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**Issue 192**  
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M79 Frag Grenades



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*The new Legend of Zelda*

**PS2, Xbox reviewed!**

**Spider-Man 2**

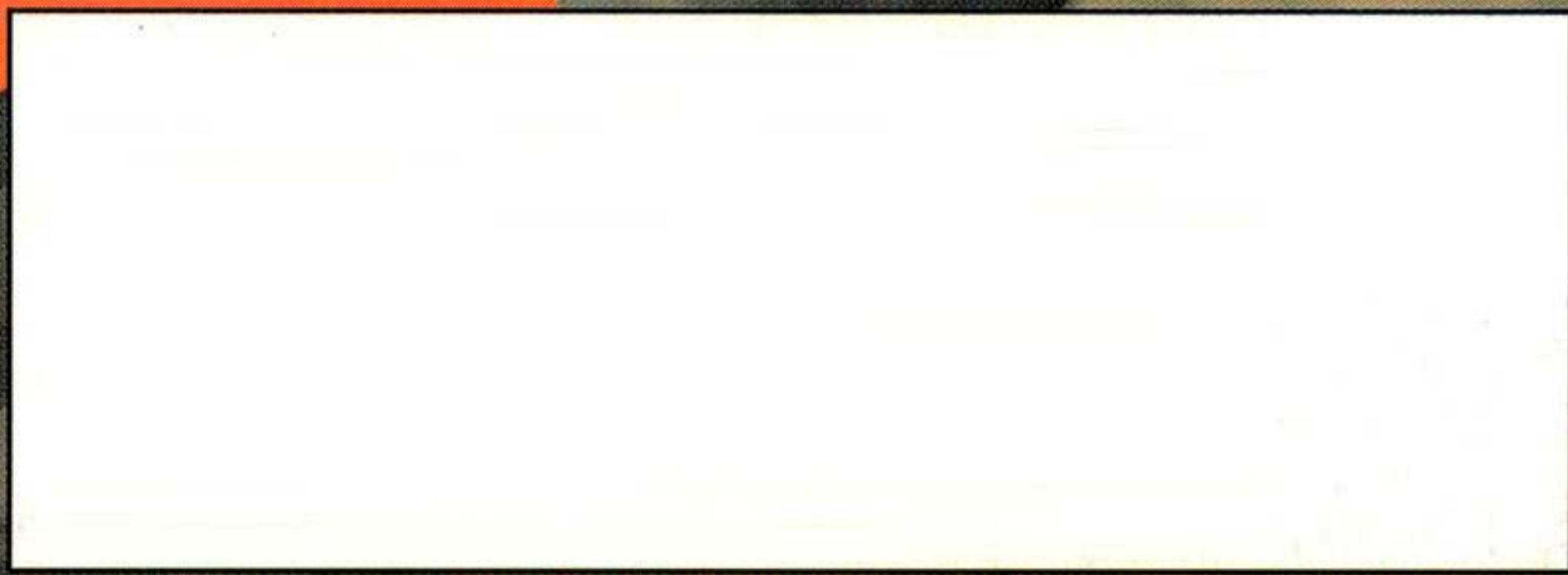


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# METAL GEAR SOLID 3

**SNAKE EATER**

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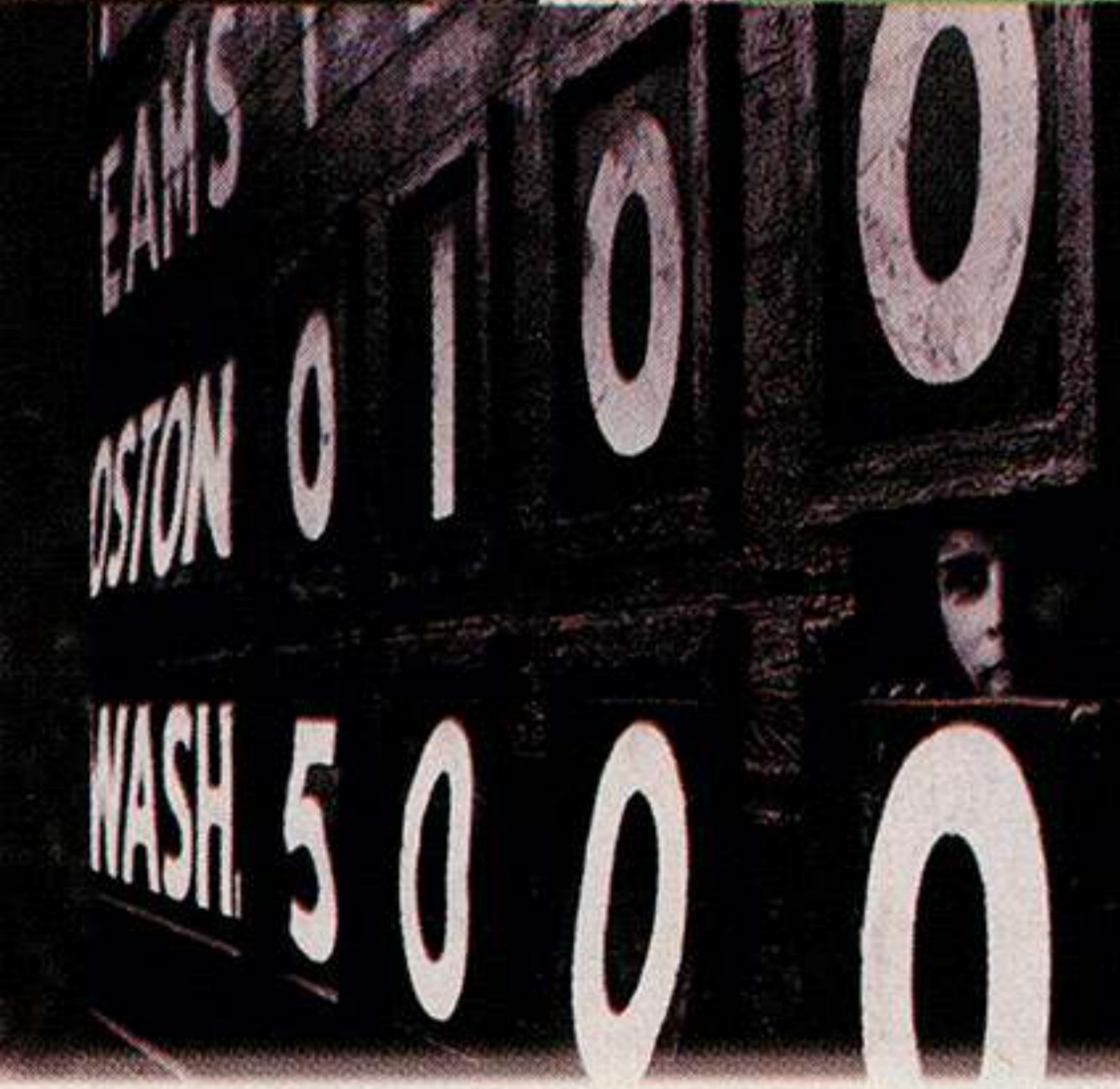
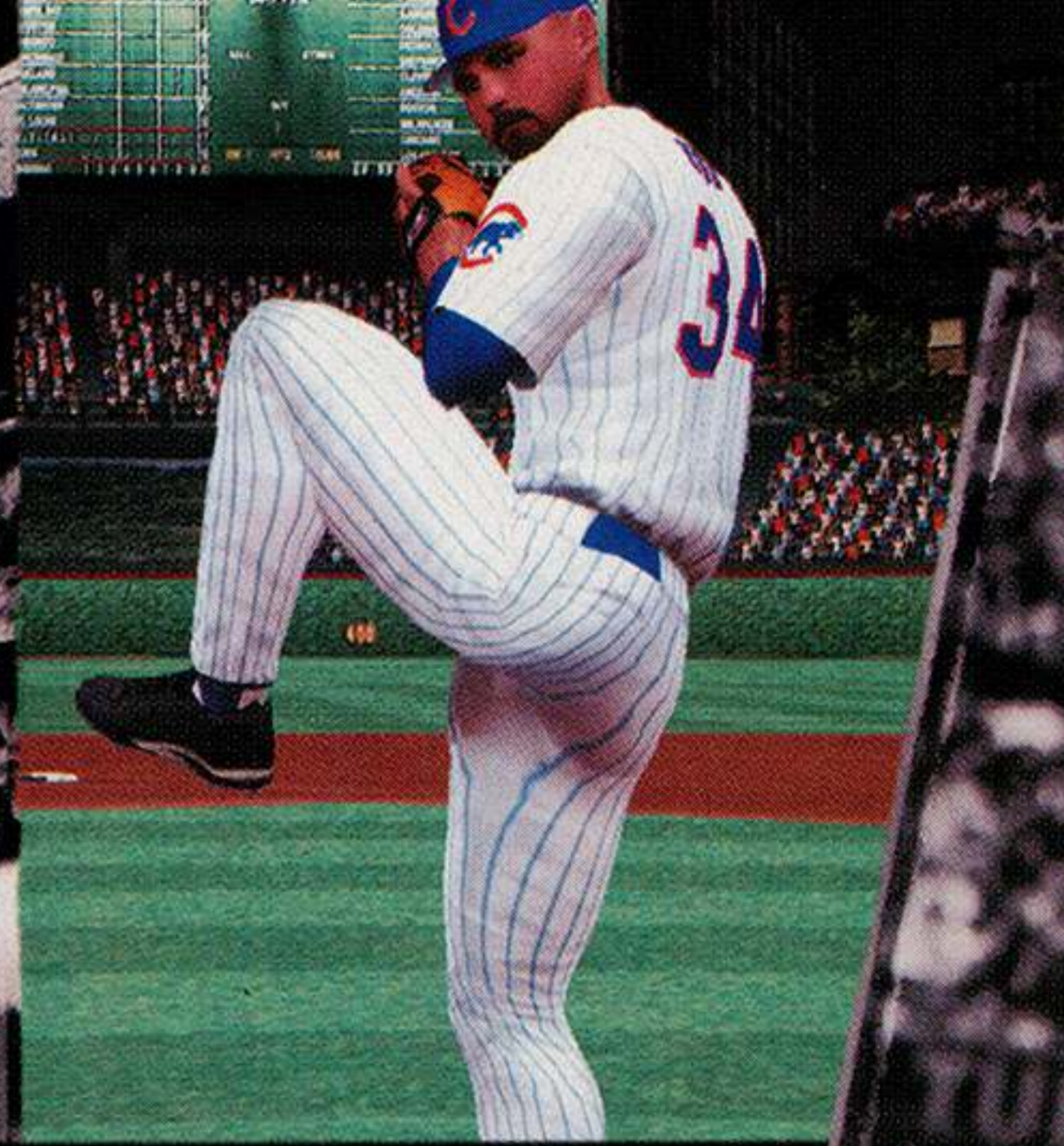
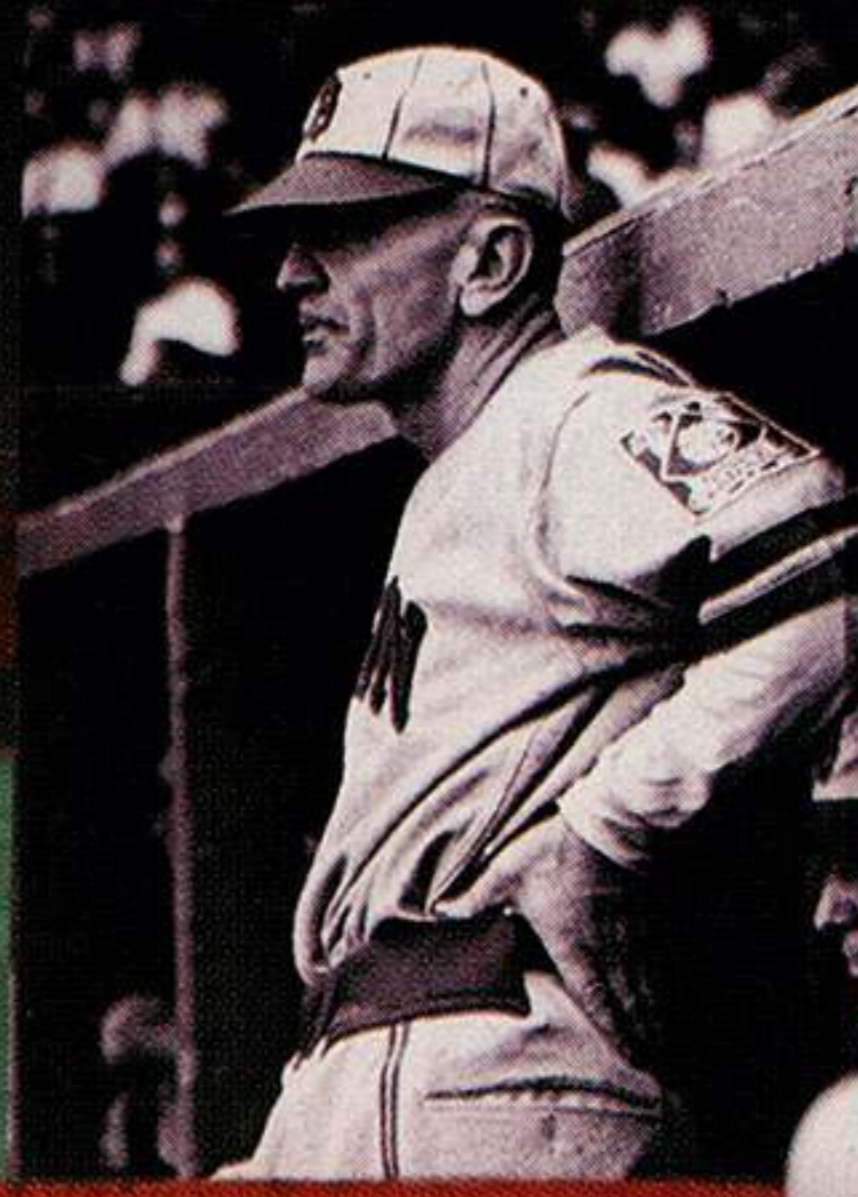
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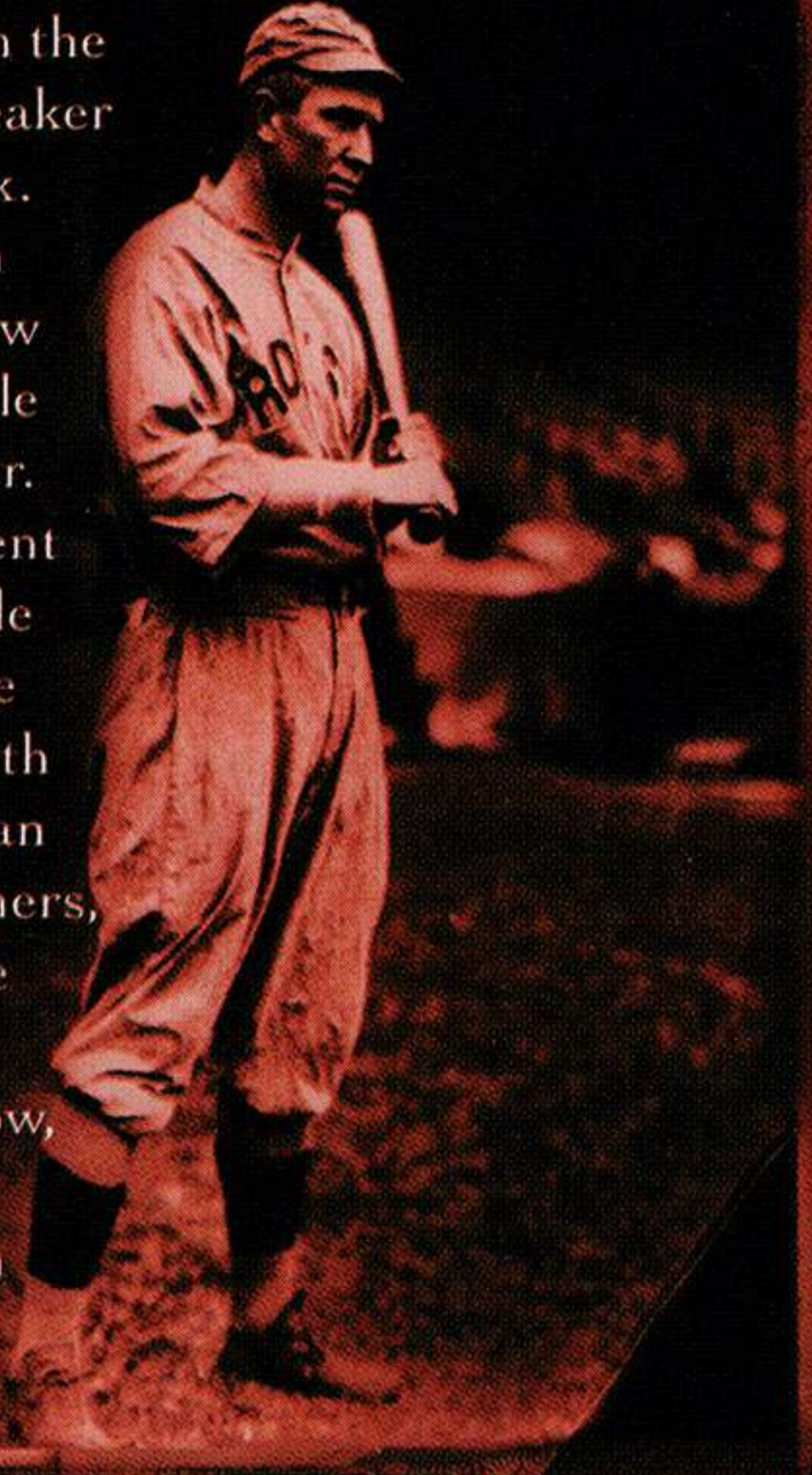
# TALES OF SYMPHONIA™



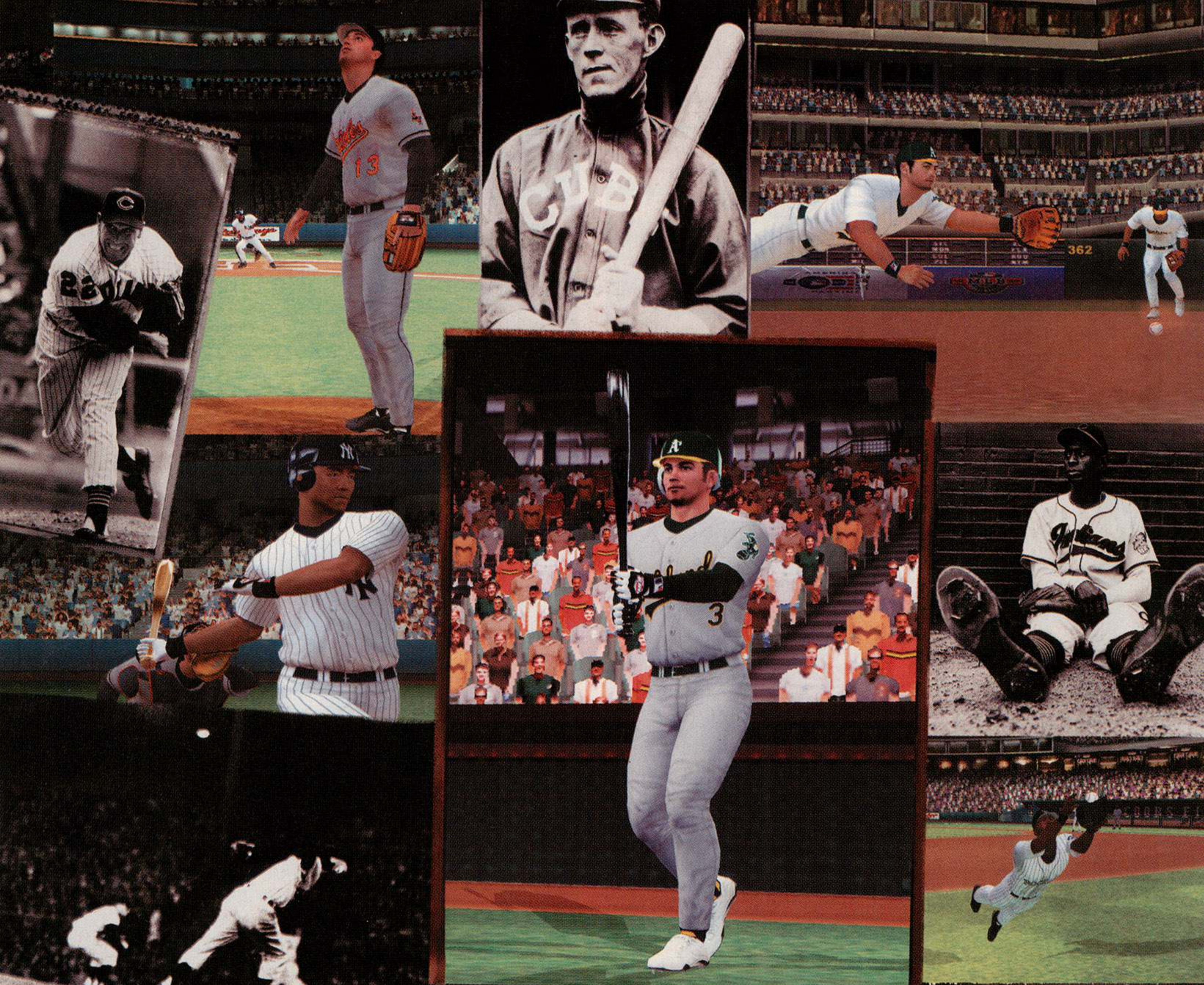


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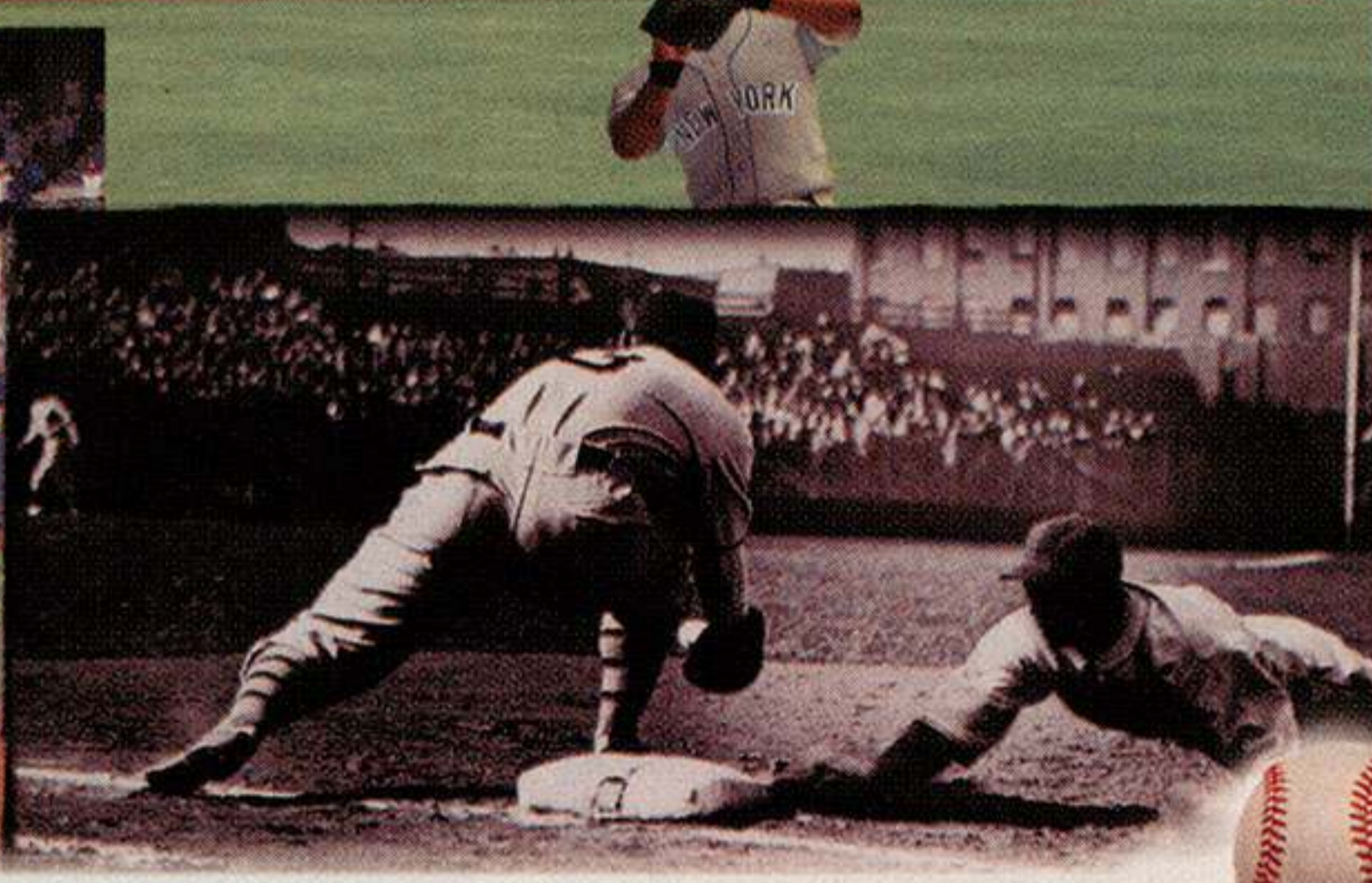
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Handhelds aren't just for kids...and there's tons the time. Stay in the loop!

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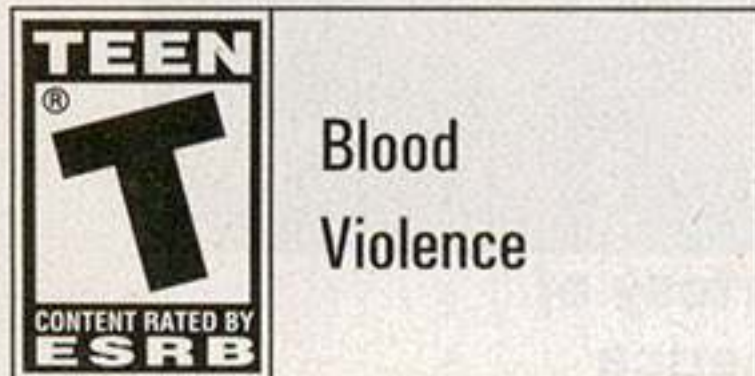


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FORGOTTEN REALMS



PlayStation 2



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**22 Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater**

Snake isn't the only commando who can use stealth and strategy to go undercover. Here's an in-depth, hands-on look at the most challenging game in Konami's Metal Gear Solid saga.

**31 Metal Gear Solid: The Comic**

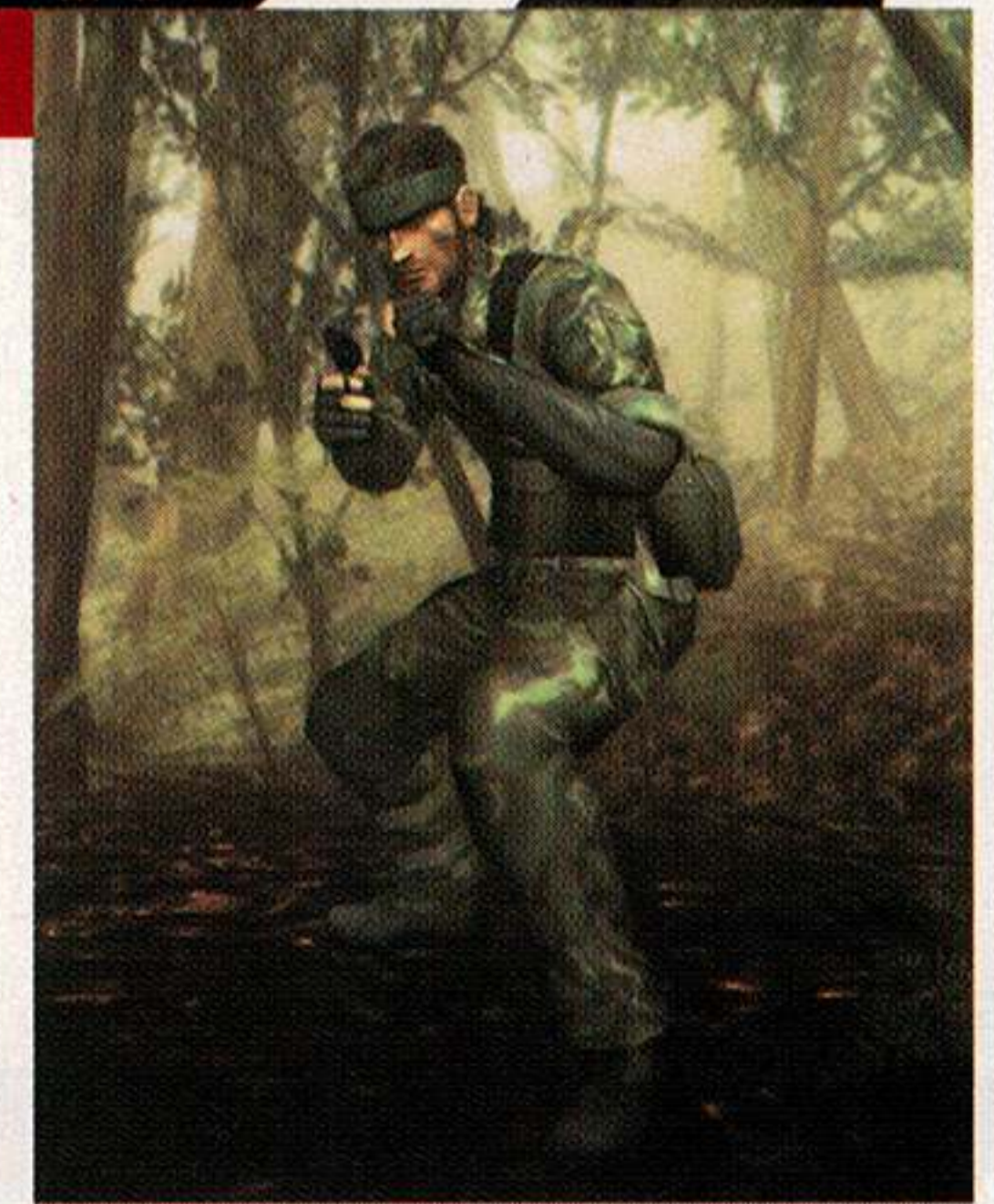
The story of Snake and Metal Gear is jumping over to the world of comics. IDW will publish the first tale, which is based on the first Metal Gear Solid game for the PlayStation.

**36 Men of Valor**

Vivendi Universal is preparing to transport you back in time for gritty, dangerous jungle combat. Check out Men of Valor, which attempts to re-create the combat and heartbreak of the Vietnam War.

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...WINNING

110 Code Vault

Here are the secrets to your success: Full Spectrum Warrior (Xbox), NBA Ballers (PS2, Xbox), Hitman: Contracts (Xbox), Fight Night (Xbox), World Tour Soccer 2005 (PS2), and more.



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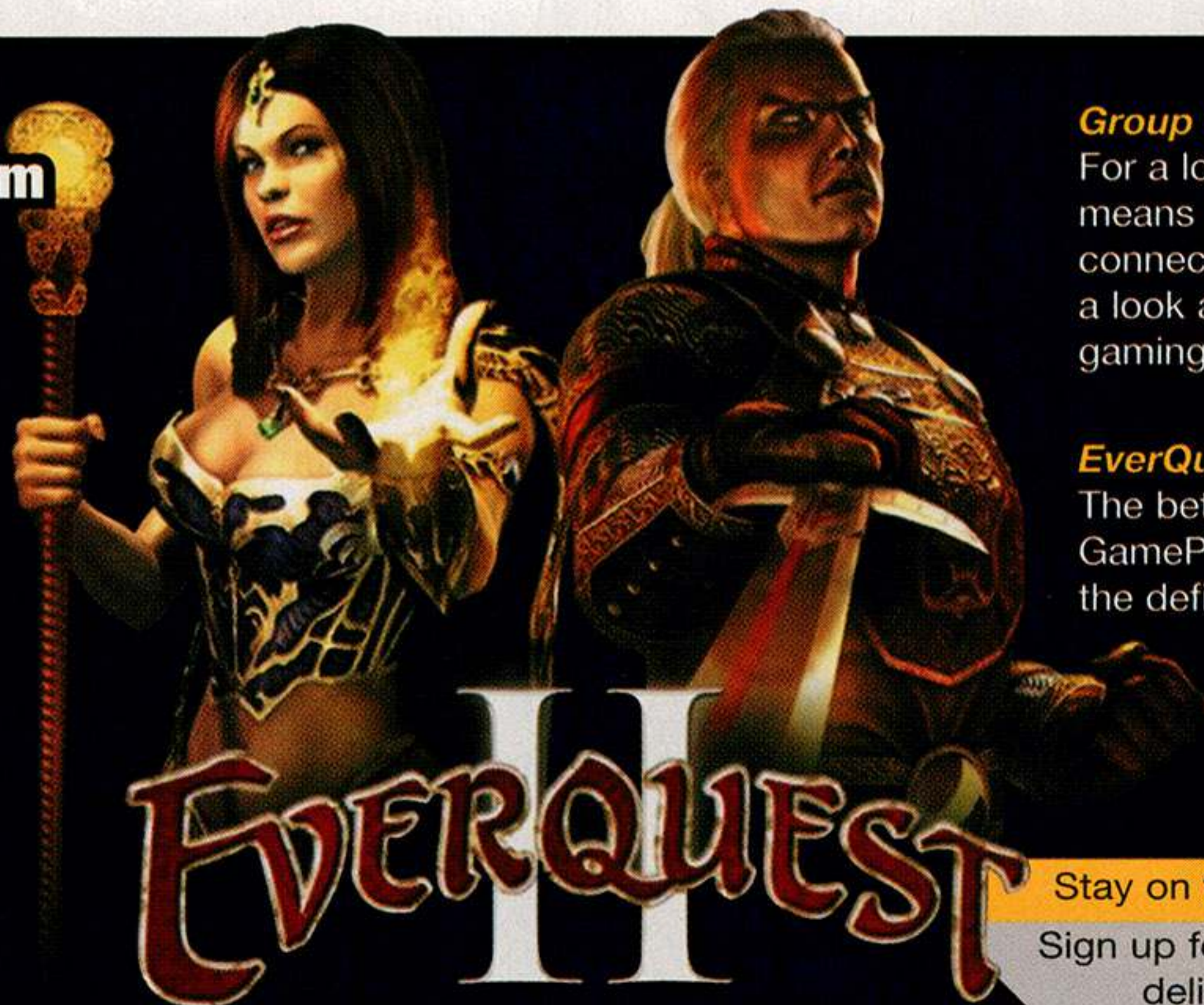
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**Pigskin Frenzy!**  
 Madden vs. ESPN. Which one deserves your money? We pit them head to head online, and the matchups may surprise you.



EVERQUEST II

**Group Gaming Goodness**

For a lot of gamers, August means back to school and re-connecting with friends, so here's a look at some of the best group gaming experiences out there.

**EverQuest II**

The beta is in full swing, and GamePro.com is inside. How has the defining MMORPG evolved?

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PlayStation 2

GAME BOY ADVANCE



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## Sega Strikes Back

It's that time of the year when Sega's ESPN NFL series gamely initiates its heretofore perennial headbutting against the stone mountain and league leader that is EA Sports' Madden NFL.

So what do you do when you're up against the monster of monsters? You hit 'em where they least expect it. In a beautiful off-the-field move (no...reviving the "2K" brand is not it), ESPN NFL 2K5 is priced at \$19.99.

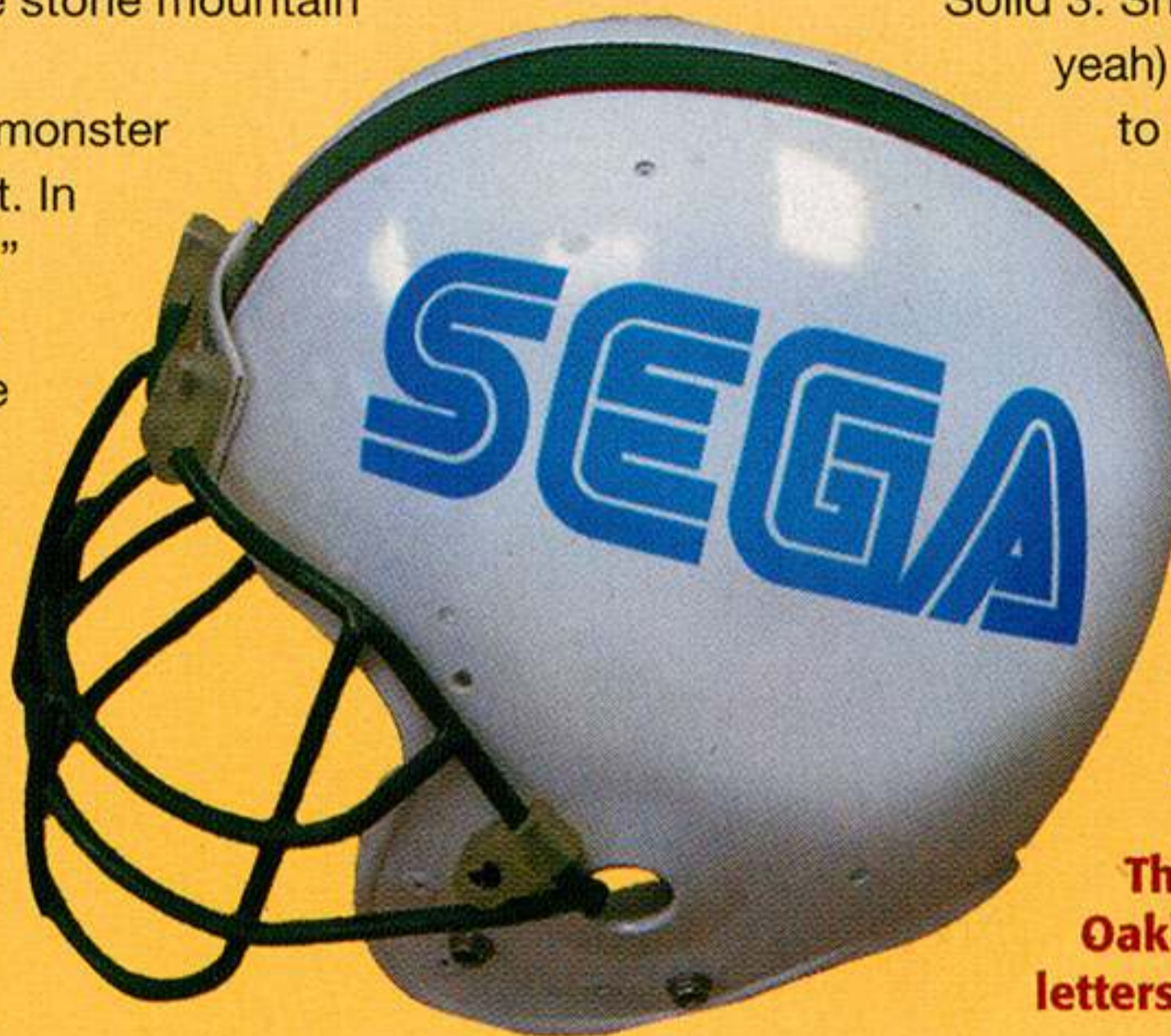
ESPN NFL 2K5 is a topnotch title (check out the Sports Pages Review in this issue), and even the most hardcore Madden veteran has got to be swayed a little. At that price, why wouldn't any football gamer worth his virtual jockstrap at least check it out? Now you can have your Madden and 2K5, too.

Everyone has an opinion about games that aren't worth the standard \$39.99 price tag; here's one whose play value is beyond its price tag. Of course, the other way to look at it is with so many

humongous, high-profile games due out this fall—i.e., Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater, Halo 2, Gran Turismo 4, and (oh, yeah) Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas—you have to do something to stand out from this hype-worthy crowd and get your game into gamers' hands while the getting's good.

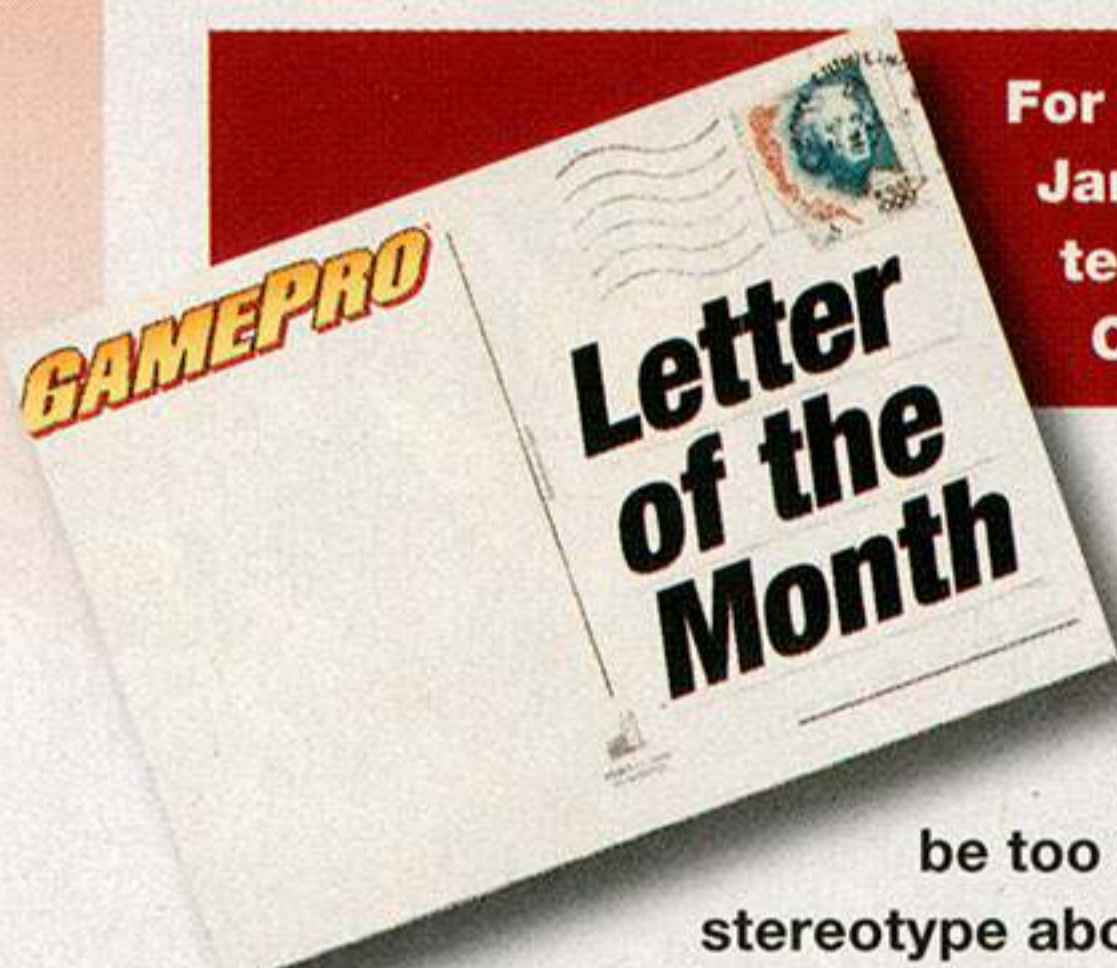
But when Sega teamed up with Take 2 Interactive's Global Star "value" label, no one thought the price-tag trimming would start with the ESPN-branded games, particularly not a high-profile title like ESPN NFL 2K5.

Nice move. Score one for Team Sega/Global Star.

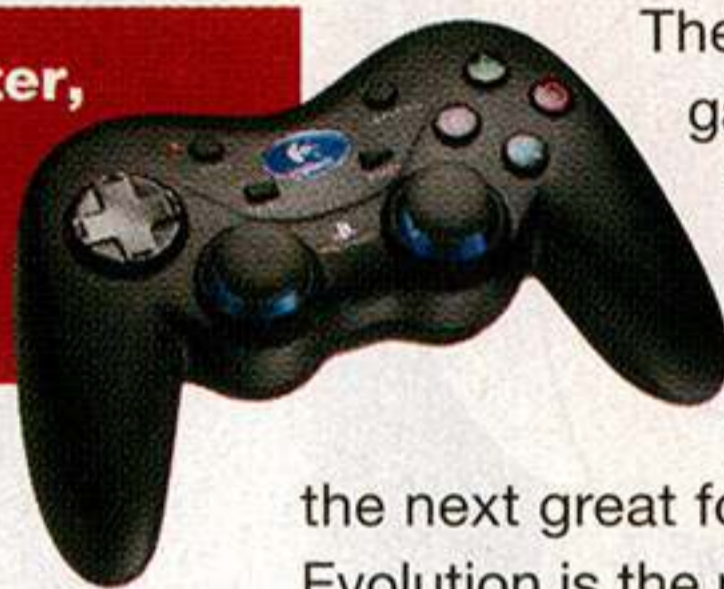


**The GamePros,  
Oakland, CA  
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LOADING...



**For his smart and elegant letter, Jamie will receive a Logitech Cordless Action Controller. Well done!**



### Gamers Of All Ages

There seems to be this ugly little issue that will not go away: Can you be too old to play video games? The old stereotype about gamers, especially those of us over 18 (I'm 23, thank you) is that we are nerdy, overweight shut-ins with no social life. Thinking like that is both archaic and narrow-minded. The fact of the matter is that games are becoming more and more mainstream every day.

I guess the reason some people think video games should have an age limit is because they think games are some kind of high-priced toy. Ten years ago I might have agreed, but the video-game industry has not only become a valid form of entertainment but also a form of media.

Also, as gamers mature, so do games. Game content has come a long way from munching dots and table tennis. Today, games require you to think with on-the-fly decision making and brain-racking puzzles common in the best games.

The ESRB ratings also show that games are maturing.

There are games that deal with drugs, politics, racism, sexuality, and sexual orientation.

With the combination of adult themes, adult language, and sometimes graphic violence, it should be understood that some games are not meant for kids but for that "older" demographic that people say shouldn't be playing games.

If you didn't buy any of that, I guess it just boils down to personal freedoms. We have the right to play games as entertainment, and as adults, we are going to fully exercise that right.

► **Jamie Walden—Augusta, GA**

The average nongameplaying citizen forgets that console gaming began before the 1989 introduction of Nintendo's 8-bit NES. Several generations have grown up and matured since then with games as their regular leisure-time entertainment. Video games have already made an impact on popular culture, and they are poised to become the next great form of creative expression and storytelling—for adults. Evolution is the revolution.

### Eternal Darkness: The Movie

I've heard there are plans to bring Nintendo's survival/horror game *Eternal Darkness* to the movies. If so, who will produce *Eternal Darkness*? I just hope they are thoughtful and respectful of the original material.

► **Steve Nelson—Ocean Shores, WA**

Hypnotic, a film and television entertainment company, has an agreement with Nintendo to develop any TV or movie properties based on *Eternal Darkness: Sanity's Requiem*. Their credits include *The O.C.* on Fox and *The Bourne Identity* (Matt Damon's spy flick) for Universal. The company became enchanted by *Eternal Darkness* when it worked with Nintendo to create the *Eternal Darkness* Films Competition a couple of years ago and then took some of the best works around to several film festivals around the country. Let's hope that *Eternal Darkness* doesn't get stranded in "eternal development."

### Burned by Burnout

I'm a huge *Burnout* fan, and when I saw *Burnout 3* among your sneak previews my happiness knew no bounds. But that happiness was instantly shattered when I did not see a GameCube icon at the top of the article. Is this a mistake, or is this game really not coming out on the GameCube?

► **Shawn Souder—Laureldale, PA**

Shawn, take a deep breath, close your eyes, and keep repeating, "Serenity now, serenity now." *Burnout 3* is not coming to the GameCube. Electronic Arts is now publishing this crash-em-up racer, and developer Criterion wants to make online gameplay one of the high-profile feature sets. Online gameplay, as you know, is not the GameCube's strong point. Although *Burnout 3* with its demolition-style driving would be the perfect game for you to use to vent your frustrations, you'll have to do it with the PS2 or the Xbox.



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WHO YOU ARE IS NOT ALWAYS...





## Grand Theft Geography

I would like to know more about Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas. Will it have a brand-new story mode? Where does the game take place, and can you go to previous places that were featured in Vice City and GTAIII?

► **Brandon Heigh—Balto, MD**

Grand Theft Auto is the featured sneak preview this issue, so you can find the answers to many of your questions there (and no doubt form some new ones, too). You might have already figured out the game's location in part by looking up the San Andreas Fault in California. It's a geologic "crack" in the surface that runs the length of the state and causes those earthquakes. GTA's "San Andreas" is the name of a fictional state. The game encompasses at least three cities that sort of feel like San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Las Vegas. Each of these cities/gameplay areas is reportedly the size of Vice City. Unfortunately, although there's extensive drive time as you can imagine, there's no indication that you'll be able to visit Vice City, Staunton Island, or other GTA locales.

## Nintendo Worries

It recently came to my attention that Nintendo planned to release its next-generation console about six or seven months before the PS3 and possibly the Xbox 2. This worries me because I am a huge Nintendo fanboy, and this reminds me of the Sega's Dreamcast failure because the Dreamcast was also released several months before the PS2. So I'm afraid for Nintendo because if they go out of business, I will probably buy the Xbox 2. I just want to know what your opinion on this is and if you feel it will mean disaster for Nintendo.

► **PS2Hater—Via Internet**

Maybe we are on the verge of experiencing a new world order where there are no Nintendo game systems...a world exclusive to PS2 and Xbox games...a world where Mario, Link, and Samus are forgotten...a world where Game Boys are extinct...a world without Pokémon. Maybe this world would even be a kinder, gentler place where all game companies would live in peace and harmony? Nawwwww! Fear not, young...uh, Hater. You can argue the relative merits of the NES, Super NES, N64, and GameCube, but then you realize that these systems have been major contributors to the modern history of video games. And even though Sega's out of the hardware business, its great game franchises and legendary design studios continue to make games. Is Nintendo any different? One thing's certain: As long as there are games to be made, Nintendo will be making them.

## Nice Eye

I totally love the new look of *GamePro*. Good job with the remodeling. Those *Queer Eye* guys didn't help, did they?

► **Michael "UFO" Rusniak—Pontiac, IL**

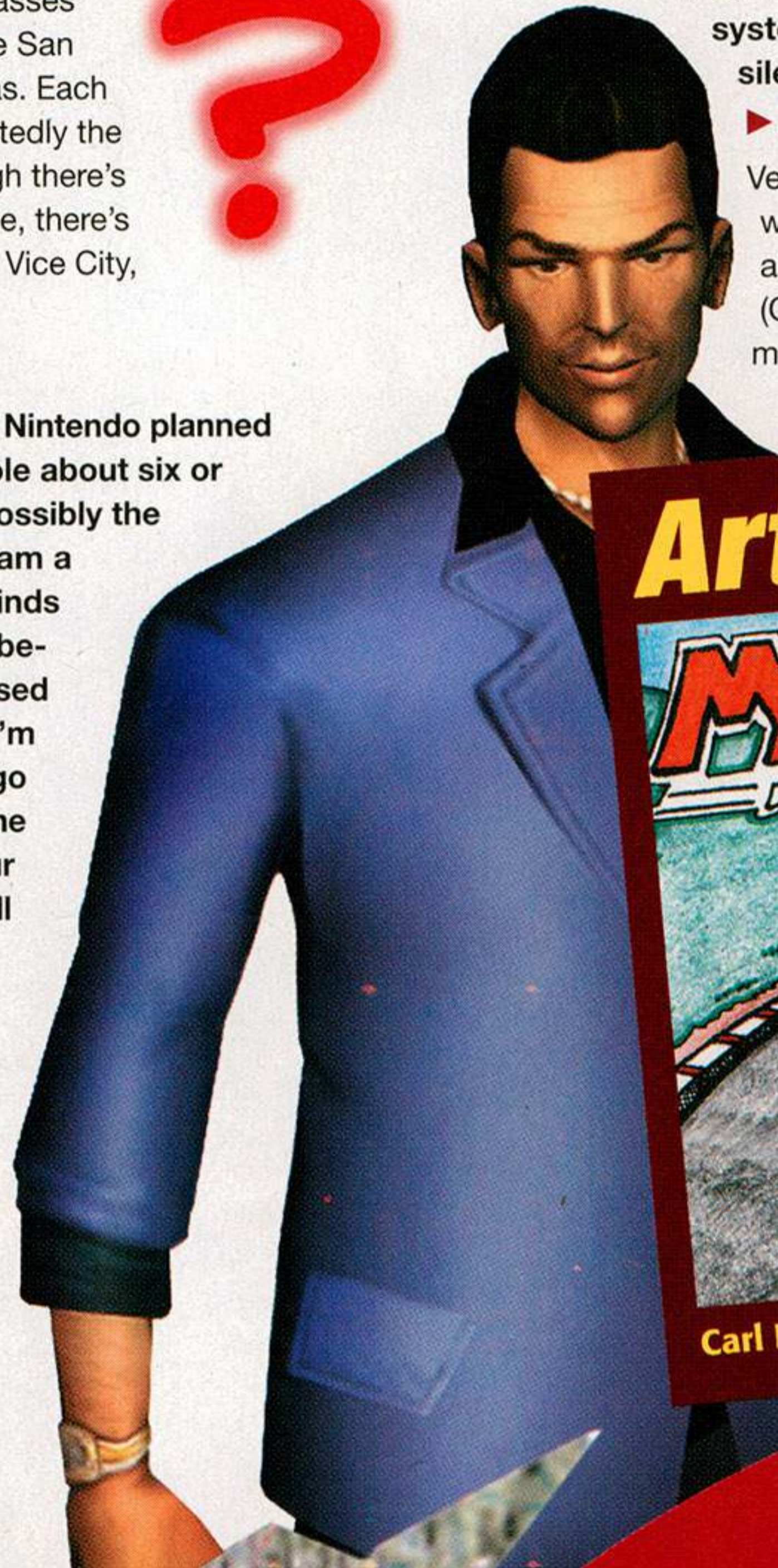
The Fab Five from *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy* did stop by, but Major Mike wouldn't let them in (he feared for his beret). Thanks for the support and feedback; *GamePro's* new look continues to be a work in progress.

## Silent Thanks

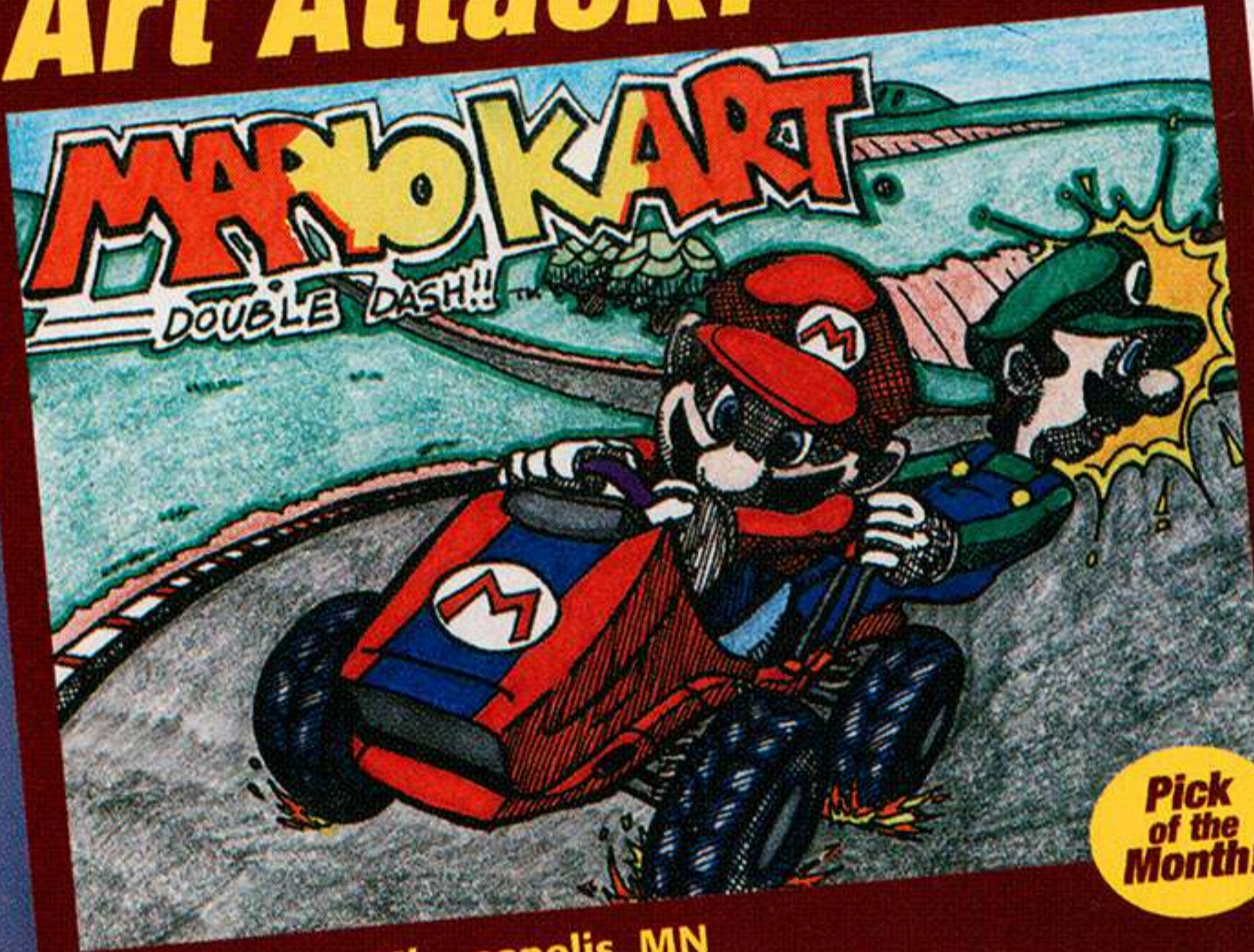
I am writing to you on behalf of video-game programmers, designers, game testers, and sound designers. I think we all owe them a great deal of thanks. I mean is it or is it not these dedicated people who work their tails off to make great games and great game systems for us to enjoy? We should all take a moment of silence in recognition of these people.

► **Joel Parnam—San Antonio, TX**

Very nicely put, Joel. We are certainly the beneficiaries of the work of some amazingly creative and talented people. How about August 13 (Friday the 13th) 12 noon, San Antonio (Central) time? One minute of pause to recognize great game making everywhere?



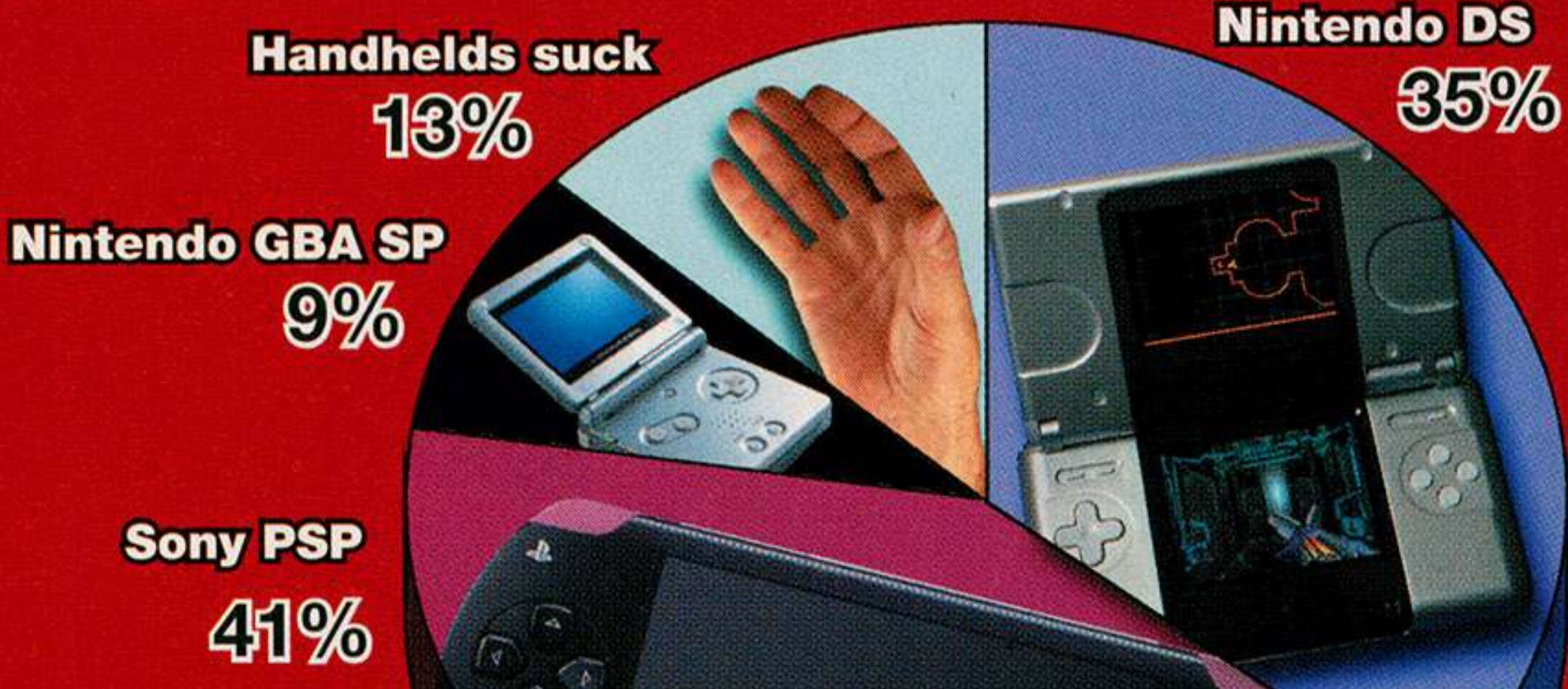
## Art Attack!



**Carl Englund—Minneapolis, MN**

## Poll Vault

Which handheld interests you most?



Results courtesy of *GamePro.com*—log on and be heard!



WHO YOU WILL BECOME.





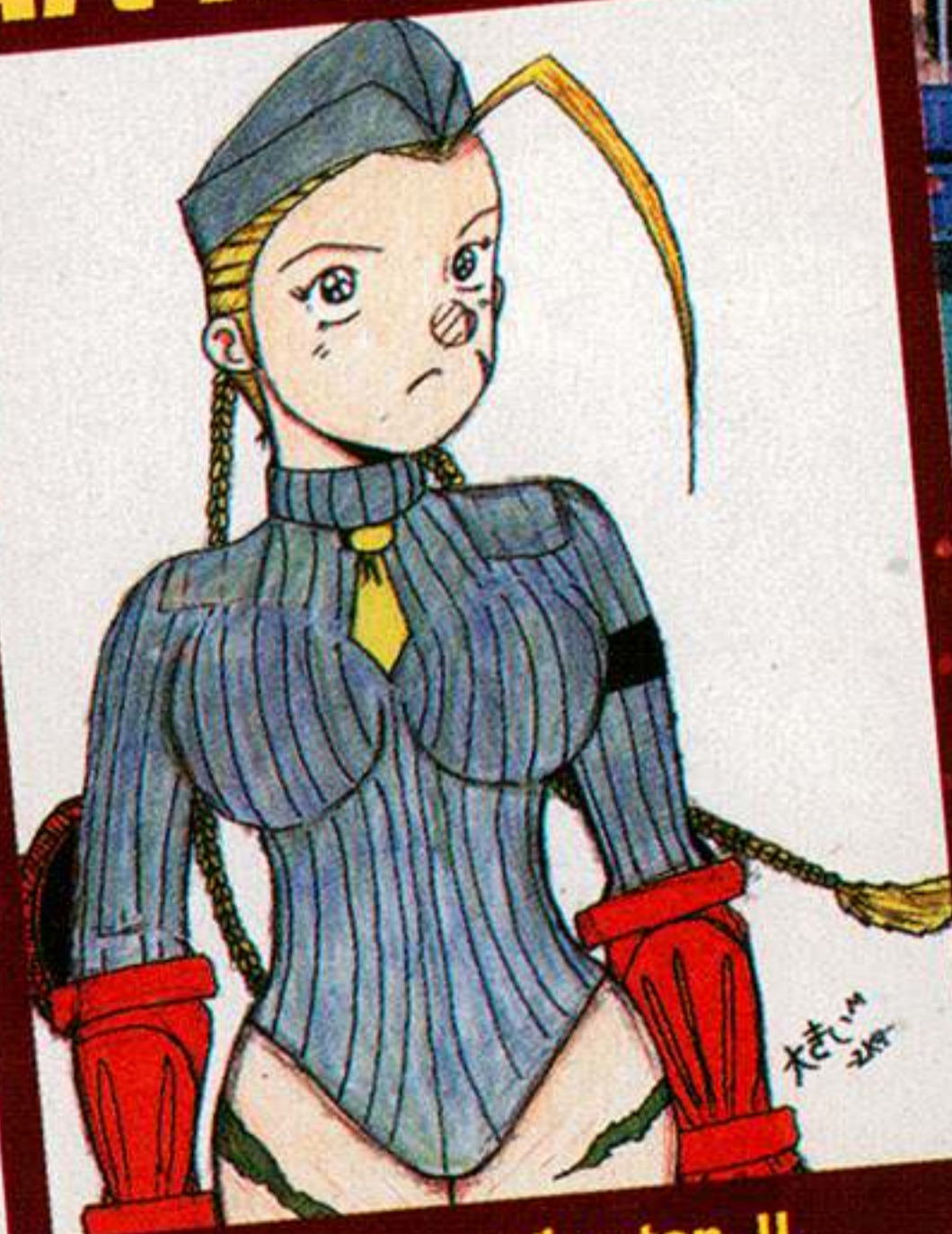
## The Halo Xbox Blues

I first learned of *GamePro* when I was a small lad of four years, two months, six days, eight hours, 37 minutes, and 26 seconds. My dad bought your first-class magazine back when MC Hammer was dominating the charts and it was much easier to understand what Ozzy was saying. My favorite game of all time is Halo (for the Xbox), but I think Xbox fans got ripped off. The PC version has flamethrowers, fuel rod cannons, extra levels, and Banshees in multiplayer mode. I may cry because of this treachery.

► Tom Henneman the Third—Maumee, OH

Although your letter makes us shed a nostalgic tear for Hammer Time, please bear this in mind: *There is no crying in video gaming.* However, if you can hold back the boo-hoos until November, Number 3, you'll see that the Bungie boys have taken your lament to heart. Halo 2 for the Xbox will feature a bunch of cool features—particularly in multiplayer mode—including the ability to not only battle in Banshees but also to climb onto them to knock your opponents out of the cockpit as well! You'll get new weapons and be able to fire two of them at once, too. Remember: Crying! None!

## Art Attack!



Morgan Moore—Wheaton, IL

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

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

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four-eyed\_dragon  
jen\_x  
major\_mike  
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pongsifu  
star\_dingo  
tokyo\_drifter  
the\_vixen

## READER REVIEW

### Deus Ex: The Conspiracy

**PE** If you can see past the outdated graphics, *Deus Ex* is a great game!

I admit I was skeptical when I bought this game. The graphics, while not horrible, are still very outdated. That's the reason this game's not a 5.0. But aside from the graphics (and oh yeah, the controls are a bit confusing), this game's ingenious.

The story itself is a work of art, but the true gem is the gameplay. You have the overall say on what happens to your character, and you're not following some predetermined story

line. Practically everything you do (and don't do) has a bearing on your fate. The results are sometimes funny, sometimes frustrating, and often just really cool. For example: If you accidentally (or purposely) kill someone on your side, you'll hear about it at some time or another. In fact, an investigation may be started because of your decision. Nifty, huh? So, even though the look of the game could be better, the feel of it couldn't be, and this game is a definite must-have for the PS2.

—TheSponge239



FUN FACTOR  
4.5/5



Agree? Disagree? Or just think you can do better? Write your own user reviews at [GamePro.com](http://GamePro.com), and maybe you'll see your opinions here next.



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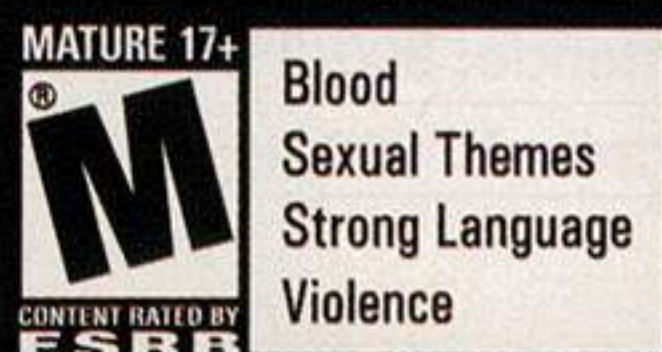


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it's good to play together



**The Watch Dog takes a much-needed break from sifting through hordes of Xbox and PlayStation 2 e-mails of dirty-disc drama and takes a look at Sony's new hard drive. Plus, there's the PC game staple of desktop crashes and choppiness.**

## Hard-Drive Heartache

I purchased the Hard Disk Drive (HDD) for the PlayStation 2 the day it came out because I was really anticipating FFXI. It works fine, and I love it as well as the game. However, I am experiencing some problems that don't really wreck the game but are giving me a headache: For some strange reason, the HDD makes this loud screeching noise when I'm shutting it down, sometimes when loading, or even midgame. It drives me nuts; you can hear it through the whole house, and I don't know what the problem is. Is this normal? Thank you in advance for any help you can offer.

### ► Wolf Winchester—Via Internet

Any hardware that screeches isn't normal, except maybe a PC HabiCase (<http://www.thinkgeek.com/stuff/41/habicase.shtml>). First, double-check that the noise is actually coming from the hard drive and not the PlayStation 2 itself. Disconnect the hard drive and play games to see if you hear the same sound. Possible sources of screeching from the PlayStation 2 are the fan and DVD drive.

If you've isolated the sound to the HDD, be sure that the drive is installed securely—double-check the instructions to make sure you've inserted the drive and engaged its locks correctly. Beyond that, the noise is likely coming from the mechanical arm scraping against a disc in the hard drive. Similar to a record player, the hard drive is made up of metal disc plates (called platters) that spin while mechanical arms move to read, write, and delete data.

You should run a diagnostic with the HDD Utility Disc that came with your PlayStation HDD. As outlined on page 30 of your HDD manual (which can be downloaded online by going to <http://www.us.playstation.com/hardwaremanuals.aspx>), load up the disc, go to the utility menu, select "Diagnose and Repair HDD," and press the × button. If you get any error messages, be sure to write them down exactly.

If that doesn't fix the issue, the next step is to reformat the hard drive, which will wipe out all saved information on the hard drive (including FFXI

itself!), so you may want to call up Sony tech support first to see if the issue can be resolved without reformatting. At the utilities menu, you will see an option to "Format HDD." Select this option, and your hard drive will be wiped clean, hopefully along with the error. If the formatting can't be completed because of an error message, write down the exact error message (including the error code if there is one, such as P0L-0010) and contact Sony tech support at its toll-free number, 800/345-7669. Giving tech support the error message will inform them of the specific problem. In a worst case, it might be that the drive itself is physically defective; Sony can tell you how to get a replacement, if that's the diagnosis.



## Crashed and MIA in 'Nam

I recently purchased Battlefield Vietnam, and in the few days I've had it, it has crashed my computer at least four times. I had the graphics on the highest quality but turned them down to try to stop the game from crashing. After doing this, it was running better until I was killed. Then my computer crashed and restarted when I was supposed to respawn. Is there a patch or a way to get it to work? My computer is an HP Media Center with a Radeon 9200 graphics card that easily meets the system requirements. Thanks for your time.

### ► Aaron Kirschner—Yankton, SD

Not sure whether or not you've patched the game, but the problem seems worse for the 1.01 patch. This has been a problem voiced by many owners of the game, and unfortunately, EA Games hasn't given any word of an all-curing solution.

Although the Radeon 9500/9700/9800 series cards in particular encounter problems, Battlefield Vietnam seems to impact a lot of ATI cards in general. The first suggestion would be to download the latest ATI Catalyst drivers. The motherboard drivers and sound drivers are also important to update.

If you have a Creative sound card, EAX sound has seen some issues with the game as well. Try turning down the hardware acceleration by going into Start Menu → Settings → Control Panel. Double-click the Sounds and Multimedia icon (or Multimedia, depending on your OS). Go to the Audio tab and click on Advanced for the Sound Playback device. At the Advanced Audio Properties Window, click on the Performance tab and reduce the hardware acceleration slider.

Software firewalls may also be an issue. If you use a program like ZoneAlarm, it may be kicking you back to the desktop in an attempt to prompt you to accept data transfer to and from the IP of the Battlefield Vietnam server.

Another suggestion that has worked for some is to open the videoDefault.con file in the \Mods\BfVietnam\Settings directory of your Battlefield Vietnam folder and change `renderer.allowAllRefreshRates` to 1.

## XIII, Your Lucky Number

Okay, so I bought XIII for the PC and put in the first installation disc, and everything was cool—but then when it said to put in disc two, after a minute or so, Windows gave me the "something's screwed up" beep, and I got a "wrong volume inserted" message. Any help would be nice; I spent 50 bucks on this game, and Wal-Mart has a no-refund policy.

### ► John Garrett—Via Internet

This is a problem that's particular to people who have virtual drives on their computer. CD-burning software like Nero or Clone-CD creates virtual drives, which the game detects and doesn't like. It's actually a feature deliberately put in to prevent software piracy. The solution would be to either disable the virtual drives or copy all files to a folder on your hard drive and try installing again.

## Submissions

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

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

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

## You Make the Call

Having problems with hardware or software from Sony, Nintendo, or Microsoft? Here are the customer service numbers to call:

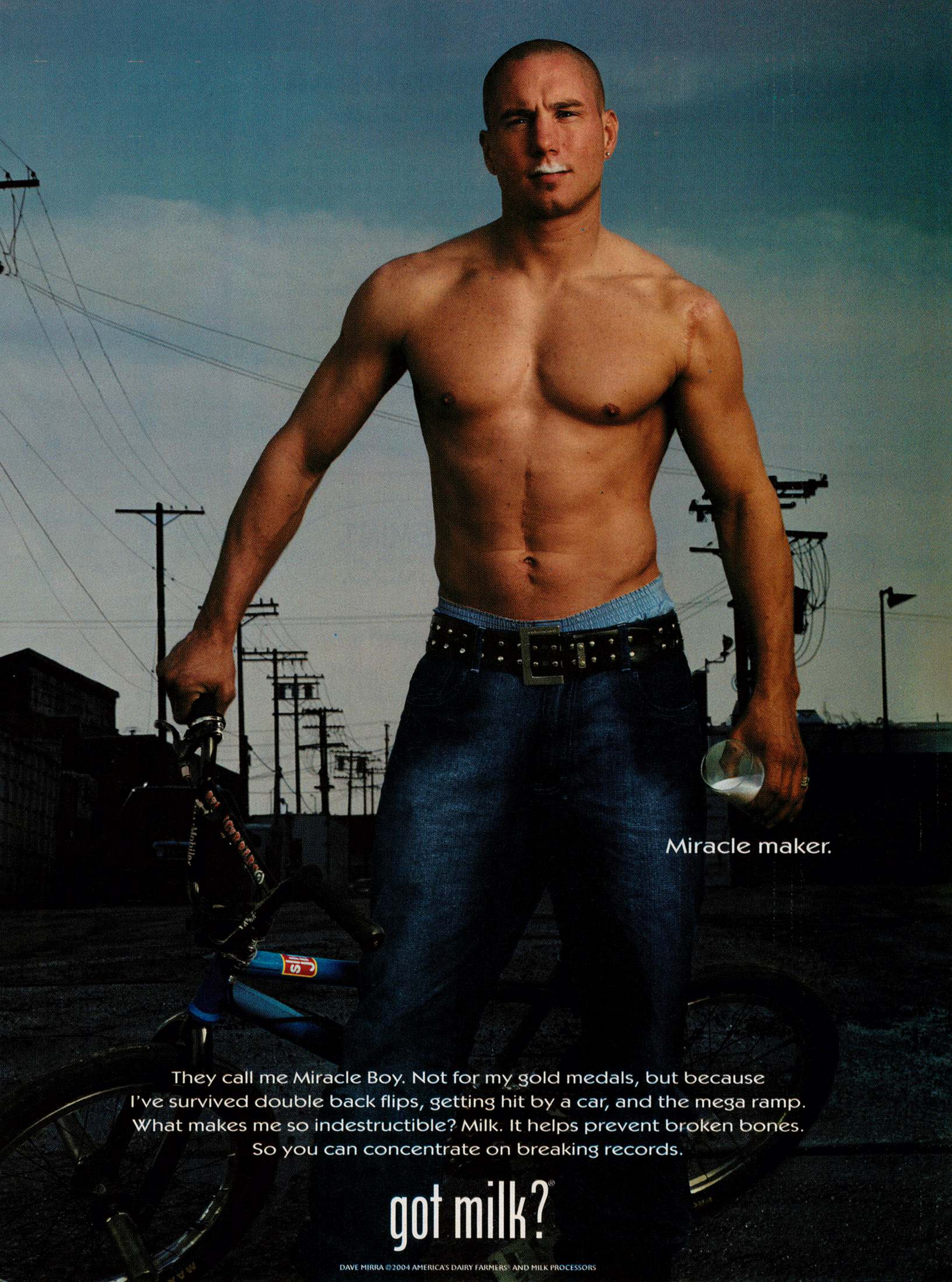
**Sony: 800/345-7669**

**Nintendo: 800/255-3700**

**Microsoft: 800/469-9269**







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They call me Miracle Boy. Not for my gold medals, but because I've survived double back flips, getting hit by a car, and the mega ramp. What makes me so indestructible? Milk. It helps prevent broken bones. So you can concentrate on breaking records.

got milk?<sup>®</sup>



# You Say You Want a Revolution?

## New details reveal code name of Nintendo's next console

Nintendo has started to discuss the GameCube's successor, which is code named "Revolution." Trouble is, it's all so early, there are very few details and equally large question marks.

"We're thinking of an innovative idea for our next-generation console that's completely different from consoles in the past," said Nintendo President Satoru Iwata at a Tokyo conference in June. "It will be clearly distinct from the other next-generation consoles that competing companies will develop. What's important isn't a next-generation technology but a next-generation way of playing games." Some have suggested that this might be an EyeToy-style camera interface or some other ergonomic break from the traditional tethered-control-pad form of console interaction.

"We at Nintendo aren't brushing off the need for high technology," affirmed Iwata, "but we think there are other ways of taking advantage of it. The Nintendo DS's double screen or touch-sensitive panel aren't particularly new, but there weren't any other companies that thought of using them in video-game machines.

"However it might have been in the past," Iwata told the audience, "increased hardware efficiency isn't connected to the consumer's enjoyment any more...in the next generation, gameplay is what's important."

The only firm detail gleaned from the conference is that Revolution will be able to connect to PC monitors as well as TV sets; whether this will be via a standard VGA port or a DVI-style connector is not yet known. Other elements of the console are not yet being discussed.

Nintendo's being cryptic, to be sure, but it sure sounds tantalizing. "It won't be a continuation but something completely different," Nintendo Senior Managing Director Yoshiro Mori said at an analyst's briefing in May. The focus remains the same with a console "that can be enjoyed from young children to the elderly."



## Halo 2 Toys—Sneak Peek!

Halo fans have already committed November 9 to memory as Halo 2's big launch date. Might want to slide that up a month, though, as the next wave of the ridiculously popular Halo action figures hits a month earlier. The first wave of Halo 2 toys features an even-more-detailed Master Chief, the Warthog (which sold out in record time in the original wave of Halo toys), the pimped-out civilian version of the Warthog known simply as the Hog, and one of Halo 2's new enemies, the Brute. You can expect to pay \$15-\$18 apiece, but based on these photos of the prototypes...won't it be money well spent?

### Grand Theft Auto: Offline

For months, fans have been asking if GTA: San Andreas will be online, and Rockstar's Creative Director Dan Houser finally has an answer: No. "San Andreas will not be online," Houser said to the Dutch magazine *Power Unlimited*. "We have a lot of script writers working on GTA, and they use so many scenarios to build the story—it's impossible to do that in an online game; that problem has not been solved," he said. As for the future? Well, maybe. "We are thinking about it," he revealed, "but it's simply better to do the things we want to see in GTA in a single-player game. I'm not saying that online games aren't fun, but I do believe that online games are not yet ready for the immersive gameplay that GTA has to offer."

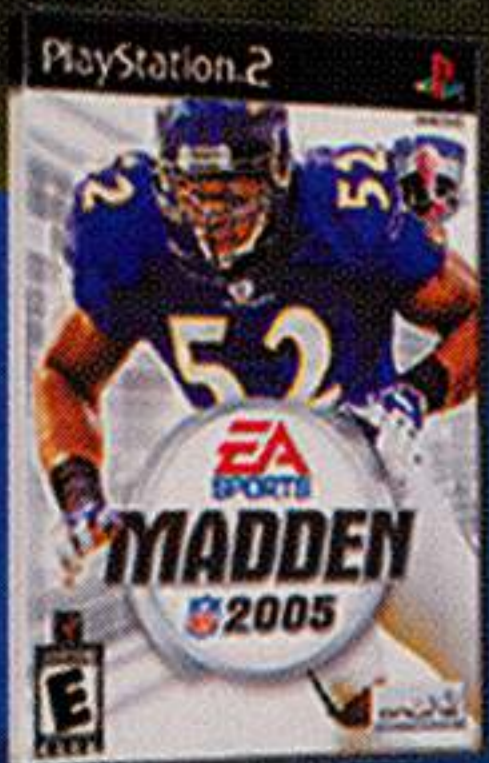
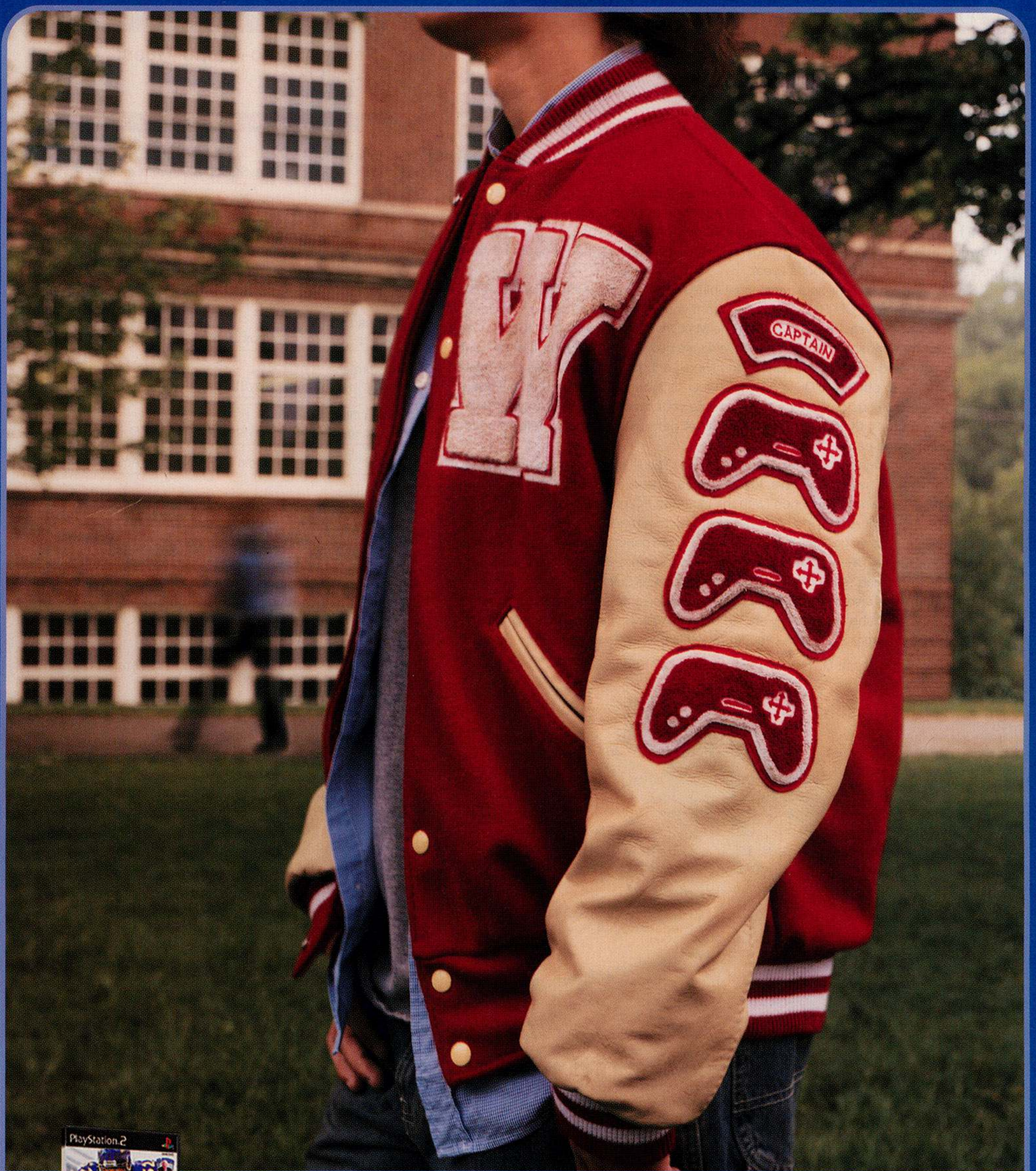
### Half-Life 2 Thieves Busted

Valve has announced that arrests were made in several countries related to the Half-Life 2 source code theft, which caused a major delay of the game (as well as outlandish conspiracy theories). The Half-Life 2 developer attributes the arrest to the help of the online community, who purportedly aided authorities in tracking down the culprits. "Within a few days of the announcement of the break-in, the online gaming community had tracked down those involved," said Gabe Newell, Valve's CEO. "It was extraordinary to watch how quickly and how cleverly gamers were able to unravel what are traditionally unsolvable problems for law enforcement related to this kind of cyber-crime."

### Oddworld Goes to EA

Electronic Arts has announced that it signed an agreement with Oddworld Inhabitants for the worldwide publishing rights to the next Oddworld game for the PlayStation 2 and Xbox. Players will once again take on the role of the Stranger, a Western-style bounty hunter who chases outlaws in the new frontier of the Oddworld universe. The game is slated for release in 2005. "Partnering with EA is a major win for us," said Lorne Lanning, president of Oddworld Inhabitants. "Through EA's first-rate publishing and marketing expertise, the expanded universe of Oddworld can reach millions of game fans and extend the reach of this distinctive series."





**Better dress up. The game's on.** Madden NFL 2005, to be precise. Pick it up at Best Buy™ beginning August 12<sup>1</sup>. Also, check out [maddenchallenge.com](http://maddenchallenge.com) and register for the Madden Challenge Tournament. At Best Buy, gamers rule.





# GamePro Labs

## Datel MaxDrive

PS2

Rating: 5.0

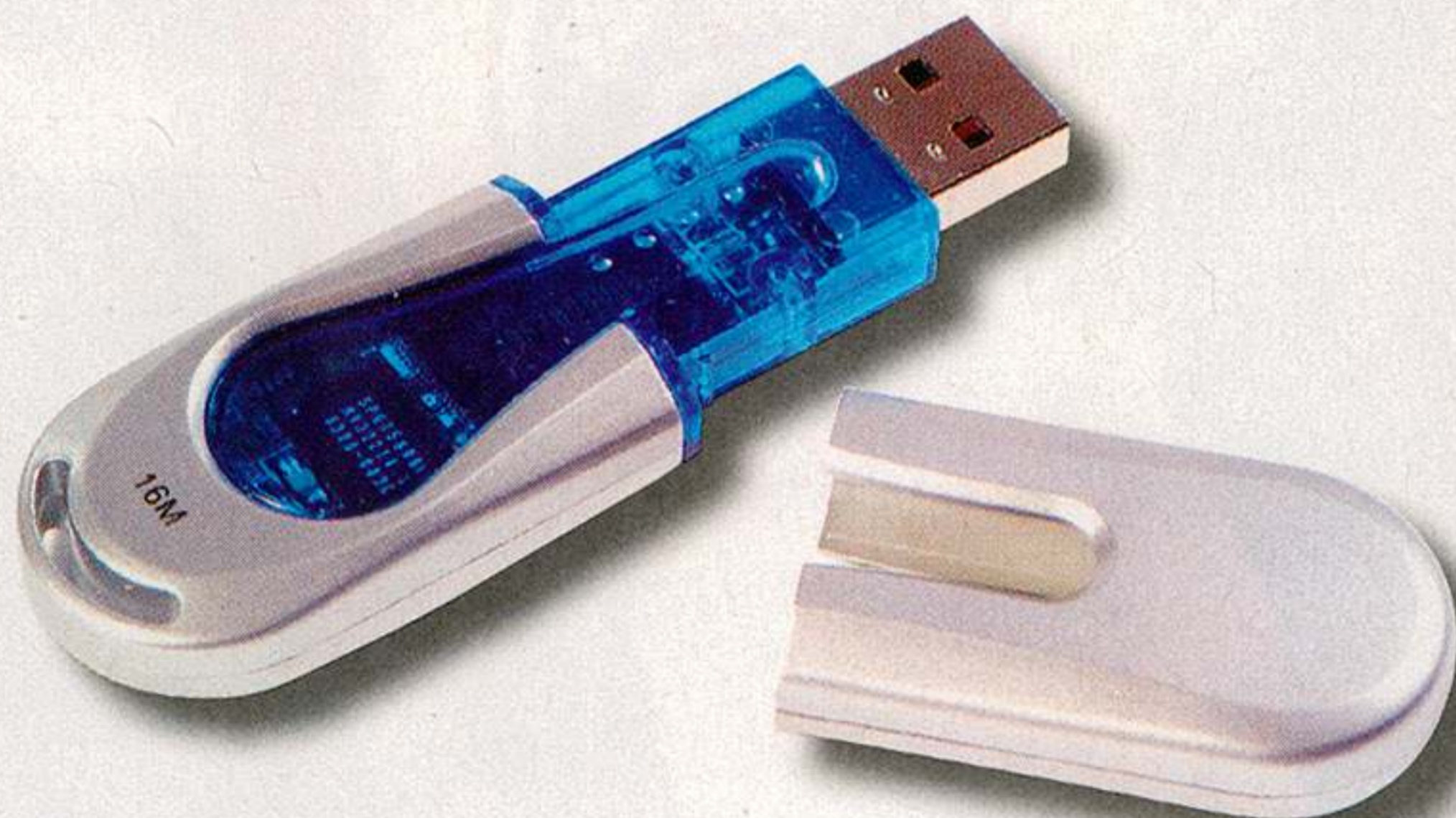
Remember the DexDrive—the funky save-game transfer device that let you swap PlayStation game data with friends as file attachments and back up all your game save files to your PC? The concept is now reborn for the PS2, only it's even easier—now the transfer device is one of those USB memory sticks, and it could be the coolest peripheral to come out all year.

Simply shove the silver-and-translucent-blue MaxDrive into the front of your PS2, run the enclosed PS2 CD-ROM, copy files from your memory card to the MaxDrive, and ta da—your saves are safe. Unplug the MaxDrive, stick it into the USB slot on your PC (or Macintosh—something the DexDrive never supported), and copy your saves to your hard drive for permanent archiving—or attach the save files to e-mails and send them to other MaxDrive-equipped friends around the country. In the era of games that let you customize everything, create your own levels, and put your own face on characters, the MaxDrive's ability to let gamers swap personalized save games quickly and easily kicks ass.

Amazingly, the functionality doesn't end there. The MaxDrive makes it insanely easy to download new characters, levels, saves, and even EyeToy movies either over your PC's Internet connection (with the included PC program) or straight from your PS2's Network Adaptor. That's right—if you're already online with your PS2, now you can pull down goodies like user-created skate parks or custom sports teams directly to your MaxDrive, courtesy of Datel's own servers. The software can also "crush" and "uncrush" save files to make online transfer quicker.

The MaxDrive is also available for Xbox (with a green shell, natch); we didn't get a chance to try it, but the functionality should be the same. Buy a MaxDrive for yourself and then one for every PS2 gamer you know—this thing's awesome.—*Dan Elektro*

**Price: \$29.99. Contact: Datel, 727/431-0650, codejunkies.com**



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

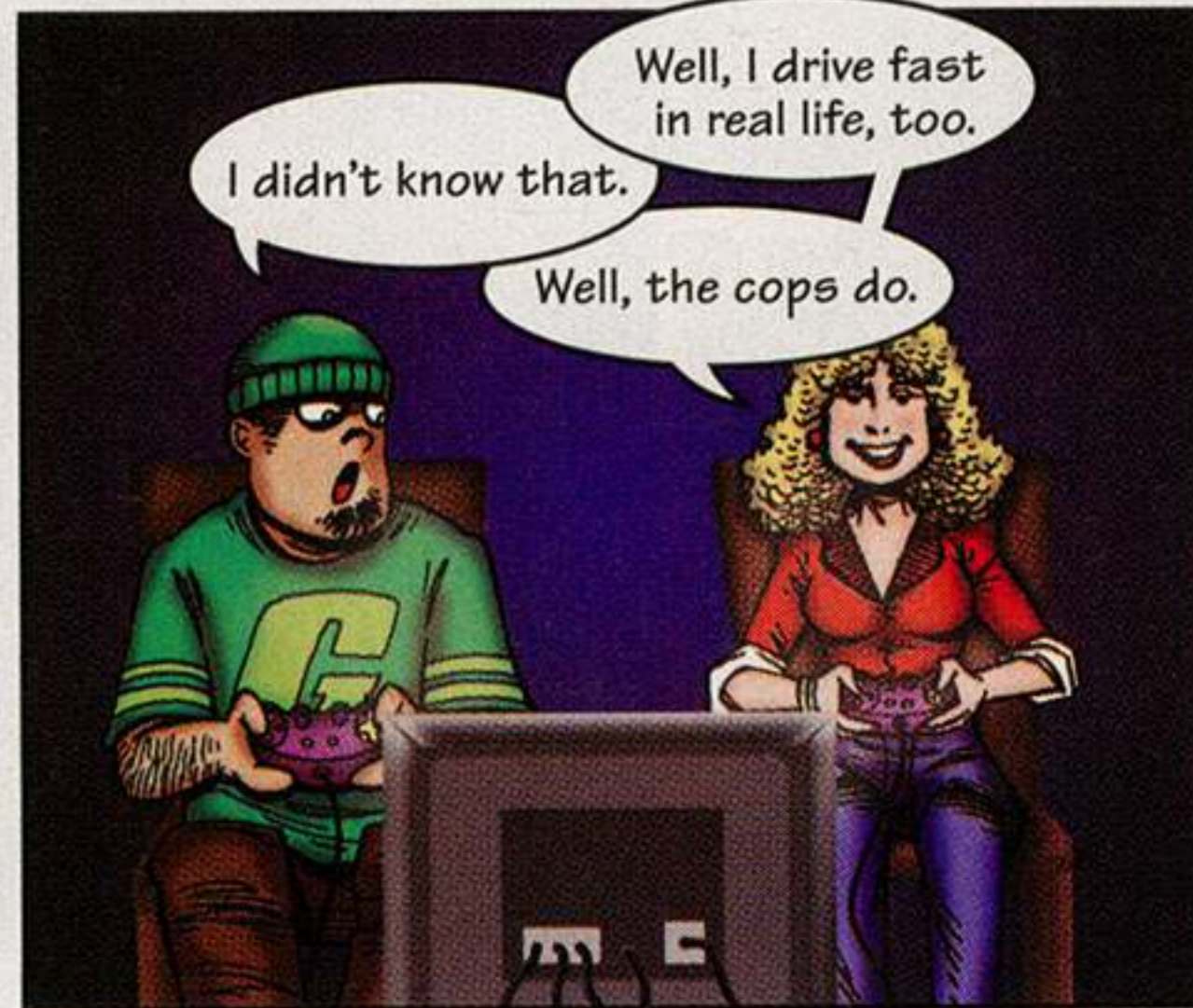
TITLE	PLATFORM	PUBLISHER
1 Red Dead Revolver	PlayStation 2	Rockstar Games
2 NBA Ballers	PlayStation 2	Midway
3 Fight Night 2004	PlayStation 2	EA Sports
4 MVP Baseball 2004	PlayStation 2	EA Sports
5 Shrek 2	PlayStation 2	Activision
6 Red Dead Revolver	Xbox	Rockstar Games
7 Transformers Armada	PlayStation 2	Atari
8 Syphon Filter: The Omega Strain	PlayStation 2	Sony
9 Shrek 2	Game Boy Advance	Activision
10 Onimusha 3: Demon Siege	PlayStation 2	Capcom

Source: The NPD Group/NPD Funworld

## Static

the Zelda trailer...the Zelda trailer...the Zelda trailer... "Grand Theft Auto is, ultimately, a dead-end street," said Nintendo Europe Managing Director David Gosen. Spoken like a true businessman whose platform doesn't offer the franchise. • Getting in trouble with your parents sucks. Having your mom sell your PS2 on eBay as very public, hilarious punishment is worse. Some poor sucker out there pushed his parents too far, and his mom sold his console for less than market value in a very detailed, very embarrassing eBay auction—but it was enough money to repay the parents for some of the stuff that the kid destroyed and the alcohol that he illegally consumed. If momma ain't happy, ain't nobody happy. Word to the wise: their roof, their rules. • Worst Promo Item of the Month: Tecmo stopped by to show off Gallop Racer 2004 and left behind...underwear. Clean underwear, mind you, but we really didn't need two pairs of tighy-whiteys printed with the motto "Too big to be a jockey?" You know, as in Jockey shorts? Get it? Better still, want them? • Burn-out 3: Takedown...Burnout 3: Takedown...Burnout 3: Takedown.

## Internal Combustion



Babble: Auch 'n Amrich Doodles: Mao



Plays by official rules.

He has to, he's Landon Donovan.

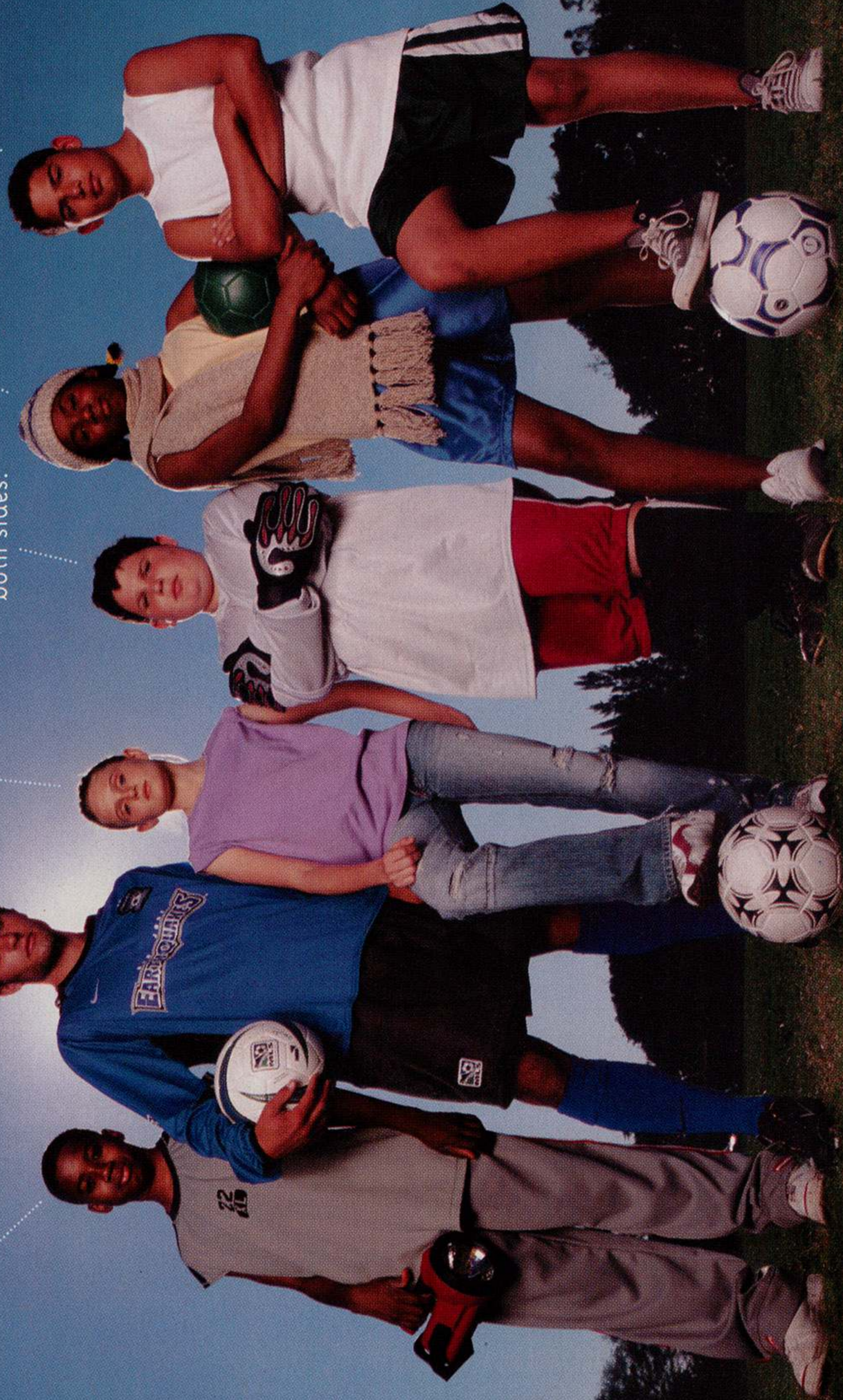
Plays at night with flashlights.

Plays with her best friends until the 6:07 train goes by.

Paints ball green so it shows up in the snow.

Uses shopping cart as goal.

Plays keeper for both sides.



Landon's way or your way, it makes no difference how you play. Just get out there. Anytime. Anywhere.

**VERB**  
It's what you do.



EXCLUSIVE  
HANDS-ON  
PREVIEW!

# THE MARKED PREY

MEET THE TEAM  
"SNAKE"



Rumors abound that this isn't the Solid Snake of previous games but Big Boss, or even a Snake clone. Called Jack by "The Boss," Snake's mission is to parachute into enemy territory and rescue a nuclear scientist.

Snake enters the Cold War era in Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater. But is Snake solid in the jungle or a fish out of water? *By Major Mike*

**M**etal Gear maestro Hideo Kojima revealed the latest trailer from the upcoming series entry, Snake Eater, at the Electronic Entertainment Expo with a playable demo available at the show. *GamePro* had some quality time with the trial version away from the sound and fury of the show floor, and it's mighty impressive.

**"AUGUST 24, 1964, 5:00 A.M."**

First, some background. Snake Eater is set during the Cold War in 1964, when tensions between the U.S. and Russia are high, especially with mutual suspicion of secret nuclear arms development. When the U.S. gets word of a nuclear scientist working on a deadly weapon who wishes to defect, they send in special forces—specifically, Snake.



Just because Snake Eater is set in 1964 doesn't mean it lacks hi-tech weapons. Here, Snake's confronted by flying sentry drones.



Snake's mission seems simple enough: parachute into Russian-occupied territory, find a man named Sokolov, and take him to an extraction point in under four hours. With a hush-hush mission (a violation of international conventions of warfare, we-don't-know-you-if-you-are-captured type of thing), Snake must erase all evidence of his presence in the jungle. Snake's HALO (high altitude low opening) parachute drop sets off the action, and once he hits the ground, the mission begins.

## MEET THE TEAM PARA-MEDIC



Para-Medic gives Snake information on how to stay alive in the harsh jungle environment. She promises to tell Snake her real name if he makes it back from the mission alive.

## WELCOME TO THE JUNGLE

Snake's armed with an MK-22 Hush Puppy tranquilizer gun equipped with a silencer that slowly deteriorates each time it's fired and eventually falls off. Snake compensates for his initial limited arsenal with a host of new attacks and evasive techniques—particularly close-quarters combat (see sidebar on next page). As the name implies, CQC is a method of hand-to-hand fighting, and it is a key technique in the game. Snake can execute several different moves when he has a gun and knife (or just a knife) equipped, and he can soundlessly stalk enemies in order to take them by surprise.

Maintaining Snake's stamina is another important play facet. Snake has a life and stamina bar. The life bar displays how much damage he can take before he dies; the stamina bar shows how much energy Snake has in reserve to perform certain moves—dangling from ledges or steadying his aim, for instance. If Snake goes too long without sustenance, his grumbling stomach provides an unwanted audio cue that alerts any enemies he may be trying to sneak up on. Stamina is replenished by consuming food from a variety of sources: hanging fruit, mushrooms, wildlife, and even hornet nests. Some wildlife won't go quietly as bigger prey like alligators can bite and smack Snake around as he moves in for the kill. (Snake can, however, extract payback by feeding the reptile a grenade.) Each time Snake shoots potential food, it changes into a collectible container. Dead things do have a tendency to rot, but Snake can tranquilize and cage up to three small live animals so they remain fresh for feasting. You can also make Snake dizzy enough to vomit if you feed him, pause the game, spin him around in the camouflage menu, and then resume the game.

## NAKED SNAKE

New weapons and items also abound. While Snake lacks radar to see his enemies' locations and fields of vision, he does have a variety of sensors, including sonar and motion detection. These items, however, must be used sparingly due to their limited power supplies. In the arsenal department, procured weapons include a scope rifle, shotgun, M16A1 machine gun, and various grenades. Some of the natural surroundings can be used to Snake's advantage as well; hornet nests, for example, can be dropped onto enemies who must then deal with the ensuing angry swarm. Speaking of enemies, adversaries have ramped-up A.I., and they constantly check in with each other via radio; if the chain is broken, an investigation is launched (Snake players

with steady aim, however, can disable their radios by shooting them). Enemies are also fairly tough: They limp and try to hide when badly injured as their wounds slowly color their uniforms red.

## SNAKE IN THE GRASS

Many players will be struck by how different Snake Eater is from other Metal Gear games. The controls are similar to those of Sons of Liberty but with added and modified features. Snake can use some weapons while dangling from trees, and there's a stalk ability that allows him to move slowly and silently behind an enemy. Getting accustomed to the surroundings is the biggest shock. The great outdoors is loaded with activity, and the tall grass can conceal everything from enemy soldiers to slithering snakes (which is of little help because *anything* that moves appears on a sensor), while blowing wind, rustling grass, and chirping birds can mask the footsteps of approaching enemies on the audio track. The uneven terrain is also hazardous, and it's easy for Snake to lose his footing on narrow ledges or rickety bridges and be sent to an instant death.



**Virtuous Mission:** Snake must find the nuclear scientist Sokolov, who's being held prisoner in an abandoned factory in Russian-occupied territory.



The rope bridge's supports can all be severed, making it difficult for Snake to cross and easy for enemies to fall.



Sitting behind the cannons of an anti-aircraft gun, Snake takes on a Soviet helicopter gunship.



Selecting the right camouflage pattern and face paint combination in certain surroundings allows Snake to blend in perfectly.

## MEET THE TEAM THE BOSS



The Boss is an old acquaintance of Snake and a mission advisor who observes the events from a submarine in the Arctic Ocean. The Boss taught Snake CQC skills. During World War II, The Boss assembled the Cobra unit—"a group of heroes who brought the war to an end and saved the world."



Snake can use animal carcasses for camouflage, such as an alligator head as shown here.

CONTINUED ►



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# METAL GEAR ACID



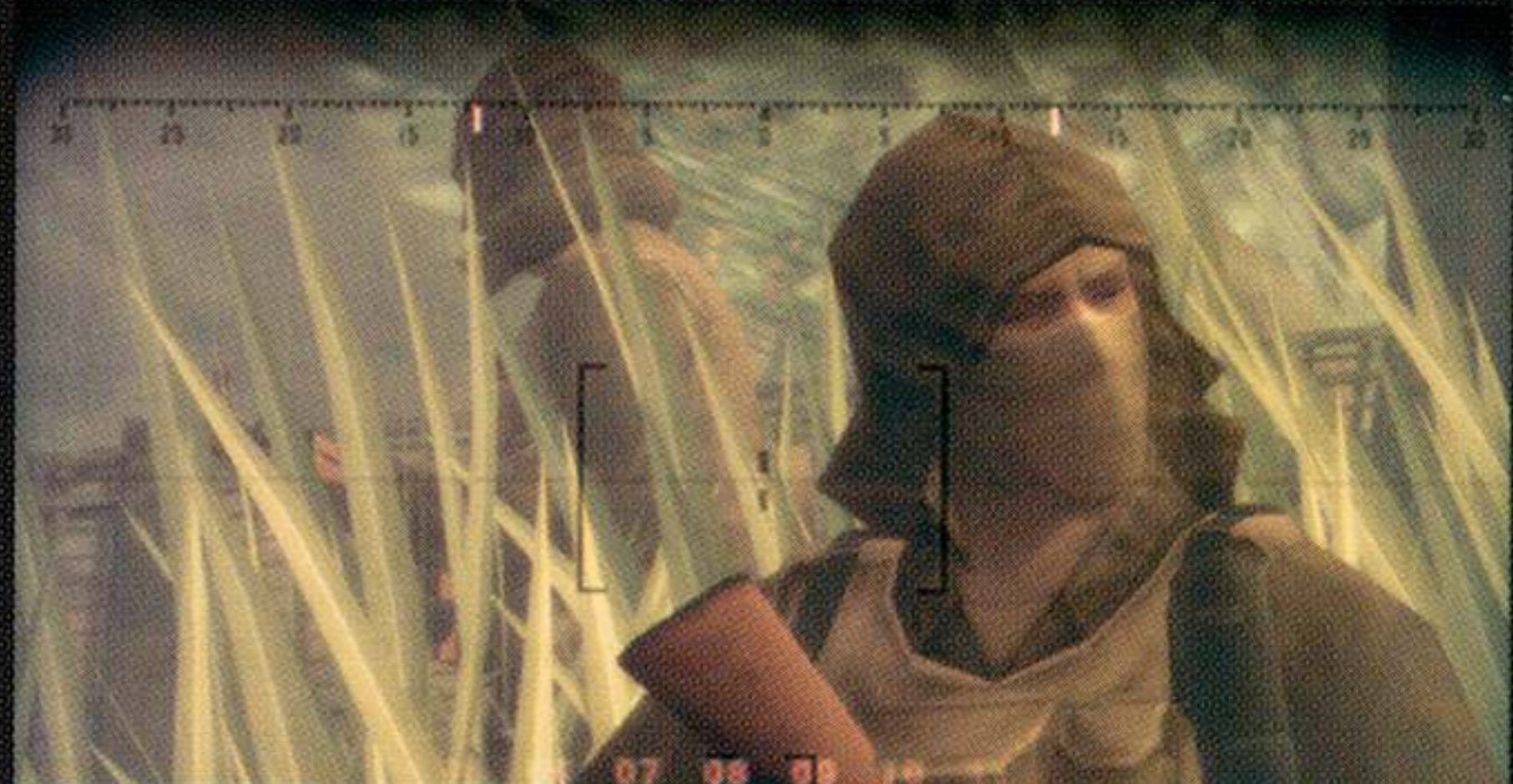
The Metal Gear Solid series has made the rounds to almost every game console, so it's not surprising that it will show up on Sony's upcoming PlayStation Portable System (PSP). Not much is known about Metal Gear Acid, although a brief demo at the Electronic Entertainment Expo featured turn-based play mechanics as Snake was moved around squares on a grid in an attempt to sneak up behind various enemies. Acid should be released in early 2005.

Other neat features include Snake's ability to push barrels down inclines to flatten enemies and cause explosions, and the interactive cinematic cut-sequences (that you can watch from different points of view) add a clever, subtle touch. The dialogue's tight and expansive as always, and series trademark quips about the evils of nuclear war and mass-destruction weapons are never in short supply.

## RUMBLE IN THE JUNGLE

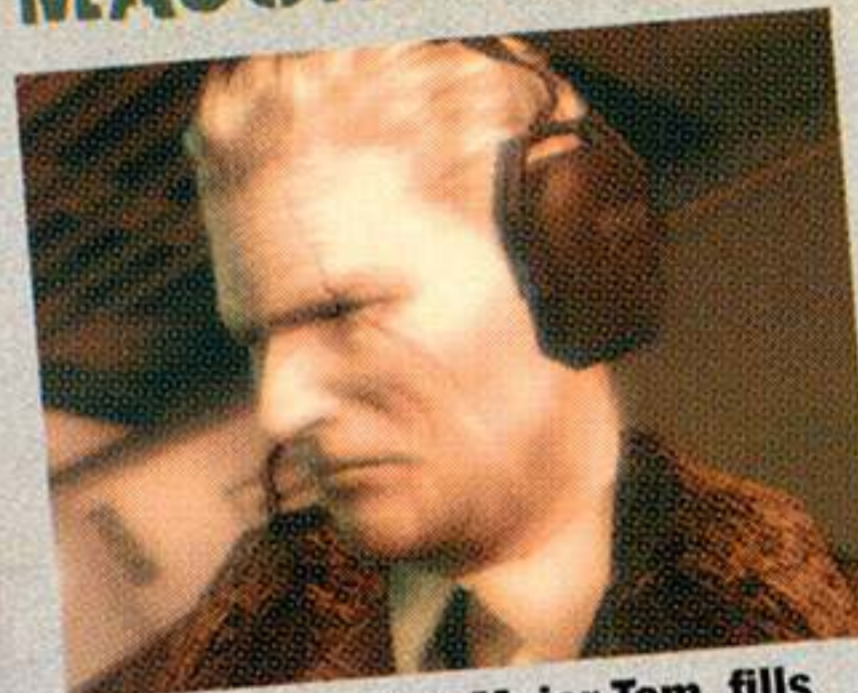
Flowing through Snake Eater is a constant James Bond 1960s vibe—from order-taking to gadgets to the opening title credits that are accompanied by the game's titular theme song (think "Snake Eater" in place of "Goldfinger").

The demo raised some cliff-hanger questions, and it climaxed with Snake bursting into Sokolov's prison cell only to find...a surprise that won't be ruined here. Knowing Kojima's past Metal Gear titles, Snake Eater is sure to be filled with twists: The lead character, Snake, for example, is rumored to be Big Boss (or even a Snake clone), and Kojima has hinted of a major plot twist to occur within the first 10 minutes of the game. What's in store? Find out the real story when Snake Eater slithers into stores this November.



Snake Eater's play engine is loaded with bells and whistles like interactive cinematic cut-scenes.

### MEET THE TEAM MAJOR TOM



Snake's superior, Major Tom, fills a role similar to that of Campbell in Metal Gear Solid and the sequel, Sons of Liberty. He and Para-Medic observe the events from above in an AC-130 gunship.

## CLOSE-QUARTERS COMBAT (CQC)

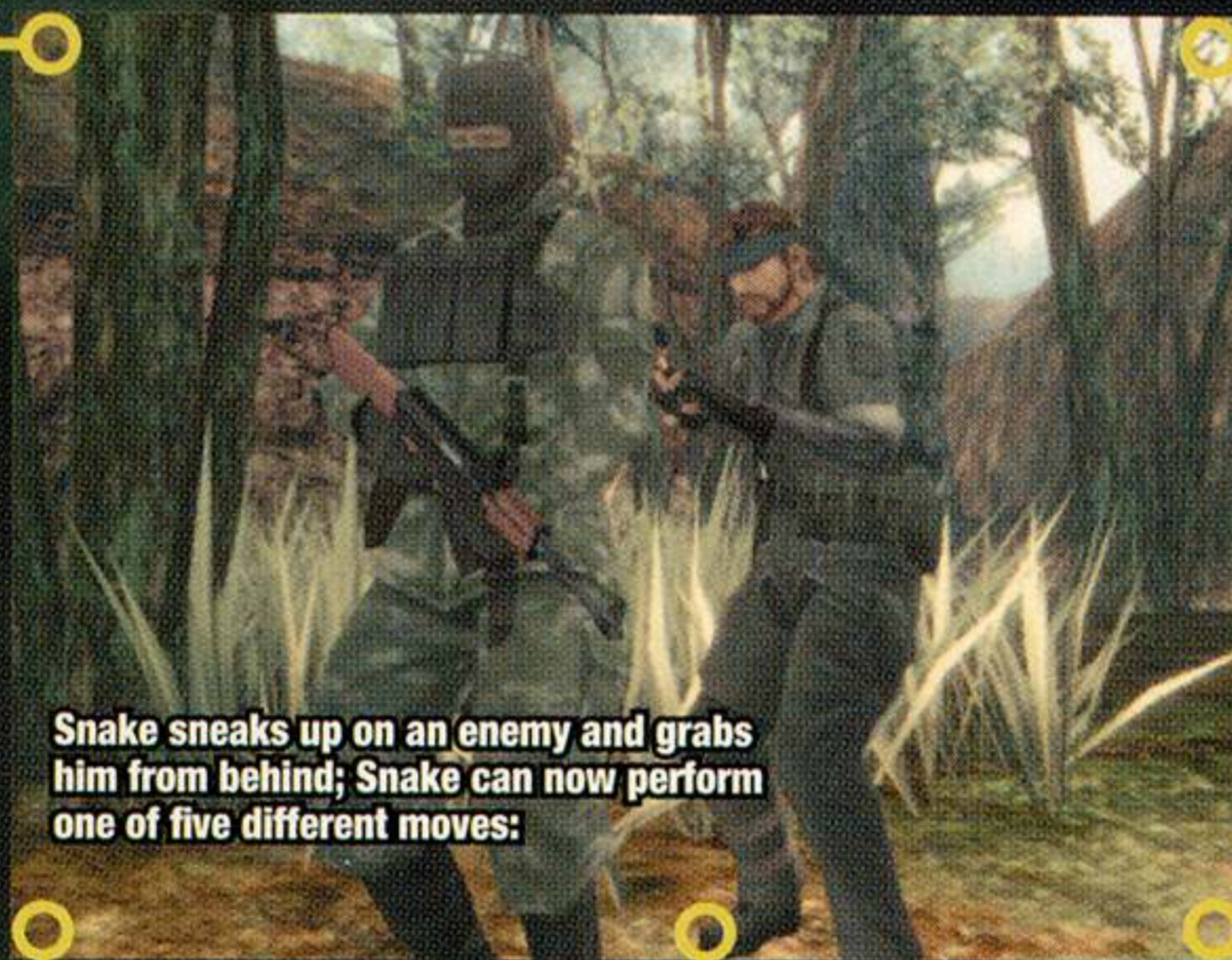
Sneaking has always been able to execute a variety of hand-to-hand moves against his adversaries, and Snake Eater gives him the most intricate actions yet...



1 Use the enemy as a human shield to deter others from attacking.



If Snake has the pistol-and-knife combination already equipped, he can switch to first-person mode to sharpen his aim.



Sneaking up on an enemy and grabbing him from behind; Snake can now perform one of five different moves:



2 Slit the enemy's throat silently with the Survival Knife.



3 Flip the enemy and slam him into the ground, rendering him unconscious.



5 "Motivate" the captured enemy to give up valuable information, such as the location of enemy platoons or where traps may be found.



4 Throw the enemy to the ground and cover him with the pistol.

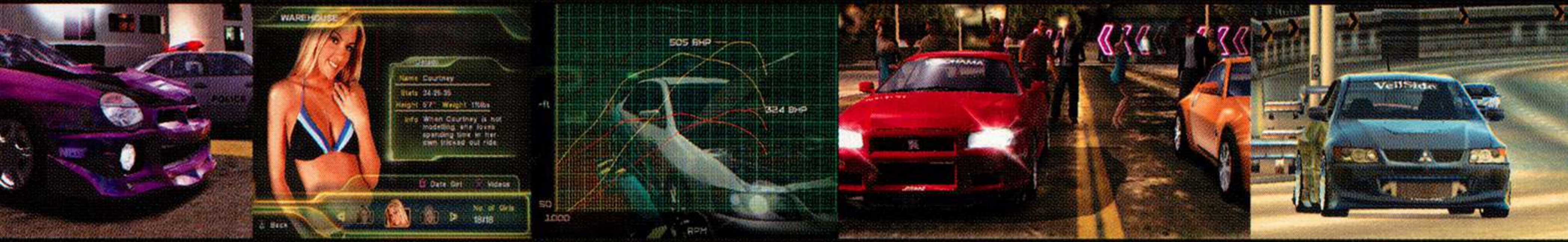




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PlayStation 2



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A close-up of Darth Vader's head and right hand. He is wearing his iconic black hood and mask, with a gold chain around his neck. His right hand, in a black glove, is pointing towards the word "JOIN". The background is a dark red with a subtle pattern of small white dots.

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# WHAT'S EATING SOLID SNAKE

Metal Gear Solid's dark and brooding world comes alive as a comic book—and *GamePro* has the exclusive interview and sneak peek. *By Tokyo Drifter*

World-threatening conspiracies, strange villains, and a mysterious protagonist—these are ingredients you'll find in any run-of-the-mill comic book or video-game plot. But it's how the tale is told and the strength of the characters that shapes these ingredients into the stuff of legends. Such is the case with the Metal Gear game series, which is now being worked into what looks to be a memorable comic book experience. Charged with this daunting task are writer Kris Oprisko and artist Ashley Wood. Oprisko is fresh off work on *CSI*, while Wood is best known for his unique renditions of *Spawn* and his character designs for *Contra: Shattered Soldier* for the PlayStation 2. *GamePro* sat down with the pair to go over the challenges and joys of bringing the espionage thriller to the paneled page.

***GamePro:* Solid Snake's history has always been shrouded in mystery, and several twists have been revealed in the plot line of the games. Does that complex back-story make it easier or harder to create a comic around him?**

*Kris Oprisko:* Definitely easier. In a world where some things are hidden and others made plain, a host of options open up to the writer as to where to take a character. At the same time, it is my intent to stay 100 percent true to Snake as a character.

***GP:* How involved is Konami or series creator Hideo Kojima in the project?**

*Ashley Wood:* They're all over it... it's their baby. We're all working very closely to make sure it's the best it can be.

***GP:* Will the comic follow the story laid out in the games, or will there be different twists?**

*KO:* The comics will follow the story line of the original Metal Gear Solid game. There will be instances, though, where incidents hinted at in the dialogue are more fully explored. In fact, the opening of the first issue is just such a scene!

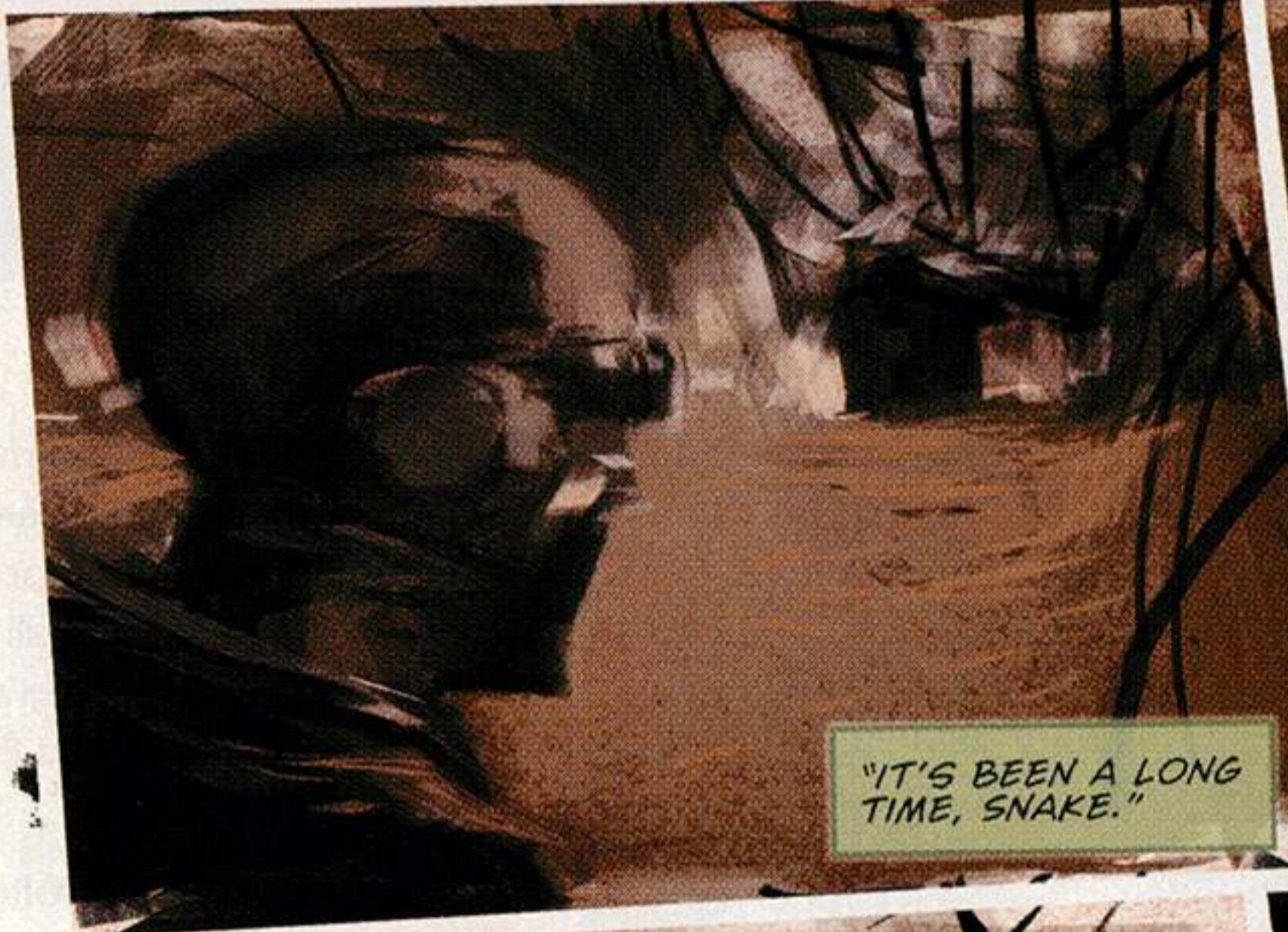
***GP:* Will you change any of the Metal Gear characters' appearances radically from what we've seen in the games?**

*AW:* No way. Yoji [Shinkawa], the character designer and visual monster of Metal Gear Solid, has created a stunning world and set of characters. I love them the way they are.

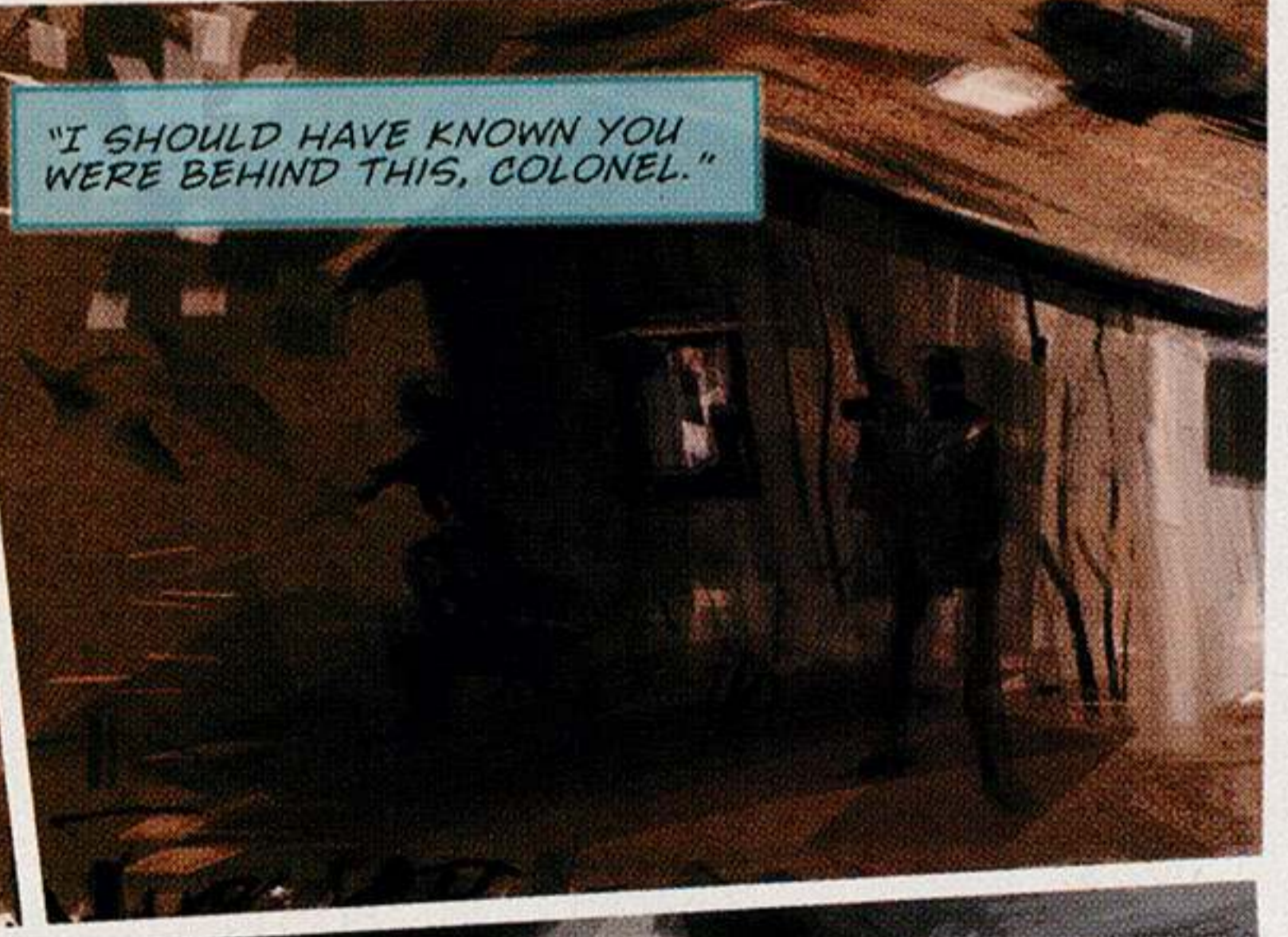


Somewhere in the western United States.

THAT'S CLOSE ENOUGH. KILL THE LIGHTS AND RADIO COMLINKS. PURE STEALTH FROM HERE ON IN.



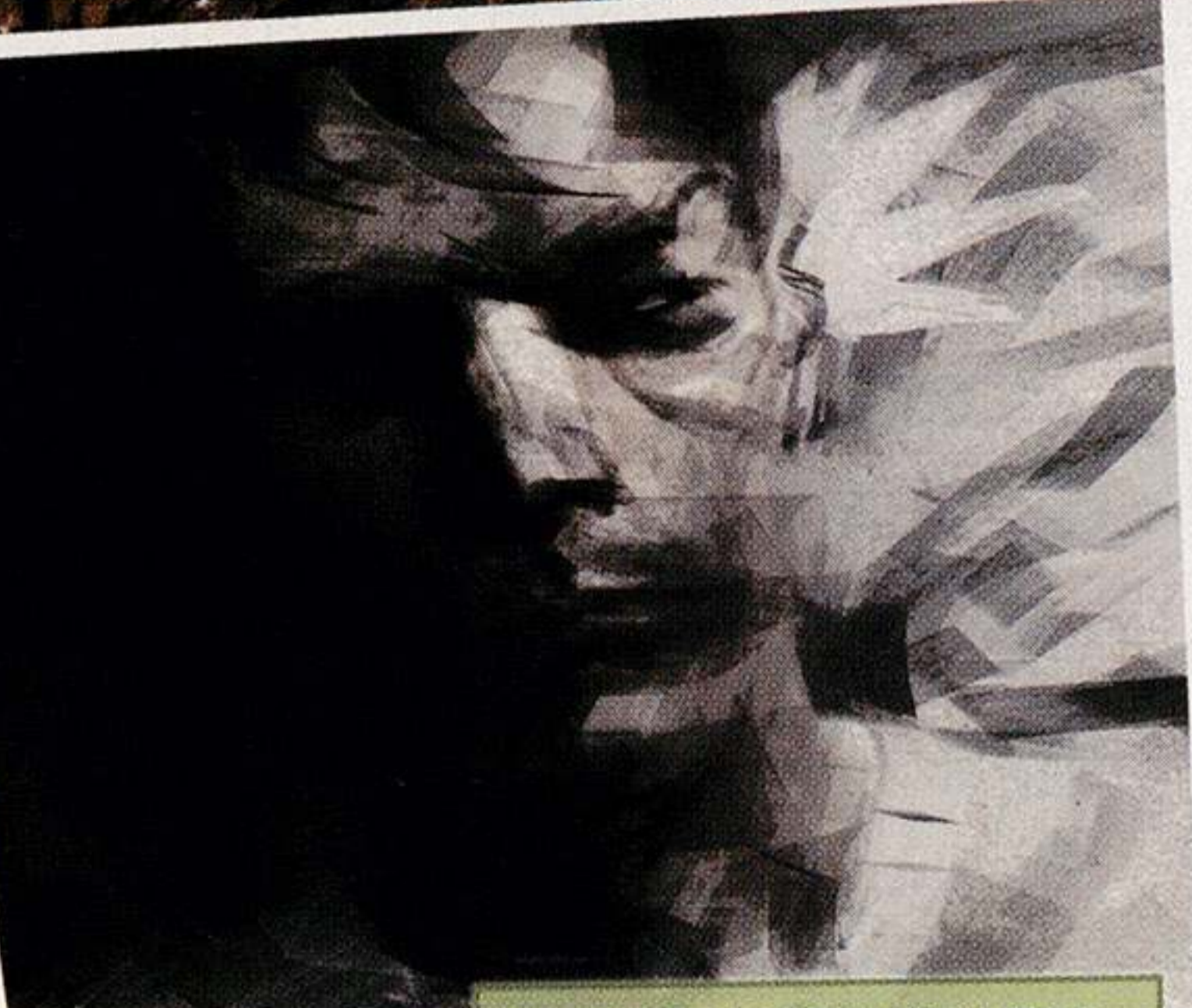
"IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME, SNAKE."



"I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN YOU WERE BEHIND THIS, COLONEL."



"WHAT DO YOU WANT FROM ME?"



"I JUST INVITED YOU HERE SO WE COULD HAVE A TALK."



A short time later...

...BUT WE'VE GOT A SERIOUS SITUATION HERE, SNAKE. ONLY YOU CAN GET US OUT OF IT.

I'M RETIRED FROM FOXHOUND, COL. CAMPBELL. I DON'T HAVE TO TAKE ORDERS FROM YOU OR ANYONE ELSE.

YOU'LL TAKE THESE ORDERS.

ABOUT FIVE HOURS AGO, AN ISLAND IN ALASKA'S FOX ARCHIPELAGO CALLED SHADOW MOSES ISLAND WAS OCCUPIED BY NEXT-GENERATION SPECIAL FORCES.

THE ISLAND IS A SECRET NUCLEAR WEAPONS DISPOSAL FACILITY.

THEY'VE PRESENTED WASHINGTON WITH A SINGLE DEMAND, AND IF THAT ISN'T MET, THEY'LL LAUNCH NUCLEAR ORDNANCE. THEY GAVE US 24 HOURS TO COMPLY.



WHO'S SHE?



DR. NAOMI HUNTER, THE UNIT'S CHIEF MEDIC, AND AN EXPERT IN GENE THERAPY.



SO WHAT EXACTLY ARE THE TERRORISTS DEMANDING?

A CORPSE. OR, TO BE MORE SPECIFIC, CELL SPECIMENS WHICH CONTAIN THE INDIVIDUAL'S GENETIC INFORMATION.







"AFTER THE SDV GETS AS CLOSE AS IT CAN, DISPOSE OF IT. AFTER THAT, YOU'LL HAVE TO SWIM."

"IN SUBZERO ALASKAN WATER?"



"DON'T WORRY... THAT SUIT REPRESENTS THE LATEST ADVANCES IN POLY-THERMAL TECHNOLOGY."

"AND THAT SHOT I GAVE YOU? IT CONTAINS AN ANTI-FREEZING PEPTIDE SO YOUR BLOOD AND OTHER BODILY FLUIDS DON'T FREEZE."



"IT ALSO CONTAINS NOOTROPICS TO IMPROVE YOUR MENTAL FUNCTIONING AND NANOMACHINES TO REPLENISH ADRENALINE, NUTRITION, AND SUGARS."

"STAY IN CONTACT WITH US WITH YOUR CODEC. THE RECEIVER DIRECTLY STIMULATES THE SMALL BONES OF YOUR EAR. NO ONE BUT YOU WILL BE ABLE TO HEAR IT."





"OH, AND ONE MORE THING. THIS IS A TOP-SECRET BLACK OP. DON'T EXPECT ANY OFFICIAL SUPPORT."

STAY ALERT! HE'LL BE THROUGH HERE... I KNOW IT.

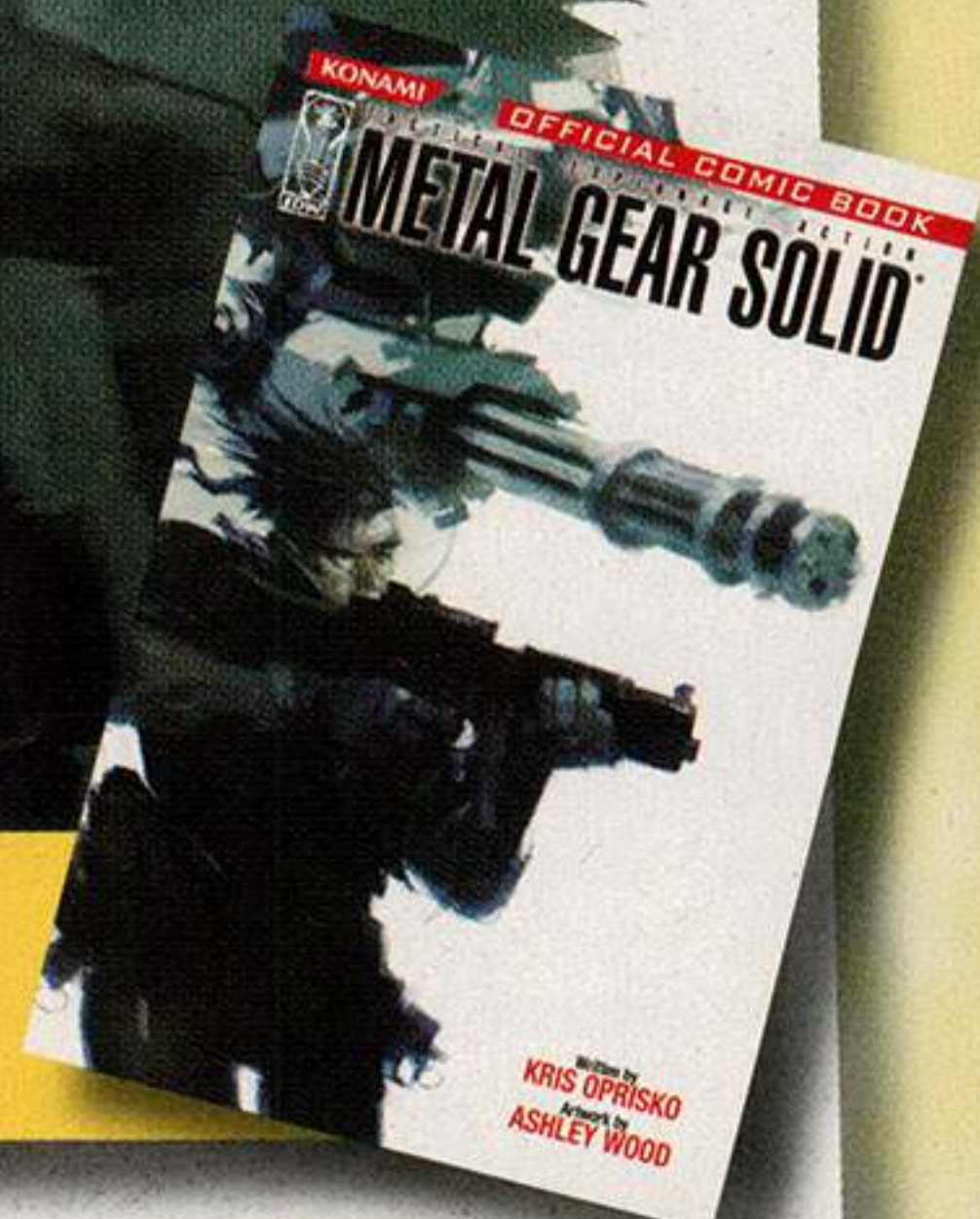
I'M GOING TO SWAT DOWN A COUPLE OF BOTHERSOME FLIES.

THAT'S HIM-LIQUID SNAKE. OTHER THAN A DIFFERENCE IN SKIN TONE, HE COULD BE MY TWIN. BACKGROUND MURKY, BUT ONE THING'S FOR SURE... HE'S THE ENEMY. THE SOLID VERSUS THE LIQUID...

THIS IS SNAKE. COLONEL, CAN YOU HEAR ME?

LOUD AND CLEAR. WHAT'S THE SITUATION?

Find out what happens next! **METAL GEAR SOLID #1** on sale at all comic book shops September 2004! Call 888/COMIC-BOOK or go online to <http://csis.diamondcomics.com/> to find a comic shop near you!





# WAR IN THE JUNGLE

A platoon of first-person shooters set in Vietnam is emerging from the bush, but Men of Valor takes point, leading the way for the rest of the grunts. *By Air Hendrix*

EXCLUSIVE  
HANDS-ON  
PREVIEW!

As the developer of one of the landmarks in the Medal of Honor series, Allied Assault, 2015 has earned a place in the spotlight as it crafts its console debut, Men of Valor for the Xbox. But after the Vietnam-based game was delayed from February to October, will it still deliver the crackling tension and razor-sharp warfare that its pedigree would lead you to expect? Scouting the terrain in this first-ever hands-on preview provides some reliable intel on how battle-ready Men of Valor will be when showtime comes.

## OUT OF THE BUSH—IN A BODY BAG!

When you think about combat in Vietnam, the immediate mental picture is a jungle slog fraught with terrifying ambushes. Men of Valor's preview version viscerally captures that with sleekly implemented foliage—not only can you use vegetation for cover, but the Viet Cong employs it better than you, providing heart-stopping moments where you're suddenly attacked by an enemy you can't see. This style of gameplay will be the core of the game's appeal—a fresh kind of battle where you



This would be a good time to warn him that he's about to be blown sky-high in a Viet Cong trap.





Crouching or going prone behind cover will be the only way to survive.



To search a corpse for ammo or health canteens, hold Y while the half-circle meter fills.



Men of Valor's vast multiplayer options will include cooperative play via split-screen or Xbox Live.

have to take cover, peer ahead, then rush to the next spot as your squad moves around you. As in Call of Duty, the missions flow more organically, too—they're more about immersing you in a situation than routing you from Point A to B. It's certainly not revolutionary gameplay, especially because Valor won't provide you with a limitless environment—at times, it's distressingly easy to find the invisible-wall boundaries. But it does excel at creating the illusion of open space, and between that and the chance to deploy the tactics of this war, Valor should provide an original, exciting experience.

Superb multiplayer support builds in plenty of depth, too. Players can tackle missions cooperatively via split-screen or over Xbox Live, while deathmatches, objective-based campaigns, capture the flag, and more provide plenty of other firepower (2015 is still finalizing the number of players it will support).

Valor also bravely tackles the racial issues and other hot buttons of this war. African-American soldiers—including Dean Shepard, the main character whom you play as—discuss the crap they have to put up with at the hands of white soldiers in very colorful language. Later, a hot-headed squadmate, angered by the loss of a friend, argues that innocent villagers should be slaughtered, a crime that your lieutenant emphatically squelches. Valor never descends into the horror and madness of such situations, but it doesn't shy away from exploring them in a thoughtful, frank manner, and it's downright cool to see a video game tackling that kind of subject matter with intelligence and maturity.

## TAG 'EM AND BAG 'EM

Valor packs plenty of variety for its hump across the troubled Vietnam landscape. The game's missions are set from 1965–1968 in Da Nang, the Iron Triangle, Khe Sanh, and during the Tet Offensive. Along with tropical forests, you'll traverse rice paddies and city streets, stalk the Viet Cong in hamlets, man chopper-mounted turrets, crawl through tunnel systems, and even pop smoke to call in artillery strikes or napalm. Lethal period weapons like the M-79 grenade launcher are a blast to use in a firefight, and the VC fights back with tough-to-spot traps and ambushes.

An innovative system for handling health injects another tactical element into the fray. When you're first injured, you start bleeding. If you take cover and bandage your wound (by holding the B button), you're momentarily out of the fight, but you often can heal a good amount of the damage. Similarly, searching corpses takes some time, so you have to decide whether you need ammo or a medkit enough to be briefly exposed while you rummage. That's good, smart game design, and Valor's controls also employ well-tuned methods for precise aiming, leaning, and crouching that let you smoothly use cover.

## A GRUNT CAN TAKE ANYTHING

Visually, Valor's lush vegetation is the star as you can slip between foliage without encountering the usual blocky pixels. The graphics aren't in the same league as those of heavyweights like The Chronicles of Riddick, but they should be very solid. Hopefully, 2015 will have time to tune up the currently jerky, spastic animations and the less-polished non-jungle environments. The A.I. was also still clearly a work-in-progress, and it wasn't yet possible to gauge how this crucial element will perform under fire. Don't be stunned, though, if Valor slips a bit past October—quality is better than punctuality.

The ingredients are all in place for one hell of a war game. As long as the right tweaks to the graphics and A.I. are implemented, Valor should be one of the fall's more absorbing firefights.



The targeting cursor turns red as it passes over an enemy—sometimes it's the only way you can tell they're there.



The light-red area on the health meter in the lower-left corner indicates bleeding damage. You can heal it quickly if you take cover, stop moving, and hold B.



The lethal M-79 has a way of settling things in a hurry.





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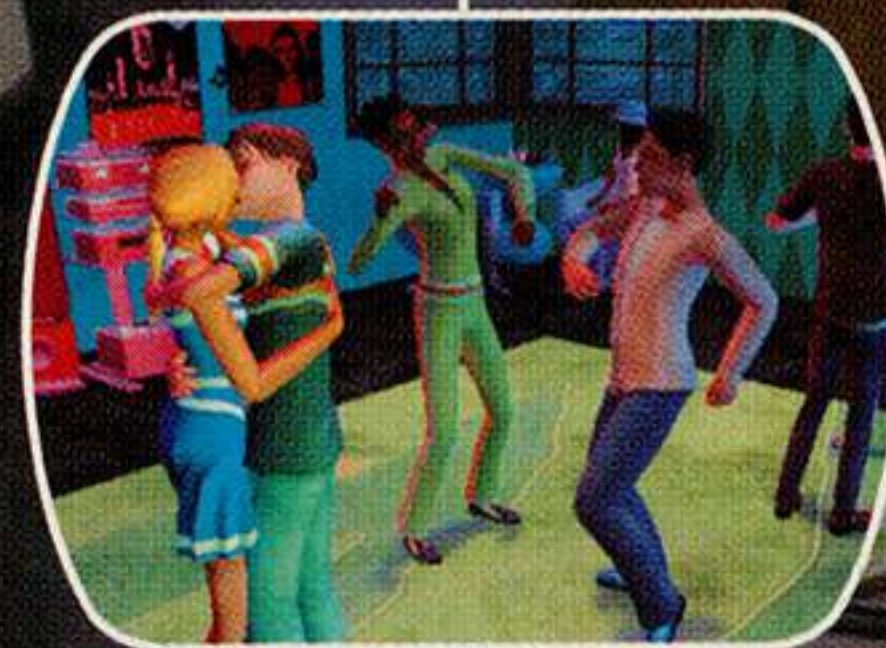
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**AGE 43** Have a mid-life crisis. Trade in your 40 year-old for two 20's.



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## Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas



**EP** How do you go about following up one of the biggest games in history? Improve everything possible, of course, but by all means keep it gangsta.

### Steady Mobbin'

GTAIII and Vice City told their tales of crime through the eyes of the Mafia at different points in history. Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas once again turns back the clock, but this time it's the early 1990s on the West Coast. San Andreas is a fictionalized version of California (and Nevada) complete with three massive cities, Los Santos (Rockstar's version of Los Angeles), San Fierro (San Francisco), and Las Venturas (Las Vegas).

It's all about street gangs and protagonist Carl "CJ"

Johnson, who is back in East Los Santos after a long absence prompted by the killing of his younger brother. It seems CJ can't escape the cycle of violence as he is once again enlisted to help out his older brother Sweet and former gang the Orange Grove Families.

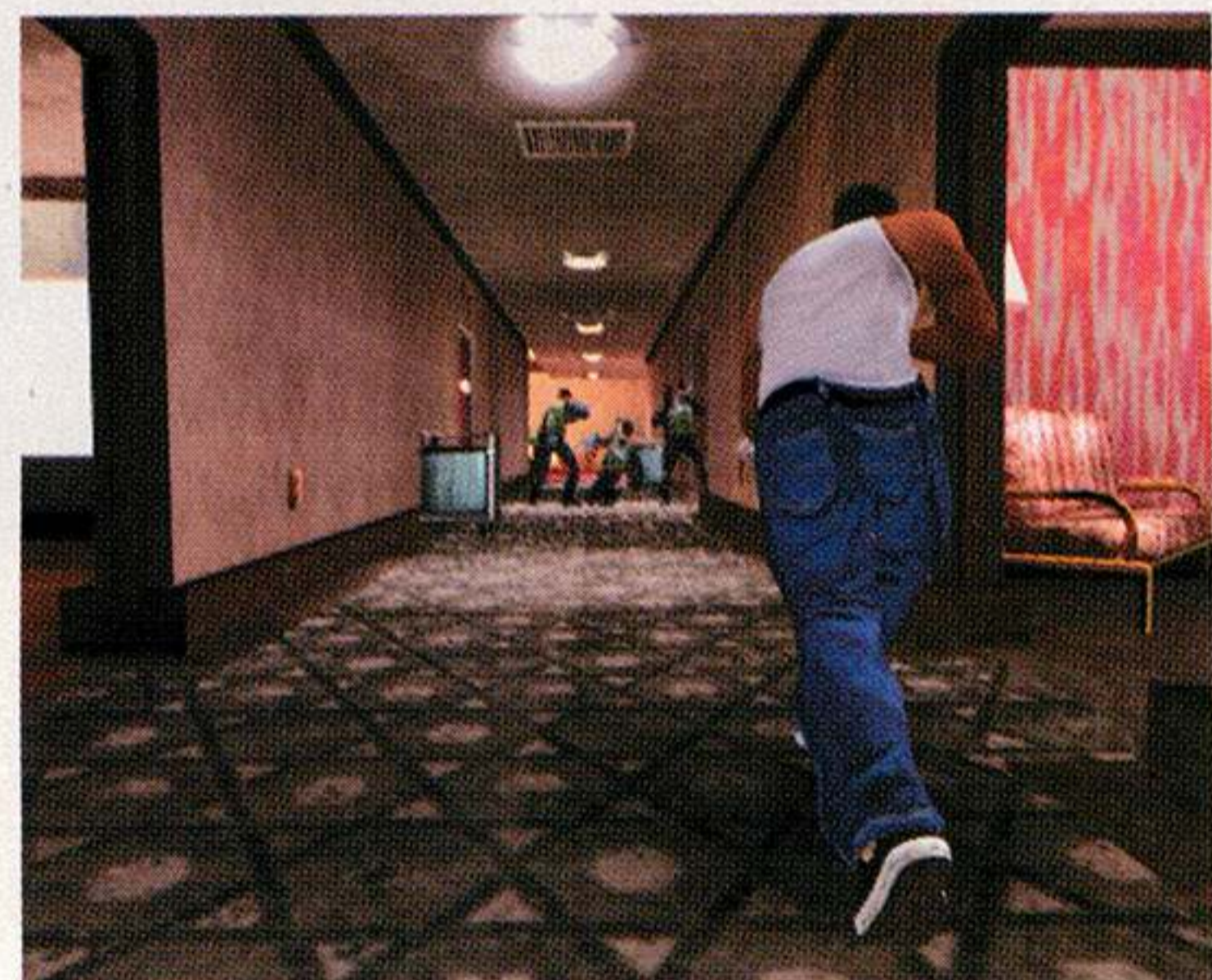
### Bring It

*GamePro* recently viewed a demo of the game that was comprised of the first few missions and portions of Los Santos. Everything has been rebuilt and optimized so that San Andreas looks much more detailed than Vice City. The city of Los Santos alone is four times the size of Vice City, which is pretty scary considering that there are two other cities and even larger deserts and badlands connecting them for you to explore.

Voice talent and licensed music is not yet finalized, but you can expect a glitzy announcement in the coming weeks. The dialogue heard so far is well delivered and easily on par with the high quality of previous games. To give the visual performances more impact and greater realism, Rockstar built the largest motion capture studio on the East Coast.

### Break Yourself, Fool!

The first mission Rockstar revealed, entitled "Menace," involves CJ and gang member Ryder, who looks like a taller version of rapper Eazy-E of NWA. Ryder wants to teach the Well-Stacked Pizza Co. a murderous lesson for painting over his Orange Grove graffiti tags. Before driving to the pizza joint, CJ is able to hop into Reece's Hair Facial Studio and customize his hairstyle. (You'll be able to do many different nonmission-related things like this, depending on what you've done already and the particular task at hand.) Once the ill duo arrives, another new option presents itself in the form



of ordering and eating food. You'll find that if you go too long without food, your character will start to weaken and get thin, but if you overeat, you'll risk carrying a spare tire around your waist. Going to the gym and engaging in strenuous missions can keep you in shape as will good eating habits. Who says GTA doesn't teach good values? Without spoiling anything, let's just say things don't turn out quite how Ryder imagined and they have to beat a hasty retreat.

Next up was the mission "Drive-By," which introduces other members of the Orange Grove, including the homie Smoke and CJ's older brother Sweet. The quad decides they need to roll on rival gang the Ballas to regain their street status. It isn't long before some Ballas members are spotted and given a proper lead salutation. CJ then has to drive in a way that makes the car less of a target while all three of his crew continuously unload.

### Truer Crime

"Reuniting the Families" was the last mission shown, and it is here that things really start to jump off. The Orange Grove calls up the other aligned families in an attempt to reclaim the

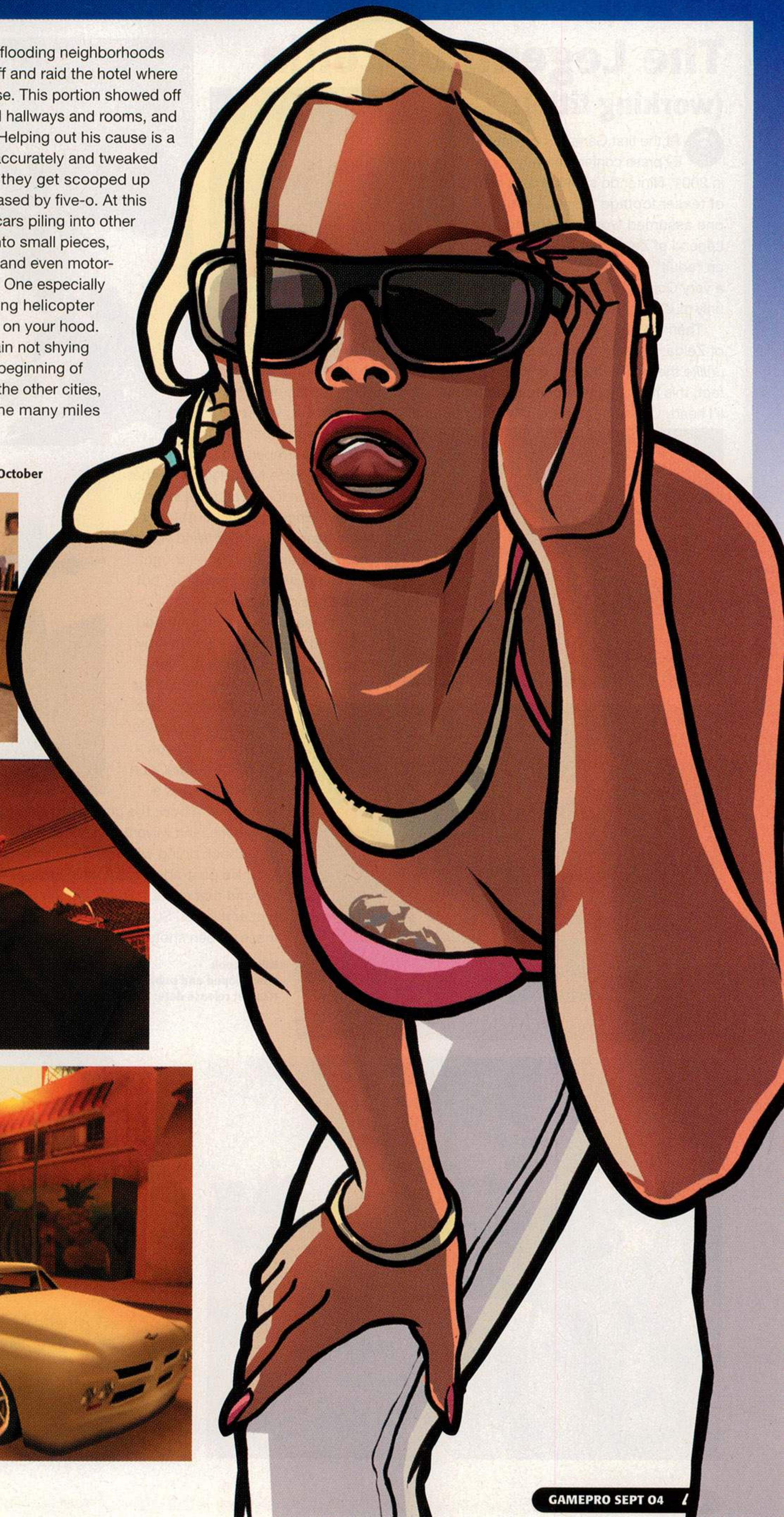
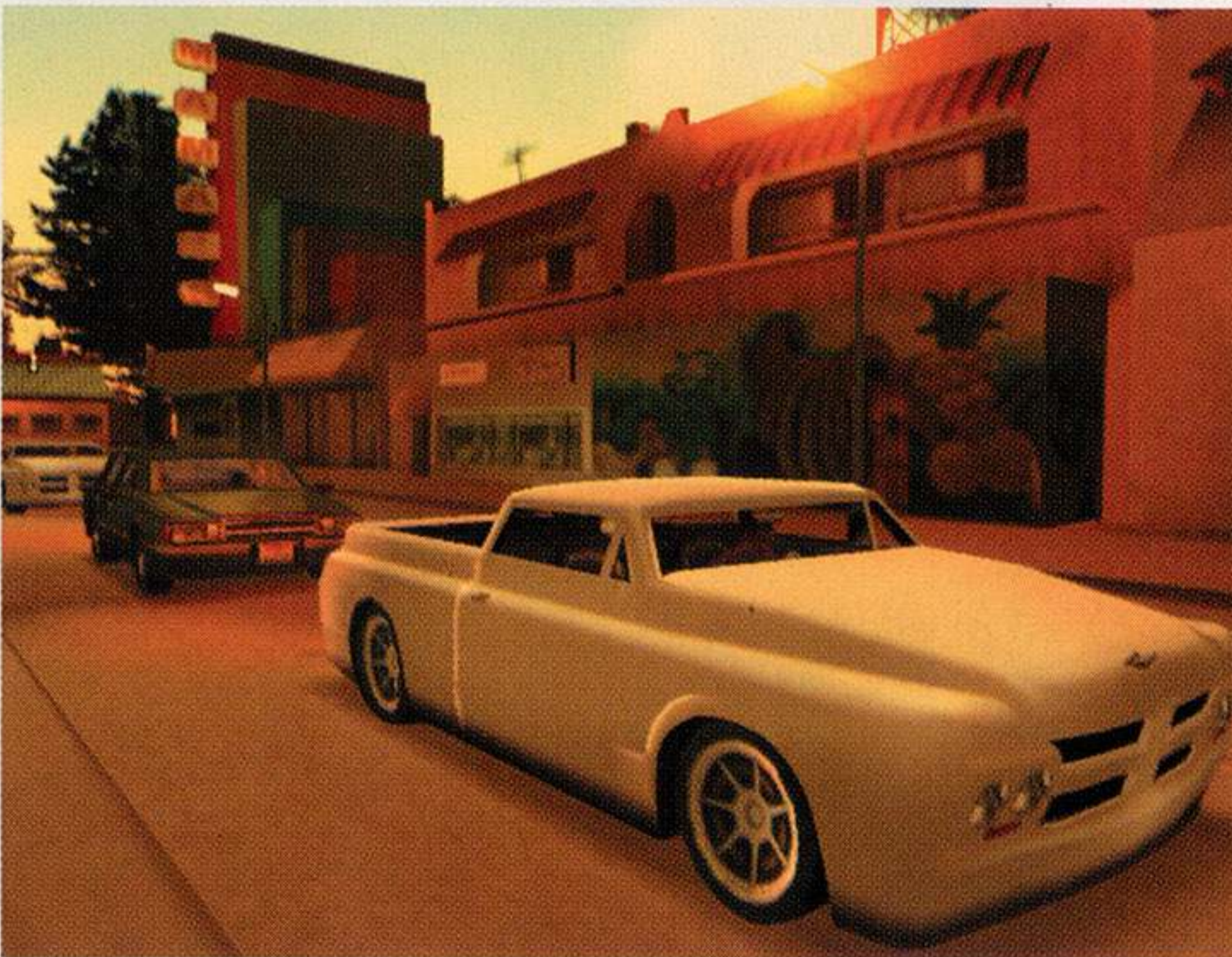
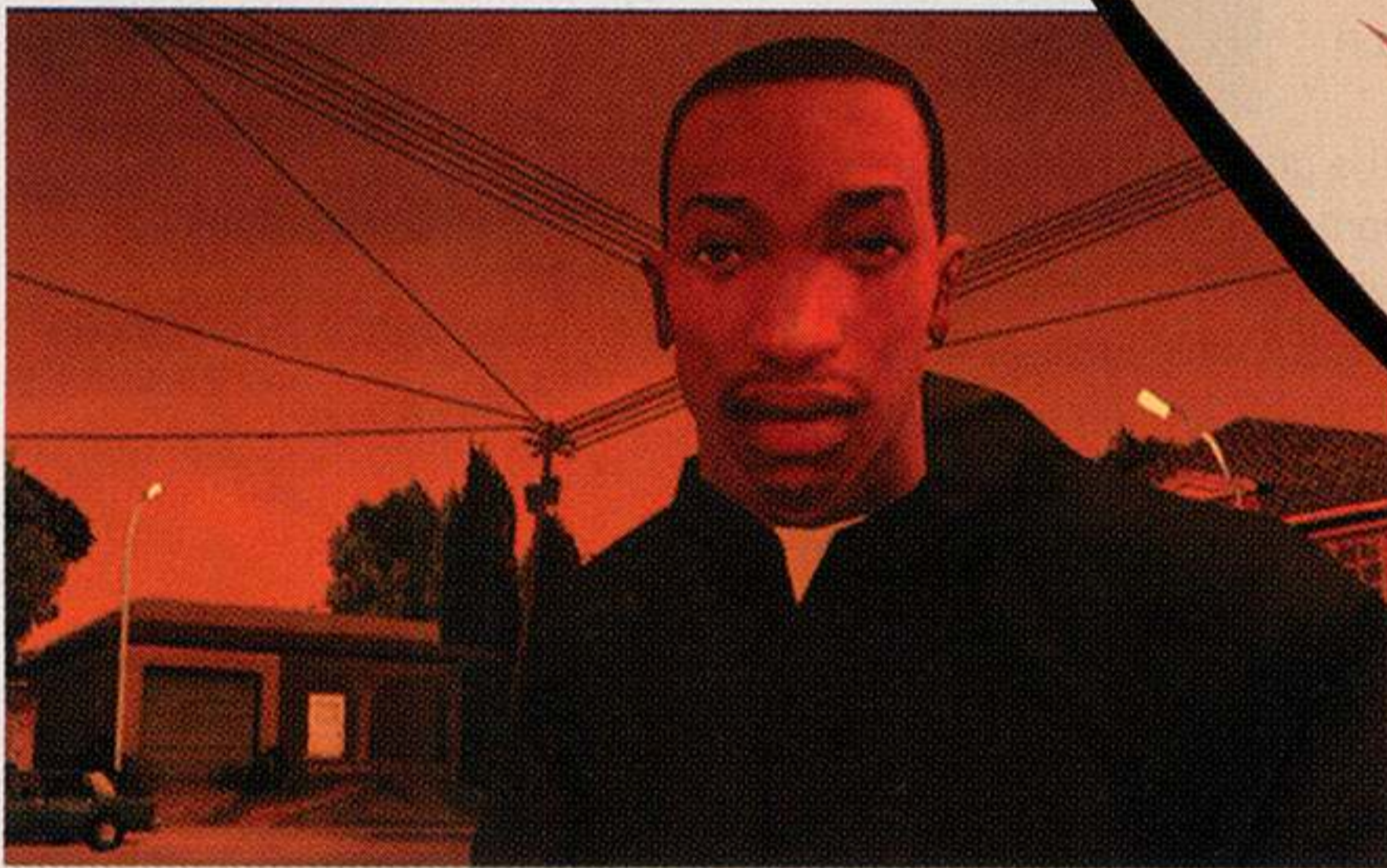




streets from rivals who gained power through flooding neighborhoods with drugs. Somehow, the police get tipped off and raid the hotel where the meeting is taking place. All hell breaks loose. This portion showed off the game's new large interiors as CJ navigated hallways and rooms, and used a shotgun to clear a path to his brother. Helping out his cause is a new aiming system that lets you target more accurately and tweaked third-person controls. Once he finds Sweet, they get scooped up by Smoke and Ryder, and are immediately chased by five-o. At this point, the chaos level amps even higher with cars piling into other cars, destructible roadside objects breaking into small pieces, ghetto birds raining death down from the sky, and even motorcycle cops jumping onto the hood of your car. One especially gruesome triggered event featured a low-flying helicopter chopping up a cop who, seconds before, was on your hood.

It's quite obvious that Rockstar is once again not shying away from controversy...and we just saw the beginning of one city. In addition to whatever goes down in the other cities, you'll see all kinds of drama popping up in the many miles in between.—*Tokyo Drifter*

- **First Look** ■ **Developed by Rockstar North**
- **Published by Rockstar Games** ■ **Target release date: October**





# The Legend of Zelda

(working title)

At the first GameCube-related E3 press conference way back in 2001, Nintendo showed off a bit of teaser footage for what everyone assumed would be the next Legend of Zelda game. It featured an “adult” Link parading around in a very Ocarina of Time-like world, only much prettier and with a lot more textures. “Ooooh,” they said. “Ahhhh.”



Then in 2002, Nintendo shocked the world by showing off *The Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker*, a game starring a Link that looked decidedly *unlike* the svelte, dapper, and oh-so-adult fellow from that first teaser. In fact, this little Link was quite an adorable, cartoony little rascal, bless his li'l heart. Of course, the world reacted violently—you remember, you were

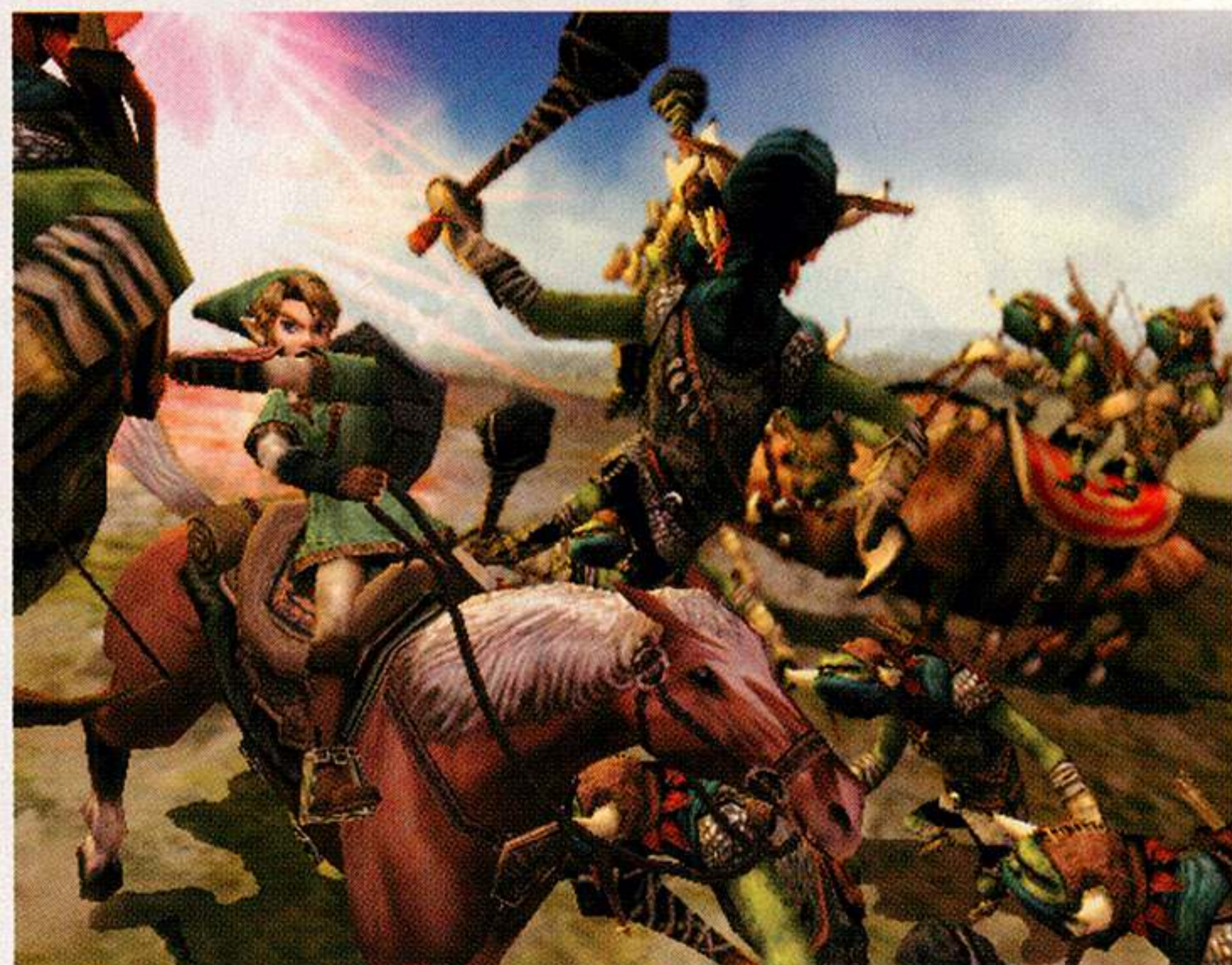
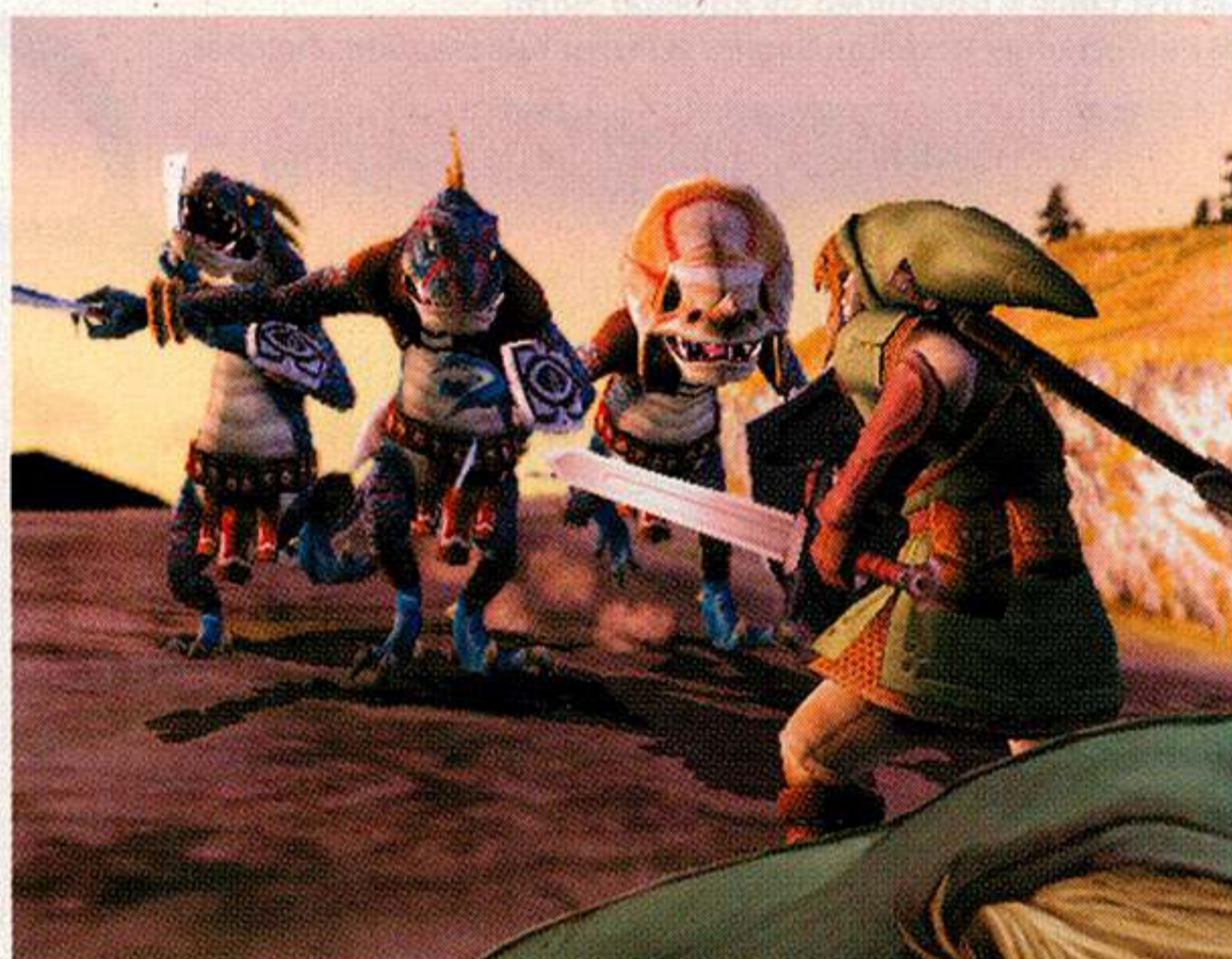


there—and ne'er before were tempers so hot or debates so fueled with either vehemence for Miyamoto's insanity or reverence for Miyamoto's creative genius. Then *The Wind Waker* came out and everyone thought it was really damn awesome, but that's beside the point.

The real point is this: Nintendo shocked the rabble at E3 2004 by showing off a trailer with everything Nintendoites were hoping for three years ago. The all-grown-up Link is back, and he's coming to the GameCube in 2005. He has a

sword and a bow; the game will feature dungeons; and Miyamoto implies that horseback riding will play a big role in Link's post-adolescent adventure—but the details beyond that are absolutely nil. Heck, the game doesn't even have a proper title yet. So for now, just make up your own theories based on these screen shots; we'll have plenty more to say later.—*Star Dingo*

- First Look
- Developed and published by Nintendo
- Target release date: 2005

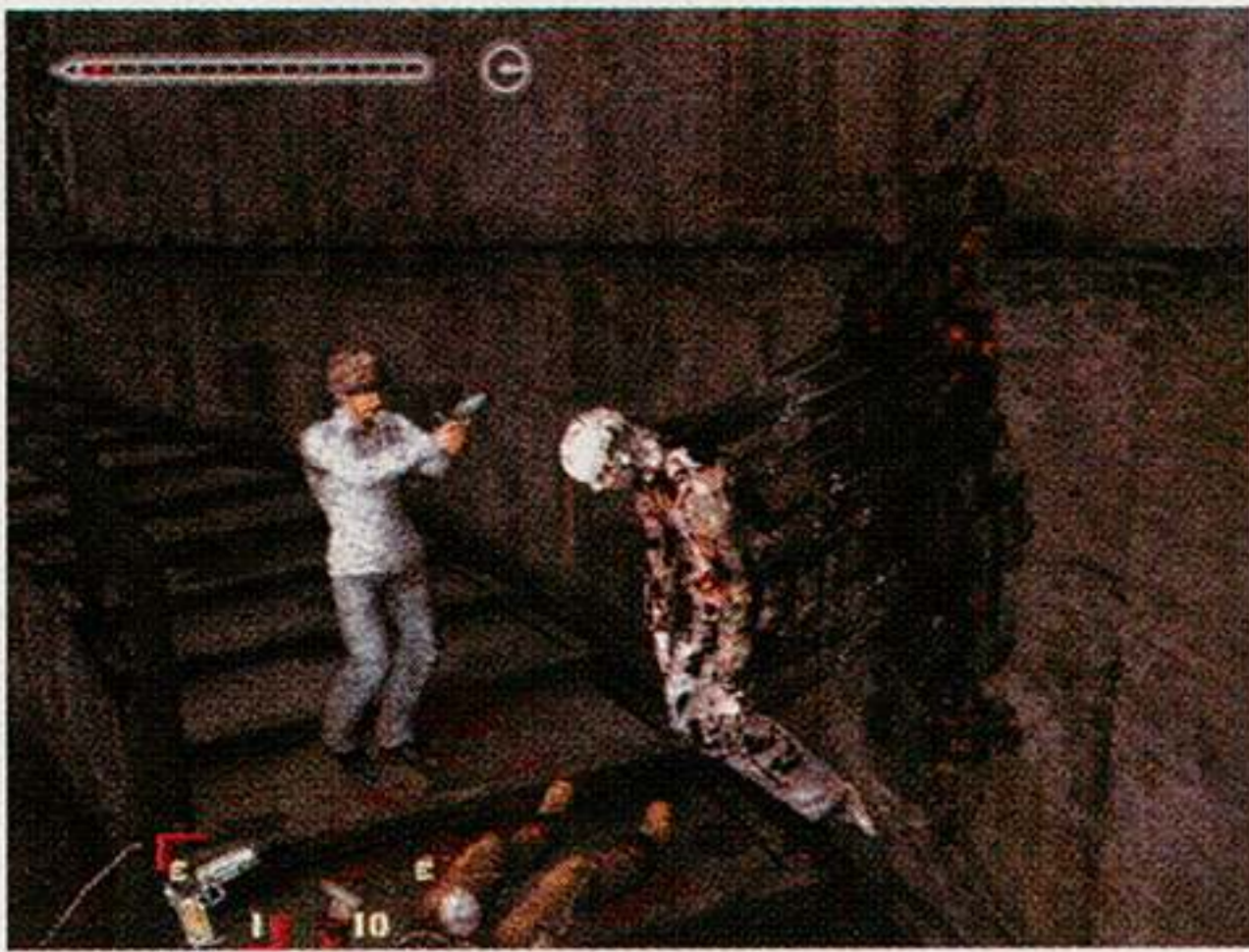




THEY  
DON'T WANT  
TO DESTROY  
OUR PLANET.

JUST  
MANKIND.





## Silent Hill 4: The Room

**FE** A hole to Hell appears in some poor bastard's bathroom, and we just can't wait to crawl in. That's the kind of power Silent Hill holds over our fragile little minds.

### What's He Building in There?

In case you've chosen to forget, the next chapter in everyone's "favorite" sadomasochistic horror/acid trip tells the tale of the pitiable Henry Townsend, trapped in his apartment after some wacko (apparently named Walter, judging by the weird "Don't go out!" note scrawled on the door) throws a bunch of creepy chains over his apartment door.

We recently got a chance to run around the PS2 build of the game (also coming to the Xbox), and all the Silent Hill staples were there: gross, gorgeous, and grainy graphics (which don't translate well to screen shots), tons of broken doors, and—like it or not—the same sort of key-code-and-medallion puzzles that fill the earliest pages of the survival/horror rulebook. The game features the usual gaggle of tumor-ridden ground-beef monsters: mummified dogs with long, lolling tongues; floating, rotting old men who crawl out of walls covered in sticky tar; giant ape torsos with two terrifying porcelain baby masks.

### He Has No Friends, But He Gets a Lot of Mail

While Henry still fights with the same slow, methodical style of unfortunate forbears like Heather and James, he does have a few new tricks up

his sleeve. Secondary characters (including a beat-up lady who hits monsters with her handbag) now follow him around, and a

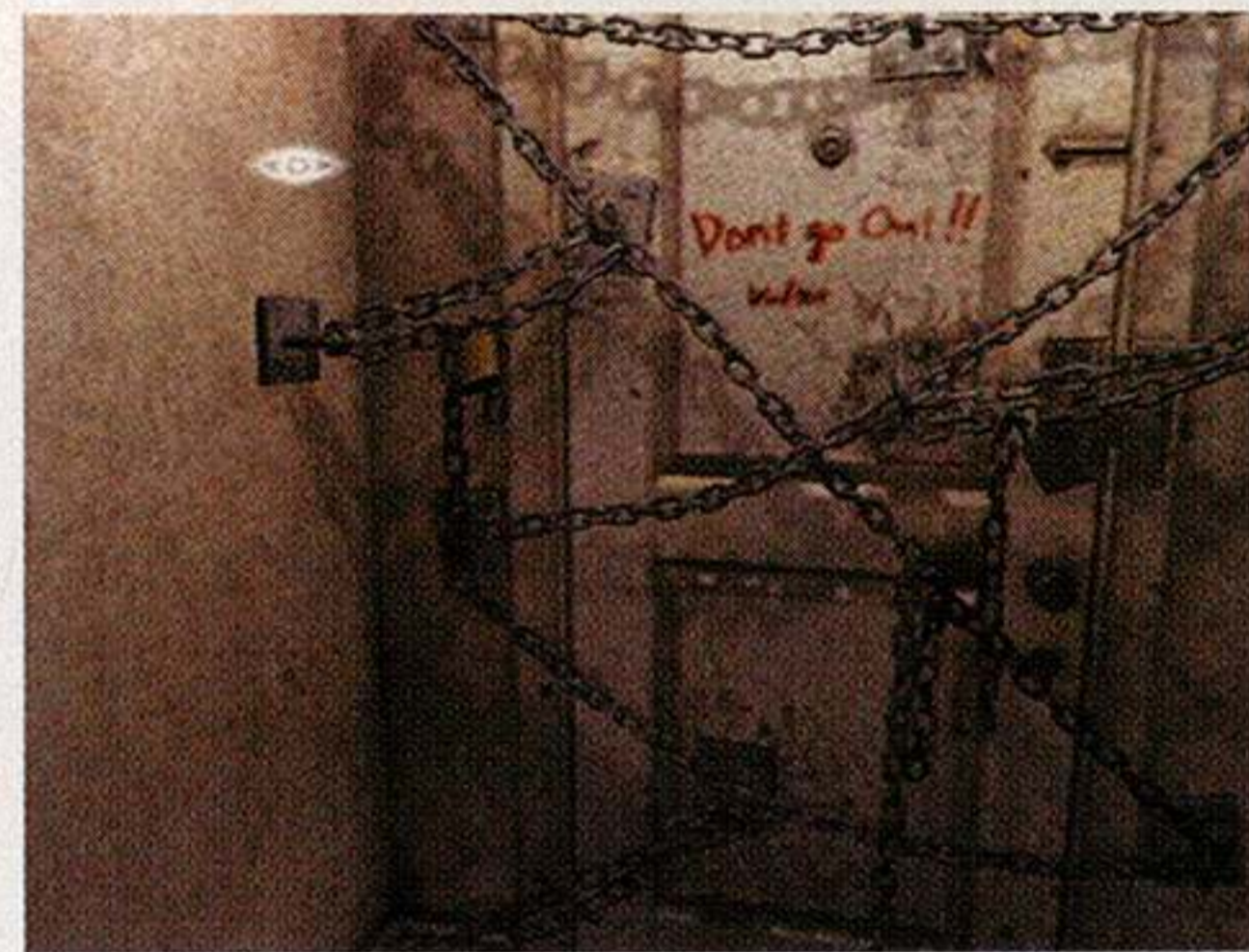
new HUD in the upper-left corner of the screen shows his health (no more color-coded guesswork). A small circular "rage" meter lets Henry unleash a particularly powerful melee attack once it's charged. Henry also has a useful side and back step, and the directional pad cycles through weapons and new spirit wards (ghost-scaring candles, protective medallions). Portals scattered throughout the game lead back to Henry's apartment in the "real world," where Henry can take a first-person graphic-adventure breather looking for clues to puzzles back in the dangerous hole places.

### I Swear to God I Heard Someone Moaning Low

While we can't tell quite yet whether Silent Hill 4 will gel into a work of cohesive, mad genius like Silent Hill 2, the mechanical improvements seem wise, and there's still insane artistry crawling under the skin. Fetid food for the warped gamer's mind.

—Star Dingo

- Hands-On ■ Developed by KCET
- Published by Konami
- Target release date: September







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## Burnout 3: Takedown

**PE X** Burnout and Burnout 2 were both sleeper hits—the first for its distinct style of risk-reward racing and the second for its prized Crash modes, which enabled you to inflict obscene monetary damages by causing massive chain-reaction pileups. Burnout 3 adds depth to the Crash modes with multiple lanes of traffic and power-ups that help or hinder your overall score. The Crashbreaker is another important factor: If you cause enough vehicles to collide, your car turns into a deadly detonate-at-will bomb with limited movement (see sidebar below). You can transform an otherwise peaceful intersection into a chaotic war zone in seconds. Burnout 3 will have more than 100 of these challenging junctions, and they're welcoming to nonracing fans and pedal pushers alike.



### Twisted Mettle

Burnout 3 is all about aggression and risk taking as racers are given speed boosts for narrowly avoiding collisions, tailgating, drifting and power sliding on turns, and—new for the series—ramming competitors off the road or into other vehicles. Races take place at intense high speeds, and the visuals do a superb job of emanating the sensation, which is occasionally—or frequently—brought to an immediate halt when your car crashes to a dead stop and sends sparks and glass across the pavement. The A.I. is tuned to fit the game's theme as computer-controlled opponents hold grudges if you cause them to crash. Human competition can be found in the online world for both versions albeit with minor variations to some play modes from the game's one-player models.

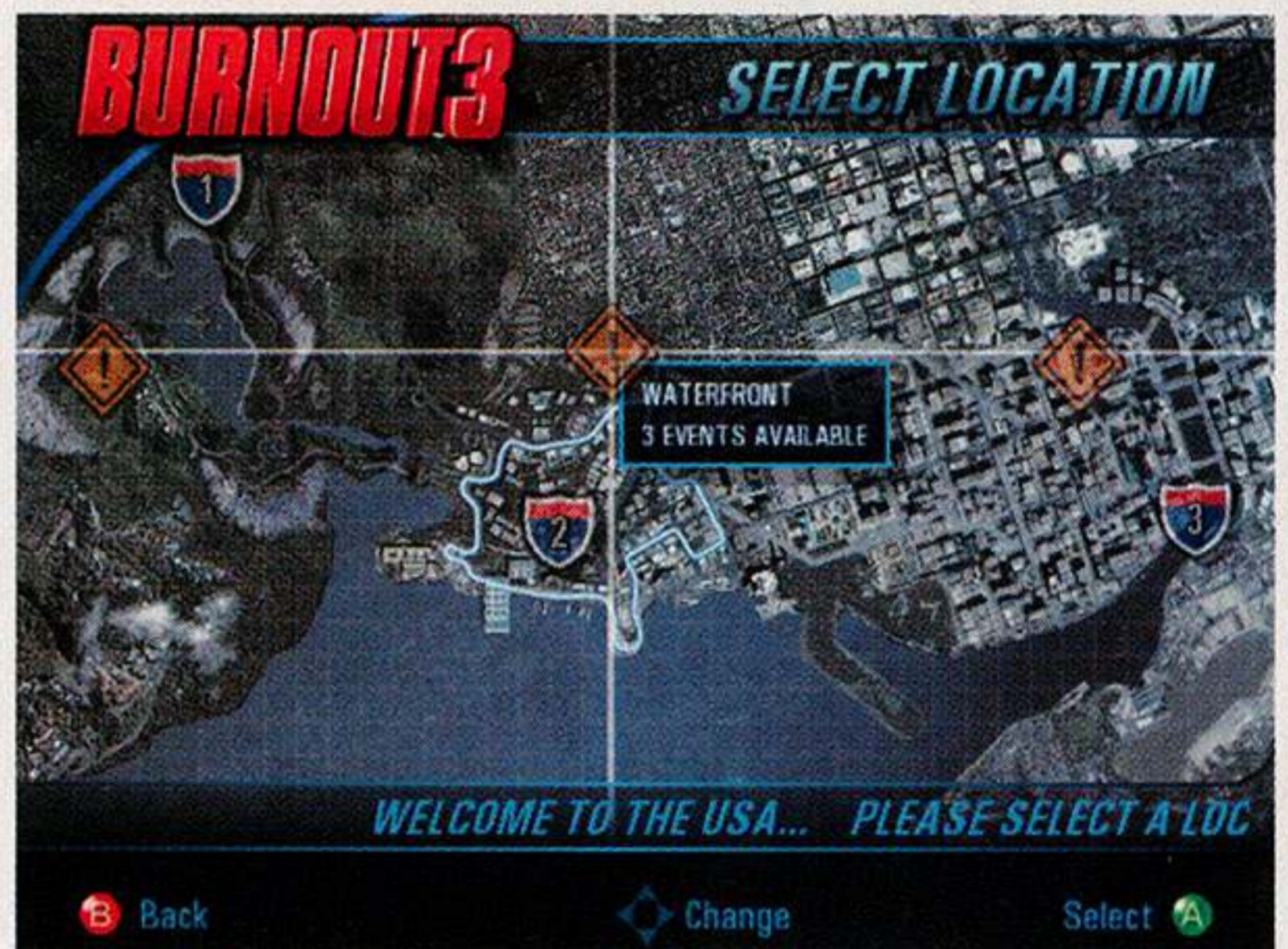


### Burning Road

Races occur in three regions (USA, Europe, and the Far East) in a variety of modes, including Race, Grand Prix, Burning Lap, and Road Rage. Road Rage requires you to knock as many opponents off the road as possible, but your vehicle is allowed only a finite number of hits. Seventy-five cars will be available in the final build, and to put their horsepower in perspective, the first car you can drive in Burnout 3 is the last and most powerful unlockable vehicle in Burnout 2. Burnout 3 has enough flash and intensity to keep one playing for hours, not to mention being one of the top racing games of the year. Keep in mind these comments are made from a prealpha version of Burnout 3, so one can only imagine how polished the final product will be.—Major Mike

■ Hands-On ■ Developed by Criterion Games  
 ■ Published by EA Games ■ Target release date: September

All screens shown here are from the Xbox version.



## Waterfront Crash Zone 1: Leap of Faith

Here's one of many ways to cause big-buck damage in Crash mode, especially if you rack up enough collisions for a Crashbreaker.



Grab the Auto Boost and veer to the left and toward the oncoming car in the left lane...



...then hit the car head on but at a slight angle. After you strike, your car should hop the rail and fall to the overpass below...



...and right next to a x4 Cash Multiplier. You've started a chain-reaction pileup on the overpass you just left...



...and a new one where you landed. After you reach the required number of crashes, use the Crashbreaker and steer your flaming wreck in mid-air to create more chaos.

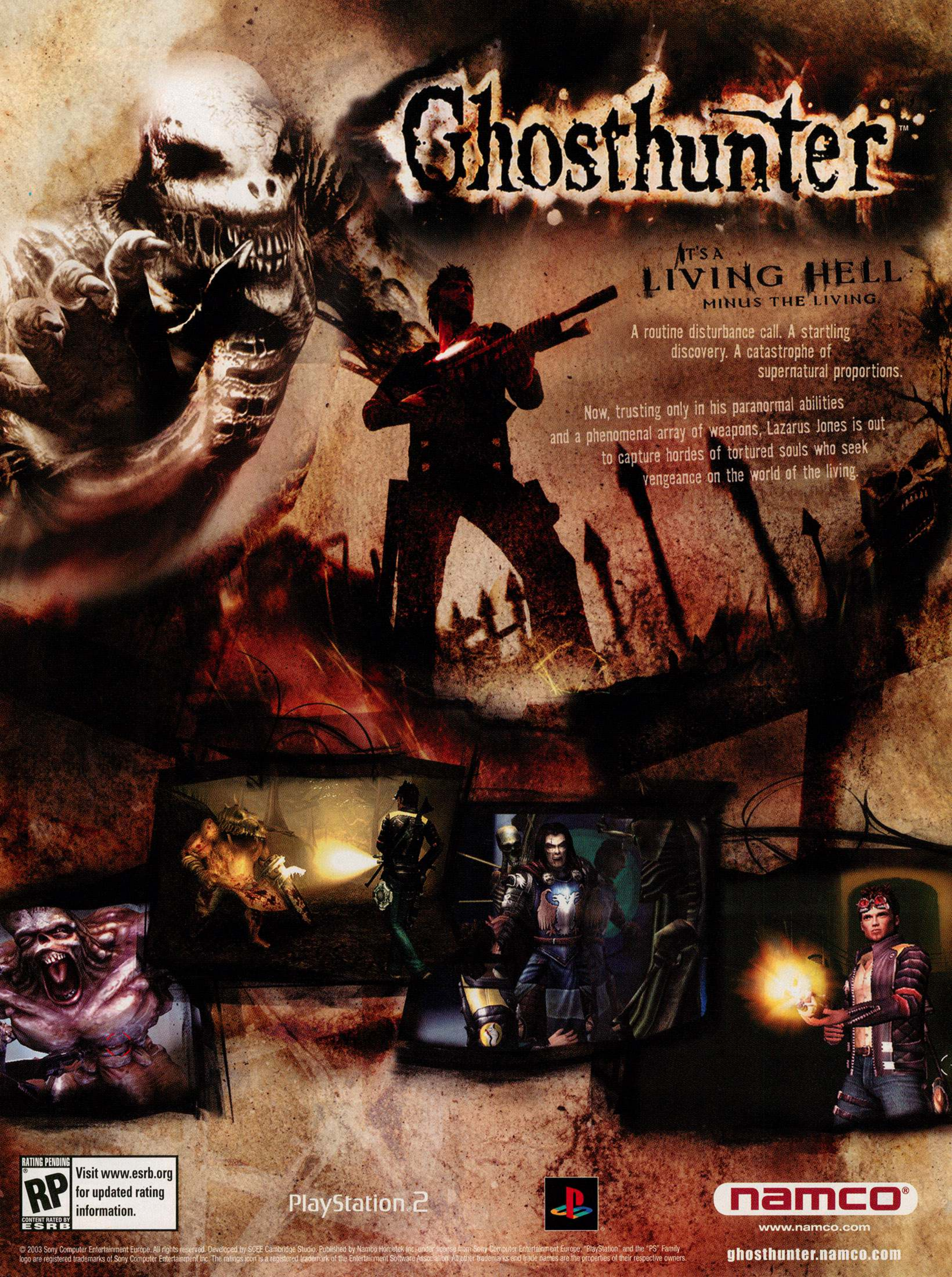


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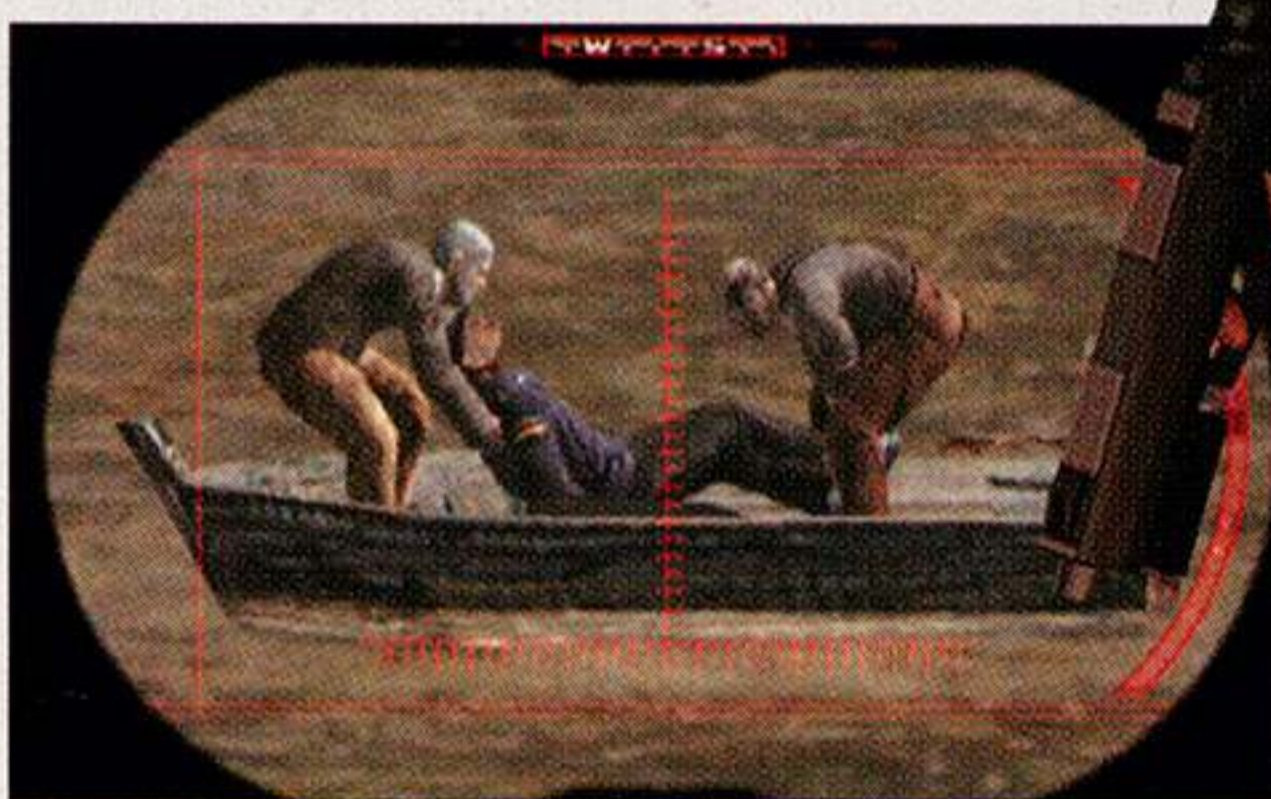
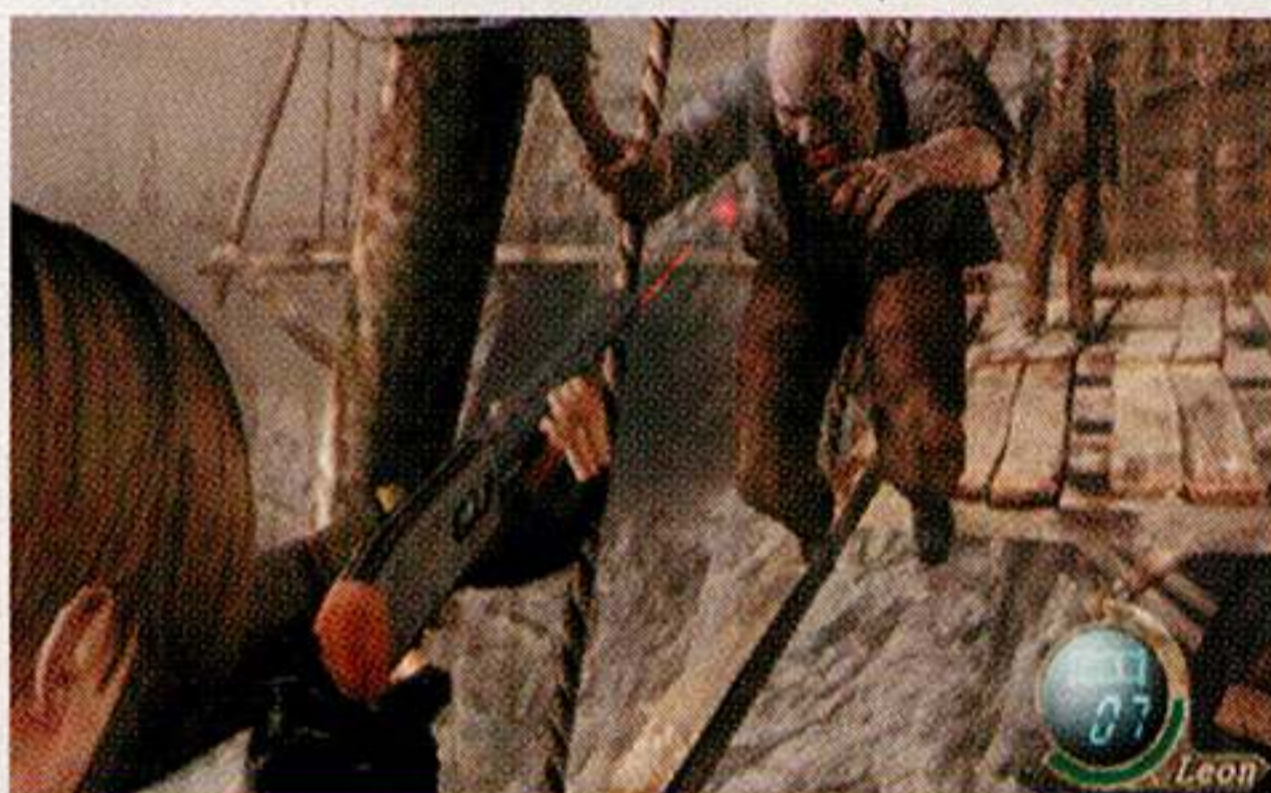
# Resident Evil 4

Capcom released more screens of the upcoming Resident Evil 4 from the trailer at the Electronic Entertainment Expo, and they reveal more about the game than mere words could describe (plus, it saves about 1000 words a pop). The story follows special agent Leon Kennedy, who must rescue the president's kidnapped daughter from what appears to be a religious cult. After surviving a small European town populated by deranged villagers (and a gigantic ogre), Leon eventually arrives at a castle where he finds the prez's daughter, Ashley. However, in addition to saving his own skin, Leon must keep the 20-year-old girl out of harm's way—if he fails, the game ends.

## Boo!

Leon isn't without "resources," though: He can use shotguns, scoped rifles, pistols, and even a room-clearing rocket launcher for when things get too intense. Some of Leon's firearms even include laser targeting that allows him to hit projectiles heading his way and send them off their intended path. An "action-button system" also helps as Leon will perform a different action when the A button is pressed in certain situations—jump out a window, duck underneath an incoming object, or even execute a devastating roundhouse kick during close combat. Capcom is keeping mum about other details, but it did reveal that the game should take 13 to 15 hours to complete and will have approximately seven to 10 bosses. The typewriter-save game system from other Evil games will be retained, but there will be no item boxes to stash stuff. Perhaps the only thing scarier than these screens is the fact that Resident Evil 4 will be available only on the GameCube.—Major Mike

■ Update ■ Developed and published by Capcom  
 ■ Target release date: November



## Leon's Babysitting

When Leon finds Ashley, he must keep her safe from harm because if her life meter runs dry, it's game over.



A mad monk grabs Ashley and carries her away...

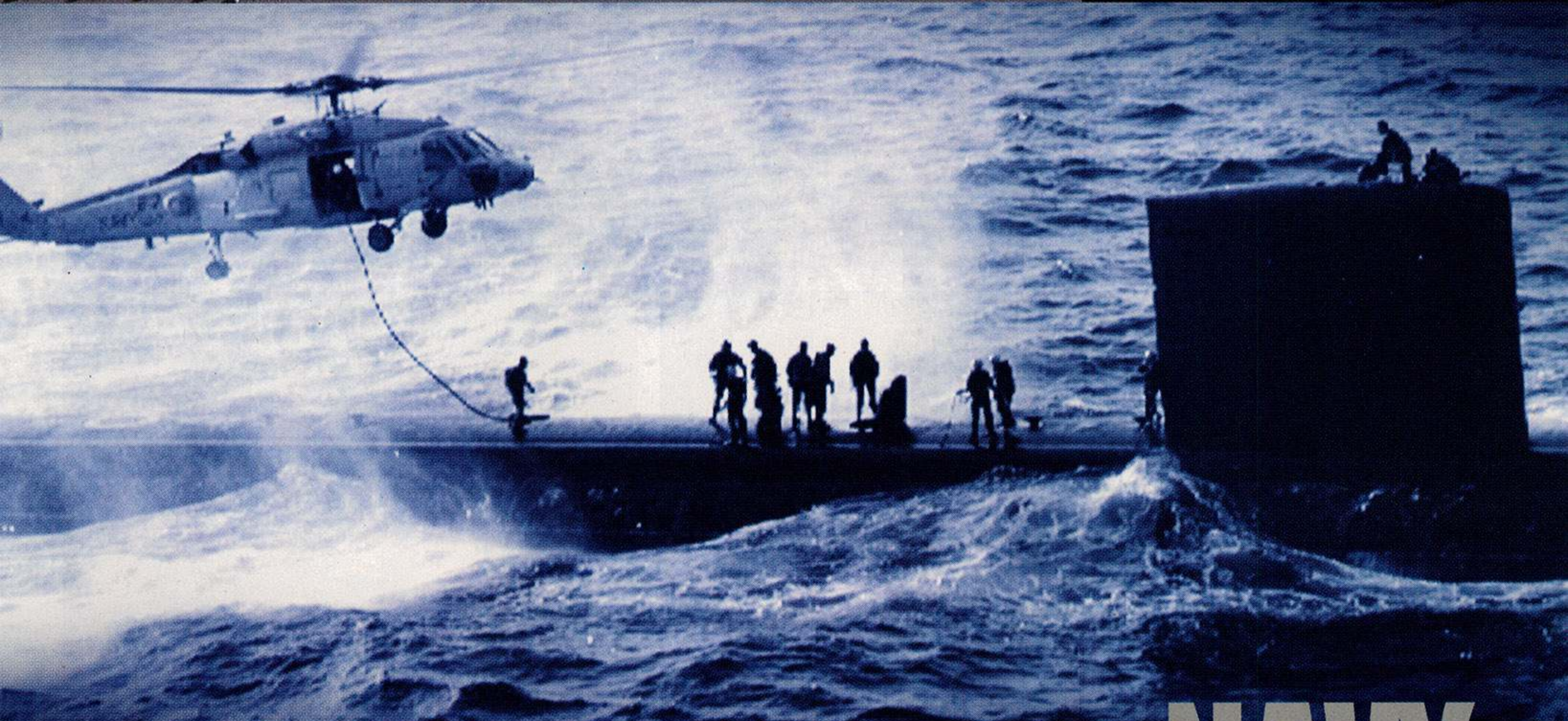


...Leon draws his pistol and aims very carefully at the assailant—being sure not to hit Ashley.





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# Prince of Persia 2

(working title)

   Normally, the number of units sold determines the success of a game. For Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time, however, the success came in a totally different way—the number of accolades it received without, surprisingly, selling lots of units. Unscathed by number crunching, Ubisoft is continuing the Persian Prince's legacy in a sequel that promises to appeal to a broader audience and still retain every fun experience found in the original—and this time, hopefully, with numbers to follow, too.

## Pity the Potentate

As in his first adventure, the “merry” monarch isn't very merry in his second outing. Escaping death has finally caught up with the prince, and now he must battle Dahaka, the incarnation of Fate who's seeking divine retribution upon the royal warrior. The Prince's journey leads him to a cursed island populated by humankind's ugliest and scariest fears, and the only way to survive is to become a truly different man.

## Your Fighting Majesty

The change in venue means that this nobleman no longer looks or acts the same way. The princely combatant has grown up into a shadowy, mature warrior, ridding himself of the repetitive swings and simple jump attacks that made up his past offensive arsenal. Fighting in the annals of the nightmarish island requires a little more ingenuity—and no boundaries. You can now control many of the hero's blade slashes as he unleashes his devastating combos, which means that combination attacks can certainly vary and don't feel repetitious. He can also use his surroundings as part of his offense, swinging from a column or pouncing on top of an enemy in conjunction with his sword thrusts. And the Prince hasn't lost his powers to manipulate time. He can still slow it down to help him pass obstacles and to add even more variety to his fighting style.

With a more mature and darker look, along with a faster battle system, it's time that this prince proves that he's worthy of finally becoming king.—*Four-Eyed Dragon*

- **First Look**
- **Developed by** Ubisoft Montreal
- **Published by** Ubisoft
- **Target release date:** November





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**Professional Volleyball Player** 8/8/04 - 8/12/04

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**Secret Agent** 8/12/04 - 8/15/04

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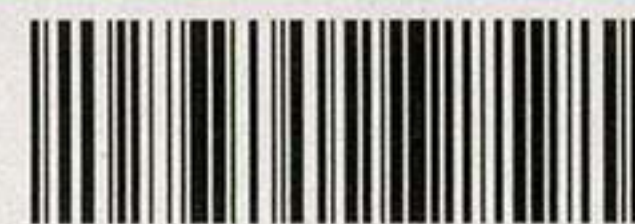
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## Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell 3 (working title)

   Ubisoft certainly knows when it has a star on its hands. When the original Splinter Cell hit consoles two years ago, the game practically reinvented the stealth/action genre, weaving modern-day, military Tom Clancy intrigue with outstanding visual effects. The sequel (already out for the Xbox), Pandora Tomorrow, upped the ante with vast improvements and additions that were highlighted by a totally original and addicting multiplayer game. Hoping to still ride the Splinter Cell wave of success, Ubisoft is already planning to release a third installment of the franchise this November. But what else can be achieved that hasn't been done already, especially when the game is expected to come out shortly after the PS2 and GameCube releases of Pandora Tomorrow?

### It's an O.G. Cell Thang

Developed by the original Splinter Cell team (Ubisoft Montreal), number three could achieve a lot. For one, the entire game engine is being rebuilt from the ground up—that means everything from polishing the graphics to making the enemy A.I. smarter. For example, in a working demo of the game, enemies threw flares into the shadows when they became alerted, which means that Sam Fisher can no longer completely rely on using the dark as cover.

Sam's movements are being refined, too. The NSA agent can now knife someone silently or give a knee to the gut during close-quarter engagements. And if he's hanging upside down from a pipe, Sam can grab and choke an unlucky soul without making a sound. Of course, it's not all hands-on with this operative. Sam's weaponry once again includes his trusty modular rifle, which can be equipped with short- and long-ranged attachments, and he can also go from a sniper rifle to a door-busting shotgun in a matter of seconds. How Sam tackles all 11 missions isn't limited, either. You can guide him to complete objectives in any order, which offers much more freedom than before.

### It Takes Two

The online aspect of this next Splinter Cell will offer a game that could put you and a buddy's friendship to the test—in a good way, of course. As in Pandora Tomorrow, you and a comrade will play as two spies who must infiltrate areas guarded by bad guys. Different to the gameplay, however, is that you and your colleague must literally work together to complete your goal: hoist your partner up a wall, share the view from an optic cable, or hold the rope while the other climbs up. Now that's cool! This is about solid communication and true teamwork.

While this next Splinter Cell may seem premature, Ubisoft is confident that Sam's reappearance, no matter how early it is, will appeal to his fans and attract newcomers to this now-clandestine classic series.

—Four-Eyed Dragon

■ First Look ■ Developed by Ubisoft Montreal  
■ Published by Ubisoft ■ Target release date: November





## Pikmin 2

In 2001, creativity incarnated as Pikmin, the defiant, genre-agnostic tale of a dime-sized alien castaway and the color-coded, submissive carrot-people who befriend him. For better or worse, this new Pikmin game feels a whole lot like the first—i.e., the controls are the same (brilliant!), a lot of the graphics are the same (charming and wondrous!), and most of the enemies, delightfully weird and Muppetey, are pulled straight from the original.

### The Potency of Beta-Carotene

But before you issue a disappointed squeak, there are lots of new nuances that make the sequel feel much more “whole” than the first one did. Thanks to the addition of compatriot Louie, you’re now able to effectively command two Pikmin armies at once. The 15-minutes-a-day time limit still applies,

but there’s no longer a 30-day restriction and, therefore, not quite the sense of being rushed. When you dive into a hole to explore the game’s new multifloored underground areas, however, the timer stops and you’re granted all the minutes in the world to make your way through the traps and puzzles. These multifloor underground dungeons are randomly generated (the above-ground environment is quite clearly designed) and have a very gridlike, right-angled structure. Often, a boss waits at the bottom, and it’s here that you’ll find the flowers that serve as the only means of obtaining the new Pikmin types (extra strong purple, poison-resistant white).

The Warcraft-style two-player split-screen game is a big surprise. Each side collects “resources” in the form of level-up nectar and enemy corpses in order to buff up their veggie army. Once properly buffed, you then lead your Pikmin into the field to gather marbles and try to either take more neutral yellow marbles back to your base than the other player or capture your enemy’s well-guarded “main” marble and bring it home.



### Dream Architect and The Paradoxical Enigma

But it’s the little touches that seal the deal—the names that the ship’s weird on-board computer comes up with for Earth’s assorted “treasures” (a Dr. Pepper bottle cap becomes a “Drought Ender”; a dead Duracell battery is dubbed a “Courage Reactor”) are just brilliant. Oh, and we just love that Piklopedia in which you fling carrots at any of the enemies you’ve encountered in a sort of resentful zoo—it’s one of the spiffiest extras on this world or any other.—*Star Dingo*

- Hands-On ■ Developed and published by Nintendo
- Target release date: August





## Def Jam Fight For NY

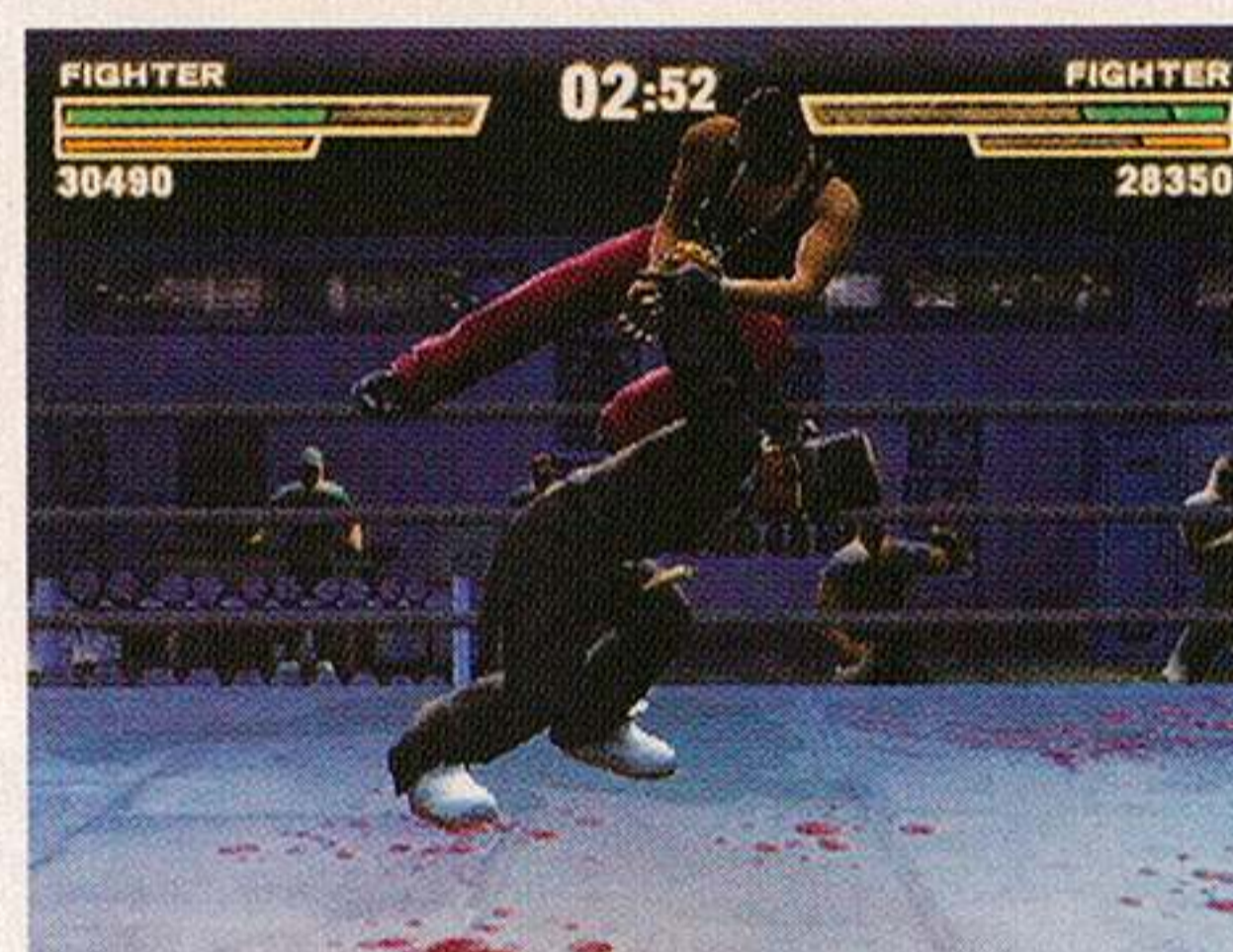
Since we last took a look at Def Jam Fight For NY a few months ago, several new multiplayer modes have become available and a number of new celebrity names (and voices) have been added to the already star-studded roster. Hip-hop big-shots like Bone Crusher, Fat Joe, Bubba Sparxxx, N.O.R.E.,



Memphis Bleek, Crazy Legs, Warren G, Xzibit, actor Omar Epps, and Jamaican mush-mouthed mumbler Sean Paul are all now selectable characters. Also, the final version of Fight For NY will feature 10 match types, including supercool Demolition, Subway, Inferno, Window, Ring-Out, Team, Free-for-All, and Cage matches, in addition to a complete single-player story mode and a promising Create-a-Player option (both of which were unavailable for this hands-on preview).

### Def Jeezie In the Heezy

Even in this early build, the level of environmental interactivity was impressive with stage-specific weapons, persistent blood stains, destructible items, and situational hazards (like rowdy crowd members and a deadly speeding subway train), making each location unique and providing clever players with a variety of ways to humiliate and defeat their opponents. The detailed damage also extended to the fighters' faces, which became bruised and beaten throughout the course of a bout, adding a nice touch of realism to the over-the-top inner-city action. Nearly all of the 25 arenas were available to play, including such colorful locales as a dive bar, a wrecking yard, a penthouse office, a local gym, and even a "gentlemen's club" (plus a remixed version) with each level having a decidedly gritty (yet appealing) urban appearance.



### Word to Your Mother

The differences between the five fighting styles are easily recognizable; street fighters rely mainly on mighty haymaker blows while submission experts target an opponent's joints with brutal disabling power in order to force a tap-out (a very cool feature). Because you can now mix and match the skills of up to three different fighting techniques, players can optimize their fighter's skill set by selecting the types of moves that best suit their personal style.

### Break Yo' Self Sucka

However, one minor complaint in need of attention is the usually obedient camera, which in this build had a nasty habit of slipping behind the heads of audience members in tight, close-quarters shots, thereby causing you to momentarily lose track of your opponent. Petty gripes aside, however, Fight For NY is already a surprisingly deep, customizable, and enjoyable brawler for pimps, hustlers, and fighting fans alike. Word is born.—Bones

■ Hands-On ■ Developed by EA Canada/AKI  
 ■ Published by EA Games ■ Target release date: September

All screens shown here are from the PlayStation 2 version.



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# Devil May Cry 3

**FE** After a disappointing sophomore showing, the Devil May Cry series is stepping up to the plate for a third episode of sword-swinging and lead-shooting mayhem. Series fans put off by the boredom and strangeness of the second game (with such “memorable” bosses as a gunship with a big red eye pulsating on its side) will be pleased to hear that the series looks as if it’s back on track. This adventure is a prequel to the first DMC game with a younger—and cockier—Dante at odds with his evil brother, Virgil, who, it seems, chose an evil path. Other characters in the game include the mystery-man Arkham and the female devil-hunter Lady, whose prime objective is to destroy *all* demons—including Dante.

## Destroy All Demons

For Devil May Cry 3, the developers rebuilt the play engine from the ground up and emphasized improved graphics and music. The camera has been overhauled as the gamer’s view rests squarely behind Dante...of course,



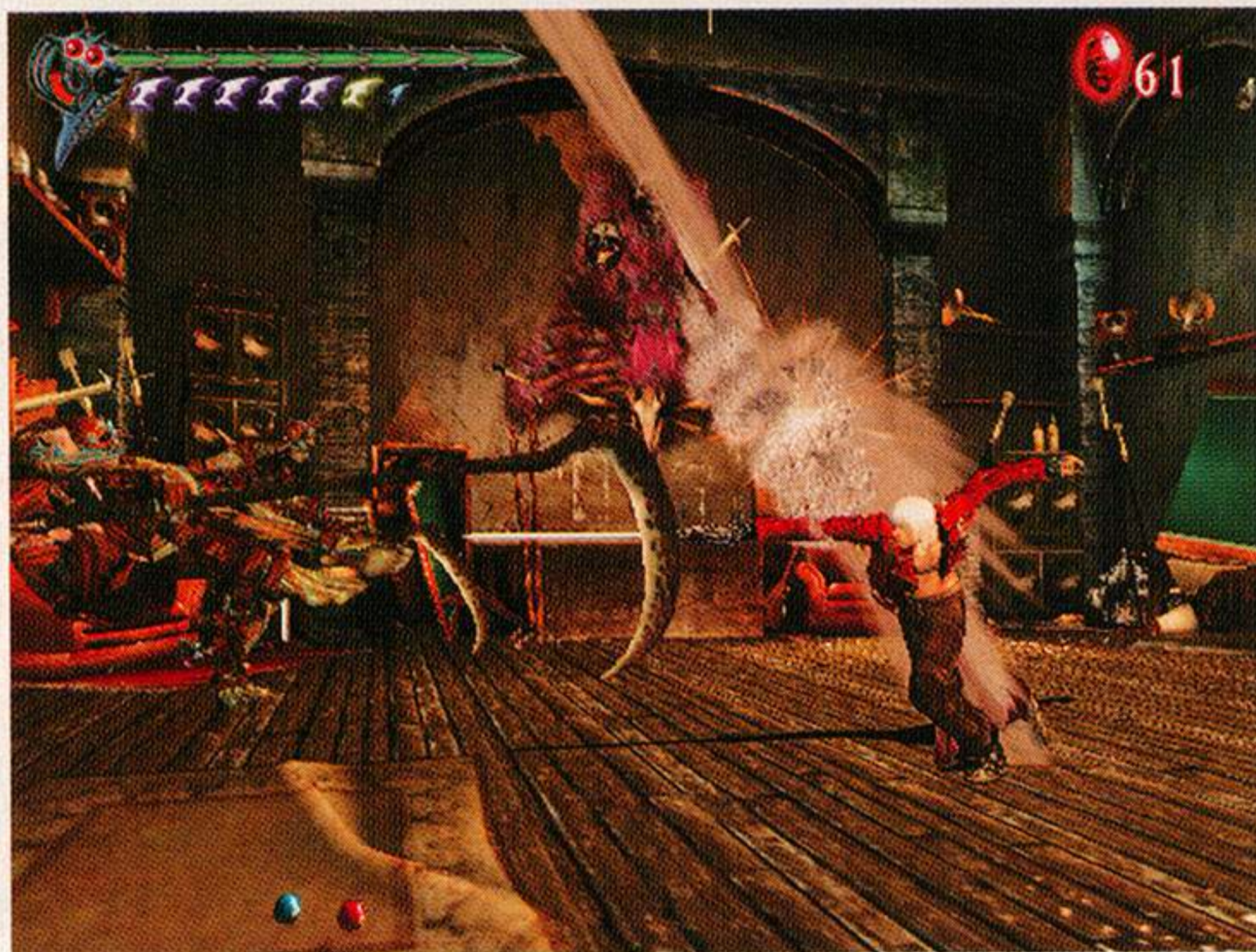
these changes will hardly affect the core gameplay hook, which has always been fast and furious action. Weapons in Dante’s arsenal include shotguns, hand-guns, and even guitars to crank out deadly decibels. Another notable DMC3 feature is the “My Dante” customization, which enables various devil-hunting styles, including Gunslinger, Sword Master, Trickster, and Royal Guard.



Each distinction lets Dante develop a specific attribute (Gunslinger, for instance, strengthens Dante’s shooting skills), thus forcing you to change your approach for repeat playthroughs.

## The World, The Flesh, and the Devil

Devil May Cry 3 made its world debut at the Electronic Entertainment Expo in May with whirlwind video footage. Activities included air-juggling enemies and running up walls, and at one point, Dante punched out a series of mon-



sters as he chomped on a piece of pizza. Hopefully, this third DMC entry will restore the fun and challenge that the first game provided, but the second one lacked.—Major Mike

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





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PlayStation 2



INTERMEDIA



# Backyard Wrestling 2: There Goes the Neighborhood

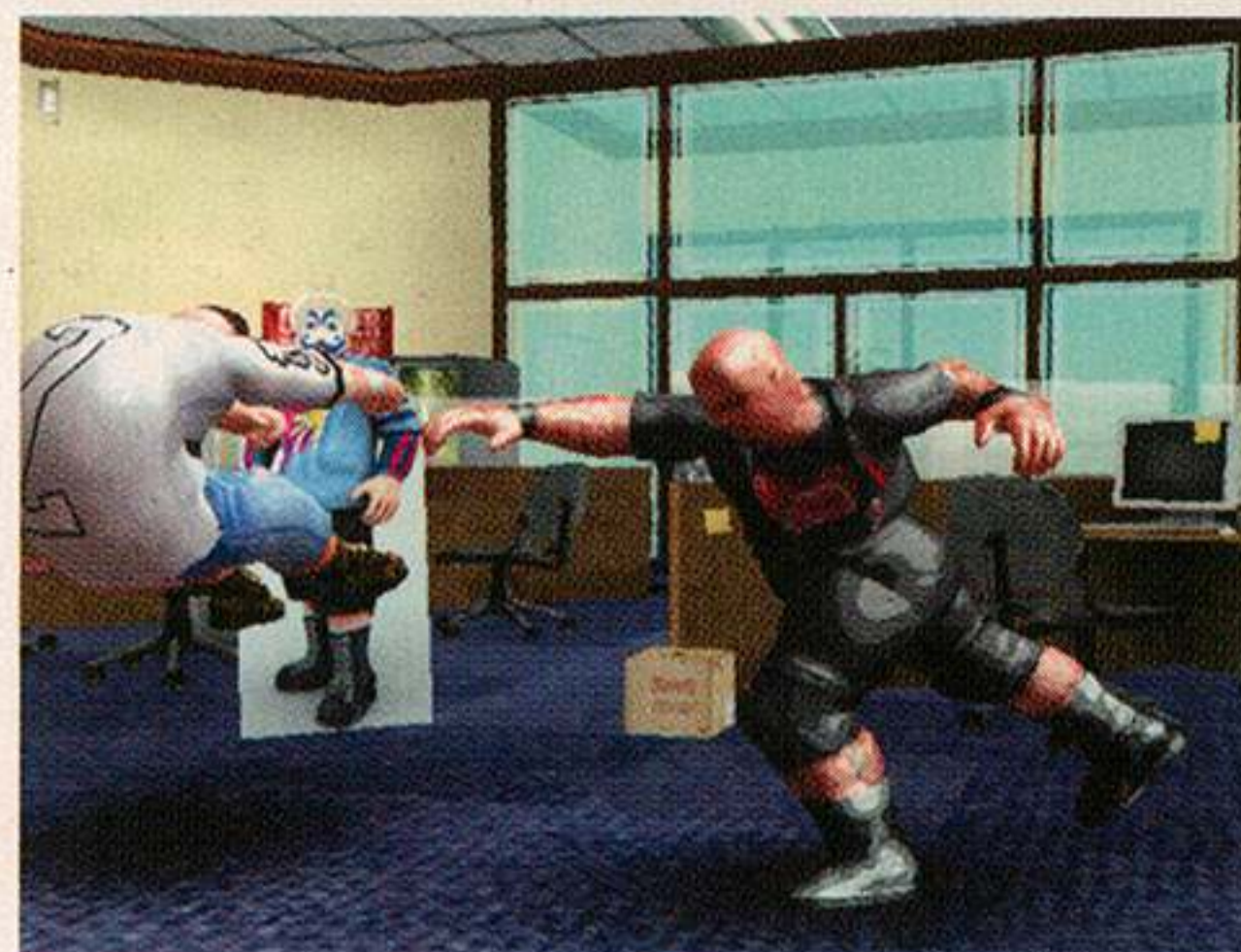
**FE** **X** Ever wanted to shove one of the Insane Clown Posse into a deep fryer? Well, here ya go. Insane doesn't begin to describe the phenomenon of Backyard Wrestling, but it



sure does make for natural video-game fodder. Last year's console adaptation of the real-life nuttiness was a pretty fun game with lots of good concepts, but it definitely had its share of flaws—and like any good sequel should, this year's contender tries to learn from past mistakes.



The folks at developer Paradox are going even more overboard with the "environmental interaction" thing with more weapons to grab (chainsaws, spiked bats, shattered boards) and specific objects in the background you can use to cause

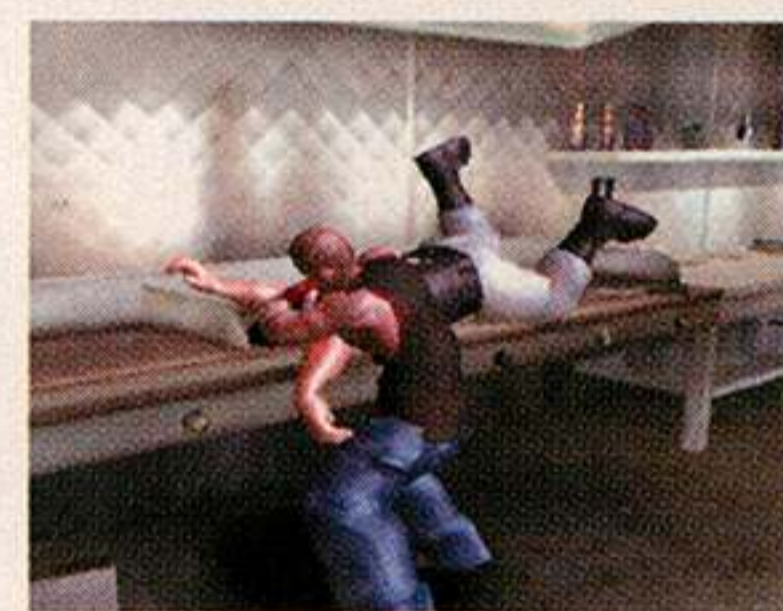


extraordinary, extra-special pain. The previous game's barely there Create-a-Wrestler mode has been replaced by something more fully fleshed, complete with a graphics editor that lets you make your own tattoos and logos. The soundtrack flies all over the fringe-music timeline with tracks from Andrew WK, Body Count, Kool Keith, and TSOL. But the real big deal about Backyard Wrestling 2 is that it's the first wrestling game you'll be able to play online, on both the PS2 and via Xbox Live. Time to invent some new trash talk.

—Star Dingo

■ First Look ■ Developed by Paradox  
 ■ Published by Eidos Interactive ■ Target release date: October

All screens shown here are from the PlayStation 2 version.



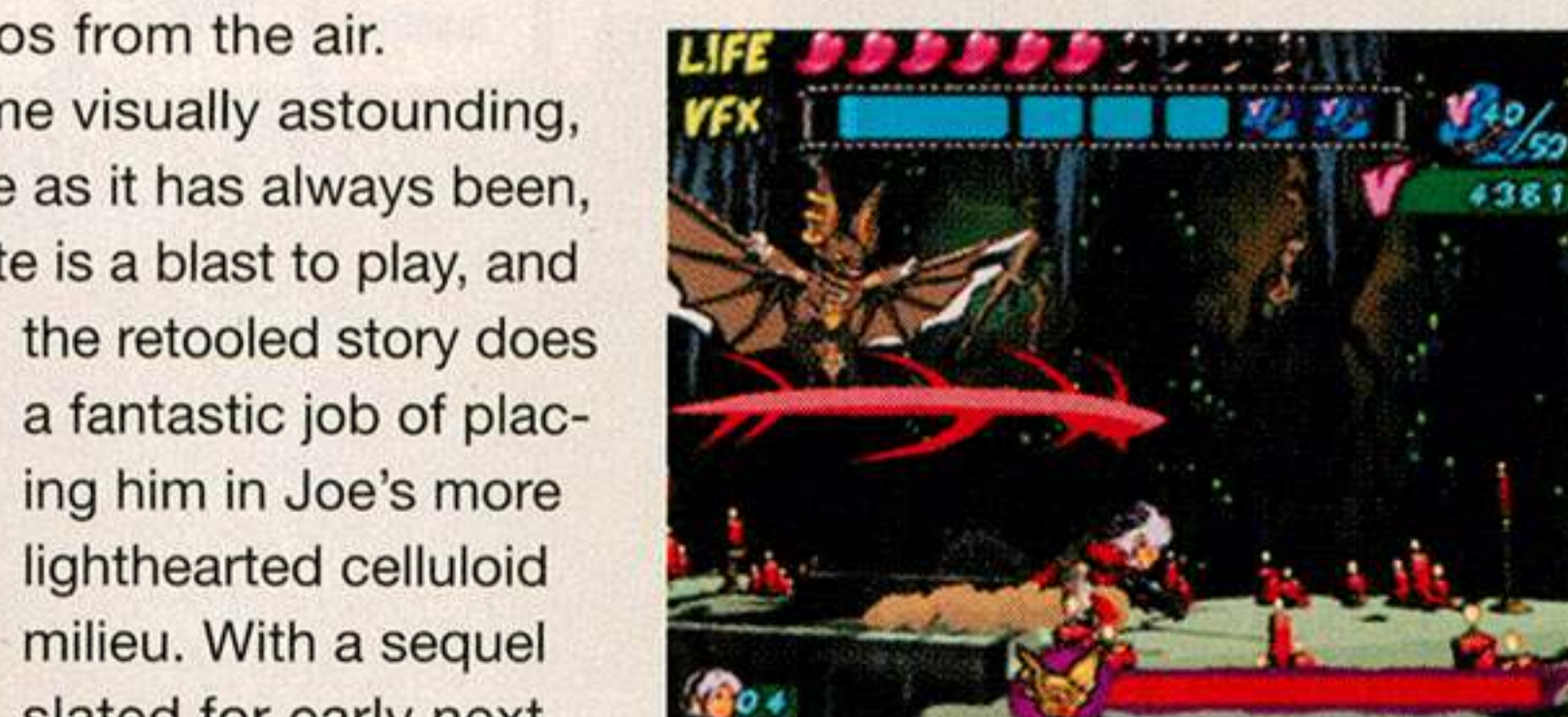
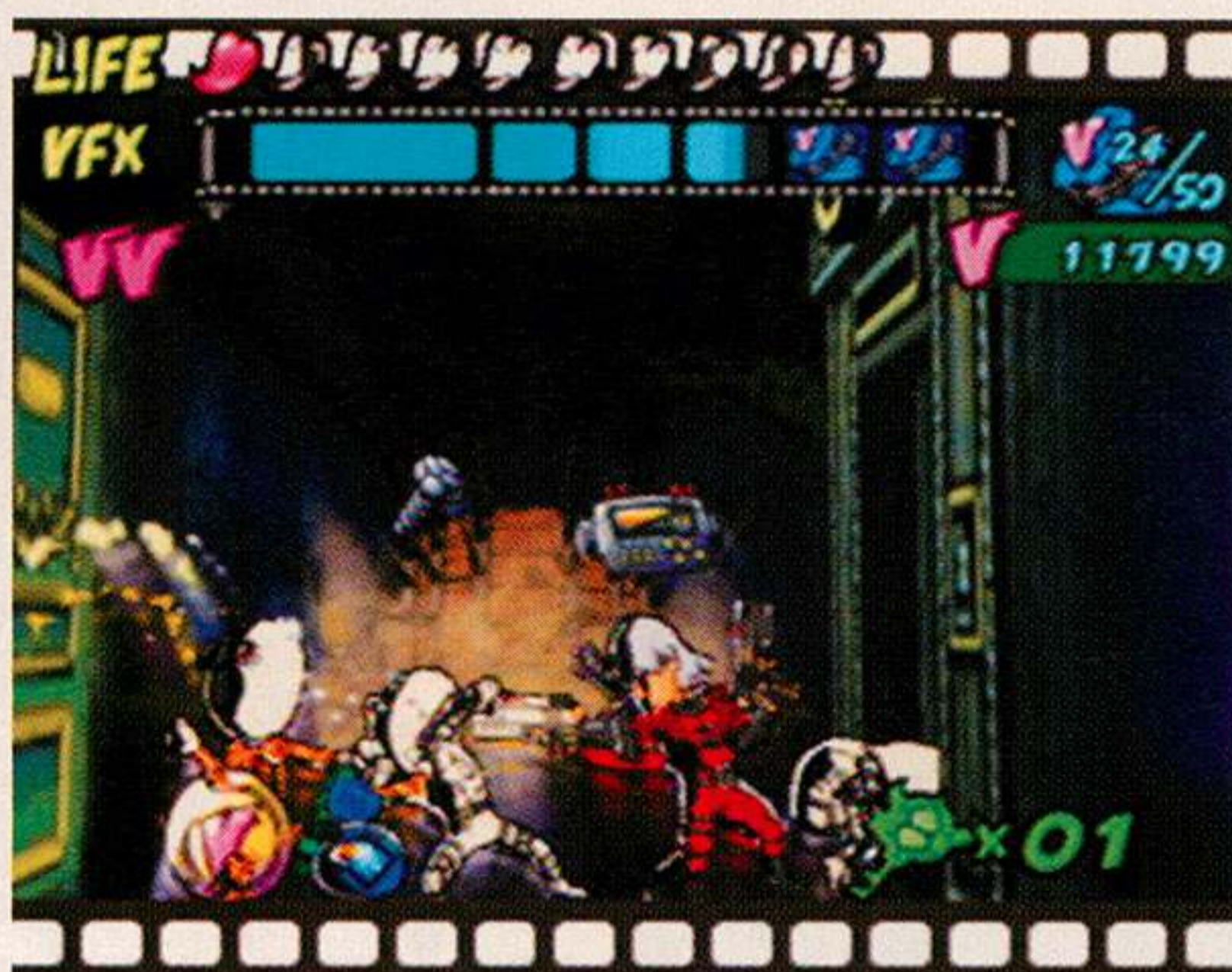
## Viewtiful Joe

**FE** Despite garnering heaps of critical praise, last year's GameCube-exclusive Viewtiful Joe enjoyed only lukewarm sales. Thus, Capcom is porting it to the PlayStation 2. In addition to a new and much easier mode of difficulty, the playable PlayStation 2 version of Viewtiful Joe features Capcom's demon-hunting poster-boy Dante as a selectable character. Not only are the between-action cut scenes rewritten in order to assimilate Dante into Joe's universe, but the same voice actor who worked



on Devil May Cry does the voice for Dante in VJ as well. Furthermore, Dante has his own purchasable power-ups, including a sword-flinging ability and an aerial gun attack that allows him to unleash devastating bullet salvos from the air.

Other than that, the game is the same visually astounding, addictively challenging rollercoaster ride as it has always been, and the fluid controls remain intact. Dante is a blast to play, and the retooled story does a fantastic job of placing him in Joe's more lighthearted celluloid milieu. With a sequel slated for early next



year, PlayStation 2 owners are not going to want to miss out on this seminal and captivating romp in a bizarre superhero world.—Iron Monkey

■ Hands-On ■ Developed and published by Capcom  
 ■ Target release date: September





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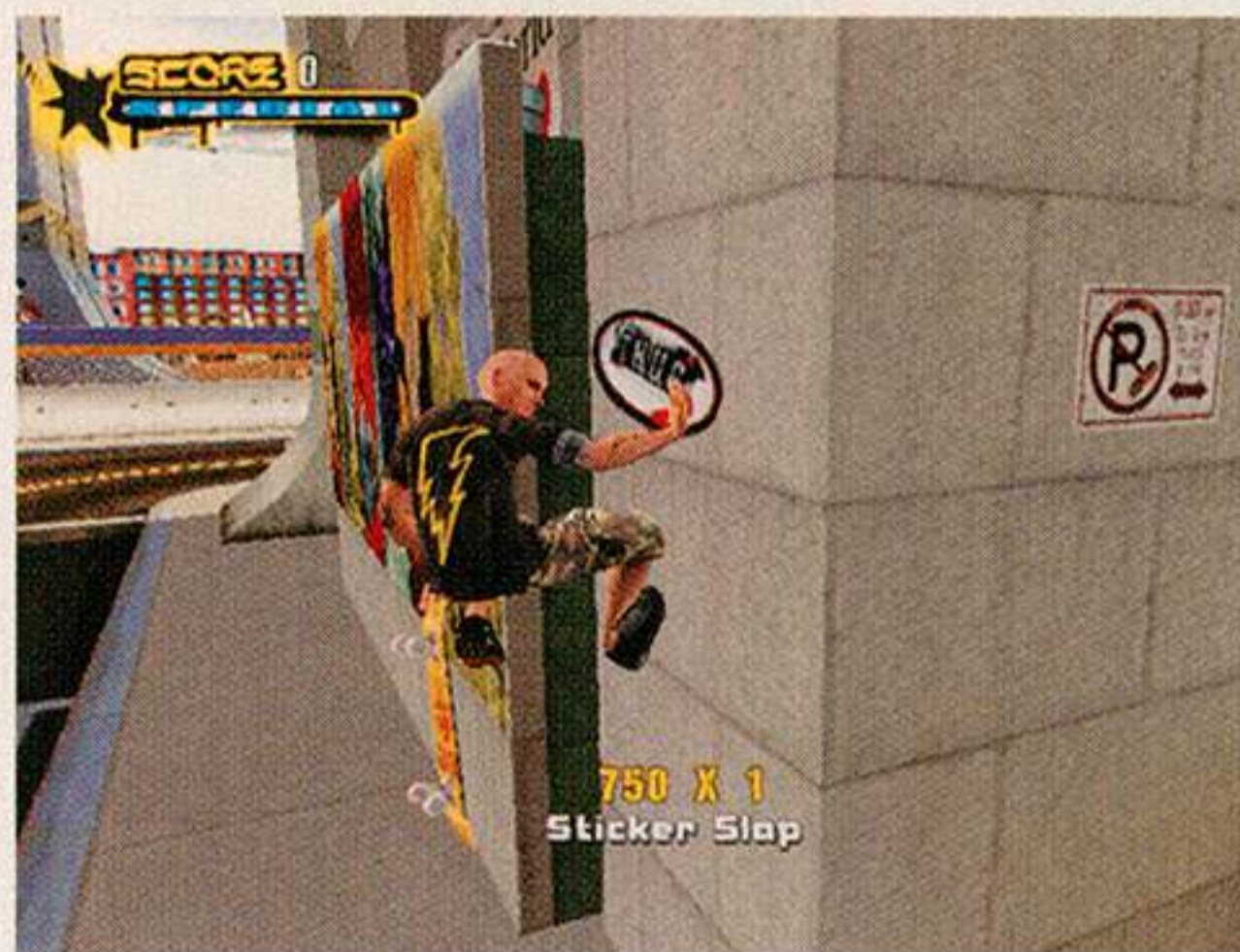
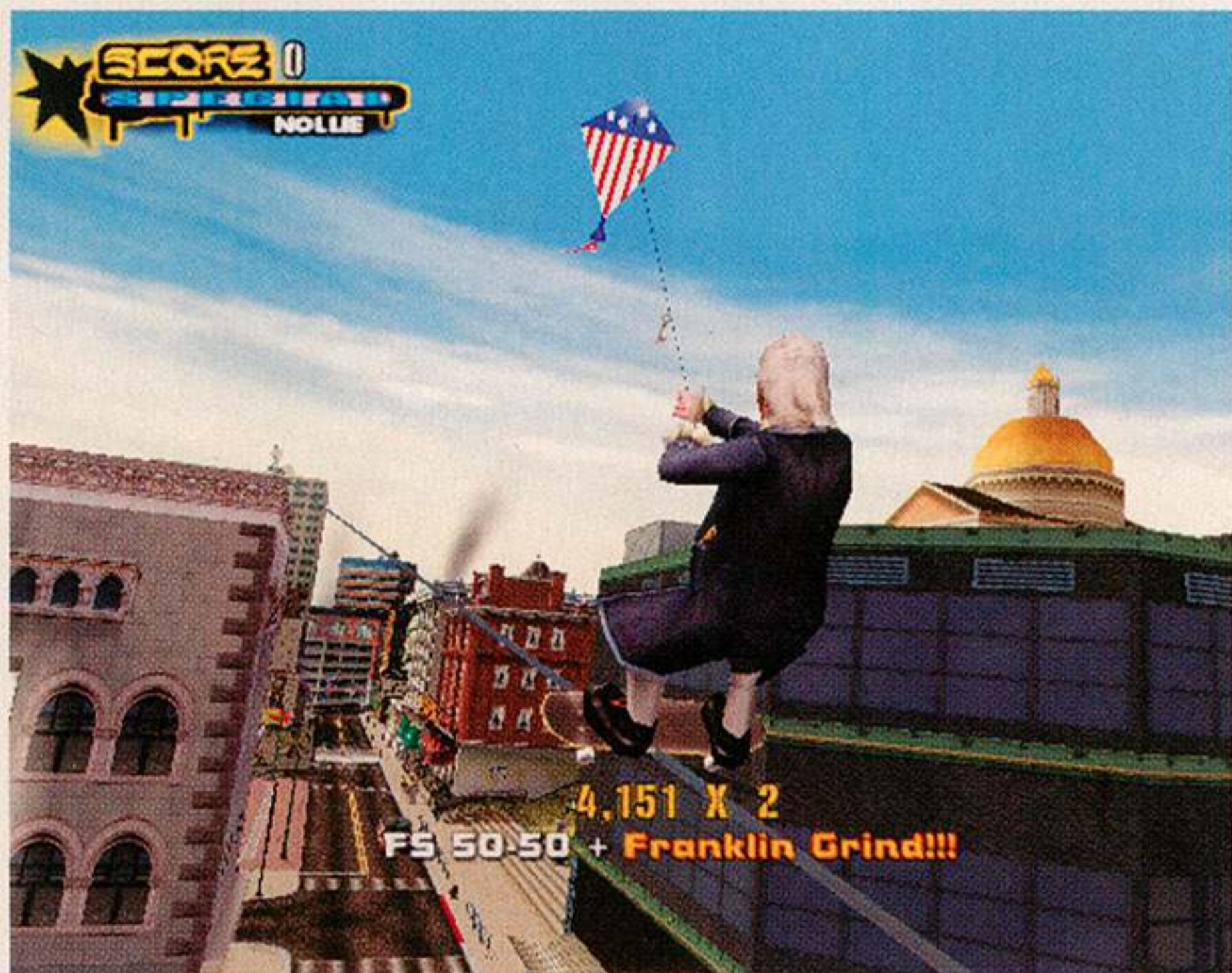


EXPERIENCE COUNTS



# Tony Hawk's Underground 2: World Destruction Tour

**PE X G** Can you believe that the Tony Hawk franchise is already at its sixth installment? Seems like only yesterday that it turned action sports on its ear. The story mode worked well in last year's Tony Hawk's Underground, so THUG2 gets an upgrade, picking up where last year's saga left off. Now a pro and on tour, you find yourself recruited for a side project: Team Hawk vs. Team Bam in an entirely unorthodox, prank-filled, skate-it-like-it's-your-last "friendly competition." The mechanics have swapped around a little, too; because you're playing on a team, each member has different goals, and you can swap among your compatriots at any time. Every level will have a large event that, when you find and trigger it, changes the level's structure and its resulting lines. Players can now throw projectiles, create and apply custom stickers and spray-painted graffiti tags around the levels, boost their combo meter after a bail with a "Freak Out" aggro move (it says "Spazz Out" in the screen, but the game's still in development), and yes, unlock unusual secret characters like Ben Franklin. One of the coolest elements (visually, anyway) is the Focus mode, which kicks the game into slow motion for greater control and precision while performing tricks. And if you don't like the new story mode structure, you can play the whole game in Classic mode, complete with secret tapes, S-K-A-T-E goals, and all that old-school structure. Intrigued? Neversoft's busy working on it. Check back later.—Dan Elektro



And if you don't like the new story mode structure, you can play the whole game in Classic mode, complete with secret tapes, S-K-A-T-E goals, and all that old-school structure. Intrigued? Neversoft's busy working on it. Check back later.—Dan Elektro

■ First Look ■ Developed by Neversoft  
 ■ Published by Activision ■ Target release date: Winter 2004

All screens shown here are from the PlayStation 2 version.

# Dead Rush

**PE X G** Fresh from its New York-fueled victory with Spider-Man 2, developer Treyarch is creating another metropolis, this time the fictional town of Eastport. As Jake Walker, you find yourself stuck in the darkened city—the bridges are blown out, mysterious earthquakes still rock the town, and nobody's seen the sun in a long time. What do all those things have to do with the living dead, who gleefully, quickly, and cooperatively attack the warm-fleshed survivors? Some of the game takes place on foot (with weapons, of course), but the focus here is on getting in a car and trying to survive your journey as you get from point A to point B, looking for clues and a way out. En route, zombies will leap onto your car, ripping it to shreds; you'll have to practice some very unsafe driving to dislodge them, scraping nearby walls and swerving around corners to hurl them free. As your car gets damaged, you'll have to repair it by scavenging for parts from other vehicles you find. Can you risk getting out of the car to replace your tire or door—or is the danger of the car exploding worse? Dead Rush is still fairly early in development, but how can you not look forward to the idea of GTA: Raccoon City?—Dan Elektro

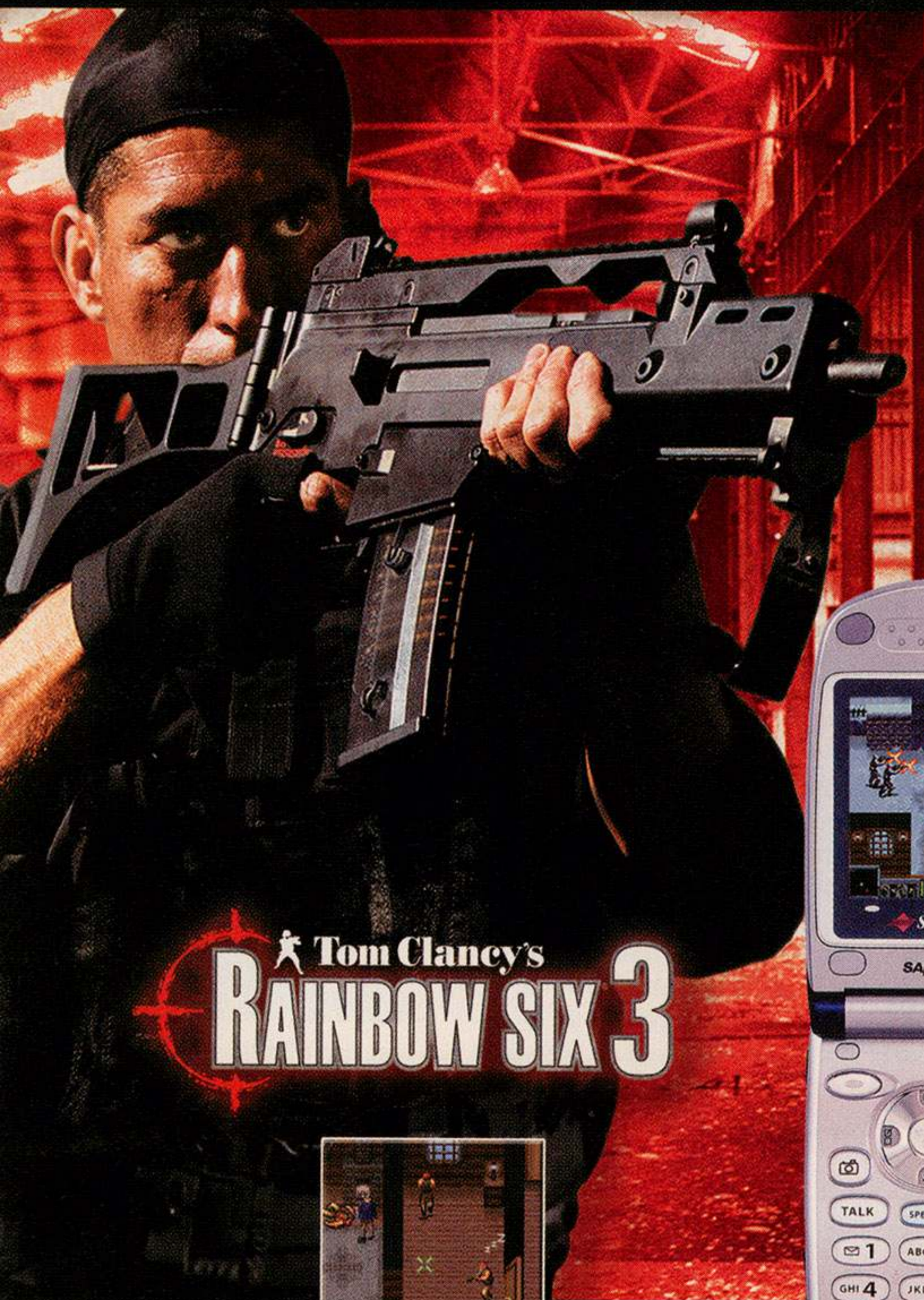


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■ First Look ■ Developed by Treyarch  
 ■ Published by Activision ■ Target release date: 2005

All screens shown here are from the Xbox version.





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## Snowblind

**PE X PC** Considering this game's high potential, Eidos is doing a great job of maintaining a low profile for this gritty, futuristic first-person shooter. Very little is known about this ambitious title from veteran developer Crystal Dynamics except that it's set in the same world as the popular Deus Ex titles but falls outside the official canon of that series. With 11 missions spread over 16 distinct maps (including an opera house, a Buddhist temple, a thick jungle, and a desolate urban wasteland), Snowblind casts you into the role of an elite superhuman combat specialist fighting on the front lines of a war in a "relevant near-future setting."



Snowblind boasts competitive, voice chat-enabled online play for up to 16 gamers with several exclusive play modes designed specifically for the PlayStation 2 and Xbox versions.

In addition to the familiar arsenal of Deus Ex-style weapons and gadgets, Snowblind will also feature a number of new vehicles and several creative inventory additions like the Riot Wall and "Kicker" physics gun, which promise to add a new level of depth to both single-player missions and multiplayer fragfests. Character customization will also play a big part in the development of your superhuman abilities with special items called "Biomods" upgrading your character's skills in specific areas. And while the details surrounding Snowblind's plot remain hazy at best, it is clear that an emphasis will be placed on establishing strong emotional ties between you and your comrades with careless and negligent play resulting in the inscribing of your fallen friends' names on a guilt-ridden War Memorial Wall at the end of the game.—Bones

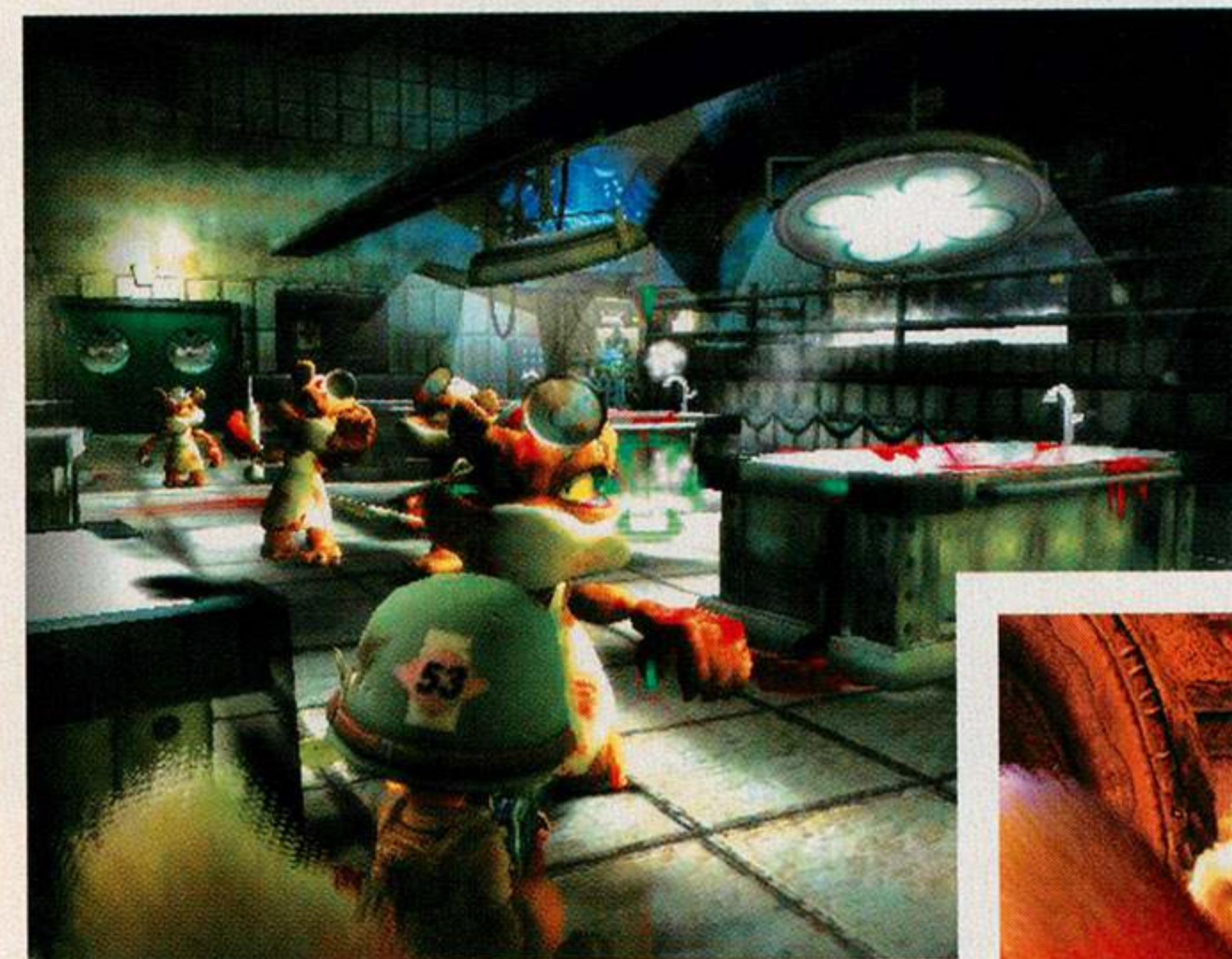


■ First Look ■ Developed by Crystal Dynamics ■ Published by Eidos ■ Target release date: To be determined

## Conker: Live and Reloaded



**X** As a Rare example of gamers getting more bang for their buck, Conker: Live and Reloaded is actually two games in one: a brand-new, Xbox Live-supported, team-based shooter; and a fully re-created version of the N64 hit Conker's Bad Fur Day. Live and Reloaded features competitive deathmatch and cooperative campaign story modes for up to 16 players via system link or Xbox Live with downloadable content like new maps and unlockable extras. In the campaign mode, players take part in online, story-driven, multiplayer missions as part of a team of deadly squirrels by assuming the role of one of six distinct character types, including Skyjockey, Long Ranger, Grunt, Demolisher, Thermophile, and Sneaker. Your battle against the evil Tediz spans two campaigns, Old War and Future War, and is comprised of a set of sub-missions to be played progressively online with the cooperative strategy of your teammates. Conker's cute and furry appearance belies his deadly abilities (and foul mouth) as Live and Reloaded features an arsenal of devastating weaponry like camera-guided rockets, anti-infantry sentries, acid throwers, five vehicle types, and special skills that enable you to disguise yourself or feign death and creep up on unsuspecting enemies. The bonus game, Conker's Bad Fur Day, has been completely revamped with updated graphics and "enhanced profanity" that promise to uphold all the lewd humor and tacky innuendoes that made this squirrel famous in the first place.—Bones



■ First Look ■ Developed by Rare  
 ■ Published by Microsoft ■ Target release date: March



# Mech Assault 2: Lone Wolf

**X** As the Xbox-exclusive follow-up to the popular Mech Assault, Lone Wolf cranks up the intensity of the robotic combat with several flashy technical improvements and a few ambitious additions. The level of interactivity has been noticeably increased as every environment in the game's five distinct worlds is now entirely destructible. A new perspective has also been introduced to help players appreciate the sheer enormity of the towering 40-foot metal monsters. For the first time, you can hop in and out of your Mech to scope out the battlefield, climb walls, hitch a ride with an ally aircraft, or even hijack an enemy



Mech for use against your opponents. Lone Wolf also features a new single-player campaign mode with a deeper and more immersive story line to compliment the competitive, team-based Xbox Live play (with optional Xbox Live headset support for international trash talking). The variety of selectable 31st-Century weapons and vehicles has also been beefed up with each Mech having unique weapons and artillery configurations like the super-sneaky Raptor



Mech and the massive, monkeylike Atlas Mech. Unfortunately, Mech Assault 2: Lone Wolf isn't due out until January of 2005, so Xbox-owning Mech fans searching for a quick fix will have to look elsewhere to slake their thirst for robotic destruction.—Bones

- First Look ■ Developed by Day 1 Studios
- Published by Microsoft
- Target release date: January

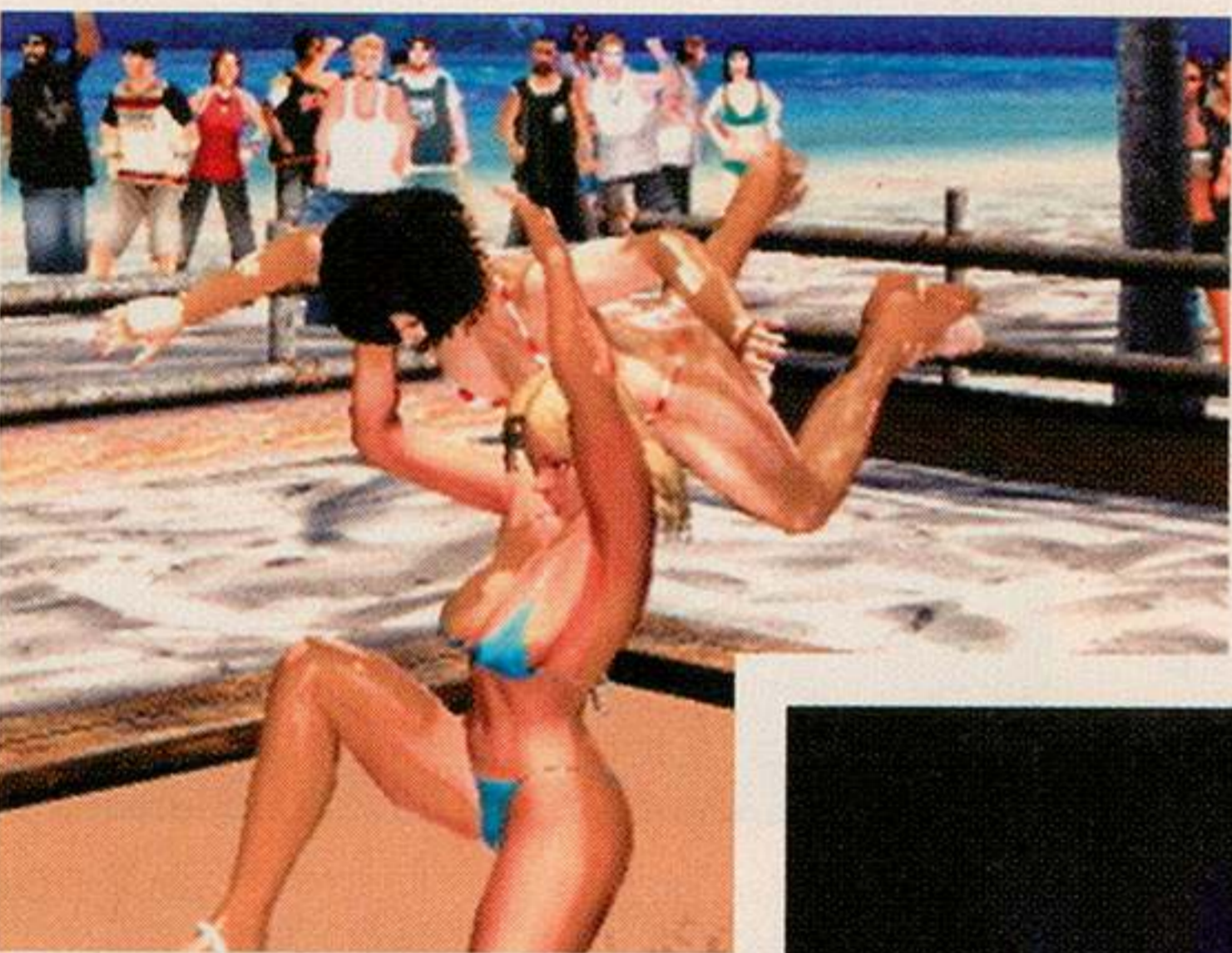
# Rumble Roses

**FE** If salivating over scantily clad women playing volleyball or duking it out in a street brawl isn't enough for you, then Konami's take on the video-game jiggle factor is sure to arouse your imagination even further. This all-female wrestling event has super-sexy computer-generated models hitting the canvas in a three-count competition. You'll be able to determine the personality—naughty

or nice—of all 11 playable titillating ladies, and the type of persona you pick reflects how your grappler wrestles, what kind of attitude she expresses, and most importantly, the type of costume she wears. Beyond the usual elbows and suplexes, the realistic combat also includes humiliating opponents by placing them in compromising positions. And what would a respectable all-woman wrestling game be without a mud mode?! You can witness the finesse and grace of two bikini-wearing ladies splattering and soaking in the slippery mud pit. Sure, it's a pubescent guy thing, but a combination of an age-old sport and some very hot eye candy is sure to create some unforgettable gaming moments.

—Four-Eyed Dragon

- First Look ■ Developed by KCET
- Published by Konami
- Target release date: November





# Donkey Konga

**D**onkey Konga has the potential to be one of those games with a simple, no-brainer concept that turns out to be fun and deceptively addicting. As with other music-oriented games, such as *Guitar Mania* and *Dance Dance Revolution*, you use a nontraditional controller (in this case, dual drums) to beat out the rhythm of a tune by following along with the moving onscreen icons. For variety, you're sometimes prompted to clap your hands together, and the sound registers with the built-in microphones.

The game's called *Donkey Konga*, and Donkey Kong himself is playing congas on-screen, but your set of skins is called the DK Bongo drum controller—conga-looking bongos that are close to actual bongo size.

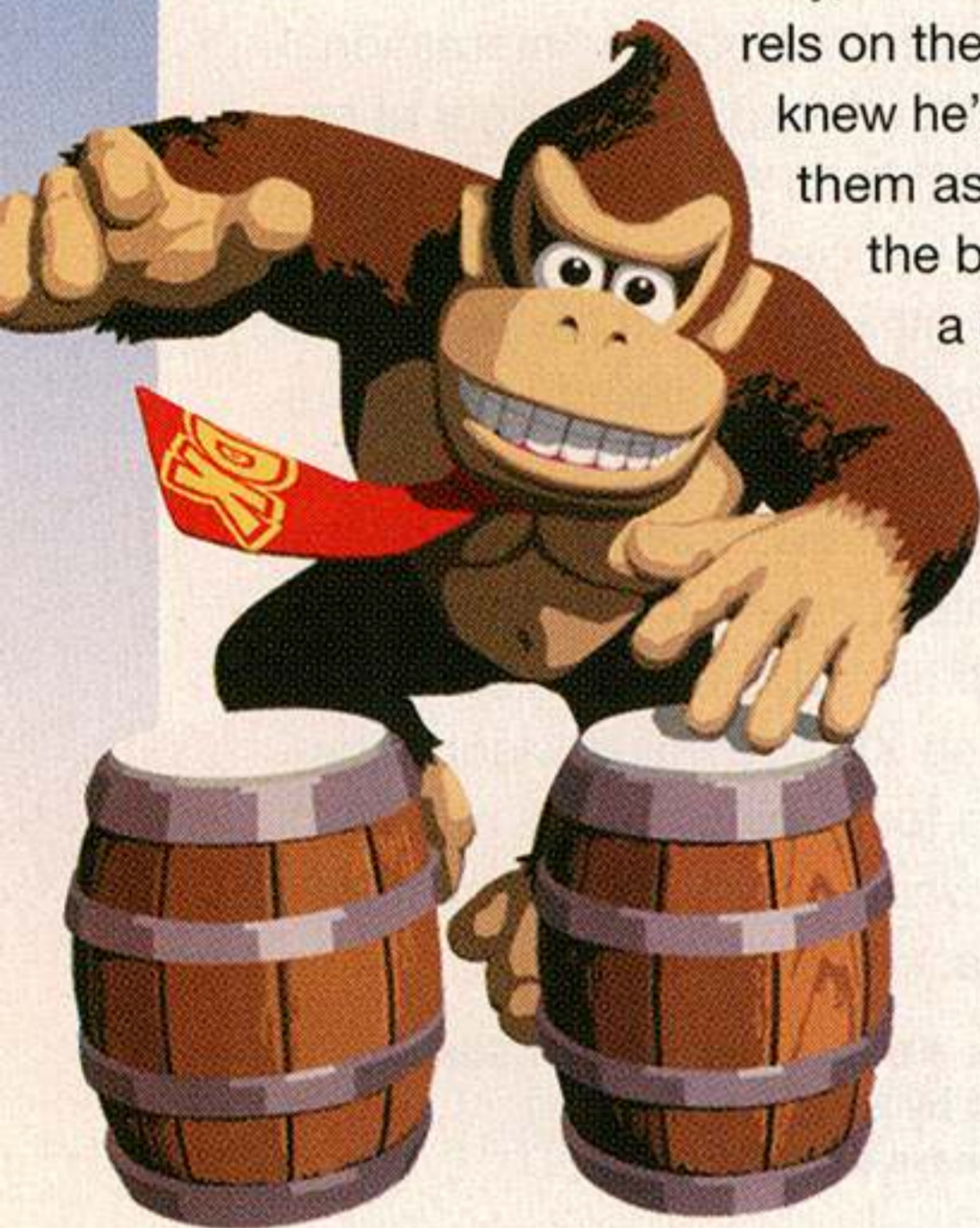
The song list is long and eclectic. The game features 30 tunes that range from kids medleys to classical to pop chart toppers. There are three difficulty settings and five gameplay modes, including four-player jam sessions and two-player versus action.

Sure, sure, you say, but what about the story line? DK himself and his simian pal,

Diddy, are the stars. They discover a pair of old barrels on the beach one day, and Cranky Kong (you knew he'd show up eventually) correctly identifies them as legendary musical instruments. So let the beatings begin. And even if you can't tell a conga from a bongo, Konga seems destined to beat those definitions into you.

—*Brother Buzz*

- First Look ■ Developed by Namco
- Published by Nintendo
- Target release date: September



# Astro Boy

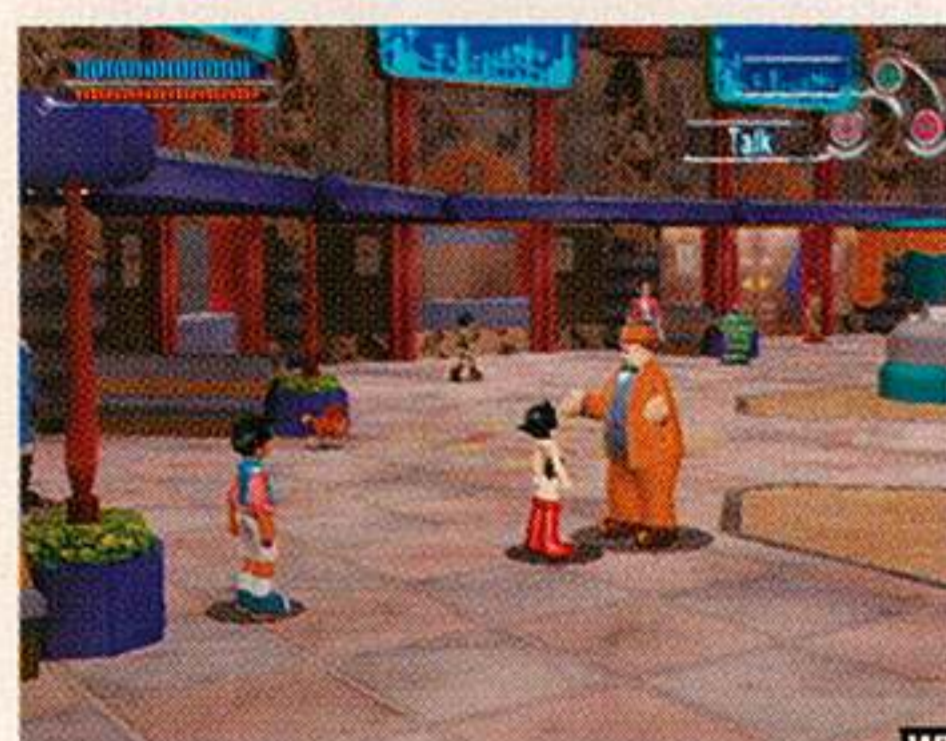
**M**anga doesn't get any more retro than *Astro Boy*, Osamu Tezuka's brainchild that kicked off Japan's infatuation with cartoons over 50 years ago. After Astro's many incarnations in print and on TV, Sonic Team is bringing the iconic robot boy to the PS2.

The game begins with the creation of Astro Boy in the lab of Dr. O'Shay. Two of Astro Boy's powers, Rocket Feet and Supersonic Hearing, develop almost immediately. Several other abilities must be discovered as the game progresses, including 1,000,000-Horsepower Strength, Arm Cannon, X-Ray Vision, Digibeam, and the Power of Analyzation.

The Rocket Feet get you up in the air and help you explore the vast reaches of Metro City right away. The buildings and environments are filled with 1950s sci-fi charm, and are fleshed out nicely with stylish humans and androids. Side-quests supplement Astro Boy's main story and boss battles to give players a bit of freedom. Predictably, collector cards are hidden throughout the game to reward exploration.

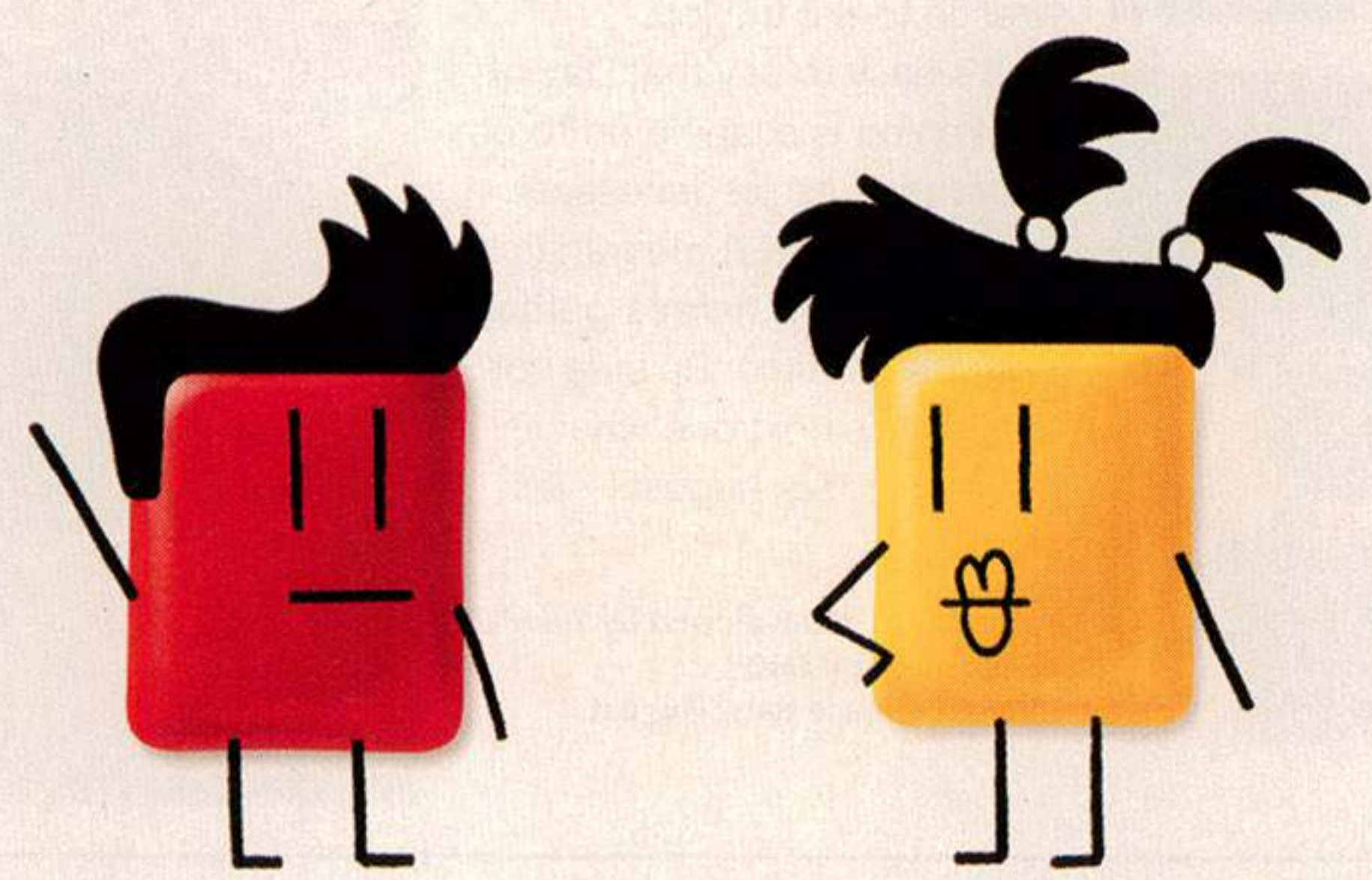
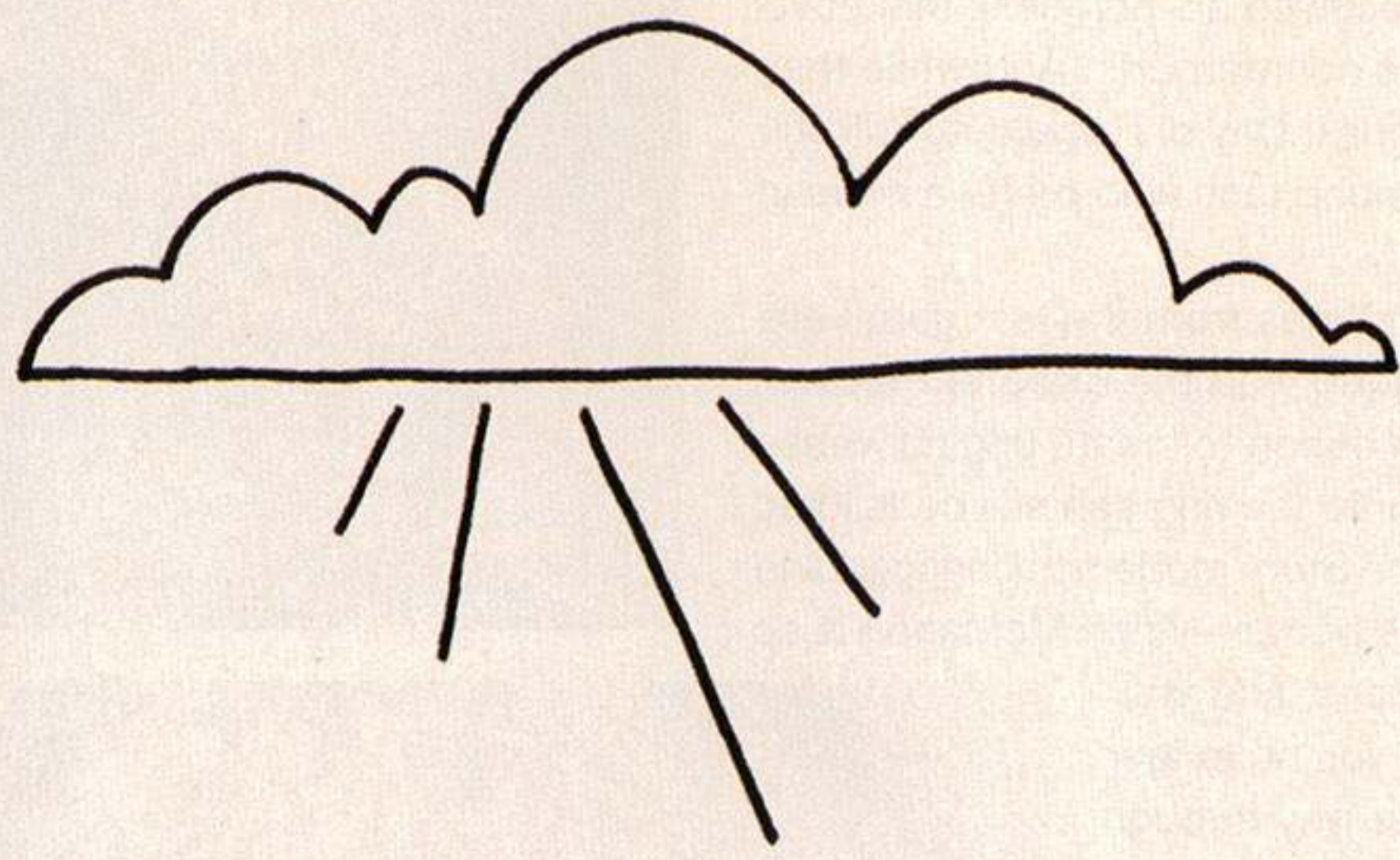
For as great as it looks, however, actually playing *Astro Boy* is a mixed bag. Difficulty ensues as soon as you have to combine flight with any other activity, i.e. fighting. Combat, especially of the aerial variety, feels cumbersome and has a steep learning curve. The camera controls are unintuitive, and targeting has as much to do with luck as skill. *Astro Boy* would benefit from an overhauled control scheme, but because it's already been released in Japan, it's unlikely that any major changes will occur.—*Optimus Sublime*

- Hands-On ■ Developed by Sonic Team ■ Published by Sega ■ Target release date: August





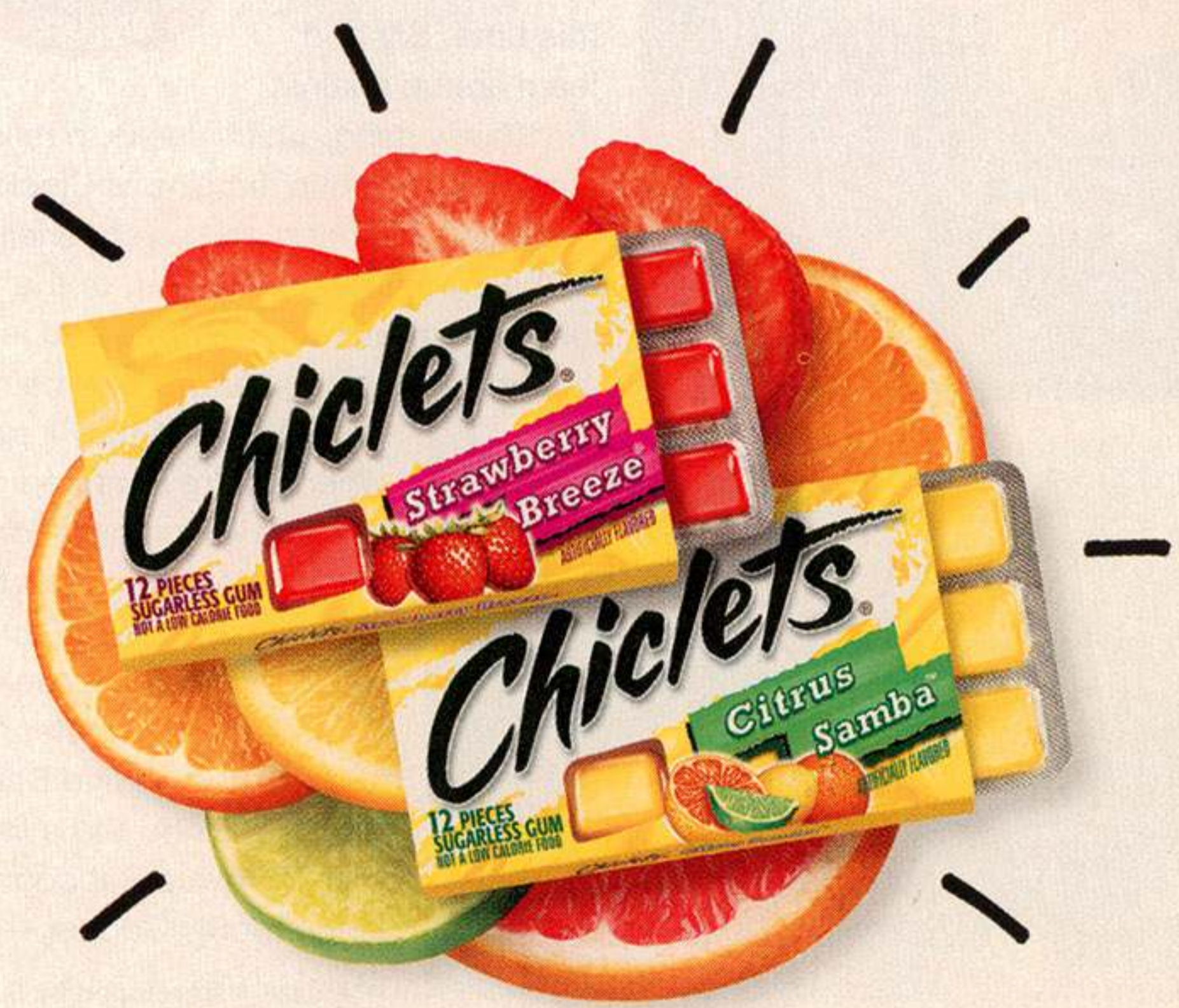
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# WWE WrestleMania: Day of Reckoning

Looks like THQ has once again returned to the lab to craft another WWE title, this one called Day of Reckoning. This time, THQ embellishes on the same wrestling engine used in last year's GameCube brawler *WrestleMania XIX*. The characters have received an incredible makeover, and your favorite WWE Superstars now look more like their real-life counterparts. And while the PS2 has the upper hand on sales in the ring with its *SmackDown* series, *Day of Reckoning* will still



be the choice among fans who prefer a more intimate setting.

All the match types from the last game are still available (along with the Bra and Panties match), as is the option to create original wrestlers. Entrances into the ring can still be tailored to your fitting. The Story mode has changed and seemingly for the better—Vince McMahon is accepting applications, and you want in. Luckily, you no longer have to fight your way through mall security guards trained to wrestle to get the job.

It's easy to say that *Day of Reckoning* is shaping up to be better than its predecessors, falling in line with the tradition of THQ's WWE games getting better each time. Be sure not to miss this next one when it hits stores this August.—*Test Monkey*

■ Hands-On ■ Developed by Yuke's  
 ■ Published by THQ  
 ■ Target release date: August



# Sly 2: Band of Thieves

Sly Cooper, master thief and raccoon, is ready to unveil his major caper for the PS2. With *Band of Thieves*, developer Sucker Punch is looking to endow Sly and crew with more sophisticated gameplay and details that belie the game's cartoon animation visual style.

Sly's pals Murray (the hippo) and Bentley (the turtle) will have the opportunity to star on their own with more extensive playable skills. Murray has a key role as Sly's muscle, and Bentley shows stealth moves as a sort of ace demolitions expert. In some areas (including the boss battles), you're required to switch among the three thieves.



On that subject, [www.gamepro.com](http://www.gamepro.com) this time, Sly and team are up against the Klaww gang, which seeks to reassemble the robotic remains of Clockwerk, Sly's nemesis and sworn enemy of the Cooper clan. The A.I. of the villains has been juiced to react more directly and less predictably to your moves. Henchmen will also be more aware of your presence, and they'll swarm to attack you when you're detected. To thwart his foes, Sly gets new moves for his thief's cane, including power-up attacks and the ability to pick pockets. But he and his gang will also make use of such tools as ice axes, spy cams, and parachutes.

Fans should find *Band of Thieves* to be bigger, trickier, and a little more dangerous than *Thievius Raccoonus*; a worthy challenge for Sly Cooper.—*Brother Buzz*

■ Update ■ Developed by Sucker Punch  
 ■ Published by Sony ■ Target release date: September





## Sega Super Stars

**PE** Sega Super Stars is a collection of more than a dozen “family friendly” mini-games starring some of video gaming’s most recognizable characters and titles. Designed exclusively for use with the EyeToy peripheral for the PlayStation 2, Sega Super Stars lets players star in some of their favorite gaming moments like sprinting through Sonic the Hedgehog’s Super Speed Tube or going for a stroll, er, roll in Super Monkey Ball. Now, uninhibited gamers will have a fun excuse for flailing their arms in the air like madmen as they shadow-box the likes of Virtua Fighter’s Akira and Rau, and frantically slap their air-instruments in Samba de Amigo. With the full lineup of Super Star mini-games to be announced in the months to come, it looks as though Sega is preparing to charge its way to the top of the new interactive family/party games genre.—*Bones*

■ **First Look** ■ **Developed by Sonic Team**  
 ■ **Published by Sega** ■ **Target release date: Fall 2004**



## The Incredibles

**PE X G** If you have a license that you don’t want treated like kiddie crap, hand it to THQ’s Heavy Iron Studios—its last two games (Scooby Doo: Night of 1000 Frights and SpongeBob SquarePants: The Battle for Bikini Bottom) were better than they really had any right to be. Heavy Iron’s latest project is Pixar’s big Thanksgiving blockbuster-in-waiting, *The Incredibles*, Brad Bird’s CG



homage to the *Fantastic Four*. The game stars five of the CG flick’s super-heroes (the full family plus one “family friend”); each character has his or her own gameplay style and set of super-moves. Super-



strong Mr. Incredible can punch, perform action-hero combos, or use his super strength to pick up heavy objects and pull down poles to propel himself slingshot style; his wife, the versatile Elasti-girl, stretches and deforms to lasso enemies and whip them around a room.—*Star Dingo*

■ **First Look** ■ **Developed by Heavy Iron Studios**  
 ■ **Published by THQ** ■ **Target release date: November**



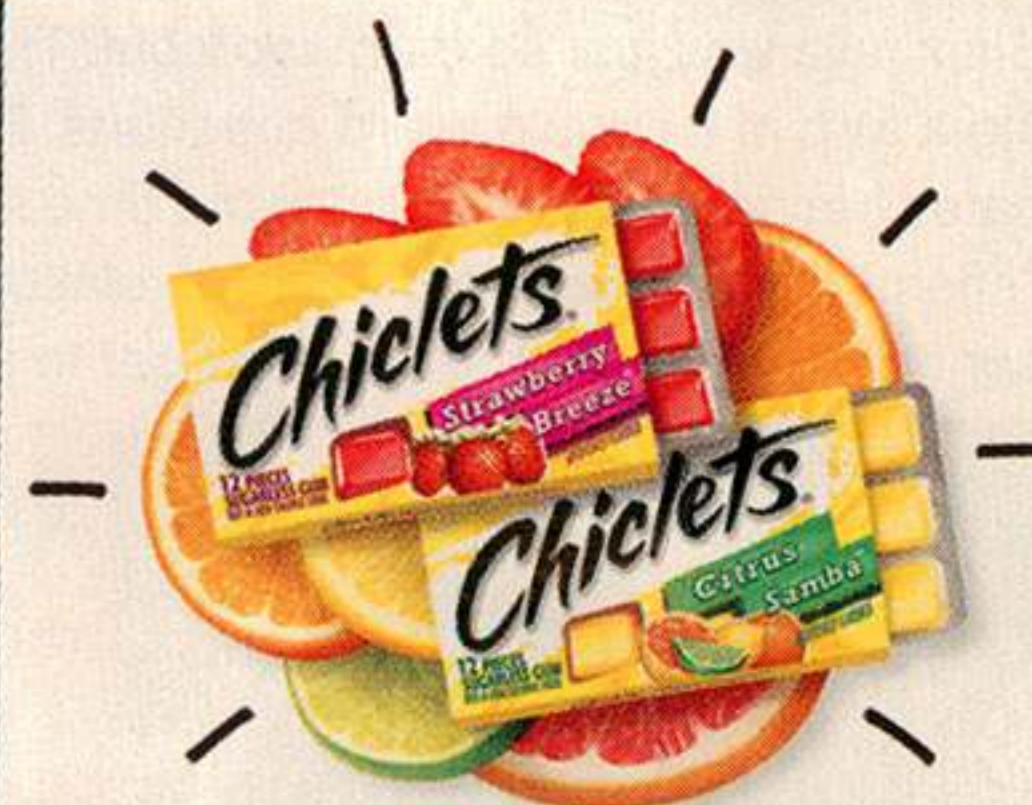
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## Gradius V

**FE** In production for over two years, Gradius V is a work of love for KCET, and it shows. Although our preview build was a mere two levels, the polish and production values were at the top of the charts. Not only does the game look good at this stage, but it also already stands a good chance of giving Ikaruga a run for its money.

All of the classic Gradius elements are here: the abilities to choose your power-up style, adjust your option arrangement, and even cheat a bit by using a variation on the original Konami code. Visually, the game is awash with vibrant



color and constant action. Lighting effects are liberally used, giving rise to flames and explosions that appear to burn with an unusual intensity. While the gameplay is restricted to a 2D plane, high-resolution imagery fills the background to the point of being so engaging it's distracting. No one will ever accuse Gradius V of not being pretty—this could be eye candy at its best.—Syriel

■ Hands-On ■ Developed by KCET  
 ■ Published by Konami ■ Target release date: September



## Dynasty Warriors 4: Empires

**FE** The newest member of the clan, Dynasty Warriors 4: Empires, is no mere expansion pack. Empires is a standalone game that adds kingdom-building strategy to Dynasty Warriors' trademark tactical action.

The new Empire mode requires more than just slaughter. There are bribes to be issued, tech to be traded, and thugs and sorceresses to be hired. In the preview build, the map interface was clean and easy to understand. Action has been improved with the inclusion of Battlefield Strongholds, crucial areas of the battle map that provide troop strength and morale bonuses for the controlling kingdom.

Empires also improves on the Officer Edit mode with new character models and abilities. Four entertaining two-player "Vs. Challenge" modes offer quick hack-n-slash relief for those times when you just don't need the weight of kingdom management on your shoulders. Empires is shaping up to be a well-rounded blend of action and strategy with plenty of extras to keep the fans happy.—Optimus Sublime

■ Hands-On ■ Developed by Omega Force  
 ■ Published by Koei ■ Target release date: September



## Blinx 2: Masters of Time & Space

**X** While the original Blinx may not have set the world on fire (to put it nicely), there were some really awesome concepts—a vacuum as a weapon, time controls, and an interesting "collect three similar marshmallows" gameplay style—that begged for further exploration. Plus, that Blinx fella was just so darn adorable. The new-and-improved Blinx is taking a turn in a couple weird directions. First off, the gameplay now alternates between the exploits of the time sweepers (cats) and those of the "enemy" pigs, masters of special relations. While cats gather crystals to control the flow of time, the pigs get to use all manner of weird warps and

portals, including portable holes you can throw under doors and on top of impossible-to-reach places in order to make them accessible. You also get to design your own kitty or piggy, shaping its ears and eyes and style before unleashing it on the unsuspecting time-space continuum or into new two-player battle and co-op modes.—Star Dingo

■ First Look ■ Developed by Artoon  
 ■ Published by Microsoft ■ Target release date: November





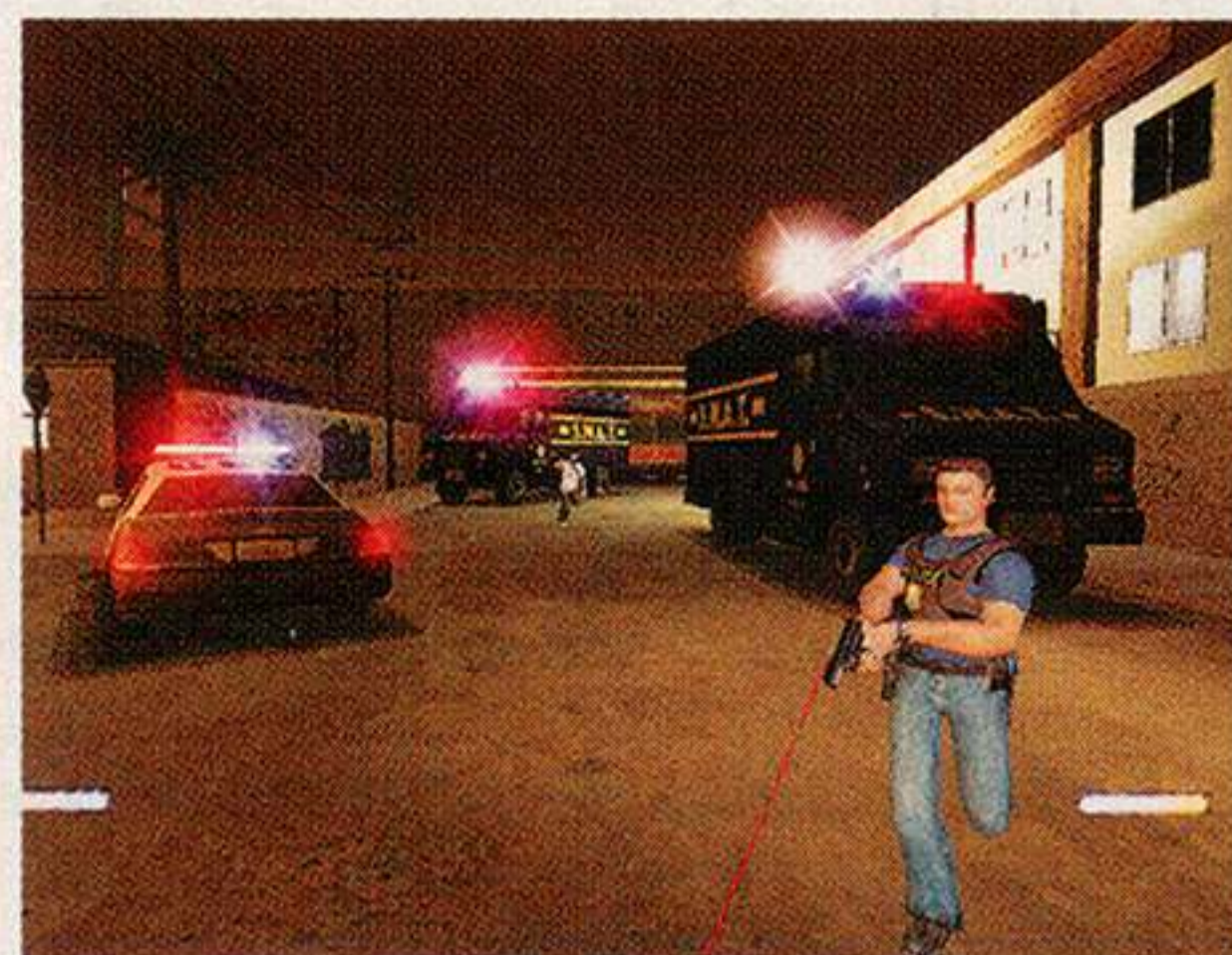
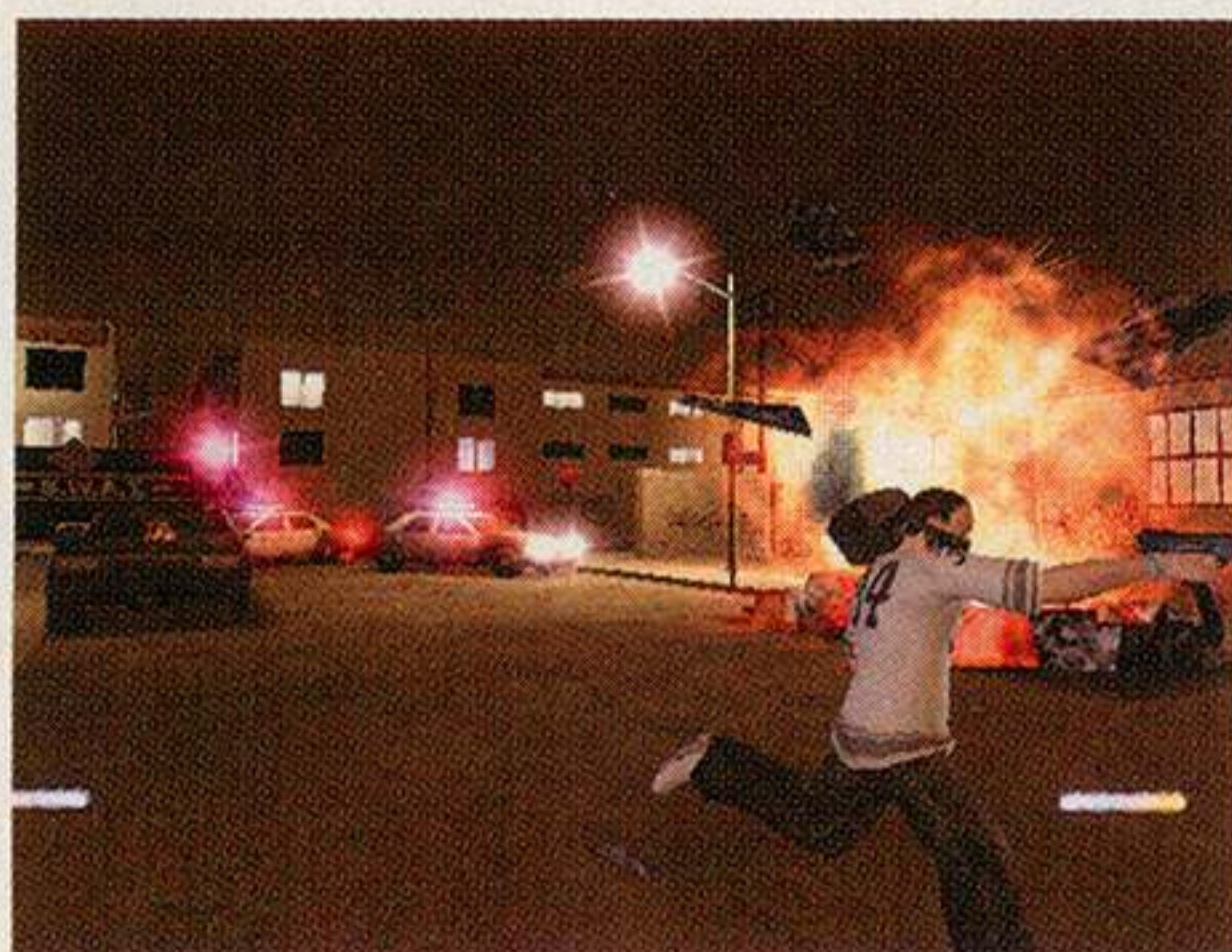
## 25 to Life



**PE X** Can't get enough of that urban thuggery happening in your city streets? 25 to Life puts you right smack in the middle of the gang life, forcing you to protect your precious turf online with up to 16 other people. You can also choose to be the po-po if the law appeals to you instead. Playing it alone, this third-person shooter has you rising through the gang ranks, where breaking out of prison and sneaking into a drug kingpin's domain are all in a day's work. Just don't attract unwanted attention from pedestrians, barking dogs, and car alarms—the typical neighborhood environment. Your street smarts are rewarded with new customizable threads that show off your true ranking among the crew. Although 25 to Life plays on today's violent (albeit perverse) street personalities, an early demo of the game already showed signs of solid street cred.—*Four-Eyed Dragon*

■ **First Look** ■ **Developed by Avalanche Software**  
 ■ **Published by Eidos Interactive** ■ **Target release date: February**

All screens shown here are from the PlayStation 2 version.



## Phantom Crash 2050



**PE** In preparation for a follow-up to 2002's Phantom Crash, Genki is focusing its energy on the best aspects of the mech fighter—namely, deep customization options and awesome multiplayer combat. Despite its name, Phantom Crash 2050 actually takes place during a postapocalyptic 2071, a time when robot fighting becomes one of the most popular spectator sports. 2050 is the very first online mech combat game for the PS2. Up to eight players will be able



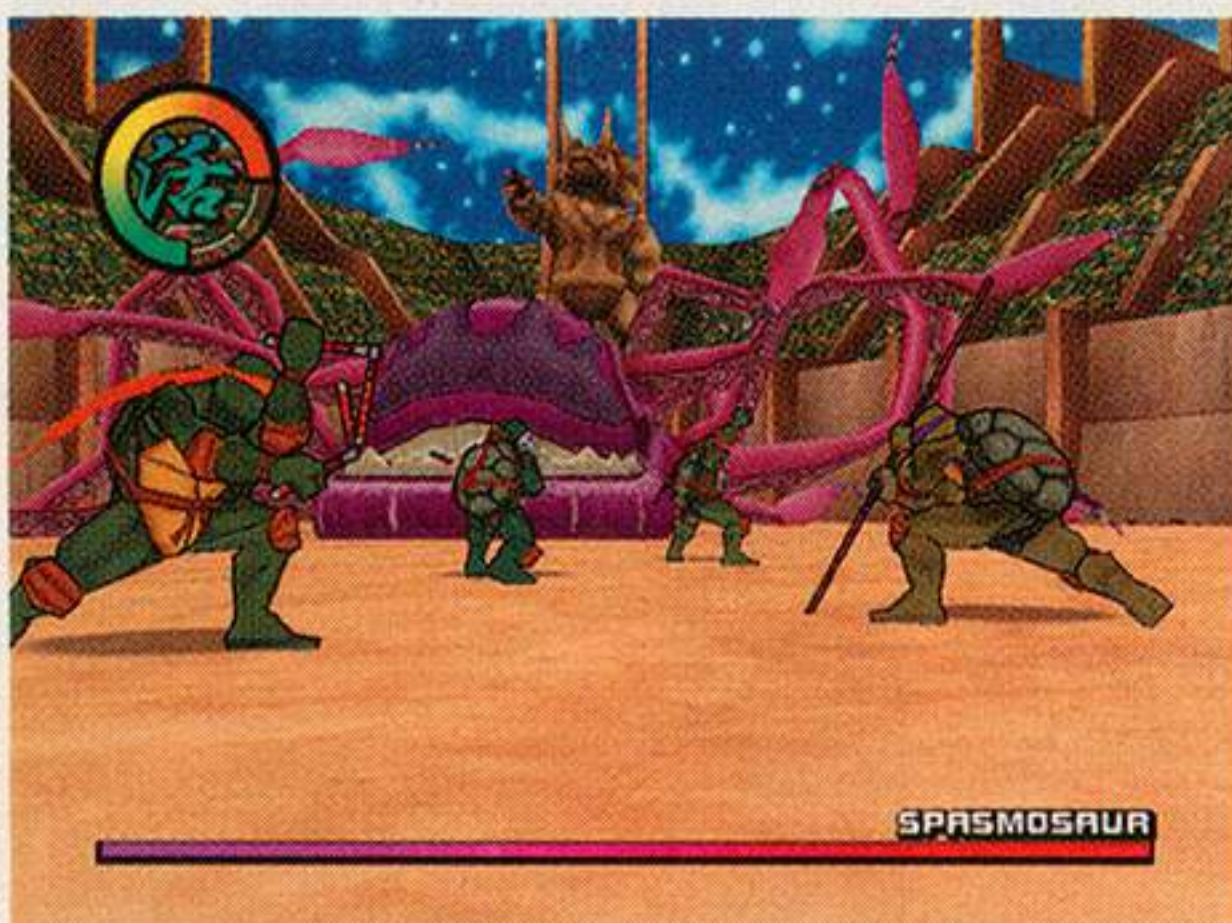
to enter online arenas and pit their heavily customized robots against one another. Konami is touting the insane amount of customization options that allow for over 1 million combinations of body parts and weapons. Besides more customization and arenas, the sequel will introduce all-new features, such as stealth capabilities that turn your robot invisible and the option to toggle between first- and third-person views.—*Iron Monkey*

■ **First Look** ■ **Developed by Genki**  
 ■ **Published by Konami** ■ **Target release date: February**



## Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles 2

**PE X G** With cel-shaded visuals and vocal talents provided by the TV show's cast, Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles 2 will be an action-packed re-creation of the popular cartoon series. The last game allowed only two people to play simultaneously, but this sequel will allow up to four players to join forces in a story-based cooperative mode or compete with each other head-to-head in a Battle Nexus mode. Though this chapter will place more emphasis on platform hopping and obstacle dodging, the fighting system is being improved so that each Turtle will have new unique abilities and jaw-crushing ninjitsu techniques, and you'll be able to chain attacks together to form more than 30 moves. The nonlinear story, based on the second season of the show, will change depending on how well you fight, and as an added bonus, players will be able to unlock the old-school TMNT arcade games.—*Iron Monkey*



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■ **First Look** ■ **Developed and published by Konami**  
 ■ **Target release date: October**





# Midnight Club 3: Dub Edition

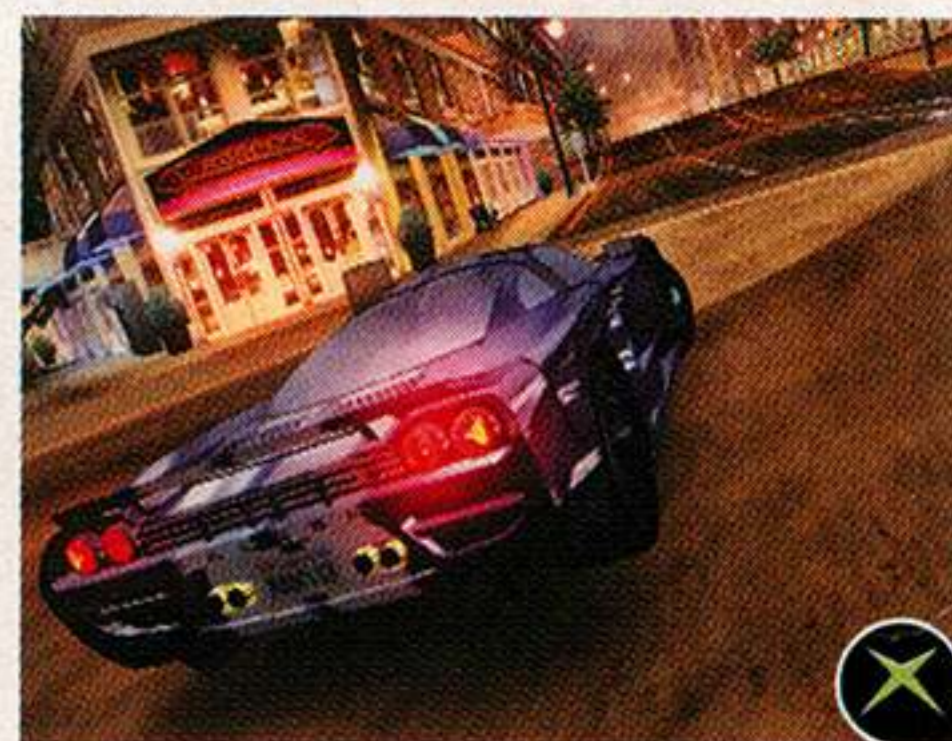
**PE X** The Midnight Club series has built a following since its debut way back in the first year of the PlayStation 2's release. With its latest effort, Rockstar is looking to become the top dog. Midnight Club 3: Dub Edition packs all the wide-open street racing the franchise is known for but expands it with upgraded graphics, larger race courses, and more branching paths to the finish line.

The big news is the partnership with *Dub* magazine, which specializes in high-end car customization, so look for flashy, expensive

rims that are fully 3D modeled. Bikes are also back, and they control better this time, which is good because they can now use turbo to fly through the streets. Eight-player online support for both the PS2 and Xbox lets you compete in competitions or just cruise around the city and floss out.

—Tokyo Drifter

- First Look ■ Developed by Rockstar San Diego
- Published by Rockstar Games
- Target release date: November



# Dance Dance Revolution Extreme



**PE** Konami's move-your-feet-to-the-beat masterpiece returns to home consoles with new songs and the inclusion of EyeToy support. All the standard features are here, including song modifiers, workout mode, background videos, nonstop, and the ultrahard Oni mode, along with a healthy selection of big-name licenses—you'll find the likes of Paul Oakenfold and BT among others.

The EyeToy modes in our build were limited but functional. One mode simply acts as a camera, replacing the background with live video of your showstopping performance, while the other requires you to constantly

move your hands to keep the screen clean—stop wiping, and the arrows become obscured.

Fans of the series are sure to enjoy the mix, but the jury is still out on the EyeToy features. If fleshed out a bit, they could really enhance the series, but if the visual gadget receives the minimalist treatment, it will quickly be forgotten.—Syriel

- Hands-On ■ Developed by KCET
- Published by Konami
- Target release date: September

# Under the Skin



**PE** Under the Skin is a cel-shaded, free-roaming, third-person action/adventure game that combines the graphical funkiness of Viewtiful Joe with the game ingenuity of Jet Grind Radio. Players assume the role of Cosmi, an adolescent alien sent to Earth in a coming-of-age trial. Cosmi must compete with resident aliens in pranking the indigenous life forms of Earth to acquire enough points (coins) to be able to return home as a full-fledged adult.

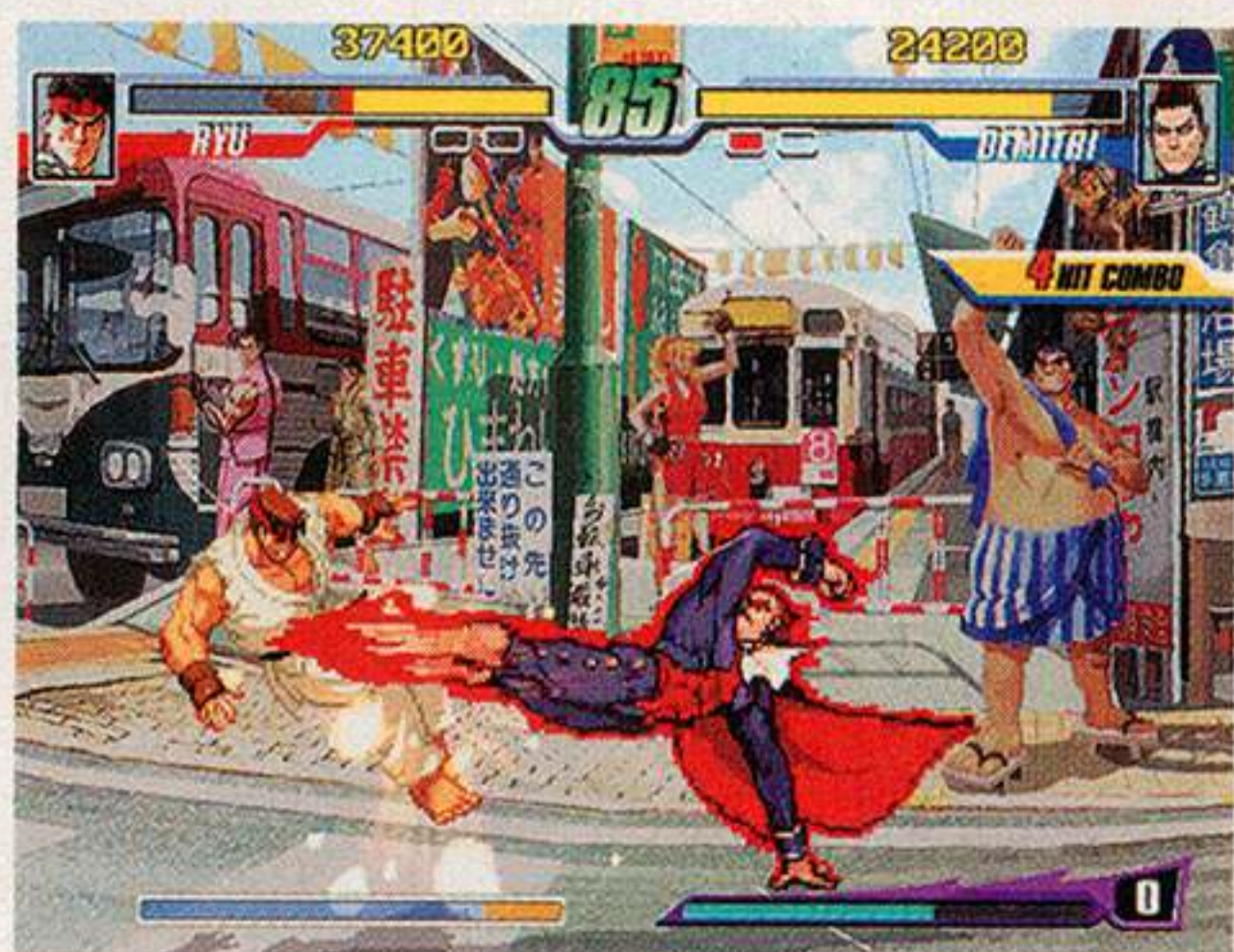
Cosmi, in human disguise, must attack innocent bystanders using a bizarre arsenal of weapons, including Karaoke, Farts, and Camera Flashes to acquire coins without revealing his identity.

With its bizarre gameplay and eight free-roaming environments (including a Resident Evil level!), we eagerly await the arrival of Under the Skin in October.—Rice Burner

- Hands-On ■ Developed and published by Capcom
- Target release date: October







# Capcom Fighting Jam

**PE X** Believe the hype—2D fighting is alive, and Capcom, proprietor of the best genre entries out there, is drawing from the rosters of its best fighters for a frenzied free-for-all in Capcom Fighting Jam for the PlayStation 2 and Xbox. Capcom Fighting Jam will assemble fighters from some of Capcom's most famous series, including Ryu and Guile from Street Fighter II; Demitri and Felicia from Darkstalkers; Yun and Chun-Li from Street Fighter III; Guy and Sakura from Street



Fighter Alpha; and Leo and Hauser from the lesser-known Red Earth. The brawler will use a six-button control scheme and feature your staple Arcade and Survival modes, as well as a Vs. mode that showcases two-on-two team battles. PlayStation 2 owners will have to keep head-to-head fights confined to the living room, but Xbox pugilists will be able to compete online via Xbox Live.—Iron Monkey

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

All screens shown here are from the PlayStation 2 version.

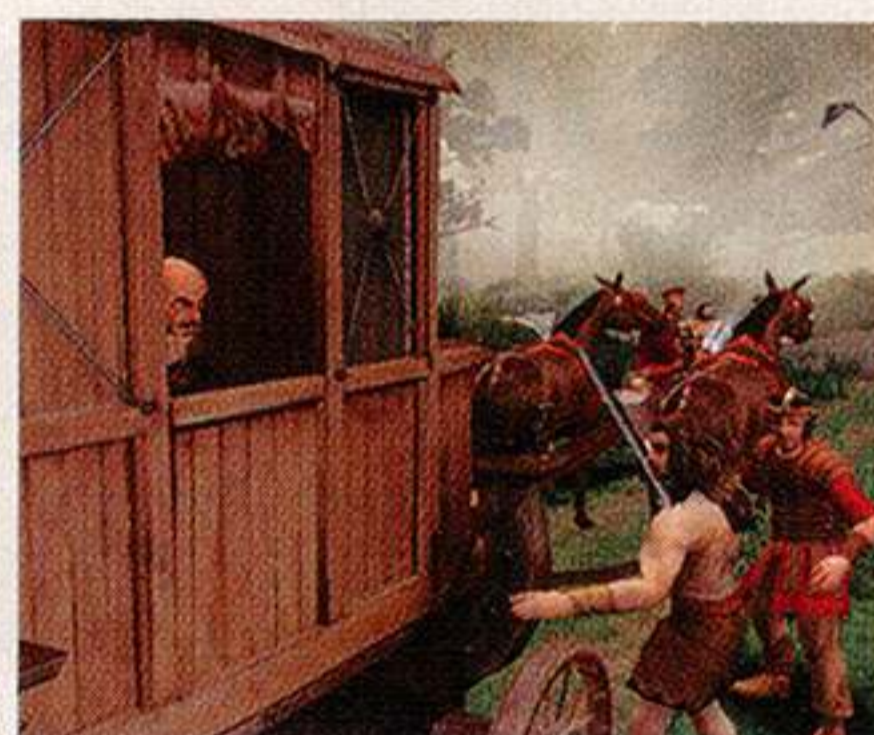


# King Arthur

**PE X C** The classic tale about the legendary king and his faithful Knights of the Round Table is about to be remade once again. Developer Krome Studios' version is based on the upcoming movie *King Arthur*, which is produced by Jerry Bruckheimer and stars Clive Owen and Keira Knightly. In the game, you take control of the five main characters, including Arthur, Lancelot, and Guinevere, and follow the story's adventure, which is full of love, loyalty, and lots of sword slashing. The unique battle system enables you to fight others while on top of a horse, while two-player co-op mode ensures total medieval tag-team action.—Four-Eyed Dragon

■ **First Look** ■ **Developed by Krome Studios**  
 ■ **Published by Konami** ■ **Target release date: Winter 2004**

All screens shown here are from the PlayStation 2 version.



# BC

**X** Intrepid, a satellite developer for France's famed Lionhead Studios, is hard at work on a new title that will send Xbox owners back to prehistory. BC takes place well before the birth of the Common Era and puts you in charge of a wandering pack of slope-brows who are keen on survival and the propagation of the species. Ravenous creatures, other tribes, and even the weather will threaten to eliminate your tribe from the gene pool. Only your wise leadership stands between immortality and extinction.

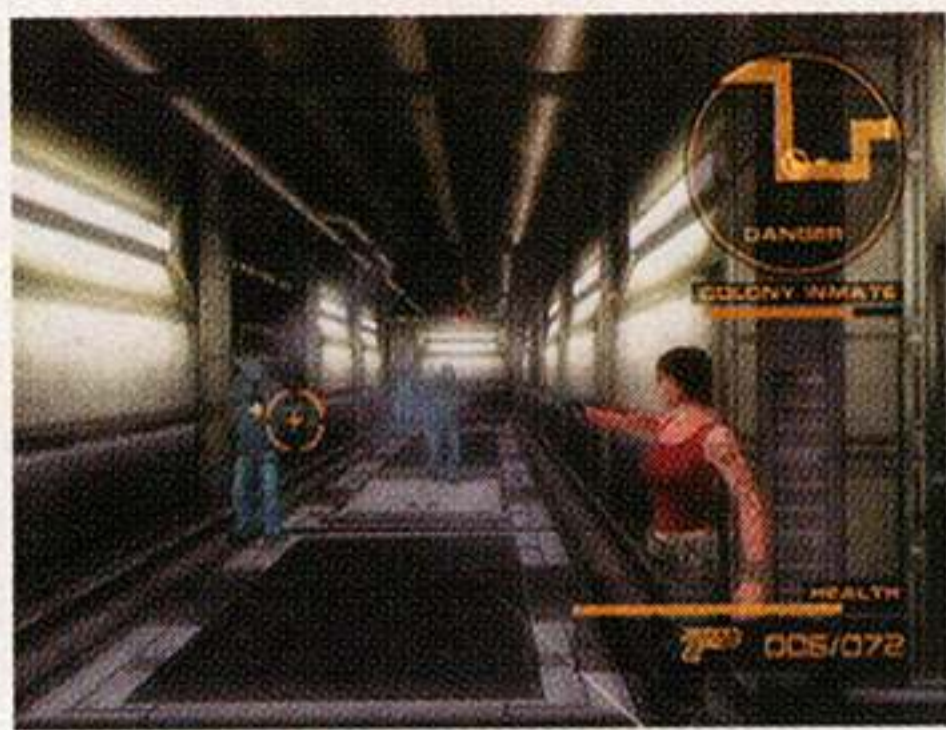
The developers are planning nonlinear gameplay in environments where everything is potentially a tool or weapon. Metaphorically, you'll be the big, black monolith providing your tribe with the impetus to evolve. Yet to be revealed: whether or not advanced A.I. and weirder-than-fiction emergent behaviors will set this Molyneux title apart from the herd.—Can o' Beans

■ **First Look** ■ **Developed by Intrepid Computer Entertainment**  
 ■ **Published by Microsoft** ■ **Target release date: 2005**





# Headhunter: Redemption



**PE X** **Headhunter: Redemption** is the continuation of the gritty, postapocalyptic story that takes place in a *Metropolis*-type world divided between "Above" and "Below." In the PS2 preview build, the most apparent difference between *Redemption* and other third-person action titles is the unique and somewhat convoluted targeting system. First, you press and hold R1 to highlight an enemy. As you hold R1, crosshairs appear and waver from side to side, replicating the process of drawing a bead

on your target. You then must time your shot with the swaying of the reticle (tap  $\times$  while holding R1 to fire). Surprisingly, this system works better than it sounds. The wonkiest part is toggling between targets, which requires you to flick the right analog stick while holding R1 and then going back to  $\times$  with your right thumb to fire. For now, it feels awkward and unwieldy, but Sega still has time before the August release date to tune things.—*Optimus Sublime*

- Hands-On ■ Developed by Amuze
- Published by Sega ■ Target release date: August

All screens shown here are from the PlayStation 2 version.



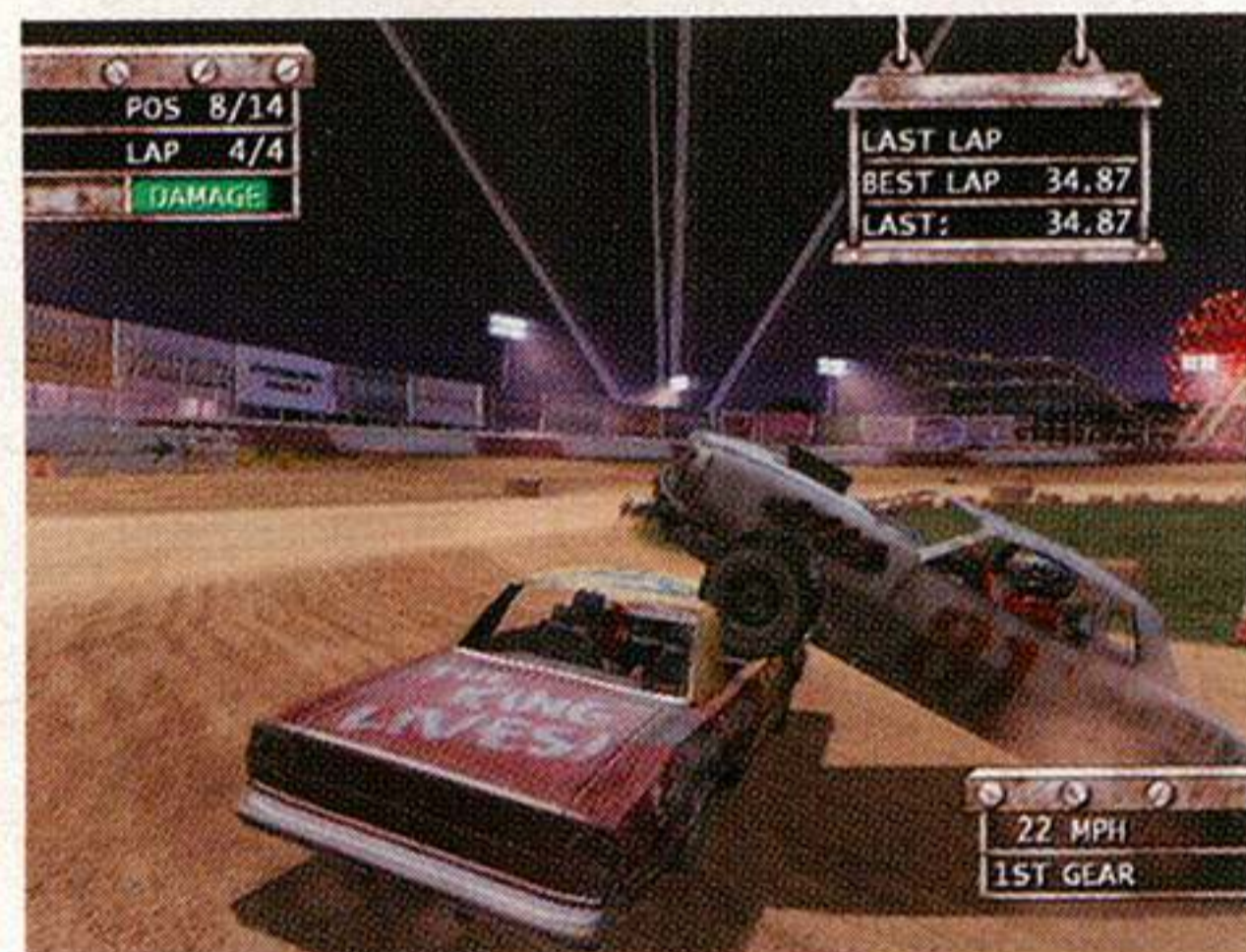
# Test Drive: Eve of Destruction



**PE** In an effort to reinvigorate the aging *Test Drive* franchise, Monster Games (*NASCAR: Dirt to Daytona*) and Atari are working on *Test Drive: Eve of Destruction*. Think cool *Road Warrior* cars beating the hell out of each other on dirt tracks. Mix in jumps, hay bales, and school buses, and you'll start to get the idea of what they're up to. The demo build featured four sample races: Suicide Surprise, Figure 8 Jump, Demolition Derby, and Jump Race. So far, *Eve of Destruction*

looks great, and the car physics need only minor tuning. Multiplayer mode isn't ready yet, but based on the single-player experience, it looks very promising. The only detraction is the annoying carnie barker announcer, but it's unclear whether the audio is final or filler. *Eve's* smash-em-up racer will be in stores this September.—*Optimus Sublime*

- Hands-On ■ Developed by Monster Games
- Published by Atari
- Target release date: September



# The Red Star



**PE X** Three heroes are joined together in this epic tale of treacherous rebellion against a tyrannical power. One, Maya Antares, a Sorceress-General for The Red Fleet, is forced to flee from her post when she hears that her husband, Marcus, once believed killed in a battle, is still alive. Meanwhile, The Red Fleet will stop at nothing to repossess her magical powers.

Set in a 3D world, *The Red Star's* style of gameplay resembles a cross between Capcom's *Final*



*Fight* and Konami's *Contra*—fending off bosses requires careful attention and precise maneuvering, while the guards you encounter throughout the levels can simply be handled with button mashing. You use strafes, pivots, and crosshairs to wage your way to freedom and truth, and each playable character is charged with different attacks and special abilities. Fly solo or engage in simultaneous two-player action when *The Red Star* arrives this September.—*Test Monkey*

- Hands-On ■ Developed and published by Acclaim ■ Target release date: September

All screens shown here are from the PlayStation 2 version.





# Advance Wars: Under Fire

**A** Advance Wars is on the march from the Game Boy Advance to the GameCube. Under Fire sees the franchise shift from a turn-based, aerial-view tactics game to a real-time, 3D, strategic-action game. You'll see warfare up close and personal from a soldier's perspective as you "jump" into different fronts as the leader of combat units, including a squad of infantry, a tank battalion, and flying gunships. Single button presses will enable you to leap into battle at any time and any location of your campaign. While you're fighting as the leader of one team in a variety of combat units, the rest of your army will defend terrain against attacks in your absence. The cool visuals display a stylized cartoon look, but there's nothing lighthearted about the combat. With Advance Wars: Under Fire, GBA warfare is about to grow up.—*Brother Buzz*



■ **First Look** ■ **Developed by** Kuju Entertainment  
 ■ **Published by** Nintendo ■ **Target release date:** 2005

# TimeSplitters: Future Perfect

**T** Travel through time to aid your past or future self in the fight against the wicked TimeSplitters and their plot to destroy humanity in the third installment of this popular arcadey shooter. A new, more cohesive story has Cortez seeking out the TimeSplitters' origins across five time periods, ranging from 1924 to 2401. The developer is promising no fewer than 20 weapons—everything from melee to rocket launcher plus a special new gravity gun (FPS fans take note: The gravity gun is the new flamethrower).

TimeSplitters: Future Perfect will ship with an upgraded Map Maker utility that enables the sharing of home-brewed multiplayer maps online. New but unspecified multiplayer modes are joining enhanced versions of old multiplayer faves like Deathmatch, Elimination, and BagTag. So if an aged version of yourself shows up at your door bearing a battered copy of TimeSplitters: Future Perfect, you're probably there to help.—*8 1/2 Samurai*

■ **First Look** ■ **Developed by** Free Radical Design  
 ■ **Published by** EA Games ■ **Target release date:** March

All screens shown here are from the Xbox version.



# Pariah

**C** Created by members of the Unreal team, this sci-fi FPS places you in the role of a down-and-out doctor who is given a new lease on life after a near-fatal crash. Accompanied by a woman infected with a lethal pathogen, you have 16 hours to get out of a contaminated prison sector before a thermonuclear detonation designed to eradicate the mysterious virus occurs.

Utilizing a heavily tweaked Unreal engine and Havok physics, this shooter will combine action and stealth with a methodically plotted story line to provide a gripping single-player experience. The developers are crafting environments to give players tons of strategic opportunities, while enemies will showcase an emergent A.I. and coordinate team-based attack tactics based on how you play. With the added allure of customizable weapons, vehicular combat, and a massive multiplayer experience, Pariah could end up being ranked alongside Halo and Riddick.—*Iron Monkey*

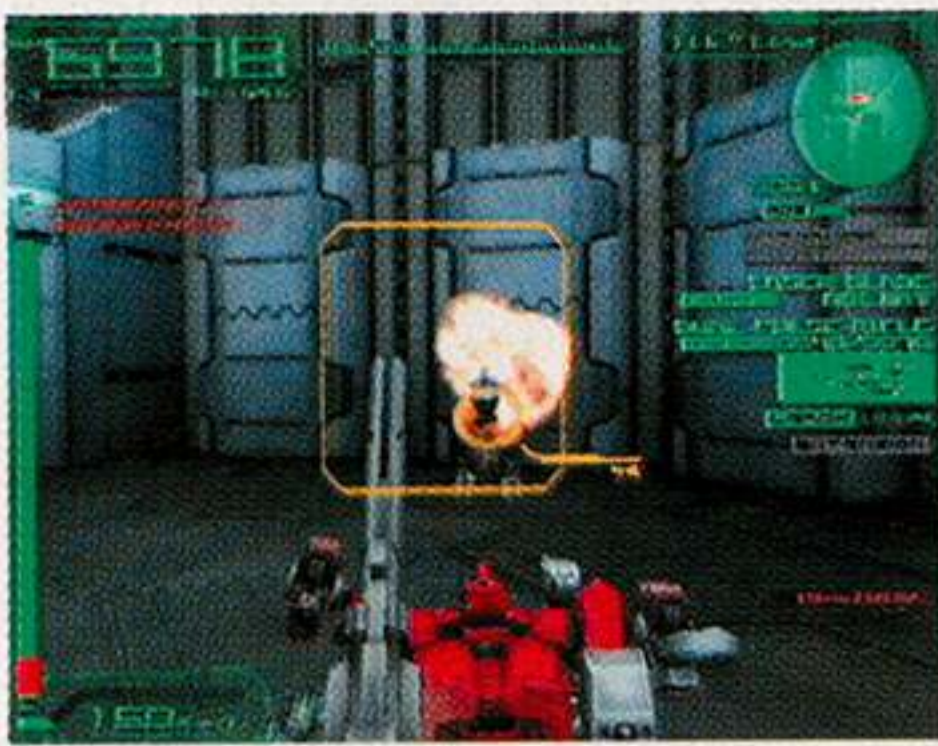
■ **First Look** ■ **Developed by** Pseudo Interactive (PS2); Digital Extremes (Xbox)  
 ■ **Published by** Groove Games ■ **Target release date:** Spring 2005

All screens shown here are from the Xbox version.



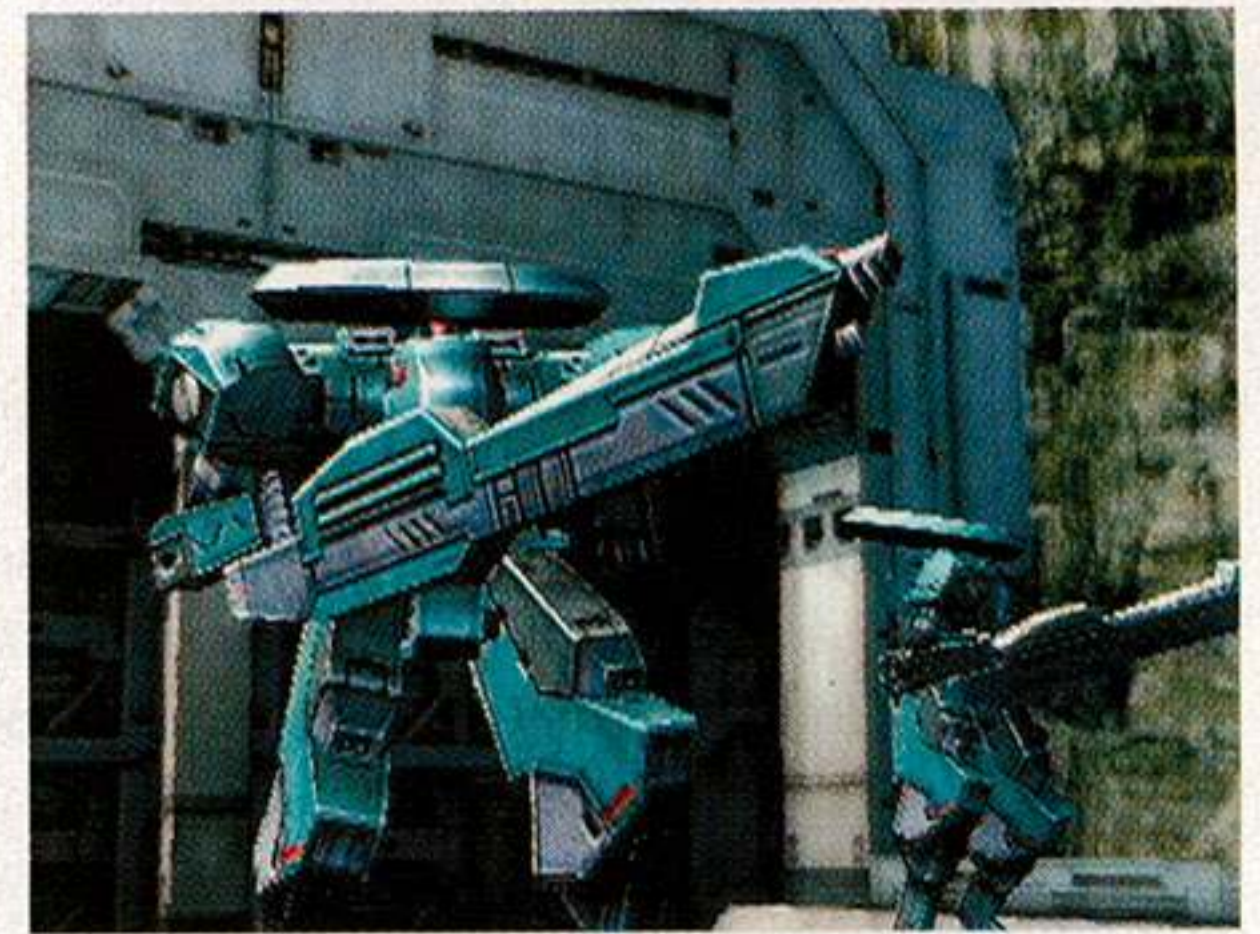


# Armored Core: Nexus



**PE** Simply because Armored Core: Nexus features two playable game discs, Agetec has dubbed it as the “largest installment of the Armored Core series ever.” Complete as a standalone sequel, the first disc contains new missions that progress the saga, while on disc two, you’ll find a handful of remodeled missions all from previous games in the series. And that’s not all: In addition to these new and old missions, Nexus makes up with previously discouraged mech fans with a completely renovated—and improved, judging by the preview build—control scheme. (How awesome is that?) And as if that weren’t enough, the latest installment will also feature online and network play so you and your friends won’t have to share screens anymore. (Someone up there loves us!) No matter what your quarrel with the previous Armored Core titles was, Agetec has finally come up with a way to say, “Eat this.” (Nah, they didn’t really say that.)—*Test Monkey*

- Hands-On ■ Developed by From Software
- Published by Agetec ■ Target release date: August



# Spy Fiction

**PE** Sammy’s visually slick espionage romp is nearing release and differs from other stealth/action fare in that its focus lies in the skillful use of disguise to infiltrate enemy areas. First, you take a photo of the person you want to pose as. Then you hop into the nearest barrel, dumpster, or locker; change; and walk freely around enemy territory. At the start of the game, you choose between two covert agents and are assigned to infiltrate the headquarters of an antigovernment cell known as Enigma. As in Splinter Cell and

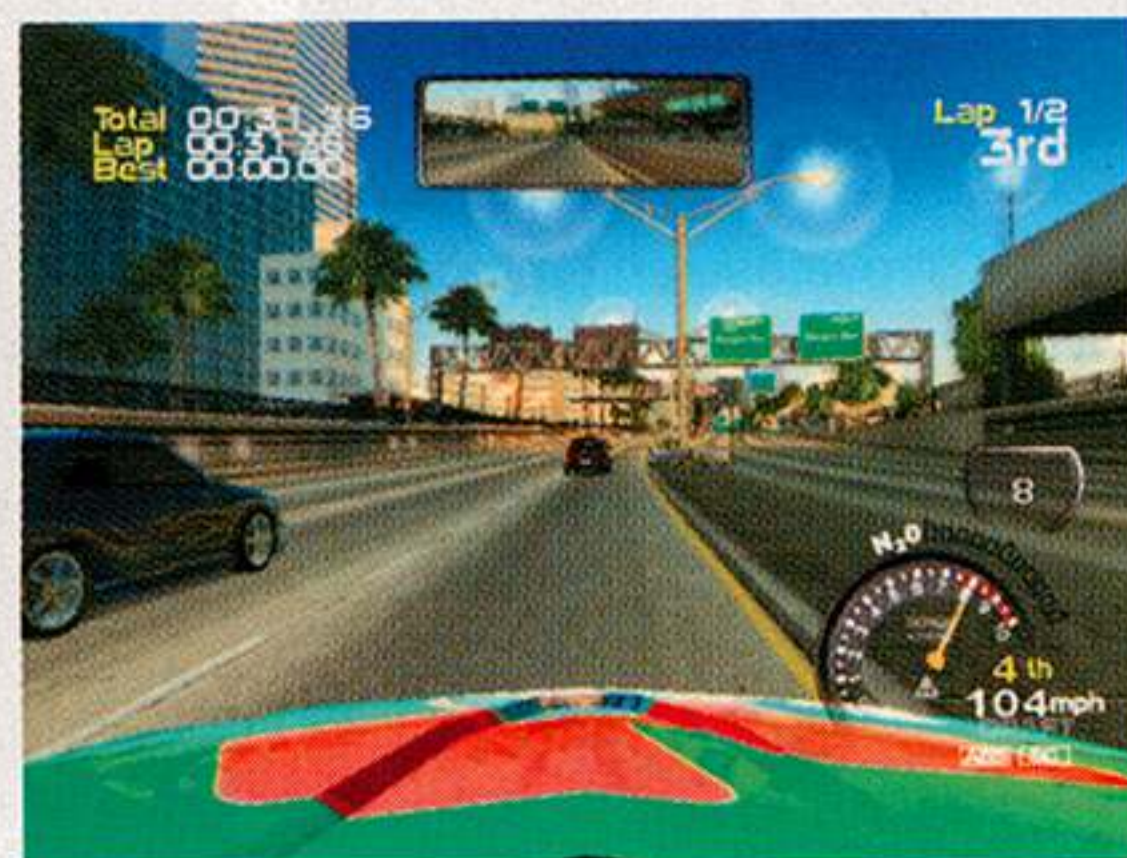
Metal Gear, you want to stick to walls, hide in shadows, and move when the enemy’s back is turned to avoid frontal confrontation, and your hi-tech gear allows you to visually blend in with your surroundings and scurry along ceilings. Spy Fiction is shaping up to be a compelling adventure game.—*Iron Monkey*

- Hands-On ■ Developed by Access Games
- Published by Sammy Studios ■ Target release date: September



# Street Racing Syndicate

**PE X G** The *2 Fast 2 Furious* movie divided auto fans—some saw nitrous blue flames bursting from the exhaust of an R34 Skyline GT-R and thought, “Phat.” Hardcore enthusiasts saw the Skyline’s famed Attesa-ETS all-wheel-drive system turned off for the sake of cinematically glitzy burnouts and hated the movie. In much the same way, Street Racing Syndicate caters to the former who just want to have fun and don’t care for the details. Regardless of drivetrain, cars generally oversteer, allowing for drifting. True to import tuning culture, SRS features famous



models like Tila Nguyen, enabling players to win their respect by taking on various challenges. While players can just start up a quick game in Arcade mode, the core of the game lies in Street mode, which allows players to trick out their rides with engine and suspension upgrades, body kits, and rims. The game is a double clutch shift away from the authenticity of *Need for Speed Underground*.—*Funky Zealot*

- Hands-On ■ Developed by Eutechnyx
- Published by Namco ■ Target release date: September

All screens shown here are from the Xbox version.



# ATV Offroad Fury 3

**ATV** Auto racers of all kinds have been in the spotlight lately, but all the while, ATV Offroad Fury has been blazing its own trail across the driving-game landscape. ATV3 gets a new developer this year in the Climax Group, and the series shows no signs of slowing down. There are 24 ATVs you can ride with 20 customizable components, and you can tag them with your own custom-made logos, too. Riders can race through 30 environments containing 67 tracks, including 16 Supercross tracks. Multiplayer modes feature two-player and four-player split-screen contests, and up to six players online. Online gamers can also store their race stats online and form clans.



The trick system is being amped up this year as well. You can bust 34 freestyle tricks, which you orchestrate into combos. Moreover, combos can be sequenced together with a brand-new linker system. If ATVs are your preferred racing machines, ATV Offroad Fury 3 looks like a winner.

—Brother Buzz

- First Look ■ Developed by Climax Group
- Published by Sony ■ Target release date: November



# Geist

**G**eist has been an intriguing entry on Nintendo's release list for over a year. It's a first-person shooter with an out-of-body twist that makes it a sort of disembodied-person shooter. You play as a counterterrorism agent whose body gets separated from his soul when he's captured and subjected to a scientific experiment run amok. Now he can inhabit and control inanimate objects and other living beings... although he really doesn't want to. The strategy gameplay elements as you try to return to normalcy are truly intriguing, especially as you must first scare any person or animal in order to possess them. You might, for example, choose to use a mouse to sneak into a room, and your gameplay view will be a ground-level, rodent's-eye-view of the action. Before you can do that, however, you have to figure out how to frighten the mouse. Oh, yes, there's plenty of FPS combat, too.—Brother Buzz

- First Look ■ Developed by n-Space
- Published by Nintendo ■ Target release date: Winter 2004



# SNK vs. Capcom: Chaos

**X**You've played Capcom's version. Now get ready for SNK's take on what is perhaps the best tag-team matchup in all of arcade fighting. Chaos brings together 36 brawlers from Fatal Fury, Samurai Shodown, The King of Fighters, and Street Fighter—16 of which are boss characters and two that are exclusive to this game, Shiki and Athena. During competition, you'll be able to use SNK's patented Forward Ground Step move along with the three-level power gauge, which increases the potency of your special moves. Best of all, however, is that you can go mano a mano with someone else on Xbox Live.—Four-Eyed Dragon

- First Look ■ Developed by SNK Playmore ■ Published by SNK ■ Target release date: September







PAIN SUFFER

DOOM 3™

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ING FOR YOU

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idSoftware.com

Distributed By

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Intense Violence

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# Spider-Man 2

Spidey's latest puts the "new" in New York City—and getting there is all the fun.

**PE** **X** It's so much fun to simply spin webs and fly around New York City in Spider-Man 2 that you may never bother to finish the game. It trumps its impressive predecessor with one word: *Freedom!*

## Fun City

Not that Activision's earlier Spidey games have been slouches, but in Spider-Man 2, you really will feel the thrill (and hectic pace) of being Peter Parker. The plot traces that of the film and its villain, Dr. Octopus, but the game expands to include appearances by Mysterio, Black Cat, Rhino, and other Marvel folks.

Treyarch has built a half-scale model of New York City with no loading times and no boundaries. Want to swing from Harlem to Ellis Island? Would you prefer to run through the streets on foot? Or maybe hitch a ride atop one of the hundreds of moving cars? With tons of mini-missions and goals strewn about the city, and various icons to collect, Manhattan is yours to explore—anywhere, any time, all the time.

Doing so becomes a joy thanks to the locomotion system. Web swinging takes a little practice, but in short order, you'll feel massively powerful, shooting webs that visibly auto-attach to buildings and trees, zooming around corners, pulling 360-degree loops, even grabbing onto a helicopter and getting an aerial tour of the city. The city looks great; the pedestrian models could be higher res, but it's a sweet Big Apple with cool day/night effects and detailed textures on both machines (though the Xbox version looks noticeably prettier from a distance). Spidey seems a little small on the screen, but that facilitates a better view of the terrain during swings.



**PROTIP:** Low on health but need to take out street punks? Attach to a nearby wall and Web Yank them up to you, one at a time.



**PROTIP:** Stay close to Rhino and dodge his swings (watch your Spider Sense), then lay into him with your attack of choice. It will take a few times before the big fella goes down.



**Spider-Man 2's breathtaking web swings are ProTip free, but they're the game's main attraction.**



**PROTIP:** Instead of carrying the criminals in Quentin Beck's challenge, try flicking them into the green pit with a Web Yank.



**You want freedom? Spider-Man 2 delivers more than you may be prepared to accept.**



**PROTIP:** Don't forget to use your Spidey Reflexes in battle, especially against multiple enemies. They give you early attack warnings and more response time.

## King of Swing

The street missions do get repetitive—stop an armored-car robbery, get ambushed by some thugs, chase down a car-jacker, um...deliver some pizza, save a child's balloon (?!), then stop another armored-car robbery with the same script as the first one—but the combat is never the same twice. There are so many ways to take down the bad guys, in terms of combos, unlockable special attacks, and aerial juggles, that the framework for the conflict doesn't really have to be stunningly original; it's the actual beatdowns that contain all the flavor. And they're quite tasty.

It's a strangely silent game without much music, but you will hear pedestrian chatter as you pass—everything from "Spidey, you da man!" to "Menace!" They could be less repetitive and cheesy, though. Film actor Tobey Maguire delivers Peter Parker's trademark sarcastic wit smoothly; Kirsten Dunst, Alfred Molina, and Bruce Campbell provide voices, too.

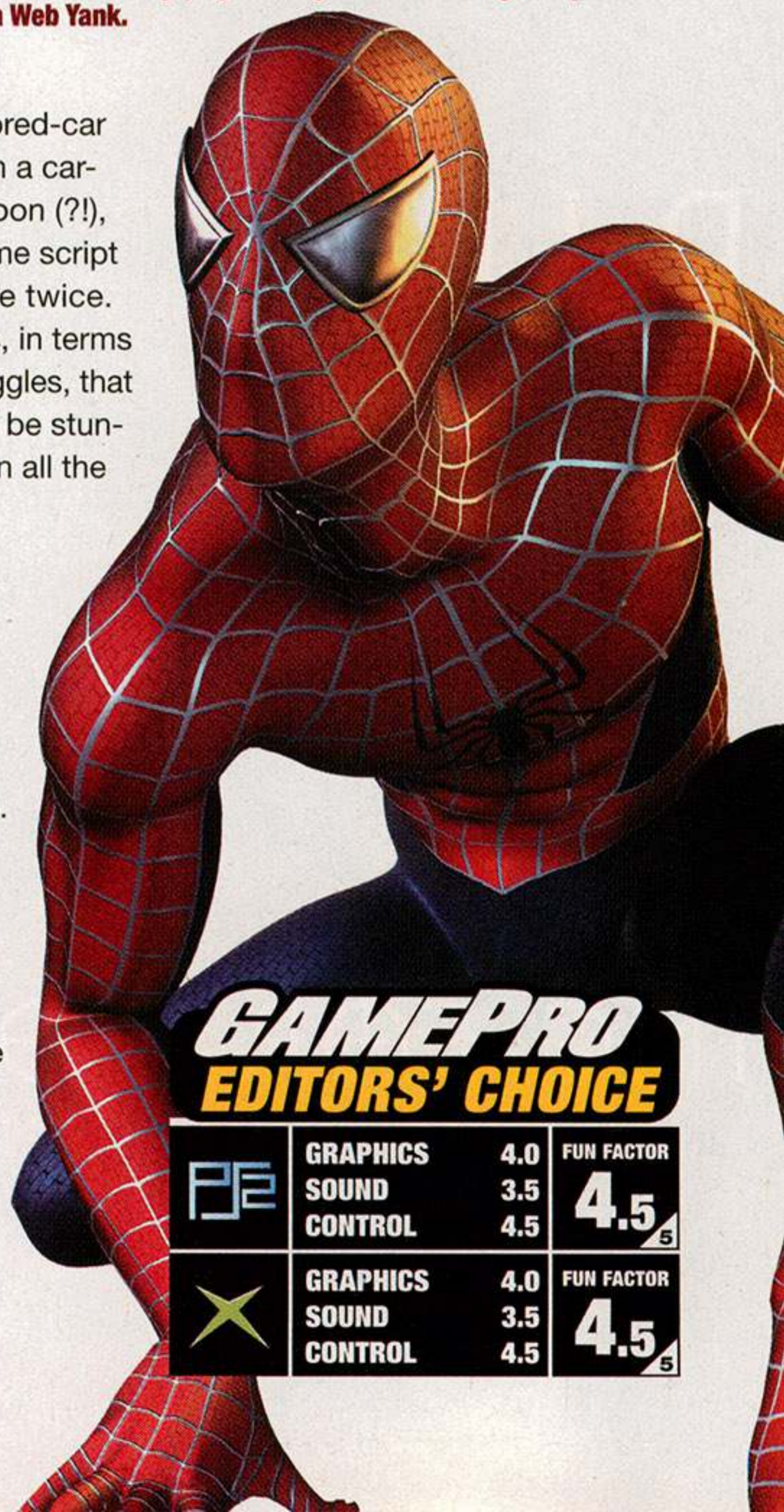
## The Spectacular Spider-Man

It sounds like hype, but it's fact: This is indeed the best Spider-Man game yet made. From the rich combat system to the simple, inexhaustible joys of swinging through the city, Spider-Man 2 delivers the experience web-slinger fans have been begging for.

—Dan Elektro

Also on the GameCube

**T** ■ Developed by Treyarch  
 ■ Published by Activision ■ \$49.99  
 ■ Available now ■ Action/adventure ■ 1 player



**GAMEPRO EDITORS' CHOICE**

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



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## Driv3r

**Disappointing news on the latest high-profile release from Atari—Driv3r performs like a wreck even before your first collision.**

**PE** **X** Like Enter the Matrix last year, Driv3r is buggy and clearly unfinished. The mess isn't as extensive as it was with Neo's nightmare—Tanner's latest adventures as an undercover cop aren't quite that treacherously crash prone—but poorly tuned gameplay and controls sink what should have been a rousing ride from one of Grand Theft Auto's primary forefathers.

### Sugar in the Gasoline

Bugs and technical issues first. We tested three boxed copies of Driv3r on three different consoles, and a clear pattern of glitches emerged. The most common issue: The game often freezes for between three and 10 seconds, then usually resumes without harm. Sometimes, however, it locks up permanently, requiring a reboot. Also, collision-detection mishaps are widespread—everything from Tanner to his vehicle sometimes passes through walls or gets stuck in walls in a way that significantly interferes with gameplay.

Frame-rate sluggishness and pop-up issues are also prevalent. Surprisingly, the pop-up doesn't involve the environment—in fact, your line of sight is impressively long—but cars and other traffic often teleport into existence a short distance down the road, adding unfairly to the challenge of high-speed driving.

### Change the Timing Belt

As far as the actual gameplay, Driv3r is like a car badly in need of a tune-up. As in the first two games, you play as an undercover cop infiltrating car-theft gangs by posing as a driver. Reflections created three sprawling cities and added new elements like speedboats and shooter-style gameplay on foot, but at its core, the game still revolves around high-speed pursuits. The best part of the action is how the cars handle on the bleeding edge of losing control.

As in past Reflections games (Stuntman and other entries in the Driver series), making the smallest mistake can be lethal, particularly because excessively bouncy physics and insanely invulnerable

obstacles (like lamp posts!) can send your vehicle cartwheeling into absurd wipeouts. Completing missions becomes a test of your stubbornness and endurance, and most players won't be able to stomach the process of incessantly repeating a mission until they succeed.

The new on-foot gameplay also just flat-out sucks, and it figures far too heavily into the action. Aiming your weapon is an aggravating chore, the enemy A.I. is horribly lame, and there's just not a scrap of fun to be had.

Visually, Driv3r looks outdated. Unsurprisingly, the Xbox version is substantially prettier, featuring richer lighting and smoother details that outshine the more pixelated PS2 game. The game's star power (voice acting by Michael Madsen, Ving Rhames, and more) and an impressive soundtrack make for a surprisingly good showing on the audio side.

### Rebuild the Engine

All these glitches and design problems don't make Driv3r unplayable, and the problems aren't as deep or as devastating as they were in Enter the Matrix, another much-hyped Atari disappointment. But they do make the game an intensely frustrating trial of patience that's rewarded with only the most fleeting glimmers of fun. If you love the Driver series with an unswerving loyalty, you'll be able to slog through Driv3r and extract your thrills. But if you're looking for something to tide you over until GTA: San Andreas is released later this fall, you'd better execute a 180 spin, floor it, and flee in the opposite direction.—*Air Hendrix*

**M** ■ Developed by Reflections Interactive ■ Published by Atari  
■ \$49.99 ■ Available now ■ Action ■ 1 player

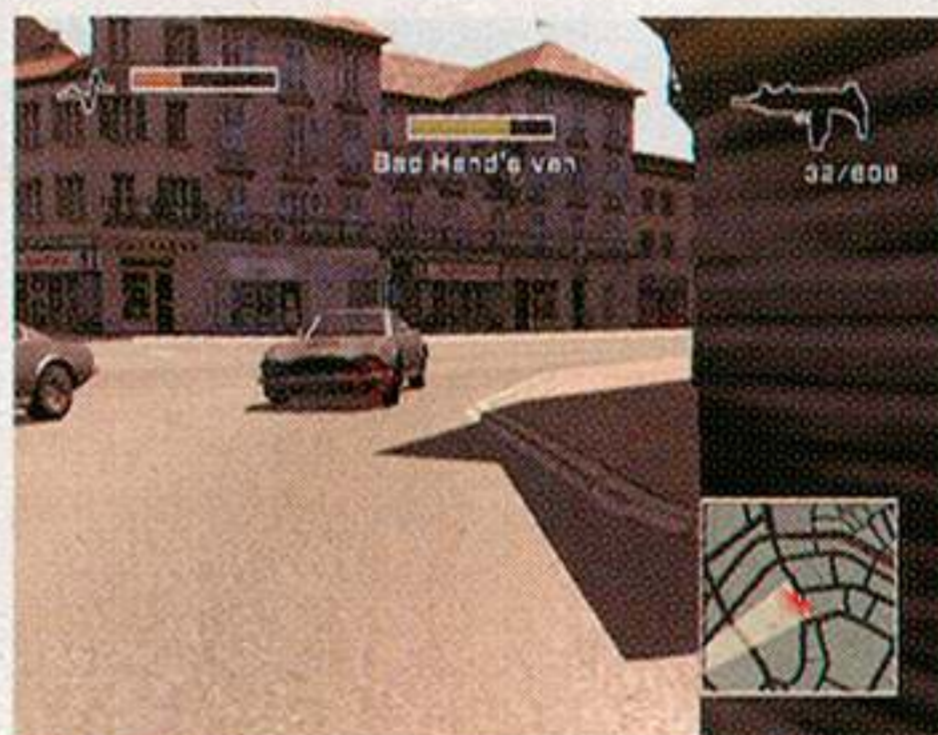
All screens shown here are from the Xbox version.



**PRO TIP:** When you're pursuing Gator in the speedboat, save your ammo for later—you can't kill him, and you'll need the firepower in Stiltsville.



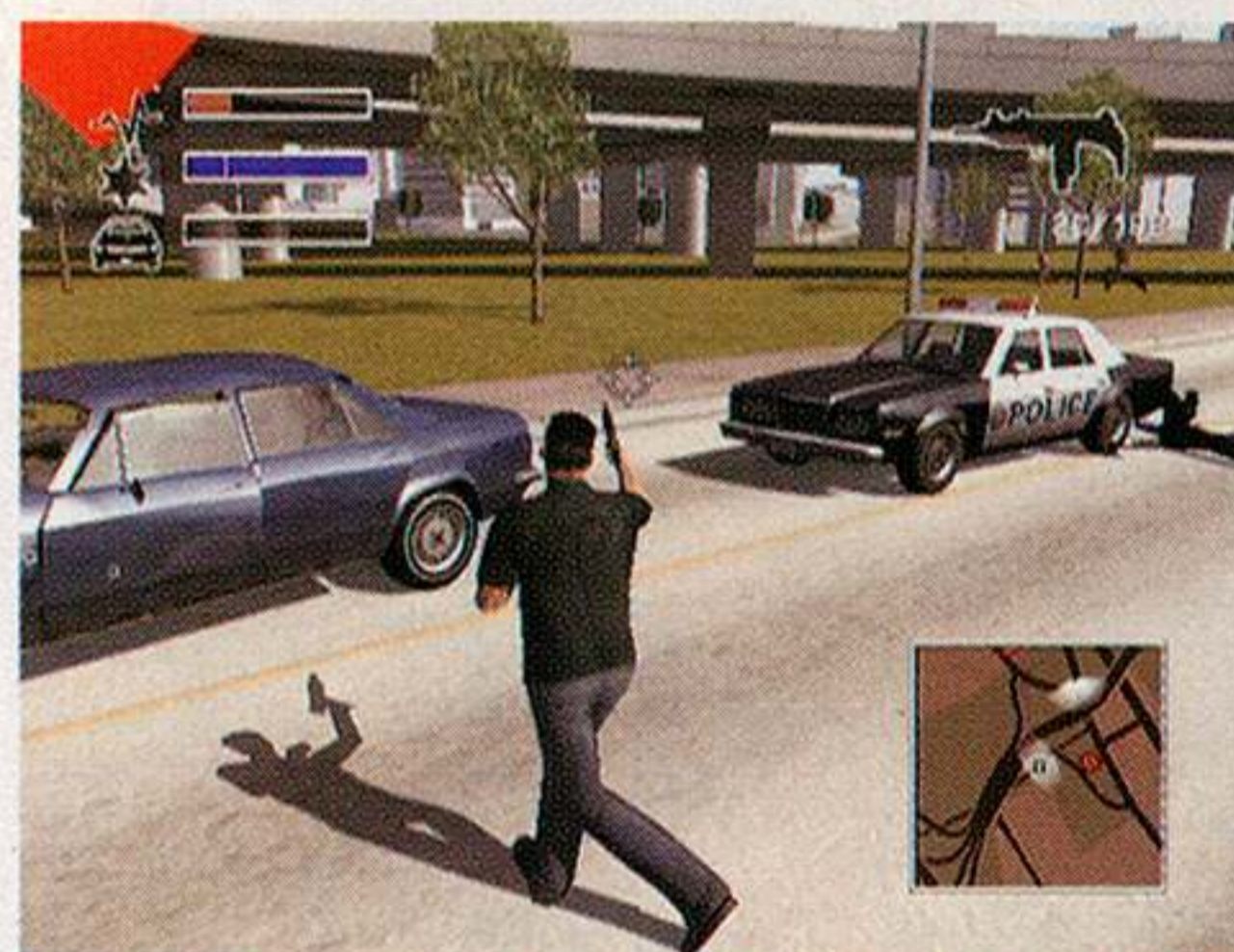
**PRO TIP:** When you're stealing the three cars in Nice, look for a motorcycle after you load the truck—you'll need its speed to have a prayer of beating the clock.



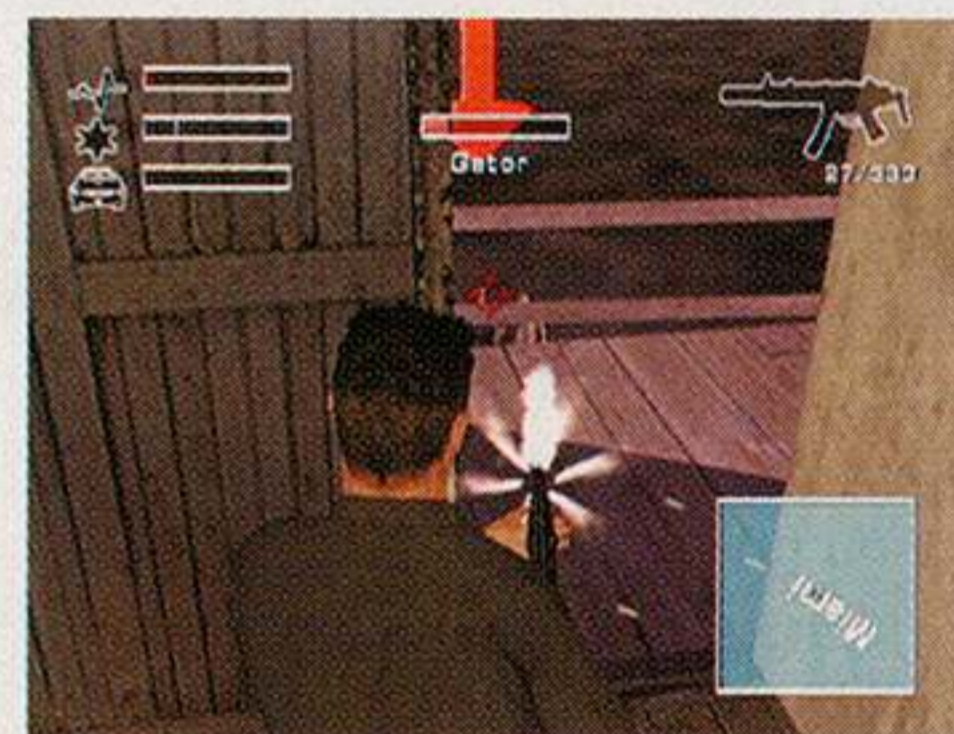
**PRO TIP:** When shooting out of the back of the van in Nice, hold your fire until the cars are reasonably close, then aim for the tires.



**PRO TIP:** When escaping Gator's island, hijack a dump truck as soon as possible. Its tanklike nature makes it easy to roll through the pursuit.



**PRO TIP:** If you can't shake a pursuing cop, just get out of your car and shoot him.



**PRO TIP:** Cheap Tactic No. 1: Lurk in doorways and snipe at enemies—most are unable to detect you when you're in another room.

PE	GRAPHICS	3.0	FUN FACTOR	2.5
	SOUND CONTROL	4.0		
X	GRAPHICS	3.5	FUN FACTOR	2.5
	SOUND CONTROL	4.0		



# Psi-Ops: The Mindgate Conspiracy

**X** You're deep inside the enemy base, surrounded by five heavily armed soldiers. Nearby, there are three wooden crates and two combustible tanks, but you're dangerously low on ammo, and your life gauge is near empty. Do you use telekinesis to toss the soldiers around and take their guns, or do you squash them with crates and immolate them with the tanks while grabbing health packs from across the walkway with your mind? Or, do you possess the guard nearest you and open fire on the rest before taking a nosedive through the window?

## My Brain Is Better Than Your Brain

Despite its linear formula, Psi-Ops gives you a surprising amount of latitude as these are the types of on-the-fly choices you continually make before and during each encounter. The typical comic-book narrative has enough freaky fare like disembodied floating crabs, secret bunker mirages, phantasmagoric corporate labyrinths, and zombies to keep things interesting, while the gameplay is challenging in that you will die often but not annoyingly so. A big part of the fun lies in retrying missions to see how much better you'll do by utilizing psychic martial arts differently. Psi-Ops' brains-over-brawn gameplay isn't necessarily limited to your psychic skills as strategy plays a big part in your missions, such as keeping enemies alive so you can suck their brain juice or use them later on (be sure you don't telepathically toss the sniper off the roof before first mind-tricking him into dismantling the alarm).

## Uri Geller Solid

Besides strong production values, the game showcases some of the most amazing physics seen on a console—nearly every object and person can be levitated, pushed, pulled, thrown, mind-controlled, and set on fire, while fantastic controls make you almost feel like you're really doing it. This could've been another run-of-the-mill third-person shooter, but you'll take great joy in coming up with dozens upon dozens of ways to mess up enemies, while the all-out psychic boss wars will burst your brain. Worth the cash.—*Iron Monkey*

Also on the PlayStation 2

**M** ■ Developed and published by Midway ■ \$49.99 ■ Available now ■ Action ■ 1 player



**PRO TIP:** When the Pyro Boss performs her strongest attack, hide behind the blast shields that come up from the floor for cover.



**PRO TIP:** You can stand on top of objects and levitate them to get to inaccessible areas.



**PRO TIP:** Living enemies yield more psychic energy than dead ones.

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

# Shadow Ops: Red Mercury

**X** Shadow Ops is one of those first-person shooters that you wish had enough depth and intensity to compete with the big boys. Unfortunately, what was promised didn't come to fruition, and the game sadly plays as a barely mediocre firefight.

## Ordinary Operations

Atari touted it as a next-generation cinematic shooter; instead, Shadow Ops is a ho-hum, average gunslinger. With the exception of its wonderfully orchestrated sound effects, which boom in 5.1 surround sound, much of Shadow Ops is standard fare. You play as a highly trained military operative whose primary objective is to retrieve and destroy the dangerous substance called Red Mercury. This isn't cloak-and-dagger stuff (although the game features several levels of using just silenced weapons) but in-your-face, aim-and-fire gameplay. In each level, you're given three types of guns, a handful of grenades, and a whole bunch of armed resistance. A few enemies are intelligent, but most are just plain dumb, which makes for uninspiring game time. Additionally, the levels are strictly linear with very little room to flank or use alternate paths to surprise enemies.

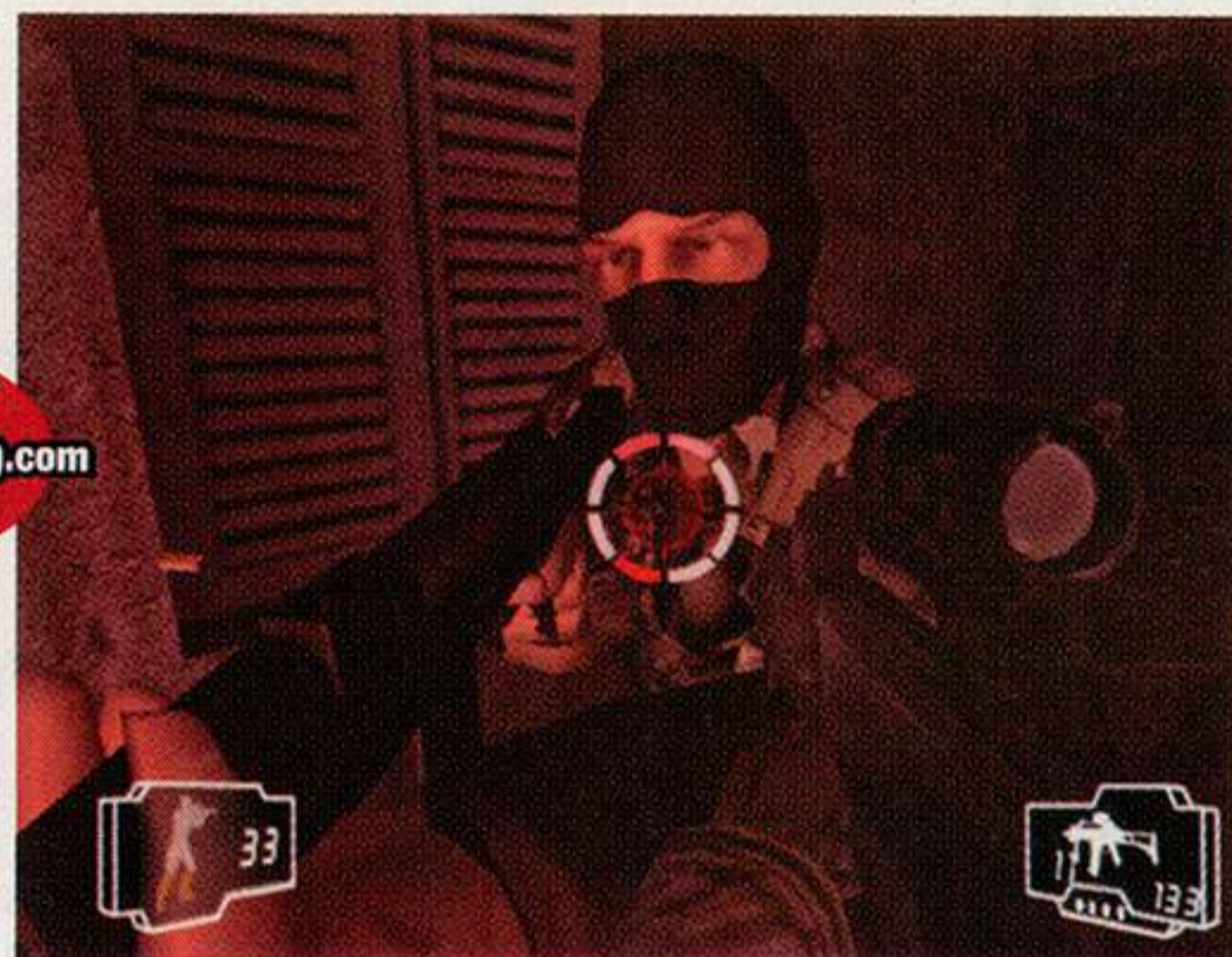


**PRO TIP:** In *Sword of Damocles*, stay on high ground when covering Galena.



**PRO TIP:** Although it's normally used only as a backup weapon, the pistol still packs a punch, especially in close quarters. Don't hesitate to use it.

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**PRO TIP:** Sometimes it's better to rush your enemy than retreat if you're ambushed. Just be sure to knock 'em silly with the butt of your gun if you're up close and personal.

## Shadow of Doubt

Disappointingly, Shadow Ops doesn't live up to today's standards in visual presentation. Bland environments and sparse detail offer little eye candy to what should be a frenetic battlefield full of explosions and mayhem.

You will, however, have no problem handling your weapons in the war zone. Pulling the trigger with your right finger and pushing the buttons to lob grenades, open doors, and jump make up the simplistic control scheme.

The multiplayer modes are just as rudimentary. Split-screen co-op missions offer some variety, while playing online comes in a distant second behind the solid *Rainbow Six 3*, which comprises more options and prettier environments.

There's not much pizzazz to Shadow Ops. It had potential, but at the end, this is one FPS that's good for a one-night rental at best. There are far better games already out to set your sights on.—*Four-Eyed Dragon*

**T** ■ Developed by Zombie ■ Published by Atari ■ \$49.99 ■ Available now ■ First-person shooter ■ 2 players; 8 online

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



# Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell Pandora Tomorrow

**PE** **C** Pandora Tomorrow may seem like yesterday's news for Xbox owners, but for PlayStation 2 and GameCube fans, the latest chapter in the espionage adventures of Sam Fisher has been an event worth waiting for. Fortunately, their patience has paid off as this new version of Pandora Tomorrow delivers all the shadow-sneaking fun of the Xbox original plus a number of exclusive extras, including alternate pathways in some stages and the ability to disable booby traps. The best and most substantial addition, however, is the new Jungle mission in which Fisher must maneuver through a beautifully rendered Indonesian forest of death.

## Much Better Late Than Never

Forget what you may have heard about the capabilities of the supposedly "underpowered" PS2—this thing rocks. The graphics of both the PS2 and GameCube versions are staggeringly beautiful and feature some of the best lighting and shadow effects seen for either console. The frame rate and character animations look just a tad better on the GameCube, but both incarnations can proudly stand side by side with their Xbox counterpart. The control scheme is tight, but the number of functions can be a bit overwhelming at times—the GameCube version, for example, has a tough time adapting due to its unique controller (which is exacerbated by an overworked A button being assigned a few too many moves).



**PROTIP:** Always remember to hide bodies in dark, low-traffic corners as carelessness will lead to your discovery and a higher alarm stage.

If you already own the Xbox version, the new exclusive features aren't enough to warrant another purchase. But for the rest of us, Pandora Tomorrow stands as a must-have title for PS2- and GameCube-owning stealth/action fans. An outstanding single-player game coupled with an innovative and addictive multiplayer mode makes Pandora Tomorrow one of the premier titles available today on any console.—*Bones*

**T** ■ Developed by Ubisoft Paris Studios ■ Published by Ubisoft ■ \$49.99 ■ Available now ■ Stealth/action ■ 1 player; 4 online



**PROTIP:** While only a few captured guards can be interrogated for useful information, all enemies make equally excellent human shields/bullet absorbers.

## Eat Your Heart Out, Snake Eater

Like its Xbox brethren, the PS2 version also includes an incredible four-player online/system link mode in which two teammates play as infiltrating spies against a two-man team of heavily armed defending mercenaries (the latter of which play in a first-person perspective). Far from being a common frantic-and-clumsy deathmatch, the multiplayer mode is a methodical yet fast-paced mission-based, voice-chat enabled set of games that push the creative envelope by offering a unique experience unlike anything else.

## GAMEPRO EDITORS' CHOICE

PE	GRAPHICS	4.5	FUN FACTOR
	SOUND	4.5	
	CONTROL	4.0	
C	GRAPHICS	5.0	FUN FACTOR
	SOUND	4.5	
	CONTROL	3.5	

# Crimson Tears

**PE** **C** Crimson Tears is the action/adventure tale of three beautiful-yet-tragic bio-engineered warriors called Mutanoids who gradually discover their potential through fighting. When the research lab that created them starts spewing monsters and distorting space-time, Amber, Tokio, and Kadie spring into action to save the city. Huge sections of Tokyo have turned into a continuously changing Dimensional Maze, but somewhere at its center lie the answers the Mutanoids seek.



**PROTIP:** Hit 'em when they're down, especially during boss battles.



**PROTIP:** A well-timed shot of Coolant enables you to benefit from overheating while sparing you from the worst of the damage.

## Crazed Mazes

Each level of the Dimensional Maze randomly generates itself when you enter, so you never play the same map twice. Though on the surface this sounds like it should increase replay value, in practice it ends up forcing you to suffer through poorly designed levels rife with pointless backtracking and no cohesiveness. The real point of Crimson Tears isn't so much about puzzles or finding your way through mazes, though: It's all about the combat.

## Wise Weapons

An elaborate combo-and-weapon upgrade system provides increasingly complex attack options as your Mutanoids level up. Weapons gain experience points, too, and can be modified with components collected in the Dimensional Maze. The controls are tight for both hand-to-hand combat and ranged weapons. The game's only flaw is the fixed camera system, which sometimes forces you to walk blindly into dangerous areas. Another thing to watch out for is the temperature gauge. Overheating causes speed and attack power increase, but at significant cost to health. Strategic overheating and judicious application of "Coolant" will help in tough spots.

The 3D cel-shaded enemies and bosses look terrific, even if the Mutanoids seem like they just came from a Square-Enix audition. In-game sound effects are goofy and fun, while the surprisingly gentle music is a nice counterpoint to the action. Crimson Tears has a *Blade Runner* "revolt of the androids" feel, played out in cut-scenes during which the Mutanoids wax philosophical on their origins.

Crimson Tears is worth looking at for its high production values, but its gameplay lacks depth. If your favorite part of Final Fantasy X was seeking out rare items to upgrade your weapons, you will love this game.

—Optimus Sublime

**T** ■ Developed by Dream Factory/Spike ■ Published by Capcom ■ \$39.99 ■ Available now ■ Action/adventure ■ 1 player



**PROTIP:** These guys drop from the ceiling. Their shadows give away where they're going to fall.

PE	GRAPHICS	4.0	FUN FACTOR
	SOUND	4.0	
	CONTROL	4.0	



# Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six 3: Black Arrow

**X** The hit tactical shooter is back with more of the same, which is both good and bad, depending on how new you are to the Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six 3 series.

## Breach and Clear on Zulu

Rainbow Six 3: Black Arrow is squarely an expansion pack with new single- and multiplayer content to state its case. As it isn't meant to be a true sequel, the game hasn't been completely overhauled, and there are very few visual and audio upgrades. That said, the graphics and the crisp sound effects still hold up extremely well. Anyone who bought the original game will find no problems easing into the gameplay of Black Arrow as all the controls and interfaces are virtually identical. The variety in objectives is about the same, and different locales are once again contrasted against each other. The campaign mode, however, does sport enemies with better A.I. that make the missions much tougher this time around.

## Contact!

The self-proclaimed "most popular Xbox Live game" knows it has a lot of rabid players looking for a ton more content, and this is where Black Arrow really delivers. Fourteen brand-new maps and four from the previous game provide many new strategies to explore. Add two new game types to the mix—



**PRO TIP:** In both online and offline matches, it's always a good idea to equip a gas mask just in case.

Capture the Point and Capture the Canister—and the play value multiplies. In a controlled beta test of the online play, both new game types proved to be immense additions to the overall fun. Both require more team cooperation to be successful, especially Capture the Point. Other improvements are balance tweaks like the removal of the way-too-powerful .50 caliber rifle and support for the 3.0 features of Xbox Live.

Newbies may find the competition online way too advanced at this point and the tougher campaign missions a bit daunting; but it's a no-brainer for fans of the original to get back onboard with Black Arrow.—Tokyo Drifter

**M** ■ Developed by Ubisoft Montreal ■ Published by Ubisoft  
 ■ \$39.99 ■ Available August ■ Action ■ 2 players



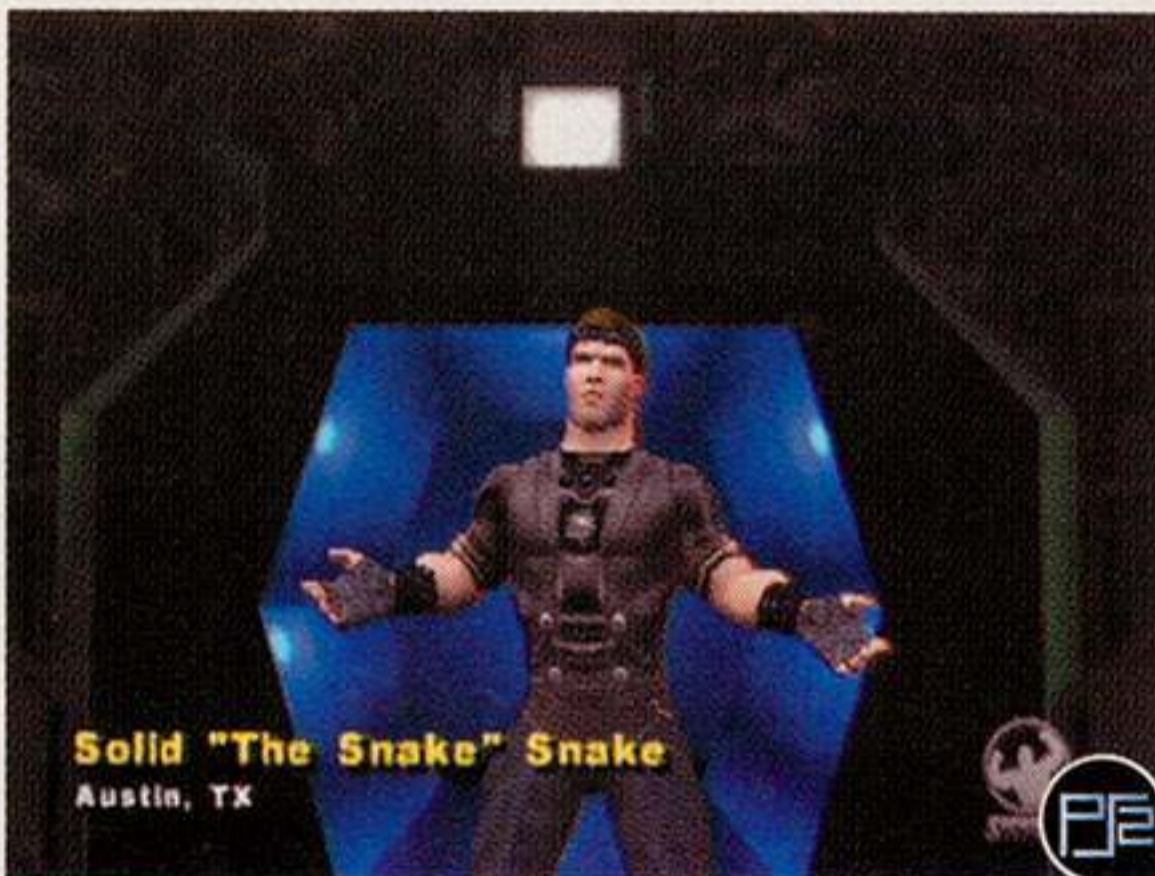
**PRO TIP:** Don't bunch up too close to your teammates as you're more likely to get wiped out by a grenade or bullet barrage.



**PRO TIP:** Always pair up to capture designated points so one guy can watch the other's back.

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

# Showdown: Legends of Wrestling



**PRO TIP:** Character creation is quite robust in Showdown. Hey, is this a sneaking mission match!?

Thankfully, Showdown: Legends of Wrestling features a brand-new and much more fluid grappling engine. To get you adjusted, the game has a series of video tutorials narrated by Brett "The Hitman" Hart and optional onscreen help buttons. Controls feel a tad sluggish, but they do mimic the level and pace of the action of the time. Moves are easy to pull off, but there are some collision problems that pop up from time to time.

## Pump You Up

The visuals get a big face-lift with better arenas, good character likeness, and nice wrestling animations. Audio also gets a boost with new musical compositions from Jim "Mouth of the South" Hart and decent commentary from a three-man booth. The previous installment had awesome interviews with a number of the greats featured in the game, but sadly, no comparable extras are to be found in Showdown. The new single-player mode takes you through the different eras in wrestling, re-enacting famous feuds and world-class matchups. The only quirk is that your character inevitably wrestles in a nonnative time period, making it feel more like a novelty and less like reliving history.

Although there is still work to be done, Showdown: Legends of Wrestling's new look and play style is a big step in the right direction. Fans looking for a walk down memory lane aren't going to be disappointed.—Tokyo Drifter

**T** ■ Developed and published by Acclaim ■ \$49.99 ■ Available now ■ Wrestling ■ 4 players

**PE** **X** The third offering in the Legends of Wrestling series reinvents itself for the better but still has a ways to go to be the champion.

## Heart of a Champion

When the first Legends of Wrestling was announced, fans who fondly remembered the early years of the squared circle declared joy. While combatants in those days wore wildly flamboyant outfits and the acting was less polished, the fire of competition seemed more pure. Unfortunately, the first and second Legends only scratched the surface of that magic, plus the gameplay and presentation were not as good as its modern-day



**PRO TIP:** Moves done in conjunction with your partner add to your Finisher meter.



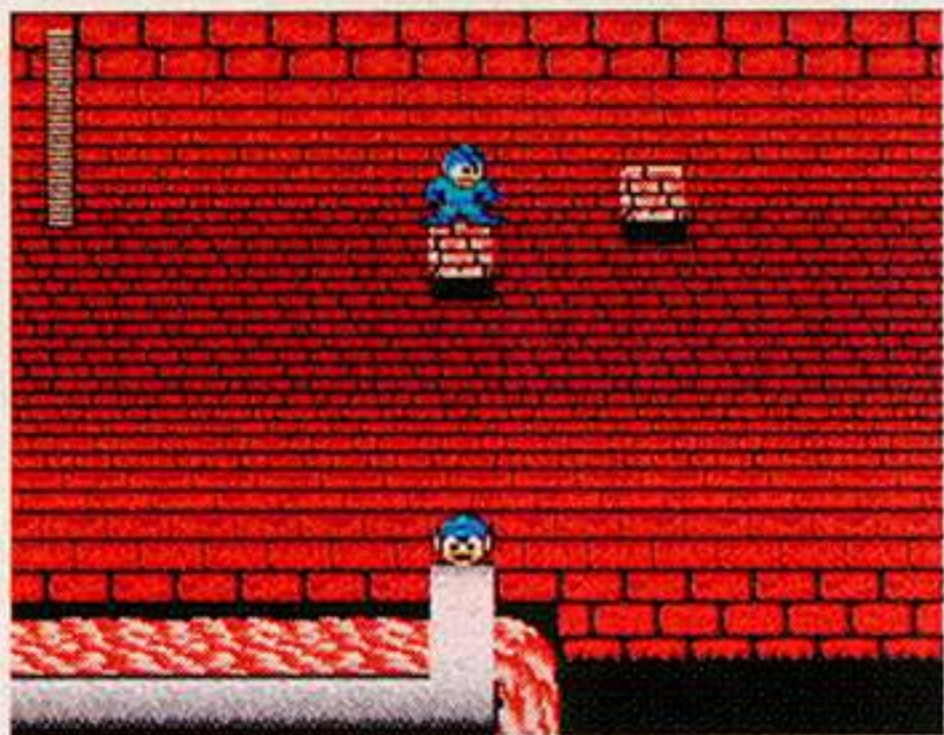
**PRO TIP:** It's cheesy, but avoiding the melee in elimination matches is a good way to conserve your health.

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



# Mega Man Anniversary Collection

**PE** Mega Man Anniversary Collection commemorates the birth and rise of one highly distinguished star amongst many in the Capcom universe. Totalling 10 playable Mega Man games—eight games were previously released on home consoles (the NES (one through six), the SNES (seven), and the PlayStation (eight)), and two arcade games were never officially released in the U.S. (until now)—this peculiar assortment ensures loyal fans a holistic experience in reliving the origin of our hero. This means that the same 8-bit battling bots we saw and heard in the first six Mega Man games on the NES are back alongside the evolved and more elaborate sights and sounds from the later games in the series in this collection.



**PRO TIP:** Don't let the hard-to-reach Mega heads distract you from your work. Some are put in places that leave you stranded once they're taken.

From the touch-sensitive jumps to the original boss weaknesses and strategies, the gameplay hasn't changed. The Collection, however, features extras that you can unlock; each time you defeat Dr. Wily and his army of elementally charged bots, you'll unlock features hidden within the game, such as production stills or original remixes of some of the more popular stage music; every fourth win earns you one of the two exclusive arcade games. There's even a token episode of the cartoon that aired for a short time on television.

Delivering such an exhaustive package of quality games and extras earns Capcom a high score. And you certainly can't complain about the price. Whether you acquire it as a collector's item or just want to get acquainted with Mega Man's past, you can be sure it's going to be one heck of a trip back into time.—*Test Monkey*

Also on the GameCube

**T** ■ Developed and published by Capcom  
■ \$29.99 ■ Available now ■ Action ■ 1 player



**PRO TIP:** Remember, boys and girls, all eight Mega Man games are direct ports, so old boss strategies and weaknesses still apply.

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

## Malice

**X** When we last saw Malice, the spunky red-haired heroine was lost in limbo—another “Vapor Trail” game doomed never to see release (see “Vapor Trails 3.0,” page 38, March). Thanks to a last-minute publishing deal, she has a second chance to make a banal impression.

Ironically, cheating death is part of the game's plot as goddess-in-training Malice wanders around time and space, jumping between platforms and collecting translucent icons, whacking bad guys with weapons like the Clockwork Hammer and the Mace of Clubs. Repeatedly. Without much imagination. Double-jumps, magic floating jumps, overhand attack jumps...you'll find all the uninspired genre hallmarks here. That classic battle of man vs. camera shows up in the game, too.



**PRO TIP:** You'll need to use your overhand attack, Quake (the B button), to take out the witch's beetles.

For a girl who was supposed to be all about attitude, how come Malice doesn't even have any personality? Really inexpressive voice acting just makes you wonder what the dialogue would have sounded like if No Doubt had delivered the voice-overs as planned. The rest of the game's soundtrack is full of forced orchestral whimsy.

Malice makes extensive use of bump-mapping and texture-layering, but the game world has moved on in the last few years, and Malice has lost much of its gee-whiz sparkle. Now it's an intentionally weird, unintentionally uninteresting platform adventure that might have been cool were it a launch title and the bar were still low. In 2004, it looks and feels more like a skippable relic.—*Dan Elektro*

Also on the PlayStation 2

**T** ■ Developed by Argonaut ■ Published by Mud Duck  
■ \$29.99 ■ Available now ■ Action/adventure ■ 1 player



**PRO TIP:** To beat the slug boss, run near the walls and avoid as many mushrooms as you can. Attack from the side.

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

## Karaoke Revolution Volume 2

**PE** Konami's fantastic vocal-performance simulator returns with new features and, most importantly, new songs! Karaoke Revolution Volume 2 provides everything you would expect, including new characters, more outfits, and additional venues, some of which need to be unlocked to access. The key feature is the 35 new tunes that cover most musical genres and mix old standards with more recent hits. If there are any complaints, it's that the range is a bit too wide this time and some crooners will not find as many songs that they know. Konami definitely needs to release more song discs to satisfy the fans. Hitting the right notes seems to be a bit more challenging at all difficulty levels, but that's not a bad thing.



**PRO TIP:** To unlock the secret *Gamestar* T-shirt, quickly press Up, R3, Right, R3, R3, Left, R3, Down, O. Then, press O at the Press Start screen.

Alternate modes like Showtime and Medley have been added to the game, joining the returning Arcade and Karaoke selections. Medley is the most meaningful as it enables you to string five songs together for a concertlike performance. Another useful option is the ability to sing a shorter version of each song, which is an absolute blessing for karaoke parties where everyone is antsy to grab the mic.

Graphically, not much has changed from the original, but it's a complete nonissue due to the nature of the game. If you enjoyed the first volume, this follow up is an absolute must have for you.—*Tokyo Drifter*

**E** ■ Developed by Harmonix Music Systems  
■ Published by Konami ■ \$9.99 ■ Available now  
■ Music ■ 8 players

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



**PRO TIP:** To unlock the secret *GamePro* T-shirt, quickly press Down, R3, Up, R3, L3, Down, L3, Up, Down. Then, press O at the Press Start screen.



# Ghosthunter

**PE** Ghosthunter is a Teen-rated take on the Silent Hill and Resident Evil series, incorporating aspects of horror, action, and stealth, but ending up being *Ghostbusters*-like with a cheesy cop-caper flair. Though it overtly deals with the supernatural, the scariest thing about Ghosthunter is that the main character, Lazarus Jones, sports Luke Perry's eyebrow and Ethan Hawke's goatee along with Brad Pitt's attitude. Every time he's on screen, you feel like punching him. Nevertheless, you must help Lazarus solve murders and capture wayward poltergeists.

## Are You the Gatekeeper?

Ghosthunter's main flaw is that it fails to develop a cohesive and believable internal logic; abilities like astral projection are accessible only at specific locations and only useful in highly contrived situations. This leads to an excessively linear game experience, while some poorly designed levels leave the player without a sense of direction or focus. At times, you're required to explore areas with no idea of what you're looking for. You must content yourself with wandering around and sticking your nose in every corner till you arbitrarily trip the next cinematic or find the ladder to the next area. Instead of good level design, Ghosthunter relies on cheap tricks like making all the rooms in an area look similar so it becomes difficult to develop a sense of direction. As there's no map, it's helpful to use spent shell casings as bread crumbs.



**PROTIP:** As Strafe Maru is fond of saying, "Run in a circle and shoot."

## Ectoplasmic Reticulum

One thing that Ghosthunter gets right most of the time is combat, which livens up levels where the puzzle, stealth, or plot elements lag. The controls are tight in third- and first-person modes, though the camera occasionally flips out in tight places and you cannot move when first-person view is on. Some of the ghosts are pretty awesome, especially a crocodile that attacks with a "ghost chainsaw." Ghosthunter's soundtrack is sufficiently spooky, but the voice acting is a bit corny and the sound effects are generic. In places, the sound levels are unbalanced, making for dialogue that is too quiet or effects that are too loud.

If you're too young for Silent Hill, Ghosthunter is a good Teen-rated alternative. It won't instill mortal terror or keep you up all night.—*Optimus Sublime*

**T** ■ Developed by SCEE Studio Cambridge  
 ■ Published by Namco ■ \$49.99  
 ■ Available August ■ Action ■ 1 player



**PROTIP:** Ghosts are susceptible to location-specific damage, so aim for the head.

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

# Amazing Island

**G** Whimsical graphics and lighthearted music transport you to the Amazing Island, where you can design your own monster (à la Magic Pengel) and send it out to challenge a series of obstacle courses. Each obstacle course consists of a series of events, which are surprisingly unforgiving. Most require exact timing and precision, even though the controls are simple and straightforward. Complete the beginner course to gain the ability to draw by yourself, which is the game's strongest selling point. If you're the creative type, it's easy to get lost for hours in the many customization options.

Once you're done building your dream creature, you can take a snapshot for its Monster Card and upload it to your Game Boy Advance. Amazing Island lets you import and export your monsters, so you can compete Mario Party-style with up to four players. The main problem with Amazing Island is that in Story mode, there's too much downtime in between courses. Still, it's good to see a game that celebrates creation rather than destruction and puts playful competition above vomitous gore.—*Optimus Sublime*



**PROTIP:** Your drawing and the accessories you choose determine your monsters' attributes.

**E** ■ Developed and published by Sega  
 ■ \$39.99 ■ Available August  
 ■ Action ■ 4 players

<b>G</b>	GRAPHICS	4.0	FUN FACTOR <b>4.0</b>
	SOUND	4.0	
	CONTROL	4.0	

# Puyo Pop Fever

**G** Puyo Pop Fever is the latest installment of the Puyo Puyo puzzle series and has been totally revamped with an enhanced game engine that includes the new Fever mode, a larger assortment of characters, and additional modes.

Fever shares a lot with many other puzzle games; Puyo blocks drop down from the screen, and players try to combine four in a row to send a nuisance Puyo over to their opponent until their screen fills

up—you can also unleash chain combos for devastating effects. But the new Fever mode adds a definite frantic dimension to the game. During a match, you build up your Fever gauge by eliminating Puyos, and when it's full, you'll enter Fever mode, which gives you a screen full of triple Puyo sets—one well-placed Puyo can set off an unstoppable chain, saving you from the brink of disaster or unleashing a fatal blow to your opponent. The only limitation Fever has is that it supports only two players.

With single, versus, and three endless modes, and 16 characters, Fever is as addictive as it gets.

—*Rice Burner*

**E** ■ Developed by Sonic Team  
 ■ Published by Sega ■ \$29.99  
 ■ Available now ■ Puzzle ■ 2 players



**PROTIP:** Complete the Waku Waku Course to unlock the character Popoi.

<b>GAMEPRO</b> <b>EDITORS' CHOICE</b>	<b>G</b>	GRAPHICS	4.0	FUN FACTOR <b>4.5</b>
		SOUND	4.0	
		CONTROL	4.5	

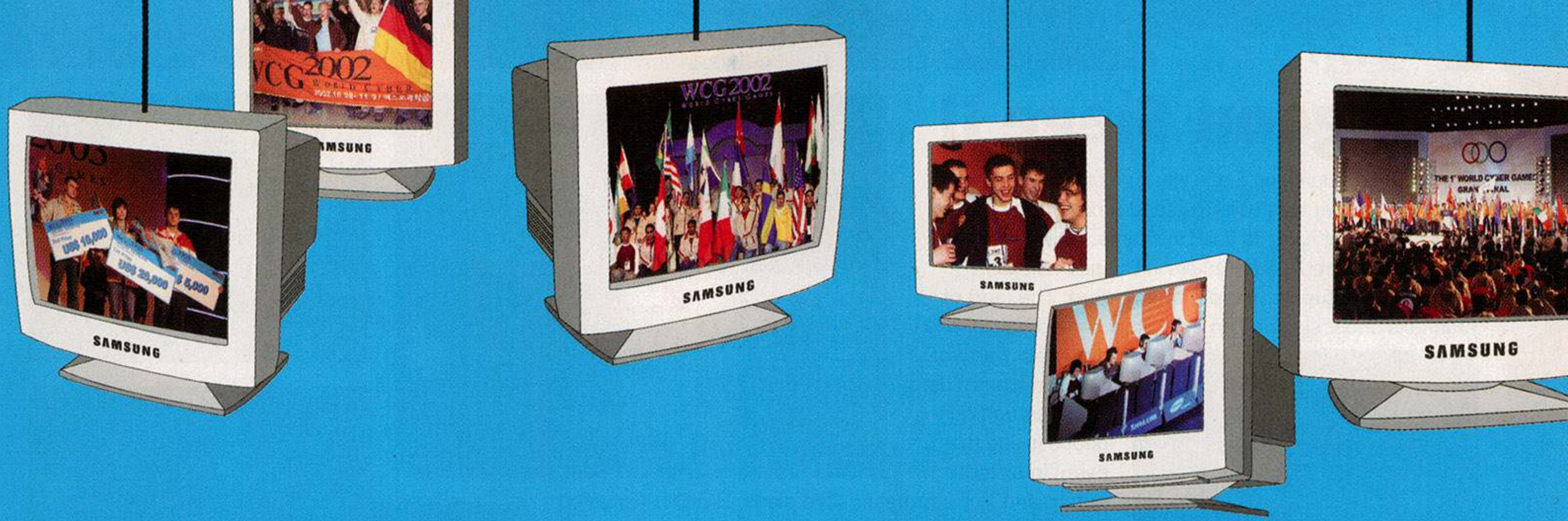


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# Dungeon Siege II

**PC** The olde Dungeon Siege was one of those rare action/RPGs that was able to stand next to the likes of Diablo II and not hang its head in shame. So what, praytell, is in store for intrepid adventurers in Dungeon Siege II?

Well, the setup seems pretty standard: The land of Aranna is under siege by an evil fellow named Valdis, and now your party of six champions must hack through dungeons (siege them, even) in order to

put an end to his reprehensible plans. But Gas Powered Games has lots of gameplay enhancements on tap. First off, Dungeon Siege II is moving away from the previous game's neo-Marxist class agnosticism with character advancement that allows for a lot more specialization with

more skill branches and ability options. Combat is striving to be a lot less automated as every class now has "Heroic Powers" they can draw on to change the flow of battle when things get messy. The world will change much more significantly depending on your actions in missions and quests. Your party will also have a lot more to say than the deaf/dumb/mute compadres from the previous game, offering conversation and advice—welcome or not—to try to influence your decisions.

—Star Dingo

■ **First Look** ■ **Developed by Gas Powered Games**  
 ■ **Published by Microsoft** ■ **Target release date: Winter 2004**



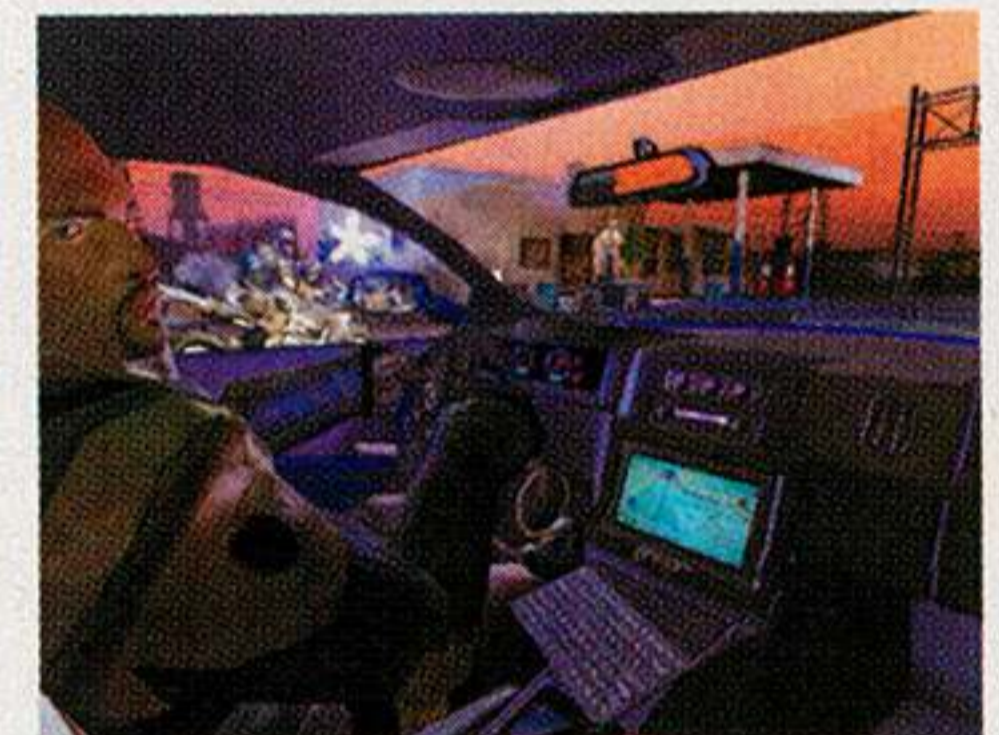
# F.E.A.R.

**PC** It seems horror games are really starting to evolve away from the whole third-person, medallion-puzzle-laden, why-is-my-grandmother-more-agile-than-Jill adventure thing. Hell, even Resident Evil doesn't look like Resident Evil anymore. Another case in point: Monolith's chaotic new first-person shooter, F.E.A.R.—think Tom Clancy high-tech S.W.A.T. stuff meets *The X-Files* meets Japanese horror movies starring creepy little girls who slowly walk on ceilings.

The technology behind F.E.A.R. is impressive (holy shadow volumes and shaders!), and the concept is pretty cool. You play a part in a squad of special operatives who specialize

in dealing with the freaky nasty stuff the F.B.I. and "regular" agencies can't handle—taking on ghosts, demons, aliens, and unspeakable cosmic horrors—with an arsenal of machine guns, corkscrew rocket launchers, and even the ability to slow down time. It's still too early to tell exactly where Monolith is going with it—the demo didn't lean as much on the freaky-weird side as you might expect (just a menacing little girl and guys in future camouflage ninja costumes in an office building), so all we can do is wonder what Monolith could be holding back. There's lots of potential, but we'll have to see if the suspense pays off.—Star Dingo

■ **First Look** ■ **Developed by Monolith Productions**  
 ■ **Published by Vivendi Universal Games** ■ **Target release date: First Quarter 2005**





# Tabula Rasa

**PC** Eastern philosophy meets alien cyberpunk meets God knows what in *Tabula Rasa*, a weird, new ship sailing the overcrowded MMORPG seas. But this particular one is helmed by Richard Garriot, the same guy who started this whole craze with *Ultima Online*...and it's obvious he's learned a few things since then. *Tabula Rasa* is one of the "new guard" MMORPGs that relies heavily on instanced areas (i.e. special just-for-your-party dungeons or just-for-you houses) to eradicate problems like overcrowding, spawn camping, and sprawling urban wastelands. Character development is very open-ended—there are no "classes," per se: You simply choose different specializations as you progress, and you're allowed to reinvent yourself with no penalty at any time. Plus, voice chat is fully integrated into the game. All that and the story and setting are absolutely nuts: It's the distant future, and mankind has learned to teleport instantly to almost anywhere by folding space (perfect back story for instanced dungeons); they now rely on balancing mind, body, and spirit using the powers of music (characters have their own "spirit instrument" that hangs out with them) and strange "spells" that work a lot like the fictional super-virus from *Snow Crash*—a swirl of visual cues and symbols that trigger violent, freaky-deaky reactions in the sentient brain.—*Star Dingo*

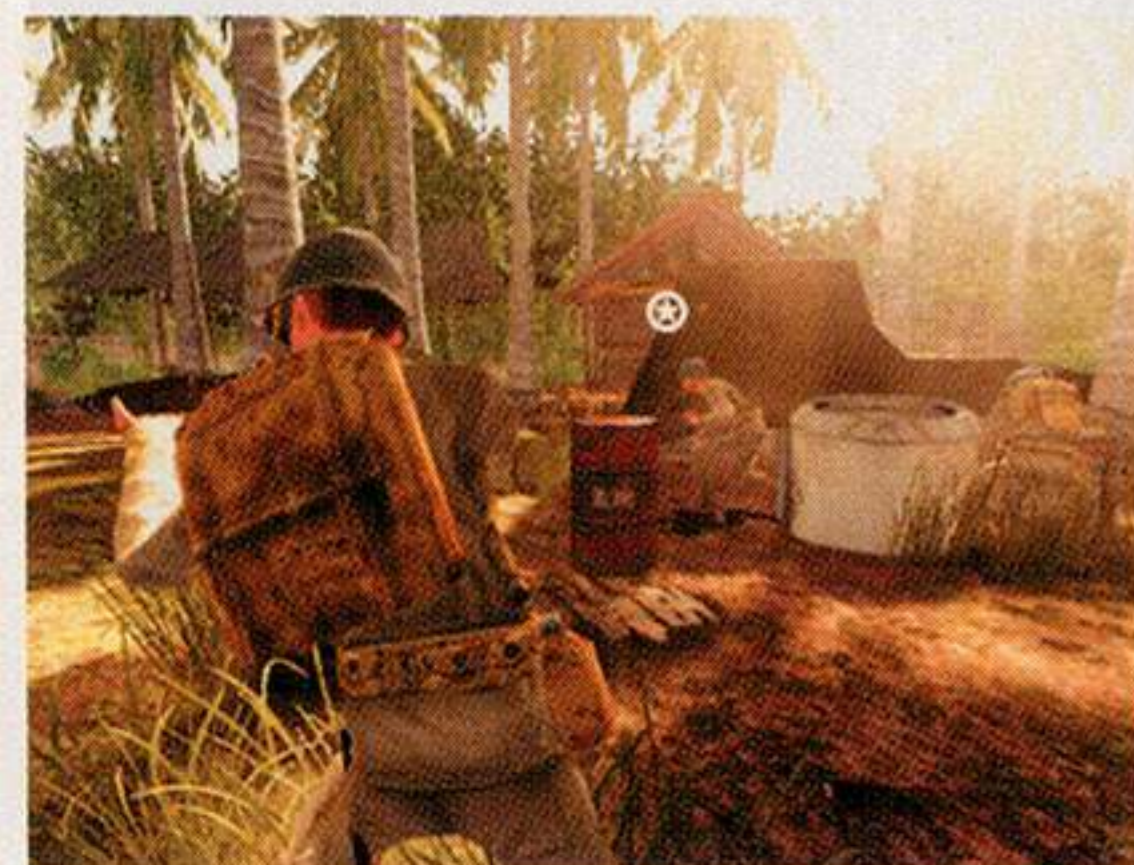
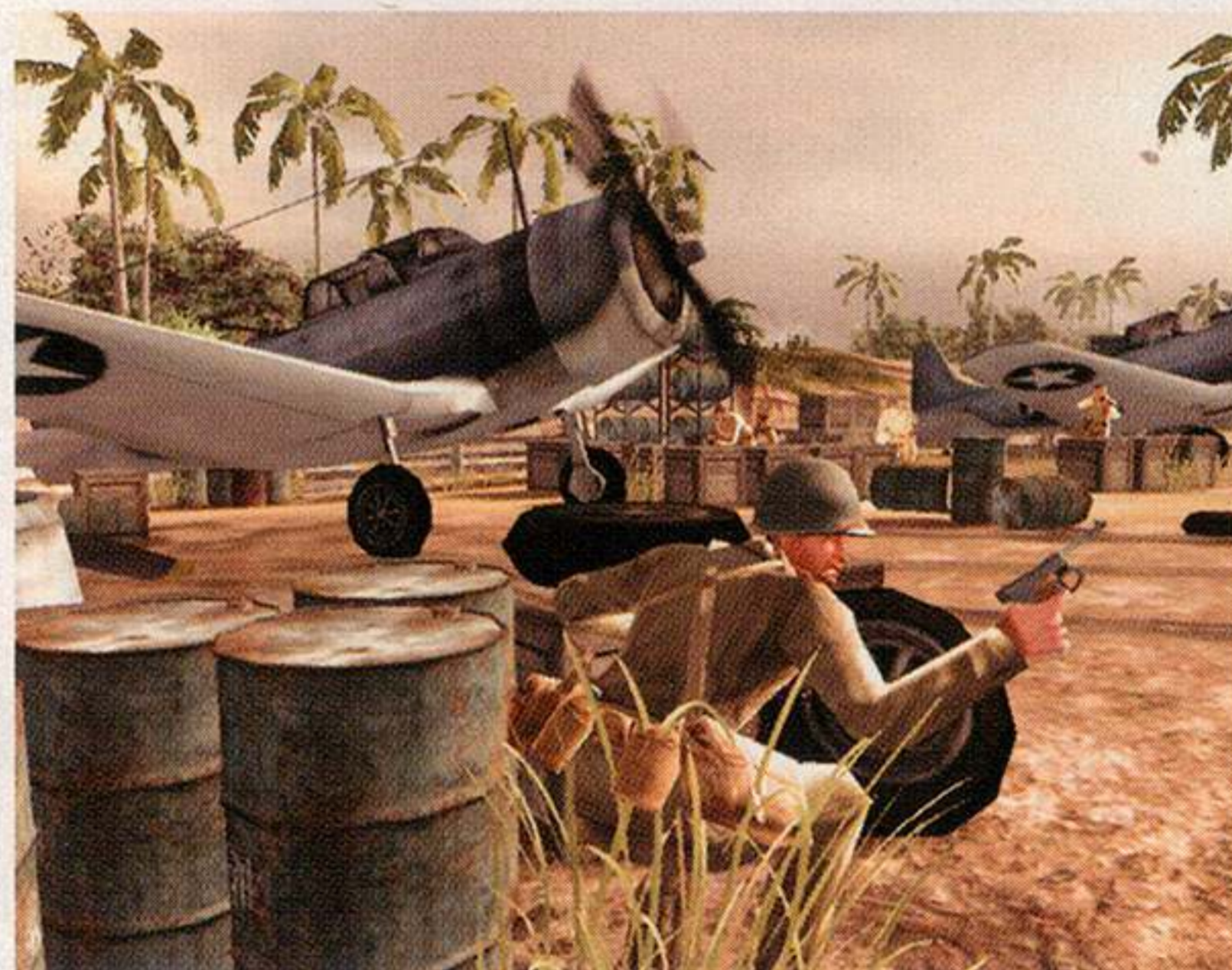
■ **First Look** ■ **Developed by** Destination Games  
 ■ **Published by** NCsoft ■ **Target release date:** Winter 2005



# Medal of Honor: Pacific Assault

**PC** The series synonymous with WWII frenetic gun running departs from the European countryside and crosses the Pacific into the deadly battlefields of Pearl Harbor, Guadalcanal, and Tarawa. The change in landscape, however, won't be the only gameplay shift in *Pacific Assault*. EA put much more realism into this FPS, starting with the removal of all arcade elements, such as picking up ammo and med kits that have been traditionally interspersed throughout levels. Additionally, you won't be going at it alone: You're now part of a squad whose specially trained soldiers give you directions and suggestions on how to best defeat the enemy. EA is quick to point out that the game never plays the same way twice as there are many options for completing objectives. And if you're under heavy fire and at your last breath, you can call for the medic to heal you back rather than respawning at the last save. Part of your offense also enables you to call in artillery and air strikes, plus you're rewarded more to solve problems creatively in all 35 levels of fully destructible environments. For example, instead of going head-on with the enemy, you can destroy the wooden supports on a guard tower for a more effective way of defeating the opposition. Integrated PunkBuster features, an all-new invader mode, and eight original game scenarios complete *Pacific Assault's* multiplayer action.—*Four-Eyed Dragon*

■ **Update** ■ **Developed by** EA LA ■ **Published by** Electronic Arts ■ **Target release date:** Fall 2004





## Rome: Total War

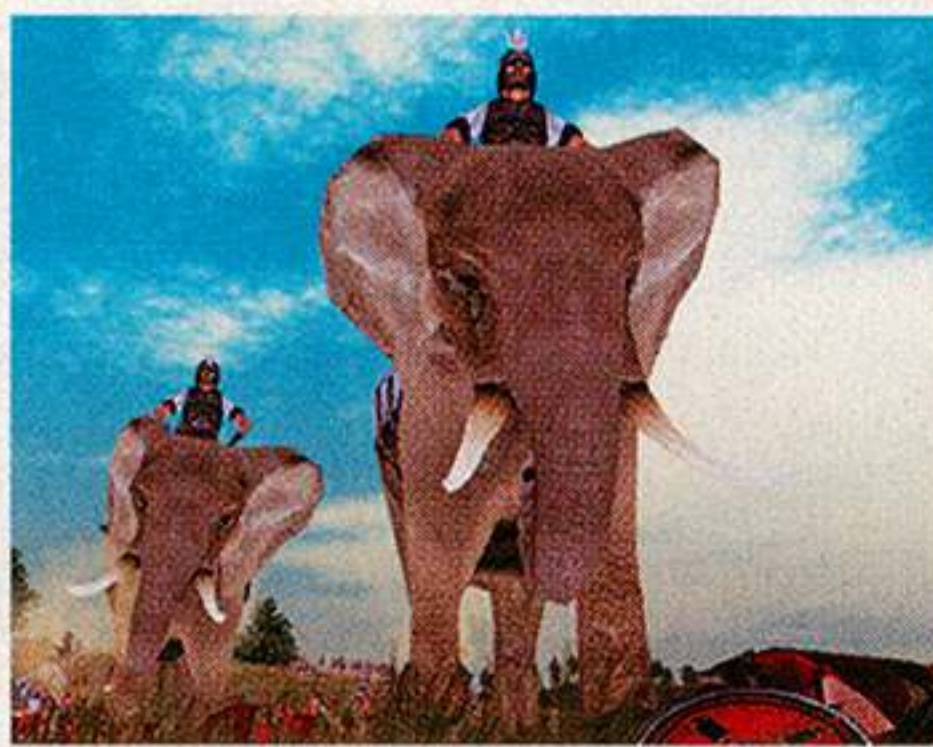
**PC** The Total War series has been known for being both massively cool and insanely difficult, both thanks to its attention to tactical detail and the huge number of troops fighting on a single battlefield at a time. The Creative Assembly is developing Rome: Total War with an eye toward making the game accessible and fun for beginners as well as hardcore grognards.

If you've seen the other games in the Total War series, then you know the craziness that ensues on the battlefield. Rome's full 3D battles will continue this tradition. Thousands of troops will march at your command—whether you're commanding the Roman legions, Greek Phalanxes, barbarian hordes, or the armies of Egypt, Carthage, or the Successor Kingdoms—but you can set up city governors and automatic systems to take care of your civic duties while you go kick ass.

—D-Pad Destroyer

■ **First Look** ■ **Developed by The Creative Assembly**  
 ■ **Published by Activision** ■ **Target release date: September**

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## Warhammer 40K: Dawn of War

**PC** Games Workshop's miniatures juggernaut has shown up in a few games in the past few years, but most feel that Dawn of War will do the most justice to the popular Warhammer 40K franchise.

Developer Relic isn't trying to turn the Warhammer 40K tabletop experience into an RTS; rather, its plan is to make a great RTS in the Warhammer 40K universe. Races will include Space Marines, Chaos, Orks, and one other race that hadn't been announced at press time, each with

its own signature units and abilities. Units in Dawn of War will have detailed morale code, the ability to equip different types of weapons, and four-way customizable badges and color schemes. Best of all, Relic has all but defeated resource-gathering in this new RTS: You'll fight to control strategic locations, and each one you occupy will give you Requisition points to use to request additional reinforcements.—D-Pad Destroyer

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



## S.T.A.L.K.E.R.: Shadow of Chernobyl

**PC** Poor Chernobyl. As if one catastrophic nuclear disaster wasn't enough, they're due for another one in 2006, according to S.T.A.L.K.E.R., a near-future shooter from Ukrainian developer GSC Game World. As a Stalker, your job is to get into the Zone, the area around the site of the disaster, and scavenge artifacts for fun and profit. Of course, the government considers you a thief, and the Zone's current inhabitants might not take kindly to your trespassing on their property.

S.T.A.L.K.E.R. features 30 square kilometers of nonlinear, explorable game territory, complete with mutants that have strange weapons and abilities ranging from gravitational attacks to telepathy and telekinesis. Better yet, the life simulation system makes for a constantly changing and reacting environment, guaranteeing real replay value as you fight through to the game's eight or more different endings.—D-Pad Destroyer

■ **First Look** ■ **Developed by GSC Game World**  
 ■ **Published by THQ** ■ **Target release date: Winter 2004**





# Ground Control II: Operation Exodus

**PC** Into the arena of “real-time strategy games that try new things” comes Ground Control II: Operation Exodus, a fast-paced RTS that focuses on battle rather than building. It’s quick and chaotic, but the high learning curve and some annoying control quirks may turn you off.

## Instant War

The first thing Ground Control II does to set itself apart from the C&C/StarCraft crowd is throw away the building-and-resource-gathering portion of gameplay—there are no mines, forests, or mountains of gems to find. The focus instead is on acquiring and holding (i.e. camping) “Victory Points,” which generate Acquisition Points (i.e. currency) automatically, and Landing Zones, which let you shuttle in troops using the game’s drop-ship. In multiplayer, all the units are available right from the beginning of a mission so there’s no “tech tree” to start, eliminating some of the memorizing-what-to-build-first strategy you get in games like Warcraft.

All this makes for some fast, chaotic, and furious battles—a blessing and a curse. You’ll never have downtime, but it’s extremely challenging to balance throwing units into the field with the amount of micromanagement each of the units requires. Every unit in Ground Control II is extremely specialized, and some quite powerful ones, if left unattended, will just die without reacting to their attacker.

## The Price of Freedom

The camera can show you just about any distance or angle, which is wonderful, though it takes a lot of getting used to—the pivot point for the camera isn’t where you’d expect it to be, and clicking on the map never shows you exactly what you want to see without some scurrying and readjustment. You’ll find far-out and almost top-down (a “traditional” RTS view) to be the most useful views, even though the game’s not nearly as pretty this way and it makes your units hard to differentiate and see. The game offers several good options for sorting and grouping, but selecting and deselecting individual units can be much more difficult—a pain, even, given the aforementioned micromanagement.



**PRO TIP:** Putting infantry with vehicles in groups will slow them down. Divide them into subgroups.



**PRO TIP:** Never meld Virons in the middle of a battle—the cocoons are super easy to destroy.

The single-player campaign, thankfully, helps ease you along the steep learning curve nice ‘n’ slow, and even throws in a couple more intimate “stealth”-style missions to help you get to know your individual units’ strengths and secondary abilities better. It even has a pretty neat story, replete with twists and turns.

Once you get the hang of the units (which takes an extra-long time) and the tricky camera, Ground Control II: Operation Exodus can be relentless, fast, and furious fun.—*Star Dingo*

**T** ■ Developed by Massive Entertainment  
 ■ Published by Vivendi Universal Games  
 ■ \$49.99 ■ Available now ■ RTS ■ 8 players



**PRO TIP:** Remap your camera keys to A, S, D, and W so you can reach your grouping hotkeys without moving your hand too far across the keyboard.



**PRO TIP:** Only ground units can take victory points. Putting flying vehicles over a victory point won’t do the trick.

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

**Recommended System Specifications**  
 ■ Windows 2000/XP ■ Pentium 4 1.5 GHz ■ 256 MB RAM ■ 1.5 GB on HD ■ 128 MB AGP graphics card



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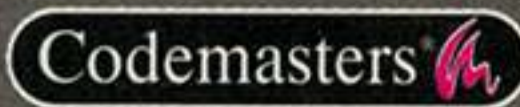
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PlayStation 2



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# Spider-Man 2

**G**ood move by Sam Raimi to save Dr. Octopus, Spider-Man's best villain (a statement not open to debate), until the second film. This game is the handheld tie-in, and though the name says Spider-Man 2, it's actually the third Spider-Man game released on the GBA. As the man who does whatever a spider can, you deliver pizzas, rescue corporate monkeys from office fires, quell prison revolts, and avoid riot police throughout a platform-peppered Manhattan before going toe to toe against Rhino, Mysterio, and Doc Ock. Of course, you have to do all this in time to get back to your job at the *Daily Bugle*, where J. Jonah Jameson berates you.



**PROTIP:** Delivering pizza to people will keep them from going to bed hungry.



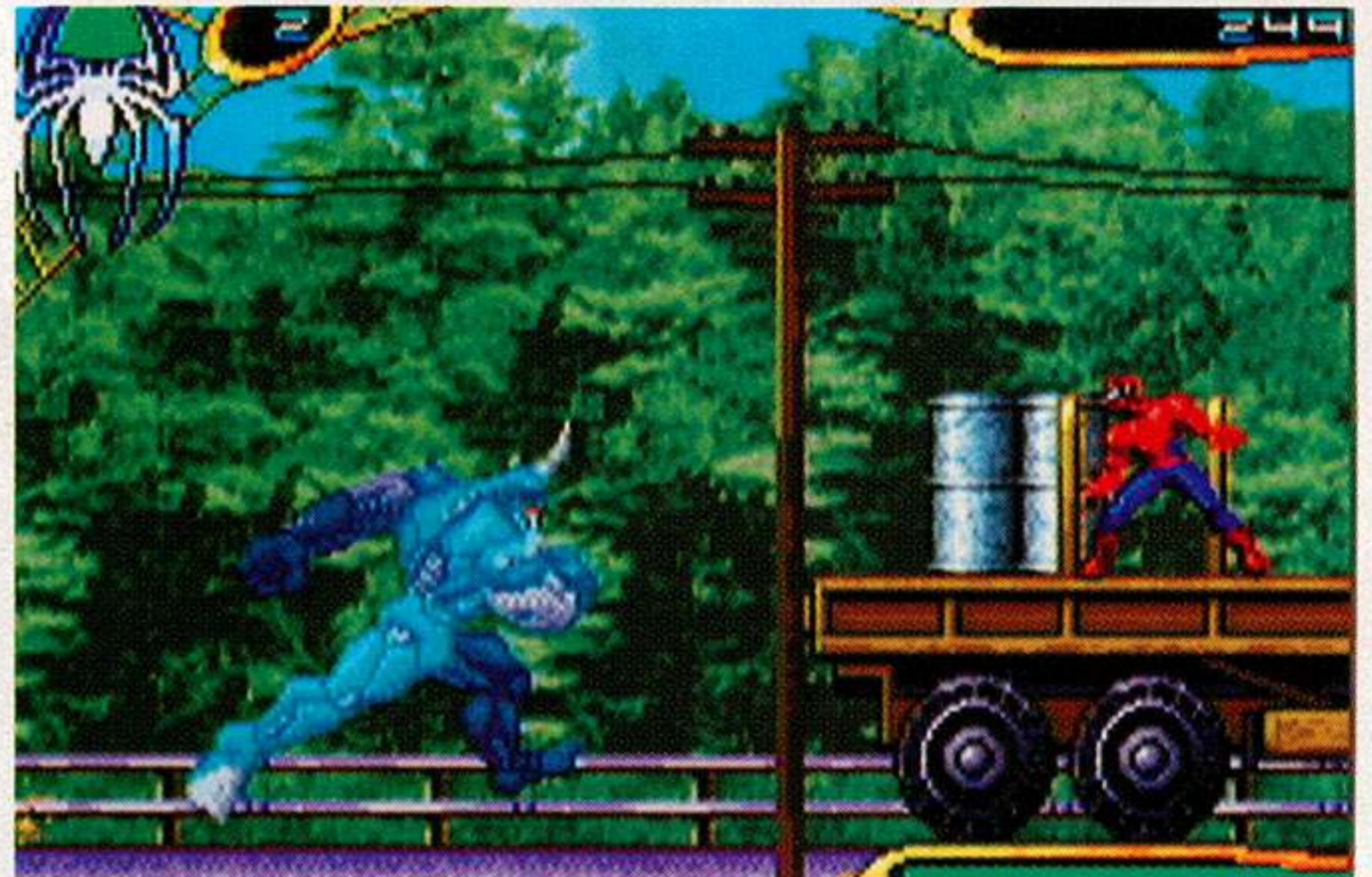
**PROTIP:** Rescue hostages to obtain door keys.

## Spider-Mod

This time out, Activision has added an experience system in which bopping muggers, rescuing hostages, and taking pics earns you points to unlock new fighting combos, enhance your speed and jumping height, and purchase web upgrades like web nets and web whips. The concept makes the beginning of the game a drag because even low-life thugs can easily knock you out, so you'll spend a lot of time repeatedly hitting, then running away, hitting, then running away like a cheap little man. However, your hard work eventually pays off, and once you have an arsenal of moves at your disposal, the game gets quite fun.

## Sticky Fingers

Problematic, though, are the sequences in which you have to swing around confounding and shoddily rendered 3D hub areas to capture Doc Ock, access new chapters, and unlock bonus missions against a timer. Even more troublesome are the (literally) sticky controls, which cause you to get stuck on walls and ceilings when you don't mean to. Trying to pull off special attacks demands extreme patience as you'll often crouch and punch instead of throwing a web net like you intended. Overall, though, Spider-Man 2 boasts good production values and is solid fun. It's worth checking out.—Iron Monkey



**PROTIP:** Use the barrels to stop Rhino's rampage.

**E** ■ Developed and published by Activision ■ \$34.99 ■ Available now ■ Action ■ 1 player

GRAPHICS	3.5	FUN FACTOR	3.5	
	SOUND			4.0
	CONTROL			3.0

# Astro Boy: Omega Factor

**J**ust as Godzilla is the personification of nature's brutal retribution on mankind for harnessing the destructive powers of the atom, Astro Boy personifies one man's hope that mankind can overcome its inherent destructive traits through understanding and compassion.

Osamu Tezuka created Tetsuwan Atom (Astro Boy) in 1952 as a boy robot that uses his atomic abilities to protect the fabric of human civilization. Over the next 50 years, Astro Boy would evolve from a two-dimensional comic-book character into an icon symbolizing the inherent integrity of humanity. Needless to say, Astro Boy has been long past due for a video-game incarnation.

## Boy Robots in Hot Pants!

In Astro Boy: Omega Factor, players assume the role of Astro Boy as he sets off on a journey of self-discovery. Astro must protect those dearest to him, build up his Omega Factor by meeting various people—differentiating between good and evil—and discover the answers to an apocalyptic millennial mystery scattered throughout time.

Omega Factor is one of the best original handheld action/platform games to come around in a very long time and features both side-scrolling fighting and shooter levels. Astro has an extensive portfolio of abilities, including punch/kick combos, jet booster dashes, special EX powers, such as Finger Beams, Arm Cannon, Machine Gun, and EX Dashes, and upgradeable force characteristics. The graphics and sounds are superb—the graphics show only minor slowdown when the action gets substantially too heavy.

## Back to the Future

Additionally, Omega Factor's replay factor is cleverly integrated into the progression of the game. Players will have to play through the game two and a half times to complete the side-quests, achieve the game's true conclusion, and complete Astro Boy's Omega Factor. The game is also the first to utilize Osamu Tezuka's vast stable of unique individuals, featuring over 45 characters from his various works, including Ambassador Magma, Amazing Three, Black Jack, and Unico.

While heavy on Tezuka cameos and references, the uninitiated need not worry; Omega Factor stands up on its own gameplay merits. With over 16 levels, three levels of difficulty, and an engaging plot-oriented story rivaling most in-depth RPG games, Astro Boy: Omega Factor is highly recommended to all.—Rice Burner

**E** ■ Developed by Hitmaker! ■ Published by Sega ■ \$19.99 ■ Available August ■ Action/platformer ■ 1 player



**PROTIP:** During the final battle with Atlas, you must protect the air tent with Astro's body so that Black Jack can successfully perform the operation.

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**PROTIP:** When Pluto goes for his Horn Laser attack, dash in behind him and use your Arm Cannon to get in some major damage.

## GAMEPRO EDITORS' CHOICE

GRAPHICS	4.5	FUN FACTOR	4.5	
	SOUND			4.0
	CONTROL			4.5



# Classic NES Series: The Legend of Zelda

One of the few video-game designers in the 1980s truly possessed of genius, Shigeru Miyamoto inoculated American youth with Super Mario Bros. before unleashing this quasi-RPG/exploration masterpiece that infected a generation of game geeks like a communicable disease.

Despite initial confusion about whether or not it would be about the mental-ward meanderings of F. Scott Fitzgerald's schizophrenic wife, the original Legend of Zelda was a pixel-perfect testament to video-game artistry that completely leveled the proverbial playing field for adventure/quest games. Almost 20 years later, the sucker holds up. As pointy-eared lad of Hyrule Link, you explore dreamlike mystical lands, graveyards, and secret underground dungeons while contending against indescribable dangers, epic bosses, and hordes of enemies who are ripped right out of Greek mythology and armed with enchanted weaponry and a cornucopia of ingenious tools and gadgets. If there is one Classic NES cart to throw your nickel to, it's this one. Trust us on this.—*Dr. Chapstick*



**PROTIP:** The boomerang is a fantastic weapon because it not only stuns enemies but also lets you to grab items from afar.

**GAMEPRO EDITORS' CHOICE**

**E** ■ Developed and published by Nintendo ■ \$19.99 ■ Available now ■ Adventure ■ 1 player

GRAPHICS	4.0	FUN FACTOR	4.5
SOUND	4.5		
CONTROL	4.5		

# Classic NES Series: Bomberman

"The" seminal action/puzzle game from the mid-1980s, Bomberman is fundamentally one of the most highly addictive and life-consuming games ever to be produced. In the game, you must navigate Bomberman through 50 mazelike subterranean levels to freedom from his hated Taskmasters, who have sent an army of stooges to prevent him from escaping. Bomberman must create carnage by bombing everything in sight to reach the door to salvation, which can only be entered when all the enemies on the level have been defeated—but the door is initially hidden in the walls of the levels, and there's a finite time limit. When the clock runs out, the Taskmaster sends in an elite squad of Pontan enemies to destroy you.

Bomberman has a peculiar effect on players—it's a game that trains you. As you're drawn into its simple and diverse gameplay, you'll find yourself gleefully blasting away, setting traps, and setting delayed multiple-row bomb blasts with the skills of a calculating superhuman mad genius. While not as advanced or socially oriented as the recent Bomberman releases, players will find the original Bomberman pleasantly and subversively enjoyable.—*Rice Burner*



**PROTIP:** Obtain power-ups to gain other abilities and turn the tide of the level by ambushing the enemies with multiple bomb explosions.

**E** ■ Developed and published by Nintendo ■ \$19.99 ■ Available now ■ Action ■ 1 player

GRAPHICS	3.0	FUN FACTOR	3.5
SOUND	3.0		
CONTROL	3.0		

# Classic NES Series: Excitebike

How does one review a game that, as of this year, is a full 20 years old? Well, take a trip back to those heady times when Cindi Lauper's "Girls Just Want to Have Fun" plagued the airwaves and video arcades were the rage. Those arcades of old bore no resemblance

to the DDR-atoriums of today. These were seedy places frequented by what today we would call "at-risk youths," then called "hoods." Blame S.E. Hinton and Matt Dillon. Within, you could expect the din of hundreds of cabinets competing to be heard over Billy Squier's "Stroke." Those were the fires in which Excitebike was forged.

The game's graphics are state of the art for that period; you can see the goggles on the rider. Control is straightforward; you push up, you go up, etc. Sound is par for the course in the era of "turn the sound off and listen to Metallica with your headphones."

Tons of people used to play this game in the arcade. It was cool then, and this version is the same, only smaller...and with a track designer.

—*FTPoed*



**"Say you're a winner, but man you're just a sinner now."**  
—*Billy Squier*

**E** ■ Developed and published by Nintendo ■ \$19.99 ■ Available now ■ Racing ■ 1 player

GRAPHICS	4.0	FUN FACTOR	4.0
SOUND	3.0		
CONTROL	5.0		

# Classic NES Series: Ice Climber

The concept is old-school arcade-simple: Guide a hammer-wielding Eskimo to the top of a mountain, then to the top of another mountain, and then another and another. Much like a modern office building, each mountain has eight "floors" filled with various perils for the climber to avoid: white fuzzy things, high winds, birds, falling icicles, and the like. To reach the next floor, the climber often has to use his head to chip away at the ceiling while workers above toil to seal the gaps. Beyond the top floor lies a large, timed "bonus course" worth tons of bonus points if you're really, really good with that jump button.

If it sounds repetitive, it is, but Nintendo finds a way to make a lot of sinister challenges out of the sparse building blocks. The controls are weird and tough—slippery by design and not by way of sickly programming; the momentum-based jumping is particularly challenging, certain to infuriate platform haters. Ice Climber may not be the Zeus of the classic NES pantheon—heck, it's not even the Hephaestus or Demeter—but those who want to test their reflexive skills will find something to latch onto.—*Star Dingo*



**PROTIP:** The direction of a floor's "slant" (from top to bottom) indicates the direction of the wind.

**E** ■ Developed and published by Nintendo ■ \$19.99 ■ Available now ■ Action ■ 2 players

GRAPHICS	3.0	FUN FACTOR	3.5
SOUND	3.0		
CONTROL	3.5		

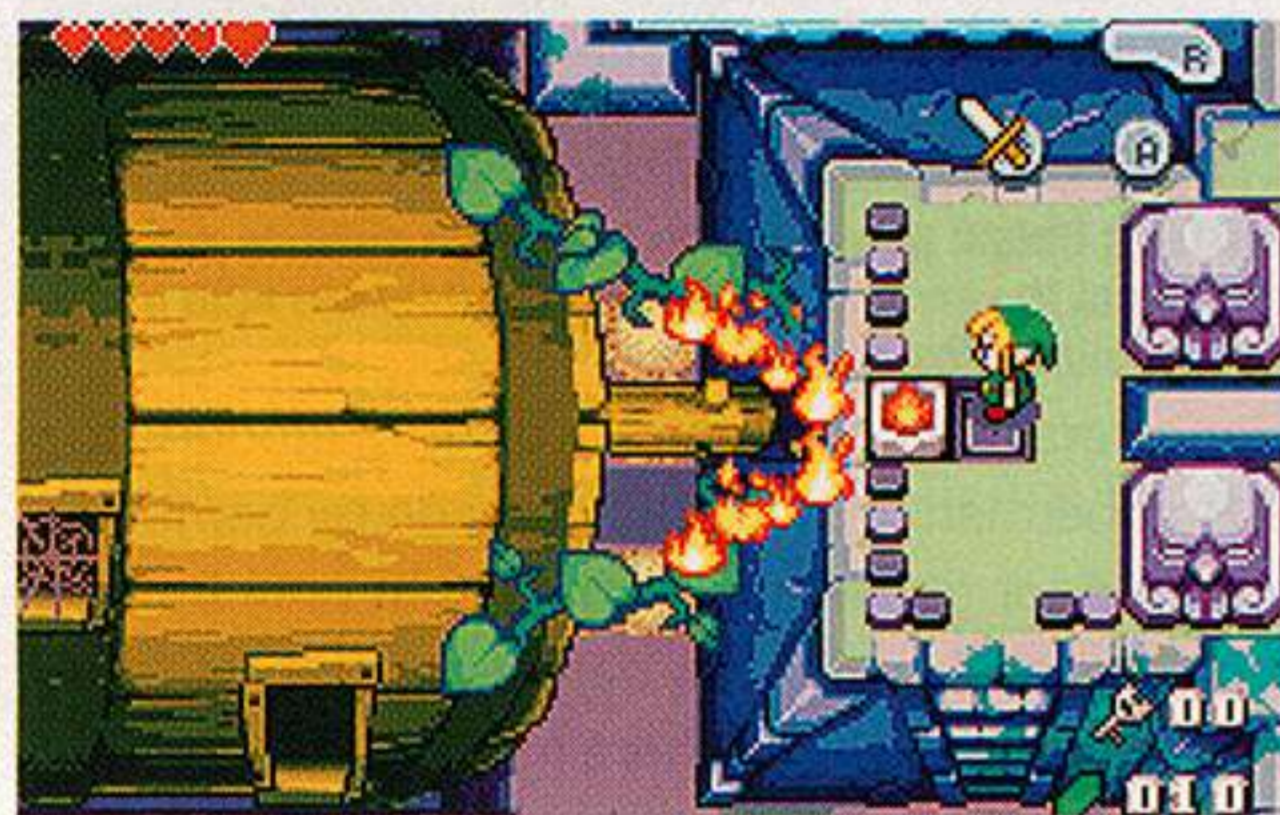


# The Legend of Zelda: The Minish Cap

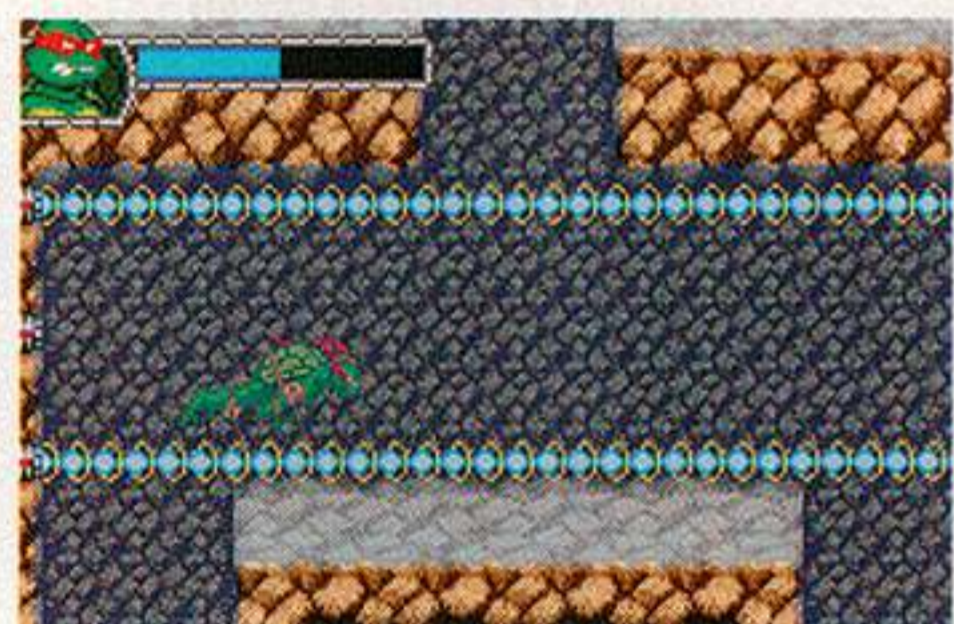
Finally, Nintendo has heard our prayers and is producing an all-new Zelda adventure for the GBA—The Legend of Zelda: The Minish Cap. The titular cap is some sort of bizarre sentient headwear that enables Link to shrink to mite size so he can get to places he'd otherwise be too large to go to. After using the hat, he encounters the Minish people, teeny folk who need his help to rescue them from the gravest of danger.

Requisite side-quests require you to collect pieces of kinstones that can be linked with other kinstone fragments in order to surmount challenges, reveal secrets, and unlock levels. This is done by finding other people in possession of kinstone shards and fusing the pieces, and because the game will support the GBA wireless adapter, you'll even be able to link kinstones with other players.—*Iron Monkey*

■ **First Look** ■ **Developed by** Capcom ■ **Published by** Nintendo ■ **Target release date:** 2005



# Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles 2

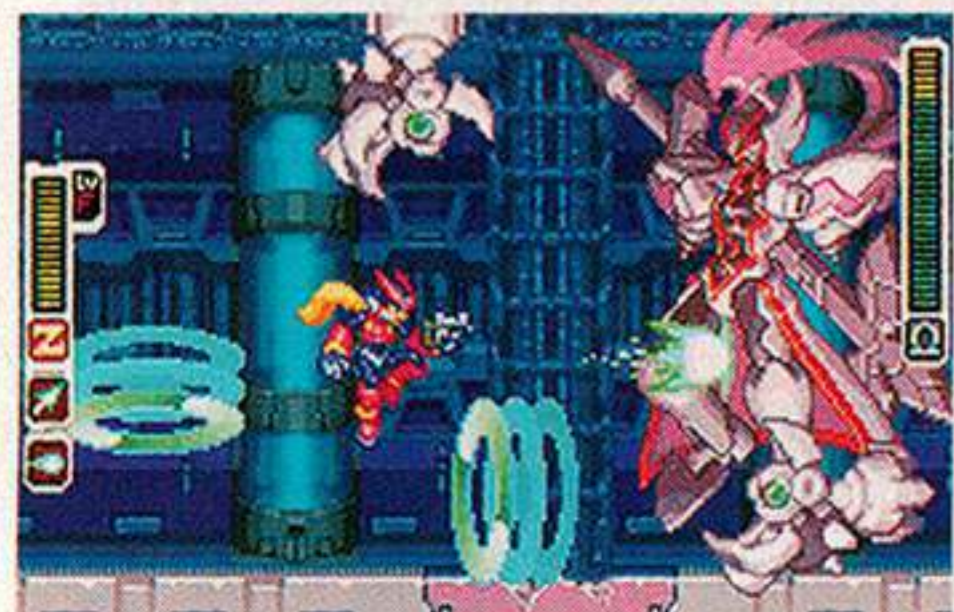


It's hard to imagine that one of the largest late 20<sup>th</sup>-Century mass-marketing juggernauts started off as a small press tongue-in-cheek homage to early Frank Miller *Daredevil* comics. Now, the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles are gearing up for another adventure on the GBA. In TMNT2, you and three friends will be able to play cooperatively against the forces of Shredder or competitively against one another. You'll contend with ninjas, genetic freaks, and gigantic mutant bosses while hopping platforms, swinging katanas, and chucking shurikens. You'll also swim underwater and pilot futuristic vehicles (some even in first-person mode). The story will follow a non-linear structure, levels will include secret routes and hidden levels, and there will be more than 60 stages altogether, including specific battle-themed stages and ride courses. Donatello, Raphael, Leonardo, and Michelangelo will return from the sewers again this October.—*Iron Monkey*

■ **First Look** ■ **Developed and published by** Konami ■ **Target release date:** October



# Mega Man Zero 3



The utopian way of life on Neo Arcadia, a world where humans and Reploids peacefully coexist, is threatened when a sinister robot named Omega unleashes the power of the Dark Elf to brainwash Zero's allies. Zero must rescue his allied resistance fighters and bring order to chaos by wresting Neo Arcadia from the control of Omega. In addition to improved visuals over

previous games, Mega Man Zero 3 will introduce new game-play features. An all-new parts customization system will allow Zero to use three types of chips (feet, body, and head) to tailor his attributes according to the stage and type of enemy he's up against, and a new Recoil Rod weapon will enable him to leap higher and break through obstacles. You'll also be able to enter Cyber Space in order to augment Zero's abilities.—*Iron Monkey*

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







# Banjo Pilot

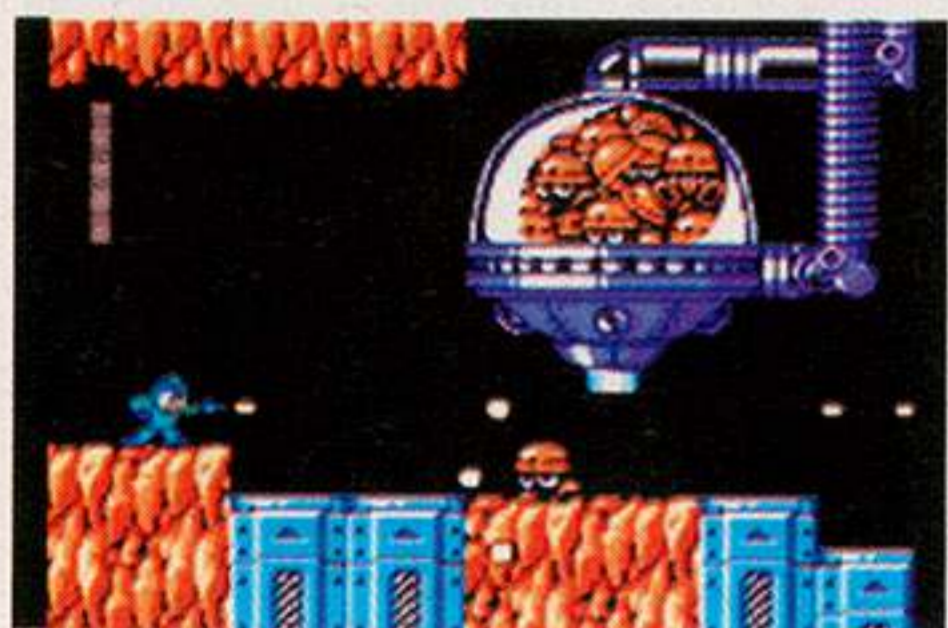
If you remember, we told you way back in 2001 that Rare was working on an air-racing title named Diddy Kong Pilot for Nintendo. Now that Rare is developing for Microsoft, the son of Donkey has been supplanted by a bear with a bird in a backpack, and Diddy Kong Pilot is now Banjo Pilot. Besides a new cast, the revamped racer will showcase beautifully overhauled visuals and more fluid gameplay. Each character from the Banjo-Kazooie series will be able to pilot his own custom aircraft and will also have a unique story line, giving a boost to the game's replay value. Link cable support will enable four players to play simultaneously, and although it's not yet known whether or not the game will utilize Diddy's motion-sensing tilt-control mechanism, we'll have more information as it becomes available.—Iron Monkey

■ Update ■ Developed by Rare  
 ■ Published by THQ ■ Target release date: Fall 2004



# Mega Man Anniversary Collection

Mega Man Anniversary Collection compiles Mega Man I through V from the original Game Boy. The classic platformers have aged well, and newcomers will dig the series' balance of fast-paced gameplay, cosmic visuals, tricky levels, and great boss battles, along with story lines that get progressively better.



In each game, you play as the titular battle droid and can choose to play levels in any order you wish, vying against warmongering mechanical bosses like Napalm Man and Skull Man so you can swipe their weaponry and upgrade your Mega Buster blaster.



To keep it real, Capcom is giving you the option to play the game in its original black-and-white glory, but if that's too archaic for you, you'll also be able to play each game with a brand-new color scheme. As another bonus, Capcom is tossing in a museum of artwork from the series for you to peruse.—Iron Monkey

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



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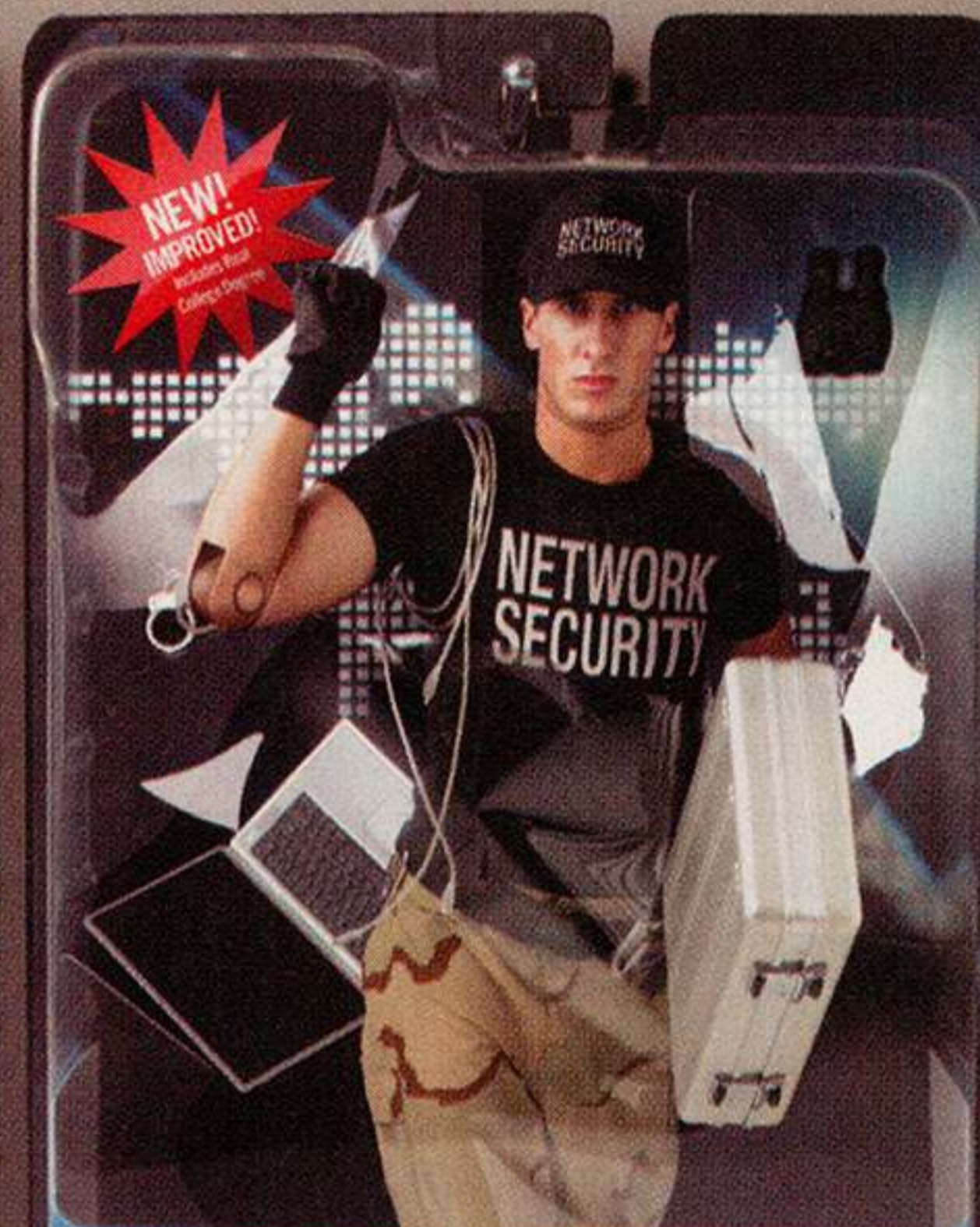


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# Madden NFL 2005

**Defense wins football championships, a lesson not lost on Madden NFL 2005.**

**PE** **X** **G** Each season, Madden NFL holds courts as the elite of the video-game football league. This year, even though there's less competition (no NFL GameDay or NFL Fever), it's gotten tougher (ESPN NFL 2K5); and Madden NFL 2005 muscles up to compete in fine form.

## Defending the Crown

The gameplay emphasis with 2005 is on defense, and it is aggressive. For one, the new Hit Stick launches tacklers into a ferocious hit at a simple flick of the right analog stick. Your defense can change the game this way by either causing a fumble...or missing a tackle completely.

Additionally, the on-the-money controls can turn you into a tough defensive signal caller. The PS2, Xbox, and GameCube versions are all evenly tuned to near perfection, and among the great defensive-move additions is the ability to adjust linemen, linebackers, and defensive backs as a group at the line of scrimmage with a few simple button presses.

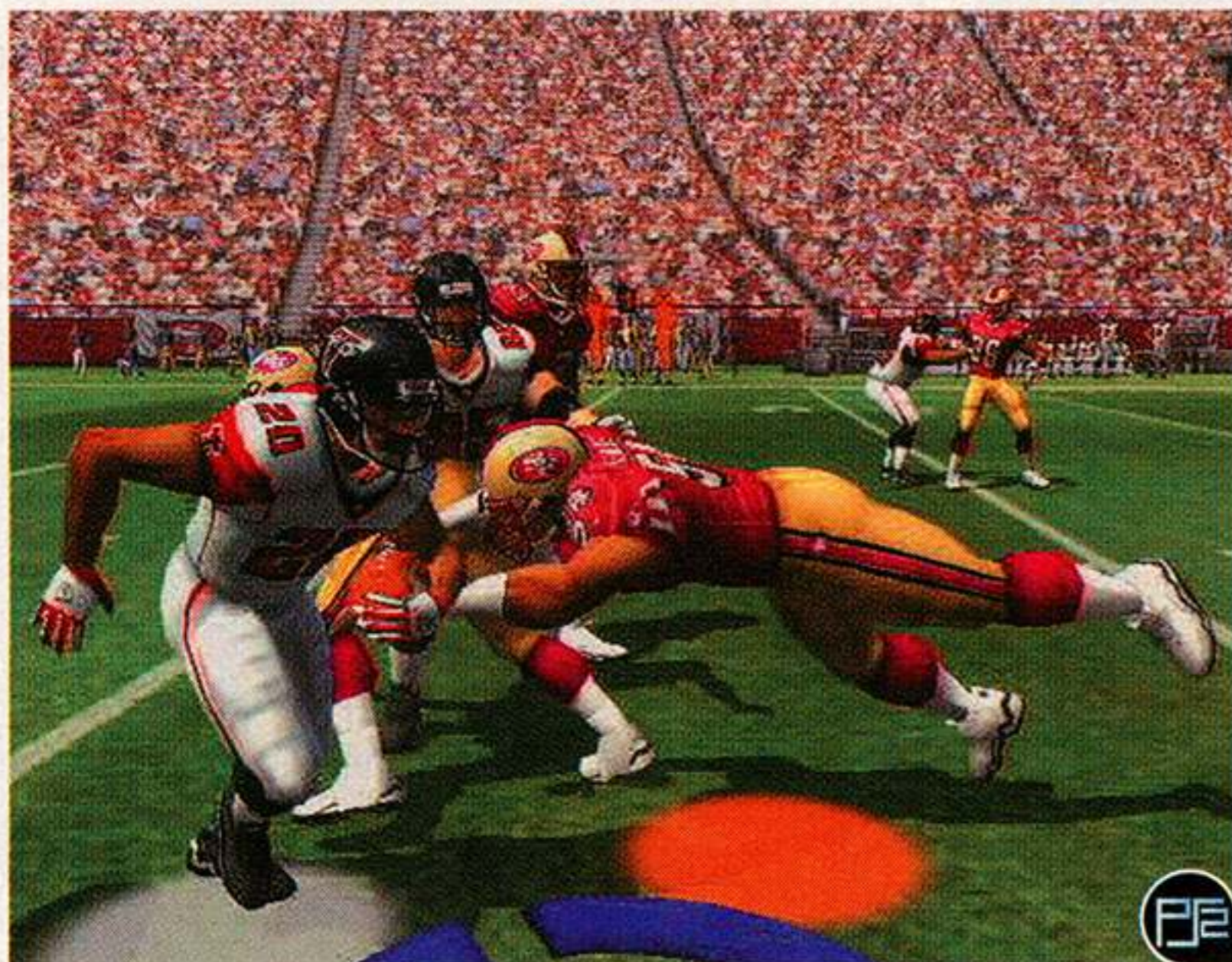
You can even make individual assignments with the DBs at the line, or you can put on your defensive coordinator's headset at the Coaching Strategy menu and assign your best cornerbacks or safeties to shadow a team's star receiver throughout the game.

Although Madden's offense has been polished over the years, it continues to receive welcome improvements. For instance, for certain pass plays, the A.I. enables key receivers to adjust their routes to the defensive players. You have to read your receivers and either fire a bullet pass or loft a floater just like in real football.

Also, Madden remains the best in the business at presenting football plays. The playbook and playcalling interface in this year's game are clean, easy to read, and snap to use.



**PRO TIP:** If your opponent has a dominant, play-making wide receiver like Randy Moss of the Vikings or Terrell Owens of the Eagles, go to Coaching Strategies and set your best defensive back to always cover him.



**PRO TIP:** The Hit Stick turns defenders into human missiles. Flick the right stick at least a half-body length away from your target...but don't miss!

## Feature Rich

The big story for 2005 is Storyline Central, a different sort of gameplay improvement altogether. As the owner of a franchise, you deal with the off-the-field drama that affects any team's performance on the field. Contract disputes, playing-time issues, and personality conflicts are all fair game, and the media will pounce on such controversy like the sharks that we...er, they are. A slick interface enables you to jump from a newspaper headline directly into Franchise menus for roster changes and other management moves.

On-the-field player animations just keep getting better and better. This year, great body mechanics make watching players in replay mode a wonder. The Xbox and GameCube visuals seriously shine, with the PS2's close behind.

Obviously with all the attention being paid to other aspects of the game, revamping the visual show was a lower priority. Presentations like the pregame warm ups mimic last season's; and the more often the cheerleading squad shows up, the more oddly cloned they look.

The sounds sing thanks to John Madden and Al Michaels. They turn in another stellar performance with expert commentary and spot-on play-by-play calls.

## Madden's NFL

2005 emphasizes the "go" over the "show," and its fans will not be disappointed. Even in the face of stiff competition, Madden NFL maintains its winning tradition.—*Brother Buzz*

**E** ■ Developed by EA Tiburon  
 ■ Published by EA Sports ■ \$39.99  
 ■ Available August ■ Football ■ 4 players



**PRO TIP:** Smart use of defensive line shifts can stifle opposing offenses before they get going on a play.



**PRO TIP:** Make a fan in franchise mode, and he shows up throughout the season.



**PRO TIP:** If your team has them in its playbook, short slant passes, particularly from the I-Form Normal set, continue to be one of the most consistent offensive weapons in this series.



**PRO TIP:** If defenders overpursue on wide running plays like tosses or sweeps, look to cut back against the grain of the defense.

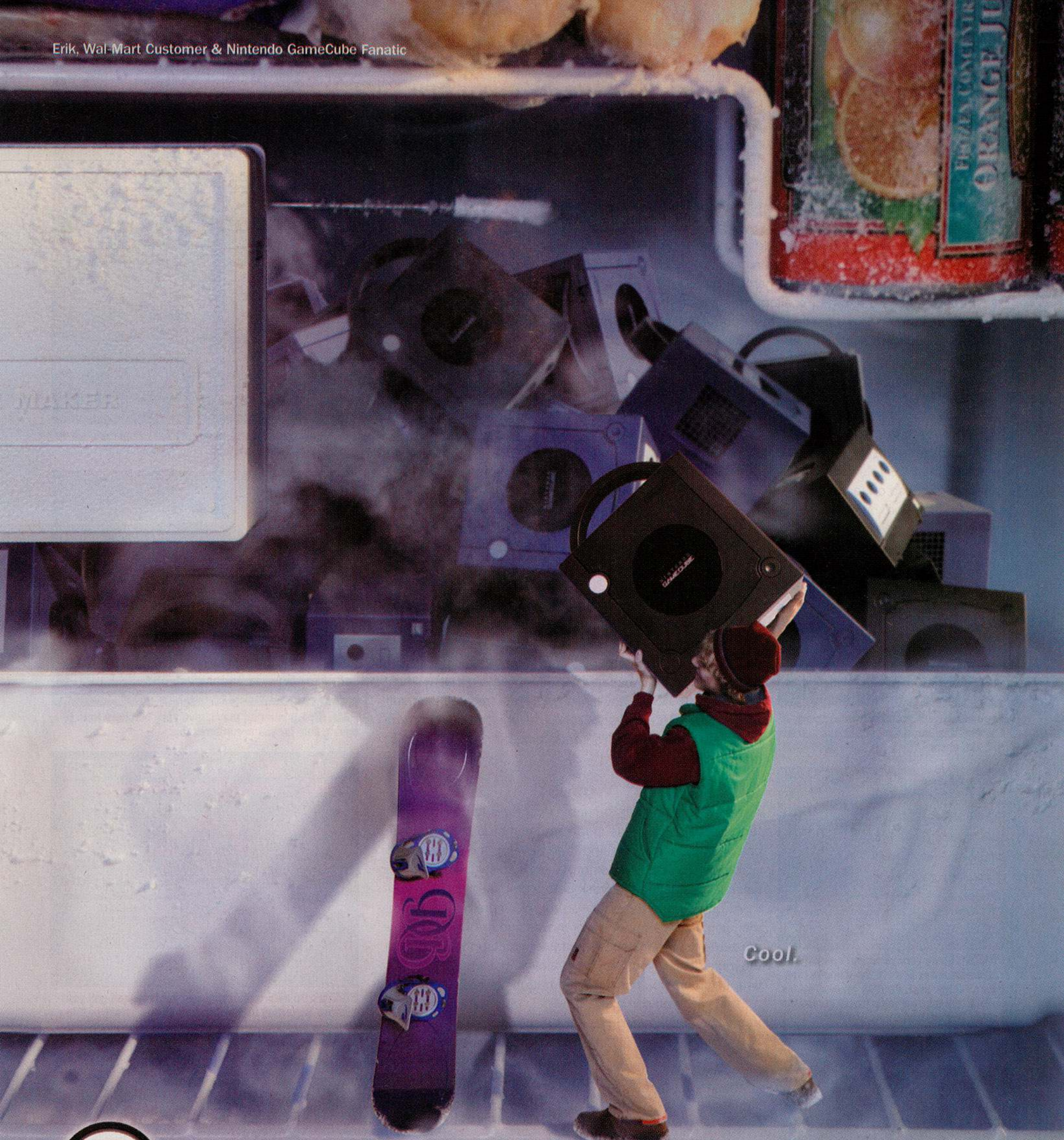
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## GAMEPRO EDITORS' CHOICE

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



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## ESPN NFL 2K5

With more moves, more strategy, more show, and a \$19.99 price tag, ESPN NFL 2K5 could go all the way.

**PE** **X** If you keep trying harder, sooner or later you'll reap the rewards. Each season, Sega's ESPN NFL series has been making steady progress in its quest for video-game-football stardom. This year, the design guys at Visual Concepts have turned ESPN NFL 2K5 into the most entertaining show in video-game football.

NFL 2K5 shows off some excellent touches off the field and some tough moves on the field. Last year, the introduction of the Crib build-a-pad feature and the first-person view was a little bit "Hollywood" for sure. This year, all the highlights are right where they should be.

### Football ESPN Style

The razzle-dazzle hits you first. The game makes excellent use of its ESPN license to pump you up from the "get" with all the familiar sights and sounds from the televised presentation, including cool in-game info graphics and ESPN personalities. Announcer Chris Berman is all over 2K5 with pregame and half-time shows based on teams you're playing and your gameplay. ESPN sideline reporter Suzy Kolber gets face time, too, by actually interviewing your star player during a postgame show.



The considerable personality and energy of ESPN's Chris Berman serves to juice up the NFL 2K5 show.

The audio overall for both the PlayStation 2 and Xbox versions is topnotch. The crowd sounds are fierce, and Berman and crew call the game according to your button presses without missing a cue.

The game's graphics presentation on the field is killer. ESPN NFL has always had the best player close-ups around (and characters on the sidelines and in the stands aren't too shabby either). The gameplay character models have been revamped to produce ultra-realistic movement that's almost like watching TV. Moreover, the game features 200 plus cut-scenes in 2K5. Last year? Forty. The whole show looks impressively sharp on the PS2 and Xbox, but the PS2 visuals are a standout.

PASSING MATCHUPS		PASSING DEFENSE	
CIN	SF	CIN	SF
Coverage	T. Rattay, QB	PD	YDS INT SCK
50	75	3	332 3 0
Def. Line	Off. Line	SACKS	
69	80	DL: 0%	
K. Rattiff, CB	B. Lloyd, WR	LB: 0%	
67	74	DB: 0%	
K. Herring, FS	C. Conway, WR	ASSISTANT STAKE	
83	71	OUR PROBLEM AREAS	
		C. Conway is facing a hard matchup this week. We will want to focus on him.	
		POSITION EVALUATION	
		CORNERBACKS	
		SAFETIES	
		LINEBACKERS	
		DEFENSIVE LINE	
		RATING	
		X	

**PRO TIP:** Study your opponent's strengths and weaknesses prior to the game to plan your strategy. Here, the 49er passing attack looks like it might enjoy success versus the Bengal pass defense.



**PRO TIP:** "Read" the defenders to find the open receiver. Here, the receiver is open underneath the linebackers who are dropping back.



**PRO TIP:** Use the coach's view to see how the offensive play you have called matches up against the defense. When you run the play, look there first.



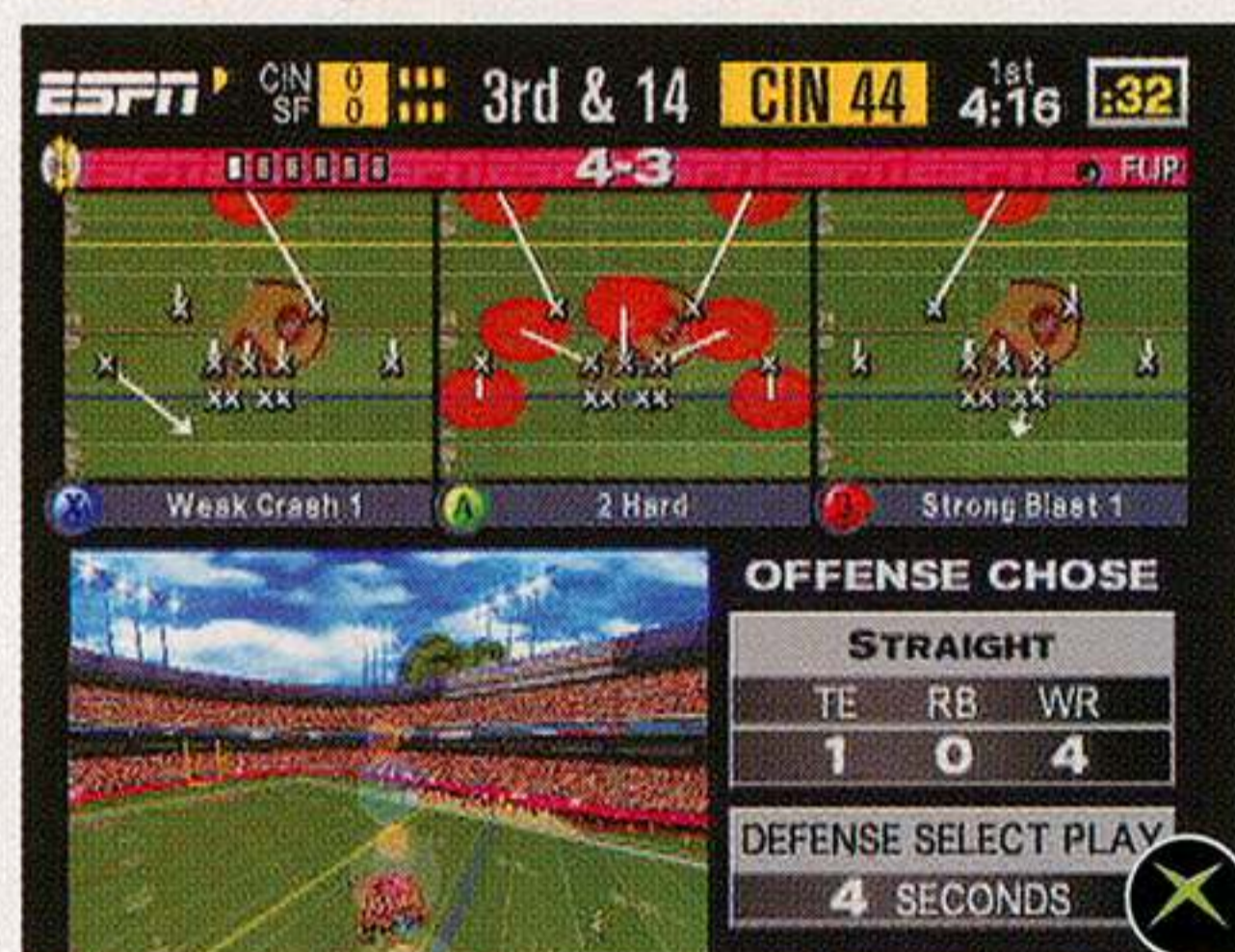
**PRO TIP:** For running plays, give your blockers time to open a hole for you to run through.

### All the Right Moves

Armchair coaches will find some cool tools to use to prepare for games. In Franchise mode, you can study an upcoming opponent's tendencies and then develop a game plan accordingly. You can even improve your ability to exploit their weaknesses during the week before practice.

At game time, the tight controls do a great job of commanding a slick array of player moves and on-the-fly scheme adjustments. For instance, the faster you tap the run button the more quickly your ballcarrier moves, but when a defender wraps you up, you can both jam buttons to see who prevails.

This year, you can make individual defensive assignments at the line of scrimmage, and it's a snap to use the right analog stick and shoulder buttons to make group adjustments with linemen, linebackers, and defensive backs. The PS2 controller responds a tad more quickly than the Xbox's in this regard. Moreover, both offensive and defensive playbook menus are cleaner this season and easier to read. You can also quickly change your audibles on the fly from the play-call screen.



**PRO TIP:** Be aware of downs and yardage, and call your defense according to the situation. In an obvious passing situation (like third and 14, for example) consider a mid-zone coverage.

### The Push Up-Front

This game has championship season written all over it. There's even a nice signing bonus to entice you into the 2K camp—the \$19.99 price tag. ESPN NFL 2K5 could...go...all...the...way.

—Brother Buzz

- PE** ■ Developed by Visual Concepts
- Published by Sega/Global Star ■ \$19.99
- Available August ■ Football ■ 4 players

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**GAMEPRO EDITORS' CHOICE**

PE	GRAPHICS	5.0	FUN FACTOR
	SOUND	5.0	5.0
	CONTROL	4.5	
X	GRAPHICS	4.5	FUN FACTOR
	SOUND	5.0	5.0
	CONTROL	4.0	



## Athens 2004

**FE** As the officially licensed video game of the 2004 Summer Olympic Games, Athens 2004 attempts to capture the size and prestige of the world's largest international athletic competition by giving gamers the chance to take part in over 25 individual events. And although this may seem like a lot, the actual variety among the different events is rather low, a problem that stems in large part from the repetitive, button-bashing nature of most events (likely a result of the difficulty in translating complex sports into an accessible video-game format). Most of the events also come from the same general areas (13 from track and field, four from swimming). As a result, the furious fingering quickly grows tiresome, while "fringe" events (like equestrian jumping and skeet shooting) feel more like roster-expanding filler than enjoyable competitions.

## Button Buster

Like its Track & Field predecessor from the NES heyday, Athens 2004 basically boils down to blistering button mashing. Most games are played by simply pressing  $\times$  and  $\circ$  in rapid succession to gain speed or build up a power meter. Athens 2004 is dance mat-compatible (which makes for some sweaty/smelly fun), but only 10 events are playable with this fat-burning peripheral. Up to four can play simultaneously with either joypads or dance mats, and the competitive element greatly expands the Fun Factor of this title.

Athens 2004 scores high in terms of realism with excellent motion-captured character animations and authentic uniforms. Detailed stadiums (based on actual architectural plans for the Athens facilities) add to the already appealing graphical presentation. Players can choose from any of the 64 competing countries (with 800 different athletes), but the game lacks a character-customization feature. Every sound effect, from the clank of the metal weights to the crunching of the runners' spikes, is dead on, though in a strange twist, the Olympic theme song and national anthems are inexplicably absent from the game.

## Stuck in the Starting Blocks

Yet for all its imperfections, Athens 2004 is just plain fun—to a point. Button-breaking bouts of cramp-inducing gameplay can be very enjoyable for a short time, but most events feature only slight variations on the same monotonous control scheme. Unsurprisingly, the fun tends to tucker out after a few hours, making Athens 2004 an excellent choice for a weekend party rental but not quite a contender for the gold—or your hard-earned cash.—*Bones*

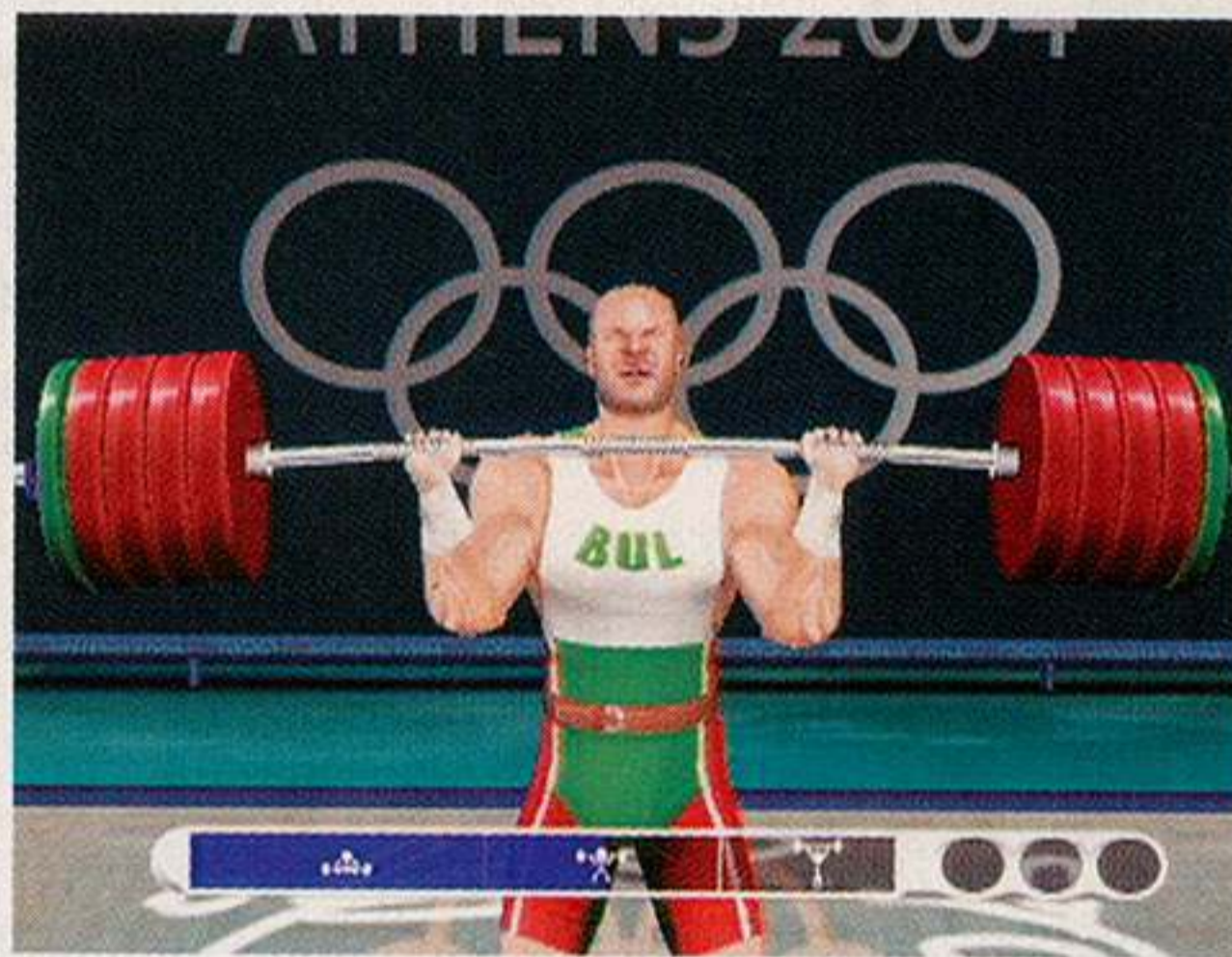
**FE** ■ Developed by Eurocom ■ Published by 989 Sports  
■ \$49.99 ■ Available now ■ Olympics ■ 4 players



**PRO TIP:** In the discus event, try to get your throwing angle just slightly above the center line for the most aerodynamic throw.



**PRO TIP:** In aquatic events, be sure to time your breaths precisely; otherwise, you'll lower your maximum speed.



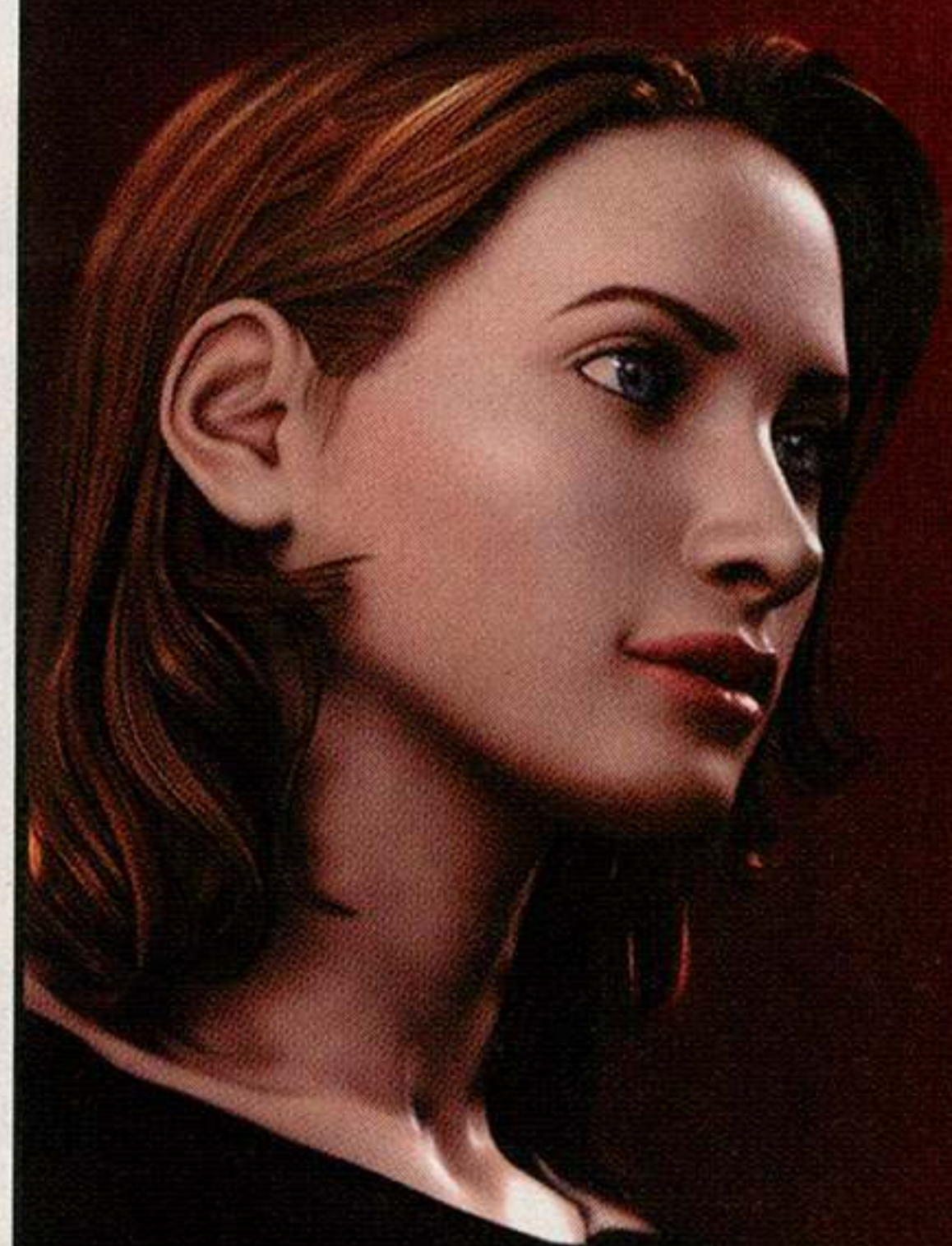
**PRO TIP:** Plan the increases in your weight increments carefully to avoid choosing a weight beyond your ability.



**PRO TIP:** Always try to maximize your power gauge in the pole vault (even at lower heights) as higher-power levels make for easier vaults.

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

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## FIFA Soccer 2005

**PE X G** The next World Cup is still almost two years away, but there's no time like the present to get into top global form. FIFA Soccer 2005 builds upon the gameplay features from last year's version, most notably the "Off the Ball" feature, which essentially lets you control two players at one time. One of the most exciting additions is improved control over your first touch of the ball. Being able to receive a pass and immediately execute your next move is a crucial skill that finally is being addressed in the

game. Of course, how effective your first touch can be is dependent on the talent level of the team member you're controlling, so don't expect to dazzle opponents with just any old body. Also, look for a deeper career mode, better broadcast replays and camera angles, and online support for both the PlayStation 2 and Xbox.—Tokyo Drifter

- First Look ■ Developed by EA Canada
- Published by EA Sports
- Target release date: Fall 2004



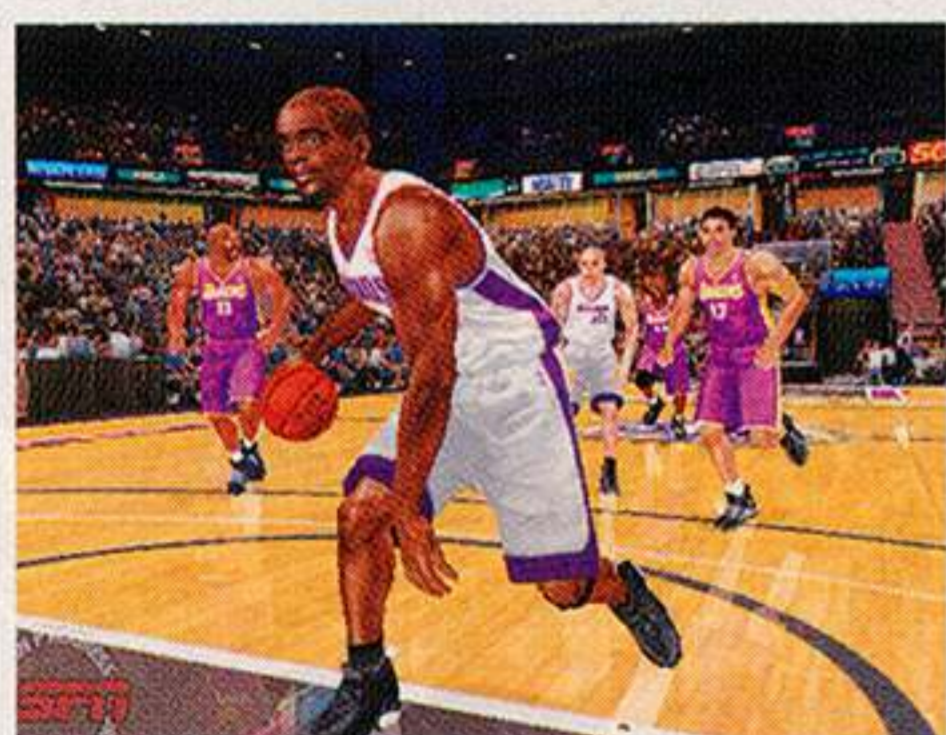
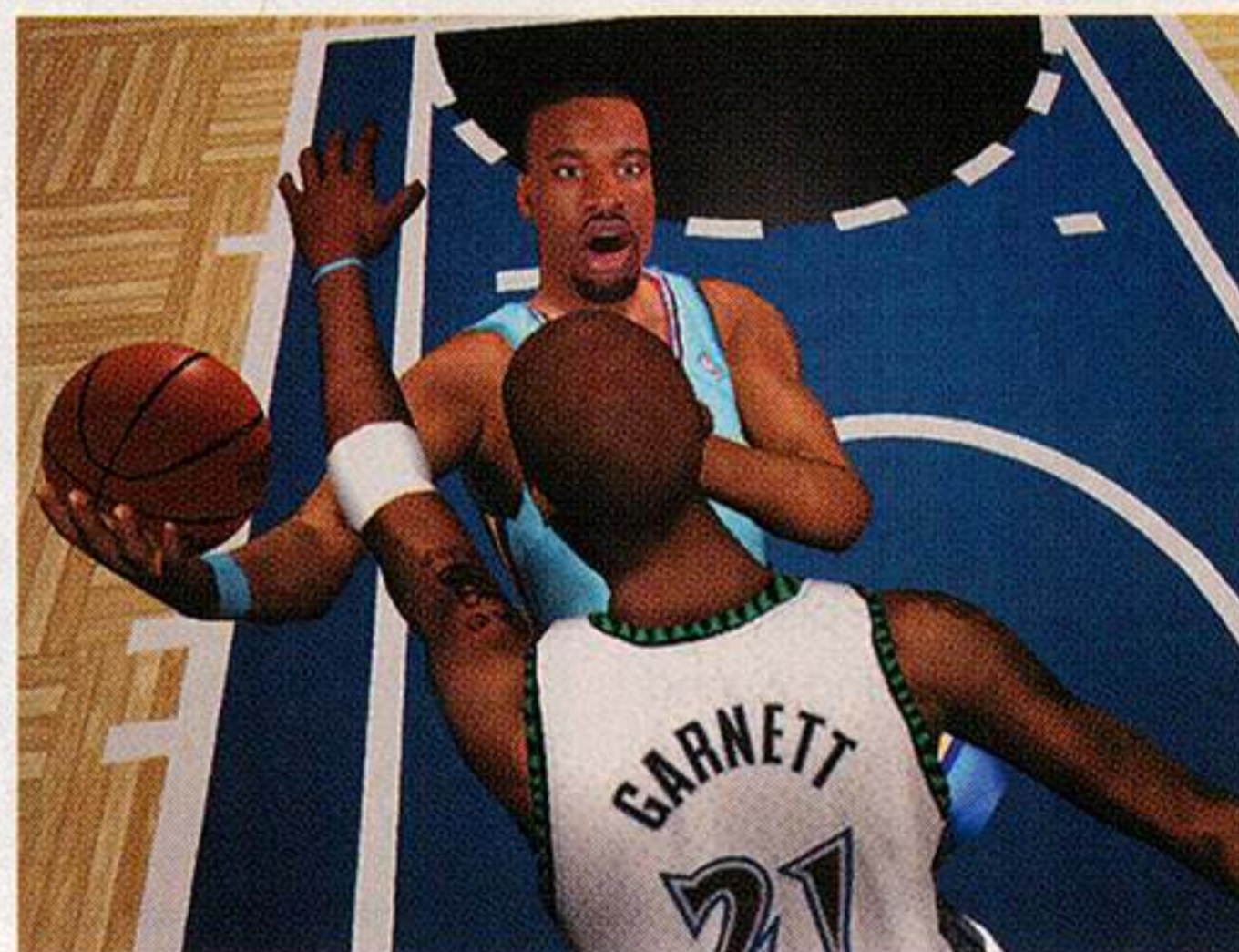
## NBA Live 2005

**PE X G** While not scoring as high with the critics as its ESPN rival, EA's basketball sim was a bigger seller. NBA Live 2005 wants to continue to give people what they want, although the changes this year are not as drastic as the previous transitional changes. The biggest hook for the franchise has been the Freestyle feature, so look

for fancy new dribbles, slam dunks, and new defensive moves, too. Players can now manually control put-backs and tip-ins, so they don't have to worry about repositioning for the next shot or even passing the ball back out. The roster of improvements also includes sharper graphics, a tweaked Dynasty mode, and returning courtside announcers Marv Albert and Mike Fratello. Support for online play on the PS2 is nothing new, but the exciting addition of Xbox Live play is.—Tokyo Drifter

- First Look ■ Developed by EA Canada
- Published by EA Sports ■ Target release date: October

All screens shown here are from the Xbox version.



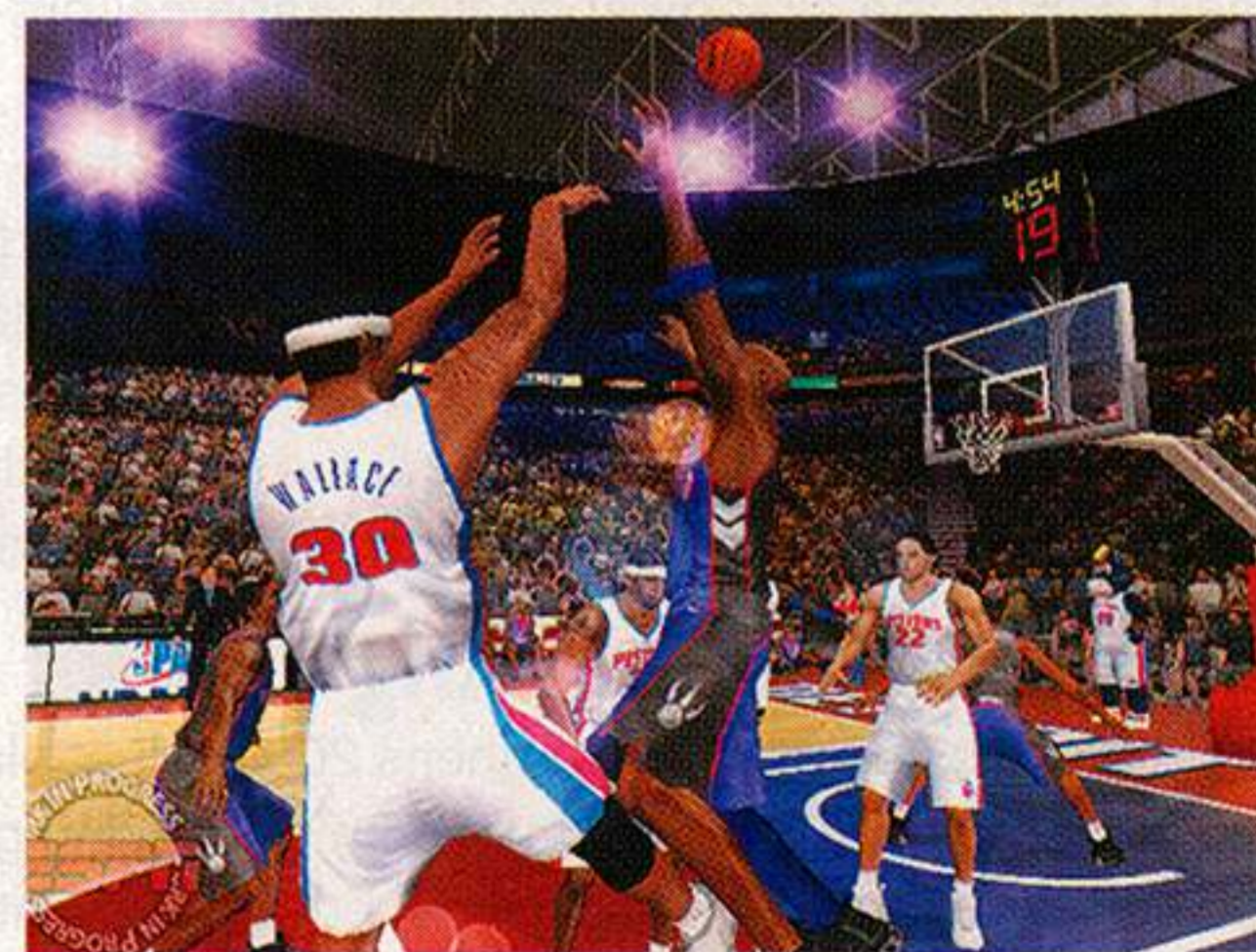
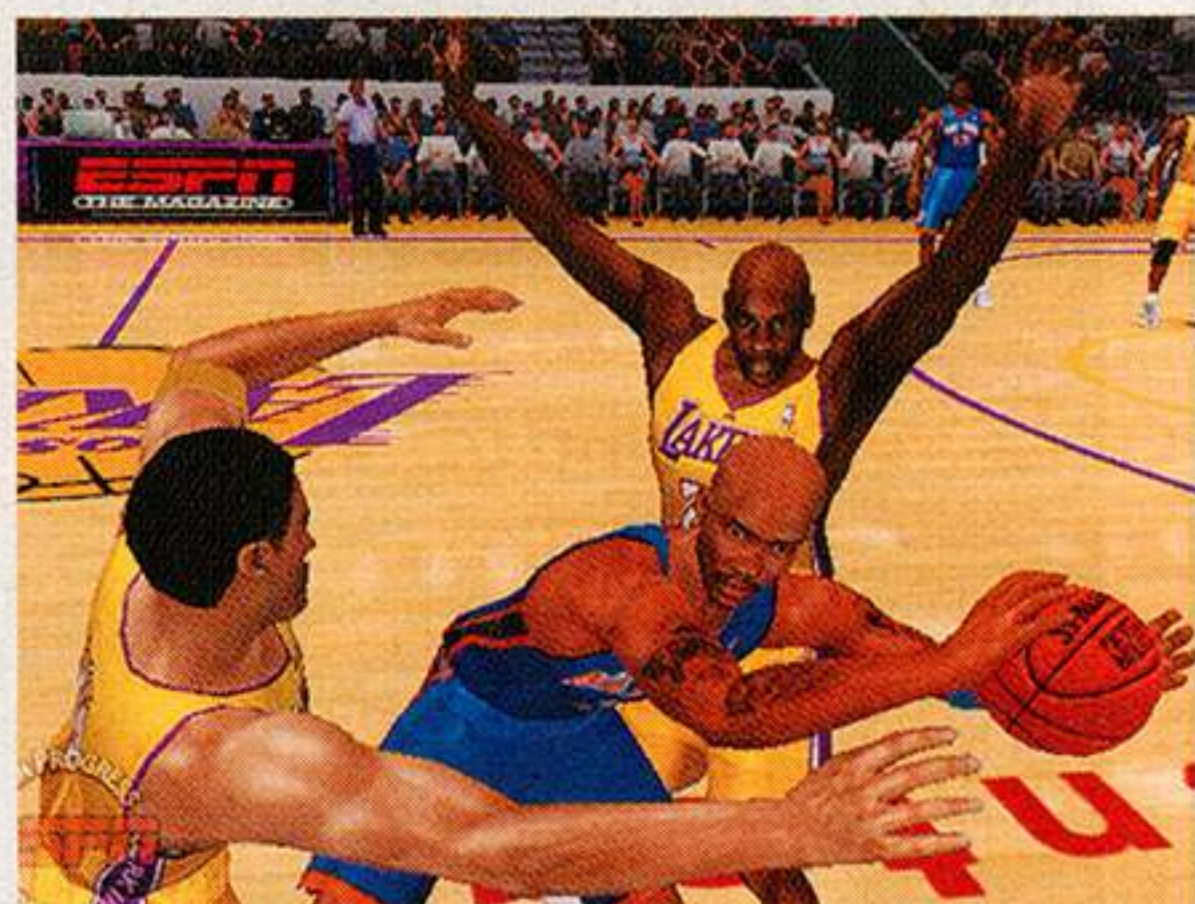
## ESPN NBA 2K5

**PE X** The competition for hoops supremacy keeps getting fiercer every year, so the current critical champ has loaded up in a major way. ESPN NBA 2K5 gets a make-over in almost every area, starting with a new momentum-based movement system, which should result in the game not only playing but also looking more natural. Speaking of looks, the graphics have again been upgraded with better

facial animations, new lighting and shadow effects, and realistic court reflections. The star has always been the game's A.I., and this year, each player decides how best to help out the team in a given situation and reacts to your actions. The popular 24/7 mode gets a host of enhancements with the most significant being online multiplayer support. Regular online games are playable on both the PS2 and Xbox with the latter supporting new tournament buddy functions of Xbox Live.—Tokyo Drifter

- First Look ■ Developed by Visual Concepts
- Published by Sega ■ Target release date: October

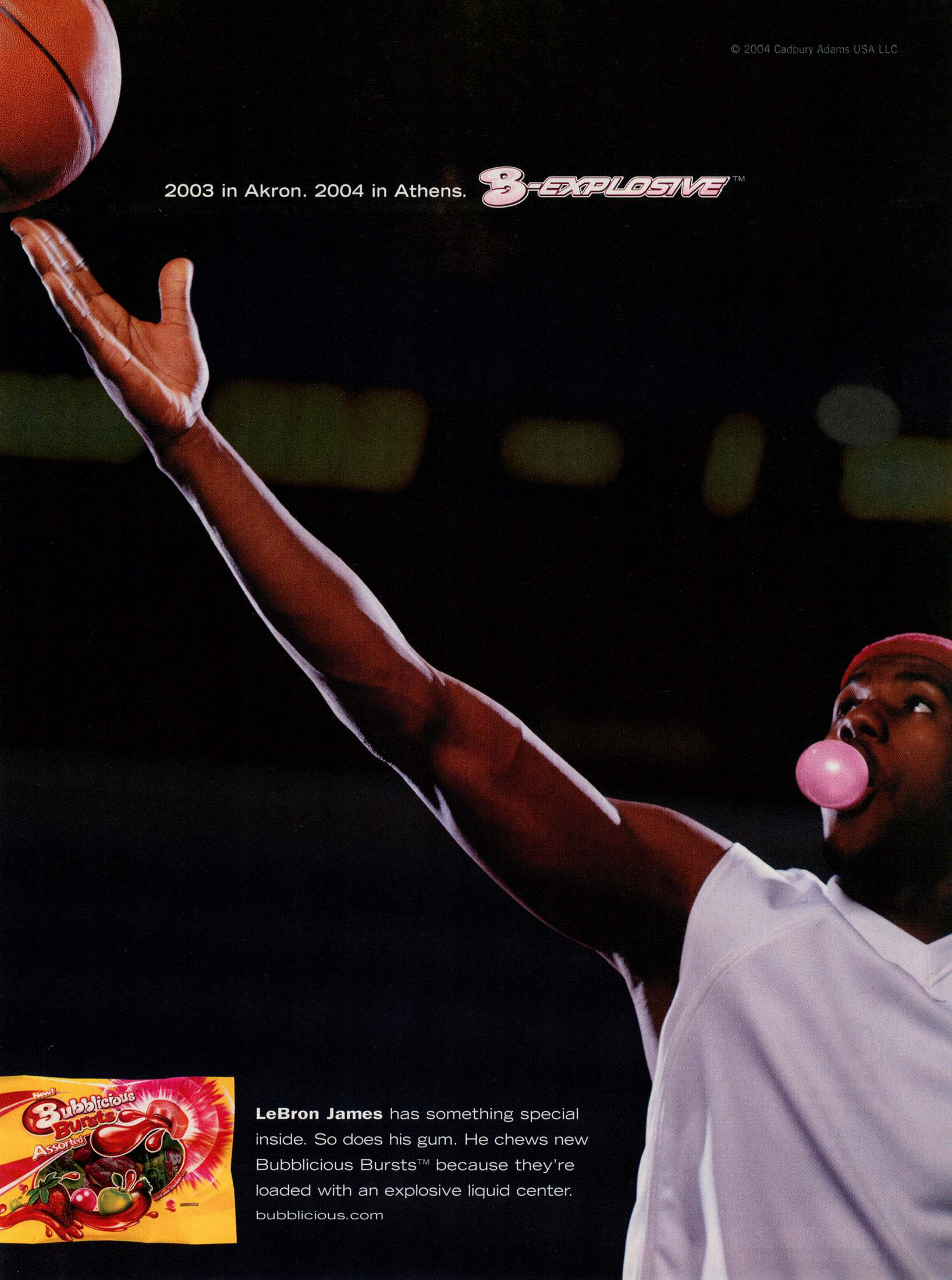
All screens shown here are from the Xbox version.





2003 in Akron. 2004 in Athens.

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## Hot Shots Golf Fore!

While every year most golf games constantly try to outperform each other on the simulation front, the Hot Shots Golf series has remained true to improving its original gameplay intent: simple, pick-up-and-play golfing without the hassles of overly realistic golf swings. This year's version is no different. Along with the usual accoutrements expected in a follow-up, Hot Shots Golf Fore strives for even more simplicity. In the preview build, the new Hot Shot Club meant for first-timers

worked like a charm, requiring only two button hits rather than the normal three to whack a ball. All you need to do is adjust the power and select where you want the ball to go.

Fore also has a lot of extras. Most notable is the return of miniature golf, which made its debut in the original game but strangely never appeared after that. Besides the several miniature golf areas, players can tee off on 13 18-hole courses, five of which are from the third Hot Shots while the other eight are brand new. You'll also have a choice to putt with 34 characters; most will be new faces with some favorites returning, too. Best of all, however, will be online play. Up to four hackers will be able to swing away in a number of competitions and Sony-sponsored tournaments. The only missing (but not too late to add) feature that would complete the Hot Shots package: wacky, fun-loving taunting from opponents.—*Four-Eyed Dragon*

■ Hands-On ■ Developed by Clap Hanz ■ Published by Sony ■ Target release date: August



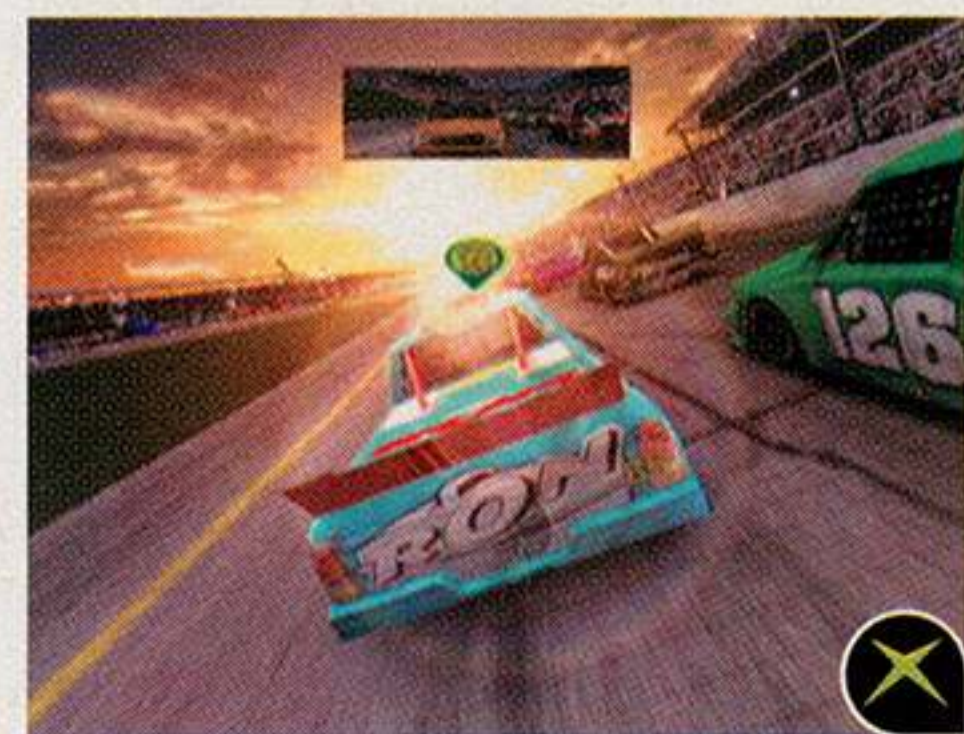
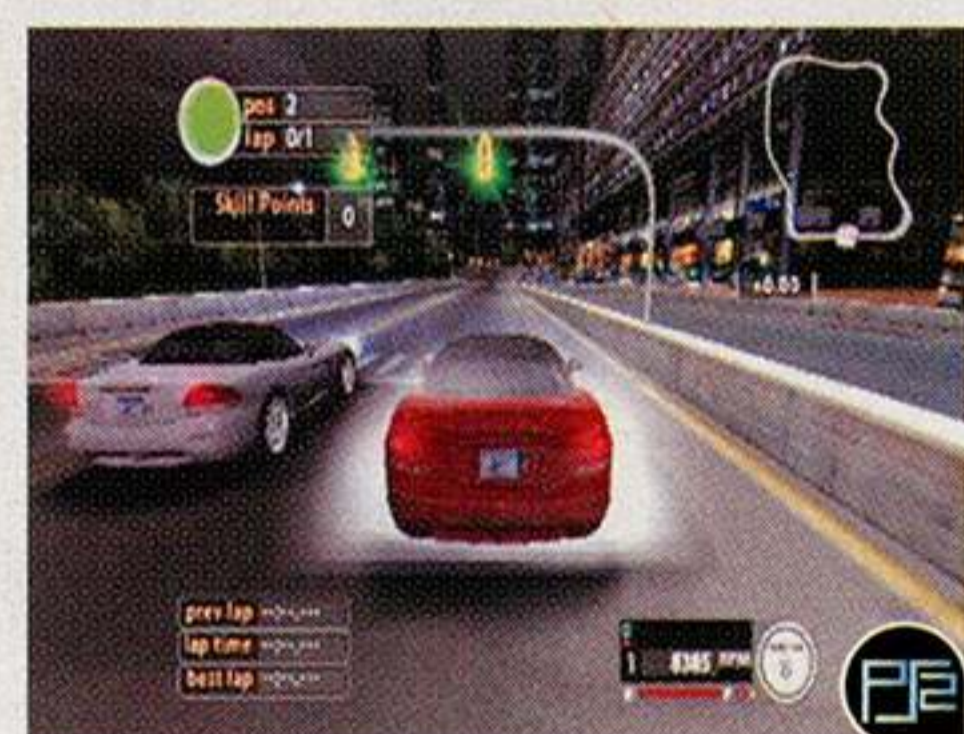
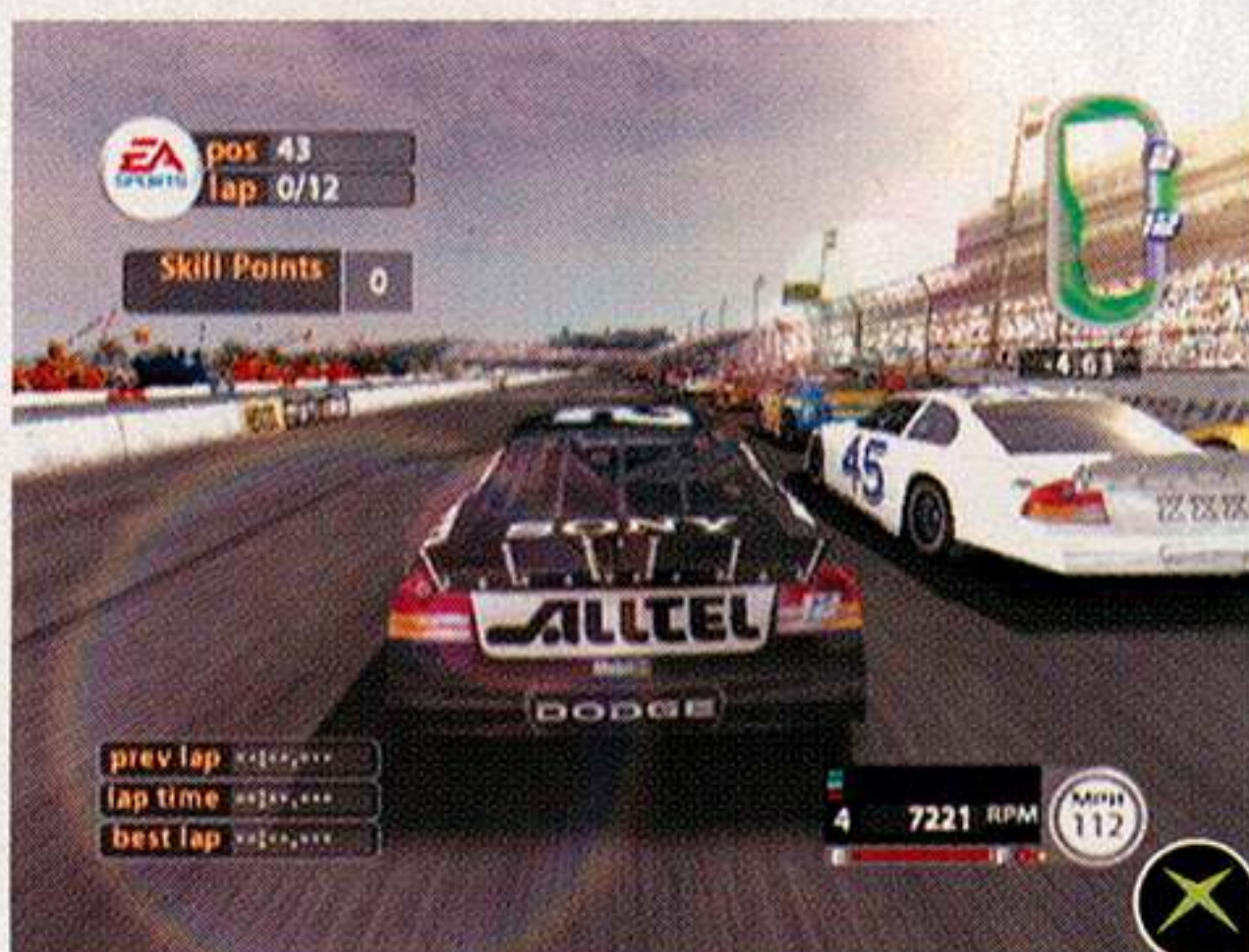
## NASCAR 2005: Chase for the Cup

NASCAR 2005 must be attempting to nudge MVP Baseball off the pedestal reserved for most improved sports game of the year. Sure, the preview versions by definition were still a bit raw and unfinished in areas ranging from graphical polish to driver A.I., but the structure of what EA Tiburon is aiming for was easy to appreciate. Beyond dropping "Thunder" from the name, NASCAR 2005 should capture race fans' attention with a fantastic new career mode called Fight for the Cup. Before you can even get to the main menu, the game goes directly

into a street race against your favorite driver, and his endorsement earns you a contract in the Featherlite Modified series. Using a framework lifted from NASCAR: Dirt to Daytona, you can earn your way into the Craftsman Truck, Busch, and Nextel series. You can either just drive, worrying only about turning left and occasionally right, or you can become an owner/driver, managing every element of your team from merchandise to pit-crew staffing and training.

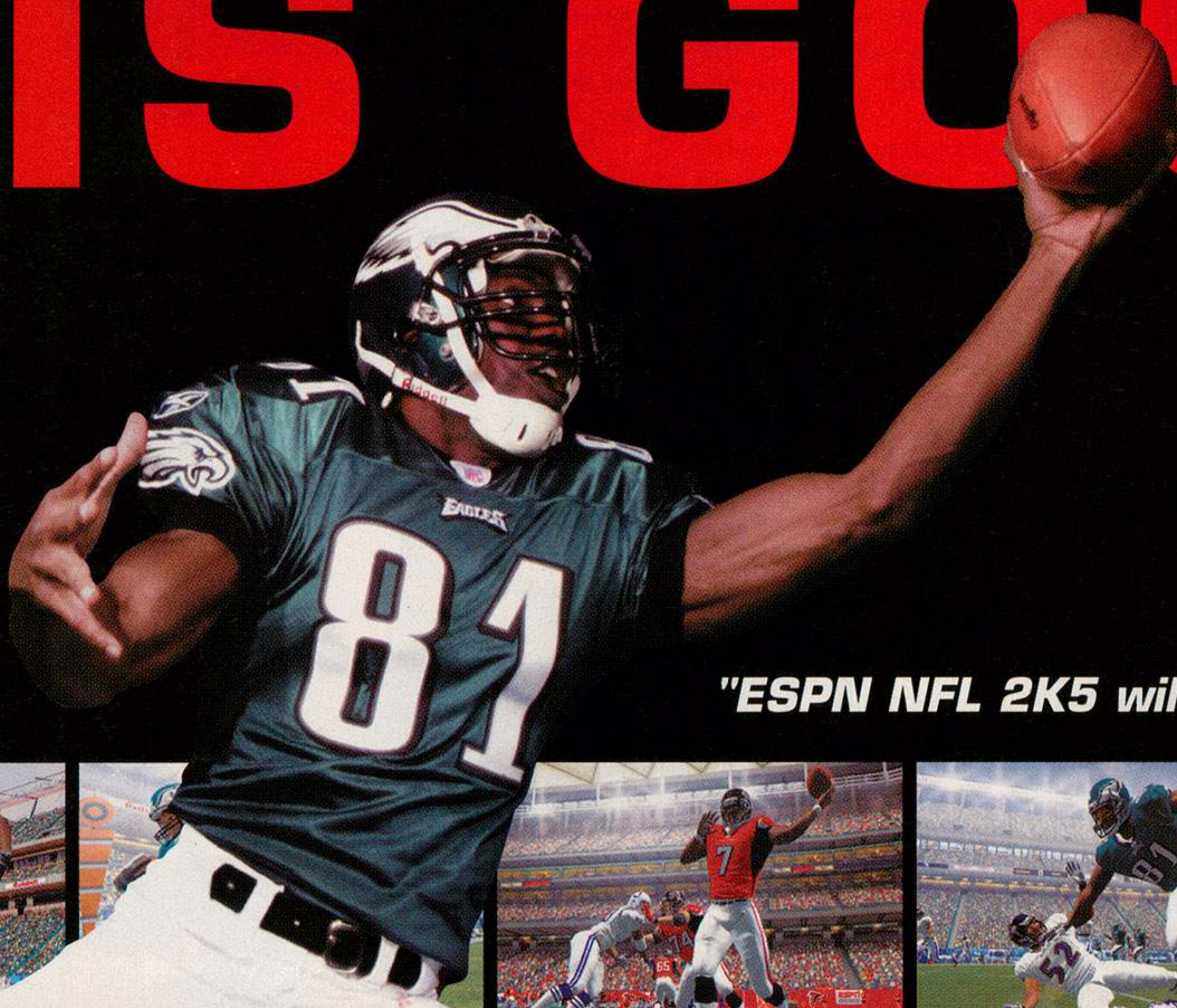
NASCAR 2005 is also amping up the popular grudges and alliances between other drivers by adding a way to intimidate opposing drivers and a way to settle post-race disputes in street races with production model cars like the Ford GT. A standard Season mode and online support for the PS2 and Xbox versions round things out nicely (the GameCube preview version wasn't available). NASCAR 2005 still drives very much like a sim, requiring you to master track lines and drive cleanly, but with this whopping new feature set, it should have the horsepower to lure a much bigger crowd.—*Air Hendrix*

■ Hands-On ■ Developed by EA Tiburon ■ Published by EA Sports ■ Target release date: August





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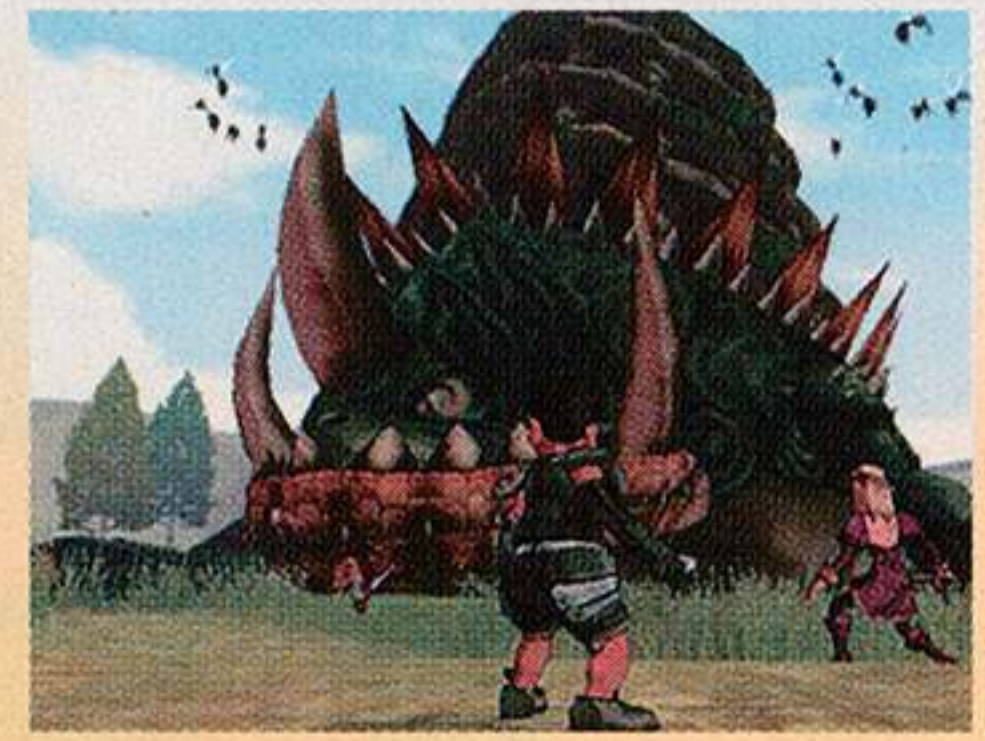
# Requiem for the Live

Back in June, Microsoft quietly announced that True Fantasy Live Online was True Fantasy Dead. The cancellation of this Xbox online role-playing monster came as only a slight surprise, really, considering it had previously been delayed until "some time in 2005" in Japan and was a no-show at E3 2004...but still, it felt like the plug was pulled on something kinda special. While the game seemed to be in many ways a carbon copy of a lot of



False Reality Dead Offline

other MMORPGs (a hyper-anime'd, cel-shaded carbon copy thanks to Dark Cloud creator Level 5), it seemed like a natural fit for Xbox Live, and it filled an obvious void in Microsoft's online service—its potentially delightful answer to Final Fantasy XI. Features like voice chat promised to revolutionize the way you play these darn MMO things (goodbye, ludicrous acronyms!). But in the end, math prevailed, and Microsoft realized the game just wasn't going to be able to compete in the oh-so-important but oh-so-Xbox-disliking Japanese market...and the U.S. subscriber base simply wasn't going to be high enough to support such a monstrous money sink like an MMORPG. So unless you have a PC, you better get used to LFGing in Vana'diel. We ne'er met her sandy shores, but Atlantis just sank into the sea.—Star Dingo



# Final Fantasy XII



**FF** The era of Active Time, an era that stood for turn-based random encounters in Square Enix games, is no more. These are the days of Active Dimension, a new Final Fantasy battle system in which spatial relations are just as important as temporal ones.

Here's how it works: Your three characters roam the map until they spy a creature or a creature spies them. At this point, you select the enemy with your targeting arc and—if it's in range—launch an attack. The system is seamless, meaning there are no load times as a separate "encounter screen" boots up, so where you're fighting is just as important as what you're fighting. Height and blocking terrain affect your battles; you can reposition your characters at any time (moving them to a safe distance to heal, for example); and nearby creatures can join the fray if they see or smell you, so it's important to use the radar in the upper-right part of the screen to position your party members wisely.

One familiar leftover from the Active Time system is the gradually filling yellow bar that represents each character's attack timing—when the bar is full, the next move you input in the command menu (fight, magic, or otherwise)



is enacted and the yellow bar is depleted. A "concentrated attack" option is available if you just want to have your whole party whale on a bad guy at will, and special A.I. routines (like "Heal When HP Is 1/2" or "Follow Leader's Moves") can be discovered and assigned to different characters so they don't have to be micromanaged.

If you've played Final Fantasy XI online (or EverQuest or Dark Age of Camelot), think of Active Dimension as the single-player extension of the MMORPG philosophy. Maybe Ivalice and Vana'diel share a common border.—Star Dingo

■ Update ■ Developed by Square Enix  
 ■ Published by Square Enix U.S.A. ■ Target release date: 2005

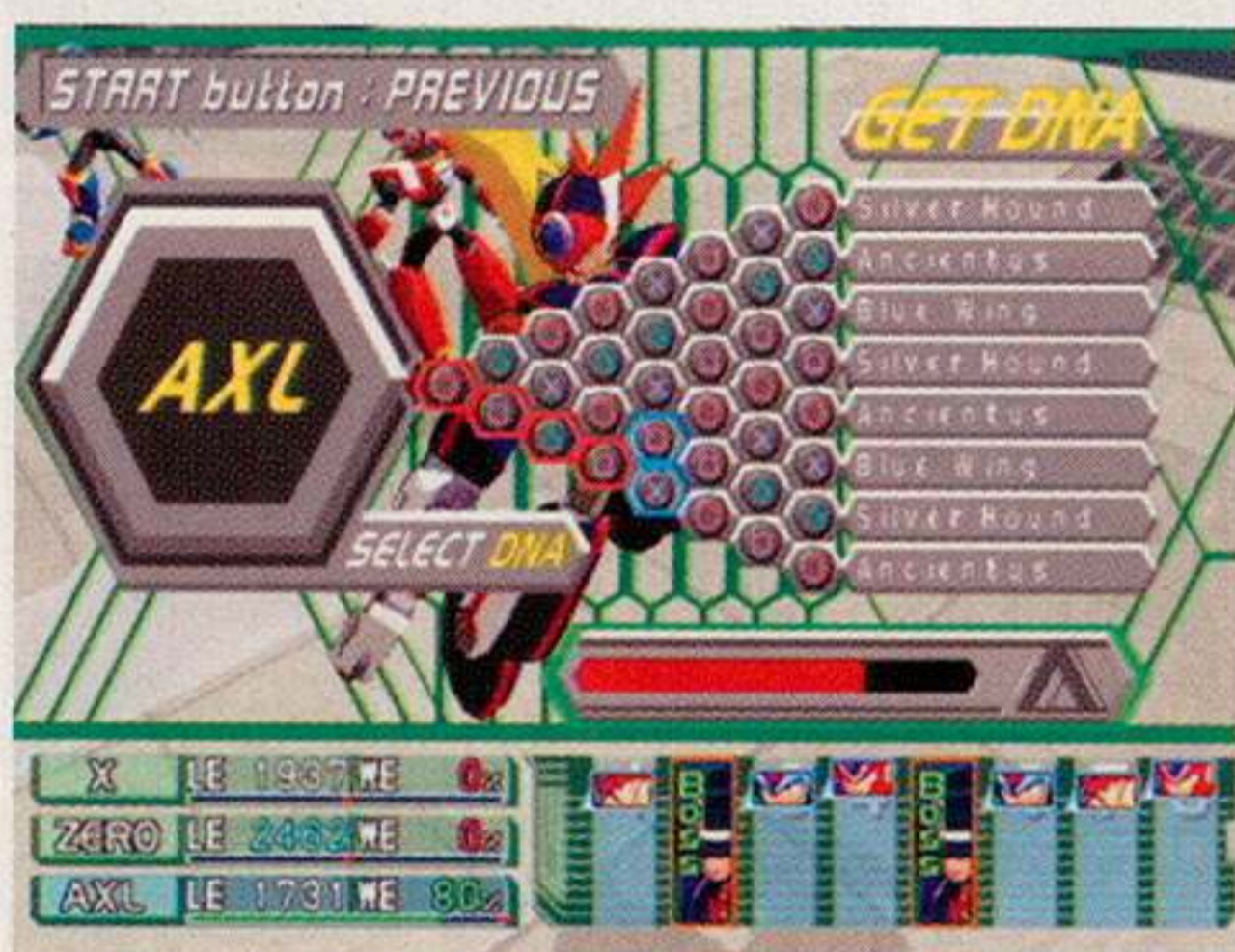


# Mega Man X: Command Mission

**FE** Mega Man X in a role-playing game? Gosh, that guy can do anything! So how does the blasty blue one's first foray into Final Fantasy territory play? Walking around the environments looks and feels a bit like Capcom's underappreciated *Breath of Fire: Dragon Quarter* with 3D cel-shaded characters moving around utilitarian, angular architecture. The battles are



turn-based in the traditional fashion, and you can view turn order as well as the HP of your party in a rather large bar crawling along the bottom-right of the screen. The bar (dubbed the "Cross Order System") helps you set up your team to deliver a "Final Strike" attack against the enemy, dealing tons of damage as they all fire their weapons together in a messy, hyperactive flurry.



In homage to Mega Man's twitchy genesis, combat relies on reflexive tricks and combos. Each character has one normal attack, two weapon attacks, and one unique special attack triggered by the R2 button once a special combo meter is full—sort of like the limit breaks in Final Fantasy only (at least



in the preview build we played) a bit faster to recharge. Zero chains together as many Street Fighter-like special moves as he can within a given time limit; Axl "summons" special replugins by tapping a series of buttons representing their cybernetic DNA. And X does what X does best—he has a simple charge beam that deals out a big burst of major damage.



While Capcom's role-playing ideas have been a little left field lately, *Command Mission* doesn't seem to be straying too far off the beaten path. But hey, it can be a little rough out there, especially for robots that can't bend their knees.—*Star Dingo*

■ Hands-On ■ Developed and published by Capcom  
■ Target release date: August

# Final Fantasy XI: Chains of Promathia

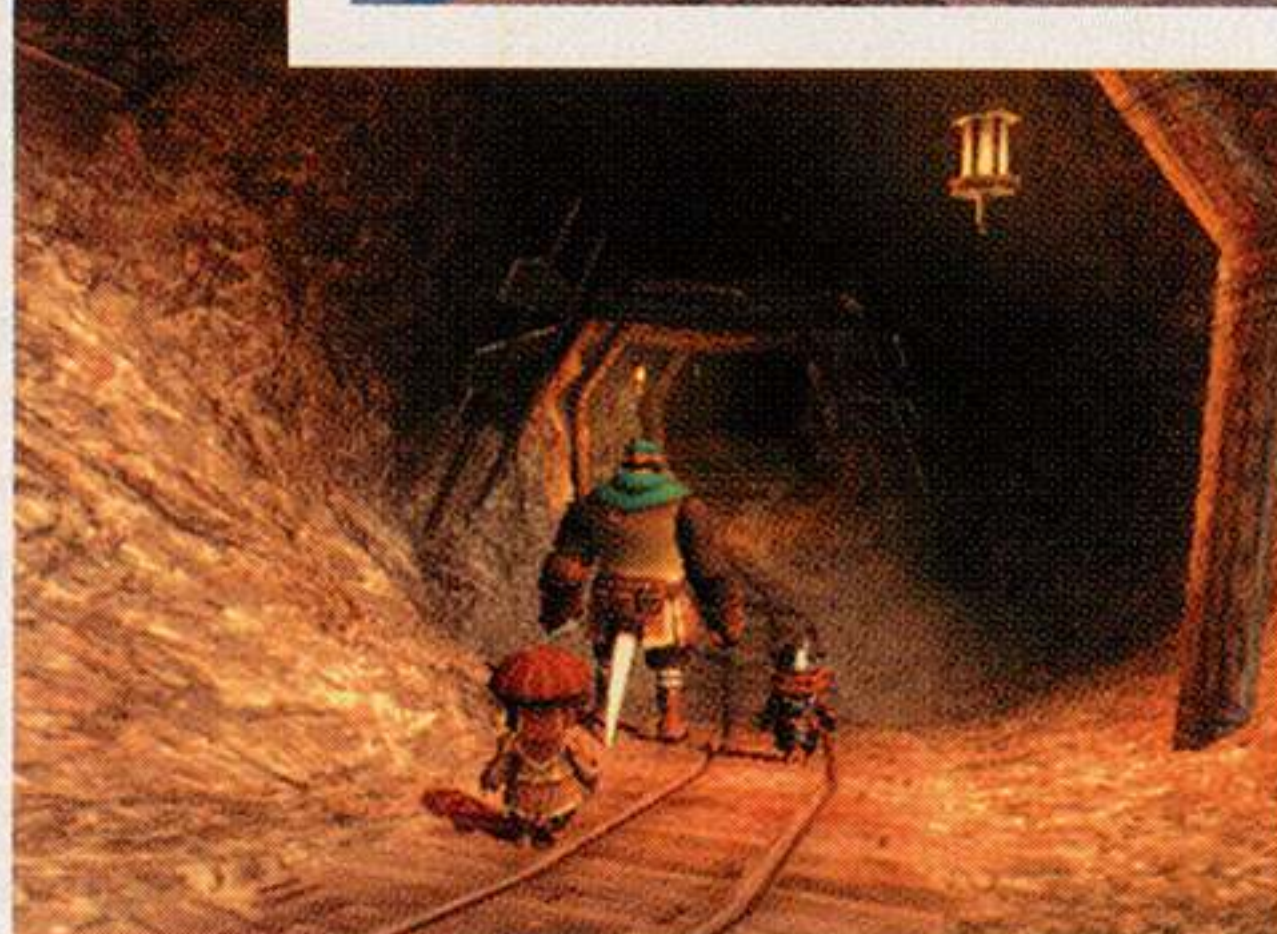
**FE** Interesting times in Vana'diel...interesting times, indeed. A strange phenomenon known as "The Emptiness" is starting to tear holes in the land while new areas have started to appear, such as Movalpolos (a subterranean city of industrious moblins) and the Tavnazian Archipelago (a once-great empire left in ruins after it was cut off from the mainland). Rumors swirl of the return of Promathia, the terrible God of Twilight. Connected to these



events are an albino boy who appears out of thin air and a priestly prima donna named Prishe.

What this all actually means is anyone's guess, but that's what you'll be finding out in the next expansion of the PS2 /PC online success story, *Final Fantasy XI*. Square Enix is being extraordinarily enigmatic and stingy with the details of what, exactly, Promathia has in store later this fall, but that's just as well. We miss mystery in our MMORPGs.—*Star Dingo*

■ First Look ■ Developed by Square Enix  
■ Published by Square Enix U.S.A.  
■ Target release date: Fall 2004





# Paper Mario 2

**C** Sing a song of Paper Mario, one of the weirdest, most absurdly delightful concepts to ever be unleashed upon the unsuspecting RPG scene. The "plot" (for how much it matters) involves a kidnapped Peach and some mysteriously powerful Star Crystals scattered around the whacked-out world. The biggest new quirk of this already quirky number is the revamped battle system—think Mario & Luigi's excellent timing-based battles coupled with an "audience" (note the crowd in the screen shots) that reacts to how well you're performing and gives you special morality boosts for doing especially keen things. Paper Mario's essential "paperiness" is also more thoroughly explored as he can use his two-dimensional origami nature to slip through cracks and turn into a paper airplane. Cult greatness is in the cards. Avoid only if you no longer have your soul.—*Star Dingo*

- First Look ■ Developed and published by Nintendo
- Target release date: October



# Fire Emblem

**C** The success of the fantastic Game Boy Advance version of Fire Emblem has prompted Nintendo to finally bring one of these ubiquitous tactical monsters out for the GameCube as well. So stop yer whining, already. This particular edition tells the tale of a soldier named Ike and the princess of Crimea, who must protect the land from half-beast invaders from the kingdom of Deain. The sorta cel-shaded graphics are looking a bit primitive, especially knowing what the GameCube can do, but the gameplay is still rooted in the same sort of story-driven strategizing that makes Fire Emblem so darn special—Pegasus Knights, weapon advantages, permanent deaths, and all. New twists include strategy modifications for the 3D terrain (kinda like Final Fantasy Tactics), new "skinshifters" that can turn into beasts, and a "hidden purpose" for each character to find, unleashing their latest superpowers.—*Star Dingo*

- First Look ■ Developed by Intelligent Systems
- Published by Nintendo ■ Target release date: 2005



# Shin Megami Tensei: Digital Devil Saga

**PE** Shin Megami Tensei, the popular Japanese RPG series that has had limited availability here in the U.S., is finally picking up steam with two major PS2 releases this year. Digital Devil Saga takes place in a town called Junkyard, where tribal warfare rages uncontrollably. Glowing spheres inexplicably infect Serf and his friends from the Embryon tribe, awakening their demonic powers. With a clear advantage over the other tribes, they embark on a quest to find Nirvana and become "champions of the Junkyard."

The series' signature demonic transformations will have a twist in Digital Devil Saga. You'll be able to strategically switch between human and demon forms, and devour your enemies to absorb their powers. The new Mantra Flow upgrade system looks like it will resemble the Sphere Grid from FFX, and a new Break system will beef up your defenses. Already available in Japan, Digital Devil Saga will be here in November.—*Optimus Sublime*

- First Look ■ Developed and published by Atlus
- Target release date: November







# Ys VI: The Ark of Napishtim

**FE** It's been a while since we've heard from the book of Ys (we're actually *not* going to tell you how to pronounce it) here in America, but Konami has decided to grace the unworthy with the next installment of the RPG saga later this year. While Ys VI was originally released on the PC in Japan, the PS2 version will have improved graphics and new CG cut-scenes, as well as some new areas and bad guys. If you're unfamiliar, the game leans heavier on the action side of the role-playing spectrum with real-time, sword-slasy combat and big boss battles. This latest installment tells the tale of perennial hero Adol, who arrives at a strange tropical island in the middle of the Vortex of Canaan only to discover that something fantastic and dangerous lies in Canaan's strange aquatic topography. —*Star Dingo*



- **First Look**
- **Developed by Nihon Falcom**
- **Published by Konami**
- **Target release date: Winter 2004**



# Wild Arms: Alter Code F

**FE** Get this. The next Wild Arms...is the *first* Wild Arms. Did your head explode yet? Okay, well, good, because that just means it's a PS2 remake of the seven-year-old PlayStation version, which follows Jack, Rudy, and Cecilia, your liaisons to adventure in a weird fantasy reinvention of the wild, wild West. While the new version features basically the same alterna-Eastwood story, the entire script has been rewritten to



include three new playable characters—gunner Emma, spunky teen Calamity Jane, and faithful butler McDullen—whose tales intermesh with the exploits of the original three. The game also works in entirely new 3D graphics, sepia-toned shading (it casts everything in nostalgic yellow), and battle system improvements like the ability to control six characters in battle at once and the Crosshair system from Wild Arms 3. Sure, history repeats itself. Sometimes, it reinvents itself, too. —*Star Dingo*

- **First Look**
- **Developed by Media Vision**
- **Published by Agetec**
- **Target release date: Winter 2004**



# Phantom Brave

**FE** Nippon Ichi Software, the quirky folks behind the wonderfully weird Disgaea and La Pucelle: Tactics, have got another dose of strategic oddity for you: Phantom Brave, a game about a phantom-controlling girl named Marona and a goth ghost named Ash who want to buy Ghost Island, thus ensuring the safety of Marona's home. Anyone familiar with NIS's games will instantly recognize the anime-on-acid art style, and NIS once again throws some trademark creative curve balls into the battle system. Characters don't move on a checkerboard; instead, they move freely within a ring dependent on their speed. A "hold" command lets you grab objects and characters to use them as weapons, and a "confine" command lets you summon phantoms into objects, effectively possessing them and creating walking statistical hybrids. Thank NIS next time you see them for bringing back the dementia. —*Star Dingo*

- **First Look**
- **Developed by Nippon Ichi Software**
- **Published by NIS America**
- **Target release date: Fall 2004**





# Star Ocean: Till the End of Time

Huge, sprawling, and epic, but not without a few black holes

**PE** Despite having a title that implies eons, enormity, dying races, and human extinction, the story of *Star Ocean* is rather intimate, and the setting is surprisingly grounded. A big chunk of the game is an extended *Star Trek: The Next Generation* away-team mission with a team of future-ites forced to interact on a primitive planet (in this case, quasi-medieval), completing their mission without accidentally breaking the Prime Directive and revealing they're actually from outer space. The graphics are great, the fighting is fun, the story is good—and man oh man, is it certainly long—but a few black holes do exist in this sea of potential supernovas.

## 299,792,458 m/s

Know first that *Star Ocean's* battle system is great—fast, challenging, well-presented, and thoroughly enjoyable. The customization and symbology (Star Oceanic for magic) options offer lots of variety, the level-up pacing is rewarding, and the characters boast diverse moves that have more uses than just generating large damage numbers. Every character has a Fury bar that's closely tied to all their best attacks—standing still builds the bar, and holding down either  $\times$  or  $\circ$  unleashes the attacks based on how you've customized your characters. Enemies behave in clearly different ways, and their animation routines (and even posture) often affect your strategy. Switching between your party members is easier than it is



**PROTIP:** Everyone dies when they run out of HP—but unlike most RPGs, *Star Ocean's* characters die if they run out of MP, too.



**PROTIP:** Align your compass North and bring up the large overlay map (press R2) to make navigation a lot easier. It's like playing the Atari 2600 version!



**PROTIP:** Press  $\circ$  or use your  $\circ$  Fury attack to break an enemy's guard and open them up to combos.



The production value is high with lots of beautiful real-time cut-scenes featuring full-on voice acting.

in, say, *Tales of Symphonia*, so the game feels a lot less like a one-man show than some other role-playing games with action-heavy encounters. The only unfortunate thing is that the controls have a high learning curve and are sometimes unresponsive, especially when trying to pull off Fury attacks.

The story is good, but if you want weird, stick with *Final Fantasy*. The cut-scenes

boast a very *Xenosaga*-like vibe with all that's good and bad about that—sometimes overly chatty but always well-produced with vibrant, fluid, and personable anime characters solidly voiced by distinctive actors. The music is schizo, though, mashing gorgeous orchestral pieces with some really heinous pseudo-metal guitar-demigod rock.

## Time Dilation

The biggest issue in the *Ocean* is boring and repetitious town and dungeon designs—most dungeons and outside areas are flat, sprawling mazes with chests to find and beasties to avoid, but little by way of landmarks or interesting puzzles; they feel less “planned” than those of some of its role-playing peers. There are exceptions, of course, but the overall effect makes the game feel slow paced, and you definitely feel the thrum of reiteration sooner rather than later.

*Star Ocean: Till the End of Time* is a fine, lengthy entry in a series that puts the *Star Ocean* name closer to equal footing with the greats, but don't cancel your preorder of *Final Fantasy XII* just yet. The battle system is out of this world—the rest of the game is a little more grounded.—*Star Dingo*

**T** ■ Developed by tri-Ace ■ Published by Square Enix U.S.A. ■ \$49.99 ■ Available August ■ RPG ■ 2 players



**PROTIP:** Standing totally still causes your Fury bar to refill quickly.



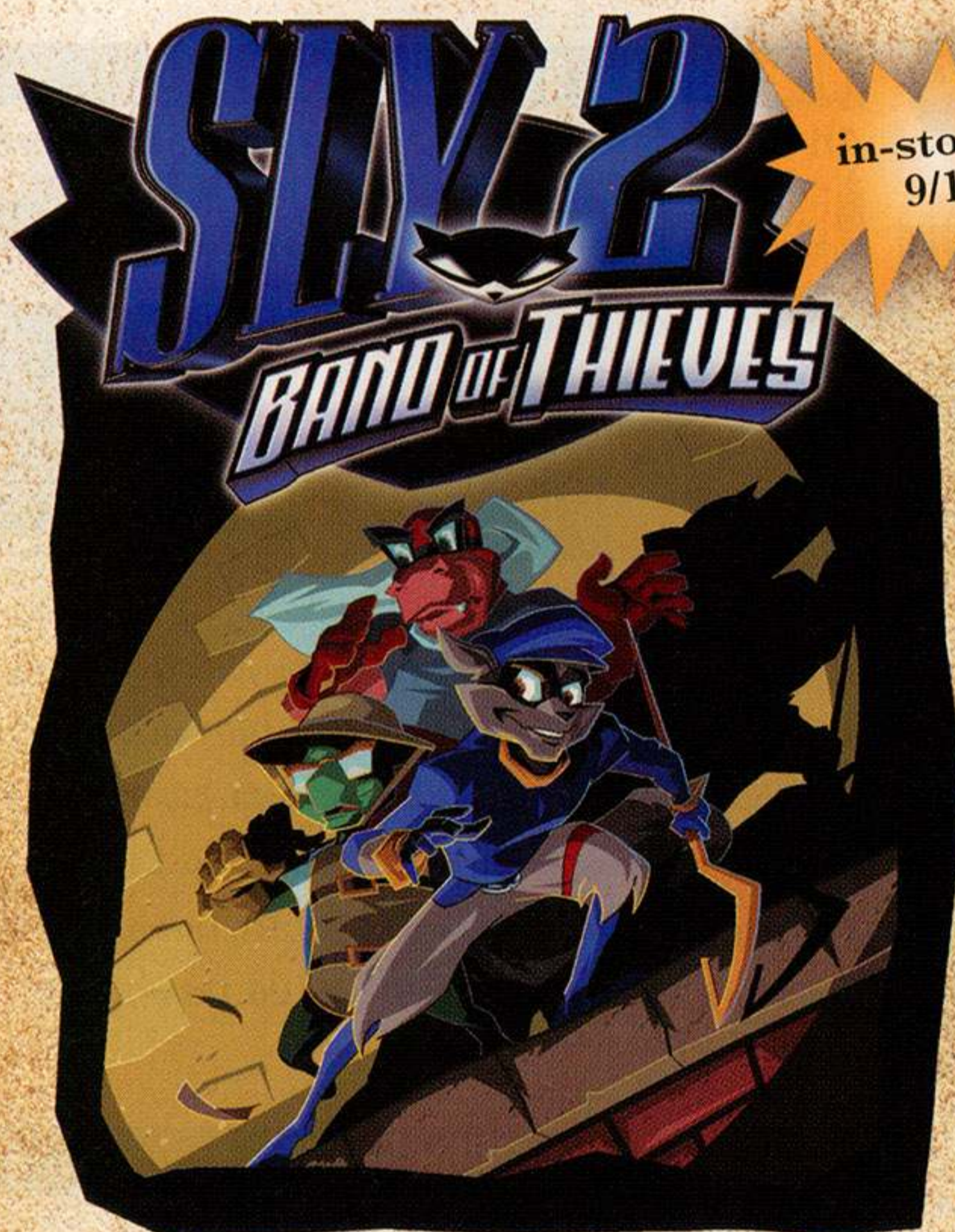
**PROTIP:** It's fun (but not particularly useful) to collect the Battle Trophies. Some, such as “Walk 42.195 km in battle” (the distance of a marathon), are just plain weird.

PE	GRAPHICS	4.5	FUN FACTOR	4.0
	SOUND	4.0		
	CONTROL	4.5		



# WANTED:

**KILLER DRAWINGS OF SLY COOPER AND HIS GANG!**



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9/14/04



SLY COOPER



MURRAY



BENTLEY

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PlayStation®2





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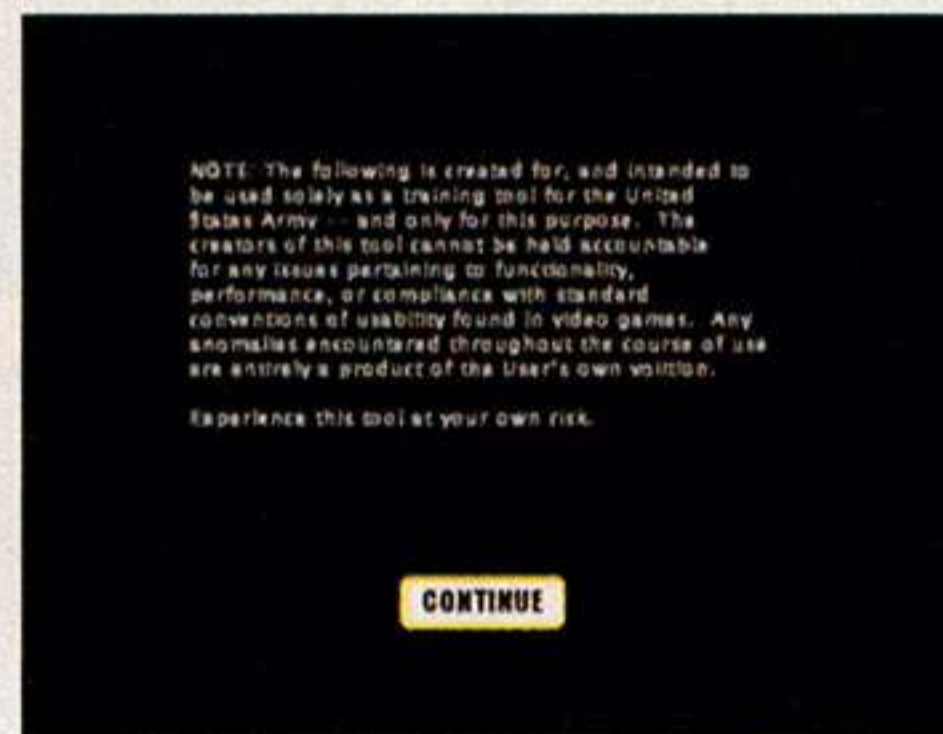
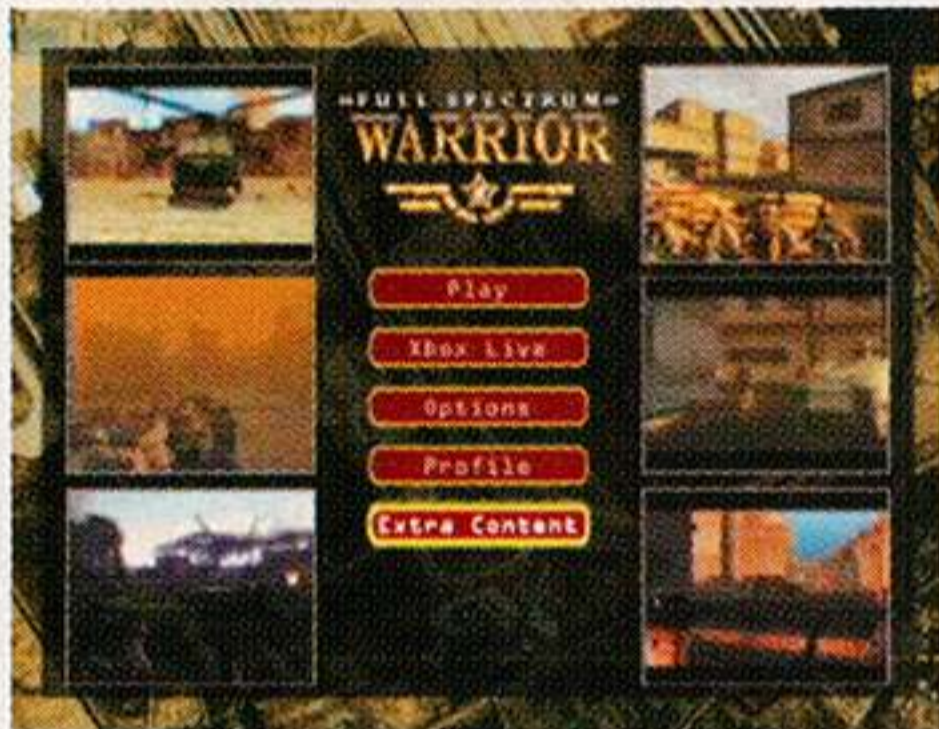
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## READER TIP OF THE MONTH

### FULL SPECTRUM WARRIOR

Army Training Mode, Unlimited Ammo, and More



At the main menu, select Extra Content and then select Cheat Codes. At the cheat entry screen, enter the following codes to unlock the corresponding cheats. If you entered the code correctly, you'll automatically return to the Extras screen.

- Army Training Mode: **HA2P1PY9TUR5TLE**
- Big Head Mode: **NICKWEST**
- Realistic Damage: **SWEDISHARMY**
- Unlimited Ammo: **MERCENARIES**

Todd Pomeroy—Charlotte, North Carolina



### WORLD TOUR SOCCER 2005

All Cheats, Development Teams, and More



At the Main Menu, enter the following codes to unlock the corresponding cheats. If you entered the code correctly, you'll see a confirming message.

**All Cheats:** Press L2, L2, L1, R1, Left, Up, Left, Down.

**Development Teams:** Press Down, Right, L2, R1, Left, R1.

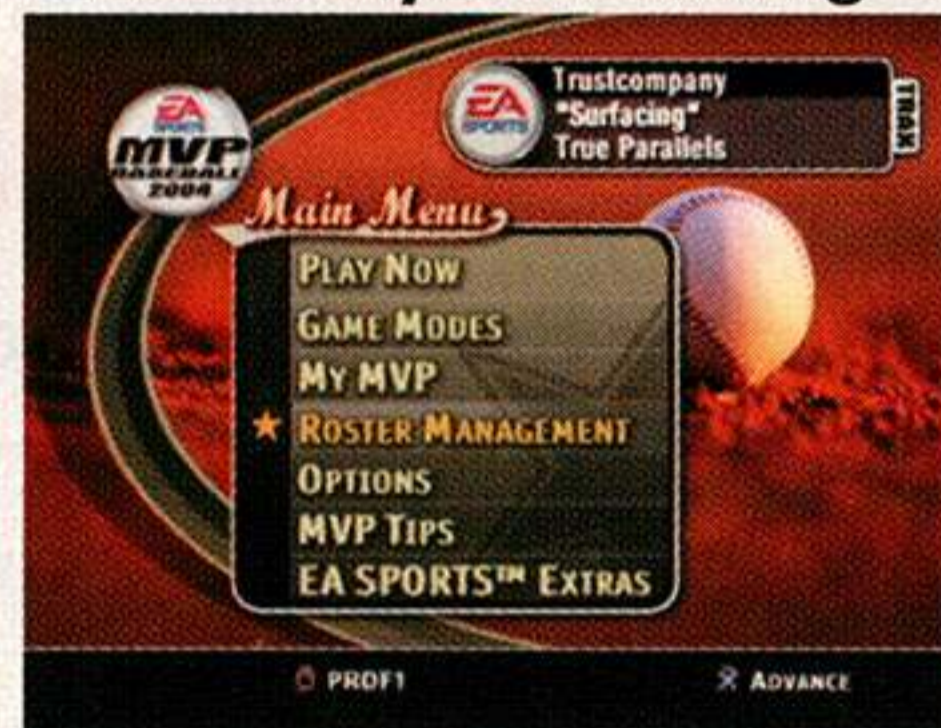
**Time Warp Teams:** Press R2, L2, R2, L2, Up, L1.

**Transfer Money Boost:** Press L1, L1, R1, Down, Left, Right.

**Unlimited Tokens:** Press Up, Down, Up, Down, R1, R1, R2, R2, Up, Down, Up, Down.

### MVP BASEBALL 2004

Create Players with Big Caps



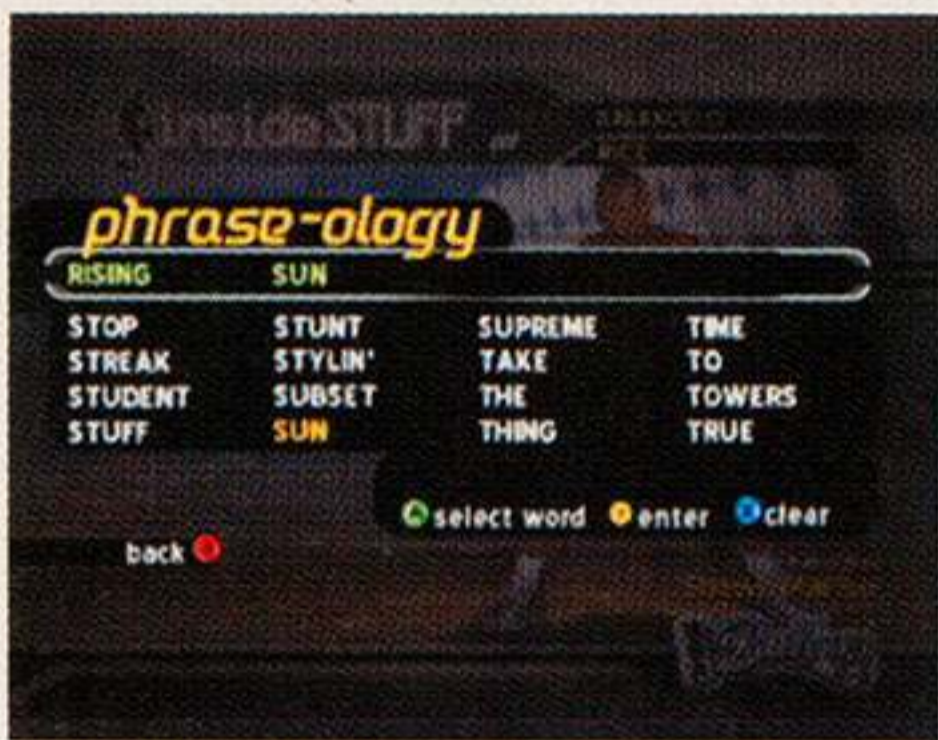
At the Main Menu, select Roster Management and then select Create/Edit Player. At the Create/Edit Player screen, select Create Player and then enter **john prosen** (case-sensitive) to create a player with a big cap.





**NBA BALLERS**

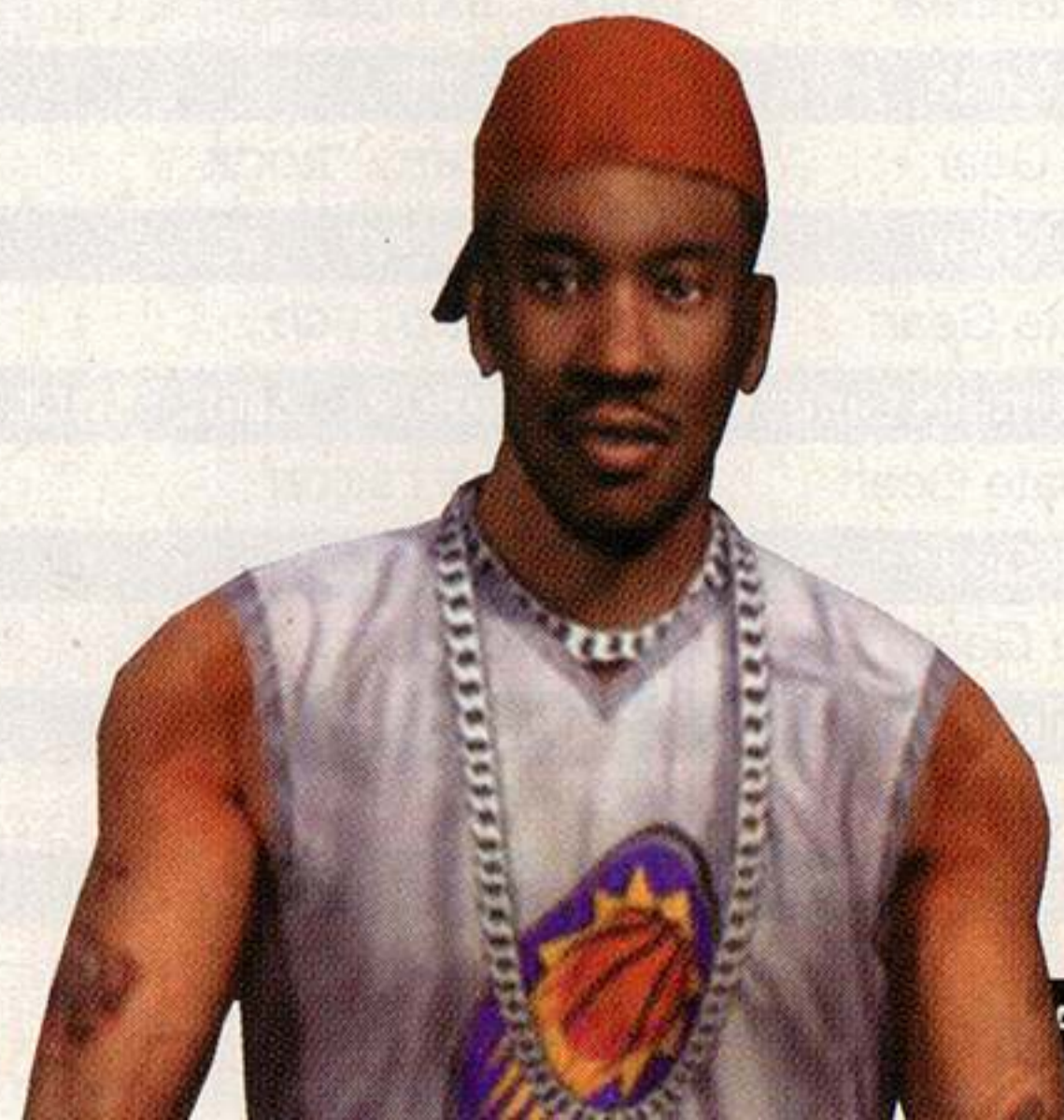
**Phrase-ology Codes and Enable Alternate Gear**



At the Main Menu, select Inside Stuff and then select Phrase-ology. At the Phrase-ology entry screen, select the following words in the listed order to unlock these cheats. If you entered the code correctly, you'll see a confirming message. To enable alternate gear for your player, **press B, B, X, X, X, Y, Up** at the VS screen. If you entered the code correctly, you'll hear a confirming sound.

- Allan Houston's Alternate Gear: **KNICKER, BOCKER, PLEASE**
- Allen Iverson's Alternate Gear: **KILLER, CROSSOVER**
- Allen Iverson's Recording Studio: **THE, ANSWER**
- All Players and Alternate Gear: **NBA, BALLERS, TRUE, PLAYA**
- Alonzo Mourning's Alternate Gear: **ZO**
- Amare Stoudamire's Alternate Gear: **RISING, SUN**
- Antoine Walker's Alternate Gear: **BALL, HAWK**
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- Bill Walton's Alternate Gear: **TOWERS, OF, POWER**
- Carmelo Anthony's Alternate Gear: **NEW, TO, THE, GAME**
- Chris Webber's Alternate Gear: **24, SECONDS**
- Clyde Drexler's Alternate Gear: **CLYDE, THE, GLIDE**
- Dajuan Wagner's Alternate Gear: **NBA, HANGTIME**
- Darko Milicic's Alternate Gear: **NBA, FASTBREAK**
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- Jason Terry's Alternate Gear: **BALL, ABOVE, ALL**
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- Yao Ming's Childhood Grade School: **PREP, SCHOOL**

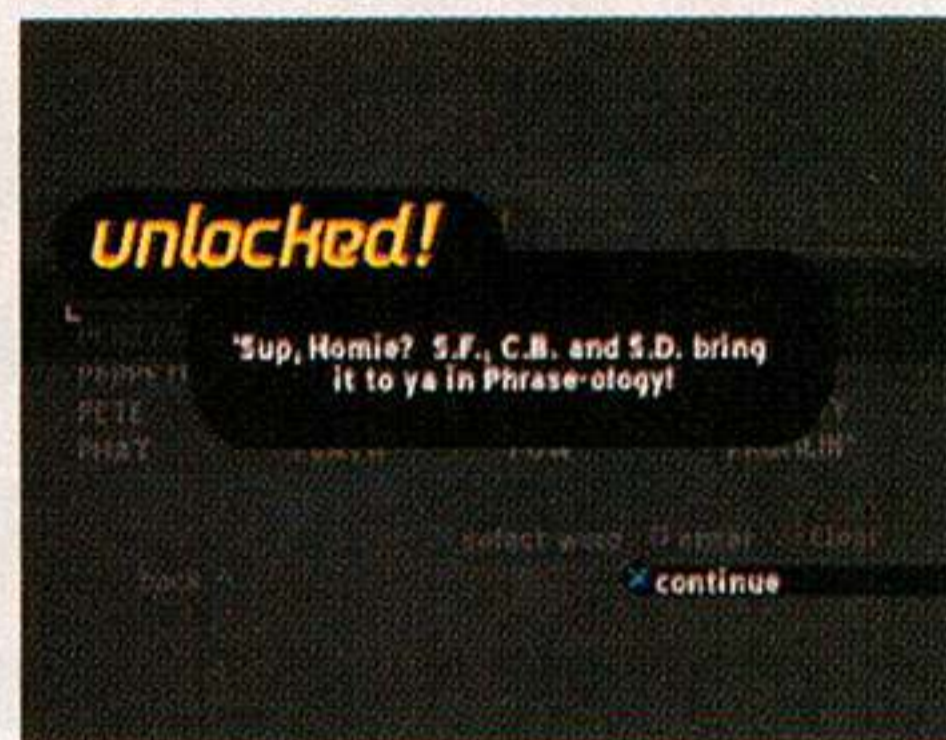




## NBA BALLERS



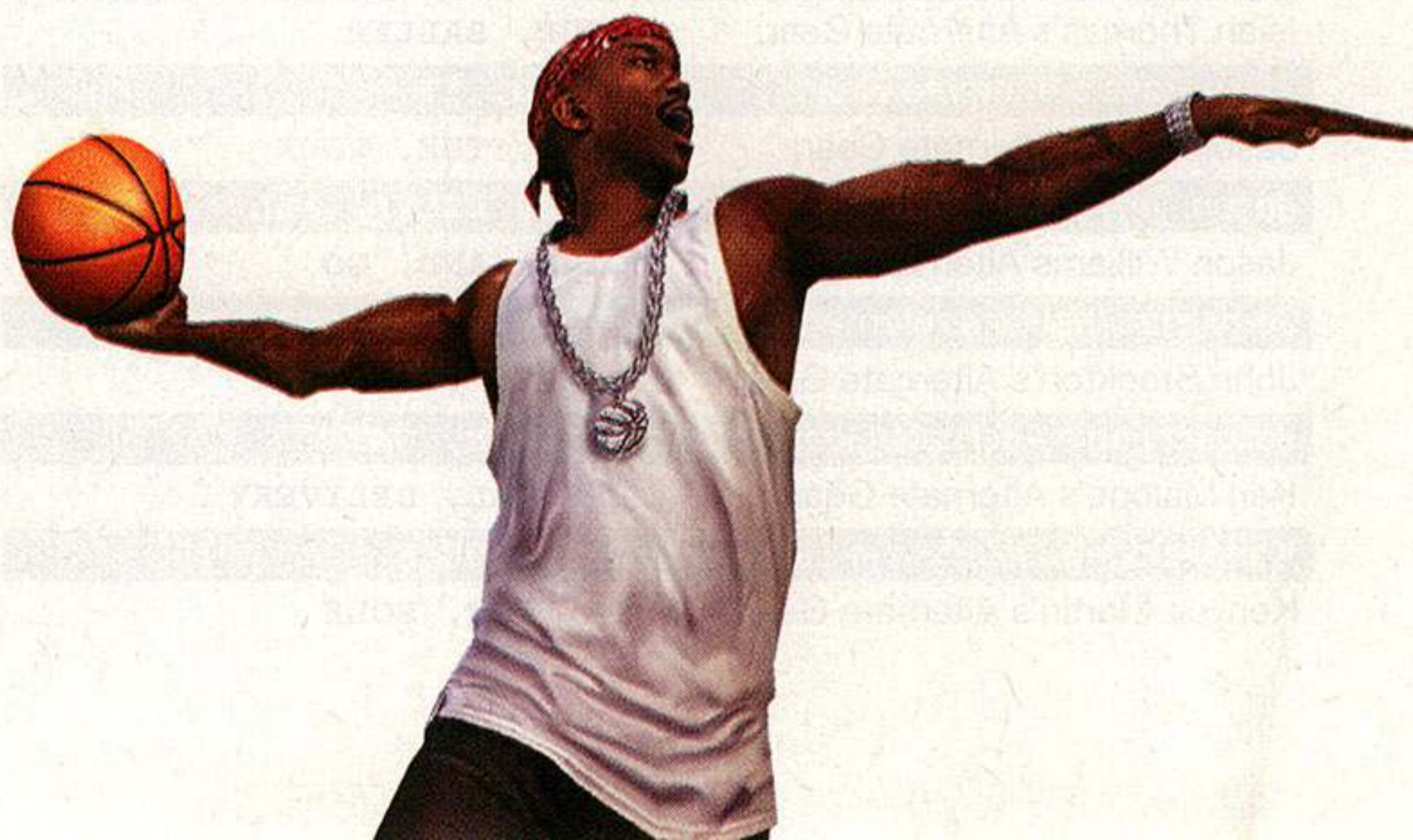
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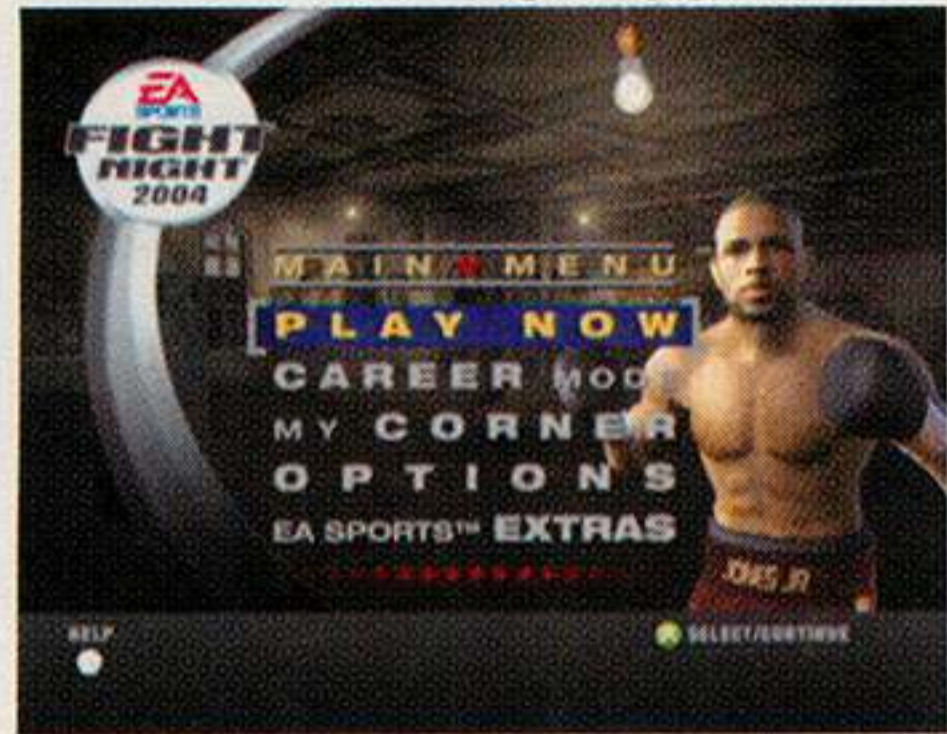




**FIGHT NIGHT 2004**



All Venues, Big Tigger, and Tiny Fighters



**All Venues:** At the Main Menu, select My Corner, and at the My Corner screen, press **Left, Left, Left, Right, Right, Right, Left, Right, Right**. If you entered the code correctly, all venues will be open.

**Big Tigger:** At the Main Menu, select My Corner and then select Record Book. At the Record Book screen, select Most Wins-Boxer and then press **Up, Up**. If you entered the code correctly, you'll see a confirming message.

**Tiny Fighters:** At the Main Menu, press **Left, Left, Left, Right, Right, Right, Left, A**. If you entered the code correctly, your boxers will be tiny with big heads.

**DRAGON BALL Z: BUDOKAI 2**



All Breakthrough Capsules

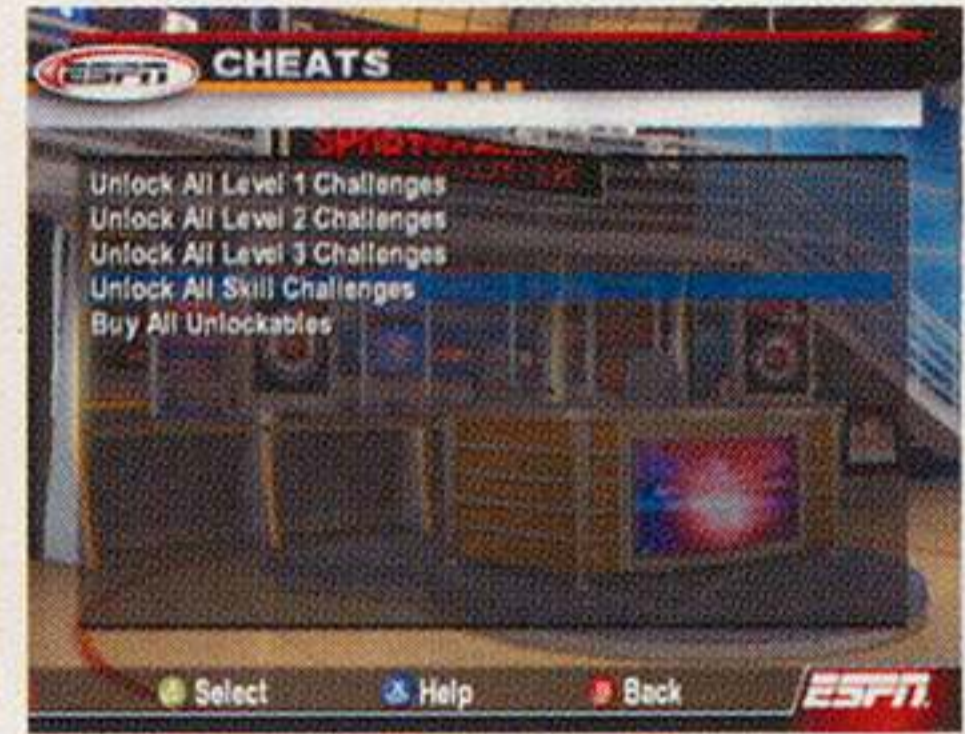
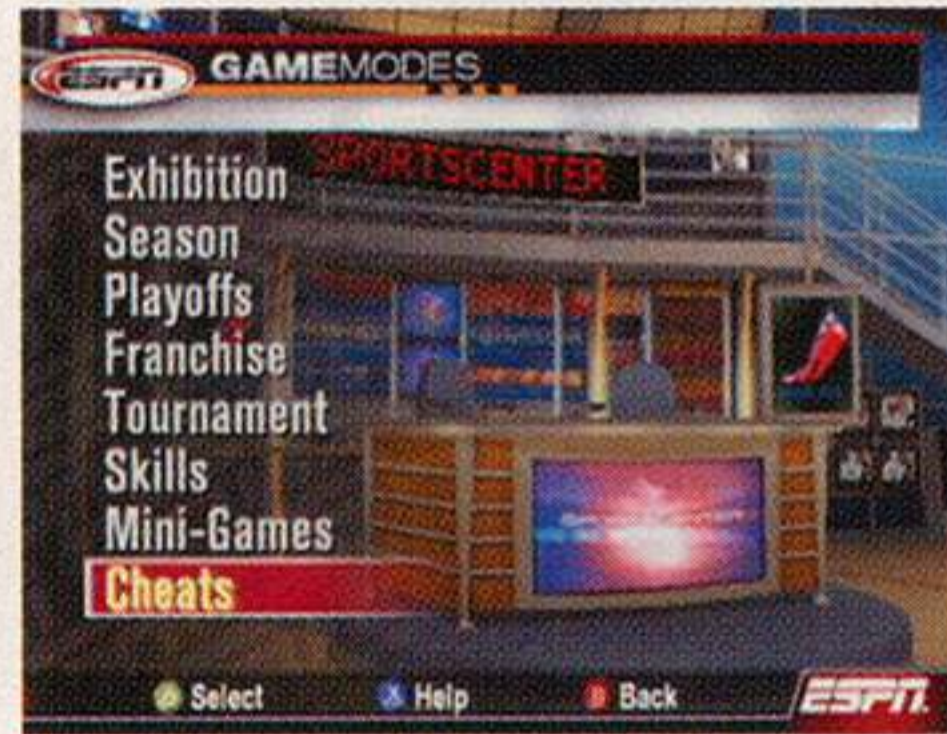


At the Main Menu, select Edit Skills and then select your memory card data. At the Edit Skills screen, select Skill Shop, and at the Skill Shop screen, **press and hold L2 and then press  $\Delta$**  to exit the screen. If you entered the code correctly, your capsule percentage will rise by 1%. Repeat the process while **holding L2** to raise your percentage to 100%, and at the Edit Skills screen, select Edit Capsules to activate the auto-save function to save your higher Capsule percentage to your memory card.

**ESPN NHL HOCKEY**



Unlock Everything

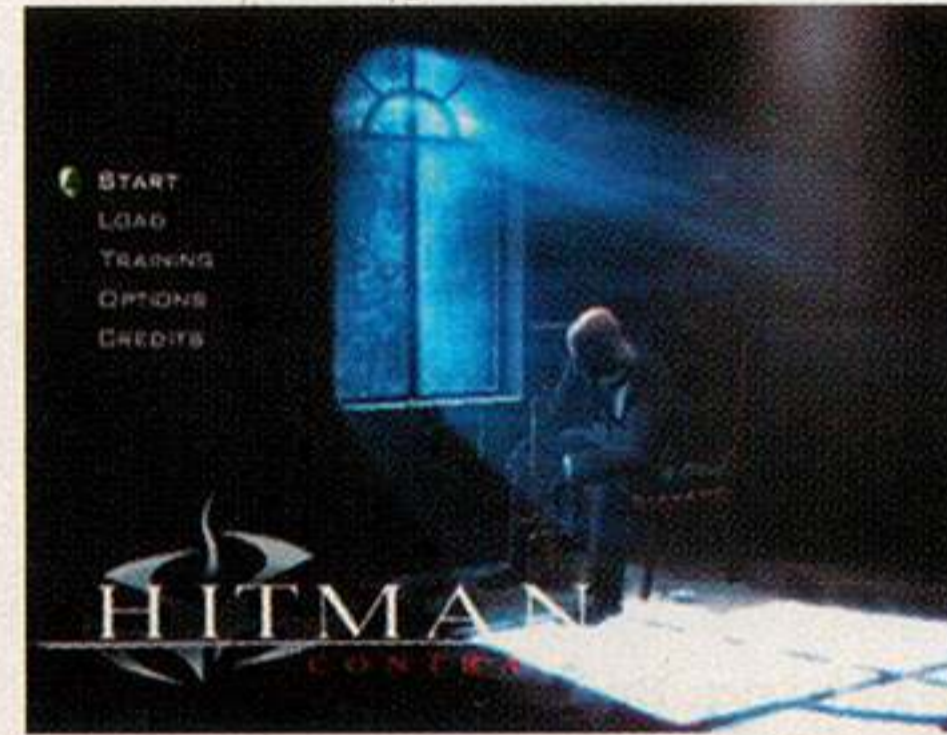


At the Main Menu, select Game Modes, and at the Game Modes screen, press **R, R, L, Left, Left, Down, Y, R, Y, L, Up, Right, Y, Down, Left, Left, Y, R, Down, Up**. If you entered the code correctly, a confirming message will appear and everything will be unlocked.

**HITMAN: CONTRACTS**

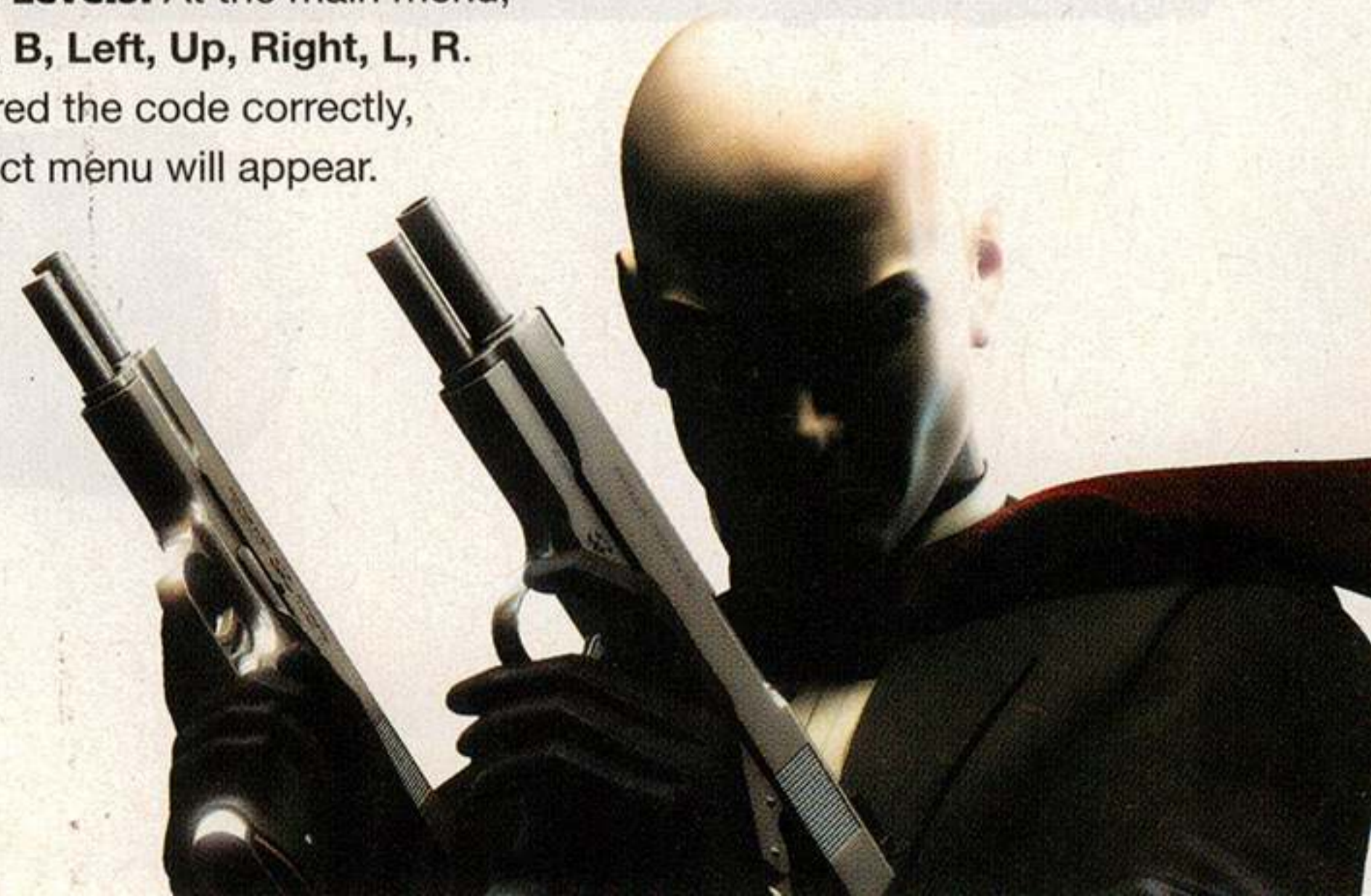


Level Complete and Unlock All Levels



**Level Complete:** During gameplay, press **R, L, Up, Down, X, A, Left Thumbstick, B, A, B, A**. If you entered the code correctly, the level will end automatically.

**Unlock All Levels:** At the main menu, press **X, Y, B, Left, Up, Right, L, R**. If you entered the code correctly, a level select menu will appear.

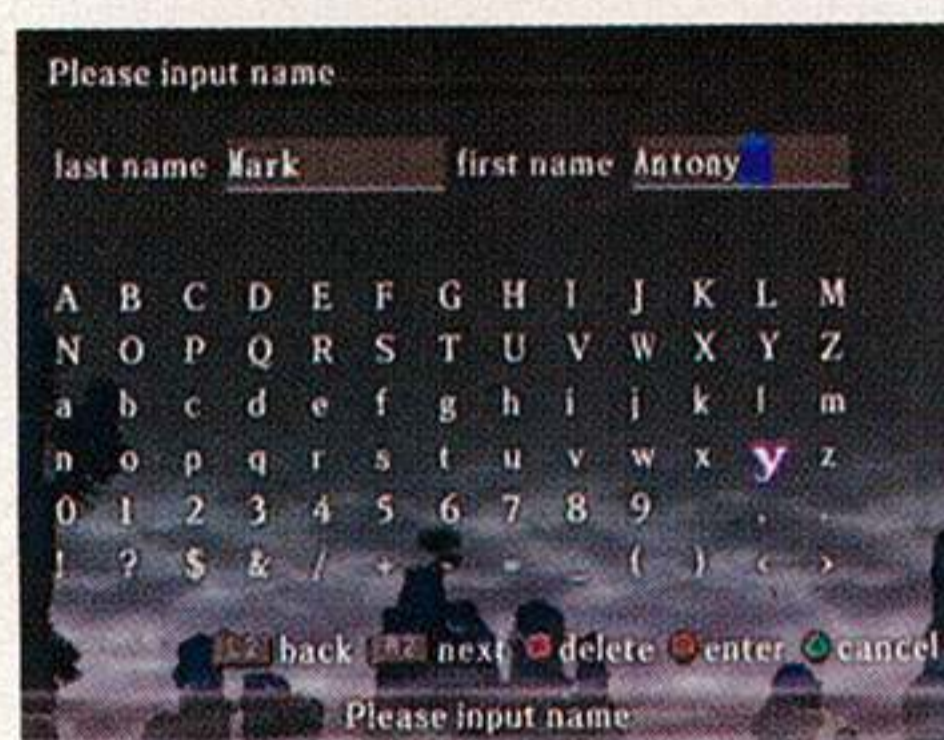




## ROMANCE OF THE THREE KINGDOMS VII



### Secret Characters



At the main menu, select New Officer and then select Create New Officer. At the Create New Officer screen, enter any of the following names (last name first) to unlock these hidden officers. If you entered the code correctly, you'll hear a confirming sound.

Abe Lincoln

Julius Caesar

Albert Einstein

Lady Diana

Augustus Caesar

Mahatma Gandhi

Benedict Arnold

Mark Antony

Ben Franklin

Mother Theresa

Betsy Ross

Nikola Tesla

Charles Darwin

Norma Jean

Crazy Horse

Robert Lee

Daniel Boone

Robin Hood

Dynasty Warrior

Sitting Bull

Genghis Khan

Sun Tzu

George Patton

Thomas Paine

Gitaroo Man

U 1

Harry Houdini

Ulysses Grant

Jeanne Darc

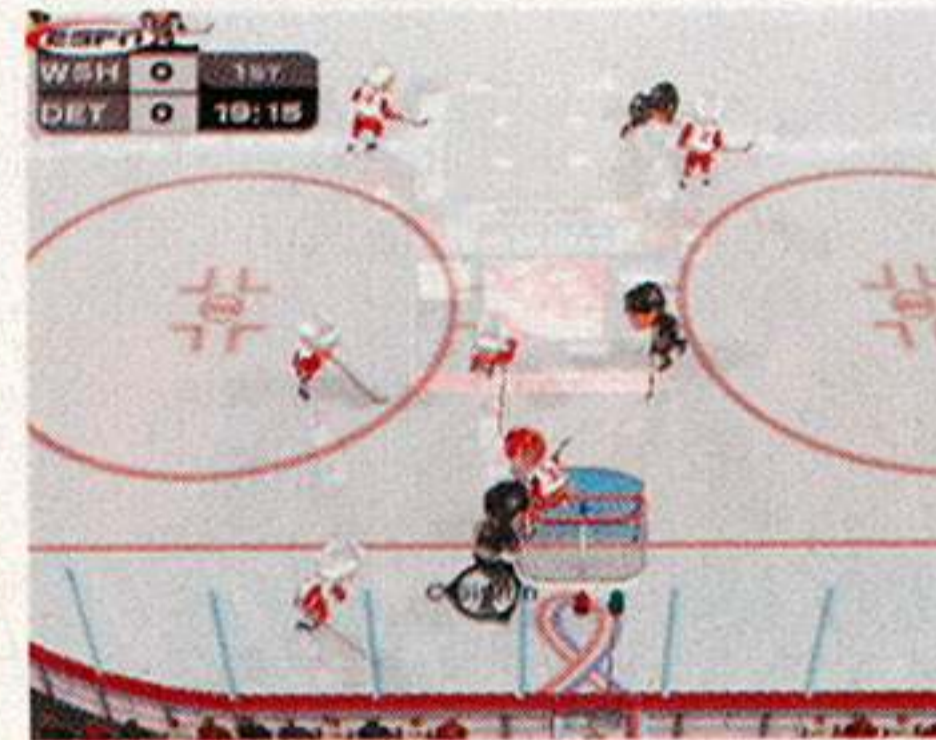
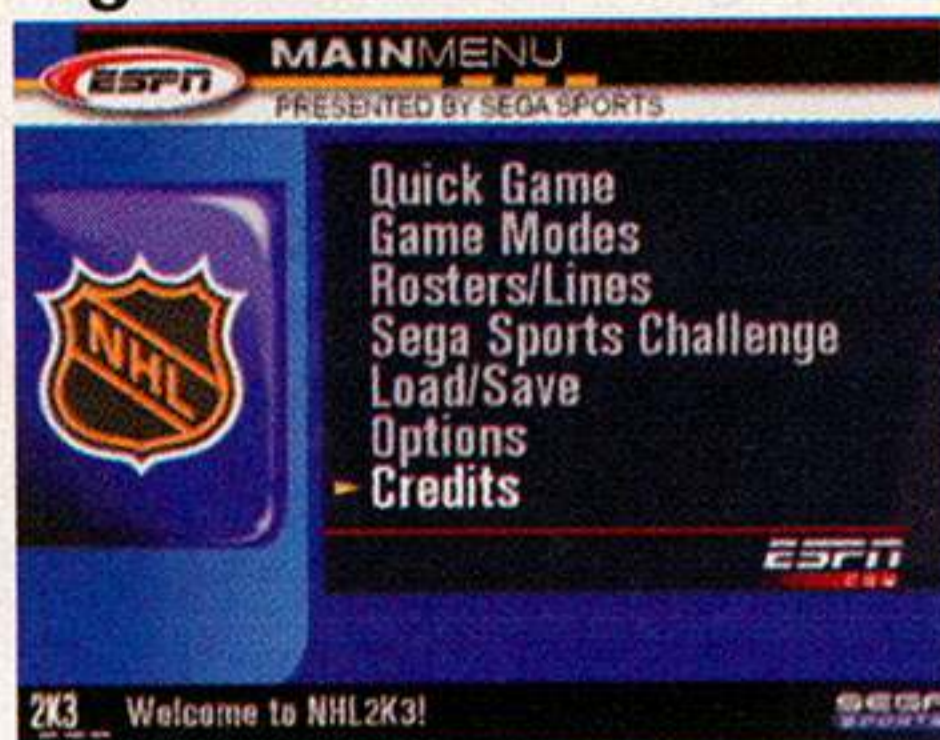
Wyatt Earp

# Romance of the Three Kingdoms VII

## NHL 2K3



### Big Head Mode

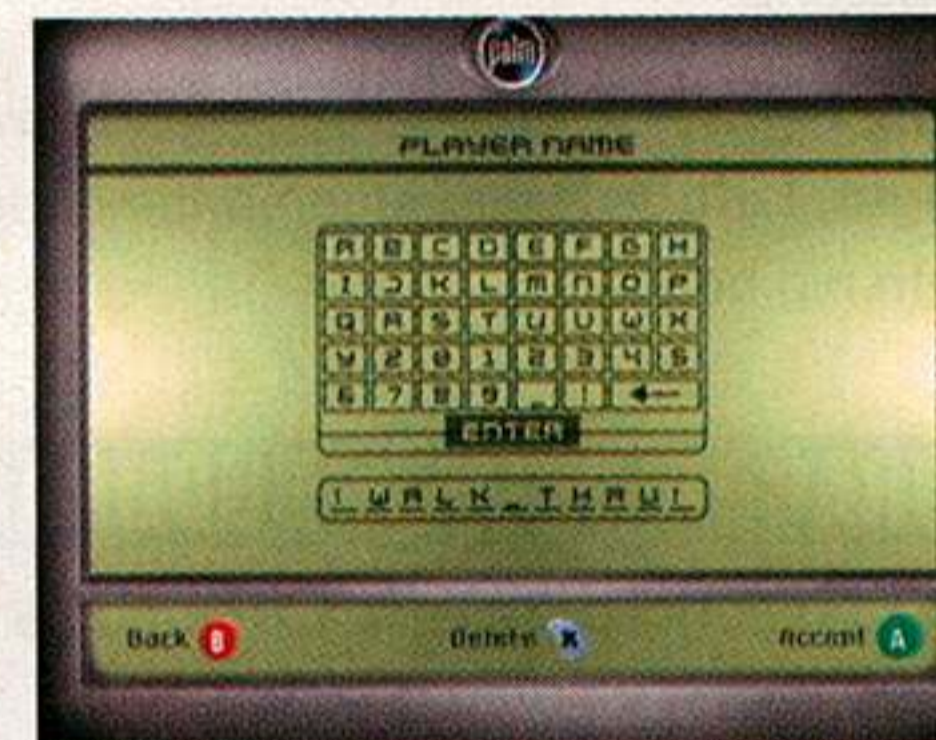


At the Main Menu, select Credits, and at the Credits screen, press L2, R2, L2, R2. If you entered the code correctly, all players will have big heads in the game.

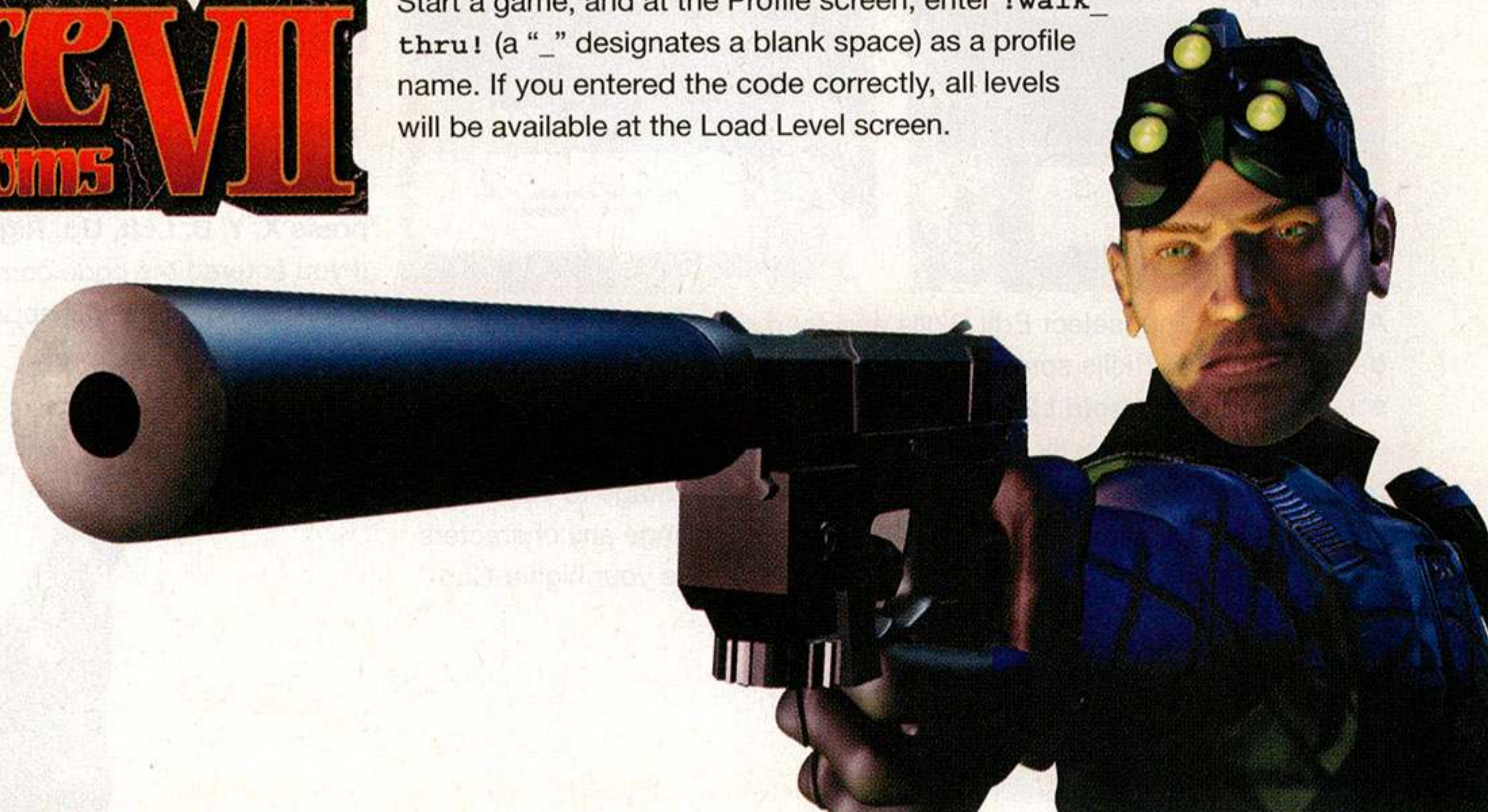
## TOM CLANCY'S SPLINTER CELL



### Unlock All Levels



Start a game, and at the Profile screen, enter !walk\_thru! (a "\_" designates a blank space) as a profile name. If you entered the code correctly, all levels will be available at the Load Level screen.





## MX UNLEASHED



### Play Demo Track

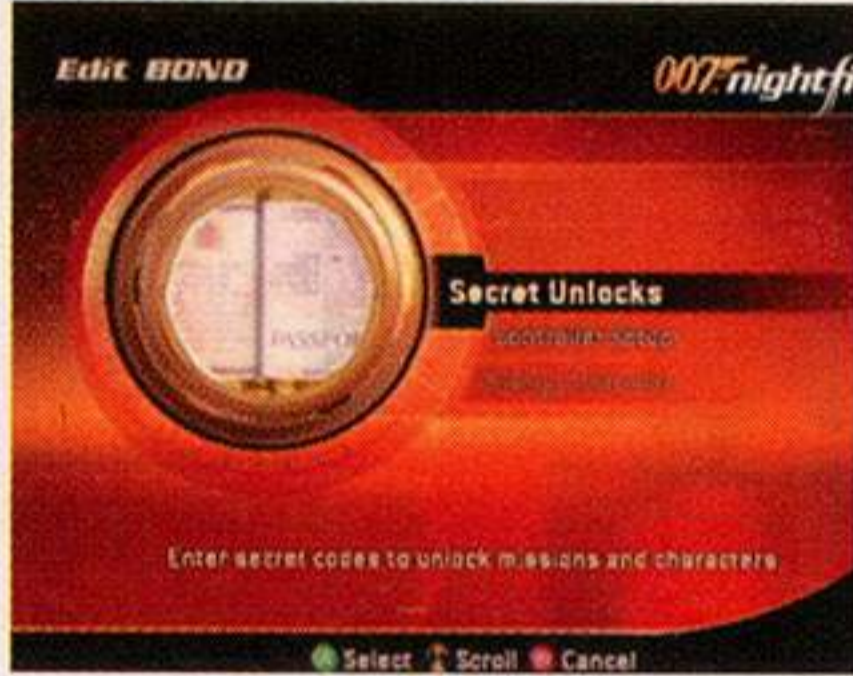


At the title screen, let the game sit for three minutes and a demo race will begin. While the demo race is playing, **press X** to join in and race the demo track.

## JAMES BOND 007: NIGHTFIRE



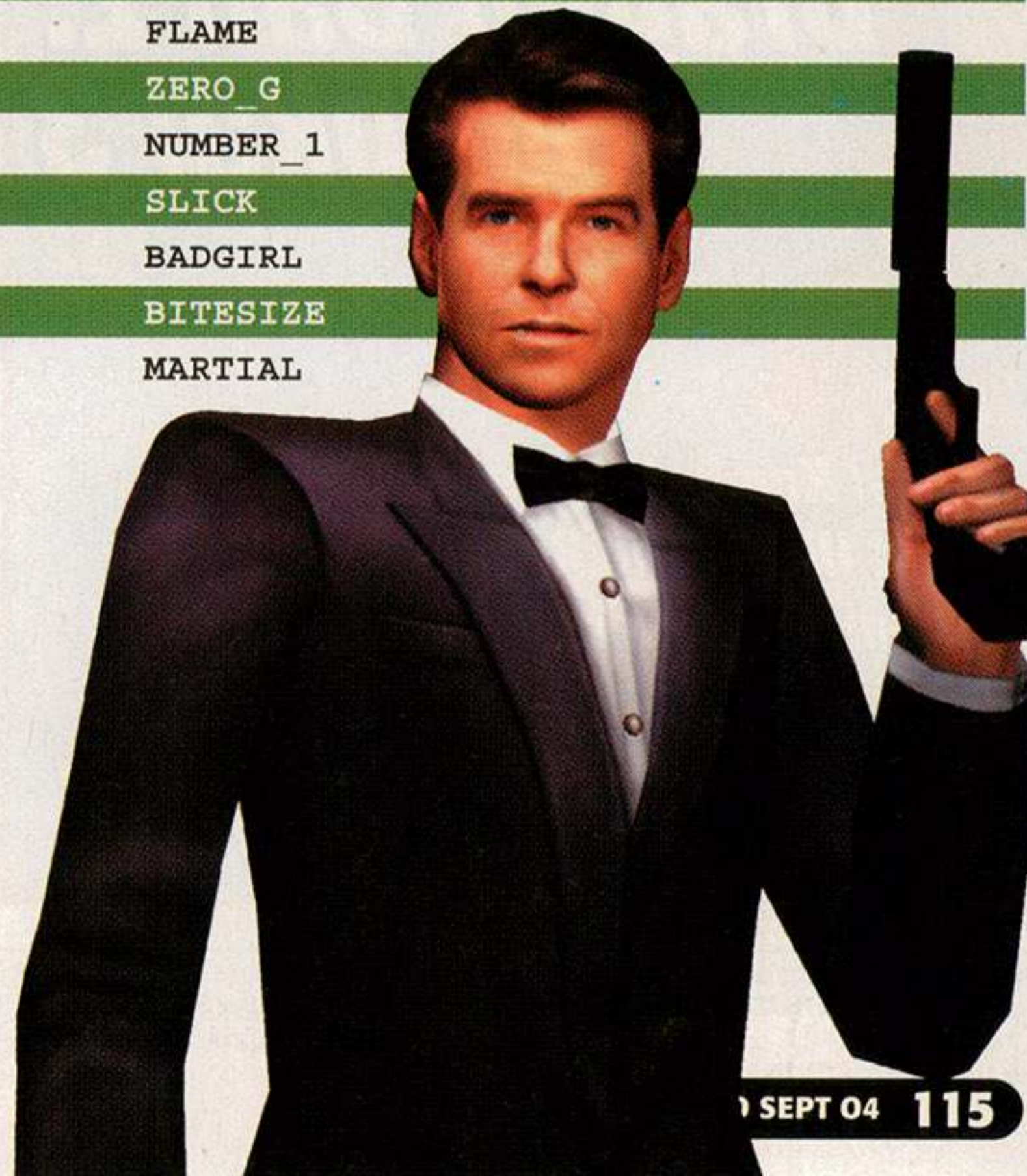
### Passcode Cheats



At the main menu, select Codenames. At the Enter Codename screen, create a new codename or select a pre-existing one, and at the next screen, select Secret Unlocks. Enter the following codes to unlock the following cheats. If you entered the code correctly, a message will appear telling you that a cheat has been unlocked.

A “\_” designates a blank space.

All Multiplayer Game Mods:	GAMEROOM
Alpine Escape Level:	POWDER
Camera Upgrade:	SHUTTER
Decryptor Upgrade:	SESAME
Deep Descent Level:	AQUA
Double Cross Level:	BONSAI
Enemies Vanquished Level:	TRACTION
Golden P2K:	AU_P2K
Golden PP7:	AU_PP7
Grapple Upgrade:	LIFTOFF
Island Infiltration Level:	PARADISE
Nightshift Level:	HIGHRISE
P2K Upgrade:	P2000
Phoenix Level:	FLAME
Unlock Bond Spacesuit:	ZERO_G
Unlock Drake:	NUMBER_1
Unlock Electra King:	SLICK
Unlock Mayday:	BADGIRL
Unlock Nick Nack:	BITESIZE
Unlock Wai Lin:	MARTIAL



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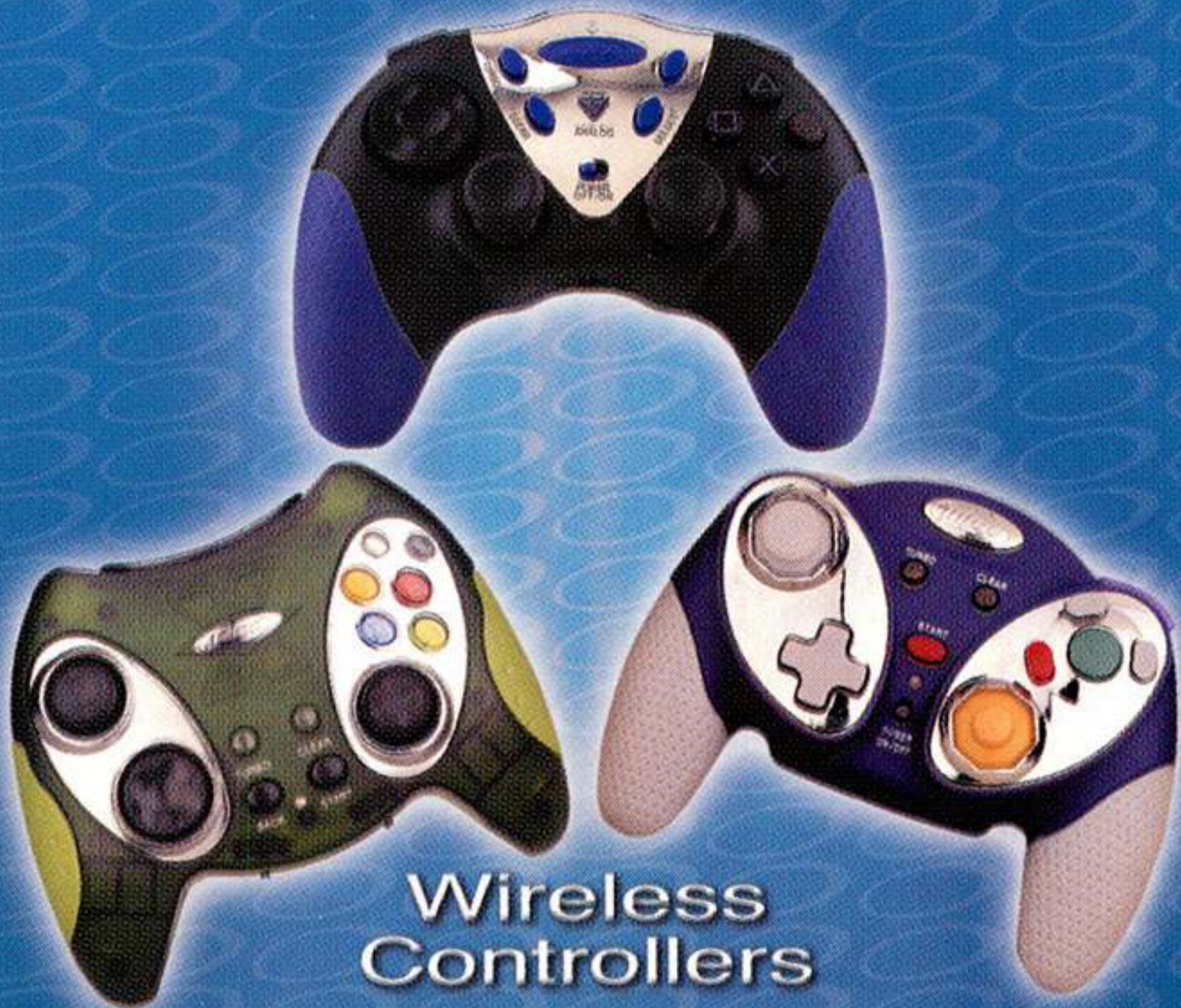
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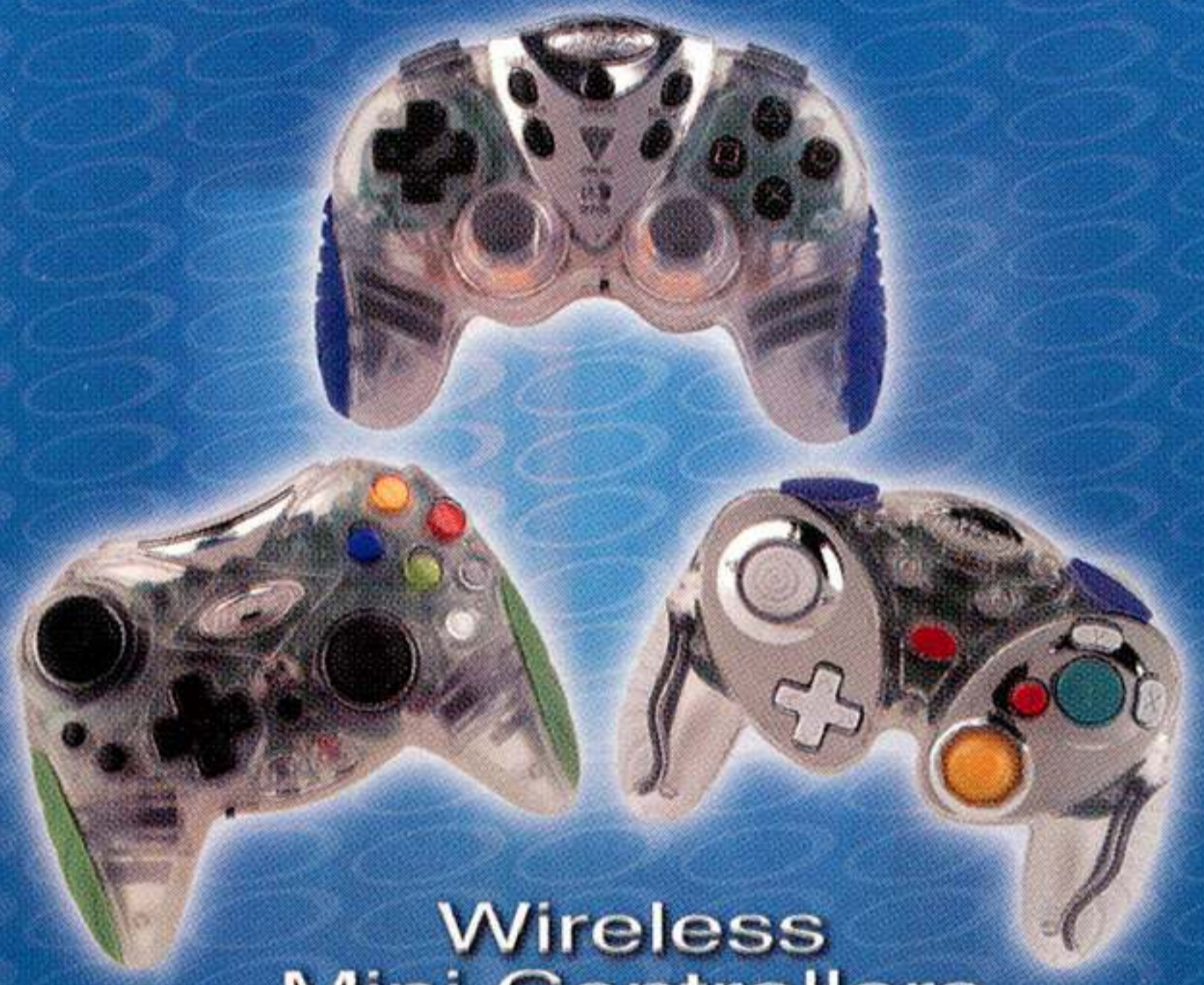
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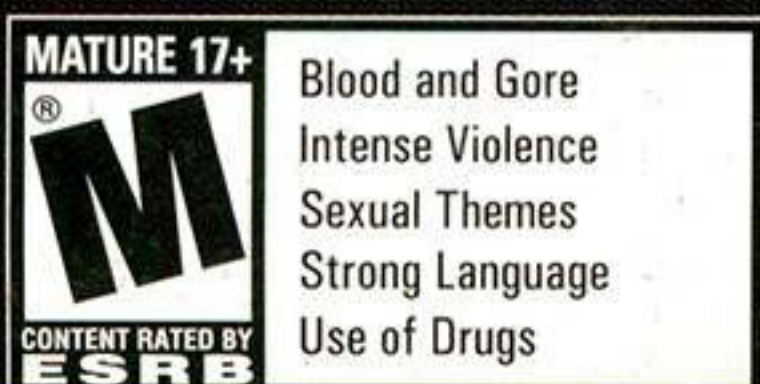


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