

**SPECIAL
PREVIEW
ISSUE**



MISS SEXIEST GAMER USA
Meet her (and the sexiest gamer dude) inside!



ELECTRONIC GAMING

The #1 Videogame Magazine **MONTHLY**

Special Feature

50 GAMES

YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT

Starring:

- Spider-Man 2 **Exclusive!**
 - Fight Club **Brutal!**
 - Zelda: Four Swords **Actually cool!**
 - X-Men: Legends **Superhero RPG!**
- and

Revealed!

NINTENDO'S NEW HANDHELD

...with dual screens!

PLUS: PS Portable update

PS2, Xbox, GameCube

WHAT'S NEXT?

Price drops, surprise sequels, and more

THE GETAWAY 2



29 GAMES REVIEWED INSIDE

Move over, WWE! The sexy gals of the WWX are in town.



FINAL FANTASY VII: ADVENT CHILDREN

New screens and info on the movie sequel

ZIFF DAVIS MEDIA™

April 2004 ISSUE 177
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community XI





FINAL FANTASY XI

ONLINE

The forces of the evil beastmen are gathering, casting a shadow of uncertainty over the future of Vana'diel. Now three proud nations must unite in an epic battle whose outcome depends on you. Enter the vast realm of FINAL FANTASY XI Online, where you can join forces with people from all over North America, as well as Japan. Immerse yourself in a persistent world that continues evolving whether you're in it or not. And even play across platforms with PC gamers as you work together to alter the course of Vana'diel history. FINAL FANTASY XI. Infinitely beyond.^{XI}



HDD
PlayStation 2

Introducing the internal Hard Disk Drive (40GB) (for PlayStation 2). Included with your purchase of FINAL FANTASY XI, the HDD exponentially expands the PlayStation 2 experience. With it, it's possible to download content like new missions, levels and characters. Experience persistent worlds. And even speed up loading times. It's just one more way the world of PlayStation 2 is constantly evolving.



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SQUARE ENIX.

PlayStation 2

PlayOnline™



Game Experience May Change During Online Play



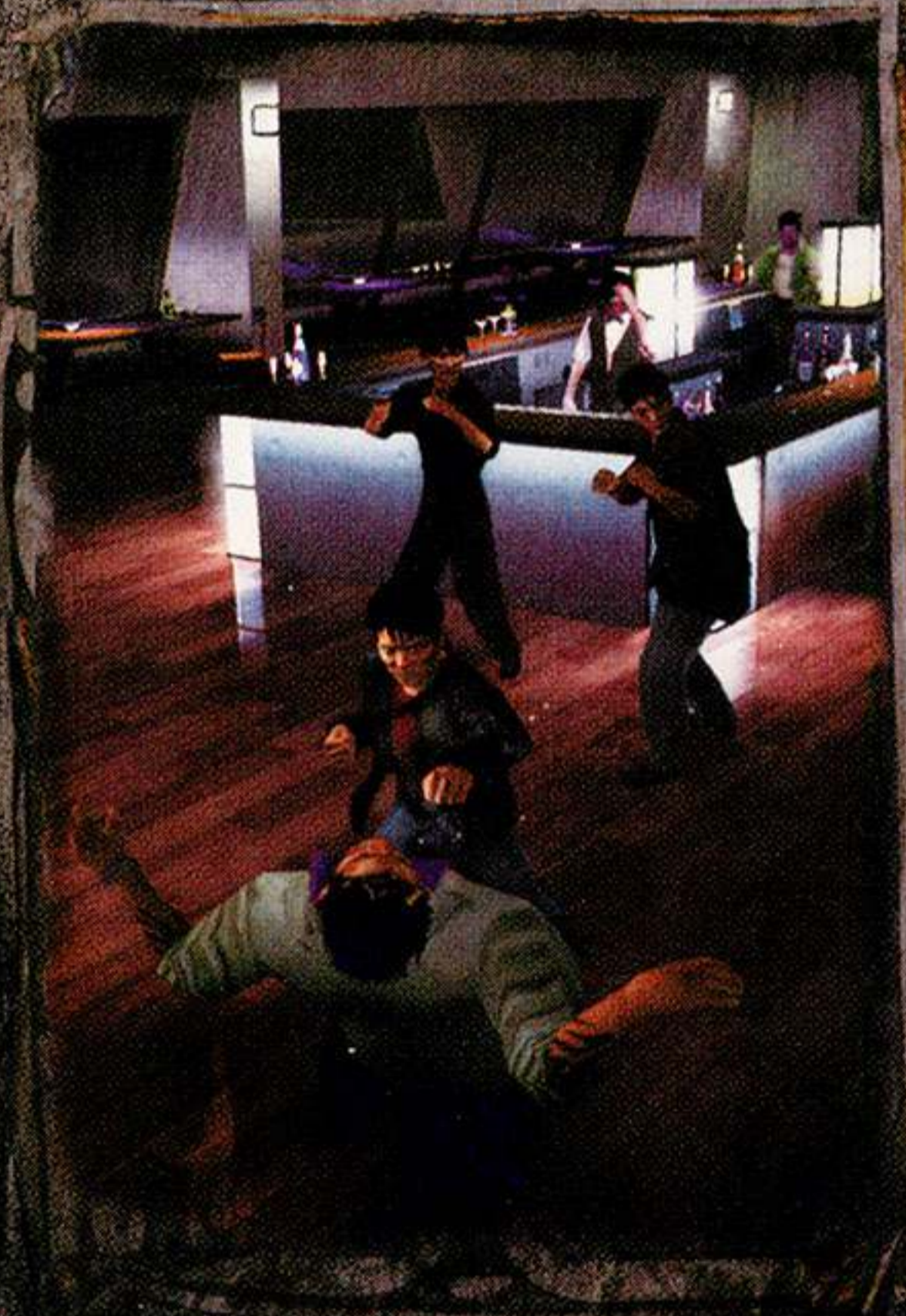
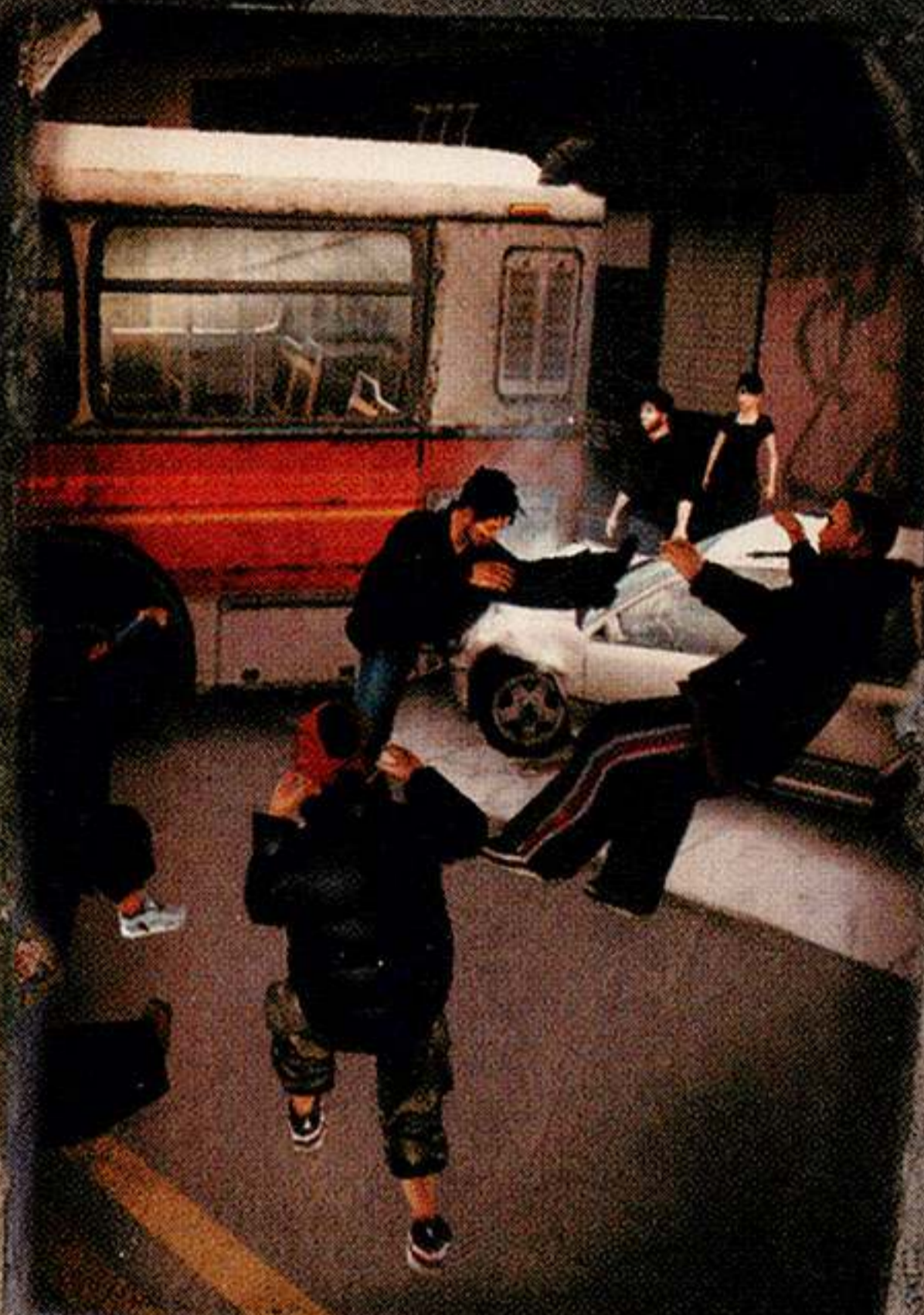
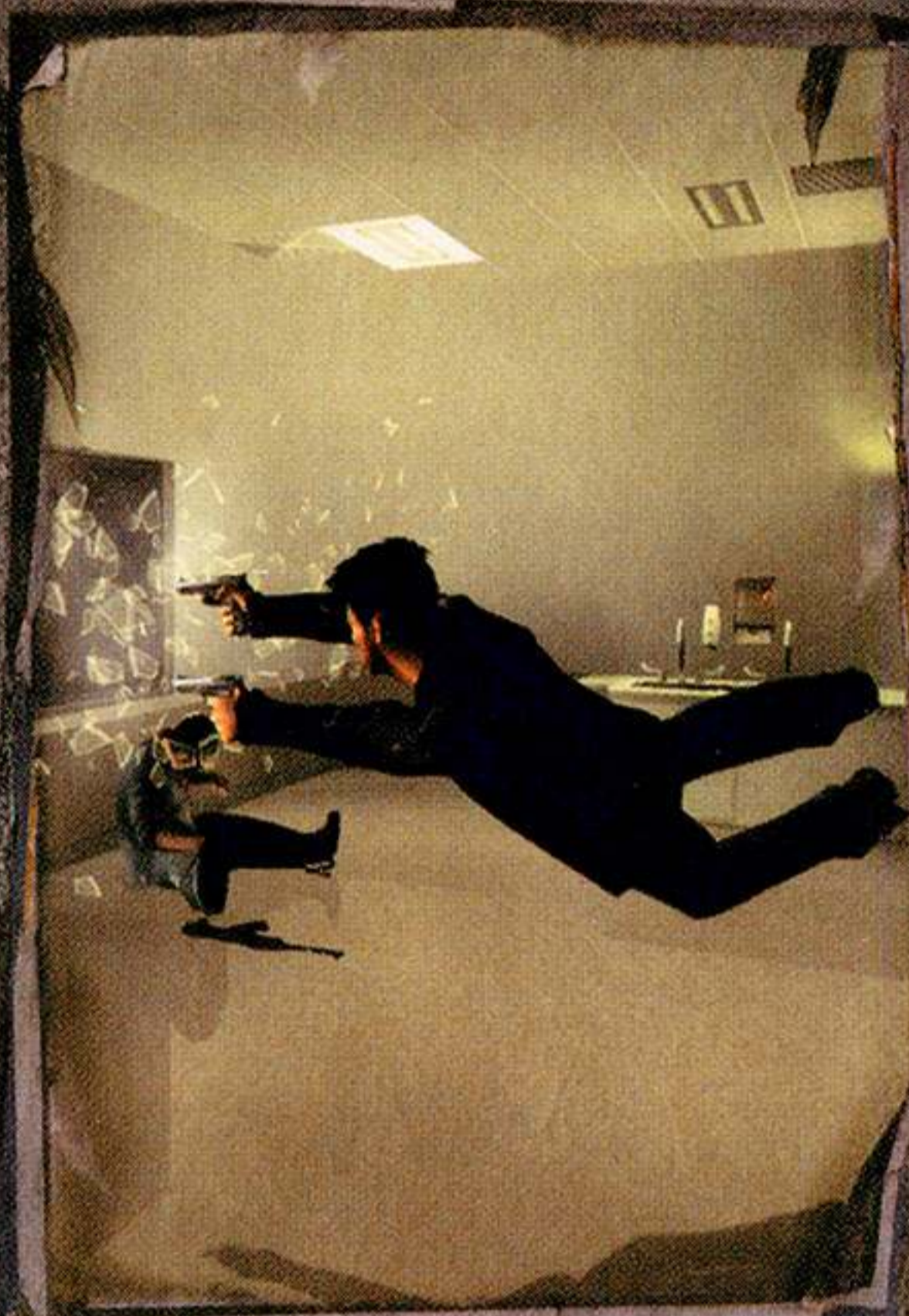
For Kit Yun, the
only way out of the
Hong Kong underworld
is to go back in.



Violence

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JET LI RISE TO HONOR 義氣



A dying man's last wish. An undercover cop who's running out of time. Jet Li is Kit Yun in Rise to Honor, the story of a cop sworn to fulfill his duty, yet bound by a promise to a powerful crime lord. Now Kit must enter a shadowy world where, to preserve his honor, he'll have to risk his life. But as his enemies will soon learn, sometimes the one who is most honorable...is also the most deadly.

PlayStation®2



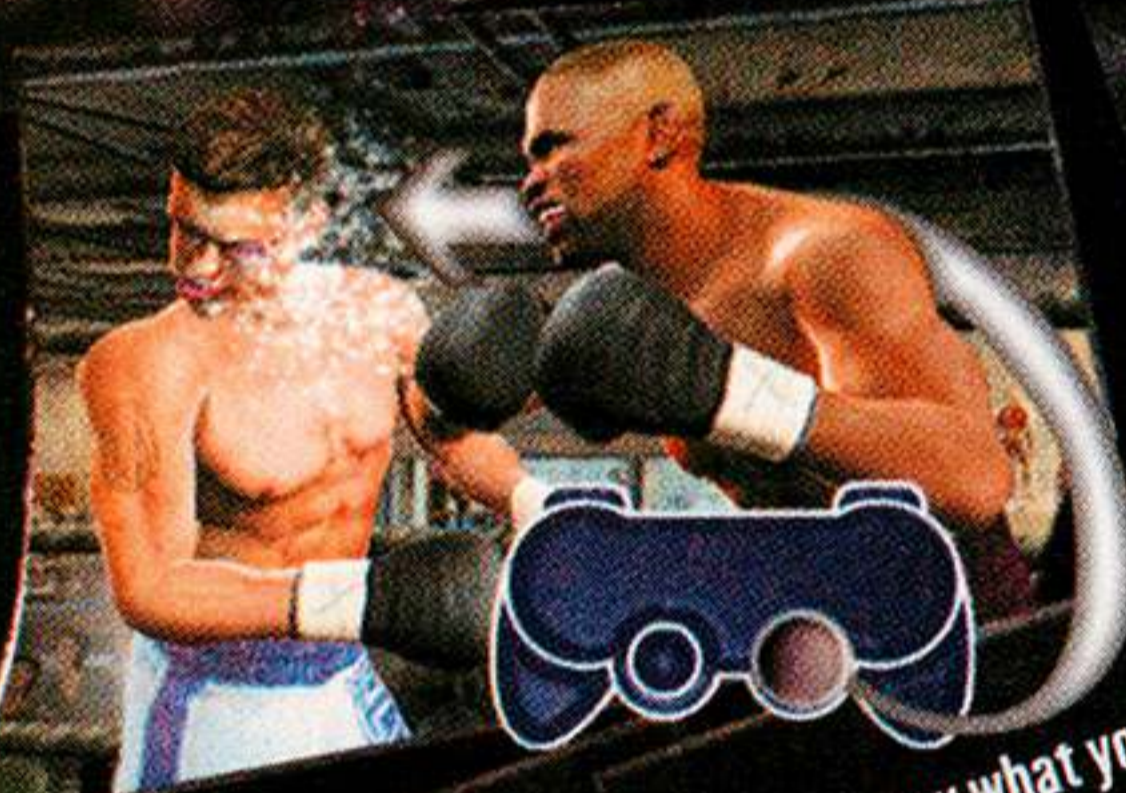
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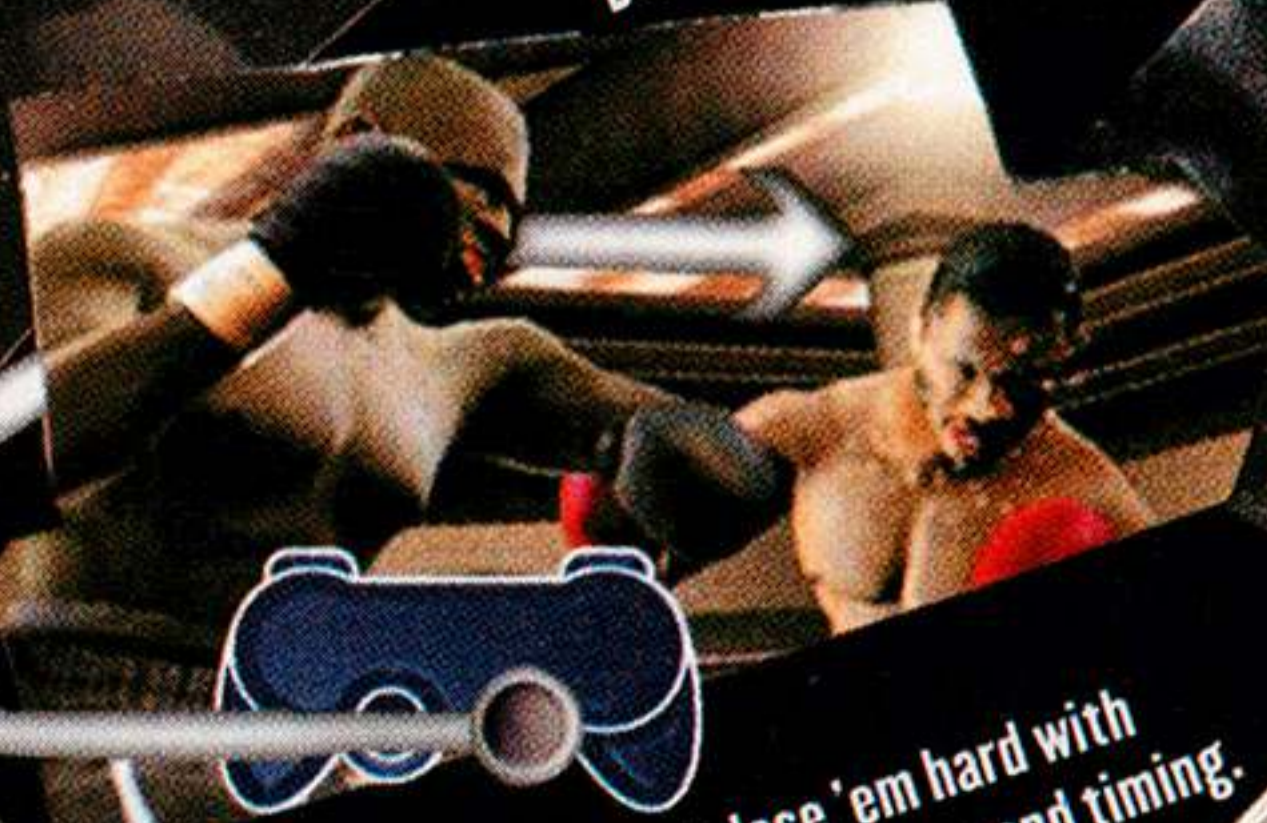
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Precise analog control lets you throw what you want. Where you want.



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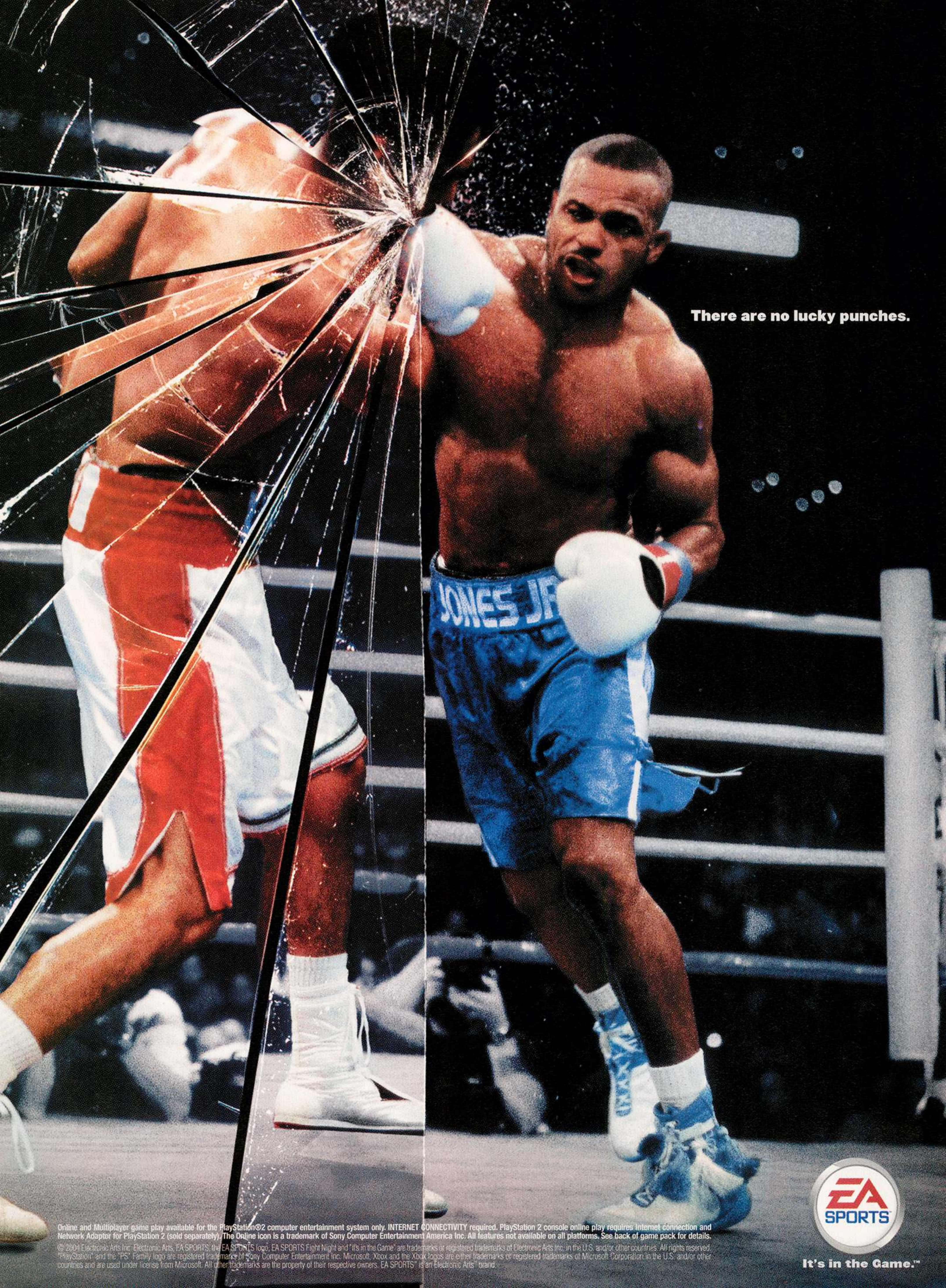
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PlayStation 2



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THE GATE DROPS MARCH 2004

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A look at April's slim pickings



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COVER STORY: 50 GAMES YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT

Please quiet down and find a seat—class is now in session. Listen up as *EGM*'s hot-to-trot teacher lectures on 2004's upcoming videogame subjects, including an exclusive first-look seminar on *The Getaway* sequel (PS2).



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AMERICA'S SEXIEST GAMER
Sorry fellas, but this hottie's already spoken for

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"Frighteningly fruity" best describes Seanbaby's afternoon of cosplay



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It isn't looking like sunny skies for everyone

editorial



I've done a lot of stupid things in my life, like trying to fix a bent PlayStation 2 fan with a paper clip (now I can use my PS2 to send smoke signals) and giving *Superman 64* a review score of 1.5 out of 10 (it should've been about 1.5 points lower), but none more stupid than altering a picture used in the February issue of *Electronic Gaming Monthly*, where we covered up the faces of Russian soldiers who died in the

line of duty. Despite our ignorance of the photo's original context, the end result was disrespectful, tactless, and just plain wrong. It was a mistake I deeply regret. The original photo is reprinted here. We'd like to apologize to everyone affected by our picture, including Sony Computer Entertainment, Zipper Interactive, Getty Images, the Russian community, and most of all, the soldiers and veterans who

we've dishonored. We're making a donation to the appropriate veterans' funds in Russia to show we're truly sorry for our mistake. On a slightly more upbeat note (but still sad in another way): We'd like to say good-bye to our old friend Joe Fielder, who hopped on the games-journalist-turned-developer bandwagon...er, bus. Good luck, Joe! Make 'em better than *Superman 64*, OK?
—Shoe, Editor-in-Chief

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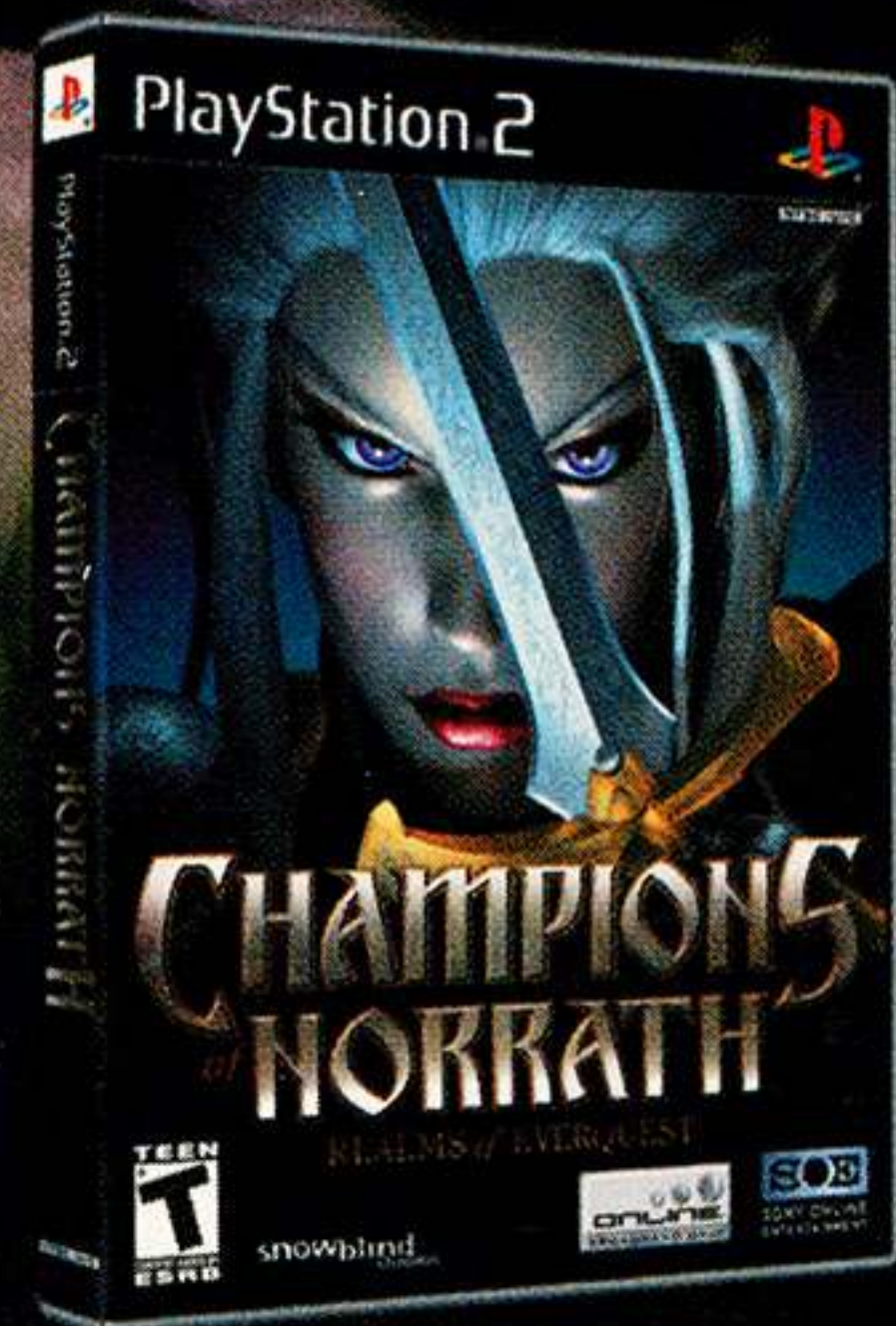
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"Top online PS2 game for 2004 – Make room on your shelf for this one." – OFFICIAL U.S. PlayStation MAGAZINE

"Four-player co-op from the creators of Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance? Where do we sign up?" – IGN.com



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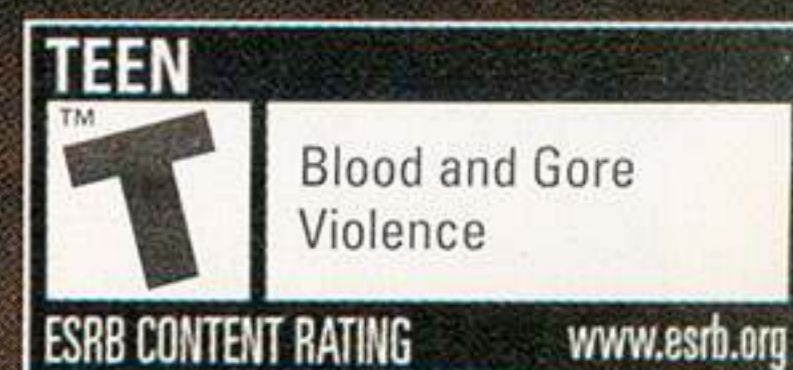
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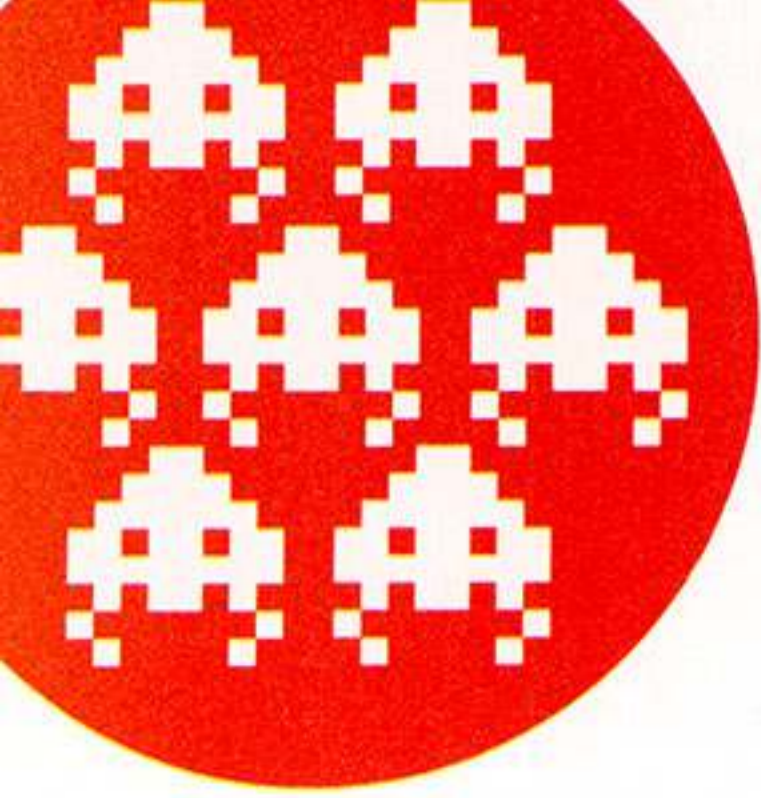
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Game Experience may change during online play



staff

quarter up

the review crew



DAN "SHOE" HSU, Editor-in-Chief
Shoe can't have a new Nintendo portable (see page 28). All his hours spent on Game Boy Advance have already given him 9,000/9,000 vision, which makes editing pages very difficult.
Now Playing: *Worms 3D, Phantasy Star Online: Episode III*
Fave Genres: Just about everything

MARK MACDONALD, Executive Editor
Mark's mind is racing (but his body's in the lee-ee-ead!) figuring out ways to sneak lyrics from Foreigner's "Double Vision" into his story on Nintendo's new DS portable.
Now Playing: *Splinter Cell: Pandora Tomorrow, SOCOM II*
Fave Genres: Action, Adventure, Shooters



JENNIFER TSAO, Managing Editor
Seanbaby's cosplay article (page 50) inspired Jennifer to play dress up this month. But since those fancy outfits require time and effort, she just dragged out last year's Halloween costume.
Now Playing: *Prince of Persia: Sands, Neverwinter: Hordes (PC)*
Fave Genres: Adventure, RPG, Action Sports, Puzzle, Music

CRISPIN BOYER, Senior Editor
Cris wants to know what it'll take to put you in the seat of *Mafia*, a broken-down *Grand Theft Auto*-cloned jalopy he had to review this month. What if he throws in the undercoating?
Now Playing: *SOCOM II, Prince of Persia: Sands, Fire Emblem*
Fave Genres: Action, Adventure, RPG



CHRIS "CJ" JOHNSTON, News Editor
CJ indulged in two of his guiltiest gaming pleasures this month by reviewing both the new *Pokémon* and *Phantasy Star Online* titles. Now, if he could only summon Pikachu in *PSO*.
Now Playing: *PSO: Episode III, Rainbow Six 3*
Fave Genres: Action, Adventure, Puzzle, Music

SHANE BETTENHAUSEN, Previews Editor
Despite spending most of the month getting served by Japanese *PSO* card battlers, Shane had time to prep for the upcoming Nintendo DS by playing an old Game & Watch.
Now Playing: *PSO: Episode III, Drakengard, Street Fighter II*
Fave Genres: Fighting, Shooters, Adventure, Racing



DEMIAN LINN, Reviews Editor
Demian's first act as reviews editor was to put Shane on all motocross games—but then *MX Unleashed* turned out to be really quite good, and another brilliant plan was foiled.
Now Playing: *Fire Emblem, Call of Duty (PC), NFL Street*
Fave Genres: Action, Hockey, Racing, Fighting

PAUL BYRNES, Associate Editor
Yes, there's a lot of work to be done, but *Mario & Luigi: Superstar Saga* isn't going to solve itself. It isn't going to let Paul do anything else until he finishes it, either.
Also Playing: *Beyond Good & Evil, Armed & Dangerous*
Fave Genres: RPG, Adventure, games with "&" in their titles



BRYAN INTIHAR, Associate Editor
Poor Bryan. The boy's been on the DL the entire month—first the flu, then a nasty cold. Luckily, crackin' the bat in *MVP Baseball 2004* is helping with his recovery.
Now Playing: *MGS: The Twin Snakes, MVP Baseball 2004*
Fave Genres: Action, Adventure, Sports

SHAWN ELLIOTT, Associate Editor
Shawn admits that today's ninjas and samurai are a force to be reckoned with, but he insists that none bang as hard as old-school kung-fu gangs. "People all over the world, join in..."
Now Playing: *Splinter Cell: Pandora Tomorrow, R-Type Final*
Fave Genres: Fighting, Shooters, Adventure, Racing



Guest Reviewers



GREG FORD
Ford's flabbergasted that more of you haven't bought *Prince of Persia: Sands* yet. What more do you want?



JON DUDLAK
Bitter review-score disputes resulted in Jon grilling the entire staff's wieners this month. Yes, even Jen's.



PATRICK MAURO
Still heartbroken by the Red Sox's October loss, Patrick looks to the future and reviews *MVP 2004*.



KEVIN GIFFORD
Being a game writer has its perks—Kevin can hang out with Sonic the Hedgehog *anytime he wants*.



JOHN RICCIARDI
If you're in Tokyo and you see a big white guy buying *Zelda* figurines, chances are it's our man John here.

■ Five editorial staffs are always better than one, which is why we welcome the help of our sister mags (and website) **XBOX NATION, OFFICIAL U.S. PLAYSTATION MAGAZINE, GMR, and 1UP.COM**. And no, they don't just write about the crappy games.

The Contributors

- Hollywood liaison **SCOTT STEINBERG** gave songstress-cum-superspy Mya the third degree in *Celebrity Gamer*...
- Artist **FREDDY ANZURES** (frogdesign.com) reimagined the shape of on-the-go gaming with the Nintendo DS...
- **DAVID HODGSON**, the only guy we know who can translate Cockney, tackled our *Getaway 2* cover story....
- Teacher's pets **JAMES MIELKE**, **SCOOTER NGUYEN**, and **GREG ORLANDO** helped out with our preview feature....
- Fab freelancer **JUSTIN SPEER** found yet another way to hype *Halo 2* and *Metal Gear Solid 3* in *The Hot Five*....
- *Masters of Doom* author **DAVID KUSHNER** kept score with professional videogame referee Walter Day....
- The design visionaries at **ENEONE** (www.eneone.com) created the crystal ball for our systems forecast....
- And **SEANBABY** dressed up like a fruitcake to infiltrate a parade of people also dressed like fruitcakes.

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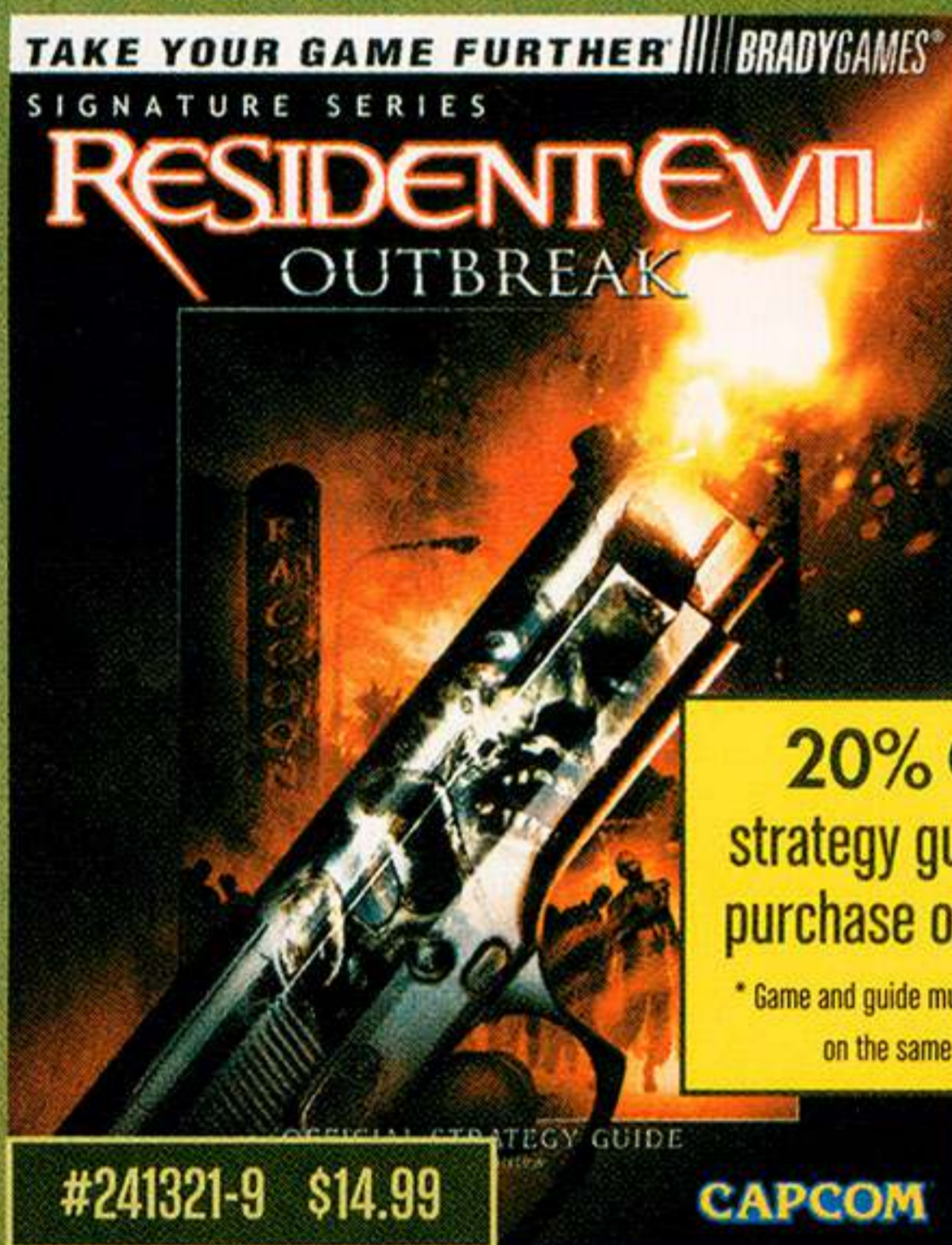


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Letters

ranting, raving, and a goddamn minivan



Instantaneous idiocy

In *EGM* #175, you recommended the Radeon 9600 graphics card. I bought one, but I couldn't figure out what to do with it. I finally got it in by opening my PS2—now it's screwed! I just get a blue screen when I turn it on. Next time you cover game hardware, consider including installation instructions. Instant Expert my ass. What the hell do I do now?

—Squall Leonhart

We forwarded your letter to Doc Brown, fictitious Radeon publicist, and here's what he suggests: "Try harnessing the power of 1.21 gigawatts by duct-taping your card to a flux capacitor."



The man's got a point

Kudos to Reviews Editor Demian Linn for admitting that videogames can indeed go too far at times (*Manhunt* review, *EGM* #175). *EGM* tends to handle the videogame-content controversy with refreshing maturity, but Editor-in-Chief Dan "Shoe" lends the notion of the trigger-happy gamer dangerous credibility by celebrating Rockstar's latest foray into unbridled violence. I'm not saying *Manhunt*'s a bad game, but, as in any legitimate entertainment medium, shock value should be dismissed for what it is and not praised merely because it blatantly defies the views of "uptight" politicians.

—Gabe Kornbluh

"*Manhunt* has no social values," Shoe admits, "but neither do some of the movies it draws

influence from. I wouldn't want those movies censored or held back, either. What would the world be without *Running Man*?"

You know the science

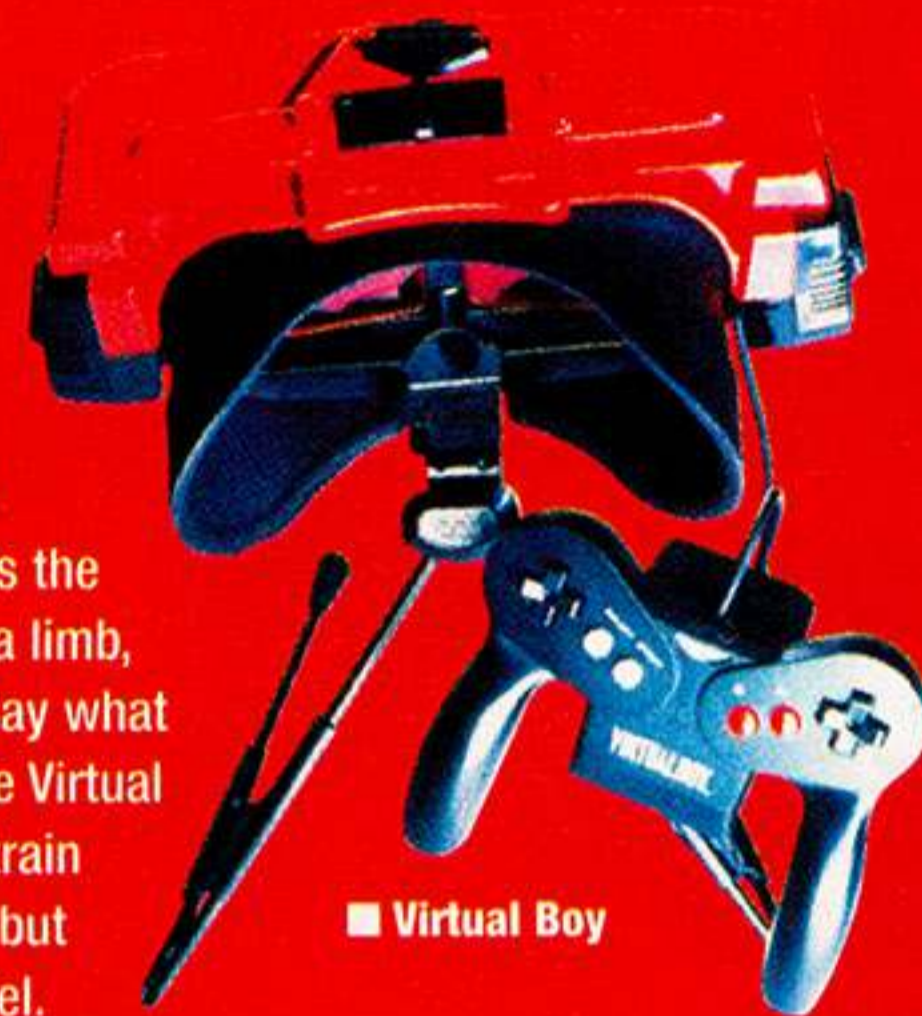
Just watched your *Ultimate Videogame Countdown*

Letter of the month

Give DS a chance

The Nintendo Dual Screen (see pg. 28) might have some screaming "Virtual Boy," but let's keep an open mind. Nintendo has the balls to go out on a limb, and I'm all for it. Say what you want about the Virtual Boy and the eye strain and neck cramps, but at least it was novel. Sometimes experiments yield great things, and, as gamers, we should embrace attempts at originality.

—Justinian Bloch



Congrats, Justinian Bloch! As our Letter of the Month writer, you've scored a game from *EGM*'s secret stash. We'll even do our best to make sure it's a GC title.

show on MTV (which was great). Anyhow, the physicist interviewed for *Tony Hawk's Underground* should've offered a better explanation of that Greek "E" formula thing. I just studied Newton's law of motion, and I understood it. Unfortunately, I forgot whatever I knew in like three days.

—Saad Aslam

We're not sure what that egghead was talking about either, Saad, but we do know we'll think twice before playing that fake-ass game in the future.

Under-covered

Why no sports covers? *Winning Eleven*, a fine simulation of the biggest sport in the world, sells millions of copies in Japan. Sports games in general sell better than games of any other genre.

—Geoffrey Grace

Even though games like *Madden* sell enough copies to fill stadiums, they're essentially the same every year... certainly not different enough to merit a cover story. As for footie: Who cares. >

POST OFFICE

Bull sessions from *EGM*'s message boards



■ Cervantes hopes to meet his Taki.

Think all game-site message boards are boring? Sound off at egmmag.com and weigh in on such topics as...

Cosplaya hatin'

When readers got word that *EGM*'s Seanbaby donned game duds and infiltrated a cosplay event (see pg. 50), some worried we wouldn't think the participants were dressed for success. According to **VoranXias**, "Cosplayers aren't as geeky as *EGM* makes them out

to be. They're just people who either have a lot of time on their hands or are the significant others of people who have a lot of time on their hands." Not so, says **Kyoske**: "Cosplayers are obsessive." Out-of-the-closet cosplayer **LionheartZERO** argues, "We're no more obsessive than gamers who insist on unlocking every available bonus. A recent outfit set me back 20 bucks—less than half the price of an average game. It took three days to make. How long does it take to complete *Final Fantasy X*?" **SenorFunkernickel** takes a more diplomatic approach: "Some cosplaying chicks are pretty hot."

Netiquette

Positive attitudes make or break online gaming experiences, but we've all got our pet peeves when it comes to multiplayer tomfoolery. **DarcDante** hates "the classic 'breather' who seems to have shoved his headset down his windpipe." Meanwhile, **MetalGearHalo**

despises "scrubs who think they're slick by selecting Warren Sapp as their kicker and always trying for the onside recovery." **VoodooGmr**, however, insists there's hope for us yet: "When I play with people who know the game, don't get mad when they get fragged, take a loss with a grin, and work to improve their skill, I always have a great time. That's what it's all about."

Stealth and bullet time

With dozens of new games indebted to *Metal Gear* and *Max Payne*'s respective innovations, we can't help but wonder if we're getting too much of a good thing. Most posters agree with **JoeShockX** that "the originals and their sequels are the only ones doing it right." But if **Mercutio**'s predictions come true, we'll have plenty of time to get used to both features: "Stealth and bullet time are here to stay, much like shooting and platforming before them."

CONTACT EGM

E-mail us at EGM@ziffdavis.com. As long as your subject line doesn't mention Paris Hilton, we'll read it! Or write to:

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Phil's tattoo: NESTacular.

Try this at home

I came up with a sweet new way to play *Halo*. I call it "Catch Your Own Plasma Grenade." Just toss a grenade straight and try to catch it on your face. My friends and I spend hours doing this in multiplayer.

—Jake Dalton

We take it this is after you guys hang out all day watching *SpongeBob*?

This is your brain on EverCrack

I'd like to educate your readers: There's a precious little high-end game in *EverQuest: Online Adventures*. There's Solusek's Eye (where Lord Nagafen lives), Toxxulia, and the Plane of Sky. My guild, Ethereal Descendants, will rip through all of this content in a few months, only to be left waiting for another raid zone such as the Isle of Dread. Then we'll decimate that. When I leveled to 50, I was listless for two months...until they added the Isle of Dread.

—Leo Vick

You certainly taught us something.

Who are you?

So my grandkids might ask, "Why do you have an ancient TV remote on your arm?" when they peep my tat. But hopefully the world will remember up, up, down, down, left, right, left, right, B, A, start 30 years from now. Then I won't have to explain anything except why grandpa pops a blue pill before he "takes a nap" with grandma.

—Phil

Marked Man

Whenever I read *EGM*, I'm left with black ink on my palms. Is it ever going to come off? I have no problem identifying other true gamers now because we all have black hands, but I'm running out of black clothes to color-coordinate with my hands.

—Mike Hicks

Nights: keep dreamin'

In last issue's Afterthoughts interview, *Sonic Heroes* Director Takashi Iizuka mentions working on a new *Nights*. So when can I buy this sequel to Sega's best game?

—Cory Richard

Iizuka crushes your hopes: "While I would love to create a sequel to *Nights* sometime in the future," he says, "there are no plans for this project right now."

Same as it ever was

I don't like the direction games are headed. Developers used to create quality games. Nowadays, they're out to make as much money with as little effort as possible. I hope you folks at *EGM* can empathize.

—Andrew Neubauer

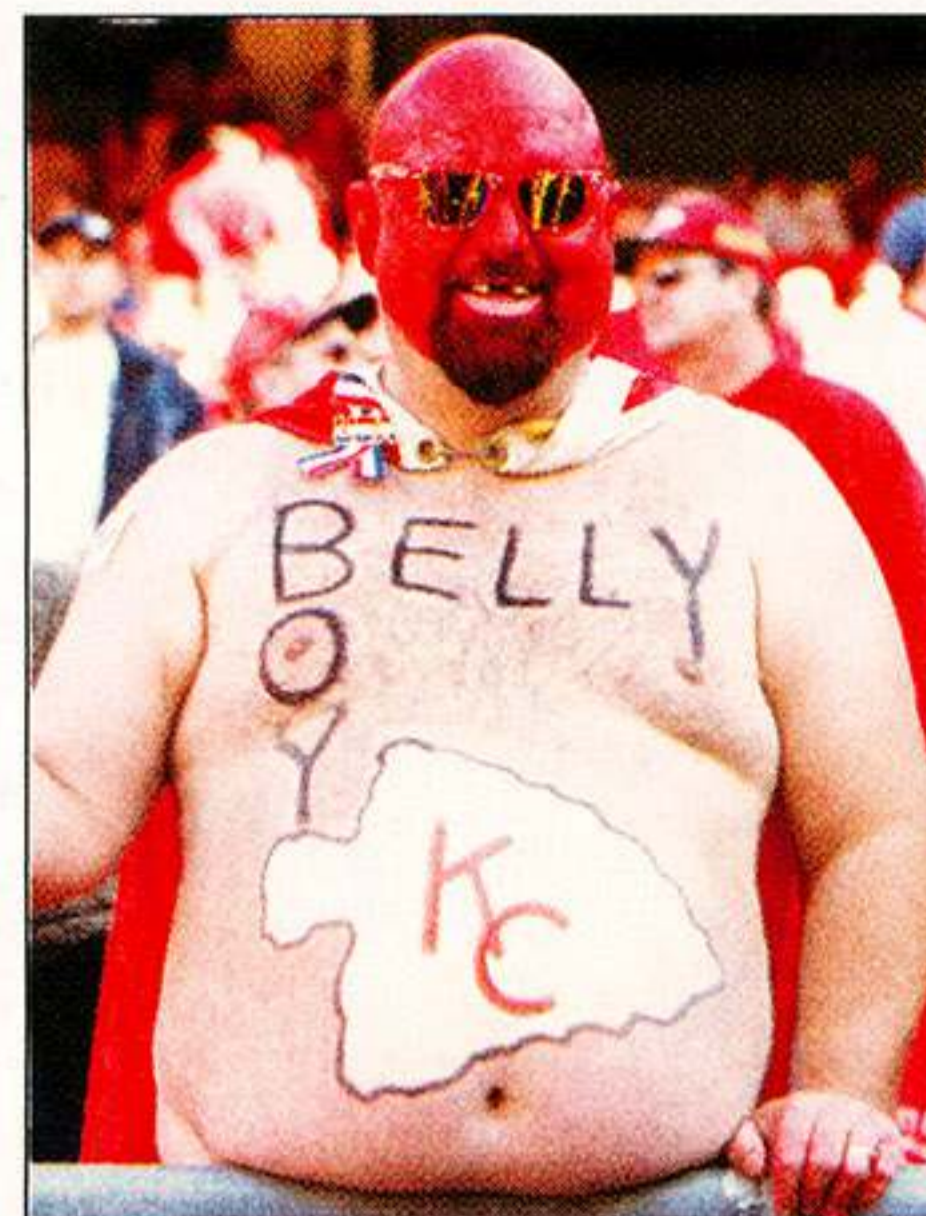
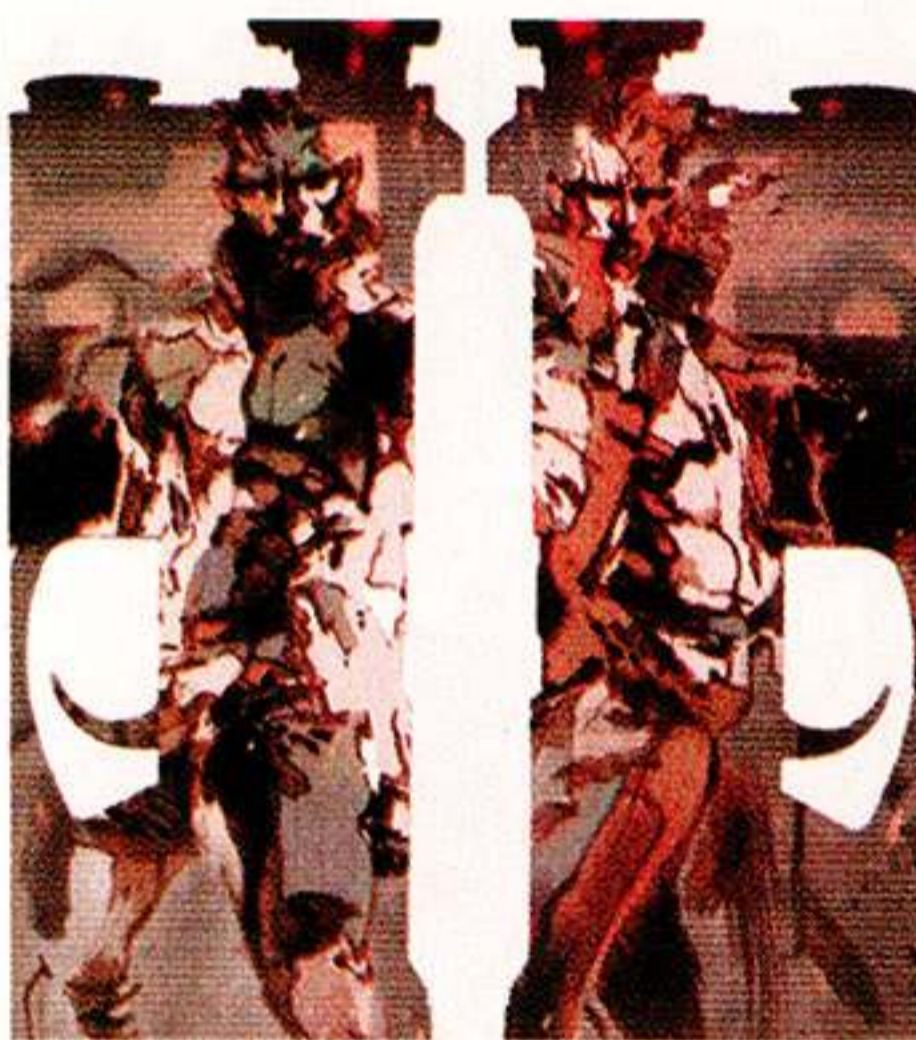
Oh, we feel for you all right, Andrew, but we suspect your memory's a bit hazy. Can you name every fuzzy mascot character from the early '90s? Us neither.

Naked gun

Peep the well-placed "triggers" in the *Metal Gear Solid: The Twin Snakes* ad in *EGM* #176. Solid Snake, indeed.

—Steve Zeigler

Other headlines for this letter: Happy Trigger, Hard Target, Half Cocked....



OOPS!

Kansas City Chiefs supporter James "Belly Boy" Tolson hopes to join the NFL Visa Hall of Fame. Our changing his trademark war paint to a space invader and red head to green probably didn't help (*EGM* #174).

Also, in a major mascot mix-up, we accidentally mislabeled robo-bud Clank of *Ratchet & Clank* fame, calling him Ratchet in our Game of the Year Awards article (*EGM* #176).

Finally, we would like to issue a formal apology to Getty Images for our unauthorized alteration of a licensed photograph in our February 2004 issue. It is Getty Images' policy that under no circumstances may an image be altered in any way without express written permission. We unintentionally violated that policy without their knowledge or consent, and we regret doing so.

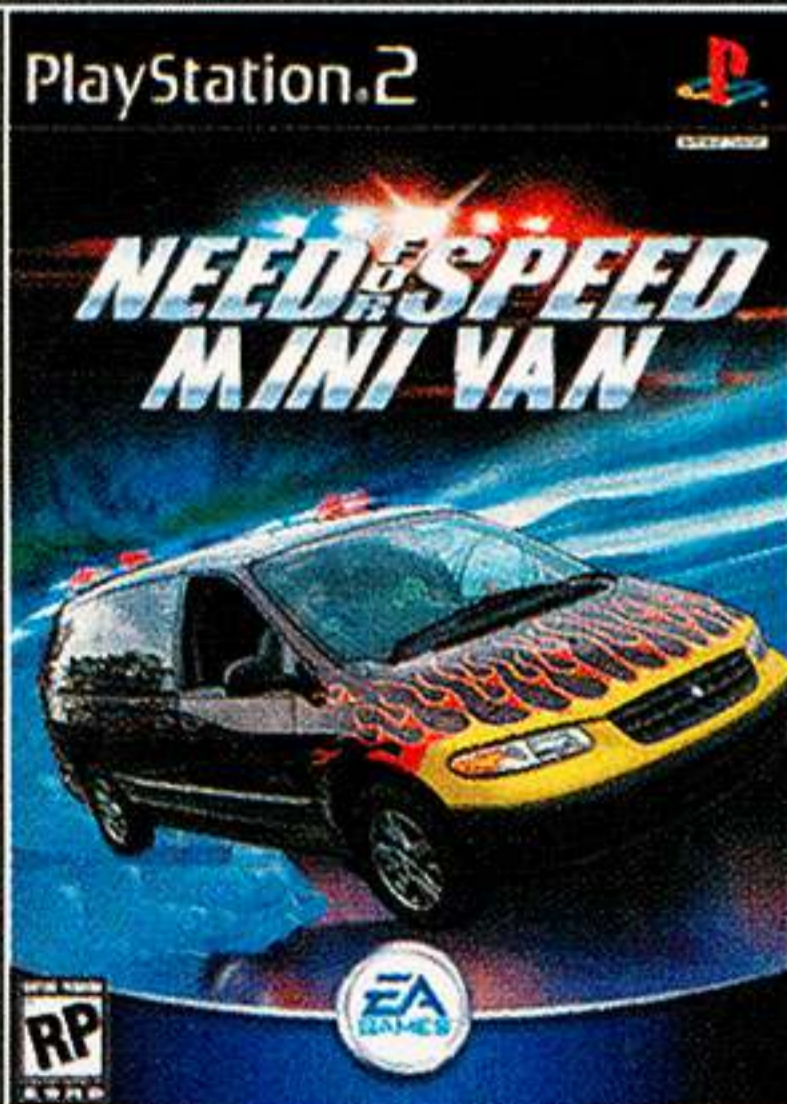
GAME DESIGN-O-RAMA

Sick of the status quo? Scheme up the game of your dreams and send it (with art) to EGM@ziffdavis.com, subject: design-o-rama

NEED FOR SPEED: MINI VAN

EA Games enters the seedy underworld of the soccer-mom mini-van racing circuit with *Need for Speed: Mini Van*. Select from a variety of domestic and import six-seaters and race to build cash and cred. Events include Pottery Barn Dash, Pick-Up-the-Kids Drift Relay, and Off-to-School Drag Race. Customize your van with authentic aftermarket parts, including child seats and DARE bumper stickers, while rocking to Celine Dion, Michael Bolton, Linkin Park (that's right), John Tesh, and 50 Cent.

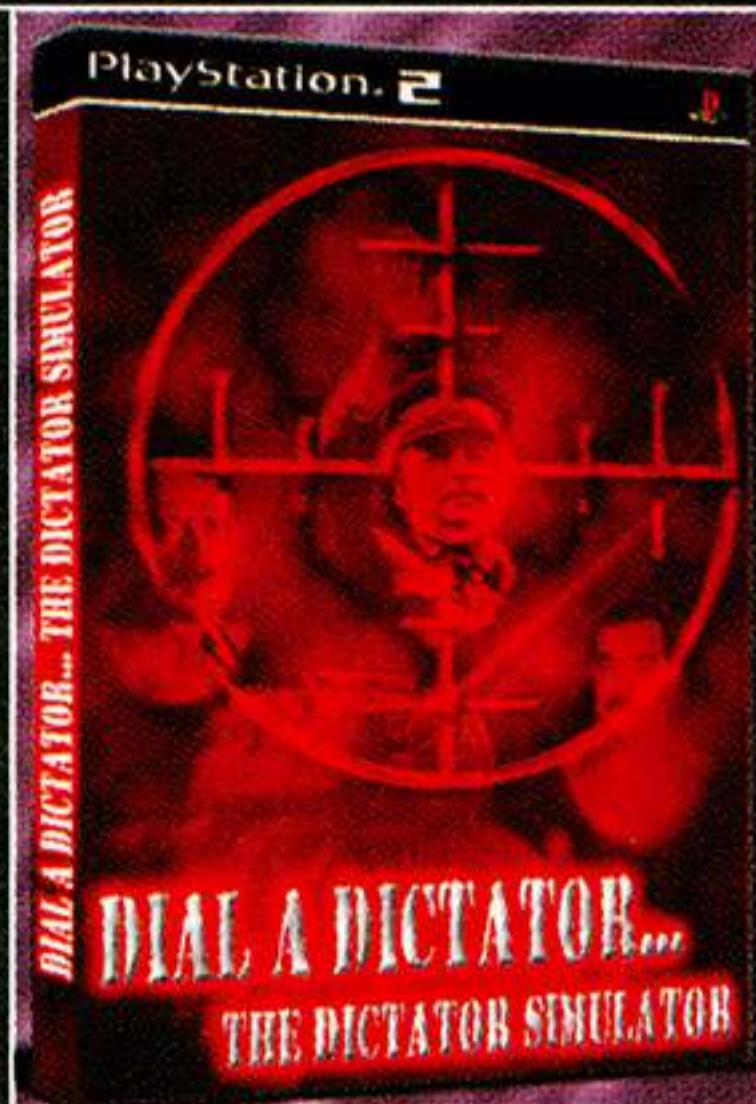
—Lowell Umaya



DIAL A DICTATOR: THE DICTATOR SIMULATOR

Start a war with neighboring states; starve, torture, and execute citizens; or simply milk your country's economy dry by building weapons of mass destruction and a new palace or two. Sure, you'll have to survive assassination attempts and the occasional revolution, but it's nothing a few tanks and attack choppers can't fix. *Dial a Dictator: The Dictator Simulator* lets you live the dream of being a paranoid psychopath. Get your enemies—real or imagined—before they get you!

—Mark Slusser



SUPER CONSOLE RACING

Finally, the perfect way to settle your childish fanboy arguments without having to get a life! It's *Super Console Racing*! Take your favorite console to the track and roll it to victory. Will you choose GameCube, the smallest and fastest of the group? The stronger but slower Xbox? Or PlayStation 2, which fires back with a secret disc-read-error weapon? Gentleman, start your processors.

—Pat McGuire



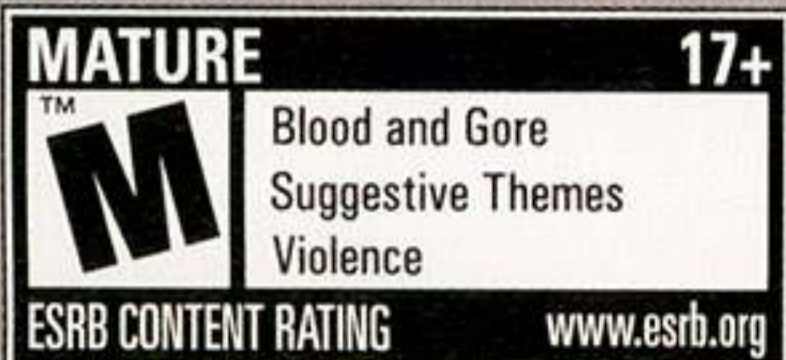
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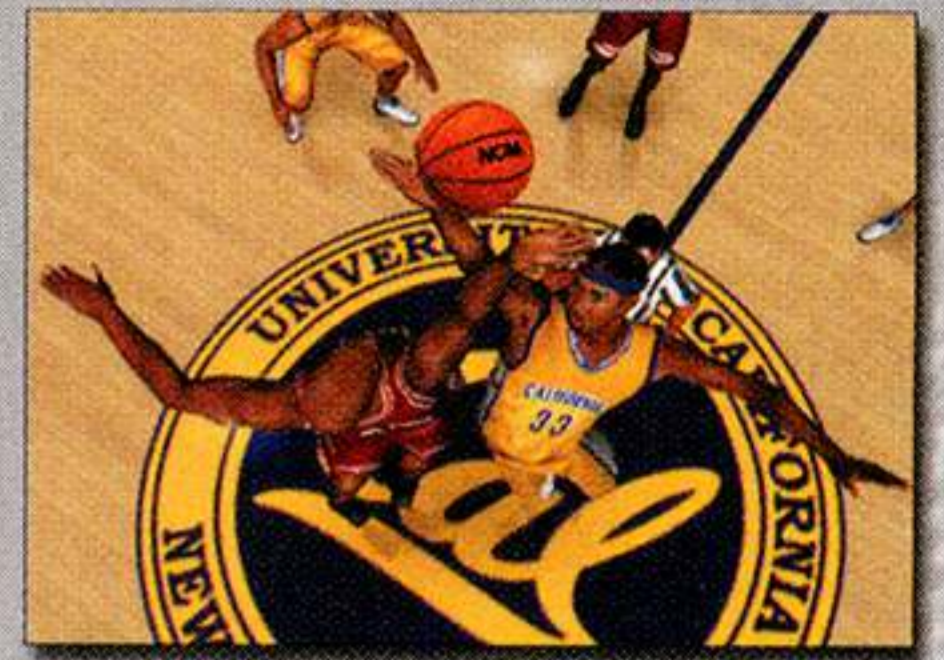
The stairway to Heaven is only ten feet high.



PlayStation 2



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TWO FOR THE ROAD

Nintendo leaks the first few details about its upcoming dual-screen portable, the **Nintendo DS**

Even with Nintendo dropping hints the last few months about new hardware under development, its announcement of a new portable system, the Nintendo DS, due out worldwide later this year, came as quite a shock.

The surprise had nothing to do with what games the DS would play, its price, or the system's design. In fact, Nintendo had virtually nothing to say on any of those points—details will be revealed at the E3 trade show in May. No, the surprise was over the announcement of the system's single most unusual—and puzzling—feature: The Nintendo DS will include not one, but two screens.

It's still unclear exactly how the dual screens, arranged one on top of the other, will be put to use in games. Nintendo gave only one example—a soccer game could use one display for a wide-angle shot and the other for a close-up view of the action—but reps have stated that this is only a single, obvious use of the technology. Different methods are promised to be revealed later.

The DS will be powered by two processors—one found in the current Game Boy Advance and another more powerful chip that drives Tapwave's new Zodiac PDA/handheld game system. That doesn't necessarily mean Nintendo's portable will perform like either of those systems, though. How fast the DS' versions of these processors will be is still unknown. And all that's known about the system's controls is that "you will not have to look down at your hands to use [it]."

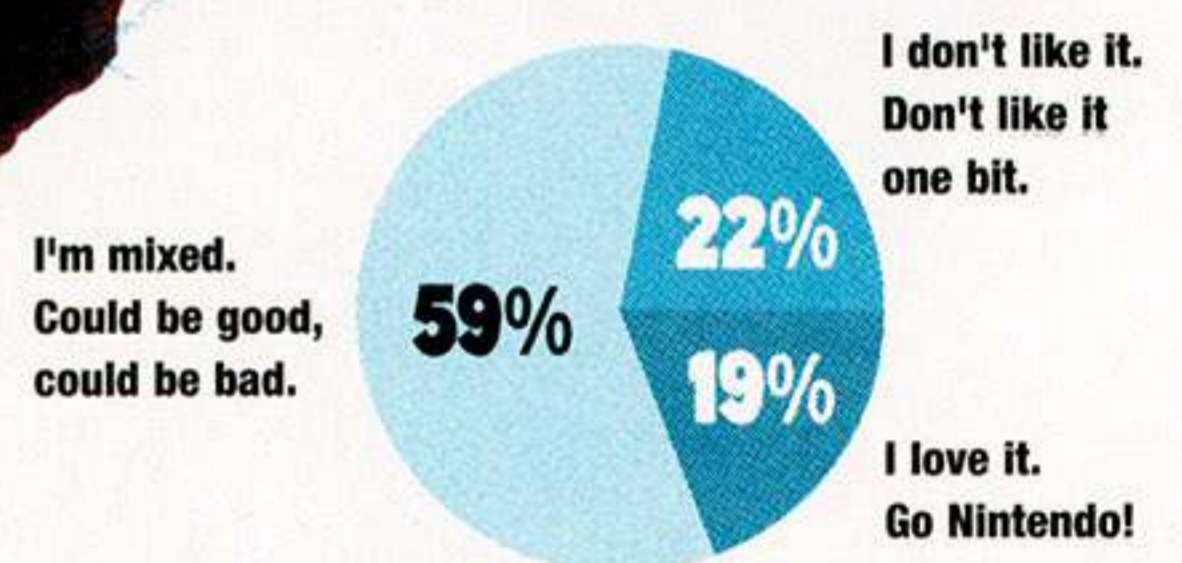
Nintendo is stressing that this new portable will not compete with its own GBA handheld, stating that work continues on

developing the next true Game Boy. But the company also would not confirm or deny that the DS would be able to play existing GBA and other older Game Boy carts. It's worth noting that the late 2004 release date would pit Nintendo's new system up against Sony's PlayStation Portable (PSP), also due out worldwide this fall.

No DS games have been announced, but big Japanese publishers like Namco, Sega, and Konami (*Castlevania*, anyone?) have pledged to develop titles. Other developers, including sports game juggernaut Electronic Arts, say they are currently evaluating the system and will decide whether or not to support it soon. —Mark MacDonald



WHAT DO YOU THINK OF NINTENDO DS?



Source: 1up.com poll, 1/29/04

ARTIST'S CONCEPT

Nintendo hasn't given many details about its new DS system yet, but we went ahead and had an artist whip up this GC/GBA SP love child based on the few things we know for sure.

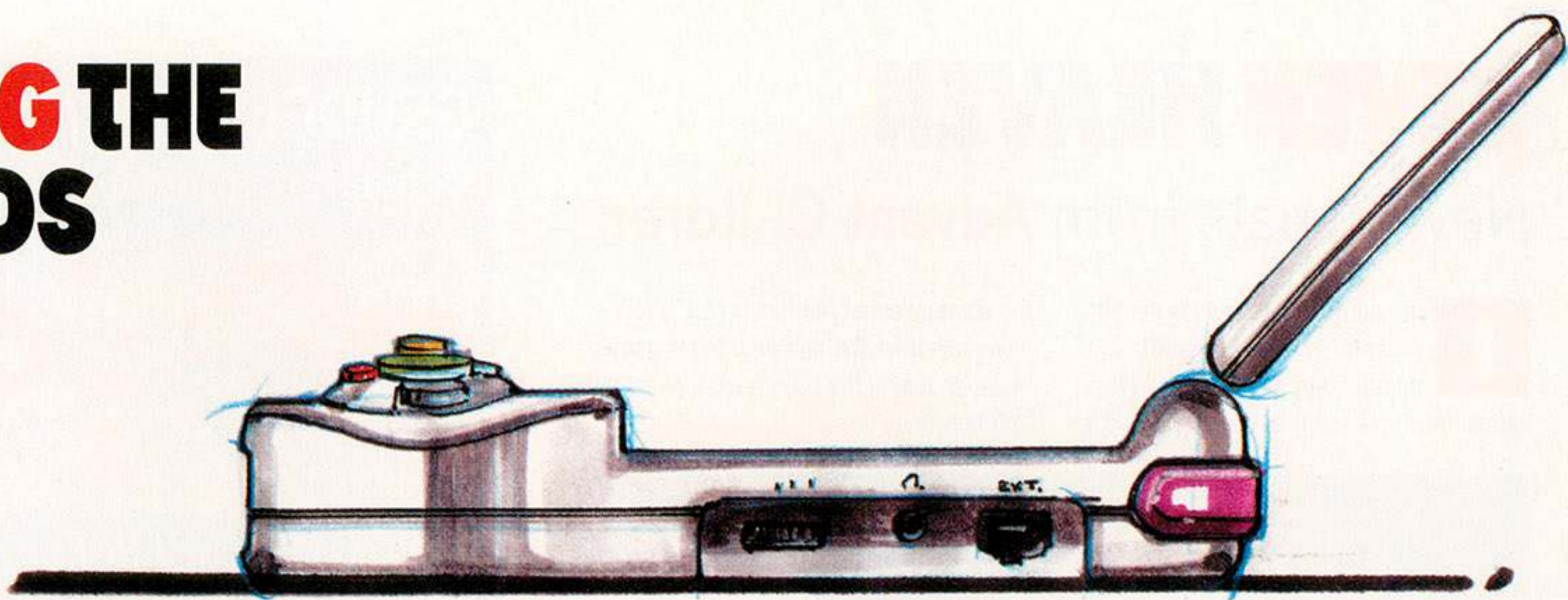
■ Nintendo has stated that both of the two screens (which will each be three inches big, measured diagonally) will be backlit for playing in the dark. We thank you and our optometrist thanks you.

■ Will link cables be a thing of the past? Rumors abound that DS systems will be able to link up wirelessly, and maybe even double as wireless controllers for the GameCube or Nintendo's next home console.

■ We're going to assume that, unlike the GBA SP, the DS will include a standard headphone jack. You hear that, Nintendo? Standard. Headphone. Jack.

Illustrations by Freddy Anzures

DISCUSSING THE NINTENDO DS



What'll it cost? What games will it launch with? Nintendo's DS announcement raised more questions than it answered. The company isn't talking specifics until May, but we asked Nintendo Vice President of Corporate Affairs Perrin Kaplan to clarify a few other points:

EGM: Can you give us a few more specific examples, besides the soccer game mentioned in the press release (one screen used for a wide angle view

EGM: What would you say to those who dismiss the DS's dual-screen setup as a gimmick?

PK: When everybody sees it and they get a

But seeing how they are both portable game systems, how is that possible?

PK: The other features that will be announced, you'll see that [the DS] is a very

PK: The minute we finished the GBA SP, we started working on the next Game Boy. This is a different product.

EGM: Will the DS delay the release of the next Game Boy?

PK: I wouldn't say that, no.

EGM: Will DS games come on Game Boy-style cartridges?

PK: They are finalizing that now—that's a possibility.

“There will be other features and other ways to play [the Nintendo DS] that we haven't ever seen before....”

—Perrin Kaplan, Nintendo Vice President of Corporate Affairs

and the other for a close-up), on how the dual-screen setup will be used?

Perrin Kaplan: I can't go into a lot of detail because a lot of that will be saved for [the announcement in May]...but the soccer example is a very basic one. There will be other features and other ways to play that we haven't ever seen before.

chance to feel it, touch it, hold it, play with it, we're hoping that they'll change their minds. I think it'd be wise for everyone just to wait until they get a chance to play with it [before judging it].

EGM: The press release states that this system will not compete with the GBA.

different product. The price point, the kind of games, the way we market it, the fact that it's got two screens—those are all features that will make it different.

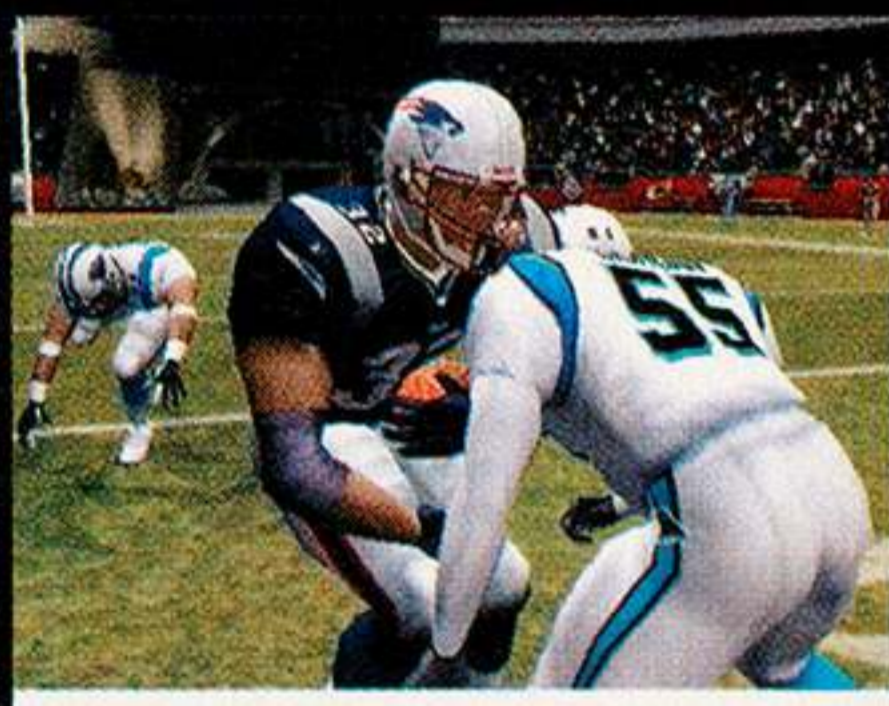
EGM: So Nintendo is still working on the follow-up system to the Game Boy Advance?

EGM: We know you can't talk specific titles, but are developers already working on DS games?

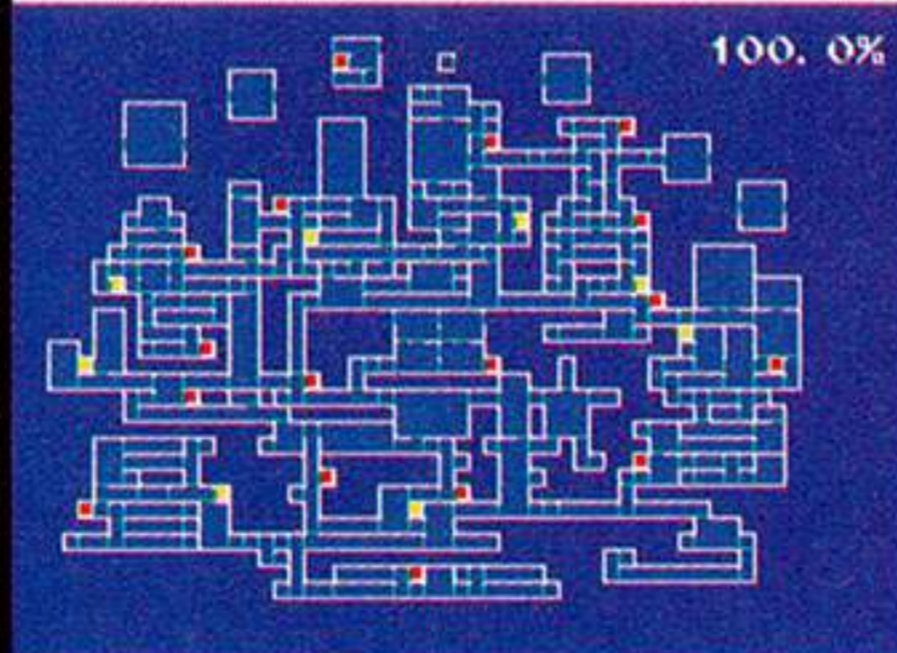
PK: Several developers had already been briefed [about the system]...and we're going on the road to meet with developers now. We're in the midst of working with a lot of licensees to get them development kits.

DOUBLE VISION: FOUR WAYS TO USE TWO SCREENS

Nintendo hasn't shown or even announced any titles for the DS yet, so we put together a few screenshots of existing games to illustrate different uses we imagine for the system's two screens. Got your own ideas for how the DS might work? Email us at EGM@ziffdavis.com with the subject "Nintendo DS idea." It feels good to get it out.



Multi-angle: This is the only solid example Nintendo offered about how the dual setup might work: One screen shows the usual wide-angle shot while the other is zoomed in for a close-up look at the action. A neat trick, but not exactly crucial for gameplay.



Status report: The second screen could function as a submenu of sorts, showing inventory, stats, a map of the area, or other info. OK, it's not very original or exciting, but we bet plenty of games will use the second screen this way nonetheless.



Combination: Nintendo mentioned that both screens could be used as one larger display if the game called for it. Except for vertical shoot-em-ups and pinball games, we can't think of many titles that would benefit much from this use of the DS.



Multitasking: DS games could use the two screens separately, with players either alternating between two characters (à la GBA RPG *Mario & Luigi*), or with the ability to control both at once (like the PS2 action/puzzler *The Adventures of Cookie & Cream*).

SEVEN HEAVEN

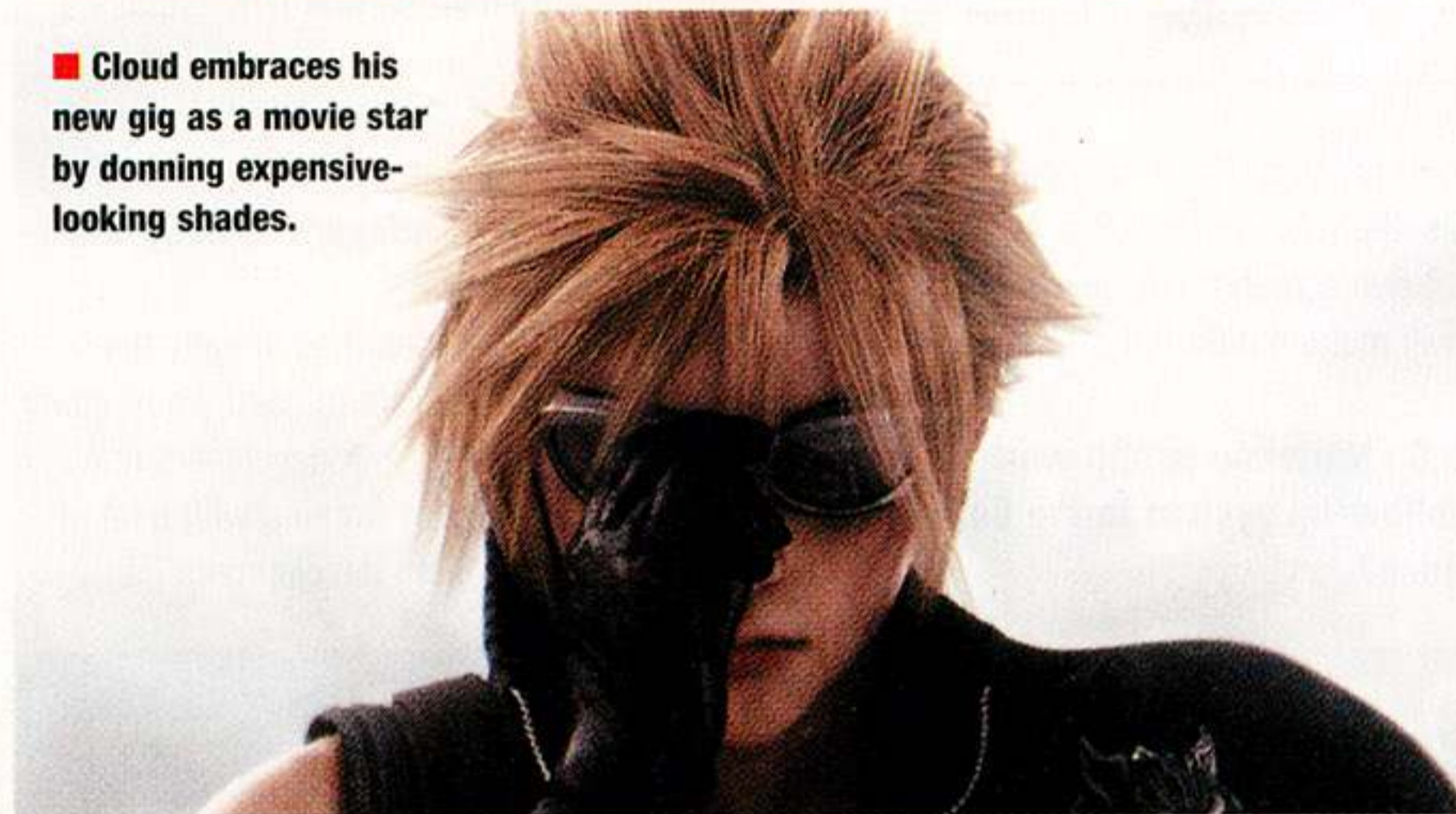
New visuals from **Advent Children**

Info on *Final Fantasy VII: Advent Children*, Square Enix's 80-minute-long *Final Fantasy VII* sequel movie, is scant at best. But despite

the secrecy about the flick's plot, a few new stills from the film (due this summer in Japan, fall in the U.S.) have trickled out. And here they are:



■ This is the first still of loud-mouthed Avalanche leader Barret in *Advent*.



■ Cloud embraces his new gig as a movie star by donning expensive-looking shades.



■ These three mysterious silver-haired foes square off against Cloud both together and separately in the first clips released from the film.

GRUDGE MATCH

Counterprogramming face-off



POKÉMON CHANNEL

PLAYBOY CHANNEL

Pitting boob tube against harmless little Pokémon may seem unfair, but Pikachu has it coming this time. Can this Poké-mockery of a game perform under pressure? Time to find out—let's whip out the Pocket Monsters and get it on!

PROGRAMMING



Shop'n Squirtle

411 Sexposé: Squirters (no lie!)
Advantage: Playboy Channel



CAST FEATURES



Monsters in balls

No balls allowed
Advantage: Playboy Channel



DRAWBACKS

Has been known to cause seizures in children under 8

Has been known to promote heart failure in men over 70
Advantage: Ah, what the heck—Playboy Channel

TRADING PLACES



Inappropriate Smoochum touching

Poke a Playmate
Advantage: Playboy Channel



MESSAGE TO VIEWERS



Buy more Pokémon stuff
Advantage: Draw

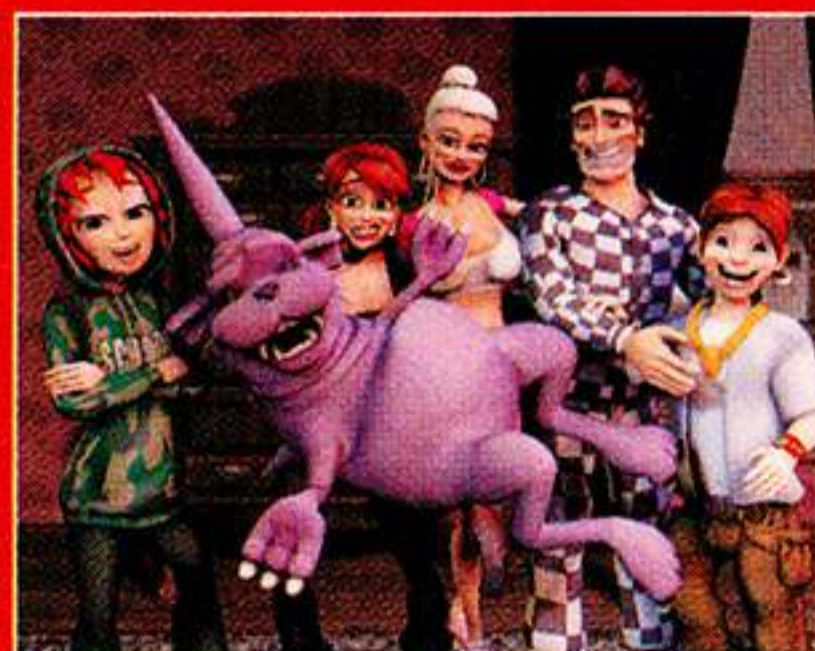
Your chances with these women are inversely proportional to your pants size
Advantage: Draw



WINNER: THE PLAYBOY CHANNEL

Foolish franchises! Do you not know that if you were to put aside your petty differences and band together you could manipulate every male mind (ages 3 and up) on the planet? Too late now.

TIDBITS THAT WILL MAKE SOME PEOPLE LAUGH AND OTHERS CRY

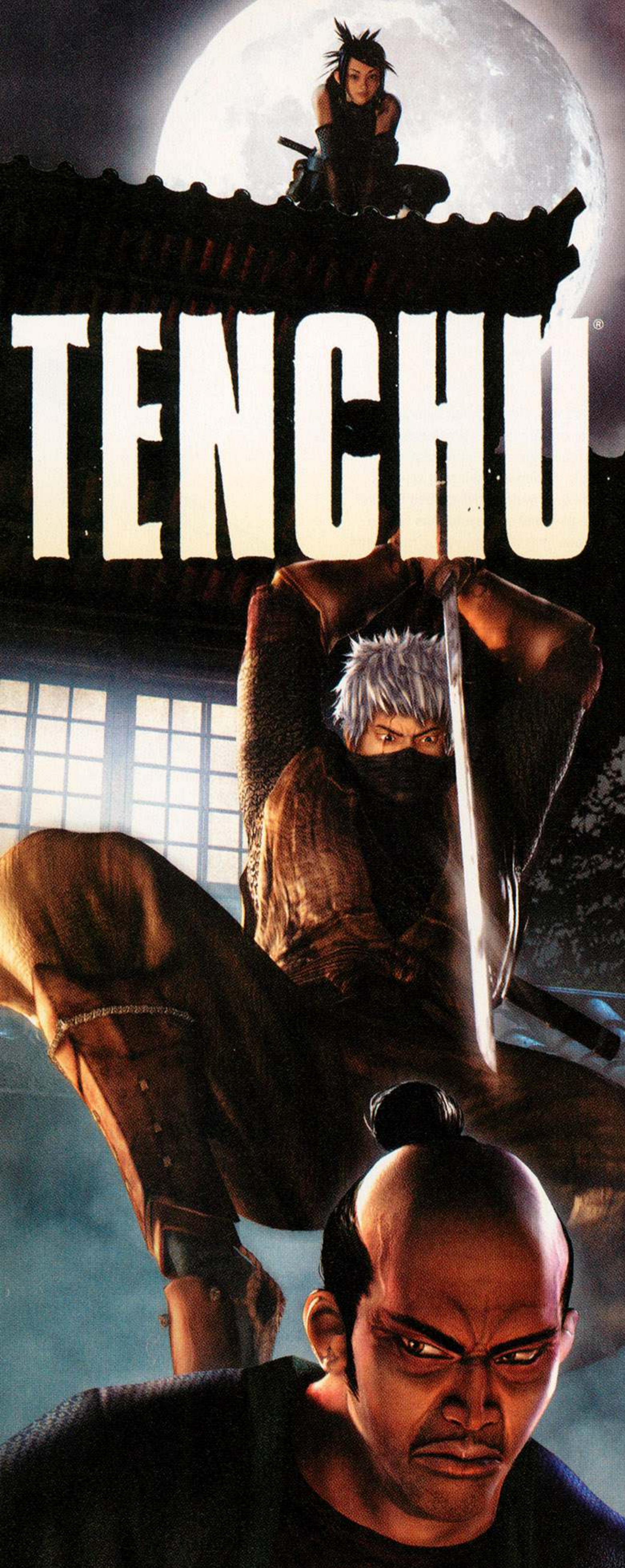


Sure, we poked a li'l fun at the concept behind *Game Over*, a CG-rendered comedy that follows the lives of videogame characters. But now we'll all get to see the finished product when the show makes its debut on UPN March 10 at 8 p.m. EST/PST. Is it just us or does the family dog look a lot like Chet at the end of '80s teen flick *Weird Science*?



■ Carro...Car Rodeo...ah, forget it.

Companies usually register the fake Web addresses featured in their games, but when Ubisoft didn't register one of the URLs on posters in its *Rainbow Six 3* shooter, someone else did...and turned it into a porn site (it's since reverted to a blank page). The URL's owner also made an unsuccessful attempt to auction the domain on eBay.



*When
evil reemerges,
so must those
who silence it.*

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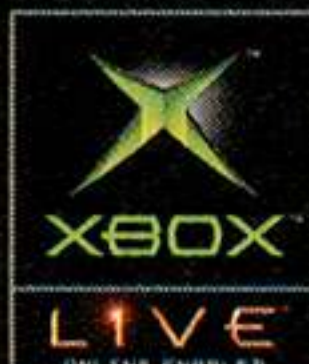
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Intense Violence



有限会社 2

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GRAN TOUR

Your map to the highways, byways, and raceways of **Gran Turismo 4**. Are we there yet?

Oh, cruel marketing department! You have wronged us once again. Japanese gamers have been playing *Gran Turismo 4: Prologue*—a five-track, 62-car glorified *GT4* demo—on their PS2s for months now, but Sony won't release it here for fear of diluting the *Gran Turismo* brand, or similar PowerPoint-speak. Harrumph.

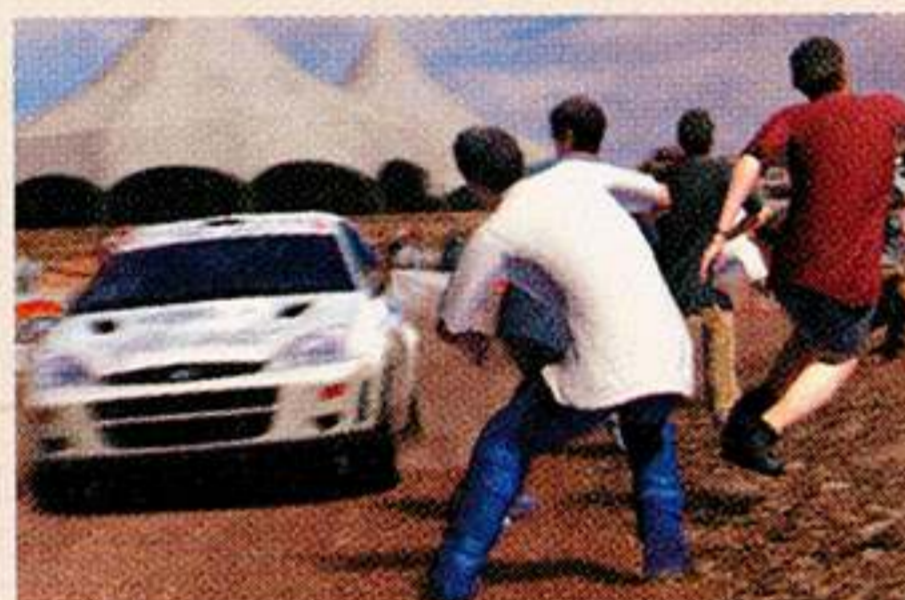
We've been doing our civic duty by playing the import *Prologue* to death,

though, and what with the info we've wrung out of developer Polyphony Digital, the wait until *GT4* arrives later this year just gets more excruciating.

At first, *Prologue* doesn't look or feel very different from *Gran Turismo 3* in terms of graphics and gameplay, but after back-to-back stick time, what seemed like subtle changes become more significant. There's a whole new layer of visual spit and polish, particu-

larly in the highly detailed environments, and the heralded "all-new" handling really does feel more accurate.

Sadly, *Prologue* is missing some of the features we're most excited for, like online play and the mysterious "museum mode" we've heard vague rumblings about. But to tide you (and us) over, here's a whirlwind tour through *GT4*'s hotspots: the Grand Canyon, New York City, and scenic Italy. —Demian Linn



Photogs dive for cover.



Behind the wheel

How much more realistic can the *Turismo* driving experience get? More so than we thought. Braking adequately to set up for turns is even more crucial in *Prologue*, and weight-shifting techniques (braking hard to load up the front wheels while simultaneously turning into the bend) are vital. Punch the gas halfway through a corner and you can induce power oversteer (a rear slide); dip a wheel onto the grass while barreling down a straight and you'll have to fight to stay on the track.



Grand Canyon

Rally racing returns in *Gran Turismo 4*—and in spectacular fashion. If the Grand Canyon track almost looks like a postcard, that's because it almost is: Developer Polyphony Digital's artists used real photographs to make the backdrop.

In another *Turismo* first, this course is not only lined with spectators, but there are actually cameramen on the track. As you speed toward them, they'll scurry to the sidelines. Unfortunately, in *Prologue* they look absolutely terrible—like 2D paper dolls—although U.S. Producer Taku Imasaki claims the human animation greatly improves with each new version of the game. Still, there's a long way to go from here.

And no, you can't drive off the cliff. Damn you, invisible walls!



New York City

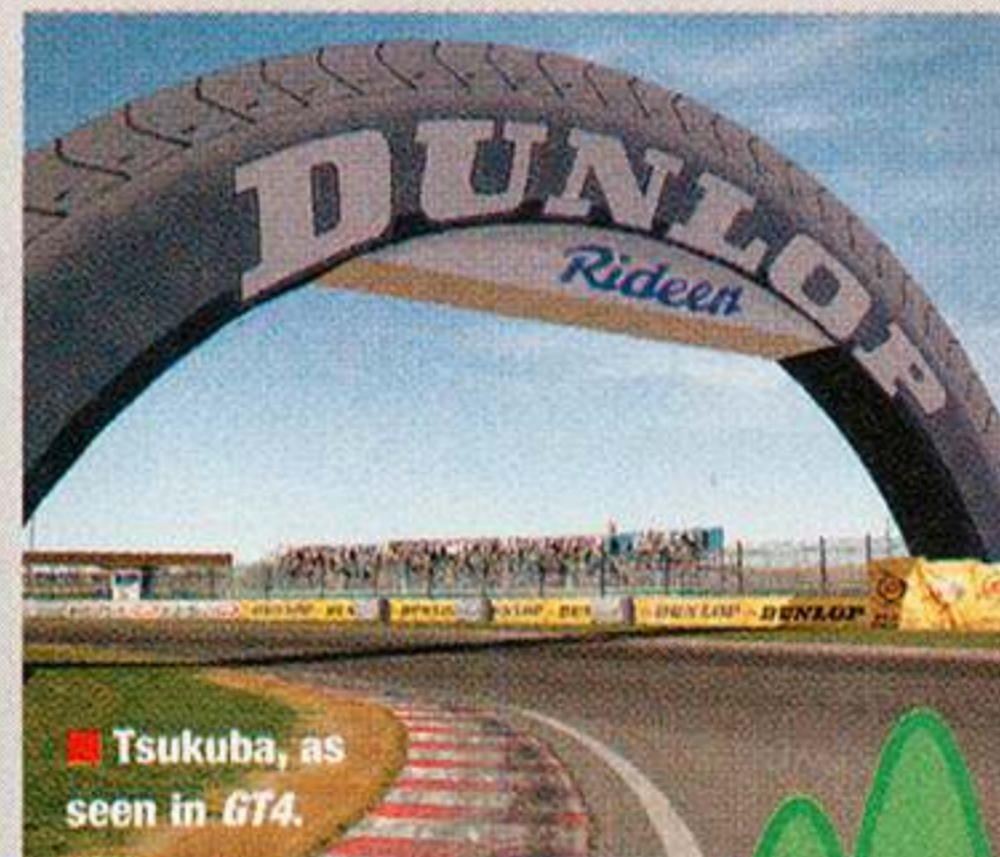
Past *Turismos* had a smattering of city courses, but *GT4* is going all out. *Prologue's* New York track is centered around a detailed re-creation of Times Square, down to individual storefronts and a riot of billboards (featuring Sony competitors Samsung and Panasonic, among others). Unconfirmed but credible rumors suggest that Paris (in both road and rally course forms), Las Vegas, Venice, Hong Kong, and the Akasaka district of Tokyo will also be in the roster, along with a track based on the decidedly unurban Yosemite.

Is it real or is it GT?

Along with the city courses, *Gran Turismo 4* will also be stocked with real-world racetracks—Tsukuba and Fuji Speedway are confirmed, while old favorites Laguna Seca and Midfield are pretty much guaranteed to make the cut, too. The Motegi track and possibly the Nürburgring (or a section thereof—it is 14 grueling miles long, after all) are also likely additions. As you can see, the graphical re-creations are amazingly true to life.



■ Tsukuba, as seen in real life.



■ Tsukuba, as seen in *GT4*.



Citta di Aria

This hilly, fictional Italian village is unlike any course we've ever seen in a *Turismo* game. It's full of blind corners and extremely narrow sections—but don't think you'll be able to rely on good old bumper-car tactics to get around. If you do much more than nudge another vehicle, your max speed will be limited (to 30 mph in *Prologue*) for 10 seconds. Same thing happens if you hit a wall at high speed. "Players should be penalized for rough driving, since in reality, you don't go hitting other cars," says *Turismo* creator Kazunori Yamauchi. "There is a plan for *GT4* right now to display a black flag for rough driving." Not entirely realistic, but effective. 🚗

>> GRAN TURISMO 4 RUMOR MILL IN FULL EFFECT: THE GAME MAY INCLUDE MOTORCYCLES, DRIFT RACING, AND ICE/SNOW RALLY STAGES. CAR DAMAGE IS STILL A NO-GO...>>

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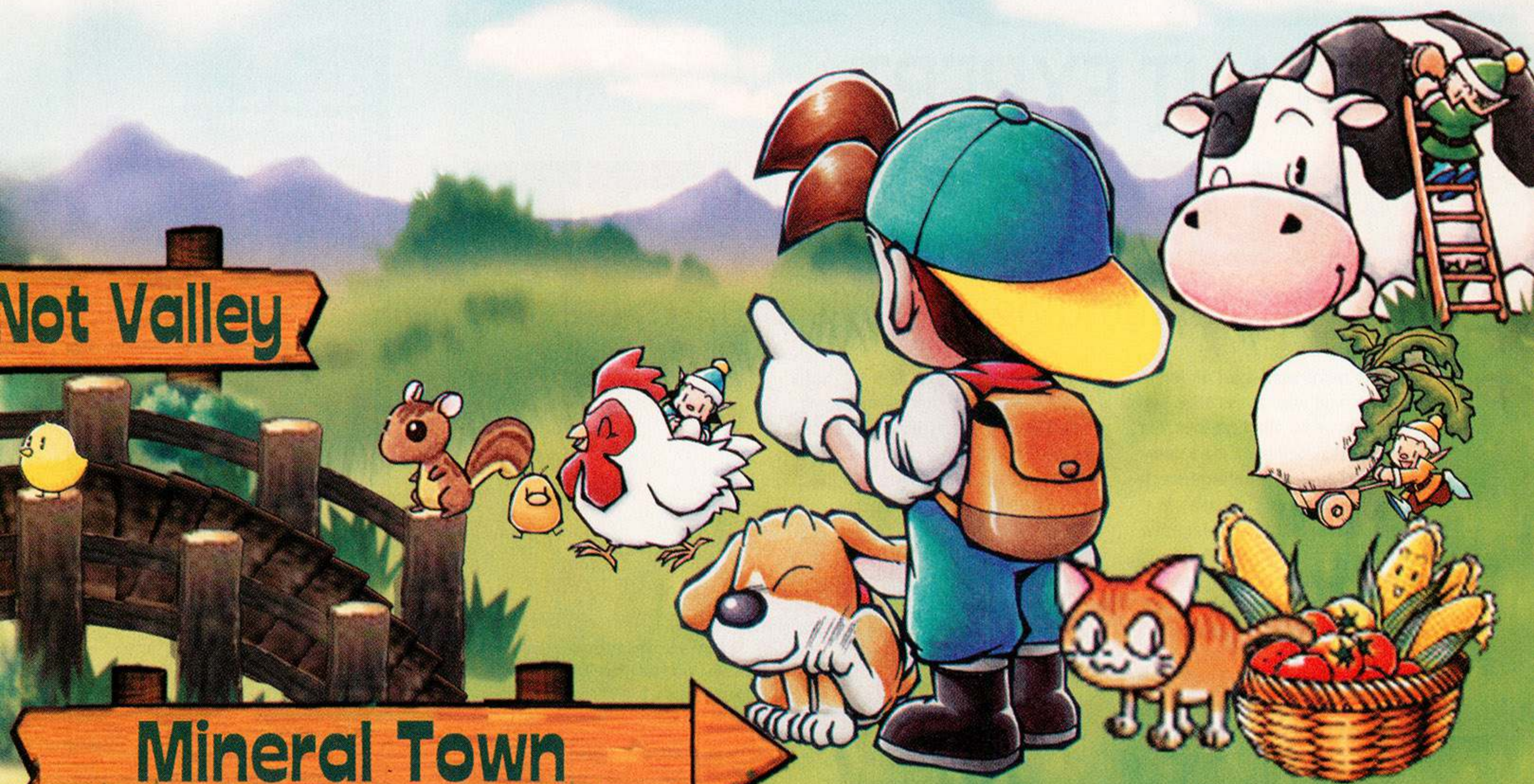
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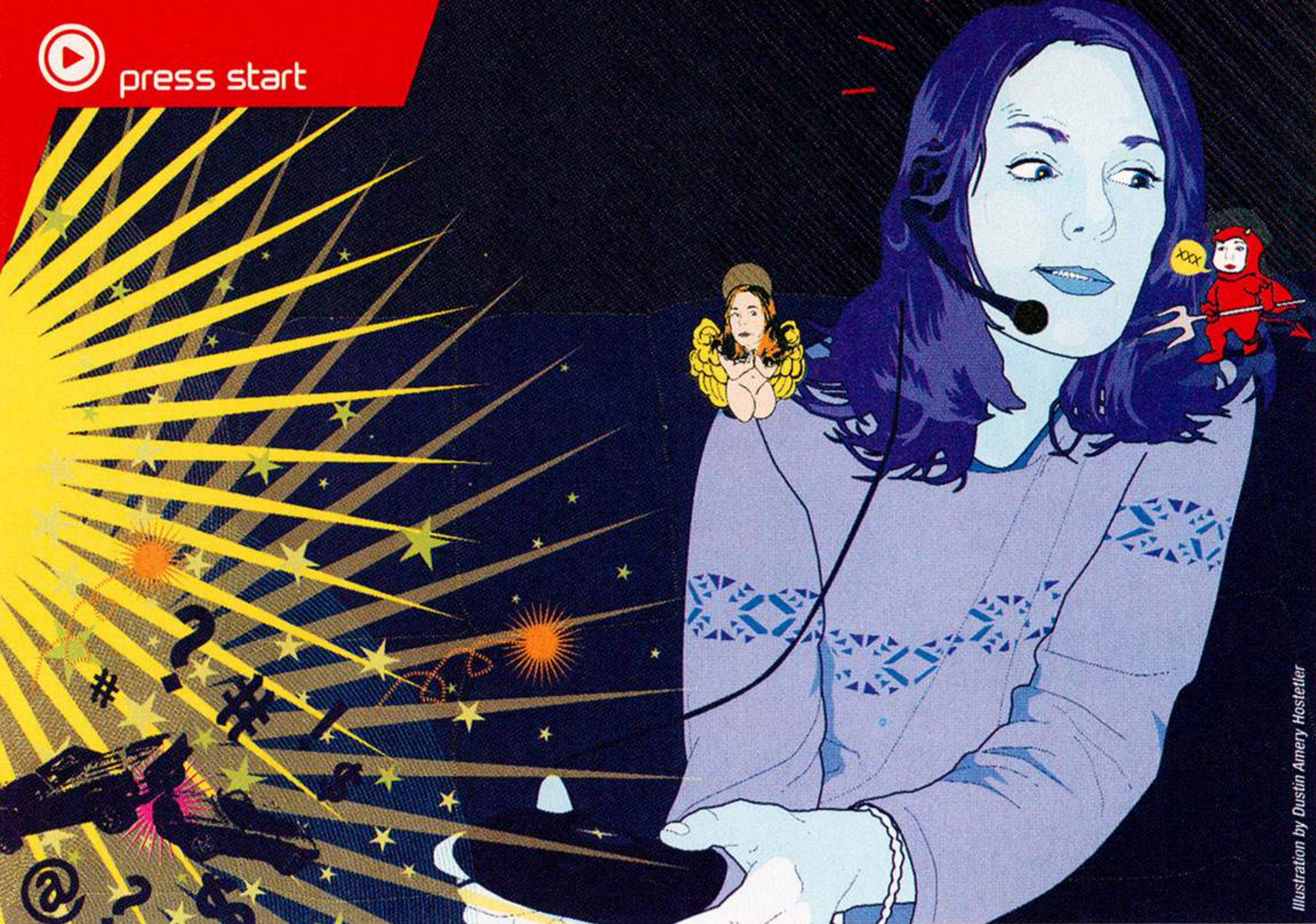


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INSTANT EXPERT: ONLINE ETIQUETTE

The ABC's of minding your P's and Q's online

With more wide-eyed do-gooders and wise asses alike logging on for the first time, it's only natural that online console gaming has devolved into a cultural wasteland of foul-mannered jackasses. We figured we could all stand to improve our interpersonal skills. So sit up straight and pay attention as we tell you how to play nice—or naughty, if you reverse our advice—with others.

Make nice with noobs

Sure, no one crashes a real-life pickup game and asks how to pass a football, but unless you're content playing online with the same old schmoes, you're gonna have

to welcome newcomers. You were once a so-called noob, too, after all, and having built a level 62 dwarf isn't exactly something to brag about. Conversely, newcomers should familiarize themselves with the basics before jumping into the fray.

Baditude

You know that ESRB warning about content changing during online play? Apparently some people think anonymity is a license to act like an idiot. Copping a racist or homophobic 'tude in a game is like crap-ping in your own playpen. Don't do it.

Share and share alike

You might reap immediate benefits by



■ Sure, you could play a closed *SOCOM II* match with your buddies and have everyone conspire to artificially boost their stats—if you're a bunch of total jerks.

grabbing every goodie in sight in games like *Phantasy Star Online*, but no one's gonna share with you when they get the really big bonuses. Try hogging all the glory in *SOCOM* or its sequel, and an opposing team that cooperates to cover pinch points and protect bases will thwart your Rambo tactics every time.

Finish what you start

Nothing's worse than going toe to toe for three quarters in a sports game only to have your opponent suddenly exit the stadium when the point spread explodes. If someone's schooling you fair and square, don't be a spoilsport—let him enjoy his success. You'll beat 'em next time.

good grief!

Griever: (gr13f3r) noun 1. Online slang for one who goes out of his or her way to disrupt an online gaming experience for the fun of it. You might be a griever if...



...you take out *SOCOM* squad-mates with a mine...before squatting over their corpses.



...you switched teams in *NFL 2K1* to call time-outs at your opponent's expense.



...you think the Xbox Communicator is an open mic at the hip-hop Olympics.



...you lure newbie players into a tough *EverQuest* dungeon...then strand 'em.

OLD SCHOOL 10 years ago in EGM

■ On the Cover: Beavis and Butt-head

They mocked lame music videos, they laughed in the face of authority, and back in '94, Beavis and Butt-head starred in their own game on Genesis and Super NES.



Game of the Month:

Tempest 2000 — Arguably the Atari Jaguar's best-loved game, this trippy-cool remake of Atari's coin-op hit walked away with top honors a decade ago, earning a 10, 9, 8, and 7 (quite a range, eh?).



Cartridge Reality

The big news of the month was that Nintendo's 64-bit Project Reality system would use cartridges, not CDs. Of course, gamers still had a long wait ahead: It'd be two and a half years until the system was released as the Nintendo 64.



Dial-a-Game

Games on demand are just as buzzworthy today as they were 10 years ago when Sega debuted its Sega Channel service. For a nominal fee gamers could download and play Genesis games via their cable TV provider, including a few that were never released as separate cartridges Stateside.

THE SUFFERING™

PRISON IS HELL



"...a gore-drenched excursion into hair-raising territory"

— GamePro

"Midway's action/horror title could be the most gruesome videogame ever"

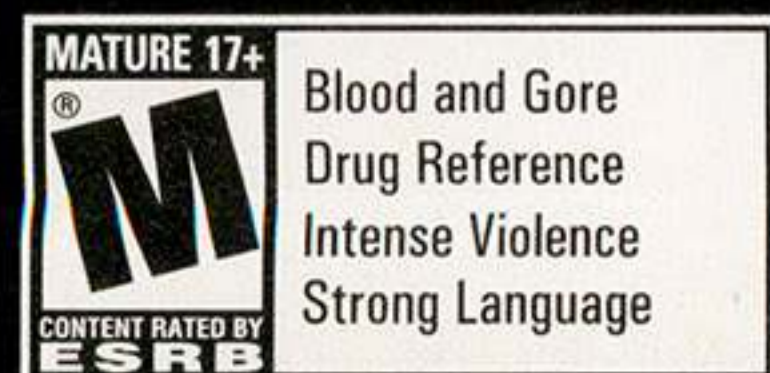
— IGN.COM



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PlayStation 2





AMERICA'S SEXIEST GAMER

All you other muthas, stop frontin'

Sexy gamer wannabes, you best cancel that plastic surgery appointment, because Gamer.tv (www.gamer.tv) has already named America's Ms. Sexiest Gamer—and she is 21-year-old Ashley Jenkins of Ogden, Utah.

Jenkins bested candidates from around the country who submitted their sexiest sexy photos to Gamer.tv's Search for the Sexiest Gamer (at sexiestgamer.com). The top five sexiest as chosen by the site's visitors (of which Jenkins was one) were flown to Hollywood last December for a final competition of gaming skills, trivia, and an all-important sexy strut-off. We sat down with Jenkins to find out just what life is like after being crowned sexiest of the sexy gamers....

EGM: So how badly did you humiliate the other contestants?

Ashley Jenkins: They [didn't tell] us our scores between the rounds. I doubt that I had the sexiest strut because I kind of vogueed and did some circles and stuff like that. I did manage to get all three of my trivia questions right, which no one else did. So I was pretty proud about that one.

EGM: What game did you have to play?

AJ: *Soul Calibur II*. It was really awkward 'cuz we had to play on the Xbox with the old controllers, so they were so big, and I'd never played on them before!

EGM: So what videogames are you playing now?

AJ: Right now I'm trying to finish up *Homeworld 2* (PC). I'm playing *FFX-2* and *Mario & Luigi*...I probably have a couple other ones that I still have to finish, but those are the main ones.

EGM: How has your life changed now that you're Ms. Sexiest Gamer?

AJ: It actually hasn't changed very much. I still have a day job. There's no wine pouring from the heavens like I expected. It's really kind of a shame.

EGM: Let's face it: Gamers aren't usually known for their attractiveness. Isn't being called "Sexiest Gamer" kind of like being called "Smartest Sports Commentator"?

AJ: [Laughs] I think gamers get a worse rap than they really deserve. I don't know any gamers who I think of as ugly. You know, they're just like everyone else.

EGM: Really?

AJ: Yeah. Granted, [annual industry trade show] E3 had a bit of a smell, but the gamers I deal with and have talked to are just like everybody else. They tend to dress a little bit better, though.

EGM: What's the best game to use as foreplay?

AJ: *Mario Kart: Double Dash!!* has some serious potential as far as foreplay goes, what with the whole switching positions thing on the kart.... [Laughs] That's horrible.

EGM: What's your favorite position...to play games in?

AJ: I usually play curled up in an armchair with my knees bent up in a corner and the controller sort of in my lap.

EGM: Are vibrating controllers sexy?

AJ: I've never really paid attention to them. I mean, I've heard about some deliberately sexy vibrating controller things but I don't think I use them for that.


EGM: Are you single?

AJ: [Laughs] No, I'm not.

EGM: A few thousand hearts just simultaneously snapped in two. So what does your boyfriend think of the title?

AJ: He thinks it's cool. He's the one who actually took the [original] picture, so...he takes the credit. [Laughs]

EGM: Twenty years from now, do you still think you'll be playing games?

AJ: Yeah, I can't see myself ever not playing games. It's one of my major priorities in life. 

—Chris Johnston



Mr. Sexiest

Oh yeah, lest we forget to mention it, Gamer.tv crowned a Mr. Sexiest Gamer, too. He's 20-year-old Colin McGannon of Royal Palm Beach, Florida. And whaddaya know, we're outta space.

Photograph by Michael Sexton. Photo taken at Orbit Cafe, Salt Lake City, Utah

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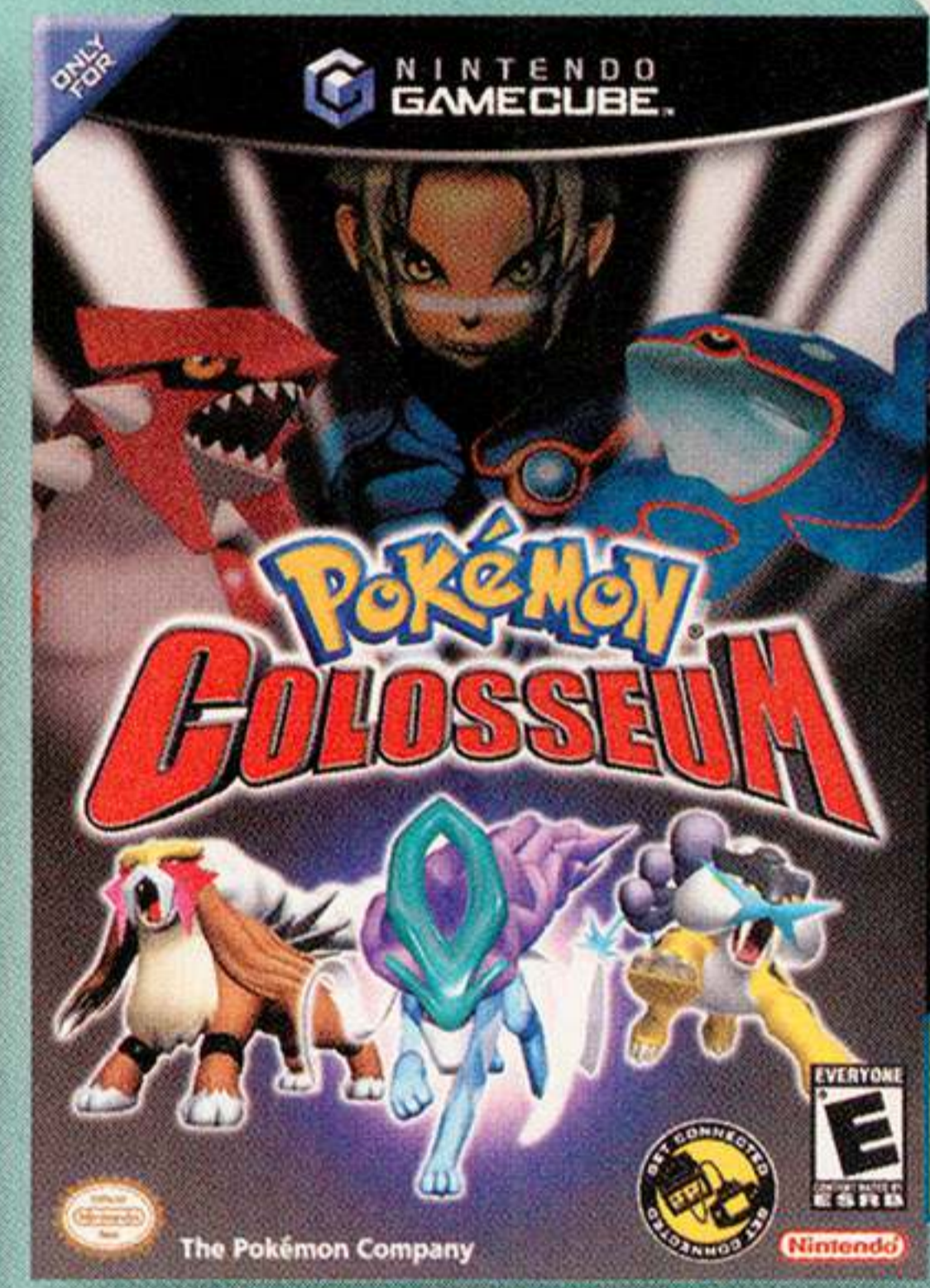
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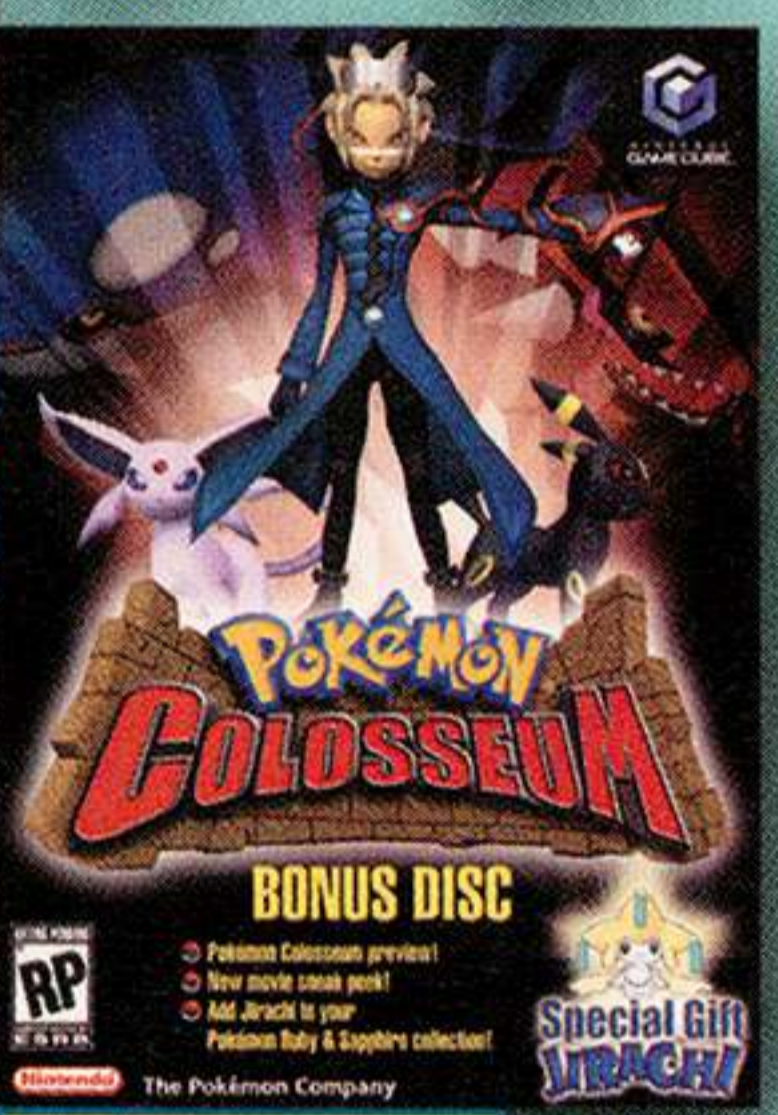
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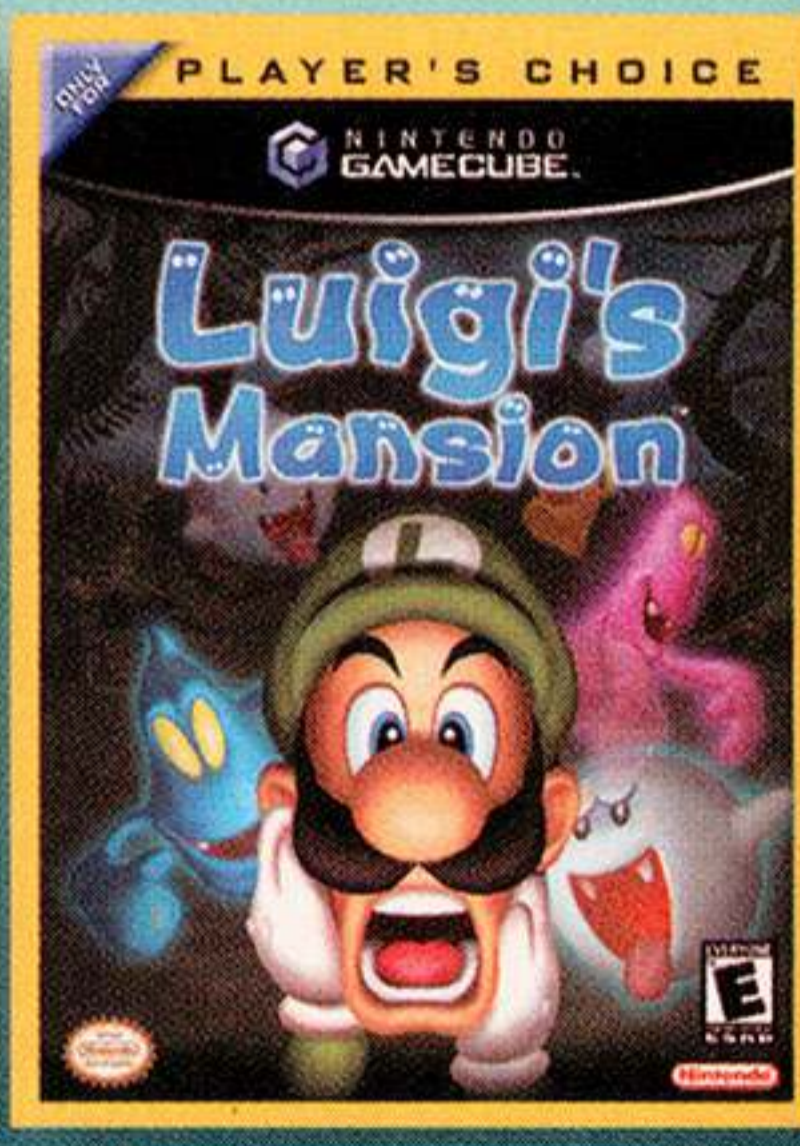
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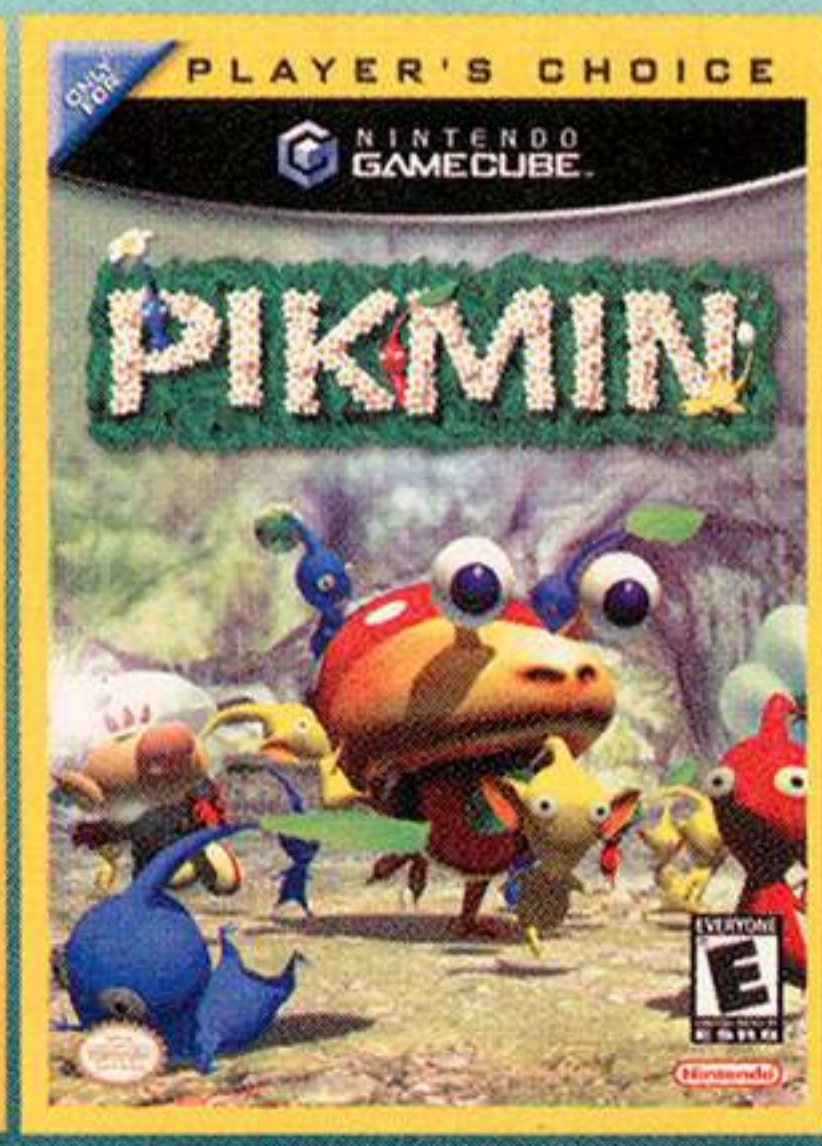
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AND I RAN, I RAN SO FAR AWAY

Is any sport too dull for gaming? **Let's Run a Marathon!** says no

Don't recognize Naoko Takahashi (left)? Not too surprising—she's a pro marathon runner who held the women's world record for a short time in 2001 (and whose face has the power to fell an elephant). Nevertheless, Takahashi's gaunt demeanor graces the cover of Japan's *Let's Run a Marathon!* (PS2), which fortunately isn't as grueling as the real thing. Your job here isn't to run—it's to manage a team of runners, tracking down sponsors and setting up training schedules for your group of prospects. There's even a *Dead or Alive: Xtreme Beach Volleyball*-style bit where you must converse with your athletes to keep them from jumping ship to another team. (They're all female, of course. Where's the fun in raising *male* marathon runners?)



SIM BECKHAM

Achieve all your goals in the PS2 import **Soccer Life!**

Time was that boys in Japan dreamed of being baseball players or robot-fighter pilots. Not anymore. Now, like the hero of Japanese PS2 release *Soccer Life!*, they all want to be big European footy stars. Think of *Life!* as a tactical version of the Franchise mode seen in most sports games—instead of leading a team to victory, you guide the career of a single player, raising his stats and choosing the right position for him. You'll also need to make friends, learn the local language, and find a wife...yes, a wife. What's more, if your wife gives birth to a boy, the kid will inherit your stats, and you can raise *him* to be a soccer player, too. Too bad nobody's tried this in a U.S. sports game, eh?

OVERHEARD



"I'd love to do a **realistic, mature take on *Zelda***. Ah, I shouldn't talk about this."

—Silicon Knights President Denis Dyack, fresh from revamping *Metal Gear Solid* for the GameCube, on what other "dream remakes" he'd like to work on

"Now this team of well-honed killing machines must use all of their specialized skills to survive, in a **desperate struggle against the web of betrayals** closing in on them...."

—From the cliché-ridden back cover of the Brute Force novel (you read that correctly) *Betrayals*, based on the Xbox squad shooter



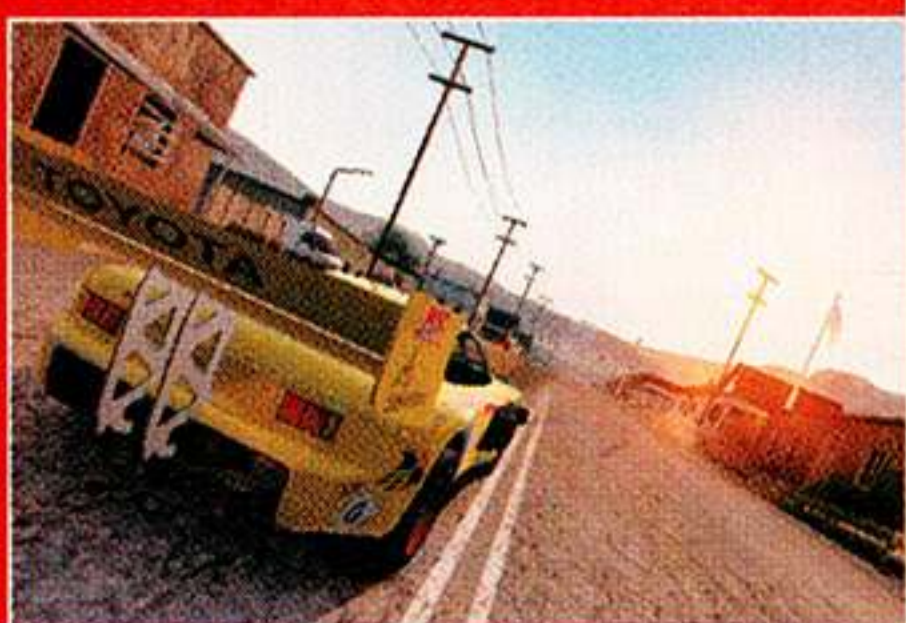
"I like **Heavy Metal Gear Solid**. It's off the hook."

—Actress Michelle Rodriguez (*S.W.A.T.*, *Resident Evil*) almost gets her favorite game name right

LI'L PREVIEWS: MASHIN' ON THE ONLINE MOTORWAY

RALLISPORT CHALLENGE 2

XB • Microsoft • May 2004 — Racing on race tracks? Pfft. The greatest automotive challenge lies far from the beaten path, and *RC2* promises to offer all the thrills of rally racing. Expect a bevy of beautiful locales, over 40 cars, and full Xbox Live support (with league play).



MTX: MOTOTRAX

PS2/XB • Activision • Spring 2004 — If you're having trouble telling the difference between games starting with *MTX*, *MX*, and *SX*, you're not alone. Activision's latest offering hopes to differentiate itself with a greater focus on racing (it still boasts zany tricks, though) and full online play.



RACE DRIVER 2: THE ULTIMATE RACING SIMULATOR

XB • Codemasters • Spring 2004 — It's unclear why this sequel to last year's *Pro Race Driver* is no longer professional, but with a plethora of licensed tracks, real-life muscle cars, multiple online modes, and a deeper Story mode, you won't mind amateur status.



A close-up portrait of basketball player Jason Kidd. He is wearing a blue New Jersey Nets jersey with red and white trim. The jersey features the team name "NEW JERSEY" in large white letters with red outlines. On the left chest, there is a patch of the American flag. On the right chest, there is a patch of the NBA logo. The background is dark with large white numbers, possibly "20".

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SYSTEM FORECAST 2K4

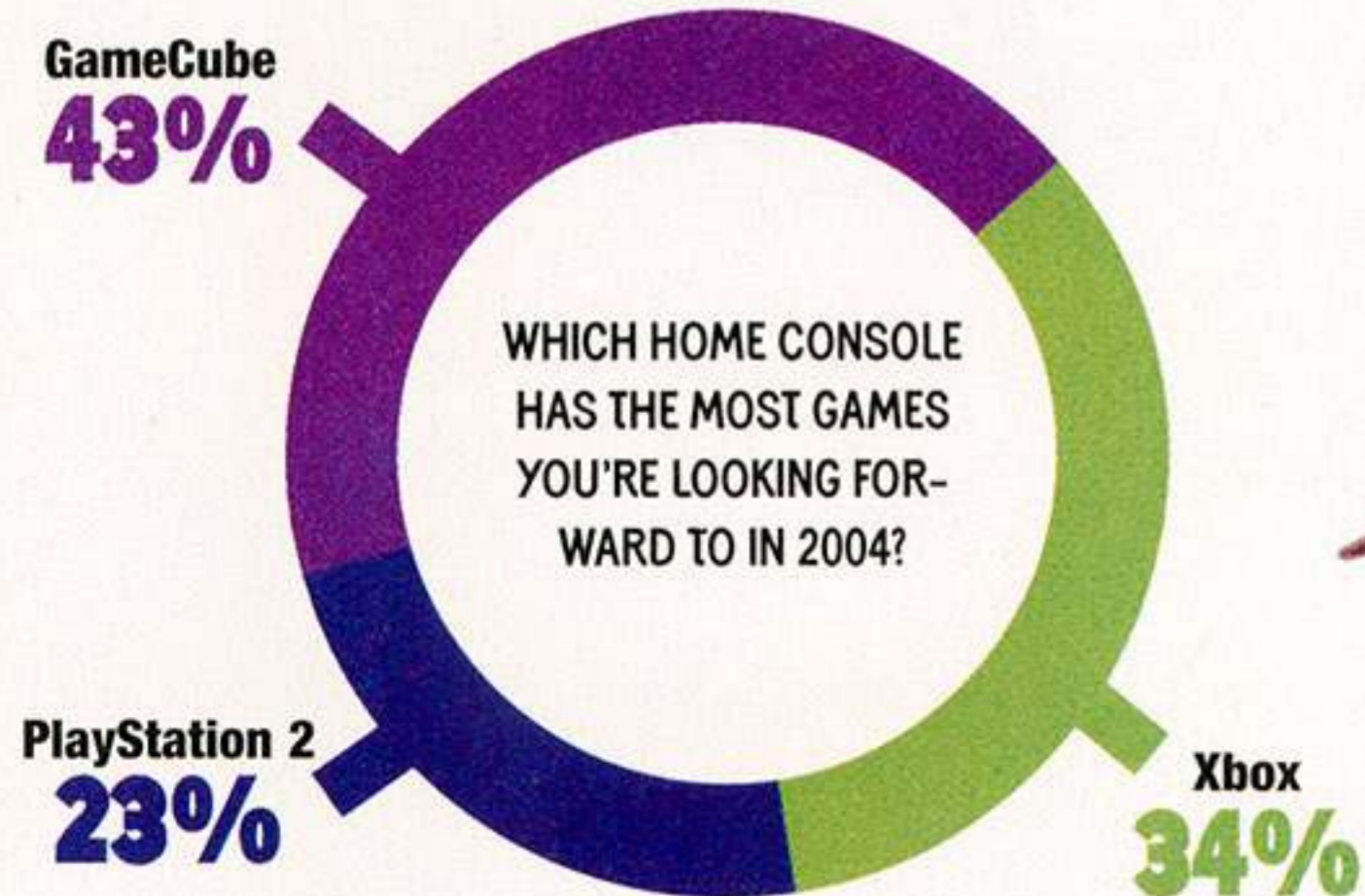
A look into your favorite console's near future

We have seen the future, and it is not shocking: sequels, sequels, and more sequels. Our crystal ball reveals that the number of multisystem mega-game follow-ups—*Halo 2*, another *Grand Theft Auto*, a new *Zelda* among them—is through the roof. Don't try to act like you're surprised. Nostradamus predicted this centuries ago.

And in case you haven't yet jumped into this generation of systems, listen up—they're going to get cheaper in the near future. Price drops for both PlayStation 2 and Xbox are expected by summer (Nintendo breached the \$100 barrier last year, so don't expect GameCube to go lower). We hate to sound like a car commercial, but with so many great games coming, there's never been a better time to buy.

Think of these next few pages as a quick and dirty summary of where your favorite system's at and what to expect from it in 2004. With each entry we've included a list of games you should have on your scope. Be sure to also check out our preview feature starting on page 83 to get an even clearer glimpse at the games to look forward to this year.

—Chris Johnston



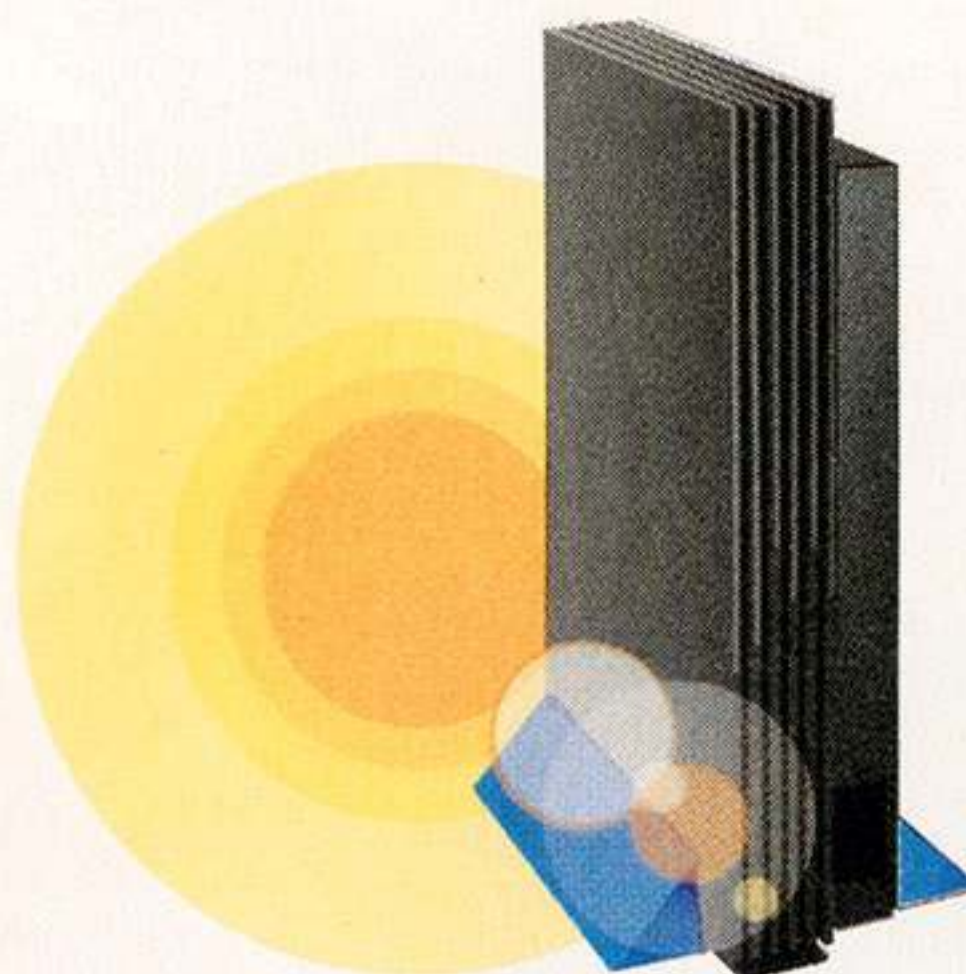
Source: 1UP.com poll, 1/28/04

■ You don't need a crystal ball to tell you that a hailstorm of releases is coming this fall.



Illustrations by Eneone

>> BY THE END OF '03, MICROSOFT SOLD 4 MILLION COPIES OF XBOX KILLER-APP HALO WORLDWIDE (AND WHO KNOWS HOW MANY THOUSANDS OF HALO 2 PREORDERS)... >>



PLAYSTATION 2

CURRENT CONDITIONS

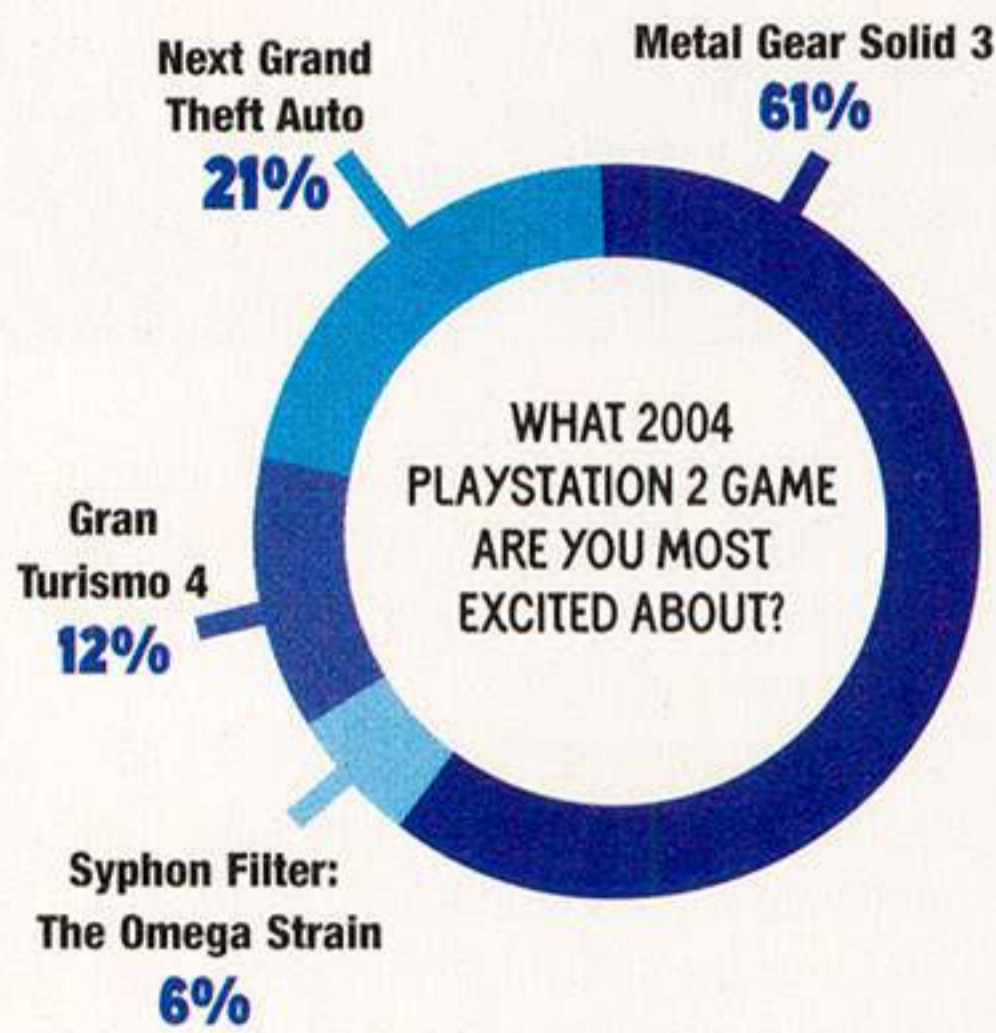
It's impossible to think of 2003 as anything but another banner year for PlayStation 2. And that trend hasn't stopped now in the first part of '04, with games like *Final Fantasy XI* and the new *Syphon Filter*.

"Not only is PS2 where we want it to be at this point, it has exceeded our expectations," says Kaz Hirai, Sony CEA president and chief operating officer. "PS2 is currently selling 37 percent better than the original PlayStation at the same point in its product life cycle." Can't beat that.

EXTENDED FORECAST

PS2 fans can look forward to new installments of nearly all of the system's biggest franchises before year's end.

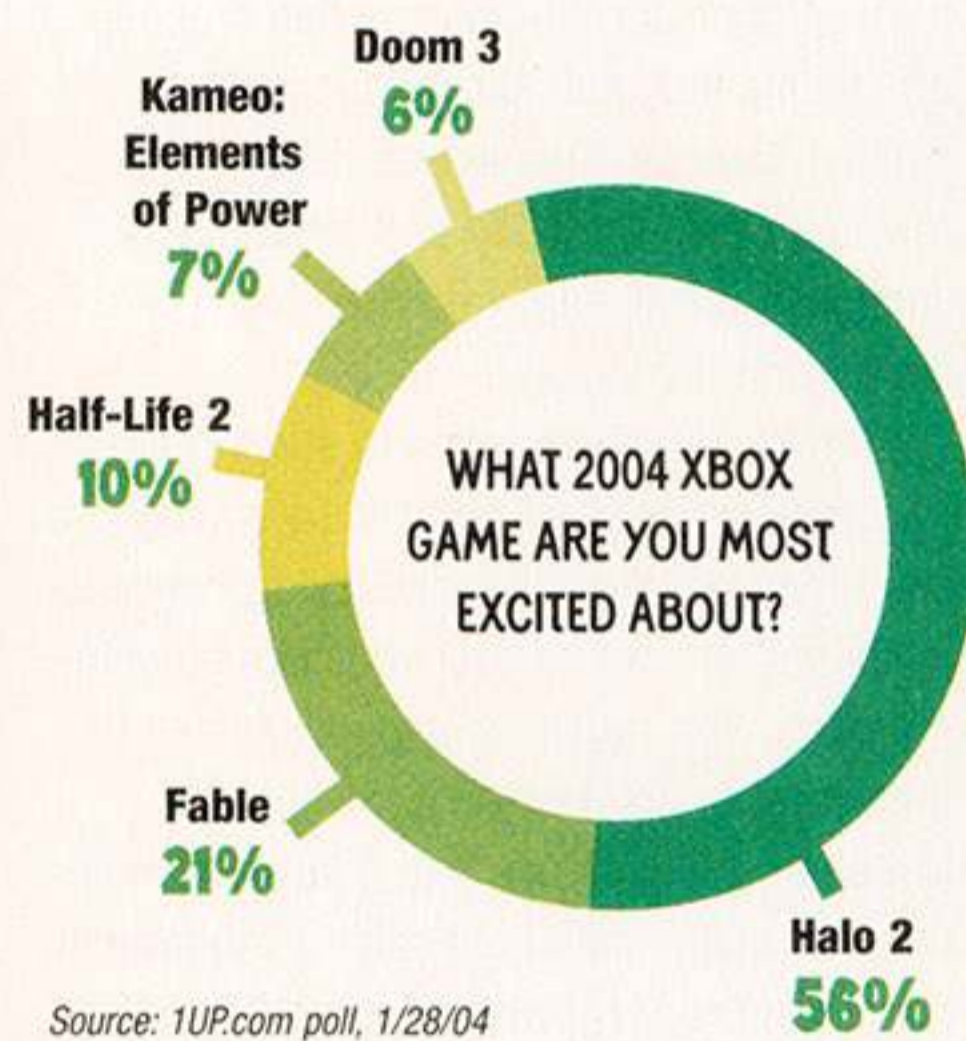
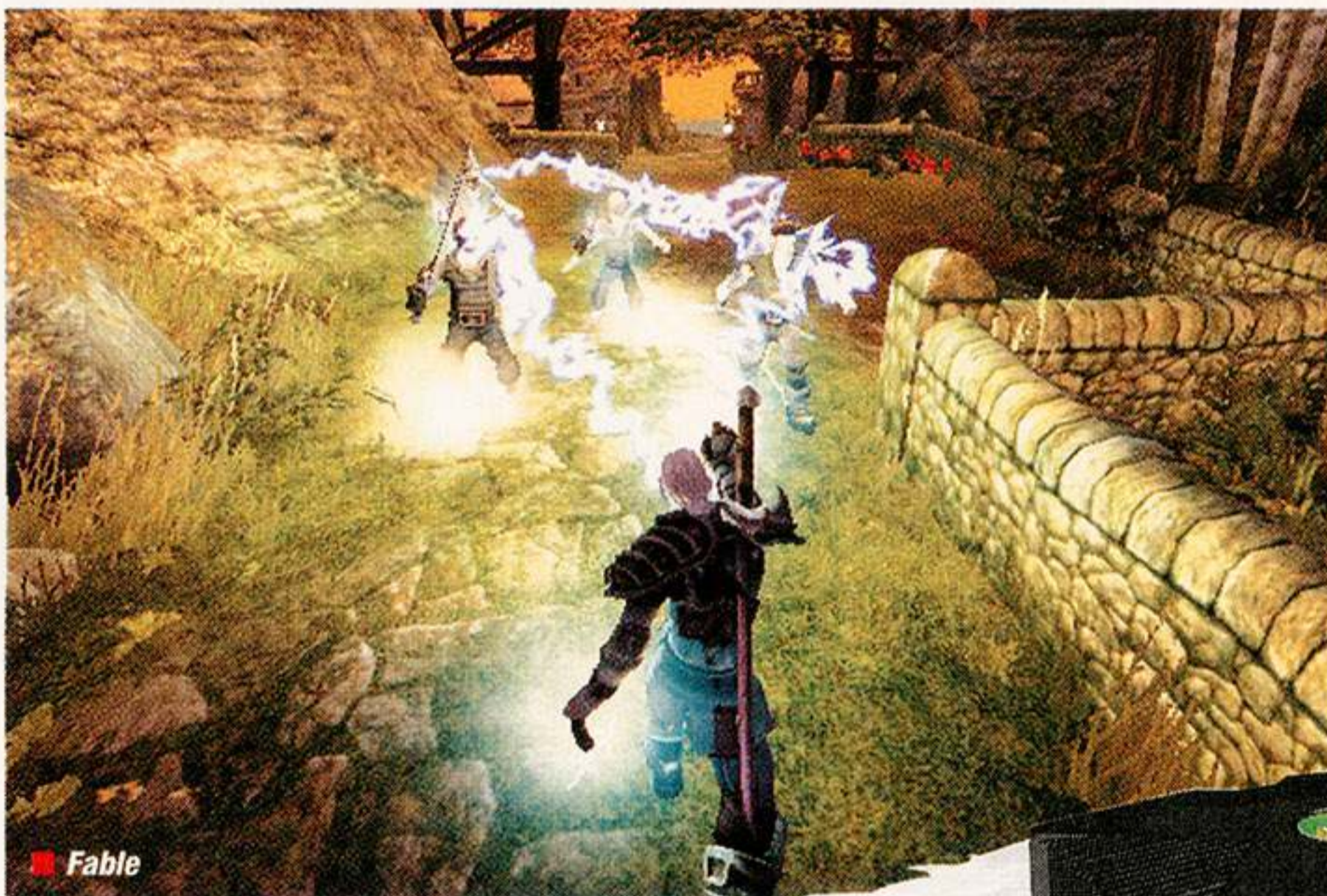
Biggest of all are two sequels, Konami's *Metal Gear Solid 3* and Sony's *Gran Turismo 4*, both of which launch later in the year. Online gaming will get a bigger push than ever before, thanks to support from Capcom (*Resident Evil: Outbreak*, *Monster Hunter*), Square (*FFXI*), and Electronic Arts (nearly everything). And more titles will support the Hard Drive and EyeToy peripherals.



Source: 1UP.com poll, 1/28/04

On the Radar

- Gran Turismo 4 • Summer '04**
Sony's premiere auto-racing sim gets faster and fiercer in its fourth lap around the track.
- Grand Theft Auto sequel • Fall '04**
Yes, you'll still be able to go on a spree of M-rated virtual carnage. Whether you're doing it on the San Andreas Fault or in Sin City doesn't matter.
- Jak III • Fall '04**
Expect it to be made official soon—Jak and his pal Dexter return for another game later this year packed with even more badtitude.
- Metal Gear Solid 3 • Fall '04**
We imagine Snake's journey will be a mix of *Metal Gear* and Disneyland's Jungle Cruise—with a body count—and we can't wait.
- Ratchet & Clank III • Winter '04**
Sony hasn't confirmed it yet, but Insomniac's been pumping these *Ratchet* games out so fast we know 2004 won't go by without one.



Source: 1UP.com poll, 1/28/04

XBOX

CURRENT CONDITIONS

The bad news if you're an Xbox fan right now is that most of the games you waited for in 2003 are the same ones you'll be waiting for in '04—not the least of which is *Halo 2* (more on that in a minute). But all things considered, the system performed well without its star attraction, garnering what Microsoft is calling a second place finish with 8.6 million units shipped to date in the United States. (But wait—Nintendo also says it's No. 2. See the GameCube section for more on that.)

The first few months of 2004 are unseasonably dry for Xbox, though we do get to finally sink our katanas into *Ninja Gaiden*. The good news is that big multiplatform titles like *Splinter Cell: Pandora Tomorrow* will be around to hold your interest until the big names' mid- to late-year arrivals.

EXTENDED FORECAST

Speaking of big names, *Halo 2* was the carrot that Microsoft dangled in front of us all last year but never delivered. And the wait is not over as we sail further into 2004. "We're going to take as much time as is necessary to ensure that *Halo 2* is the game that the fans deserve," Shane Kim, acting chief of Microsoft Game Studios, tells us. "We don't want to make just a sequel; our goal is to make [it] a worthy successor to one of the greatest franchises ever." Talk of delay has followed this sequel like a vulture—only recently did developer Bungie come clean and declare that it's coming "this fall."

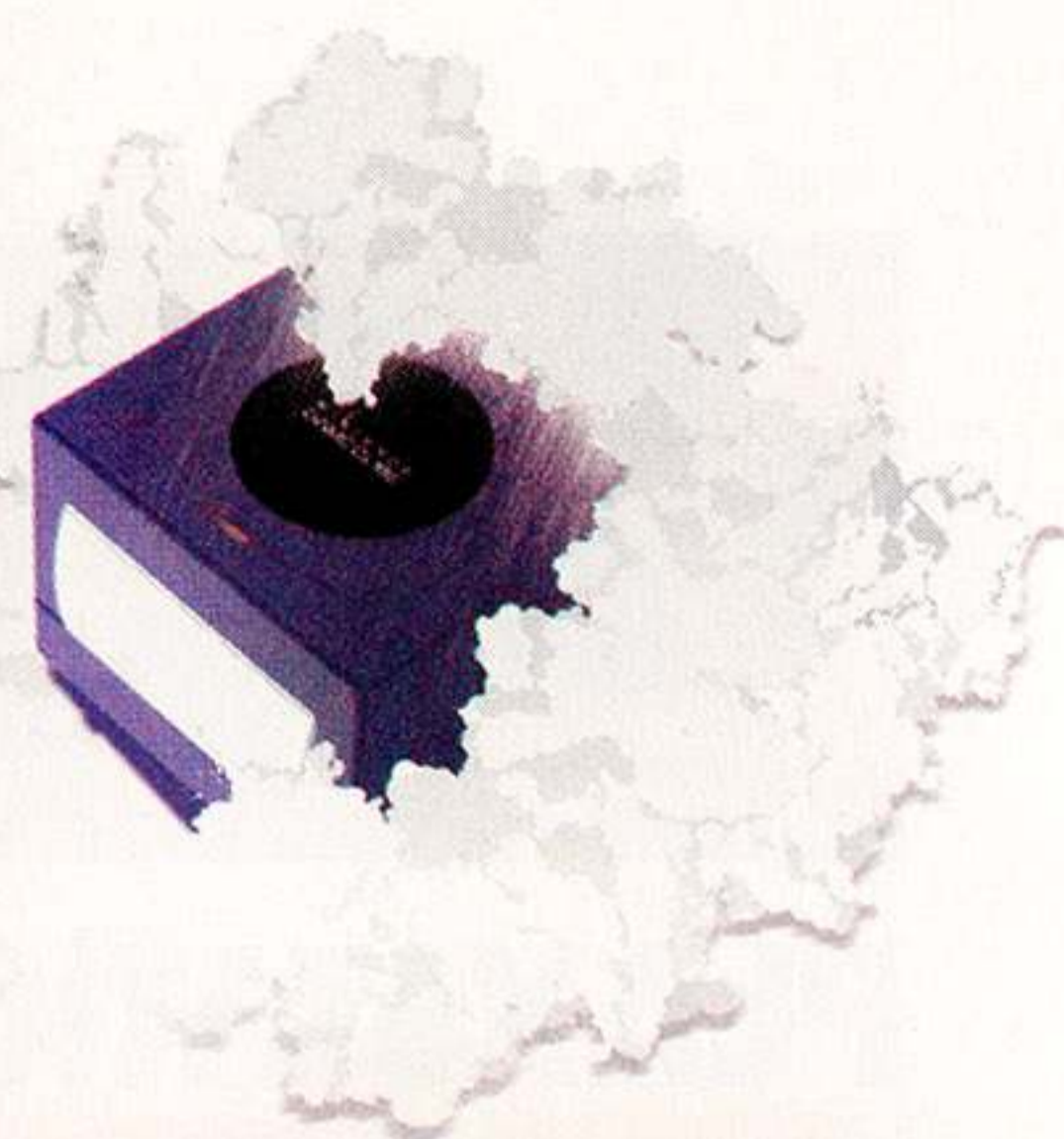
In fact, "hurry up and wait" seems to be the mantra for Xbox fans this year, as similar delays are shadowing many anticipated titles. Developer Rare's *Conker: Live and Uncut* and *Kameo: Elements of Power* are

the next games expected from the studio, and their release dates have fallen to the second half of this year (at this point, *Perfect Dark Zero* is heavily rumored as being an Xbox 2 launch game). Other big games that have suffered delays include the ultrahyped RPG *Fable*, psychological action-platformer *Psychonauts*, mythical adventure *Sudeki*, and massively multiplayer online roleplayer *True Fantasy Live Online*.

Xbox Live users, meanwhile, will see another major upgrade to the service sometime this year. "[Players] can expect more personalization and voice integration options as well as a steady stream of amazing Xbox Live-enabled games," Kim says. Let's hope that this year the stream includes some titles by Electronic Arts, whose support would get more people online.

On the Radar

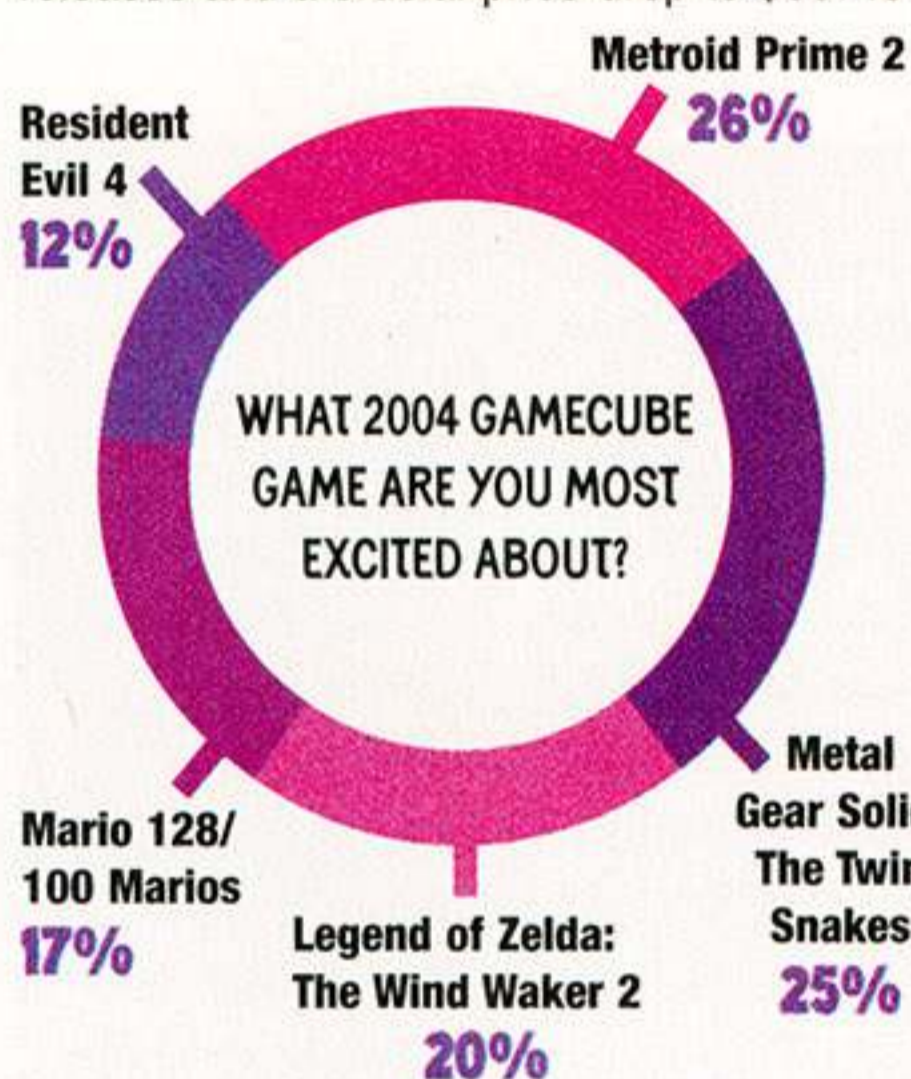
- Conker: Live and Uncut • Fall '04**
An Xbox remake of the foul-mouthed squirrel's Nintendo 64 adventure with added online multiplayer modes.
- Doom 3 • Winter '04**
If the PC version of this creepy shooter makes it out this year, the console incarnation will follow. Maybe.
- Fable • Fall '04**
We've waited for this game so long that we figure either A) It's really tough to make an RPG in which you can be anyone and do anything, or B) *Fable's* developers are dead. Yeah, you're right—it's probably A.
- Half-Life 2 • Winter '04**
Like *Doom 3*, *Half-Life's* console debut will have to wait till after the PC version's release, but it won't be far behind.
- Halo 2 • Fall '04**
At this point, maybe they should take a cue from Quentin Tarantino and give us the first part of this game now and then make us wait for the rest.
- Psychonauts • Fall '04**
It's like a psychologically invasive platforming romp through a psychedelic summer camp from hell. How can it possibly go wrong?
- Sudeki • May '04**
Guide a team of four heroes through hordes of enemies in this gorgeous Xbox adventure.
- True Fantasy Live Online • Fall '04**
Xbox's first massively multiplayer online role-playing game lets you create a character and go on a quest to smite evil with a couple thousand of your closest buddies. ➤



GAMECUBE

CURRENT CONDITIONS

After a rough start in 2003, Nintendo's struggling next-gen contender worked up enough momentum to become the best-selling home console of holiday season '03—thanks to a flurry of high-profile releases and a crucial price drop to \$99. To



Source: 1UP.com poll, 1/28/04

date, Nintendo has sold 6.8 million Cubes in the United States, but the system's increase in sales over the previous year has Nintendo saying that it is No. 2.

"One of us had to be No. 3, and it's not us," says Nintendo Vice President of Corporate Affairs Perrin Kaplan. "We finally have a library of the right games, the right hardware, at the right price."

But even being in second place doesn't solve all of GameCube's problems. Third-party support for the console has dropped off significantly and shows no signs of picking back up. This leaves major releases up to Nintendo and a handful of Japanese developers who are still supporting the system.

In 2003 Nintendo began to support its own network adapter by network-enabling a few titles (but to mixed results). Just recently, GameCube got its *second* online game—*Phantasy Star Online Episode III*, sequel to the system's first Net-enabled title. But Nintendo still contends that it will not implement an online plan until such a venture can make money. Meanwhile, expect GC-to-

GBA—or even GC-to-DS (see our lead news story)—connectivity to remain what Nintendo chooses to push in lieu of more online games.

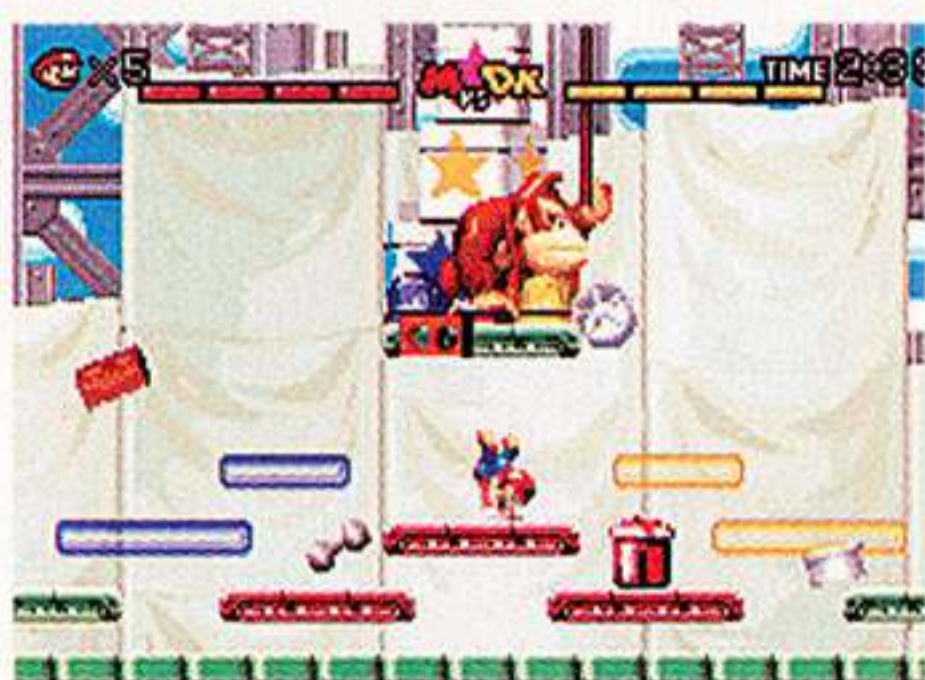
EXTENDED FORECAST

While rumors indicate that the GameCube's successor is in the works, we may not end up hearing much—if anything—about it this year. "I don't think you're going to see people who bought a [GameCube] in 2003 be anything but happy," Kaplan tells us. That doesn't seem too far from the truth, as we already know of more than a dozen high-profile Cube releases on the horizon—many of which were announced at last year's Electronic Entertainment Expo videogame show. Not the least of these are new titles in Nintendo's three key series: *Zelda*, *Mario*, and *Metroid*.

The bad news if you own a Cube is that you may miss out on a lot of multiplatform titles, but this lack of third-party support won't spell the kind of doom it would on other systems, thanks to the sheer number of great games Nintendo itself produces.

On the Radar

- Custom Robo • TBA**
Build and battle customizable toy robots in this *Virtual On*-meets-*Pokémon* action game.
- The Legend of Zelda: Four Swords • Spring '04**
Grab a couple of GBAs, link cables, and a few friends for this multiplayer *Zelda* adventure. Viva la connectivity!
- The Legend of Zelda: Wind Waker 2 • Fall '04**
Last year, *Zelda* Director Eiji Aonuma confirmed that a *Wind Waker* sequel was in development for '04.
- Mario 128/100 Marios • Fall '04**
We're still waiting to see it, but Nintendo does have a new *Mario* adventure waiting in the wings.
- Metroid Prime 2 • Fall '04**
For now, all we know is Samus will be back, courtesy once again of *Prime* developer Retro Studios.
- Star Fox 2 • Winter '04**
Fox McCloud and his crew hang up their adventuring hats to star in this straight-up space shooter, co-developed by Namco.



■ Mario & Donkey Kong

GAME BOY ADVANCE

CURRENT CONDITIONS

Nintendo's cash cow saw lots of green in 2003, selling 8.1 million units—enough to make it the No. 1 dedicated game hardware over GC, PS2, and Xbox for the year. Connectivity has begun paying off as games that require it—*Final Fantasy: Crystal Chronicles*, *Pac-Man Vs.*, *Pokémon Colosseum*—hit stores. And the e-

Reader...well, it even managed to be a little bit useful, providing new levels to *Super Mario Bros. 3*.

After a string of hits in '03, the GBA is so far off to a slow start this year, with just one major release—February's *Metroid Zero Mission*.

EXTENDED FORECAST

Although Nintendo swears that its DS portable will not affect GBA sales, there's one thing that definitely will...Sony's PSP.



But that won't stop at least a few excellent GBA titles from hitting in '04, including perhaps the biggest in years—a new portable single-player *Zelda* adventure from the folks who brought you last year's link-cable melee *Four Swords*. Also of note will be U.S. releases of the *Pokémon* remakes that just recently hit Japan.

Oh, and if you're wondering when you'll finally get that maize GBA you've always wanted...don't worry. More GBA colors are in the pipeline.

On the Radar

- The Legend of Zelda • Fall '04**
A brand-new, original *Zelda* is in the works for GBA from the folks who did the *Oracle* games and *Four Swords*.
- Mario & Donkey Kong • Fall '04**
Mario and Donkey Kong return to their roots in this classic-style action-puzzle title, partly a remake of 1994's Game Boy *Donkey Kong*.
- Mario Golf: Advance Tour • Fall '04**
After all those portable remakes of his early career, *Mario* takes some time to hit the links once again, this time on Game Boy Advance.
- Pokémon Red and Blue remakes • Summer '04**
The recent Japanese rereleases of the original *Pokémon* will head Stateside this summer, so you can catch 'em all over again.
- Sonic Advance 3 • Summer '04**
Sega's speedy hedgehog mascot laces up his sneakers for another original GBA adventure.



Death from Above



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Dogfight airborne enemies in 360 degrees within massive environments.



MOVE OVER, FOXY BOXING

Konami's **WWX: Rumble Rose** gives the ladies some ring time

If there's one thing the women of Konami's all-girl PS2 wrasslin' title *WWX: Rumble Rose* ain't, it's homely. But in addition to serving up these sweet-as-*Dead-or-Alive-Xtreme-Beach-Volleyball* visuals, developer Yuke's promises to deliver a game this November worthy of its pedigree as the force behind THQ's *WWE SmackDown!* series.

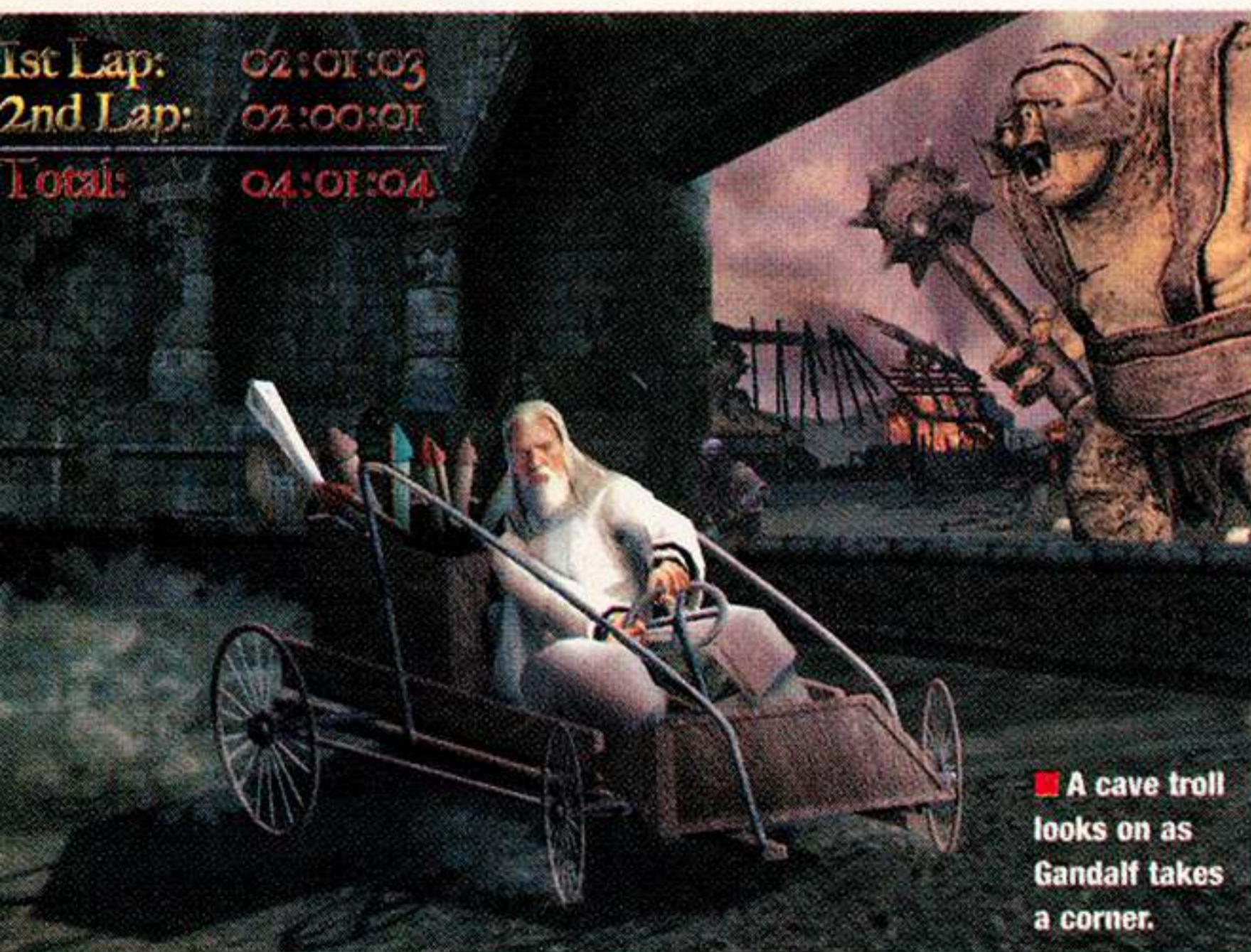
Each girl has an arsenal of both standard and more arcade-style, over-the-top moves. "We're not hampered by a license, so we're not forced to keep it in the realm of what's possible," says Producer Akari

Uchida. "They're [not] going to have lasers coming out of their eyes or [be] flying through the air, though." Hair pulling? Check.

In an interesting twist, the girls' personalities will change depending on their fighting style in *WWX*'s story mode. Fight dirty and your polygonal princess will go bad, which may nab her new moves and more revealing costumes she wouldn't have gotten by keeping it clean. But no matter which side they're on, these women still be lookin' fiiiine. "I'd actually planned to put in a few that weren't that attractive," Uchida explains. "But then I thought, what the hell...I'll make them all cute."

■ *WWX*'s Dixie Clemets and Reiko Hinomoto get along the only way they know how.

1st Lap: 02:01:03
2nd Lap: 02:00:01
Total: 04:01:04



■ A cave troll looks on as Gandalf takes a corner.

FIRST PSP SCREEN SHOWN

Rings goes racing

Come November when Sony launches its PlayStation Portable (PSP), you'll be knee-deep in Shire...that is, if you pick up EA Games' Middle-earth-set kart racer tentatively titled *The Lord of the Rings: Mordor GP*. Scheduled for simultaneous release with the system, the promising racer follows the events of the film as you race on tracks situated all over Tolkien's world—from the hobbits' home to the foot of Mt. Doom. All the major characters from the movie will be playable, each with his own custom vehicle.

In a related note, VU Games has announced that it too is making a kart racer for *Rings*, based on the book license, for release around the same time.

CHARTS

TOP 10 BEST-SELLING GAMES FOR DECEMBER 2003



- 1** **Need for Speed Underground**
PS2, EA Games
- 2** **Madden NFL 2004**
PS2, EA Sports
- 3** **Mario Kart: Double Dash!!**
GC, Nintendo
- 4** **Tony Hawk's Underground**
PS2, Activision
- 5** **Dragon Ball Z: Budokai 2**
PS2, Atari
- 6** **True Crime: Streets of L.A.**
PS2, Activision
- 7** **Medal of Honor: Rising Sun**
PS2, EA Games
- 8** **Final Fantasy X-2**
PS2, Square Enix
- 9** **SOCOM II: U.S. Navy SEALs**
PS2, Sony CEA
- 10** **Lord of the Rings: Return of the King**
PS2, EA

TOP 10 GAME RENTALS FOR THE WEEK ENDING 1/20/04



- 1** **NFL Street**
PS2, EA Sports Big
- 2** **True Crime: Streets of L.A.**
PS2, Activision
- 3** **Dragon Ball Z: Budokai 2**
PS2, Atari
- 4** **Mario Kart: Double Dash!!**
GC, Nintendo
- 5** **Manhunt**
PS2, Rockstar
- 6** **NFL Street**
XB, EA Sports Big
- 7** **Tony Hawk's Underground**
PS2, Activision
- 8** **Medal of Honor: Rising Sun**
PS2, EA Games
- 9** **The Sims: Bustin' Out**
PS2, EA Games
- 10** **Max Payne 2: The Fall of Max Payne**
PS2, Rockstar

Source: NPD TRSTS Video Games Service. Call (516) 625-6190 for questions regarding this list. "Be excellent to each other..."

BLOCKBUSTER

Source: Blockbuster Video, 1/20/04



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Chaos Below



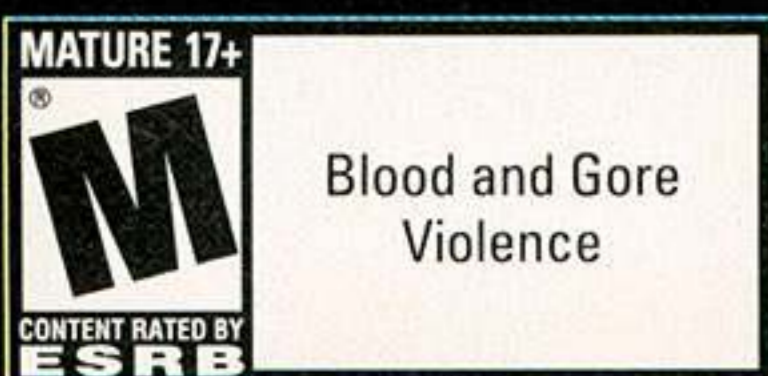


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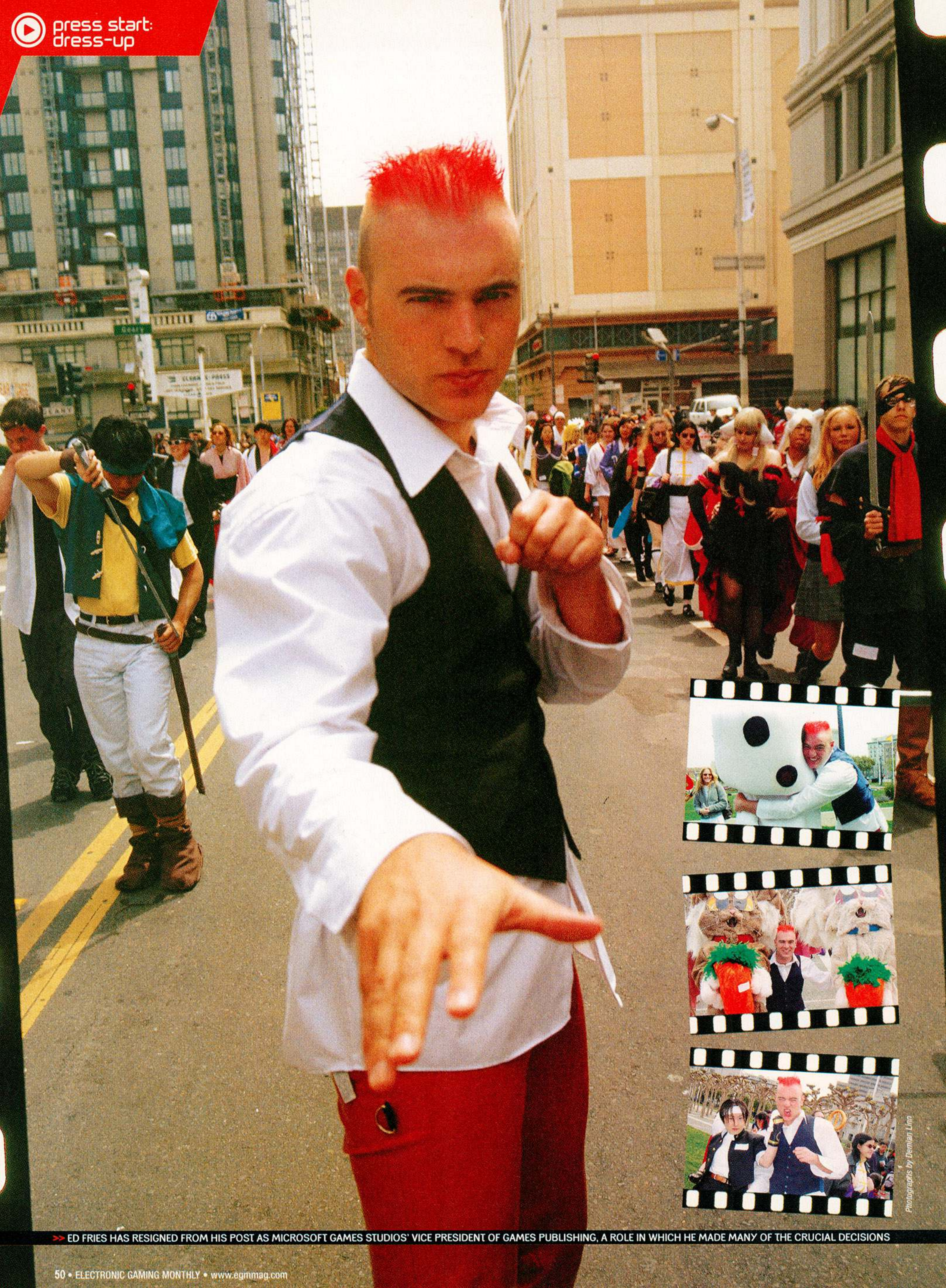




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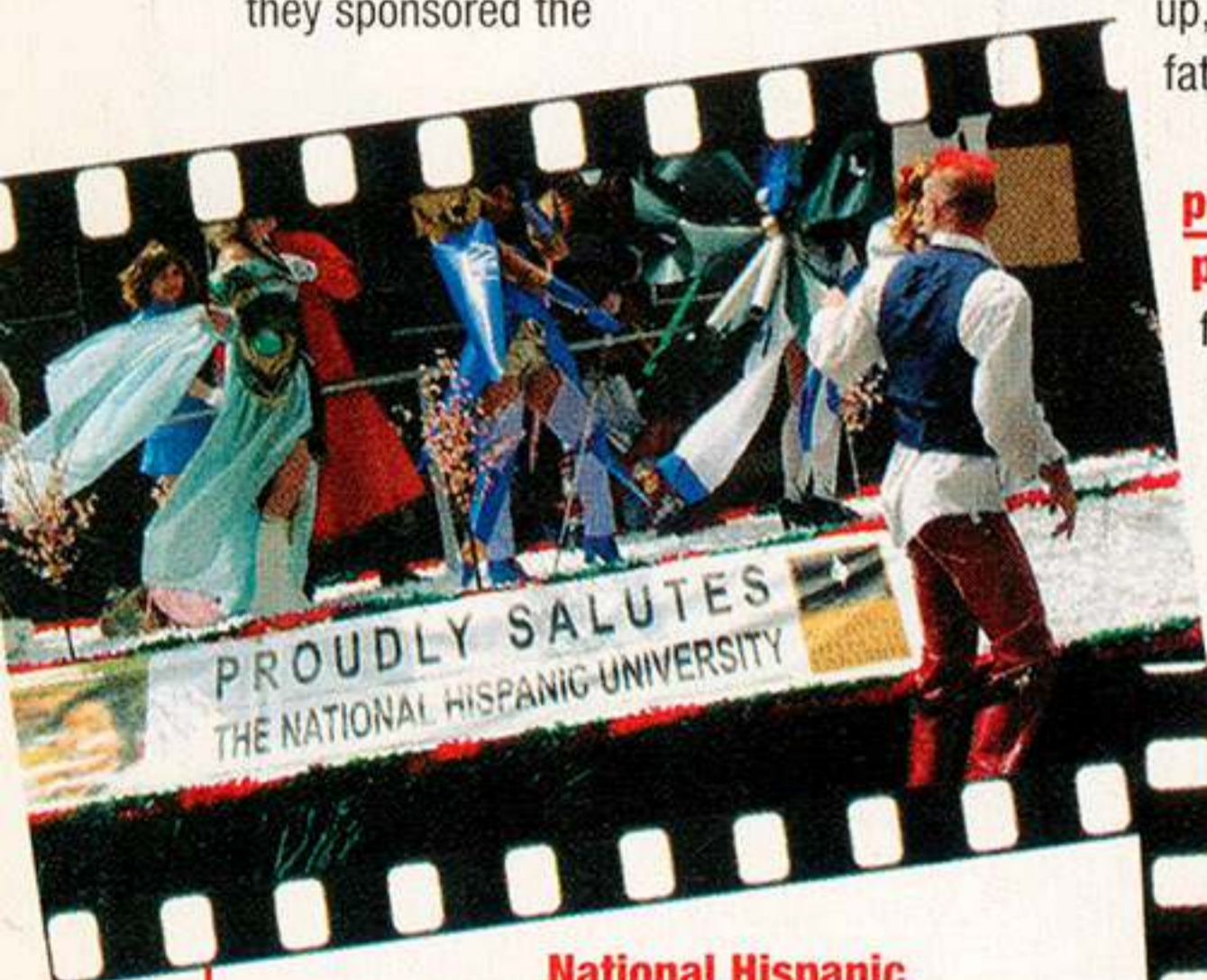


Photographs by Demian Linn

>> ED FRIES HAS RESIGNED FROM HIS POST AS MICROSOFT GAMES STUDIOS' VICE PRESIDENT OF GAMES PUBLISHING, A ROLE IN WHICH HE MADE MANY OF THE CRUCIAL DECISIONS



ride the float, and which *Final Fantasy* characters got to trudge uphill on foot. And that leads to my favorite moment of the parade: When the float's sponsor—grocery-store chain Safeway—revealed they didn't have a cosplay-themed banner, they used the next best thing: the banner left over from when they sponsored the



National Hispanic University. That meant that to curious passersby, it looked like the National Hispanic University was offering courses in Giant Bunnies, Marshmallow Impersonation, Advanced Princessing, and Postapocalyptic

Cybercombat. I thought this might have been some hilarious last-minute screw up, but a man dressed as a tiger told me that the same thing happened last year. "Hahaha!" I replied.

The feminine side

When *EGM* asked me to put on a costume and infiltrate a cosplay parade, I wasn't sure what to expect, except that there would be 300 fat dudes dressed as Sailor Moon. I was so sure of this, in fact, that I held a caption contest with myself before I took any pictures. The winning caption: "Sailor MOOO!" But if "Sailor MOOO!" is unable to perform its duties as the winning caption, the runner up, "Does this dress make my fat ass look fatter?" will take its place.

But here's the funny thing: **A surprising amount of girls are into cosplay.** And if you put a girl in hot pants from the moon, you're going to wind up with either something superhot or a sausage beast. You see, cosplay outfits are tiny little tight things that dig a very clear



trench between sexy girls and girls whose *EverQuest* characters totally rule. That said, there was a way higher percentage of hotties than you'd expect at something like this.

Now normally when you have any concentration of women—especially mostly naked ones—you'll find **a couple of clever guys** who show up just for the action. None of this creepy guy espionage went on during cosplay. Maybe a few of the dudes there were cruising for dates, but I guarantee that was secondary to dressing their way into a world of Japanese make-believe. So, parents, if you need to leave your 15-year-old daughter somewhere in a bikini and a



Notice carefully how some cosplay girls are kind of hot.



Check these guys out. No seriously, look at these guys.

Robotech headdress (and I notice some of you did), a cosplay parade is the best place to do it.

Of course, that's not the only lesson I learned as I mingled with cosplay society. While I went into this hoping to make fun of an entire people and their insane hobby, it turns out that most cosplayers are kind of lovable. And

each of them was polite enough not to mention that they could see every detail of my crotch and the impossible knot it'd been tied into. I'm not saying everyone should try going to a cosplay event, but if you're already dressed like a cartoon, you might as well stop by.

—Seanbaby

in the flesh: confessions of a cosplayer

What would drive a pretty, perky, perfectly well-adjusted 23-year-old woman to dress in intergalactic lingerie and strut in public? More importantly, how can we score a date with her? San Francisco cosplayer Tiffany-Marie Austin shows us the way to a skimpy-costumed chick's heart.

EGM: Ever fear for your safety when you're in a tiny skirt surrounded by male anime enthusiasts, some of whom are also in tiny skirts?

Tiffany-Marie Austin: Rarely. Usually, if I'm ever wearing a revealing costume I make sure that I'm in an environment where I feel safe and am surrounded by friends—instant bodyguards. As for males in skirts, they act as the best bodyguards because they confuse the predators.

EGM: What's the skimpiest costume you've worn?

TA: I generally stay away from costumes that are too revealing, but an occasional one gets by, just because I like it so much. The most revealing one is Shino [see photo to the far right] from this obscure Japanese PlayStation game called

Himikoden-Renge. And I actually modified the costume so that it would be less revealing than the original. But then I also have a Mai Shiranui [a busty *King of Fighters* character] costume.

EGM: Nice. What's the naughtiest costume you've seen on someone else?

TA: Sometimes it's hard to draw the line between "naughty" and "scary," depending on how the person wears the costume, but it's [not rare for] someone to walk around practically naked and call it a costume. People sometimes make [non-naughty] costumes slutty by leaving off parts or modifying it. *Darkstalkers* characters like Morgan and Felisha, *Dead or Alive* bathing-suit costumes, and of course Mai Shiranui are all notorious for being very naughty.

EGM: If we were to ask you on a hot cosplay dream date, would you rather we came dressed as the Beastmaster or Donkey Kong?

TA: I'd rather you came dressed as Wonder Woman.

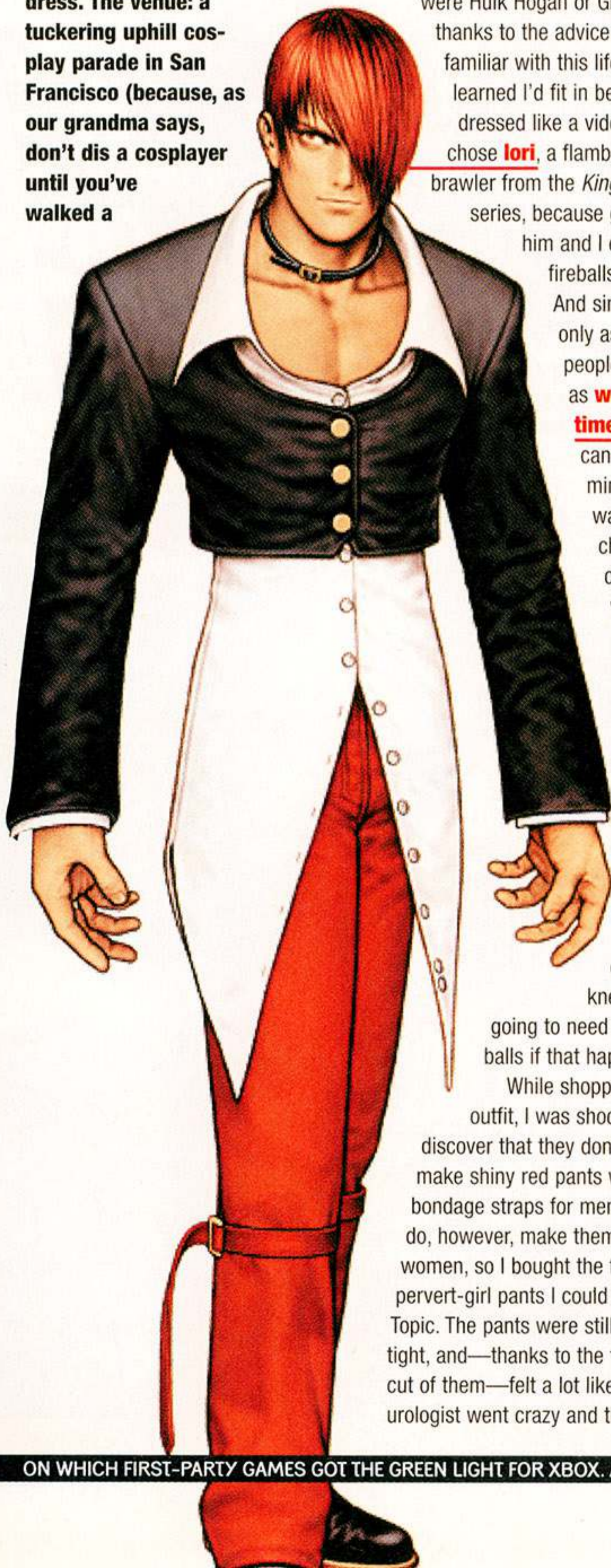


Left to right: Austin in civilian garb, *Final Fantasy* attire, and her most revealing outfit.

PLAYING DRESS-UP

EGM goes undercover to infiltrate (and capture on film) the scariest of gaming's secret societies—cosplayers

How easy it is to ridicule the things we don't understand—especially when they're fat-swaddled nerds who dress like game characters and cartoons for fun. So EGM asked humor writer Seanbaby to slip into something uncomfortable and fit in with these so-called cosplayers to help us comprehend their need for excessive dress. The venue: a tuckering uphill cosplay parade in San Francisco (because, as our grandma says, don't dis a cosplayer until you've walked a



mile in his or her Spandex outer-space boots). And thus the stage is set for Seanbaby's report from this insane march of shame....

Suiting up

I knew I had to blend in perfectly if I was going to make it into the inner cosplay circle and assassinate their overlord—I've already said too much. So my first choices for costumes were Hulk Hogan or Grover, but thanks to the advice of people familiar with this lifestyle, I learned I'd fit in better if I dressed like a videogame. I chose **lori**, a flamboyant brawler from the *King of Fighters* series, because girls like

him and I could throw fireballs if I had to. And since I can only assume that people who dress as **wizards and time warriors**

can read minds, there was a good chance the cosplayers would see through my disguise and bring me before the dork high council to answer for my deception. I knew I was

going to need some fireballs if that happened.

While shopping for the outfit, I was shocked to discover that they don't make shiny red pants with bondage straps for men. They do, however, make them for women, so I bought the fattest pervert-girl pants I could at Hot Topic. The pants were still a little tight, and—thanks to the female cut of them—felt a lot like my urologist went crazy and tied me

to something when I put them on. If this is what videogame fighters wear, they're either incredibly tolerant to crushing dong pain or have long since had their genitals removed.

Since it was hot outside, I modified lori's jacket to be a vest. I didn't know how appropriate this type of artistic license was but figured it wouldn't arouse suspicion; it would just look like I was bad at cosplaying. I was ready.

Fitting in

The cosplay parade took place on a Sunday, and Saturday is one of the six nights of the week that I drink, so my first impressions of the geek majesty were seen through bloodshot eyes while my skull tried to split in half, screaming. Ninjas and magicians chatted it up as far as the eye could see, and I'm not ashamed to say I was a little terrified. I got unlucky, and the first cosplayers I engaged stayed in character during our entire conversations. I would greet them with, "Hello. I am one of you. I am not here to make fun of your people in a videogame magazine." And they would answer, "Blargoblap mars glorbenblarp 2,000." Needless to say, irony and cosplay hate each other.

Some cosplayers really go all out. I saw people with fiberglass combat wings, robot bodies that deployed rocket launchers when their robostrings were tugged, and a few giant furry animal costumes that may or may not have served more erotic purposes after hours. I talked



to a couple of intergalactic fruit loops that said their costumes cost them hundreds of dollars and took months to build. On the other hand, I saw one kid whose costume was **an old kitchen towel thrown over his shoulders**. If I'd known I could get away with just wearing a towel cape, I wouldn't have been trying to look all



karate in size-two pants with a wedgie and a camel toe.

The organizers of the parade held a costume contest to see which *Final Fantasy* characters got to >

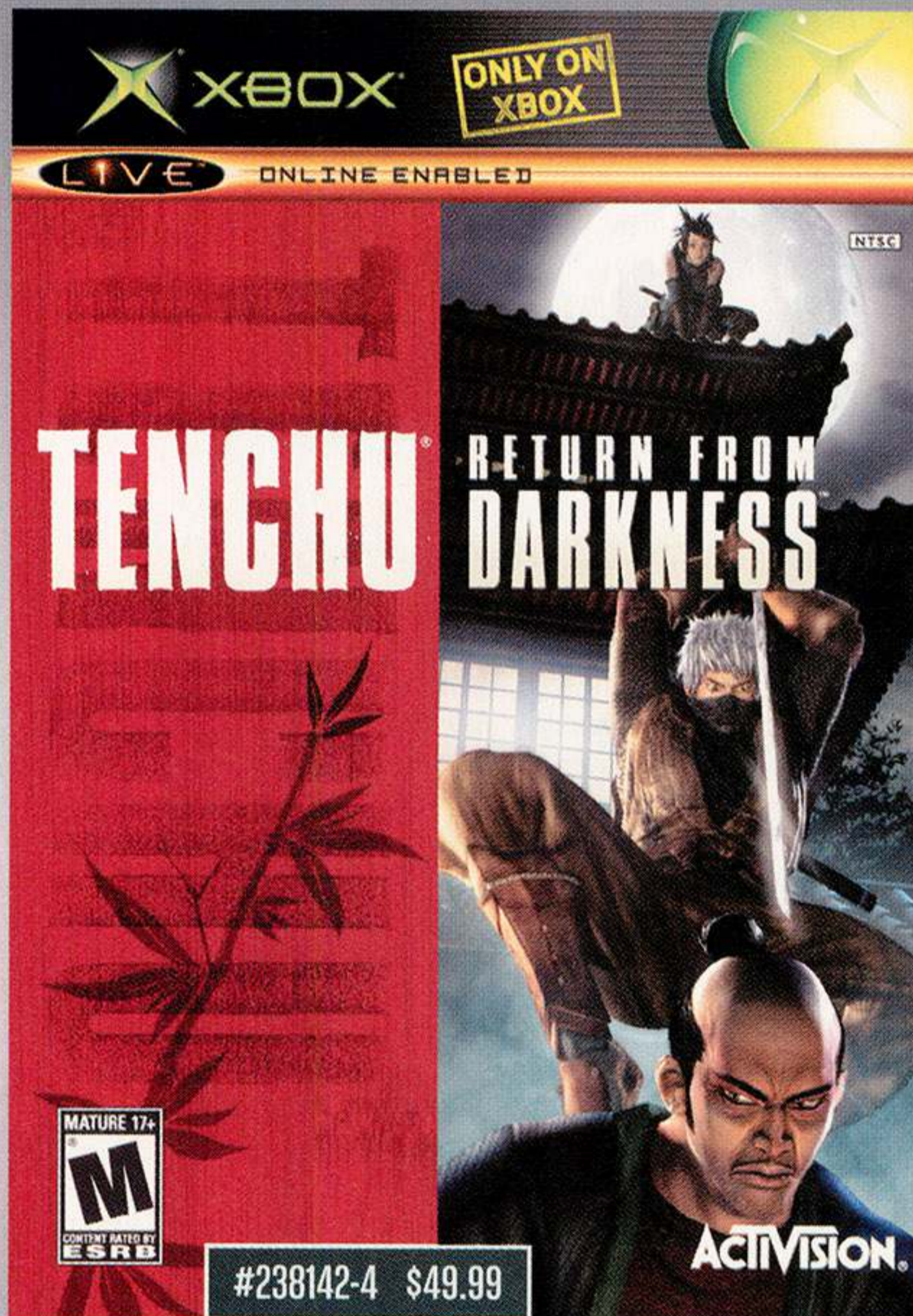
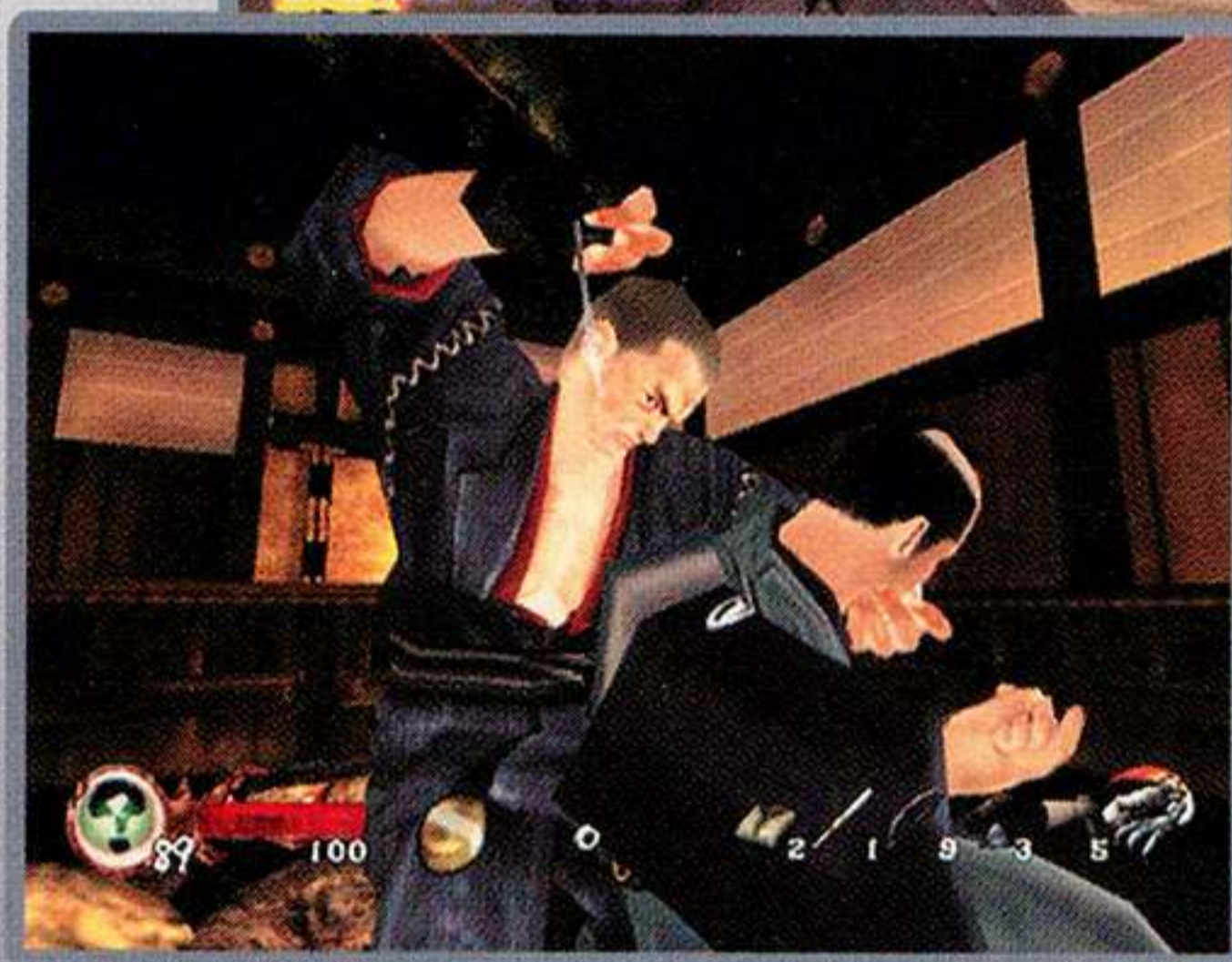


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CELEBRITY GAMER: MYA

Songstress turned Bond superspy

R &B songstress Mya works and plays hard. She stars as undercover agent Mya Starling in EA Games' just-released *James Bond 007: Everything or Nothing*, penned its title song, had a part in the movie musical *Chicago*, and somehow, between all that, has time to game. So we had no choice but to sit the steamy chanteuse down and ask her a few questions about her role in the new *Bond* title and her gaming habits.

EGM: You've already been in a hit movie, *Chicago*—why make your next acting move in a James Bond videogame?

Mya: Are you kidding? Games rock! No matter your race, creed, or color, you can find something in them to enjoy. It's like music—the variety is incredible.

EGM: Come on, you can trust us...are you really a superspy?

M: I should be, with the amount of time I spend at the shooting range. But I play a lot of PlayStation 2 and thought the role was great, so I took this opportunity.

EGM: Sure there's nothing else you'd like to own up to?

M: All right...I do share many things in common with my character. She's a badass, like me. I've got that fire. And like [Mya Starling], I hold it down for my man.

EGM: And, er, what of his do you hold?

M: Not like that, silly. I've flown guys to exotic locales, rented boats, copped some motorcycles and gone riding. It's a little ego stroke to be the provider.

EGM: What went into composing the

game's title track?

M: A lot. It's an interpretive number that speaks to everyone. Look deep enough into the track and you'll see it's about putting your foot down and getting what you want from life.


EGM: Yeah, like an advance copy of *Halo 2*!

M: You bet. I really like guys who are into games. You get to see an innocent side of them that you normally wouldn't. That's hot.

EGM: Well, except during multiplayer games of *Madden NFL*...

M: Please. Why bother? I'd take *Tetris* or *Ridge Racer* over that one anytime. Even if [the latter] does require so much coordination that I think it's cheating on me.

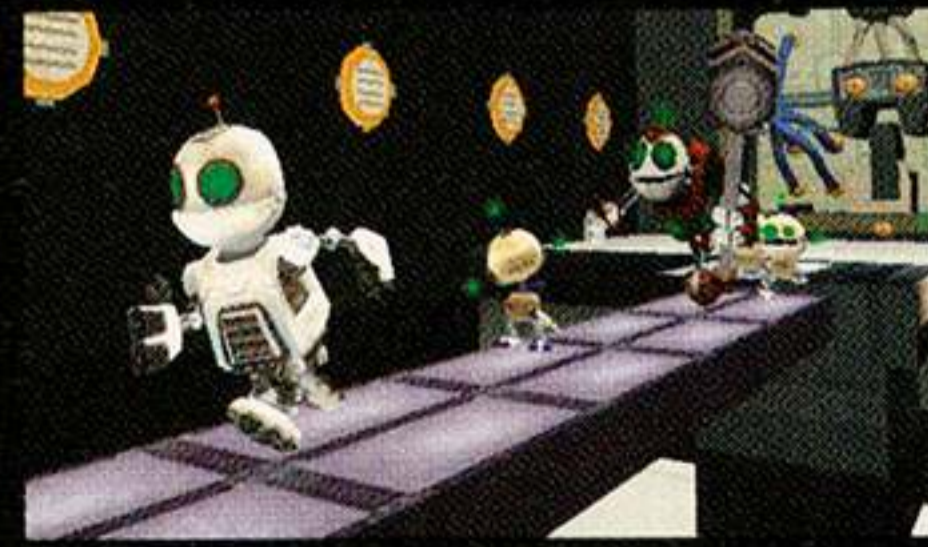
EGM: Who's the biggest celebrity gamer you know?

M: Sisqo from [R&B foursome] Dru Hill. He had a PS2 with him on the road...he took it everywhere. The guy would forget to eat if you didn't remind him. 

—Scott Steinberg



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AFTERTHOUGHTS: NFL STREET



Talkin' X's and O's with the kings of the gridiron

Spring sucks...well, at least for football fans. Gone are the Sunday afternoons and Monday nights of beers, buffalo wings (that's chicken, Jessica), and cheering on your favorite NFL team. Thankfully, developer EA Tiburon's back-alley take on the pigskin sport, *NFL Street* (PS2/XB/GC), helps fill the gridiron void until training camp starts. We spoke with *NFL Street*'s Associate Producer Jason Barnes and Senior Product Manager Tom Goedde about Tiburon's respect for another no-holds-barred football franchise, NFL prima donnas, and a potential sequel.

EGM: *Street* draws a lot of comparisons to Midway's old *NFL Blitz* games. Are there any *Blitz* junkies at Tiburon?

Jason Barnes: Yes, there are some die-hard *Blitz* fans on staff, and we have a couple of *Blitz* arcade machines. Of course, we looked at those games and what they did well, plus what areas we wanted to improve upon.

EGM: Some of the development team worked on *Madden* in the past. What was it like creating a football game that's so drastically different?

JB: It was great. It allowed us to take a lot more risks with gameplay and style.

Tom Goedde: This is the first non-simulation product Tiburon's developed. Our goal with the *Madden*, *NCAA Football*, and *NASCAR* franchises is always to just simulate the real world as closely as possible, whereas *NFL Street* is so much bigger than that. It was fun to get the creative juices flowing.

EGM: Obviously, *Street* deviates greatly from the conventional football norms. Which gameplay areas were the most difficult to nail down?

JB: Scoring was a debate. Initially, we only had two-point conversions [after touchdowns], but late in the project we added

one-point conversions for running it in, and we found it added much more strategy.

TG: Early on, we actually had multiple kinds of Gamebreakers [power-ups], but it was just too confusing. It worked much better having a single Gamebreaker for offense and defense.

EGM: Did any pro athletes help out with *Street*'s development?

JB: Yeah, we brought in a few NFL players, such as Baltimore Ravens linebacker Ray >

Falcons quarterback Michael Vick is "the ultimate pick-up player," says Associate Producer Jason Barnes. "He gets it done on both sides of the ball."



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■ Per the player's request, the developers altered 49ers lineman Jeremy Newberry's *Street* outfit to better fit his personal style.

■ Showboat in front of defensive stud Derrick Brooks and you might come up from a tackle breathing snot bubbles.

► Lewis and Marcellus Wiley, defensive end for the San Diego Chargers. We also had Atlanta Falcons quarterback Michael Vick take a look at the game, and we asked him what kind of clothing he wanted to wear, his overall style, things like that.

EGM: So give it to us straight. What was more important to the NFL players: their on-field attributes or physical appearance?

TG: For a lot of them, it was how they looked. Some of the guys wanted screenshots that they could post on their walls so one day they could tell their kids, "This is what daddy used to look like."

EGM: Did any players disapprove of their *Street* attire?

TG: Offensive lineman Jeremy Newberry [of the San Francisco 49ers] was pretty funny. In an early version, we had him in jeans and a sweatshirt. He was like, "I wouldn't be caught dead in this! You gotta get some new gear for me, man."

JB: We figured Jeremy wanted us to show off his tattoos, and after seeing some updat-



■ Bo knows videogames: Don't be shocked if former Los Angeles Raiders running back (and major league baseball slugger) Bo Jackson appears in future editions of *NFL Street*.

ed screenshots, he liked the end result much better than the initial design.

EGM: Madden is wildly popular among NFL players. What was their reaction to this brand of football?

TG: Most of them found *NFL Street* to be a nice change-up. People come with their game on for *Madden*, but it's really not for a party atmosphere. *NFL Street* is a great smack-talkin' game. It's fun to sit around and have a couple cocktails while playin'.

"We looked at [the *NFL Blitz* games] and what they did well, plus what areas we wanted to improve upon."

—*NFL Street* Associate Producer Jason Barnes

EGM: The game also features a hefty selection of NFL legends—was there anyone you wanted to include but couldn't?

JB: We would have really liked to have [former Los Angeles Raiders running back] Bo Jackson. He's kind of known as the greatest videogame football player since the *Tecmo Bowl* (8-bit Nintendo) days. Hopefully in the future we will have him.

EGM: Is there anything you wish you had more time to work on?

JB: We would have loved to include additional fields.

EGM: What were some of the field environments left on the drawing board?

TG: Sorry, we might need those ideas someday for the sequel. —Bryan Intihar

■ *Def Jam's* Redman sure dresses the part, but sadly, you won't find him in *NFL Street*.



Def Jam Football?

When asked whether developer EA Tiburon considered including *NFL Street* squads based on the other EA Big properties, Associate Producer Jason Barnes said, "We thought about [having] a *Def Jam* team and grabbing characters from *SSX* and *NBA Street*. We discussed it all year long, but the main reason we didn't was that we really wanted the focus to be on the NFL legends as our boss-type characters." Shucks.



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mail got you this excited?

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rent smart. play harder.



press start



New SOCOM II content is on the way for Sony's PS2 Hard Drive (which goes on sale, packed in with Final Fantasy XI, this March).

ONLINE THIS MONTH

The present and future of SOCOM II

Still playing *SOCOM II*? So are we and an average of over 30,000 other PS2 owners at the same time during peak hours. The total number of soldiers waging war in Sony's online shooter jumped almost 50 percent after Christmas (to almost 100,000 different players daily) and is still growing every week. What better excuse to check in with Senior Producer Seth Luisi for a quick chat on how the online war is going?

EGM: So are you happy with the reception to *SOCOM II*?

Seth Luisi: Very, very pleased. People seem to be using the new features we put into the game—making custom rooms with limited equipment, using the clans and friends list, or playing respawn [where you keep reappearing after you get killed, instead of having to wait for the round to end]. I think we have a whole new audi-

ence that does nothing but play respawn.

EGM: Have you noticed one map or mode that seems most popular?

SL: I notice people are playing escort mode a lot. And I don't know if that's just because people like that game mode or if the maps that it's played on are popular, because those tend to be larger maps with more areas to move around.

EGM: Seems like there are a lot more snipers around in *SOCOM II*...

SL: Definitely. Before, you would rarely see anyone using a sniper rifle. Now you see a lot of people using them, but thankfully, you don't see everyone using them either.

EGM: What can you tell us about your plans for the PS2 Hard Drive?

SL: I can't really talk about that right now. [But] we do have substantial downloadable content planned for the Hard Drive.

EGM: What happens to cheaters?

SL: If you are caught cheating, you get suspended for a period of time where you can't log in to *SOCOM II*, and as you are detected cheating more times, that period gets longer.

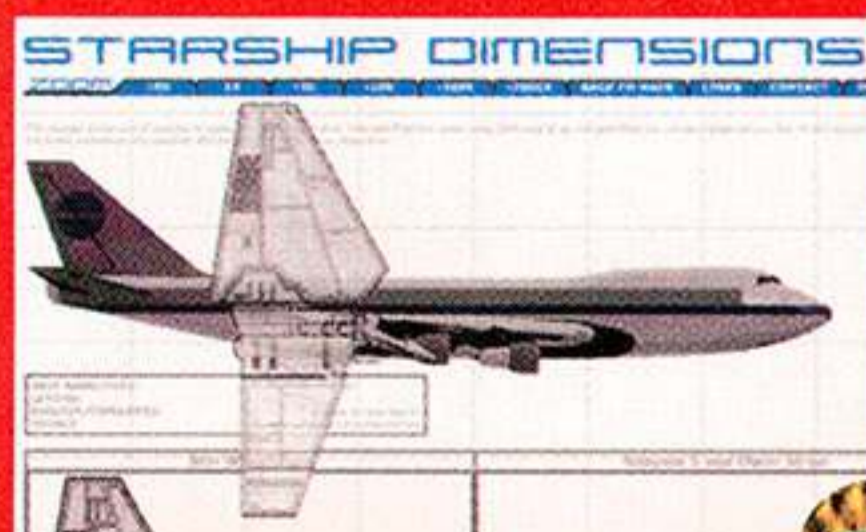
EGM: Is there anything players can do when they see someone cheating?

SL: There's a number in the user agreement you see when you log in to *SOCOM II* that you can call to report them. [And] you can always vote them out of the game and they can't get back in.

On egmmag.com

Stop on by extra.egmmag.com this month for more stills from *Final Fantasy VII: Advent Children*, an interview with Silicon Knights' Denis Dyack (one of the creative forces behind *Metal Gear Solid: The Twin Snakes*), our full interview with the producers of *NFL Street*, and more.

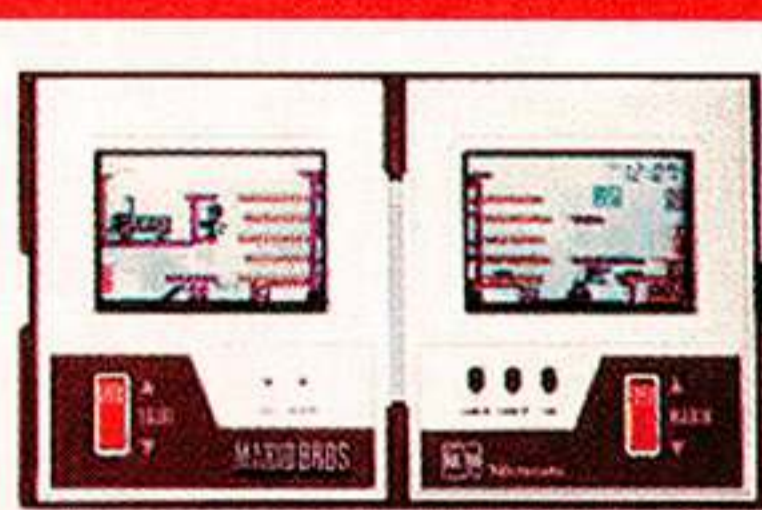
must-hit websites



merzo.net — If you're the kind of person who would, say, enjoy comparing a *Star Wars* Y-wing to a real-life 747, then this site's for you. Comparing the sizes of ships from various sci-fi series has never been this easy. Indulge that inner geek!



www.playonline.com/ff11us/ — Square's *Final Fantasy XI* launches in March on PS2, and this official site has a wealth of information, including links to in-depth fan pages, server maintenance updates, and...journal entries by game characters. Weird.



www.gameandwatch.com — All this talk of dual-screened Nintendo portables led us to this site where you can wax nostalgic for the era when Nintendo first jumped into the handheld market with its excellent line of Game & Watch titles.

PC GAMING UPDATE

Lords of OverKill



Somewhere between the transaction with Satan for their immortal souls and receiving their brand-new MBAs, the aspiring corporate jackals of America Inc. learn lots of scarifying ideas, and the blackest of these black arts is a little something called "brand extension."

Now this brand extension business isn't always absolutely and utterly soaked in the tarry bile of Beelzebub. *Champions of Norrath*, for example, is a fine game based in the constantly mushrooming *EverQuest* game world. Like Vanilla Coke, it's a great way to broaden the franchise. *Lords of EverQuest*, while not exactly Beef Liver Coke, isn't. It's more the New Coke of *EverQuest*—not horrible, but way too much like Pepsi (if Pepsi were called *WarCraft III*) to please anyone. What's so wrong about this fantasy real-time strategy (RTS)? Nothing, but there's nothing so right about it either. Mistaking sprawl for actual original content, *Lords* is ostensibly set in the *EverQuest* world, but you'd hardly know it. It wantonly apes everything in Blizzard's *WarCraft* games, except the polish. What *Lords* doesn't steal from *WarCraft* it snatches from other more compelling games: The persistent-unit feature is a direct steal from the superior *Warlords Battlecry* games. There's nothing necessarily wrong with stealing (God knows there hasn't been anything truly original in RTS's since Shiny's underappreciated *Sacrifice*), but it barely looks like Sony was trying here. More of a pale shadow than an original product, *Lords* isn't a complete waste, but it is a completely wasted opportunity.

—Robert Coffey, Computer Gaming World



There's more to winning than meets the eye.

Andrew Lawrence

GOING TO THE MAT

And Wayne Brady as Mason Wyatt



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FUMBLE



Twin Galaxies
20th Anniversary

THE REF

Ready to set a videogame world record? Meet the guy who keeps score

Of course you're the man at *Tony Hawk* or *Gran Turismo* or *Ms. Pac-Man* or (insert game name here), you cocky SOB. But no matter how great your skills, you won't get anywhere without Walter Day. The 54-year-old from Fairfield, Iowa, is the world-renowned referee of videogames. Day runs Twin Galaxies, an organization that tracks high scores and completion times for more than 100,000 cross-platform titles and runs them on www.twingalaxies.com, as well as in the book *The Official Video Game and Pinball Book of World Records*. "We're like Guinness," Day says. "We objectively witness and verify as many

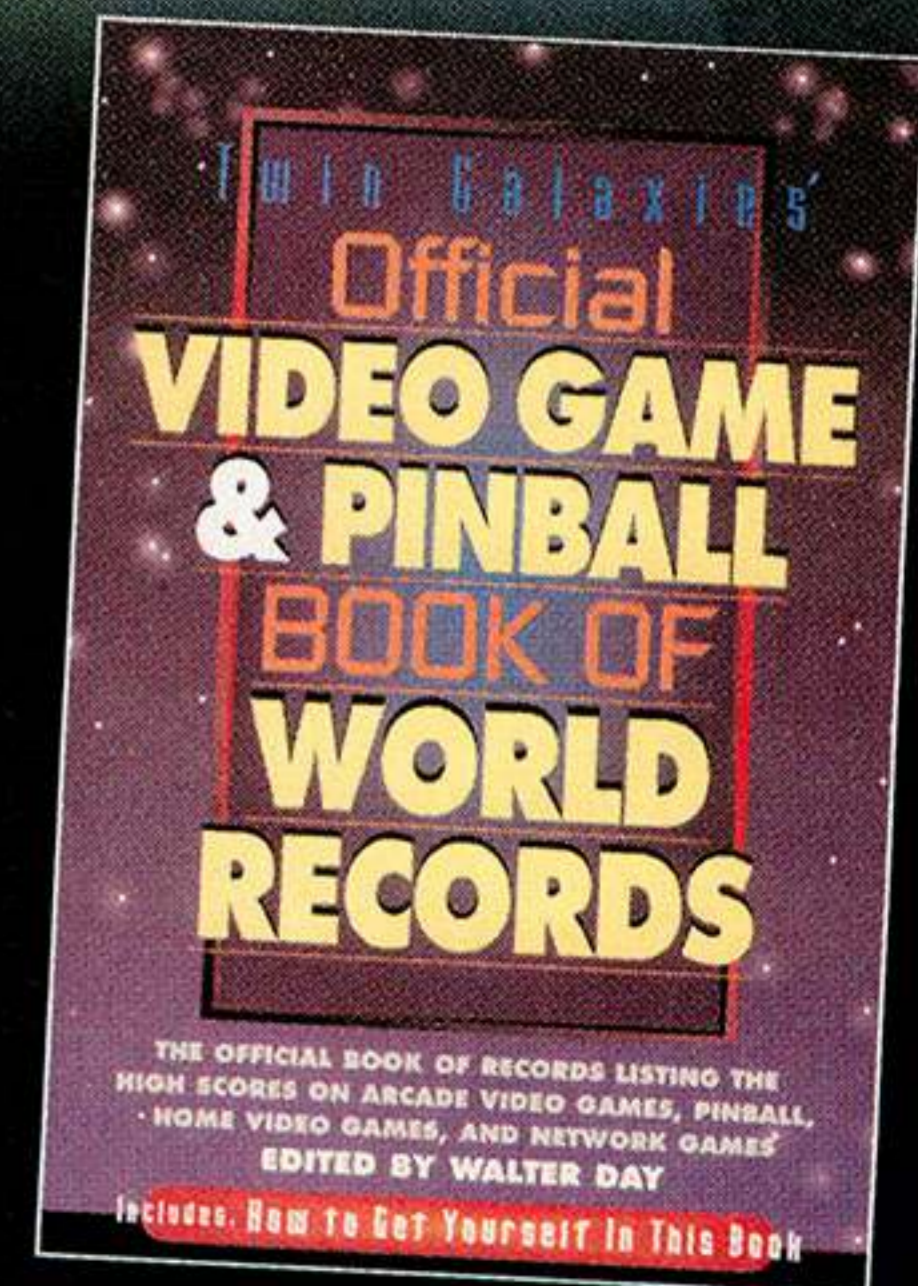
competitions as we can."

But since games are played in bars and basements as opposed to stadiums and arenas, record keeping is no easy task. Day's team of refs jet to competitions like the *Street Fighter* Championship in Omaha or the Cyberathlete Professional League's first-person-shooter contest in Dallas. Mainly, though, they rely on videotapes from gamers who capture their digital feats for posterity—and proof. "We don't just get a letter from someone's parents saying how great their kid is at *Tony Hawk*," Day says. "We need a tape showing the player booting up, scrolling through options, and recording the whole

game front to back." Twin Galaxies gets thousands of submissions per year (see twingalaxies.com for entry instructions).

Day fell into game refereeing by accident. Back in the early '80s—the golden age of arcades—he was working as an oilman in Texas when a buddy took him to a game room for the very first time. The moment he played *Pac-Man* he was hooked. "You were increasing your score and your abilities with the game," Day says, "and there was a sense of progress."

Before long, Day had dropped out of the oil biz and opened his own arcade in Iowa called Twin Galaxies. When he discovered that no one was keeping track of all the >



■ Got what it takes to make it into this book?


>> THE LATEST GUINNESS BOOK LISTS SUPER MARIO BROS. (NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM) AS THE BEST-SELLING GAME OF ALL TIME, WITH 40 MILLION SOLD WORLDWIDE... >>

■ Ten minutes in the penalty box for using a 10-year-old joypad.



► high scores, Day contacted the game publishers and volunteered for the job.

Since then, Day has established himself as the definitive scorekeeper of the industry—a job that's not getting any easier. The proliferation of cheat codes has made it more difficult to keep tabs. When a new game hits, Day and his team methodically study its features before accepting record submissions. Also, to help level the playing field, Twin Galaxies stages competitions such as the Console Games Championship: an epic contest at the Mall of America in which players compete in genres such as driving, shooting, and strategy. The \$1,000 prize money's not bad, but many just compete for the love of it.

Day thinks that champion videogamers like the legendary Billy Mitchell (see below) deserve the same kind of respect as Tiger Woods or Michael Jordan. "Great game players are not different from great athletes," he says. "They're using hand-eye coordination, mind-body coordination. And they're utilizing more or deeper intelligence in their ability to decipher a game, unravel the mystery of a game, and become the best player. I'm fascinated by watching the genius involved in becoming the greatest player." 

—David Kushner

BILLY MITCHELL: VIDEOGAME CHAMP, HOT-SAUCE MAVEN

■ Sorry, ladies: Mitchell, recognized here for his *Pac-Man* skills, is married but says he's inundated with proposals.



Billy Mitchell is the Muhammad Ali of videogames, a cocky champion who's been kicking *Ms. Pac-Man's* ass since the early '80s. The 37-year-old Floridian has set numerous world records in arcade games—even if it takes playing 47 straight hours of *Centipede*. We caught him on his cell phone while he was vacationing in Disney World, fighting off groupies.

EGM: People actually recognize you?
Billy Mitchell: Oh, yeah. Every day peo-

ple come up to me. It shocks me how knowledgeable they are about me. It's a testament to the power of videogames. I was on the Jungle Queen ride yesterday and this girl that works there recognized me. She was jumping around going, "Oh my god!" She was, like, creaming.

EGM: How'd you get into competing?

BM: In the early '80s I started playing *Donkey Kong* and got obsessive. I wasn't going to have anyone tell me that they were better than me. I had to be the best.

EGM: What makes you so good?

BM: Plain old-fashioned stubbornness. There's a huge amount of pressure to stay ahead. You have an attitude that you can't be put down. You're battling against the game, but you're also battling against yourself. It's like running a marathon. It's painful. It's absolute intensity.

EGM: Ever injure yourself competing?

BM: Never have. Though there are some guys who've injured their head slamming it into the screen.

EGM: You prefer classic arcade hits. Why not compete on today's systems?

BM: The console technology is superior, but because it has continuous play, it minimizes the level of competition. It's also a totally different experience. In the arcade, you have that big 25-inch monitor. Your power doesn't come from the game—it comes from the arcade. Back in the '80s, it was like a rock concert. When you did well, crowds would form. That's where everyone was. It's different now.

EGM: Any advice for wannabe champs?

BM: Forget it. You either have the gift and can develop it or you don't. It's simply in your DNA.

EGM: We hear of a Billy Mitchell flick.

BM: I've had more than one offer. But my story isn't finished yet. When I put down the joystick, I'm ready for the cameras.

EGM: Which actor should play you?

BM: Billy Mitchell. No one else could do it.

EGM: You make your own hot sauce and sell it at www.800hotsauce.com. How's that compare to playing games?

BM: I have the same intensity about the hot sauce my company creates. When we stand up against competitors at a food show, we don't leave room for error. We have to crush them.

THE RUMOR MILL

Gossip that wears green 24/7/365

q-mann

POT O' GOLD

Hi-ho gos-
sip fiends!
'Tis I, Patty
O'Quarter-
mann, your
host for
the
evening.



Step inside my leprechaun hut—the pot of golden rumors I am about to hand over to you is nearly overflowing. Normally, this is The Q's driest season, but a last-minute flash flood of industry dish has helped make this a hearty installment of The Rumor Mill indeed. So pick up that spoon and dig into this beyotch. E-mail quartermann@ziffdavis.com with your comments.

—The Q



Advent Children may not be all we see of Cloud in '04.

Cloud to spring into action

Final Fantasy VII fans can already look forward to the minimovie *Advent Children* (see page 30) this year. But word is that a new game featuring heroes Cloud & Co. is coming to PS2 in late 2004. Rumored to be an action game along the lines of *Devil May Cry*, the as-yet-untitled project is likely to make its debut in the next few months.

N-Gage all over again

Here's a rumor you might not've seen coming: Word is Nokia is putting the finishing touches on a redesigned version of the N-Gage hardware, so the handheld can go head-to-head with Sony's PSP later this year. If what my sources say is true, it plays the same games in a less awkward package. Could this be the end of sidetalkin'?

Multiplayer Metroid

One of the titles that The Q-inator is most looking forward to in 2004 is *Metroid Prime 2*, and whispers in the dark suggest that this time I won't have to play alone. Current scuttlebutt indicates that multiplayer has worked its way into the game, though it's unclear if it'll be straight-up deathmatch or something more...innovative.

Digital Godfather

Take EA Games' ability to churn out quality licensed games and its lack of an entry in the burgeoning mafia/gangster genre, and it's not hard to believe this next rumor. If what The Q hears is correct, the company is planning a title based on Francis Ford Coppola's 1972 epic film, *The Godfather* (and its sequels). Sounds interesting....

Games for PS3 and Xbox 2...

...are already in development! But you might be asking, "Hey Q, how can that be if no one has development kits?" Well, I'll tell you. A few developers are working on high-end PC workstations that are probably similar in processing power to both next-gen systems—they'll adapt the titles to the dev kits when they get 'em.

Sony sequel spectacular

You may already know about new installments of some of Sony's popular titles, but add these to the soon-to-be-sequelized list: *Rise to Honor*, *Dark Cloud*, and *Twisted Metal*. I'd include *Mark of Kri* (as word has it that sequel's happening too), but current talk pins the game being published by someone other than Sony. Tricky, tricky....



Anyone up for a four-player Metroid hunt?

BY THE NUMBERS

Mega Man Metrics

1987 Year *Mega Man* debuted in Japan for Nintendo's 8-bit NES

5 Different *Mega Man* series (including the *Zero* spin-offs)

31 Actual *Mega Man* titles released in the U.S. to date

20 million Units the *Mega Man* games have sold worldwide



DESERT ISLAND GAMES

JORDAN MECHNER



Each month, we ask a celebrity or game designer: If you were stranded on a deserted island, which three games would you want to add fun to your sun? This month, we strand Jordan Mechner, creator of the *Prince of Persia* series and consultant on *POP: The Sands of Time*.

—Marc Saltzman



Jak II (PS2)

"I haven't played it, so a desert island would give me a chance to catch up. This is one I could sink my teeth into."



Ico (PS2)

"I loved this game but only got halfway through. I've been meaning to get back and see it through to the ending. I still feel bad about abandoning that waiflike princess. I felt she was really starting to trust me, and I let her down!"

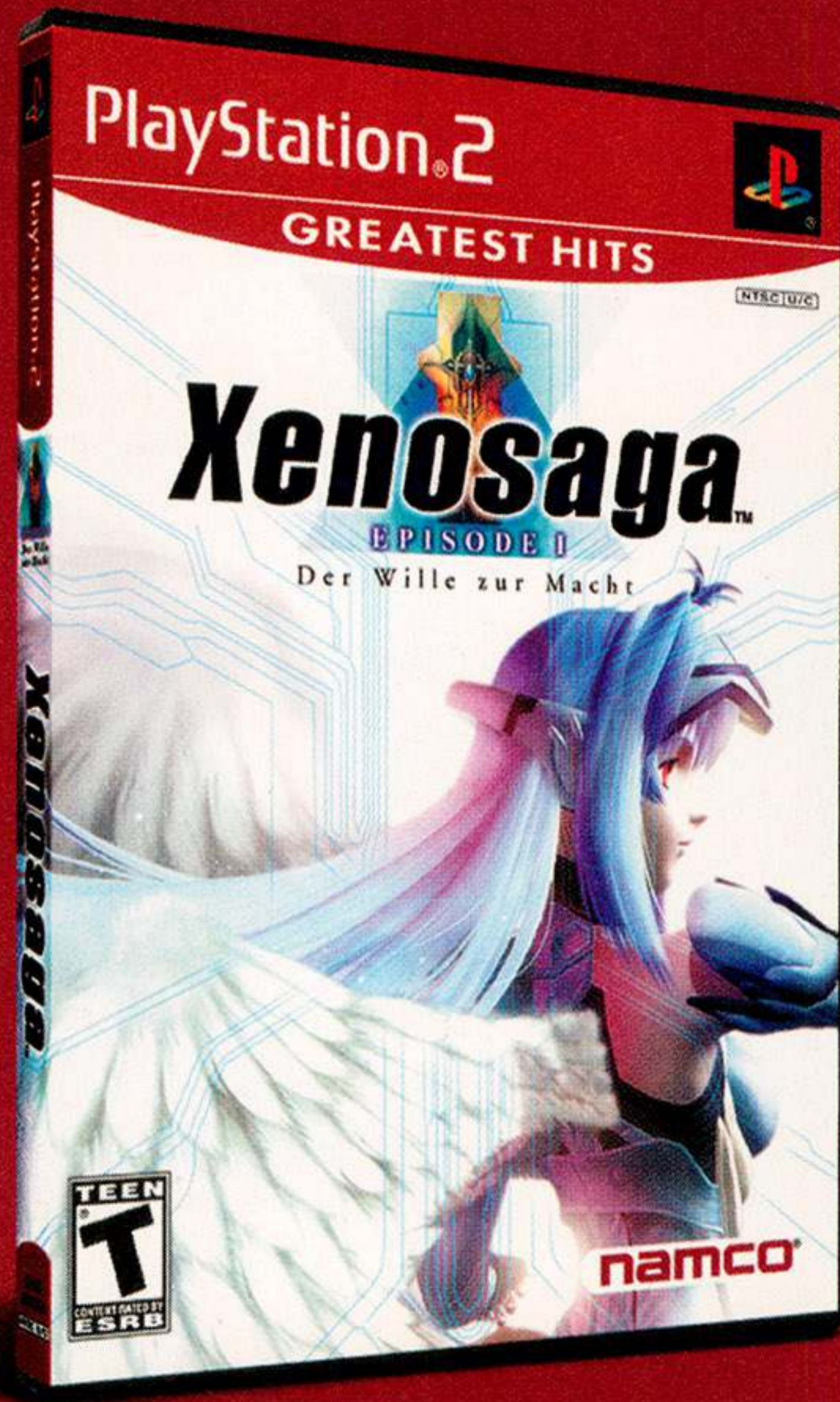


The Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker (GC)

"I've wanted to play this ever since it came out, but I never got started just because the world seems so huge and deep. It would take a decent block of time to do it justice."

Photograph by Jennifer Mechner

EPIC REVIEWS. EPIC SAGA. EPIC HIT.



"...an interstellar otherspace opus of the most magnificent kind..."
~GamePro, 4.5 out of 5

"...one of the coolest stories you'll encounter..."
~Official PlayStation Magazine, 4 out of 5

"...Xenosaga is to video games as the original Star Wars is to movies."
~GMR, 9 out of 10

"Xenosaga is truly a triple-A title..."
~Game Informer, 9.75 out of 10

"Calling this game epic would be an understatement."
~IGN

namco-xenosaga.com

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Take on 80 hours of gameplay using innovative battle and control systems.



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THE HOT FIVE

The voters have spoken—these five games interest them most

Head over to egmmag.com to vote for which games you want updates on each month.



1

HALO 2

XB • Microsoft • Fall 2004 — Red and Blue Master Chiefs, will you never get along? Not according to this first screen of actual *Halo 2* multiplayer combat. Developer Bungie released the shot the same day it affirmed a late-2004 release date.

■ Is it just us, or is that one blue dude jumping *really* high?



2

METAL GEAR SOLID 3: SNAKE EATER

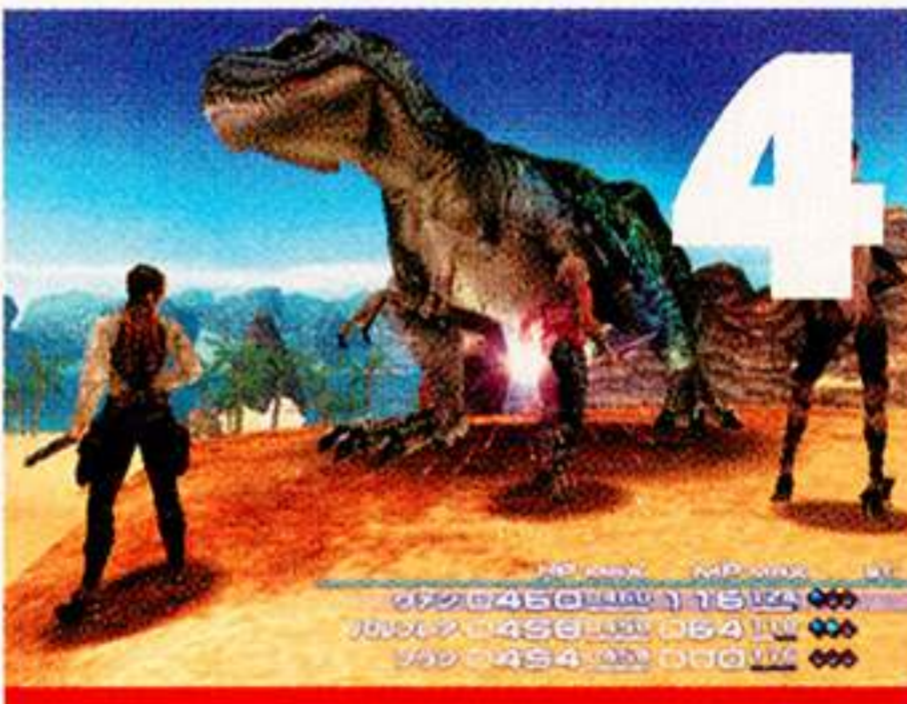
PS2 • Konami • Late 2004 — They say hunger is the best sauce. Well, it better be, since Konami's being so stingy with *MGS3* tidbits that we can barely remember what Snake tastes like. With a release still a long ways off, this new screen will have to sate your appetite.



3

RESIDENT EVIL 4

GC • Capcom • Late 2004 — You may have heard unsettling murmurings claiming that *RE4* will no longer be exclusive to GameCube, or that the game is suffering horrific delays, or that the entire staff has turned into flesh-hungry zombies and plunged Capcom's offices into a survival-horror blood bath. Don't listen. We'll give you the true scoop on *RE4*'s shocking gameplay innovations in next month's issue.



4

FINAL FANTASY XII

PS2 • Square Enix • Early 2005 — Readers have been Final Fantasizing about this hotly anticipated RPG, and we've got a few sultry details. Already confirmed are three-character battles, a less-than-linear story line, and the reappearance of staple series species, mooglees. The bad news? Commence a full year of painful yearning...now.



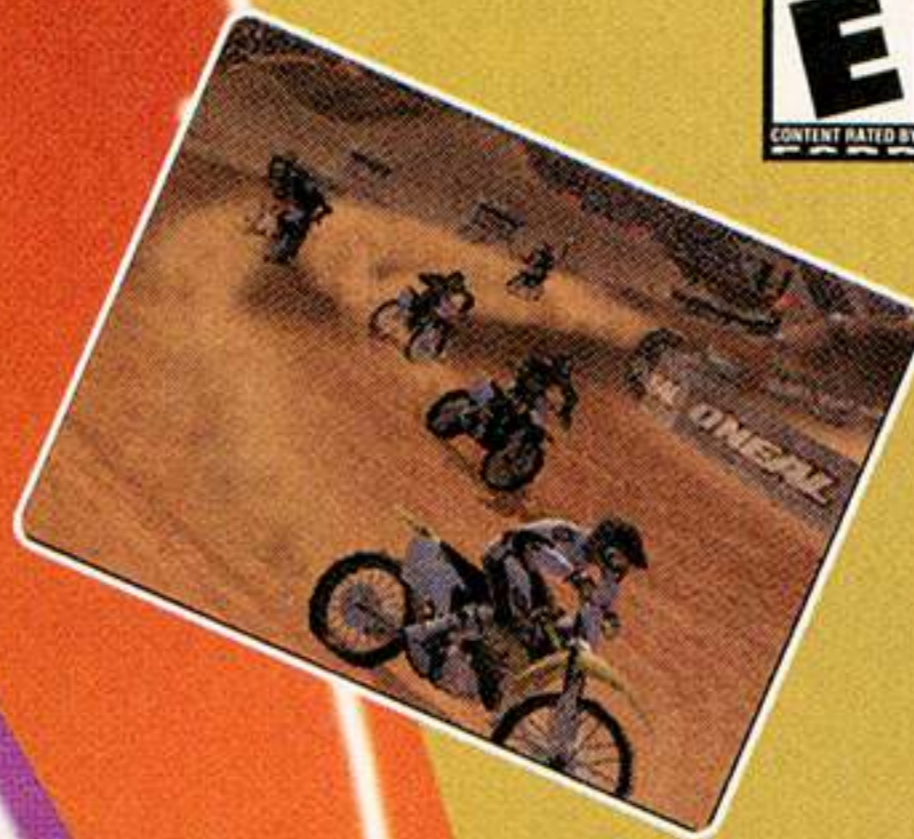
5

GRAN TURISMO 4

PS2 • Sony CEA • Mid 2004 — We're still waiting for a finalized *GT4* vehicle roster, but we can add one very special car to the list: a 1962 Buick Skylark Special (pictured above) christened "Bu'Wicked." *GT4* creator Kazunori Yamauchi handpicked the regal custom job as Best in Show at a high-profile auto show, edging out a Renault Clio Sport, an Acura NSX coupe, and a Saturn Ion for a spot in the game.

>> SONY SOLD 100,000 UNITS OF ITS NEAR-\$1,000 HIGH-END, DO-EVERYTHING MULTIMEDIA PLAYSTATION-BRANDED "PSX" IN JAPAN WITHIN ONE WEEK OF ITS RELEASE.... >>

TRICK
OFF THIS.



NOT YOUR ORDINARY GAME

MTX: MOTOTRAX
PS2, XBOX

Think you've got what it takes? MTX: Mototrax offers the fastest motocross gaming experience that will have you accelerating around corners and flying through the air at teeth-rattling speeds. Launch into a gravity-defying inverted 360 before crossing the finish line to the roar of the crowd. Earn cold hard cash from contest wins and sponsorships. Use the money to modify your rider's attributes, purchase equipment upgrades or buy access to freeride environments complete with new goals and objectives. You can upgrade your power as you progress and ride 125cc and 250cc 2 stroke bikes as well as 250cc and 450cc 4 stroke bikes from manufacturers like Suzuki and Yamaha.

The game features Travis Pastrana—legendary motocross, supercross and freestyle athlete—plus 12 other top pro riders, or you can take your skills online to compete against your friends or other live players to see who is king of the track!



BREAK OUT OF



THE ORDINARY

BREAKOUT
TRICKS

SWEET
CODES

NFL STREET
PS2, XBOX, GC



Unlimited Turbo:
Press Start to pause game play, then hold L1 and press Circle, X, Right, Left (2), Up.

Unlockable Teams:
NFL Legends: Go to the NFL Challenge and complete the initial ladder.

X-ecutioners: Go to the NFL Challenge and complete the fourth ladder.

AFC West All-Stars: Go to NFL Challenge mode and complete the AFC West.

AFC East All-Stars: Go to NFL Challenge mode and complete the AFC East.

AFC North All-Stars: Go to NFL Challenge mode and complete the AFC North.

AFC South All-Stars: Go to NFL Challenge mode and complete the AFC South.

NFC West All-Stars: Go to NFL Challenge mode and complete the NFC West.

NFC East All-Stars: Go to NFL Challenge mode and complete the NFC East.



PRINCE OF PERSIA: THE SANDS OF TIME PS2, XBOX, GC

Slo-Mo Jump

- In a fight, all the enemies lose their blocks if you use a slo-mo. The ones that wouldn't allow you to jump over them now do.

Continuous Swing

- When swinging from pole to pole, keep the R1 button pressed down; this allows the Prince to continuously swing and link to the next pole.

Secret Passages

- It is necessary to closely observe the walls that do not seem solid. They are probably walls that can be broken and lead to the secret passages.

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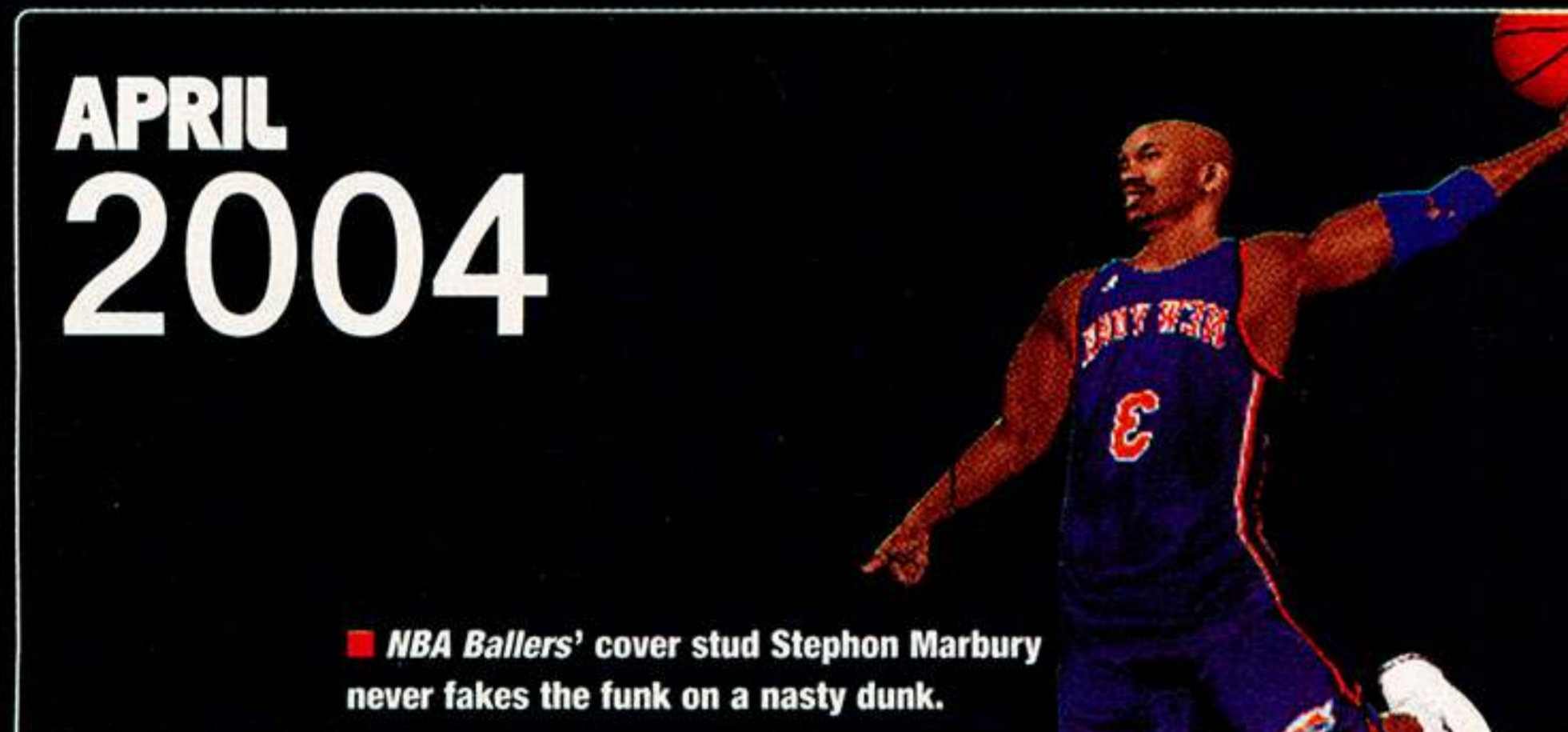
DARE TO LOG ON TO BUTTERFINGER.COM

COMING SOON

What to play during April showers

APRIL 2004

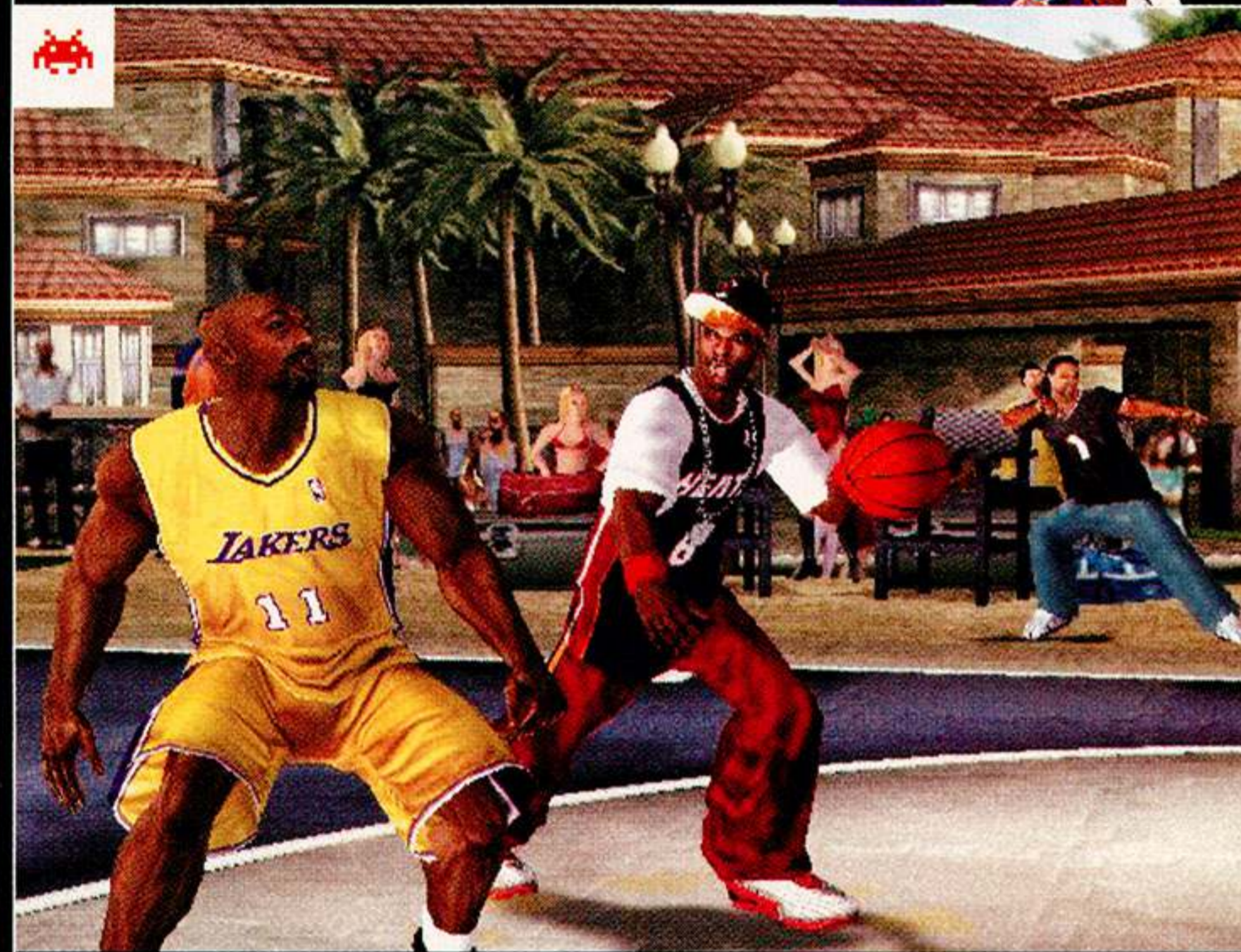
■ *NBA Ballers'* cover stud Stephon Marbury never fakes the funk on a nasty dunk.



Digimon Racing
GBA • Bandai — Digital monsters duke it out on—you guessed it—go-karts. Link cables let four little ones in on the fun.



Growlanser: Generations
PS2 • Working Designs — Triple-digit hours of play await the dedicated in this collection of previously unreleased RPGs.



Headhunter: Redemption
PS2/XB • Sega — *Metal Gear Solid* meets *Shenmue* in this sequel to the story- and stealth-driven action-adventure.



La Pucelle: Tactics
PS2 • Mastiff — Tactical roleplaying in a world where monsters pose as humans and humans look like monsters.

NBA Ballers
PS2/XB/GC • Midway — From wardrobes to automobiles, NBA superstars are known for livin' large. Now it's your turn to share in the wealth. Defeat the NBA's elite in 1-on-1 pickup games, and you too can build a home that's *MTV Cribs*-worthy.



Mega Man Anniversary Collection
PS2/GC • Capcom — Looking to play 10 of the games that defined 2D platforming? Here's your opportunity.



River City Ransom EX
GBA • Atlus — Did you know that eating sushi makes your punches and kicks stronger? In River City, it does.



Serious Sam: Next Encounter
PS2/GC • Take-Two — As far as first-person shooters go, *Sam* keeps it simple: If it moves, kill it. If not, try anyway.



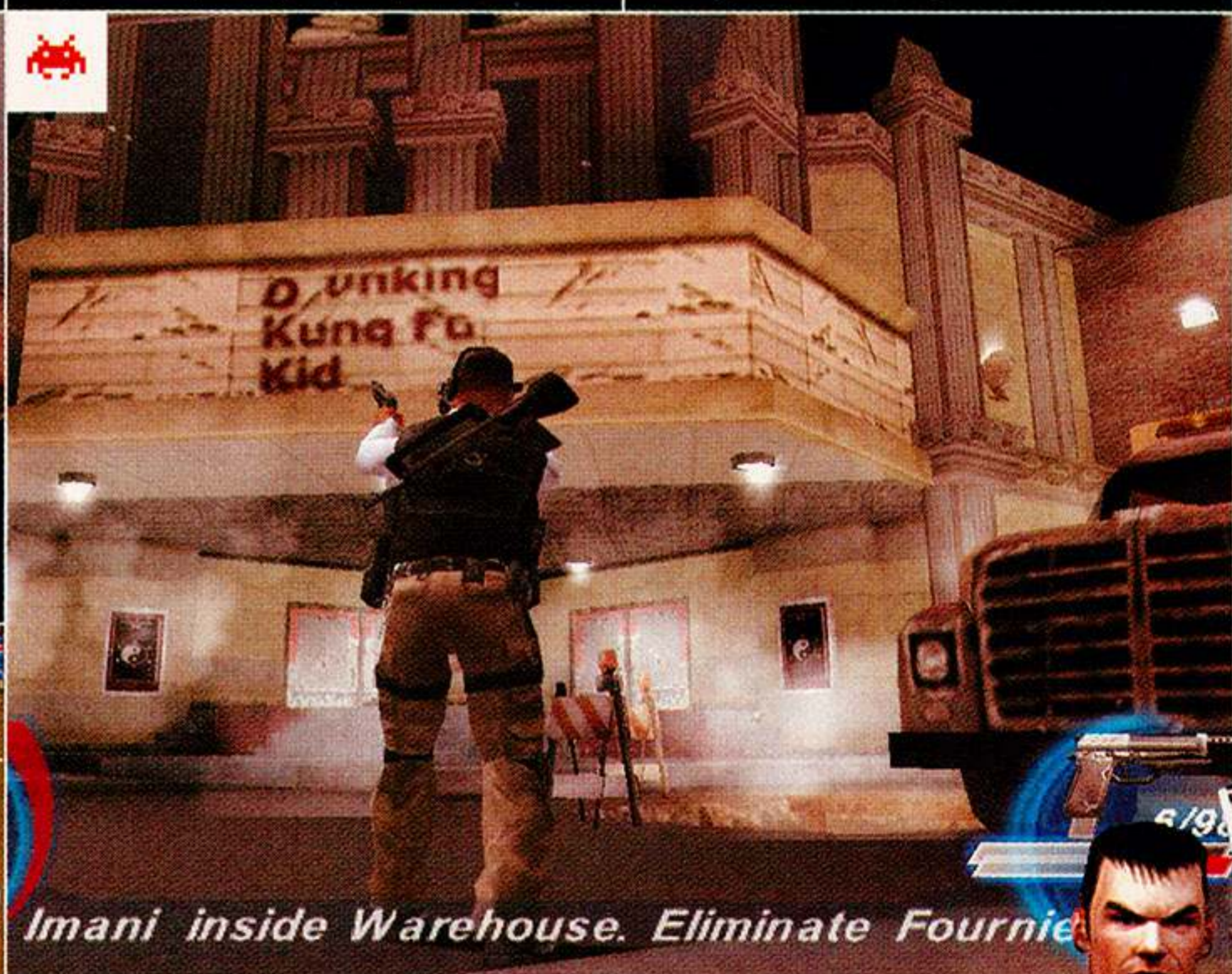
Siren
PS2 • Sony CEA — The travel brochure on this zombie-infested village never mentioned the blood-flowing rivers. Bonus!



Showdown: Legends of Wrestling
PS2/XB • Acclaim — The latest in the vintage wrasslin' series comes with simplified controls and over 70 venerable meatheads.



World Tour Soccer 2005
PS2 • 989 Sports — Sony's tour of footy features over 900 squads (international and club), plus graphics to rival *FIFA*'s.



Syphon Filter: The Omega Strain
PS2 • Sony CEA — Saving the world is reason enough to retire early, but Gabe Logan isn't signing off just yet. He's calling the shots from HQ as four new agents cooperate to eradicate evil.

■ *Syphon Filter's* Gabe Logan

TIMOTHY'S

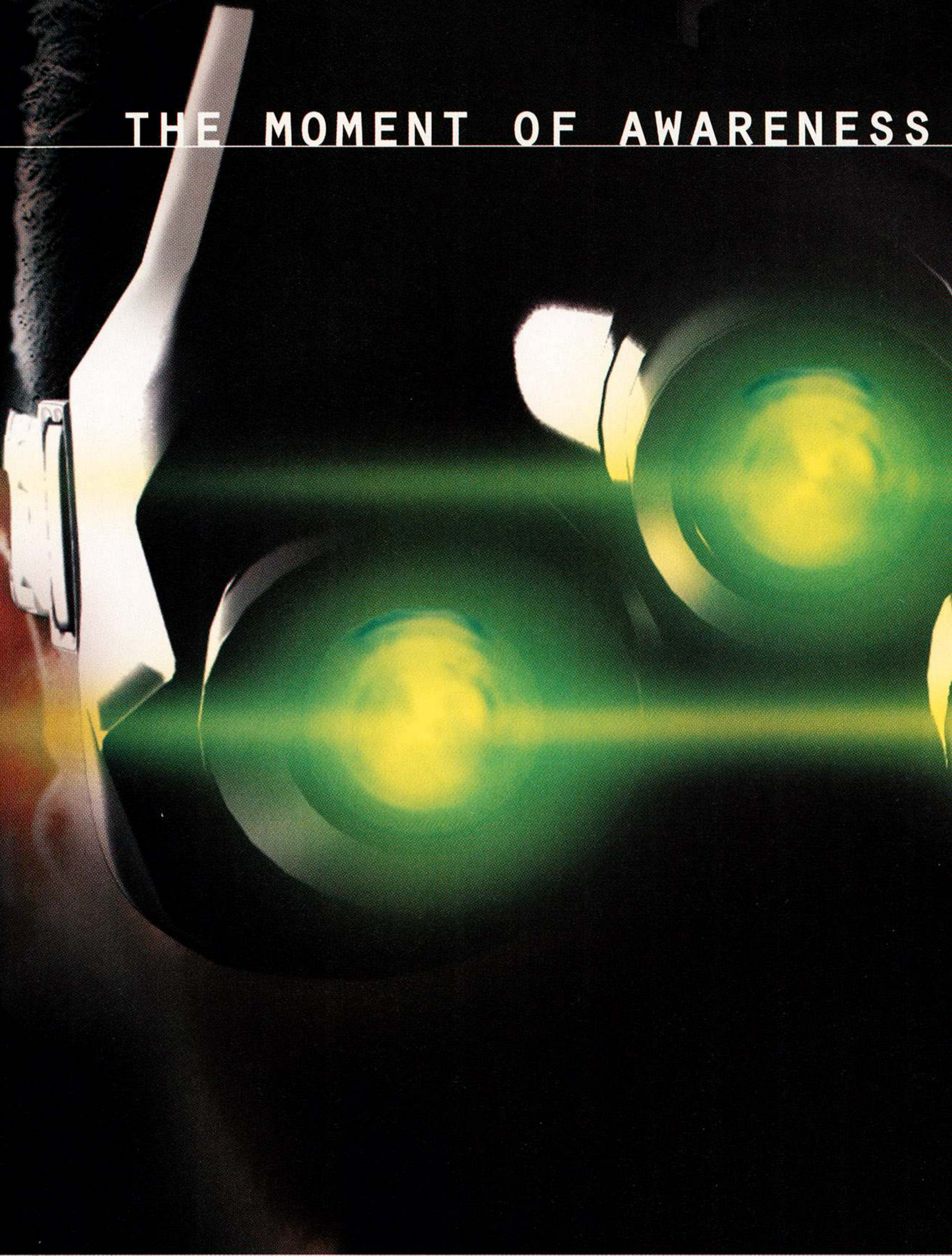


DEFINING MOMENTS



Intelligence

THE MOMENT OF AWARENESS



**“Information is
the deadliest weapon of all.”**

-Mike Grasso, Tactical Intelligence Specialist



In a matter of seconds, newly acquired intelligence can decide the fate of an entire operation. This is why militaries devote tremendous resources to gathering the most current and accurate data available. The Clancy Games Development Team operates no differently, forming a network of experts led by Clancy himself. With unprecedented civilian access into America's warfare assets, the Clancy intel group secures data on near-future technologies, tactics, and combat scenarios for immediate field use by Clancy developers.



Vigilance

THE MOMENT



A close-up, low-angle shot of a military helmet and a rifle. The helmet is made of a textured, olive-drab fabric and is positioned in the upper left. The rifle, a dark-colored assault rifle, is the central focus, angled diagonally from the bottom left towards the center. The lighting is dramatic, with strong highlights and deep shadows, creating a sense of tension and focus.

OF FOCUS

**“It is often the
little things that
will kill you.”**

-Anonymous Navy SEAL Operative



Even the best-laid plans don't withstand the first five minutes of combat. To succeed, each team member must be watchful of subtle, unpredictable nuances in ballistics, enemy behavior, and the environment. To reproduce the minute details of real-life operations, the Clancy Games Development Team looks beyond second accounts, drawing upon their own military experiences as former U.S. Marines, National Guard Reserve servicemen, and Military Police. Some details are too critical to be handled without the deadliest of certainty.

 **Tom Clancy's**



Intensity

THE MOMENT OF TRUTH



“A soldier’s life is years of training interspersed with seconds of sheer terror.”

-Special Forces Axiom

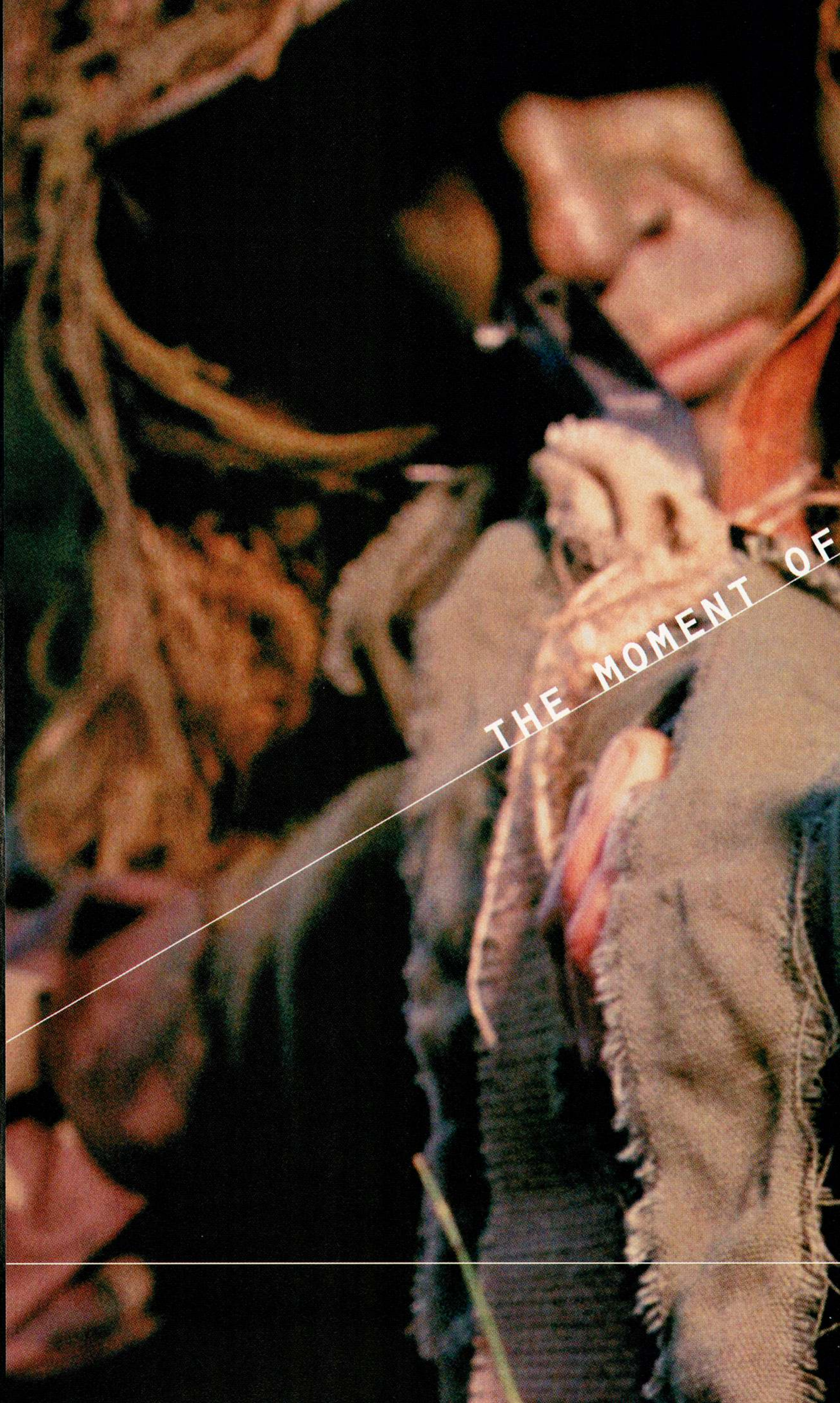


In the moments leading up to combat, an operative is brutally tested in his or her ability to face rising tension. Possessing this ability is not an instinct, but an acquired skill. And to understand it firsthand, the Clancy Games Development Team volunteered for unprotected tear gas exposure and trained with non-lethal munitions used by militaries to condition troops to fear. These experiences aided teams in depicting the crucial seconds of combat tension.



Excellence

THE MOMENT OF



PERFECTION


“U.S. Army snipers are 1800% more accurate than the average soldier.”

– U.S. Army Fact File



The ability to hit a six-foot man 628 meters away with the first, cold-barrel shot is the result of unrelenting training. Operatives must fire their weapons frequently, under every conceivable condition, until elite performance is routine. In order to create the highest quality of in-game combat, the Clancy Games Development Team undertakes assault-rifle drills and mock kill-house operations in full engagement gear, and have witnessed SWAT and Special Forces teams in action firsthand. In this way, the Clancy Team aims to learn the operative's rigorous journey to excellence.

 **Tom Clancy's**

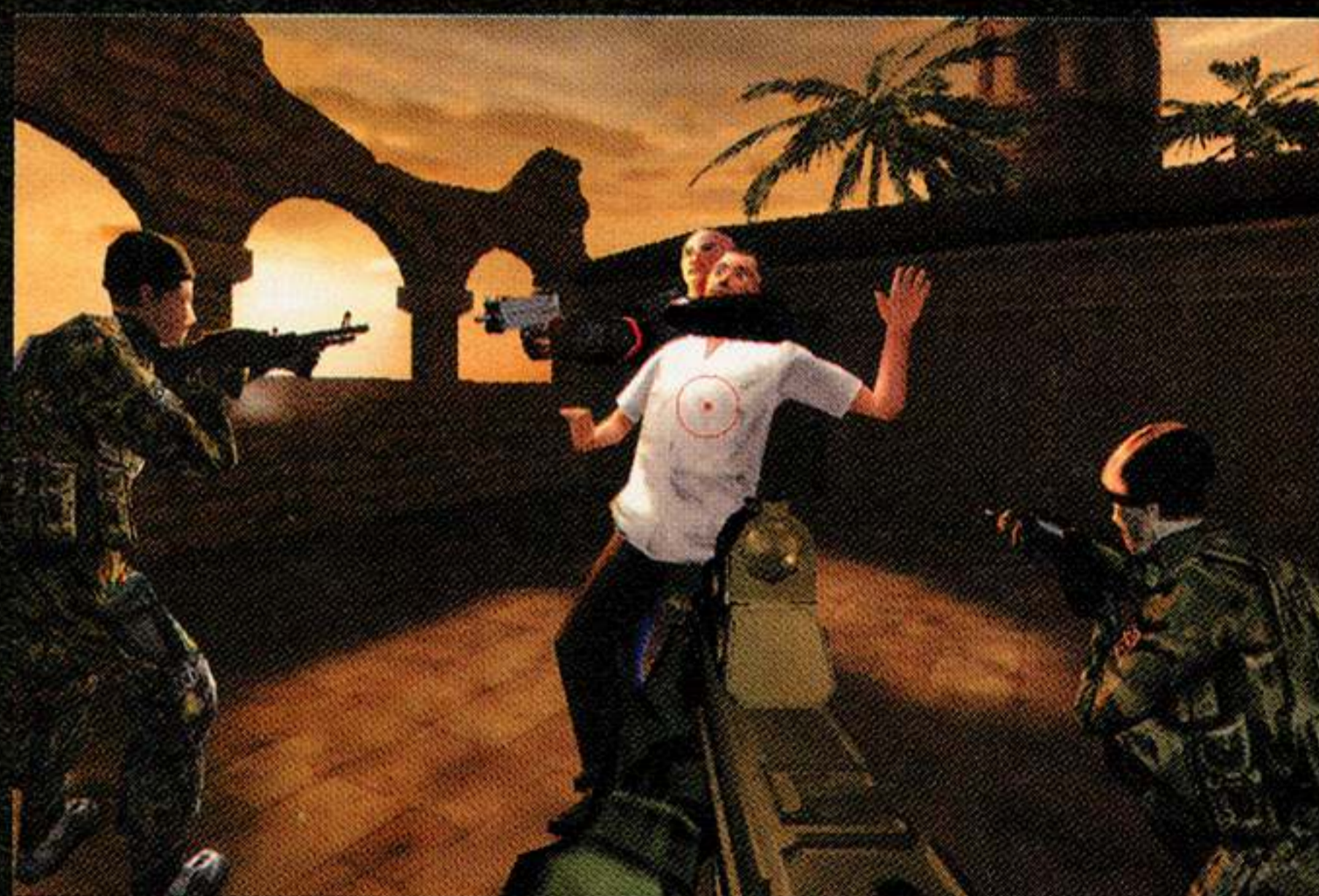


TOM CLANCY'S

FREEDOM ISN'T FREE

**“The whole point of
being an American is to enjoy
your freedom.”**

– Tom Clancy

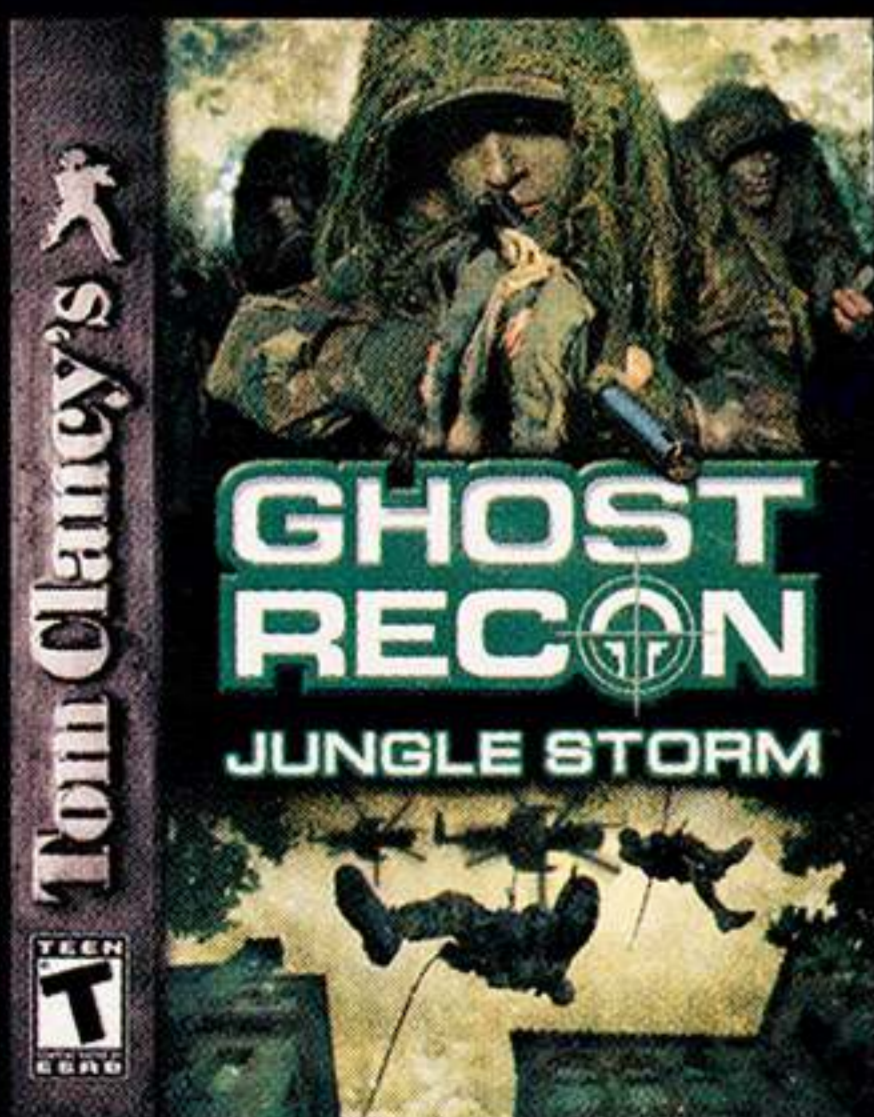
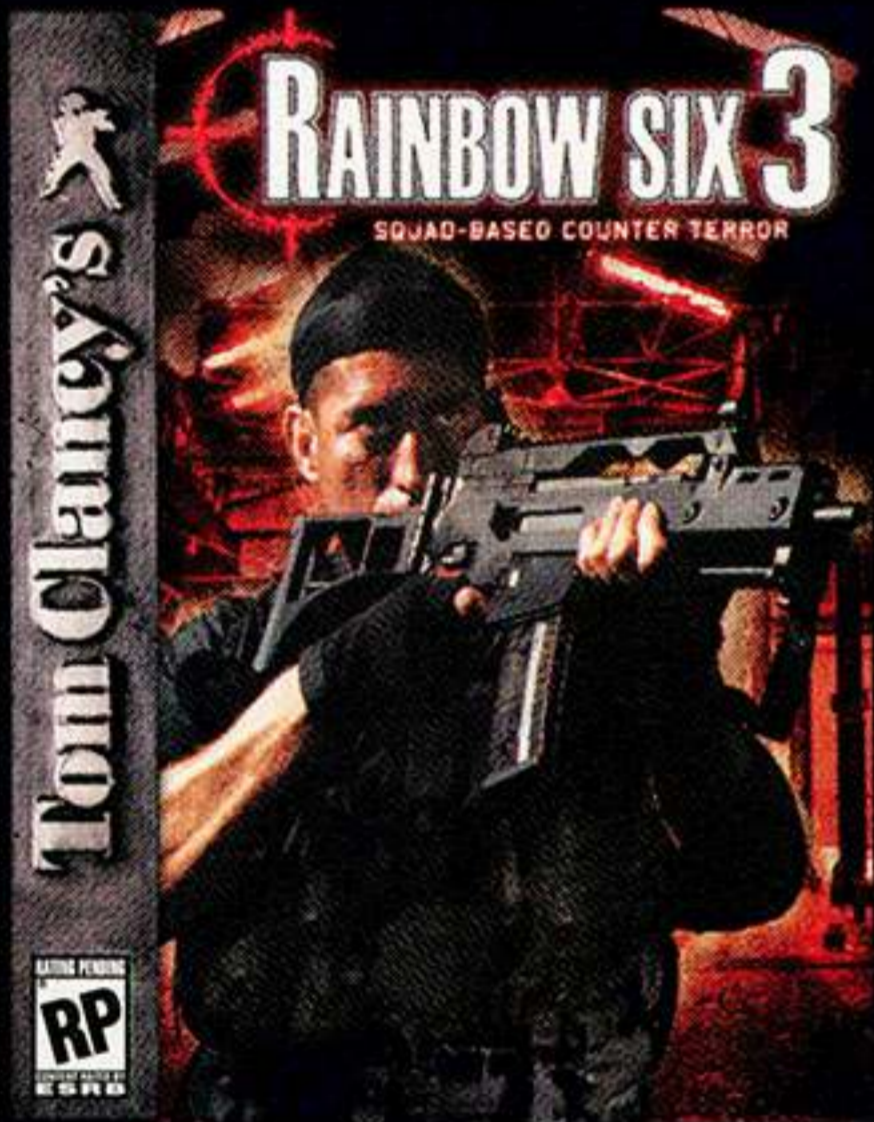
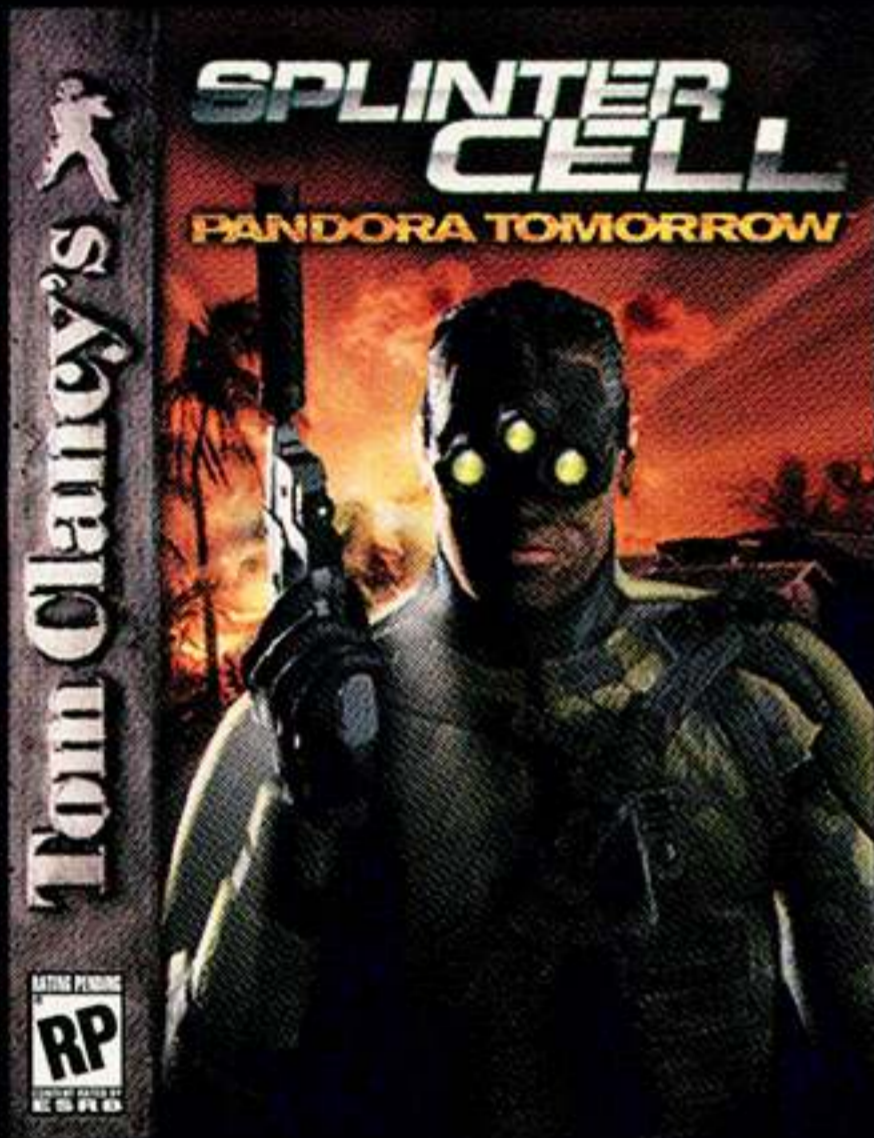


Freedom's battlefield knows no borders.

Its defenders must stand in readiness, prepared for any threat. No danger can be too great, no enemy too terrible. They must execute with intelligence, intensity, vigilance, and excellence. They must accept no outcome but victory, preserving freedom in decisive, defining moments of combat. And when the threat is extinguished, and the cost of freedom is clear – they will readily fight again. *When your moment comes, how will you perform?*

 **Tom Clancy's**

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NEW SCHOOL

The spring semester is now in session, and *EGM* has prepared an exhaustive syllabus covering the **50 games** you must know about in 2004. Our stern schoolmarm will get you up to speed on the required subjects, and yes, this will be on your test. >

Photographs by Michael Sexton

THE GETAWAY 2

PS2 • Sony CEA • Fall 2004

Students, please review your lesson on *The Getaway*, last year's PlayStation 2 *Grand Theft Auto*-style driving game bent on building a living, breathing, seedy underworld of kingpins and Cockney-rhyming, Ford Cortina-driving hard cases with family problems. Some gaming magazine touted the "hyper-realistic visuals [that] really put *Grand Theft Auto: Vice City's* graphics to shame." That same mag also said, "The controls, aiming system, and camera all have major problems." Hold on—that was us. And we weren't telling no porkie-pies.*

A big seller that eluded critical acclaim, *The Getaway* proved that a minutely modeled recreation of London—involving a painstaking photography process that took Brit developer Team Soho three years—doesn't make up for so-so gameplay. Oh,

and sending out early screens of a sparkling Audi TT in an alleyway (scenes so amazing they could never hope to be re-created in a moving game) didn't help, either. But all that's in the past now. With the announcement of *The Getaway 2*—due this fall for PS2—Sony and Team Soho are promising a sequel that rights the wrongs of the previous game while avoiding a surplus of hype and trumped-up imagery. Ogle the exclusive screens on these pages and clap politely; they look like they're from the game this time.

London calling

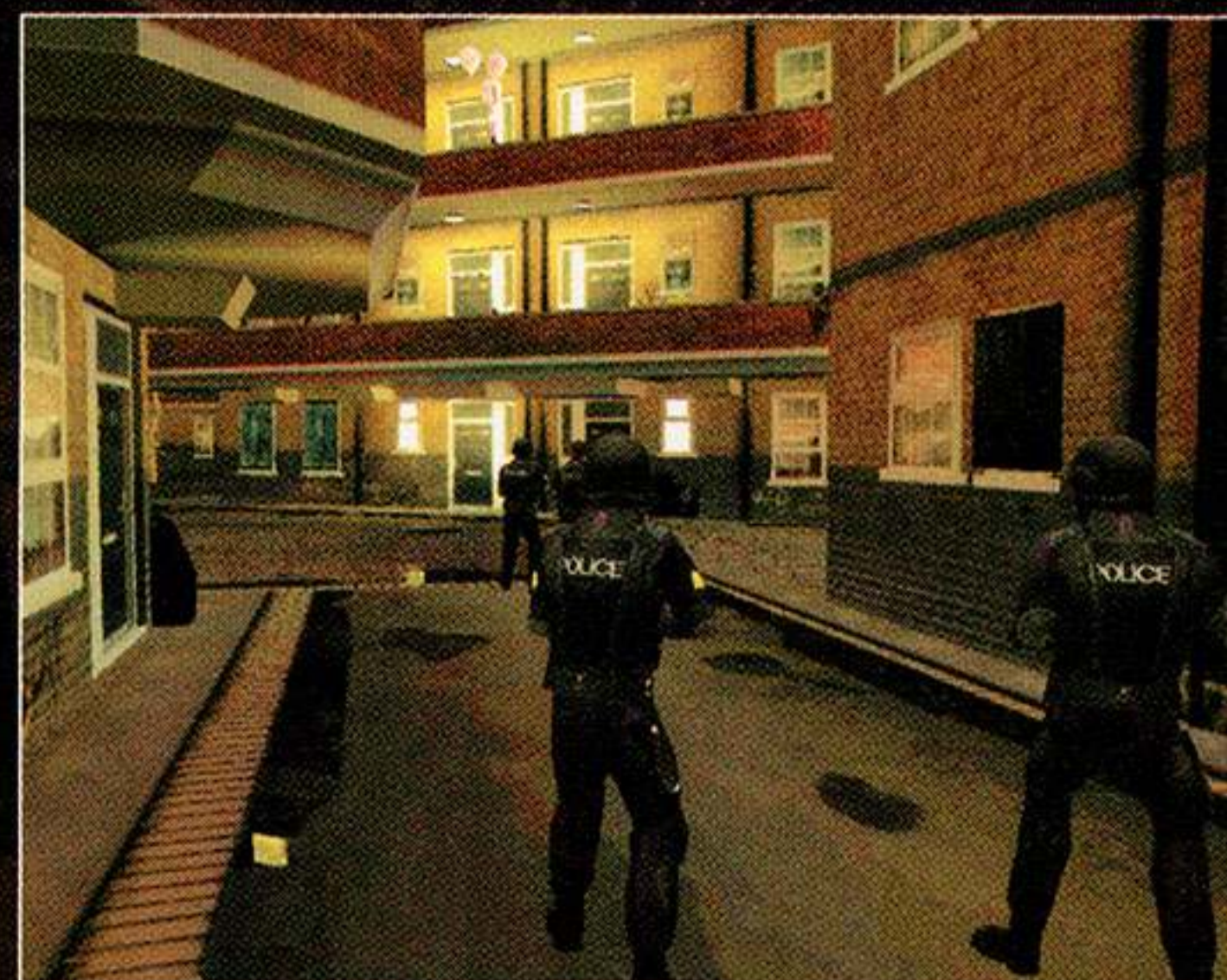
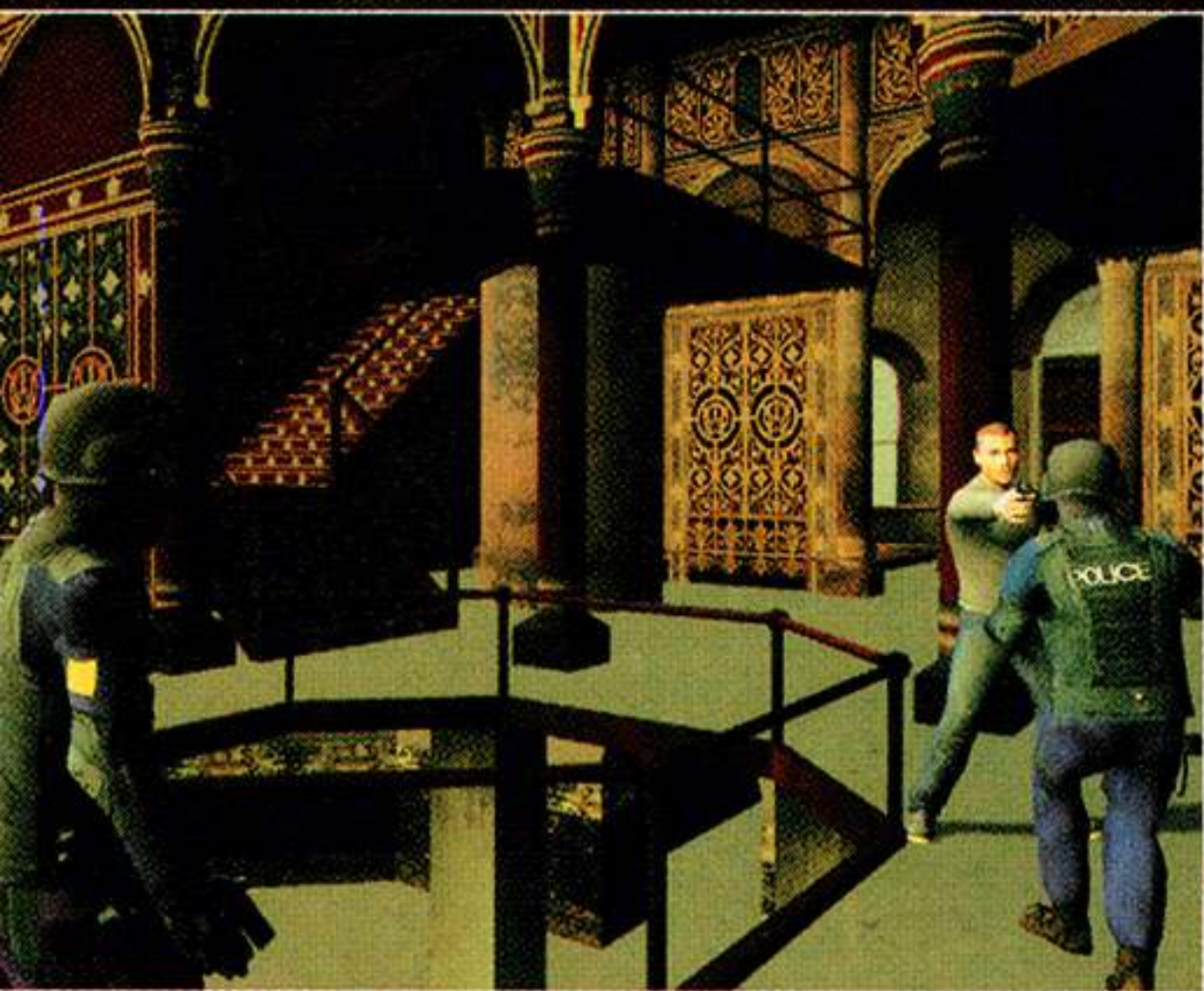
After spending three years modeling every bit of the city—down to texturing just the right shade of brickwork across King's Cross Station—Team Soho isn't about to up and leave their virtual London for the sequel. "The focus of *The Getaway* series

has always been Central London," says Director Naresh Hirani. "It's on our doorstep; we know this city, both the tourist side and the seedy side. It's the perfect backdrop to tell many stories." The team is creating new locations to add depth and detail to the heart of the city, but according to Hirani, "There was no point in expanding out to the suburbs."

This allowed the level designers to don a variety of fetching hard hats, inspect all of London's newer building sites, and gather data on all the construction that's taken place since the first game. After all, this sequel kicks off two years after the events of *The Getaway*. "London has moved on, but some things never change," Hirani says. "New gangs have moved in, some old gangs are making new friends, some of the villains are getting desperate...and it's getting dangerous."

Like the first game, then? Don't bank on it. For starters, this sequel has a new cast, and prequel stars Mark Hammond and DC Carter aren't part of it. "There are some very obvious common elements and some familiar faces, but the new story is not just a simple continuation," says Hirani. The sequel instead features amateur boxer Eddie O'Connor, a small-time palooka who gets mixed up in thuggery. But like the original, which had players start the game as a crook and switch over to a cop at the halfway point, *Getaway 2* will feature multiple characters—more than two this time. "The idea behind the structure of the first game was to show two sides of the same story—the cop and the gangster, concurrent episodes in a gangster flick," says Hirani. "The second game builds on this theme by telling the story from a number of interwoven perspectives." ►

*Cockney slang for telling lies. At least that's what the bona-fide Brit who wrote this article tells us.

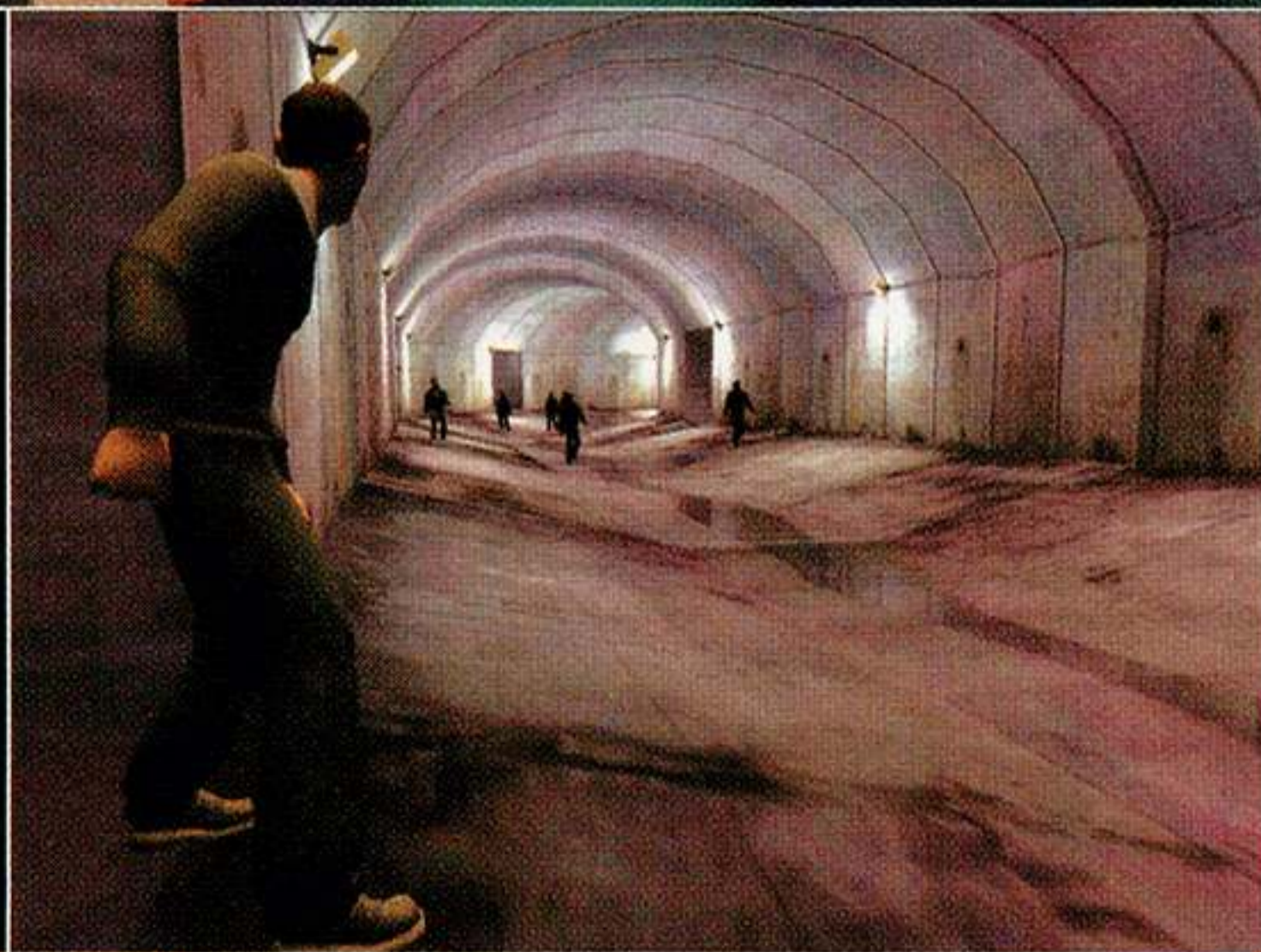


■ You'll face members of the Metropolitan Police Force's Special Operations Division, who are way more dangerous than those silly-hat Bobbies.



Sneaking Feeling

Didn't like all the skulking around in the first *Getaway*? Too bad for you, mate. Developer Team Soho is expanding the stealth gameplay of the sequel. Fortunately, "we've refined it," says Director Naresh Hirani, but that's all he'll say. We're hoping the new stealth missions won't involve tedious trial and error like in the first game.



■ You start as amateur boxer and part-time bouncer Eddie O'Connor, who lands on the bad side of Johnny Law and the king of London gangland after a small-time crime job goes awry.



Going Down

Along with grimy new sewer locations, the *Getaway 2* will feature a complex working Underground (the British equivalent of a subway system). "It will be an integral part of the story line and gameplay," says Director Naresh Hirani. "I don't want to give away too much about it, as there are some climactic scenes that take place [there]."



► Keeping it real

The developers are also still keen on sticking to the original game's strict "full immersion" aspect—a design choice that deep-sixes onscreen indicators like health bars or city maps in favor of more natural and realistic cues. Instead of relying on a simple directional arrow to figure out where to drive, for example, players must watch the turn-signal lights on their cars. The big idea is to make the series feel more like a movie than a videogame, but the lack of game-style icons was also the target of gripes from many players and reviewers of the first game. Take the bizarrely annoying and inadvertently humorous "lean" move, which requires injured players to trudge off to a quiet wall somewhere and gasp like an asthmatic smoker to regain health.

So what's the solution for the sequel? "It's a tough nut to crack," Hirani concedes. "We have the seemingly opposing ideas of gameplay essentials and the concept we call cinematic clarity. The solution used in the first *The Getaway* was effective and elegant in many ways; we allowed the player to recover when he wanted, even in a gunfight, if he found a safe spot. The drawback was that it had the potential to fragment the game experience, as the player always had the opportunity to break the flow of action."

This time around, the health system will "fit in" more naturally and not be so irritating. "In the sequel," he says, "we take the principle [of total immersion] forward by having natural locations within the environment where you can regain health through the use of objects found there. We've also added the concept of threat into the health-regain system. This forces players to think more strategically about where they stop to recover." So no wheezing against a cocaine crate on a Yardie's manor, OK rudeboy*?

Team Soho is shoring up this sequel with a lot more variety in the on-foot and driving missions and much greater diversity of unlockable gameplay, making the game less linear than before. They've also overhauled the player control system, Hirani says, "giving the player pinpoint accuracy over the characters." Add to the mix some truly different locations (such as rooftop chases, a fully working Underground rail system, and the obligatory romp around a sewage system...hey, it worked for Lara Croft, didn't it?), multiple story lines, and on-foot fighting (specific to characters and locales), then subtract boats, planes, and online play (there isn't any), and you've still got a return to London worth waiting for...until zee Germans get there.

—David SJ Hodgson

*Brit-slang translation: So no leaning against a drug crate on a gangster's turf, OK drunken South London teenager?

The Eddie O'Connor Equation: Gangster or Wankster?

That vanishing hairline. That chip-on-his-shoulder attitude. That velour tracksuit. First playable character Eddie O'Connor—a likely candidate for a *Queer Eye* makeover if there ever was one—exudes a certain working-class charm you just don't get in games. What's developer Team Soho's top-secretive formula for this brutish London gent? Let's do the math on how this ghetto-way star was built....



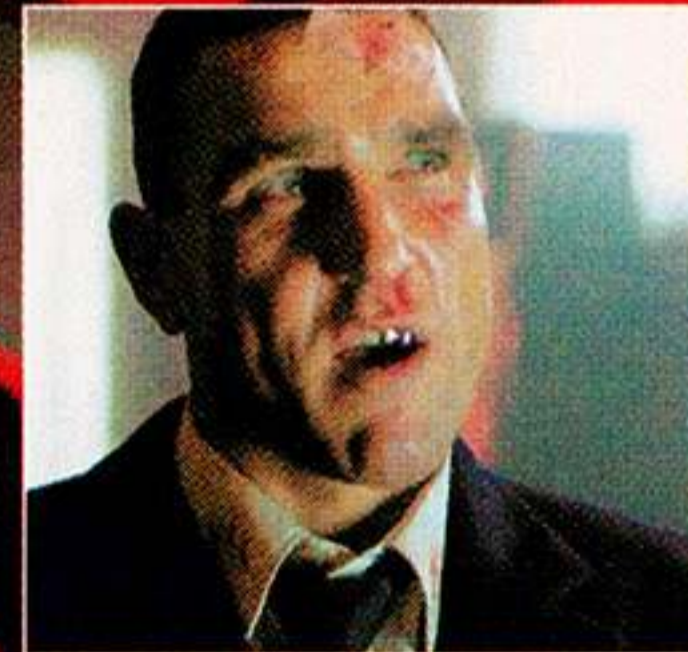
Jason Statham

Best known as Bacon, the hard-case working stiff from *Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels*. Rough and rugged, he's guaranteed to drive the ladies wild and send the gents scrambling for a Cockney thesaurus. Remove baseball bat. Replace with pool cue.



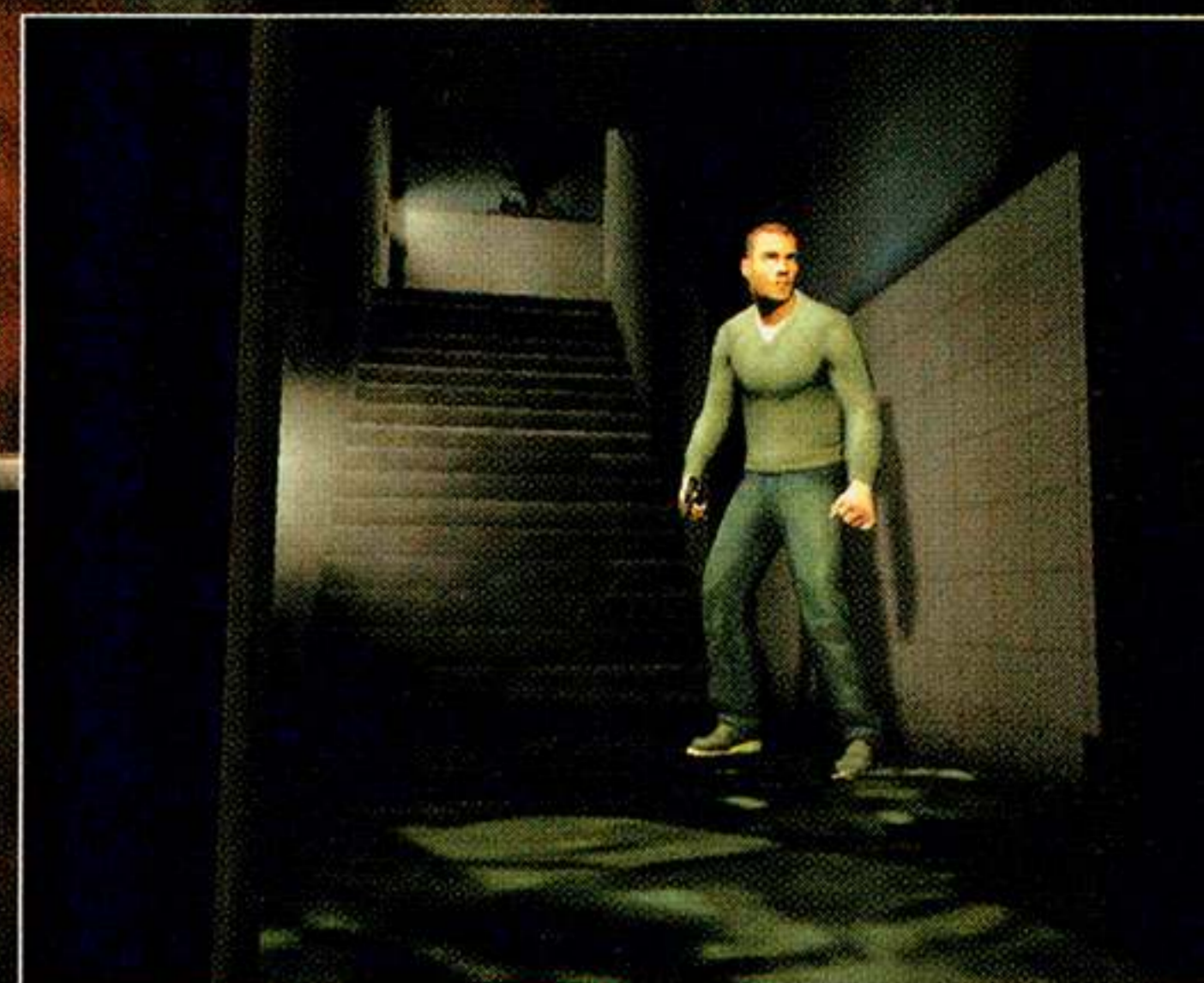
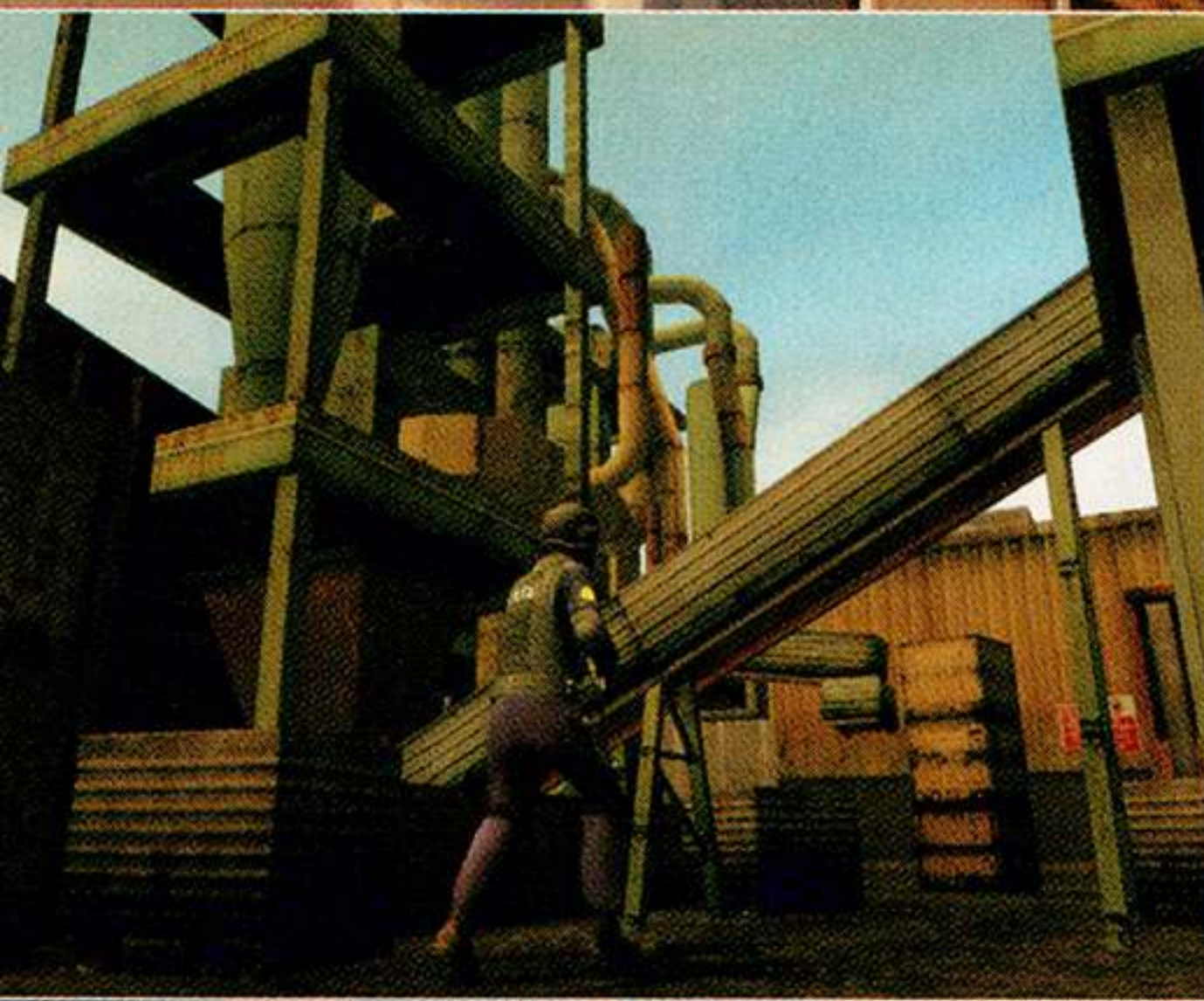
Gregory Sierra

Multiply by psychotic, balding, mid-level narcotics kingpin Felix Barbosa, played by Sierra in the early '90s drug-bust flick *Deep Cover*. This guy's explosive temper and skill with a snooker cue add that special lethal something to the *Getaway 2*'s new star.

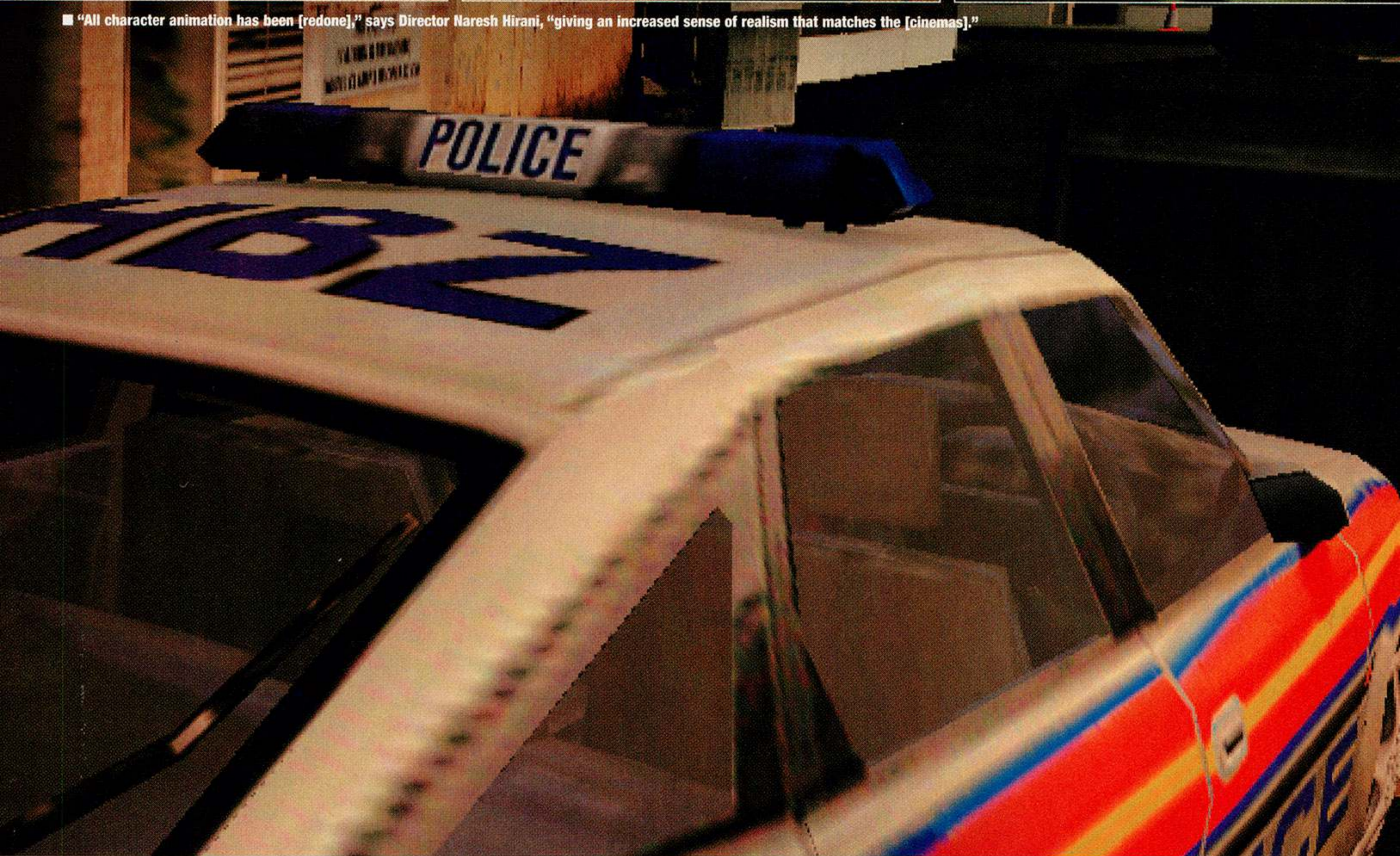


Vinnie Jones

Add the wild glare and hard-man facade of this *Snatch* star. Be sure to shorten first name and add the letters "i" and "e" to it. Edward O'Connor: too stuffy. Ed O'Connor: sounds like a jazz DJ. Eddie O'Connor: an underworld loose cannon running amok in London!



■ "All character animation has been [redone]," says Director Naresh Hirani, "giving an increased sense of realism that matches the [cinemas]."



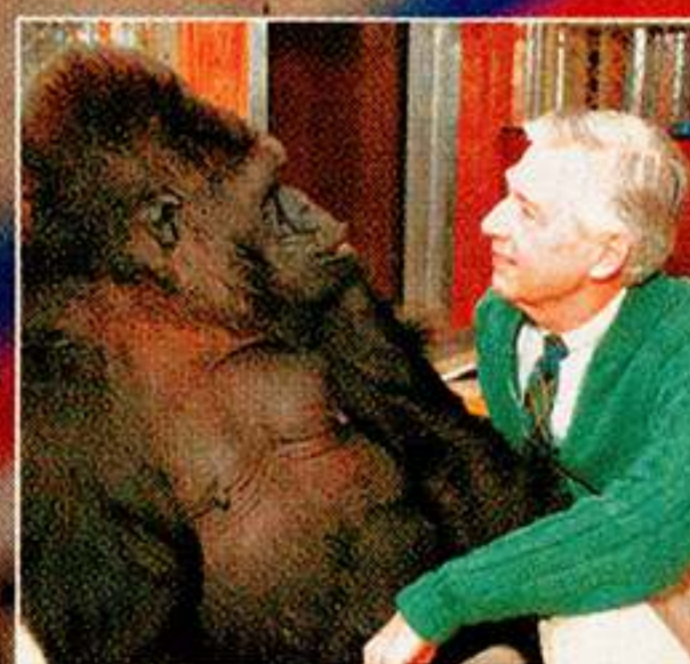
Heihachi Mishima

Whisk and knead in all the scowling anger of the *Tekken* series' deranged martial-arts master. He comes equipped with the obligatory receding hairline, but we don't really need his powers to control electricity. Leave those at the door, Mr. Mishima.



Squeaky clean Cockney chimney sweep image

Quickly remove 1920s chirpy Cockney stereotypes. O'Connor must be schooled in 1990s Guy Ritchie gang warfare instead. He should be cleaning Yardie blood from his knuckles, not soot from chimneys. With a little bit of bloomin' luck.



Mister Rogers wardrobe

Let's just go crazy, eh chaps? We want major characters sporting too-tight muscle shirts, but also all the latest outerwear from le ensemble de neighborhood, including 1970s green, too-tight, zipped velour sweatshirts. For no good reason.



Eddie O'Connor

Brooding? Check. Uncanny resemblance to *Lock, Stock* or *Snatch* cast member? Gotcha. Male-pattern baldness to accentuate anger-management problems? You betcha. Bizarre fashion sense? Definitely. Early 21st century London stereotype? Roight you are, guvnor!

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HARRY POTTER AND THE PRISONER OF AZKABAN

PS2/XB/GC • EA Games
• June 2004

Why should Harry Potter have all the fun? The first two adventures put gamers in Potter's foofy wizard shoes—this one allows you to play as Hermione and Ron, too.



■ Hell, it's more fun than being in *Rollerball*.

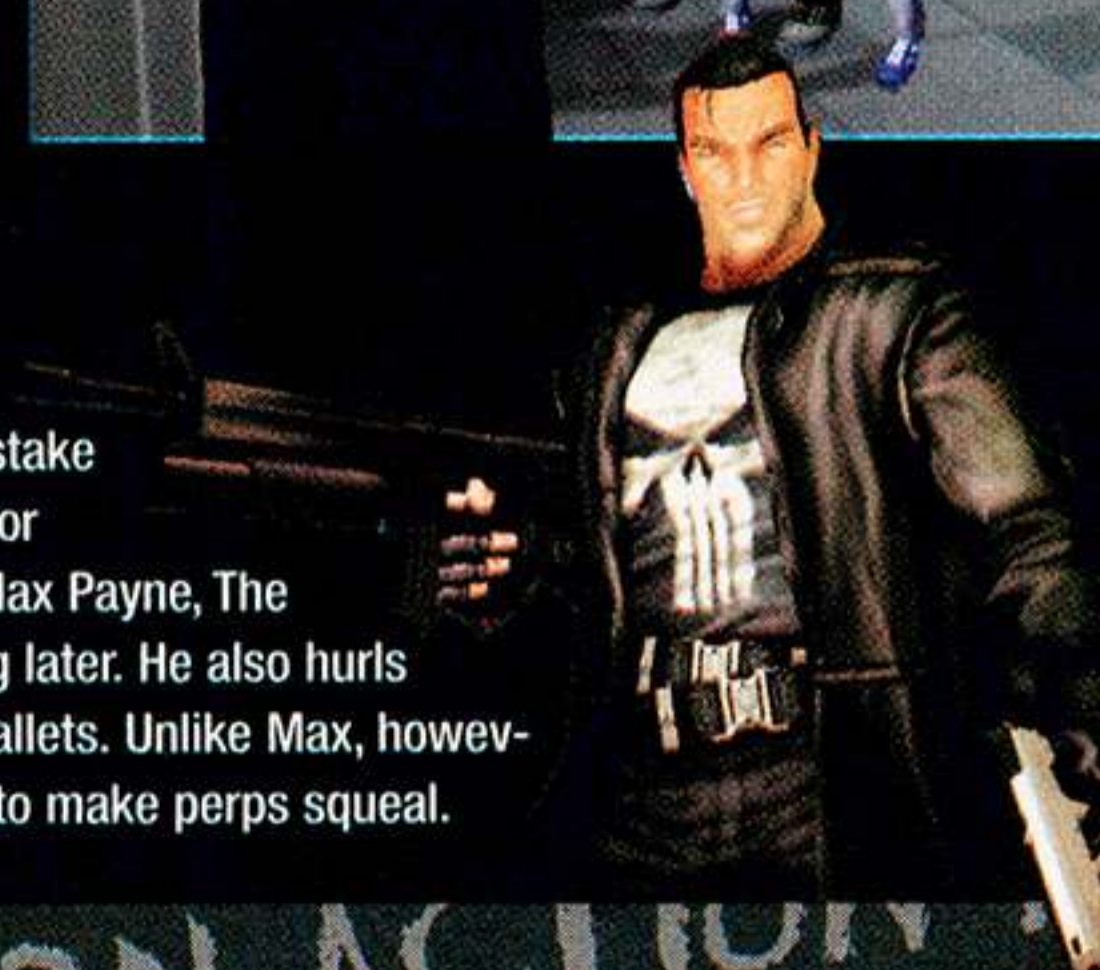
ONIMUSHA 3

PS2 • Capcom • May 2004
"He's like the Jason of feudal Japan," says *Onimusha 3* Producer Keiji Inafune of the series' resilient villain, Nobunaga Oda. Unlike Voorhees, however, he won't show up in any cheesy sequels set in space. Inafune promises that *Onimusha 3* will, once and for all, mark the end of Nobunaga's evil ambitions. The samurai Samanosuke (from the original *Onimusha*) teams up with pistol-packin' French army officer Jacques Braun, and the two set out to put this demonic foe down for his final dirt nap. You'll battle evil in both characters' historical settings—old-school Japan and present-day Paris—plus, via a time warp, Samanosuke and Jacques will visit each other's hometowns. Gameplay will emphasize action over puzzles, and this finale also features full 3D backdrops (*Onimusha 1* and *2* sported noninteractive renders).



THE PUNISHER

PS2/XB • THQ • Fall 2004
If not for the skull shirt, you might mistake Marvel Comics' badass Frank Castle for another trench-coat-clad killer. Like Max Payne, The Punisher shoots first and asks nothing later. He also hurls himself sideways in slow-mo bullet ballets. Unlike Max, however, Frank shoves faces in deep fryers to make perps squeal.



CRIMSON SEA 2

PS2 • Koei
• March 2004
PS2 gamers score a sequel to Xbox's *Dynasty Warriors*-in-the-future alien carnagefest with more missions, characters, and moves.



The Reno Factor

Making *Onimusha 3* more attractive to European gamers wasn't the only reason why Producer Keiji Inafune modeled the Jacques Braun character after French actor Jean Reno (*The Professional*, *Mission: Impossible*). "American actors are a pain in the butt to negotiate with," professes Inafune. "They want lots of money for starring in games, so [we] decided to go with [Jean Reno]." ➤



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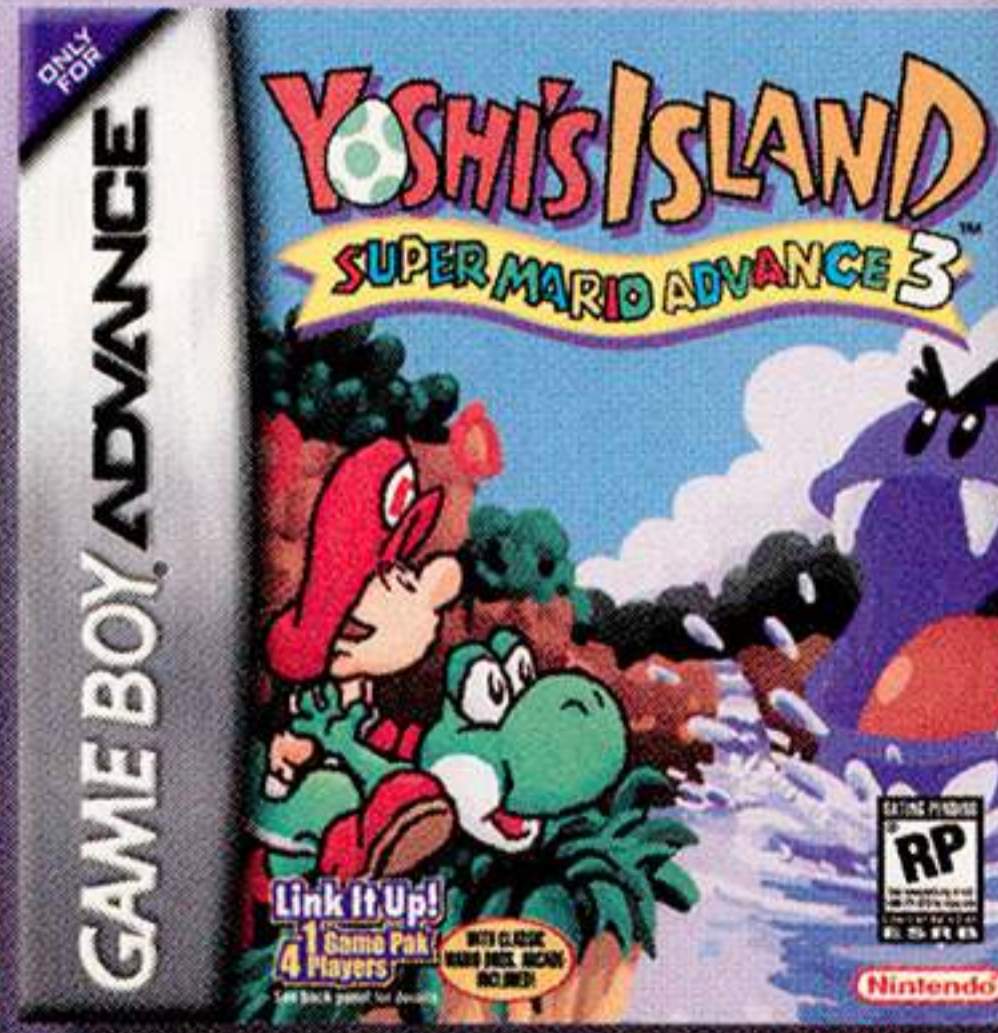
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NARC

PS2/XB • Midway • September 2004

In the late '80s, a little arcade game called *NARC* taught us that the war on drugs could be won by beating the crap out of dealers and punching their attack dogs in the mouth. And the message is the same in this remake, though the trappings are far more eye pleasing (not to mention blood soaked). As Hitman and Max Force, elite members of the NARC squad, you set out on drug-busting missions around the globe to topple Mr. Big's auspiciously named international cartel, K.R.A.K.

Adding a unique twist to the *GTA*-style formula, "You can do what you want with the contraband—turn them in to the evidence locker or sell [their stash] for some quick cash," says Producer Wayne Cline. "What you do will be tracked by the Badge rating." Play bad cop too much and you won't be able to advance unless you clean up your act.

Big's Head

At the end of the original *NARC* arcade game, you fought a giant mechanical version of Mr. Big's head that spat tongues at you. We've got our fingers crossed in hopes that this hideous abomination is in the remake, too.



■ Going rogue and killing anything that moves will put some blemishes on that Badge rating.

SPIDER-MAN 2

PS2/XB/GC • Activision • June 2004

For those of you having trouble balancing school and fun, you'd be well advised to borrow a page from Peter Parker, who's managed to do well in both his studies and his superheroing. Rather than being a shiftless layabout like most of you here, Parker spends most of his truancy navigating an open-ended New York, webslinging and fighting crime—he's like a do-gooder hero in some Bizarro-world *GTA*. You slackers in the back could learn a lot from him. ▶



ASTRO BOY

PS2 • Sega • Summer 2004

Here's the setup: You're a futuristic robot boy who defends justice by firing machine-gun blasts from his ass. As seen on TV.



SIREN

PS2 • Sony CEA • April 2004

Play as 10 different characters who are all dumb enough to wander into a haunted Japanese village.



KICK ASH.



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PlayStation 2



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ADVENT RISING

XB • Majesco • Spring 2004

When an untested developer sets out to spin a story spanning no fewer than three games, several words spring to mind. We'll settle for "ambitious." *Rising* blends gunplay, stealth, and *Halo*-style vehicular combat with an epic role-playing narrative by famed sci-fi novelist Orson Scott Card. But don't expect standard, linear fantasy fare: "Players' choices go a long way toward deciding who the hero really is," explains Card. Whoever he becomes, we know Gideon begins his pursuit for answers with a stockpile of peacemakers and access to vehicles perfect for annihilating aliens and traversing whole planets. Depending on how you play, Gideon might ditch the guns altogether and develop divine powers. Who needs bullets when you can move at supersonic speeds and psychokinetically toss tanks with your thoughts?

■ If we can save ourselves from extinction, humans might play the prophesied role of intergalactic savior.



■ Wussier heroes would have worn a helmet.



RIDDICK: ESCAPE FROM BUTCHER BAY

XB • VU Games • June 2004

This first-person adventure reveals how convicted murderer Richard B. Riddick snuck, shot, and shivved his way off the maximum-security prison planet Butcher Bay before the events of sci-fi flick *Pitch Black* and its upcoming sequel, *The Chronicles of Riddick*. Vin Diesel reprises his role as the heroic criminal for game and film alike.

BLOODRAYNE 2

PS2/XB • Majesco
• October 2004

The supersexy bloodsucker returns, and this time around, she's redefining "dysfunctional family" by hunting down her own siblings.



PLAGUE OF DARKNESS

PS2/XB • Namco • June 2004

Ghastly abominations roam medieval Europe's plague-ravaged villages, spreading an unholy disease. Enter Duron, a Knight of the Order (you know, *the* Order), who battles evil up close and personal with a variety of melee weapons and Tarot magic. If he lives long enough, he'll fight the demonic source of the Black Death itself. ▶

■ The sword's name?
Uberwang. Probably.



THE INCREDIBLES

PS2/XB/GC • THQ
• November 2004

Perform acts of stupendous superheroism in the game based on Pixar's *Finding Nemo* follow-up flick. (Note: similarities to that awful *Blasto* (PS1) game are negligible.)



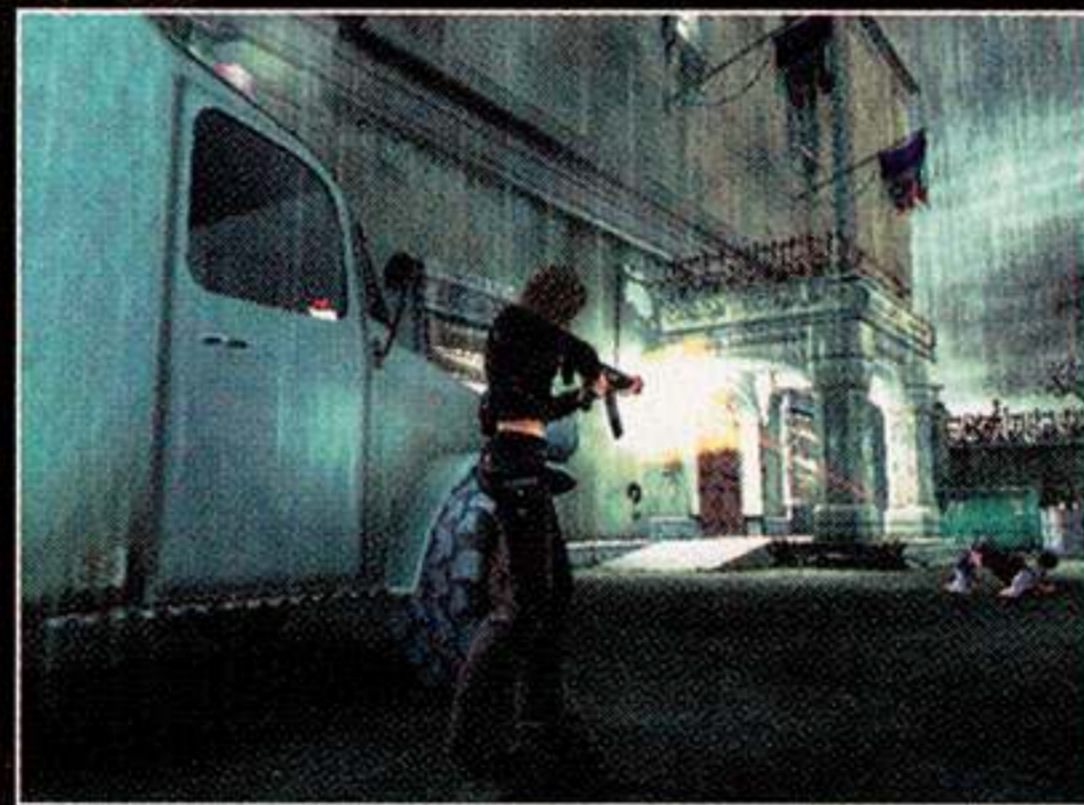
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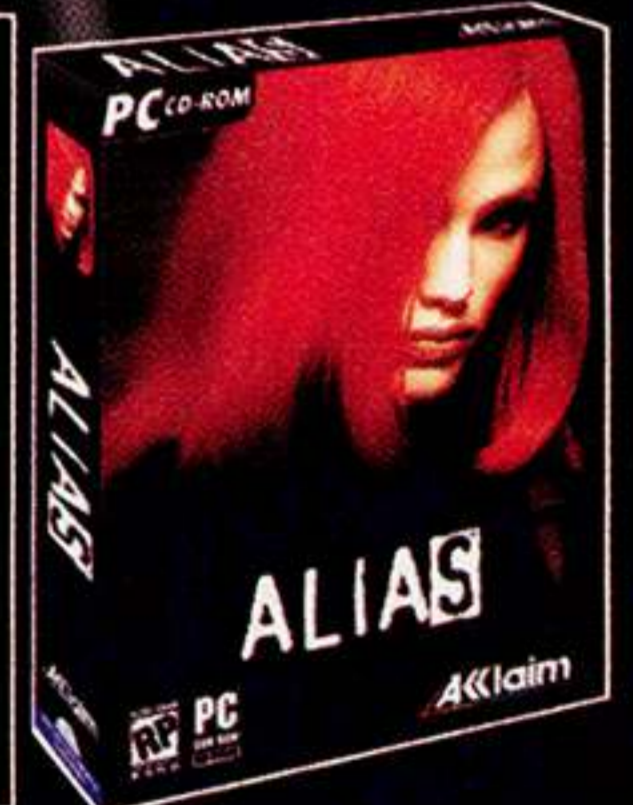
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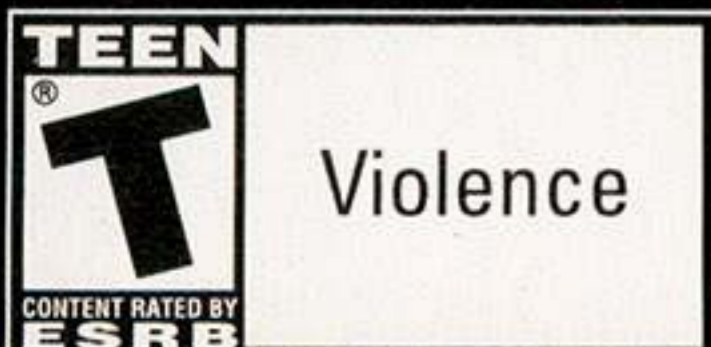
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No Need to Save Your Save
One interesting hallmark of the *Suikoden* series has been the ability to import your save data from previous games into new installments. The first two sequels had this feature, but *Suikoden IV* breaks this cycle of codependency—your *Suikoden III* save data won't do you any good here. Let go of the past!



SUIKODEN IV

PS2 • Konami • Fall 2004

This fourth installment finds Konami's flagship RPG franchise at a crossroads. Back on PS1, Konami's distinctly old-school *Suikoden* series lurked beneath the radar of most mainstream RPG buyers. (Though they're paying the price now...just try to find a copy of *Suikoden II* on eBay for less than \$100). Recently, *Suikoden III* (PS2) garnered new fans, thanks to its better-late-than-never 3D visuals, but it actually managed to turn off series vets with its confusing interlocking scenarios and tedious pacing. Thankfully, *Suikoden IV* appears poised to combine what was great about the old games with what fans expect from a modern role-playing epic.

"We looked at the development of *Suikoden III* and decided to take the next game in a new direction," says Producer Junko Kawano. "We decided to do something very different by setting the entire game on the ocean." That means you'll be doing a fair bit of seafaring between the game's myriad tiny islands, à la *Zelda: The Wind Waker* (GC), and likely building a massive houseboat instead of a home castle. Also, the battle system from *III* has been scrapped. "The battles here are much more like those in *Suikoden I* and *II*," explains Kawano. "They're fast, but also now very cinematic." Other changes include ditching the Trinity scenario system in favor of one strong story line and the addition of spoken dialogue (a first for the series).

Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg Hh Ii

RPG
GAMES

THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: FOUR SWORDS

GC • Nintendo • Summer 2004

While it's not *Wind Waker 2*, this collection offers three unique multiplayer minigames: Hyrule Adventure, Shadow Battle, and Navi's Trackers. Break out the GBAs...and the link cables.



FABLE

XB • Microsoft
• Fall 2004

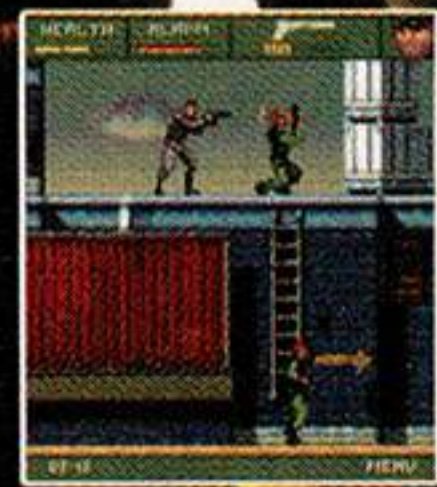
In this über-ambitious RPG, you can become a hero, villain, archer, thief, werewolf, magician, or, even more dangerous, a husband and a father. ▶



Quick, pack the noggin in ice and get that fool to the hospital!



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Level 9 GR50 Soldier

X-MEN: LEGENDS

PS2/XB/GC • Activision • May 2004

If you think PE is hard, think of gym class at Professor X's school: Running laps isn't so bad when compared to dodging booby traps, lasers, explosions, and 40-foot-tall mutant-hunting robots. Experience the mutant adolescence firsthand with *Legends*, a hybrid that blends the *X-Men* universe with hack-n-slash role-playing action like that of *Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance*. The story line centers on a new character, Alison Crestmere, who's just coming to terms with her mutant abilities, but comic fans will appreciate the large cast of playable characters (including, but not limited to, Cyclops, Wolverine, Jean Grey, Nightcrawler, Colossus, and even Forge). With newly reworked visuals (scope the subtle cartoon style) and promise of co-op multiplayer, *Legends* should successfully prove that dungeon hacking doesn't require dungeons.



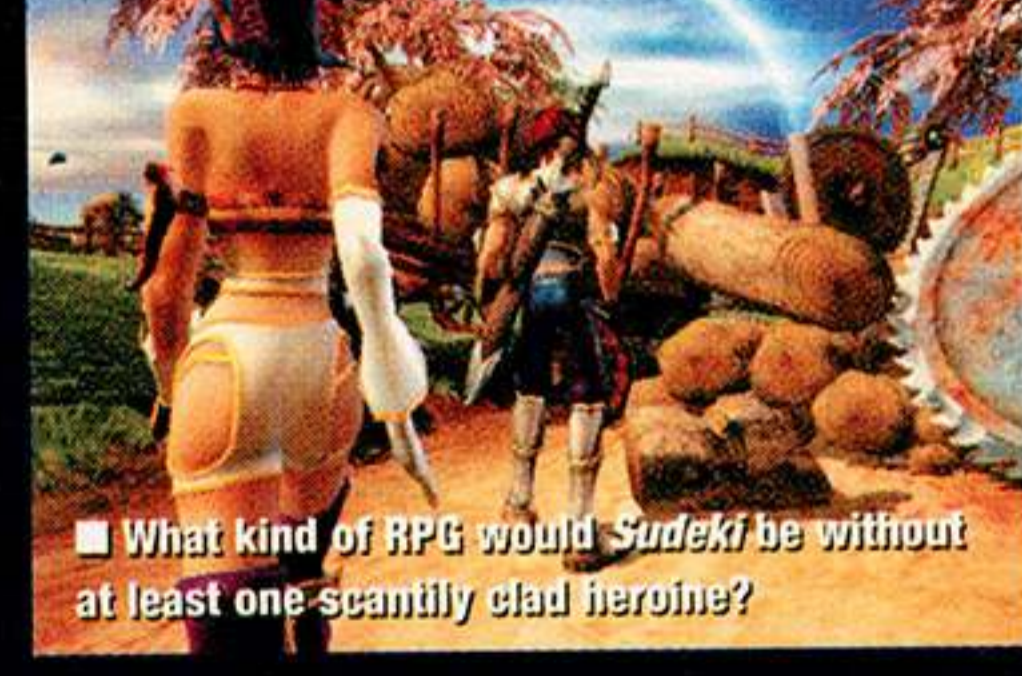
■ (Above) Cyclops strikes a somewhat questionable pose to unleash an optic blast.



SUDEKI

XB • Microsoft • Summer 2004

A sorceress, gunslinger, huntress, and swordsman all walk into a bar...actually, it's not so much a bar as it is a long-delayed action-RPG for Xbox. Thankfully, it looks to be worth the wait: *Sudeki* sports slick anime-inspired visuals, labyrinthine dungeons to explore, and an inventive real-time combat system that should make controlling an entire party a cinch.



■ What kind of RPG would *Sudeki* be without at least one scantily clad heroine?

WHAT ABOUT PSP GAMES?

Why yes, that's an excellent question. Here's the truth: Most companies simply aren't talking about games for Sony's powerful new handheld system until this May's E3 gaming expo. Two publishers have recently gone on the record with announcements: Natsume promises a new *Harvest Moon* title for crop tending on the go, while Koei looks to rake in cash with a portable *Dynasty Warriors*. We've also heard rumors that you can expect an EA Games onslaught, with versions of *The Sims*, *James Bond*, *Harry Potter*, *Lord of the Rings*, and *Catwoman* by year's end.



JADE EMPIRE

XB • Microsoft
• Winter 2004

With *Empire*, the developers of *Knights of the Old Republic* take you way back and far, far away...to ancient China. Prepare for deep combat and a whole lotta character-creation freedom.



SHIN MEGAMI TENSEI: NOCTURNE

PS2 • Atlus • Fall 2004
Atlus finally brings this demon-summoning RPG series (that the PS1 *Persona* games sprang from) Stateside, with help from *Devil May Cry*'s dashing hero, Dante. ➤



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STAR WARS: REPUBLIC COMMANDO

XB • LucasArts • Fall 2004

There's not much to love about grizzled bounty hunter Jango Fett, but there is a lot of Fett to love. The gun-for-hire became the template for the clones in *Star Wars: Attack of the Clones* and, in doing so, instantly became his own best friend a million or so times over.

Republic Commando, LucasArts' new first-person squad shooter stars Fett's clones, under armor of course, as they storm across the galaxy in never-before-seen Clone War battles. The game takes place between *Attack of the Clones* and the as-yet-unnamed third *Star Wars* prequel and promises to take a darker, more behind-the-scenes look at George Lucas' often cute-moppet-filled sci-fi playground.

Players take the role of an anonymous commando in charge of three other warriors. In the heat of combat, players can point and click to hotspots and command their allies to storm a position, man a turret and lay down support fire, or use explosives to blow up a target. A powerful DC-17M rifle serves as a commando's best friend; it can be modified on the fly to create a blaster, sniper rifle, or antiarmor gun.

—Greg Orlando



My Clone, My Soundalike

In a neat touch, all the clones in *Republic Commando* will be voiced by either actor Temuera Morrison (Jango Fett in *Star Wars: Attack of the Clones*) or professional soundalikes. "The idea [behind the soundalikes] is that twins don't exactly sound the same," explains *Commando* producer Steve Matulac.



Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg Hh

SHOOTING GAMES



GEIST

GC • Nintendo
• Fall 2004

Shooting and scaring combine when you use your ghostly powers of possession to jump in and out of your enemies' bodies.



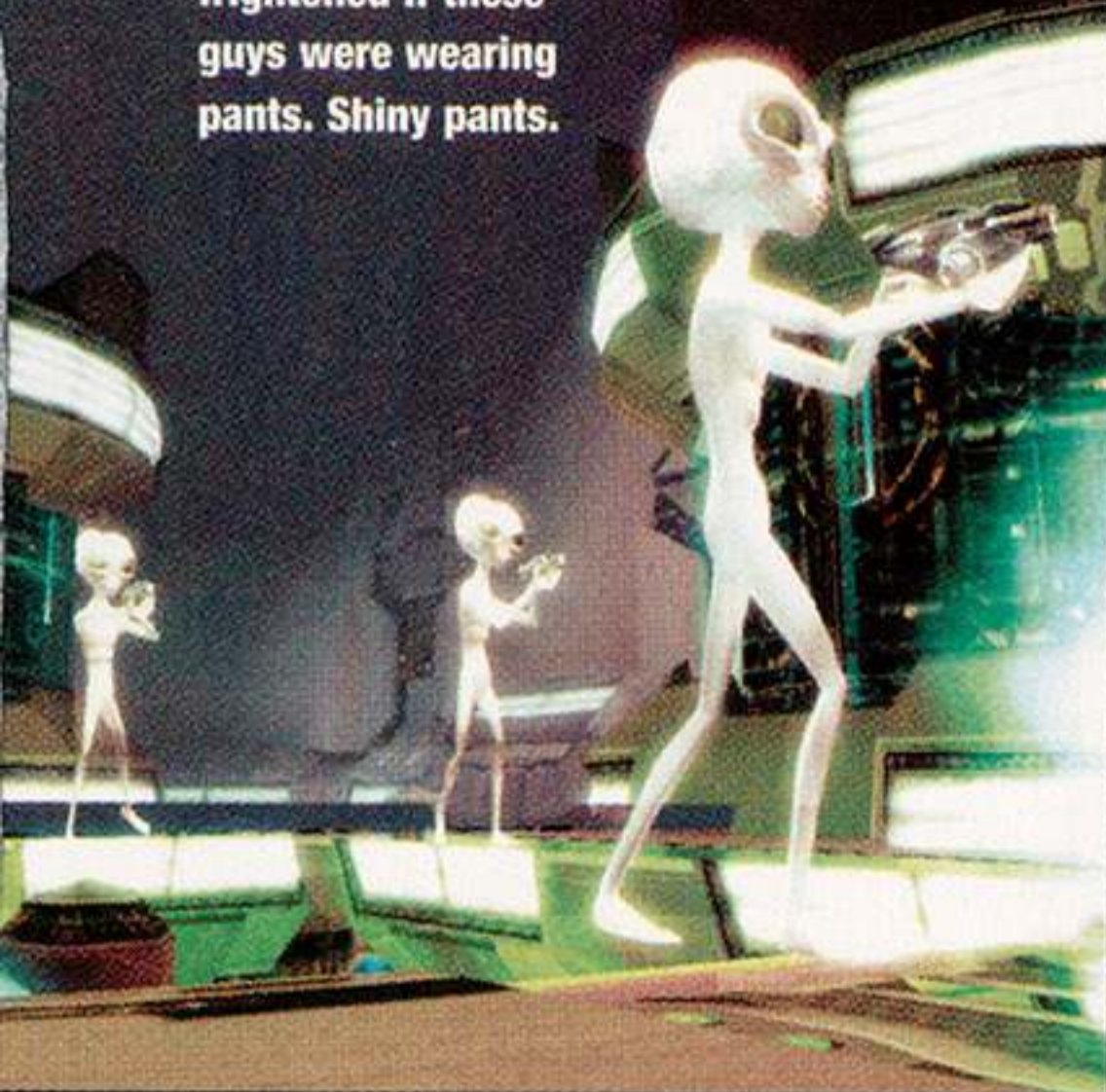
SHADOW OPS: RED MERCURY

XB • Atari • June 2004

Travel the globe as a member of an elite counterterrorism unit where teamwork and an itchy trigger finger are equally important.



■ We'd be a lot more frightened if these guys were wearing pants. Shiny pants.



AREA 51

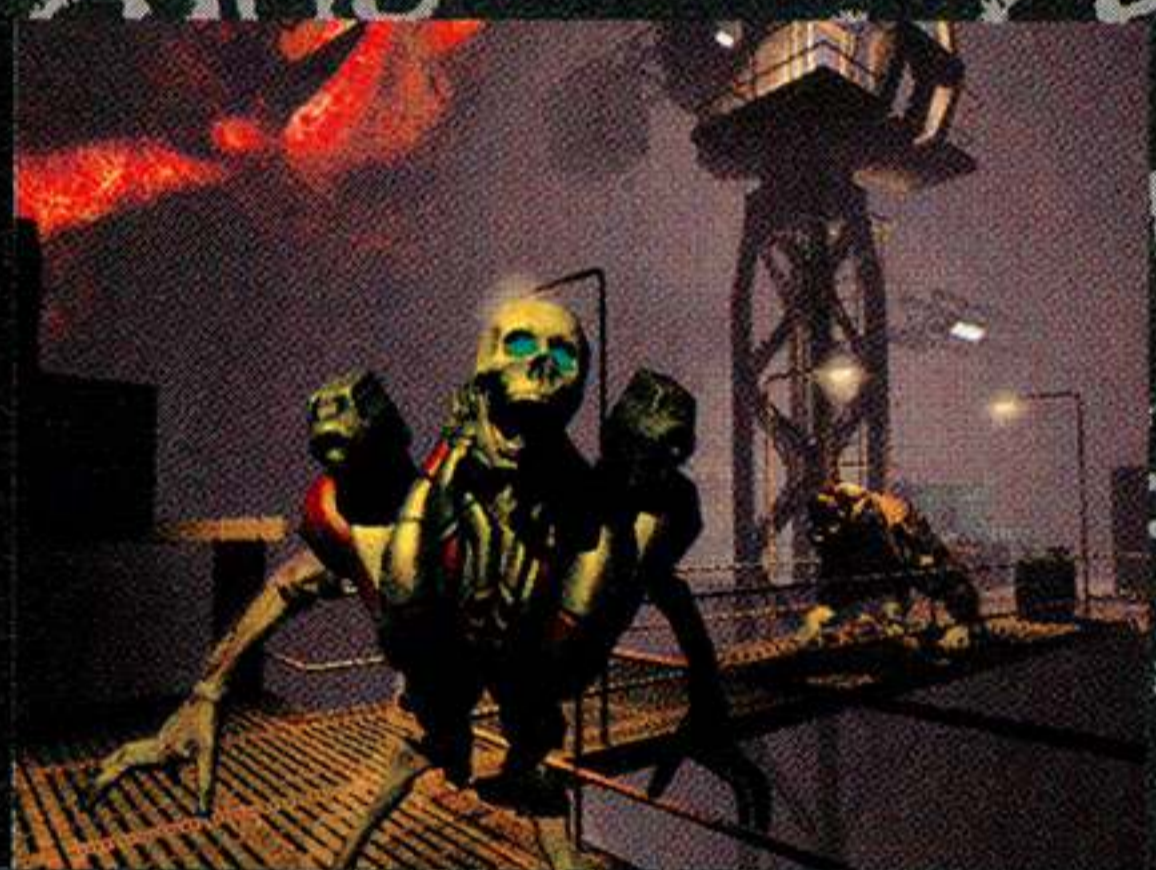
PS2/XB • Midway • Fall 2004

In the depths of the government's most secret military base, you'll find mutants, extraterrestrials, and more conspiracies than you can shake an Uzi at—but what about shaking a tentacle? As you peel back the layers of mystery, the alien mutagen you've contracted turns you into an alien-human hybrid supersoldier. Zoinks!

DOOM 3

XB • Activision • Fall 2004

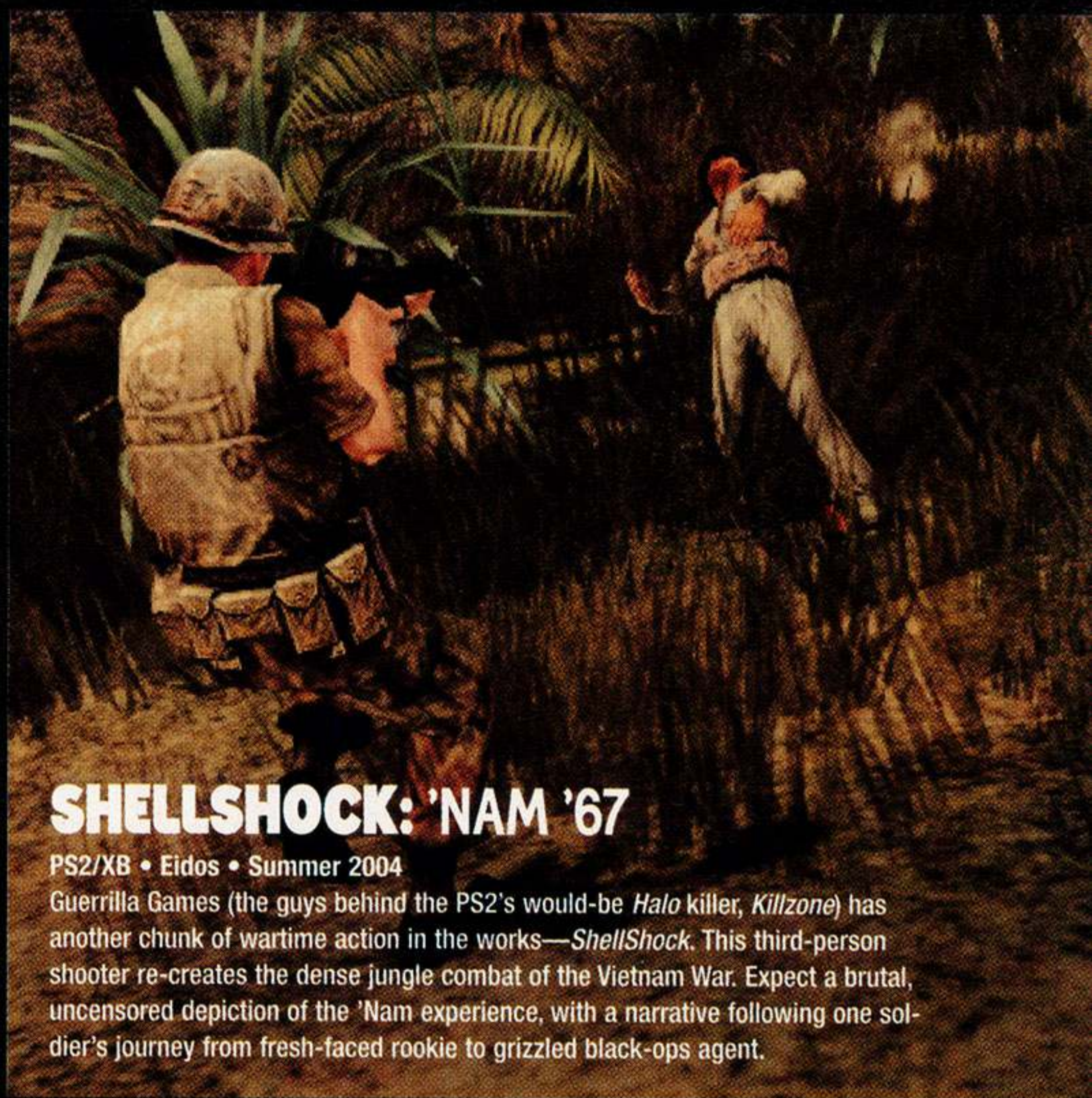
This ultra-atmospheric installment of the famous shooter series hides its ghoulish creatures in the shadows until they're within feet of eating your face. Delicious. (Note: PC version shown...sorry, kids.)



HALF-LIFE 2

XB • VU Games • Fall 2004

If you didn't already know about the breathtaking new physics and A.I. improvements that should bring this game's realism and interactivity to new heights...well, you do now. (Note: This is a PC screenshot...so pretty.)



SHELLSHOCK: 'NAM '67

PS2/XB • Eidos • Summer 2004

Guerrilla Games (the guys behind the PS2's would-be *Halo* killer, *Killzone*) has another chunk of wartime action in the works—*ShellShock*. This third-person shooter re-creates the dense jungle combat of the Vietnam War. Expect a brutal, uncensored depiction of the 'Nam experience, with a narrative following one soldier's journey from fresh-faced rookie to grizzled black-ops agent.



KILLZONE

PS2 • Sony GEA • Fall 2004

Martin de Ronde, general manager of Dutch developer Guerrilla Games, has a beef with PS2 bashers. "I get the impression that people think the PlayStation 2 isn't capable of doing certain things," he says. "It's a very powerful machine. It's got a very steep learning curve, but once you're over it, you can get excellent results." He knows what he's talking about—*Killzone*, his team's PS2-only shooter, has the potential to be the *Halo* destroyer Sony fanboys have always dreamed of. Plus, its gameplay is nearly as sexy as its visuals: You'll need to switch between members of your four-man squad to deal with the game's 26 levels of pretty landscapes and gas-mask-toting terrorists. ▶



■ While battling enemy panzers, you'll take the driver's seat in other vehicles, including Sherman tanks and armored cars.



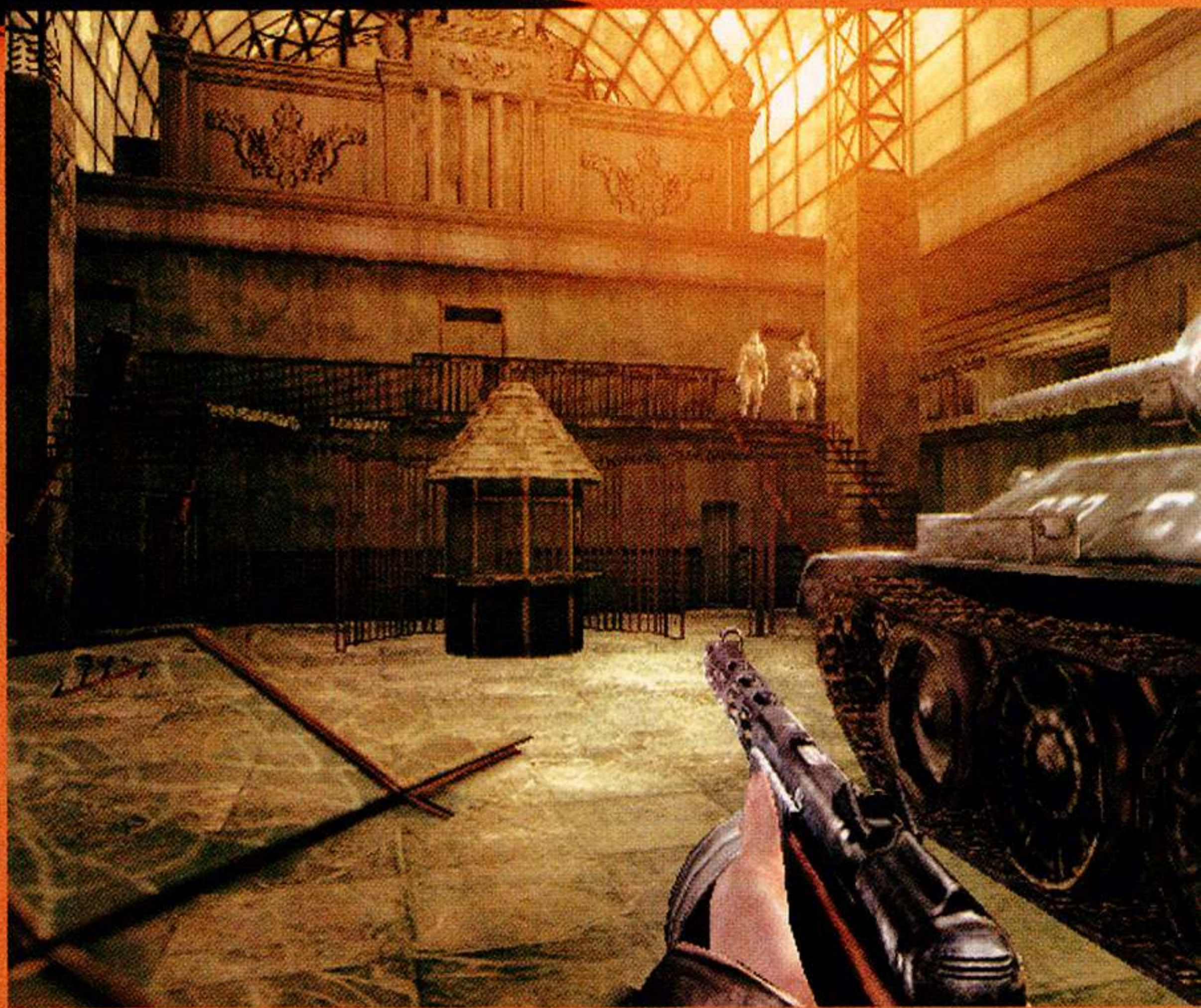
CALL OF DUTY: FINEST HOUR

PS2/XB/GC • Activision • Fall 2004

No matter how many times you've single-handedly stopped the Wehrmacht on your TV screen, supersoldiers don't win world wars in real life—heroes emerge only after nations throw grunts by the million into history's meat grinder. *Call of Duty: Finest Hour* "emphasizes 'everyman' characters who heed their own call of duty for a great variety of reasons," says Producer Scott Langteau, top brass behind the historical shooter.

You'll assume the roles of characters who range from a Russian tankerman charged with defending a besieged Stalingrad, to a female sniper liberating her hometown, to an American GI escorting a 155 mm howitzer into the heart of Aachen, to name a few. As that Soviet conscript, you won't simply sit astride 33 tons of screeching steel. (What's warfare without hardware?) Instead, you'll take control of the tank and run the goose-steppers into the ground. Dozens of friendly soldiers will fight alongside you and, depending on your rank, lead the charge or accept orders.

If *Finest Hour's* single-player skirmishes (and prospective online battles) manage to match the PC *Call of Duty's* massive set pieces, it might just strip the glory from a certain *Medal of Honor*.



100 BULLETS

PS2/XB/GC • Acclaim
• Fall 2004

If you could commit murder and get away with it, would you? This comic-book-based action romp answers that question with a resounding "bang."



DARK WATCH: CURSE OF THE WEST

PS2/XB • Sammy • October 2004

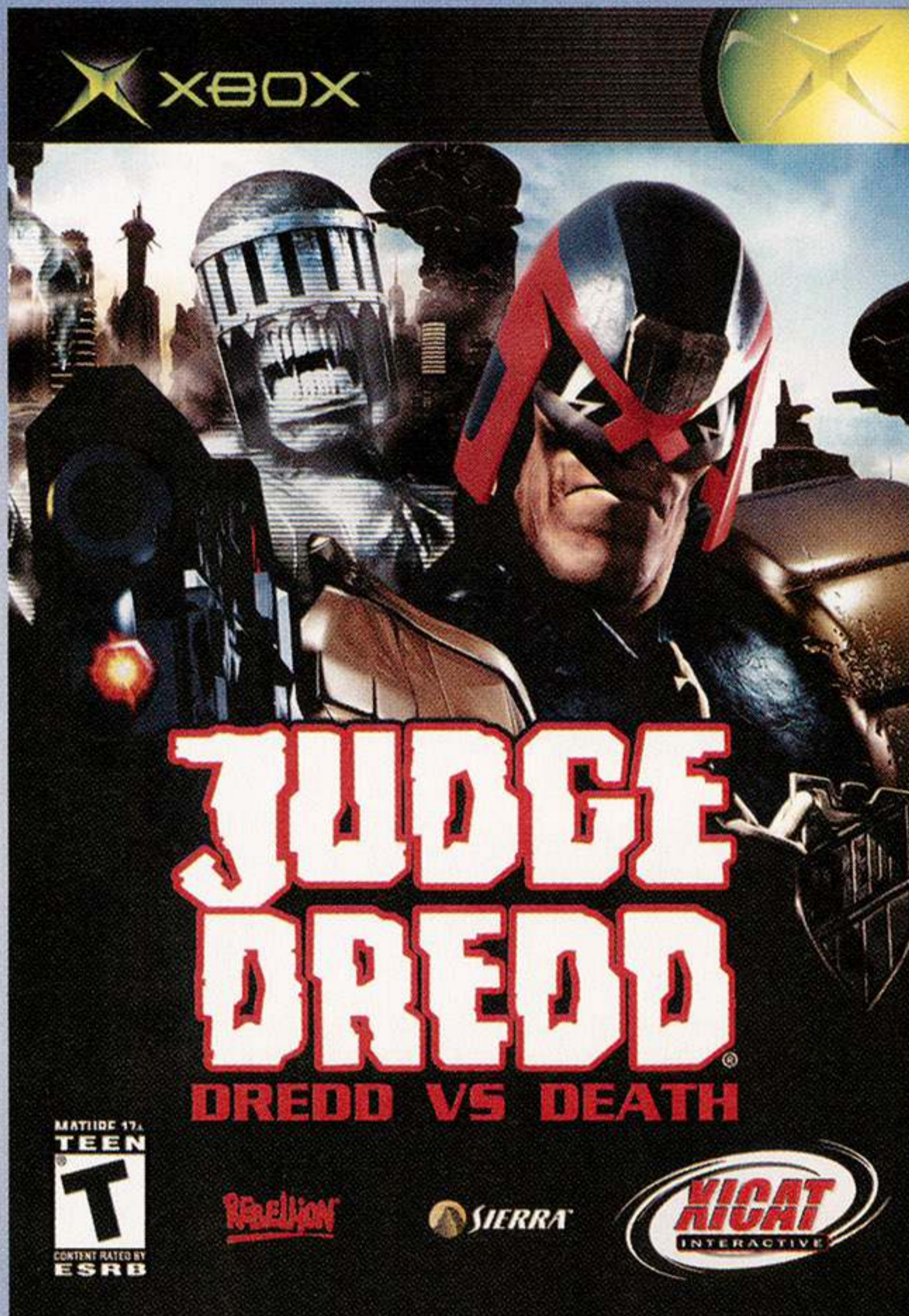
You've probably played a first-person shooter before. Maybe you've even played a first-person shooter set in the Old West before. But a first-person shooter, set in the Old West, *with* vampires? No way. >



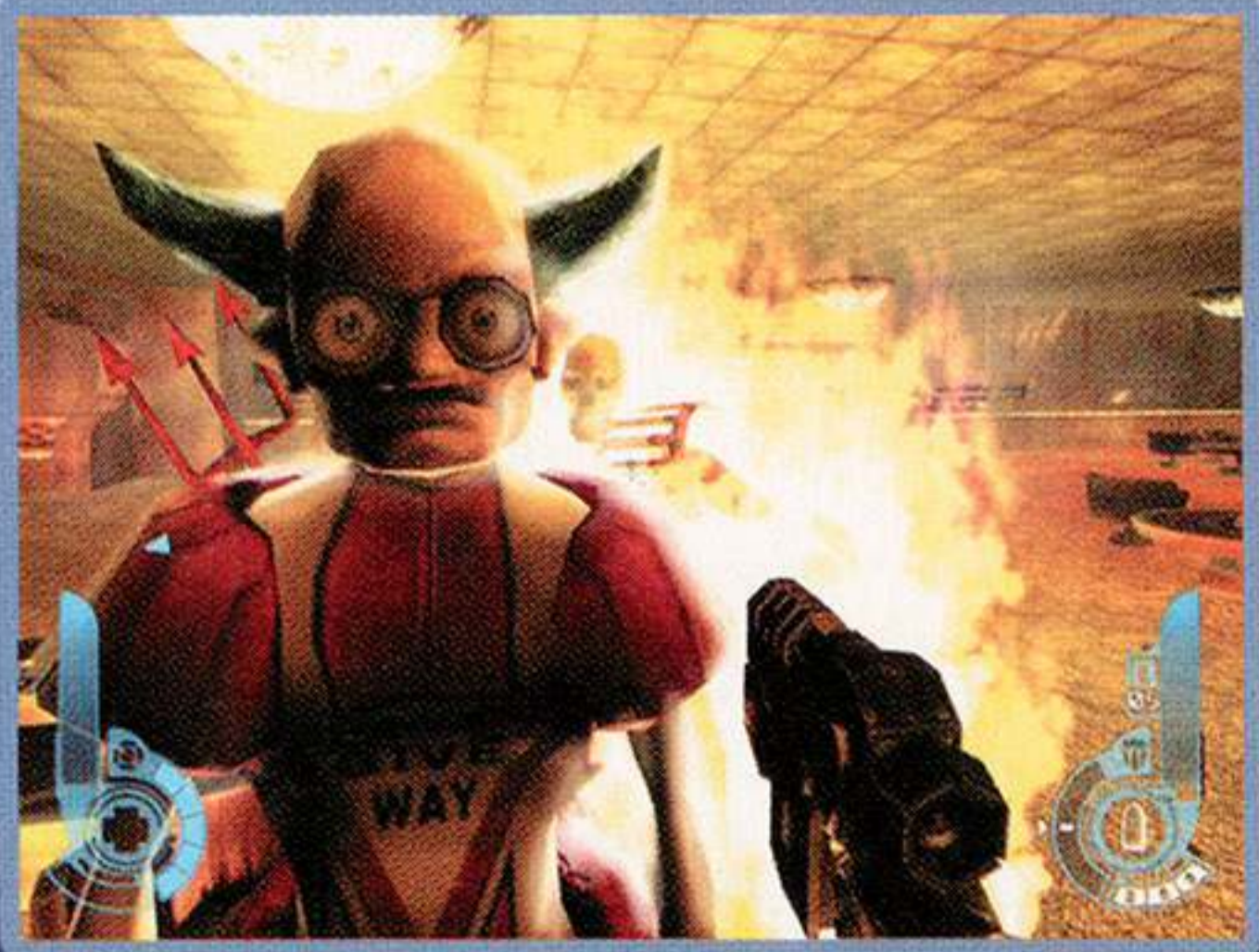
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FIGHTING GAMES



WHAT EVER HAPPENED TO...

If you thumb through an *EGM* from early 2003, you'll probably see previews of games that still haven't come out. What's the deal? Well, some of them are still on their way, albeit slowly, like *Fable* (XB), *Sudeki* (XB), *Pikmin 2* (GC), and, if you can believe it, the supposed Xbox launch title *Malice*. But some games haven't fared so well. High-profile cancellations include Sega's *Vectorman* (PS2) and Namco's *FirstStrike: Grant City Anti-Crime* (PS2/XB/GC).



■ Sega quietly canceled *Vectorman*'s big comeback.



■ Against all odds, Argonaut's *Malice* is still coming out.

SAMURAI SHODOWN V

PS2 • SNK • Fall 2004
The best *Sam Sho* since part two? Well, it certainly has the biggest character. The arcade version has us waxing nostalgic right now, and we're hoping the PS2 edition of SNK's weapon-based 2D fighter makes it Stateside sometime this year.



PHANTOM DUST

XB • Microsoft • Fall 2004
Take *Red Faction*'s destructible environments, add *Akira*'s postapocalyptic urban sprawl and crazy-eyed mentalists, and voilà: third-person action/fighting hybrid *Phantom Dust*.



TYLER

JACK

■ Yes, fanboys, they are wearing shoes. But as Producer Miller points out, Jack and Tyler fought many times before the rules of *Fight Club* were established.



FIGHT CLUB

PS2/XB • VU Games • Late 2004

First rule of remaking *Fight Club* into a videogame: Don't remake *Fight Club* into a videogame. "For us to say we're going to remake the movie would just not work," says Producer Chris Miller. "It'd be impossible with all the content that's in the film. [Besides], to me, *Fight Club* is like a perfect movie." Instead, the plan is to take a single aspect of the controversial 1999 film—1-on-1 bare-knuckled fisticuffs—and develop it into a brawler worthy of the developers' favorites (*Soul Calibur*, *Tekken*, *Dead or Alive*, and *Street Fighter*). Exactly which characters will appear in the game is still being worked out with the lawyers, but we do know each combatant will fight in one of three styles: street boxing, wrestling, or martial arts.



We are Jack's very early screenshots.

Fill in the Blanks

"We're telling the part of the story we, as viewers, didn't see," says Producer Miller, "the moments that take place in between the edits." One example of this is a fight in the flooded basement (shown at right) where we saw Jack pulling the fuse. Or remember the movie's montage travel scene, just after Jack wakes up from his long sleep? Players will visit all those places as Tyler, re-creating scenes that were only implied in the film. (If you have no idea what we're talking about, rent the movie—it's good.) "The game's story will follow the film closely," says Miller, "but it will not interfere with it." ▶



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DEAD OR ALIVE: ULTIMATE

XB • Tecmo • Spring 2004

In an effort to give their loyal Xbox fans more *DOA* bounce for their buck, Tecmo's stuffing two complete games into its upcoming *Dead or Alive: Ultimate* (previously known as *DOA Online*). If you're feeling retro, you can geek out with a slightly enhanced version of the original *Dead or Alive* for Sega Saturn (remember that one, kids?), but you'll likely spend more time ogling the vastly improved re-creation of *Dead or Alive 2: Hardcore*. Redesigned and rebuilt using the *DOA: Xtreme Beach Volleyball* graphics engine, *Hardcore's* lush visuals will surpass even those of *DOA3*—the curvaceous character models look fantastic, and the wildly complex (and newly expanded) stages gleam with absurd amounts of detail. Plus, in typical *DOA* fashion, you can expect copious unlockables, like a wealth of new bonus costumes. There's even something for the *really* dedicated fans—a brand-new CG movie that reveals, in detail, the origins of the Kasumi/Ayane catfighting rivalry.

Perhaps the biggest benefit of this whole *DOA* retrofit is that both games will be playable online via Xbox Live, making *Ultimate* the first 3D fighting game ever to go online. Plus, real-time voice chat, online rankings, and organized tournaments will transform an ordinary ass-kicking into full-on public humiliation. —James Mielke



Kasumi's Xbox

In Japan, Microsoft plans to celebrate the launch of *DOA Ultimate* with a limited-edition Xbox console inspired by Kasumi, one of the series' most beloved battling babes. The unit sports a clear blue hue (the exact color of Kasumi's outfit) and the game's logo (it's still called *Dead or Alive Online* in Japan) printed on the top. Sadly, don't look for this fetching ensemble to make it Stateside.



KING OF FIGHTERS 2002

PS2 • SNK • Summer 2004
If the recent double pack of *King of Fighters 2000* and *2001* didn't sate your SNK arcade hunger, investigate this latest version—it offers improved visuals and five characters exclusive to PS2.



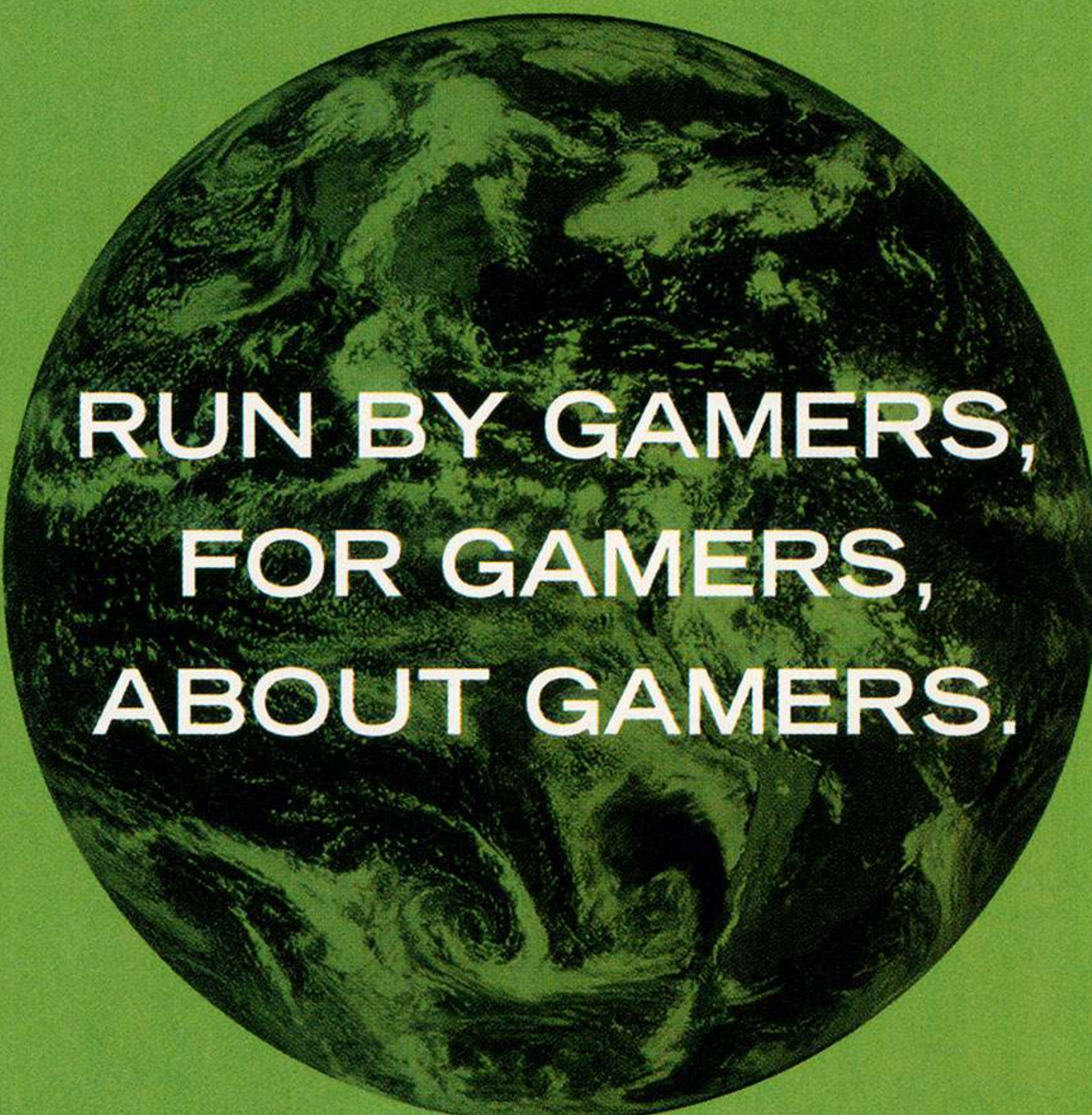
RIVER CITY RANSOM ADVANCED

GBA • Atlus • April 2004
Pompador-sportin' protagonists Ryan and Alex return in this update of the classic NES brawler, complete with RPG-like stat building, countless fast-food runs, and co-op play. ▶





IMAGINE A WORLD



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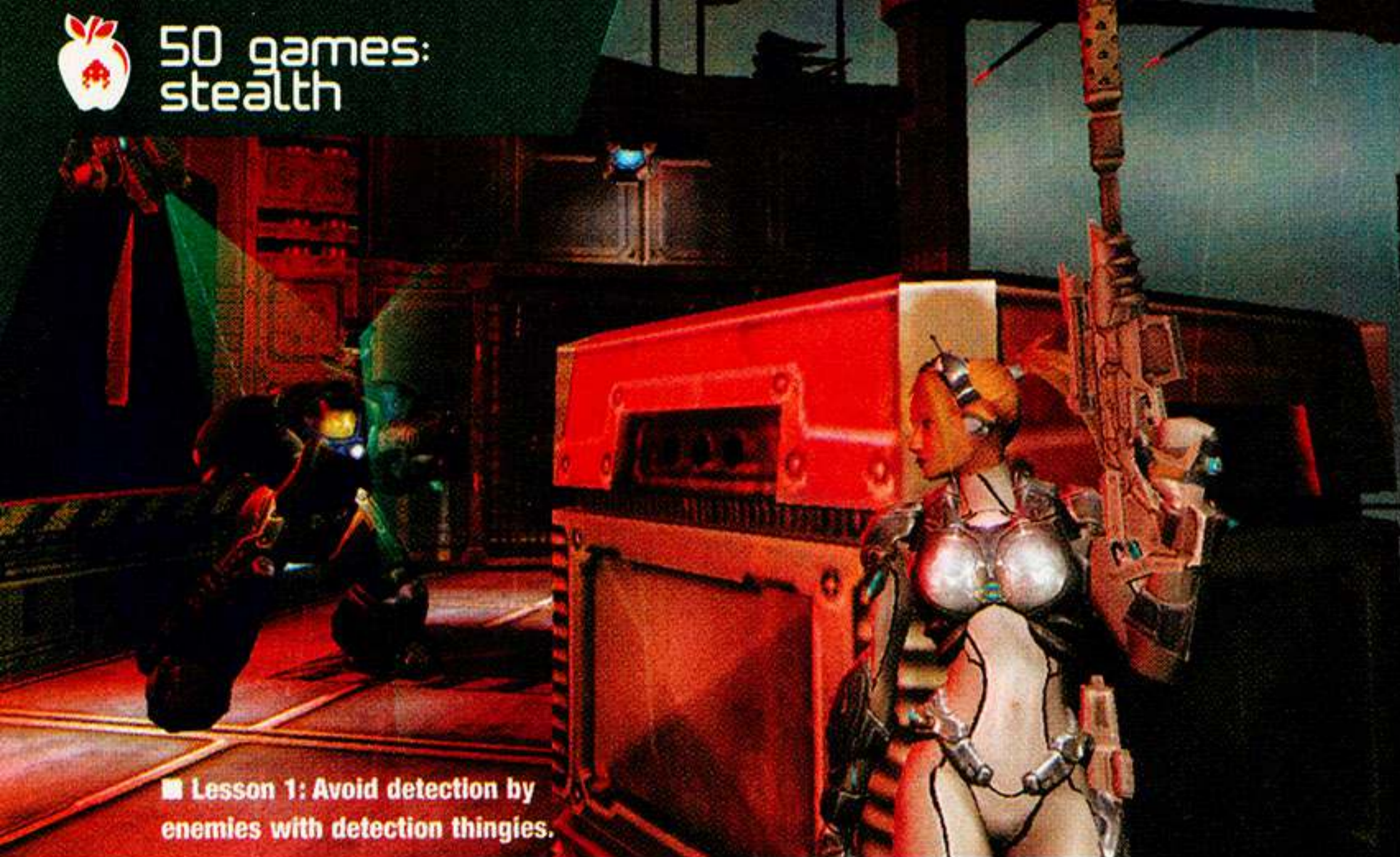
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■ Lesson 1: Avoid detection by enemies with detection thingies.



■ Lesson 2: Hide bodies or risk permanent detention.

STARCRRAFT: GHOST

PS2/XB/GC • Blizzard • Late 2004

Supersoldiers and superspies are a dime a dozen these days. But what's missing from the 007s, Solid Snakes, and Master Chiefs of the world? Sugar and spice and whatever else it is that makes a girl a girl. Enter the sexy protagonist of *StarCraft: Ghost*, a new stealth-action game from Blizzard (*WarCraft*, *Diablo* on PC). "Nova is an elite covert operative called a Ghost," says Producer John Lagrave. "She was trained from an early age to become a one-woman army." But anyone can walk softly and carry a big gun—it's Nova's sci-fi-flavored skills that make her one tough chica. "She was born with psionic gifts," says Lagrave. "She [also] has a sight

ability that allows her to see lingering footprints...or through objects. She has a speed ability as well. In game, we slow down the world and let Nova operate at normal speed, which allows her to get past timing puzzles and dodge incoming fire with ease."

She brings those skills to a war between the terrans ("think space marines," says Lagrave), zerg ("scary insectoid aliens"), and protoss ("highly advanced psionic aliens, [like] a cross between Jedi and vulcans"). Fans of the original PC real-time-strategy game *StarCraft* know this war of the worlds all too well—now they can fight the good fight on consoles on a most personal, face-to-face level.



	NOVA	JAMES BOND	SOLID SNAKE (Metal Gear Solid)
Number of videogame appearances	1	0014	Heck if we know. Who's to say who's really Solid Snake these days?
Strengths	Psionic powers, cloaking ability	Q gadgets, British accent	A name that piques ladies' interest
Weaknesses	Needs big sports bra	Women who need big sports bras	Games have been infiltrated by girly men
Most frightened by...	<i>Alien</i> (the movie)	Old age	!



RED NINJA: END OF HONOR
PS2/XB • VU Games • Winter 2004
Packin' stealth moves and a unique wire weapon, this buxom Asian assassin seeks to avenge her father's death.



SPY FICTION
PS2 • Sammy • Fall 2004
Switch between two playable characters, each with unique abilities, as you sneak around killin' fools and deploying the latest fantastic spy gadgetry. ➤



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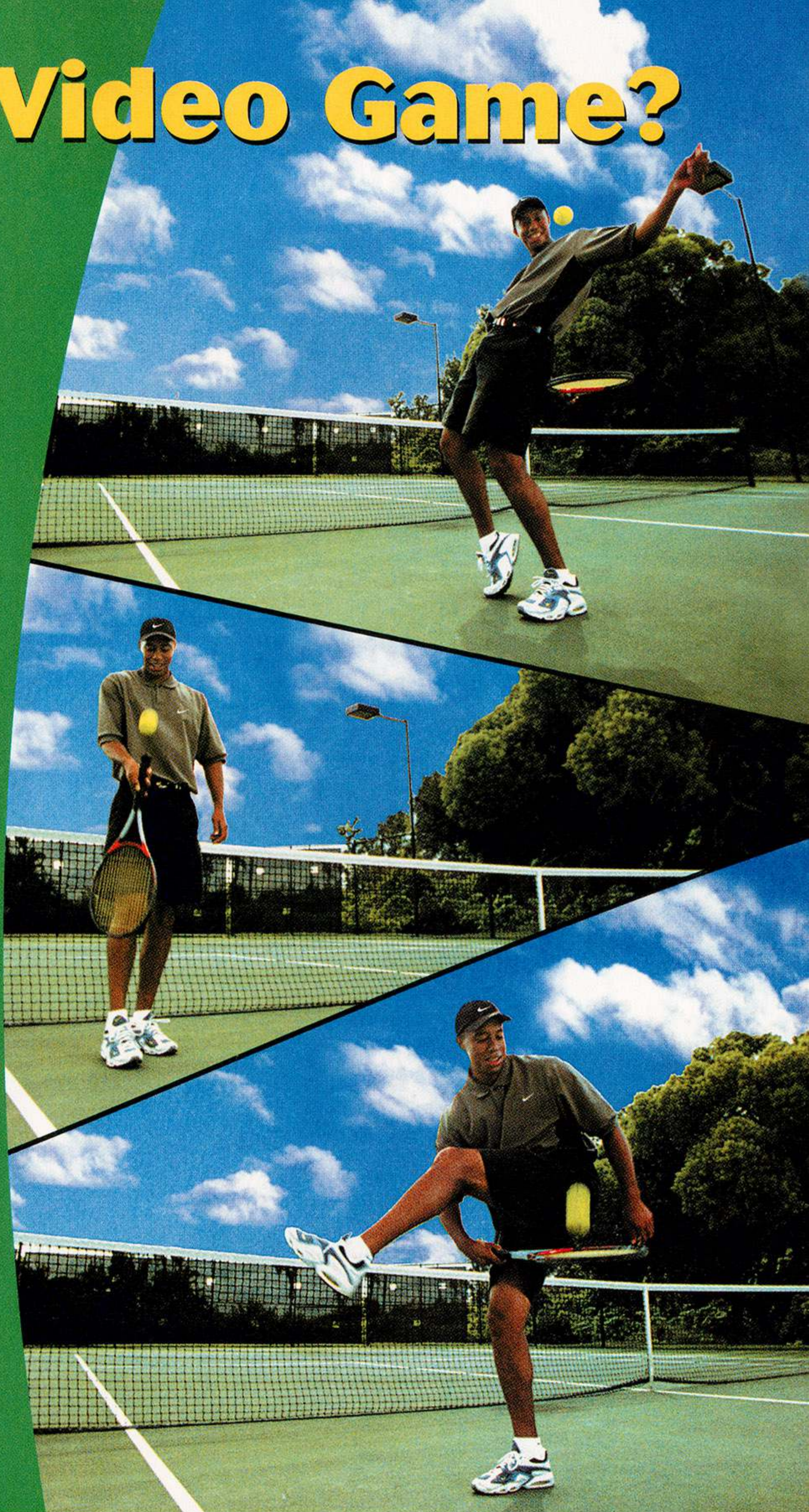
Computer and video game ratings have two parts: **rating symbols**, which tell you what age group the game is appropriate for and **content descriptors**, which tell you about specific content elements that may be of interest or concern.

So the next time you're choosing a game, check the rating and the content descriptors. And like Tiger Woods, play the game that's right for you.

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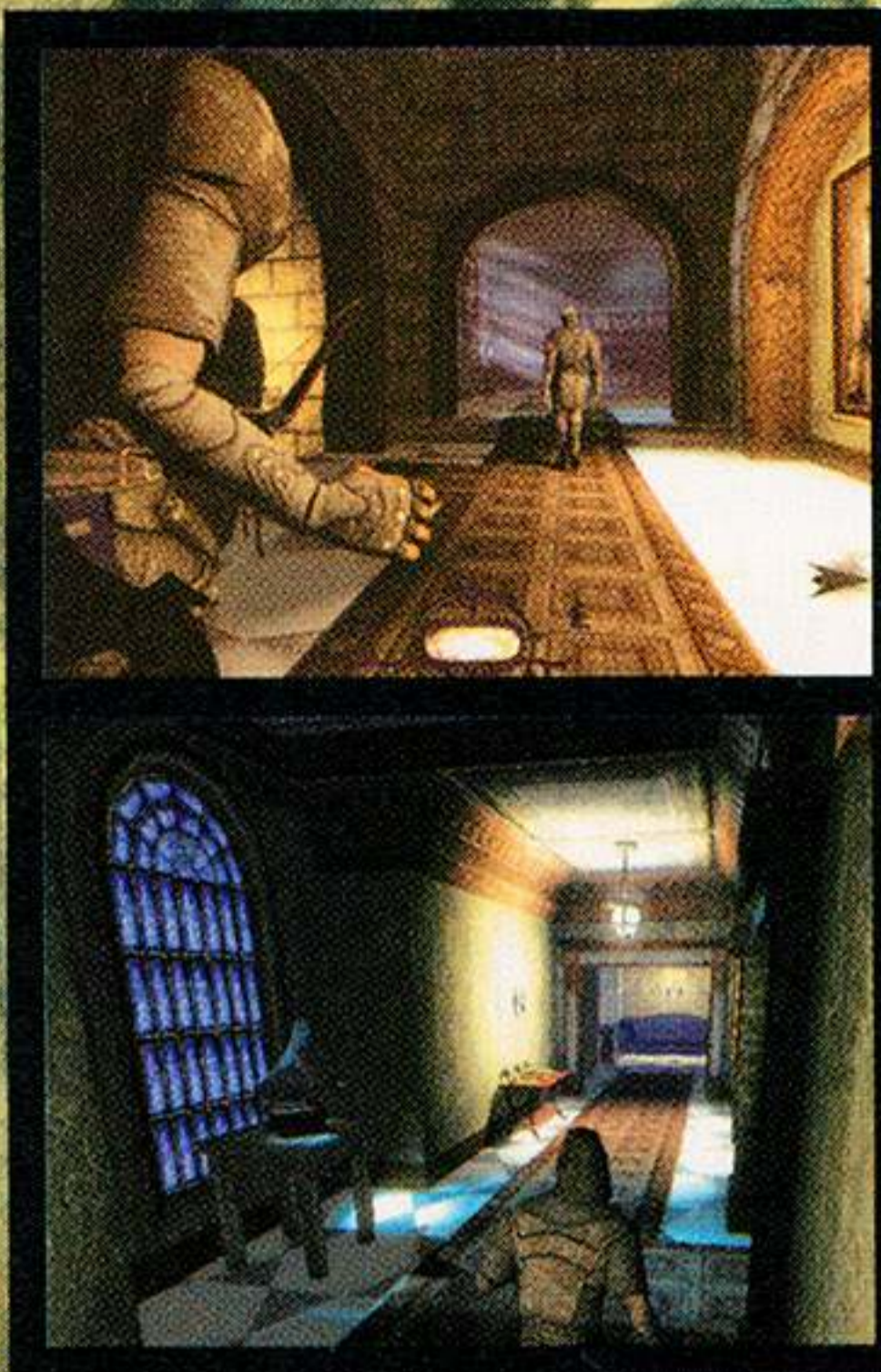


THIEF: DEADLY SHADOWS

XB • Eidos • Summer 2004

Only raging nyctophobiacs (the egghead term for folks a-scared of the dark) will fear the premise of this thievery simulator from the guys behind *Deus Ex: Invisible War*. In the perennially nighttime medieval world of *Thief*, darkness is your pal as you creep through fortress shadows, relieving lords of their knick-knacks.

And since you're a lone archer in a realm of beefcake guards, silence really is golden. "Thief's A.I. is some of the best in the industry," says Project Director Randy Smith. "An alerted guard will draw his sword and search carefully, poking into every corner of the room, opening doors, looking behind furniture, etc." Being spotted doesn't mean instant skewering, however. You can blind pursuing guards with flash bombs, drop oil slicks to trip them up, climb sheer walls to freedom, "or be creative and come up with your own solution," Smith says.



■ You can murder guards in cold blood, but knocking them out with the blackjack will attract less attention. "Killing people makes them scream and bleed," says Project Director Randy Smith.



HITMAN: CONTRACTS

PS2/XB • Eidos • Summer 2004

Reprising his role as a comb-free contract killer, bald-and-beautiful Agent 47 employs everyday objects to execute marked men this time around. Whether you choose to put goons to rest permanently with a pillow or impale 'em with a fireplace poker, *Hitman: Contracts* is bound to be as disturbing as its off-'em-as-you-see-fit approach is liberating. In addition to a more gruesome outlook, expect a gentler learning curve (*Hitman 2* is hellishly tough).

NINA

PS2 • Namco
• Fall 2004

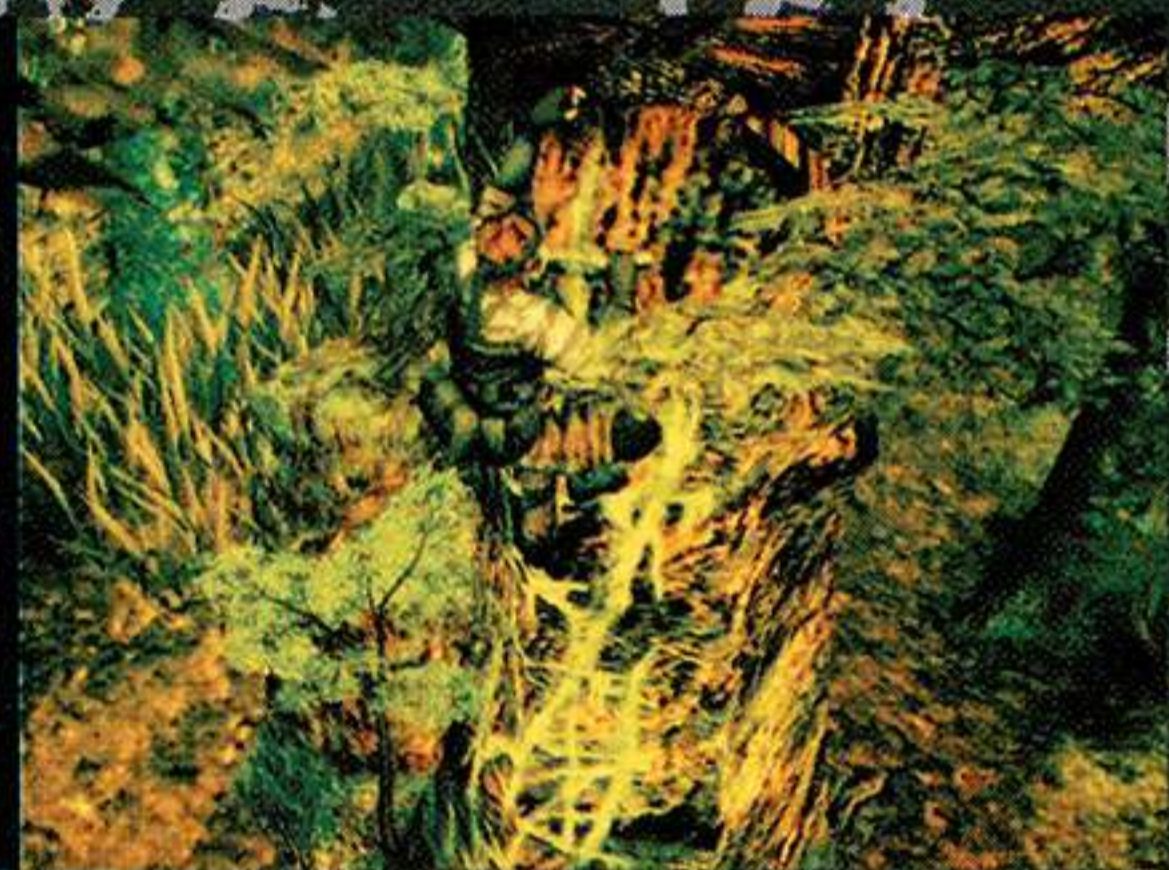
Tekken's blonde bad girl busts out in her own stealth-action romp set aboard a luxurious cruise ship. Shuffleboard optional.



METAL GEAR SOLID 3: SNAKE EATER

PS2 • Konami • Fall 2004

Camouflage and jungle survival skills (including, yes, actually dining on various types of snakes) are the focus for Konami's next stealth-action blockbuster.



■ "Hmm, smells a bit overcooked."

PSI-OPS: THE MINDGATE CONSPIRACY

PS2/XB • Midway • June 2004

Imagine Solid Snake with psychic powers far superior to Miss Cleo's and you've got the profile of *Psi-Ops* star Nick Scryer. This secret agent possesses such abilities as telekinesis, pyrokinesis, remote viewing, and even mind control. Also, Nick's never afraid to bust a cap if he's suffering from a brain fart. ➤

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NINTENDO'S ABANDONED ESOTERICA

Nintendo has an odd habit of announcing utterly bizarre games but then failing to follow through by actually releasing them. Oddball titles like *Giftpia* (a pastel-colored RPG devoid of combat), *Stage Debut* (a talent simulator that involves scanning e-Cards), *Custom Robo* (brutal toy-box warfare), and *Roll-O-Rama* (in which you control a ball by tilting the controller) seem unlikely to ever make it to store shelves.



■ Nintendo weirdness abounds: (clockwise from top) *Stage Debut*, *Custom Robo*, and *Giftpia*.

HARVEST MOON FOR GIRLS

GBA/GC • Natsume • Fall 2004

Apparently, *Harvest Moon: Friends of Mineral Town* (GBA) and *Harvest Moon: A Wonderful Life* (GC) should have had "for Boys" added to their titles, because both are being remade with a feminine twist.



PIKMIN 2

GC • Nintendo • Summer 2004

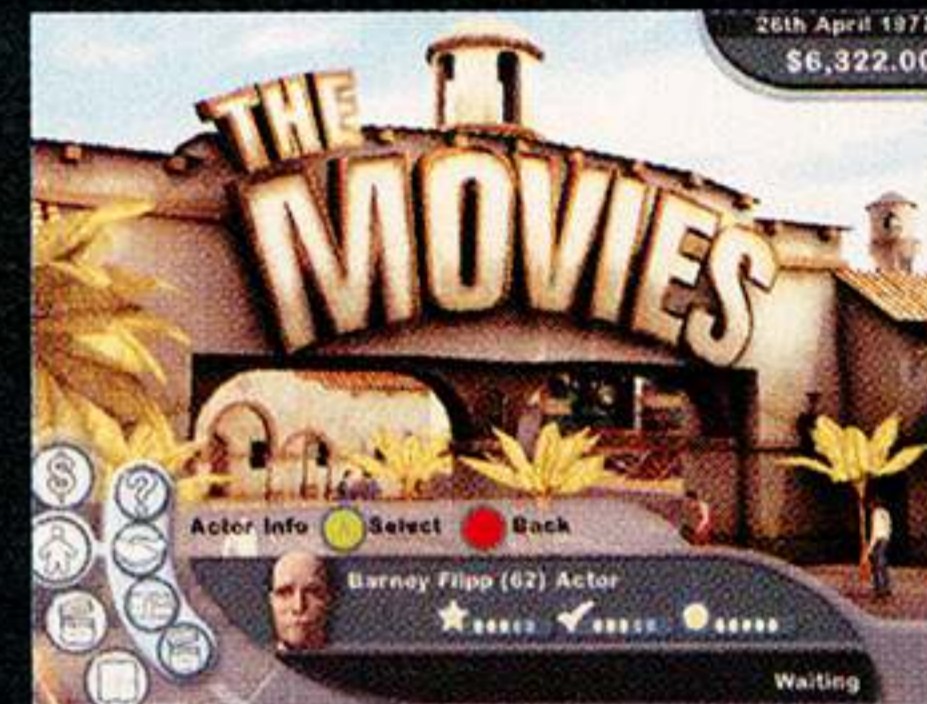
Hear that small pitter-patter down the hallway? That's the sound of 3,000 cute li'l plantimals returning for another garden-themed real-time-strategy jaunt.



THE MOVIES

PS2/XB/GC • Activision • Fall 2004

Being a movie star has its drawbacks—you gotta be in great shape, give up your privacy, and sign an irritating number of autographs. The Hollywood job you really want is studio owner, and designer Peter Molyneux (*Populous*, *Theme Park*) understands this. To put it in true Hollywood terms, *The Movies* is *The Sims* meets *The Player*. You run a movie studio from the early days of cinema right through 2010. You select scripts, design sets, direct the cast and crew, and deal with diva actors and their entourages. "[You] basically experience anything you've ever read about Hollywood—from stars' bad behavior and expensive turkeys to meteoric rises to stardom and surprise box-office successes," Molyneux says.



■ Your personal movie studio—use it to make Oscar-winning fare...or *Hudson Hawk 2*.



Title: **Wildest Week 2**

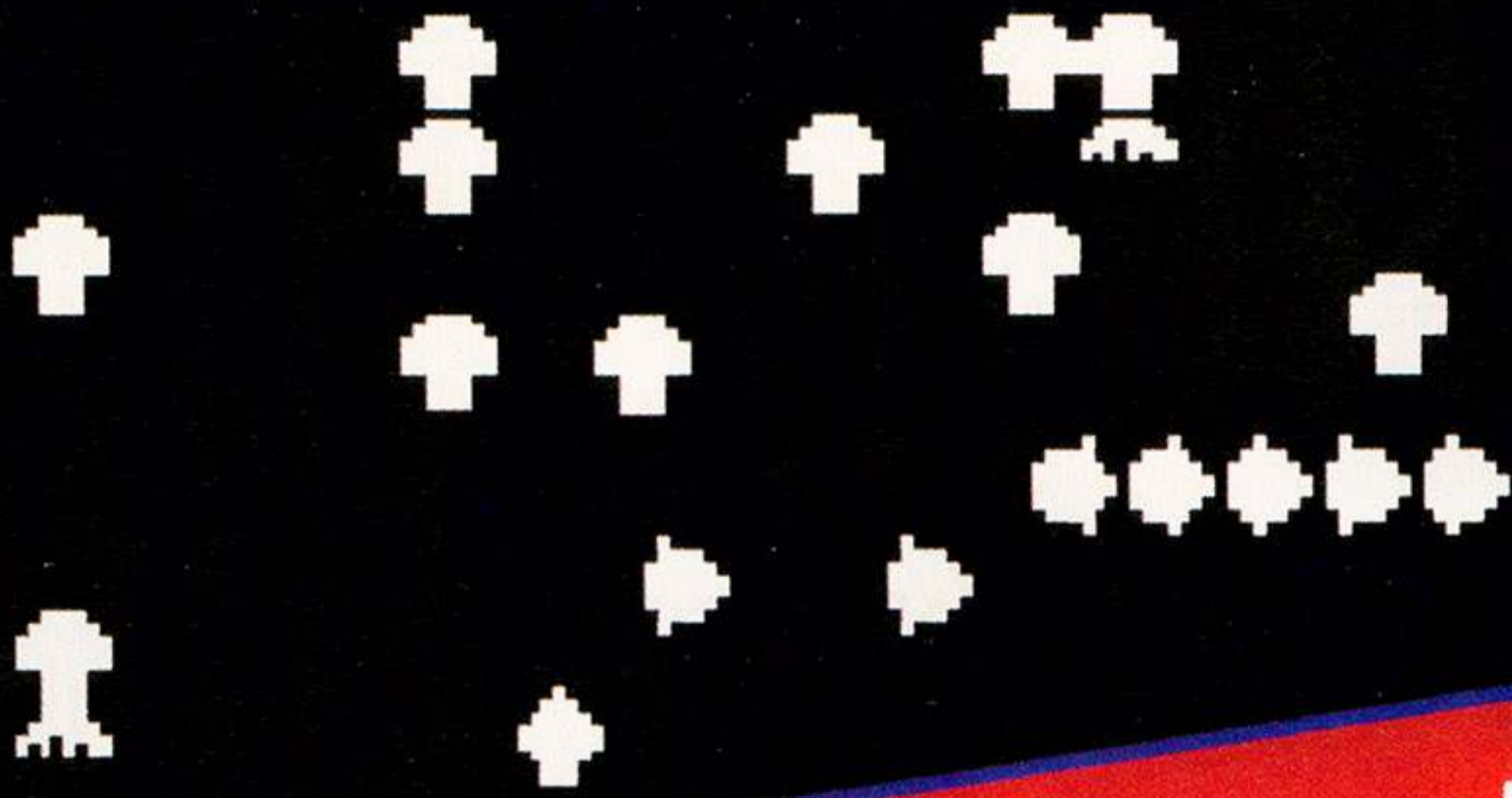
Director: Chad Best



I Made This

How will you get your *Movies* creations to a demanding public? Activision hopes to let players post their completed works to a central website. So, if you're good enough, you could end up with some real fans in the end.





THAT WAS
THEN

see what's
NEXT



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review crew

the must buys, the nice tries, and the cow pies



■ Hey Rio of *LifeLine* fame, I said, "Look behind you! A she-ninja!" Fine, don't listen....

DIRECTORY

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- 122 Cy Girls



■ Hey Diavolo, he who smelt it dealt it.



■ PS2/XB/GC

■ ONLINE
(PS2 ONLY)



JAMES BOND 007: EVERYTHING OR NOTHING

Looks like they chose everything

Which Version? Only PS2 owners can play the cooperative campaign online. On the other hand, Xbox and GameCube gamers can engage in four-player versus matches without extra hardware. Otherwise, all three are virtually identical, so the choice may come down to which system's controller you prefer.

PAUL: Fans expect a lot in a James Bond story: sardonic wordplay, gorgeous women, menacing supervillains, vehicular mayhem, rough-and-tumble fistfights, huge explosions, cutting-edge gadgetry, and 007's trademark improvisation. Well, expect away, y'all—*Everything or Nothing* delivers. It feels even more like a Bond adventure than some lesser chapters in the film series. (Timothy Dalton?! Honestly.)

Unlike previous 007 games, which had you merely shooting a million minions, or at best re-creating set pieces from the most recent film, *EON* encourages you to think and act like Bond. Use Q's rappelling device to seek the high ground (oh look, a sniper rifle!), throw a flash grenade to distract the guards, or open that steam vent to incapacitate 'em. Once you get into the MI6 mind-

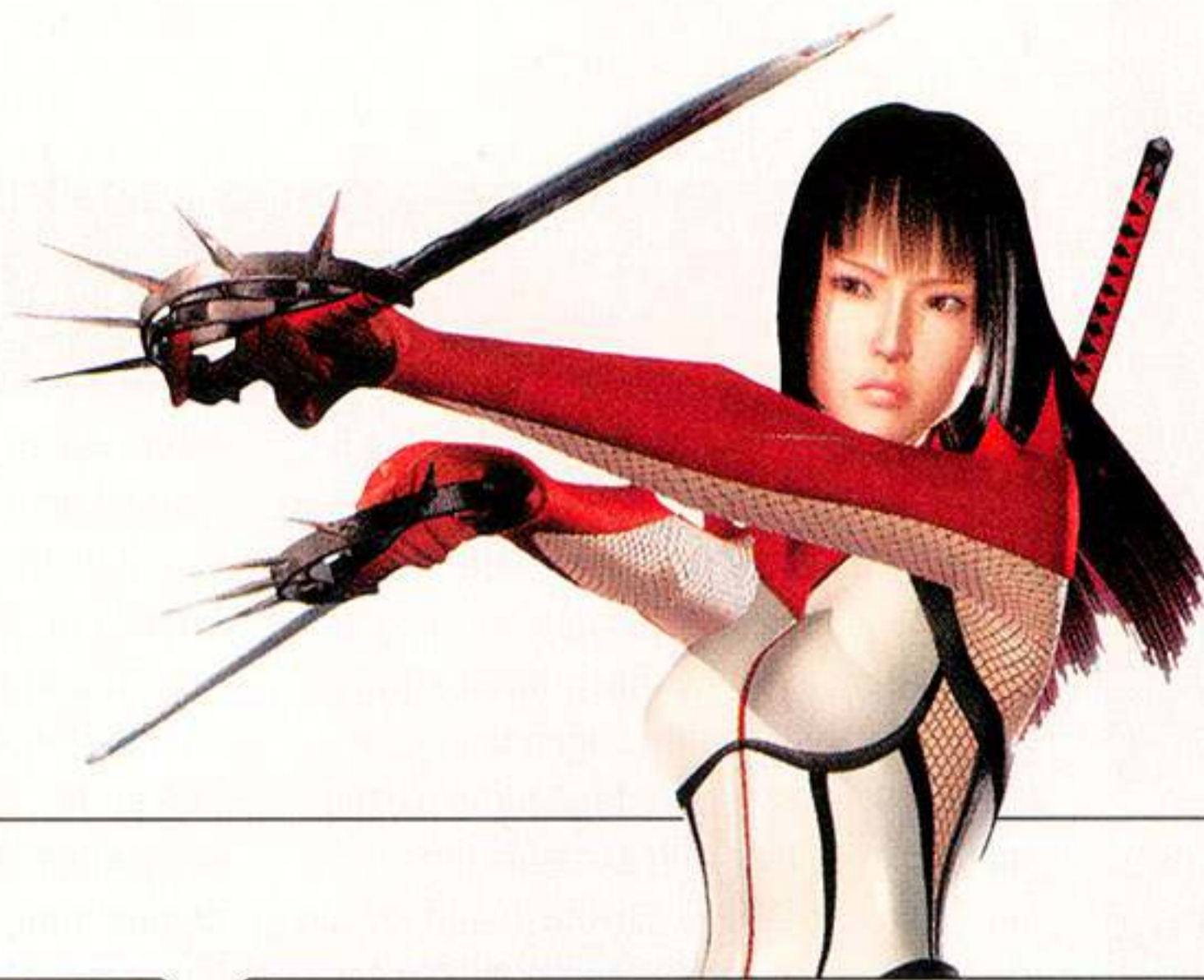
set, it seems totally natural to throw yourself off a cliff sans parachute—you'll figure out something on the way down—or drive a tank *through* that building. Things can't go too wrong with Bond at the wheel.

Speaking of wheels, these vehicle scenes are sweet. Not content to beat Midway's *Spy Hunter* at its own game (it does), *EON* lets you drive a variety of weapon-equipped vehicles along branching paths full of obstacles, jumps, and lots of explodable, expendable enemies. Now I know why Bond drives by the seat of his pants—it's really fun.

Although 007 can defeat enemies with stealth attacks, plain ol' pugilism, or Q's gadgets, the bad guys' tendency to buddy up means it's often simpler to take them out with bullets rather than

Bondian guile. An occasionally iffy lock-on system and a jumbled inventory cause a little trouble too, but it's nothing you can't handle. After all, you're Bond. James Bond.

JOHN R: Playing a Bond shooter in third person might seem a bit awkward at first, but the more time you spend with *Everything or Nothing*, the more you grow to appreciate the new viewpoint. Combat skews toward stealth tactics and strategic planning rather than pure run-n-gun action this time around, making *EON* feel more like *Metal Gear Solid* or *Splinter Cell* than past Bond games—or at least that's how I approached it; sounds like Paul and Scooter had as much fun going in with guns blazing. The awesome driving and flying stages only serve to enhance the



■ *Nightshade's* Hibana prepares to eviscerate something. Anything. Everything.

XBOX

122 Colin McRae Rally 04

GAMECUBE

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130 Harvest Moon: A Wonderful Life

130 Pokémon Colosseum

THE RATING SYSTEM



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 or higher.

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

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

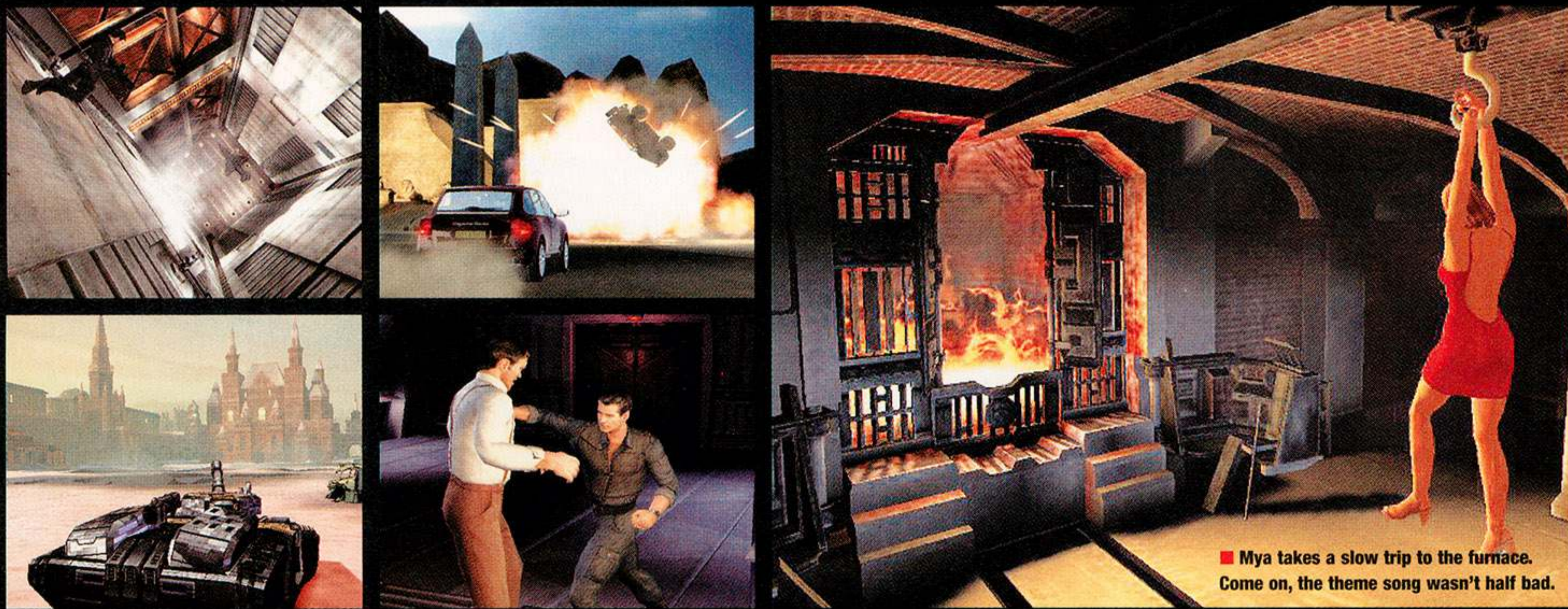
ESRB KEY (Also check out www.esrb.com)

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.

<p>Pierce Brosnan (James Bond) Voice acting: ★★★★★ Delivers one-liners as dry as the secret agent's shaken-not-stirred martinis.</p>	<p>Willem Dafoe (Nikolai Diavolo) Voice acting: ★★★★★ The perfect supervillain, Dafoe clearly enjoys Diavolo's thick Russian accent.</p>	<p>Shannon Elizabeth (Serena St. Germaine) Voice acting: ★★★★★ Is this hottie really hot for the aging Bond? We don't buy it.</p>	<p>Dame Judi Dench (M) Voice acting: ★★★★★ Fail a mission and you're treated to the perfect dose of M's withering contempt.</p>	<p>Mya (Mya Starling) Voice acting: ★★★★★ Is she reading right from the script? Probably. Did they use the first take? Probably not.</p>



■ Mya takes a slow trip to the furnace. Come on, the theme song wasn't half bad.

overall experience.

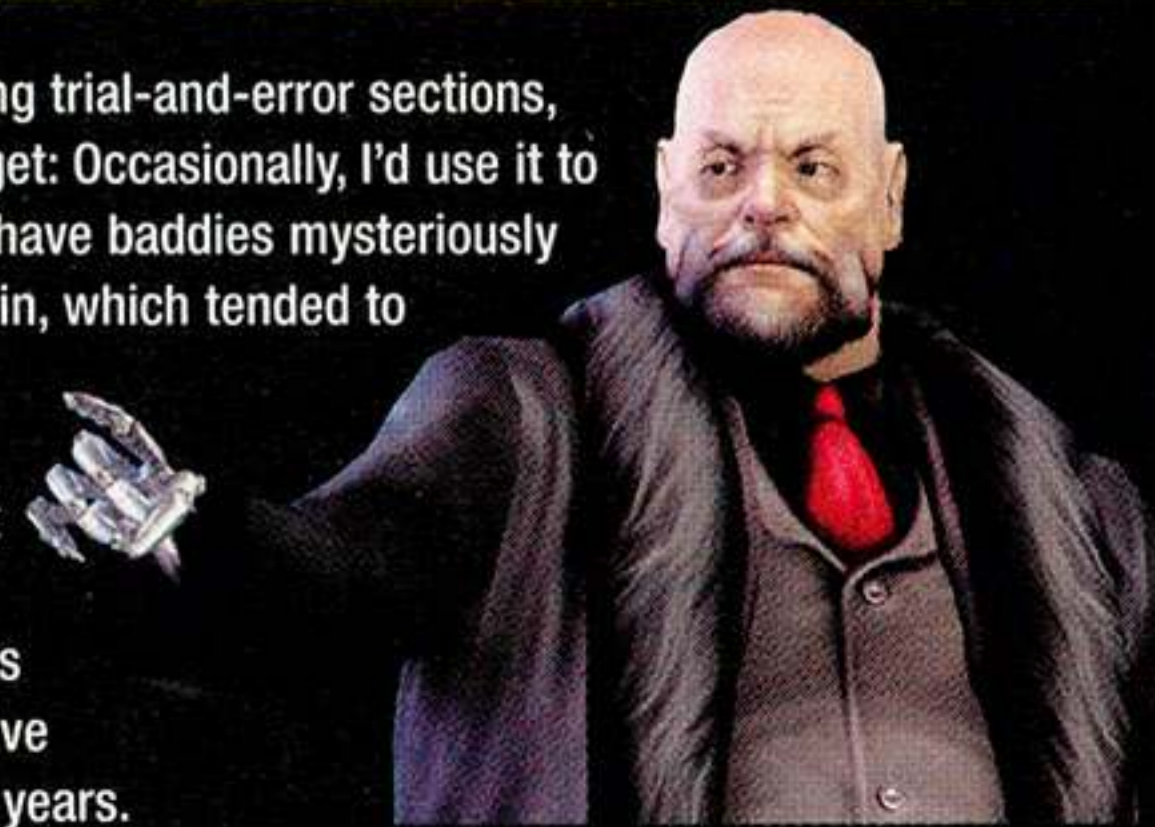
My only real complaint with *Everything or Nothing* is that the story is pretty much entirely forgettable (not unlike most recent Bond movies). Still, the star-studded roster of voice talent demands respect and adds an extra layer of polish to what is otherwise a very solid third-person shooter.

OFFICIAL PS MAG—SCOOTER: To say that *Everything or Nothing* feels like a new Bond flick

is an understatement—imagine the last three Bond flicks fused into some sort of massive martini-swilling super-Bond flick, and you're close. We're talkin' car chases, tank hijackings, crazy gadgets, general sneakery, and even an act of seduction or two. It's been a while since I played a game with such engaging, pure, and thrilling action, and on top of the excellent single-player game, there's a pretty cool co-op mode to nicely round out the package.

Minor downers include an occasionally wonky

camera, some annoying trial-and-error sections, and the Q-spider gadget: Occasionally, I'd use it to scout a room, only to have baddies mysteriously appear after I walked in, which tended to devalue the Q-spider as a recon tool. I won't say it's the best Bond game ever made, but I will say it's the best Bond game I've played in the last five years.



Good: The Bondiest Bond game yet
Bad: Somewhat flaky lock-on
The Only Character Missing: Ms. Moneypenny



THE VERDICTS (OUT OF 10)

8.0 8.5 8.5

PAUL

JOHN R.

SCOOTER

Publisher: EA Games
Developer: EA
Players: 1-4 (2 co-op)
ESRB: Teen

www.eagames.com



Blow a hole in the garden and sink this worm—thanks, deformable landscapes!

PS2/XB/GC

ONLINE
(XBOX ONLY)

WORMS 3D

Violent invertebrates = fun for the whole family



Clockwise from top: homing pigeon, Uzi, holy hand grenade, nuclear bomb, fire punch

Good: The wonderful *Worms* formula works in 3D

Bad: Except now it's hard as heck to aim some weapons

Kids, Don't Come Near Us: Up to 80% of you may have worms*



SHOE: Worms don't kill worms. Worms with guns do. And these li'l buggers go out of their way to exercise their right to bear arms (despite not having actual arms) in this 3D update to the much-loved strategy series. Here, you control squads of cute-but-deadly worms who take turns blasting each other to hell with arsenals the Pentagon and Wile E. Coyote would love to have. But it's the intentionally fallible controls that turn this game from fun to hilarious. For example, before you toss that cluster bomb, you have to compensate for distance, wind, launch speed, arc, and momentum. And since you're probably not Rain Man, you'll get a lot of errant explosions that make for laughs-out-loud at your next party-game session. Not the multiplayer type? Try the billion single-player scenarios that are set up like missions, not just all-out deathmatches.

Unfortunately, while the fantastic *Worms* formula stays intact here, it becomes infinitely more difficult to gauge distances, wind, and all that in 3D. For that reason alone, I can't recommend this one over its 2D predecessors.

PAUL: A-yup, it's *Worms*—cute cartoon annelids annihilating each other with a plethora of powerful ordnance. Dueling the computer always feels like practice, no matter how cleverly conceived the mission, but multiplayer *Worms* is perfect for the nieces' and nephews' visit, or even when some friends come over in the drinkin' mood (I humbly suggest tequila as the apropos aperitif). Too bad everyone has to share a single controller, a fact which cheaters can exploit to sabotage an opponent's turn "by accident." *Penalties*—think 'em up and enforce 'em.

DEMIAN: It may be in 3D, but it's still the same old *Worms*—packed with warped (and British) humor and a guaranteed good time if you've got some friends to battle. Shoe's right about the switch to three dimensions making it tougher to aim, but the flip side is that the game requires more skill, and that's not entirely bad. The occasional glitches I encountered were entirely bad, though, like the time my explosive-packed carrier pigeon hit its victim...but decided not to go boom.

THE VERDICTS (OUT OF 10)	8.0	6.5	7.5
	SHOE	PAUL	DEMIAN

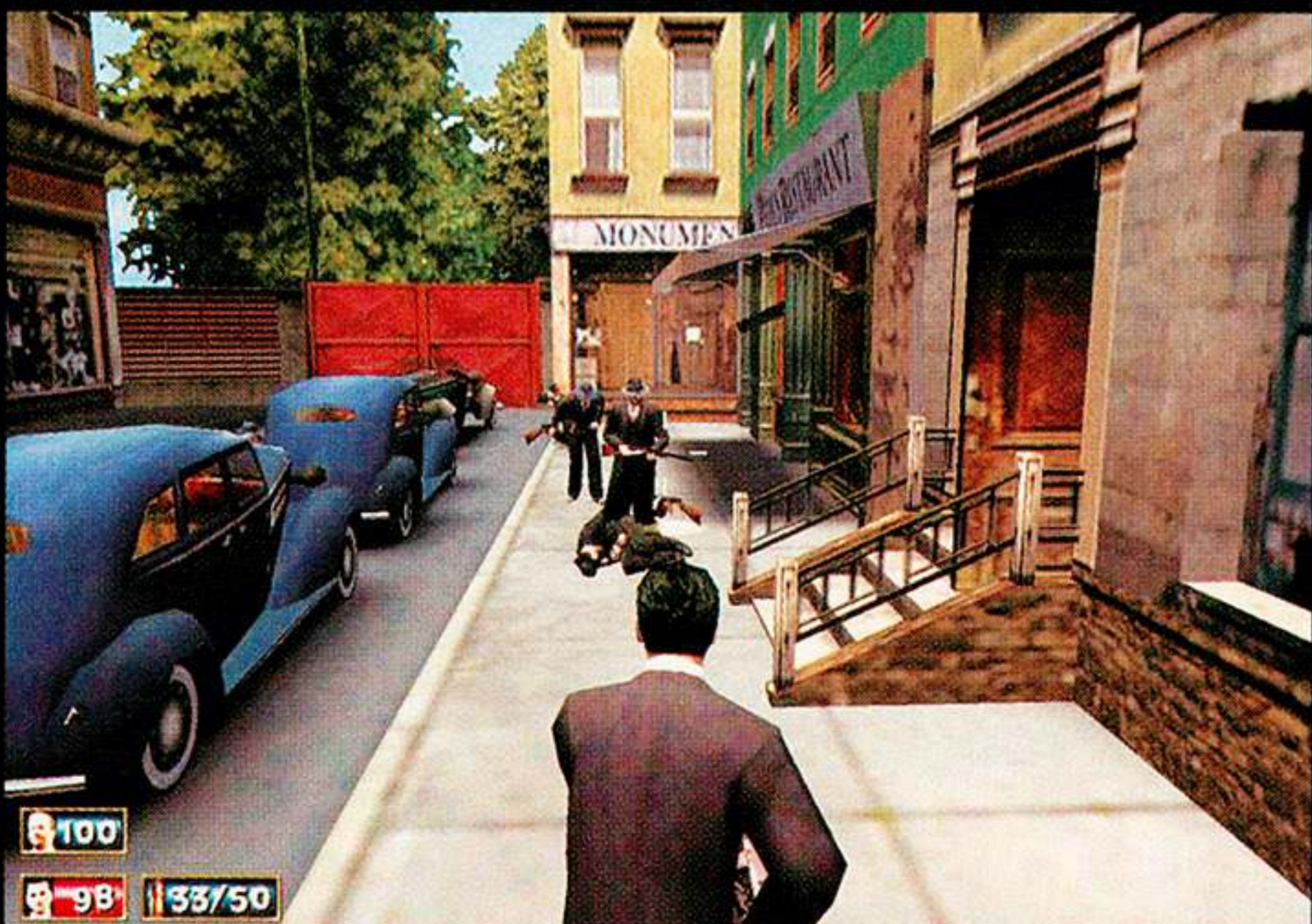
Publisher: Acclaim
Developer: Team17
Players: 1-4
ESRB: Teen
www.worms3d.com
* U. of Cambridge estimates on Caucasian children infected with pinworms: 30-80%.



PS2/XB

MAFIA

An offer you can probably refuse



"After this, you guys wanna play some stickball?"

Good: Excellent story and mission variety

Bad: Fluctuating difficulty and cheap enemies

Watch Instead: *The Godfather*



G. FORD: Set in 1930s New York City—esque *Lost Heaven*—complete with inaccurate guns and cars that struggle to break 50 mph—*Mafia* tells the tale of an enterprising cabbie's rise through the ranks of the mob (via *Grand Theft Auto*—style car-based missions and third-person shooting action) and his subsequent attempt to rat out The Family. Which, as the canon of mob movies has taught us, is heavily frowned upon.

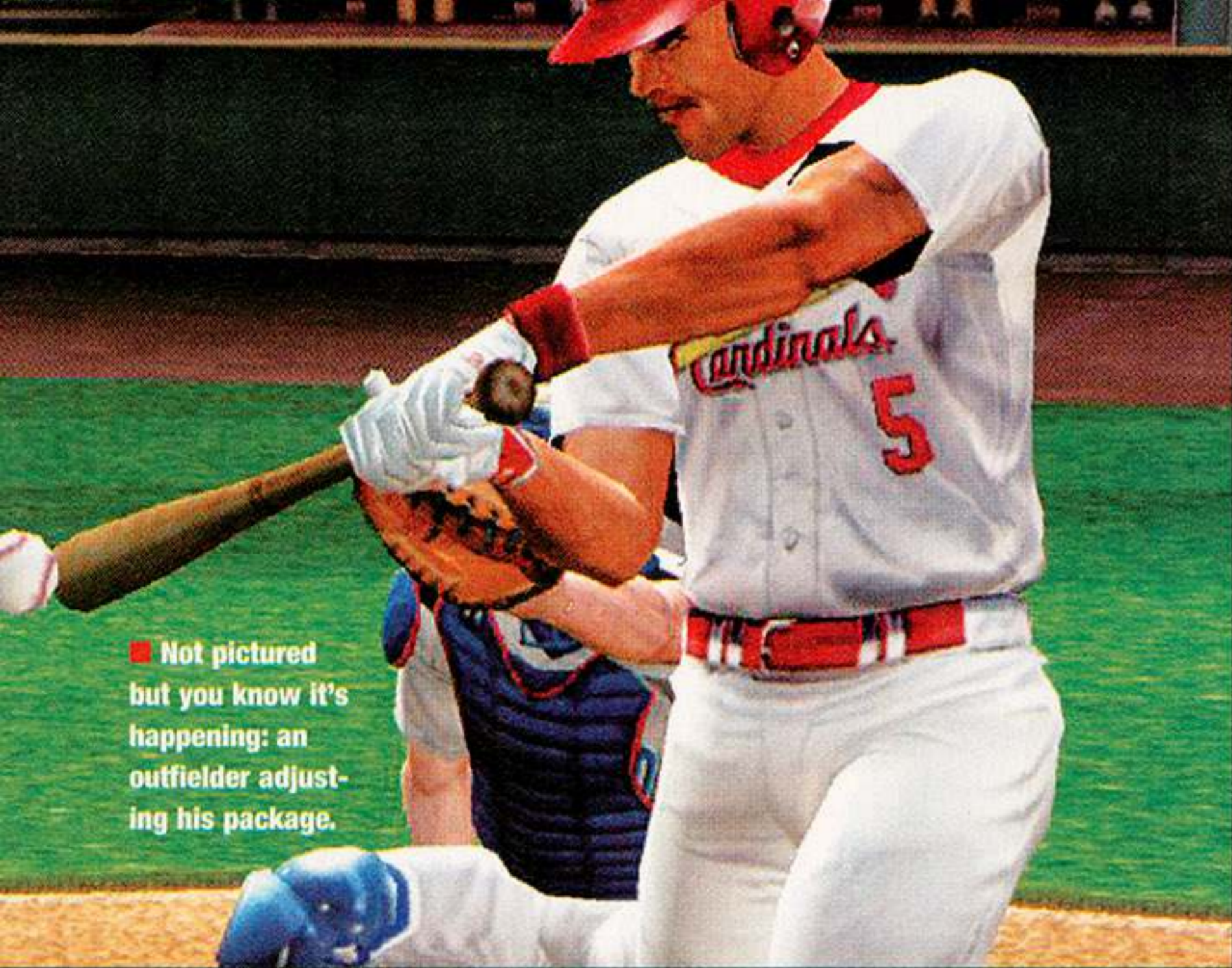
The excellent cut-scenes and score combine to set a wonderful mood, but right as you're cruising through the game's impressive variety of tasks, it all comes to a screeching halt. Highly frustrating missions pepper the game, usually filled with cheap enemies who have impeccable aim and a superhuman ability to absorb multiple shotgun blasts at point-blank range. When driving, buildings and other scenery tend to pop up out of nowhere, while cars and pedestrians sometimes disappear if you switch from the front view to the rear and back again, which really makes *Mafia* feel like the two-year-old PC port it is. Still, the story should keep dedicated gamers going; just don't expect gameplay to match.

CRISPIN: Compared to most games that've jacked *Grand Theft Auto's* hit-and-run formula, *Mafia* is a sluggish, low-octane jalopy—and not just because its old-tyme autocarriages barely break the speed limit. This Sunday driver cruises along in the slow lane with long-winded cinematics, lengthy loading times, and too much time spent driving from A to B. Your hero does get into thrilling situations—rooftop chases, colossal firefights, hasty getaways—but they're often spoiled by twitchy on-foot control and glitches. So that's why they call it the Great Depression.

OFFICIAL PS MAG—SCOOTER: It may not be *GTA*, but to me, *Mafia* is one of the best crime games out there. Sure, it's got minor problems, like the semi-dated look (I'm criticizing technology, not art aesthetic), interminable load times, hit detection, melee combat controls, and the sometimes boring driving bits. But what enthralls me is *Mafia's* great sense of style, the large variety of mission types (ranging from sabotaging a race car to walking a girl home), and the excellent story.

THE VERDICTS (OUT OF 10)	6.0	5.0	7.5
	G. FORD	CRISPIN	SCOOTER

Publisher: Gathering
Developer: Illusion Softworks
Players: 1
ESRB: Mature
www.take2games.com



■ Not pictured but you know it's happening: an outfielder adjusting his package.



■ Olde tyme players like Jackie Robinson, Lou Gehrig, and Ty Cobb are unlockable, along with stadiums and uniforms.



PS2/XB/GC

ONLINE (PS2 ONLY)

MVP BASEBALL 2004

Going...going...it's still going

Good: Intuitive batting controls
Bad: Slow-reacting outfielders
EA Cover Curse's Next Victim: Albert Pujols



BRYAN: EA's baseball entry walked off the diamond last spring with my "Comeback Game of the Year" award, and this season's *MVP* is better still—and rightfully deserving of its namesake.

Aside from offering a deeper, feature-heavy dynasty mode (now complete with minor league squads), *2004* revolutionizes the art of videogame batting much like *2003* did with pitching. Thanks to the all-new left analog stick hitting mechanics, it's never been so intuitive to step up to the plate and belt a pitch to the opposite field, or to drive in a run with a sacrifice fly. *MVP's* unmatched on-field controls don't stop there; with a simple tap of the right analog stick, you can command fielders to dive for balls, or as a baserunner, break up potential double plays.

But even actual MVPs commit one or two minor errors throughout the season. The player models aren't the most lifelike, and in terms of gameplay, outfielders react a tad too slowly to well-hit balls. Still, neither of these gripes should stop you from buying the most innovative baseball sim I've played yet.

PATRICK: *MVP* may be in its sophomore season, but there's no slump in sight. This year, in addition to the tremendous pitching interface, you enjoy complete command over the swing and experience the depth and realism of actually standing in the batter's box. Several subtleties add to the experience, like multiple slide types, check swing hits, and dropped third strikes. EA Sports also mended last year's bugs: Runners on second now advance on balls hit

to the right, tags work when they should, and fly balls don't inexplicably drop next to waiting outfielders. The season is young, but *MVP 2004* looks like a winner.

OFFICIAL PS MAG—CHRIS B: When you screw up in *MVP*, it's *your* fault. And you know it. Be it getting schooled by a Roger Clemens splitter or giving up a three-run shot to Jon "Barry Bonds can't be in this game, so EA created me" Dowd, you almost always feel in total control of what happens on the field. (And if fielders responded better, you could leave out that "almost.") Dynasty mode is another highlight, but you'll sim most of each season—it's 162 games or none in *MVP*. Fortunately, it's so good, you might find yourself wanting to play that many anyway.



■ Players can now make Willie Mays-style over-the-shoulder catches (left) with ease, thanks to *MVP's* new on-field controls.



THE VERDICTS (OUT OF 10)	8.5	8.0	8.5
	BRYAN	PATRICK	CHRIS B.

Publisher: EA Sports
Developer: EA Canada
Players: 1-2 (PS2: 1-2 online)
ESRB: Everyone

www.easports.com



ASKA

SHE'S THE ARTISTIC TYPE. THOUGH HER ARTS ARE PURELY MARTIAL.

CYBIRLS

09:27:36



■ Watch your coccyx! Them moguls hurt.

■ PS2/XB

MX UNLEASHED



Better living through motocross

Good: Physics and controls complement each other perfectly
Bad: Intolerable load times
Best Trick: Triple backflip into faceplant into ragdoll roll



JON D: This year's *MX* is certainly the most professional motocross game I've played—the physics are flawless and every race has nail-biter potential, even if you're dead last heading into the final lap. Unfortunately, the mind-boggling load times kept hampering my high after every race in career mode. And since it's mostly quantity-over-quality level design, the huge number of similar courses only emphasized the eons that passed between each. But once I wandered into the freestyle arena, I recovered quickly—huge jumps helped me find new ways to dramatically injure Crumples, my custom rider, and turned my frown upside down. A clutch of cool unlockables, including a biplane and new freestyle playgrounds, added enough replay value to make up for the career-mode vanilla. Die-hard motocross fans will appreciate the main-game tedium more than I did, but we casuals can still enjoy the bulk of this one.

BRYAN: Developer Rainbow Studios' take on the world of off-road crotch rockets would be exactly the kind of high-performance gaming motor oil I'd be looking to

put into my console...if consoles took oil. Whether or not you're a video grease monkey, you'll dig *Unleashed's* superb handling, challenging track designs, rewarding career mode, and addictive minigames. The limited multiplayer support and shallow selection of tunes stalled my enthusiasm, but only slightly. It's been a while since I had this much fun riding in the mud on two wheels...like, since the original *Excitebike* (NES). And that's saying something.

OFFICIAL PS MAG—JOE R: Like Rainbow Studios' other dirt-based racer, *ATV Offroad Fury*, *MX Unleashed* is really rather good. Here, Rainbow contributes to the *Grand Theft Auto*-ification of the planet by throwing in a mission-based freestyle mode, highlighted by the ability to drive a different wacky vehicle in each environment. The racing is fun but still occasionally frustrating: It's far too easy to lose a solid lead by a chance misstep. Still, the feeling that you can win the race if you can nail that *one* jump or cut that one turn *just* right is enough to keep me playing.



THE VERDICTS (OUT OF 10)

8.0	8.0	8.0
JON D.	BRYAN	JOE R.

Publisher: THQ
 Developer: Rainbow Studios
 Players: 1-2
 ESRB: Everyone

www.thq.com

■ PlayStation 2

LIFELINE

Her name is Rio, and she doesn't understand



■ Here's why Rio wears an apron: aliens shoot goo.



Good: Decent voice actors
Bad: Voice recognition is spotty at best
Guaranteed: You will swear at this game



PAUL: Aliens crash an orbiting hotel's gala, gobbling guests like hors d'oeuvres. Rio, erstwhile waitress, asks you to guide her to safety, so grab that headset, get bossy, and talk her down.

I'd hoped that voice recognition would enable social interaction with Rio, more interesting puzzles, or deeper strategy in firefights. Nope. *LifeLine* is survival-horror circa 1995: a quest for keys punctuated by awkward combat, with the occasional cut-scene to develop a clichéd story.

You mostly bark the names of objects, since Rio is stymied by fancy words like verbs, adjectives, and prepositions. Propositions she sometimes understands, but her prudish responses aren't much fun. Pity. When Rio misconstrued my clearly enunciated "break room" and used (wasted) a health pack—*twice*—I lost all interest in her survival. Stupid ho.

Voice recognition will be a lot more fun when it *works*. Until then, if I really want to be ignored and misunderstood by a girl, I'll go clubbing and hit on the haughty hipster chick in the Pabst Blue Ribbon T-shirt.

CRISPIN: *LifeLine's* talk-your-way-outta-this-one gameplay would be a revolutionary concept worth shouting about...if it didn't suffer from a major failure to communicate. The game's ditzy-chick star just does not listen. You'll go blue in the face screaming for her to shoot a monster's tongue or examine some doohickey, only to have her leave the room or stare at you blankly. It all adds a frustrating layer of gimmicky complication to the combat (which does get easier as you learn more commands) and stale *Resident Evil*-style puzzles.

BRYAN: As if I didn't have enough lady problems already, here's another woman who doesn't understand me. Sadly, *LifeLine's* voice recognition feature works in reverse, impeding gameplay instead of enhancing it. Rio struggles to comprehend your commands, making both exploration and combat painfully frustrating, and even the most scholarly gamer will need a thesaurus when verbally identifying several key items for the dimwitted heroine. At 40 bucks, *LifeLine's* talk isn't cheap enough.



■ Left to right: Rio, expendable characters.

Dirty Talk

Say these phrases for some interesting results:

- Sleep with me
- Bark like a dog
- Kill yourself
- I hate you
- F*** you
- Every curse word you know



THE VERDICTS (OUT OF 10)

4.5	4.5	4.0
PAUL	CRISPIN	BRYAN

Publisher: Konami
 Developer: Sony CEI
 Players: 1
 ESRB: Mature

www.konami.com



■ Wonder what happened between *Onimusha 2* and *3*? Some of that backstory is told between *Blade Warrior's* battles.



■ PlayStation 2

ONIMUSHA BLADE WARRIORS

Super Bushido Brothers

Good: Four-player free-for-alls

Bad: Sparring solo

Best Warrior Without a Blade: Mega Man



SHAWN: Waves ripped from a wall scroll, tall grass swaying in the wind—*Blade Warriors'* scenery belongs in a travel brochure, but the Land of the Rising Sun's rivers run blood red when samurai square off against an army of demons. Light on story, this *Onimusha* saga spin-off is almost all slice and dice. Think of it as *Super Smash Bros.* (GC) with Bushido instead of butt stomping—simple fun for four players, with strategy based not so much on *how* you swing your sword (*Soul Calibur* it ain't), but when. Outside of unlockable bonuses, though, you won't find much incentive to spar alone here. Several arenas and swordsmen, including 17th century rivals Miyamoto Musashi and Sasaki Kojiro, await you if you're willing to

work your way to the top time after time, but while the rewards are nice, the effort is as dull as a wooden practice sword.

SHOE: Admit it: You wouldn't like the *Super Smash Bros.* series half as much without the heavy Nintendo flavoring. So if you took that same four-player-battle concept into the world of *Onimusha*, it wouldn't be nearly as cool, right? (Answer: right.) *Blade Warriors* simply doesn't have the variety needed to keep you and your friends hooked on multiplayer—all the warriors have essentially the same moves, and each level isn't that different from the next. Single player, however, is sharp. Leveling up and finding new weapons, armor, or items give you plenty of incentive

to keep slashing and button mashing away.

GMR—MILKMAN: Snobby fighting-game zealots might balk at *Blade Warriors'* button-mashy antics, but for PS2 owners looking for a *Super Smash Bros.*-ish beat-em-up, this game is a worthy diversion. Shoe and I will agree to disagree: The single-player mode is merely a forum in which to level up characters in classic *Onimusha* fashion, but when you get to use these studs in the surprisingly entertaining multiplayer modes, the game shows its true worth. Sure, pitting Mega Man EXE against Miyamoto Musashi is a little bizarre, but when a game looks this good, players (*Onimusha* fans in particular) will find much to enjoy in this harmless exercise in fan service.



■ Try importing a memory-card save from the forthcoming *Onimusha 3* for a few surprises....

THE VERDICTS (OUT OF 10)	7.0	7.0	7.5
	SHAWN	SHOE	MILKMAN

Publisher: Capcom
Developer: Capcom
Players: 1-2 (2-4 w/Multitap)
ESRB: Teen

www.capcom.com



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

CYBERGIRLS

07:18:54

Stevie Nicks said it best: "In the battle of the dragon, no one walks away."



PlayStation 2

DRAKENGARD

Guarded optimism



Caim's on-foot missions manage to maintain freshness by offering tons of unique weapons.

Good: Deep, dark story
Bad: Repetitive gameplay
Number of Incestuous Relationships: One



JOHN R: If *Dynasty Warriors* got it on with *Panzer Dragoon*, the end result would probably be something akin to *Drakengard*. Unfortunately, *Drakengard's* core gameplay doesn't live up to the high standards set by either of its forebears, but its dark, twisted story and fantastic production values make it well worth experiencing—at least once.

Most of the time, you fight waves of mindless enemies, whether you're on the ground, in the air, or strafing ground targets from above. Melee combat is similar to what you'd find in *Dynasty Warriors*, but the nonstop battling gets old fast, thanks to dumb enemy A.I. and stages that are often too big for their own good. The flying sections aren't restricted to a set path like in *Panzer Dragoon*, which is nice, but the action tends to get repetitive after a while.

Still, *Drakengard's* branching plot and multiple endings (the last one is truly bizarre) will inspire you to press on, regardless of the inherent gameplay flaws.

SHANE: I'm with John—this jack-of-all-trades hybrid doesn't best the games from which it draws inspiration, but it's still

enjoyable. From an audiovisual standpoint, *Drakengard* is merely competent (cool art direction and cinematics offset the drab colors and occasional slowdown), and the, uh, Shakespearean narrative might offend some, but the robust gameplay will keep you coming back. All three level types are totally engaging, and a wealth of secrets (hidden stages, dragons, and weapons) means that a weekend rental won't be nearly long enough.

OFFICIAL PS MAG—CHRIS B: Call me old-fashioned, but I like my games incest free. Sadly, the suggestion that *Drakengard's* hero does his sister helps make up the most painfully unwatchable story I've experienced in years. John R. and Shane are right about *Drakengard's* gameplay owing a debt to the open-field hack-n-slash of *Dynasty Warriors* and *Panzer Dragoon's* dragon-riding combat, but it never comes close to matching the greatness of either. And just try avoiding such horribly acted, overly melodramatic midbattle dialogue as this: "Forgiven. No forgiveness. Unforgiven. No." Now what the hell does that mean?

THE VERDICTS (OUT OF 10)	7.5	7.0	3.5
	JOHN R.	SHANE	CHRIS B.

Publisher: Square Enix
Developer: Cavia
Players: 1
ESRB: Mature

www.square-enix-usa.com



PlayStation 2

FIREFIGHTER F.D. 18

Shake and bake—we got ourselves a barbecue



End-of-level "boss fires" remind you that it's all just a game. Whew!

Good: Best firefighting game since that one a long time ago
Bad: If you've fought one fire, you've fought them all
Disfigured, Diabolical Arsonist: Check



DEMIAN: I have a whole new respect for firemen. I mean, of course there's the risking-your-life-every-day thing, but the firefighter-see-and-destroy security robots (which are curiously immune to high-pressure blasts of water but explode into a ball of flame when smacked with an ax) and the big ol' boss fires, well, I had no idea!

OK, so in order to make a game out of something that probably isn't much like a game (especially not a fun one), *Firefighter* takes some odd liberties. The killer robots, the magic fire hose that never snags or runs dry, the basic premise of a lone-wolf firefighter who's tasked with saving countless civilians with next to no help—it's all a bit silly. But hey, it's also a pretty novel game idea, and how often do you run across these? The cheap deaths, repetitive gameplay, and ham-handed love story may dampen *Firefighter*, but whatever—it's still not half as bad as Ron Howard's *Backdraft*.

CRISPIN: And to think I wanted to be a firefighter when I was a laddy. Not after playing this game, which proves that battling blazes is not only a hazardous profession,

but it's also tedious, frustrating, and a real head trip (wait till you face fire-possessed flying laundry and fireman-hating robots). Too many missions degenerate into retry-until-you-don't-die exercises in trial and error as you wander through the haze, seeking the fastest route to trapped civvies. The smoke-choked visuals and killer fire effects help you feel the burn, though. If nothing else, this game's tense moments will make you sweat.

JENNIFER: I'll try to convey this game's most exciting moment. You're trudging through the burning halls of an office building when your squadmate shouts, "Watch out for the explosion!" The floor on which you're standing immediately bursts into flames for no apparent reason. You die! Other exciting moments: selecting between your hose's two settings! Saving helpless administrative assistants from smoke inhalation! Recovering cherished family photos and PDAs! Crawling through ventilation shafts because your ax can't bust through a carpeted cubicle wall! You get my point—don't play with this fire.

THE VERDICTS (OUT OF 10)	6.5	6.0	4.0
	DEMIAN	CRISPIN	JENNIFER

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

www.konami.com/usa



PlayStation 2

NIGHTSHADE

Shinobi...for her

Good: Tight control, challenging bosses

Bad: Scarce improvement upon *Shinobi*

Your Shinobi Save Game: Unlocks secrets in *Nightshade*

SHANE: Sega's *Shinobi* (PS2) proved to be a surprise hit, garnering fans with its fast action, tricky jumping bits, and crimson rivers of satisfying gore. A sequel seems like a no-brainer, since the original's faults—repetitive level design, a dearth of enemy types, and finicky camera controls—shouldn't be too tough to correct. Well, at least that was the plan. Oddly, this She-nobi pseudosequel doesn't fix any of those problems. Instead, it delivers a nearly identical gameplay experience—except this time, you're a hot chick wearing skintight spandex.

The familiar Tate system remains intact: Your constant goal is to incapacitate the onscreen enemies before executing them all in a cool moment of simultaneous murder. *Nightshade* ups the ante by offering

limitless Tate combos, but it drops the ball by toning down the gruesome death cinemas. No more grisly dismemberment and outré arterial spray—just lots of vague collapsing animations. Lame. Also, although the stages are all new, some of them impart a sense of déjà vu...do both games really need subway levels? Still, it's fun enough to warrant a casual playthrough, but not much more. Can we please have a real *Shinobi* sequel now?

SHAWN: Bottomless pits are more about making money than proving skill—so why, when it's impossible to plunk quarters in *Nightshade*, must my ninja plummet to her death with alarming regularity? Yes, it is a problem, and no, I'm not a pansy. Flying from foe to foe, cutting down

five in the space of a second, this she-killer is built for speed. But instant deaths, abetted by a bad camera, put the brakes on the best bits of an otherwise ugly and repetitive game.

MARK: I missed the last PS2 *Shinobi*, but as an old fan of the series, I was really excited to play this spinoff/update. That excitement lasted until about the second level in *Nightshade*. Combat has some interesting ideas—the lightning-fast movement and combo system have the potential for zenlike mastery—but it becomes so repetitive that even the voice actors sound bored. Visually, there's just no excuse for this. Levels look drab and empty, and you fight the same blocky bugs over and over. Yawn.



Hotsuma, the scarf-clad *Shinobi* hero, can be unlocked after finishing the game.

THE VERDICTS (OUT OF 10)	6.0	5.5	5.0
	SHANE	SHAWN	MARK

Publisher: Sega
Developer: Sega Wow
Players: 1
ESRB: Mature

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CY GIRLS

PlayStation 2



Blood
Strong Language
Suggestive Themes
Violence

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PlayStation 2

CY GIRLS

Fighting crime, one chat room at a time



Good: Sweet shoot-outs and swordplay
Bad: Too many puzzles with little payoff
Based on: A Japanese toy line

SHAWN: Aska sticks to the shadows and speaks with a sword. Ice lets all hell break loose with machine guns and grenades. Stacked and packed, together they're the crack undercover unit some idiot decided to call Cy Girls. Each gal's episode comes on its own disc, and although their stories overlap, either could've stood alone.

Both agents are a blast to boss around. Throw Ice through a hail of gunfire, and she'll continue shooting back even after hitting the floor. Agile Aska runs along walls and, with the help of a grappling hook, scales sheer surfaces or snares foes à la *Mortal Kombat's* Scorpion.

With sexy graphics, courtesy of the same technical gee-wizardry that wowed you in *Metal Gear Solid 2*, the game looks as hot as its ladies. But it's in the puzzle parts that *Cy Girls'* stretch marks start to show. While the stuff in cyberspace (where the girls hack and scramble security programs) is clever, the rest serves no purpose other than to impede your progress. One locked door leads to another; you'll feel like the butt of a bad blonde joke when you get stuck messing with crate puzzles and looking for your keys.

CJ: *Cy Girls* looks great, sports smooth control (as long as you go nowhere near the Novice setting), and has a good sense of style. But Shawn and Giancarlo called it; no matter who you play as, the near-constant, incredibly frustrating puzzles paralyze the otherwise decent gameplay. Each time I'd run into one, I would inch ever closer to throwing the controller through the television. Games are supposed to be fun, not aggravating, right? I like a challenge, but this is ridiculous.

OFFICIAL PS MAG—GIANCARLO: If it weren't for the crazy amount of inane fetch quests in *Cy Girls*, it might've turned out to be a decent action game. The two playable characters borrow some of the best elements from *Metal Gear Solid* and *Tenchu*, and they're integrated pretty well. But searching for three or four different items just to open a single door (which happens throughout the game) is the epitome of tedium, and the fact that some of these items are so well hidden that you have to scour every square inch of a room is ridiculous. *Cy Girls*, why must you torture me?



THE VERDICTS (OUT OF 10)	7.0	5.0	5.0
	SHAWN	CJ	GIANCARLO

Publisher: Konami
Developer: Konami
Players: 1
ESRB: Mature

www.konami.com/usa

Xbox

ONLINE

COLIN MCRAE RALLY 04

Yelling in your ear at 150 mph



Good: As close as any of us will get to real rally racing
Bad: Never seeing another car on the track
Nice Price: \$19.99



DEMIAN: Like soccer, Fanta, and afternoon naps, rally racing—and the *Colin McRae* series—is huge in Europe. And not so huge here, which is why developer Codemasters is releasing *Rally 04* at the rock-bottom double-bargain fire sale price of \$19.99. If you like the driving sims, quit this reading malarkey and get it posthaste.

Rally racing consists of single-car sprints against the clock, so the lack of head-to-head competition tends to elicit a "what the Sam Hill?" from the NASCAR crowd. Get past that detail, though, and you'll find a game that rivals *Gran Turismo* in its attention to detail and driving physics. There may not be other cars on the track, but *Rally 04* is no less demanding—the tortuous courses require complete concentration, and if you aren't "in the zone," you'll soon be in the ditch.

Xbox Live support is new this year, but minimal—you can't download ghosts or do much beyond post your best times. And once you've made it through the various rally classes (2- and 4-wheel drive, group B, and ultrarealistic expert), only the biggest, dirtiest rally mavens will feel the need to keep driving.

BRYAN: Along with the top-notch handling and car physics, you'll find a meaty championship mode, wicked terrain, and dazzling weather effects (tackling the Japan course during a torrential downpour is especially impressive) under *McRae's* hood. The bare-bones Xbox Live support and lack of in-game music (even as an option) do, however, lower *Rally 04's* horsepower slightly.

XBOX—SIMON: The *McRae* rally franchise is now locked in a bumper-to-bumper battle with Microsoft's *Rallisport Challenge*, and despite a number of cool new features, it's slowly losing some ground. Turbocharging the game is slick presentation, thrilling handling, new cars (including the mongoose on Red Bull Citroën Xsara), and a custom championship feature that allows you to mix and match stages from anywhere in the world. Applying the brakes, though, is the woefully underpowered online mode. *McRae* is still great (and cheap), but when *Rallisport* arrives next month with full Live support, *Rally 04* may feel like last year's model.



■ The Citroën Xsara goes like stink.

THE VERDICTS (OUT OF 10)	8.5	8.0	8.5
	DEMIAN	BRYAN	SIMON

Publisher: Codemasters
Developer: Codemasters
Players: 1-4 (splitscreen)
ESRB: Everyone

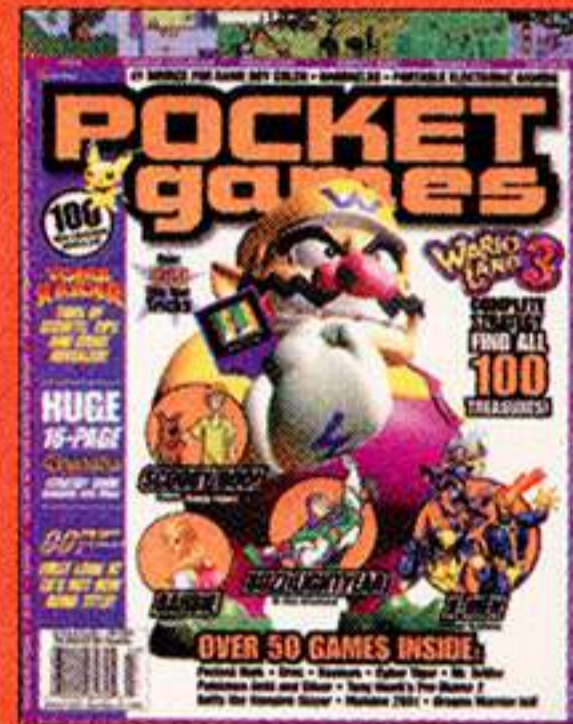
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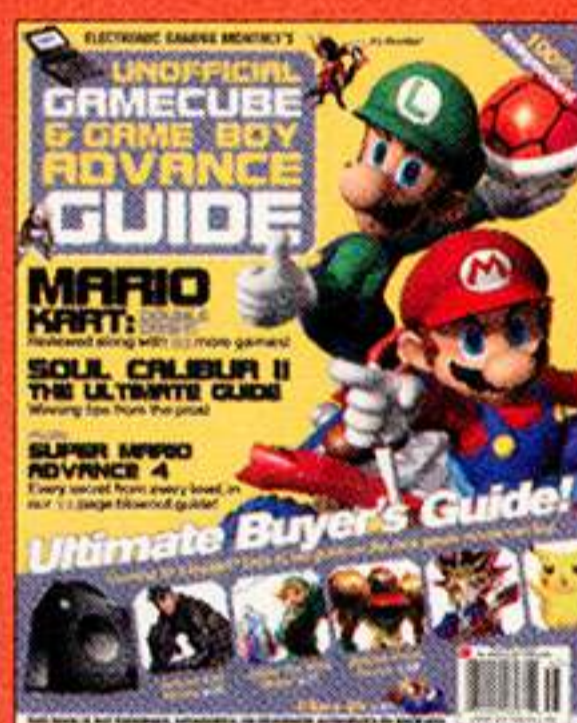
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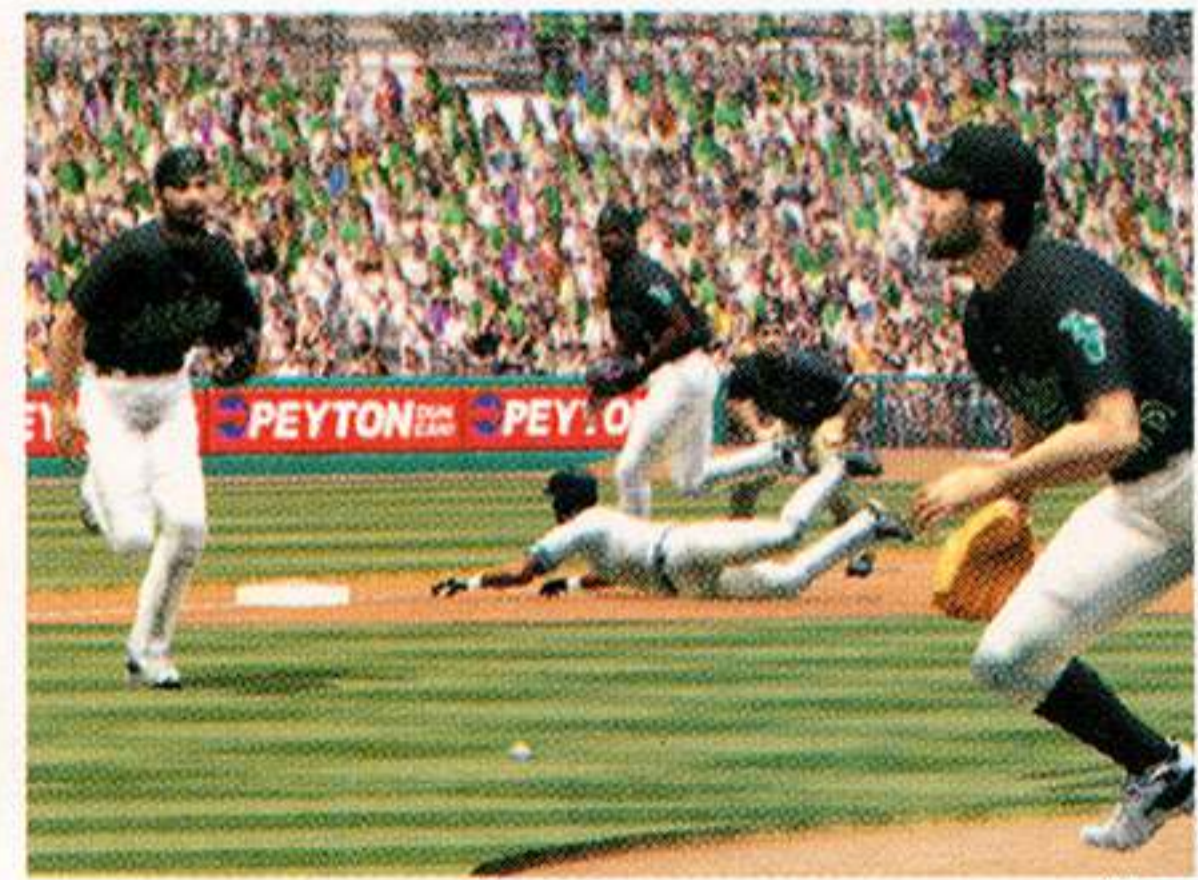
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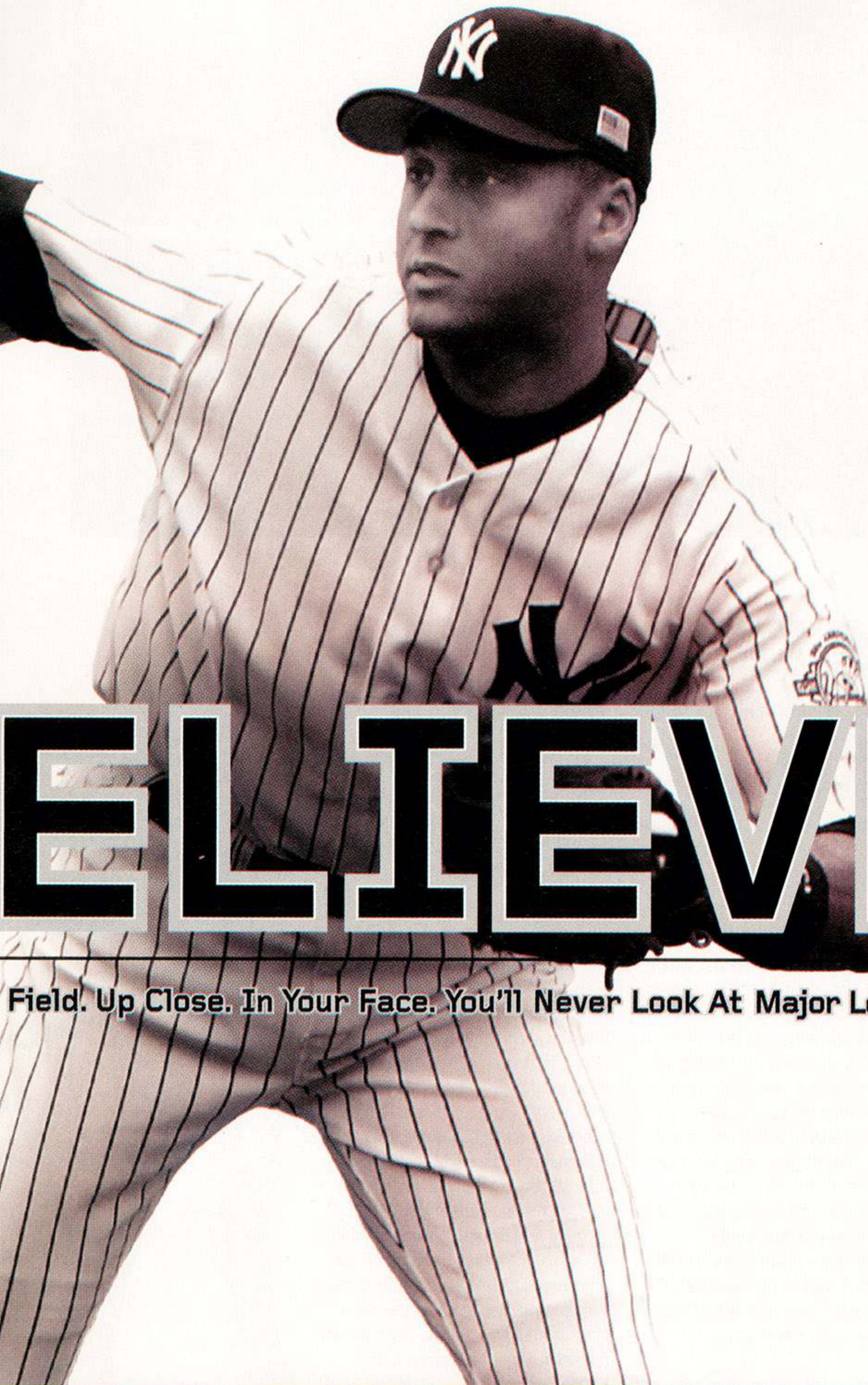
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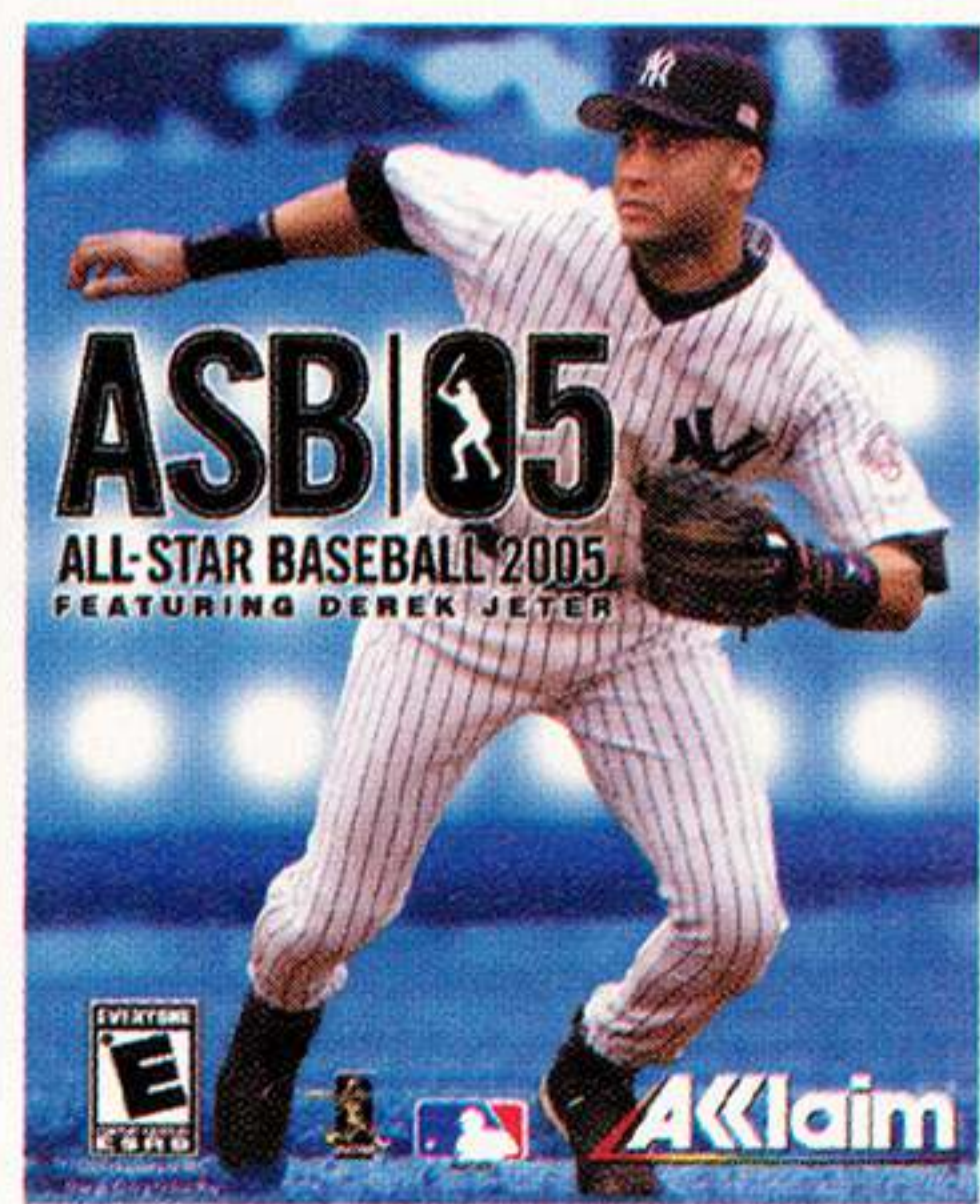
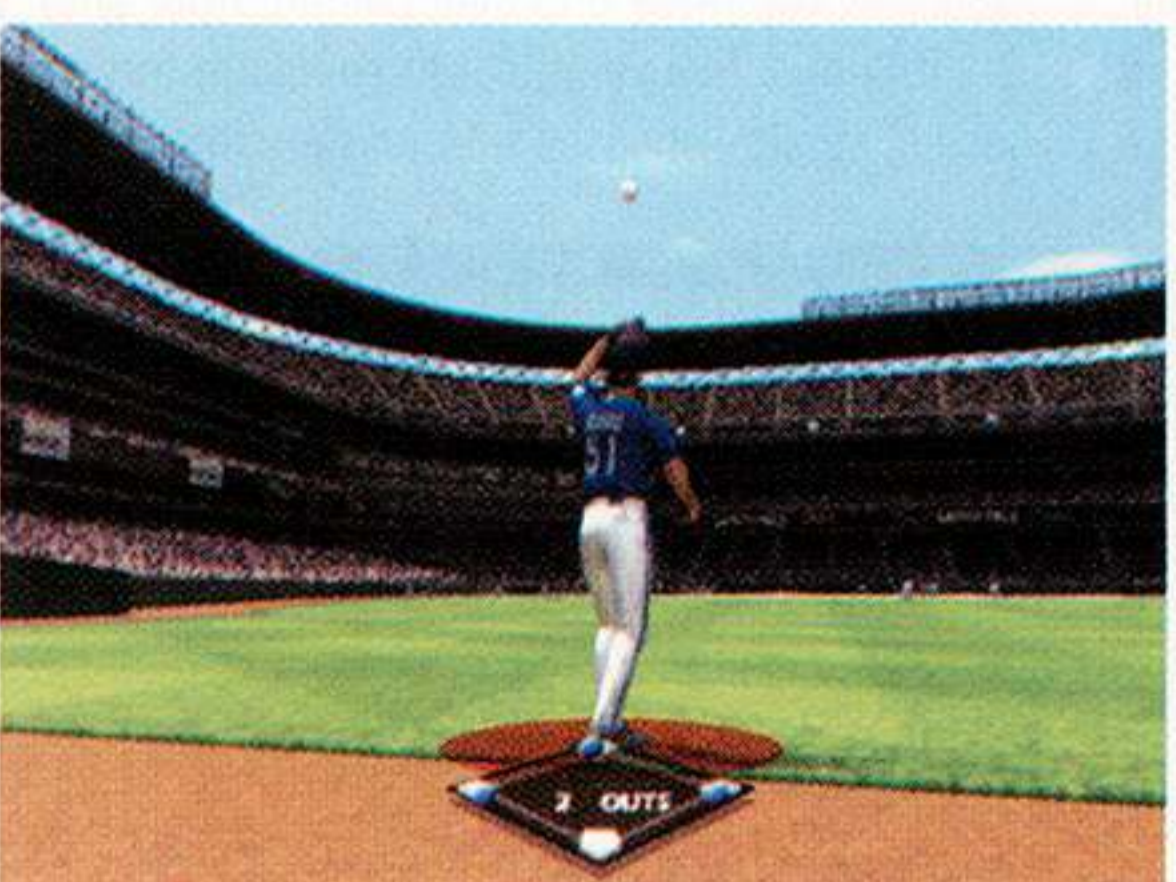
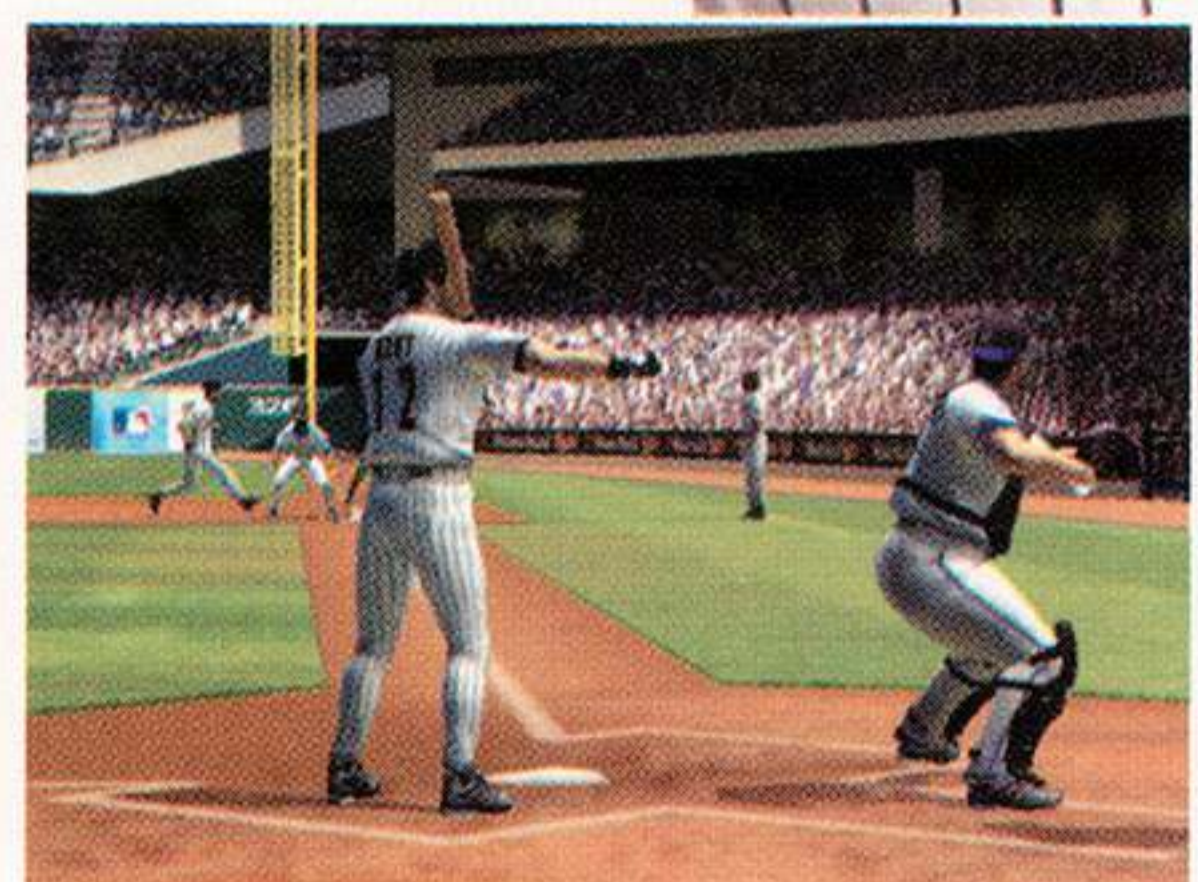


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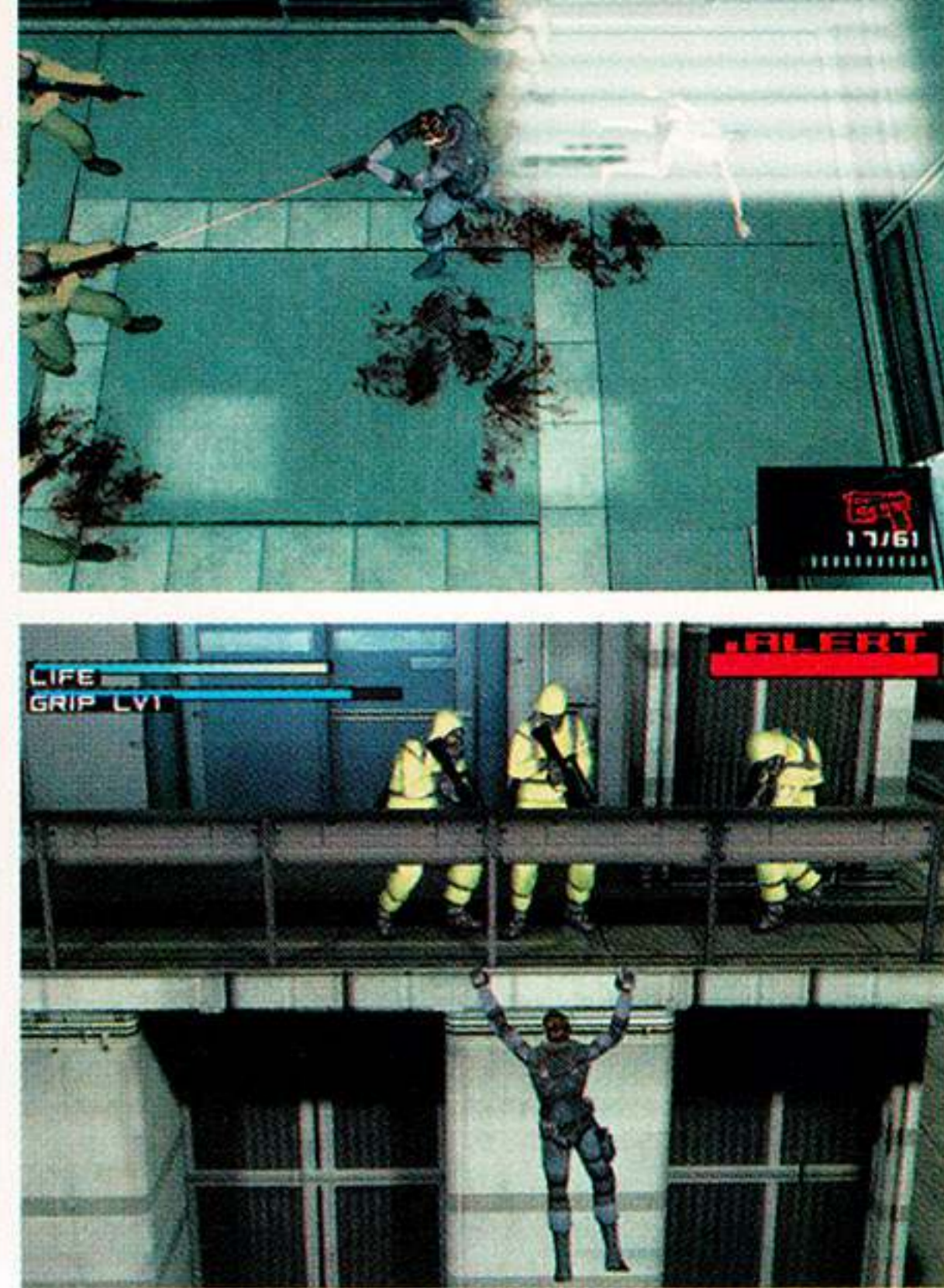
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■ All of *Metal Gear's* many cut-scenes have been completely redone for *Twin Snakes*.



■ GameCube

METAL GEAR SOLID: THE TWIN SNAKES

Precious metal

MARK: Measured against all other games, *Metal Gear Solid* absolutely holds up—it has an emotional, twisting story; rock-solid controls; and intense hide-and-sneak gameplay that launched a genre. If you missed the stealth-action classic on PS1, you absolutely must play this version. But judged as a remake, *Twin Snakes'* lack of major changes, as well as troubles with some tweaks, left me feeling just a bit disappointed.

In terms of controls, *Twin Snakes* faithfully reproduces *Metal Gear's* excellent setup and feel and adds handy new moves (hanging from ledges, stuffing guards in lockers, etc.) from *MGS2*. The game looks decent, like a sharper version of the original, but thanks in part to its limited color palette, *Twin Snakes* is far from the best we've seen on the Cube. Luckily, the revamped cut-scenes add some spice to the visuals—filled with *Fight Club*-esque zooms and, of course, *Matrix-y* slow-mo 360s, they inject new excitement and even a sight gag or two into

Metal Gear's already gripping story.

But sometimes you can see the stitches where new elements were grafted on. Evading guards is tougher—they call for backup, clear rooms, and leave corpses behind when they die (for other guards to find), adding importance to staying hidden and covering your tracks. Trouble is, the levels were designed around the old A.I.; the relatively small rooms and lack of hiding places make getting away overly difficult. The ability to shoot in first-person view is another welcome feature, but it spoils the challenge of a few sections and completely ruins at least one boss battle.

Don't misunderstand me, though—this is still a good version of a great game. I just can't help thinking what might have been had *Metal Gear Solid* been more thoroughly reworked.

SHAWN: The price of a clandestine affair with Solid Snake: five years spent sneaking through lesser, stealth-obsessed *Metal Gear* knockoffs.

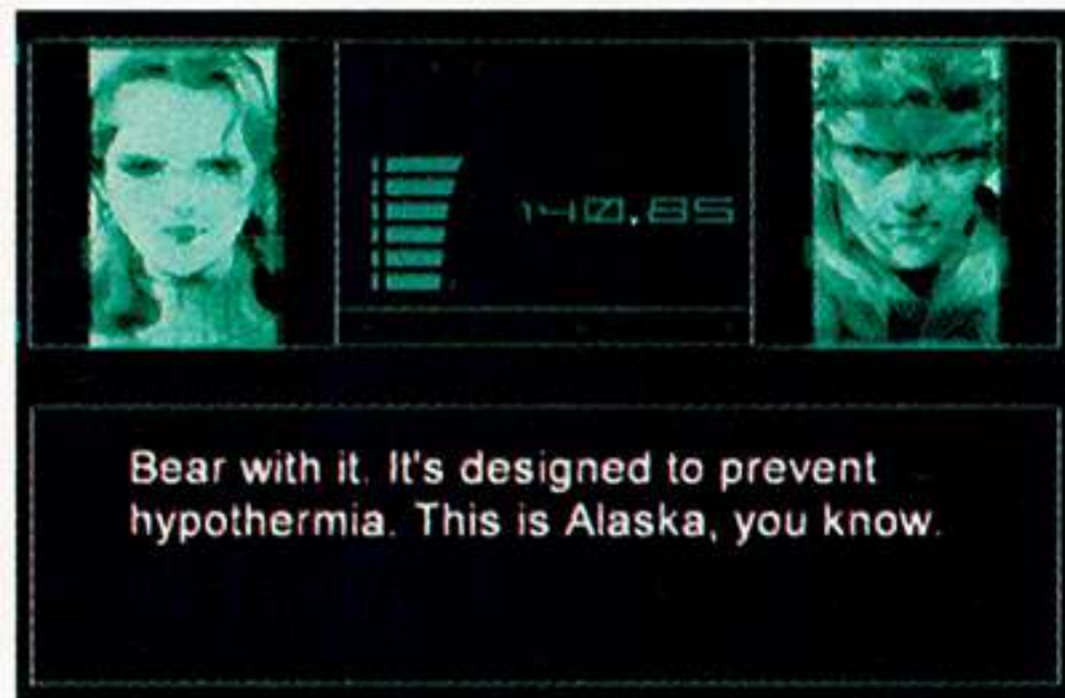
Splinter Cell notwithstanding, no other game offers so many nuanced ways to remain unnoticed. Still, there's more to *Metal Gear Solid* than hide-and-seek, something most copycats missed. Equipped with everything from camera-guided missiles to a ketchup bottle used to fool guards in the event that he's captured, Snake's got plenty to do when he's not playing hard to get.

The guys (and gals!) who first made the game knew they were onto something groundbreaking and, from the brilliant boss battles to the suspenseful story, spared no expense. The folks who remade it knew better than to fix what wasn't broken—everything old isn't exactly new, but it doesn't need to be. ▶



Shalashaska Sha-lacking

A good example of how one "improvement" in this *Metal Gear* remake ends up backfiring is the first boss battle against Revolver "Shalashaska" Ocelot. In the original, you had to use timing and quick reflexes to hit the wily Russian as he ran around corners without getting shot yourself. But with *Twin Snakes'* new first-person-shooting mode, you don't even need to move. Just sit back and pick him off with a few quick shots.



■ Unfortunately, the old codec radio sequences return exactly as they appeared in the original game.

Good: Same great *MGS* gameplay, awesome revamped cut-scenes
Bad: Very few other additions or changes
Bonus: Dog-tag collection à la *MGS2*



THE VERDICTS
(OUT OF 10)

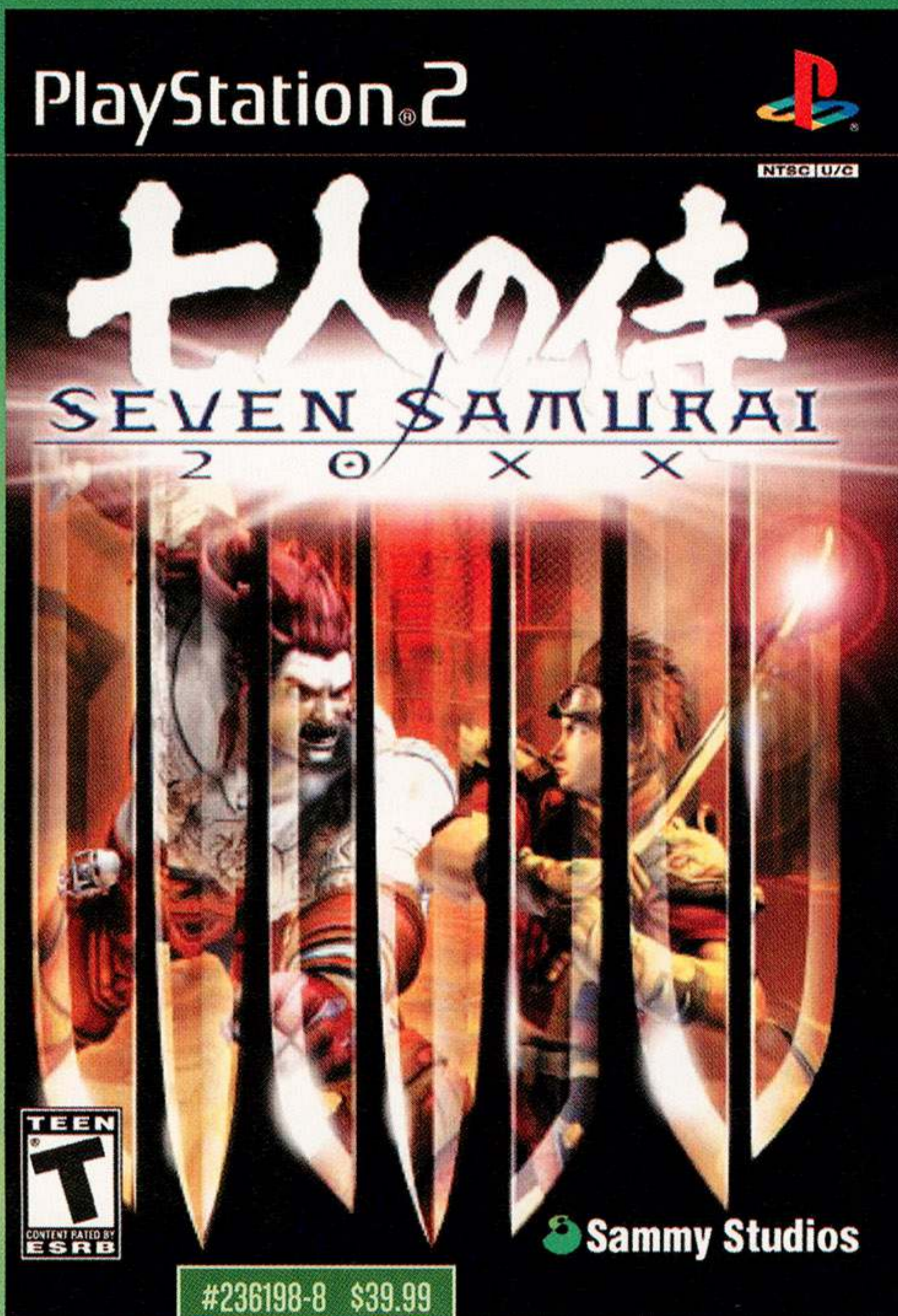
8.0 **9.0** **8.5**
 MARK SHAWN ANDREW

Publisher: Konami
 Developer: Silicon Knights
 Players: 1
 ESRB: Mature

www.konami.com/usa

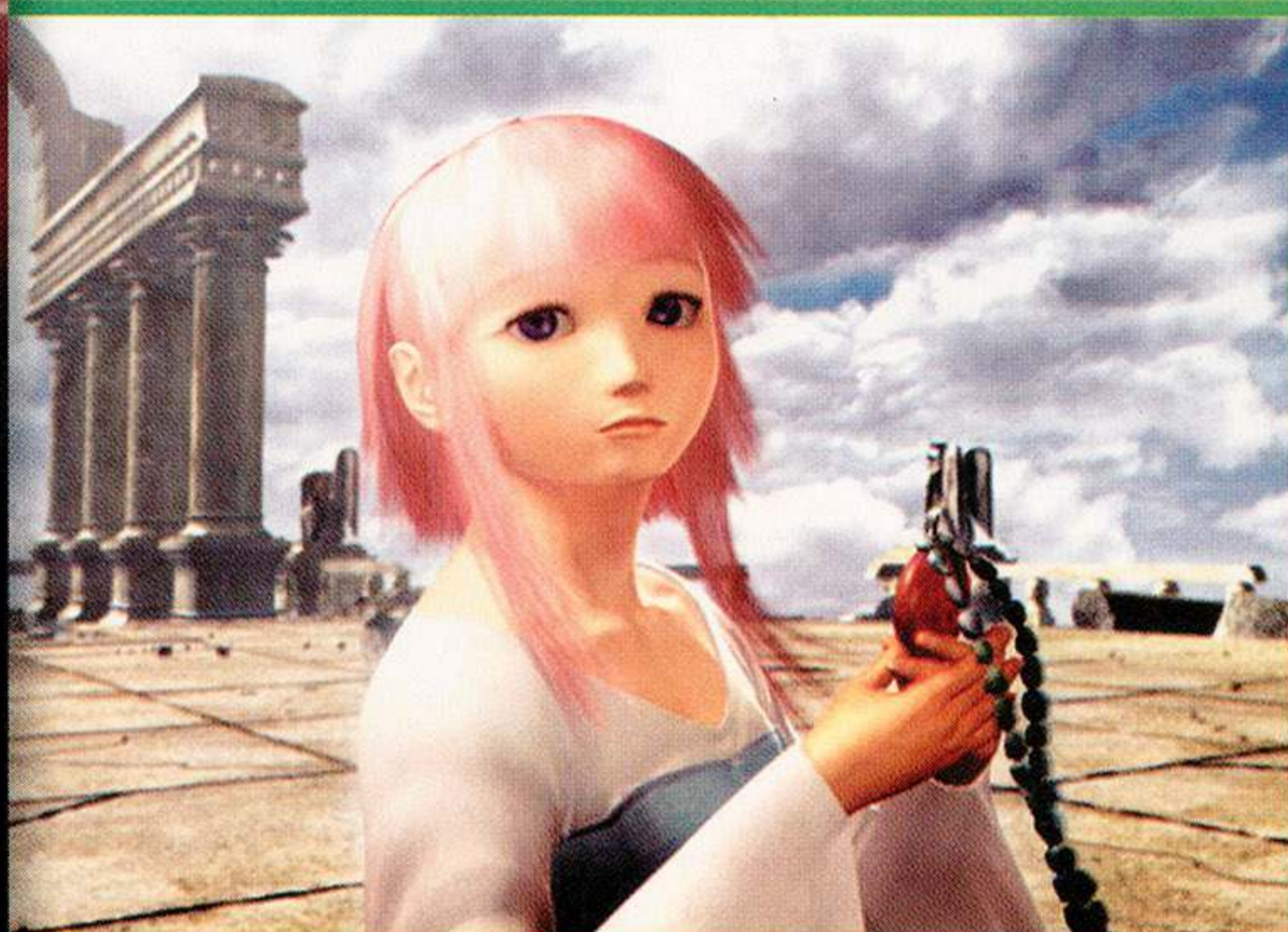
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► Adding anything other than a face-lift, smarter foes, and fresh cut-scenes would've been sacrilege.

GMR—ANDREW: Well, if you're going to play a version of *Metal Gear Solid*, then this is definitely the one. Granted, that may not sound enthusiastic enough considering the excellent job developer Silicon Knights did, partly because despite all of the wonderful new additions to the game—and there are many—it still feels like you're playing the original *MGS*. Then again, the original was fantastic, so it only follows that *The Twin Snakes* would be at least the same. But with each new feature comes a downside: First-person aiming makes regular combat easier...but it also makes boss battles far *too* easy; the new cut-scenes are brilliantly produced...when they're not overdosing on painfully clichéd bullet-time effects (though Mark liked 'em all right); and the graphical overhaul is nice...but we know GameCube is capable of even better.



■ You can watch through all of the revamped cinemas (and either of the game's endings) in the demo theater once you unlock it.



Playing Mantis

Ah, the famous Psycho Mantis scene, in which he “reads your mind” and analyzes your personality by scanning your memory card. Now you get a different message depending on what Nintendo game saves you have, including *Eternal Darkness*, *Twin Snakes* developer Silicon Knights' previous game. Also, obsessive types take note: The portraits in the room have changed. They are (left to right) cut-scene director Ryuhei Kitamura, *MGS* creator Hideo Kojima, and Silicon Knights head Denis Dyack.



Dark characters summon cuddly critters to deal damage.



GameCube

ONLINE

PHANTASY STAR ONLINE EPISODE III: C.A.R.D. REVOLUTION

Five-card stud

Good: Wildly addictive

Bad: Voice chat would be nice

PSO I & II Players: Can use your same Hunter's License for III

SHANE: Upon hearing the news that the third chapter of *Phantasy Star Online* would be a card game, you probably wrote it off. I know I did. Yet, here I am at three in the morning, wondering where all my free time went. Somehow, developer Sonic Team managed to meld everything great about the previous *PSOs* (aesthetic beauty, an engaging online community, and the never-ending quest for better equipment) with a simple, addictive card game.

Gameplay is a little baffling at first (even with the tutorial mode), but within 30 minutes, you'll get the hang of its two unique gameplay styles—Hero and Dark. Heroes battle with weapons and armor while Dark characters summon monsters to do their bidding, but both allow serious strategists to thrive, thanks to tons of

creative card combos. Each side offers its own single-player quest (both around 25 hours long), but the true pleasure lurks online. Quick matches are a breeze to set up, and frequent tournaments offer plenty of competition. It's a shame that GC has no means of voice chat, though—trash typing just isn't as fun.

SHOE: *Episode III* is like going to a strip club: There's a whole lotta teasing going on, but the true prize/goal is frustratingly inaccessible. For most *PSO* fans, this card-game detour—complete with new graphics—will only make you want a real action-RPG sequel even more. Be that as it may, *Episode III* will please deep thinkers. It's a lot more complicated than your typical card game, with multiple layers of attack-defense

strategy to worry about. Naturally, pursuing those ultrarare cards is what will keep you playing, but if you like simpler adventures, stay away. Matches (especially online sans voice chat) can get awfully long and sometimes boring.

CJ: *PSO's* surprising shift to the realm of cards has only *strengthened* the series' hold on me. Sure, it's a lot easier to pick up and play, and it sports a better story than most card games—but the masterstroke is the gameplay differences between Hero and Dark. It makes contests more intense, a feat unmatched by other card-based battlers (ahem, *Yu-Gi-Oh!*). Online play takes a hit if you don't have a keyboard, and voice chat is sorely missed, but anyone who likes *PSO* will dig it.



(Left) Snagging sexy weapons remains a big part of *PSO's* appeal—your foes will swoon with envy for your Delsaber's Buster.

THE VERDICTS (OUT OF 10)	9.0	8.0	9.0
	SHANE	SHOE	CJ

Publisher: Sega
Developer: Sonic Team
Players: 1-4 (2-32 in online tournaments)
ESRB: Teen

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Plusle flummoxes foes by tripping the light fantastic—next stop, Vegas.

GameCube

POKÉMON COLOSSEUM

Put another Pikachu on the barbie

Good: Story mode

Bad: Battle mode

Why Not: Give us a real stand-alone *Pokémon* game next time?



CJ: For years Nintendo has squandered the console potential of *Pokémon* by churning out titles with merely a fleeting relationship to the real McCoy. The worst offenders are two lackluster *Stadium* titles on Nintendo 64 that allow you to battle your monsters in 3D but neuter the rest of what makes *Pokémon* good—the role-playing-game part. *Colosseum*, which is a *Stadium* sequel, changes that a bit by adding a much-needed story mode, featuring an RPGish quest just satisfying enough to make the game worth your time. It doesn't feel like a full, stand-alone adventure, but it looks and sounds great (never mind what Mark "Mewtwo killed my family" MacDonald says), and its interesting and very different story will keep the casual Pokéfán glued.

On the flip side, *Colosseum's* battle mode is much like the N64 *Stadiums'*. Your enjoyment will depend on how much you like hundreds of Pokébrawls strung one after another. For me, the lack of a worthwhile goal makes it an excruciatingly boring experience. *Colosseum* is as close as we've come to a real console *Pokémon* game, but it ain't quite there yet.

MARK: With simplistic graphics, surprisingly bad audio, and that same repetitive combat the series has been trotting out for years now (four-critter battles change little), *Colosseum* is for hardcore Pokéfreaks and kids too young to know any better. The new RPG mode is a nice addition, but its ho-hum story and simplistic nature won't appeal to anyone who doesn't still run home after school to catch the cartoon on television. As for multiplayer, the fact that the game requires extra players to use linked-up GBAs is absurd.

KEVIN: Nintendo has finally answered the pleas for a console *Pokémon* RPG...sort of. The story mode in *Colosseum* is surprisingly dark (by *Pokémon* standards), but with its lifeless characters and endless torrent of dialogue windows, it's not quite the full-fledged RPG fans may be hoping for. You'll still want to play through it, though: The 2-on-2 battles are just as engaging as the ones in the GBA *Pokémon*, and you can then enter your *Pokémon* crew in battle mode. Two steps forward and two steps back, then.



THE VERDICTS (OUT OF 10)	7.0	5.0	7.0
	CJ	MARK	KEVIN

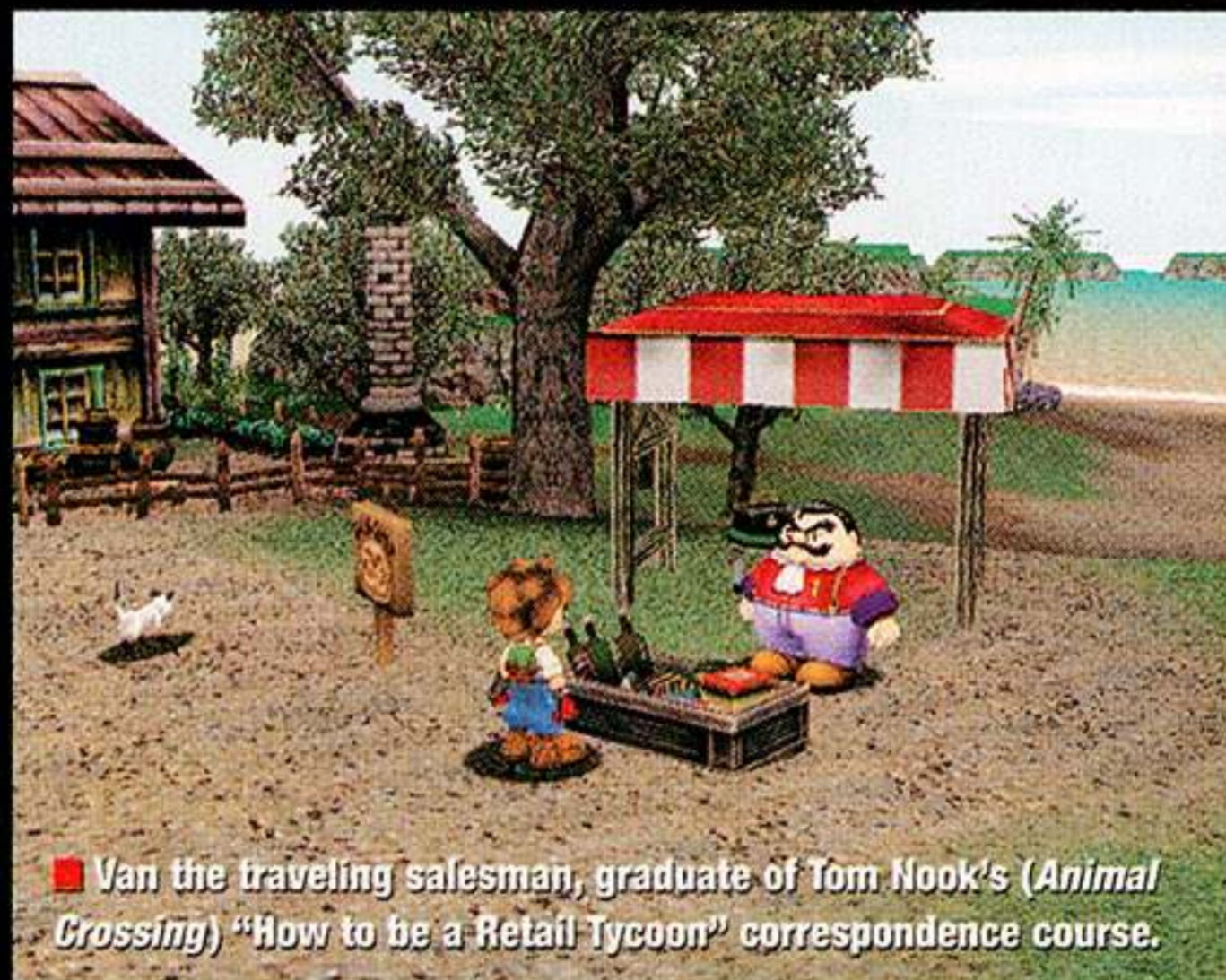
Publisher: Nintendo
Developer: Genius Sonority
Players: 1-4
ESRB: Everyone

www.pokemon.com

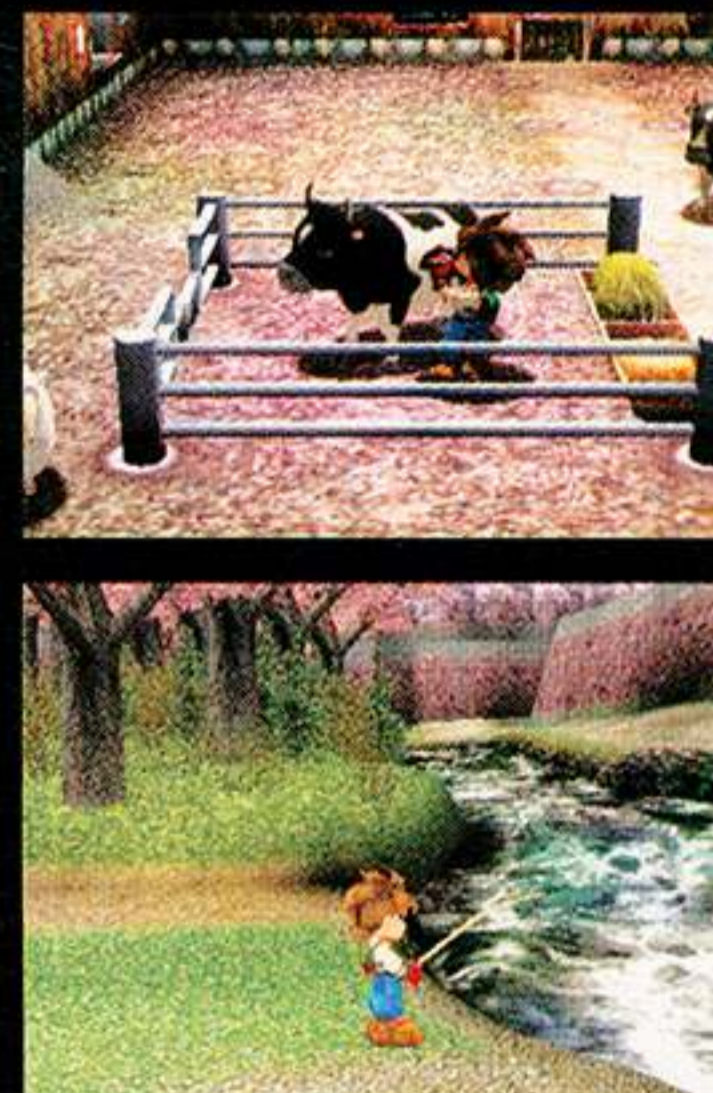
GameCube

HARVEST MOON: A WONDERFUL LIFE

Git off my land



Van the traveling salesman, graduate of Tom Nook's (*Animal Crossing*) "How to be a Retail Tycoon" correspondence course.



Good: Success on the farm is very rewarding

Bad: Sometimes feels like watching grass grow

Except That: Real grass might grow faster



JENNIFER: *A Wonderful Life* is a bit like a tomato from the farmers' market. The inside is unexpectedly nice and juicy, but the outside sure ain't perfectly round, red, or shiny—and it comes with a few bugs.

The farming-sim foundation is solid; raising crops and an ever-growing livestock menagerie is fun and satisfying. I also enjoyed my character's evolution from small-time farmboy to flourishing farmerman, complete with wife and kid. This is truly a different kind of game, one that really reminds you that videogames can be more than just run-jump-shoot.

That's why its rough edges are so disappointing. Certain design oversights—it's too difficult to water crops, the buy/sell interfaces suck, moving your damn chickens is a pain, etc.—make the game way clunkier than it should be. Dialogue with villagers feels pointless; occasionally, you're rewarded with some half-assed minigame, but even those are rare. Buggy gameplay and spelling errors are further distractions. *A Wonderful Life* is enjoyable but could have been really outstanding.

KEVIN: If you liked *Animal Crossing* but craved loftier goals than collecting furniture and making obscene clothing patterns, then you—yes, you—are *Harvest Moon's* target audience. *Wonderful Life* is longer and includes more stuff to grow (ooh, fruit trees!), but it also shares the faults of its series predecessors: occasional bugs, earnestly bucolic graphics that are less Norman Rockwell and more early-era Sega Dreamcast, and molasses-slow story advancement. Stick it out,

though, and you could find it even more addictive than *Animal Crossing*.

GMR—CARRIE: *A Wonderful Life* is the most calming game I've played. The methodical routine of tending to your plants and animals is downright soothing, and building up your farm from one lone cow to a bustling money machine is gratifying in a baron of agribusiness sort of way. Waiting for my lady friend to accept my marriage proposal is less fun, but hey, I respect her desire to take things slow. The downside to this pastoral pleasantness is that it requires Zen-like patience. Chances are, you don't have it.



After a hard day of planting (top), dude hits the 'shrooms and wigs out (bottom).

THE VERDICTS (OUT OF 10)	6.5	6.5	7.0
	JENNIFER	KEVIN	CARRIE

Publisher: Natsume
Developer: Marvelous
Players: 1
ESRB: Everyone

www.natsume.com

REVIEWS WRAP-UP

The hits and misses that we, uh, missed this month



Guess what...*Ninja Gaiden* missed our deadline *again* this month. And you're probably playing it right now. Laugh it up...and expect our review next issue—fer reals this time. Here's the other stuff that didn't show, or we couldn't squeeze in.



■ Giant robots descend on hapless Tokyo.

Steel Battalion: Line of Contact
XB • Capcom — This version of the niche mech-combat game adds online multiplayer but no new single-player missions. We couldn't review it ahead of time because the #S%@ servers weren't up. But judging from our stick time during the beta test, it's awesome.



■ Scully meets a trailer-park resident.

X-Files: Resist or Serve
PS2/XB • VU Games — VU Games refused to let us see *X-Files* before it hit stores, so you know what that means. The forecast is mostly cloudy with a high probability of sucking.

Auto Modellista
XB • Capcom — This misguided melding of cartoony visuals and serious racing drifts onto Xbox, but bare-bones Live support and slightly revamped graphics can't compensate for the atrocious handling problems.



■ Bomberman: Blowing up since 1989.

Bomberman Jetters
GC • Majesco — Adventure mode is a dud, but so what? *Jetters* brings more iterations of the multiplayer bouts that make Bomberman a perennial favorite. Blowing up numbered tiles in sequence and capturing balloons in frenetic four-player matches is 20 bucks' worth of fun.

Romance of the Three Kingdoms IX
PS2 • Koei — Either you're a hardcore fan who preordered this ultrahardcore strategy game months ago, or you're a nonfan who's going to ignore it again. So,



■ Thrill to the unification of ancient China!

enjoy if you're the former; keep moving along if you're the latter.

Ice Nine
GBA • Bam! — You've soooo played this kinda game before: *Ice Nine's* a first-person shooter with exploding barrels, switches that open distant doors, and hordes of brain-dead baddies. But it also mixes in sniper-rifle action, stealth missions, and spiffy gizmos (like night-vision goggles), making it practically state of the art among GBA's small lineup of first-person blasters.

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REVIEWS ARCHIVE

There's gold in them thar lists

greatest hit
or miss?



DEVIL MAY CRY 2

■ PlayStation 2
 ■ Released: January 2003
 ■ Original Scores: 7.0, 7.0, 8.0
 As in the original, no one can match the demonic Dante's blast-and-slash action (or his devilishly good looks and snazzy wardrobe). But too bad the sequel is so freaking easy. You'll rid the world of these ghouls long before Dante is done frosting his hair.

ADVANCE YOURSELF

Whether sitting on the bus or your household's porcelain throne, playing games on Nintendo's Game Boy Advance is a superb way to pass the time (and take your mind off the smell). Here's a look at how the pocket-sized machine has fared so far with our Review Crew.

117 GBA games the Review Crew has seen since the system's launch

18 GBA games *EGM* has reviewed with the word "Advance" in the title

37 Awards *EGM* has handed out to GBA games (26 Silver, 11 Gold)

5 GBA games that have earned Game of the Month honors (*Castlevania: Circle of the Moon*, *Super Mario Advance 2: SMW*, *Castlevania: Harmony of Dissonance*, *Castlevania: Aria of Sorrow*, *Super Mario Advance 4: SMB3*)



GAME	SYSTEM	VERDICT	SCORES (out of 10)	AWARD
1080° Avalanche	GC	■ The straightforward slope riding is OK, but <i>Avalanche</i> can't compete with <i>SSX 3</i>	7.5 7.0 5.5	
Airforce Delta Strike	PS2	■ Slow-moving flight sim stalls before it reaches the danger zone	3.5 3.5 6.0	
American Idol	PS2	■ In our best Simon Cowell voice, "Bloody awful"	1.5 2.0 1.0	
Amped 2	XB	■ An eye-pleasing boarder with very few patches of yellow snow	8.0 8.0 9.0	Silver
Armed and Dangerous	XB	■ Looks like butt, but plays better than blasé blasters like <i>Brute Force</i>	6.5 7.0 8.0	
Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance II	PS2/XB	■ Painted with dated graphics and rife with dull level design	7.0 4.5 5.0	
Battlestar Galactica	PS2/XB	■ Launched before all systems were go	6.0 6.0 5.5	
Beyond Good & Evil	PS2/XB/GC	■ Plays a lot like <i>Wind Waker</i> (GC). That's a good thing. Real good	8.5 9.0 8.0	Silver
Billy Hatcher and the Giant Egg	GC	■ Egg-pushing gameplay helps <i>Hatcher</i> feel wonderfully unique	7.0 8.0 8.5	
Bloody Roar 4	PS2	■ Once again, <i>Bloody Roar's</i> 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
Buffy: Chaos Bleeds	XB	■ Return to Sunnydale for decent action, so-so fighting, and terrible puns aplenty	4.5 6.5 7.5	
Champions of Norrath: Realms of EQ	PS2	■ A <i>Dark Alliance</i> -style take on <i>EverQuest</i> , complete with online co-op	8.5 8.0 8.5	Silver
Conflict: Desert Storm II	PS2/XB	■ Another flawed operation with a few moments of valor	5.5 4.0 6.0	
Counter-Strike	XB	■ A bare-bones first-person shooter that's 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, <i>Crimson Skies</i> kicks the genre's tires and lights its fires	9.0 9.0 8.5	Silver
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	■ <i>Invisible War's</i> captivating story compensates for its technical shortcomings	8.0 9.0 7.0	Silver
Dragon Ball Z: Budokai 2	PS2	■ This time around, <i>Budokai</i> 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	■ <i>Gauntlet</i> -style fun for four, but misses its saving throw for thrills in solo play	6.0 5.5 6.5	
Dynasty Tactics 2	PS2	■ Medieval Chinese generals put on their wildest headgear before going to war	7.5 7.5 7.5	
ESPN College Hoops	PS2/XB	■ Our own NCAA investigation reveals that <i>ESPN</i> plays too much like a pro game	6.5 7.5 6.5	
ESPN NBA Basketball	PS2/XB	■ Even Kobe Bryant's star-studded legal team struggled finding fault with this one	8.5 9.5 9.0	Gold
ESPN NHL Hockey	PS2/XB	■ If we were in Detroit, we'd be throwin' an octopus onto the ice. Goal!	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	
Fallout: Brotherhood of Steel	PS2/XB	■ Repetitive critter hunting in a watered-down wasteland	4.0 4.5 4.0	
Fatal Frame II: Crimson Butterfly	PS2	■ Scary game with a silly name	7.5 7.5 6.5	
FIFA Soccer 2004	PS2/XB/GC	■ Superior on-field controls make it a breeze to bend it like Beckham	7.5 9.0 8.0	Silver
Final Fantasy: Crystal Chronicles	GC	■ Charming action-RPG so cute it could give Hello Kitty a heart attack	8.0 8.0 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	■ Deep tactical strategy, but your trip through fantasyland ends too quickly	7.5 8.0 8.5	Silver
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 <i>your</i> ghoulies while playing	5.5 4.0 4.5	
Harry Potter: Quidditch World Cup	PS2/XB/GC	■ Rugby, basketball, and nerds on broomsticks collide with thrilling results	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	■ Like real karaoke, except the audience actually boos you offstage for bad singing	8.5 8.5 7.5	Silver
Kill.Switch	PS2/XB	■ An intuitive find-cover-and-return-fire system adds strategy to the shoot-outs	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 <i>Skies</i> any frequent-flier mileage	3.0 5.5 4.0	
Links 2004	XB	■ A shallow create-a-golfer mode keeps <i>Links</i> a few strokes behind <i>Tiger</i>	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	■ Stick an orc in it, it's fun. Stick a thousand orcs in it, it's...er, funner	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	
Lupin the Third	PS2	■ Fanatically true to the anime, but fiddly controls and lame puzzles steal the fun	5.5 4.5 7.0	
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 <i>Paper Mario</i>	9.0 8.5 9.0	Silver
Mario Golf: Toadstool Tour	GC	■ When he's not saving the world from Koopa, Mario plays a mean 18 holes	8.0 8.0 7.5	
Mario Kart: Double Dash!!	GC	■ One of the reasons you bought a Cube. And it delivers beautifully	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
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	■ A few stunning set pieces can't save this rough-edged shooter from mediocrity	5.5 5.0 5.5	
Mega Man Battle Chip Challenge	GBA	■ O' Blue should've cashed in his chips for better gameplay	6.0 5.0 6.0	
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

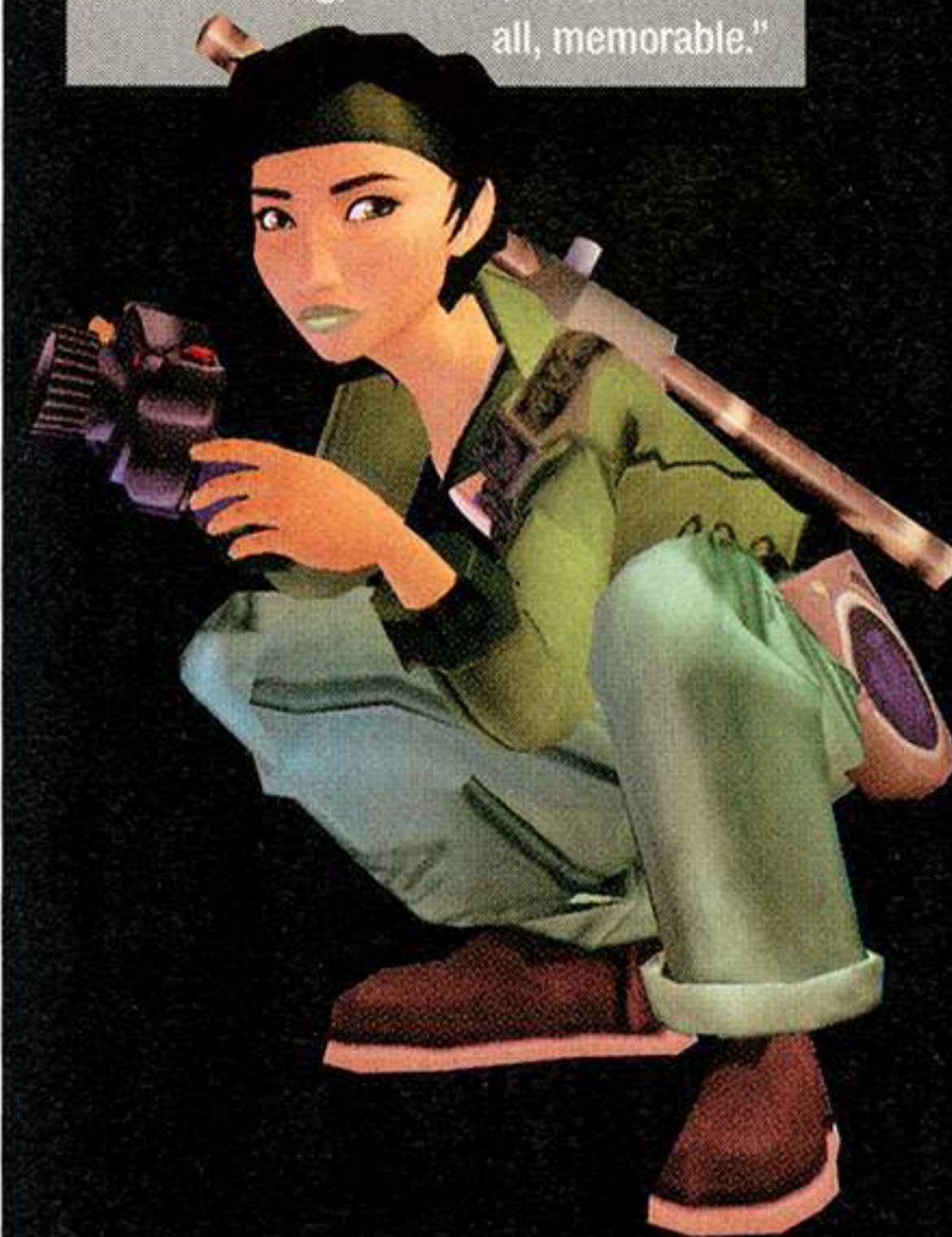


■ The only chicks in *Champions of Norrath* wear chastity belts.

GAME	SYSTEM	VERDICT	SCORES (out of 10)	AWARD
Metroid Zero Mission	GBA	■ Samus blasts back to her first adventure in this surprise-filled remake	9.5 9.0 9.0	Gold
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	■ Should hire Knicks President Isiah Thomas to help shake things up for <i>ID 2005</i>	6.0 7.5 6.5	
NBA Live 2004	PS2/XB/GC	■ Not even the Laker Girls can compete with <i>Live's</i> stylish on-court moves	8.0 8.5 9.0	Silver
NCAA March Madness 2004	PS2/XB	■ It's awesome, baby, with a capital A!	8.0 8.0 8.0	Silver
NFL Blitz Pro	PS2/XB/GC	■ A <i>Madden</i> -like face-lift puts <i>Blitz</i> firmly back in the playoff race	7.0 7.0 6.0	
NFL Fever 2004	XB	■ For yet another year, <i>Fever</i> is third-string on the pigskin depth chart	6.5 6.5 6.0	
NFL Street	PS2/XB/GC	■ The gridiron gods have <i>Street</i> -ified football, and, boy, is it good	8.5 8.0 9.0	Silver
NHL 2004	PS2/XB/GC	■ Beefy dynasty mode, but plays and looks as ugly as a hockey player's smile	8.5 6.5 7.0	
NHL Hitz Pro	PS2/XB/GC	■ Like a porn star's assets, <i>Hitz</i> isn't exactly realistic, but it's sure fun to play with	7.5 8.5 8.0	Silver
NHL Rivals 2004	XB	■ Our referees slap <i>Rivals</i> with a five-minute major for sucking	3.5 4.0 6.5	
Pac-Man Vs.	GC	■ Excellent multiplayer makes GBA connectivity worthwhile	8.0 7.5 9.0	Silver
Pirates of the Caribbean	XB	■ Suffers more glitches than the Disney ride in a thunderstorm	6.0 5.5 4.5	
P.N.03	GC	■ We're assuming <i>Product Number 04</i> won't see development	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 <i>Gran Turismo 3</i>	9.5 9.5 9.5	Gold
R: Racing Evolution	PS2/XB/GC	■ Looks fantastic, but it feels like you're driving on ice	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
Rise to Honor	PS2	■ Look, it's Jet Li!...in a kinda repetitive brawler with cheap enemies in Fubu gear	6.5 6.5 6.0	
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	■ A shameless Lara Croft wannabe stars in a decent stealth-action game	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	
R-Type Final	PS2	■ Pure side-scrolling shooter bliss, plus it's only 30 bucks	8.5 8.0 8.0	Silver
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	■ A prettier soul for sure, but plays a bit too much like the original	7.5 7.0 7.0	
Silent Scope Complete	XB	■ There's no better way to freak out America's politicians than with this sniper game	6.5 5.0 6.0	
The Simpsons: Hit & Run	PS2/XB/GC	■ A <i>Grand Theft Auto</i> -style game with a <i>Simpsons</i> twist? Excellent...	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 <i>SOCOM II</i> the best game of its kind	9.0 9.0 9.5	Gold
Sonic Battle	GBA	■ Sonic and pals come to fisticuffs in this love-it-or-hate-it pseudo 3D brawler	7.0 5.0 4.5	
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 <i>Spawn</i> outings to date...which isn't saying much	5.0 6.0 3.5	
Sphinx and the Cursed Mummy	PS2/XB/GC	■ A fun romp through ancient Egypt—playable mummy and sphinx included in box!	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	■ The best thing to happen to <i>Star Wars</i> since <i>The Empire Strikes Back</i>	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	■ Enemies so dumb even Colin Farrell and LL Cool J could cap 'em	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	■ Ho-hum brawling action with the heroes in half-shells	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	■ As hot as Tiger's bride-to-be. Well, almost	9.0 9.0 9.5	Gold
Time Crisis 3	PS2	■ <i>TC3</i> remains an uncontested crack shot among light-gun shooters	7.0 7.0 8.5	
Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon: Jungle Storm	PS2	■ Online play is OK, but good God these graphics are uglier than a colon polyp	4.5 5.0 6.5	
Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six 3	XB	■ Squad-based shooting at its best	9.0 7.5 9.0	Silver
Tony Hawk's Underground	PS2/XB/GC	■ Oh my god...he is? Someone get him out!	9.0 9.0 10	Gold
Top Spin	XB	■ Here's your only chance to ever score with tennis bombshell Anna Kournikova	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	
Wrath: Unleashed	PS2/XB	■ A half-assed strategy game plus a half-assed fighter make...well, you do the math	4.0 7.0 4.5	
Whiplash	PS2/XB	■ Goofy concept and humor compensate for crummy graphics and average gameplay	7.0 6.0 8.0	
Winning Eleven 7	PS2	■ Soccer action more intense than a David Beckham-Posh Spice embrace	9.5 8.5 8.5	Silver
WWE Raw 2: Ruthless Aggression	XB	■ 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	■ Better than years past, but a steroid injection or two away from main-event status	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	

UNDEREXPOSED

A sporty shutterbug and her piggy pal not your style? Apparently, gamers didn't get the big picture, as one of last holiday season's best games, *Beyond Good & Evil*, was also among its least popular. Now selling for liquidation prices of less than \$20 at several major retailers, there's no reason not to pick up the Silver Award-winning action-adventure game we called "mesmerizing, ominous, and, most of all, memorable."



greatest hit
or miss?



ANIMAL CROSSING

- GameCube
- Released: September 2002
- Original Scores: 9.0, 9.5, 9.0

In what may be the least macho game ever made, your supercute character wanders around town digging up fossils, fishing, redecorating his or her apartment, and writing letters to the town's talking animals. And it's awesome. You can even invite real-world friends to visit your town and appreciate your Fisher-Price-style feng shui.



tricks of the trade

because cheaters do prosper, especially in videogames

trickster

Has it really been an entire year since I received dozens of death threats due to a fib about Topless



mode in *Dead or Alive: Xtreme Beach Volleyball*? Well, I've learned my lesson—that EGM's male demographic requires perky breast cheats that work in their videogames. We can't promise you perves any puppies this month, but we've got the next best thing: top-notch killing techniques for violent Teen- and Mature-rated games. Here's to sex and violence! Cheers!

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

GAME DIRECTORY

- Baldur's Gate:**
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■ PS2/XB

BALDUR'S GATE: DARK ALLIANCE II

This epic dungeon romp is a fine specimen of an isometric role-playing game, complete with foppish high-fantasy character names. Naturally, you'll want to invest weeks of meticulous gameplay into honing your character to the very peak of performance. Or sack all that and level them up with cheats, make them invulnerable, and warp them anywhere. But where's the fun in that? Below.

(Before you go ruining the fun for everyone, make sure you activate the cheat codes during gameplay, not from a menu screen.)

Invulnerability and warping

The codes below enable options for both invulnerability and level warping, which allows you to skip directly to any level in the game. The levels are listed by abbreviated names, but they're roughly in the same order they are in the game.

Xbox: Press and hold the left and right triggers and A, B, X, and Y buttons. While continuing to hold them, push White.

PS2: Press and hold L1, R1, Triangle, Square, Circle, and X. While still holding them, press Start.

Level-up cheating

This useful cheat sets the level of your current character to 10, grants him or her a whopping 45 feat points, and gives 'em 500,000 gold pieces. You can do it only once per game, but if you'd like to do it again (to get more feat points or gold), save your game, reload, and enter the



■ Drizzt has a +5 defending scimitar. Guess who doesn't. Legolas.

code again. Note that if your level is higher than 10, it will be set back to 10.

Xbox: Press and hold the left and right triggers and A, B, X, and Y buttons. While continuing to hold them, push White.

PS2: Press and hold L1, R1, Triangle, Square, Circle, and X. While still holding them, press L2.

Play as Drizzt Do'Urden

You know Drizzt, don't you? He's the legendary Drow hero of several R.A. Salvatore *Forgotten Realms* novels. He begins the game at level 16 with his trademark blades, Icingdeath (a +3 frost scimitar) and Twinkle (a +5 defending scimitar), and a suit of +4 mithral chainmail. You can't ever replace these items, but you can equip other armaments and accessories. Drizzt can use a few exclusive feats, like Otiluke's Icy Sphere and Repulsion. To play as him, after you complete the quest once, start a new game. Then scroll to the right as you

choose your character—after Allessia, Drizzt's name will appear.

Play as Artemis Entreri

Like the Tupac and Biggie of *Forgotten Realms*, Artemis Entreri and Drizzt don't get along. But instead of Benjamin-countin', women-degradin', crotch-grabbin', and drive-by-shootin' antics, Drizzt and Artemis go medieval and let their magical bling bling do the talking. Like Drizzt, Artemis begins at level 16 with his trademark weapon, Charon's Claw, and a defending dagger. He's also packing a suit of +4 grand leather armor of thunder. As an assassin, his feat selection is similar to Vhaidra's after her class change—plus the exclusive feat Ash Blade. To play as him, after you beat the game in extreme mode (with any character), you'll be able to select Artemis Entreri. If you don't want to beat the game again, you can use the invulnerability and warp codes to skip to the end of extreme mode with an already-existing character.

■ XB

STAR WARS JEDI KNIGHT: JEDI ACADEMY

Luke's about to unwrap his birthday present from C3PO. He's looking at the wrapped gift, and he sees it's a bit crumpled. He begins to rip the paper, and Darth Vader strides in. "Luke..." Darth rasps menacingly, "that's a...[gasp, wheeze]...Verpine cardio-regulator!" "No way!" cries Luke, who finishes unwrapping and opens the box. Out falls a Verpine cardio-regulator, just as Vader had predicted! "H-how could you know this?" demands Luke. Darth replies, "I have...[gasp, wheeze]...felt your presents." Ha ha!

Here are some codes. Enter them during gameplay. Let us never speak of this joke again. This isn't the joke you're looking for.

All Force Powers: Hold down the right thumbstick, then press Left, Down, Right, Up, Down, Down.

Invincibility: Hold down the right thumbstick, then press Down, Up, Left, Right, Down, Up.

Level Skip: Hold down the right thumbstick, then press Up, Up, Down, Down, Left, Right.

Max Force Power: Hold down the left thumbstick, then press Up, Up, Down, Left, Down, Up, Left.

Unlimited Force Power: Hold down the right thumbstick, then press Up, Down, Up, Left, Up, Right.



TRICKS IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PRIMA GAMES

Stuck on a particularly upsetting crate-pushing puzzle? Found that the boss you're fighting has some sort of glowing purple jewel in its chest/forehead/buttocks but can't lock on with your ordnance? Then turn to Prima for answers. The official guides to *Mafia*, *Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance II*, and *Fallout: Brotherhood of Steel* are on sale now.



■ GC

RESIDENT EVIL CODE: VERONICA X

We're not knocking GameCube, but has it actually taken four years for this Dreamcast game to appear on Nintendo's newest fun machine? Well, now you've got arguably the finest title in the series to play when your kid brother, daughter, or tragically unhip uncle finishes that *Animal Crossing* marathon. Look! We've even taken a screenshot showing Claire with the rocket launcher, one of the hardest-to-obtain weapons in any videogame ever. Why? Because we *are* that tragically unhip uncle.

The Linear Launcher: It's the first-person BFG you've always wanted instead of that damn crossbow. Earn it by finishing battle mode with each character, beating these times:

Claire: 06:00

Biker Claire: 07:30

Chris: 06:30

Steve: 10:00

Wesker: 30:00

The Rocket Launcher: To earn it, finish the game with an A ranking (complete the quest in less than four and a half hours). That's



insane—except opening the lid of your GameCube pauses the timer!

Unlock Steve "Annoying" Burnside: Grab the gold luger replicas when you're playing through the game as Chris.

■ PS2/XB

FALLOUT: BROTHERHOOD OF STEEL

We've pillaged the Wasteland for some good old-fashioned hidden characters and weapons. Behold our impressive list of unlockables:

Hidden characters

Several of the folks you meet during your travels can be enlisted to help fight the mutants. As you finish each chapter, another supporting character is unlocked. After clearing Carbon of the raider matron's menace, the Vault-Tec heroine Patty becomes available. Once the ghoulish city of Los is undone, Rhombus, the paladin in purple, joins the cause. And the Vault Dweller, the hero of the original *Fallout*, goes in for another tour of duty once Attis has been defeated.

Secret weapons

The Slugger: The Great Bambino wishes he had a bat like this. This piece of lumber knocks enemies across the screen and does huge damage. To uncover the Slugger, head to the docks in Los. Check the narrow alleyway behind the last few pools of green radioactive sludge. There will be ghouls standing behind fences. Lob grenades over the fence and kill these ghouls. Exit the alleyway and meet the largest ghoul you've ever seen. Use your biggest boom to bring down the monster, then claim the Slugger.

The Meat Cannon: This weapon has more than an amusingly offensive name: It has incredible range, and it never runs out of



■ Dilligent looters will find the Meat Cannon here. Lunchtime, suckas!

ammo. The Meat Cannon fires explosive meat that does out serious damage. To find the Meat Cannon, check the Bridge chapter of Los. Remember the hidden area (across from the save-game console) that requires a leap of faith over an abyss? Walk out across the blackness and reach the island, kill all of the ghouls on the asphalt island, and head for the truck in the back corner. Open the footlockers to discover caps and the Meat Cannon. *Bon appétit.*

Bonus material

Brotherhood's development team assembled all of the cut-scenes and cinematics, as well as plenty of making-of footage, for your perusal. All of these extra goodies are accessed from the Bonus option on the main menu. For the basics:

Every time you complete a chapter, the accompanying cinematic is unlocked for future and forever viewing. Once you complete the game, the following bonus materials are unlocked:

Pin-ups: Footage of the female characters from the game, but done up for a '50s-era calendar shoot.

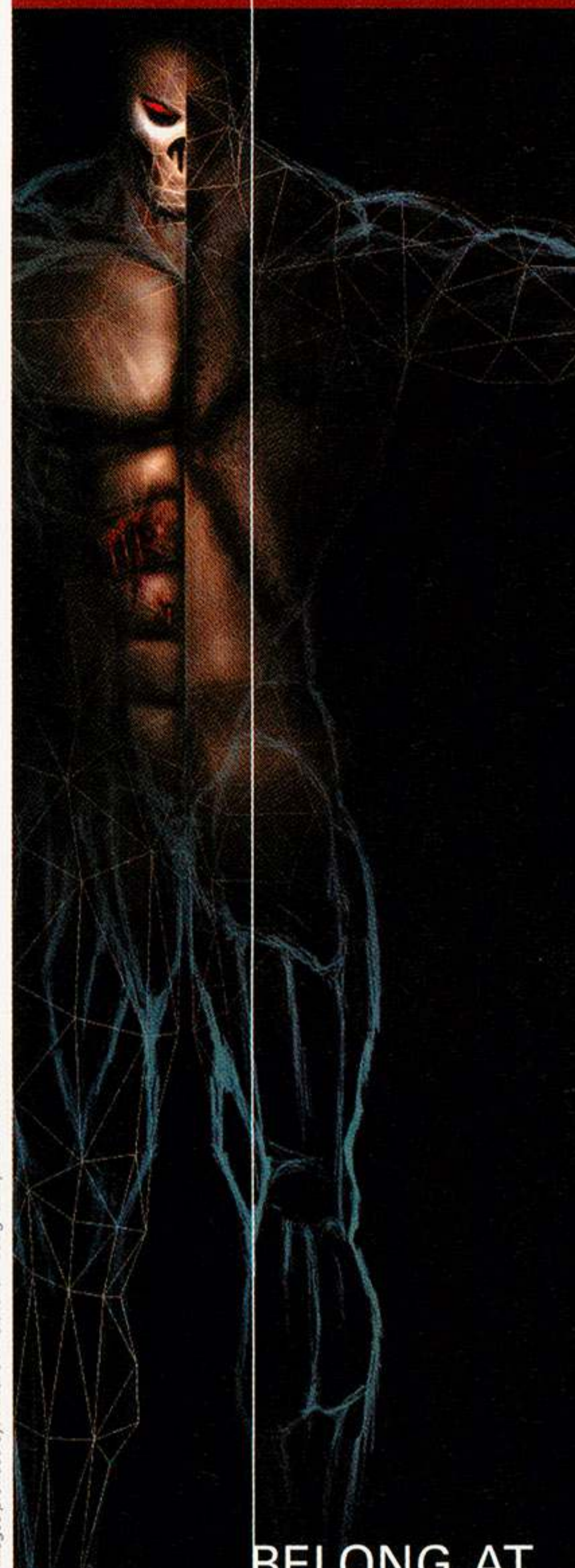
Environment: View concept artwork for the game's locations, such as Carbon and Los.

Weapons: Check out concept artwork and renderings of the weapons used in the game.

Characters: More artwork, but this set concentrates on the characters.

Skinlab Music Video: Watch a music video starring Skinlab, who provided some of the rockin' tunes that play over the game's best action sequences. >

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images provided by: Andrew Gerard · designed by: Danielle Knotts

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■ PS2/XB

MAFIA

The man with the scam is Lucas Bertoni, the mechanic on the outskirts of town. Doing favors for him is the key to getting your meat hooks on the sweetest rides in Lost Heaven. Want to get these wheels into your personal garage? Lucas'll show you how to break into some rare, exotic cars owned by Lost Heaven's upper crust.

But nothing comes for free in this business, and Lucas is only willing to teach you how to steal these automobiles if you run special errands for him. These tasks might include tailing somebody or delivering a package, for instance.

After the race in mission 6, Tommy can begin visiting Lucas' garage. Visit him only when the game alerts you that you can (usually after completing a mission for Salieri). Otherwise, Lucas shows you nothin'. Bupkis.

To accept an errand from Lucas, park outside his garage and walk in. Talk to him to find out what you need to do. Once you complete the job, return to his garage. Lucas'll show you how to pick the lock of a fine car and tell you exactly where you can find said car. Once you steal the wheels, return to Salieri's and the car is added to your fleet.

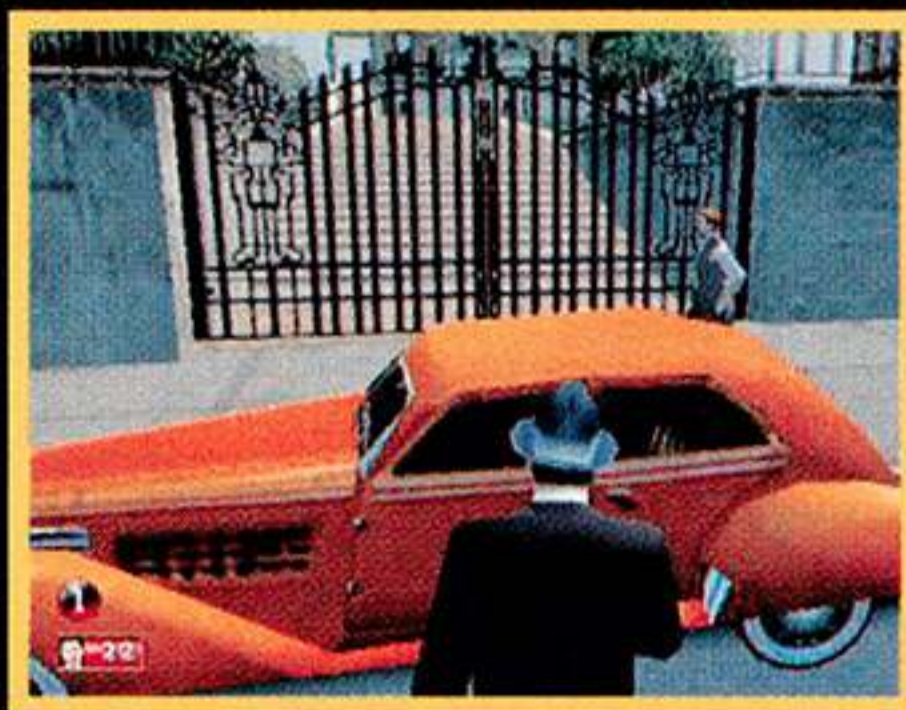
Need more info? Fuggetaboutit! Hey, watch the knees! No, not the hammer! Crunch! OK, OK, geez, I'll tell you what you need to know! Here's a more complete breakdown of the eight missions Lucas sends you on.

Mission 6

The first time you visit Lucas, he shows you how to steal the Lassiter V16 Phaeton. The car is parked behind the municipal building. Drive over to the building's lot and approach the vehicle. When nobody's looking, pick the lock and the Phaeton is yours. Bada bing!

Mission 9

Lucas tells you that a buddy of his is



wanted by the cops. If you drive to Hoboken and warn the guy, Lucas shows you how to steal an Ulver Airstream.

Follow the map to the guy's door, which is marked with a blue X, and use the Action button. Return to Lucas. The appreciative mechanic shows you how to lift the Airstream and directs you to Oakwood, where you'll find one ripe for the picking. So pick, already. Bada bong!

Mission 10

Want the Thor 810? First, listen to Lucas' tale of a bouncer who takes too much pleasure in his job. Follow the map to the club the bouncer works at, beat him up, and return to Lucas.

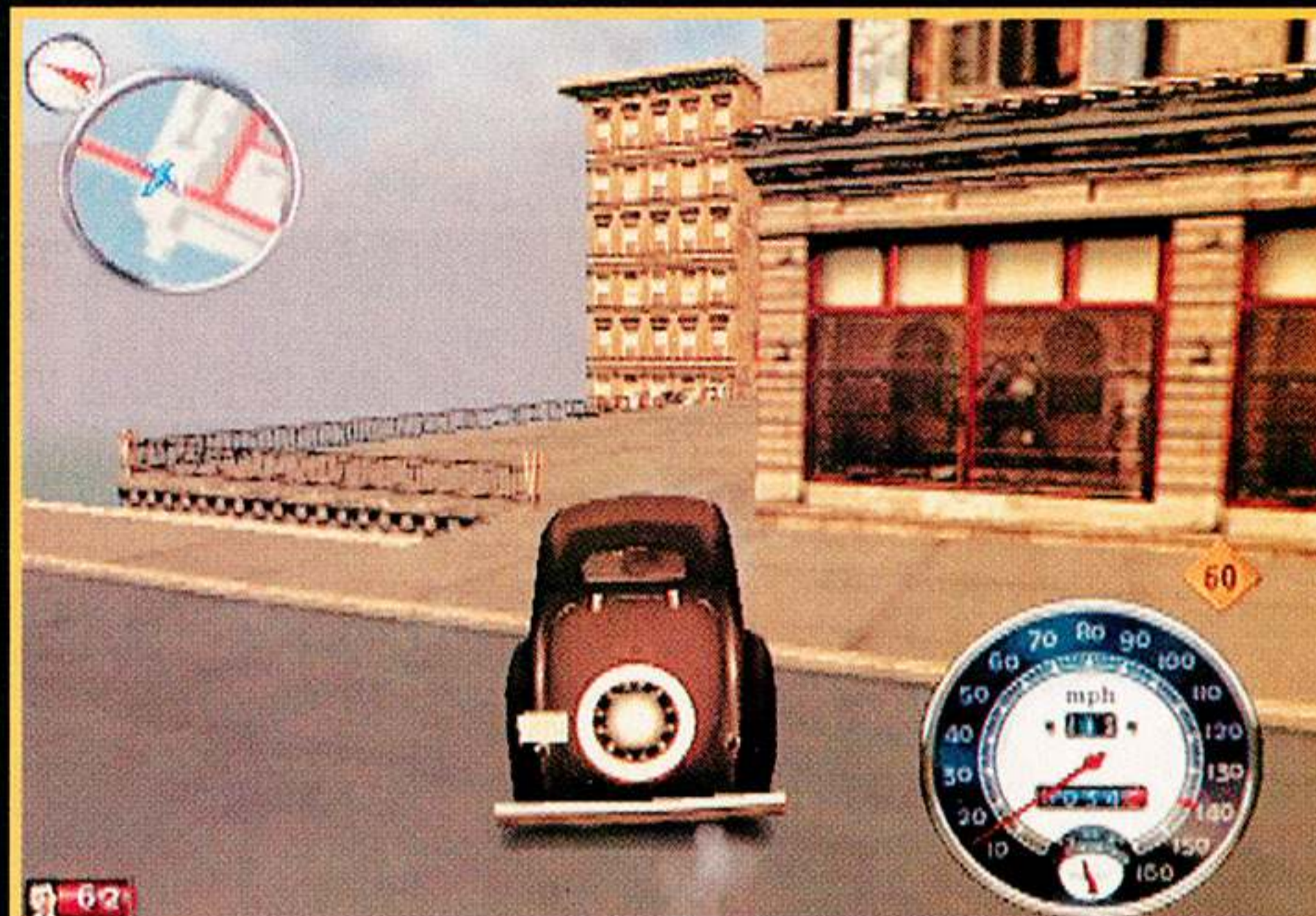
The Thor is waiting for you outside an estate in swanky Oak Hill. There are guards near the house, so approach cautiously. When the coast is clear, pick the lock and speed away. Budda bang!

Mission 15

Lucas needs you to rush to a street corner and pick up a friend who was on the wrong end of a gun. You must drive his friend to the hospital in New Ark real quicklike. The friend's health meter slowly ebbs away. If you don't make it to the hospital in time, he dies and you fail. If you make it to the hospital, Lucas shows you how to lift a Bruno Speedster 851. The car is parked at the garage on Central Island. If the area is free of curious peepers, make with the swiping. Budda finger!



■ Lucas will show you how to steal Lost Heaven's best rides—but not for free.



■ Mission 19: Park your car at the top of the stairs, poised for a quick getaway.

Mission 16

The Celeste Marque is a fine piece of machinery that's worth risking a little high-speed chase for. Lucas has a car used in a crime that needs to be destroyed, but he can't do it. He needs you to drive the car to the beach at the southern tip of Oakwood and dump it in the ocean. The only problem is that a bunch of cops are looking for the car. Race to the beach, eluding the police with speed and artful use of traffic. Once there, park the car on the edge of the cliff and get out. The car rolls off on its own.

Return to Lucas, and he'll tell you where to find the Marque. For once, don't follow his instructions. The car is parked in front of a diner downtown. When you start picking the lock, the owner comes out and opens fire. Instead, wait for the owner to leave the diner and drive home to Oakwood. Once he's inside his house, steal the car from the driveway with no difficulty. Shazam!

Mission 17

The Lassiter Appolyon is a beauty that deserves to be in your garage. All you need to do is pick up one of Lucas' colleagues in the Works Quarter and drop him off where Lucas tells you to. The Appolyon is parked in Oak Hill. Problem is, a car like this commands attention. If a person witnesses you stealing it, they'll raise a ruckus. You need to be fast and full of health, just in case. Abracadabra!

Mission 19

Lucas needs you to deliver an itty-bitty package to an associate of his who hangs out beneath the East Marshall Bridge. Park your car at the top of the stairs, making sure the door is facing the stairs, just in case you need to hightail it out of there. Run down, and you'll see the associate, Dick, standing there.

Unfortunately, you were followed by

some dark-suited thugs. Turn around and open fire. The shots may attract the police, so be ready to make a break for it when all the thugs are dead. Return to Lucas, and he'll tell you where you can find the gorgeous Trautenberg Model J. The owner is leaving Oakwood Junior High en route to downtown.

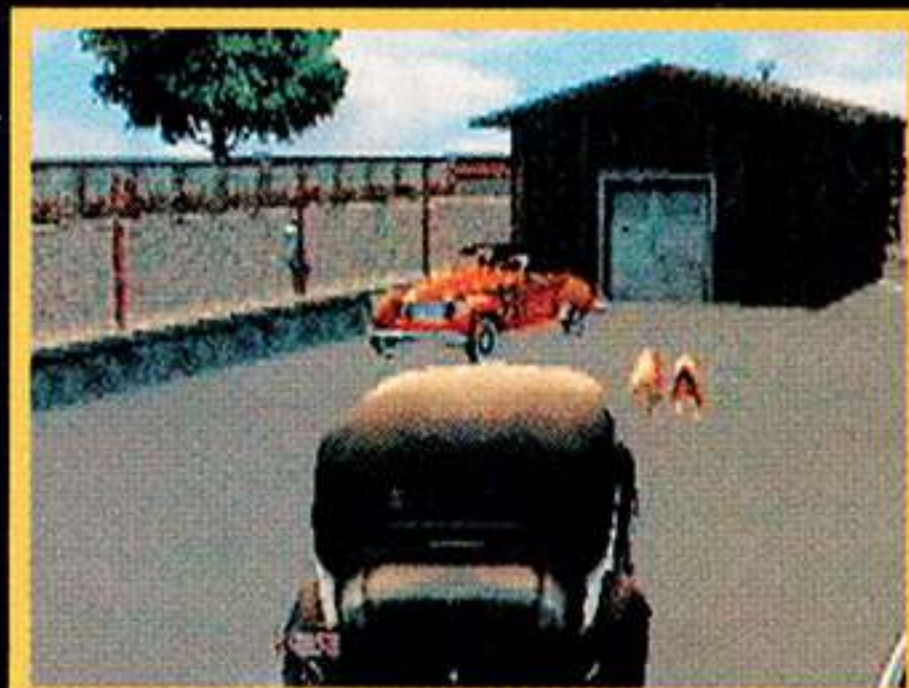
Follow the guy as he circles several blocks. Pull your car in front of his and hop out. Yank the driver out of the car and speed away in your new ride. Yowza!

Mission 20

The final car Lucas shows you how to steal is a Thor 812 Cabriolet, a nice roadster that's great for getaways.

Lucas needs you to follow a prostitute as she leaves the Hotel Corleone. Drive to the hotel and wait for the woman in red to leave. Keep her in sight—she does not appear on the map. Once you find her apartment, return to Lucas and tell him where she went. Lucas then informs you that the Thor is at a lot in Chinatown. What he doesn't mention is the pack of vicious guard dogs in the yard.

You could open the gate and try to shoot the dogs, but they move fast, and you don't want a bunch of people witnessing you butchering animals. Instead, run out and open the gate, then get back in your car and drive over the dogs in the yard, avoiding personal injury. With the curs in dog heaven, you can steal the car with impunity. Capisci? ►





VS.



GameShark serves up more *Whiplash* cheats than Spanx can twirl Redmond at, plus a little *Robotech* chicanery for anime fans.

Whiplash (PS2)

Have Air Smash
25D0B128 1474D70E

Enter This First

F453BE2E FE644416

Have Juggle Finish
25D0B328 1474D7AE

Exclusive!

Waive Animal-Rescue Requirements

24D1A6A8 1274C109
2454B62E 9E76892A
24D1B688 1256C119
24D1B528 30B6C794

Have Hyper Dash
25D0B328 1474D79E

Have Chain Charge
25D0B328 1474D7BE

Have Level Maps
25D0B128 1474D72E

Exclusive!

0% Company Worth
25D03528 1674C138
25D03528 1674C188

Infinite Health

24911488 04D4410D

Infinite Scurry

2490B328 34F4559C

Infinite Robomice

0550912A 1474D7BC

Infinite Keys

1500B128 1CF4D73E

Max Animals Saved

1540B468 1C74D50E

Have Glide

25D0B328 1474D72E

Have High-Voltage Grapple

25D0B328 1474D71

Have Sweep Finish

25D0B328 1474D78E

Robotech: The Macross Saga (GBA)

Enter This First
977CF4158816

CDDE317562F5
BE56E27552E3

Turbo Side-Scroll

138C34EB711E
114C766163FE

Infinite Missiles

CF2977F946F7

Rapid-Fire Missiles

6073EA17E395
EC0C77FB42C3

Rapid-Fire Gun

6C0C7273AAA5
CF6957F042B7

Unlock All Characters

BECE19F25057
62AB98DE4383



With infinite Simoleans, your Sim will soon have the swankiest pad in town. Action Replay also offers some help for ghost photographers.

The Sims: Bustin' Out (GC)

Enter This First
7P22-FN8P-3NVPE
TR9W-RG1Y-PF3GC

Exclusive!

Everything Unlocked

JU59-R737-Q8N8H
2X35-MN8M-2UKFR
KKK3-QWDV-59CDQ

Exclusive!

Super Debug Mode

V0V2-DXRY-F2FJ4
CC2N-2UH0-UU64W
JW6D-Q290-WWEU7
HFTX-KQDZ-FM81H

Infinite Simoleans

8UZC-Y65M-62QGW
UQ7B-CCDH-MZAP9

Max Out All Motives (Press Up + B)

0N4Q-H29D-ZMQGM
8MUX-8UR9-F9ZMN
URZT-16C7-8EE0M
ZP02-VK03-9ZRB5
3T31-MW2W-Y968F

Have Super Lawn Gnome

VBB1-4D92-HF4P5
CC2N-2UH0-UU64W

Fatal Frame II (PS2)

Enter This First
29T8-T4CA-U2HC7
958B-JD80-H73VK

Exclusive!

Weak Ghosts

76DB-BG3P-VHJV5
7H1X-X0EV-PXVKD
KBAN-PJRO-RX4U0
WDW9-8H04-C4W51
T9JV-5PZ5-Y1YNW
PGCD-56NE-PU9XP

Exclusive!

Infinite Time for Doll Puzzle

WC69-JGEV-K5ER7
QTRF-TPCY-7CEJE

Infinite Turns for Pinwheel Puzzle 1

ZCD9-X29Y-ZH8Y8
8PU4-4K47-JNF1R

Infinite Turns for Pinwheel Puzzle 2

QYQH-EODF-BNUX1
XX01-0KPK-C3W7Q

Infinite Turns for Tachibana Shrine

E29Q-2G3X-P1QGU
1HR6-Y65F-Z1VJW



An unlucky spin of the bottle gets Mio into an embarrassing situation. Come on, a deal's a deal.

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- Brooklyn, NY
- Boston, MA
- Columbus, OH
- Detroit, MI
- Indianapolis, IN
- Louisville, KY
- Chicago, IL
- Milwaukee, WI
- Kansas City, MO
- Denver, CO
- Seattle, WA
- Portland, OR
- San Francisco, CA
- San Jose, CA
- Las Vegas, NV
- Phoenix, AZ
- San Diego, CA
- Los Angeles, CA

GC
1080° AVALANCHE



Don't confuse Nintendo's long-in-the-tooth snowboarding title with "1090," a popular nickname for the mullet hairstyle (that's 10 percent on top, 90 percent in back). As if you would.

Level skip

To use these codes, choose Enter an Avalanche Code from the Options menu.

- Novice final challenge:** JAS3IKRR
- Hard final challenge:** 2AUNIKFS
- Expert final challenge:** EATFIKRM
- Extreme final challenge:** 9AVVIKNY

Unlockables

And plenty of 'em. Check out the list:

- Alternate costumes:** Complete Expert mode with any character.
- Alternate board designs:** Retrieve 18 Time Trial coins.
- Alternate board skins:** Retrieve all Time Trial coins, including those in Extreme.
- Bones (character):** Complete Extreme mode using Rob.

- Crystal (character):** Complete Extreme mode using Akari.
- Frosty (character):** Complete Extreme mode using Ricky.
- Mimi (character):** Complete Extreme mode using Tara.
- Titanium (character):** Complete Extreme mode using Kemen.
- Extreme Championship:** Complete Expert championship.
- Second board for Winterborn, Once Bitten, Scarefactix, GCN, and Crime Scene:** Retrieve two Time Trial coins.
- Third board for Mind Invasion, Happiness, Cold Front, Broken Forest, and DNA:** Retrieve five Time Trial coins.
- Fourth board for 8-Bit Soul, Bad Cat, Pulse, Conquest, and Backbone:** Retrieve nine Time Trial coins.
- Mr. Beakes' Board:** Earn two trophies.
- NST 1080° Avalanche:** Earn 15 trophies.
- Old-School Board (NES Control Pad):** Earn six trophies.
- Paintbrush board:** Earn seven coins.
- Penguin board:** Earn one coin.
- Power Painter:** Earn nine trophies.

PS2/XB
GOBLIN COMMANDER: UNLEASH THE HORDE

More like unleash the codes. Punch these in during gameplay.

PlayStation 2 codes

Hold L1, R1, Triangle, and Down for about 3 seconds until a cheat-activation message appears, then tap the following:

- Gain 100 Gold:** L1, R1, R1, R1, R1, L1, Triangle, L1, L1, L1
- Gain 100 Souls:** R1, L1, L1, L1, L1, R1, Triangle, R1, R1, R1
- Gain 1,000 Gold and Souls:** R1, R1, L1, R1, R1, Triangle, Triangle, Triangle, L1, L1
- Disable Fog of War:** R1, L1, R1, R1, L1, L1, Triangle, Triangle, L1, R1
- Invincibility:** R1, R1, R1, L1, L1, L1, R1, L1, Triangle, R1
- Level Select:** (deep breath) Triangle, Triangle, Triangle, L1, R1, L1, L1, R1, L1, R1, R1, L1, R1, L1, R1, L1, R1, L1, R1, L1, R1, L1, R1, Triangle, Triangle (whew!)

- Slow Down:** L1, L1, L1, L1, L1, Triangle, Triangle, Triangle, Triangle, R1
- Speed Up:** R1, R1, R1, R1, R1, L1, Triangle, R1, R1, R1
- Complete Current Level:** R1, R1, L1, L1, L1, R1, R1, Triangle, Triangle, Triangle

Xbox and GameCube codes

Hold Left and Right triggers, Y, and Down until a confirmation appears, then press:

- Gain 100 Gold:** L, R, R, R, R, L, Y, L, L, L
- Gain 100 Souls:** R, L, L, L, L, R, Y, R, R, R
- Gain 1,000 Gold and Souls:** R, R, L, R, R, Y, Y, Y, L, L
- Disable Fog of War:** R, L, R, R, L, L, Y, Y, L, R
- Invincibility:** R, R, R, L, L, L, R, L, Y, R
- Level Select:** Y, Y, Y, L, R, L, L, R, L, R, R, L, R, L, R, L, R, L, L, R, L, R, R, Y, Y, Y
- Slow Down:** L, L, L, L, L, Y, Y, Y, Y, R
- Speed Up:** R, R, R, R, R, L, Y, R, R, R
- Complete Current Level:** R, R, L, L, L, R, R, Y, Y, Y, Y



That right there is some hot goblin-on-goblin action. Wanna see it in slow motion? No?

PS2/XB/GC
NEED FOR SPEED UNDERGROUND

Ready for another joke? A street racer walks into a doctor's office with a steering wheel clamped firmly to his groin. "What do we have here?" the doctor asks. The racer replies, "Doc, help me—this thing's driving me nuts!" Thank you. I'm here all week. After that Rodney Dangerfield moment, I'd better bring out some top-notch codes to bring you back from the brink. So here's how to unlock all the tracks in NFSU without any hassle (enter codes at the Main menu):

Cheat	GameCube	PlayStation 2	Xbox
All Drag Tracks	Right, Z, Left, R, Z, L, Y, X	Right, Square, Left, R1, Square, L1, L2, R2	Right, X, Left, R, X, L, White, Black
All Drift Tracks	Left, Left, Left, Left, Right, X, R, Y	Left, Left, Left, Left, Right, R2, R1, L2	Left, Left, Left, Left, Right, Black, R, White
All Sprint Tracks	Up, X, X, X, R, Down, Down, Down	Up, R2, R2, R2, R1, Down, Down, Down	Up, Black, Black, Black, R, Down, Down, Down
All Circuit Tracks	D-pad Down, R, R, R, X, X, X, Z	Down, R1, R1, R1, R2, R2, R2, Square	Down, R, R, R, Black, Black, Black, X
Drift Physics in All Modes	—	R1, Up, Up, Up, Down, Down, Down, L1	R, Up, Up, Up, Down, Down, Down, L



Yes, this is what sucking looks like. Fourth place out of four? Here's a tip: In order to win, you gotta want it. Want it!



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THE REST OF THE CRAP

Angering marketing departments since 2002

help me

This month, in what can only be considered an attack on my sanity, I'm squeezing five bad games onto this page. Evidently I got a little too



long-winded last time, when I compared *Dinotopia* to the tragic pandemic of dong crabs. You probably don't remember that, because it was changed to "*Dinotopia? More like cheese weasel on crack!*" by the editors, softened by Standards and Practices to become "I did not enjoy this game about dinosaurs," and finally filtered through the United Council of Dinosaur Enthusiast Grandmothers to end at "Terrific!"

—Seanbaby

ROCKET POWER: ZERO GRAVITY ZONE



I hate to pull out the trump card of insulting captions, but "Psh! Nice game."

GBA • THQ — This is a great game for people who like *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater* but hate themselves. The controls are so clumsy and unresponsive that you might as well throw your Game Boy into a dryer and shout suggestions at it through the glass. Like all games inspired by Nickelodeon TV shows, the main stars are a group of horribly deformed children, so it's possible they're not listening to the control pad because the ugly little monsters are trying to reshape their disfigured

heads against nearby structures.

Bottom Line: What with all the suffering and pain in the world, it seems petty to mock a videogame simply because it's inferior. That being said, this videogame is personally responsible for most of that suffering and pain I just mentioned.

MUPPETS PARTY CRUISE



Unicycle Death Bowl: It's not over until the last Muppet dies of exposure.

PS2 • TDK — Not being excessively fruity or elderly, I'm unfamiliar with what goes on during a party cruise. However, my girlfriend is both, and she says that this game is very faithful to standard cruise activities like launching puppets out of cannons. With so many minigames available, there's a chance you won't even notice that none of them are fun. I feel the same way about minigames as I do about minirobots: You can almost ignore them on their own, but if you get too many of 'em together, they merge to form Borgon and then you can wave goodbye to what we call "uneaten babies."

Bottom Line: Switch to this party game if you and your friends thought *Pokémon Jr. Scrabble* was letting you keep too much of your dignity.

POWER RANGERS: NINJA STORM

GBA • THQ — My Game Boy and I reached a gentleman's agreement that both allowed me to review *Ninja Storm* and also let my Game Boy get the game the hell out of itself. After 30 seconds of stick time in which I bonked a steady stream of identical ninjas, the Game Boy liquefied the cartridge and told me that if I wanted to play more of this monotonous crap, my



Thrill to the sight of the red Power Ranger fighting ninjas #232 and #233.

primitive meatbrain could simulate it by remembering those 30 seconds as many times as I wanted. My Game Boy might be a rude little robobastard, but I have to admit it has a point here.

Bottom Line: It might not be fair to make fun of the game's plodding monotony since, if you play long enough, some ninjas are black instead of green, creating a virtual surfeit of ninja variety.

OZZY & DRUX



This isn't an early version of the game. Your glasses aren't dirty. It actually looks like that.

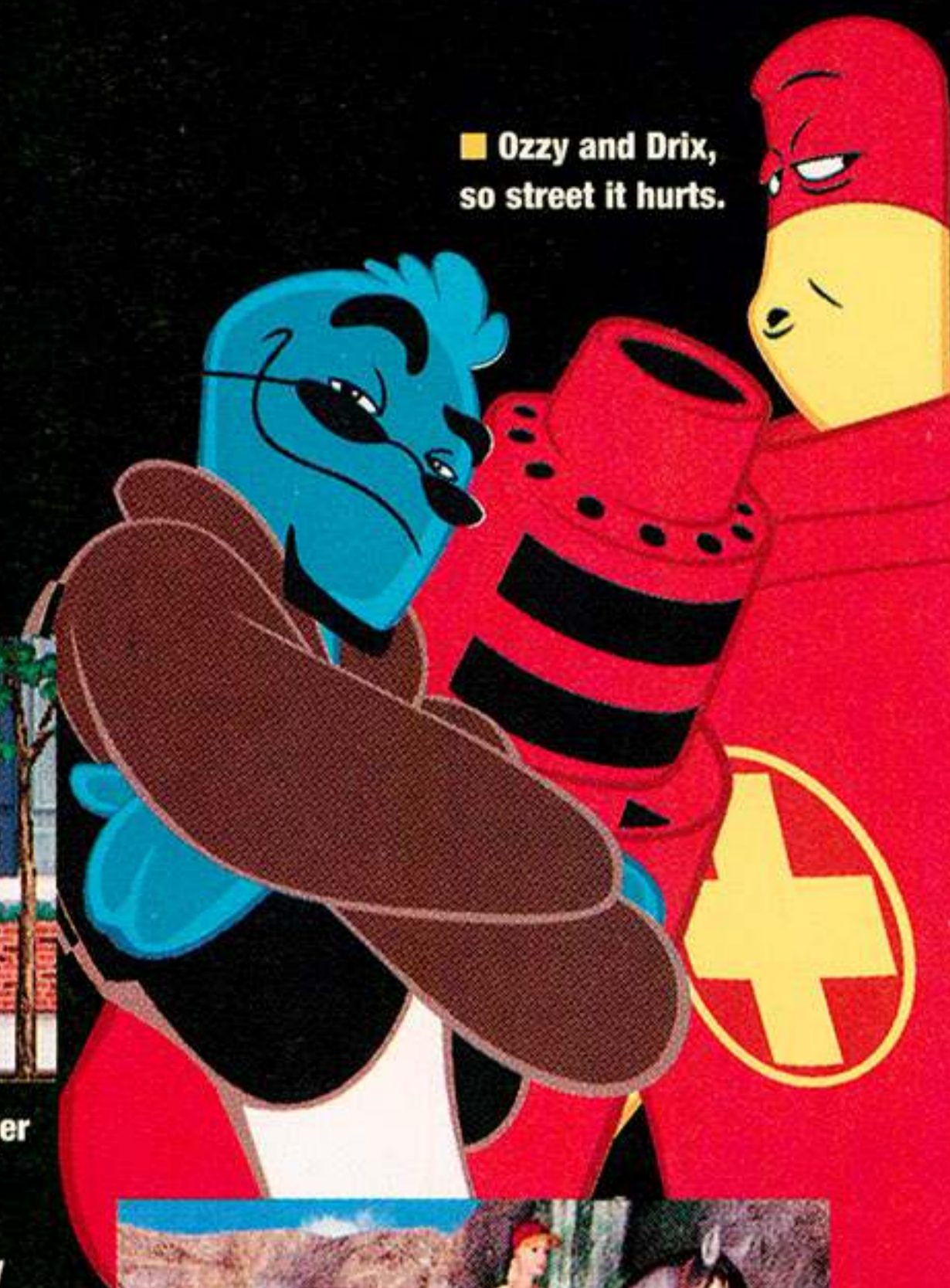
GBA • Midway — It's always been a dream of mine to be well-versed enough in theology that when I saw something this terrible I could gasp, "Th-the prophecy has come true!" only really mean it and back it up with religious text references. A pious background would also come in handy while playing this thing, since nearly every gap requires a spastic launch into space, and whether you land on a platform or bottomless death is pretty much up to your god. Apparently, my god likes watching me die.

Bottom Line: If you're so stupid that you need someone to tell you *Ozzy & Drix* is a failure, here's a picture of the letter w for you to play with: W.

BARBIE HORSE ADVENTURES: WILD HORSE RESCUE

XB • VU Games — Finally, a game based on the e-mail spam you've been getting for years. It might disappoint you to discover, however, that this game took the idea of horse adventures with fashion models in a strangely non-erotic direction. Instead of "thrObbing, maMMoTh CENSORED CENSORED all oVEr her CENSORED!" it starts out with Barbie and her carefully multicultural friends going on a

Ozzy and Drix, so street it hurts.



Not pictured: immigrants carrying Barbie's three steamer trunks full of vital accessories.

frantic pony rescue mission. You've got to go immediately, but when you're Barbie, there's always time for fashion and fun! So as the hours roll by and bringing the escaped horses back alive becomes more and more impossible, you design the perfect rescue outfit. Want to know what I picked? Giggle, I chose pink EVERYTHING! I wasn't done, though! Then I got to dress up my rescue horse!

Bottom Line: As I chose the perfect ribbons and saddle blankets to go with the edge-of-your-seat drama, Barbie shouted words of encouragement. But I had to hit mute after she screamed, "What a cool-looking horse!" As if I need some plastic slut to tell me how cool my horse looks.

classic crap

A NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET (NES)

Fans of the film should know that a little bit of the movie's edge is gone now that the nightmare's been translated into a little boy fighting Halloween cookies. The dream world is exactly like the regular one, except the bats are now spooky ghosts and the spiders can take an extra punch.



great moments in bad box art



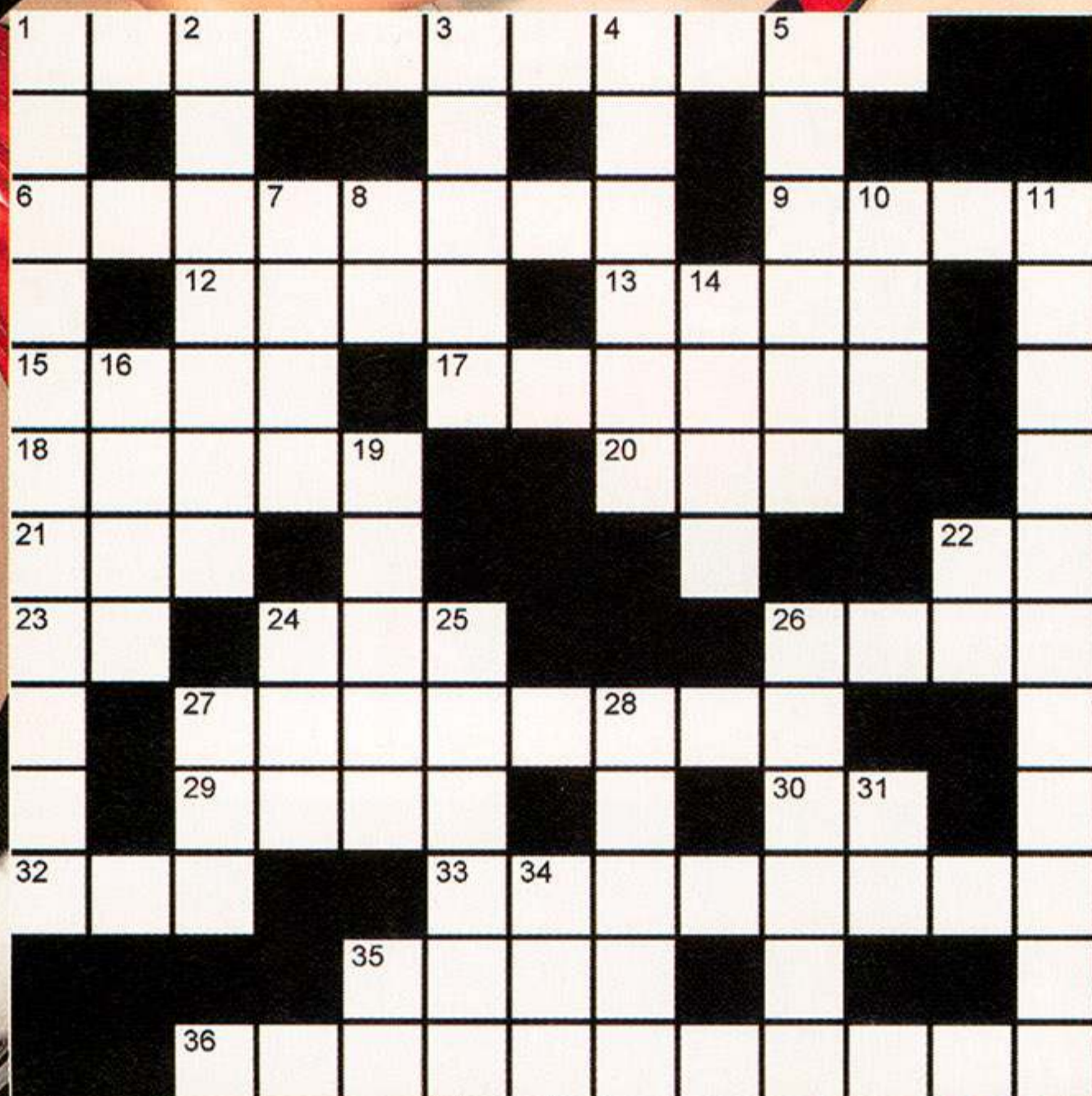
ROCK N BALL (NES)

It could be a hockey game, but I've never seen a hockey league that launches fruity boys in hot pants into the sky for any reason. That's why I thought it might be about aerobics in space. My final theory, though, was that it wasn't a game at all. If I hadn't opened the box and found a cartridge, I would have assumed that this thing, through unknown means, opened a gateway for Richard Simmons' imagination to throw up directly into my eyes.



NAMES OF THE GAMES

(Solution on page 143)



ACROSS

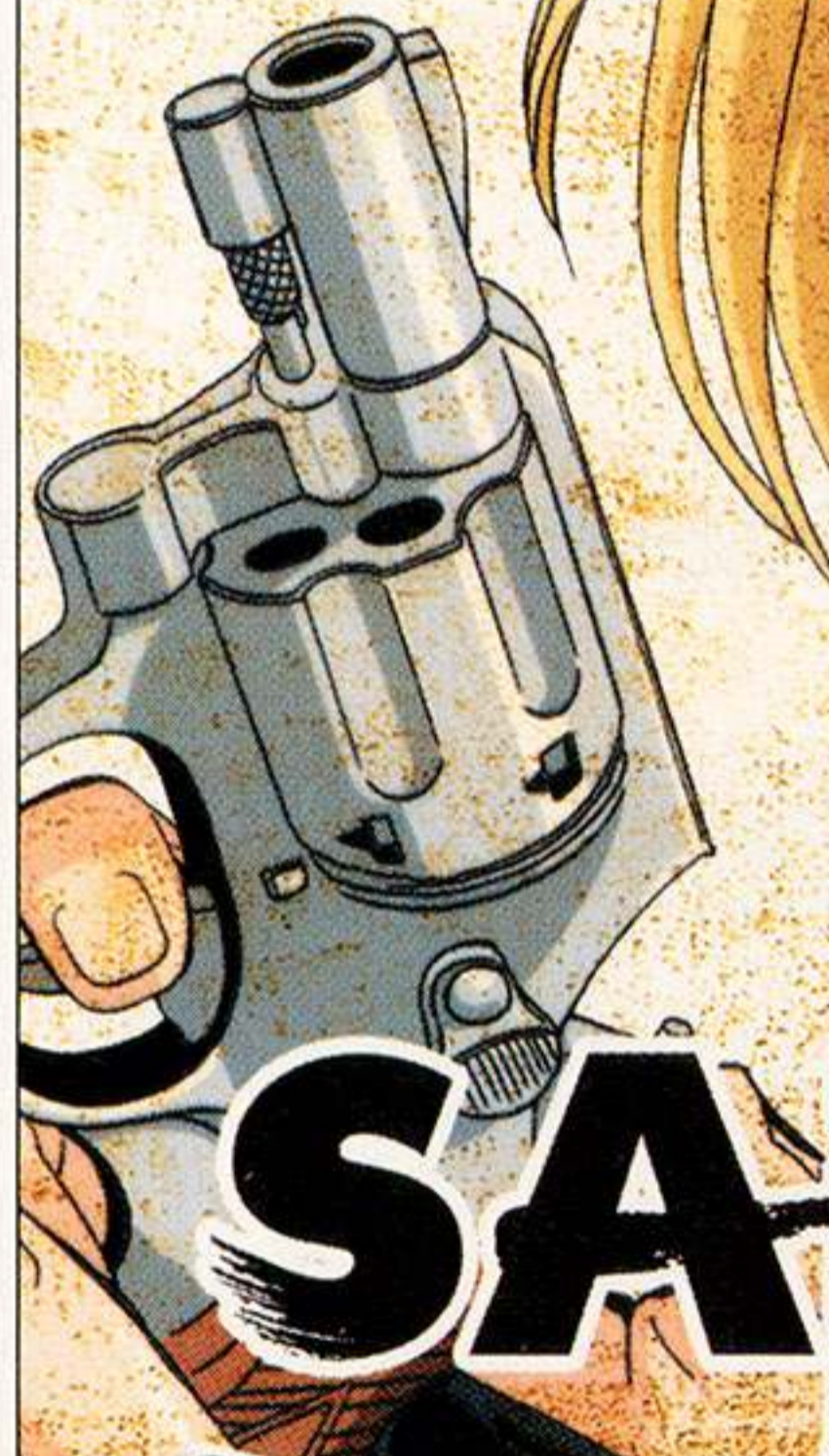
1. Evergreen wiz kid reappearing in '04
6. Monochrome martial artist?
9. Like 2004's *Fight* or 2000's *Midnight*
12. Bombastic transportation
13. *Zelda: Oracle of Seasons* tough-skinned boss
15. Like *South Park Rally*'s Cartman
17. Regains energy overnight?
18. *Final Fantasy XI* status-aiding footwear
20. Candles help you do it in an NES *Zelda* dungeon
21. Hangs with the *Power of Juju*
22. Opposite of upload (abbrv.)
23. Where *NFL 2004*'s Ravens play (abbrv.)
24. What a big mutha trucker might have to watch for in the road?
26. The last boss in *Ghosts 'n' Goblins* (NES), the first time you fight him
27. Frank Castle of 2004 comic-turned-videogame
29. What someone might call a hardcore gamer
30. Great for slashing *Castlevania* bats
32. Indirect sponsor of *Deer Hunt* (PS2/XB)
33. Mrs. Domino's "unstoppable" partner

35. Any good traitor character is usually this as well
36. Microsoft Japan's 2004 action title

DOWN

1. Farming game that'll finally get a version in 2004 "for girls"
2. Prequel game to two Vin Diesel movies
3. *SSX* obstacles?
4. Cheats at *Magic Pengel* (PS2)?
5. How to leave PS2's *Monkey Island*?
7. *True Crime* protagonist
8. Arctic NES mountain-scaling original, for short
10. *WWX* wrestler's weight standard
11. 2004 *Star Wars* warfare simulator
14. Where you might find PS2's *Nemo*?
16. Might be dirt or tarmac in *GT4* (PS2)
19. *Mario Sunshine* (GC) collectible
22. He was originally supposed to be called Monkey Kong (abbrv.)
24. Keep a rented game 'til this date
28. Like powerboat racer *Thunder*
31. 2004's online *Final Fantasy*, finally
34. Like *Ninja Turtles*' Splinter
35. 7 DOWN's stomping grounds

**A HOLY MAN WITH A GUN.
AN IMMATURE MONKEY DEMON.
A HARD-LIVING, HARD-LOVING
HALF-BREED.
A DEMON WITH A DRAGON
THAT TURNS INTO A JEEP.
THE FATE OF ALL HUMANITY
RESTS IN THEIR HANDS...**



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GAME BOY ADVANCE GIVEAWAY



The Game Boy Advance SP has really enlightened gaming on the go. But why spend 100 bucks when you can get one of these babies for free?

Electronic Gaming Monthly and Nintendo are teaming up to give two lucky readers a flame-colored Game Boy Advance SP and a copy of the action-role-playing game *Sword of*

Mana. Simply find the piece of character art (shown in the upper right) hidden in the mag—the one on this page doesn't count, wiseguy.

Then, e-mail us the page number (EGM@ziffdavis.com, Subject: Game Boy Advance Giveaway) and hope you are randomly chosen. All entries must be received by April 15, 2004, or you're stuck, like us, buying both.

GRAND PRIZE (TWO (2) WINNERS)

A flame-colored Game Boy Advance SP and a copy of *Sword of Mana*.

HOW TO PLAY

1. Find the hidden *Sword of Mana* character art in this issue of *EGM*.
2. E-mail us (EGM@ziffdavis.com) with the page number, along with your name and mailing address. Write "Game Boy Advance Giveaway" in the e-mail's subject line.

All correct entries received by April 15, 2004, will then be entered into a drawing for the prizes. Only one entry per person is accepted.

Full legal rules are available at <http://gbacontest.egmmag.com>.

Find the hidden piece of character art and this GBA SP and game could be yours!

5.1 Ch equivalent 6-Speaker Headphones

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FINALIST
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tom's hardware guide

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NEXT MONTH: MAY 2004 • ISSUE #178

ON SALE MARCH 30



GOLDENEYE: DR. NO VS. GOLDFINGER

It's a world-exclusive cover story on the game with three names: *GoldenEye: Dr. No vs. Goldfinger*—sequel of sorts to the best James Bond adventure ever, *GoldenEye 007* (Nintendo 64). For the first time, you *won't* be stepping in the shoes of the British superspy. Instead, play the villain and take on 007 in this first-person shooter that shakes up the Bond-universe timeline and continuity like a perfect martini...made in the Twilight Zone. (Where else

would you see classic Bond fiends like Dr. No, Goldfinger, and even Oddjob going after each other?)

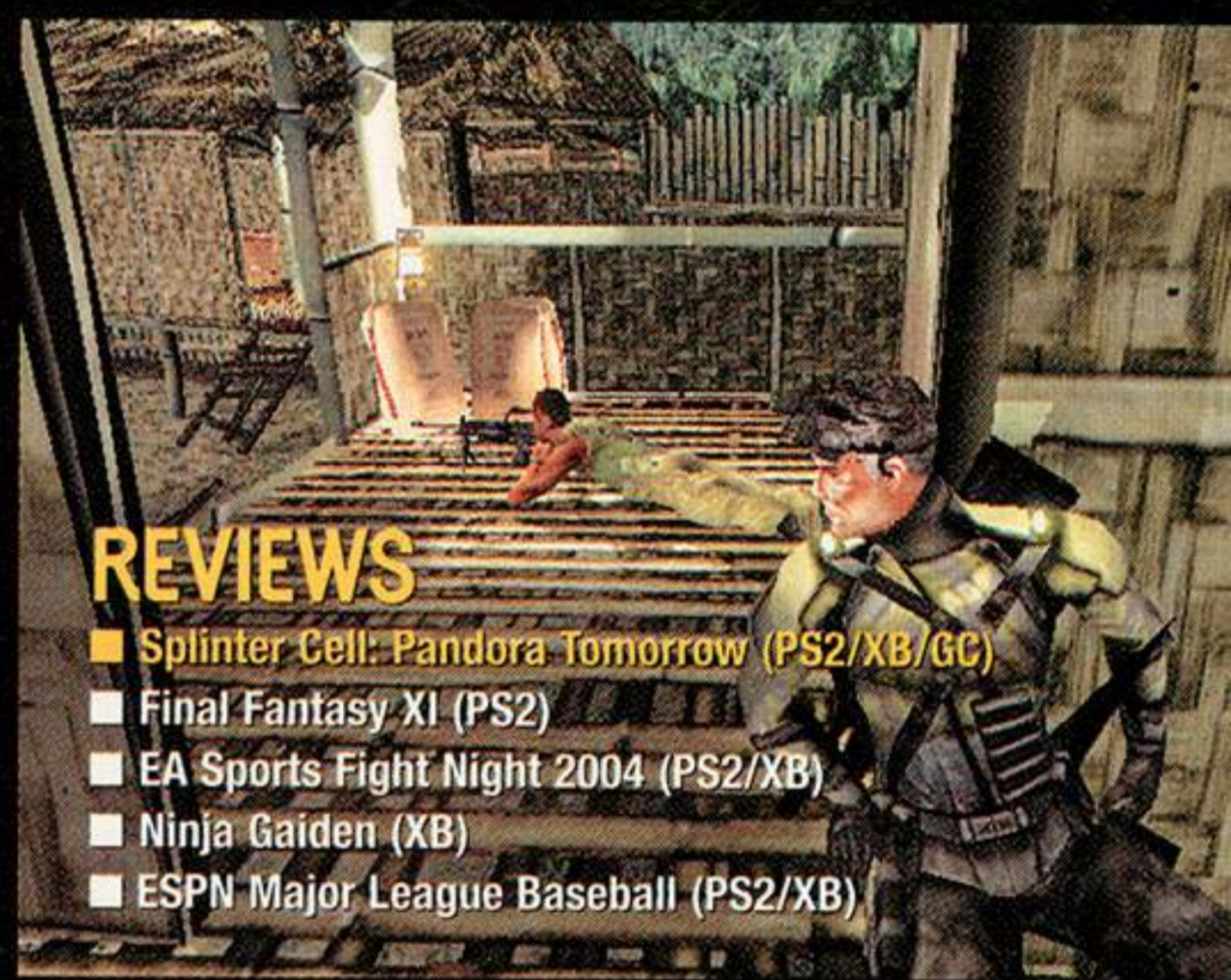
Plus, *EGM* turns 15! We celebrate with a look at how the magazine grew from humble photocopied fanzine to international gaming juggernaut.

We'll also round up this year's hottest RPGs, including *Kingdom Hearts II*, *Xenosaga Episode II*, *True Fantasy Live Online*, *Sudeki*, and *Zelda: Four Swords*.



PREVIEWS

- Onimusha 3 (PS2)
- Red Dead Revolver (PS2/XB)
- Burnout 3 (PS2/XB)
- TimeSplitters 3 (PS2/XB)
- Tales of Symphonia (GC)



REVIEWS

- Splinter Cell: Pandora Tomorrow (PS2/XB/GC)
- Final Fantasy XI (PS2)
- EA Sports Fight Night 2004 (PS2/XB)
- Ninja Gaiden (XB)
- ESPN Major League Baseball (PS2/XB)

(All planned editorial content is subject to change.)

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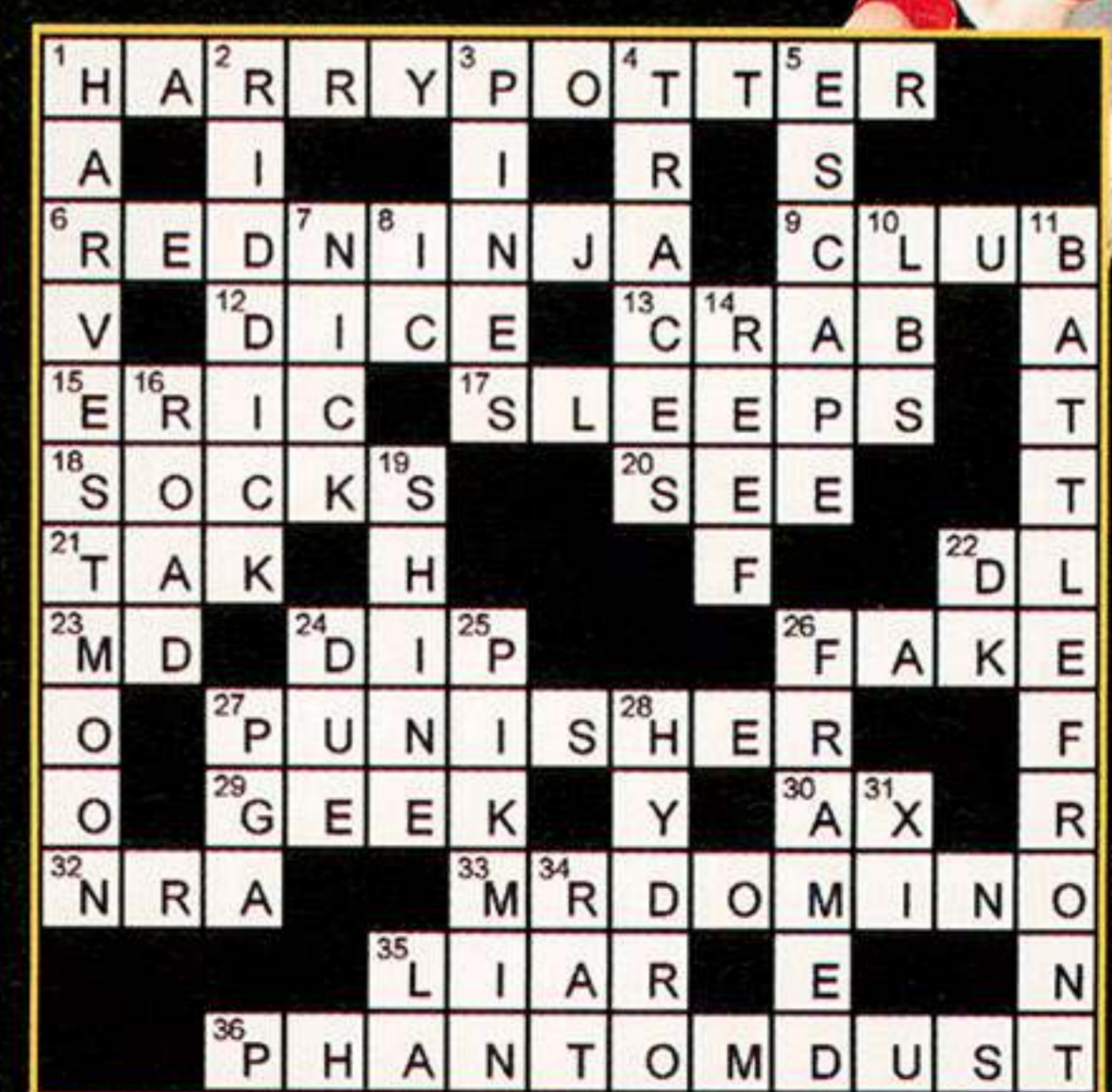
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ANSWERS TO NAME OF THE GAMES

on page 141





HSU AND CHAN
GAME DESIGNERS IN...
HORRORS FROM BEYOND!

MISTAKES WERE MADE!

HELLO, VIDEO GAMERS!
I'M HSU TANAKA, THIS IS MY BROTHER CHAN, AND WE ARE VIDEO GAME DESIGNERS!

IT IS ALL WE KNOW.

TOO RIGHT, BROTHER CHAN! AND THAT MEANS THAT WE HAVE AN INVESTMENT TO PROTECT!
VIOLENTLY, IF OPPORTUNITY PRESENTS ITSELF AND THE COAST IS CLEAR!

IN THESE HIGHLY COMPETITIVE TIMES, IT'S NOT ENOUGH TO MERELY HAVE A SOLID PRODUCT ON THE MARKET--
--ALTHOUGH APPARENTLY, IN CERTAIN CASES YOU CAN STAY AFLOAT PRETTY WELL JUST BY RELEASING LOTS OF CRAP WITH THE WORDS "TOMB RAIDER" ON IT--

BUT NO, THESE DAYS, SURVIVAL REQUIRES A WORKING KNOWLEDGE OF THE INDUSTRY ENTIRE: WHERE IT IS, WHERE IT'S BEEN, AND WHERE IT'S GOING!

YES, THE FUTURE! DARK AS THE INSIDE OF A DEACON'S HAT, UNFATHOMABLE AS THE CONTENTS OF A WOMAN'S PURSE!

SEVERAL COMPANIES ALREADY HAVE TEAMS OF ANALYSTS USING THE DATA OF TODAY TO DETERMINE TRENDS IN THE MARKET OF TOMORROW...

BUT US? DO WE LOOK LIKE A COUPLE OF NANCY BOYS? NO! WE DETERMINE THE FUTURE THE OLD-FASHIONED WAY-- UNSPEAKABLE BLACK-MAGIC RITUALS!

HSU! YOU SPOKE OF THEM!

COULDN'T BE HELPED. WONT HAPPEN AGAIN!

NOW THEN, CHAN-- HAVE YOU ASSEMBLED ALL OF OUR DARK AND GHASTLY INGREDIENTS?

INDEED I HAVE, NECROMANCER HSU! THEY ARE ARRANGED NEATLY BEFORE YOU IN MARKED CONTAINERS, ACCORDING TO COLOR AND PUNGENCY. THE REALLY AROMATIC STUFF IS DOWN AT THE END, IN TUPPERWARE.

I WOULDN'T OPEN THE BLUE ONE INSIDE, IF YOU CATCH MY DRIFT.

EYE OF NEWT!
WHOLE-ROASTED FROG!
BRAIN OF SNAKE!
SCENT OF DOG!

OH, THIS IS GONNA BE BAD WHEN IT HITS THE WATER.

CLAWS OF EAGLE!
NOSE OF ELF!
WHISKERS FROM THE CHIN OF SATAN HIMSELF!

I HAD A TIME GETTING THOSE, I CAN TELL YOU.

AND FINALLY-- THE BLOOD OF A LIVE CHICKEN!

HE FELL DOWN SOME STAIRS.

Foom!

WHO DARES SUMMON THE DEMON OF THE CAULDRON?!
WHO MUST NOW SUFFER DEATH FOR THEIR INSOLENCE?!

UH... HE JUST LEFT. NO IDEA WHO HE WAS, CRAZY TRESPASSERS. HEY, SINCE YOU'RE ALREADY HERE, THOUGH, I HAVE A QUESTION!

TELL US, GREAT DEMON-THINGY, WHAT GAMING TRENDS AWAIT US IN THE YEARS TO COME?

GAMING... WHAT?

LOOK, WE'RE REALLY BUSY, PREPARING FOR THE COMING WAR WITH THE FORCES OF LIGHT--

YEAH, YEAH, WE'LL LET YOU GET BACK TO THAT IN A SECOND. NOW LET'S HAVE IT. WHAT'S COMING FOR THE GAMING WORLD?

ALL RIGHT, ALL RIGHT, HERE, LEMME LOOK...

OK, IN THE NEXT FEW YEARS, WE'RE GOING TO SEE AN EXTREME SURGE IN THE NUMBER OF GAMES BASED ON TIKI MERCHANDISE.

THAT'S IT.

GOTCH-- WHAT?

THE EYE THAT PEERS INTO THE INFINITE!

THAT'S ALL WE GET? TIKI GAMES?

WELL, IF OUR PLAN WORKS, THE WORLD WILL BE TURNED CRIMSON WITH THE BLOOD OF MORTAL MAN AND ALL WILL WITHER IN TWO YEARS, ANYWAY. TIKI GAMES SHOULD HOLD YOU TILL THEN.

YOU SURE YOU AREN'T JUST SCREWING WITH ME?

HEY, I'M A DEMON; YOU TAKE YOUR CHANCES WITH RELIABILITY. I'M GOING BACK TO BED.

HMPH. WELL, LET THAT BE A VALUABLE LESSON TO THOSE OF YOU WHO WOULD ATTEMPT SERIOUS WORK IN THE OCCULT SCIENCES: DEMONS ARE NOT TO BE TRUSTED! RIGHT, HSU?

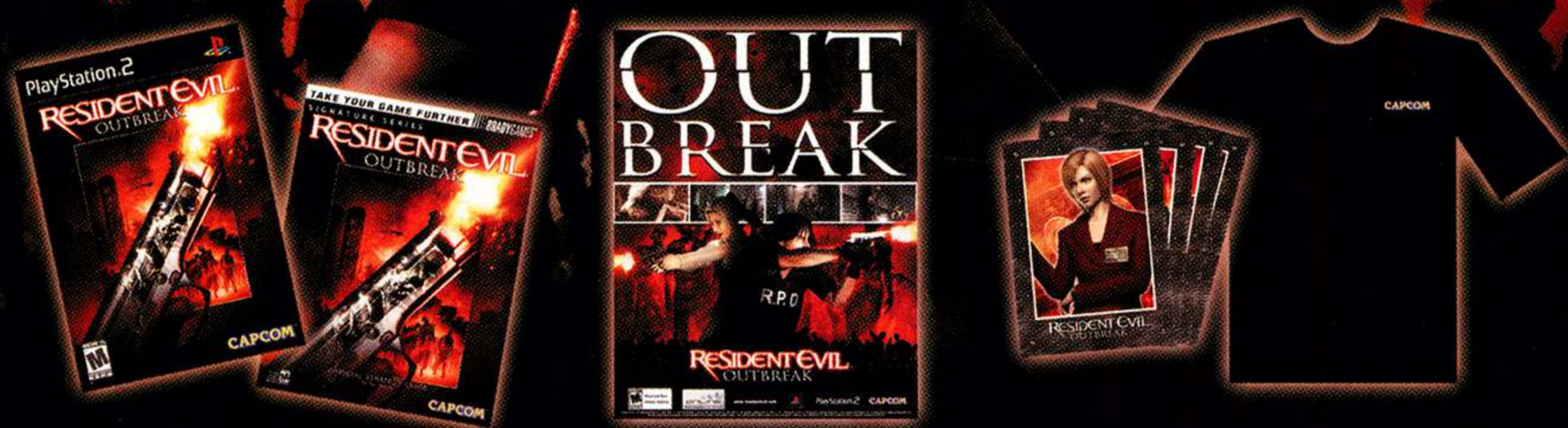
BLOODY WELL RIGHT! UNTIL NEXT MONTH, KIA ORA, EVERYBODY!

END!

EGM PRESENTS

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