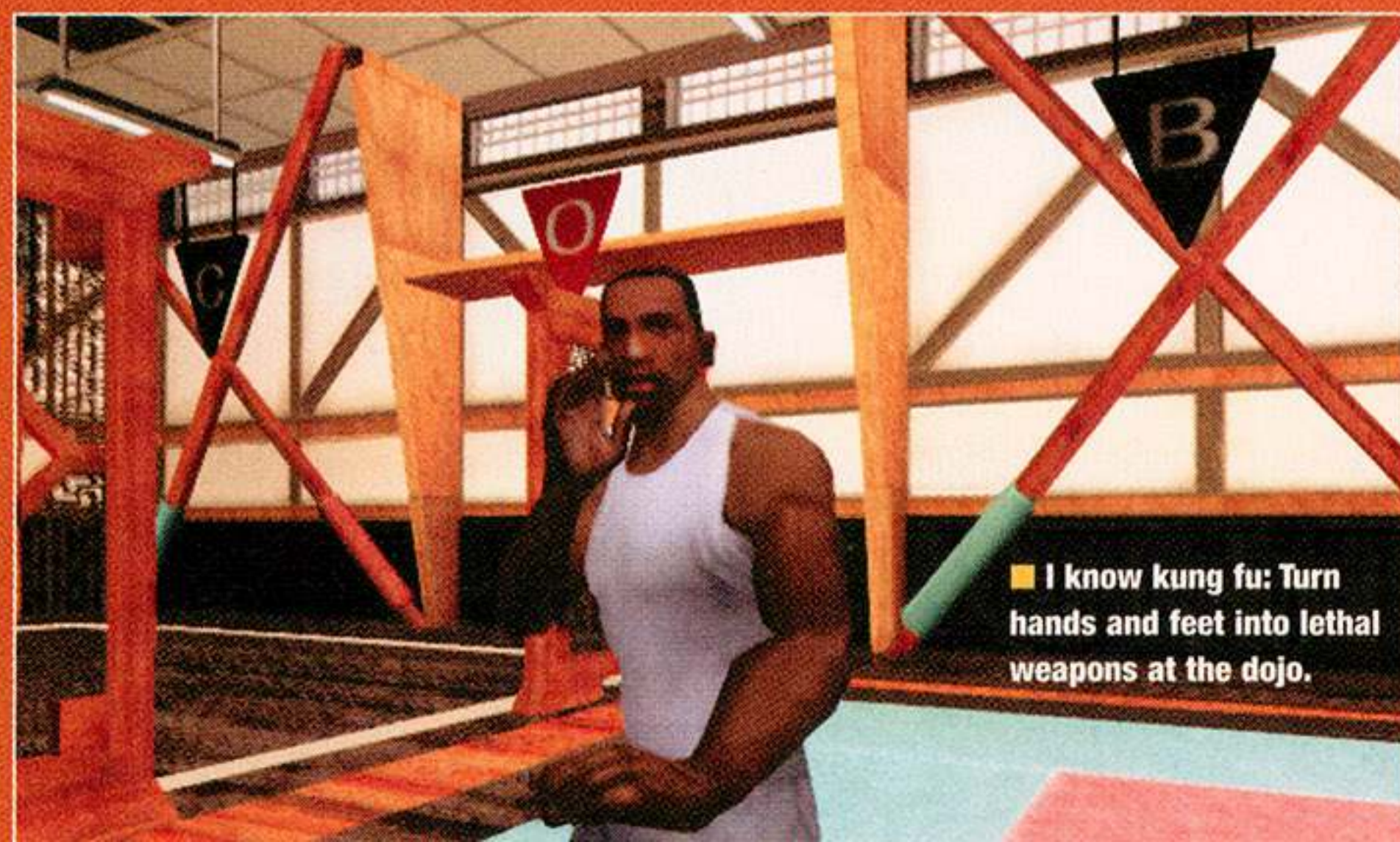
fine art of whoop-ass. Learn roundhouse kicks, drop-heel kicks (perfect for groin shots), and running front kicks. The new combos will have you pocketing your pistol in lieu of brass knuckles or a sword—all in the name of well-rounded thugdom.

After tenderizing the dojo's human punching bags, you can head to another SF hotspot: Otto's Autos. Because no self-respecting hood should trolley around the streets of Hashbury during the Hashbury & Garcia "Joint Festival" in a run-of-the-mill hooty, you'll want to meet up with your homey, Cesar, the emperor of car customization. Otto's is a paradise for *DUB Magazine* subscribers and *2 Fast 2 Furious* fanboys. Here you can modify any ride in the game, tweaking paint jobs (flames, anyone?) or rearranging the front bumper, rear bumper, exhaust pipes, spoiler, and rims. You can even install nitrous for supersonic getaways.

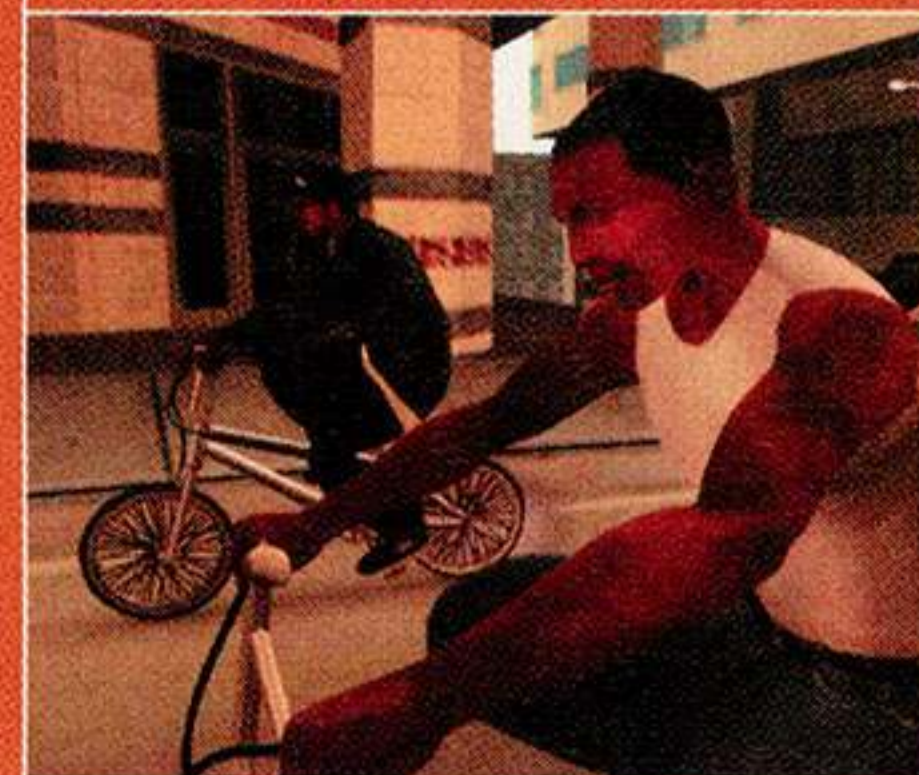
Different cars allow for different mods, making Otto's a frequent stop. Of course, all of these mods'll cost you, but a few muggings in San Fierro's rip-off of the Presidio will fatten that wallet. ➤

## New in Town: Shaping Up

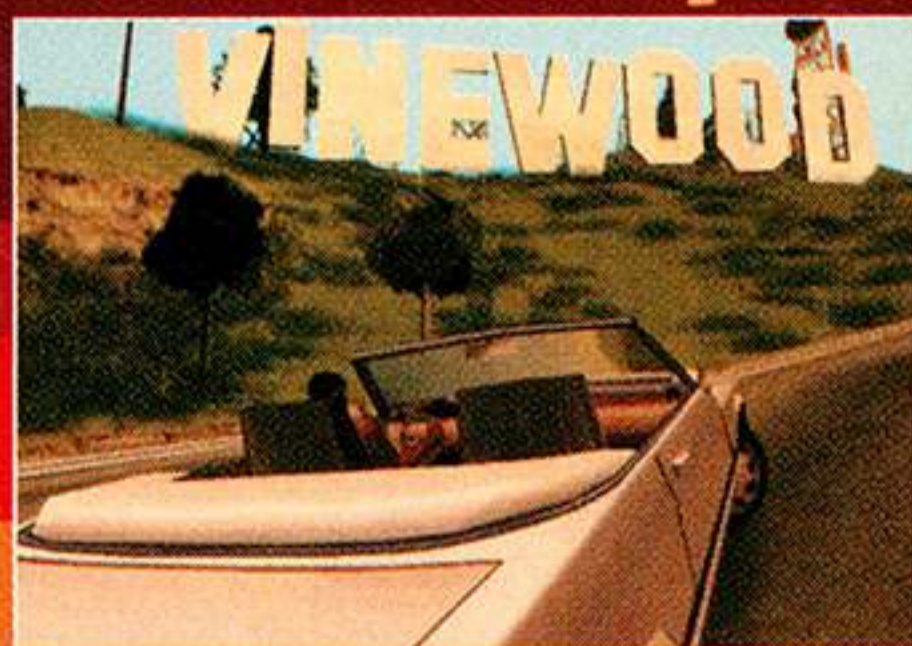
Eating helps you stay sharp and builds your new stamina bar, but don't go hog wild on the fast food. Overeat all the time and your body will go Pillsbury Doughboy (binge too much in one sitting and you'll even puke). To keep your weight sensible, feel the burn while pedaling your BMX, shoot some hoops, or hit the gym. At San Fierro's dojo, you can hop on a workout cycle or pump iron. The latter is a sort of minigame, requiring you to hit buttons *Track & Field*-style to complete reps.



■ I know kung fu: Turn hands and feet into lethal weapons at the dojo.







■ Turf wars ravish Los Santos' streets, but mad bank makes for sunnier times.



## PREP SCHOOL

Four steps to get you krunked up for San Andreas...

**Step 1: Hit the road** — Gas up your hydraulic'd Winnebago and bounce your way out of Compton, CA. Scoot north to San Francisco's Upper Haight, then bet on black on the Las Vegas Strip. Head back to Compton with mad skrilla and a backseat full of Fatburger wrappers. Total drive time: 19 hours. Distance: 1,250 miles.



**Step 2: Rent some good hood flicks** — While cruising city to city, fire up *Boyz N the Hood* on the DVD, followed by *Menace II Society* and *Casino*. While *Colors* fits the game's vibe, as does the chase scene in *Bullitt*, both flicks are more dated than the concept of Ebonics.



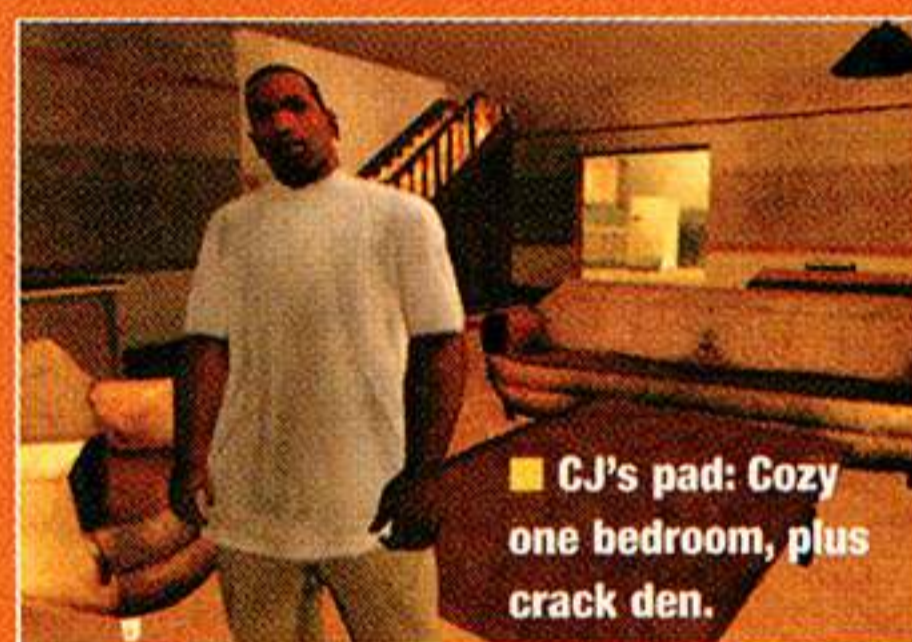
**Step 3: Crank up the Muzak** — Hit Streetside Records for West Coast rap's must-haves. Grab NWA's *Straight Outta Compton*, Dr. Dre's groundbreaking *The Chronic*, and Snoop Doggy Dogg's debut (with the ever so subtle title) *Doggystyle*. Crank those explicit lyrics *Office Space*-style.



**Step 4: Play early '90s urban dress-up** — For the men, throw on an Ocean Pacific top, hop into a pair of overalls with one strap undone, and put Timbos on the toes. For the ladies, a baggy Hypercolor T with shoulder pads, spandex stirrup pants, and a pair of Tretorns will do. Hot, hot, hot! Honorable mention: Those dope-ass MC Hammer pants and a Charlotte Hornets Starter jacket. Make with the street talk (see next page) and you're fierce.



**Lady killer:** While brothel rumors persist, the only thing we know for sure is that the snappier CJ dresses and the more cash he flashes, the more the ladies love him.



■ CJ's pad: Cozy one bedroom, plus crack den.



### ► Welcome to Los Santos

It seems right to end our tour of *San Andreas*' three cities in the town where the game begins: Los Santos, a parody of smoggy L.A. Just don't expect the welcome wagon to roll up—home ain't no heyday, homey. CJ's mom's funeral is interrupted by a drive-by, his hood is teeming with more crack than a late-night Skinemax classic, and his local gang is in disarray. It's time to take the power back—but he can't do it alone.

If you're going to be a leader with followers, start by earning respect. No thug wants to take orders from some punk-ass apprentice. Put the finishing touches on a few missions, bust caps in some rival gangsters, and big up your tag by spray painting it around town. Then, when you're ready, take over some territory. Fo' real. You can now stomp over to a rival's region, start blasting fools, and make that gang's land your own.

Nothing's easy about engaging in a turf war, though; you'll have to survive wave after wave of your rivals' attacks. Survive and you'll expand your posse's territory. "The gangster stuff in this game is something we've just never done before," says Houser.

After a takeover, homies from your local clan, the Orange Grove Families, will start loitering on street corners while wearing the OGF colors. If the opposition (cops, gangs) rolls into your hood, your dawgs will start shooting. It's faultless backup if you've got the po-po on your tail during a mission. Of course, newly copped turf must be defended—at some point there's gonna be young blood from a competing gang wanting to make a name for himself.

Still, you won't have to defend your area alone. With enough respect you can recruit your own personal posse. Step up to any perp wearing like-colored gear and ask him to join the fight. If your rep's high enough, he'll pledge allegiance by throwing up the Orange Grove Families gang sign. If your rep's too low, he'll ignore your request, tip back his 40, and guzzle. ►

### New in Town: Get up and Get Down

In previous *GTAs*, you felt like you had freedom. But while carving up innocents with a chain saw and jackin' rides offered a nice approximation of autonomy, you still suffered plenty of restrictions. In *San Andreas*, all bets are off. You can swim and dive down into the depths. You can climb fences and walls and clamber onto the tops of boxes. Grab a Dodo airplane and you can soar three times higher than in *Vice City*. How's that for a state of independence?





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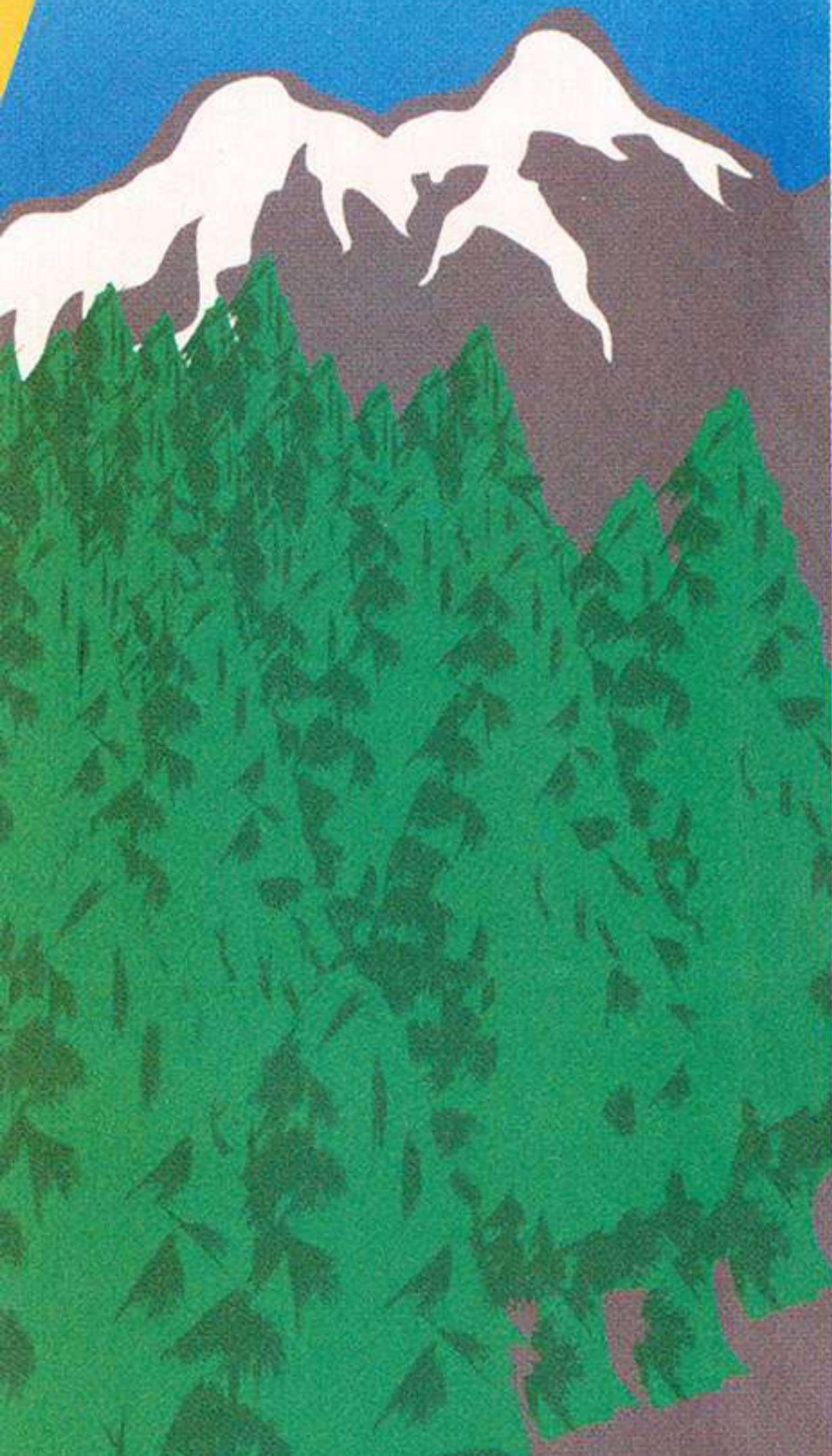
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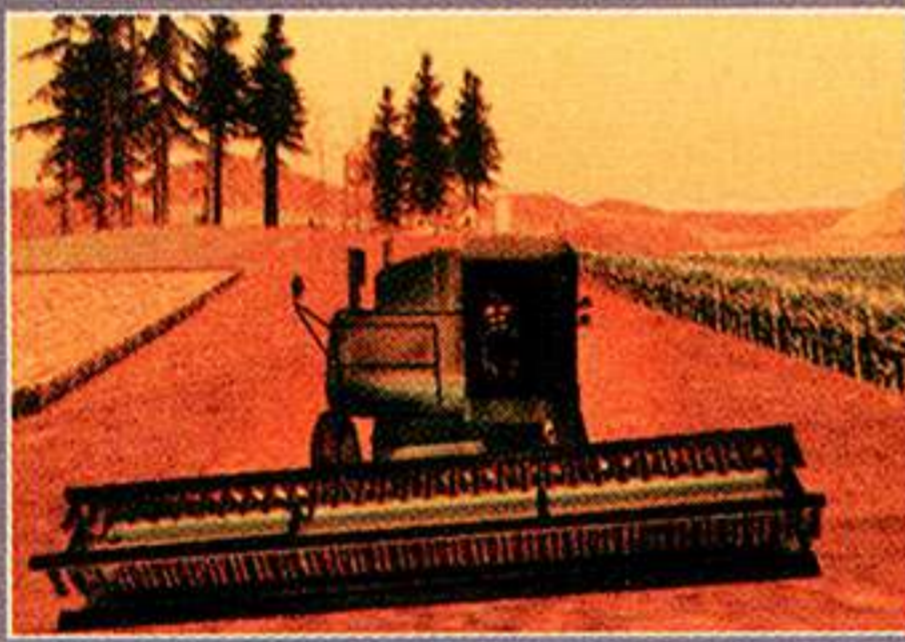
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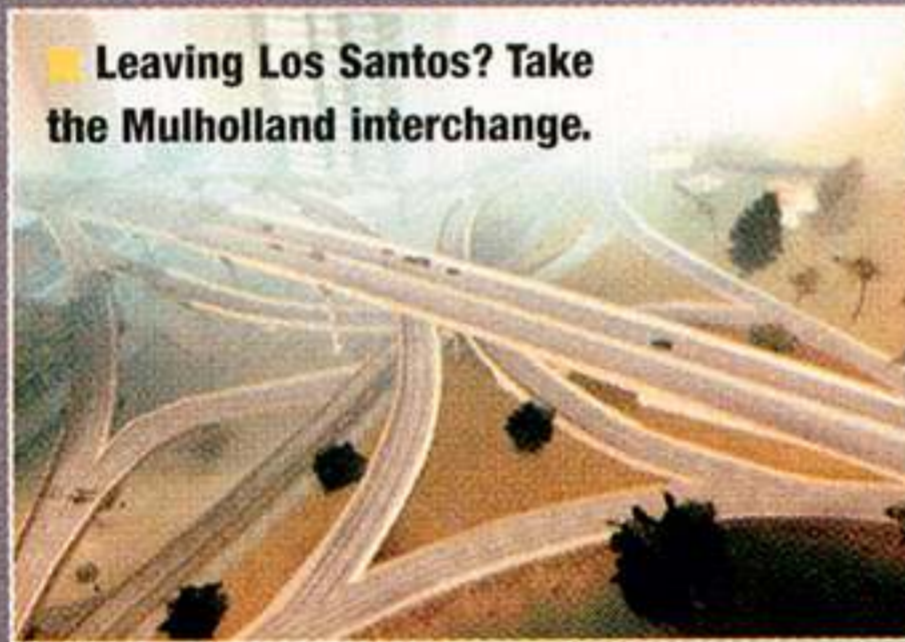




■ If the rednecks don't get you, beware of their wives. Who are also their cousins.



■ Leaving Los Santos? Take the Mulholland interchange.



## WORDS ON THE STREET

Nothing separates streetwise guys from Backstreet Boys rejects like bad vernacular. We've got your back with this short list of early '90s slang. We suggest saying the urban term in the voice of a thug, then stating the definition in the vocal stylings of *Revenge of the Nerds'* lead poindexter Louis Skolnick.

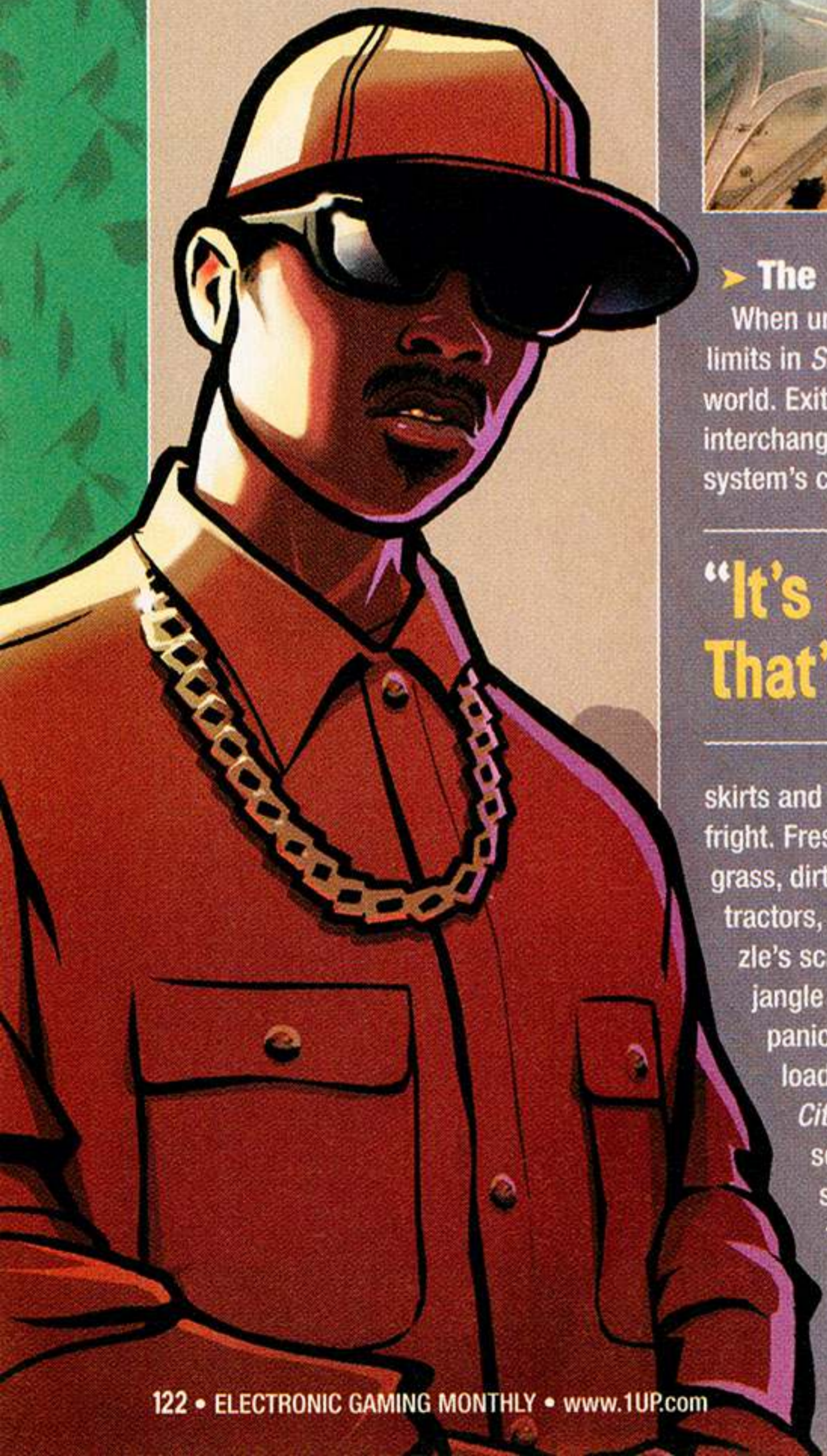
### WHEN YOU SAY:

### IT MEANS:

Bounce	To leave
Cap	To shoot
The 5-0	The police
Chronic	Top-shelf marijuana
Forty	A 40-ounce malt-liquor beverage
Gat	Gun
Grill	One's face
Grimey	Selfish
Crunk	A state of excitement or enthusiasm
Nine	9mm pistol
Skrilla	Money
Slangin'	Dealing drugs
Snaps on the petrol	Money for gas
Chickenhead	A materialistic woman ▶
Yo, G!	Hello, friend!



**Street cleaner:** As CJ rides up the respect ladder, young gangstas like this one will swear allegiance to the Orange Grove Families and help CJ out during missions.



### ▶ The great outdoors

When urban cats step outside of the city limits in *San Andreas*, it's a whole new world. Exit off the Los Santos Mulholland interchange (a nod to the L.A. freeway system's cloverleaves), head into the out-

hiding place when the law-dogs are hot on your tail. Going from city to city can take anywhere from five to 10 minutes on the highway, but if you want to bumble around on the varied topography (including deserts, forests, and mountains), you can

**"It's not just a gangbanging game. That's part of it."**

—Rockstar VP of Creative Development Dan Houser

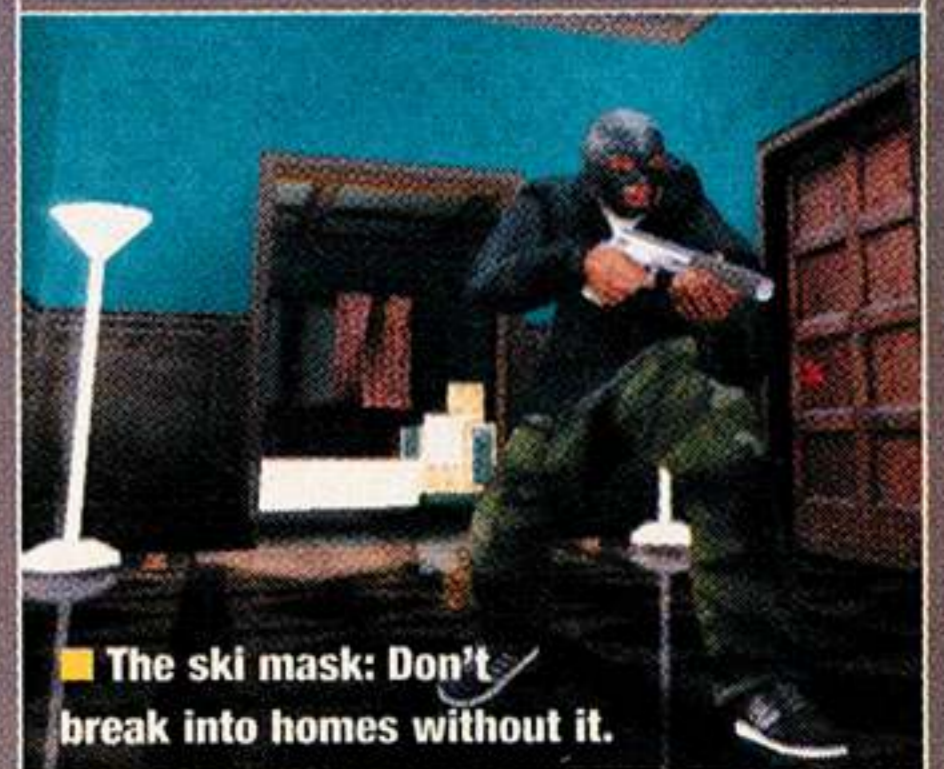
skirts and beyond, and get ready for a fright. Fresh air, scores of trees, unsullied grass, dirt roads, small towns, one-seat tractors, combine harvesters—that shizzle's scary! Especially when the jingle jangle of *Deliverance* smarts your tympanic. But at least you won't have load times busting the mood. In *Vice City*, crossing bridges means a 10-second blackout—one you won't suffer from when driving through the state of San Andreas. Ever. The outlandish size of the wilderness makes it a perfect

stunt jump for hours without even seeing the haze of the inner-city smog. Best advice: Swindle the new and improved Dodo and wing it from one end of the state to the other.

Just be sure to head back to your hometown when you've got some dough. "The good thing about Los Santos is you start there and it's one vibe, but then you come back later in the game and you're much more Hollywood," Houser says. "To see a city from two sides—after spending weeks of real time away from it—is a very cool thing." 🐛

### New in Town: Grand Theft Residence

Forget O-Dawg-style liquor store holdups in *San Andreas*—now you can rob someone's house! The latest in *GTA* side missions, burglary has you heisting a moving truck, then cleaning out some poor sap's crib. Grab a ski mask from a local store to enter full-time stealth mode and bring a bat or a knife to keep the killing quiet if anyone's home. Check all the rooms to gank the most valuable, easiest-to-carry items, like TVs and stereos. Then go sell it all!



■ The ski mask: Don't break into homes without it.



EGM PRESENTS

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PlayStation®2

KONAMI





# review crew

poking, prodding, pinching



■ *Def Jam Fight for NY's* Bone Crusher says, "I swear I won't rest until my beer gut is *this* big."

## DIRECTORY

### MULTIPLATFORM

- |   |   |                                   |
|---|---|-----------------------------------|
| <b>124</b> Star Wars Battlefront          | <b>132</b> Def Jam Fight for NY         | <b>140</b> Headhunter: Redemption |
| <b>128</b> The Guy Game                   | <b>136</b> Juiced                       |                                   |
| <b>128</b> Test Drive: Eve of Destruction | <b>136</b> Terminator 3: The Redemption |                                   |
| <b>130</b> Second Sight                   | <b>138</b> Mega Man X Command Mission   |                                   |
| <b>130</b> ShellShock: Nam '67            | <b>138</b> Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2005    |                                   |

### PLAYSTATION 2

- |   |                                    |
|---|------------------------------------|
| <b>140</b> Katamari Damacy                | <b>144</b> Shadow Hearts: Covenant |
| <b>142</b> Sly 2: Band of Thieves         | <b>144</b> Under the Skin          |
| <b>143</b> Dance Dance Revolution Extreme |                                    |
| <b>143</b> Gradius V                      |                                    |



■ *Star Wars: Ewok Hunter* takes one step closer to reality...and Ted Nugent books a flight to Endor.



**Disturbances in the Force**  
Even under ideal conditions we came across choppy performance in our online clashes. Plus, there's no way to deal with disruptive turncoats. Not good, considering how tempting it'll be for some to join the dark side and waste their own team with an X-wing.

PS2/XB

ONLINE  
(PS2/XB)



# STAR WARS BATTLEFRONT

## Never tell me the odds

**SHAWN:** How do you warm over Hoth, the snowball planet that has served as a setting in almost every game from the fabled galaxy far, far away? Put online players in an imposing AT-AT and on every tauntaun and turret it tramples. Based on all the big movie melees—everything from forest free-for-alls to bot and clone clashes—*Battlefront* is the ultimate fantasy fulfillment for *Star Wars* fans with lightspeed Internet links.

Making nice with strangers is a must. My favorite friendly moment: riding in a Republic gunship, calling out targets for teammates on each of its cannons as I tried to set our sniper down on a spire overlooking the droid army's depot. It's when you quit cooperating that dubious

balance disturbs the Force. Imperial walkers, for instance, are practically impervious. Wander into one without air support from a trained X-wing pilot who's got a proton torpedo to spare, and they'll hear you bitch and moan from Alderaan to the Outer Rim.

Solo play sits on the dark side for the same reasons. *Battlefront's* computer-controlled bots can't compensate for human help or competition. Sure, you can get one to sit shotgun in a snowspeeder or repair your shot-up ship, but any sort of



complex strategy is out of the question, meaning you might spend the entire match single-handedly saving the day. Not that that's entirely difficult when the enemy steers its tanks into trees, and even their Jedi just stands around staring into space.

**SHOE:** Someone made a videogame out of all those *Star Wars* toys and imaginary battles you had as a kid. It's a dream come true for any *Wars* geek, old or new—that is, if you can handle the choppy action that looks like someone is stop-motion-capturing plastic Darth Vader action figures. Our playtests rarely ran smoothly, whether it was three of us in a private game or 12 on a dedicated server





## THE RATING SYSTEM

0-4.5 BAD	5.0-6.5 FAIR	7.0-10 GOOD
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At EGM, we evaluate only games that have been deemed final and reviewable by their publishers. Three editors rate each game independently, and we use the whole scale. **5.0 IS AVERAGE.**

## AWARDS



**Platinum** — straight 10s. For games that are life-changing.



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



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



**GAME OF THE MONTH**  
The highest-scoring game each month gets a star.



**SHAME OF THE MONTH**  
The lowest-rated game with unanimously bad scores.

### XBOX

- 146 Fable
- 150 Galleon
- 150 Kingdom Under Fire: The Crusaders

### GAMECUBE

- 151 Donkey Konga
- 151 WWE Day of Reckoning

### GBA

- 152 Advance Guardian Heroes
- 152 Mario Pinball Land
- 153 Pokémon FireRed/LeafGreen

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

**E-Everyone:** Saccharine fun for the whole family; dancing elves, rampant sharing, and possibly Smurfs.

**T-Teen:** Like PG-13 movies, Teen games often feature fisticuffs, mild violence, and madcap antics.

**M-Mature:** For the 18-and-over crowd. Intense violence, gore, pixilated sex, drugs; parents no likey.



■ Another *Star Wars* game, another battle for Hoth (above), but this time the Imperial walkers are loaded with spotty teens.

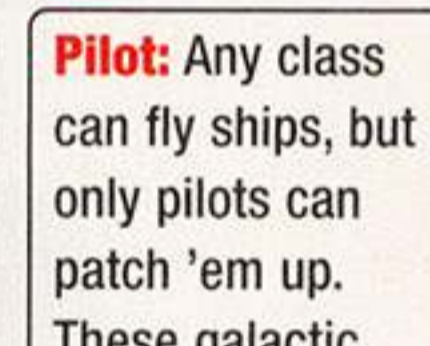


### Your Place in the Cosmos

Playing as one of the following five classes, you'll find as much action on foot as you will in the cockpit.



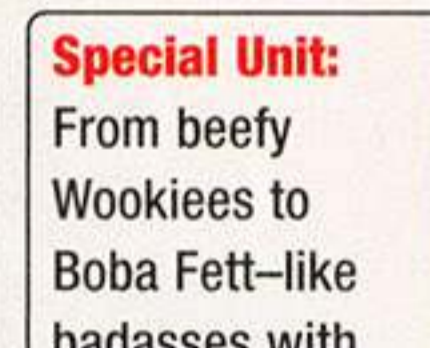
**Scout:** Sharpshootin' scouts pack sniper rifles and pocket-sized probe droids for staking out the field.



**Pilot:** Any class can fly ships, but only pilots can patch 'em up. These galactic grease monkeys also double as medics and can dispense health and ammo to hurting allies.



**Assault Trooper:** Menace vehicles with a variety of big-bang munitions including mines, thermal detonators, and missile launchers.



**Special Unit:** From beefy Wookiees to Boba Fett-like badasses with jetpacks, each of *Battlefront's* four factions features its own signature shock troops.



**Infantry:** Standard grunts (Rebels and 'troopers alike) do the job with a blast rifle and several grenades.

provided by LucasArts. Still, fun I had, from blasting battle droids on Naboo to taking down lumbering AT-ATs with tow cables (with buddy Shawn piloting the snowspeeder). It helps a lot that the fields are littered with dumb computer-controlled bots—they provide lots of cannon fodder and the illusion that the battles are huge and epic, straight from the films.

**OFFICIAL PS MAG—CHRIS:** There are games based around the *Star Wars* universe (e.g., *Knights of the Old Republic*), and then there are flat-out *STAR WARS* games. And when it comes to titles based directly on familiar content, *Battlefront* is tough to beat. Every ground battle you've seen is covered (along with several you haven't), each in the epic style it deserves. It's a truly beautiful game, too, spanning

from the lush forest of Ewok-infested Endor to the Tatooine desert (complete with hostile Tusken Raiders). And it's just plain cool to see Darth Vader walking around kicking ass. Vehicle implementation could use some work—starships are just too fast for practical use—and things get slow online even if your room isn't completely full, but those are minor issues. Any *Star Wars* fan will love this. No question. 🚀

**Good:** Massive, multiplayer *Star Wars* warfare  
**Bad:** The Force forgot about single player  
**Grease 'Em:** Ewoks and Gungans



THE VERDICTS (out of 10)	8.0	8.0	9.0
	SHAWN	SHOE	CHRIS

Publisher: LucasArts  
 Developer: Pandemic  
 Players: PS2 1-2 (2-16 online),  
 XB 1-2 (2-24 online)  
 ESRB: Teen  
[www.lucasarts.com](http://www.lucasarts.com)



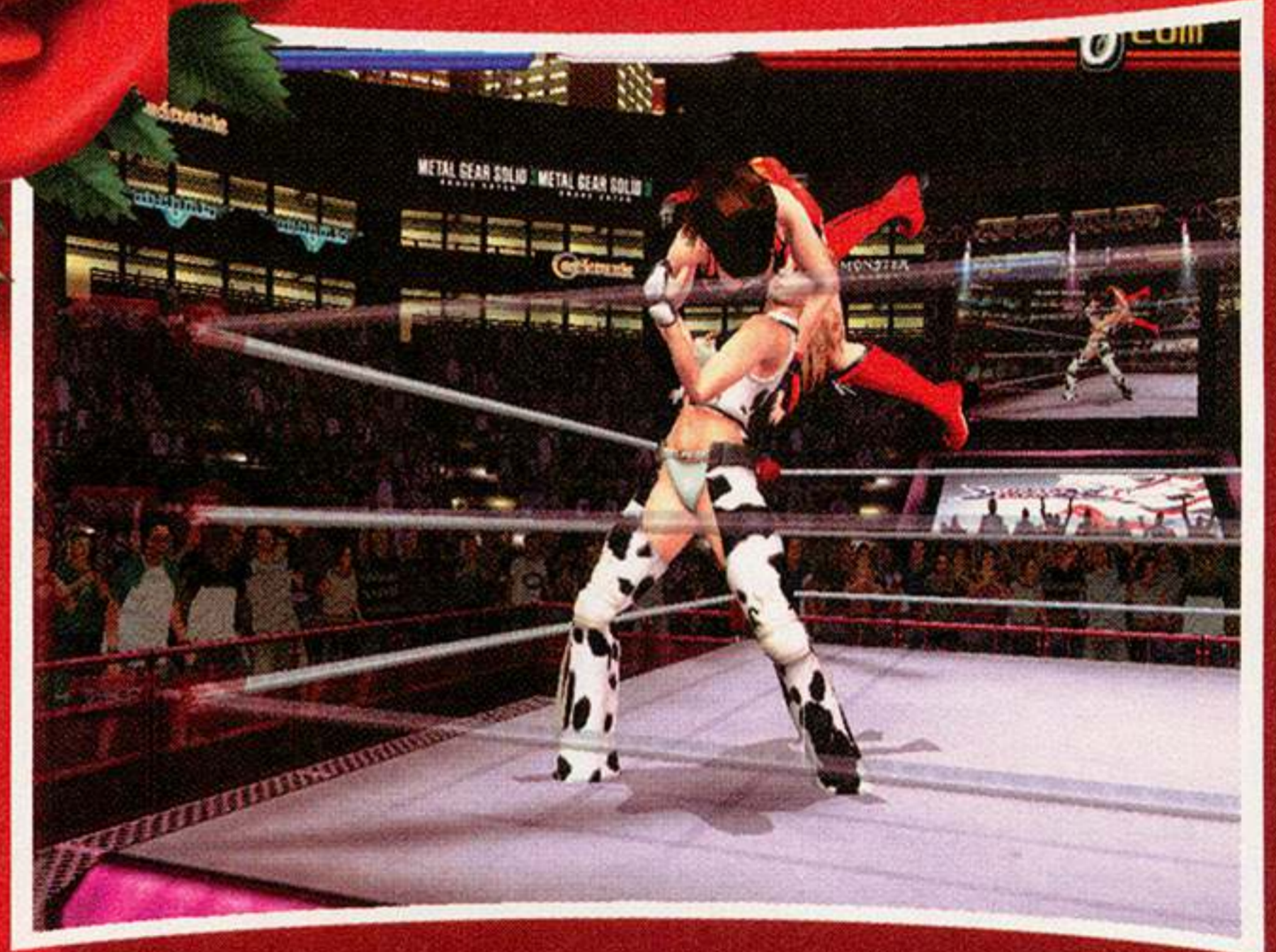
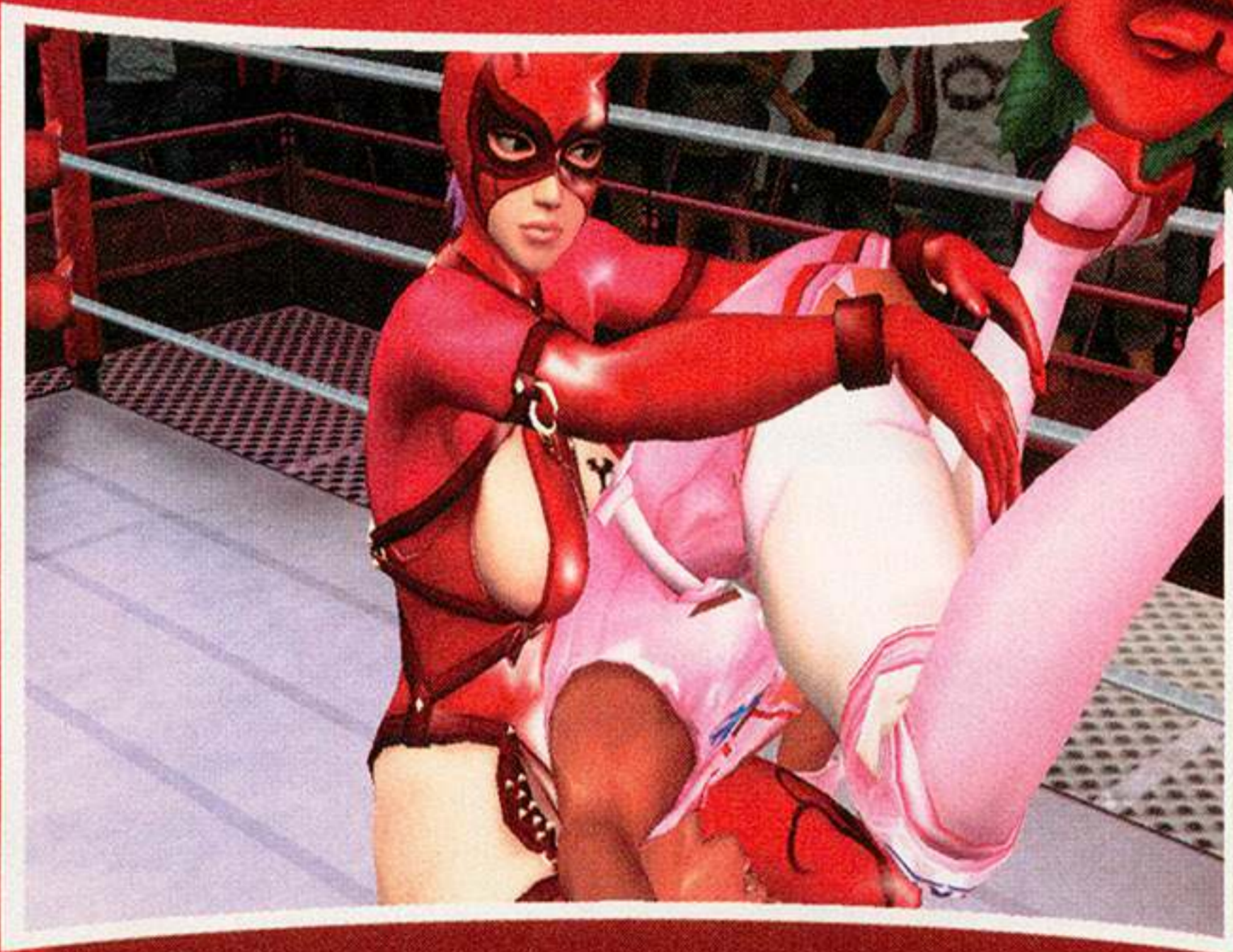


**EVEN WHEN YOU LOSE,  
YOU WIN.**



"We're impressed... the game plays as good as it looks." – PSM

"Looks amazing... plays fantastic." – Play Magazine | "Face it. You've always wanted this." – 1up.com



They're on top of you. You're on top of them. Does it really matter? All female wrestlers. 10,000 polygons per character. And hardcore wrestling gameplay. It's Rumble Roses and it's definitely a win-win situation.

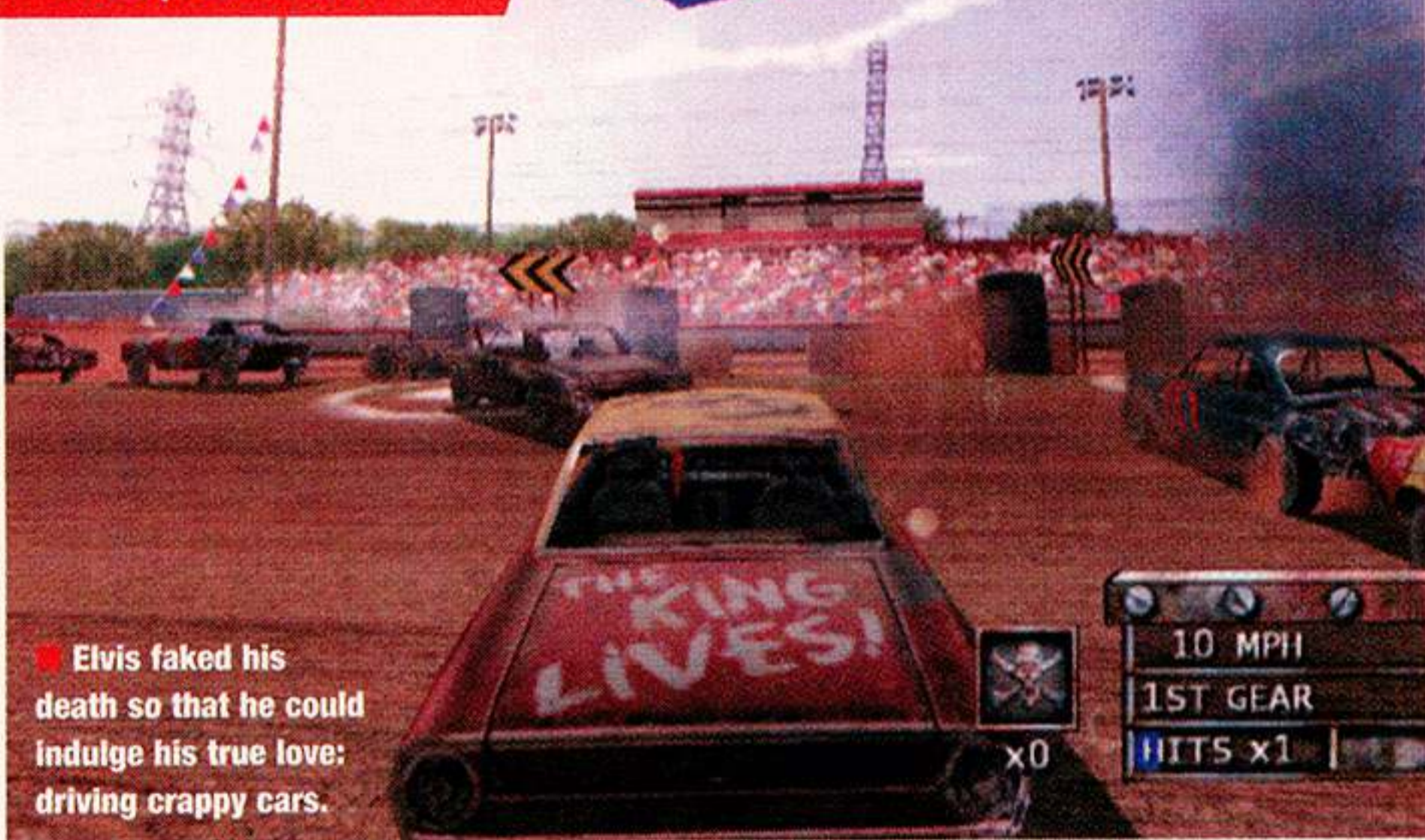
# RUMBLE ROSES



PlayStation 2







Elvis faked his death so that he could indulge his true love: driving crappy cars.

PS2/XB

# TEST DRIVE: EVE OF DESTRUCTION

Redneck rampage



**Good:** Driving classic beaters like the Ford Pinto  
**Bad:** Pintos aren't actually, you know, good  
**Should've Been Named:** *Test Drive: The Simple Life*



**DAN L:** As the racing genre grows ever more complex, customizable, and corpulent, it's nice to see a game that is simple in its premise and fun in its execution. *Test Drive: Eve of Destruction* proves you can teach an old series new tricks, as it has successfully changed lanes from exotic-car-powered racer to grits-fueled back roads basher.

*Eve of Destruction* sets gamers up with a simple choice: Win the race and advance to the next level or explore the outer limits of physics while trying to produce the most outrageous head-on crashes. If you get overly obsessed with mayhem, no worries...destroying other racers earns points toward unlocking new cars, modes, and other nifty items.

The game's wide array of races runs the gamut from interesting to bizarre, but one constant factor lessens the overall impact—the racin' be slow. Quarter-century-old school buses and '70s-era compact cars make the dash to 60 mph more of a gentle amble.

**DEMIAN:** Uh...did we play the same game? *Eve of Destruction*, right, the one with

floaty, slow-driving, crappy cars and a tediously repetitive career mode? I give Atari credit for taking the *Test Drive* series where it's never gone before, but I can't say I enjoyed the trip. The arcade mode school bus and chain races (in which you tow another car) are good for a laugh, but the rest gets old quick. The best part was that I got to drive a beat-up AMC Pacer look-alike...but is anyone besides me going to consider that a good thing?

**OFFICIAL PS MAG—JOHN D:** If *Burnout 3* is the ultimate expression of racing and destruction, then *Eve of Destruction* is the hillbilly, down-on-the farm alternative. Think of it as the redneck racer that will slowly but surely sneak into your game-play rotation as a quiet but guilty pleasure. Handling-wise, it's a bit on the slippery side, and contrary to the current fashion, it's desperately, desperately sluggish. But *Eve of Destruction* seems to revel in its down-to-earth, country boy demeanor—replete with southern geetaw rawk and chicken-fried locations—and the experience is downright infectious.

THE VERDICTS (OUT OF 10)	7.5	4.5	8.0
	DAN L.	DEMIAN	JOHN D.

Publisher: Atari  
Developer: Monster Games  
Players: PS2 1-2 (3-4 w/Multitap), XB 1-4  
ESRB: Teen

www.atari.com



The ballz minigames (right) do feature actual (if bad) gameplay.

PS2/XB

# THE GUY GAME

Girls gone stupid



When *Girls Gone Wild* meets that lame game show *Street Smarts*, we all lose.

**Good:** Drinking makes this game slightly more fun  
**Bad:** Too much guesswork to see the goods  
**Ballz:** Someone's tech demo turned into boring minigames



**SHOE:** This girls-gone-wild trivia game is mildly challenging at times—like, do you know what "URL" stands for? If so, congrats, you big dork. Several spring break bimbos also attempt to answer the questions in various video bits. If they get them wrong, off comes the top and out comes the boobage. At first, a censor bar obscures the goods, but if you rack up mounds of points, the bar makes way for fuzzy mammaries, then eventually, the full clear view bounces in.

But here's where the game busts: You have to predict what the girls will say to get that full view. You get a pair of choices, but it's a coin flip most of the time. So you have to be *really* good at blind, random guessing or you have to replay the episodes a boring second time through to see what you can get on the Internet for free anyway. It's great that this game exposes college girls who literally don't know how many letters are in the alphabet, but mostly, it's just sad.

**SHANE:** Here's the situation: You desperately want to see women's breasts. I hear ya.

Here are my suggestions. First, you can type the magic word "breasts" into Google Image Search. Or, if you prefer both your lighting and your ladies classy(ish), you can buy an issue of *Playboy*—for nonclassy ladies, *Swank*. Or, if you're a life-hating masochist, you can waste \$40 on *The Guy Game*, spend countless hours answering dumb trivia questions—and guessing if vapid skanks can answer dumb trivia questions (usually not)—and then...maybe see breasts.

**XBN—GREG:** What price, titties? It doesn't take a transvestite-hooker-starved Eddie Murphy to tell you that some sex is entirely too costly. In *The Guy Game*, players must wade through 40 or so minutes of badly shot, badly edited, and badly commented on spring break footage before one of the "hotties" shows her gazooms without any censoring. It's pretty much the death of your videogame—a game featuring naked human females—when the highlight is a series of unimpressive knockoffs of *Marble Madness* and *Skee Ball*. Seek real breasts the old-fashioned way. By begging.

THE VERDICTS (OUT OF 10)	1.5	1.0	0.0
	SHOE	SHANE	GREG

Publisher: Gathering  
Developer: Topheavy  
Players: 1-4  
ESRB: Mature

www.theguygame.com





TWISTED  
GOTTA HAVE ^ SWEET?



# LAMBZILLA

HE'S BAAAAD

*"Shear Terror!" - Helene Kahn, Detroit Enquirer*

*"I smell sequel!" - David Haeg, Idaho Investigator*



Written by: Harry Fleece. Produced by the Wool Bros. Director of Photography: Andy Cuttit. Music by Shears for Fears.

THIS FILM IS NOT YET RATED

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





■ Though you've got two G.I.s with you in this level, they aren't good for much.

■ PS2/XB

# SHELLSHOCK: NAM '67

Me love you not—so—long time

**Good:** The terrors of war, all in videogame form!

**Bad:** Sluggish action, short game

**Best Icon:** Two bunnies humping, for sex with hookers

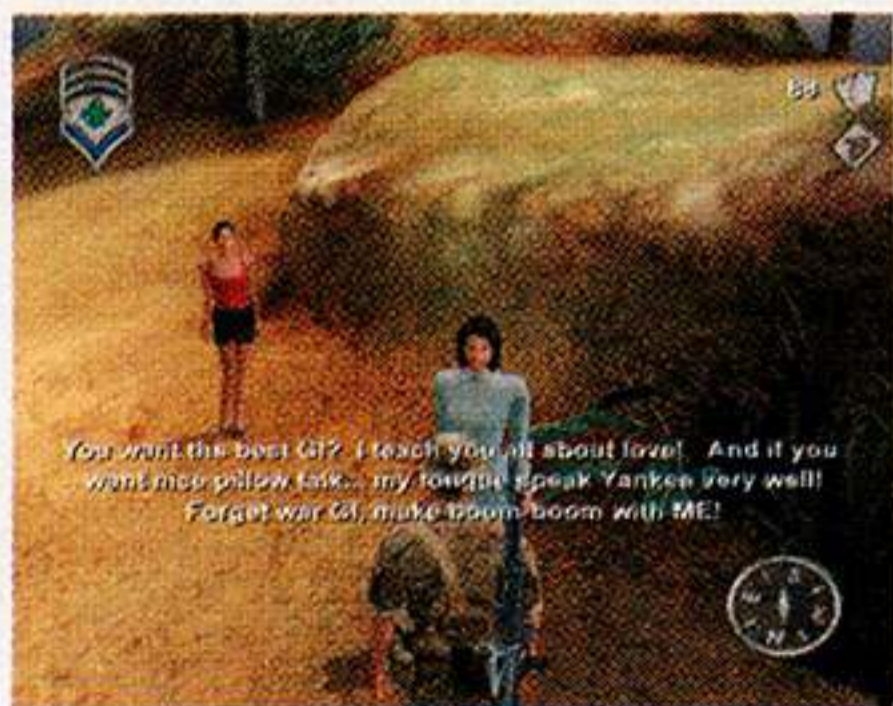


**SHOE:** *ShellShock* is first out of the gate—one of too many wartime shooters releasing soon, all out to prove they know the Vietnam War the best. I have a sense that this will be one of the better ones, with graphic cut-scenes (combined with great voice acting) that'll make you wince when civilians are executed, fellow soldiers turn psychotic, etc. Kids' game, this is not.

So while *ShellShock* does a great job in expressing the s\*\*\*ty mood of the war, the gameplay is more *Captain Corelli's Mandolin* than *Full Metal Jacket*. OK, that's a bit of a stretch, but the action is sluggish and the game's too short, especially with no multiplayer. More disappointing is the wasted potential. *ShellShock* tries to go beyond mere run-and-gun—your'll also have downtime at your base, where you can talk to people, buy stuff, or even pay for some boom-boom with a she-so-horny local gal. These RPG-like features could've been great, but it's all fluff, adding to the ambience but taking up too much time and doing nothing gameplay-wise—so you'll end up skipping it all anyway.

**SHAWN:** Sometimes *ShellShock* paints it perfectly black—at sunset, when the game's washed out, weather-worn graphics make sense; when lead and limbs fly (aim high and Charlie literally loses his head); and in the sack-shriveling moments when you spot scouts in the saw grass or defuse a booby trap seconds before it detonates. Most of the time, though, you're just going through the immoral motions—sniping enemies who eschew cover for suicidal charges, blasting explosive barrels—in a vanilla shoot-em-up with Vietnam War veneer.

**OFFICIAL PS MAG—JOE:** Looking at stills of *ShellShock*, you'd think it's great. But any resemblance it bears to *SOCOM* is swept away the minute you start playing. Slowdown, crappy animation, dumb A.I., and a laggy control scheme are bad enough, but it's the stupendously awful level design—with impassible areas that might as well be invisible walls—that really takes the cake. There's a lot of gameplay here, and it's mildly diverting, but it'd be hard to recommend it over, well, just about any other combat shooter.



THE VERDICTS (OUT OF 10)	7.0	6.0	4.0
	SHOE	SHAWN	JOE

Publisher: Eidos  
Developer: Guerrilla  
Players: 1  
ESRB: Mature

www.eidosinteractive.com

■ PS2/XB/GC

# SECOND SIGHT

Metal Gear collides clumsily with Miss Cleo



■ For a game about mental powers, there's an awful lot of shootin' going on.

**Good:** Nifty, novel psychic abilities

**Bad:** Deplorable graphics on the PS2 version

**Try Instead:** *Psi-Ops: The Mindgate Conspiracy*



**JON D:** For a game that's built around using your head, *Second Sight* requires less brainpower than you'd think. The first third of the game is a slurry of clichéd plot points, mundane gunplay, and needlessly lengthy training. But give it some time to bloom and you'll eventually be rewarded with more dynamic psychic abilities that make whacking the scores of faceless troops and guards more interesting...if you're disciplined enough to use them. I found myself too easily able to half-ass my way through most situations with fast feet and an automatic weapon instead of the intended stealth and mind games.

The PS2 game's supercrappy graphics and sometimes-spotty controls often make psychic-skill execution awkward and unexciting, anyway, so there wasn't much incentive to try beyond my own curiosity. Shy away from this graphically challenged version in favor of an Xbox or Cube copy if you have the luxury.

**JOHN R:** Maybe I like my games simpler as I get older, unlike that young Turk Jon D. *Second Sight* combines the best parts of *TimeSplitters* (huge levels, fluid controls, and gorgeous art), throws in surprisingly satisfying stealth gameplay that's not overly complex, and then adds one of the most compelling videogame narratives in recent memory. The story itself is interesting, but what's really special is how the events unfold over two separate time periods, keeping you guessing about what really happened right to the end. Don't let this one slip under your radar—it's definitely worth playing!

**1UP.COM—MATT:** You don't buy a Ferrari to run errands—you buy it to drive fast (and possibly to show your support of the color yellow). So why does a game focus on cool-sounding super-powers like telekinesis only to make their primary uses to flip switches?

Say the developers wanted to make *Second Sight* more of a stealth game—fair enough, since in that case you'd expect subtle powers, but odd camera angles spoil the sneaking. *Second Sight* is technologically well crafted, with good controls, graphics, and story—but without the freedom of superior mentalist *Psi-Ops*.



■ Main character John Vattic with mental powers (top), Vattic pre-mentalism (above).

THE VERDICTS (OUT OF 10)	5.5	7.5	6.5
	JON D.	JOHN R.	MATT

Publisher: Codemasters  
Developer: Free Radical  
Players: 1  
ESRB: Teen

www.codemasters.com





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Fight for NY's stages are full of environmental hazards you can use to your advantage...most aren't quite so obvious, though.



**Mastering the Art of Rap-Fu**  
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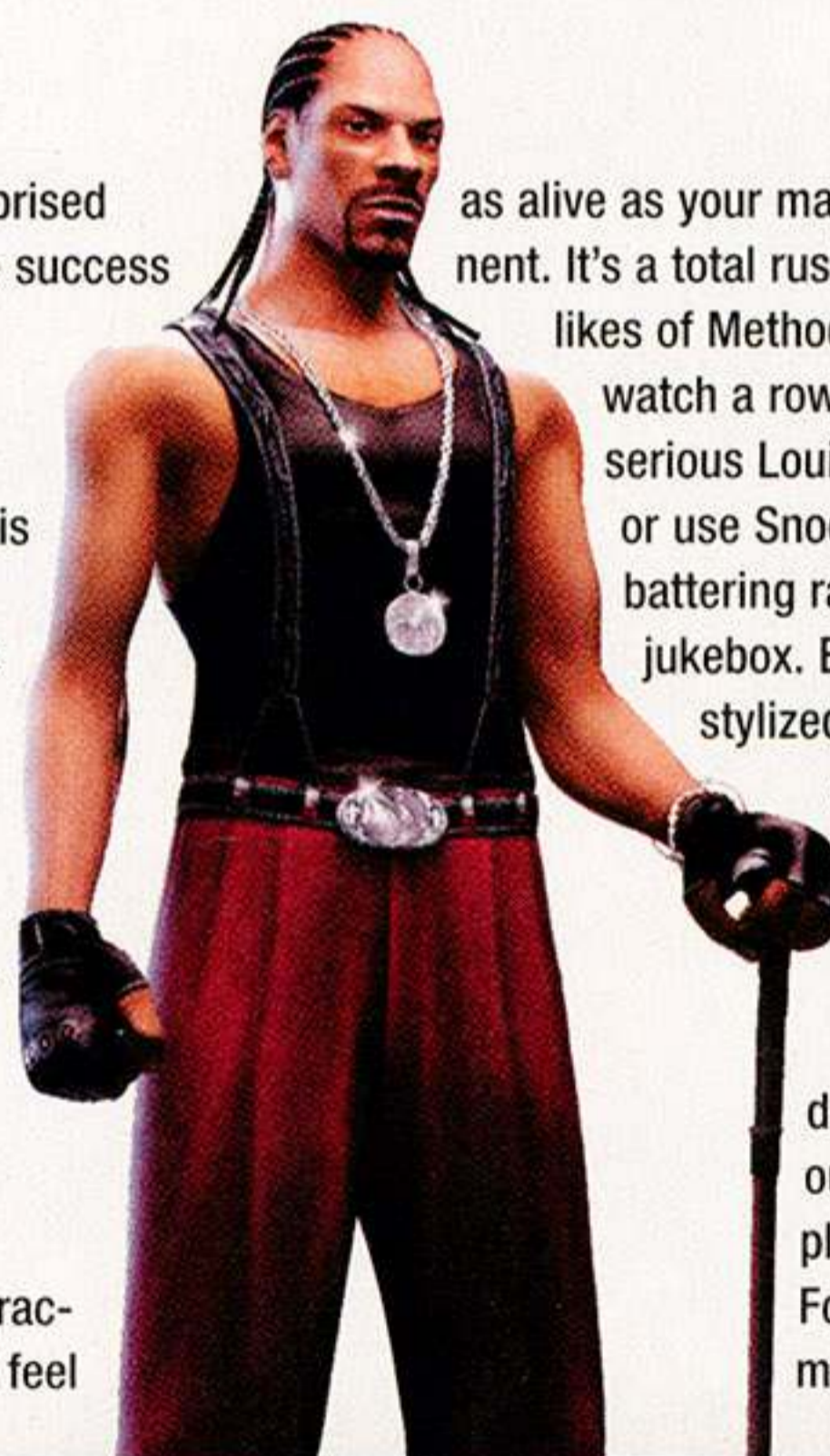
PS2/XB/GC

# DEF JAM FIGHT FOR NY

## Battle rap

**BRYAN:** While *Def Jam Vendetta* surprised many (including yours truly) with the success of its hip-hop-studded fisticuffs, *Vendetta* was really just a *WWE* title pimped out in Def Jam clothing. But that ain't the case in *Fight for NY*; this one enters the underground fight-club scene with a completely unique brand of ass whuppin'. And even if you've always been more of a lover than a fighter, the game will still knock your block off.

All you need is a few bouts under your belt to understand the appeal of this blood sport. *Fight for NY* is a perfect blend of karate chops, body slams, submission holds, and other brawling techniques with highly interactive and visually striking arenas that feel



as alive as your master-of-the-mic opponent. It's a total rush every time you toss the likes of Method Man into the crowd and watch a rowdy onlooker deliver a serious Louisville Slugger beatdown, or use Snoop Dogg's noggin as a battering ram to bust up a nearby jukebox. Each environment is a

stylized house of pain, and discovering all the different opportunities for inflicting discomfort is sickly fulfilling.

*Fight for NY* also deserves a major shout-out for what it accomplishes outside the ring. For starters, your custom-made pugilists—yes, you

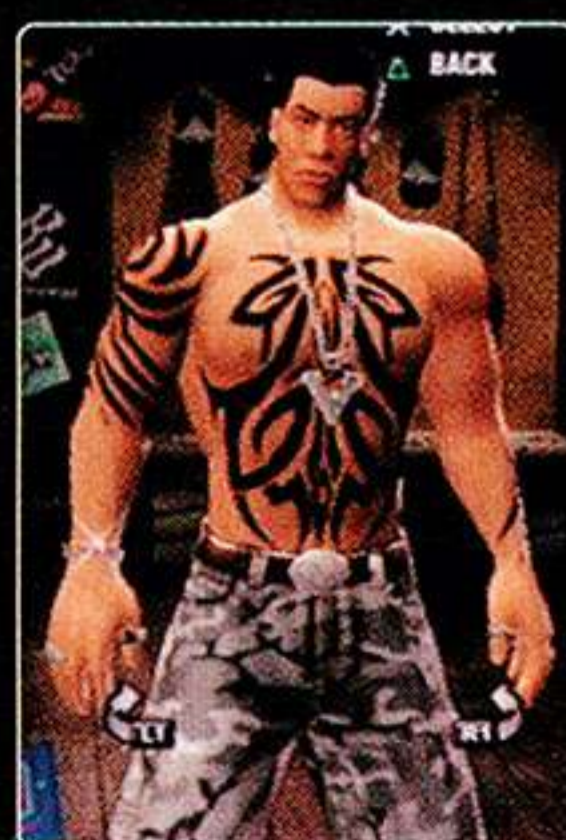
can create your own, finally—look as hardcore as the game's big-name talent. And unlike *Vendetta*, the story mode is quite meaty and stockpiled with challenging match types (it'll take much more than two extended play sessions to reach its conclusion). Even the narrative scores a KO, thanks to its unexpected turn of events and Hollywood-worthy voiceovers.

Yet that doesn't mean the game leaves you without a scratch. The breezy tutorial neglects to mention a few key in-fight mechanics (for instance, exactly how to perform the various counters), and A.I. opponents always seem to muster a comeback. Nevertheless, you'll still want to reserve a spot on the undercard of this extreme fighting circuit.

**SHAWN:** Say hello to knockdown, drag-out, hit-you-so-hard-you-burp-the-milk-you-drank-as-a-baby brawling. Once you face off in a ring of fire, ▶

### Stylin' and Profilin'

*Fight for NY*'s all-new character creator may seem shallow at first, but progress through the game's story mode and you'll swear you've just landed in *Hip-Hop Eye for the Straight Guy*. Victories earn you tons of fresh gear from brands such as Phat Farm, Nike, and Def Jam University. You can also deck your protege out in all sorts of gaudy jewelry (a requirement for any high roller). And don't forget to visit the barbershop to clean up that tight fade.



"Ink Stain"



"Fruity Lincoln"



"Mr. Boyakasha"



Once an A.I. fighter hits the danger zone, he'll kick it up and come out swinging. Damn sandbaggers.

**Good:** Unmatched environment interaction  
**Bad:** Cheap-ass A.I. opponents  
**Best Trash Talker:** Redman



THE VERDICTS  
(OUT OF 10)

8.5  
BRYAN

8.5  
SHAWN

9.0  
GIANCARLO

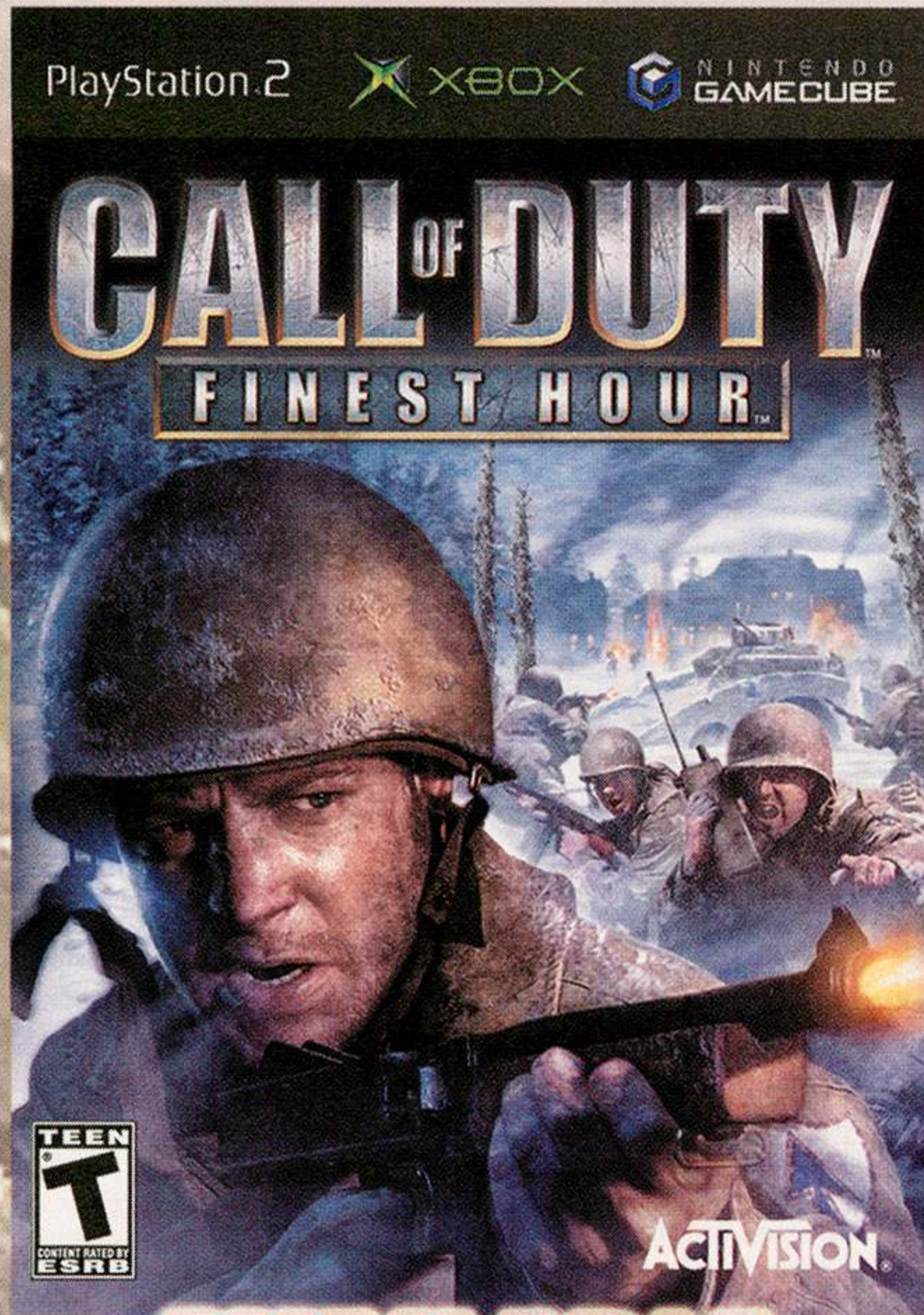
Publisher: EA Games  
Developer: EA Canada/AKI  
Players: PS2 1-2 (3-4 w/Multitap), XB and GC 1-4  
ESRB: Mature

www.defjamfightforny.com



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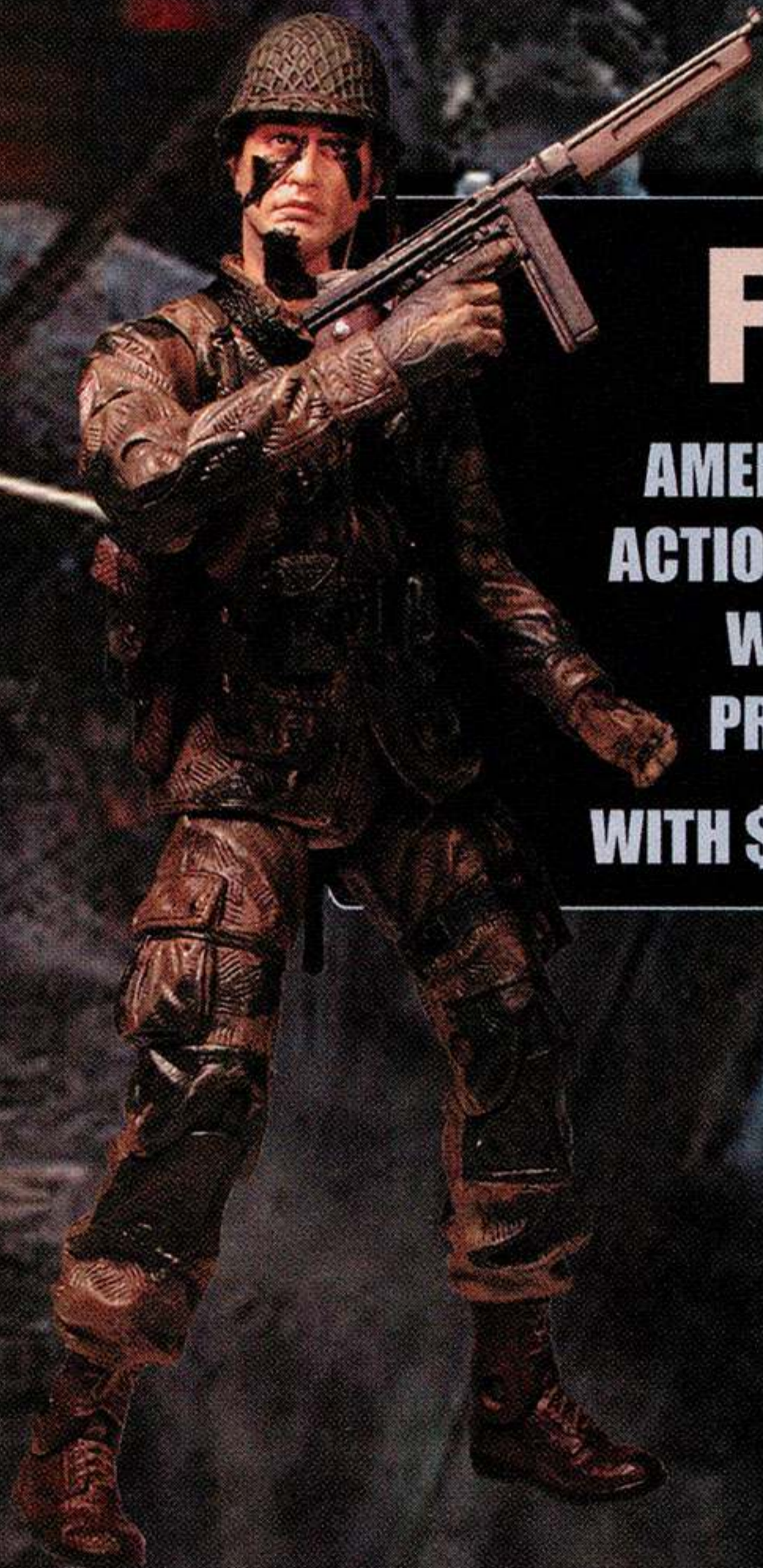


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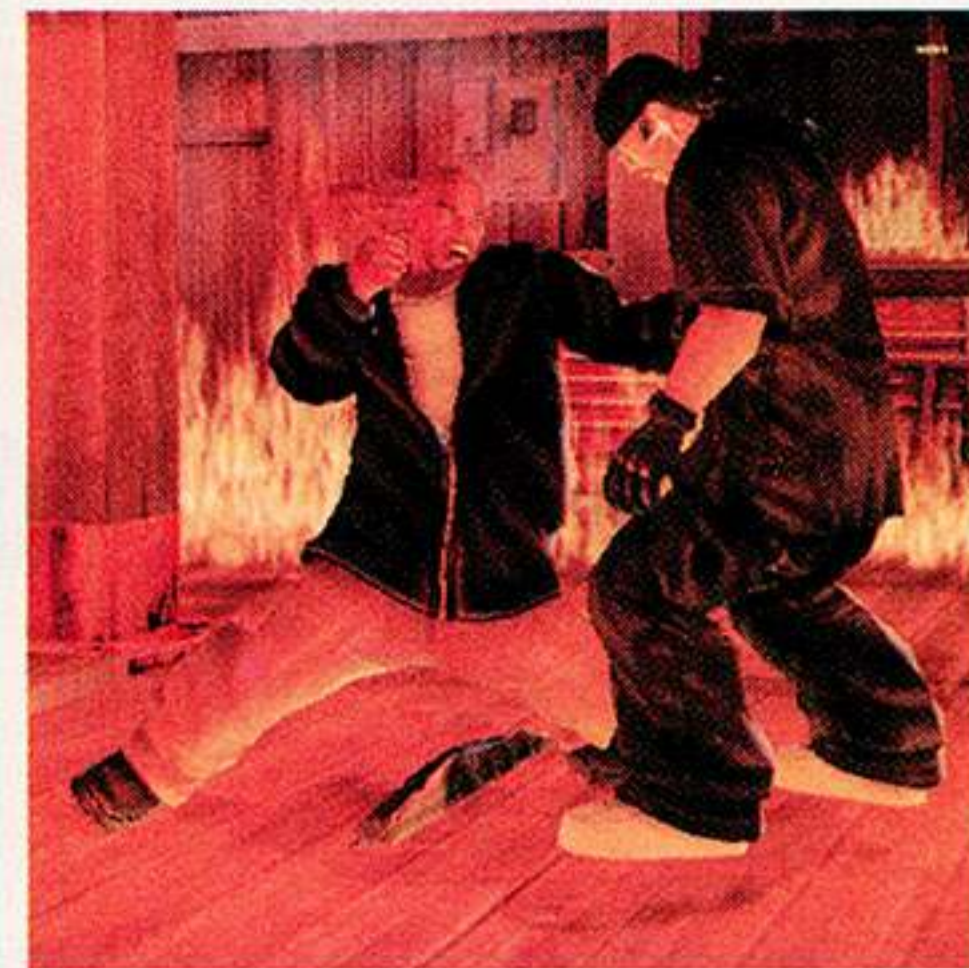
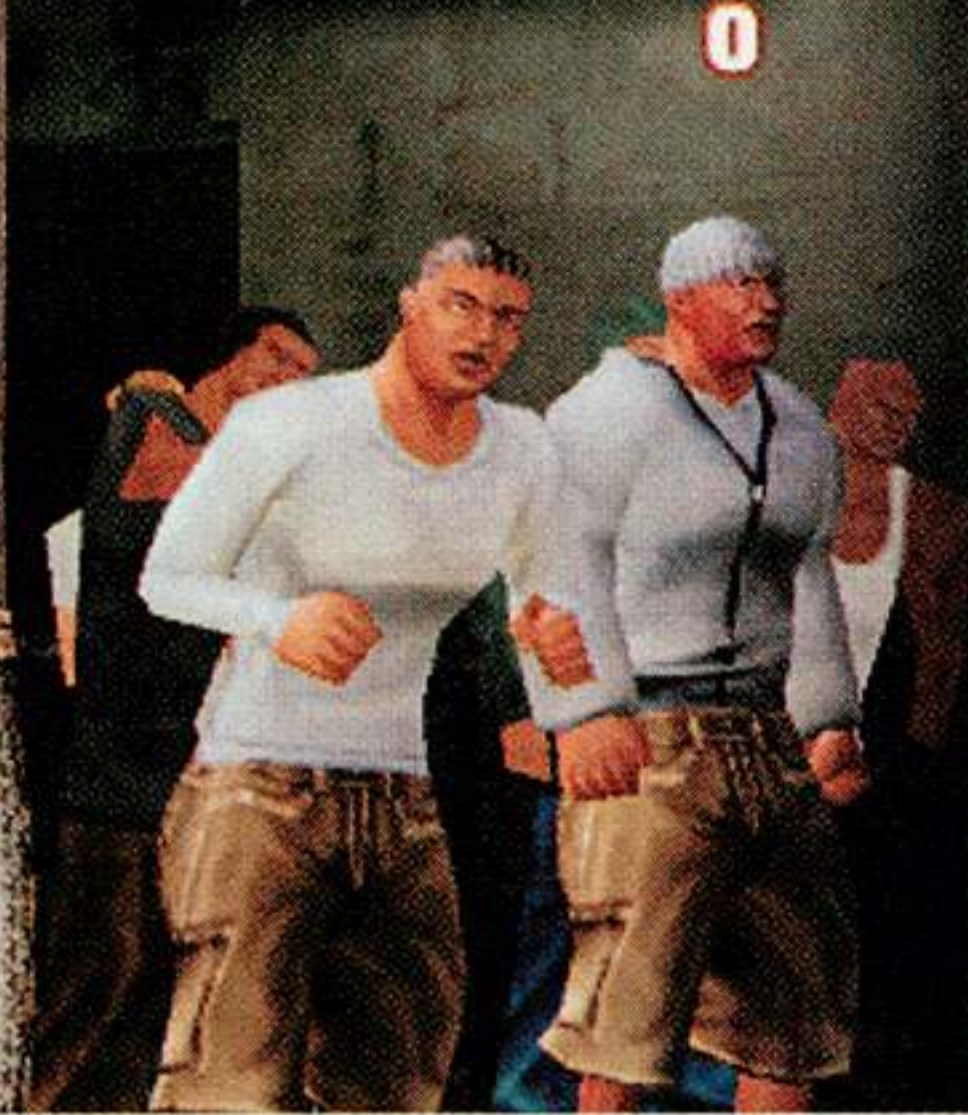
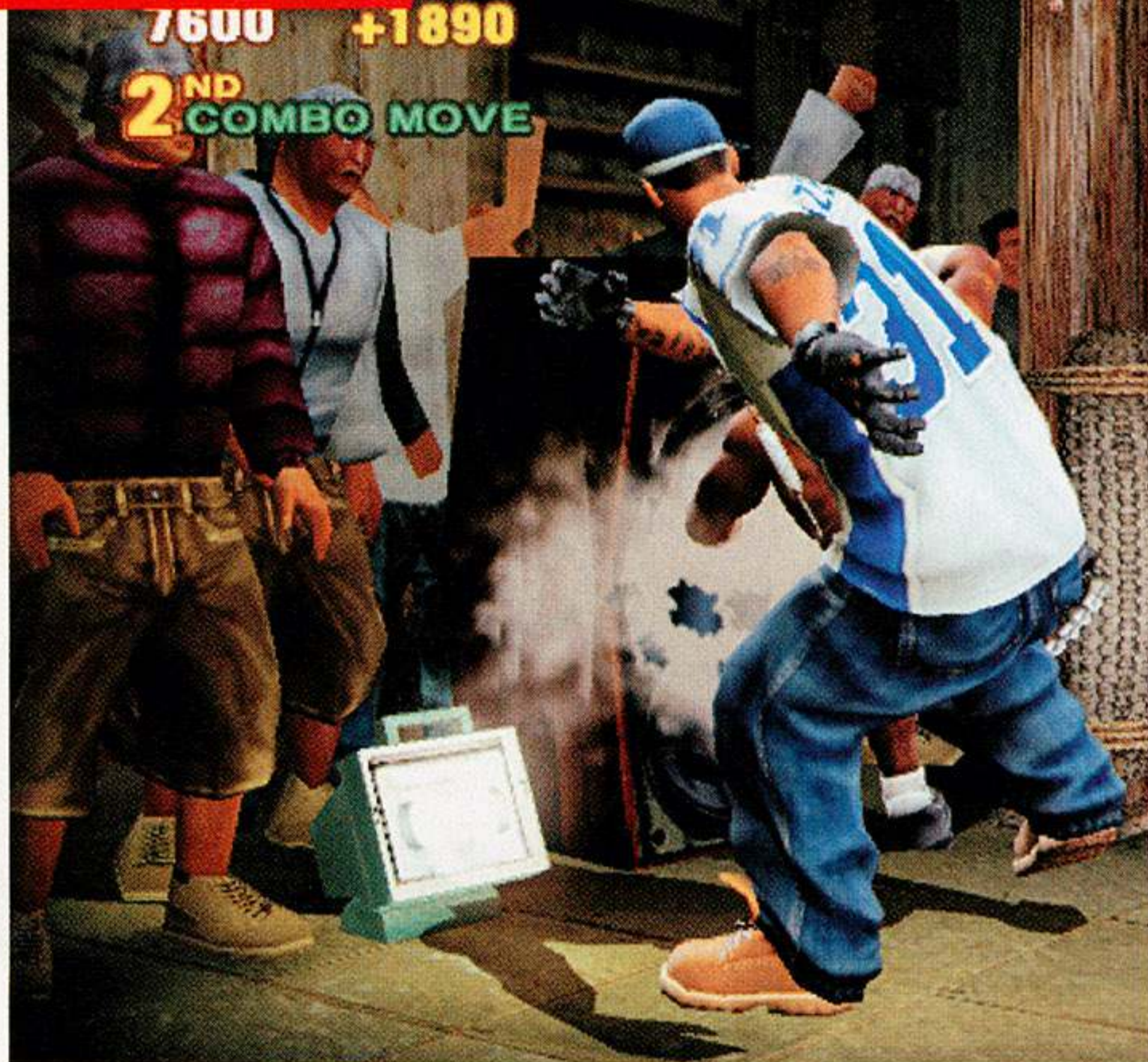
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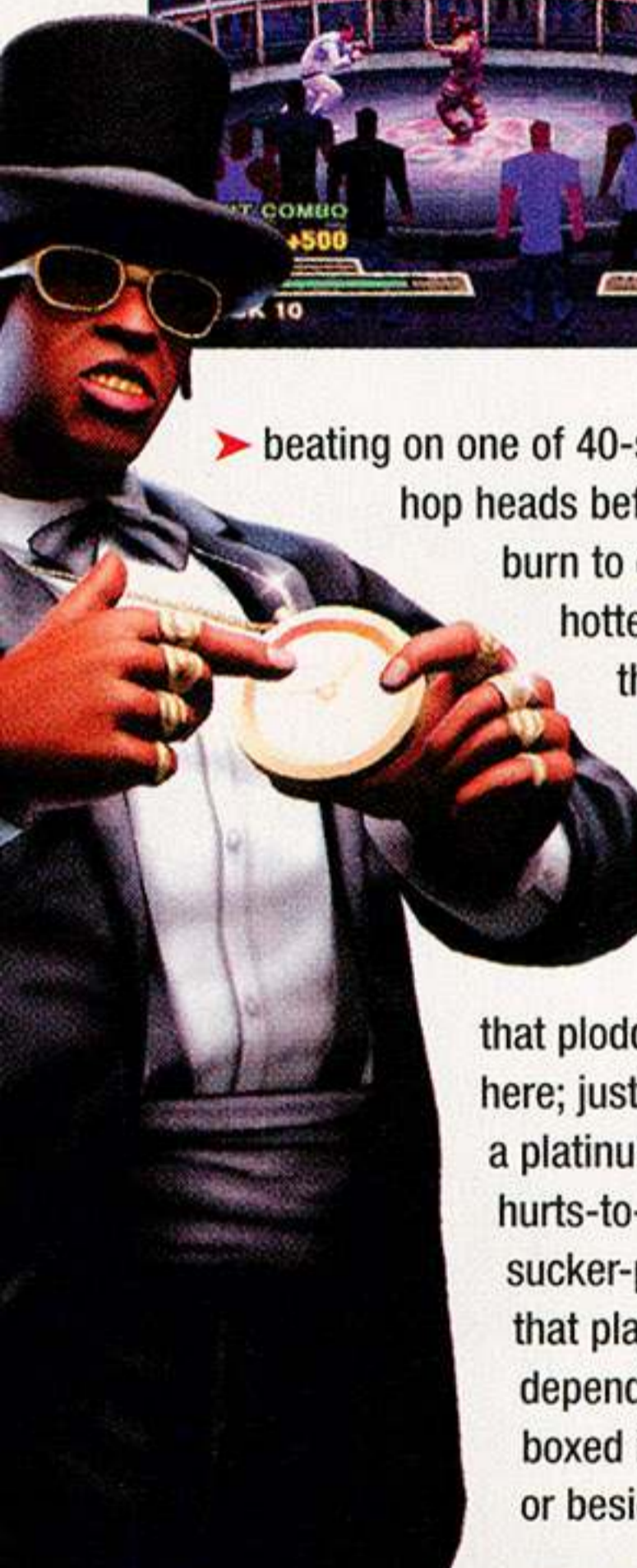
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**ACTIVISION**





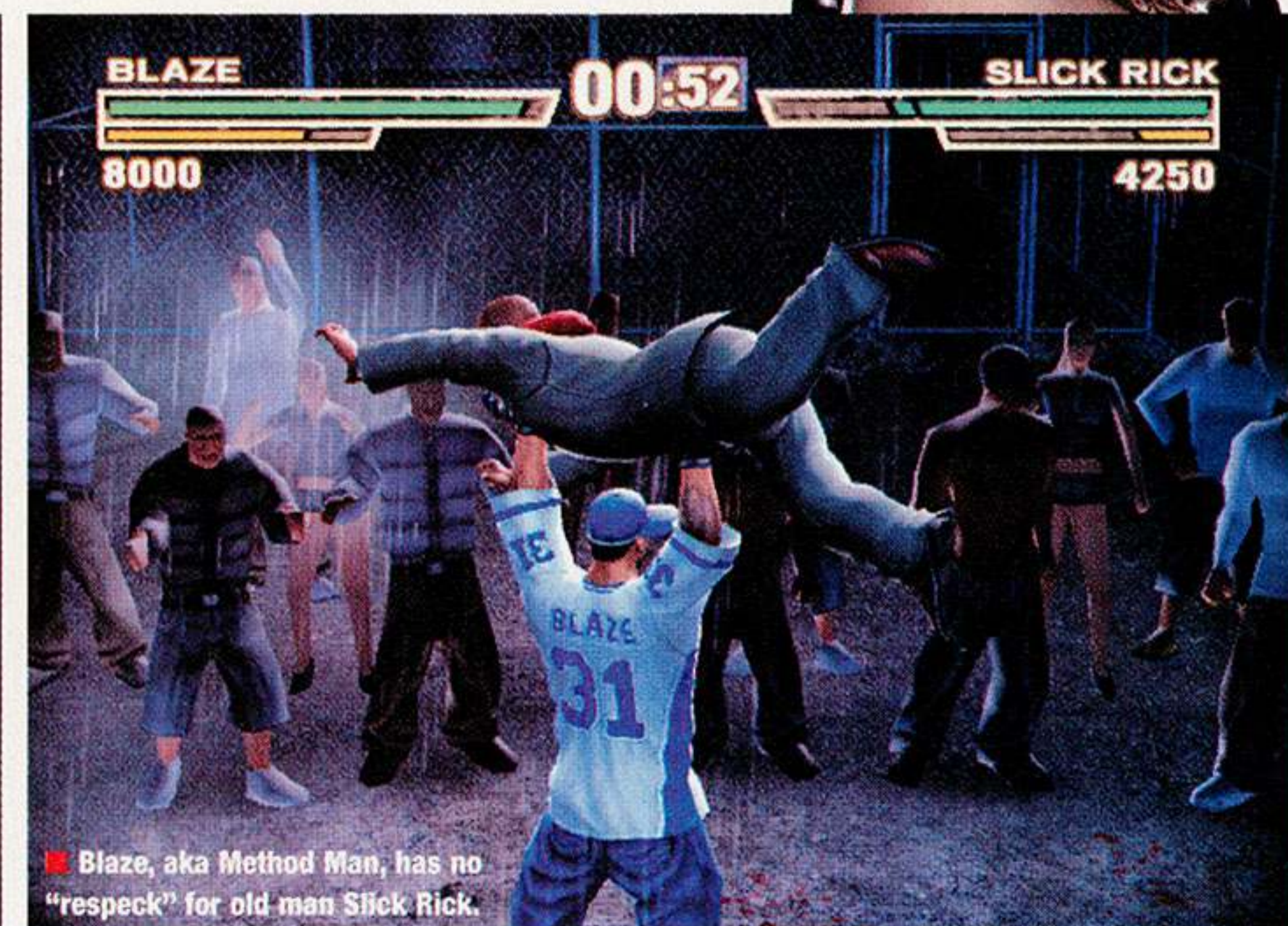
■ Sticky Fingaz is so desperate, he steals your lady. There goes his Players' Ball invite.



▶ beating on one of 40-some hardcore hip-hop heads before watching him burn to death in the summer's hottest trends, you'll think that mat and turnbuckle matches are tame. As far as grapplers go, *Fight for NY* is one of, if not the greatest. None of that plodding, predictable stuff here; just style that shines like a platinum-plated smile, and hurts-to-watch, swifter-than-a-sucker-punch roughhousing that plays out differently depending on whether you're boxed in by an unruly crowd or beside the hood of a soon-

to-be-dented car. Oh, and the story's sick, too. As far as fighters go, the game is on point with a pacing and approach all its own. Purists might think they want more—more ways to set up and psych out scrubs, more means of avoiding a maiming when they're up against the wall. Still, it's a rare ruckus that you can play with a casual gamer pal who couldn't combo his way out of a wet paper bag, and both walk away from blissfully bruised. **OFFICIAL PS MAG—GIANCARLO:** *Fight for NY's* inherent appeal is pretty obvious to fans of hip-hop. And hey, maybe even nonfans would relish the opportunity to fight as (or beat the crap out of) artists from the continually growing musical genre. But *Fight for NY* is not one of those games that relies on star power. In fact, it's quite the opposite, because the game's fighting mechanics are actu-

ally some of the best in the genre to date. At the most basic level, it boils down to this—a mixture of the Nintendo 64 *WWE* titles from famed wrestling-game maker AKI and *Fight Club* (the movie...not the upcoming game). The five fight styles are different enough from each other that you have to adopt different strategies according to their strengths and weaknesses. Fighting is a lot deeper than it initially seems, but that appearance of simplicity is what will draw all types of people to *Fight for NY*. The best part of all, though, is the story mode, which not only has a great create-a-fighter option, but also a surprisingly good story that almost flawlessly ties all aspects of the game together. **✪**



■ Blaze, aka Method Man, has no "respect" for old man Slick Rick.



VIDEO: YES. GAME: NO.



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PS2/XB/GC

# TERMINATOR 3: THE REDEMPTION

Rise of the mediocrity



Whether shooting on foot or shooting from a van, it's still a Terminator game.

**Good:** It's better than the *Rise of the Machines* game

**Bad:** It's still not good

**At Least:** The co-op mode is entertaining



**G. FORD:** Ignore this game's subtitle—there is no redemption for those of us who suffered through *T3: Rise of the Machines*. While this game is certainly better than that piece of shovelware, it still isn't average-quality fare. *Redemption* switches between third-person on-foot action, vehicle-based driving missions, and on-rails shooter levels while following the plot of the movie, complete with canned Arnold one-liners.

Amazingly, the Governor's adventure isn't completely disappointing. While the on-foot stuff is bland and plodding, the vehicle-based missions set in the future are fast and fun—until you hit a couple with cryptic objectives, at which point you'll be spouting some one-liners of your own.

Collectively, the infuriating missions and maddening difficulty swings prove to be overwhelming, sucking away what little fun there is. The only thing that got the bad taste out of my mouth was the surprisingly decent co-op mode, which plays like an old-school arcade shooter.

**JON D:** I wish someone would travel back in time to terminate Arnold Schwarzen-

egger so I wouldn't have to play games like this. Once the third battle-bred robot of the future decided attacking me with a parking sign was the most effective offense, I knew I was up the creek. I did locate the button that makes Arnold say "Talk to da hahnd," but this killer feature couldn't distract me from level after poorly balanced level of alternately shooting robots on foot and shooting robots from a vehicle. And stages with no checkpoints mean lots of time wasted on recovering old ground. This *T3's* just no fun at all.

**1UP.COM—MATT:** Ever play an action game with a one-off racing level? Bet it had simplistic controls and was exciting just because it broke the monotony of the rest of the game. Stack about 20 of those levels together and you get *Terminator 3: The Redemption*—of course, now the break from the monotony has become the monotony itself. The graphics and overall feel aren't terrible, but with every scene trying to be superexplosive (say adios to subtlety and pacing), you'll likely grow numb to the experience quickly.

THE VERDICTS (OUT OF 10)	4.0	2.5	5.0
	G. FORD	JON D.	MATT

Publisher: Atari  
Developer: Paradigm  
Players: 1-2  
ESRB: Teen

www.atari.com



PS2/XB

ONLINE  
(PS2/XBOX)

# JUICED

Team-building exercise



Juiced offers the standard online racing modes, except you can also enter team races with your CPU drivers.

V1 to 5th High

NEXT CAR

**Good:** Running your own team of street racing leadfoots

**Bad:** Losing all your cars in pink slip races

**Better Than:** *Street Racing Syndicate*



**DEMIAN:** Here's something you probably didn't know about *Juiced*, a game that looks like just another generic street racer, but isn't: You can actually *lose*. Not just a race—I'm talking your cars, your money, everything (in career mode, of course), and you'll have to restart completely.

Here's something else: You can also read a book and play the game at the same time. See, *Juiced* isn't just about buying a car, tuning and tweaking it, running races, and then buying a better set of wheels. It's also about building a team of CPU drivers who can actually do the racing—and use the track time to buff their skills—while you play the pit boss. Sure, you can hog the wheel if you want, but grooming your A.I. drivers until they're even better than you are is kinda fun...and a totally new idea.

Outta-nowhere innovation aside, *Juiced* does have some old problems. The cars are often skittish and unforgiving (turn just slightly and hit the brakes and it's spin city), and even if you're rolling in cash, you'll have to wait for better stuff to unlock before you can buy it. But all that crazy team-building stuff makes it worth a look.

**G. FORD:** In the race of *Need for Speed Underground* also-rans, *Juiced* is a solid contender. The respect system is particularly interesting—you impress other crews by driving and betting successfully. Do well, and you can enter more prestigious races and eventually host your own events. Get too cocky in a pink-slip race, though, and you might be walking home. It's compelling, but the ample downtime (training, watching races you bet on) and here-comes-the-spinout controls help restrain the excitement.

**OFFICIAL PS MAG—JOHN D:** Another month, another street racer. To some extent the choice presented now is very much a matter of taste, and *Juiced* just doesn't tweak my driving-very-fast gland. I can appreciate its technical proficiency, and I agree with Demian that it's unusually innovative, but I didn't really find the idea of letting the game play itself particularly enjoyable. Clever, yes. Fun, no. That said, I think it's a little better (faster, certainly) than its closest competitor, *SRS*, and pulls off many of the same features in a classier fashion.

THE VERDICTS (OUT OF 10)	7.0	7.0	6.5
	DEMIAN	G. FORD	JOHN D.

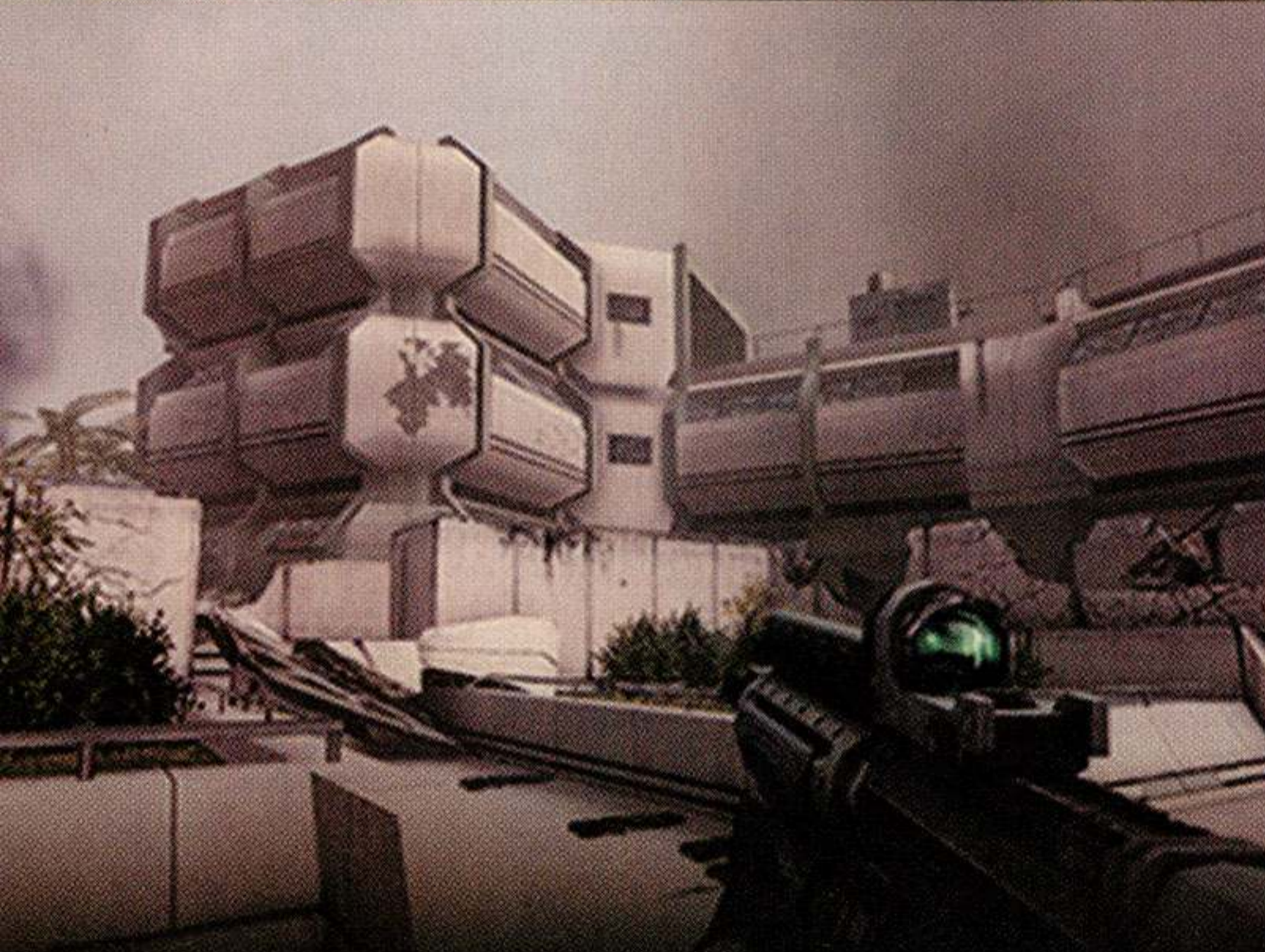
Publisher: Acclaim  
Developer: Juice Games  
Players: 1-2 (2-6 online)  
ESRB: Teen

www.juicedthegame.com



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PS2/XB/GC

# TIGER WOODS: PGA TOUR 2005

In for a birdie

ONLINE  
(PS2/XB only)



**Good:** One of the deepest sports games out there  
**Bad:** New minigames needed  
**Strange Celebrity Cameo:** Justin Timberlake...wha?



**BRYAN:** Tiger may be hitting a few more bogeys these days (who wants to practice when you're married to a supermodel?), but his virtual game is still well under par.

Gameplaywise, little has changed from last year's edition; *Tiger 2005* sports the same precise analog swing controls, and for those who groaned about the putting being too easy, caddy tips can now be turned off. The game's feature set, however, sees several welcome additions. Country club snobs will surely enjoy modifying courses (the number of options available rivals *Tiger's* always-beefy character creator) and going stroke for stroke with golfing icons such as Jack Nicklaus and Arnold Palmer. And thanks to online wagering (don't get too excited—it's only for in-game cashola), I finally have a reason to challenge all you *Tiger* wannabes.

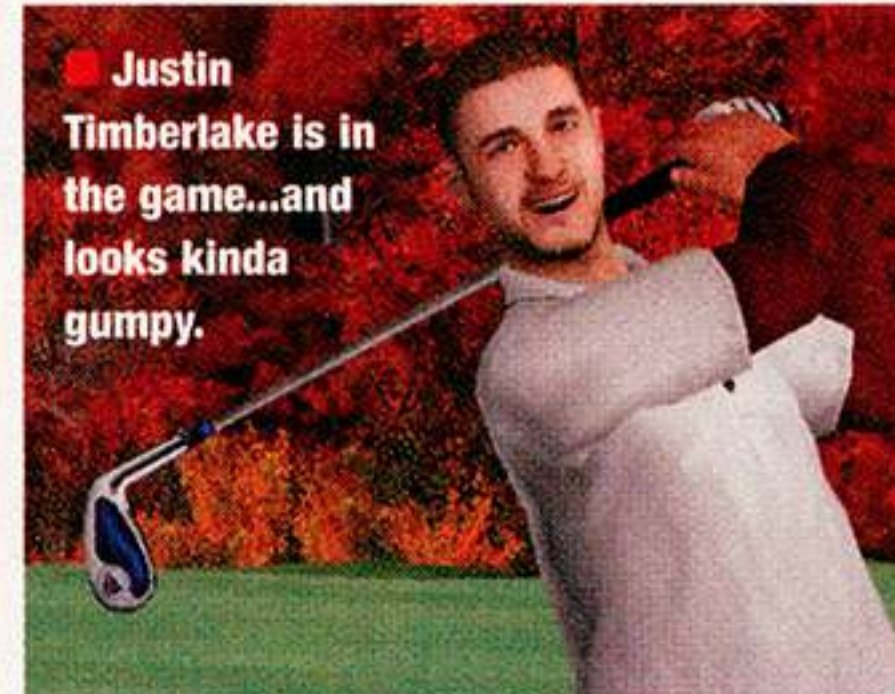
Unfortunately, even the best golfers land in the sand from time to time, and *Tiger 2005* is no exception. The foliage resembles that found in a pop-up book, the minigames are growing old, and though *2004* revolutionized the game, *2005* is mostly spit and polish. Still, it's worth playing quite a few rounds on these impressive links.

**DAN L:** On the links, this year's *Tiger* is a lot like last year's. You can adjust your stance now, but it comes down to this—pull the analog stick back consistently, and your ball will travel far and straight.

In the bogey column: *Tiger 2005's* lifeless courses (trees and other objects look bad) and the sometimes spastic camera. Ball physics don't overly impress either,

as the courses still lack the realistic feel of *Links 2004* or *Hot Shots*.

**PATRICK:** The problem with last year's *Tiger* was that, over time, the game became too easy. You shouldn't be able to routinely post a 52 at Pebble Beach, and now that won't be so simple (if you don't want it to be) because of "Tiger-proofing"—you can change course conditions (and ultimately scoring) by adjusting factors like fairway width and green size. More courses, the usual great swing mechanic, the addition of classic pros, and the new and improved GameFace II feature (the best create-a-character option in *any* game) inches the franchise ever closer to perfection.



THE VERDICTS (OUT OF 10)	8.5	8.0	9.5
	BRYAN	DAN L.	PATRICK

Publisher: EA Sports  
Developer: EA Redwood  
Players: PS2 1-2 (3-4 w/  
Multitap, 2 online), XB 1-4 (2  
online), GC 1-4  
ESRB: Everyone  
www.easports.com

PS2/GC

# MEGA MAN X: COMMAND MISSION

I, for one, welcome our new robot overlords



**Good:** Easy to pick up and play  
**Bad:** Not particularly engaging  
**Believe It or Not:** It's the first *Mega Man* console RPG



**KEVIN:** Y'know, there was once a time when *Mega Man* games were considered the exclusive property of hardcore gamers. I know it's hard to believe, but it's true. The hugely successful *Battle Network* changed all that, though, and the result is what you're seeing now with *Command Mission*—a game with nice production values that's more generic than the dog food they sell at Big Lots.

A completely orthodox Japanese role-playing game, *Command Mission* has everything you'd expect from the genre and nothing you wouldn't. You've got your long, boxy dungeons, your conversations with other party members that don't seem to go anywhere or reach any sort of conclusion, and your fighting system that eagerly remakes *Final Fantasy X's*. This battle setup does have some neat extras (every robot has his own finishing move, and the tandem attacks are impressive to watch the first few times), but everything's strictly by the book here, folks. Get it only if you enjoy the characters...and make sure you get the Cube version, since the PS2 port suffers from long load times between battles.

**1UP.COM—NICH:** Odd beast, this one: It's not quite an RPG, with barely any side quests or exploration, and it's not quite a *Mega Man* game, since it's pretty linear and you don't earn your enemies' weapons when you beat them. The story and voice acting are perfunctory, though *Mega Man X* fans ought to be used to that by now. So once you're past the impressive cartoony aesthetic, all that's left is the

battle system—which you may enjoy a lot until you realize just how long every single battle takes.

**1UP.COM—JEREMY:** In combining *Mega Man X* with an RPG, *Command Mission* somehow draws attention to the worst parts of both. While the crisp graphics and energetic battles work well, the dungeons are a chore and the plot is your usual *Mega Man X* bluster—weak in a five-hour platformer, unbearable in a full-length RPG. I expected better from the creators of last year's amazing *Breath of Fire: Dragon Quarter*. Unfortunately, innovation has taken a backseat here to mere predictable competence. At least it's more fun than the most recent "real" *MMX* games.



**Command Mission's** story pits the resistance against the rebellion. Wait, what?

THE VERDICTS (OUT OF 10)	6.5	6.5	6.0
	KEVIN	NICH	JEREMY

Publisher: Capcom  
Developer: Capcom  
Players: 1  
ESRB: Everyone

www.capcom.com



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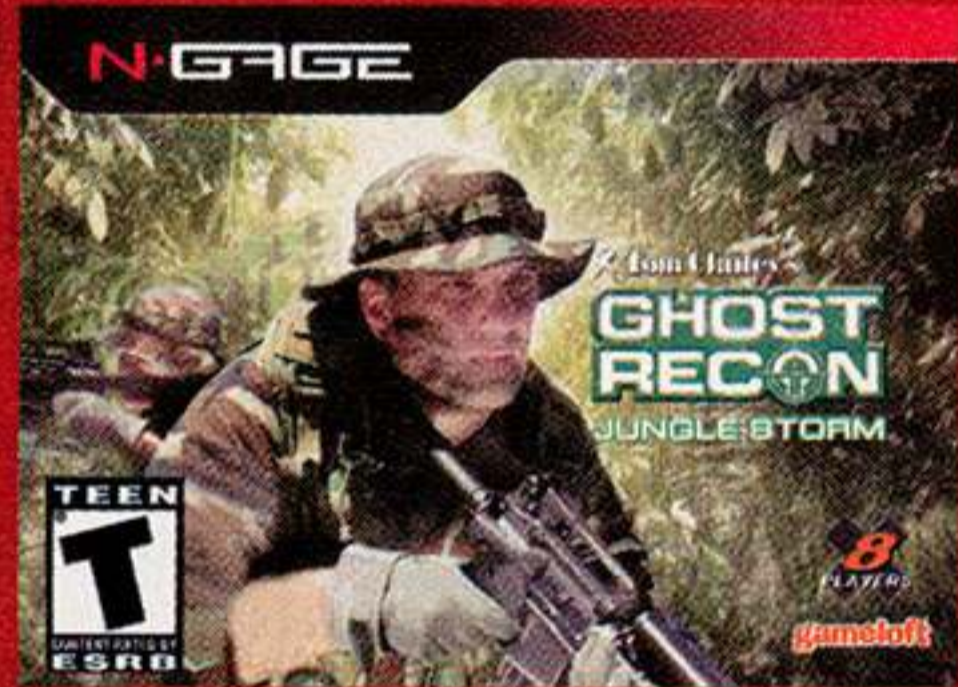
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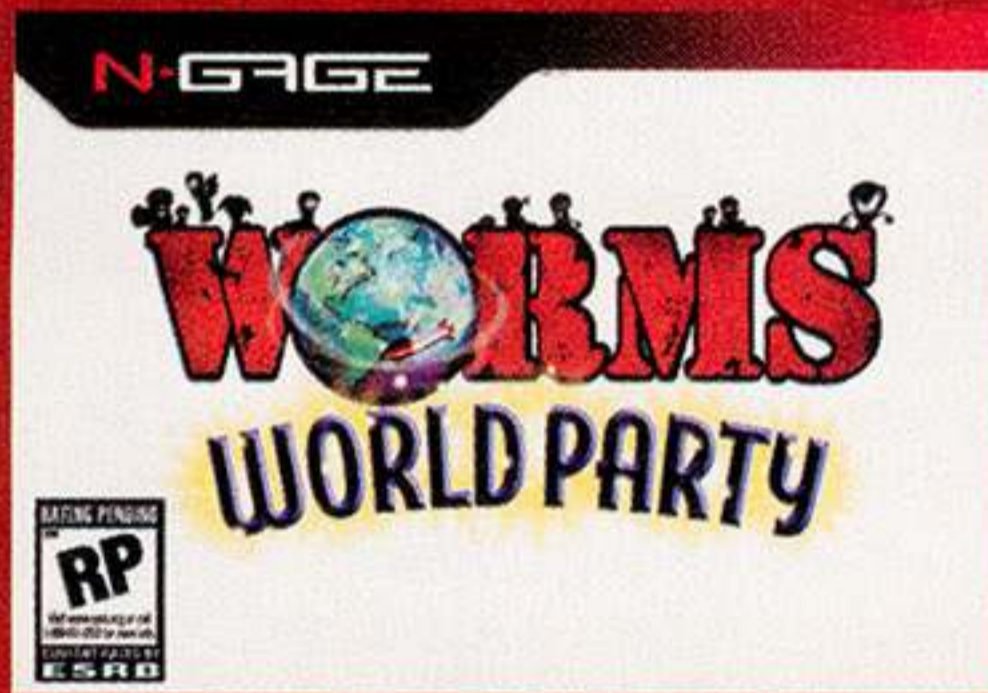
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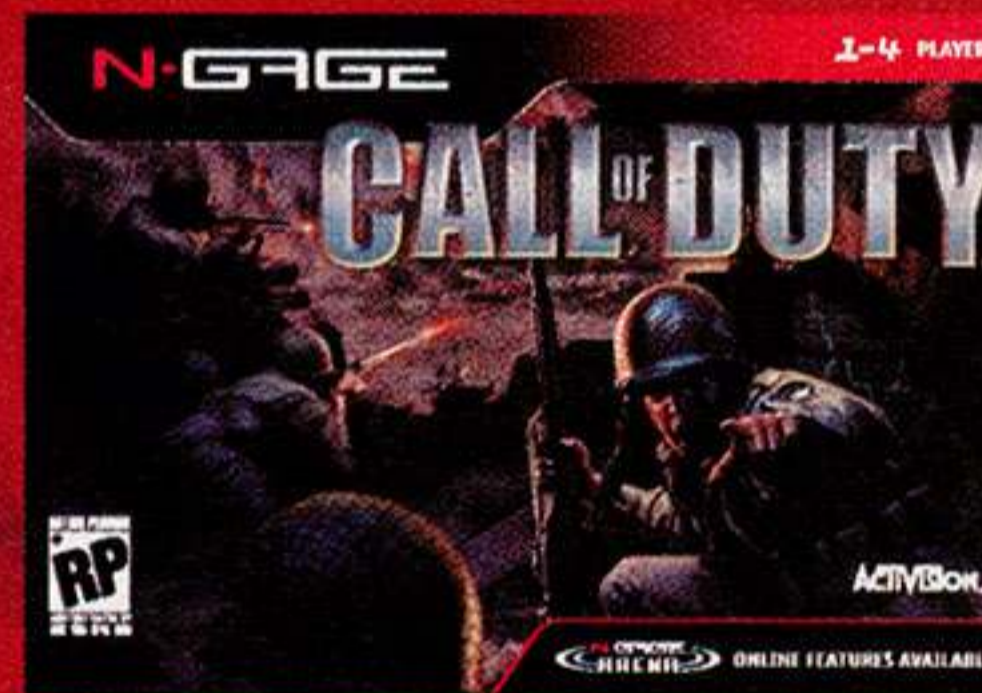
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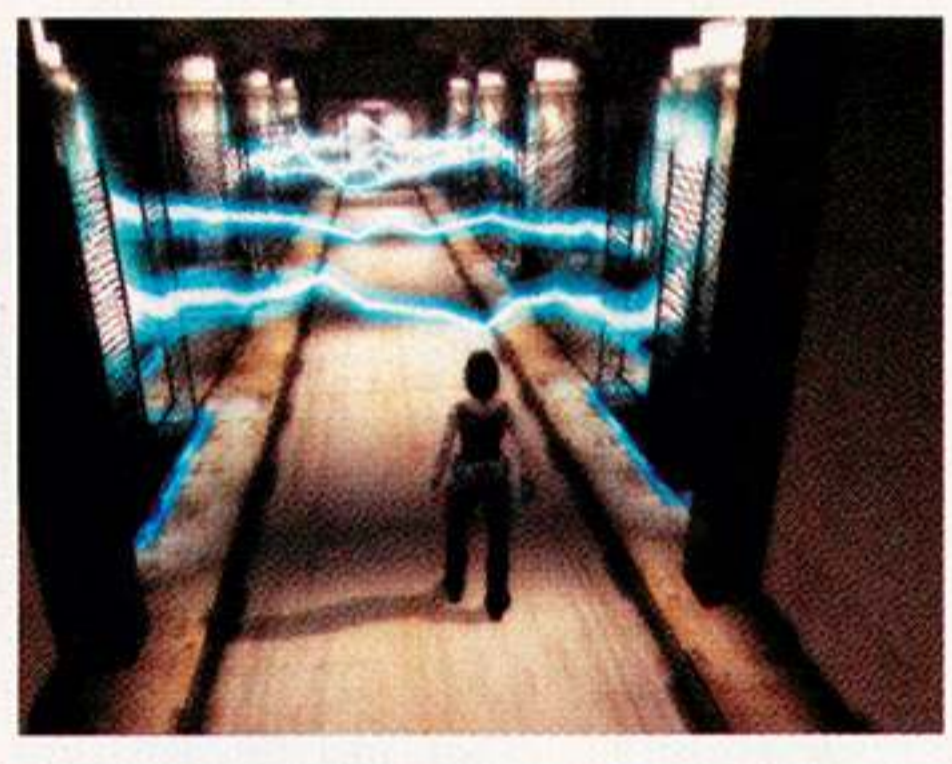


■ Enemy variety isn't one of *Redemption's* strong suits.

■ PS2/XB

# HEADHUNTER: REDEMPTION

The hunt for good gameplay continues...



**Good:** The music's pretty good, as are some of the later levels  
**Bad:** The camera, controls, stealth aspects, targeting system...  
**Worst:** Load times, poorly placed checkpoints, lame puzzles



**G. FORD:** I'm all for a good story, but if the rest of a game is a letdown, it just hurts that much more. About eight hours into *Headhunter: Redemption*, I was enjoying this third-person action game's decent narrative, but gameplay and control snafus were taking a terrible toll.

Right off the bat, the counterintuitive camera (which you can't remap or invert) will likely throw off many gamers, and it's followed by dozens of other annoying hang-ups. You can't target key items without first locking on to them in first-person mode, for example, and when you try to sneak up on an enemy for a silent kill, you'll often sidle up to a wall or nearby crate, as the same button controls both commands. A weak targeting system doesn't help either, making large firefights and boss battles a royal pain. Still, it's possible to mine some fun from *Redemption*, thanks to its interesting, if stereotypical, characters and some creative later levels, but most gamers won't have the perseverance to get that far.

tered the clumsy controls and a camera as twitchy as a coked-out Chihuahua, I found myself hooked by its enormous environments, slick graphics, and Jennifer Garner-wannabe heroine. Still, the gameplay lacks anything resembling creativity, the writers were apparently paid by the cliché, and it's a pale shadow of the games it so obviously rips off. Think of *Headhunter* as videogame junk food: empty and unsatisfying, but still hard to put down.

**OFFICIAL PS MAG—CHRIS:** I liked the first *Headhunter*, but its poor controls needed some serious redeeming. Sadly, *Redemption* does not live up to its title in that respect. Whether you're Jack Wade or newcomer Leeza X, your movements just feel off. And why must I hit *left* on the right analog stick when my intention is to look *right*? Talk about counterintuitive.

Still, the generally engaging gameplay style—*Metal Gear* stealth meets *Syphon Filter* shootouts meet totally nonsensical *Resident Evil* puzzles—remains intact, and the darker, less funny story does hold your interest. Too bad about the crap controls.

**1UP.COM—JEREMY:** It took me a while to warm up to *Headhunter*. But once I mas-

THE VERDICTS (OUT OF 10)	5.0	6.0	5.5
	G. FORD	JEREMY	CHRIS

Publisher: Sega  
 Developer: Amuze  
 Players: 1  
 ESRB: Mature

www.sega.com



■ PlayStation 2

# KATAMARI DAMACY

Roll with it, baby



**Good:** Unique concept and incredible soundtrack  
**Bad:** Recycles the same few levels  
**Icing on the Cake:** It's only \$20!



**MARK:** Don't let the freaky name (Japanese for "soul of the blob") or bizarre concept (you simply roll up objects into a giant ball within a time limit) scare you—*Katamari Damacy* is a uniquely entertaining game that even the most casual gamer can enjoy.

Controls are the very definition of "pick up and play"; you maneuver your ball, dash, and jump using only the two analog sticks. With a bright, blocky style, the graphics are incredibly basic, but for good reason: Every object you see—cows, cars, trees, buildings, eventually even the ground itself—will stick to your junk ball once it's big enough. Which is the thrill behind *Katamari*: You start out rolling up tiny stuff like batteries, mice, and bananas, but soon you're sucking up cats, people (who scream and wiggle), traffic lights, and those houses that once seemed so huge. It's like the feeling of accomplishment you get from gaining levels in an RPG and the satisfaction of vacuuming a dirty floor all rolled into one. Sure, you're basically doing the same thing each mission, but *Katamari's* elegant controls, killer soundtrack, and wicked humor make it perfectly suited for replay.

**JENNIFER:** I'd always wondered what it would feel like to eat a small Japanese town, but, really, I never thought I'd get to find out. Then I met an odd little game called *Katamari Damacy*. Now I know that eating Japanese towns is fun and pretty darned addictive. My favorite part is the middle of the meal—after I've sucked up the little tatami mats and pachinko balls—when the perspective changes and I notice there are whole apartment buildings and pachinko parlors to devour. Bonus discovery: Those Japanese play cool music in their towns!

**KEVIN:** *Katamari* isn't very difficult, but it is very different...almost therapeutic, in a way. There's just something about rolling a giant blob of junk around a pastel-colored Lego city. Of course, the cute graphics and mind-boggling soundtrack (no musical genre is safe from its rampage) are only half the story—the goofy dialogue, smooth difficulty curve, and inherent fun of taking something small and building it into something big are all things you just can't find anywhere else on the game shelf. Bravo.

THE VERDICTS (OUT OF 10)	8.5	8.5	8.5
	MARK	JENNIFER	KEVIN

PUBLISHER: Namco  
 DEVELOPER: Namco  
 PLAYERS: 1-2  
 ESRB: Everyone

www.namco.com





**LESSON 86:**

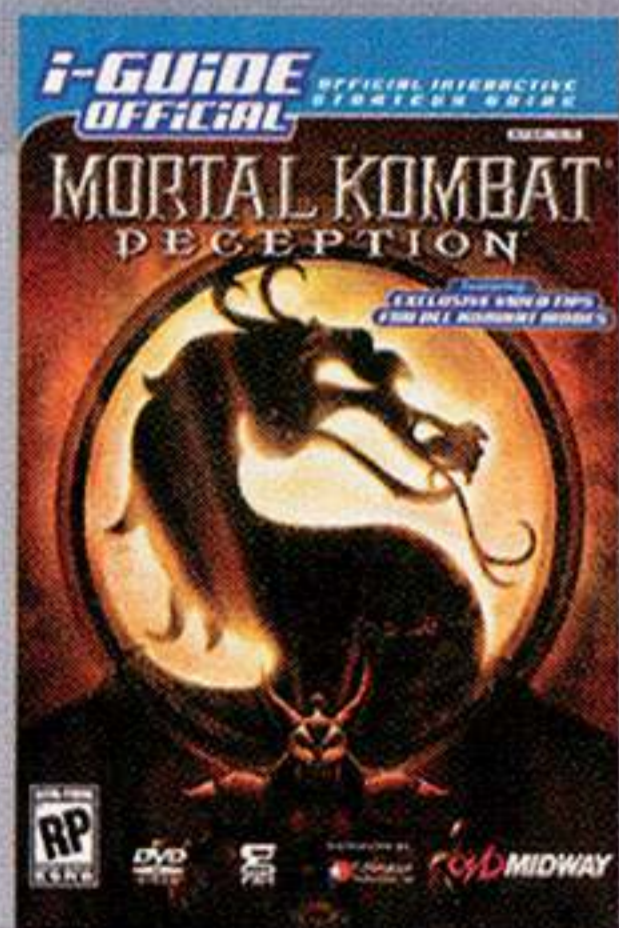
ALWAYS LOOK YOUR OPPONENT IN THE EYES

**ADDENDUM:**

THAT IS, IF THEY HAVE EYES.

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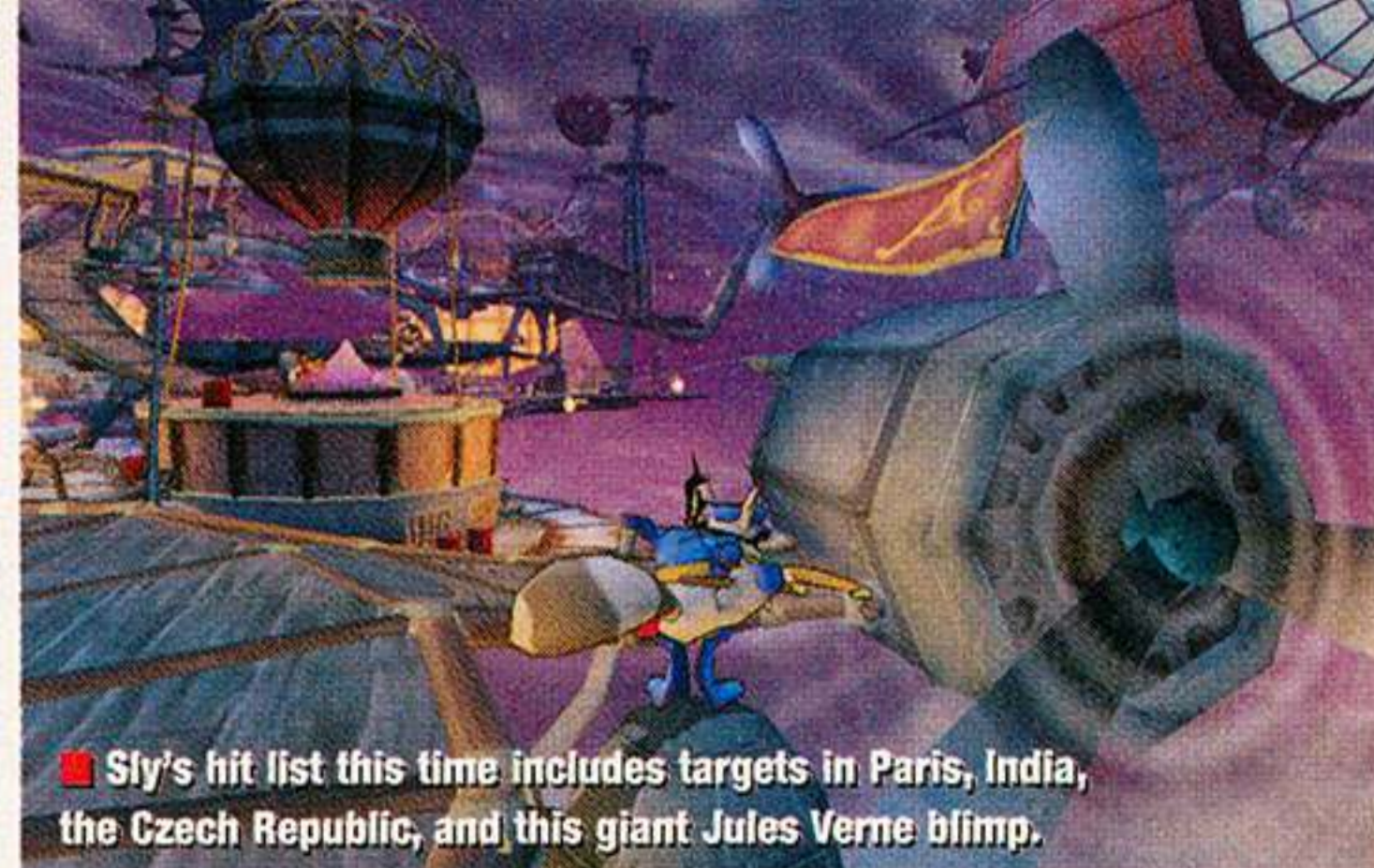


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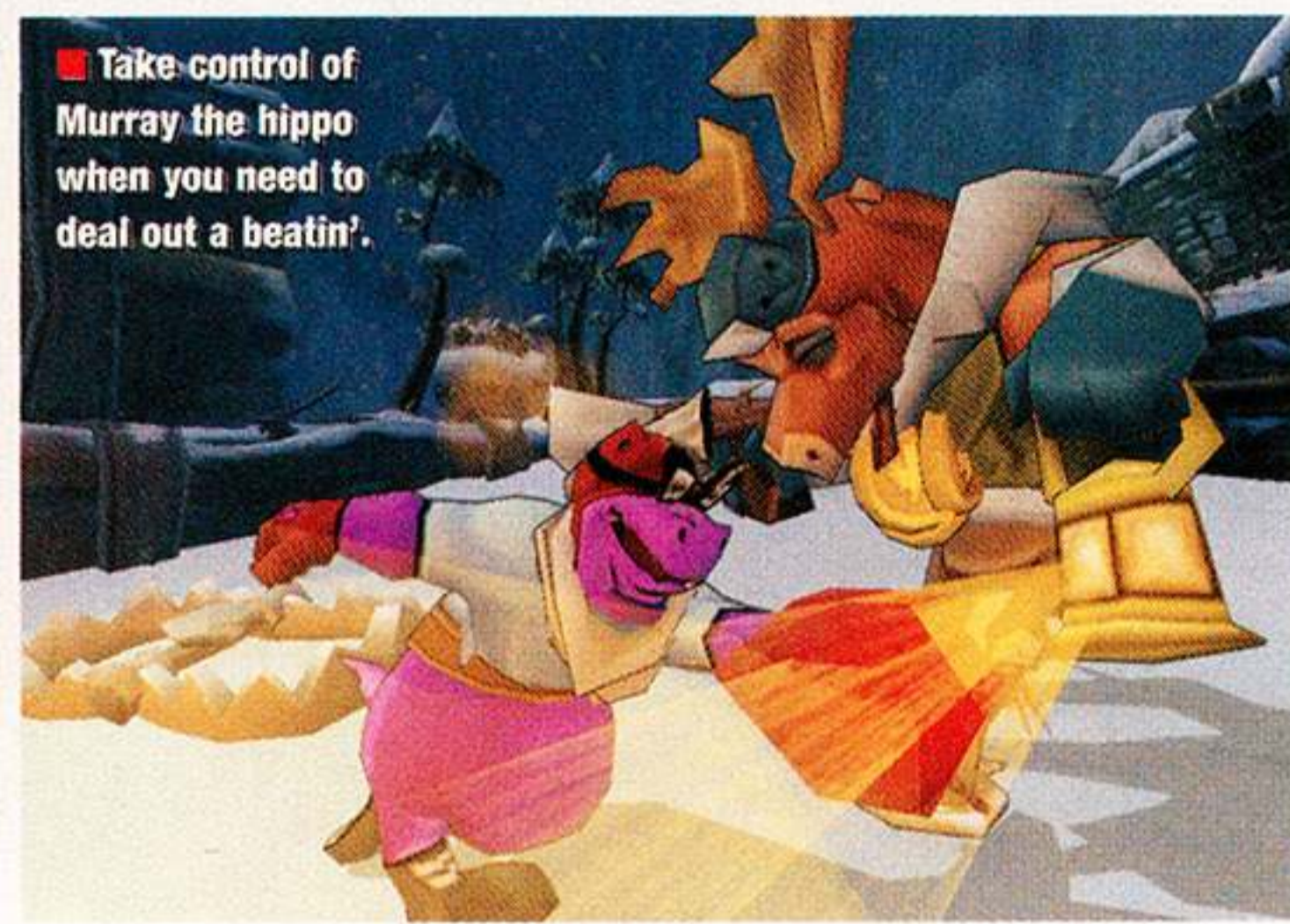


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■ Sly's hit list this time includes targets in Paris, India, the Czech Republic, and this giant Jules Verne blimp.



■ Take control of Murray the hippo when you need to deal out a beatin'.

★  
GAME OF THE MONTH

■ PlayStation 2

# SLY 2: BAND OF THIEVES

## One more big job

**KEVIN:** Remember back a couple years ago when platformers and their endless-doodad-collection gameplay were all but declared dead? Thanks mostly to the efforts of Sony's developers, the genre's been revitalized—and *Sly 2* sets such a high standard for this year's crop that Sony's upcoming *Jak* and *Ratchet & Clank* sequels definitely have their work cut out for them.

The original *Sly* was a smart piece of loony cartoony mayhem that needed to climb just another rung or two on the ladder to achieve perfection. With *Sly 2*, however, the folks at developer Sucker Punch have dealt with all of the first *Sly*'s weaknesses. Game over in eight hours? No problem—it'll take you at least three times that long to finish *Sly 2*, and that's without time attacks or any other boring extras. One-hit deaths? Forget it—you've got a life meter now. Too much of the same thing? Not anymore—each mission is a "heist" involving Sly and his cohorts Murray and Bentley, so you're doing something totally different on every stage.

And then there's *Sly*'s most striking point, the graphics. Not that they're much better than before, but the amount of polish you see—the subtle animations, the movielike camerawork—has increased remarkably. You'll still have the occasional problem making certain jumps (your shadow tends to be camouflaged by the floor, making judgement difficult), but otherwise *Sly 2* has my preliminary vote for best platformer of the year.

**G. FORD:** Quietly and real sneakylike, Sly Cooper could quickly become the class of Sony's platforming trio. The quality of the raccoon's second

release is staggering, setting the bar awfully high for his jumpy brethren. From streamlined details—such as the Bat Signal-esque level indicators available at the press of a button and the unobtrusive scroll bar that lists new commands and objectives—to the perfect blend of platforming and light stealth, *Sly 2* delivers a near-flawless experience. And while fighting multiple opponents can be troublesome and enemies sometimes reappear too frequently, these are minor gripes. You always have something to do and you rarely mind doing it. When all the pieces of a grand heist come together, well, it's a fine feeling. Don't let *Sly 2*'s cartoony look fool you—it offers a more than worthy adventure.

**1UP.COM—NICH:** *Sly 2* is such a huge improvement over the first game that it's kind of eerie.

What mystical covenants did developer Sucker Punch enter into to produce a game that controls and looks exactly like the first *Sly* but feels so much different?

The balance between the free-roaming parts and the mission objectives is exactly right; running around, pickpocketing guards, and finding miscellaneous valuables isn't so much fun that you'll deliberately go out to do it, but on the other hand, the nonessential stuff makes for an interesting diversion from the task at hand. And when it comes to the missions themselves, everything is improved, especially the care and detail put into the minigames that were so perfunctory last time around. Sucker punched is about right for how much *Sly 2*'s quality took me by surprise.



### Bump and Run

*Sly*'s added a pickpocket move to his thievery repertoire, which he'll use to pinch mission-critical items like key cards, as well as general loot (coins, gold pens, etc.). He'll also find other valuables during the course of his sneaking, but how does the modern burglar fence his ill-gotten goods? Via the Internet, of course. Bring your stash back to the getaway van safely, and your turtle pal Bentley will auction it off and raise the cash necessary to buy power-ups for all three protagonists. He's a madman with the eBay.



**Good:** Incredibly well polished  
**Bad:** Except the controls are just a wee bit janky  
**Don't Miss:** The chance to play as a hippo and nerdy turtle



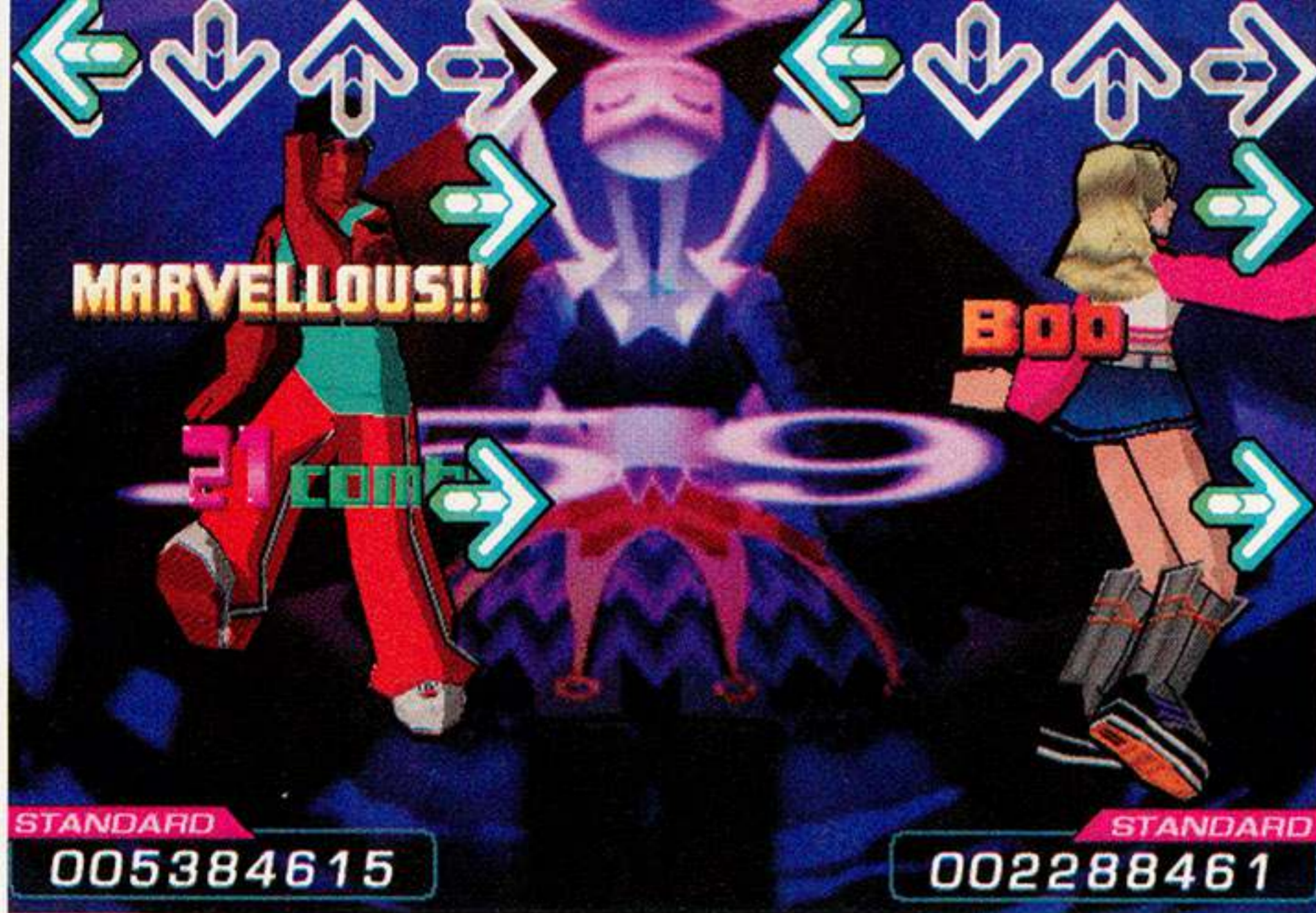
THE VERDICTS  
(OUT OF 10)

9.0 8.5 9.0  
 KEVIN G. FORD NICH

Publisher: Sony CEA  
 Developer: Sucker Punch  
 Players: 1  
 ESRB: Everyone

www.slycooper.com





PlayStation 2

# DANCE DANCE REVOLUTION EXTREME

The revolution will be televised



Extreme includes new minigames in the mix and EyeToy support for added hand-waving.

**Good:** Finally, the soundtrack has a little variety  
**Bad:** Still, it's mostly adrenaline-pumpin' party techno  
**Benefits of Cardiovascular Exercise:** Endorphins, good mood



**JENNIFER:** *DDR* is so very tried-and-true that it doesn't take utter genius to create great new versions of the fundamentally fast and fun hot-steppin' rhythm-action gameplay. So this *Extremeth* version (don't ask how many there've been because I've long since lost count) won't shock anyone, but it won't let anyone down either.

The addition of a handful of '80s hits (does my passion for Duran Duran's "The Reflex" date me?) and low-bpm pop songs will help simpler folk feel the beat. And EyeToy support adds hand moves to your dance routines. This natural evolution really keeps the game fresh, offering a welcome challenge for *DDR* vets and simple, silly appeal for newbies. Plus, the party minigames (even those that don't use EyeToy) are great—more fun than some of the games that came with the original *EyeToy: Play*.

that said, however, *Extreme* has the most "new" material of any U.S. mix, with 70-odd songs (including stuff from *Silent Hill* and *Karaoke Revolution*), bunches of minigames, and enough difficult bits (1/64th beats? Arrrrgh) to please any satin-jacketed arcade performer. It's a *DDR* game for *DDR* players, and they'll be perfectly satisfied. The only blemish that bothered me: workout mode seems to arbitrarily not, uh, work out with certain game types.

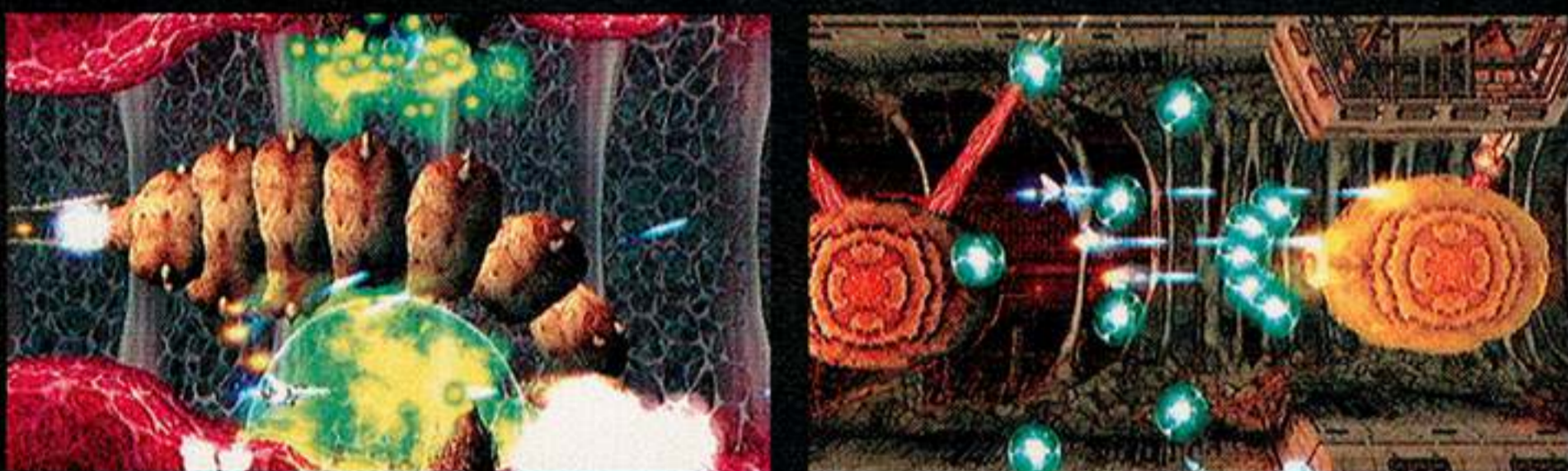
**GMR—CARRIE:** Konami went all out trying to please players of all skill levels with *DDR Extreme*; some of the EyeToy games are out-of-control hard—I have a tough enough time just getting my feet coordinated. I love the new minigames because you don't need grace or rhythm; they're all about just moving your feet as fast as possible, without the frustration of trying to stay on beat. I just wish the same inclusiveness had gone into the music selection. Even with all the songs, there are only a handful that I actively like.

**KEVIN:** There's little to be said here that hasn't already been discussed in previous *DDR* episodes. The game's too good to be messed around with much, as developer and publisher Konami is well aware—

THE VERDICTS (OUT OF 10)	8.5	8.0	8.5
	JENNIFER	KEVIN	CARRIE

Publisher: Konami  
 Developer: Konami Tokyo  
 Players: 1-2  
 Rating: Everyone

www.konami.com/usa



PlayStation 2

# GRADIUS V

Keep your options open



Boss got you down? Keep blasting away. After 15 hours of play you'll unlock unlimited credits.

**Good:** New "option" controls fit different playing styles nicely  
**Bad:** Newbs will have a rough time on even the easiest settings  
**Big Prizes:** Win 'em in the online high-score contest



**JON D:** It's about time we saw something up-to-date in this stubbornly stagnant shooter series. *V* is a comfortable compromise between familiar *Gradius* tricks and flashier firepower that plays off the series-defining "option" weapons (you know, those little gunner satellites).

Ship and option configurations are awesome to mess around with, especially when you and a partner choose complementary styles—I'm a huge fan of finally having a two-player mode in *Gradius*. But a limited stock of ships shortens game time by pulling retries from a common pool that dries up quickly. Plus, having a wingman is a lot more confusing than flying solo when the action intensifies—I lost myself in laser wash dozens of times. *V* is simple shooter fun, but still a notch below the more replayable *R-Type Final*.

**MARK:** *Gradius V* reminds me of what was so good about the good ol' days of gaming: simple, intense, glorious twitch gameplay. Not that it's all mindless action; options add depth and keep this game fresh past the first playthrough—figurative options

(the player deciding on the fly how to upgrade weapons) and literal options (the little glowing balls you earn that act as shields and extra firepower). Mastering these power-ups as you plow through the supertough (but possible!) levels, aided by a well-balanced continue system, is an experience no fan of the genre should miss. Jon's right about multiplayer getting confusing, but it's good for a laugh, and besides, I always prefer going solo when I'm serious about a shooter.

**SHANE:** And I thought that *Ikaruga* (GC) was hard. *Gradius V* ups the ante with never-ending parades of colossal bosses, creative stages that conspire to crush your ship, and hundreds of horrible little bullets to dodge. Newcomers will find an attractive shooter that teaches twitch-game skills you never had. Returning *Gradius* fans get a killer love letter to the series (complete with nods to fan fave offshoot *Life Force*) that's so hard you'll weep for your atrophied hand-eye coordination. Whatever your skill level, though, good luck finishing the last three levels without unlimited credits.

THE VERDICTS (OUT OF 10)	7.0	8.5	8.0
	JON D.	MARK	SHANE

Publisher: Konami  
 Developer: Konami Tokyo  
 Players: 1-2  
 ESRB: Everyone

www.konami.com/usa





review crew:  
playstation 2

■ The Labor Day parade just gets weirder every year.



■ PlayStation 2

# UNDER THE SKIN

Like a melanoma

**Good:** Some fun multiplayer moments  
**Bad:** Repetitive, short, repetitive  
**Not Worth:** More than \$20

**MARK:** After playing *Under the Skin* for five minutes, I had to stop and look for a tutorial. It wasn't a control problem; they're simple and solid. And it wasn't any gameplay confusion; as a mischievous alien, I was assuming human disguises, attacking crowds of people, and grabbing their dropped coins (before my CPU or human opponent did) with ease. And that was exactly the trouble—it was so simplistic I figured there *must* be something I was missing. There wasn't.

Deciding which humans to mimic and how to order your weapons effectively (say, hit with a fart first, then follow up with a cannon blast, and finally use roller skates to pick up the coins quickly) is fun at first, but soon the repetition sets in. Different level objectives would've helped; the few stages where you aren't just out to get more coins than the other guy (like one where you and the computer stalk the Nemesis monster from *Resident Evil 3* together) stand out.

As it is, *Under the Skin* is so limited in scope that only younger kids or those who fish it from the bargain bin months from now will find a decent multiplayer value.



**SHOE:** When *everything* in a stage, on- and offscreen, is out to nail you, you can only take so much before the obscenities start flying. I can dig a challenge, but just whom exactly is this game meant for? Superhardcore gamers who have the will to finish each level? Doubtful, since the game requires very little strategy, hand-eye coordination, or thinking. Youngsters? Nah—too difficult. *Skin* is a tough but unrewarding arcade-action game that's fun to look at and worth checking out...for about 10 minutes.

**DEMIAN:** *Skin* looks promising, with a cartoony style and oddball characters, but the basic gameplay starts out shallow and stays that way. Sure, unleashing a spread-fire volley of pies or a herd of rampaging elephants has its moments, but you better take 'em where you can get 'em because you'll beat the game in about two hours.

Not even the *Resident Evil*-themed stage is a draw, though shambling undead replace the shambling living and there's a happy-looking cartoon Nemesis running around. *Skin* won't stay at \$40 for long, but whatever the price, it's too much.



THE VERDICTS (OUT OF 10)	5.5	4.0	4.0
	MARK	SHOE	DEMIAN

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

www.capcom.com

■ PlayStation 2

# SHADOW HEARTS: COVENANT

Metal Gear collides clumsily with Miss Cleo



**Good:** Skill-based combat, interesting setting  
**Bad:** Inconsistent visuals  
**Cool Preorder Bonus:** A free copy of the first *Shadow Hearts*

**SHANE:** The original *Shadow Hearts* was one of the first decent RPGs on PS2. Luckily, all the clueless questers who missed out last time now get a second shot at WWI-era role-playing at its finest.

Picking up just months after the first game's conclusion, *Covenant* thrusts you back into a wicked world of military intrigue and religious turmoil—a unique setting that instantly sets the game apart from the countless medieval and futuristic role-players out there. Expect to be bombarded by a rapid procession of drab environments (nothing here looks as nice as *Final Fantasy X* or *Xenosaga*), offbeat characters (a creepy ventriloquist?), and seemingly never-ending plot twists.

Dungeons, puzzles, and towns adhere to the genre norms, but like the last game, *Covenant's* battle system tosses a nifty wrench into the proceedings. You set up "Judgement Rings" to perform attacks: By stopping a spinning gauge at the right spot, you can dish out extra damage (but hit the wrong spot and you're screwed). Now you can further customize the rings and deliver punishing combo attacks, which deepen your combat options. It's definitely worth a look.

**GMR—CHRISTIAN:** *Covenant* doesn't offer a lot that I haven't seen before as an avid RPG fan, but it's executed with a remarkable competence, precision, and variety. There's never a shortage of interesting stuff to do, and the longer I played, the better the game got. Even more surprisingly, it has a great sense of humor—but it handles the serious stuff with equal

panache. It's a much better buy for Square Enix fans than the recent *Star Ocean: Till the End of Time*.

**1UP.COM—JEREMY:** Get ready to wipe away a nostalgic tear—*Covenant* is a dose of pure, concentrated 1999. The entire game feels like it was built from leftover scraps of PS1 *Final Fantasys*: linear plot, random battles, annoying puzzle dungeons, and even a surly pretty-boy "antihero." As far as by-the-book RPGs go, though, it's pretty good. The historical setting and engaging battle system help redeem the staleness, and Christian's right about the script; it has the good grace not to take itself too seriously. RPG fans will love it—just don't expect much originality.



THE VERDICTS (OUT OF 10)	7.5	8.5	7.0
	SHANE	CHRISTIAN	JEREMY

Publisher: Midway  
Developer: Nautilus  
Players: 1  
ESRB: Teen

www.midway.com





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Xbox

# FABLE

## We can be heroes



**Mo' Magic**  
Definitely give your hero some magic skills. Without at least minor healing, many missions (especially those where you have to escort a defenseless schmo) can become a real drag. Ranged attacks are also good to buff up. Which are the best? Two out of three EGM reviewers say, "Lightning rules!"

**T**he role-playing game some four years in the making from fabled PC game designer Peter Molyneux (*Black & White*) is finally done. Choose your own adventure in *Fable*—and whether you're good or evil along the way—during 12 to 15 hours of questing, then relax with some interesting sim components that you can play forever, if you'd like. Buy (and redecorate) houses, get married (and divorced), and sport more hairstyles than the dudes on *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy*. But does *Fable* raise the bar for Xbox RPGs? Our Review Crew sat down to hash it out.

**JENNIFER:** I'll admit I had high hopes for this one. I love my RPGs, and *Fable* promised to add new depth to the usual character building. So when I discovered that it was little more than a solid hack-and-slash action-RPG, I felt pretty disappointed.

**XBN—GREG:** I don't think the game is a disappointment at all. Divorce *Fable* from its crushing

hype and the game's a solid, enjoyable—but flawed—RPG.

**MARK:** Actually, I have to say *Fable* is better than I expected. I had no idea how well the real meat of the game—combat—would turn out. And while it lacks a certain polish (more enemies that really make you block and dodge would've been nice), I never get bored fighting. Quite the opposite. Switching between bows, melee weapons, and magic, the combo and experience systems—I actively seek out enemies rather than avoid them.

**JENNIFER:** I find *Fable's* combat pretty repetitive; it requires hardly any tactics or class specialization. Yeah, it's fun switching between skill sets, but to me, a great RPG rewards specialization and mastery of a certain skill set. For example, I felt penalized for not giving my guy more magic skills.

**GREG:** Roleplaying is more than strategic fights. *Fable* seems to be the ultimate role-playing game

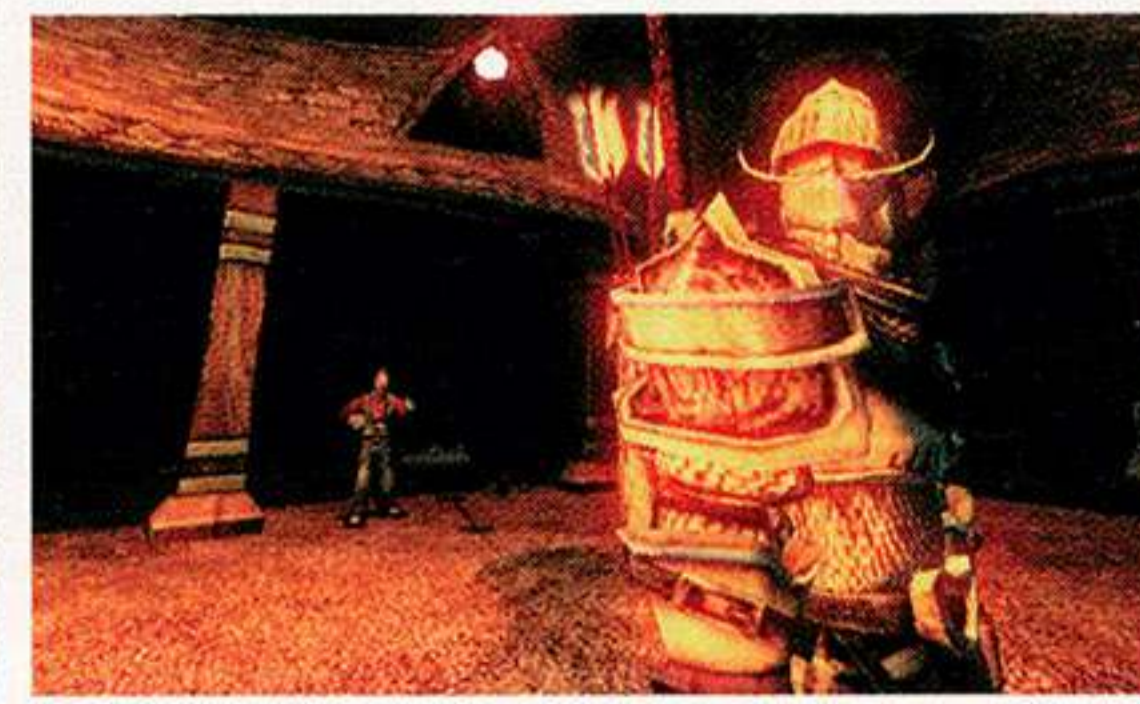
because you're not just taking someone else's role—you're developing your own.

**MARK:** That's the thing I really love: character customization. Mohawks, handlebar 'stashes, sweet tats—you can really make the character your own. And not just in looks; the number of different skills (spells, health, speed, and a *lot* more) you can build up in whatever order you choose is the perfect reward for a quest well done.

**JENNIFER:** I'd like more armor and weapon choices. Then again, who doesn't like silly mustaches?

**GREG:** It's great to have the freedom to mold your hero in terms of his appearance, alignment, and inclinations—and it adds a ton of replay value. People will want to go back and try an entirely new hero after they beat the game for the first time.

**MARK:** Well yeah, especially since it's only like 12 frickin' hours long.



Have we mentioned how truly awesome *Fable's* graphics are? 'Cause it's true.

**Good:** Endless possibilities for character development  
**Bad:** 'Cept the story's waaaay too short  
**Annoying Thing They Coulda Done Better:** The map system



THE VERDICTS (OUT OF 10)	7.5	8.0	9.0
	JENNIFER	MARK	GREG

Publisher: Microsoft  
Developer: Big Blue Box/  
Lionhead  
Players: 1  
ESRB: Mature  
www.xbox.com



## Character Study



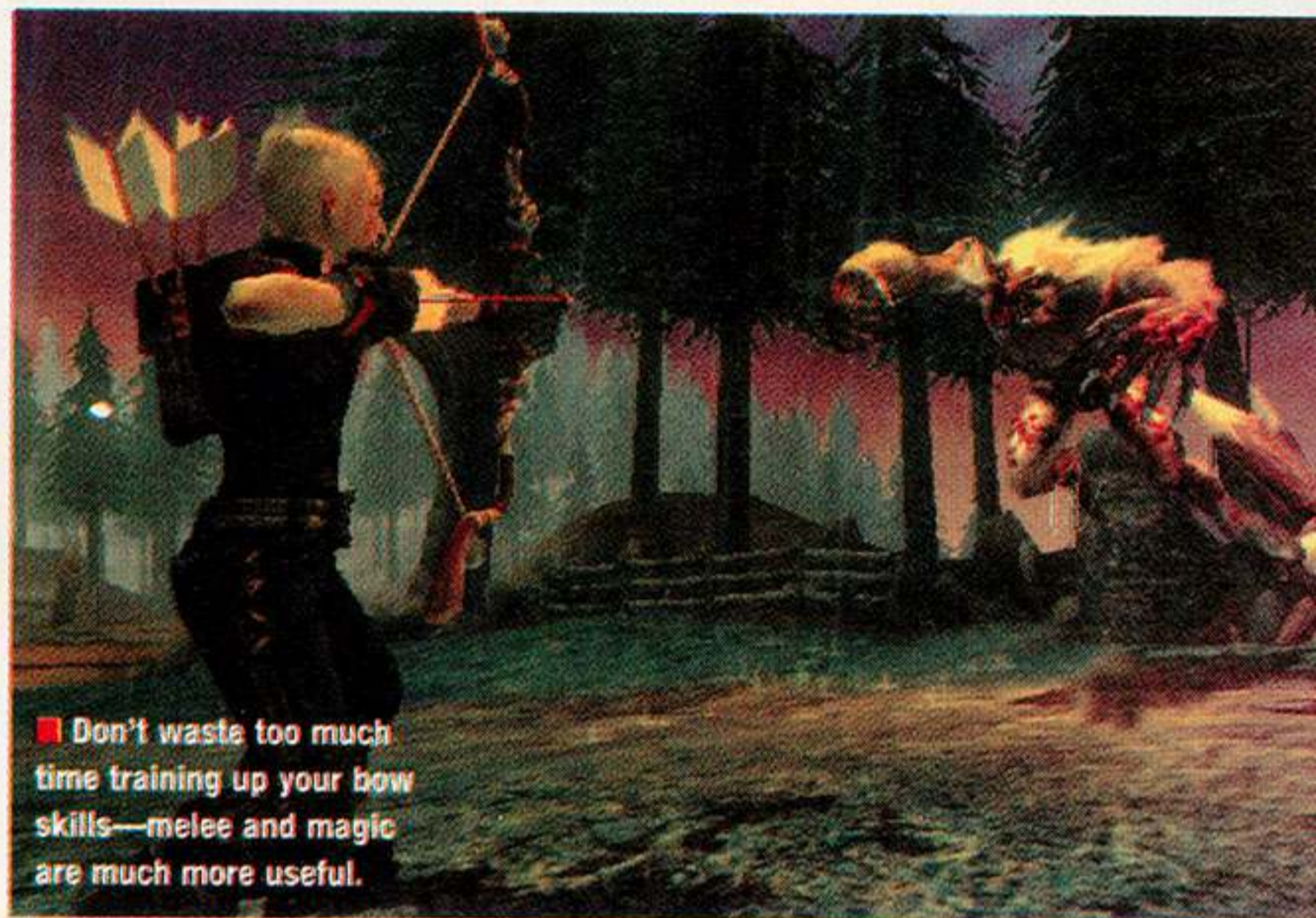
**Title:** Death Bringer  
**Played by:** Jennifer  
**Best chicken kick:** 14.63 m  
**Proudest moment:** Accidentally farted on Lady Grey, the snooty town mayor.  
**Backstory:** Jen's hero had trouble winning the ladies' hearts—until he learned the "sexy hero pose" expression.



**Title:** Piemaster  
**Played by:** Greg  
**Divorces:** 37  
**Proudest moment:** Kicked out of Oakvale on 11 separate occasions.  
**Backstory:** Greg's hero, Joe Sixpack, enjoyed the simple things, like fishing, chicken punting, and philandering.



**Title:** Chicken Chaser  
**Played by:** Mark  
**Number of times had sex:** 0  
**Proudest moment:** Got drunk and slaughtered a whole town.  
**Backstory:** Yeah, Mark's ultraevil hero is wearing a dress. Wanna make something of it?



**JENNIFER:** *Fable* is definitely not a game to hurry through. If you don't explore and experiment, you'll miss out on all kinds of good stuff.

**MARK:** How about those boss battles, though? Now we can talk disappointing.

**GREG:** They're rote. Discover pattern, execute pattern, repeat. I beat the final boss without coming within 20 feet of him.

**JENNIFER:** You forgot one step: Adjust the awful camera. I lost count of how many times I found myself running backwards, shooting arrows at off-screen enemies because it was so laborious adjusting the camera every time.

But enough about combat. What about the game's much-vaunted "emergent" aspects? Flirting with villagers and getting married was mildly amusing, but, for me, the combo of hack-and-slash action with a *Sims*-style dollhouse didn't work well enough to elevate the game to greatness.

**GREG:** Yes. It's much more exciting to shape a hero than to play a sort of weak minigame to win a wife for a few extra ducats.

**MARK:** I really enjoyed the feeling of pride I got when I overheard townspeople talking about me—not an emotion I'm accustomed to experiencing in a game. But most of the fancy "interactive world" aspects didn't draw me in.

That said, being evil sucks once you get past the initial thrill of people dropping crates and running just 'cause you walk by. Girls don't fall in love with you, people won't talk to or about you when you're around, the horns you grow look silly.... All I did was slaughter an entire village or two. OK, three. But that's it. I had a rough childhood.

**GREG:** *Fable* does an excellent job of reinforcing the image you've created for your hero. It's recognition, fame, or hatred—all very valuable pieces of feedback. The game is aware of your standing in the world, and it reacts accordingly.

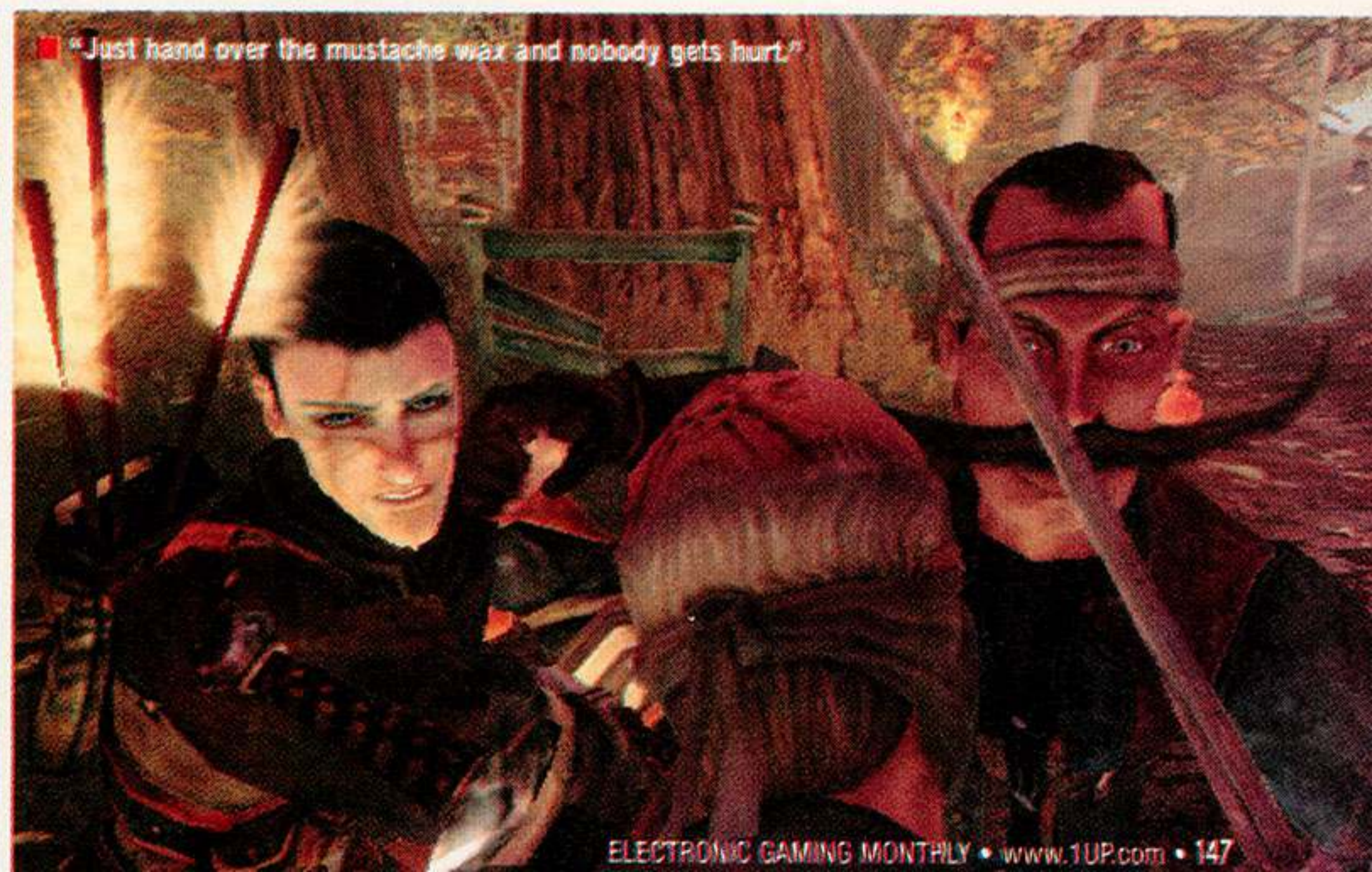
**MARK:** It's impressive in a way, and cool to know it's there, but I would have traded it for a few *Zelda*-style puzzle-filled dungeons (so sad *Fable* doesn't have any) in a second.

**JENNIFER:** And the "puzzles" it did have were pretty lame. The prison warden poetry reading? Puh-lease.

**MARK:** My biggest gripe is still the size of the game—it's not tiny, but it's also not big enough to match the otherwise epic feel of *Fable*. The world might be as deep as an ocean, but it doesn't matter so much when it's only the size of a swimming pool.

**GREG:** I think we should celebrate what *Fable* brings to the table: its ability to let players create and define their own hero...

**JENNIFER:** ...and mash buttons till their thumbs are sore. 🐔







**WIELD THE EXCALIBUR**  
PLAY AS ONE OF 5 KNIGHTS, INCLUDING  
ARTHUR, LANCELOT AND GUINEVERE.

**BATTLE ON HORSEBACK**  
GET A LEG UP ON THE ENEMY  
WITH POWERFUL HORSE ATTACKS.

**ARCHERY ATTACKS**  
RANGED COMBAT GIVES YOU  
DEAD AIM AND EXPLOSIVE RESULTS.

# KING ARTHUR



Violence

NOVEMBER 2004







LEGENDS HAVE NEVER BEEN PLAYABLE...  
UNTIL NOW.



PlayStation 2

**KONAMI**

[www.konami.com/usa](http://www.konami.com/usa)

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**Good:** Excellent voice acting, some clever puzzles  
**Bad:** Atrocious graphics, clunky controls  
**Winner:** Award for Most Prominent Collarbones



**SHANE:** When *Galleon* was first announced for the Dreamcast back in 1998, it seemed like an ambitious adventure in swashbuckling. Hell, it even looked good. *Galleon* promised more of the daring leaps and puzzles that made the first *Tomb Raider* such a hit, and it had a winning pedigree—Lara's creator left to work on *Galleon* soon after crafting Ms. Croft's first adventure.

Numerous delays and reworkings later, *Galleon* is finally staggering onto an unsuspecting Xbox near you. Put simply, this game looks awful. Indescribably stunted characters (have the designers ever seen a human leg?), embarrassingly stark environments, and laughable special effects make this the ugliest Xbox game you'll ever see.

Of course, visuals aren't everything. Good gameplay can outshine the nastiest exterior. Tragically, *Galleon* stumbles here, too—what could have been exciting platforming, combat, and puzzle-solving becomes an exercise in frustration with clumsy controls and uneven level design. At least the game is mercifully short. Rent it if you want to observe a gaming shipwreck dredged up from an earlier era.

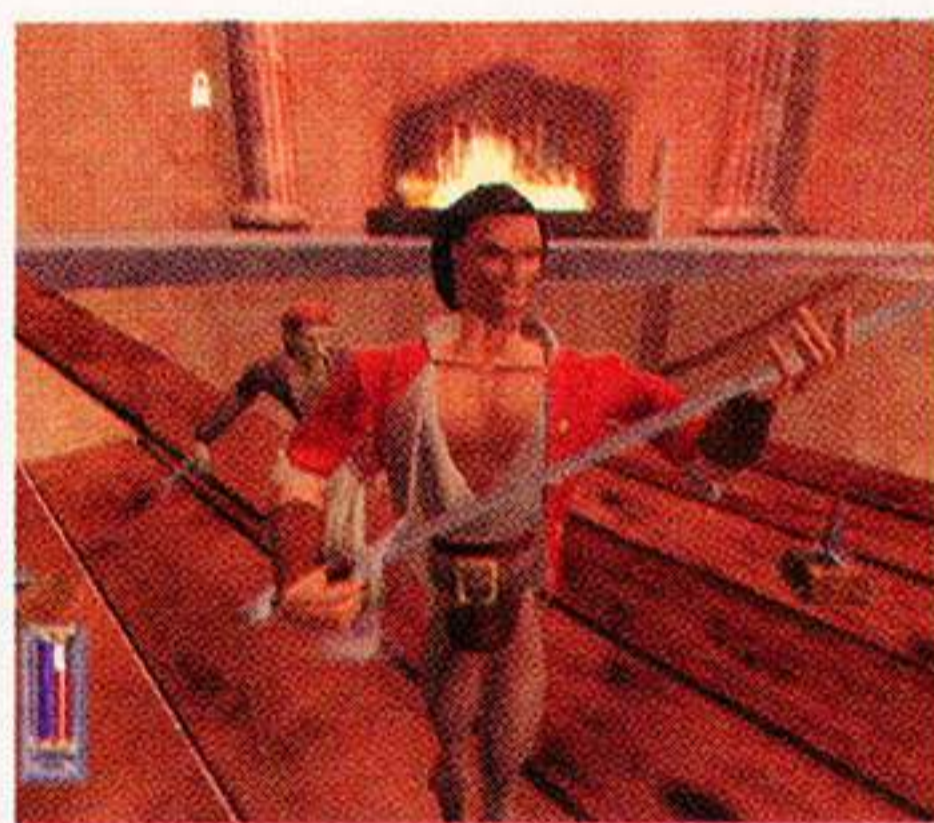
**CRISPIN:** Compared to more recent and far superior adventure games like *Prince of Persia*, *Galleon* looks and plays like a funky, buggy evolutionary offshoot of the genre developed in isolation while the rest of the gaming world passed it by. Its novel control scheme works great half the time but often feels sluggish and leads to oddball situations (such as climbing up a door you're trying to walk through). One in 10 gamers might glom on to *Galleon* for the sake of its uniqueness, but for everyone else, this ship has sailed.

**KEVIN:** Never before have I seen a game that so blithely pairs high-tech special effects with low-tech production values. On one end, you have perfect lip-synching and main guy Rhama's uncanny ability to climb platforms like a real person (subtle, yes, but no game has done it before). But then there's the ugly characters, acres of empty terrain, a poor camera, and "try this jump again and again" gameplay that went out of style with *Tomb Raider 3*. It's a fascinating museum piece of what people considered state-of-the-art back in 1999.

Xbox

# GALLEON

Lost at sea



■ Hey *Galleon*, Skeletor called...he wants his extended family back.

THE VERDICTS (OUT OF 10)	4.0	5.0	4.5
	SHANE	CRISPIN	KEVIN

Publisher: Atlus  
 Developer: Confounding Factor  
 Players: 1  
 ESRB: Teen

www.galleon-game.com



■ It's classic rock-scissors-paper: Pikemen (left) are death to cavalry, useless against archers.

**Good:** Interesting mix of strategy and combat  
**Bad:** Occasionally wonky camera  
**Wargamers:** You can put away your die-cast miniatures now



**DEMIAN:** Imagine the squad-based field tactics of *Full Spectrum Warrior* combined with a hack-and-slasher like the PS2's *Dynasty Warriors*, set in a generic fantasy world with orcs, busty dark elves, and dudes with big hammers. Aside from some horrific voice acting and a grating metal soundtrack, *Kingdom* is really quite good.

As each battle scenario unfolds, you'll maneuver groups of specialized troops (cavalry, archers, etc.), and though the interface takes some getting used to, it wasn't long before I was wading in with my infantry and simultaneously outflanking the enemy force with a cavalry charge. Once the hand-to-hand combat starts, the perspective shifts and you'll take control of your hero character, fighting the battle up close—it's dramatic, but more about button-mashing than finesse or strategy.

Off the battlefield you can level up and buy better arms for your heroes and army grunts alike, so you can customize your forces to fit your style. With four lengthy campaigns (two on the bad guys' side) and Xbox Live battles (head-to-head and 2-on-2), that's a hell of a lot of orc slayin'.

**KEVIN:** In all my years of furtively gripping controllers, I've never played a game quite like *Crusaders*. It's a lot like the old Sega Saturn game *Dragon Force*—and it's what publisher Koei should do with the *Dynasty Warriors* series instead of churning it out yearly, *Madden*-style. Slicing through goblins and Amazon elf gals while controlling multiple armies may sound hopelessly complicated on paper, but the brilliant control scheme keeps you from feeling lost. The animation and fighting are a bit stiff, yes, but the gameplay is solid.

**XBN—GREG:** War is never pretty, save for in *Kingdom Under Fire: The Crusaders*, where it's fairly beautiful. Warriors choke the screen, arrows rain down from the heavens, and corpses serve as grim testimony to the angry proceedings. Tactical elements buoy the play immensely; arm-chair generals command multiple squads and use the terrain to their advantage, but, as noted, the combat is almost exactly like *Dynasty Warriors*, with button-mashing being the secret to success and battles won simply by killing an enemy leader.

Xbox

ONLINE

# KINGDOM UNDER FIRE: THE CRUSADERS

Have fun storming the castle



THE VERDICTS (OUT OF 10)	7.5	8.0	8.0
	DEMIAN	KEVIN	GREG

Publisher: Microsoft  
 Developer: Phantagram  
 Players: 1-2 (2-4 online)  
 ESRB: Mature

www.kuftc.com





■ GameCube

# DONKEY KONGA



The rhythm is gonna get you

**Good:** Therapy for carpal tunnel syndrome  
**Bad:** That is, until your palms start to itch  
**Your Downstairs Neighbors:** Are gonna hate you



**JENNIFER:** You're probably starting to think that all it takes is a goofy-ass controller and some licensed songs to make an awesome rhythm-action game. That's exactly why I approached *Donkey Konga* with some skepticism. Sure, the super-cute bongo drums immediately make me want to play the game, but who knows? Hidden behind the gimmicky controller might be some totally jive gameplay. Not so. Except for a few totally jive songs, this game is as solid as a rock-steady beat.

It's deceptively simple—you pound along with the notes on the screen, hitting the drums or clapping in time. With just a handful of modes that are all quite similar, it initially seems a bit too basic—but just keep playing. You'll unlock higher difficulty levels (you have to earn the right to play the cooler, more rhythmically complex versions), funny new sound sets, and quirky minigames. And then things heat up fast. Multiplayer is a total blast, too, because you each play different drum parts, so rather than just competing, you actually feel like you're part of an ensemble. Gimmicky controller be damned...give me my *Konga*!

**MARK:** Despite a few unforgivably awful choices ("Row, Row, Row Your Boat," "Bingo," and the dreaded "DK Rap"), *Konga's* selection of tunes and skill levels will get most gamers groovin': Blink 182 for the kids; "Whip It!" and "We Will Rock You" for the (relative) old-timers like myself; remixed *Mario* and *Zelda* themes for the Nintendo nostalgic; "Right Here, Right Now" for...wait, who the hell is that for? Anyway, the controller and concept work well in a party setting, though *Konga* gets dull—and painful on the hands—playing alone or in longer sessions (more and better minigames or other unlockables would've helped).

**GMR—CARRIE:** *Konga's* cheesy plastic drums are like bright lights and cotton candy at a fair—near irresistible. I love how, with the briefest of explanations, anyone can play, and everybody wants to. The coin incentive in single player is a cool way to keep you practicing and playing, but I wish you could buy new songs instead of harder versions of the same ones. Like cotton candy, this game is sweet but not completely satisfying.



■ Multiplayer juices things up with minigames, but four-player jam sessions are where it's at.

THE VERDICTS (OUT OF 10)	8.0	7.0	7.5
	JENNIFER	MARK	CARRIE

Publisher: Nintendo  
 Developer: Namco  
 Players: 1-4  
 ESRB: Everyone

www.nintendo.com

■ GameCube

# WWE DAY OF RECKONING

Hurts worse than a kick to the junk



**Good:** Impressive-looking wrestlers, intuitive controls  
**Bad:** Ho-hum story mode  
**For the Hormone-Raging Teenager:** New bra & panties matches



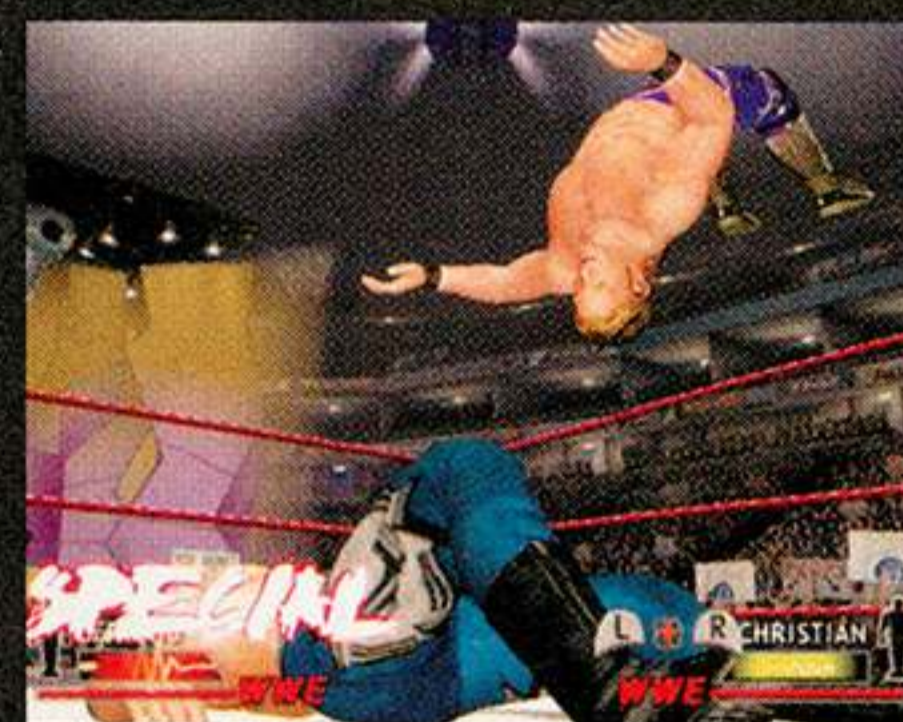
**BRYAN:** *Day of Reckoning* sure looks like a champ, but under that chiseled physique are more problems than a retired grappler coming to grips with life out of the spotlight...and no more free 'roids.

The game steps into the ring sporting incredibly detailed wrestlers and controls so simple that any jobber can lay the smack down, be it on candy asses or regular asses. But like last year's GameCube-exclusive *WWE* title, this one loses by pinfall due to its uninspiring story mode. Guiding your created superstar from pretender to contender merely amounts to a series of frustrating tussles with some ridiculous stipulations, like letting your partner—whom you have no control over—record the victory. *Lame.* Forget about branching story lines à la THQ's *SmackDown!* series (PS2)—aside from deciding which *WWE* faction (*SmackDown* or *Raw*) to join, your path to glory is preset. Toss in A.I. foes who are all counter-move masters, and you've got a game that deserves a mouthful of Mr. Socko.

**SHAWN:** Welcome to the world of workaday wrestlers, the schmucks in standard-issue spandex whose job is to make the guys with gimmicks look good. Whether you struggle through the second-rate story mode as a bona fide blue chipper or step into exhibitions with superstars, you haven't got a prayer when the game's cheap champs decide to pound you purple (after you've put in 20 minutes preparing for the pin). And while what goes around comes around when you fight friends, *Reckoning's* poor man's presentation—no

commentary or voice work, a three-song soundtrack, etc.—is still more like a weekly match than the main event.

**1UP.COM—DAVE:** *Day of Reckoning* has pretty decent fundamentals, and it's a solid multiplayer game. The animation and grappling controls would have been worshiped a year or two ago, and the create-a-wrestler mode is up to hardcore specs. But it takes more to make a wrestling superstar in 2004, and that's where this game fails—the A.I. behavior is frequently glitchy, and the linear story mode is like refined antifun. The only thing more frustrating than fighting the overpowered CPU is hoping a bonehead A.I. tag partner won't blow a crucial match.

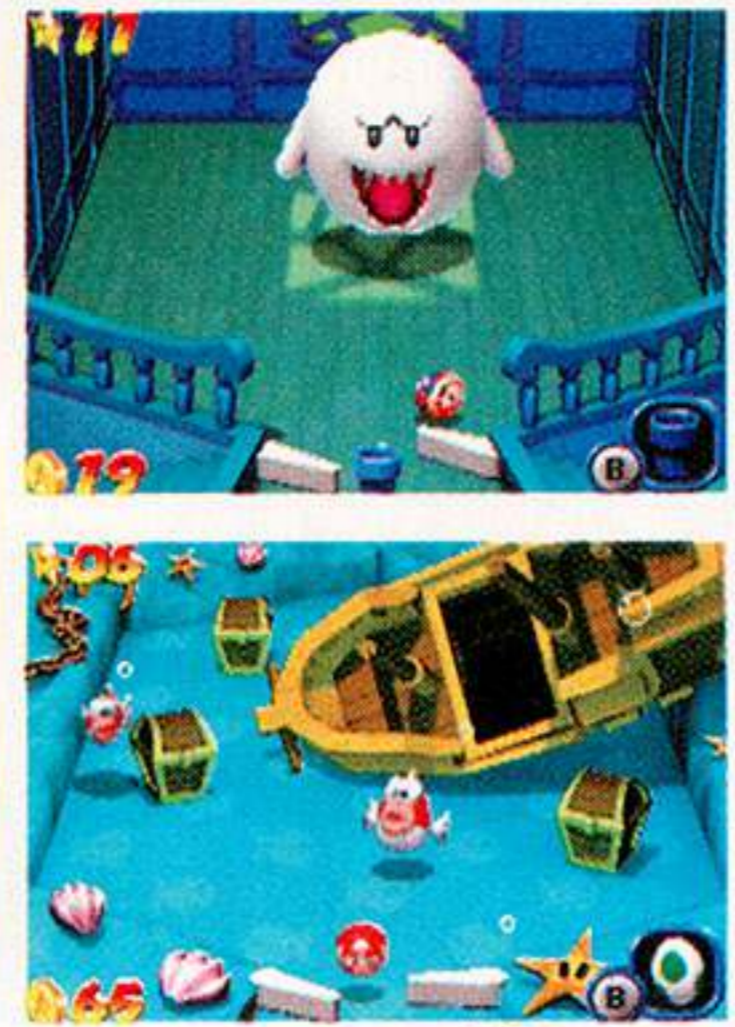


THE VERDICTS (OUT OF 10)	5.5	5.0	6.5
	BRYAN	SHAWN	DAVE

Publisher: THQ  
 Developer: Yukes  
 Players: 1-4  
 ESRB: Teen

www.thq.com





**Good:** Converts the Mushroom Kingdom into mini pinball tables  
**Bad:** Too tricky trick shots  
**Not as Good as:** *Pokémon Pinball*



**SHAWN:** Setting high scores is the least of your worries as you careen through *Mario Pinball Land*'s eye-catching worlds, collecting stars by steamrolling critters and solving puzzles—the game's more of a Mario outing in which the portly plumber happens to be a pinball than it is pinball with toadstool-theme tables. It's clever for sure (you can megasize your spherical hero with magic mushrooms or shrink him to B.B. proportions so that he can slip through secret passages), but it's also a bit too complicated for its own good.

*Mario Pinball* doesn't offer mega-size tables bristling with neon bumpers and chutes. Instead, you get lots of wee boards that play more like monotonous pinball minigames, with few targets and simple goals that get numbingly repetitive when you lose a ball and have to start over. It almost seems like a kid's game—until you encounter bosses and trick shots that push your temper to full tilt. And speaking of tilt...where is it?

Pinball is controlled chaos. There's only so much finesse you can get from a pair of flippers, yet *Mario* throws stuff at you that'd trip up The Who's silver-ball wizard Tommy, then punishes you for failing. If only the game gave you more say over your trajectory—tilt would've been nice and simple steering even better—it could've been as great as its concept.

**1UP.COM—DAVE:** The makers of *Mario Pinball* seem to think that if a few big pinball boards are fun, a bunch of tiny, simple pinball boards are fun. They ain't. The bigger, messier, and more complicated pinball gets, the better—a great machine like *Medieval Madness* is crammed full of targets and ways to score. *Pinball Land*'s boards boil down to shooting one or two targets until terminal frustration sets in.

**CRISPIN:** Something not so super happened to this pinball game on its way to Mario Land—it stopped being a pinball game. Unlike other silver-ball slingers,

The way the boards link up creates another problem: Fall out of a later board, and you'll have to repeat the effort required to progress that far. Didn't anybody realize that this isn't any fun?

THE VERDICTS (OUT OF 10)	5.5	3.5	3.0
	SHAWN	CRISPIN	DAVE

Publisher: Nintendo  
 Developer: Fuse  
 Players: 1  
 ESRB: Everyone

www.nintendo.com

GBA

# MARIO PINBALL LAND



Tilted



(Left) Do you want what's behind door No. 5 or door No. 5? Or door No. 5?



**Good:** The Sega Saturn classic returns...  
**Bad:** ...along with all the outlandish slowdown  
**Shame:** This isn't *Gunstar Heroes* (Genesis)



**KEVIN:** It's a drag that the original *Guardian Heroes* (a 1996 Sega Saturn release from the maker of GC's *Ikaruga* and the GBA *Astro Boy*) has become a costly collector's item. It's a corker of a game, one of the best in the now-ailing beat-em-up action genre—and what's worse, this portable sequel only proves that the GBA really can't handle ports from home consoles very well.

huge characters, and over-the-top, action-heavy battles. Unfortunately, Kevin's right—the tiny GBA screen isn't exactly the best place to try to replicate this kind of experience. But *AGH* at least manages to come pretty close. In typical Treasure fashion, the screen is almost always littered with enemies, and the challenge level is absurdly high for a beat-em-up. Still, unless you're a big fan of the genre, the endless button mashing can get pretty tiring.

It's not like the action isn't there. Developer Treasure's packed a ton of it into this package—every stage is a gauntlet of ominous monsters, enormous bosses, and tricky jumps. In many ways, it's like *Astro Boy*: an homage to the bygone era of 2D action games. Unfortunately, *Guardian Heroes* will remind you of all the bad bits of those olden times, too. The game has major issues with slowdown—any more than a couple of enemies onscreen, and your GBA just stops trying. Add in teeny-tiny visuals and laggy controls, and maybe Treasure should have saved this for more powerful hardware like the PSP or Nintendo DS.

**1UP.COM—SAM:** Compared with the way-cool *Astro Boy: Omega Factor*, Treasure's latest is somewhat of a disappointment. I'm a huge fan of the original, but this scaled-down sequel doesn't have the same magic. The graphics are sharp, the music is catchy, but the story and settings just aren't as compelling. Thankfully, as with all Treasure games, there's a deceptively deep fighting system that keeps the action fresh and strategic throughout. The occasional slowdown—which isn't nearly as bad as the Saturn original's—is even welcome at times. Now where's my *Gunstar* sequel?

**JOHN R:** The original *Guardian Heroes* stood out because of its stunning visuals,

THE VERDICTS (OUT OF 10)	6.0	7.0	7.5
	KEVIN	JOHN R.	SAM

Publisher: Ubisoft  
 Developer: Treasure  
 Players: 1 (2-4 via Link cable)  
 ESRB: Everyone

www.ubisoft.com

GBA

# ADVANCE GUARDIAN HEROES

A backward advance



Up to four players can link up and hack-and-slash together.





GBA

# POKÉMON FIRE RED AND LEAF GREEN

Would you please just catch 'em all already?

**Good:** The best *Pokémon* yet...for beginners

**Bad:** Less innovation than ever before

**Packed With:** Neat-o-keen wireless adapter



**KEVIN:** Can you believe it's been six years since *Pokémon* invaded America? Six years! If you bought the original monster-collecting RPG classic when you were 8, you'd be in high school now—and if you feel like wallowing in preteen nostalgia, then these new versions are perfect, if perhaps a bit too familiar.

The big new feature this time is wireless support, which offers a taste of what Nintendo DS multiplayer could be like. Games are limited to four players and there's no built-in tournament support, but up to 40 people can connect to a local-area wireless "lobby" at once, setting up games and trading in small, furry creatures. For schoolyards and mall tournaments, it's a major convenience.

Otherwise, this is a faithful port of the original—to a fault, actually. Besides the graphics (which upgrade the game to manageable *Ruby/Sapphire*-caliber visuals) and a new online-help system, this really isn't far removed from the game you played in 1998. Hardcore fans will dig the fact that you can find all 386 current Pokémon within these two carts, but beyond nostalgia, there aren't many compelling reasons to do so.

**JOHN R:** It's been a long time since I've had any interest in a new *Pokémon* game, but *FireRed* and *LeafGreen* managed to completely revitalize my enthusiasm for the little buggers. Kevin's right about the nostalgia factor, but still—the old games have never looked so good, and there's a lot of new content (added islands after the main quest, all the critters from the later games, a revamped pokédex, etc.), not to mention wireless play—finally! I wish they included the clock function from *Gold/Silver*, and that the battles were actually animated, but otherwise, my complaints are few. Bring on *Emerald*!

**SHANE:** I haven't had any desire to catch 'em all for damn near five years now, but this remake lured me back into the critter-collecting biz. Fundamentally, it's still the same game, and its simplistic visuals, barely animated battles, and wafer-thin plot don't do much for me...but its surprisingly deep, balanced gameplay and addictive pacing have me weirdly hooked. New features, including additional areas, useful items (like the running shoes), and wireless combat make a compelling argument to catch 'em all, all over again.



THE VERDICTS (OUT OF 10)	7.0	8.0	8.0
	KEVIN	JOHN R.	SHANE

Publisher: Nintendo  
Developer: Game Freak  
Players: 1-4 (up to 5 in chat, up to 40 in trade lobbies)  
ESRB: Everyone

www.pokemon.com

# Grand Theft Auto

GAME BOY ADVANCE

# COMING SOON



Visit [www.esrb.org](http://www.esrb.org) for updated rating information.



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# REVIEWS WRAP-UP

## Where tardy games go to serve detention

**S**o close. We thought *The Guy Game* might actually out-suck our all-time lowest scoring game, *Mortal Kombat Advance* (0.5, 0.0, 1.5 outta 10), but Shoe loved all over it (relatively) and *Guy* averaged 0.5 better.

In non-bad-game related news, efforts to review *Dead or Alive Ultimate* (XB) in a timely manner failed. It's good, but we won't know how good until next issue.

### QUICK HITS

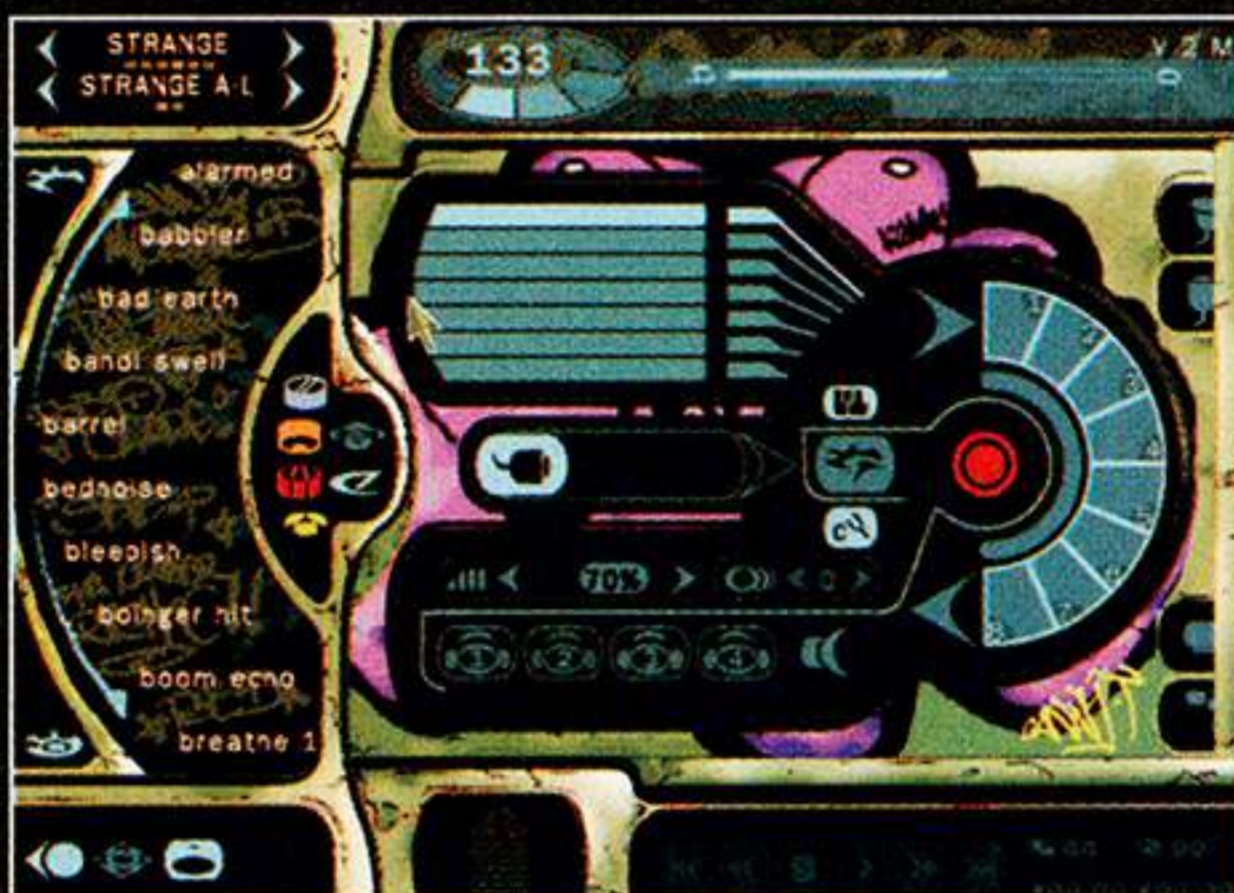
**Hamtaro: Ham-Ham Games** (GBA) is out. Normally we don't care much for minigames involving hamsters, but *Ham-Ham* is made by some of the same folks who did *Mario & Luigi: Superstar Saga*, and it's quite good.... We're tapping our toes, wondering where the heck *F-Zero:*

*GP Legend* (GBA) is. Nintendo won't give us an early look, so we have to wait for retail copies.... *Growlanser: Generations* (PS2), the latest from known procrastinators Working Designs, also failed to show up *again*.... The series formerly known as *NHL FaceOff* is now called *Gretzky NHL*,

and the 2005 edition has been delayed until November.... With time winding down, EA Sports called an audible and added online leagues to *Madden 2005*. The result: touchdown! (But don't tell us your entire game plan next year, EA, and we will toss a yellow hanky. At your eye.)



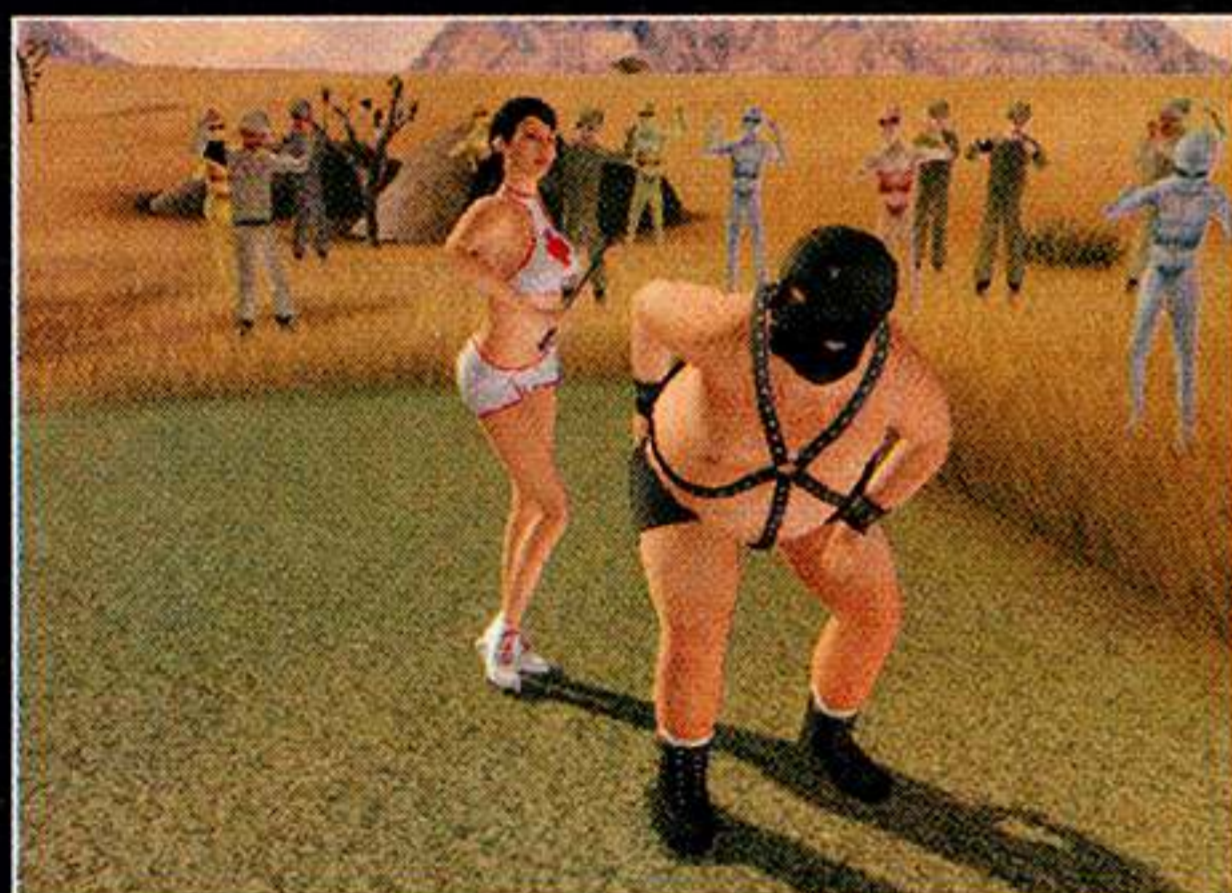
**Gallop Racer 2004** • PS2 • Tecmo • ESRB: E  
Whoever's buying *Gallop Racer* every year and keeping the series in business, please stop. These games are a pain to review! They're a convoluted mess of menus and lingo only a horse-racing connoisseur could love. Or comprehend. But *2004* offers plenty to do, and once you learn the ropes, it can be addicting.



**Digital Hitz Factory** • PS2 • XS Games • ESRB: E  
This music maker is asking to be mocked, spelling "Hitz" like that and all, but alas, it's actually good. *Hitz* has a ton of optionz (almost too many) and letz you import tunez or vocal samplez with the included mic and line-in adapter. The interface is slick but somewhat hard to navigate with a PS2 controller.



**Robotech: Invasion** • PS2/XB • Global Star • ESRB: T  
Protoculture-huffing *Robotech* junkies will crash hard when they hear this sequel's lack of cartoon tunes and spy its blah visuals (prequel *Robotech: Battlecry*'s 'toon style represented the show much better). But *Invasion*'s compelling plot has potential, even if early levels are iffy. Full review next ish.



**Outlaw Golf 2** • PS2/XB • Global Star • ESRB: M  
If you've always found *Tiger* too serious or *Hot Shots* too kiddy, you may want to shout "Fore!" on these links, featuring the likes of club-swinging hicks, rico-suave manwhores, and dominatrices. The controls are simple, there's online play, and it's got *Jackass*-style golf-cart racing. Not bad for a mere 20 bones.



**Yager** • XB • Kemco • ESRB: T — A budget-priced game with business-class production values, the unfortunately titled *Yager* is a slick-looking but sluggish jet shooter that'll give wannabe fighter jocks their money's worth. The missions mix exploration and blasting, while the characters you meet in the air spin together the nifty plot.



**Colin McRae Rally 2005** • XB • Codemasters • ESRB: E — The *Madden* of rally racing is back—of course—after its annual tune-up. *2005* is a bit quicker and spiffier-looking than the last *Colin*, and the career mode has been revamped to give players some choice of what to do when. The real news, though: eight-player races on Xbox Live.

### GONE FISHIN'. AND HUNTIN'.

If you're too lazy to actually sit in a boat and pound beers, or sit in a tree and pound beers....



**Cabela's Deer Hunt 2005**  
PS2/XB • Activision  
Think *Metal Gear Solid* in the great outdoors with a short-winded geezer and Bambi instead of a genome soldier and baddies.



**Pro Fishing Challenge**  
XB • Atlus  
This ultraserious sim includes everything but the bug bites and wet seat cushions, and it's the first fishing game to go online.



**Rapala Pro Fishing**  
PS2/XB • Activision  
*Rapala* uses the analog stick for casting, which works well, but the game's not as in-depth as *Pro Fishing Challenge*.



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# REVIEWS ARCHIVE

## Set those store clerks straight

**bargain-bin  
bounty**



### ESPN NHL 2K5

■ PS2/XB  
 ■ Released: September 2004  
 ■ Original Scores: 8.5, 8.5, 8.0  
 Surprisingly, checking out the greatest show on ice won't break your piggy bank. For a mere 20 bucks, *ESPN* hits the rink with the prettiest visuals, an authentic telecast presentation, and the best sports minigames around. Let's hope next year's edition hits a little harder.

### STAR WARS VS. STAR TREK

Where cunning Starfleet Captain Jean-Luc Picard outthinks extraterrestrials, hunchbacked Jedi Yoda double-talks humans to death. But which space-faring sage's series can claim sci-fi supremacy?

■ Average score for the 35 *Star Wars* games reviewed by EGM: 6.87



■ Average score for the 11 *Star Trek* games reviewed by EGM: 6.47



GAME	SYSTEM	VERDICT	SCORES (out of 10)	AWARD
Alias	PS2/XB	■ Sexy disguises can't conceal shoddy gameplay	5.0 5.5 4.5	
All-Star Baseball 2005	PS2/XB	■ Take us out to the ball game...just not this one	5.5 4.5 6.0	
Amazing Island	GC	■ What's amazing is that this game made it to the States at all	5.5 3.0 5.5	
American Idol	PS2	■ The only button you need to press is on your console	1.5 2.0 1.0	
Armored Core: Nexus	PS2	■ Impress the ladies with your elaborately customized mechanical avatar. Or not	6.0 6.0 7.0	
Astro Boy	PS2	■ Tweens will take to this robo tyke, but his game's too short and totally not sweet	5.0 3.0 5.0	
Astro Boy: Omega Factor	GBA	■ 'Toon-lovers and jaded players alike will enjoy this intense platformer	8.5 9.0 8.5	Silver
Athens 2004	PS2	■ Sony's Summer Olympics aren't as special as we hoped	5.0 5.5 5.0	
Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance II	PS2/XB	■ Ho-hum hack-n-slash. Now that's a role you don't wanna play	7.0 4.5 5.0	
Bujingai: The Forsaken City	PS2	■ Your average martial arts actioner, but with 100 percent more Japanese rock stars	4.5 6.0 7.5	
Burnout 3: Takedown	PS2/XB	■ Insurance (and heart) rates skyrocket with each spectacular crash	9.0 9.5 9.0	Gold
Catwoman	PS2/XB/GC	■ The feline femme looks purrfect, but she's flea-ridden under the fluff	4.5 5.5 2.0	
Champions of Norrath: Realms of EQ	PS2	■ More about slaying orcs than socializing with dorks	8.5 8.0 8.5	Silver
The Chronicles of Riddick	XB	■ With gameplay this good, a life sentence isn't long enough	9.0 8.0 9.0	Silver
Colin McRae Rally 04	XB	■ Choosy rally racing fans choose <i>Colin</i> . But <i>RalliSport 2</i> 's more fun	8.5 8.0 8.5	Silver
Crash Nitro Kart	PS2/XB/GC	■ For roadside assistance, call 1-800-BUY-MARIO-KART	5.5 6.0 5.5	
Crimson Tears	PS2	■ Repetitive battles will bore you to tears	5.5 6.0 6.5	
Custom Robo	GC	■ Impress your schoolyard chums with your elaborately customized mini-robot. Or not	6.5 6.0 8.0	
Cy Girls	PS2	■ Progress-impeding puzzles will make you feel like the butt of a bad blonde joke	7.0 5.0 5.0	
Dance Dance Revolution Ultramix	XB	■ Lose pounds and prepare for the prom	8.5 8.0 7.0	
Dead Man's Hand	XB	■ Find out how the West was dumb in this oddball first-person shooting gallery	6.5 5.0 4.5	
Destruction Derby Arenas	PS2	■ This clunker has major problems under the hood	4.5 3.5 6.0	
Drake	XB	■ It's now illegal for anyone who considers buying it to use currency	2.0 0.5 2.5	
DRIV3R	PS2/XB	■ <i>Driver</i> meets <i>Grand Theft Auto</i> , and somehow an "e" becomes a "3"	8.5 7.5 6.5	
Dynasty Warriors 4: Empires	PS2	■ New name, same ol' beat-em-up game—with light "strategy" elements	6.0 5.5 6.5	
EA Sports Fight Night 2004	PS2/XB	■ Lightning never tasted so good. It's the crapping thunder we could do without	8.5 9.0 8.0	Silver
Echo Night: Beyond	PS2	■ <i>Echo Night</i> 's creepy moonbase has everything you'd want...except for combat	6.0 5.5 5.0	
ESPN College Hoops	PS2/XB	■ Fouls out for playing too much like a pro baller	6.5 7.5 6.5	
ESPN Major League Baseball	PS2/XB	■ If <i>MVP</i> is this season's Yankees, then sadly, <i>ESPN</i> is its BoSox	8.0 8.5 7.5	Silver
ESPN NFL 2K5	PS2/XB	■ The best 20 bucks a sporto could ever spend	8.5 8.5 8.0	Silver
ESPN NHL 2K5	PS2/XB	■ <i>ESPN</i> 's puckster hoists the Cup yet again. Can you say dynasty?	8.5 8.5 8.0	Silver
EverQuest Online Adventures: Frontiers	PS2	■ It's a lonely frontier for PS2 <i>EverQuest</i> fans	6.5 6.0 7.0	
EyeToy: Groove	PS2	■ Discover just how idiotic you look dancing on TV	8.0 8.0 7.0	
Fatal Frame II: Crimson Butterfly	PS2	■ Combating poltergeists with a Polaroid is scarier than it sounds	7.5 7.5 6.5	
FIFA Soccer 2004	PS2/XB/GC	■ Responsive, intricate controls, but <i>FIFA</i> 's our second fave after <i>Winning Eleven</i>	7.5 9.0 8.0	Silver
Final Fantasy: Crystal Chronicles	GC	■ Charming RPG romp works best with three friends along for the GBA-linked-up ride	8.0 8.0 8.0	Silver
Final Fantasy XI	PS2	■ They'll never know you're not really a feisty female feline. Well, until the honeymoon	8.5 8.5 8.5	Silver
Front Mission 4	PS2	■ You'll need to be smart to figure out this deep mech-strategy game	8.0 8.0 8.0	Silver
Full Spectrum Warrior	XB	■ A war-winning coalition of gritty graphics and tactical gameplay	8.0 7.0 8.0	
Galactic Wrestling: Feat. Ultimate Muscle	PS2	■ A bare-bones feature set makes this <i>Muscle</i> worth flexing only as a rental	5.5 5.5 5.0	
Ghosthunter	PS2	■ Light on the spookiness, with linear gameplay only an algebra teacher could love	6.5 6.0 6.0	
Guilty Gear X2 #Reload	XB	■ We're not sure how to pronounce it, but this online fighting game rocks	9.0 8.5 9.0	Silver
Harry Potter and the Pris. of Azkaban	PS2/XB/GC	■ Control Harry and pals in this charming yet simple <i>Zelda</i> rip-off for the preschool set	7.0 6.5 6.0	
Harvest Moon: A Wonderful Life	GC	■ For those who think farming and videogames are a natural combo	6.5 6.5 7.0	
Hitman: Contracts	PS2/XB	■ Money grows on trees when you cut throats to rake leaves	8.0 7.5 8.5	Silver
Hot Shots Golf Fore!	PS2	■ Aside from online play, you won't find many surprises on these links	7.0 8.5 6.5	
James Bond 007: Everything or Nothing	PS2/XB/GC	■ More gadgets and a better story than any of the recent flicks	8.0 8.5 8.5	Silver
Karaoke Revolution Volume 2	PS2	■ Medleys, more songs to butcher, and a streamlined interface	8.5 8.5 8.5	Silver
La Pucelle: Tactics	PS2	■ Deep strategy-RPG gameplay you'll love, with childish characters you'll despise	7.5 8.5 8.0	Silver
The Legend of Zelda: Four Swords Adv.	GC	■ <i>Zelda</i> teaches Link a little somethin' about four-play in this old-school adventure	8.5 9.0 8.0	Silver
Lowrider	PS2	■ Won't make you wanna bounce	5.0 5.5 2.0	
Lord of the Rings: Return of the King	PS2/XB/GC	■ Get hackin' in this beautiful beat-em-up	8.5 8.5 8.0	Silver
Lord of the Rings: Return of the King	GBA	■ Legolas gets shrunk to Keebler size, and your girlfriend still thinks he's hot	7.0 6.0 7.5	
Madden NFL 2005	PS2/XB/GC	■ Visual touch-ups and superior play keep Johnny Ballgame on top	9.0 9.5 9.0	Gold
Mafia	PS2/XB	■ Jack jalopies and outdrive thugs in this glitchy 1930s gangster game	6.0 5.0 7.5	
Malice	PS2/XB	■ You can beat this limp platformer in a single sitting...but why bother?	5.0 5.0 4.0	
Manhunt	PS2	■ Rockstar's latest effort to keep the ESRB around	7.0 6.5 7.0	
Mario Golf: Advance Tour	GBA	■ Play with your putter on the bus—without getting arrested for once	9.5 8.5 8.5	Silver
Mario & Luigi: Superstar Saga	GBA	■ A polished, thoroughly enjoyable adventure in the same vein as <i>Paper Mario</i>	9.0 8.5 9.0	Silver
Mario vs. Donkey Kong	GBA	■ The plumber and big ape clash again in this good, but not great, platformer/puzzler	7.0 7.5 7.5	
McFarlane's Evil Prophecy	PS2	■ This half-assed, brainless beat-em-up is evil indeed	2.0 3.5 2.5	
Mega Man Anniversary Collection	PS2	■ This quality compendium is well worth it, but only for old fans	8.0 8.0 7.0	
Metal Gear Solid: The Twin Snakes	GC	■ A solid if uninspired update of the PlayStation stealth-action classic	8.0 9.0 8.5	Silver
Metal Slug 3	XB	■ Fantastic but frustrating 2D side-scroller for the nimble-fingered	7.5 6.5 8.0	
Metroid: Zero Mission	GBA	■ Surprise twists supercharge this remake of space chick Samus' original romp	9.5 9.0 9.0	Gold
MLB 2005	PS2	■ A quick trip to the minors has made <i>MLB</i> a title contender again	7.0 7.0 7.0	



■ Two-faced *Stuck On You* stars find work in *Silent Hill 4*.

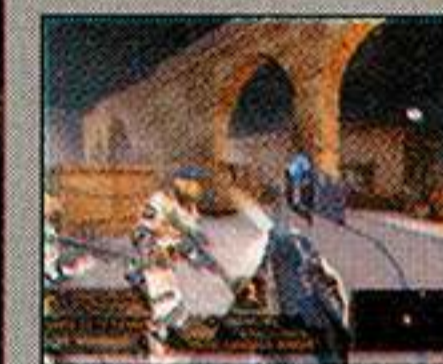
GAME	SYSTEM	VERDICT	SCORES (out of 10)	AWARD
MLB SlugFest: Loaded	PS2/XB	■ Midway's slugger nearly clears the fences with its burning arcade play	8.0 7.0 8.0	
MX Unleashed	PS2/XB	■ Realistic dirt racing minus the damn cleaning bills	8.0 8.0 8.0	Silver
MVP Baseball 2004	PS2/XB/GC	■ EA's take on America's pastime clears the fences with an all-new batting system	8.5 8.0 8.5	Silver
NASCAR 2005: Chase the Cup	PS2/XB/GC	■ A great game, even if your nickname isn't "Cooter"	9.0 8.0 9.0	Silver
NBA Ballers	PS2/XB	■ Midway's 1-on-1 baller has the skillz to pay the billz (or something like that)	8.0 8.0 8.0	Silver
NCAA Football 2005	PS2/XB/GC	■ Subtle but oh-so-effective improvements make <i>NCAA</i> Heisman-worthy	9.0 9.5 9.0	Gold
NCAA March Madness 2004	PS2/XB	■ The only thing missing from this college hoopster is rioting coeds	8.0 8.0 8.0	Silver
NFL Street	PS2/XB/GC	■ Playground (or is it prison?) rules football; best played with friends	8.5 8.0 9.0	Silver
NHL 2005	PS2/XB/GC	■ The Bob Probert of hockey games—all force, no finesse	6.0 6.0 7.0	
NHL Hitz Pro	PS2/XB/GC	■ Like a porn star's assets, <i>Hitz</i> isn't exactly realistic, but it's sure fun to play with	7.5 8.5 8.0	Silver
NHL Rivals 2004	XB	■ Our referees slap <i>Rivals</i> with a five-minute major for sucking	3.5 4.0 6.5	
Nightshade	PS2	■ <i>Beverly Hills Ninja</i> on a scale of ninja-tude	6.0 5.5 5.0	
Ninja Gaiden	XB	■ Download more beautiful, brutal levels on Xbox Live	9.5 9.5 9.5	Gold
Onimusha 3: Demon Siege	PS2	■ The soul-sucking series finale has us screaming "Vive la France!"	8.5 7.0 9.0	Silver
Onimusha Blade Warriors	PS2	■ Four-player <i>Smash Bros.</i> (GC)-style action cooked with an Oriental flavor packet	7.0 7.0 7.5	
Phantasy Star Online: Episode III	GC	■ As deep and addictive as real-life card games, but without all that geeky cardboard	9.0 8.0 9.0	Silver
Phantom Brave	PS2	■ Only the mentally courageous will be able to handle this hardcore strategy-RPG	8.5 8.5 8.5	Silver
Pikmin 2	GC	■ Just when you think it's over, this flower-powered game grows a new adventure	8.5 9.0 9.0	Silver
Pokémon Colosseum	GC	■ Story mode injects some life into this otherwise mediocre Poké-battler	7.0 5.0 7.0	
Project Gotham Racing 2	XB	■ Where's the Batmobile? We want our money back	9.5 9.5 9.5	Gold
Psi-Ops: The Mindgate Conspiracy	PS2/XB	■ Better than bullet time, <i>Psi-Ops'</i> brain powers are mind blowing	8.0 7.5 7.5	
Puyo Pop Fever	GC	■ A classic puzzle game updated with new modes and short-bus-ready characters	7.0 7.0 7.0	
R: Racing Evolution	PS2/XB/GC	■ Not much of a racer, but the ladies look lovely	6.5 6.0 4.5	
RalliSport Challenge 2	XB	■ Who knew driving in Sweden could be so much fun?	9.0 9.0 9.0	Gold
Rainbow Six 3	XB	■ The shooting-gallery gameplay of single-player is redeemed online...	9.0 7.5 9.0	Silver
Rainbow Six 3	PS2	■ ...but not in this crippled, watered-down PS2 version	5.0 6.0 6.0	
Rainbow Six 3: Black Arrow	XB	■ Mission-pack for the squad-based FPS is worth it for its expanded online features	7.5 8.0 8.0	
Ratchet & Clank: Going Commando	PS2	■ A veritable cavalcade of platforming, shooting, space faring, and comedic hijinks	8.5 9.5 9.5	Gold
Red Dead Revolver	PS2/XB	■ Guess we skipped the history lesson about the fat cowboy in a dynamite suit	6.0 4.5 4.0	
Resident Evil Outbreak	PS2	■ A little help? Hello? If only this otherwise gripping online game had a gab function...	5.5 6.5 7.0	
Rise to Honor	PS2	■ Tap-tap your right analog stick in this repetitive brawler with 360-degree combat	6.5 6.5 6.0	
R-Type Final	PS2	■ Remind your thumbs of yesterday with this fun throwback to '90s shooters	8.5 8.0 8.0	Silver
Samurai Jack: The Shadow of Aku	PS2/XB/GC	■ The TV show's axed, so this hack-n-slasher is all <i>Jack</i> fans have left	6.0 7.0 5.5	
Samurai Warriors	PS2	■ The series hasn't been there (Japan), but it's done that (skewer oodles of swordsmen)	7.0 6.5 7.5	
Serious Sam: Next Encounter	PS2/GC	■ Never take your finger off the trigger in this dumb but fun first-person shooter	6.5 7.0 5.0	
Seven Samurai 20XX	PS2	■ So boring we wish it would slit its own wretched belly	3.5 3.5 4.0	
Shadow Ops: Red Mercury	XB	■ War is hell—but still preferable to this modern-day cliché-ridden first-person shooter	4.0 4.5 4.0	
Shining Force: Res. of the Dark Dragon	GBA	■ Addictive tactical RPG, but still a few steps shy of <i>Final Fantasy Tactics Advance</i>	8.0 8.0 7.5	
Showdown: Legends of Wrestling	PS2/XB	■ This glitchy grappler's retirees reek of Bengay	3.5 3.0 2.5	
Shrek 2	PS2/XB/GC	■ Made for the kiddies, but a fun four-player fairy tale all the same	7.5 6.0 5.0	
Silent Hill 4: The Room	PS2/XB	■ Claustrophobic chills upstage the now familiar cadavers	7.5 7.5 7.5	
Siren	PS2	■ Battle hayseed zombies in this <i>Silent Hill</i> clone that's more convoluted than creepy	5.0 7.0 4.0	
Smash Court Tennis Pro Tournament 2	PS2	■ <i>Smash</i> may not look as good as Kournikova, but hey, it plays better	7.0 8.0 8.0	
Spider-Man 2	PS2/XB/GC	■ Sticky-string commuting across New York City is a thrill, but combat's a tangled web	7.0 7.0 7.0	
Splinter Cell Pandora Tomorrow	XB	■ The ultimate stealth game with revolutionary 2-on-2 online multiplayer...	10 9.5 9.5	Gold
Splinter Cell Pandora Tomorrow	PS2	■ ...gets a little chopped up on PS2, but non-Xboxers won't even notice...	9.0 9.0 9.5	Gold
Splinter Cell Pandora Tomorrow	GC	■ ...unlike GameCube owners, who'll wonder where the multiplayer modes went	7.0 8.0 7.5	
Spy Fiction	PS2	■ Spy fact: Creeping around like a third-rate Solid Snake kinda blows	5.5 3.0 5.0	
Star Ocean: Till the End of Time	PS2	■ Janky battles keep this epic RPG from attaining <i>Final Fantasy</i> -caliber status	7.0 7.0 7.5	
Steel Battalion: Line of Contact	XB	■ This ultradeep robo sim's horrible interface and laggy play need an overhaul	5.0 5.5 4.5	
Street Fighter Anniversary Collection	PS2	■ Celebrate a decade of street fighting with the champs of 2D combat	8.5 9.0 8.0	Silver
Street Racing Syndicate	PS2/XB/GC	■ <i>SRS</i> showed up fashionably late, but the race had already started	7.0 6.0 6.0	
Sudeki	XB	■ Microsoft's full-frontal action-RPG assault is kinda flat	4.5 6.0 5.5	
Syphon Filter: The Omega Strain	PS2	■ Low-fever shoot-em-up contaminated by foul controls	6.5 6.5 5.0	
Tales of Symphonia	GC	■ Solid adventure with a dippy plot, but RPG-starved Cubers won't mind	8.5 7.5 8.5	Silver
Thief: Deadly Shadows	XB	■ Adjust your TV set in this too-dark game of grand theft bauble set in medieval times	7.0 7.0 8.5	
Top Spin	XB	■ Microsoft steps up to the service line and nails an ace with <i>Top Spin</i>	9.0 9.0 9.0	Gold
Transformers	PS2	■ Carriers that change into mile-high robots? Doesn't get much cooler than that	8.0 7.5 7.5	
UFC: Sudden Impact	PS2	■ There comes a point in every fighter's career when it's time to hang it up	6.0 4.5 4.0	
Van Helsing	PS2/XB	■ Van doesn't mind biting <i>Devil May Cry</i> so long as he can stick it to the Count	7.0 6.5 6.0	
Viewtiful Joe	PS2	■ Stylish graphics and deep beat-em-up gameplay still rocks socks	8.5 8.5 9.0	Silver
Way of the Samurai 2	PS2	■ The way of the warrior presents plenty of branching paths, but they're all kinda boring	6.0 5.5 5.0	
World Tour Soccer 2005	PS2	■ Receives a yellow card for its unresponsive controls and shallow gameplay options	6.5 5.0 4.5	
WWE Wrestlemania XIX	GC	■ A tedious story mode keeps McMahon's bunch outta the main event	7.5 7.5 6.5	
WWE SmackDown! Here Comes the Pain	PS2	■ Nowhere near as painful as its name implies	7.5 8.0 7.0	
Worms 3D	PS2/XB/GC	■ That's an entire extra dimension of caricatured carnage! Great multiplayer fun	7.5 7.5 6.5	

## TREND SPOTTING

Pseudosequels offer more of the same with a twist or two—new missions, multiplayer modes, characters, and costumes—but are they worth the money, even at reduced prices?



**Dynasty Warriors 4: Empires**  
(PS2)  
6.0, 5.5, 6.5



**Rainbow Six 3: Black Arrow**  
(XB)  
7.5, 8.0, 8.0



**Ghost Recon: Island Thunder**  
(XB)  
7.5, 7.0, 7.0



**Virtua Fighter 4: Evolution**  
(PS2)  
10, 9.0, 9.5

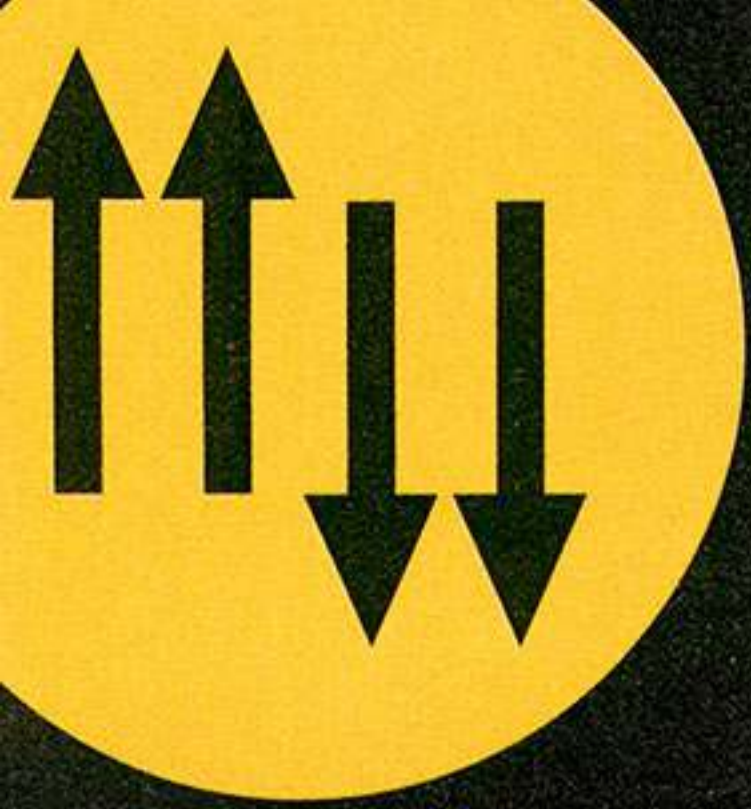
## bargain-bin bounty



## GUILTY GEAR X2 #RELOAD

■ Xbox  
■ Released: September 2004  
■ Original Scores: 9.0, 8.5, 9.0  
Blow the speakers and bang your head: With Gene Simmons-sized tongue in cheek, *Guilty Gear* riots on the Sunset Strip with a motley crew of gorgeously rendered heavy metal rejects. Silly as it sounds, this fast and flexible fighting game's online fights are anything but.





# tricks of the trade

Cheat your way to god status. We won't tell anyone

## trickster

It's the calm before the storm. This month, we've got tricks, tips, and codes from all the games that companies wisely pushed out before the holiday rush, when the big dogs *Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas*, *Halo 2*, *Knights of the Old Republic II*, and dozens of other quality titles all jostle and rough-house for your hard-earned spondoolicks. We've still got an epic array of gaming goodness for you to cheat your way through; there's *Fable* and *Silent Hill 4*, not to mention the new *Def Jam*. Next month? We release the hounds.

—David S. J. Hodgson  
egm@ziffdavis.com

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■ PS2

## SILENT HILL 4

### The "Escape" Ending

To achieve the "Escape" ending, do a little spring cleaning. After creating a new hole in your laundry room, demon spirits can pass freely into your apartment. The only way to keep your apartment clear is to place a Holy Candle in the area where the demon is invading. Watch the candle fully burn to ensure that the demon spirit is truly expelled. Keep your apartment clear throughout the remainder of the game. **Important Tip:** Walter will set down a doll in the early stages of the game. Picking up this evil token will make it much harder to keep your apartment clear of demons.



■ XB

## FABLE

### Demon Doors

Demon Doors are located throughout the world of *Fable* and guard most of the secret items within the game. These mysterious doors will only open to adventurers who can solve their riddles. Inside each Demon Door is a secret area that you can't access any other way.

### Heroes' Guild



#### Contains: Elixir of Life

Use the Lamp (the one you received at your Heroes' Guild graduation) in front of this door to solve this door's riddle. In addition to the Elixir of Life prize, this Demon Door contains a tattoo and a few books in the bookcase and on the reading table.

### Greatwood Gorge

#### Contains: Wellow's Pickhammer

This door wants to see some evil deeds, and there are three ways to get it open. The simplest way is to become completely evil (horns, circling flies, red

Make sure that Eileen lives through the final battle. To save her, defeat the boss before she reaches the death trap in the center of the room. Here's a tip to speed up the process: Bring the melee weapon you are comfortable with. Once the large marionette-like demon has been stuck like a pig, quickly dispose of the boss in its human form. Long-range weapons don't work here; strike hard and quickly. Use the Hand Axe, the Spade, or the Pick Axe of Despair. The human form will die before Eileen does.



smoke, all that). Another way is to convince it of your cruelty by savagely murdering several people in front of it (your own bodyguards or people you've escorted from town). A third way is to eat evil Crunchy Chick foods in front of it. You'll need 10, which you can buy at the Bandit Camp or Darkwood Camp.

### Rose Cottage



#### Contains: Will User's Bright Suit

All this door wants is a little love, making it one of the easier doors to open. Give it a gift, even a cheap one like chocolates or a red rose, and you'll win its heart. The prize is Will User's Bright Suit: shirt, trousers, boots, and gloves.

### Greatwood Caves



#### Contains: Ebonblade Cutlass

When you talk to this Demon Door, you need to have an active combat multiplier of at least 14. To do this, get your active combat multiplier as high as you can in the Hobbe Cave Entrance area, then come out to the Greatwood Cave area and kill the hobbes or troll there before your multiplier drops too low (if that doesn't do it, dash back into the cave and repeat). The Physical Shield spell is crucial, as it will ensure that your multiplier isn't broken prematurely. It's easiest to do this late in the game when you're stronger and able to do more

damage in shorter amounts of time, but those who attempt it sooner can get an early legendary weapon.

### Darkwood Marshes



#### Contains: Will User's Dark Suit

This door will issue a combat challenge that you can accept at your leisure. When you do, you'll face several rounds of hobbes, starting with weakling fighters and moving up to the more dangerous lieutenants. The prize is the full suit of Will User's Dark Clothes, the eviler (and cooler) variant of Will User's Clothes.

### Barrow Fields



#### Contains: Will Master's Elixir

This door will only open for someone who is seriously overweight (your Personality screen needs to read Obese, and even that may not be enough). To get there, eat lots of red meat and apple pie with a full health bar. Starting at Slim, it takes about 25 apple pies or 27 pieces of red meat (beer and fish will also do it, but it takes more than 40 of each).

### Grey House



#### Contains: The Axe of Ronok

This door wants to see you marry a "posh wife with a title," and that's Mayor Lady Grey of Bowerstone North, who you can only wed if you complete the Mayor's Invitation quest.



### TRICKS OF THE TRADE IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PRIMA GAMES

When entering the wonderful world of *Fable*, be sure you pack Prima's *Official Fable Strategy Guide*. Opening more than just Demon Doors, this indispensable tome features comprehensive quest solutions and all that other high-fantasy malarkey you need and expect to be uncovered. On sale now at your local gaming emporium.



■ PS2/XB/GC

## DEF JAM FIGHT FOR NY

### NYC Venues

Scattered around the city are diverse clubs and out-of-the-way locations for underground throwdowns. Here's a rundown of where you'll be leaving a trail of blood—yours and theirs.

### Foundation

A place for basic training, this venue has numerous dangerous items. Use everything—bottles, baseball bats, brooms, and pipes—to spill liquid crimson.

Aside from weapons, watch out for physical hazards. The room has



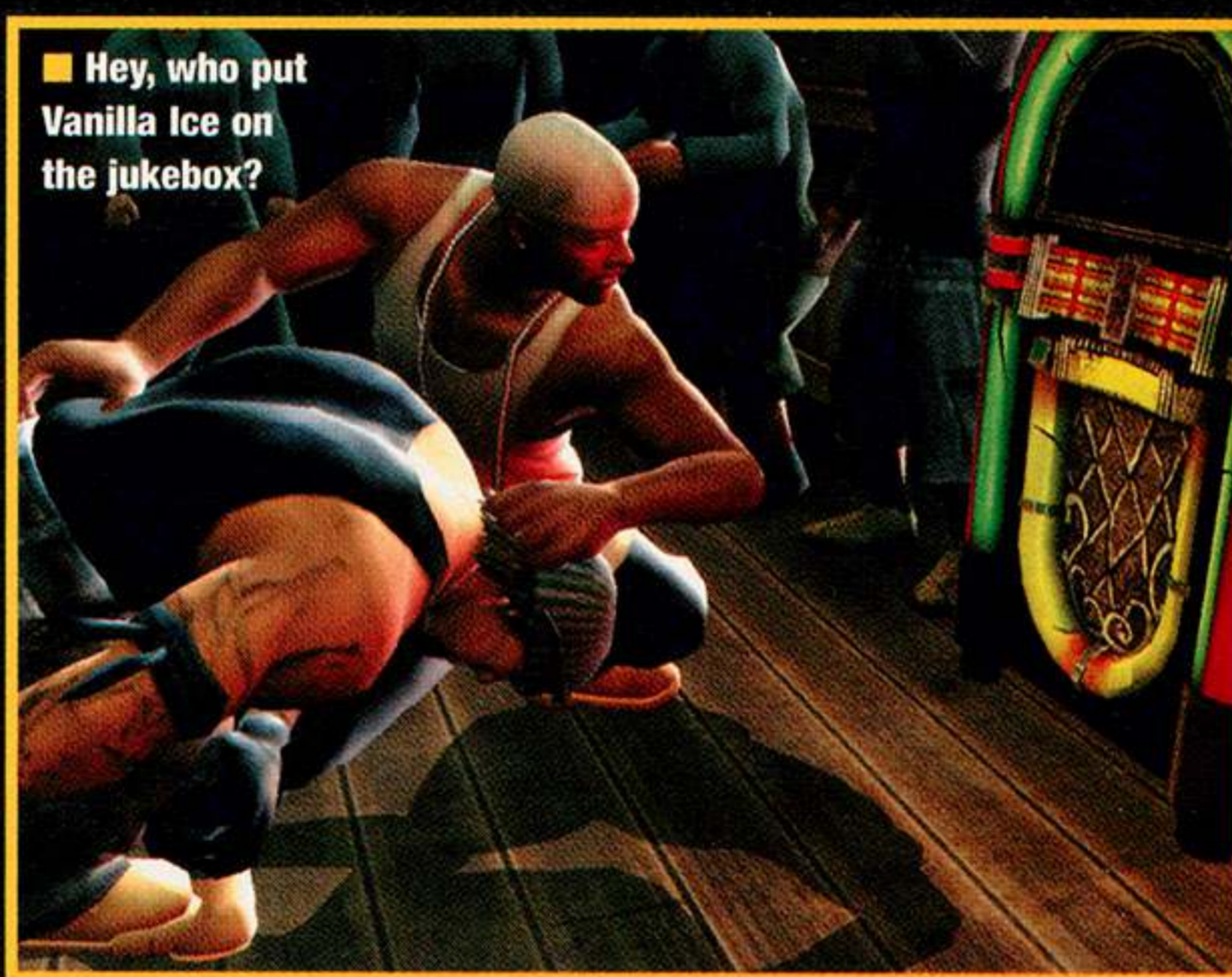
several wooden posts and two large floor speakers you can throw opponents into for some devastating moves. If the lighting doesn't do it for you, change it up by busting your opponent open on the two destructible droplights.

### The Limit

Crow runs this roadhouse for the time being. The crowd is rowdy and has no shortage of input. Occasionally, a fan hands off a pool cue, which makes nasty work of your opponents if you get creative with it.

The wooden pillars around the room serve as hot spots for grappling attacks. You can also grab pool cues from the pillars. First, grapple your opponent with your back to the pillar, then press toward the pillar and grapple again. You grab a pool cue. Use it to smash your opponent in the face, and keep it for further use.

A few other objects around the room add to the entertainment. The neon chicken sign on one of the pillars is destructible, as is the jukebox. Swing your opponents like rag dolls into these objects and impress the crowd. The pool table at the room's other end is a sturdy



■ Hey, who put  
Vanilla Ice on  
the jukebox?

piece of furniture, useful to bounce someone off—an occasion that is sure to arise.

### Babylon

Here in this Caribbean club you find a hungry crowd, eager to toss you pool cues and bottles to battle your foes. Turn up the volume with several environmental objects, specifically two large speakers near the bottom of the room, and two vertical lighted pillars near the top of the room (these have a particularly nasty dynamic).

Use the pillars like this: Grapple your opponent with your back to the pillar, and then press toward the pillar and press grapple again. You grab a light tube, which you can smash across your opponent's



head. You can also throw your opponent back into the tube to cause damage. After a tube is broken, you can use the pillar to launch the usual attacks with environmental hot spot grapples.

Look for the fuse box on the left end of the room and throw your opponent into it to open it up. Throwing him against the now-open box causes it to spark.

### Red Hook Tire Co.

The fire continues to grow as the fight goes on, and the usable area of the ring gets smaller and smaller

as the building burns down.

The only weapons are pieces of the burning building. Use two wooden posts as environmental obstacles, which are destructible after a few solid hits.

Remember that the flames are getting higher all around you. One step out of the ring for either fighter, and he'll be hot-stepping it around the ring with a bad case of blisters. Stay away from the fiery ring if you want to get out of this building as one uncooked piece. Use your pushing strikes or grapples to keep your foe on his heels, back up against the flames.

### The Pit

A construction site is a good place for a scrap. The Pit, with all the building supplies lying around, lends itself to a knockdown festival of pain. The crowd is into it, and fans hand off several new weapons, including shovels and hammers. Use a couple of stacks of lumber as environmental obstacles for whips and grapples; keep pushing your opponents back into them for the advantage.

You can also use the walls to launch attacks, and launch flying attacks from a pile of cement bags. Two small flood lamps are on the top end of the area; use environmental attacks with these to knock your foe's lights out. ►



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▶ ■ PS2/XB

# BURNOUT 3: TAKEDOWN

## Unlockable Cars

Tired of crashing that little hatchback coupe into traffic in hopes of setting a record-high pileup? The following is a table with a breakdown of all vehicles available and how to unlock them in *Burnout 3*. Now you have access to vehicles such as a city bus to send into oncoming traffic. Buckle up and have a blast!

### CAR NAMES & UNLOCK REQUIREMENTS

Car Name	Unlock Requirements	
<b>COMPACT</b>	COMPACT TYPE 1	Available from the start
	COMPACT TYPE 2	Available from the start
	COMPACT TYPE 3	Available from the start
	TUNED COMPACT	Gold in Race Event 5
	MODIFIED COMPACT	Gold in Race Event 6
	CUSTOM COMPACT	Burnout Points Total = 10,000
	ASSASSIN COMPACT	Takedown Total = 15
	COMPACT PROTOTYPE	Gold in Race Event 8a
	COMPACT DX	Gold Medals Total = 4
	DOMINATOR COMPACT	Gold in Race Event 7

Car Name	Unlock Requirements	
<b>MUSCLE</b>	MUSCLE TYPE 1	Bronze in Race Event 8 (start of Muscle Race Class)
	MUSCLE TYPE 2	Bronze in Race Event 8 (start of Muscle Race Class)
	MUSCLE TYPE 3	Bronze in Race Event 8 (start of Muscle Race Class)
	TUNED MUSCLE	Gold in Race Event 14
	MODIFIED MUSCLE	Gold in Race Event 15
	CUSTOM MUSCLE	Burnout Points Total = 25,000
	ASSASSIN MUSCLE	Takedown Total = 30
	MUSCLE PROTOTYPE	Gold in Race Event 18A (all Golds in Muscle Class)
	MUSCLE DX	Gold Medals Total = 10
	DOMINATOR MUSCLE	Gold in Race Event 17

Car Name	Unlock Requirements	
<b>COUPE</b>	COUPE TYPE 1	Bronze in Race Event 18 (start of Coupe Race Class)
	COUPE TYPE 2	Bronze in Race Event 18 (start of Coupe Race Class)
	COUPE TYPE 3	Bronze in Race Event 18 (start of Coupe Race Class)
	TUNED COUPE	Gold in Race Event 26
	MODIFIED COUPE	Gold in Race Event 21
	CUSTOM COUPE	Burnout Points Total = 50,000
	ASSASSIN COUPE	Takedown Total = 60
	COUPE PROTOTYPE	Gold in Race Event 30A (all Golds in Sports Class)
	COUPE DX	Gold Medals Total = 18
	DOMINATOR COUPE	Gold in Race Event 27

Car Name	Unlock Requirements	
<b>SPORTS</b>	SPORTS TYPE 1	Bronze in Race Event 30 (start of Sports Race Class)
	SPORTS TYPE 2	Bronze in Race Event 30 (start of Sports Race Class)
	SPORTS TYPE 3	Bronze in Race Event 30 (start of Sports Race Class)
	TUNED SPORTS	Gold in Race Event 42
	MODIFIED SPORTS	Gold in Race Event 43
	CUSTOM SPORTS	Burnout Points Total = 100,000
	ASSASSIN SPORTS	Takedown Total = 100
	SPORTS PROTOTYPE	Gold in Race Event 44A (all Golds in Sports Class)
	SPORTS DX	Gold Medals Total = 25
	DOMINATOR SPORTS	Gold in Race Event 40

Car Name	Unlock Requirements	
<b>SUPER</b>	SUPER TYPE 1	Bronze in Race Event 44 (start of Super Race Class)
	SUPER TYPE 2	Bronze in Race Event 44 (start of Super Race Class)
	SUPER TYPE 3	Bronze in Race Event 44 (start of Super Race Class)
	TUNED SUPER	Gold in Race Event 50
	MODIFIED SUPER	Gold in Race Event 56
	CUSTOM SUPER	Burnout Points Total = 200,000
	ASSASSIN SUPER	Takedown Total = 150
	SUPER PROTOTYPE	Gold in Race Event 60 (all Golds in all Race Championship Events)
	SUPER DX	Gold Medals Total = 32
	DOMINATOR SUPER	Gold in Race Event 51

Car Name	Unlock Requirements	
<b>SPECIAL</b>	OVAL RACER SPECIAL	Collect all Signature Takedowns
	CUSTOM COUPE ULT.	Collect all Gold Medals in Crash
	EURO-CIRCUIT RACER	Collect all Skill Trophies
	CLASSIC HOT ROD	Collect all Special Event postcards
	FIRE TRUCK	Collect all Crash Headlines
	U.S. CIRCUIT RACER	Gold in Race Event 59
	WORLD CIRCUIT RACER	Golds in All Race Events

Car Name	Unlock Requirements	
<b>HEAVYWEIGHT</b>	HEAVY PICKUP	Win \$1,000,000 in Crash modes
	4WD RACER	Win \$2,000,000 in Crash modes
	SUV DELUXE	Win \$5,000,000 in Crash modes
	4WD HEAVY DUTY	Win \$10,000,000 in Crash modes
	B-TEAM VAN	Win \$15,000,000 in Crash modes
	DELIVERY TRUCK	Win \$20,000,000 in Crash modes
	TRACTOR CAB	Win \$30,000,000 in Crash modes
	LONGNOSE CAB	Win \$50,000,000 in Crash modes
	CITY BUS	Win \$70,000,000 in Crash modes
	TRASH TRUCK	Win \$90,000,000 in Crash modes



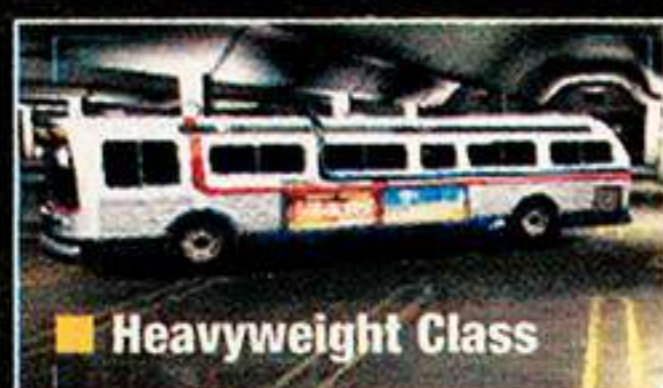
■ Muscle Class



■ Coupe Class



■ Sports Class



■ Heavyweight Class

## TRICKS TOP 5

### ■ PS2 Way of the Samurai 2

In the Character Customization screen, highlight Name Selection, choose any character model, then press L1, R2, R1, L2, L1, R2, R1, L2, Square. You will hear a chime to let you know the code worked. Now press left or right to cycle through the different characters.

### ■ PS2/XB Catwoman

Highlight the Comic option in the Main menu and go to Vault. Enter the password 1940. This will open additional items in the Comic option.



### ■ GC/PS2/XB Spider-Man 2



For this code to work, you can't have any *Spidey 2* saves on your memory card or Xbox. Start a new game and enter the name HCRAVERT. This gives you 200,000 hero points, the swing and web zip upgrades, big game hunter, alien buster, and shock absorber. You can't keep this name, but every time you enter it, you get another 200,000 hero points.

### ■ PS2/XB Psi Ops: The Mindgate Conspiracy



To enter this code, highlight Extra Content and press the R Trigger (Xbox) or R1 (PS2).

Super Psi Powers 456456

### ■ GBA Spyro Orange: The Cortex Conspiracy

When at the Game Mode Select screen, press the L and R buttons at the same time, then enter the code.

Turns enemies into sheep  
SH33P





VS.



Like a streak of light, Spider-Man delivers pizzas just in time.

PS2 Spider-Man 2

(M) 0X2Y-84RG-N3W4D GA64-T5RW-53K25

Infinite Health JB20-5F53-AZHNN 8BGX-DDJV-6HE7Z

Max Health PDUY-5N2Z-ERRJD 1QWH-VNJB-7GFXF

Map Always On RGJJ-TM3P-JVT3V 6BDM-KAPM-4JVVP

Map Always Off 1G32-34EP-V27KN ZZ4Y-51WB-P05E0

No Cars 9ZRH-F1WW-K54HH N2HU-Q21C-DZ3XU

GBA Yu-Gi-Oh!: Reshef of Destruction

(M) 065f13f2 cee4dc95 7d8c031c 6e01e47d

Infinite LP a6eceb6d 5d38edba

1 Hit Kills Opponent cba7a66d 97d99ec0 2d1d73ea bf8f4489

Max/Inf All Cards cd7bb2a7 760af34d

Max/Inf Domino



c89926c5 87112a1a

Max Deck Capacity

00342e40 b85b18d8

GBA Spider-Man 2

(M) adaa7ca1 dcbf3773 0676963e 8ce35e87

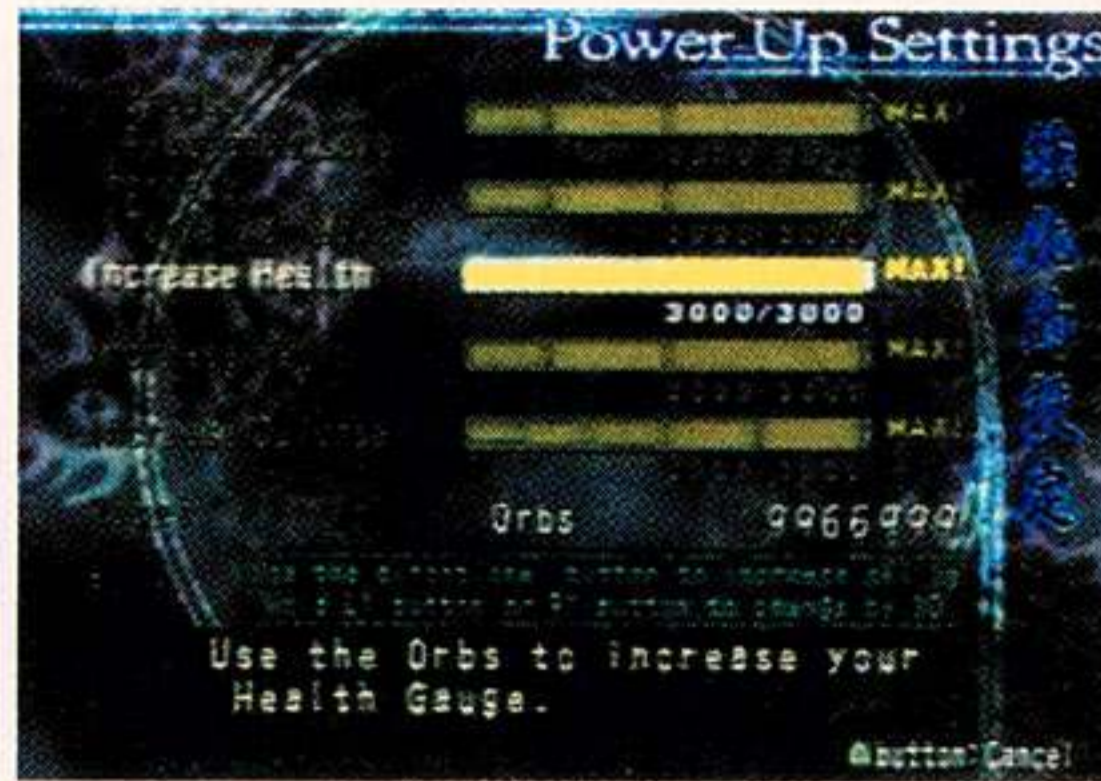
Infinite Lives 0bbc7682 dd8ab6cc

Infinite Health 35d69fc1 f7d0059b

Infinite Web 4934e652 cd193504

More Time 440c5229 3c3cebaa 5370f27c 8c81a471

Max Experience df02b5b7 34ddb4b



Bujingai's orbs are used to upgrade Lau and his attacks.

PS2 Bujingai: The Forsaken City

(M) Must Be On 94COB5BC 3DE64406

Infinite Health Gauge 25F61128 5264D94C

Infinite Spell Gauge 25F0112A 1674D15E

Infinite Defense Gauge 25F0112A 1674D1CE

Max Health Gauge 25F61128 5264D96C

Max Spell Gauge 25F0112A 1674D17E

Max Defense Gauge 25F0112A 1674D1EE

Max Orbs 2415957E 9AE0521A

Max Ryuugatou Level 15F0183F 1EF49164

Max Tenreiken Level 15F0183E 1EF49154

No Continues Used 24909568 16F05328

Have All Spells 2411D568 16F01338 2411D568 16F01388 2411D568 16F013A8 24119568 16F01398

Exclusive Codes!

Max Health Level 15F0183F 1EF49154

Max Magic Level 15F0183E 1EF49174

Max Defense Level 15F0183F 1EF49174

GBA Catwoman

(M) Must Be On 900177CAED61 D631EBB47603 DB6BC72231A3

Infinite Health AB9D925389C4

Infinite Power 2B9D121B89C0 220E18CAB8E8

Have Max Gems AB97BA518CC4 A316B0D19864

Have All Attacks 51E909ABA568 5928021BB9C8

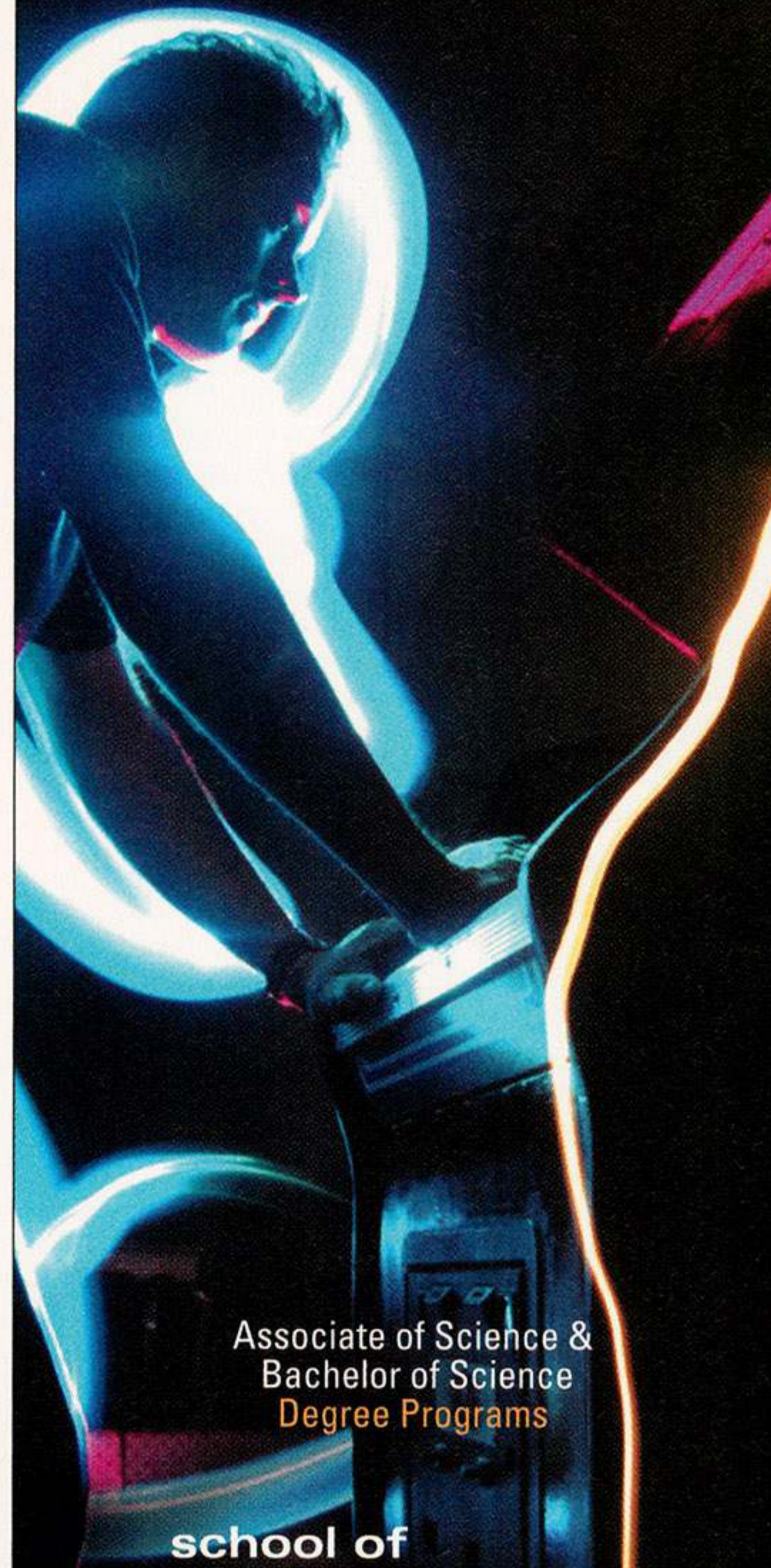
Exclusive Codes!

Infinite Power Mode 26D775AC4033

Start on Final Stage 557E0E4D5CCC EEBD95B603B1 D57E8E055CC8



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# REST OF THE CRAP

## Now with half the Barbie, triple the Van Damme

**W**hen I heard that no one sent us any copies of games based either on kids' shows or just basic girlish wonderment, I thought I'd get the month off to catch up on some of my noncomedy work, such as reading jogging magazines aloud to crippled orphans. Then I was informed that there is still enough crap peripherally related to videogames to require my crap-evaluating services. Plus, now that Mary-Kate and Ashley are one failed project away from a third eating disorder and softcore porn, respectively, my *EGM* overlords have decreed that it's no longer cute to make fun of their games. So here I am reviewing the worst movies based on games, while the children at St. Despair's Hospital make do with their backup entertainment: a box of 3000 hungry spiders.

—Seanbaby

■ "It's the collection agency, Bison. Your ass is six months overdue, and it's mine."



### The Wizard • 1989

Some say it's a glorified commercial for *Super Mario Brothers 3*. Others say no way; this story of an autistic boy leading two sexually experimental 12-year-olds to the Nintendo championships with the money he earns by hustling businessmen in *Double Dragon* simply had to be told. It is to the Nintendo community what *Over the Top* was to the arm-wrestling community: a brutal and lasting reminder of why you shouldn't make movies about those people.

**Worst line:** In case anyone thinks this movie isn't a feature-length advertisement for Nintendo, after the evil videogame bully is finished playing *Rad Racer* (badly), he turns to Fred Savage to growl, "I love the Power Glove. It's so bad." If you've never tried the Power Glove, it was a lot like translating your input into French, then Japanese, then back into English. So for example, if your impotent flailing was trying to say "walk right," the signal that made it to your Nintendo was "spuculent hamtasm."

**Worst scene:** It's hard to beat the Power Glove one. I'd like to dare filmmakers to try to make a worse scene, ever, during the entire course of the cinematic future.



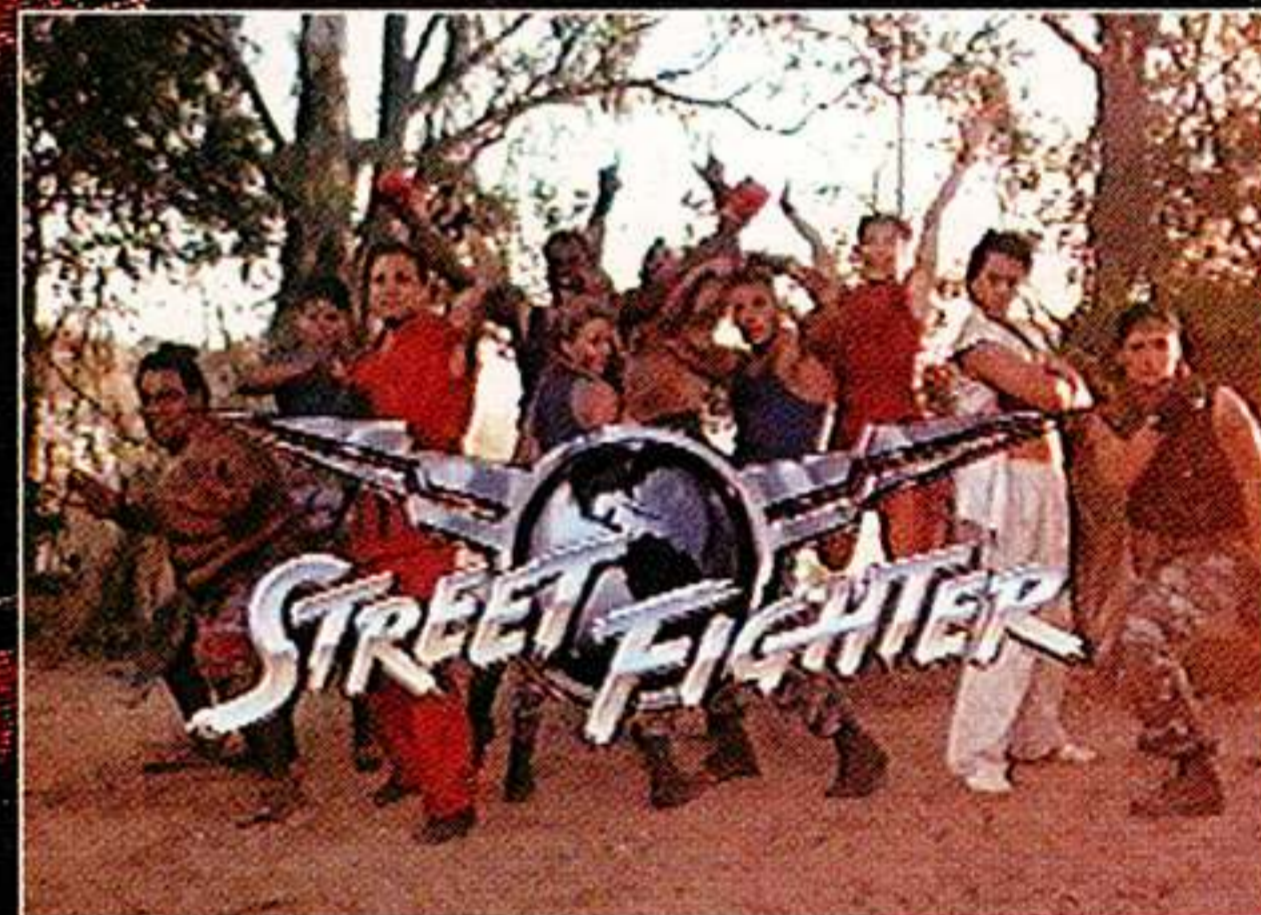
### Mortal Kombat: Annihilation • 1997

*Annihilation's* plot not only throws out logic, it even throws out the crazy logic established by the first *Mortal Kombat* movie. Flaming, cartwheeling ninjas fall from the sky for no apparent reason, and I'm OK with that because it's the kind of thing that could kill you and your dying words would be, "sooo...a-awe...some!"

Fine, let's not explore the subplot of excitable evil gymnasts falling through roofs, but even one spinning newspaper with the headline, "World in Chaos! Non-Karate Weapons Useless Against Meteor Ninjas!" would have been nice. Even though that particular headline is so common sense, no paper would bother to report it.

**Worst line:** When Kitana sees her mother, Sindel, and exclaims, "Mother! You're alive!" Sindel quips back, "Too bad YOU will...die!" Was there some sort of contest where collecting enough Nabisco snack points let you write dialogue for a feature film?

**Worst scene:** Any mode of travel that isn't a front flip, such as walking, is strictly forbidden in *Mortal Kombat* etiquette. So when Shao Kahn has to break the news to his father that Raiden is still alive, he spins down the stairs at incredible speed, as remorsefully as possible.



### Street Fighter • 1994

Rule No. 1 in making a movie about *Street Fighter* is to take the characters and have them fight. Rule No. 2 shouldn't have to exist, but if it did, it would be to fill the time between fights with musical training montages or musical montages of shorter fights. But *Street Fighter* chose to ignore these simple rules I just invented ten years after its release. To anyone who tries this again, if you have a group of people who are superpowered warriors, you're done. Have them attack each other for 90 minutes and we'll fill in the holes in the plot by ourselves.

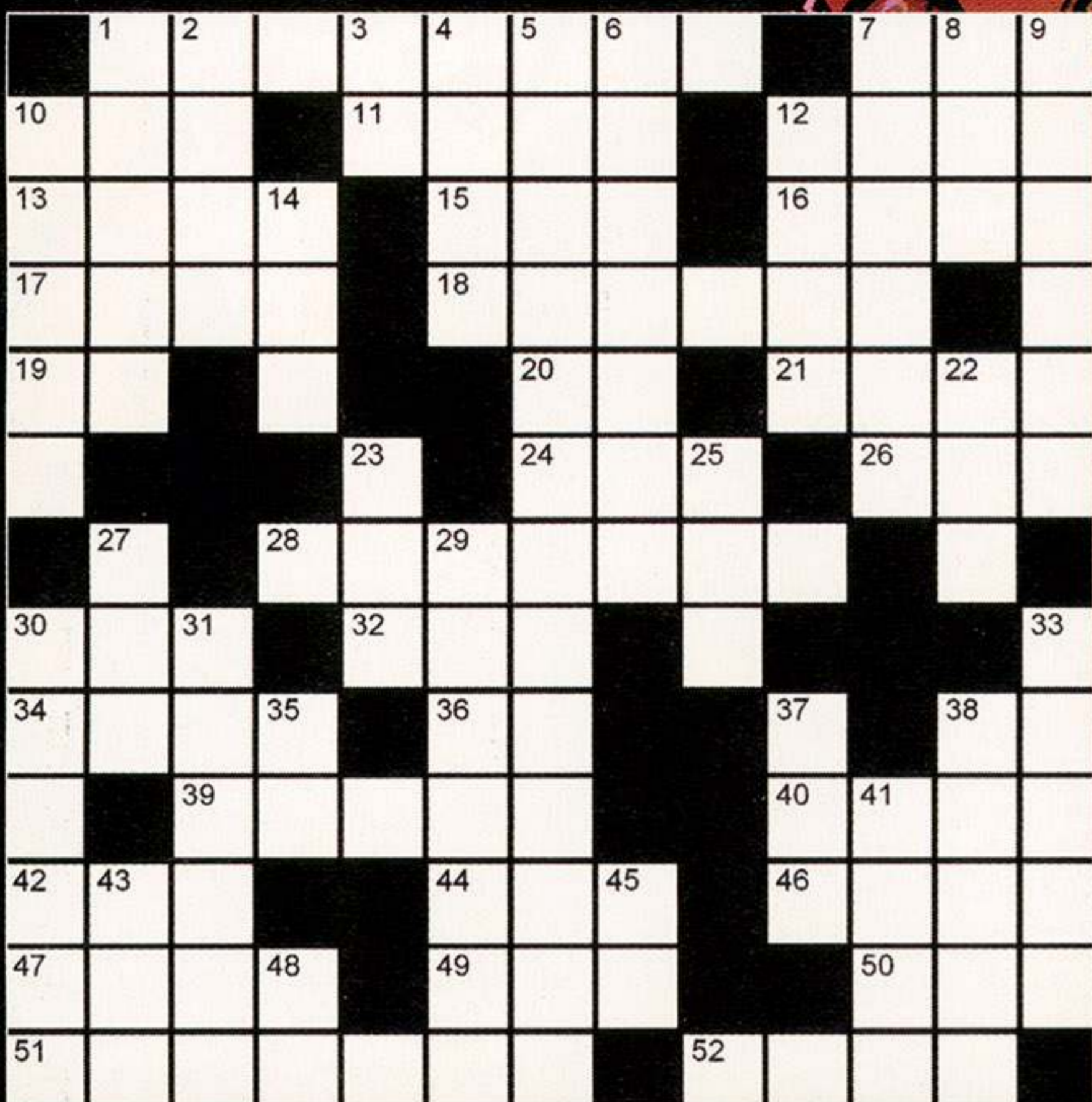
**Worst line:** "I'm sumo, brother. My body can be in one place. My mind another." Well, I guess if my body was trying to pick a fat man up by his diaper, my mind would definitely be somewhere else, because it wouldn't have had anything to do with that idea.

**Worst scene:** When Bison's supersuit brings him back to life. A shirt that gives you CPR is an imbecile's idea of unkillable. That would be like saying you're immune to flamethrowers because your hat squirts aloe vera, or telling police that tear gas is useless thanks to your contact lenses and their tiny windshield wipers.



# ARE YOU GOING TO SAN ANDREAS?

(Solution on page 165)



## ACROSS

1. *Grand Theft Auto (GTA)* publisher
7. *Smackdown!* official
10. Place to get buff in *San Andreas*
11. The Tommy Vercetti of *San Andreas*
12. *GTA* commercial vehicle
13. PS2 *Project*
15. Like Koei's *Crimson*
16. Ready for plucking in *Harvest Moon?*
17. *GTA: Vice City* Wave 103 band
18. Playable dwarf in upcoming *The Lord of the Rings, The Third Age* RPG
19. Dreamcast *Driller*
20. *Gundam Force* PS2 prefix
21. Like the sixth dungeon to the graveyard in the original *Legend of Zelda*
24. Illinois school of *NCAA* games
26. Short-range fireballer of 27 down
28. Round robin, for short?
30. Act like Mario in *Yoshi's Island?*
32. Number of lives you get in *Rygar*
34. *San Andreas* hairstyle, for one
36. *Crisis-laden* PS1 game, for short
38. *Final Fantasy III*'s Japanese numerical equivalent
39. *Chrono Trigger* time machine
40. Leggy male *Tekken*-ite
42. *Wakeboarding Unleashed* propulsion
44. Genuine PS2 replacement parts?
46. *Panzer Dragoon Saga* (Saturn) kid
47. *NBA Live* basket scores, in one mode
49. *R: Racing Evolution* Acura
50. Movie-based PC boat title \_ *Boot*
51. Solid Snake's family?
52. Last guy

## DOWN

1. 11 across's gangsta friend
2. *Legacy of Kain* title word
3. *MLB* Royal
4. Original *Prince of Persia* clothing accessory
5. RPG goodie bag
6. Genesis carpet rider
7. *Knights of the Old Republic* Tusken
8. Points that determine RPG level-ups (abbrv.)
9. San Francisco: San \_ in *San Andreas*
10. Xbox *Onimusha*
12. Version 2.0 is out this year on consoles
14. *Halo* marker points
22. Yes, to *Zelda: Wind Waker* pirates
23. *Mario*'s ghost
25. Cartoon shading
27. SNK's street fighter (abbrv.)
29. PS2 *Pryzm*'s "dark" beast
30. Los Angeles: Los \_ in *San Andreas*
31. *MLB* Milwaukeean
33. Vehicle type new to *GTA* in *San Andreas*
35. Just one mission in *Psi-Ops?*
37. Munch's *Oddworld* partner
38. Las \_ : Las Venturas in *San Andreas*
41. Compiles high score?
43. Number of folks who can play *San Andreas* at once
45. Common abbreviation for motocross games
48. More advanced Game Boy

# STAR WARS GAME & DVD GIVEAWAY

Enter for a chance to win every Star Wars game!

Forget about letting the Wookiee win—you deserve free stuff, too. So to celebrate the release of the original *Star Wars* trilogy on DVD, LucasArts and *Electronic Gaming Monthly* are offering you the chance to score loads of free games and movies based on George Lucas' faraway galaxy. Just go to <http://starwars.egm.1UP.com> and tell us what other page in the magazine has this image of Jedi bad boy Darth Vader. So may the Force be with you...or whatever the Star Wars nerds say these days.



## GRAND PRIZE (ONE WINNER)

- One copy of *Star Wars Battlefront* (PlayStation 2 or Xbox version)
- One copy of the classic *Star Wars* trilogy DVD set
- One copy of every *Star Wars* game that's come out for PlayStation 2, Xbox, and GameCube

## RUNNERS-UP PRIZES (10 WINNERS)

- One copy of *Star Wars Battlefront* (PlayStation 2 or Xbox version)
- One copy of the classic *Star Wars* trilogy DVD set

## HOW TO PLAY

1. Log on to the contest page at <http://starwars.egm.1UP.com>
2. Tell us what page number the *other* Darth Vader image is on (not this one, dummy!) to complete the entry form.

All correct entries received by November 16, 2004, will then be entered into a random drawing for the prizes. Multiple entries will be disqualified.

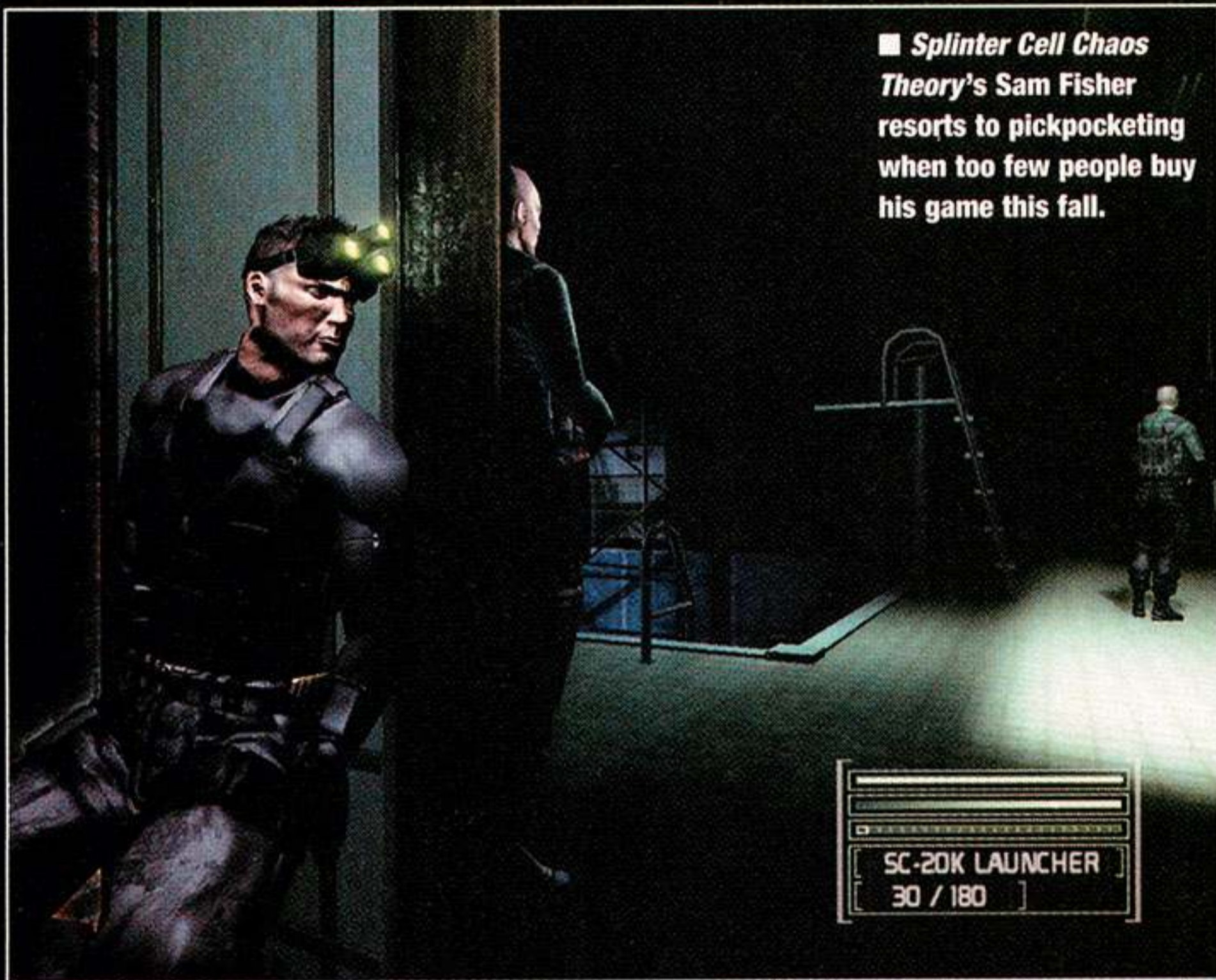
Full legal rules available at <http://starwars.egm.1UP.com>





# FINAL WORD

## Cause some things just gotta be said



■ *Splinter Cell Chaos Theory's* Sam Fisher resorts to pickpocketing when too few people buy his game this fall.

**Y**ou asked for it—you got it. Final Word is back in full effect, ready to rock the paper airwaves with brutally honest talk. Each issue, we'll hit up two gaming editors with a few topics to see what crap spews out of their mouths. Up on stage this month: *Electronic Gaming Monthly* News Editor Bryan "Sporto 2004" Intihar and Previews Editor Shane "Sporto 1993" Bettenhausen.

**A producer for a major third-party publisher has commented that he thinks Microsoft will have the No. 1 console next time around, beating out Sony's PlayStation 3 and Nintendo's mystery machine. Thoughts?**

**"Expect to beat [*San Andreas*] in 20 hours and spend another 130 getting haircuts and hunting random hookers."**

**Bryan:** What's more dangerous than an injured animal? An injured animal with a bankroll the size of gazillionaire Bill Gates'. The bigwigs at Microsoft are fully aware that this next round of consoles is their last shot to overtake Sony, and I think you're gonna see them throw more money toward acquiring top-notch titles from Japanese companies. Trust me, a lot—and I mean a lot—more gamers will turn into Xbots if the likes of Square Enix (*Final Fantasy*) pledge their support.

**Shane:** Well, Xbox was really profitable for Capcom, Konami, and Sega. Hey, no...wait a minute, all their games flopped! Tecmo (*Dead or Alive* series, *Ninja Gaiden*) is the lone Japanese Xbox success story. I do

agree that Microsoft is willing to lose big again—it's lost millions a year on Xbox ever since it came out. What's another quadrillion dollars to Bill Gates?

### This holiday: Too many games?

**Shane:** Of course there are too many games coming out—if you're someone who has all three consoles and has to play the latest and greatest. If you just have a Cube or Xbox, though, you'll be all right.

**Bryan:** Forget about having the bucks to afford the likes of *Metal Gear Solid 3*, *Prince of Persia 2*, *Splinter Cell Chaos Theory*...who has the time to play all these games? I sure don't, and I play these things for a living.

### Rockstar claims *Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas* can take more than 150 hours to beat. Discuss.

**Shane:** All those RPGs offering "over 100 hours of gameplay" were talking about getting all of your characters to level 9 billion; you could usually beat the games in 40, tops. I'm betting *San Andreas* is similar—expect to beat it in 20 hours and spend another 130 getting haircuts and hunting random hookers.

**Bryan:** I don't know why Shane is complaining. This gives him extra time to go four-wheeling in *San Andreas*' backcountry—perfect for a Kentucky native, right?

**Shane:** No comment.

### Most overrated game in recent history? Our reviews included.

**Bryan:** *Psi-Ops*. Too many people were blinded by the character's unique powers to see its obvious flaws, like a poor narrative, repetitive boss battles, and unbalanced levels (the last quarter of the game feels like it was done by another developer). Don't get me wrong, it's a good game, just not a *great* one.

Shane, didn't you say your fellow *Soul Calibur II* reviewers were too generous?

**Shane:** Well, my *Soul Calibur II* score (9.0 out of 10) was dead on—those two 10s the other guys gave were off the mark, of course. Also, the other two reviewers of *Final Fantasy X-2* (who gave it 9.5s) were

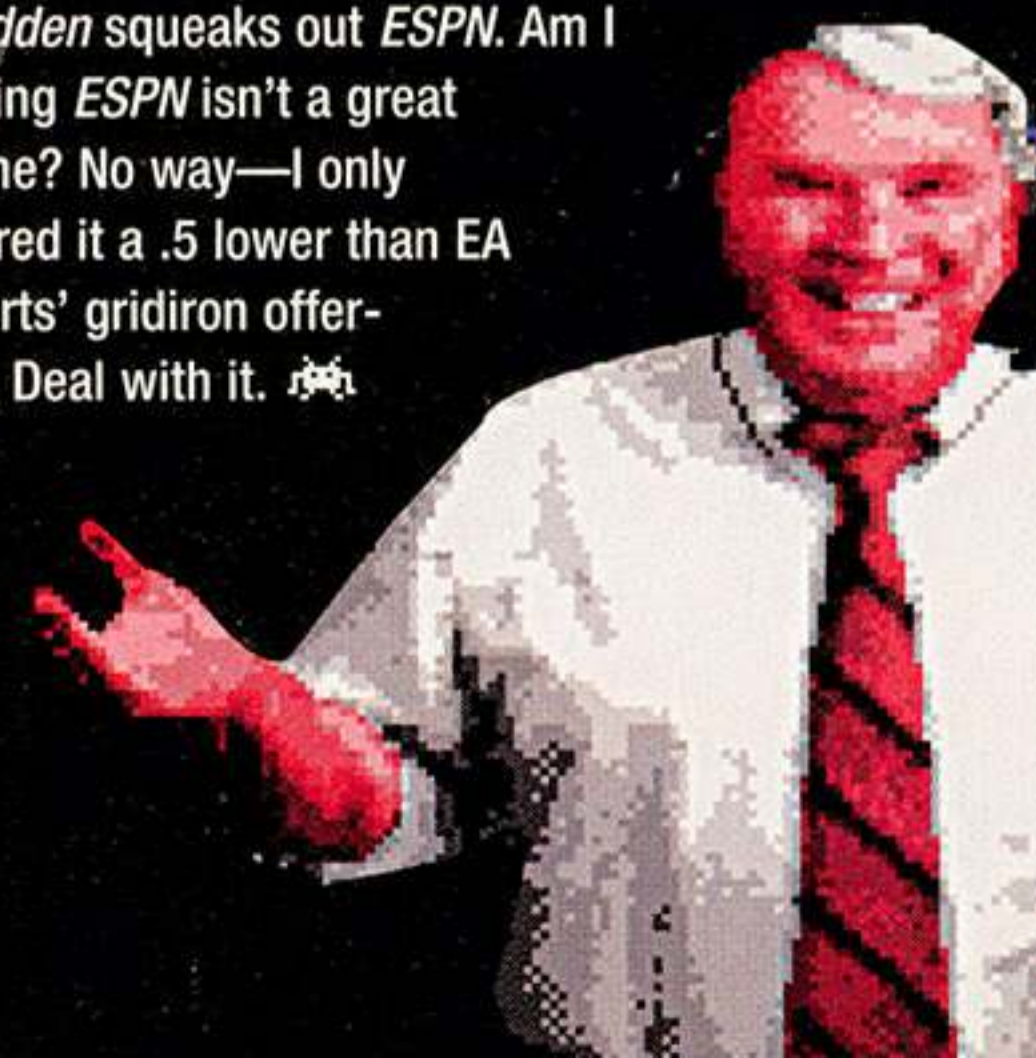
blinded by all the flesh-flashing; my 8.5 was maybe a little generous....

**Bryan:** Since we're being honest here, then I'll come clean—I scored *Enter the Matrix* too high (6.5). I'm telling you, mixing the red and blue pills is never a good idea....

### ESPN NFL 2K5 versus Madden NFL 2005: some Sega/ESPN Videogames fans are pissed that we scored Madden higher, even claiming we were paid off by EA Sports....

**Shane:** Now, I wasn't on the review, but I think that I would have given the edge to ESPN. The 2K series has been fast, fun, and playable ever since its Dreamcast debut, and it's always been right on Madden's heels in terms of quality. So suddenly it's still just as good but now costs less than half of what Madden does? Instant purchase.

**Bryan:** Why am I even having this conversation with a guy who hasn't touched a football game since *Madden '93*? Anyway, speaking as someone *who actually likes football*, I've played both games extensively, and at the end of the day, I feel Madden squeaks out ESPN. Am I saying ESPN isn't a great game? No way—I only scored it a .5 lower than EA Sports' gridiron offering. Deal with it.





# NEXT MONTH: DECEMBER 2004 • ISSUE #185

# HALO 2

ON SALE OCTOBER 19

We had the world's first *Halo 2* cover story back in 2002. Next month, we're about to make headlines again with another universe-wide exclusive. Want to see **new single-player screenshots**? Want to see new multiplayer levels? Want to learn about **secret vehicles and weapons**? Sure you do. We'll be visiting developer Bungie Studios to get the inside scoop and the last major preview before the game comes out on November 9. Miss it and you'll hate yourself—and no one wants to see that happen.

We'll also have the first **hands-on preview of *Kingdom Hearts II***, the upcoming action-RPG that marries *Final Fantasy* with the wonderful worlds of Disney. And if you're a newsstand buyer, look for our **special DVD**, chock-full of exclusive videos, contests to win game systems, trivia, music from videogame bands, videogame comedy, and more!



Next month: new single-player *Halo 2* screens and more....



## PREVIEWS

- 25 to Life (PS2/XB)
- MechAssault 2: Lone Wolf (XB)
- Ratchet & Clank: Up Your Arsenal (PS2)
- Call of Duty: Finest Hour (PS2/XB/GC)
- Kingdom Hearts II (PS2)



## REVIEWS

- Rumble Roses (PS2)
- Paper Mario: The Thousand-Year Door (GC)
- Tony Hawk's Underground 2 (PS2/XB/GC)
- Mortal Kombat: Deception (PS2/XB)

(All planned editorial content is subject to change.)

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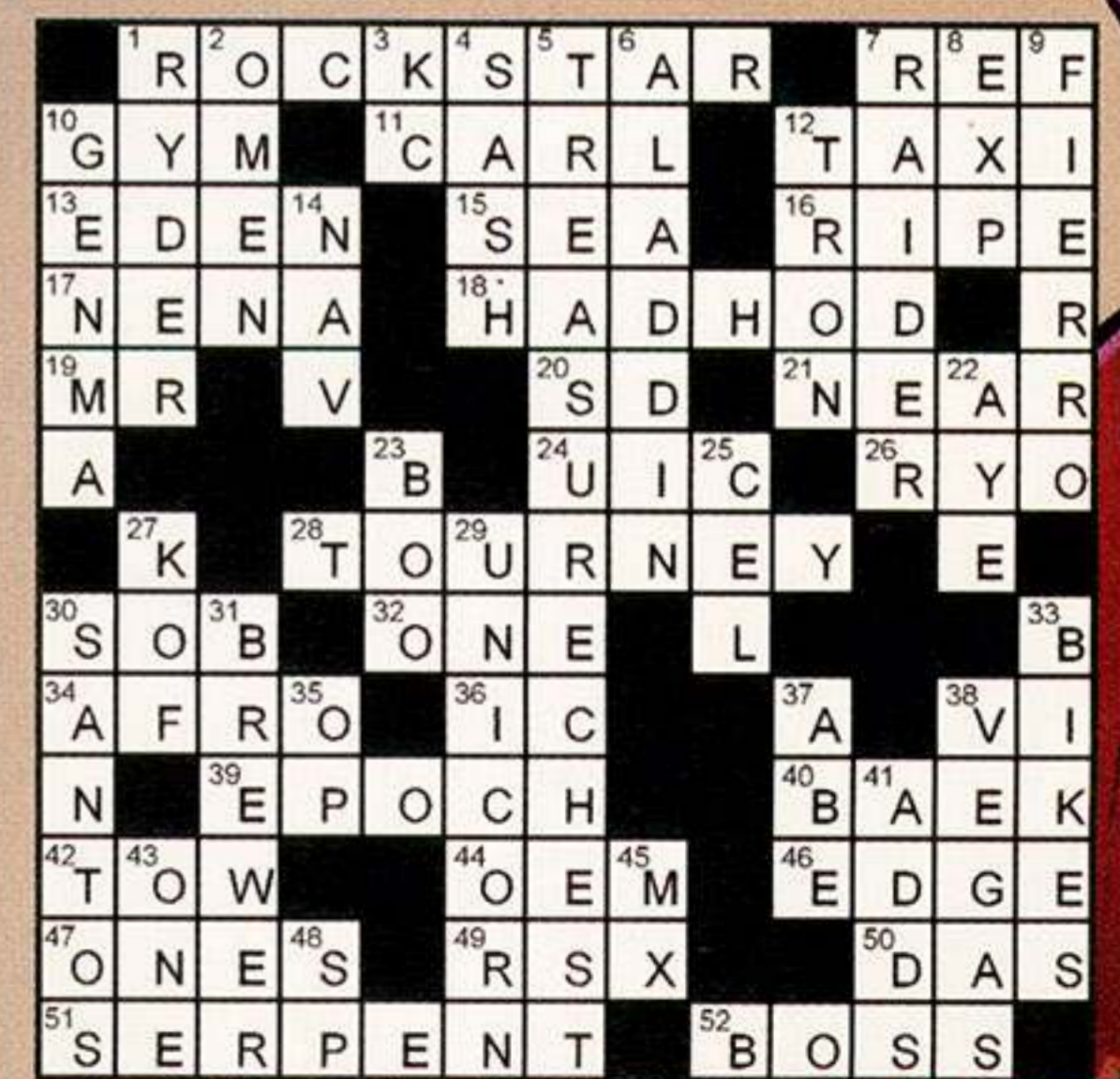
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## ANSWERS TO ARE YOU GOING TO SAN ANDREAS?

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**HSU AND CHAN**  
EPISODE IV:  
**'A NEW JOKE'**

OKAY, I'M TAPPED OUT.

MAKE THE FARCE BE WITH YOU—  
THE RANDOM MESSAGE  
YODA TALKING THROUGH HIS BUTT

HELLO, VIDEO GAMERS! I'M HSU TANAKA, AND I'M HERE TODAY AT "BERT'S VIDEO RENTAL AND TANNING," IN SCENIC GREEN HILL, OHIO, AWAITING THE HISTORIC RELEASE OF THE ORIGINAL "STAR WARS" TRILOGY ON DVD! THESE ARE THE MOMENTS WHEN THE TRUE DEDICATION OF THE FANS REALLY SHINES THROUGH! HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN WAITING IN LINE, SIR?

FOUR MONTHS! I QUIT MY JOB FOR IT! WOULDN'T MISS THIS FOR THE WORLD!

HO HO, SO YOU JUST SAVED ENOUGH TO BUY THE SET, AND QUIT YOUR JOB, JUST LIKE THAT?

OH... MONEY, I FORGOT ABOUT THAT.

STAR WARS IS OLD!

IT'S BEEN 25 YEARS SINCE THE RELEASE OF THE FIRST "STAR WARS" MOVIE, BUT THE DVD COLLECTION ARRIVES ON AN EVEN MORE SIGNIFICANT ANNIVERSARY—TEN YEARS AGO THIS DAY, SOMEONE TOLD THE LAST ORIGINAL "STAR WARS" JOKE!

THE JOKE IN QUESTION IS ATTRIBUTED TO ROGER FER-GUSON, 41, OF BUNKPORT, 'LLINOIS, WHO SAID, "I'LL BET YODA WAS MORE ATTRACTIVE 800 YEARS AGO, BACK WHEN HE WAS KERMIT THE FROG."

HIS WIFE, GEORGINA, IS ON RECORD AS HAVING "CHUCKLED POLITELY."

SINCE THAT DATE, ALL JESTS MADE IN REFERENCE TO THE "STAR WARS" TRILOGY HAVE SIMPLY BEEN UNWITTING REPEATS OF PREVIOUS JOKES MADE IN OUR NATION'S WRITING ROOMS, TV ROOMS, PLAYGROUNDS AND CAFETERIAS... AND SOME NOT-SO-UNWITTING ONES, THOUGH WE'RE NOT POINTING FINGERS...

I SAID I NEVER SAW THAT EPISODE OF "SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE!"

HOW LONG ARE YOU GONNA KEEP BRINGING THAT UP?

AND YET, SOME STILL HOLD OUT HOPE, HOPE THAT WITH TIME AND EFFORT, THEY MIGHT BE ABLE TO FLOG ONE MORE LAFF OUTTA THIS DEAD HORSE, SO INTO THE NIGHT THEY TOIL! AND JUST FOR THE RECORD, EXCESSIVELY OBSCURE CHARACTER REFERENCES DO NOT COUNT.

BUT THE COMEDIC POTENTIAL OF MALAKILI THE RANCOR KEEPER HAS HARDLY BEEN TAPPED!

HELLO, THERE, I AM PROFESSOR RAYMOND MCGOOGHAN, AND THIS IS THE YUX-O-LUX 5000 HUMOR EXTRACTION COMPUTER! OVER THE NEXT FEW DAYS, IT WILL ANALYZE THE "STAR WARS" DVDS FRAME-BY-FRAME, COMPILING EVERY SCRAP OF HUMOR LEFT INTO A SINGLE, UNIFYING JOKE! RIGHT, MY CREATION?

THIS ISN'T GONNA HELP ME GET CHICKS, IS IT?

NOT BY A LONG SHOT.

THE COMPUTER WORKS TIRELESSLY...

OH, MAN, WOOKIEES, THERE'S GOTTA BE A JOKE THERE.

THROUGH THE FORT NIGHT...

SO, CAROL, WHATCHA UP TO? ME, I'M JUST SITTING HERE, WATCHIN' "STAR WARS." WANNA COME OVER? I GOT A T-1 LINE, I GOT A SHIELDED POWER SUPPLY...

I'M CLEANING MY PRINT HEADS.

SO, CAN WE GO IN?

PATIENCE, GENTLEMEN, SCIENCE TAKES TIME.

I THOUGHT THAT WAS ART.

OH, THAT'S RIGHT; SCIENCE TAKES MONEY. LET'S GO SEE WHAT WE'VE GOT.

IN MY HAND, GENTLEMEN... I NOW HOLD THE JOKE...

THE FINAL JOKE ABOUT THE ORIGINAL "STAR WARS" TRILOGY! I'LL ASK FOR COMPLETE SILENCE AS I READ. AHM...

"I GOT BORED DURING "RETURN OF THE JEDI" AND CONSTRUCTED A SET OF TITANIUM ARMS FOR WHICH TO REVENGE MYSELF AGAINST THE HUMAN RACE."

...WELL, THAT WASN'T FUNNY AT--

EEP!

GRAB!

AAAARGH!

"P.S.: WHAT DO YOU CALL FOUR EWOKS IN A BLENDER?"

I ALREADY HEARD THAT ONE!



COMING

107 17 49-477

Rico's House of Halo (California) and the No Limits Crew (Pennsylvania) at Xbox Headquarters.



# CAN'T WAIT FOR NOVEMBER 9? NEITHER COULD DEW!

XBOX® & DEW's FIRST HALO 2 LAN PARTY  
XBOX HEADQUARTERS: REDMOND, WASHINGTON

Halo fans submitted photos showing how much they love Dew & Halo together — Winners were invited to play Halo 2 at Xbox HQ 107 days before launch. Check out more event photos at [mountaindew.com/gaming](http://mountaindew.com/gaming).



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[MOUNTAINDEW.COM/GAMING](http://MOUNTAINDEW.COM/GAMING)

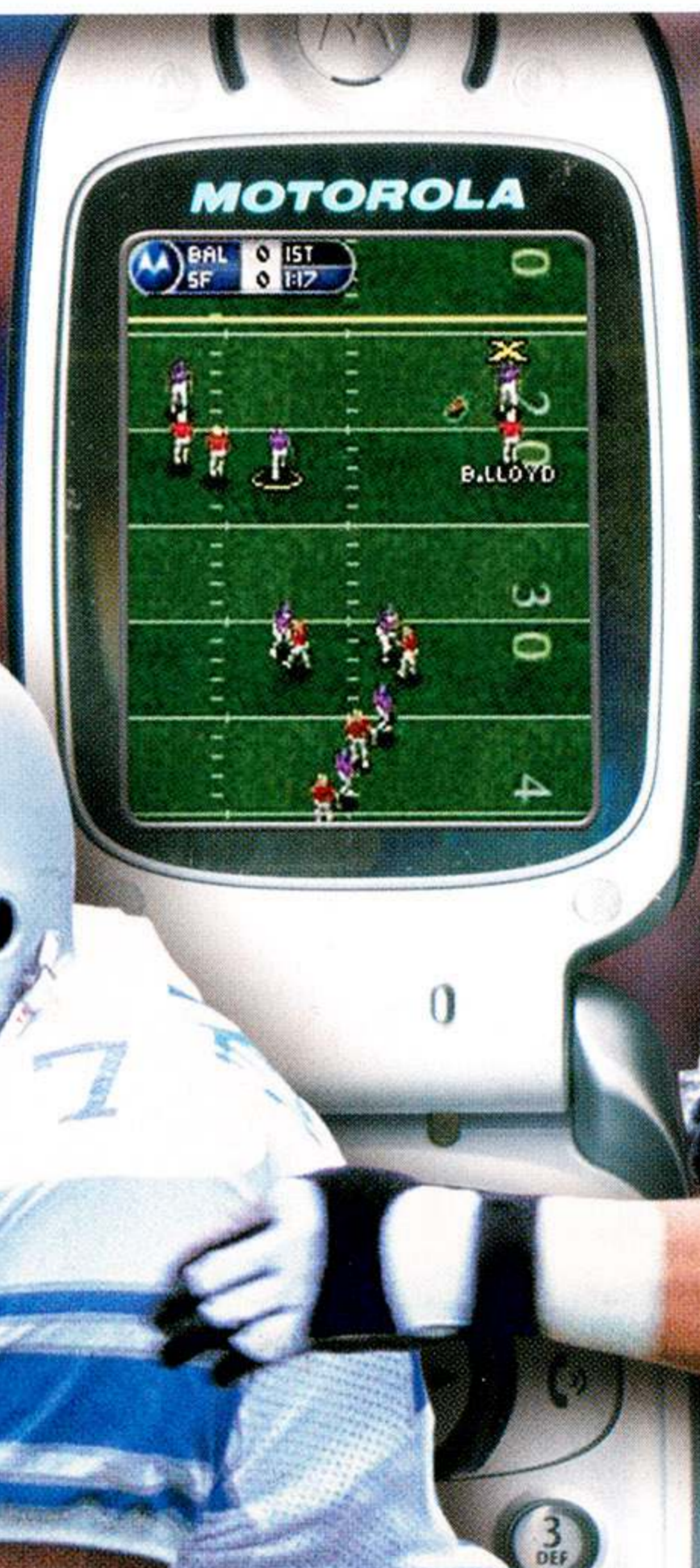


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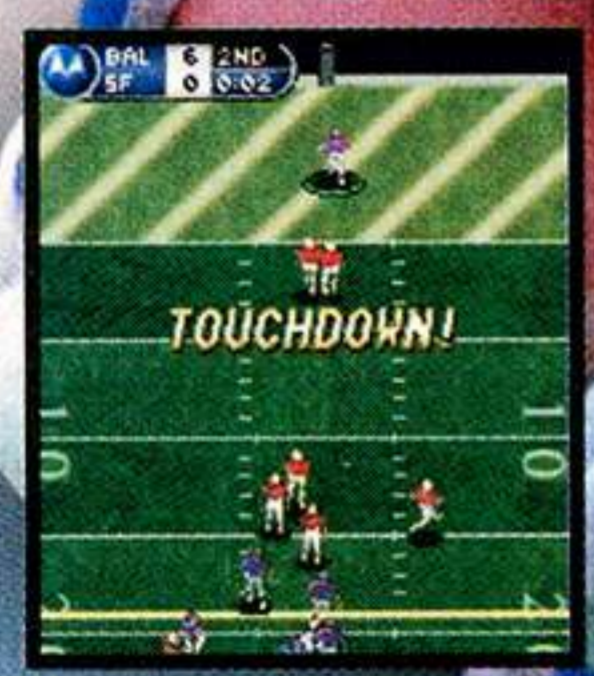
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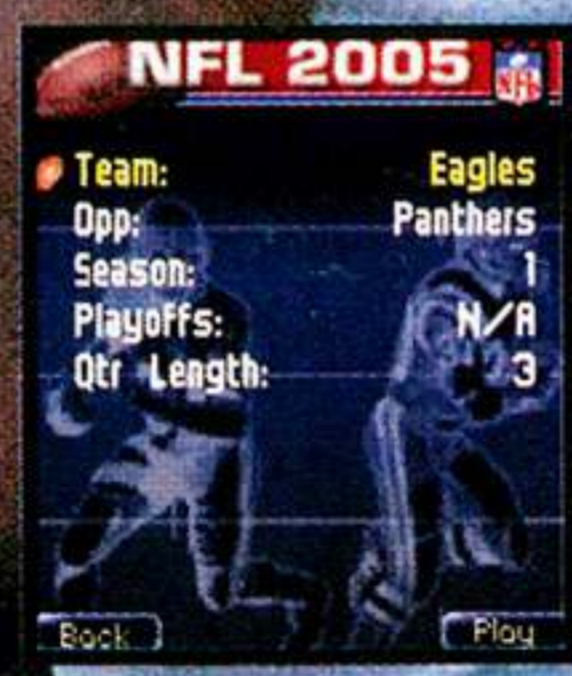
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