

GEARS OF WAR 2 • DEVIL MAY CRY 4 • STREET FIGHTER IV

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2008 TOP SHOOTERS

OUR EXPERTS UNVEIL
9 PERFECT HEAVY-HITTERS!

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XBOX 360
SPECIAL REPORT



GEARS OF WAR 2

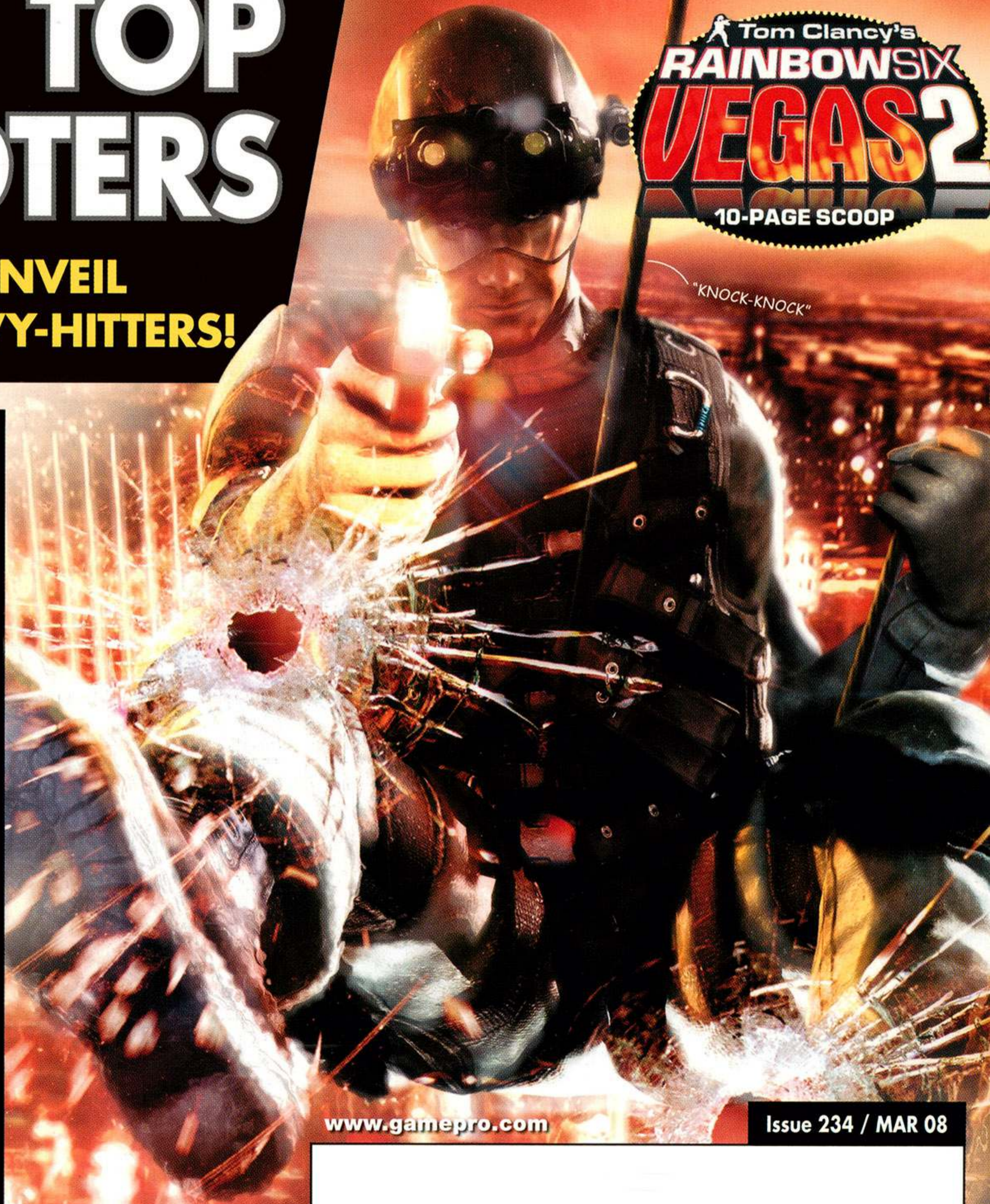


TOO HUMAN



NINJA GAIDEN II

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VEGAS 2
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Issue 234 / MAR 08



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Blood
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RP

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Tom Clancy's RAINBOW SIX VEGAS 2

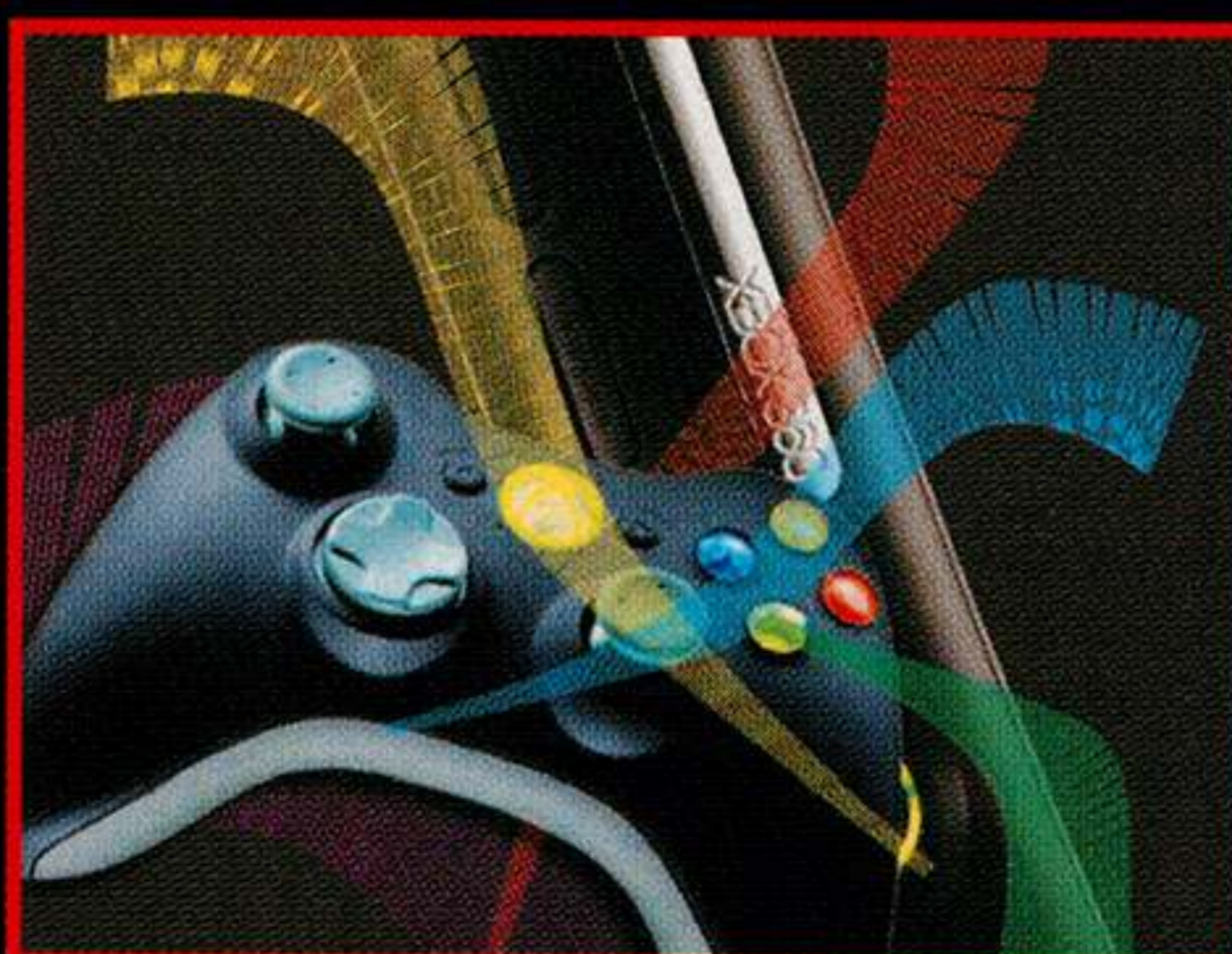
48 Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six Vegas 2: The Perfect Shooter

GamePro editor Sid Shuman played Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six: Vegas 2 before anyone else in the world! *GamePro's* 10-page exclusive unveils online cooperative play, new multiplayer modes, and 11 new high-tech weapons.



58 The 2008 Shooter Shoot-Out

The *GamePro* editors take on a high-priority mission: to positively ID the hottest first-person shooter of 2008.



64 Xbox 360 in 2008: The Complete Guide

The Xbox 360 is poised to own 2008. *GamePro* reveals new secrets about *Too Human*, *Ninja Gaiden II*, and two never-before-seen Xbox Live Arcade titles for the console.

70 The 2007 Game of the Year Awards

Here are *GamePro's* picks for the top games of 2007 for each console. We also give our pick for the best *overall* game of 2007!

72 GamerHelp: Super Mario Galaxy (Wii) and Call of Duty 4: Modern Warfare (PS3, Xbox 360)

We show you how to track down all the hidden Power Stars in *Super Mario Galaxy*, and then take you to *Modern Warfare* and reveal the location of all enemy Intel laptops.

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20 Star Wars invades Soulcalibur IV

Guess who's crashing the party? Forget about the 1997 disaster known as Masters of Teräs Käsi; this is how *Star Wars* characters should be treated in a fighting game.

26 Microsoft: PS3 Home is "Questionable"

The head honcho of Microsoft Game Studios talks about PlayStation Network functionality, apologizes for the Xbox 360 Red Rings of Death, and clarifies the post-EA future of Mass Effect.

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A New Year Means New Predictions

We're already two months deep into 2008 and you know what that means—it's time for highly speculative, poorly researched prediction pieces! I spoke with some of the other *GamePro* editors and cobbled together a list of three top predictions for 2008. Right? Wrong? You be the judge.

PREDICTION #1: An Xbox 360 "slim" hardware redesign.

We know one thing for sure: The Xbox 360 hardware pretty much sucks. The Red Ring of Death issue has plagued millions of Xbox 360 owners and cost Microsoft some \$1 billion in repair costs. So it stands to reason that Microsoft needs a new, cheaper, more reliable Xbox 360 model, and quick. I'm expecting a slimmer size, smaller 65nm CPU technology for reduced heat, and possibly (please!) an internal power supply. Wi-Fi would be great, too, but HD DVD support is out of the question at this point—it's a doomed format.

PREDICTION #2: Microsoft will buy Epic Games for \$1 billion this summer.

Epic Games is one of the few highly regarded indie developers (Valve is another), partly for their games but mostly for their Unreal engine technology. Microsoft has lots of cash on hand, and in buying Epic, could collect royalty rights for Unreal tech across other platforms (meaning, they'd actually make money on PS3 game sales). Given Epic's tight partnership with Microsoft, along with widespread use of the Unreal engine, and this move makes a lot of sense, particularly in light of EA's Pandemic/BioWare merger well as the Activision/Vivendi shocker.

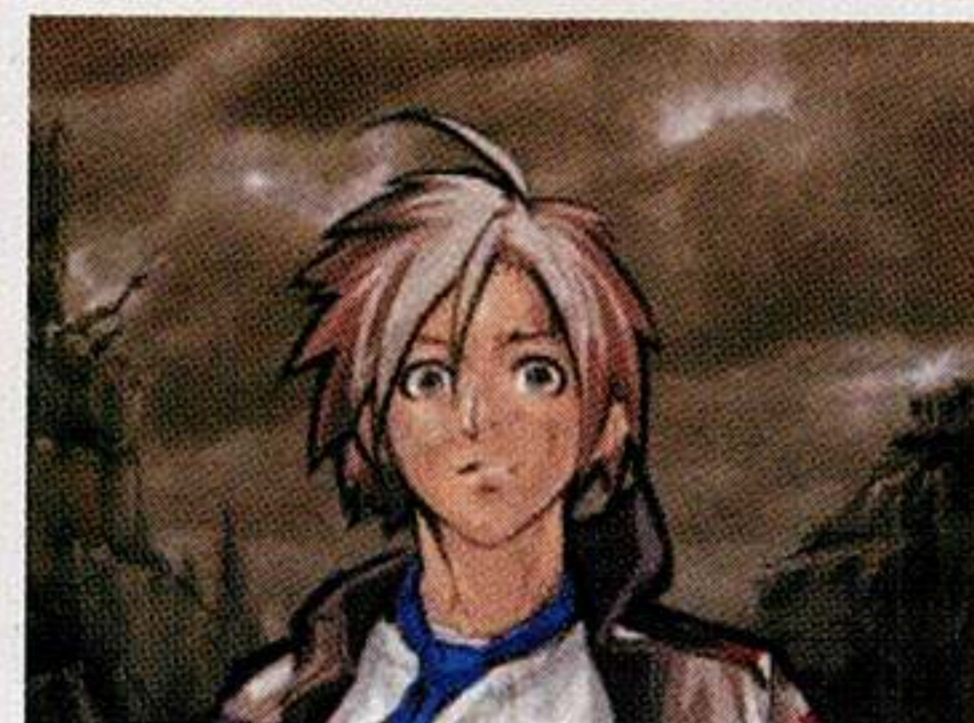
PREDICTION #3: Smash Bros. Brawl a smash hit; its online multiplayer component? Not so much.

Gamers will go ga-ga over the upcoming Super Smash Bros. Brawl, with its expansive all-star roster and fast-and-furious fights. But Nintendo's less-than-stellar Wii online service will lead to headaches for Brawlers looking to take their game online, putting a dent into what could (and should) have been a big boost to Nintendo's struggling foray into the online space.

Travis Moses
Assistant Editor

ADVANCE WARS

DAYS OF RUIN



"FEATURES LIKE WI-FI PLAY WITH VOICE CHAT, AND MAP CREATION AND SHARING REMAKE THE TITLE WHILE KEEPING ITS ADDICTIVE STRATEGY GAMEPLAY."

- JOYSTIQ.COM

"ADVANCE WARS: DAYS OF RUIN LOOKS TO BE THE MOST EXCITING ENTRY IN THE SERIES SINCE ITS INTRODUCTION. ANY FANS OF PREVIOUS INSTALLMENTS SHOULD FIND AN INCREDIBLE NEW DEPTH WITH THE TITLE, AS WELL AS THE MATURITY THAT A GAME ABOUT WAR SHOULD HAVE."

- UGO.COM

"IT MAY BE A BIG CHANGE, BUT ADVANCE WARS: DAYS OF RUIN IS A WELCOME ADDITION TO THE SERIES AND ONE THAT SHOULD BREATHE NEW LIFE INTO THE GAME."

- KOTAKU.COM

The battle begins anew in *Advance Wars: Days of Ruin*. Set amid a world in chaos and featuring a grittier look, new characters, online Nintendo® Wi-Fi Connection battles and map trading, the latest installment in the Advance Wars series provides intense strategy battles anywhere you go. The days of ruin are upon us!

AdvanceWars.com

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Language
Mild Violence

TUROK



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PLAYSTATION 3



XBOX 360 LIVE

MATURE 17+
M Blood and Gore
Intense Violence
Language
ESRB CONTENT RATING www.esrb.org

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SURVIVE



Word is that Bill Murray and Dan Aykroyd are lending their chops to this long-awaited game. We want to see s'more!

▼ **GHOSTBUSTERS: THE VIDEO GAME** PS3, XBOX 360, WII, PC



▼ **TUROK** PS3, XBOX 360, PC



▼ **TWISTED METAL: HEAD ON: EXTRA TWISTED EDITION** PS2



▼ **TEKKEN 6** ARCADE, PS3



▼ **DEAD SPACE** PS3, XBOX 360



▼ **BROTHERS IN ARMS HELL'S HIGHWAY** PS3, XBOX 360, PC



▼ **CONDEMNED 2: BLOODSHOT** PS3, XBOX 360

OPENING SHOTS



DEVIL MAY CRY 4 PS3, XBOX 360, PC



RACE DRIVER GRID PS3, XBOX 360, PC



Niko is known for his subtle negotiation tactics.

GRAND THEFT AUTO IV PS3, XBOX 360



TOO HUMAN XBOX 360



GOD OF WAR: CHAINS OF OLYMPUS PSP



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ACHIEVING WHAT YOU NEVER
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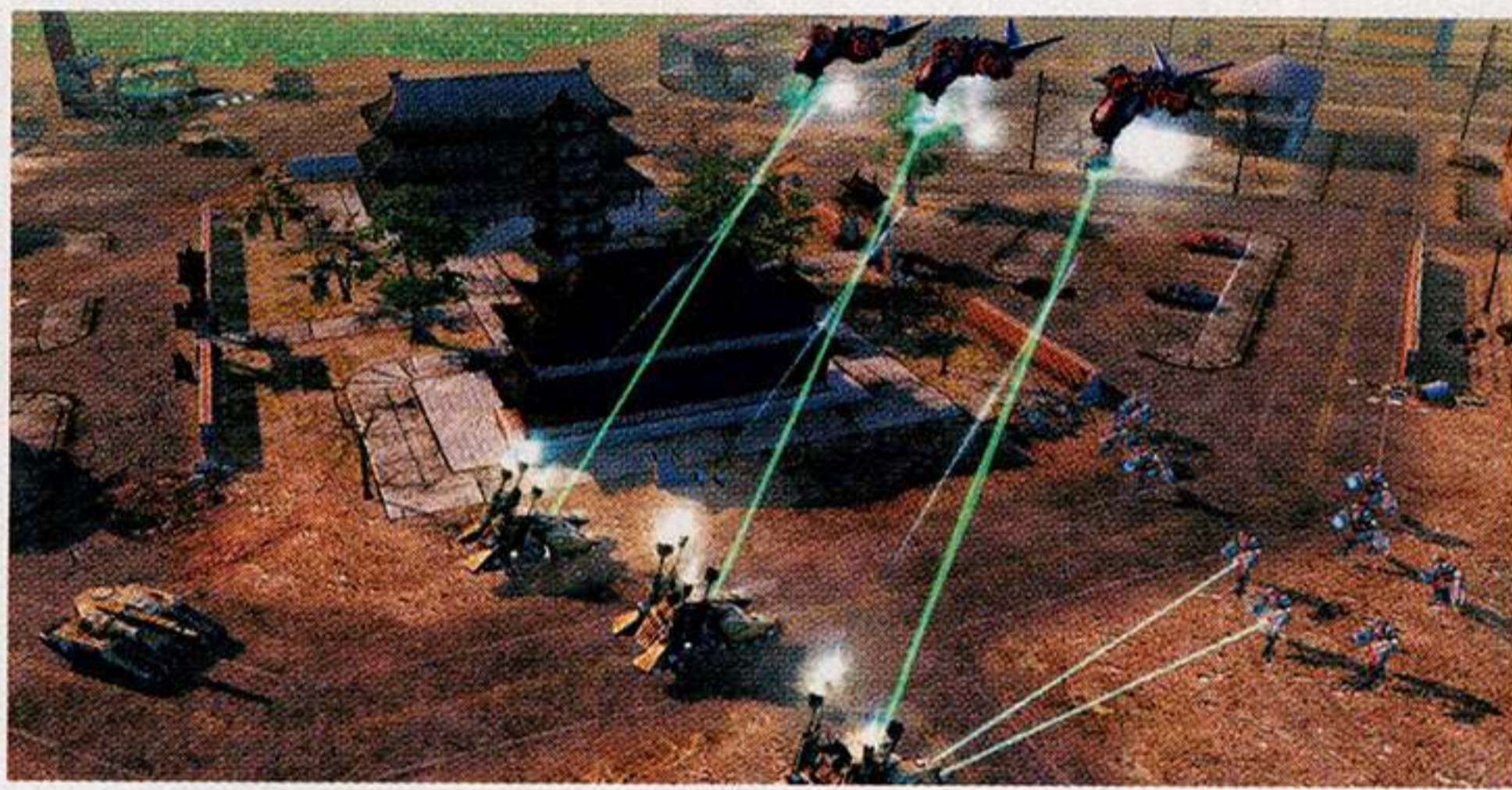
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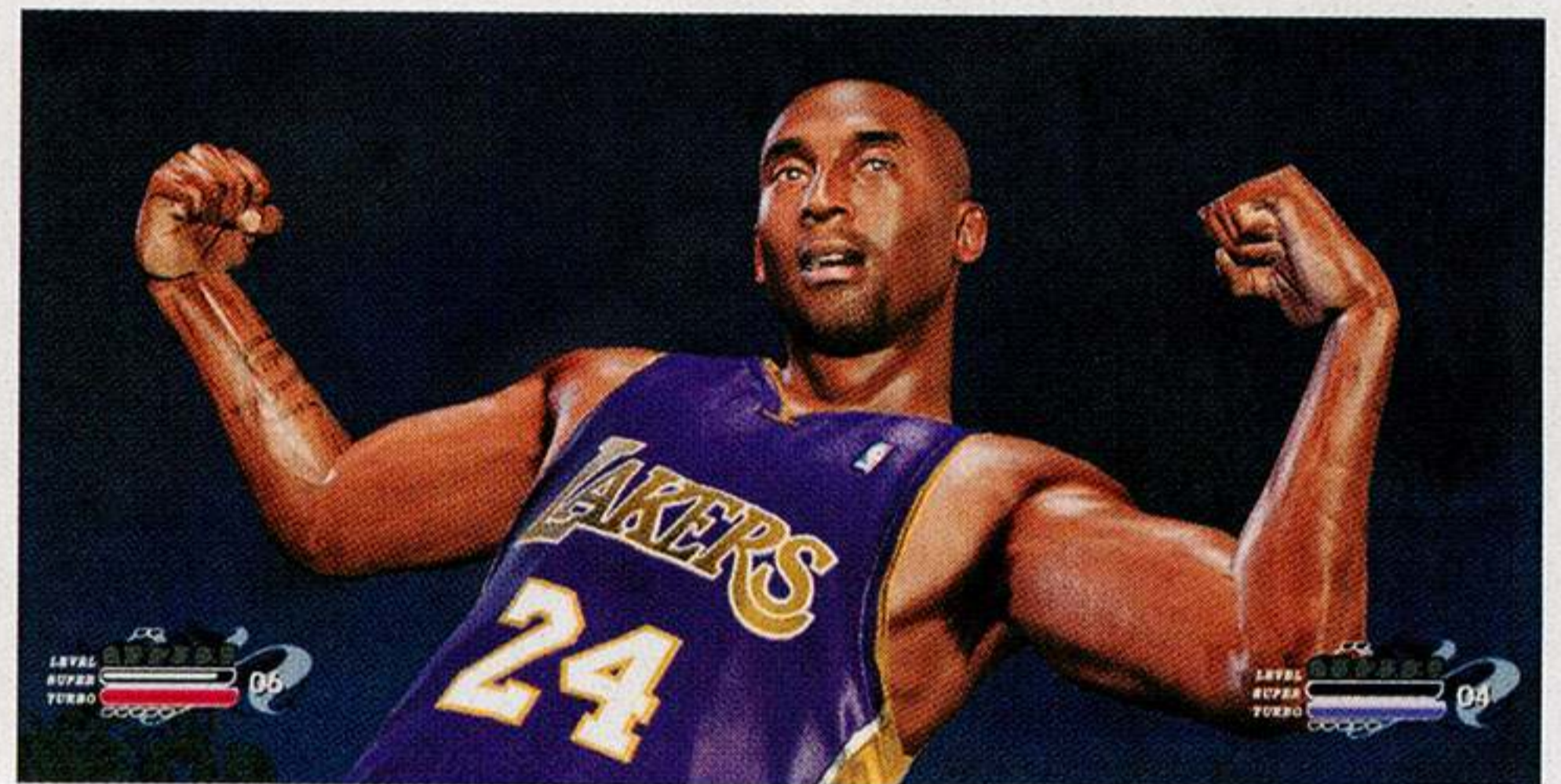


What would happen if a Storm Trooper and Cyrax from Mortal Kombat had a baby? This neo-punk abomination, that's what.

FINAL FANTASY XIII PS3



COMMAND & CONQUER 3: KANE'S WRATH XBOX 360, PC

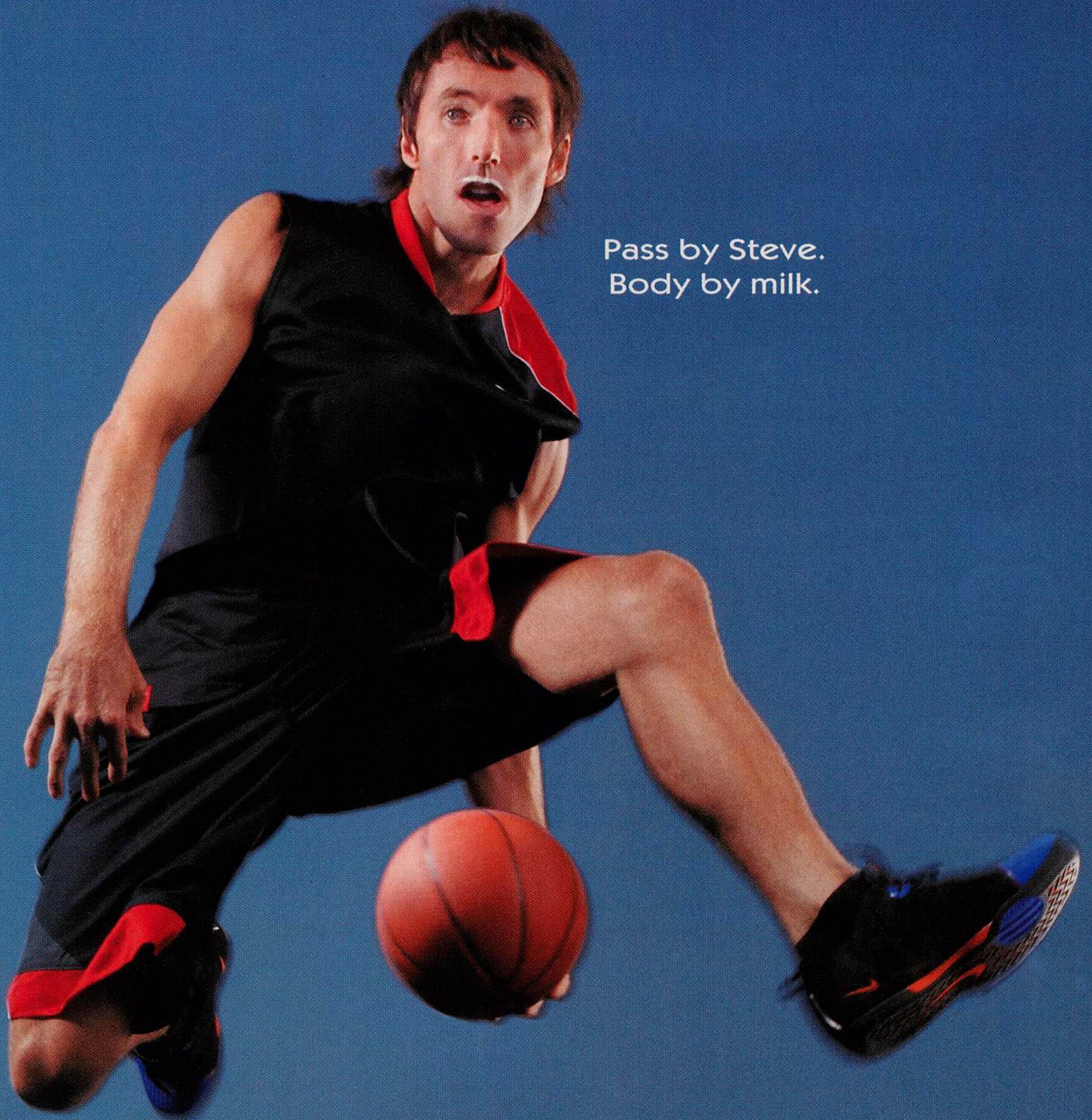


NBA BALLERS: CHOSEN ONE PS3, XBOX 360



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NINJA GAIDEN II XBOX 360



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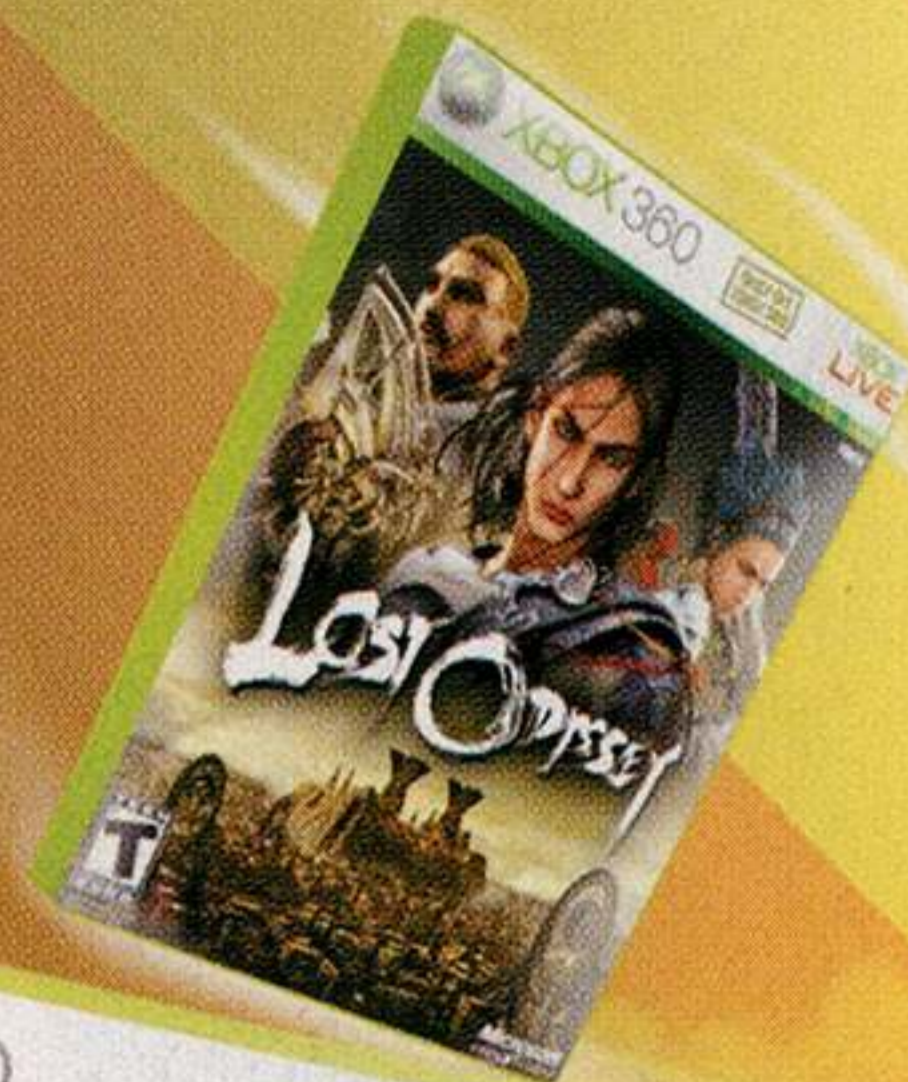


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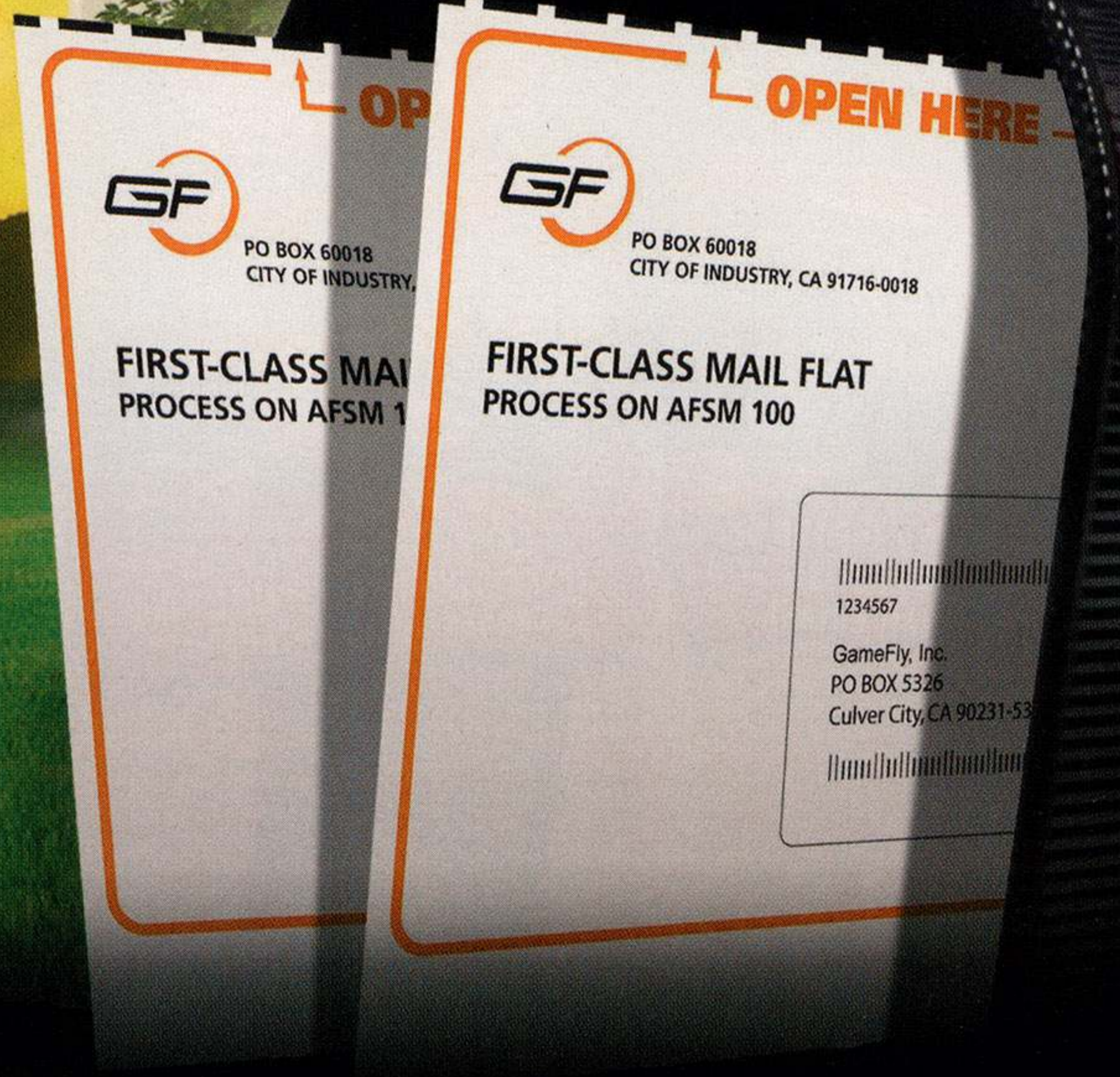
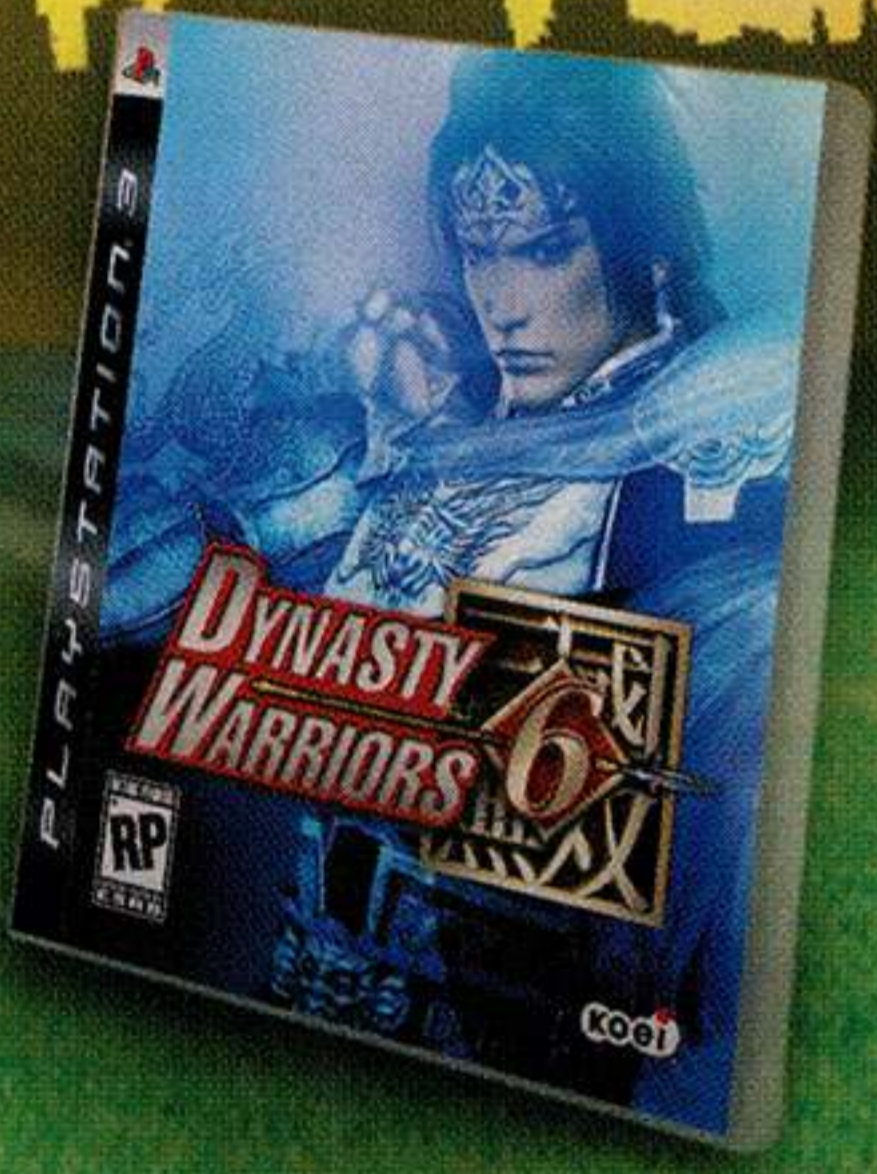
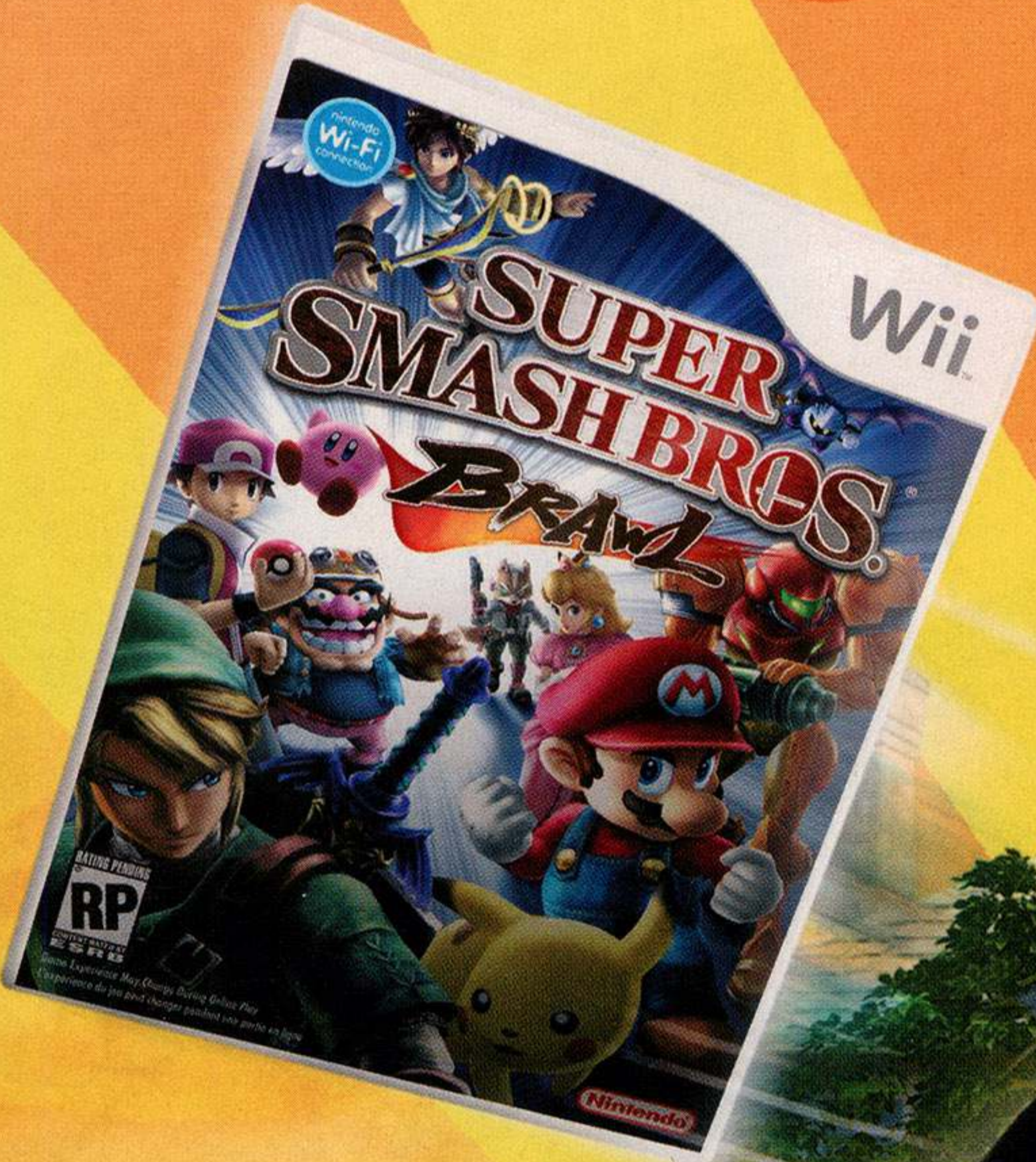
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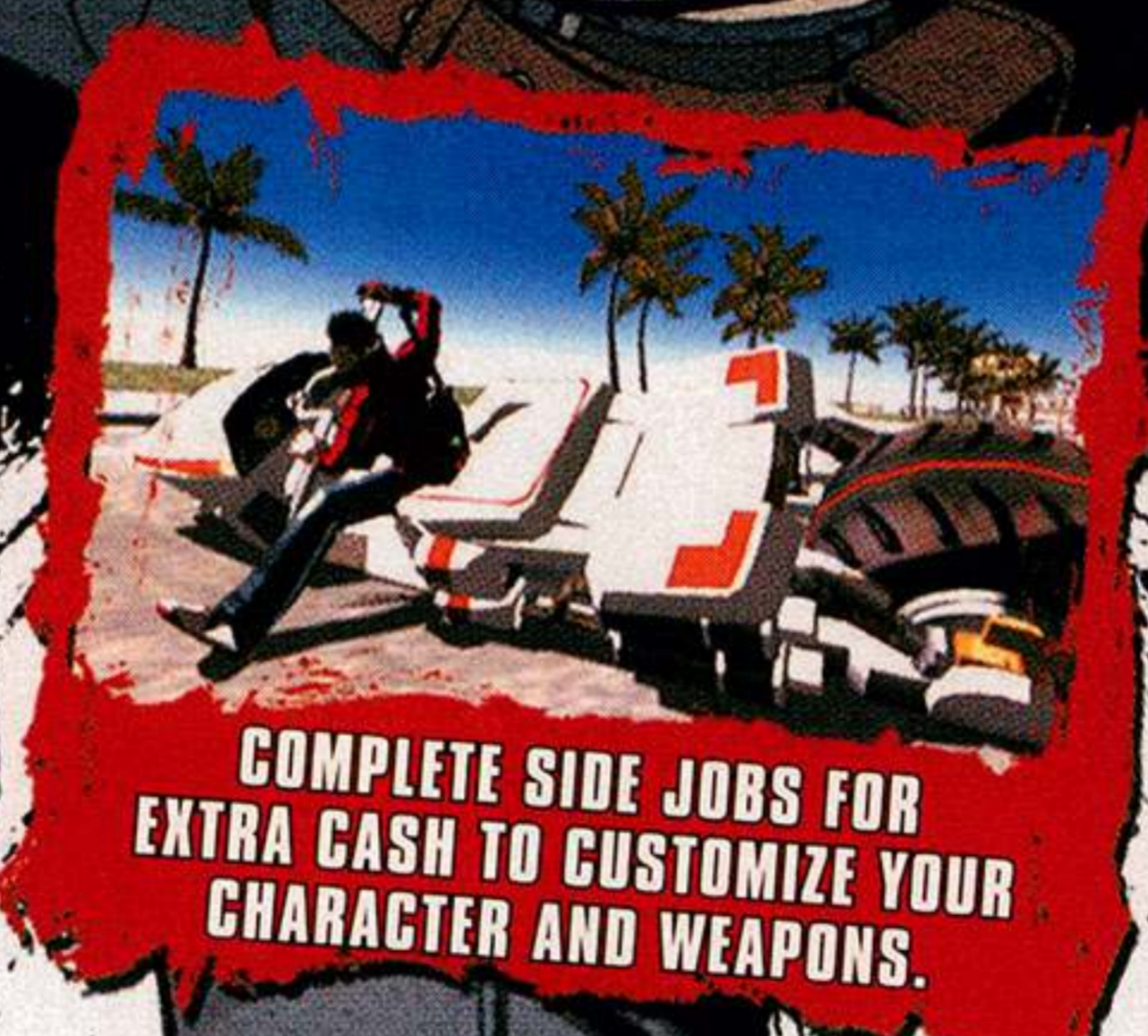


NO MORE HEROES™

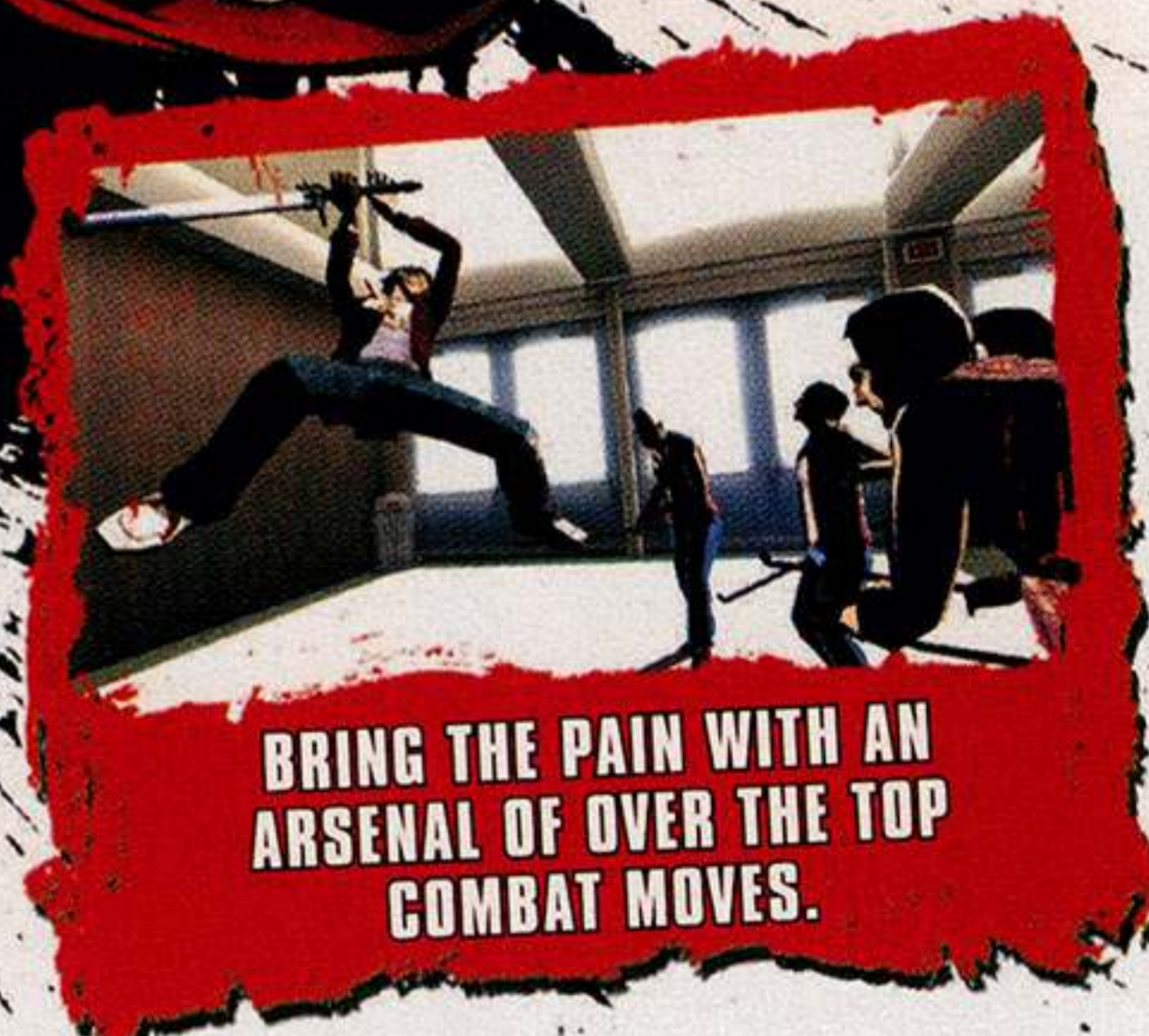
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SPAWN POINT

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INSIDE SPAWN POINT

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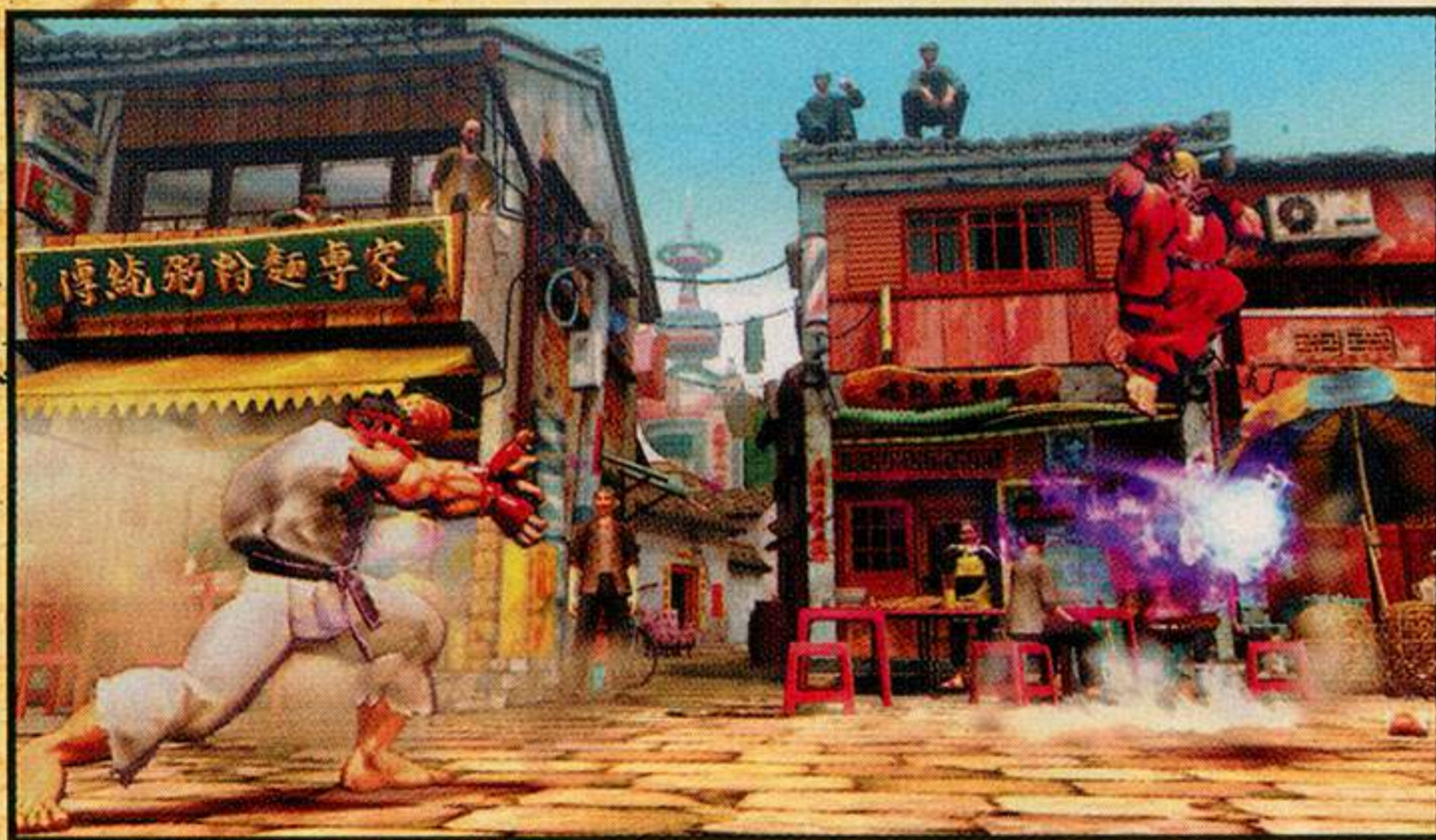


2D or 3D?

After 10 years of remakes and spin-offs, Capcom has finally announced that the fighting juggernaut Street Fighter is well into development on its fourth iteration. Details are scarce, but here's everything we know to date.



Facial expressions dynamically change based on whether your character is attacking or getting punched in the gut.



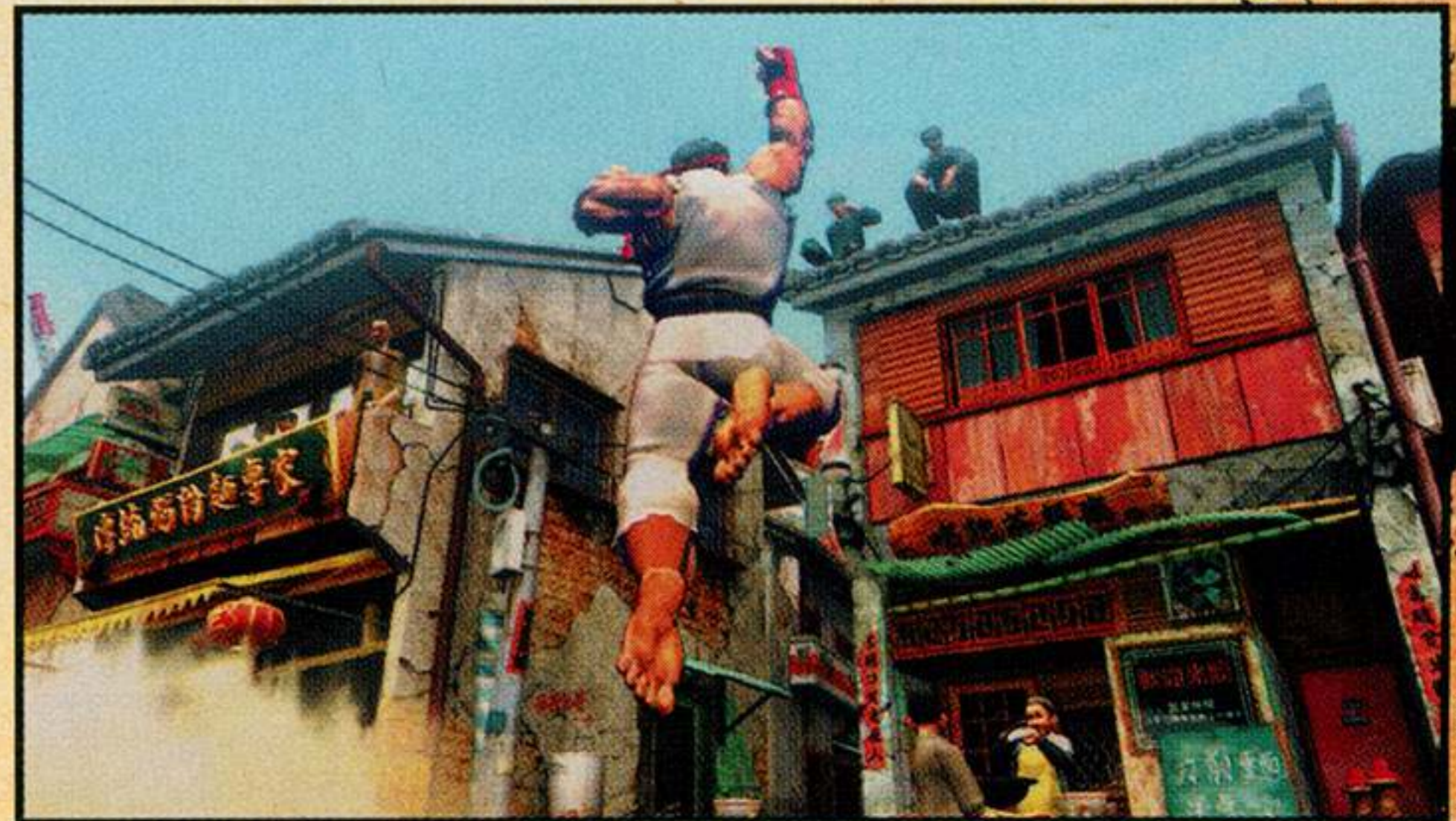
Although the characters and environments are rendered completely in 3D, SFIV remains strictly confined to a 2D fighting plane.



Only four characters have been announced as of press time—Chun-Li, Dhalsim, Ken, and Ryu.



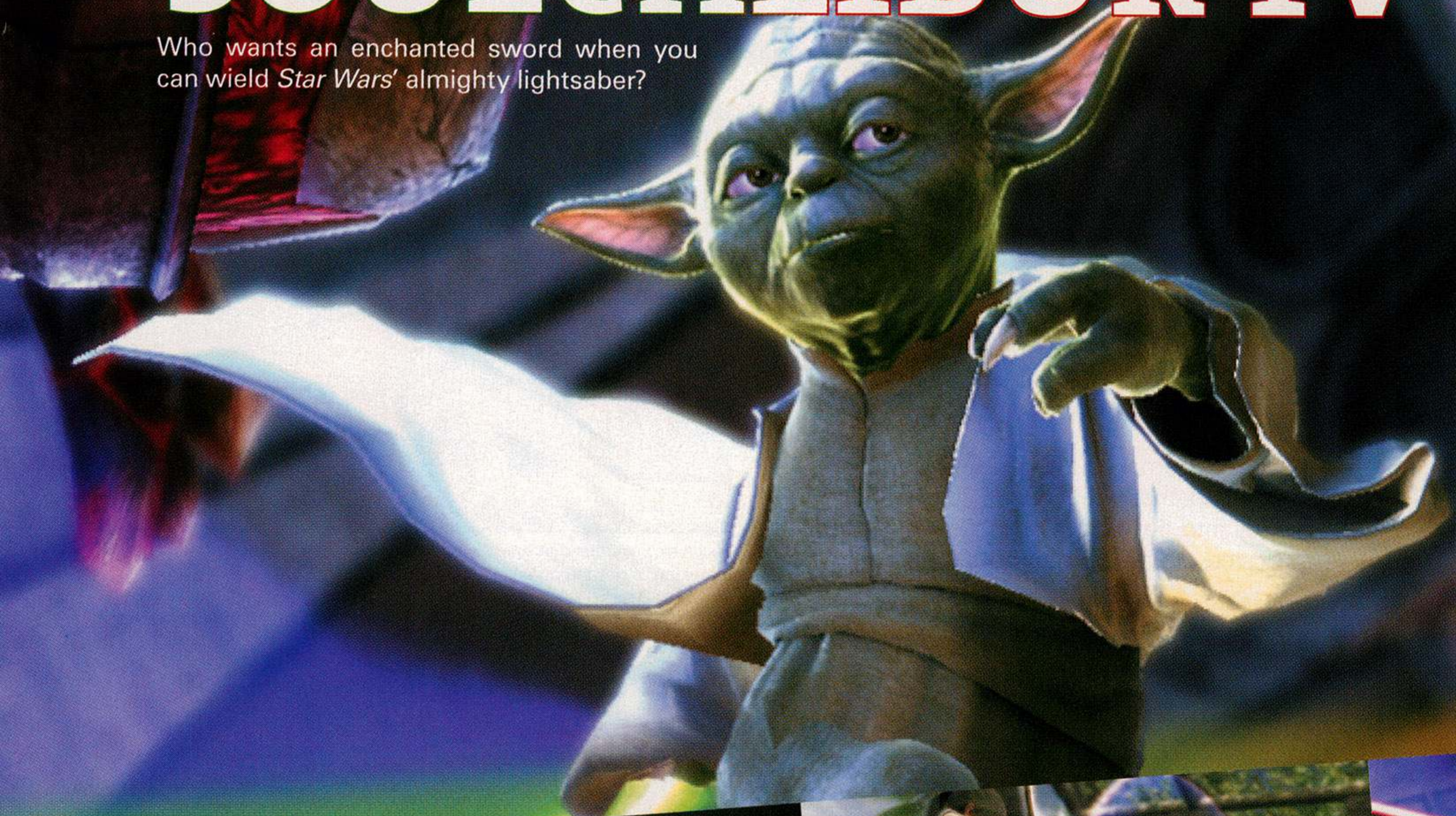
There will be very little to no character customization to retain the iconic look and feel of each character. That means no goofy Tekken hats.



Ryu's Shoryuken Dragon Punch returns in full force, as does the Hadouken Fireball and Hurricane Kick.

STAR WARS INVADES SOULCALIBUR IV

Who wants an enchanted sword when you can wield *Star Wars'* almighty lightsaber?



NAMCO BANDAI AND LucasArts unveiled a Soulcalibur surprise: Jedi Master Yoda and Sith Lord Darth Vader will appear as playable characters in the new-gen weapon brawler Soulcalibur IV.

Details are scarce, but what we do know is that Yoda will be an exclusive character in the Xbox 360 version of Soulcalibur IV, while Darth Vader will appear only on the PlayStation 3. Whoa! Platform-exclusive fighters are nothing new for the Soul series, however. In 2003,

Soulcalibur II launched on three different platforms with as many different exclusive characters: PS2 owners got Tekken's Heihachi, Xbox got Todd McFarlane's Spawn, and the GameCube got The Legend of Zelda's Link.

But Soulcalibur IV's exclusive characters are rather inspired. And no matter which version you choose, both promise to play identically. Check out our "Moves Wish List" on the opposite page.



MOVES WISH LIST

We've got some high expectations for Yoda and Vader in *Soulcalibur IV*. Can the reality live up to our hopes?

YODA (XBOX 360)

Force Levitate: Yoda can lift entire starships with his Force powers; why not an opponent? This move could provide a huge opening for follow-up combos.

Force Push: A Jedi standby, this power pushes opponents backwards and knocks them off their feet. Force Push could serve as a useful counter attack or parrying move.

Spin Attack: Last seen in *Attack of the Clones* and *Revenge of the Sith*, and used to powerful effect against Count Dooku, this controversial move sees Yoda zipping around like Sonic the Hedgehog on speed.

DARTH VADER (PS3)

Force Choke: A D. Viddy classic, this levitating choke hold could stun an opponent for several seconds, opening him up to a megaton Sith combo or other devastating attack.

Lightsaber Throw: Used against Luke in *Return of the Jedi*, Vader hurls his trademark red lightsaber at his helpless target, and then uses the Force to pull it back into his hand.

Sith Lightning: The most powerful Sith power (used by the evil Emperor and Count Dooku) from the films, these would slow down and damage nearby opponents.

GAMEPRO FORTUNE TELLER

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SUCKS OR RULES

Changing the world, one insult at a time

Before ninjas and zombies overrun the Earth in 2012, their rise to power begins with two of 2008's most-anticipated games.



NINJA GAIDEN II
Release Date: Mid 2008 // Xbox 360



LEFT 4 DEAD
Release Date: Spring 2008 // Xbox 360, PC

Team Ninja has big plans for Ryu Hayabusa this year, with a new handheld and console title on the way. Having remade the Xbox classic eight ways from Sunday, Itagaki and company are finally working on a true sequel to the brutal ninja bloodfest. While it may not be deviating too far from the original's winning formula, Polygonus can't resist the charms of new weapons, refined fighting mechanics, and the copious loss of limbs and blood.

VERDICT: Polygonus knows a few good Gods himself, and Ryu promises to be the new God of War. With an arsenal of more sharp blades than a Renaissance faire, this is one ninja who will annihilate the competition brutally.

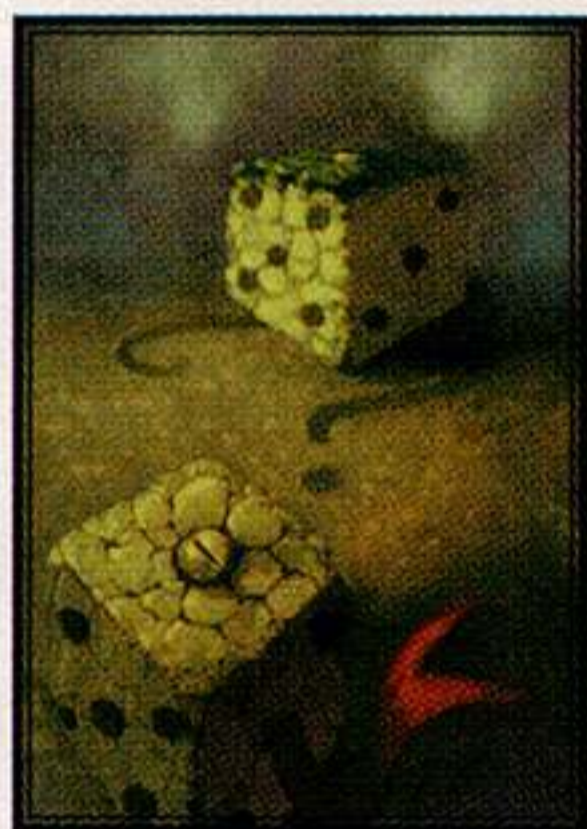
CARD: The King



Polygonus is baffled. Doesn't Capcom have the market cornered on zombie shooters? Apparently not, because this first-person shooter of the dead is coming from two companies that know their weaponry—Turtle Rock Studios and Valve. While the act of exploding a zombie's brains via shotgun will never get old, Polygonus wonders if the A.I. in this game will be up to snuff. You can't have brain-dead A.I. in a game, even if it is filled with brain-dead creatures.

VERDICT: Remember that Land of the Dead FPS? Polygonus does, and it haunts him to this day. Trust Polygonus, sometimes knowing all can be a curse. Looks like we'll have to wait and see how Left 4 Dead pans out.

CARD: The Gambler



SUCKS

Xbox Originals. Without any added achievement functionality, Xbox originals boils down to paying \$15 to download games you can find elsewhere for a few bucks. Add in emulation artifacts like texturing problems, flickering, and ear-killing bursts of static audio, and you can count us out. **SUCKS**

Guitar Hero 3. The Wii version of Guitar Hero III is stuck with mono playback of classic stereo tracks. We might listen to our music a bit too loud, but we still know a nasty screw-up when we hear one. **SUCKS**

Singapore. The excellent Mass Effect was briefly banned on the island nation for offering the possibility of non-explicit lesbian sex with an alien character. Censors luckily came to their senses before the game launched. **SUCKS**

RULES

Deus Ex 3. Eidos's new Montreal studio will develop the third iteration of one of the most highly regarded science fiction games of the last ten years. Hopefully everyone learned enough from Deus Ex 2's disappointing showing to avoid a repeat performance. **RULES**

Shatner's Shammy. In World of Warcraft's latest TV advertisements, Mr. T waxes proud about his Night Elf Mohawk, and William Shatner's Tauren commands the forces of nature. Finally, game commercials that make us giggle rather than groan. **RULES**

NiGHTS: Storm Chaser. Sega's NiGHTS: Journey of Dreams will use the Wii's Weather Channel information to control the climate of a secondary "A-Life" sandbox mode. Now you've got a reason to root for natural disasters. **RULES**

What's **your** opinion?
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GAMES TO DIE FOR

Our current obsessions



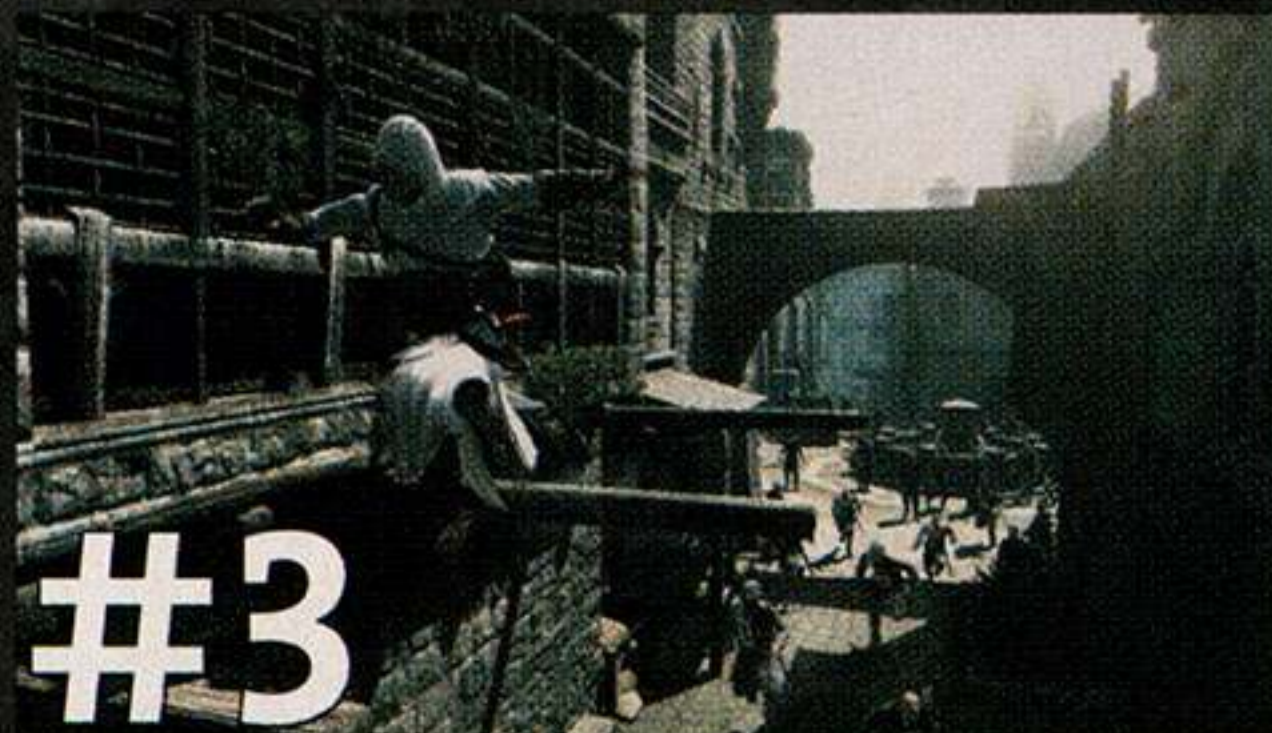
#1

CALL OF DUTY 4 (PS3, XBOX 360, PC)
More than just a stellar game and a must-buy, this is as close to perfection as you're likely to see from a first-person shooter.



#2

MASS EFFECT (XBOX 360)
BioWare's science fiction epic is an expansive and absorbing universe of exploration, intrigue, and real-time combat.



#3

ASSASSIN'S CREED (PS3, XBOX 360, PC)
So skillfully combines tense stealth, brutal combat, and open-world exploration that you'll actually grieve a bit when it's over.

DESTROY ALL HUMANS!

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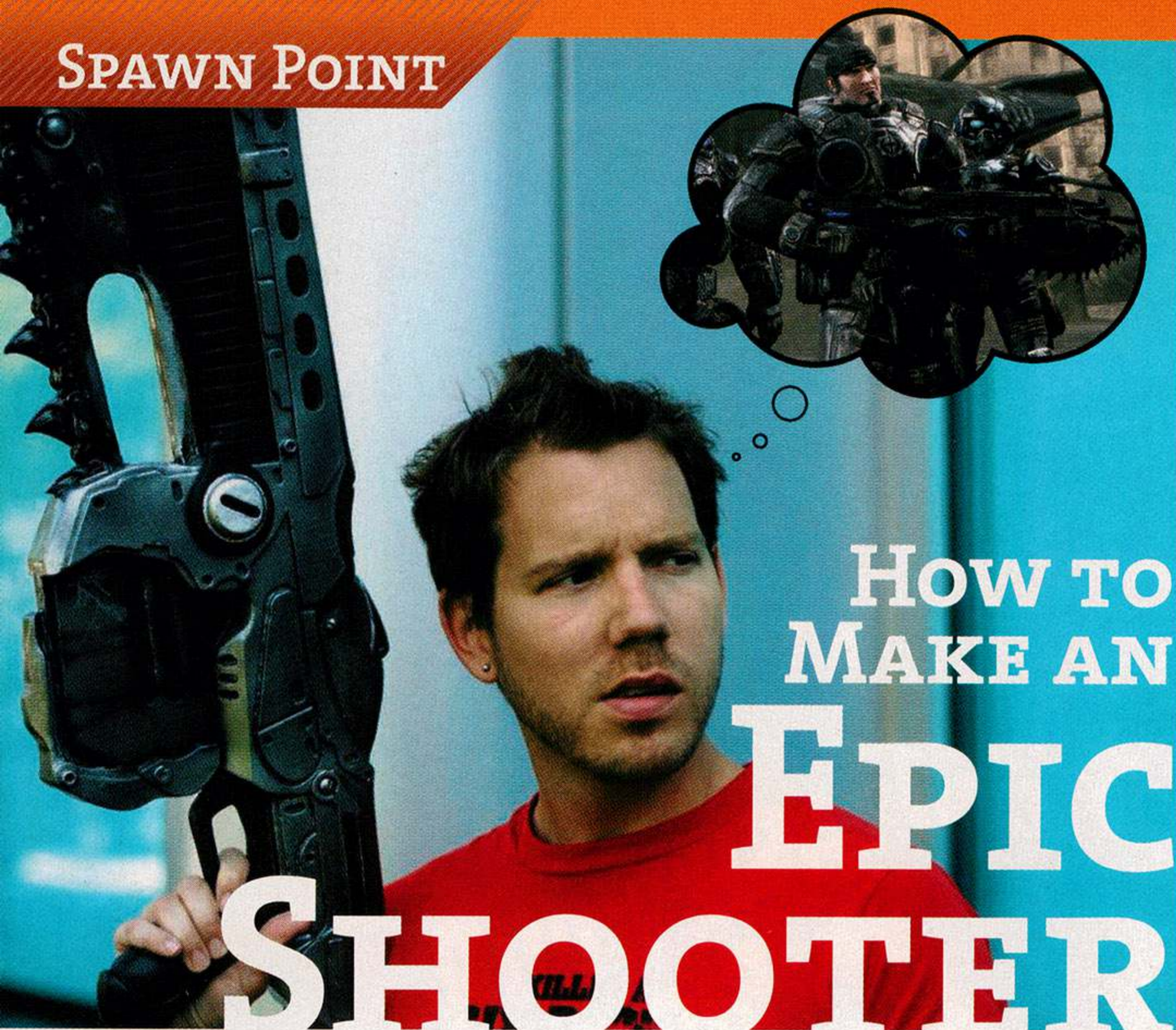
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Available March 2008
www.DestroyAllHumansGame.com

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HOW TO MAKE AN EPIC SHOOTER

Lead game designer Cliff Bleszinski (CliffyB.) and Epic president Michael Capps discuss the anatomy of a good first-person shooter and the future of Gears of War.

GamePro: What is your philosophy for making a good shooter?

CliffyB. (top): My core philosophy is to make sure the moment-to-moment gameplay flows. Make sure that when your character moves, he has a sense of weight. And that when he shoots, it feels interesting and compelling. Also, what kind of muzzle flash is coming off the gun? How does the lighting look that reflects off the character? The blood that comes off the enemy and the way that enemy reacts when he is tagged by bullets. If you get that right, everything else kind of falls into place and players will want to keep hitting that fire button. Where you go from there, objectives, storyline, characters, graphics, and pacing, all of that will eventually fall into place with enough iteration, time, and polish.

GP: What's next for Gears of War?

CB: Well, Gears is out on PC. We're excited about that. The initial impressions were great and the movie is being worked on. I can't really disclose any future plans at the moment, unfortunately.



GP: We asked CliffyB. the same thing, but what is your philosophy for making a good shooter?



Mike Capps (above): There are a couple of keys to it and Cliff is the best guy to ask since he's done it so many times, but primarily it has to be fun to shoot guns. You know we'll give you the gun, and if you can just sit in a room shooting the walls to see the explosions and the decals and have fun doing it, then we made a good shooter. It has to be fun to die, too. I love it in Gears when you die. Your head shoots up in a fountain of blood or you are sawed in half. Then after that is polish. That has always been our secret. Take a game that ships in six months and spend those six months polishing it. That seems to work very well for us.

GP: What advice would you give Microsoft with the Xbox 360?

MC: They should convince us to do a sequel to Gears; I think that would be really good! [Laughs] I think the Xbox does amazingly smart things. PS3 is a super powerful platform, but the tools came a little later than some would have liked. So it was difficult in the beginning, but those guys are going to amazing things, too.

THE BIG 5

We sound off...



1 SUPER MARIO GALAXY SETS RATING RECORD

Nintendo's moustached mascot dethroned Ocarina of Time as the highest rated game of all time, averaging an astonishing 97.8 percent across 35 different review sources.

THE VERDICT: Say what you will about Nintendo's third-party quality control, but its first-party development track record is as good as it gets.

2 XBOX 360 OUTSELLS PS3 IN JAPAN

Microsoft's console efforts have long struggled in the land of the rising sun, but the tide continues to turn on Sony's cherished home turf.

THE VERDICT: Looks like Microsoft's efforts to woo Japanese developers to its concave console are starting to pay some serious dividends.

3 GOD OF WAR III CONFIRMED FOR PS3

Sony finally officially announced that God of War III is in development for the PlayStation 3 at Sony Santa Monica, the same studio that crafted the first two.

THE VERDICT: The last chapter was the most graphically stunning adventure to grace the PS2. Let's hope the third installment can live up to our stratospheric expectations (fingers crossed).

4 ATARI QUILTS GAME DEVELOPMENT

As part of its restructuring, Atari will no longer develop any software, and instead focus exclusively on publishing.

THE VERDICT: As poorly run as Atari has been over the years, it's still upsetting to see a one-time industry juggernaut reduced to an intellectual property fire sale.



5 \$399 PS3 GOES ON SALE

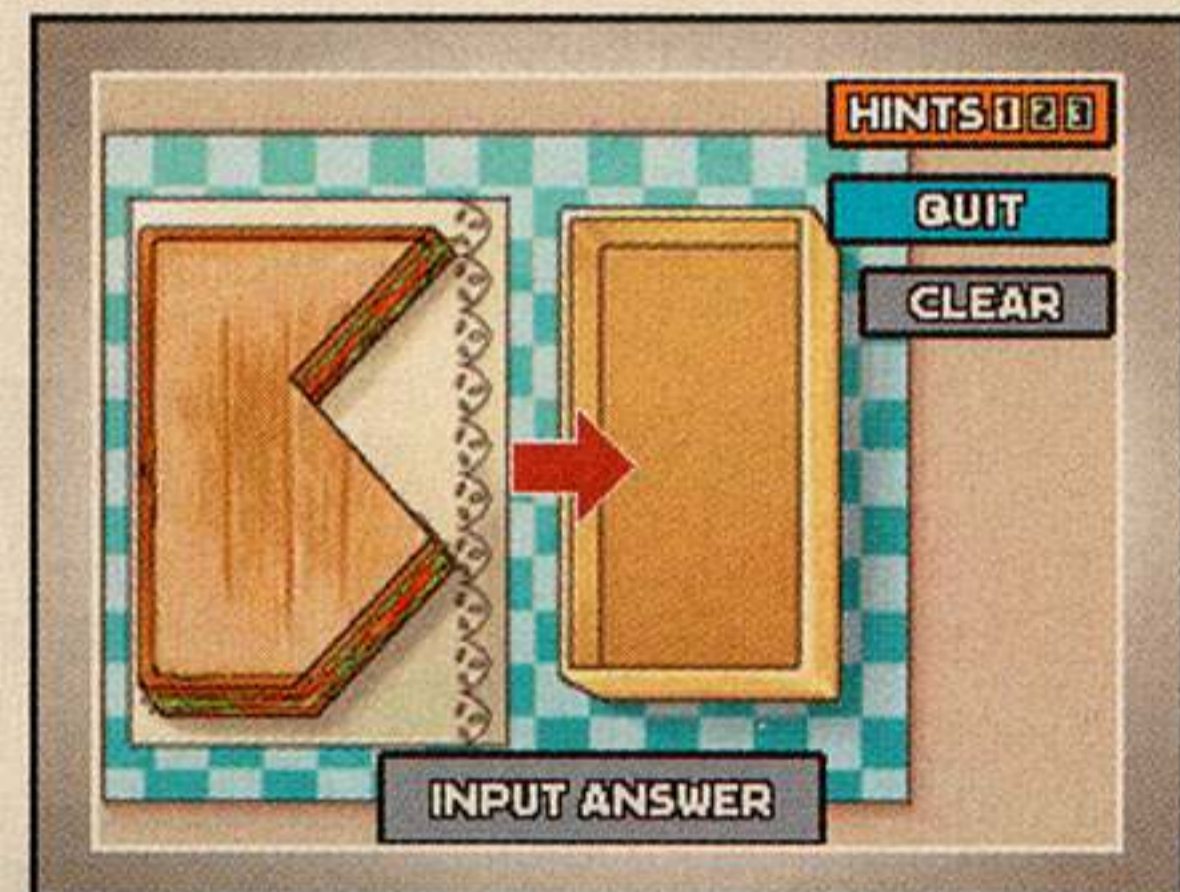
A slightly stripped-down 40GB version of Sony's next-generation platform hit the streets, marking the second price cut in less than a year.

THE VERDICT: That's still \$50 more than an Xbox 360. It seems unlikely this move could create the holiday sales dogfight Sony is presumably looking for.



Using scraps left over from your breakfast, you've managed to cobble together a rather oddly shaped sandwich.

How many times must you cut the sandwich in order to make it fit neatly in the container?



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PROFESSOR LAYTON and the CURIOUS VILLAGE™

Solve your way in.

MICROSOFT THINKS THAT PS3 HOME IS "QUESTIONABLE"

The head honcho of Microsoft Game Studios talks to *GamePro* about PlayStation Network functionality, apologizes for the Xbox 360 Red Rings of Death, and clarifies the post-EA future of Mass Effect.



GamePro: If you were offered a million-billion dollars to work with Sony on the PS3, what advice would you offer them?

Shane Kim: Well, I'm not going to answer that. You can't buy my loyalty [laughs]. No, price is a big one and, clearly, Sony bet on Blu-ray when the overall HD movie playback market is not moving towards a standard. And I just don't believe in what they are doing with Home.

First off, promising it by holiday 2007 when they just announced it at E3. I mean we had over five years of development on Xbox, so we understand how complex it is to do something like that. Then to layer on top of that this avatar-based world. It's a very ambitious vision and whether or not it's the right vision is questionable.

GP: Have you ever had an Xbox 360 Red Ring and die on you?

SK: No, I can honestly say that.

GP: What do you say to people who have had multiple Xbox 360s fail on them?

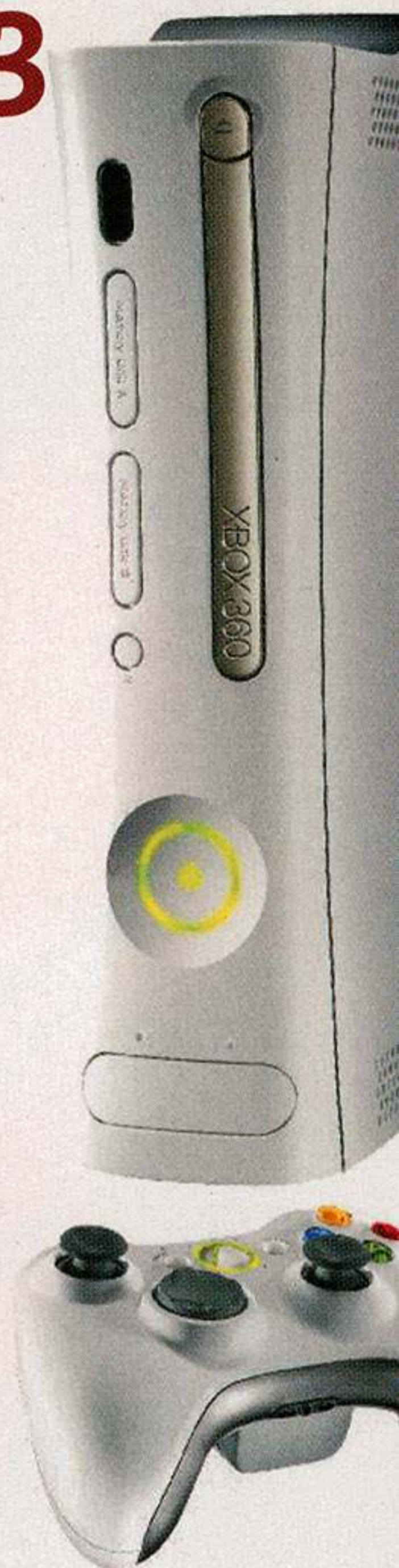
SK: We're really sorry. I don't know what else to say. There's no way you'll ever get me or the company poo-pooing that, be-

cause clearly that's just unacceptable. I think to our credit we stepped up in a really big way. And we still have work to do because part of that is not just the hardware but the investment in customer service and getting people their consoles faster. But some people, especially those with original Xbox 360s, may still run into a problem and we've got to continue to take care of that. The good news is we're confident with addressing the vast majority of those issues and we're seeing better performance from newer Xbox 360s.



GP: Mass Effect was a big hit for Microsoft Game Studios, but the game's creator, BioWare, was recently acquired by EA. Does that mean MGS won't publish Mass Effect 2?

SK: We still plan on publishing the Mass Effect property for the foreseeable future. You could imagine a world where [that could change due to EA owning BioWare], but we've been pretty clear that we are committed to Mass Effect; we've invested a lot in Mass Effect and not just from a development standpoint but a marketing standpoint. And I think EA understands that our intention is to continue publishing Mass Effect. I also think that EA had other reasons for buying BioWare and Pandemic besides just Mass Effect.



Versus Mode

Two classic characters, one classic brawl.



VS

Mario
(Super Mario Galaxy)

First Impressions: Donkey Kong (1981)

Key Abilities: High jumps, gymnastic flips, and special hats

Offense: Ground pounds, spins, punches, and fireballs

Weak Points: Princess Peach, fattening pastries, and collecting stars

Secret Shame: Addicted to performance-enhancing mushrooms

Sonic
(Sonic & the Secret Rings)

First Impressions: Sonic the Hedgehog (1991)

Key Abilities: Ludicrous speed, spin dash, and Super Sonic

Offense: Spin and homing attacks

Weak Points: Amy Rose, water, and his own recent 3D games

Secret Shame: Spends thousands each month on fur-care products

OUTCOME:

Once upon a time, Mario's idea of weaponry was fireballs of questionable origin. He's since gone the water gun and melee spin route and is not in an enviable position when Sonic tears towards him in a spiky ball that closely resembles a blue circular saw. Luckily for him, this confrontation's taking place on a tiny planet with not much in the way of gravity, leading Sonic and

his considerable velocity to hurtle off into the cold vacuum of space without so much as a catchphrase uttered.

DECISION: Mario >>>



This is Vince Young.

Wireless Sports Updates

Of course Vince Young is into football. After all, he did win a college championship and is currently a starting pro quarterback. So you know he keeps up on everything happening in the league on his phone's MEdia™ Net home page.

Ringtones

As fast as he is on the field, he's even faster off it. Vince is always switching up his ringtone for the latest hip-hop track he's gotten stuck in his head. Luckily, he's got over 3 million to choose from with AT&T Mobile Music.

Picture Messaging

Vince travels for work. A lot. So he likes to keep in touch with his mother and friends back home. And with unlimited picture messaging on his MEdia™ Max Unlimited plan, he saves a lot doing it.

Me/Charity

Most people don't know that Vince isn't just about football. He's also a volunteer teacher who's working to make sure every kid has access to the technology that drives today's world.

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att.com/digitalworld



KNOW YOUR...

CRUCIAL PERIPHERALS

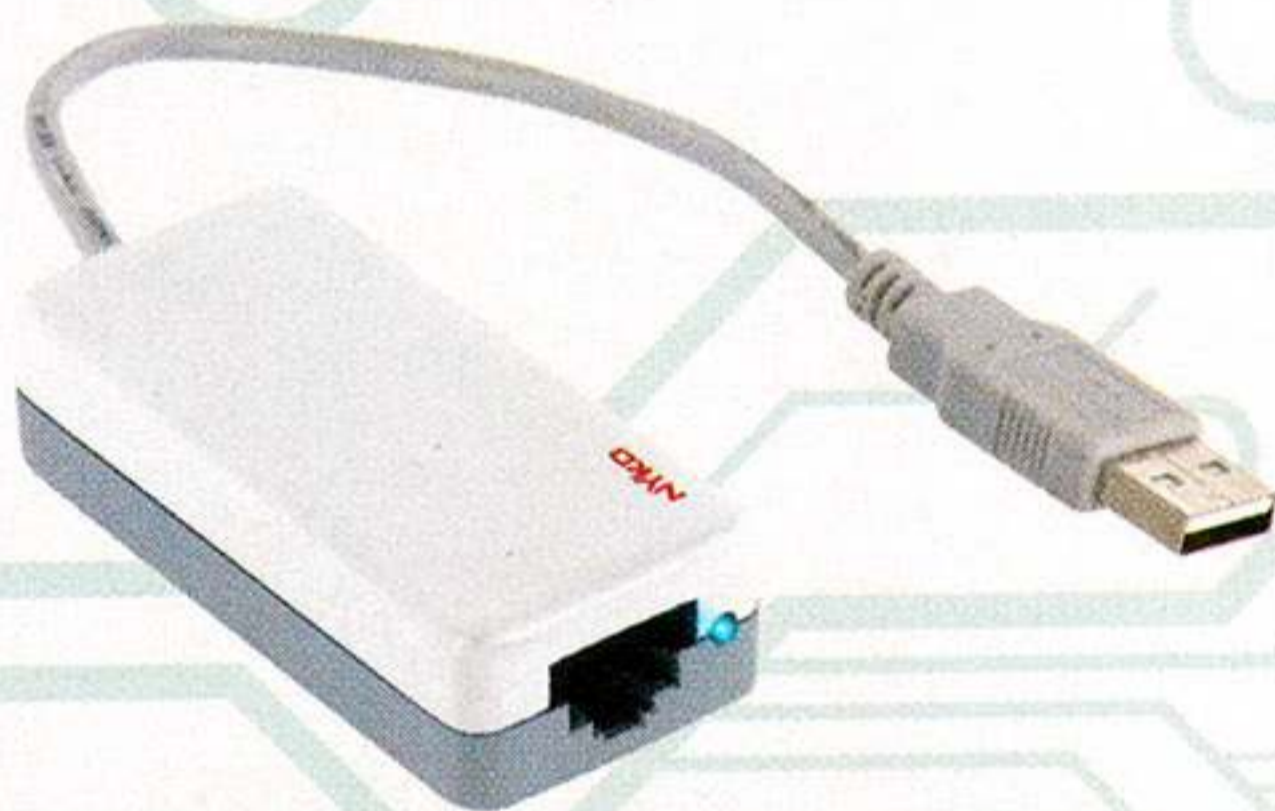


WIRELESS NUNCHUK

It was bound to happen sooner or later. Enjoy the freedom of the Wireless Nunchuk controller attachment for the Nintendo Wii for \$34.99—available in February. An adapter plugs into the bottom of the Wii Remote, and two AAA batteries keep the Wireless Nunchuk alive for up to 30 hours.

PERFECT SHOT

Maybe the Wii Zapper's not the right fit for your light-gun comfort. Check out the Perfect Shot, a one-handed pistol with a tactile spring-loaded trigger. The Perfect Shot offers an ergonomic gun grip for just \$14.99.



NET CONNECT

A hard wire to the Internet is always faster than a wireless connection, and you don't have to deal with frustrating WEP keys and passcodes. Unlike Nintendo's USB network adapter for the Wii, which is only available online, Nyko's Net Connect is available in most major retail outlets for \$24.99.



CHARGE BASE 2

Let's face it; charging a PS3 controller with out-of-the-box USB cables is a major hassle. If you've got the extra desk space, try the Charge Base 2 for the PS3. The controllers charge faster and things stayed organized when you eliminate those pesky cables. The Charge Base 2 retails for \$29.99.

Geek Speak 2.0

Big words, small type.

Noob Tube: Slang for any rocket or grenade launcher that allows inexperienced players to nab some easy kills early in their careers.

Ready Up: Used to indicate that you're prepared for play to start. Often heard in online multiplayer lobbies as a plaintive plea for a lone straggler to hit the appropriate button so the match can begin.

KIK: KIK is a misspelled variant of LOL, which is short for "laughing out loud." KIK is often typed on purpose for ironic giggles.

FAMOUS LAST WORDS

OVERHEARD THIS MONTH



"It's the breakthrough we've been anticipating. We've been holding our breath. We've taken so much heat over the year on PlayStation 3. Finally, the turning point has been passed."

Sony CEO **Howard Stringer** on selling over 100,000 PlayStation 3 units in one week.



"I won't say that it would be impossible, but it would be very difficult...the hard disk came in handy and allowed us to have big, open levels with lots of detail."

Naughty Dog co-president **Evan Wells** on why Uncharted: Drake's Fortune would be difficult to port to the Xbox 360.



"Their reputation is not at stake. If it were, we could show how, over the last century, they've been derided for some of the most stupid decisions in censorship history."

Rockstar legal rep **Geoffrey Robertson** on the BBFC's refusal to grant Manhunt 2 certification.



"We're already seeing a big leap in what people are able to do with the PS3 compared to a year ago. And we're going to see just as big a leap between now and the end of 2008."

Insomniac Games Chief Creative Officer **Brian Hastings** in an interview with VideoGamer.com.



"We are always preparing for new hardware so that we can launch whenever we determine we should do so. Scheduling for a fixed launch date four years from today, regardless of future changes in the industry, however, appears to be too inflexible an approach to us."

Nintendo President **Satoru Iwata** at the company's Q3 financial results conference.



IN THE BEGINNING, THERE WAS DARKNESS.

MARCH 2008



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DARKNESSREVEALS.COM



MARK WAHLBERG IS MAX PAYNE

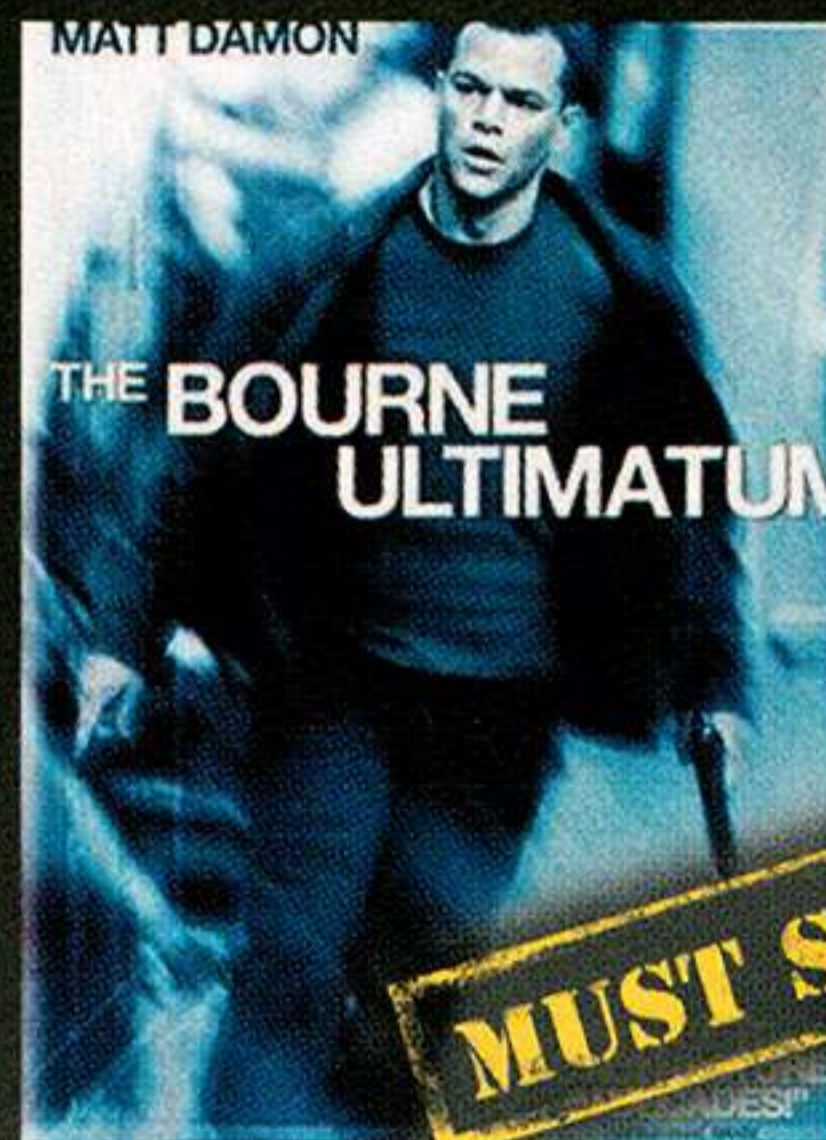
Cameras are set to roll on a Max Payne movie with Oscar-nominated actor Mark Wahlberg as the New York City cop.



Director John Moore (*Behind Enemy Lines*, *The Omen*) and producer Scott Faye (*Venom*, *Alice*) will helm the video game adaptation. Max Payne is expected to begin shooting by February 2008 in Toronto, Canada, which will replicate the snowy New York City landscape of the game world. Screenwriter Beau Thorne has taken the original game and adapted it for the big screen. Unlike Fox's *Hitman* adaptation, which replicated the Mature-rated game's violence on screen with an R rating, Faye said Max Payne will shoot for a PG-13 rating.—**John Gaudiosi**

DVD PRO

Movies for gamers



THE BOURNE ULTIMATUM

The final film in the Robert Ludlum trilogy is a lean and smart action flick that never lets the pace or your pulse drop. Also on HD DVD. TheBourneUltimatum.com
\$29.98

EASTERN PROMISES

David Cronenberg's ruthlessly taut mob thriller plumbs the depths of the mysterious Nikolai Luzhin, and the consequences of his encounter with an innocent midwife who knows too much. Also on HD DVD. FocusFeatures.com
\$29.98

3:10 TO YUMA

Christian Bale and Russell Crowe blaze a violent trail across the old west in this remake based on a classic Elmore Leonard short story. Also on Blu-ray. 310toYumaTheFilm.com
\$29.95

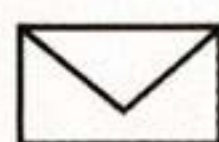


...ear Online...Metal Gear Online...Metal Gear Online... • You know, as good as *Mass Effect* was, there are a lot of ways BioWare can improve upon the inevitable sequel. For starters, I want to see shorter load times, more in-depth equipment mods, and deeper combat. Planetary exploring in the Mako could use a shot in the arm, too. I also hope *Mass Effect 2* goes multiplatform now that EA owns BioWare...

• A special note for PSP owners: put *Patapon* on your "Games to Own" list. It's from the same folks who made the under-appreciated *LocoRoco*. In *Patapon*, you command a tiny army with timed button presses, which pound out a battle rhythm to keep your army marching towards victory. Totally cute and totally cool... • So a little birdie let slip that a certain big sequel for a certain very big game is closer than we think. What game, you ask? Here's a clue: they were the eighth plague... • Though it's months old by this point, the whole *GameSpot*/*Jeff Gerstmann* controversy is still on my mind. We'll likely never know the truth behind Jeff's termination, but the scandal was an overnight sensation on the Internets. And to think: all of this uproar could have been avoided had *GameSpot* simply addressed it directly early on. Instead, the executives waited and waited and waited while the controversy grew and grew. There's a lesson here somewhere, kids... • So our cover story this month on *Rainbow Six Vegas 2* was pure pleasure. It turns out that I was the first—first!—person to play *Vegas 2* outside of the development team at *Ubisoft*. I absolutely loved the original *Vegas* (best shooter of 2006!) and *Vegas 2* ups the ante in a big way. Be sure to check out the full report this issue—this might be the game that makes me drop *Call of Duty 4* for good...



Pwned this month: BioWare, GameSpot, and Atari



e-mail Sid: sid_shuman@gamepro.com

• So some folks want to know what my favorite game of 2007 was. It's a little late, and a little weird, but here goes: *Everyday Shooter* on the PS3. I know, I know, it's a strange choice; a \$10 downloadable arcade game. But I simply thought *Everyday Shooter* was the most creative, engrossing game I've played in years. Of course, *BioShock*, *Mass Effect*, and *Call of Duty 4* are also worthy "Game of the Year" winners in my book... • So I'm not one to kick a company when they're down, but I wasn't terribly impressed by a recent showing of Atari's new *Alone in the Dark*. The developers are shooting for a more "immersive" experience, but opening your jacket to monitor your health and items doesn't look like much fun. Making things worse were some silly puzzles, such as using a boat oar to push aside an electrified wire, or combining scotch tape and hair spray to make a toxic proximity bomb (huh?). Neat ideas, but I'm not convinced. Prove me wrong, Atari... • *Borderlands...Borderlands...Borderla...*

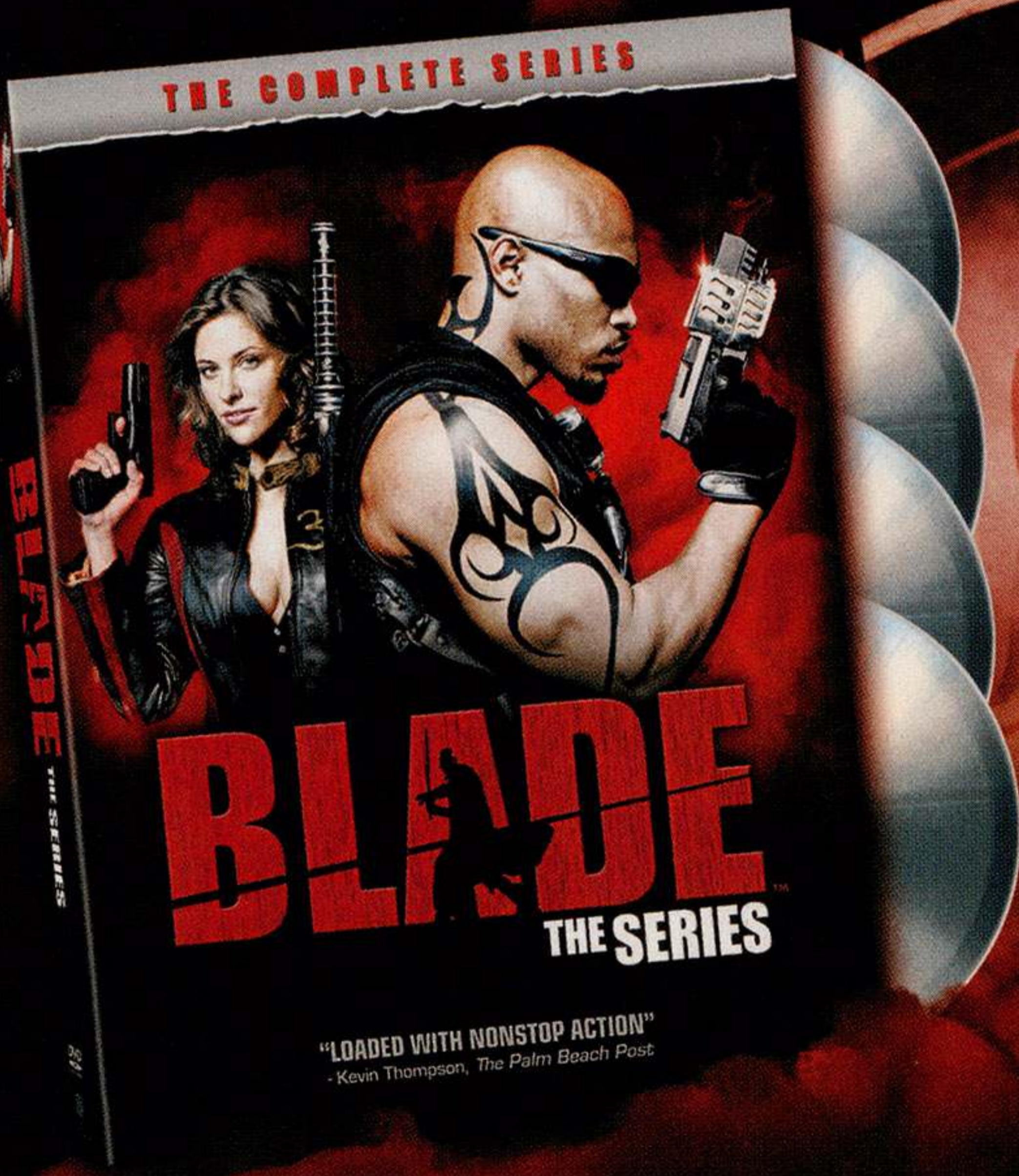
GF MOST WANTED

The GameFly Weekly Top 10 is the leading source of online video game rental data—and the only top 10 list that features what gamers actually want to play.

1. Kingdom Under Fire: Circle of Doom	(Microsoft)	Xbox 360
2. Assassin's Creed	(Ubisoft)	Xbox 360
3. Call of Duty 4: Modern Warfare	(Activision)	Xbox 360
4. Mass Effect	(Microsoft)	Xbox 360
5. Burnout Paradise	(EA Games)	Xbox 360
6. Uncharted: Drake's Fortune	(Sony)	PS3
7. Kane & Lynch: Dead Men	(Eidos Interactive)	Xbox 360
8. Medal of Honor: Airborne	(EA Games)	Xbox 360
9. The Orange Box	(EA Games)	Xbox 360
10. BioShock	(2K Games)	Xbox 360

"It's Bloody Good"

David Bianculli, New York Daily News



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*Episode 12 ("Monsters") presented as originally aired
www.newline.com • www.bladetv.net

NOT RATED

MARVEL

SPIKE
GUT THROBE ACTION



The Force Unleashed is packed full of Force-wielding action.

STAR WARS: THE FORCE UNLEASHED

The Force is strong in the newest—and most brutal—take on *Star Wars*.

PS3 Xbox 360 Wii

■ Developer and Publisher: LucasArts ■ Release Date: Spring 2008

With the movie franchise finished, the Battlefront series thriving, and the LEGO *Star Wars* games now in box-set form, LucasArts needs a new baby. *Star Wars: The Force Unleashed* is the chosen child.

The developers behind *The Force Unleashed* decided to answer our collective prayers and recreate what should be most fun in a *Star Wars* game: using the Force. It's being

completely re-envisioned so that kicking someone's butt with it should be as fun as it sounds. And that's no easy feat—there's a high standard to live up to, especially on the Wii where everyone's been yearning for wicked Saber battles. But LucasArts is putting a hefty amount of attention into making sure *The Force Unleashed* produces something authentic and, more important, fun.

HIGHLIGHTS

- A new *Star Wars* franchise is born, based on kicking butt with the Force.
- Takes place between Episodes III and IV.
- Play as Darth Vader's secret apprentice to hunt down Jedi.

SETTING UP THE STORY

The Force Unleashed takes place between Episodes III and IV, where you'll play as Darth Vader's secret apprentice (not yet named). The overall plot is about redemption, but LucasArts gave us a little hint that we might not necessarily finish the game with the same character. And while it doesn't look like TFU will have a Mass Effect level of choices—this is an action game after all—the story should play a major role in keeping *Star Wars* fans hooked.

Sent by Vader to hunt down Jedi, our first look at the game started in a TIE Fighter construction utility where we saw the Force in action. This facility is essentially a giant hanger where soldiers attack from what seems like everywhere. As you might expect, there's a lot of Saber swinging and what the developers call "grip" maneuvers where you can fling objects and foes like nobody's business. Toss a foe in the air and Sith attack him like there's no tomorrow. That oughta put his hair on end.



This Force shock attack is a lightning-fast way to eliminate a group of Troopers.

CONTINUED ►

AS AN AMERICAN

YOU CAN MAKE A COMMITMENT.

FULFILL A COMMITMENT.

BREAK A COMMITMENT.

THERE ARE BIG COMMITMENTS.

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COMMITMENTS YOU NEVER

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OR EMBRACE IT.

AS AN AMERICAN AND
A MARINE CORPS OFFICER

YOUR COMMITMENT WILL IMPACT

THE FUTURE OF THIS NATION.

FEW CAN BE MARINES.

EVEN FEWER CAN LEAD THEM.

CAN YOU?

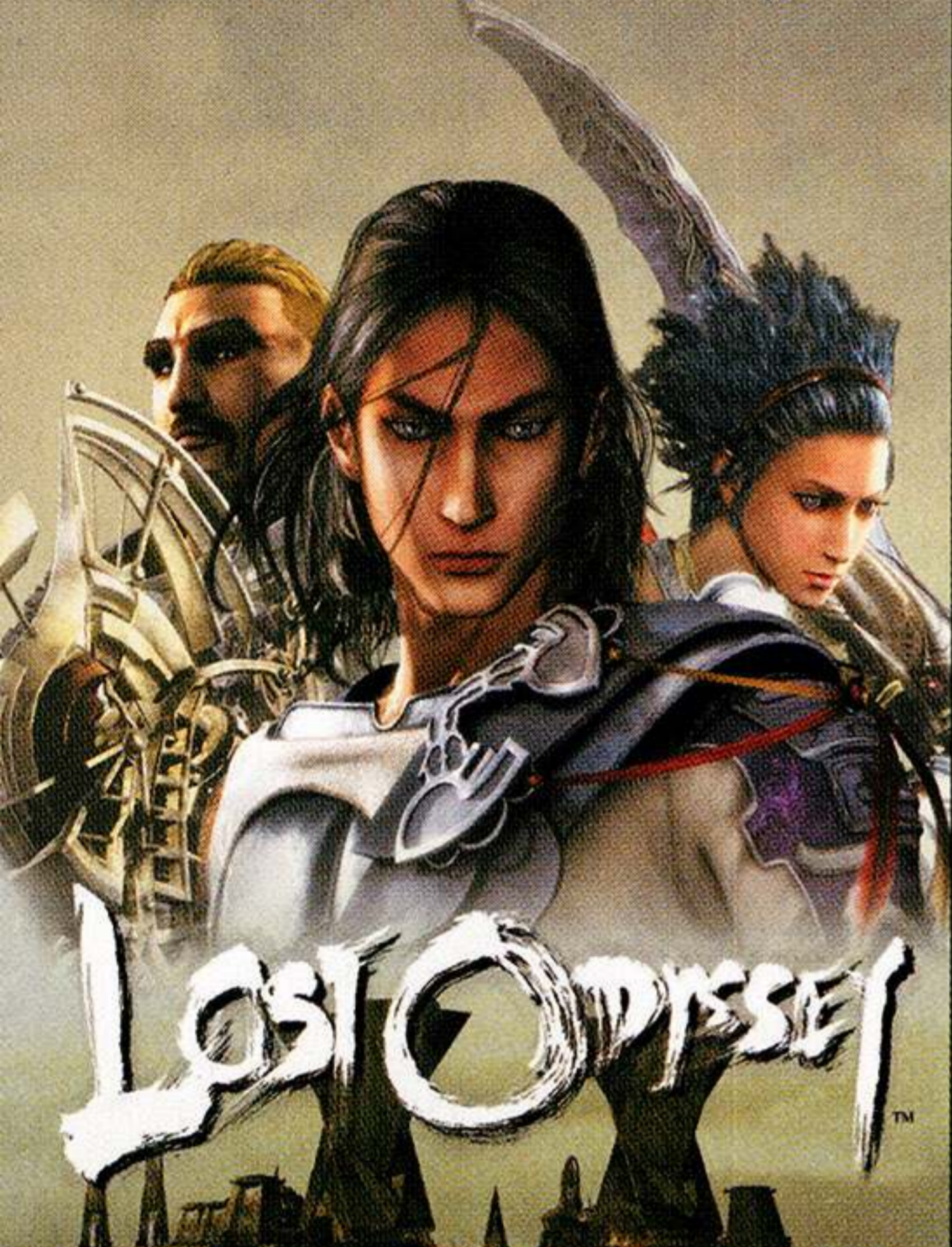


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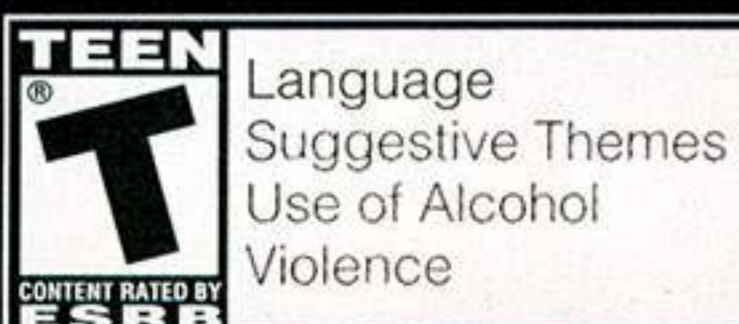
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PREVIEWS

TO FELUCIA AND BEYOND

Felucia, a contested world at the end of the Clone Wars, is swarming with fungus and other strange plant-life. In TFU, it's equally creepy, bizarre, and marvelous to see in virtual recreation. Here, surrounded by giant mushrooms, you'll fight against mighty Felucian homeworld warriors and unleash the powerful Force "lightning" attack—an electric grip that shocks multiple enemies at once.

From there, we got a quick glimpse at Raxus Prime, also from Episode III, a galactic junkyard, loaded with toxic waste; a host of the galaxy's trash. But this dumping ground has some significance. You're sent by Vader to find a Jedi in hiding, but getting past Junk Golems (huge enemies made from the planet's waste)

surely won't be the only obstacles standing in your way.

Wii WARS

On the Wii version, everything's a little simpler. Instead of tracking the exact motions of the Wii Remote, simplified gestures activate Saber swings while the Nunchuk controls grip maneuvers. And there is a one-on-one multiplayer Wii duel mode where you engage in Wii Remote wars. Finally!

—Chris Morell

WEJV

Get the link to **Star Wars: The Force Unleashed** screens and news sent to your e-mail. Text WEJV to 59479

Only standard text messaging rates apply



The Wii version will support two-player multiplayer duels.

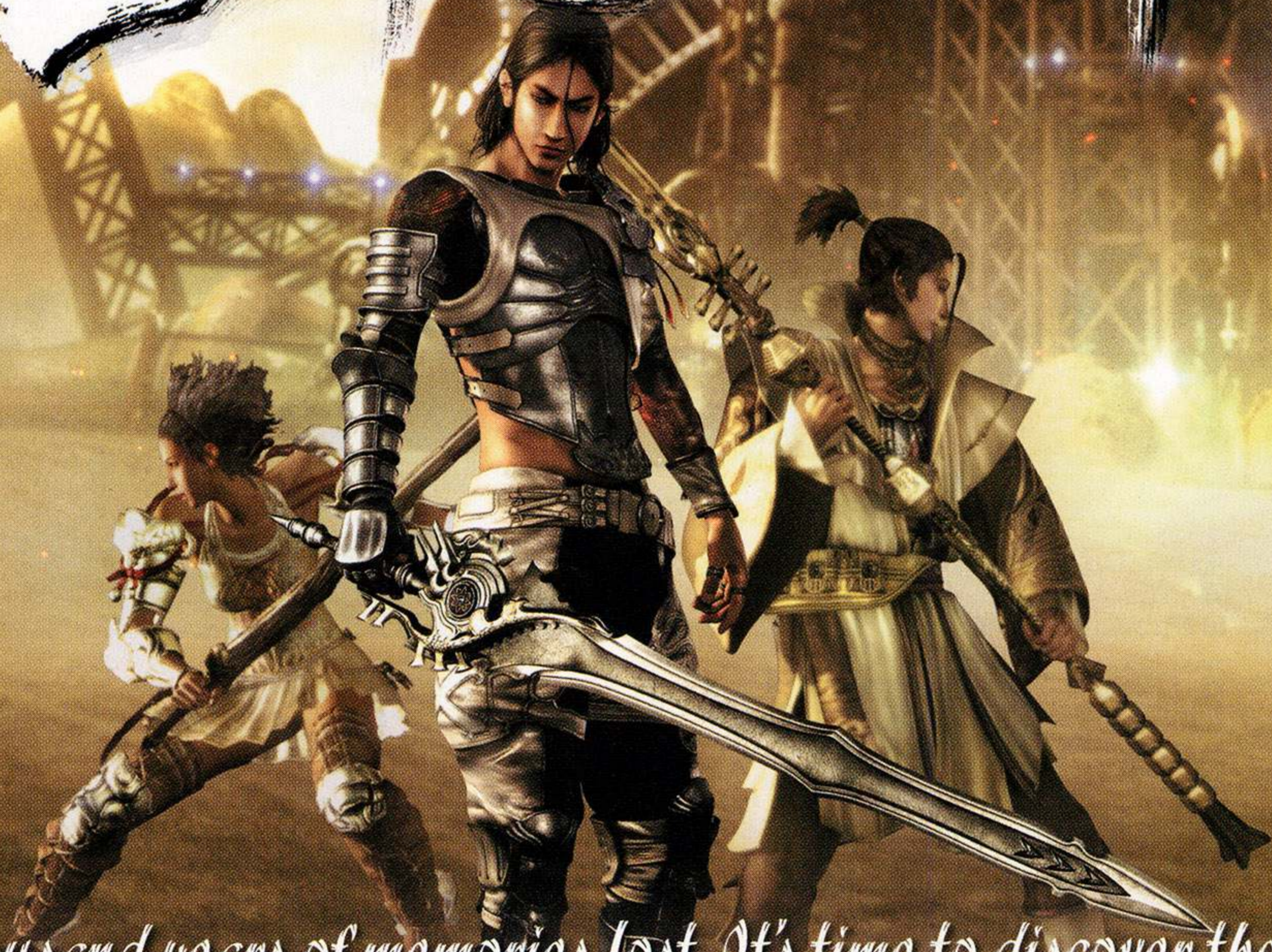


The trash-ridden world of Raxus Prime.



Force "grip" maneuvers allow you to fling baddies at will.

LOST ODYSSEY



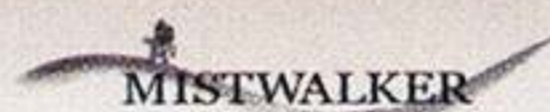
A thousand years of memories lost. It's time to discover them.

From the famed creator of Final Fantasy, Hironobu Sakaguchi, comes a revolutionary RPG experience rich in depth, emotion, and cinematic gameplay. In an age that has harnessed the dark power of magic, you are the mysterious, immortal Kaim—on a quest to reclaim 1,000 years of lost memories. Unlock a past infused with love, betrayal, and war to reveal the path to reclaim your life and rescue the world.



xbox.com/lostodyssey

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TOMB RAIDER UNDERWORLD

Lara raids like the Croft of old.

PS3 Xbox 360

■ Developer: Crystal Dynamics ■ Publisher: Eidos Interactive ■ Release Date: 2008

Since picking up the reigns of the Tomb Raider series, developer Crystal Dynamics has managed to turn around a near-lifeless franchise back to Croft-y standards. The trouble is that the exploratory adventure genre Tomb Raider all but pioneered have since surpassed what Lara Croft can do. Even with the series' return to respectability with the well-regarded Legend, we've seen that other games in the genre have out-Lara'd Lara. And female lead characters are now commonplace. Even more worrisome is that recent

games like Uncharted: Drake's Fortune are doing everything Lara did and then some. But with the eighth title in the franchise in sights, Tomb Raider Underworld has a chance to restore Lara to her former glory.

THE ROAD TO GLORY

Crystal is out to create a more, "realistic, meaningful Tomb Raider." And seeing as how we're now eight games deep and in the thick of the newest generation of gaming and graph-

ics, I'd say it's about time. Underworld, set to release later this year, is more than just getting Lara back into adventure mode; it's a huge technological undertaking for the series. Built from the ground up, a fresh game engine allows for plenty of new features that should provide a substantial upgrade from Tomb Raider Legend.

In Underworld, it's Lara against the world. The terrain is vast and treacherous, built with incredible attention to detail that you'll be compelled to explore. And Lara can do pretty much anything you'd expect her to, a key advantage when you consider the platforming/combat-centric gameplay.

VAYAMOS A MÉXICO!

The first gameplay demo of Underworld pins Lara in Chiapas, Mexico, halfway through the game's fourth level. It's stormy; thunder and lightning boom and crack in the background. Lara makes her way to a Mayan ruins site to locate a missing artifact. Outside the ruins, Lara's pursued by panthers. These deadly cats help showcase her new combat moves. Primarily focused on firepower, the combat in Underworld will have Lara constantly showing off her dual pistol skills.

A new independent aiming system for each pistol allows her to fend off the panthers with little effort, though the cats pounce quickly and there's little time to think. Hint: nearby debris can be used as a valuable melee weapon. And if other human baddies happen to be close by, why not let them play with the kitties?



Smoother, blended animations make Lara's acrobatics easier to control.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Tomb Raider Underworld is the eighth game in the series.
- Built from the ground up for the PS3 and the Xbox 360.
- Focus on close weapons combat, platforming, and environmental puzzles.

CRAFTY CROFT

As Lara dives and rolls to evade panther claws, the game's graphics impress. Dozens of shaders make lighting and shadows lifelike. If our heroine gets wet or muddy, she slowly dries off. Perhaps most complex in terms of technology are the facial and contextual animations given to Lara that make her character incredibly dynamic, evident in the peril she wears during a fight or in how she only uses one hand when holding a large object like a pole.

In the demo, Lara uses such a pole to leverage her up on a wall à la the Prince of Persia. As she steps across another pole using it as an all-too-narrow bridge, a fancy cartwheel off the pole reveals her panache as a gymnast. All animations are motion captured and each flows nicely to the next. And there are (of course) no rules, either. Tons of blended animations mean you should be able to use Lara to get around by any feasible means.

A new grappling system now allows Lara to target objects, say, a stone, to pull it off a perch

and use it as a step. And as we see it in action, we're told of the dynamic physics system that brings the game's rubble tumbling down as if in real life. As Lara climbs on one slippery ledge, tarantulas pour out like an Indie Jones flick. She answers by shooting, slapping, and stomping the pests.

INTO THE UNDERWORLD

We jump to a bigger area in a Mayan ballcourt. Lara's presented with a large, distinctively Tomb Raider-ish environmental puzzle. After getting a few dials in the right place, a ramp opens leading down to the Mayan ruins; exactly where she wants to be. But the ramp only stays open for a short amount of time. To get there, she hops on her motorcycle—now drivable anywhere in the game—and blazes down the ramp and into the underworld. And that's where our demo ended.

There are certainly other great adventure games out there (and more to come in 2008, for sure), but Lara Croft still has the recognition and attitude that can bring Tomb Raider back to greatness. And it could all come to fruition with Underworld later this year.—Chris Morell

W25Y

Get the link to **Tomb Raider Underworld** screens and news sent to your e-mail. Text **W25Y** to **59479**

Only standard text messaging rates apply

Set one knee down in the mud and that knee becomes dirty. Stand in the rain to wash away the dirt and grime.



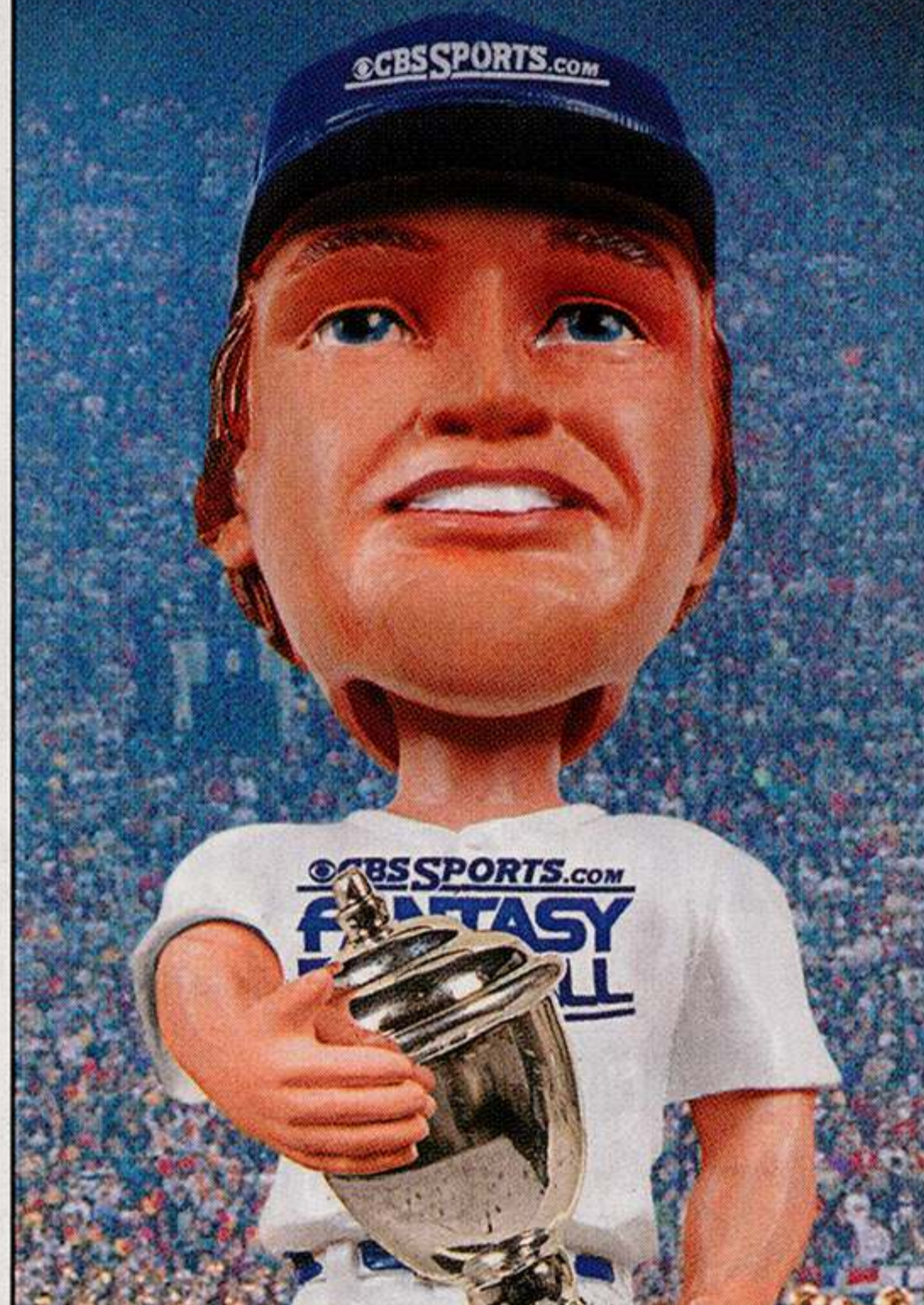
Lara can now aim her pistols independently at two different targets.



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Everything you loved about Final Fantasy VII has been updated in Lost Odyssey for the Xbox 360.

LOST ODYSSEY

The father of Final Fantasy goes back to his roots.

Xbox 360

Developer: Mistwalker ■ Publisher: Microsoft ■ Release Date: February

RPGers rejoice: 2008 is going to be our big year. Looming on the horizon are some colossal console RPG titles, two of which bear the hallowed Final Fantasy moniker. Leading the rush of these highly anticipated games, however, is Mistwalker's *Lost Odyssey*, a game that may actually prove more "Final Fantasy" than any other game released this year.

Developer Mistwalker is headed by Hironobu Sakaguchi, the father of Final Fantasy, and his imprint is so strong that it's clear that *Lost Odyssey* is Sakaguchi's "Lost Fantasy."

FAMILIAR TERRITORY

Throughout the game, RPGers will experience some serious déjà vu as Final Fantasy VII elements unfurl before them via familiar turn-based gameplay, concepts, music by Nobuo Uematsu, four game discs, and even menus that look alike. The emphasis on story, though, has set *Lost Odyssey* a step above and beyond the typical.

Lost Odyssey follows Kaim Argonar, an immortal who has lived for a thousand years, but can't remember anything. He is joined by a series of other characters of varying mortality, but all are acutely imagined and have vibrant personalities that really make the game entertaining. Each is portrayed compellingly via truly cutting-edge graphics and excellent voice acting that comes in many different flavors, from English to Japanese to even French, German, and Italian.

RPGs are notorious for being character and plot-driven experiences, but *Lost Odyssey* sweeps this concept above and beyond any other game. Sakaguchi has enlisted a well-known Japanese author, Kiyoshi Shigematsu, to create one of the most surprising parts of the game: a collection of short stories titled "A Thousand Years of Dreams."

Throughout the game, Kaim, being an amnesiac immortal, will occasionally have dreams or experience things—entering an area or talking to an NPC—that trigger the return of a buried memory. The player then has the option to view the dream sequence, which is a short story from Kaim's past, presented by dynamic moving text and background sounds. It's strange to read so much text, but if you take the time to read these scenes, you'll be treated to moments that are shockingly poetic and profound, and add great depth to Kaim's character and the world he travels through.

RPG 360

Kaim's world is currently brimming with war as one country, Urha, is battling another, Khent, for domination and control of magic energy. Players will feel at home with the battle concepts and controls, though names have been changed and details have been altered: there's a world map, random encounters, and turn-based, menu-controlled action.

HIGHLIGHTS

- From the father of Final Fantasy comes *Lost Odyssey* for the Xbox 360.
- Relies on many traditional RPG elements like turn-based fighting.
- Four game discs means one long journey.

Lost Odyssey is a beautiful game, but that beauty spans four—yes, *four*—game discs and is riddled with long loading screens, though hopefully those will be cut down for the final retail version. *Lost Odyssey* is shaping up to be a great RPG with an amazing story component that should not be missed by RPG fans, and with its release, the Xbox 360 has cemented its place as the console of choice for RPGers. —Amanda Ng



DMGD

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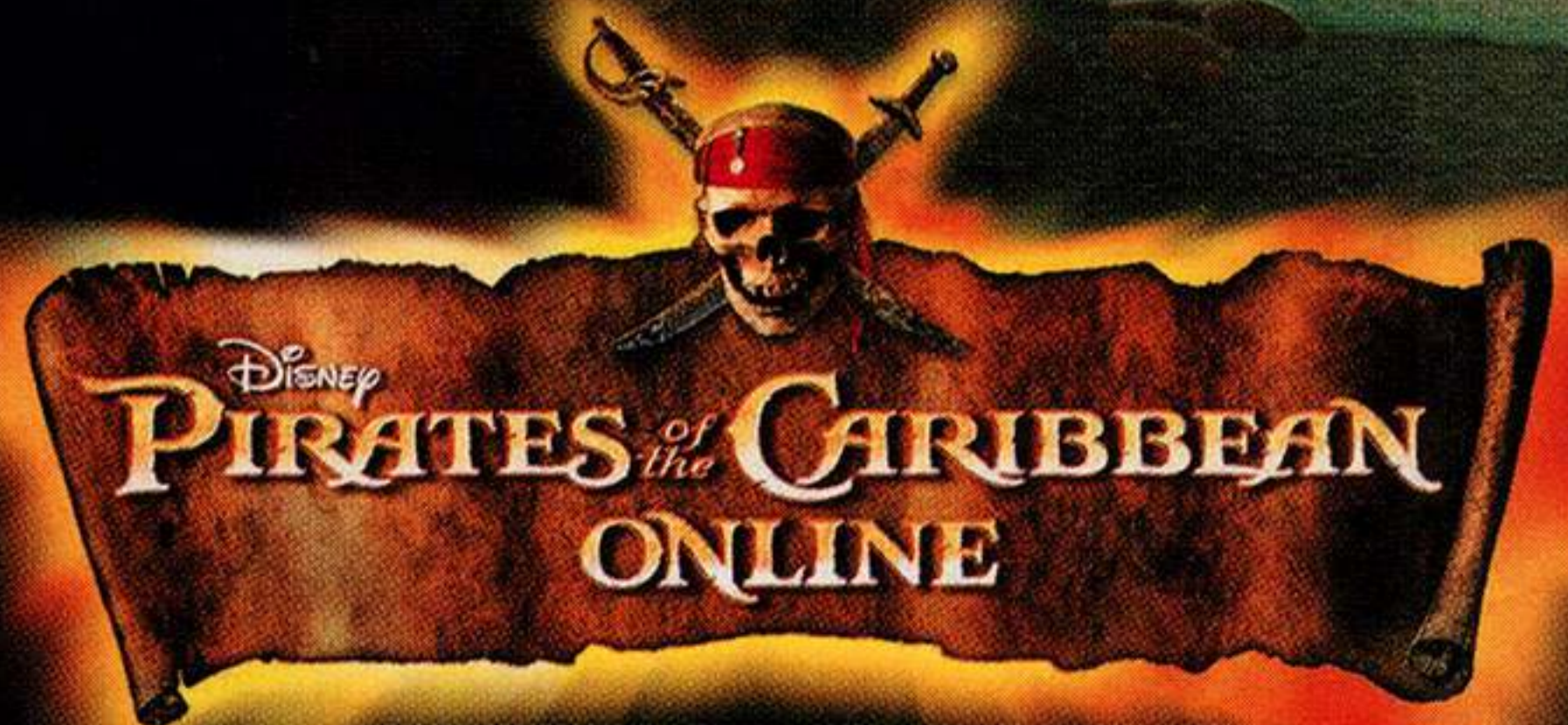
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PATAPON

PSP

■ Developer and Publisher: Sony ■ Release Date: February



Boss battles, such as this giant crab, can be played over and over again for better item drops.

The studio behind 2006's creatively cute *LocoRoco* is offering up another gem in *Patapon*. I knew this would probably be something good, but you really have to play the game to see how special it really is.

Patapon is like a role-playing and strategy game wrapped inside of a rhythm game. The basic idea is that you control the cute-yet-ferociously deadly Patapon army by tapping specific button combinations in time with the Patapon's addictive songs.



"Hunting levels" are a great way to earn Ka-ching, the currency to purchase new units in *Patapon*.

PATA, PATA, PATA, PON!

The Patapon sing and you tap to the rhythm. There's a command to march, one to attack, another to defend, retreat, and more. The game is presented in a unique 2D art style. There are loads of stages, and the ultimate goal is to move the Patapon army from left to right, defeat the enemies, pick up weapons, items, and Ka-ching (currency) to spend on birthing more soldiers, and eventually bring the Patapon to glory. You see, you're their God, and your rhythm guides them to victory.

There is a ton of strategy that goes into advancing the Patapon army, and while it may

seem like a simple concept, there is a lot to do and customize. You can outfit your troops with new weapons, create new soldiers with the right combo of items, learn new "miracles" like summoning rain and wind, and much more. And like *LocoRoco*, it's all done so wonderfully creative and cute. The songs the Patapon sing are catchy and clever. The art style is unlike anything on the PSP. It's a mix of genres that is interesting enough to deserve its own.

If you have a PSP, *Patapon* is a delicious treat. Be sure to keep up with our coverage on GamePro.com until its release early next year. —Chris Morell

NINJA REFLEX

Wii

■ Developer: Sanzaru Games

■ Publisher: EA Games ■ Release Date: 2008



We've all wanted to be a ninja at one point or another...run away from home and train with a martial arts guru. Now your Ninja dreams can come true. In fact, you don't even have to get off the couch with *Ninja Reflex*.

The game comprises of six mini-games based on different forms of ninja reflex training (hence the name *Ninja Reflex*). The single-player game starts you at the lowest level of the ninja arts: the white belt. But with enough training and motivation, becoming Daniel-san is a mere shuriken throw away. Before the training begins, however, you must choose a ninja name with over 25,000 different combinations to choose from. Switch between first and last names to create quirky pseudonyms such as "Unconscious Tree" and "Sleeping Willow."



FUN WITH CHOPSTICKS

We were able to test out three of the game's six mini-games, the first of which is my personal favorite Hashi—catching flies with chopsticks. Aim the Wii Remote at the screen and press the A and B buttons to pinch the chopsticks together. If you're fast enough to grab a pesky fly, place it into one of three spinning bowls for a point. The person with the most points at the end of the match wins. But be careful; some flies are color coded for individual players.

Another game, *Hotaru*, is a firefly call-out challenge. *Hotaru* will really test your reflexes as a true virtual ninja. When the light of a firefly flickers onscreen, press the A button to call it out. Get the fastest time and most points for the win, but again, be careful not to call out an opponent's color-coded firefly.

The most in-depth mini-game revealed so far is *Shuriken*; train your shuriken-throwing skills in the courtyard against pop-up ninjas. Each player has an aiming reticule that is used to lock onto targets with the B button. Once you are locked on, make a throwing gesture with the Wii Remote to toss a ninja star. The person with the most ninja pop-ups destroyed wins, but don't hit the beautiful geishas.

While what we've seen looks fun, it's up to you to decide if six mini-games is enough to draw you into *Ninja Reflex*. —Travis Moses

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HOT SHOTS GOLF 5

PS3

■ Developer: Clap Hanz ■ Publisher: Sony
■ Release Date: March



Hot Shots Golf has had a nice run over the years since its inception on the original PlayStation, providing a nice twist to the country club-esqué, often geriatric sport of golf by adding arcade-style gameplay and goofy anime characters. After having incarnations on Sony's two previous consoles, it comes as no surprise to see it arrive on the PS3 (Hot Shots Golf 5, or Minna no Golf 5, has been available in Japan for about six months.)

The first thing you'll notice about Hot Shots Golf 5 is that, well, it looks like Hot Shots. The graphics have been given an expected boost for the PS3, although this game definitely won't cause any double takes. The Hot Shots series has never been the best looking game on the block; so don't expect this one to show off what your hard-earned PS3 is capable of. That said, the courses are vibrantly colored and beautifully designed. The core Hot Shots gameplay is in tact here, and this version will still deliver one of the best virtual golf experiences around.

One of the most noticeable changes in Hot Shots Golf 5 is how you measure the power of your shots and putts. When swinging, rather than the usual power bar increasing from right to left on the screen, your club flashes depending on the power of your swing. A flashing yellow club indicates your power is halfway, and a flashing red one indicates you have full power. It's up to you to guess just how much power between yellow and red (or less) you'll need to get your ball to your desired distance.

Putting is done in a similar fashion. You're shown how far the bar will go with full power, so you have to guesstimate just how far back you need to bring the putter. And if these new styles of swinging aren't your thing, you can always switch to the classic style before you tee off.

These new features, along with the series' staples of humor and character/caddy customization, prove that Hot Shots Golf 5 is shaping up to be another solid Hot Shots title and a birdie for the PS3.—**Ryan Perez**



CONDEMNED 2: BLOODSHOT

PS3 Xbox 360

■ Developer: Monolith ■ Publisher: Sega
■ Release Date: February

Condemned 2: Bloodshot is a first-person crime thriller with a paranormal twist that explores the shady undergrounds of drug abuse and serial killings.



Condemned: Criminal Origins debuted on the Xbox 360 as one of the better launch games, but never hit the big time like BioShock or Halo 3, and instantly became a cult classic because of its dark atmosphere, slow pacing, and visceral depiction of gruesome serial killings. Condemned 2 improves upon the same formula and picks up a year after the events of Criminal Origins. You still play as Serial Crimes Unit investigator Ethan Thomas, who has seen better days. After the traumatic events of the first game, Ethan has become a homeless alcoholic summoned back to duty to help locate his missing partner.

Condemned 2 features an improved combat system, which still focuses on hand-to-hand combat and limited firearm use, but adds offensive and defensive combo moves to close-quarters combat. Your right and left fists are controlled independently by the Left and Right Triggers and holding down both buttons will block. If you successfully land two alternating blows without getting it, you can perform a combo finisher. Blocking an attack will stun and open your opponent giving you more time to perform combos. Land enough hits and fill up your combo meter to perform a vicious grapple beat down.



Forensic crime-scene investigations have been almost entirely reworked for Condemned 2, where the evidence collection process allows you to create-a-report that is sent back to headquarters for evaluation. For example, we came across a dead body in a dilapidated hotel. After examining the victim, we deduced it was an "adult male," "police officer," who "was shot in the back." The report was sent back to headquarters and we were rewarded with a perfect forensics score.

With more weapons, refined in-your-face combat, and new multiplayer modes Condemned 2 is already a substantial improvement over the first game, but we get the feeling another cult classic is on hand and not a big hit.—**Travis Moses**

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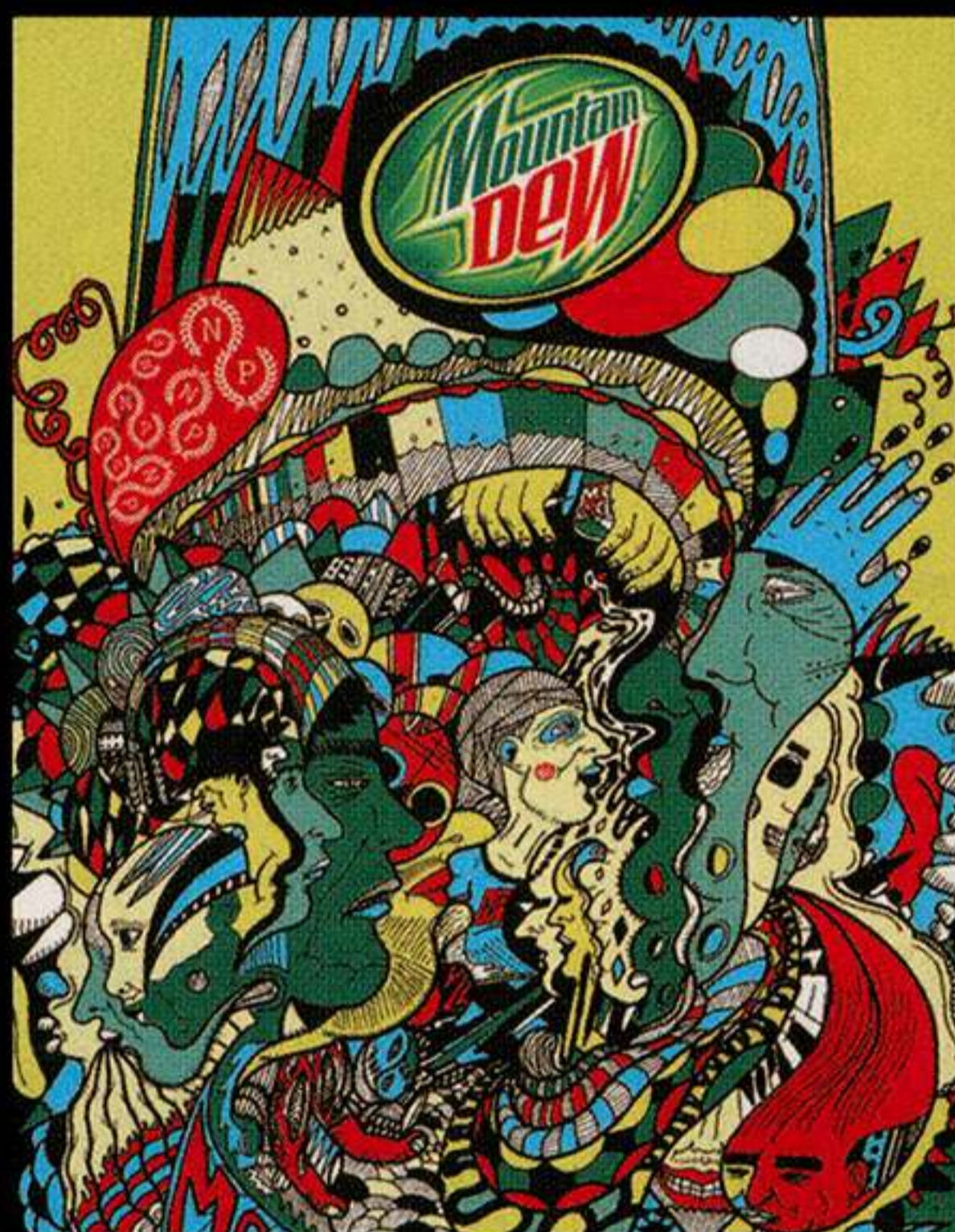
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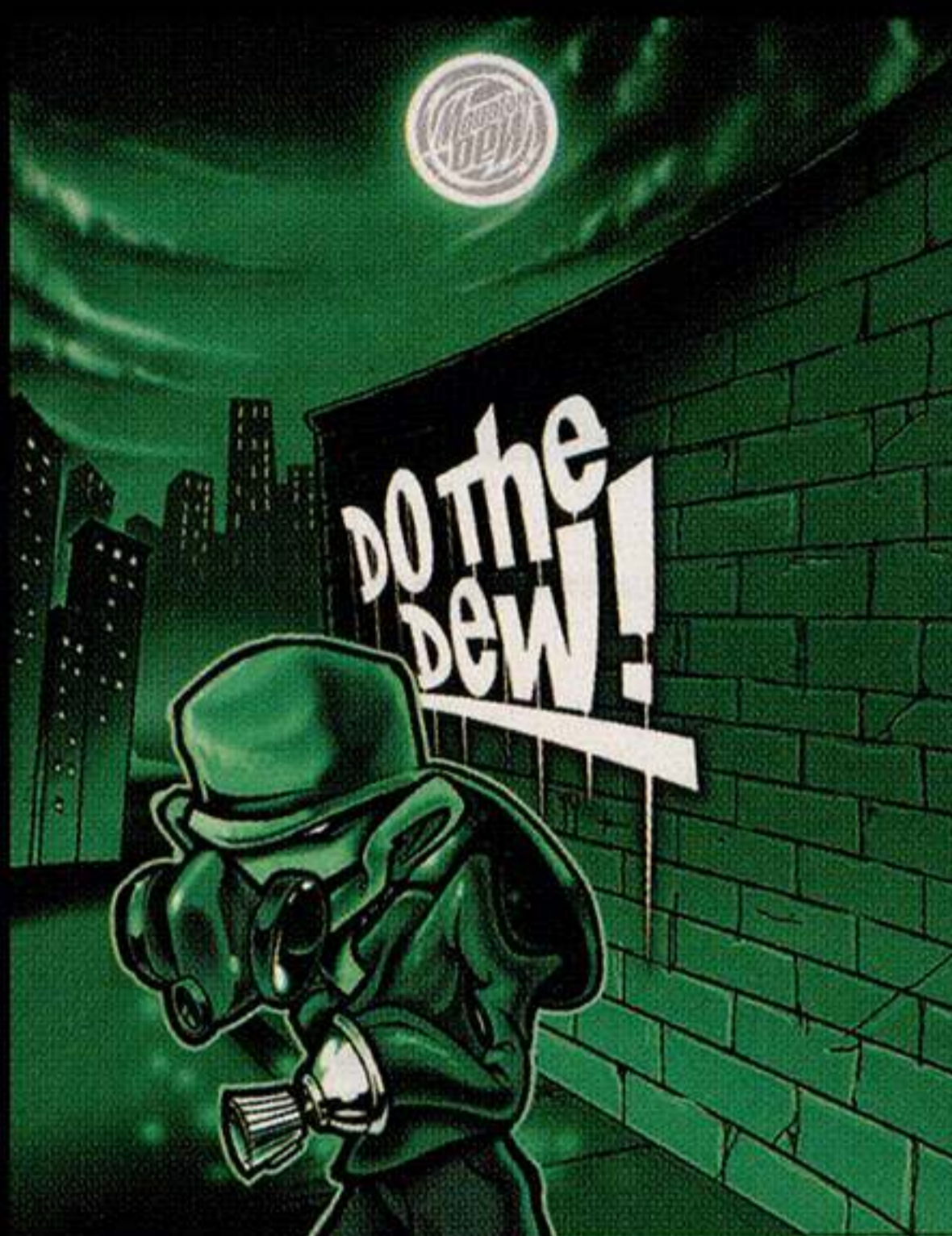
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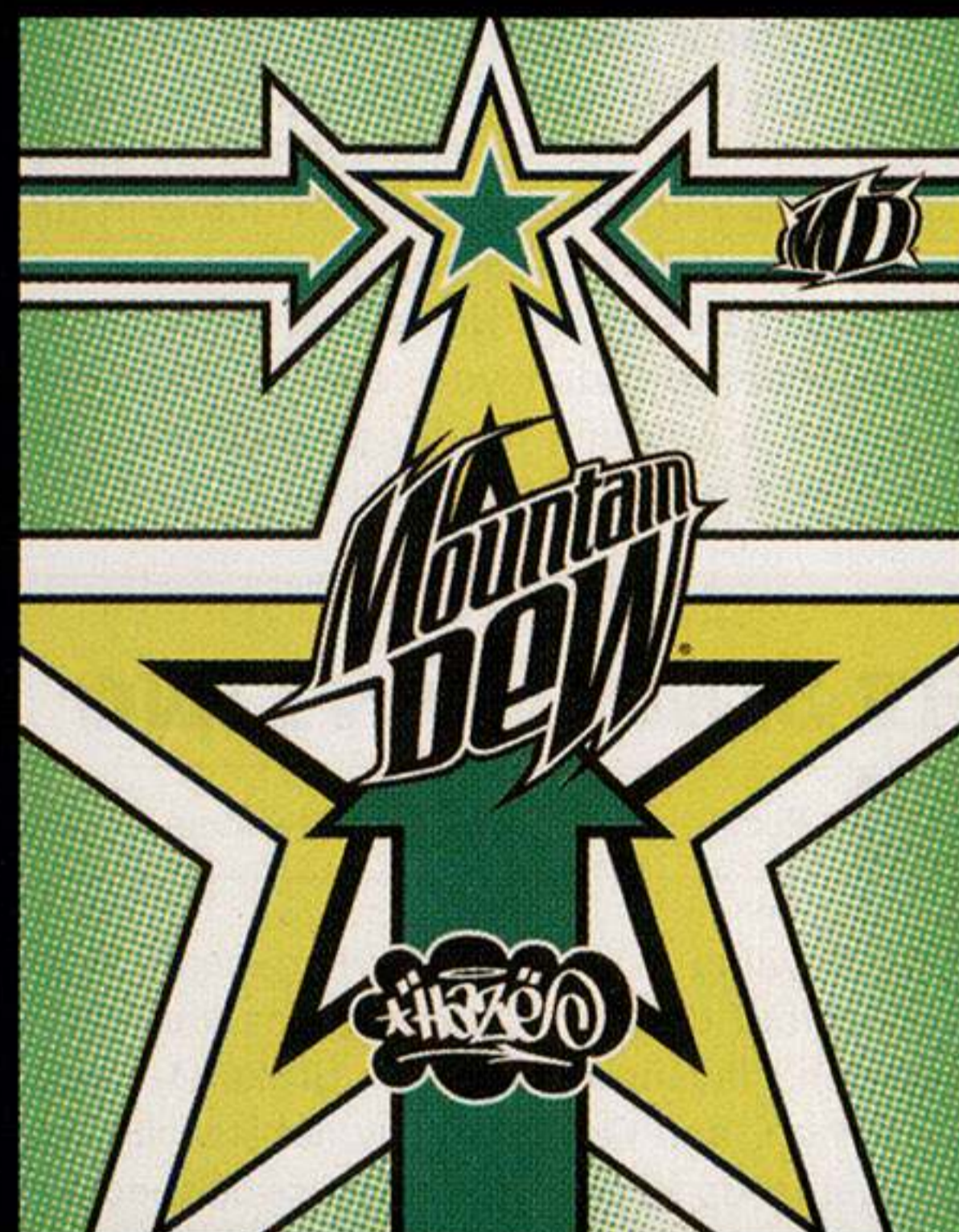
CHUCK ANDERSON

"Highs and lows everyone goes through..."



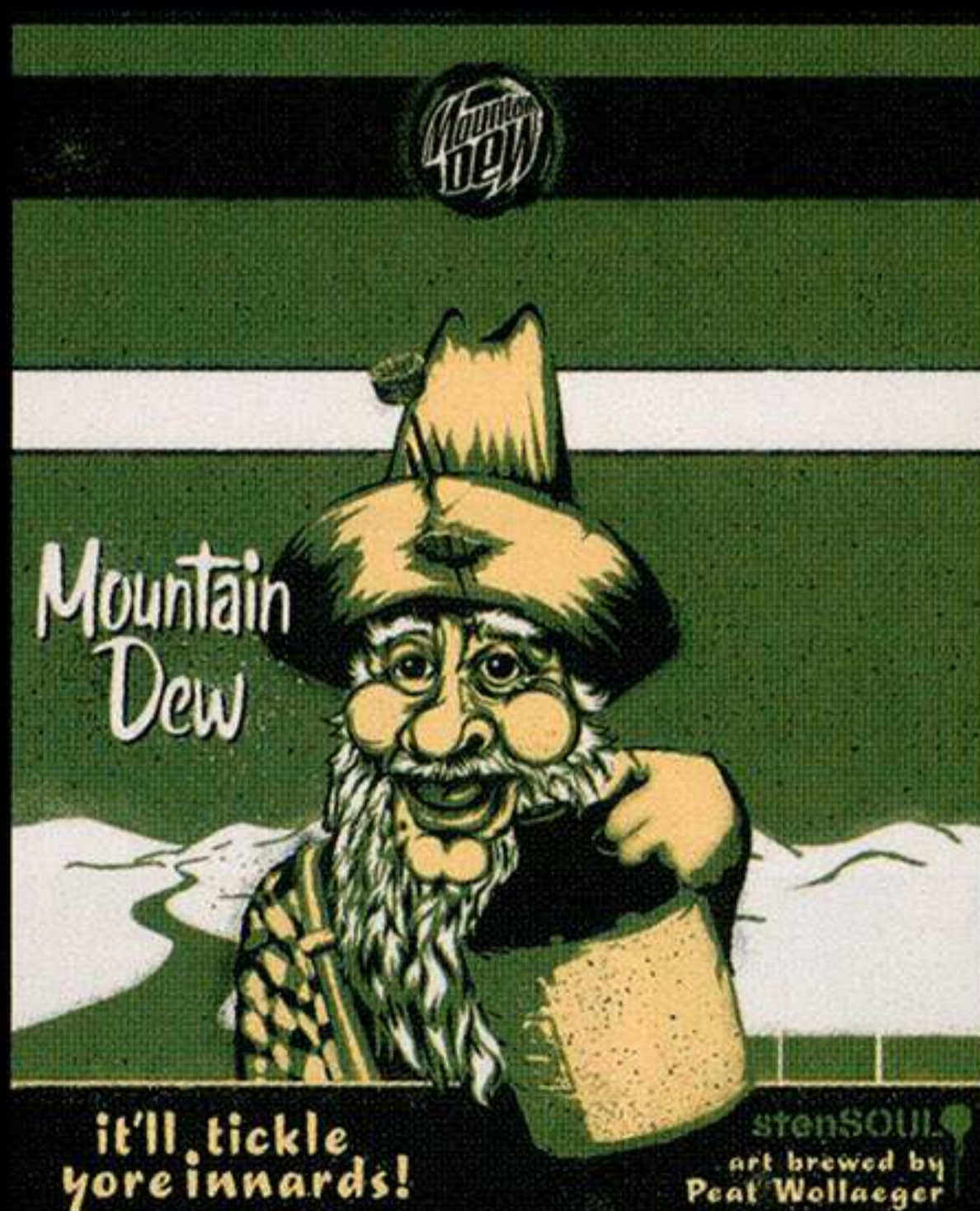
DEZ

"DEW is about excitement and adventure."



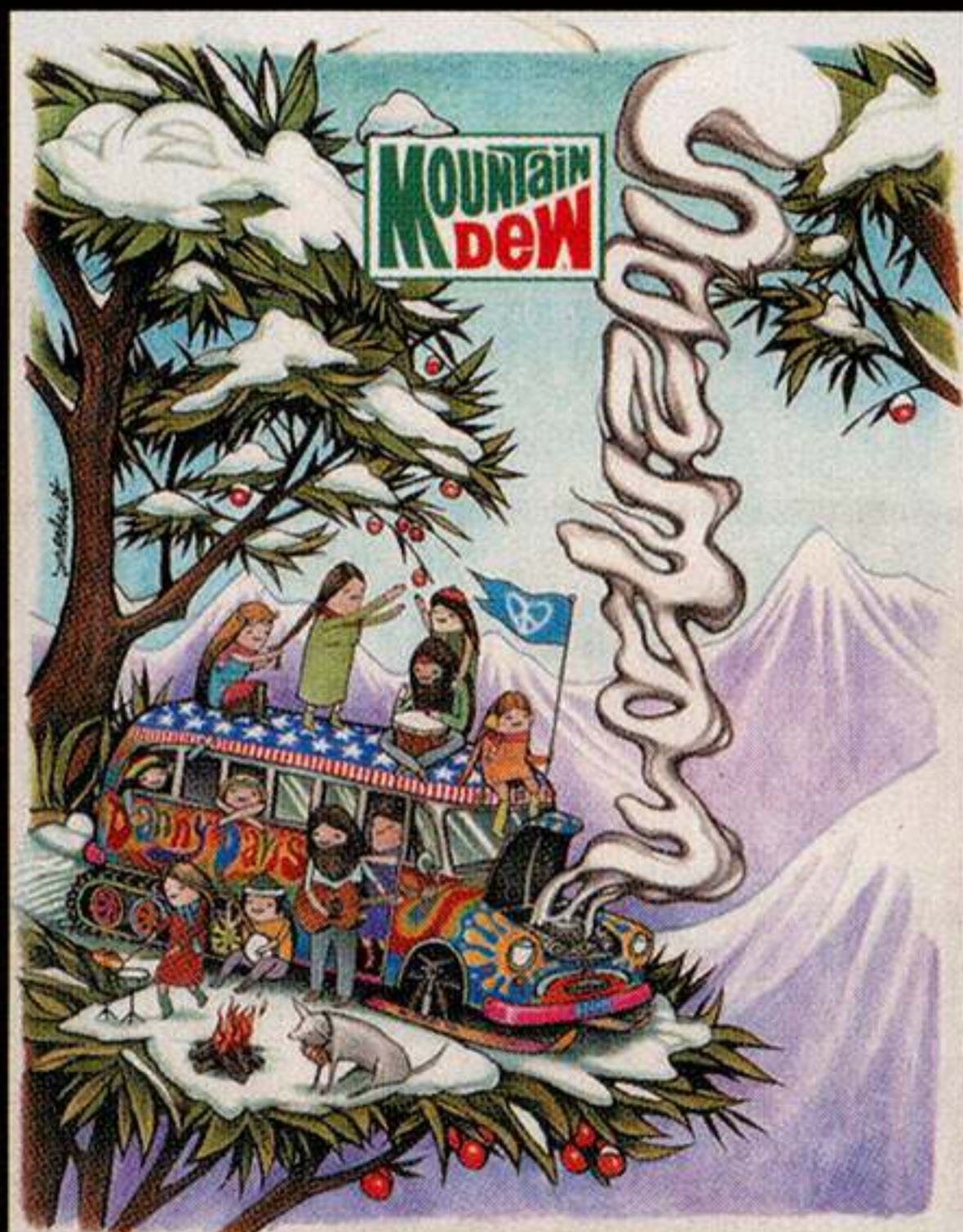
HAZE

"Super vibrant, pop art kind of vibe."



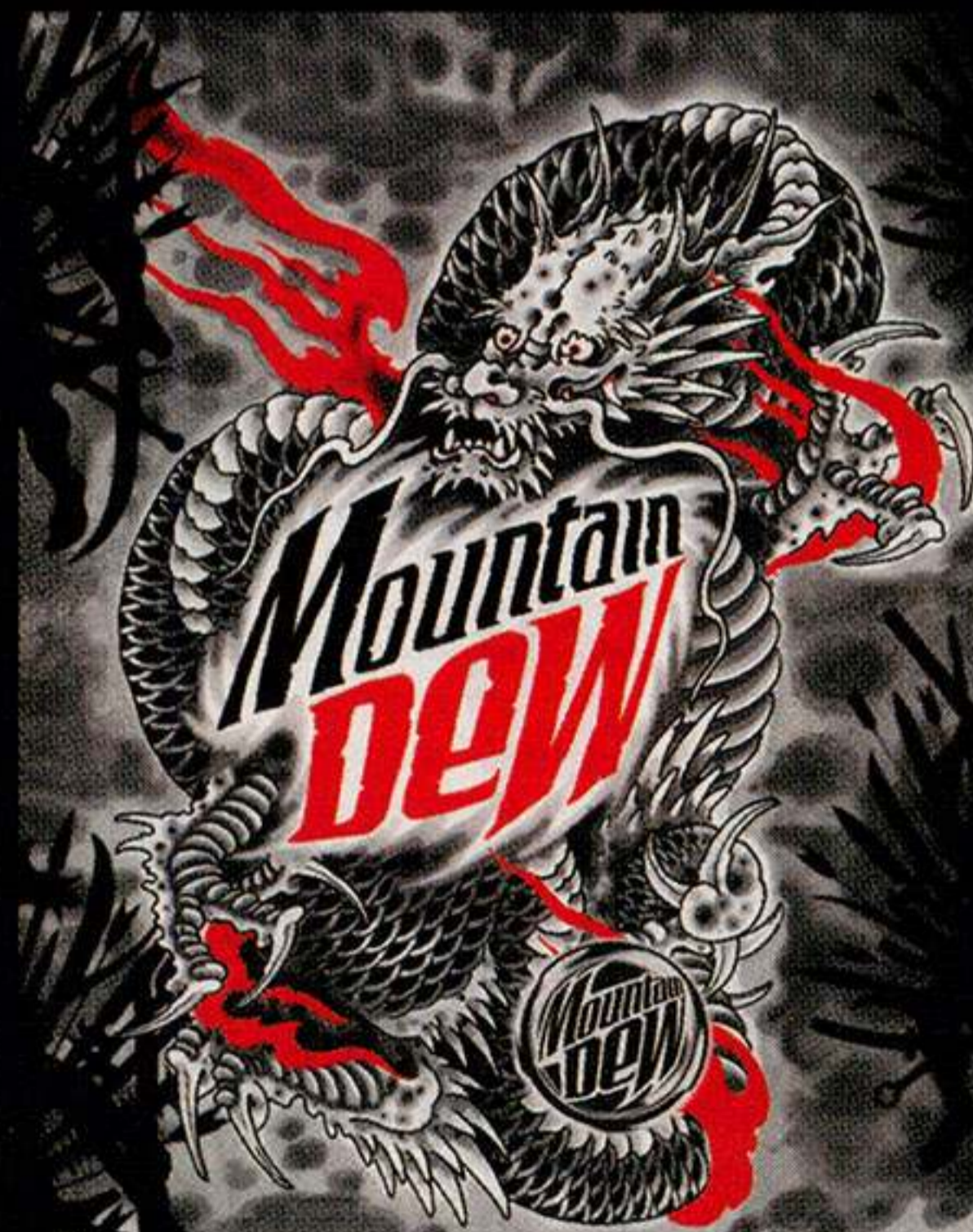
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SCOTT LENHARDT & DANNY DAVIS

"Like hanging out with a friend I hadn't seen in a while, ..."



TROY DENNING

"A magic elixir from a samurai's pouch."

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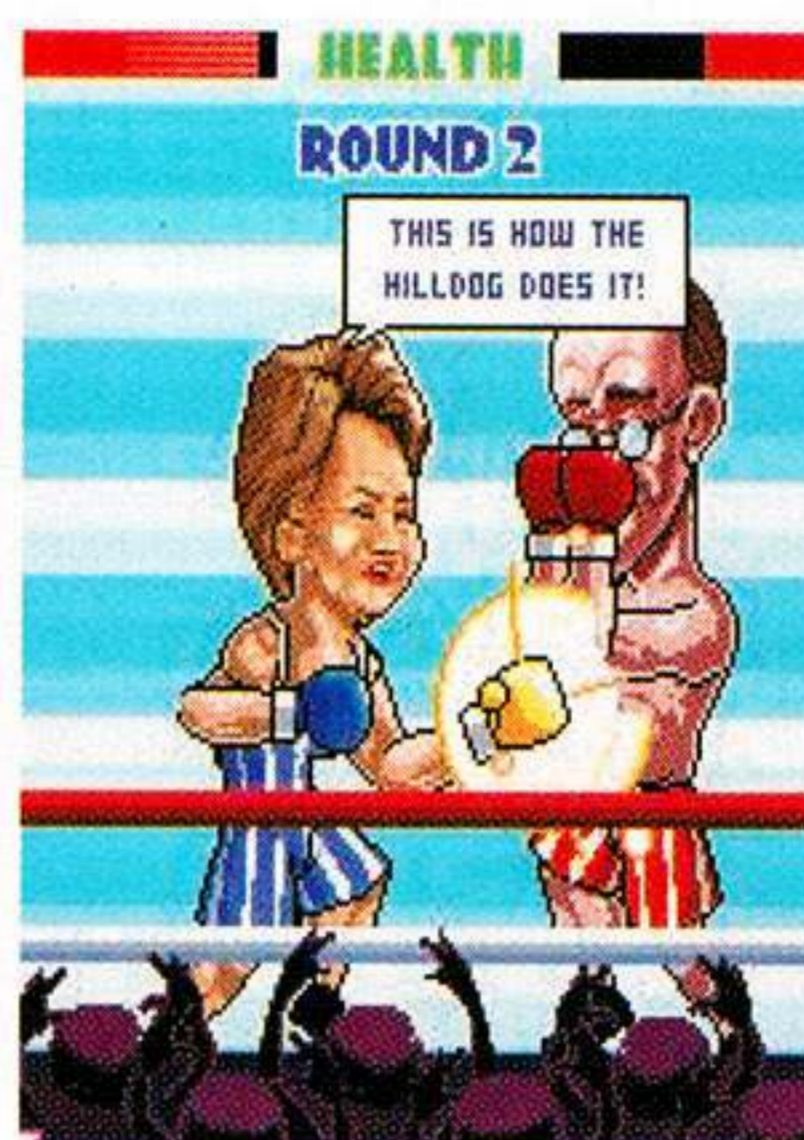
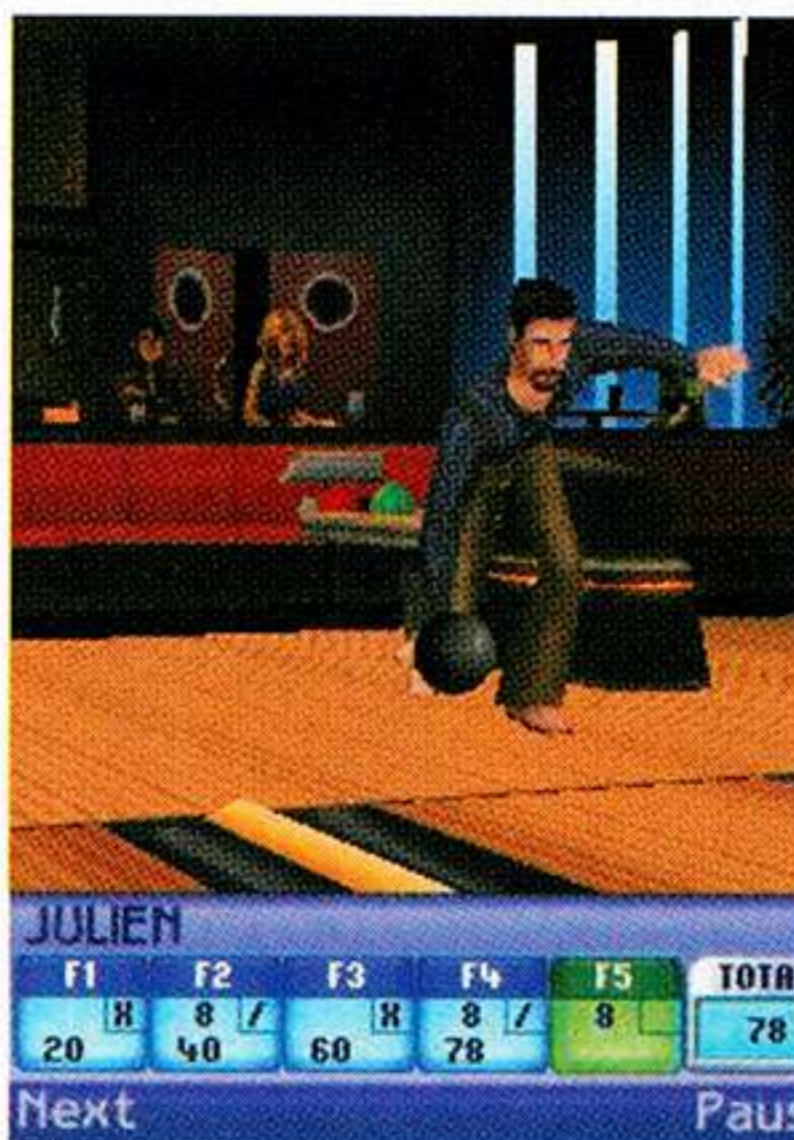
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BATTLE FOR THE WHITE HOUSE

Mobile ■ Publisher: GameLoft ■ Release Date: Available now

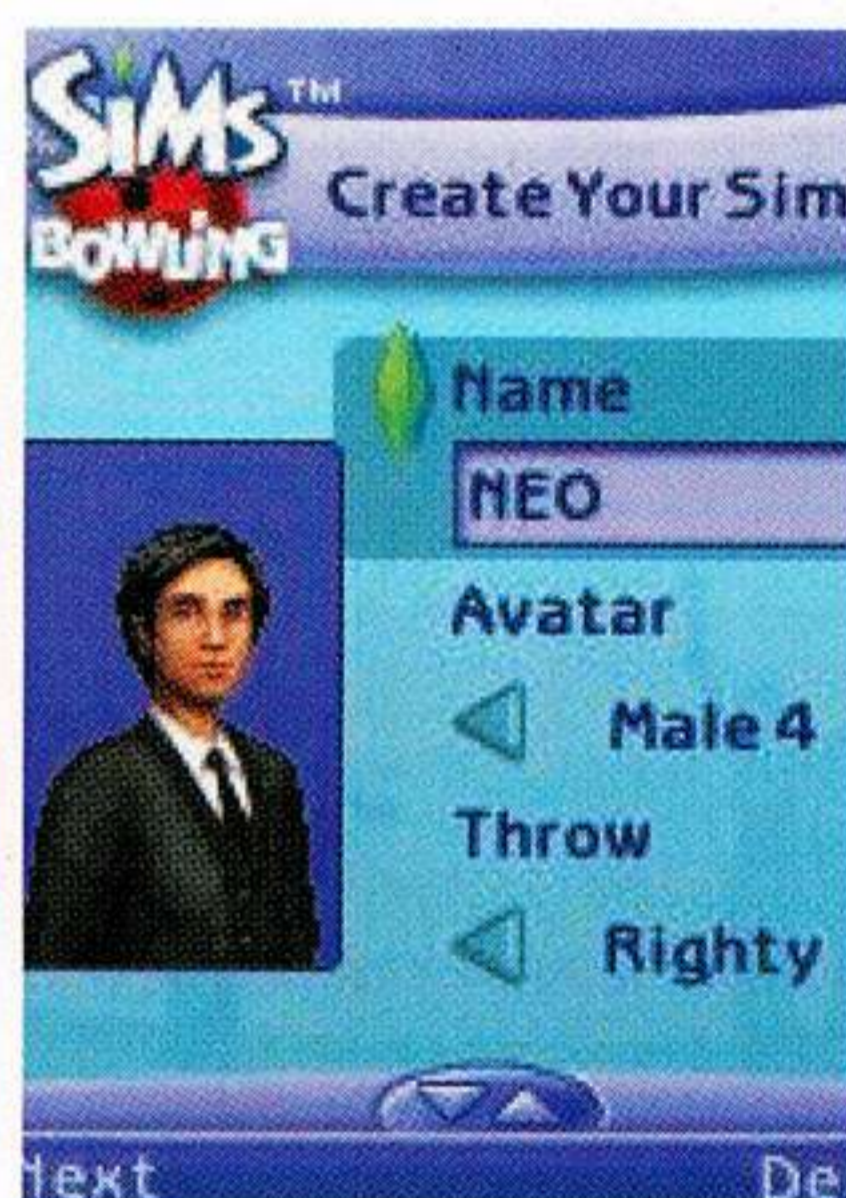
If you are like most people and think the Presidential Candidates suck, and you could do a better job, then you should try the new mobile game, Battle for the White House, where you can be President without having to kiss up to any voters! The game is filled with over 70 crazy mini-games including turning the debate room into an epic dance-off, boxing matches with your opponents, and multi-tasking by avoiding annoying protestors, while signing autographs for your adoring fans. Just choose your party and a candidate then get ready fight, dance, and steal your way to the top. You can face-off against or play up to six star candidates with three levels of difficulty in six different locations for your campaign. Keep track of all your achievements in the Hall of Fame and see just how popular of a president you could be. Battle for the White House is amazing fun for political hard heads and those who are politically ignorant.



THE SIMS BOWLING

Mobile ■ Publisher: EA Games ■ Release Date: Available now

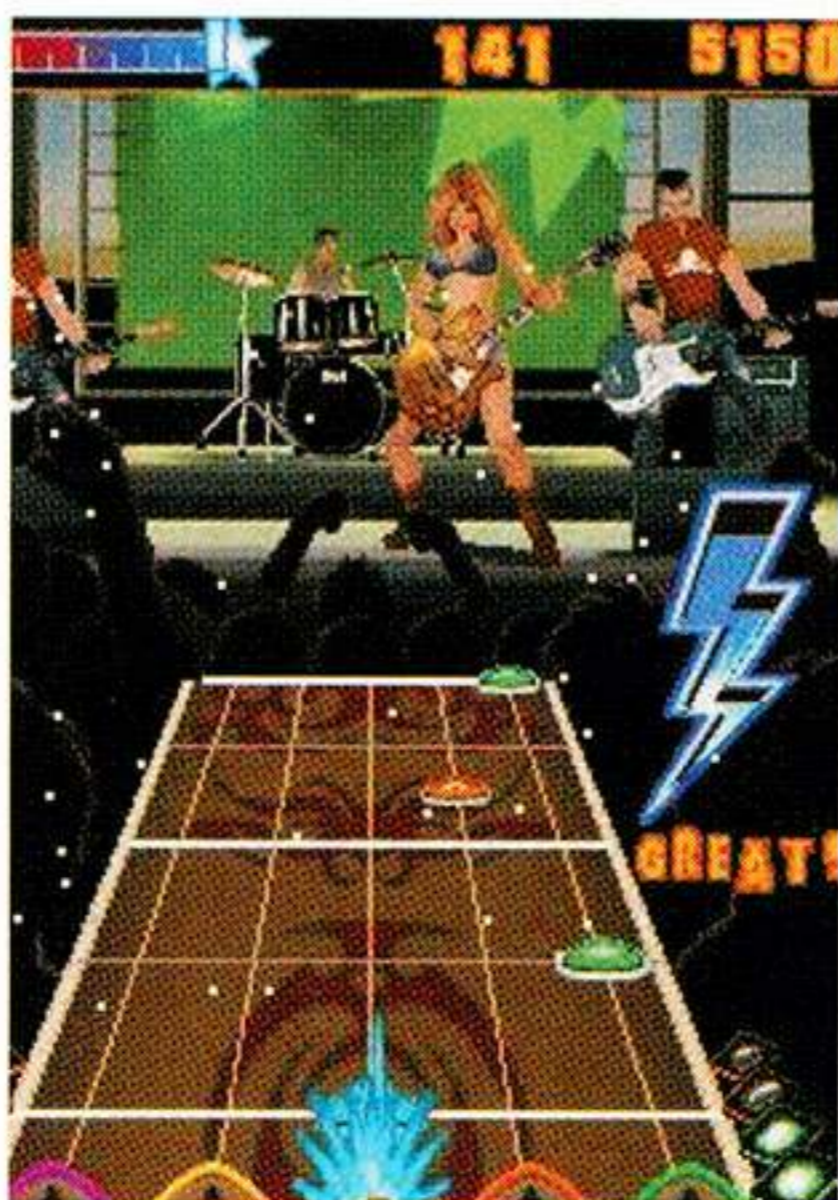
Sims Bowling is a great bowling game featuring four different game modes and endless fun. Play through Classic, Strike-O-Thon, Spare-O-Thon, and Online Derby, which can be played against up to four other players connected through each others cell phone carrier network, to prove you're the master bowler. In the Sims Bowling you have to win popularity with your own customized character by showing off your bowling skills and winning trophies. Simple single-button gameplay allows anyone from any skill level to show off their bowling skills by adjusting speed and sending their bowling balls flying down the lanes. So get your sim, put your bowling shoes on and show them how you are the number one bowler around!



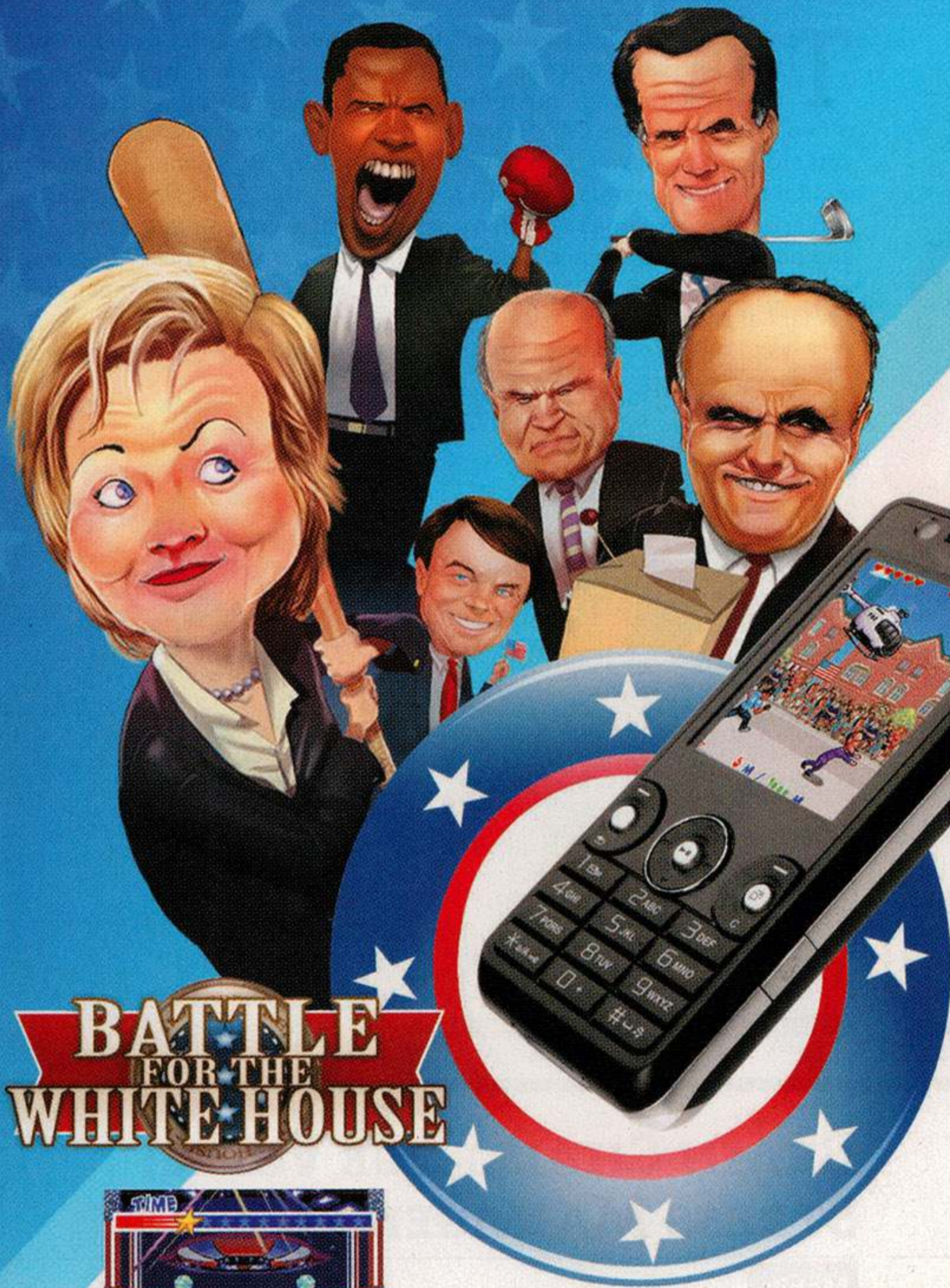
GUITAR LEGEND: GET ON STAGE

Mobile ■ Publisher: GameLoft ■ Release Date: Available now

Guitar Legend features eight famous rock songs (including Heart Shaped Box, Rock You Like A Hurricane, and Smoke on the Water) that you must master as you work your way from the garage to the stage. Rock Star mode allows you to play your way up the ranks winning over fans as you go. Over 50 levels of music madness, five rockers for you to choose from, three difficulty levels for beginners or pros, and simple controls allow players of any skill level to become a rock god; no musical experience needed! With Guitar Legend you can be a rock star anytime and anywhere, guaranteed!



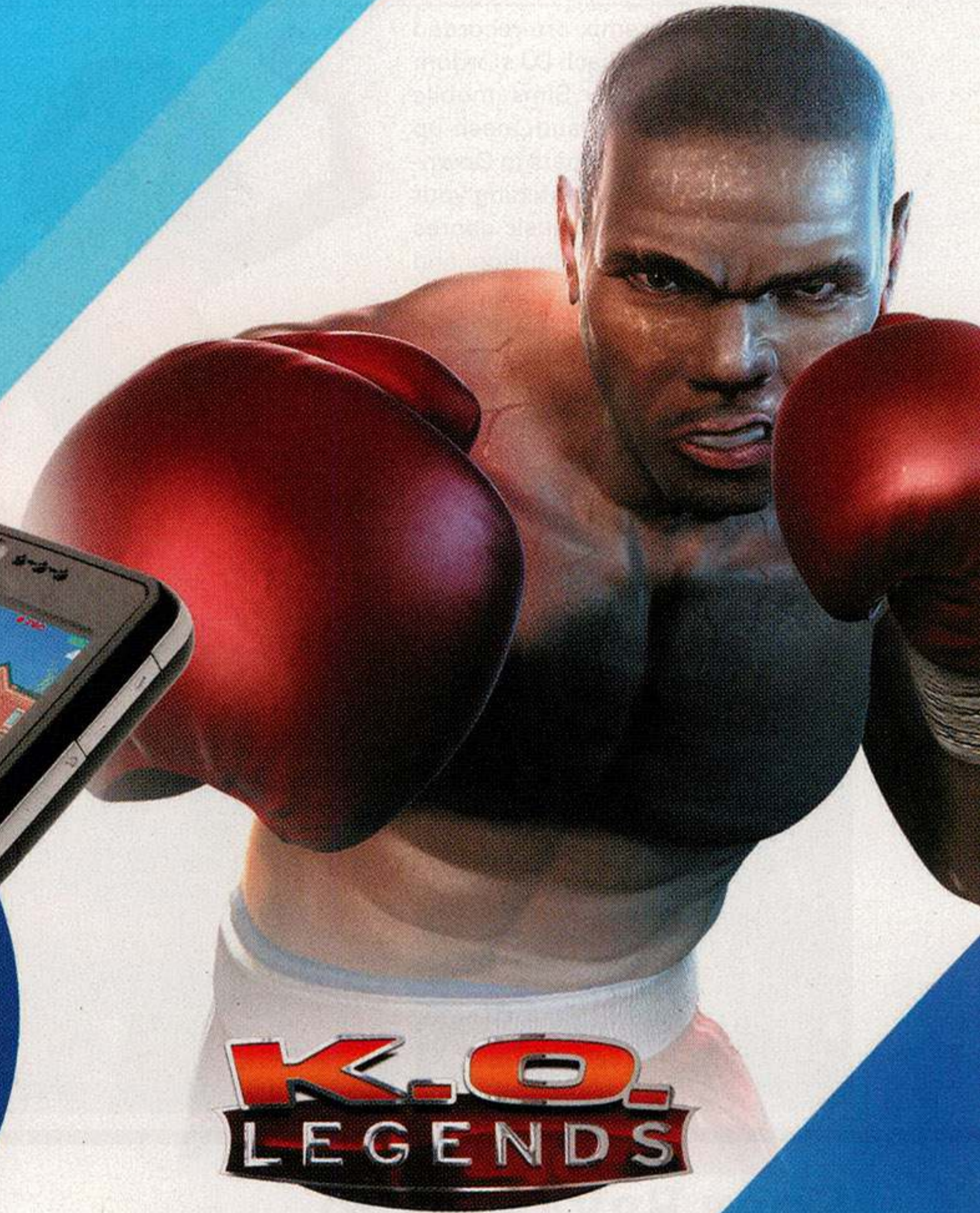
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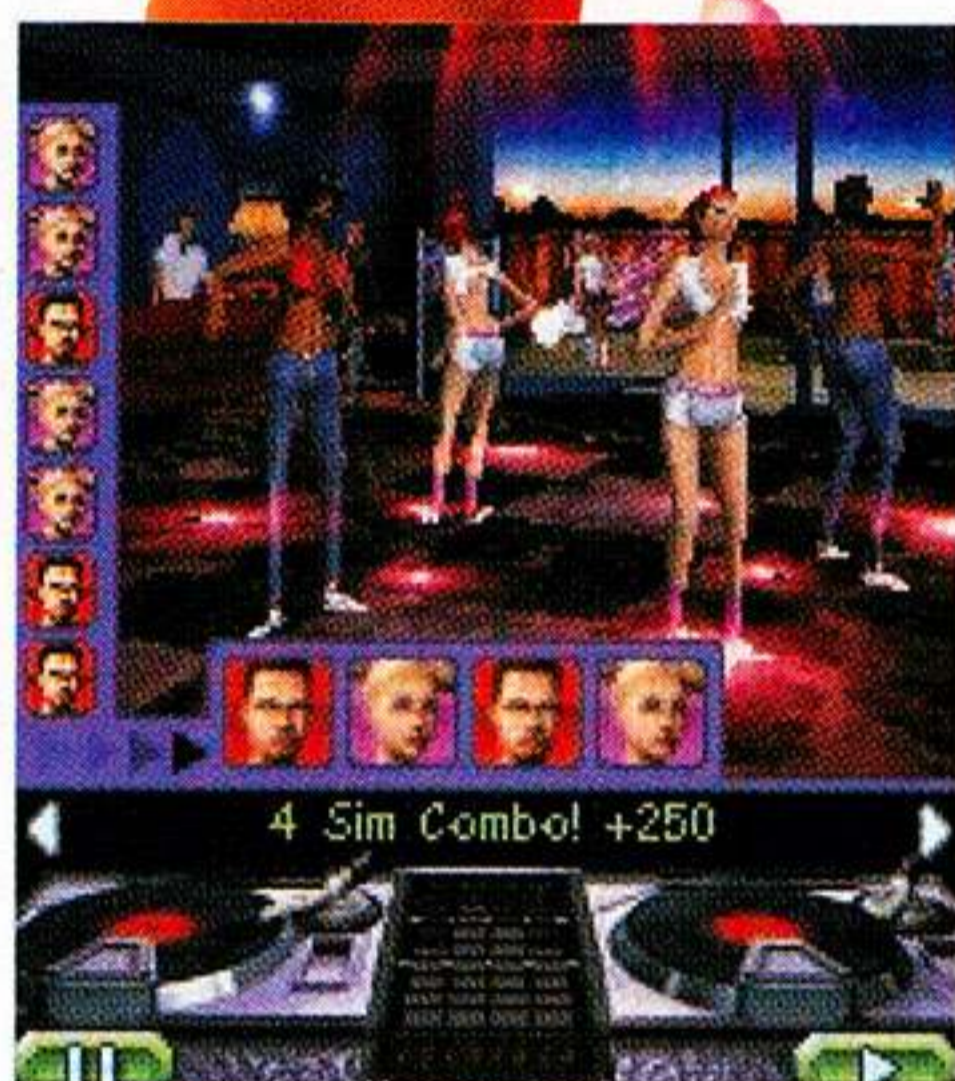
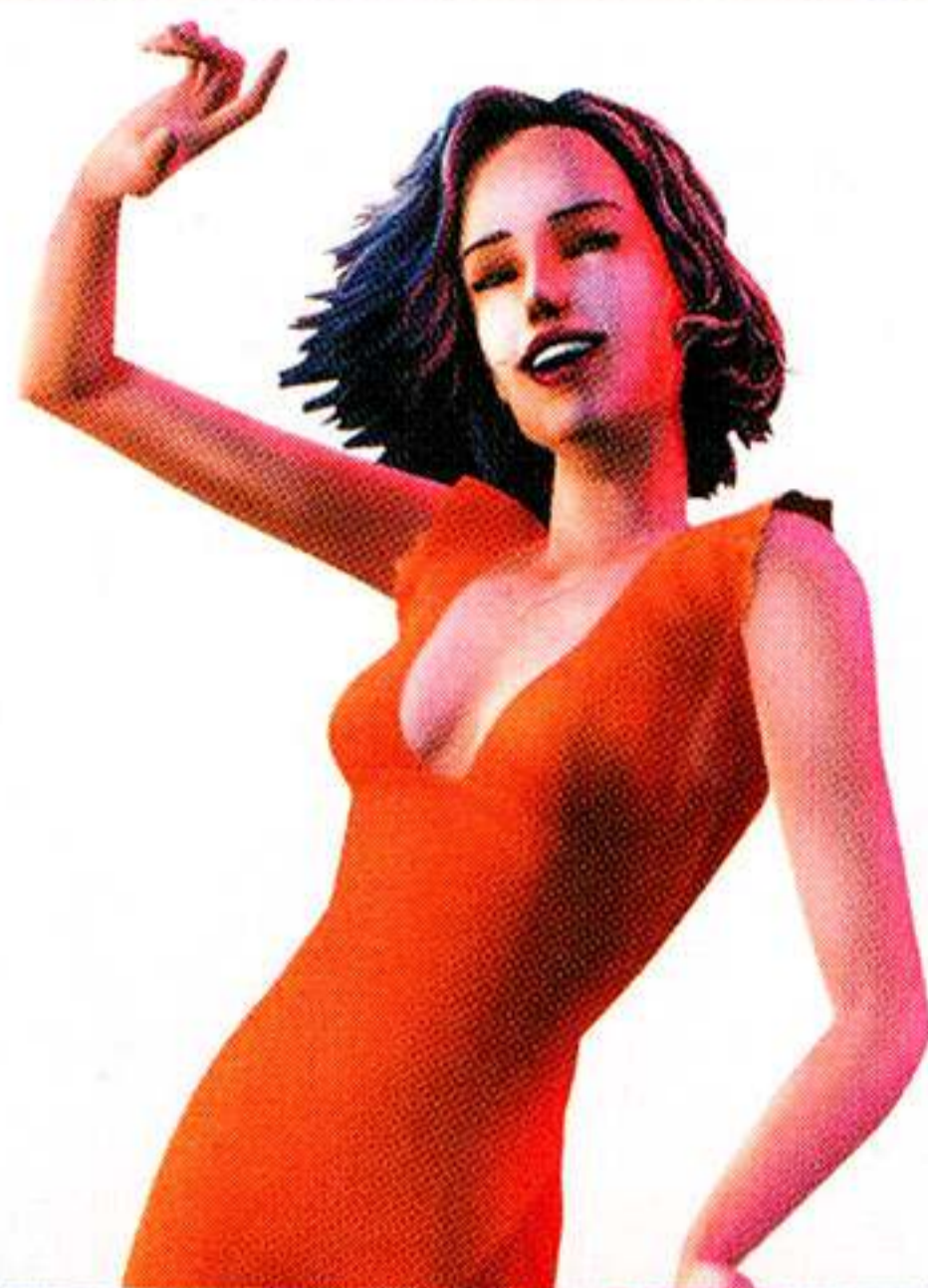
gameloft

THE SIMS DJ

Mobile

■ Publisher: EA Games ■ Release Date: Available now

Mix and remix pre-recorded tracks to reach DJ stardom in this new Sims mobile game. Spin records and mash-up tracks to please club goers in Downtown Pleasantville by matching your mixes with one of the music genres (including Pop, Rock, Hip-Hop and Dance) that they want to hear. Earn Simoleons to buy extra equipment, tracks, and other cool stuff to win the popularity of the club scene. Also you can use your favorite newly remixed tracks as ring tones on your cell phone and even send them to your friends! The Sims DJ allows you to turn your cell phone into a turntable at anytime you want.



BURGERTIME DELIGHT

Mobile

■ Publisher: Namco Bandai Games ■ Release Date: Available now

The classic arcade game is back to celebrate its 25th anniversary and this time you can play it anytime you want on your cell phone! While you (Chef Peter Pepper) are trying to build the über burger you must fight off your food enemies (Mr. Hotdog, Mr. Egg, and Mr. Pickle) as they chase you around each level. BurgerTime Delight has newly enhanced graphics, eight new environments, two new food enemies (Mr. Garlic and Mr. Carrot), and special mini-games between each level allowing you to collect points and bonus items! So squish, squash, stun, and burn your pesky foes away with the new BurgerTime Delight game on your cell phone, a must for all gamers of any shapes or sizes.



KOBE BRYANT PRO BASKETBALL 2008

Mobile

■ Publisher: GameLoft ■ Release Date: Available now

Kobe Bryant Pro Basketball 2008 allows you to take the bosses seat while you edit your roster and choose your favorite maneuvers. Tracking your stats, beefing up your blocking, going for more dramatic dunks, and showing off your all around skill for basketball is all part of the game. Start this basketball season off right with a full 80 game season, a Slam Dunk contest and a three-point shoot contest, ensuring you will be mesmerized for hours, making Kobe Bryant Pro Basketball 2008 the game to have this year.

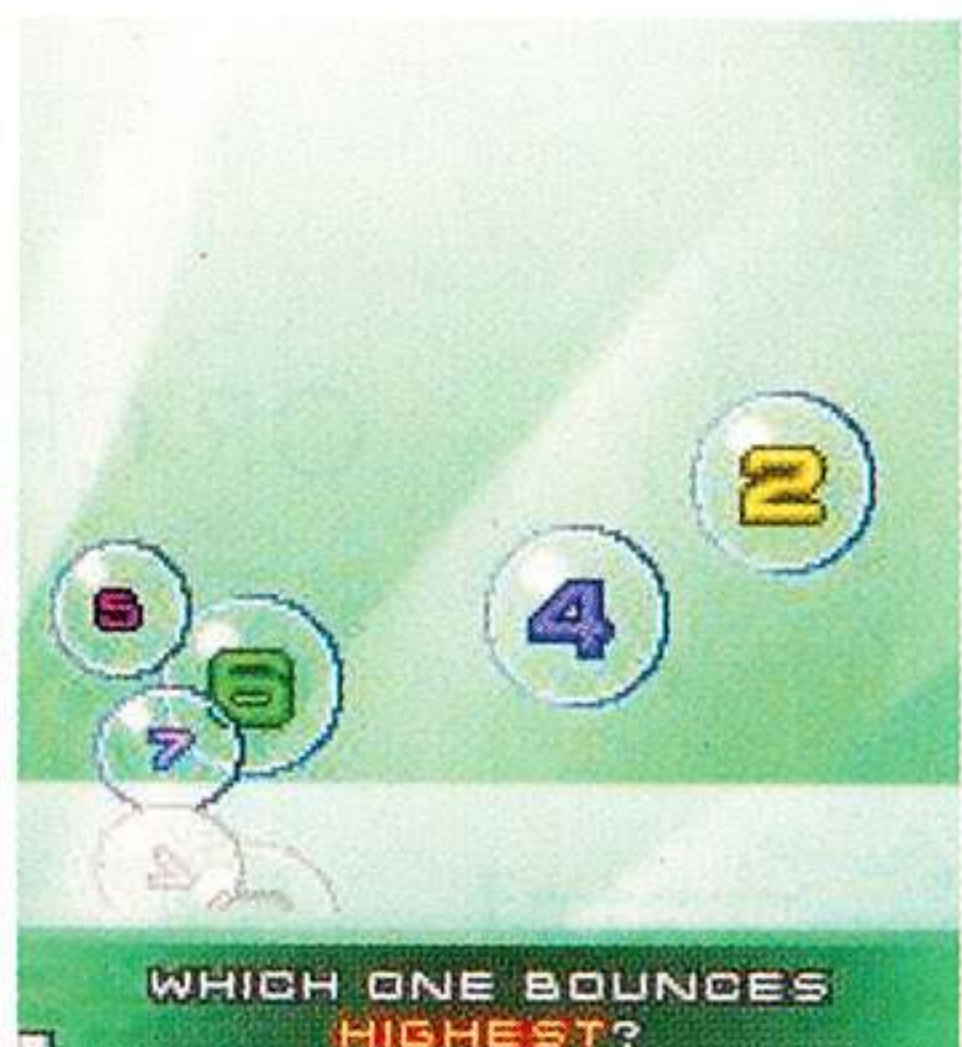
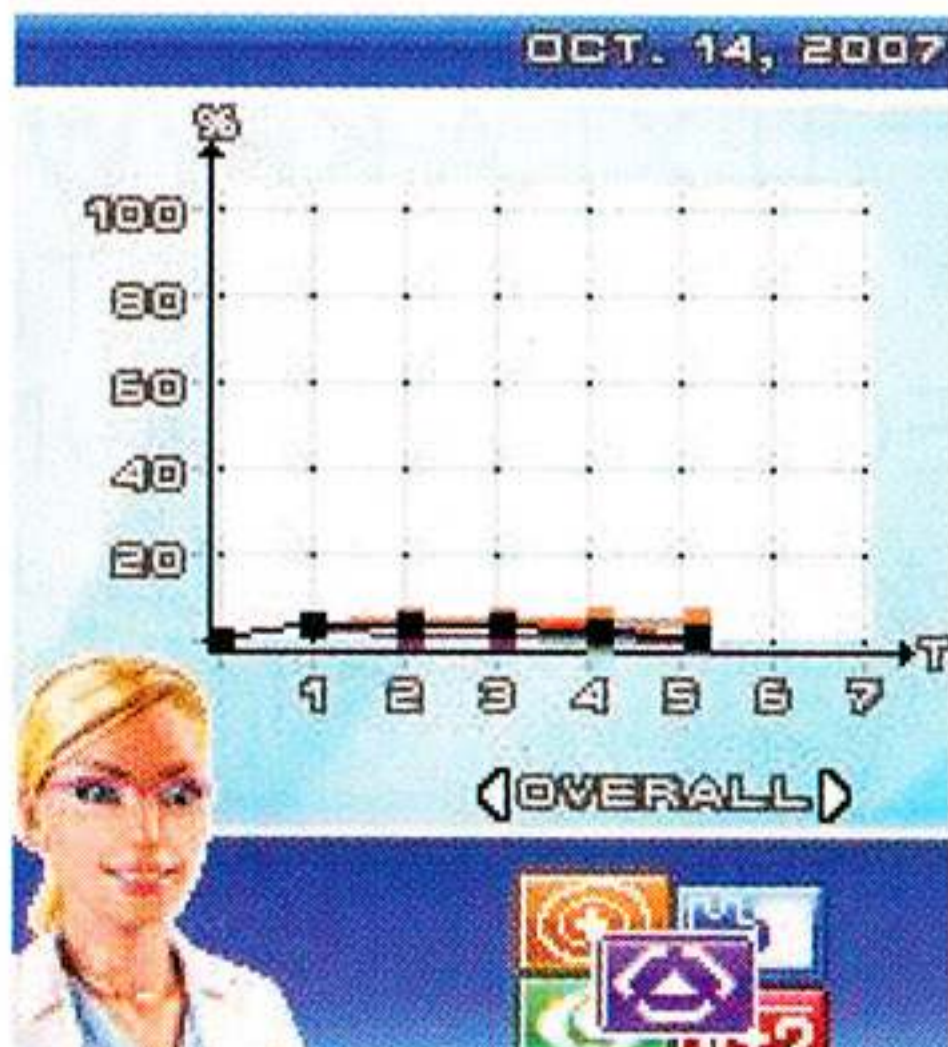


BRAIN CHALLENGE VOL. 2: STRESS MANAGEMENT

Mobile

■ Publisher: GameLoft ■ Release Date: Available now

Brain Challenge 2: Stress Management allows you to have a great time while maximizing your brain activity. With 20 new exercises and five categories you can learn how to improve your concentration, even when stressed. Brain Challenge 2 has a difficulty adaptive system that learns with you, adjusts the games difficulty level with your improvement, and a training mode where you can work on strengthening your weak areas even while on the go. Whether you are riding on a bus, flying in an airplane or just waiting at the dentist office, it's never a bad time to train your brain and Stress Management is the perfect game for just that!



ALL FATE BREAKS LOOSE.



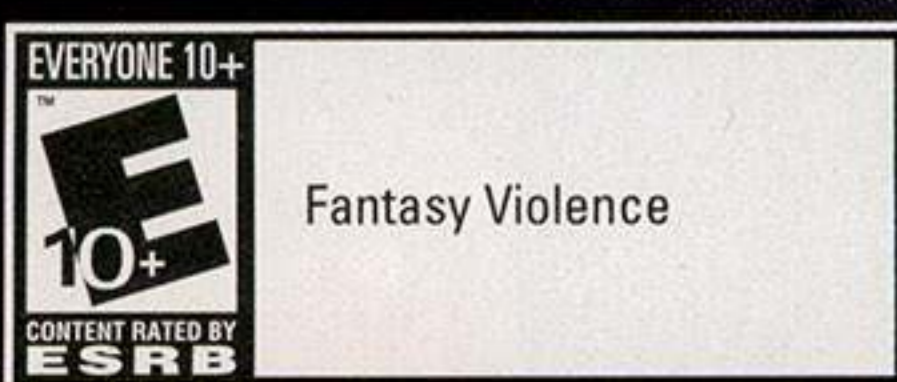
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First Look &
Hands-On!

The Perfect Shooter*

Tightly wound action, RPG customization, and killer co-op make Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six Vegas 2 the shooter to beat in 2008.

By Sid Shuman

* From the Rejected Headline Department: **Aces High** (too obvious); **High Roller** (too stupid); **Sin, Skin, and Shootin'** (marginally more clever if you say it out loud); and **Bullets & Brains** (intended to spotlight Vegas 2's intelligence, instead sounds creepy). Okay, we'll stop now.



The Perfect Shooter



The first rule of Vegas 2? Don't fix what ain't broken. The original Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six Vegas blew away players with tight, suspenseful action that was governed by the rules of real-world warfare. This ain't no pray-and-spray exercise: securing and keeping cover is vital to your survival, high-caliber guns kick harder and hold fewer bullets, and automatic weapons fire in single-shot and burst modes. Because Vegas didn't dumb down its subject matter one bit, it was one of the best games of 2006 and a high water mark for the Rainbow Six series and the shooter genre alike.

Now Ubisoft Montreal is back to finish what they started with Rainbow Six Vegas 2, a follow-up that's part sequel, part side story. The game opens several years before the events depicted in the original Vegas.

Previously on Rainbow Six Vegas...

The original Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six Vegas pulled a fast one at the conclusion of its single-player campaign, climaxing the storyline with a key betrayal, a cliffhanger ending, and a cryptic "To Be Continued." Vegas 2 promises to answer all the lingering questions about the first game...and rest assured, there will be no cliffhanger ending this time around. In fact, Ubisoft Montreal explained that because Vegas 2 will be the last Rainbow Six game to take part in Sin City, they want to end this story with a "bang."

Logan, the protagonist from the original Vegas, is MIA this time around. Instead, you play from the perspective of Bishop, a newly appointed Rainbow Six squad leader with a lot to prove. Rather than being stuck with a pre-fabricated Bishop, you can use the Persistent Elite Creation (PEC) mode to fully customize a male or female lead character. Better yet, that character will

have a persistent look, skills, and arsenal across all the modes, whether single-player or multiplayer. And as in the last game, you can plaster your face onto your character using the Xbox Live Vision camera.

Ballistics Test

We had an exclusive chance to play Vegas 2, and the early experiences were promising.

Vegas is nothing if not accessible: newcomers are often surprised by how simple the controls are despite the game's depth and realism. Veterans from Halo and, particularly, Call of Duty 4: Modern Warfare will be able to hop right into the action, as the controls deviate only slightly from standard shooter layouts.

Our exclusive hands-on multiplayer sessions highlighted several key gameplay themes in Vegas 2. For starters, bullet penetration and destructible cover put a new spin on the shooting dynamic, meaning that *where* you take cover is almost as important as *when* you take cover. High-caliber rounds pierce through thinner materials (wood, plastic) and gouge chunks off barricades and other cover. If your cover is being torn to shreds by enemy gunfire, you can use the new sprint command (activated by the left bumper) to hightail it to a safer position. These new features don't represent a drastic change—Vegas fans will feel right at home—but they do make raise the stakes and give the action a leaner, more menacing feel. So far, so good.

9DN7

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UNDER PRESSURE: Vegas 2 adds several new wrinkles, including bullet penetration physics (you can shoot through doors and other materials) and destructible cover that crumbles under weapon fire.

SIGNAL LOST: New to Vegas 2 is a Domination-inspired multiplayer mode called "Total Conquest." To win, a team must control three satellite dishes for 30 straight seconds. Because these matches grow increasingly intense as time runs out, Total Conquest is our favorite new mode in Vegas 2 so far.



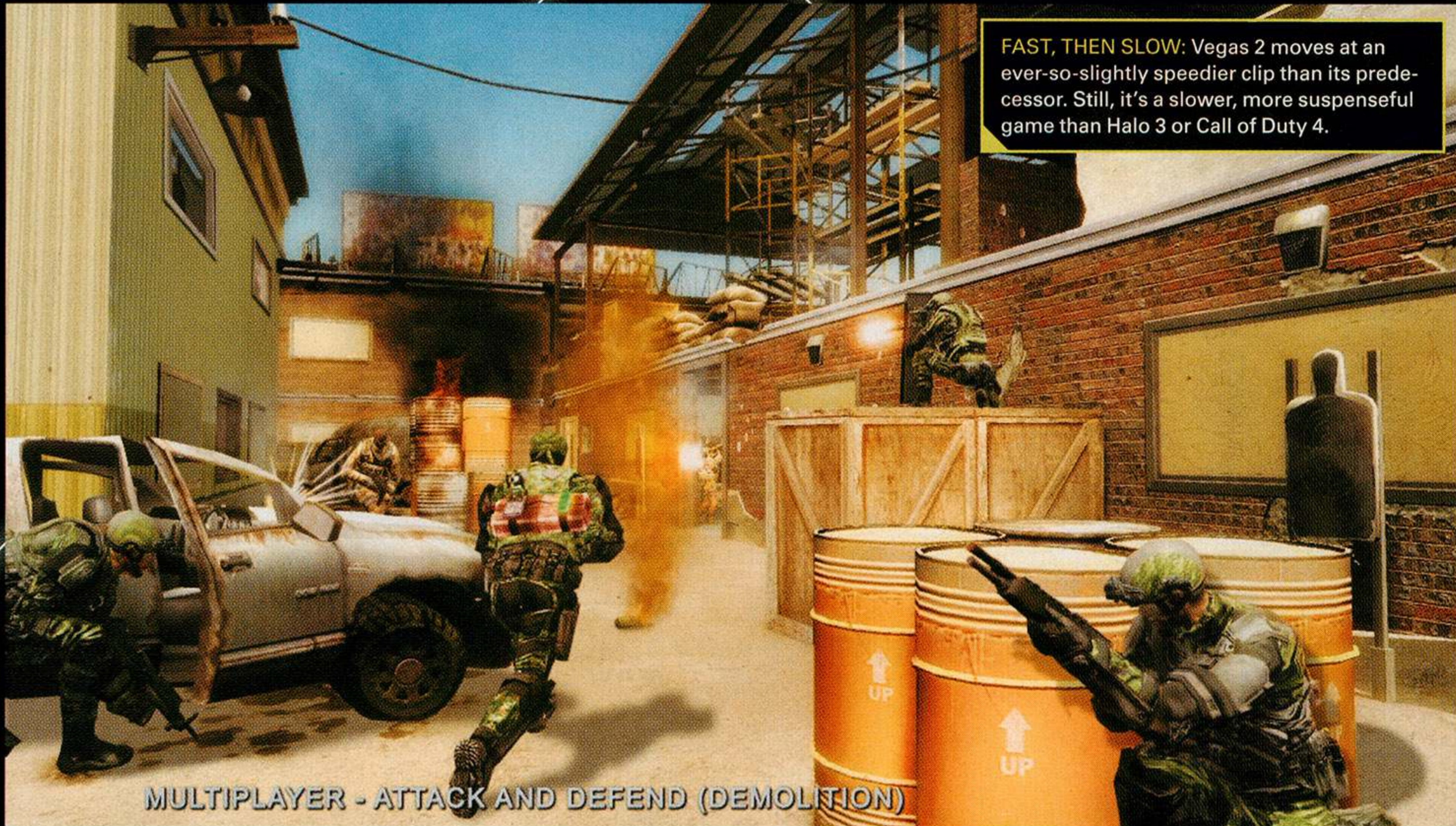
Tom Clancy's **RAINBOW SIX VEGAS 2** VS. **CALL OF DUTY 4 MODERN WARFARE**

The comparisons are inevitable. Call of Duty 4: Modern Warfare or Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six: Vegas 2? Both games are excellent, but here's where each excels.

	Call of Duty 4	Vegas 2
Realistic weapon behavior	★	★
Insanely realistic weapon behavior		★
Persistent character for online	★	★
Persistent character across all modes		★
Speedy, twitch-based moving and shooting	★	
Slower, stealthier creeping and ambushing		★
Survival traits: Accuracy, speed, tenacity	★	
Survival traits: Forethought, patience, teamwork		★

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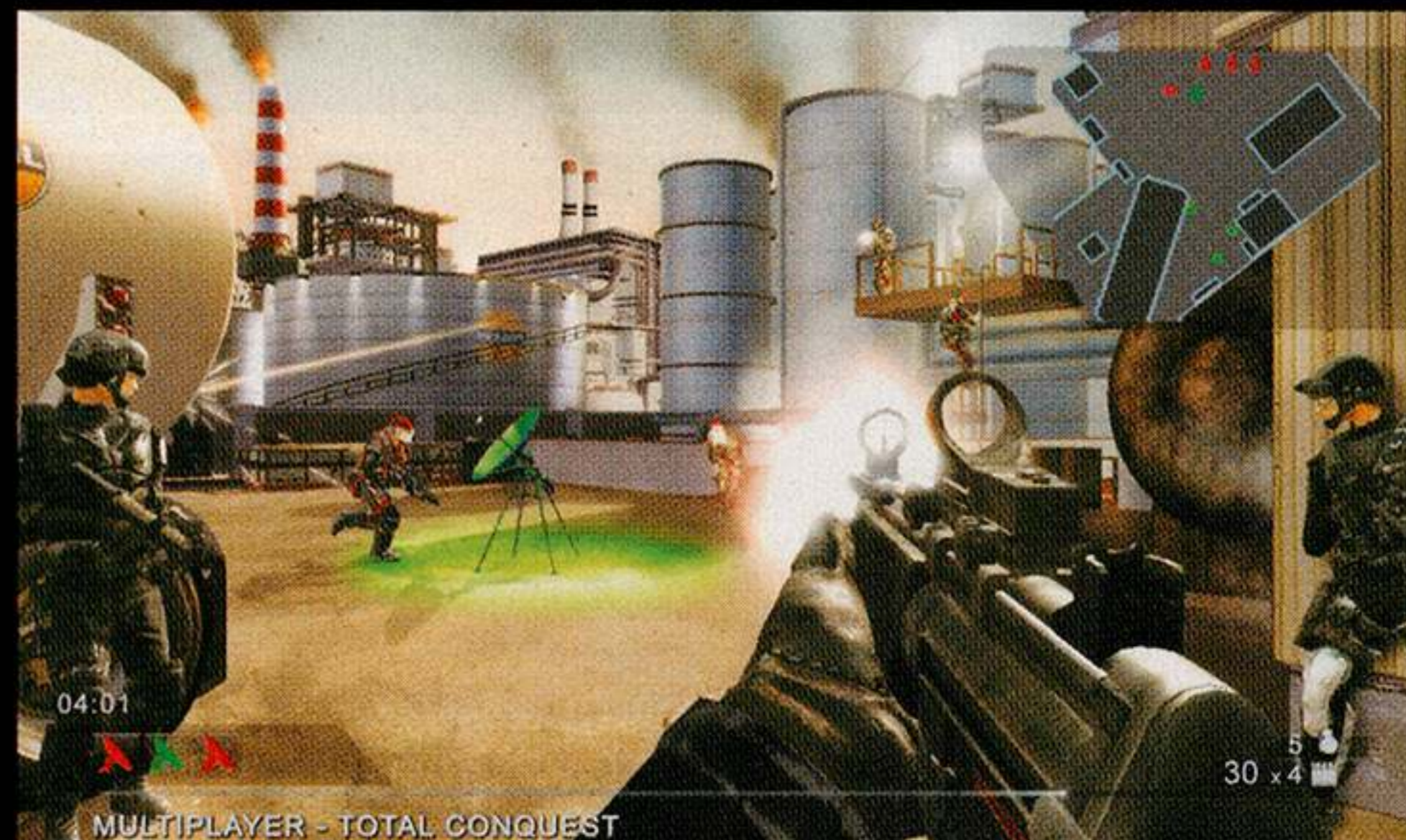
The Perfect Shooter



MULTIPLAYER - ATTACK AND DEFEND (DEMOLITION)



MULTIPLAYER - ATTACK AND DEFEND (DEMOLITION)



MULTIPLAYER - TOTAL CONQUEST

Building a Better Shooter

Artificial intelligence, a strong suit of the last game, has seen a key upgrade in the campaign mode. Your teammates (returning Vegas vets Jung Park and Michael Walter) are far more helpful in a firefight, roaring out enemy positions ("Sniper on the roof!"), suggesting more appropriate weapons for each encounter, and generally acting like believable squad sidekicks. Enemies, too, are smarter than before, edging away from compromised cover and using more sophisticated equipment, such as ballistic shields. Flanking, surveillance, and teamwork will be more important than ever. Luckily, you can also dish out more damage by ordering your sidekicks to toss grenades at nearby terrorists.

But character customization was the main hook of the original Vegas, and Vegas 2 is upping the ante in a big way. Rather than earning experience points to unlock new guns and gear, players now must earn ACES (Advanced Combat Enhancement and Specialization). ACES are essentially skill points, and fall into three categories: Marksmanship (headshots, long-range kills), Assault (scoring multiple kills, using explosives), and Close Quarter (short-range kills, using flash and smoke bombs). ACES may end up being the biggest, best addition to Vegas 2, as you'll have far more control over what weapons you unlock, and when. If you prefer to play as a sniper, you can focus on nailing headshots to quickly unlock the high-end sniper rifles. But you aren't pigeonholed into a

class, either; you can unlock any ACES category at any time.

Like the original game, Vegas 2's Unreal 3.0-based graphics look crisp and vibrant. There are some noticeable visual improvements, particularly to dynamic lighting and some new particle effects, but overall Vegas 2 shares a similar look with its predecessor. One bit of good news is that multiplayer matches will boast nearly the same graphics fidelity as the beefier single-player experience, a welcome upgrade owed to careful texture optimization and programming wizardry. Lengthy level load times, one of the only maddening flaws from the last game, are noticeably shorter in Vegas 2. Overall, Vegas 2 feels like a more polished, balanced, and complete version of the first game. That's great news for shooter fans.

Hair Trigger

By the time you read this exclusive hands-on report, Vegas 2 should be mere weeks away from landing on the Xbox 360, PS3, and PC...and simultaneously, no less. Because it launched beside the massive Gears of War hype machine, the original Vegas never quite received the attention it warranted (though it sold like gangbusters). Now that Vegas 2 is releasing in a more forgiving March timeframe, we're betting it will find the massive audience it deserves.

If you've never played Rainbow Six before, this is the perfect time to take the plunge. Take it from us: Vegas 2 is money.

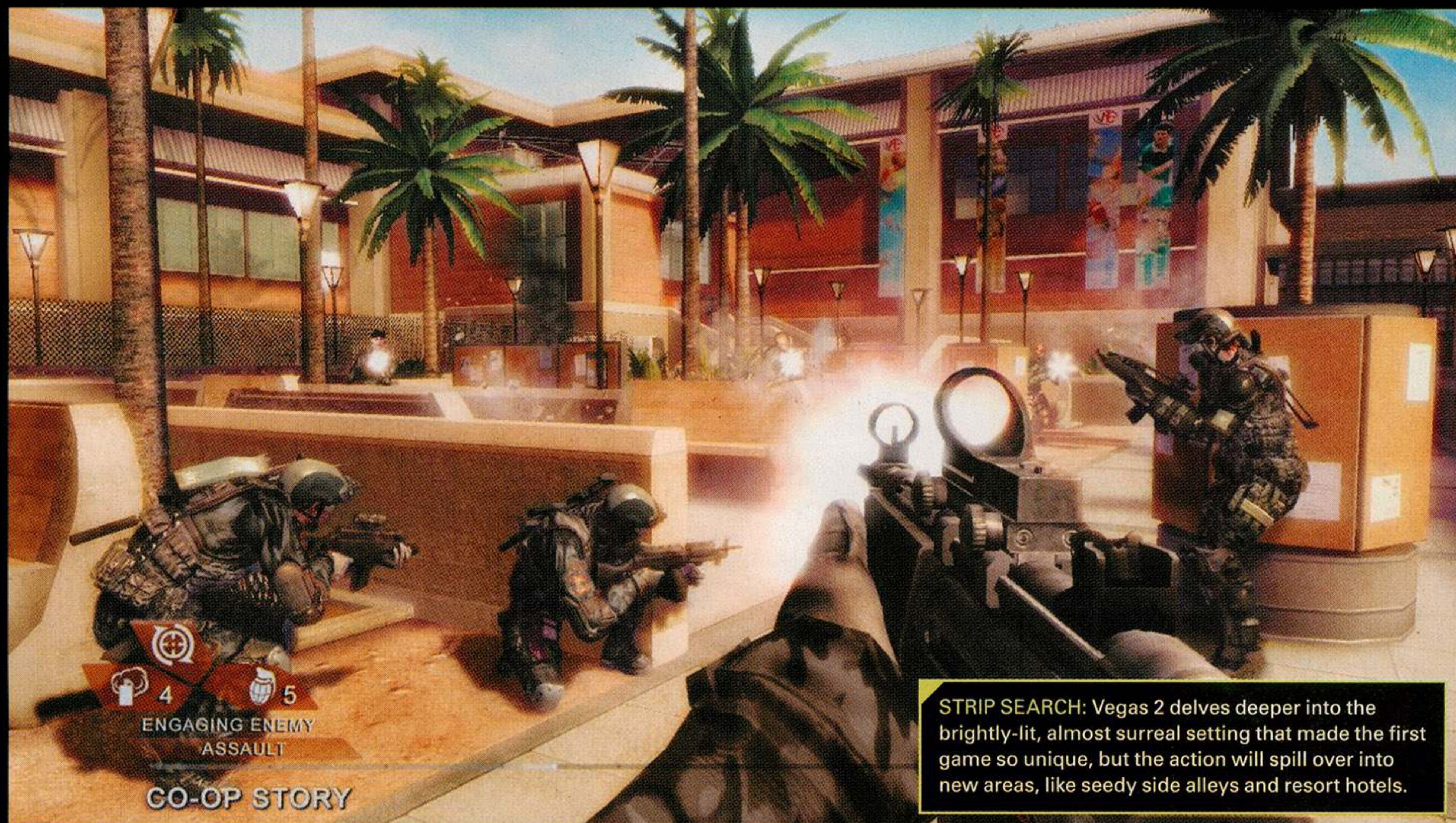
Happiness is a Warm Gun

Fanatic attention to weapon detail is a hallmark of the Vegas games. Here are our favorite examples.

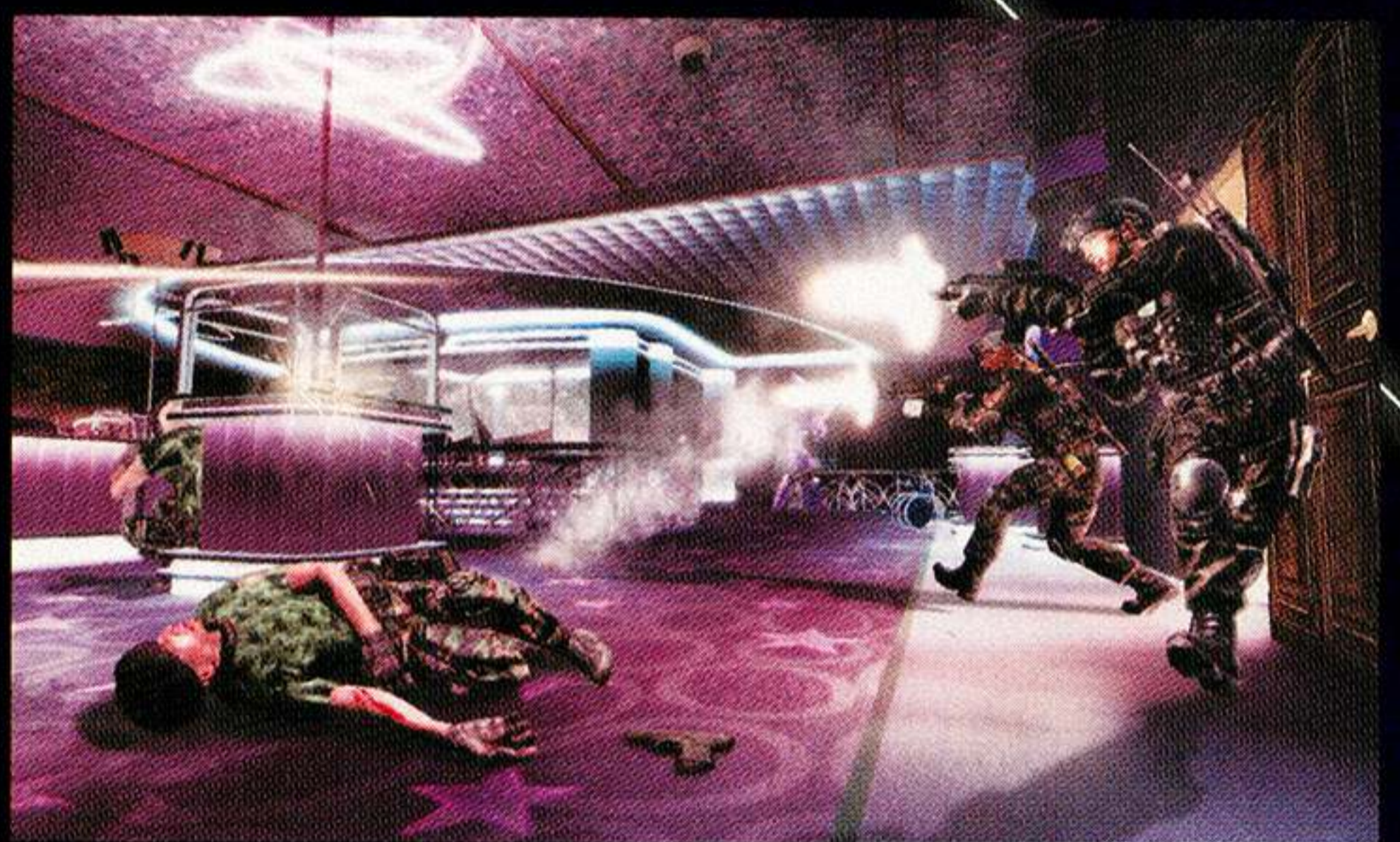
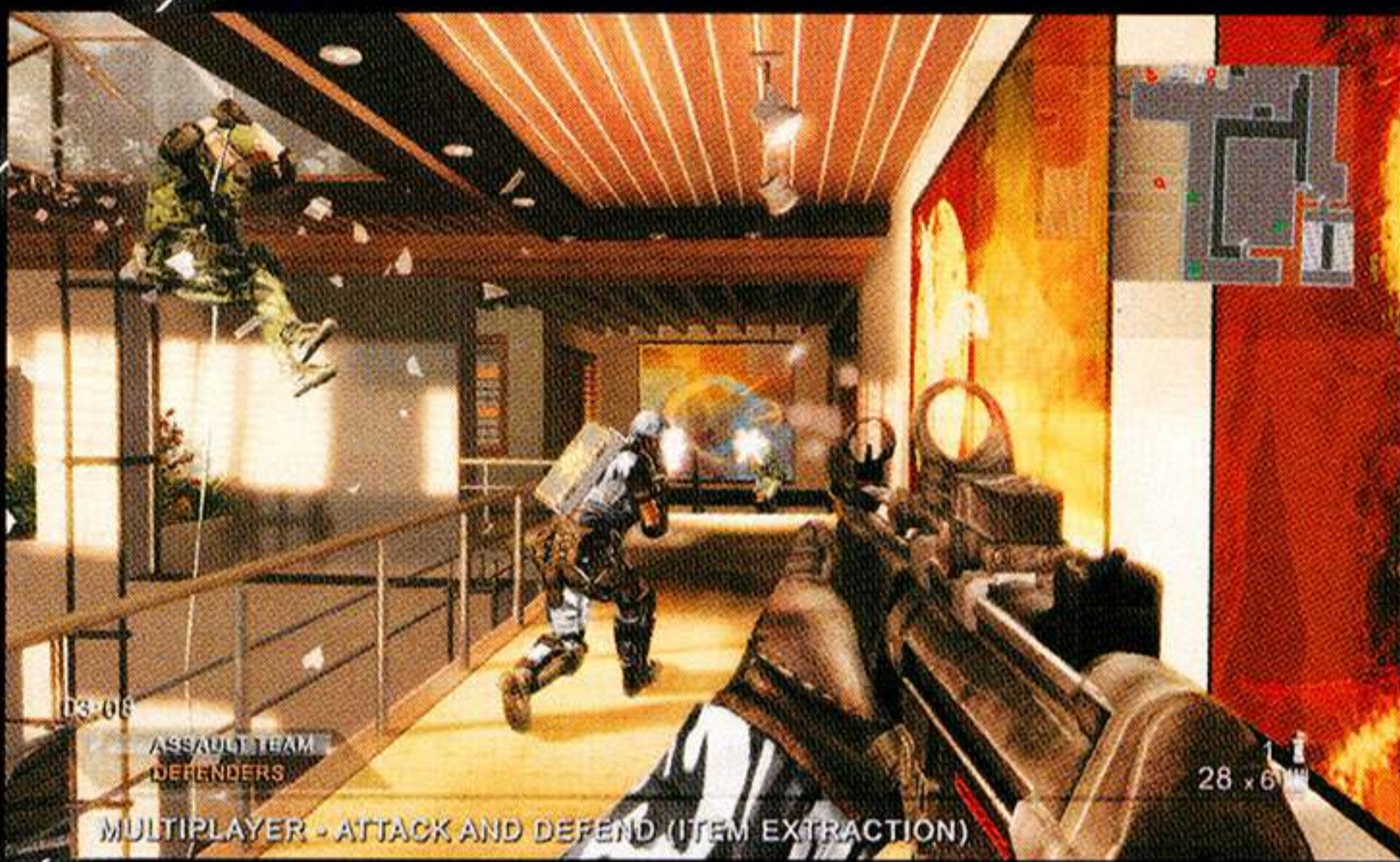


- Silencers increase accuracy by lengthening the barrel, though they sacrifice range and stopping power.
- Guns with 30-round clips can actually hold 31 bullets, with the final round loaded into the chamber and ready to fire.
- Most automatic weapons have multiple firing settings, everything from full-auto and single-shot to multi-round burst firing patterns.

CONTINUED ►



The Perfect Shooter



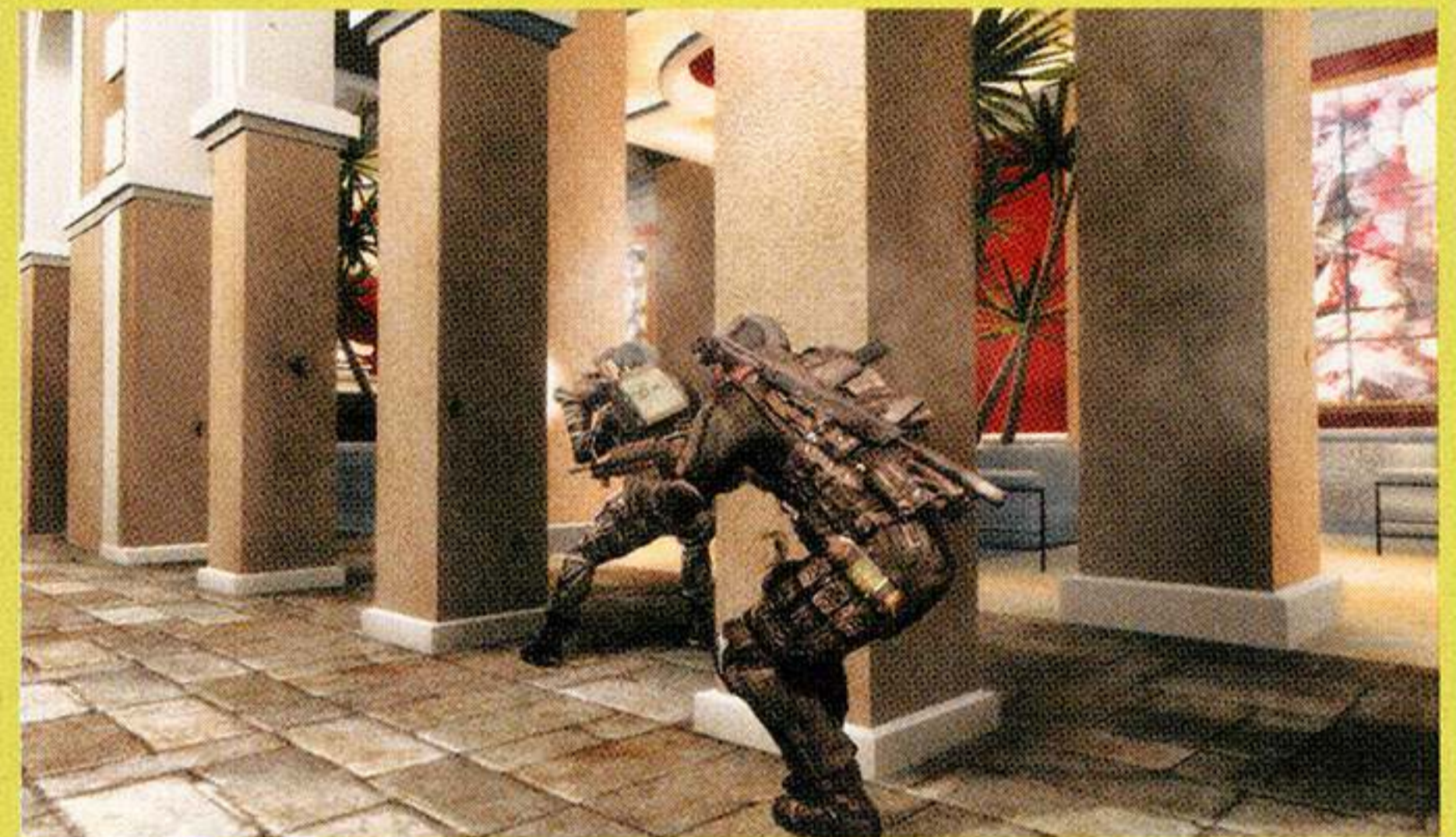


Leap Frog

Advances in artificial intelligence grant Vegas 2's combatants with more realistic behaviors. Case in point: a new tactical maneuver called "leapfrogging."



Squad members will cover you as you move...



...from point to point. Once you're behind safe cover, you can return the favor for your teammate...



...but watch out! Enemy squads will use leapfrogging, too. Be sure and stay on your toes!

CONTINUED ▶

Full Metal Jackpot

Vegas 2 adds 11 new weapons, bringing the grand total to nearly 50 guns in all. Here are early specs for the 2008 additions.

L96 Arctic Warfare



Type: Sniper Rifle

Considered one of the finest sniper rifles in the world, the Arctic Warfare fires 7.62mm ammunition and features an anti-icing design that makes it a must-have for frigid climates.

SR-25 SD



Type: Sniper Rifle

SOCOM fans will already know this bad boy. The SR-25 has a reputation for reliability and accuracy, and fires heavy-hitting 7.62mm rounds.

M468



Type: Assault Rifle

Less a dedicated assault rifle than an upgrade kit for the M4 and M16. The US manufacturer endowed it with heavier 6.8mm rounds for increased range and damage.

L85A2



Type: Assault Rifle

The British experimented with making a more compact 5.56mm assault rifle, and the result is currently in use by the Royal Marines.

AKS-74U



Type: Assault Rifle

The Soviet-designed AKS-74U is a re-thinking of the venerable AK-47 assault rifle, and boasts greater accuracy and impressive power thanks to its smaller rounds. In Vegas 2, firing assault rifles in bursts is more important (and effective).

FN FNC



Type: Assault Rifle

Short for Fabrique Nationale Carabine, so named for its Belgian manufacturer, this assault rifle fires 5.56mm rounds in semi-auto, full-auto, or three-round bursts.

VZ83 Skorpion



Type: Submachine Gun

This iconic weapon is actually closer to a machine pistol compared to the heavier rifles and SMGs, but it's highly portable. In Vegas 2, SMGs are considered to be the ultimate close-quarters weapon.

AUG Para SMG



Type: Submachine Gun

The compact bullpup design is effective for close-range encounters, and the 9mm rounds cut down on recoil. Despite its lethal nature, the AUG looks strikingly elegant.

Type 05 SMG



Type: Submachine Gun

This Chinese-made SMG comes with a compact, pistol-like design. It's relatively new on the international scene, and fires smaller 5.8mm rounds that boost the magazine capacity to 50.

Mossberg 500 Tactical



Type: Shotgun

A 12-gauge shotgun with enormous close-range destructive potential. In our test runs, we noticed that Ubisoft Montreal has boosted damage but cut back on range with all the members of the shotgun family.



P99

Type: Handgun

This relative newcomer was designed by its German manufacturer with a focus on law enforcement. Its efficient hammerless design eases the strain of trigger pull. Vegas 2 pumps up the effectiveness of all its handguns, offering a faster firing rate across the board. **GP**

Know Your Ammo

Can't tell buckshot from your backside? Brush up on the basics with this handy field guide to the most popular ammo types found in Vegas 2.



• 5.56mm NATO

Though smaller than its predecessor, the 7.62mm, this efficient projectile is the modern choice for rifles and some SMGs.

• 7.62mm NATO

A larger rifle round that's well-suited to assault and sniping roles, it combines stopping power with long-range accuracy.



• 357 Magnum

Considered the most punishing handgun ammunition, this large round kicks like a mule but shreds through combat armor. Vegas 2's Desert Eagle is chambered for .357 rounds.

• 9mm Parabellum

A popular choice for semi-auto handguns and submachine guns, the 9mm (hollowpoint in Vegas 2) is an inexpensive round with moderate recoil. It's best reserved for close-range encounters.



• 50 BMG

This enormous bullet is a top choice for high-powered sniper rifles and heavy machine guns.



2008

Shooter Shoot-Out

Cast a glance at 2008's first-person shooter release calendar, and you'll see all the genre staples represented, from earthbound militaristic bombast to supernatural science fiction. Some games are focused on inspired next-generation refinements of tried-and-true gameplay mechanics, while others seem out to reinvent what the genre stands for. Whatever your action preferences, your trigger finger's about to get one hell of a workout this year. *By Cameron Lewis*



Killzone 2

Killzone 2's gorgeous tech could make it the PS3's first mega-hit.

One way or another, the third game in the Killzone franchise will be a critical release for the PlayStation 3. For all the raw power offered by the platform, it hasn't yet seen a true monster hit to call its own. Fortunately for Sony, Killzone 2 never has been a stranger to high expectations.

Great Expectations

Viewers of the game's pre-rendered E3 2005 video expressed disbelief that such stunning visual quality could be rendered in real-time, but the naysayers have had to eat considerable crow since the appearance of gameplay footage that comes surprisingly close to that seminal presentation. Every character, from ISA soldiers to Helghast troopers, boasts greater fidelity than an entire level of the original game, and moves with utterly convincing fluidity whether vaulting a rail, barking an order or collapsing to the ground in death like a sack of potatoes. Silky smooth motion capture performances blend with real-time physics calculations: tag an enemy in the shoulder, and he'll pivot in direct proportion to the force of the blow, spraying crimson fluid that pools and stains the grimy world around him.

The huge environments teem with destructible debris, and every fleeting frame is packed with features that exist to suck players into the action. Smoke and cinders swirl in the air, flames leap and spread from wreckage to bystanders, and electricity pounds buildings in a breathtaking display of production design prowess. Every aspect of Killzone 2's visuals seems tailored toward cinematic immersion, right down to the bare essentials of a heads-up display that only obscures your view to convey vital information like ammo counts and weapon switching opportunities, while 7.1 surround sound support calculates audio occlusion and reflection effects to make wide open arenas and constricted hallways sound appropriately different during the din of combat.

Spit & Polish

When each seamless and streaming level of the Helghast home world takes up two gigabytes or so, you can start to see the tangible value of Blu-ray's storage capacity. But the designers seem to know that all the gorgeous textures and particle

So many shooters, so little time! These handy icons will help you evaluate each game at a glance.

Legend



Brilliant A.I.



Co-op Focus



Customizable Guns



Extraterrestrial Enemies



Fright Fest



Futuristic Weapons



High-Pressure Gameplay



Hyped to Oblivion



New Franchise



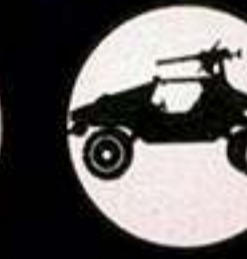
RPG Twist



Slo-mo Motion



Unnatural Opposition



Vehicle Combat



PlayStation 3
 Developer: Guerilla Games
 Publisher: Sony
 Fall 2008



Brilliant A.I.



Extraterrestrial Enemies



High-Pressure Gameplay



Hyped to Oblivion

effects in the world can't prop up stale gameplay. Killzone 2 isn't concerned with differentiating itself via gimmicks and distractions: its design is wholly centered around making the nearly constant shooting that dominates the experience as fun and varied as possible. Bosses, such as a chain gun-wielding brute, punctuate firefights with less resilient shock troops, and improved A.I. means they're all constantly aware of what breakable objects, your likely nearby hiding spots, and how they might best utilize the disintegrating nooks and crannies around them.

Cover is an important part of your defensive arsenal as well. Run up to a wall of sheet metal, tap a shoulder button to latch onto it, then lean and peek with substantially diminished peril. Whether you dart from one edge to another, tilting out and squeezing off streams of white hot metal, or spray blind fire across a wide area, you'll remain in the first-person perspective at all times. Being able to see over and around your cover seems a little strange if you're supposedly crouched down behind it, but it also saves you from spending too much time staring at rusty metal up close.

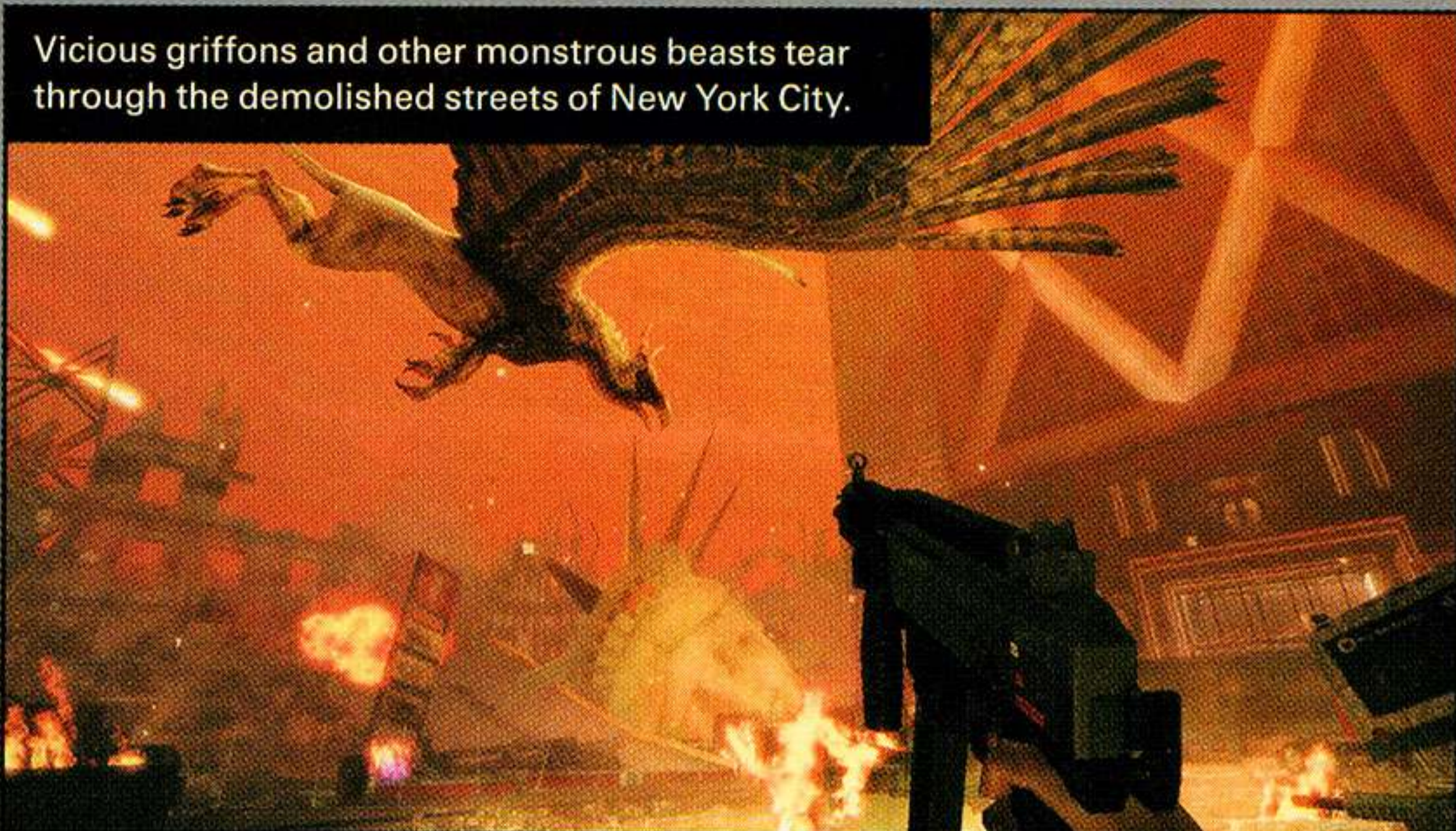
Multiplayer Mystery

Precious little is known about Killzone 2's online play at this point, though its existence is certainly assured. We've heard talk of ranking and reward systems, and the developers have to know how high the online bar is raised in the wake of Call of Duty 4, Team Fortress 2 and Halo 3, but concrete specifics are under tight wraps. Deathmatch is a no-brainer, and it's not hard to imagine a multiplayer remix of the solo campaign's long series of military objectives, but when tantalizing hints have been dropped involving alien weather systems and the potential for vehicles, Guerilla Games could have just about anything hidden up its sleeves.

The biggest question mark for Killzone 2 is whether its thoughtful refinements of classic genre elements will be enough to turn it into the breakaway hit that PlayStation 3 purveyors and purchasers alike desire it to be. However the sales numbers shake out, though, it'll undoubtedly be remembered as one of the most aesthetically ambitious titles of 2008.

CONTINUED ►

Legendary



Vicious griffons and other monstrous beasts tear through the demolished streets of New York City.

PC, PlayStation 3, Xbox 360
 Developer: Spark Unlimited
 Publisher: Gamecock Media Group
 Mid 2008



Brilliant A.I.



New Franchise



High-Pressure Gameplay



Unnatural Opposition

When Charles Deckard opens Pandora's Box, the modern world is suddenly beset by all manner of mythical creatures hell-bent on reducing our pitiful civilization to rubble. Luckily, the breached container also marks the man, giving him the ability to siphon health off fallen creatures. Downing them might be a problem, though: we're talking packs of werewolves,

charging minotaurs, flocks of griffons the size of cement mixers, and golems that tower a dozen stories over the streets of New York City. You'll even battle cunning humans and freaks of mythology simultaneously in a three-way blaze of intense fantasy firepower that promises to upend the traditional patterns of FPS play.

Fallout 3



Futuristic Weapons



Customizable Guns



RPG Twist



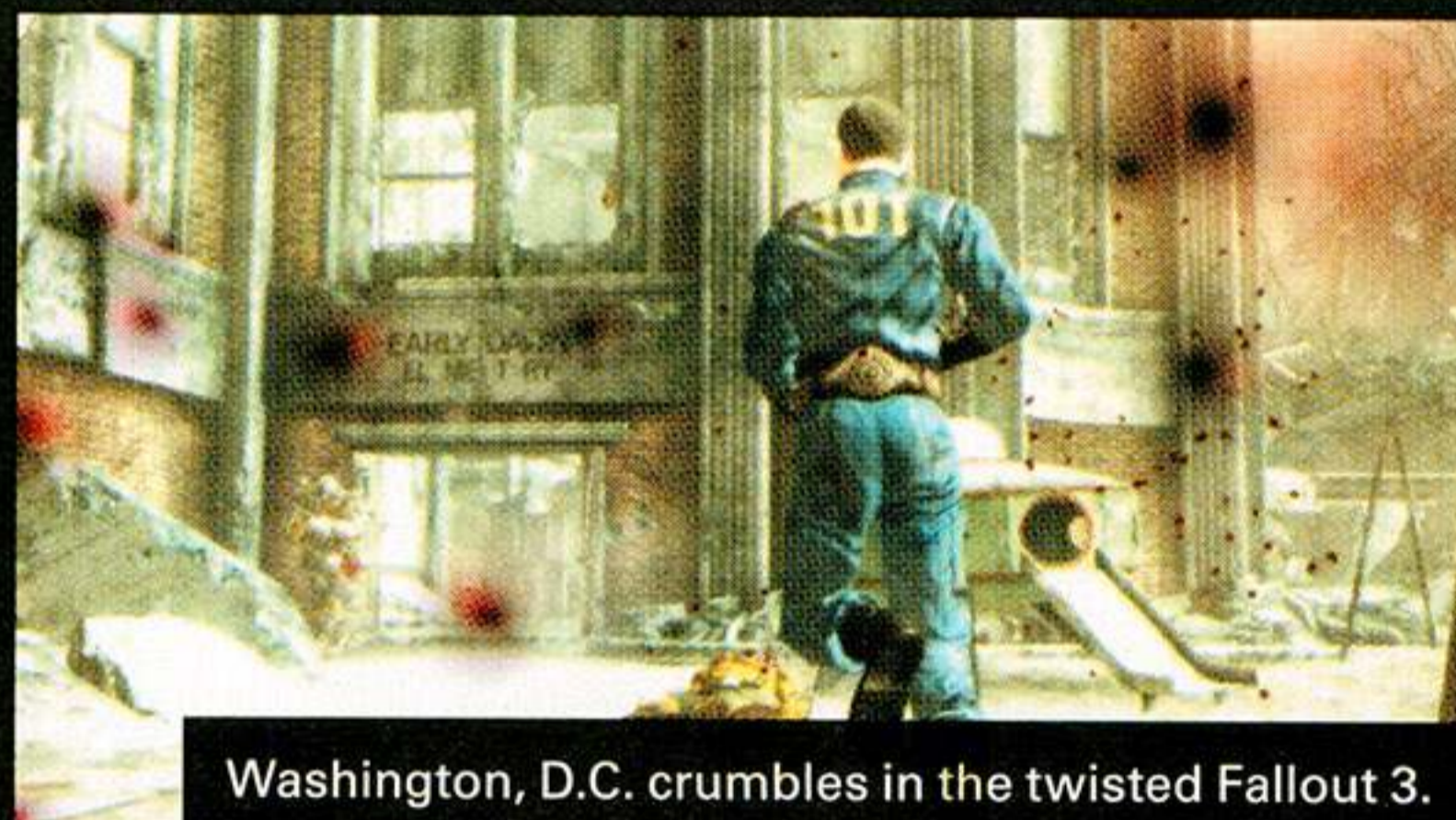
Hyped to Oblivion



Unnatural Opposition

Fallout 3 is bringing all the twisted personality that made the original adventures cult favorites, into the first-person realm, but instead of wandering the tiled isometric wastelands of post-apocalypse California, you'll search for your missing father amid the dangerous outlying suburbs and crumbling urban sprawl of Washington, D.C. from a first-person perspective. Quests feature some remarkably tangible consequences for moral decisions, whether you detonate a nuke or execute the wrong crazed raider, and we're just itching to try out the unique VATS combat system, which will let you pause fights to spend action points and queue up brutal targeted attacks.

PC, PlayStation 3, Xbox 360
 Developer: Bethesda Softworks
 Publisher: Bethesda Softworks
 September 2008



Washington, D.C. crumbles in the twisted Fallout 3.

Resistance 2

Resistance: Fall of Man is the PS3's first (and only) mega-hit, selling well over two million copies so far. But developer Insomniac Games is already hard at work on the inevitable sequel, tentatively called Resistance 2, and it's scheduled to hit the PS3 in fall of 2008. Here are early details on the game's online mode, partly based on a recent *Game Informer* story and partly based on inside word in the industry.

- Massive 60-player (!) online battles...but does "more" equal "fun?"
- Online cooperative play that supports up to eight players, the most we've ever seen for a shooter...but will coordination be a challenge?
- A special co-op only campaign mode, making for two full campaign modes....but is two always better than one?
- New "classes" for online play, including standard infantry, medic, and special forces-style roles...clearly an addition inspired by Call of Duty 4 and other pioneers.
- Online stat tracking through the Resistance website...another tip of the hat to Halo, which broke major ground with its online community features.

PlayStation 3
 Developer: Insomniac
 Publisher: Sony
 2008



Hyped to Oblivion



Unnatural Opposition



Co-op Focus

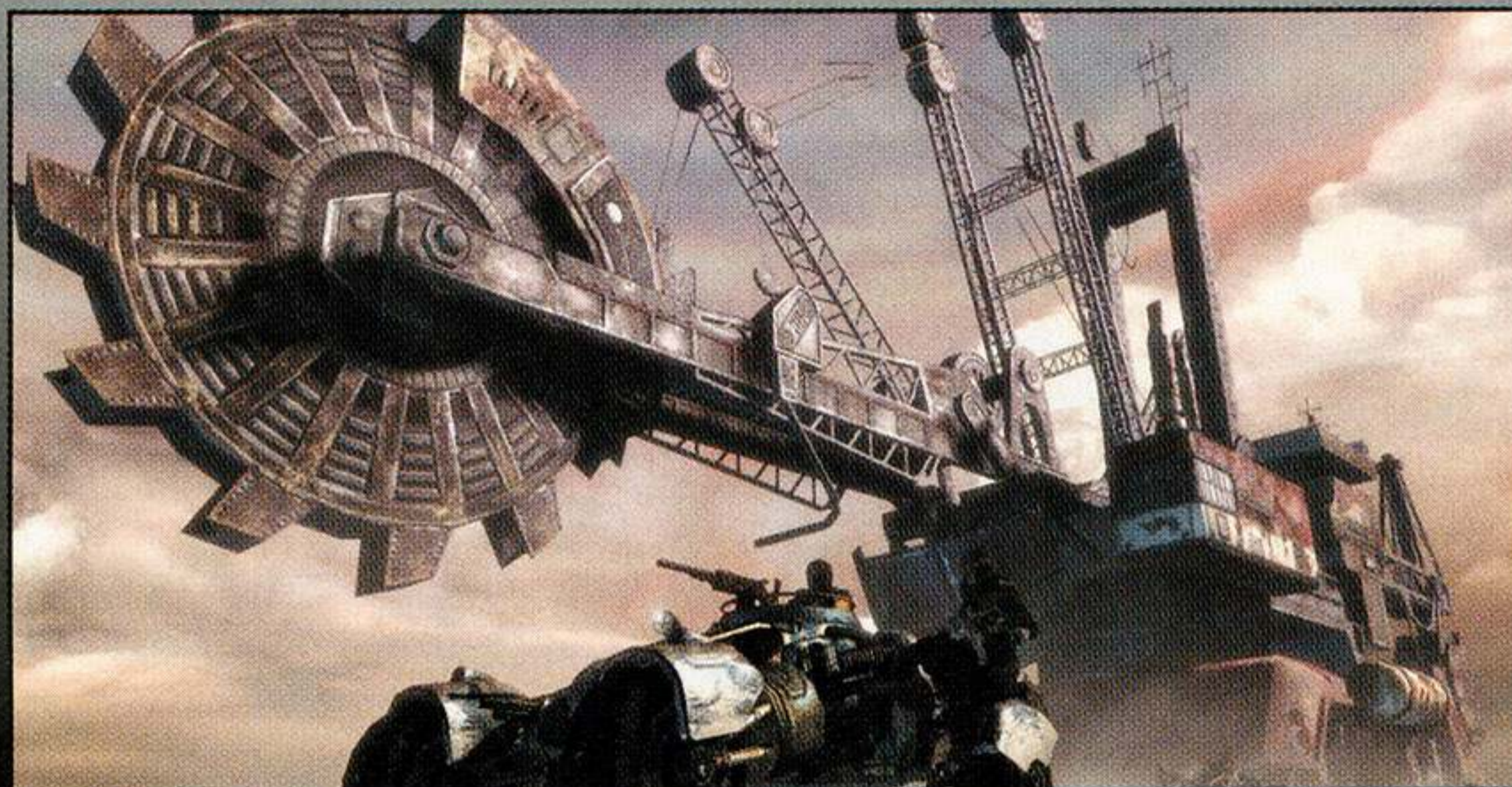


Futuristic Weapons



Check GamePro.com for the latest details, and stay tuned to the pages of this magazine—we'll have much more on Resistance 2 soon.

Borderlands



PC, PlayStation 3, Xbox 360
 Developer: Gearbox Software
 Publisher: 2K Games
 September 2008



Futuristic Weapons



Slo-mo Motion



Customizable Guns



Vehicle Combat



New Franchise



RPG Twist



Co-op Focus

Somehow on Pandora hides a vault of alien technology ready to unleash a shockwave of galactic technological change, and whoever finds it first is fated for riches and power beyond imagining. This science fiction epic—the first in a planned franchise—is a futuristic take on the same frontier spirit (and greed) that fueled our own westward expansion. Blend the Old West flavor of Firefly, the crazed marauding bandits of Mad Max, and Indiana Jones-style treasure hunting, and you're ready for launch.

Leveling Up

Borderlands is all about hardcore run-and-gun action, but it stirs in some tasty RPG-style variety. Whether you play as brawny Soldier, stealthy Hunter or a tweaked-up Siren capable of spawning time-slowing bubbles and environmental effects, you'll receive experience for every savage brigand or riled-up native creature you turn to crimson putty, and spend upgrade points on class-specific skill trees. Learn to jump forty feet in the air, increase your reload speed, or improve your innate ability to take a beating that'd cripple lesser men.

You'll need a vehicle to explore the variegated regions that lie between settlements and points of interest on Pandora's surface. Upgrade the armor and armaments on your rig and roll out solo, or take advantage of a meaty emphasis on four-player co-op. Online or off, take turns on turrets and passenger hardpoints, swap drivers at will, and tear through side quests that'll send you from dry salt flats and frozen tundra to the coast of the vast Mud Sea, squaring off against everything from scrawny scavengers to a twisted cross between a four-eyed rhino and a hairless mammoth.

Pandora's Pillbox

If the developers have their way, you won't face the same encounter twice, thanks to a game engine that drops bunkers, tower defenses, enemies and weapons on the fly. Don't call it randomization: every environment is intelligently designed, but brimming with appropriate inhabitants and useful items that evolve in unexpected ways from one engagement to the next. These goons don't just scatter a few bullets at the moment of death; they drop whatever they were wearing and shooting. If a couple of headshots don't bring a fool down, make sure you snag his helmet when he's finally twitching on the ground.

The loot possibilities are staggering. To say that Borderlands has over half a million weapons sounds like an exercise in specious marketing hyperbole, but we're not talking statistical differences and paint jobs. Instead of a vanilla stock of hard-wired pea-shooters, you'll run across insane oddities: three-cylindered pistols that shoot shotgun shells, pipes that spew balls of explosive cesium, and creepy biological monstrosities that fire heaven knows what brand of sticky poisonous goop. Add modifications, and the fabrication freedom is bound to be intoxicating.

There's no guarantee Borderlands will live up to its heroic promises when it rides into town later this year, but seeing such open-ended unpredictability fused with nearly every aspect of its design nevertheless leaves us in a state of sweaty anticipation.

Left 4 Dead

PC, Xbox 360
 Developer: Turtle Rock
 Publisher: EA Games
 June 2008



Fright Fest



New Franchise



Co-op Focus



Unnatural Opposition

You and three buddies work together to battle a viral outbreak that's turned the populace into nasty stampeding zombies. Each of the four initial campaigns is comprised of five maps that a seasoned team can plow through in an hour, from city streets to subway tunnels, but procedural placement of creeps promises to inject a ton of replayability because you'll never know where the next huge crowd of screaming infected nightmares is hiding. Death's not the end, either: succumb to a sneaky Hunter or knuckle-walking Tank, and you'll return as a boss creature to make life difficult for your former allies.



CONTINUED ►



Project Origin

PC, PlayStation 3, Xbox 360
 Developer: Monolith
 Publisher: Warner Bros. Interactive Entertainment
 2008



Slo-mo Motion



Brilliant A.I.



Fright Fest



High-Pressure Gameplay



Unnatural Opposition

You wouldn't know it from the title, but Project Origin is the sequel to 2005's F.E.A.R., an intensely violent and unsettling trip down the blood-drenched corridors of paranormal conspiracy.

Deadly Serious

Like the original, this is no ordinary ghost story, and it doesn't lighten the mood with any irony or tongue-in-cheek distractions. While many supernatural tales of terror are restricted to haunted houses or cursed families, the stakes of this alternate reality have never been higher, and the tone is one of single-minded intensity. The hallucinatory fever dream interludes that punctuated the first game are back, and the creepy little girl specter of Alma—mother of Paxton Fettel—has clearly been stocking up on the crazy pills.

When your Delta Force agent awakes in a deserted hospital after a surgical procedure, you've got squads of armored personnel and crazed nasties to contend with. The snazzy new goggles that serve as your H.U.D. let you receive transmissions from other characters, but the presence of a shield bar means med kits are gone, replaced instead with timed recovery from damage. This is but the first tangible clue to Project Origin's overriding design focus: sustained intensity, with minimum distraction.

Ghosts in the Machine

Early demonstrations reveal A.I. opposition as frightening as in the original, but the world itself is even more chaotic and destructible. Simply throw-

ing a grenade results in a swirling maelstrom of sparking electronics, detached limbs, dislodged lighting fixtures and blood splatter. You can kick over couches and gurneys to create temporary cover for yourself or obstacles for your assailants, but none of these foes ever seems to take one of those sitting duck "you can kill me now" intermissions that define the comparatively slow pace of many shooters. Luckily you'll have the same ability to slow time that the original Point Man enjoyed, not to mention a laser rifle that can ignite goons from a distance.

Project Origin isn't just about insane action, though. You can expect shocking moments that rely as much on eerie quiet as on sprays of bullets, revealing a remarkably creepy ambience birthed by the threatening shadows of noir-ish lighting, and music that punctuates disturbing discoveries. Monolith's sequel could be like playing the lead role in the best kind of horror movie—you know, one that doesn't just lather the screen with gore, but gets inside your head and nests there.

F.E.A.R. stood out from the crowd not because it had the most impressive graphics or the coolest weapons, but because you never quite knew what was going to happen next. Even if you were one of the many gamers who got to the end and still didn't really know what the hell was going on (not many did), you still felt like you'd been through a high-pressure wringer. Project Origin is set to build upon that exciting base by ratcheting up the tension wherever it can, and we can't wait to strap in for the white-knuckle ride.

Enemy Territory: Quake Wars

PlayStation 3, Xbox 360
 Developer: Z-Axis (PlayStation 3), Nerve Software (Xbox 360)
 Publisher: Activision
 2008



Futuristic Weapons



Vehicle Combat



Extraterrestrial Enemies



High-Pressure Gameplay



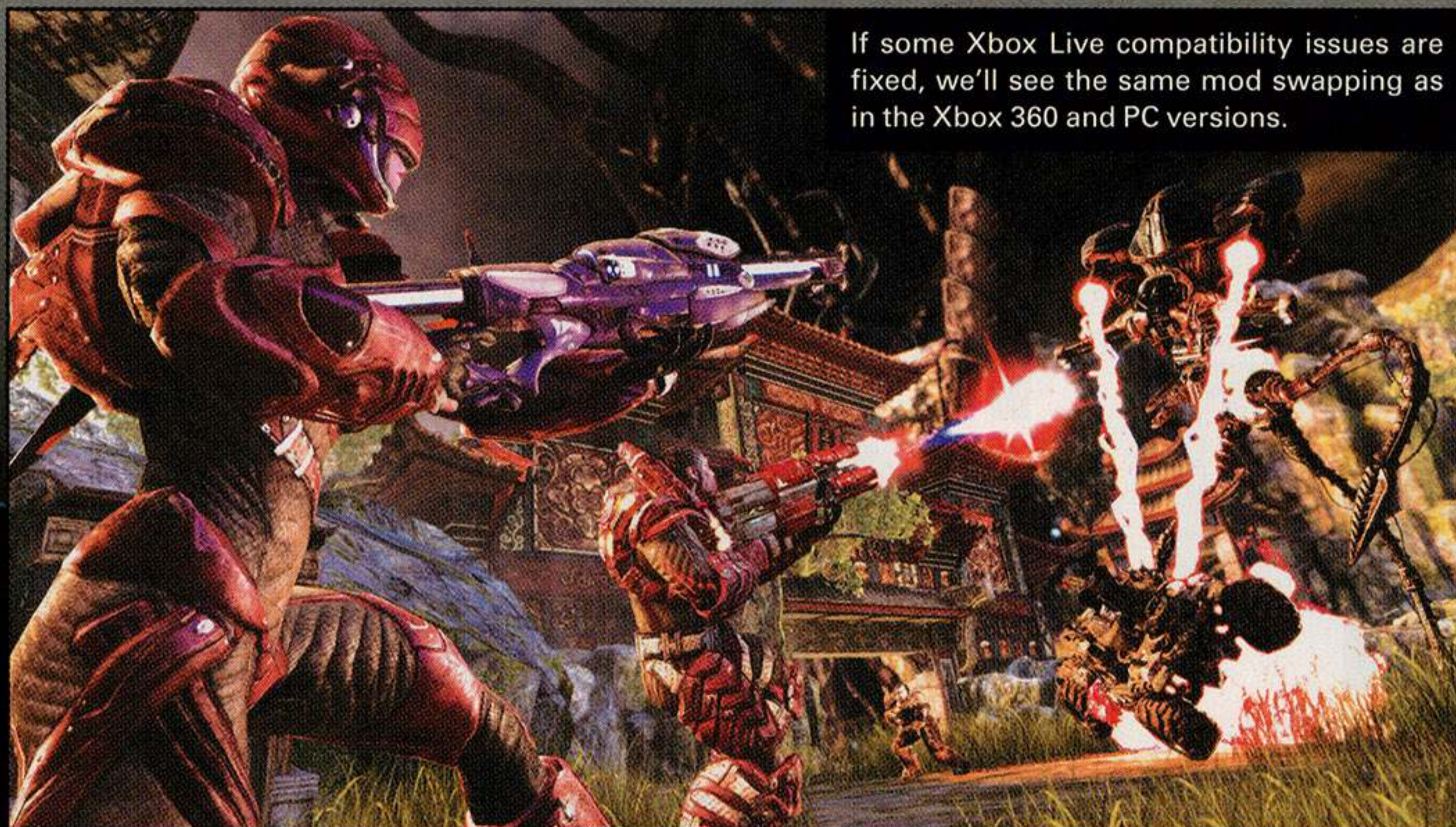
RPG Twist

Massive team combat at its finest, coming to consoles later this year.



PC gamers are already enjoying Quake Wars' online class warfare, which offers five different balanced and fun combat roles for human defenders and alien invaders alike, from soldiers and medics to sneaky covert agents and artillery-dropping engineers. Scrabble for territory by completing varied campaign-style objectives instead of camping a patch of dirt, or take control of thirteen different vehicles, from helicopters to tanks, and tear across twelve enormous and richly textured killing fields. You can even play a campaign mode where stats and bonuses carry over between three different incursions, lending a semi-persistent feel to each otherwise fleeting

Unreal Tournament III



If some Xbox Live compatibility issues are fixed, we'll see the same mod swapping as in the Xbox 360 and PC versions.

Xbox 360
Developer: Epic Games
Publisher: Midway
May 2008



Vehicle
Combat



Futuristic
Weapons



RPG
Twist



High-Pressure
Gameplay



Extraterrestrial
Enemies

Unreal Tournament III is built on an upgraded version of the engine that powered Gears of War, but its sheer speed of play stands in stark contrast to stop-and-pop caution: You're better off digging your own grave than wasting a moment looking for cover.

The Need for Speed

The best thing you can do to improve your own odds of survival is keep moving, and there are some slick new ways to get around these vast alien vistas in a hurry. Hop in one of eighteen different vehicles, from the speed-boosted Axon Scorpion assault buggy to Necris monstrosities like the two-person tripod DarkWalker, to get where you're going in heavily armed style. Better yet, bust out the new personal hoverboard and skate your way all over creation, cutting down on the travel time that used to plague players spawned out on the fringes. Be careful, though—take so much as a pellet of damage and you'll find yourself face down in the dirt and vulnerable to follow-up beat-downs.

Such simple additions to the straightforward and familiar gameplay of the series' past might not be revolutionary, but they seep down deep into every aspect of play. For example, flag carriers in vehicular Capture the Flag matches can't tootle off in vehicles, but they can snag a ride behind one Tony Hawk-style, or use a personal translocator to teleport short distances and confuse pursuers.

The More the Merrier

Unless major (and unlikely) changes are made, the single-player campaign will be forgettable despite the inclusion of four-player co-op, but think of it as boot camp for the endlessly frenetic battlegrounds of online multiplayer. Get set for a considerable collection of mirrored maps and asymmetrical choke points, along with a compelling Warfare mode, an update of the old Onslaught and Assault match types, where teams struggle to control goodie-dropping nodes with the help of powerful stalemate-busting orbs. Though the breakneck pace of the PC version is noticeably reduced on the PlayStation 3, this visually arresting slab of futuristic fragging is sure to be the fastest run-and-gun bloodbath around when it finally hits the Xbox 360.

So what's the hold up? Why is this version lagging so far behind the PC and PS3 releases? The answer lies in the series' past as something of a modders paradise, and though the PS3's open network lets players transfer downloaded modifications like new modes to the console via a USB drive or memory stick, the Xbox 360's tighter reins it more difficult on Xbox Live.

In fact, we're still waiting to hear how Epic Games and Microsoft will resolve the issue. You can be certain they know the stakes at play, however—the PC version hasn't sold anywhere near as well as expected, and the 16-player match limit is disappointing when even a Wii shooter can cram in 32. We're confident the Xbox 360 edition of Unreal Tournament III will be good, but only a favorable answer to this nagging open question can make it great. **GP**



Feature

Xbox 360 in 2008: The Complete Guide



Sorry PS3—the Xbox 360 ruled 2007. And with *Gears of War 2* and *Ninja Gaiden II* on the horizon, 2008 shows no signs of slowing.

By Chris Morell & Sid Shuman



Ryu dazzles with bloody blades in the most Westernized Ninja Gaiden game yet.

Xbox 360 Trick #1 Hand Me a Towel

A temporary cure for the dreaded red ring of death

Have an Xbox 360 that just went dead via the red ring of death? Try this quick fix for a temporary solution and a quick laugh. Wrap a towel around the console. This will heat up the dead solder joint and just might get the console running again. If it works, though, it will probably go cold again, but it's a quick solution if you want to say your last goodbye

Ninja Gaiden II

Tecmo's slasher goes mainstream, but still keeps a sharp edge.

After three iterations of Ninja Gaiden that began on the original Xbox, we're finally on the cusp of a true, honest-to-God Ninja Gaiden II. And just like the first game, Ninja Gaiden II will land on an Xbox console before it goes anywhere else.

It looks so violent. Will it make me hurl?

It's true—blood fountains, arterial sprays, and severed limbs are all on Ninja Gaiden II's menu. But the violence is more artistic, less grotesque—like Tarantino's revenge flick *Kill Bill*, blood is just the seasoning on a particularly juicy steak. Which, in the case of Ninja Gaiden II, is rapid-fire, non-stop slashing action. Ryu Hayabusa zips from enemy to enemy, hacking away with swords, scythes, and Predator-style bladed fists. Sure, it's bloody...but it's also so fast that the violence barely registers.

Meh, these games all look the same.

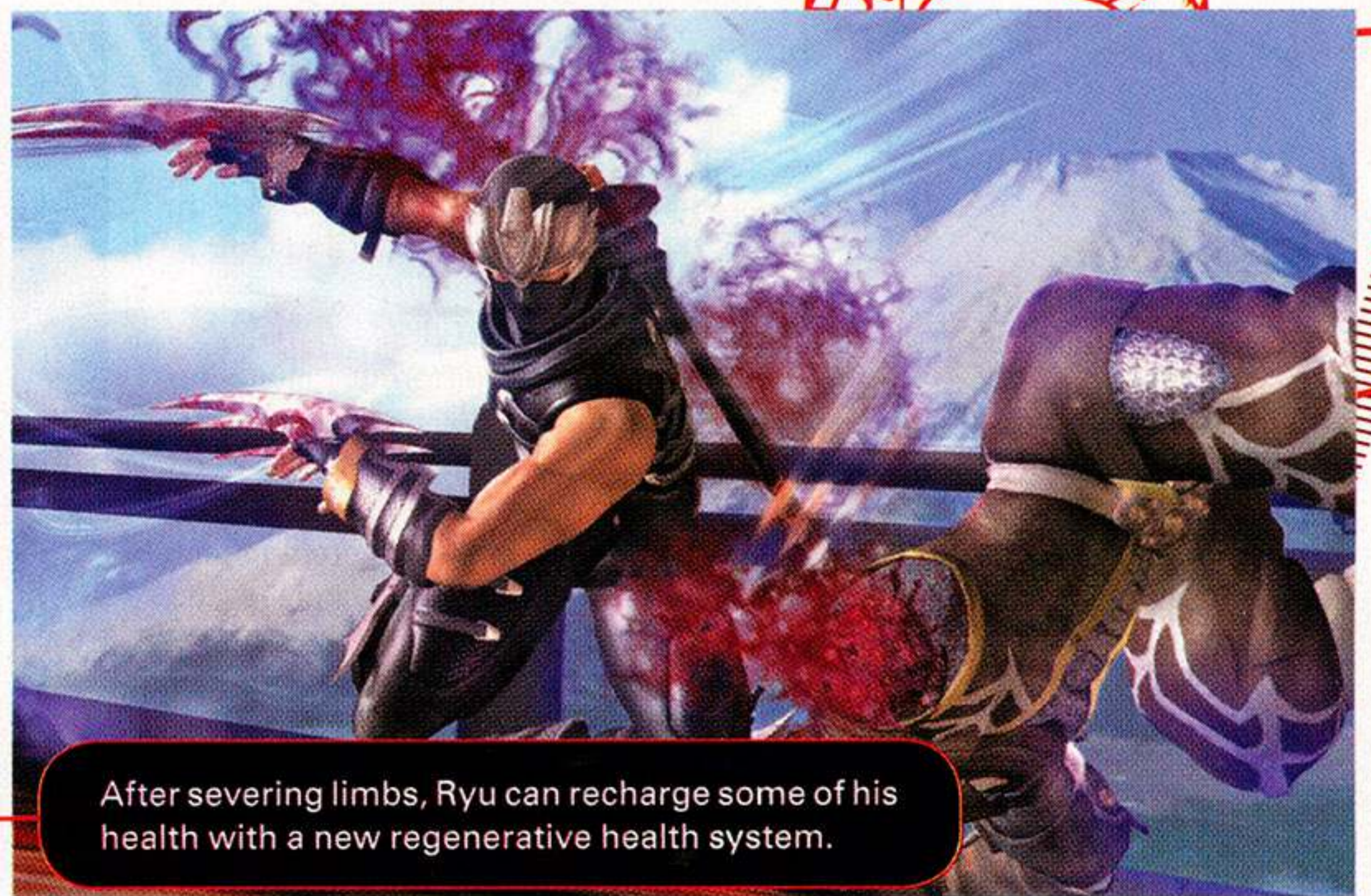
We still think Ninja Gaiden II is worth a look. Tecmo has completely rewritten the rendering engine, bringing you in closer and tighter to the action. It's also the best-looking Gaiden game we've seen yet. We had an exclusive opportunity to see the latest version of the game at Microsoft's Redmond campus, where Ryu danced through the level with blades of fury, severing limbs and heads off enemy ninjas. Though the game runs faster than before, we noticed more onscreen enemies and more advanced A.I. tactics. Ninja Gaiden II's enemies will fight to the death—even if you lop off a leg, enemy ninjas will brandish grenades and lunge at you for a fatal embrace.

But the other Ninja Gaiden games were way too hard for me.

Not this time. Ninja Gaiden creator Tomonobu Itagaki is notorious for demanding near-perfection from his players, but he's easing off on the hot sauce for Ninja Gaiden II. For starters, this game introduces a new, lower difficulty level—even easier than "Ninja Dog" mode from Ninja Gaiden Black. Ryu also has a lifesaving new ability: he can regenerate some of his health between fights, a Halo-like upgrade that will reduce the eyebrow-scorching difficulty another notch.

I like God of War's look and feel better.

Then you'll probably like Ninja Gaiden II too. Whether it's Microsoft's influence or an effort by Tecmo itself, Ninja Gaiden II seems to be designed with the American gamer in mind. Everything has seen a Westernized slant, from the art style to the controls. One example is the design of the game's heads-up display; you can access items and skills with the directional pad rather than diving into obscure menus. Combine that with the new regenerative health system and even better camera control, and Xbox 360 owners will soon be privy to the most accessible Ninja Gaiden game yet.



After severing limbs, Ryu can recharge some of his health with a new regenerative health system.

CONTINUED ►



Furious combat coats Too Human's wonderfully epic storyline.

Xbox 360 Trick #2

Movie Heaven

Play Divx videos on your Xbox 360

Have a slew of downloaded movies on your PC or Mac? We won't tell. So why not put them to use? With the latest dashboard update, the Xbox 360 can now play all your Divx video files. The compressed yet high-quality Divx format is pretty much the downloaded standard these days, and the 360's playback is flawless. Simply plop the files on a disc or use your 360 as a media extender to access you PC and fire up all your favorite TV shows. Bonus: Xvid and other video files are also supported!

Too Human

Microsoft and Silicon Knights have an answer to God of War, and it's only on the 360.

The saga of Too Human's development is almost as epic as the game's storyline. Originally envisioned as a five-disc PlayStation game, the developers of Too Human have valiantly stuck with the game's concept—essentially Devil May Cry meets Diablo II—and steadily reworked it during the course of at least three console cycles. Despite its drawn-out development process, and a flurry of negative buzz two years ago stemming from a too-early press screening, Too Human is finally approaching a climactic Xbox 360 release in 2008. And here's the big surprise: it actually looks damned interesting.

Well, what does it play like?

Too Human plays a lot like God of War or Devil May Cry, only with most of the puzzle parts cut out in favor of almost constant twitch action and RPG customizing. How you approach combat is based partly on your character class. Depending on how you equip your character and what skills you choose to upgrade, you might blast enemies from long range with rifles and SMGs, knock several foes into the air at once and slay them all with mid-air combos, wade into the thick of battle berserker-style, or a combination of all these tactics.

But the real hook might end up being the simplicity of the controls, which rely heavily on the Xbox 360 analog sticks. Holding the triggers readies your guns, which you can aim and fire using the right analog stick ala Geometry Wars. Releasing the triggers activates melee mode, and merely tapping the right stick towards an enemy will make you perform a dash attack. It's a simple system, but with the juggles and weapon types, seems to have some depth.

What's with the Vikings?

They're not Vikings, exactly. Too Human's backstory is based on a cyberpunk vision of Norse mythology. Your character is actually a god, a human embedded with enhancing microchips and silvery doo-dads. Though the storyline has been kept under tight wraps by the developer, it seems that your buddies, the Norse gods, are fending off an attack by an army of sentient machines who show signs of evolving. Wrapped around this Matrix-style plot is the Norse mythology, and we spotted characters based on gods such as Baldur and Odin.

Why should I care?

The five different character classes are designed to complement each other in battle, a must for any online action-RPG. Bio-engineer classes can enhance the abilities of themselves and nearby partners, while Commandos work to cover their teammates with rifle fire. The developers are putting a huge focus on online cooperative play, and hope to allow as many as four players to play together.



Too Human's Matrix-y plot is actually based on a futuristic vision of Norse mythology.

Fable 2

GamePro talks fighting, farting, and Fable 2 with Lionhead Studios' Peter Molyneux.

Is it an action game or an RPG?

"Yes, Fable 2 is still an action game. And yes, it is still an RPG game. It's up to the player as to how they mix those two elements together. You only earn experience and renown for completing quests; you earn money for jobs such as trading. If you wanted, you could end the game as a poor but famous hero, or as a rich hero who is less known."

Can I customize the dog sidekick?

"The dog morphs to reflect how good or evil you are, meaning that his appearance changes according to how you treat him and what you do in the world. But you can also buy a range of accessories: collars, toys, and treats...in both good and evil varieties."

Is it true one button controls all the combat?

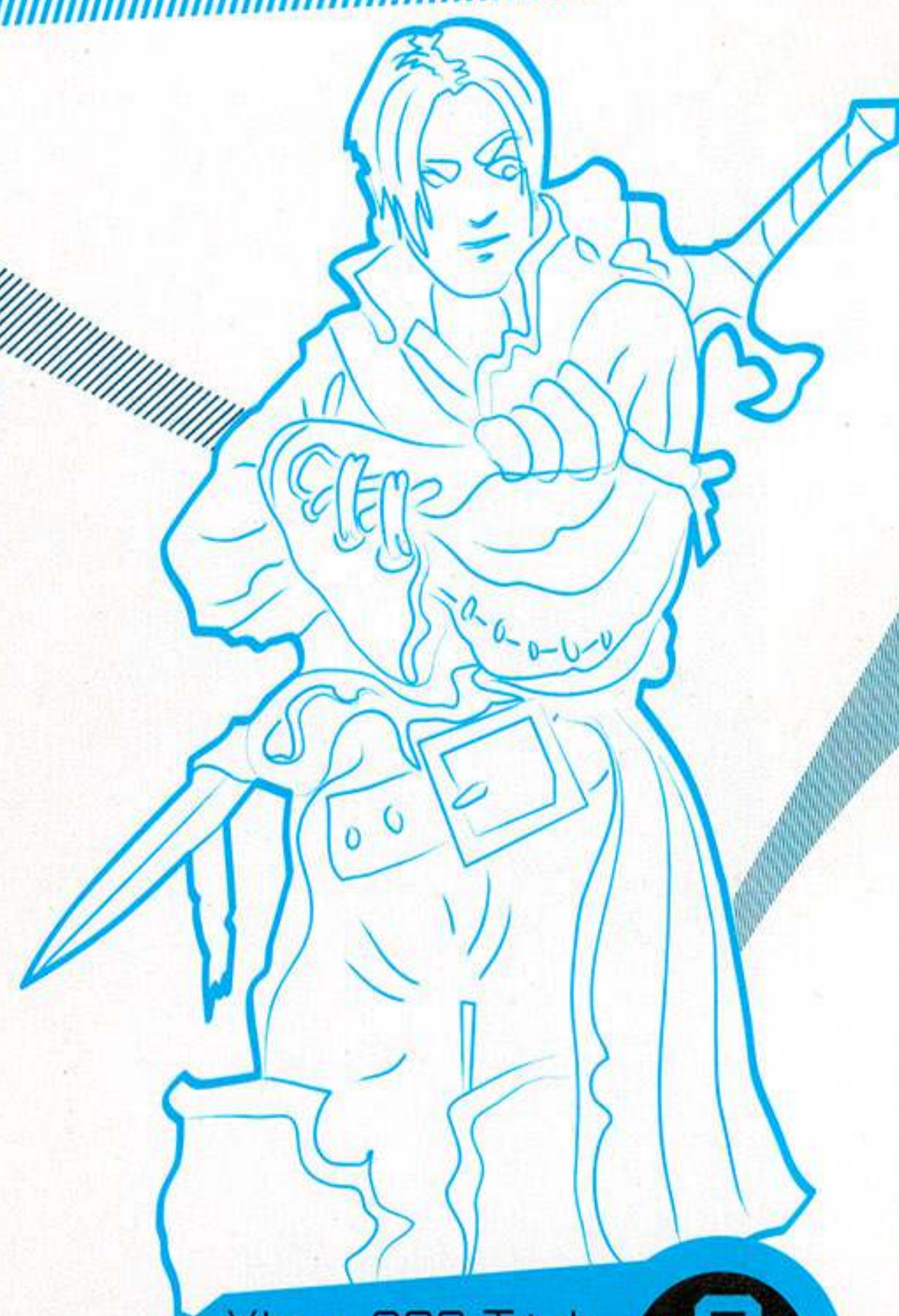
"Actually to be more precise, melee combat, including swords and heavy weapons, is on the X button. Guns and crossbows are on the Y button, and magic is on the B button. You can mash the buttons, hold them down, or combine them to swing a sword, fire a gun, and cast a spell in any combination."

Can I find enchanted weapons and items?

"Fable 2 has quest items ("the singing sword"), story-based items, and heroic items. You also have the ability to customize items and use augments. You can combine these in different orders on different pieces of equipment."

How can I interact with other characters?

"There are tons of new emotes. We have also introduced extendable emotes that allow you to extend an expression for as long as you like. I don't think I need to point out what that means for farting!"



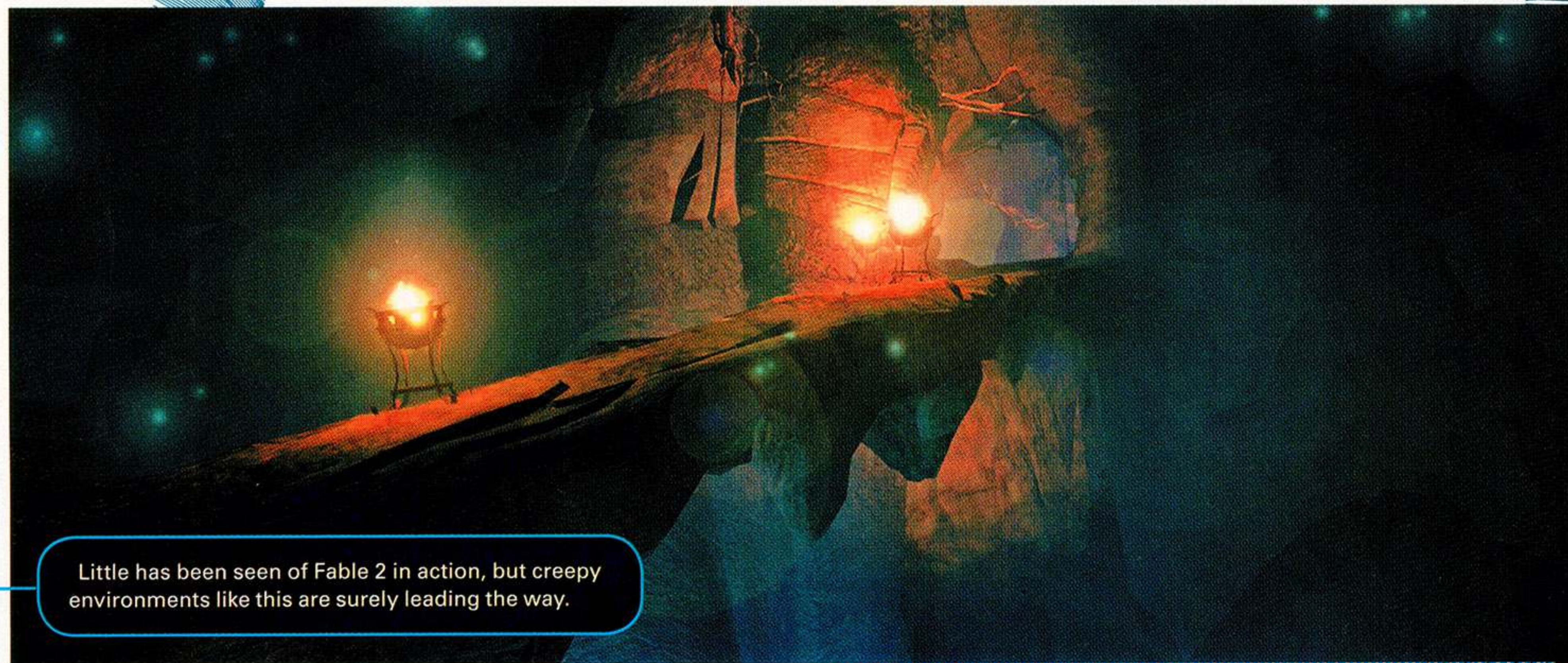
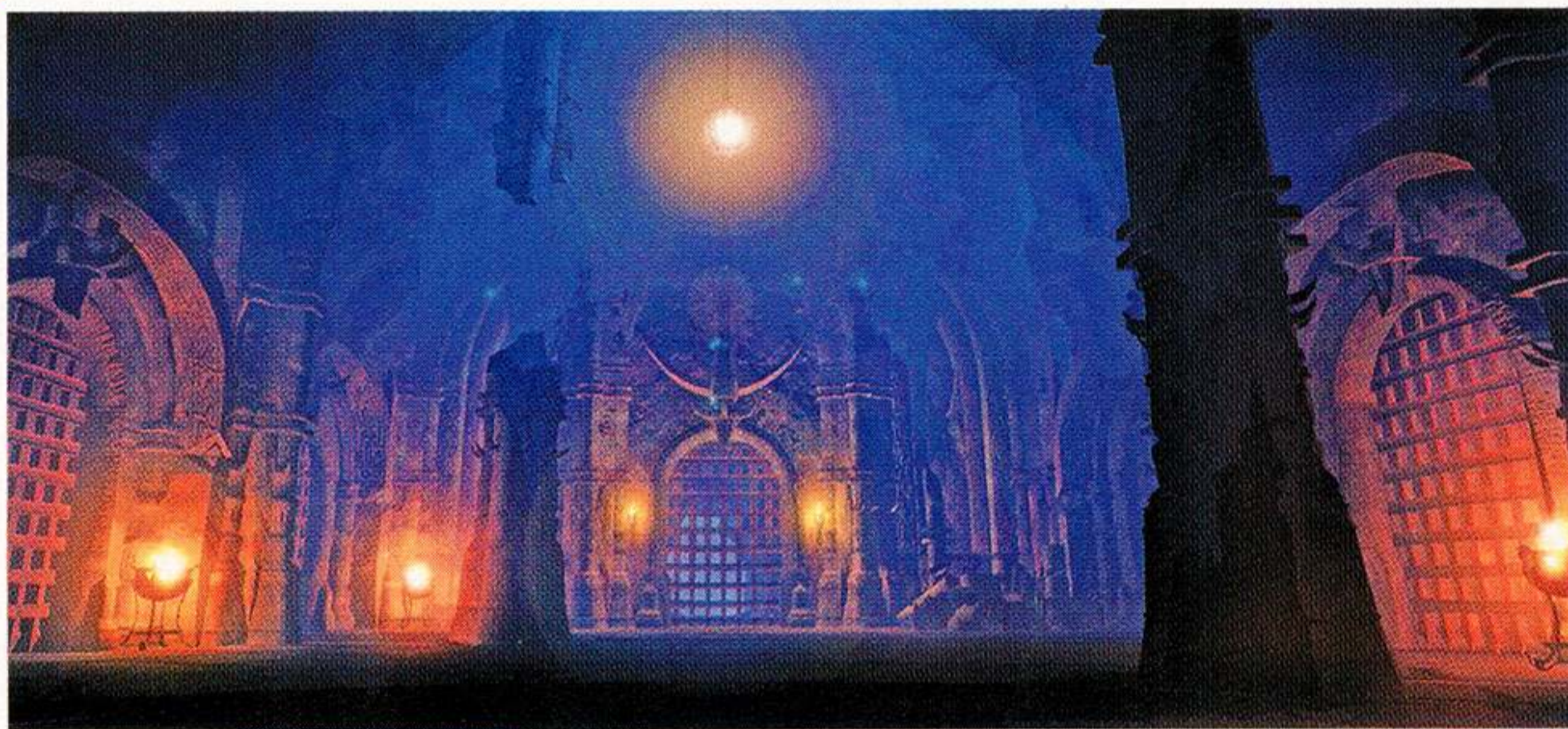
Xbox 360 Trick #3

Wii60 Remote

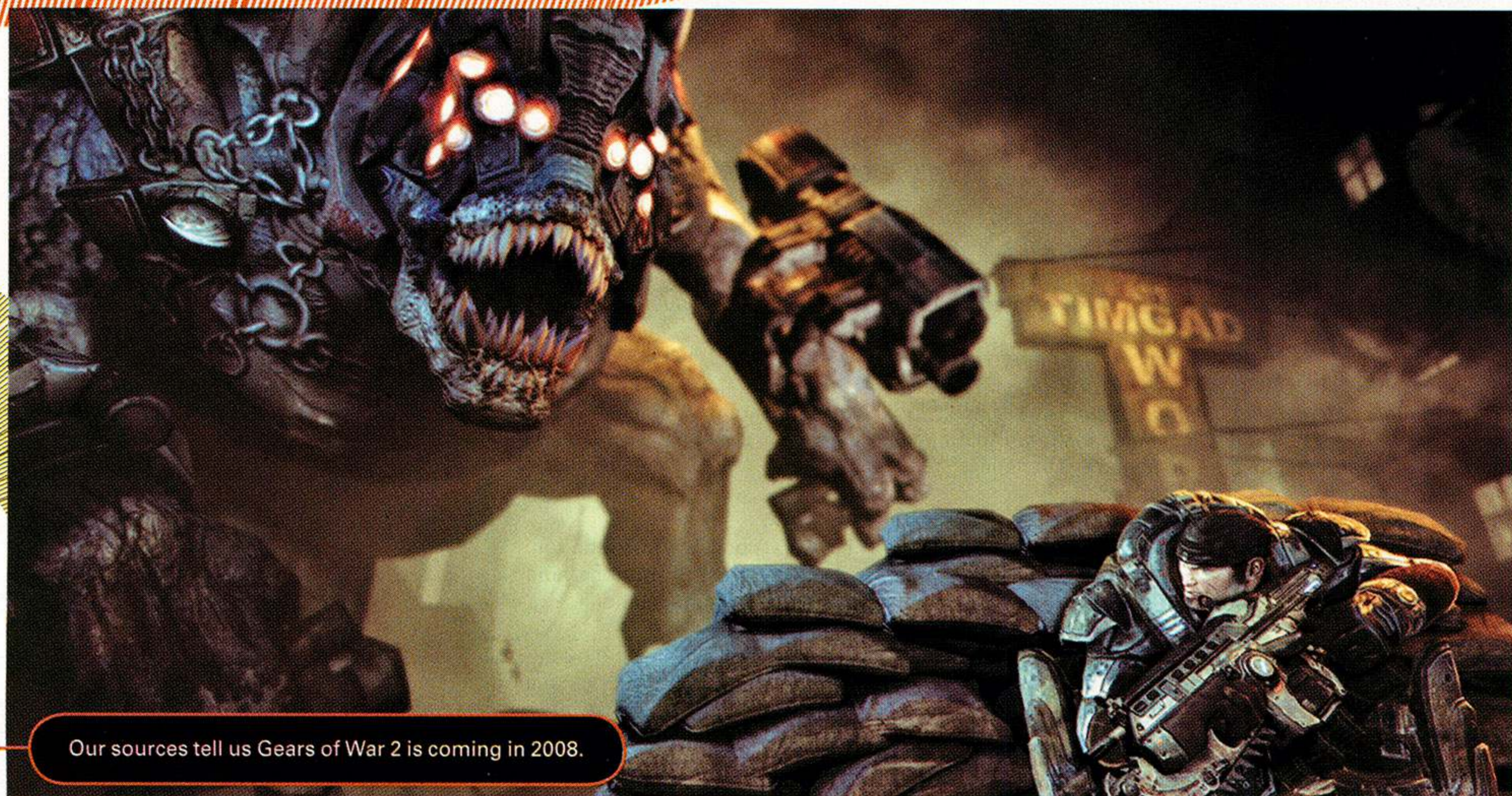
Use your Wii Remote to play Xbox 360 games

Not for beginners, but anyone with moderate hacking experience can mod their Xbox 360 controller to accept Bluetooth commands. From there, it's only a short step to getting the Wii Remote to send button input signals to the Xbox 360 console. Even more impressive is that another modder successfully got Wii Remote motion-sensing functionality working via a PS2 controller workaround. Halo 2 with a Wii Remote? Yes, sir. And there's a video to prove it. Google is your good friend.

CONTINUED ▶



Little has been seen of Fable 2 in action, but creepy environments like this are surely leading the way.



Our sources tell us Gears of War 2 is coming in 2008.

Gears of War 2

The Gears are In Motion

So much of the Xbox 360's first year success was dependent on Gears of War. And boy did it deliver. More than just a tide-over for Halo 3, Gears developer Epic's gorgeous shooter was the first real showcase of what Microsoft's console could deliver in terms of technological quality. And now that we've all seen Halo 3, it's even more impressive that Epic outdid Bungie's mega-franchise, graphics-wise, a year earlier.

And now, in 2008, Microsoft is counting on Epic even more. Halo 3 and Mass Effect are out, and the PlayStation 3 is picking up momentum with Metal Gear Solid 4, Killzone 2 and LittleBigPlanet, all potential upcoming super-hits. So all eyes are on Epic to deliver Gears of War 2 this year.

So is it coming in 2008?

Gears of War 2 hasn't officially been announced yet, but our sources rumor that the sequel to the Xbox 360 hit is indeed coming in 2008. And what better way for Microsoft to counter Metal Gear than with a few gears of its own.

But it's not enough to just retrace shooter territory in Gears 2. The first game was great, but it didn't blow anyone away with originality. It simply put all the best aspects of other shooters into one amazing package. And aside from the obvious graphical superiority and online co-op mode, most of Gears of War was standard shooter stuff.

What should we expect?

In Gears 2, expect a slight graphical boost. We also think four-player co-op is a must this time around. Seeing as how a number of other games are doing the team co-op thing, Gears 2 shouldn't slack in that department. Overall, the multiplayer will probably see the most changes in the sequel. Though definitely fun, Gears of War's online multiplayer component was no-frills. Expect a better matchmaking system, more game modes, and better ranking.

What shouldn't we expect?

Don't expect anything crazy or revolutionary. This probably won't be a game that blows down doors and bends genres. The graphics probably won't be a huge jump over the first game simply because there's not a lot of leeway there, as the first game was already so graphically impressive. Also, don't expect anything crazy on the online side like customizable video sharing. This is an action-packed shooter and Epic will surely be sticking to the heavy action stuff.

It's certainly possible for Gears of War 2 to slip into 2009, but we think Microsoft is pressing Epic to deliver the game by the holiday season of 2008. That's when it could help the Xbox 360 the most.



Xbox 360 Trick #4

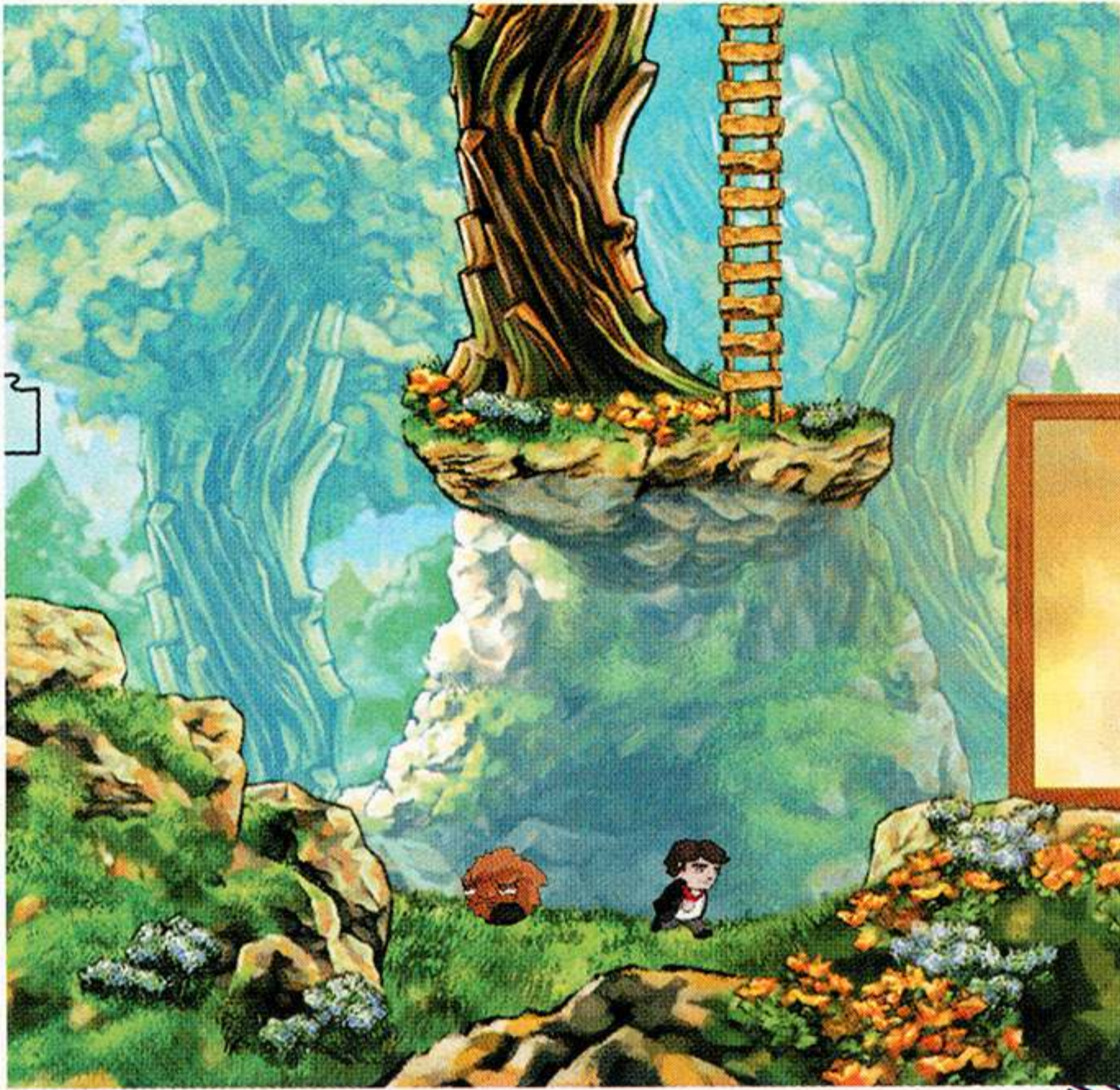
Keep it Cool

Prevent your Xbox 360 from overheating

Space saver or serious design flaw? Setting your Xbox 360 up vertically seems like a great way to conserve space, though in actuality, it blocks the system's main source of ventilation, which can cause the system to overheat. A better way to set it up is on its side or, better yet, upside down vertically for maximum cool.

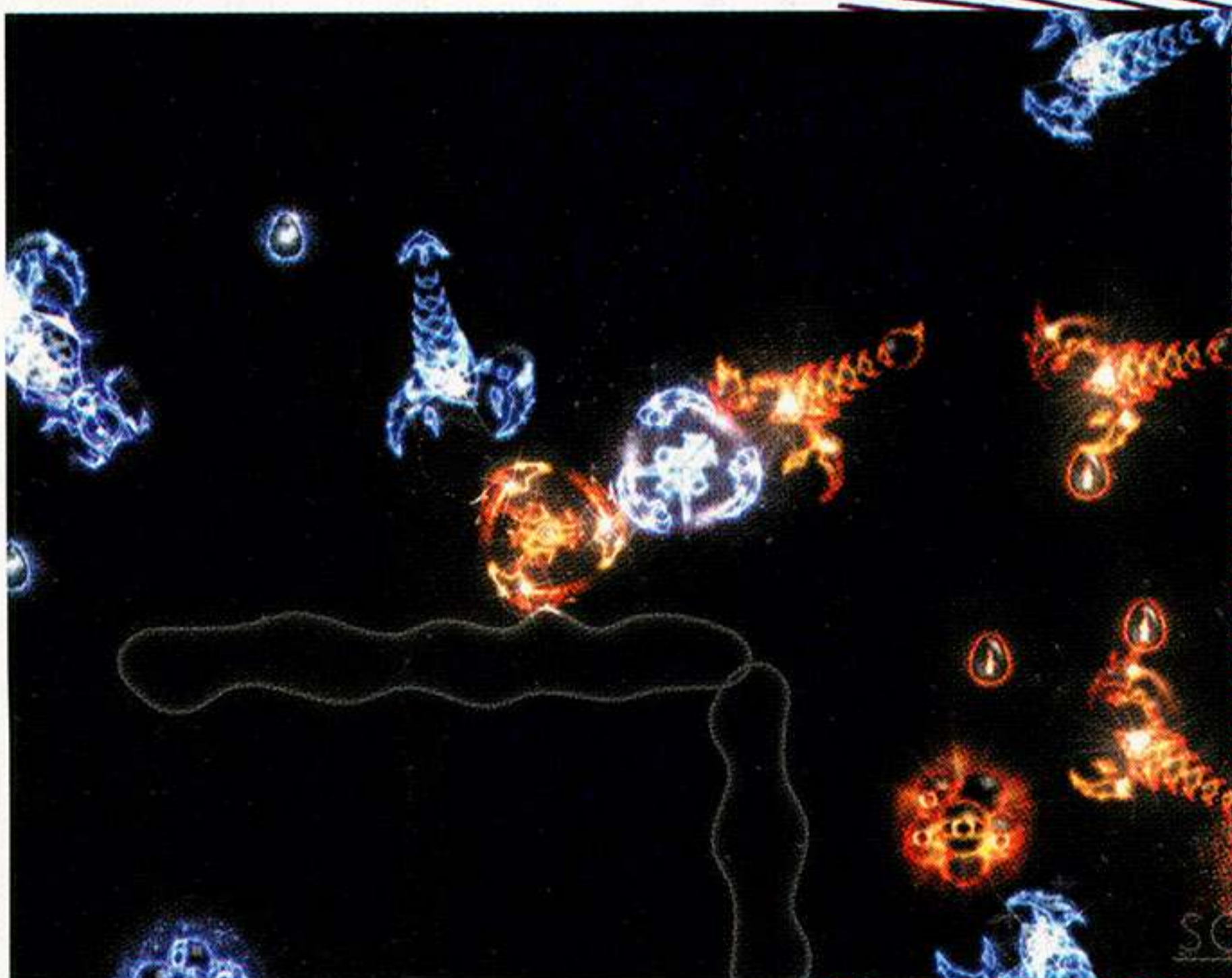
Xbox Live Arcade in 2008

Braid and Schitzoid are two never-before-seen games set to land on Xbox Live in 2008. We've got the scoop!



Braid plays a lot like classic Mario. But underneath Braid's gorgeous 2D graphics lies an exciting twist: players can fast-forward or rewind the action to instantly re-try fatal jumps, defeat certain enemies, or access secret areas. So far, Braid looks to be a novel spin on the venerable platform genre.

Schizoid is billed as "the ultimate co-op game." Two players (or one player and the computer) must coordinate their movements in order to defeat waves of color-coded enemies. But the catch is that only the Red player can defeat red enemies; the Blue player can only kill blue enemies. The concept may sound simple, but the chaotic later levels require a surprising amount of strategy and cooperation. **GP**



If You Purchased Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas Before July 20, 2005

You May Be Eligible for Benefits From A Class Action Settlement

If you purchased the video game *Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas* ("GTA:SA") before July 20, 2005, you may be part of a class action Settlement. This Notice is just a summary. For more complete information, you should read the full Notice. You can get a copy of the full Notice by calling the number or visiting the Web site below.

What is the Class Action Lawsuit About?

The lawsuit claims that Defendants, Take-Two Interactive Software, Inc. and its subsidiary Rockstar Games, Inc., manufactured and sold *GTA:SA* with hidden content that, if unlocked by the user, could display scenes of a sexual nature, which became known as the "Hot Coffee" scenes. The lawsuit claims the marketing of the game with this content under an improper rating violated Consumer Protection laws.

Who is Included?

The Class includes everyone who bought *GTA:SA* before July 20, 2005. Resellers are not included in the Class.

What Are the Terms of the Settlement?

Class members who meet certain eligibility conditions may be able to claim cash payments ranging from \$5 to \$35, and/or to exchange the game for a copy without the content at issue. For full details about the qualifications to make a claim you should read the full Notice.

Who Represents Me?

The Court has appointed attorneys to represent the Class. You may hire your own attorney, if you wish. However, you will be responsible for that attorney's fees and expenses. Class Counsel will ask the Court for an award of attorneys' fees and reimbursement of expenses in the amount of \$1,000,000. This amount includes approximately \$955,000 in attorneys' fees and approximately \$45,000 for reimbursement of expenses. Defendants have agreed to and will not oppose this request. The Court may consider the request at the Final Approval Hearing on **June 25, 2008 at 10:30 a.m.**

What Are My Legal Rights?

- If you wish to stay in the Class, you do not have to do anything. If you want to get a benefit you must file a claim as explained below. If the Court approves the Settlement, you will be bound by all the Court's orders. This means you cannot sue the Defendants covered by the Settlement in the future.
- If you qualify, you must complete a claim form to receive any payment. Depending on the kind of proof of purchase you have, you may be eligible for different amounts of cash payments. You can get a Claim Form by calling the toll-free number or visiting the Web site below. Claim Forms must be postmarked no later than **May 16, 2008**.
- If you do not wish to be a member of the Class, you must submit a letter to the Settlement Administrator indicating that you do not want to be a member of the Class postmarked no later than **April 25, 2008**. If you request to be excluded from the Class you cannot make a claim for a cash payment under this Settlement.
- You can tell the Court if you do not like this Settlement or some part of it if you do not exclude yourself. To object or comment, you must send a letter to the Court postmarked no later than **April 25, 2008**.

Will the Court Approve the Settlement?

The Court will hold a Final Approval Hearing on **June 25, 2008 at 10:30 a.m.** to consider whether the Proposed Settlement is fair, reasonable, and adequate and the motion for attorneys' fees and expenses.

For a Notice of Proposed Class Action Settlement and a Claim Form

Call toll-free: **1-800-409-0328**
or Visit: www.gtasettlement.com

Or Write: **GTA: San Andreas 1st Edition Settlement Administrator,**
c/o of Rust Consulting, P.O. Box 1912, Faribault, MN 55021-7167

Round Two...Fight! *GamePro's* editors choose the best games of the year. *By The GamePros*

THE 2007 GAME OF THE YEAR AWARDS

What a year! Last month, we introduced our Editors' Choice winners for 2007, with special commendations for such accomplishments as graphics, innovation, and story line. This month, we name the overall best games of 2007. It's no easy task, considering the quality and quantity of games released in the second half of the year. Many of the following categories had the *GamePro* editors so conflicted that the winner was decided by a single vote!



To win a Game of the Year award, a game must demonstrate two things. First, a mastery of its particular game style, from graphics and story line to gameplay polish. Second, and specific to the console winners, the winner should be a perfect embodiment of the strengths and features of its platform. This might include outstanding Xbox Live play for an Xbox 360 game, or intuitive motion-sensing controls for a Wii title. Needless to say, every game listed below is well worth your time and money. And don't forget to visit GamePro.com to see the full list of nominees and winners. But enough talk—on with the show!

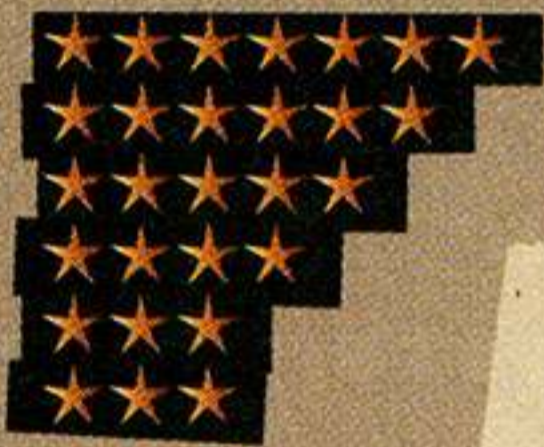
OVERALL GAME OF THE YEAR

WINNER: Call of Duty 4: Modern Warfare



Vote Breakdown:

- Call of Duty 4
- Rock Band
- Mass Effect
- BioShock
- Halo 3
- Super Mario Galaxy



Talk about an upset! The top slot went to office favorite Call of Duty 4 for its toe-curling action and deep online mode. Even more surprising is Rock Band's strong second-place showing, which edged out Mass Effect and BioShock. Critical darlings like Assassin's Creed, Super Mario Galaxy, and The Orange Box barely placed, which proves just how intense the competition was this year. Also worthy of note: aside from Mario, all of the winners are Xbox 360 exclusives or otherwise available on the Xbox 360. Just sayin'...



PLAYSTATION 3 GAME OF THE YEAR

WINNER: Ratchet & Clank Future: Tools of Destruction

A narrow victory for Ratchet & Clank Future, the one PS3 game that nearly everyone agreed was worth the wait. Call of Duty 4 also placed strong, followed distantly by the innovative Assassin's Creed. More puzzling is Uncharted's low placing, a mystery for a game that's actually quite popular among the editors. In another surprise, cult favorite Everyday Shooter earned a key nod—an impressive feat for a cheap downloadable game!



Vote Breakdown:

- Ratchet & Clank Future: Tools of Destruction
- Call of Duty 4
- Assassin's Creed
- Uncharted: Drake's Fortune
- Everyday Shooter





PLAYSTATION 2 GAME OF THE YEAR

WINNER: God of War II

With few big-name PS2 titles introduced in 2007, the brilliant God of War II scored an easy kill. As the last truly great Sony-produced game for the PS2, God of War II pushed the aging console to soaring new heights—some editors claimed its graphics actually looked better than many Xbox 360 games. In such a lean year for the PS2, Guitar Hero III was the only other game to earn any real heat, though Atlus's action-RPG Odin Sphere saw a few eager nods.

Vote Breakdown:



XBOX 360 GAME OF THE YEAR

WINNER: BioShock

Vote Breakdown:



Which Xbox 360 game most showed off the system's strengths? Though it was a tight, heartbreaking race, the *GamePro* editors ultimately sided with BioShock for its polished presentation, immense replayability, and superior storytelling. Mass Effect and Call of Duty 4 had a lot of heat coming into this vote, but both games were edged out in what became an extremely tight race. One thing's for sure, though: in terms of games, 2007 was a phenomenal year for Xbox 360 owners.



Talk about a no-brainer. The fun, quirky Super Mario Galaxy dominated this category, proving that the Wii can excel at more than just casual party games. But the bigger surprise was the robust second place showing of Mario Strikers Charged—a reflection of the soccer game's popularity during *GamePro* lunch breaks. Metroid Prime 3 limped onto the list with only a handful of votes, while reader favorite Zack & Wiki was snubbed.

Wii GAME OF THE YEAR

WINNER: Super Mario Galaxy

Vote Breakdown:



PC GAME OF THE YEAR

WINNER: The Orange Box

Vote Breakdown:



In late 2007, a barrage of hot shooters and RPGs emerged to distract PC gamers from their schoolwork and household chores. Ultimately, the editors selected The Orange Box as the key "must buy" PC game for its eccentric lineup of spatial puzzle solving (Portal), online team shooting (Team Fortress 2), and new Half-Life 2 expansions. Crisis scored high as well, despite its outrageous hardware requirements. The Witcher also earned one enthusiastic vote; its ambiguous morality choices make it a solid alternative to Mass Effect.

The Hidden Power Stars

There over 50 hidden Power Stars in Super Mario Galaxy—find them all with this guide. *From GamerHelp.com*



The Terrace

Good Egg Galaxy: Complete Dino Piranha's Speed Run, Purple Coin Omelet, and Luigi on the Roof to acquire three hidden Power Stars.

Honeyhive Galaxy: Complete Honeyhive Cosmic Mario Race, The Honeyhive's Purple Coins, and Luigi in the Honeyhive Kingdom to acquire three hidden Power Stars.

Sweet Sweet Galaxy: Feed the hungry Luma hanging around outside the Terrace 400 Star Bits to unlock the Sweet Sweet Galaxy, launch to the secret galaxy, and then complete Rocky Road.

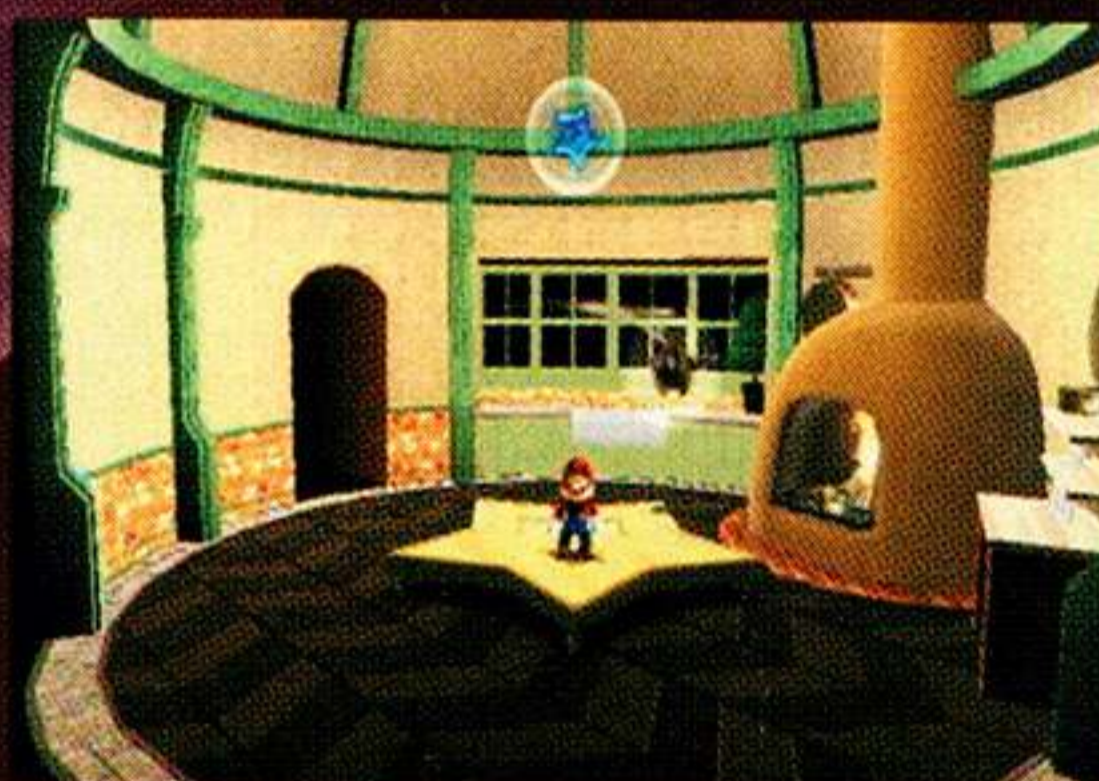


The Fountain

Battlerock Galaxy: Complete Topmaniac's Daredevil Run, Purple Coins on the Battlerock, Battlerock's Garbage Dump, and Luigi Under the Saucer to acquire four hidden Power Stars.

Sling Pod Galaxy: Feed the hungry Luma hanging around outside the Fountain 400 Star Bits to unlock the Sling Pod Galaxy, launch to the secret galaxy, and then complete A Very Sticky Situation.

Space Junk Galaxy: Complete Pull Star Path Speed Run, Purple Coin Spacewalk, and Yoshi's Unexpected Appearance to acquire three hidden Power Stars.



The Kitchen

Beach Bowl Galaxy: Complete Fast Foes on the Cyclone Stone, Beachcombing for Purple Coins, and Wall Jumping Up Waterfalls to acquire three hidden Power Stars.

Drip Drop Galaxy: Feed the hungry Luma hanging around outside the Kitchen 600 Star Bits to unlock the Drip Drop Galaxy, launch to the secret galaxy, and then complete Giant Eel Outbreak.

Ghostly Galaxy: Complete Bouldergeist's Daredevil Run, Purple Coins in the Bone Pen, and Matter Splatter Mansion to acquire three hidden Power Stars.



The Bedroom

Bigmouth Galaxy: Feed the hungry Luma hanging around outside the Bedroom 800 Star Bits to unlock the Bigmouth Galaxy, launch to the secret galaxy, and then complete Bigmouth's Gold Bait.

Dusty Dune Galaxy: Complete Sandblast Speed Run, Purple Coins in the Desert, Bullet Bill on Your Back, and Treasure of the Pyramid to acquire four hidden Power Stars.

Freeze Flame Galaxy: Complete Frosty Cosmic Mario Race, Purple Coins on the Summit, and Conquering the Summit to acquire three hidden Power Stars.

Gusty Garden Galaxy: Complete Major Burrow's Daredevil Run, Purple Coins on the Purple Cube, and The Golden Chomp to acquire three hidden Power Stars.

Super Mario Galaxy
Strategy



The Engine Room

Gold Leaf Galaxy: Complete Cosmic Mario Forest Race, Purple Coins in the Woods, and Bell on the Big Tree to acquire three hidden Power Stars.

Sand Spiral Galaxy: Feed the hungry Luma hanging around outside the Engine Room 1000 Star Bits to unlock the Sand Spiral Galaxy, launch to the secret galaxy, and then complete Choosing a Favorite Snack.

Sea Slide Galaxy: Complete Underwater Cosmic Mario Race, Purple Coins by the Seaside, and Hurry, He's Hungry to acquire three hidden Power Stars.

Toy Time Galaxy: Complete Fast Foes of Toy Time, Luigi's Purple Coins, and The Flipswitch Chain to acquire three hidden Power Stars.



The Garden

Deep Dark Galaxy: Complete Ghost Ship Daredevil Run, Plunder the Purple Coins, and Boo in a Box to acquire three hidden Power Stars.

Dreadnought Galaxy: Complete Topman Tribe Speed Run, Battlestation's Purple Coins, and Dreadnought's Garbage Dump to acquire three hidden Power Stars.

Melty Molten Galaxy: Complete Lava Spire Daredevil Run, Red-Hot Purple Coins, and Burning Tide to acquire three hidden Power Stars.

Snow Cap Galaxy: Feed the hungry Luma hanging around outside the Garden 1600 Star Bits to unlock the Snow Cap Galaxy, launch to the secret galaxy, and then complete Star Bunnies in the Snow.



The Gate

Boo's Boneyard Galaxy: Feed the hungry Luma hanging around outside the Gate 1200 Star Bits to unlock the Boo's Boneyard Galaxy, launch to the secret galaxy and then complete Racing the Spooky Speedster.

Bonus Stars

Bubble Blast Galaxy: Complete The Electric Labyrinth to acquire a hidden Power Star.

Loopdeeswoop Galaxy: Complete The Galaxy's Greatest Wave to acquire a hidden Power Star.

Rolling Gizmo Galaxy: Complete Gizmos, Gears, and Gadgets to acquire a hidden Power Star.

Mario's Rides

These pointers will help you with the various forms of transportation Mario has in the game.



Ball

The key to maintaining control of the Ball is to keep the speed you're rolling at low, otherwise the momentum will be too great and you risk rolling right off the map.

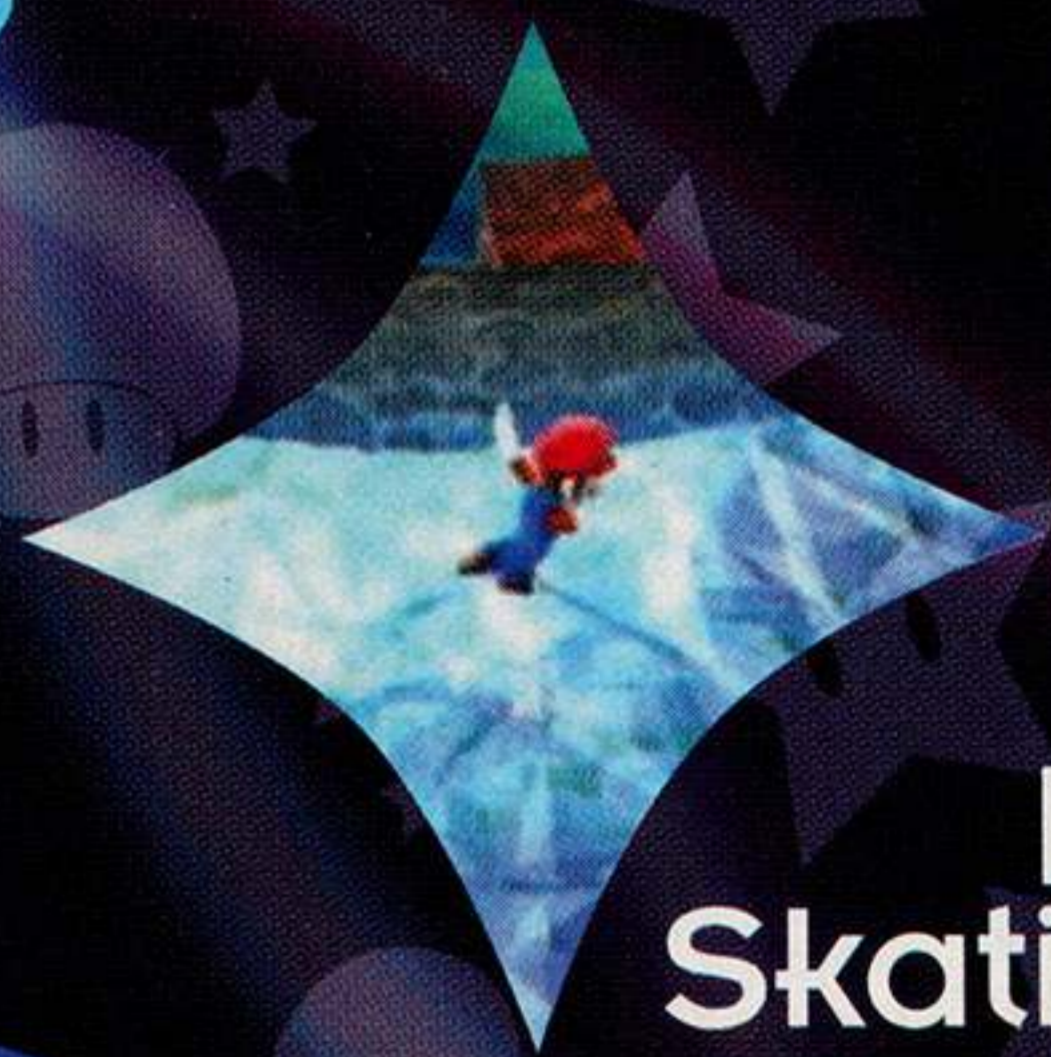
Bubble

Like maneuvering the Ball, you need to take it slow while inside the Bubble or you'll burst it on something sharp or explosive that you don't have time to get around.



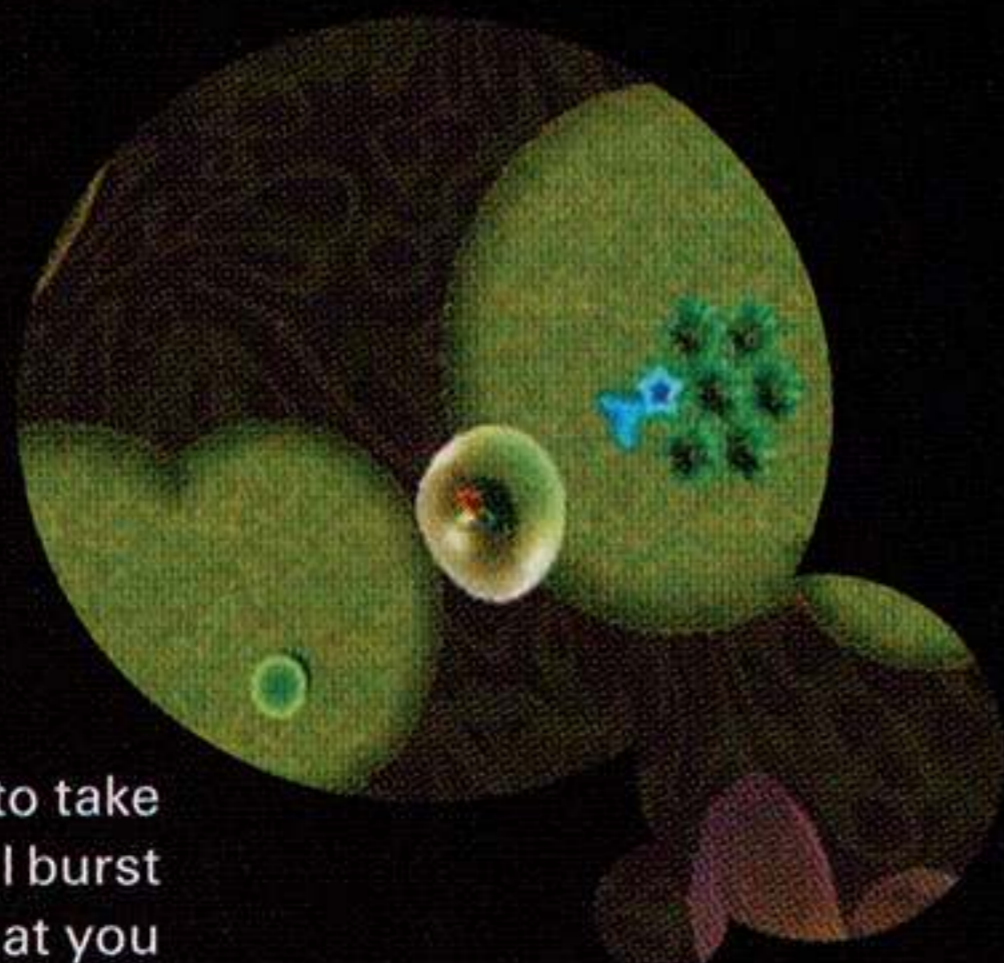
Sting Ray

A trick that is not mentioned in the Sting Ray surfing tutorial is jumping. Shake the Wii Remote to jump while riding the Sting Ray to catch some air.



Ice Skating

The fastest way to travel across frozen surfaces is to shake the Wii Remote to start skating.



Shell

In addition to making travelling underwater much easier, the Shell allows you to leap to areas high above the water you are in.

CONTINUED ►

The 3 Most Grueling Boss Battles

We show you how to defeat the most backbreaking bosses in the game! *From GamerHelp.com*

Super Mario Galaxy is loaded with boss battles. This step-by-step guide shows you how to take down three of the hardest bosses in the game.

Bowser

Bowser's Galaxy Reactor:
"The Fate of the Universe"



Step 1: When you reach the giant checkered staircase, race up them while dodging the smoldering meteorites that Bowser unleashes upon you. Make sure you snag the Life Mushroom and the 1-Up Mushroom on your way up—you're going to need them for this final clash with your arch enemy.

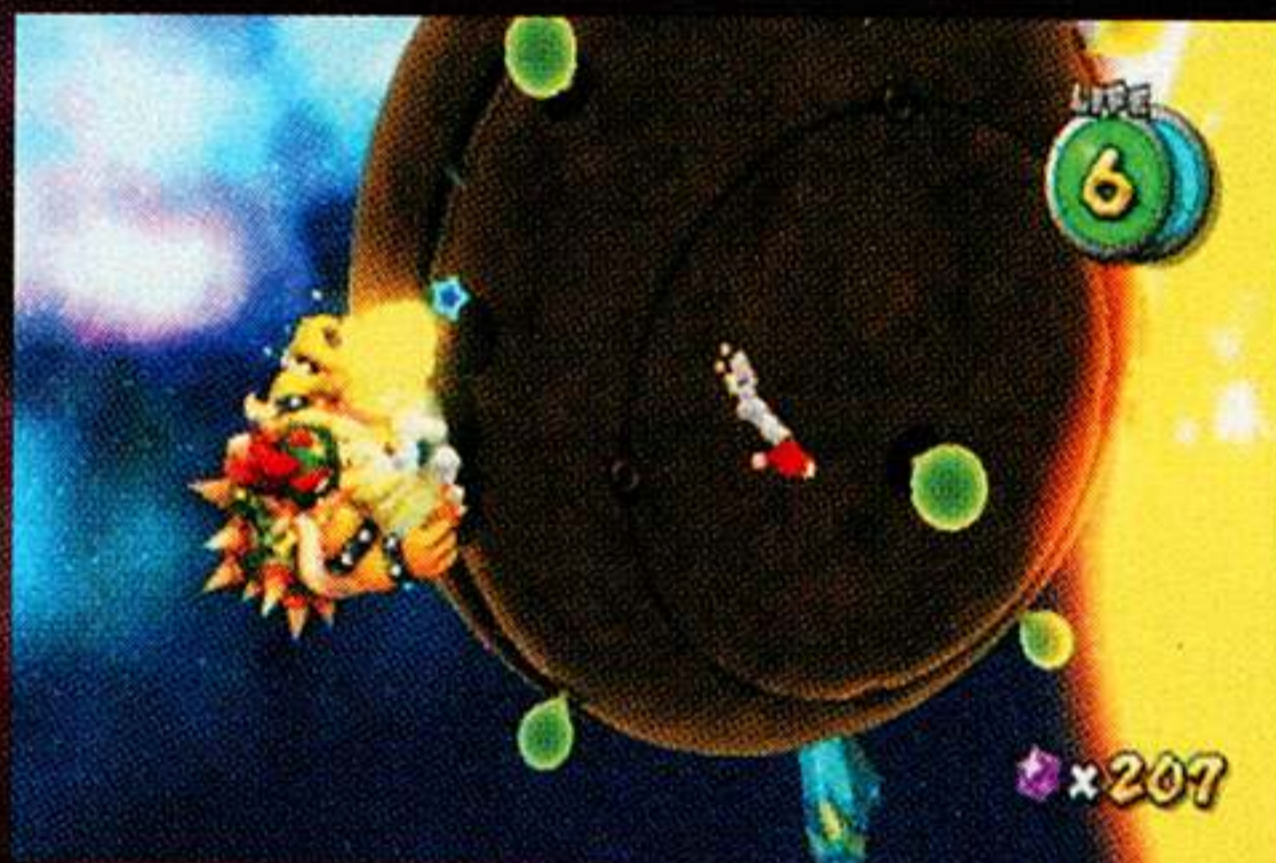


Step 2: During the first phase of the battle on top of the gray planetoid, Bowser has two primary attacks. He will jump up and down, creating blue shockwaves that you need to jump over and he will also attempt to flatten Mario while rolling around inside a boulder.

If you need to restore health, now's the time to do so because there are numerous coins on this first planetoid. When he is rolling towards you, run alongside him and hit him with your spin attack, which will burst his rock. Bowser will start spinning uncontrollably on his back around the planetoid, so whack him again with your spin attack. Repeat this process once more to end the initial phase of the boss battle.



Step 3: The fight will move to a brown planetoid and your adversary has learned a couple of new tricks. Evade the fiery projectiles Bowser spews at you. When he turns into a spiked ball and comes after you, spin one of the elastic plants into him, once he starts spinning around on his back smack him with your spin attack.



Step 4: In the final phase of the battle, you need to get Bowser to attempt to smash you under his reptilian buttocks by standing on top of the shiny circles located on the planetoid. When he ruptures these he will be burnt by the lava they contain and then start running around with his tail on fire. Spank him with a spin attack when he stops moving and repeat this process to conquer Bowser.

Power-Up!

Here are some essential tips to mastering the many forms of Mario.



Fire Mario

The Fire Mario power-up is primarily used to solve puzzles, but this alternate form is also quite effective in wiping out enemies, especially some armored foes that Mario cannot normally defeat.



Ice Mario

With Ice Mario, you can freeze water that is too cold to swim in so that you can walk on it instead.



Rainbow Mario

It's wise to have a plan before picking up the Rainbow Mario power-up because its effects wear off in a matter of seconds.



Flying Mario

Score a red star and you'll be able to fly much higher than you can with Bee Mario or Boo Mario.



Major Burrows

Gusty Garden Galaxy:
"The Dirty Tricks of Major Burrows"



Step 1: Stop the beastly mole from chasing the rabbit by ground pounding near him once he pops his head out of the ground. Nail him with a spin attack while he's stunned. Major Burrows will now start to hunt you so start moving.

Step 2: Run from him as he tunnels through the dirt and stay away from that spiked helmet of his when he erupts from the ground. As you did before, ground pound near the rodent when he pops up, and then strike him with a spin attack.



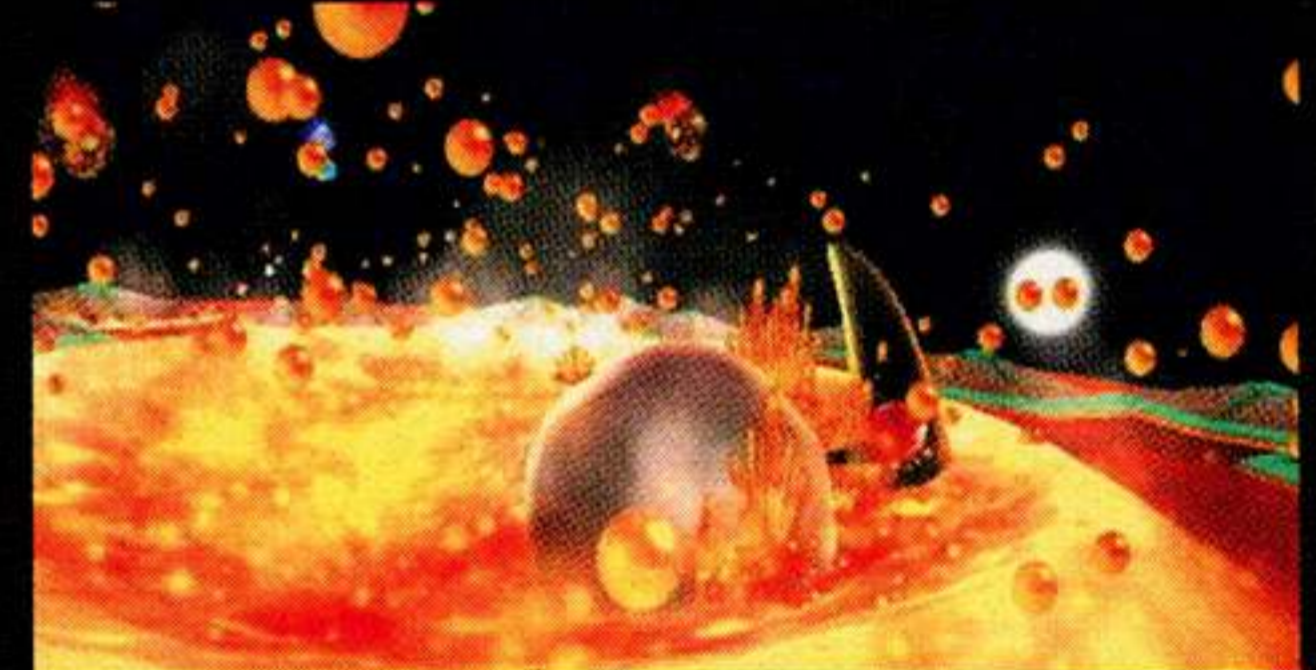
Step 3: Major Burrows will become furious and chase after you, even faster than before. Continue to ground pound when he rears his ugly head and follow it up with another ground pound when his eyes start to glow red and he charges after you. Major Burrows will completely emerge from the ground, so slap him with a spin attack while he's vulnerable. If you're having a hard time catching up to him while he's out of the ground, you can ground pound again to slow him down.

King Kaliente

Bowser Jr.'s Lava Reactor:
"King Kaliente's Spicy Return"



Step 1: The fireproof octopus returns, but when you battle the King this time you have to stand on top of hexagonal platforms that sink if you stand on them for more than a second. The key to not getting engulfed in molten rock is to keep moving around—luckily the platforms go all the way around King Kaliente.



Step 2: Watch out for the boss' blue ember minions that will torch your buns if you get too close to them. One of the other main hazards you need to avoid are the flaming projectiles the King fires at you which come in threes. The third type of attack this creature has is summoning meteorites to crash down on you.

Step 3: Some of the projectiles that King Kaliente shoots aren't on fire, send them back to him by spinning on them. Pelt him with his own projectiles over and over again and the King will curl up and plunge into his 1000-degree tomb.

5DUZ

Get the link to **Super Mario Galaxy** screens and news sent to your e-mail. Text 5DUZ to 59479

Only standard text messaging rates apply



Boo Mario

Ghosts hate the light and the same goes for Boo Mario. Stay out of lights or you'll transform back into regular Mario.



CONTINUED ►

Spring Mario

Remember that you can not only bounce up and down with Spring Mario but also off walls.



Bee Mario

When buzzing around as Bee Mario, use your flying power in short bursts to soar greater distances than if you simply used it all at once.



Unlock all of the cheats in Call of Duty 4: Modern Warfare by tracking down all 30 enemy Intel laptops scattered throughout the game with this guide.

By Brad Russell



Crew Expendable

1. Look in the room near the beginning of the game where two enemies are sleeping.
2. Once you reach the first big cargo room below deck, get down the stairs to find this one by an open panel on the floor.

Blackout

3. This laptop is located in the first shack to the left at the start of the level.
4. In the final building that your squad storms to rescue Nikolai, on the second floor; the laptop will be next to a toilet.

Charlie Don't Surf

5. Follow the waypoint to the first building. There is a room on the left as you enter the basement; the laptop is in there.
6. This one is to the far right, before you cross over the big road, dissecting the level. It's up the stairs of a small building occupied by one enemy.
7. Once you have crossed over the big road, go up the stairs from the ground level to get on the rooftop; the laptop is up there.

The Bog

8. Get off the highway and shoot your way through the dilapidated building. Watch your squad mates kick open a door; there's nothing in there except for a laptop.
9. Use the Javelin to destroy the four tanks on the overpass. Your squad then moves through an empty marketplace. Look for an open nook in the corner for the laptop.



Hunted

10. Once you're outside of the house with the cellar, you will find the next laptop in another nearby house.
11. Approach the final barn shootout from under the tin roof to avoid the enemy helicopter. This one is on a table under the tin roof.



War Pig

12. When the tank starts moving through the streets, go up the first blue stairway on the right; the laptop is upstairs in a closet.
13. Search the last building on the left before the street makes a 90-degree turn. You have to fight your way up to the second floor to get this one.
14. After the narrow alley of highly explosive cars, enter the building and move up the stairs to find this one in the machine gun nest. Hint: It's the last building you enter in the level.

Shock and Awe

15. Clear the first alley after landing and head into the northwest building. This laptop is upstairs next to the squad that needs assistance.
16. Directly in front of the last laptop location is a two-story building occupied by machine gunners. Enter this building and look upstairs in the closet.

Enemy Intel Locations

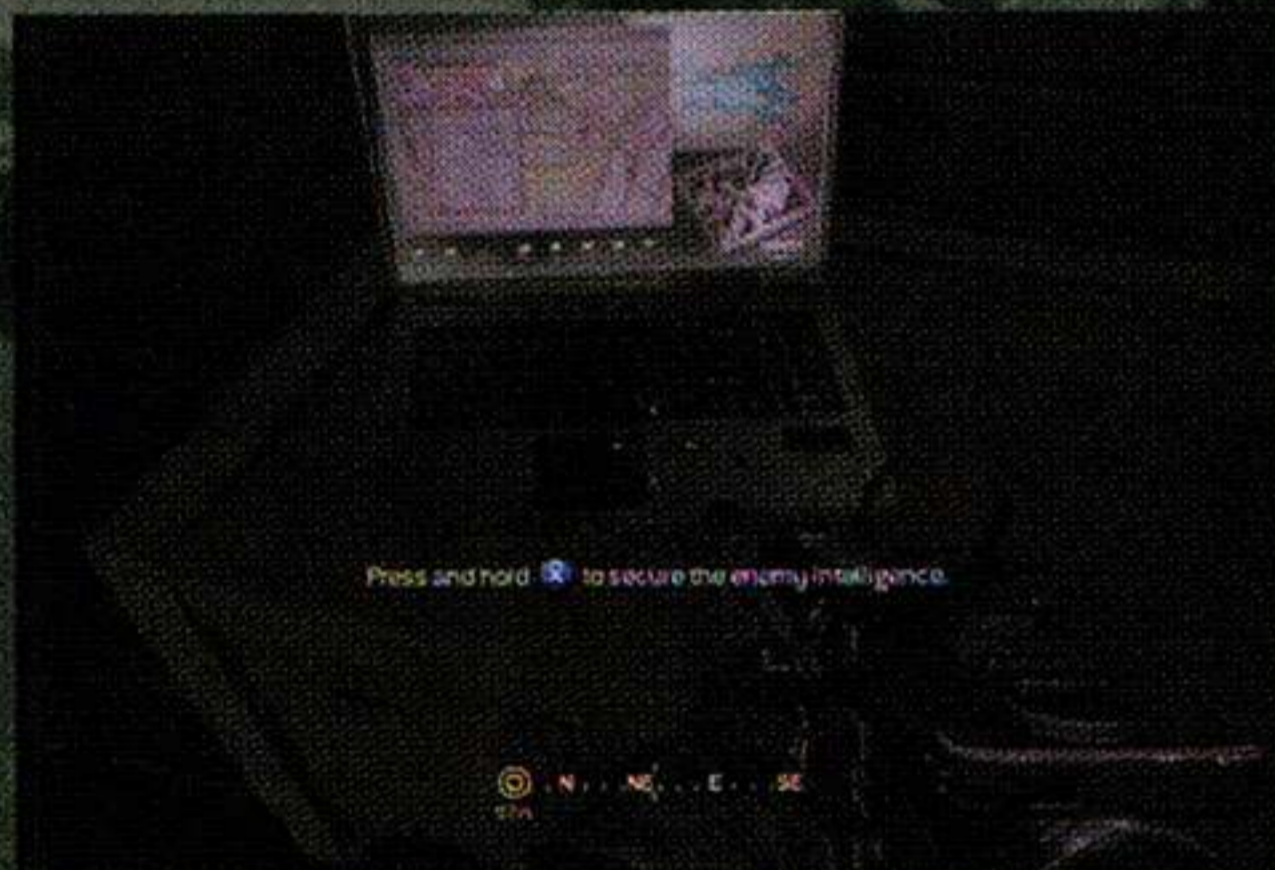
Call of Duty 4: Modern Warfare

There's no such thing as cyberspace and the real world anymore.

Safehouse

17. Fight your way up the hill. Enter the first enemy house to find this Intel laptop in a room upstairs.

18. The next laptop is located in the basement of the house with the satellite dish on the roof. Look in one of the diner booths.



All Ghilled Up

19. Snipe the enemy in the church tower and confirm the kill to find this laptop.

20. In the container yard, you and MacMillan will pass by a group of guards in the center of the area. Let Mac take out one of the guys, and then try to blow away the other two to find this Intel laptop resting on some barrels.

21. After you crawl under the trucks, there will be one final showdown with a guy at the top of a staircase. Kill him, go up these stairs, and then jump into a room for this Intel laptop.

One Shot, One Kill

22. After Mac is injured, and after you cross through the interior of a building, you will exit from a hole in the wall and find yourself back on the streets. Climb up the ladder to your right and go up the stairs (with Mac on your back); you'll see this Intel laptop just up ahead.

23. Before the battle at the Ferris wheel, you and Mac need to find a pathway between the tall buildings. A door that you need to enter is blocked. After the battle starts and the enemy helicopters show up, this sealed door will begin to open up and pour out more enemies. Once the choppers leave, get out of your hiding spot and run to the corner of the building where most enemies are emerging from. Go over to the now-open doors and grab the Intel laptop inside.

The Sins of the Father

24. After clearing out the diner area of this mission, you'll eventually come across a room with the next Intel laptop inside. This is your only chance to grab the Intel laptop before it turns to day.

25. After you start chasing the son down an alley, you and Griggs will hit a parking lot. Enemies will attack from above. The enemies to the right and in a building have an Intel with them; go up the stairs to the side to grab it.

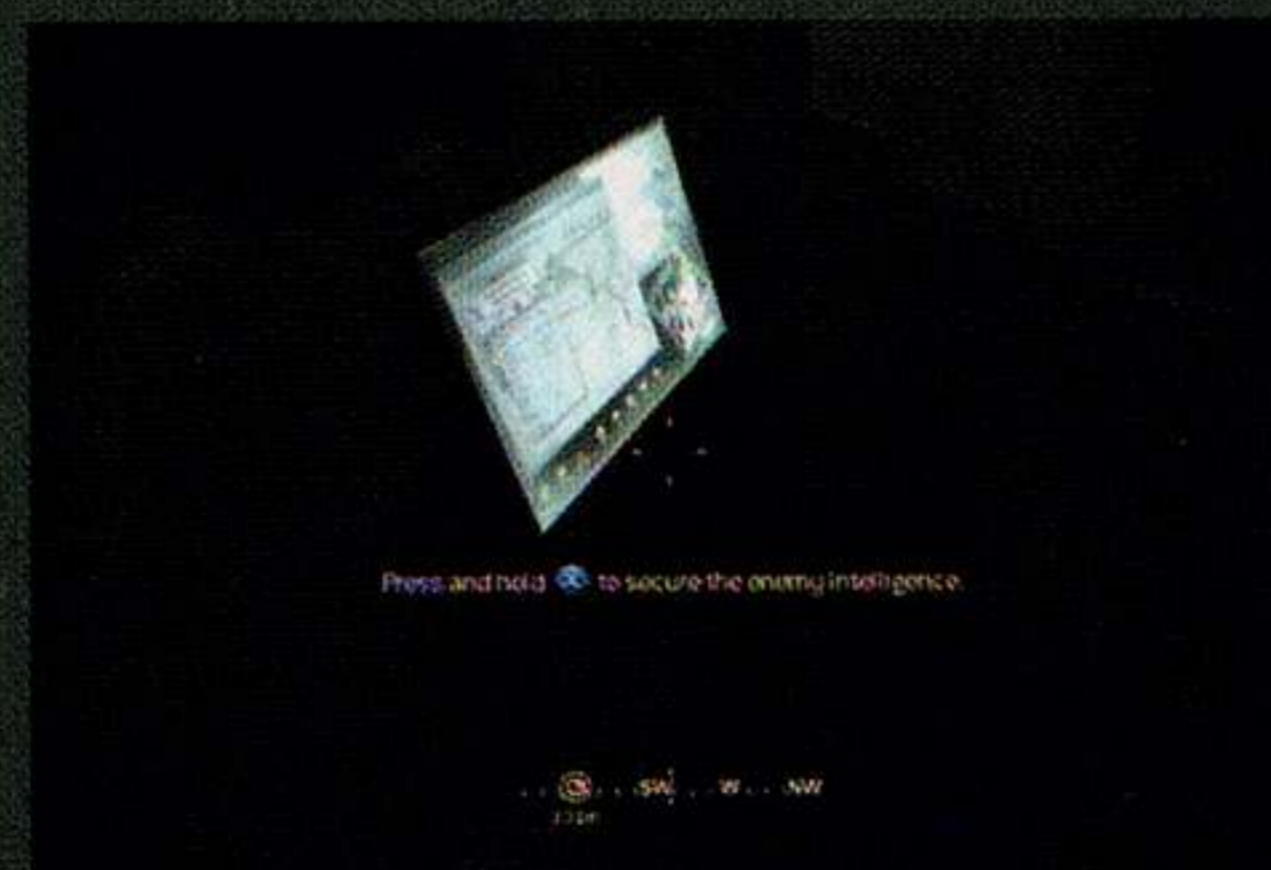
Ultimatum

26. After you cut the power, a huge battle ensues. Look towards the rear of the large building on your right to find this Intel laptop.

All In

27. After the first BMP is out, head right and start fighting the guys protecting the gate. Find the path behind one of the buildings to your right to acquire the next Intel laptop.

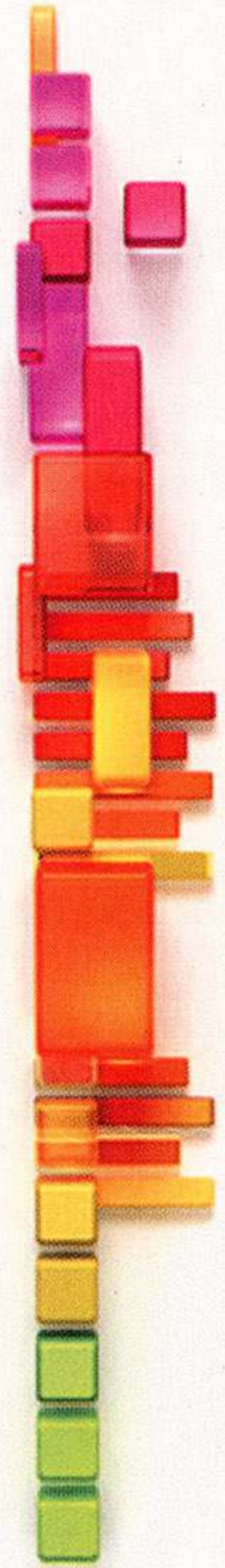
28. Once all the BMP's are out and the silo field is clear, go south and enter the hangar; this Intel laptop is by the right wall.



No Fighting in the War Room

29. Once you're out of the showers, go down the left path. You'll fight your way through some living quarters, and then you'll reach a hallway; the next Intel laptop is in a dark room to your left.

30. The last Intel laptop is in the war room. After you enter the code, go to the opposite side of the room to find this laptop.



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GAME OF THE MONTH

NO MORE HEROES

Deciding which game to give our coveted Game of the Month award to is never easy. Some months, we have so many eligible titles that it takes us weeks just to narrow down the choices; other months, we're left scrambling to find a decent contender, only to have one miraculously appear at the last possible moment. And sometimes, like this month, a title that no one expected to contend will come out of nowhere to steal the spotlight.

When *No More Heroes* first arrived in our office, we had no idea what to make of the game. Its unique art style and irreverent sense of humor definitely stood out, but its pixilated graphics and bizarre gameplay were hard to get used to. But the more we played the game, the more we bought into the game's inherent charm. After helping lovable hero Travis Touchdown reach the end of his offbeat quest, there was no doubt in our mind that we had found a worthy recipient of our Game of the Month award.

So turn the page to read Games.Net editor Dave Rudden's take on game guru Suda 51's latest opus and see why *No More Heroes* is one of the best Wii titles ever produced.



TOILET HUMOR:

After another assassin is vanquished, Travis saves his ass (and his progress) with one of the weirdest save points in gaming.

GAME REVIEWS:

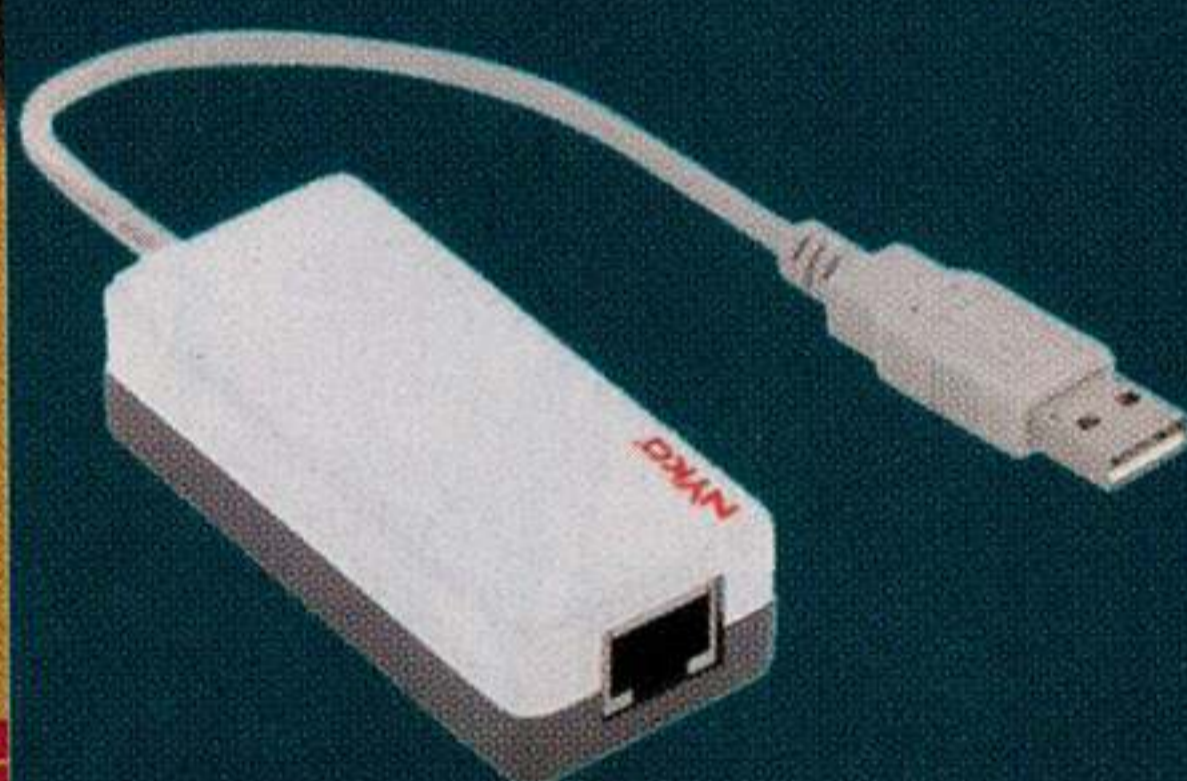
Devil May Cry 4 (PS3, Xbox 360)	82	No More Heroes (Wii)	80
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GAMEPRO LABS

Think it's all just fun and games here at *GamePro*? Nope, we get to test out some awesome hardware too. This month, we take a look at the Nyko Wii Net Connect, a nifty USB Ethernet adapter for the Wii. And if that's not enough to scratch your gadget itch, be sure to check GamePro.com for more reviews of the latest toys and gear!

NYKO WII NET CONNECT

Nyko.com
\$24.99



Getting your wireless connection to play nice with your Wii can lead to headaches, not to mention the fact that some gamers are stuck with a regular old-fashioned wired connection. So does that mean you have to miss out on all the sweet online gaming action and old-school Virtual Console titles? Not if you get your hands on the Net Connect. This handy device lets you hook your Wii up to a wired Ethernet cable, eliminating the hassle of dealing with the Wii's sometimes fussy wireless connection.

It's simple to use and it works as advertised: you simply hook the USB connector into the Wii, plug your Ethernet cable into the other end, and have your Wii look for the connection. The only sticking point is the price—\$25 is somewhat steep—as well as the fact that you'll have yet another wire running around your living room, but if you hate fiddling with the wireless connection or you only have a wired network, the Net Connect is an easy way to get your Wii online.

PROS: Easy as pie setup; no need to mess about with complicated settings.
CONS: A tad on the pricey side; unit sticks out a little when connected.

FUN FACTOR: 4.25

GAMEPRO'S RATING SCALE

Behind the numbers:

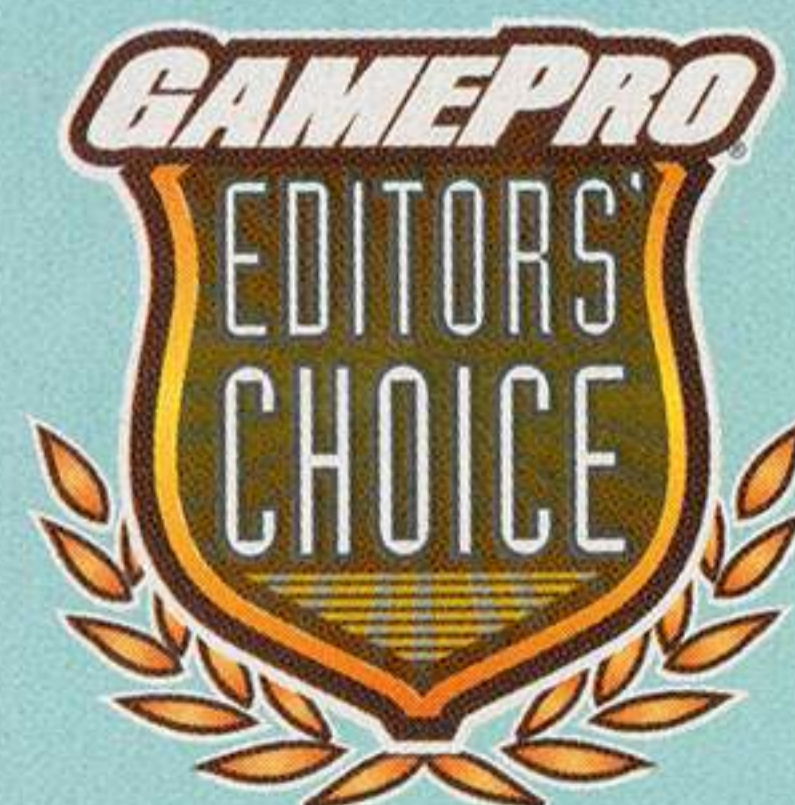
5.00–4.50 The best of the best. If you don't own this game, you should. Think Halo, Zelda, Resident Evil, and Metal Gear Solid.

4.25–3.50 Highly enjoyable, but falls short of true greatness. The *Fight Nights* and *Tony Hawks* of the world.

3.25–2.50 Approach with caution—try before you buy. Enter the *Matrix* and the *Dynasty Warriors* games fall squarely in this category.

2.25–1.50 Should come with a sticker: "Warning, contains poisonous amounts of suckage." Remember *Backyard Wrestling*?

1.25–0.00 An absolute insult to humanity. Kill it with fire and holy water.



Games that score **4.50 or higher** are awarded our coveted Editors' Choice Award.



The entries for the best new character of 2008 have closed. Here's your winner.

NO MORE HEROES

With excellent motion controls, an intriguing story, and plenty of style, No More Heroes is a cut above the rest of the Wii's action titles.



Wii ESRB: M

Developer: Grasshopper Manufacture Publisher: Ubisoft

LucasArts, this is what happens when you dilly-dally. While you pondered how to create a true lightsaber game for the Wii, another company came in and completely stole your thunder. For every gamer who's felt disappointed by tacked-on motion controls, I present the game that has completely captured the essence of the Force. No More Heroes? Try No More Competition.

ASSASSINS, BLEED

No More Heroes presents a simple story—in order to impress a girl, Travis Touchdown, a geeky hipster-samurai engages in a duel with and kills the 11th ranked assassin in the United States. Since he's already on the muddy trail, Travis decides to work his way down the list to become the best damn assassin this side of Altair and Agent 47.

With a set goal in mind, No More Heroes is refreshingly straightforward. You know your ultimate objective from the get-go, and it's always at the forefront of the game, but it still includes some neat twists and turns along the way. While drawing on a multitude of excellent pop-culture sources including *Star Wars*, anime, 8-bit gaming, and *Kill Bill*, No More Heroes still manages to create its own unique story and memorable characters, to the point where it could have its own pop-culture impact if the game catches on with the gaming public. Thankfully, it's got great gameplay to ensure that happens.

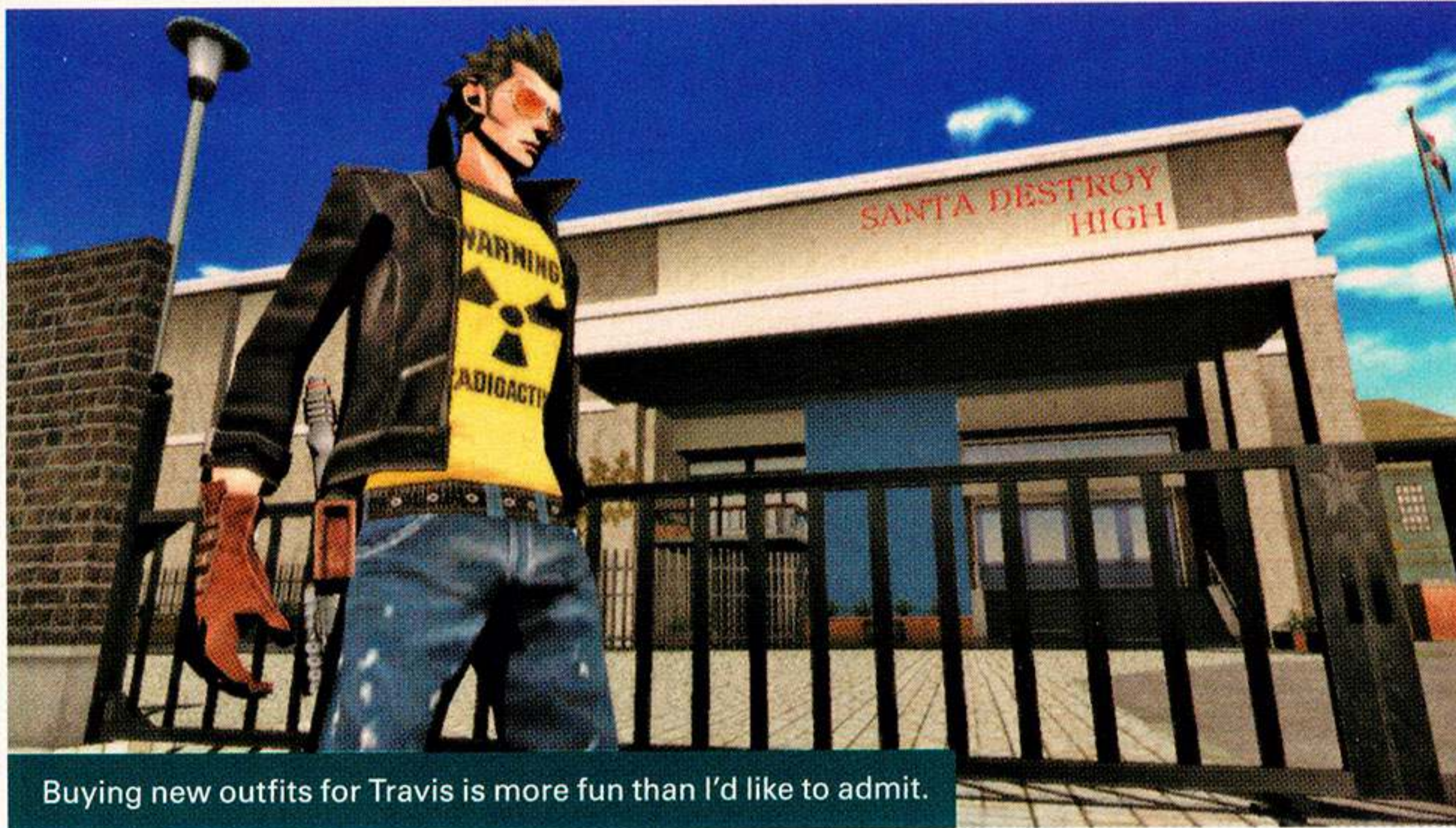
THE SWORD IS MIGHTIER THAN EVER

Having disappointed legions of gamers with the wonky controls in *Red Steel*, Ubisoft must have realized that less is more when the company agreed to publish Killer7 director Suda 51's latest off-the-wall action title. Instead of making the gamer swing the Wii Remote and Nunchuk around like a hopped up idiot and failing to deliver true 1:1 movement onscreen like nearly every other sword-based Wii game—I'm talking about titles like *Soulcalibur Legends*, *Dragon Blade*, and yes, even *Twilight Princess*—No More Heroes boils down sword fighting to its basest elements. In doing that, they may have just perfected it.

During the course of the game, roughly 90 percent of your attacks will be performed by simply



It's time to play "Fart or weapon flash?"



Buying new outfits for Travis is more fun than I'd like to admit.

hitting the A or B button. While that sounds like a recipe for button-mashing mayhem, a few simple motion sensing tweaks make the fighting amazingly immersive. For starters, you switch between high and low attacks by tilting the Wii Remote up or down. A lot of strategy comes out of finding openings in enemy attacks, so evading attacks by using the directional pad and locking on/blocking with Z make the game a lot more than brainless slashing.

A SLICE OF HEAVEN

Immersion and enjoyability aren't mutually exclusive, though. Thankfully, the most inconsequential of combat additions makes it the most fun. When you've nearly depleted an opponent's energy, the action will slow down and a direction icon will appear on the screen. Swing your Wii Remote up, down, left, or right in accordance with the prompt, and you'll perform a devastating, bloody finishing move in the aforementioned direction. The prompt also allows you to perform throw moves on stunned opponents, using both the Wii Remote and Nunchuk to unleash deadly suplexes that would freak out even WWE superstars.

Over the course of the game, you'll literally perform hundreds and hundreds of throws and finishing strikes and yet, you won't get tired of it thanks to the ingenious game design. The game's ability to entertain over the long haul is also a testament to its unique level design.

THE PATH OF ENFIGHTENMENT

No More Heroes basically lives and dies by its level design. You're going to be slashing your way through eleven stages to reach each assassin, and even fun combat can get repetitive if you're doing the same thing over and over again. Thankfully, the stages are just unique enough to keep you going. Without spoiling the crazy ways the combat changes, I can assure you that the game integrates sports and public transportation with ruthless sword fighting perfectly.

And then there are the bosses. Keeping in accordance with the game's great story, the assassins you have to make your way through are memorably designed, and their fighting styles are fun to contend with. There are a few occasions, however, where you become painfully aware of the game's over-reliance on pattern-based fighting and the A.I. could be a bit tighter, but these issues are minor and don't ruin the fun all that much.

NO MORE SIDE MISSIONS

The one area where No More Heroes falters is the open-ended world Travis inhabits between levels. The stages and bosses are by far the game's meat and potatoes, so the tacked-on side-missions, stores, and lots of driving feel like the biggest serving of fluffy filler I've ever encountered. Case in point: the boring "third-rate" jobs that have you performing janitorial tasks with the Wii Remote.

It's actually a lot more fun than it has any right to be, but any diversion from the game's great combat is unwelcome. As it is, you'll probably take 10-12 hours to play through No More Heroes, but I would have settled for an experience that was half as long if it meant I could have just played through each of the main stages in succession.

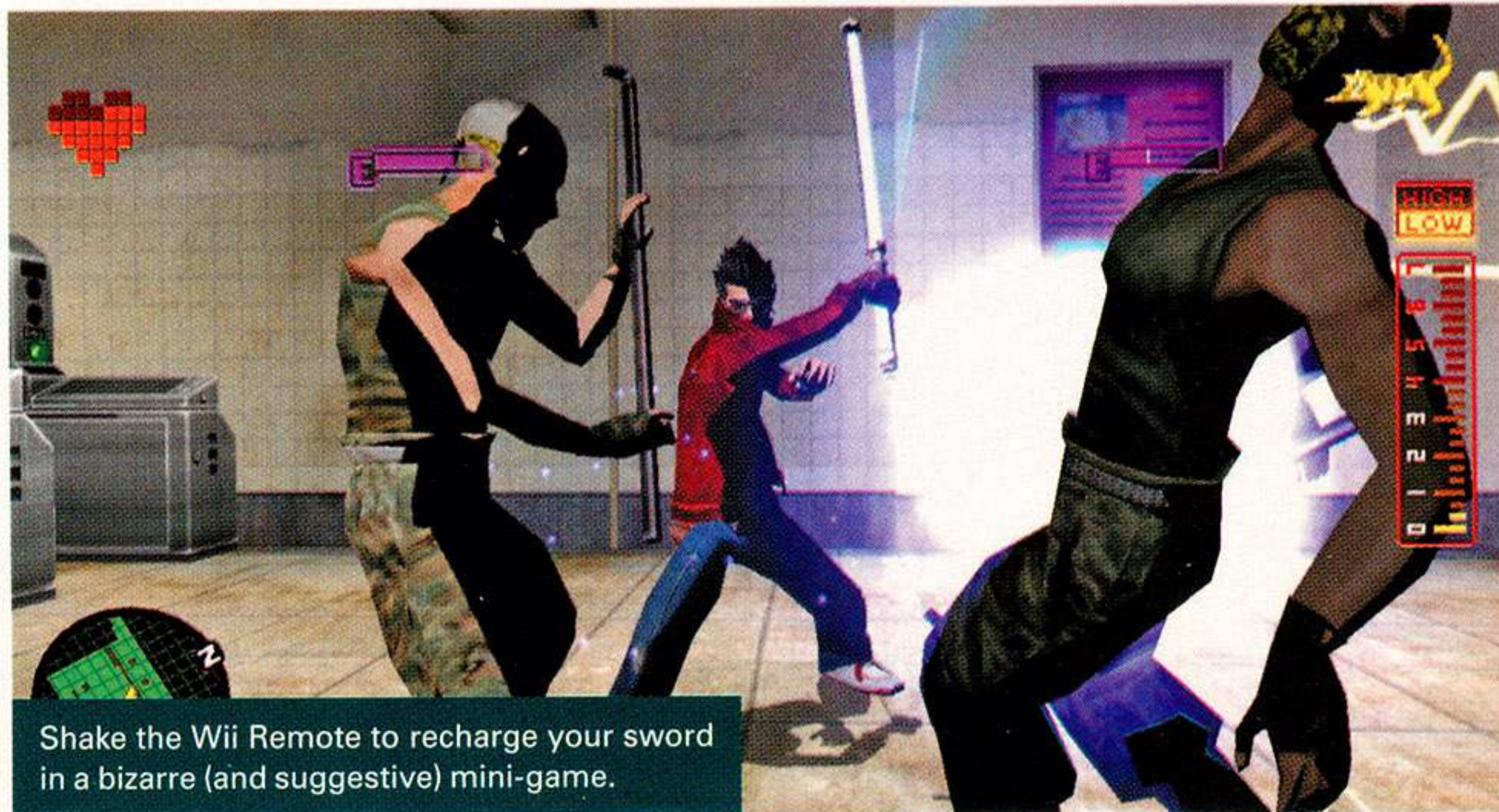
KILL WITH YOUR EYES CLOSED

Also disappointing was the fact that the game's graphics aren't really that good. The only saving grace is that the visual style is excellent, with a sweet pulp-comic/anime-inspired look that really stands out. Still, the repetitive enemy models, the sparsely-populated open world, and the raw look of the game proves that while the Wii represents the wave of the future in terms of a gaming experience, it's yesterday's news when it comes to the visual element. I couldn't help but think about how awesome this game would be if it also featured Xbox 360 or PS3 level graphics.

The sound, however, fares much better. The voice acting is very well done, and while there's not a whole lot of songs being played over the course of the game, the few that do play are memorable without being repetitive. The Wii Remote's speakers are also put to great use, with the light-saber-esque Beam Katana's unsheathing and sword clanging providing a nice aural touch to the action. I won't spoil the game's greatest use of the Wii Remote's tiny speakers, but I will say that it made for one of the greatest Wii moments I've encountered yet. You'll know it when you hear it.

MORE NO MORE HEROES PLZ

No More Heroes easily ranks among the Wii's finest titles, busting a bunch of myths along the way. You say sword-based combat peaked with Twilight Princess? Wait until you slice a suit-wearing crony in half. The Wii can't do mature games? This game does it without the dark dreariness of just about every other violence-laden M-rated title. It could use a bit less filler, but No More Heroes is still a fine fight from the first blow to the last strike. Sorry LucasArts, but the bar for the next Wii *Star Wars* game has just been raised through the roof.—**Dave Rudden**



Shake the Wii Remote to recharge your sword in a bizarre (and suggestive) mini-game.

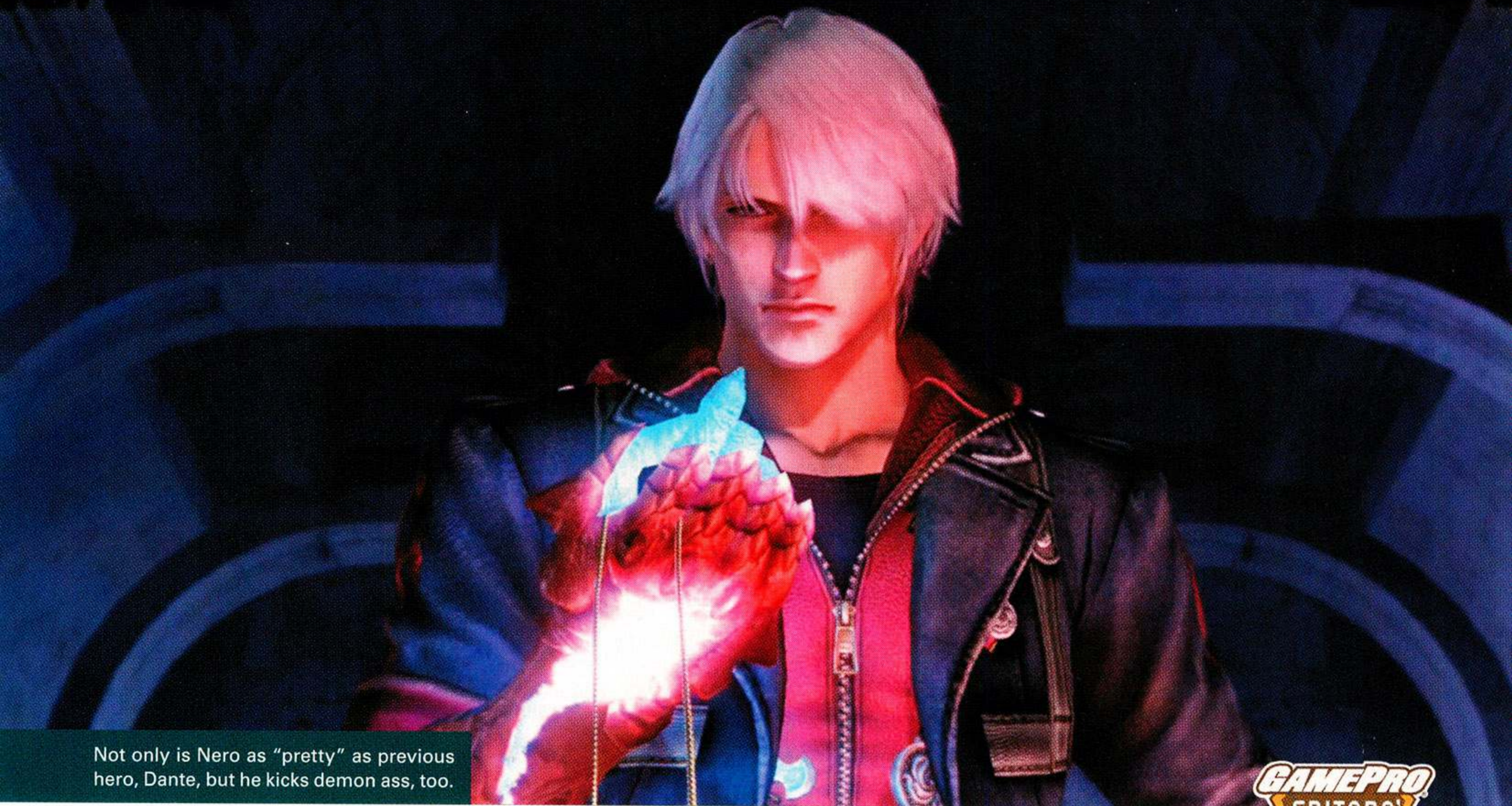
FUN FACTOR

4.50

OUT OF 5.00

PROS: The most enjoyable sword combat on the Wii yet; unique design keeps things fresh

CONS: Roaming the city is boring; cool art style, ugly graphics; boss fights are a tad wonky



Not only is Nero as “pretty” as previous hero, Dante, but he kicks demon ass, too.



DEVIL MAY CRY 4

The latest entry in the combo-heavy Devil May Cry franchise proves it's still fun to hunt demons.

PS3 Xbox 360 ESRB: M

Developer and Publisher: Capcom

Devil May Cry 4 is an insanely good looking, over-the-top, action-fighting game that combines a high-drama story with crazy boss fights and one of the deepest, most rewarding combo systems around. There are some camera and save issues, but those hardly keep it from being an awesome title. Fans of the series and newcomers alike are in for a treat, as DMC4 is a great way to literally kick off the new year.

NEW KID ON THE BLOCK

Capcom has yet again found a way to revitalize the Devil May Cry franchise, this time leaning on blisteringly tight presentation and the new protagonist, Nero, an impetuous, demon-arm imbued member of the Holy Knights. Nero makes quite a grand entrance into the series and manages to leave a lasting impression; he might even give series favorite Dante a good run for his money.

The game's story line also holds a lot of secrets for those of you who have paid close attention to the franchise. I won't reveal any of them in the review, as that would just be cruel, but rest assured if you know your DMC history, you'll have a few things to smile about.

ARTHRITIS SUFFERERS MAY CRY

Plot points and secret revelations aside, I enjoyed the hand-cramping combo tree, though the overall difficulty, especially the majority of the boss fights, aren't nearly as epic as what I expected. Playing as Nero, I spent the better part of the game mastering his weapons: the Red Queen sword, which boasts a fuel-injected, damage-increasing throttle system; the Blue Rose double-barreled revolver; and the Devil Bringer, a bitchin' demonic hand that can grab enemies near and far and pound them into a slime of red orbs.

Nero's death-dealing abilities are highly upgradeable with the old red orb collection and stylish points systems from previous DMC games, that let you learn new skills and buy new items. There are some other control mechanics I really liked, including a move called Hellbound, which basically is like a mix of Kratos's grapple-swing and sword-jumping in Halo; you link onto blue grapple points and soar across gaps and levels, which is especially cool during a few vertical puzzles that have you platforming up chasms.



In DMC4, expect to be outnumbered by baddies at every turn. But don't fret: you've got more than enough fire power to get by.



Despite the game's name, these demons won't cry, no matter how many times you hack them with your blade.



What's the only thing worse than getting punched in the face? Getting punched in the face a second time by an even bigger fist.



BOYS DON'T CRY

Devil May Cry 4 looks outrageously beautiful. The cut-scenes are brilliantly rendered and the whole presentation runs without a hiccup at 60 frames per second. There are some moments that aren't as spectacular as others, but all in all, the game looks pretty damn good. Sadly, I can't gush quite as effusively about the sound. First, the same irritating song comes on every time Nero runs into any kind of enemy, and he rattles off the same three "attack lines" with the annoyance of a three-year-old: "Catch this," "Get lost," and "Slam dunk." So, Nero plays basketball? Lame.

HEAVY LOAD

Other game-comprising elements include a semi-fixed camera you have limited control over—you can move it some of the time but not all of the time, which was frustrating, especially during certain crucial moments. The save system is all but broken as well: the game pretends to save your file mid-mission, but whenever you quit out and return, you have to start the mission from the beginning again.

Geez, Capcom, you guys really need to rethink the designs of your save mechanics, especially if you're going to throw in lame-ass puzzles into your games. Oh, and I should probably note that I played

both PS3 and Xbox 360 versions of DMC4 and found almost no difference between the two in gameplay. The initial load time for the PS3, however, is about 20 minutes. Luckily, it only happens the first time you load the game. Also, subjectively speaking, I didn't notice any major differences between the quality of the Xbox 360 and PS3's graphics, but I'm sure both sides of the argument will find reasons to crow about their own platform's superiority.

BABE OF THE YEAR

Even with its minor faults, you'll be hard-pressed to find a better-feeling, better-looking, jack-of-all-trades action game on the market today. DMC4 has a lot to offer, and for fans of the series, there are a bunch of new and returning characters thrown into the mix. We meet Gloria for the first time: a gloriously rendered character whose physical attributes make Itagaki-san's volleyball DOA girls seem blasé. My prediction: Gloria will become the hottest chick in video gaming, like ever.

I'm hoping against hope that Capcom will somehow address the wonky camera and save system, because that would go a long way towards making DMC4 truly sublime. Still, I highly recommend it to anyone who's looking for an amazing action game to add to their library. —Casey Lynch

FUN FACTOR

4.50

OUT OF 5.00



PROS: Fantastic graphics; very fluid fighting mechanics; Nero and Gloria are awesome.

CONS: Audio is lackluster; the camera and save system are problematic.

DRAGON QUEST SWORDS: THE MASKED QUEEN AND THE TOWER OF MIRRORS

Wii ESRB: T

Developer: 8ing/Genius Sonority Publisher: Square Enix



The Blue Slime may be weak, but it's no wonder it's the franchise's mascot.

If you count its popularity in Japan, the Dragon Quest franchise is one of the most established series in all of gaming. However, if you pick up the latest installment, *Dragon Quest Swords: The Masked Queen and the Tower of Mirrors* (try saying that five times fast), thinking you're going to get a traditional role playing experience, you'll be disappointed because it skews away from the tried-and-true that the original *Dragon Quest* helped establish.

However, don't let that stop you, as *Swords* offers a fun and unique experience that isn't perfect but is still worth considering.



WHEN MONSTERS ATTACK

In many ways, *The Masked Queen* is a rail-shooter wrapped in an RPG package. Instead of using a gun to shoot monsters or zombies, you are equipped with a sword and must slash, parry, and stab enemies as they jump out from the wild and attack. As the game progresses various members join your party (hence the RPG element), but they are limited to supportive roles of casting offensive and

defensive spells. The gameplay itself is fun and engrossing and the graphics are rather stunning for a Wii game.

Unfortunately, *The Masked Queen* relies on the Wii Remote's motion sensing capabilities to a fault. The repetition of hacking and slashing through monster after monster left my arm sore and my patience worn thin.

COME AND GO

I also didn't like the fact that while in the city, you have the freedom to move about, but when you head into the wild, movement is restricted along a set path. This 'limited-freedom of movement' was particularly frustrating as was the fact that the game world felt a little barren and lifeless.

Still, *Dragon Quest Swords: The Masked Queen and the Tower of Mirrors* offers a unique blend of game genres that coalesce together into an interesting gaming experience. Each element is handled nicely and contributes to the whole. Arm fatigue aside, this is a great chance to revisit the *Dragon Quest* world, even if it is for something other than the usual RPG experience.

—Todd Melick

FUN FACTOR

4.00

OUT OF 5.00



PROS: Brilliant environments; refreshing take on a well established franchise.

CONS: Extensive use of the Wii Remote and repetitive action will wear out your arm.

KINGDOM UNDER FIRE: CIRCLE OF DOOM

Xbox 360 ESRB: M

Developer: Blueside Publisher: Microsoft



Those dark shadows you see on the ground are vultures circling high above the *Kingdom Under Fire* series. The hollow carcass of a role-playing game is all you'll find in the latest installment, *Circle of Doom*, which is dead on arrival due to some crippling flaws. Underwhelming action and shallow role-playing mechanics send this aptly titled game helplessly spiraling toward ruin.

Kingdom Under Fire: Circle of Doom never provides a cogent explanation of exactly what is going on, choosing instead to thrust you into a confusing fantasy world without even giving you a clear objective. It's entirely possible to play through the game without ever forwarding the plot, which is a bad sign all around. With no narrative backbone, the game devolves into a lame hack-n-slash affair where you just button-mash enemies to death.

But boring combat is just one half of the misery pie that this game serves up, with half-baked role-playing elements comprising the rest. There is a great deal of equipment to customize your character with but oddly, that same depth is missing when it comes to character abilities and attributes. Leveling up grants points for enhancing three core stats: hit points, skill points and luck, which just barely fulfills the minimum as far as character development goes but that's about all you get. Special abilities, such as magic spells and powerful combo attacks, are also present but you have to kill an entire army of enemy just to get access to them.

The lone bright spot comes in the form of four player cooperative play via Xbox Live, though collectively sharing the disappointment of this game is like tasting a nasty drink then passing it to your buddies to offer them a sip. No matter how you slice it, *Circle of Doom* just doesn't have any appeal. —Tracy Erickson

FUN FACTOR

2.00

OUT OF 5.00



PROS: Supports up to four players for cooperative play over Xbox Live.

CONS: Combat's bland; character development options are shallow; the story is incoherent.

TUROK

Xbox 360 ESRB: M

Developer: Propaganda Games Publisher: Touchstone Studios



See, this is the reason why you don't bring a knife to a gunfight.

The Turok series has definitely seen more than its fair share of ups and downs. While the first two installments were worthwhile, the later games, especially the horrifically bad Turok: Evolution, left the series toiling in the gutter.

The bad news is that the latest installment, Turok, isn't good enough to single-handedly repair the franchise's tarnished reputation but it is good enough that you'll want to forgive some of its ancestors' sins.



DINO CRISIS

The story begins with our hero and a team of mercenaries traveling to a distant planet to capture rogue war criminal Roland Kane who, unbeknownst to Turok and Co., has been performing genetic experiments bringing prehistoric creatures back to life. What is it with criminals and their kooky plans, anyway?

Story aside, the action is decent enough. There are plenty of thrills to be had as you wander around lush jungles and dank caves looking for things to put bullets into.

PEANUTS FOR BRAINS?

I was also impressed by the A.I. that was controlling the dinosaurs; it was actually good enough to offer up some strategic possibilities. For instance, you can use them as weapons by shooting nearby enemies and bringing them to the dino's attention. There is also a great variety to the dinosaur designs and their animations are impressive.

The odd part is that the same can't be said for your human foes. Maybe I'm just tired of fighting humanoid soldiers but the battles against the humans proved to be far less memorable than the fights against the dinos.

JUNGLE ROT

The game's overall visual presentation was also a little lacking. While the game's graphics are awesome, there just isn't enough variety to the various areas that you'll traverse. The paths from one objective to the next is also really linear, leading you to feel like a rat who's running a pre-constructed maze.

But it's not all bad with Turok. The game controls wonderfully and the frame rate never falters. There's no sign of fog shrouding distances in the background and the load times are mercifully short, save for when you're actually loading up the game.

Turok is a solid enough shooter that won't wow you the way triple-A titles like Call of Duty 4 or BioShock will. But if you're looking for some solid action, Turok more than fits the bill.—Andy Burt



FUN FACTOR

3.75

OUT OF 5.00



PROS: Dinosaurs are engaging; story line and gameplay are solid.

CONS: Lack of environment variety and linear objectives; some A.I. is lacking.

DREAMERS WANTED.

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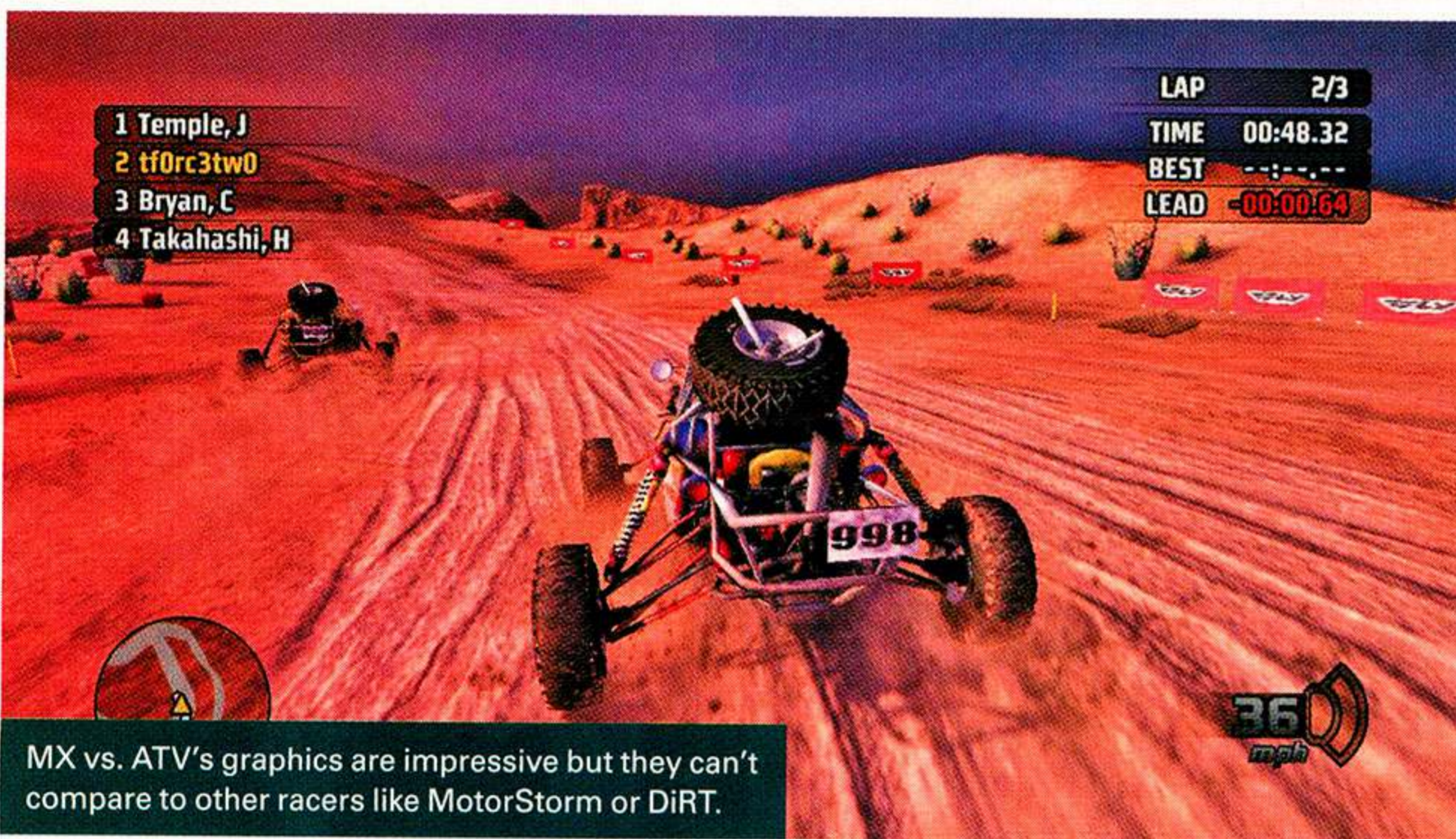
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MX vs. ATV UNTAMED

Xbox 360 ESRB: E

Developer: Rainbow Studios Publisher: THQ



MX vs. ATV's graphics are impressive but they can't compare to other racers like MotorStorm or DiRT.

MX vs. ATV Untamed proves that you can't teach an old dog new tricks. The latest installment of the dirt-worn racing series throws every conceivable motorbike, four-wheeler, and buggy together in an attempt to capture the genre's pole position. Unfortunately, Untamed doesn't do anything particularly well choosing ease of play and a glut of content over innovation and superior quality.

MUD IN YOUR EYE

On the plus side, the game is instantly accessible thanks to simple controls and forgiving handling. You'll find it easy to jump right into the driver's seat of the large roster of vehicles and take off across the many venues. There's an impressive list of events for you to tackle, as well, including: super-cross, freestyle, open-cross, super-moto, endurocross, mini-moto, and way-point runs.

Unfortunately, Untamed suffers from a lot of problems. The first is that the terrain exerts little influence on your handling, which makes the game easy to play but robs you of a sense of challenge and realism. Any sense of difficulty comes from the computer controlled racers who will give you a run for your money at the higher difficulty settings and the freestyle trick contests, which suffer from finicky button combos and landings.

BUMPER TO BUMPER

Sadly, these issues carry over to the multiplayer modes. Untamed does, however, soundly beat back competing racers in terms of options: full split-screen, system link, and online play via Xbox Live across any of the events featured in the single player game. It truly is the game's one bright point.

Untamed also lets you customize your vehicles and riders, but it's entirely cosmetic since equipment has no impact on performance; this means you'll spend more time playing dress-up than anything. While it's a nice touch, I would have preferred it if they focused on letting you actually affect your vehicle's performance through upgrades and tweaks.

SHOWROOM SHINE

The game also suffers from some presentation issues. There are long loading times and while the practice arena that they dump you into is a novel approach, running circles inside an empty indoor arena while waiting for a race to start is not my idea of fun. The graphics also underwhelm, with a last-gen flavor that falls far below the standard set by marquee titles Sega Rally Revo and MotorStorm. There's little variation in terrain, vehicles don't leave persistent tracks in the mud, and a plastic sheen covers nearly everything.

Untamed is a pup past its prime. The multiplayer mode holds potential overall but the uninspired off-road racing and bland presentation means you should only consider it if you're a diehard franchise fan or an off-road racing junkie. —Tracy Erickson



FUN FACTOR

3.00

OUT OF 5.00

PROS: Great online play; sheer wealth of modes ensure lasting value.

CONS: Handling isn't dynamic to terrain; bland graphics; unacceptable loading times.



NANOSTRAY 2

DS ESRB: E

Developer: Shin'en Publisher: Majesco



If the original Nanostray left you floating in deep space with its tacked-on touch controls, absentee story, and unlimited continues, Shin'en has heard your distress call. Nanostray 2 corrects all of these problems while maintaining the gorgeous production values we've come to expect from the original DS game and Iridion GBA titles.

The first injustice that was corrected was the addition of a boilerplate plot that, while it won't win any major sci-fi awards, does a decent job of moving the game forward with some sense of purpose. The developers also wisely put in the option for a traditional control scheme, allowing you to forgo the much-maligned touchscreen based controls that plagued the first title. You use the directional pad to control movement, the A and B buttons to shoot your main and secondary weapons, and the L and R buttons to shift the position of your helper satellites.

Supplementing the new story and controls are some astronomical production values: The menus and cut-scenes are superb; the backgrounds contain stunning detail; the 3D game sprites zip and spin fluidly; and the techno-infused soundtrack adds a sense of urgency to the already twitchy gameplay. There are some slowdown issues but they're not severe.

The one thing I didn't like was the level design, which fell into predictable patterns. Thankfully, the ramped up difficulty keeps the game from growing stale too fast. You'll also get a fair amount of replay value from the included challenges and unlockable simulators which are essentially objective-based mini-games. The multiplayer and online components are also a blast and should help keep the cart in your DS long after you've finished off the single-player mode.

Nanostray 2 will definitely please hardcore arcade shooter fans, but the increased difficulty may narrow the game's mainstream appeal. Still, if you're up for a challenge, this is one title definitely worth adding to your DS library. —Mike Spitalieri

FUN FACTOR

4.00

OUT OF 5.00

PROS: Excellent presentation and intense shoot-em-up action.

CONS: Level design is too predictable.



STAR TREK CONQUEST

Wii ESRB: E

Developer: 4J Studios Publisher: Bethesda Softworks

We've all had our hearts broken by games like Star Trek: Conquest. Despite its intriguing concept, this game never comes close to reaching its potential and isn't worth more than a tiny parsec of your time (and yes, before you write angry letters, we know parsec is a measure of distance, not time).



RESISTANCE IS WORTHWHILE

In the woeful campaign mode of Conquest, which is set in Star Trek's Next Generation era, you're presented with a static board of interconnecting nodes. The goal is to build up to three fleets with



any combination of three different types of ships and vanquish your foes by conquering their territory. Done right, Conquest could have offered a taut, frantic experience as opponents raced to occupy strategic locations, all while carefully balancing offensive and defensive units. Unfortunately, the final product is a shallow and unfulfilling game that is riddled with problems.

PROCEEDING IS NOT LOGICAL

For instance, each faction has a pre-determined starting location, with some special sectors scattered around, like the fog of war dispelling Argus Array or the pre-built battle station Deep Space 9. The sad part is that none of these items

change position, no matter how many times you play, so each playthrough devolves into a predictable pattern.

As a result, every game's outcome feels inevitable from the very beginning, which renders any time spent on devising a strategy pointless. And to top it all off, there's no multiplayer mode present, which might have helped alleviate some of these issues.

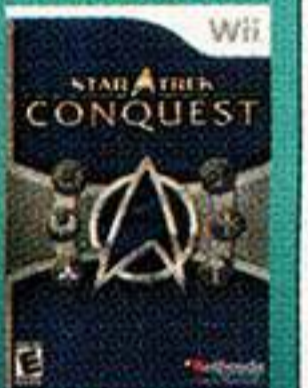
FAR FROM THE NEXT GENERATION

Conquest tantalized my inner tribble's imagination with promises of epic battles in space but it ultimately left me feeling bored and uninspired. It's a pathetic attempt at capturing the feel of the Star Trek universe and a disappointment for hardcore fans all around. Set phasers to "avoid."
—Hugh Sterbakov

FUN FACTOR

1.00

OUT OF 5.00



PROS: You'll get one exciting game out of it...

CONS: ...and never have any reason to ever play again.

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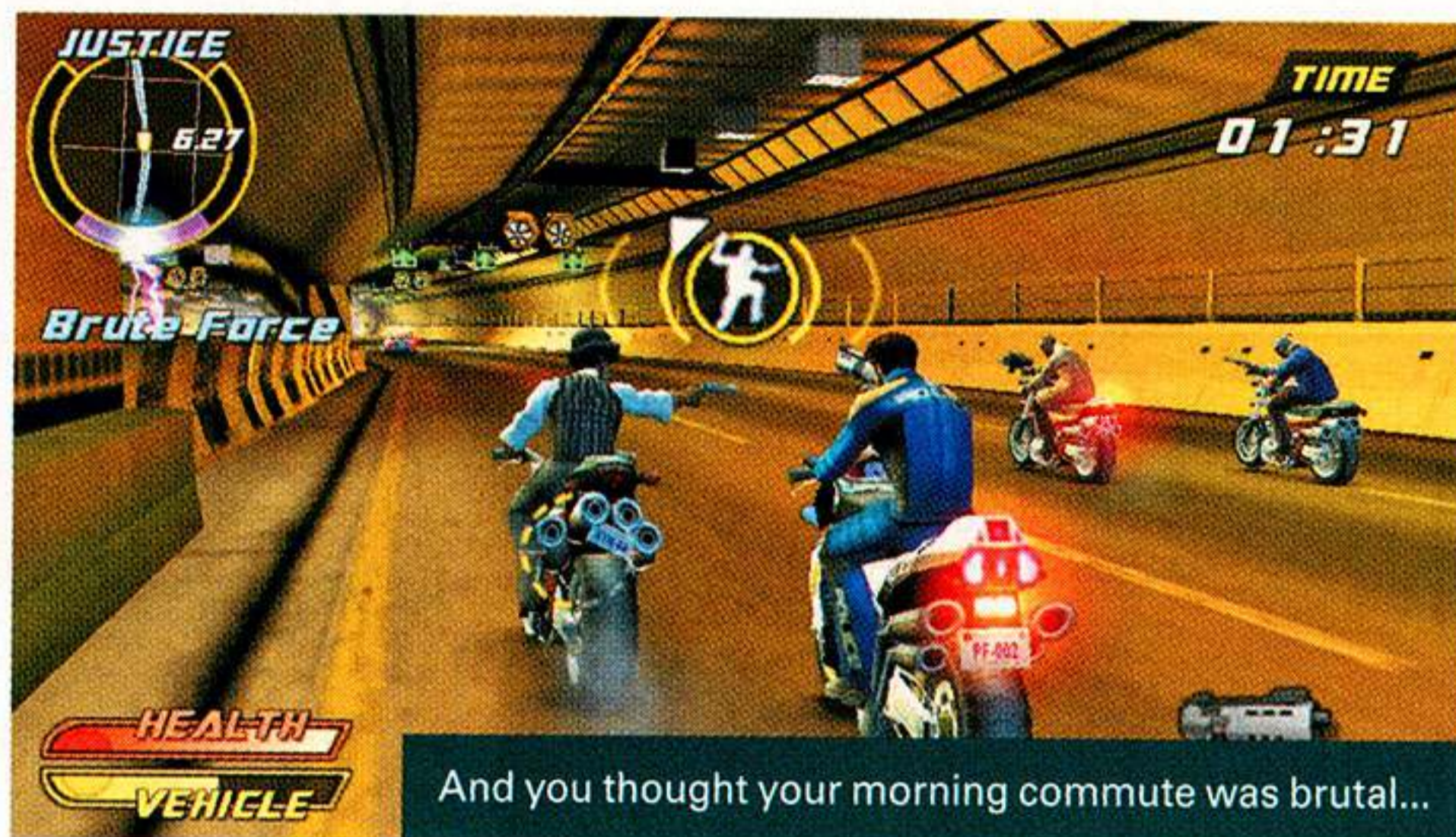
E-COUPON

REVIEWS

PURSUIT FORCE: EXTREME JUSTICE

PSP ESRB: T

Developer: Bigbig Studios Publisher: Sony



Much like its predecessor, Pursuit Force: Extreme Justice is a fast paced action game that places you among the ranks of a squadron of crime fighting daredevils that specialize in high speed chases and ridiculously dangerous maneuvers. The game is over-the-top but in a good way and even though it isn't great, it still manages to satisfy.

CAN'T DRIVE 55

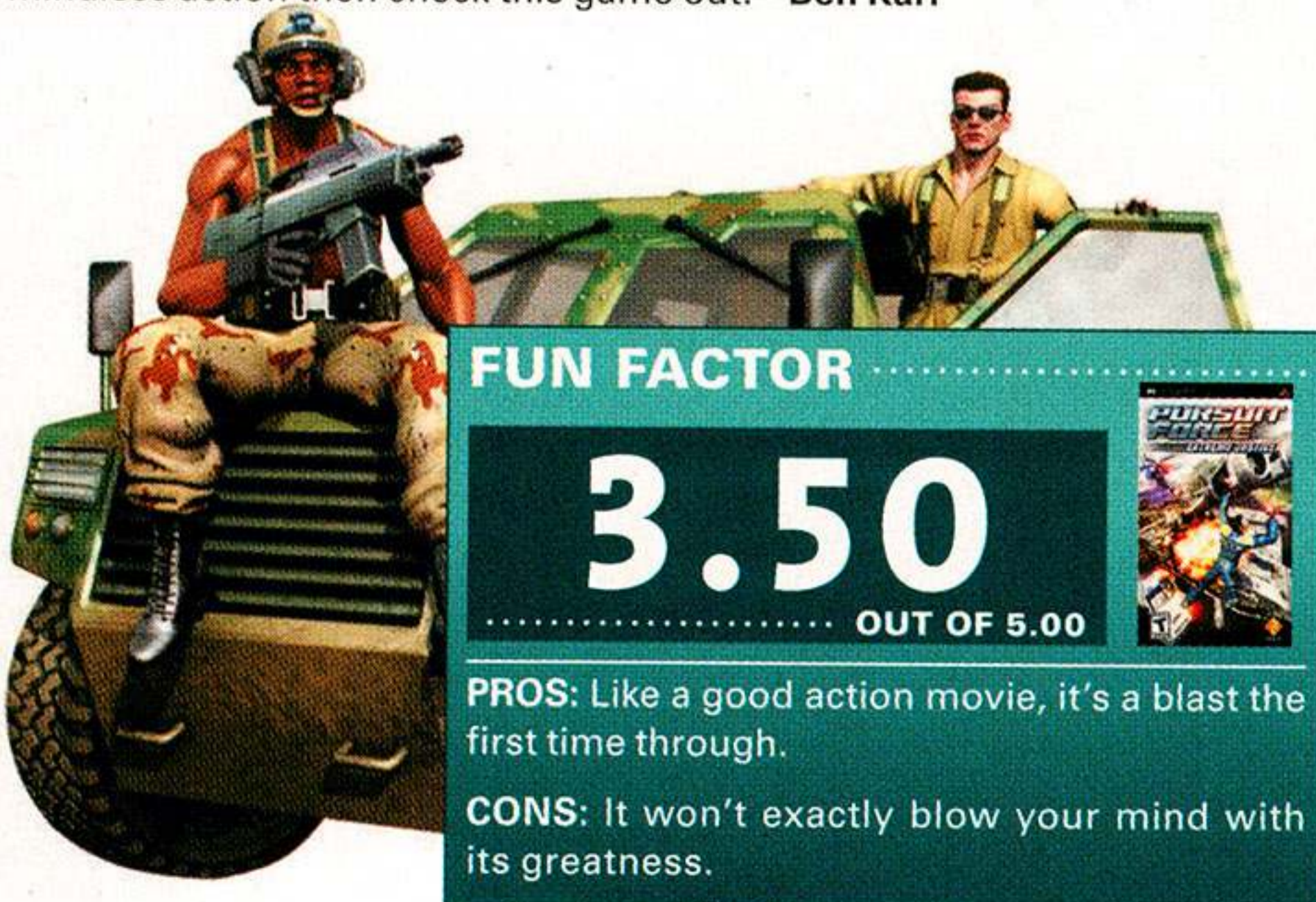
Extreme Justice does suffer from a generic plot that involves a shadowy crime syndicate named the Renegades. It's standard action boilerplate but it's a nice upgrade from the first title's lame story. Unfortunately, the voice acting and downright embarrassing dialogue make it really hard to take seriously.

The good news is that the missions are varied and interesting. You'll spend most of your time driving around and pursuing your enemies but the game manages to keep you entertained throughout. When you're not leaping from car to car on the freeway, you'll be engaged in activities like manning a gun turret on a helicopter and taking down foes in hand-to-hand combat.

SOMETHING FOR NOTHING

Extreme Justice also has a good amount of bonus content as well. Bounty mode and Challenges require you to complete missions while meeting certain requirements; it's just too bad that they feel so similar. There's also a multiplayer mode that allows up to four player pursuits, which can be a fun diversion. Add in the tight controls and passable graphics and you have a pretty decent action title that's worth at least one playthrough.

Extreme Justice hardly stands out from the rest of the pack but it more or less hits its intended mark. It's not going to blow you away but it is fun enough to keep you engaged for a few hours. If you're looking for some mindless action then check this game out.—Ben Karl



FUN FACTOR

3.50
OUT OF 5.00

PROS: Like a good action movie, it's a blast the first time through.

CONS: It won't exactly blow your mind with its greatness.

UNREAL TOURNAMENT III

PS3 ESRB: M

■ Developer: Epic Games ■ Publisher: Midway

Unreal Tournament III is the long awaited next-gen follow-up to Unreal Tournament 2004. The combat is fast and furious and there's a wide variety of game variants, though the single-player campaign is really just a tutorial tied together by a thin story line that prepares you for the main multiplayer event.

The differences between Unreal Tournament III and the more popular shooters of 2007 like Call of Duty 4 and Halo 3 are immediately obvious, the first and primary being the frantic pace. If you haven't played a UT game in a long time, get ready to move fast. I couldn't believe the contrast in speed between this game and Call of Duty 4; add to that all of the double-jumping, side-dashing, and wall-jumping chaos and UTIII is easily the most frenetic shooter currently on the market.



The single-player campaign mode, which you can play online with up to three other players, is basically an offline training mode for the online multiplayer. It does a good job of familiarizing you with all of the maps and level types with revenge-tinged story bits peppered throughout.

On the multiplayer side, there are 14 maps and six game types including deathmatch, team deathmatch, capture the flag, vehicle CTF, Warfare, and Duel. The overall online experience is rather good, though I did experience minor issues with lag and random disconnects from the host. I also ran into random clipping issues and other graphical quirks but things ran smoothly for the most part. The game also looks, sounds, and plays amazingly well, though several design and gameplay elements including Reaper, the main poster boy for UTIII, feels very derivative of Gears of War.

Still, if you're a PS3 owner on the hunt for a fast and fun online experience, UTIII is a compelling title that you should definitely consider. —Casey Lynch

FUN FACTOR

4.25

OUT OF 5.00



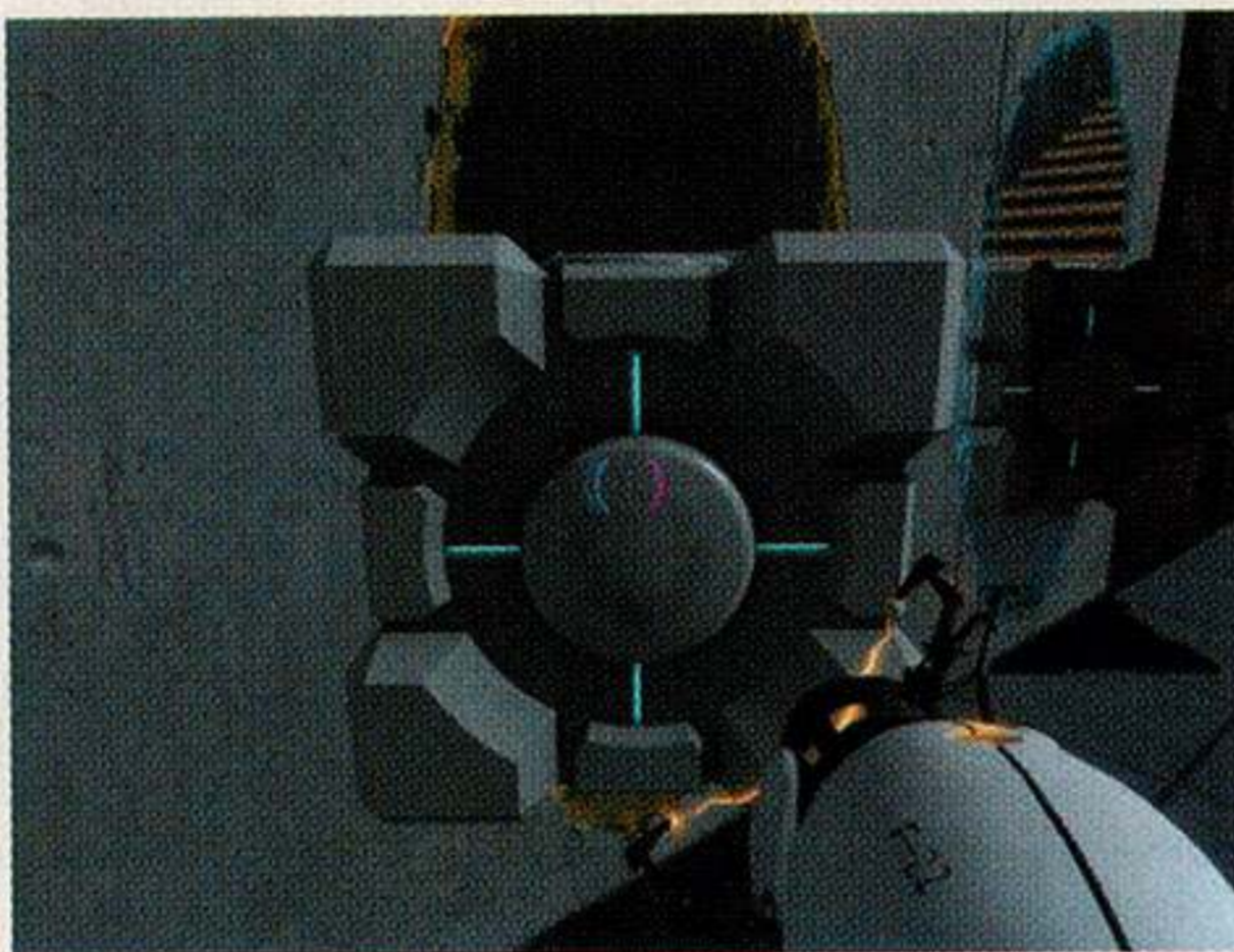
PROS: Faster than any shooter out right now; maps and characters look great.

CONS: The single-player mode is basically a long tutorial; be wary of bugs.

THE ORANGE BOX

PS3 ESRB: M

■ Developer: Valve
■ Publisher: EA Games



The Orange Box is as close to a must buy title as it gets for PS3 owners. It features five incredible games that are worth buying individually; heck, for Team Fortress 2 alone, I'd thrown in my first-born.

By now, you probably know all about what the Orange Box has to offer but just in case you don't, here's a quick primer: it includes the classic Half Life 2 as well as the follow-ups Episode One and Two; these mini-sequels do an excellent job of extending the story and set up what's coming next.

Also included is the gem Portal, a mind-blowing and sometimes baffling title that shines with excellent game design and dialogue. The game arms you with a special gun that allows you to create portals on the fly; you use it to solve environmental puzzles while unraveling the hilarious back story. It isn't particularly long but the experience is awesome from the first minute to the last.

As if that wasn't enough, the package is rounded out by Team Fortress 2, which I feel is the best multi-player game of the year. The new art style, fast pace, and strategic team play really help set it apart from the rest of the pack. It feels simplified when compared to the original but it's ridiculously fun. The PS3 version also features dedicated servers which helps eliminate a lot of the hosting problems that affected the Xbox 360 version. A nice addition is the option to vote on maps rather than return to the lobby between games.

There has been some criticism levied against the PS3 version of Orange Box for daunting load times and frame rate issues, and while they are present, it's easy to forgive these technical issues given the quality of the game itself. If you have a PS3, you can't afford not to own it. —Abbie Heppe

FUN FACTOR

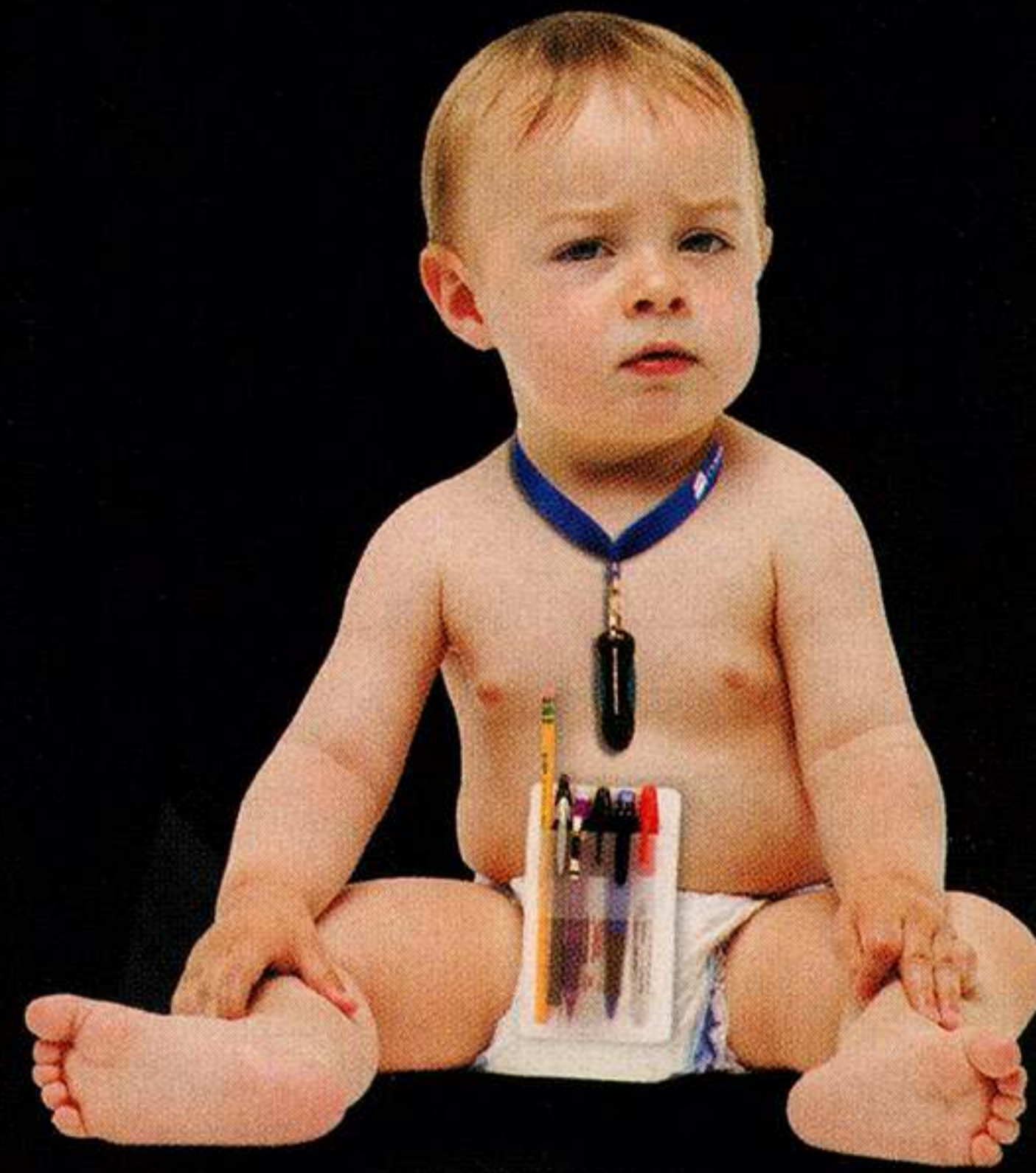
5.00

OUT OF 5.00



PROS: Five incredible games in one awesome package; there are dedicated servers for TF2.

CONS: Painful load times; frame-rate issues; controls are the least friendly of all versions.



[GEEKED AT BIRTH.]



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COMPUTER FORENSICS	ROBOTICS

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ASK THE PROS

You ask, we answer.

QUESTION OF THE MONTH

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

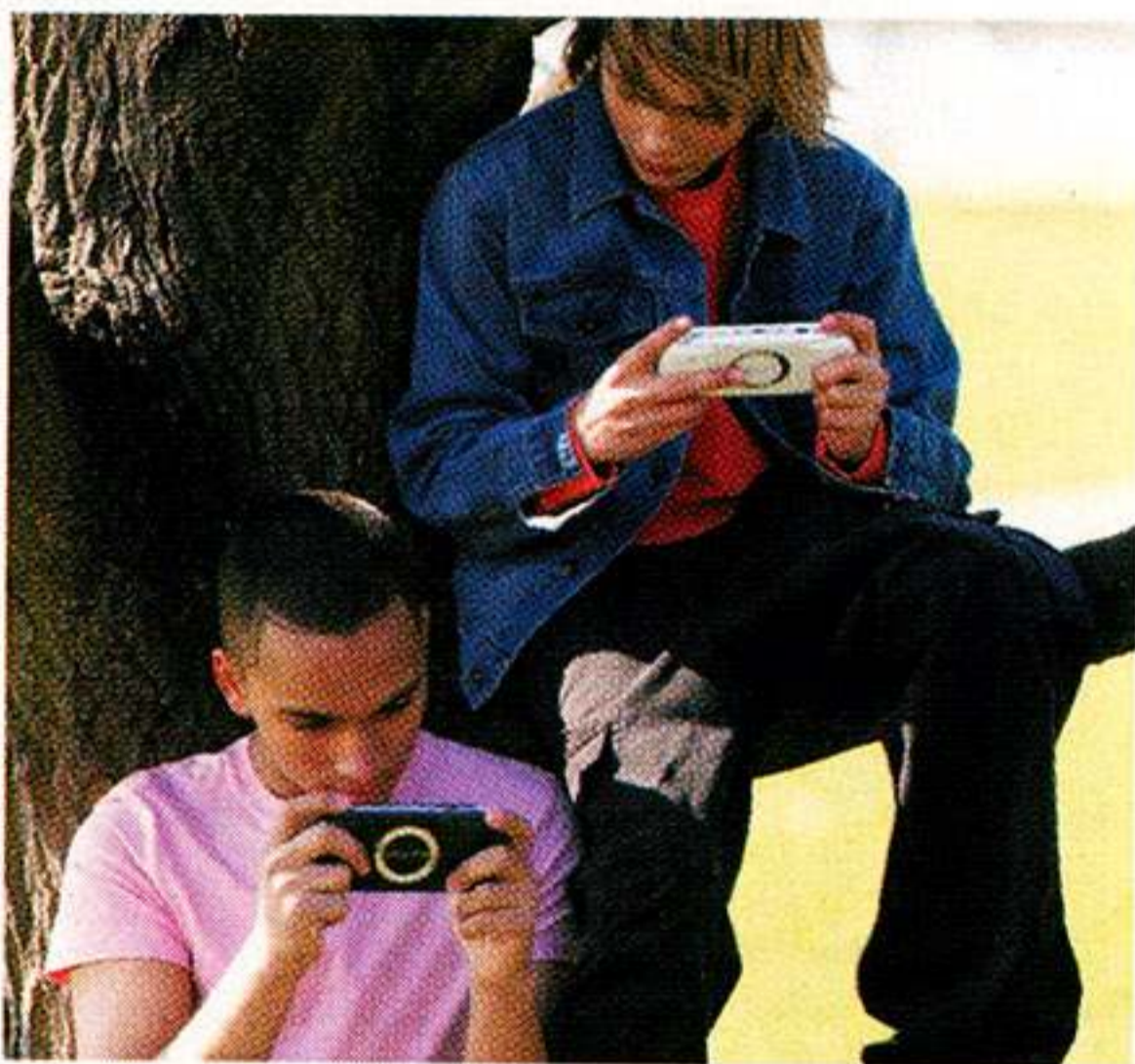


Q: What is a gamer?
—ameendingo



Tae K. Kim says: If you look at it from a purely linguistics-based angle, ameendingo, a gamer is "one who games," or more correctly, "one who plays games." So that's it. Don't buy into the elitist crap about "hardcore" versus "casual" gamers and all that jazz. If you play video games and you enjoy doing so, then you're a gamer. Obviously, some people buy into the lifestyle and culture a whole lot more than others, but again, don't worry about proving yourself.

If people want to challenge your cred, just ignore them and go back to enjoying video games. After all, that's the whole point of playing video games in the first place, isn't it? To have fun?



A WII BIT OF ASSASSINATION

Q: Why is it that they are making Assassin's Creed for the DS and not the Wii? Don't you think it would be a little more interesting on the Wii?—shadwo617

Tae K. Kim says: You have to think about whether or not a Wii version of AC would make sense. Ubisoft can get away with a DS version because they can tailor the experience to that specific platform. If they were to make a Wii version, the expectation would be that it should be comparable to the Xbox 360 and PS3. But remember that the Wii cannot compare to the other two consoles in terms of hardware, and from what I've seen of the game, a Wii version would not be able to match the Xbox 360 and PS3 versions in terms of graphics.

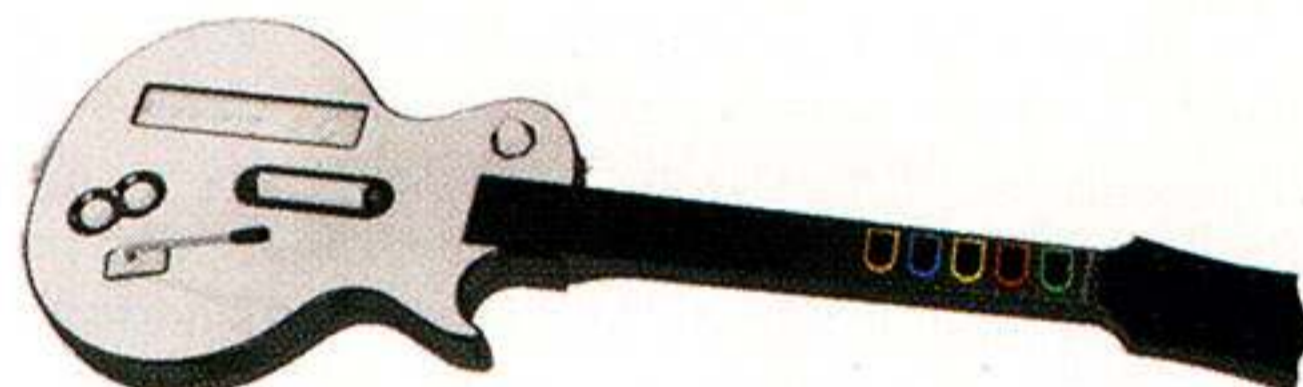
I don't think Ubisoft has flat-out denied that a Wii version is coming out, so there might still be a chance but you have to be aware of the factors involved. A Wii version might be awesome but then again, it might also be a watered down, too.

A WIRELESS CONUNDRUM

Q: My Wii will not accept the new update for some reason and I'm always getting error codes. Could it be that the range of the wireless adapter inside the Wii is pathetic? Seriously, my Wii is less than five yards away from a wireless router. Please don't give me a link to that complicated website that Nintendo has set up, there are no solutions there.—Chuckfreebase

Tae K. Kim says: I doubt that it's the distance between your Wii and your wireless router that is the problem. It sounds like the problem lies with your

Wii's wireless settings. First, check and make sure that your wireless router is set up and working properly. Then make sure that you can access your wireless network using a laptop or computer. Once that's verified, reset the wireless settings and configure everything from scratch. If you still get errors, I'd suggest you jot down the error code and do some detective work on Google. I don't know what sort of errors you're experiencing so I can't help you troubleshoot but there are places out there where you can get more information and help. If it's any consolation, even us GamePros have had trouble getting our Wiis online through our wireless network here at work. We've had to bug our IT guys to come help. It can be frustrating but hang in there and try and get it working.



CAN I BE A HERO ON THE Wii?

Q: What do you think of Guitar Hero III for the Wii? I love it, but others I talk to really hate it. I believe that it is one of the best games for Wii.—salty13

Tae K. Kim says: I haven't played the Wii version of Guitar Hero III, salty13. But even without having played it, I can say this: It's Guitar Hero III, and Guitar Hero III is awesome so I'm sure the Wii version is awesome. I don't know how it stacks up against the Xbox 360 version or the PS3 version but it's great

GAMEPRO CHALLENGE

This month we asked you to help your favorite game characters find love by writing a personals ad for them.



Link (The Legend of Zelda): Handsome Hyrulian male seeks woman who is independent, yet retain feminine qualities. If you are the one then please travel the world with me, as I wander aimlessly vanquishing evil where ever it may rise.

—Gamiac2002, Status: End Boss

Vaan (Final Fantasy XII): Just looking for you're average, down to earth girl who...wait, he is a guy right?

—Chiodos, Status: Ninja

Kratos (God of War): Sensitive masculine half god, looking for lover/sparring partner. Must hate the Gods. Boob size matters.

—Miamiifan, Status: Hero

HK-47 (Star Wars: Knights of the Old Republic): Hello meat bags. I require a female to have target practice at...I mean with.

—Jerichowiz, Status: Hero

Take the GamePro Challenge at www.GamePro.com/community!

ASK THE GAME GIRL



Hey GameGirls! My girlfriend's birthday is right around the corner and we just got a Wii with no games other than Wii Sports. She absolutely loves Wii Sports and I want to know what Wii games I should buy her. She's never been into gaming until now. Any suggestions?—Jessica



Nikole says: If she is n00b to the gaming world I suggest starting with games she likes. She likes Wii Sports so other games like that are Cooking Mama and WarioWare. Guitar Hero III for the Wii is coming out soon, and that's going to be a real crowd pleaser. I know my sister is a casual gamer at best, and her favorite game is Mario Party 8. Also get some games that you like to so you can expand her love of games. I hear good things about Metroid Prime 3: Corruption, too.

Send your questions to the GameGirls at www.GameGirl.com

that Wii owners have a chance to rock out as well.

I know there is a troubling issue with the audio only coming out in mono, but despite that quibble, I hear it's still a good time.

I have no idea why some people hate the game but hey, if they have legitimate gripes with it, that's their burden to bear. You seem to enjoy it so don't worry about what the other people say and just keep having a good time.

CHATTING WITH OUT THE WIRES

Q: Will there ever be plans in the future for a headset for the Wii. It would be nice to play Medal of Honor: Heroes online while chatting out strategies with my teammates.—*thelaw721*

Tae K. Kim says: This is an idea that makes perfect sense. It's a little weird that it hasn't happened yet. I haven't heard anything official or even unofficial regarding a headset, but having played a few games on Xbox Live I know that voice chat is an awesome feature.

Sure, you have to deal with all the idiots and gutter-mouths, but there are legit uses for the tech, such as the one you mentioned. Unfortunately, I'm going to have to give you the stock answer: While Nintendo hasn't announced anything, I'm sure they are aware of it and probably have something planned internally.

Nintendo hasn't quite made online play a priority the way Microsoft and Sony have, but you have to figure with upcoming titles like Super Smash Bros. Brawl, Nintendo understands the importance of it, so maybe a headset isn't such a far fetched idea. For now we'll have to add this to the list of other things Nintendo should do but hasn't

yet like, downloadable expansion packs to the Mii Creation tool, adding virtual pets, and demanding that they put in classic Nintendo theme songs into the Wii version of Guitar Hero III.

At this point, all I can recommend is that you be patient and cross your fingers that either Nintendo or a third-party peripheral maker steps up.



PROS

Ask the Pros and read more tips online.

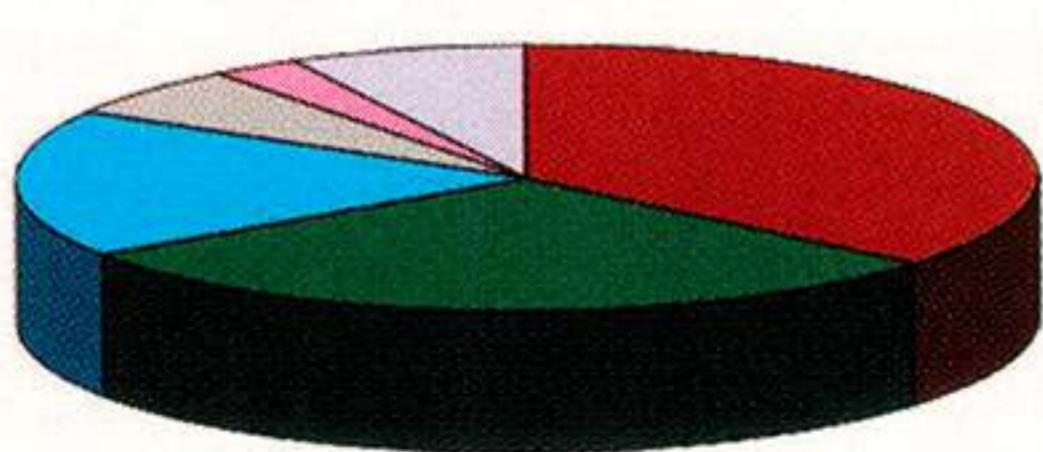
Text **PROS** to 59479

Only standard text messaging rates apply

GAMEPRO POLL

Results as of January 1, 2008

What system did you ask for during the holidays?



■ PS3: 36.3%
■ Xbox 360: 29.4%
■ Wii: 17.9%
■ PSP: 6.1%
■ DS: 3%
■ Other: 7.4%



AWESOME THREADS

Overheard on the GamePro.com message boards...

Member of the Month



AncientGamer

Rank: End Boss

Sex: Male

Age: 21

Expertise: Gaming, Movies

Hometown: Cayuga, NY

"Home (for PS3) needs to be amazing. Don't ask why, it just does. Home has to give people a reason to stray from Microsoft's dominant choke hold on online gaming with Xbox Live. If Home fails, that will be a huge setback."



Chip10

Status: Hero

On a new Tomb Raider for current-gen consoles

"Of course, I can always go for some next-gen boobage."



Kubrick

Status: Hero

On Carson Daily and Ryan Seacrest as Sith Lords

"There is no way these guys should be popular or have TV shows! They are clouding everyone's judgment with the dark side."



Enigmatic King

Status: End Boss

On what people would be if not human

"If I was the Grim Reaper, half of you wouldn't even be typing right now."



CowboyKiller

Status: Ninja

On if people miss going to the local arcade

"They got exiled with the birth of DDR. I still go to an old movie theater that has some old school, classic arcade games, like the 6-in-1 SNES game with Spy Hunter, Mario Bros., and others."

Join The Hub Today!

GamePro.com

HH

HEAD TO HEAD

You write, we respond.

MO' GRAPHICS, MO' PROBLEMS

I just picked up Call of Duty 4 for the PS3 and had a question/complaint that I was hoping you guys could shed some light on. On the back of the case it shows that the game is 1080p compatible, and this was the reason why I decided to try it on the PS3 instead of the Xbox 360. I do have a fully 1080p TV and when I switch its inputs, the TV's heading tells me what resolution it's showing. So whenever I am playing games on my Xbox 360 it always tells me that I am getting full 1080p resolution. This is also the case whenever I turn on my PS3 or watch Blu-ray movies on the system.

When I am playing Call of Duty it is only displaying in 720p, not 1080p. So my question is: Is there something wrong with my game or is it my whole setup? Is that why my Call of Duty is not showing in full HD or is the game only 720p compatible, and the back of the case lying? If you could help me out I would appreciate it, because with all the hype about the graphics of Call of Duty I am mad that I am not getting the full HD experience.

Jeff DeVries—Holland, MI

It seems the better technology gets the more issues there are that come up. These technical difficulties ultimately get in the way of a fun experience. If you're having problems with the display resolution with your games on the PS3 go into the display settings on the main menu and uncheck the 720p and 1080i options. This should fix the issue.

ACCEPT ME! FOR I NOW WEAR NORMAL HUMAN PANTS!



LETTER OF THE MONTH CONTEST

GUITAR HERO II XBOX 360 BUNDLE

The Letter of the Month winner will receive the Guitar Hero II bundle for the Xbox 360. Rock on!



The presence of realistic graphics is almost an expectation these days.

KEEPING IT REAL WITH THE Wii

In your December issue you printed a letter dripping of anti-Nintendo fanboyism saying the graphics on the Wii weren't as "Visually" appealing as Xbox 360 and it lacked "quality" games.

There are a lot of gamers out there, like me, who do not really care for the PS3's or Xbox 360's "real-life" graphics. The games released for those consoles maybe hardcore and cutting edge, but you're either carrying around a gun and icing, slicing, or dicing people in half, or crushing someone's head like a watermelon. Though the graphics on the Wii are simpler than those systems, the games that are released appeal to a gamer with more "casual" and "laid-back" gaming taste.

Gamers who need their bloodbaths in their video games they need not worry. There are quite a few games out for those "blood-lusting" gamers who say they don't want to buy a Wii because it lacks M-rated titles like, Resident Evil, True Crime: Streets of New York, The Godfather, Scarface: The World is Yours, and Manhunt 2. Nintendo had some of the first violent video games around.

Nintendo is going nowhere, baby. The sales of the Wii have been good, beating out both the PS3 and Xbox 360. The death of Nintendo would signify the end of the gaming industry as a whole. While the Wii's graphics may not be "as real-as-real" I'll go out on a limb and say that Nintendo can stay alive in the presence of giants like PS3 and Xbox 360. Who knows, perhaps Nintendo's follow-up console to the Wii will look so real that we'll be able to see every strand of hair on Mario's mustache and every ripple and scale on Bowser's skin.

Dallas Morarie—Readstown, WI

Rated M for Mario.
Nintendo 4 life!



ORIGINAL MONSTERS ARE HARD TO COME BY

A friend and I were talking about FPS's and he complained that all of them are using monsters more and humans less. He tried the demo for Crysis and when he got to the dead squad member he was pretty much was fed up with it. He said that the monsters with rockets for arms were lame and there needs to be more originality in the genre. I told him that most WWII games used humans and they're over done. I think that fact, coupled with the ridiculously simple premise of shooters, a new, original idea would be hard to fit into the genre as far as the enemies goes.

Erick Hawkins—Via Internet

SEEING RED OVER Wii

So I open my mailbox and surprise, surprise! What do I see? Yet another Nintendo Wii cover. Seriously, you guys are about as impartial as *Nintendo Power*.

Ron Sharkey—Via Internet

A CASE OF THE BLUES

Recently I have been hearing a lot of talk about the Blu-ray format and as an Xbox 360 owner I'm starting to get worried. I think Microsoft may have made a huge mistake in not supporting HD DVD right out of the box. First I hear about how UTIII will ship with more maps for the PS3 than for the Xbox 360, then I hear that Killzone 2 had a demo level that was over 2 GB in size (about a third of the capacity of a dual layer DVD if I'm not mistaken).

This is unfortunate but, if you think about it, Xbox 360 owners can't really complain. We mock the PS3 for its high price point and "unnecessary features," but Blu-ray support is one of those features that add a significant increase to the price of the console. If you look back at the PS2 it was in a very similar situation. Sure, when the PS2 first launched the DVD functionality didn't really seem



necessary because most of the games were on CD. Can you imagine what would have happened if the PS2 only supported CD? Instead, the PS2 went on to sell the most units and get the best, most varied game library of all three consoles.

When you take into account the loading times which are starting to get atrocious on the Xbox 360, its beginning to look like the Blu-ray format that we all balked at is actually giving the PS3 a huge advantage in the games category—the one that really matters.

Ian Beaupre—Toronto, ON

MAKING EVERY CLASS COUNT

When I grow up, I want to be a creative director, like Ken Levine at Irrational Games! I will be entering high school soon, and I was wondering what kind of classes I should take in high school and college to get a job like that.

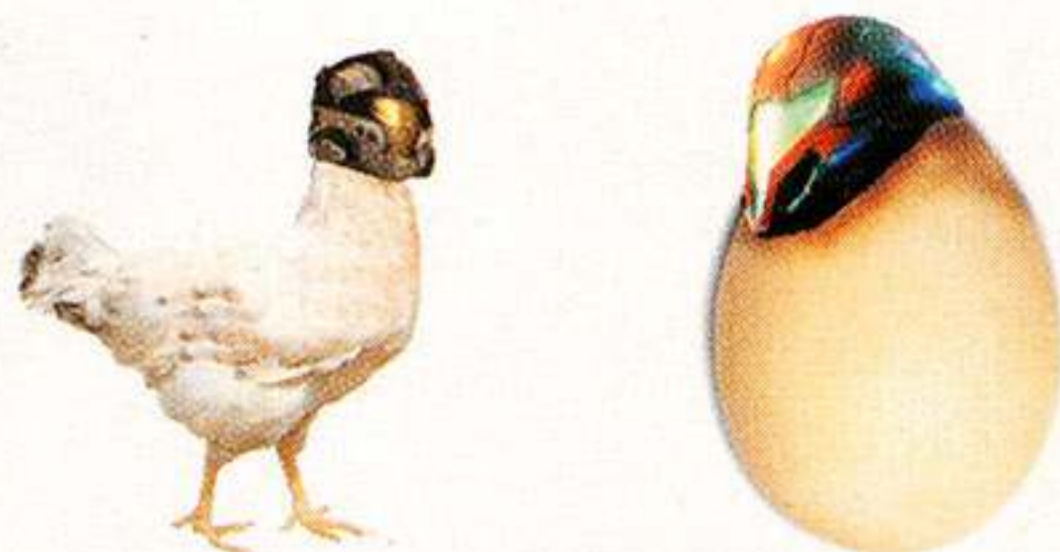
Ashe Welch—Via Internet

If you're interested in working in the gaming industry the best advice is to take a wide variety of classes. Having a solid background in computers and information science is important, but a solid background in art, literature, and social science will give you perspective. I wouldn't worry too much about what classes you take if you're in high school. Who knows, maybe you'll change your mind and decide to be a firefighter when you grow up.

THE POWER OF ONE

I am a hardcore gamer and play games across a multitude of platforms. My hope is that in the future technology will evolve and grow so all games will be multiplatform. Online content is growing and including movies, music, and downloadable games proves that game consoles are not just for

games, but are multimedia interfaces for many people. I love many of the exclusive titles, but how many people can really afford to buy everything? Multiplatform games allow people, regardless of what system they own, to play and experience



them. The idea of just having to own one console is exciting. I think this should be the future of gaming. Video games should be enjoyed by all and should be easy to access.

James Cornett—Atlantic City, NJ

ACCEPTING HALO

I read your December issue of *GamePro*, which I loved because I can't wait for Super Smash Bros. Brawl. I got a bit "peeved" when I read someone insinuating Miyamoto pretty much copied Halo for Metroid. Now, I don't know if this guy even knows anything about Metroid, but let's look at the facts.

Halo is pretty much a bite off Metroid. You got the Flood parasites that look a lot like Metroids. You got a hero that has a really cool battle space suit. You have surroundings from an ancient/extinct civilization called the Chozo/Forerunners, and beings (Space Pirates/Convent) attempting to use either the Metroids/ Flood or Halo rings for their own gain.

Metroid has been out a lot longer, these concepts are not Halo originals. Bungee just used a

first-person perspective. I am not by any means a hater of Halo (I just made Captain and forged a map called Sand War.) It's just that I can accept the fact that Halo is not the originator of certain ideas. I'm surprised the GamePros didn't call him out on this themselves.

Aviel Perez—Via Internet

KEEP YOUR COMMENTS TO YOURSELF

I hate when I'm playing a game, either online or off, and someone walks into the room and asks to play with me, and then starts telling me how bad of a player I am. Many people have put me down and told me how terrible I was at the game just because I made a mistake. What's the point to that? Please don't put someone down unless you are actually a better player. Be logical and don't put someone down if they're better than you, they don't deserve it.

Caleb Rood—Owosso, MI

ALL'S FAIR IN THE CONSOLE WAR

Everyday when I go to school a lot of people make fun of me because I don't own a next-gen console. They laugh at me and always talk about things like Halo 3 and Gears of War. I'm writing to ask you to send me a Xbox 360 elite. I would love it if you could do that.

Bobby Ramirez—Apollo Beach, FL

It sounds like the people you go to school with need a lesson in how to treat people. While we'd love to help you and everyone else out with their console needs we simply can't. The truth is many of us here at *GamePro* don't own every system out and spend many hours hanging out with our friends that do. It's unfortunate that life's unfair sometimes.

LET'S CONNECT!

Got a question or comment? Write to us at: letters@gamepro.com or *GamePro*, Head2Head, 501 2nd St., Ste. 114, San Francisco, CA 94107. Be sure to tell us your city and state, too.

ART ATTACK!

This month's winner receives

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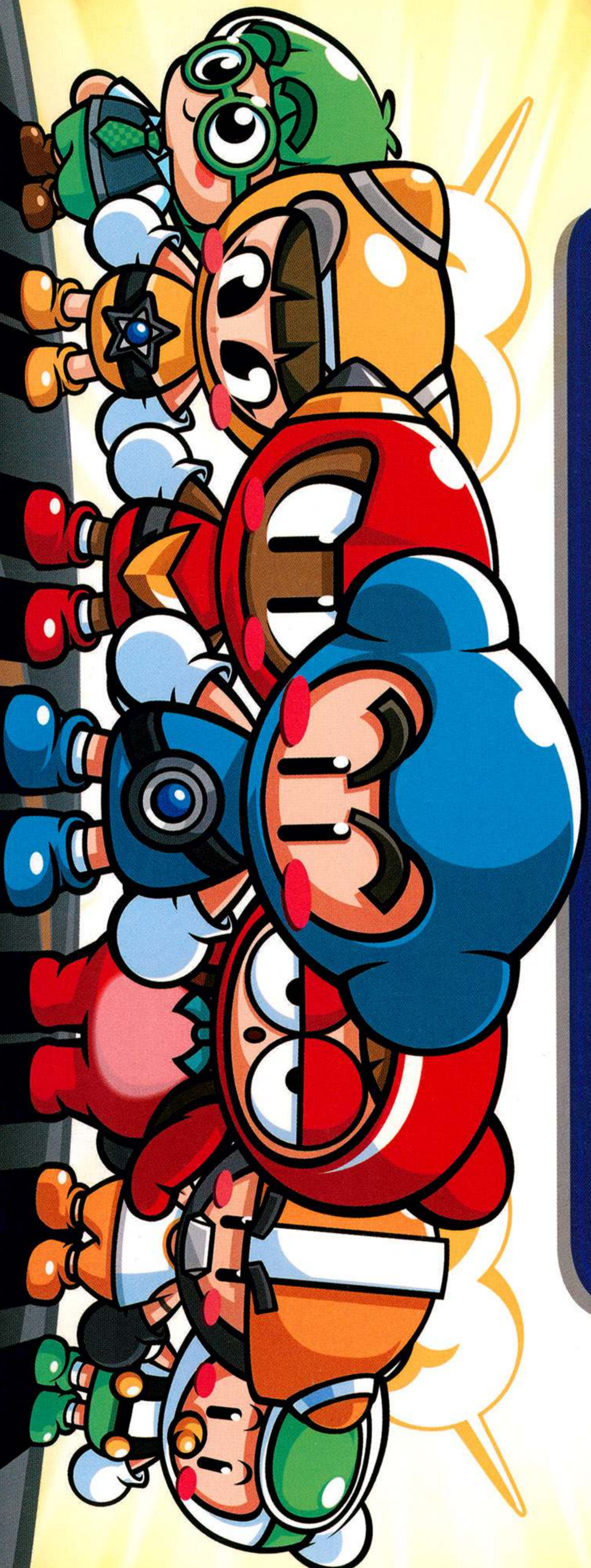
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