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HE'S BACK...

SAM FISHER RETURNS IN

SPLINTER CELL PANDORA TOMORROW

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SILENT HILL 4 creeps to PS2 and Xbox. First screens inside!

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- Resident Evil Outbreak
- Final Fantasy XI
- Driv3r
- Metroid Zero Mission
- Neo Contra
- Rise to Honor
- 007: Everything or Nothing
- Winning Eleven 7
- Full Spectrum Warrior
- Champions of Norrath
- R-Type Final

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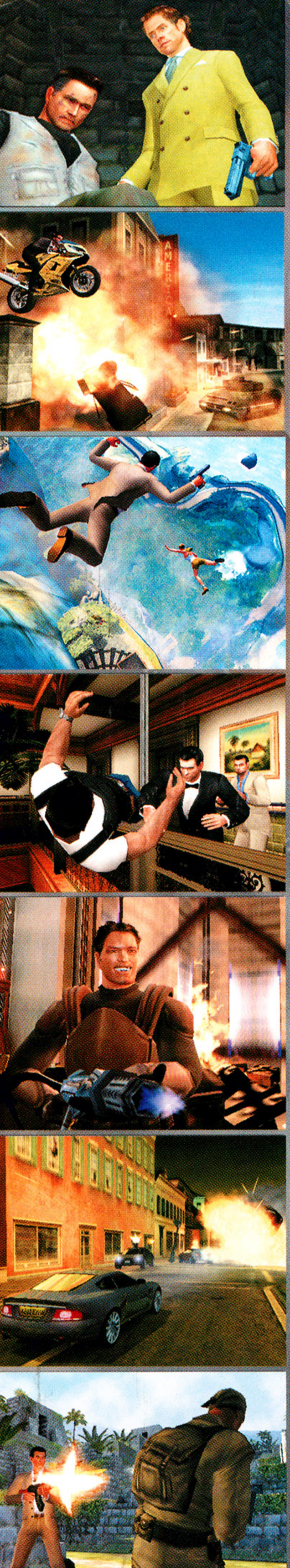
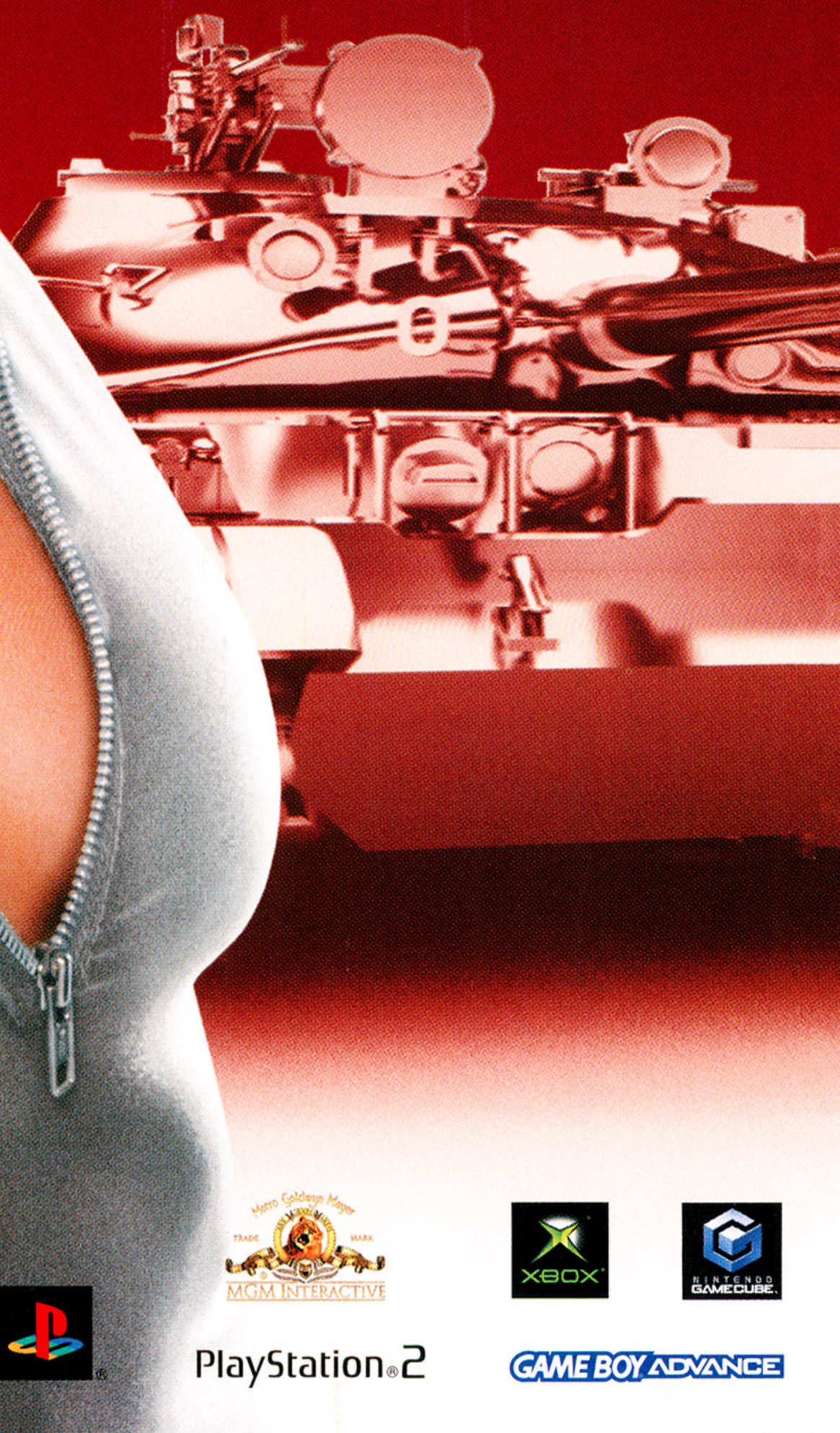


Good or Evil?

Shaken or Stirred?

Life or Death?

Heidi or Shannon?



TSU 2004 XXX

TEEN
T
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Violence
Suggestive Themes

Metro Goldwyn Mayer TRADE MARK
MGM INTERACTIVE

PlayStation 2

XBOX

NINTENDO GAMECUBE

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For Kit Yun, the only way out of the Hong Kong underworld is to go back in.

TEEN
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Violence

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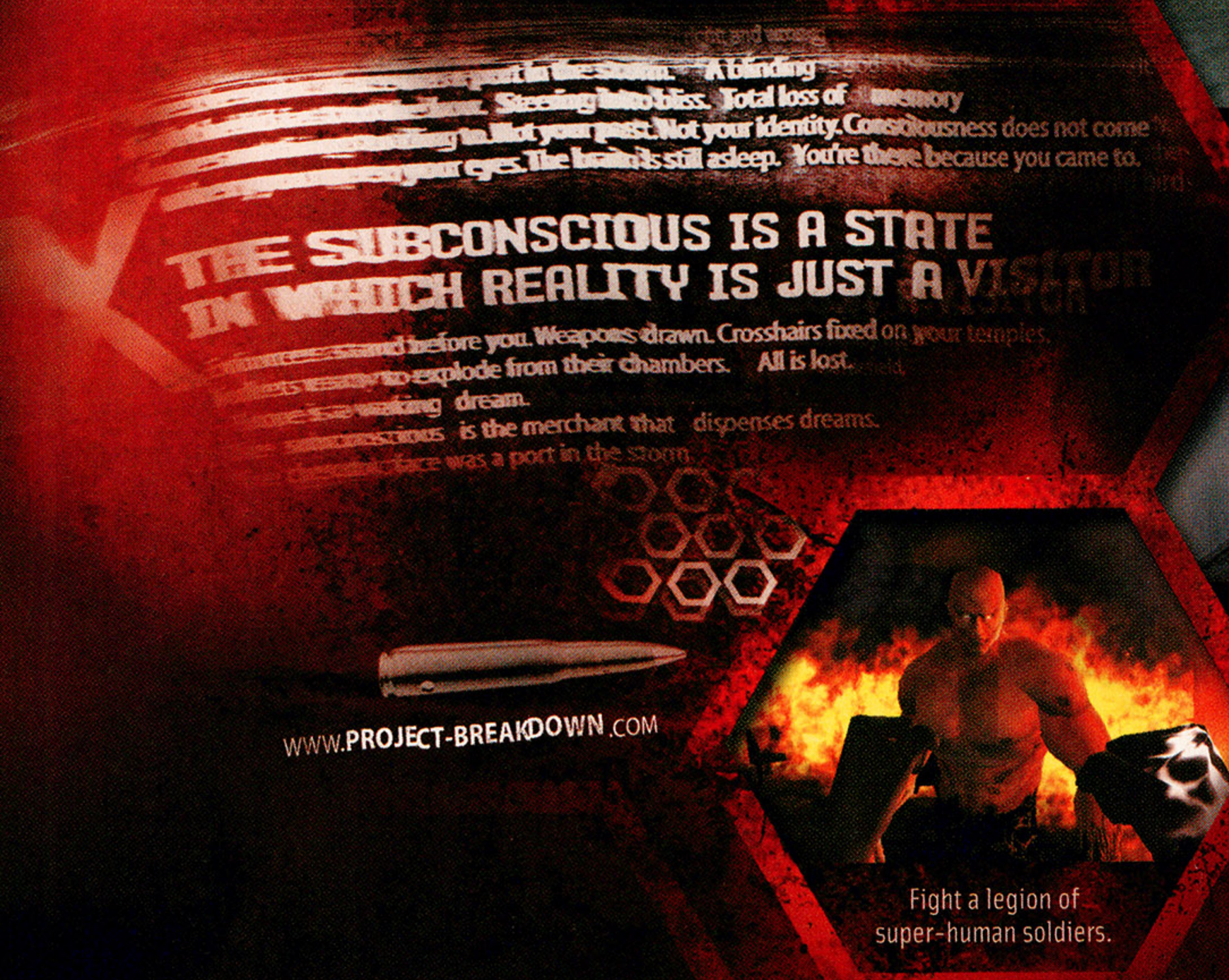

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FORGOTTEN REALMS

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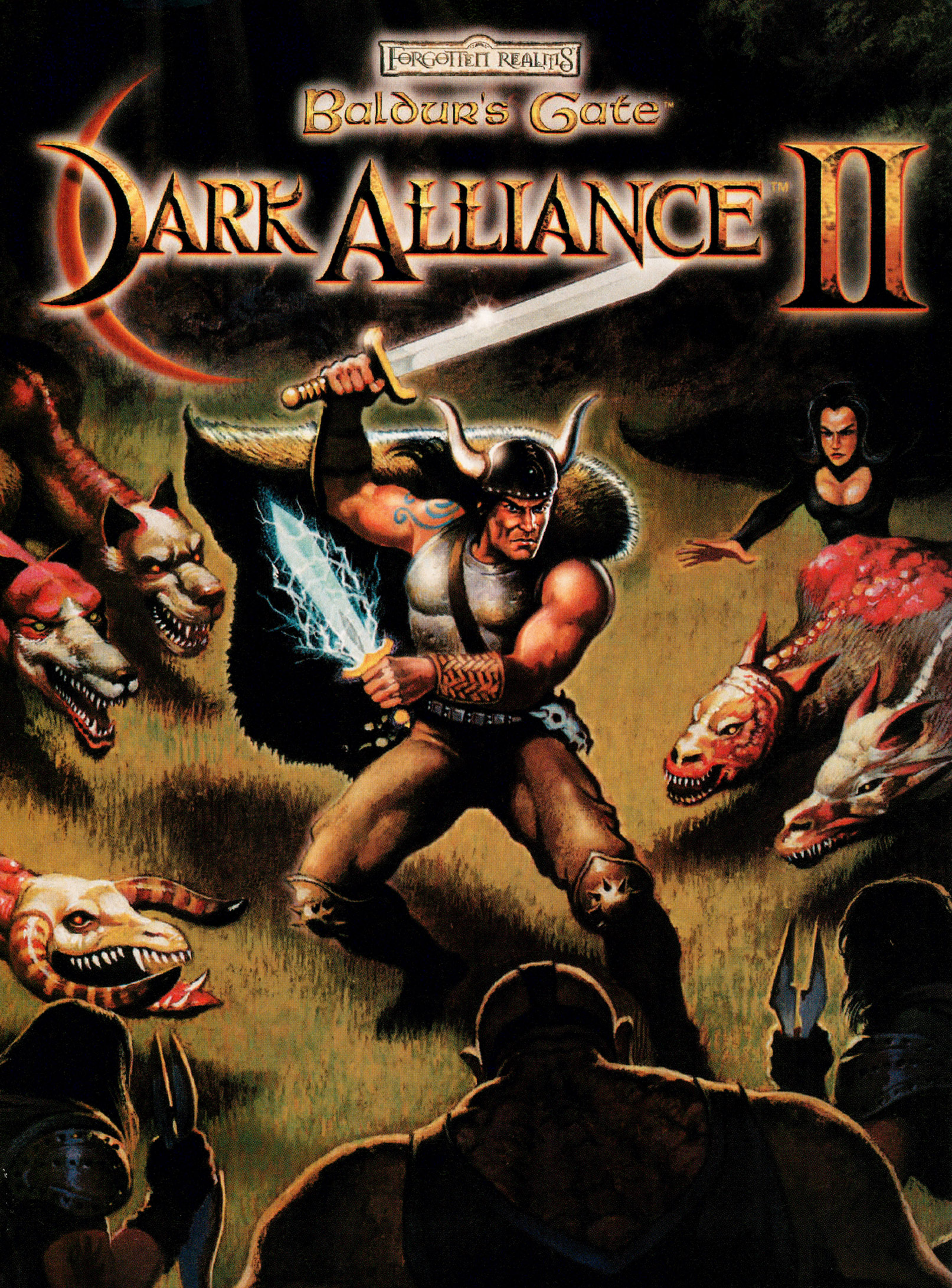
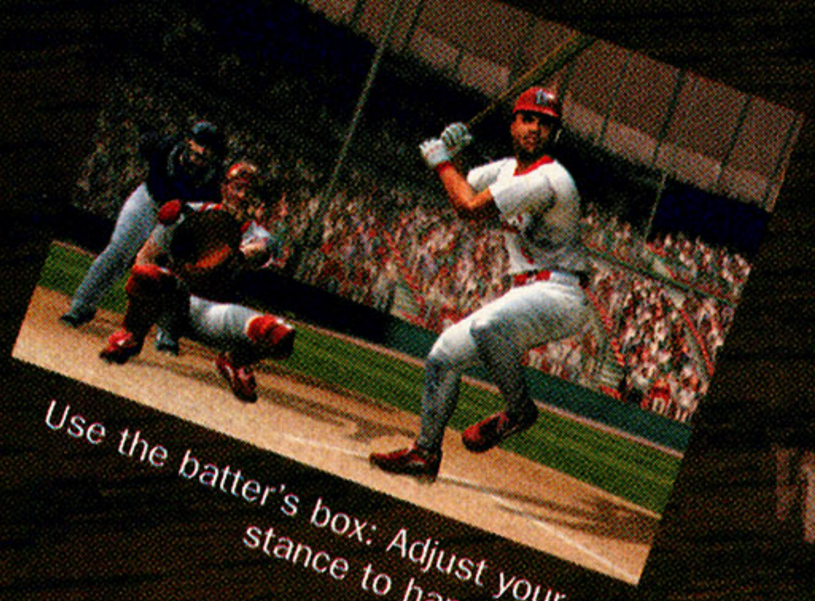
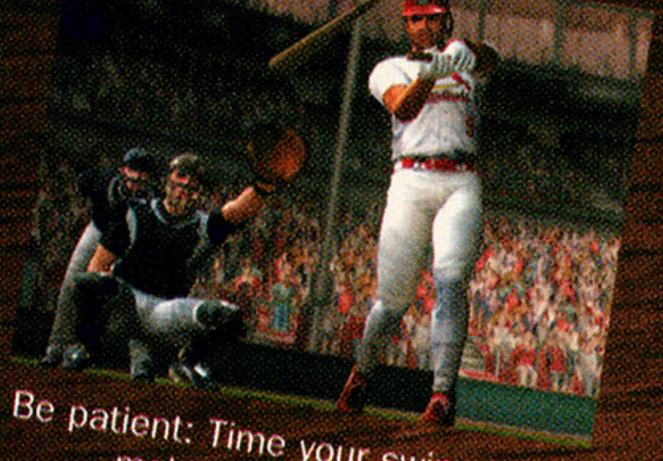




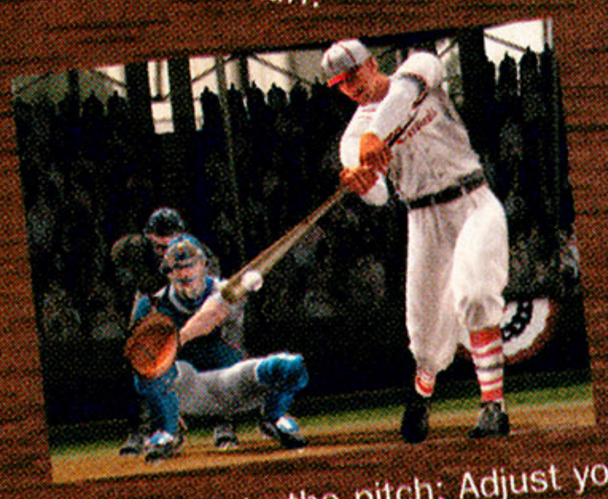
Use the batter's box: Adjust your stance to handle inside pitches.

WIND BLOWING OUT TO RIGHT.



Be patient: Time your swing to make contact with off-speed stuff.

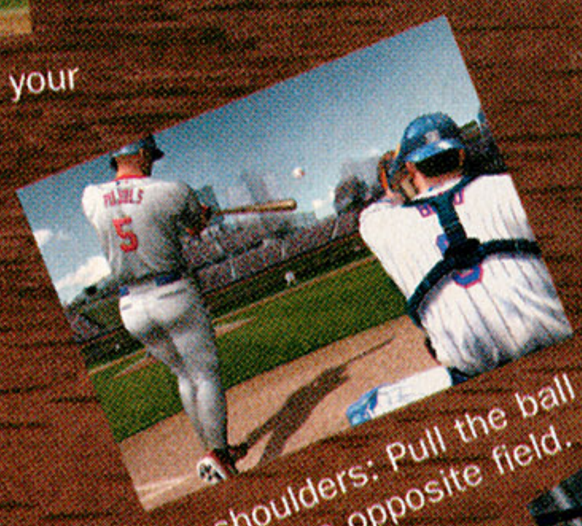
SEEN TWO STRAIGHT CURVES.



React to the pitch: Adjust your swing level to go after the ball.

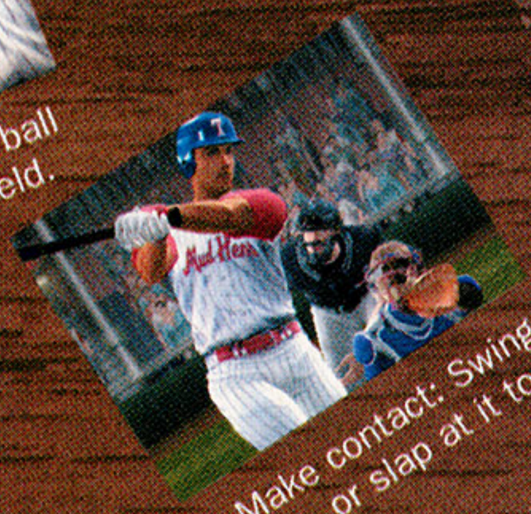
THINK FASTBALL? NAH.

THINK SLIDER.



Adjust your shoulders: Pull the ball or go opposite field.

SEE IT.



Make contact: Swing for power, drag bunt, or slap at it to stay alive.

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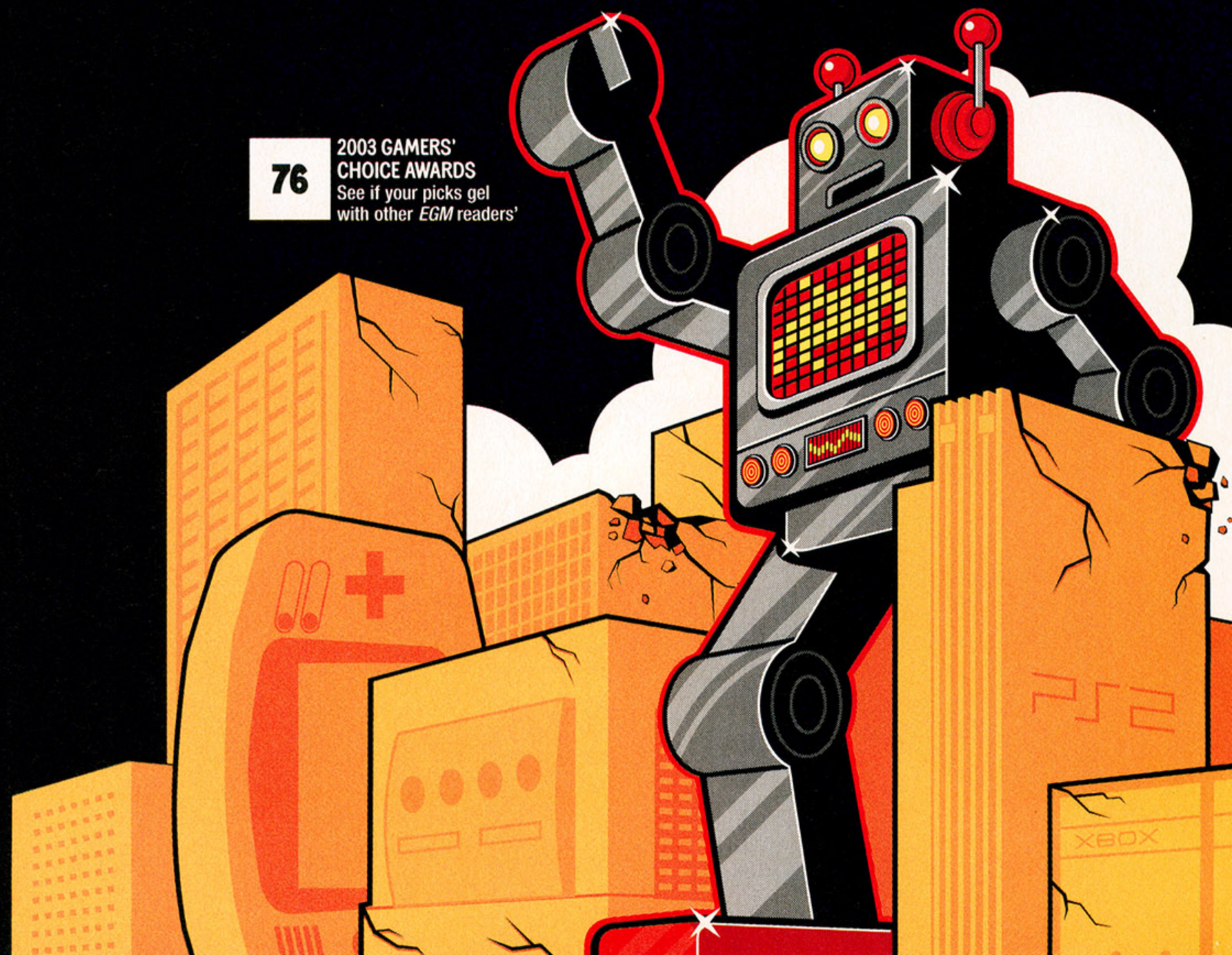

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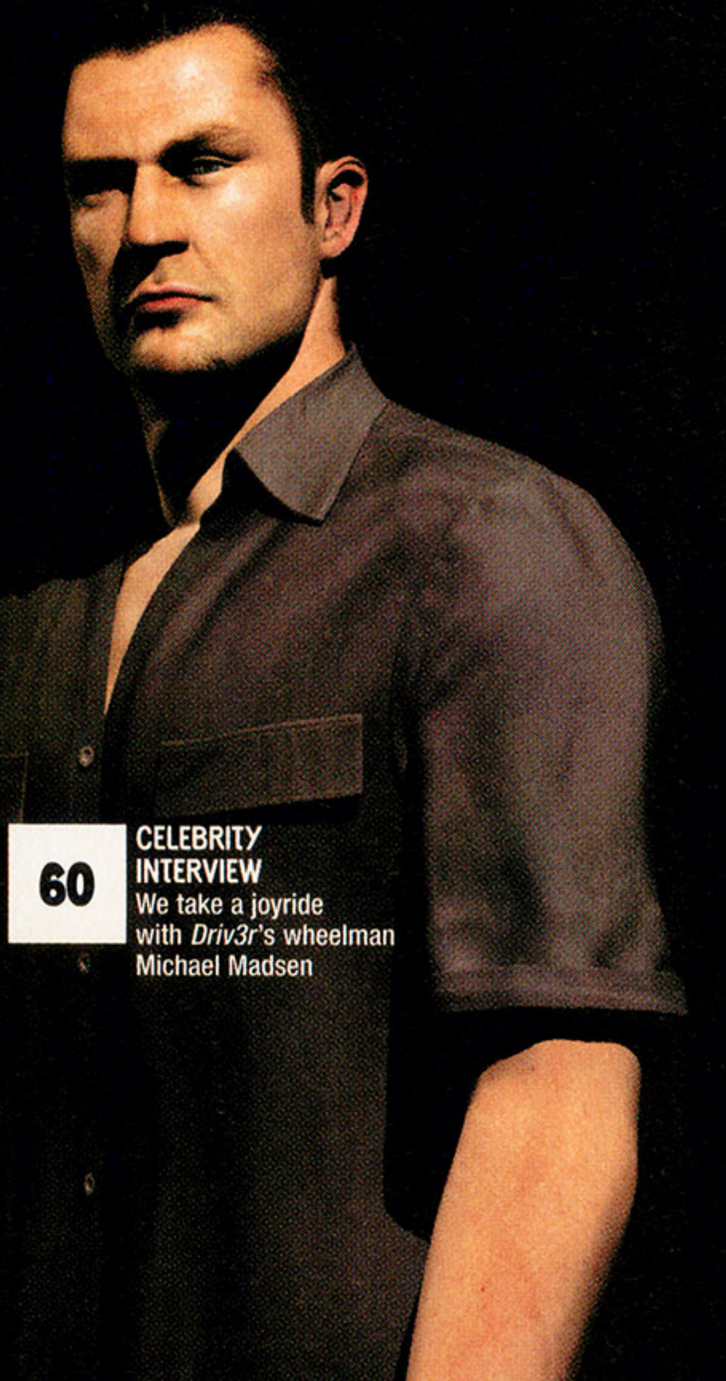

60 CELEBRITY INTERVIEW
We take a joyride with *Driv3r*'s wheelman Michael Madsen

editorial

Screw invisibility or flight—if I could have any superpower, I'd ask for the ability to turn my body into data signals, beam through the Internet at warp speed, then come out the other end to put my fist into some jackass' mouth. I'm not talking about any Joe Schmoe Net surfer. I want to beat up those kids who think online anonymity is carte blanche to behave like a butthole in multiplayer games... the same kids who'd never have the guts to act like that to anyone's face in real life.

I want to sock that punk who enjoys ruining everyone's session by killing his own teammates. I want to knock out that jerk who suddenly turns into a foul-mouthed racist on Xbox Live, just because mommy and daddy aren't within earshot. Most of all, I'd like to take out the idiot who gets online just to show off how drunk he is. "Dude, I'm so wasted!" Oh shut up, you dork. No one over the age of 13 thinks you're cool just because you took a sip of Miller Lite.

Maybe I'm a bit too heated and should be asking for a less aggressive, see-through-women's-clothing X-ray vision instead. But if this editorial gets through to just one person and makes him change his ways, then my job here is done, and online gaming becomes a safer world for everyone to enjoy.

—Shoe, Editor-in-Chief

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staff

reviewer role call

the review crew

DAN "SHOE" HSU, Editor-in-Chief
The snowy season means Shoe is now ready to try all the things he's learned in snowboarding videogames...for real. It also means we're looking for backup editors-in-chief.
Now Playing: *Rainbow Six 3*, *Prince of Persia*, *FF Tactics Adv.*
Fave Genres: Just about everything

MARK MACDONALD, Executive Editor
Ever since he got back from his trip to France for our cover story, Mark will not shut up about *Pandora Tomorrow*'s "incredibly addictive" online multiplayer mode.
Now Playing: *Metroid Zero Mission*, *R-Type Final*, *SOCOM II*
Fave Genres: Action, Adventure, Shooters

JENNIFER TSAO, Managing Editor
Being an *EGM* editor is cool, but Jennifer still has her rock-star dreams. So she started a band, learned three chords, and wrote a bunch of punk songs. Up next: world tour!
Now Playing: *Final Fantasy: Crystal Chronicles*, *Deus Ex*, guitar
Fave Genres: Adventure, RPG, Action Sports, Music

CRISPIN BOYER, Senior Editor
Crispin's logical career progression: game-store clerk, college student, newspaper reporter, game-magazine editor, costumed crimefighter with shirtless *EGM* contributor Seanbaby.
Now Playing: *Prince of Persia*, *Rainbow Six 3*
Fave Genres: Action, Adventure, RPG

CHRIS "CJ" JOHNSTON, News Editor
For CJ, the beginning few months of 2004 means playing and attempting to finish the hits of 2003, many of which he started but never completed when they were "new releases."
Now Playing: *Rainbow Six 3*, *Ratchet & Clank: GC*
Fave Genres: Action, Adventure, Puzzle, Music

SHANE BETTENHAUSEN, Reviews Editor
Next month, Shane will abdicate his role to pursue the exciting field of *EGM* Previews editing. What he'll miss most: making fellow editor Shawn Elliott review games like *American Idol*.
Now Playing: *Final Fantasy: Crystal Chronicles*, *Metroid ZM*
Fave Genres: Action, RPG, Fighting, Karaoke

JOE FIELDER, Previews Editor
We're sad to say that Joe's heading to sunny L.A. to start a job in game design on a certain WWII first-person shooter series. If it's good, maybe he'll get a Congressional....
Now Playing: *Champions of Norrath*, *SOCOM II*
Fave Genres: Shooters, Action, Strategy

DEMIAN LINN, Editor-at-Large
Playing *Winning Eleven 7* reminded Demian of all those bawdy soccer chants he learned while attending English Premiership games a few years ago...most of which involved Posh Spice.
Now Playing: *Rainbow Six 3*, *NFL Street*, *Winning Eleven 7*
Fave Genres: Action, Hockey, Racing, Fighting

PAUL BYRNES, Associate Editor
Reviewing *Fallout: Brotherhood of Steel* left a bad taste in Paul's mouth, so he's replaying the PC classics *Fallout 1* & *2* and even the underrated strategy-RPG hybrid *Fallout Tactics*.
Also Playing: *Beyond Good & Evil*, *Armed and Dangerous*
Fave Genres: RPG, Adventure, Strategy, Fighting

BRYAN INTIHAR, Associate Editor
During an *NFL Street*-inspired pickup game, Bryan made defenders look foolish until he ran into Bubba. Quick piece of advice: Never taunt a 400 lb. man with the ball.
Now Playing: *NFL Street*, *Final Fantasy: Crystal Chronicles*
Fave Genres: Action, Adventure, Sports

SHAWN ELLIOTT, Associate Editor
After solving yet another game with misguided stealth segments, Shawn swears he's done sneaking around (until *Splinter Cell Pandora Tomorrow*, at least).
Now Playing: *SOCOM II*, *EyeToy: Play*, *Metroid Zero Mission*
Fave Genres: Fighting, Shooters, Adventure, Racing

Guest Reviewers

GREG FORD
Last month it was *Sly Cooper*, this month *Wind Waker*. Ford's playing catch-up during these slow months.

JON DUDLAK
With a light load this month, Jon passed time by eating the Chia Pet seeds from an old holiday gift.

PATRICK MAURO
Patrick reviewed *NFL Street* and *Winning Eleven 7* this month, and never blinked once. We swear.

KEVIN GIFFORD
EGM's webguy (and writer for 1UP.com) turns 26 in February. All he wants is a sequel to *Whiplash*.

JOHN RICCIARDI
John lives in Japan, where the first season of *24* just arrived. So that's why we haven't heard from him.

■ The object you're holding in your hands (and we really hope you're holding *EGM*) wouldn't be complete without aid from the editorial staffs of sister mags (and website) **XBOX NATION**, **GAMENOW**, **OFFICIAL U.S. PLAYSTATION MAGAZINE**, **GMR**, and **1UP.COM**.

The Contributors

■ **SCOTT STEINBERG** looks into the glitzy lifestyles of game developers in part two of our Play Money feature....
■ British freelancer and BBC correspondent **DANIEL BOUTROS** plays with silent assassin's toys in *Hitman: Contracts*....
■ Prima Games' tricks guru **DAVID HODGSON** tells you how to let Snoop Dogg off the leash in *True Crime*....
■ *USA Today* freelancer **MARC SALTZMAN** shows you where all your loot goes in game development....
■ Regular contributor **JUSTIN SPEER** probes *Silent Hill 4*'s panic room, then hooks you up with The Hot Five....
■ *Masters of Doom* author **DAVID KUSHNER** gives a quickie lesson on game schools in Instant Expert....
■ Former *GameNOW* editor **ETHAN EINHORN** interrogates the infamous Mr. Blonde about his role in *Driv3r*....
■ And **MIGUEL LOPEZ** logs more than 100 hours online to diagnose your future addiction to *Final Fantasy XI*.

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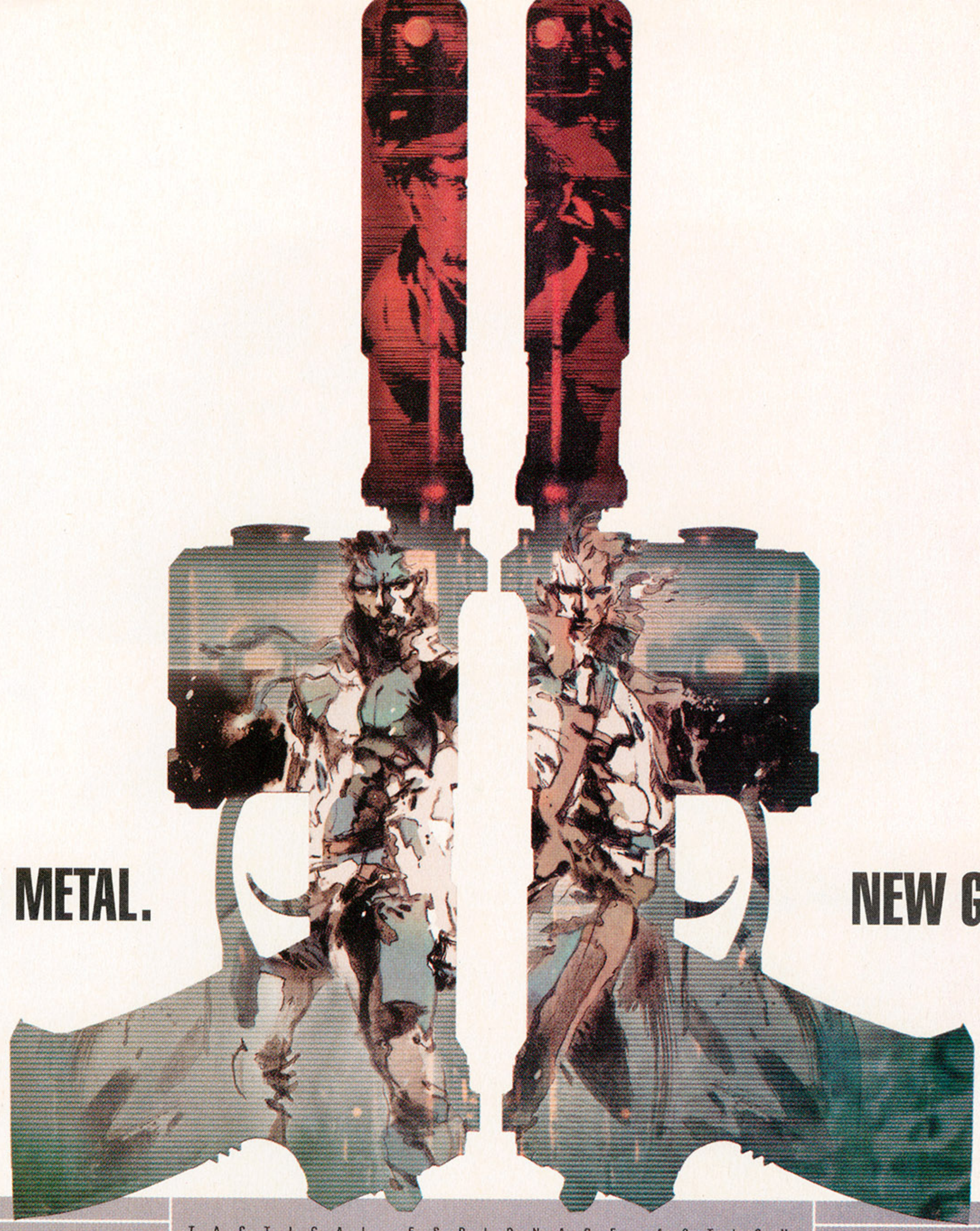

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Diplomacy Is Primary Weapon in America's Quest to End Indonesian Crisis.

By Eric C. Baldwin
GLOBAL PRESS NETWORK

Indonesia – A governmen[illegible]
inter[illegible]

was relieved [illegible] vio[illegible]

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letters

ranting, raving, and flatulent sumos

There's a special 10th circle of hell reserved for online game cheaters.

Cheaters never prosper

Regarding Edward A. Picchi's letter in *EGM* #175 (page 22) about *SOCOM II* cheaters—I found out about a glitch (involving VIPs, but I'm not going to go into detail) while playing with some top 10 players who, I think, had been exploiting it for hours, if not weeks. I tried it once and it definitely works, but I don't recommend it for players who have pride in their skills or want to avoid a ban, because it's pretty easy to spot an abuser by checking his or her stats.

—Joe Clemente

We forwarded this to Seth Luisi, *SOCOM II* senior producer, and here's what he had to say: "We are aware of this issue and we are working on an update to resolve it. We will also be looking for players who use this exploit and will be readjusting their score accordingly.

Over time, we will be rolling out more and more powerful cheat detection on the *SOCOM II* servers. Anyone who tries to cheat online in *SOCOM II* will learn that there are consequences."

Boomer's new job: punishing *SOCOM II* cheaters.

Gonna need to see some ID

I just got a job at Target, and during orientation, they said that it is imperative we not sell M-rated videogames to minors. I asked if we had the same policy for R-rated movies; my supervisor said no. I'm not against the regulation of videogame sales—I think it's good to keep mature games from kids—but come on! At least have the same rules for R-rated movies. Videogames shoulder all the blame as the cause of our youth's problems, but R-rated movies are often more violent and disturbing than mature games. All those critics out there are hypocrites, sneering at videogames while R-rated movies pass right under their noses.

—Josh Taylor

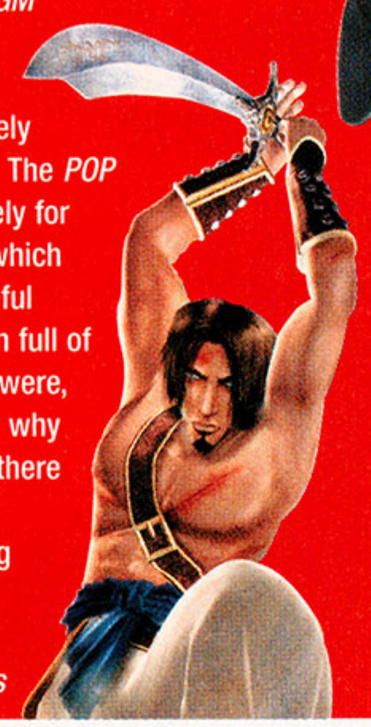
We asked Target to respond, but they just gave us a summary of their M-rated games policy and ignored your excellent point about R-rated movies. Incidentally, almost all major videogame retailers recently agreed to begin carding M-rated-game buyers—check the Post Office box (below) for more on that ongoing controversy. ➤

letter of the month

Not bossy enough

You have answered a great question for me! In your *Prince of Persia* Afterthoughts article in *EGM* #175, page 54, you had a sidebar (entitled "Who's the Boss?") about the boss battles that ultimately weren't included in the final game. The *POP* strategy guide (which I bought solely for the poster of the shirtless prince, which now hangs above my bed—shameful indeed!) has an art-concept section full of absolutely amazing creatures that were, sadly, not in the game. I now know why these frightening beasts were not there to slaughter me and inhibit the speediness of my game conquering—a sad, sad discovery, but understandable.

—Stacy Lewis



Congrats, Stacy Lewis! As our Letter of the Month writer, you've won a Nyko iType2 PS2 controller. It's especially suited for online games, so here's hoping you like those, eh?

POST OFFICE

They have no mouth, yet they must scream

Battle reports from the frontlines of *EGM*'s message boards. Join the fracas at egmmag.com and weigh in on such topics as...

Carding underage gamers

When news broke that most videogame retailers will now refuse M-rated games to buyers under 17, there was more rejoicing than gnashing of teeth. "I don't have a problem asking those little punks for ID," says **DaFro**, ever the diplomat. **Firestar46** thinks, "This'll be great for the industry, because it'll take heat off the developers that make M-rated games. Now, the parents are the only people to blame when s*** happens, rather than *Grand Theft Auto* or *Doom*." "I'm pro!" says **UltraMaximus** before mocking the li'l nippers. "It would be funny to ask a 10-year-old for ID and have him pull out his Mickey Mouse membership card." But **nick_danger** forecasts doom and gloom: "This is a risky move on the part of retailers, because by having a policy in place, they can now be held accountable for breaking it."

Best (as in worst) box art

Associate Editor Shawn Elliott kicked off a thread about terrible box art with a pic of *Demon Attack* (Atari 2600), which features a silver half-dinosaur, half-fighter jet flying through outer space. Hilarity ensued, along with a shockingly bad *Pac-Man* (Atari 400/800) box from **Xehirut** and the disturbing *Tommy Lasorda Baseball* (Sega Genesis) from **JohnnyD19**, to name just a few.

Tommy Lasorda and Pac-Man, partners in evil.

Hardcore versus mainstream

Editor-in-Chief Dan "Shoe" Hsu unleashed hell with his editorial on this subject in *EGM* #175 (page 13). **TheLastMoogle**'s got his money on his mind with this cynical view: "I'd like to personally thank all the mainstream gamers for ignoring the obscure games so much that they drop in price within a month." **Tifa**'s taking a more long-term outlook: "I think the growth of the industry is a good thing. I would like to think that this is a hobby I can enjoy for the rest of my life." **LoneSage**, like many board denizens, is on the fence: "Mainstreamers are bringing a lot of money into the industry (how many copies of *Enter the Matrix* were sold? Three million?), but at the same time, they're hurting the quality of games. If *Manhunt* and *True Crime* continue to sell well, who knows—Mario could be shooting a hooker one day."

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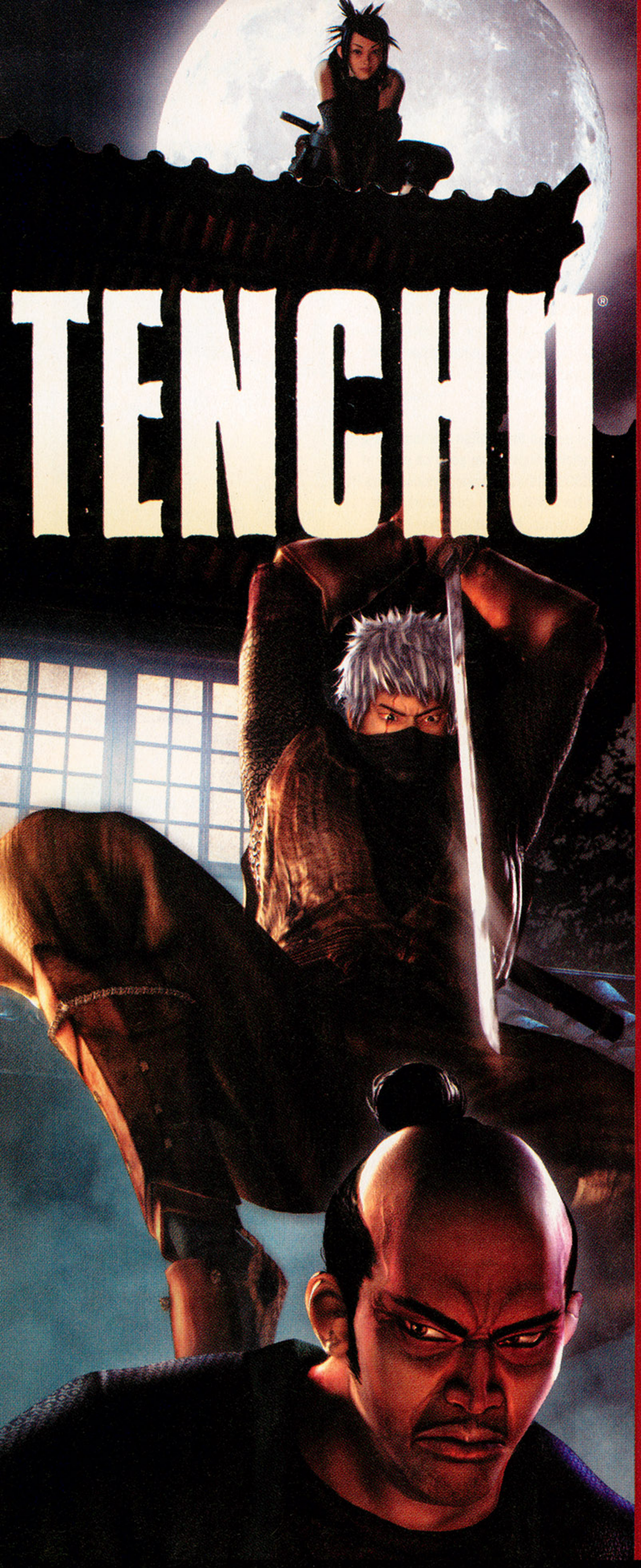

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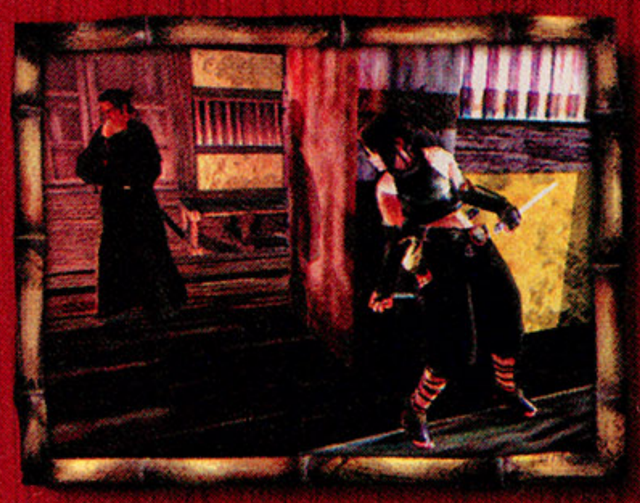

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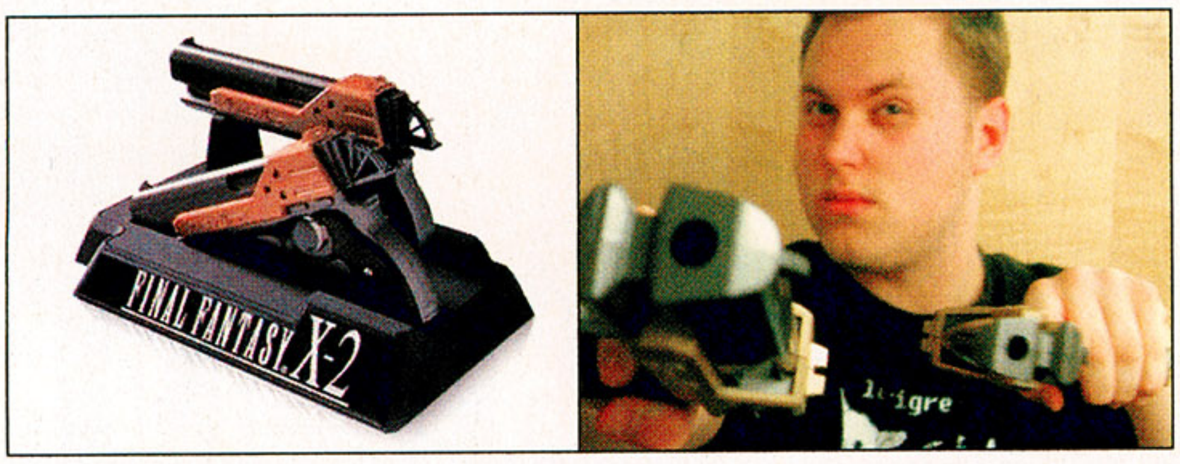


■ **Reviews Editor Shane "Moneybags" Bettenhausen sleeps with his pricey Bee gun controllers.**

Thank you, come again

I noticed in *EGM* #176, on page 94, you said that Ivy's Calamity Symphony throw is the most powerful move in *Soul Calibur II*, but after messing around in practice mode, I managed to do more damage with Astaroth's Demented Moon. Ha! I outnerded you!

—Steve Furlong

Not so fast, Captain Poindexter. You were doing Calamity Symphony all wrong—if you "buffer" the move (rotate the D-pad wildly in hopes that you'll hit all the necessary directions), it does less damage than if you hit each D-pad input perfectly. Like we do. Every time. Blindfolded.

More big units, please

I have to agree with Sean Maloney's letter (*EGM* #174, page 22) about underdressed female game characters. This oversexualization is annoying, though all media is guilty, not just videogames. Girl gamers need strong, intelligent, and beautiful heroines that they can relate to; *Beyond Good & Evil* looks interesting, but I'll pass on *Final Fantasy X-2*. You might be able to talk me into a beach volleyball game full of guys with big packs and pecks, though. Anyway, ladies, fill out those warranty and registration cards, and be sure to put an X beside "female." If they realize we're paying, they'll know we're playing, too.

—Marie LaRose

Gun nut

Where can I get Yuna's Tiny Bee guns that Reviews Editor Shane Bettenhausen is wielding menacingly on page 20 of *EGM* #174? Is that the limited-edition controller? Does it work only with the Japanese version of *Final Fantasy X-2*? I need answers! I'm going crazy looking for them!

—Nick Gordon

That is indeed the limited-edition *FFX-2* controller, which we've seen on eBay at over $400 (although toysnjoys.com has it listed for $210), and it does work with the U.S. game. Try making Shane an offer—he's got a bad habit of betting on games of *Tetris Attack* and could use a little help out of the hole.

On the pot

In *EGM* #175, page 69, there's a blurb about the Virtual FX 2D-to-3D converter. According to the website, i-glassesesstore.com, the FX can convert any 2D video signal to a 3D picture, but in the mag, you talk about using it only for games. Does it really work for regular television, too? I don't want to shell out $300 and get a box that gives me a headache and makes my television look like it's on marijuana.

—David Wilson

Uh...don't know about the TV-on-marijuana part, but we tried it and it works fine. Wearing goggles to watch television does get a little old, though.

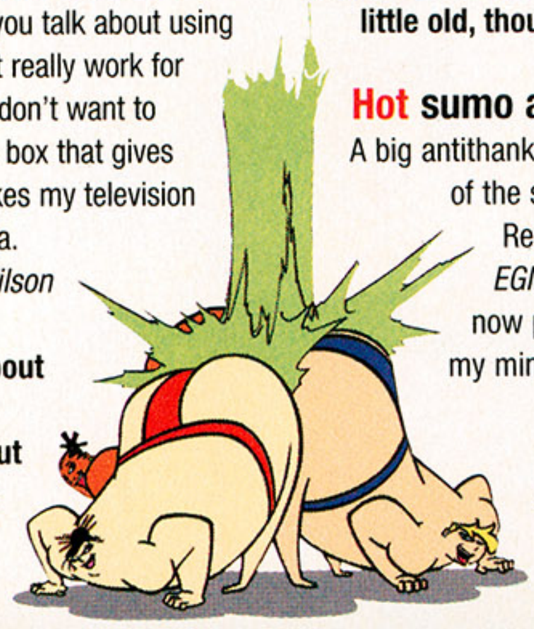
OOPS!

Our art director almost committed ritualistic suicide when she realized we forgot to credit artist Chuck Ernst for his wicked Master-Chief-on-the-moon illustration on page 12 of *EGM* #175. So thanks for that, Chuck.

Hot sumo action

A big antithanks for printing that picture of the sumos in Seanbaby's Rest of the Crap section in *EGM* #175, page 142. It's now permanently burned into my mind.

—Fuzzy



EGM: your source for disturbing sumo imagery.

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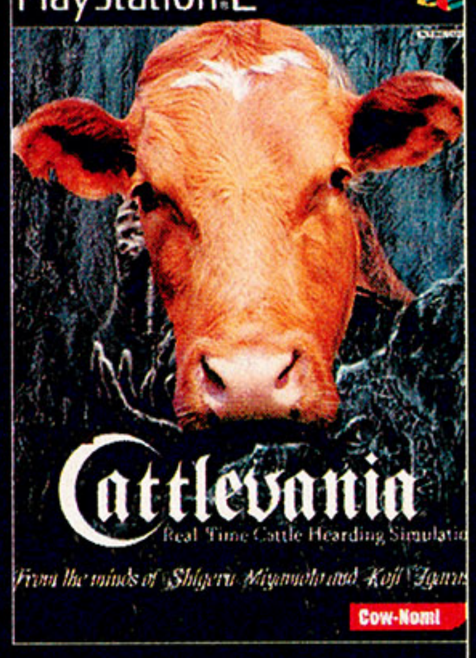

From the minds of two of the greatest game creators of this or any generation, Shigeru Miyamoto (*Mario*) and Koji Igarashi (*Castlevania*), comes an action-packed cattle-herding simulation that could never have been realized on previous consoles. Combining the real-time strategy of *Pikmin*, the character-building elements of *Castlevania*, and the methane-infused mayhem of actual cattle ranching, *Cattlevania* promises to be a beefy game the likes of which you have never seen before!

—BJ Shapiro

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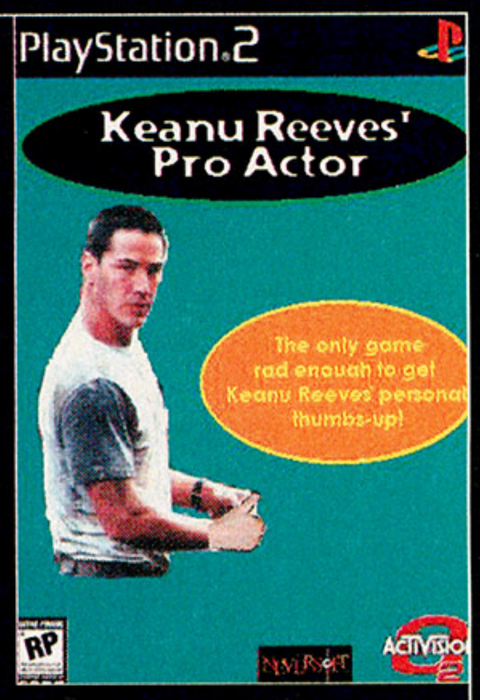
In this awesome driving sim, players select a starting point and destination (within the 48 contiguous United States only) and then drive there in *real* time! Want to drive from New York to Boston? It'll take you about four hours of gameplay—if you don't hit traffic. But watch your pee and hunger meters carefully; you'll need to pull over every couple of hours. Plus, take the *Road Trip U.S.A.* GBA game (pictured) on the go and experience your life in real time!

—Matthew Schwartz

KEANU REEVES' PRO ACTOR



Journey through exciting locations—including your parents' basement and a McDonalds' kitchen—while Keanu Reeves personally instructs you on important acting techniques, like saying "Whoa" or looking confused. Perform meaningless tasks as directed by perfect strangers offering ridiculous amounts of money! Remember, if your game doesn't have Keanu Reeves' personal thumbs up, you've probably been gypped by a company that didn't pay him hundreds of thousands of dollars to endorse it.

—Andrew Rueckert

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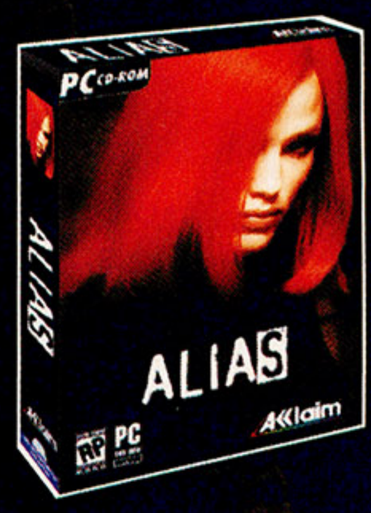

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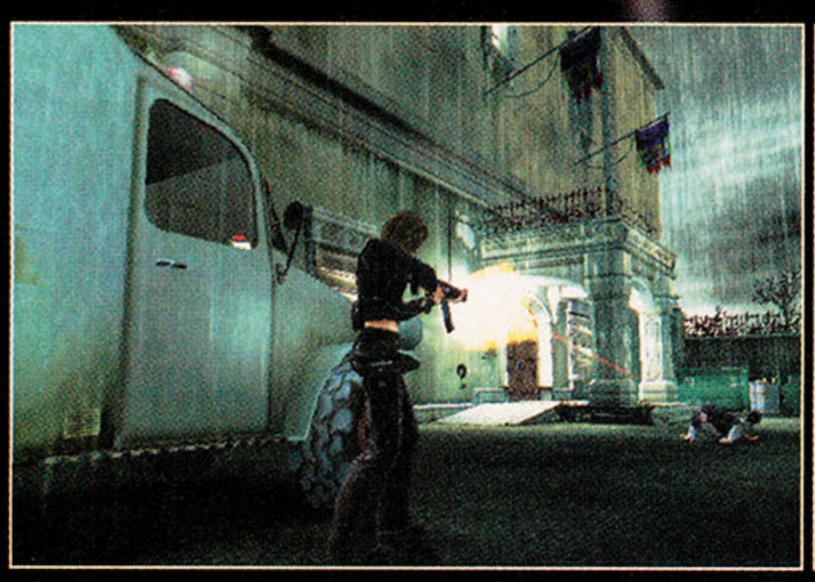

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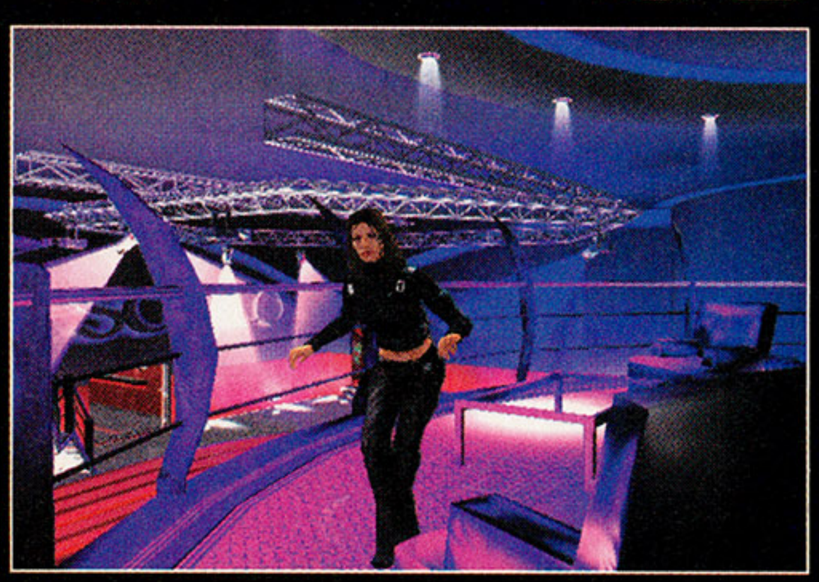

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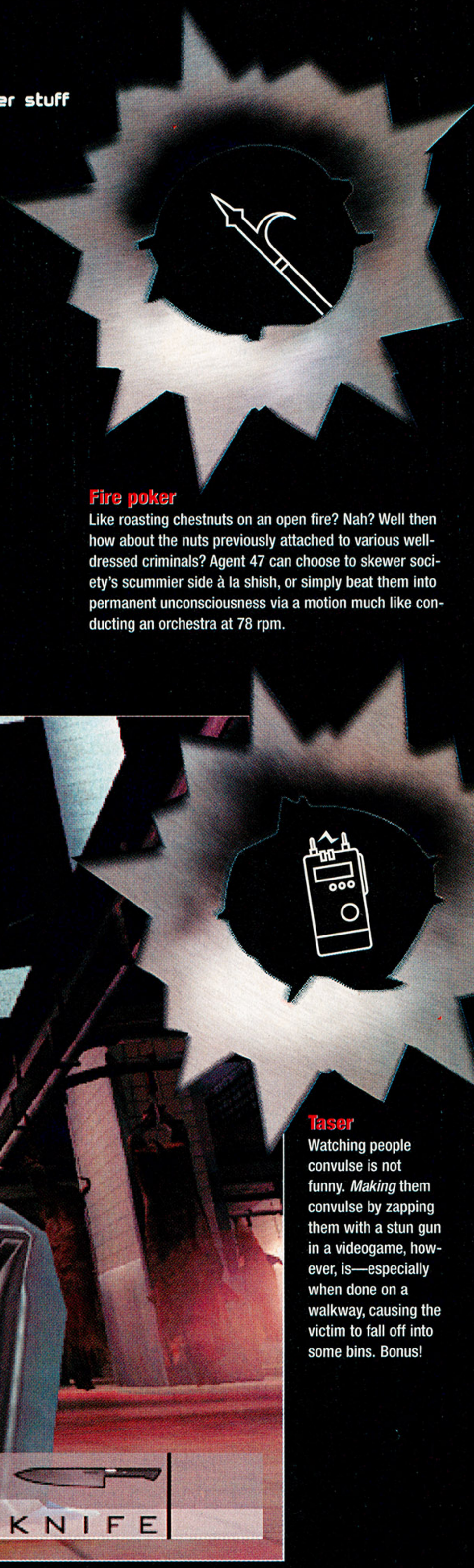
DIRTY WORK

Time for some on-the-job training with the Hitman sequel's silent assassin...

Killing is Agent 47's business, and business is good in *Hitman: Contracts*, the PlayStation 2 and Xbox follow-up—due this spring—to the acclaimed *Hitman 2*. The silent-but-violent assassin starts the game wounded in Paris, trapped in what publisher Eidos describes as "a dangerous situation, even for him."

Gee, we think our hairless hero will be all right—especially now that he's learned some lethal new ways to do his job and tweaked his technique with fave weapons. He'll pull off more stylish choking animations with his deadly fiber wire, depending on how stealthily you approach bad guys. And a new briefcase lets him smuggle his sniper rifle into secure locations. But guns are no fun—not when you can use so many new toys in *Contracts*. We play with six.... ***—Daniel Boutros***

■ **Psycho path: The game's visuals will subtly and eerily reflect our disturbed hero's mood.**



Fire poker
Like roasting chestnuts on an open fire? Nah? Well then how about the nuts previously attached to various well-dressed criminals? Agent 47 can choose to skewer society's scummier side à la shish, or simply beat them into permanent unconsciousness via a motion much like conducting an orchestra at 78 rpm.

Taser
Watching people convulse is not funny. *Making* them convulse by zapping them with a stun gun in a videogame, however, is—especially when done on a walkway, causing the victim to fall off into some bins. Bonus!

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Pool cue

Although he won't go all Jackie Chan with this handy stick, Agent 47 will be able to choke victims by maneuvering the cue into their throat regions. Or he can just bludgeon enemies bloody. Your choice.

Meat hook

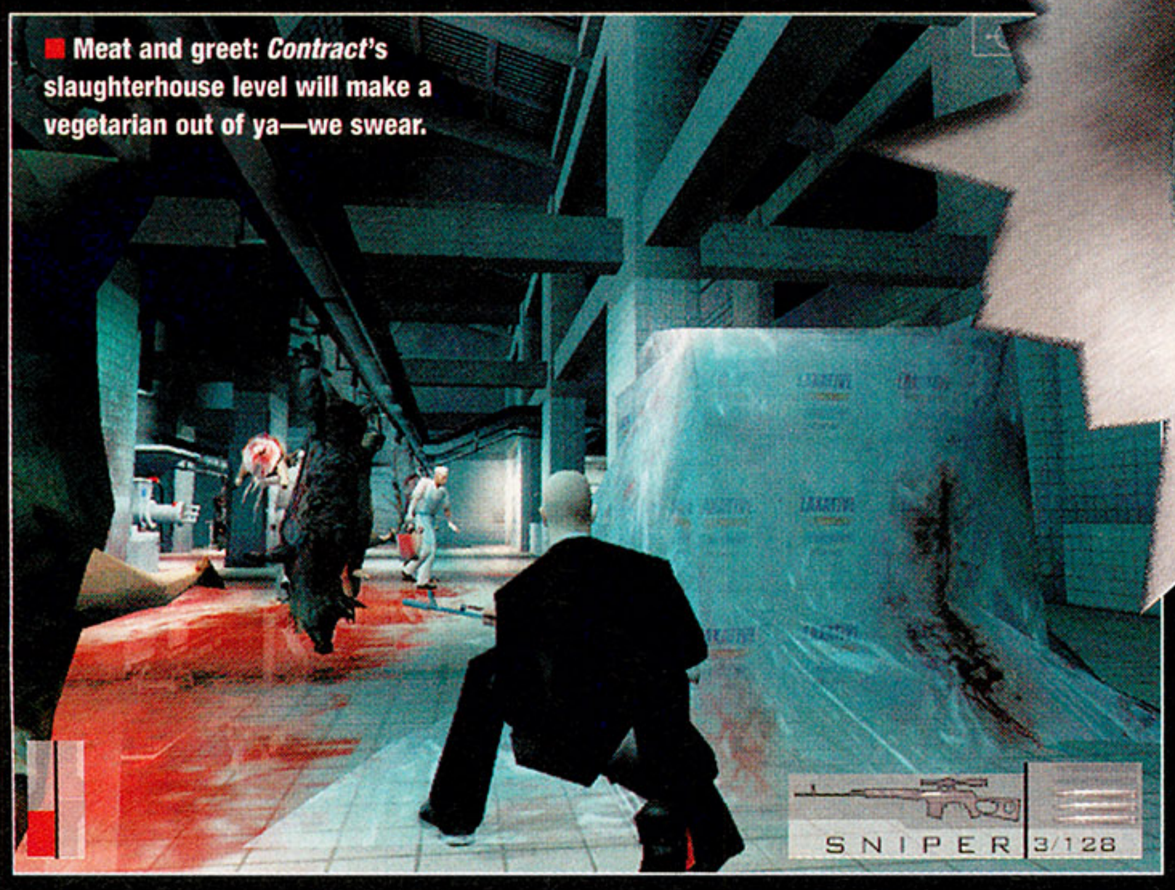
A horror-flick favorite, this gruesome weapon is used in close-quarters combat, or to grant dead bodies the ultimate posthumous wedgie and drag them to meat-conveyor-assisted disposal. The silent assassin will find the hook in the animal-rights-friendly Slaughterhouse Nightclub level, wherein we're betting he won't join a villain named the Meat King for pleasant tea-and-biscuits chatter.

Shovel

It's the simple things in life that are the most treasured, and spanking people rigid with a shovel ranks up there with a nice walk on the beach and a sunny day—at least for a sicko pro like Agent 47. Experience awe as the perfect weight distribution of this solid instrument results in a solid "ping" upon collisions. Nay a bludgeon—'tis art!

Pillow

Seen *Gosford Park*? No? Neither have we. Apparently this period piece features a scene in which a napping chap gets killed by way of pillow-suffocation. *Hitman* developer IO Interactive cites the film as inspiration for similar smothering sequences in *Contracts*. Who says Merchant Ivory is for wussies?



■ **Meat and greet: *Contract*'s slaughterhouse level will make a vegetarian out of ya—we swear.**

Icons by L-dopa

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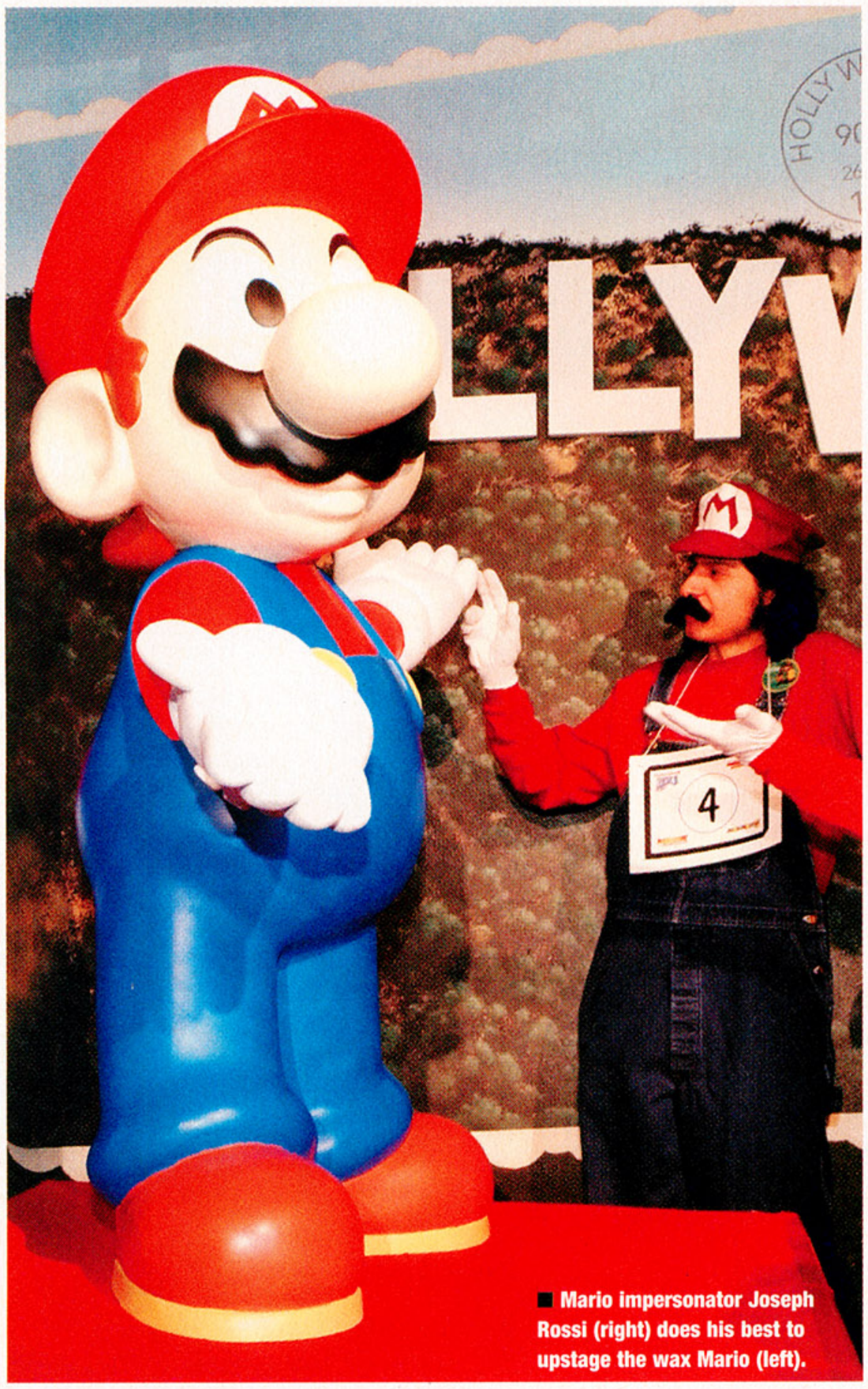
WAX APPEAL

Tourists at Hollywood museum heard saying, "It's-a him, Mario!"

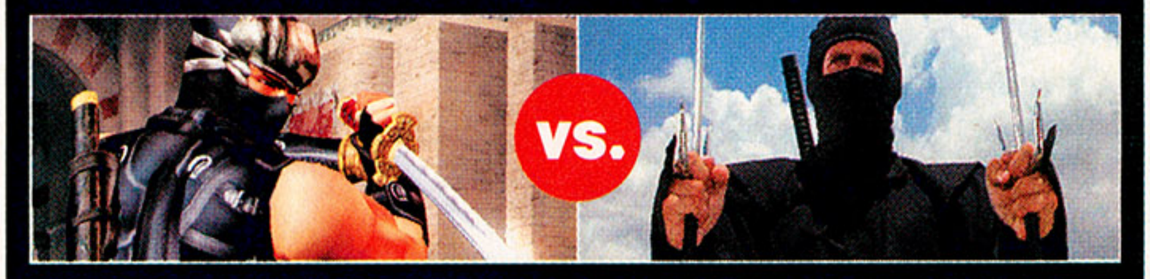


■ Mario impersonator Joseph Rossi (right) does his best to upstage the wax Mario (left).

The Hollywood Wax Museum has a new face to greet patrons entering its halls: Mario. After nearly unveiling a botched version that had to be destroyed, the museum debuted the mascot, replacing *The Matrix*'s Neo and Trinity at the coveted front-door spot. Mario will stay there for a few months, then become a permanent fixture. Find visitor info at www.hollywoodwax.com.

GRUDGE MATCH

Mind-blowing Ninja Showdown!



NINJA GAIDEN **AMERICAN NINJA**

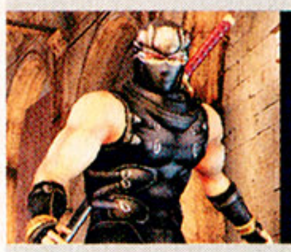
By the end of the '80s, the two most prolific occupations were pantsuit retailer and professional ninja (in that order). These two ninja-rific franchises are proof of it. Can the resurrected *Ninja Gaiden* topple the five-time *American Ninja* of the silver screen? Can we work the word "ninja" into every sentence? Ninja yes.

NINJA STARS

Ryu Hayabusa, former 8-bit hero and *DOA* cast member, gets retooled once again
Advantage: Ninja Gaiden

Fifth—yes, *fifth*—movie features Pat "Arnold from *Happy Days*" Morita imparting ninja wisdom not covered in the first four films

NINJA WEAR



Batman meets Jacques Cousteau
Advantage: Ninja Tie!

Pantsuits! (Didn't we tell you?)
Advantage: Ninja Tie!

NINJA COHORTS

Works alone
Advantage: Ninja Gaiden

Curtis Jackson, tough-guy sidekick played by Steve James—star of *American Ninja 2* and *3*

NINJA ACTION BROUGHT TO YOU BY

Tecmo, purveyors of *DOA Volleyball*
Advantage: Ninja Gaiden

Sam Firstenberg, director of *Breakin' II: Electric Boogaloo*

NINJA WEAPONS

Nunchucks, katana, bow and arrow

Muscle T, killer stance
Advantage: American Ninja

NINJA MASTER: NINJA GAIDEN'S RYU HAYABUSA
Ouch—white man in a ninja suit takes a shuriken to the groin and falls before the mighty Hayabusa! There can be only one...ninja.

BURNING QUESTION: THE LORD OF THE RINGS: THE RETURN OF THE KING

If you're like us, you finished EA's *Lord of the Rings: Return of the King* (or read Tolkien's novel) and noticed the movie's missing the Mouth of Sauron, a monstrous black knight who parlays with Aragorn and Gandalf outside the Black Gate of Mordor just before the final battle. He's a boss in the game, which is supposed to be strictly based on the film, so why didn't we see him in theaters? "I can't really comment," says EA Producer Neil Young. "[Film director] Peter Jackson makes the call on what happens in the final edit, and I haven't spoken with him...about that sequence or where it's going to end up." New Line Cinema wouldn't say whether this scene will appear in the extended-edition DVD of the film due at the end of the year. We figure it's a sure thing.

■ Missing teeth: *Return of the King*'s Mouth of Sauron.

>> EA GAMES' NEXT *HARRY POTTER* TITLE, *PRISONER OF AZKABAN*, IS SCHEDULED FOR RELEASE LATER THIS SPRING (BEFORE THE MOVIE DEBUTS JUNE 4) FOR PS2, XB, GC, AND GBA.... >>

Fantastic heists, impossible escapes, and busty brunettes — all in a day's work for anime's favorite thief.

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TREASURE OF THE SORCERER KING

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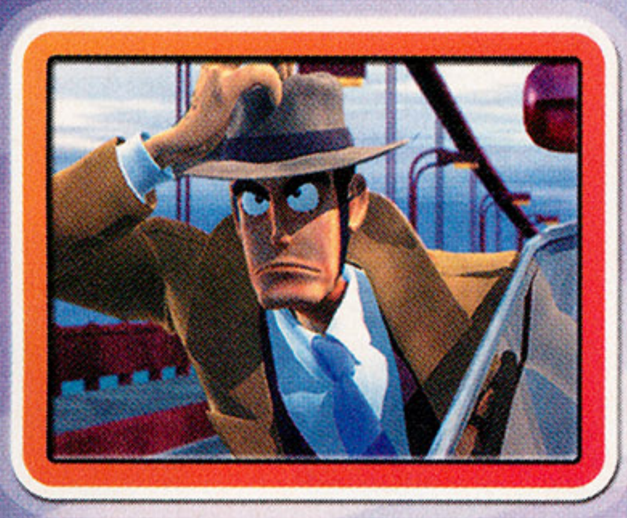
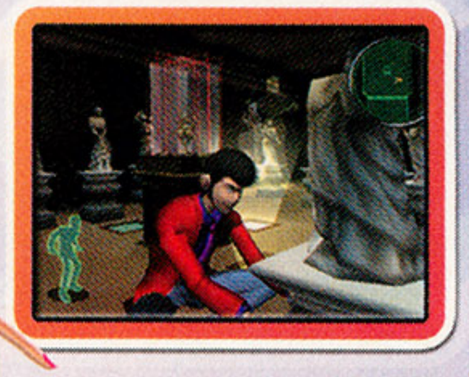


Use disguises and stealth to evade your enemies, especially Interpol Inspector Zenigata.

Play as gun-toting Jigen...

...or the sword wielding samurai, Goemon.



Can you pull off the ultimate heist?

Solve puzzles and gather clues to loot the King's fortune in this cinematic action adventure!

As seen on Cartoon Network's Adult Swim block and available on DVD!

The star of 6 theatrical films, 10 television films and 228 TV episodes, Lupin's outrageous exploits from the hilarious TV series are now available on DVD!

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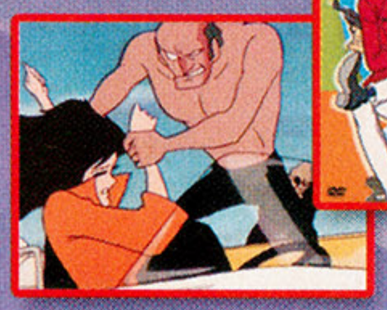
PUSHING TV'S BUTTONS
CARTOON NETWORK



geneon Pioneer

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www.lupinofficial.com

TEEN
T
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
Mild Language
Violence

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LUPIN THE 3rd

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(s03)

PlayStation®2

FIRST LOOK: NEO CONTRA

Contra is going 3D again? Whoa...

Unless you remember the Iran-Contra scandal of the mid '80s, you were probably too young to really connect with Konami's old-school, phallic-alien-blasting *Contra* series until 2002's *Shattered Soldier* for PS2. But hey, that game was a great place to start—*Soldier* proved that Konami could still deliver a killer, side-scrolling *Contra* game in this age of 3D wonderment and that *Contra* games can still be hellishly (read: wonderfully) difficult. *Soldier*'s success, however, didn't inspire its developers to craft another side-scrolling shoot-a-thon—its PS2 follow-up, this fall's *Neo Contra*, bravely takes the franchise's gameplay into three dimensions...again.

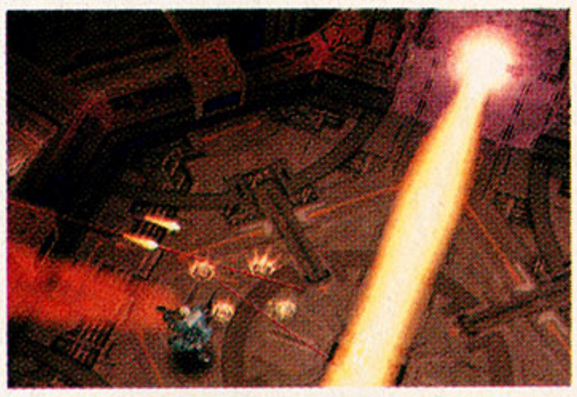
That's right, *Contra*'s been down the 3D road before, and it wasn't pretty. *Contra: Legacy of War* and *C: The Contra Adventure* experimented with free-roaming action on PS1, but the resulting gameplay lacked the fun and intensity of past *Contra*s. In this case, though, the developers of *Neo Contra* are happy to learn from someone else's mistakes. "Those games...failed to provide players with simple, accessible gameplay," says Producer Nobuya Nakazato. "Plus, it was difficult to judge enemy attack ranges, and the player simply didn't have the proper means of attack and defense." So, basically, the developers want *Neo Contra* to be nothing like those games.

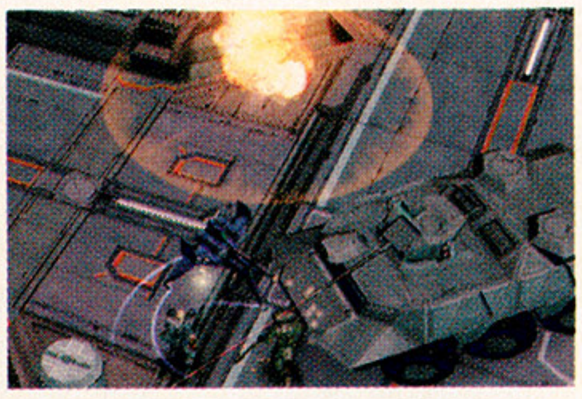
Although *Neo Contra* shifts the normal viewing perspective, the vintage games' beloved gameplay remains intact. "Fans should not worry that the feel of *Contra* will be gone," assures Nakazato. "It's a natural progression for the franchise that will deliver a great 3D *Contra* with 2D gameplay." So, although you'll have to cover a lot more ground while you do it, you'll still be switching between various huge guns, blasting copious icky aliens, and facing off against mammoth boss monstrosities. As expected, *Neo Contra* will be best enjoyed with two players: Player one controls grizzled series vet Bill Rizer, while player two controls the bizarrely out-of-place-yet-still-cool samurai, Genbei Jaguer Yagyu. "Jaguer is a very unique and interesting guy," explains Nakazato. "He's definitely something that you have not seen before in a *Contra* game."

Despite making surprising changes to the series' formula, the developers know better than to mess with the established legacy of difficulty. "As a series, *Contra* has always been tougher than other games, but we feel that is part of its appeal," muses Director Takayuki Ando. "As we intensify the action to keep players riveted throughout the stages, the game itself becomes more difficult to clear." Don't worry, though. Wimps can always tackle the easy mode...just don't expect to ever see the game's real ending.

—Shane Bettenhausen

■ Player one? Say hello to our last line of defense against alien scum: Bill Rizer.





■ Player two? Meet Jaguer.

■ Switching to the lightning cannon can be a prudent move.

uncanny resemblance

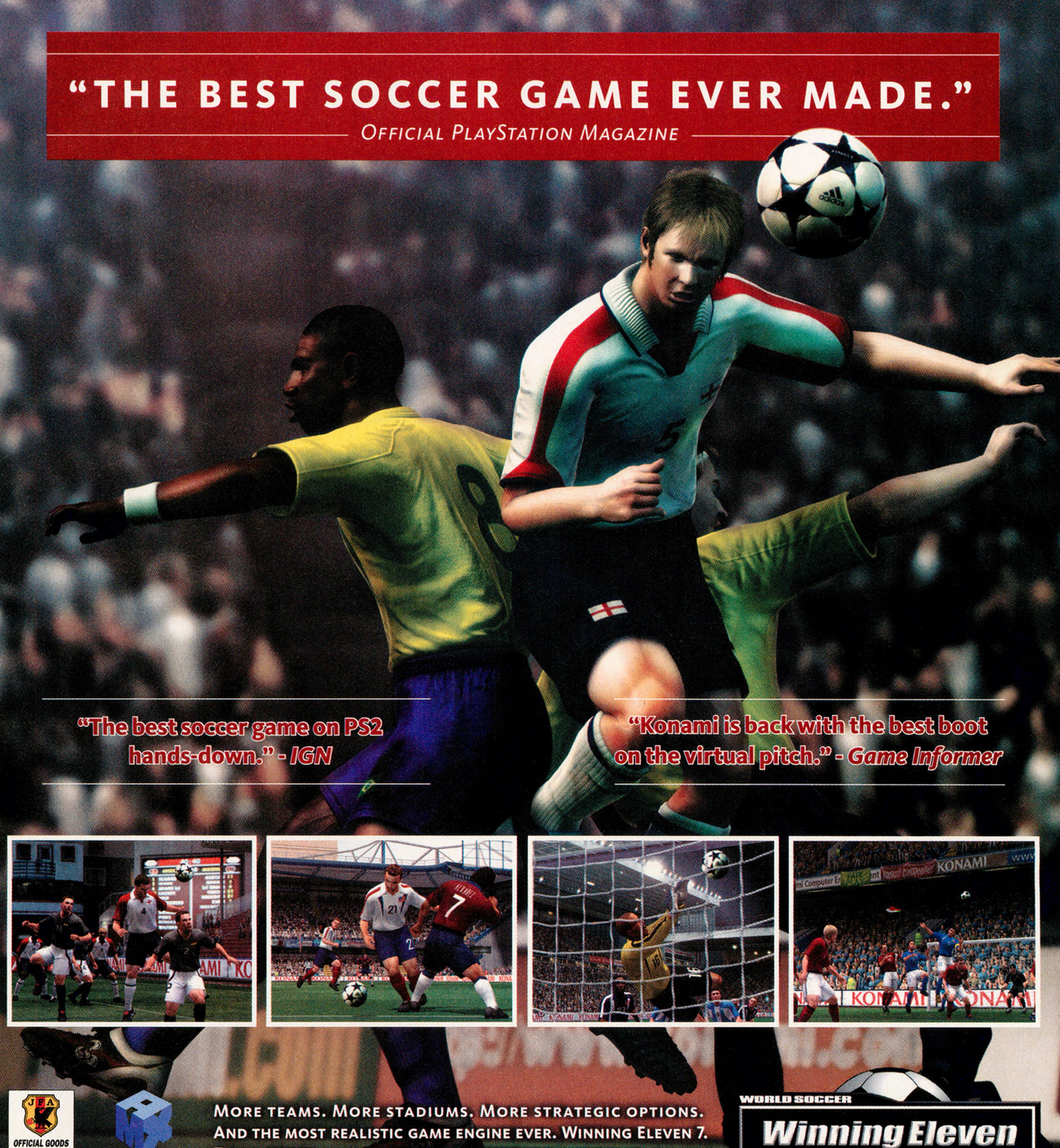
■ Right: A boss. Below: Tetsuo!!

Maybe it's just a bizarre coincidence, but this creepy baby-headed boss looks remarkably similar to Tetsuo's final, freaked-out metamorphosis in the landmark anime film *Akira*. Except in *Neo Contra*, the blobby infant isn't actually your best friend undergone tragic psychic mutation...well, probably not.

>> ROCKSTAR WILL PUBLISH THE OLD WEST–THEMED ACTION GAME *RED DEAD REVOLVER* FOR PS2 AND XBOX THIS SPRING. FORMER PUBLISHER CAPCOM DROPPED IT LATE LAST YEAR.... >>

"THE BEST SOCCER GAME EVER MADE."

Official PlayStation Magazine



"The best soccer game on PS2 hands-down." - *IGN*

"Konami is back with the best boot on the virtual pitch." - *Game Informer*

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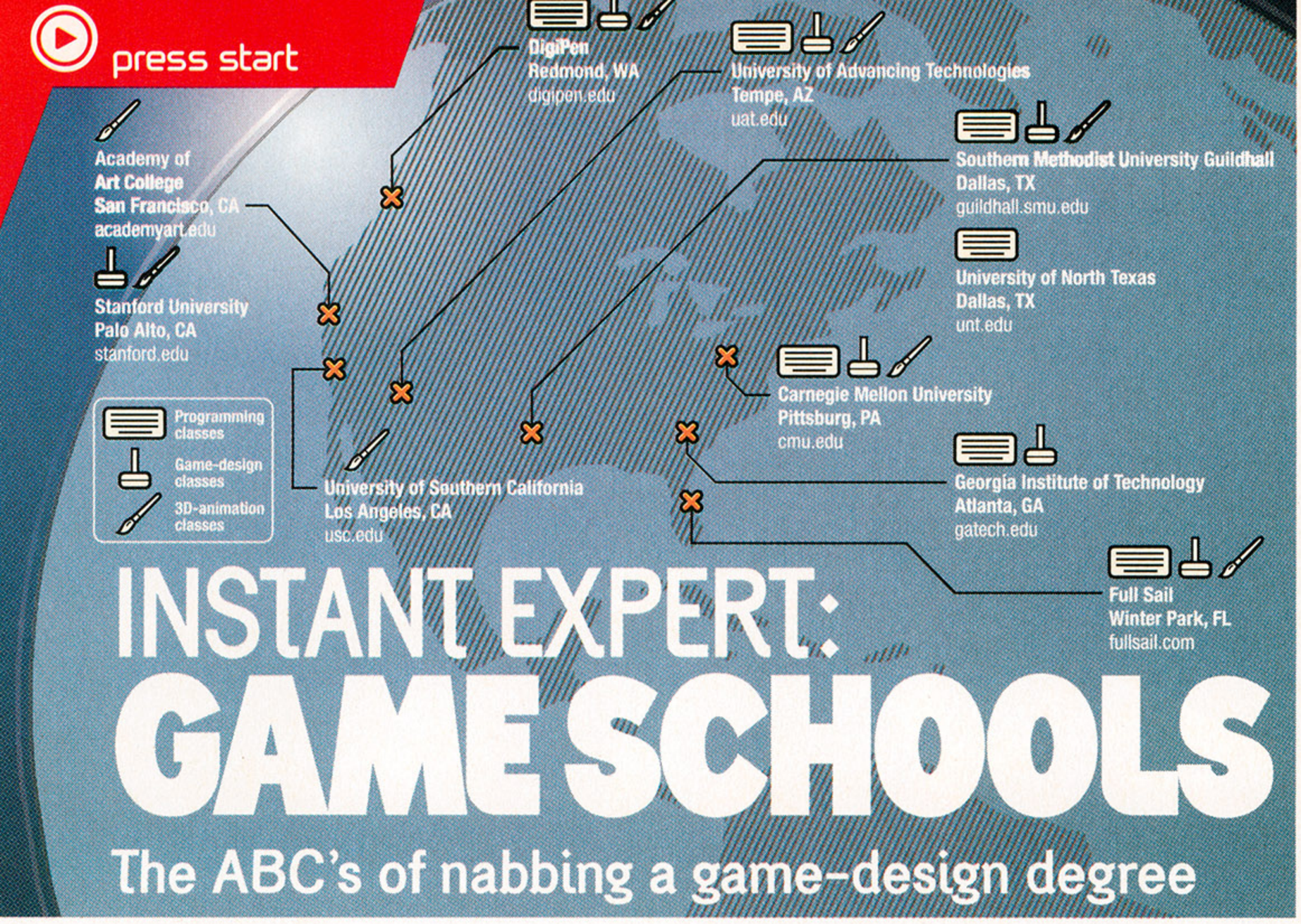


INSTANT EXPERT: GAME SCHOOLS

The ABC's of nabbing a game-design degree

Now that videogames are a multibillion-buck industry, higher education is taking notice. Universities around the country are offering a variety of courses—and even full-fledged degrees—in the art and science of game design. But it's not all fun and fragging: Game programming is more about calculus than *Castlevania*. Here's how to get schooled....

Where to go

There are two camps of game schools: ones that offer full-blown degrees and ones that offer nondegree courses in game programming and art. Nintendo-sponsored DigiPen in Redmond, WA; Full Sail in Winter Park, FL; and the Guildhall at Southern Methodist University in Dallas each offer a variety of programs—running from 18 months to four years—which grant you some kind of diploma in game making. Stanford University in Palo Alto, CA, the Academy of Art College in San Francisco, and the Art Institutes campuses located across the country (find locations at www.aii.edu) all offer some classes—from 3D animation to programming—in the field. Students can even pursue graduate degrees in game studies at Georgia Institute of Technology in Atlanta and Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, PA.

What you'll study

Most videogame courses focus on computer programming—and hardcore coding at that. Students enrolled in DigiPen, for example, have to master Introduction to Differential Equations and Discreet and Computational Geometry before they tackle making the next *Mario Party*. But more and more schools are offering a diverse menu for wannabe game makers. As part of Carnegie Mellon's master's program in entertainment technology, for example, students take courses in everything from screenwriting to improvisational acting.

What it costs

Learning the ropes of game design ain't cheap. At DigiPen, classes are $345 per credit—that's $53,130 for a four-year degree or $27,600 for a two-year program. Tuition at Southern Methodist University's Guildhall will set you back $37,000 for three years. But hey, that includes a fully loaded laptop tailor-made for game making upon your arrival. The good news: Financial aid, based on your academic performance and need, is available at most schools. So spend more time hitting the books instead of sitting on the couch. A high score in *Karaoke Revolution* won't get you a free ride. —*David Kushner*

Photograph by Karen Moskowitz

Students at DigiPen are expected to work 12 hours a day, six days a week.

BY THE NUMBERS

Clash of the titans

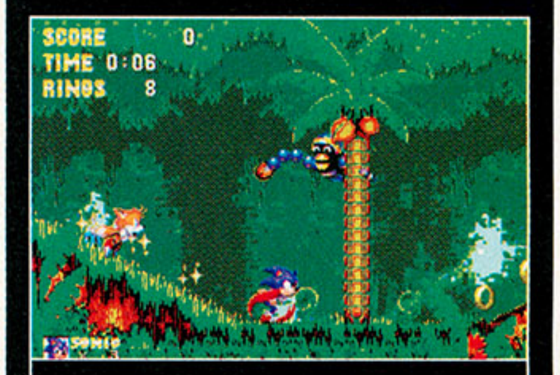
1970	Arnold Schwarzenegger makes his debut in *Hercules in New York*
1981	Mario makes his first appearance in *Donkey Kong* (arcade)
46	Number of movies in which Arnold Schwarzenegger has starred
67	Number of games in which Mario has starred
0	Number of times Mario has been elected to political office

OLD SCHOOL

10 years ago in EGM

On the cover: Star Trek

Forget which *Trek* you think is best—the crew of *The Next Generation* is the only one that has scored an *EGM* cover. Inside this issue, we previewed new *Trek* games for SNES, Genesis, and 3DO.



Game of the Month: Sonic 3 — Sonic the Hedgehog's third and arguably best adventure on Sega's Genesis took top honors from our Review Crew 10 years ago this month, scoring two 10s and two nines (out of 10).

Saturn in sight — Sega debuted its 32-bit Saturn game console at 1994's Winter Consumer Electronics Show, more than a year before the machine's surprise early release in America. Shown with the system's debut was early video of its first games: *Virtua Fighter*, *Daytona USA*, *Clockwork Knight*, and *Panzer Dragoon*.

Early days of online

Even in 1994, a few companies tried to get online console gaming off the ground. Though none were successful, AT&T's Edge 16 Sega Genesis modem was the most promising, with ahead-of-its-time features such as simultaneous data and voice communication for talking to your opponent (much like you can with the Xbox/PS2 headsets today).

>> IN CASE IT WAS KEEPING YOU AWAKE AT NIGHT, MICROSOFT'S XBOX ACTION-RPG *SUDEKI* (WHICH WAS SUPPOSED TO BE OUT BY NOW) HAS BEEN DELAYED UNTIL MAY 2004.... >>

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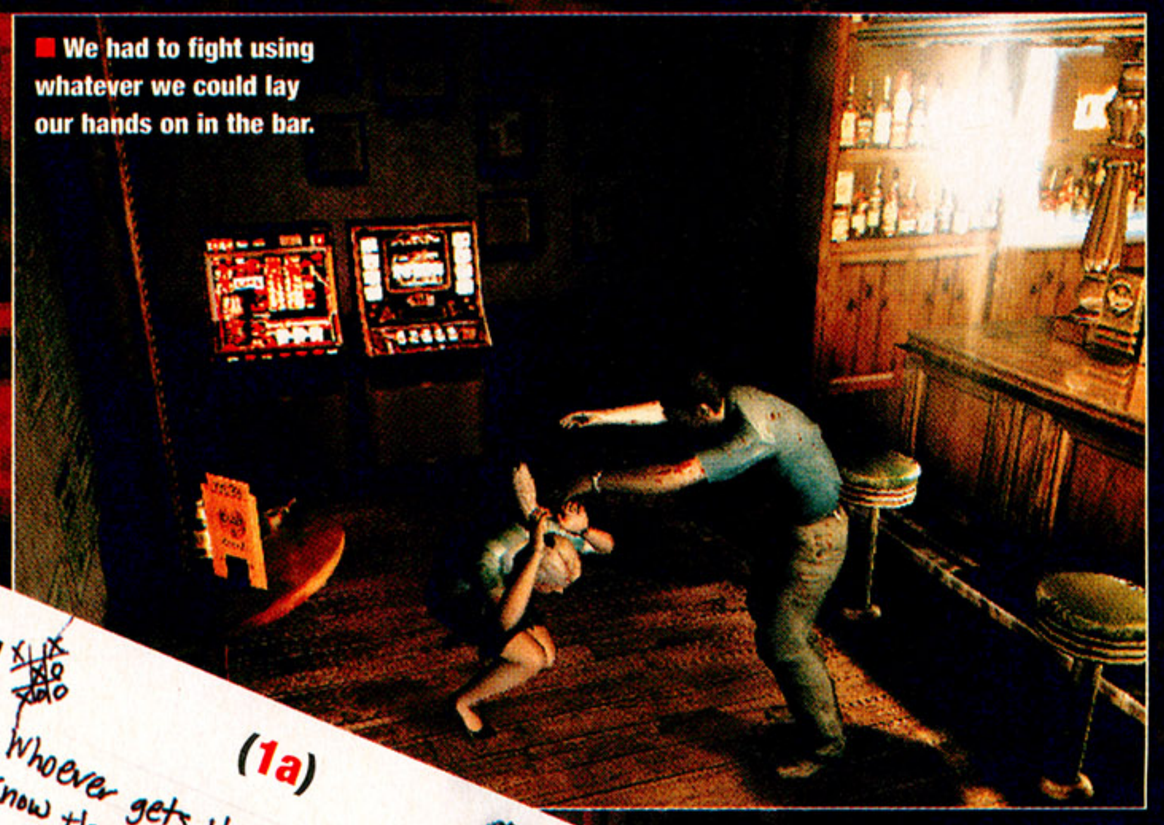
Game Experience May Change During Online Play

Online play requires Internet connection and Network Adaptor for PlayStation 2 (sold separately). Players are responsible for all applicable Internet and subscription fees. Children under the age of 13 are not permitted to use PlayOnline services, including games. Acceptance of certain agreements is required. A valid credit card required to set up account. Free subscription for 30 days. Some restrictions may apply. ©2001-2004 SQUARE ENIX CO., LTD. All Rights Reserved. Title Design by Yoshitaka Amano. FINAL FANTASY is a registered trademark of Square Enix Co., Ltd. SQUARE ENIX, the Square Enix logo, PLAYONLINE, the PlayOnline logo are trademarks of Square Enix Co., Ltd. "PlayStation" and the "PS" Family logo are registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. "Live In Your World. Play In Ours." is a trademark of Sony Computer Entertainment America Inc. The Online icon is a trademark of Sony Computer Entertainment America Inc. HDD logo is a trademark of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc.

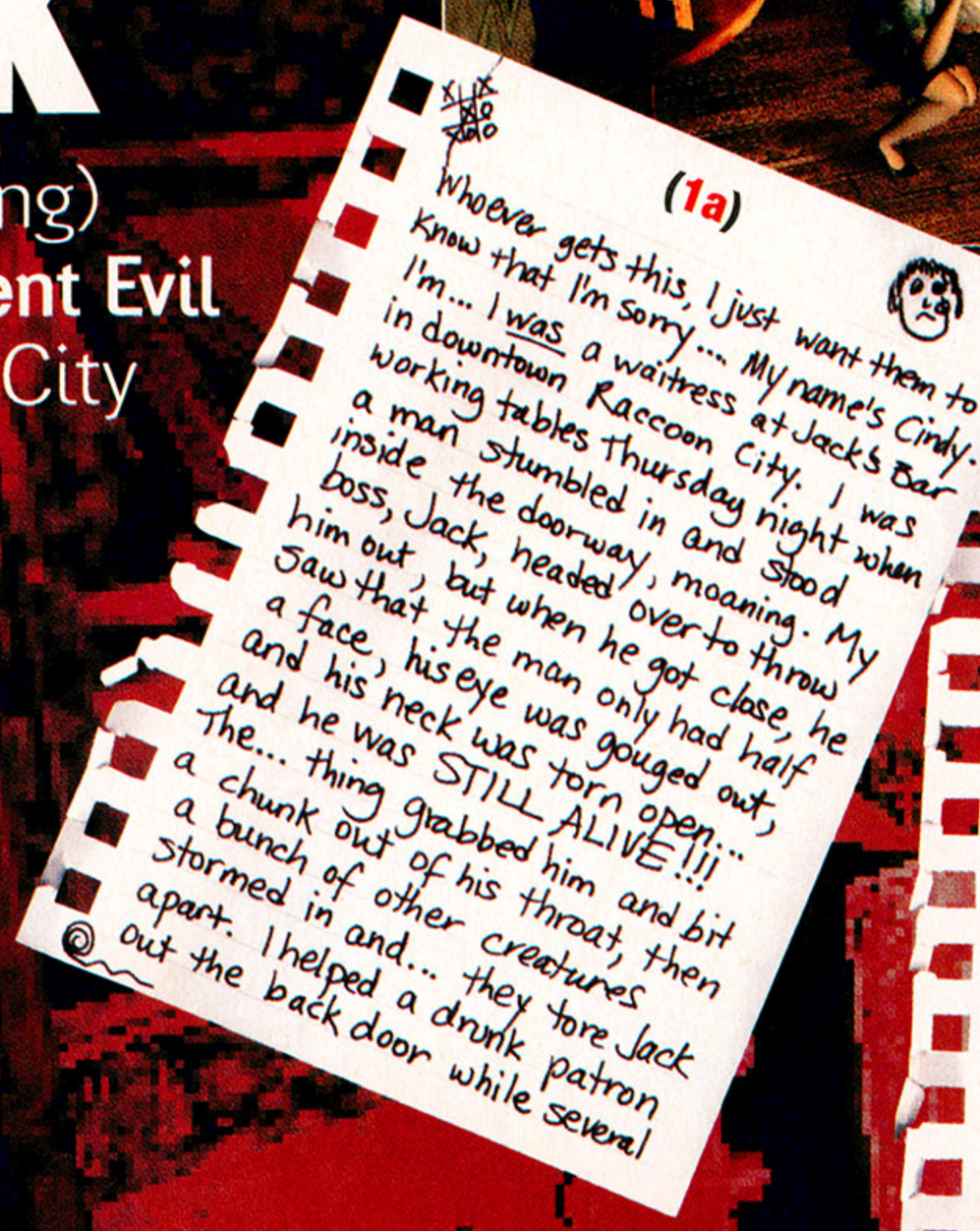
WHEN ZOMBIES ATTACK

Notes from (still-living) inhabitants of **Resident Evil Outbreak**'s Raccoon City

"When I made this game," says *Resident Evil Outbreak* Director Eiichiro Sasaki, "I didn't make it by *Resident Evil* rules. I just wanted to make it fun." And it shows. Picture a *Resident Evil* game without inventory boxes, with alternate analog controls similar to those in *Devil May Cry*, and with an almost reasonable amount of health and ammo. Now, imagine that you can play it online (over a broadband connection) with the help of up to three friends, or offline with the computer controlling the other characters, and you've got Capcom's *Resident Evil Outbreak*, due in March for PS2. In it, you play one of eight different characters, each with his or her own unique skills. In our research on the game, we came across several hand-written notes from one of these Raccoon City residents. Read on to see why this sleepy, creepy burg is a great place to visit, but you wouldn't want to die there.... ***—Joe Fielder***

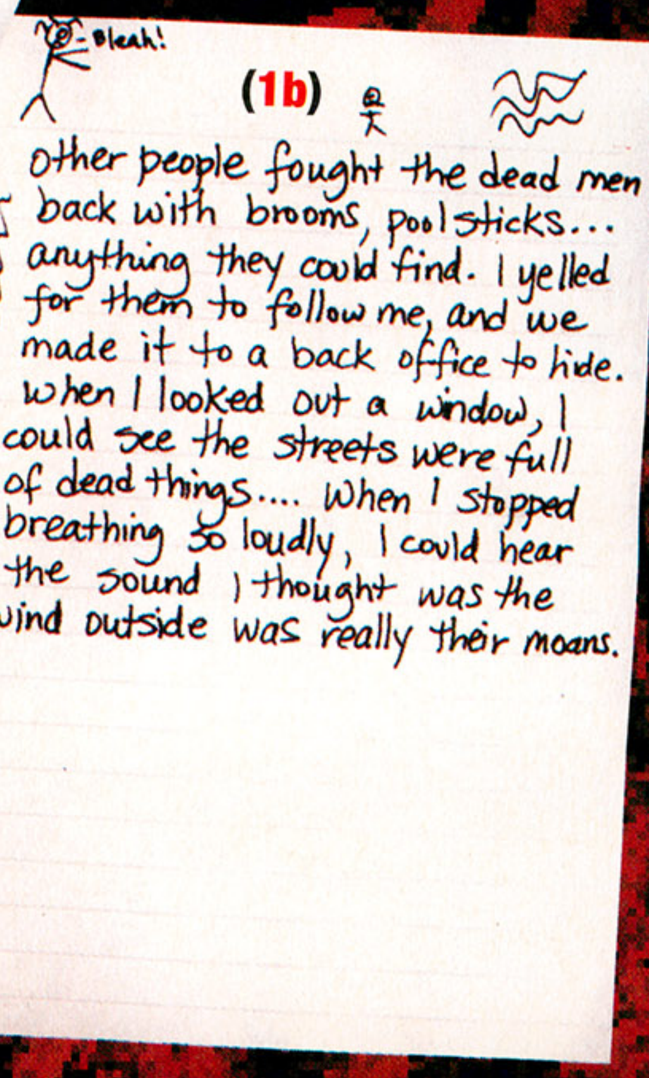


■ We had to fight using whatever we could lay our hands on in the bar.



(1a)

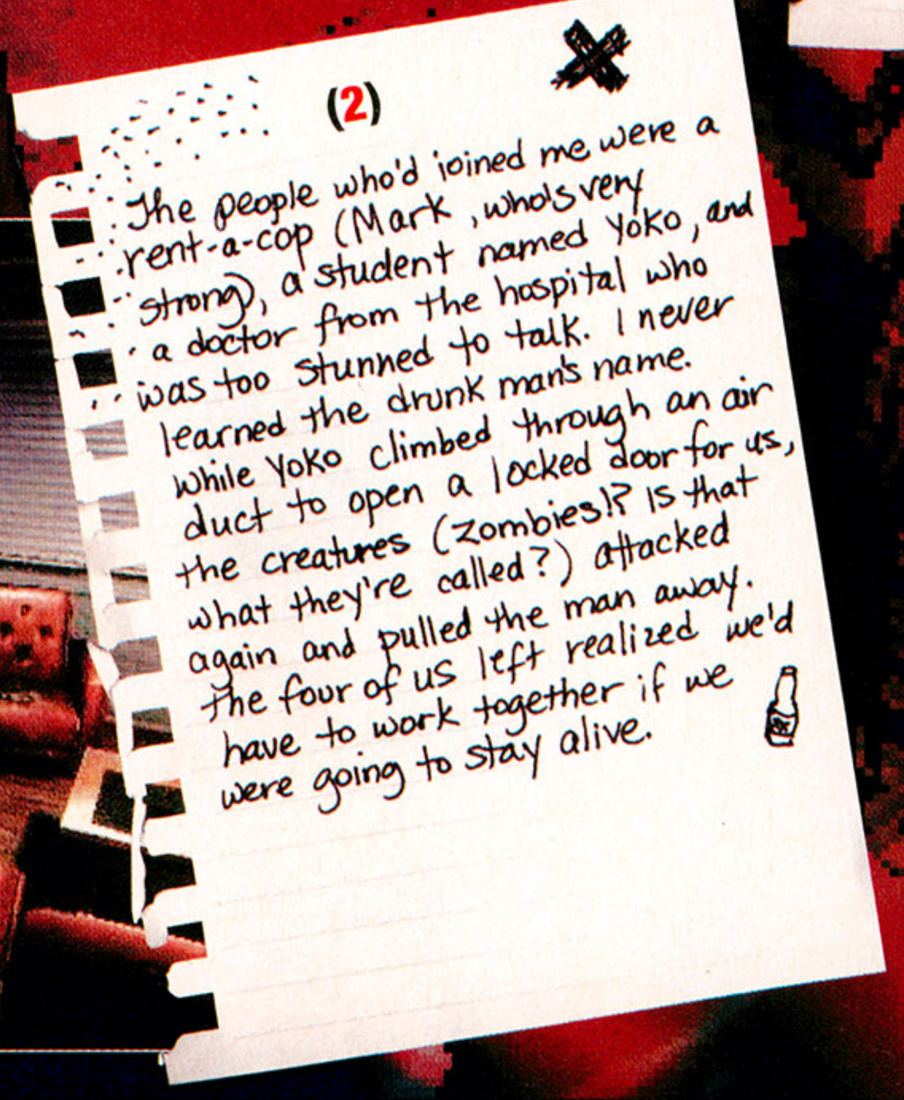
Whoever gets this, I just want them to know that I'm sorry... My name's Cindy. I'm... I was a waitress at Jack's Bar in downtown Raccoon City. I was working tables Thursday night when a man stumbled in and stood inside the doorway, moaning. My boss, Jack, headed over to throw him out, but when he got close, he saw that the man only had half a face, his eye was gouged out, and his neck was torn open... The... thing grabbed him and bit a chunk out of his throat, then a bunch of other creatures stormed in and... they tore Jack apart. I helped a drunk patron out the back door while several



(1b)

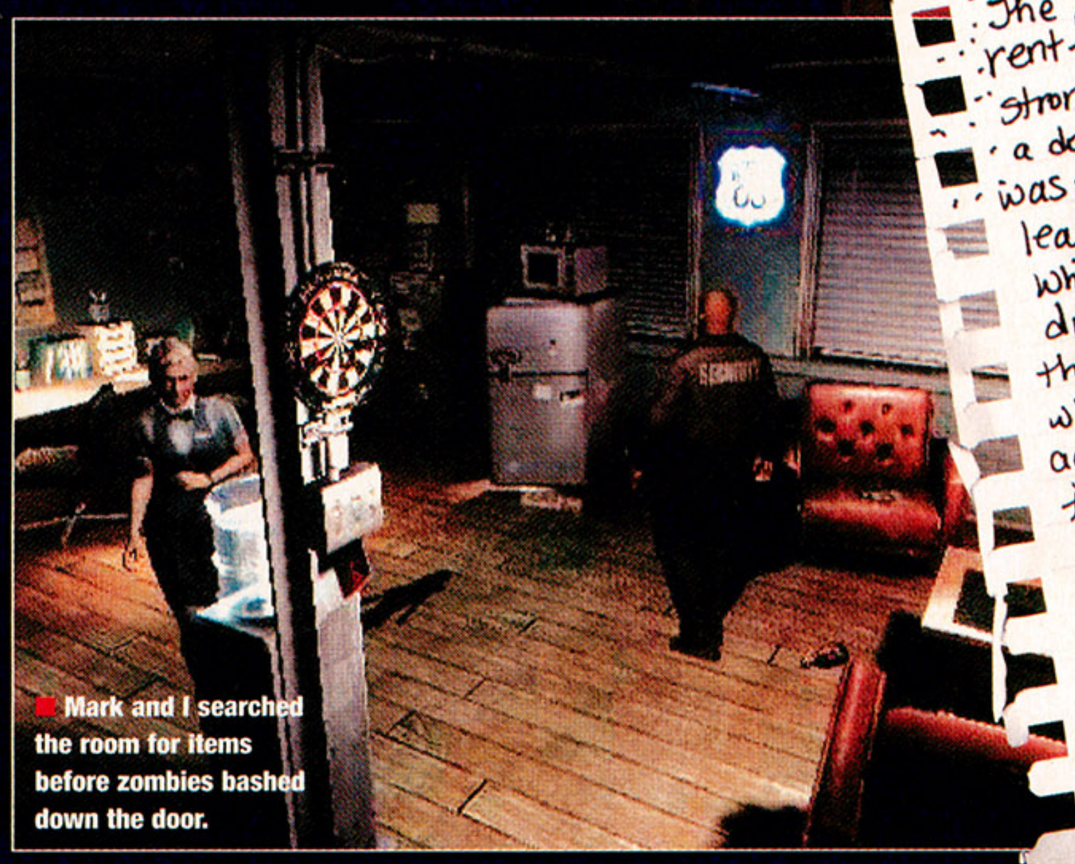
Bleah!

other people fought the dead men back with brooms, pool sticks... anything they could find. I yelled for them to follow me, and we made it to a back office to hide. When I looked out a window, I could see the streets were full of dead things.... When I stopped breathing so loudly, I could hear the sound I thought was the wind outside was really their moans.



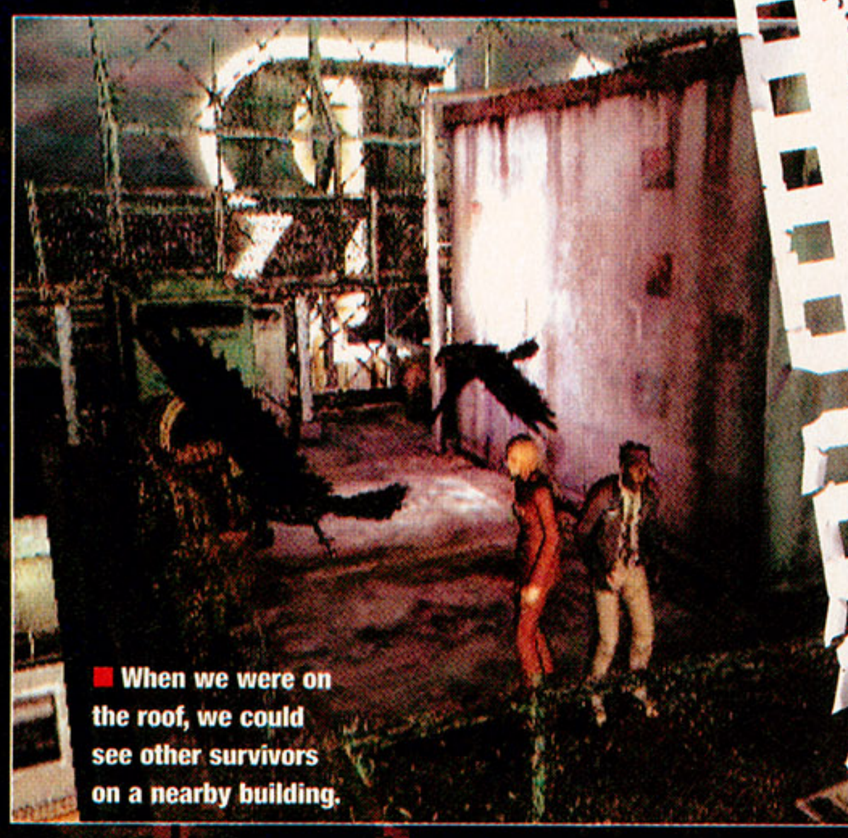
(2)

The people who'd joined me were a rent-a-cop (Mark, who's very strong), a student named Yoko, and a doctor from the hospital who was too stunned to talk. I never learned the drunk man's name. While Yoko climbed through an air duct to open a locked door for us, the creatures (zombies!? Is that what they're called?) attacked again and pulled the man away. The four of us left realized we'd have to work together if we were going to stay alive.



■ Mark and I searched the room for items before zombies bashed down the door.

>> ROCKSTAR RECENTLY COMMENTED THAT THE LONG-DELAYED, UNDERPUBLICIZED VERSION OF *GRAND THEFT AUTO* FOR GBA IS STILL IN THE WORKS. IT'S UNCLEAR WHETHER THE



■ When we were on the roof, we could see other survivors on a nearby building.

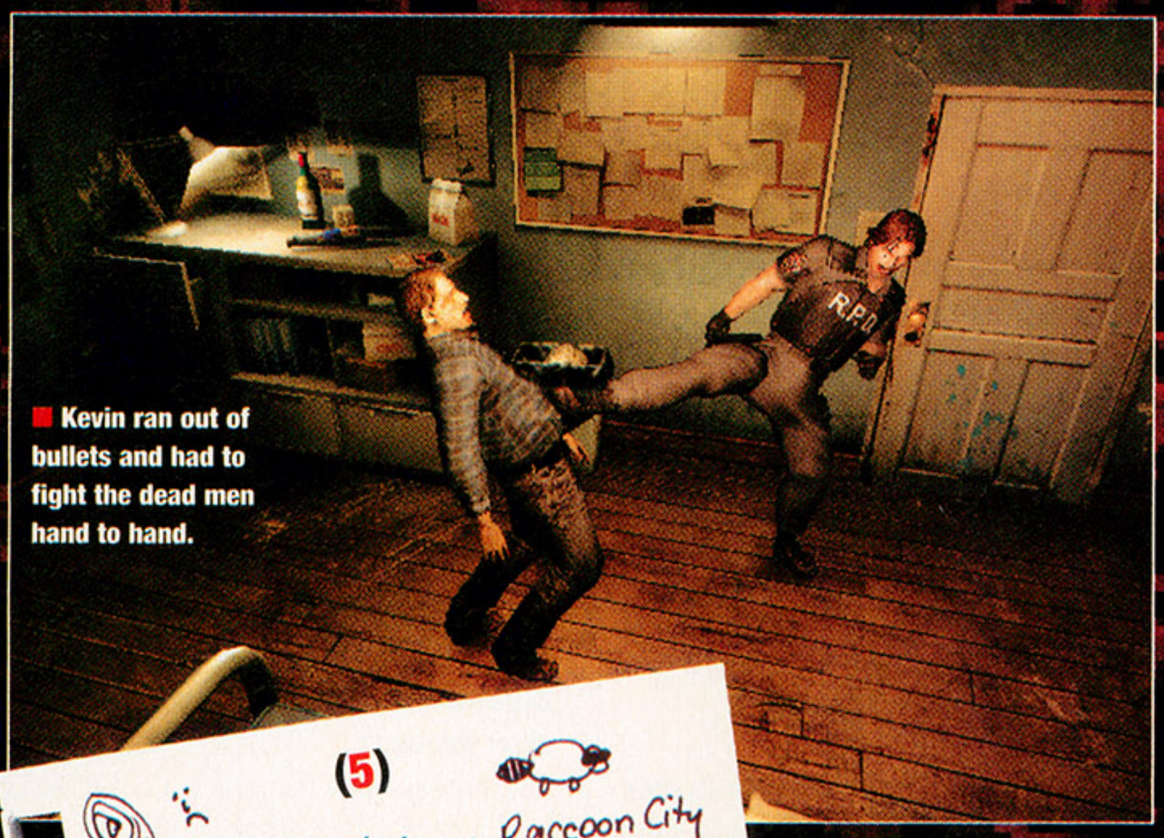
(3)

we loaded up on items from a storeroom we wandered into — health sprays, bullets (I wish one of us had a gun), healing herbs, and a lighter. Yoko has a backpack, so we gave her more to carry. The doctor, David, came to his senses finally and said we should head to the hospital. To get there, we had to jump across a roof, and Yoko almost didn't make it. She was hanging from the ledge while George fought off these evil birds that tried to make Yoko fall, but I pulled her up

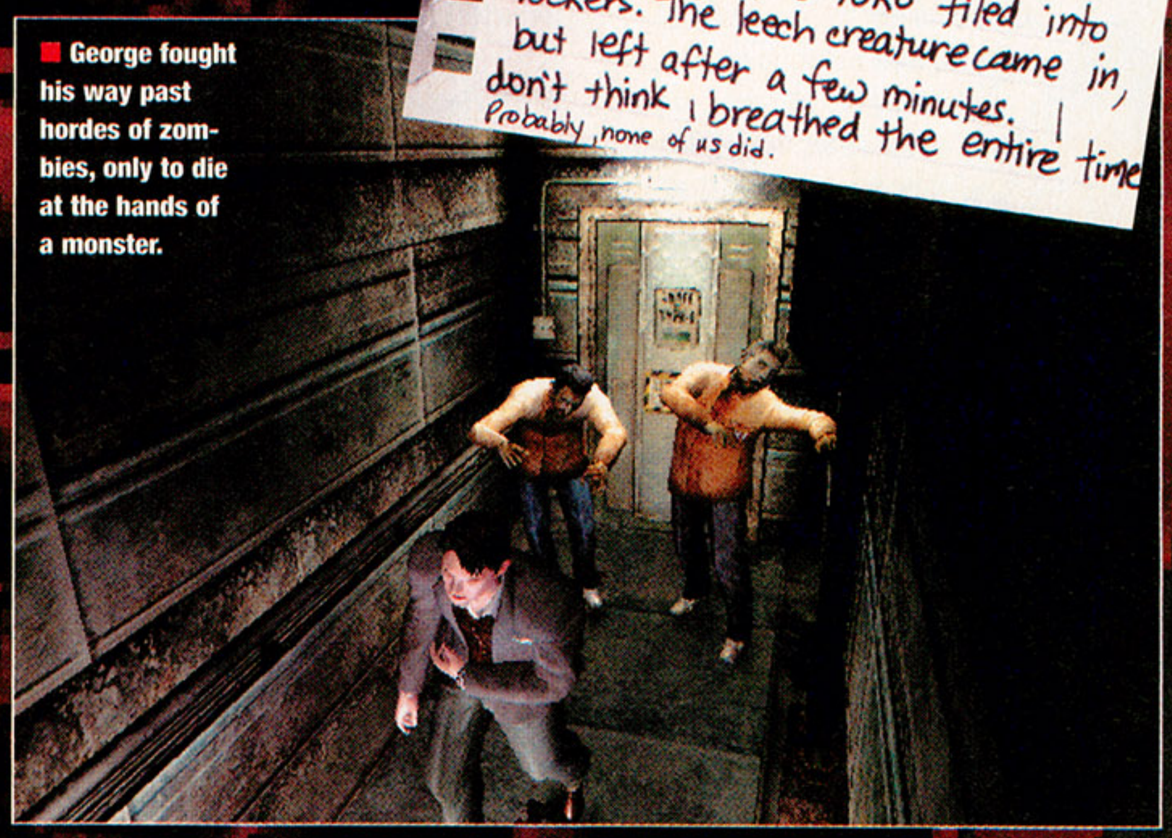
I hate it!!

(4)

Inside the hospital, David made medicine for us in a lab and George found a handgun. Right then, a vent in the ceiling burst open and a man fell to the floor right on top of David. The man was covered with thousands of squirming leeches (yuck!) and once it had a hold of David, there was no prying him free. George unloaded a full clip at the thing, but it was no use. It ate David alive. we ran as fast as we could through a zombie-filled hallway and hid again. I crawled under a bed while George and Yoko filed into lockers. The leech creature came in, but left after a few minutes. I don't think I breathed the entire time Probably, none of us did.



■ Kevin ran out of bullets and had to fight the dead men hand to hand.



■ George fought his way past hordes of zombies, only to die at the hands of a monster.

(5)

We ran into Kevin, a Raccoon City cop. I swear, he looks Just like Tom Cruise.... Every time he talks, he sounds breathless and annoyed, but he has a gun, so I don't care. Yoko suggested we head to a nearby laboratory that's run by a company called Umbrella. She interns there and says she knows all the security-door codes and has a map. On the way there, Kevin got bit by one of the zombies, so I carried him into an office and cleaned his wound with some health spray. Later on, when a creature grabbed me, I called to him for help, but Kevin kept right on going. I'll never help him again.... Kevin = jerk!@!*

■ A lead pipe works fine against one zombie, but two....

(6)

Some zombies overran Kevin, and I let them take him. That came back to bite me, literally, later when he burst through a door — dead-alive. Kevin sunk his teeth into me before I managed to shake him off. Right now, George, Yoko, and I are camped out in a lab in the Umbrella facility. Zombies are just about to beat down the door, and I... I itch all over. But especially where I got bit. It's strange. when I look over at Yoko, I swear she's starting to look like one big pork-chop sandwich to me.... Oh my god, I'm sooooo hungry.... yum!

GAME WILL UTILIZE THE ISOMETRIC TOP-DOWN PERSPECTIVE SEEN IN THE EARLY PLAYSTATION 1/DREAMCAST *GTA* GAMES OR IF IT WILL BE IN 3D LIKE *GTA3* AND *GTA: VICE CITY*.... >>

AFTERTHOUGHTS: SONIC HEROES

A candid chat with Sonic Team's lord of the rings

In 2003, Sega's hyperactive mascot was nearly as overexposed as Bennifer: Sonic starred in two new GBA games, milked his back catalog with a GameCube rerelease of *Sonic Adventure*, headlined a hit cartoon on the Fox network, and even hawked McNuggets to tykes via a successful Happy Meal promotion. All that hoopla, however, paled in comparison to this January's triple-console launch of *Sonic Heroes*—an all-new 3D platformer, and his first on both Xbox and PlayStation 2. We spoke with *Heroes* Director Takashi Iizuka (who's headed up nearly every *Sonic* game since *Sonic 3* on Genesis) about the 'hog's latest title.

EGM: *Heroes* offers some really amazing levels, such as the Casino Park and Haunted House areas. Were you consciously trying to be more creative and daring this time around than in the *Sonic Adventure* games?

Takashi Iizuka: The *Adventure* series was much more story driven, so I was limited to the types of level designs that would make sense in the context of the plot. But with *Heroes*, I had much more freedom to explore more action-packed, wild levels like in the old, side-scrolling *Sonic* games. I've secretly wanted to make a 3D pinball-themed *Sonic* stage for years.

EGM: *Sonic Heroes*' grading system seems pretty harsh—what's the secret to getting A's? Is it even worth getting them?

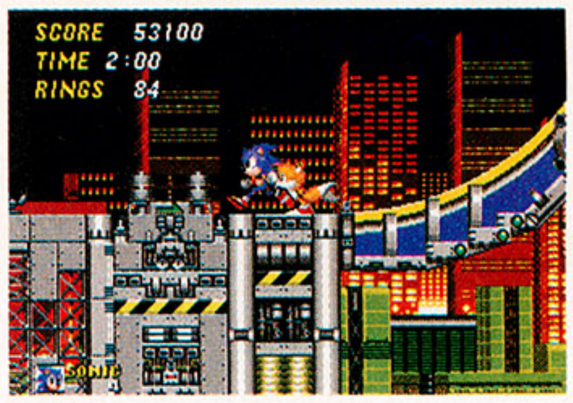
TI: [It's] very, very challenging to get an A grade. Getting A's isn't impossible, but you must practice playing the stages over and over until you can get through them quickly without dying. It's worth it, though: If you get all A's in all the stages with all the teams, you unlock a really cool, surprising mode that will please players looking for even more challenge.

EGM: The GameCube and Xbox versions run smoother than the PS2's. What's up with that?

TI: Of course, as you know, the PlayStation 2 does not have the most favorable amount of memory...so Sonic Team created a basic ideal of how *Heroes* should play and then arranged it so that it would work on GC, XB, and PS2. So, I had to sacrifice a certain amount of technical performance in order to offer the same experience on PS2.

EGM: The boss battles in *Sonic Heroes* are really unique—you're usually fighting a boss while traveling through a stage or arena at the same time. Why the change from the norm?

TI: We decided to experiment with a new concept for the bosses, because in most action games, you're moving quickly through the regular stages, but your momentum completely stops when you reach the boss. It really disrupts the flow of the game. Here, we keep your adrenaline pumping while you fight the boss.



■ **Iizuka names *Sonic 2* (Genesis) as his fave 'hog romp due to its fun, diverse levels.**

EGM: Nintendo's VP of marketing George Harrison once said that "Mario will never start shooting hookers." Would you ever make a game where Sonic caps some hos in order to appeal to older gamers?

TI: [Laughs] I have no plans to do that! And I have a good reason: It's been 12 years since *Sonic* first came out, and people who experienced it back then are now old enough to have their own children. In a way, we've created a chain of *Sonic* fans, and if I changed *Sonic* to appeal to adults, it would cut the chain. —*Shane Bettenhausen*

Will Nights Fly Again?

It's been eight years since *Heroes* director Iizuka created *Nights Into Dreams*, a Sega Saturn title that's legendary among hardcore gamers. Will its purple harlequin star ever return? "I know that there are very strong, loyal *Nights* fans out there," says Iizuka. "I promise that as long as I'm with Sega, I will create *Nights* again…the more I hear from the fans about their love for the game, the more reasons I have to consider it as my next project."

■ **Getting all A's in *Heroes'* stages opens up an even greater challenge.**

>> THIS SUMMER, KONAMI WILL PUBLISH A PS2 AND GBA GAME BASED ON *SHAMAN KING*, AN ANIME TV SERIES ON FOX AND A COMIC THAT APPEARS IN *SHONEN JUMP* MAGAZINE.... >>

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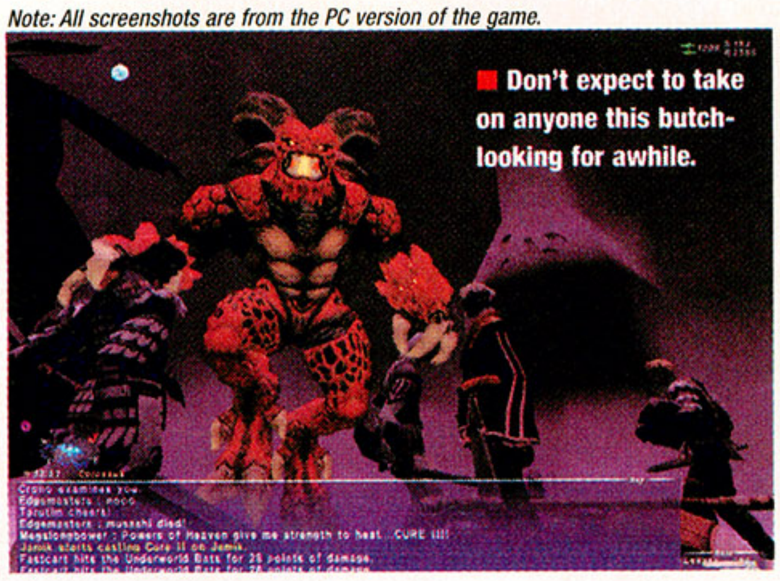
MY SO-CALLED FANTASY LIFE

Charting your future online addiction to FFXI

Anyone who's played massively multiplayer online games will attest to the fact that, for all their fun, they sometime involve work—tedious, carpal-tunnel-inducing work. *Final Fantasy XI Online*—due in March pre-installed on the PS2 Hard Disk Drive and requiring a monthly $12.95 subscription fee—is no different. Sure, you'll partake in your share of high adventure thrills like monster killing, treasure hunting, dungeon crawling, and interacting with other players from around the world, but that's only half the story. The other half casts you in a number of exciting roles, including those of...um, pest controller and virtual junk collector. Here's a look at what to expect—for better or worse—from your first hundred hours of play. Yes, we said *hundred*....

Note: All screenshots are from the PC version of the game.



Hours: 0-1

This ain't a pop-in-and-play deal—far from it, actually. While the game comes pre-installed on the PS2 Hard Disk Drive, you'll most likely have to download a series of updates and fixes before you play—and that can take pretty long. From there, you choose your character's sex, appearance, job, and race (this is the biggie—certain races are ideal for fighting, while others are best at magic. And, of course, some freakers simply demand to play as a slutty catgirl). Then you're ready for adventure.

Hours: 1-20

Starting out in the world of Vana'diel is relatively painless, once you get a grip on the controls. Humility, however, will set in pretty quickly. In this phase of your virtual life, your enemies are some the cutest, most harmless-looking critters you've ever seen, and you'll find it's hard to feel like a badass warrior with bunny rabbits, caterpillars, and birds frequently kicking the living crap out of you. Don't worry, though. The game gets more fun as you level up and become more powerful. We swear. Scout's honor.

Hours: 20-50

Now, things get interesting. You start seriously interacting with other players, which can be both exciting and scary (see sidebar below). You'll venture farther from town, fighting tougher, less harmless-looking creatures while busting out powerful team-combo attacks with your pals. The constant treadmill of killing wildlife and scavenging remains eventually gets dull, though, and this is when you need to take a break and get your pasty butt outside—*FFXI* is a lot more fun when you're not glued to it 24/7.

Hours: 50-100

Once you get this far, true virtual manhood (or womanhood) is in your grasp. You'll get to ride Chocobos, fly on airships, and take on really powerful monsters—giants, various undead horrors, enormous reptiles, and the like. You also gain access to the game's coolest jobs—like ninja, samurai, and summoner—as well as take on the most intense missions. You've already dedicated several weeks of your precious life to get this far, so the rewards better be good...right?

—Miguel Lopez

meet the feebles

In case you haven't played online RPGs before, we thought we'd give you a feel for the types of people you'll meet and greet. Prepare!

Casual Player

Likes: Getting items for free from benevolent hardcore players
Dislikes: Extended play sessions
Quote: "Um, how do I heal you again? Oh, you're already dead... Sorry, my mom's calling me for dinner...."

FF Fanboy

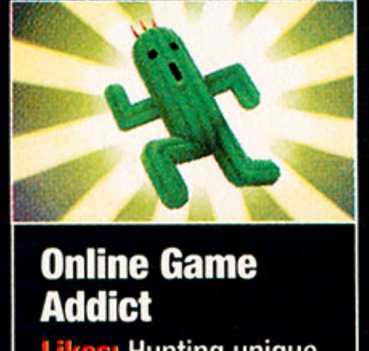
Likes: Talking to Cid, riding chocobos, fighting tonberries
Dislikes: That you can't make your character look like *FFVII*'s Cloud Strife
Quote: "The Mission 4 ending cinematic was so beautiful."

"Female" Player

Likes: Getting free stuff, getting attention, getting hugs
Dislikes: Prying questions regarding "her" real-life gender
Quote: "C'mon! Of course I'm really a girl, hon! *hugz*"

Japanese Player

Likes: *FFXI*'s auto-translation feature (so he or she can play with U.S. players)
Dislikes: Western emoticons :-P
Quote: "I do not understand many English ^^;"



Online Game Addict

Likes: Hunting unique monsters, hanging by the auction house, berating newbies
Dislikes: Anyone outside of his clan
Quote: "Lizzy was SOOO camped after she spawned, LOL!"

The Creep/ Pervert

Likes: Mithra (*FFXI*'s catgirl race) and tarutaru (*FFXI*'s cute diminutive race)
Dislikes: Getting put on your banned list
Quote: "I just need your address to send you those comics...."

>> APPARENTLY THE *KIRBY* SERIES WILL GO ON WITHOUT CREATOR MASAHIRO SAKURAI. NINTENDO HAS ANNOUNCED A NEW *KIRBY* GAME FOR GBA DUE IN JAPAN IN MARCH '04.... >>

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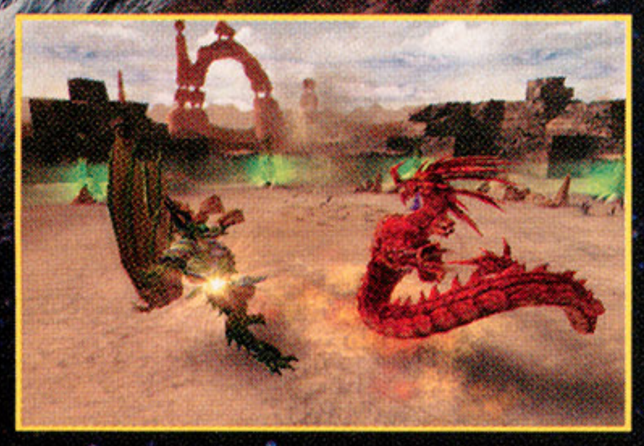

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EGM INTERNATIONAL

Japan's Valentine's Day gifts to you

PUNCH-DRUNK LOVE

Love Upper! explores underground bikini boxing

As we all know, the rules of *Fight Club* don't allow us to talk about it. Luckily, the rules of the *Love Upper!* all-female underground fighting tournament have no such clause. Which is good, since we'd much rather join this club anyway. If this recent Japanese PS2 release is to be believed, then 12 of Japan's sauciest sex-pots are whapping away for glory every night, breasts jiggling like they were fighting on the moon. As the nubile warriors advance through the ranks of this misogynistic underworld, they unlock (what else?) new outfits for themselves—34 of 'em, from bikinis to private-school uniforms. Shame Darva Conger hung up her gloves after one *Celebrity Boxing* episode. She coulda been a contender.

YOUNG, DUMB, AND....

Don't ask, and the men of **Gakuen Heaven** won't tell

You don't need a keen mind to see that there's something odd about the Japanese PS2 release *Gakuen Heaven*. It may look like a normal adventure game at first: As high-school student Keita Ito, you must make friends and build a social life at a boys-only private academy. However, this is no innocent point-and-click game. All the characters are very *handsome*—they've got girlish faces, wispy hair, and some "forget" to button their shirts for that classic Scott Baio look. And then there's the subtitle ("Boy's Love Scramble!") and the developer's name ("Spray"). Yes, it's *that* sort of game. Be glad this PS2 port's been bowdlerized—the PC version had enough heavy petting to merit an 18-and-over rating.

OVERHEARD

"Story in a game is like story in porn."

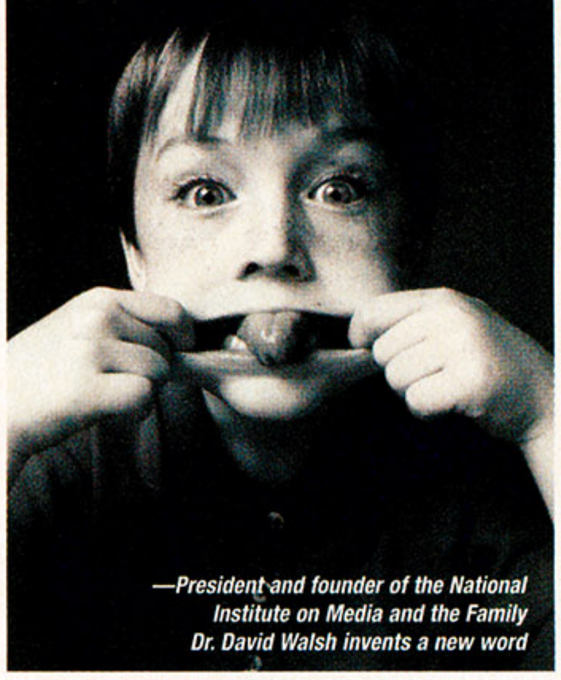
It's expected to be there, but it's not important."

—id Software Programmer John Carmack, currently hard at work crafting the intricate plot of Doom 3

"I hate these Haitians. We'll take them out. We'll take these Haitians down."

—Grand Theft Auto: Vice City's Tommy Vercetti; GTA publisher Take Two Interactive recently agreed to change parts of the game in response to public outcry against "racist" segments like this

"Children's access to these 'killographic' games, parents' lack of knowledge of ratings, and kids' game-playing habits are all major contributors to the increase in casual violence and the culture of disrespect among our children."



—President and founder of the National Institute on Media and the Family Dr. David Walsh invents a new word

LI'L PREVIEWS: FOR THE SCI-FI AND/OR COMIC BOOK GEEK IN YOU!

VIRTUA FIGHTER CYBER GENERATION

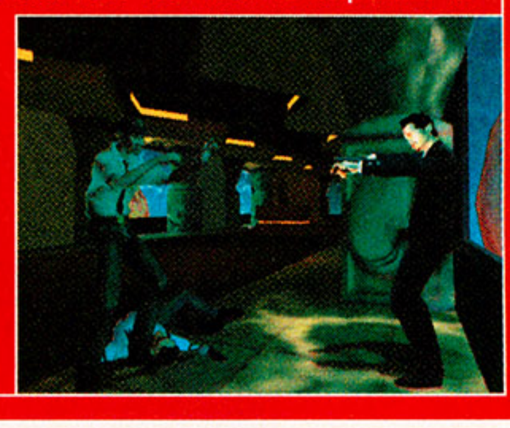
PS2/GC • Sega • Summer 2004 — The "*Virtua Fighter* RPG" Sega's hinted at for months isn't quite what you'd expect: It stars a teenage hacker named Sei who uses "Virtua Souls" (fighting moves) to take a bite out of cyber-crime in the Internet of the future. Correlation to the original *VF*: hardly any at all.

THE RED STAR

PS2/XB • Acclaim • Fall 2004 — Based on a comic series, *The Red Star* is a bash-em-up set in alternate-reality Russia with co-op play, magic spells called "protokols," and a decided lack of progressive political reform. Freeing yourself from the chains of capitalism has never seemed so...mystical.

100 BULLETS

PS2/XB • Acclaim • Fall 2004 — Another comic-book-inspired action game, *100 Bullets* stars an agent who grants average Joes the right to kill off their enemies scot free. Your role? To help them do it. Gameplay details are slim, but Acclaim promises a new feature that "blows away bullet time."



>> STARTING FEB. 9, PRE-ORDERING *POKÉMON COLOSSEUM* FOR GC GETS YOU A DISC WITH POKÉ-TRAILERS AND A RARE MONSTER, JIRACHI, FOR GBA'S *RUBY* AND *SAPPHIRE*.... >>

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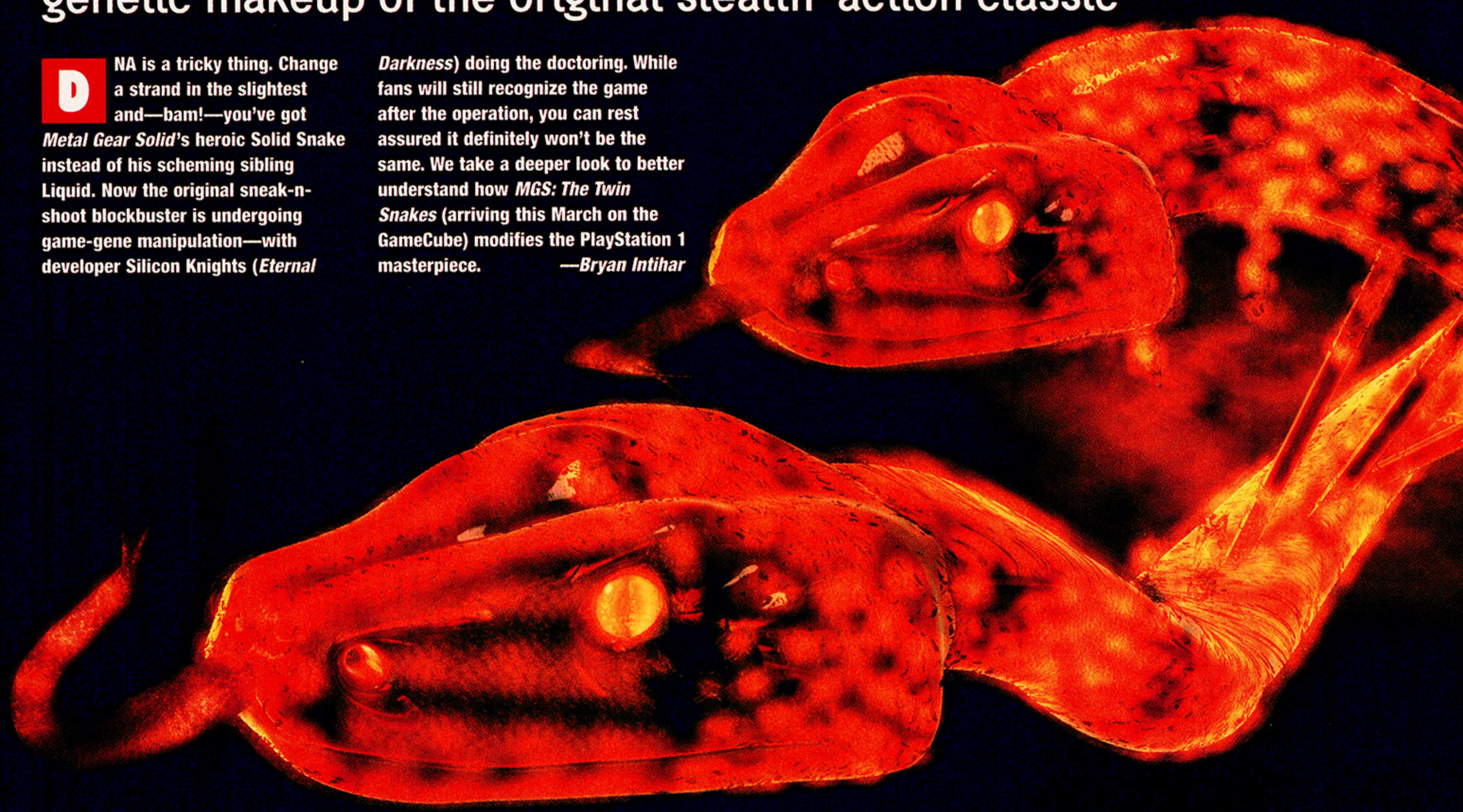
GEAR SHIFTING

Learn how **Metal Gear Solid: The Twin Snakes** alters the genetic makeup of the original stealth-action classic

DNA is a tricky thing. Change a strand in the slightest and—bam!—you've got *Metal Gear Solid*'s heroic Solid Snake instead of his scheming sibling Liquid. Now the original sneak-n-shoot blockbuster is undergoing game-gene manipulation—with developer Silicon Knights (*Eternal Darkness*) doing the doctoring. While fans will still recognize the game after the operation, you can rest assured it definitely won't be the same. We take a deeper look to better understand how *MGS: The Twin Snakes* (arriving this March on the GameCube) modifies the PlayStation 1 masterpiece. —*Bryan Intihar*



■ Here's a look at the GameCube revamp...

■ ...compared to two pics from the PlayStation 1 version.

■ *Twin Snakes* gives a fresh perspective to your battle with Revolver Ocelot.

Graphics

The most obvious upgrade in *Twin Snakes* is its visuals. "Technically, [this game] surpasses the PS2 version of *Metal Gear Solid 2* pretty much in every way," says President Denis Dyack of Silicon Knights. The developers are bringing every bit of eye-candy—from weather effects to character models—up to today's standards. Simply compare the above screenshots of the GameCube and PlayStation 1 versions if you need further proof.

Gameplay

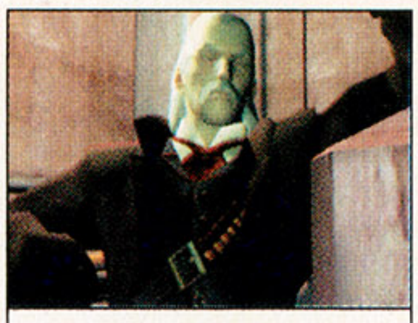
Your stealth repertoire now consists of every technique introduced in *MGS2*, such as first-person shooting, hiding in lockers, and crawling along ledges. You can also expect significantly smarter foes. "[In the original game] when you reach the heliport," says Dyack, "if spotted, you could just hide in the truck. Now if you do that the enemies will start throwing grenades in there." And like their *MGS2* cousins, *Twin Snakes*' patrolling guards will follow clearing procedures.

>> SONY HAS A NEW *APE ESCAPE* PS2 GAME (ROUGHLY TRANSLATED AS *APE ESCAPE OLYMPIA*) DUE FOR JAPAN IN FALL. NO WORD ON A U.S. RELEASE YET, BUT IT SEEMS LIKELY.... >>

DON'T I KNOW YOU?

Skipped over *Metal Gear Solid* and went straight to the sequel? Believe it or not, Liquid Snake's powers once went beyond putting Revolver Ocelot's arm-wrestling prowess over the top. Here's a look at some of the characters in the original's roster:

Solid Snake
Unlike in *MGS2*, Solid Snake doesn't take a backseat to any bleach-blond sissies. *Twin Snakes* is 100 percent Raiden-free. We promise.

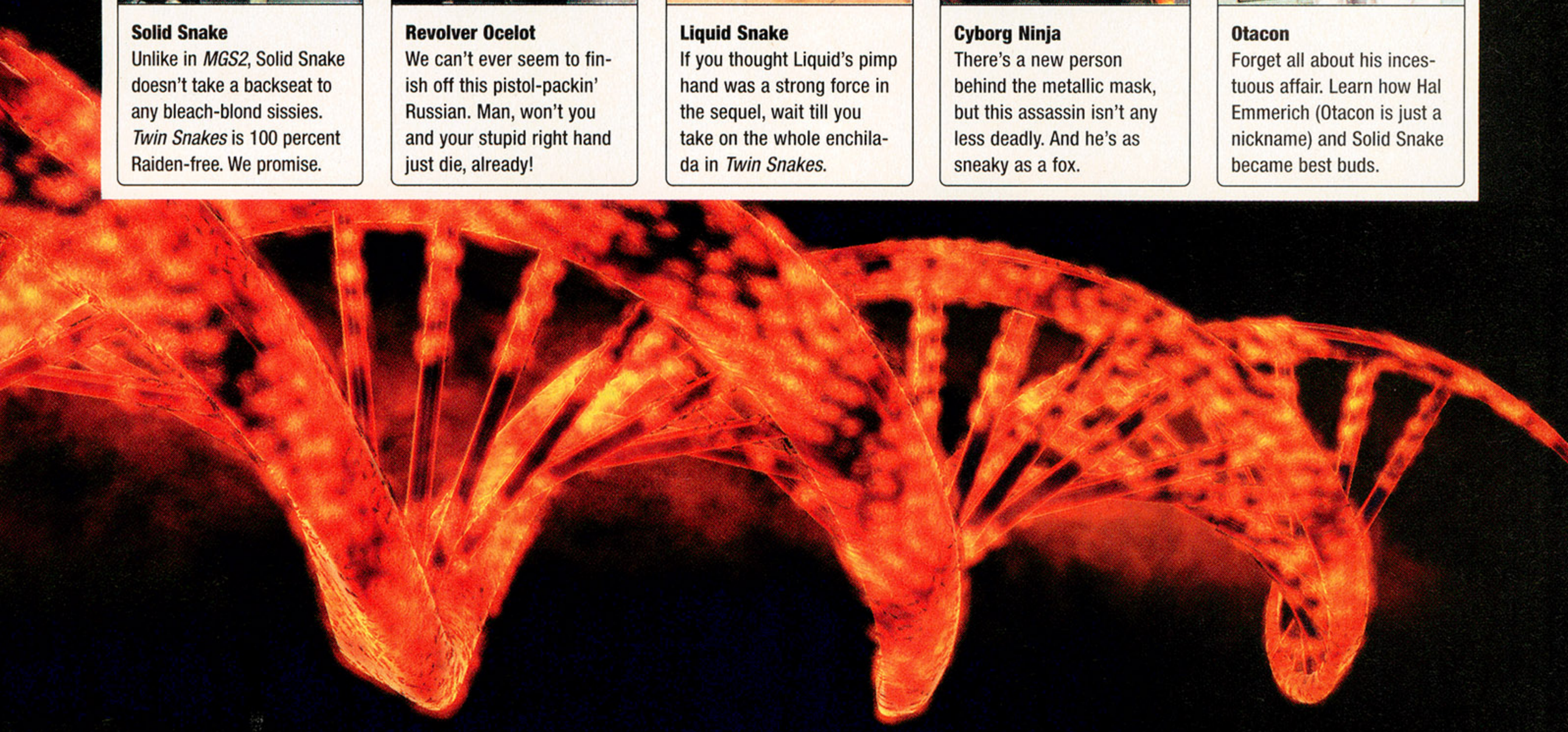


Revolver Ocelot
We can't ever seem to finish off this pistol-packin' Russian. Man, won't you and your stupid right hand just die, already!

Liquid Snake
If you thought Liquid's pimp hand was a strong force in the sequel, wait till you take on the whole enchilada in *Twin Snakes*.

Cyborg Ninja
There's a new person behind the metallic mask, but this assassin isn't any less deadly. And he's as sneaky as a fox.

Otacon
Forget all about his incestuous affair. Learn how Hal Emmerich (Otacon is just a nickname) and Solid Snake became best buds.

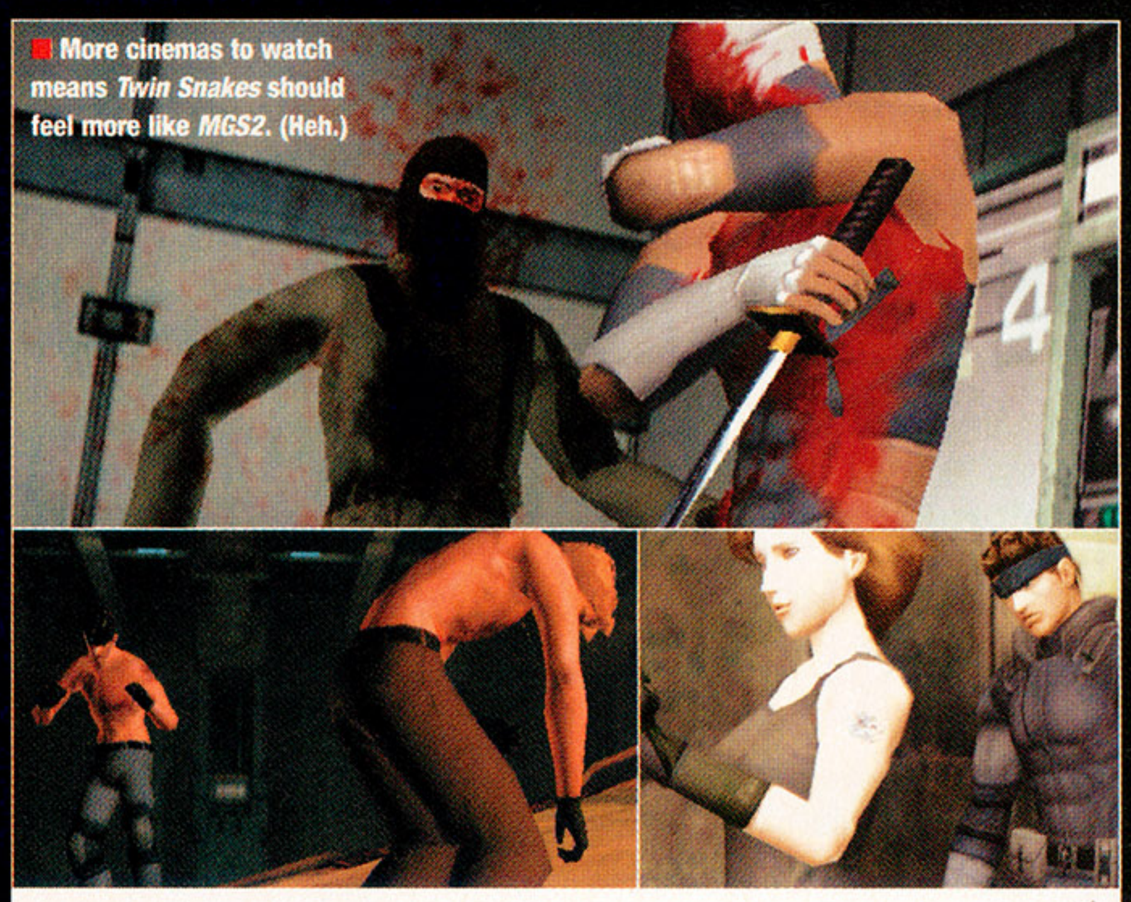


■ **Hiding unconscious guards in lockers wasn't possible in the original.**

Terrain

"We added lockers [and more railings] everywhere, and we had to rearrange and move rooms around to make sure it all worked," says Dyack. "[Since you're] able to do all the things from *MGS2* in the *MGS* environments, we had to make sure there are opportunities to do [all of] that." Those things include hiding yourself or tranquilizer-darted foes in those aforementioned lockers and throwing enemies over ledges, which Silicon Knights also had to attach to various spots in the game.

■ **More cinemas to watch means *Twin Snakes* should feel more like *MGS2*. (Heh.)**



Story

The father of the *Metal Gear* series, Hideo Kojima, hired Japanese film director and writer Ryuhei Kitamura to redo every cut-scene and shoot brand-new footage. Only in the *Twin Snakes* version will you witness the cyborg ninja enter the room trailing a shower of sparks as he drags his katana along the metal floor, seconds before slicing off Revolver Ocelot's right hand. The game's cut-scenes total three hours, which is roughly 50 percent longer than in the original.

3D Render by Jonathan Bohannon

>> VU GAMES HAS ANNOUNCED A FIGHTING GAME BASED ON THE FILM AND NOVEL *FIGHT CLUB* FOR PS2 AND XB IN FALL. A SOAP-MAKING MINIGAME WILL LIKELY NOT APPEAR.... >>

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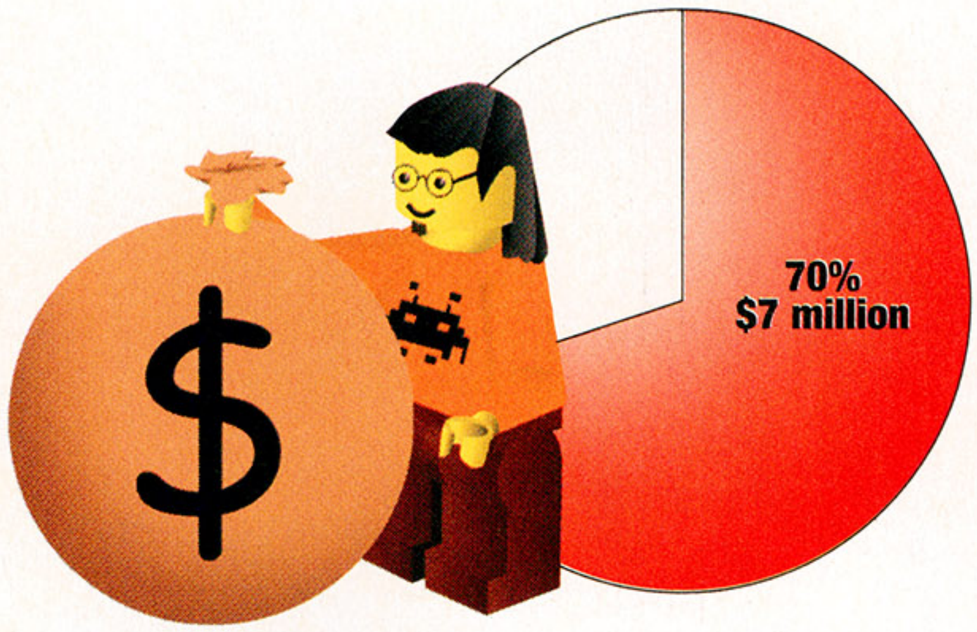
MONEY TRAIL

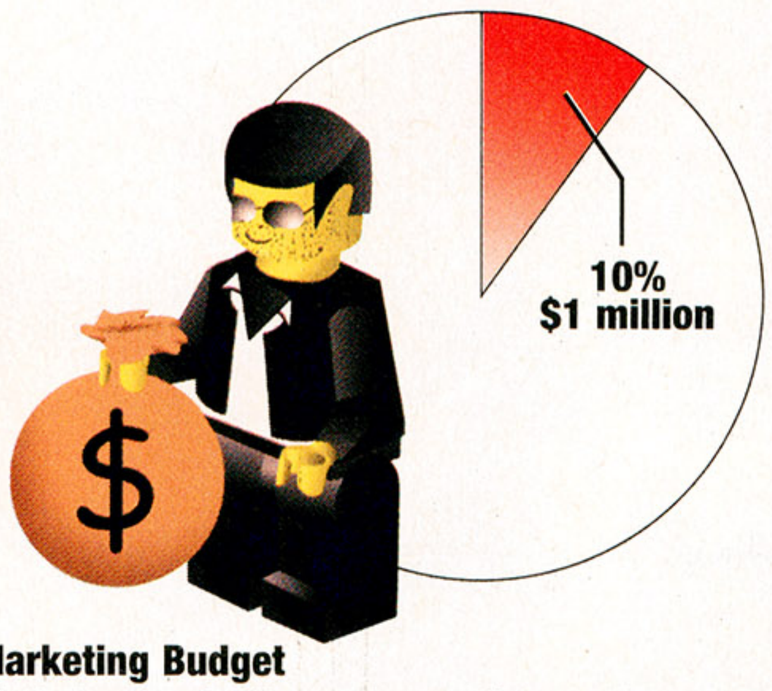
We show where all the cash goes in making a game

Gone are the days when a game cost only a few grand and required three dudes to make. Today, big-name titles can run up to $25 million to go from concept to your console. What are the steps in between? Let's deconstruct the budget process of a typical $10 million console game. ***—Marc Saltzman***



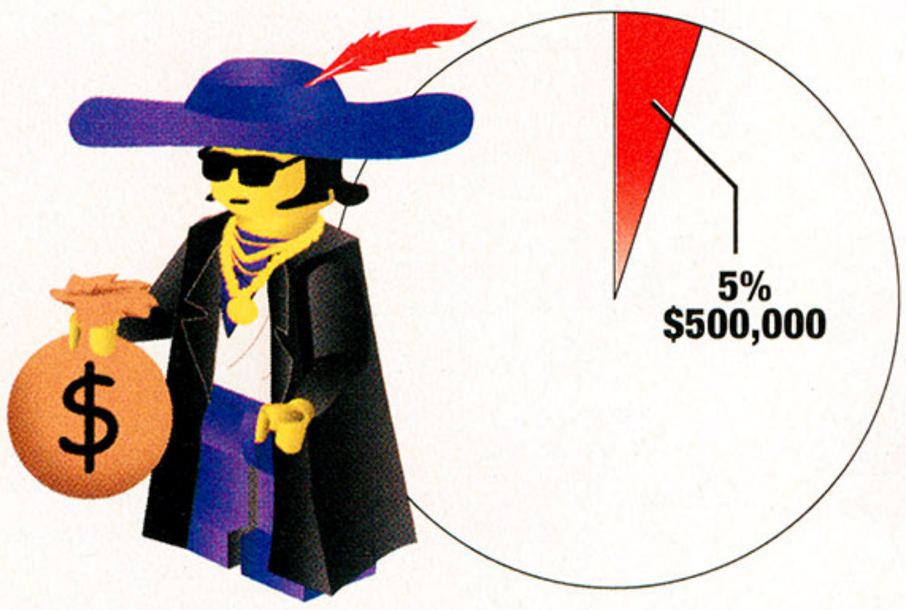
Development Budget

Creating the game—which entails the employment of designers, programmers, artists, sound engineers and musicians, voice actors, testers, and so forth—is easily the biggest chunk of change. This process also involves the creation or licensing of a graphics engine, tools and other middleware, and also general overhead concerns such as rent, electricity, and health insurance.



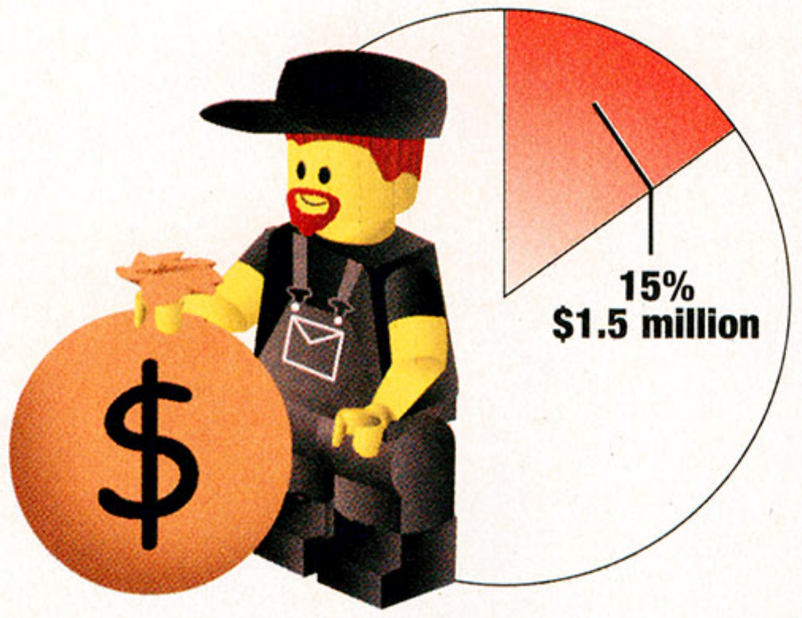
Marketing Budget

What's the point of making a great game if the world doesn't know about it? That's where marketing and public-relations departments come in, and getting the word out costs money. PR reps work with the press to get media exposure, while marketing people deal more directly with the consumer through advertising, packaging, promotions, and retailers.



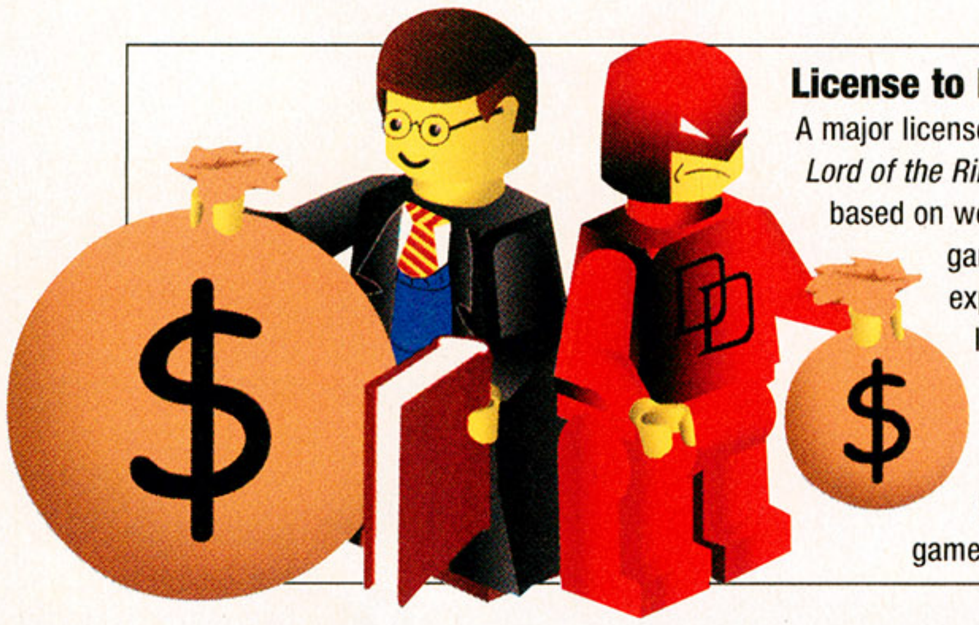
Console-maker Royalty

To create a title for a particular console, a third-party game publisher must cough up a royalty fee to that console's manufacturer. Sony, for instance, may take $7 to $9 for every copy of a PlayStation 2 game made—but the better the title does, the lower this royalty rate becomes (as long as such deals are arranged beforehand). Also, royalties are less if it's a game made exclusively for that console.



Manufacturing, Sales, Distribution

It ain't cheap to create a few hundred thousand DVDs, with packaging, and then distribute them around the nation so they can appear at your local retailer. A publisher may also consider putting that game on other platforms, which means additional manufacturing, distribution, and other costs. Generally speaking, a publisher is looking at selling nearly half a million units before it sees a profit on its investment.



License to Bill

A major license—including such Hollywood tie-ins as *The Hulk*, *Matrix*, and *Lord of the Rings* movies—can greatly add to the cost of a product. Games based on well-known TV series can also cost a pretty penny, while sports games all have league and player licenses, which can be very expensive. Licensing costs have a broad range, adding potentially $5 million to $15 million (or higher) for a triple-A license (like *Harry Potter*), down to $1 million for a B license (say, *Daredevil*). Licensing usually includes a certain percentage of revenues, too, which can range from 3 to 10 percent. But if the well-known name on the box attracts more casual gamers, publishers are happy to fork over the dough.

Illustrations by Kevin Convertito

CHARTS

TOP 10 BEST-SELLING GAMES FOR NOVEMBER 2003

1. **Mario Kart: Double Dash!!** GC, Nintendo
2. **Medal of Honor: Rising Sun** PS2, EA Games
3. **Final Fantasy X-2** PS2, Square Enix
4. **Grand Theft Auto Double Pack** XB, Rockstar
5. **SOCOM II: U.S. Navy SEALs** PS2, Sony CEA
6. **Need for Speed: Underground** PS2, EA Games
7. **Tony Hawk's Underground** PS2, Activision
8. **True Crime: Streets of L.A.** PS2, Activision
9. **Mario Advance 4: Super Mario Bros. 3** • GBA, Nintendo
10. **Madden NFL 2004** PS2, EA Sports

Source: NPD TRSTS Video Games Service. Call (516) 625-6190 for questions regarding this list. "Buddy the Elf! What's your favorite color?"

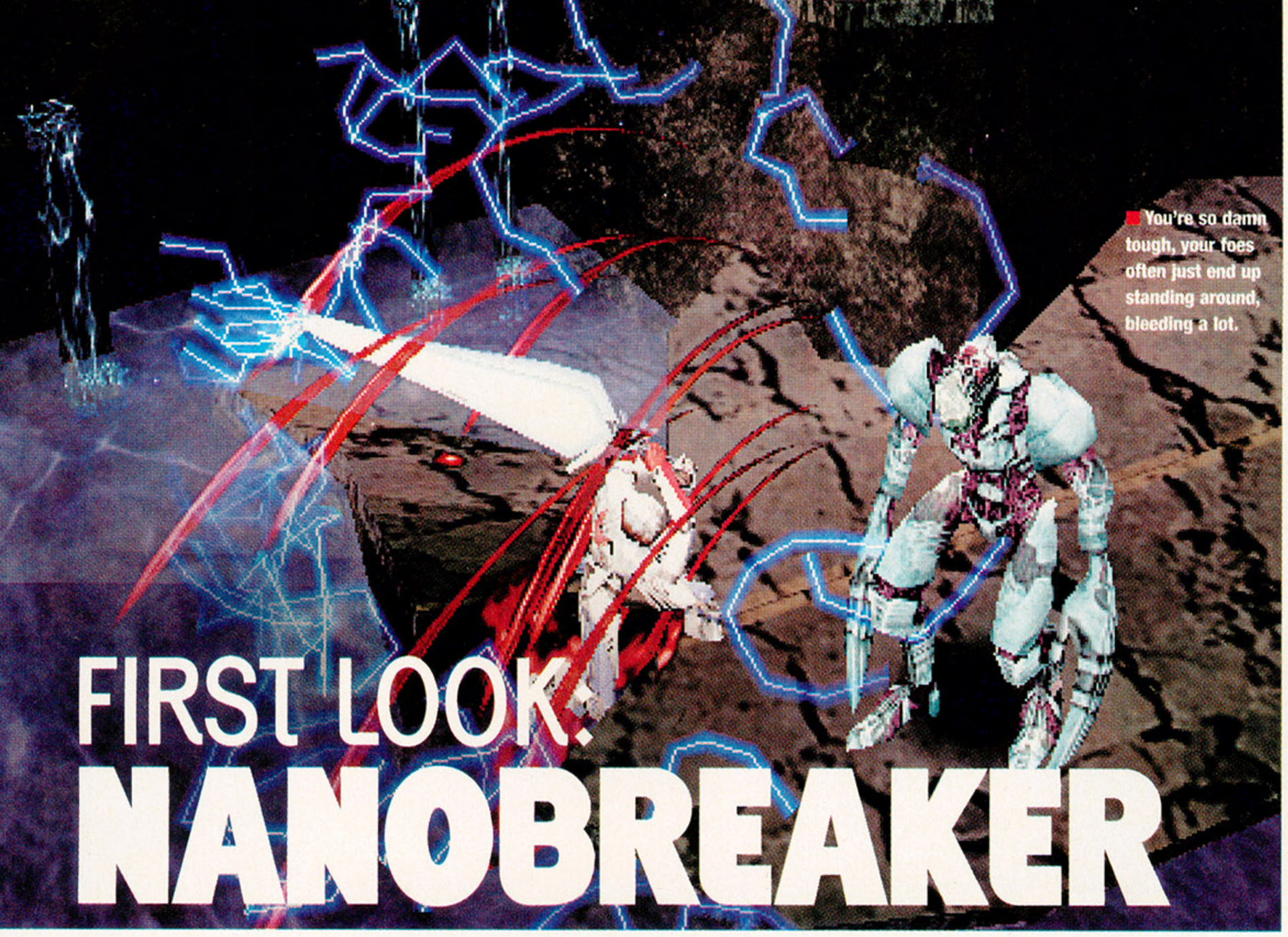
TOP 10 GAME RENTALS FOR THE WEEK ENDING 12/16/03

BLOCKBUSTER

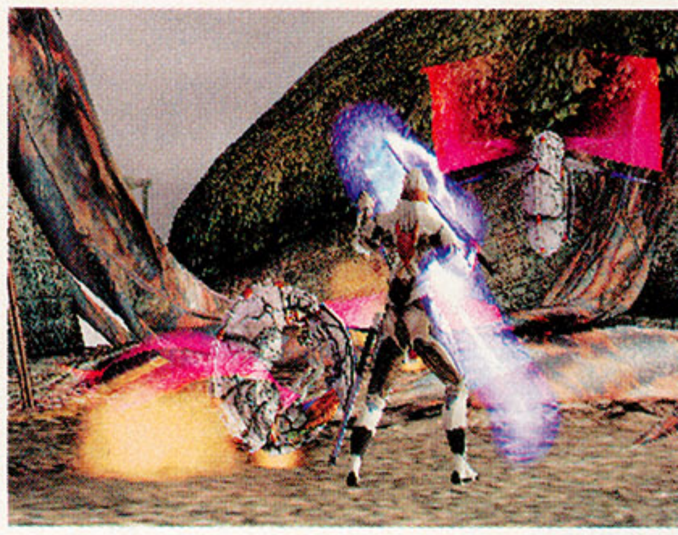
1. **Dragon Ball Z: Budokai 2** PS2, Atari
2. **True Crime: Streets of L.A.** PS2, Activision
3. **Need for Speed: Underground** PS2, EA Games
4. **Tony Hawk's Underground** PS2, Activision
5. **Grand Theft Auto III** PS2, Rockstar
6. **SOCOM II: U.S. Navy SEALs** PS2, Sony CEA
7. **Final Fantasy X-2** PS2, Square Enix
8. **WWE SmackDown! Here Comes the Pain** • PS2, THQ
9. **The Simpsons: Hit & Run** PS2, VU Games
10. **Madden NFL 2004** PS2, EA Sports

Source: Blockbuster Video, 12/16/03

>> TECMO IS OFFERING A LINE OF *NINJA GAIDEN* MERCHANDISE, BASED ON THE NEW XBOX TITLE *AND* THE OLD-SCHOOL 8-BIT NINTENDO GAMES, ON THE WEB AT TECMOGAMES.COM.... >>



You're so damn tough, your foes often just end up standing around, bleeding a lot.



FIRST LOOK: NANOBREAKER

The dark prince behind Castlevania looks to the future

After feverishly cranking out three well-received *Castlevania* titles (*Lament of Innocence* for PS2 and two GBA adventures) in a little over a year, Producer Koji Igarashi needs a break from all the vamping. "I'm not Gothic all the time!" he says. Luckily, he's working on just the thing to beat the undead blues: next fall's *Nanobreaker* for PS2.

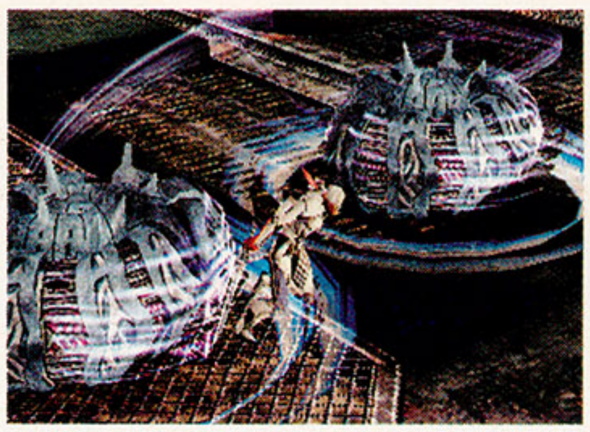
Although fundamentally similar to *Lament of Innocence* (they're both 3D action titles, after all), the games' characters, settings, and story lines couldn't be more different: *Nanobreaker* is set in a bleak cyberpunk dystopia where humanity and machinery have melded. "I decided to make a futuristic game this time," explains Igarashi, "and nanomachines and nanotechnology are often in the news these days, [so] I thought it would make a fun theme for a game." It's unclear whether *Nanobreaker*'s microscopic mechanisms should be considered fun, though—the baby robots here cause serious chaos, mixing with human DNA to create a limitless army of so-called Orgamech mutants relentlessly bent on global annihilation.

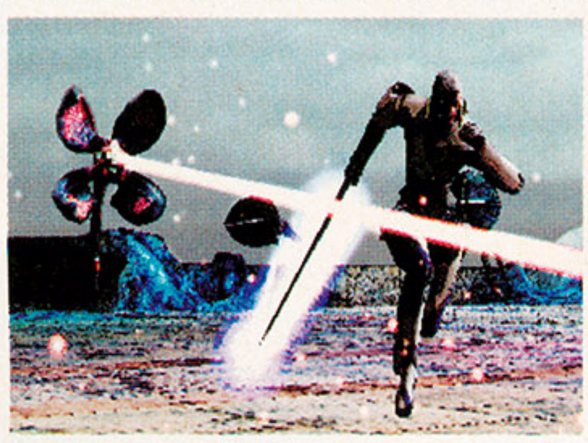
Of course, it's up to you to thwart this potential robopocalypse, but even your character (who remains mysteriously nameless at this point) isn't entirely human himself. "You play as the military's most powerful cyborg," explains Director Kenichiro Kato. "He's viewed as a weapon instead of a soldier...as a cyborg, he's still suffering from the dark side of human emotions; he doesn't want to continue killing, but he's still not human. He's caught between worlds." His muddled emotional state and troubled past will unravel as the game progresses, but thankfully, his internal strife doesn't keep him from unleashing cybernetic beat downs.

Your primary weapon is the Plasma Blade, a glowing saber that conceals some stylish secrets. "It has two major attacks: slicing vertically and horizontally," Igarashi explains. "You can also thrust enemies into the air to perform various combos that cause the Plasma Blade to change form. For example, after a certain combo, it transforms into a gigantic ax that cleaves enemies in two with one stroke."

So, despite a radically different setting and tone, *Nanobreaker*'s underlying gameplay sounds much like *Lament*'s: pure, visceral action laden with complex combos. Also, it sounds like *Nanobreaker* won't suffer from the same flaw that kept Igarashi's first 3D *Castlevania* from attaining perfection—repetitive level design. "With *Lament of Innocence*, the maps were divided into many small rooms," Kato says, "but with *Nanobreaker*, each area is much larger in scale...this will be the major difference." Exploring Orgamech-infested power plants and bombed-out buildings will hopefully feel much more organic and open than the endless kill-all-the-baddies rooms of Dracula's castle. —*Shane Bettenhausen*

"He doesn't want to continue killing, but he's still not human."
—Director Kenichiro Kato





This level is likely slippery and tastes distinctly like copper.

reality check

In case you're not keeping up on the latest nano news, know that scientists are actually getting closer to developing self-replicating microscopic machines that could conceivably have far-reaching medical and chemical uses. In fact, President Bush signed a bill in late '03 pledging nearly $4 billion toward nanotech research.

>> SONY COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT AMERICA HAS ANNOUNCED THAT IT'S DELAYED *SYPHON FILTER: THE OMEGA STRAIN* FOR PS2 FROM MARCH TO THE FAR VAGUER SPRING '04.... >>

PLAY MONEY

We break into the glitzy pads of the game biz's highest scorers—and learn their secrets for success

Here's a shocker: Megahot games make megabucks. So we figured we'd show you where some of that moolah winds up. Once again, we invade the lavish homes of two captains of the gaming industry. (Miss the first half of this two-part article last month? No soup for you!) Even better, these guys share the wealth, offering tips on making it big in the biz. Listen up and maybe one day you too can own your own observatory and/or walk-in wine closet.

—Scott Steinberg

KING OF HIS CASTLE

Ultima papa Richard "Lord British" Garriott is worth a king's ransom

Stop giving your neighborhood role-playing rejects swirlies: As Richard Garriott proves, they could crush you with the press of a key someday. A bored kid back in '79, he programmed a game known as *Akalabeth* in his spare time, which begat the blockbuster *Ultima* RPG series for PC and consoles. They say a man's home is his castle, but damn...who knew Richie Rich here would take it so literally with his Austin, Texas-based fortress.

EGM: What's the secret to your success, my liege?
Richard Garriott: Timing. Early on, I became a master of all trades (e.g., programming, art, design, sound). Today it's too much for one man to handle.

EGM: But surely timing wasn't entirely the reason for *Ultima*'s popularity?
RG: Innovation was key. Instead of creating cheap sequels, I'd start from scratch each time. That habit of maximizing innovation was important to the franchise's staying power.

EGM: So to prosper and stay on the cutting edge, you have to keep reinventing yourself?
RG: Yes, definitely...you have to keep up with the times. There are lots of ways to be innovative—sadly, many [games] are simply what I describe as "Me too, plus one feature."

EGM: Roughly how much cash has the franchise generated?
RG: Right now, upwards of $100 million. *Ultima Online* [PC] currently generates $25 million a year to this day.

EGM: Of that, how much did you see?
RG: Nowhere near that much, but several million, certainly.

EGM: What's the best thing the money bought you?
RG: The opportunity to explore the world. I've been to Antarctica and the South Pole twice, visited the threshold of space...it spawned a lot of creative energy that went into my games.

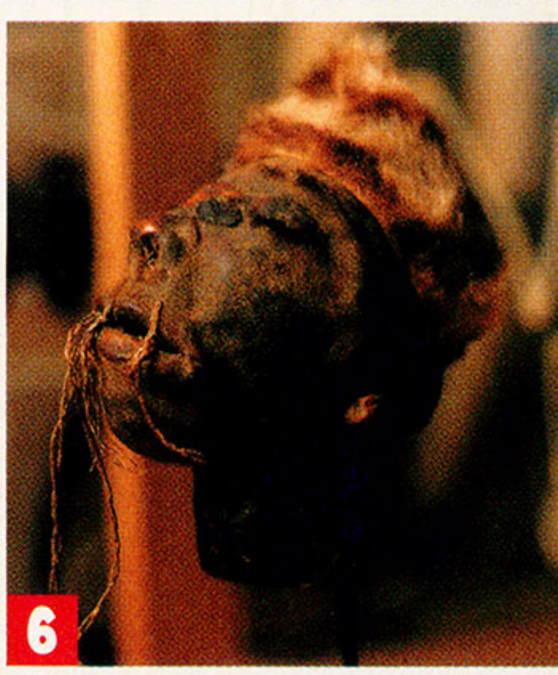
EGM: Biggest drawback of the loot?
RG: The expectations that build around you. People are always wondering what comes next. There's a lot of pressure...you can't back off....

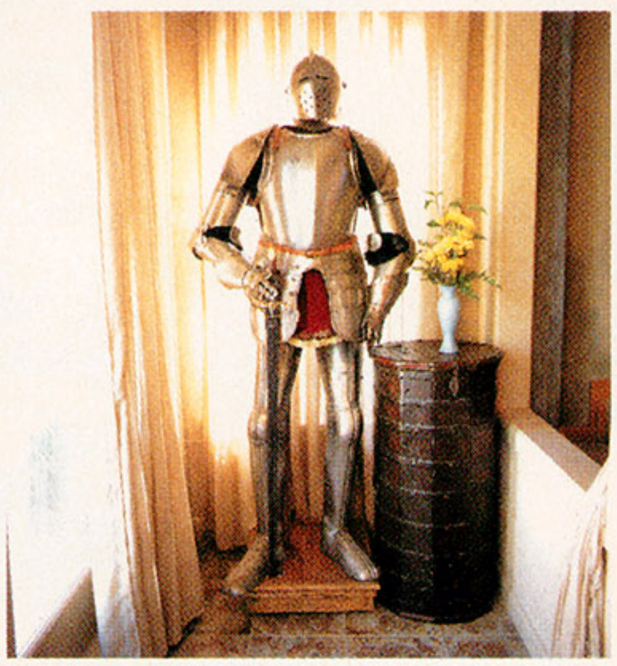
EGM: Did establishing a character like Lord British (Garriott's alter ego in the *Ultima* universe) play a major part in your success?
RG: It was a big part of it. It lent credence to the fact I want to live in these virtual worlds as much as anyone else. And the moniker sticks—it's helped me become more memorable than equally successful game creators.

EGM: Ever cause an identity crisis?
RG: Funny thing is, my father is a NASA astronaut. There's times we'll be in a science circle and people will recognize me ahead of him. But then there are times at game conventions when they'll recognize him ahead of me.

Photographs by Michael Sexton

>> PUMP UP YOUR GREASE-MONKEY CRED WHILE PASSING THE TIME UNTIL *GRAN TURISMO 4*'S RELEASE WITH MBI PUBLISHING'S *THE CARS OF GRAN TURISMO*. THIS $15 MAGAZINE—





■ **House of our Lord British: 1 This stairway—surrounded by lethal medieval weaponry—leads to (2) the domed observatory on the tippy top of Garriott's home. 3 Where do you keep your vampire-hunting kit? Garriott keeps his on an 1800s coffin (4), complete with a skeleton inside. 5 You won't find a leather Mardi Gras mask like this at Spencer Gifts. 6 A genuine shrunken head from 1930s South America. 7 Garriott has a passion for astronomical models and quack medical devices. 8 His pool is both indoor and outdoor, with a submerged swim-through portal connecting both sides. Check out the hot tub in the back.**

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MUNCH MONEY

Lorne Lanning's odyssey through Oddworld led to greener pastures

Normally, calling a pair of individuals "Oddworld Inhabitants" would get your ass kicked lickety-split, but not if that duo is Lorne Lanning and partner Sherry McKenna. After co-founding a company with said name, they went on to hook more than 4 million gamers across the globe with a uniquely bizarre yet equally endearing series set in a twisted alien universe: the *Oddworld* games (which includes *Abe's Oddysee* for PS1, *Munch's Oddysee* for Xbox, and an upcoming new Xbox installment). Like sneaky series hero Abe, we tiptoe into Lanning's sprawling California lodge for a look-see.

EGM: You guys came out of nowhere in the mid-'90s. Was the company a pipe dream, or...?
Lorne Lanning: Sherry and I were working for a special effects company, where we had no creative input. I wanted to be a storyteller and own my own intellectual property and knew videogames were the medium of the future. It's all about creative control.

EGM: And the money to do this came from where?
LL: Venture capital. We ran into a guy who saw how much money the publisher Rocket Science had raised. He wanted to write his own get-rich-quick story.

EGM: You must've been wishing on the right star, eh?
LL: It's all about who you know. And smart business negotiation...but there was some random, dumb chance to it.

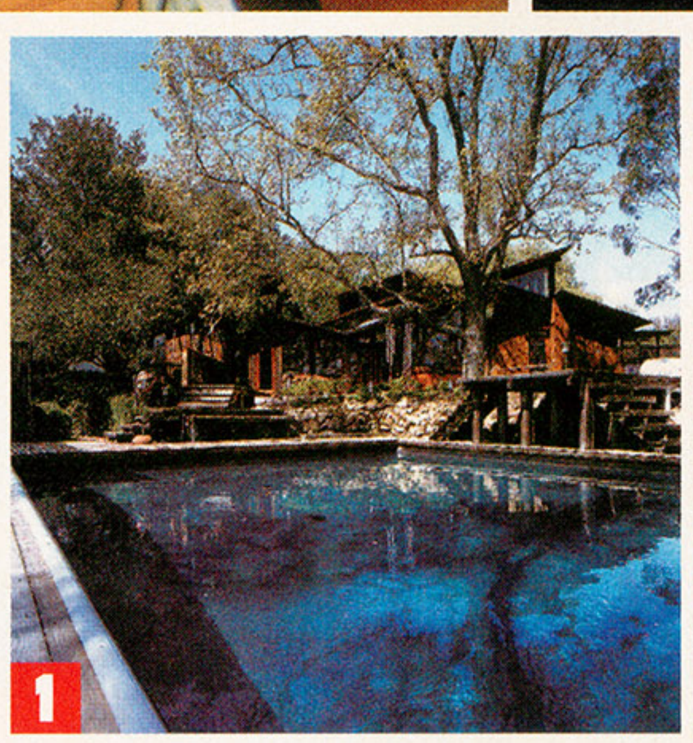
EGM: So you attribute your breakout star power to luck?
LL: I think luck is something you create. Timing was everything for us, but we knew that money was going to be coming into the technology business in the coming years. Because we did our homework, setting out to get some of that money was much easier. You have to understand the market before you can master it.

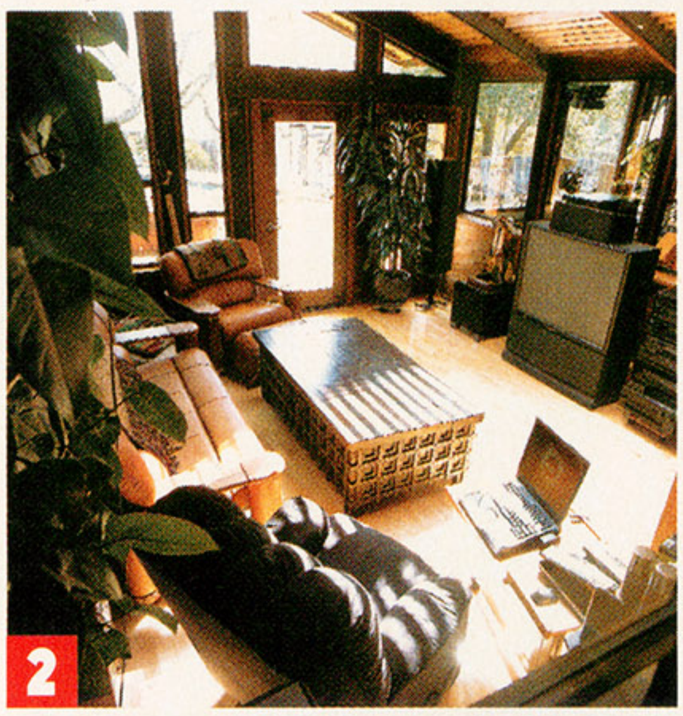
EGM: Then we're guessing the *Oddworld* series' grand reception was no surprise to you?
LL: [Laughs] I always say it's pleasant to have success, but when you borrow a million dollars to make an entertainment product, you really have to plan on succeeding. We were even ready to walk away from our initial investment proposal if we didn't get what we wanted, because we were so confident in our capabilities.

EGM: But not everyone can afford to be that ballsy.
LL: Hey, I believe being creative and innovative is safer than taking the "me too" route most game developers do.

EGM: Your best suggestion for anyone who'd care to follow in your footsteps, then?
LL: It has more to do with work ethic than any approach. You can't have low standards. If someone thinks they can do great work that'll blow people away on a 9 to 5 schedule, they're getting into the wrong business. It's like the Olympics—don't train your ass off, and you'll never win a gold medal.

>> ARCADES MAY BE DYING, BUT DON'T TOSS OUT YOUR GAME TOKENS JUST YET. PACHINKO-PUSHING JAPANESE GAME PUBLISHER SAMMY, WHICH WAS ONCE IN





■ Lanning's pad: 1 Tucked under old oaks and partly solar-powered, Lanning's custom-built wood-and-glass home feels more like a Native American lodge than a typical house. "My friends call it the sweat lodge," he says. 2 The old chest in Lanning's gaming/home-theater room is filled with videogame consoles. All the wires run under the hardwood floor. 3 The master bedroom features funky glowing paintings, including 4 *Kissing* by artist Alex Grey. 5 This guardian shaman sculpture is one of several "ghost chasers" found throughout the house. 6 An authentic submarine door seals the booze cellar.

TALKS TO BUY SEGA, NOW OWNS 22.4 PERCENT OF THE COMPANY. SAMMY HOPES TO GIVE THE HOUSE OF SONIC EXTRA LIFE BY RENEWING ITS FOCUS ON ARCADE GAMES.... >>

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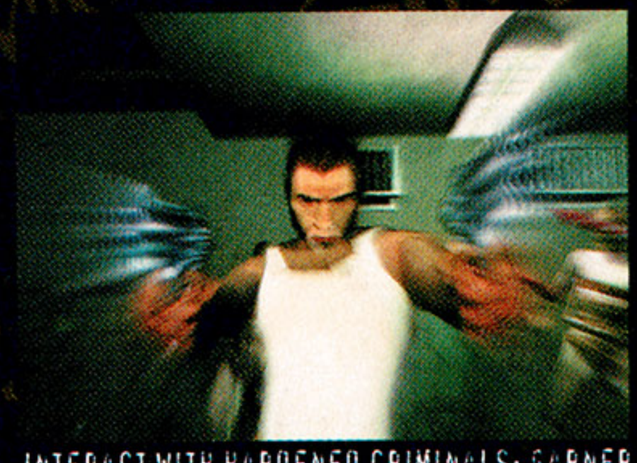
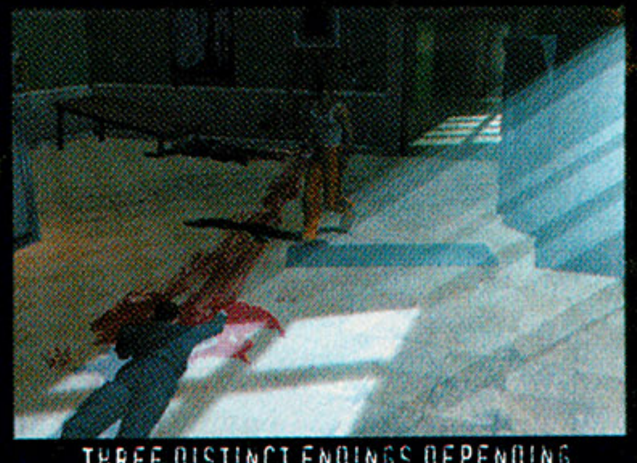


INTERACT WITH HARDENED CRIMINALS; GARNER THEIR ASSISTANCE OR END THEIR LIFE.



THREE DISTINCT ENDINGS DEPENDING ON HOW YOU PLAY THE GAME.

The Suffering is an all-new next-generation entry into the action horror genre, and the first game of its kind to probe into the very unsettling and seedy underbelly of a maximum-security penitentiary, which is haunted by horrific and grotesque apparitions, all represented by the unique and disturbing executions that previously befell them. Take on the role of Torque, an inmate who must face much more than his own inner demons and the harsh and gritty reality of death row, as he fights to escape the unleashing of the penitentiary's gruesome secrets in what amounts to be a challenging and terrifying journey through one of the most hellish environments ever imagined. The Suffering features ultra-mature content and three distinctly different endings depending upon how you choose to survive.

CREATURE DESIGN BY STAN WINSTON STUDIOS

"Midway's action/horror title could be the most gruesome videogame ever"
– IGN.COM

"...adults will get a demented, scary ride"
– Game Informer

MATURE 17+
M
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Blood and Gore
Drug Reference
Intense Violence
Strong Language

PlayStation.2

XBOX

Stan Winston STUDIO

MIDWAY

THE SUFFERING™

PRISON IS HELL

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SHOW AND TELL: FULL SPECTRUM WARRIOR

A guided tour of duty from the developer

General Patton must be rolling over in his grave. Members of the U.S. Army playing videogames to learn squad-based survival skills? Yup, and this March a modified version of the simulator the Army trains with is coming to Xbox: *Full Spectrum Warrior*.

But THQ's game isn't just another team-based military shooter like *Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six 3*. Your intellect, rather than your trigger finger, is the key to success here. (It's a third-person *plotter*—you never physically fire a shot.) We brought in the game's director, Wil Stahl from Pandemic (*Star Wars: The Clone Wars*), to show us how to safely guide both Alpha and Bravo teams through a typical *Warrior* scenario.

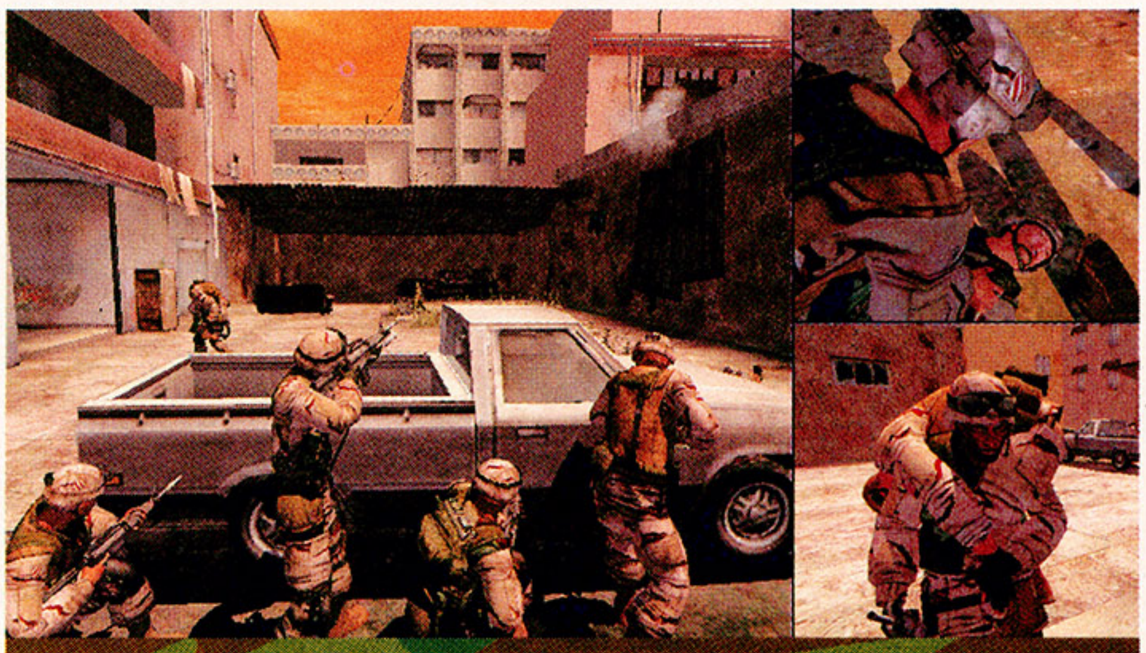
—Bryan Intihar

STEP 1: LAYING DOWN COVER FIRE

Wil Stahl: "Here, I'm moving my squad [of nine men divided into two teams] down an alley and into a central courtyard. Bravo team [in the foreground] is supplying cover fire while Alpha team bounds from the corner along the wall. Bounding is an advanced kind of movement that allows me to move a team to a location two soldiers at a time. [This maneuver] is slower but allows the soldiers to move and fire."

STEP 2: GETTING INTO POSITION

WS: "Using the Y button on the Xbox controller, I'm able to move the camera between both teams; using the directional pad I can move the camera to any individual soldier of [either Alpha or Bravo] team. By switching to the Alpha team leader here, I'm able to get a look into the courtyard as an enemy [in the center of the screen] runs for cover behind the dumpster."



STEP 3: EVACUATING THE WOUNDED

WS: "[At this point] I've taken care of the first enemy but sustained a casualty in the process. I've also come under fire from a balcony to the upper right. By moving Alpha team behind this truck, they're able to put suppression fire on the balcony, so I can have the other team carry the wounded man into the garage on the left. Now I have to find a way to get Alpha team out from behind that truck."

STEP 4: TAKING OUT THE ENEMY

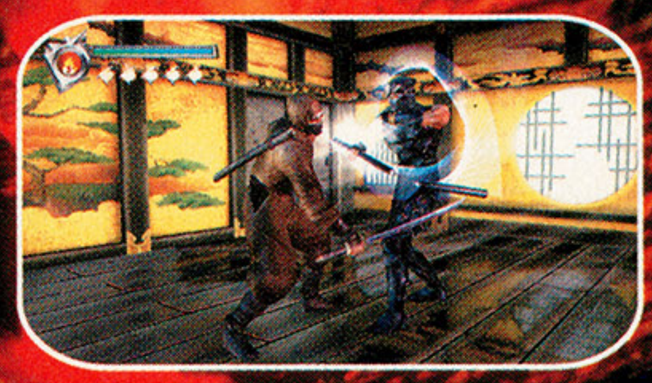
WS: "Alpha team uses the truck for cover from a sniper on a balcony of the adjacent high-rise. But before they can tackle that problem, they must clear the courtyard by outgunning the OP4 [military speak for opposing force] from two different vantage points. Then [Alpha team can] suppress the sniper with heavy fire from your squad's automatic weapons while Bravo flanks him for a better angle and takes him out."

>> INTERPLAY HAS SOLD THE LONG-DELAYED XBOX ACTION-ADVENTURE GAME *GALLEON* TO SCI, WHO WILL RELEASE IT THIS SPRING IN EUROPE. NO WORD ON A U.S. DATE YET.... >>

Vengeance... is a dish better served hot.

This time it's personal... Ryu Hayabusa, the deadly and feared ninja assassin, is out for blood after his clan is massacred by the evil Vigor Empire. Vowing to seek revenge on those that betrayed him, he sets off on an action-packed adventure where the lines between good and evil are blurred and all that he believes in will be tested.

Possess the fury of Ryu Hayabusa as you destroy your opponents using lethal ninja weapons and cunning skill. Your mission: to annihilate your enemies and defeat the Holy Emperor, reclaiming the magical sword "Ryuken".



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CELEBRITY GAMER: MICHAEL MADSEN

Getting down with Driv3r's wheel man

He cut off a cop's ear in *Reservoir Dogs*. He was the moralistic member of the Deadly Viper Assassination Squad in *Kill Bill*. And he was the stern (but caring) father in two *Free Willy* movies. In the *GTA*-like *Driv3r* (due in March for PS2, XB, and GC), Michael Madsen plays an undercover cop whose personality fits comfortably amidst all three extremes.

EGM: Tell us a bit about your character in the game. Is there any of your real personality in there?
MM: I'm the wheel man—my character's name is Tanner. He's a very handsome, very strong individual. As a matter of fact, I have recently returned to weight training and boxing.... I think [this role has] inspired me.

EGM: How does this guy compare to tough characters like Bud from *Kill Bill* or Mr. Blonde from *Reservoir Dogs*?
MM: As violent as Tanner is, he's in fact a heroic individual who's trying to do something right. When I started off as an actor, to be honest with you, I thought of myself as the romantic leading man, not as the vicious killer. But unfortunately—or fortunately, depending on how you look at it—the roles that I'm most recognized for are the bad fellas. I'll blame that on Quentin Tarantino [laughs].

EGM: So...Tanner won't be cutting anybody's ears off.
MM: I don't think that's in his repertoire.

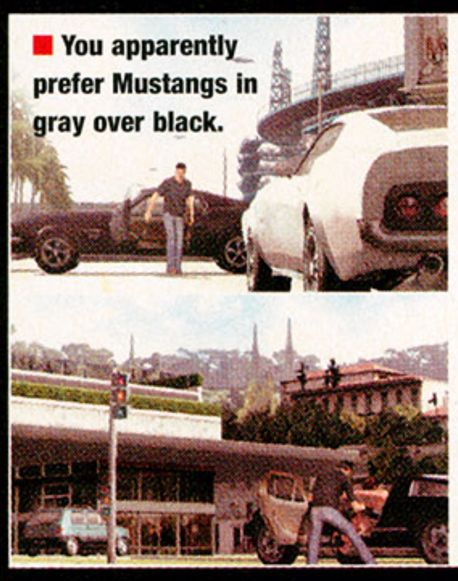
EGM: We didn't think so. Was there any room for improvisation when you were recording *Driv3r*?
MM: Yeah, it was very encouraged. There's a few times where I try to give Tanner some humor that wasn't on the page. I got a big kick out of it.

EGM: Are you planning to be involved in any games based on films you've been in? Like *Reservoir Dogs*?
MM: There's a company that's trying to make a *Reservoir Dogs* game based on the character of Mr. Blonde, and I'm really looking forward to that. I don't know if they're gonna be able to do it, though. You see, even though Artisan [Pictures] owns the rights to *Reservoir Dogs*, they don't own the rights to the characters. Those belong to Quentin. It's complicated, but I know they'd like to do some sort of a prequel to the film.

EGM: Do you know anything about the *Kill Bill* videogame that's supposedly in the works?
MM: I've heard Quentin talk about it, that he struck a deal with somebody for a videogame. But I don't really know the details of that.

EGM: Okay, last question: So, what's your poison?
MM: There's a drink that originated in a club in Miami called the "Mr. Blonde." It's half Jack Daniels and half lemonade. So I got a drink named after me, for godsakes, and it's not bad.

—Justin Speer and Ethan Einhorn



■ **You apparently prefer Mustangs in gray over black.**

Maximum OverDriv3

After launching off a blocky PS1 ramp, the *Driver* series has hurtled through the air in poetic slow motion for more than three years. It's about to touch down with the jarring crash of its incredibly complex physics system. But that's not all that's new. There's a lot of ground to cover: three cities (Miami, Nice, and Istanbul), 156 square miles of pavement, and 35,000 buildings. This time Tanner's packing a variety of hand cannons—and a grenade launcher you'll likely want to nickname. Plus, *Driv3r* lets you get behind the wheel of a fully articulated 18-wheeler.

■ **Check out the extended version of our interview with Michael Madsen at extra.egmmag.com.**

>> ATARI HAS SIGNED RIDLEY SCOTT ASSOCIATES TO MAKE A THREE-MINUTE LIVE-ACTION FILM INSPIRED BY *DRIV3R*. THE MOVIE (THE FIRST OF THREE) CAN BE VIEWED ON DRIV3R.COM.... >>

THE MOST ACCLAIMED GAME OF THE YEAR

FIVE OUT OF FIVE STARS
EDITOR'S CHOICE
– GameSpy

93%
EDITOR'S CHOICE
– PC Gamer

90%
– Gamers.com

94%
– Gamerankings.com

FIVE OUT OF FIVE
– GamePro.com

3 1/2 STARS OUT OF 4
– The Associated Press

4 1/2 STARS OUT OF 5
EDITOR'S CHOICE
– Computer Gaming World

9.3
EDITOR'S CHOICE
– IGN

9.0
EDITOR'S CHOICE
– Gamespot

A+
– UGO

FIVE OUT OF FIVE STARS
– Maxim

90%
– Game Informer

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NVIDIA
Answer The Call

TEEN
T
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
Blood
Violence

PC CD-ROM SOFTWARE

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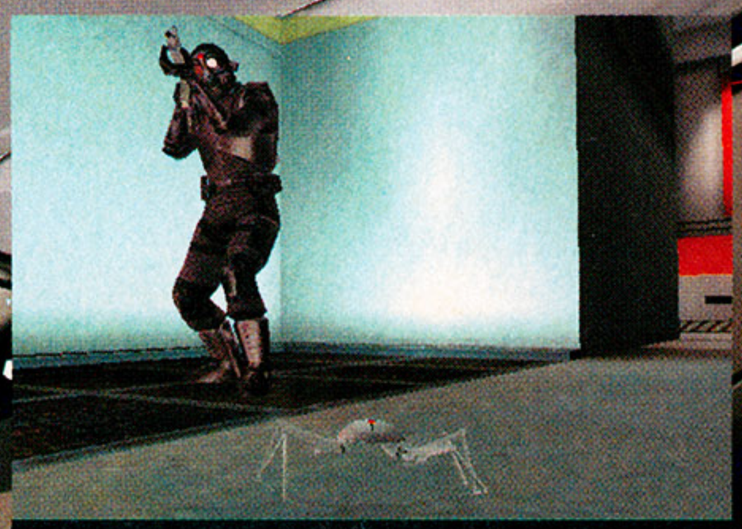
INSPECT YOUR GADGETS

Looking up Bond's arsenal for 007: Everything or Nothing

You've heard about the unprecedented star power in James Bond's newest action game, *007: Everything or Nothing*: the golden pipes and chiseled likenesses of actors Pierce Brosnan and Willem Dafoe, the alluring theme song by Mya, the snappy script penned by Bond scribe Bruce Feinstein...the list goes on and on. But all that, you could argue, is just a distraction—the gadgets are the real stars, saving Bond's skin time and time again. After all, what would 007 be without the ever-resourceful Q, the gent responsible for all of Bond's spy gear? So we stopped by the engineering genius' workshop for a briefing on the lethal tools you'll use in Her Majesty's service this February on PlayStation 2, Xbox, and GameCube.

—Shawn Elliott



Spider cam

Sure, James has an assortment of punishing melee moves and an arsenal of machine guns to match, but by keeping to the shadows and using nanospiders, he won't always need 'em. Spot a sniper, but don't want to risk a duel? Send one of these little buggers behind him and blow him out of his perch...although Q would prefer you returned all equipment in pristine condition.

PS2 Network Adapter

Bond may get all the latest gear, but agents Suggs and Lotus have got each other. Whether online (PS2 only) or splitting a screen, you and your accomplice must pool ammo, provide covering fire, and otherwise collaborate to survive co-op mode's 12 unique missions. Plus, puzzles go beyond releasing locks by standing on pressure plates. In one level, for instance, Suggs must deactivate a series of lasers as Lotus' life hangs in the balance. And since you share respawns, the life you save may be your own.

>> EA SPORTS HAS ANNOUNCED *FIGHT NIGHT 2004* FOR PS2 AND XBOX. IT REPLACES THE *KNOCKOUT KINGS* LINE AND CARRIES A NEW CONTROL SCHEME AND CAREER MODE.... >>

Rubinovski SF-63

Subtlety is a luxury that a spy can't always afford. If ex-KGB agent Nikolai Diavolo's armored column reaches the Kremlin, this behemoth may be your only hope of preventing a coup. Use the SF-63's metal-melting nanoshells to bring whole buildings down on Diavolo's henchmen. Dosvedanya!

Triumph Daytona superbike

Sometimes two wheels are better than four—even when you happen to drive an Aston Martin Vanquish equipped with an acid slick that dissolves vulcanized rubber. When it comes to chasing runaway trains and racing over the rooftops of Peruvian villas, what could be better than a Daytona superbike that spews flames from either side of its fairing? Now you've got a license to kill *and* break traffic laws.

GBA

No, Q Branch isn't facing budget cuts—connecting your GBA to your GC lets MI6 give Mr. Bond mission advice and on-the-minute updates.

>> ROCKSTAR'S PS2 STEALTH GAME *MANHUNT* HAS BECOME THE FIRST GAME TO BE BANNED IN NEW ZEALAND. NZ OFFICIALS CITED IT AS "INJURIOUS TO THE PUBLIC GOOD".... >>

EENIE, MEENIE, MINEY, BOOM.

They're back. And they're itching for action. With tons of planets to conquer in a whole new gigantic galaxy, you better believe Ratchet & Clank are gonna sink their teeth into some destruction. Ummm, destruction. With weapon upgrades, mods, armor and the ability for Ratchet to get stronger and smarter as the game goes on, this could get uglier than The Grandmas In Bikinis Calendar after-party. Speaking of parties, there's also hoverbike racing, space combat and gladiator arenas. As far as weapons and gadgets go, Ratchet & Clank are stacked with over 50 new ones, along with unlockable upgrades, so by the end of the journey, you'll go through more weapons and gadgets than a hungry fat man will go through chicken wings at lunch. Lock and load, baby, lock and load. **www.us.playstation.com**

RATCHET & CLANK

GOING COMMANDO

LIVE IN YOUR WORLD.
PLAY IN OURS.™

TEEN
T
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Mild Violence

PlayStation®2

INSOMNIAC GAMES

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1080° Avalanche

Kirby Air Ride

Mario Kart: Double Dash!!

If you've got high-speed Net access, are halfway tech savvy, and have a thirst to play these Nintendo games online, you've got options....

ONLINE THIS MONTH

Getting your GameCube online

Aside from an occasional round of *Phantasy Star*, GameCube gets about as much online action as your 98-year-old grandpa. Thankfully, some part-time programmers/full-time fans have taken matters into their own hands.

By taking a trip to WarpPipe's web reservoir at warppipe.com, you'll be introduced to a process called tunneling, which tricks games playable via LAN (local area network) into thinking they're jacked into another GameCube in your living room. In reality, you'll be competing against players across the globe in *Mario Kart: Double Dash!!*, *Kirby Air Ride*, and *1080° Avalanche*.

All you need is a PC, a GameCube, a GC broadband adapter, a high-speed Net connection, and a router/hub to link it all together. (If you don't already have one set up, be sure to establish a network between all your machines, as your PC has to be able to share data with the Cube.) There are a variety of hook-up options, but ultimately you'll need to download the WarpPipe beta software to your PC. The only catch is you'll have to find buddies on message boards by swapping IP addresses because there are no matchmaking options yet (though they're promised soon).

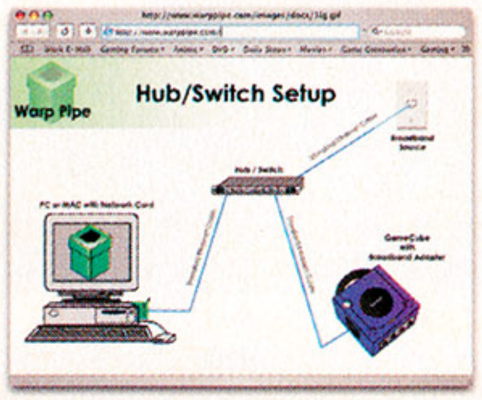
Since it's still in beta, WarpPipe isn't without a few hiccups. If your Net connection is slower than 128 kbps upstream bandwidth (or 256 kbps for *Kirby*), you risk the chance of being randomly dumped from races. Firewalls also pose a threat to compatibility, so it's best to turn them off first.

—Jon M. Gibson

On egmmag.com

Drop by extra.egmmag.com to read our full ***Prince of Persia*** and ***Sonic Heroes*** **Afterthoughts** interviews, our chat with the developers of ***Driv3r***, and full transcripts of our talks with the creators of Konami's ***Neo-Contra*** and ***Nanobreaker***.

Head over to WarpPipe's website for the full how-to.



must-hit websites

arcadetones.emuunlim.com — You know you want your Nokia cell phone to ring with the sweet, sweet sounds of *The Legend of Zelda*, *Pac-Man*, and *Tetris*. Hit this site, download the tunes, and relive classic gaming moments whenever you get a call.

theadvantageband.com — A lot of bands cover 8-bit Nintendo-era game music, but few do it with as much soul as the Advantage, a West Coast foursome that belts out soaring renditions of music from *Mega Man 2*, *Wizards & Warriors*, and *DuckTales*.

flashplayer.com/games/supermariorampage.html — Ever wonder just how unstoppable Mario would be if, well, he had a shotgun? Now you can test your killographic hypothesis, thanks to this rather, erm, grisly web game.

PC GAMING UPDATE

Princes and Knights

KOTOR

Lots of things get lost in translation when console games are ported to PC—little niggling things like, oh, fun and enjoyment. Fortunately, two of the best ports of the year have just come out for PC, and not only was nothing lost, but things were actually gained.

Knights of the Old Republic fares the best. A lot of this success is due to the game's mouse-driven interface. While the character and inventory screens work well on Xbox, navigating all that information is an effortless breeze when you can just click on the thing you want and then jump right back into the action and story. The load times are insanely fast, and developer BioWare has also done a great job with the PC graphics by ratcheting up the texture detail and polygon count to something well over jaw-droppingly gorgeous. At standard resolutions, the game looks great. At higher resolutions, it's a marvel. And as an added bonus for PC gamers' patience, there's a brand-new PC-exclusive Rodian vendor selling high-end equipment (at high-end prices).

Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time benefits from the graphical upgrades the PC offers, and somehow a game that is among the most beautiful console titles in years gets even richer on PC. This is also the rare platformer that survives the move to PC in terms of gameplay, with keyboard and mouse controls that actually work well. The only downside is that the first and second *Princes*, unlockable on the console versions, didn't make the jump. Then again, PC gamers could play those games years ago. *—Robert Coffey, Computer Gaming World*

Prince of Persia

>> BY THE TIME YOU READ THIS IN LATE JANUARY, *DESTRUCTION DERBY ARENA*, THE LATEST ENTRY IN THE CAR-CRUNCHING *DESTRUCTION DERBY* SERIES, WILL BE ON STORE SHELVES.... >>

KICK ASH.

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TEEN
T
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Blood
Mild Language
Violence

PlayStation.2

KONAMI

www.konami.com/usa

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ROOM WITHOUT A VIEW

The nightmare starts at home in Silent Hill 4

Henry Townsend hasn't set foot outside his small apartment for five days. It's not that he doesn't want to leave, it's that he can't. His windows won't open. He can't break through the walls. The phone's dead, and nobody seems to be able to hear him outside. The front door? It's bound by heavy chains and sealed with a series of huge locks. But there just might be a way out after all. Henry woke up this morning to find a huge, gaping hole in the back of his bathroom wall. God only knows how it got there, who made it, and what's on the other side—but chances are it's going to be bloody, loathsome, and disturbing beyond belief. After all, this is *Silent Hill*, the survival-horror series so f'ed up that it makes *Resident Evil* look like friggin' *Scooby-Doo*.

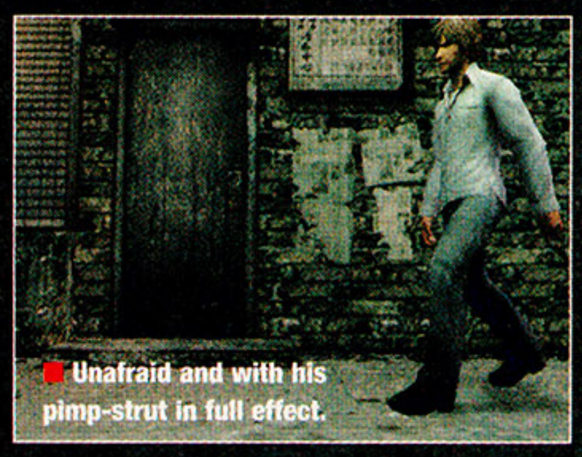
Along with the surreal opening scenario, Konami has divulged the first cryptic details concerning the fourth episode of this psychotic series. Unlike the third chapter, which formed a concrete link with the original title, this fall's *Silent Hill 4* for PS2 and XB will be another departure, a new plot luring unfamiliar characters to the twisted New England town. According to Producer Akira Yamaoka, players can still expect familiar elements—maybe even a few unexpected revelations. "There's not a direct connection in terms of the story lines. You might, however, see some people that you would never expect. There's a common theme of the alternate world of *Silent Hill*."

Surprisingly, the producer has an even more shocking admission: "I can say that the story is darker than the past games."

Since *Silent Hill 2* contained a scene where a pyramid-headed beast violently raped a creature composed of adjoined sets of mannequin legs (it was, y'know, an embodiment of the protagonist's sexual frustration with his wife who was, um, crippled by illness before he ended her life), a darker story is a bold claim indeed. "Henry can't stop himself from climbing into the hole, as he badly wants to get out of his apartment," explains Yamaoka. "The theme of the story lies in solving the connection between the room where you live and the alternate world. Why is the alternate world tied to your room?" The real question remains: Do we really want to find out?

—Justin Speer

Mulling over one of the game's puzzles.



Unafraid and with his pimp-strut in full effect.

"I like your game. All mine are sticky..."

Atrocity Exhibition

Silent Hill is infamous for disturbing scenes like those seen here. In the most cringe-worthy one, an anguished nurse suffers a gruesome end when blood erupts from every pore.

SILENT HILL GUEST BOOK

The folks drawn to town in earlier games were ordinary people who ended up in a nightmare world that they helped shape with their darkest thoughts. Meet 'em here:

Harry Mason
After his wife passed away, Harry's adopted daughter begged to visit the town. If he only knew about her dark link to the place.

James Sunderland
JS received a letter in his dead wife's handwriting, inviting him to the place where they shared so many great memories. Bad idea....

Heather Morris
This 17-year-old mall rat was pulled into Silent Hill without warning. A dark secret dwelt within her, and it wanted out very badly.

>> ROCKSTAR ANNOUNCED THAT AN XBOX VERSION OF ITS STEALTH-ACTION GAME *MANHUNT* WILL ARRIVE "SOMETIME IN 2004." NO WORD ON ANY CHANGES OR UPGRADES YET.... >>

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EVERY WARRIOR IS A LEGEND.

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TEEN
T
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Violence
Suggestive Themes

PlayStation®2

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THE RUMOR MILL

Gossip that sees its shadow

q-mann GROUNDED

Open the blast doors, Q-followers. 'Tis I, your rumor ranger for this tour de speculation, The Quartermann, and I've got a fresh bounty of the finest conjecture and gossipitude in Gamingsberg. Best part is, it's yours for only $19.95! So call now! Wait, what? I've gotta give this stuff away for free? Well, OK, I'll do it, but only because I like you. Don't go tellin' your friends that I did this. One per customer, ya hear! Oh, and if you wanna send ol' Q your comments, point 'em to quartermann@ziffdavis.com.

—The Q

If PStwo is as cute as this PSone, we'll take three. Wait, make that four.

Nintendo goes mobile

While its luck with home consoles hasn't always been the best, Nintendo has done one thing right for over a decade—portable gaming. Facing competition this fall from Sony's PlayStation Portable (PSP), the company is taking measures to ensure it stays king of the hill. The Q's inner circle of gossip fiends are whispering that part of Nintendo's big plan for this May's Electronic Entertainment Expo is the introduction of a new mobile device. And describing it as mobile means it'll be more than just another Game Boy (anyone need a new cell phone?).

PSP games ready up

Think about it: Less than a year from now, you're going to be able to buy a PlayStation Portable that's somewhere between PS2 and Sega's Dreamcast in terms of power. And just a few of the titles The Q-meister hears are coming to the system are the next *SSX* and a version of *Madden NFL 2005* from Electronic Arts, a remake of Konami's *Castlevania: Symphony of the Night*, a portable *Harvest Moon* courtesy of Natsume, and a few titles from Koei.

Get ready for PStwo

Just as PS1 morphed into a new monster when PS2 came along, rumor has it Sony is working on a smaller and cheaper version of PS2 called (naturally) PStwo. But a few features of its papa may end up missing in the name of cost savings, so you're not gonna want to sell off your original machine just yet.

New Deus Ex coming

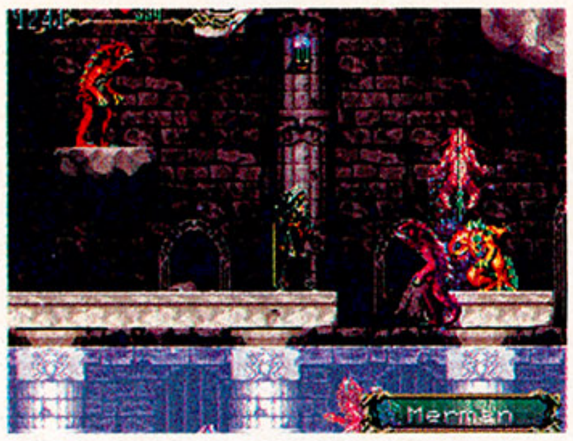
It feels like *Deus Ex: Invisible War* just came out yesterday, but The Q hears there's another console *Deus Ex* in the works already. This time it's a PS2 multiplayer shooter entitled *Clan Wars*.

Sequel Watch 2004

That's right, squirrelly gamers, new installments of your favorite games are so close, you'll soon be able to taste 'em. Right now, yours truly is monitoring the situation on *SOCOM III*, *Jak III*, *Sly Cooper 2*, a new *Need For Speed* (which I'm hearing is *not* a sequel to *Underground*), *Def Jam Vendetta 2* (which will probably include some *GTA*-inspired gameplay), and *Warhawk 2* (sequel to an early PS1 favorite).

Battlefield 1942 PS2 details

The Q admits, his addiction to online gaming is strong. Very strong. And the new installment of military shooter *Battlefield 1942* in development for PS2 will likely become a necessary fix. The hot rumor right now is that PS2 players will be able to play against PC gamers. Not since *Quake III* on Dreamcast has the feat been attempted (and even then, not to great success), but let's hope that feature stays in, eh?



PSP could use a little *Castlevania*.

TIDBITS FOR THE PORTABLE-MINDED PLAYER IN YOU

Square Offers Brave Shot

If you're a member of Verizon Wireless' Get It Now service, you can download Square Enix's first U.S. cellphone game, the space shooter *Brave Shot* ($2 monthly or $5 unlimited use). More titles will follow in the months to come.

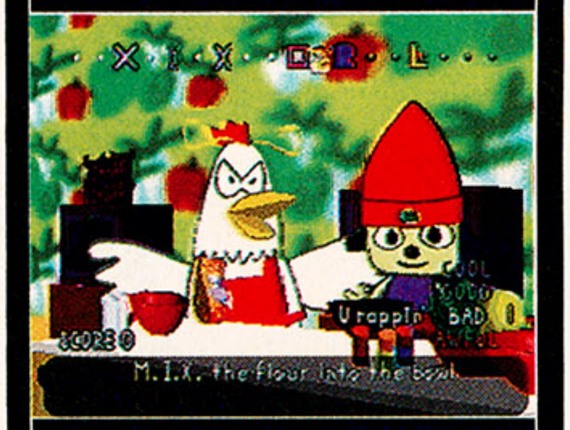
Oops! Game Boy

We imagine Nintendo's new limited-edition onyx/platinum Game Boy Advance SP color scheme is the result of a major factory screwup, like the one that led to those Uh-Oh! Oreo cookies, only not as delectable. Should you actually *like* how this bastardization of science looks, you can pick one up beginning February 9 for 100 bucks.

DESERT ISLAND GAMES
ED ROBERTSON

Every 30 days or so, we corner a celeb or game designer and ask, "If you were marooned on a deserted island, what three console games would you want to wash ashore?" This month, we strand Barenaked Ladies' co-frontman and guitarist Ed Robertson, whose tune "One Week" is featured in *Karaoke Revolution* for PlayStation 2. ***—Marc Saltzman***

Soul Calibur II (PS2/XB/GC)
"You gotta have a good fighting game—and this is the best. Maybe I could teach some of the indigenous wildlife to hold a controller."



Parappa the Rapper (PS1)
"Because it allows me to [get more music into] my desert-island music collection. Great design, great music, thoroughly fun."

Gran Turismo 3 A-spec (PS2)
"You'd want a good, pure driving game. Plus, you'd likely be battling your own sanity after a while—this would help push it over the edge."*

* Robertson adds: "Oh, also, could *Halo 2* accidentally wash up onshore when it comes out?"

>> *MEGA MAN MANIA*, A GBA COLLECTION OF FIVE PREVIOUS GAME BOY *MEGA MAN*S FEATURING BOTH ORIGINAL AND UPDATED GRAPHICS, BUSTS INTO STORES MARCH 23.... >>

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Juicy Fruit

grapermelon
Artificially Flavored
12 PIECES CHEWING GUM

TWISTED
GOTTA HAVE ~ SWEET?

FISTS OF FURY

Forearmed is forewarned in Namco's fisticuff-filled fantasy, Breakdown

Mind matters in Namco's first-person adventure *Breakdown*—due for Xbox in March. As amnesiac ass-kicker Derrick Cole, you must discover how you became imprisoned in a top-secret lockup, find the truth behind your emerging superpowers, and answer the most important question of all: Who the @#!% are you?

Make no mistake, though; mind won't triumph over matter when it comes to the kiss of hot lead or the caress of a rock-hard fist. There will be brawls aplenty in *Breakdown*. Gunfights, too.

The game's plot unravels slowly, and Namco refuses to give details away; a 45-minute playtest with *Breakdown* failed to pierce its veil of secrecy. Hirofumi Kami, the game's producer, won't even explain the significance of its title. "Sometimes, you have to break things down and build them back up in order to figure them out," he says cryptically. When asked about Cole's past, Kami responds, "If I told you, I'd have to kill you."

Expect weirdness. Cole's first major act in *Breakdown* is to puke a mickey-slipped meal into a toilet. While he flees down one of the game's gray metal hallways, the screen warps and flashes. Cole becomes momentarily disoriented, and just when it seems another lunch might be lost, he raises his hand to reveal he's developed, at least temporarily, X-ray vision. Whether this is an illusion, an indication of his insanity, or what is uncertain, and Kami won't comment about it.

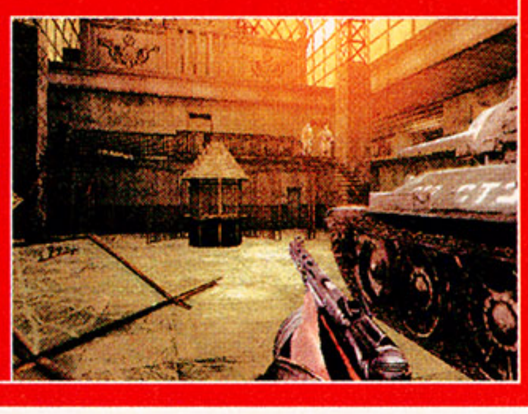
"Sometimes, you have to break things down...to figure them out." *—Producer Hirofumi Kami*

Breakdown's physicality threatens to rival its mindgames; Cole can use any weapon against normal foes, but the enigmatic T'lan Warriors (seen above) must be defeated in first-person hand-to-hand combat. Before the mystery is solved, there will be plenty of opportunities to fight and flee, complete puzzles of the jumping and brainteasing varieties, and more. Kami also promises "a very unpredictable plot twist during the second half of the game," which ensures this mystery won't easily be sleuthed. *—Greg Orlando*

LI'L PREVIEWS: SOMEDAY THIS WAR'S GONNA END...OKAY, MAYBE NOT

CALL OF DUTY: FINEST HOUR

PS2/XB/GC • Activision • Summer 2004 — Okay, it's slightly complicated. Activision has two WWII first-person shooters named *Call of Duty*: one recently released for PC, and one coming for consoles. And both are *Medal of Honor*-ish titles sending you on a tour of European hot spots.

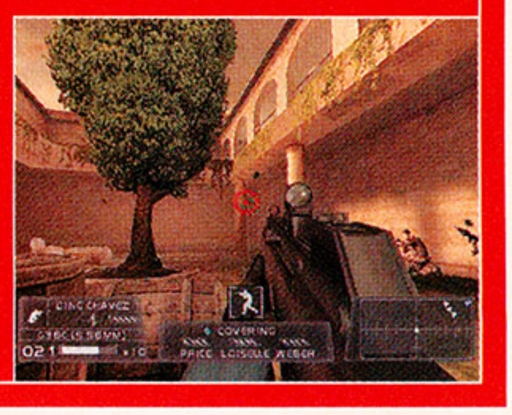


BEHIND ENEMY LINES

PS2/XB • Acclaim • June 2004 — Look familiar, RPG fans? It should: This WWII action game uses the same engine as *Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance*. The only difference: instead of weird fantasy realms, you're stormin' Normandy and Market Garden. A gelatinous-cube-free zone, in other words.

TOM CLANCY'S RAINBOW SIX 3

PS2 • Ubisoft • Spring 2004 — Clancyphiles worried about Ubi hack-jobbing their Xbox tactical shooter to PS2 should put down the flashbang now. Not only are the graphics nearly unscathed, there are also new features like original scripted events and a split-screen co-op mode. Eight-player online is on hand, too.



>> SEGA HAS RELEASED TWO NEW FREE DOWNLOADABLE QUESTS FOR THE XBOX VERSION OF *PHANTASY STAR ONLINE*. ONE MAY EVEN HAVE A CHARACTER FROM *NIGHTS* (SATURN) IN IT.... >>

the Game Designers Studio
SQUARE ENIX

who are you?

Embark on a journey of epic proportions to gather the precious myrrh droplets. Beware, countless challenges stand in the way of your caravan. Face them alone, or for the first time ever, battle with friends by connecting up to four Game Boy® Advance systems. Final Fantasy: Crystal Chronicles. Only for Nintendo GameCube.

TEEN
T
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
Fantasy Violence

FINAL FANTASY CRYSTAL CHRONICLES

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THE HOT FIVE

The newest in new on the most popular games on the horizon

(Vote for your favorite games each month at egmmag.com. Why? Because you want to be heard! That's why.)

The Master Chief suggests you play the original *Halo* again while you wait for the sequel.

HALO 2

XB • Microsoft • 2004
Master Chief rocks the vote once more, landing in our top spot for the third month in a row. You guys can't seem to get enough of *Halo 2*, and sadly neither can we! The original has received its first price cut in more than two years, so everyone out there pop that sucker in and start imagining shiny new vehicles and weapons, destructible environments, altered gravity, re-educated A.I., and hot human-on-Covenant multiplayer action on Live. Mentally affix a '2' to the title and you're practically there. (Or head over to bungie.com and watch the latest "Making of *Halo 2*" video.)

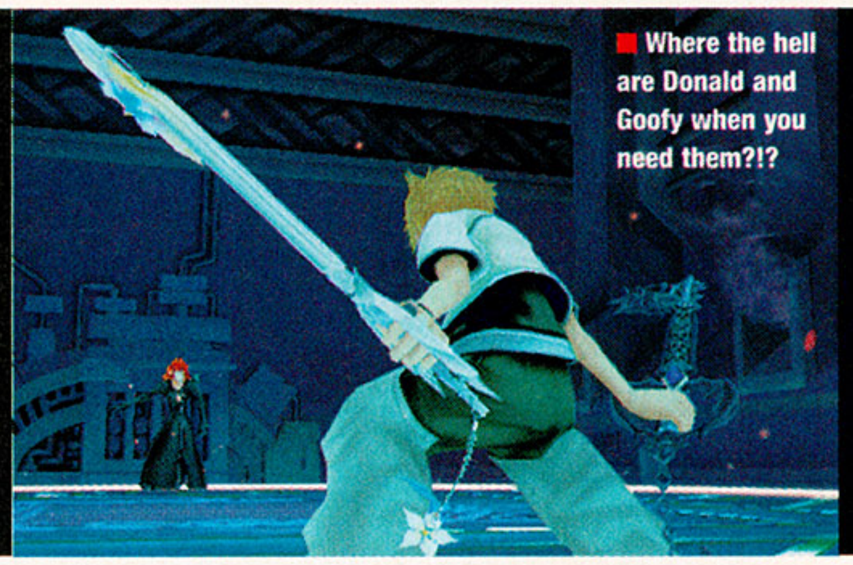
Want new shots of *MGS3*? Awww, go climb up a tree.

METAL GEAR SOLID 3: SNAKE EATER

PS2 • Konami • Late 2004 — Still we continue our starvation death march toward *MGS3*'s release date. Konami hasn't even thrown a snack-size salamander of info our way, so this month it's come down to speculation—or hallucination. We might've licked the wrong tree frog. Everything's green....

KINGDOM HEARTS II

PS2 • Square Enix • TBA — We had some great new *Kingdom Hearts* info ready to go this issue, until someone slipped us a Mickey. Now all we can remember is that the story for the GBA game *Kingdom Hearts: Chain of Memories* will tie in with the PS2 game (*Final Fantasy VII*'s Cloud helps link them together). Also, we hear Disney's modest mouse will be capable of doling out some serious damage in *Kingdom Hearts II*. So expect some heavy backup from the big M.



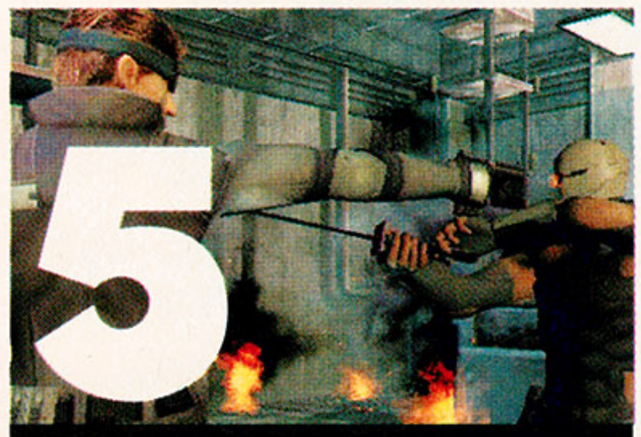
Where the hell are Donald and Goofy when you need them?!?

Leon is probably peeing his pants right now.

Sienna Guillory's Jill looks pixel-perfect in the next *RE* film forray.

RESIDENT EVIL 4

GC • Capcom • Late 2004 — While *Resident Evil 4* has a potentially infected Leon fighting swirling black clouds of vapor that form into phantom attackers and disappearing dogs, the upcoming *Resident Evil: Apocalypse* movie pits a genetically altered Alice (Milla Jovovich) with superhuman strength and reflexes against the unstoppable Nemesis. Fans who can swallow this far-flung premise will be rewarded by glimpses of characters from *RE3*, a helicopter-versus-girl chase sequence straight out of the intro to *RE Code: Veronica*, and some really bitchin' S.T.A.R.S. vehicles. Maybe Milla'll kick a zombie dog in the face in slow motion again, too. There's always hope....



METAL GEAR SOLID: THE TWIN SNAKES

GC • Konami • March 2004 — Want an additional bit of info that you won't find in the *Twin Snakes* preview on page 46? Well, the once-promised GC-GBA link feature has recently been canned. So much for connectivity being "the way of the future," eh?

>> THQ HAS ANNOUNCED A GAME BASED ON MARVEL COMICS' GRITTY VIGILANTE THE PUNISHER. THE VOLITION-DEVELOPED SHOOTER WILL COME TO PS2 AND XB IN THE FALL.... >>

COMING SOON

Gaming gold at the end of the rainbow

■ **Keep those pot handles turned in while playing *Firefighter F.D. 18*.**

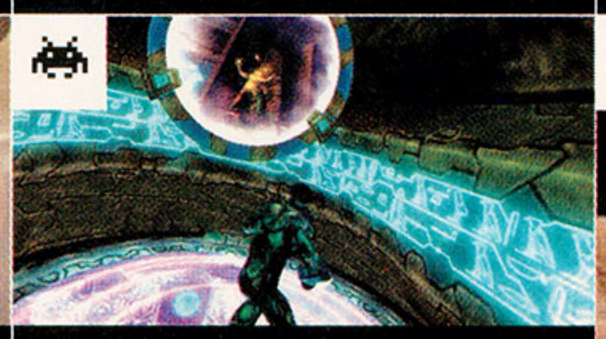
MARCH 2004

All-Star Baseball 2005
PS2/XB • Acclaim — Leading *All-Star*'s charge for a pennant are an all-new fielder camera and deeper dynasty mode.

Blood Will Tell
PS2 • Sega — Limbless ronin Hyakkimaru must recover his humanity (or is that manhood?) from body-part-snatchin' demons.

Cy Girls
PS2 • Konami — Femme fatales Ice and Aska tackle terrorism in both the real and virtual world. Cyber-splendid.

Drakengard
PS2 • Square Enix — Combines aerial combat à la *Panzer Dragoon* with *Dynasty Warriors*' swift swordplay.

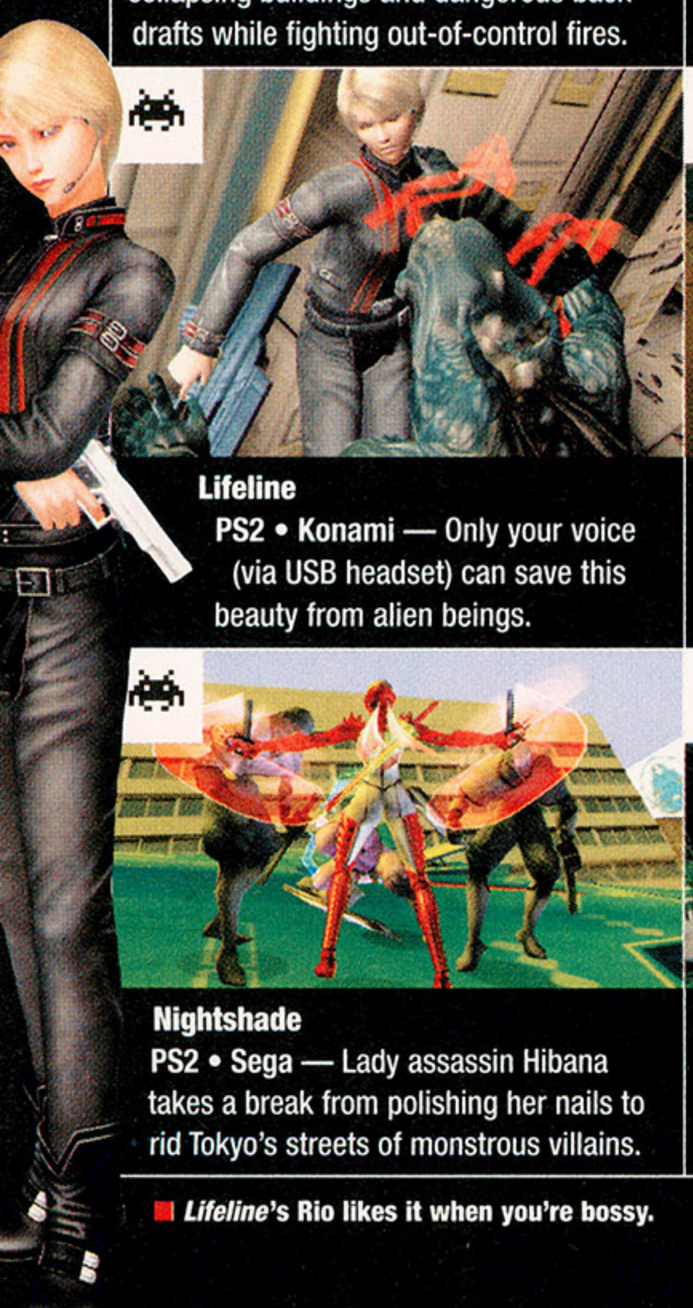


DroneZ
XB • Metro3D — Defend cyberspace with the help of a real-world hacker. Sounds suspiciously like *Tron* to us....

EA Sports Fight Night 2004
PS2/XB • EA Sports — Bye-bye *Knockout Kings*, hello *Fight Night*. EA's brand-new boxing franchise enters the ring with 32 legendary boxers, including the likes of Roy Jones Jr. and Muhammad Ali. Plus, there's the extra treat of online play for PS2 owners.

Firefighter F.D. 18
PS2 • Konami — Rescue survivors from collapsing buildings and dangerous backdrafts while fighting out-of-control fires.

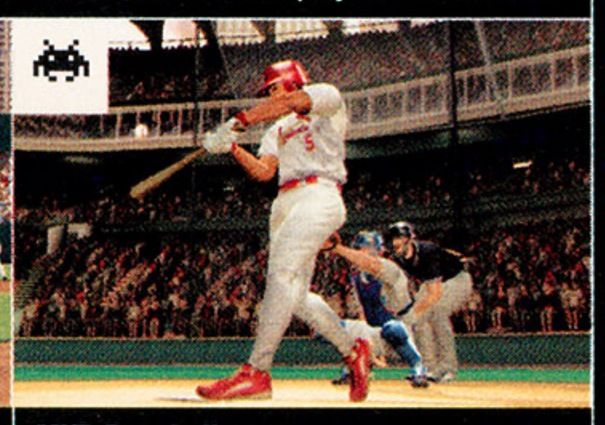
Ghost Master
XB • Empire — Build an army of unusual suspects and scare the bejesus outta every man, woman, and child in town.



Lifeline
PS2 • Konami — Only your voice (via USB headset) can save this beauty from alien beings.

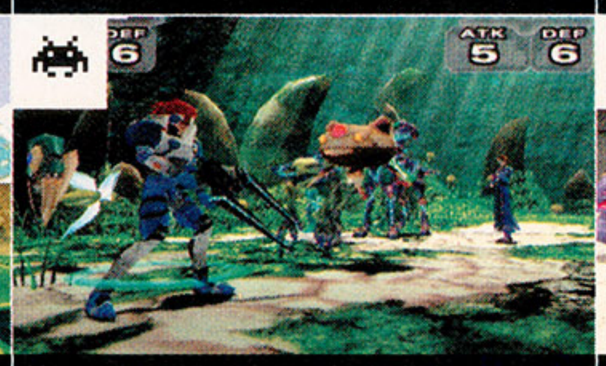
Micro Mayhem
XB/GC • Jaleco — Take toy cars for a spin across the carpet in this wee racer (just keep 'em away from Ryan Dunn).

MLB 2005
PS2 • 989 Sports — *MLB*'s starting lineup now features all-time greats such as Ty Cobb, Babe Ruth, and Jackie Robinson.



MVP Baseball 2004
PS2/XB/GC • EA Sports — *MVP* steps up to the plate with improved batting mechanics and an online mode (PS2 only).

Nightshade
PS2 • Sega — Lady assassin Hibana takes a break from polishing her nails to rid Tokyo's streets of monstrous villains.



Phantasy Star Online Episode III: C.A.R.D. Revolution
GC • Sega — Strategic online card battles await.

Pokémon Colosseum
GC • Nintendo — Bring the pocket-monster arena outta GBA and into the Cube.

River City Ransom
GBA • Atlus — Free the students of River City High in this port of the much-loved RPG/fighting game for NES.

■ ***Lifeline*'s Rio likes it when you're bossy.**

■ **In the *Pokémon Colosseum*, you call 'em as you see 'em.**

ATTACK OF THE 2003 GAMERS' CHOICE AWARDS

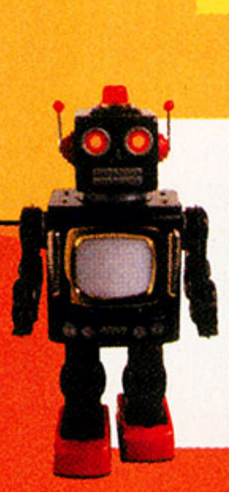
Run for your lives! Last year's top titles are locked in ground-quaking combat. We—and you—pick the victors

Oh the humanity! Why, year in and year out, must we pit our favorite games against one another in gruesome combat that only leads to severe property damage, acute stomach cramps, and a totally bitchin' confetti-drenched gala in which we dole out our nifty robot-shaped awards to the games that conquered?

Because you readers love this crap, that's why. Don't play like you don't: You guys picked the mightiest of last year's mighty too, courtesy of an online ballot on www.1UP.com. Find out which way your vote rocked on page 88.

If our awards seem screwy compared to yours, that's because we categorized ours differently, breaking them into a multiplatform category, system-exclusive games of the year, and one overall game of the year. We also disqualified our Game of the Year from all other categories to ensure one title doesn't tyrannically lord over the other games, forcing them to harvest plutonium for its atomic weaponry.

This year also sees the return of our Tobias Bruckner Memorial Awards for Excellence in the Field of Crapulence. Tobias who? Just know that he's a very bad man who represents very bad games. Find out how bad on page 86. The National Guard is on standby. ➤



Why all the robots?
Winners of our Gamers' Choice Awards each receive Robot the Awards Robot™, a fully functional robo-trophy suitable for bronzing and/or bomb defusal.

Illustrations by Aaron Piland

PLAYSTATION 2 GAME OF THE YEAR:

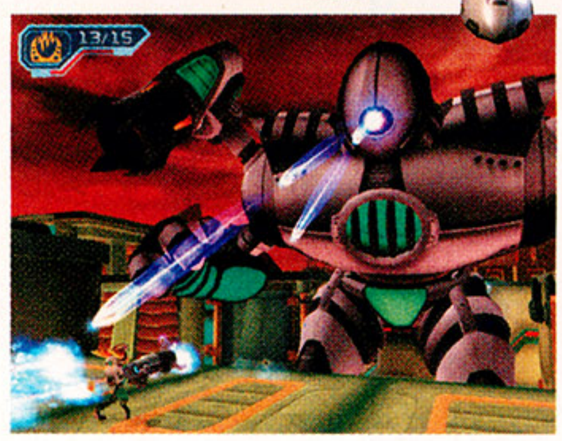
RATCHET & CLANK: GOING COMMANDO

Sony CEA • Runner-up: SOCOM II

It seems like only yesterday that we first met Ratchet and Clank, but their second outing, *Going Commando*, is no quickie sequel. Developer Insomniac Games painstakingly fine-tuned everything we love about the original, making saving the universe with an arsenal of big guns more satisfying than ever (even if hero Ratchet is still kinda corny).

Accepted by Ted Price, president of developer Insomniac
"None of us can remember a year when so many great games were released, and therefore we are deeply honored to receive [this award]."

■ **Attitude adjustment: For the sequel, robo-bud Ratchet lost the smarmy 'tude and gained a hero's sensibility. We actually like him now.**



WHY IT CONQUERED...

1 Upgrade or Die
Using and upgrading Ratchet's arsenal of kick-ass weaponry adds a satisfying, more RPGish hook to the already great jumping-and-blasting action. Ratchet gains experience and hit points, making him an even match for tougher opponents later on.

2 Appetite for Destruction
We could—and do—spend hours formulating new ways to decimate Ratchet's foes. Is it better to run in guns blazing, toss out a few bombs, or sit back and send robotic spiderbots to do your bidding? The mind, it boggles.

3 It's a Big, Dangerous Universe Out There
Larger worlds with loads of gladiatorial arena challenges, microgames, and space shooting add maximum variety. If it had a racing game, it would have everything. Wait—it *does* have a racing game!

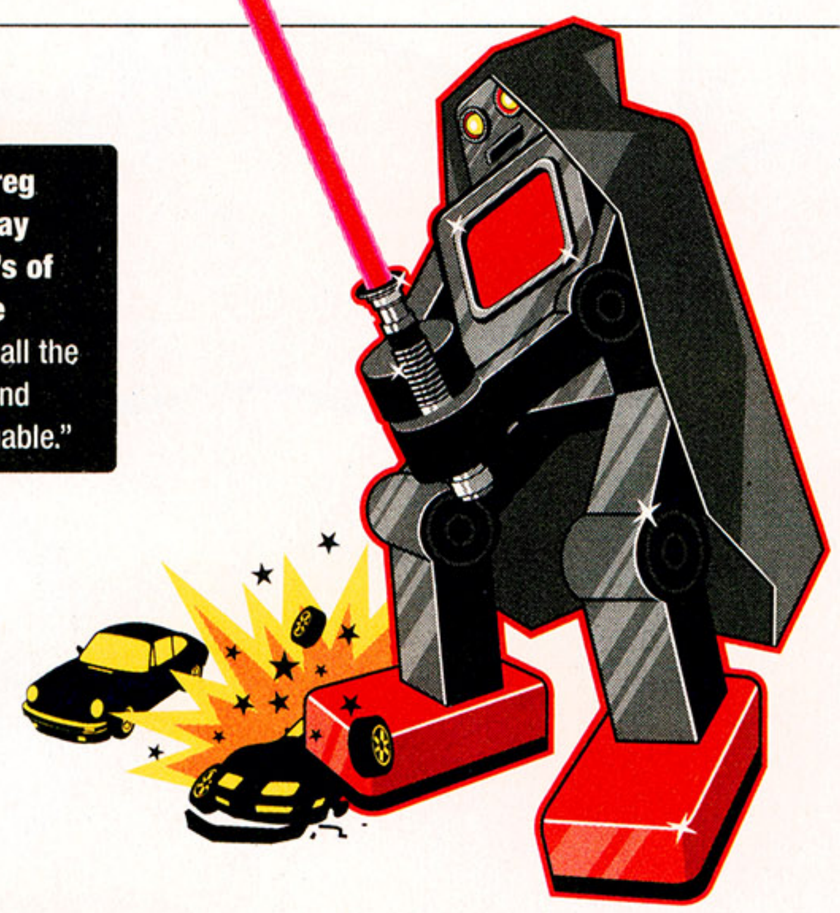
XBOX GAME OF THE YEAR:

STAR WARS: KNIGHTS OF THE OLD REPUBLIC

LucasArts • Runner-up: Project Gotham Racing 2

We'd almost given up hope that *Star Wars* games could be this good (or that RPGs could be this original). But then *Star Wars: Knights of the Old Republic* energized everything. Now Xbox owners have another game worth mentioning in the same sentence as *Halo*. (As in, "I can't believe you haven't played....") And *Knights*' story is full of so many cool twists, it's nearly as great as the original *Star Wars* thrillogy.

Accepted by Dr. Greg Zeschuk and Dr. Ray Muzyka, joint CEO's of developer BioWare
"We'd like to thank all the fans, whose input and support were invaluable."



WHY IT CONQUERED...

1 It's Star Wars, Stupid!
You'll travel to such famous spots as Tatooine, train with the Jedi, let wookiees win, take on rancors, and swing a mean lightsaber. Princess Leia's dual-Cinnabon 'do is the only thing missing.

2 Have It Your Way
Knights of the Old Republic lets you play on the light or dark side of the Force. You'll have frequent chances to crush the weak or save the innocent—and each path leads to a different ending.

3 It's Got Character
You take control of a party of three characters at once (from a pool of 10)—each has noteworthy side quests you'll want to explore. Completists will spend a long time seeing everything. ➤

IT WAS A GOOD YEAR FOR...

...fighting games
Between *Soul Calibur II* and the budget-priced *Virtua Fighter: Evolution*, couch-potato brawlers got to pummel pals in the absolute best kung fu games ever.

...online gaming
People who play with people really got to step up their game last year, thanks to killer online content and ramped-up clan and tournament support from Microsoft and EA.

...the platforming genre
This once-moldy genre is starting to smell winter-green fresh, thanks to bold new concepts in killer titles like *Ratchet & Clank: Going Commando*, *Prince of Persia*, and *Jak II*.

KONAMI

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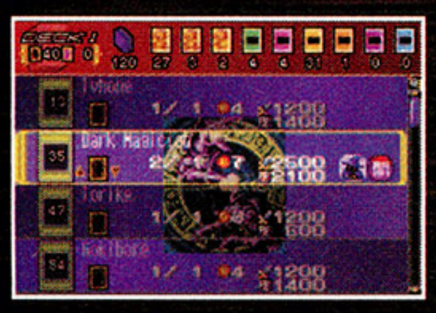
OFFICIAL VIDEOGAME OF THE 2004 YU-GI-OH! TOURNAMENT!

SHONEN JUMP'S

遊☆戯☆王 Yu-Gi-Oh!™

World Championship Tournament 2004



EVERYONE

CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Mild Fantasy Violence

This Summer, the title of King of Games is up for grabs in the **2004 Yu-Gi-Oh! Videogame tournament!** Get the game, hone your dueling skills and see if you've got what it takes to be the #1 videogame duelist in the world.

Find out more details at www.konami.com/yugiohtournament2004

GAME BOY ADVANCE™

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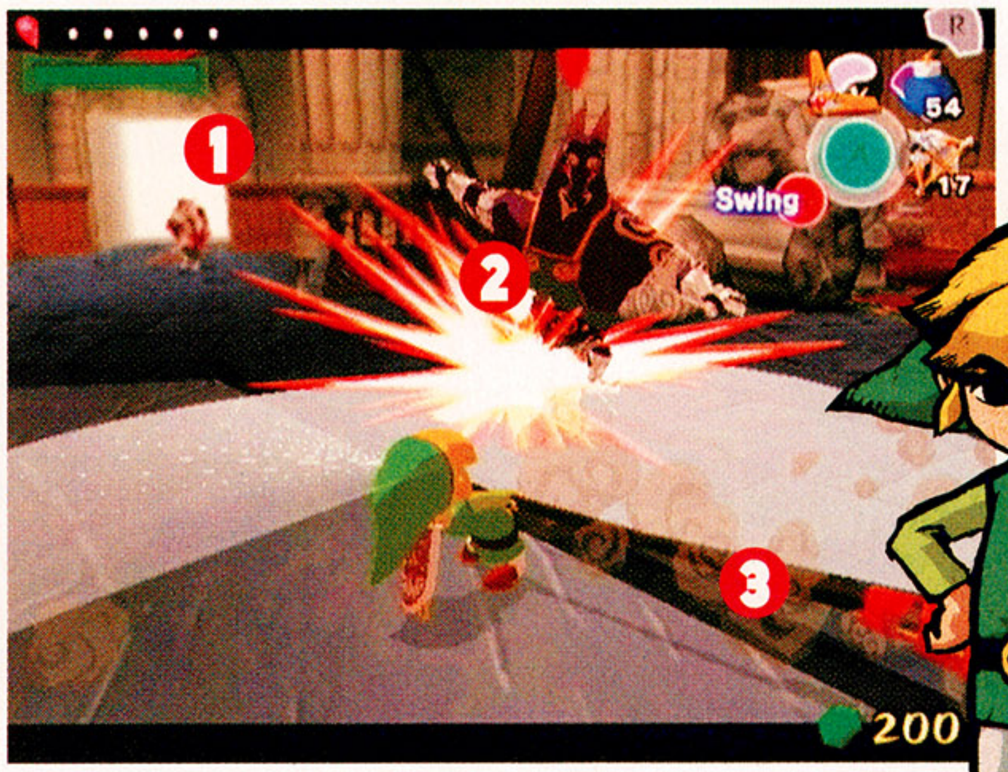
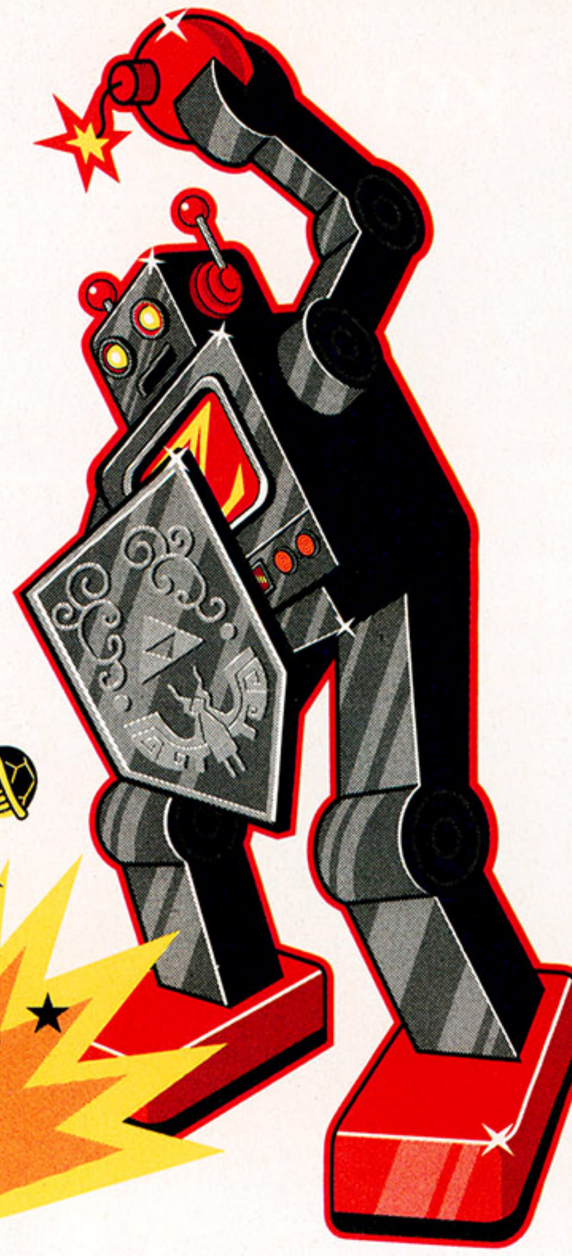
GAMECUBE GAME OF THE YEAR:

THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: THE WIND WAKER

Nintendo • Runner-up: Mario Kart: Double Dash!!
Sure, series hero Link looks a day out of day care, and his world's got a total Saturday morning 'toon thing happening, but if you dismiss our GC Game of the Year's captivating high-seas adventure as kid's stuff, we'll kick your ass up and down the playground. Then we'll tell our mommies.





■ **Link's got moxie written all over his saucer-eyed face. His changing expressions are one of *Wind Waker*'s most endearing features.**

Accepted by Nintendo of America translator Bill Trinen
"After all the uproar over the new look, it's great to see *Wind Waker* acknowledged for what it represents: another solid entry in the *Zelda* franchise...."

WHY IT CONQUERED...

1 Dungeon Master
Between long stretches at sea in a chatty boat (*Wind Waker* goes overboard on oceanic exploration), you'll spelunk some of the most puzzling dungeons in the series.

2 Good Fight
He may look like a toddler in tights, but Link knows how to handle himself with new moves that make all the combat fun. And boss battles are as spiffy as ever.

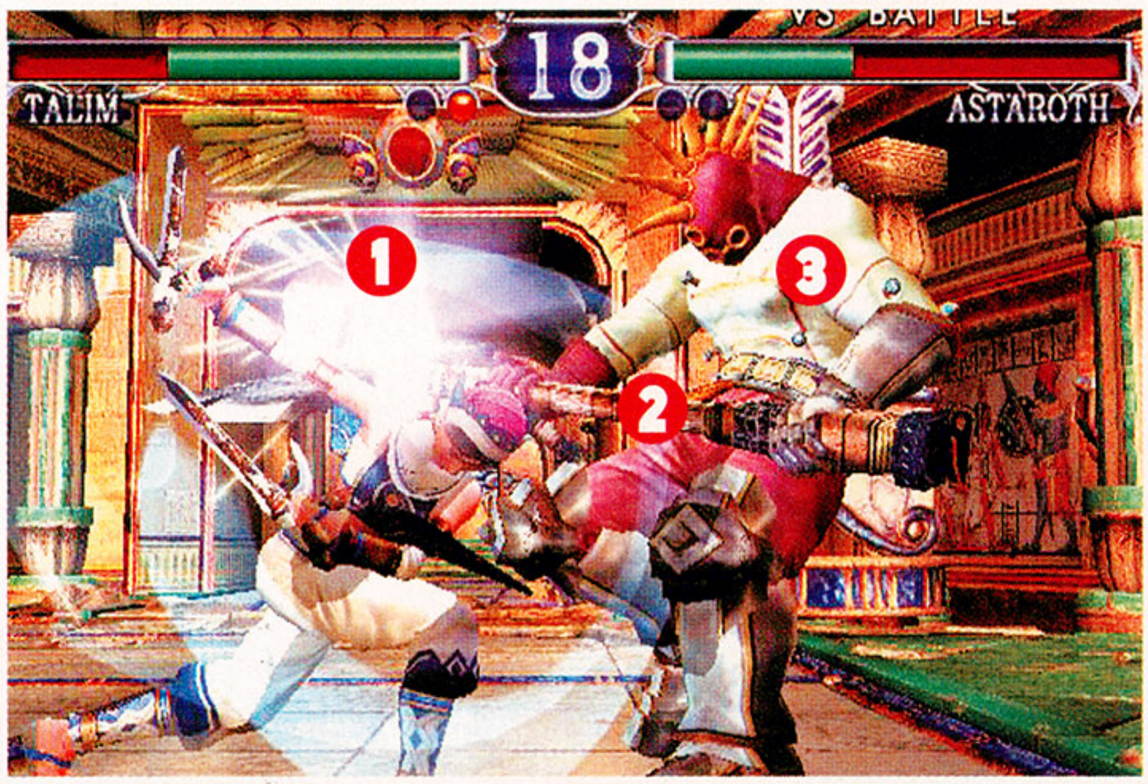
3 'Toon Up
Wind Waker's Disney-flick graphics and animation—once a cause for nervous grumbles from hardliner fans—take your breath away. It's like playing a cartoon.

MULTIPLATFORM GAME OF THE YEAR:

SOUL CALIBUR II

Namco • Runner-up: SSX 3
Soul Calibur II talks to our inner street fighter...then kidnaps it—forcing us to play this masterpiece of a fighting game for hours and even days at a time, forgoing food, sleep, and other basic needs that let us live and smell OK. Sorry—it's that good.

Accepted by *SC2* Producer Hiroaki Yotoriyama
"Thanks to this award, I think I can convince upper management to let us develop the ultimate multiplatform game [we've] been dreaming of. I'd love to tell you about it, but then I'd have to kill you ninja-style, like Taki."



WHY IT CONQUERED...

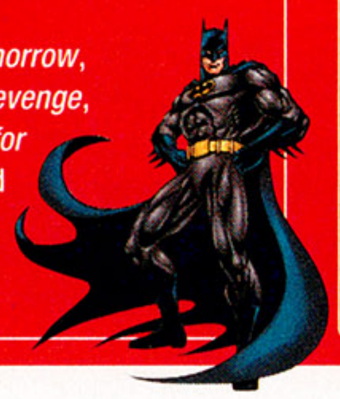
1 Hey Good Lookin'
Graphics aren't important.... OK, that's bull—they are important, and *Soul Calibur II* has some of the best. When the sparks start flying around the motion-captured fighters and beautifully rendered arenas, you'll be a believer.

2 Hammer Time
Like *2001: A Space Odyssey* taught us, fisticuffs are sooo last era and weapons = evolution. Here, you'll find axes, swords, spears, and more. Play through the weapon master mode to get the really deadly stuff, like broomsticks and tambourines.

3 Circus of the Stars and Freaks
No other fighting game this side of *Street Fighter* has such an eclectic cast, from *Tekken* warrior Yoshimitsu to system-exclusives Spawn (XB) and Link (GC) to pirates and a dude in fetish gear and a codpiece. ➤

IT WAS A BAD YEAR FOR...

...superheroes
Batman: Dark Tomorrow, *X2: Wolverine's Revenge*, *Aquaman: Battle for Atlantis*—all used their powers for lameness rather than good.

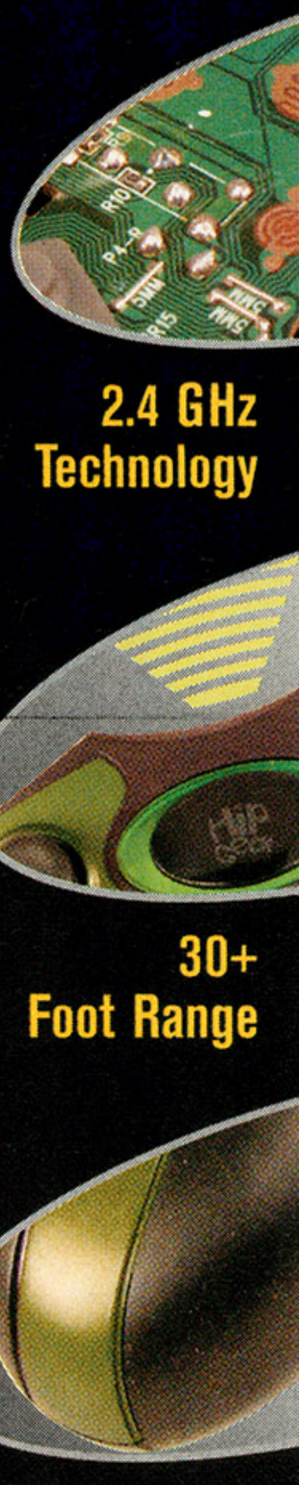


...the GameCube
Despite a recent rally in sales, Nintendo's troubled console lags in the No. 3 spot behind Xbox and is seeing less and less support from third-party publishers.

...massively multiplayer online role-playing games
Despite its on-fire cred in the PC realm, *EverQuest* fizzled when it hit PS2. Maybe *Final Fantasy XI* (PS2) and *True Fantasy Live Online* (XB) will get the party started.

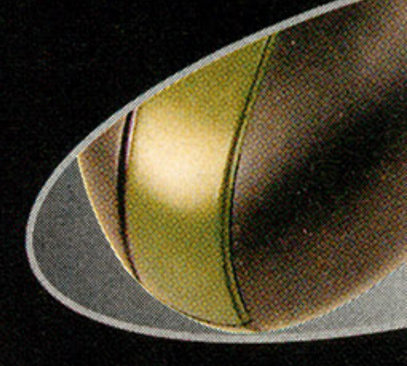
Go 2.4GHz Wireless!

Life Lesson #5 - Press PAUSE on special occasions.



2.4 GHz Technology

30+ Foot Range



Rubberized Grips

Batteries Included - 4AA

"Get Hip, live happily ever after"

- Chicago Tribune

The all new Hip Gear

2.4 GHz Wireless Controller

Available for:

Xbox™

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5 Year Guarantee

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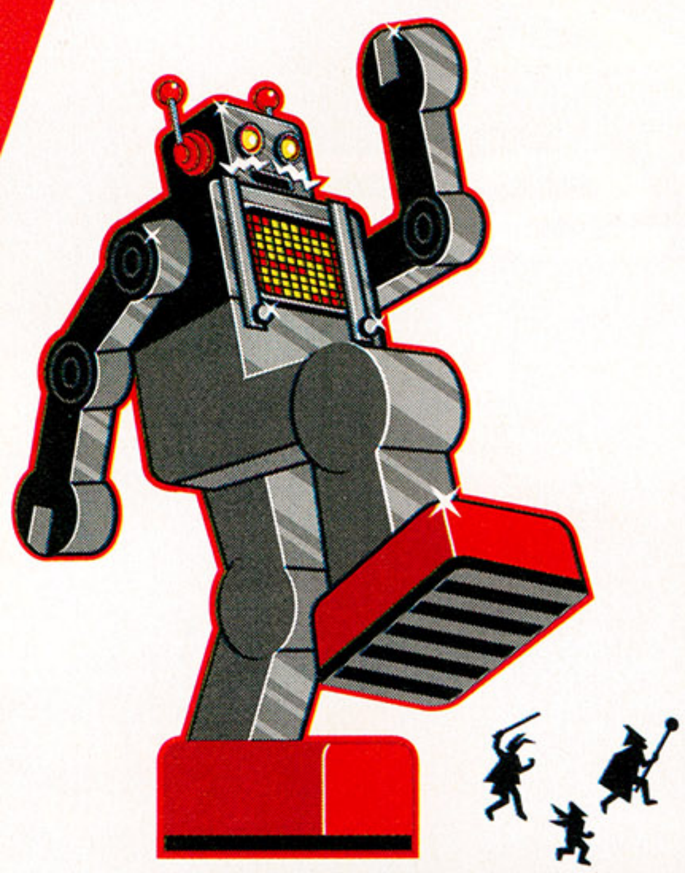
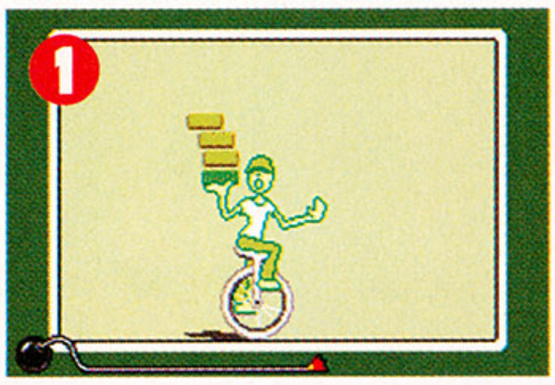


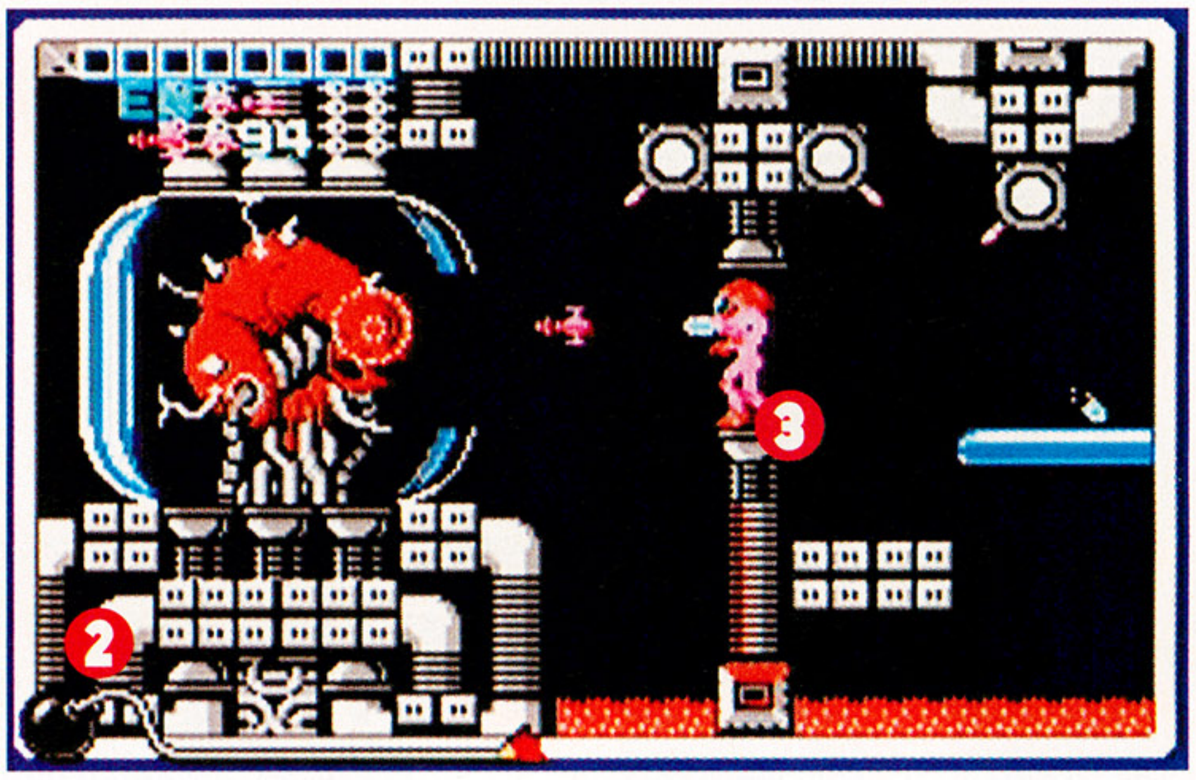
GAME BOY ADVANCE GAME OF THE YEAR:

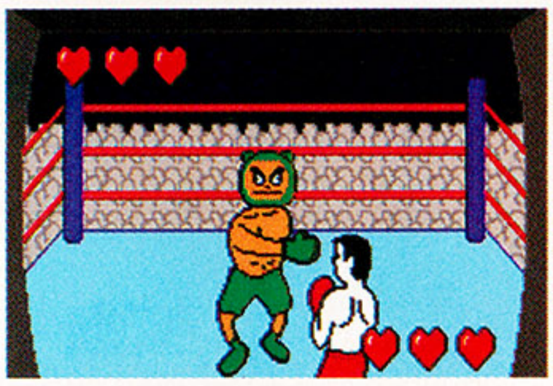
WARIO WARE INC.: MEGA MICROGAME$

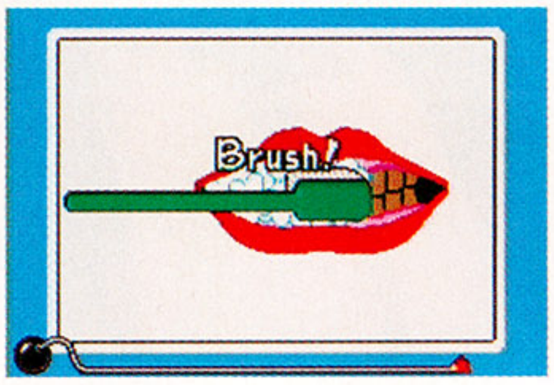
Nintendo • Runner-up: Final Fantasy Tactics Advance

Take-it-with-you masterpieces *Mario & Luigi: Superstar* and *Final Fantasy Tactics Advance* top a lengthy list of absolutely top-notch 2003 GBA titles, but in the end we just couldn't resist *Wario Ware*'s hyperactive minigames, which deliver a zillion twitchy thrills for attention-deficit gamers.









Accepted by WarioWare President Wario (courtesy of Nintendo)
"Hey, it's about time I got some big-shot award. Everyone knows my game is the best. I'm just glad I'm not a loser like all you other guys."

WHY IT CONQUERED...

1 Small Wonders
Wario Ware doesn't skimp on its lickety-split minigames: You get more than 200 of the little suckers, from simple shooters to dental-hygiene simulators.

2 Think Fast
You get no time to think, so it's a good thing all the games are instantly decipherable. That's what makes 'em so charming—and perfect for the a.m. commute.

3 Good Ol' Games
Wario Ware even packs classic-themed minigames—based on everything from *Metroid* to *Punch Out!*—that'll give Nintendo dorks pangs of sweet nostalgia.

COMMENDATION FOR TECHNICAL ACHIEVEMENT:

KARAOKE REVOLUTION

PS2 • Konami • Runner-up: Eye Toy (PS2)

A copy of *Karaoke Revolution*: $60. A PS2: $180. Mocking your male pals as they sing Madonna's "Like a Virgin": priceless. Thanks to its nifty "voice analyzer" technology, *Karaoke Revolution* transforms your living room into a happenin' karaoke bar.

Accepted by *Karaoke Revolution* Producer Michael McHale
"We weren't sure how people were going to react to a singing game, and we certainly didn't expect any awards, [so this] is very exciting.... We hope the industry will continue to develop innovative and unique game products."

WHY IT CONQUERED...

1 You're an American Idol?
Well, here's your chance to prove it. Hit the correct notes and you'll send your score and the crowd into a tizzy. Stink up the joint and they'll boo you right off the stage.

2 Solid Gold
Revolution features more than 35 songs, and planned sequels will deliver many additional tunes.

3 Opposites Attract
Any game that helps balance a party's male-female ratio has a special place in our software library. Just look at that crowd; we didn't even have to bribe these ladies with (much) free booze.

4 Testing...1, 2, 3
A USB headset (bundled with the special $60 version of the game) acts as your microphone, leaving both hands free for those crucial air-guitar riffs. ➤

THE TOP 5 NEWS STORIES OF 2003...

5 Little-guy game systems
Infinium Labs, DISCover, Tapwave...never heard of them? That hasn't stopped these small-fry companies from readying game hardware to challenge the big boys.

■ Infinium's Phantom

4 Crystal catches Lara
When Lara Croft's debut PS2 adventure, *Angel of Darkness* shipped late, buggy, and blah, publisher Eidos swiped the series' reigns from developer Core and handed them to Crystal Dynamics. ➤

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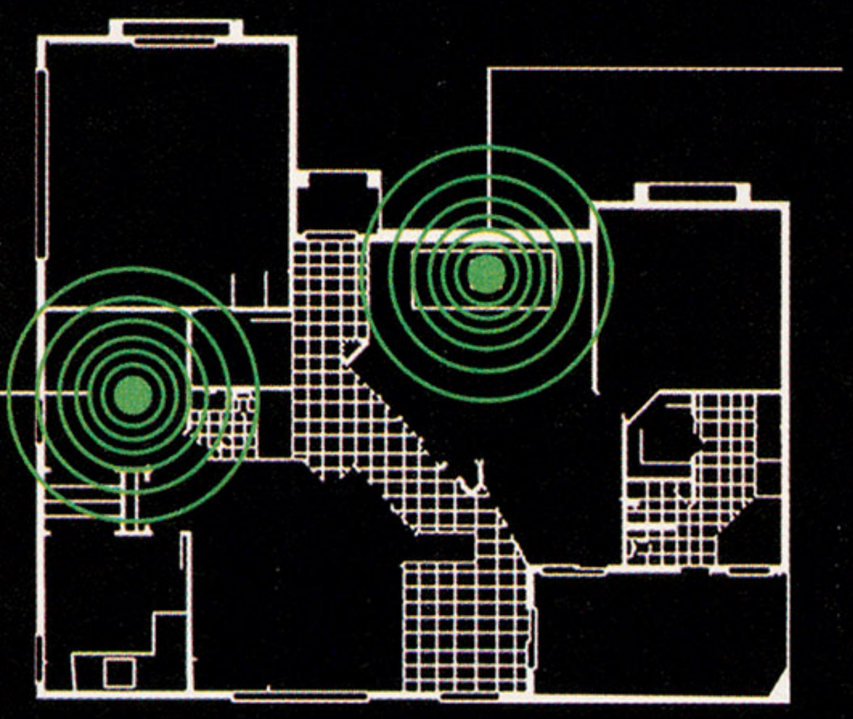
[Base Unit]



plug in here

broadband internet location:

[NW sector: Long Origin = 7.43958333,

Lat Origin = 46.95240556]

play here

gaming console location:

[SE sector: Long Origin = 7.43922453,

Lat Origin = 46.95294523]

[Remote Unit]

simple to use: no programming
or software installation required

WIRELESS

NETEXTENDER™

The Wireless Net Extender™ from Nyko® is the easiest way to wirelessly connect your PlayStation®2, Xbox® or PC to a broadband internet connection. With its compact, plug and play design, you benefit from secure data encryption with no annoying software installation, or latency issues. In gaming terms, this means you will be up and running in no time, playing online in any room without messy wires. Find out more: nyko.com/netextender

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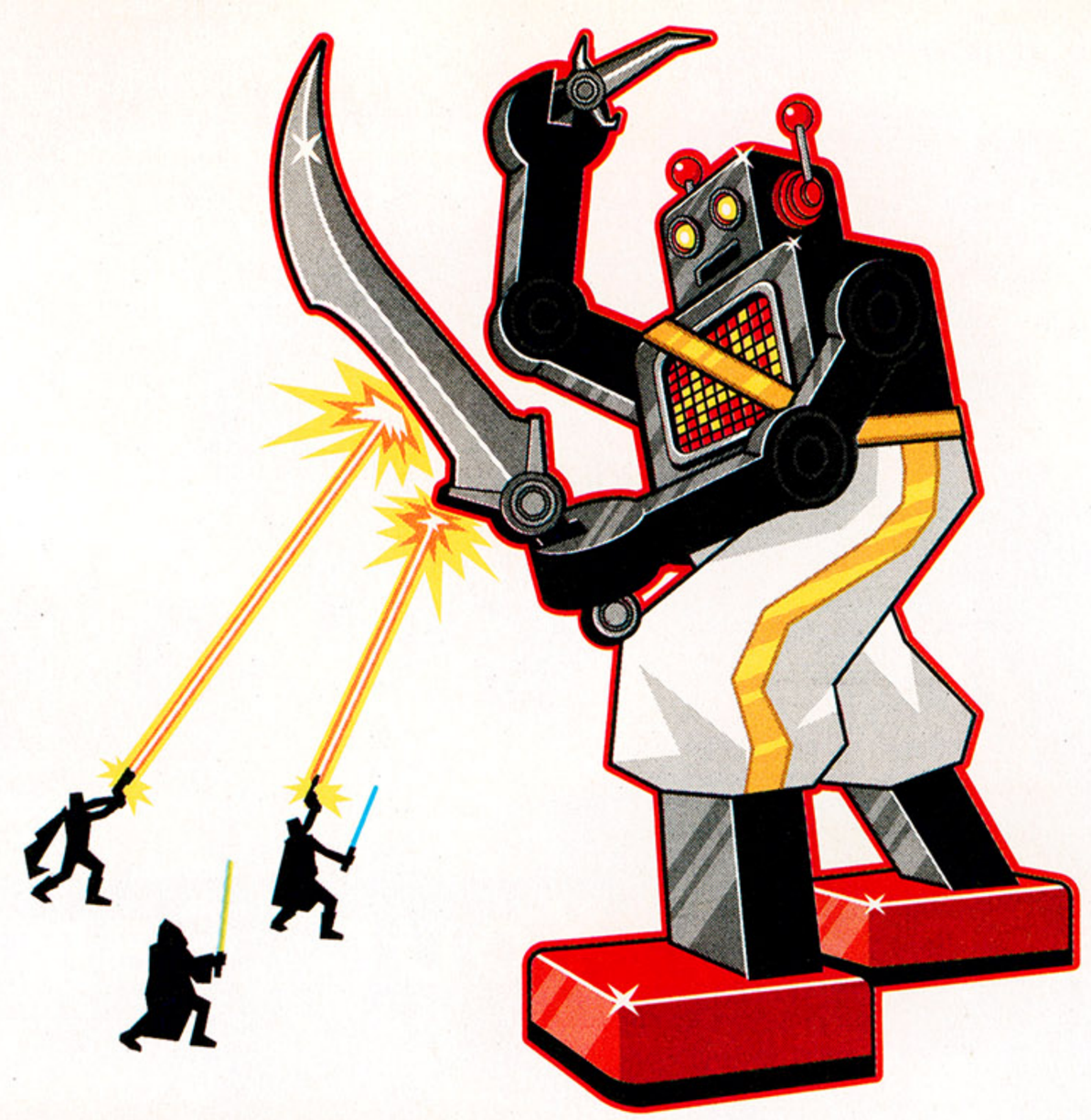
GAME OF THE YEAR:

PRINCE OF PERSIA



PS2/XB/GC • Ubisoft • Runner-up: Knights of the Old Republic (XB)

A prince among action-platformers, *Sands of Time* is spellbinding. You *are* the sultan's son, determined to fulfill your destiny, even if that means fiddling with time in the process—and taking your phone off the hook. Unfortunately, the game isn't selling too hot. Buy it. You don't know what you're missing.

WHY IT CONQUERED...

1 Art of Fighting

With the ability to retrace every saber stroke—courtesy of a magic time-tripping dagger—there's no excuse for less-than-perfect swordplay. A fiend sneak in a hit while you were filleting one of his friends? Turn back the hands of time for a second chance.

2 Smooth as the Sultan's Silk

The prince's acrobatics wouldn't be half as amazing if it weren't for *Sands of Time*'s lifelike animation. As he runs across walls, each footfall stirs up dust, and the tapestries sway gently as he glides past them.

3 With the Greatest of Ease

Combat is only part of the equation. Whether shimmying across crumbling ledges, using poles as makeshift trapezes, or walking heel-to-toe along narrow beams, the Prince uses every part of the environment to get where he's gotta go.

4 Splendors of Babylon

The lavish graphics and majestic scope of *Sands of Time*'s levels don't just make the game look gorgeous, they give it a pulse. She's a beaut. ➤

Accepted by Jordan Mechner, creator of *POP* and creative consultant
"It's an honor to accept this award on behalf of the entire team in Ubisoft Montreal—many of whom are [now] enjoying long-dreamed-of vacations."

➤ THE TOP 5 NEWS STORIES OF 2003... (CONT.)

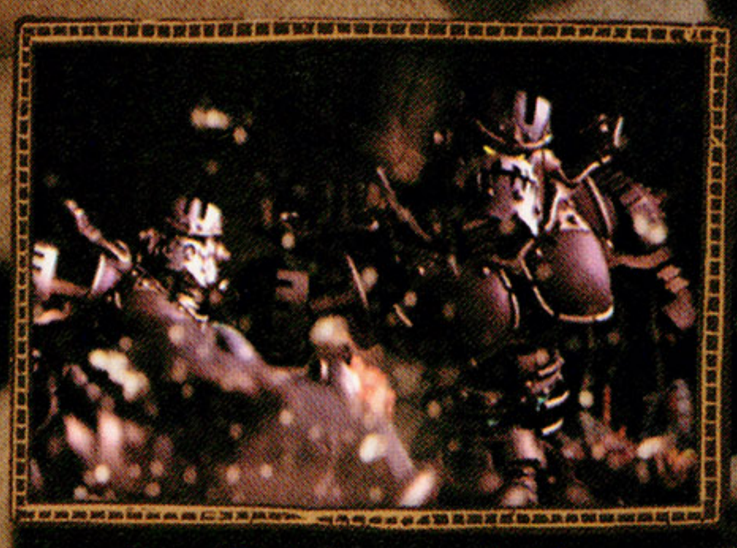
3 Square and Enix collide
When the world's two mightiest RPG powerhouses finally set aside their rivalry and joined forces, you'd better believe it was big news.

2 Nintendo shows us the light
In any other year, the debut of a lit-up version of Nintendo's mega-successful Game Boy—the GBA SP—would be the bombshell news story. But...

1 Sony announces its portable
...Sony stole Nintendo's thunder with its announcement of the PSP, a handheld system supposedly nearly as powerful as the PS2. Will it steal GBA's lunch? Find out when PSP hits this Christmas.

MAXIMO vs ARMY OF ZIN™

Arsenal of devastating combos and attacks.



Army of Zin declare war on the living.

Unleash the terrifying power of Grim.

MAXIMO
IS BACK
AND THIS TIME
IT'S WAR.

AVAILABLE JANUARY 2004

TEEN
T
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
Animated Blood
Violence

PlayStation 2

CAPCOM
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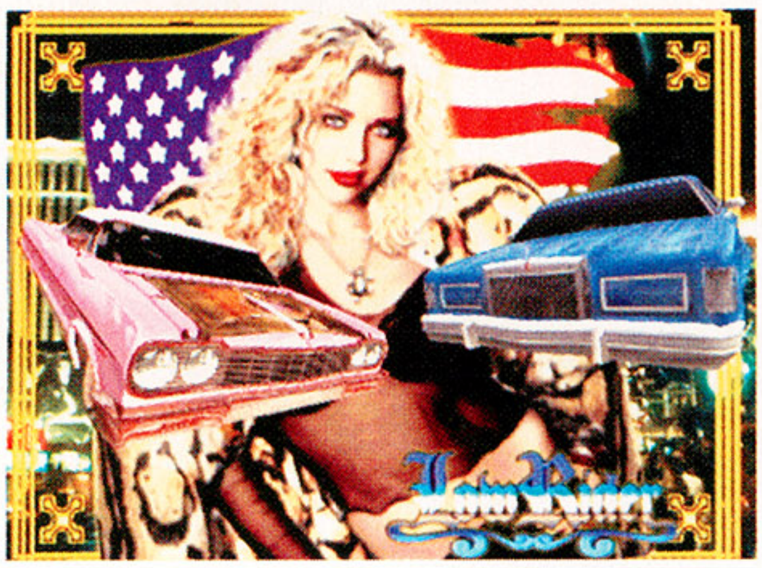
EGM'S SECOND ANNUAL
TOBIAS BRUCKNER MEMORIAL AWARDS
FOR EXCELLENCE IN THE FIELD OF CRAPULENCE

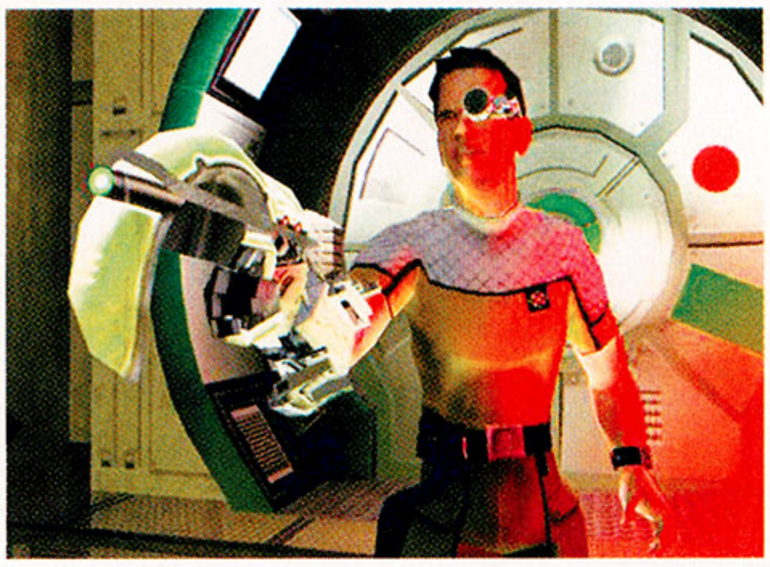
Tobias Bruckner, arch-villain of 2002's terrible *Turok: Evolution*, is *EGM*'s Whoopi Goldberg—the only star bright, sparkly, and insipid enough to head up our awards for egregious crapulence in the field of game design for two years in a row. After all, it takes the worst to represent the worst, and Bruckner, a time-traveling, racist, dinosaur-riding, cyborg cavalry captain, is the shining lighthouse on the craggy bluffs of god-awful. And this year's Tobies go to...

BEST WORST LOADING SCREEN: LOWRIDER



The Virgin Mary, Satan, and some snakeskin-coat-wearing chick with an American flag behind her all help make PS2 hopping-car simulator *Lowrider*'s loading screens an example to the videogame industry—an example of how to make something so horribly bad, it's kinda good.

TURD ROCK FROM THE SUN: RTX RED ROCK



Reminding us of GC adventure *Metroid Prime*—but in a bad way—this PS2 shooter sends its junior-astronaut hero to alien-besieged Mars, where he finds sci-fi clichés, crummy scenery, and busted boss battles while wearing an eyepiece that lets him chat with invisible turd-shaped rocks. No, really.

NO-TALENT AWARD: AMERICAN IDOL

Not even fork-tongued demon-spawn Simon Cowell himself could come up with a put-down devastating enough to suit the game version of *American Idol* (PS2). Don't buy it, don't rent it, and let us never speak of it again.

BEST WORST CONCEPT: CRUSH HOUR

Twisted Metal-style car combat starring WWE wrestlers makes for one terrible—and unintentionally funny—game. But on paper, the idea...still sounds terrible and unintentionally funny. It takes a special kind of dollar-signs-in-his-eyes marketing whiz to come up with the concept behind *Crush Hour* (PS2/GC). And by special, we mean "very special."

THE "SAY, THIS GAME ISN'T DONE!" AWARD: ENTER THE MATRIX

■ **"Please don't crash. Please don't crash. Please don't..."**

We'd probably get a lot more worked up about all the glitches, gameplay snafus, and other headaches in this mother of all movie-licensed games, but then, the flicks kinda sucked, too. So really, *Enter the Matrix* (PS2/XB/GC) is just being true to its source material. But it still gets a Tobie....

CHARACTER BUCKING TO UNSEAT TOBIAS BRUCKNER: TAK

The Moe Howard hairstyle, the spare-tire gut—and...what is that, eye shadow? Nice try, Avalanche Software. It's obvious you tried to outdo Captain Bruckner in ultra-lameness with the cave-baby star of *Tak and the Power of Juju* (PS2/GC). But then, *Tak*'s platforming gameplay is pretty good, making it easy to overlook the hero's hideousness. Hence, Bruckner's job as master of our game-disaster ceremonies is safe for another year.

■ **Don't look at it, Marion!**

TRAGICALLY CATCHY TUNES AWARD: ANYTHING FROM FREAKY FLYERS

If you ever wander within earshot of this mediocre multiplatform biplane racer (and that's really not a good idea to begin with), immediately plug your ears and go "la-la-la-la-la," lest any one of its bubbly, silly jingles lodge in your noggin forevermore. Sample lyrics: "Boy, you're in the Navy now, so drop your pacifier and fly like a man / It's no time to suck your thumb / You don't need a note from mommy if you try to save the motherland." Great—now it's in our heads again.

MOST RIDICULOUS BOSS BATTLE: BIN LADEN IN FUGITIVE HUNTER

America's recent capture of Saddam Hussein went down with a surprising lack of Chuck Norris–style spinning kicks, roundhouse punches, or other general kung fu-ism. So we find it odd that bounty-hunting simulation *Fugitive Hunter* (PS2) ends with a good ol' fashioned karate throwdown betwixt the game's gung ho hero and public enemy numero uno Osama bin Laden. Succeed in subduing terrorism's surprisingly limber final boss and you're treated to a thrice-repeated cinema of your character showing bin Laden to his seat—via a friendly kick to the head—in a U.S. helicopter. Let that be a lesson to the rest of you terrorists who want to keep your teeth.

WORST IDEA SINCE NEW COKE: THE N-GAGE

This $200 cell-phone-plus-game-system-plus-MP3-player contraption is so poorly conceived—from the ridiculous way you must hold it to "side talk" to the crappy lineup of launch games to the cartridge-changing operation best left to a Radio Shack employee—we figure that manufacturer Nokia forgot to list its best function: paper weight. Click. ➤

AND SO I SHALL NAME HER AURA

WITHOUT YOU SHE WOULD NOT EXIST

THE SHINING GIRL AURA

WE WILL ENTRUST HER WITH OUR WILL

OUR FUTURE IS IN HER HANDS

SHE IS OUR

I MUST

SPEAK WITH MORGANNA

TO GO WHERE SHE IS

THE LIVING FLESH POSES A HINDRANCE

BUT I MUST

I MUST GO FOR OUR AURA

EMMA PLEASE GIVE ME A LITTLE MORE

COURAGE

NO THE PASSAGE OF TIME

IS IRREVERSIBLE

BIRTH OR DEATH

NOW ONLY THESE TWO

CHOICES REMAIN

AURA THE CHILD OF LIGHT

EMMA'S DAUGHTER

MY DAUGHTER

JUST A LITTLE MORE

TRAVELER TAKE THIS TO HEART

IT IS DARKEST BEFORE THE DAWN

REINCARNATED ELUSIVE LYRIC POET

絶対包囲 .hack DOT QUARANTINE™ Part 4

THE FINAL CHAPTER

www.dothack.com

After survivi ng parts 1, 2 and 3 of the .hack saga, th e end is in sight for K ite and friends. But the cl]ock is ticking, the bracelet is g one and s}till the virus is ragi ng. Player by play r, The Wolrd is f?lling apart. Now tehy m>st cure th!s vi*r+s or w@tch their fr~ien]ds f^ade% aw|ay — how wlil it e/nd? I t's u^p to y_u.

.hack has spread beyond video games. Also look for DVDs, trading cards, strategy guides and now Manga comics! .hack//Legend of the Twilight available now from TOKYOPOP®.

TEEN T CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
Mature Sexual Themes
Mild Language
Violence

.hack//SIGN As seen on CARTOON NETWORK PlayStation.2 BANDAI

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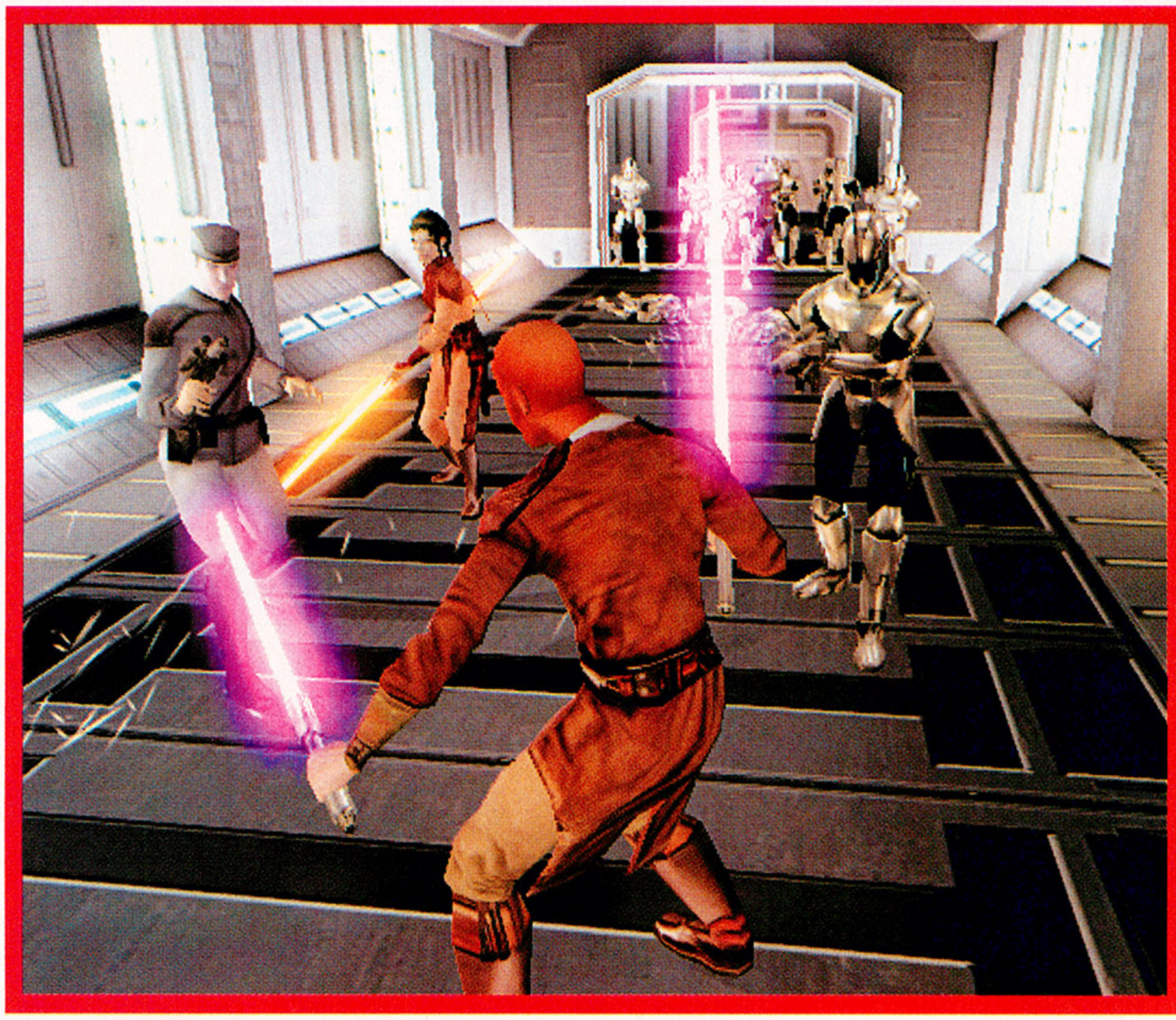
YOUR TURN

Didn't agree with our awards? Simmer down—you readers got to pick your tops of 2003, too

Power to the people—especially people who play games. That's the idea behind the poll we ran on www.1UP.com, which lured tens of thousands of readers to vote for the best games—including PC titles—of 2003. You have spoken, and here are the results, complete with random commentary from the peanut gallery....



GAME OF THE YEAR: STAR WARS: KNIGHTS OF THE OLD REPUBLIC (XB/PC)

"*Knights of the Old Republic*: Best. *Star Wars* game. Ever."
—Josh Read, Parkersburg, WV

Runner-up: The Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker (GC)

■ **"Is it just me or is that Tingle dude a little...er... fruity?"**
—Zach Long, Delaware, OH

SPORTS/EXTREME SPORTS GAME OF THE YEAR: TONY HAWK'S UNDERGROUND (PS2/XB/GC/PC)

"Also known as: *Tony Hawk: How to Be a Cool Skater While Breaking the Law.*"
—Aaron Rice, Lynchburg, VA

Runner-up: Madden NFL 2004 (PS2/XB/GC/PC)

ACTION GAME OF THE YEAR: SPLINTER CELL (PS2/GC)

"*Splinter Cell*, *Splinter Cell*, Sam will save the day / With a *SOCOM* to your head, you had better pray"
—Ross Harrington, Westerly, RI

Runner-up: The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King (PS2/XB/GC/PC)

ADVENTURE GAME OF THE YEAR: THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: THE WIND WAKER (GC)

"I was a doubter about Link's new look, but after actually playing it, I can't believe how ignorant I was!"
—Adam King, Los Angeles, CA

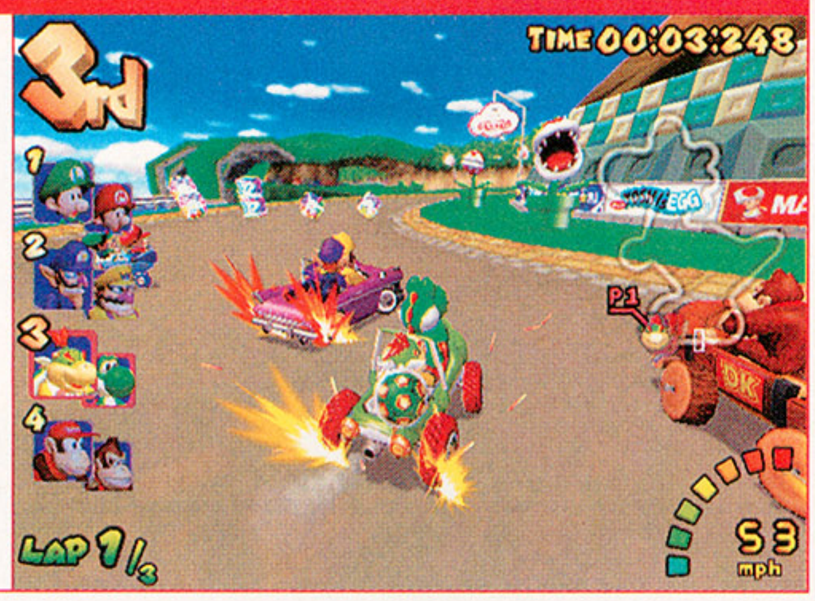
Runner-up: Prince of Persia: Sands of Time (PS2/XB/GC/PC)

RACING GAME OF THE YEAR:
MARIO KART: DOUBLE DASH!! (GC)

"Co-op play is the single best addition to this series. You can spend days and days playing with your buds. Now let the trash-talking commence!"

—Patrick Bradley, Amherst, VA

Runner-up: Need for Speed: Underground (PS2/XB/GC/PC)



FIGHTING GAME OF THE YEAR:
SOUL CALIBUR II (PS2/XB/GC)

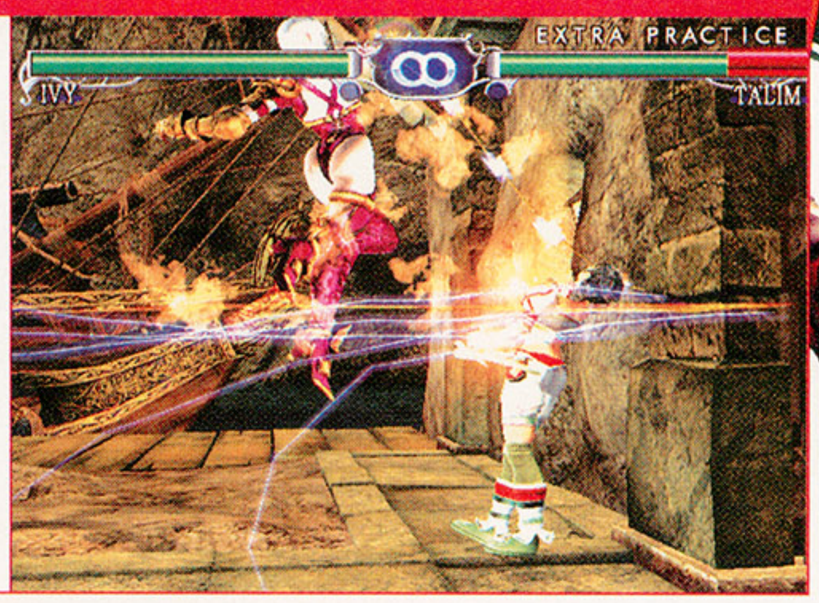
"A turning point for fighting games!"

—Eli Yudin, Washington, DC

"Getting hit with Kilik's stick never felt better."

—Nickolas Coad, Belmont, ME

Runner-up: SmackDown! Here Comes the Pain (PS2)



SHOOTER OF THE YEAR:
HALO (PC)

"There's a certain joy in blowing away a Flood enemy in midair with the shotgun. Not the most satisfying part of the game but definitely fun when you're surrounded by them."

—Aaron Grono, Forest Lake, MN

Runner-up: SOCOM II: U.S. Navy SEALs (PS2)

STRATEGY GAME OF THE YEAR:
WARCRAFT III: THE FROZEN THRONE (PC)

"I'll be sitting in front of my PC with this for a good five years. I've played it over 2,000 times online, and it's still as fun as when I first popped it in."

—Dante Biasatti, Colleyville, TX

Runner-up: Final Fantasy Tactics Advance (GBA)

ONLINE GAME OF THE YEAR:
STAR WARS GALAXIES (PC)

"After the shaky first month, *Galaxies* has really grown on me—now that we're rocking vehicles, player cities, and creature mounts (all of which should've been in from day one)."

—Dustin Quillen Altoona, IA

Runner-up: SOCOM II: U.S. Navy SEALs (PS2)

ROLE-PLAYING GAME OF THE YEAR:
STAR WARS: KNIGHTS OF THE OLD REPUBLIC (XB/PC)

"The game was excellent but also quite funny because you could run around in your undergarments and no one would care. Guess that's normal in that galaxy."

—Seth Row, Upland, IN

Runner-up: Final Fantasy X-2 (PS2)

WIN THE AWARD WINNERS!

We've handed out all the robot statues, sat through each sappy acceptance speech, and drunk every last drop of celebratory bubbly. But the party isn't over yet. *Electronic Gaming Monthly* is giving seven lucky readers a copy of every game that won a 2003 Editors' Choice Award. Simply go to http://awardscontest.egmmag.com, fill out the entry form, and pray to the gaming gods that you'll be randomly chosen. Sorry, but bribing an *EGM* editor won't help your chances. Won't hurt 'em, neither.

GRAND PRIZE: SEVEN (7) WINNERS

A copy of every game that *EGM* honored with a 2003 Editors' Choice award. (Note: that doesn't include the readers' picks on these two pages.)

HOW TO ENTER:

Log on to the contest page at **http://awardscontest.egmmag.com**. Fill out the entry form. All entries received by March 9, 2004, will then be entered into a drawing for the prizes. Only one entry per person is accepted. If you submit multiple entries, you'll be automaticaly disqualified.

Full legal rules—written by genuine New York lawyers—are available at http://awardscontest.egmmag.com.

WELCOME TO THE JUNGLE

Ubisoft takes the stealth action outside, and outside the box online, in Splinter Cell Pandora Tomorrow

by Mark MacDonald

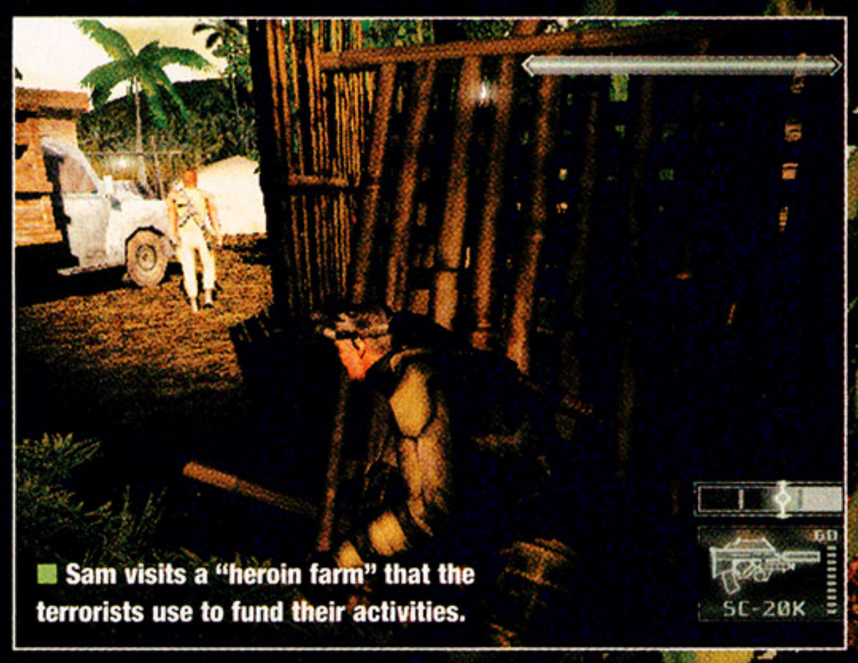
Good cheese? Yes. Fine wines? Sure. Berets with the little pointy thing in the middle? Definitely. But one thing the French are *not* known for is their willingness to jump into a fight.

"Going to war without France," Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld recently joked, "is like going duck hunting without an accordion." Missouri Congressman Roy Blount was less kind. "Do you know how many Frenchmen it takes to defend Paris?" he asked. "It's not known. It's never been tried."

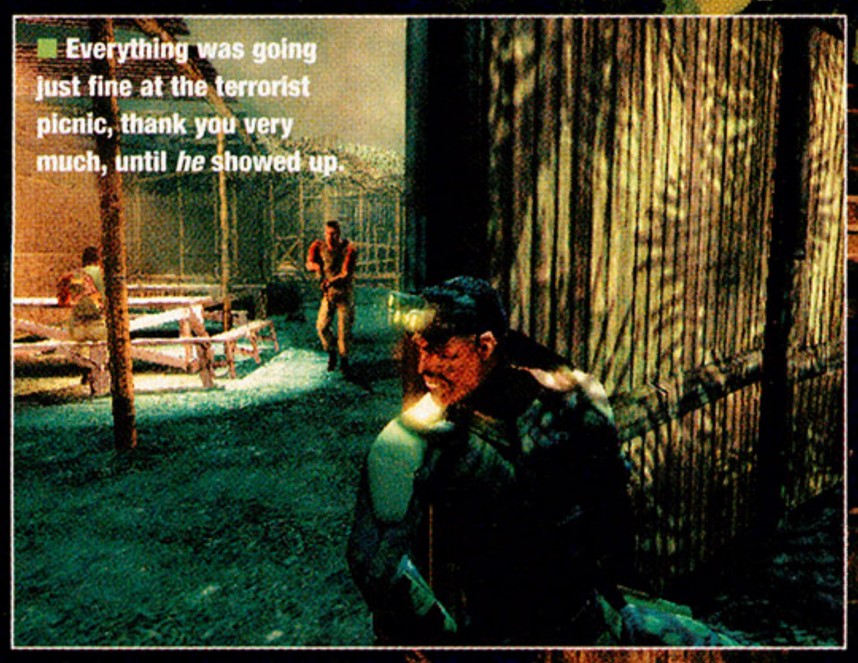
But what these men don't realize is that, for the last few months, brave French men and women have been dying by the hundreds in a battle being waged on their own soil. And yet, even after an estimated 700 hours of fighting and more than 38,000 casualties, so many volunteers show up every day that officials have to turn people away.

Then again, anyone reading this magazine would probably enlist too, since all of the carnage is taking place online at Ubisoft's development studios a few hours outside Paris, testing the unique new multiplayer mode of *Splinter Cell Pandora Tomorrow*. For many, just the chance to glimpse the stealth-action sequel before its March release on PS2, Xbox, and PC (GC may see a slight delay) would be worth the price of a ticket across the Atlantic.

Luckily, we suffered through the 12-hour flight and questionable airplane food so that you wouldn't have to. Over the next few pages, you'll find our report from the front lines: exclusive screens, developer interviews, and a rundown of our hands-on time with both *Pandora Tomorrow*'s improved single-player game and its wildly ambitious multiplayer component. So sit back, relax, and maybe enjoy some freedom fries as we open *Pandora*'s box. ➤



■ Sam visits a "heroin farm" that the terrorists use to fund their activities.



■ Everything was going just fine at the terrorist picnic, thank you very much, until *he* showed up.

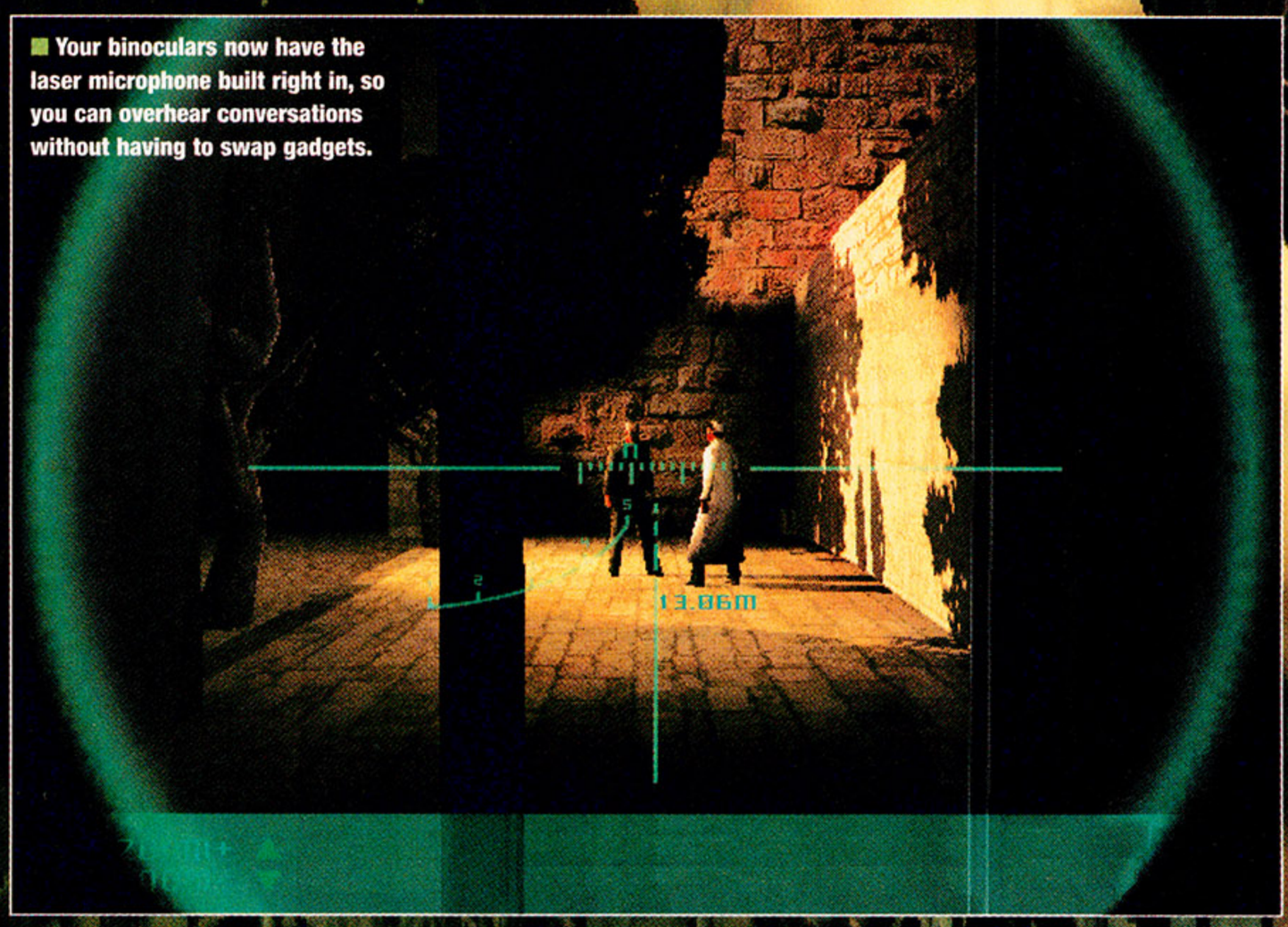
SINGLE PLAYER

After selling nearly 4 million copies of the first game, Ubisoft isn't fixing what ain't broke in *Splinter Cell*'s single-player formula. Crouching, climbing, jumping, shooting—Secret Agent Sam Fisher's controls in *Pandora Tomorrow* are just like before. Sticking to the shadows (again aided by an onscreen light meter that lets you know how visible you are to the enemy) is still the best method of getting through each mission.

Instead of rethinking these basic building blocks, the team at Ubisoft is working on emphasizing the game's strengths. If the original *Splinter Cell* lived up to its tag line of "stealth action redefined," *Pandora Tomorrow* seems more like "stealth action refined."

"We were very, very happy with the gameplay for the first *Splinter Cell*," says Associate Producer Julian Gerighty, "but we wanted to look back at the game design and change little things that would make a significant impact." Take Sam's famous spy gadgets, for example. The optical cable he uses to peek under doors now incorporates the thermal- and night-vision options seen in the GC and PS2 *Splinter Cell*s. His pistol packs a laser sight he can use for more precise aiming (just make sure the bad guys don't spot the little red dot), and his SC-20K rifle includes a quick zoom, à la *Halo*. Sam can also temporarily disable enemies with new flashbang charges or disrupt surveillance devices with chaff grenades.

Nothing radical, but all welcome changes—as are the additions to his physical moves. A whistle to attract ➤

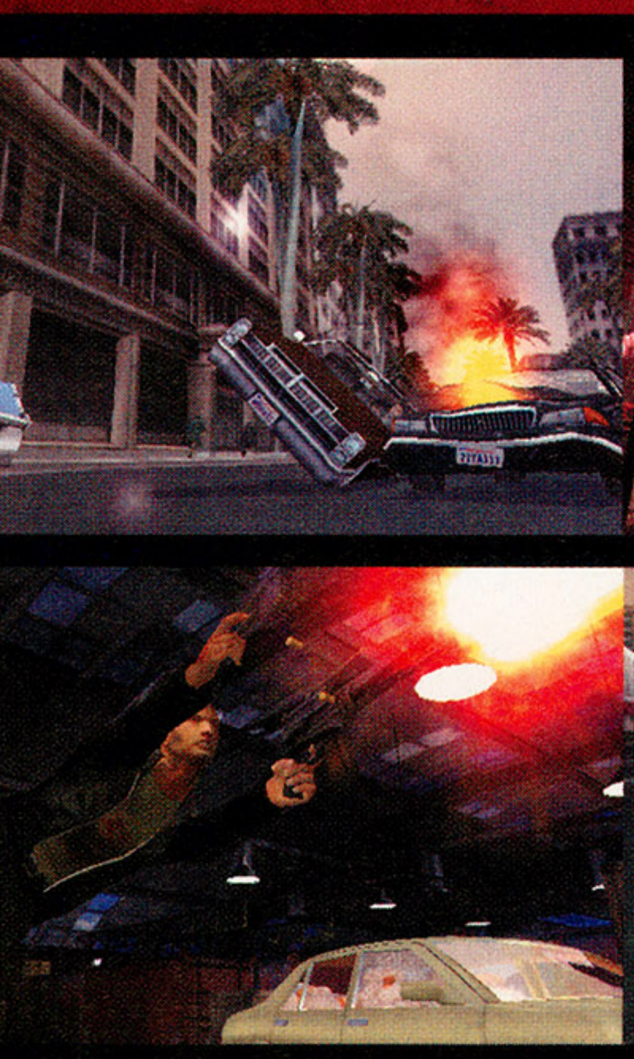


■ Your binoculars now have the laser microphone built right in, so you can overhear conversations without having to swap gadgets.

"★★★★★"
—Maxim.com

"BEST ACTION GAME"
—Spike TV Video Game Awards

"9/10"
—IGN.com



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Blood and Gore
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Strong Language
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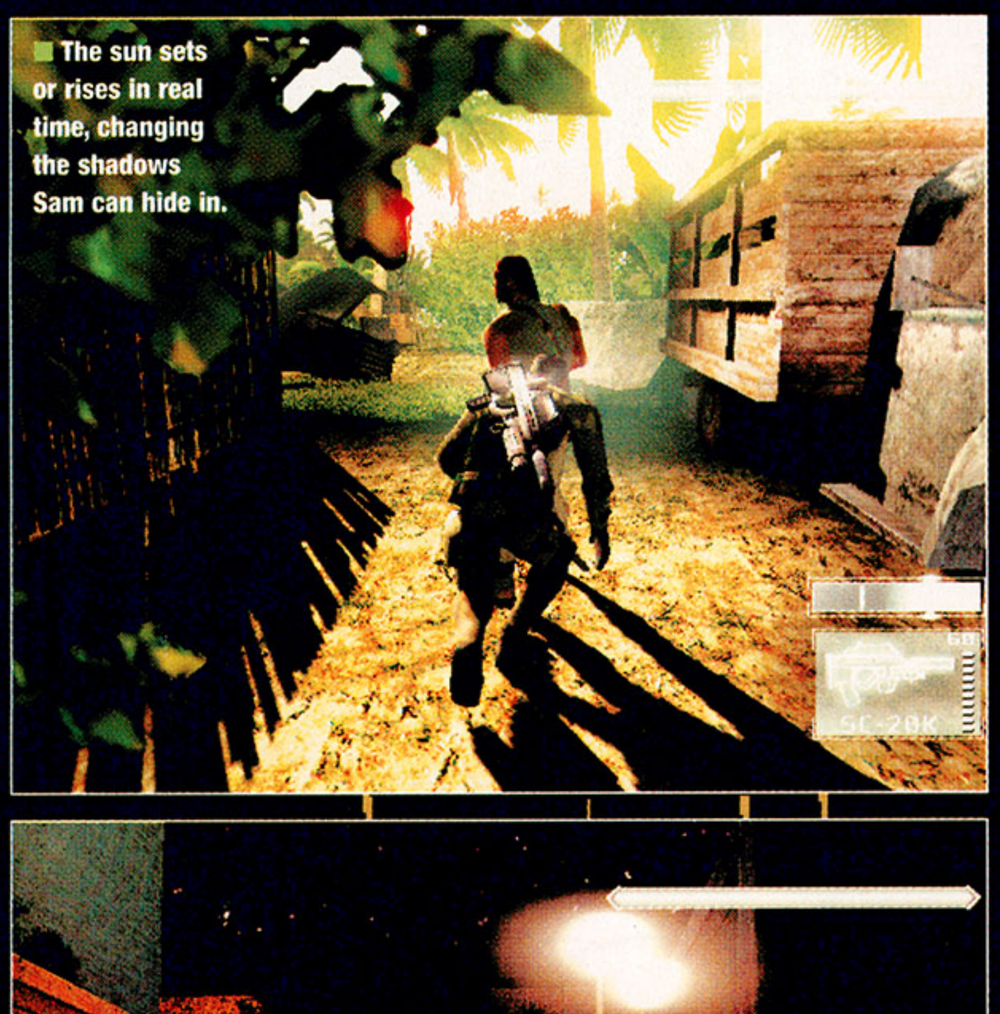

The sun sets or rises in real time, changing the shadows Sam can hide in.

"We wanted to take Sam out of the typical dark industrial settings of the first game."
—Animator James Green

Guards will get tougher each time you set off an alarm, arming themselves with better weapons, and later with bulletproof vests and helmets.

guards, a new "SWAT turn" quick pivot that allows Sam to spin past open doorways without being seen, and a revised version of the famous split-jump (which allows Sam to wedge and boost himself up narrow vertical shafts) should all come in handy. We aren't sure yet how useful Sam's ability to hang upside down off pipes and fire at enemies will be, but hey, it *looks* cool.

Speaking of looks, though the first *Splinter Cell* is widely regarded as one of the best-looking games ever, adjusting the graphics was a priority for *Pandora*. "We [wanted to take] Sam out of the typical dark industrial settings of the original game," says Animator James Green. "*Pandora* features some beautifully lush outdoor environments that will really surprise fans who expect to see Sam crawling through air vents in some factory." Exploring the great outdoors makes for more than just pretty pictures, too. In some open-air missions, the sun will slowly rise or set in the background as you play. And in a game where hiding in shadows is crucial, it should be obvious how this added time factor will affect gameplay.

Other design tweaks focus on giving the player multiple ways to tackle a level. "There might be an easy way or a hard way [to get past parts of a mission]," says Green. "Like in [a level set at the Los ➤

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EVERYONE
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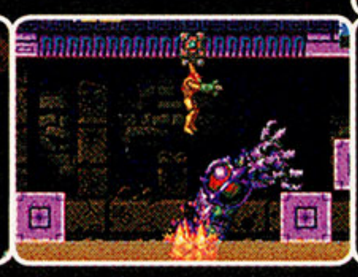
METROID® ZERO MISSION



GAME BOY ADVANCE

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"We're trying to add more of the feeling that you're making the story happen, instead of just connecting the dots."
—Animator James Green

Just what in the hell does "Pandora Tomorrow" mean, anyway?
First, the bad news: We can't tell you. The phrase is an integral part of the story we promised we wouldn't ruin. But the good news is there is an explanation, and the title *does* make sense once you hear it. It is not a mistranslation of the original French title, or the result of the developers tossing darts at a dictionary, as some had speculated.

■ Now your enemies can take hostages as well.

➤ Angeles airport], you have to get inside. And there's a couple of different ways you can do that. There's the easy way, the special way, where you sneak onto the back of a big trailer truck. But you can also sneak in [on foot], avoiding all the guards and dogs, which is a lot tougher. It's not like, 'You didn't get on the truck—you failed.' [Or in another level], you're supposed to meet an arms dealer, and you walk in and you're surprised to find he's being robbed by two men. So you can knock them both out or just leave 'em if you want. But the fun way is to grab one guy, and the other guy grabs the arms dealer. Then you have to shoot him over the shoulder and not hit [his hostage]."

Other choices, according to Green, can affect the story line. "At the end of this mission, after this agent has helped you, you both [are in] an elevator. And, just as you step inside, Lambert comes on your radio, which only you can hear, and says 'Kill her. Kill her now. Trust me. I just got some bad information, just do it, don't question me.' And you have no time to decide. You've been ordered to kill someone in cold blood. And you can kill the person or not—it's completely optional. And you see what happens based on that later." ➤

■ Sam's actually under orders *not* to rescue the hostages here—he's to stop the terrorists from gaining crucial intel, and that's it.

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PlayStation.2

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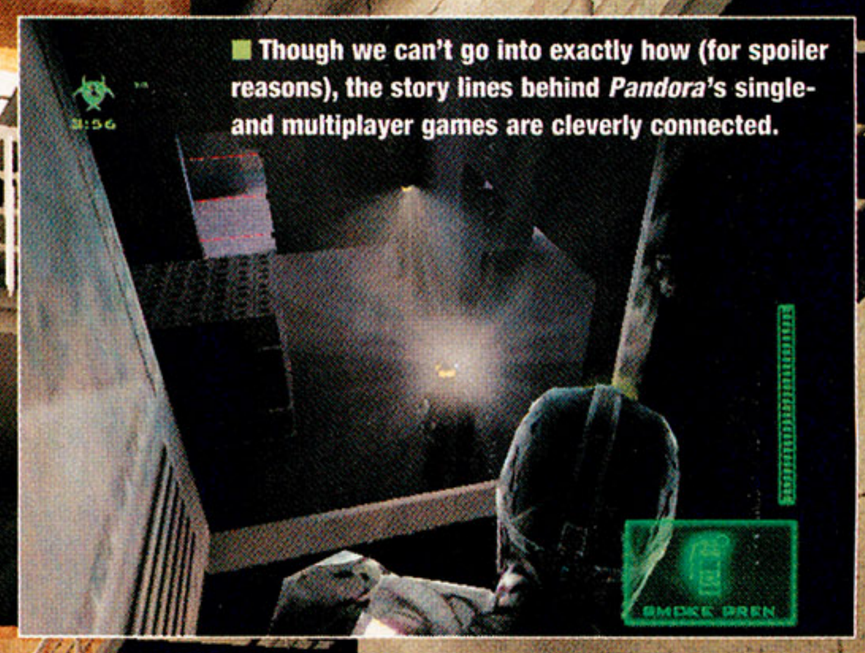
"It is as fun to track someone down as it is to sneak."
—*Creative Director Gunther Galipot*



■ Though we can't go into exactly how (for spoiler reasons), the story lines behind *Pandora*'s single- and multiplayer games are cleverly connected.

■ A mercenary's charging melee attack knocks a spy clean off his feet.

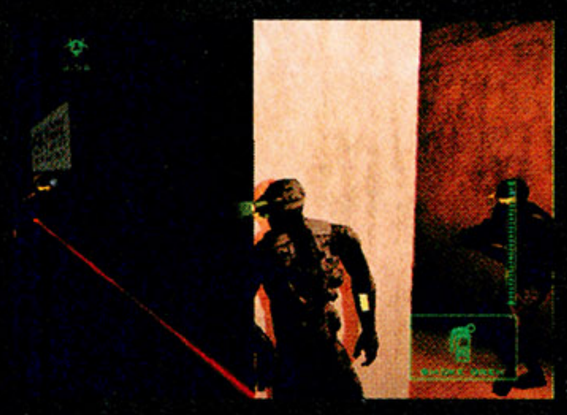
➤ MULTIPLAYER

Though we added them in this article for the sake of clarity, in real life, Gunther Galipot does not use commas or periods. The creative director speaks English in a low, quiet voice, but when he talks about *Pandora*'s multiplayer mode, he spits out words like a machine gun, moving from one thought into the next without so much as a pause. It's obvious he's nervous and excited, but that's understandable. After all, the concept of *Pandora*'s radically unique four-player online mode was his. And now his baby is finally being born, after a surprisingly long wait; it's been five years since Galipot was inspired by a certain *other* stealth-action game.

"I saw the first trailer for the original *Metal Gear Solid* at [a videogame trade show]," he says. "[I started] to think what a multiplayer stealth game could be like. I thought it could be fun to track down someone—just as rewarding as infiltrating. I realized it could be very creepy looking for someone and not knowing where they are—a lot of tension, a lot of emotion." The idea behind letting players control both sides of the stealth formula (the spies trying to hide and the mercenary guards looking for them) was born.

The only problem was with the camera. "We had to find some way to simulate the cone of vision [the guards have] on the radar in *Metal Gear*," says Galipot. The solution was simple: first-person perspective. While the spies' third-person view allows them to see more of their surroundings so that they can dodge, climb, and hide effectively, the mercenaries' first-person vantage point helps them aim but limits their field of vision. The idea is to have each side play completely differently, but be equally powerful. "What's interesting to me is offering two different kinds of gameplay that are wholly complementary," says Galipot.

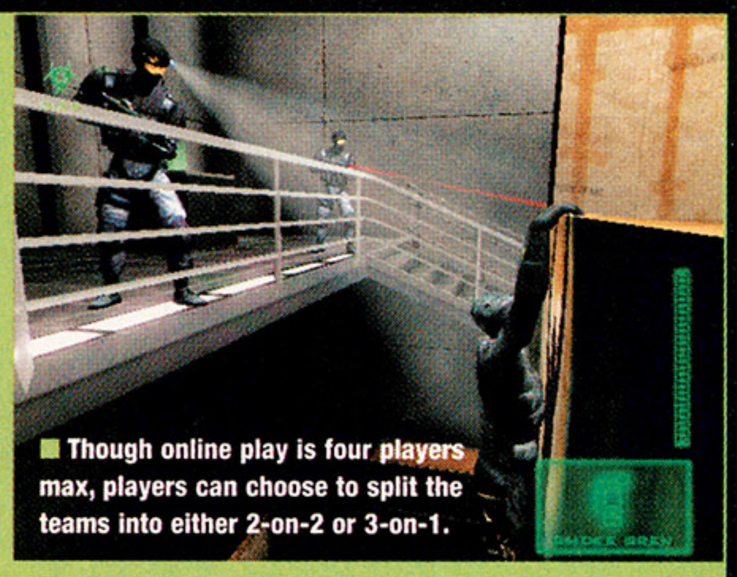
Other differences between the two sides reinforce this idea. The mercs have rifles, complete with zoom scopes and ➤



■ Spies can tell by the color of the merc's goggles if they are using motion detection (red), EMF (blue), or normal vision (amber).

MULTIPLAYER MODUS OPERANDI

The developers are still tinkering with a few other ideas, but *Pandora* will ship with at least these three multiplayer game modes, each playable on any one of five different maps. (New maps may be available for PS2 or XB download in the future.)



■ Though online play is four players max, players can choose to split the teams into either 2-on-2 or 3-on-1.

NEUTRALIZATION: The spies' objective is to hack into a number of special safes containing...hmm, how can we put this without spoiling anything...let's just say it's something...that plays an important role in *Pandora*'s single-player game...before time runs out. The mercs simply try to stop them. Each safe has two access points; since the spies can hack into either to get into a safe, the mercs can't camp at one spot they know the spies must go to.

EXTRACTION: Like Neutralization, only with a capture-the-flag-style twist: This time, after grabbing the...special something...the spies need to carry it back to their starting point. "And if you run too fast [while carrying the item], you'll appear on the mercs' radar. We're also playing with the idea that [the special something] might start glowing if you are moving too quickly, so you can be detected in the dark."

SABOTAGE: In this scenario, similar to planting a bomb in *SOCOM*'s demolition mode, the spies try to place a modem anywhere in a certain area surrounding the objective. Once it's placed, they have to defend it for a certain amount of time from being disarmed by the mercenaries.

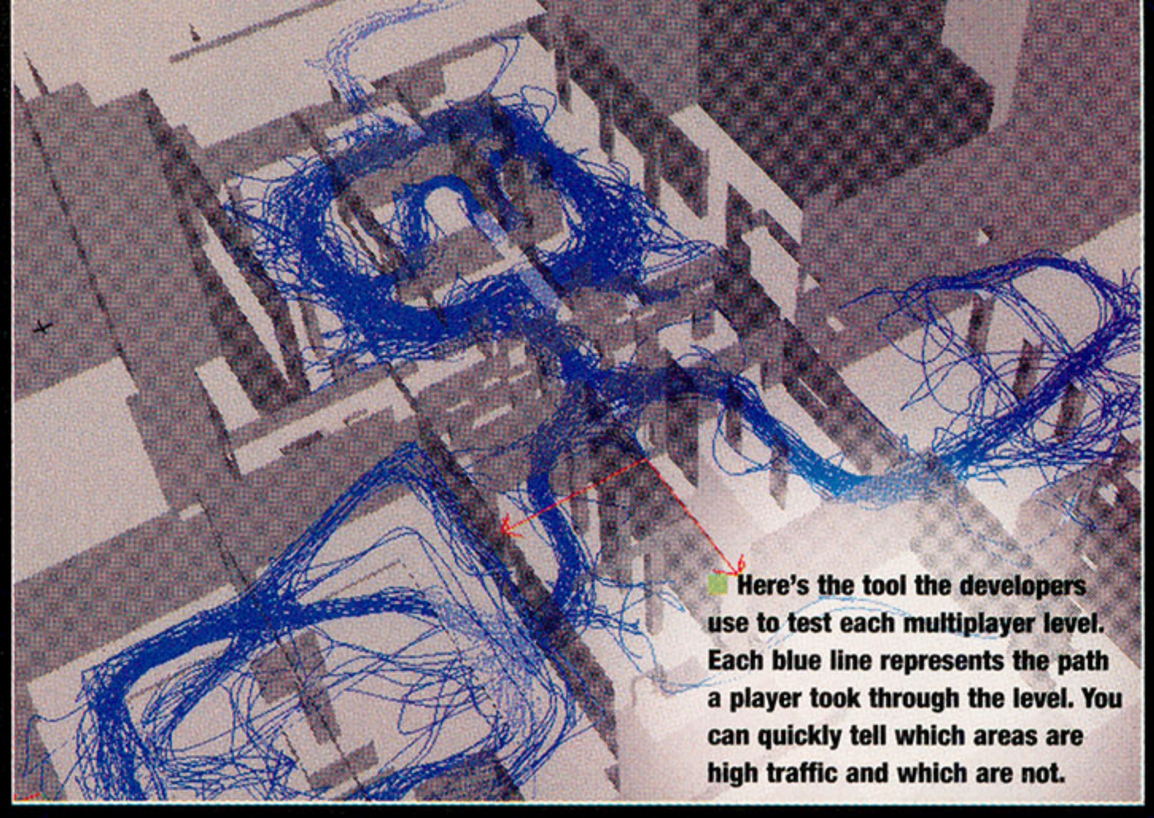
"Maybe you had a bad day, so you want to come home and kill some spies."

—Creative Director Gunther Galipot

semi- or fully automatic firing modes; the spies have only single-fire pistols loaded with nonlethal bullets that stun their target for a few seconds (the only way the spies can kill is by sneaking up behind an opponent and breaking their neck or by falling down on top of them). Spies have a weak punch from short range, while the mercs have a charging attack with their rifle butt. Spies have low-light and heat vision; mercs have flashlights, and views to detect motion, noise, or the electrical pulse (EMF) given off by the spies' goggles. Each side also has its own full set of other gadgets and gizmos.

Every feature feeds into Galipot's larger philosophy about how each side should play. "The mercenary has the upper hand when face-to-face with his opponent," he says, "but his weaknesses are linked to what he can't see, whether it's behind him, above him, or just a few feet away, hiding in the darkness. The spy is able to see without being seen. Shadow and surprise are his best allies. From the safety of darkness, he feels capable of anything—only to feel suddenly vulnerable when he is discovered."

But why limit multiplayer to only four players? After all, *Pandora Tomorrow* requires a broadband connection (on PS2 and Xbox at least; whether or not the GameCube version will have online at all is still up in the air)—surely, it could handle more traffic. "We tried more than four people," says Galipot, "and it just didn't work as well. The more players you have, the faster the action is...you don't have time for reflection, only reflexes, and that's not what we wanted. We limited the number of players in order to create tension at the highest level." Associate Producer Gerighty ➤



Here's the tool the developers use to test each multiplayer level. Each blue line represents the path a player took through the level. You can quickly tell which areas are high traffic and which are not.

In addition to at least five multiplayer maps out of the box, we expect Ubisoft will offer extra downloadable levels for both Xbox and hard-drive-equipped PS2 owners down the line.

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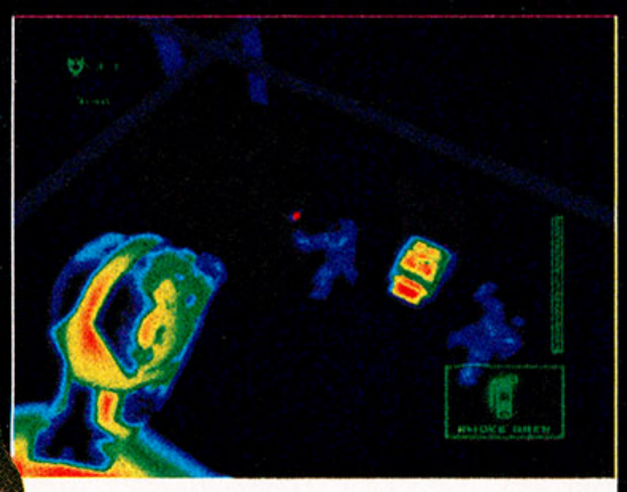
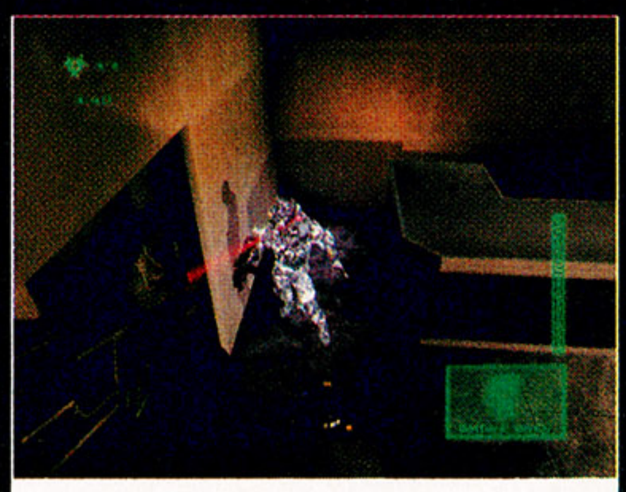
TWO SIDES TO EVERY STORY

It can be hard to understand just how all the different factors of *Pandora*'s multiplayer mode work together without seeing a game in action. So let's take a look at the first minute or so of a 2-on-2 online game (Spy A and B versus Merc 1 and 2) from both teams' perspectives:

SPY TEAM



SPY: The two spies decide to split up. Nearing an objective, **Spy A switches to thermal vision** and looks through the ceiling tiles beneath him to spot the two mercs. He radios their position over his headset so that Spy B can head for a different objective as far away as possible.

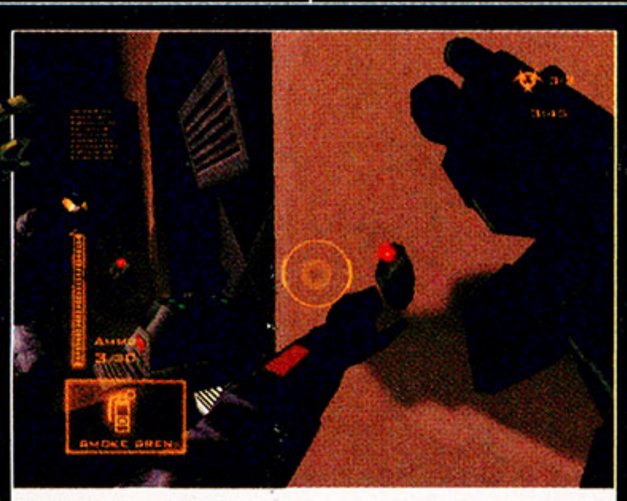


SPY: Although he hasn't been spotted yet, Spy A cannot resist—he has a perfect shot at Merc 1. **He nails the merc with a sticky shocker** right in the head (which stuns the target for a bit longer than a normal body shot) and laughs so hard that he accidentally falls from his hiding spot.

SPY: Crap, this is bad. Spy A decides to make the most of a bad situation by shooting the stunned merc with a spy bullet—now both spies can spot him on their radar *and* listen in to his headset communications. Then he quickly **drops a smoke grenade** and tries to escape in the confusion.

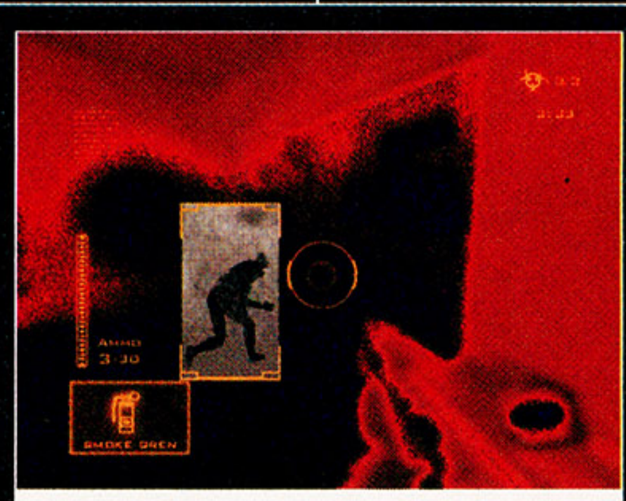
00:15 00:19 00:21

MERC TEAM

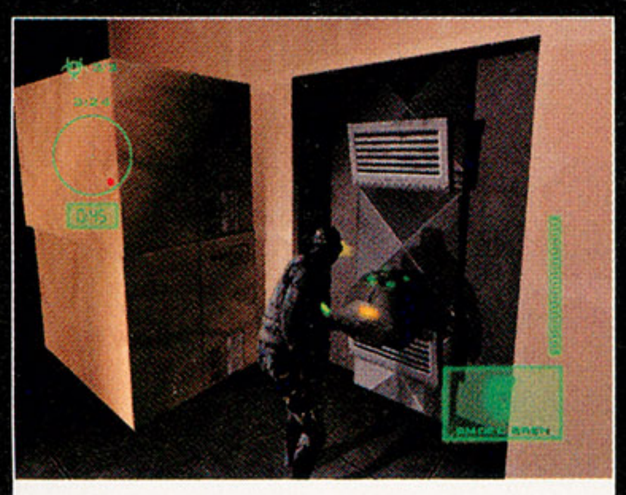


MERC: Mercs 1 and 2 decide to stick together for now so that they can cover each other's backs. They **place mines near an objective**—by holding the button when they place the charges, the mercs can set them to go off when someone gets close or breaks a laser tripwire...their choice.

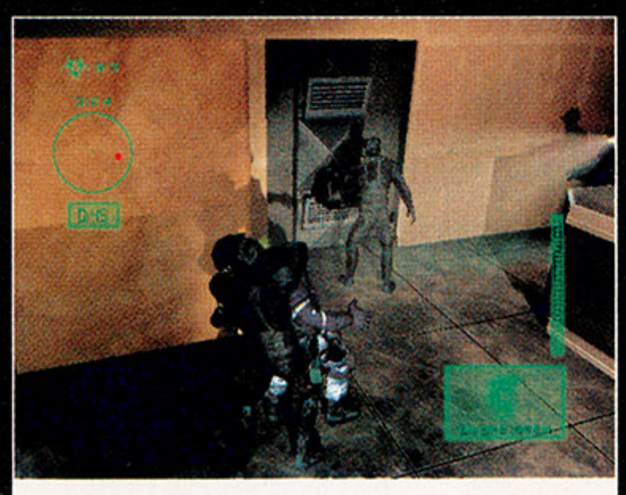
MERC: Merc 1 was just suggesting that his teammate move on to the next objective when he thought he saw something up high. He turns on his flashlight and suddenly **his view goes all fuzzy—he's been hit**! He can't move, but he radios his partner, telling him where the spy shot him from.



MERC: Instead of losing the spy in the smoke, Merc 2 **switches his visor to motion detect** and spots his prey. He takes aim and kills the spy before he can escape. However, neither merc is aware that their communications can now be overheard, thanks to the spy bullet planted on Merc 1.



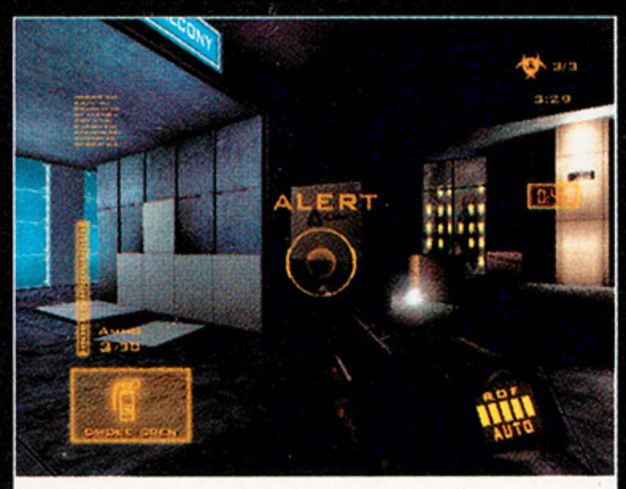
SPY: Meanwhile, **Spy B approaches one of the safes that the spies are trying to break into**. (Also note the new red merc dot on the radar). But he sets off a laser tripwire alarm (thermal vision would have revealed it); he'll have to wait a few seconds for security to disarm before he can hack the safe.



SPY: Spy A has respawned and waits near Spy B to protect him from the incoming mercs. Seeing Merc 1 on his radar and hearing him talk about approaching over his headset, he waits in the shadows and sneaks up on the merc as he enters the area, **grabbing him from behind**.

00:22

00:52



MERC: Both mercs **receive an alert that says where a tripwire has been crossed**. On their way to the location, they see that the objective near the alert area is being hacked. A timer appears, showing how much time it will take until the spies will hack into the safe. They'll need to move fast.

MERC: Merc 2 has **a choice: go after the spy hacking the safe and let his partner get killed or try to save his partner by shooting around him, but letting the spies complete the objective**. Decisions, decisions. All that, and we haven't even reached the 1-minute mark of game time.

agrees. "If you had 8-on-8, every dark spot there's going to be somebody, so it turns into a shooting game. The tension is dead, and that tension is the key for a stealth game."

But just as important as tension to *Pandora*'s multiplayer game is communication. Online, the PS2 and, of course, Xbox versions will support voice chat (GameCube...well, you starting to see a trend here?). "Communication encourages teamplay, as players can coordinate and strategize," says Galipot. "[But] also competition, [where it can] stimulate emotional reactions by allowing taunting. My favorite example is the feature that allows [the spy side] to grab [a mercenary] from behind—making it impossible for him to escape—and then whispering threats into his ear as he struggles unsuccessfully to break free."

Luckily, since Galipot played as a mercenary for most of the few hours we spent trying out multiplayer *Pandora*, we avoided his favorite brand of online smack talk. But even so, the experience was intense enough that we had to be pried off the controller when it was finally time to go. Even in its unfinished state, the edge that the spies have in movement, stealth, and defense counterbalances the offensive and detection skills of the mercenaries amazingly well, like two oddly shaped puzzle pieces that fit snugly together. And the bond and teamwork you and your one partner develop, as you work together to outwit your foes, is totally unlike your typical deathmatch scenario.

Levels have all been designed with a ridiculous number of different paths—vents, pipes, ladders, stairways, doors—in and out of every area, so predictability and "camping" is tossed out the window. Plus, each environment has been, and continues to be, balanced and refined every day by a state-of-the-art program that compiles statistics based on the thousands and thousands of multiplayer test sessions. If there's a path being used too much, or not enough, the level designers might add or remove a door, lengthen or shorten a hallway, darken or brighten a room.

All of which should come as good news to the families of those brave 38,000 French volunteers who died over and over testing online for the greater good: If *Splinter Cell Pandora Tomorrow* turns out as good as it looks, their loved ones will not have died in vain.

A better pic to end the feature than this melodramatic money shot? We'd like to see it.

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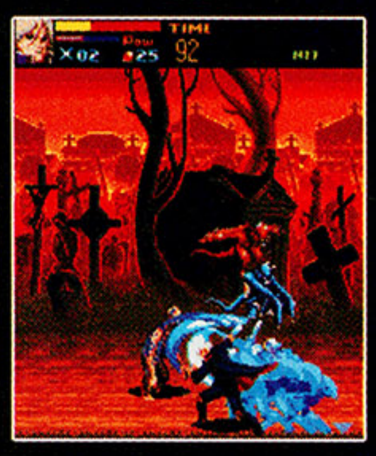

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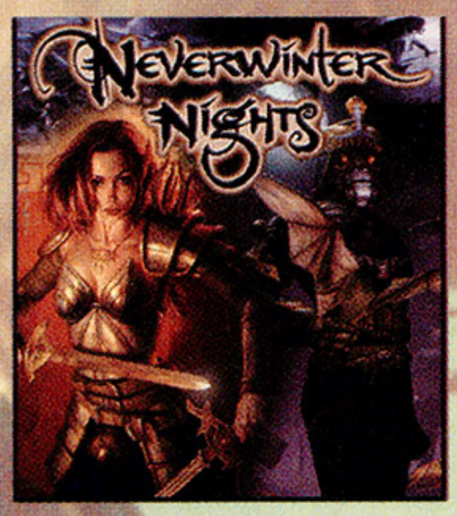

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PREVIEW

NEVERWINTER NIGHTS

DEVELOPER: FLOODGATE PUBLISHER: JAMDAT MOBILE

For many of us nerds, the first useful thing we could get a computer to do was roll saving throws in *Dungeons & Dragons*. BioWare's *Neverwinter Nights* garnered rave reviews and huge sales by taking that notion to the highest level.

In early 2004, JAMDAT and Floodgate will bring *Neverwinter Nights* to mobile phones, but it won't be the same as the PC version, let alone the pen-and-paper game. It can't be. It took PCs almost 30 years to properly represent *AD&D* electronically. But when this *NWN* comes out, it's going to revolutionize mobile RPGs.

We played betas of the game on an LG VX6000 and a Motorola MPx200 Smartphone. Both phones sport impressive graphics for their hardware, but it's hard to look at anything else once you savor the Moto's isometric perspective and detailed textures. If you are serious about mobile games, your next phone should run a Microsoft OS.

Before you play *NWN,* you've got to create a character. In the mobile version, your choices are drawn from *AD&D 3.0* rules, and there are seven races and seven classes (barbarian, cleric, fighter, monk, paladin, rogue, and sorcerer). Character portraits and background music are pulled from (or heavily influenced by) BioWare's *NWN* game, and both add nice touches to the game.

But the story is the main thing. The members of the Floodgate and JAMDAT teams are longtime *AD&D* players (and environmentalists), and *NWN*'s narrative arc shows it. In the game's first chapter, your adopted father charges you with finding the cause of a blight threatening the Circle Grove. It turns out that displaced dwarves and their metallurgy are causing the blight, but they'll stop polluting if you complete several quests. These missions are nicely varied, and the characters you encounter along the way set a new

standard for mobile adventuring.

Not all of the standard RPG problems are fixed, however. There are (and perhaps always will be) too many repetitious conversations with NPCs. There are scores of buildings to visit across dozens of towns in mobile *NWN,* but there's little variation beyond the "buy/sell" or "sleep here" options. It would have been nice to see more of the racial/alignment effects that appear in the PC version get translated to the mobile game.

But these are minor points more associated with the RPG genre itself than this particular implementation. The version we played was only 80 percent complete, and the team is working on several improvements. Moreover, the architecture of the mobile platform makes adding new modules to *NWN* possible. Although JAMDAT has not committed to expanding the series beyond the three missions included in the download, the framework for doing so is built into the game engine. If all goes well, you might be playing *NWN* on mobile for as long as you've been playing it on your PC.

- MATTHEW BELLOWS

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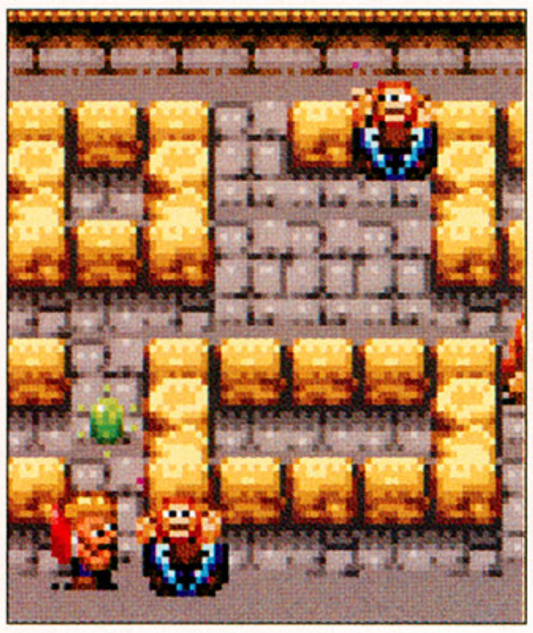

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- **Ace Yeti Trapper** by Super Happy Fun Fun
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ABOUT THIS SECTION

Wireless Gaming Review **in** ***EGM*** **and** ***CGW*** **is produced by WGR Media to bring you news, reviews, and previews of wireless games. Our editorial approach is simple: We write about the best of the best. There's a lot of junk out there. We don't want you to buy it. We do want to hear what you think, though, so for questions, comments, or advertising inquiries, please e-mail Matthew Bellows at matthew@wgamer.com**

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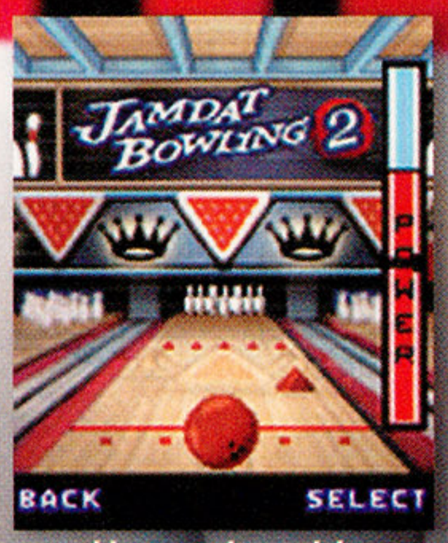
Thanks for sacrificing the holidays: Cashman Andrus, Technology Editor; Avery Score, Games Editor; Damon Brown, Contributor; Stephen Palley, Contributor; Patrick Bossi, Copy Editor; Jason Babler, Lead Designer; and Anne Marie Miguel, Special Operations.

The ***Wireless Gaming Review*** **supplement to** ***Electronic Gaming Monthly*** **and** ***Computer Gaming World*** **is published four times per year (March, June, September, and December). For advertising information, please contact matthew@wgamer.com.**

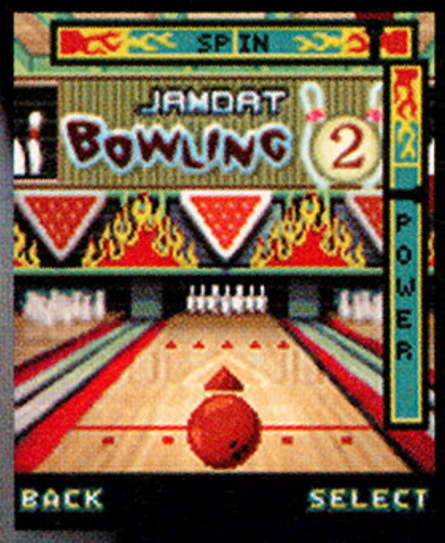
"Convincing physics, beautiful interface, head-to-head competitions — Bowling 2 is a huge step forward." — wgamer.com

JAMDAT BOWLING 2

The original had over two million downloads—
JAMDAT Bowling 2 is twice as good.
If you've never played a wireless game,
this is the place to start.

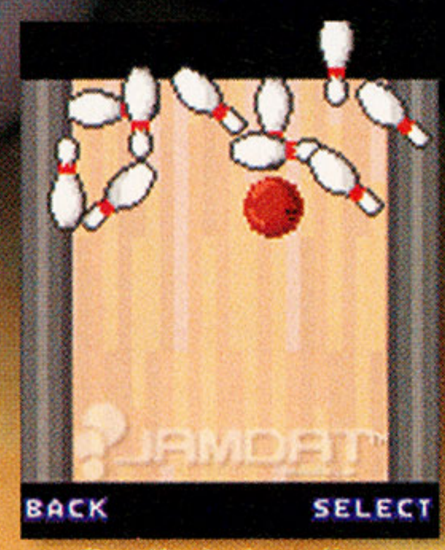


User selectable themes



One button control of spin, aim and power

Live multiplayer scoring



Realistic bowling physics

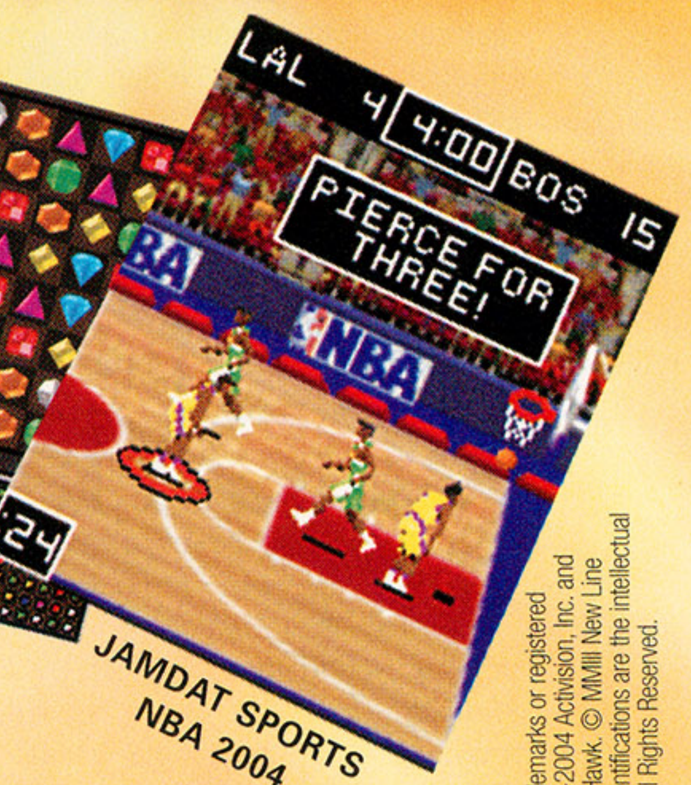
JAMDAT Solitaire

Tony Hawk's Underground

The Lord of the Rings™ Pinball

The Return of the King

Multiplayer Bejeweled



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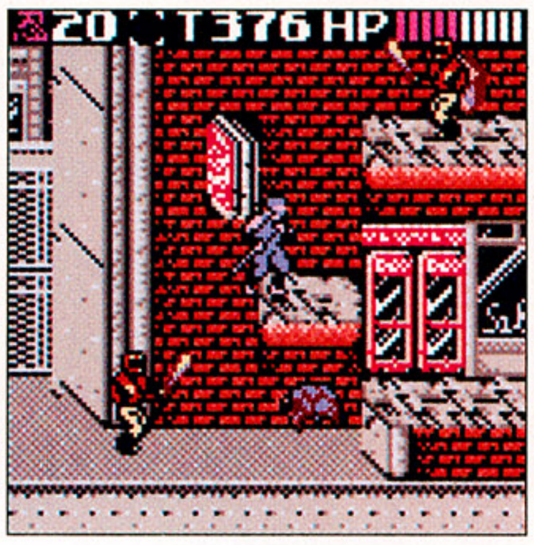
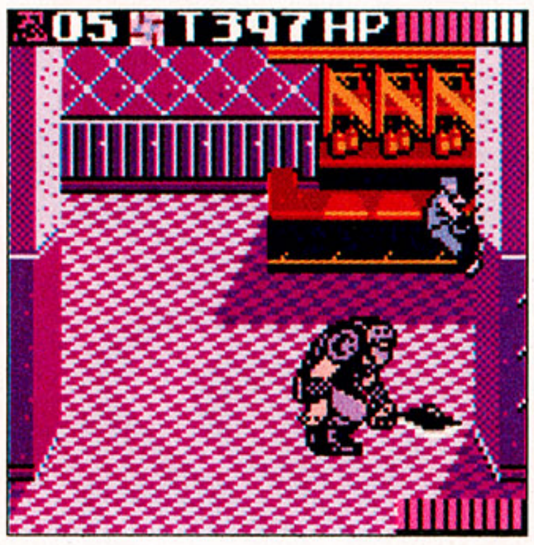
WIRELESS GAMING REVIEW

PREVIEW

NINJA GAIDEN CHAPTER 1: DESTINY

DEVELOPER: TECMO PUBLISHER: TECMO





Ninjas and videogames were made for one another. Their torrid affair has now lasted almost two decades—it's not just a summer thing. Soon, on your phone, you'll be able to replay their honeymoon. Don't think you'll be relaxing on Caribbean beaches, though. This postnuptial outing features none other than Ryu Hayabusa, aka "The Super Ninja," kicking the pixelated snot out of hordes of hapless, anonymous henchmen. Yes, that's right: *Ninja Gaiden*, the seminal NES classic, has gone mobile, and the result is shaping up to be a solid port that captures the fun, frenetic swordplay of the original.

For series veterans, there's nothing new here. The upswing of that is the fact that *Ninja Gaiden* is almost a console-perfect port. You climb walls, slash baddies, and wreak havoc with ninjitsu magic across five levels and against nine enemies. The graphics and sound (on our J-Phone preview version, at least) seem on par with the NES version that so entranced us all.

My concerns for the U.S. release are twofold. First, the Japanese version I previewed has some control issues. The keypad is not always responsive enough to change Ryu's direction on the fly (for example, hitting a guy to your left, then throwing a ninja star at a baddy on your right). And this is the kind of game that really makes control issues stand out. Second, the handsets that Tecmo is porting to are not up to Japanese standards. I shudder with fear at the AV quality loss, which could result from the port to our generally inferior phones. Tune into *WGR* to see how the Stateside release shapes up. - AVERY SCORE

http://wgamer.com/game-3103

MOST ANTICIPATED MOBILE GAME

FROM A WGAMER.COM READER POLL

Ninja Gaiden: 34.29%
Call of Duty: 20.95%
Neverwinter Nights: 21.90%
Pathway to Glory: 7.62%
Snowboard Tycoon: 4.76%
Other: 10.48%

REVIEW

ACE YETI TRAPPER

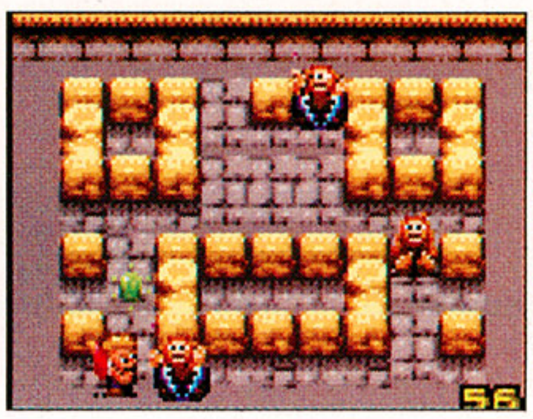
DEVELOPER: SUPER HAPPY FUN FUN **PUBLISHER:** BANDAI **AVAILABLE ON:** SPRINT

The *Ace Yeti Trapper* concept is simple: World-famous explorer Jack Bivouac has decided to try his yeti-finding skills in Nepal, the ultimate alpine arena. To get his shot at the Big Y, Jack must first practice his trapping skills on lesser beasts, outwitting them and leading them into traps through a variety of mazelike levels.

Jack maneuvers around each rock-strewn level with a nicely animated aplomb, swinging his arms like a manic Mario and laying traps with abandon. *AYT* runs smoothly, with no hiccuping or slowdown even on a crowded level. The control scheme takes a little getting used to, especially the trap-laying command. It takes a whopping four button presses to set and prime a trap, and an additional four button presses to airlift a trapped creature off the level, so you'd better hope your keypad has a durable "5" button.

In summary, *AYT* isn't a fancy game, but it's addictive in an obsessive, *Dig Dug*–like fashion. Because trap-setting takes time, forethought is a must on the more advanced levels, which increase creature speed and maze difficulty. Before long, you'll find yourself muttering epithets at yaks and yetis alike, garnering the extra bonus of increased breathing room on public transportation. - STEPHEN PALLEY

http://wgamer.com/game-2725



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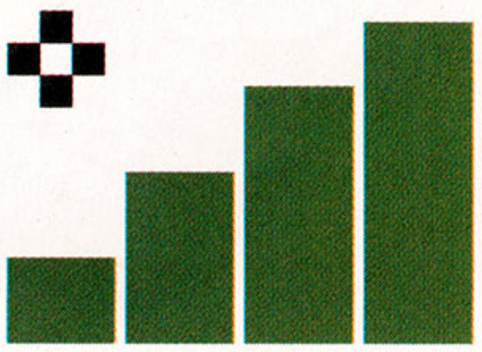
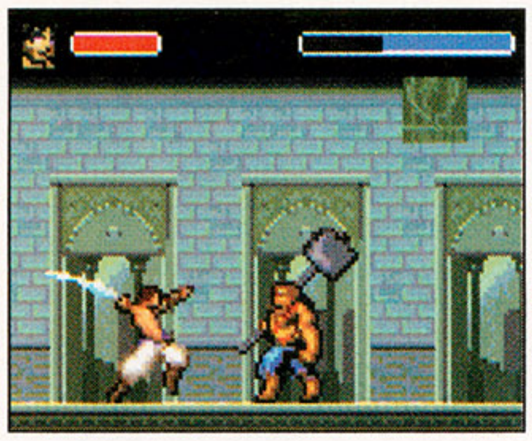


REVIEW: PRINCE OF PERSIA

DEVELOPER: GAMELOFT **PUBLISHER:** GAMELOFT
AVAILABLE ON: VERIZON

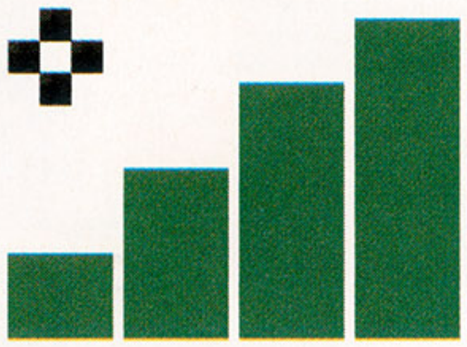


It's tough to find a more consistent mobile games publisher than Gameloft, and it's very tough indeed to find a better wireless action-adventure game than *Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time*. From controls to graphics, the game plays like it belongs on the top shelf in the Game Boy Advance section.

Like the previous *POP*s, *The Sands of Time* features a prince who has to climb, fence, and think his way out of a booby-trapped castle. The prince can find items that give him new techniques, such as short-term flight and forward rolls. The controls are crisp, despite the game utilizing nearly every button for an action. And while the fighting is fun, solving the game requires more brains than brawn. Extra details (like a code in the Verizon version, which unlocks a big-head version of the PC game) make *Sands of Time* a mobile masterpiece.

My only complaint is that, like most Gameloft titles, the game feels too short. However, hidden items and level rankings will probably encourage you to play through it many times over. Another triumph for the Gameloft team. - DAMON BROWN
http://wgamer.com/game-2911

WGAMER RATING:



REVIEW: WORMS WORLD PARTY

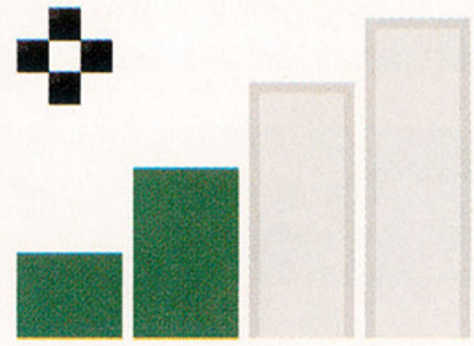
DEVELOPER: KILOO **PUBLISHER:** THQ
AVAILABLE ON: NOKIA SERIES 60 PHONES

I love *Worms*. Pitting those feisty, squishy little guys against each other, unleashing fiery and explosive death on their hapless brethren—what a joy. Unfortunately, the J2ME version from THQ is rather disappointing.

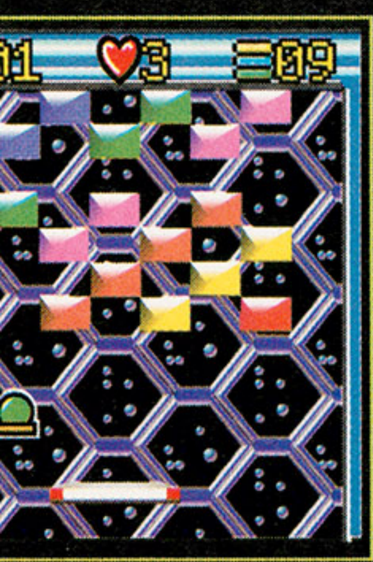
The basics of the *Worms* experience—fanciful destructible environments, an assortment of weapons and plaintive death cries—are there, if slightly pruned to fit on a phone. What is missing is the sense of nonstop fun that makes *Worms* such a great party game. It's surprisingly slow, and at times, it really starts to drag. The game's A.I. isn't very good, either, so you shouldn't have much trouble consistently beating it.

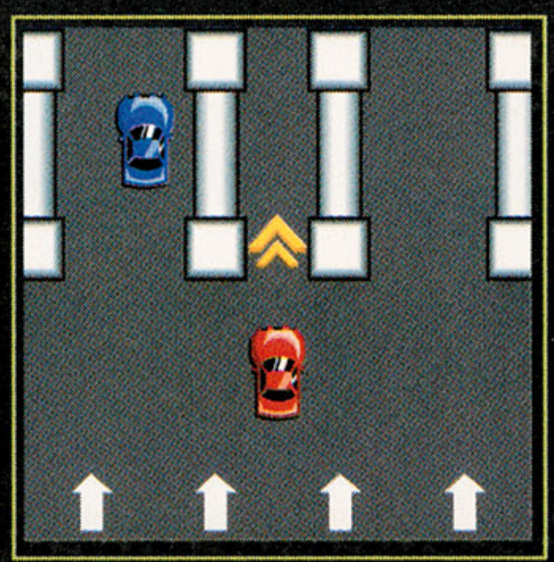
If I hadn't had such high hopes for *Worms* going mobile, I would have gotten a kick out of this one. But *Worms* should be a blast, and this is merely a thud. - CASHMAN ANDRUS
http://wgamer.com/game-1269

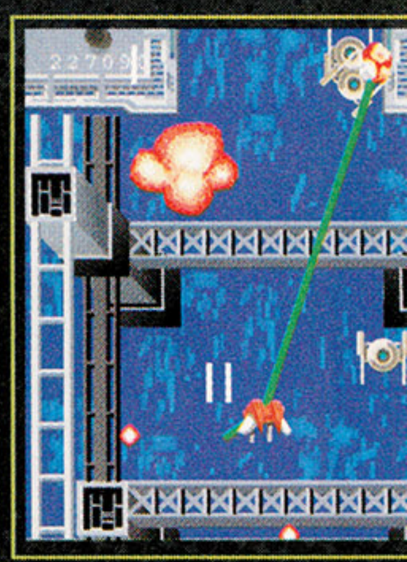
WGAMER RATING:



www.dwango.com







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THE NEXT LEVEL

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WIRELESS GAMING REVIEW

THE FUTURE IS UNEVENLY DISTRIBUTED

- CASHMAN ANDRUS

YES, IT'S TRUE—JAPAN HAS MUCH COOLER GADGETS THAN WE DO. THESE DAYS, THE BIGGEST GAP IS IN PHONES, WITH JAPANESE CONSUMERS BUYING ONES THAT ARE EASILY 12 TO 18 MONTHS AHEAD OF WHAT WE GET HERE. SO, HERE'S A GLIMPSE OF YOUR FUTURE:
For more on this phone, check out **http://wgamer.com/device-427**

FOMA F900i by Fujitsu

SCREEN: These days, it's all about QVGA. That's 240x320 pixels, with either 65K or 262K colors, packed into a 2.2-inch screen, which makes the screens about twice as sharp as those of most notebook LCDs.

GAMES: Whether you're looking for *Tetris*, MMORPGs, or shoot-em-ups, some of the best developers in the world have games for you. For example, Square Enix signed up to make *Final Fantasy* and *Dragon Quest* titles for the launch of the 900i series.

COMPATIBILITY: NTT DoCoMo cracks the whip over half a dozen manufacturers, herding them to crank out phones to a very tight spec on an even tighter schedule. That means a new phone series every six months or so, which all support the same apps, services, and even accessories.

NETWORK: The 900i series is for DoCoMo's FOMA third-generation W-CDMA network. It supports download speeds of up to 384Kbps, which is about half as fast as a cable modem.

FLASH: Do you have a taste for kittens that sing punk classics or for rude Web cartoons? Either way, you can watch Macromedia Flash movies on this phone.

JAVA: With 400k of scratch-pad space, there's plenty of space for rich graphics and immersive sound. DoCoMo has its own version of Java, called DoJa, with added support for phone necessities.

HORSEPOWER: Some models run Linux and others run Symbian. Either way, you've got a fully multitasking 32-bit OS, running on an ARM9 processor with more power than a high-end desktop from five years ago.

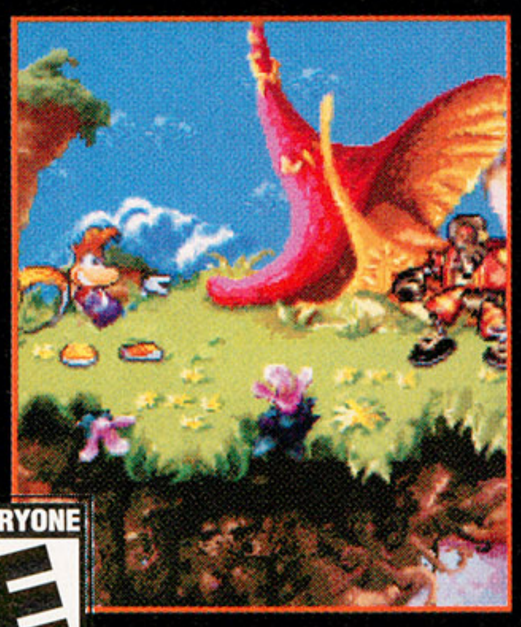
MEMORY CARD: Memory Stick Duo or miniSD card slots let you transfer games, pics, and tunes between your phone and the rest of your digital world.

CAMERA: These phones come with 1- to 2-megapixel digital cameras built in, with support for movies and videoconferencing.

DESIGN: Since all the phones in a series have pretty much the same features, manufacturers use styling to appeal to different crowds. And they're not afraid of color, so whether you're into Ferrari red, acid green, or Hello Kitty pink, you can find a phone that fits you.

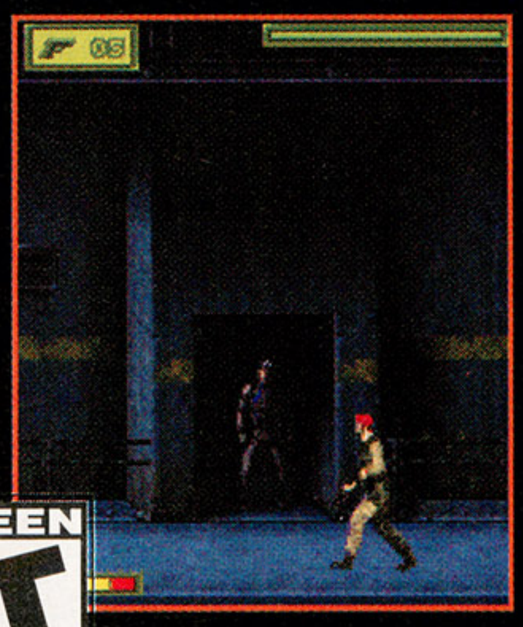
This is where the games begin.

RAYMAN 3



EVERYONE
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Tom Clancy's SPLINTER CELL
TEAM STEALTH ACTION



TEEN
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

MARCEL DESAILLY PROSOCCER

EVERYONE
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Wireless multiplayer gaming
Game card titles from top publishers
Supports 3D graphics
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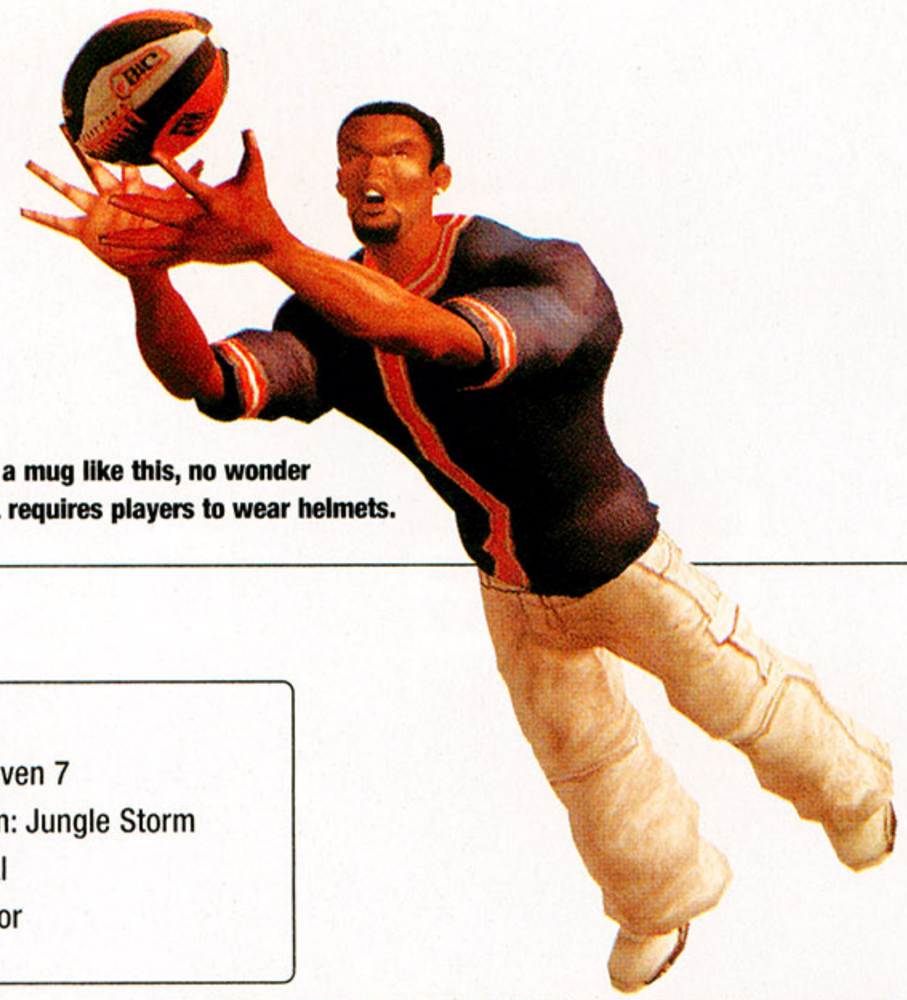
review crew

your monthly guide to gaming's winners and losers



■ With a mug like this, no wonder the NFL requires players to wear helmets.

DIRECTORY

MULTIPLATFORM

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114 Wrath: Unleashed

PLAYSTATION 2

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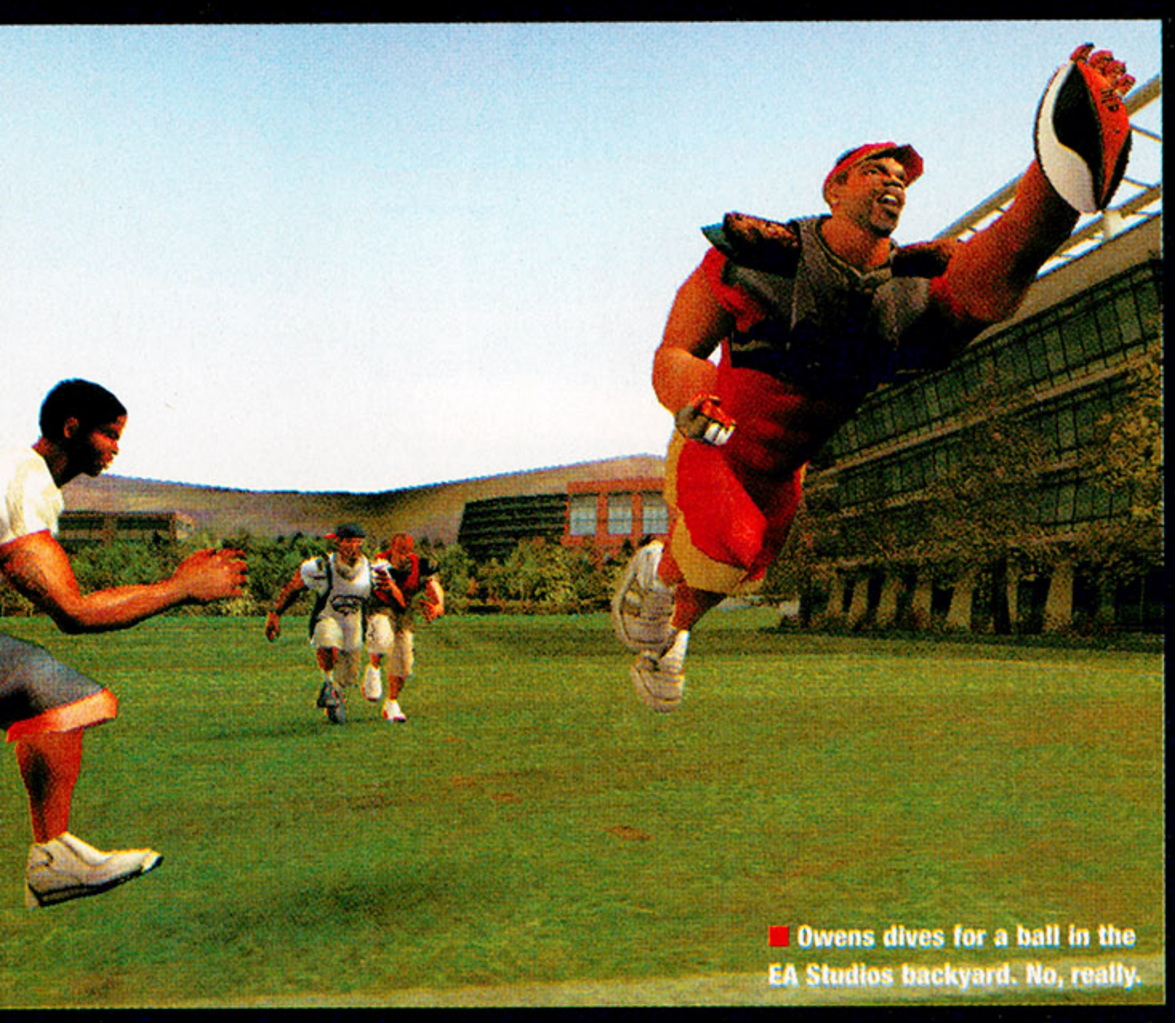

■ Owens dives for a ball in the EA Studios backyard. No, really.

■ PS2/XB/GC

ONLINE (PS2 ONLY)

NFL STREET

Pigskin pimpin'

NFL Challenge Build a team from scratch and take on the opposition in multiple ladder-style tourneys. The mode also features 150-plus tasks that earn you such bonuses as development points, new plays, and unlockable players. It's bound to keep you happily busy till next season.

BRYAN: I eat, drink, and sleep football. Most *EGM* editors don't. So why do so many of them keep challenging me to a game of *NFL Street*? Simply put, whether you pray to the football gods every Sunday or watch pigskin only around Super Bowl time, this game appeals to the quick-thrill, pick-up-and-play gamer in all of us.

Street perfectly blends the arcadey feel of old-school *NFL Blitz* games with *NBA Street*'s flamboyant antics. Anything goes on these unconventional (and fantastic-looking) fields, and the gameplay reflects *Street*'s no-holds-barred attitude. Here's an example: A defender who's just intercepted the ball starts dribbling the pigskin like a basketball downfield. Soon thereafter, he pays the price for showboating and fumbles. The team that started the play picks the ball back up and heads toward pay dirt. Before he can be slammed against the sideline wall, the ball carrier pulls a Matrix-style run up the concrete barrier, hops off like a jack rabbit, and registers six more points on the scoreboard. Yes, that was just one play in a single game, but giddily fun gameplay like this is so common that it's hard to put the controller down. These reelworthy moments (or, some might say, football follies) consistently keep the gameplay energized and unpredictable.

But the game isn't without faults: Cycling through the pint-sized play-call window is a chore, playing rock-solid defense is a struggle at times, and the create-a-player has limited facial options. Still, nitpicking won't change the fact that *Street* is one of the most accessible and, more important, entertaining sports titles to date.

DEMIAN: Point toward the sky and give it up for the Almighty; football has been *Street*-ified. And it is good.

As a big fan of the first few *NFL Blitz* games and the *NBA Street* series, I was hoping *NFL Street* would borrow (or steal, whatever it takes) the best bits from both. And it pretty much does—though *NFL Street* lacks some of the polish that makes *NBA Street Vol. 2* such a must-have, it easily stiff-arms *Blitz* as the top arcadey take on football.

With the same seven players on offense *and* defense, the chess match (well, chess as played by hulking, non-Russian jocks) begins long before you hit the field. If you load up your team with big men, your rushing game should be unstoppable, but good luck defending the pass. If you know

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GAMECUBE

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130 Sonic Battle

THE RATING SYSTEM

0-4.5 BAD | 5.0-6.5 FAIR | 7.0-10 GOOD

Here at *EGM*, we review only games that have been deemed final and reviewable by their publishers. Three editors review each game independently, and don't forget: **5.0 IS AVERAGE.**

AWARDS

Platinum — for games that get all 10s. These games rule.

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

Silver — for games with a mean score of 8.0 (but not 9.0).

GAME OF THE MONTH — This goes to the highest-reviewed game each month.

SHAME OF THE MONTH — A rare dishonor for games with unanimously bad scores.

ESRB KEY (Also check out www.esrb.com)

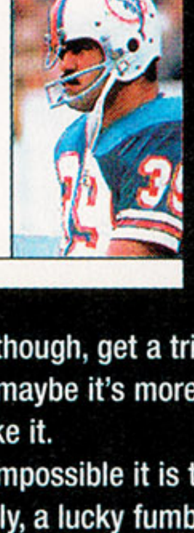
E-Everyone: Wholesome fun for the whole family, devoid of hookers, head shots, or heroin use.

T-Teen: Like PG-13 movies, Teen games usually feature mild violence and "comic mischief."

M-Mature: Whereas these games typically offer all the gore, sex, drugs, and fun of R-rated fare.

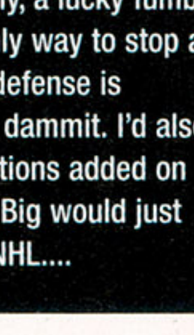
Gridiron Greats

Here's the lowdown on some of *Street*'s unlockable players:

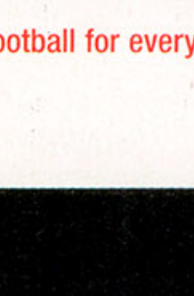


William "The Refrigerator" Perry: We'd like to think that Weight Watchers hired The Fridge as a spokesperson soon after he retired his Super Bowl shuffle.

Lester Hayes: One of the best man-to-man cover guys to play in the NFL. He loved suiting up for the Raiders almost as much as he loved his Jeri curl.

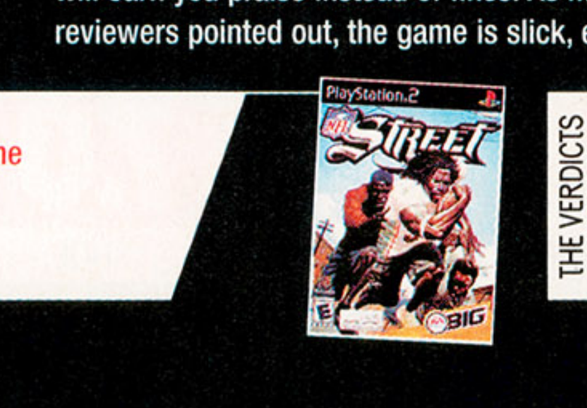


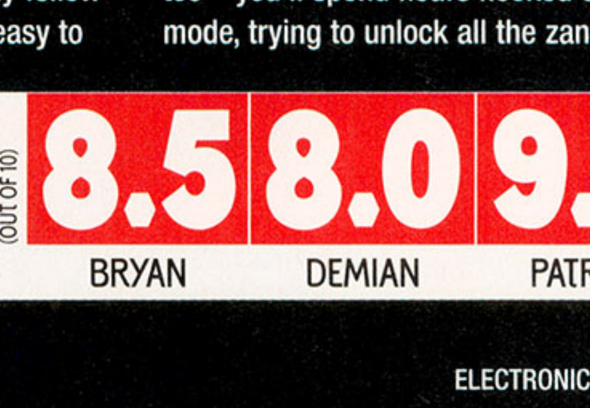
Lawrence Taylor: LT was so intimidating that he'd make opposing teams whimper in fear. These days, he's shedding tears during TV confessionals. Wussy!



Larry Csonka: The Miami Dolphins' fullback played for the last undefeated NFL team (and the last to receive the memo about bushy mustaches bein' outta style).

■ *NFL Street* replaces the standard pat on the butt with masculine embraces.





your opponent likes to air it out, though, get a trio of good defensive backs. OK, so maybe it's more like checkers than chess, but I like it.

What I don't like is how near-impossible it is to force a turnover on downs; usually, a lucky fumble recovery or interception is the only way to stop a good offense. Everybody knows defense is supposed to win championships, dammit. I'd also like to see more plays and formations added on both sides of the ball. Now, if EA Big would just give the *Street* treatment to the NHL....

PATRICK: After Midway dropped the ball and changed its *Blitz* series from 7-on-7 adrenaline roughhousing to a more traditional *Madden* competitor, it looked like arcade pigskin might be extinct. Thankfully, EA Big picks up that cast-down gauntlet and runs with it. *NFL Street* completely reimagines football, injecting fun and flava into the usually predictable genre.

Anything goes in *Street*—Joe Horn–type antics will earn you praise instead of fines. As my fellow reviewers pointed out, the game is slick, easy to pick up (if you've ever touched *Madden*, you'll know exactly what to do), and a blast to play, but the various game modes are the biggest draw for me. For example, the pickup mode rocks: Here, you and an opponent assemble a seven-man team from among 40 randomly selected players. You and your opponent take turns picking guys (just like grade-school kickball) and then duke it out. These creative modes offer cool incentives, too—you'll spend hours hooked on NFL Challenge mode, trying to unlock all the zany stadiums.

PS2 Envy
Only the PS2 version of *Street* features online play. It's fast, fun, and it supports the USB headset for trash talkin', too.

Good: An entertaining brand of football for everyone
Bad: Inefficient play-call menu
No Sign of: John Madden

THE VERDICTS (OUT OF 10)

BRYAN	DEMIAN	PATRICK
8.5	8.0	9.0

Publisher: EA Sports Big
Developer: EA Tiburon
Players: 1-4 (1-2 online)
ESRB: Everyone

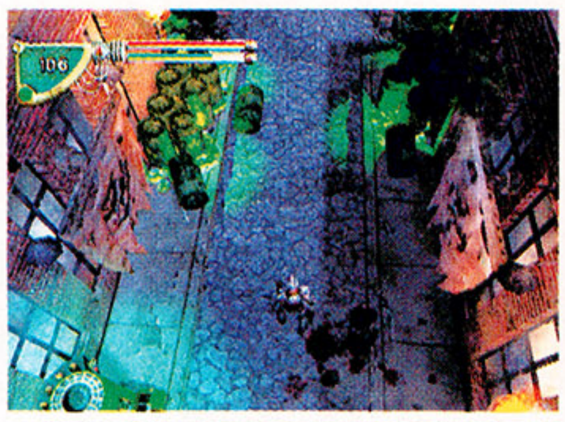
www.nflstreet.com

Fashion sense didn't survive the nuclear war. Look at all the denim!

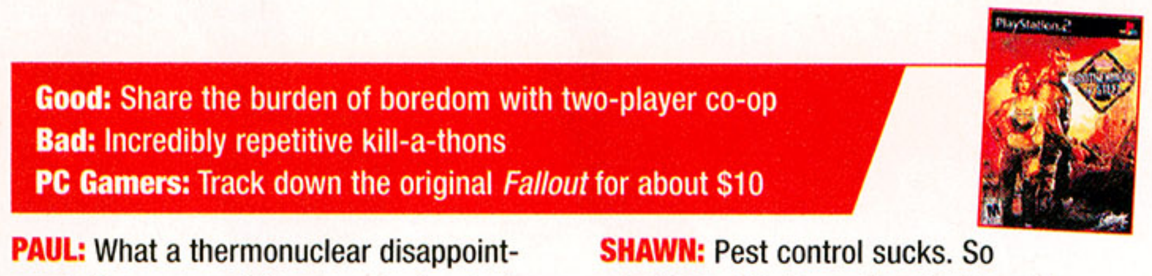
PS2/XB

FALLOUT: BROTHERHOOD OF STEEL

Better left in the Vault



(Left) Man, someone caught a whole lot of fireflies! And stuffed 'em in barrels.



Good: Share the burden of boredom with two-player co-op
Bad: Incredibly repetitive kill-a-thons
PC Gamers: Track down the original *Fallout* for about $10

PAUL: What a thermonuclear disappointment. To someone like me, who loved all three *Fallout* role-playing games on PC, this is a power fist to the face—an insult. *Brotherhood*'s setting has neither the bleak, epic feel of *Fallout*'s post-apocalyptic Wasteland, nor any of its characteristic '50s retro-futurism. Its mutants and ghouls are merely monsters, not the irradiated subcastes of humanity they were in previous games. Worst of all, its gameplay offers nothing but rote combat, nearly devoid of strategy, story, or purpose.

What's left is a tedious trek through a vapid version of *Mad Max*. You'll waste your first three hours wandering and hunting vermin. If you make it through that, you'll graduate to boring fetch quests and *more* extermination missions. The plot improves eventually, but even so it'll seem dumbed down to *Fallout* fans, while newcomers unfamiliar with the series' story will dismiss it as derivative and campy.

I suspect that, because of financial problems, Interplay had to ship this baby half done. But half-cooked babies just aren't palatable, even in the Wasteland.

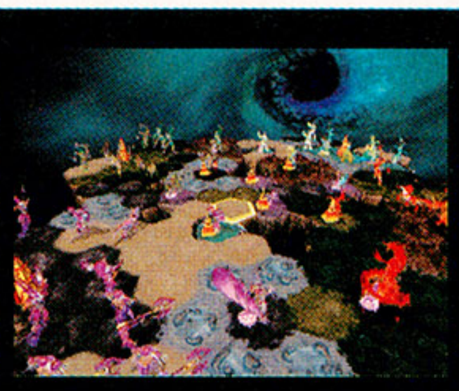
SHAWN: Pest control sucks. So what I want to know is who thought "punch 60 radscorpions to death" would make for memorable mission objectives in a dungeon brawler? Sorry, the old stick-and-carrot ruse of more powerful weapons to kill even stronger rats and roaches isn't sound enough incentive, what with no particular story, style, or substance to support it. When ghouls with ray guns replace the critters, the going admittedly gets a bit better, even if the poor camera and crappy plot don't.

KEVIN: Recently, a rash of virtually identical action-RPGs invaded store shelves, each offering a top-down perspective, hordes of monsters to slay, and constipated-looking characters in the story scenes. *Fallout* was supposed to be a break from this monotony—not to mention a sequel to one of the best PC games ever made. So what happened here? This disgrace feels exactly like Interplay's own *Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance II*, except with unpolished visuals, soulless storytelling, and methodical hack-n-slash gameplay.

THE VERDICTS (OUT OF 10)	PAUL	SHAWN	KEVIN
	4.0	4.5	4.0

Publisher: VU Games
Developer: Interplay
Players: 1-2
ESRB: Mature

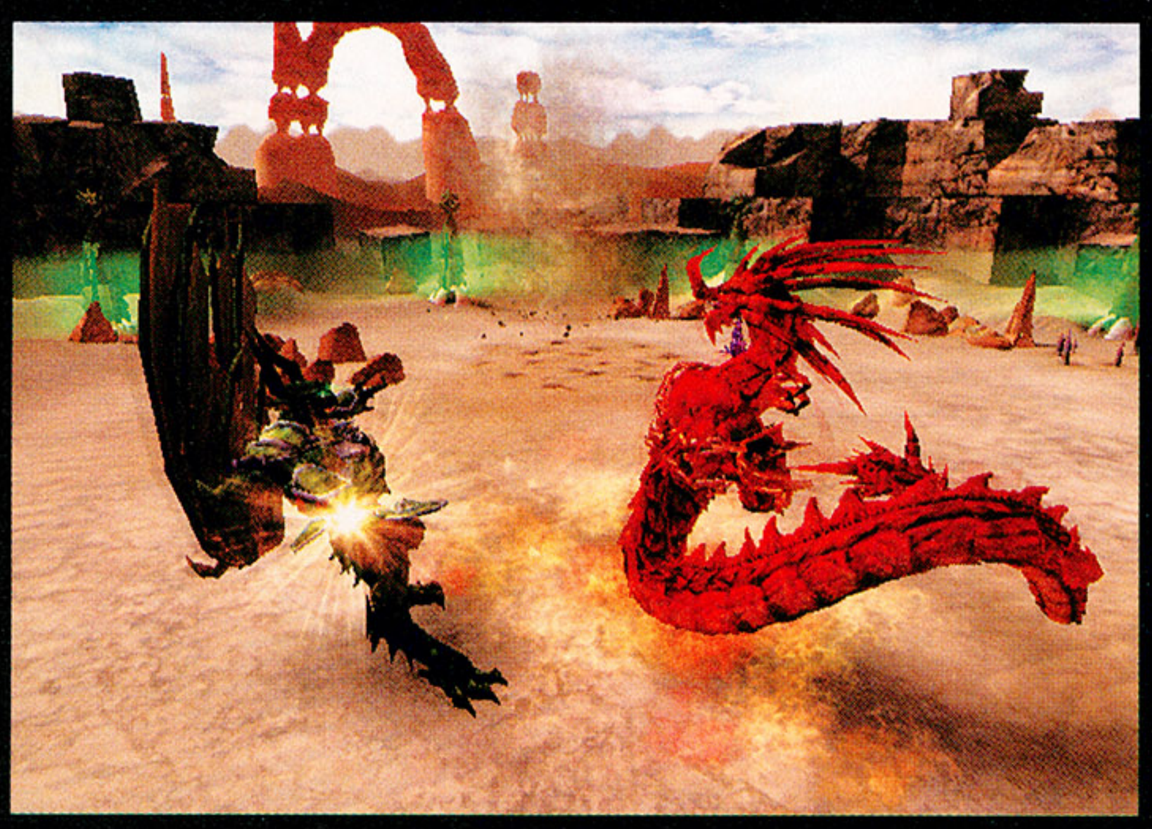
www.vugames.com



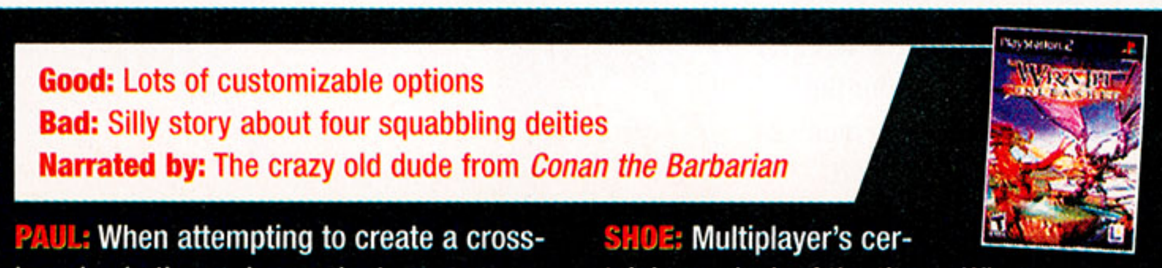
PS2/XB

WRATH: UNLEASHED

Two blah tastes that taste blah together



In the immortal words of that *EverQuest* commercial: Time to slay the dragon!



Good: Lots of customizable options
Bad: Silly story about four squabbling deities
Narrated by: The crazy old dude from *Conan the Barbarian*

PAUL: When attempting to create a cross-breed, whether a dog, a plant, or a game, you ought to begin with specimens of the highest pedigree. That's where *Wrath: Unleashed* screws up—right at the start. It fuses a boring turn-based strategy game with a lackluster one-on-one fighter.

In the puzzle-like campaign mode, tactical progress is steady, although slow—but a fair versus game rarely escapes stalemate. Each player captures their share of strategically significant hexagons...and camps there. As long as no one screws up too badly, everyone can just keep using magic to replace their defeated creatures, more or less indefinitely. Shawn and I drudged through a tedious two-and-a-half hour game that ended only because I got sick of it and committed suicide. That match could have dragged on for *days*.

Fighting is no better. You can randomly mash buttons or you can run around the arena spamming fireballs, wearing your opponent down in an admittedly cheap way. But you can't have a satisfying fight.

No synergy here—*Wrath* is exactly the sum of these parts.

SHOE: Multiplayer's certainly no clash of the titans. When Shawn's cheap single-button abuse and Paul's wimpy hit-and-run "techniques" are winning battles, you know some developer didn't put a lot of energy into making the action half of this action-strategy game very good. Single-player, however, can be quite fun for the casual strategist. Though the storyline and characters suffer under a glaze of hokeyness, the game gives you a good variety of maps, terrain types, and monsters, and it offers plenty to strategize over without overly complicating things.

SHAWN: *Wrath* attempts to appeal to two distinct audiences...and fails. Tacticians won't take to its mash-happy battles, and combatants will want to dispense with the calculation and cut to the duels. Nor is either aspect of the game very good. The strategy segments are slow-paced and inclined to stalemate (a single campaign can drag on indefinitely) as the brawling bits are boring and easily abused. In short, two half-assed components combine to make...well, you do the math.

THE VERDICTS (OUT OF 10)	PAUL	SHOE	SHAWN
	4.0	7.0	4.5

Publisher: LucasArts
Developer: The Collective
Players: PS2 1-2 (2-4 w/ Multitap); XB: 1-4
ESRB: Teen

www.lucasarts.com

PlayStation 2

AIRFORCE DELTA STRIKE

How about a little radio silence?

Good: Massive variety of planes...
Bad: ...few of which seem to break the 55 mph barrier
Tonight's Guest Star: Vic Viper from *Gradius*

CRISPIN: I usually have a hard time falling asleep on long flights. But I really did conk out during one of *Delta Strike*'s many dull, virtual-lullaby cinema sequences. The game's makers added these sci-fi soap-opera interludes—which star 20 barely animated characters who fight, flirt, and ramble on about government factions—to spice up the series' air combat. But the plot takes tremendous effort to comprehend, and it doesn't help that characters continue to gossip like an old ladies' sewing circle while you're flying missions, when you're too busy busting targets and dodging missiles to pay attention.

Not that the missions do much to wake you up. Although you get 60 in all, ranging from canyon-skimming flights to outer-space dogfights (plus one ultrafrustrating iceberg battle), too many send you on emergency scrambles to down approaching fighters. Ace pilotry leads to niftier planes—more than 100, including WWII-era fighters. But since most of these jets seemingly soar as fast as a garbage truck in reverse, it's hard to get the blood pumping. Or to keep those eyelids from getting heavier, and heavier, and heavi...zzzz.

SHAWN: Pilot a plane that couldn't keep pace with a power walker, let alone turn and burn. Scroll through text-heavy briefings in brutally long layovers between each and every flight. Return to *Delta Strike*'s not-so-wild blue yonder and listen to your wingmen shoot the breeze with mission control. Try your damnedest not to nod off while creeping over barren, doo-doo-brown terrain, scanning the skies for the first sign of fun. Or simply remain seated, wedged between a slob and a screaming brat, reading your complimentary copy of *SkyMall*.

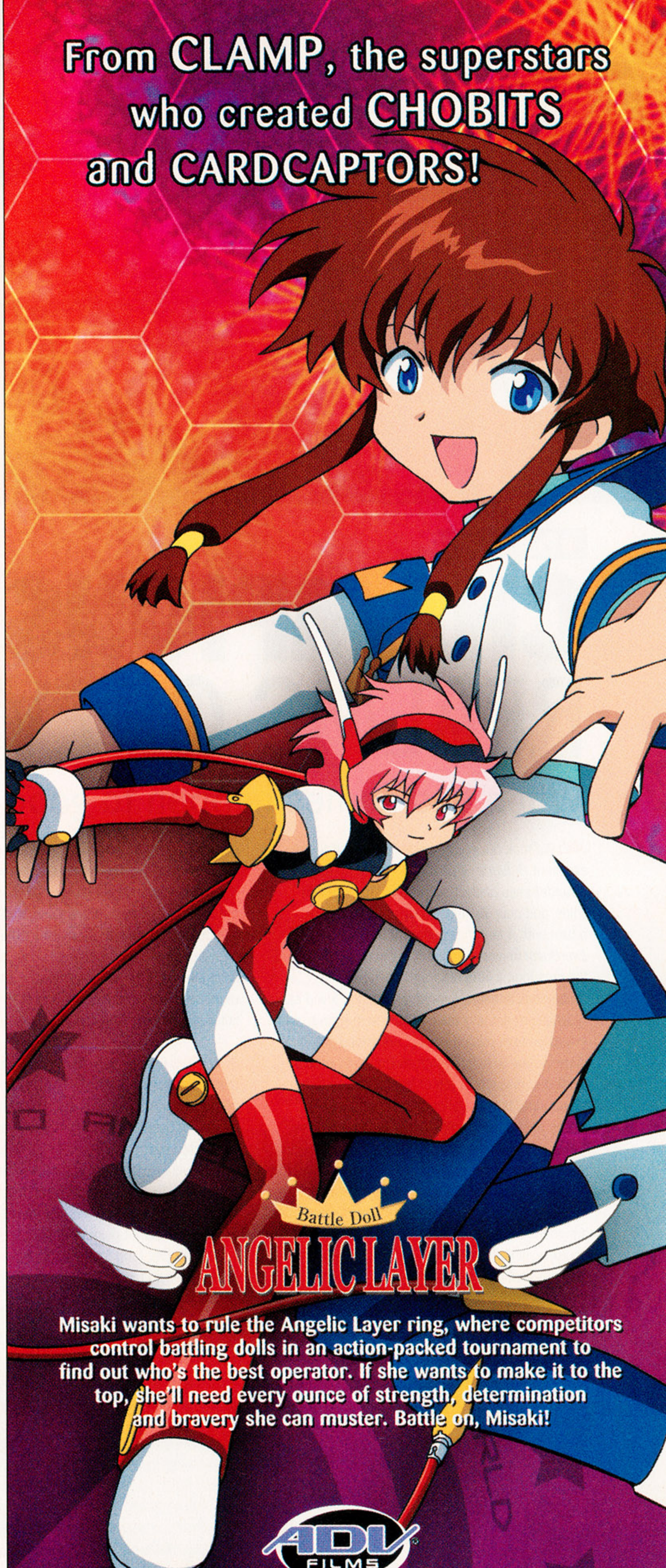
G. FORD: *Delta Strike* keeps you juggling responsibilities with its plethora of pilots, planes, and plots, and it all surrounds a decent-controlling flying engine. Problem is, the mission structure is poorly paced, with too many dull dogfighting missions wedged between the occasional inspired ones. And all that talking sure doesn't help—you will stop caring about which squeaky-voiced flyboy is getting revenge on whom after a few chatter-filled sorties. Ultimately, though, *Delta Strike*'s flying action isn't bad...just bland.

The Land of Dairy Queen is in for some long-overdue napalming.

THE VERDICTS (OUT OF 10)	CRISPIN	SHAWN	G. FORD
	3.5	3.5	6.0

Publisher: Konami
Developer: Konami Studios
Players: 1
ESRB: Teen

www.konami.com/airforcedeltastrike



■ *Champions'* feral vampires lack the frilly clothes of those found in stinky Anne Rice books.

■ PlayStation 2

CHAMPIONS OF NORRATH: REALMS OF EVERQUEST

When bad names happen to good action-RPGs

JOE: We took our pointy wizards' hats off to the excellent *Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance* for bringing *Gauntlet*-style hack-n-slash thrills back to consoles, and now, *Alliance*'s original developers return with a fantastic action-RPG set in Sony's *EverQuest* universe. (The big difference? Um...well, the orcs look a little different, we guess.) *Champions* mimicks everything that we loved about *Alliance* but actually takes it all a step further, with extensive item customization, enhanced graphics, more variety to its straightforward all-monsters-must-die missions, a ton of levels, and up to four-player simultaneous play, both online and off.

The best part, though, is that the heart of the game—*Champions*' tight fight-or-flight gameplay—remains utterly engaging either alone or with friends helping you out. And luckily, *Champions* visuals are up to par with the gameplay. Cavernous dungeons and web-filled tombs have an almost photo-realistic look to them, and visual effects (like the light cast from a flaming sword) will have you geeking out, looking for new weapons to ogle.

Great as it is, *Champions* still isn't perfect. Though it's much less pronounced than in *Alliance*, the constant sword swinging and spellcasting does still get repetitive over time—something that more monster variety and additional subquests could have alleviated. So although *Champions* clearly reigns as current king of the action-RPG hill, there's still room before it reaches the peak.

JENNIFER: Enough with the *BGDA* comparisons—this game stands on its own as a totally fun hack-n-slash ride. You don't have to follow the story too closely, but you'll still enjoy the rich environments, well-acted dialogue, and cool characters, from sexy undead villains (oh, Lord Vanarhost!) to pus-filled ant queens (eew!). What drew me in most, however, was the deep character customization. Adding an extra critical hit point or upgrading my helmet with a vampire fang to increase mana regeneration kept me playing, even through the repetitive parts...which brings me to the game's only significant flaw. It doesn't require enough strategy in single- or multiplayer—you can almost always charge in, fire arrows or lightning hammers ablazing, and you'll beat your enemies just fine. But I can't complain too much about that, now, can I?

CJ: Based on how much I despise the massively dull massively multiplayer *EverQuest Online Adventures* for PS2, I fully expected to also hate *Champions*. But I can't! This game is too great.

Champions reminds me of the classic arcade action of *Gauntlet*, only with infinitely more depth. Fantastic visuals, fun combat, complex and superbly designed dungeons, and even an engaging story line combine to keep players enraptured. To top all that off, while it's plenty enjoyable solo, it's even better multiplayer or online with friends. I missed the boat on developer Snowblind's previous actioner, *Dark Alliance*. Maybe you did, too, but don't let this one get away.

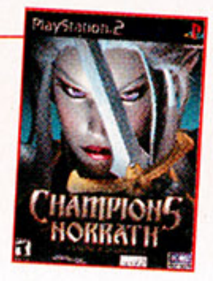
Friend or Foe? Of course, finding the right folks to play with can radically change your experience with the multiplayer side of *Champions*. Some jerks you'll meet online will snag all of the fallen special items while you're busy administering a beat down to a gaggle of orcs, while others might give you beefy magic weapons or load you up on health and mana potions at the store. Our advice? If they don't keep asking what you're wearing, play with 'em again.

Know Your Role

Each character class in *Champions* has its own unique set of abilities and spells. For instance, the wood-elf ranger can shoot flaming arrows, while the shadow knight can befriend the undead and emit a trail of pestilence. Since *EverQuest* is relatively unknown compared with *D&D*, it'll take you a while to discover which group possesses your favorite tricks. (We could barely stand looking at the gaudily dressed erudite wizards, so they remain an unknown quantity for us.)

■ That stag hat is all the rage in Norrath this season.

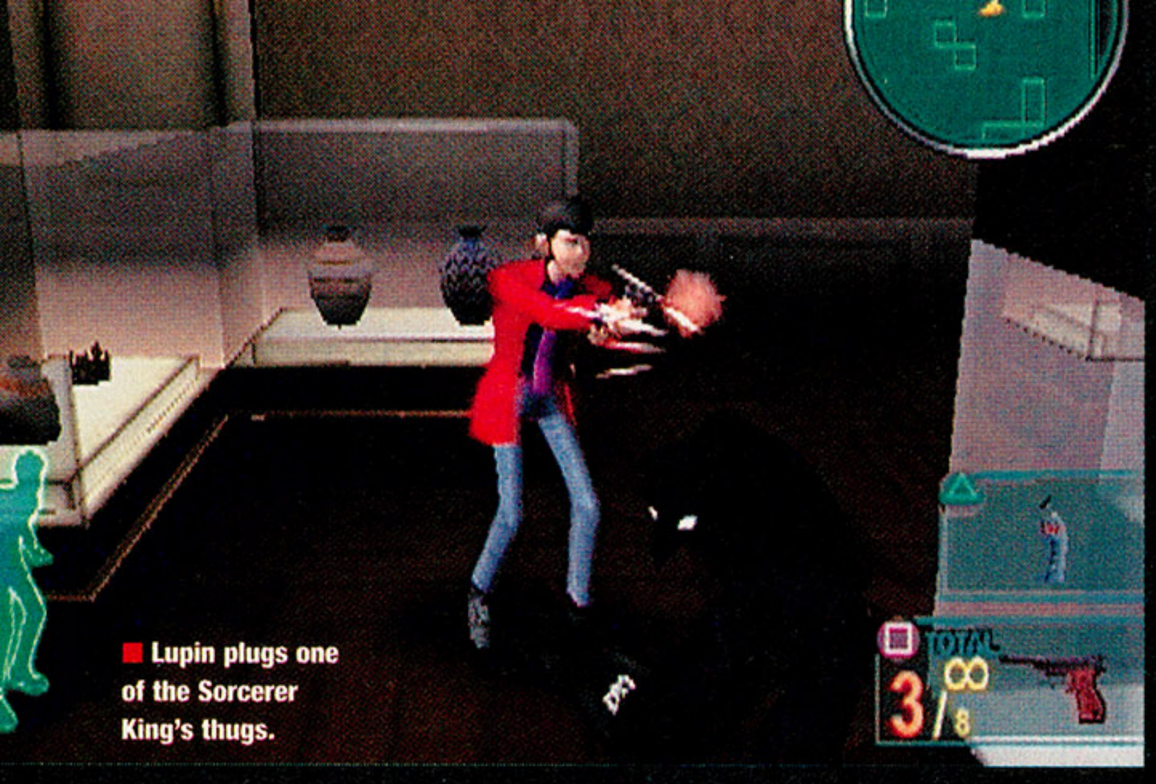
Good: Tons of customization, lots to do, and online play
Bad: Not enough monsters in the manual
Still Somewhat Living in the Shadow of: *Diablo II* (PC)



THE VERDICTS (OUT OF 10)	JOE	JENNIFER	CJ
	8.5	8.0	8.5

Publisher: Sony Online Ent.
Developer: Snowblind
Players: 1-2
(2-4 w/ Multitap or Online)
ESRB: Teen

station.sony.com



■ Lupin plugs one of the Sorcerer King's thugs.

■ (Below) Hmm...hasn't anyone 'round here heard of using a *key*?

Note with circles and checks

A note obtained in a room on the 1F of the North Wing

■ PlayStation 2

LUPIN THE THIRD: TREASURE OF THE SORCERER KING

This classic anime thief won't steal your heart

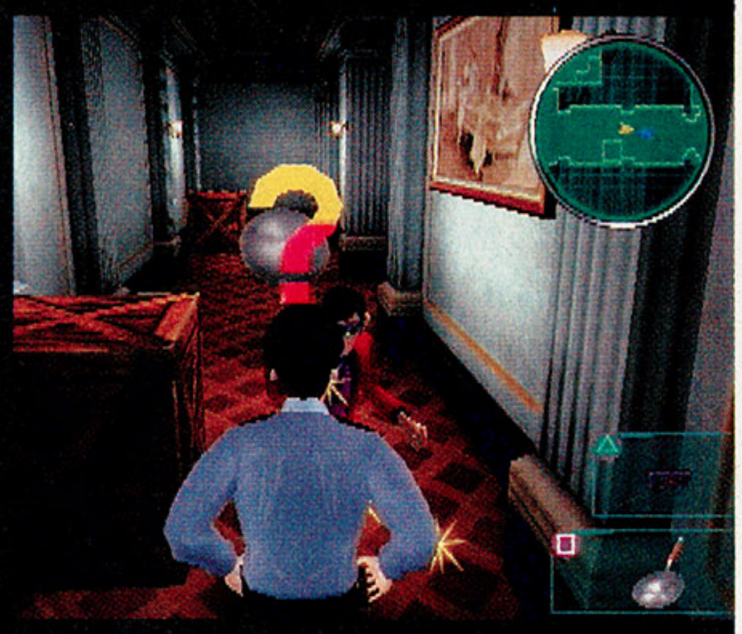
Good: Captures the look and feel of the show
Bad: Stiff, stilted controls don't do it any favors
Next Time, Lupin Should Steal: Better gameplay

CJ: As a fan of the *Lupin* anime for many years, I'm happy to see one of the illustrious thief's gaming romps make it Stateside...even if the game itself is a bit of a letdown. To its credit, *Treasure* offers a well-written (if typical) *Lupin* story, stars the TV show's English dub cast, and matches the visual style of the anime nicely. But I won't be blinded by fanboyism—this is an average adventure game that feels pretty dated by modern standards.

Stiff, robotic controls present the game's biggest hurdle. Most action sequences are a joke, as gun battles consist of standing still while firing at a bad guy who is five feet away. Even a few awkward attempts at stealth fail to add flavor to this bland gameplay stew. Also, the gameplay's too reliant on noggin-scratching puzzles—you'll often wander around until you eventually stumble on the right path or clue to progress. Overall, *Treasure* is passable *Lupin* fare for diehard fans, but it probably won't win any new ones.

PAUL: Like its hero, this game wears many none-too-convincing disguises. There's a lot of faulty stealth gameplay, some shooting, and a dash of gadgeteering. But underneath that, it's an old-school adventure game, where everything is part of an extravagant puzzle—for example, a Cup-O-Noodle's expiration date is the code to unlock a door. *Lupin* would've been better if we were free to roam around in true adventure-game fashion, hunting for clues without the headaches that tacked-on fighting and sneaking cause.

KEVIN: It's always nice to see an anime game that doesn't outright embarrass its source material. Someone out there was serious about pleasing *Lupin* fans: The script and music deliver 100 percent original anime quality, and every place you go brims with that authentic James Bond-gone-bad *Lupin* feel. The game itself (a mix of *Metal Gear Solid* and *Resident Evil*) is just above average—the controls are more fiddly than an Irish wedding—but the hide-and-shoot gameplay and fun puzzles are engaging enough to keep anime freaks playing. As a *Lupin* maniac, I feared the worst...and came out decently satisfied.



■ (Above) Lupin does his best Sam Fisher impression by bashing this guard on the head with a frying pan while wearing infrared goggles. Impressions aren't his forte.

THE VERDICTS (OUT OF 10)	5.5	4.5	7.0
	CJ	PAUL	KEVIN

Publisher: Bandai
Developer: Eia
Players: 1
ESRB: Teen

www.lupinofficial.com

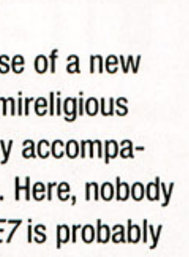
Winning Eleven 7: Way more crewcuts than last year.

PlayStation 2

WINNING ELEVEN 7

Best soccer franchise with the worst name

England's Michael Owen corrals a pass (left); Wayne Rooney prepares to miss the net (right).



Good: Amazingly accurate gameplay
Bad: Gameplay may be too accurate for nonfanatical fans
Known Across the Atlantic as: *Pro Evolution 3*

PATRICK: First, a warning: This game is for serious soccer fans. If a hard-fought 1-0 battle doesn't sound like edge-of-the-seat stuff to you, then fire up *Madden* and let us enjoy this beautiful game in peace.

For those still reading, *Winning Eleven 7* is as good as it gets. The *FIFA* series may have a bit more flash, but *Eleven* is top of the table when it comes to gameplay—and that's all that counts with soccer. You'll need a solid passing game to mount any sort of offensive attack, and even then goals are rare. Sky a ball over the crossbar after all the work it takes to set up a shot and you'll be more distraught than the suicidal players on the field. But when you do score, it's all the sweeter.

Although there are no MLS teams and most of the other national league squads are incorrectly named (due to Byzantine licensing rules), nearly all of the players do bear the right names. More importantly, the stars actually play like their real-life counterparts—Michael Owen's speed borders on the ridiculous, while David Beckham bends kicks like a mofo. But perhaps the best news of all? *Eleven*'s $35 price tag.

BRYAN: I should be writing this review topless. Having just led my team to victory in sudden-death overtime, soccer etiquette practically demands sweaty-shirt removal to further stoke the already delirious fans. *WE7* brings this level of excitement to every nail-biting match, and the highly skilled A.I. helps preserve the series' reputation as the most true-to-life soccer sim. Cosmetic improvements such as spiffier player models and animations are just the icing on the, er, soccer cake. Next year, add online play and I'll drop trou.

DEMIAN: In Europe, the release of a new *Winning Eleven* game is a semireligious event for soccer fans, possibly accompanied by red wine and fainting. Here, nobody notices. Too bad, because *WE7* is probably the best soccer game yet made, thanks to relatively simple but deep controls and peerless gameplay. Minor gripes: I'd like to see a little more visual polish, and I think the menus are still atrociously complicated. Also, curious soccer game newbies, prepare your mind for boggling—the initial learning curve can be pretty steep.

THE VERDICTS (OUT OF 10)	PATRICK	BRYAN	DEMIAN
	9.5	8.5	8.5

Publisher: Konami
Developer: Konami Tokyo
Players: 1-2 (1-8 w/Multitap)
ESRB: Everyone

www.konami.com

The lunar surface is postcard pretty compared to some of the levels in *Jungle Storm*.

PlayStation 2

GHOST RECON: JUNGLE STORM

Low caliber

Idiots one second, geniuses the next, enemies'll nail you with small arms from long range.

Good: Plentiful online modes
Bad: Appallingly bad graphics and A.I.
Gomer: Pyle

SHAWN: The year is 2009, and, according to Tom Clancy's latest infantry combat sim, there's trouble in Colombia. By now you know the drill: You're in charge of two three-soldier squads, and you can outfit each group as you see fit. Prefer to play it safe? Snoop around with a sniper before devising a plan of approach. And if you like your business risky, you can always just set the jungle ablaze with the big guns. Issuing commands is easy, provided you have a USB headset on hand (the controller setup sports shortcuts, but you can't truly fine-tune the procedures without pausing).

Alongside online modes that are as abundant as they are mediocre (be sure to bring a tent and can of beans to these campouts), strategy is among *Ghost Recon: Jungle Storm*'s few saving graces. War might be ugly, but good God, this looks like sin. Every level is an angular wasteland where Turok might very well have tracked dinosaurs in the Jurassic era of 3D gaming. Add to this a lack of visible weapons, soldiers who seem to be wearing cement boots, and alarmingly stupid A.I., and you'll see why I wish I'd dodged this draft.

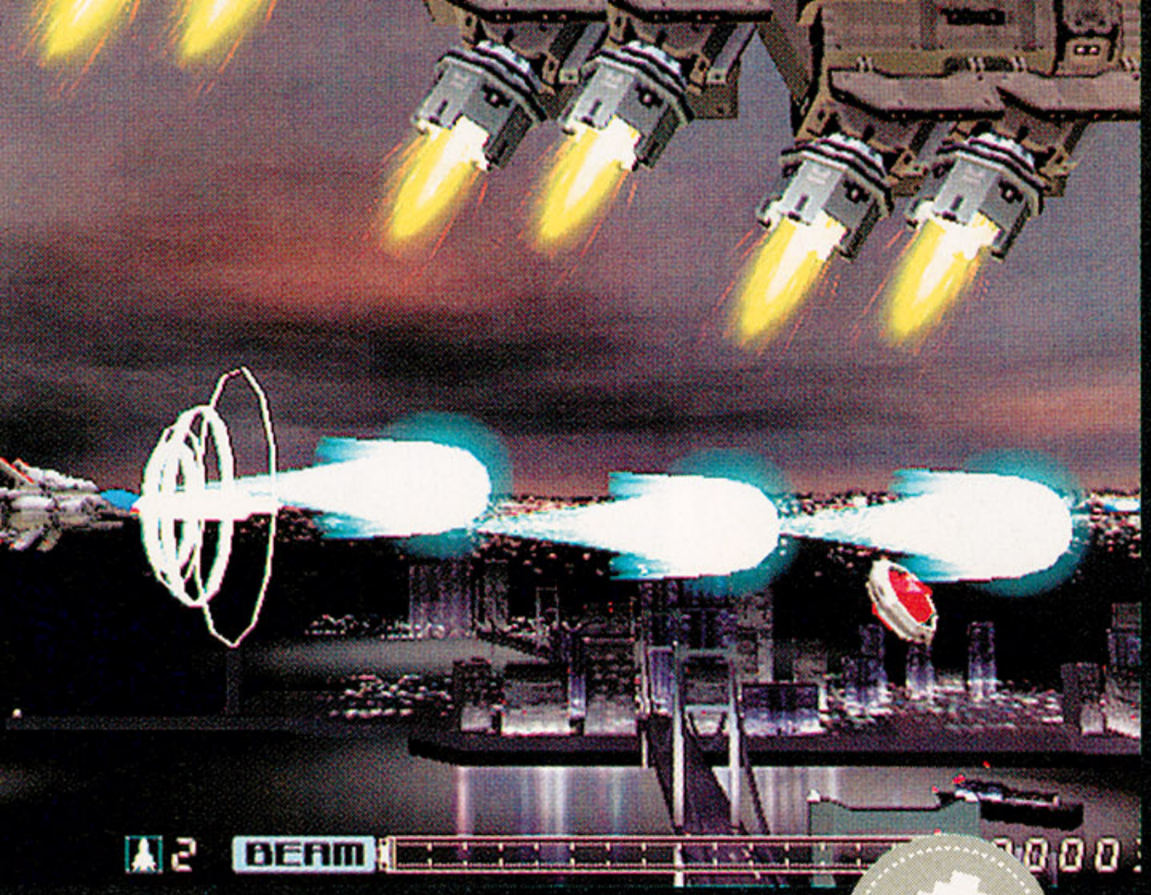
CRISPIN: On paper, *Jungle Storm* is a steely-eyed *SOCOM* killer, reporting for duty with more single-player missions, a flexible squad-control interface, and a greater variety of online modes. But then you play it and—aaiiieee!—is it ever ugly. The blah environments and goofy animation do little to draw you into what's supposed to be a realistic combat experience. Spotty A.I. and clunky controls make it even harder to maintain gung-ho enthusiasm. The co-op multiplayer modes (standard deathmatch is dull) rescue *Jungle Storm* from a dishonorable discharge. Just don't expect *SOCOM II*'s atmosphere.

JOE: Last fall's *Ghost Recon: Island Thunder* looks dated on Xbox, so it's no surprise that *Jungle Storm* on PS2 is positively U-G-L-Y on PS2—but its mix of squad-based strategy and first-person shooting remains slowly paced, smartly thrilling fun. *SOCOM II* aficionados don't have to worry about this game knocking the crown off their king's noggin, although its ballistic intellectual gameplay (online or off) make *Storm* worth seeking out. Just barely.

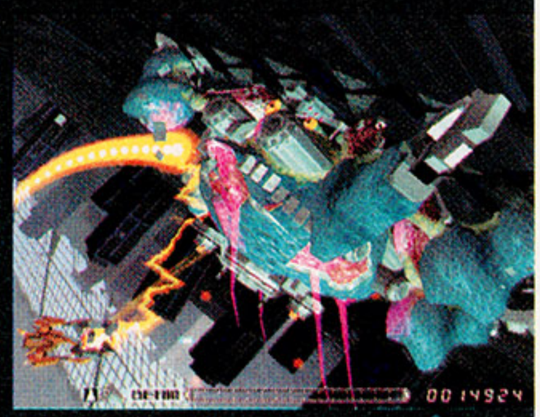
THE VERDICTS (OUT OF 10)	SHAWN	CRISPIN	JOE
	4.5	5.0	6.5

Publisher: Ubisoft
Developer: Ubisoft
Players: 1-2 (2-16 Online)
ESRB: Teen

www.ubisoft.com



■ *R-Type* games move slower than your average shooter and require careful planning and execution over reflexes.



■ PlayStation 2

R-TYPE FINAL

The best Type of shooter

SILVER

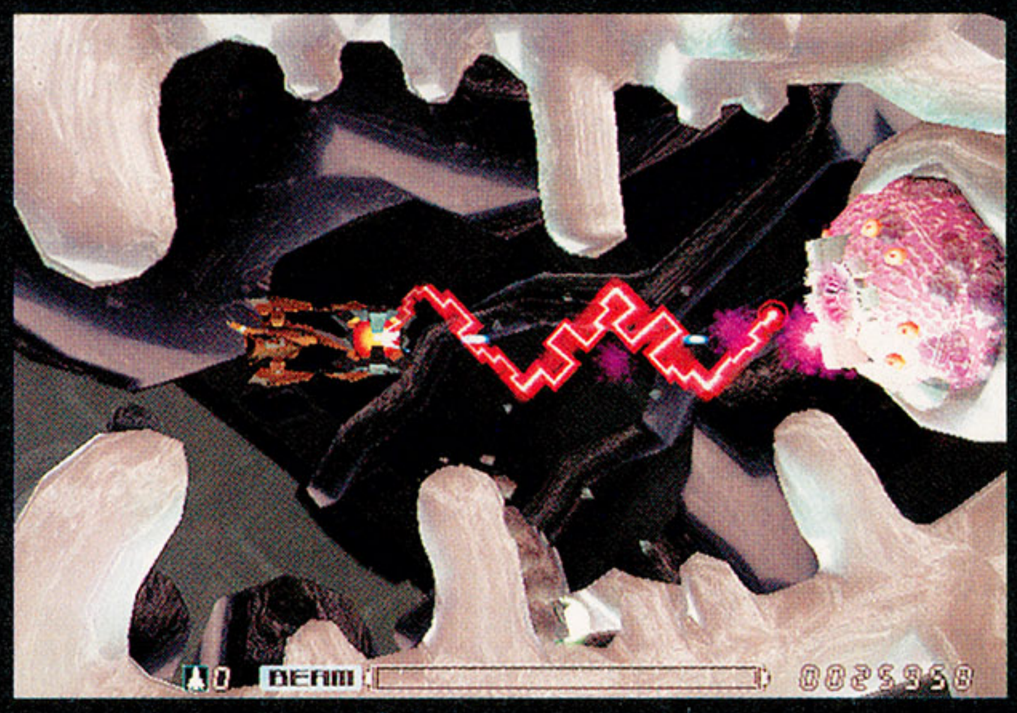
Good: Huge variety of ships, classic *R-Type* gameplay
Bad: Some excessive slowdown, interface problems
Weirdest Ship Name: The R-9AX "Delicatessen"

MARK: If you've played an *R-Type* shooter before, from the 15-year-old original arcade game right down to the recent PS1 *R-Type Delta*, you know what you're getting here. *Final* doesn't mess with the formula, it celebrates it: the force pod you can attach to your ship for extra defense or fire off to attack on its own, the different levels of three laser power-ups, the gigantic pattern-based bosses, even the "big-ship stage" where you spend a whole level attacking different parts of one gigantic craft. All that under a fresh coat of paint is fine with me; shooters have hardly improved upon the *R-Type* template in the last decade.

What *Final* does add is some variety. Along with five difficulty levels, the different characteristics of the 100 ships you can unlock—each with its own power-up effects, missiles, and other options to choose from—deepen and lengthen the game. You can customize your ships to fit the particular challenges of each level or even program their A.I. and watch as they fight between each other in the odd versus mode. (Quite lame, actually, but a quirky bonus so I'll give Irem points for simply trying.) The $30 price tag just seals the deal.

JON D: Underwater flying, several sweet detachable gun bits, a traditional stage-long battleship encounter...*Final* is an *R-Type* fanatic's dream and the best thing to happen to side-scrolling shooters since *G-Darius* (PS1). New ships and a somewhat awkward versus mode expand the genre and round out the satisfying solo game. *R-Type* only suffers on technical issues: Slowdown often drags action to a crawl (an artificial aid—lasers are easier to dodge in slow-mo), even though the graphics are sometimes more PS1.5 than PS2. But whether you're an old *R-Type* fan or a total newbie, it's a must-buy.

JOHN R: It saddens me to think this may be the last new taste of *R-Type* we ever get. *Final* definitely takes the storied franchise out on a high note, with more than 100 ships to unlock and a solid dose of the classic, "thinking man's shooter" gameplay that *R-Type* fans love. Level designs are a bit weak compared to past *R-Types*, but the variety and replay value here more than make up for it. A must-own for shooter fans.



■ Battling the giant bosses is one of the best parts of *Final*—watch carefully to develop a pattern to beat 'em.

THE VERDICTS (OUT OF 10)		
8.5	8.0	8.0
MARK	JON D.	JOHN R.

Publisher: Fresh Games
Developer: Irem
Players: 1 (2 in versus mode)
ESRB: Everyone

www.eidos.com

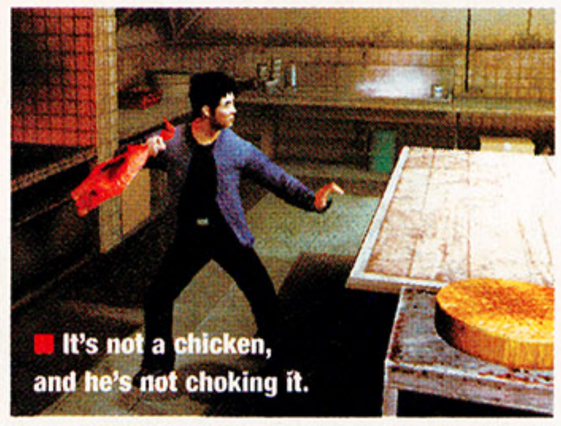
ICE

SHE'D LOVE TO TAKE YOU OUT. FROM 20 METERS.

CYGIRLS

07:18:54

Peep the Guccis, you Phat Farm–wearing fools!



It's not a chicken, and he's not choking it.

PlayStation 2

RISE TO HONOR

Half jet set, half jet lag

Put the moves on mob heiress Michelle Chiang.

SHAWN: *Rise to Honor* infuses the classic beat-em-up formula with cinematic flair. Kit (aka Hong Kong legend Jet Li) Yun's kung fu is so seamless it seems choreographed. Take, for instance, your typical restaurant ruckus—you know, the one where the cleaver-wielding chef chases crooks from his kitchen. Parry blows with whatever's at hand—that Peking duck should do nicely—then flip a goon onto the hot grill. Clever controls make ass kicking as easy as it is elegant (simply shove the right analog stick in the direction you want to attack), and counters keep you from feeling like you're on the martial arts treadmill—at least for a while.

It's not that there aren't other things to do: Scripted action sequences and sloppy but fun shootouts punctuate the fistfights. The former are adrenaline-fueled affairs that have Kit playing hide-and-seek with armed helicopters and staying out of a sniper's scope, while the twin pistol exchanges of the latter are comparatively low caliber.

As cool as they sometimes are, such sequences are simply interludes—hardly enough to keep the slugfests that take center stage from becoming a chore. If the enemies weren't so cheap in the later levels, it wouldn't matter. But once wave after wave start evading your every move no matter how much you mix it up, forcing you to find and exploit the A.I.'s blind spots, *Rise*'s martial artistry stoops to lowbrow brawling. When the dust settles, it's worth checking out...once it hits matinee price.

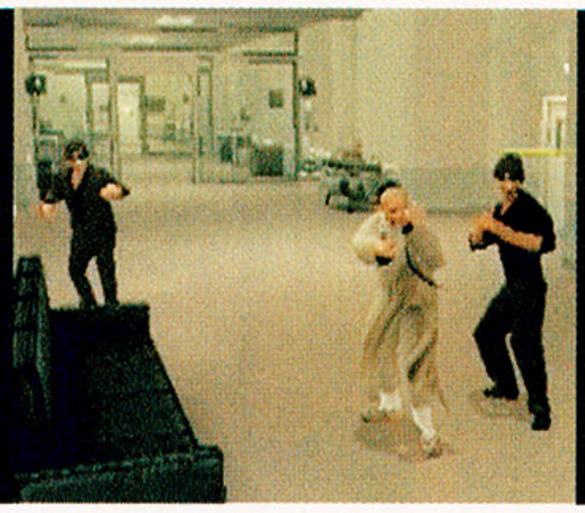
SHOE: I didn't know the bell curve could apply to videogame difficulty. *Rise to Honor* gets crazy hard about halfway through (with cheap sub-bosses that have supermagnetic grabbing abilities), but then it peters off with the last few levels—and not just because I got enough fighting experience under my black belt. I still enjoyed pressing on, though, because a great control scheme and plentiful save and checkpoints keep the frustration down.

The gameplay variety helps, too. *Rise* doesn't excel in any individual area—the stealth/shooting/beat-em-up parts won't kung fu sweep anyone off his feet, but together, they combo for a mindless good time. Too bad you have the same moves set from start to finish, and the coolest Jet Li chop-socky stuff only happens in cut-scenes.

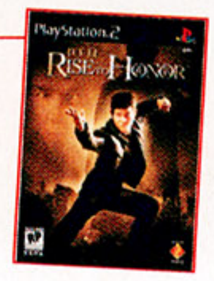
OFFICIAL PS MAG—SCOOTER: *Rise to Honor* might seem like revolutionary movie-star-in-gaming fusion, but it's basically just an excuse for Jet Li to star in a dumbed-down (yet beautiful) remake of the arcade classic *Final Fight*. Brawlin' vets can expect Metro City fisticuffs flashbacks—it seems that beating up five goons at a time is still the best way to reach the top of the criminal food chain. Luckily, the silly-sounding analog-stick fighting scheme actually works. If not for some serious balance issues (some bosses can easily kill you in two hits), stupidly out-of-place stealth levels, and finicky weapon controls (it's really hard, for some reason, to hit somebody with a stick), *Honor* might have been more than just a solid rental.

Costume Party

In addition to Jet Li's mug and moves, *Rise to Honor* features outfits from a few of the Wushu wizard's more famous flicks. Li uses gravity-defying kung fu to fight off foreigners with guns in *Once Upon a Time in China* (right) and settles a Sino-Japanese feud in the thinly veiled remake of Bruce Lee's *Fist of Fury*, *Fist of Legend* (far right).



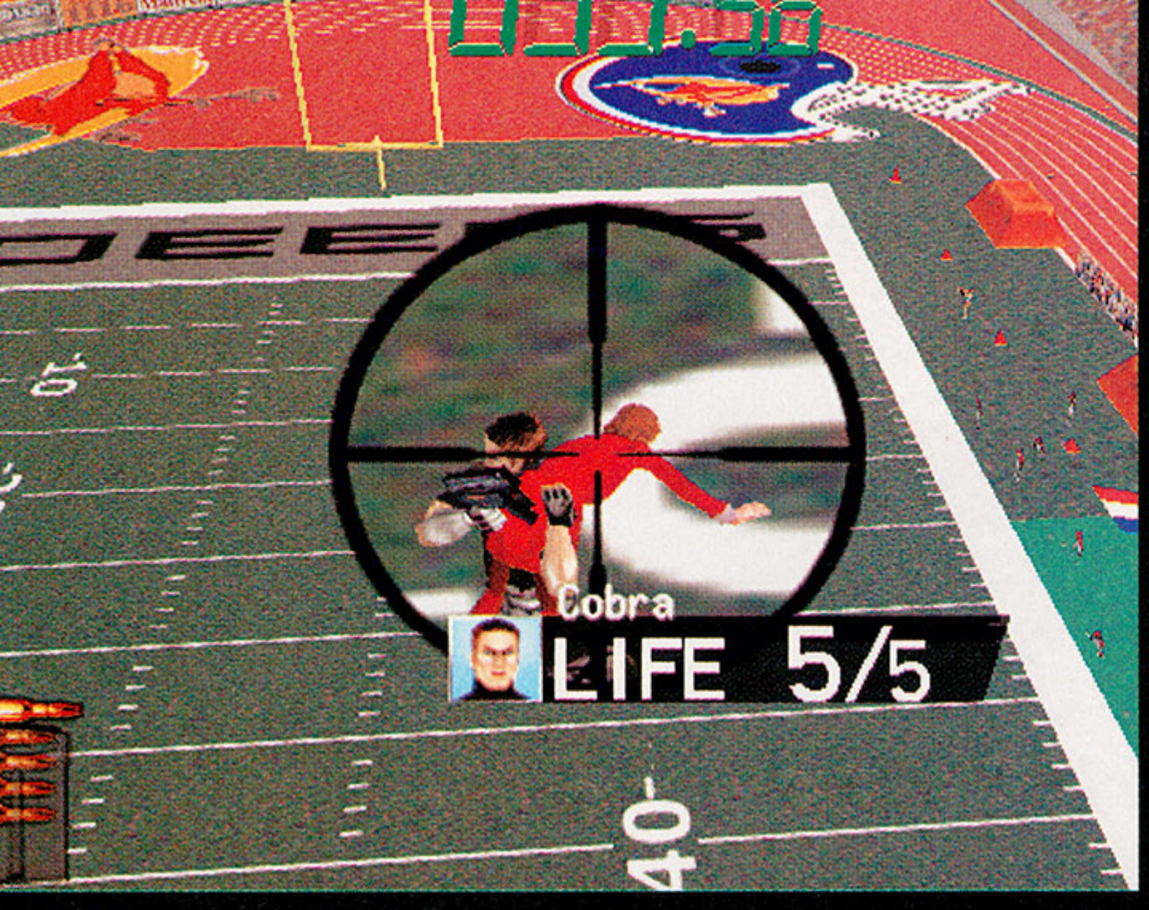
Good: Stylish martial arts action
Bad: Crushing difficulty curve
Must-See Jet Li Movie: *Hero*



THE VERDICTS (OUT OF 10)	SHAWN	SHOE	SCOOTER
	6.5	6.5	6.0

Publisher: Sony CEA
Developer: SCEA Foster City
Players: 1
ESRB: Teen

www.playstation.com

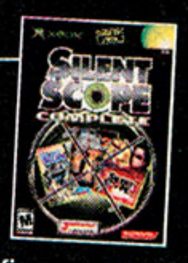


If you were a madman bent on world domination, you figure you'd remember to bring along a bulletproof vest.

Xbox

SILENT SCOPE COMPLETE

Silent all these years



Good: Three *Silent Scope*s for the price of one
Bad: *Silent Scope 3* is the only one worth playing for long
Only in *Silent Scope*: Can the president be so easily kidnapped

CJ: The three (four, if you count the bonus *EX*) *Silent Scope*s bundled in *Complete* let you live out that childhood fantasy of protecting innocent civilians by shooting terrorists with a very large rifle from a great distance. But for some reason, in the world of *Silent Scope*, most of the situations you're put in are pretty ridiculous. I mean, really...what terrorist is going to carry the president's daughter across a football field *during* a game? But it's that kitschy over-the-top-ness, coupled with sharp (but slightly dated) graphics, that makes *Scope* such an enjoyable distraction.

It is a shame, however, that *Complete* doesn't do anything to upgrade the visuals or gameplay of these older games. And *Scope 1* and *2* can't hold a candle to the options and unlockables offered by the third installment. Still, it's not a terrible package for the price, and it's definitely worth picking up if you've got an Xbox lightgun gathering dust next to *House of the Dead III*.

G. FORD: As thrilling (and controversial) as it is to be put in the role of a sniper, any positive feelings here are sufficiently dampened by the Xbox pad. Unless you're willing to pony up 40 bucks for a gun, *Scope* is bound to frustrate you. These games belong in the arcade with dedicated guns and scopes, because moving the cursor around with a pad, not to mention zooming in and out, just isn't pinpoint or quick enough.

Konami should be commended for including the entire series, with *Scope 3* being the jewel here, but it's hard to recommend a game that you can beat in a weekend.

SHOE: My eyes aren't so good anymore. After extended playtime with *Silent Scope Complete*, sitting 3 feet away from the television, scanning for targets the size of dust mites, my peepers gave out before my thumbs did. Next went my mind—blown to smithereens by the excruciatingly bad voice acting and absurd cinemas (which show their low-budget arcade roots all too well).

I actually enjoyed the gameplay, though. It has smooth controls and intense moments, and it's as solid as any sniping moment found in any other shooter. Just watch out for that crazy difficulty spike that happens about halfway through each title—and don't forget the Visine.

Silent Scope Light Rifle

If you take your sniping seriously, you'll want to check out this $40 tricked-out rifle-sized lightgun from Pelican—it boasts a unique sensor that auto-zooms the in-game action when you put your face up to the scope. Info at www.pelicanperformance.com.

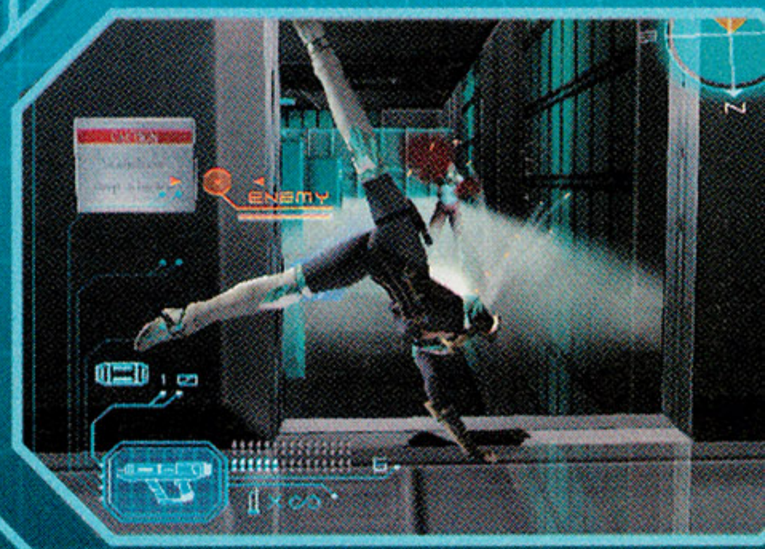
Catching an eyeful of the ladies refills your health, but what's she doing way up *there*?

THE VERDICTS (OUT OF 10)		
6.5	5.0	6.0
CJ	G. FORD	SHOE

Publisher: Konami
Developer: Konami
Players: 1-2
ESRB: Teen

www.konami.com

2 GIRLS.
2 WORLDS.
1 HARDCORE MISSION.



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CYGIRLS

PlayStation.2

MATURE M CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
Blood
Strong Language
Suggestive Themes
Violence

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TEEN
T
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Comic Mischief
Mild Language
Mild Violence
Suggestive Themes

www.us.playstation.com

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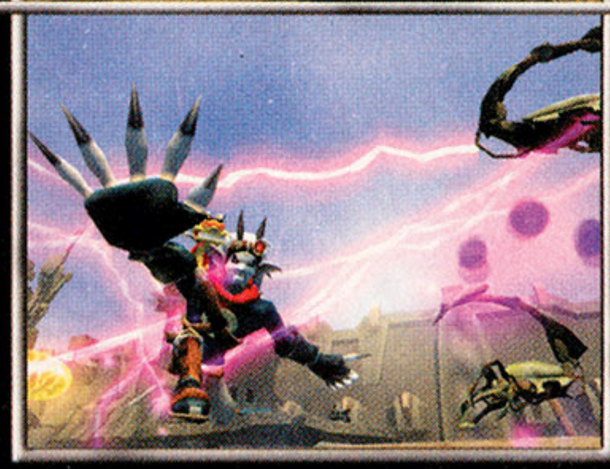
JAK II™

THIS WORLD IS
BETTER LEFT TO JAK.



It ain't no namby pamby fairyland, pal. It's a whole new kind of evil. Crawling with ruthless dictators, backstabbing allies and blood thirsty freaks with an appetite for extra rare meat. All pansies kindly tippy toe on out of here. This requires someone with serious ass-kicking savvy. And that someone, my friend, is Jak. This time he's pissed off and battle ready, with a frighteningly large gun, get-the-hell-outta-my-way hoverboard and a nasty case of mutant powers. So please, save yourself the detached appendages and let him handle it.

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GameCube

FINAL FANTASY: CRYSTAL CHRONICLES

Because you need more cables in your life

SHANE: *Crystal Chronicles* isn't exactly the classic *Final Fantasy* homecoming that Nintendo fans may have hoped for. While it might lure in series vets with distinctive *FF* trappings—cuddly moogle mailmen, elemental spellcraft, and familiar foes such as tonberries and cactuars—it's really a different beast altogether. You won't find any melodramatic love stories, lavish CG cutscenes, turn-based battles, or over-the-top summon spells here; *Crystal Chronicles* reduces the *Final Fantasy* experience to a basic, action-packed concept that's all about gameplay and charm. Imagine *Zelda* crossed with *Gauntlet*, and you're close to figuring out this remarkable game's addictive formula.

Actually, the first (and most important) part of that formula involves finding three friends. Nintendo has been preaching the gospel of connectivity (as opposed to, say, online play) for the last year, and *Chronicles* finally makes good on that promise: It truly is best when played with four players. Brave souls willing to fill their lives with cables (see sidebar) will reap fantastic rewards—teamwork factors into the gameplay at a fundamental level. You'll want to recruit your friends so one of you can carry the Crystal Chalice, a magic device that provides a protective shield from the poisonous gas infesting each dungeon. Also, combat rewards combos—both physical and magical attacks power up when executed simultaneously. Simple hack-n-slash gameplay magically transforms into something strategic, wild, and addictive.

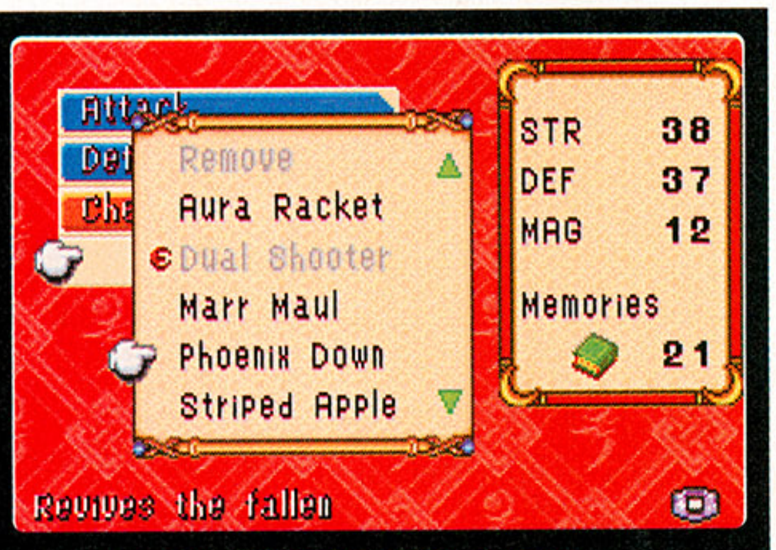
Single-player action isn't quite as compelling (no combos, some puzzles are tough without friends, and your pet moogle isn't that adept at carrying the Chalice), but it's an acceptable alternative when your pals aren't around. And since you can move your characters in and out of each other's games at any point, you'll want to play solo just to find new weapons and artifacts for your hero.

Gameplay isn't the only draw here. *Chronicles* is one visually arresting game—every location you explore harbors stunning details. Overhead torches sway in a mine, casting flickering shadows; rivulets of sand cascade down sun-bleached desert dunes; gooey, mucuslike cobblestones glint in a fungal forest. The graphics are so great that you'll actually start wondering what a realistic GC *Zelda* might have looked like. A haunting, subtle soundtrack matches the brilliance of the eye candy, and the evocative, folky tunes provide a great score for all the monster thwacking.

Daunting as the setup might be, give *Chronicles* a chance and you'll likely get hooked. It's a simple, beautiful, and rewarding experience.

You Will Connect...or Else

It's integral that you understand the bizarre love/hate relationship you're bound to feel about *Chronicles*' multiplayer action. There's no denying that playing through this adventure with three of your pals offers giggly hijinks and boundless thrills...but that fun comes at a high price. Specifically, each player (regardless of whether you're playing with one, two, or three friends) must play using a GBA hooked to the Cube via a link cable. The realization of "Gee, I'm having a lot of fun...and all it required was nearly 600 dollars' worth of Nintendo hardware" might cause insanity. So, if the whole connectivity concept rubs you the wrong way, you might want to steer clear.



Why does the game force everyone to use GBAs? So that you can manage your equipment privately, of course.

Good: Stellar graphics, fun multiplayer action
Bad: Absurd GBA prerequisite, scant plot
Creepiest Character Class: Bustier-clad female Yukes

THE VERDICTS (OUT OF 10)	SHANE	JENNIFER	KEVIN
	8.0	8.0	8.0

Publisher: Nintendo
Developer: Game Designers Studio
Players: 1
(2-4 w/ GBA-to-GC Link cables)
ESRB: Teen
www.nintendo.com

When three players all cast Blizzard simultaneously, a powerful Blizzaga spell erupts.

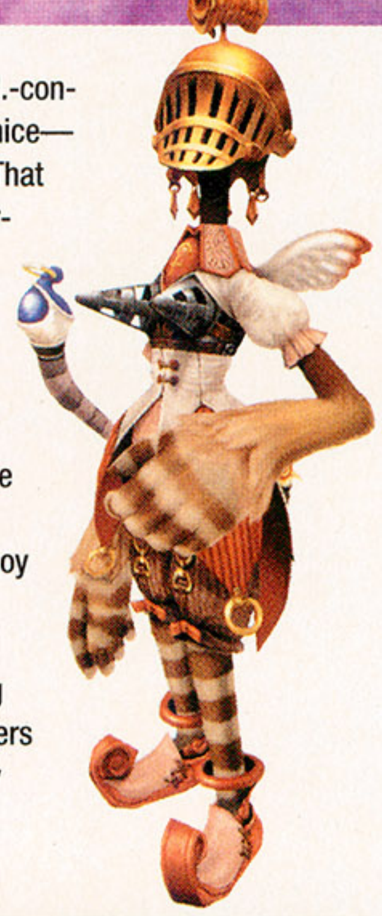
JENNIFER: For me, playing this game is sort of like walking by the Hello Kitty store. I know I'm supposed to be too cool/sophisticated/old to go inside, but the disgustingly cute characters, blindingly pretty colors, and shiny objects lure me in and keep me there for hours at a time until I guiltily emerge into the filthy, impure real world (which, it then seems, just doesn't offer enough glittering mushrooms in one day to keep me happy).

Lots of stereotypes work (this game's for kiddies, for girls, for *Final Fantasy*–lovin' fanboys), but none even hint at how deep this action-RPG goes. You can specialize your character in magic or melee, or you can keep your guy a jack-of-all-trades. You can meticulously beat every boss in every level, or you can skip around wherever your little heart takes you (though this can make the game more difficult, since your character won't have the proper skillz to pay the billz). You can (in a fantastic homage to *Animal Crossing*) write letters and send gifts to your family and friends to win their favor. It's both intensely frivolous and intensely rewarding—everyone should try it.

KEVIN: I'm sorry if this sounds blunt, but calling this game *Final Fantasy* probably wasn't the greatest idea. Despite the moogles and traditional magic-spell names, this really isn't *FF*—there are no experience points or leveling, and really not much of a story, either. Instead, you've got a fair-to-middlin' action-RPG that graduates to a must-play experience with two or three friends.

It's obvious that the developers concentrated most of their effort on the multiplayer game. Playing by yourself gets boring very quickly, even by the second "year" of in-game time, thanks to the repetitive dungeons and straightforward hack-n-slash gameplay. Your moogle companion is more of a drag than a support, too. Some sort of A.I.-controlled fighting companion would have been nice—after all, you're in a "crystal caravan," right? That would imply traveling with more than one person, no?

The single-player roughness, though, is covered by two features: a superb graphic and sound package (the most beautiful on GameCube, I'd say), as well as a multiplayer mode that's actually worth the cost of multiple GBAs and cables. I know most gamers won't have the money and time required to fully enjoy *FFCC* with their pals, but the payoff in dorky couch-rocking fun is something unattainable anywhere else. Just make sure you're playing with evenly balanced characters—the monsters seem like they're tuned to the strongest party member, so very weak characters could get crushed in their wake.



Crystal Chronicles' extra-fluffy moogles are 200 percent cuter than those in any other *FF* game.

Everybody's Got Something to Hide Except for Me and My Moogle

Just about every recent *Final Fantasy* game has featured moogles, cuddly magical critters who fill various important roles in society. In *Crystal Chronicles*, moogles provide several important functions. If you're playing alone, your pet moogle will carry the Crystal Chalice and help fight once in a while. (Repay his kindness by washing, clipping, and coloring his fur during downtime.) Moogles also deliver letters, so players can send all correspondence via moogle mail. Finally, be sure to search every location in the game for a hidden moogle house. Each one houses a collectable stamp that unlocks a GBA minigame.

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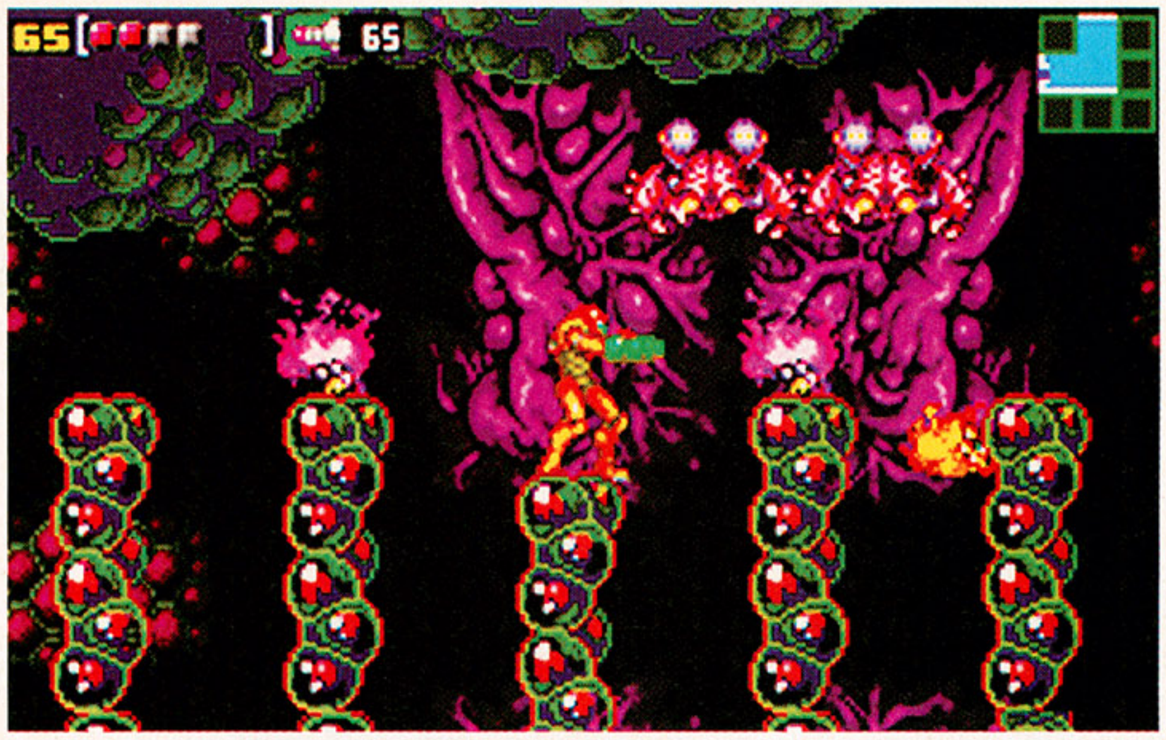
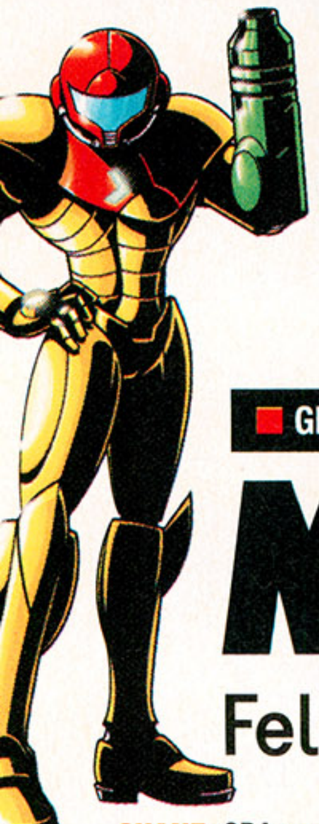
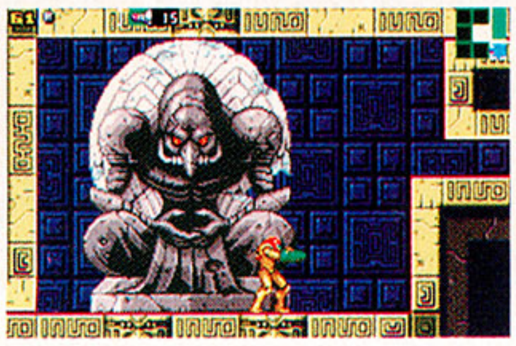
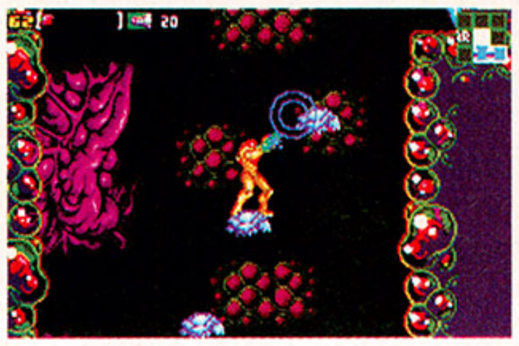
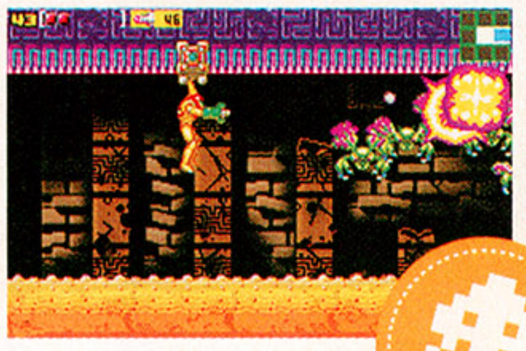
■ The newfangled ability to shoot diagonally gives Samus the edge.











GOLD

GAME OF THE MONTH

■ GBA

METROID ZERO MISSION

Fell in love with a girl

SHANE: GBA provides a fitting home for the original *Metroid*, considering it's the game that gave birth to the whole genre of exploration-based action-adventure (we'd never have the three great GBA *Castlevania*s without it). But *Zero Mission* isn't merely a portable replacement for that classic 8-bit *Metroid* cartridge you foolishly sold at a yard sale (though that's in here, too)—it's a remake that fleshes out every aspect of the landmark title.

Veterans of the old-school classic will feel instantly at home back on planet Zebes: You start out on the familiar pedestal in Brinstar, run to the left to grab the Morph Ball, and set out in search of the Long Beam. But don't think you know exactly what to expect—*Zero Mission*'s newly organic environments pack a ton of surprises: hundreds of tricky secrets, unexpected (and challenging) boss encounters, original areas to explore, and a stunning new final act that bravely eschews all normal *Metroid* conventions.

Gameplay is, as expected, perfect. The developers deftly fuse the rudimentary framework of the classic *Metroid* world with all the complex moves from *Super Metroid* (Super NES) to create a killer hybrid. Adding power-ups such as Super Missiles, Speed Boost, and Space Jump completely changes the scope of exploration, so you'll be navigating every cranny for hours in search of elusive objects.

But even newcomers who have no memory of trouncing Ridley back in '87 will fall in love here—you can't ignore *Zero Mission*'s artful graphics, haunting soundtrack, and brilliantly balanced gameplay. This is a must-have for all GBA owners.

MARK: "Remake" almost doesn't seem like the right word for *Zero Mission*. Besides the basic structure and a few knowing winks, it's a very different game from the original *Metroid*. (The exciting stealth-action section, in particular, was a pleasant surprise.)

Even more than its famous 2D predecessors, *Zero* does a great job of working puzzles seamlessly into gameplay and giving you the general idea of what to do next while leaving you free to explore. Props for the moody soundtrack, sneaky hidden secrets, and spot-on controls carried over from *Metroid Fusion*—only the pathetically simple bosses disappoint.

CRISPIN: If you managed to dodge citrus-colored she-warrior Samus Aran's grapple-beam pull over the years and have never played a *Metroid* game, this is your chance to finally suit up and get sucked in. Everything that makes the series so classic—the killer weapons, spectacular bosses (don't listen to Mark), clever level design, moody music, perfect control—is here.

And if you're already a *Metroid* maniac, you'll love *Zero Mission* even more, regardless of whether you played the original NES game. It's certainly a more fleshed-out experience, with more bosses, new sticky spots (which will take you a while to figure out), and very cool surprises.

Cinematic Surprises
Metroid Zero Mission ups the narrative quotient of the original NES *Metroid* by about 500 percent: Now, the game's story not only unfolds in cool cinematic cutscenes, but also expands upon the creepy raised-by-birdmen-from-outer-space aspects of Samus' origin from *Metroid Prime* (GC).

Samus' Secret Stash

***Zero Mission*'s fun doesn't run dry once you've exterminated all the Metroids—unlockables abound.**

■ **Hard Mode:** Series vets won't find the easy or normal settings very tough...but they'll whimper when the first li'l critter takes 'em out on hard.

■ **NES *Metroid*:** See how far Samus has come by playing the old-school (and überdifficult) original.

■ **Art Gallery:** Hook *Zero Mission* up with *Metroid Fusion* (you'll need two GBAs and a cable) to access a special collection of Samus artwork.

■ Kick it NES-style.

■ If you thought Kraid was a bastard before, wait until hard mode.

Good: Visuals, gameplay, music, unlockables, etc.
Bad: Samus' tacky, under-the-helmet hairdo
NES Vets: Get ready for some surprises

THE VERDICTS (OUT OF 10)	9.5	9.0	9.0
	SHANE	MARK	CRISPIN

Publisher: Nintendo
Developer: Nintendo
Players: 1
ESRB: Everyone

www.nintendo.com

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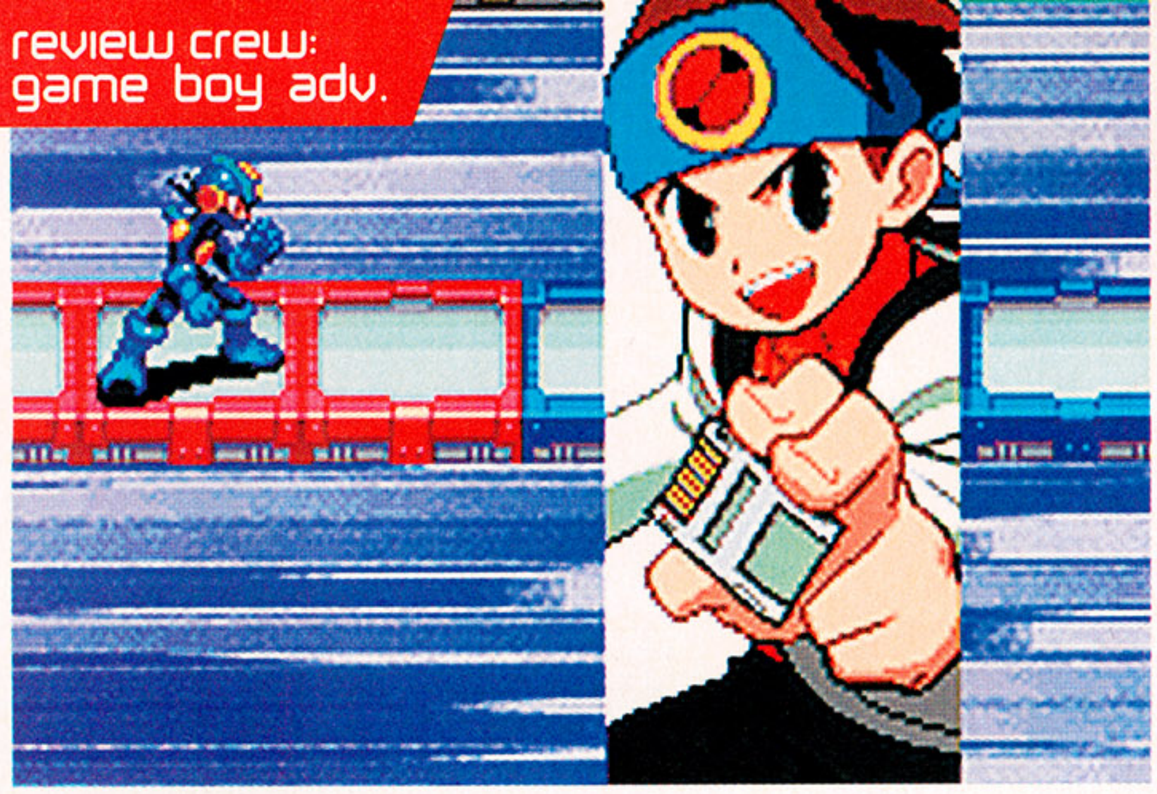
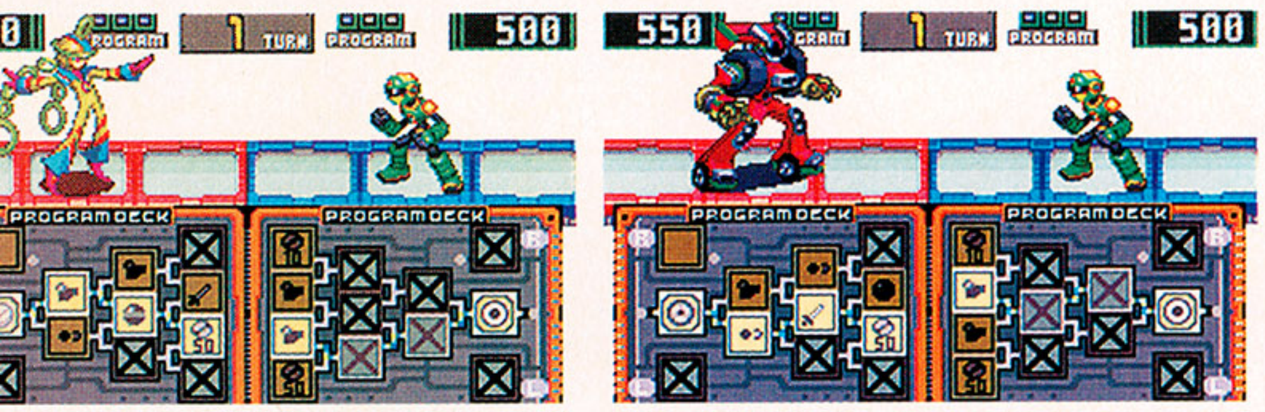


GBA

MEGA MAN BATTLE CHIP CHALLENGE

Victory is in the chips...maybe



Each turn, the computer determines which circuit you'll run through your chipset.

Good: Fun to set up your deck using the myriad card combos
Bad: Brain-dead battles
Will Tide You Over Until: The next *Battle Network* game

CJ: Imagine any of the *Mega Man Battle Network* GBA games, minus the action and running around, plus a hefty helping of trading-card gameplay, and you've got *Battle Chip Challenge*—an interesting offshoot that branches off *Network*'s story.

Fans will appreciate being able to play as a number of different characters, and the visuals and sounds are up to the series' high standards. But unfortunately, the actual battles aren't that great; they're a tedious exercise in repeatedly pressing the A button to advance dialog boxes. It's fun to set up your Battle Chip deck, but the strategy halts once a fight commences. You can't do much besides watch it play out as if you've set up a trail of dominoes, hoping they'll trigger the right way. You're not *completely* helpless—you have two customizable slots for chips you can plug in for backup anytime—but it doesn't make you feel like you have any more real control over the matches.

Kids who dig real-life card games will likely derive some strategic pleasure here, but their fingers won't appreciate the repetitive stress injuries.

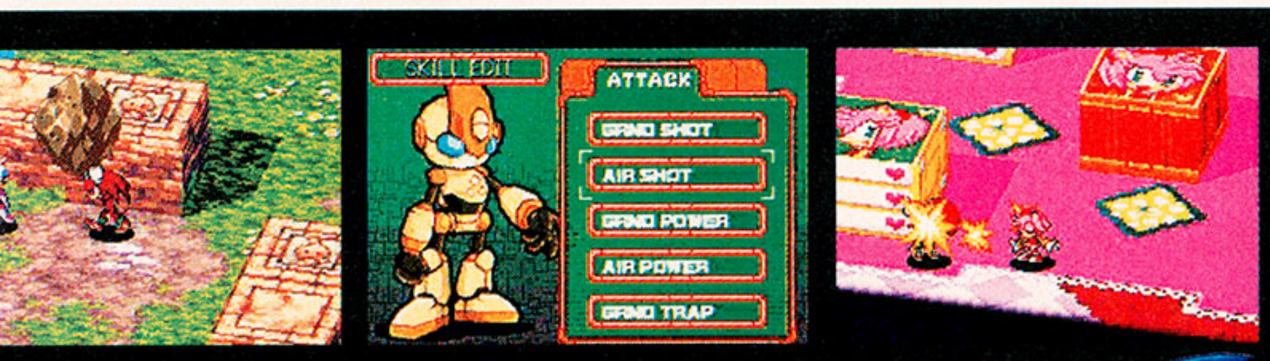
KEVIN: *Battle Network* followers could be in for some major culture shock with this game. The peppy go-go music and pop-art visuals are still there, but the card-based gameplay is completely different—and, regrettably, not quite as engaging. The reason? Everything from using chips in battle to buying new ones is decided randomly for you, so it never seems like you're really in control. This design means that advancing in the tournament requires more patience than talent, since later battles drag on and on with no input required. Perhaps this would've been better as a *real* card game....

GAMENOW—PHIL: Let the broken record play on: The biggest problem with *Challenge* is that the battles just aren't all that fun. Since all the strategy takes place before the fight, the bouts themselves are long, boring sequences in which you do nothing but repeatedly tap A. Despite this, I found myself slowly becoming involved in the game, thanks to the cool characters. It's definitely not in the same league as the legendary *Card Fighter's Clash* for Neo-Geo Pocket, but it's not terrible, either.

THE VERDICTS (OUT OF 10)	CJ	KEVIN	PHIL
	6.0	5.0	6.0

Publisher: Capcom
Developer: Capcom
Players: 1 (1-2 w/ Link cable)
ESRB: Everyone

www.capcom.com



GBA

SONIC BATTLE

When hedgehogs attack

Four-player bouts get messy, but you can usually win by repeatedly abusing powerful moves.

Good: Fun four-player action
Bad: Simplistic levels
Thank God: Very few voice samples

JOHN R: Sega's latest GBA *Sonic* game is quite a departure from two previous *Advance* games, ditching the side-scrolling platform action in favor of an overhead-view 3D fighting engine. The gameplay is reminiscent of Capcom's *Power Stone* games for the old Dreamcast (God rest its soul), minus the environmental interaction and flashy special effects. You'd think a game like this wouldn't fare so well on a tiny handheld, but surprisingly, *Sonic Battle* holds up quite nicely. Four-player fights are especially fun, and since each character has multiple ways of setting up attacks (aerial, ground, and defense), the action manages to stay fresh. And if you get tired of the main cast, you can always build your own custom robot fighter in the single-player story mode.

My biggest beef with *Battle* is that the environments are too plain. Granted, it's nice to have 3D stages, but the fights would've been much more exciting if you could break walls, pick stuff up and throw it, fight in multilevel arenas, and so on. As it stands now, it's a bit too cut and dried, but it's a solid first effort nonetheless.

SHANE: From a purely technical standpoint, *Sonic Battle* astounds. 3D graphics have never looked this sharp on GBA before—these detailed (and smooth-moving) environments offer hope for future stabs at PS1-quality visuals. Shame about the gameplay, though. Combat ranges from dull (any time you have to fight as dimwitted robotic newcomer Emerl) to freakishly unbalanced (Amy Rose is a god character with her unstoppable mallet spin), and it all gets old very quickly. Multiplayer battles and unlockable minigames help the cause some, but you're better off passing.

BRYAN: Too many speeding tickets have landed Sonic and pals in something worse than traffic school—a second-rate, no-thrills brawler. What a shame, because *Battle* was potentially a portable, story-driven *Super Smash Bros. Melee* (GC). Each character has a unique moves set, and equipping your robot with the most effective skills injects a small strategy element. Still, you can achieve most victories through mind-numbing button mashing, and, except for KO counts, bouts vary little.

THE VERDICTS (OUT OF 10)	JOHN	SHANE	BRYAN
	7.0	5.0	4.5

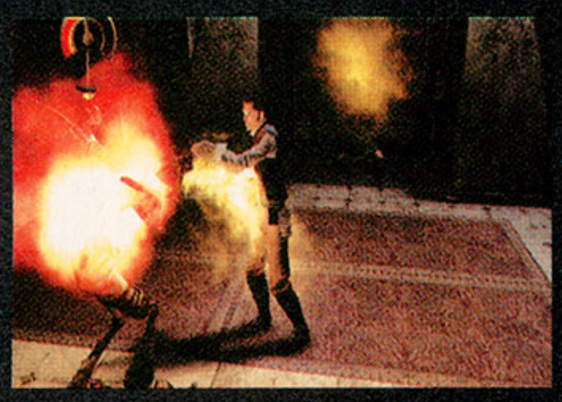
Publisher: THQ
Developer: Sonic Team
Players: 1 (2-4 Linked)
ESRB: Everyone

www.thq.com

REVIEWS WRAP-UP

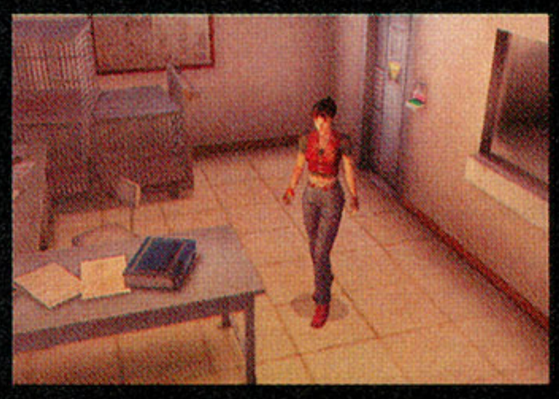
A guide to what we skipped and what skipped us this month in reviews

With the crippling avalanche of holiday releases now but a distant memory, we generally have enough room to cover every release in Review Crew. Random games that are either too late or marginal to cover still show up, so...enjoy.



Curse: The Eye of Isis

XB • DreamCatcher — When Victorians investigating the disappearance of a cursed statue run into mummies, it can mean only one thing: You're gonna have to kill fiends and find keys. Sure, with its confining camera and stiff controls, *Curse* could've come out a decade ago, but its Egypt-flavored take on *Resident Evil*'s formula might feed your survival-horror need. And for 20 bucks, it still beats watching a Brendan Fraser flick.



Resident Evil Code: Veronica X

GC • Capcom — Sure, you could cough up the $40 that Capcom's asking for this Sega Dreamcast port, but why would you ever want to? You could probably buy a used Dreamcast console and *Code: Veronica* for that price. Don't mistake our disdain for hatred, though—*Veronica* is one of the best *Resident Evil* games ever...but Capcom's rerelease pricing structure is just plain daft.

Didn't Quite Make it: Ninja Gaiden

We were really hoping to get our hands on a reviewable copy of Tecmo's *Ninja Gaiden* for Xbox, but it simply wasn't available. (Producer Tomonobu Itagaki is infamous for tweaking gameplay elements up until the very last moment.) Rest assured, from what we've seen, the wait should prove worthwhile. The fighting prowess of black-clad Hayabusa is on par with his appearances in the *Dead or Alive* series, and, better yet, he's packing a bow, throwing stars, and Dabilahro, a 4-foot broadsword ideal for performing height-reduction surgery on demons. Barring any new delays, come back next month for the entrails-filled review.

REVIEWS ARCHIVE

Our guide to the good, bad, and ugly

greatest hit or miss?

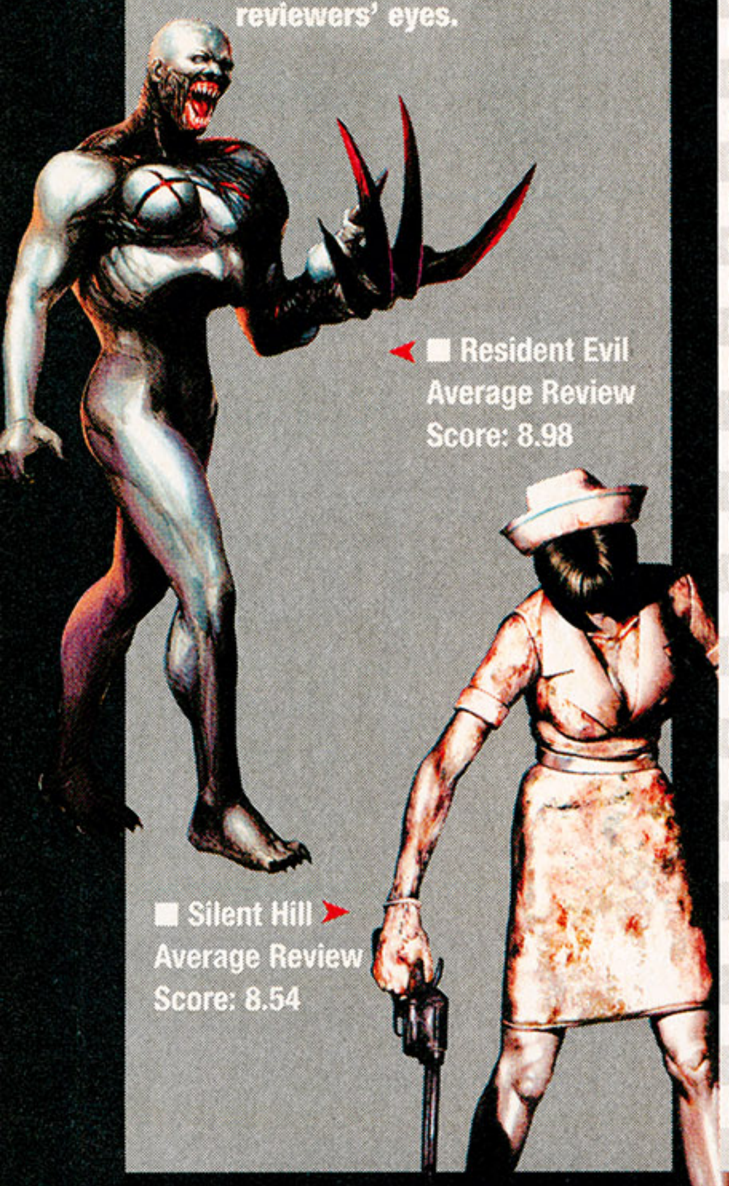
TOM CLANCY'S SPLINTER CELL

■ **XB (Also on: PS2/GC)**
■ **Released: November 2002**
■ **Original Scores: 9.5, 8.5, 9.0**

Splinter Cell star Sam Fisher fits the stealth-action profile perfectly: He's got sneakier moves than a testosterone-fueled teenager, his bag of tricks is brimming with spy gadgets, he sports a five o'clock shadow, and he has the personality of a pet rock.

DUEL OF THE UNDEAD

Videogames were hardly considered a "scary" form of entertainment until *Resident Evil* and *Silent Hill* terrorized your console. Here's how the two survival-horror series (only major releases, no remakes or offshoots) stack up in *EGM* reviewers' eyes.

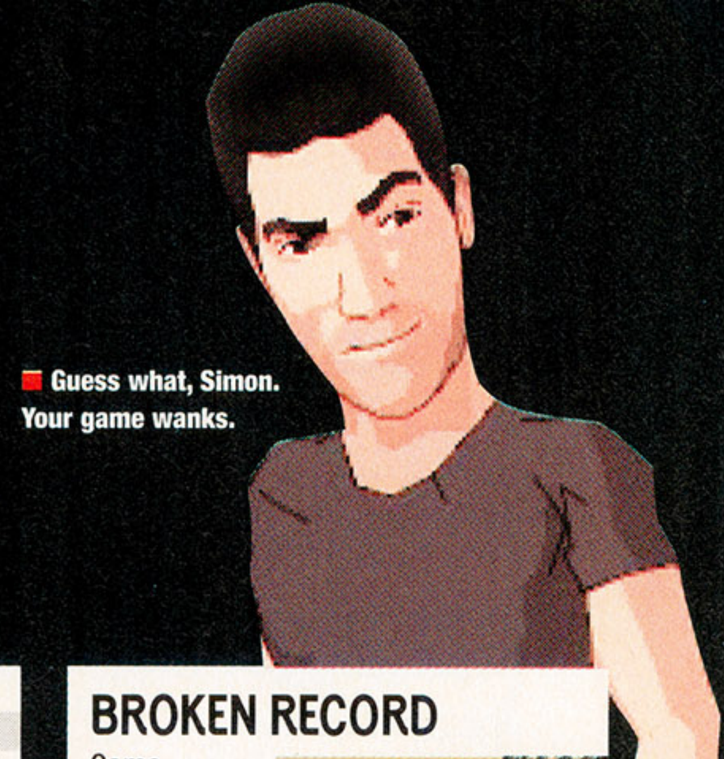


■ Resident Evil
Average Review
Score: 8.98

■ Silent Hill
Average Review
Score: 8.54

GAME	SYSTEM	VERDICT	SCORES (out of 10)	AWARD
1080° Avalanche	GC	■ The straightforward slope riding is OK, but *Avalanche* can't compete with *SSX 3*	7.5 7.0 5.5	
American Idol	PS2	■ In our best Simon Cowell voice, "Bloody awful"	1.5 2.0 1.0	
Amped 2	XB	■ A competitive, visually stunning snowboarding sim with plenty of flair	8.0 8.0 9.0	Silver
Armed and Dangerous	XB	■ Looks like butt, but plays better than blasé blasters like *Brute Force*	6.5 7.0 8.0	
Backyard Wrestling: Don't Try at Home	PS2/XB	■ Trailer-trashy thrills with cheap opponents	7.0 8.0 2.0	
Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance II	PS2/XB	■ Painted with dated graphics and rife with dull level design	7.0 4.5 5.0	
Batman: Rise of Sin Tzu	PS2/XB/GC	■ Beating up cavalcades of clones gets boring before the end of the first stage	5.5 7.0 4.0	
Battlestar Galactica	PS2/XB	■ Launched before all systems were go	6.0 6.0 5.5	
Beyond Good & Evil	PS2/XB/GC	■ The best action-adventure game since *Wind Waker* (GC)? We think so	8.5 9.0 8.0	Silver
Billy Hatcher and the Giant Egg	GC	■ Egg-pushing gameplay helps *Hatcher* feel wonderfully unique	7.0 8.0 8.5	
Bloody Roar 4	PS2	■ Once again, *Bloody Roar*'s call-of-the-wild concept is tamed by woeful execution	4.0 3.5 3.5	
Boktai: The Sun is in Your Hand	GBA	■ A portable gem in which playing in the sun is an enjoyable requirement	9.0 8.0 8.5	Silver
Bombastic	PS2	■ An addictive, unconventional puzzler…even if it involves some math	8.0 7.5 8.5	Silver
Brute Force	XB	■ Repetitive squad-based shooter recycles too many levels and enemies	6.5 6.0 7.5	
Buffy: Chaos Bleeds	XB	■ A brain-dead *Buffy* fan's dream and a decent beat-em-up for the unbitten	4.5 6.5 7.5	
Castlevania: Lament of Innocence	PS2	■ Comes close, but doesn't quite capture that classic *Castlevania* brilliance	8.0 7.5 7.5	
Conflict: Desert Storm II	PS2/XB	■ Another flawed operation with a few moments of valor	5.5 4.0 6.0	
Counter-Strike	XB	■ Bare-bones, online-only action makes it expendable in the war of the war games	5.0 5.0 7.0	
Crash Nitro Kart	PS2/XB/GC	■ This kart needs a tune-up	5.5 6.0 5.5	
Crimson Skies: High Road to Revenge	XB	■ A stellar and stylish shooter, *Crimson Skies* kicks the genre's tires and lights its fires	9.0 9.0 8.5	Silver
Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon	PS2	■ Re-creates the movie's characters and locations, but none of its grace	5.0 4.0 3.0	
Dance Dance Revolution Ultramix	XB	■ Perfect your gimp step and build a pimp rep	8.5 8.0 7.0	
DDRMAX2	PS2	■ An overly familiar experience for all but the complete novice	6.5 7.5 9.0	
Deus Ex: Invisible War	XB	■ *Invisible War*'s captivating story compensates for its technical shortcomings	8.0 9.0 7.0	Silver
Disgaea: Hour of Darkness	PS2	■ Creative, challenging, and totally deserving of RPG gamers' attention	8.5 8.0 7.5	Silver
Downhill Domination	PS2	■ Huge tracks boast intense attention to detail and gripping gameplay	8.5 8.0 7.0	
Dragon Ball Z: Budokai 2	PS2	■ This time around, *Budokai* is best left to the most loyal breed of *DBZ* fan	5.5 5.0 5.0	
Dragon Ball Z: Taiketsu	GBA	■ Sucks ballZ	5.5 4.0 3.5	
Drake	XB	■ A shooter so horribly busted that it's almost funny. It's mostly sad, though	2.0 0.5 2.5	
Dungeons and Dragons: Heroes	XB	■ Like swimming, story-free dungeon crawling shouldn't be done alone	6.0 5.5 6.5	
Dynasty Tactics 2	PS2	■ Focuses more on hardcore, heady planning than visual thrills and frills	7.5 7.5 7.5	
ESPN College Hoops	PS2/XB	■ Simply a pro game in college basketball clothing	6.5 7.5 6.5	
ESPN NBA Basketball	PS2/XB	■ No other baller matches *ESPN*'s stellar graphics or innovative 24/7 mode	8.5 9.5 9.0	Gold
ESPN NHL Hockey	PS2/XB	■ Solid gameplay and slick visuals make ESPN's puck offering the year's best	8.5 9.0 9.0	Silver
EverQuest Online Adventures: Frontiers	PS2	■ Doesn't the front lawn constitute a new frontier to Evercrack-heads?	6.5 6.0 7.0	
Fatal Frame II: Crimson Butterfly	PS2	■ Scary game with a silly name	7.5 7.5 6.5	
FIFA Soccer 2004	PS2/XB/GC	■ Plays more like *Winning Eleven* and less like *FIFA*. That's a good thing	7.5 9.0 8.0	Silver
Final Fantasy Tactics Advance	GBA	■ Deep strategy for the on-the-go tactician. Complete with androgynous heroes	9.0 9.0 9.0	Gold
Final Fantasy X-2	PS2	■ Yuna and her female friends rock Spira like never before, and we like it	8.5 9.5 9.5	Gold
Fire Emblem	GBA	■ Like *Advance Wars*, but with a rich fantasy setting and intriguing plot	7.5 8.0 8.5	Silver
Freedom Fighters	PS2/XB/GC	■ Liberating the Land of the Free from Russian invaders is historically fun	7.5 8.5 8.0	Silver
F-Zero GX	GC	■ Fast? Yes. Stylish? Yes. Frustratingly difficult? Oh hell yes	9.0 7.5 7.0	
Ghost Recon: Island Thunder	XB	■ The single-player mode is an appetizer to the multiplayer's heartier meal	7.5 7.0 7.0	
Gladius	PS2/XB/GC	■ Repetitive combat, but rich storytelling makes it worthwhile	6.0 8.5 7.0	
Goblin Commander: Unleash the Horde	PS2/XB/GC	■ The best original real-time strategy game to grace a console	8.0 6.0 4.5	
Grabbed by the Ghoulies	XB	■ Definitely more fun if someone grabs *your* ghoulies while playing	5.5 4.0 4.5	
Harry Potter: Quidditch World Cup	PS2/XB/GC	■ Don't be a snitch. Catch it. It's a blast, especially for *Potter*-heads	7.5 7.5 6.5	
The Hobbit	PS2/XB/GC	■ Bilbo Baggins' journey just isn't as appealing as his young nephew's	6.5 5.0 7.0	
Hunter: The Reckoning—Redeemer	XB	■ Slow, repetitive pacing keeps the thrills in check	7.5 6.0 6.0	
Karaoke Revolution	PS2	■ Even the tone deaf will enjoy belting out these tunes	8.5 8.5 7.5	Silver
Kill.Switch	PS2/XB	■ *Kill.Switch*'s run-and-gun gameplay is as gripping as it is one-dimensional	6.0 6.5 7.5	
King of Fighters 2000 & 2001	PS2	■ Deep and responsive, but only diehards will pick it up over Capcom's 2D fighters	5.5 5.0 7.5	
Kirby Air Ride	GC	■ Supremely easy for anyone to pick up and play, yet surprisingly deep	6.0 8.0 7.0	
Kya: Dark Lineage	PS2	■ Profoundly mediocre platformer with aspirations of greatness	6.5 6.0 5.0	
Legacy of Kain: Defiance	PS2/XB	■ Stunningly gorgeous. Let the blood sucking and soul reaving commence	7.5 8.0 7.0	
Lethal Skies II	PS2	■ Not even the dull two-player modes earn *Skies* any frequent-flier mileage	3.0 5.5 4.0	
Links 2004	XB	■ A shallow create-a-golfer mode keeps *Links* a few strokes behind *Tiger*	6.5 7.5 6.5	
Lowrider	PS2	■ Multiplayer mode is the stuff drinking games are made of	5.0 5.5 2.0	
Lord of the Rings: Return of the King	PS2/XB/GC	■ For another year, hail to the king of movie-based game franchises	8.5 8.5 8.0	Silver
Lord of the Rings: Return of the King	GBA	■ Doesn't quite rule them all, but offers enjoyable hack-n-slash action nonetheless	7.0 6.0 7.5	
Magic the Gathering: Battlegrounds	XB	■ The cards say you need a life	4.0 5.5 4.5	
Manhunt	PS2	■ Videogame-hating Senator Joe Lieberman's dream come true	7.0 6.5 7.0	
Mario & Luigi: Superstar Saga	GBA	■ A polished, thoroughly enjoyable adventure in the same vein as *Paper Mario*	9.0 8.5 9.0	Silver
Mario Golf: Toadstool Tour	GC	■ Cinch-to-learn controls, funky minigames, and all-around ball-whacking fun	8.0 8.0 7.5	
Mario Kart: Double Dash!!	GC	■ Smile. Now you have a reason to use your GameCube again	10 10 9.5	Gold
Mario Party 5	GC	■ Buy it, call some friends, and let chaos reign	8.0 8.0 8.0	Silver

GAME	SYSTEM	VERDICT	SCORES (out of 10)	AWARD
Maximo vs. Army of Zin	PS2	Despite the clean underwear, it's not as zesty as the original	6.0 6.0 7.0	
Max Payne	GBA	Bullet time in your back pocket	7.0 7.0 8.0	
Max Payne 2: The Fall of Max Payne	PS2/XB	Slow-mo bloodshed at its hard-boiled best	8.0 8.0 8.5	Silver
Medal of Honor: Rising Sun	PS2/XB/GC	This tour of duty is fit for serious war buffs only	5.5 5.0 5.5	
Metal Arms: Glitch in the System	PS2/XB/GC	A surprisingly good sci-fi shooter and contender for sleeper hit of the year	8.0 8.0 8.0	Silver
Midway Arcade Treasures	PS2/XB/GC	With 20 timeless classics for a mere 20 bucks, there's no reason not to buy it	8.5 7.5 8.5	Silver
Mission: Impossible—Operation Surma	PS2/XB	Mr. Hunt could use less cumbersome controls and quicker-witted foes	6.5 6.5 6.0	
Monster 4x4: Masters of Metal	PS2/GC	Subpar driving won't sate your hunger for mud-caked mayhem	4.5 4.5 6.0	
Monster Rancher 4	PS2	Vast, empty, and repetitive dungeons didn't bother all of our reviewers	5.5 7.0 6.5	
NBA Inside Drive 2004	XB	Another ho-hum hoopster from Microsoft, but at least you can now play online	6.0 7.5 6.5	
NBA Jam	PS2/XB	Plays much like the original arcade game, which is both good and bad	6.0 7.0 5.0	
NBA Live 2004	PS2/XB/GC	Superior on-court control keeps *Live* steadily on the comeback trail	8.0 8.5 9.0	Silver
NCAA March Madness 2004	PS2/XB	Captures the essence of the collegiate game like no other	8.0 8.0 8.0	Silver
NFL Blitz Pro	PS2/XB/GC	Incredibly fast, great-looking, totally over-the-top football	7.0 7.0 6.0	
NFL Fever 2004	XB	A shallow dynasty mode tackles *Fever*'s shot at greatness	6.5 6.5 6.0	
NHL 2004	PS2/XB/GC	EA skates on the ice with too much force and not enough finesse	8.5 6.5 7.0	
NHL Hitz Pro	PS2/XB/GC	Not the most realistic game of hockey, but among the most enjoyable	7.5 8.5 8.0	Silver
NHL Rivals 2004	XB	Microsoft's first attempt at hockey falls through the ice	3.5 4.0 6.5	
Pac-Man Vs.	GC	Excellent multiplayer makes GBA connectivity worthwhile	8.0 7.5 9.0	Silver
Pirates of the Caribbean	XB	Barely shipshape Arr-PG won't keep your interest afloat	6.0 5.5 4.5	
P.N.03	GC	One truly badass character design is all *P.N.03* has to offer	4.0 5.0 4.0	
Pokémon Channel	GC	Good God, change the channel!	3.5 2.0 6.0	
Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time	PS2/XB/GC	An opium-induced vision where time moves at the speed of your imagination	9.5 9.0 9.5	Gold
Project Gotham Racing 2	XB	Buckle up for the best racing sim since *Gran Turismo 3*	9.5 9.5 9.5	Gold
R: Racing Evolution	PS2/XB/GC	Watered down with twitchy, frustrating controls and zero customization options	6.5 6.0 4.5	
Ratchet & Clank: Going Commando	PS2	Everything you've ever wanted from an action game, and an absolute must-play	8.5 9.5 9.5	Gold
RoadKill	PS2/XB/GC	Delivers violence and four-letter words in a playable format	5.5 5.0 8.0	
Rogue Ops	PS2/XB/GC	Nikki Connors needs a few more stealth lessons from Sam Fisher (*Splinter Cell*)	7.0 6.0 4.5	
RPG Maker 2	PS2	No matter how cool the concept, your RPG will look like crap	5.5 3.5 6.5	
Sega GT Online	XB	The addition of online play and a $20 price tag gets our motor runnin'	8.5 8.5 8.5	Silver
Shining Soul II	GBA	Prettier visuals and more character classes give *Soul II* just enough shine	7.5 7.0 7.0	
Silent Hill 3	PS2	So scary it'll have you stocking up on those adult-sized diapers	8.5 8.5 9.0	Silver
The Simpsons: Hit & Run	PS2/XB/GC	A family-friendly *Grand Theft Auto: Springfield*	8.0 6.5 7.0	
The Sims Bustin' Out	PS2/XB/GC	Even your lady friend will bust out a controller and play	9.0 8.5 9.0	Silver
The Sims Bustin' Out	GBA	Surprisingly rewarding for an errand-running simulator	8.0 5.0 8.0	
SOCOM II: U.S. Navy SEALs	PS2	Cool missions and great multiplayer make *SOCOM II* the best game of its kind	9.0 9.0 9.5	Gold
Soul Calibur II	PS2/XB/GC	Our souls, at least, still burn. Can't speak for yours	10 9.0 10	Gold
Space Channel 5: Special Edition	PS2	Sensational style and a swingin' soundtrack meet simple Simon Says gameplay	8.5 6.5 8.5	
Spawn: Armageddon	PS2/XB/GC	Among the better *Spawn* outings to date...which isn't saying much	5.0 6.0 3.5	
Sphinx and the Cursed Mummy	PS2/XB/GC	The masochistic mummy more than makes up for Sphinx's mediocrity	8.0 7.0 7.0	
SSX 3	PS2/XB/GC	Still the undisputed king of the mountain	9.0 9.0 9.0	Gold
Star Trek: Shattered Universe	PS2/XB	We'd sooner play with the captain's log	3.0 3.0 3.0	
Star Wars Jedi Knight: Jedi Academy	XB	Takin' Lightsabers 101 is cool, but we'd rather cut class and hang with Boba Fett	6.0 6.5 3.0	
Star Wars: Knights of the Old Republic	XB	Follow either side of the Force in the best Xbox role-playing game to date	9.0 9.5 10	Gold
Star Wars Rogue Squad. III: Rebel Strike	GC	Yoda says, "Stay in the air, you will. Heading out on foot leads to the dark side."	7.0 7.0 7.5	
Super Mario Advance 4	GBA	Undoubtedly stands the test of time as one of history's greatest platformers	9.5 9.0 9.5	Gold
SWAT: Global Strike Team	PS2/XB	Commanding your team via headset is cool, even with the atrocious enemy A.I.	4.0 5.0 6.0	
Sword of Mana	GBA	Managing your weapons requires a master's degree in metallurgy	6.5 6.5 5.0	
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles	PS2/XB/GC	Looks great, but the action is as repetitive as the Turtles' catchphrases	5.5 6.0 7.0	
Terminator 3: Rise of the Machines	PS2/XB	No need to come back, Arnold	3.5 3.5 2.0	
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2004	PS2/XB/GC	An accurate sim that's more fun to play than other less serious golf games	9.0 9.0 9.5	Gold
Time Crisis 3	PS2	*TC3* remains an uncontested crack shot among light-gun shooters	7.0 7.0 8.5	
Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six 3	XB	Squad-based shooting at its best	9.0 7.5 9.0	Silver
Tomb Raider: The Angel of Darkness	PS2	Lara's back, but her gameplay's never been jankier	5.0 3.0 7.0	
Tony Hawk's Underground	PS2/XB/GC	Story mode breathes new life into the venerable series	9.0 9.0 10	Gold
Top Spin	XB	You'll never wanna play *Virtua Tennis* (DC, PS2) again	9.0 9.0 9.0	Gold
True Crime: Streets of L.A.	PS2/XB/GC	A spot-on re-creation of Los Angeles. Too bad the ride is over so quickly	6.5 9.5 5.5	
Virtua Fighter 4: Evolution	PS2	As fleshed-out, complicated, and utterly addictive as fighters come	10 9.0 9.5	Gold
Voodoo Vince	XB	Tedious jumping puzzles and pointless collecting plague the patchwork hero	6.0 6.5 7.0	
Warhammer 40,000: Fire Warrior	PS2	A switch-flipping, key-finding, frag-em-all affair, oblivious to FPS innovation	5.5 5.5 6.0	
Whiplash	PS2/XB	Goofy concept and humor compensate for crummy graphics and average gameplay	7.0 6.0 8.0	
WWE Raw 2: Ruthless Aggression	XB	They couldn't even spell Goldberg's name correctly. We willingly tap out	3.0 5.5 4.5	
WWE SmackDown! Here Comes the Pain	PS2	Match types galore, improved story mode—pain never felt so good	7.5 8.0 7.0	
WWE Wrestlemania XIX	GC	*XIX*'s improved character-creation system atomic-drops you into the WWE	7.5 7.5 6.5	
XIII	PS2/XB/GC	One stylish first-person shooter. Sadly, superhuman A.I. keeps this one unlucky	6.5 6.5 6.5	
Yu Yu Hakusho: Spirit Detectives	GBA	Shouldn't be allowed within 50 feet of anybody's GBA	2.0 1.5 3.0	



BROKEN RECORD

Game soundtracks have graduated from beeps and boops to symphonies and Top 40 hit parades. But whether you prefer the simplicity of the good ol' days or welcome the rise of real music, we're sure you'll agree on one thing: Songs that feature fools rapping or singing about the game you're playing suck. Here are a few offenders:

True Crime: Streets of L.A. (PS2/XB/GC) 6.5, 9.5, 5.5

Madden NFL 2003 (PS2/XB/GC) 9.0, 9.5, 9.5

Freaky Flyers (PS2/XB/GC) 5.0, 3.0, 4.0

greatest hit or miss?

SUPER MARIO SUNSHINE

- GC
- Released: September 2002
- Original Scores: 9.5, 9.5, 9.5

Someone's spoiled Delfino's island scenery with sludge. Armed with a nifty new water-pumping backpack, Mario must clean up the town and find the culprit. With dozens of creative ways to collect coins, playing fetch has never been so much fun.

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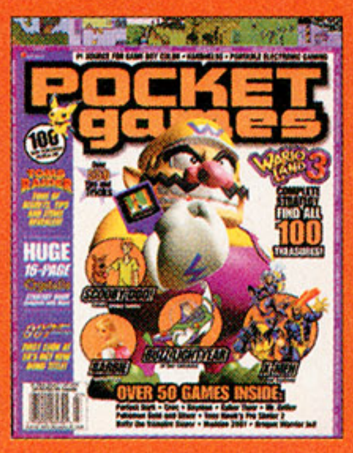

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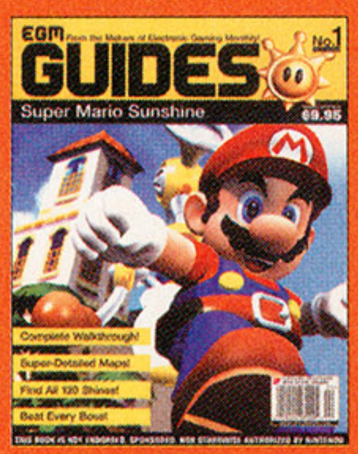

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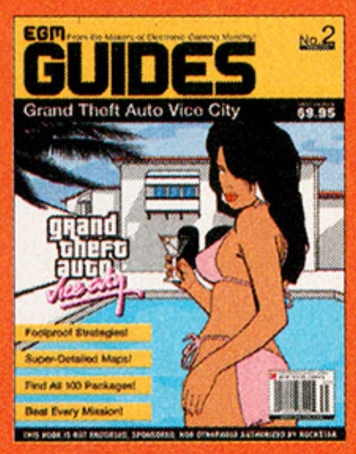

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Feeling a little bleary in the midwinter? Then lose 50 pounds, audition and win a part on *The Real World*, bitch about your housemates with a variety of insensitive or racially charged remarks, learn to "grow as a person," utterly fail at the straightforward job MTV producers set up for you, and while you're on television, mention how great *EGM*'s Top 15 Games show was, OK? Alternately, you could cheat your way through the games you got sick of over the holidays.

—David S. J. Hodgson
egm@ziffdavis.com

GAME DIRECTORY

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■ PlayStation 2

MANHUNT

EGM reader Bobby Michael beat _Manhunt_ on Fetish difficulty, then fiddled with the controller at the Title screen. When he held down all four shoulder buttons, he heard a strange message that, in true Black Sabbath tradition, is played backward. (Parental groups are no doubt already marshalling their hysteria.) Bobby recorded the sounds on his computer, reversed them, and heard this:

"Daddy didn't see what would happen if she left me. Mommy's supposed to care, but she was never there. Triangle, Left 1, Up, Up, Right 2, Square, Triangle, Square, Up, Circle, Down, Down."

Nearing total freak down, we tapped this in at the Title screen *in reverse* (**Down, Down, Circle, Up, Square, Triangle, Square, R2, Up, Up, L1, Triangle**). We were rewarded with god mode (invincibility). High praise to Bobby Michael for managing to finish this freaky game with all marbles present and accounted for, and for discovering and decoding this secret. (Rockstar is graciously sending him some limited-edition *Manhunt* tchotchkes.)

What does this message mean? Song lyrics? Searing diatribe on today's latchkey kids? Gibberish? Let us know!

■ This black van is crying out for some *A-Team*–style modification. Can't you hear it?

Unlockable Codes

Prepare for moral outrage. No, we're not talking about the snuff-film vignettes during each kill—we mean the effort required to unlock the game's cheat codes. *Manhunt*'s button cheats will work only after you complete two specific stages with a five-star skill rating. Which is a *disgrace*. The whole point of cheat codes is to get something cool for free! (Input the codes at the Main menu.)

Helium Hunters (squeaky voices)
Beat Strapped for Cash, View of Innocence
R1, R1, Triangle, Circle, Square, L2, L1, Down

Monkey Skin
Beat Press Coverage, Wrong Side of the Tracks
Square, Square, R2, Down, Triangle, Square, Circle, Down

Regeneration
Beat Fueled by Hate, Grounds for Assault
R2, Right, Circle, R2, L2, Down, Circle, Left

Runner
Beat Born Again, Doorway Into Hell
R2, R2, L1, R2, Left, Right, Left, Right

Super Punch
Beat Mouth of Madness, Doing Time
L1, Triangle, Triangle, Triangle, Circle, Circle, Circle, R1

Bonus Levels

Can't get enough of that ultraviolence? (You sick puppy.) Well, lucky you—*Manhunt* has four unlockable bonus stages full of thugs to eviscerate and gang members to decapitate. Enjoy. If that's the right word.

Hard as Nails: Beat chapters 1-5 on Hardcore difficulty.
Brawl Game: Beat chapters 1-10 on Hardcore difficulty.
Monkey See, Monkey Die: Beat chapters 1-15 on Hardcore difficulty.
Time 2 Die: Finish levels 16-20 with at least a three-star skill rating.

■ PS2/XB

LEGACY OF KAIN: DEFIANCE

We've learned of a bizarre button cheat that turns Kain's main weapon into a long cardboard tube. When you enter the code correctly, you'll hear Kain say, "Fear the tube."

What the heck is this all about? It's an homage to the Cardboard Tube Samurai, an occasionally recurring character in the web comic *Penny Arcade*. Look, just go to penny-arcade.com and do a search for "tube" and you'll understand. Here's the code (pause the game, then punch it in):

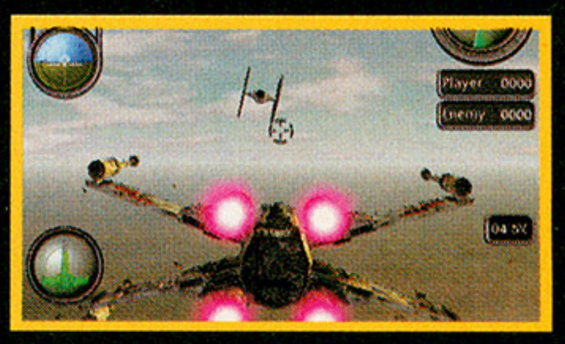
PlayStation 2: Up, Down, Left, Right, R2, L2, Triangle, Down, Circle
Xbox: Up, Down, Left, Right, Black, White, Y, Down, B

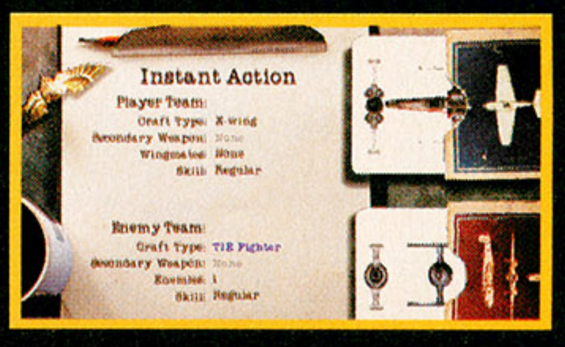
■ Xbox

SECRET WEAPONS OVER NORMANDY

Ready for some *really* secret weapons over Normandy? We're talking vehicles from a galaxy far, far away. The creators of the *X-wing* series just wouldn't be upholding the LucasArts rule of adding *Star Wars* references to every single game the company releases if it weren't possible to pilot an X-wing and TIE fighter.

To unlock them, you must complete the entire game—every mission, every challenge. Then, just when you see the smoke billowing from the wreckage of Krieger's Daimler Benz C, you'll be notified of your *Star Wars*–themed reward. Note you cannot play through the regular single-player game with your new ships. They are strictly for instant action mode. It's fun to see the X-wing tear across the White Cliffs of Dover, blasting German aircraft out of the sky (Jedi versus Nazis, baby!). Or you can engage a TIE fighter in a sci-fi dogfight in the 1940s, fully evoking the spirit of bizarre-world combat.





TRICKS IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PRIMA GAMES

Yearning for complete guidance? Having problems with a tough enemy, stealth infiltration, key location, or other such videogame mainstay? Then grab a copy of Prima's official guides to *Armed and Dangerous*, *Deus Ex: Invisible War*, *Secret Weapons Over Normandy*, or *The Sims: Bustin' Out*. The answers to all your questions are revealed within.

■ PS2/XB/GC

THE SIMPSONS: HIT & RUN

"Best. Simpsons game. Ever." Who said that? Hold on—it was us! Well then. *Hit & Run* features codes you can activate at any time, rather than after tedious, labor-intensive activities, like finishing the game and digging in virtual dirt with a frickin' shovel (we're looking at you, *Medal of Honor: Rising Sun*).

Go to the Options menu (from the Main menu or the Pause screen), hold the Left and Right triggers (XB/GC) or L1 and R1 (PS2), and tap in the following:

Cheat	XB/GC code	PS2 code
Different credits audio	A, X, X, Y	X, Square, Square, Triangle
Alternate views	B, B, B, A	Circle, Circle, Circle, X
Different camera angles	B, A, B, A	—
Easily destroyed traffic	Y, Y, X, X	Triangle, Triangle, Square, Square
Sound horn to jump	X, X, X, Y	Square, Square, Square, Triangle
Psychedelic DUI view	Y, B, Y, B	Triangle, Circle, Triangle, Circle
Red Box Racer	B, B, Y, X	Circle, Circle, Triangle, Square
Grid view	B, A, B, Y	—
Speedometer view	Y, Y, B, X	Triangle, Triangle, Circle, Square
Zippy cars	X, X, X, X	Square, Square, Square, Square
Even faster cars	Y, Y, Y, Y	Triangle, Triangle, Triangle, Triangle
Unlock all cars*	A, B, A, B	X, Circle, X, Circle
Indestructible jalopy	Y, A, Y, A	Triangle, X, Triangle, X

** Requires a loaded save file of a completed game.*

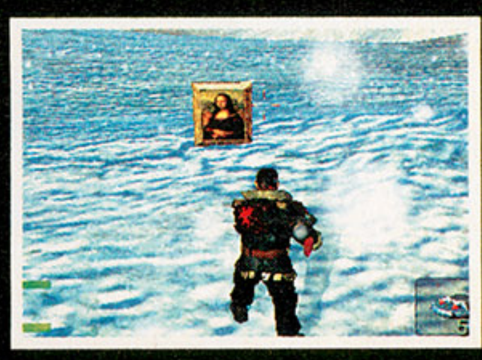
■ Xbox

ARMED AND DANGEROUS

Here's a comprehensive list of unlockables you can earn by collecting tokens in this quirky, irreverent blast-em-up. We also reveal a handful of amusing and useful button codes.

Each of *Armed and Dangerous*' 21 missions features one hidden token, usually found off the beaten path. The tokens take different shapes depending on the mission. Sometimes the token looks like a painting, other times it looks like an egg or jar. In base-defense missions, the tokens take the form of crates dropped by the plane that swoops in to replenish your supply of powder kegs. (Keep your eyes peeled and blast the crates with your Gatling guns to collect these levels' tokens.)

Each token you snag puts you one step closer to unlocking a hidden feature. The number of tokens required varies according to the difficulty level you're playing. Generally speaking, the higher the difficulty level, the fewer tokens it takes to unlock each bonus feature. Take a look at this chart for a rundown of what you can expect to unlock as you blast your way through the game.



How about some codes to make your killings all the more satisfying?

Fill Ammo: Black, B, A, Right, Right, A, Left, Black
Big Hands: Right, White, X, Left, White, Right, Right, Y
Big Heads: L, Black, B, White, White, B, Black, L
Big Boots: R, White, Y, A, L, B, White, X
Invincible: X, X, X, Right, A, Left, Left, Y

■ That shark was powerful *hongry*. That's why the feller got et.

Cheat	Easy	Medium	Over the Top	Insane
Replay Missions	1	1	1	1
Replay Cut-scene	2	2	1	1
Big Heads Mode	3	3	1	1
The Gauntlet Bonus Mission	4	4	1	1
Big Hands Mode	10	9	3	1
Big Boots Mode	14	10	4	2
Peasant a-go-go Bonus Mission	18	12	5	3
All Movies Unlocked	21	14	6	4
Shenanigans Bonus Mission	—	18	9	6
Full Ammo	—	21	11	7
Full Health	—	—	13	8
Infinite Ammo	—	—	15	9
Invincibility	—	—	17	11
All Levels Unlocked	—	—	19	15

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■ Xbox

GRAND THEFT AUTO: DOUBLE PACK

Many copies of these Xbox ports suffer from the "pedestrian problem" (foot-bound residents of Vice City suddenly become silent, including Tommy Vercetti), earning the *Double Pack* the unwanted nickname *Glitch Theft Auto*. While Rockstar quietly replaces these faulty copies of the game, we present a long list of the comedic cheats that PlayStation 2 owners have been using and abusing for years.

Please note that you should *never* save your game after using these codes, since they can corrupt your save file and prevent you from completing the game. So, put in the codes and goof around all you like, but be sure to reset the system and play fair if you intend to save your progress. You've been warned.

Enter codes at any time during gameplay. Enter codes that affect vehicle behavior while you're inside the vehicle.

Grand Theft Auto III

Floating Cars (cars behave like gliders if you catch air): Right, Black, B, R, White, Down, L, R
Explode Car: White, Black, L, R, White, Black, Y, X, B, Y, White, L
Precise Car Handling (you can press in the analog stick to jump): R, L, Black, L, Left, R, R, Y
Get a Tank Instantly: B, B, B, B, B, B, R, White, L, Y, B, Y
Invisible Cars: L, L, X, Black, Y, L, Y
Raise Wanted Level: Black, Black, L, Black, Left, Right, Left, Right, Left, Right
Lower Wanted Level: Black, Black, L, Black, Up, Down, Up, Down, Up, Down
Instant Cash: Black, Black, L, L, Left, Down, Right, Up, Left, Down, Right, Up
Crazy Pedestrians: Black, R, Y, A, White, L, Up, Down
Pedestrians Hate You: Down, Up, Left, Up, A, R, Black, L, White
Pedestrian Animosity (boxing): Right, Black, B, R, White, Down, L, R
Pedestrian Animosity (fighting): Down, Up, Left, Up, A, R, Black, White, L
All Weapons: Black, Black, L, Black, Left, Down, Right, Up, Left, Down, Right, Up
Full Armor: Black, Black, L, White, Left, Down, Right, Up, Left, Down, Right, Up
Maximum Health: Black, Black, L, R, Left, Down, Right, Up, Left, Down, Right, Up
New Clothes (repeat as many times as desired): Right, Down, Left, Up, L, White, Up, Left, Down, Right
Faster Clock: B, B, B, X, X, X, X, X, L, Y, B, Y
Slow Down Gameplay: Y, Up, Right, Down, X, R, Black
Speed Up Gameplay: Y, Up, Right, Down, X, L, White
Clear Weather: L, White, R, Black, Black, R, White, Y
Cloudy Weather: L, White, R, Black, Black, R, White, X
Foggy Weather: L, White, R, Black, Black, R, White, A
Rainy Weather: L, White, R, Black, Black, R, White, B
Gore: X, L, B, Down, L, R, Y, Right, L, A

Grand Theft Auto: Vice City

Aggressive Drivers: Black, B, R, White, Left, R, L, Black, White
Increase Armor: R, Black, L, A, Left, Down, Right, Up, Left, Down, Right, Up
Turn All Cars Black: B, White, Up, R, Left, A, R, L, Left, B
Make All Cars Explode: Black, White, R, L, White, Black, X, Y, B, Y, White, L
Aquatic Vehicles (use cars as boats): Right, Black, B, R, White, X, R, Black
New Clothes (repeat as many times as desired): Right, Right, Left, Up, L, White, Left, Up, Down, Right
Tire Inflation (repeat to increase size): R, A, Y, Right, Black, X, Up, Down, X

■ When driving the tank, you can turn the turret 180° and fire repeatedly to go *really* fast.

Flying Vehicles (makes vehicle behave like the Dodo airplane): Right, Black, B, R, White, Down, L, R
Health Increase: R, Black, L, B, Left, Down, Right, Up, Left, Down, Right, Up
Faster Top Speed (vehicle): Right, R, Up, White, White, Left, R, L, R, R
Ladies' Man (certain females pursue you): B, A, L, L, Black, A, A, B, Y
Lower Wanted Level: R, R, B, Black, Up, Down, Up, Down, Up, Down
Raise Wanted Level: R, R, B, Black, Left, Right, Left, Right, Left, Right
Precise Vehicle Handling: Y, R, R, Left, R, L, Black, L
Make All Cars Turn Pink: B, L, Down, White, Left, A, R, L, Right, A
Play as Candy Suxxx: B, Black, Down, R, Left, Right, R, L, A, White
Play as Hilary King: R, B, Black, L, Right, R, L, A, Black
Play as Ken Rosenberg: Right, L, Up, White, L, Right, R, L, A, R
Play as Lance Vance: B, White, Left, A, R, L, A, L
Play as Love Fist Guy #1: Down, L, Down, White, Left, A, R, L, A, A
Play as Love Fist Guy #2: R, White, Black, L, Right, Black, Left, A, X, L
Play as Mercedes: Black, L, Up, L, Right, R, Right, Up, B, Y
Play as Phil Cassidy: Right, R, Up, Black, L, Right, R, L, Right, B
Play as Ricardo Diaz: L, White, R, Black, Down, L, Black, White
Play as Sonny Forelli: B, L, B, White, Left, A, R, L, A, A
Instant Bloodring Banger (car): Up, Right, Right, L, Right, Up, X, White
Instant Bloodring Racer: Down, R, B, White, White, A, R, L, Left, Left
Instant Caddie: B, L, Up, R, White, A, R, L, B, A
Instant Hotring Racer #1: R, B, Black, Right, L, White, A, A, X, R
Instant Hotring Racer #2: Black, L, B, Right, L, R, Right, Up, B, Black
Instant Love Fist Limo: Black, Up, White, Left, Left, R, L, B, Right
Instant Rhino Tank: B, B, L, B, B, B, L, White, R, Y, B, Y
Instant Romero's Hearse: Down, Black, Down, R, White, Left, R, L, Left, Right
Instant Saber Turbo: Right, White, Down, White, White, A, R, L, B, Left
Instant Trashmaster: B, R, B, R, Left, Left, R, L, B, Right
Commit Suicide: Right, White, Down, R, Left, Left, R, L, White, L
Weapons Collection #1: R, Black, L, Black, Left, Down, Right, Up, Left, Down, Right, Up
Weapons Collection #2: R, Black, L, Black, Left, Down, Right, Up, Left, Down, Down, Left
Weapons Collection #3: R, Black, L, Black, Left, Down, Right, Up, Left, Down, Down, Down
Bikini Girls Pack Heat: Right, L, B, White, Left, A, R, L, L, A
Pedestrians Hate You: Down, Up, Up, Up, A, Black, R, White, White
Pedestrians Armed: Black, R, A, Y, A, Y, Up, Down
Police Return From Death: B, L, Down, White, Left, A, R, L, Right, A
Show Media Level: Black, B, Up, L, Right, R, Right, Up, X, Y
Slow Down Clock: Y, Up, Right, Down, X, Black, R
Speed Up Clock: B, B, L, X, L, X, X, X, L, Y, B, Y
Cloudy Weather: Black, A, L, L, White, White, White, Y
Completely Overcast: Black, A, L, L, White, White, White, X
Foggy Weather: Black, A, L, L, White, White, White, A
Stormy Weather: Black, A, L, L, White, White, White, B
Clear Weather: Black, A, L, L, White, White, White, Down ➤

■ Mix and match cheat codes: Want to be Candy Suxxx while driving a tank? Voilà!

GameShark VS. Action Replay

It's a good month for fans of cheatin'. Behold, more ways to cheat death and fiddle with time in *Prince of Persia*, plus some *FFX-2* tricks.

Prince of Persia: The Sands Of Time (PS2)

Enter This First
94D0BDF8 36EE4424

Exclusive!
Game Speed: Half Speed
2498C3E8 14B2D70D

Exclusive!
Game Speed: Double
24909368 04B0D70C

Exclusive!
Game Speed: Triple
24909348 04B0D70C

Exclusive!
Game Speed: Quadruple
24909368 04B1D70C

Infinite Health (Except Big Falls)
24D1B5F4 9D3CD7DD
24D1B4B4 BFBC43ED

Infinite Health (Farah)
249013E8 B2B4D5A9

Infinite Sand Tanks
249034C8 B0B4452D

Infinite Slow Motion
249836A8 24B4534C

Add New Sand Tank
24D030EC 92B553BD

Final Fantasy X-2 (PS2)

Enter This First
94C497AC B5260F5C

Max Gil
244C4D2E D8B71A57

All Garment Grids
44101628 103453EC
59BD493C 66250118

All Dresspheres
04101628 143473FC
14101629 143413FC
44111428 1034534C
3902D7E1 9FAB91E0
04101429 1434537C
04101428 143473CC

Yuna: Level 99 With Massive Experience
24DB67E8 45AC5D2D

Rikku: Level 99 With Massive Experience
249B64E8 452C5DAD

Paine: Level 99 With Massive Experience
249B64E8 45AC5D2D

All Accessories at Maximum Capacity
44523668 14B4470C
593CD3F9 CEA50100

All Items at Maximum Capacity
44511768 5434450C
593CD3F9 CEA50100

Action Replay says, "I'll see your *Final Fantasy* codes, GameShark, and raise you *Lord of the Rings: Return of the King*." High stakes, y'all.

Lord of the Rings: Return of the King (PS2)

Enter This First
3MB5-UBAC-CEPUJ
W94H-WJ3G-09U92

Exclusive!
Play as Aragorn
3PUG-YXDX-XBCJW
6AW9-CK24-YVT4V
XB4R-ZGQF-TP8WH

Exclusive!
Play as Legolas
0ZMQ-YD9D-FRRYN
APR4-97V8-UB3Z2
1D5B-Q6B8-5QY2A

Exclusive!
Play as Gimli
RPYG-5ZF7-P0WRM
95EP-CPMC-YCXJN
JZ9C-RBTX-AZC9A

Exclusive!
Play as Gandalf
K81W-1UTK-J349D
0399-26KX-Y2013
AMRK-KPAY-VPFPT

Exclusive!
Play as Sam
TMMG-HR17-5GW4W
QUWB-6YJQ-5FDTU
UJ8K-0PZH-9UN7R

Exclusive!
Play as Frodo
6K2X-R14M-KVBJJ
KA98-PNEG-ZDEVG
A0VN-3J1A-K9R8F

Exclusive!
Play as Pippin
KADU-6MGW-VT86G
C7YA-CG87-A7QRB
MWWU-YFJ7-63J50

Exclusive!
Play as Merry
9T4F-XUWE-V1TF7
56CA-KC59-3D1HE
F28Q-9W19-HX3NT

Exclusive!
Play as Faramir
5ZZ9-YDQE-ZEZ5E
PJZ8-CYBN-XC7Q3
KGWF-C9U8-Z8Y23

Final Fantasy X-2 (PS2)

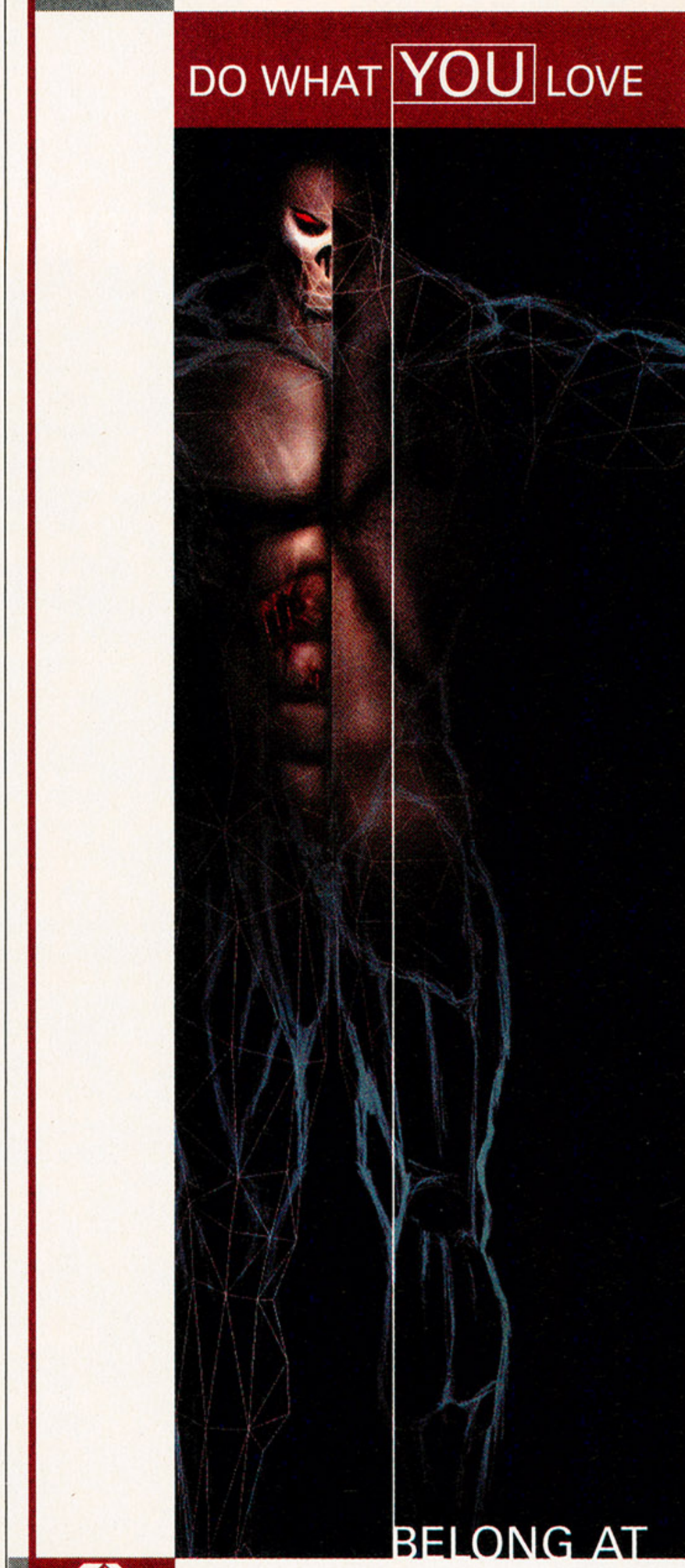
Enter This First
YHFK-N75A-RB81J
D47P-ZDV4-TDZVQ

All Key Items
KX5B-5YJ8-7KJRP
ADFY-M2DY-10QXF
WGA6-J27T-0B6TB
N9MJ-398Y-HCU3G

All Garment Grids
7VCC-65GM-V2D05
3MFN-F4G9-2QM1P
KEZW-5AGQ-H6GFC

AI Bhed Fully Translated
F1QX-T4B7-23XQX
BXBF-9KVW-A534W

■ **Ah, how sweet it is to enjoy ill-gotten gains. A simple code gives you all *Final Fantasy X-2*'s Garment Grids (above left) and all its items (left).**



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■ Xbox

DEUS EX: INVISIBLE WAR

Have you battled through to the last portion of the game but aren't sure which ending to go after? Good thing we're here. Let's break down the options for you. (SPOILERS ahead! Don't read any further if you don't want the game's endings ruined.)

Ending #1: ApostleCorp Great Advance

What happens?
With the conflicts between JC and Helios resolved by an infusion of your DNA, and with help from you and his machine, JC/Helios is able to forge an unbreakable link among all humanity.

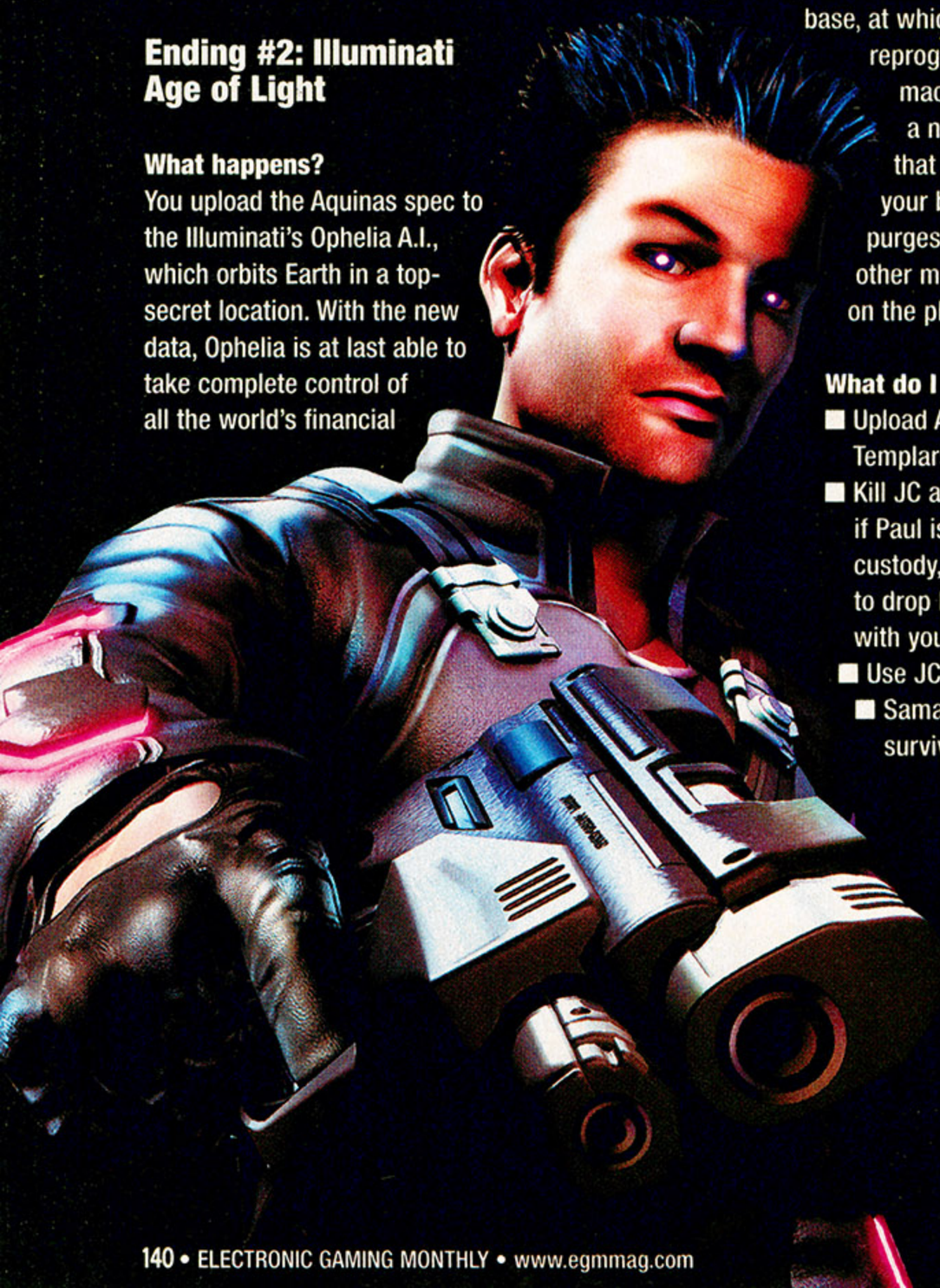
What do I have to do?
- Upload the Aquinas spec to JC
- Return to the statue and step into the machine
- JC must survive (it's all right if Paul is dead)

How does it turn out?
Universal biomodification makes everybody equal. Cybernetic consciousness creates perfect democracy. But is it ultimate freedom or universal slavery?

What's in it for me?
You become part of the new whole, just like everybody else.

Ending #2: Illuminati Age of Light

What happens?
You upload the Aquinas spec to the Illuminati's Ophelia A.I., which orbits Earth in a top-secret location. With the new data, Ophelia is at last able to take complete control of all the world's financial markets and government institutions under the Illuminati.



What do I have to do?
- Upload Aquinas to the Illuminati
- Kill JC and Paul Denton
- Destroy JC's machine
- Chad Dumier or Nicolette DuClare (or both) must survive

How does it turn out?
Earth's future is very prosperous, very clean, and very, very controlled.

What's in it for me?
You become one of the new secret masters on the fast track to Prima Illuminatus status. If you want to be rich and powerful, this is the choice for you. Under some circumstances, when you kill JC and destroy or subvert his machine (as part of the Templar, Illuminati, or anarchy endgames), the dying Helios entity will be able to bring him back for one last fight against you. JC will no longer have the power of Helios, but he will have one big, honking rocket launcher. If JC is revived, you'll need to finish him off again before you can finish the game.

Ending #3: The Templar Flood

What happens?
You upload Aquinas to a secret Templar base, at which point it reprograms JC's machine to create a nanite swarm that divests you of your biomods and purges or destroys all other modified humans on the planet.

What do I have to do?
- Upload Aquinas to the Templars
- Kill JC and Paul (even if Paul is in Saman's custody, you still have to drop by and kill him with your own hands)
- Use JC's machine
- Saman must survive

How does it turn out?
Saman and the Templars take advantage of the chaos caused by their nanite flood to seize absolute control of the planet, ruling with strict religious totalitarianism.

What's in it for me?
You're now part of the inner circle of a paranoid, religious dictatorship, and you don't have your biomods to get you out of scrapes anymore. Good luck.

Ending #4: Scorched Earth

What happens?
Urged on by Leo, you decide that the world doesn't need any new gods, puppet masters, or kings. You decide to give the world a fresh start free of external control.

What do I have to do?
- Kill JC, Paul, Chad, Nicolette, and Saman
- Destroy JC's machine
- It doesn't matter whether you upload Aquinas to anybody

How does it turn out?
Knowingly or not, Leo was being manipulated by the Omar the whole time. They begin to stamp out all other power groups and impose their brand of warlike Darwinian capitalism on the world, combining it with a program of universal biomodification and shared consciousness. When the human race has been toughened enough, they start to look to the stars....

What's in it for me?
One heck of a preferred-customer discount, plus the chance to apply for your own frog suit. After that, you're on your own, just like the rest of the planet.

■ Xbox

PROJECT GOTHAM RACING 2

There's a simple but sweet Easter egg hidden in your garage. When you're in "walk" mode and inside your garage, mosey on over to the arcade machine and press A. You'll start the *Geometry Wars* minigame—the best and most viciously addictive secret diversion since a little game called *Death Tank* was hidden in *PowerSlave* on PS1.

■ Game Boy Advance

THE SIMS: BUSTIN' OUT

Cheats cost money in this game, and they're suitably difficult to get. Remember when cheat codes were simple button presses from the Main menu? That's old news: Work for those cheat codes, baby!

For two hours a week, you can purchase cheats from Heidi Shadows, the cheat ninja. You must be in the right place at the right time, and that's no easy feat. Heidi appears southwest of Imperial Estates on Mondays from 11:00 p.m. to midnight, and in the Park Maze on Fridays from 3:00 a.m. to 4:00 a.m. The hard part about pulling this off is knowing what day of the week it is. The process is cumbersome but not difficult:

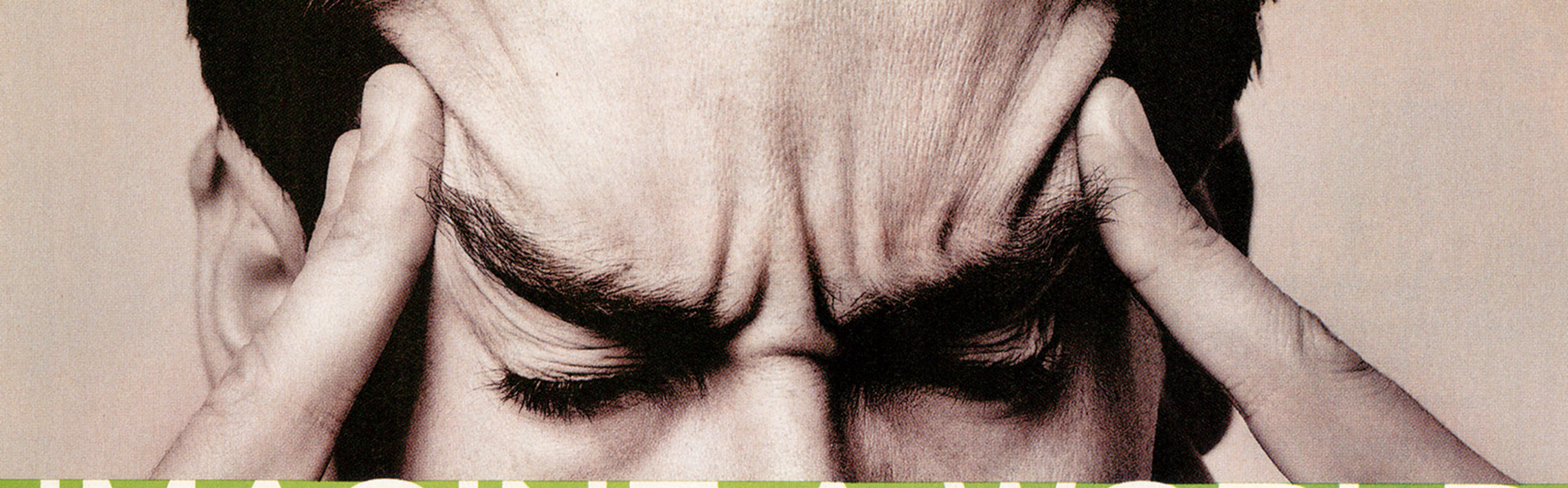
1. Press Select and save your game.
2. Press Select again and select Save Game from the menu.
3. Look at the file you just saved. It states the time and day in the game of the last save, with the day given as a number.
4. Divide the number by 7 and note the remainder: 1 means Monday, 5 means Friday. On all other days of the week, Heidi does not appear to sell cheats.

Once you have the correct day, you must be in the correct place at the correct time. To find the right places, consult the map in the Overview section. For best results, be in running distance of the location at the appointed hour, save your game, and enter as the clock strikes the correct time. When you find Heidi, buy cheats from her like you would buy items in any shop. She sells the following items:

- Rosebud: Adds 5,000 simoleans
- Slip of Paper: Contains the password "Bucket." Our cheat scientists do not yet know what this is good for.
- Silver Tongue Berry: Adds one Charisma point
- Gourmet Berry: Adds one Cooking point
- Clock Berry: Adds one Mechanical point
- Buff Berry: Adds one Body point
- Mind Berry: Adds one Logic point
- DaVinci Berry: Adds one Creative point

Zodiac Items

When you choose a zodiac sign at the start of the game, you unlock two items unique to your chosen star sign: a zodiac recliner and a zodiac statue. By hitting a floor switch in the steam tunnels, you are transported to a secret room that contains two recliners. The statue can be found very rarely at the stores, and it costs a bundle (use that Rosebud cheat to afford it). However, it fetches a nice price in a GBA Link auction and provides a hefty Room boost if you put it in your house.



IMAGINE A WORLD

WE DO.

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GAME GROUP

PICK ONE UP ON NEWSSTANDS EVERYWHERE.

THE REST OF THE CRAP

Seanbaby makes bad games pay

sound off

I'M A MARTYR

The power of journalism can bring governments to their knees and turn pop sensations into a preteen boy's darkest nightmare. And this was never more evident than when the villains behind the videogame based on *The Cat in the Hat* movie refused to send *EGM* a copy of their crappy game because they "didn't want Seanbaby making fun of it." Like that's going to stop me. I'm the first to admit that the war isn't over, but this small victory might be the first step toward a world without bad games. Picture it: an age of enlightenment in which *The Cat in the Hat* remains safely away from your GBA not because game developers hate me, but because they hate the idea of ruining Christmas for our children. My monthly sacrifice shall lead you to a utopian gaming future. —*Seanbaby*

THE CAT IN THE HAT

Cat: Well kids, how about I show you how to have fun when Mom is gone

GBA • VU Games — *The Cat in the Hat* isn't the kind of depressing failure that stems from its developers' ineptitude. No, this is an expertly calculated attack against happiness. Look at that screenshot—the word evil doesn't begin to describe it. Neither does the word plorkenblog, but to plorkenblog's credit, I just made it up, so it wouldn't be fair to judge it by the same descriptive standards as real words.

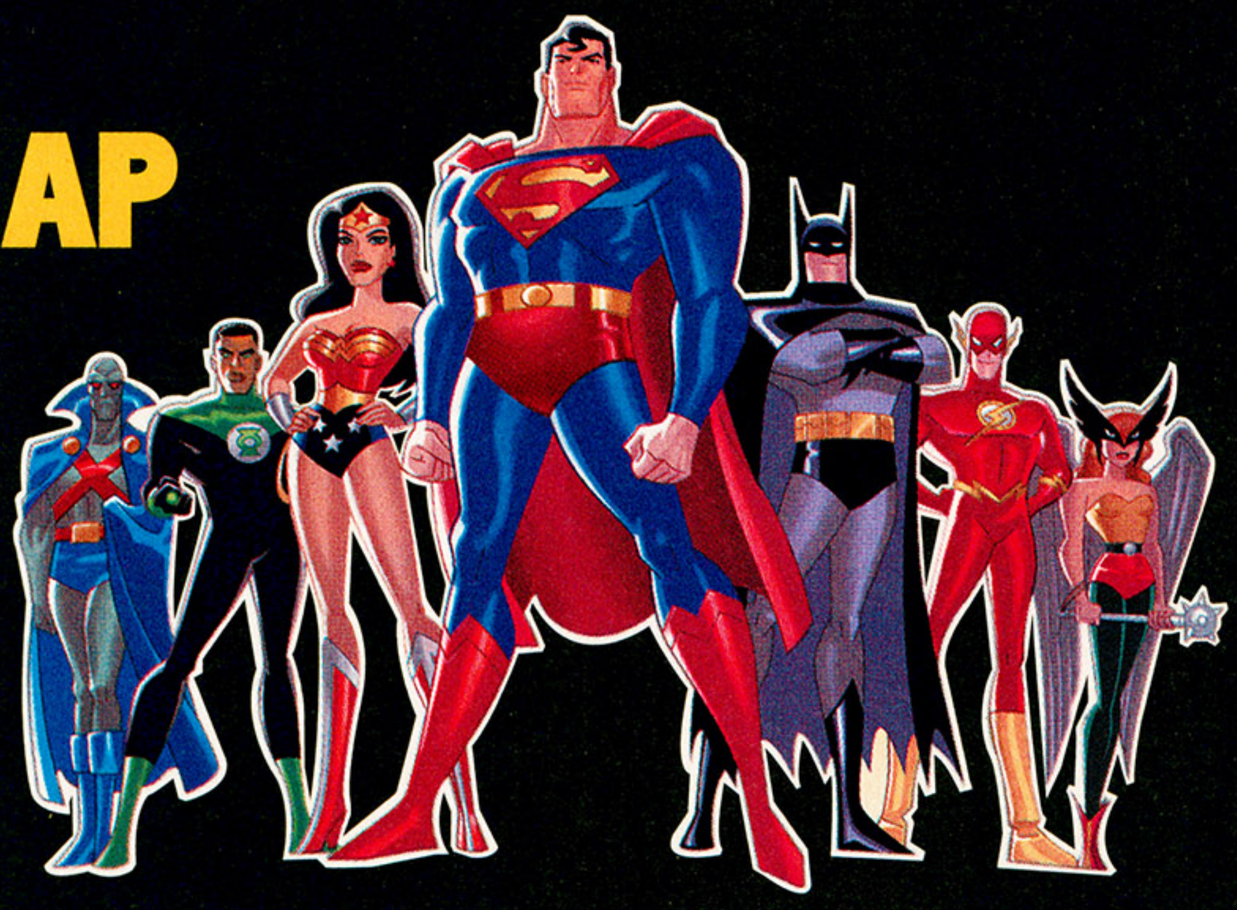
My point is this: Someone or something deliberately packaged fear and despair into a Game Boy cartridge. I don't care what anyone says, no matter how clumsily they screw things up during the design process, no group of Earth humans could *accidentally* program the 8th layer of hell into a game. That's the accident equivalent of eating 300 babies by mistake. I'm not saying it's impossible; it's just going to take one hell of an explanation when you get caught doing it, Satan.

Bottom Line: Am I the only one who noticed that Mike Myers in the *Cat in the Hat* makeup is a childhood vision of horror? Seriously, if this freakish man-cat were a howling scorpion with my father's face riding the blood-soaked ghost of Joseph Stalin, I wouldn't be more terrified of it.

THE FAIRLY ODD PARENTS! BREAKIN' DA RULES

PS2/XB/GC • THQ — As young Timmy, you must find the dumbly titled *Da Rules* book in order to take away your baby-sitter's ability to control time and space with her wishes. And since anyone playing this game is either 6 years old, an idiot, or both, the developers knew you'd need serious guidance. That's why your fairy godparents show up to help you perform every single task. Advice like "Jump by pressing the Jump button! Try it now!" and "See this lone floating path surrounded by miles of nothing else? Try walking down it now!" really got me out of some tough jams. I thought they'd finally stop shouting what magical stars do after I'd picked up 70 or 80 of them, but you may be surprised to discover that they do not.

Bottom Line: If you enjoy mediocre platforming games and whatever crappy cartoon this is based on, give it a try. But be sure to also pick up the Mad Catz IcePick Ear Stabber to protect yourself from the obnoxious, ceaseless fairy commentary.



Justice League: Safeguarding the world's supply of Lycra from fatties since 1960.

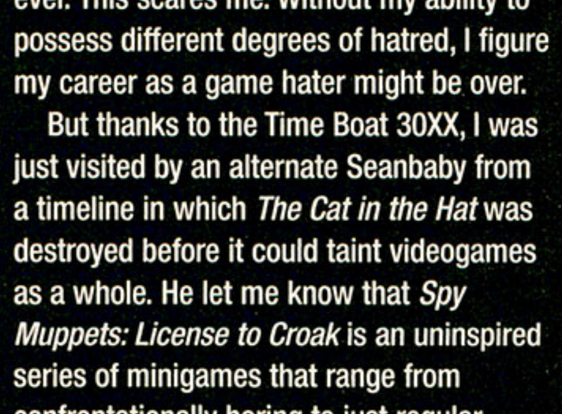
SPY MUPPETS: LICENSE TO CROAK

GBA • TDK Mediactive — Compared to *The Cat in the Hat*, I give this game 70 Fantastitrophies for Excellence out of a possible none. Do the math on that—it defies the laws of trophydom, and yet here we live in the twisted bizarro universe where it happened. The fact that *Spy Muppets* is not *The Cat in the Hat* makes it a tie with all the other games that are also not *The Cat in the Hat* as my favorite game ever. This scares me. Without my ability to possess different degrees of hatred, I figure my career as a game hater might be over.

But thanks to the Time Boat 30XX, I was just visited by an alternate Seanbaby from a timeline in which *The Cat in the Hat* was destroyed before it could taint videogames as a whole. He let me know that *Spy Muppets: License to Croak* is an uninspired series of minigames that range from confrontationally boring to just regular boring. So, if you need something to help you sleep or always wished you could hate the Muppets a little bit more, try it out.

Bottom Line: *Spy Muppets*' minigames actually offer a lot of variety, but then again, so does a handful of candy-colored prescription drugs.

JUSTICE LEAGUE CHRONICLES



GBA • Midway — When you're coming up with a challenge for the Justice League, you need to think big. It has Superman, Wonder Woman, The Flash, and Green Lantern, who—I don't know if you've seen the cartoon—can now actually fight the color yellow. That's why I was surprised that the first level pits them against evil Eskimos. I think they were shooting freeze rays at me, but aside from that, they were ordinary Eskimos. They weren't riding igloo tanks or battle walruses or anything.

So to even the odds, *JLC* is very loose with its interpretation of in-game collisions. For example, simply because The Flash's fist is 9 inches deep into an Eskimo's face doesn't necessarily mean that you hit him. In fact, for every justice punch that hits an enemy, the game has about a 30 percent chance of noticing it. While there's a slight chance this is due to a mastermind plot by Lex Luthor, my money's on serious programming failure.

Bottom Line: Although it is terrible, this game gets credit for having zero Aquaman sightings—which is the best accolade a superhero game can achieve. Of course, if the Earth's guppies and goldfish do take this opportunity to attack, you're screwed.

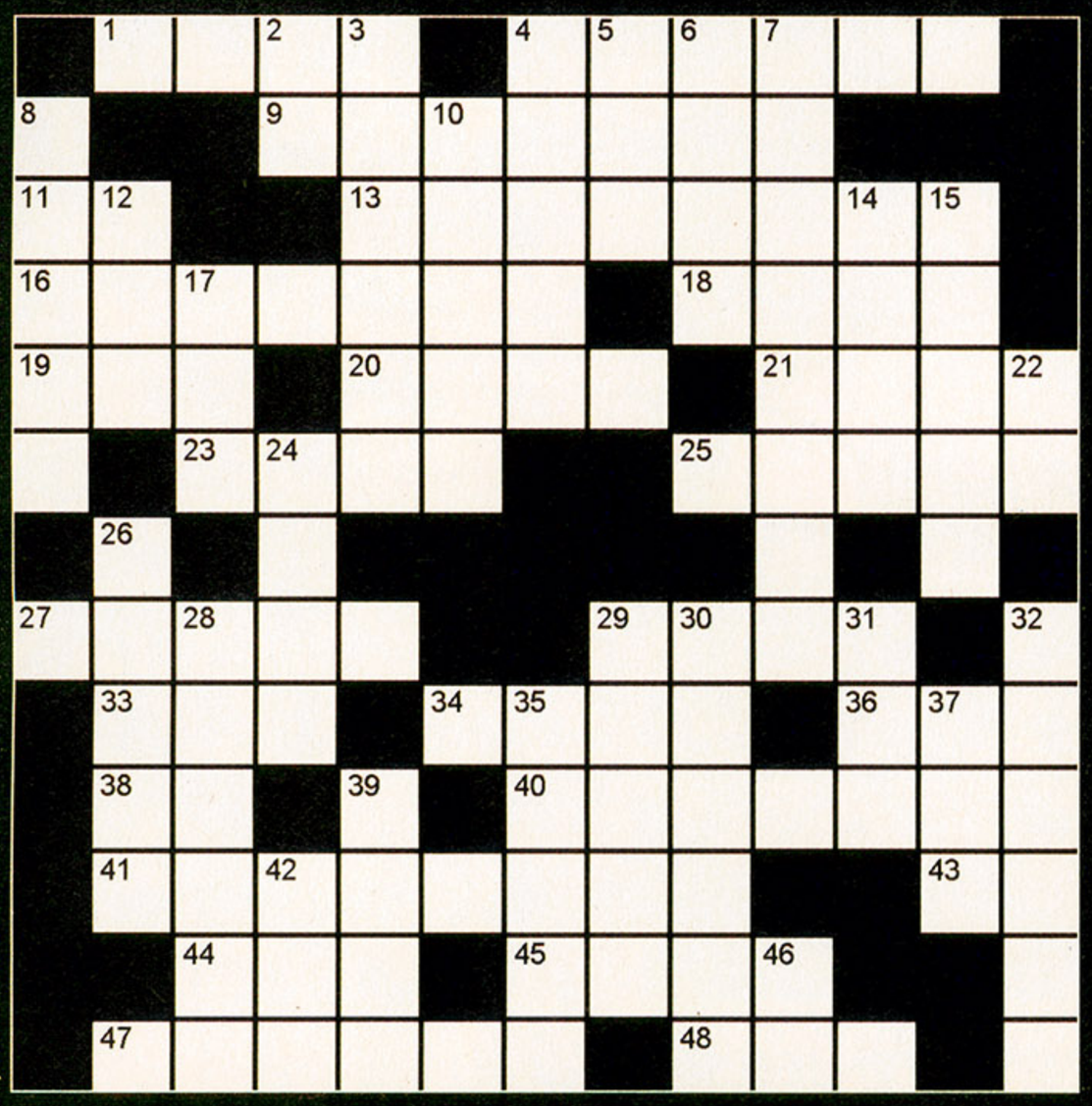
classic crap

PLUMBERS DON'T WEAR TIES

No, this isn't a grainy still from some Skinemax flick: *Ties* really is a game for the 3DO console. And we use the term "game" loosely, as it's more of a lame porno with sporadic button-pressing bits. Still, we couldn't pass up a box promising "race cars, shower scenes, daddy's girls, and chickens."

SPLINTER CELL-EBRATION

(Solution on page 144)



ACROSS

1. *Project Gotham 2*'s Leon Cupra R maker
4. *Bomberman*'s PC prefix
9. *Splinter Cell*'s com-link Colonel _
11. Like the Dole stickers in *Super Monkey Ball* or the KFC in *Crazy Taxi*
13. Early Atari/Midway 4-player coin-op
16. *Metal Gear* bad guy
18. *Ikari Warriors* (NES) resurrection code and '70s disco import supergroup
19. *Tekken*'s kung fu cop
20. Not new
21. *NCAA Football* bowl game
23. Swing like this to hit to the opposite field in *All-Star Baseball*
25. *Playboy* playmate _ Tenison of failed *Mortal Kombat* TV show
27. Worth 1,000 points in *Ms. Pac-Man*
29. *Dragon Ball Z* mainstay
33. Rack up the same score as your opponent
34. Like a *Max Payne* painkiller
36. Game Boy's *Intergalactic Ninja*
38. Like Sam Fisher's night-vision goggles (abbrv.)
40. Raced off-road?
41. *Mario Sunshine* cephalopod king
43. *Street Fighter*'s Chun-_
44. *NBA Showtime* kickoff
45. Middle-of-the-road ESRB rating
47. One of Dr. Wily's sharpest robots in *Mega Man 3* (NES), _man
48. _ Mead of *Terraforming* (TurboDuo)

DOWN

2. Spawn's alias, _ Simmons
3. Switch team members in *SmackDown!*
4. What Spanx does to Redmond in *Whiplash*?
5. Highest *EGM* review score
6. Successor to *Panzer Dragoon Saga* (Saturn)
7. Spell that lowers an enemy's magic defense in *Final Fantasy X* (abbrv.)
8. *Marvel vs. Capcom* burly gunslinger
10. *Splinter Cell* computer geek
12. One way to fail a *Splinter Cell* mission
14. *Star Wars: Knights of the Old Republic*'s Hawk
15. *Splinter Cell* immobilizer
17. Best spent in *Final Fantasy VII*'s Golden Saucer
22. Hal Emmerich's sister's nickname in *Metal Gear Solid 2*
24. *Twisted Metal* wheelman
26. *Splinter Cell* camera cable
28. Like *Zelda: The Wind Waker*'s Tetra
29. GBA affliction
30. *Tony Hawk* tricks
31. *State of Emergency* automatic weapon
32. Reward for game completion?
35. Angry version of 28 down?
37. Sega's *Ecco* ocean cohabitant
39. *True Crime* Nick's employer
42. *Mario Golf* lingo for ball location
46. Real-life inspiration for *GTA3*'s Liberty City (abbrv.)

STEPPING OUT OF THESE PAGES AND INTO YOUR HOMES!

Join Shoe and the rest of the Ziff Davis Media editors as they invade your screen with the latest game news and releases that will jumpstart your weekend!

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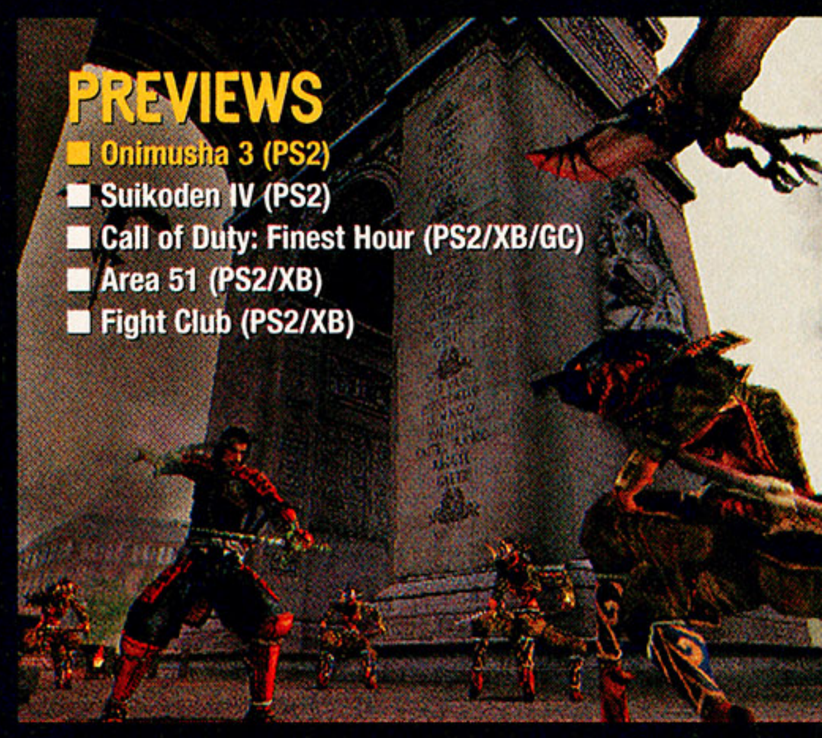
ON SALE MARCH 2

THE NEWEST IN NEW, THE HOTTEST IN HOT

Sure, you're looking forward to the likes of *Halo 2*, *Resident Evil 4*, *Gran Turismo 4*, and *Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater*. You know that. We know that. Even your grandma knows that. But what about all of the *other* games coming out this year, including the ones you haven't even heard of yet? In our April issue, we preview new games like ----, ----, and ---- ----. Want to know what these games are? Come back next month for them...and more.



PREVIEWS

- Onimusha 3 (PS2)
- Suikoden IV (PS2)
- Call of Duty: Finest Hour (PS2/XB/GC)
- Area 51 (PS2/XB)
- Fight Club (PS2/XB)

REVIEWS

- Ninja Gaiden (XB)
- Steel Battalion: Line of Contact (XB)
- Drakengard (PS2)
- Nightshade (PS2)
- Phantasy Star Online Episode III: C.A.R.D. Revolution (GC)

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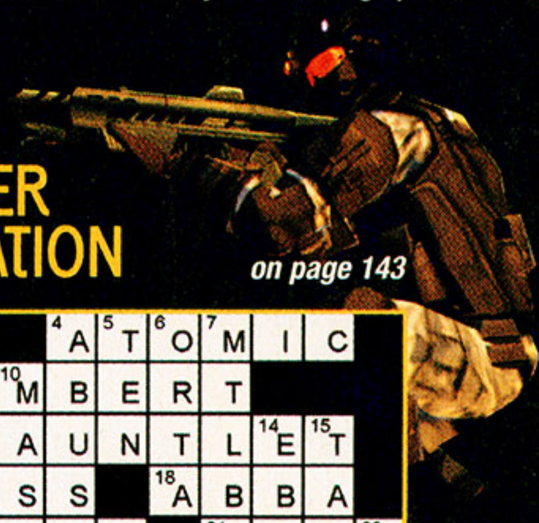

ANSWERS TO SPLINTER CELL-EBRATION

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'PANDORA YO MOMMA'

WE HAVE BEEN GIVEN THE FIFTH FREEDOM.
THAT'D BE, YOU KNOW, LIKE, ESP.
CREEPY!

HELLO, VIDEO GAMERS! I'M HSU TANAKA, THAT'S MY BROTHER CHAN, AND WHAT, WE ASK YOU, IS THE DEAL WITH TOM CLANCY? SINCE WHEN IS HE A GAME DESIGNER? THE GUY STAMPS HIS NAME ON A FEW ACTION-STRATEGY TITLES, AND HE'S A LICENSE TO PRINT MONEY!
YOU DON'T SUPPOSE HE'S A POKEMON IN DISGUISE, DO YOU?
I'M PRETTY SURE THAT WOULD HAVE COME OUT AT SOME POINT IN HIS MILITARY CAREER.
HORS D'OEUVRE?

OF COURSE! HIS MILITARY BACKGROUND, THAT'S THE KEY TO IT ALL! NOBODY WOULD HAVE EVER BOUGHT HIS STUFF IF HE HAD BEEN "TOM CLANCY, SHORT-ORDER COOK," OR "TOM CLANCY, DENTAL ASSISTANT!"
IT'S ALL BEEN ABOUT PUBLIC NOTIONS OF GOVERNMENT DRAMA, WHICH HE'S BEEN FEEDING OFF OF LIKE A PORCUPINE SUCKLING THE TEAT OF A BULL-RAT!
I DON'T KNOW WHAT THAT MEANS, BUT LOOK WHAT I MADE-- "SPLINTER CELERY!"
GOOD WITH PEANUT BUTTER!

TWO CAN PLAY AT THIS GAME! THE CROWDS WILL CLAMOR FOR OUR GAMES, TOO, ONCE I'VE WRITTEN MY OWN POLITICAL THRILLER, DRAWING UPON MY **OWN** WORK IN THE SERVICE OF MY COUNTRY!
HSU, YOU HAD A WEEK-LONG JOB AT THE DMV, WHICH YOU NEVER SHOWED UP FOR.
I LEARNED ENOUGH! GIMME SOME ROOM! AHEM!

HSU TANAKA'S
The Hunt for the Sum of All Patriot Dangers
A Patriotic Novel of Political Tension by
★ HSU TANAKA ★
Former Civil Servant
Has watched 'Patton' a couple of times

6:00, CIA HEADQUARTERS
CIA AGENT JOHN REYNOLDS, IT IS GOOD TO SEE YOU, AS WE WALK IN THIS HALLWAY TO A MEETING WITH THE PRESIDENT!
THANK YOU, MR. DIRECTOR OF THE CIA! DO YOU HAVE ANY SAGE ADVICE TO DISPENSE ABOUT SUCH MEETINGS, GIVEN THAT YOU ARE OLD AND WISE AND PROBABLY NEAR DEATH?
YES-- KEEP YOUR MOUTH SHUT AND YOUR EYES OPEN. POLITICAL PEOPLE DON'T LIKE TO BE SURPRISED. ALSO, THE PRESIDENT MIGHT BITE YOU IF STARTLED. HERE WE GO!

THE MEETING!
OUR INTELLIGENCE INDICATES THAT A RADICAL GROUP OF IRISH-CHINESE-RUSSIAN EXTREMISTS ARE IN HIDING IN THE REPUBLIC OF GUAM... ANY IDEAS ON HOW TO FLUSH OUT THESE EVILDOERS? AGENT KRAMER?
SIR, I PROPOSE THAT WE SEND IN A SPECIAL TEAM OF UNDERCOVER OPERATIVES TO SYSTEMATICALLY BEAT UP ALL THE CITIZENS OF GUAM, THUS ELIMINATING THE THREAT ENTIRELY. ANY OBJECTIONS?
FIG. A

I OBJECT! I FIND THE ACT OF SENDING IN OUR OPERATIVES TO HARM INNOCENT CIVILIANS TO BE PATENTLY UN-AMERICAN!
WELL, OK, NOT UN-AMERICAN, PER SE, BUT KINDA WRONG-LIKE. THAT'S HOW I FEEL.

AFTER THE MEETING...
...AND THEN HE BIT ME!
PUT SOME ALCOHOL ON IT AND KEEP IT WRAPPED. I WARNED YOU, BOY, POLITICS ISN'T--
JOHN REYNOLDS!

YOU DON'T WANT TO GO MAKING THE WRONG SORT OF ENEMIES, JOHN, NOT HERE IN WASHINGTON! AFTER YOU LEFT THE MEETING, MY **OTHER** PLAN WAS APPROVED-- A PLAN TO DROP NUCLEAR SUBMARINES FROM A PLANE ONTO GUAM TO FLUSH OUT THE RADICALS!
WHAT? BUT-- BUT--

WAIT-- NUCLEAR **SUBMARINES** FROM A **PLANE**?
WE HAVE THE ELEMENT OF SURPRISE, JOHN, YOU MUST GIVE US THAT.
GOOD DAY.

DID YOU HEAR THAT, SIR?
WE CAN'T LET THEM GO THROUGH WITH IT! GUAM MIGHT HAVE AN ARMY OR SOME TRAINED LIVESTOCK OR SOMETHING THAT'LL RETALIATE!
I'D LOVE TO HELP, BUT AS YOU CAN SEE, I'M DYING! GACK!

I HAVE TO STOP THIS! CORRUPTION IN GOVERNMENT OFFICES, WHO WOULD HAVE THOUGHT? IT'S TIME FOR JOHN REYNOLDS TO PUT THINGS RIGHT!

HELLO? HEY, THIS IS AGENT KRAMER, WITH THE BUREAU OF DANGEROUS, POORLY-THOUGHT-OUT OPERATIONS? YEAH, WE PUT IN AN ORDER FOR A LOAD OF NUCLEAR SUBMARINES TO BE DROPPED ON GUAM? WELL, WE NEED TO CHANGE THAT-- DROP THEM ON DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES, INSTEAD. SURE, JUST PUT IT ON MY VISA. YOU'RE A PEACH. GOTTA GO.
PHONE

IT WORKED! THE SUBS LANDED DIRECTLY IN THE HEART OF L.A., WHERE NOBODY NOTICED THEM! KRAMER'S PLAN FAILED, AND NEWER, SAFER PLANS OF RADICAL APPREHENSION ARE BEING IMPLEMENTED!
AND APPARENTLY, I BECAME DIRECTOR OF THE CIA SOMEWHERE ALONG THE LINE! I CAN INVESTIGATE PEOPLE'S **DOGS** IF I WANT TO!
THIS IS GOOD POOP!
DAILY NEW... WORLD SAFE
THE END
MIRACLE DIET PILL

SO, IF I UNDERSTAND THE PROCESS CORRECTLY, WE JUST SIT BACK AND WAIT FOR THE CHECKS! CATCH YOU NEXT TIME, VIDEO GAMERS!
HMM... NEEDS MORE WANTON VIOLENCE.
END!

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GIAMBI.

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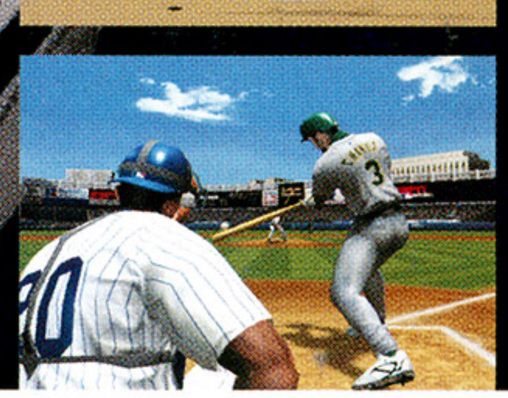

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