

2ND ANNUAL BASEBALL BREAKDOWN INSIDE

GAMEINFORMER®

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CLASSIC GAMING RETURNS

MAXIMO

INSIDE INFO • REVIEW • STRATEGY GUIDE

**MACE GRIFFIN
BOUNTY HUNTER**

GI Investigates England's Answer To Halo



ISSUE
107

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MARCH 2002



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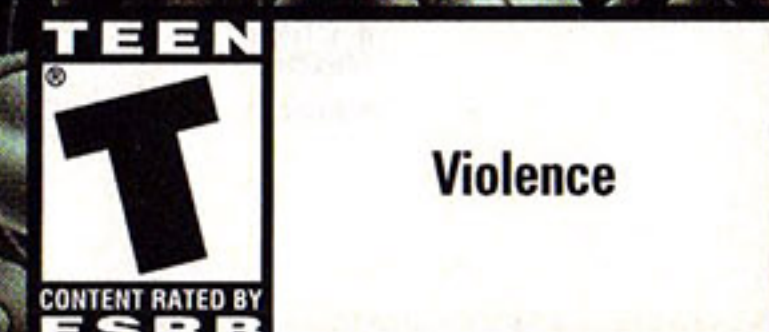


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Ghosts to Glory

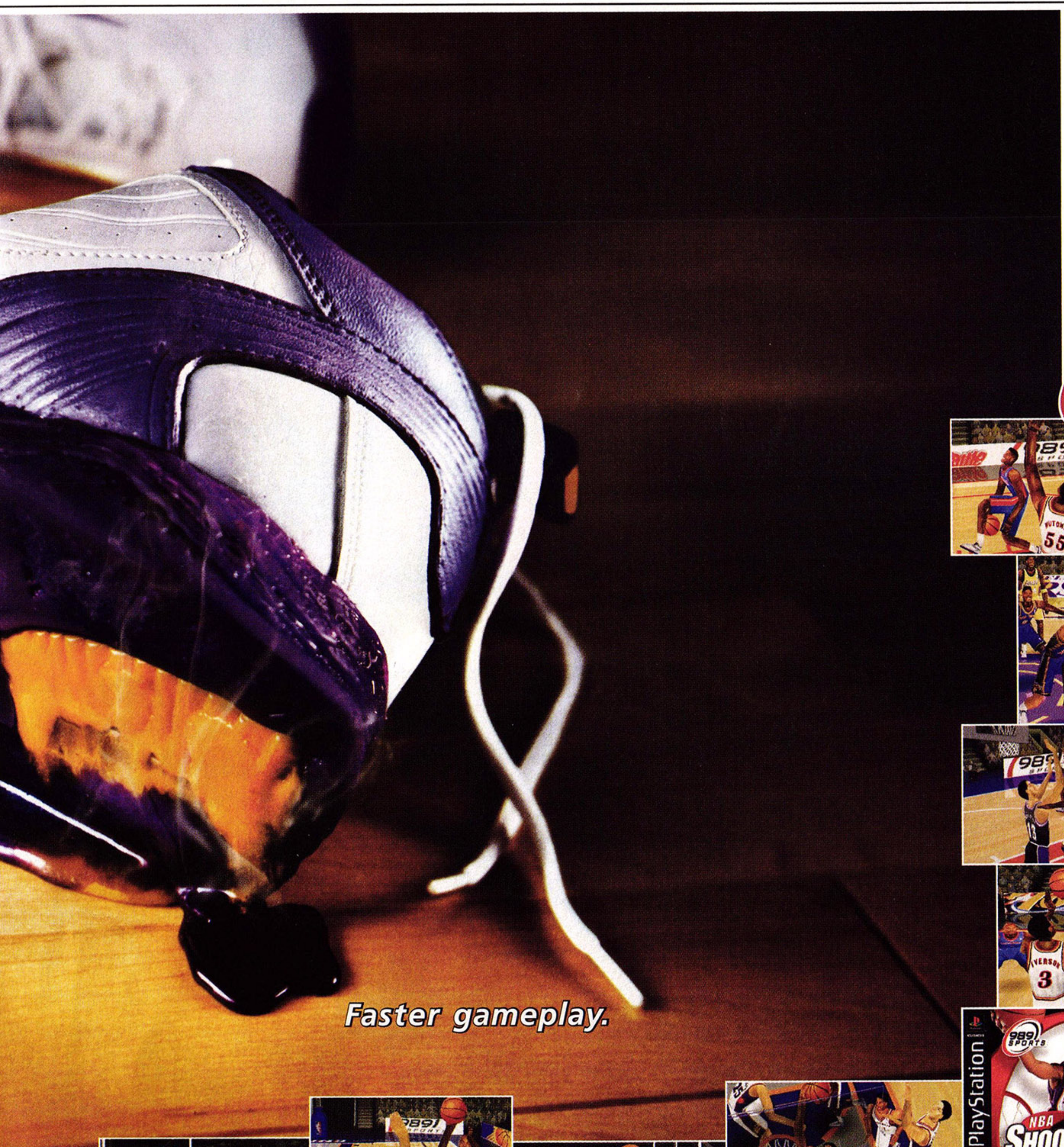


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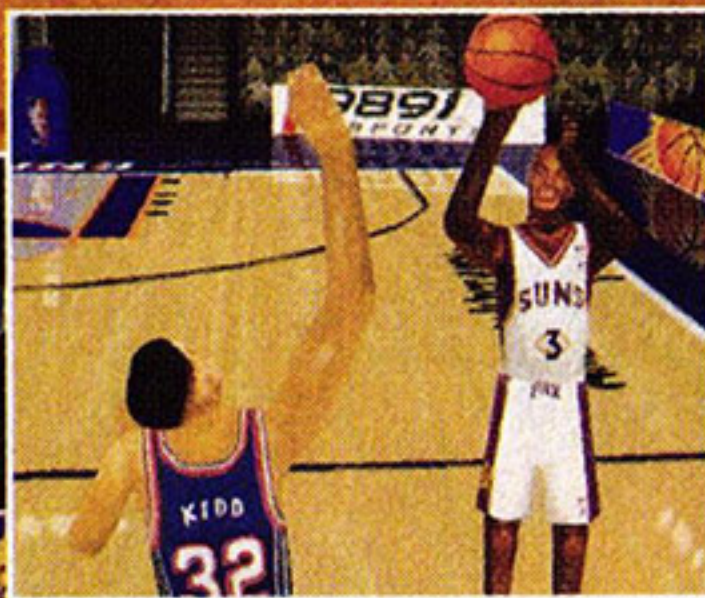
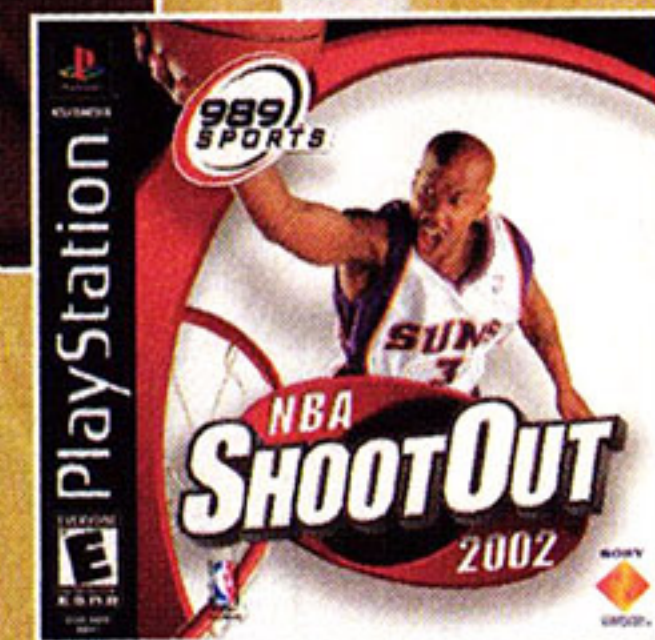
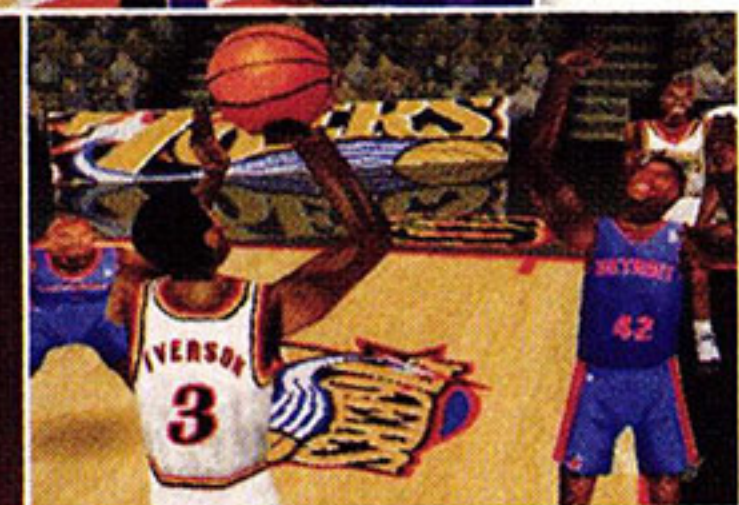
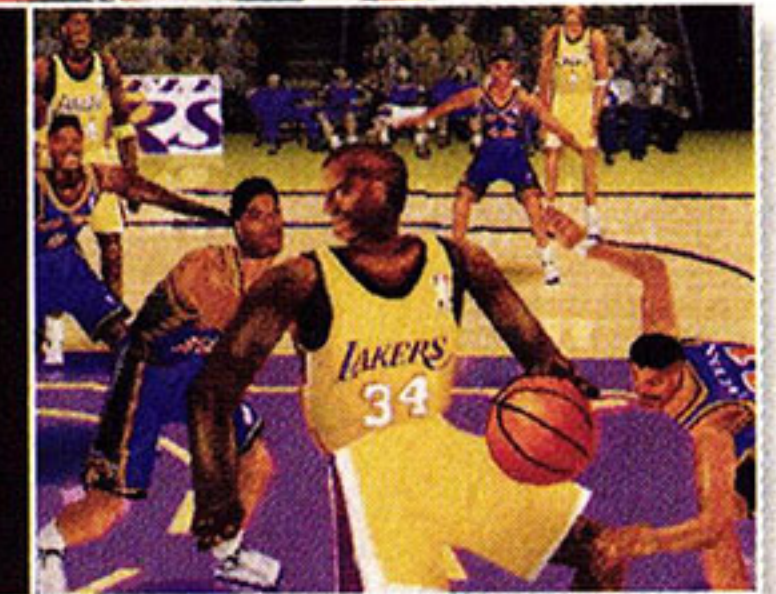


Someone call the janitor, the hardwood is about to get messy. Kick your game into high gear with 18 one-touch player controls including pump fakes, screens, auto defend, signature dribbles and moves. Run with the team of your choice or create your own player and see how you match up against the NBA's best. Oh, and tell that guy to bring a buffer and some extra wax, rubber doesn't come up easy.





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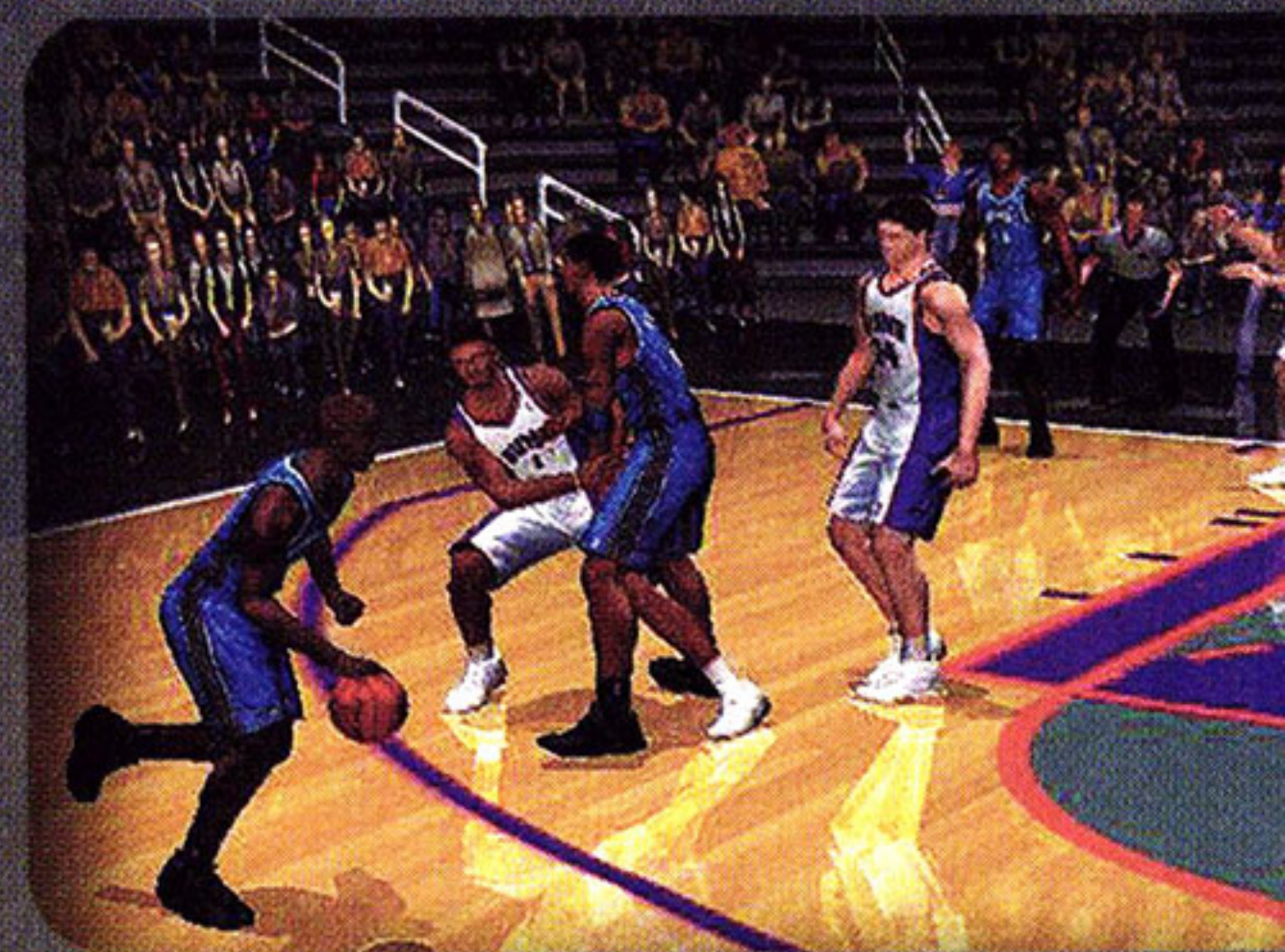
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NBA 2K2

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PlayStation 2

XBOX

Dreamcast

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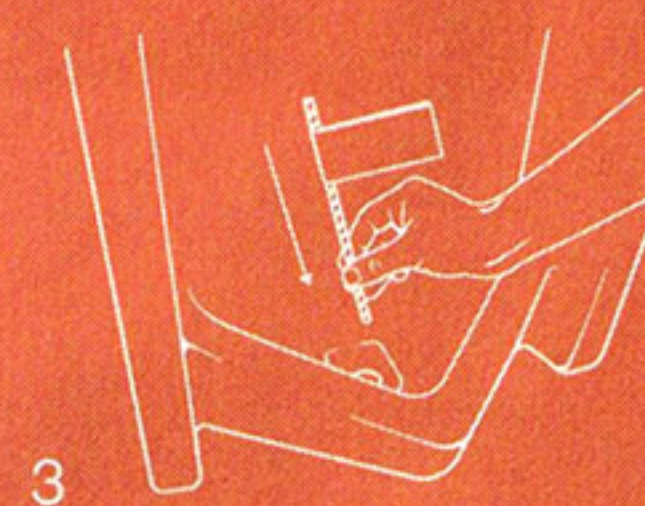
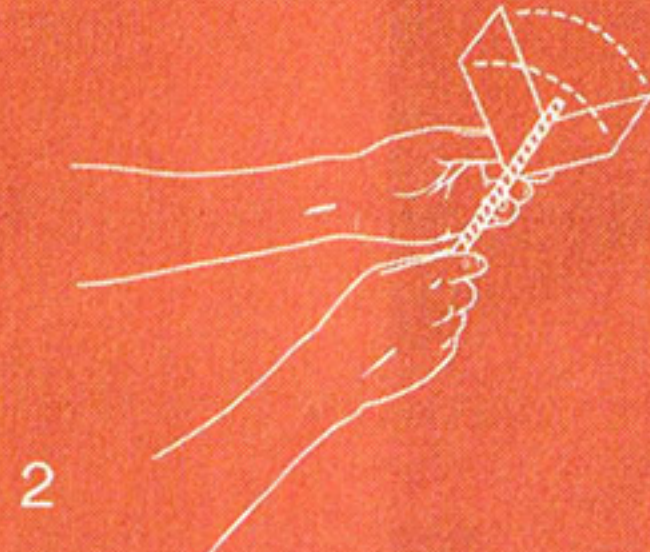
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GAMEINFORMER

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COVER STORY **36 MAXIMO**

We're blowing out Capcom's newest action/platformer by giving you the inside skinny on what went into making the game, offering up a detailed review. Then, we give you a kick in the pants with our very own strategy guide. Who else would do all of this just for you? No one, that's who.

FEATURE

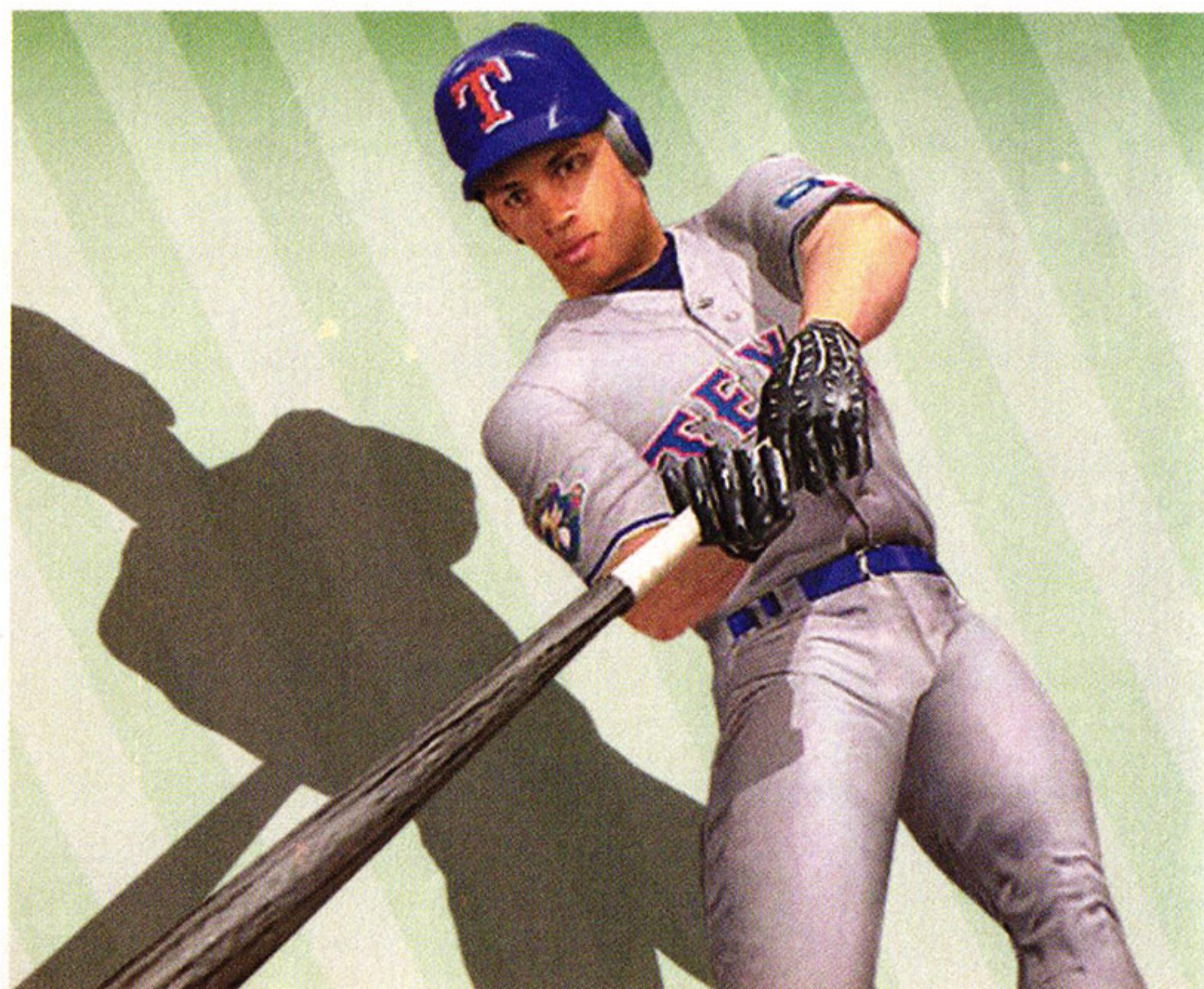
42 HIGH PLAINS DRIFTER

Game Informer goes behind the scenes for the eagerly anticipated title Mace Griffin Bounty Hunter – a game which seamlessly incorporates both first-person shooting and starship combat. You may not know this now, but you're going to buy this game. Flip on over and find out why.

FEATURE

48 BIG HITTERS ON DECK

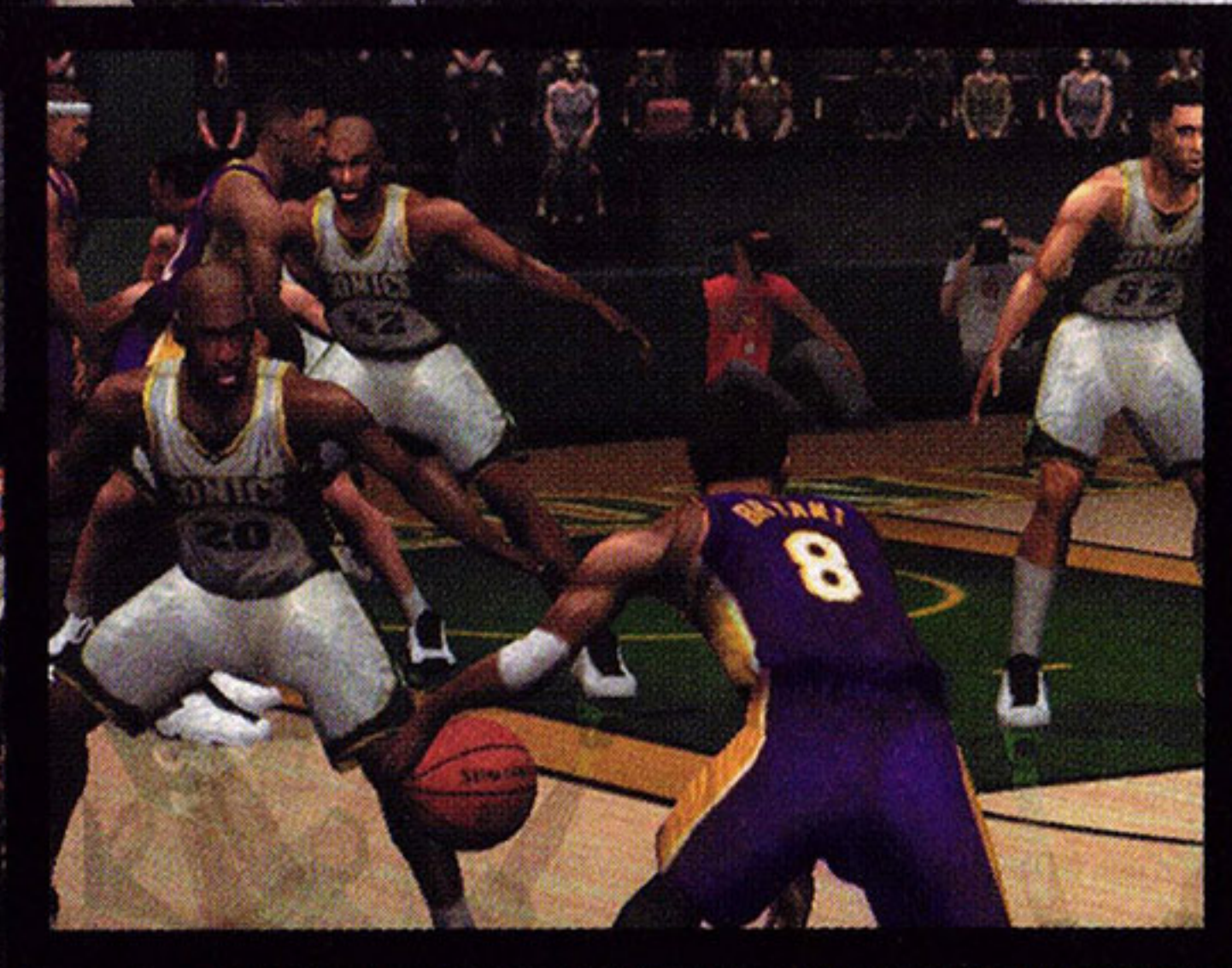
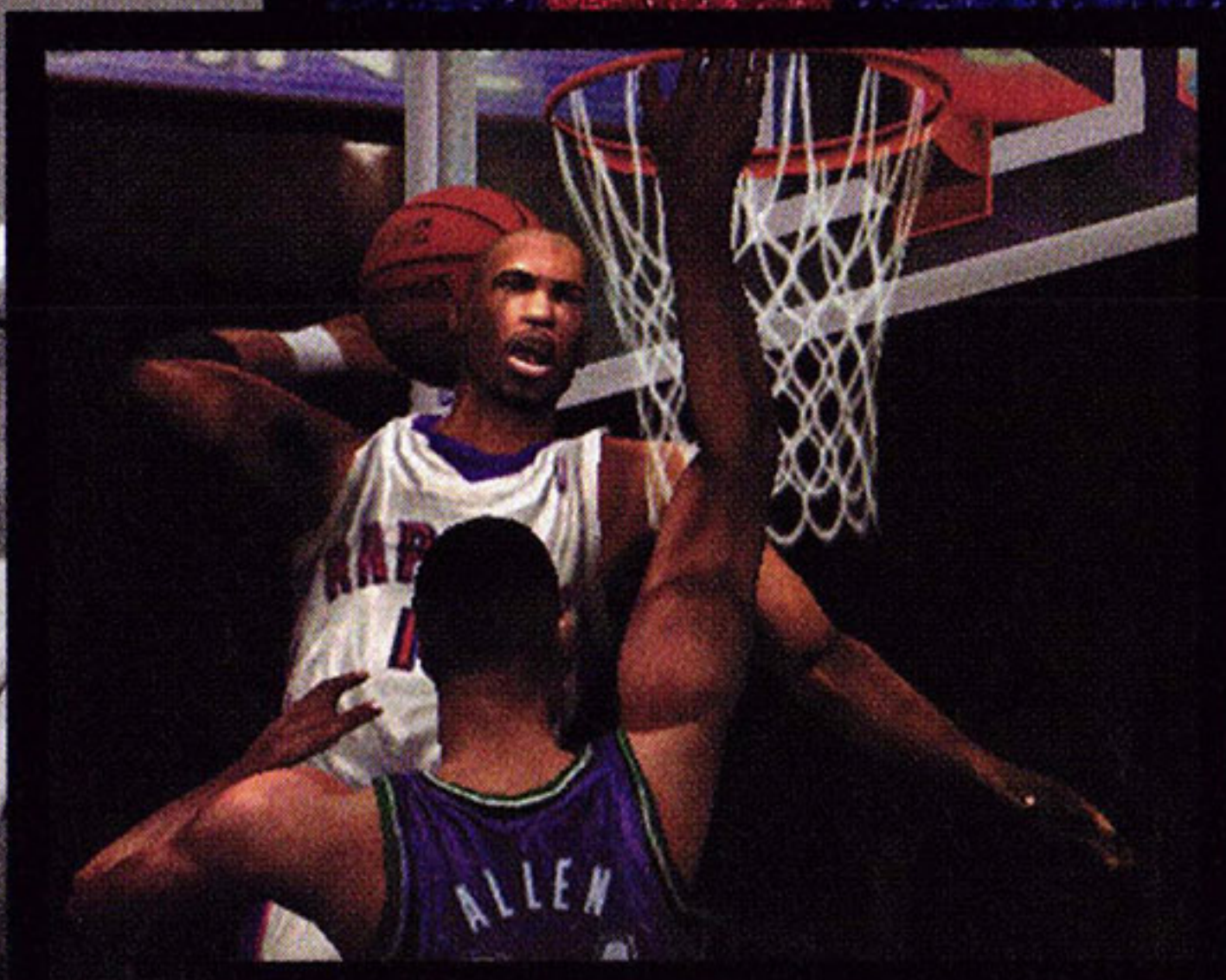
For the second year running, GI is the magazine sports fans go to for their spring training report on the upcoming wave of baseball games. Luckily, Bud Selig's asinine visions of contraction don't reach into the digital realm. Play ball!!





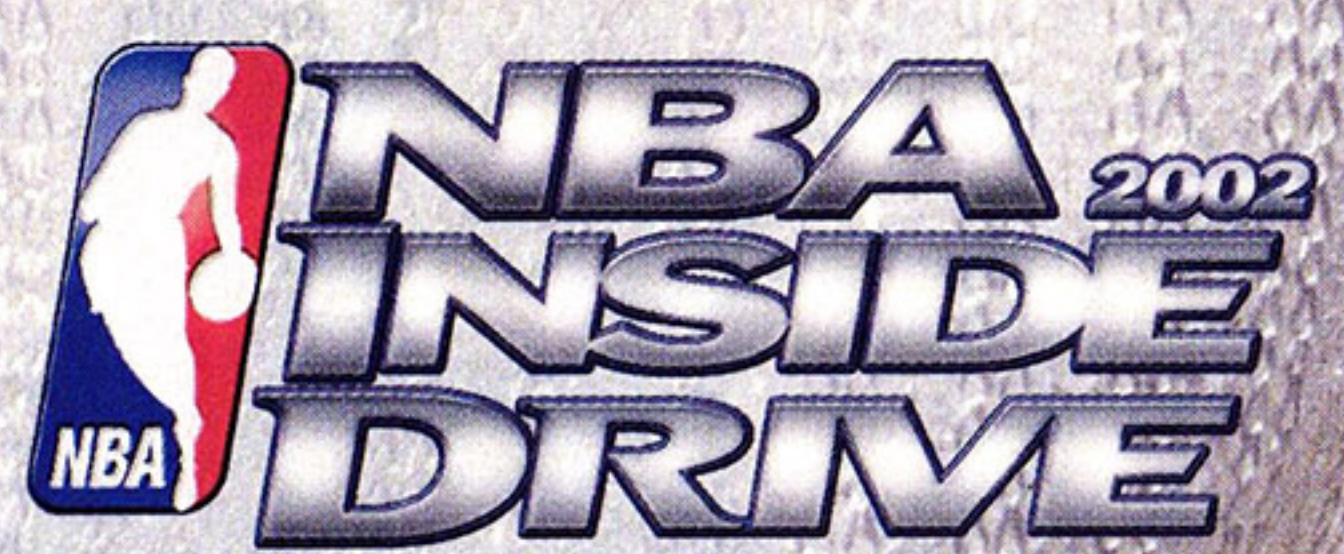
Oh Vince, I did so want to move to Los Angeles.

Yeah, well bust out the mittens, Buttercup. I just signed for 7 with Toronto.



Your office is a 20,000 seat arena, your salary has a whole lot of zeros, and "Who stole my stapler?" is "Who's picking up Vince on D?" You wanted real, you got real. Build an all-NBA team during the draft. Check your team's actual NBA playbook, and call those plays with real-time coaching. And details? You can count the players' cornrows. Have your secretary take a memo — this rules.

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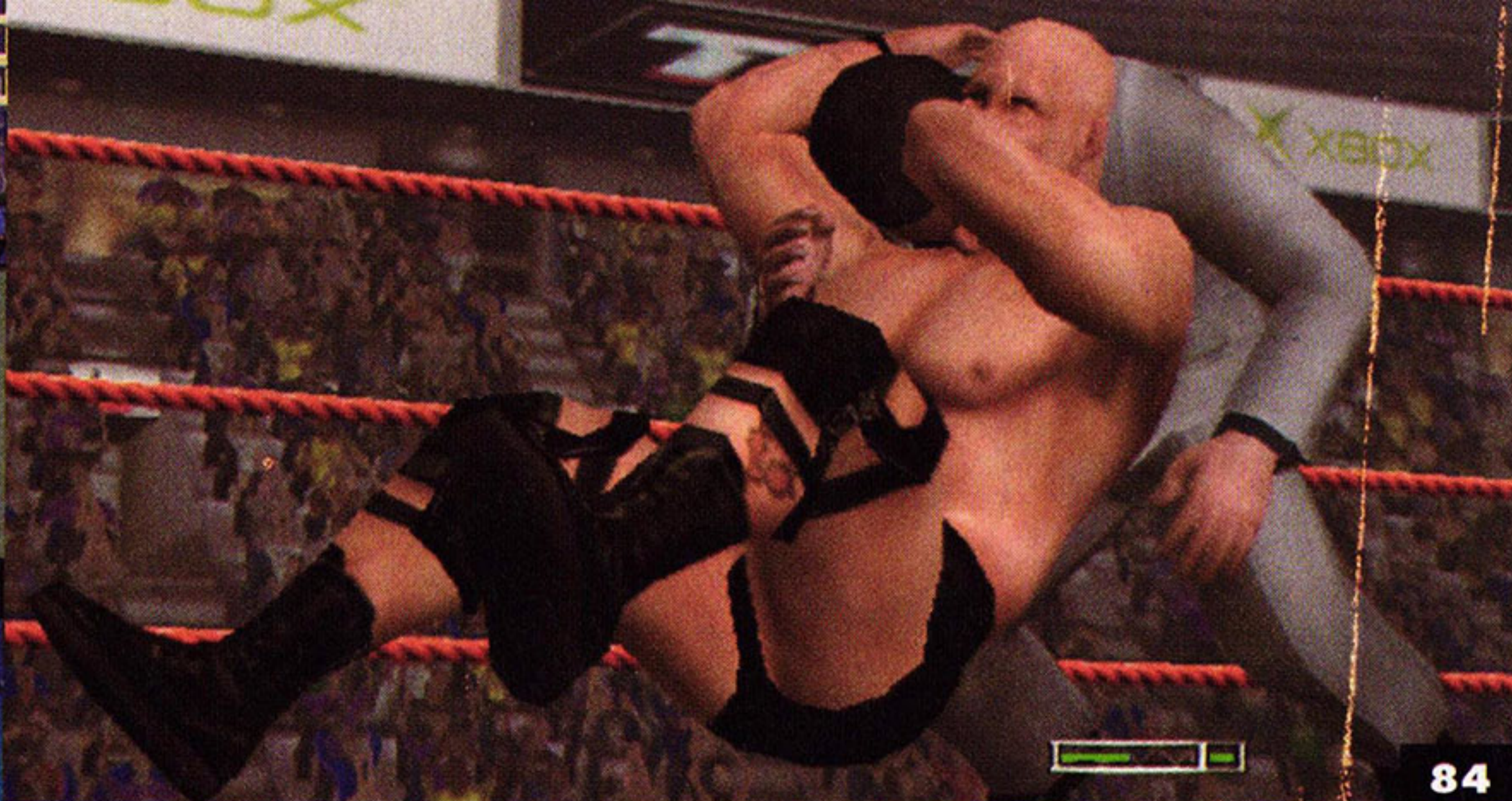
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The rantings and ravings of the lunatics who write for this magazine are once again given precious editorial space. Notice though, that it isn't much. If you give these people an inch, they'll take a mile...MATT! I said you could have one chip – not the whole bag!!!

20 GI SPY

The Game Informer paparazzi stalk the video game industry, bringing you candid photos of all the action.

22 DEAR GI

Everything from video game piracy to some shocking and troubling news on the drug known as "crack" is in this month's Dear GI. Also, there is an army out there. If you mess with them, it could mean your butt. Don't say we didn't warn you.

26 NEWS

We have obtained an exclusive interview with Resident Evil godfather, Shinji Mikami, for your eyes only! You won't believe what this guy has to say. Also found within the gilded pages of GI News are shots of Universal Interactive's new Lord of the Rings Xbox title, and a little something we have a feeling might be connected to a very hush-hust next-gen title. Insane!

54 PREVIEWS

Okay, we're going to list a bunch of the games in the preview section, then time how long it takes you to rip through the pages to read them. Here we go: Onimusha 2, Wrestlemania X8, Global Operations, Vexx, and Auto Modellista...Begin.

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92 CHARTS

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96 PLAY TO PERFECTION

Maximo will never defeat you! Not with this, The Best Maximo Strategy Guide Ever™. Be confident that you can play this game without worrying about your controller suddenly flying out of your hands and crashing into your TV screen.

102 SECRET ACCESS

This section is dedicated to all of you filthy cheaters out there. Don't feel bad, we're filthy cheaters too. It sure helps when you're trying to beat Max Payne, Splashtown, or Final Fantasy X.

106 CLASSIC GI

The very first video game magazine on the market paved the way for the rest of us. Take a look at the people behind it and the challenges they ran into as pioneers in the field. When you're done with that, fire up your old SNES and play some Super Punch-Out along with our classic guide.

112 ETC

A hodgepodge of items grace Etc this month. Among them, a 9-11 tribute comic, a Dreamcast accessory, Masters of the Universe figures and more.

NOT JUST A GAME
POETRY IN MOTION

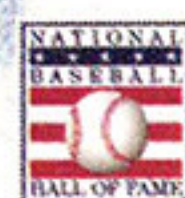
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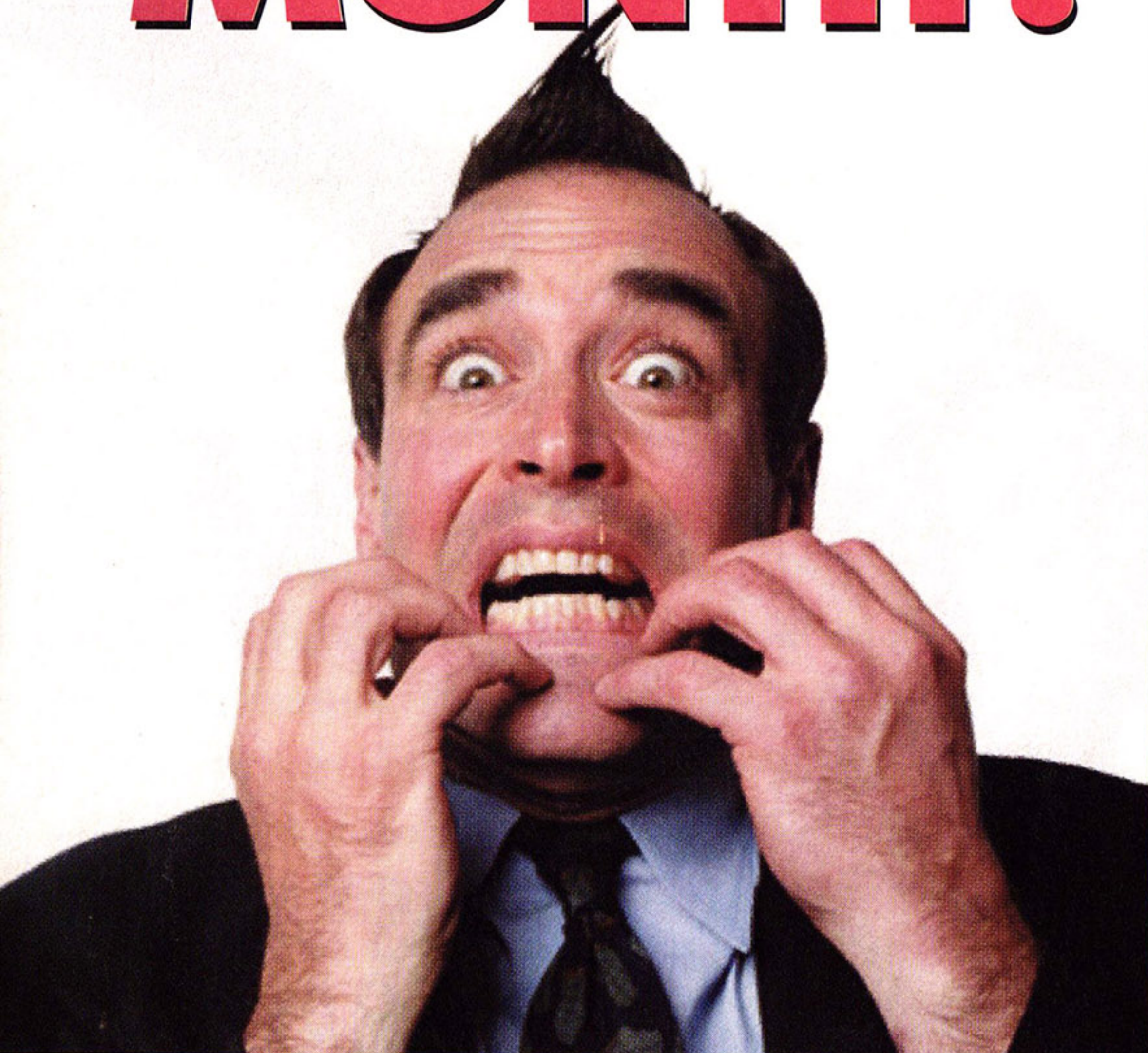


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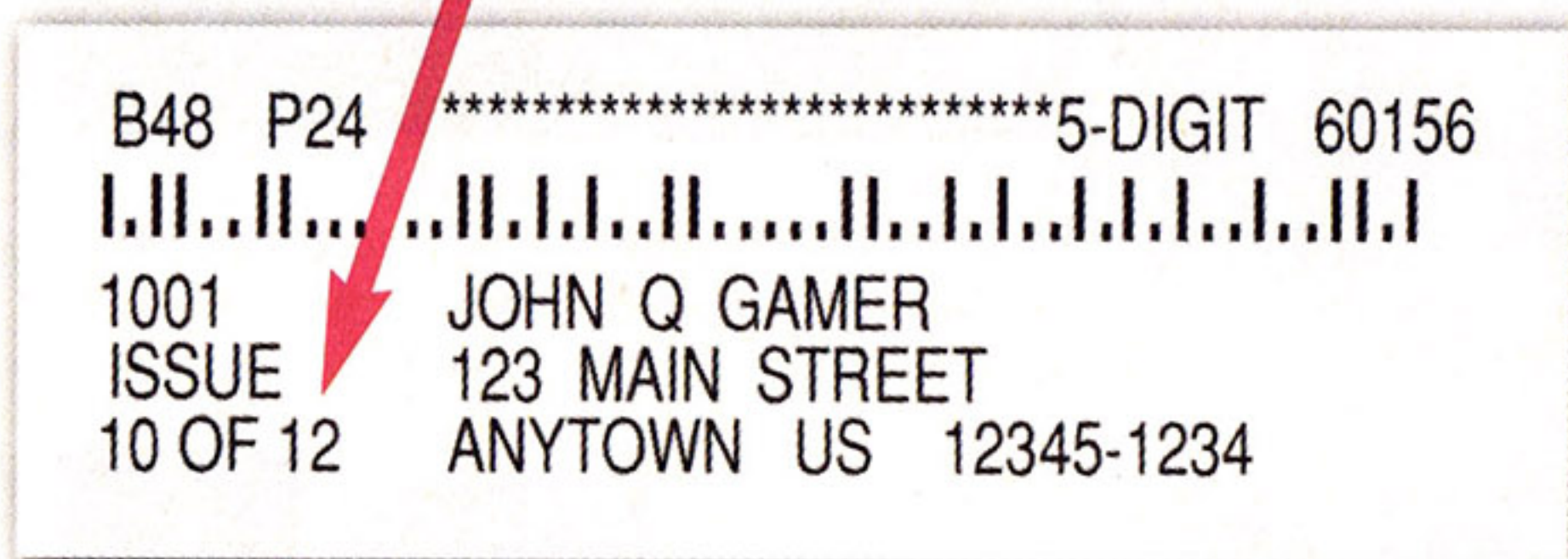
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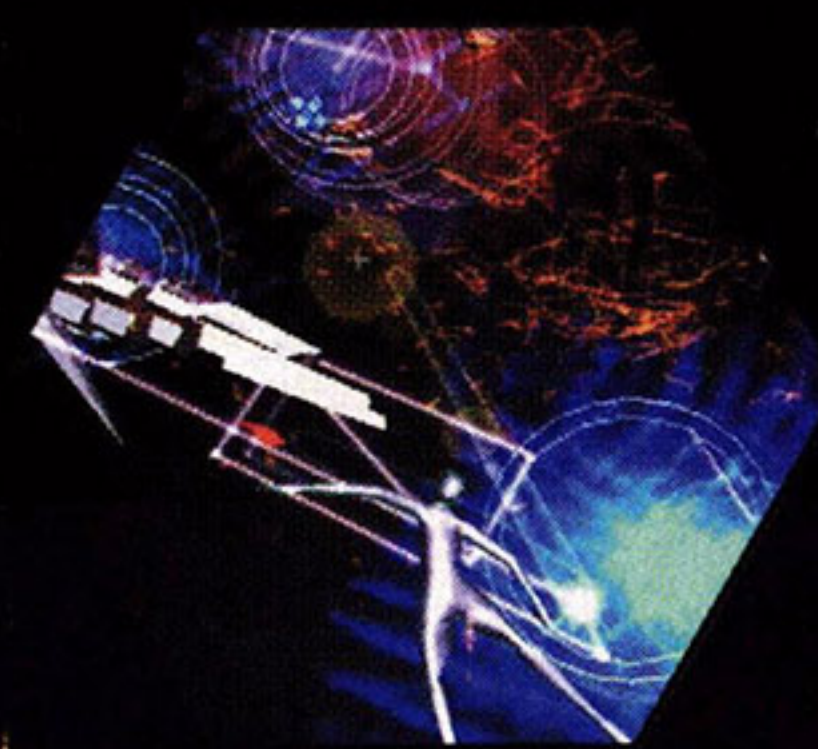
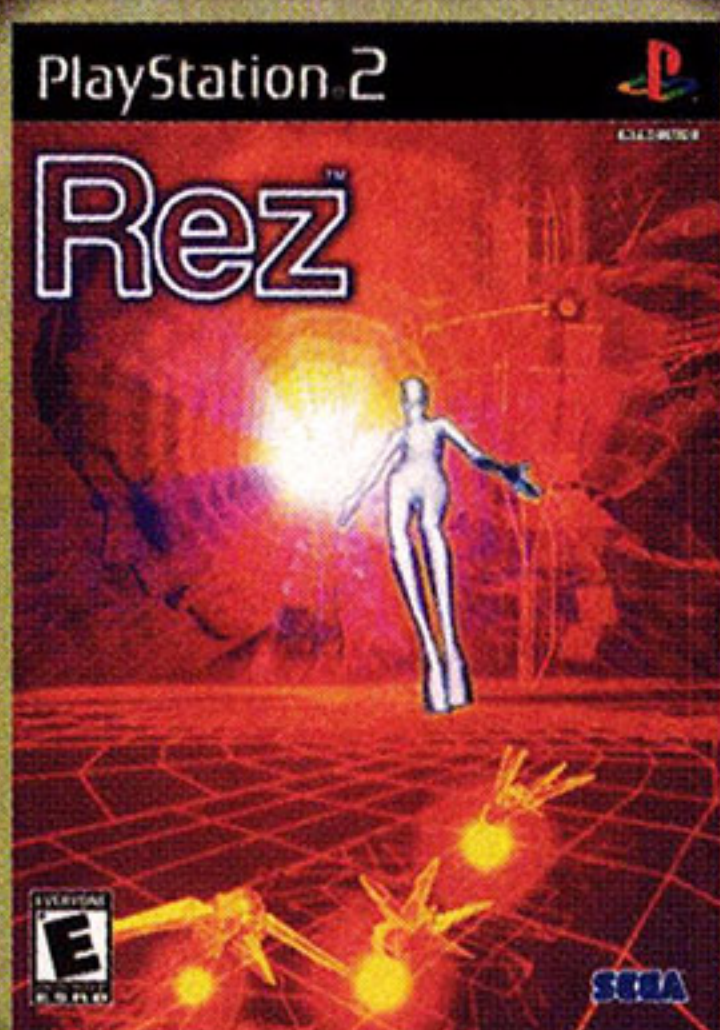


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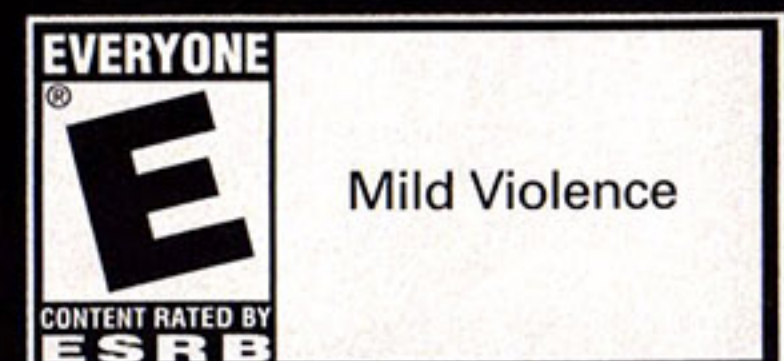
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So sharpen your swords and prepare for battle.*



PlayStation 2



EDITORS' FORUM

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?



Now that all the holiday hoopla has come to an end and all the new systems are out, it's time for Game Informer and the rest of the industry to get back to the business of games. Over the last couple of weeks I have had a chance to take a glimpse at what

the future holds for gamers this fall, and I think everyone will be quite pleased with what lies in store.

I have little doubt that this year will be better than the last. If you consider how many amazing games came out in 2001, that is quite a feat. This year will be vital to all three consoles if they hope to storm into 2003 with some momentum. So, expect Microsoft, Sony, and Nintendo to bring out the big guns. At this early stage in the game, Xbox and Nintendo still have their work cut out for them to catch up with PlayStation 2, but I certainly think it's possible for them to make up a lot of ground if Sony stumbles.

If you still haven't decided which system to go with,

or to go with all three as I would advise you to do, don't expect anything too spectacular to come down the pipe and change your mind in the following months. However, with online gaming coming back to the mainstream with both Sony and Microsoft launching their networks, there might be some great mid-year gaming surprises.

Personally, I wish there were more big name franchises coming out in the early part of this year, but unfortunately game companies are compelled to launch all their monster titles during the holidays. Luckily, there should be just enough solid software to keep gamers happy while we wait for the fall and the onslaught of killer titles. The good news is, Game Informer will be unveiling many of these games in the coming months so get ready to be amazed. Don't let that subscription run out – you won't want to miss what's coming. I've seen it. It's going to knock your socks off.

Andy McNamara
Editor
andy@gameinformer.com



Andy sleeps off his St. Paddy's Day overindulgence of Lucky Charms. The little folk and their pot o' gold, left to right: Kato, Kristian, Reiner, Justin, and Matt.

REINER, THE RAGING GAMER

reiner@gameinformer.com

After a successful holiday season, the video game industry has once again entered into a state of hibernation. I can understand why companies want to have new product on the shelves during the busiest shopping season, but I also feel as though it would be beneficial to release games year round. After digesting more than they could chew in 2001, gamers remain hungry – especially those who invested in the Xbox and GameCube. Rather than continually feeding those in need, developers are once again gearing up for another competitive holiday season. Over the next few months, we may see one, perhaps two blockbuster titles. Rather than letting your machines gather dust, I recommend catching up on the games you missed out on last year. It may seem like the industry is dead, but in actuality it's resting and preparing for another mind-altering explosion. Without question, 2002 will be the most impressive year in the history of gaming.

MATT, THE ORIGINAL GAMER

matt@gameinformer.com

I can sincerely say that the first month of 2002 has been one of the most hectic months of my life. Everything was looking peachy, until the pretentious, middlebrow suckwads at Minnesota Public Radio decided to lay off my girlfriend a week before we were set to close on the house. Luckily, my mortgage company was none the wiser (thanks, Dan) and we got the pad anyway. From there, it's been a two-week gulag of writing the mag, moving, and practicing for and playing two shows with my band in the space of twelve days. I'm lucky I'm already bald, or I probably would have lost all my hair from stress. As always, the mag got done, and now I'm representing Southside Minneapolis to the fullest, as a property-tax-paying citizen. Finally got the new Jay-Z record, too. It's good.

KRISTIAN, THE GAME DAWG

kristian@gameinformer.com

Baseball is a funny little sport. It's one of those things that is incredibly boring to watch if you've never played it. Except if you're talking about soccer – that sport would be boring even if you gave the players shotguns and clown shoes. In any event, I can't think of anything else to say. Therefore, I'm giving the seven of you who read my monthly rants an assignment: Email or snail mail me a suggestion for the subject of my blurb next month and I'll pick one to write about. Don't bother telling me to write about how much I suck – I'm already well versed on that subject. I'll even sweeten the pot... I will personally mail a Game Informer shirt or a drawing of my own creation to the entry I choose. I'm a terrible artist, by the way, so please indicate which prize you'd like in your message.

JUSTIN, THE DIGITAL DEVIANT

justin@gameinformer.com

Life is full of questions. Here are a few that have been on my mind. Why hasn't Nintendo made a backlit GBA yet, when many would pay extra to actually see the screen? How can LucasArts keep milking the *Episode 1* license, when the movie wasn't that good? When will there be a good non-launch, non-port Xbox game? Why did Koei make *Gitaroo Man* 800% easier for the American release? When will Nintendo realize it needs the press and third-party publishers? Why haven't more MN-living GI readers come to see me take on other cruiserweights at indie wrestling shows? When will Michael Jordan just disappear? Why don't people turn off MTV and the radio, and quit letting others decide what they listen to? Whatever happened to Jell-o Pudding Pops? They were damn good.

KATO, THE GAME KATANA

kato@gameinformer.com

Sucking is a way of life at Game Informer. We are inundated daily with earnest proclamations at just how much we "suck," and how we're the "suckiest sucks that ever sucked," and so forth. The editors, myself included, are also guilty of using it to describe games. Let's reach for a higher standard. For example, why not be more positively negative or eloquently descriptive from now on? Turn "this sucks" into "this game does a great job of failing in every way conceivable." Don't you feel better already? Of course, don't get me wrong, I dislike loads of stuff – last month's review bio is a case in point. But don't we all agree that Limp Bizkit honestly sucks anyway? So why don't we say that when talking about Fred Durst and/or his band, you are officially allowed to use the word "suck."

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MPH

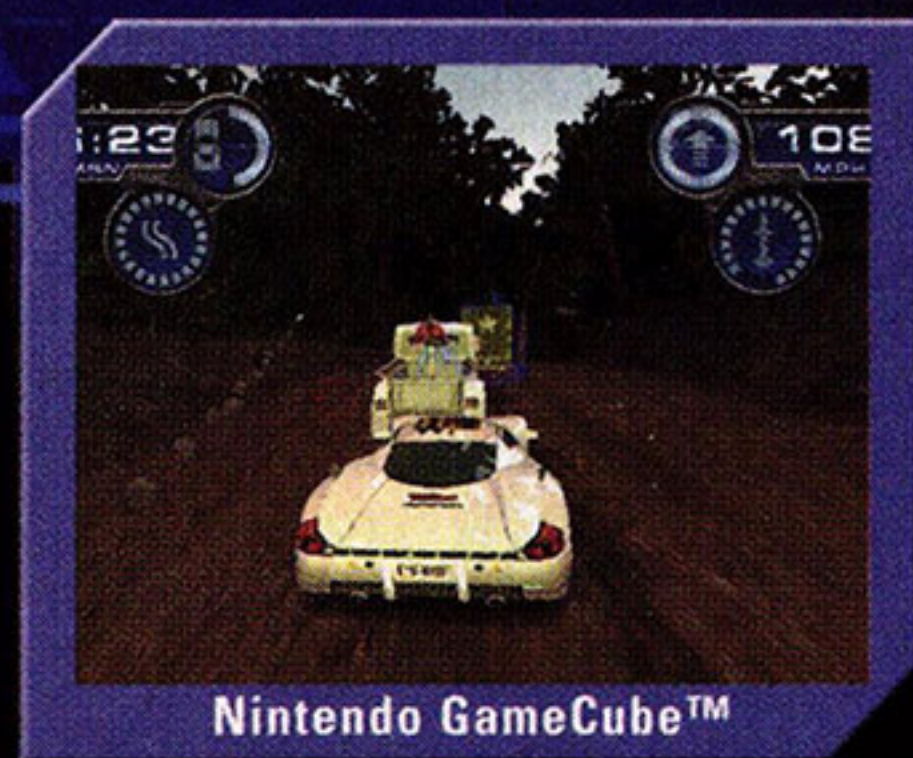


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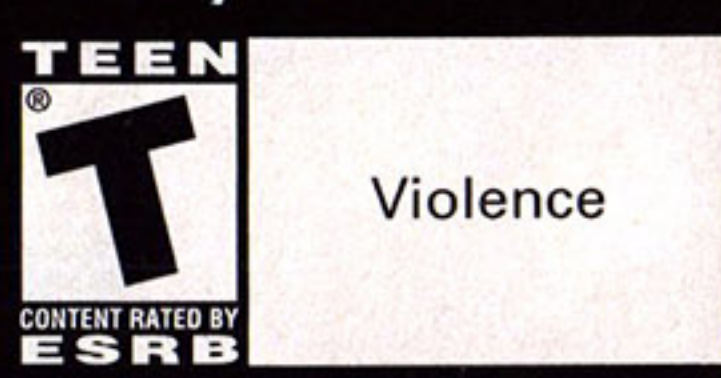


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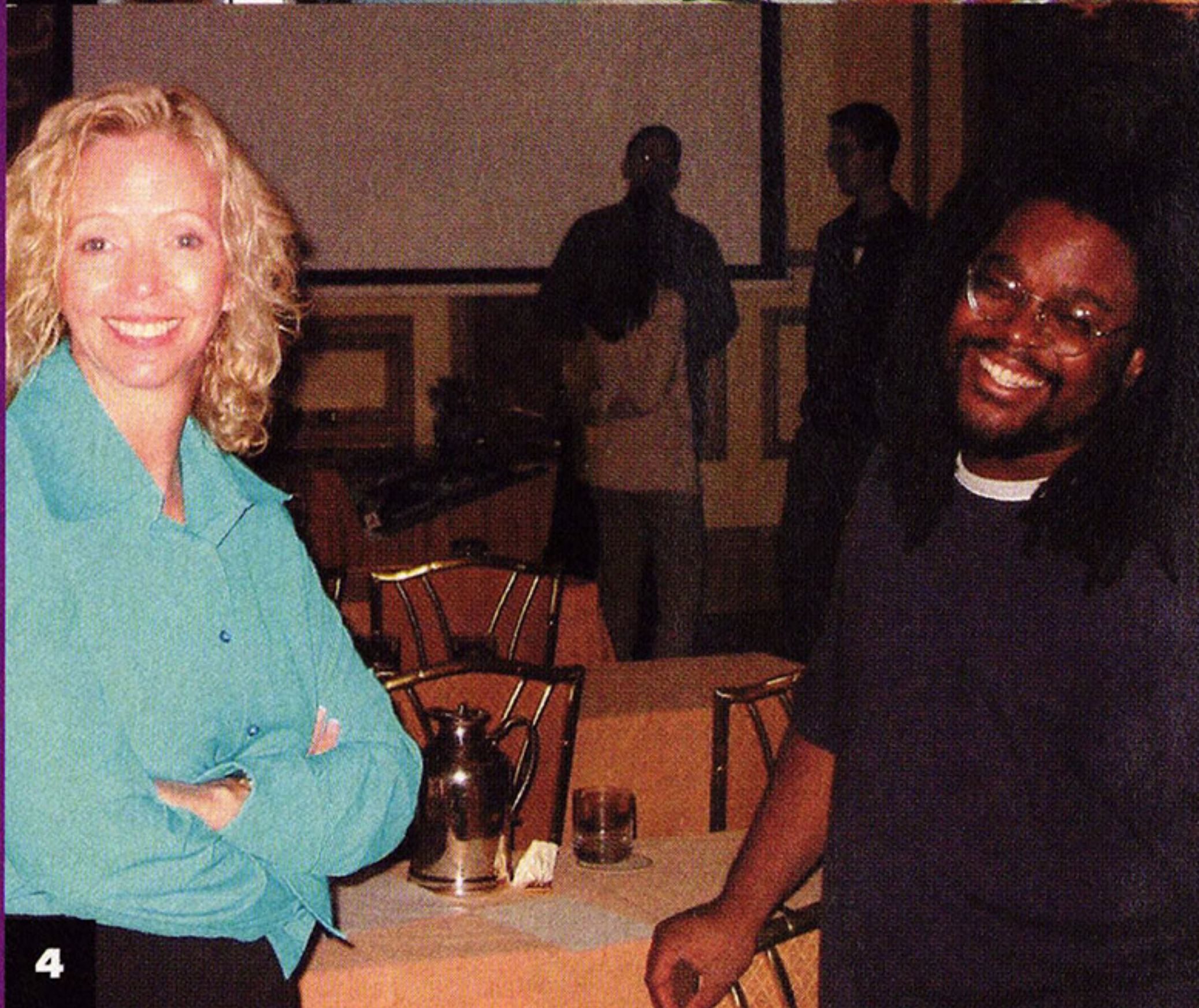


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GI SPY



1 Justin Leeper is GI's foremost expert at tossing salad. **2** Square Soft's Kyoko Yamashita waves hello to the gang at GI. **3** Terminal Reality's Frederick Jones, HighWater Group's Laura Heeb, and GI's Matt Helgeson decide to become homiez 4 life. **4** Capcom's Melinda Mongelluzzo and Newsweek's N'Gai Croal fight off the paparazzi at a recent press event. **5** PSM's Chet Barber thanks Capcom's Matt Atwood for his excellent work on Heavy Metal: Geomatrix. **6** Here's ad sales guru Rob Borm, seconds before he was forcibly ejected from the Game Informer Christmas Party. **7** Kristian pops a woodie for Eidos' Kjell Vistad. **8** Origami artist Andy McNamara calls this piece "Tin Foil Swan Filled with Leftover Ravioli."



Out here,

amongst the clouds

and the sea,

a chain gun.



STORMFRONT
STUDIOS



Set sail aboard a
torpedo-laden gunboat
and while away your
days destroying Devil
boats, forts and shore
batteries. Paradise
awaits in the Dragon Sea.

Set

a course

for

destruction

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DEAR GI

HE'S MAD AS HELL, AND HE'S NOT GOING TO TAKE IT ANYMORE!

Are you guys getting sick of people complaining about innovation, or is it just me? I just read Josh Fuentes' letter in the January 2002 issue of GI and I need to vent. I am so fed up with people ragging on video game companies for trying something new. People scream, "Give us something different!" Then, they piss and moan when companies try to answer their pleas. I swear to God, the next time I hear someone complain about "Cel-da" or "Rocket-pack Mario," I'm going to beat somebody's ass. Nintendo tries to give you something new and – before you even touch the game – you complain about how it is going to suck. Every Mario and Zelda game has been a masterpiece, and just because one of them has a new graphic look doesn't mean it's going to play poorly. I've also heard people complaining that Final Fantasy X uses real voice actors instead of the traditional text boxes. Hello? Square is trying to do something special in this game! If people don't quit whining about innovation, all games are going to be the same and we're going back to the crash of '83. AAAAAHHHHH! Make it stop! That's all I have to say. Thanks for letting me vent, and keep up the good work.

Bryan Piras
Via email

P.S. Can you bring back Rick, the Video Ranger? He was cool.

Okay, Bryan, you need to calm down. Close your eyes and start taking deep breaths. Now, imagine that you're in your happy place. Bad thoughts out, positive thoughts in. You're obviously under a lot of stress right now, and probably aren't thinking clearly. The fact that you think the Video Ranger was cool is proof of that.

We wholeheartedly agree with your sentiments, and we eagerly look forward to the unique new vision Miyamoto has for Zelda and Mario on the GameCube. However, this aversion to innovation runs a lot deeper than that. Many groundbreaking titles have failed miserably, just because they were too far ahead of the curve for consumers to grasp. Take PenPen Trilcelon, for example. For years, people said, "Please, please give us a penguin racing game! We are tired of cars! Penguins are cute and frolic in the snow!!" But when they got one, what happened? Nobody bought it. How about Glover for the N64? We can't count how many letters we've received over the years begging for an action/platform game starring a disembodied hand. Guess how much that sold? Zilch. People just don't appreciate true genius.



You have no idea.

PITHY PROSE

This letter was written using only eight words.

Greg Ramled
Via email

Good job, Greg! Next time, try using zero!

PIRACY CONCERNS

I have a subscription to your magazine and I think it is the best. I have some friends who bootleg video games and I was wondering what your thoughts are about this. They say that it doesn't hurt the company, but I read an article on the millions of dollars that Sony lost due to bootleggers.

Brandon
West Chester, PA

The proliferation of CD-ROM burner technology has spurred a massive increase in the incidence of video game piracy in recent years, primarily in bootlegged versions of easy-to-duplicate PlayStation games. So far, DVD-ROMs are much more difficult to copy, and all three of the new consoles have sophisticated lock-out technology, but we expect that game pirates are already figuring out ways around these preventative measures.

Yes, it is possible and often easy to duplicate games. However, that does not make it right. Bootlegging games is no different from shoplifting, and running a piracy ring can often result in serious criminal charges. The Interactive Digital Software Association (the governing body of the video game industry) estimates that illegal game piracy cost the industry \$3 billion in the year 2000, and has been involved with a number of sting operations on piracy rings with the FBI and the US Customs Service.

Being involved with a bootlegging operation could put both you and your friends in some serious legal trouble, but, more importantly, it negatively affects the health of video games as a whole. Today, it takes an investment of millions of dollars and sometimes hundreds of people to make blockbusters like Metal Gear Solid 2 or Final Fantasy X. If developers can't recoup these skyrocketing costs with sales revenues,

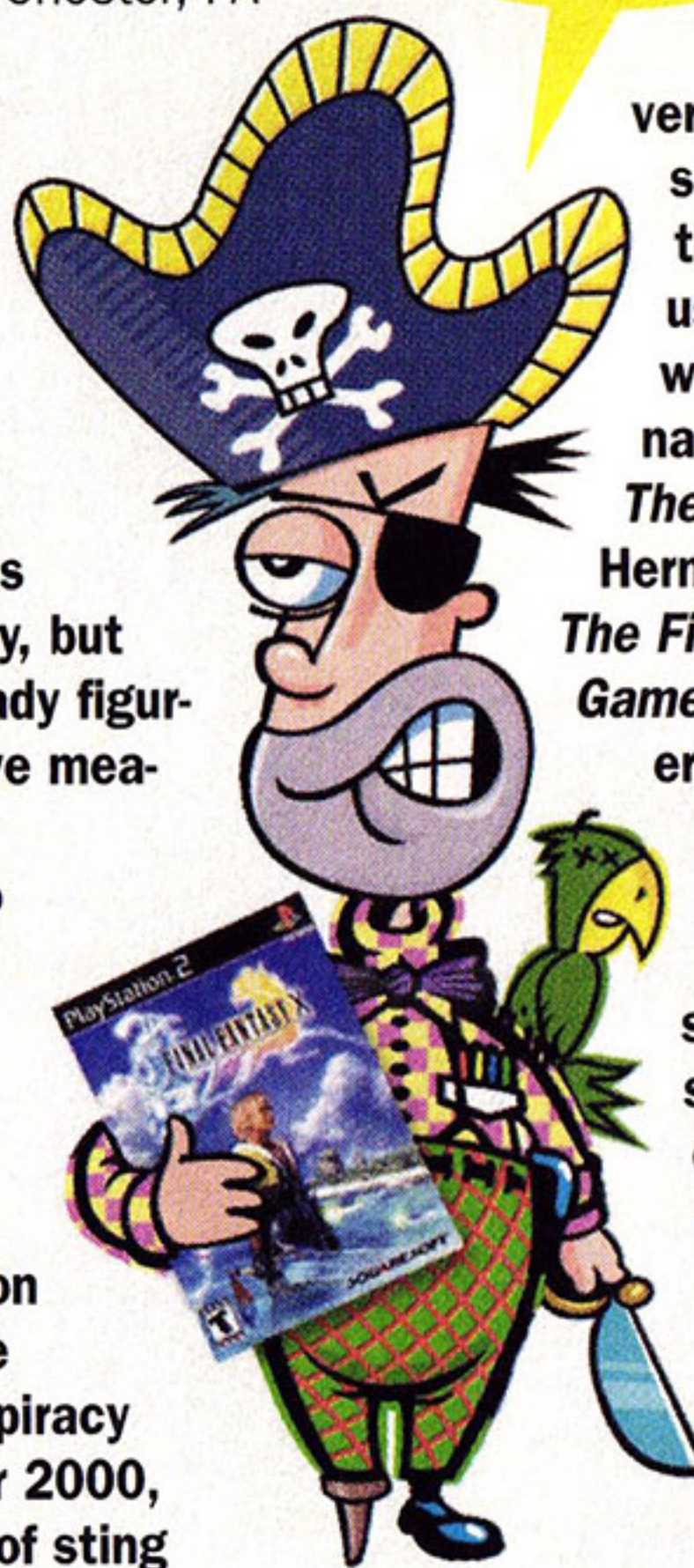
then it doesn't take a genius to figure out what happens next. Basically, your friends' argument that "These companies make billions of dollars, so what difference does it make if we copy a few games" is just rationalization for his own illegal behavior. Do the right thing and buy your games like everybody else.

SPELLING WOES CONTINUE

Hey, guys, I just wanted to tell you, before I criticize you, that your magazine is one of the best I've ever read, and has three times more humor than PSM magazine. I think you've done a great job, and I love the Previews section because it tells me everything I need to know about upcoming games on PS2 that I want. But in your Final Fantasy Issue, 105, I think, I read the article about Gumpei Yokoi. I think it's very sad about his death, but I mean, if you do, too, then spell his frickin' name right! It's not very respectable when you keep on spelling the genius' name wrong, is it? I bet you'd feel bad, Andy, if they spelled your name wrong. Picture this: Here lies the body of Andru McNamera! How do you feel now, GI?

Sean McDorman

ARGHHH MATEYS!!
WHO NEEDS A COPY OF
FINAL FANTASY X?



Is this because everyone pronounces your name as "seen?" We obviously meant no disrespect to the memory of Mr.

Yokoi, but there is a bit of a controversy surrounding just how his name is spelled. In translating Japanese to English, the letters "n" and "m" can sometimes be used interchangeably, which is probably what led to the two spellings of Mr. Yokoi's name in the first place. In the book *Phoenix: The Fall and Rise of Video Games*, Leonard Herman uses "Gumpei," as does Steve Kent in *The First Quarter*. But David Scheff, who wrote *Game Over: Press Start To Continue* (considered to be the definitive history of Nintendo), opts for "Gunpei." We opted to use Scheff's spelling. However, after receiving your letter, we tracked down a source at Nintendo who said the definitive spelling is in fact "Gumpei." So, from now on, we will change our spelling to reflect the official Nintendo stance on the issue. We apologize for any confusion caused by our article.

GAMES OF THE LIVING BASEHEADS

I am an avid gamer and I was wondering if it is mandatory for Japanese game designers to smoke crack on the job. For example, take that game Mister Mosquito – what is with that?

Tim Hart
Via aol.com

Crack? What about it? What are you trying to insinuate? Listen, we're NOT hooked on crack! Okay, maybe we smoke a little once on special occasions,

Shantae™

GAME BOY
COLOR

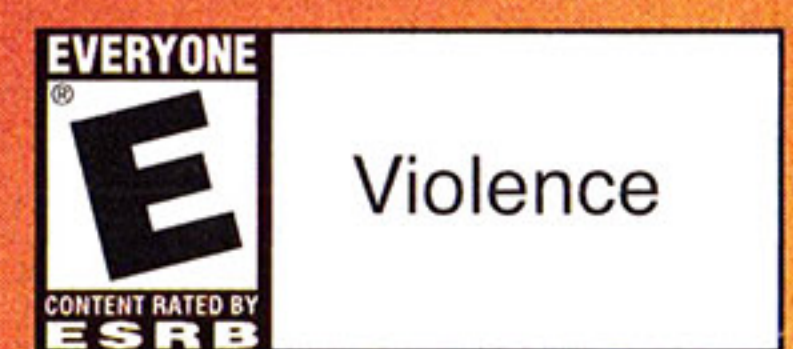
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Performance on
GAME BOY
ADVANCE

NOT JUST ANOTHER GENIE in a BOTTLE!



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ENVELOPE ART

but it's not like we have some kind of problem or anything. Really, we had too many PlayStation 2s cluttering up our office, so it was good that we took some of them down to the pawnshop. It's not that we needed the money that bad. Also, it's always been Reiner's dream to be a male stripper, we certainly didn't force him into anything.

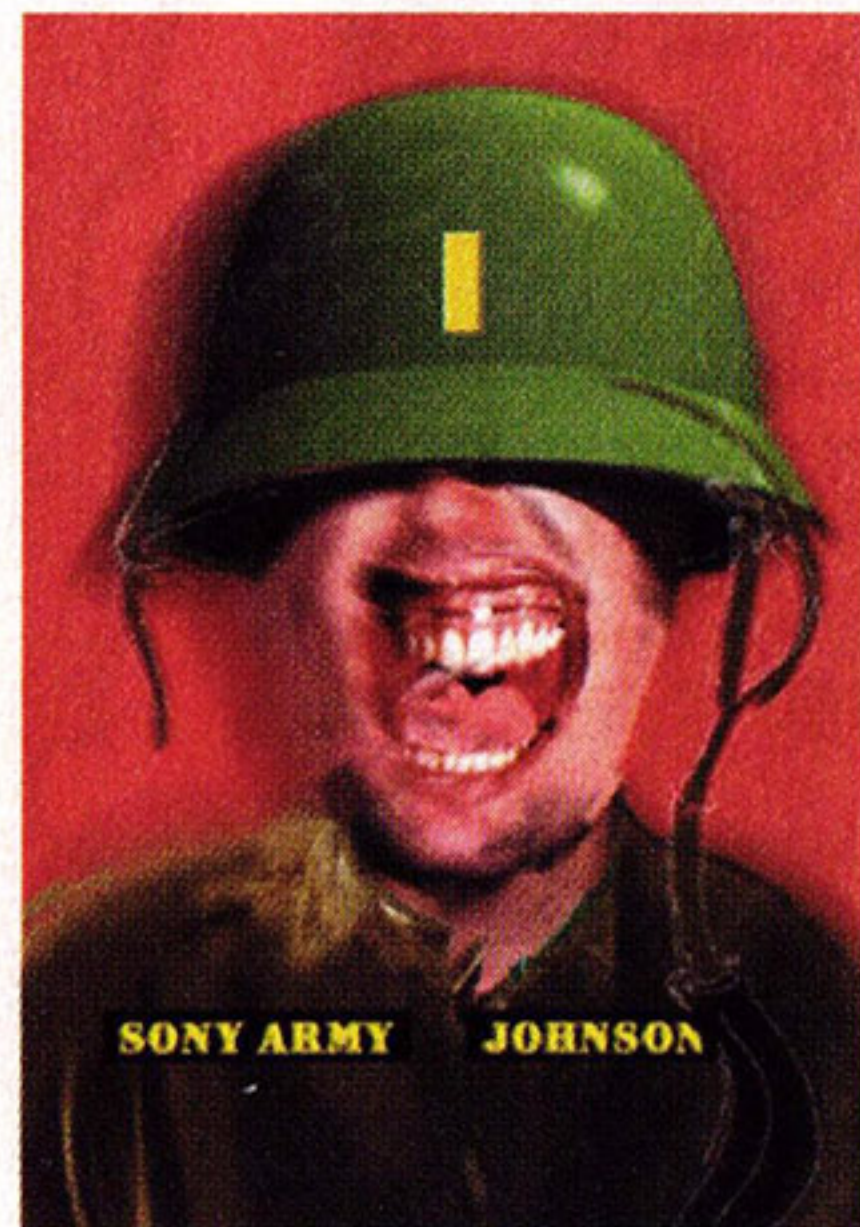
As far as Japanese game designers go, they are as clean as a whistle as far as we know. Americans, by and large, don't have a very good understanding of Japanese culture, so there are times when the odd creativity demonstrated in video games from the Land of the Rising Sun falls on deaf ears here in the United States. Perhaps train simulators and mosquito action games aren't your cup of tea, but just remember that the idea of a plump plumber rescuing a princess from some overgrown turtle monsters probably seemed like a pretty bizarre premise at one time, too.

TEN HUT!

Many of my traitor friends say that GameCube and Xbox have a chance to beat PlayStation 2. I say NOT! As a Sony soldier, I pledged my loyalty to Sony in the fall of '95. As part of that pledge, I play nothing but Sony products. Also, I have sworn to fight against any system that gets in the way of Sony being #1. As a lieutenant of the ever-growing Sony Army, it was I who waged war against Sega in September of '99. I led my troops on a wave of assaults, and in the first quarter of 2001, Sega surrendered to the superior power of

Sony. In November, the time came for us to wage war on our two new opponents. When we are done with them – just like the Sega Dreamcast – they will die a slow, horrible death from the wrath of Sony. Mock [sic] my words: ALL THOSE WHO OPPOSE SONY WILL BE CRUSHED!

Lt. Reggie Johnson
Via aol.com



We would never mock your words, but this console war mentality is getting a bit out of hand. Every system on the market has its strengths and weaknesses, but there is no reason to get into a shouting match with those that own another console. Let's take a brief reality break. Sony, Nintendo, and Microsoft are giant corporations, whose purpose is to make as much money as possible. They are quite interested in your money, but they have no feelings for you personally, so there's really no reason to have any sort of blind devotion or emotional attachment to any console manufacturer. Just decide which system has the features and games you're looking for, and make your purchasing decision like you would for any piece of home electronics. You don't go around saying, "My Emerson microwave could kick your Samsung microwave's ass!" do you? Live and let live, people.



Bissan al Hussein
It's prom night at Middle Earth High!



Jason Rodriguez
Not content with just breaking his record, Barry Bonds decides to blow up Mark McGwire's house! KERFLOW!!!



Emmanuel Ero-Phillips Jr.
We love you too!



Jhon Thomas
It's good to see that Solid Snake waxes his bikini line.



MARCH WINNER!

Jose Silva
Capri pants: \$24.95, Half shirt: \$15.95, Bloody heart: priceless

Enter the Game Informer Envelope Art Contest. All you need to do is draw, paint, scratch, spit, or carve the best darn envelope art you can think of and send it to us. Please include your name, phone number, and return address on the back of the envelope. If you're the monthly winner, we'll feature your work in GI and you'll receive a video game prize from the Game Informer vault.

Send to:
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Sang Tran
Soooooo pretty.



PC Screenshot



Xbox Screenshot



Xbox Screenshot



PC Screenshot

Best RPG of E3
- Computer Gaming World

Top 20 Games of E3
- GameSpot

#1 Xbox Game of E3
- Gamesmania

Elder Scrolls Series
- GameSpy Hall of Fame



** The sequel to Arena and Daggerfall, the award-winning 1994 and 1996 RPGs of the Year.*

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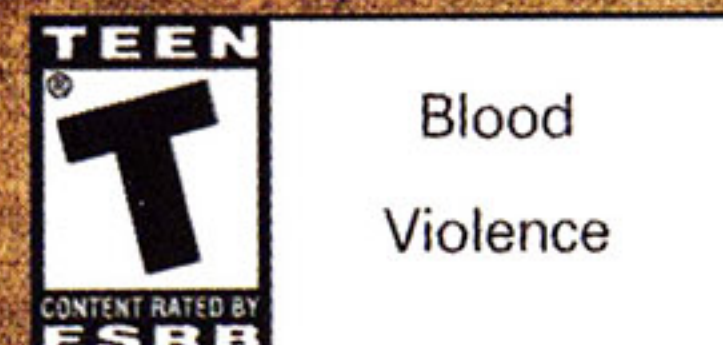
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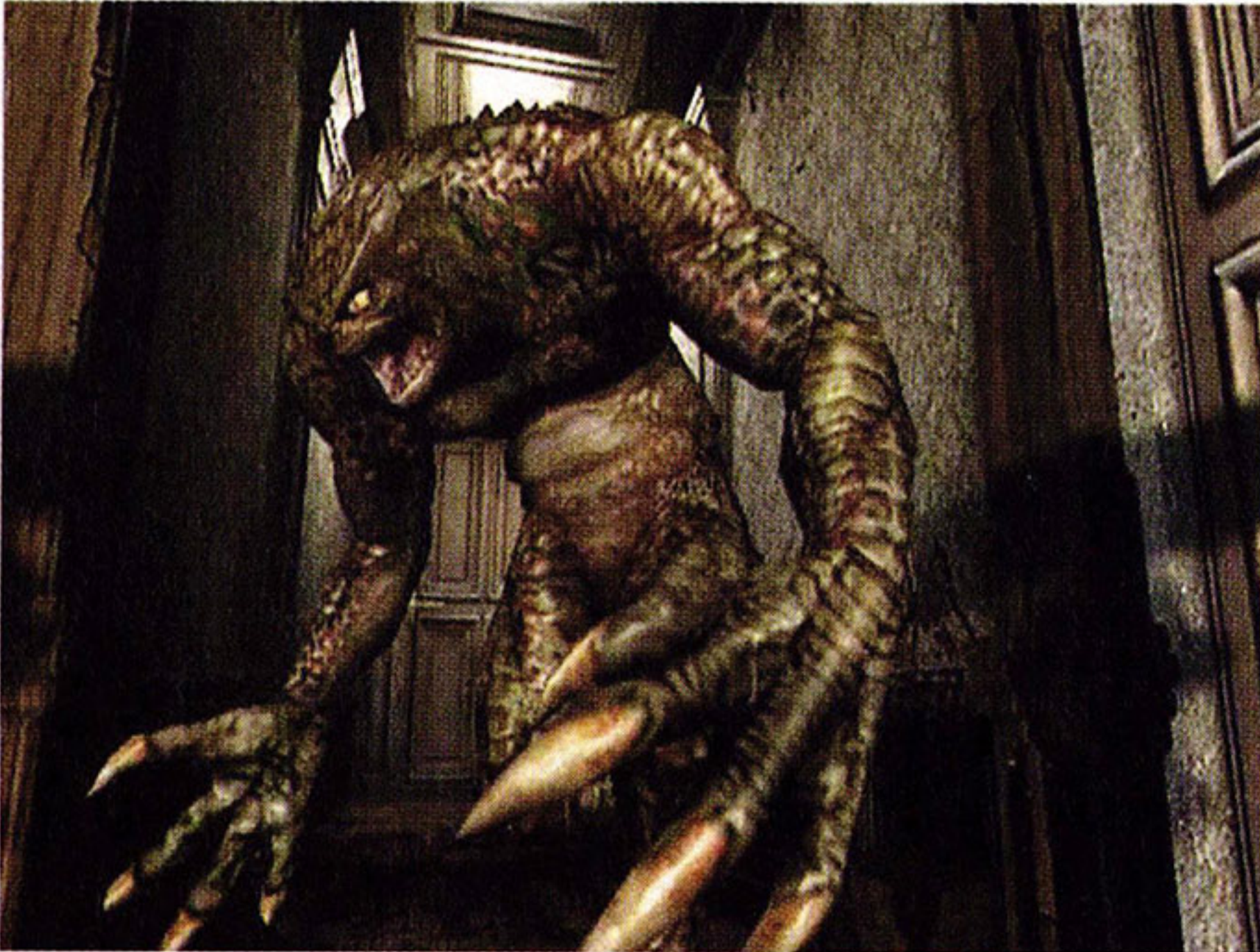


GI NEWS

MIKAMI TALKS RESIDENT EVIL

Nintendo's GameCube stock shot up when the company announced, late last year, that the *Resident Evil* series would be an exclusive for the fabled makers of Mario. None were more pleased than those here at *Game Informer*, but imagine our further delight when *Resident Evil* mastermind **Shinji Mikami** agreed to take time out of his hectic schedule to speak with us exclusively about the **Capcom** series. Read on as he unveils his thoughts on the title and even spills some of its secrets.

This GameCube remake of the original PlayStation *Resident Evil* marks Mikami's return to directing the series after having stepped away for a while to head other projects such as *Dino Crisis*. "I returned to the director's job because I felt I should be in charge," he explained of his involvement. "It is because I created the original *RE* and should be working on any enhancements myself."



Even though he says that this return has nothing to do with the GameCube, fans can be assured this move will only further validate Nintendo's coup.

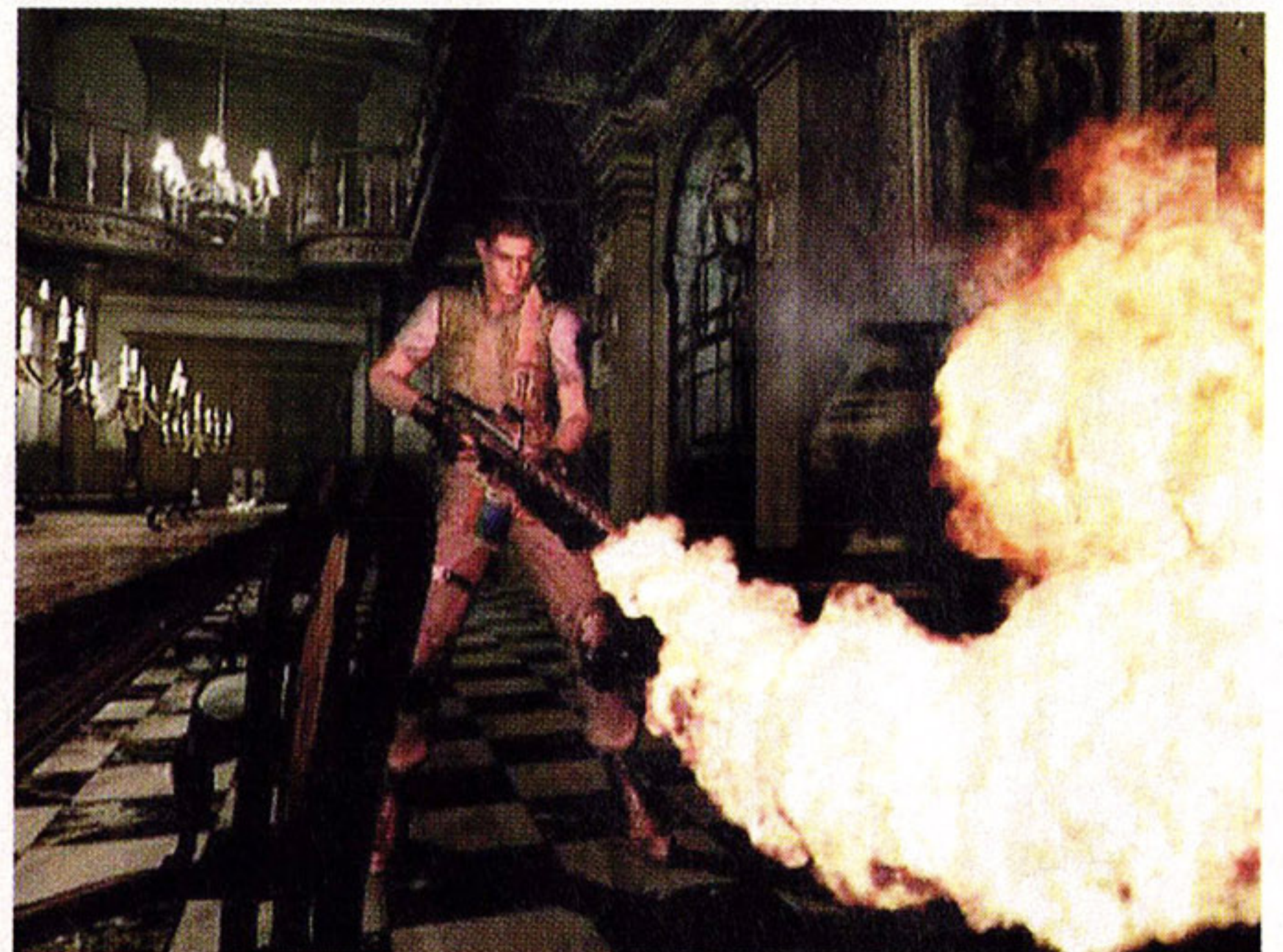
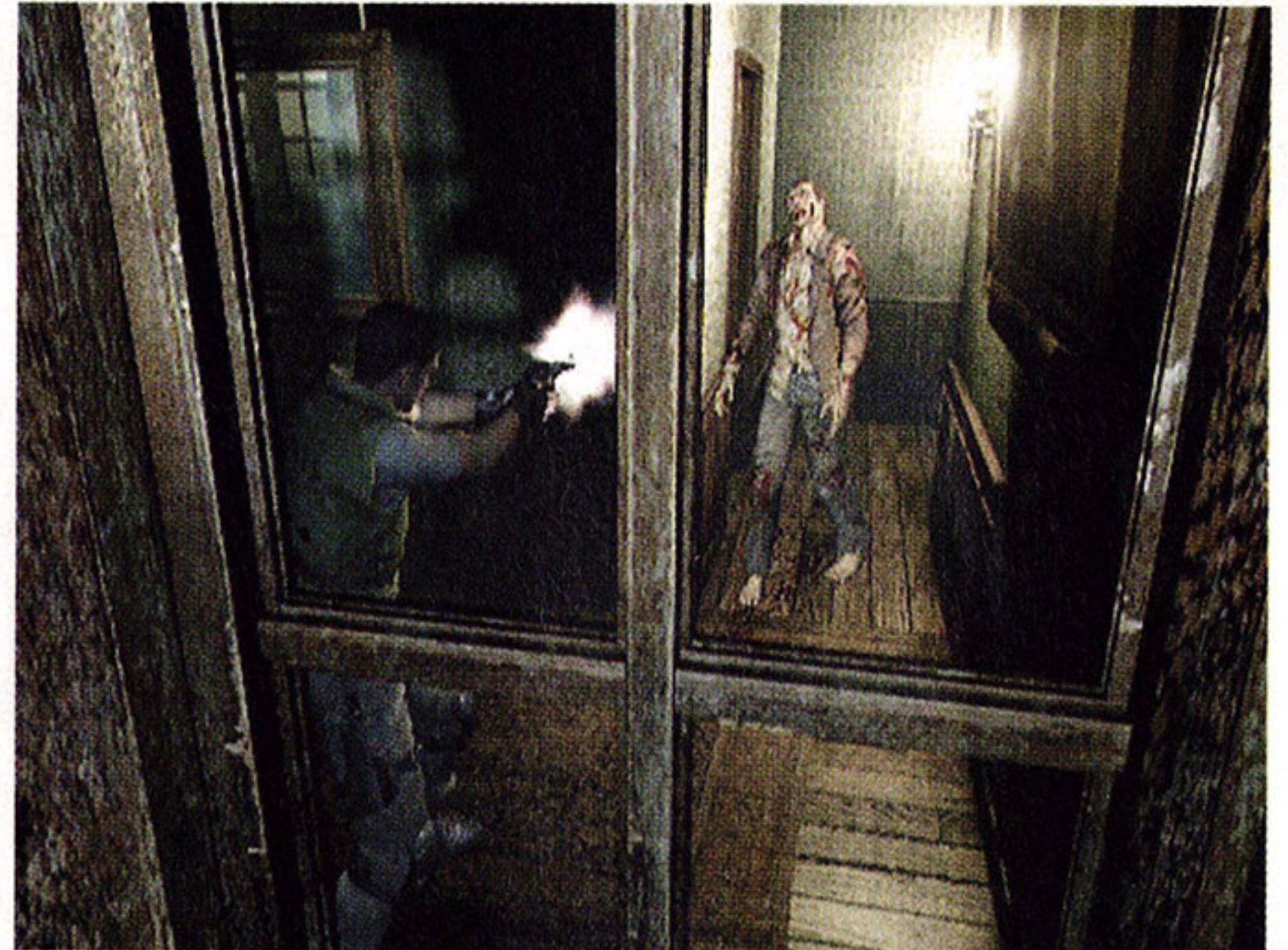
So why Nintendo, then? Says Mikami, "This may sound like an easy question to answer, but it is actually a very tough one. In short, I would say it was because I sympathized with Nintendo's stance in making games. The fact that GameCube is a pure gaming machine – not a DVD player – was another reason I sympathized."

Although all the buzz is about how powerful the Xbox is, the GC has easily shown that it's a powerhouse in its own right. One look at the GameCube *Resident Evil*'s lighting and shadow effects, and you'll be chomping at the bit to revisit the title that made the term "survival horror" famous.

Interestingly, however, Mikami reminded us not to get too preoccupied with tech specs. "We could have achieved a similar quality on other platforms as well. It is my opinion that in the future, a game's quality will be mainly decided by the creator's skill, not which platform the game is developed on." Regardless, Mikami and his crew have wrought some impressive results out of the 'Cube. Even though the backgrounds are still prerendered, real-time effects such as running water, swaying grass, or blood have been added to, as Mikami puts it, "give gamers a very strong sense of actually being there."

Apart from the obvious graphical superiority, fans will also be able to play *RE* differently. The hand-to-hand fighting of Chris and Jill is now more elaborate. We've witnessed scenes where, instead of merely pushing off a dog when attacked, characters will go to much more dramatic lengths. In one instance, Chris pulled out his knife and jabbed a rabid canine in the skull to escape from being bitten, while in another, a grenade in the mouth solved the problem quite quickly.

These flourishes are just the start. Mikami himself promises this new *RE* will contain rare firearms, and at least four costumes to be earned, including Jill's outfit from *RE 3*. Also in store will be "a unique game mode as an extra and some new gameplay features to the zombies." Like what? All Mikami would tell us was, "I'm sure you'll be surprised..."



FIRST RESIDENT EVIL MOVIE TRAILER

The first trailer for the *Resident Evil* movie has just been released. Starring the Peter Nguyen-spurned **Milla Jovovich** (see last month's *GI Spy*) and *The Fast and Furious*' **Michelle Rodriguez**, the film will hit theaters on April 5. Check out footage of the film at www.resident-evil-the-movie.com.

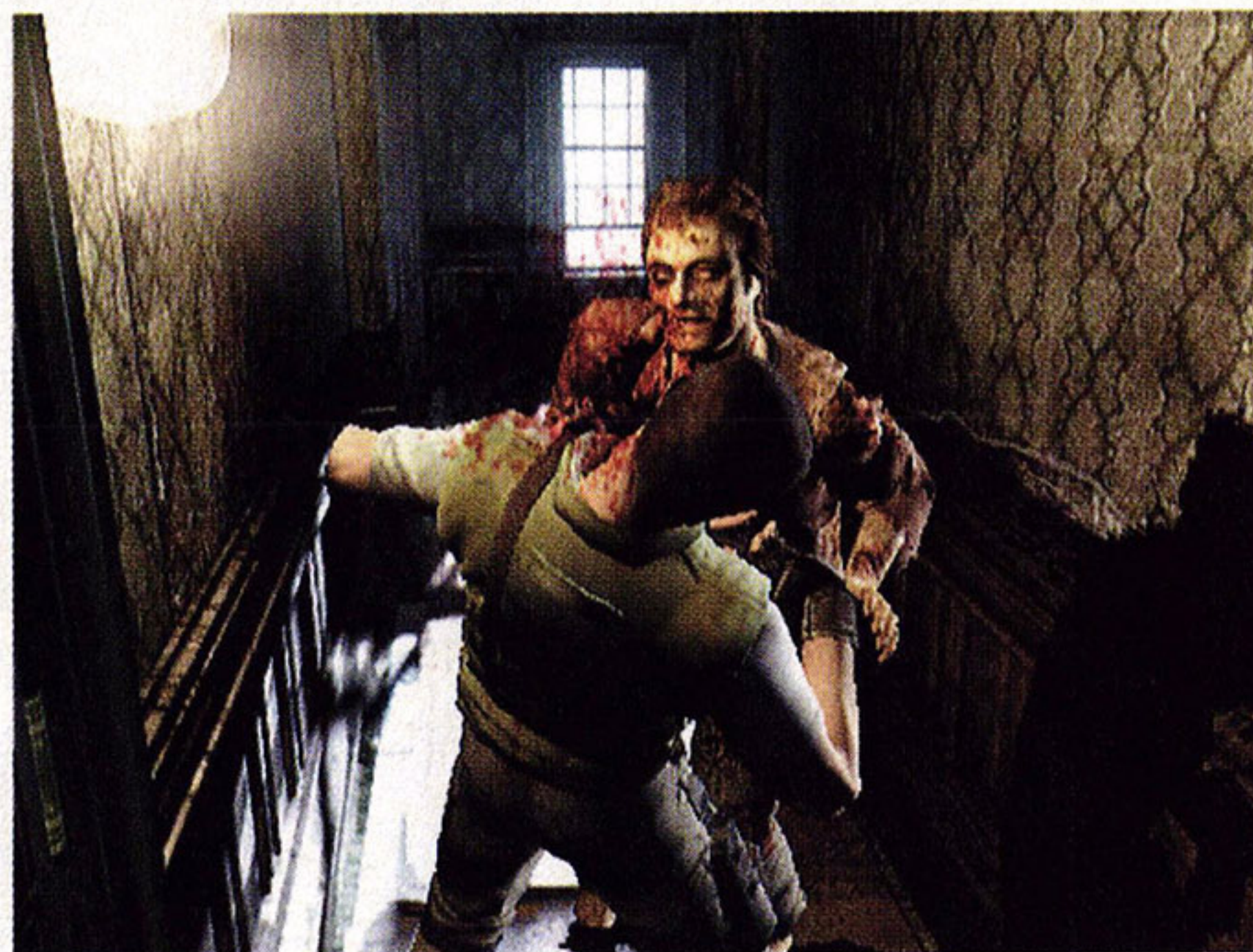




One aspect of the *Resident Evil* remakes that we are sadly surprised about is the decision to re-record the notoriously cheesy voice acting of the original. Mikami said, "Unfortunately [laughs] we have replaced all the voices for *RE* [GC]. They should not sound 'cheesy' this time." And what talk about *Resident Evil* would be complete without asking about the whereabouts of **Barry**? Well, "I haven't decided what I should do with Barry," said Mikami, "but at least I can say he is a loveable character and should be treated as

such." Those looking for more Barry satisfaction can find it on the **Game Boy Color**, as **Resident Evil Gaiden** (releasing in March) allows you to control the "loveable" Mr. Burton.

According to Capcom, there will be five *Resident Evil* titles in 2002. These include ports of *RE 2*, *RE 3*, and **RE Code: Veronica**. Former **N64** game **RE: Zero** will also be brought to the GameCube.



Capcom includes **Resident Evil 4**, but that won't occur till 2003 at the earliest. *RE* for the GameCube is scheduled to release in Japan on March 22, but as of the time of this writing, Capcom had not yet decided on an exact North American date. However, the publisher did assure us that our version of the title would appear soon after it comes out in Japan.

THE ONE RING IS UNIVERSAL

The One Ring of Power has divided and ensnared many, and none more potently than video game publishers. **Universal Interactive** and **Electronic Arts** currently have separate licenses to make titles based on **J.R.R.**

Tolkien's tales of Middle Earth. This month, *Game Informer* is proud to bring you some never-before-seen shots of Universal Interactive's efforts at bringing the **Lord of the Rings** trilogy of books to digital life (for more on EA's treatments on the *Lord of the Rings* movie, see last month's *News* section).

Universal's deal with **Tolkien Enterprises** has already spawned the announcement of two titles. **Fellowship of the Ring** for the **Xbox** is being planned for this October as an action/adventure game enabling you to control Frodo, Aragorn, or Gandalf through eight different realms. If these pictures from the bowels of *Moria* are any indication, the journey should be quite a fun, if possibly deadly, one.

Also scheduled for release in October is a **Game Boy Advance** treatment that will be more of an RPG than the Xbox version. Entitled **Lord of the Rings Part I**, this game features an isometric view and will encompass both *The Fellowship of the Ring* and the second book, *The Two Towers*. More vids are in the works, and are being slated for "multiple next-generation and **PC** platforms," according to Universal Interactive.



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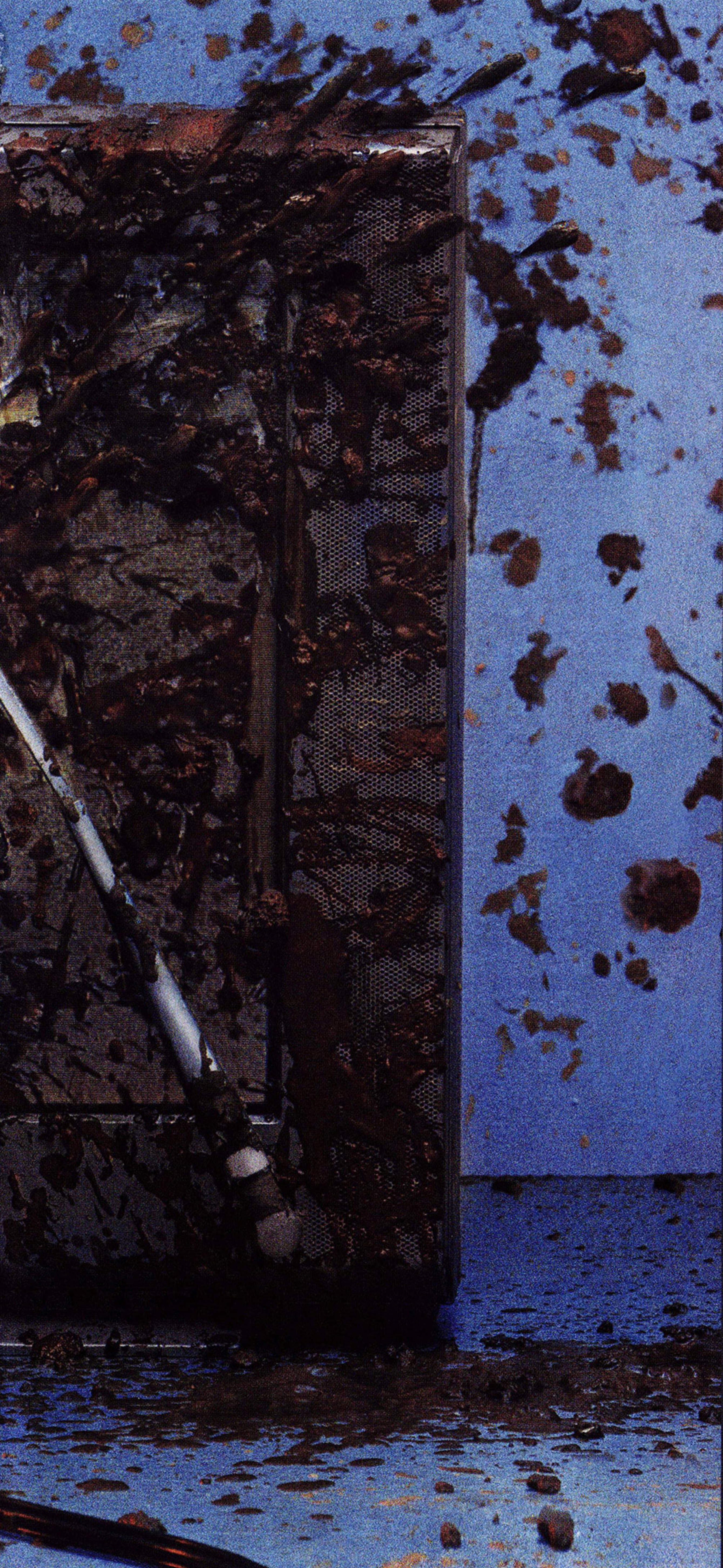
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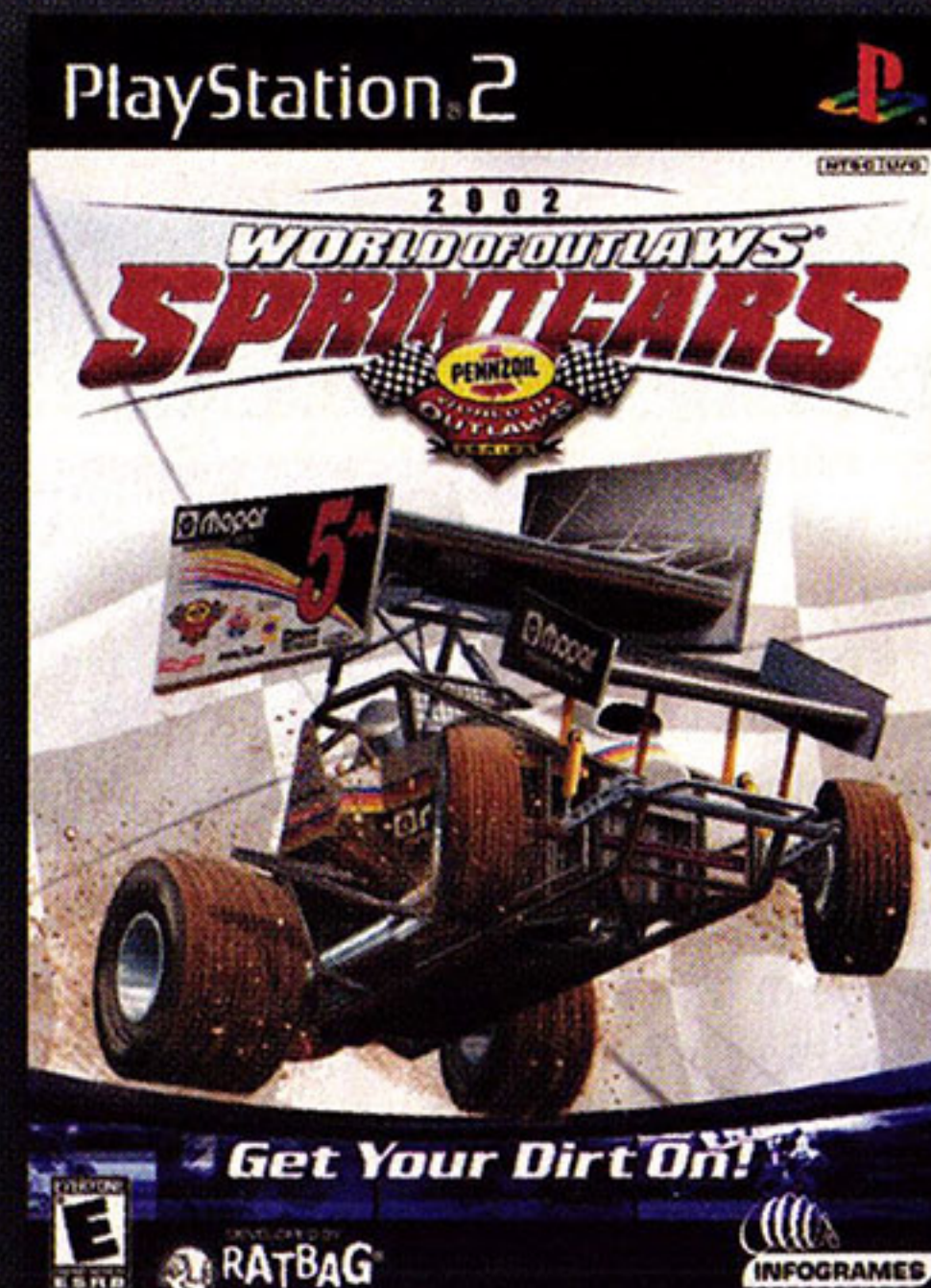
PlayStation 2





INTRODUCING WORLD OF OUTLAWS®
SPRINT CARS 2002.

Now, for the first time ever on a next-generation console, you can experience the mud-splattered madness of dirt track racing. Fight G-force around treacherous, shifting dirt tracks at over 170 miles per hour inside one of the most dangerous machines on the planet. This is one game that looks, feels and almost smells like the real thing.



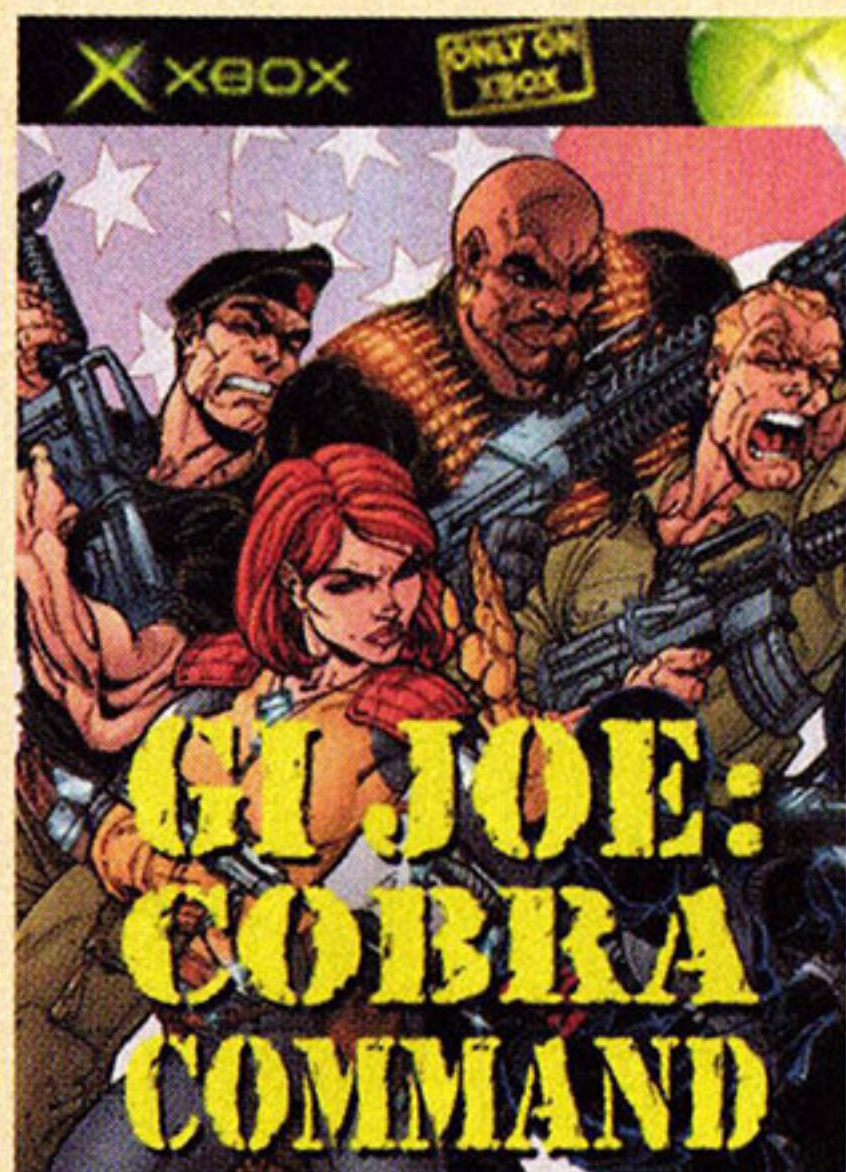


R&D

Game Informer's research and development operatives search the globe, seeking out the untapped licenses that will become tomorrow's killer games. If you have any great ideas for games of the future, be sure to drop us a line. Maybe we'll use our godlike power over the video game industry to turn you into a millionaire – or just steal your idea.

GI JOE: COBRA COMMAND

It has been a full decade now since Cobra last tried to take over the world in the digital realms, and luckily for you, their strength has been gathering. As a newly appointed colonel in the ever-growing ranks of the Dark Army, it's your duty to see the forces of G.I. Joe crushed to dust under your boot heel. As one of the first RTS/FPS hybrids to hit the market, Cobra



Command forces you to display your skills as both a tactician and foot soldier. Missions begin as you place your regiments around a landing zone and establish the Terrordrome. In RTS fashion, you must build up your base's capabilities and

defeat Joe's forces by gaining control of a key structure on the map. Once this has been accomplished, the perspective melts seamlessly into the familiar FPS perspective as you stride out of your Cobra H.I.S.S. and into the building where plans for an ancient super weapon must be stolen. Around every corner lurks another of the cursed G.I. Joe do-gooders. Will Duke send you to an early grave, or will you need to make Destro proud and bring an end to Duke's meddling? Blast away at them, and soon the world will be yours.

TOP 10 REJECTED NAMES FOR ACTIVISION'S NEXT ACTION SPORTS GAME

- 10 Stephen Hawking's Pro Skater
- 9 Ollie the Bum's Dumpster of Fun
- 8 Richard Simmons' Skatin' to the Oldies
- 7 Not Another Tony Hawk Sequel
- 6 Officer Dick's Pro Cavity Search
- 5 Tony Hawk Kart
- 4 Courtney Love's Pro Stanker
- 3 Lee Carvello's Pro Putter
- 2 Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 5
- 1 Corey Haim's Pro Former Child Star

DEVELOPER TOP 5

PAUL CHAPMAN
Producer,
Warthog



- 1 Command & Conquer – PC
- 2 Half-Life – PC
- 3 Micro Machines – Sega Genesis
- 4 Sonic the Hedgehog – Sega Genesis
- 5 Tekken 2 – PS-X

READER TOP 5

GERARD CAPUTO
Little Falls, NJ

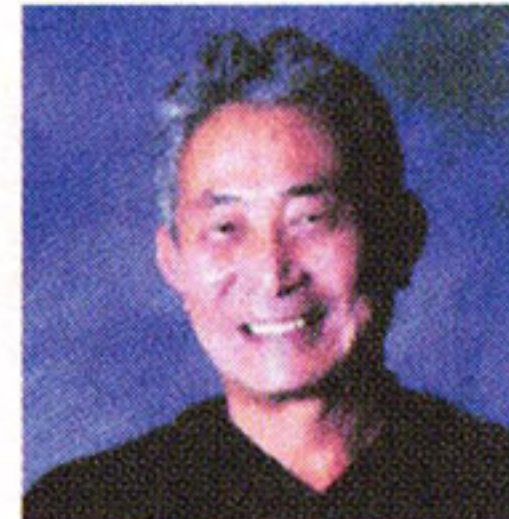


- 1 The Meta Gear series – NES, PS-X, PS2
- 2 Grand Theft Auto III – PS2
- 3 Medal of Honor – PS-X
- 4 Virtual Pro Wrestling 64 2 (JPN import) – N64
- 5 Tony Hawk's Pro Skater – PS-X

Game Informer is looking for your Top Five favorite games. Please send your Top Fives to:

Game Informer Magazine
Attn: Top Five
724 North First St., 4th Floor
Minneapolis, MN 55401

Everyone that enters every month will be entered in a drawing to win a GI T-Shirt! So get writing!



NINTENDO'S ARAKAWA RETIRES

On January 7, after 22 years in the business, 55-year-old **Minoru Arakawa** retired from his post as **Nintendo of America's** President. Despite surprising some, this move has been discussed by Nintendo of America (NOA) and its parent company **Nintendo Co. Ltd. (NCL)** for some time. Replacing Arakawa, effective immediately, will be former **Pokémon Company** Chief Financial Officer and **Pokémon USA** President **Tatsumi Kimishima**. Mr. Arakawa had this to say regarding his departure: "The U.S. video game industry is extremely strong and NOA's position within the industry has never been better. The recent impressive marketplace successes of both **Game Boy Advance** and the Nintendo **GameCube** coupled with NOA's unparalleled financial and management resources allow me the opportunity to pursue new endeavors." These new activities include overseeing the construction of a new house in Hawaii.

Minoru Arakawa founded the American branch of Nintendo in 1980, and after racking up failure after failure, he finally broke the company in this country by introducing us to a **Shigeru Miyamoto**-developed arcade game called **Donkey Kong**. In 1985, after the video game market had totally imploded, Arakawa almost single-handedly revived the industry by bringing over the **NES** from Japan. In 1997, he introduced Americans to **Pokémon**. All the while Arakawa's father-in-law, legendary hard-nosed businessman and Nintendo CEO **Hiroshi Yamauchi**, rode Arakawa to come through in America – a strategy that was wildly successful.

Arakawa's retirement, ex-NOA chairman **Howard Lincoln's** move to the Seattle Mariners, and NOA Vice President of Sales and Marketing **Peter Main's** stepping down this month, has led many to wonder when **Hiroshi Yamauchi** will also bow out. He has previously said that he would retire after the release of the N64 in 1996 and most recently after the launch of the GameCube this year. However, there has yet to be any news of his departure. These recent movements in the upper echelon of the storied video game company and the possibility of Hiroshi Yamauchi retiring in the next few years suggest a changing of the guard at Nintendo. It was believed that Arakawa would be Yamauchi's successor, but that is no longer a possibility. Still, whoever is at the top of Nintendo, the company should continue to travel down the road that has already paved its way to great fortune.

RETURNING TO WOLFENSTEIN

Activision agrees that the right to waste Nazis is not something that should be restricted to just the **PC**, so it has announced that its big hit, **Return to Castle Wolfenstein**, will be brought to the **Xbox** and **PlayStation 2**. Unlike the PC edition, which has sold in excess of one million copies already, these console editions of the game will feature developer **Raster Productions** at the helm. Worry not, however, as it has overseen other ports such as **Quake III Arena** for the **Dreamcast**. Also, these upcoming *Wolfensteins* (a specific release date has not been decided upon yet) promise to contain "unique design and technical modifications" that will maximize the title on each particular platform.

In other *Return to Castle Wolfenstein* news, Activision has just acquired its developer **Gray Matter Interactive Studios**. The company purchased the remaining 60% of the studios' stock in order to make it a wholly owned subsidiary of Activision.



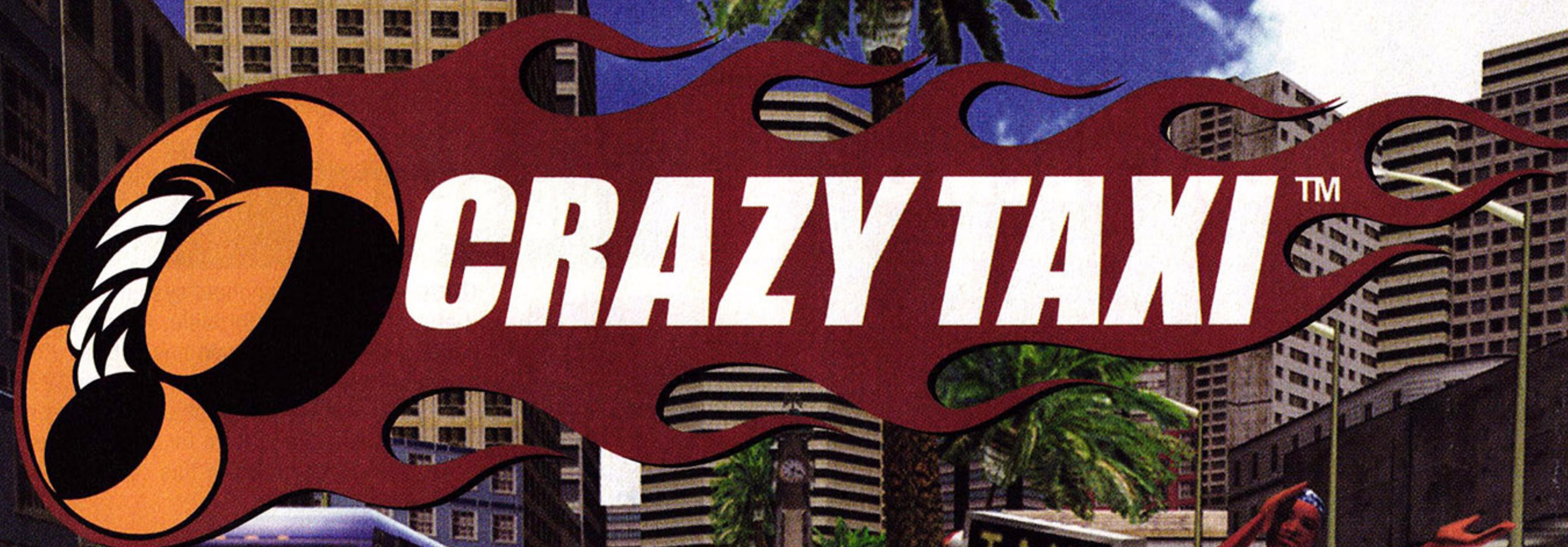
NAME THAT GAME

Changing faces is definitely the name of the game here. Not only because your character had to switch into six different incarnations (such as Hawk-Man or Lizard-Man) during his quest, but also because this game has

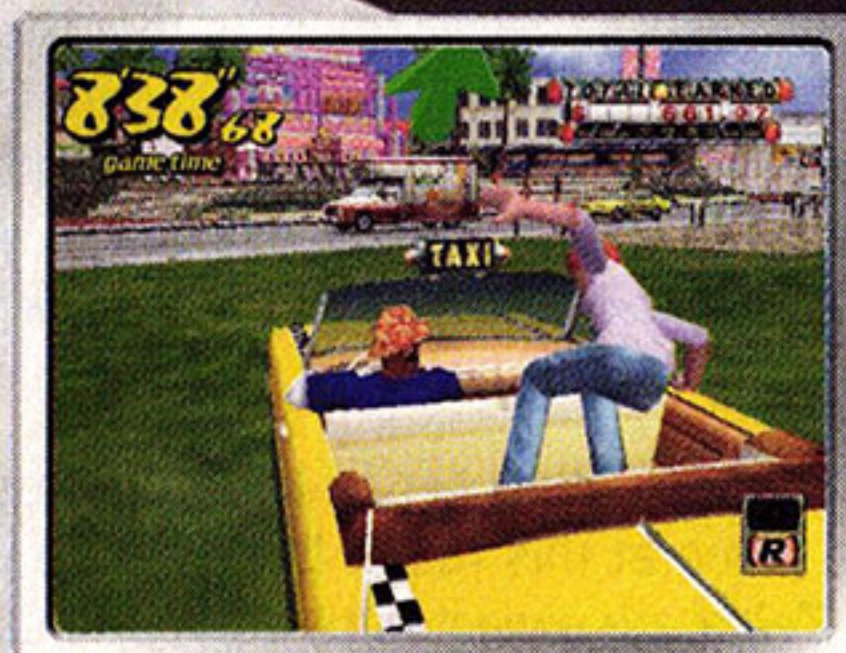
been released as two separate titles. Name the TurboGrafx-16 version of this vid that was based on the 8-bit Sega Master System's Wonder Boy III: The Dragon's Trap. In both editions, your mission was to save Monster World from the Meka Dragon. Just beware his evil curse.



(Answer on page 35)



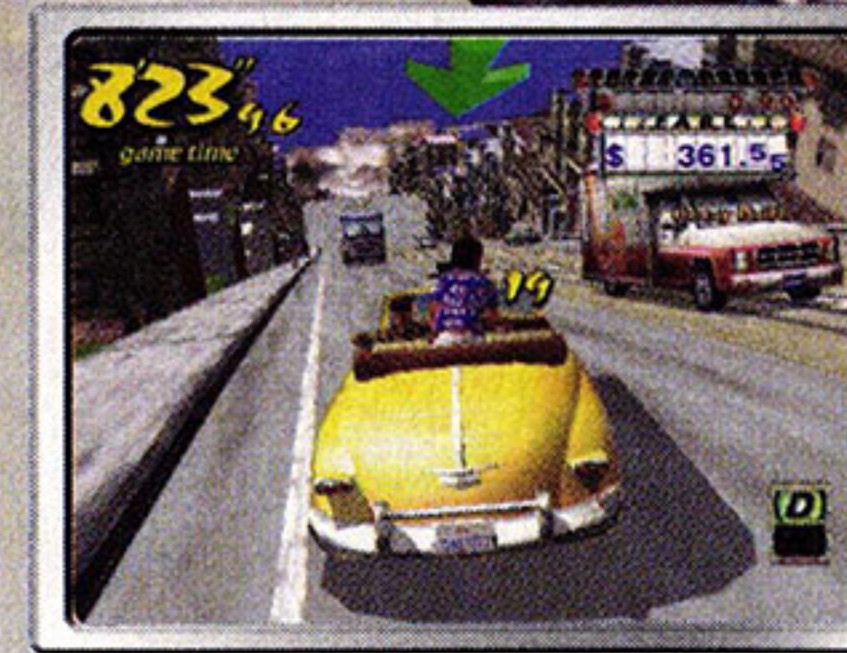
CRAZY TAXI™



Kickin' in-game soundtrack featuring The Offspring and Bad Religion!

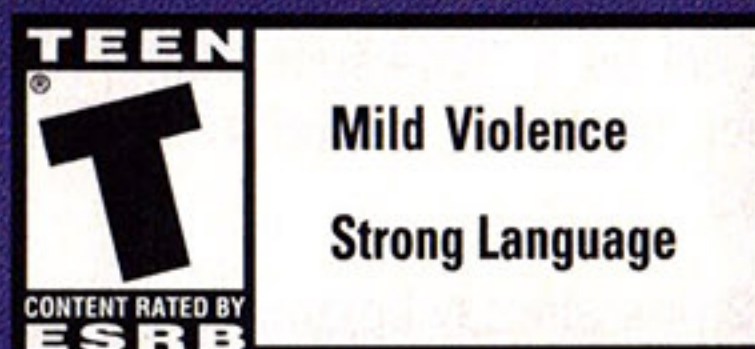


Rules? There ain't no rules. Drive on rooftops, through subways, even underwater!



Wild, original arcade action now with Nintendo GameCube™ graphics and power!

NOW ON NINTENDO GAMECUBE™



PlayStation 2



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TWO NEW FROM TECMO

If you're someone who can claim that **Silent Hill 2** and **Pokémon Snap** appear on your list of favorite games, then we suggest you make room for **Tecmo's Fatal Frame**. The game comes out in the US March 8, and features artistic graphics designed to create an atmosphere of darkness and fear similar to **Konami's** horror title. To vanquish enemies, however, you will have to capture their souls on film. Don't bother with trying to use red-eye reduction on your camera.

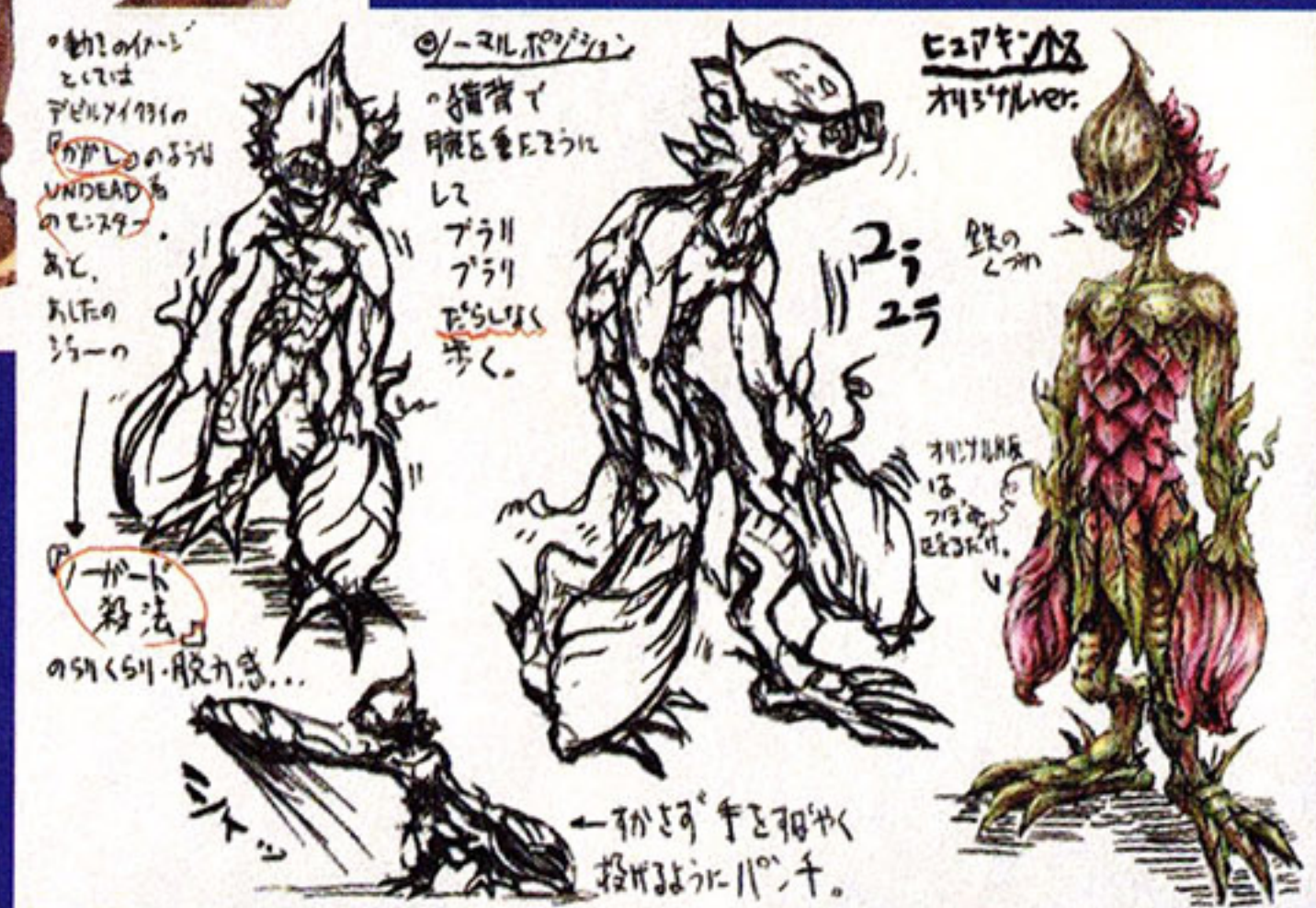


Fatal Frame

Also in from Tecmo are these intriguing character sketches. We don't quite know what they're from just yet, but



it should be an indication that something serious is in the works from the company. Could it be these are sketches for a fourth **Deception** title? What about bringing back **NES** classic **Rygar**, or inaugurating a whole new title? Stay tuned and we should find out more soon.



EIDOS ROLLS WITH LEGAIA SEQUEL

Last month, we broke the story on **Eidos'** new **Fresh Games** brand as it captured the hearts of hardcore gamers all across the country. The label will specialize in bringing over quality, formerly Japanese-exclusive titles to these shores, starting in March. We've already told you about **Mad Maestro** (check out the *Photophile* section of this issue) and **Mister Mosquito**, but Fresh Games has unveiled a third **PlayStation 2** game that will no doubt make you even happier.

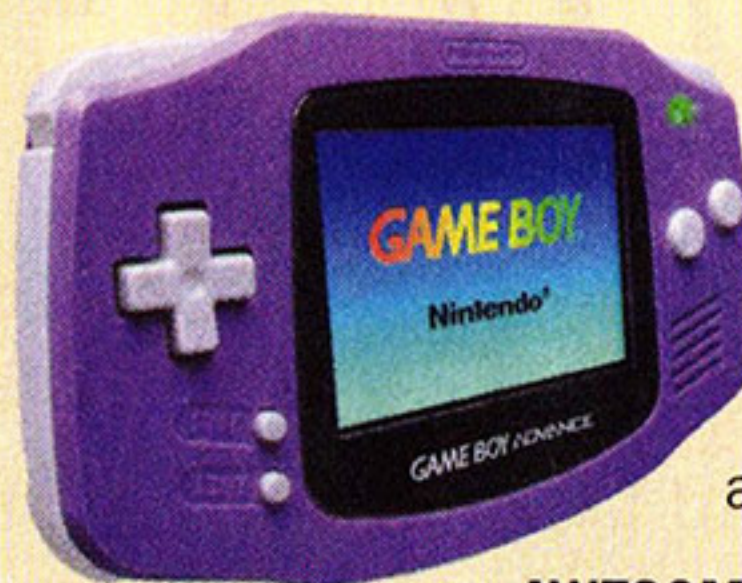
The **Sony of Japan**-developed **Legaia 2: Duel Saga** (known as *Legaia Duel Saga* over there) has just been added to the nascent label's March lineup. This sequel to **Legend of Legaia** keeps the original's Hyper Arts battle system and adds tandem supers known as Variable Arts.



Legaia 2: Duel Saga



THE GOOD, THE BAD, THE UGLY



GOOD – The best handheld system ever just got better – and more affordable. Almost half a year after it debuted, **Nintendo** has cut the official price of the **Game Boy Advance** from \$99.99 to \$79.99. Although some chains have been consistently selling the system for \$89.99, this nod to the hard working folks of this country is surely appreciated. Cheers!

AWESOME! – The city of **Indianapolis** has been ordered by a District Court Judge to pay the video game industry \$318,000 in lawyers' fees and other costs. This was after the city's proposed legislation to ban minors from playing violent video games in public arcades was challenged and defeated. Can we get that in quarters, please?

BAD – **Square** has released **Final Fantasy X International** – in Japan. Apart from the usual assortment of extras, this edition of the **PS2** title features an epilogue to the US version called **FFX Another Story: The Forever Nagi Festival**, which takes place two years after the game ends. There are no plans to release *FFX International* in America.

UGLY – Ex-**EverQuest** creators **Brad McQuaid** and **Jeff Butler** are in cahoots to create their own massively multiplayer online RPG to compete with their old beau. Their new development studio has yet to unveil a name, and the duo's game is similarly anonymous at this time, but their goal is clear: Kick the crap out of **Verant Interactive**.

GOOD – Whenever there's a monkey out of place, Matt the O.G.'s on the case... **Sony of Japan** has released footage of **Ape Escape 2** for the **PlayStation 2**. Unlike **Ape Escape 2001**, AE 2 will be a true sequel to the original platform game.



LOOSE TALK

Whenever there's a juicy rumor in the industry, *Game Informer* experts are on it like a fly on stink. If loose lips are spraying hot gossip, we're sucking up the secret saliva and drooling it all over this section. These leads may turn out to be 100% untrue, but then again, they could also be dead honest, and you've just learned about them months before anyone else! In the industry and need to get back at the boss who fired you by spilling some secrets? Email us at loosetalk@gameinformer.com and we'll be your shoulder to cry on.

Buzz has always circulated on the topic of whether **Square** would release games on consoles other than **Sony's**. The newest development is that the **Final Fantasy** maker is talking with **Microsoft**. The **Xbox** creators are apparently serious about bringing both **Square** and **Enix** onboard to provide online content for its new system. Late last year, Sony purchased a 19% interest in Square, which has its own deal with Enix so that the company that created **Dragon Warrior** could utilize Square's **PlayOnline** network.

GameCube owners the world over will finally get a look at the reasons why they bought the console in the first place at this year's **E3** in L.A. (this May). **Mario Sunshine** and **The Legend of Zelda** are expected to be in attendance in playable form. Furthermore, creator **Shigeru Miyamoto** has another secret title that will be unveiled at the expo.

The **Xbox** may become part of an all-in-one consumer entertainment/media hub called the **HomeStation**. Despite telling us that it didn't want to use the console for too much more than gaming, insiders say that the HomeStation will be a self-contained unit that will allow you to play Xbox games, use the Internet, and email people. It will also play DVDs and music, and act as a **TiVo**-esque digital recording device. Microsoft isn't talking about the project, but it is expected to be announced later in the year before being released in 2003.

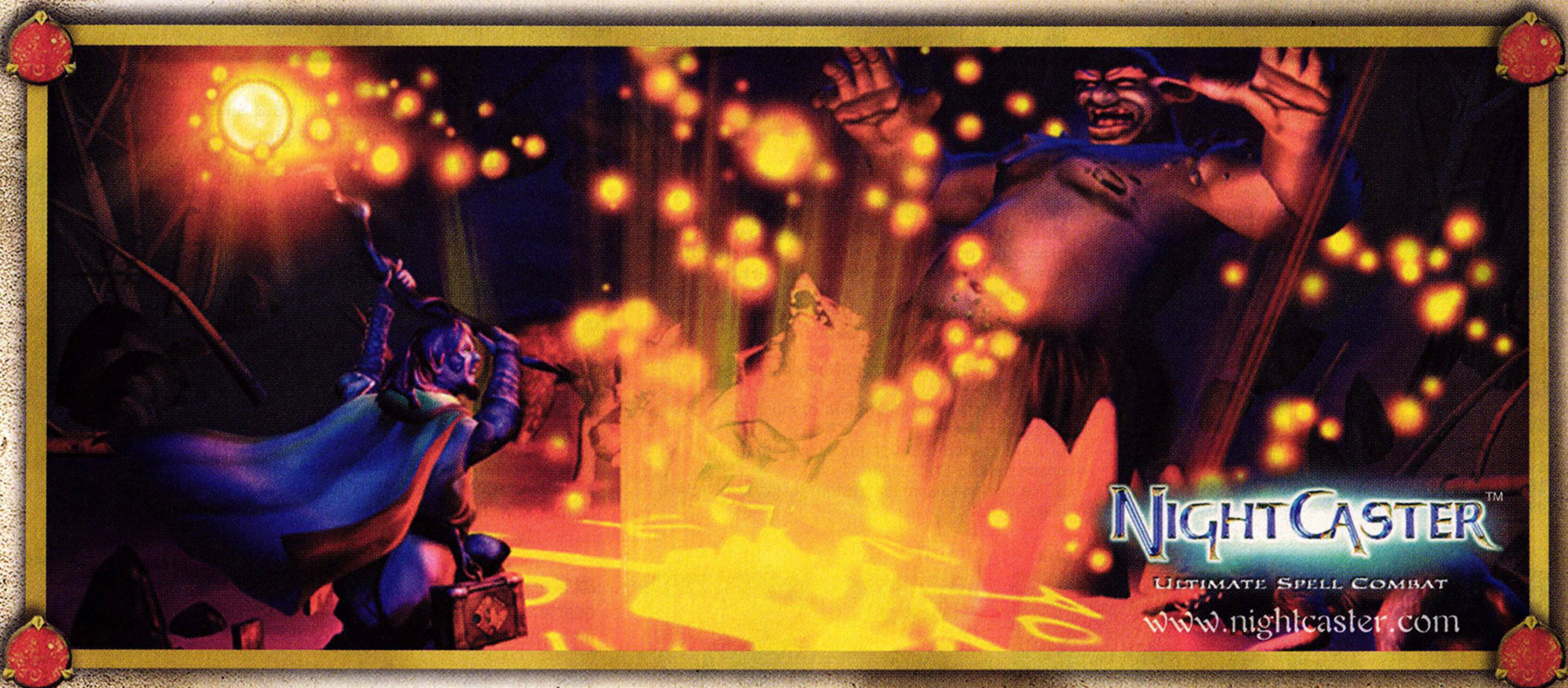
Work on **Gran Turismo 4** for the **PlayStation 2** has already begun. The game should come out in the middle of next year, and feature several online play modes. Other goodies slated for the game include variable weather and time of day options, as well as new courses in Hong Kong and China.



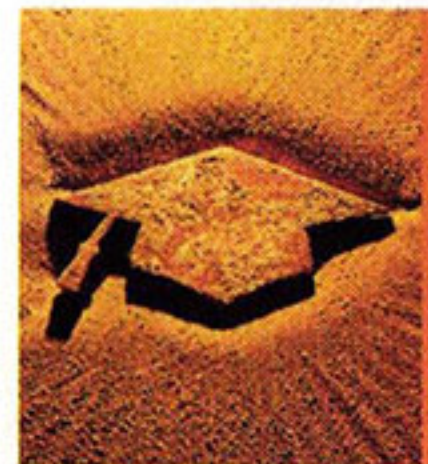
he land was eternally dark, evil prevailed,
and there appeared to be no hope at all.

And as if that wasn't enough, the young wizard had aged 30 years in a day and a pack of wild hell hounds was trying to devour him. He used his orb and a lava spell to torch the wretched beasts and ran for his life. He continues on his quest to become a master sorcerer, but he still has nowhere near the 45 spells he needs to defeat the darkness.

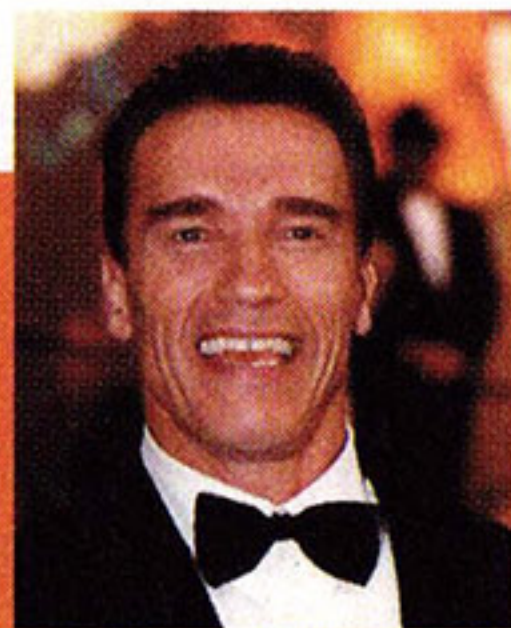
Not even near the end



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VIDEO GAME TRIVIA



Arnold Schwarzenegger just signed a \$30 million contract to star in Terminator 3. As some of his biggest fans, we disagree with Arnold's decision and wish he would have signed on to create a sequel to another of his monster hits. If you were an actor (or actress), the score you receive through this trivia contest determines which film you'd likely be cast for.

Question 1: Before it was renamed Acclaim Studios London, Probe Software was the premiere developer of movie based licenses. Which of these games did Probe not have a hand in?

- A. Alien Trilogy
- B. Judge Dredd
- C. The Terminator
- D. Batman Forever

Question 2: In 1982, Amiga Corporation entered the competitive electronic business with a powerful computer boasting a 16-bit 68000 chip. The codename for this machine was named after the wife of Amiga's president. What was her name?

- A. Shella
- B. Lorraine
- C. Denise
- D. Samantha

Question 3: What was the first non-Japanese developer to create software for the Nintendo Entertainment System?

- A. Imagineering
- B. Mindscape
- C. Acclaim
- D. Rare

Question 4: Well before Capcom and SNK joined forces for two amazing games, Tradewest shocked the world when it released a game that combined Double Dragon with another well recognized franchise. Who were Jimmy and Billy's allies?

- A. Battletoads
- B. Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
- C. Bad Dudes
- D. Bandits

Question 5: SSI will always be remembered for its wide variety of Advanced Dungeons and Dragons games. At the same time, however, this company made a name for itself in a different way with the development of a popular Sega Genesis game. What was it?

- A. Buck Rogers: Countdown to Doomsday
- B. Computer Baseball
- C. Battle for Normandy
- D. Phantasie

Question 6: In the highly underrated NES game, NES Open Tournament Golf, players assumed the role of Mario and battled across 18 holes against five computer-controlled characters. Along with Steve, Mark, Tony, and

Billy, whom else did Mario compete against?

- A. Doug
- B. Sam
- C. Toad
- D. Luigi

Question 7: In 1981, Midway racked up another arcade hit with the release of Gorf - a game that combined elements of Galaxian and Space Invaders. When it was time to create a sequel, Midway destroyed all expectations. What was the sequel called?

- A. Gorf Magus
- B. Gorf II: Seeker of Stars
- C. Gorfian War
- D. Ms. Gorf



Question 8: In Castlevania III: Dracula's Curse, Simon Belmont opted to take a vacation rather than run amok in another haunted castle. Lo and behold, his ancestor decided to step in and rid the land of evil. What was his name?

- A. Grant Belmont
- B. Trevor Belmont
- C. Jason Belmont
- D. Damien Belmont

Question 9: In the Atari 2600 game Combat, players could choose between three different environments. What were they?

- A. Open Field, Blaster Maze, Master
- B. Open Field, Blaster Maze, Easy Maze
- C. Open Field, Easy Maze, Complex Maze
- D. Open Field, Easy Maze, Master

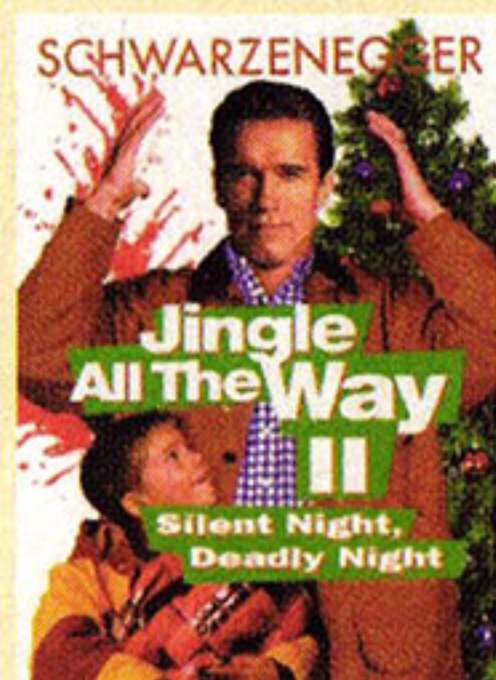
Question 10: Naughty Dog's lead programmer, Andy Gavin, will always have a place within video game history for creating numerous programming innovations. Before he started tinkering with games, he joined the Artificial Intelligence Laboratory at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. What top-secret project was Gavin working on?

- A. He created strawberry-flavored microwave popcorn
- B. He assisted in the creation of musical greeting cards
- C. He designed the fuel intake system for the space shuttle Challenger
- D. He designed a vision system for one of NASA's Mars rovers

Score & Rank



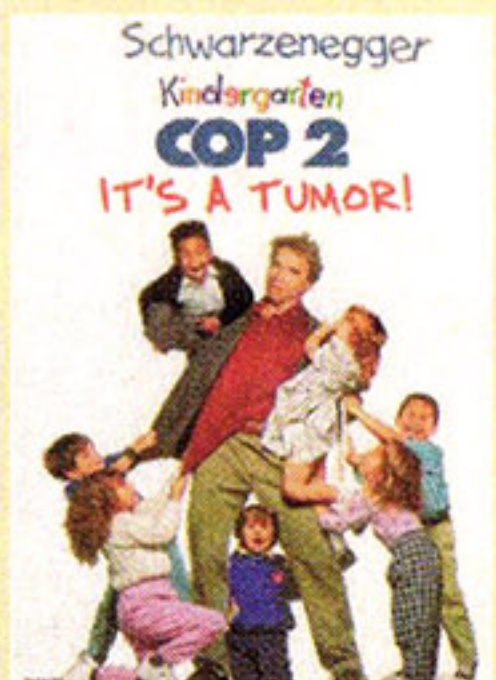
1 Junior 2: The Birth Control Didn't Work



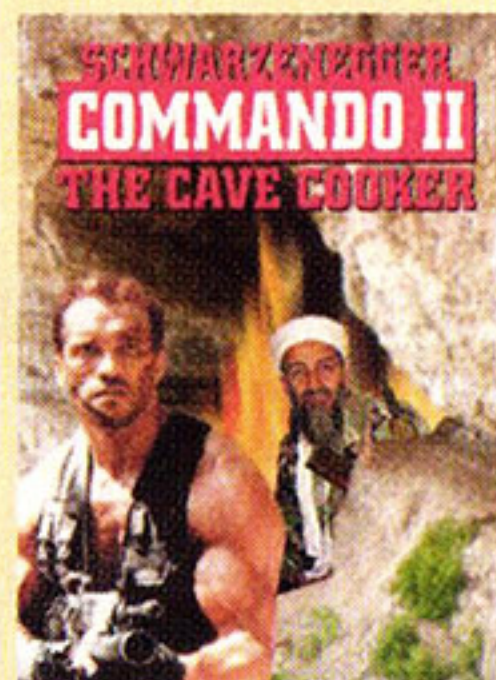
2-3 Jingle All the Way II: Silent Night, Deadly Night



4-6 Total Recall II: Firestone Strikes Again



7-9 Kindergarten Cop 2: It's a Tumor!



10 Commando II: The Cave Cooker

Video Game Trivia Answers:

1. C 2. B 3. D 4. A 5. A 6. D 7. D 8. B 9. C 10. D

MORE MARVEL VIDEO GAMES

Encore Inc. has signed up with Marvel Enterprises to produce an action/adventure title based on the comic hero Daredevil. The game should be released in conjunction with the movie that stars Ben Affleck as the blind crime-fighter Matt Murdock. Although the film comes out before the end of 2002, it is not known if the plot line of the vid



will follow that of the movie itself.

Not to be outdone, Universal Interactive has secured the rights from Marvel for The Incredible Hulk, which will see treatment in a game on unknown formats at an undisclosed time. Not surprisingly, however, a movie for this hero is also in the works. Directed by Ang Lee, The Incredible Hulk is slated to hit theaters in the summer of 2003.

THE NEW XBOX

Microsoft of Japan is offering a limited edition black see-through shelled Xbox to gamers when the system launches over there on February 22. This version of the console will be restricted to only 50,000 units and will sell for 39,800 yen, or around \$50 more than the regular price. Also coming with this special edition Xbox will be a silver plate keychain featuring the engraved signature of Bill Gates.



Game Informer contacted Microsoft as to whether it plans to bring this Xbox to America, but no final decision has been made.



BREAK DOWN

77% of GI readers are still asking us what's better: Xbox or GameCube. Now we've finally come up with an answer: Xbox. Figure that one out!

81% of officially announced GameCube games for the first quarter of this year will already be available on another console first. This compares with 45% for Xbox

75% of the time GI editors would rather listen to their headphones than each other

100% of attempts by GI editors to quit smoking have failed

56% of those in attendance at GI's Christmas party expected Paul Anderson's "little buddy" to once again make an appearance. That same percentage were proved wrong

DATA FILE

► **The Force** is finally strong with the **Xbox**! One of the highlights of last year's **E3**, **Star Wars: Knights of the Old Republic**, has become an exclusive for the **Microsoft** platform. This RPG is loaded with locations bustling with ambient life, massive and magnificent battles, and a variety of character classes and skills to choose from. *Knights of the Old Republic* is being developed by **Baldur's Gate** vets **Bioware** for release before 2003.

► **EA** is livin' large with another **Sims** expansion pack entitled **The Sims: Vacation**. This new house party has set a hot date for the end of March, and allows your family to head off to snowy mountain slopes, camp in the forest, or tan on the beach.

► **Digital Extremes** is busy co-developing **Unreal Tournament 2** for the **PC**, due out in the fall of this year. The game will utilize the new **Epic 3D** engine and feature 30 indoor and outdoor environments, around 50 character models, and of course, a whole host of weapons. Also, five multiplayer modes are being touted.

► **Global VR** is going to give **Golden Tee Golf** a run for its money. The coin-op company has secured a license from **EA Sports** to put **Tiger Woods PGA TOUR Golf** into sports bars and arcades everywhere. Using the popular trackball interface, it'll be interesting to see if Woods can unseat the long-standing champ **Golden Tee**.

► Following our news two issues ago, **THQ** has announced **Red Faction 2** for this winter. The game will feature a four-player option, more destructible environments, an auto-save function and more.

► **Bioware** and **Interplay** have settled their dispute over **Neverwinter Nights**. This means that the game should come out this summer, courtesy of **Infogrames**. More bad news for Interplay, in that founder and CEO **Brian Fargo** has decided to resign from the company. **Titus Interactive's** acquisition of Interplay last August is rumored to be behind Fargo's move.

► **Ex-Sony** and **Sega** wunderkind **Bernie Stolar** has popped up as President and Chief Operating Officer of **BAM! Entertainment**. Stolar previously had successfully headed the launches of both the Sony **PlayStation** and Sega **Dreamcast**, as well as being the President of **Mattel Interactive**.

► **LucasArts** has announced that it's planning a new **Indiana Jones** title for multiple platforms this fall. The publisher will use **The Collective's** proprietary engine to execute the title's action/adventure and puzzle mix. Also, **Steven Spielberg** and **Harrison Ford** have confirmed the making of a fourth **Indiana Jones** movie.

Name That Game Answer:

Dragon's Curse

CONTEST

BALDUR'S GATE: CONTEST ALLIANCE

Interplay's **Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance** transforms the mundane paper-and-pencil world of D&D's third edition rules into a glorious PlayStation 2 adventure. Game Informer and Interplay proudly bring you a selection of goods for a game that should belong in any action/RPG fans' inventory. What better way to immortalize your quest through **Dark Alliance** than with a magnificent framed lithograph featuring the title's impressive character art? Bugbears be damned!

Grand Prize (3)

- Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance Framed Dwarf Lithograph

- Interplay's Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance PlayStation 2 Game

- Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance Poster

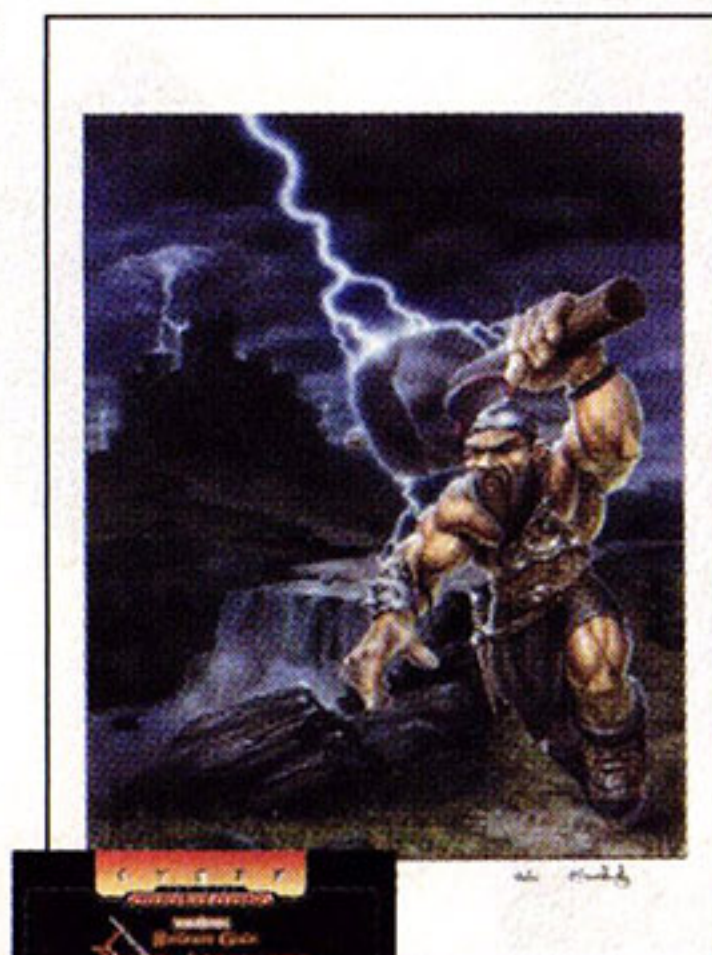
- Sybex Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance Strategy Guide

Second Prize (1)

- Interplay's Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance PlayStation 2 Game

- Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance Poster

- Sybex Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance Strategy Guide



There Are Two Ways To Enter:

(1) Send a POSTCARD with your NAME, ADDRESS & TELEPHONE NUMBER to:

GI's Baldur's Gate Contest
724 N. FIRST ST. 4TH FLOOR
MINNEAPOLIS, MN 55401

(2) Send an EMAIL with your NAME, ADDRESS & TELEPHONE NUMBER to: baldurs@gameinformer.com

Your name will be placed in a pool of valid entrants for a random drawing to be conducted on April, 8 2002.

GAME INFORMER'S BALDUR'S GATE OFFICIAL RULES

1. NO PURCHASE NECESSARY. To enter, send your name, age, address, and telephone number on a postcard to: GI's Baldur's Gate, 724 FIRST ST. NORTH, 4TH FLOOR, MINNEAPOLIS, MN 55401. Or, email your name, age, address, and telephone number to: baldurs@gameinformer.com. Entries must be received by April 8, 2002. One entry per person. Duplicated entries will be disqualified. Game Informer magazine (the "Sponsor") is not responsible for lost, late, mutilated, illegible, incomplete or misdirected entries. 2. PRIZES: Three (3) grand prize winners will receive a Baldur's Gate framed lithograph, a Baldur's Gate PS2 game, a Baldur's Gate poster, and a Baldur's Gate strategy guide (approximate retail value \$150). One (1) second place winner will receive a Baldur's Gate PS2 game, a Baldur's Gate poster, and a Baldur's Gate strategy guide (approximate retail value \$75). Sponsor reserves the right to substitute prize of equal or greater value if prize is unavailable. Prizes are non-transferable and no substitutions allowed. 3. WINNER(S): Winners will be determined by random drawings of all valid entries received by the Sponsor, whose decisions are final. Drawing will be held on or about April 8, 2002. Winners shall be notified by email and/or telephone. Please allow six to eight weeks for delivery of prizes. 4. ODDS OF WINNING: The odds of winning depend on number of valid entries received. 5. ELIGIBILITY: Promotion open to residents of United States only. Return of any prize/prize notification as undeliverable will result in disqualification and an alternate winner will be selected. Winner may be required to sign an affidavit of eligibility/release of liability/prize acceptance within 14 days of receipt or forfeit prize. If the winner is a minor, then prize may be awarded to winner's parent or legal guardian. By acceptance of prize, winners agree to the use of their name and/or likeness for purposes of advertising, trade, or promotion without further compensation, unless prohibited by law. Employees of the Sponsor, Game Informer Magazine, and their parent and affiliated companies and their families are not eligible. Neither the Sponsor nor its affiliates, subsidiaries, division or related companies are responsible for any damages, taxes, or expenses that winners might incur as a result of this sweepstakes or receipt of prize. 6. RESTRICTIONS: Void where prohibited or restricted by law.

PlayStation®2



Don't Stumble Around in the Dark

Visit the web site dedicated to giving you the last word on how to survive the greatest 1-Player challenge in the history of RPG's!

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www.KINGSFIELD.Agetec.com

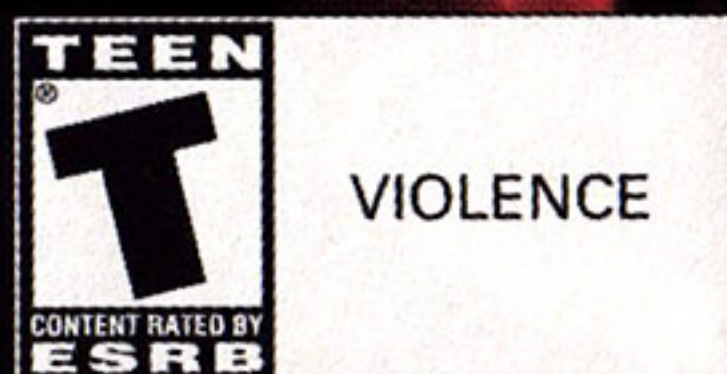


Explore more than 40 levels of a subterranean realm lost in time.

Arm yourself with magic items capable of unleashing massive spells.

There are more than 90 levels of power for your character.

Learn to barter if you are a bit short on gold.



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The image is a promotional graphic for the video game Maximo: Ghosts to Glory. It features a central character, Maximo, in a red and black outfit, holding a sword and a shield. He is surrounded by various enemies and bosses, including a large skull in a green hood, a woman with a crown, and a man with a beard. The background is a fiery, orange and yellow landscape. The title "MAXIMO" is written in large, stylized, metallic letters, with "Ghosts to Glory" in a smaller font below it. The text "NEXT-GEN" is written in red, and "NOSTALGIA" is written in large, glowing white letters. The bottom of the image shows two screenshots from the game: one of Maximo in a dark, fiery environment and another of Maximo in a blue, rocky environment.

MAXIMO

Ghosts to Glory

NEXT-GEN

NOSTALGIA

In terms of ingenuity and pure entertainment, the reign of the Nintendo Entertainment System could be considered the high watermark of the video game industry. For a generation of gamers reared in the 1980s and early '90s, the classic side-scrolling action titles of that era hold fast as examples of gaming in its truest form. We might be in awe of the intricate graphics and epic nature of the best of today's console games, but no current game can claim the emotional attachment that we feel toward Mario and the other heroes of his day. Both in print and on the Internet, many express the feeling that video game companies may have lost their devotion to the science of creating fun and compelling gameplay in the quest to create ever more impressive displays of visual fireworks.

While many are quick to cry for a return to the values of the 8-bit era, a look at the sales charts is all it takes to confirm that people don't always put their money where their mouth is. Most of this year's breakaway hits – Halo, Grand Theft Auto III, Final Fantasy X, and Metal Gear Solid 2, to name a few – are games that push the gaming experience further toward the aesthetics of motion pictures. Conversely, more traditional action/platformers, like Jak and Daxter and Klonoa 2, have struggled to find a following with the next-gen audience. So, what do gamers really want: Old-school action or cinematic thrills?

The answer to this question is of utmost important to the creators of

Maximo, Capcom's bold new attempt to re-create the magic of classic 2D action titles on the PlayStation 2. Inspired by the ancient arcade hits Ghosts n' Goblins and Ghouls n' Ghosts, Maximo is unapologetic in its adherence to the "less is more" philosophy that defined the classic games of yesteryear. So far, the reaction of both the press and the public has been overwhelmingly positive, and the game was very well received at last year's E3. However, advance praise is no guarantee of sales, and Capcom Digital (the company's US development wing) has a lot riding on Maximo, the first console game entirely conceived and created by Capcom of America. Will consumers embrace this return to the basics of gaming? No one can be sure. What we are sure of, is the fact that Maximo is a brilliantly constructed and refreshing break from the norm.

Maximo is the brainchild of Capcom's David Siller, a veteran producer who has worked on past titles such as Rygar and Crash Bandicoot. His journey through the video game industry eventually took him to the Stateside branch of Capcom, and he quickly began work to establish the company's US arm as a respected development house in its own right. His first project was to salvage Final Fight Revenge, an arcade fighter that had become stalled in the development cycle. Although Siller's team was not able to turn said pig's ear into a silk purse, their efforts won the attention of Capcom of Japan, and they were soon given the go ahead to work on an all-new original project.

■ **PLATFORM** PLAYSTATION 2 ■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** CAPCOM ■ **DEVELOPER** CAPCOM DIGITAL STUDIOS ■ **RELEASE** FEBRUARY 12





In creating Maximo, David Siller and his team drew inspiration from the early '80s classics Ghosts n' Goblins and Ghouls n' Ghosts (pictured above)

This new project, entitled Maximo, was to be a tribute to Ghosts n' Goblins, one of Capcom's first ever hits. The company had tried several times to resurrect the franchise in the '90s, most recently for the Nintendo 64, but these attempts had been deemed unworthy, and ultimately scrapped. Siller wisely decided that, while the game would contain references to Ghosts n' Goblins, it would feature new characters and a new depth of gameplay. Also, he wanted the game to be more action-oriented, as opposed to the task-driven designs that have been so overused in the years since the release of Mario 64 and Banjo-Kazooie.

"We wanted to get back to that classic style of action game where, once the game begins, you better damn well be ready to rock and roll," comments Siller. "Another thing we wanted to avoid was the tutorial level. We really hated that Nintendo/Rare formula where a little fairy comes by and says, [affecting a high falsetto] 'Press X to jump! Then, stand on your head and fart!' If you're a hardcore gamer, you don't need that."

Once the project was in motion, Siller and his team began work on developing the game's characters, storyline, and level design. The highly-stylized character models, which lend the game a level of personality that most generic action titles would envy, were created with the help of the acclaimed Japanese anime artist Susumu Matsushita, the creator of the beloved Monkey Magic animated series. With the art direction in place, a plot was formulated – one that sees Maximo suffering the indignation of having his true love and his four comely sorceresses captured by the evil Achille. If that

wasn't enough, he is then killed by his nemesis. Luckily, the Grim Reaper has taken offense at Achille for releasing the spirit forces that gives Death his powers, and reanimates Maximo, sending him on a quest to knock off Achille once and for all. The whimsical storyline recalls the time when video games didn't take themselves quite so seriously. "Hey, I'm a guy that makes video games," Siller comments. "Not a frustrated film director." Siller went on to reveal that there had been a plan for Maximo to encounter Ghosts n' Goblins' hero Arthur in his quest, an intriguing plot twist that might be included in a future Maximo sequel.

Based on screenshots alone, one would not consider Maximo to be one of the most awe-inspiring of the PlayStation 2 games we've seen to date. This assumption is true to a point, but it's important not to overlook the game's considerable strengths. It has a simple, clean look, and is filled with lovingly crafted animations, each enhanced by sonic details like the clank of the sword against metal, or a wooden thud when it gets stuck in a tree. Maximo is definitely not pushing the PlayStation 2's hardware to its limits, but nearly everything in the game somehow seems like it's just as it should be, right down to a camera system that is nearly flawless.

As you have probably guessed by now, Maximo's gameplay is not complex, and is essentially a 3D reinvention of the hack n' slash action of Ghosts n' Goblins, Rush'n Attack, and other 8-bit games of similar ilk. Rest assured, you will not be required to master the complex control schemes that have made recent action titles like Syphon Filter so off-putting to some. Basically, there is one button for jump and one button for attack – that's it. However, Siller and his team have implemented some subtle, yet innovative, changes to the familiar formula.



These voodoo dolls want to steal your Maximojo!



Unlike the common cannon-fodder enemies, these skeleton swordsman can provide quite a challenge in groups



Maximo takes time off from adventuring to dance the night away at a rave. This boss even has a big, stupid Dr. Seuss hat on!



Notice the sword sticking through this pirate skeleton's chest. It will prevent you from performing a Downward Strike when he is lying on his back



Maximo's Mighty Blow is probably the all-around most useful power-up in the game



You sword can be powered-up with a number of enchantments



A fast and frantic action game, Maximo doesn't let you stand still for a minute



The Downward Strike is an effective way of killing enemies quickly

Although it may appear rudimentary at face value, there is actually quite a bit of depth lying underneath Maximo's simplistic surface. The game is instantly fun, and definitely captures the "pick-up-and-play" appeal that many developers attempt, but few accomplish with any real success. The playcontrol is never overly complicated, but as the game progresses, new abilities, weapons, and sword enhancements are gradually added to Maximo's repertoire, giving the player a real sense of purpose that drives them to complete the game's multitude of levels. Although very linear, each of these stages is strewn with secret areas, hidden chests, and hard-to-obtain gold coins that should make it extremely difficult to attain the coveted 100% completion level.

Some of these character upgrades are quite modest – a second-strike move, for instance – but once you delve further into the ability system, it proves to be quite well-designed, forcing you to judiciously manage your character's attributes. Upgrades generally fall into three categories: Maximo abilities, shield upgrades and sword enchantments. Maximo abilities include the aforementioned second strike the Mighty Blow (a thrusting motion that deals tremendous damage), the Shockwave (which powers up Maximo's downward thrust move), and the Gold seeker (which lets you use the

Shock wave to detect hidden chests). Sword enhancements allow you to do some cool things like shoot fireballs from your flaming blade, but are often only temporary and deplete with each use. Your shield proves very useful both for defense, and as a weapon when thrown. Even better, the Midas Shield enhancement can be combined with the Throwing Shield and used to gather gold coins that are perched in high or hard-to-reach areas.

Although it would be cool to trick out our hero with each and every one of these upgrades and abilities, the game's designers only allow you a limited number of permanent ability slots, requiring you to make tough decisions about just which of your powers are most important. You start out with three permanent slots, into which you can shuttle upgrades in and out. Of course, you can collect as many as you're able; but once you die, you will lose any abilities that aren't kept in the first three slots. What to save and what to keep? It's a veritable Sophie's choice.

At the end of each world, you will be rewarded with a new permanent upgrade slot, and the choice of taking a save, an armor upgrade, or a kiss. The kisses have no real value during gameplay, but if you complete the game with every kiss, you will open up a special section of Maximo concept art by

Susumu Matsushita. Unfortunately for completists, a kiss must be saved in the new ability slot you just received, which means you must finish the game with only three slots to preserve all your kisses. Overall, the system of upgrades is indicative of the great deal of thought and care that went into balancing Maximo's gameplay, resulting in a game that can be conquered by a casual gamer, but also provides enough challenge for the most skilled players.

For a game that is so steeped in tradition, it's odd just how different Maximo feels from the current crop of games crowding retail shelves. For all the advancements that video games have made in the last five years, it is also instructive to think about what might be lost as game creators continue to stray further from the simple principles of fun and ease-of-play that first made gaming an international pastime. Surely, we wouldn't trade our copies of Metal Gear Solid 2 for the world, but we should hope that we will always have the simple pleasures of solid gameplay to fall back on when we tire of slogging through hours and hours of overwrought dialogue and pretentious cinematography. Hopefully, Maximo will find success, and demonstrate that there is still a place in the modern marketplace for a game that wants nothing more than to entertain you for a few hours.

Most of the boss battles are based on memorizing simple patterns, but many are challenging nonetheless





MACE GRIFFIN BOUNTY HUNTER

HIGH PLAINS DRIFTER

The release of three new platforms in the span of almost a year has thrust the next generation of video games upon us. With this emphasis on home console technology and what it will do for video games in the 21st century, it's almost as if we expect the next captivating hit title to appear out of thin air simply because of the lofty specs of the system it's on. However, the journey toward a moving game experience, or elevating the first-person shooter genre to new heights, just isn't that easy. It takes vision to sculpt success out of a high-powered platform like the Xbox or the PC, and that's exactly what developer Warthog had when it created the self-proclaimed "Arcade Space Action" game Mace Griffin Bounty Hunter.

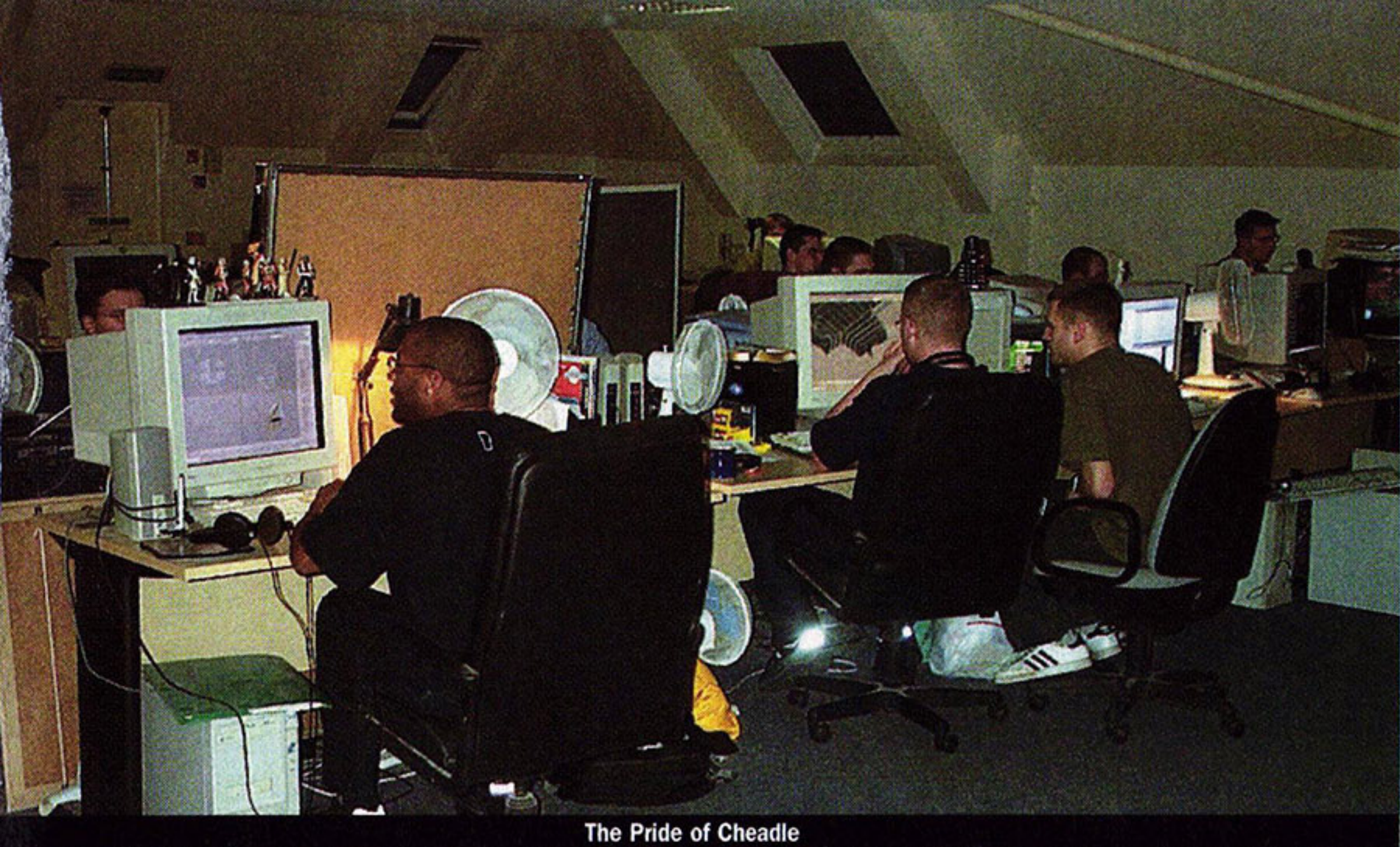
Warthog's headquarters lie in Cheadle, a suburb of Manchester, England. Cheadle isn't a notable town, and you'd be hard-pressed to see it as the birthplace of a blockbuster video game. But look past its requisite corner pubs and small-town feel, and you'll find that some amazing developments are occurring in the north of England. Oddly, this mixture of two distinct worlds neatly parallels the seamless integration of space-fighter combat and first-person shooter that Mace Griffin Bounty Hunter is striving for.

Imagine clearing away hangars of enemy soldiers with the precision of your ship's cannons before maneuvering in, docking, and continuing the assault on foot – all in one continuous experience that you can control. Oh, yeah, did we mention the fact that the Xbox and the PC do all this without pausing one second to load? Better yet is the fact that such a scenario is just a small example of the possibilities open to you within Bounty Hunter's expansive levels. A universe of betrayal, corruption, mind-control, and plenty of other surprises keep the game's twisted wheel of deceit and intrigue turning; not letting you stop until you get to the end of the line. Anybody up for a simple game of revenge?

Game Informer visited with Warthog to not only get a glimpse of events 400 years into the future of Mankind, but also to witness how one developer's attempt to take the first-person shooter genre to a higher plane is taking shape.



■ PLATFORM XBOX/PC ■ STYLE 1-PLAYER ACTION/SHOOTER ■ PUBLISHER CRAVE (XBOX)/EA (PC) ■ DEVELOPER WARTHOG ■ RELEASE FALL



The Pride of Cheadle

PALE RIDER

Mace Griffin Bounty Hunter's look to the future starts with roots in the past. The original vision for the game grew out of an appreciation of classic films. "We've always liked the idea of spaghetti westerns, and we tried to incorporate those themes into it," explains Mace's Producer Paul Chapman. "Early on in the development of the game, we had some really obvious things like guys flying around on mechanical horses. A lot of those things have been really turned down because it just didn't sit too comfortably with science fiction." Nevertheless, Mace Griffin as a person remains true to Chapman's ideals of "a very brooding, enigmatic character; kind of Clint Eastwood-style."

The freedom symbolized by the vast expanse of the American West remained essential as the game's development progressed and the project team grew steadily from six to 24 people. Eventually, initial elements like a barter system and a non-linear storyline fell to the wayside, but two things remained clear. Warthog wanted to make use of the experience it had accrued working on titles like StarLancer (PC/Dreamcast) and Star Trek: Invasion

(PlayStation), while exploring new territory with first-person shooting. Technological walls wouldn't stop the team's ambition. Mace Griffin's External Producer, Mike Arkin, recalls that just putting together prototypes of one of the initial stages required "three or four Half-Life levels stitched together, because they just weren't big enough." And that's just the start of the journey...

Producer Paul Chapman presides over the art that would make the game



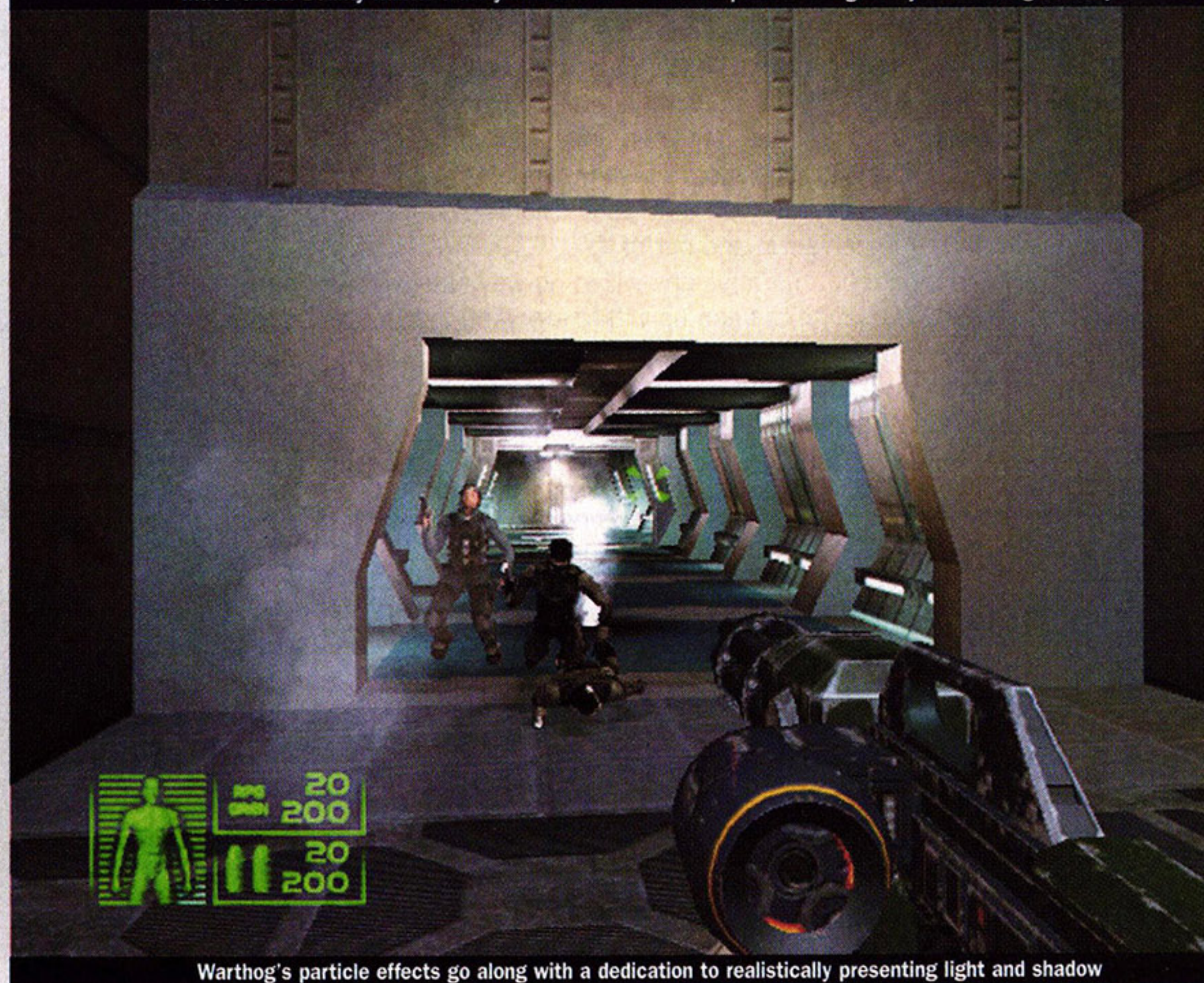
The AI governing your enemies makes them formidable foes



HIGH PLAINS DRIFTER



Mace Griffin Bounty Hunter's story will turn on a dime and produce a high body count along the way

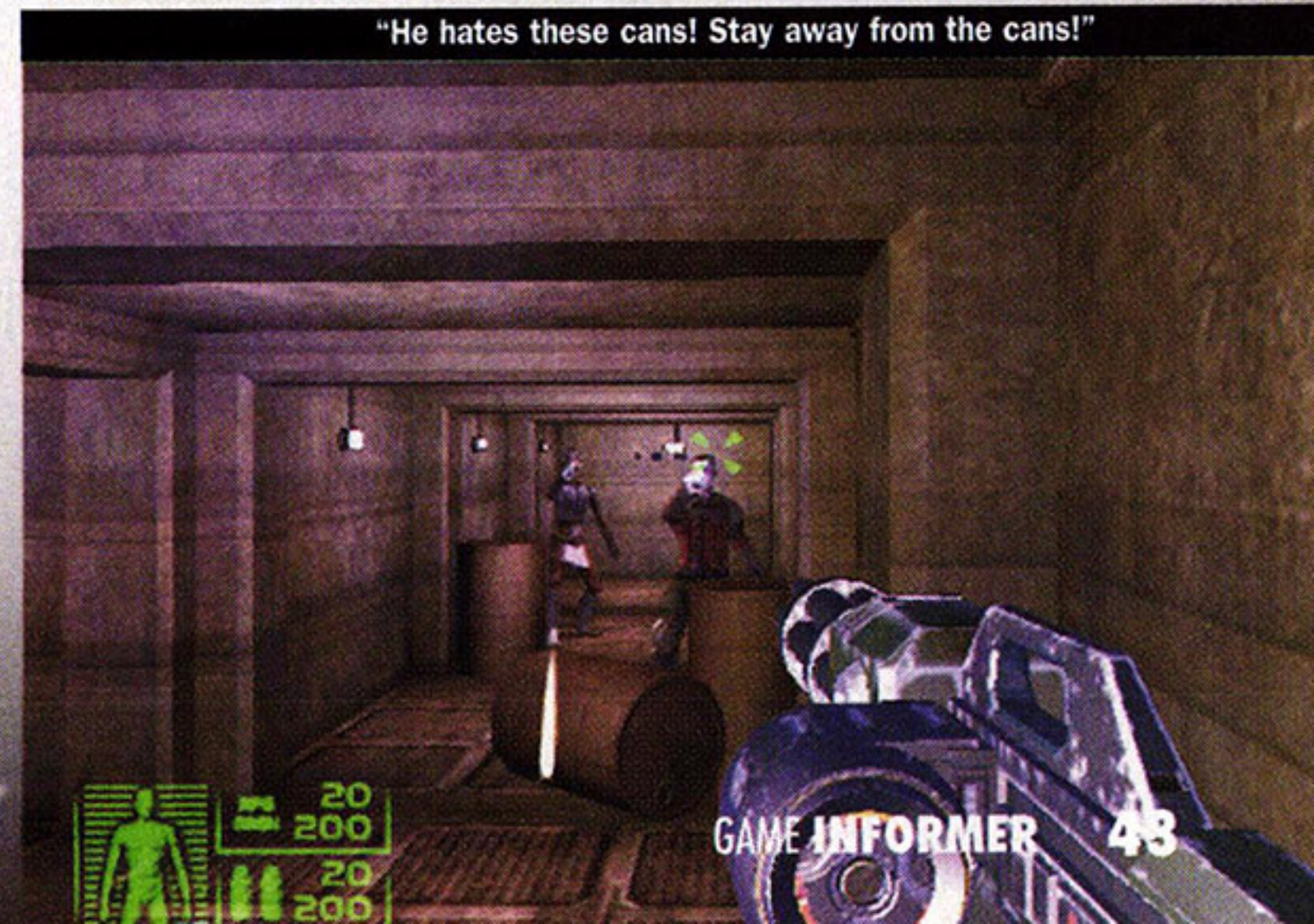


Warthog's particle effects go along with a dedication to realistically presenting light and shadow

FUTURE EFFECT

Four centuries into the future, Man's exploration has colonized new solar systems and uncovered a wealth of mineral riches to exploit. Land rights, smuggling, and corruption are commonplace issues for companies like Talon Corporation, whose Enforcers act as a bastard police force in the lawless vacuum these settlers live in. To curb the ineffectiveness and scandalous activities of the Enforcers, and handle some of the larger crimes, Earth's High Senate soon creates the Rangers. But the Rangers are disbanded after Talon fights back with a campaign to discredit the group. Finally, a last-ditch attempt at order is made as the government sets up the Guild of Bounty Hunters to help keep the peace. Made up of ex-cops, criminals, old Rangers, and an assortment of others, Bounty Hunters are the last hope for justice. Enter Mace Griffin, an ex-Ranger on the wrong side of the law after having served 10 years in the joint. A decade in the big house can mess with your mind, but Mace is certain of two things: He was framed for his crime, and someone's gonna pay.

"He hates these cans! Stay away from the cans!"



WHEN WORLDS COLLIDE

Warthog's design to feature flexible gameplay works perfectly with the constantly evolving plot. To truly appreciate what this means in the game, we've got to go back to its beginnings. "The original idea when I came [to the project] was that it was going to be two engines," recalls Lead Programmer Ben Sugden. "But when I sat down, it wasn't going to be feasible for me to integrate the two engines, so I just wrote one."

Chapman chimes in, "We were going to build the game on two technologies that already existed in-house, and it just didn't make sense. We had expectations that we'd have burst loading [instead of making the game seamless]."

"And I was so bloody arrogant that I thought I could just do it all in one," Sugden laughs.

"So Ben stupidly wrote [a] demo that impressed everybody, and now we're stuck writing a game!"

Such innovation on the part of Sugden and other team members enabled the perfect merging of two different video game styles. We witnessed levels where, after dogfighting foes in front of a nebula-painted background, we could hover at the edge of the hangar and see its fully rendered 3D inhabitants inside, before docking and leaping out to blow them to pieces with a grenade launcher. Mike Arkin explains, "You're seeing the exterior of the ship, but that entire interior has been modeled. When we talk about a seamless transition, we shouldn't even use that word. There is no transition. There's just one big, huge level, and you can go in and out of it."

We've been promised that missions will in no way start with the same boring beginning, but will change to keep up with a storyline that's continually rolling. Sometimes you'll start on foot; sometimes you won't. Besides, any given level will often flip-flop between both of these gameplay experiences as you make your way through Bounty Hunter's sizeable environments.

Those who know Warthog from its work on fighter combat titles StarLancer or Star Trek:

“**When we talk about a seamless transition, we shouldn't even use that word. There is no transition. There's just one big, huge level, and you can go in and out of it.**”

MIKE ARKIN
EXTERNAL PRODUCER

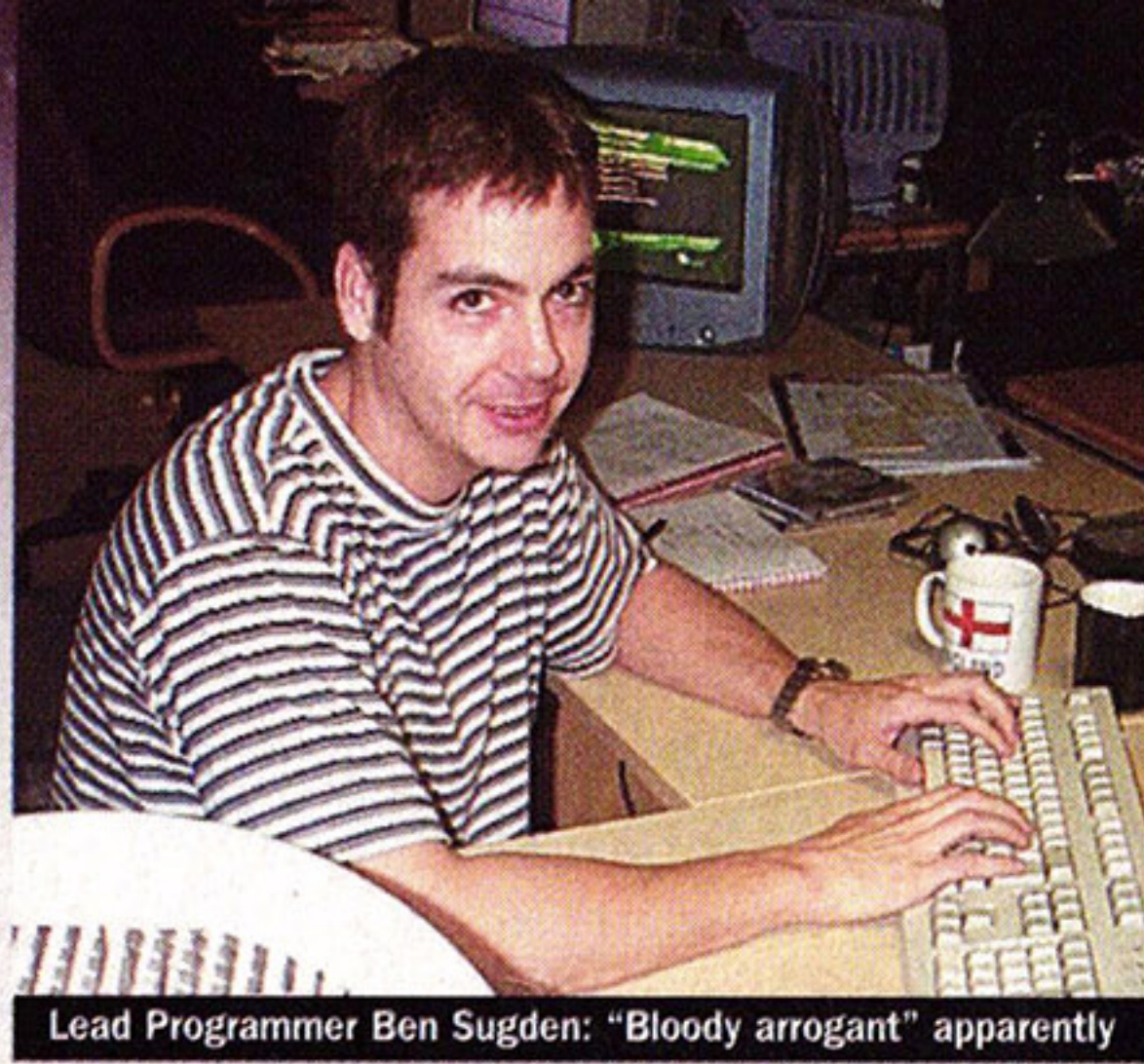
Invasion can expect those styles to be represented properly, although not necessarily in the same way. The team puts the balance between first-person shooting and space combat at about a 70:30 ratio. Chapman says this includes "dispensing with



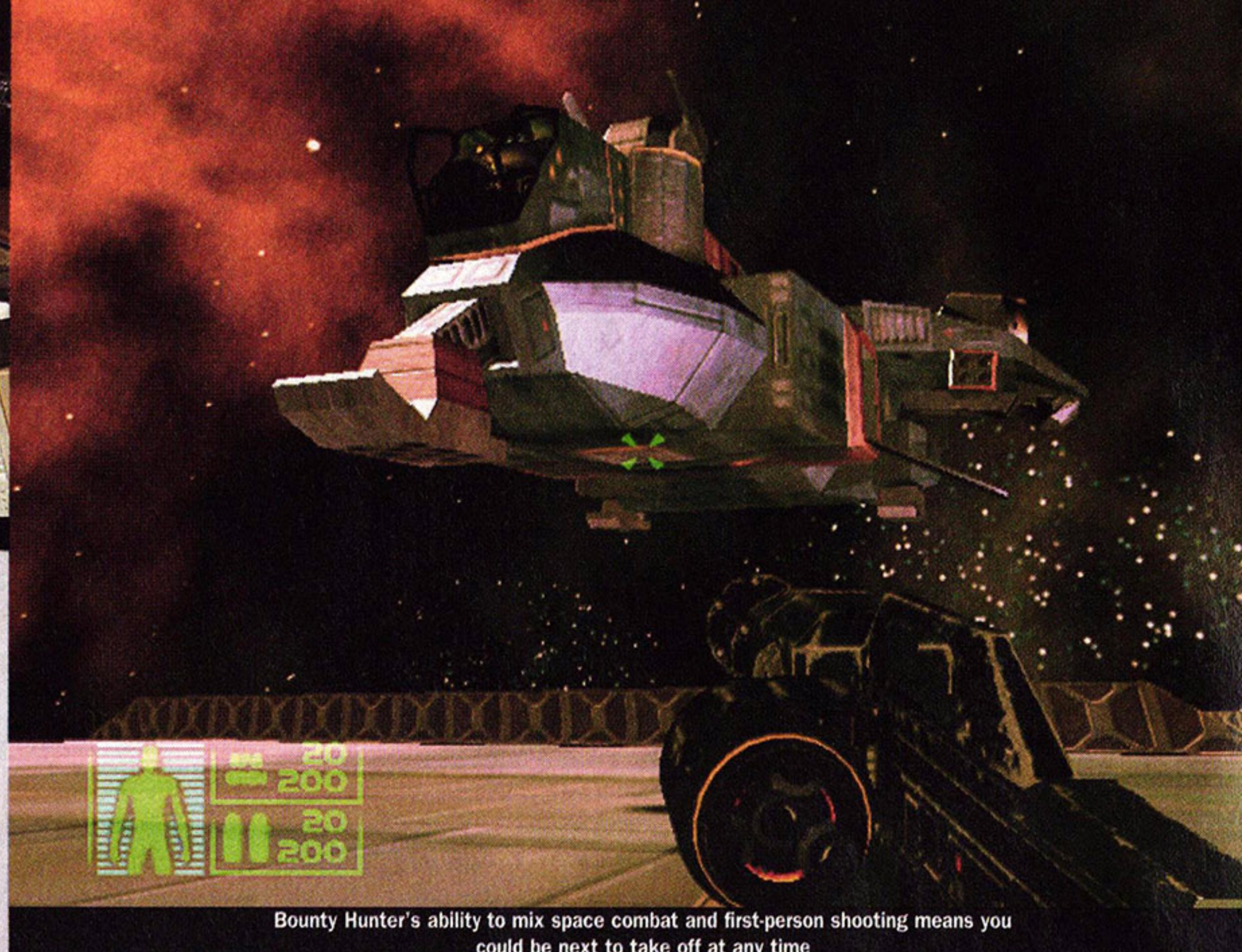
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stuff like ship/squadron/weapons management." Plus, "The AI is going to be quite different [from StarLancer] because it's really going to lend itself to the first-person style of combat." Some of the more frustrating aspects of StarLancer that fans have pointed out to the developer, such as hunting and seeking, will be dropped. Instead, you can expect more of the fast-paced and frenzied skirmishes that we know you crave.

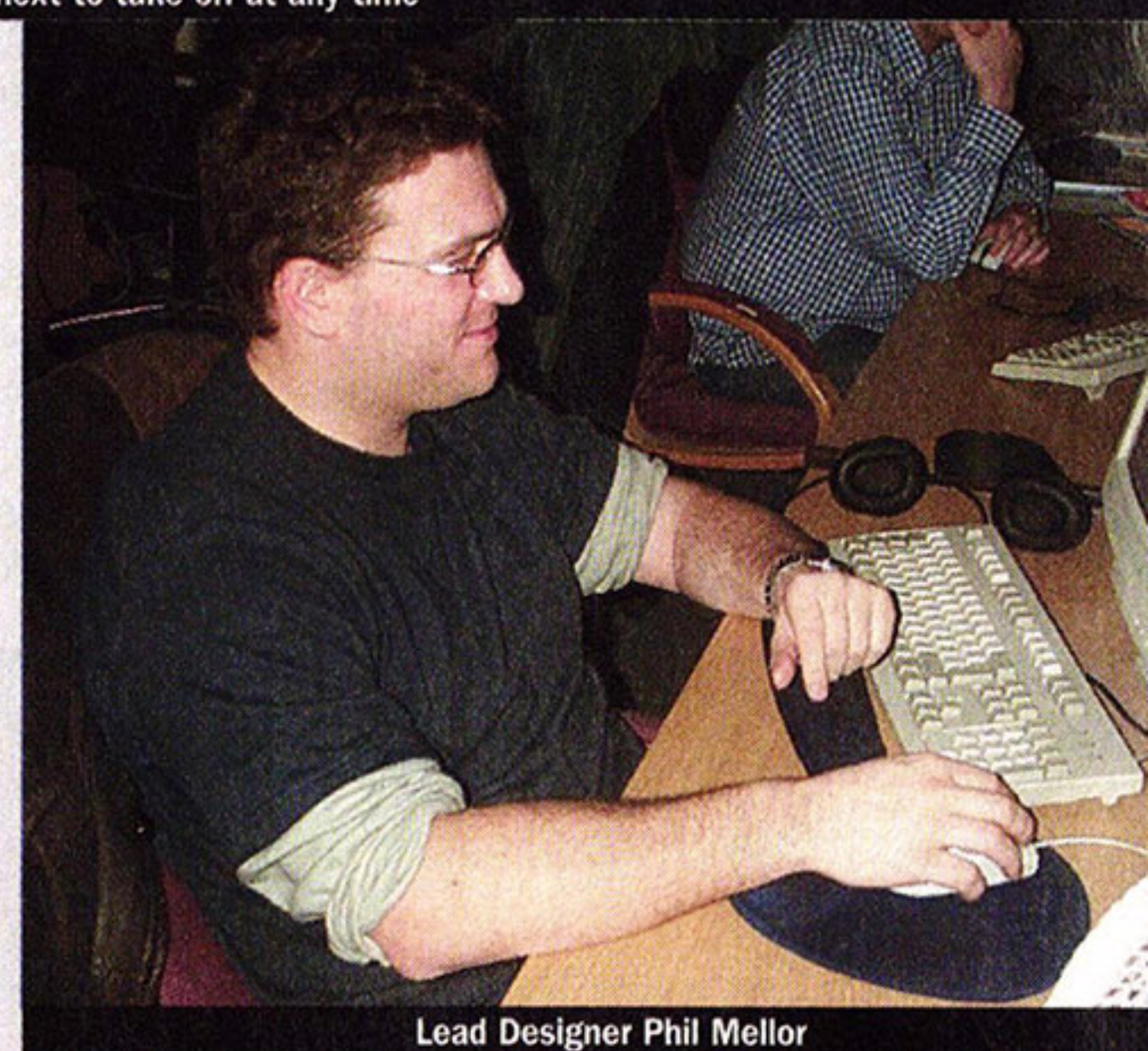
Another example of Warthog's re-evaluation of the space genre encompasses the controls for your craft. Previous Warthog titles have used some pretty complex button mapping for ships. Bounty Hunter, however, helps the player more by utilizing the control commonalities that exist between the two genres, making it easier to switch back and forth. Still, Lead Designer Phil Mellor warned us against thinking that there's nothing in the game for their old fighter-jock friends. "It's not like [space combat] is a neglected matter of the game. It's very necessary. It's not just like first-person and a bit of space done poorly at the end, it's all integrated."



Lead Programmer Ben Sugden: "Bloody arrogant" apparently



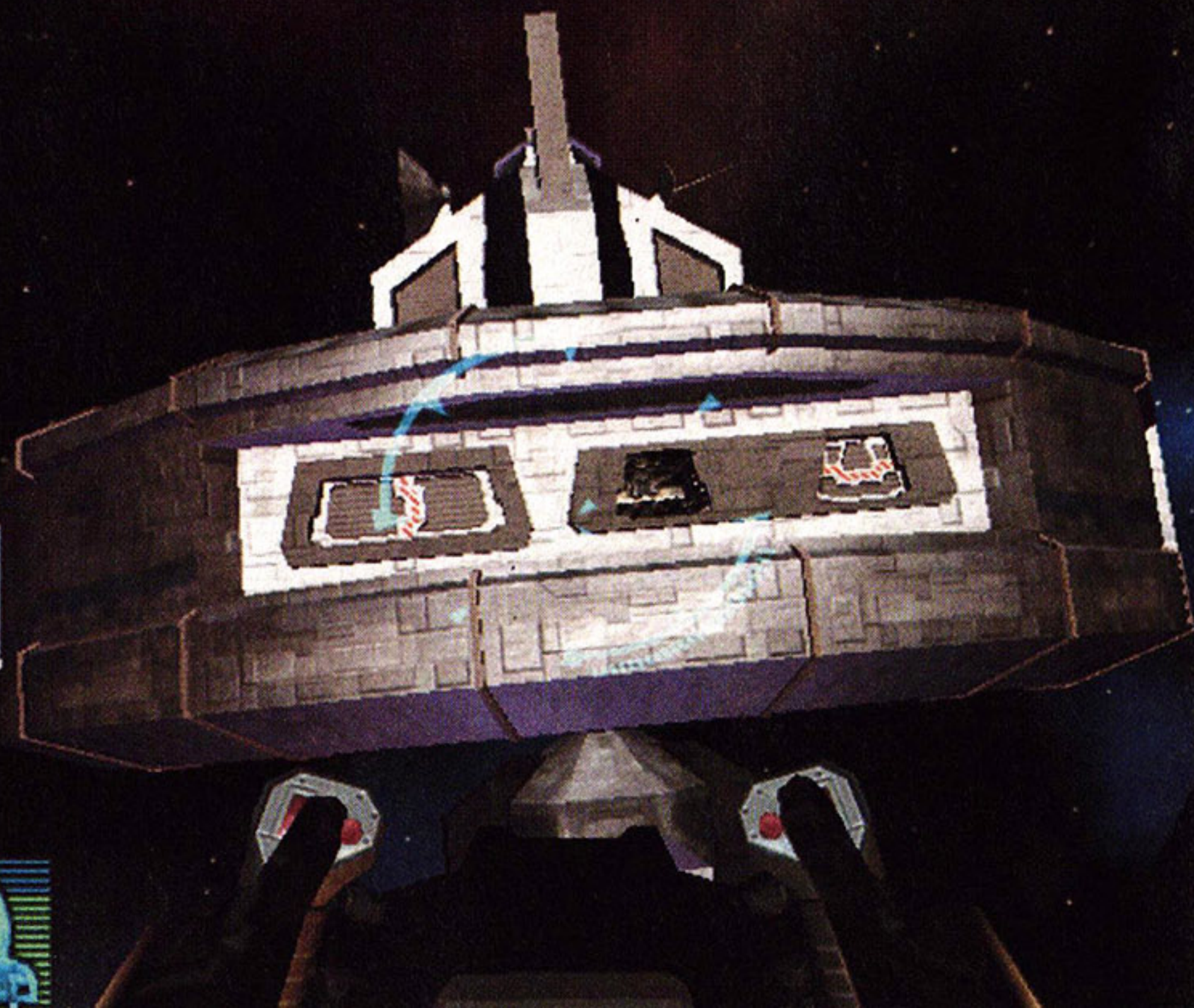
Bounty Hunter's ability to mix space combat and first-person shooting means you could be next to take off at any time



Lead Designer Phil Mellor

Warthog's experiences with space combat will definitely shine through in this first-person shooter

This station's insides are already fully rendered in 3D, and allow you to pick off its enemies from space





A hulking Jaldari

A HIVE OF SCUM AND VILLAINY

Although you could technically point to Mace Griffin Bounty Hunter's 20 missions, the free-flowing nature that has been created for the game makes playing it anything but segmented. After getting out of the slammer, Mace's singular obsession of revenge soon broadens into an adventure that neither he nor you could have imagined. Alien races, such as the Valleakens and the Jaldari, mix with an intriguing cast that includes crooked cops, politicians, space pirates, and disciples of a religious cult known as the Order of Virtual Light. Strange are those whose acolytes worship through mind control.

This motley ensemble is as varied as the missions themselves, and the manner in which you'll receive them. Your objectives for a particular level will easily change as the story unfolds before you, leading you to those tasks that range from the incidental to the significant – due to Bounty Hunter's plot, however, you may never know which until it's all over with. Ice worlds, mine pits, medical/genetic laboratories, outdoor locations, underwater lairs, and even ranches featuring 25-meter-high beasts of burden called Gedo are just some of the varying locales. Similarly, you will draw on other skills, such as stealth and cunning, to proceed through areas where it isn't advantageous to sound the report of your guns. Pacifying a temple of out-of-control religious zealots and protecting a marked crime lord from assassination will be some of the tasks you'll encounter in the ever-evolving fashion of Mace Griffin Bounty Hunter.

Mission variety is greatly aided by the game's large level designs. Senior Designer Mike Taylor told us it took him over an hour to simply walk through one particular area, just to show people the rooms. However, he said, "when you're actually fighting against people..." "It's like three days!" jokes Phil Mellor.

Warthog took great pains to present players with locations that aren't just physically huge, but are fully utilized during gameplay. One particular environment allows you to clear out sections with your sniper rifle before proceeding to them safely later on. Bounty Hunter's ethic of freedom maximizes its locations. This equals its ability to allow characters to move on a whim between space and first-person shooting areas. In fact, we've been told you can go just about anywhere. "There's some eye candy bits thrown in there," explains Mellor, "but for most of it, if you pass through a certain section and you see another section, you should be able to get into it. You get pretty pissed when there's a cool bit, like a gantry bit and you want to go explore it [but can't in other games]." Unlike the later levels of Halo, which start to repeat themselves, Bounty Hunter strives to give you levels where the first-rate design imbues them with variety, yet they still contain a stunning aesthetic look that is continuous.



"Draw!"

Warthog's Rag Doll IK system of movement means this guy will go bendy and floppy in all the right ways



HIGH PLAINS DRIFTER



See that purple blip? That's your ship, and this is how big one of Bounty Hunter's sections is



If you can see it, you should be able to go to it



Bounty Hunter's levels give you plenty to explore and the freedom to exploit them to your advantage

A WANTED MAN IS A DEAD MAN

Despite the stretching of the proverbial first-person envelope which Warthog has undertaken with Bounty Hunter, the game more than holds its own when it comes to the visceral thrills that fans expect of the genre. The diverse weapon selection will more than suit your needs, and a sidearm like the Sonic Shock Cannon will have you happily carrying out your orders with extreme prejudice and style. This particular armament is customizable to suit your range and intensity requirements. Some sections of the game will be better served with the proper use of guns such as this.

Warthog has even taken another step with the combat aspect of the title by using sophisticated enemy AI and a movement system called Rag Doll IK (Inverse Kinematics). This technology allows for a more accurate physics model when blowing enemies clear up into the sky. For instance, explosions will throw soldiers into walls, then slide them down with tremendous realism. As Sugden explains, this isn't as simple as it sounds. "If you shoot [a guy] in the foot, you want to apply a force to the foot, and let the whole body move with that. You have the bones and all the constraints on a body to pull him. You can't get an animator to do that..."

Any such roadblocks Warthog has encountered since the project first got off the ground more than two years ago have now been conquered in dramatic fashion. Mace Griffin Bounty Hunter's inventive exploration of two old genres has produced a must-see title for the Xbox and PC this fall, and shows us that, like revenge, invention never sleeps.

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Long ago, in the days of darkness and magic, a majestic hillside castle is surrounded for help. One lone swordsman, Samanosuke, rushes to her side, only to find she has the legion of demon warriors. Capcom's epic samurai adventure meets the power of the

Warrior



MATURE
M
CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB
Blood and Gore
Violence

by power-hungry warlords. The noble Princess Yuki, fearing for her life, sends an urgent request vanished. As the enemy scales the fortress walls, Samanosuke vows to avenge the princess and destroy Xbox™ in a new, enhanced version that delivers twice the action-packed gameplay of the original.

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GENMA
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Game Informer Takes a Swing at This Season's Baseball

Like a reaper hovering over those soon to pass, contraction looms over Major League Baseball's clubhouses. For many players, the 2002 season will be their last hurrah in the big leagues. Commissioner Bud Selig hasn't named the teams that will undoubtedly crash and burn, but the Minnesota Twins and Montreal Expos are at the top of speculator lists. Even if two teams fall, baseball remains tainted. Without a salary cap, owners can basically buy championships. Why play another 162 games when the New York Yankees are essentially locked in for another World Series appearance? The sport needs a drastic overhaul. Players need to tuck away their egos and play the game for the love of it, not for the benefits and cash involved.

The only remainder of baseball integrity lies within video games. With seven different baseball games scheduled to release within the next few months, the competition is just as brutal, and the race for the pennant should be just as exciting as it is in the bigs. Did the developers pour their hearts and souls into the project, or did they rush it out the door? We have all the answers

you need. In our analysis, we've pulled no punches, scrutinizing each release right down to the very pixel. Can All-Star Baseball repeat as the best baseball game of the year? Does EA's title have legs? Is the console version of High Heat just as impressive as it is on the PC? Exactly how do Sony and Sega fit into the grand scheme of things? The only game not featured in this article is Microsoft's top-secret first-party title. When contacted about its whereabouts, Microsoft had this to say: "Microsoft Game Studios is currently evaluating our plans to publish a baseball game on Xbox. At this time, there are no further details." Is it coming? Yes. This year? Probably not. Word on the streets is that the game needs another year in development. Seven games...all fighting for the top seed. Who will win? Who deserves to be sent back down to the minors? We have all the answers you could ever want. In addition to seeing which baseball title we think is the best of the year, you should also be able to determine which one best suits your playing needs. So without further delay, read on and enjoy Game Informer's second annual Spring Training Report.

	Triple Play 2002	All-Star Baseball 2003	High Heat Baseball 2003	MLB 2003	World Series Baseball 2K3
Format	PS2, Xbox	PS2, Xbox, GC	PS2, PC	PS2	Xbox, GC
2002 Schedule	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Career Statistics	No	YES	YES	YES	No
Year by Year Career Breakdown	No	No	No	YES (10 Years)	No
Previous Season Statistics	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Historical Players	No	YES (52 Total)	No	No	YES
Classic Teams/Uniforms	No	YES (2 Per Team)	No	No	YES
Stat Tracking Categories	Over 50	67	78 (Splits 150)	107	80
Franchise Mode	No	YES	No	YES	YES
Fantasy Draft	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Continuing Seasons	No	YES (20 Years)	No	YES (10 Years)	YES (Years TBD)
Big League Challenge	No	No	No (2 On 2 Showdown)	YES (Original)	No
Create-A-Team	No	YES	No	TBD	TBD
Create-A-Player	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Custom Player Options	Over 30	Over 30	33	10	47
Motion Captured Animations	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Number of Animations	500	1,900	1,500	3,000	1,400
Number of Signature Animations	40	200	200	300	148
Number of Star Player Face Maps	160	400	350	Every Player	495
Polygons in Player Models	4,800	5,000	6,000	6,000	6,500
Wild Pitches/Passed Balls	No	YES	YES	YES	YES
Dropped Third Strikes	No	YES	YES	YES	YES
Injuries	No	YES	YES	YES	YES
Home Plate Collisions	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Trading Cards	No	YES	No	No	No
On-Field Coaches & Managers	No	YES	YES	YES	YES
Umpire Arguments	No	No	Yes (With Ejections)	No	No
Commentators	Bob Costas, Harold Reynolds	Thom Brennaman, Steve Lyons, Bob Brenly	Dave O'Brien, Chuck Valencia	Vin Scully, Dave Campbell	Mike Krukow, Ted Robinson
End of Season Awards	YES	YES	No	YES	YES
Last Roster Update	January 15	February 01	January	TBD	March
Cover Boy	Luis Gonzalez	Derek Jeter	Curt Schilling	Barry Bonds	TBD
Developer	Pandemic	Acclaim Studios Austin	3DO	989 Sports	Blue Shift, INC.
Publisher	Electronic Arts	Acclaim	3DO	Sony Computer Entertainment America	Sega
Release Date	March 12 (PS2), March 26 (Xbox)	February 26 (PS2, Xbox, GC)	February 12 (PS2, PC)	TBD	April 23 (Xbox), June 11 (GC)

PLAYSTATION 2, XBOX

TRIPLE PLAY 2002

Let the truth be told, it doesn't matter how EA's baseball product turns out. As we've seen in the past, EA's games, regardless of their quality, sell by namesake alone. Did EA have the best baseball game last year? No, not by a long shot. But it was, in fact, the best selling baseball game of 2001. We remain baffled as to why EA decided to name last year's release Triple Play Baseball, as opposed to Triple Play 2002. For this year's game, EA went back to adding a year behind the title and decided that 2002 would be more appropriate (which it is), but failed to realize that every other company is sticking with 2003. In our opinion, this little flub makes the game seem dated from the get-go. When kids head to their local video game retailer, it will essentially look like last year's game.

EA also dumped Treyarch as the developer, and handed the future of the series over to Pandemic. To be quite frank, other than the gorgeous stadiums and player models, we really didn't enjoy anything from Treyarch's game. Rather than start anew, it appears Pandemic took the existing engine and made a handful of modifications. The gameplay hasn't changed too terribly much. The batting/pitching duel remains cursor-based and the ball floats to the plate as though it were chucked underhand. The frontend is still quite boring, consisting of Exhibition, Season, and Home Run Derby modes. A fantasy draft is included, but it doesn't offer continuing seasons or general manager options. Once again, created-player attributes can be maxed to the limit.

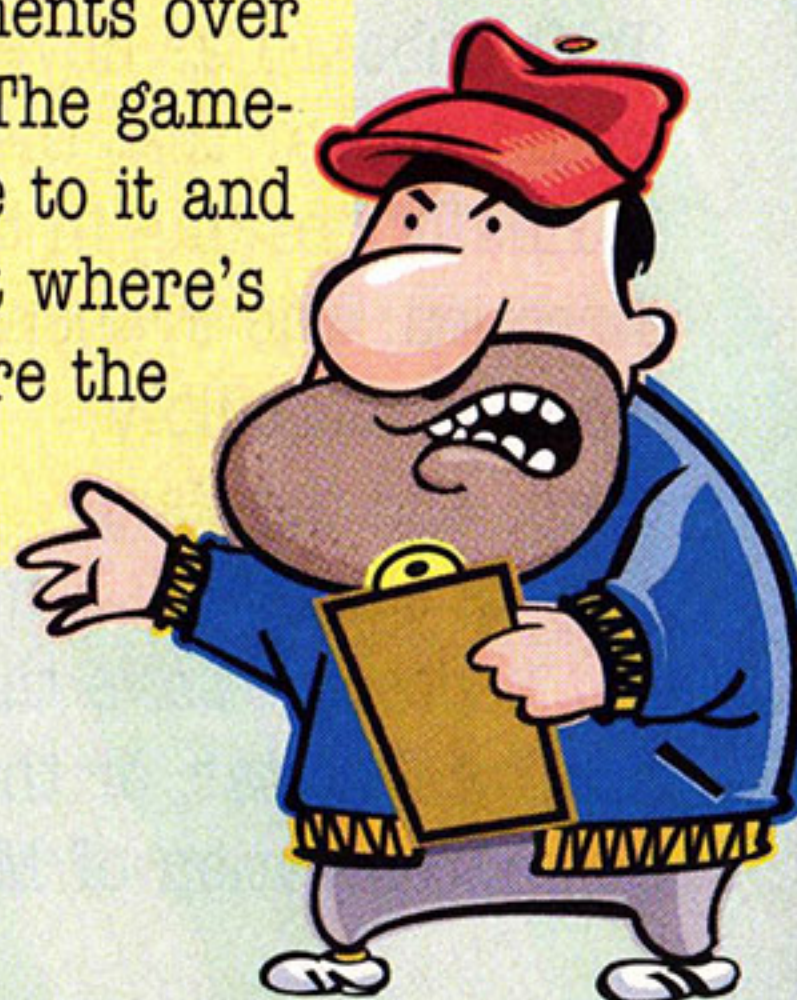
The only alteration that Pandemic implemented into the gameplay is a quick-flash replay when a ball is hit. From the batting perspective, you'll see which direction the ball is hit. When the fielding view comes up, you'll see contact being made again. This, of course, allows the players to get a jump on the ball. The fielding aids and throwing controls have received subtle, and we mean subtle, tweaks as well.

On the visual side, Pandemic went nuts. Photo-realistic head scans (cyber-scans) of all of the players in the league have been seamlessly wrapped onto the polygonal models; tons of new motion-capture animations have been inserted; and the TV-style presentation captures every aspect of the game, from inning breaks to home run celebrations.

As you've probably gathered, EA's focus this year was of a graphical nature. This game really doesn't offer up anything extraordinary in the gameplay or simulation aspects. It looks great, plays decent, and that's about it.

Scouting Report

Just like the New York Yankees, this game is way over-hyped and hasn't really made any improvements over the last few years. The gameplay has a nice pace to it and it is fun to play, but where's the depth? Where are the fantasy options?



BIG HITTERS ON DECK

PS2

Hundreds of new motion-captured animations have been added to the existing code



Xbox

Cyber-scans were taken of all the players in the league. The realism in Randy Johnson's face will surely make children cry



Xbox

All the details are included, even sand clouds on stolen base attempts



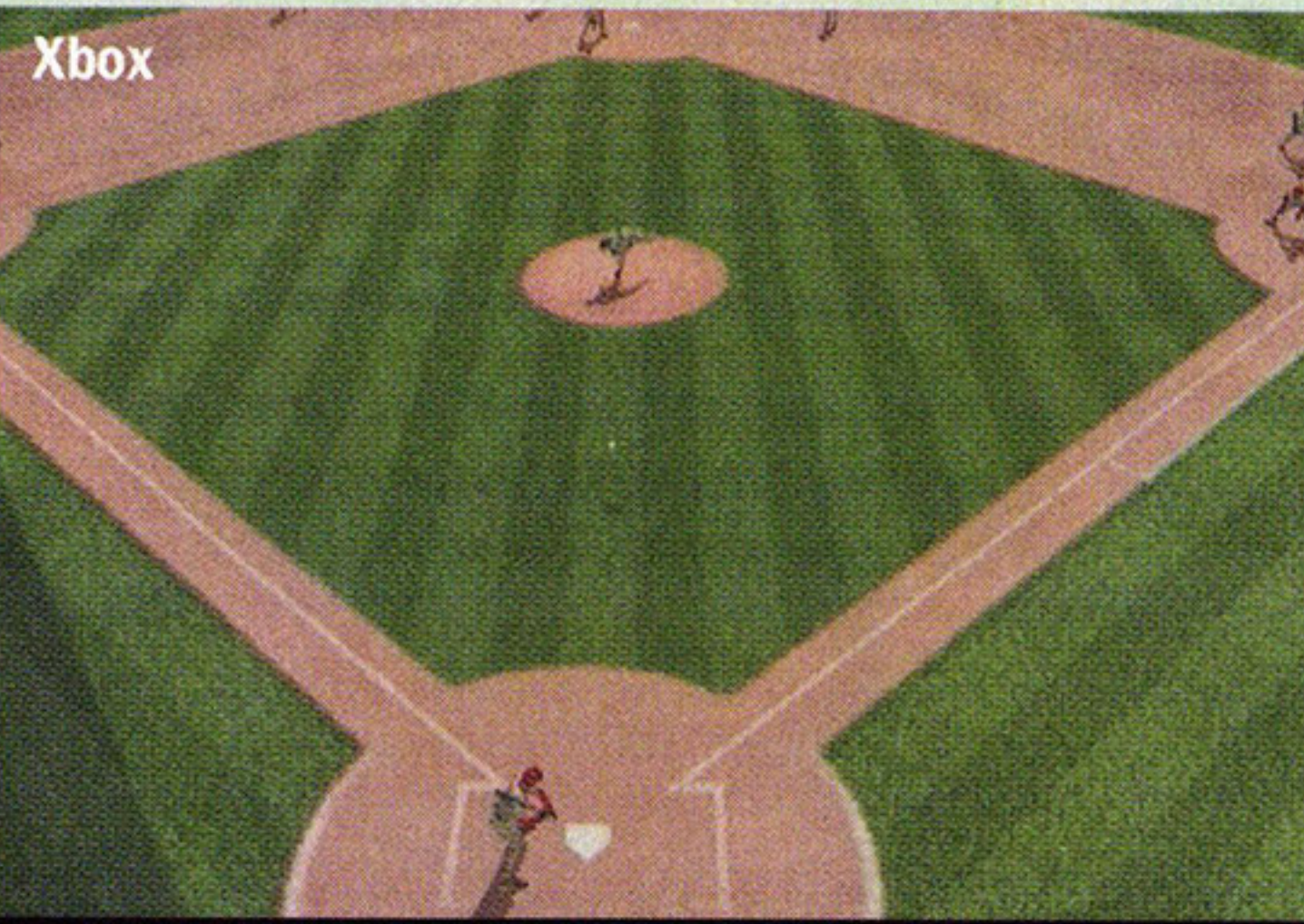
Xbox

The pitching/batting controls are identical to last year's offering



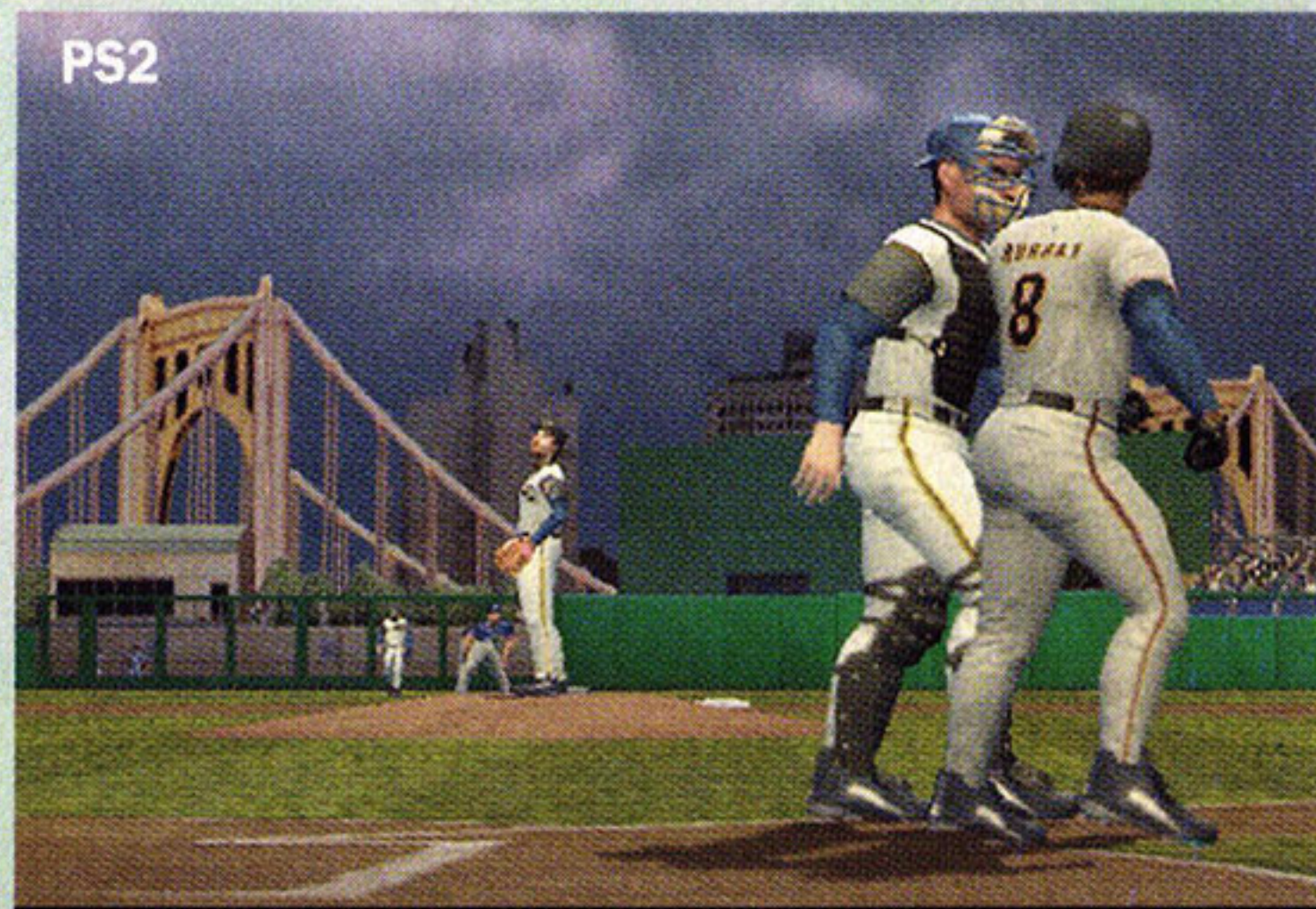
PS2

The realism of the stadiums is unmatched



Xbox

When the view switches to fielding, you'll see the pitch and contact point again, thus allowing you to better position your players

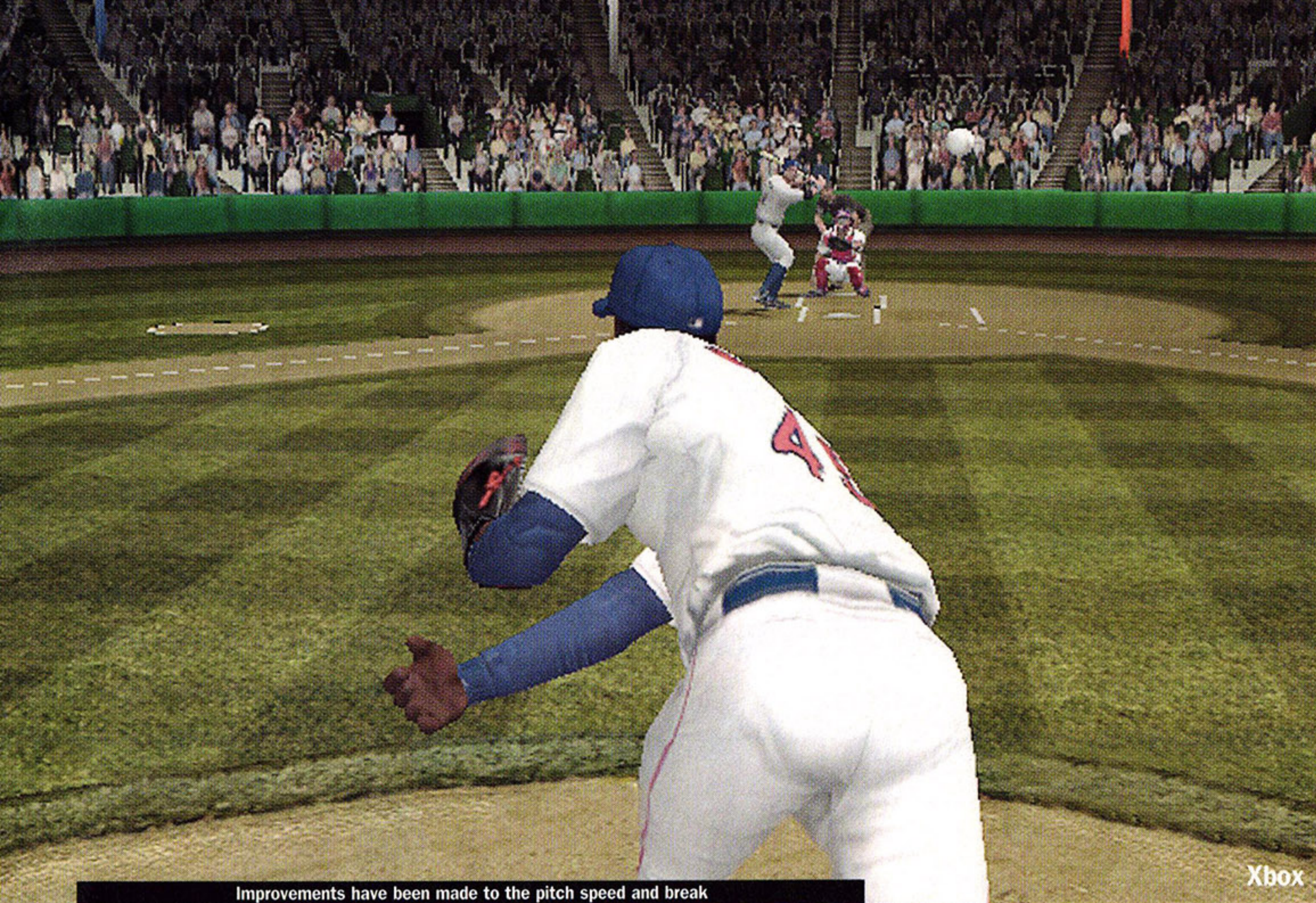


PS2

"He didn't mean to hit you in the groin with that pitch. Just think of it as a...uh...love tap."

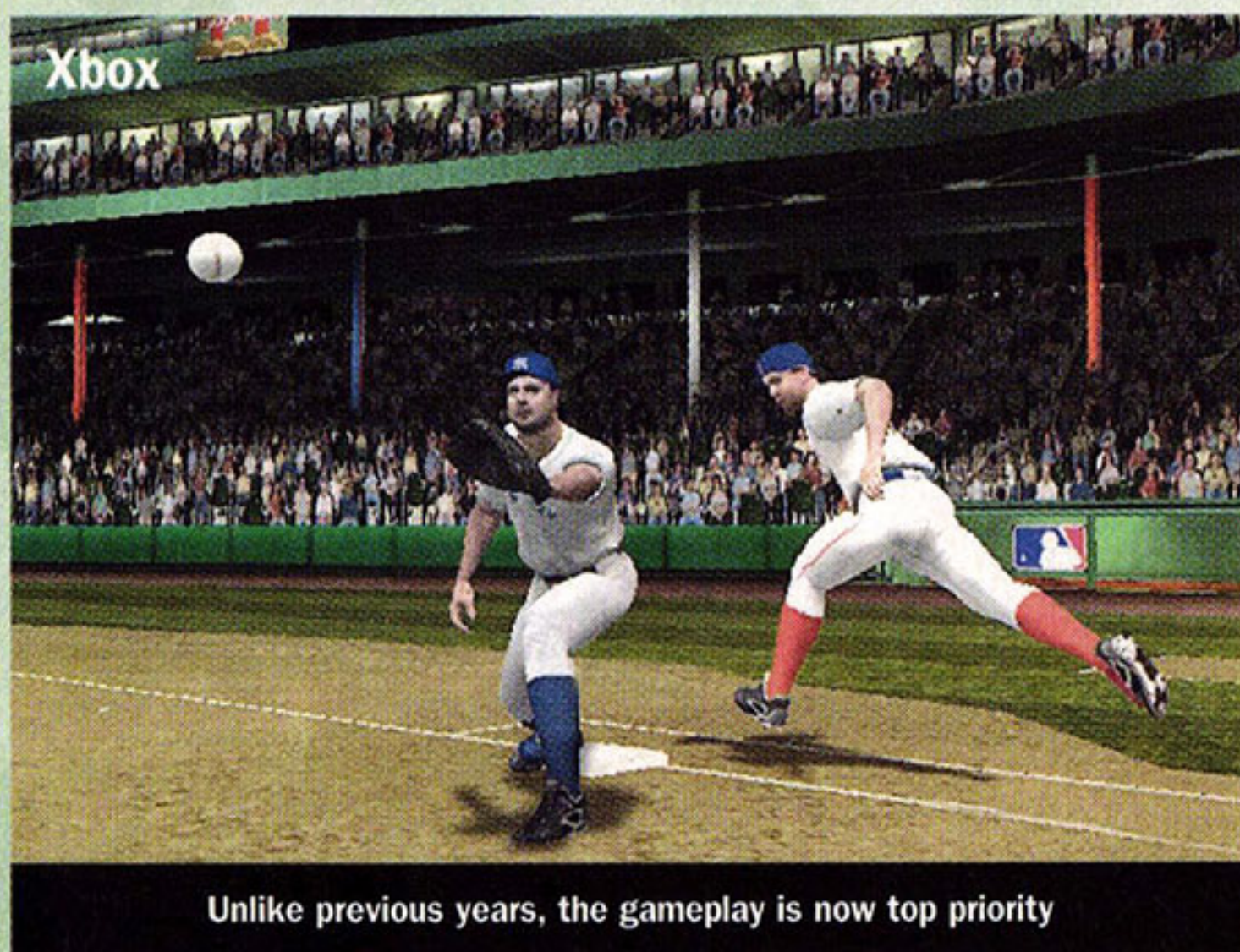
XBOX, GAMECUBE

WORLD SERIES BASEBALL 2K3

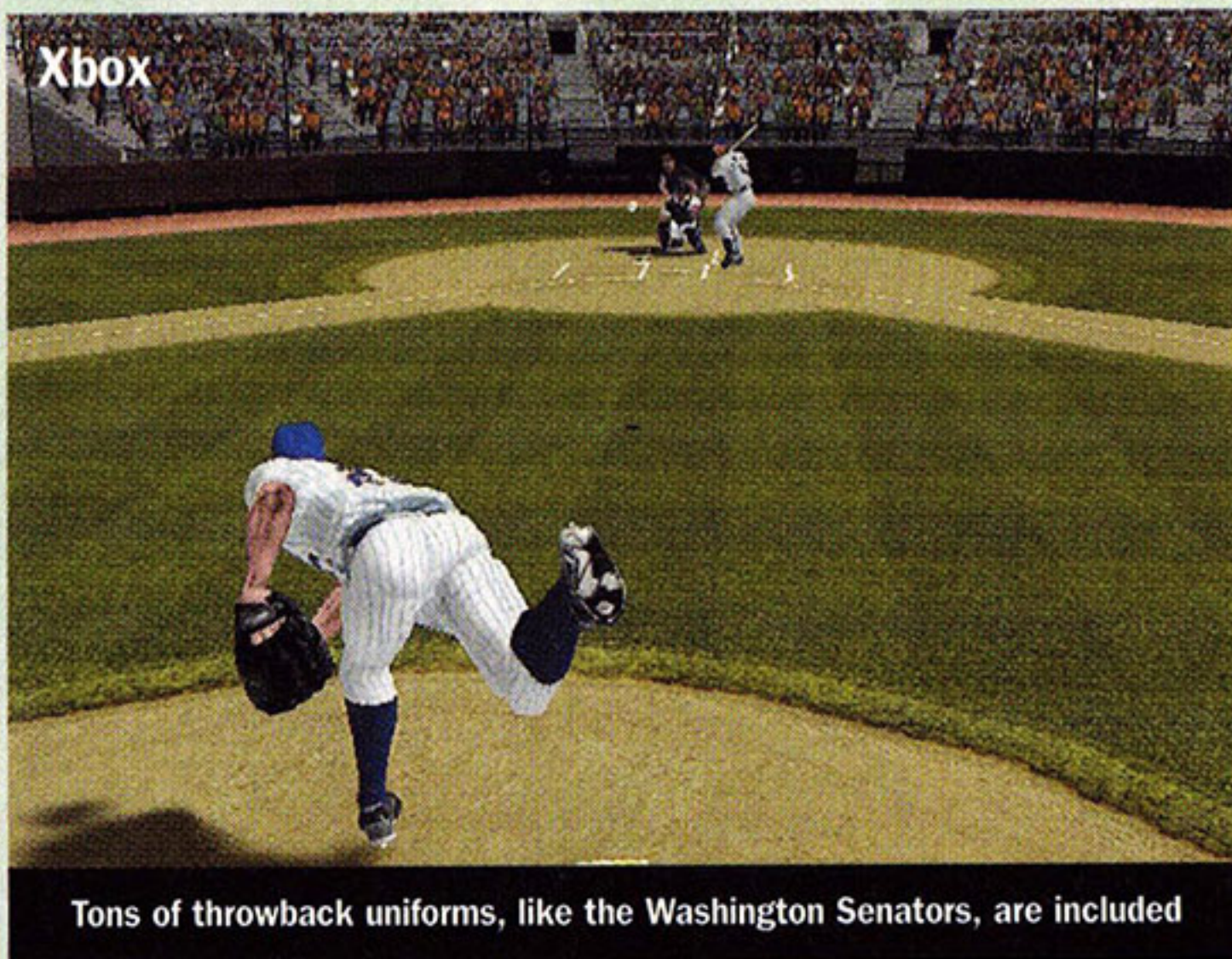


Improvements have been made to the pitch speed and break

Xbox

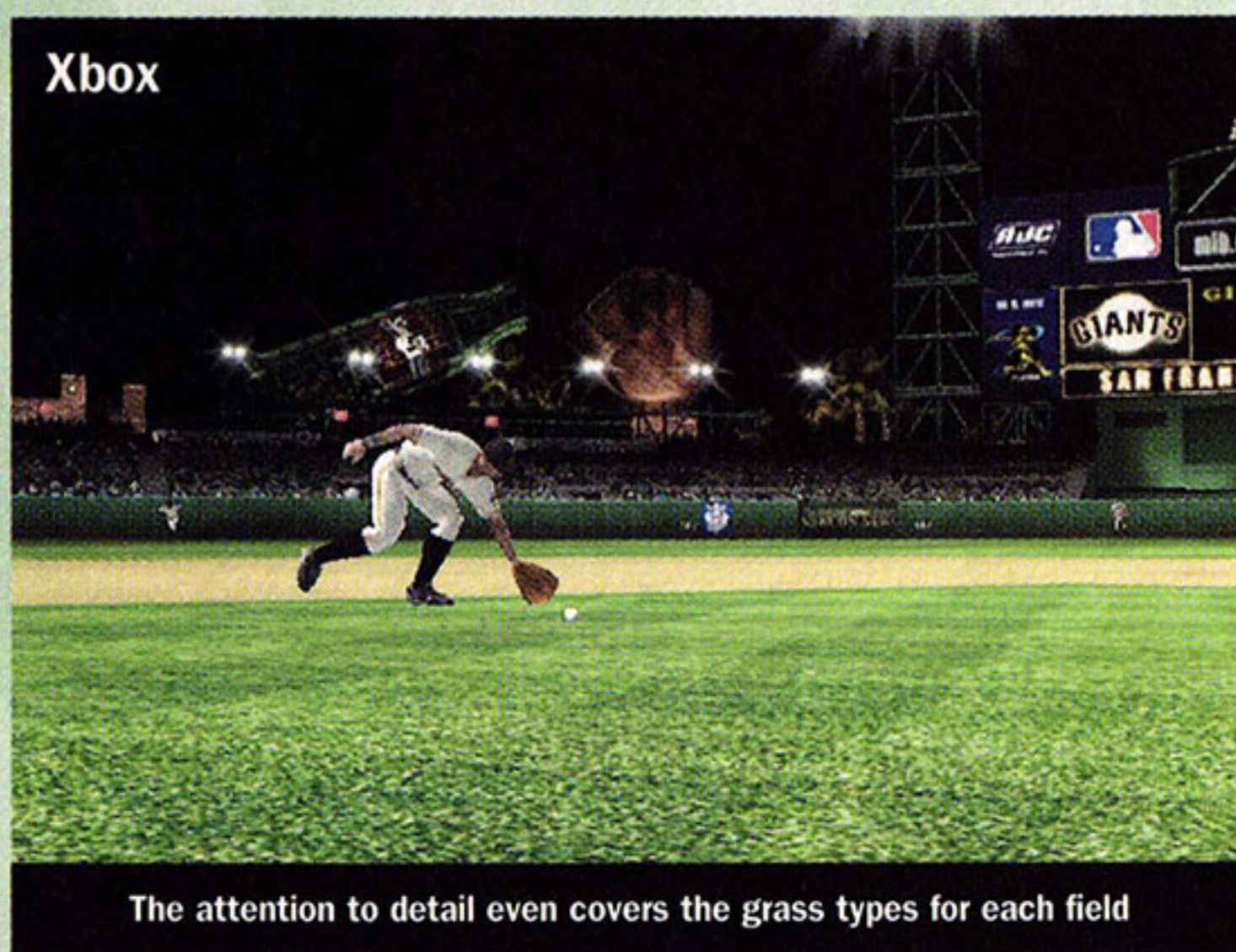


Unlike previous years, the gameplay is now top priority

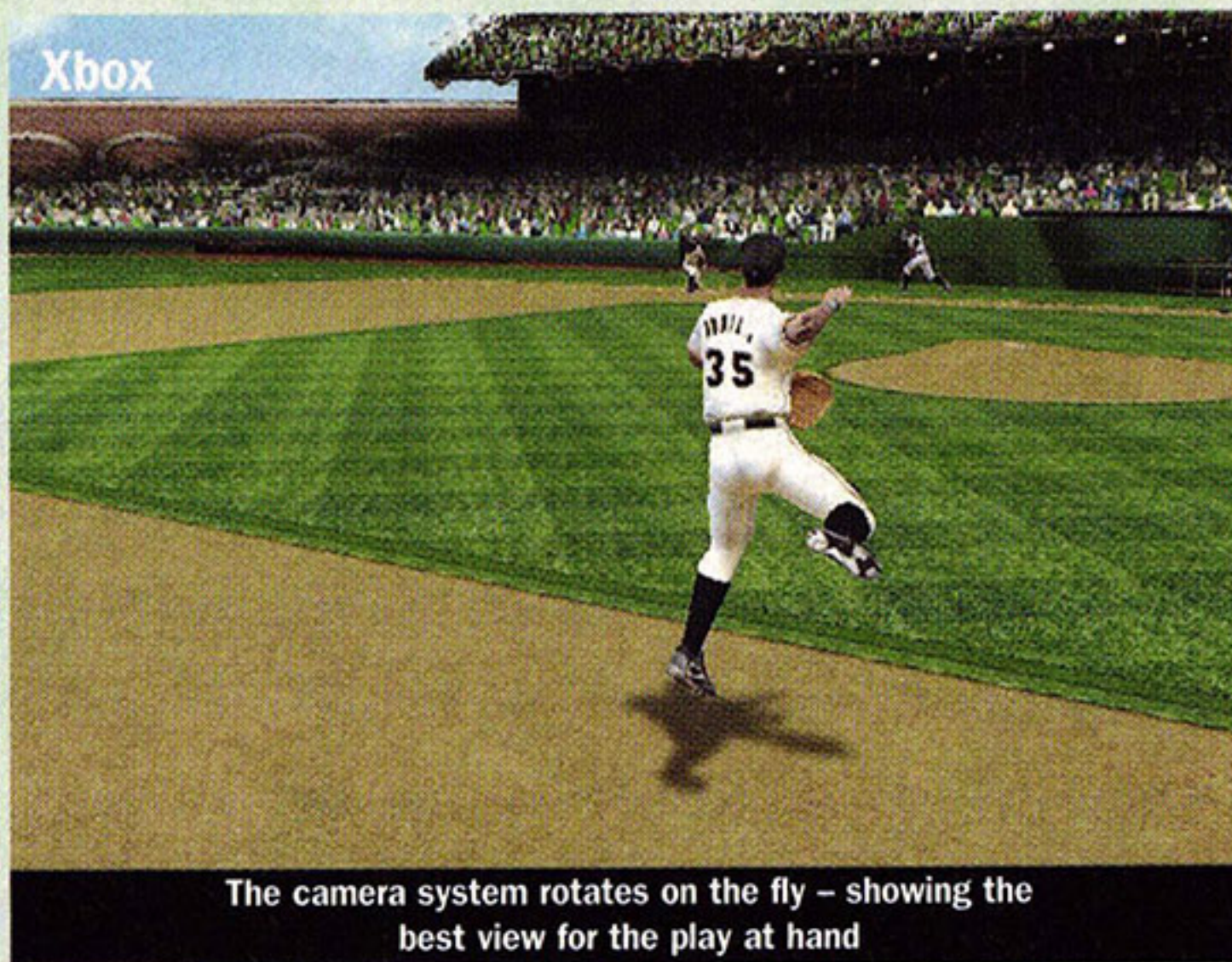


Tons of throwback uniforms, like the Washington Senators, are included

Xbox

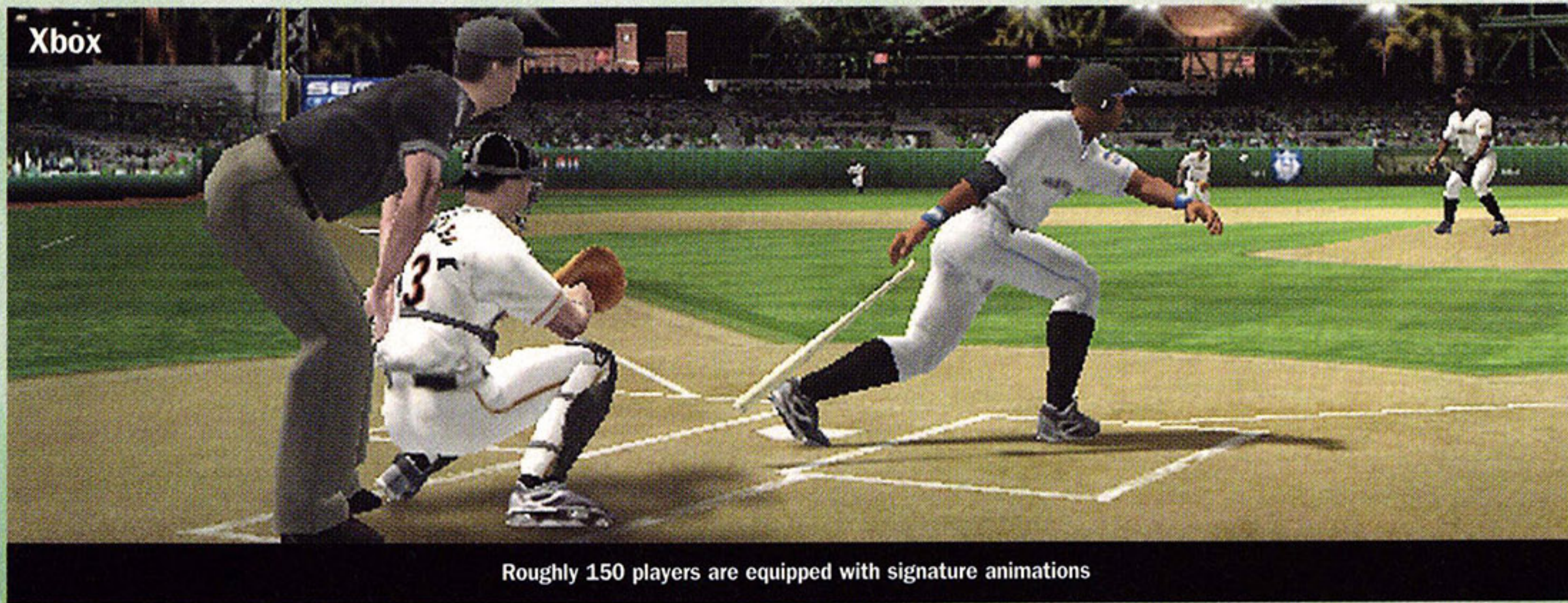


The attention to detail even covers the grass types for each field



The camera system rotates on the fly - showing the best view for the play at hand

Xbox



Roughly 150 players are equipped with signature animations

Xbox

Most baseball fanatics won't come within ten feet of World Series Baseball. For those of you who made the decision not to play World Series Baseball 2K1 (one of the better judgments of your life), it was, without a hint of doubt, one of the worst baseball games ever conceived. We believe, in an effort to be timely, Sega hacked the game into bits. Then, in what can best be described as one of the most unspeakable acts in all of gaming, Sega even went so far as to remove most of the gameplay elements, including all fielding controls. That's right. When a ball was hit into the field, the computer would do all the work for you. Essentially, you watched most of the game. Speaking of which, exactly how entertaining is it to watch digital baseball?

With World Series 2K2, Sega made a valiant effort to reinsert gamers into the action, and even opened up the online doors, allowing players to compete across the globe. Last year's game was decent, but seeing that Visual Concepts spent most of its time creating actual gameplay, it was lacking in depth. For the follow-up, the development reigns have been passed to Blue Shift, a rookie in the baseball field.

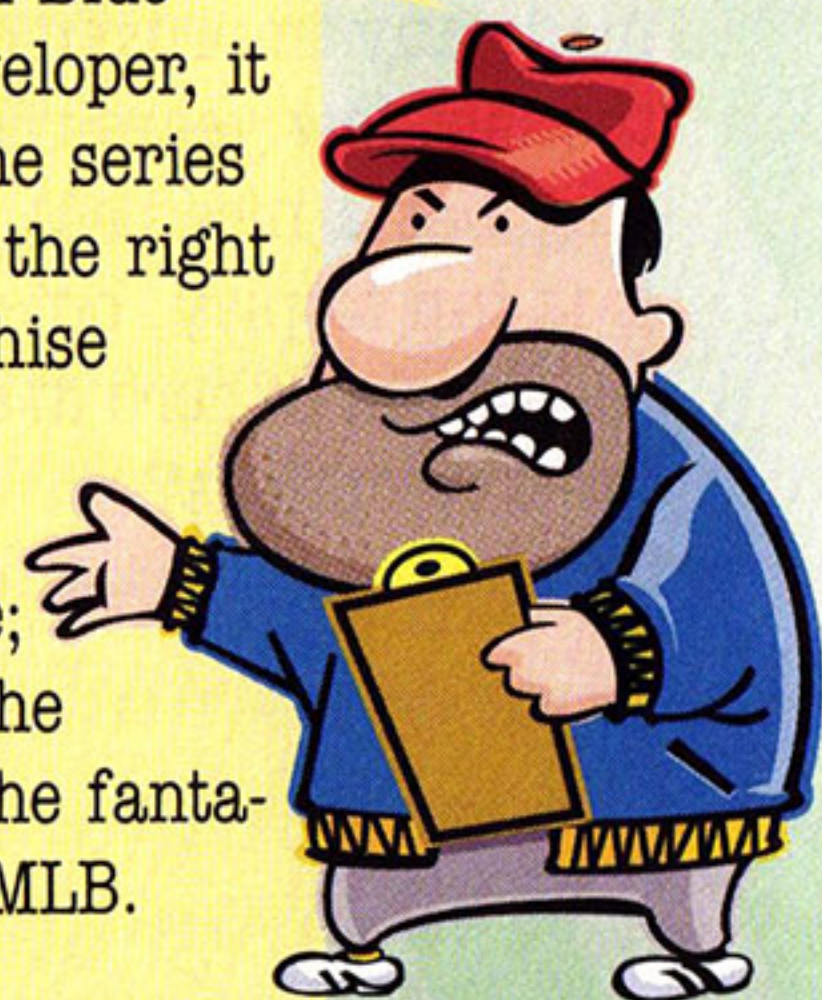
While this should have been a rebuilding year for Sega, Blue Shift did an amazing job and has created a baseball game that continually hits the long ball. The finished product is actually quite comparable to All-Star Baseball. It offers an expansive Franchise mode, complete with a full financial model that lets gamers hire coaches, select scouts, and negotiate player contracts. With rollover seasons, you'll have plenty of time to assemble a winning team. As has been the case with other Sega Sports product, World Series' Franchise mode is the deepest we've seen.

While it seemed that Acclaim was the only one with the Cooperstown contract, Sega decided to snag it as well. If a team boasting Ernie Banks and Mike "Holy" Schmidt isn't authentic enough, you can journey into the past and control such legendary teams as the Washington Senators and Brooklyn Dodgers.

From realistic fielding animations to improvements in pitch speed and break, World Series 2K3's gameplay is a complete departure from its roots. The AI is well seasoned, and hit balls can be picked up and tracked right off the bat. The gameplay is finally where it should be, and for the first time in the history of the series, so are the fantasy options.

Scouting Report

Sega has struggled with baseball more so than with any other sport. But with Blue Shift onboard as developer, it would appear that the series is finally heading in the right direction. The Franchise mode is incredibly deep, and the gameplay is commendable; but it doesn't have the fluff of All-Star, or the fantasy concentration of MLB.



PLAYSTATION 2, PC

HIGH HEAT MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL 2003

High Heat may not be the flashiest release of the season, but its gameplay execution, devotion to the rules of the sport, and quickness of games are unmatched. In last season's title, it held little graphical value. In actuality, the texturing and level of detail in the player models came across like a little leaguer trying to compete on a professional level. Knowing full well that a complete visual overhaul was necessary, 3DO has gone back to the drawing board and revamped the graphics engine. The end result isn't striking, but it now harbors the essence of realism and has enough flash to hang with the big boys.

Along with 350 star player facial maps, High Heat now boasts smooth batting animations, a slew of new fielding animations, and a unique TV-style presentation. Rather than have random camera breaks for no particular reason, the cuts in High Heat cleverly tie into the game. On a completely random basis, the camera may cut from the batter stepping into the box to an onfield coach who is giving the player signs. If you're lucky, you may even see a scene where a player argues with the umpire over a questionable call. Much like the real deal, if the player goes too far, he will be ejected from the game.

The PC version of High Heat remains the dominating release when it comes to customizable options, but PS2 players will now have the ability to conduct a draft and create-a-player. Agreeably, these are welcome additions, but they should have been included from the get-go. If 3DO truly wants to compete with the EAs and Sonys, it will have to don the guise of the innovator, rather than play catch up. As silly as this may sound, gamers love variety – even if it's inserted on the side.

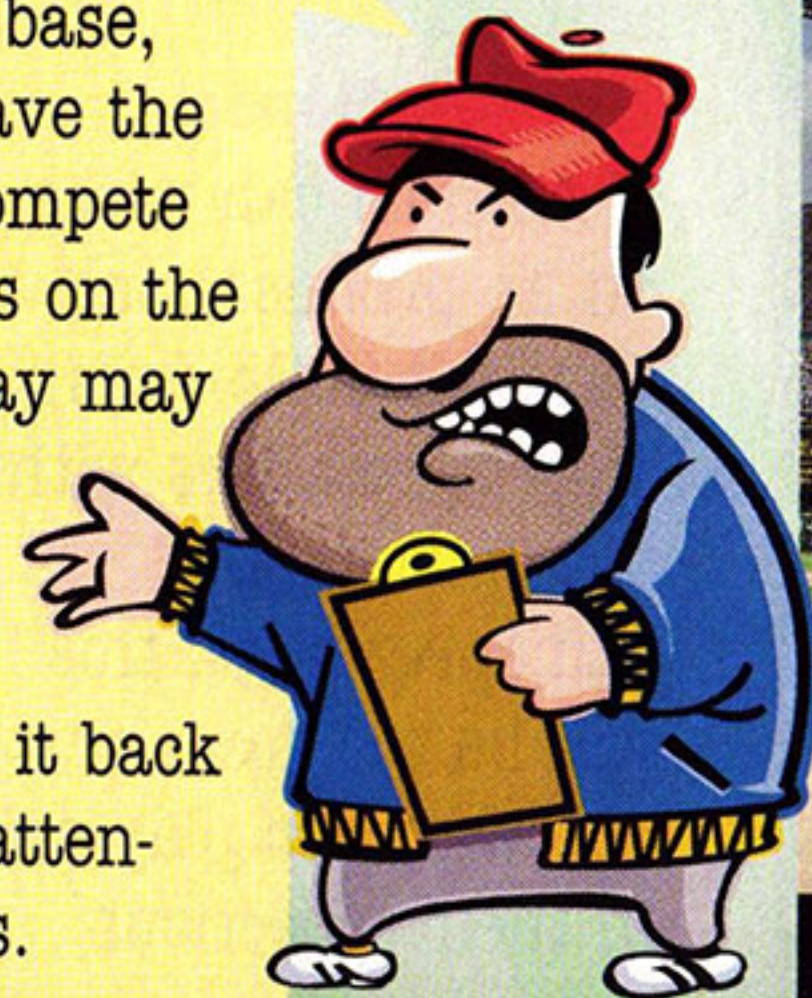
As far as onfield action is concerned, no PS2 baseball game captures the gameplay and intricacies of the sport like High Heat 2003. Everything from pitcher fatigue, to hot and cold batter zones, is taken into account. If a fielder is prone to making mistakes, it's accurately captured in the game. The beauty of High Heat is how fast a game can be completed. Most baseball games drag on and on and on, whereas 3DO's formula never seems to get old. The play mechanics are deep enough for enthusiasts to dig their teeth into, yet simplistically delivered.

In an attempt to draw awareness to its title, 3DO made a conscious effort to be the first baseball game to release this season. A noble move, but one that comes with a number of drawbacks. For starters, with a February 12 street date, the rosters won't be up to date by the time the baseball season begins. Secondly, who in the world is thinking about baseball in February?

We've always admired the stance 3DO has taken, but for the second year running, the game still comes up short.

Scouting Report

Like an overweight veteran trying to steal third base, High Heat doesn't have the wheels it needs to compete with the other games on the market. The gameplay may be the best in the biz, but the lack of customization and fantasy options hold it back from garnering the attention it truly deserves.

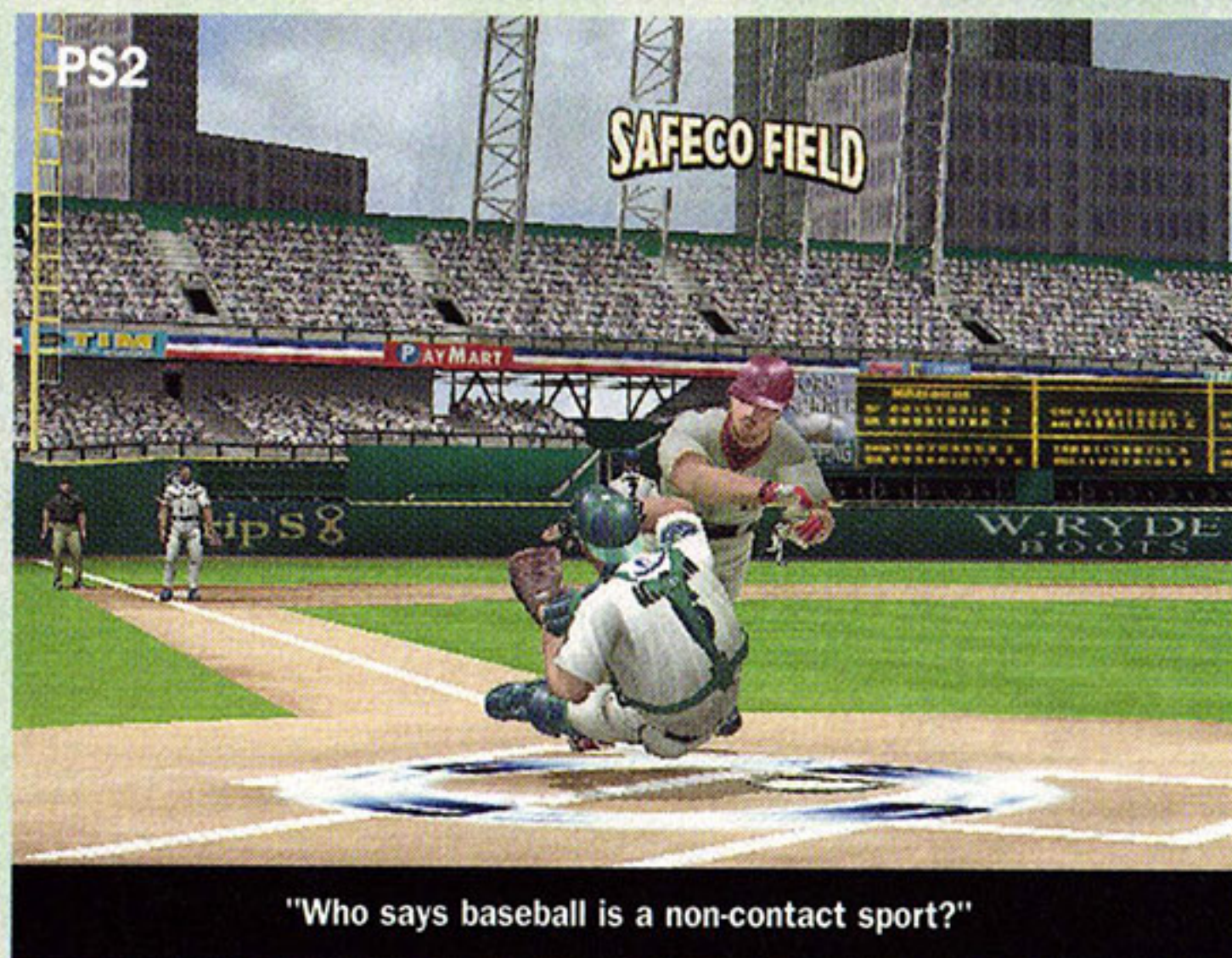


BIG HITTERS ON DECK



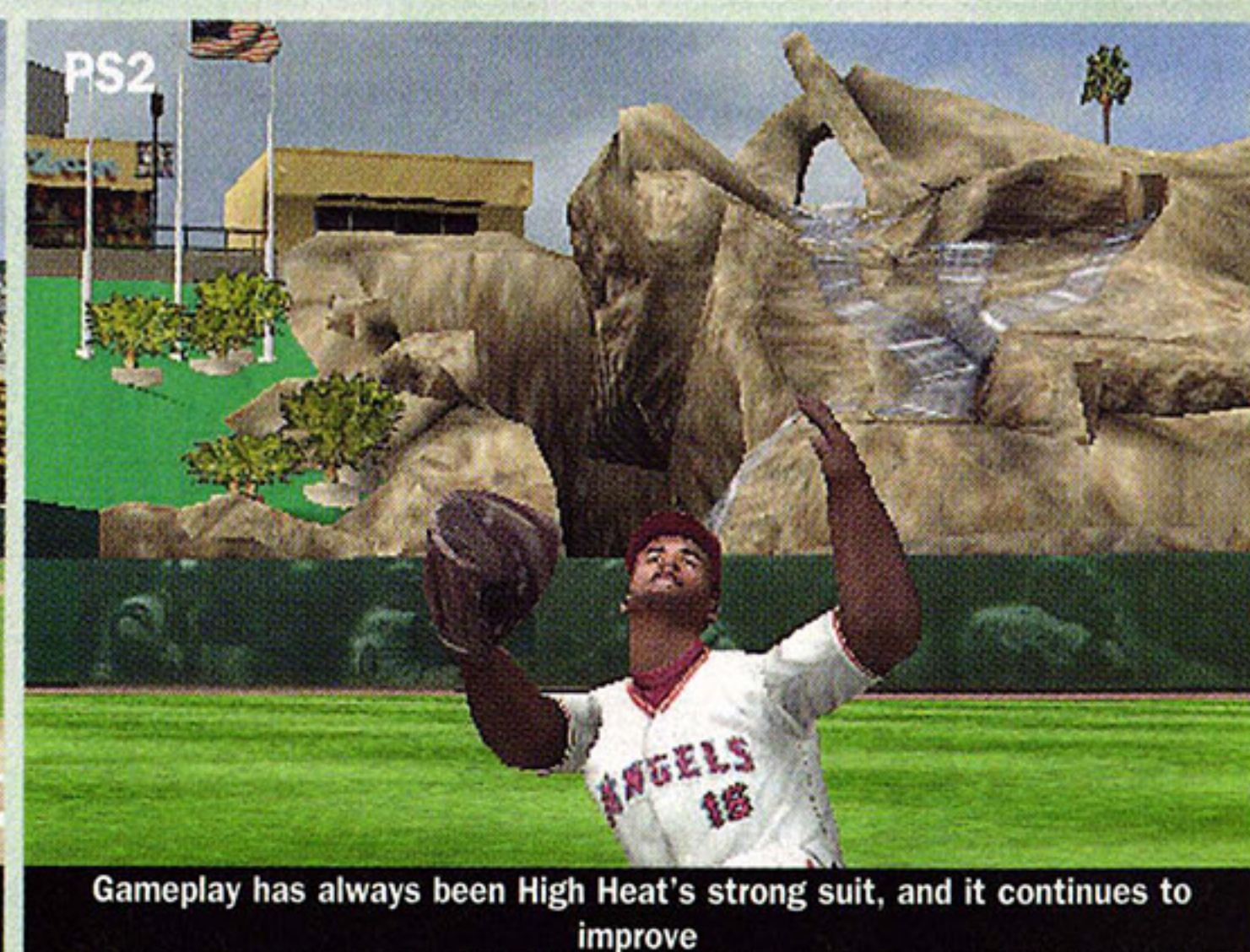
PS2

"Yep. I kick ass. Here, catch, hold my bat as I trot off into the sunset"



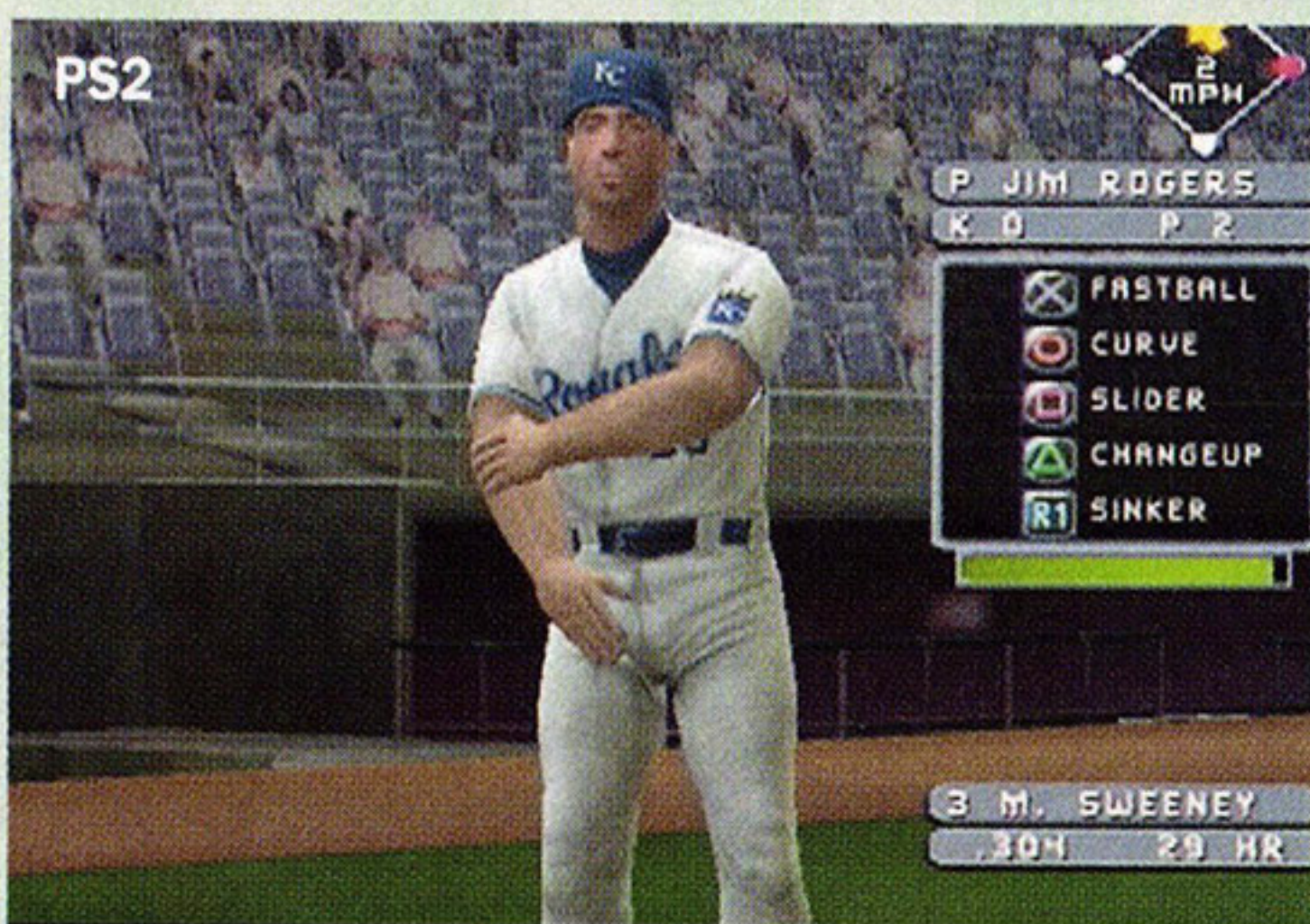
PS2

"Who says baseball is a non-contact sport?"



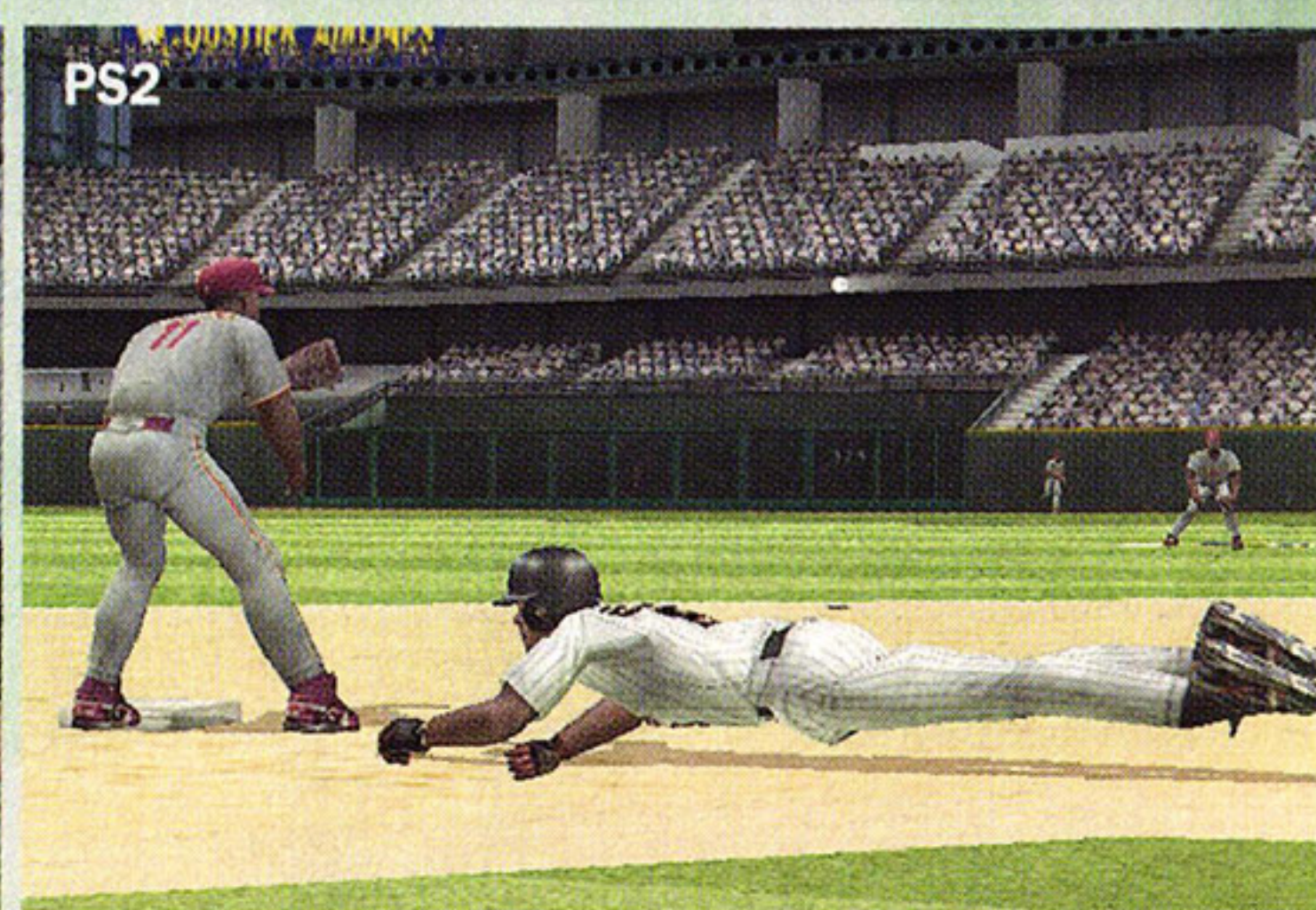
PS2

Gameplay has always been High Heat's strong suit, and it continues to improve



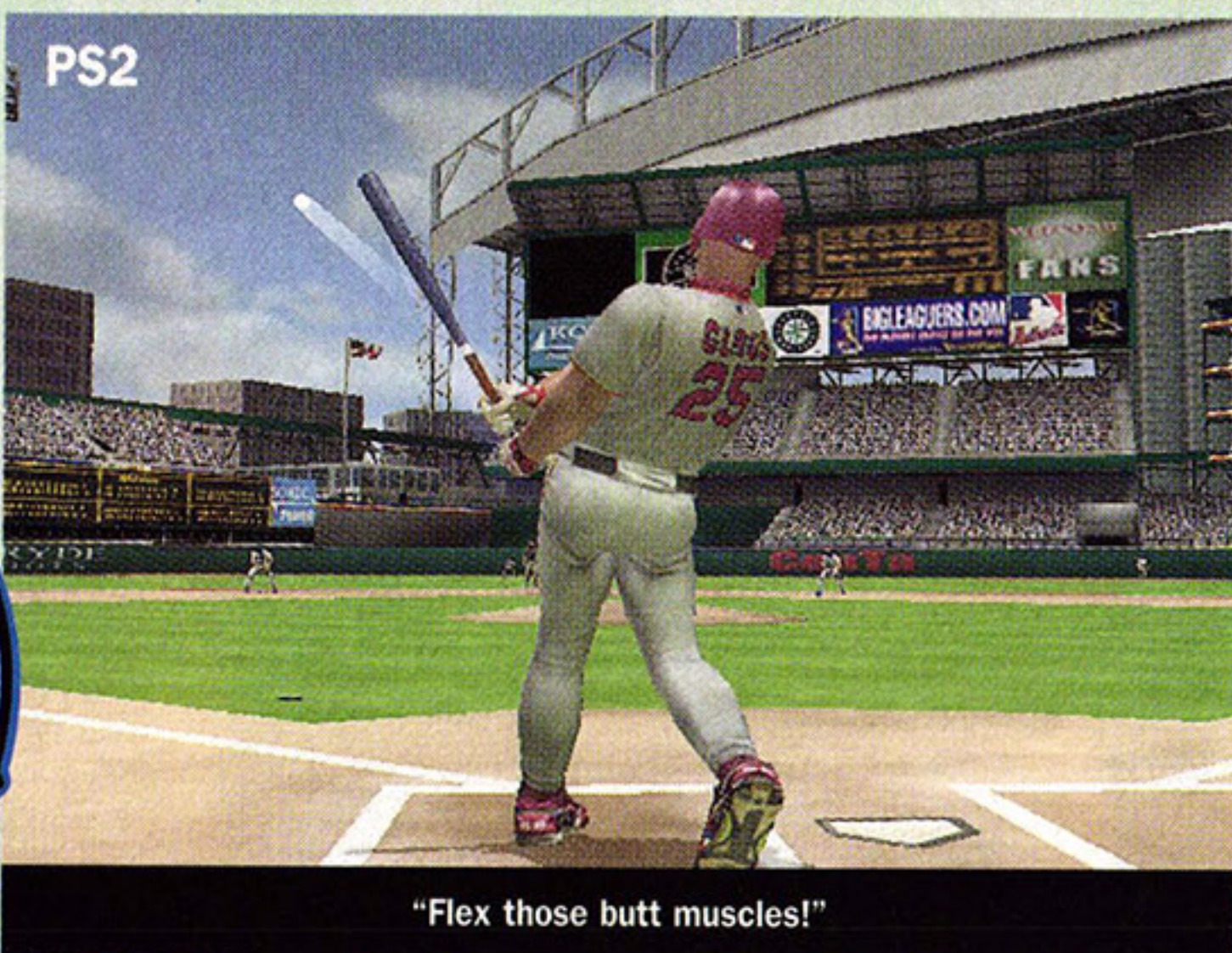
PS2

Animated field coaches get their groove on as they give batters signs



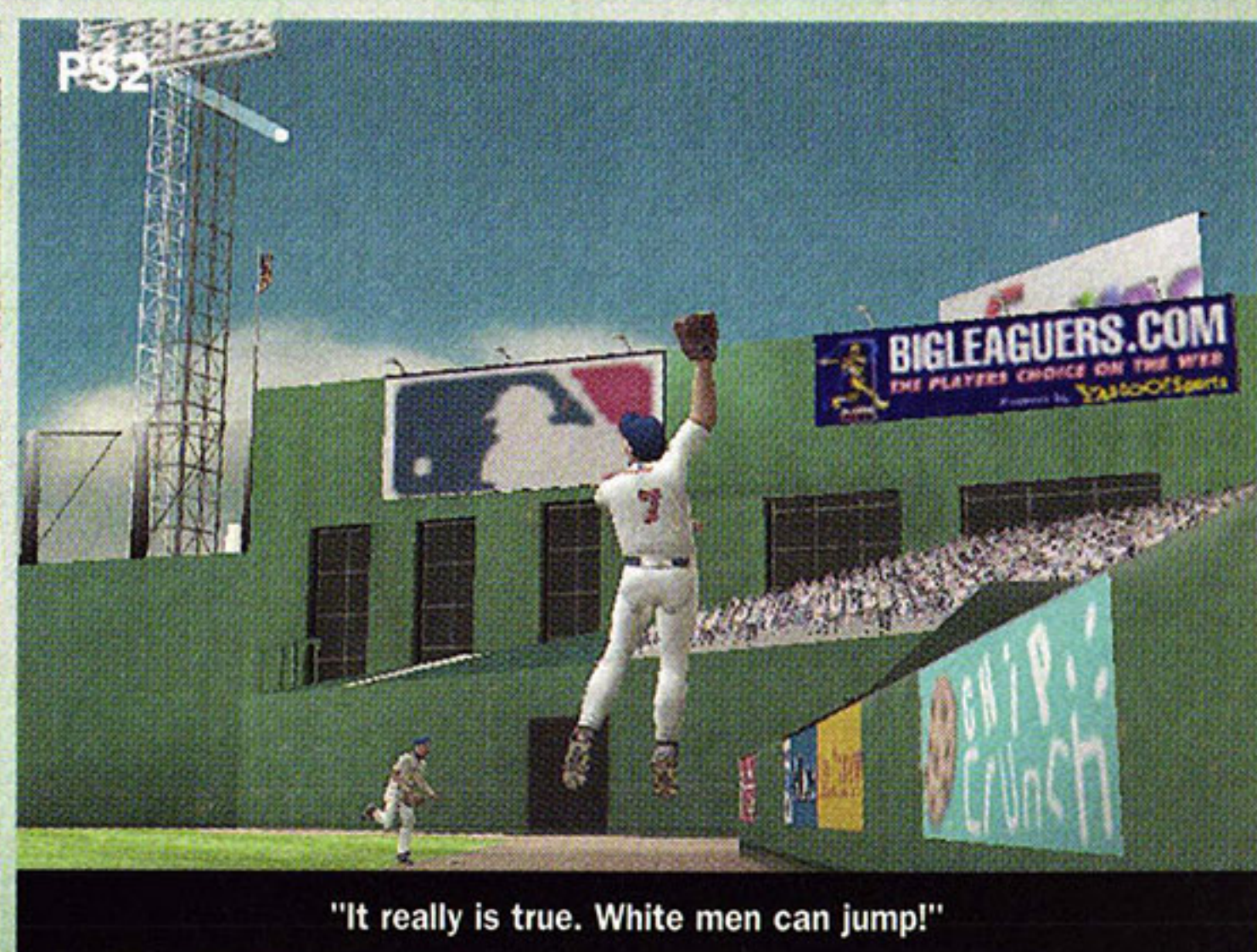
PS2

As you can clearly see, fielders assume realistic positions and are ready to make the tag



PS2

"Flex those butt muscles!"



PS2

"It really is true. White men can jump!"



Along with Reggie Jackson, over 50 legendary Hall of Famers are included

PLAYSTATION 2, XBOX, GAMECUBE

ALL-STAR BASEBALL 2003

Last year, the Game Informer review staff unanimously agreed that All-Star Baseball 2002 was the best baseball game of the season. It embodied the true essence of realism, a wealth of customizable features, a handful of intriguing extras, and an extremely fast gameplay engine. As dynamic as it may have been, the game still contained a number of frustrating bugs, glitches, and statistical errors. We had a chance to speak with All-Star Baseball 2003's development team, and they came right out and admitted that they knew of the mistakes, and did everything in their power to ensure that this year's game is completely bug free.

Knowing full well its gameplay engine is unrivaled, Acclaim shifted development focus and decided to load down the game with a number of unique bonus options. On the gameplay front, the fielding mechanics have been smoothed out, obscure AI glitches have been removed, and the batting/pitching duel has been refined ever so subtly. Random events like broken bats, erratic throws, and wild pitches are now part of the experience as well. In an attempt to combat EA's graphical assault, All-Star Baseball now boasts a hefty TV-style presentation with incredibly detailed out-of-play sequences, mascots dancing on the dugouts, cameras on pitchers in the dugout, and three-man commentary by Thom Brennaman, Steve Lyons, and Bob Brenly. Fantasy leaguers will be happy to hear that Acclaim has completely revamped this year's Career mode. If you can tolerate baseball for roughly 3,000 games, you can follow a team for 20 continuing seasons. If you choose to, you can enter Expansion mode and create a fictional team of your own. Acclaim's artists fabricated dozens of jerseys, logos, and stadiums – several of which spoof the real deal. Who would you rather play for, the Yellow Sox or the Green Sox?

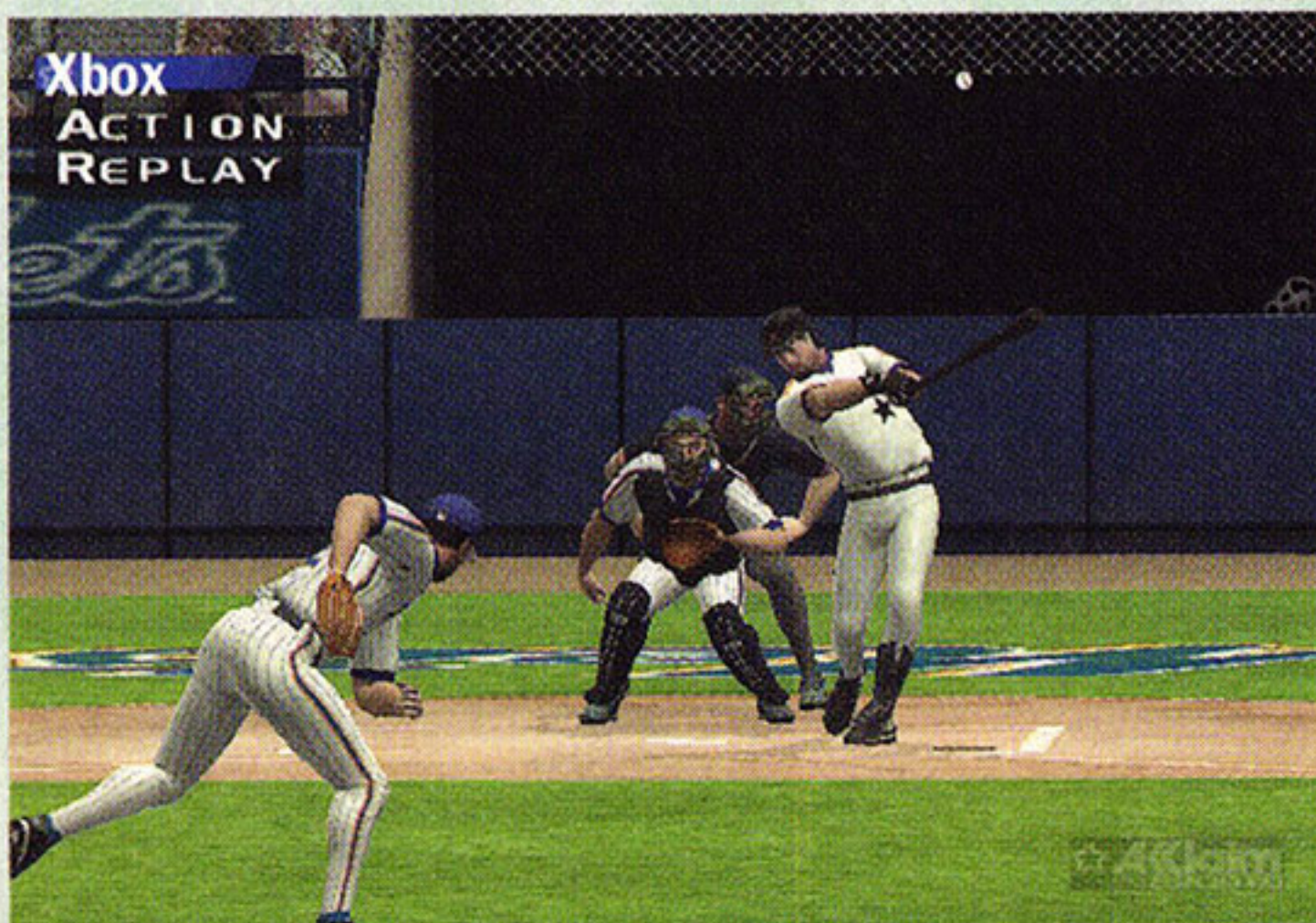
The most exciting additions to this release take place off the field. For those of you who love to collect baseball cards, or simply thought that the cards in Madden were a great idea and a reason to continue playing the game, you can now purchase packs of Donruss cards. Along with player cards, you'll also find insert cards that unlock historic team uniforms and cheats. Of equal importance, All-Star Baseball 2003 also boasts an innovative trivia minigame that plays out just like a regular baseball game, complete with nine innings and team batting orders.

If you truly believe that today's baseball superstars are too greedy for their own good, much like Sega's World Series, All-Star Baseball 2003 taps into the ever-expanding Cooperstown roster. Over 50 legendary Hall of Famers are included in this release, but oddly, only one of them is a catcher. Where's Carlton Fisk?!

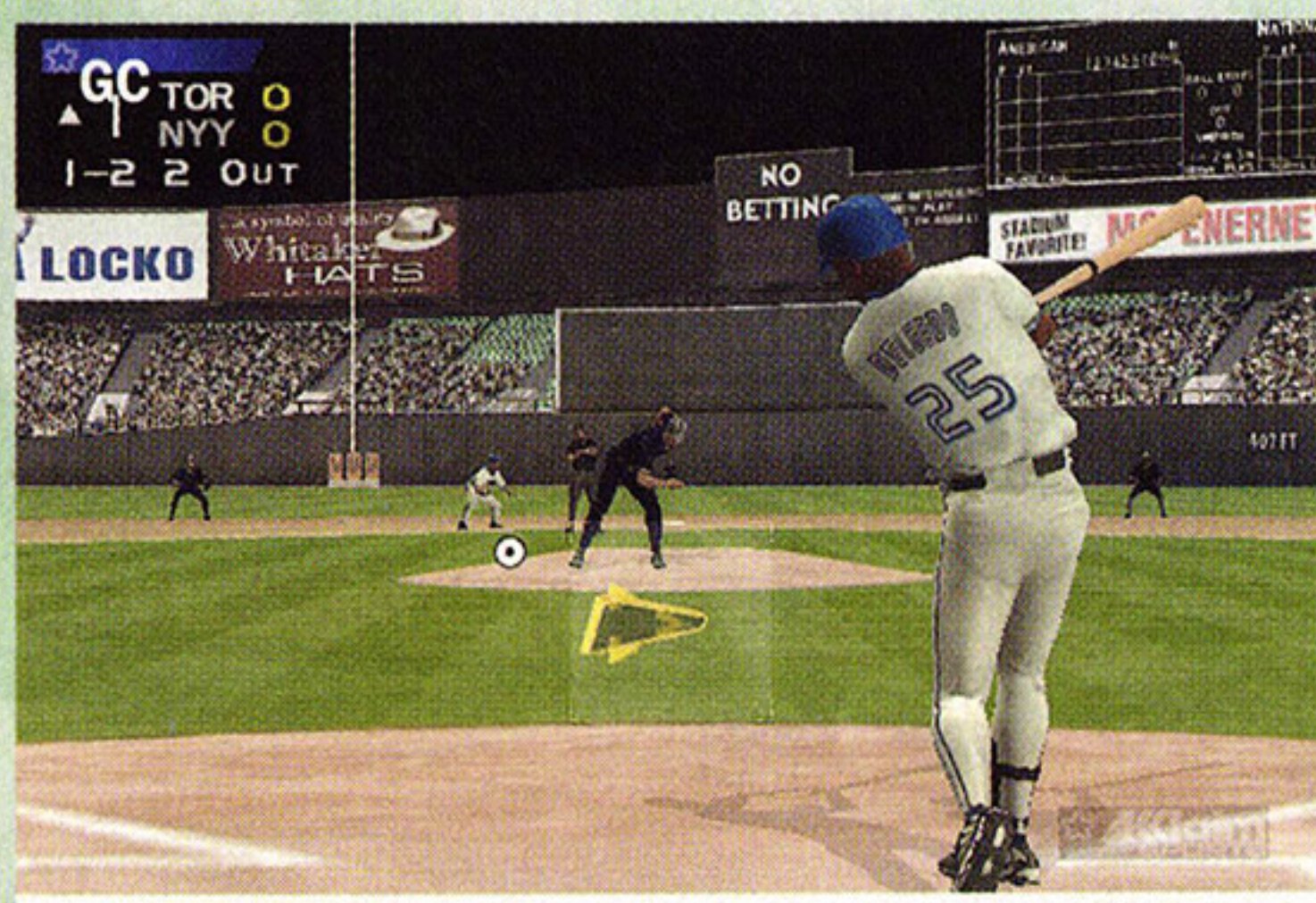
Altogether, All-Star Baseball 2003 is this year's most exciting release, and the only game that offers a much-needed break from the action.



All-Star Baseball 2003 is the only game with collectible trading cards



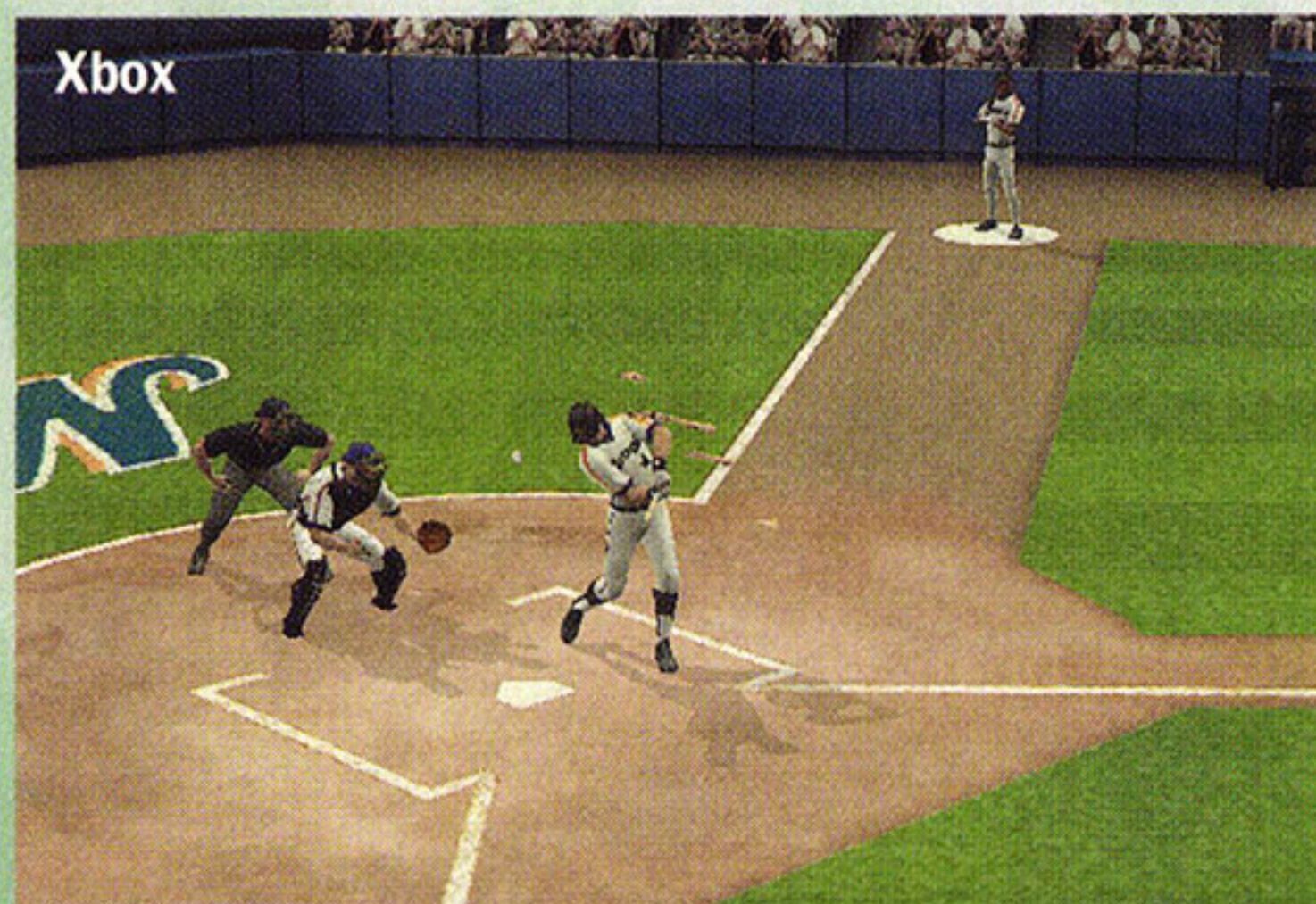
Players can unlock two classic uniforms (like the '86 Mets) for each team



The batting/pitching interface is the most accurate out of this year's lineup of games



As an added bonus, Acclaim has included a number of interesting cheats. This may look like Big Head mode, but it's actually Bobble Head mode



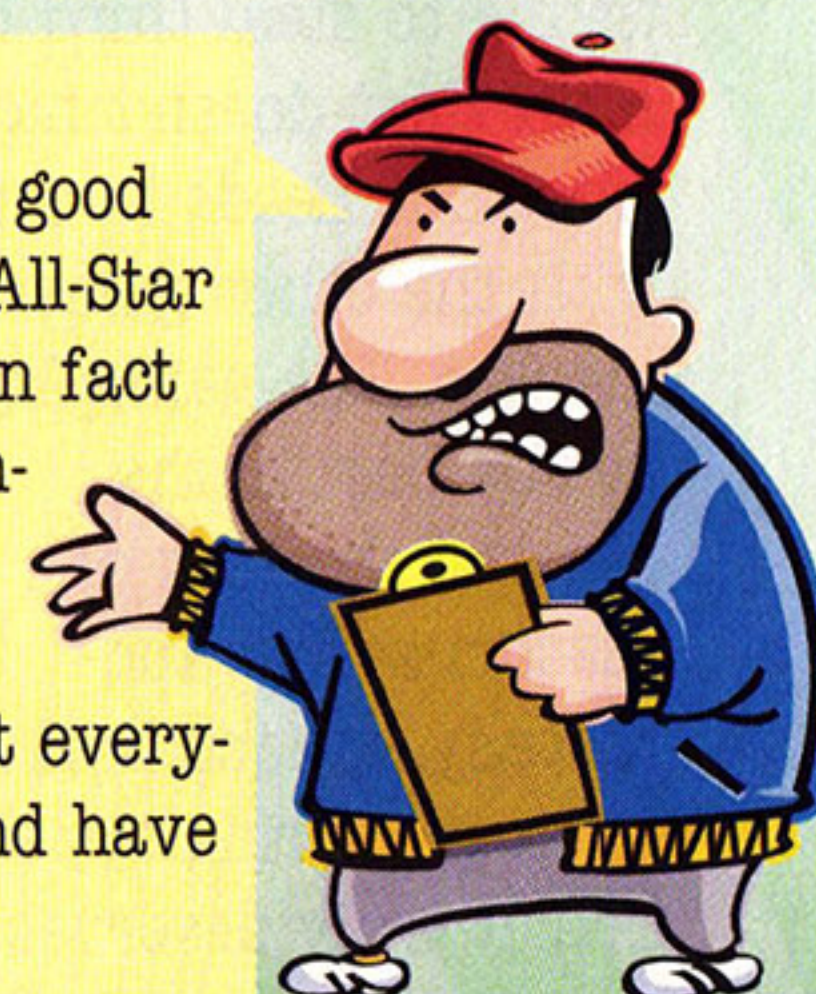
Randomly throughout play, a bat may explode and shower parts across the field



The detail in the player faces is right on the money

Scouting Report

If Acclaim can make good on its promise, and All-Star Baseball 2003 does in fact ship to retailers without detrimental gameplay bugs, this will be the game that everyone wants to play and have in their collections.



PLAYSTATION 2

MLB 2003

After sitting out last season with a hamstring injury, reports from spring training confirm that Sony's highly acclaimed MLB series has recovered nicely and will in fact make its PlayStation 2 debut this year, but won't be inserted into the lineup until mid-season (possibly as late as May or June). From what we've seen thus far, however, MLB 2003 may be worth the wait. Rather than follow the leader, developer 989 has always veered off the beaten path and tried something different.

This year, it appears as though 989's motto is substance. The genuine Spring Training mode, where players test their skills to see if they have what it takes to make it to "the show," is just one of 12 different modes included in this release. Of much interest, the Spring Training mode works in conjunction with the beefy Career mode, allowing players to extend their playing duration through 10 complete seasons. For those of you who enjoy the statistical aspects of the sport, but don't necessarily want to compete, you can sit on the bench and call the shots within Manager mode, or build a dynasty and monitor day-to-day transactions within the incredibly complex General Manager mode. Last year, EA held the exclusive rights to the Las Vegas' Big League Challenge. This season, it can only be found in MLB 2003.

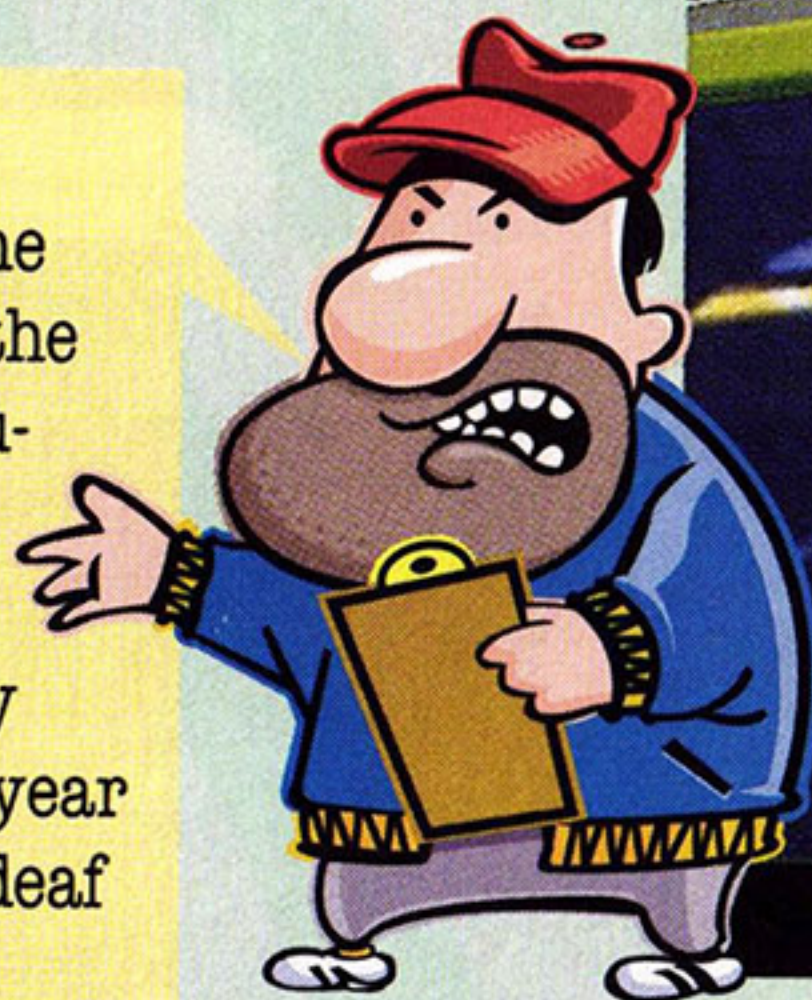
Rather than rehash the generic batting/pitching setup, 989 has reinvented the game. Batters can now gamble and try to guess a pitch type and location. If your assumption is correct, you'll lock onto the ball and smack it out of its seams. Hitting the ball on the sweet spot of the bat also brings about benefits. Of equal importance, you can now check swings, and charge the mound if you're beamed. Hot and cold are also tracked with each at-bat. If a player struggles through the course of the game, the batting cursor will shrink. If they rack up a series of hits, it will grow. Pitchers will now need to take sizeable strike zones into consideration. Nothing truly revolutionary has been added to the fielding aspect. However, the collision fields between the ball and player models are captured accurately, generating barehanded grabs and throws from the knees.

MLB's TV-style presentation is brought to life through dozens of cameras, including close-ups of team mascots. For the first time ever, fans will also interact with the game as they reach over the railing and snag balls. As if this wasn't enough, after the final out is recorded, the play of the game will be rebroadcast through an auto action replay.

The 989 brand of sports hasn't made an impact on the PS2 yet, and to be quite frank, it's done little more than rot and stink. With MLB 2003, it would appear that 989 is finally making a run for the pennant, and has spared no expense in doing so.

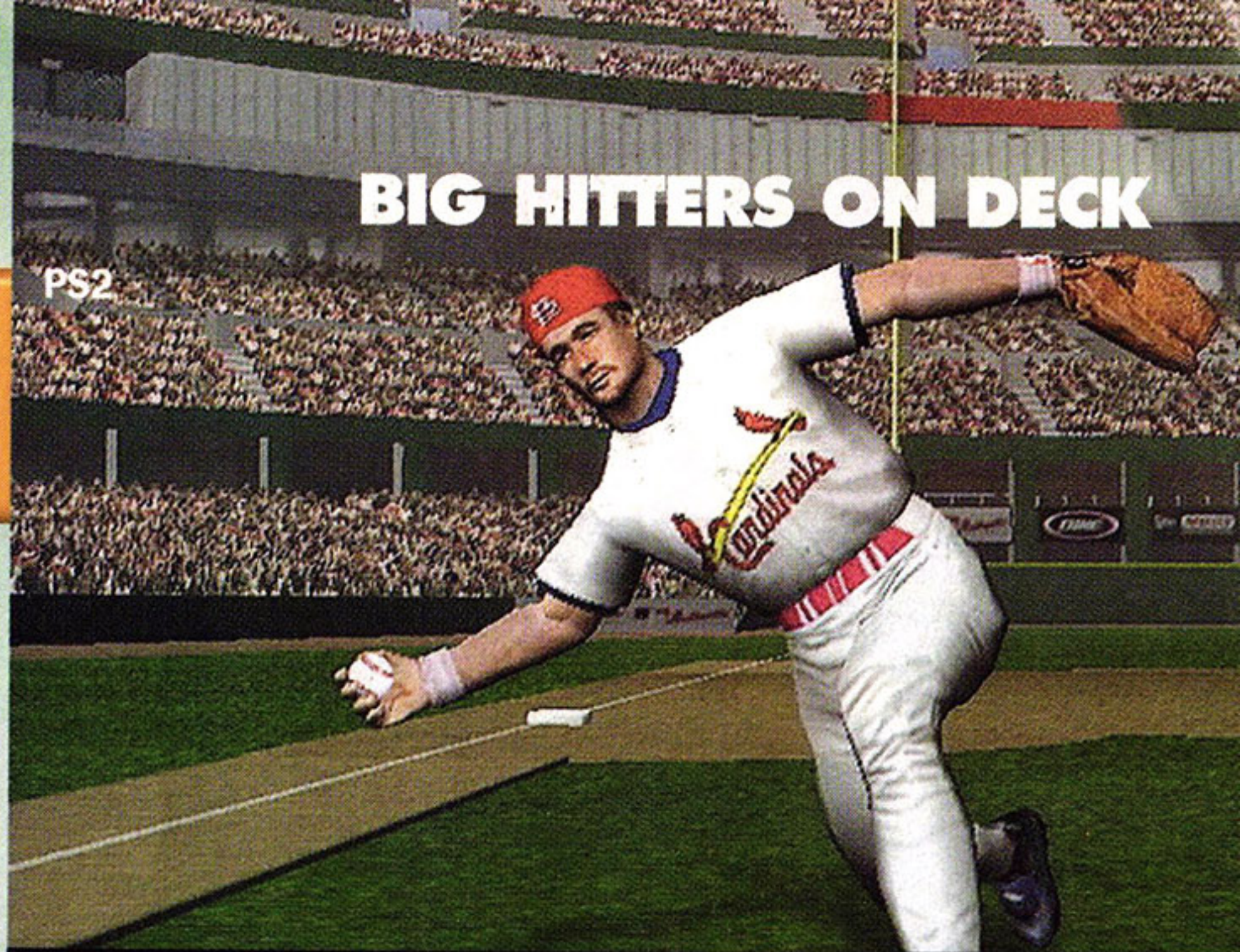
Scouting Report

Without question, this is the most ambitious project of the year, and should be a simulation fanatic's dream come true. The untimely release date, however, may make 989's lengthy three-year development cycle fall on deaf ears.



BIG HITTERS ON DECK

PS2



The collision fields between the ball and players are accurately captured, as seen through this bare-handed snag

PS2



Fans can now jump out of their seats, reach over the wall, and snag home runs. Interference?! It's the umpire's call!

BASEBALL ODDITIES

Back in the day, there were tons of obscure baseball games. Do BaseWars or Baseball Stars ring any bells? After a decade of waiting, developers are once again taking baseball to the extreme.

PLAYSTATION 2, XBOX, GAMECUBE

MLB SLUGFEST 2003

PS2



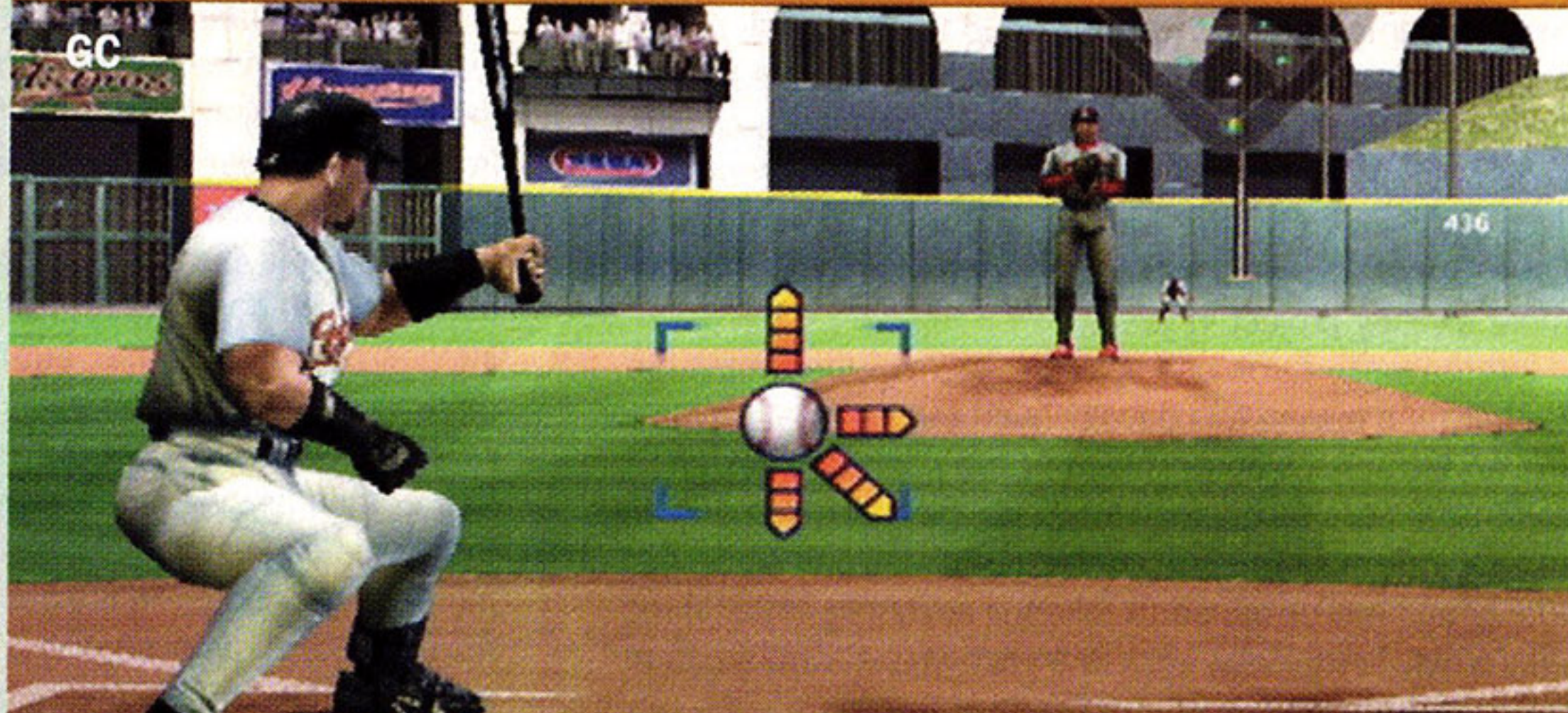
Judging by the pitching meter, you can either throw a strike, or try to kill the batter

With the tag line, "There's a riot at the bat rack!", you should be able to draw your own conclusion as to what kind of a game MLB Slugfest is. Intentionally bean batters, hit mile-long home run shots, stampede through catchers – just don't play the sport the way it was meant to be. As Midway says, "This is baseball without the lollygaging between pitches." America's favorite pastime just got violent. When you see the animations Midway has in store for this game, you'll know exactly what we mean. All three versions of Slugfest should slide safely onto retail shelves in April or May. Look out!

GAMECUBE

HOME RUN KING

GC



The easy-to-manage batting controls allow players to strategically place their hits

Developed by Sega of Japan, this arcade-styled release is more in check than MLB Slugfest, but is still a far cry from a true simulation. High-scoring affairs and easy-to-learn controls are what Home Run King is all about. In a sense, it's perfect for kids; however, we have a feeling everyone will get something out of the Create-A-Team option, and never tire of the amazing hook-slide and leaping catch animations. This GameCube exclusive release should be available for purchase on March 26.

PREVIEWS



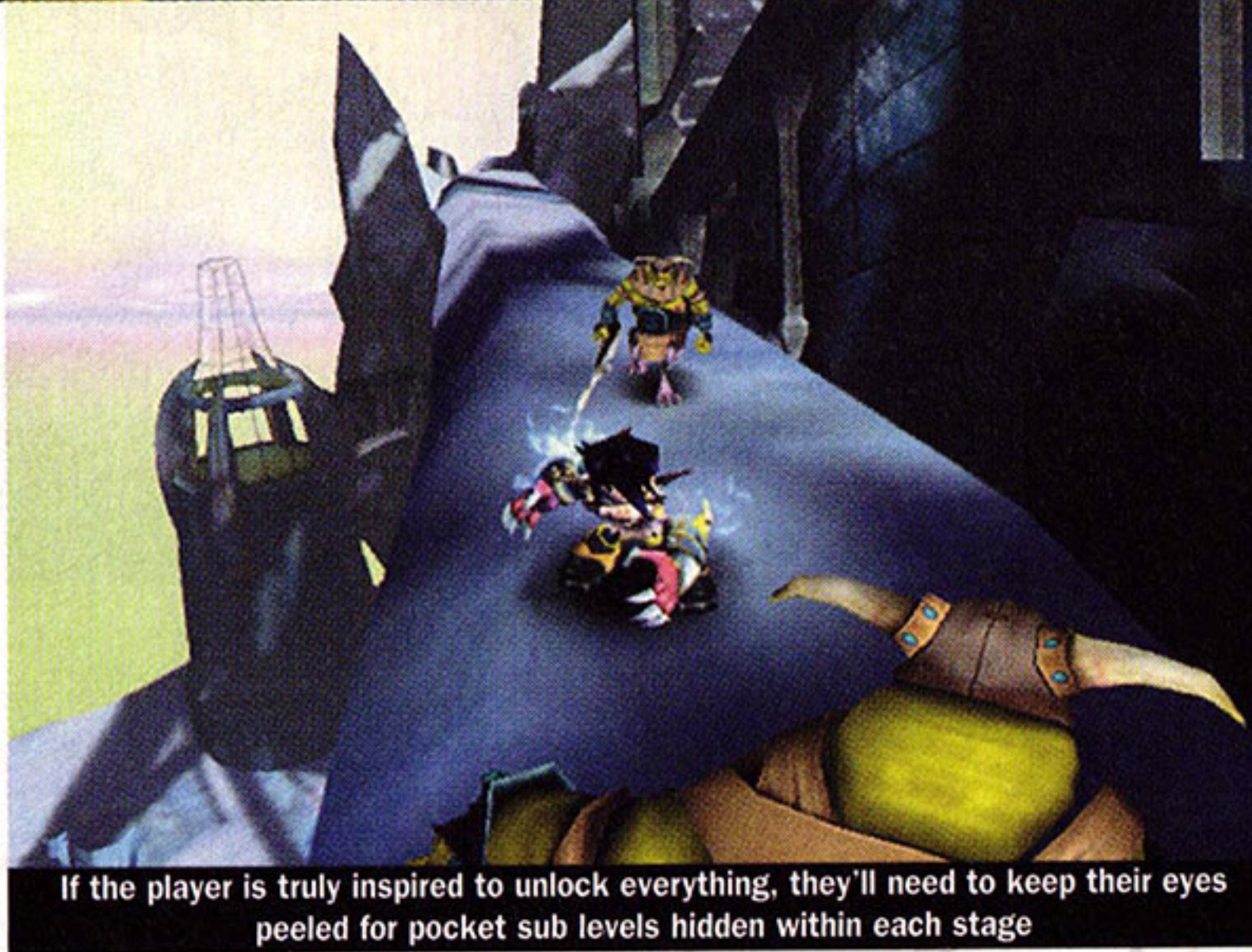
PLAYSTATION 2/XBOX/GAMECUBE

VEXX

THE NEW ACCLAIM

Like a phoenix rising from the ashes, Acclaim has spread its wings and taken to the air, leaving behind its unpredictable and often grisly past. On a recent trip to Acclaim Studios Austin, a sense of excitement ran amok through the hearts and souls of everyone on staff. The phrase "the new Acclaim" was tossed around loosely, but in truth, this is the perfect summary of the company's current position within the industry. Gone are the days of haphazard development with buggy results. The new Acclaim is determined to make the best product it can and will be given the time and funding it needs to accomplish this task. Last month, Game Informer was invited to take a sneak peek at Turok: Evolution – the first game that demonstrates Acclaim's newfound determination. While we were there, we caught wind of another title in development called Vexx (formerly Jinx). Acclaim's Creative Director and all-around nice guy, Dave Dienstbeir, went as far to say that Vexx was "Acclaim's most exciting project in years."

Interestingly, Turok and Vexx are tied together at the hip. Rather than having two development teams create tools for the projects, Acclaim decided to have one team design expansive core technology for all its upcoming games – thus reducing duplication. The pooled resources can be altered on the fly and are designed to take full advantage of all three platforms. Technically, Vexx is an action/platform game at heart, but it's kind of the bad seed in the group – the kid in school who would cut class to have a cigarette in the bathroom. The nature of the game is dark and violent. A perfect example of this is embedded within the story. At first glance, Vexx's plot seems all too familiar. On the planet Astara, the villagers of Rockhaven lead peaceful lives – until the Shadowraith, Dark Yabu, and his minions descend from the sky and with an unparalleled ruthlessness, destroy the town, and enslave the townsfolk – taking them on as slaves within the treacherous caves of Rockhaven. Setting an



If the player is truly inspired to unlock everything, they'll need to keep their eyes peeled for pocket sub levels hidden within each stage



Through Dynamic Portal Generation, Vexx can actually enter the wall textures, where 2D gameplay segments take place

example for those who try to rebel, Yabu brutally slays young Vexx's grandfather. Vexx manages to escape, sneaking onto an enemy windship where he stumbles upon an ancient artifact, the Astani Battlegloves. Similar to Arthur's touch of Excalibur, the gloves bond onto Vexx's arms, nearly sucking the life out of him. Vexx is left for dead, but he's actually far from it. The gloves give him special powers; powers he will use to exact revenge on Yabu.

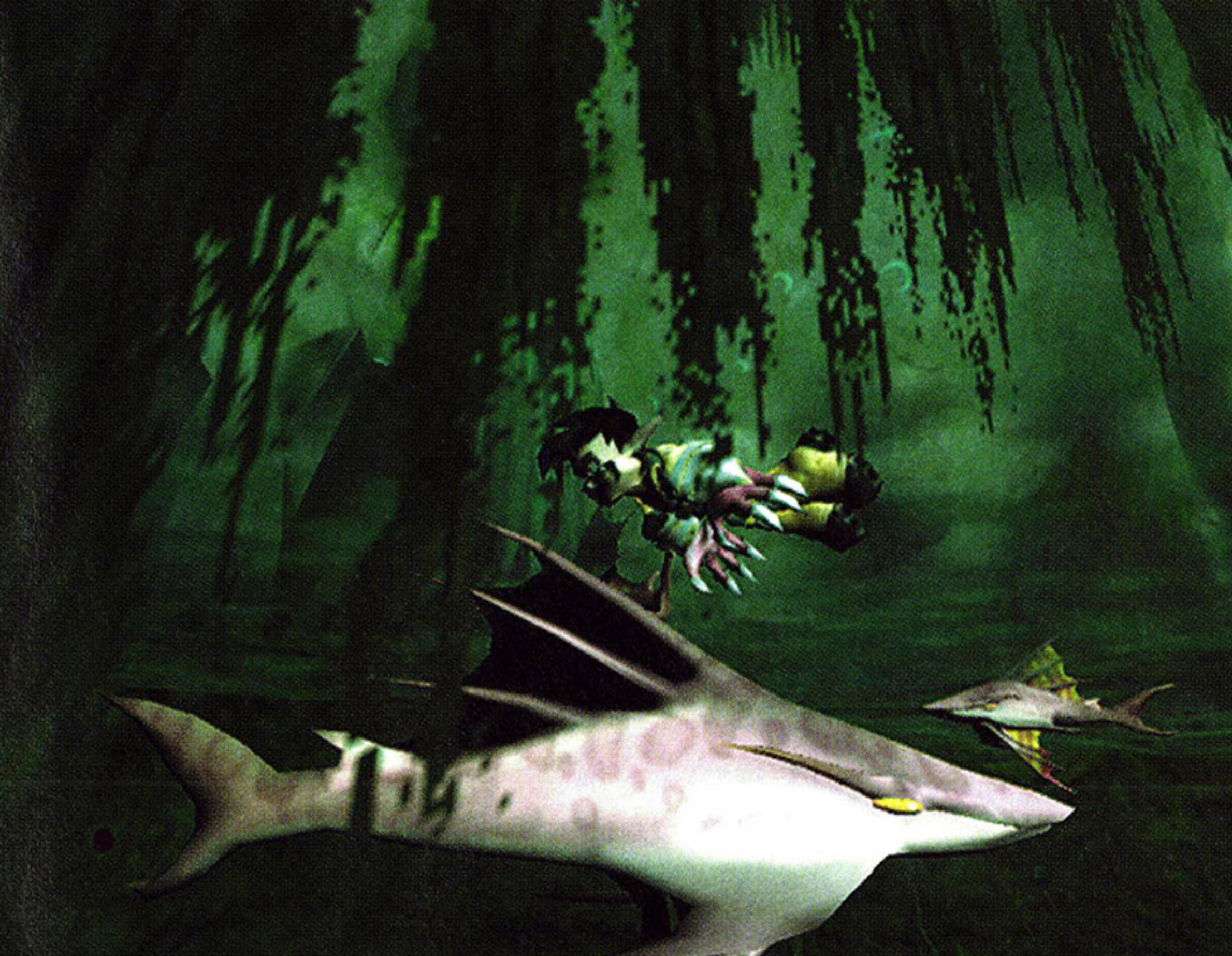
The gameplay further separates Vexx from the normality of the action/platform genre. Jumping from ledge to ledge is an integral part of the game, but it's executed with a lightning-quick vigilance. Vexx can soar into the air, flip up to double jump, and then kick over and rise upward into a triple jump. Rather than landing, and much like a bullet whizzing through the air, he can use his gloves to propel him forward. Or, on a more graceful note, he is able to simply extend his arms and float as though he's wearing a parachute. As you may have gathered, the controls are incredibly responsive, allowing players to concoct huge combos and cancel a move midway. The gloves can also be tapped to perform a number of innovative maneuvers. Vexx can dig into a wall, then climb in Spider-Man fashion. He can also use them to improve his movement underwater, propelling him at great speeds through unthinkable currents. Of course, they best come into play during combat. All the battle moves are inspired by fighting games and anime, thus taking on a life of their own. Truly talented players will be able to execute gigantic combo

strings that level the opposition. However, you'll have to tap into different techniques to topple the critters in the world as they are designed to react differently to the glove powers. More intriguing yet, the game makes use of day and night cycles. When the land is engulfed into darkness, the creatures will transform into more powerful adversaries.

Taking a cue from Naughty Dog, Acclaim wanted to create a world that players can clearly see from the get-go. Basically, you may see an island in the distance the second you start playing, but you probably won't navigate it until you're a good ways through the game. On the detail side, the environments are overflowing with ambient life, and hair, clothes, and trees move realistically with the wind. The designers at Acclaim are also quite taken with one of their latest revelations. Through a system called Dynamic Portal Generation, Vexx can actually walk into a wall texture. Perplexed? So were we. When this happens, the game transforms into a classic side-scroller, giving players a much-needed break from the massive quest. Crazy! In addition to this, players can unlock a different four-player minigame for each of the six worlds.

Acclaim plans to release all three versions of the game at the same time. Even though it's still early in development, Vexx is shaping up nicely and if Acclaim can successfully implement everything we've mentioned, it could very well be the next big platformer. Mario beware.

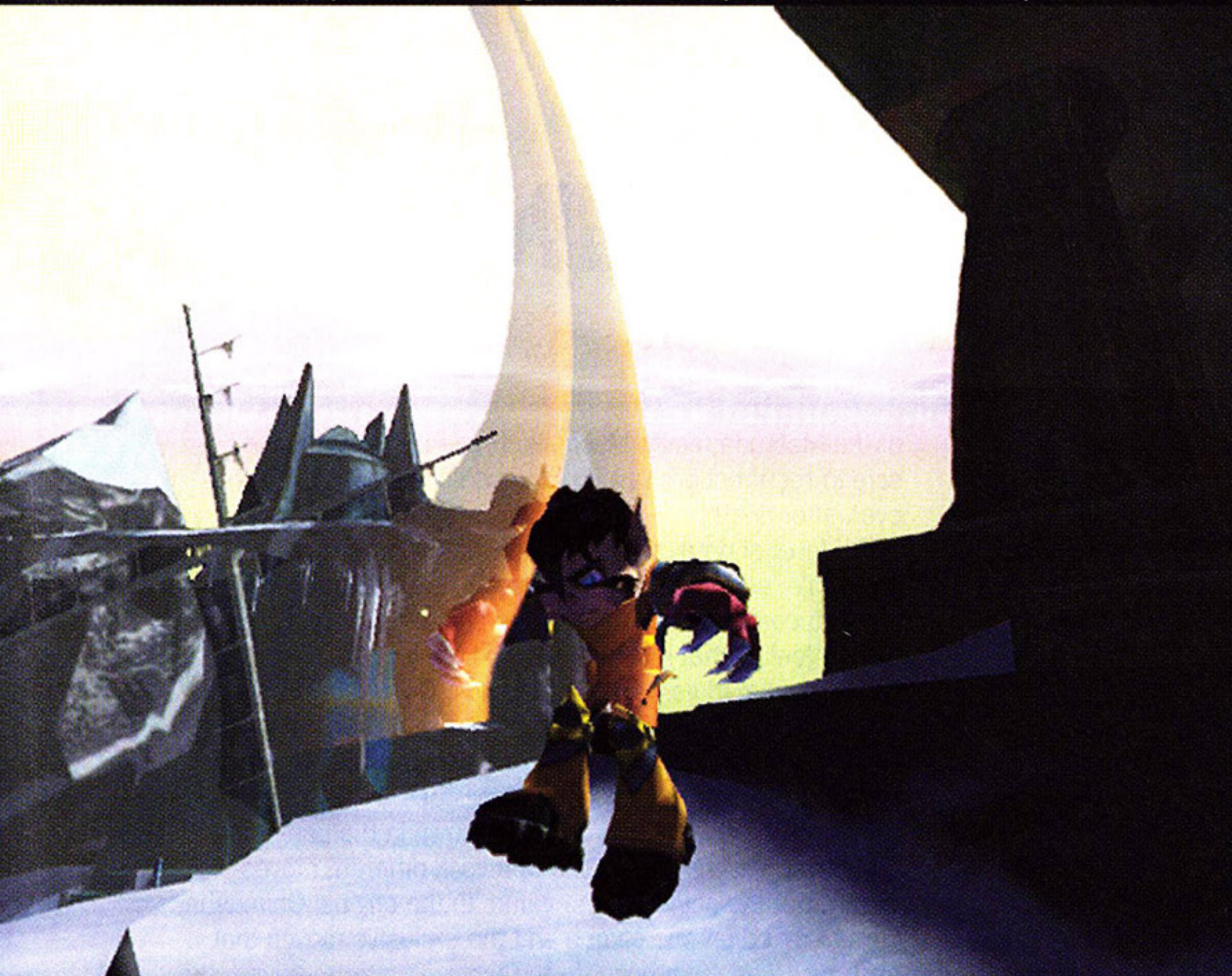
■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER ACTION/PLATFORM ■ **PUBLISHER** ACCLAIM
■ **DEVELOPER** ACCLAIM STUDIOS AUSTIN ■ **RELEASE** OCTOBER



This may look like another ordinary swimming level, but it's actually quite complex. Through analog/pressure-sensitive controls, players can use Vexx's gloves to powerswim past the scaled evil from the depths below



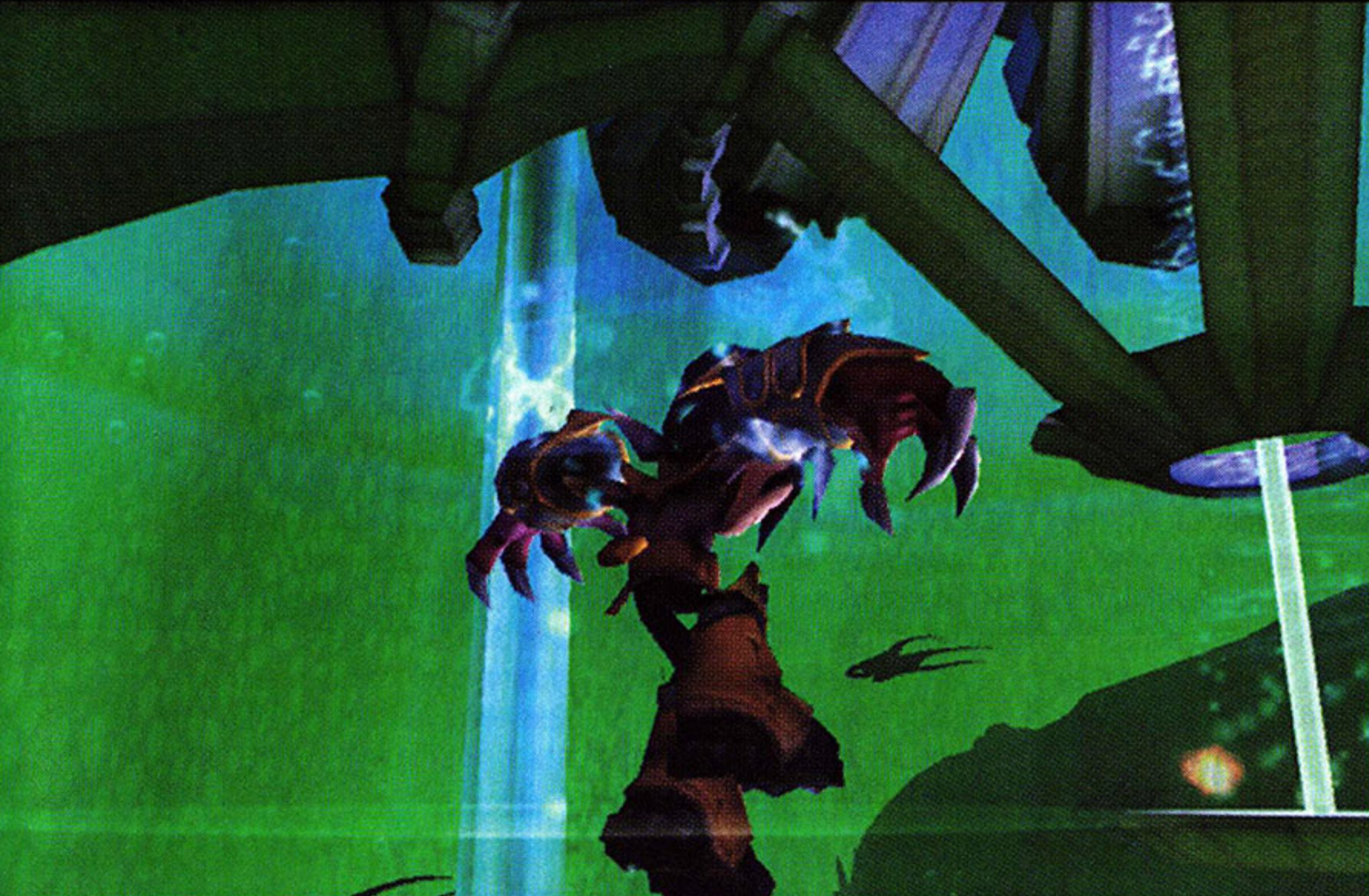
Breaking away from the generic combat system in most platformers, Vexx's combat is inspired by fighting games and anime, allowing players to perform high-flying maneuvers and outrageous combo attacks



The control schematic is robust and responsive. Hardcore gamers can master Skill Moves (like the triple jump shown) to unlock new zones and secrets



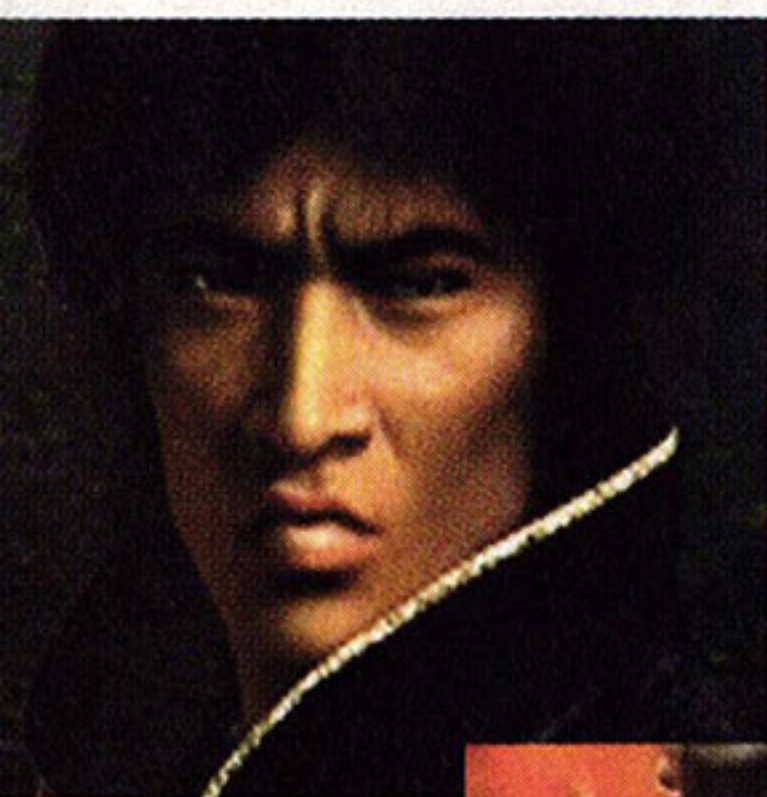
Day and night cycles are included within all 18 of the stages. Interestingly, when night falls, the enemies transform into more aggressive beasts



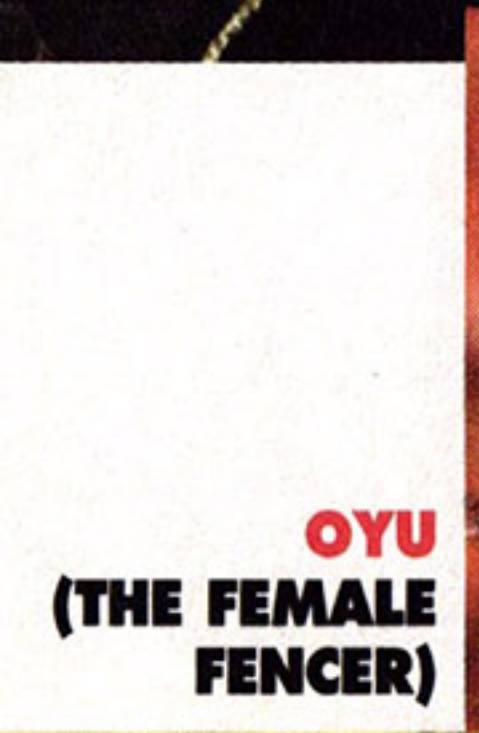
This stage is designed much like the Gungan homes in *The Phantom Menace*. If you look to the background, you can see silhouettes of fish and a massive leviathan (which later becomes a boss) circling your position



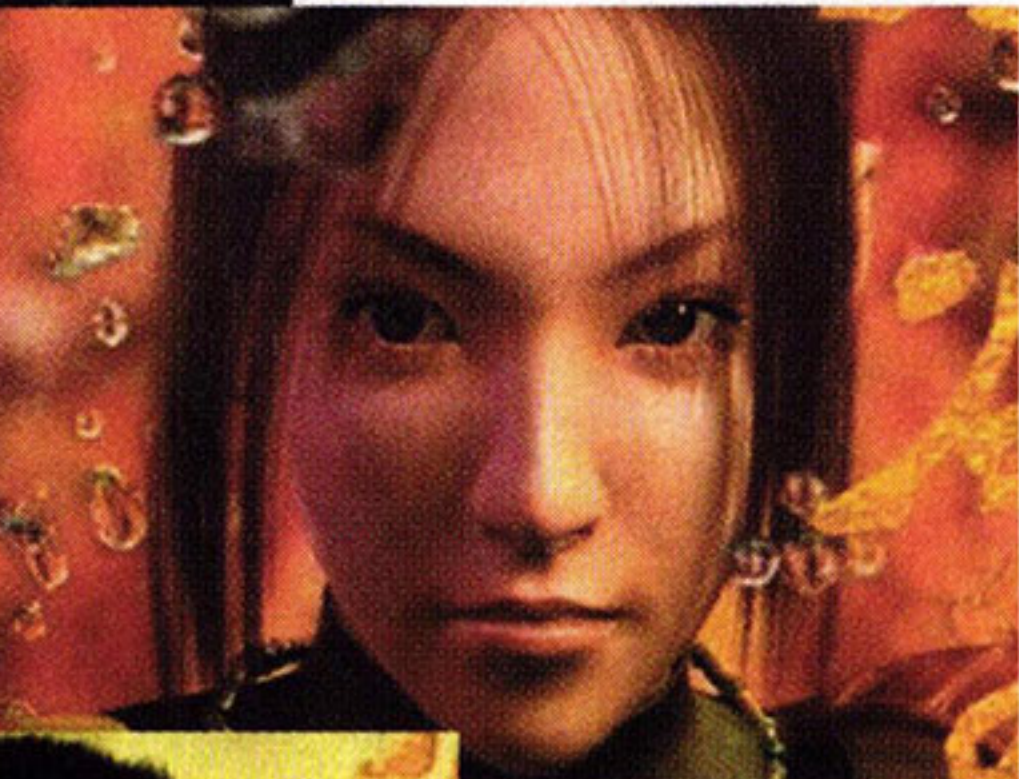
Vexx's razor-sharp Astani Battlegloves can be used to climb up walls



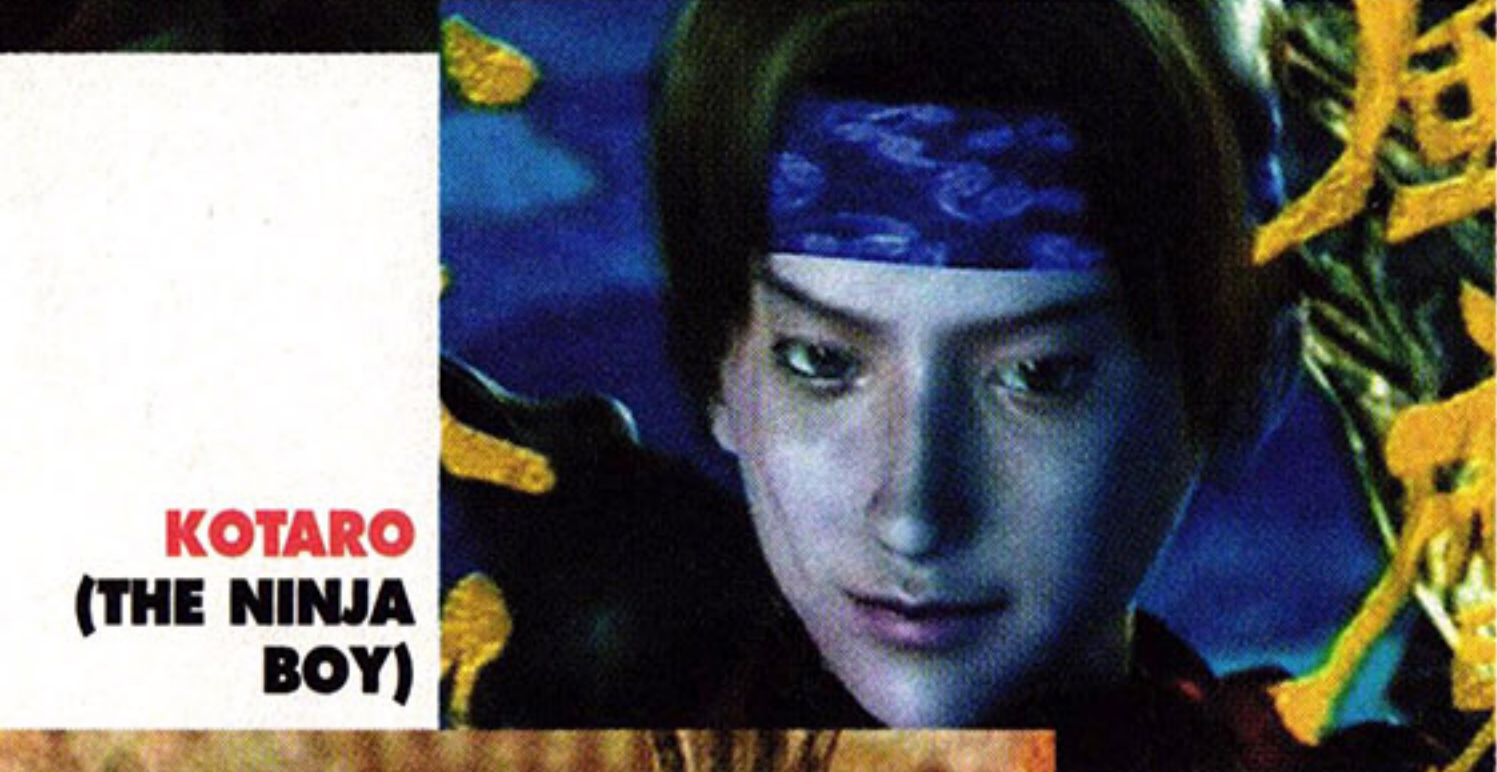
JUBEI YAGYU
(THE MAIN CHARACTER)



OYU
(THE FEMALE FENCER)



MAGOICHI
(THE FIREARMS EXPERT)



KOTARO
(THE NINJA BOY)



EKEI
(THE OVERWEIGHT WARRIOR)

PLAYSTATION 2

ONIMUSHA 2: SAMURAI'S DESTINY

DEVELOPMENT WITH A VENGEANCE

As video games continue to evolve, it's becoming evident that developers are trying to blend the boundaries that separate motion pictures and video games. A majority of the gaming nation has voiced concern toward this movement – an infection that is currently sweeping across the entire video game industry. The question on everyone's mind: Will we still play the games, or simply watch them? Within the last year, this transformation wasn't well received. Square Soft's fighting game, *The Bouncer*, featured roughly four hours of cinematics, yet only 40 minutes of actual playtime. Is this the trend developers will follow? Will gameplay eventually be placed on the backburner? Not if Capcom has a say in how the industry functions. *Onimusha 2: Samurai's Destiny* may be Capcom's most movie-intensive game to date, yet in many ways it could also be argued that it's the company's most ambitious gameplay project as well. As should be the case with every developer, Capcom's goal is to seamlessly incorporate both aspects into a game without making sacrifices on either front.

To ensure that the cinematics jump off of the screen with striking realism, Capcom has enlisted the talents of a number of Japan's finest. The most noticeable addition to the team, which now boasts over 70 people, is Keita Amemiya, a legendary character designer, illustrator, and director. While Keita assisted in the development of *Onimusha 2* on a number of fronts, his biggest accomplishment comes in the fleshing out of realism within the characters. Working with digital actors has proved to be incredibly challenging, but the end result of his labor is nothing short of spectacular. Keita especially focused on the realism of *Onimusha 2*'s main character, Jubei Yagyu. In a controversial turn of events, Capcom actually modeled the character after the late Japanese actor, Yusaku Matsuda. Before passing away at an early age of 39, Yusaku lit up the silver screen in a number of movies, including a brief cameo in Ridley Scott's *Black Rain*.

Resurrecting this legend may seem somewhat immoral, but Capcom wouldn't do it without the consent and support

of the Matsuda family. Much like Bruce Lee's upcoming big screen resurrection, Yasaku Matsuda's legacy will live on – even after death.

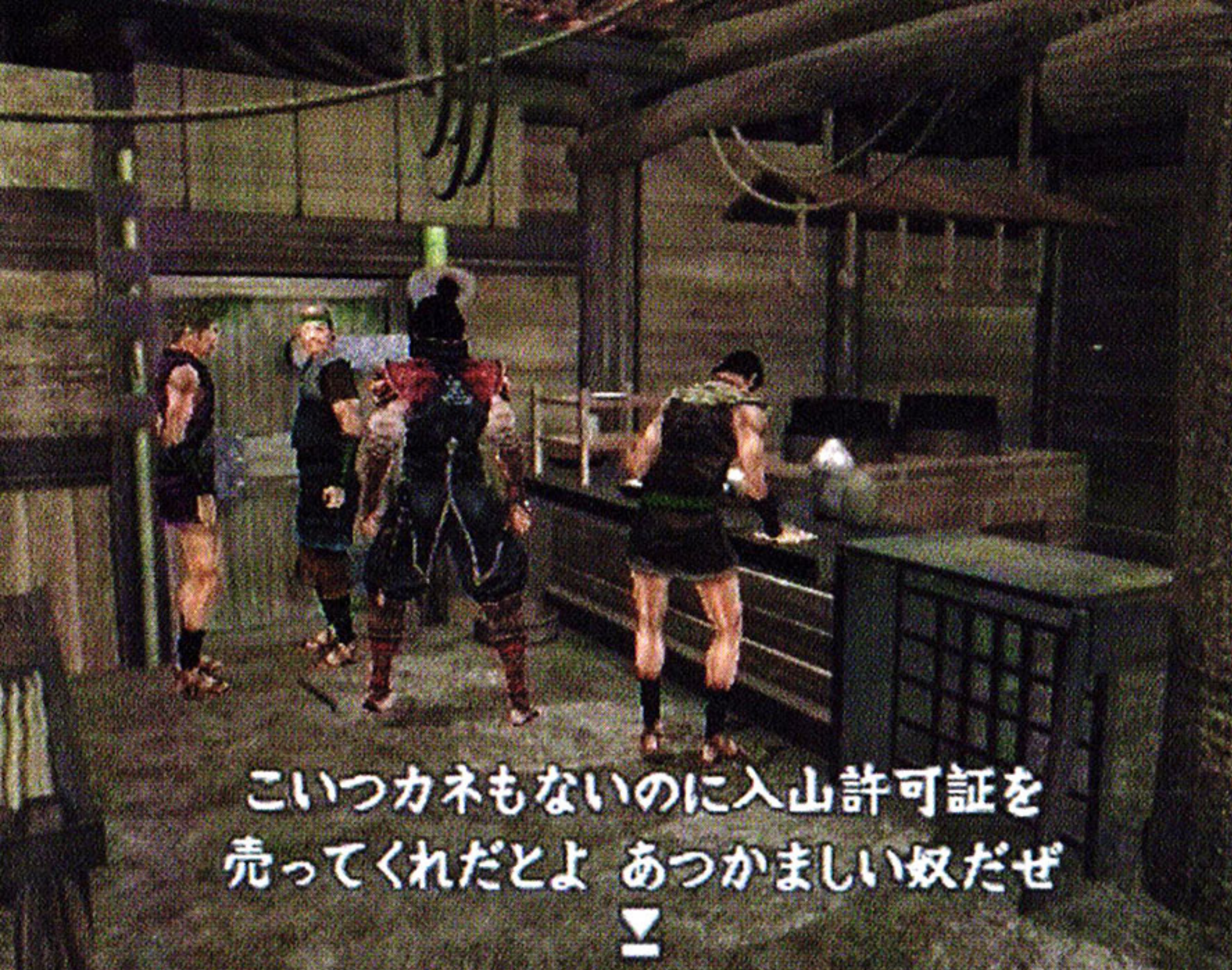
The level of detail that went into the CG movies is incredible, and something people will be talking about for years to come. As beautiful as the cutscenes may be, we have a feeling that most gamers will remember *Onimusha 2* for its fine-tuned gameplay mechanics. Giving players more than enough substance – more than they'd ever know what to do with – the combat takes precedence over every other aspect of the game. Capcom has included a bevy of esoteric fighting techniques in this project. Known in the game as Ohgi arts, players will be able to unlock different moves throughout the course of the game. In the original *Onimusha*, players relied on one combo and the exclusive moves that each new weapon brought to the table. This time around, the game starts out the same, but quickly expands into something quite original. If you enjoyed the demon transformation in *Devil May Cry*, Jubei will temporarily morph into an all-empowering demon when a specific number of blue souls are obtained.

Of equal interest, Jubei, if he chooses to, can seek out help. As you interact with villagers (that's right, you can talk to people), you may stumble upon a character who believes in your cause and wants to help you out however they can. Some of these characters are purely static, giving you items you need to pass certain obstacles. On the other hand, a select few, four to be exact, will run at your side and may, just may, even be used as secondary playable characters.

Knowing full well that the original release was too short, Capcom has expanded the size of the quest, allowing players to backtrack, and collect gold to buy better items. Your journey will take you to the shores of Ogre Island, foggy canyons, gold mines, forests, and uncharted wastelands.

With heavy RPG undertones, lightning-quick combat, and gorgeous cinematics, *Onimusha 2* is a drastic leap forward for the series and one of the most – if not the most intriguing survival horror games we've seen.

■ STYLE 1-PLAYER ACTION/ADVENTURE ■ PUBLISHER CAPCOM ■ DEVELOPER CAPCOM ■ RELEASE SUMMER



こいつカネもないのに入山許可証を
売ってくれだどよ あつかましい奴だぜ



Taking a tip from RPGs, players will now need to converse with villagers to purchase items and find out clues that intertwine with the story



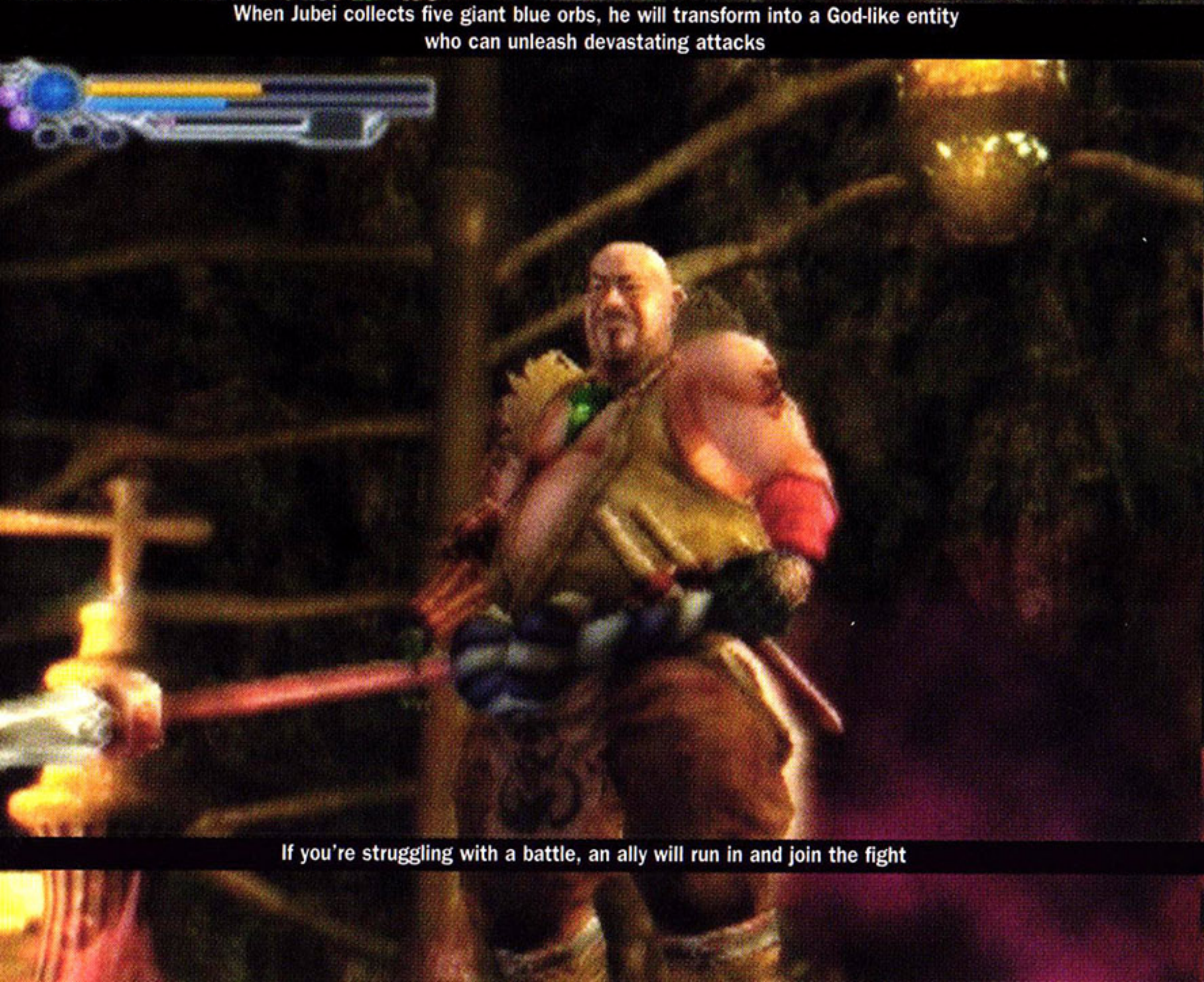
Soul sucking is just as prominent as before. The red souls can be used to increase the level and power of your weapons



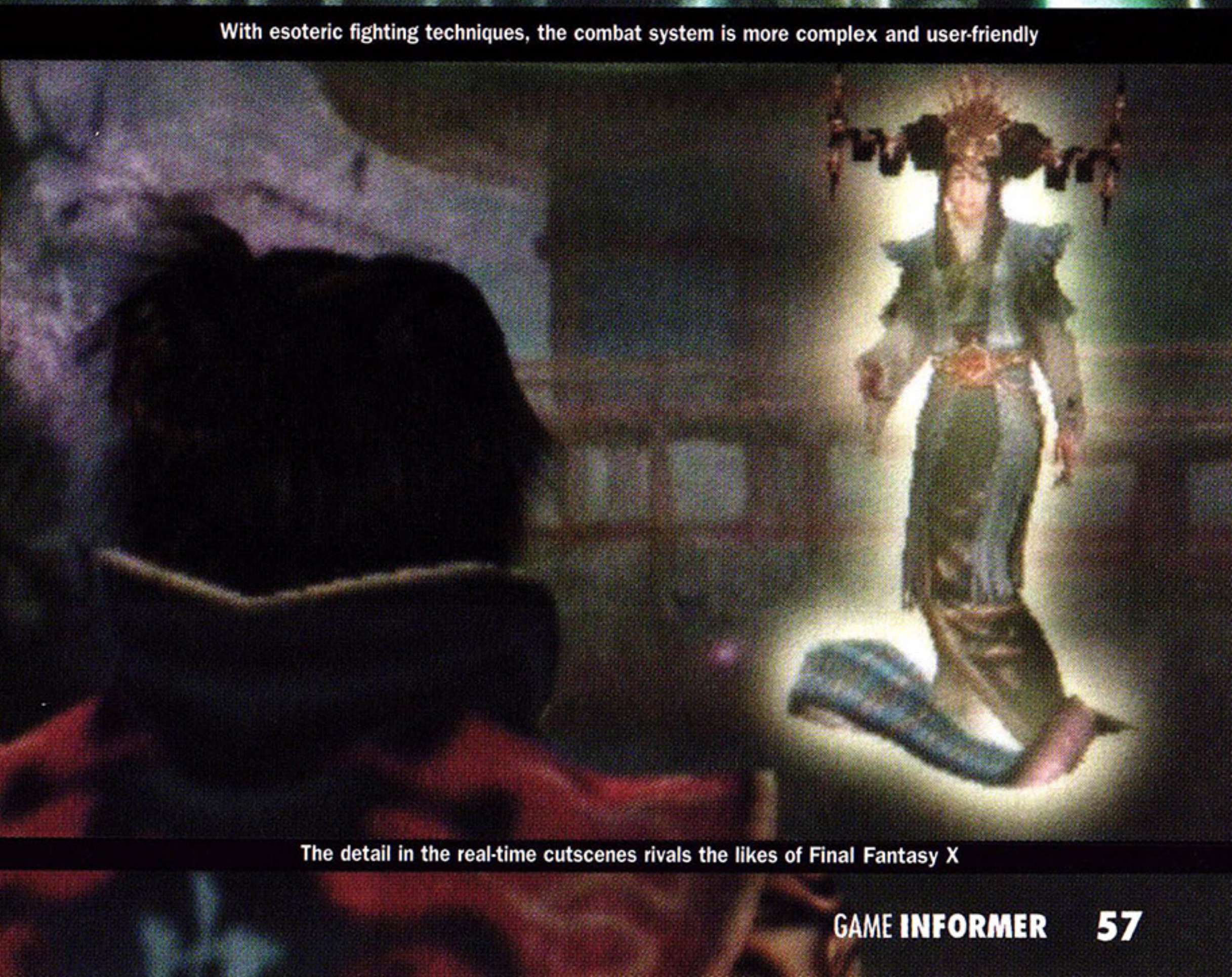
When Jubei collects five giant blue orbs, he will transform into a God-like entity who can unleash devastating attacks



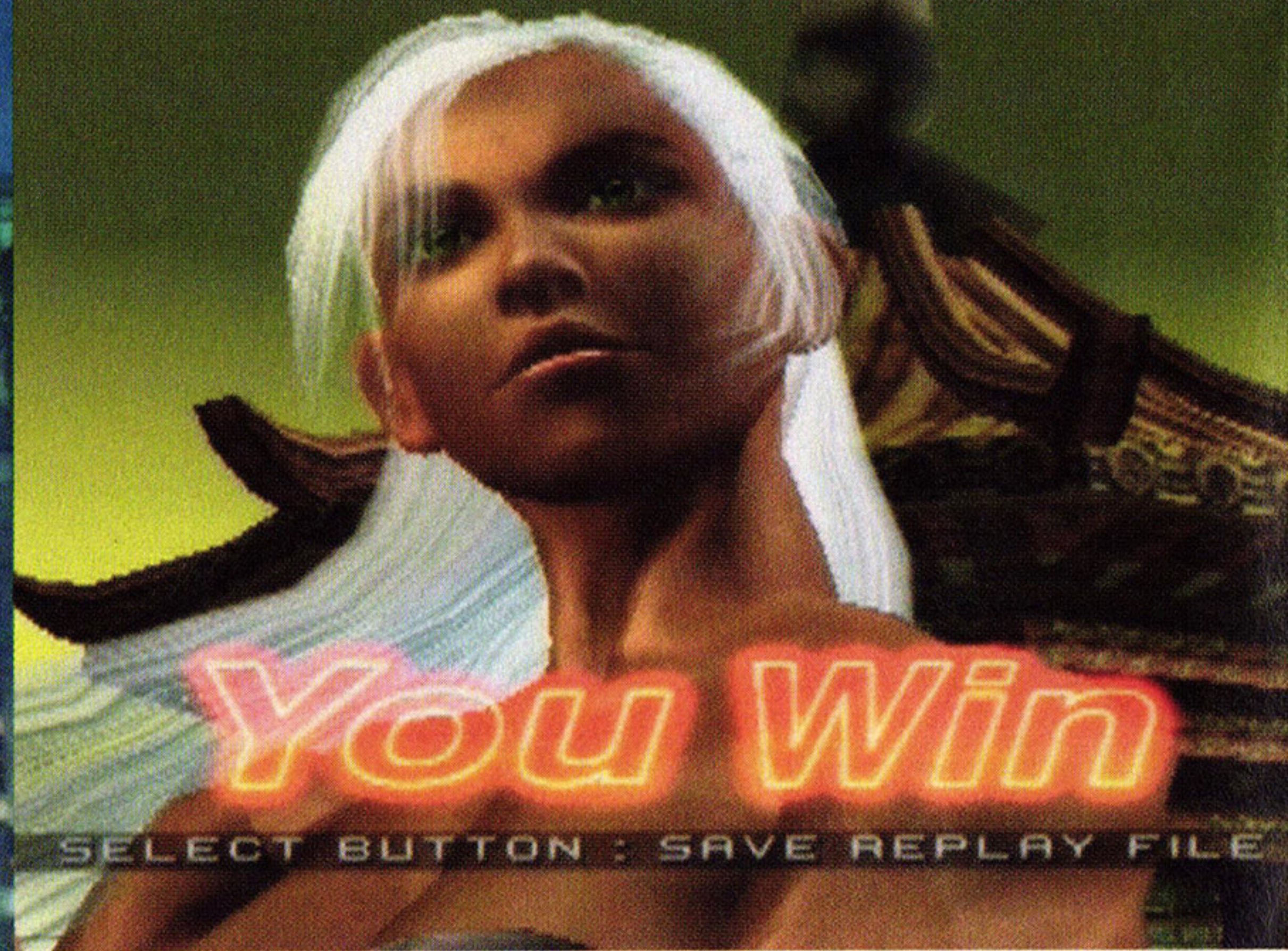
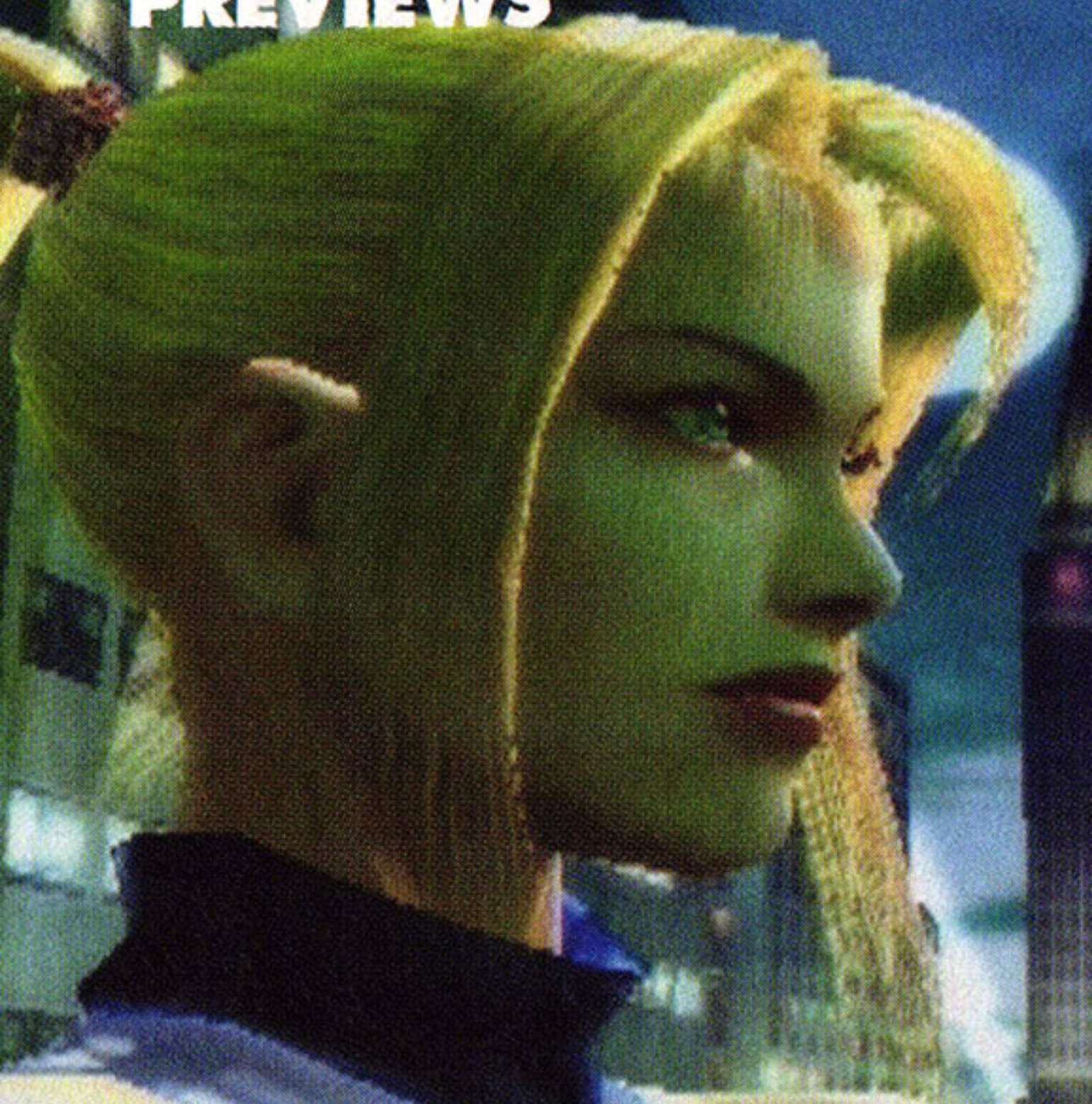
With esoteric fighting techniques, the combat system is more complex and user-friendly



If you're struggling with a battle, an ally will run in and join the fight



The detail in the real-time cutscenes rivals the likes of Final Fantasy X



The two new characters, Vanessa and Lei Fei, square off



The camera zooms in on the action for throws and holds



The water doesn't affect the fighting but it sure is cool to look at

PLAYSTATION 2

VIRTUA FIGHTER 4

EVERYBODY WAS KUNG FU FIGHTING

After months of waiting, we finally got our hands on a playable copy of Virtua Fighter 4 and to say the least, we are impressed. From the user interface to backgrounds, the level of detail is quite outstanding. Unfortunately, the game doesn't look quite as sharp as its arcade counterpart, but fans will be pleased with its speed of play and quick load times.

The first time we fired it up, we were a little disappointed with the size of the player models and, on some close-ups, how the characters aren't as smooth and lifelike as we would have liked. Don't get us wrong, however. The game looks absolutely gorgeous. One of the most impressive things is the environments. The backgrounds are full of life and the use of particle and lighting effects, like snow and water, have to be seen in motion to be believed.

For those of you unfamiliar with the arcade release, Virtua Fighter 4 features two new combatants, Lei Fei and Vanessa Lewis, to bring the total number of fighters up to 13. To Virtua Fighter veterans, the play is just as you would expect, but there

are many new counters and defensive moves that allow players to switch up their stance and fighting styles mid-fight. The combat itself is fierce, and there are a number of new moves that will have you exploring characters for weeks, learning techniques.

There are also some nice console-only extras, like the ability to customize your character's clothing, or add new accessories like sunglasses and hairstyles. Players can also coach their own AI characters, then pit them against each other or challenge Arcade mode.

Game Informer is very excited about this release, and had a blast getting in some playtime. However, it must be said that even with all the great work Sega has done for this release, it still doesn't look quite as outstanding as the Xbox's Dead or Alive 3. Yet, once you get the controller in hand and start playing, the slight downgrade in graphics won't make a lick of difference, as Virtua Fighter 4 has more than enough playability to keep any fighting fan happy.

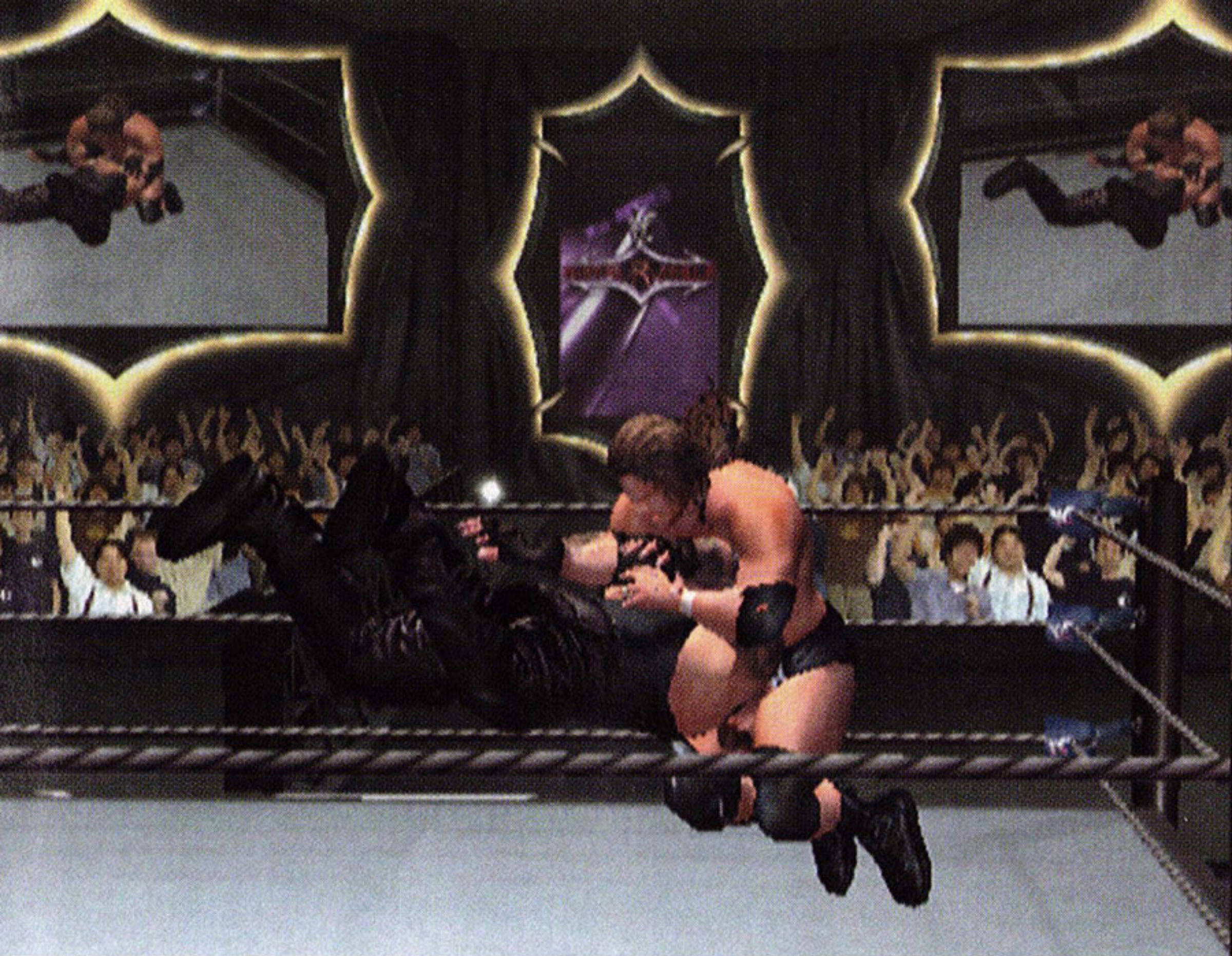
■ STYLE 1 OR 2-PLAYER FIGHTING ■ PUBLISHER SEGA ■ DEVELOPER AM2 ■ RELEASE MARCH 19



Check out the snow particle effects



Combatants leave their mark in the fluff, so don't eat the yellow snow



GAMECUBE

WWF WRESTLEMANIA X8

THE BEST THERE IS, WAS, AND EVER WILL BE?

WrestleMania is the grandest

spectacle for the WWF each year. Past highlights include Hulk Hogan slamming Andre the Giant at WrestleMania III, Mike Tyson acting as an enforcer for Shawn Michaels passing the torch to Steve Austin at WrestleMania XIV, and the Hogan-Warrior showdown at WrestleMania VI. Perhaps the biggest moment of them all, though, was Special Delivery Jones jobbing to King Kong Bundy in nine seconds in the first WrestleMania. Who knows what this year's event will hold, with the World Wrestling Federation bringing the wildest angles and the biggest matches to the Toronto SkyDome? After getting a peek at this game, though, our attention is turned more to GameCube than Pay-Per-View.

Our fondest wrestling game memories take place on Nintendo 64. It's there where THQ mixed the brilliance of Aki's engine with the WWF's attitude to craft some of the best titles around. The new era of next-gen gaming has produced nothing that rivals No Mercy and WrestleMania 2000, using inferior engines and shallower career modes. Luckily, WrestleMania X8 is looking to keep up this Nintendo console legacy, and squash j-brones like SmackDown and Xbox's Raw under its patent leather boot.

One big issue is the roster. Finally, we'll get to have guys like Booker T, Rob Van Dam, and Hurricane Helms at our disposal – all with around 3,500 polygons each. We've even heard the words Ric Flair spoken by THQ execs. Whooo! And, if we can be serious for minute, we're also keeping our fingers crossed for Lance Storm as a playable wrestler. Thanks to a new engine reminiscent of the N64 games, these superstars will have even more of their signature maneuvers than ever before!

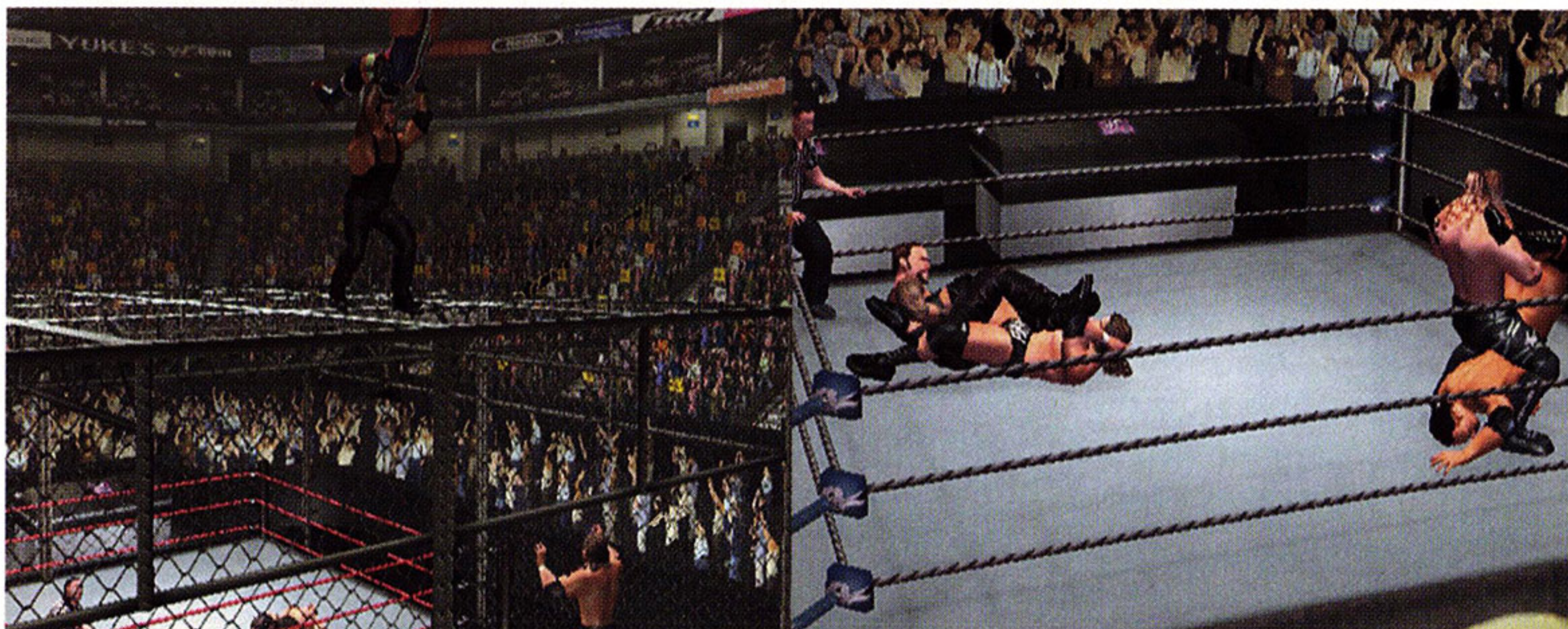
Gimmick matches add replay to a title. Two guys facing off in the ring is fun, but we like to throw cells, tables, and more combatants into the mix. As you can see, Hell in a Cell is here. TLC (Tables, Ladders and Chairs) matches are also in full effect. What we have is a game that appears to combine the graphical splendor of WWF Raw, the options of SmackDown, and the gameplay of No Mercy. Hot damn! What about career mode and create-a-wrestler depth, you ask? We're not sure, but we're chomping at the bit to find out. WrestleMania X8 is the Mecca for sports entertainment, and may become the same for wrestling games.



Kick him in the jimmy, Kurt!



Kurt Angle is the best of the best in wrestling



Hasn't Undertaker done enough damage in Hell in a Cell?

It's a slobberknocker if we've ever seen one



The bionic redneck has some sharp shoulders

■ STYLE 1 TO 4-PLAYER FIGHTING ■ PUBLISHER THQ ■ DEVELOPER YUKE'S ■ RELEASE SUMMER



XBOX

BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER

YOU'RE LOOKING BUFF

Some may say that a vampire brawler featuring a teeny-bopper idol has nothing to offer the gaming public. To that, we say, "Bah!" You obviously haven't played this game yet. We wish we could tell you that the boss battle at the end of this title is none other than Lestat from Anne Rice's literature, but it was not to be. That would be quite sweet, however. In lieu of that, the Collective has offered up an extensive line of undead characters just waiting to get their butts kicked by the gorgeous blond bombshell, Buffy.

After taking the preview build through its paces a number of times, it's quite apparent this release will be much better than many people thought it would, or could, be. Overcoming the obstacles that arise from adapting a popular television show into a video game seem to have been accomplished with the use of an exceptional combat system. We didn't think we'd be saying this about a Buffy the Vampire Slayer game, but everything seems to work remarkably well during gameplay. The snappy one-liners and crisp graphics serve to set the title's mood, and the action is unparalleled when it comes to third-person brawlers on the Xbox.

The plot behind the action is designed to give players the feeling that they're playing through a lost episode at the end

of the third season. A number of familiar faces and places are also in attendance such as Willow, Angel, Cordelia, Xander and Giles, as well as locales in and around Sunnydale High School, Buffy's house, the Bronze nightclub and the town square. We're not sure if you're going to believe this, but Buffy has to fight vampires in every one of these places to save her friends.

During your search for those who aren't quite as well versed in beat-down techniques as you are, you'll find that making use of the game's intuitive and effective combo-system will serve you well. Most hard-hitting combos are initiated with the use of Slayer Power – a mana bar of sorts which Buffy keeps full by defeating enemies. You'll also be given assorted weaponry (shovels, wooden stakes...the usual) to help you keep that bar full and your health topped off. Some enemies can be defeated by merely beating them to an oozy pulp, while others require the obligatory stake through the heart. It's up to you to find the best way to utilize the tools you find. This game has a lot to offer and it's coming out soon – don't be afraid to put this one in your library, Xboxers.

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** ELECTRONIC ARTS ■ **DEVELOPER** THE COLLECTIVE/FOX INTERACTIVE
 ■ **RELEASE** MARCH 5



"Ohmigawd. This place is like totally DIRTY!"



Using garden implements will fend off any foe

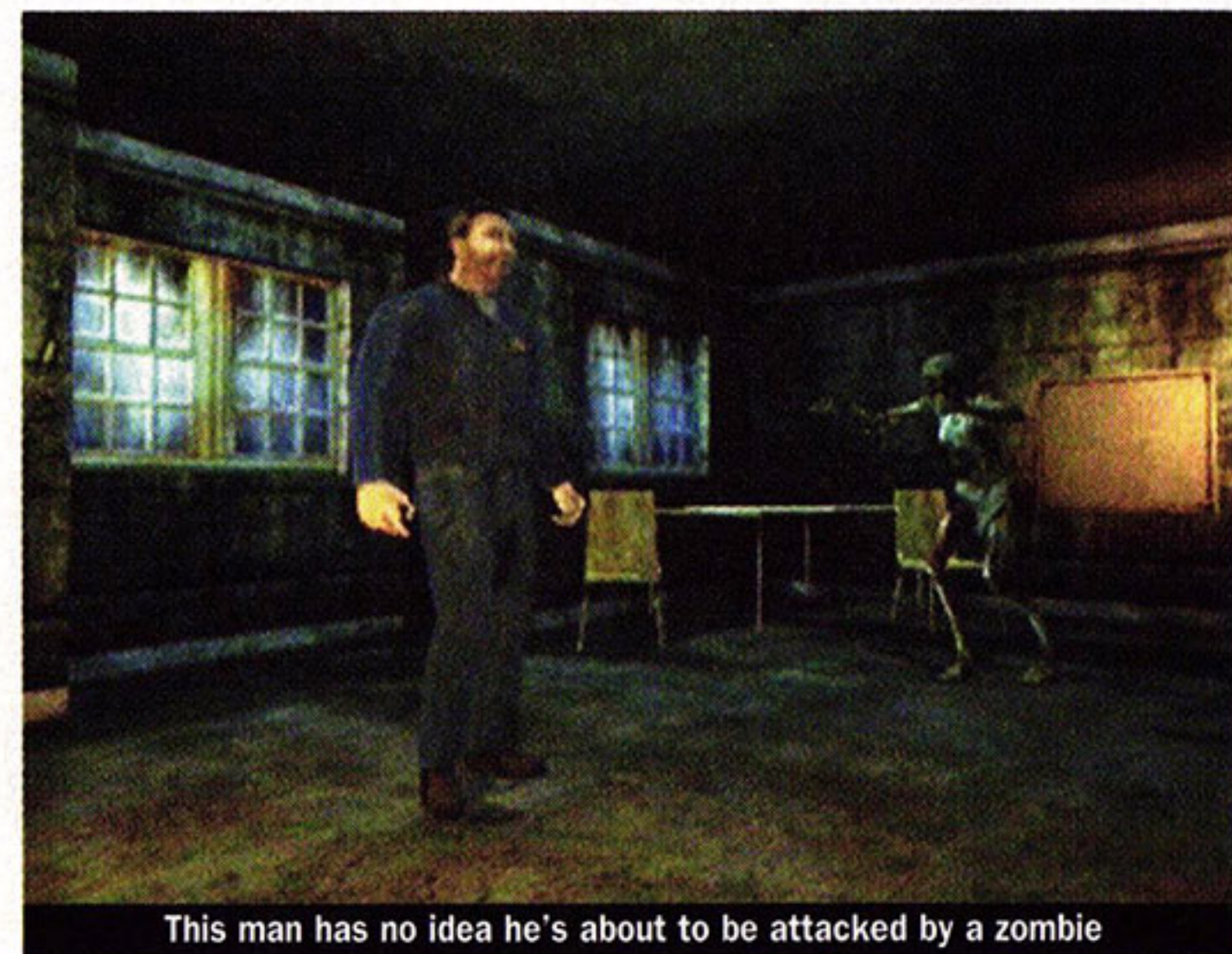


A Buffy jump



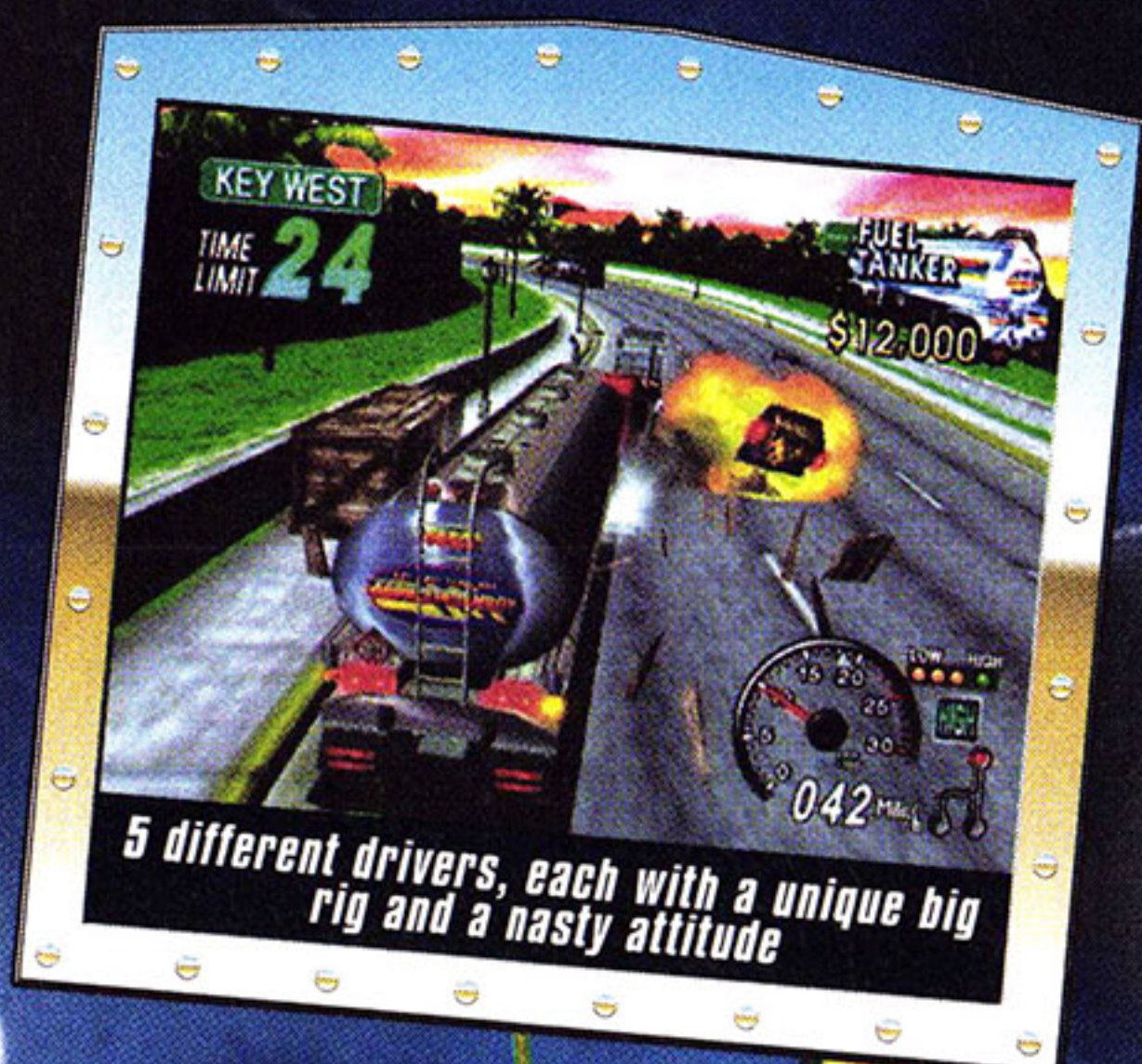
And now with the glow-in-the-dark jewelry. What's up with that?

"Um, you're like a total Melvin. Get out of my way!"



This man has no idea he's about to be attacked by a zombie

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2-player, split-screen "Versus Mode," featuring 4 different raceways



PlayStation 2

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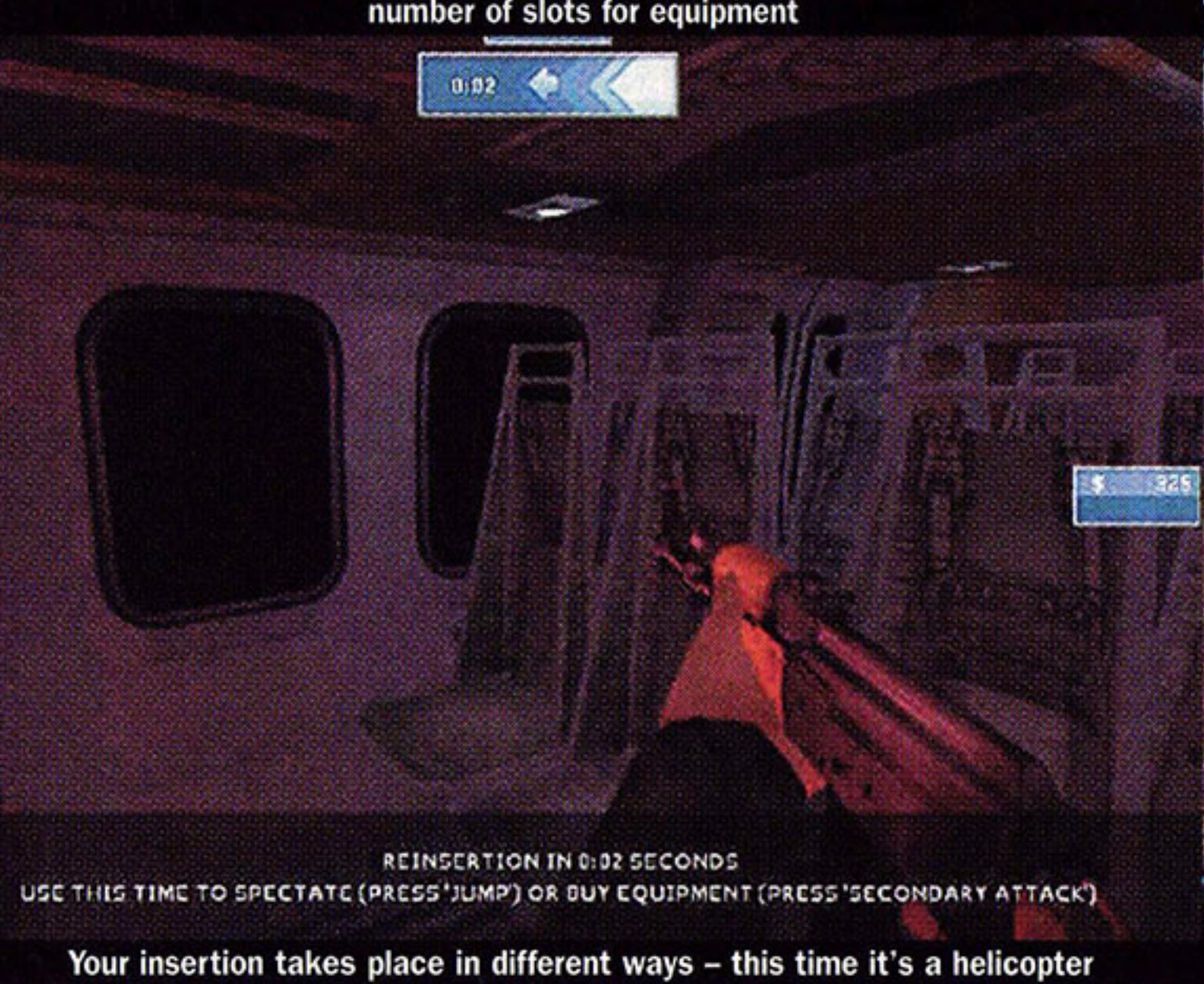
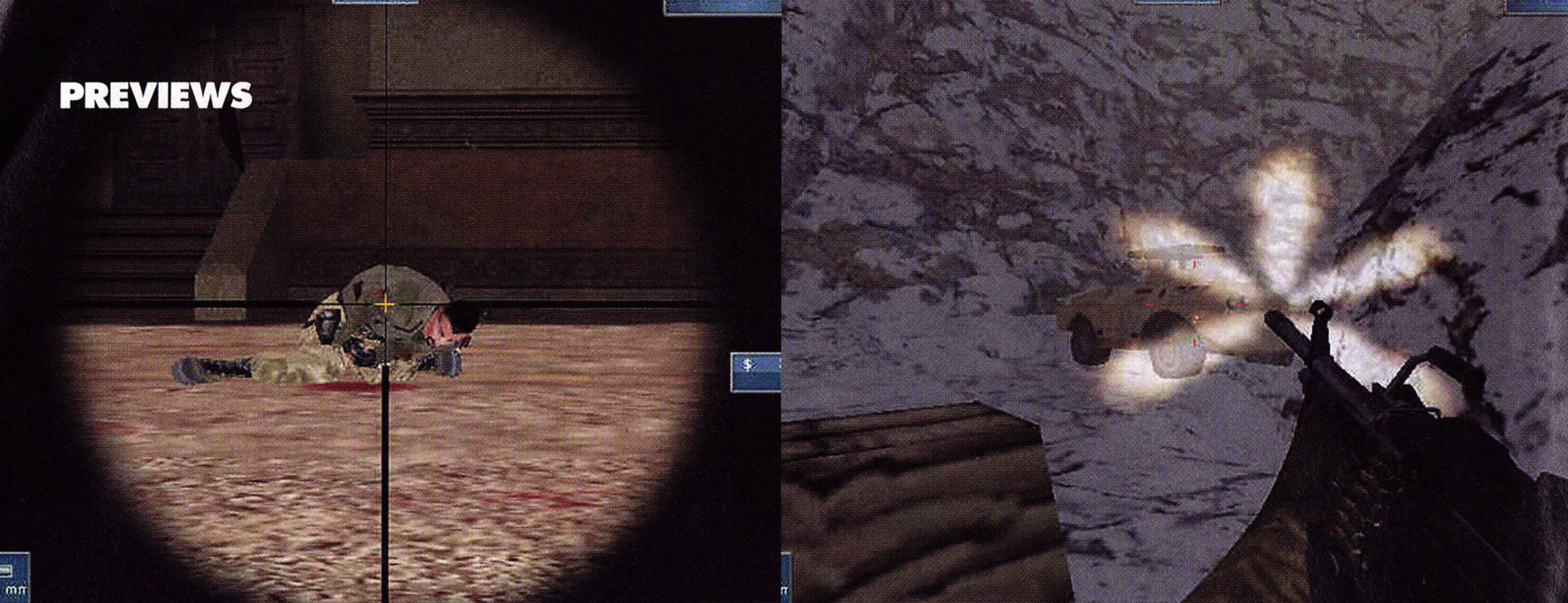
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EVERYONE
E
CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB

VIOLENCE



PC

GLOBAL OPERATIONS

MULTIPLAYER NIRVANA

In this newly born age of the realistic multiplayer first-person shooter genre, few have been able to claim superiority and dominance – with the possible exception of Counter-Strike. Anyone interested in the category has his or her particular favorites, but EA is attempting to wipe the slate clean and become everyone's favorite by incorporating into one hard-hitting package, the pieces of what makes each game fun on its own.

Basically, Global Operations will be a next-gen hybrid of Counter-Strike and Team Fortress. When you open the game, you're given a number of one-player levels to practice against bot opponents, and also the obligatory online component to unleash your squad-based tactical abilities. There are a number of customizable options to explore before you start in on the fighting, such as assorted patches you can choose to have displayed on your uniform, but the real teeth of the load-out phase comes when you choose your character. Six different troopers are available, each with special abilities. The Demoman is the C4 and grenade launcher specialist, the Heavy Gunner does the machine gun work, Commandos are a middle-of-the-road type of assault trooper, Recon units have the ability to manipulate a device that shows who is in the area regardless of walls or environment (enemies and friendlies are color-coded), and the Medic and Sniper do what you'd think they'd do.

If you happen to stumble upon a weapon left behind by those less fortunate (how could you not?), you're able to manipulate anyone's piece, but with varying degrees of effectiveness. A Recon unit won't be able to use a machine gun as effectively as a Heavy Gunner, etc. That's not to say that picking up a discarded weapon is useless; you'll just have to judge how effective you'll be with a new gun. Apart from the armament side of things, the insertion techniques are much more interesting than simply spawning out of thin air. You'll be airdropped into some locations, driven in by armored transport in others, and flown in by attack helicopters for those hard-to-reach spots.

So you're probably wondering how the game actually plays. Having spent a good deal of time with the beta version, we feel pretty confident in telling you that Global Operations is basically Counter-Strike taken to the next level. There are more guns, explosives, add-ons, mission objectives and strategic possibilities than any other game of this type yet released. That being said, this is not meant to be a single-player game. You may enjoy it for a time without going online, but that's where its bread and butter lies. If you're looking for an FPS with a lot of single-player potential, buy Medal of Honor: Allied Assault. For online fun, Global Ops may be the next big thing.

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 24-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** ELECTRONIC ARTS ■ **DEVELOPER** BARKING DOG STUDIOS ■ **RELEASE** MARCH 12



4-PLAY AT ITS BEST



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GAUNTLET DARK LEGACY



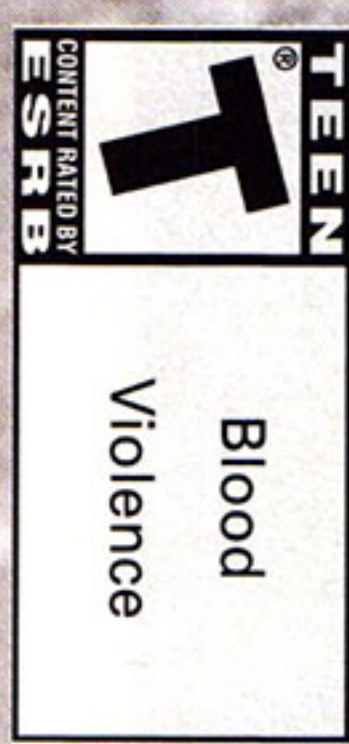
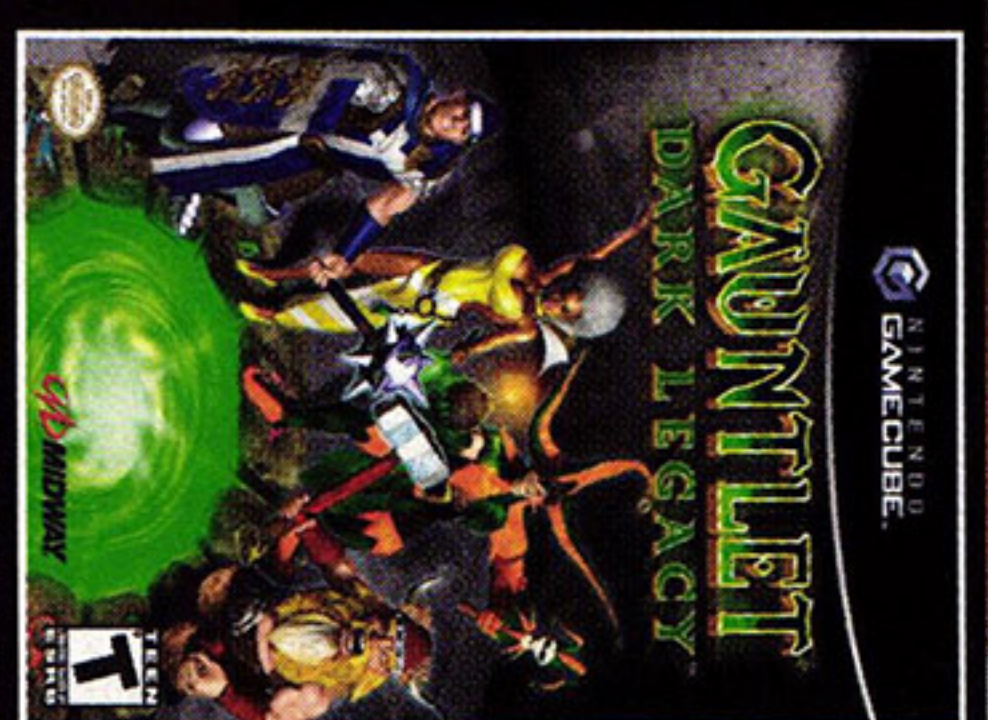
Terrifying Boss Battles



Spectacular Magic Attacks



1-4 Player Co-operative Action



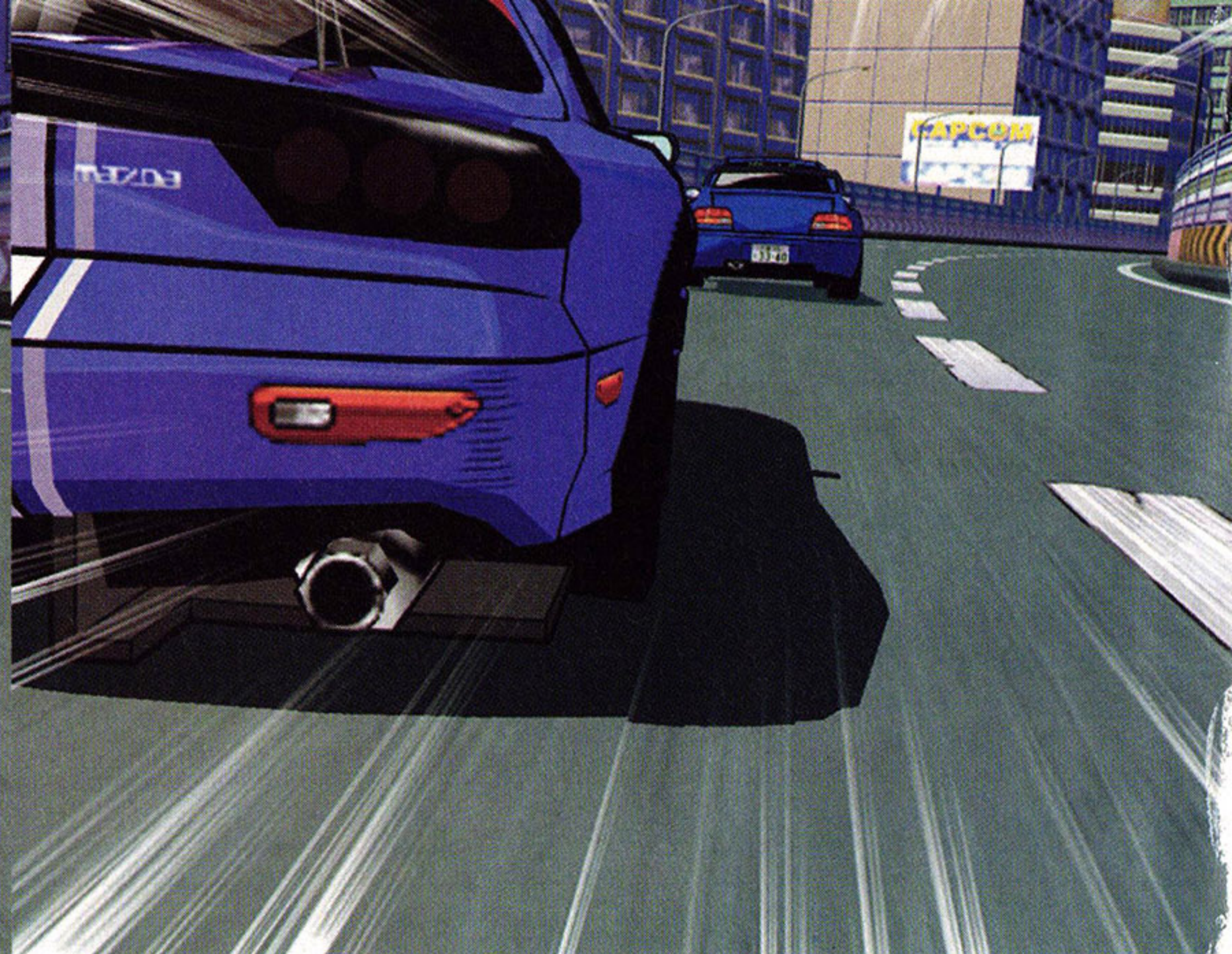
PlayStation®2



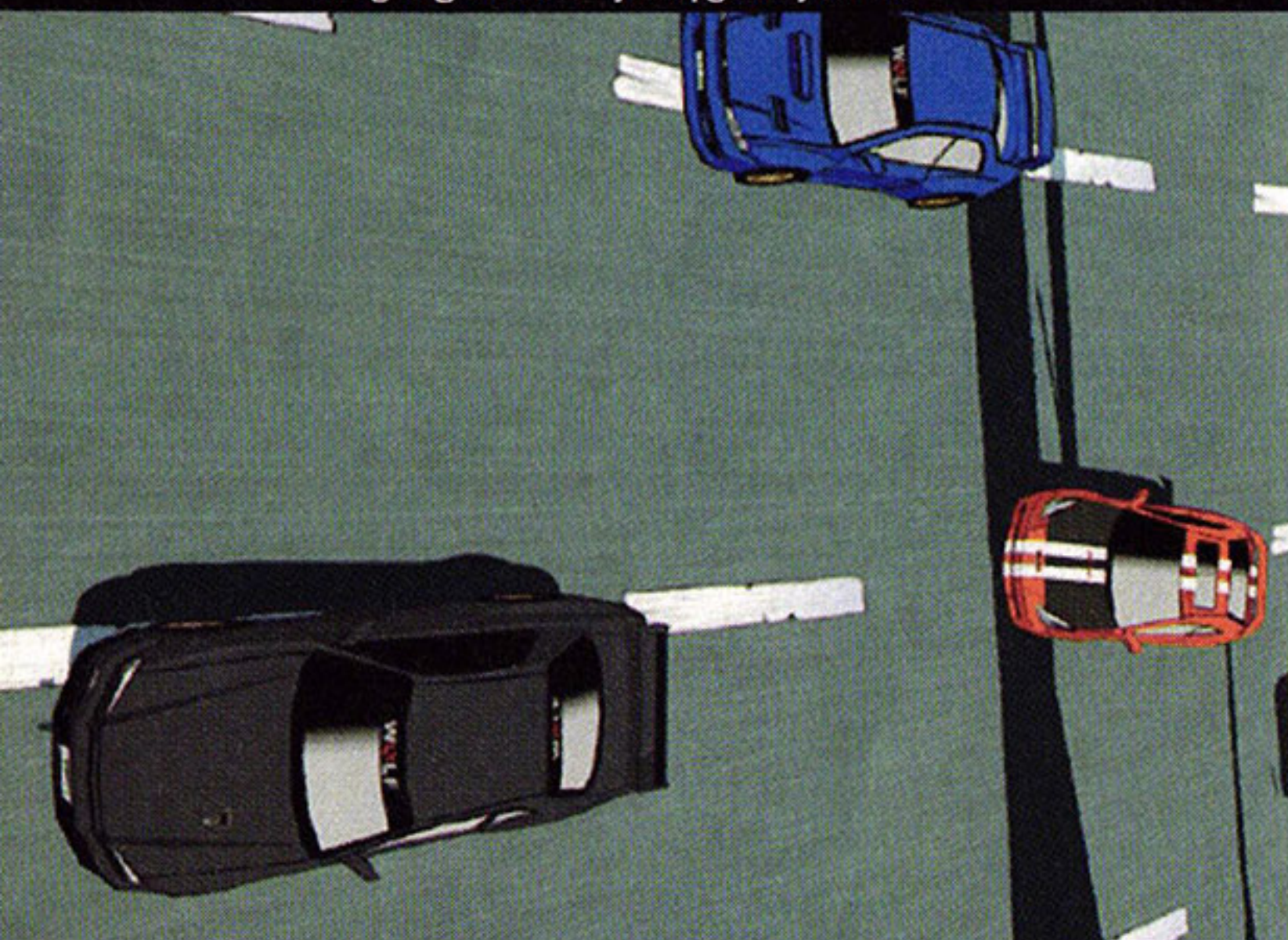
Available March 2002
Sneak Preview at
gauntletdarklegacy.com



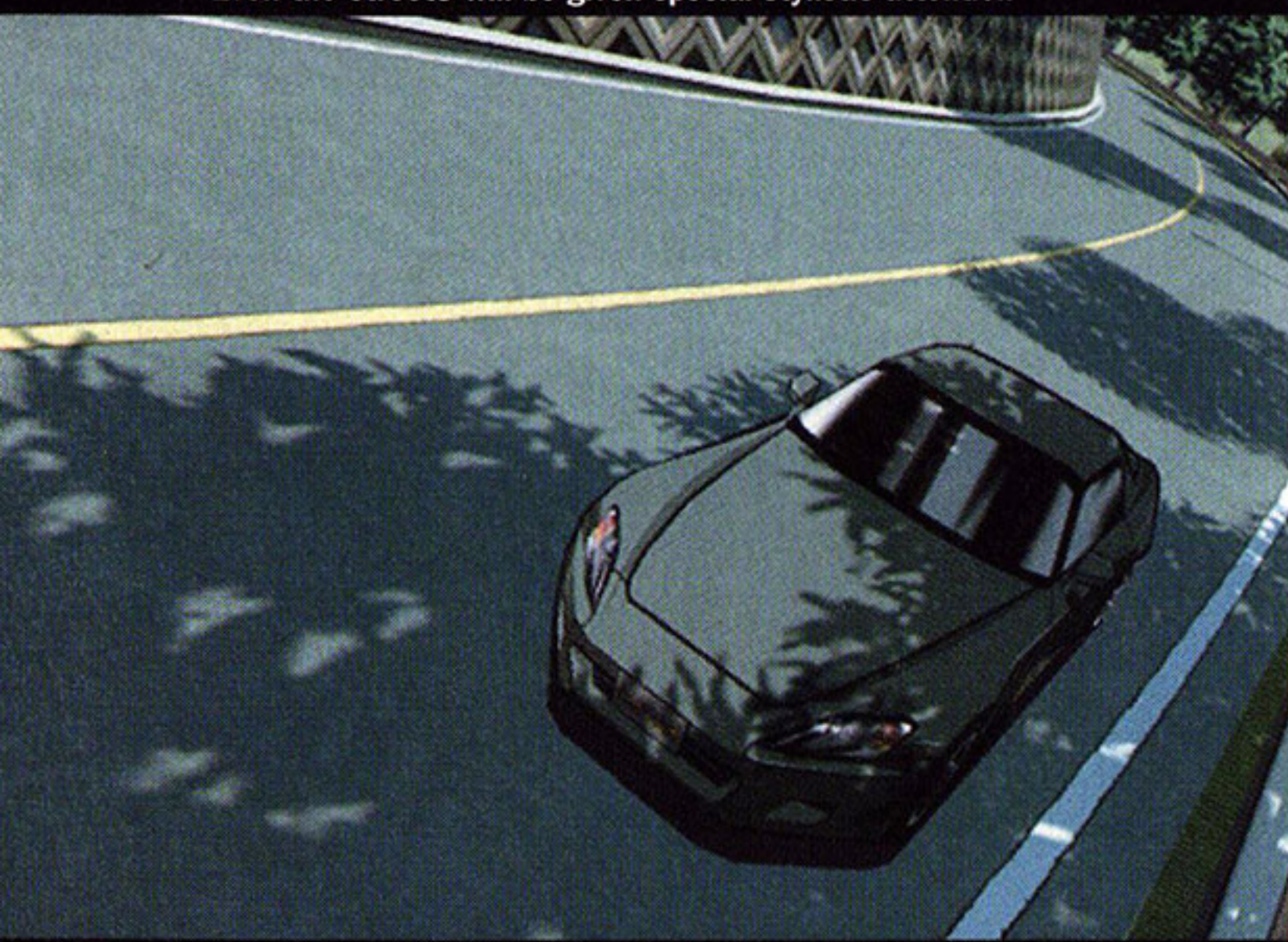
PREVIEWS



The garage is where you upgrade your ride



Even the streets will be given special stylistic attention



Shading and lighting effects will all be highly realistic

PLAYSTATION 2

AUTO MODELLISTA

AUTO WHAT-A?



This intriguing game's peculiar style can be explained, in large part, by understanding the meaning of its title. Literally translated as "Car Designer," this is a release that will push the envelope when it comes to people's perceptions of a racing game. From the pictures, you can already tell this is unlike anything you've seen before, but what you don't know is how much more lies beneath the flashy and highly stylized surface. Game Informer had the opportunity to talk with Auto Modellista's producer, Yoshihiro Sudo, about what gamers can expect from this unique title.

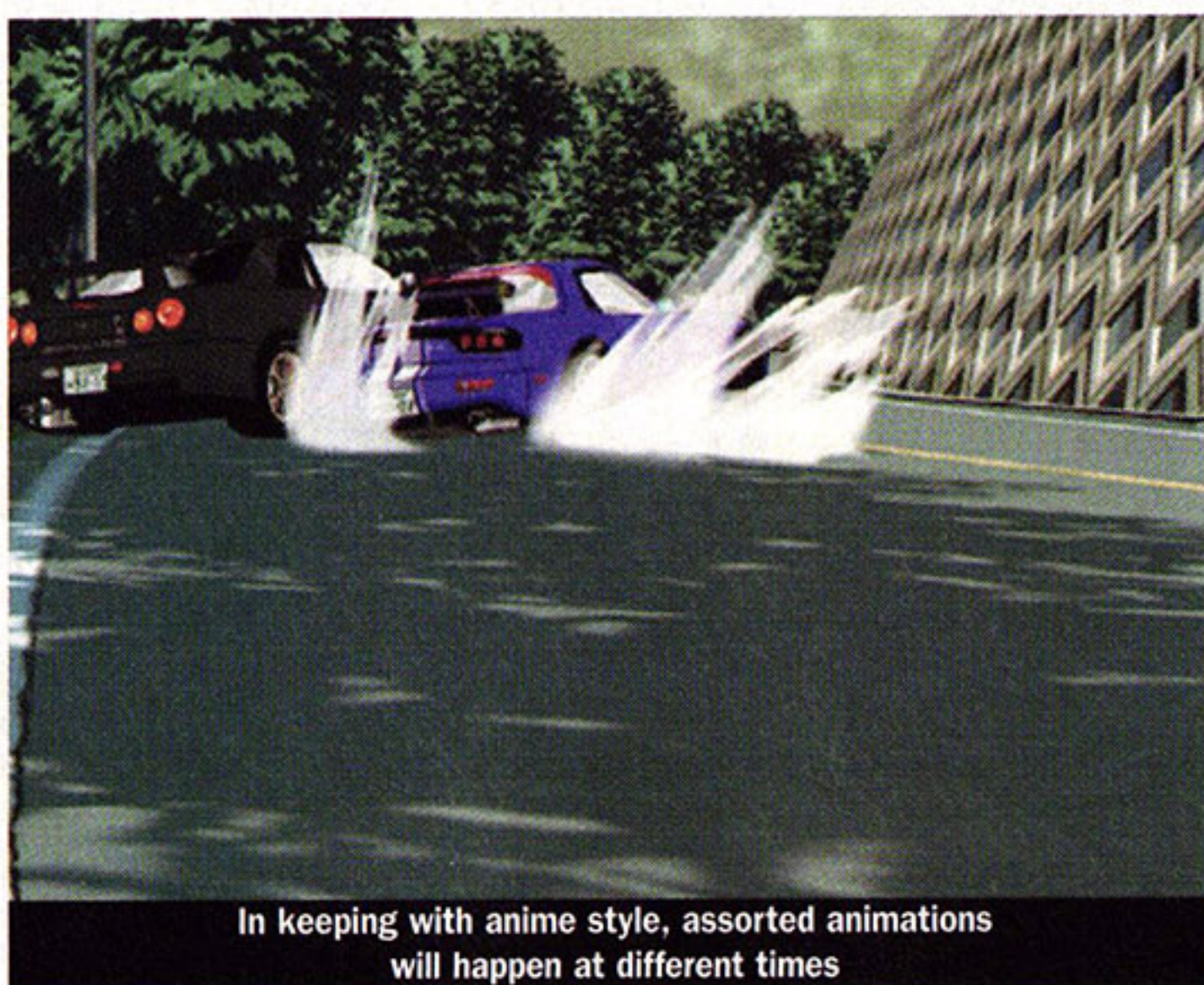
As a cel-shaded, reality-based racer, this game raises a number of questions. What we really wanted to know was what led Capcom, a company that has never released a game of this ilk before, to decide on going forward with such an ambitious project. Mr. Sudo told us, "I wanted to create a never-before-seen racing game. Because the majority of [racing games out there] boast 'realistic' graphics, I wanted to create something totally different. We also felt the anime-style presentation was the best way to express what we believe is the fun element in driving cars." When we asked how difficult it has been to give a realistic feel to a vehicle modeled using typically "unrealistic" techniques, we were told, "In adopting anime-style graphics, there's a great danger that your graphics may end up looking very 'cheap.' I

have seen a couple of games that have fallen into that trap. We did not simply adopt cel-shaded graphics, but spent a long time in establishing our own skills to achieve both anime-style and realism at the same time. In addition, we placed great importance on the game's overall atmosphere and tried to understand each car's appealing points and represent them accurately. That attention to the small details should give gamers a refreshing experience."

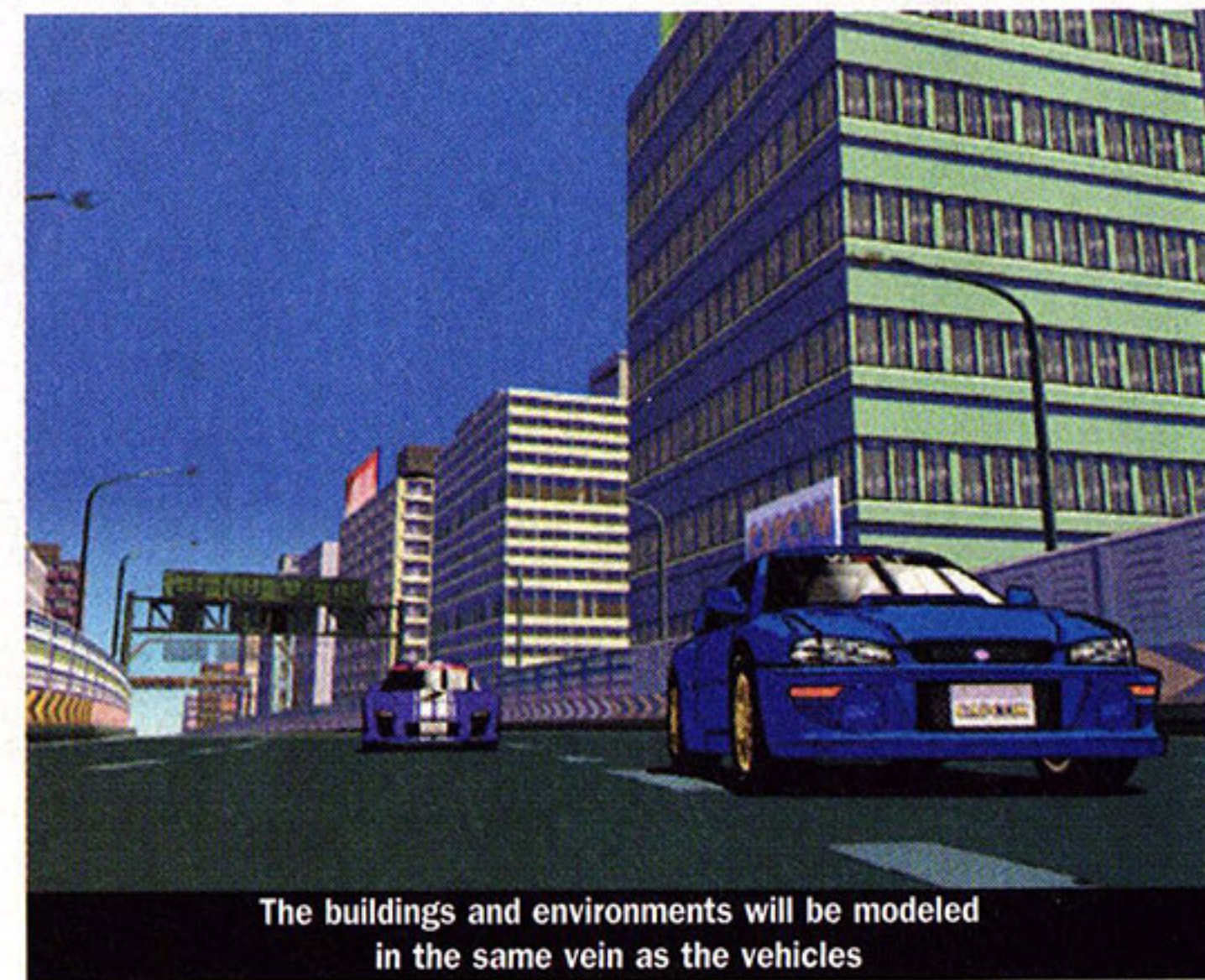
This all sounds quite exciting, especially given the fact that players will be able to build fully customizable cars from the beginning of the game, then race them to upgrade their looks and abilities. When we asked exactly which cars would be available for play, we were assured that Japanese, American and European models would all be available, but exact models are still under negotiation. Hopefully, Mr. Sudo and company will bring back the AMC Pacer, but we have a feeling it might be overlooked.

Auto Modellista will undoubtedly be one of the most unique games to hit the PS2 racing circuit next fall, but will it have the gameplay to back up its novel look? As in all things, time will tell – but from what we've seen and heard, this title seems to be shaping up quite well.

■ STYLE 1 TO 4-PLAYER RACING ■ PUBLISHER CAPCOM ■ DEVELOPER CAPCOM ■ RELEASE FALL



In keeping with anime style, assorted animations will happen at different times



The buildings and environments will be modeled in the same vein as the vehicles



PLAYSTATION 2/XBOX/GAMECUBE

CHRIS EDWARDS AGGRESSIVE INLINE

BE AGGRESSIVE! B-E AGGRESSIVE!

Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX 2 – cool game, right? Well, the same studio that brought you the best BMX game around is now entering the uncharted waters of inline skating. Unlike how Mat Hoffman was to Tony Hawk, Chris Edwards Aggressive Inline isn't just the old game's engine with a new lead character. Instead, it's a brand new endeavor for Acclaim Max Sports, Z-Axis, and the action sports genre as a whole.

When your wheels are attached to your feet, your options are nearly limitless. The same applies to Aggressive Inline. You can skate, grind, and perform tricks while skating forward and backwards (fakie). When you're facing the other way, you sacrifice speed and air, but your points will be greater. With your hands free, the game lets you swing around poles to gain height or reach new areas. Also, you can skitch cars – grabbing onto them and hitching a short ride to rest your burning calves.

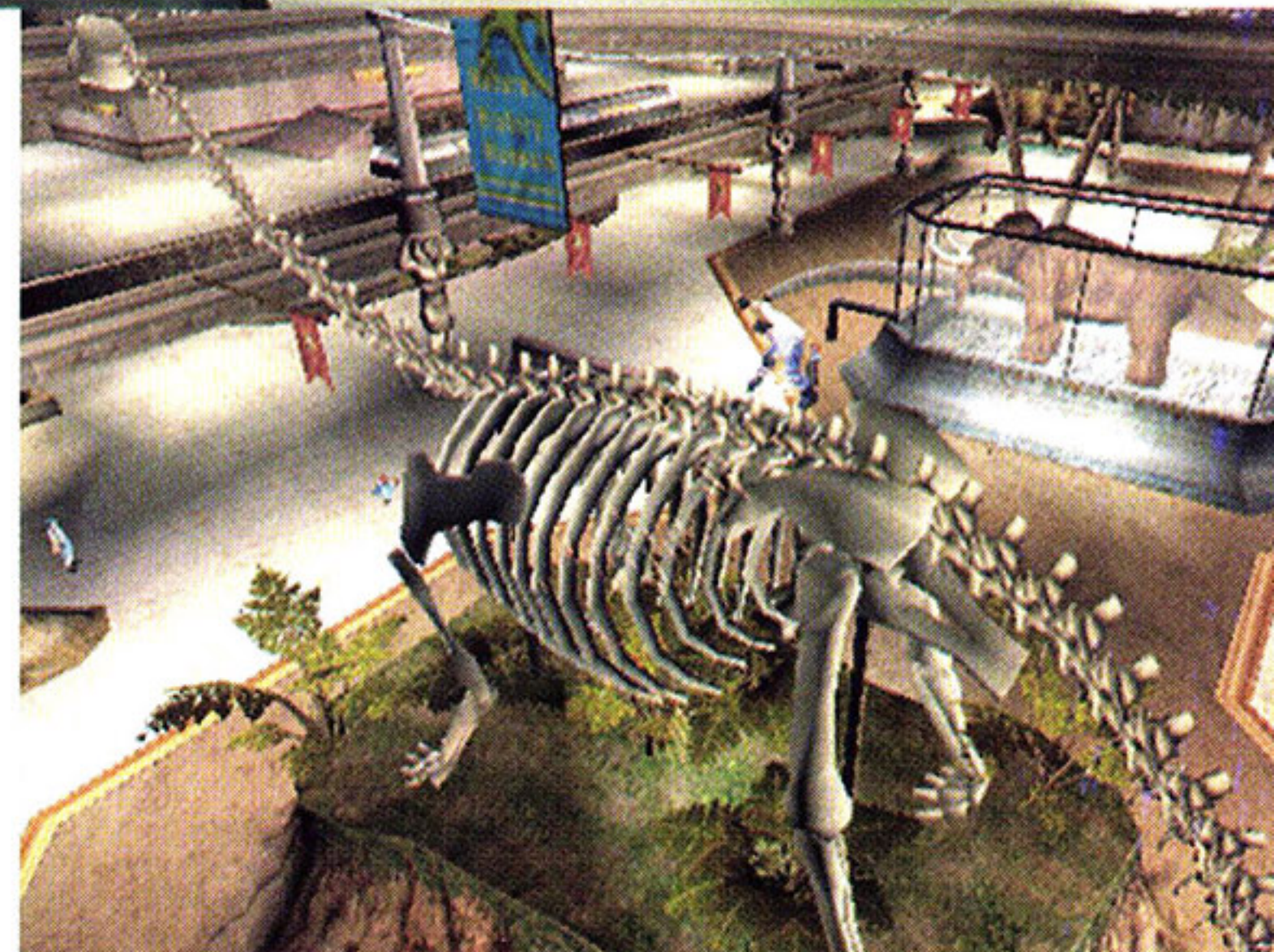
The innovation doesn't stop with Chris Edwards' mobility. The trick system has been revamped from the clever modifier system of Mirra. Tricks are performed on one button, but it's how many directions you tap that alters what the trick is. Tap one direction, and you'll do a grab trick. The second tap makes your character spin. Tap three, if you're feeling lucky, will modify the trick for even more reward. The other main button is an action button, which does countless things, depending on the situation. You'll use it to talk to people, to

swing or grab objects, to transfer, and do just about every non-trick activity.

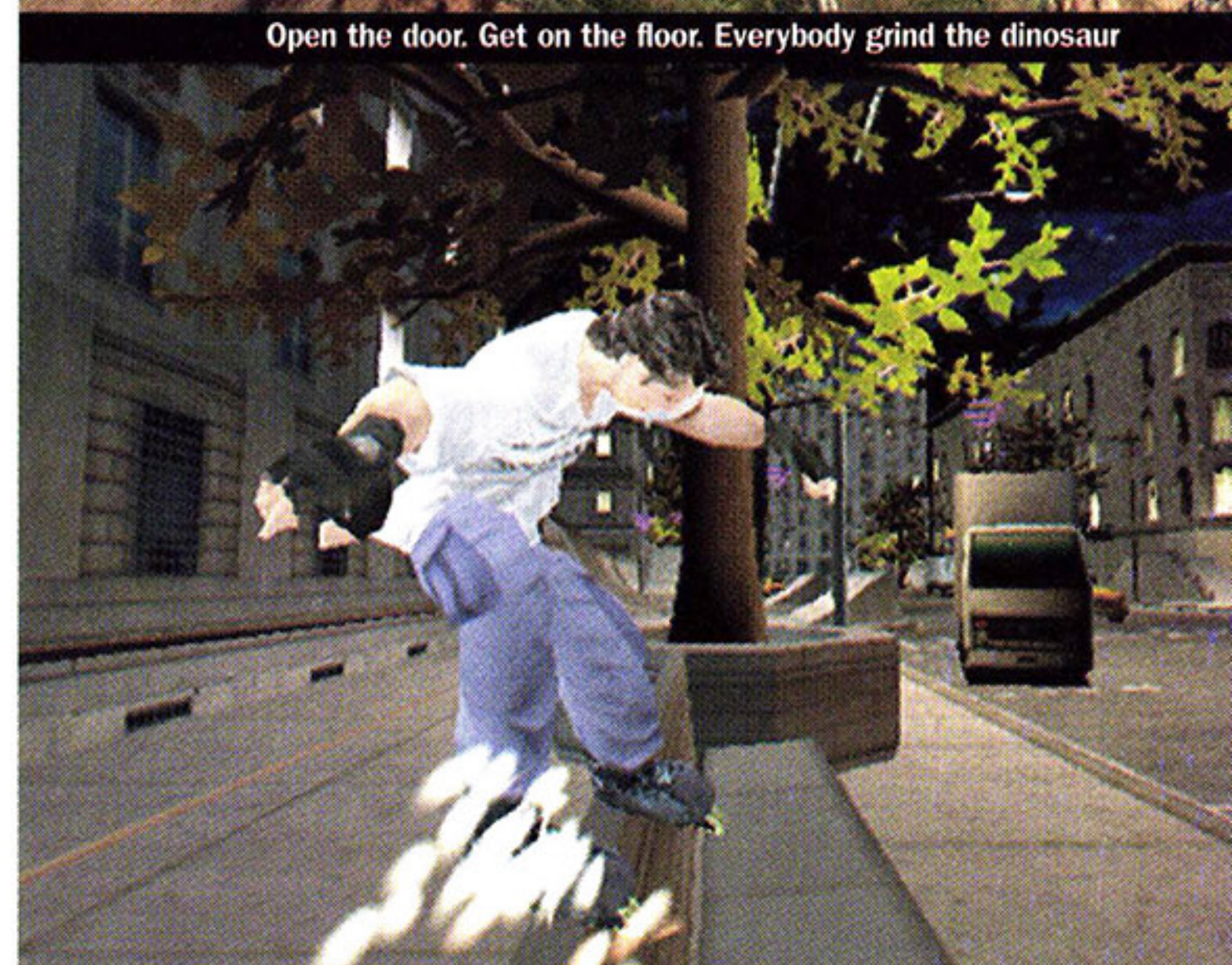
The nine levels are almost on par with the huge scope of Mirra 2's, but this time there is a lot more put into each one. Not only will they have a grocery list of tasks to accomplish, but pedestrians hanging out will make you do their bidding, too. Numerous cinematic events occur on every stage. For example, a clown may ask you (with a voice-over, no less) to take care of a Ferris wheel's bolt. This causes the wheel to come loose, trouncing through the level and ending up in the water, which allows you to reach a previously unattainable island. Pretty smokin', huh? Like we said, there's a bunch of these, as well as a one-on-one match-up with a rival skater on every level. In an odd twist, there is no time limit for your run, though many missions will only give you so much time to accomplish them.

You want more, you greedy so-and-so? Aggressive Inline, unlike Mirra 2, has simultaneous split-screen multiplayer, aside from a bunch of turn-based games. Crashes have been made even sicker, and in many cases are event-specific. The park editor returns, and your building skills will even be put to the test in level objectives. Z-Axis is definitely not resting on its Mirra accomplishments. Chris Edwards Aggressive Inline will not only stand on its own two feet, it's poised to revolutionize action sports as we know it.

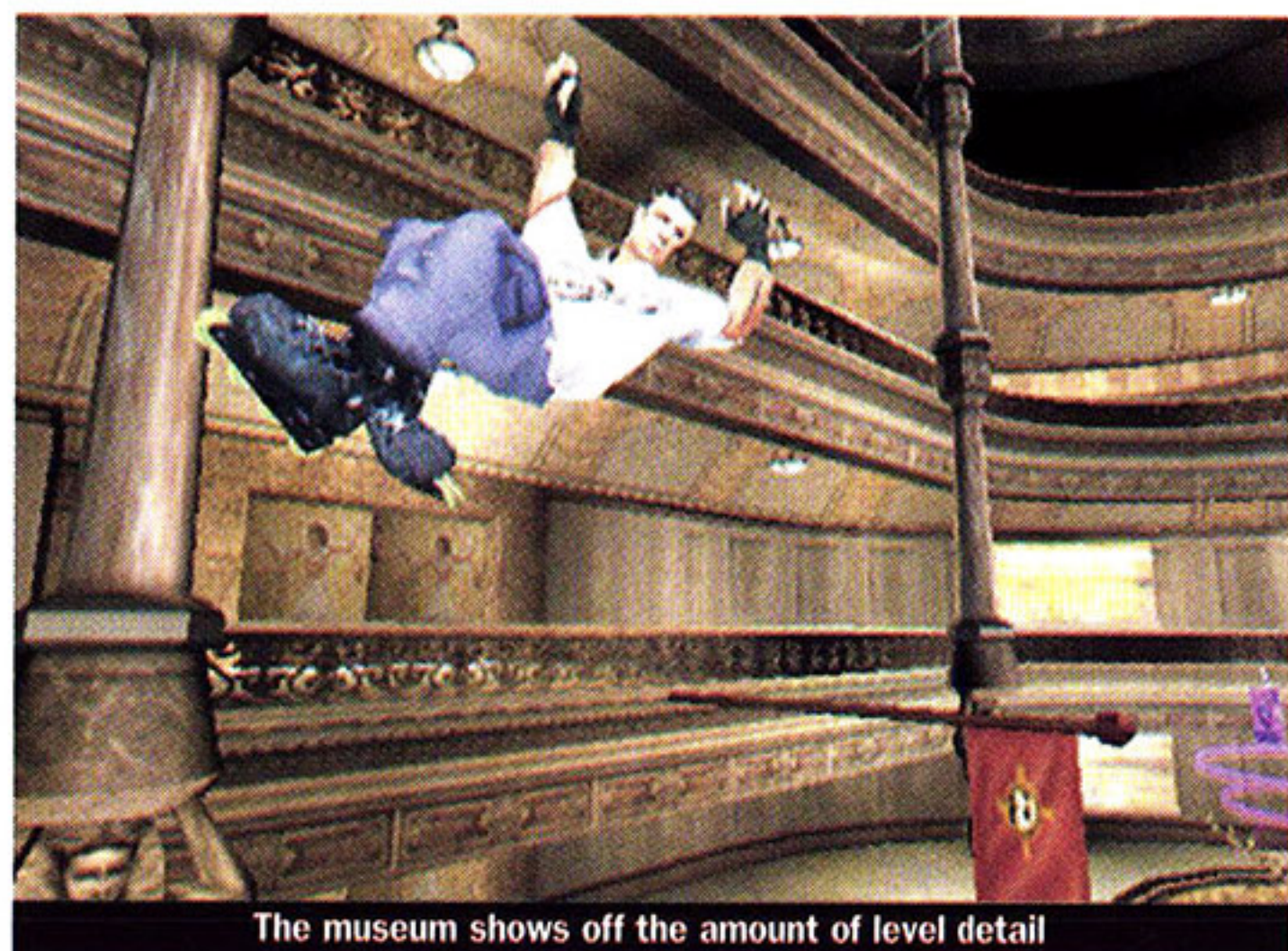
■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER ACTION/SPORTS ■ **PUBLISHER** ACCLAIM MAX SPORTS ■ **DEVELOPER** Z-AXIS
 ■ **RELEASE** MAY 16 (PLAYSTATION 2), AUGUST (XBOX, GAMECUBE)



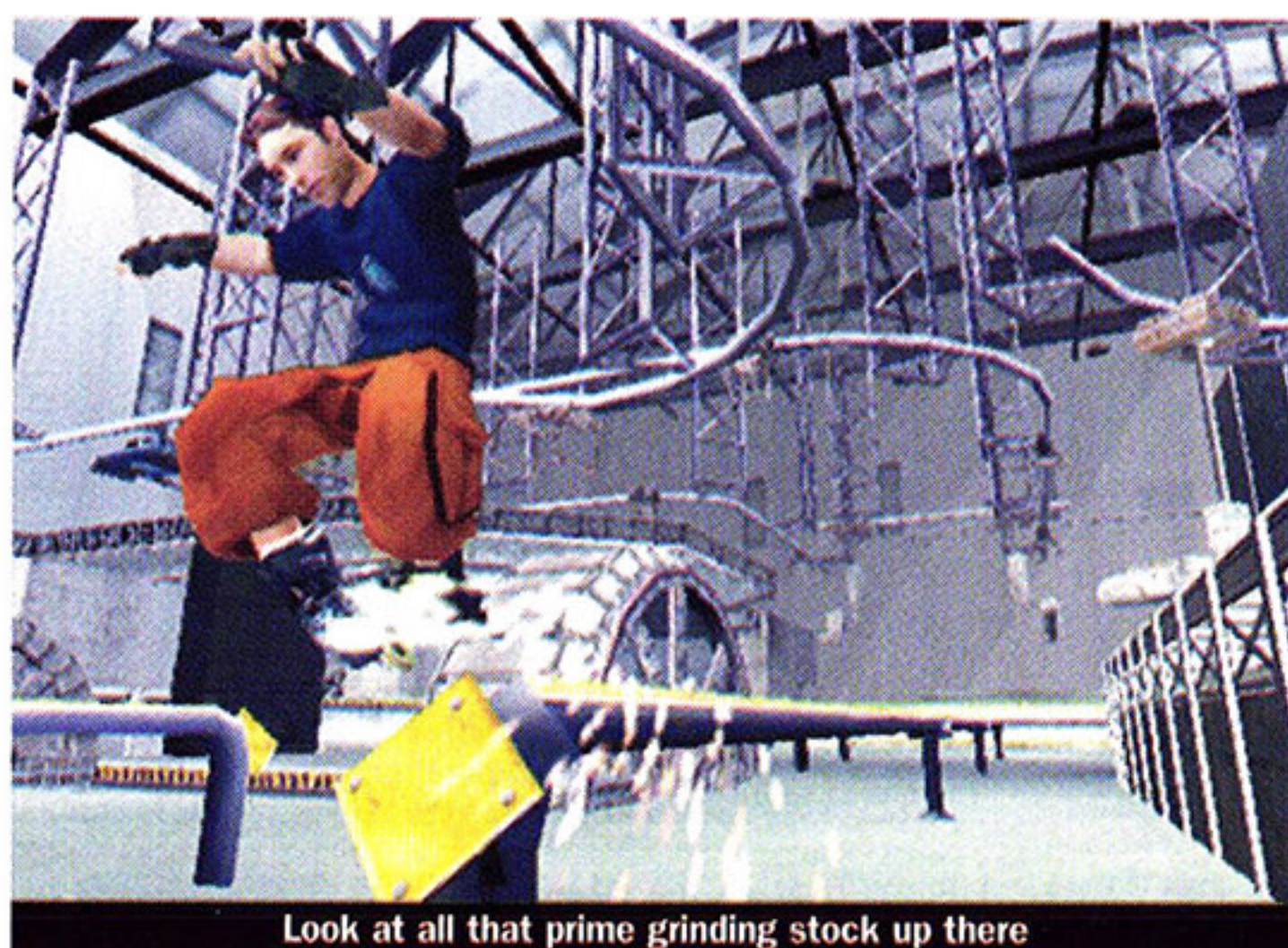
Open the door. Get on the floor. Everybody grind the dinosaur



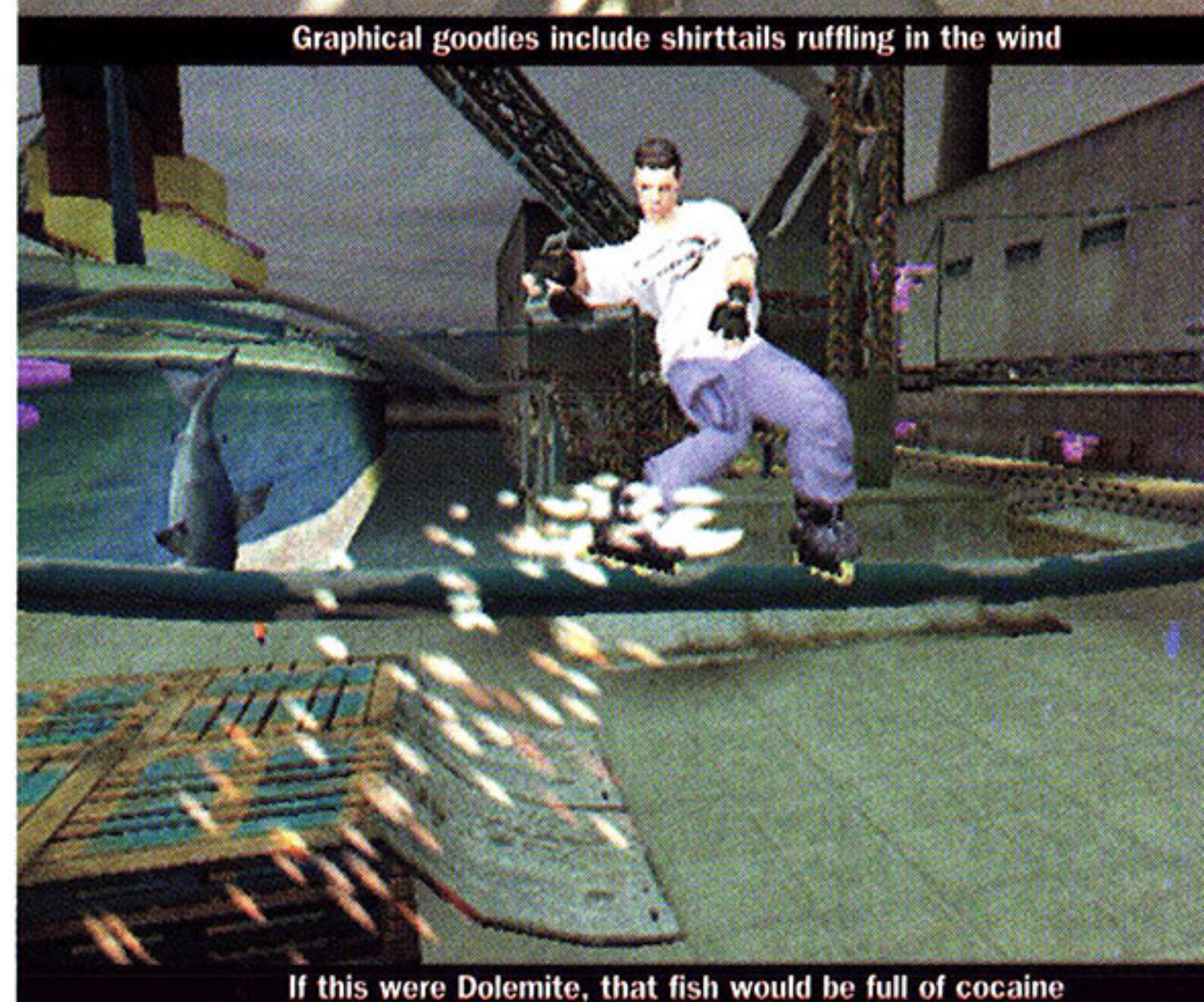
Graphical goodies include shirttails ruffling in the wind



The museum shows off the amount of level detail



Look at all that prime grinding stock up there



If this were Dolemite, that fish would be full of cocaine

PREVIEWS



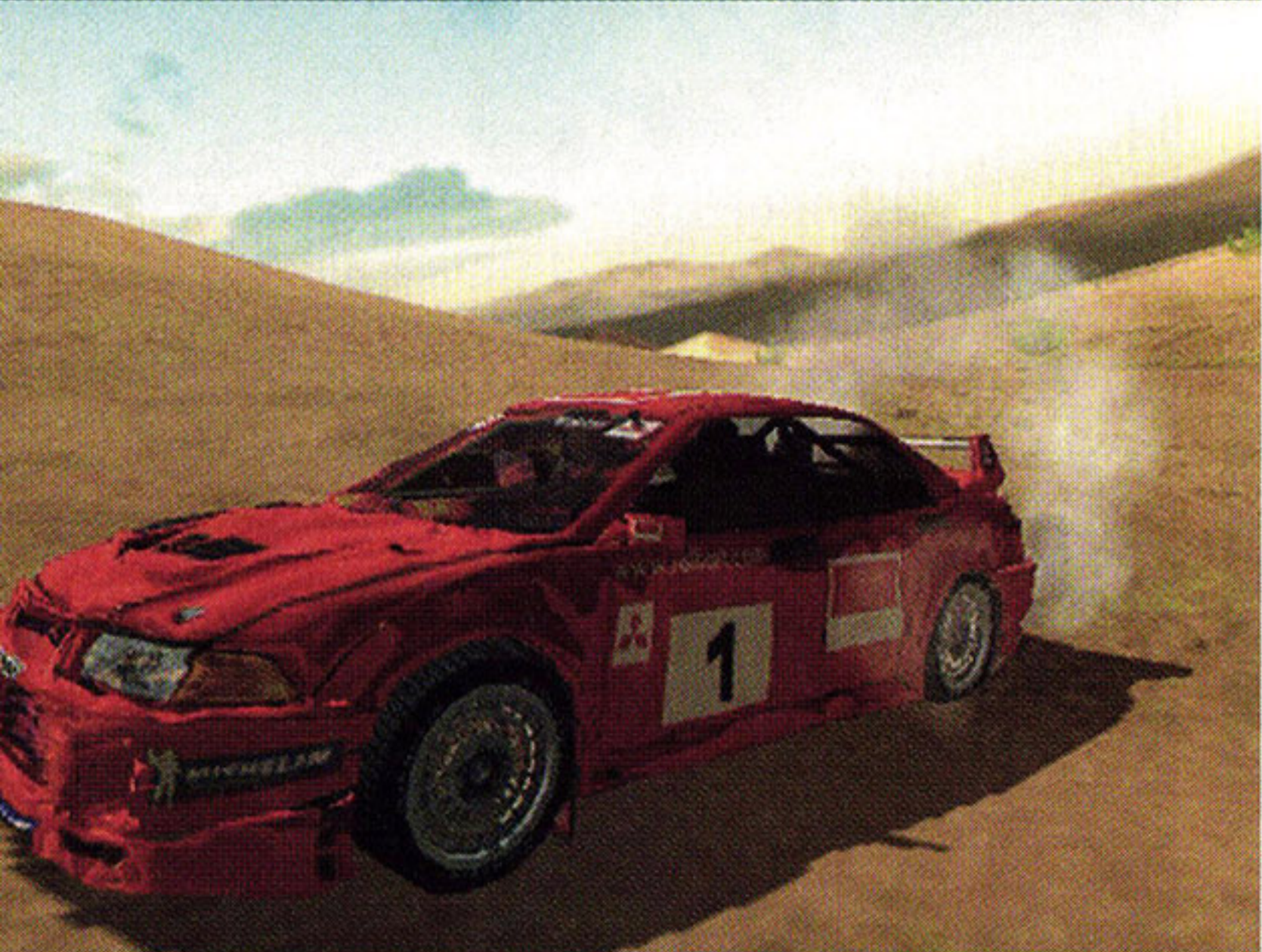
PLAYSTATION 2/XBOX

RACE OF CHAMPIONS

BROUGHT TO YOU BY WHEATIES...

Look at the realism, people! This game is going to be gorgeous! Rally racing will never be the same after *Race of Champions* is released. Featuring over 20 fully licensed rally cars from such manufacturers as Peugeot, Toyota and Saab, RoC will have you pitting your skills against some of the best Rally drivers in the world. There won't be any of this wussy "superficial damage only" mandate that has held back the realism of many other racing titles out there. You'll see doors flying off their hinges, blown tires, loose wheels, smashed windows and much more as you try to avoid obstacles on the 20-plus expansive tracks.

A number of different gameplay modes will also be available for your perusal. Circuit Races will be available in Rally Cross mode, Hill Climb will have you blasting your way up the side of a mountain, and you'll need to beat the clock in Checkpoint mode. For those of you who are looking for something a bit out of the ordinary, Elimination mode will disqualify the slowest racer for each lap until only one is left standing; Follow The Leader gives drivers a "health bar" that depletes, should players ever find themselves out of first place; and Relay mode features two teams of four drivers racing against each other. If all of this doesn't light your Rally fire, then you're just a cold-hearted snake.



■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER RACING ■ **PUBLISHER** ACTIVISION
 ■ **DEVELOPER** CLIMAX GROUP ■ **RELEASE** FALL



GAMECUBE

STAR FOX ADVENTURES: DINOSAUR PLANET

WHERE IS RARE?

The latest entry in the Star Fox series takes place eight years after the events in *Star Fox 64*. If Rareware continues delaying the game, the actual street date may reflect this in real-time. As it stands now, retailers are posting a March 25 release date. The question is, what year? Nintendo really needs a high-caliber game for the slow spring months, but Rare likes to take its time. In the meantime, Nintendo hooked us up with a new batch of screenshots that show just how dynamic the game will be. Take a look.



Here's a look at a high-speed chase sequence that rivals the likes of the Speederbike scene in *Return of the Jedi*



The combat sequences feature the same lock-on and letterbox technology found in *Zelda*

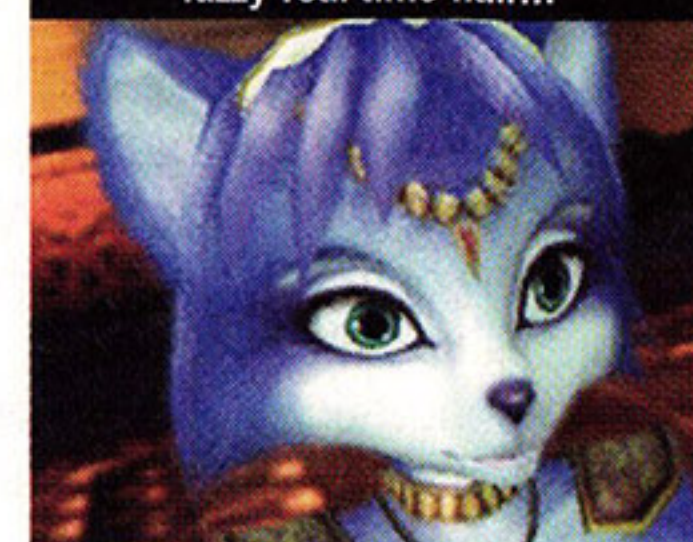


When the going gets tough, Fox will hop into his Arwing and obliterate the evil thunder lizards from the skies

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION/ADVENTURE ■ **PUBLISHER** NINTENDO ■ **DEVELOPER** RAREWARE/NINTENDO
 ■ **RELEASE** SECOND QUARTER



A video game first... fuzzy real-time hair!!!



FUR EFFECTS

Doing its best Pixar impersonation, Rareware is implementing real-time hair into *Star Fox Adventures*. Each character model is comprised of thousands of little hairs that flow with each movement. It's an amazing effect, but a worrisome one as well. In the past, Rareware pushed the Nintendo 64 to the limit to deliver dynamic lighting and particle effects. The games looked great, but it was at the expense of keeping a consistent framerate. Hopefully, this isn't the case for this highly anticipated release.



GAMECUBE

SOCCER SLAM

HITZ FOR BRITZ

Soccer has been absent from developer Visual Concepts' resumé of quality titles, and given the modest reception of the sport here, perhaps that's perfectly fine. Then again, Sega's Hitmaker team made tennis a household name to vid players, and VC is attempting to do the same for soccer. Departing, however, from its more straight takes on other pastimes, the maker of NBA and NFL 2K have chosen to take the road less realistic on its way to success.

Looking at the bare facts, you'd half expect this game to be a Midway title. You can choose from three-person teams (not including a goalie), with an array of funky character designs and personalities. These range from futuristic cyber-chicks, to takes on your average pint-swilling hooligan and foreign footy star. Your team can proceed through regular or round-robin tourneys, or participate in a ten-game season where you'll unlock stadiums, spend cash, and hopefully qualify for the playoffs.

Soccer Slam distinguishes itself from other extreme takes on sports by being less about roughing up players and more about moves. Powering players up and using Turbo are only the tip of the iceberg. First off, there's a roving spotlight that allows you to get off a power kick *Matrix*-style, if you should shoot while under it. Similarly, Killer Kicks are available if you've filled up your team's meter through successful passes, combo moves, steals, etc. Dekes, shoves, and even protection from muscling opponents are also possible. Not to be ignored, the title offers sim fans more standard moves like the give-and-go, bicycle kicks, one-hits, juggling, and lob passes.

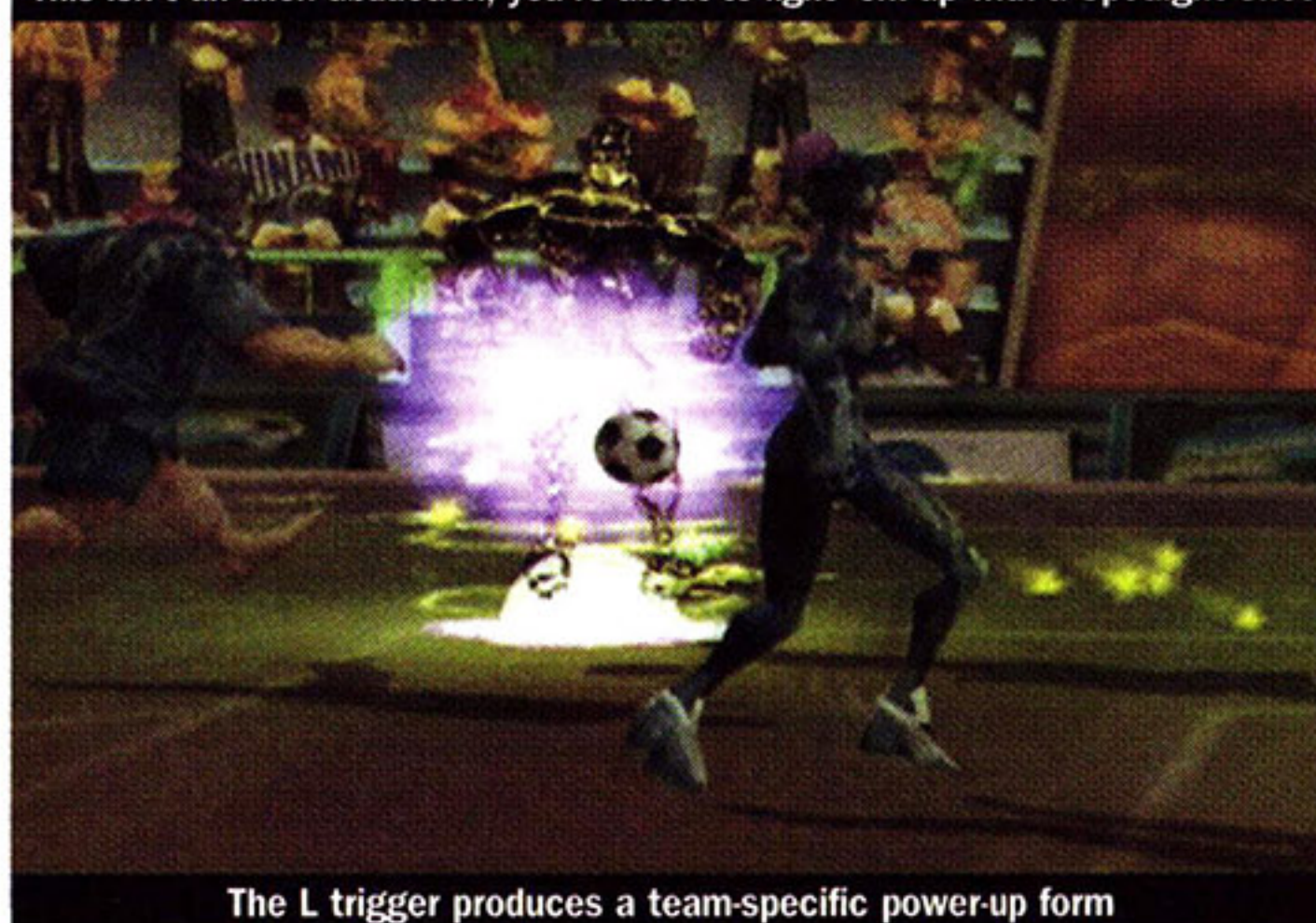
Beneath the humorous exterior, Soccer Slam is full of moves, classic soccer strategy, and requires quick skill. This fact should make it more than simply Visual Concepts' first footy title, or just something to appease younger GameCube owners.



This isn't an alien abduction, you're about to light 'em up with a Spotlight Shot



There are animations for goals and goats



The L trigger produces a team-specific power-up form



There's no such thing as illegal use of hands here

■ STYLE 1 TO 4-PLAYER SPORTS ■ PUBLISHER SEGA ■ DEVELOPER VISUAL CONCEPTS ■ RELEASE MARCH 26



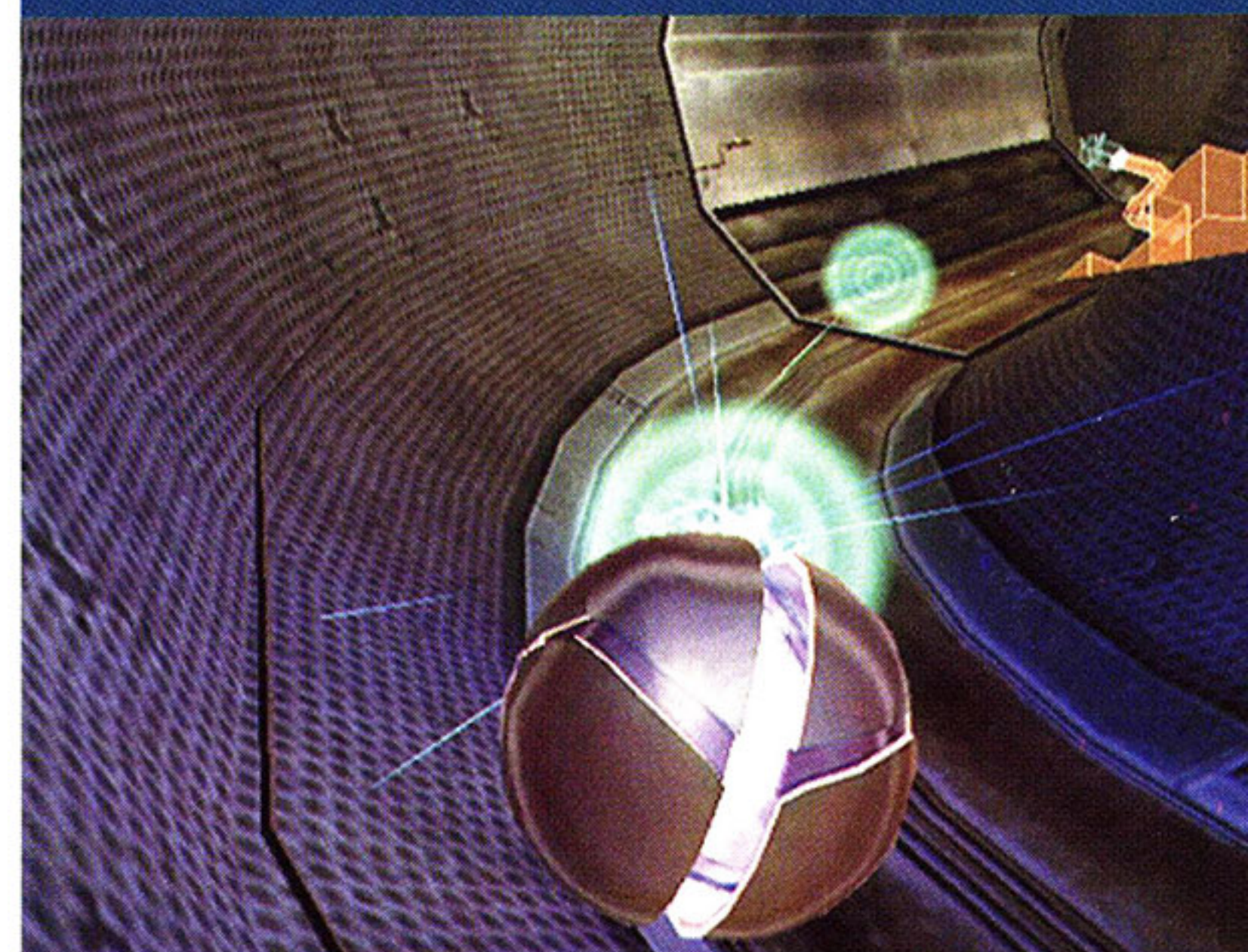
GAMECUBE

METROID PRIME

PRAYING FOR SAMUS

Shigeru Miyamoto has been working closely with developer Retro Studios to ensure that the latest Metroid offering, which also happens to be the first adventure set within the third dimension, does the series justice. Can Retro, a studio that hasn't released a game yet, pull off what can best be described as the most daring feat to ever grace the video game scene? We have our reservations, but we also respect Miyamoto a great deal. Right now, Nintendo is keeping the project under lock and key...obviously. Yet, we were successful in securing a few new screens that clearly show two things. One – it's a first-person shooter with tons of aliens and gadgets. And two – for Samus' more daring maneuvers, the game pans out to a third-person perspective. We're not sold on the FPS aspect, but the idea behind the perspective shift is intriguing and may actually work.

Of course, Nintendo won't show anything until the game is further along. Furthermore, if the game doesn't turn out, we wouldn't be surprised if Nintendo canceled it before showing it off to the world. A release date hasn't been set, but rumblings within Nintendo point toward late November.



When Samus performs acrobatic maneuvers, like the bomb roll, the game pans out to a third-person perspective

■ STYLE 1-PLAYER ACTION/ADVENTURE ■ PUBLISHER NINTENDO ■ DEVELOPER RETRO STUDIOS ■ RELEASE TBA

PREVIEWS



PLAYSTATION 2, GAMECUBE, XBOX

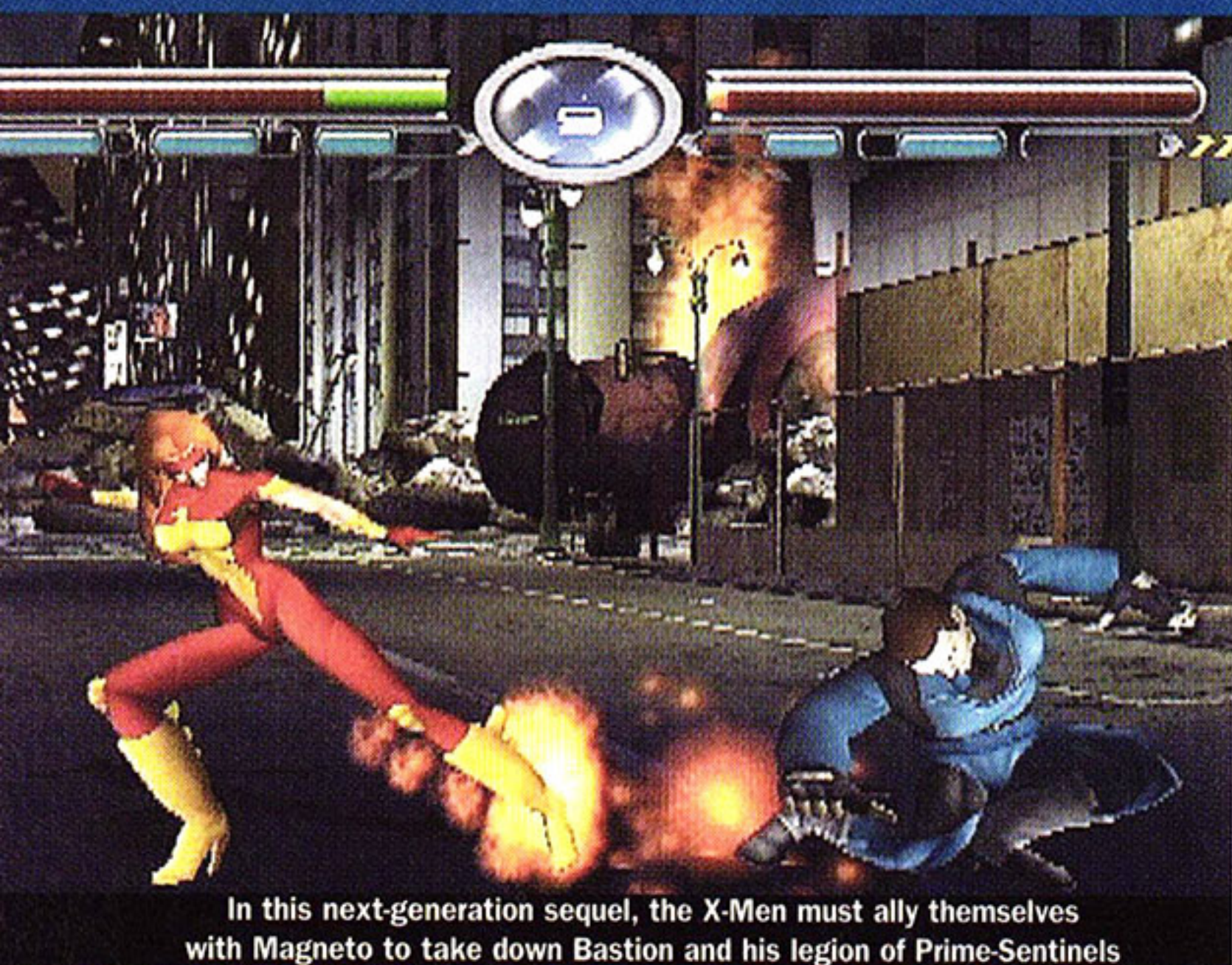
X-MEN: NEXT DIMENSION

SENTINEL GENOCIDE

Wolverine and his posse of genetically different freaks are finally marking their territory on the next-generation consoles. To give this extraordinary license the red carpet treatment that it so rightfully deserves, Activision has once again enlisted the developmental talents of Paradox Entertainment, acclaimed for its work on the Mutant Academy titles and respected for its devotion to creating an entertaining Wu-Tang game.

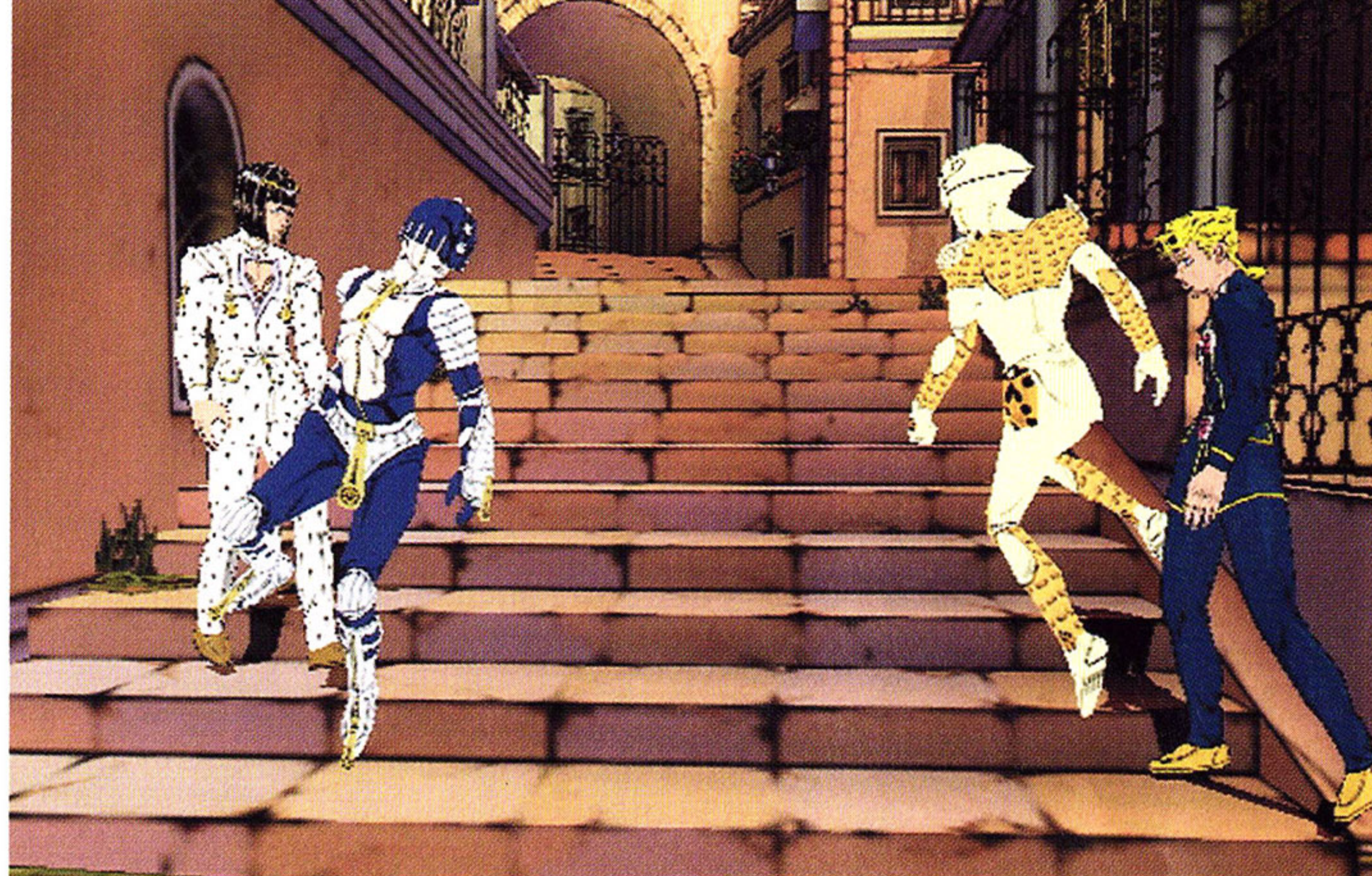
Along with a number of graphical improvements, storytelling plays a vital role in this third round of mutant fighting. Bastion and his army of Prime-Sentinels are intent on eradicating the entire mutant species. This time around, the X-Men won't be able to topple this giant alone. In a surprising turn of events, Xavier sides with Magneto and his Brotherhood of Evil Mutants. The question is, can they be trusted?

The gameplay will remain true to the series' roots and is overflowing with combo strings, juggles, and aerial attacks. Paradox also plans to include non-area-based fighting, destructible, multi-tiered arenas, and eight-way movement. The fight for the future of mutantkind begins this summer for Xbox, GameCube, and PlayStation 2.



In this next-generation sequel, the X-Men must ally themselves with Magneto to take down Bastion and his legion of Prime-Sentinels

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER FIGHTING ■ **PUBLISHER** ACTIVISION
 ■ **DEVELOPER** PARADOX ENTERTAINMENT
 ■ **RELEASE** SUMMER



PLAYSTATION 2

JOJO'S BIZARRE ADVENTURE VOLUME 5

HOW BIZARRE

Oh, JoJo, where have you been? When last we saw your anime-based fighting game self, you were showing off bazooka-firing boobs on Dreamcast and PlayStation. Now look at you, all 3D and next-gen. It brings a tear to our eye to see you so grown up [sniff]. Next thing you know, you're going to want to be called Joseph and buy a minivan so you can cart the kids and the wife to Shakey's for good pizza and entertaining atmosphere.

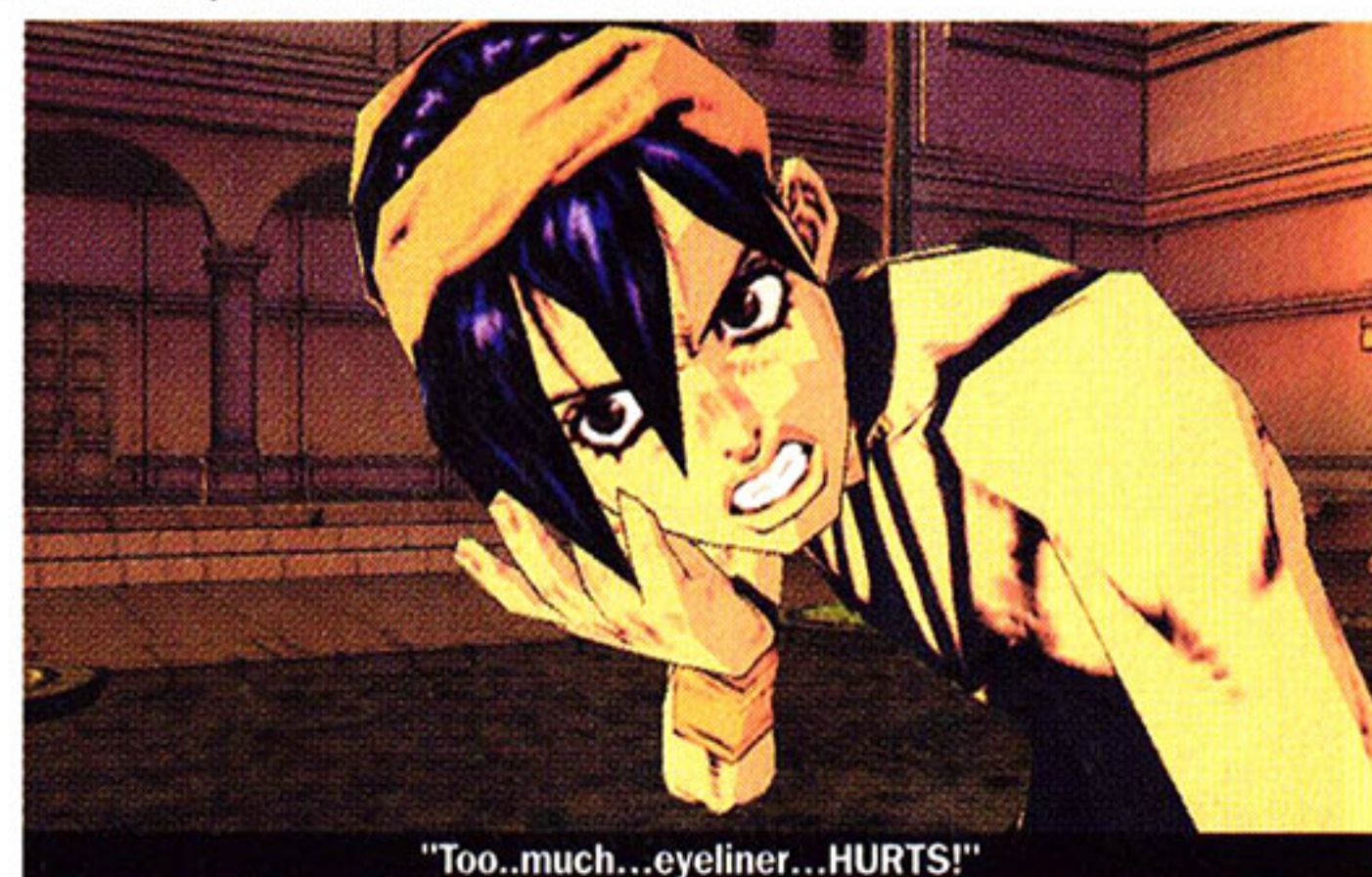
When it comes to its fighting series, Capcom usually leaves well enough alone, but we see why Bizarre Adventure was brought to 3D. The cel-shading, while a bit overdone nowadays, bears an accurate resemblance to the comic book series. Capcom says it's for more realism. We doubt that a game with a playable yappy dog worries about appearing true to life, but who are we to argue? We've been assured that the characters will look even better in their new, robust forms, than in their paper-thin incarnations.

JoJo's gameplay will be familiar to any Capcom fanatics, with the simple special move sequences and easy to manage stage navigation. The one thing the new perspective seems to have altered is the Stand – a shadowy alter ego each character has with them. Now, special moves will bring out these helpful chaps. This can be countered with another maneuver, which will negate the aforementioned attacks. Touché.

JoJo's Bizarre Adventure Volume 5 (not to be confused with Simpsons bit character Joey Jo Jo Junior Shabadoo) is sure to be another interesting, obscure brawling romp from Capcom. Whether we'll regret the jump to 3D remains to be seen, but with the recent shortage of fighting games, we welcome any opportunity to do a few quarter-circle forward motions.



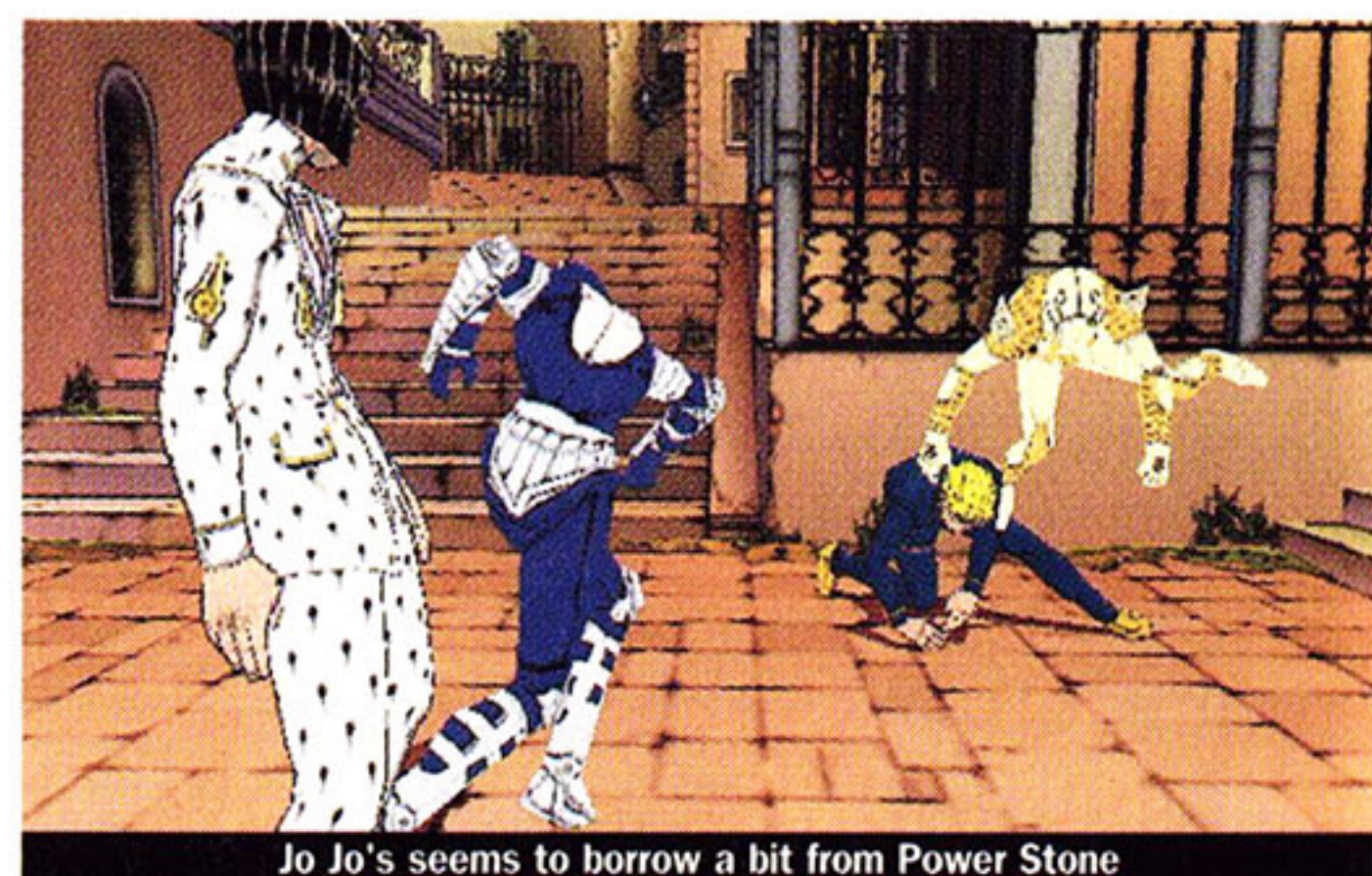
"No, really. In the future, my costume is cool."



"Too...much...eyeliner...HURTS!"



"These? They're my speed holes. For hitting faster."



Jo Jo's seems to borrow a bit from Power Stone

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER FIGHTING ■ **PUBLISHER** CAPCOM ■ **DEVELOPER** CAPCOM ■ **RELEASE** TBA



GAME BOY ADVANCE

BANJO-KAZOOIE: GRUNTY'S REVENGE

THE WORLD'S SMALLEST BANJO

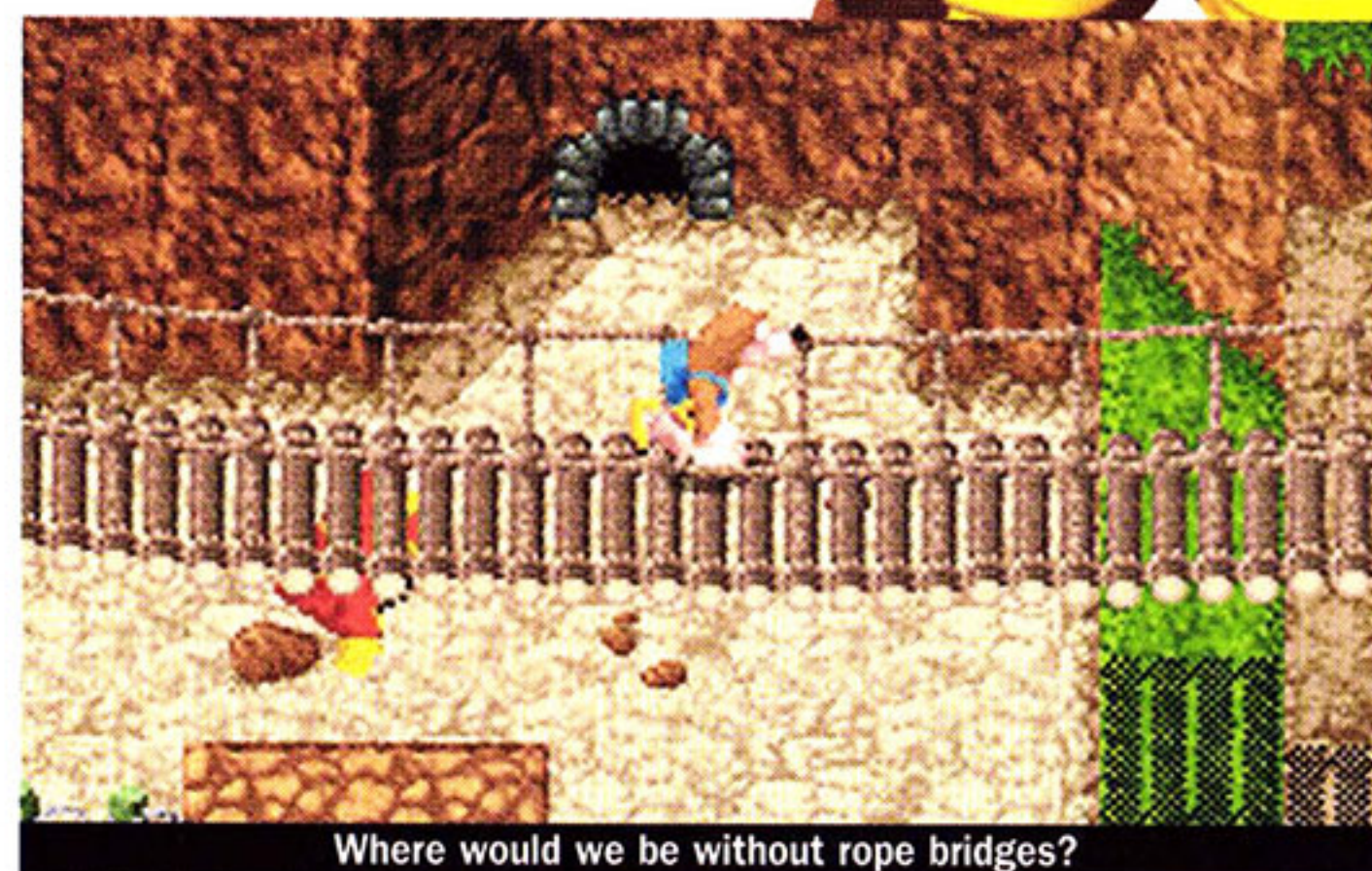
While platform fans wait with bated breath for Rare's dynamic duo to make their GameCube debut in the much-discussed (but not officially announced) Banjo-Threeie, they'll just have to console themselves with Grunty's Revenge. Slated for release sometime in 2002, this game will see Rare attempt to translate Banjo's 3D thrills into an overhead, isometric view. This is by no means an easy task, to which anyone who's had the unfortunate opportunity of playing Spyro: Season of Ice can attest.

Instead of continuing where Banjo-Tooie left off (a move that would have wreaked havoc with the story arc of the next GameCube title), the gang at Rare cleverly decided to craft Grunty's Revenge as an "alternate history" within the Banjo universe. In a twist worthy of a Quantum Leap episode, this game's plot imagines that Gruntilda had not been saved by her sisters, but rather, by Klungo. Now, old Grunty is traveling back in time to stop herself from being defeated by Banjo and Kazooie. Damn! That's so far off the wall it isn't even in the room! Of course, being that this is a GBA game, we don't expect much in the way of cutscenes, so this wacky tale will probably be told mostly through still screens and text boxes.

As far as gameplay goes, you can expect most of your favorite moves, like the Bill Drill and the Wonderwing, to be in your arsenal of attacks. However, you will have a few new tricks up your sleeve in the form of new Mumbo transformations. As usual, there will be a ton of exploration and some mind-bending puzzles. The only question is whether Rare can maintain the Banjo mystique in the two-dimensional environs of the Game Boy Advance. We're a bit skeptical, but we also remember that this IS Rare, a company that makes very few mistakes. Let's hope its proven track record holds true for this title as well.



As before, Banjo and Kazooie do the old piggyback maneuver



Where would we be without rope bridges?

PREVIEWS



GAME BOY ADVANCE

KONAMI COLLECTOR'S SERIES: ARCADE ADVANCED

BACK TO THE FUTURE

It doesn't take a genius to figure out that there is a pretty penny to be made porting collections of early '80s classics to the Game Boy Advance. Heck, the development cost of producing Konami's Arcade Advanced is probably less than Hideo Kojima's room service bill at the Four Seasons. That doesn't mean that these kinds of games are a rip-off, however. In reality, they give gamers a great bang for their buck, and Arcade Advanced should be no different, as it delivers no less than six action-packed hits in one tiny GBA cartridge. Here's the lineup: Frogger, Scramble, Time Pilot, Gyruss, Yie Ar Kung Fu (a precursor of the Street Fighter series), and the infamous Cold War epic, Rush'n Attack. Not bad for thirty clams.



■ STYLE 1 OR 2-PLAYER ACTION ■ PUBLISHER KONAMI
■ DEVELOPER KONAMI ■ RELEASE APRIL

■ STYLE 1-PLAYER ACTION/PLATFORM ■ PUBLISHER NINTENDO ■ DEVELOPER RARE ■ RELEASE TBA

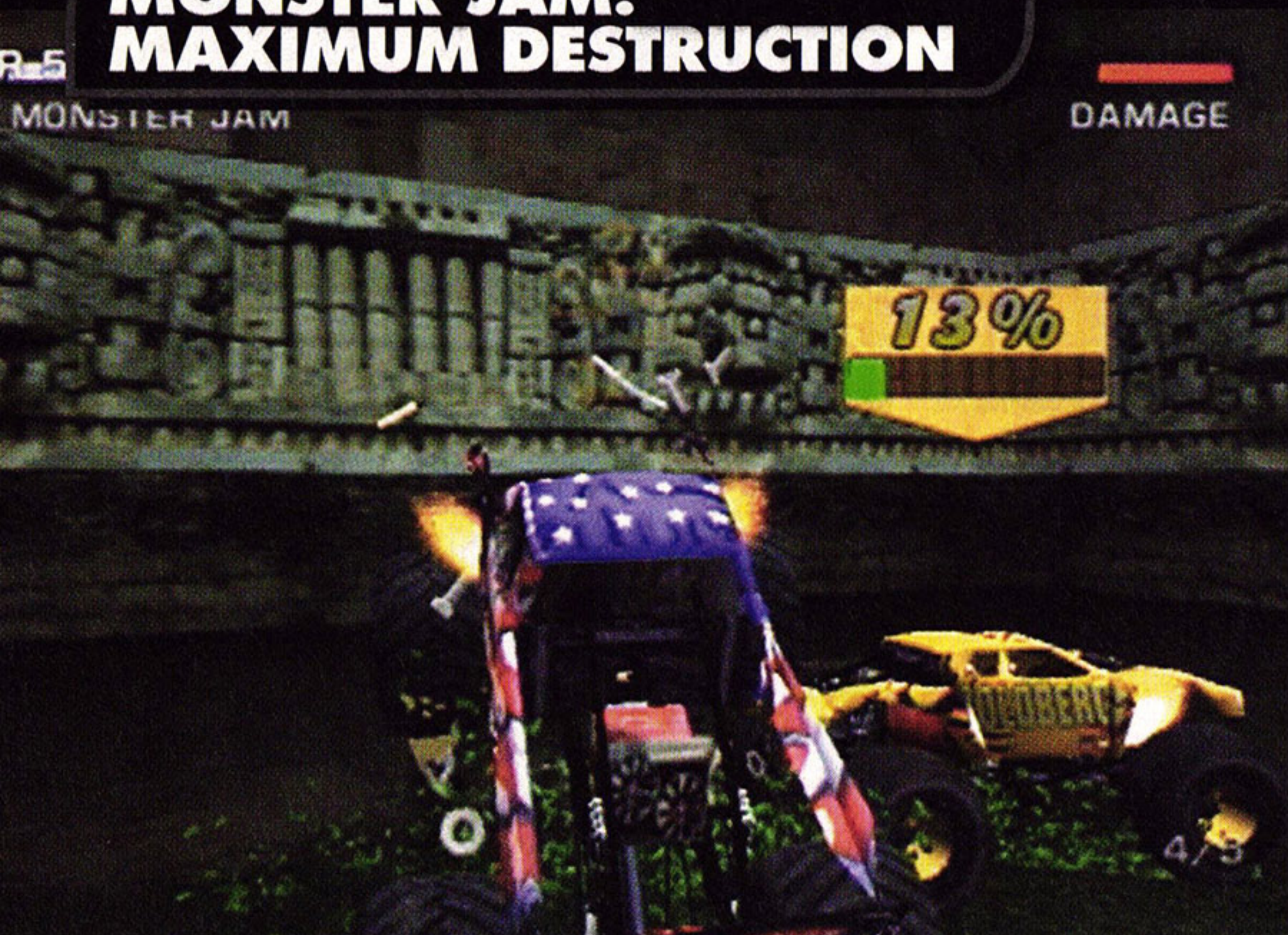
PHOTOPHILE

PLAYSTATION 2

MONSTER JAM: MAXIMUM DESTRUCTION

R-5

MONSTER JAM



If there are two things the French are known for, it's fine food and monster truck enthusiasm. You would be hard-pressed to find a mile on the Champs Elysées devoid of a Goldberg shirt or a Gravedigger hat. Interestingly enough, monster trucks seem to be catching on here in the States now, too. Leave it to the French-owned company Ubi Soft to be a trendsetter when it comes to thinking up different ways to smash vehicles with enormous wheels. In late March, Ubi Soft will release *Monster Jam* – its latest effort on the subject. The game has a number of different racing modes for you to explore, as well as a heaping helping of multiplayer stages and a butt-load of different trucks to drive.

PLAYSTATION 2

TIMESPLITTERS 2



From what we've seen so far, Free Radical is making good on its promise to expand and improve upon the original for *TimeSplitters 2*. With an enormous single-player campaign and a pulse-pounding four-player mode, Eidos is confident that this *TimeSplitters* incarnation will be the one everyone runs out to buy. Given the fact that members of the development team have worked on such projects as *GoldenEye*, this title will most likely be impressive indeed. Check it out for yourself this spring.

PLAYSTATION 2

TEKKEN 4



Get ready to satiate your Tekken desire with Namco's *Tekken 4*. Featuring the best part of *Tekken 3*, this installment will also have *Tekken Force* mode where you're given the opportunity to fend off hundreds of enemies with a number of different playable characters – each with their own unique plot line. September 15 may seem like a long way off, but who knows – maybe they'll move the release date up... Yeah right!

XBOX/GAMECUBE

TOXIC GRIND



Take the movie *Running Man*, substitute BMX rider Jason Hayes for Arnold Schwarzenegger, and you've got the basic premise for THQ's newest extreme sports game, *Toxic Grind*. Jason, after being sent into the future, must ride for his young life in an extreme reality television program. During your time with Mr. Hayes you'll find yourself doing things like sinking battleships, deactivating bombs and destroying helicopters – all while riding your bike! Crazy! Be ready to do some grindage this summer.

GAME BOY ADVANCE

PINBALL OF THE DEAD



THQ is just dying to bring you this sick new pinball game. How's that for a cheesy opener? It seems handheld gaming, pinball and zombies should go together quite nicely – and we'll find out come May if that's true. This project originated as a Sega game, but in the topsy turvy world of video games, you never know who is going to end up with which title. Maybe Xbox will release the next Mario game! Insanity!!! You're right, that would never, ever happen.

PHOTOPHILE

GAME BOY ADVANCE

MOTOCROSS MANIACS ADVANCE



The best description we have for this game is *Excitebike* on crack. If you don't remember *Excitebike* and you've never done crack, it breaks down a little something like this: Players are able to choose between six different racers (each with their own special abilities) and four different modes of play. Additionally, assorted hidden characters and tracks are unlocked after completing certain tasks. For the odd gamer who actually has friends, a four-player link cable mode awaits. As you traverse the loops and hills on your bike, don't forget to pick up some weapons (missiles and mines to name a couple) for encouraging your opponents to stay behind you. Konami hopes to have this one staring you in the face by April.

GAME BOY ADVANCE

ICE AGE



Based on the motion picture of the same name, *Ice Age* will take players on an incredible adventure throughout the crazy environments only an *Ice Age* can bring about. Spanning 10 levels and featuring two playable characters (Manny the Mammoth and Sid the Sloth), Ubi Soft will have you jumping, fighting and puzzling your way to bring baby Roshan back to the human settlement. Look for *Ice Age* to hit shelves in March.

GAME BOY ADVANCE

SABRE WULF



1984 was a long time ago – and yet the *Sabre Wulf* series continues to change and grow from that, its entrance into the video game world. Nintendo, in conjunction with its golden child, Rare, is letting the Wulf loose again. It's your job as Sabreman to return the valuables Sabre Wulf is stealing, and make sure he doesn't do it again. You'll have plenty of help in this action/platformer: friendly animals who aid you in navigating traps and pitfalls your nemesis has left to trip you up. We're hoping for a spring release, but anything's possible.

XBOX

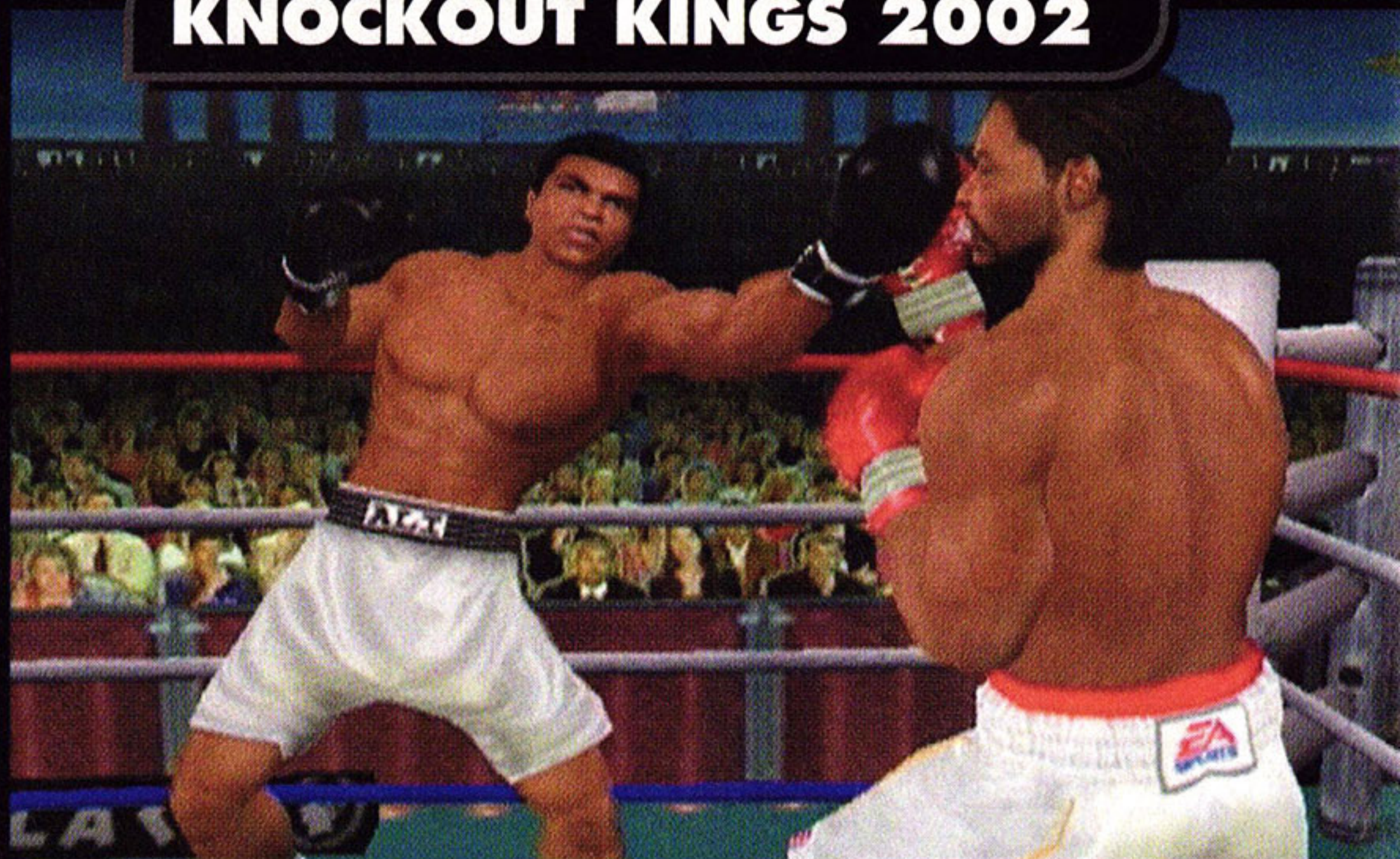
TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 3



Activision's skater darling is coming at you with truck-sparking action on or around March 5, and it's worth waiting for seeing as how this version has a new hidden track as well as another hidden character. If that doesn't make you happy, you should probably look into a Prozac prescription.

PLAYSTATION 2/XBOX

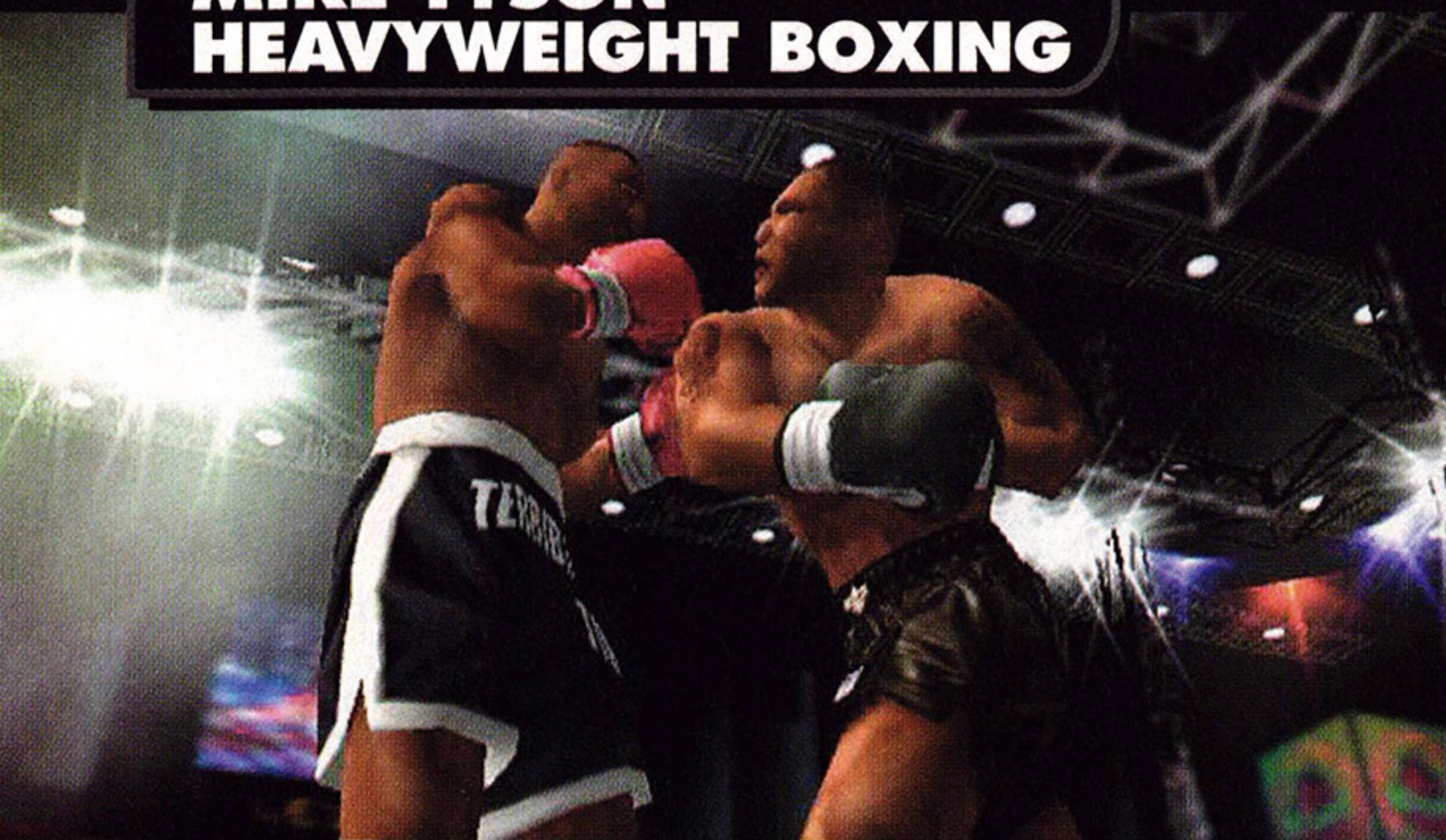
KNOCKOUT KINGS 2002



EA's Knockout Kings series has been touted as some of the best boxing games of all-time. Featuring an extensive create-a-boxer mode, fantasy fights and a whole lot more, Knockout Kings 2002 will surely satiate even the biggest boxing enthusiast's pugilistic desire. If all goes according to plan you should be seeing Ali, Lewis and all of their friends by early March.

PLAYSTATION 2/XBOX

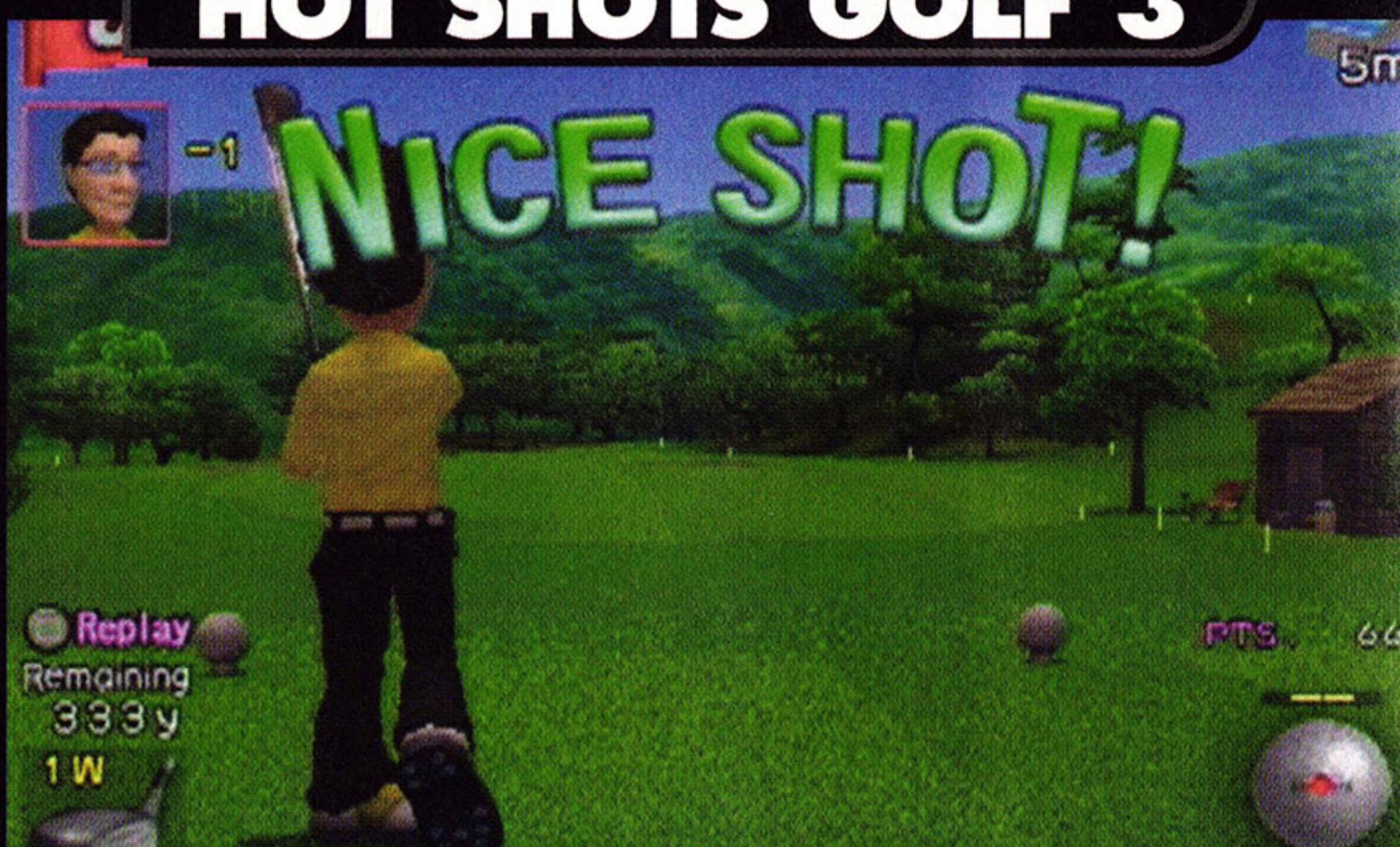
MIKE TYSON HEAVYWEIGHT BOXING



When you think of Mike Tyson you may think of words like "ear," "prison," or maybe even "therapy." Codemasters wants you to forget all of that. Instead, feast your Tyson-starved eyes on the next generation of video game based on this controversial boxer. Fourteen professional boxers will be available for play, each with his own signature punch, but what we really want to know is whether or not Glass Joe will be an unlockable character. We'll all find out this April.

PLAYSTATION 2

HOT SHOTS GOLF 3

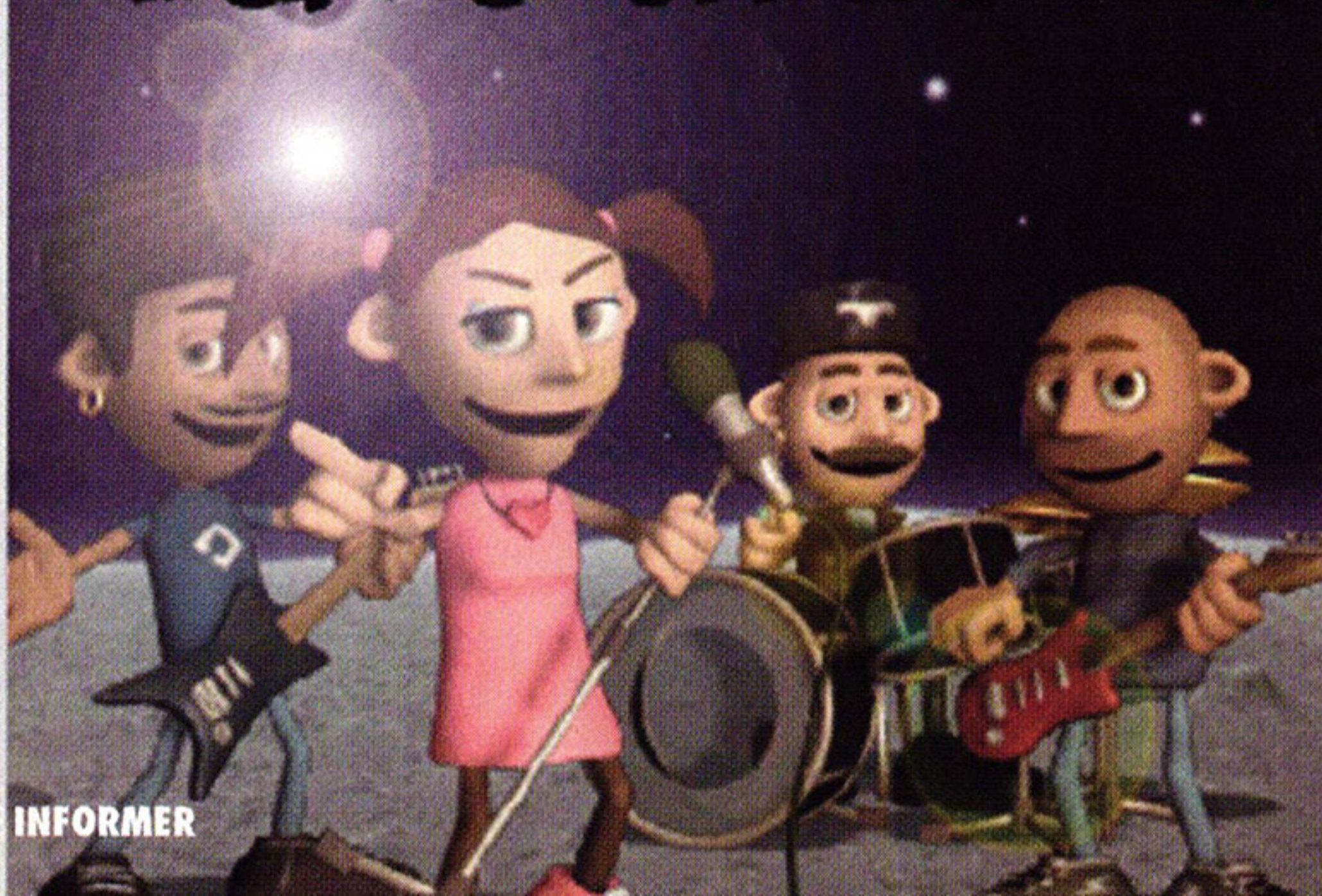


On or around March 12, many, many PS2-owning golf fanatics will be able to lay their hands on the newest addition to the Hot Shots Golf dynasty. Luckily for us, the mistakes of the first sequel have been mended for the third installment. Bristling with modes and replay value, Sony has made extra sure that Hot Shots Golf 3 will become an integral part of your ever-expanding PS2 library.

PC

ROCK MANAGER

oklahoma muffler society



Background

Moon \$5,000

Artist

All musicians \$0

Effects

Lensflare \$1,500

Font

Cartoon \$750

Have you ever wished you could take control of a young up-and-coming band, then steer them to international stardom? If you're anything like Peter Grant, your answer is yes. Some people lack the funds and the stomach for such an undertaking; however, Monsterland Produktion has come up with the next best thing. You must shape and mold a band from scratch to ensure their meteoric rise to the top. Do you have an ear for music, a talent for management, or a taste for fish? If you answered yes to any of these, you'll be pulling for this title to come Stateside. Right now, only those lucky Brits have been tapped for the release market, but negotiations are underway to get the game shipped over the pond.

PLAYSTATION 2

MAD MAESTRO



As video game sound technology increases, so do the number of different ways game manufacturers attempt to exploit this advantage. Eidos' Mad Maestro is the perfect example. Gamers will take on the role of a young conductor with the mission to save a beloved little theater from being closed. As a button-timing game, MM's music is exclusively classical in content, with pieces ranging from waltzes to full-on symphonies. Will this title be able to contend with the likes of Gitaroo Man? We'll find out this March.

PLAYSTATION 2

SKYGUNNER



Atlus' foray into the world of aerial adventure is marked by the upcoming release of SkyGunner – a game where players must put their airborne combat skills to the test to protect a perpetual-motion machine from the evil genius, Ventre. Featuring a plethora (do you know what a plethora is, Jeffe?) of special weapons, three playable characters, and over 25 missions to fly through, this summer may not come fast enough for all of you SkyGunners out there.

PLAYSTATION 2

NEED FOR SPEED: HOT PURSUIT 2



Most people have the dream of buying a Ferrari and racing around their hometown harassing the local fuzz. As always, EA knows how you feel. In response to the growing demand for video vigilantism, Need For Speed: Hot Pursuit 2 has been slated for a spring release this year. With over 20 licensed cars, 60 events, 16 drivers, and a host of high-powered racing action, this NFS incarnation is sure to dominate the lives of racing fans for months on end.

PHOTOPHILE

GAME BOY ADVANCE

TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 3



Come March, all of you board-monkeys out there can take your Hawk on the road. Activision's THPS 3 is nearly here for the newest addition to the Nintendo handheld club, and all you need to be a part of it is a little patience and a bit of scratch. The same hard-hitting skating will accompany this game, along with smooth graphics, impressive sound and a control scheme that may leave you wondering how you used so many buttons on your console version.

PLAYSTATION 2/XBOX/GAMECUBE

ORCHID



Imagine yourself waking up in a strange place with no idea of how you got there. Maybe that sounds like a typical Sunday morning for some of you, but for Orchid, it's just the beginning of her problems. It seems there's someone, or something, after her – but she doesn't know who or why. Orchid can kick some serious heinie, but she doesn't know how she got that knowledge either! It's your job to get to the bottom of things by putting the beat-down on a bunch of baddies who are in serious need of it. Argonaut is very excited about this third-person, comic-book styled brawler, but a firm release date has yet to be announced.

REVIEWS

Our crack (or crackhead, we can never decide which) review team rates games in a number of categories to help you sort out the great from the stuff you hate. Each game is reviewed by at least two staff members, and you will find both their opinions on each review. To make things a little easier we have put together some definitions of what the numbers mean, what the reviewers are like (so you can find the reviewer most like yourself), what we look for in a game, and also a cheat sheet so the newbies can understand our advanced video game jargon. Read on and soon you will be talking FPS and FMV with the best of them.

THE SCORING SYSTEM

Game Informer's rating system ranges from 0 to 10, and is similar to school grading. 7 is average, 9 and above is exemplary work, 5 and below is a failure. Aside from concept, entertainment, graphics, playability, sound, and replay value (all explained to the right), other factors that influence a game's final score are how much game you get for your money and how all the game's elements come together.

10 – Perfection. One of the best games of all time, if not THE best game of all time. This game has no flaws, and thus this rating is rarely given out.

9 – Worth owning. Fans of the genre should definitely enjoy this game, but even those who don't normally like this type of game may find themselves getting hooked.

8 – Worth playing. Still a great game, but arguably so. It may not be the best ever, but there's enough to keep your fingers wrapped around the controller for some time.

7 – Worth renting. Unless you're a fledgling gamer, you've probably seen everything this game has to offer before. Still, just checking it out won't ruin your weekend.

6 – Limited appeal. There are always a few people that will fall in love with a game of this caliber, but for the most part, those playing it will be yearning for something more.

5 & BELOW – Garbage. From this point down, it's just a matter of how much of a failure the game is. The lower the score, the more you're hating life for playing it.

CONCEPT

What new ideas the game brings to the table and how well old ideas are presented.

GRAPHICS

How good a game looks, taking into account any flaws such as bad collision or pop-up.

SOUND

Does the game's music and sound effects get you involved or do they make you resolve to always play with the volume down?

PLAYABILITY

Basically, the controller to human interface. The less you think about the hunk of plastic in your hands, the better the playability.


ENTERTAINMENT


Flat out, just how fun the game is to play. The most important factor in rating a game.


REPLAY VALUE


The longevity of the title.


- **High** – You'll still be popping this game in five years from now.
- **Moderately High** – Good for a long while, but the thrills won't last forever.
- **Moderate** – Good for a few months or a few times through.
- **Moderately Low** – After finishing it, there's not much reason to give it a second go.
- **Low** – You'll quit playing before you complete the game.


CONTENT RATING
 Content suitable for persons ages 3 and older.

CONTENT RATING
 Content suitable for persons ages 17 and older.

CONTENT RATING
 Content suitable for persons ages 6 and older.

CONTENT RATING
 Content suitable only for adults.

CONTENT RATING
 Content suitable for persons ages 13 and older.

CONTENT RATING
 Product is awaiting final rating.



ANDY

Handle: The Game Hombre **Expertise:** RPGs, Action/Platform, Driving, First-Person Shooters **Interests:** Timberwolves Basketball, Imagining How Kick Butt *The Two Towers* Will Be When It Comes Out **Dislikes:** Looking For New Employees, Airports, Veal Victis, That MTV Is Poisoning America's Youth **Current Favorite Games:** Advance Wars, Virtua Fighter 4, EverQuest: Shadows Of Luclin, Jak & Daxter: The Precursor Legacy

When Andy's not yelling at a game for "rippin' him off," he plays drums in Minneapolis indie rock band, *Unbelievable Jolly Machine*. A longtime fan of *Metroid*, Andy has been reviewing video games professionally since the days of the 8-bit NES. While a big sports fan in real life, Andy isn't the first to line up for sports titles, but is always willing to put in the extra hours to play a good RPG or strategy game.

REINER

Handle: The Raging Gamer **Expertise:** RPGs, Fighting, Action/Platform, Sports **Interests:** Comic Books, DVD Movies, The Bounty Hunters In *Attack Of The Clones*, Count Dooku's Obscure Lightsaber **Dislikes:** The Fact That George Lucas Actually Considered Putting 'N Sync Into *Attack Of The Clones*, The Lack Of Software For GameCube And Xbox **Current Favorite Games:** Final Fantasy X, Maximo, All-Star Baseball 2003

Reiner considers himself the biggest *Star Wars* fan in the world. Along with his impressive collection of *Star Wars* action figures, he has seen the trilogy 549 times. A fan of all game types, role-playing games are his strong suit. In his six years as a professional gamer, Reiner has achieved the impossible. Penetrating the pixel boundary, he not only plays games, he's in one, and can be shot daily in the epic N64 release, *Perfect Dark*.



MATT

Handle: The Original Gamer **Expertise:** Racing, Puzzle, Action/Adventure **Interests:** Nuggets II, The Smiths, Home Ownership, Shipmates, Not Losing My Mind **Dislikes:** Minnesota Public Radio, Moving, Physical Activity In General **Current Favorite Games:** Maximo, Gitaroo Man, Drakan: The Ancients' Gates

While record collecting, watching reality television, and playing video games might sound like a state of retarded adolescence, Matt manages to scrap together an almost meaningful existence out of these activities. His encyclopedic knowledge of pop culture is either amazing or annoying, depending on how close your desk is to his. Less esoteric than his colleagues, Matt prefers traditional action and platform games.

KRISTIAN

Handle: The Game Dawg **Expertise:** RPGs, Strategy, Sports **Interests:** Getting A New PC, *The Royal Tenenbaums* Soundtrack, Programming Free Online Games, Hot Water Heaters **Dislikes:** Broken Hot Water Heaters, Traffic Jams On 35W South At 2:00 In The Afternoon, My Cluttered Desk **Current Favorite Games:** SimGolf, Serious Sam: The Second Encounter, Baldur's Gate: Throne Of Bhaal, Madden NFL 2002 (Xbox)

Kristian enjoys opening a can of whoop-ass on his buddies at the ping pong table, then running off to the driving range for a lesson in humility and anger management. The original text-driven Zork started Kristian on the gaming road; *Ultima 6*, *NES Baseball*, and *Zelda* made sure he stayed. Still an avid RPG fan, he can always find time to pound out a good sports game.



JUSTIN

Handle: The Digital Deviant **Expertise:** Action/Platform, Fighting, RPGs **Interests:** Fruit Salad, Bowling, Privacy, GWA's New Stage Show, Sledding, Cake **Dislikes:** Boston Market Discontinuing Tortellini Salad, Airline Passengers Who Recline Their Seats And/Or Bring Cranky Kids On Planes **Current Favorite Games:** Gitaroo Man, Final Fantasy X, NBA 2K2 (Xbox), Project Gotham Racing

Unlike most gaming jabronis, Justin knows there's life outside video vegetation. He moonlights as wrestler Justin Lee in the Minnesota independent scene, where he violently bonds with other sweaty males – a practice that just gets blank stares when attempted on other GI reviewers. Though the youngest on staff, Justin's tastes are highly old-school, and he plays 16-bit classics as often as he plugs into the latest titles.

KATO

Handle: The Game Katana **Expertise:** Sports, Action/Adventure, Action/Platform **Interests:** Reading *Lord Of The Rings: The Two Towers*, Brian Wilson, Dark Tower, Mike "Miami" Tice **Dislikes:** The Fact That Mike Tyson's Brain Is So Small He Could Spit It Out The Gap In His Teeth **Current Favorite Games:** Gitaroo Man, Nate's Twilight Zone Pinball Game, The Curling Segment Of ESPN International Winter Sports 2002

When not buying copious amounts of records, Kato can be found exercising good taste, feeding the goats, and trying in vain to update his wardrobe into the 21st century. Like other young men of his generation, he quickly found out that the one true real world application of good grades was the free arcade tokens that were given out as a reward. With allegiance to none, he takes on every game with an equal eye.



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NEWBIE CHEAT SHEET

For our newer readers, here is a glossary of terms and acronyms that commonly appear in the magazine. Video game veterans should move along (these aren't the droids you are looking for).

action – A term we use for games like Zone of the Enders and Gauntlet

adventure – A term we use for games like Myst and Escape From Monkey Island

AI – Artificial Intelligence. Usually used to refer to how well the computer reacts to a human opponent

board – A term we use for games like Jeopardy! and Mario Party

CG – Computer-Generated graphics

DC – Sega Dreamcast

E3 – Electronic Entertainment Expo. The world's largest convention for video games

fighting – A term we use for games like Street Fighter and Dead or Alive

FMV – Full Motion Video. Usually refers to an animated CG cutscene

FPS – Frames Per Second. How many animation frames happen in one second. Also used to denote First-Person Shooters like Doom, GoldenEye, & Unreal Tournament

framerate – The frames of animation used to create the illusion of movement

frontend – A game's menus and options

GB – Game Boy

GBA – Game Boy Advance

GBC – Game Boy Color

GC – GameCube

isometric – Three-quarters top down view, like StarCraft or Red Alert 2

ISP – Internet Service Provider. The company that provides you with access to the Internet

jaggles – Graphical lines that are jagged when they should be straight

LAN – Local Area Network. Connecting computers or consoles together within a small space to allow communication between them. Provides fast, simultaneous gameplay

minigame – A small, simple game within a larger one

motion-capture – Using human models and infrared cameras to record movement for game animation. Also mo-cap

N64 – Nintendo 64

NES – Nintendo Entertainment System

platform – A term we use for games like Super Mario and Crash Bandicoot

pop-up – When onscreen objects, usually distant, suddenly appear

PS2 – Sony PlayStation 2

PS-X – Sony PlayStation

puzzle – A term we use for games like Tetris and Chu Chu Rocket

racing – A term we use for games like Gran Turismo and Mario Kart

RPG – Role-Playing Game. A game that involves character improvement through collecting and spending points. A term we use for games like Final Fantasy and Dragon Warrior

SG – Sega Genesis

shooter – A term we use for games like Mars Matrix and Gradius

SNES – Super Nintendo Entertainment System

sports – A term we use for games like Madden NFL

SS – Sega Saturn

strategy – A term we use for games like Command & Conquer and Fallout Tactics

third-party – Something made for a console by a company other than the console manufacturer

vomit – What people do during a Helen Hunt movie

Maximo

REVIEWS



GAME OF THE MONTH MAXIMO

If Capcom is known for one thing, it's producing intriguing and addictive video games. This month we take a close look at what makes Capcom's newest action title tick. Combining nostalgic gameplay traits with the best of today's visual effects and 3D environments, Maximo will appeal to veteran gamers and newcomers alike. Page 76



Throughout the course of the game, Maximo will obtain a wide variety of different boxer shorts



Platforming is just as integral of a gameplay element as the combat



When Maximo dons the gold armor, he will be invincible for 20 seconds

PLAYSTATION 2

MAXIMO: GHOSTS TO GLORY

GHOSTS OF GAMEPLAY PAST

Until the release of Maximo, Capcom's US division has primarily been an importer of Japanese goods. However, for years efforts have been made to create an American development studio. In the early days of 32-bit gaming, this stateside wing began developing a handful of titles for the PlayStation. None of the product actually made it to retail shelves. The only title that was approved was the arcade game, *Final Fight Revenge*. Even though it was declared a failure by critics, Capcom of Japan seemed quite pleased with the final product, and granted the team another chance. After years of designing, the US branch finally struck gold. Maximo is the fruit of its labor.

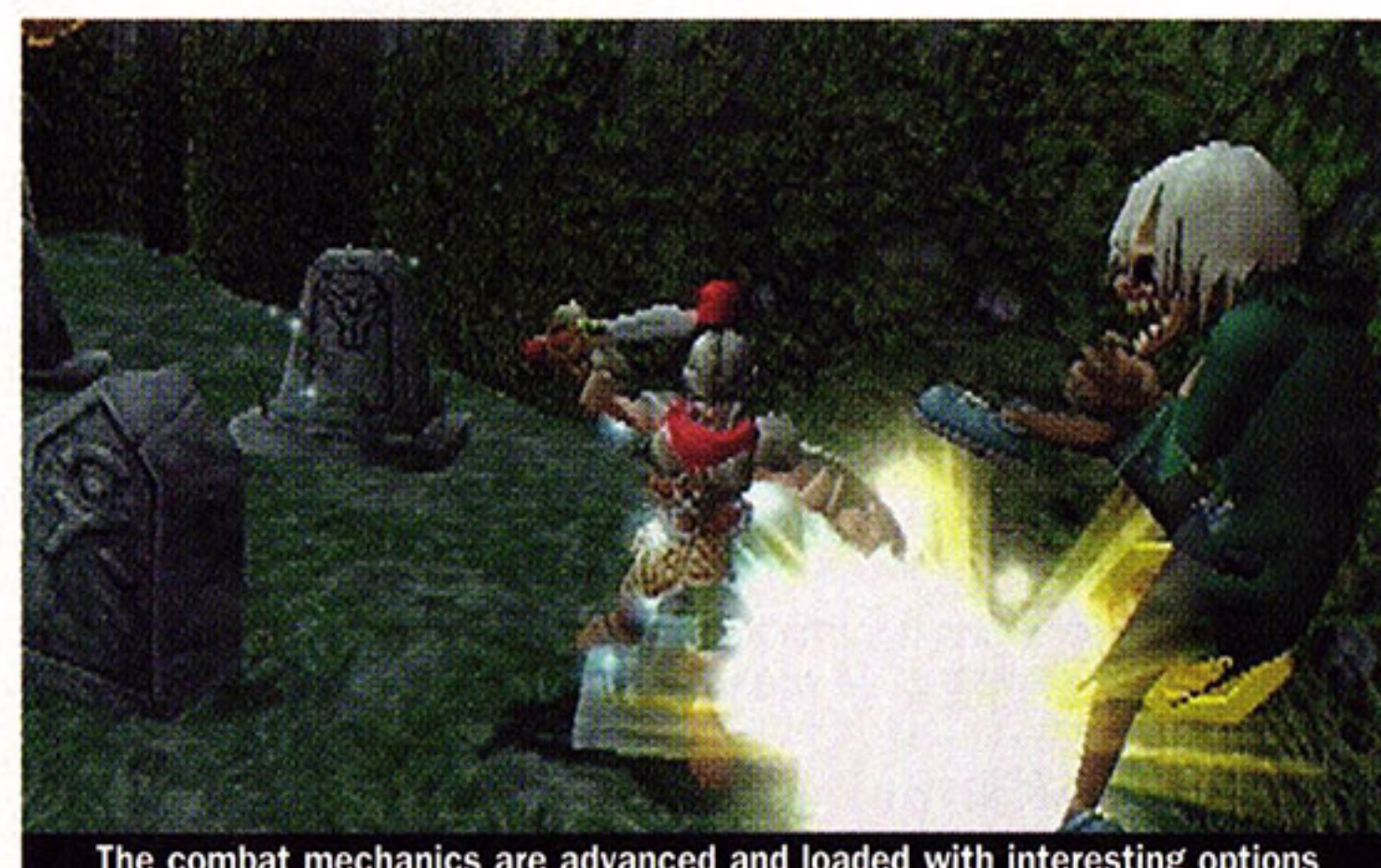
Capcom has always aspired to revitalize the *Ghouls n' Ghosts* lineage, but the only headway that has been made was a cameo by the series' star in *Marvel vs. Capcom*. Even though the main character is completely original and the story is quite different, Maximo is essentially the next-generation *Ghouls n' Ghosts* that Capcom has always envisioned. If the theme of the game, a warrior slaying undead minions, isn't enough to convince you, then perhaps the subtle details, such as the heart shaped boxer shorts under Maximo's armor, or the eerily familiar soundtrack are.

The entire gameplay package evokes nostalgia, yet has enough advancements embedded in its coding to give it the high-end kick in the butt it needs to compete with today's greatest releases. The most noticeable difference or evolution that Maximo brings to the table is how the combat is delivered. Arthur had an unlimited supply of lances to chuck at undead foes. Maximo prefers the more direct approach of flailing with a razor sharp sword. The only projectiles in the game are a shield that works like a boomerang and magical blasts that rocket from the blade. I'm sure Capcom tried to implement the lance in some fashion, but it probably didn't work as well within the 3D environments. Though different, the hack n' slash tactics work incredibly well, allowing players to construct combos and different strategies for the enemy types. The combat system is where this title truly shines – most notably within the innovative item management system that allows Maximo to equip varying armaments. Challenge also rears its ugly head in the form of platforming. These segments are a bit touchy. Maximo doesn't float like most action/platform

characters, so your jumps had better be on target. The camera doesn't always present the best perspective for these portions of the game, either. To a certain extent it works, but it can prove to be a tad frustrating.

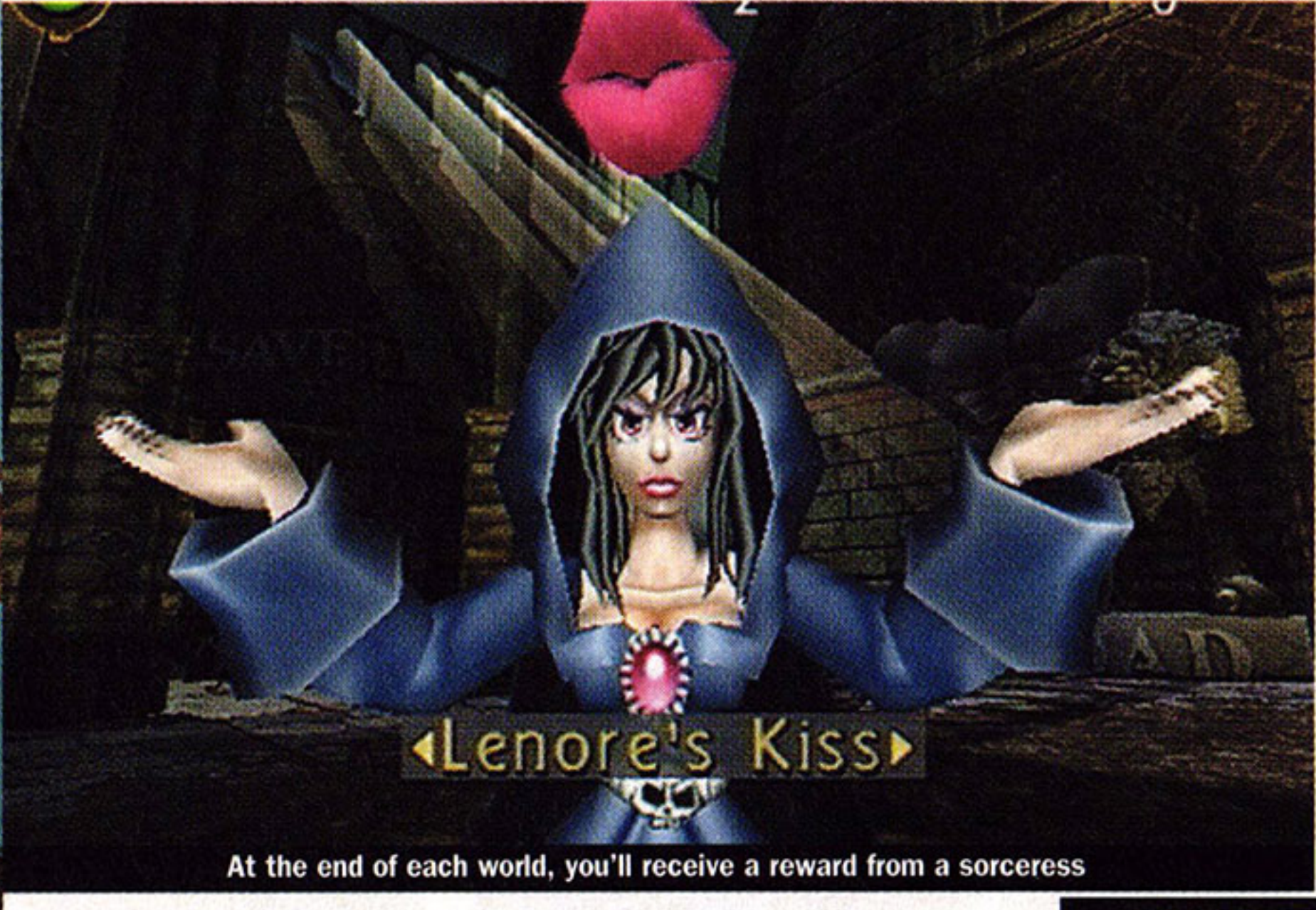
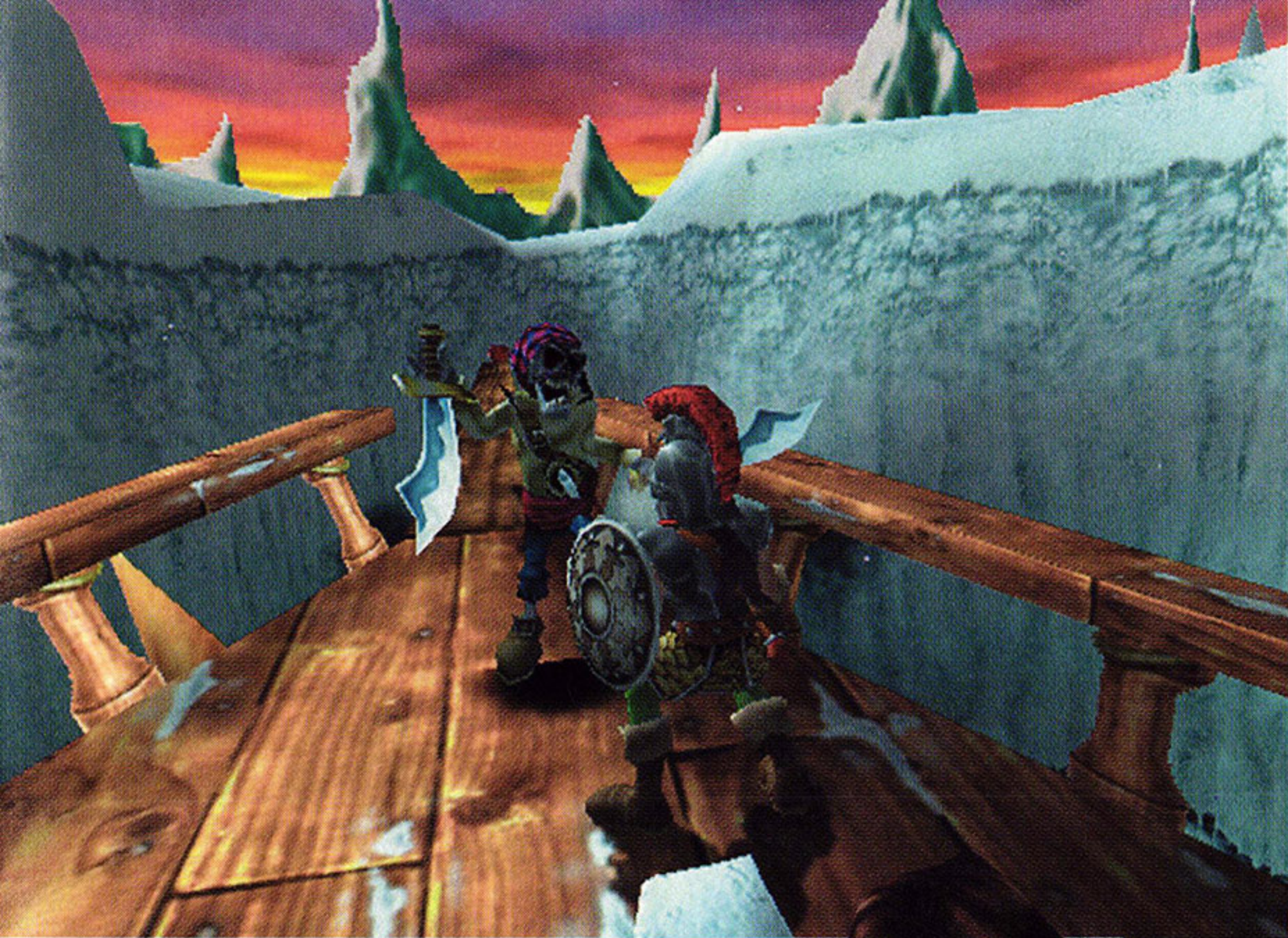
The levels are quite diverse in design and structure. You never know when an enemy will rise from a grave, or worse yet, when the ground will crumble and collapse beneath you. Basically, you're always on your toes. Capcom should also be commended for creating some of the most random secrets around. When you complete a level, you'll be given a percentage that tallies the loot you've found and the enemies that you've killed. To reach 100% you'll need to unearth everything, including a handful of chests that aren't visible. To draw them out, you'll need to jump across the terrain. If you land on a specific spot, a chest will appear. This may seem like too much legwork, which it is at first, but as the game progresses you'll unlock items that expand your search radius. Very clever.

The size of the quest is comparable to most games within this genre, yet Maximo has a high replay level – not just in the form of secrets, but additional modes and gameplay difficulties. The visual material really couldn't be much more detailed. I'm sure you'll hear the soundtrack ringing through your ears as you go about your daily business. And I'm certain that you'll find yourself completely entranced by the phenomenal gameplay package Capcom has developed. Maximo may be nostalgic in nature, but it's also one of today's must-play games. – REINER

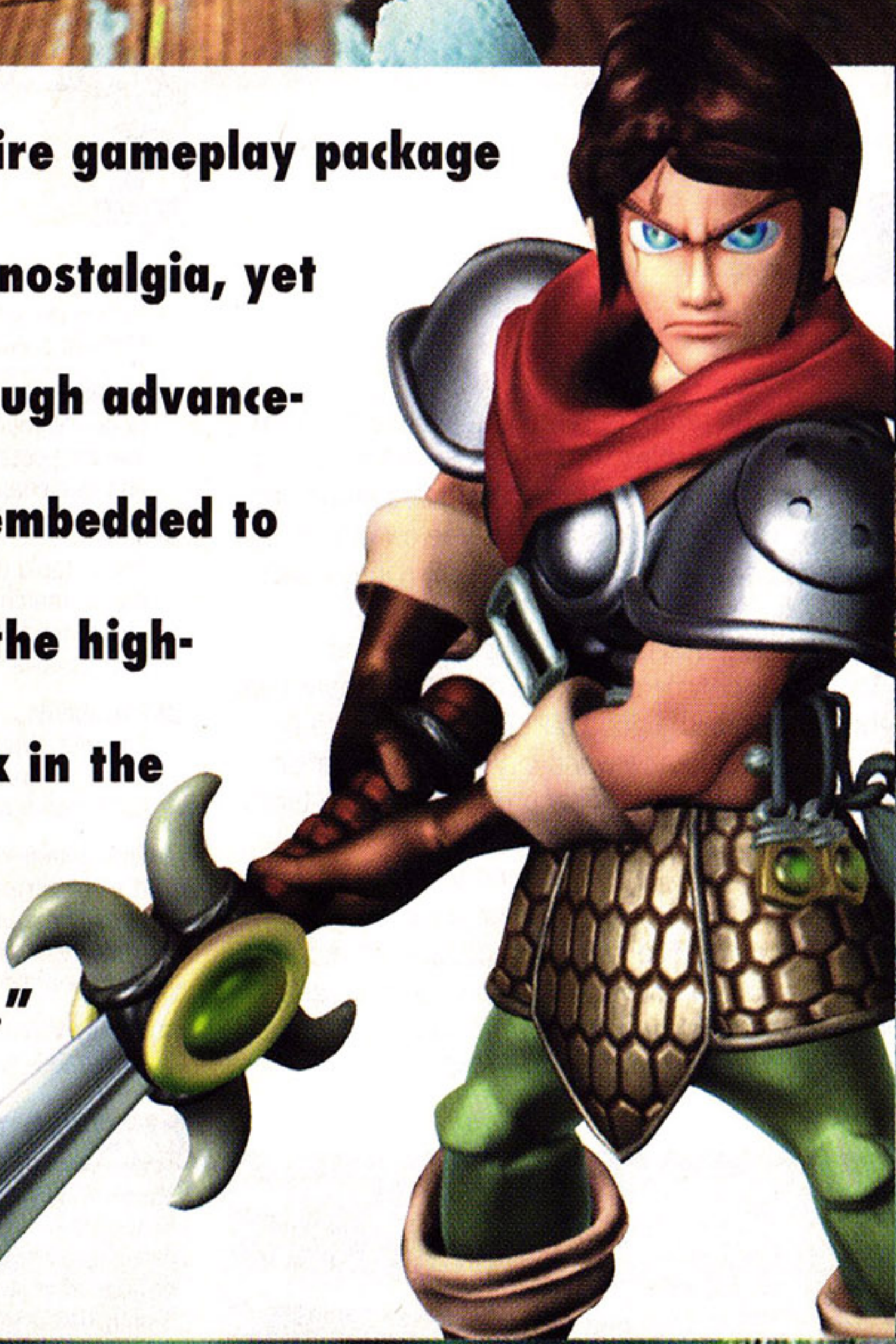


The combat mechanics are advanced and loaded with interesting options

■ STYLE 1-PLAYER ACTION ■ PUBLISHER CAPCOM ■ DEVELOPER CAPCOM DIGITAL STUDIOS ■ RELEASE FEBRUARY 12



"The entire gameplay package evokes nostalgia, yet has enough advancements embedded to give it the high-end kick in the butt it needs..."



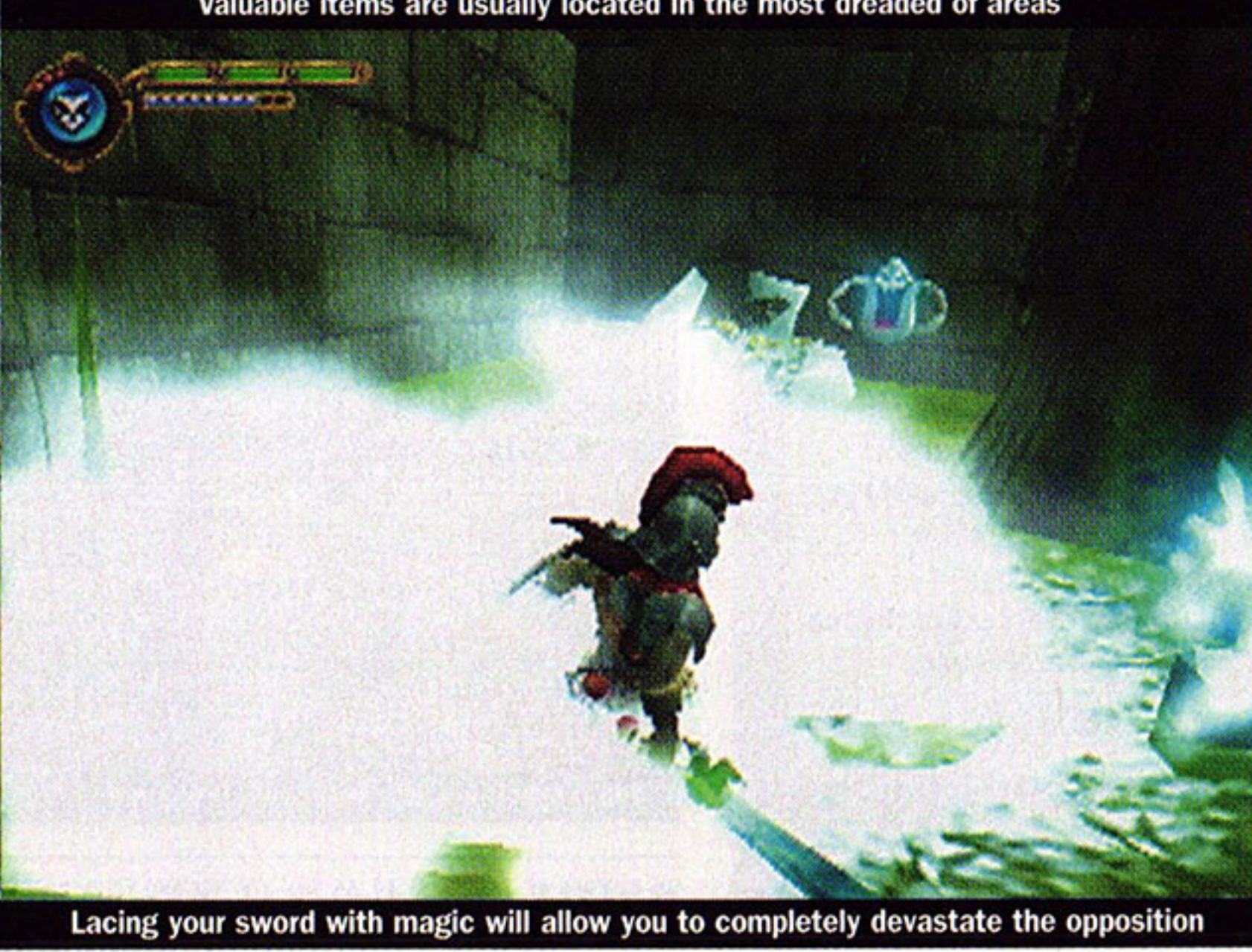
Each world consists of four levels, an overworld, and a boss encounter



Valuable items are usually located in the most dreaded of areas



The environment designs hark back to the game's roots



Lacing your sword with magic will allow you to completely devastate the opposition

THE BOTTOM LINE

TEEN
T
ESRB

9

- **Concept:** A combination of nostalgic Ghouls n' Ghosts gameplay with today's flashiest effects and three-dimensional worlds
- **Graphics:** From the lushly detailed environments to the fluid character animations, Maximo's visuals are simply extraordinary
- **Sound:** A new-age spin on the original Ghouls n' Ghosts score
- **Playability:** Sophisticated hack n' slash maneuvers are as finely tuned as can be. On the other hand, the platforming and camera work could have benefited from some tweaking
- **Entertainment:** The game can be conquered in roughly 10 hours, if you're an expert gamer. However, finding all of the secrets could take eons
- **Replay Value:** High

SECOND OPINION

Pure and simple, Maximo is a great game. There are a lot of things it's not. It's not complex. It doesn't attempt to dazzle you with a load of CG cutscenes. The story is a silly, if entertaining, trifle. However, if you look at this game for what it is – a fast-paced and challenging hack n' slasher packed with hidden goodies – I think you're going to enjoy Maximo. Although it is essentially a throwback to the 8-bit era, the upgrade system is very clever, adding some real depth to what would otherwise be a fairly rudimentary gameplay experience. Also, I appreciated the fact that this game requires you to exhibit some real skill to advance farther through the levels, and doesn't let you save every five minutes like so many titles do today. If you want a welcome blast from the past, or merely want to chop up skeletons in style, Maximo will fit the bill nicely.

MATT – 8.75

REVIEWS



PLAYSTATION 2

GITAROO MAN

BUST OUT YOUR BIGSBY

There are very few of us who haven't delved into the embarrassing, yet somehow supremely satisfying world of air guitar rock. You know the drill: You've got your Ratt turned up at home, and when that rippin' solo during Round and Round kicks in you surrender to the sweetness and fall to your knees while imagining yourself playing a Flying V behind your head in front of thousands of screaming fans. Don't be ashamed – we've all done it. Little did you know, you were training yourself for Gitaroo Man.

As sad as it seems, having done a little air guitar in your past will probably work in your favor in this, the best rhythm game ever released. Essentially a button-timer with a twist, Gitaroo Man takes you on the journey of a young boy who must play a magical instrument called a Gitaroo to defeat an evil nemesis. The twist lies in the use of the left analog stick to steer your way through the looping lines where the timing indicators for your guitar playing reside. You may time your picking perfectly, but if your direction isn't accurate, your line will be lost. By outplaying your opponent, you advance in levels and gain access to different songs. From the inspired music to the quirky gameplay, Gitaroo Man will not disappoint. Go get it. Right now. – **KRISTIAN**



- **Concept:** Defeat evil and save your girl by playing the guitar
- **Graphics:** The highly stylized animation serves this game well
- **Sound:** This has some of the best original music I've ever heard come from a console game
- **Playability:** The old adage holds true here: Easy to learn, hard to master
- **Entertainment:** Unless you have absolutely no interest in music whatsoever, you're going to love this game
- **Replay Value:** Moderate

SECOND OPINION

Don't write this off as "more weird Japanese crap." Gitaroo Man is an original title that evokes more emotion than *Led Zeppelin IV*. I was worried it was made too easy in the Americanized version, until I got to Master's Play. I'm not worthy! Gitaroo Man embarrasses every other rhythm game out there. You win.

JUSTIN – 8.75

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** KOEI
 ■ **DEVELOPER** KOEI ■ **RELEASE** JANUARY 20



PLAYSTATION 2

AIRBLADE

HOVERING TOWARD HEAVEN

This past E3 saw lots of big news. Between the return of Nintendo, Microsoft's Xbox assault, and the PS2's robust lineup of top-flight titles, there was almost too much to take in. However, during my three days in the City of Angels, two titles stood out as possible sleeper hits: *Drakan: The Ancients' Gates* and *AirBlade*. I came away from the show psyched about *AirBlade*, and I'm happy to see that the game has grown into a slick little action/sports title.

Yes, it's just a space-age Tony Hawk clone, but *AirBlade* is an amazing looking and surprisingly well done piece of software. The gravity-defying properties of the hoverboard are what make this title stand out, both for good and bad. The good part is, your ability to fly above the ground and swing off poles opens up a whole new world of vertical exploration that most games like this only touch on. The bad part is, the floaty physics make the tricks too easy to land. It's nearly impossible to mess up a ground trick or a grind.

Thankfully, the developers have structured the level objectives around this, and scoring is not really a factor in completing *AirBlade's* Story Mode. Instead, your goals are along the lines of "Grind three satellite dishes" or "Trick over five guards." Adding even more challenge is the fact that, unlike in *Tony Hawk*, you can't save individual completed goals. The levels can be passed only by finishing all of them in one perfect run. For this fact, *AirBlade* is at turns fun and frustrating, but a ride well worth taking. – **MATT**

THE BOTTOM LINE



- **Concept:** Tony Hawk gets busy with Michael J. Fox's hoverboard
- **Graphics:** Good all-around effort, featuring detailed landscapes and nice character models
- **Sound:** These tepid dance tracks are no match for Activision's awesome action sports soundtracks.
- **Playability:** The trick system isn't as deep as I would have hoped, but it has a solid feel
- **Entertainment:** It's not perfect, but *AirBlade* does some unique things with the modern skateboarding formula
- **Replay Value:** Moderately High



Poles can be used to propel yourself upward, or for quick turnarounds

Long grinds are extremely easy to perform

You'll reach heights you never imagined in *Tony Hawk*

The level goals are, shall we say, somewhat derivative

SECOND OPINION

Matt's early speculation is right on the mark – *AirBlade* is definitely a sleeper. True enough, after investing a measly hour into this release, my eyelids began to fall, my reflexes slowed, and before long, I was out cold – dreaming of a version of the game that was actually somewhat entertaining. Rather than create an interesting gameplay package, Criterion focused on the story and the intertwining objectives. Basically, take *Tony Hawk*, remove all the enjoyment that comes from tricking out, and focus specifically on the level goals. This formula could have worked, but the objectives you're required to complete are repeated through every level. Grind on an object...bonk an enemy on the head...swing on a pole. That's about the gist of it. The visual material is extraordinary, and the physics engine is a work of art, but the gameplay, or lack thereof, spoils the entire package.

REINER – 6

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 8-PLAYER ACTION/SPORTS ■ **PUBLISHER** NAMCO
 ■ **DEVELOPER** CRITERION STUDIOS ■ **RELEASE** JANUARY 29

NBA 2K2

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER SPORTS
 ■ **PUBLISHER** SEGA SPORTS
 ■ **RELEASE** JANUARY 22



I wish Visual Concepts would've spent as much time enhancing the Dreamcast-to-PS2 conversion of this game as it did with NFL 2K2. Unlike the Xbox NBA 2K2, which got a graphical upgrade, nothing has changed. I'm

gripping as a 2K veteran. Those new to the series will love the realism, difficulty, and Franchise mode. Errant passing is the only major gameplay flaw. NBA 2K2 is money – but I expect more next season. – **JUSTIN**

E 8.75

THE LEGEND OF ALON D'AR

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER ACTION/RPG
 ■ **PUBLISHER** UBI SOFT
 ■ **RELEASE** DECEMBER 5



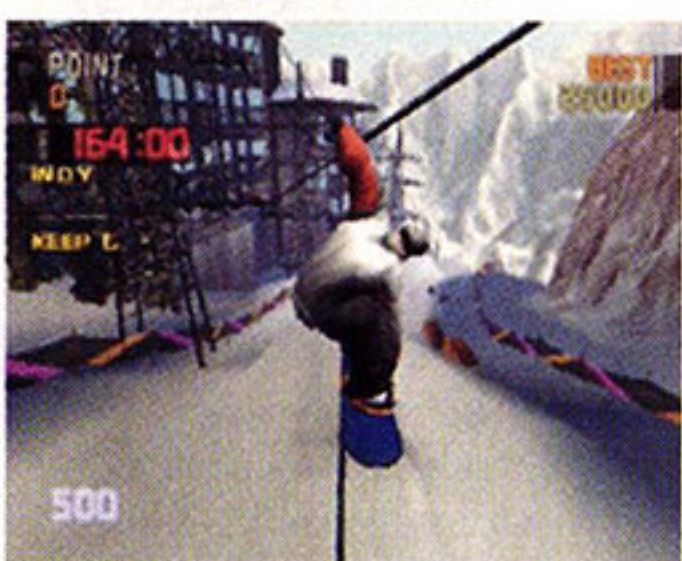
If there's a legend here, it's that this title fails to raise your heartbeat in almost any way. Leveling-up is something all RPG fanatics enjoy, but I found its tedium in Alon D'ar more than I could bear. Levels can be pretty large, but they are

often a wasteland of mindless scavenger hunt sidequests and bland environments that are only exacerbated by signs that point you in the right direction. Perhaps the biggest crime, however, is that real-time battles can be frustrating, and that they are made worse by some truly poor animations. Alon D'oh! – **KATO**

T 5

ESPN WINTER X SNOWBOARDING 2002

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER SPORTS
 ■ **PUBLISHER** KONAMI
 ■ **RELEASE** JANUARY 5



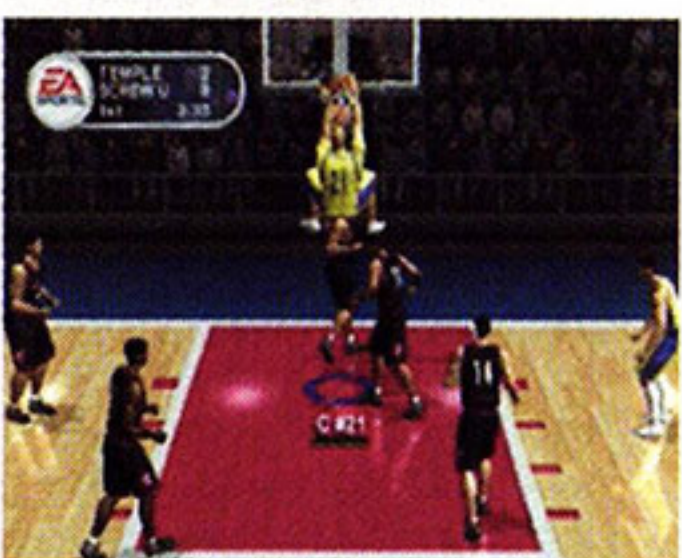
The last thing the video game world needs at this moment is yet another snowboarding game; even worse, a mediocre one. Graphically, Winter X is sufficient, but the gameplay is just pretty blah. There is a Career mode that lets you

take a boarder from nobody to the Games, but the trip isn't all that exciting. There is a solid base here, so if you buy you won't be disappointed, but there are much better options, like SSX Tricky and Shaun Palmer. – **ANDY**

E 7

NCAA MARCH MADNESS 2002

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER SPORTS
 ■ **PUBLISHER** EA SPORTS
 ■ **RELEASE** JANUARY 8



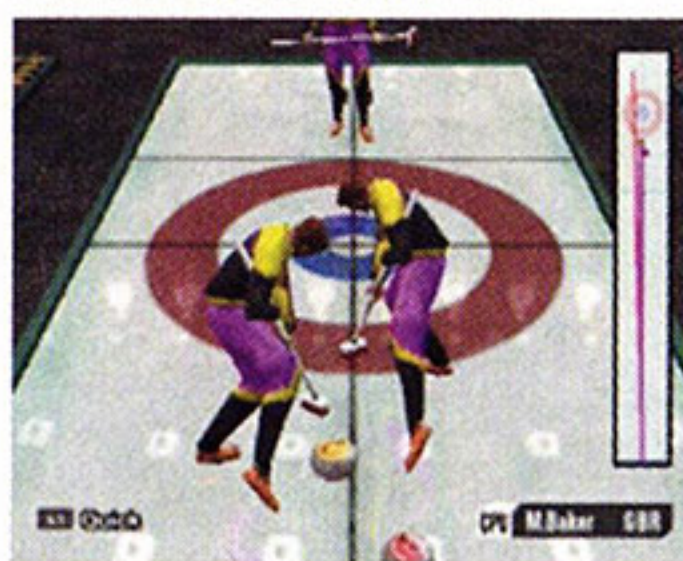
Imagine that EA is some crusty old dean of a prestigious university. Some of its worst, party-minded students, as a way to get back at him for instituting an alcohol-free school zone, decide to take the dean's favorite college

basketball game, and eliminate any season modes, intelligent AI, and gameplay polish. Sounds like the best prank ever! Not to mention one of the crappier basketball games on the planet. The team responsible for March Madness needs to go back to school. – **JUSTIN**

E 4.75

ESPN INTERNATIONAL WINTER SPORTS 2002

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER SPORTS
 ■ **PUBLISHER** KONAMI
 ■ **RELEASE** JANUARY 29



This game doesn't have the official Olympic license, but you'll very quickly get the idea, as this isn't anything you haven't experienced before. Button timing and mashing is fine, but it would be great if

Konami could expand snowboarding (and even figure skating) into a more combo-laden affair à la Tony Hawk. Then again, neither would have the high drama, skill, and competition of ESPN's curling event. Rent this and save your money for when your mom makes you buy her a new Swiffer 'cause you wore out the old one curling in your garage. – **KATO**

E 7



PAC-MAN WORLD 2

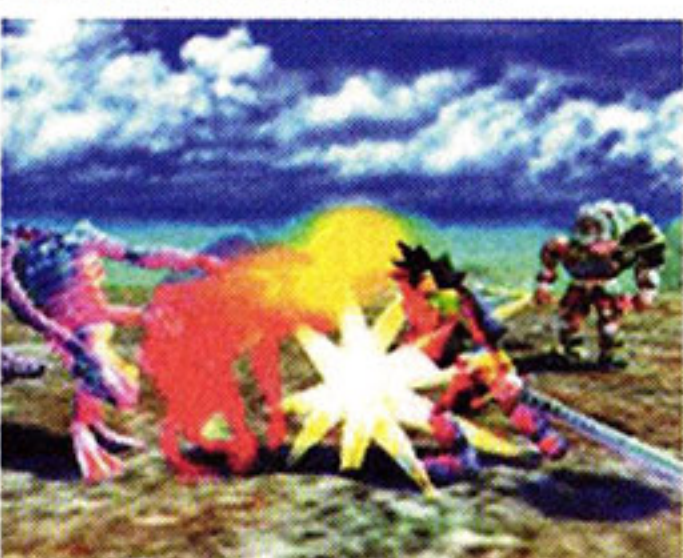
■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION/PLATFORM
 ■ **PUBLISHER** NAMCO
 ■ **RELEASE** FEBRUARY 26

Aside from Mario, Pac-Man is still probably the most famous franchise in all of video games. However, Namco has never figured out how to keep its rotund dot muncher a relevant part of the current gaming scene. Yes, Pac-Man is a bona fide icon, but today he finds himself in a position similar to that of aging rock superstars like Paul McCartney or Mick Jagger. Everyone agrees that they are legends, but that doesn't mean they want to buy their new album. It's hard to pinpoint just where this game went wrong, but I think it has something to do with the decision to move away from the essentially side-scrolling nature of the first Pac-Man World. Of course, this is much more difficult to accomplish, and the developers failed to develop a camera system capable of dealing with the 3D action. Don't call it a comeback, because it's not. – **MATT**

E 5.5

GRANDIA II

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ROLE-PLAYING GAME
 ■ **PUBLISHER** UBI SOFT
 ■ **RELEASE** JANUARY 29



Much like an archeologist excavating an ancient rune, I feel as though I've unearthed a long-lost gaming relic. Grandia II pushed the Dreamcast hardware to the limit, but it does little to take advantage of the PlayStation 2.

Developer GameArts implemented roughly 30 minutes of new CG footage, but the heart and soul of the game hasn't received the enhancements it so desperately needs. The texturing is blurry, the camera chugs and rotates at a snail's pace, and the character models lack detail. Tie the archaic visual presentation to the nauseating plot and uninteresting character personalities, and the end result is yet another RPG that doesn't live up to the expectations. – **REINER**

T 6.5



PLAYSTATION 2

PIRATES: THE LEGEND OF BLACK KAT

SEA LEGS & BOOTY

As far as picaroon simulations go, Bethesda Software's PC hit, Sea Dogs, allowed players to truly immerse themselves in the whimsical, yet highly treacherous lifestyle of a pirate. Westwood's approach to this genre isn't nearly as engaging.

The pirate theme is just dressing, cleverly hiding the fact that this is yet another generic action game that could have been transformed into any conceivable concept. The majority of gameplay takes place on land, where players must hack n' slash their way through countless hoards of undead adversaries and rival buccaneers to unearth treasure rewards. While the action at hand is disappointing, forcing players to repeatedly jam on a button to exact sword-devastating combos, thrills emerge in the ability to explore and unearth new zones.

To add variety, Westwood has instituted naval warfare. While gorgeously detailed, these segments lack variety and grow wearisome just as quickly as the hand-to-hand combat.

The sheer size of the quest is admirable, but I quickly grew tired of the repetitious play. If I perform another three-hit combo, I'll gladly walk the plank! The only way I can vouch for this release is if it's played sparsely for an hour or two at a time. It may not be a blockbuster release, but it is moderately entertaining. – **REINER**

THE BOTTOM LINE
T 7.25

- **Concept:** Create action game, insert hot chick
- **Graphics:** Luxuriously detailed water... generic character models, environments, and texturing
- **Sound:** Westwood has always excelled in creating memorable scores. Pirates is no different. It's catchy and fits the subject matter perfectly
- **Playability:** From the boat battles to sword combat, all the action relies on one button. Fire cannon...swing sword
- **Entertainment:** The thrills of combat wear off quickly. However, the ability to upgrade ships and chart out new lands should keep gamers hooked until the end
- **Replay Value:** Moderately High

SECOND OPINION

Pirates is either a great disappointment or a great surprise, depending on how you look at it. Glass half-empty cynics will cry that this was a flubbed attempt at creating an engrossing, high seas epic that encompassed both third-person action and strategic naval combat. However, I'll play the optimist and give Westwood credit for improving the game over its ludicrously bad E3 demo.

MATT - 7

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION/ADVENTURE ■ **PUBLISHER** ELECTRONIC ARTS ■ **DEVELOPER** WESTWOOD STUDIOS
 ■ **RELEASE** FEBRUARY 5



"[Courtside] is a pretty rocking title that can hang with the b-ball big boys."

GAMECUBE

NBA COURTSIDE 2002

KOBABY GOT BACK

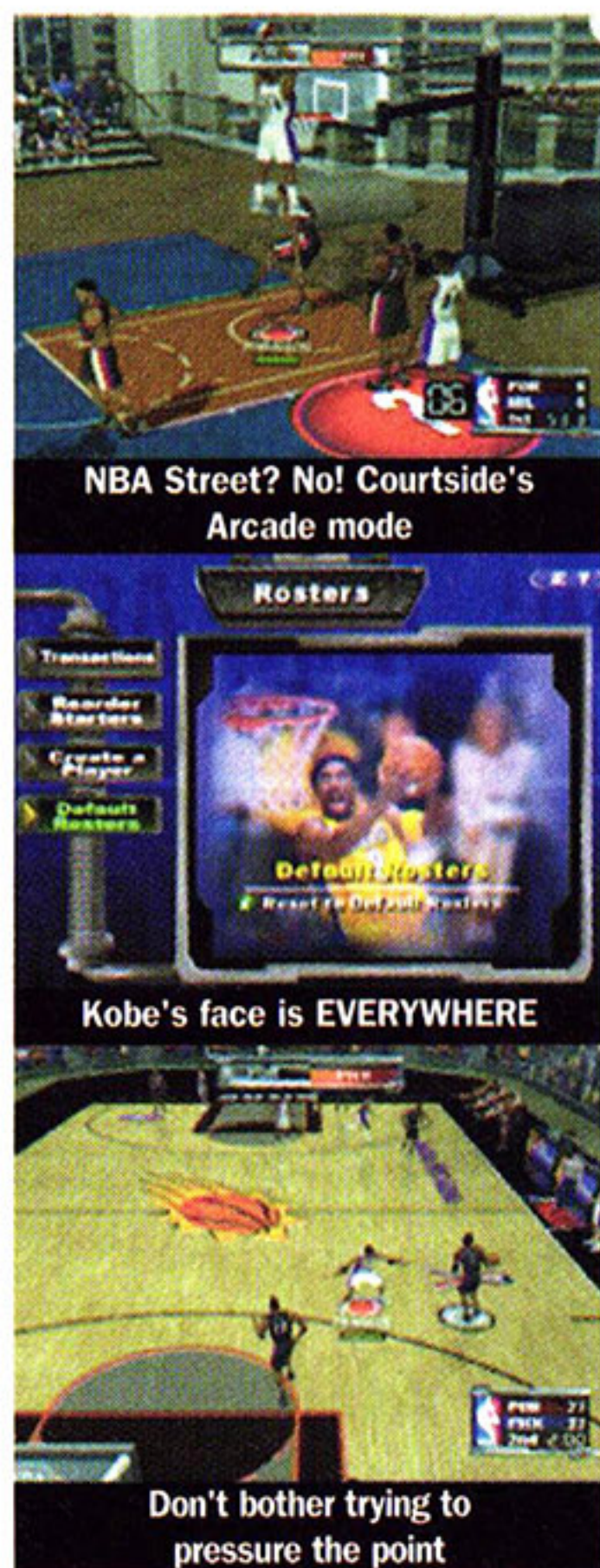
I'm not a big Kobe Bryant fan. Maybe it stems from the All-Star Game where he waved off a pick from The Mailman to take Jordan one-on-one. Perhaps it's his pseudo-deep Adidas commercials. Either way, give me a Dirk Nowitski, Steve Francis, or Tracy McGrady any day. Still, I endured eight instruction book pictures of Kobe and countless menu action shots to play this game. While Left Field made a few Courtsides on Nintendo 64, since this is the first one in a while and on a new system, I consider it a first-generation product. As such, it's a pretty rocking title that can hang with the b-ball big boys.

When I first saw the game, it looked a lot like NBA 2K. After playing it, though, it's much more similar to NBA Live – no defense, no Franchise mode, but a lot of fun. The control is a shock to the system at first, since you use the C-Stick for both passing and switching defenders. It takes some getting used to, but it's really a good way to go. Stat tracking is up to par, even though you have to go to a different screen to view them mid-game. The Season mode has a fantasy draft (my favorite) so you can create your team from scratch. Unfortunately, you can trade players at will with no AI acceptance, allowing you to make your own dream team. This is just part of Courtside's kid-oriented features, which

also include no fatigue and Easy difficulty as game defaults. I know GameCube is geared more towards children than Xbox or PS2, but basketball is basketball and should be treated as such. Few people who will play this game are unfamiliar to video game hoops.

Rebounding is just a hair inferior to NBA 2K2, but better than Live. Your players seem to gravitate to the ball in slow motion, but at least you have a chance at grabbing the board. Courtside's dunks are some of the best I've seen, which may be thanks to Kobe's input. This game is all offense. Driving players are almost unstoppable, evoking memories of Lakers Vs. Celtics. The computer plays like it's got the flu, which only adds to the slow pace of the action. I shot about 75% from the field every game. There's a lot of standing around or leisurely strolling. Defenders fall for pump fakes easily, too. At least they'll intercept bad passes. When playing D, steals and blocks are actually decent. Every rejection is very obvious, as hands swat the ball. A few curiosities include having point guards inbound, and frequent goaltending calls on dunks. Kobe's quirky in more than a few ways, but I really had some fun with it. It's not Live or NBA 2K2, but it's definitely not far behind, and definitely worth checking out. – JUSTIN

■ STYLE 1 TO 4-PLAYER SPORTS ■ PUBLISHER NINTENDO ■ DEVELOPER LEFT FIELD ■ RELEASE JANUARY 14



Fake the shot, then drive the lane



Dunk the ball until you...break yo' neck!

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE
E
CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB

8.25

- **Concept:** GameCube needs basketball, doesn't it?
- **Graphics:** Good crowd and decent models. The arenas are a tad awkward
- **Sound:** Amazingly, the commentators spout multiple factoids for each player
- **Playability:** The C-Stick use alone makes this control different from other hoops titles, though it's actually very intuitive
- **Entertainment:** For a first next-gen effort, Courtside's definitely got game
- **Replay Value:** Moderately High

SECOND OPINION

Courtside doesn't have the polish nor the depth of Sega and EA's products, but it's definitely a contender, and easily Left Field's best basketball game to date. Since Left Field started from scratch, technically, this is a first-generation title. Along with this classification come a number of obscure glitches like goaltending on dunks and questionable AI. Courtside is also lacking in the simulation aspect. It doesn't offer continuing seasons, and you can freely trade for whomever you want. At the same time, though, the game shines in a number of categories. The collision fields between the players and the ball are incredibly accurate. I was also fairly impressed with the unique C-Stick passing and variety within the offensive plays. It may rank third in the standings, but I have a feeling that GameCube owners will be quite pleased with what Left Field has pieced together.

REINER – 7.5



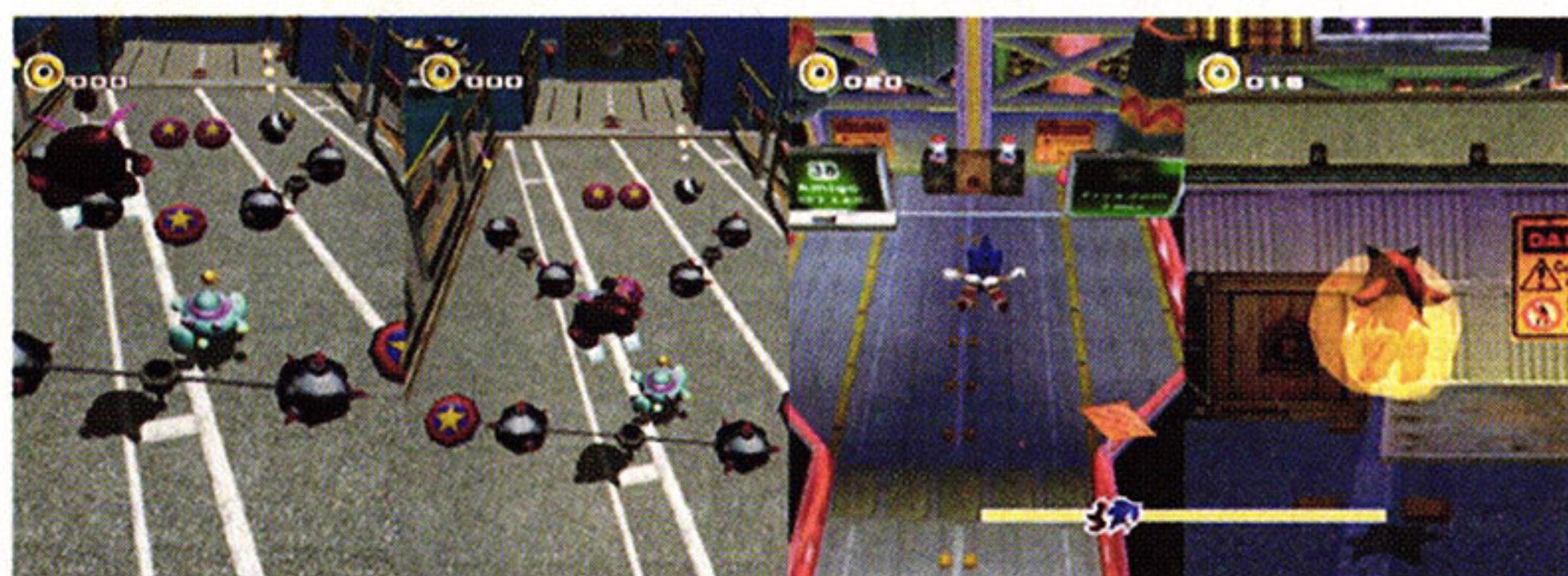
GAMECUBE

SONIC ADVENTURE 2 BATTLE

LOSING SPEED

The breakneck velocity of Sega's attitude-driven mascot has decelerated to a modest jog. Rather than focus specifically on the blue blur, Sega desired to encompass the entire Sonic universe in this release. An unwise decision, if I may say so. With six different playable characters, the complexity of the quest transforms into a series of minigames. The Sonic levels are as explosive as ever, although the control isn't nearly as refined as it should be. The rest of the stages in the game are poorly concocted and void of fun.

To spice up the GameCube version, Sega implemented an array of two-player minigames. From split-screen racing to heated battles, these multiplayer bonuses are just as aggravating and poorly designed as the main quest. Other than the Sonic levels, which are few and far between, the only aspect that truly drew me into the quest was the ability to raise and nurture the adorable little Chao pets. This obscure break from the game is quite deep and more finely polished than the game itself. I have a feeling that kids will thoroughly enjoy this release, but it's way too easy and too far off the beaten track to entice hardcore gamers or fans of Sonic's nostalgic exploits. — REINER



The GameCube version comes equipped with exclusive two-player minigames

Players can also compete head-to-head in electrifying races



In addition to the wildly amusing Chao breeding and racing, you'll now have the ability to test your virtual pet's kung-fu in Karate mode

Metal Sonic is one of the 12 characters available for multiplayer

■ STYLE 1 OR 2-PLAYER ACTION ■ PUBLISHER SEGA ■ DEVELOPER SONIC TEAM
■ RELEASE FEBRUARY 12

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE
E

7.5

■ Concept:

An enhanced port of the Dreamcast game with new two-player mini-battles, improved Chao raising, and Game Boy Advance compatibility

■ Graphics:

The engine runs smoothly, offering gorgeous environment designs and fluid movements

■ Sound:

'80s rock with annoying spoken dialogue

■ Playability:

The sheer speed of gameplay is impressive, but the play mechanics are glitchy and unresponsive

■ Entertainment:

There's a lot to do in this game, but Chao raising is the only mode that is consistently amusing

■ Replay Value:

Moderately High

SECOND OPINION

It's almost criminal how one-sided Sonic Adventure 2 is. On one hand, I pretty much hate the gameplay. The Sonic/Shadow stages consist of basically pressing forward as your 'hog of choice loops like mad. The mecha stages are lame central, with some shooting and little else. The Emerald scavenger hunts bite it, too. Who really wants to find some green rock in a Sonic game? The updated multiplayer mode is only worthy as a means to punish small children ("Clean your room or you'll have to play two-player Sonic with your sister."). But then, the glimmering, shining ray of joy is Chao. They are my masters. I have no choice but to play through the piss-poor levels to get them new animals and gems. I have to race and fight (new Chao Karate) with them. They're so damn cute. Argh! Curse Sega for making me play such a bad game just to advance my Chao!

JUSTIN — 7

REVIEWS

GAMECUBE

SIMPSONS ROAD RAGE

■ STYLE 1 OR 2-PLAYER RACING
■ PUBLISHER ELECTRONIC ARTS
■ RELEASE DECEMBER 19



Simpsons reruns are always gold, because you can never take in all the obscurities and genius in one viewing. Though a little short on gameplay depth, Road Rage is worth repeated play because of the show-lifted locations and both original and reused character quotes. The leprechaun may tell you to burn things, but shut him up and listen to me: Simpsons Road Rage is most definitely okalee dokalee, neighborino. — JUSTIN

TEEN
T 8

GAMECUBE

UNIVERSAL STUDIOS:
THEME PARK ADVENTURE

■ STYLE 1 OR 2-PLAYER ACTION
■ PUBLISHER KEMCO
■ RELEASE DECEMBER 20

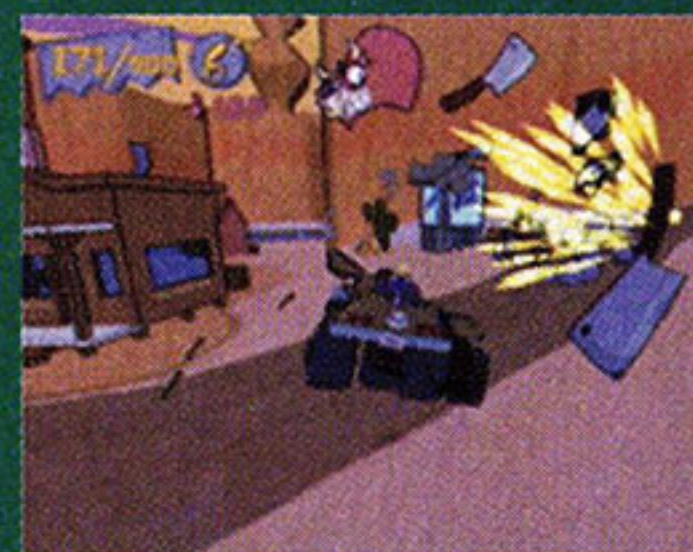
The problem with theme parks is that you have to put up with a lot of annoying crap (long lines, perverts in large animal costumes, horribly high concession prices, etc.) just to get a handful of fleeting thrills. The same is true for Theme Park Adventure. You'll spend more time aimlessly wandering through the park, talking to strangely happy pedestrians, and picking up garbage than you will playing the semi-entertaining minigames that pass for rides in this game. Also, the Waterworld "attraction" (actually a thirty-second clip of a plane crashing into the water) is the lamest thing I've ever seen, except for myself naked. Yuck! — MATT

EVERYONE
E 4

GAMECUBE

CEL DAMAGE

■ STYLE 1 TO 4 PLAYER ACTION
■ PUBLISHER ELECTRONIC ARTS
■ RELEASE JANUARY 8



You'd think that this game would somehow be more palatable on the GameCube, but it's not. The fact that you can't use the analog stick for forward movement in Nintendo's edition of Cel Damage suggests to me that there really is a conspiracy between Microsoft and EA to make the Xbox controller look good (see my previous Xbox review of Madden). Unfortunately, the game's cel-shaded graphics are the real loser here, because they're wasted on the wrong title. — KATO

TEEN
T 5



"The amount of new material in this game is definitely noteworthy, especially since it alters the overall gameplay experience."

XBOX
GENMA ONIMUSHA

GREEN ORBS & HAM

Genma Onimusha sounds like a full-fledged sequel, but it's actually a port of the PlayStation 2 game released last March. To give this re-release some legs, and also to make it appeal to fans of the original, Capcom has completely reinvented the entire quest. Of course, the prerendered backdrops and overall story arc remain untouched, but the majority of gameplay is in fact new. The environments may seem familiar, and the gameplay mechanics may fit like a worn glove, but the remainder of the game has been overhauled, not just to create a different experience, but to add much needed diversity and a boost in the overall difficulty curve.

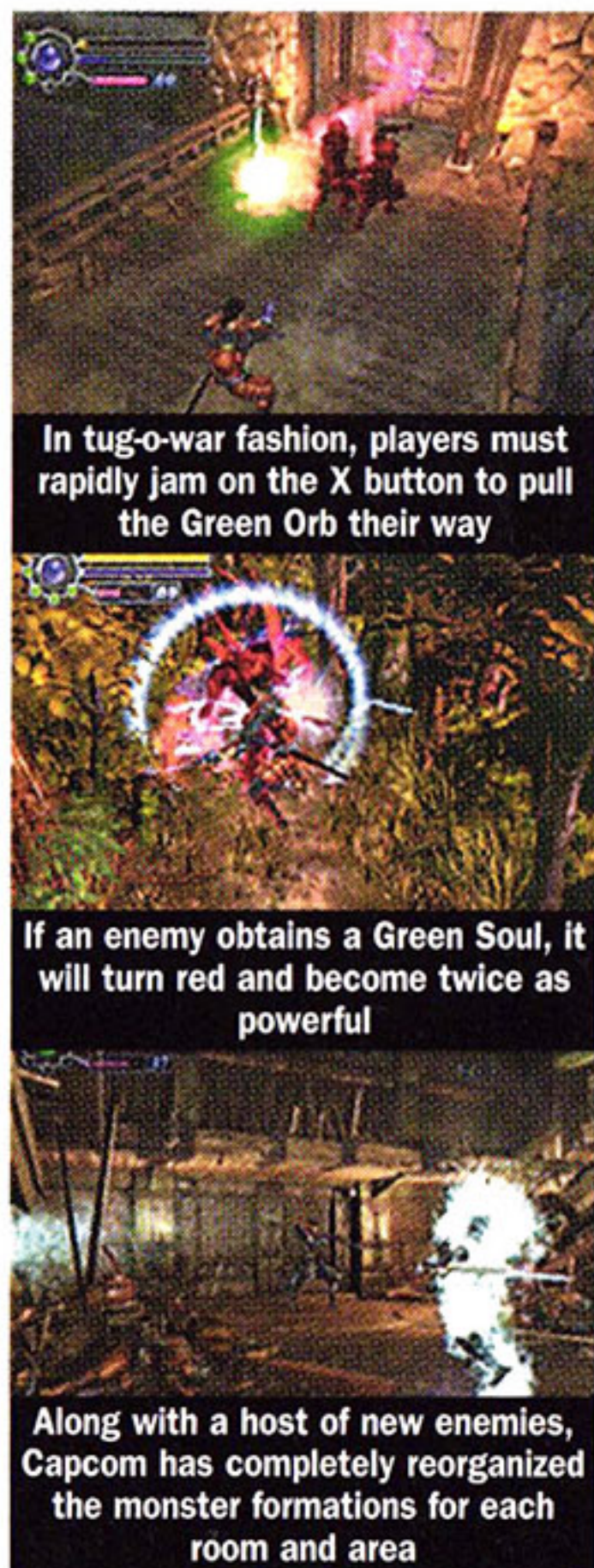
I invested approximately 15 hours into the founding PlayStation 2 release. Within this time, I managed to complete the game three times and unlock all of the secrets hidden within. Even with a firm understanding of how the game works, I only managed to finish the Xbox version once within the 15 hours I vested. The expanded duration in play stems from a number of changes that have been embedded in the coding. For starters, all of the monster locations and formations have changed. In laymen's terms, if you enter a room in the PlayStation 2 version, you'll run into two weak enemies; whereas if you enter this room in the Xbox version, you'll run into four strong enemies. In addition to this, a handful of the monsters in the game are exclusive to the

Xbox version. Of course, these new recruits are as vicious as can be. My favorite would have to be the little doll, Ayame. Her appearance is laughable, but she's far from harmless. Much like the Nemesis in Resident Evil 3, she'll continually stalk and attack you until the end of the game.

To add an even larger boost in challenge, Capcom has incorporated new Green Souls. Whenever one of these Souls appears on the battlefield, you'll need to fight the opposition in a button-mashing tug-o-war to obtain it. If you possess the Soul, new special attacks are yours to command. However, if this precious item falls into the hands of an enemy, the beast will become twice as powerful. If you tie all of these elements together, the game finally has the longevity and brutal difficulty needed to keep gamers immersed. There are also a number of secrets like alternate costumes and armors that can be obtained by running through the game a number of times.

The amount of new material in this game is definitely noteworthy, especially since it alters the overall gameplay experience. Even if you've already played through the original PS2 release 100 times, I'd recommend taking a look at this port. Genma Onimusha is insanely difficult, the boss battles are more inventive, and the rewards are all the more enticing. — **REINER**

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION/ADVENTURE ■ **PUBLISHER** CAPCOM ■ **DEVELOPER** CAPCOM ■ **RELEASE** JANUARY 29



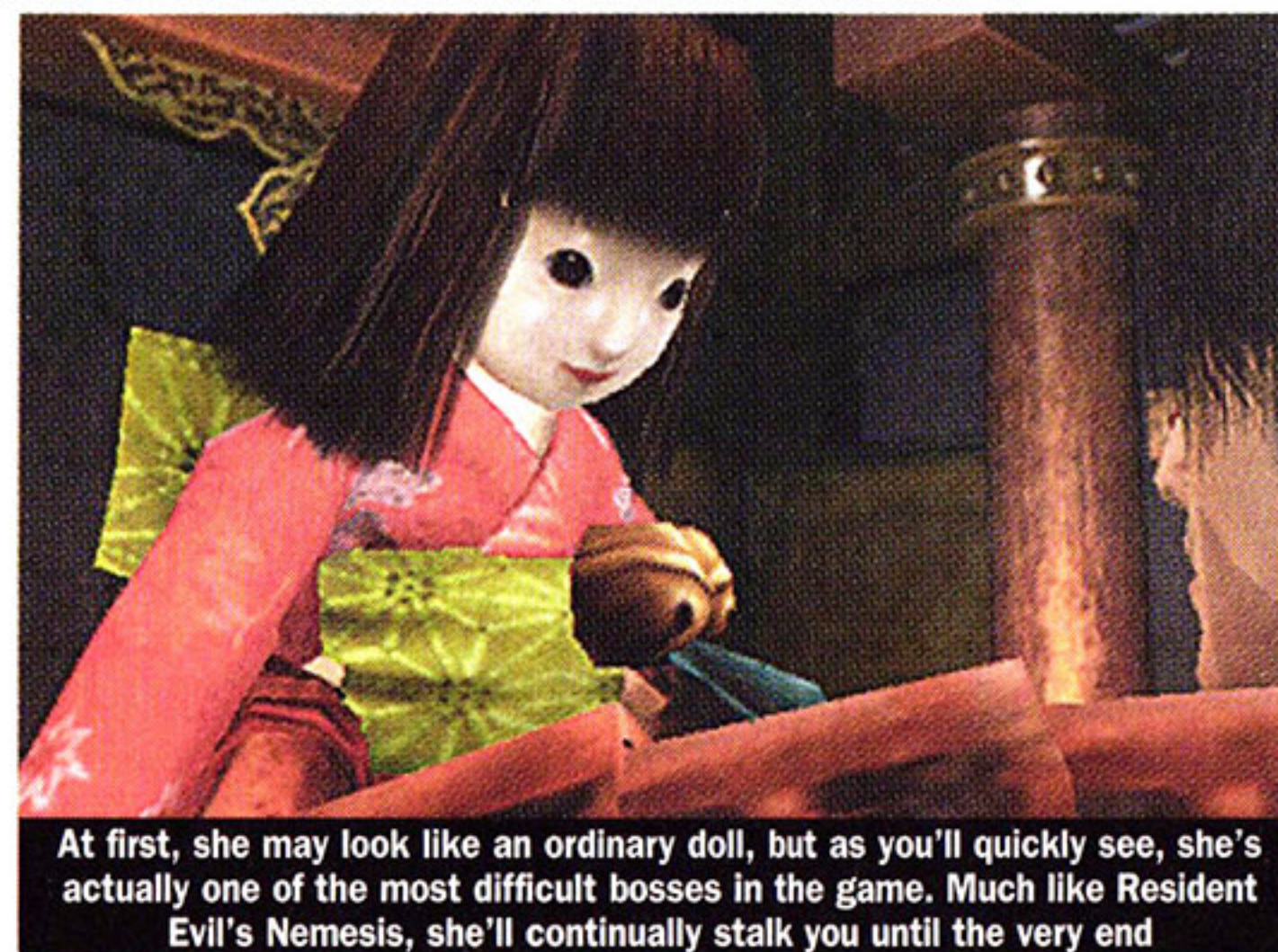
In tug-o-war fashion, players must rapidly jam on the X button to pull the Green Orb their way

If an enemy obtains a Green Soul, it will turn red and become twice as powerful

Along with a host of new enemies, Capcom has completely reorganized the monster formations for each room and area



Exclusive to the Xbox version, players can enter the battle tower. The goal of this area is to clear out the waves of enemies that infest each floor.



At first, she may look like an ordinary doll, but as you'll quickly see, she's actually one of the most difficult bosses in the game. Much like Resident Evil's Nemesis, she'll continually stalk you until the very end

THE BOTTOM LINE
MATURE
M
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
8.5

- **Concept:** Razor-sharp sword combat styled in the classic Resident Evil vein
- **Graphics:** The prerendered backdrops are identical to the founding PS2 release. However, new particle effects have been laced to some of the enemies
- **Sound:** One of the few scores that would make John Williams jealous
- **Playability:** Strategic button mashing coupled with perplexing puzzles
- **Entertainment:** Still too short, but this version does feature a ramped up difficulty curve, different enemy formations, new bosses, and a battle tower
- **Replay Value:** Moderately High

SECOND OPINION

I enjoyed my time with PS2's Onimusha, although I never considered it a game that I had to beat a second time. Genma Onimusha, however, might be the postscript that I first desired. No, it doesn't redefine the game, but it does provide more depth to the title's action foundation. The inclusion of the Green Souls not only makes Genma more challenging, but also requires more strategy from you. I found myself concentrating on my blocking and movement during combat more than I did with the PS2. Visually, this Onimusha distinguishes itself by using a more matted palette than the PS2 version. Whether this is better or not may be a personal call, as it makes the game look slightly different, but not necessarily improved. I only wish Capcom would've allowed you to play this title with the analog stick. That would have truly unleashed Genma's fighting spirit.

KATO — 8.5



XBOX

JET SET RADIO FUTURE

GRAFFITI IS NOT A CRIME, BUT BORING GAMEPLAY IS

Jet Grind Radio (Jet Set Radio in Japan) on Dreamcast was actually one of my favorite titles for the system. It was just weird enough to be different, and had gameplay that was just easy enough to be enjoyable. The follow-up, Jet Set Radio Future on Xbox, is almost identical to the first with some tweaks and improvements to bring it up to date. But, it also has some design changes that I felt hindered the game.

The improvements to JSRF are obvious once you load it up: The environments are much larger than on the Dreamcast, and the level of detail and ambient life is truly impressive. Scores of people dive out of your way as you cruise down the streets, and cars, banners, and carts fill the streets.

To make sure you get a good look at all these things, the game has been designed so that all the areas connect to give it more of an adventure-game feel. Unfortunately, this slows the pace down some, which reveals its lack of playcontrol options. Sure, there is a combo system here, but compared to the Tony Hawks of the world, it really is rather shallow. Plus, the interactive graffiti segments (where you input motions on the controller) have been removed, and now all it takes is a single button press to tag a spot.

Jet Set Radio Future is still a decent game, but its lack of depth makes it the poster child for an average game. You will enjoy it, but it's nothing to write home about. On a side note, the music is some of the best I have heard in a game in a long time. — **ANDY**



The rules of gravity don't apply in Jet Set Radio Future, you can grind up just about anything

Up to four players can play cooperatively or competitively in five different events

This flock of crows is a good example of the amount of ambient life in the game

Create your own graffiti, or choose from various pre-made pieces you can unlock in the game

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** SEGA ■ **DEVELOPER** SMILEBIT
 ■ **RELEASE** FEBRUARY 19

THE BOTTOM LINE



- **Concept:**
Outlandish youths sporting inline skates fight the power
- **Graphics:**
A gorgeous cel-shaded world with bigger environments and more ambient life to show the power of Xbox
- **Sound:**
I ignored the game for many hours and just let the music play, if that gives you an idea of how much I liked it
- **Playability:**
Since the interactive graffiti element has been removed from the game, the play is much more one-dimensional
- **Entertainment:**
Interesting enough to play, but at no time did it really take off
- **Replay Value:**
Moderately Low

SECOND OPINION

Jet Grind Radio for the Dreamcast may have set off a cel-shaded revolution, but the gameplay itself didn't quite spark the across-the-board interest that Sega had hoped. Jet Set Radio Future attempts to bridge the gap. First off, JSRF flows more than its predecessor, but this comes at a price. You don't have to apply tags manually, which is too bad. Still, this is made up for by Future's dizzying array of grinds that will have you grinding up lightposts high above the city to JSRF's awesome soundtrack. Its large levels become richer every time you traverse them to complete your various tasks. While these features are exciting, I feel JSRF misses the mass appeal boat for two reasons. It's not as challenging as Tony Hawk, and its new multiplayer isn't as engaging either. Regardless, I had a blast with the game, and applaud Sega's continuation of quality. This title's only fault is that it won't sell systems by itself.

KATO - 8

REVIEWS



XBOX

NBA 2K2

NO LONGER BOXED OUT

I'd be a tad angry if I were a PS2 owner. Xbox 2K2 got the cosmetic makeover the PlayStation 2 version sorely needed. While nowhere near the Xbox's graphical potential, it's still better than it was. I guess Xbox deserves to get a superior product every now and then.

Aside from graphics, this is the same NBA 2K2 as on other systems. The play is as spot-on as ever, though of course button layouts take getting used to. I'm not going to call it perfect, because there are a few problems, but it's sho'nuff the top seed of basketball games.

For the benefit of you and the developer, let me outline said problems. First, passes often go errant. If there's a fast break, your dish will usually go to the weak-side man instead of the guy under the hoop. Argh! Also, you can't see a player's stats from the sub screen. C'mon now, EA had that back on the Genesis. Speaking of subs, please – for the good of mankind – take auto subs off of default.

Whew. Now that I got that out of my system, back to the praise. I love Franchise mode. Your players' attributes change depending on performance. This is the only game where the AI schools me if I'm not careful. It feels more like real basketball in a way I can't explain. While it's a little late in coming, this is the superior version of the superior series. — **JUSTIN**

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER SPORTS ■ **PUBLISHER** SEGA SPORTS
 ■ **DEVELOPER** VISUAL CONCEPTS ■ **RELEASE** MARCH 15

THE BOTTOM LINE



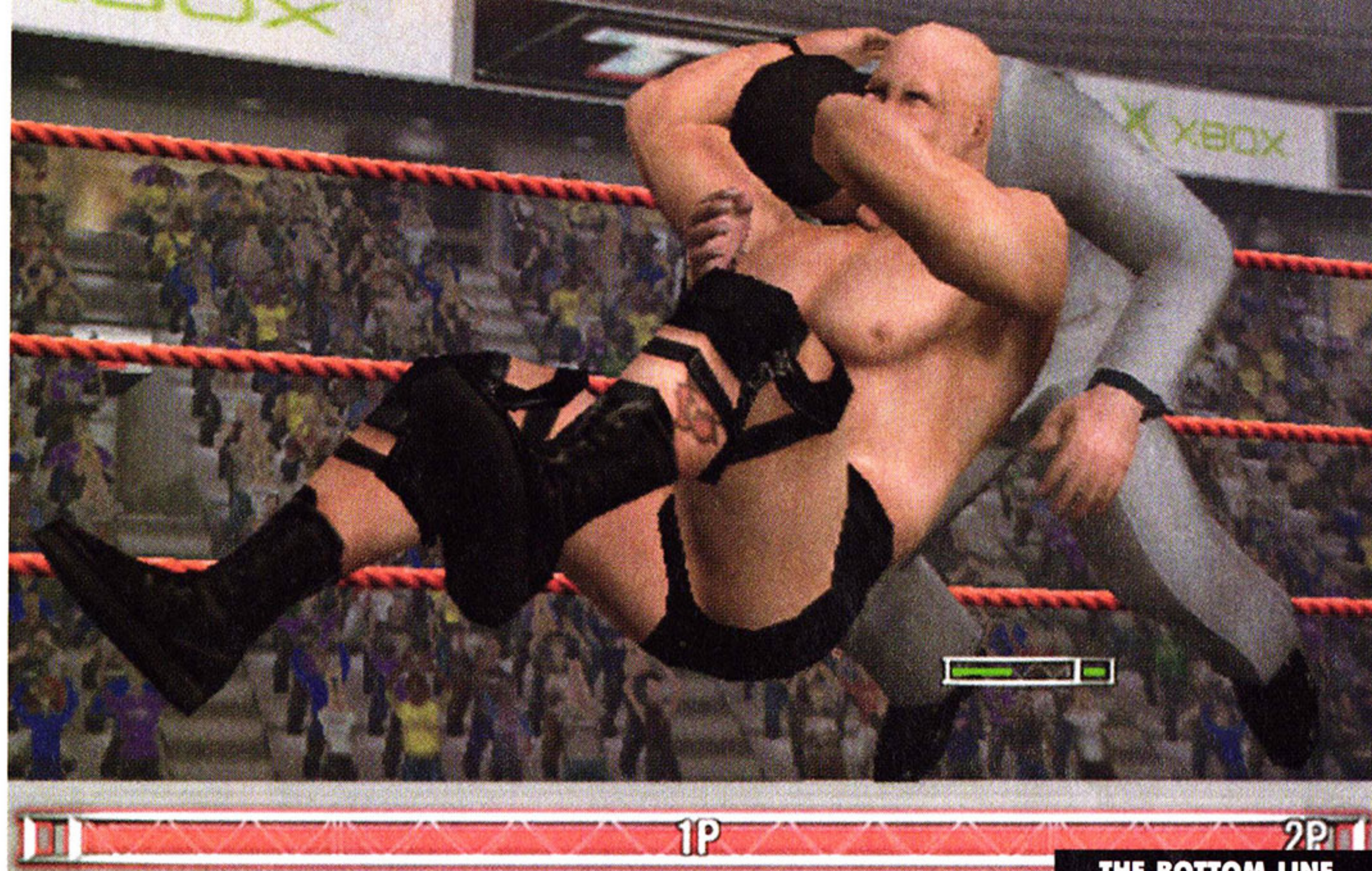
- **Concept:**
Give Xbox the gift of the best b-ball series in video games
- **Graphics:**
A huge step up from the PS2 and Dreamcast incarnations, with better models all around
- **Sound:**
Nice commentary, crowd chatter, and smack talking
- **Playability:**
Believe it or not, this version outplays the others – in part, thanks to the Xbox controller
- **Entertainment:**
This is the ultimate version of NBA 2K2, and as such is a must-have hoops title
- **Replay Value:**
High

SECOND OPINION

Out of 2002's assortment of basketball games, NBA 2K2 is the only title that stands out as something extraordinary. Along with the incredibly accurate play mechanics and top-rate Franchise mode, the Xbox version is equipped with improved graphics and smoother player movement.

REINER - 9.25

REVIEWS



XBOX

UFC TAPOUT

OCTAGON WITH THE WIND

Ultimate Fighting Championship is the ideal subject for a next-gen game. I smelled what Crave was cookin' with the Dreamcast installment, even though it left room for improvement. While Tapout didn't bandage up all the wounds of its predecessor, it's much better than a punch in the groin.

The fighting system of Tapout has been expanded to allow for more flow and versatility. Strikers still have a distinct advantage, but there's a lot more for grapplers to do. Every limb is a target, and counters are more numerous to keep the mental and physical chess game going. It's basically Tekken Wrestling without a jump button. The gameplay is still sort of the antithesis of actual mixed martial arts, where grapplers have the upper hand. It's tougher than it should be to grab someone, and there isn't that feel of just barreling into an opponent, ignoring his strikes to take him down. Still, there's more strategy involved than your typical button-mashing fighter, especially when things go to the mat.

Building up your created fighter is gone, as they now start with stats comparable to the pros. Instead, much of your game time is spent trying to unlock hidden characters, like Ice-T the OG gangsta. This isn't the best trade-off, but improved mechanics will have you playing regular matches more often. Tapout issues a beat-down to other fighting and wrestling games. — **JUSTIN**

THE BOTTOM LINE

TEEN
T
8.25

■ Concept:

Guys in Jockeys fighting for...for...bah, do they really need a reason?

■ Graphics:

Tremendously articulated models show off the power of Xbox. They aren't up to DOA 3 standards, but are still impressive

■ Sound:

Decent rock score and plenty of grunts

■ Playability:

More striking than the real thing makes this into Tekken with matwork

■ Entertainment:

While missing the create-a-fighter season from the DC original, Tapout is still one tough customer

■ Replay Value:

Moderately High

SECOND OPINION

As a UFC newbie, I came away from my time with Tapout extremely impressed with its fluid and dynamic gameplay. What really stands out for me is the way Tapout effectively mimics the ebb and flow of real-life matches, where the challenge lies in expertly timing your attacks and counters, rather than just memorizing long combos. Or maybe I just like wrestling with half-naked men. Who knows?

MATT - 8.5

XBOX

WWF RAW

WHAT?

Often, the most popular wrestlers are also the least talented at wrestling. Hulk Hogan didn't know a wristlock from a wristwatch. The Rock is far from one of the better grapplers on the WWF roster; just look at his Sharpshooter. However, they attained their success via dynamic personalities and a killer look. Coincidentally, that's all WWF Raw has going for it. It captures the electricity of the sport and is quite amazing graphically, but it's low in the substance department, and not quite as endearing.

While this is a new engine, it's very similar to SmackDown – bad news in my opinion, especially with no Career mode to back it up. (It's true.) Many grapple attempts are simply pushed away, and it's too easy to just beat your opponent when they're down (a tactic the computer will use to ad nauseam). These two things prevent the game from ever really gathering speed, even with a momentum meter. Brawling is also way too prevalent. From the strange bumps wrestlers take and their odd selling of moves (the guy kicking out gets up before the guy who went for the pin), it seems like Anchor didn't do its homework. However, Raw does take advantage of the Xbox, with great graphics and very little loading.

Sadly, Raw has convinced me it's impossible to make a wrestling game that tells a story and flows like an actual match. The only source of enjoyment was collecting the obscure items and weapons (hats, fruit, chairs), akin to Smash Bros.' trophies. Sorry, Triple H, but it's not time to play this game. — **JUSTIN**



The wrestler creator isn't very realistic

You get instant replays just like on television

There are over 150 items to collect, wear, and hit people with

Raven comes loaded for bear. Isn't that New Jack's gimmick?

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER FIGHTING ■ **PUBLISHER** THQ ■ **DEVELOPER** ANCHOR
■ **RELEASE** FEBRUARY 12

THE BOTTOM LINE

TEEN
T
6.5

■ Concept:

Finally, the Rock has come to the Box

■ Graphics:

Stiff, but amazingly detailed character models. Not the best camera angle, though

■ Sound:

Terrible in-ring music, but at least void of the crummy commentary that plagued SmackDown

■ Playability:

Very SmackDown-esque control, which isn't a compliment. Don't bother using the analog stick

■ Entertainment:

I liked collecting items, but the rest of the game makes me submit

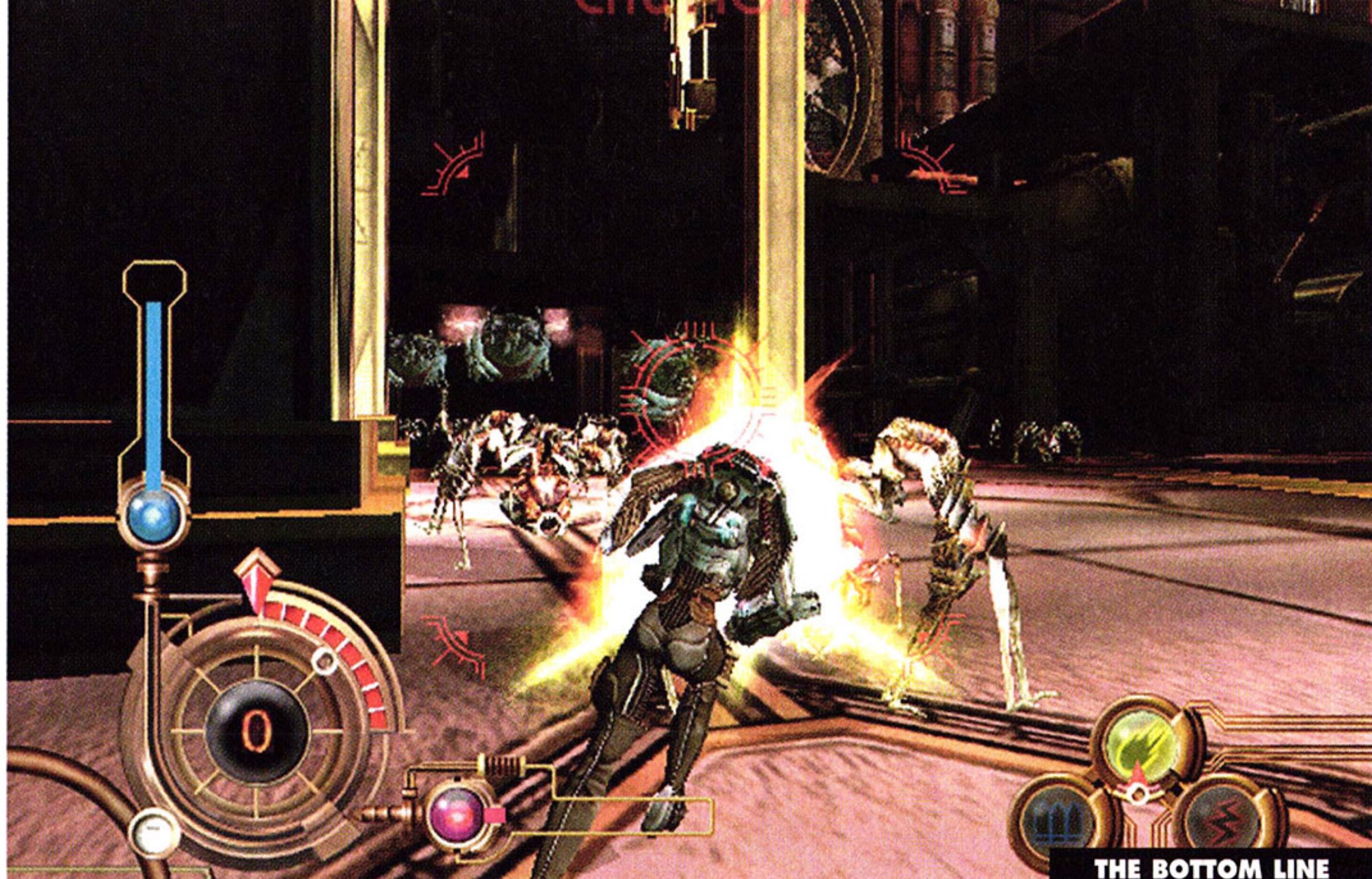
■ Replay Value:

Moderate

SECOND OPINION

THQ has always brought out the best within the World Wrestling Federation. However, the most recent batch of games, specifically SmackDown and Raw, are major letdowns, and are more appropriately suited for the World Wrestling Farceration. While PS2 SmackDown offers a bevy of moves and customizable options, the gameplay's extremely generic and the Career mode severely butchered. To much amazement, Raw's play mechanics are even worse, a Career mode is not included, and the overall presentation is downright ugly. Certainly, the character models look fantastic, but their movements are extremely awkward – appearing as though they were subject to a nasty backstage wedge. Of equal distress, the computer AI doesn't appear to know a thing about wrestling. The only fascination I had with the game was the ability to create a custom entrance and the overabundance of items you can collect.

REINER - 6.25



XBOX

GUN VALKYRIE

SEGA'S TERRIBLE SECRET

I wouldn't say that Gun Valkyrie is the worst Xbox game I've ever played, but just the fact that I would consider comparing it to Azurik and Shrek pretty much typifies how I feel about this release. Words cannot accurately portray how overcome with disgust and dissatisfaction I am...especially since its package bears the sacred Sega name. This is one of those rare games where you can't even begin to comprehend how it made it off of the design floor, let alone through an entire development process. When I say that you can shoot aliens, I've basically covered 99% of what this game has to offer. The sad thing is, blasting these hostile extraterrestrial invaders is thrill-less and somewhat aggravating endeavor.

What else does this game have to offer? Well, you can initiate a speed burst for...uh...hmmm. Let's just write that one off as a tool that the testing team requested to subtly, yet effectively, cut the amount of time they had to spend with this project. On a somewhat interesting note, you can also soar into the sky via a jetpack. The controls for this invention are very smooth and allow you to complete hours upon hours of unnecessary and highly repetitive platforming segments. Did I forget to mention that you have to kill every alien in a zone to open doors? How ingenious.

I'd like all of you to do me a favor. Just pretend that Sega didn't release this game. Would you answer the door if you knew it was a door-to-door salesman? Of course not. The same theory applies here. If someone asks you about Gun Valkyrie, say something like, "Oh...You mean that Enix SNES game?" or "Gun Valkyrie? What are you talking about, crackhead?!" The world would definitely be a better place without it. — REINER



"I just might have enough juice in this baby to launch me to a game that isn't so dreadfully boring!" Gun Valkyrie is one of the few games where you cheer on your own death

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** SEGA ■ **DEVELOPER** SMILEBIT
 ■ **RELEASE** MARCH 19

THE BOTTOM LINE
T 5.25
 CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

- **Concept:** Blast through hordes of alien critters. Repeat.
- **Graphics:** The Xbox can be tapped into to create amazing visuals, but as is the case with Gun Valkyrie, it can also be used to generate generic environments and hideous texturing
- **Sound:** Out of the Xbox's multitude of sound channels, Gun Valkyrie uses three sparingly
- **Playability:** Bang! Bang! Bang! Thud. Move on to the next level
- **Entertainment:** The gameplay doesn't create enough excitement to keep you playing
- **Replay Value:** Low

SECOND OPINION

Microsoft has made a big to-do about how much Sega is supporting the Xbox, but after playing Gun Valkyrie, I'm wondering just how much Sonic and the boys are really behind Bill's new toy. I'm sure you're already salivating over the screenshots you've seen of this game, and there is no doubt that this is a great-looking title. Still, you shouldn't be fooled into thinking that this game is worth your time. Conceptually, it's from a school of game design that I despise, one that believes that players really like to run around for hours in a generic, futuristic environment trying to figure out how to open doors. I wish they had focused more on the utilizing the abilities of the characters' mecha suits, instead of creating a ho-hum action game that you'll forget about the second you turn it off. Also, the targeting system is just plain awful.

MATT — 6

XBOX

ESPN INTERNATIONAL WINTER SPORTS 2002

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER SPORTS
 ■ **PUBLISHER** KONAMI
 ■ **RELEASE** FEBRUARY 2



The union between ESPN and Konami has failed at every endeavor thus far. Strangely, their best sport-to-vid translation is curling. Curling! I'm glad to see few button-masher events here, but the rhythm gameplay is half-assed. Only three of the paltry list of ten events (including two near-identical downhill and ski jump contests) are worth a second play — moguls, figure skating (still a disappointment), and the above-mentioned curling. The others are a joke, including freestyle snowboarding and bobsledding. The leader in sports and the company behind Metal Gear should just go their separate ways. — JUSTIN

E 3



XBOX

NFL 2K2

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER SPORTS
 ■ **PUBLISHER** SEGA
 ■ **RELEASE** JANUARY 8

If Dreamcast owners got the shaft when the significantly improved PlayStation 2 edition of NFL 2K2 came out, then this version might give back a little love — provided they have an Xbox. I am referring to how much I think Microsoft's controller will feel more natural in your hand, due to the rough similarities between it and the DC's. It doesn't sound like much, but that's the sort of minutiae you have to consider when a game's on its third port in almost as many months. — KATO

E 9.25

XBOX

ESPN NFL PRIMETIME 2002

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER SPORTS
 ■ **PUBLISHER** KONAMI
 ■ **RELEASE** FEBRUARY 2



You always see those teams at the end of a football season that are out of the playoffs and have nothing to play for. PrimeTime may be playing for pride — evident in the faces and play-calling system — but this just isn't ESPN's year. If there's one thing this game suffers from, it's that you can't control the receivers. This greatly handicaps passing and is symptomatic of the type of joyless gameplay experience that is PrimeTime's unfortunate trademark this year. — KATO

E 6



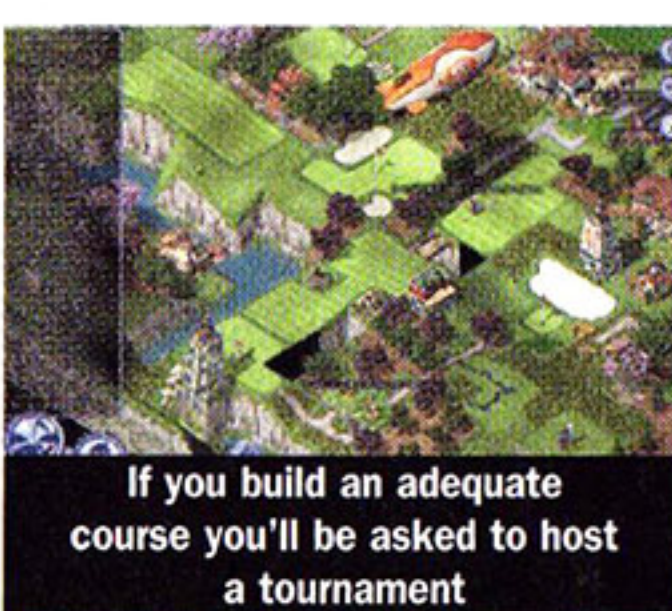
"Sid Meier's Sim Golf is a masterfully crafted piece of work that will likely spawn some intriguing expansion packs"

PC
SID MEIER'S SIM GOLF
 GET IN THE HOLE!

Put two of the biggest names in PC simulation games together and what do you get? One kick-ass golf title, that's what. It went a little something like this: Sid Meier gets an idea for a golf simulation game, but he wants to make sure he makes a game everyone can enjoy. Who to call? Maxis founder and creator of the Sim franchise, Will Wright, of course! Duh! So collaboration ensues and the end product is a brilliantly conceived and executed piece of entertainment software. Not a bad way to make a game, eh?

This release is nothing if not ridiculously and deliciously addictive. Not many would be able to walk away from a few simple minutes with Sim Golf, and fewer still would be able to think about anything else if they are able to escape its clutches. The game opens benignly enough – you're given a bit of money, a clubhouse and a few acres upon which to build your dream course. After your first hole is built, you start getting visitors. Each time a visitor completes a hole they pay you a greens fee. As the greens fees start rolling in with more regularity, you're able to build new holes, add buildings and decorate your course with a number of different trees and plants. Eventually, people will join your club as members, and will pay higher greens fees for the honor. As the fun rating of your course increases and your

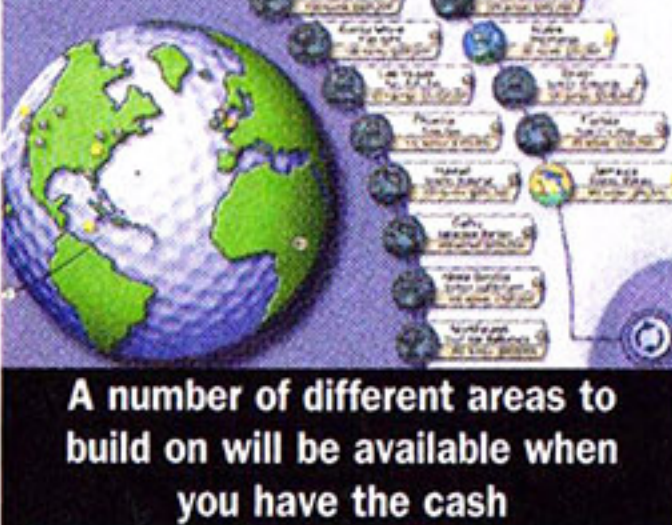
fame spreads, more people will come to check things out. If you end up getting bored constructing your own country club, you can always golf the holes you've built with your resident golf pro. Set up at the beginning of the game, this is a golfer who has a number of different ability scores which will increase or decrease depending on how well you play. To help you along the way, for each noteworthy accomplishment your course reaches, you'll be given a certain number of points to put toward character improvement. For example, if your pro has particularly poor iron accuracy, building your course's first dog-leg left hole will give you three points to distribute into any skill you choose. Funnel them into iron accuracy, and you'll see a noticeable change in Mr. Pro's play. The only thing holding this title back is the sometimes-sketchy graphical integrity and a few other minor bugs that will probably be fixed when the game is patched for the first time. Other than that, Sid Meier's Sim Golf is a masterfully crafted piece of work that will likely spawn some intriguing expansion packs. Matt says this game will be bigger than Mario Sunshine when it comes out, but I think he's insane. It's Mario, Matt! Nothing sells better than Mario – not even Super Dodge Ball Advance. – **KRISTIAN**



If you build an adequate course you'll be asked to host a tournament



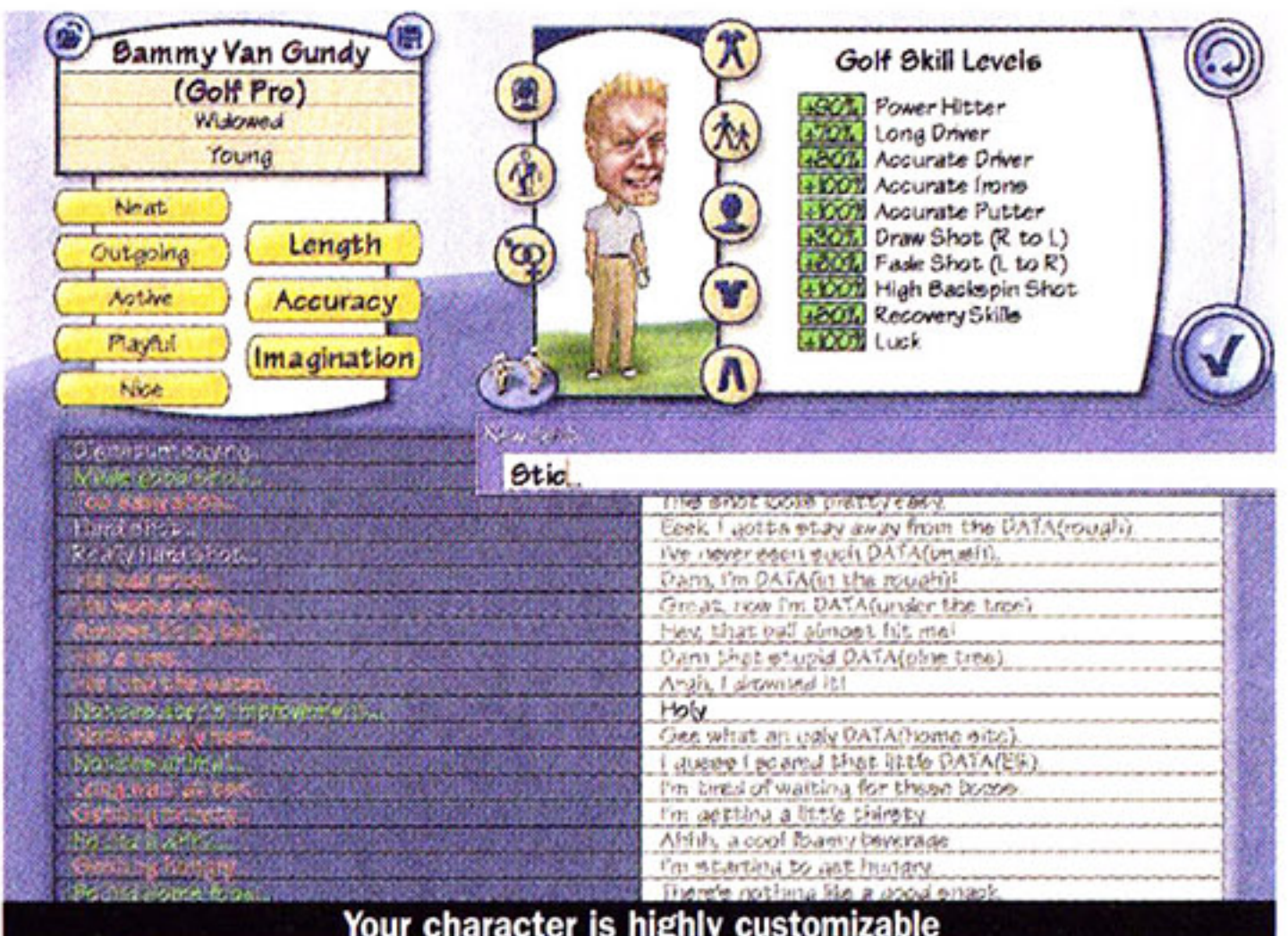
Conserving your money early in the game is a good idea



A number of different areas to build on will be available when you have the cash



If a course member is pleased after shooting a round, they may decide to upgrade their membership



Your character is highly customizable

THE BOTTOM LINE
 EVERYONE
E 9.25
 CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

- **Concept:** Build your dream course and watch folks plunk down cash to play it
- **Graphics:** Things get a bit blocky at the maximum magnification level, but everything else looks sweet
- **Sound:** Take a few of the sounds from the Sims, put them in a golf setting, and that's what you have here
- **Playability:** Easy to pick up and nearly impossible to put down
- **Entertainment:** Golf enthusiasts, Sim fanatics and newcomers will all get a big kick out of this game
- **Replay Value:** High

SECOND OPINION
 Hats off to Sid Meier and the Firaxis crew. Ah screw it! Shoes, shirts, boxers, I take it all off and bow my head in gratitude. While I've invested more time than I care to admit into previous Sim endeavors, I can easily say that Sim Golf is the game that you'll play the longest. Along with all the customization features you've become accustomed to, this release allows you to interact with your creation and play through the holes that you artistically fashioned. The golf game is fairly basic, but it's a heck of a lot of fun. Through time, your golfer's abilities will improve, and if you are lucky, you'll rack up the best score for the course. I can't even begin to tell you how deep the simulation aspect is. Along with the plethora of options, the menus are easy to navigate – a blind monkey could do it. Simply said, this is a must-have for golf fans.
REINER – 9



50
74

100

100

100

100

THE BOTTOM LINE



9.25

"...a high-octane, gun-slinging killfest the likes of which even General George S. Patton would be proud."

PC
**SERIOUS SAM:
THE SECOND ENCOUNTER**
KER-BLAMMO!

Know you love explosions, blood, gore, dismemberment, and all the rest – but I'm here to tell you that Sam has a sensitive side, too. When you're playing this game, don't just think about your own enjoyment – pause for a moment to reflect on what the poor guy is going through to bring you a few minutes of entertainment. Reward him for it. Instead of turning the headless kamikaze running at you into a heap of flesh and slag with your flame-thrower, try smelling the flowers in the field! The programmers put them in there for a reason, dangit! Maybe that isn't your style. FINE. At least try to preserve the scenery by not reducing the foliage to rubble with your rocket launcher. Just a thought.

It is too true that for nature lovers and pacifists alike, SS2 is a slap in the face for everything they hold dear. Too damned bad, I say. Thank goodness there aren't any Spotted Owls in this game, or we'd really have a controversy on our hands. As it stands, however, Mr. Stone (aka Serious) is still doling out punishment to environment and enemy alike – and at an alarming rate. There is very little subtlety to this game: From the time the intro sequence closes, to your first enemy encounter, little more than 40 seconds elapse. Either you're ready to kick the tires and light the fires, or you're looking at the load screen as you respawn from the beginning. Not that there's anything wrong with that – quite the contrary, in fact. This title does

exactly what it wants to do; and that is to deliver a high-octane, gun-slinging killfest the likes of which even General George S. Patton would be proud.

Of course, there is a reason Sam is once again sending assorted critters to an early grave – but who cares? And, more importantly, who wants to care? The developers certainly didn't want to, and that's awesome! They're the first ones who will tell you that the plot is only an excuse for getting you to kill different things in crazy environments. Croteam has come up with the perfect blend: just enough plot to give you some sense that you're not roaming around levels killing things for no reason, but allowing you to be fully immersed in the action without having to worry about how it might effect the level's outcome.

One of the best parts of this game comes not from the plot (or lack thereof), or even the action, but from the down-to-earth nature of the entire undertaking. In certain circumstances you may mow down a familiar foe, then hear Sam comment, "Hey, didn't I kick your ass two rooms ago?" Other times the description of an upcoming level may go something like this, "...putting the statues on this alter may produce some great SFX, awesome animations and dazzling particle effects, but that sort of thing only happens in computer games." Not every game, though. Be sure you check this one out – it sure beats a boot to the head. – KRISTIAN

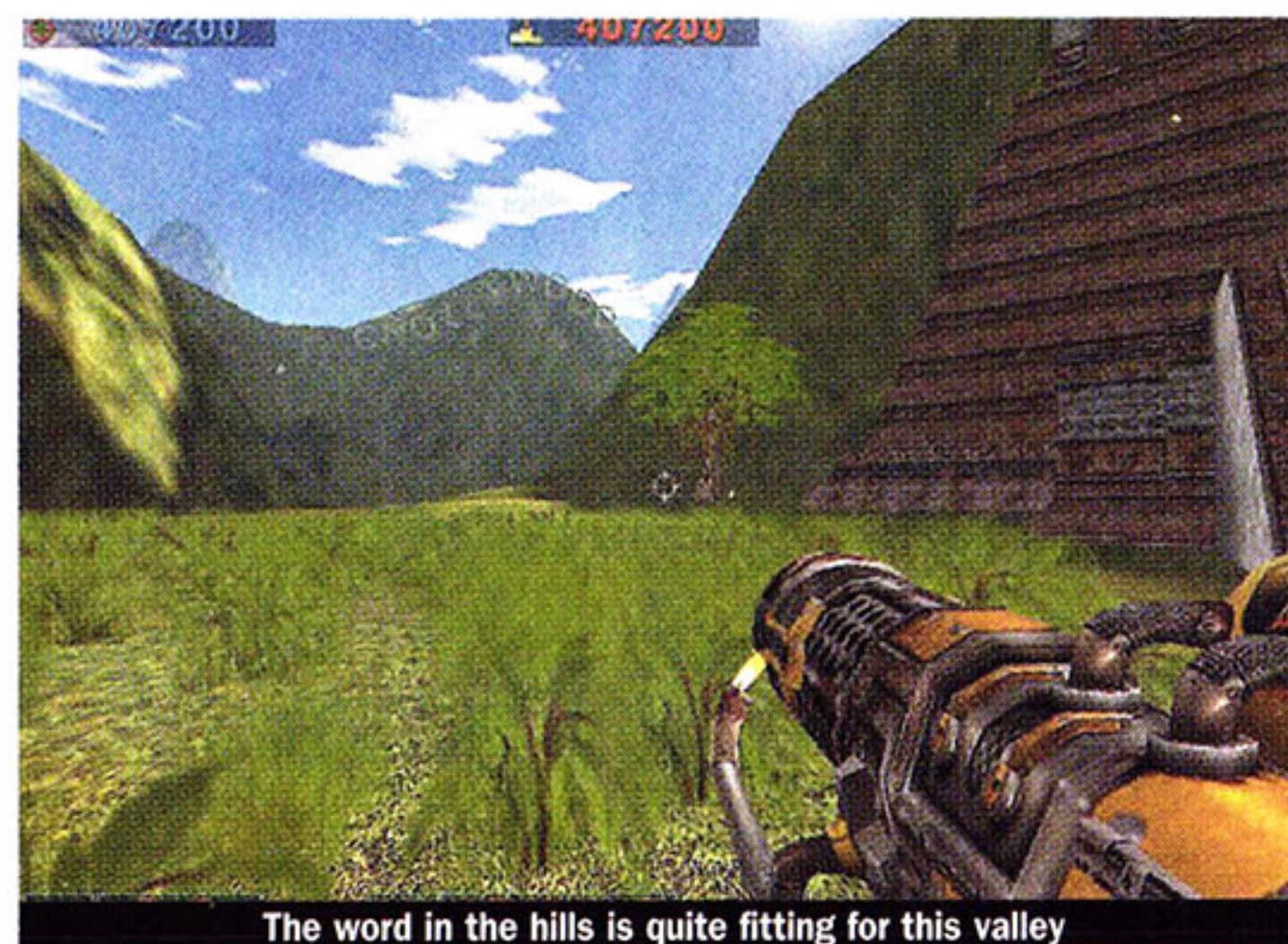
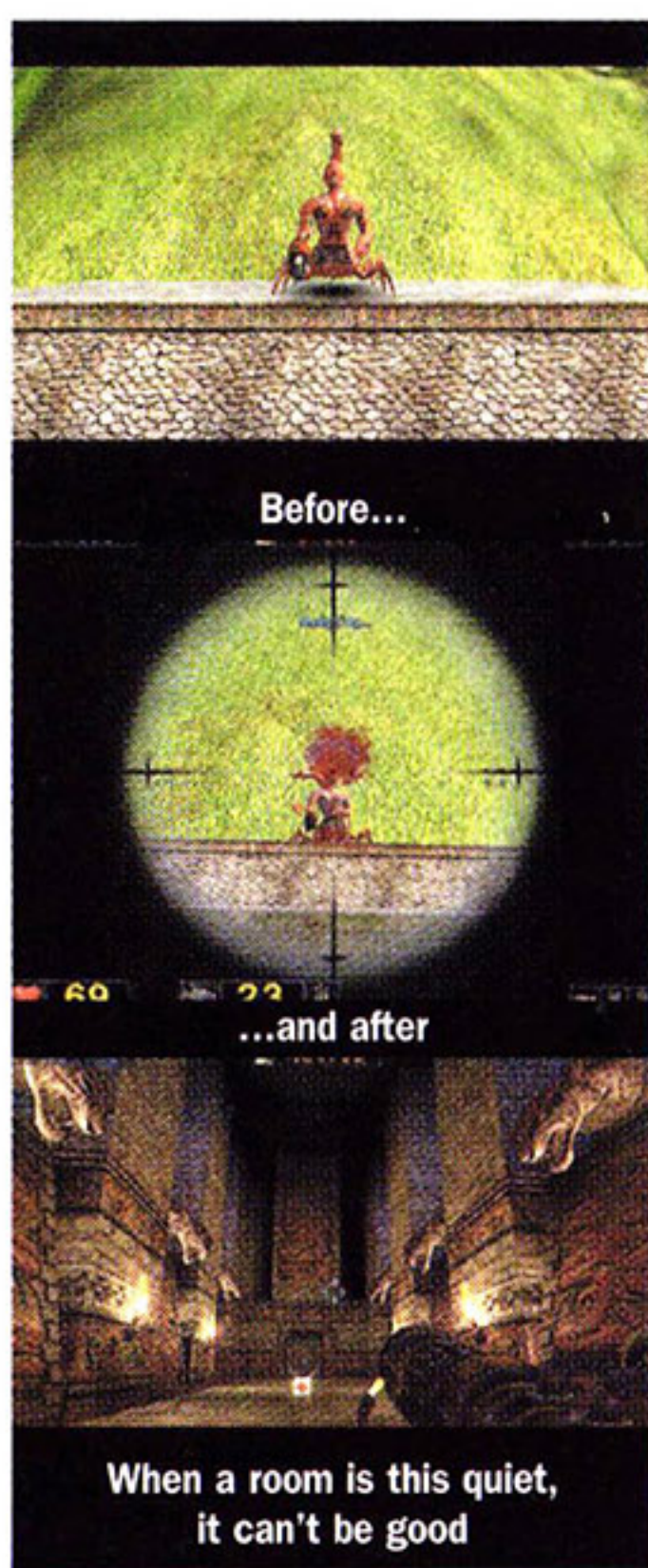
- **Concept:**
Any synonyms for "death," "kill," or "weapon" you can think of would be excellent descriptions of what goes on in this game
- **Graphics:**
Decent – I could almost see the vines growing out of the pumpkin-headed, chainsaw-wielding dudes who chased me all over the place
- **Sound:**
There are some great voice-overs to be heard, as well as some exceptional noises that could best be described as "splat"
- **Playability:**
The controls are perfect – you never think about them
- **Entertainment:**
As with the first one, this offering is catharsis in its purest form
- **Replay Value:**
High

SECOND OPINION

This semi-sequel to the pulse-pounding original *Serious Sam* offers some nice graphical improvements, but really is just more of the same – which isn't a bad thing. There are more weapons, more baddies, and more of the never-ending action that made me love the first game. For anyone out there who hasn't had a chance to play the first, *The Second Coming* is a perfect opportunity to get your *Serious Sam* groove on. There may be games with better AI and graphics, but there is no first-person game anywhere, on any system, that offers as much frantic, nonstop, no-quarter action as *Serious Sam*. Check it out, you won't be disappointed.

ANDY – 8.75

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 32-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** TAKE 2 INTERACTIVE ■ **DEVELOPER** CROTEAM ■ **RELEASE** FEBRUARY 6



REVIEWS



PC

CAR TYCOON

MY LITTLE DEUCE COUPE

This sounds like it should be a really interesting and compelling game. There are so many facets of the automobile industry that could be incorporated into this title it almost boggles the mind. Unfortunately, very few of these components made their way into Car Tycoon. The game instead centers around pushing cars out of your factories, running promotions at your dealerships, buying ambiguous advertising with various ad firms, running an anemic in-house R&D sector, and participating in industrial espionage that wasn't given enough development time to be fleshed out completely. Additionally, the amount of bugs in the game make it extremely frustrating to play from time to time. However, some of the most interesting things that happened to me while I was playing occurred as a result of bugs. I received numerous illegal operation error messages in German, and my virtual assistant would pop up on the screen from time to time and tell me my cars weren't selling very well – in German. Strange, no?

Aside from its numerous flaws, Car Tycoon does deliver when it comes to addictive gameplay. Watching your newest model of land yacht roll off the line and get purchased the moment it enters the showroom is fun, but ultimately CT just doesn't have a whole lot of staying power. – **KRISTIAN**

THE BOTTOM LINE
EVERYONE
E 6.75
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

- **Concept:** Sell more cars than the competition – that's about it
- **Graphics:** There's nothing terribly striking or interesting offered in this department
- **Sound:** You can have just as much fun with the volume on or off
- **Playability:** After a bit of a learning curve, you should have no problems here
- **Entertainment:** What could have been great is merely adequate
- **Replay Value:** Moderately High

SECOND OPINION

A game whose concept should've been thought of sooner, but should've been in development longer, Car Tycoon spends too much time on espionage and not enough on car design. I wish it were more open-ended and stat-driven. I wasn't always sure why I was doing well or badly. Car Tycoon is like getting a flat tire on your way to Makeout Point. Disappointing.

JUSTIN – 6.5

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER STRATEGY ■ **PUBLISHER** FISHTANK INTERACTIVE ■ **DEVELOPER** VECTORCOM
 ■ **RELEASE** JANUARY 5



PC

BLACK & WHITE: CREATURE ISLE

THE CREATURE WITHIN

Anyone who played Black & White knows that possibly the best aspect of that game was teaching your Creature to do certain things. With Creature Isle you get plenty of opportunity to teach your little guy new skills (including assorted pooping techniques), and you'll also have a number of challenges to accomplish with your Creature around the spacious island you find yourself transported to – bowling, building and herding to name a few. You're given a reward for each successfully accomplished challenge, but the real teeth of the game come in the form of a pet your Creature is charged with rearing.

Named Tyke, this cuddly little critter will follow your beast around, learning from everything it sees. Although I thought Creature Isle was in danger of being a really intricate babysitting game, the charm of watching the little guy eat hapless villagers just like its role-model is quite irresistible. Despite the fact that there are a number of ways to interact with Tyke and your environment, it really comes down to how much you like shepherding your big guy around the island to tangle with its various inhabitants. I dug it, but I wouldn't suggest anyone but a hardcore B&W vet dip his beak into this one. – **KRISTIAN**



Tyke is born!

If you play your cards right, your Creature will learn to breakdance

You'll be given extensive background on the island's history

Bowling is one of the best challenges

THE BOTTOM LINE

TEEN
T 8.25
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

- **Concept:** Get in touch with your Creature's inner creature
- **Graphics:** No big departures from its parent game here, but that's not a bad thing
- **Sound:** What was once good is still just as good
- **Playability:** This isn't a game a newbie is going to step right into. You'll need to pay attention to the tutorials if you're a little rusty
- **Entertainment:** It's nice to see a development house nail an expansion effort
- **Replay Value:** Moderate

SECOND OPINION

For most gamers, interacting with the adorable little monsters took precedent over saving the villagers. Peter Molyneux and his crew obviously felt the same way. Rather than focus on the quest (which happens to be completely new), the majority of your time is spent with your Creature. Expanding upon the original selection, players will now have the ability to raise two new breeds – crocodiles and rhinos. As your loved ones grow, they'll need to complete 24 different trials, which are basically constructed as minigames. One of these challenges tests your Creature's parenting skills and asks that it raise a newborn of its own. In such, you essentially have two children to nurture. If you fell in love with the virtual pet aspect within the original, the Creature AI is more dynamic and the insertion of variety keeps the adventure from becoming redundant.

REINER – 9

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 8-PLAYER STRATEGY ■ **PUBLISHER** ELECTRONIC ARTS
 ■ **DEVELOPER** LIONHEAD STUDIOS ■ **RELEASE** JANUARY 21

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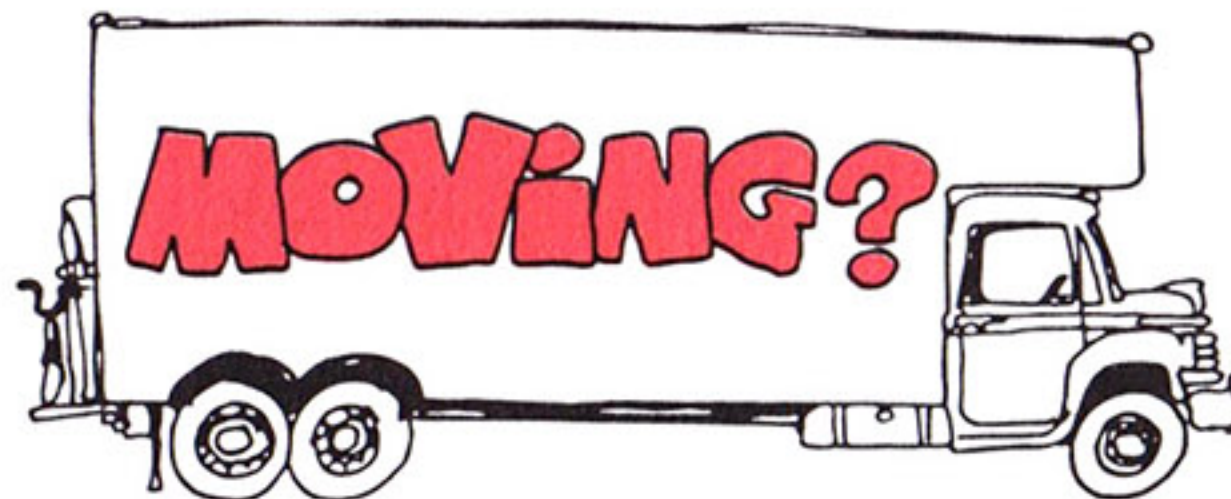
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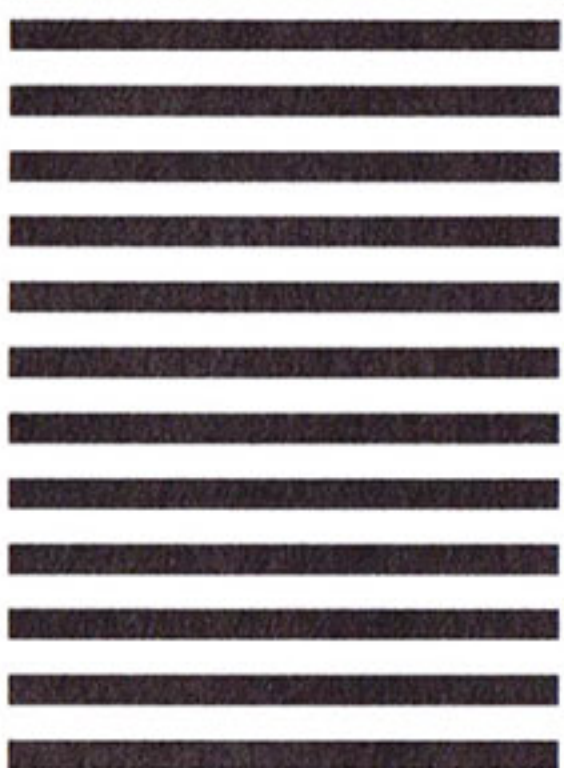
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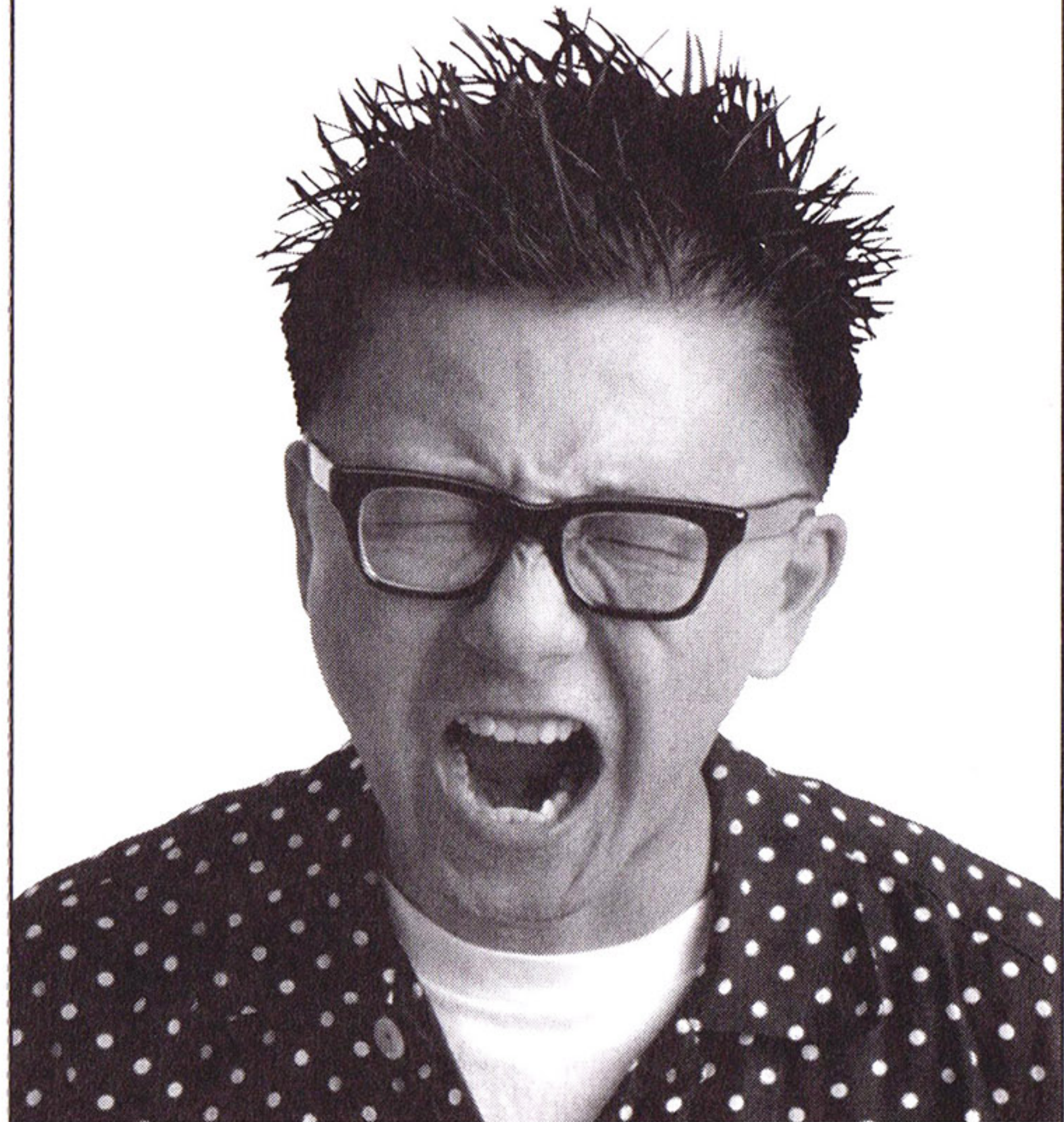
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PC

S.W.I.N.E.

PIGS IN A BLANKET

What's the matter with you? Do you think you're too good for a game that uses barnyard animals as its military palette? Maybe you think units like the Carrotpult and the Pig Puller are too stupid sounding to be taken seriously. Don't let the lighthearted tone of S.W.I.N.E. mislead you – this game is deeper than Bill Gates' pocketbook.

The depth doesn't come from the story (pigs invade the sheep, sheep fight back) or any type of control innovation. Rather, the tactical element of how to minimize losses while maximizing damage is brought to the forefront here more than in most other real-time strategy titles on the market. All of that irritating wood/ore/gold/grain gathering is done away with in favor of a unit-purchasing system at the beginning of each level. Every unit you buy enters the field with no experience (imagine that), then begins to rack up points for each enemy encounter it survives. If you're smart about rotating your vehicles to the Service Trailer for repairs during combat, it won't be long before they're enjoying the benefits of veteran and elite status. The units are persistent, so any that survive an entire mission will be there for the next one as well.

Aside from a few graphical glitches, this is a great game with a lot to offer – say hello to one of the first sleepers of the spring. – **KRISTIAN**



■ **STYLE** 1 TO 8-PLAYER STRATEGY ■ **PUBLISHER** FISHTANK INTERACTIVE ■ **DEVELOPER** STORMREGION ■ **RELEASE** DECEMBER 3

THE BOTTOM LINE
TEEN
T
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
8.5

- **Concept:** Basic RTS fare without the sometimes tedious resource-gathering elements
- **Graphics:** Surprisingly good – this game could stand toe-to-toe with the best of what's out there in this department
- **Sound:** Good effects and some great pop-culture references
- **Playability:** Any veterans of the genre should be able to skip the tutorials and go straight to gameplay
- **Entertainment:** It might not seem like it should be fun, but this game's got it where it counts, kid
- **Replay Value:** High

SECOND OPINION

As a casual PC gamer, I've always been put off by the complexities of unit and resource management contained in many popular real-time strategy games of the Command & Conquer ilk. As such, I've gotten my kicks out of smaller scale, but no less challenging, team-based strategy titles like Commandos and Desperado. S.W.I.N.E. is a nice attempt to combine the strengths of these two genres into a fast and fun game that can be embraced by part-time gamers and hardcore strategy buffs alike. The point-and-click interface is nicely implemented, and didn't give me a bit of trouble. The only downside to this game are the slightly unimaginative campaigns, and the oh-so-annoying voice-overs, which feature the worst "foreign" accents I've heard in a while. Imagine a voice that combines the worst parts of Arnold Schwarzenegger, Inspector Clouseau, and Miss Cleo. Then imagine that voice spouting annoying quips in your ear every three seconds.

MATT 7.5

REVIEWS



PC

COMANCHE 4

SIKORSKY WAS A GENIUS

As a rule of thumb, I usually shy away from helicopter action games. I know it seems like a particularly obscure section of gaming to have an aversion to, but there we are. Comanche 4 did nothing to change my mind on the subject. The game is, for lack of a better term, tired. The rock-em sock-em blow-stuff-up type of gameplay has yet to be breached when it comes to our multi-rotored airborne friends. True, the graphics (namely the explosions) are decent in C4, but so what? I wanted to make some type of investment in the gameplay, but I was never given the opportunity to do so. By investment, I mean a reason to go from one mission to the next. Maybe there should have been some sort of story arc that carried through from mission to mission, but alas there was none. Thus, I found myself polishing off a sortie with little to no desire to start another one. True, there is a nice multiplayer component to take advantage of if you so choose, but is that reason enough to plunk down a wad of cash for something you're probably going to lose interest in within a couple of hours? Only if you're T.C. from Magnum P.I. – **KRISTIAN**

THE BOTTOM LINE
TEEN
T
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
6.5

- **Concept:** Helicopters in flight, demolition delight!
- **Graphics:** This is the game's strongpoint, which is too bad since the graphics are merely average
- **Sound:** The uninspiring voice acting and stock explosion effects are to be expected
- **Playability:** Comanche 4's controls give a nod to the FPS school of thought
- **Entertainment:** Things that seem interesting in one mission lose their appeal in the next
- **Replay Value:** High

SECOND OPINION

Comanche 4's mantra is one of straightforward action. In fact, you're even given plenty of waypoints in missions so you don't lose your way. Although there are some nods to sim-fans, this one is for those with itchy trigger fingers and short attention spans. Be a good soldier and don't bother with a story, just do your duty.

KATO - 7

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 16-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** NOVALOGIC
■ **DEVELOPER** NOVALOGIC
■ **RELEASE** DECEMBER 15

REVIEWS



GAME BOY ADVANCE

ZONE OF THE ENDERS: THE FIST OF MARS

NOT-SO-SOLID METAL GEAR

The inclusion of a Metal Gear Solid 2 demo with the release of the original PlayStation 2 ZOE almost overshadowed the game itself. In hindsight, Hideo Kojima's "other title" was a good, but limited experience. Now more constraints are put on it by the fact that it's on the Game Boy Advance.

I imagine Konami knew that replicating the fast and intuitive controls of the first would prove too much for the GBA. Therefore, Fist of Mars dispenses almost entirely with the action genre and moves onto strategy instead. Is this a mistake? Not necessarily, until you realize that this title treads water instead of diving into anything unique. For those that still want action, Fist of Mars does offer a Ring of Red-esque real-time targeting component when attacking enemies.

Unfortunately, the animation is always the same, so the joy is short-lived. Wannabe generals will find some tight pinches that they'll delight in getting out of, but I eventually found myself turning the targeting segments of combat to auto just to get through things faster. This brings us to the juncture where Fist of Mars unfortunately fails to keep itself together: its story. ZOE's themes of technology and humanity are just too cliched and stiffly presented here to help make this title anything more than a franchise name and a genre exercise. — KATO

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE
E
CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB

6.5

■ **Concept:**
Take away the PS2 Enders' fabulous controls and leave you with its boring themes instead. Then replace the fast action with strategy

■ **Graphics:**
Battle animations are repetitive, but the anime character boxes are nice

■ **Sound:**
There are some tense chords here and there, but basically it sounds like menu music

■ **Playability:**
Nothing much to speak or complain of

■ **Entertainment:**
This is not your PS2's ZOE, and it may only be for the hardcore at heart

■ **Replay Value:**
Moderately Low

SECOND OPINION

Advance Wars so owns this game it's not even funny. I did like that Fist of Mars offers some story along with its combat. It's just a shame that it's so canned, the story's almost more interesting to skip than to read. The game's strongest point is its use of the Ring of Red-styled targeting system, but even that nice feature isn't enough to make this game worth your time, unless you have already beaten Advance Wars and you'll take any old, turn-based combat game.

ANDY — 6.75

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER STRATEGY ■ **PUBLISHER** KONAMI
■ **DEVELOPER** KONAMI ■ **RELEASE** FEBRUARY 26



GAME BOY ADVANCE

TEKKEN ADVANCE

IRON FIST TURNS IRON FINGERNAIL

I wouldn't have believed it if I hadn't seen it with my own two eyes. Tekken is pretty kick-ass on Game Boy Advance. Read that last sentence and let it sink in. While two less buttons means even more random mashing, and there are obviously no fantastically rendered endings to drool over, Tekken Advance will still provide hours of violent stimulation on the go.

Difficulty could've killed this game. The preview version was easy, as were the first few bouts in Arcade mode. However, things get tougher in a hurry — especially with a jacked-up Heihachi Mishima as your boss. The difficulty is by no means impossible, but you probably won't cruise through undefeated (and that's a good thing).

The game looks great, and I'm stumped at how there's so much scrolling going on. Equally amazing is the arcade-quality speech and music. Control is a bit less sophisticated, with one punch button and one kick. You'll still see the combos flying, though it may be at the expense of carpal tunnel syndrome. Sidesteps, rolls, and tackles are all here. Tag mode is interesting, as your goal is to take out one of the three opponents two out of three rounds. I really can't complain about Tekken Advance. Looking for a fight? Here it is, second only to Street Fighter II on GBA. Have at it! — JUSTIN



Give one last kick after the match is over

Kids, in a real fight, nobody wins

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER FIGHTING ■ **PUBLISHER** NAMCO ■ **DEVELOPER** NAMCO
■ **RELEASE** JANUARY 29

THE BOTTOM LINE

TEEN
T
CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB

8.5

- **Concept:**
Pull off the biggest contortionist act in video games
- **Graphics:**
Nice characters, scaling backgrounds, and some cool effects
- **Sound:**
All the voices from the arcade, and impressive music
- **Playability:**
Mostly mashing, with a little strategy squeezed in
- **Entertainment:**
Lots of modes and fighters, along with a decent difficulty curve, make this a perfect portable throw-down
- **Replay Value:**
Moderately High

SECOND OPINION

Pulling off a fighting game on a handheld system has always been tricky, because there isn't enough horsepower, or buttons, to keep up with all the bells and whistles fighting fans have come to expect. Plus, the challenges double when the series you are dealing with is in 3D. Considering the limitations, Tekken Advance does a good job with what it has to work with, as anyone familiar with the series can easily pick a character and be pulling off combos left and right within minutes. The overall look is slightly pixelated, and compared to the GBA Street Fighter series, it looks lackluster. However, Tekken Advance makes up for its lack of polished graphics with fast action and a tag mode that can switch between three characters in an instant (which is an impressive feat on a handheld). A solid attempt at Tekken on the go, but fighting games are only fun on handhelds for so long.

ANDY — 8

MORTAL KOMBAT ADVANCE – GBA

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER FIGHTING
 ■ **PUBLISHER** MIDWAY
 ■ **RELEASE** DECEMBER 12



The ESRB Mature rating will tell you there's blood. The screenshot will tell you it looks good on Game Boy Advance. However, it takes yours truly to tell you that

Mortal Kombat plays like butt on the GBA. All the fighters, fatalities, and arcade accuracy in graphics and sound won't make up for the krummy kontrols. Timing is way off. Leg sweeps, one of the game's best strikes, are too hard to pull off, as are many special moves. MK Advance may look GBA, but it plays GBC, and that's the killer. – **JUSTIN**

M 5.75

PLANET MONSTERS – GBA

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER ACTION/PUZZLE
 ■ **PUBLISHER** TITUS
 ■ **RELEASE** DECEMBER 17



Planet Monsters looks like the kind of nondescript game you'd easily pass over on the shelves, but I advise you not to make that mistake. Featuring 40 levels and four-player support, your objective is simply to defeat three rivals on each board by squashing them with sliding blocks. Monsters' mazes are inventive, chock-full of roaming baddies and power-ups, and end with cool boss battles. It's a good mix of strategy and quick-fire reflexes which can produce chases sort of like Pac-Man. It's cheap(er) price (\$29.99) also makes it a solid buy. – **KATO**

E 7.75

TOP GUN: FIRESTORM – GBC

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION
 ■ **PUBLISHER** TITUS
 ■ **RELEASE** DECEMBER 8



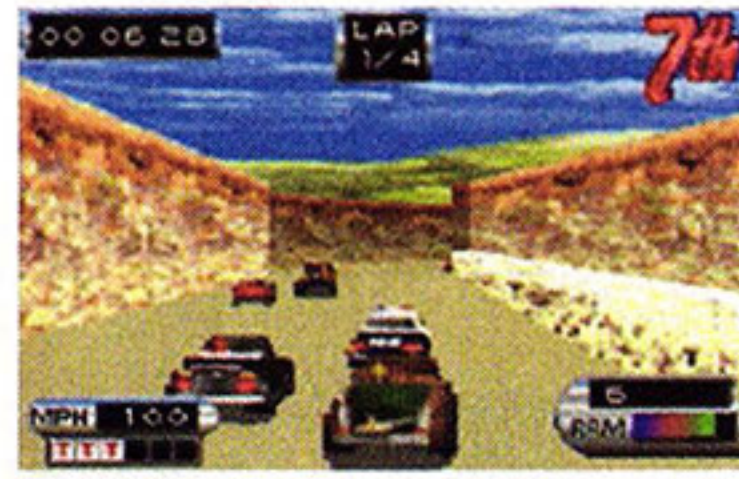
This game is about fighter jets – the F-14 Tomcat to be exact. Fighter jets, as many of you know, can fly quite high. Unfortunately, this aspect of reality has slipped through the

developer's fingers. Cliffs, it seems, are insurmountable objects that no plane has ever been able to pass, and as such, you spend most of your in-game time avoiding these stationary behemoths as you shoot at assorted land and air targets. Oh yeah – tall buildings, there's no getting over those either. No buzzing the tower for you! – **KRISTIAN**

E 5

CRUIS'N VELOCITY – GBA

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER RACING
 ■ **PUBLISHER** MIDWAY
 ■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 30



The old saying, "the whole is not equal to the sum of its parts," holds particularly true with Cruis'n Velocity. Usually, the truism is used to describe a unit or team

that performs beyond its supposed ability. Unfortunately, this game seems to have the right parts (unlockable cars, multiplayer abilities, etc.), but the culmination of these during gameplay seems more worthy of an Atari 7800 cart than it does the most powerful handheld ever devised. Beware. – **KRISTIAN**

E 4.5

MEGA MAN XTREME 2 – GBC

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION
 ■ **PUBLISHER** CAPCOM
 ■ **RELEASE** DECEMBER 21



If you played through the first entry in the Xtreme series, you probably walked away from the game with a bad taste in your mouth. The levels were too short, the boss battles lacked strategy, and the overall difficulty

didn't embody the nail-biting essence we've become accustomed to. With the sequel, Capcom implemented two different quests, allowing players to play as Mega Man and the mysterious sidekick, Zero. In addition to this, a number of hidden modes have been inserted to raise the replay value, the bosses are actually somewhat intelligent, and the overall difficulty curve has been raised to cater to an older audience. – **REINER**

E 7



STAR WARS: JEDI POWER BATTLES – GBA

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION
 ■ **PUBLISHER** THQ/LUCASARTS
 ■ **RELEASE** DECEMBER 5

The PlayStation version of Jedi Power Battles received lukewarm reviews from the Game Informer staff and consumers. For this fact alone, I question LucasArts and THQ's decision to port the game to the Game Boy Advance. Hotgen did a commendable job recreating the look and essence of the original 32-bit release, but unfortunately it also managed to incorporate all the flaws as well. It's a nice game to look at, but playing it's a different story altogether. As was the case two years ago, the platforming segments are poorly concocted, which in turn leads to countless cheap deaths and a Death Star-size migraine. The combat is also quite cumbersome, lending the droid adversaries an unfair advantage. The idea behind this game is intriguing, but the execution is way off the mark. – **REINER**

T 6.25

RAMPAGE PUZZLE ATTACK – GBA

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER PUZZLE
 ■ **PUBLISHER** MIDWAY
 ■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 22



When you first turn on this puzzler, it looks like a rip-off of Tetris Attack (Pokémon Puzzle League for all you Pokémanics out there), but actually, it's just a strange deviation

that's uninspiring to say the least. Basically, you set two blocks from a line of colored blocks on the top of the screen, that you can then drop down on the stacks below to remove them. However, in three of the four modes, there is no penalty for taking as much time as you need to make your selections, so there is absolutely no sense of panic (the mark of a good puzzler), thus there is no excitement. Plus, there is no battery save, so you must write down a 10-letter password to save your progress. – **ANDY**

E 5



GAME BOY ADVANCE

DAVE MIRRA FREESTYLE BMX 2

OBJECTS IN MIRRA ARE LARGER THAN THEY APPEAR

With the massive scope of Mirra 2 on next-gen systems, it would be impossible to try duplicating it on Game Boy Advance. Thus, this game isn't all that similar to its console cousins. It uses a 3/4 isometric view, all-new levels, and a different objective slant. Is it still a good game? Sho'nuff.

Remember collecting S-K-A-T-E in Tony Hawk? Here, you collect M-I-R-R-A. Remember the secret tape in each level? Here they're called Super Stars. Mirra 2 GBA has more in common with Tony than the BMX game it's named after, and even looks almost identical to Tony 2 on this same handheld. The control is different, though, as buttons are reversed. The main thing keeping it from being on par with Tony 2 is the fact that Mr. Hawk's game is a port of the PS-X version we all know and love.

Inferiorities to Tony aside, Mirra 2 makes other portable action sports games look like a pile of puke. The movement is 3D. The levels are decent. Manuals and wall rides abound. Sure, you're going to fall. A lot. You'll be frustrated and beat down, but you'll come back for more. Why? Dave Mirra 2 is one of the better GBA games around. So there. – **JUSTIN**

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE
E 8.25
 COMMENT RATED BY
 ESRB

- **Concept:** Adapt a great console action sports game into a great portable action sports game
- **Graphics:** Aside from the models, everything's crisp. I'm not too fond of the fixed angle, but it's a necessary evil
- **Sound:** Surprisingly decent music
- **Playability:** You can still rack up big points and do all the moves you do on Mirra 2 at home
- **Entertainment:** On GBA, like PS2 and GameCube, Mirra is a worthy challenger for Tony Hawk
- **Replay Value:** Moderately High

SECOND OPINION

Rather than model this handheld port after its console brethren, Full-Fat decided to copy the formula used to bring Tony Hawk 2 to the GBA. The outcome is a beautiful game that offers smooth controls, navigable levels, and incredible detail in the character models.

REINER – 8.75

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER ACTION/SPORTS ■ **PUBLISHER** ACCLAIM ■ **DEVELOPER** FULL-FAT ■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 20

CHARTS

In association with the NPD TRSTS Video Games Service, Charts presents an in-depth listing of the best-selling software on a month-to-month basis. Are the games you spend your hard-earned dollars on top sellers? Take a look below to find out. We've also compiled a listing of the top-selling Japanese software, and, of course, we included a Top 10 list of the games the GI staff is currently enjoying.



NPD TOP 20

Listings Based Upon NPD Data For December 2001 Based On Units Sold

RANK	L. MO	GAME	SYSTEM	SCORE	RELEASE DATE	PRICE POINT
1	2	Grand Theft Auto III	PS2	9.5	Oct-01	\$51

Hands down, GTA III was the breakout hit of 2001. During the crucial month of December, this dark horse sprang into the top spot on the charts, rocketing past a host of well-established franchises. Given the excellent buzz this game is generating, we wouldn't be surprised if it has the legs to stay in the Top Ten well into 2002.

2	N/A	Final Fantasy X	PS2	9.75	Dec-02	\$51
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Square's Final Fantasy dynasty has always been a big money earner, and the juggernaut shows no signs of slowing down with the release of the tenth in the long-running series. The draw of Final Fantasy is so strong that consumers have been able to overlook the fact that Tidus has a really – shall we say – flamboyant haircut and weird shorts. Guess people are more open minded than we thought.

3	N/A	Super Smash Bros. Melee	GCN	9.25	Dec-02	\$50
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Gamers love Nintendo. This is a fact. The company's stable of beloved characters is unparalleled in the video game industry, and almost all of them make appearances in Super Smash Bros. Melee. So, it's really no surprise that this title has made a big splash at retail outlets across the country.

4	1	Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons of Liberty	PS2	10	Nov-02	\$47
---	---	--	-----	----	--------	------

Mullets are slowly creeping their way back into fashion, and Solid Snake is leading the charge. There's just something so sensual about a man who has long hair in back and short hair on top, but we digress. Metal Gear Solid 2, the most hyped game in recent memory, is living up to its billing both critically and commercially, showing no signs of slowing down. ¡Viva la mullet!

5	9	Madden NFL 2002	PS2	9.75	Aug-02	\$48
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When you're talking football, the first thing that comes to mind is Mike Tice, the Minnesota Viking's straight-shooting new head coach. Of course, the second thing that comes to mind is Madden football, the most popular – and best – football title on the market. Expect to see Madden maintain its position on the charts until after the Pro Bowl is over.

RANK	L. MO	GAME	SYSTEM	SCORE	RELEASE DATE	PRICE POINT
6	5	Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3	PS2	9.75	Oct-02	\$48
7	6	Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone	PS-X	5.5	Nov-02	\$40
8	4	Halo	Xbox	9.5	Nov-02	\$49
9	20	James Bond 007 in...Agent Under Fire	PS2	9.25	Nov-02	\$50
10	11	Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3	PS-X	8.5	Oct-02	\$38
11	16	Pokémon Crystal	GBC	6.75	Jul-02	\$30
12	N/A	Max Payne	PS2	7.75	Dec-02	\$50
13	10	WWF SmackDown!: Just Bring It	PS2	8	Nov-02	\$50
14	17	Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2	PSX	10	Sep-00	\$20
15	N/A	Gran Turismo 3: A-Spec	PS2	9	Jul-02	\$49
16	N/A	Super Mario Advance	GBA	8.5	Jun-02	\$30
17	15	NBA Live 2002	PS2	8.5	Oct-02	\$49
18	N/A	Pikmin	GCN	9.25	Dec-02	\$50
19	N/A	Mario Kart: Super Circuit	GBA	9.5	Aug-02	\$30
20	N/A	Driver 2	PS-X	8.75	Nov-00	\$20

Source: NPD Interactive Entertainment Service • Kristin Barnett-Von-Korff (516) 625-2481

JAPAN TOP 10

Source: Game Japan Based On Monthly Units Sold

POS.	L. MO	GAME	SYSTEM
1	N/A	Gran Turismo: Concept 2001 Tokyo	PS-X
2	N/A	Gundam Vs. Zeon DX	GC
3	N/A	World Soccer Winning Eleven 5: Winning Evolution	PS2
4	N/A	Toh Taro Dentetsu?	PS2
5	1	Dragon Quest IV: Guiding Friends	PS2
6	2	Super Smash Bros. Melee	PS2
7	N/A	Dynasty Warriors 3	PS2
8	N/A	Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons of Liberty	PS2
9	N/A	Animal Forest Plus	PS2
10	N/A	Demon Dog	GC



GAME INFORMER TOP 10

The Staff's Favorite Picks

POS.	L. MO	GAME	SYSTEM
1	1	Medal of Honor: Allied Assault	PC
2	3	Final Fantasy X	PS2
3	2	Super Smash Bros. Melee	GC
4	6	Grand Theft Auto III	PS2
5	3	Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons of Liberty	PS2
6	N/A	Maximo	PS2
7	5	Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3	PS2
8	N/A	Black & White: Creature Isle	PC
9	10	Drakan: The Ancients' Gates	PS2
10	N/A	Gitaroo Man	PS2



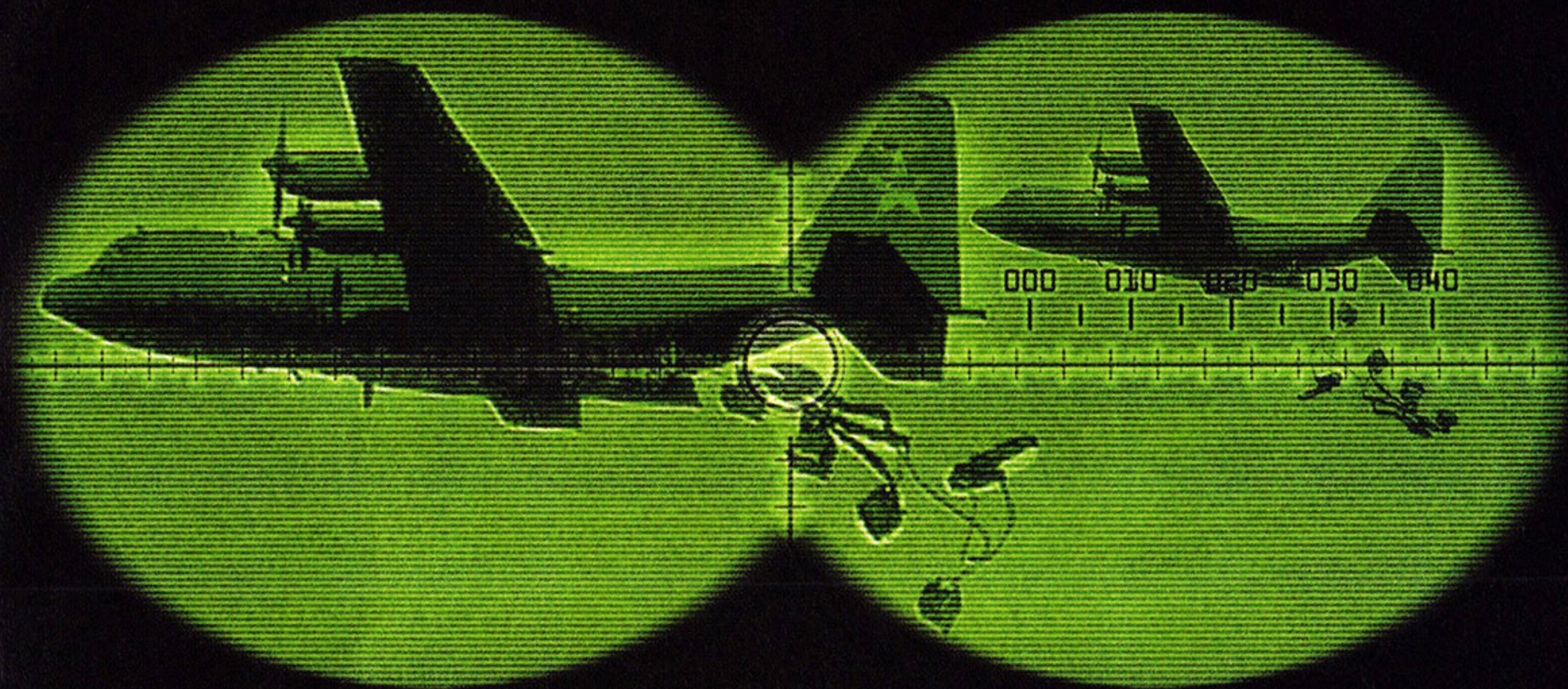
PC TOP 10

Based On Monthly Units Sold. Source: NPD Interactive Entertainment Service Kristin Barnett-Von-Korff (516) 625-2481

POS.	L. MO	GAME	MONTH	PRICE
1	1	The Sims: Hot Date	Nov-01	\$30
2	2	Harry Potter and The Sorcerer's Stone	Nov-01	\$28
3	3	The Sims	Jul-01	\$43
4	5	Roller Coaster Tycoon	May-99	\$21
5	N/A	Return to Castle Wolfenstein	Nov-01	\$55
6	7	Zoo Tycoon	Oct-01	\$29
7	N/A	Empire Earth	Nov-01	\$47
8	N/A	The Sims: Livin' Large	Sep-01	\$29
9	N/A	Madden NFL 2002	Aug-01	\$28
10	6	Civilization III	Oct-01	\$48



PlayStation®2



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All new mission types including helicopter drop offs!



Outrun and outwit your enemies head-to-head in split screen multiplayer mode!



SPEC OPS: RANGER ELITE

■ **FORMAT** PLAYSTATION ■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER ACTION
 ■ **PUBLISHER** TAKE 2 INTERACTIVE ■ **REVIEWED** JUL-01



Spec Ops' posturing function (stand upright, crouch, or lie prone) saved my skin. I only wish combat was further made easier by a 180° quick turn, but no dice. Ranger Elite is a well-functioning trooper, but this title merely gives extra missions to

the series. The shadows and draw-in distance are still atrocious, and this Spec Ops even takes away Stealth Patrols' red targeting square, leaving you to fire in spurts at foes until you finally make contact. Regardless, you'll come away feeling you could run the whole military with just the change in your pocket. — **KATO**



PLAYSTATION 2

18 Wheeler			
American Pro Truck	7.25	Dec-01	
4x4 Evolution	8	May-01	
Ace Combat 04:			
Shattered Skies	8.5	Nov-01	
All-Star Baseball 2002	8	May-01	
Arctic Thunder	5	Nov-01	
Armored Core 2:			
Another Age	8.5	Oct-01	
Army Men: Air Attack 2	3.5	Jun-01	
Army Men: Green Rogue	1	Jun-01	
Army Men: Sarge's Heroes 2	5.5	Jun-01	
Bass Strike	7	Nov-01	
Batman: Vengeance	7	Nov-01	
Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance	8.75	Dec-01	
Bloody Roar 3	8	Aug-01	
Burnout	7.75	Jan-02	
Capcom Vs. SNK 2	7.75	Dec-01	
CART Fury			
Championship Racing	8	Aug-01	
Casper: Spirit Dimensions	6.25	Nov-01	
City Crisis	7	Sep-01	
Crash Bandicoot:			
Wrath of Cortex	6.75	Jan-02	
Crazy Taxi	8.25	Jun-01	
Dark Cloud	9	Jul-01	
Dark Summit	6.5	Jan-02	
Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX 2	9	Oct-01	
Devil May Cry	9.5	Oct-01	
Drakan: The Ancients' Gates	9	Feb-02	
Driven	6.5	Feb-02	
Dynasty Warriors 3	7	Jan-02	
Ephemeral Fantasia	4	Sep-01	
Escape From Monkey Island	8.5	Sep-01	
ESPN MLS Extratime	6	Jun-01	
ESPN NBA 2night	4.25	May-01	
ESPN NFL PrimeTime 2002	6	Jan-02	
ESPN NHL			
National Hockey Night	6.25	May-01	
ESPN Winter X			
Games Snowboarding	8.25	Jan-01	
ESPN X Games Skateboarding	5	Sep-01	
Evil Twin: Cyprien's Chronicles	6	Jan-02	
Extermination	8.25	Sep-01	
Extreme G3	8	Nov-01	
F1 Racing Championship	8.75	Apr-01	
FIFA Soccer 2002	8	Dec-01	
Final Fantasy X	9.75	Jan-02	
Forever Kingdom	5	Jan-02	
Formula One 2001	8.5	Nov-01	
Frequency	8.5	Dec-01	
Fur Fighters: Viggo's Revenge	6.5	Jul-01	
Gallop Racer 2001	7.5	Sep-01	
Gauntlet Dark Legacy	7.75	Jun-01	
Giants: Citizen Kabuto	9	Dec-01	
Grand Theft Auto III	9.5	Dec-01	
Gran Turismo 3: A-Spec	9	Aug-01	
Guilty Gear X	6	Dec-01	
Half-Life Decay	8	Dec-01	
Harvest Moon:			
Save the Homeland	7.5	Dec-01	
Heroes of Might and Magic	4.5	Jul-01	
High Heat Baseball 2002	7.75	May-01	
ICO	9	Sep-01	
Jade Cocoon 2	8.25	Feb-02	
Jak and Daxter:			
The Precursor Legacy	9.25	Jan-02	
James Bond 007 In...			
Agent Under Fire	9.25	Jan-02	
Jeremy McGrath's			
Supercross World	5	Jan-02	
Kessen II	8	Oct-01	
Kinetica	8	Nov-01	
Klonoa 2: Lunatea's Veil	8.25	Aug-01	
Legends of Wrestling	6.25	Feb-02	
Le Mans 24 Hours	8.5	Sep-01	
Madden NFL 2002	9.75	Oct-01	
Max Payne	7.75	Feb-02	
MDK2: Armageddon	7.5	May-01	
Metal Gear Solid 2:			
Sons of Liberty	10	Dec-01	
Mobile Suit Gundam:			
Journey to Jaburo	6.5	Sep-01	
Mobile Suit Gundam:			
Zeonic Front	7.75	Feb-02	
Monster Rancher 3	9.25	Nov-01	
MotoGP 2	7	Feb-02	
Motor Mayhem	7	Aug-01	
MTV Music Generator 2	8.5	Jun-01	
Mummy Returns, The	2.5	Jan-02	
MX2002			
Featuring Ricky Carmichael	7	Aug-01	
MXRider	7	Dec-01	
Namco Museum	8	Feb-02	
NASCAR Heat 2002	8.5	Aug-01	
NASCAR Thunder 2002	8.5	Dec-01	
NBA Hoopz	5.75	May-01	
NBA Live 2002	8.5	Dec-01	
NBA ShootOut 2001	6.5	Apr-01	
NBA Street	9.25	Aug-01	
NCAA Final Four 2002	5	Dec-01	
NCAA Football 2002	9	Oct-01	
NFL 2K2	9.5	Jan-02	
NFL GameDay 2002	5	Feb-02	
NFL QB Club 2002	7.5	Nov-01	
NHL FaceOff 2001	1	Apr-01	
NHL 2002	9.5	Nov-01	
NHL Hitz 2002	8.5	Dec-01	
No One Lives Forever	7	Dec-01	
Okage: Shadow King	8	Nov-01	
Parappa The Rapper 2	7.5	Feb-02	
Portal Runner	4	Oct-01	
Project Eden	5.5	Jan-02	
Quake III Revolution	7.75	May-01	
Rayman 2: Revolution	8	Apr-01	
Red Faction	9	Jun-01	
Resident Evil Code:			
Veronica X	9.25	Aug-01	
Rez	6	Feb-02	
Ring of Red	9	Apr-01	
Rugby	7.5	Aug-01	
Rumble Racing	7.75	May-01	
Rune: Viking Warlord	7.25	Sep-01	
Shadow Hearts	7.75	Jan-02	
Shaun Palmer's			
Pro Snowboarder	8.25	Dec-01	
Silent Hill 2	7	Oct-01	
Silent Scope 2: Dark Silhouette	8	Sep-01	
Simpsons Road Rage	8	Dec-01	
Smuggler's Run 2:			
Hostile Territory	7.5	Dec-01	
Soldier of Fortune Gold	4	Jan-02	
Soul Reaver 2	8.75	Dec-01	
Splashdown	9	Dec-01	
Spy Hunter	8.5	Nov-01	
SSX Tricky	9	Dec-01	
Star Trek Voyager: Elite Force	4.5	Feb-02	
Star Wars:			
Super Bombad Racing	2.5	May-01	
Stretch Panic	7.5	Sep-01	
Stunt GP	4	Jan-02	
Supercar Street Challenge	6	Dec-01	
Tarzan Untamed	7.75	Jan-02	
Test Drive Off-Road:			
Wide Open	6.25	Nov-01	
Thunderstrike:			
Operation Phoenix	4	Dec-01	
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2001	6	Apr-01	
Time Crisis 2	8.25	Oct-01	
Tokyo Xtreme Racer: Zero	8	Jun-01	
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3	9.75	Dec-01	
Top Gun: Combat Zones	7.75	Oct-01	
Tsugunai: Atonement	7.25	Jan-02	
Twisted Metal: Black	9.5	Jul-01	
Unison	7.75	May-01	
Vampire Night	6.5	Dec-01	
Victorious Boxers:			
Ippo's Road To Glory	7.75	Feb-02	
WarJetz	5.5	Sep-01	
Warriors of Might and Magic	7.75	Apr-01	
Wave Rally	4	Feb-02	
Winback: Covert Ops	7.5	Apr-01	
Wizardry:			
Tale of the Forsaken Land	6.5	Feb-02	
World Tour Soccer 2002	8.25	Feb-02	
WWF SmackDown! Just Bring It	8	Dec-01	
Yanya Caballista: City Skater	7.5	Oct-01	
Zone of the Enders	9.25	May-01	

PLAYSTATION

Alone in the Dark:			
The New Nightmare	8	Aug-01	
Arc The Lad Collection	8.5	Jan-02	
Battle Hunter	5	Sep-01	

Castlevania Chronicles	6.75	Oct-01	
Dance Dance Revolution	8.75	Apr-01	
Dance Dance Revolution:			
Disney Mix	6.25	Sep-01	
Darkstone	7.25	Apr-01	
Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX:			
Maximum Remix	7.25	Jul-01	
Digimon Digital Card Battle	7.5	Sep-01	
Disney's Aladdin In			
Nasira's Revenge	6	May-01	
Disney's Atlantis:			
The Lost Empire	7.25	Aug-01	
Dragon Warrior VII	6.75	Nov-01	
Final Fantasy Chronicles	9	Jul-01	
Harry Potter and			
The Sorcerer's Stone	5.5	Jan-02	
Hoshigami:			
Ruining Blue Earth	7.25	Feb-02	
Madden NFL 2002	8	Sep-01	
Mat Hoffman's Pro BMX	8.5	Jun-01	
Mega Man X6	6.5	Feb-02	
Metal Slug X	6	Aug-01	
MLB 2002	6	Jul-01	
Monsters, Inc	5	Nov-01	
Motocross Mania	5	Sep-01	
NBA ShootOut 2002	4.75	Nov-01	
NFL GameDay 2002	6	Sep-01	
One Piece Mansion	7.75	Oct-01	
Point Blank 3	7.25	May-01	
Powerpuff Girls:			
Chemical X-Traversal	1.5	Nov-01	
Power Spike Pro			
Beach Volleyball	5	Jan-01	
Saiyuki: Journey West	8.5	Aug-01	
Saltwater Sportfishing	6.5	Jan-02	
Sheep Raider	7.25	Nov-01	
Simpsons Wrestling, The	2	Jun-01	
Spec Ops: Covert Assault	4	Dec-01	
Spec Ops: Ranger Elite	6	Jul-01	
Spider-Man 2 Enter: Electro	8.5	Oct-01	
Strikers 1945	6.75	May-01	
Supercross	5.75	Apr-01	
Syphon Filter 3	9	Dec-01	
Tales of Destiny II	7.75	Sep-01	
Time Crisis: Project Titan	7	Jun-01	
Twisted Metal: Small Brawl	3	Jan-02	
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3	8.5	Dec-01	
Top Shop	7.5	Jul-01	
Toy Story Racer	5	Apr-01	
Triple Play Baseball	7	Apr-01	
V.I.P.	1	Jan-02	
Virtual Kasparov	7.75	Jan-02	
Weakest Link	7	Jan-02	
World's Scariest Police Chases	6.75	Aug-01	
X-Men: Mutant Academy 2	8.25	Oct-01	

GAMECUBE

All-Star Baseball 2002	5.75	Feb-02	
Batman: Vengeance	6.75	Feb-02	
Crazy Taxi	7.5	Jan-02	
Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX 2	8.75	Feb-02	
Extreme G3	8.25	Feb-02	
FIFA Soccer 2002	8	Feb-02	
Luigi's Mansion	9	Nov-01	
Madden NFL 2002	9	Feb-02	
NHL Hitz 2002	8	Feb-02	
Pikmin	9.25	Jan-02	
SSX Tricky	8.5	Feb-02	
Star Wars: Rogue Leader	9.5	Dec-01	
Super Monkey Ball	8.5	Nov-01	
Super Smash Bros. Melee	9.25	Feb-02	
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3	9.75	Jan-02	
Wave Race: Blue Storm	8.5	Nov-01	

NINTENDO 64

Aidyn Chronicles:			
The First Mage	0.5	May-01	
Conker's Bad Fur Day	9	Apr-01	
Dr. Mario 64	8.5	May-01	
Mario Party 3	4	May-01	
Pokémon Stadium 2	6	May-01	
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2	9.25	Oct-01	

DR. MARIO 64

■ **FORMAT** NINTENDO 64 ■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER PUZZLE
 ■ **PUBLISHER** NINTENDO ■ **REVIEWED** MAY-01



Going from level to level, taking your time defeating stacks of naughty germs, is my idea of gaming nirvana, especially when you toss in the toe-tapping Chill soundtrack as your musical accompaniment. What can I say? I'm nostalgic. The only bummer about Dr. Mario 64 is the fact that Tetris, which came with it on Super Nintendo, isn't part of the package. I probably would've rather had it on here than the Story mode that replaced it. Whining aside, this is a lot of game for \$30, especially in N64 proportions. Unless you're a Pokémon junkie, this could be the last great Nintendo 64 game to come down the pipe. — **JUSTIN**



DREAMCAST

18 Wheeler			
American Pro Truck	8.5	Jun-01	
Alien Front Online	8	Sep-01	
Alone in the Dark:			
The New Nightmare	8	Nov-01	
Atari Anniversary Edition	6	Sep-01	
Bombberman Online	8.5	Nov-01	
Confidential Mission	5.5	Jun-01	
Crazy Taxi 2	8.75	Jul-01	
Daytona USA	7	Apr-01	
Death Crimson OX	4	Dec-01	
Floigan Bros.	8.25	Aug-01	
Heavy Metal: Geomatrix	3	Dec-01	
Illbleed	5	Jun-01	
Kao the Kangaroo	7	Apr-01	
Last Blade 2:			
Heart of the Samurai, The	8	Sep-01	
Mars Matrix	8	May-01	
Mat Hoffman's Pro BMX	7	Dec-01	
NBA 2K2	9.25	Dec-01	
NCAA College Football 2K2:			
Road to the Rose Bowl	8	Oct-01	
NFL 2K2	9	Nov-01	
Ooga Booga	6	Oct-01	
Outrigger	6.25	Jun-01	
PBA Tour Bowling 2001	6.25	Jun-01	
Phantasy Star Online Ver. 2	8.75	Nov-01	
Razor Freestyle Scooter	7.5	Oct-01	
Record of Lodoss War	8.5	May-01	
Sega Bass Fishing	8.5	Oct-01	
Sega Smash Pack	9	May-01	
Soldier of Fortune	7.75	Aug-01	
Sonic Adventure 2	7.5	Aug-01	
Spider-Man	8	Jun-01	
Sports Jam	7.75	Aug-01	
Tennis 2K2	9.5	Jan-02	
Unreal Tournament	8.5	Apr-01	
World Series Baseball 2K2	7	Oct-01	
Worms World Party	8	May-01	

XBOX

4x4 Evolution 2	7.5	Nov-01	
Airforce Delta Storm	6.5	Dec-01	
Ameped: Freestyle			
Snowboarding	7	Dec-01	
Arctic Thunder	5	Dec-01	
Azurik: Rise of Perathia	4.5	Feb-02	
Batman: Vengeance	7	Feb-02	
Blood Wake	5	Feb-02	
Cel Damage	5	Dec-01	
Dark Summit	7	Dec-01	
Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX 2	9	Dec-01	
Dead Or Alive 3	9.25	Dec-01	
F1 2001	7.75	Feb-02	
Fusion Frenzy	6	Dec-01	
Halo	9.5	Nov-01	
Kabuki Warriors	0.5	Dec-01	
Mad Dash Racing	6	Jan-02	
Madden NFL 2002	9.5	Nov-01	
Max Payne	9	Feb-02	
MX2002			
Featuring Ricky Carmichael	7.5	Jan-02	
NASCAR Heat 2002	8.25	Dec-01	
NASCAR Thunder 2002	9	Dec-01	
NBA Live 2002	8.5	Jan-02	
NFL Fever 2002	8.25	Dec-01	
NHL 2002	9.25	Dec-01	
NHL Hitz 2002	8.5	Jan-02	
Nightcaster	5.5	Feb-02	
Oddworld: Munch's Oddysee	7	Dec-01	
Project Gotham Racing	8.5	Dec-01	
Shrek	2	Jan-02	
Silent Hill 2: Restless Dreams	8.25		

NEW RELEASES ALL DATES SUBJECT TO CHANGE. CALL YOUR LOCAL RETAILER FOR MORE DETAILS

Release Date	Title	Publisher/Distributor	System	Release Date	Title	Publisher/Distributor	System	Release Date	Title	Publisher/Distributor	System
2/15/02	Gadget Tycoon	Dreamcatcher	PC	3/11/02	Star Wars Jedi: Starfighter	LucasArts	PS2	3/26/02	Elder Scrolls III: Morrowind	Bethesda Softworks	Xbox
2/15/02	Rally Trophy	Macmillan	PC	3/12/02	Major League Baseball	THQ	GBA	3/26/02	James Bond 007 in...Agent Under Fire	Electronic Arts	Xbox
2/18/02	Woody Woodpecker	Dreamcatcher	PS2	3/12/02	Rainbow Six: Rogue Spear	Ubi Soft	GBA	3/26/02	Legacy of Kain: Blood Omen 2	Eidos	Xbox
2/19/02	Decathlon Advance	Infogrames	GBA	3/12/02	Street Fighter Alpha 3	Capcom	GBA	3/26/02	NFL Blitz 2002	Midway	Xbox
2/19/02	18 Wheeler American Pro Truck	Acclaim	GC	3/12/02	Pac-Man World 2	Namco	GC	3/26/02	Triple Play 2002	Electronic Arts	Xbox
2/19/02	Smashing Drive	Namco	GC	3/12/02	Spy Hunter	Midway	GC	3/29/02	Commandos 2: Men of Courage	Eidos	PS2
2/19/02	Gitaroo Man	Koei	PS2	3/12/02	Die Hard Nakatomi Plaza	Vivendi Universal	PC	3/29/02	Commandos 2: Men of Courage	Eidos	Xbox
2/19/02	NFL Blitz 2002	Midway	PS2	3/12/02	Serious Sam: The Second Encounter	Gathering of Developers	PC	4/1/02	Dragon's Lair 3D	Ubi Soft	PC
2/19/02	Pirates: The Legend of Black Kat	Electronic Arts	PS2	3/12/02	Warlords Battlecry II	Ubi Soft	PC	4/1/02	Evil Twin: Cyprien's Chronicle	Ubi Soft	PC
2/19/02	Tetris Worlds	THQ	PS2	3/12/02	Hot Shots Golf 3	Sony	PS2	4/1/02	MLB Slugfest	Midway	PS2
2/19/02	World Tour Soccer 2002	Sony	PS2	3/12/02	Sled Storm 2	Electronic Arts	PS2	4/2/02	Robocop	Titus	GBA
2/19/02	New Legends	THQ	Xbox	3/12/02	Transworld Surf	Infogrames	PS2	4/4/02	Dungeon Siege	Microsoft	PC
2/19/02	UFC: Tapout	Crave	Xbox	3/12/02	Triple Play 2002	Electronic Arts	PS2	4/9/02	Burnout	Acclaim	GC
2/20/02	Digimon Rumble Arena	Bandai	PS-X	3/12/02	World of Outlaws: Sprint Cars	Infogrames	PS2	4/9/02	NHL FaceOff 2002	Sony	PS2
2/25/02	Shantae	Capcom	GBC	3/12/02	Pirates: The Legend of Black Kat	Electronic Arts	Xbox	4/9/02	No One Lives Forever	Vivendi Universal	PS2
				3/12/02	Spy Hunter	Midway	Xbox	4/9/02	SOCOM: US Navy Seals	Sony	PS2
				3/15/02	Smuggler's Run	Destination Software	GBA				
				3/15/02	Snowboarding	Titus	GBA				
				3/15/02	3D Pool All Stars	Titus	GBC				
				3/15/02	ET: Cosmic Garden	NewKidCo	GBC				
				3/15/02	ET: Digital Planner	NewKidCo	GBC				
				3/15/02	Robocop	Titus	GBC				
				3/15/02	Batman: Dark Tomorrow	Crave	GC				
				3/15/02	Eternal Darkness: Sanity's Requiem	Nintendo	GC				
				3/15/02	Soccer Slam	Sega	GC				
				3/15/02	Arabian Knights	Dreamcatcher	PC				
				3/15/02	IHRA Drag Racing	Bethesda Softworks	PS2				
				3/15/02	Pryzm Chapter One: The Dark Unicorn	TDK Mediative	PS2				
				3/18/02	The Ripping Friends	THQ	GBA				
				3/18/02	Yu-gi-oh!: Dark Duel Stories	Konami	GBC				
				3/19/02	Britney's Dance Beat	THQ	GBA				
				3/19/02	Disney's Jungle Book	Ubi Soft	GBA				
				3/19/02	X-Blad: In-Line Skating	Crave	GBA				
				3/19/02	Command & Conquer: Red Strike Bundle	Electronic Arts	PC				
				3/19/02	FIFA World Cup 2002	Electronic Arts	PC				
				3/19/02	Hooter's Road Trip	Ubi Soft	PC				
				3/19/02	Sniper	Xicat Interactive	PC				
				3/19/02	Free Wheelin' USA	Ubi Soft	PS-X				
				3/19/02	Monsters, Inc.	Sony	PS2				
				3/19/02	Red Card Soccer	Midway	PS2				
				3/19/02	Virtua Fighter 4	Sega	PS2				
				3/19/02	Gun Valkyrie	Sega	Xbox				
				3/19/02	Smashing Drive	Namco	Xbox				
				3/22/02	Ballistic	Infogrames	Xbox				
				3/25/02	Muppet Pinball Mayhem	NewKidCo	GBA				
				3/25/02	Starfox Adventures: Dinosaur Planet	Nintendo	GC				
				3/25/02	Black Moon Chronicles	Dreamcatcher	PC				
				3/26/02	Atari Anniversary Advance	Infogrames	GBA				
				3/26/02	Motocross Maniacs Advance	Konami	GBA				
				3/26/02	NHL 2002	Electronic Arts	GBA				
				3/26/02	Space Invaders	Activision	GBA				
				3/26/02	The Scorpion King: Sword of Osiris	Vivendi Universal	GBA				
				3/26/02	Bloody Roar: Primal Fury	Activision	GC				
				3/26/02	Home Run King	Sega	GC				
				3/26/02	James Bond 007 in... Agent Under Fire	Electronic Arts	GC				
				3/26/02	NFL Blitz 2002	Midway	GC				
				3/26/02	Virtua Striker 2002	Sega	GC				

PLANETSIDE

■ **FORMAT** PC ■ **STYLE** MASSIVELY MULTIPLAYER ONLINE ACTION
 ■ **PUBLISHER** SONY COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT AMERICA
 ■ **RELEASE** JUNE 17



Verant Interactive, creator of the underground drug EverQuest, have a new fix in the works for PC gamers. Not only will Verant's upcoming project, PlanetSide, win over the hearts of online role-playing addicts, it will also target the hardcore first-person shooter fan base.

With servers holding approximately 3,500 players, PlanetSide will be the first massively multiplayer online first-person shooter – offering the best of both worlds.

2/26/02	Casper	Titus	GBA
2/26/02	Crash Bandicoot: The Huge Adventure	Vivendi Universal	GBA
2/26/02	Mike Tyson Boxing	Ubi Soft	GBA
2/26/02	Monster Jam: Maximum Destruction	Ubi Soft	GBA
2/26/02	Zone of the Enders: The Fist of Mars	Konami	GBA
2/26/02	All-Star Baseball 2003	Acclaim	GC
2/26/02	Jeremy McGrath's Supercross World	Acclaim	GC
2/26/02	Command & Conquer: Renegade	Westwood Studios/EA	PC
2/26/02	Lock On: Modern Air Combat	Ubi Soft	PC
2/26/02	Mafia	Take 2	PC
2/26/02	Star Trek: Bridge Commander	Activision	PC
2/26/02	Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2002	Electronic Arts	PC
2/26/02	Arc the Lad: Collection	Working Designs	PS-X
2/26/02	Creatures	Crave	PS-X
2/26/02	All-Star Baseball 2003	Acclaim	PS2
2/26/02	Deus Ex: The Conspiracy	Eidos	PS2
2/26/02	Pac-Man World 2	Namco	PS2
2/26/02	Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2002	Electronic Arts	PS2
2/26/02	All-Star Baseball 2003	Acclaim	Xbox
2/26/02	Jet Set Radio Future	Sega	Xbox
2/27/02	Superpower	Dreamcatcher	PC
2/28/02	Shadow Man: 2cond Coming	Acclaim	PS2
3/1/02	Cubix Robots for Everyone: Clash n' Bash	3DO	GBA
3/1/02	Disney's Tarzan Untamed	Ubi Soft	GBA
3/1/02	Pocky & Rocky	Crave	GBA
3/1/02	Three Stooges	Metro3D	GBA
3/1/02	911 Paramedic	Vivendi Universal	PC
3/1/02	Shadow of Zorro	Dreamcatcher	PC
3/1/02	Star Wars: Jedi Outcast	LucasArts	PC
3/1/02	Dexter's Lab: Mandark	Bam! Entertainment	PS-X
3/1/02	Aliens: Colonial Marines	Electronic Arts	PS2
3/1/02	EOE: Eve of Extinction	Eidos	PS2
3/1/02	Fatal Frame	Tecmo	PS2
3/1/02	Herdy Gerdy	Eidos	PS2
3/1/02	Hidden Invasion	Crave	PS2
3/1/02	King's Field: The Ancient City	Tommo	PS2
3/1/02	Powerpuff Girls	Bam! Entertainment	PS2
3/1/02	Rainbow Six: Rogue Spear	Ubi Soft	PS2
3/1/02	Shifters	3DO	PS2
3/4/02	MotoGP	THQ	GBA
3/4/02	Austerlitz: Napoleon's Greatest Victories	Strategy First	PC
3/4/02	Elder Scrolls III: Morrowind	Bethesda Softworks	PC
3/4/02	Who Shot Johnny Rock?	Digital Leisure	PC
3/5/02	High Heat Baseball 2003	3DO	GBA
3/5/02	Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3	Activision	GBA
3/5/02	Gauntlet Dark Legacy	Midway	GC
3/5/02	NBA Street	Electronic Arts	GC
3/5/02	Dark Planet: Battle for Netropolis	Ubi Soft	PC
3/5/02	Freedom Force	Electronic Arts	PC
3/5/02	Soldier of Fortune 2: Double Helix	Activision	PC
3/5/02	Britney's Dance Beat	THQ	PS2
3/5/02	Knockout Kings 2002	Electronic Arts	PS2
3/5/02	Knockout Kings 2002	Electronic Arts	Xbox
3/5/02	NBA 2K2	Sega	Xbox
3/5/02	Rallisport Challenge	Microsoft	Xbox
3/5/02	Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3	Activision	Xbox
3/6/02	Sheep	Capcom	GBA

HERDY GERDY

■ **FORMAT** PC ■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ADVENTURE ■ **PUBLISHER** EIDOS
 ■ **RELEASE** MARCH 1



Herdy Gerdy will feature a unique blend of adventure, strategy, and RPG elements. To be sure, we've never seen a game quite like this one. Recently, Game Informer was granted a sneak peak at the nuts and bolts of Herdy Gerdy's gameplay. The graphics are

highly stylized and incredibly complex for a console game. Core is working around the clock to make sure there will be no load time for the graphical ingenuity struck in this peerless release. This game looked very impressive when we saw last saw it, but only time will tell if Core can bring its dream to fruition.

3/26/02	Ghost Recon Mission Pack #1	Red Storm Entertainment	PC
3/26/02	Heroes of Might & Magic IV	3DO	PC
3/26/02	Hitman 2	Eidos	PC
3/26/02	Rayman Arena	Ubi Soft	PC
3/26/02	The Sims: Vacation	Electronic Arts	PC
3/26/02	Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3	Activision	PC
3/26/02	Yu-gi-oh!: Forbidden Memories	Konami	PS-X
3/26/02	Army Men: RTS	3DO	PS2
3/26/02	Caesar's Palace	Take 2	PS2
3/26/02	Legacy of Kain: Blood Omen 2	Eidos	PS2
3/26/02	Monster Jam: Maximum Destruction	Ubi Soft	PS2
3/26/02	Need for Speed: Hot Pursuit 2	Electronic Arts	PS2
3/26/02	Smash Court Tennis Pro Tournament	Namco	PS2
3/26/02	Worms Blast	Ubi Soft	PS2
3/26/02	Crash Bandicoot: The Wrath of Cortex	Vivendi Universal	Xbox

FREEKSTYLE

■ **FORMAT** PLAYSTATION 2 ■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER ACTION/SPORTS
 ■ **PUBLISHER** EA SPORTS BIG ■ **RELEASE** MAY 28



Unlike SSX's eclectic cast of characters, the riders in Freestyle are all real professionals. It appears there are enough crazies who do this stuff for a living that you don't have to make people up. Such cycle stalwarts as Mike Metzger, Greg Albertyn and Brian Deegan

are all included, along with many more. Do you know any of those people? Neither do we, but we imagine we'll get acquainted with them pretty fast, as we watch them tackle the eight challenging courses, complete with shortcuts and different paths. If anyone can pull off a great motocross game, it's EA Big. We look forward to seeing what will become of Freestyle, and how it will change our perception of this under-appreciated sport.

4/9/02	Burnout	Acclaim	Xbox
4/15/02	Virtua Tennis 2K2	Sega	PS2
4/16/02	Duke Nukem	Take 2	GBA
4/16/02	Grand Theft Auto III	Take 2	PC
4/19/02	Bonx Racers	Ubi Soft	GBA
4/19/02	Worms Blast	Ubi Soft	GBA
4/19/02	Conflict Zone	Ubi Soft	PS2
4/19/02	Evil Twin: Cyprien's Chronicle	Ubi Soft	PS2
4/23/02	Buffy the Vampire Slayer	Electronic Arts	Xbox
4/23/02	World Series Baseball 2K3	Sega	Xbox
4/30/02	Age of Wonders 2	Gathering of Developers	PC
4/30/02	Dance Dance Revolution: Konamix	Konami	PS-X
5/1/02	Defender Of The Crown	Metro3D	GBA
5/1/02	Wings Advance	Metro3D	GBA
5/1/02	Gravity Games BMX	Midway	GC
5/1/02	MLB Slugfest	Midway	GC
5/1/02	Red Card Soccer	Midway	GC
5/1/02	Industry Tycoon 2	Macmillan	PC
5/1/02	Gravity Games BMX	Midway	PS2
5/1/02	Legion: The Legend of Excalibur	Midway	PS2
5/1/02	UFC: Throwdown	Crave	PS2
5/1/02	Gravity Games BMX	Midway	Xbox
5/1/02	MLB Slugfest	Midway	Xbox
5/1/02	Red Card Soccer	Midway	Xbox
5/7/02	Mega Man Battle Network 2	Capcom	GBA
5/7/02	MLB 2003	Sony	PS2
5/7/02	Space Race	Infogrames	PS2
5/7/02	Hitman 2	Eidos	Xbox
5/14/02	Dragon Ball Z: Legacy of Goku	Infogrames	GBA
5/14/02	Legends of Wrestling	Acclaim	GC
5/14/02	Zoo Cube	Acclaim	GC
5/14/02	Chris Edwards Aggressive Inline Skating	Acclaim	PS2
5/14/02	Legends of Wrestling	Acclaim	Xbox
5/15/02	Arx Fatalis	Fishtank Interactive	PC
5/15/02	Beam Breakers	Fishtank Interactive	PC
5/15/02	Rayman Arena	Ubi Soft	PS-X
5/15/02	Jimmy Neutron Boy Genius	THQ	PS2
5/15/02	Rayman Arena	Ubi Soft	PS2
5/15/02	Skies of Arcadia	Sega	PS2
5/15/02	Sega GT 2002	Sega	Xbox
5/21/02	Downforce	Titus	PS2
5/24/02	Space Ace	Digital Leisure	PC
5/27/02	Pinball of the		

PLAY TO PERFECTION

When it comes to getting to the end of a given level, Maximo is a straightforward game. Even if you don't see it right away, it usually only takes a few seconds to discover that next platform you need to get up on the cliff or island that leads to the exit crystal.

Therefore, we've chosen to cover the secrets more than the actual process of working through the levels themselves. Most of the levels of the game follow a basic area-to-area straight path approach, so when we say "forward, back, left, or right," it's from the perspective of moving towards the end of the level on the main path. In locations where this is not possible, we will give a point of reference.

Maximo is split into five worlds. Each world has a hub level that allows you access to the rest of the levels and each hub has a mystical pool that allows you to save your game or transport to worlds that you've already been to for 100 gold pieces. While each hub has plenty of secrets, they are of no consequence to mastering the game, so we've focused only on the surrounding levels of each world.

SECRETS & DIRTY DEVELOPER TRICKS

The primary goal of this guide is level mastery. To get 100% mastery on a given level, you will need to pick up every object on the level that hasn't been nailed down, slay every enemy, break everything that can be broken, and discover every secret. Fortunately, you only have to get these things once for each particular item, monster, or broken object, so if you ever had a lot of trouble getting to something, you don't have to do it twice. Here are a few tips for each type of mastery goal.

BURIED TREASURE CHESTS – The secret to finding buried treasure is not where you jump, but where you land a jump. Use the dust cloud that forms around Maximo's feet to get an idea of how close you need to be when you land near a hidden chest. Buried Chests tend to be in conspicuous places, but not as much on the later levels. Most of the secret chests in World 1 are near trees, for instance. See Special Powers for the Gold Seeker.

MONSTERS – You actually have to personally slay monsters by your own hand. Knocking them off of



The Maximo Mastery Walkthrough

cliffs or small platforms into deep water, molten lava, the void of Hell, etc. doesn't count. If you accidentally do this, sometimes it's worth taking the jump with them to make them reappear after you've worked your way back from the last checkpoint. Just make sure you have plenty of lives.

ITEMS – The most common developer trick for hiding items is putting them in places that can't be seen as you move forward through a level. Turning around and taking a look back periodically is critical. They also love hiding things behind door frames and archways leading to small rooms where it's impossible to see around the corner due to the locked perspective. We also recommend placing the Shield of Midas in your permanent ability inventory the second you get it. It will save you a lot of trouble when it comes to trying to nail that row of eight coins placed across a particularly tricky jump. Random items dropped from slain enemies that fade after time don't count towards level mastery, but some enemies drop keys, which do count.

BREAK EVERYTHING – This includes plate glass windows, stone torches, weird...things in the spirit world, coffins (stone & wood), and soul containers, which can conveniently be completely destroyed with one overhead strike. Fortunately, souls don't count towards level mastery, so don't worry if you lose any of them after busting a container.

POWER-UPS

All of these abilities are temporary unless you lock them into Maximo's Lock inventory. At the beginning of the game, only three abilities can be locked so that Maximo doesn't lose them if he dies. After beating a boss, you are given an additional permanent slot.

MAXIMO'S SPECIAL POWERS

SECOND STRIKE – A quick extra attack is an all-around useful ability. One thing to keep in mind, however, is that Maximo takes a step forward on the second attack – not good near cliffs. We didn't really find it worth our while to lock this one, when so many enemies require more specialized attacks than simple slashing and the basic slash is almost as fast even without the follow-up attack.

MIGHTY BLOW – This move is basically an improved version of the ▲ overhead attack. It has a quicker recovery time, still hits enemies low to the ground, and does a lot of damage. It's no good against higher targets, like Ghastly Gus' head, however. The forward motion of this attack makes it another bad move to make on a cliff's edge.

FURIOUS SPIN ATTACK – This ability is simply a more powerful version of the regular 360° Spin Attack.

KISS – After accepting a kiss from the sorceresses you rescue in each world, Maximo gets an extended ability inventory but an ability called Kiss takes up one slot. You can remove Kiss in favor of a useful power, but if you die, it's gone forever. Hold on to all the kisses you collect if you want to gain access to the concept art for the game when you beat the final boss. We recommend ditching the kisses on your first time through the game. It's really hard to master every

level with only three ability slots free and the prize for mastery is cooler.

SHIELD ABILITIES

THROW SHIELD – Although damaging to your shield, it can sometimes come in handy to throw it at approaching enemies – particularly if you're outnumbered. Shield of Midas, Blizzard Shield, and Shield of Thunder all grant special attacks and abilities to Throw Shield. You can get on fine in the first world without locking this ability, but we recommend it for the rest of the game. Throw Shield can also be used to grab souls.

MIGHTY THROW – This excellent ability extends the range of Throw Shield.

SHIELD OF MIDAS – The Midas Shield allows you to combine your blocking and throwing abilities with an very useful gold, gem, and soul attracting ability. It's extremely handy when a ghost forces you to dump a bunch of souls. All you have to do is hold the block button and spin to get them all back. This ability turns a thrown shield into a gold magnet as well. On some levels, Shield of Midas is essential for picking up certain items. Lock this one for the game. Shield of Midas is replaced if you pick up Shield of Thunder, or Shield of Storms, so be careful when fighting opponents that tend to yield these items.

SHIELD OF STORMS – This shield pushes enemies back when used, which not only leaves opponents stunned and open to attack, but prevents damage to your shield as well. It also enhances the Throw Shield attack.

SHIELD OF THUNDER – This shield power damages enemies when you block and also enhances a shield throw with a lightning attack.

SWORD ABILITIES

MAGIC BOLT – This ability can only be used when you've acquired a sword enchantment, and drains energy in order to fire a ranged magic attack at enemies. It can come in handy for that one axe-thrower inconveniently placed near a tricky jump. Light and Fire attacks have a long range and are excellent for taking out single enemies blocking critical platforms, while Frost and Armageddon are great for taking out multiple enemies at a closer range.

DOOMSTRIKE – This powerful enchantment-draining ability does hideous amounts of damage to a wide area.

LONG SWORD – Reach can come in handy against certain enemies (especially skeleton warriors). The Long Sword does not require a sword enchantment to function.

GOLD SEEKER – This ability is a godsend for gamers and strategy guide writers alike. It emits a large shock wave when you execute a downward strike that reveals chests with far greater efficiency than jump searching. Unfortunately, the shock wave does not damage enemies.

WIDER SHOCK WAVE – This ability expands the shock wave attack of the downward strike, which kills lesser enemies and stuns others. It really shines when used in conjunction with Gold Seeker which expands this already useful ability's range considerably.

RING OF PAIN – Ring of Pain causes swords to spring out of the ground all around you when you execute a Downward Strike. Enemies can block this attack, however, so we don't recommend hopping into a horde of skeleton warriors, expecting them all to disintegrate. Wider shock wave will extend the range of the blades, making it a great toy to use on hordes of regular skeletons.

ARMOR ABILITIES

MASK OF SORROW – This ability makes you do damage to enemies simply by touching them when you've acquired maximum (gold) armor. Its use is limited, so we wouldn't recommend locking it, but if you're having trouble with a particular group of enemies it can be fun.

INCREASED ARMOR – Picking up this upgrade allows you to take one more level of armor enhancement for four, rather than three health bars. Picking up additional Increased Armor icons is essentially like picking up a suit of armor. The one trade-off of having this ability is that it will take longer for you to activate Mask of Sorrow.

WORLD 1: THE BONEYARD

ENEMIES

RAVENS & GHOSTS – These enemies do no damage to you. Ghosts cause you to drop accumulated souls and then attempt to eat them up. They move pretty fast and pulse, making it hard to see exactly how far away they are, so use their shadow as a guide for when to strike. Ravens will take your money, but can easily be hit with a short jump attack as they slowly fly away.

SKELETONS – These are the basic one-hit wonders of this world, although the yellow pantsed variety takes multiple hits – if you knock them down simply to do a downward strike to finish them off. The red-shorted skeletons can also teleport behind you.

SKELETON WARRIORS – These guys are a little tricky as they have shields they use. If they block your attack, quickly raise your shield to block their counter-attack and then go in for the kill. Blue Skeleton

Warriors are the nastier cousins of the green-shorted types. They take more hits and block more frequently.

SKELETON AXE THROWER – Axe throwers are easily dispatched when alone. Simply jump when they hurl their axes at you and wack them a couple times to knock them down. Finish with the Downward Strike. In groups of two or more, they can be a serious hassle.

SKELETON HALBERDIERS – Carrying large pole-axes, these skeletons would be a nasty threat if they weren't so easily dispatched with two Mighty Blows or Overhead Cuts. Later on in the game, they typically take three hits instead of two.

ZOMBIES – These guys go straight after you and can take a few hits, but otherwise aren't much of a threat unless they have friends. Some varieties don't have any legs. Others will split into the legless kind after you hit them. Mighty Blow or Overhead Cut are the best ways to hurt the rug rat types.

MONSTER PORTALS – These red medallion-like structures continually unleash new monsters. Destroy these quickly with a Downward Strike.

MIMIC – Indistinguishable from chests, Mimics will leap at you when disturbed. The second a Mimic comes to life, jump back, and perform a Mighty Blow on them.

WIZARDS – These nasties will turn you into a baby or an old man for a period of time if they hit you with their green magic bolts, at which point they will unload with their damaging red bolts. Use your shield to block and then move in for the kill. They will disappear after a while so if you're low on hit points just take cover. If you kill them without being turned into something they tend to give out better items like diamonds and 1-Ups. You may have to get the better item to master the level.

HAZARDS

COLLAPSING GROUND – There are frequent earthquakes in this world that cause areas to rise, fall, and sink into lava. When the level starts a quakin', the best reaction to have is to jump backwards in order to avoid instant death.

BONE DIRT – If you have to cross patches of purple dirt with bones sticking out of it, be sure to bunny hop across to avoid being damaged by grasping skeletal claws.

STATUE HEADS – These heads will rise out of the ground, damaging you if you touch them. Small piles of dirt give away their locations, however.

SKULL TOWERS – These invincible structures spit out purple energy skulls that can damage you. Fortunately, they are stationary and cannot aim.

LAVA AND DEEP WATER – Falling into either will kill you.

1-1 GRAVE DANGER

1. JUMP SEARCH

Jump around the closest tree to you at the beginning of this level to reveal a chest.

2. JUMP SEARCH

The next area is a pavillion with a golden gate that can be unlocked with a key in the chest to the left. Jump around the tree in the middle of the pavillion to get a secret chest before moving on through the gate.

3. HIDDEN DIAMOND

After stepping through the gate, you will pass some graves on the left. A diamond is hidden behind one of them.



4. HIDDEN AREA

After you get the diamond, head to the second grave where skeletons attack you from and turn left to see a small box canyon with a chest inside it.

5. HIDDEN AREA

Continue to follow the main path until you get to a lava chasm. Double jump over it and run up to the check point. Turn around to see a path on the left leading up the side of a hill. Smash a large rock in the wall at the top of this hill to enter a crypt where a potion is hidden away on the other side of the tomb. Now do a Downward Strike to smash the stone coffin open and fall through into an area with an extra life and a few coins. Smash the statue to open the gate and get back on to the main path.

6. JUMP SEARCH & HIDDEN AREA

A short way up the path you will arrive at another lava chasm that can be circumvented by a zigzagging land bridge. Look to your left to see a small graveyard with a hill topped by a conspicuous tree overlooking it. You will need to jump on top of the grave stone by the open grave to be able to jump on top of the hill. Jump around the tree to reveal a locked chest with a sword enchantment in it. Look on the other side of the hill to see three chests. Jump down, kill the skeletons and claim the goodies. You will have to jump across some bone dirt to get back on to the main path.

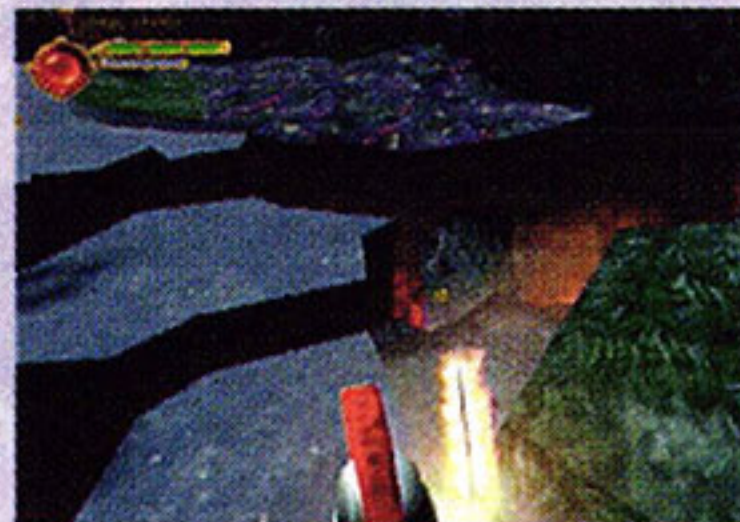


7. JUMP SEARCH

Once you've gotten past the zigzagging land bridge and the graveyard, you will see a tree with a chest to the left of it on your right. Jump around on the other side of the tree to get a secret chest.

8. HIDDEN AREA

Look down the last of the lava pits to see a series of platforms leading down to a cave. Here you will find a diamond and some coins.



9. JUMP SEARCH

Once you get back up from the chasm, cross it and jump around the tree just to your left to unearth a chest with armor.

10. JUST JUMP

In the area shortly before the smashed bridge, there is an open gate. Before going through it, check the area in front of the left edge of the gate wall next to the small patch of bone dirt to get a chest with money and another extra life.



11. JUMP SEARCH

After jumping the smashed bridge and fighting off a second skeletal axeman, there is a patch of bone dirt with several stones in it. Jump on the one closest to the tree to reveal another chest.

12. LOCKED CHEST WITH ARMOR

Before entering the cave at the end of the level, continue on a bit to get to a convenient locked chest with armor.

1-3 DEAD HEAT

1. JUMP SEARCH

Immediately turn around, smash the window, jump through, and unlock the gate. Go through and search the tree to the right.

2. JUMP SEARCH

Head back to the area where the parthenon-like structure is. After the ground collapses, hop across to the roof and then straight across to the ledge on the other side of the lava (to the left of the swinging door). Search the tree here for a chest.



3. LOCKED CHEST

Hop from the parthenon/schoolhouse/church building to the platform in front of the swinging door. Wait for the door to start to swing open and hop to the platform on the other side of the gate. Look to your left to see a locked chest with a sword enchantment in it. A life potion is on the other side. Return to the platform and use single jumps to get across the coffins to the next platform.

4. JUMP SEARCH

Jump across the narrow ridge and you will find yourself between two locked doors. The tree by the locked door to the left hides a chest. Get all the goodies and head across the lava to the next area, using single jumps for the shorter jumps. There is a tricky 1-Up heart on a floating coffin in the lava.



5. HIDDEN AREA & HIDDEN

Once you've crossed the lava immediately run into the building and do a Downward Strike on the skeleton generator in the floor. Smash through the plate glass to get to a locked chest with a sword enchantment. A life potion is hidden behind the door archway.

6. JUMP SEARCH

Continue on across coffins and platforms until you're on a platform with a skull tower.

Search the area on its left to find a chest with armor. Continue on to the next island where you will find a gate key on the right side of the skull tower. Move on from the left side of the island.



7. JUMP SEARCH & HIDDEN POTION

A locked chest lays hidden right in front of the mausoleum you face after opening the gate. When you enter this mausoleum to pick up a gate key, turn around to see a life potion hidden behind one of the doors.

1-4 COFFIN CANYON

1. JUMP SEARCH

Keep moving until you get to a newly formed cliff. Jump around the tree here to get a chest.

2. HIDDEN AREA

Move to the right side of the cliff and jump down to the lower platforms. Look behind you to see a cave where you will be attacked by a halberd wielding skeleton and a bunch of ghosts before you can claim a chest with a ton of money.



3. JUMP SEARCH

You will get to a pair of skull-hurling towers. Before crossing the line of fire, jump search the tree here for loot.

4. JUMP SEARCH

After you get past the towers, look to the left wall to see a doorway leading to a narrow passage with another tower. Follow the path up to a checkpoint and a tree that can be jumped around to get a chest.

5. JUMP SEARCH

After crossing the collapsing bridge, stand in the gateway and look to your right. You can jump around the column and jump search to reveal a chest with armor.



6. JUMP SEARCH

Check around the large tree near the central mausoleum in the large graveyard.

7. HIDDEN AREA

From the previous tree head over to the building with the blue skeleton warrior and a picture window. Smash the plate glass window and go through for a fight, a life, and some gold.

8. JUMP SEARCH

Run behind the central mausoleum and smash the plate glass window to get into a room with a statue. Smash the statue and take the newly formed steps up to a plateau. Jump to the next platform and jump around to find a chest with goodies. The next platform is the exit crystal area. To make it through the ensuing fight, we recommend hugging the wall as you jump so as to get into a corner that's not on the edge of the precipice.



1-5 BAD TO THE BONE

1. JUMP SEARCH

After picking up the armor conveniently located right behind you, jump search the bone dirt near the first pine tree after you exit the cave.

2. JUMP SEARCH

There is a chest hidden behind one of the gravestones near the checkpoint and life potion dispenser.



3. HIDDEN AREA

After hopping up two coffins to get to an upper area, you can see a 1-Up heart

behind some grating. You need to get to the edge of the cliff by the wall and double jump around the edge to get to this goodie.

4. FAKE WALL

After you drop through the tomb/Downward Strike entrance, follow the left wall to get to a rock outcropping. Smash this for a room with a locked chest containing armor.



5. HIDDEN AREA & JUMP SEARCH

A secret behind a waterfall in a video game!? That's crazy! Behind the waterfall are three coins. Jump search here for a chest.

6. JUMP SEARCH

On the other side of the river from the cave entrance you came from there is a small graveyard with open grave. Search the tree near here for a chest.



BOSS BATTLE - GHASTLY GUS

Once you've completed all of the levels, return to the hub and enter the tower. This basic pattern is the same for the rest of the worlds. Ghastly Gus has three basic attacks. He'll swipe at you if get too close at the wrong time. Otherwise he'll start shoveling dirt at you, or he'll jam his weapon into the ground for a shock wave effect that you have to jump to avoid. The best times to go after him are when he starts shoveling dirt, or when he gloats after doing the shock wave. Simply Downward Strike him in the toes twice and he'll fall over, leaving you with the opportunity to jump and attack him in the head once. Repeat until he's finished.



WORLD 2: THE GREAT DANK

NEW ENEMIES

RED SHORTED SKELETON WARRIORS – Like the Red Skeletons, these warriors can teleport, which ultimately does nothing more than create a little confusion and delay their demise. They are also vulnerable to attack after teleporting, so be sure to nail them the second they pop up behind you.

PIRANHA ZOMBIE – This dangerous variation on the basic Zombie is covered with piranha and frequently shakes them off at you – an attack that's difficult to evade or block. The best way to take these guys out is to jump over them and Downward Strike 'em.

SPATTER PLANTS – These purple and red flowering plants spit explosive spores at you. They are quite good at

leading you, so don't run in a straight line when avoiding their deadly bombs. Once you get in their face, however, they're easily stunned and won't be able to attack as long as you keep hacking. Unfortunately, they are rarely alone. The red variety's spores also hatch and start walking towards you.

GATORS – When you see bubbles coming out of the water, be prepared to get out of the way. These tough critters will suddenly appear out of the swamp muck and attack you with two vicious bites. Avoid this attack and then use Mighty Blow or Downward Strike to take them out. It usually takes two or three attacks to destroy them.

GREEN GHOST – If a Green Ghost hits you, you will start walking very slowly like a zombie and the controls will be

reversed. Otherwise they are like other ghosts but don't reappear as often.

NEW HAZARDS

TAR – Tar prevents you from jumping and slows you down. If you stand in one place for too long, even if you're fighting, you will drown, so try to keep the heavy combat on solid ground unless it's just to peg a Zombie with a Mighty Blow or two.

VINE GATES – Strike these vines to gain access to new areas, but hurry across them as they grow back quickly and they will damage you if you touch them. Avoid using the Second Strike ability on them as this will cause you to hurt yourself.

2-8 WATERY GRAVE

1. JUMP SEARCH

Jump on the boarded path near the life potion dispenser to find a chest.



2. HIDDEN AREA

Use the orange mushrooms growing out of the side of the tree as steps to get up to a small straw hut with some coins and a key.

3. HIDDEN AREA

Leave the first area by cutting through a series of vines. Before continuing on to the left, head right on the path a short way and cut through the vine wall at the end to get to a hidden area with a soul stone and half a Zombie.

4. JUMP SEARCH

Head back to the main path, cut down the wall of vines, and jump over them to reveal this chest hidden near the first checkpoint.

5. HIDDEN ARMOR

Continue on to another swampy area. Use the orange mushrooms as steps to get to a handy suit of armor.



6. JUMP SEARCH

In the same swampy area, jump search the area by the plant to the left of the stairs leading to the gate.

7. HIDDEN KEY & 1-UP HEART

A key lies above the third check point. From the perspective of facing the large wall that the checkpoint is next to, use the broken wall to the left to jump up and get to it. You will need to start off by jumping from a nearby sarcophagus to get on the broken wall. After you get the key, turn back (but don't jump down yet) to see a 1-Up heart you can get to by jumping around a pillar.



8. HIDDEN KEY

Head forward from the gate and keep going until you hit the far end of the solid part of these ruins where a suit of armor lies behind a locked door. Head to the left to get to a series of platforms and a Skeleton Axe Warrior. Deep water surrounds the platforms, so you'll want to be careful. Use your shield if necessary to block his attacks and then knock him into the water with a Shield Throw if you have it. Otherwise, you'll need to jump over to his platform quickly before he gets a chance to throw another axe. Hop platforms to get to a log where you can jump to the left to get back into the ruins area and grab a key.

9. HIDDEN MASK OF SORROW & 1-UP HEART

Head back the way you came and continue past the locked room with the armor in it (if you haven't grabbed it already). Once you've passed an open gate, look to your left to see a stump with another orange mushroom growing out of it. Use the stump to get up on the wall and head left to the roof of the armor building. Get on the very far corner of the building and make a tricky double jump to the roof of the building kitty-corner from you. Keep on hopping rooftop to rooftop to get to the mask sitting on the roof of the building closest to the fountain. Now head back to the stump and get back up on the wall. Roof hop over the buildings in the swamp to get to a 1-Up heart. These are both tricky jumps, but they are possible.

10. JUMP SEARCH

Before exiting the level, head back from the exit crystal and search the corner of the building on the left wall to reveal a chest with a life potion. Be sure and grab the diamond that is hidden behind the doorway arch in the building that faces you.



2-9 VOODOO VILLAGE

1. LOOK BEHIND YOU & JUMP SEARCH

The creators of the game love this secret! Just look behind you before moving on to find a locked chest and a conveniently located key for it. There is a buried chest to the left of the hut.

2. JUMP SEARCH

Head back to where you started and jump search on the right of the log to find treasure.



3. JUMP SEARCH

Before hitting the first vine wall, search the water between the logs.

4. DIFFICULT KEY

When you get to a platform overlooking a group of huts in the deep brown water, jump to the hut directly in front of you and then jump on the roots of the giant tree to your left to get an orange mushroom shelf with a key.



5. HIDDEN COINS

After getting the key, go back to the giant root and jump from it to the moving platforms. You can use the platform to get to a hut with a locked door and a locked chest containing armor. Run around behind the hut to get a hidden coin bag.

6. HIDDEN LIFE POTION & JUMP SEARCH

Look down from the moving platform facing the beach with a checkpoint. Jump on the dock to the left to get a key and from there to solid ground. Go left from the checkpoint to pick up a red life potion. Head back to the right and hack through a vine wall, continue on and then cut through another wall. There is a hidden chest beyond these vines.



2-11 THE QUICK AND THE DEAD

1. JUMP SEARCH

Once again, look directly behind you. Take out the Zombies and jump search the back of the cave you start in for a chest.

2. JUMP SEARCH & HIDDEN 1-UP

Now, simply head straight out of the cave and keep on going until you get to a giant green root growing through a building. Search the right side of it for a handy suit

of armor. Now get on top of the roof and double jump to get on to the left edge of the building's roof. It's tricky, but possible. A 1-Up heart is behind the tree sticking out of the roof.



3. JUMP SEARCH

Look down from the roof where you got the heart to see two coffins. There is a chest buried on the other side of the far one.

4. HIDDEN KEYS

Head past the building with a Silver Shield dispenser behind a locked door, and get on top of the stump via the mushroom shelf growing out of it. From here you get to the roof of the building with the shield in it, jump across to the building across the water, and use the wall ledge to get to a key and other items. You can also use the shield building to get to the ledge of the wall on the other side, where a key has been squirreled away around the corner leading away from this area.

5. JUMP SEARCH

Continue on from the stump until you get to the far wall, and search the corner here for a locked chest with a Frost sword enchantment.



6. JUMP SEARCH

As you depart from the ruins area, you will see a conspicuous dirt outcropping on the right. Search here to find a chest.

7. HIDDEN ARMOR & JUMP SEARCH

After you unlock the gate, look up at the giant tree on your right to find a suit of armor. Search the ground between the roots on the other side of the tree to find a chest.

8. JUMP SEARCH

Search every nook and cranny of this watery area as there are a lot of non-buried chests located throughout. When you get to the next checkpoint, you will be confronted with a Frogger-style river with large turtle shells and wooden rafts floating down it. Use these to make your way up the river. When you get to a tunnel, jump search around the cylindrical rock toward the end of the tunnel to find a buried chest.

WORLD 3: FROZEN WASTES



2-10 'DEM BONES

1. JUMP SEARCH

You start off on a platform in a tar pit. Jump across to the next one and then jump straight ahead and you will be right about where the buried chest is.

2. JUMP SEARCH

Another buried chest lies next to a tree against the wall on the left by the small tar pools.



3. HEART & HIDDEN AREA

Look behind you now to see a heart. You can get to it by jumping from the edge of the tar pool and then quickly jumping in order to avoid running back through the tar. Before heading up the stairs, be sure to grab the souls in the room behind the vine wall.

4. MASK OF SORROW

Head up the stairs, hack through the vines, and jump down to the closest platform in the lake of tar. Hop across the platforms until you get to an island with a small pool of tar in the middle. Look to your left to see platforms leading up to a Dragon Skeleton. Hop up to it and smash the statue to unearth a crucial platform. On your way back, note the Mask of Sorrow floating high above the small pool of tar. Jump from the upper platform of the island to get to it.



5. HIDDEN AREA

From the island you can see a door in the wall near a platform and a large skull floating in the muck. Just jump over to the platform. You can crawl up onto it if you don't hit it. Hop over to the door and head up the stairs. Look to your right to find a heart between the ribs. You can jump out to get it and then double jump back. Hack through the vines and jump back to the beginning platform of this area from the cliff.

6. JUMP SEARCH

Keep on island hopping until you get to a narrow island with a petrified tree. Search near the tree to find a buried chest.

7. HIDDEN ITEMS

Continue on until you get attacked by a Wizard from the left. After dealing with him, hack through the vines on the peninsula he was standing and grab the key across the pit. Continue on until you get to a large Gator skeleton. Jump into the tar to the right to grab a 1-Up heart and a Light sword enchantment. Slog back up to the head of the Gator and where there is a platform you can crawl up to.

8. JUMP SEARCH & HIDDEN DIAMOND

Continue on until you get to a large Gator skull with its mouth open. Look behind you to see a small island with a soul container on it. Jump on the island to get some buried treasure. Head back and hop on top of the head of the Gator or simply use the Midas Shield to get to a diamond in its left eye.

9. JUMP SEARCH

After hopping to the next platform from the Gator skull with the diamond, search at the very edge of the slope that leads into the tar.



10. JUMP SEARCH

After getting into a nasty battle with two Spatter Plants and an Axe Thrower, search the area by the side of the stairs to reveal some buried treasure. From the top of the stairs, hop over a petrified tree root to get to a diamond squirreled away on the other side. Jump back and hack through the vines and a horde of monsters to get to the level's end.

BOSS BATTLE: BOKOR LABAS

This guy is a bit tougher than ol' Gus. He starts by shrinking you down to the size of a rodent and then tries to stomp on you. Run away from him and start double jumping if he starts to get close. Eventually you regain your regular size and he gets angry, summoning a horde of voodoo doll babies and starts flinging fire bolts at you. Try to kill all the babies while avoiding his attacks. His next move is to clone himself and have his spawn run around like idiots. Each clone will go down with one strike, but you have to get them all quickly or they will regenerate. The Long Sword ability comes in handy here. The last clone you hit will do real damage to him, so try to hit him with a Mighty Blow. Repeat until dead.



NEW ENEMIES

ICE PIRATES – Encased in ice, these harpoon wielding ghouls are immune to slashing and must instead be dealt an Overhead Cut or Mighty Blow. You can slash them with the fire sword, however.

PIRATE SKELETONS – It's better to avoid than block this enemy's potent attacks as it will reduce your shield to tatters in no time. The best way to kill Pirate Skeletons is by jumping over them from higher ground and hitting them from behind. This will knock them over sword point down so that you can safely perform an Overhead Strike to finish them off. Doing an Overhead Strike to a Pirate Skeleton on its back will result in damage due to the sword sticking out of its torso.

BOMBARDIER SKELETONS – There is no good way to take these nasties out without a Shield Throw or a Magic Bolt. If you haven't locked Shield Throw yet, we suggest you go back to one of the earlier worlds and pick it up before trying to make it through any more levels in this world. Simply dodge their first bomb attacks and then hit them with a ranged attack from a safe distance (they explode when hit). Having the ice sword is the only safe way to attack them at close range safely.

ARCTIC PLANT – Not much of a threat if you have Shield Throw (which you should have locked by now), these nasties pop up out

of the ground and spew freezing goo around them. If you get hit, or you run into them, you will be encased in ice and vulnerable to attack or sliding off of a cliff. One Shield Throw attack will take them out.

YETI – Yeti are tough and have some powerful attacks. The best way to take them down is to avoid their snow ripple attack by jumping to the side and then getting in their face. They block frequently so constantly hit them with a barrage of jump and slash attacks right in the kisser. Jump slashes work best, because you won't be vulnerable to attack while recovering from being blocked. The Fire sword enchantment will slay them in one hit.

HAZARDS

ICE CRYSTALS – These are like the statue heads from the first level.

ICE ISLANDS – These gray wobbling islands will sink if you stand on them for more than a second.

ICE – Flat ice is relatively easy to deal with. If you start to lose control, simply jump back. Ice on a slope will cause you to slide in the appropriate direction, so pay attention to how shiny the ground is when skirting a cliff.

3-13 SHIVER ME TIMBERS

1. JUMP SEARCH

Directly behind you, there is a buried chest by the three snow bumps on the island's edge.

2. JUMP SEARCH

Before going up the stairs, search for a chest to the left.



3. JUMP SEARCH

Immediately after getting up the stairs, search the area between the two fang-like stalagmites.

4. JUMP SEARCH

Continue on until you get to a locked chest. Bust through the ice wall, and search for a secret chest between the two pointy rocks by the checkpoint in the new area.



5. HIDDEN HEART & COINS

Hop on one of the moving icebergs to get to a soul snowman and then hop on the next one to get to the pirate ship. There is a 1-Up heart all the way at the end of the bowsprit (the pointy thing at the front of the ship). Head all the way to the other side of the ship and watch the very back area as that side sinks. A column of coins will appear.

6. JUMP SEARCH & HIDDEN DIAMOND

Once you get to a new lake with a ship sticking out of the edge to your right and a snowman on your left, jump over to the platform with the snowman, get the goods and jump search for a locked chest with a Midas Shield. Look carefully at the ship to see a diamond in front of it.

7. JUMP SEARCH

Continue working your way across platforms until you get to the other side of the lake. Search the pointy rock near the

ship with a skull figurehead for another chest.



8. JUMP SEARCH

There is another chest buried behind the exit crystal in addition to the two that are already there.

3-15 GO WITH THE FLOE

1. HIDDEN ARMOR

After passing through the first doorway, look to your left to see a small shelf in the cliff. Use this to get up to a suit of armor.



2. HIDDEN CHEST

Cross the small islands to get to the other side of the water. A chest can be found buried behind the pillar on your right.

3. HIDDEN CHEST

From the first checkpoint, look up and a little right to see a platform even higher up on the cliff. Jump across to the platform with a Skeleton Warrior and then hop up to this area. Search on top to find the chest.



4. HIDDEN CHEST

Continue on until you see a bunch of coins arcing over two platforms. Hop over and head left a little bit. Search by the wall to find a chest. If you look to your right, you will be in view of the waterfall. Hop up to the top of the waterfall to see a terrifying platform challenge.

5. HIDDEN KEY & COINS

After pulling off an insane feat of platforming by jumping from ice floe to ice floe in order to get the next checkpoint, you will arrive at a room with Yeti and several ice doors. When you reach the area beyond this one, with a snowman an arctic plant, and another freakin' Yeti, look to your left see a path, work your way up this path to get to an ice slide with the hidden items. Before going down the slide, look to your left to see a bag of coins.

6. HIDDEN CHESTS

After crossing a series of sinking ice platforms, you will get to a wide area with a several holes, a Yeti, and coins spread out all over the place. Several steps lead upward. Search the first one for another chest. In the same area, look to the right from where you just got a chest. Head past a hole that is next to the upper ledge and keep going straight until you get to an area between a wall and a hole on the right where you can search for another chest.



7. HIDDEN KEY

You will get up to an icy area with a ship frozen on it. After picking up all of the coins and smashing all of the snowmen on the other side of the boat, get on to the deck by jumping from the side of the boat that you started out on. When you're on the ship check the bowsprit (the pointy thing in front) for a key.

3-16 DEAD IN THE WATER

1. HIDDEN CHESTS

Guess what? Turn around. There are two chests hidden behind you. One is behind the armor dispenser, and the other is on the edge of the cliff to the right of the cave.



2. HIDDEN COINS

Now head all the way back down the hill and grab the two coins under the dock (you need the Midas Shield which is conveniently located in a cave underneath the snowy hill you just ran down). Getting the key nearby requires a tricky double jump.

3. HIDDEN CHEST

Search between the rocks after the checkpoint and the place the cannon is shooting at to find your next chest.



4. HIDDEN AREAS

When you get to the tunnel with ice, chasms, and Yeti, keep an eye on the walls for two ice doors.

5. HIDDEN CHEST

A locked chest is right next to the locked gate leading to the exit area.



6. JUMP SEARCH & AN ITEM

After stepping through the gold key gate, head down the steps and work your way left to get to a key on a narrow pathway. Search the stone area in front of the key to find another chest. Before exiting this level, make sure you go to the locked gate where the chest with armor is or was, and check behind the left arch for an item. That little doozy kept us dead in the water for quite some time.

3-17 CANNONBALL RUN

1. TRICKY KEY

After hopping across the ice platforms to the half sunken ship, walk up the bowsprit (the pointy thing in front) and jump down to the platform where the Ice Pirate just appeared. Take him out for a key.



2. JUMP SEARCH

After entering a new area and fighting a Yeti, smash the ice wall on the right. Search this small room for a chest. If you have a Fire sword enchantment, you may simply want to run down the corridor first and take all the remaining Yeti up to the next checkpoint with one swipe instead of losing the enchantment and having to fight them the hard way.

3. HIDDEN AREA & KEY

Further down there is another breakable ice wall on the right. Smash it to get to a room with a woolly mammoth skull. Hop on top of the skull in order to jump for a key. On your way out of this room, be sure to note the diamond tucked away in the giant rib cage on the wall.

4. HIDDEN AREA & ITEMS

When you get to the first checkpoint, smash the ice door to your left to get to a snowman and some money.

5. JUMP SEARCH

You will get to a large open area with a bottomless pit and some platforms to get across. The platform after the snowman has a chest buried in it.

6. HIDDEN AREAS

At the next checkpoint there are ice doors to your right and left. The one on the right leads to a locked chest containing a Fire sword enchantment (useful!), but is guarded by a Wizard and other enemies.

7. HIDDEN 1-UP

When you start crossing platforms at the bottom of the hill, take out the Bombardier Skeleton with a shield toss and jump up to where he was standing to find a 1-Up heart.

8. JUMP SEARCH

Make a rapid advance across the ice islands after the cannons stop firing. When you get up to the ledge leading to the next area, search for a chest.



9. HIDDEN AREAS & JUMP SEARCH

Smash the ice door and take out the Pirate Skeletons. There is a room to the left with a diamond in it where two of the pirates came out of. Search the back of it for a hidden chest. The forward ice doors lead to a locked chest with a 1-Up heart. The ice doors to the right lead to the exit crystal.



BOSS BATTLE: CAPTAIN CADAVER

The not-so-good captain is one of the more challenging bosses in the game, simply because he isn't entirely predictable. In the area, there are three grates in the floor. First you have to run up to him in order to knock him back towards a grate, causing him to get his peg leg stuck. Run up to him and hack away at the leg with a duck and slash to do damage to him. Towards the end, some of the grates will start opening and closing, but you can usually get him down to three quarters of his health on the same grate if you keep him walking in the right direction. He has several types of attacks. His whirlwind attack is almost impossible to avoid, but if you do manage to dodge it, he will be winded for a moment allowing you to make an easy-money hit. To dodge his pistols wait for the shot, move out of the way a few steps, stop, and wait for the next shot. After firing damaging attacks at you, he will fire another volley of ice shots that freeze you like the Arctic Plant does. He also has a few basic melee attacks that are easier to avoid.



WORLD 4: THE REALM OF SPIRITS

NEW ENEMIES

WAR PIGS – These pigs carry huge hammers that unleash a nasty shock wave when they get around to swinging it. The only way to take them out is to duck and slash.

PO'D PAN – Not your average evil Satyr, these guys are buff, tough, and they like to charge. Their charge can be blocked for minimal damage to your shield, however. It usually doesn't take too many hits to put them down.

HELL HAGS – Unlike Ghosts and Ravens, Hell Hags don't do damage, but ARE really dangerous. These nasties will pick you up and attempt to drop you off the nearest cliff. If one gets a hold of you, rapidly press all of your action buttons to shake loose.

NEW HAZARDS

BEAR TRAPS – When jumping onto one of these lovely platforms, try to land close to the center and duck (L2). Wait for them to open and jump away. If you get hit while ducking, quickly double jump before the moving trap bars push you off the platform.

NAUSEA, VOMITING, DIZZINESS – Maximo has some of the most rapidly spinning gears in the history of 3D platform gaming. When trying to get your bearings, get closer to the middle of the gear where the motion is less extreme. When jumping from a gear to another platform, never run against the wheel as this will drastically reduce the amount of air and distance you can get.

4-19 INFERNAL DEVICES

Like most of the Realm of Spirit's levels, Infernal Devices is actually a lot more linear than it looks. Searching for chests is actually made easier by the fact that there is less ground to cover.

1. LOOK BEHIND YOU

A couple soul conduits, a locked chest and a key hidden behind the wall are behind you at the beginning of this level.



2. JUMP SEARCH

When you get to the first platform with a swinging mace on it, check slightly to the left of the groove the mace strikes to find a chest.

3. JUMP SEARCH & HIDDEN COINS

When you get to the first checkpoint platform, look a little to the left side to see a couple coins hidden behind the wall of the next platform. Search the area by the column to the left of the stone head where the Monster Generator was for a chest.

4. JUMP SEARCH

From the same island, hop up to the metal catwalk with the Skeleton Warrior on it and jump over to the small floating island on the other side of a rapidly spinning gear. Search this island for a locked chest.



5. JUMP SEARCH

After the second fire-breathing dragon head, continue on past the bouncy brains on the right. Jump over to the ledge on the other side of the bear trap. Search the area near the key to find more buried treasure. Head back to the bouncy brains to move on.

6. JUMP SEARCH

Search on the right side of the scratch left by the swinging mace after you get past the area with two spinning gears and a really obnoxious Wizard.

7. KEYS, GATES, & A JUMP SEARCH

Head back to the platform where the Wizard was and use it to hop over to the checkpoint. Examine the large floating mountain from this vantage point and you will see a ledge on the side of the mountain with catwalks above and below it. Search all of these catwalks for three keys and three gated caves with useful treasure in them. Search around the gate on the ledge that is farthest from the last checkpoint to find a chest.



8. HIDDEN DIAMOND & ANOTHER SECRET CATWALK

Examine the other side of the stone head that formerly housed some Zombies to find a diamond. Look down over the side of the platform to see a catwalk which leads to some armor underneath the platform and to a bouncy brain which will bounce you up to the last platform.

9. JUMP SEARCH & A LOCKED CHEST & A KEY

From the perspective of facing the exit crystal from the main path, look behind the left wall to see a locked chest. There is a key on a small platform above you. To get to it, you need to use the lower catwalk and the top of the walls to move clockwise around the tower to the upper catwalk. You'll have to double jump through the left window and then onto the key platform on the right. A hidden chest lies on the other side of the wall to the right of the exit crystal.



4-21 CRUSHED SPIRITS

Note: This is one of the nastiest levels for acquiring items. Most are in plain view but are extremely difficult to obtain without the Midas Shield due to all of the spinning gears they tend to get placed on.

1. LOOK BEHIND YOU

There is a bag of coins hidden on the rocky ledge to the right of the smoke-spewing spire on the edge of the platform.

2. JUMP SEARCH

The second you get down to the platform with the bouncy brain, search the ledge to your left for a hidden locked chest.

3. JUMP SEARCH

The next chest is buried directly beneath the first fire-breathing dragon head.



4. JUMP SEARCH

There is a buried chest in the nook of the right green wall past the first fire-breathing dragon head.

5. HIDDEN SOUL CONTAINER

When you get to a dead end facing a bunch of gears shortly after the previous jump search, take the right-most gear up to the area directly above your head.



6. JUMP SEARCH

In the second floating mountain with swinging maces, search to the left of the scratch mark of the last mace to find a hidden chest.

7. LOOK BEHIND YOU

After travelling through the large floating mountain and reaching the platform on the other side, look behind you to see some catwalks. Jump to the small catwalk to the left to hop up to the upper catwalk where a suit of armor lies behind a locked door.

8. JUMP SEARCH

As you continue on you will reach an area where a dragon head is merrily blasting away at a ring of five gold coins. The chest, of course, is in the middle of the coins.

9. JUMP SEARCH

After jumping past two spinning axe blades that are slightly out of sync with one another, search the next platform for a chest.

10. JUMP SEARCH

A chest is buried by the right tooth at the exit area. Also search behind the head-like cave to find some hidden monsters. That's right, now the developers are even hiding monsters on us.



4-22 THE UNKINDEST CUT

Note: This is the easiest of the Realm of Spirits levels and a great place to power up for armor and sword enchantments (they're all here).

1. JUMP SEARCH

Search the area directly behind you for a locked chest.

2. JUMP SEARCH

Search around the large pillar directly in front of where you start.

3. HIDDEN AREA

After opening your new found chest, look down over the edge to see a series of platforms leading to a skeleton that yields a key and a chest with armor.

WORLD 5: MAXIMO CASTLE

4. JUMP SEARCH

Cross the two big gears and jump onto the small platform with the soul container on it. Search for buried treasure.

5. TOP OF THE GEARS

Continue on, but before crossing the two large blades, look to your left to see a checkpoint. Use the platform it's on to get to the top of the two gears, where more goods and enemies can be found, one of which has a key for the chest off of the first gear on the lower level.

6. JUMP SEARCH

Continue on until you get to a really large platform with a swinging mace in the middle and a checkpoint on the other side. A hidden chest lies to the left of the spires on the checkpoint's left side.

**7. JUMP SEARCH**

The next hidden chest lies to the right of the entrance to the interior of the mountain. Be sure not to miss the key across the bear traps or the locked chest on that walkway back by the bouncy brains you used to get here.

8. JUMP SEARCH

Work your way past the saw blades (you have to duck the second set rather than jump) until you get to a locked gate. Search close to the saw blade tracks to find this chest.

9. JUMP SEARCH

Immediately after stepping through the gate, search to your left for the final chest.

4-23 DOWN THE GULLET

Note: This is one of the least linear levels in the game. Before going anywhere, look around a bit. Directly ahead of you is your first goal, a statue that will set the two platforms to the left of the bear trap in motion. This will enable you to get to the platform that is farthest from you, where another statue will cause the large head directly below you to open its mouth. The floating mountain to the right is completely optional, but you will need to hit it in order to master the level. The mountain directly behind you leads to the end.

1. SPIRIT CONTAINERS

The first thing you need to do is hit the spirit container on your right, and then the two left of the head.

2. HIT THE OPTIONAL MOUNTAIN

It's best to do this first, as dying will reset the statues you smash. After you fight your way through the mountain's interior and get to the other side, look to your left to see a bouncy brain which you can use to hop up to the next brain, in order to get to the top of the mountain where items and enemies can be found. When you're done with that, head back down and continue down the path for more enemies, items, and breakables. Just be sure to take the alternate route back up. Look left after you get to a dead end to see it.

3. JUMP SEARCH

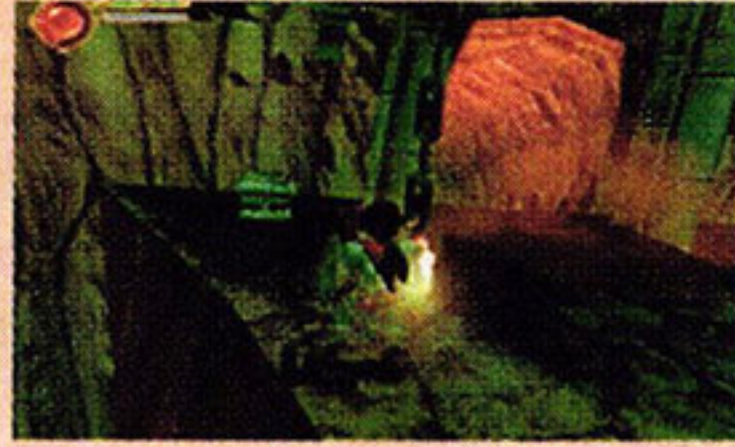
There is a chest hidden on the first statue island.

**4. JUMP SEARCH**

On your way to the next statue island, check the platform right after you hop past the swinging mace for a chest.

5. JUMP SEARCH

A locked chest with armor is buried on the left side of the large head that you opened up.

**6. ARMOR & COINS**

As you work your way into the Bighead Mountain, you will get to a large cavern with chains hanging from the ceiling a couple small catwalk platforms with lava pools next to them. From the first catwalk platform, scan the wall for an elevator moving up and down. You will need to wait until it's almost all the way at the bottom before making the jump for the coins and armor.

7. JUMP SEARCH

After moving on from the cavern, a chest is hidden between the two fire-breathing demon heads.

8. JUMP SEARCH

After you get back outside again, you will see another mountain. The third platform from Bighead Mountain contains a chest.

9. JUMP SEARCH

Enter the interior of the third mountain and continue on until you get to a shield (you probably need one by now). Head back up to where you killed the Bombardier Skeleton and look to your left. You need to jump on these small floating islands to get up to the top of the island. Once you're up top, check the immediate area for a chest.

10. JUMP SEARCH & TRICKY AXE SKELETON

Clear out the area in the counterclockwise direction first and then work your way around the mountain clockwise until you see an area with two alcoves on the back of the mountain. The one on the right is guarded by an Axe Skeleton. Without a sword enchantment, it's really hard to take this guy out without knocking him into the void (which won't count towards mastering the level). If you have Mighty Shield Throw, that should work too. Check the place where he used to stand to get a chest. When you're done, keep headin' round the mountain 'til she gets to an unguarded exit crystal. Whew!

**BOSS BATTLE: LORD GUTTERSCUM**

This is probably the easiest boss in the game. Keep on running around the circle in one direction. When he blows fire at you, double jump to avoid it, and run around to his back. Jump slash him in the butt and then back away. Start running in a circle around him again, when he spits at you change direction, but keep running until he blows fire again. Repeat until dead.

**5-26 THE SIEGE****1. JUMP SEARCH**

Search directly in front of the siege tower behind you to find a buried chest.

2. JUMP SEARCH

After getting past the first golden key gate, head left from the checkpoint and search the area where the Green Ghost attacks you.

**3. HIDDEN KEY & LOCKED CHEST**

After you fight the Wizard and get the drawbridge open, head up the tower and jump up to the rafters to find a key for the locked chest at the top of the stairs.

4. 1-UP HEART, JUMP SEARCH & LIFE POTION

The siege tower holds many secrets. Head around to the other side of it where the wheels are broken and search between the axles for a hidden chest. Next go to the front of it and look up. You should see 1-Up heart. You need to drop down from the top to get to this heart. Head back around to the back of the tower and start climbing. Check behind the box to find a life potion. Jump down along the trail of coins to get to the next area.

**5. JUMP SEARCH**

Search the area in front of the catapult for a buried chest.

6. JUMP SEARCH

After using the gold key that the Halberdier Skeleton had to smash the wall with the catapult, search on the other side of the wall for yet another chest.

7. JUMP SEARCH

After clearing out the exit crystal area, get a key from the Mimic in the left room. Go back out to the front gate and head right and around the right castle tower. Kill the Spatter Plant and search behind it to find a locked chest.

**5-27 GREAT ESCAPE****1. JUMP SEARCH & POTIONS**

Head left and search in the corner for a hidden chest. Head down from here to find a life potion hidden behind a pillar.

2. JUMP SEARCH

After crossing the first lava pit area and going up the stairs, search by the window for a hidden chest.

3. JUMP SEARCH

Check behind the first checkpoint for a chest.

**4. JUMP SEARCH**

Search in the room to the right of the second Black Knight after the first checkpoint to find a locked chest.

5. ARMAGEDDON ENCHANTMENT

Head upstairs from the second checkpoint and hop along the parapets (near the well) to get to a secret area behind a hedge wall.

6. JUMP SEARCH

Head back to the checkpoint area and up the stairs again. Before you get to the area with a well, look down at the hedge maze. There is a square hedge in the right corner. Hop down from here and across the bushes to get to it and search for a buried chest.

7. ITEMS & ENEMIES

When you get to the maze beyond the locked gate, search every nook and cranny of it for enemies, items, and a buried chest to the upper left.

8. JUMP SEARCH

There is a hidden chest against the left wall of the exit area.

5-28 DUNGEON OF DESPAIR**1. JUMP SEARCH**

After busting a hole in the wall of the cell start in and following the trail of keys and locked gates, you will open your first gold key gate and find yourself in a new area. In the room downstairs, there is a hidden chest near the kegs.

**2. HIDDEN DIAMOND & LIFE POTION**

In the room with the green slime pit and sliding Iron Maiden, use a thrown Midas Shield to get the diamond hiding in plain sight above the pit. Also, in the room with the Wizard, be sure to grab the green life potion disguised as background graphics on the middle table.

**3. JUMP SEARCH**

After finding a key in the area beyond where you dismantled a Black Knight, bring it back to the locked door in the previous area and open it. Beyond two Axe Automaton lies a smashable wall. Continue down the corridor a ways until you fight a skeleton. Search around here for another hidden chest. Bust open the door at the end of the corridor for a golden key gate.

4. JUMP SEARCH

In the gold key area for the next gate, search between the pair of Axe

Automatons and the single one to find this chest.

5. JUMP SEARCH

After crossing the first river, search the cell to the right for another buried chest.

6. JUMP SEARCH

After crossing the second river, you find yourself in an area with two Sliding Iron Maidens. The rooms they're sliding into contain chests, but more importantly the empty room between them across from the locked gate contains a buried chest.

BOSS BATTLE: KING ACHILLE

Your initial goal is to get Achilles down to half of his health. He summons a giant Achilles head on you which drops crown shaped mines and blasts you with its eyes. Try to keep Achilles between you and the head. Dodge his wand attacks, get a hit in, and run away to avoid his purple blast attack, which does no damage but knocks you down and leaves you vulnerable. Repeat until he puts up a shield with one of the Special ability symbols on it. Attack him with whichever special ability is required to bust the shield. If you don't have the ability, run as far away from him as you can and wait for the shield to burst. After he stops doing the shields, the head will disappear and drop armor, so be sure and pick this up. Keep at it until you get him down to half his hit points and he turns into a giant. Smash all of the energy conductors around the circle to return him to normal. Repeat until his magic machinery breaks and he can't use his wand anymore. Attack him after he finishes his three swing combo and then back off. Repeat until dead.

**BOSS BATTLE: DEMON QUEEN**

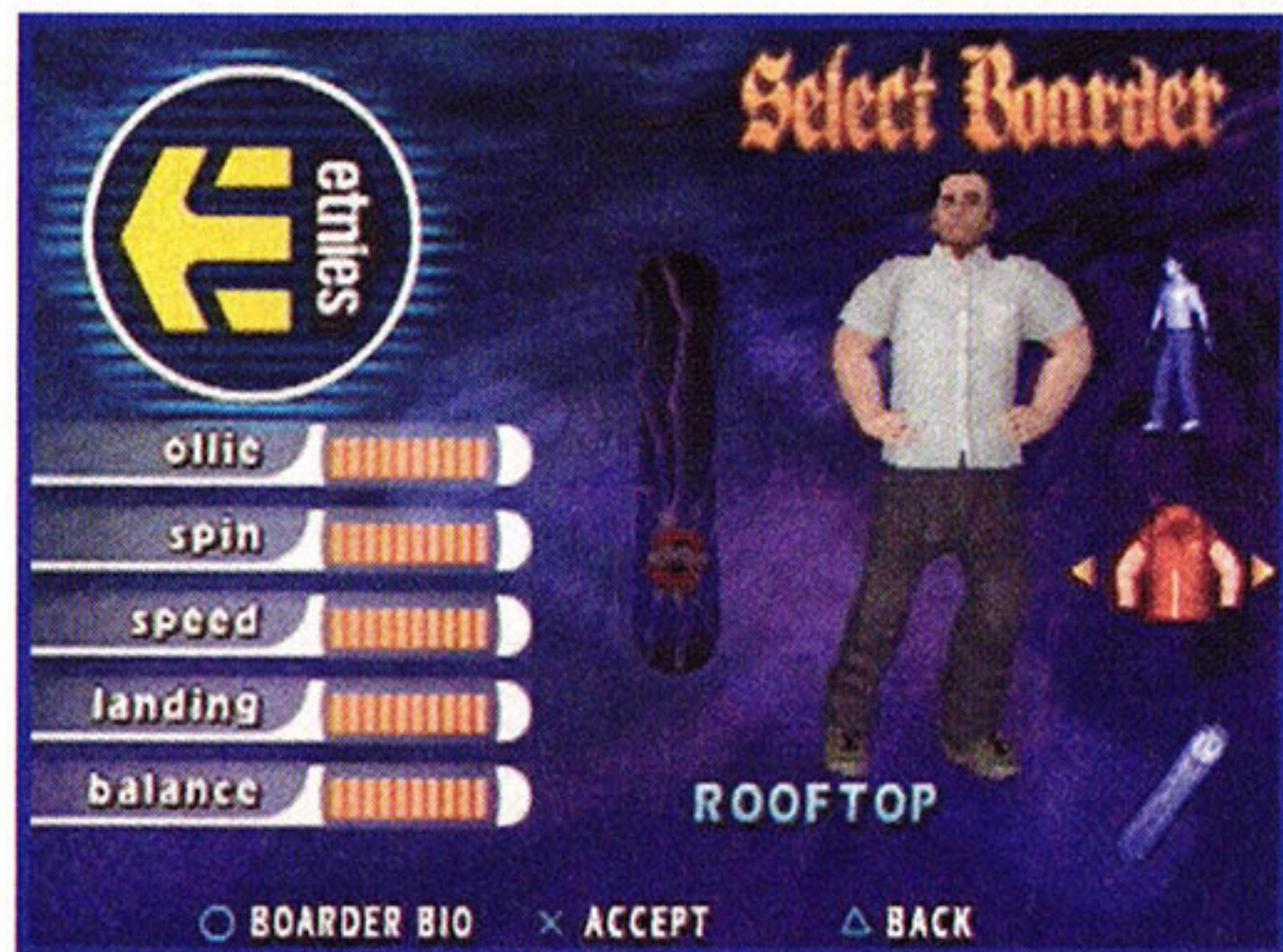
If you master the game, you fight this amazingly cool boss. While intimidating, she isn't incredibly hard. You just need to search the darkness for visual clues of her presence like glowing eyes or a flicker of movement by the window. Try to constantly face her or she'll hit you from behind. When she suddenly appears in front of you jump up and slash her in the eye. Repeat until dead.

**THE END**

Once you master the game, you gain access to a new level, The Mastery Level which appears on the main menu. Basically, it's a backward version of the very first level in the game, only the lava pits will open up while you're on top of them, there are hordes and hordes of enemies to combat, and bone dirt is everywhere. Unfortunately, we're a bit too short on time, space, and sanity to get into further detail, but it's a pretty good bet that when you master this level more goodies open up.

SECRET ACCESS

PS2 PLAYSTATION 2



SHAUN PALMER'S PRO SNOWBOARDER

To enter these cheats, head to the Main Menu, then highlight Options. From here, input any of the sequences below. A sound will ring out when the codes are entered correctly.

All Goals, Characters, & Boards – Hold Right and R2, then press Δ (x2), \circ , Δ .

All Movies – Hold Left and R1, then press Δ (x2), \circ , Δ .

Cheat Mode – Hold Left and L2, then press Δ , \square , Δ , \circ , Δ .

Max Statistics – Hold L1 and Right, then press Δ (x2), \circ , Δ .

"The Rhino"
Toledo, OH



SPLASHDOWN

Before any of these codes can be entered, you'll first need to activate the Cheat menu. To do this, head into the Options, hold R2, then press Up (x2), Down (x2), Left, Right, Left, Right, \square , \circ , \square , \circ . All of these codes are case-sensitive.

Never Fall Off Ski – TopBird

Normal AI in Difficult Mode – Hobbble

Insanely Difficult AI – AllOutAI

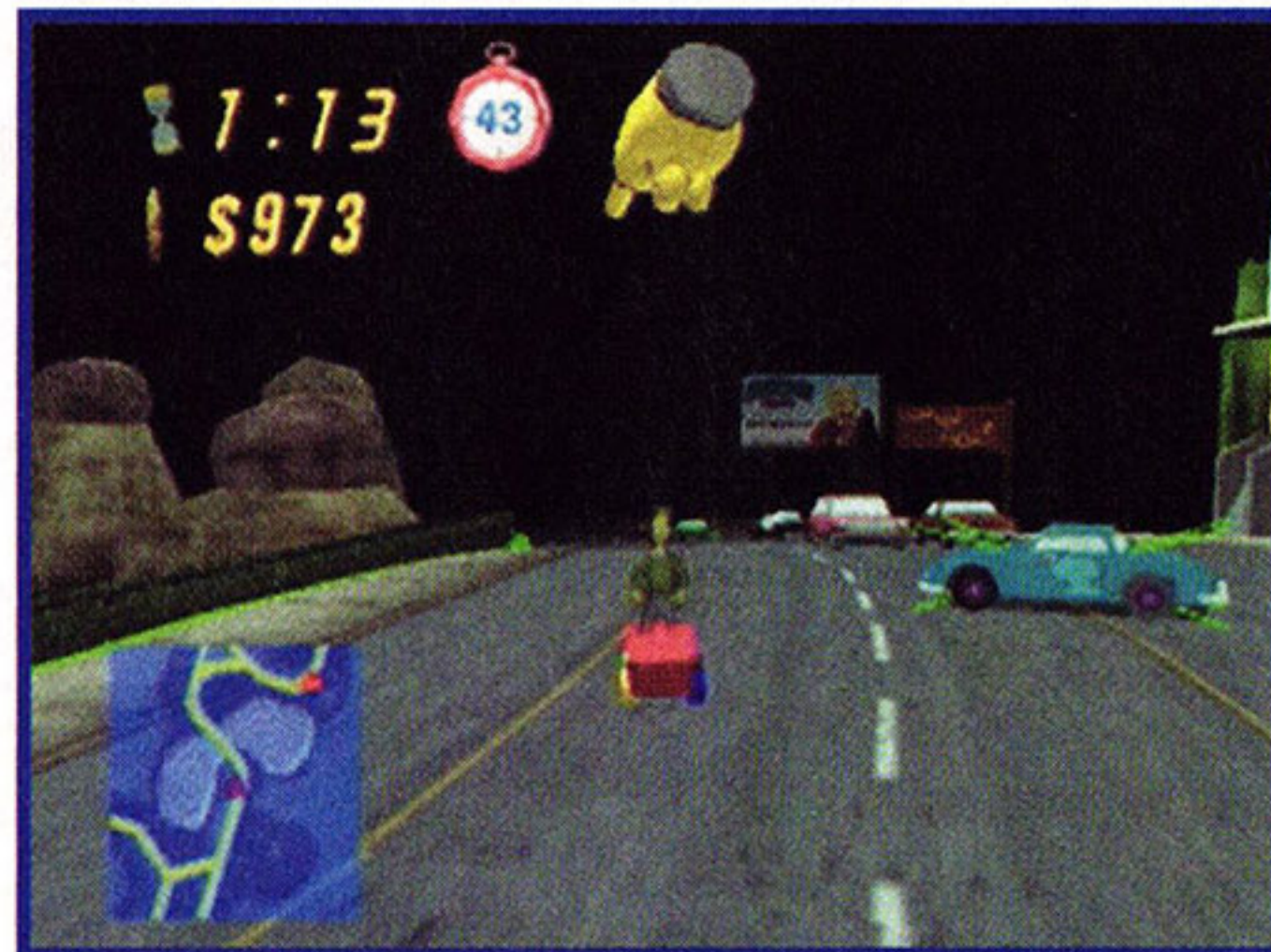
All Characters – AllChar

All FMV Clips – Festival

UFO in the Sky (Arcade Time Trials) – lBelieve

F-18 in the Sky (Arcade Time Trials) – F18

Stanley Kubrick
Atlanta, GA



THE SIMPSONS: ROAD RAGE

Enter all of these codes at the Options screen.

2D Characters – Hold L1 and R1, then press \circ (x4).

Additional Camera Views – Hold L1 and R1, then press Δ (x4).

Christmas Mode – Hold L1 and R1, then press Δ (x2), \circ , Δ .

Collision Lines – Hold L1 and R1, then press Δ (x2), \square (x2).

Extra Cash – Hold L1 and R1, then press \square (x4).

Halloween Mode – Hold L1 and R1, then press Δ (x2), \circ , \times .

New Year's Mode – Hold L1 and R1, then press Δ (x2), \circ , \square .

Night Driving – Hold L1 and R1, then press \times (x4).

Nuclear Bus – Hold L1 and R1, then press Δ (x2), \square , \times .

Overhead Perspective – Hold L1 and R1, then press \circ (x3), \square .

Soapbox Car – Hold L1 and R1, then press Δ (x2), \square , \circ .

Smithers' Car – Hold L1 and R1, then press Δ (x2), \square (x2).

Thanksgiving Mode – Hold L1 and R1, then press Δ (x2), \circ (x2).

"Gl Droid"

(location unknown – last seen waiting in line for Episode II tickets)

FREQUENCY

Cheat Mode – At the Title Screen, press Down, Right, Up, Left (x2), Up, Right. A sound will confirm that the code has been successfully entered. Now, head into a game and input any of the codes below.

Extra Autocatcher – Left, Right (x2), Left, Up

Extra Multiplier – Right, Left (x2), Right, Up

Jose Canseco
Bellington, AZ

BALDUR'S GATE: DARK ALLIANCE

Unlock Drizzt – To compete in a grueling Challenge mode with this familiar dark elf, simply complete the game on any difficulty level. To unlock Drizzt as a playable character, complete the game within the Extreme difficulty setting.

Jay Lindsay
Orlando, FL

CODE OF THE MONTH



DYNASTY WARRIORS 3

Enter all of these codes at the Main Menu.

All Generals – R2 (x3), L1, Δ , L2 (x3), R1, \square

All Movies – Δ , L1, Δ , R1, Δ , \square , L2, \square , R2, \square

Free Mode Selection – R1, R2, L2, L1, \square , L1, L2, R2, R1, Δ

Music Test – L1 (x2), R1 (x2), L2 (x2), R2 (x2), \square , Δ

Shu Generals – L1, \square , Δ , R2, L1, L2 (x2), R1, \square , L1

Wei Generals – L2, L1, \square , Δ , L1, L2, R1, R2, L1, L2

Wu Generals – Δ (x2), L1, \square , R1, R2, L1, L2 (x3)

Hans Brink
Chicago, IL



TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 3

Enter this case-sensitive code at the Cheats menu.

Level Select – roadtrip

"David, The Defiant Gamer"
Cleveland, OH

PS2 PLAYSTATION 2

**SSX TRICKY**

Mallora Board – At the Title Screen, hold L1 and R1, then press X (x2), Right, O (x2), Down, Δ (x2), Left, □ (x2), Up. Release L1 and R1 and you'll hear a confirmation sound. Choose Elise as your character, then enter an event. Instead of wearing her normal garb, she'll now be dressed in blue and the Mallora Board will be fastened below her.

Play as Mix Master Mike – At the Title Screen (with Start Game and DVD Content), hold L1 and R1, then press X (x2), Right, X (x2), Down, X (x2), Left, X (x2), Up. Nothing will happen when this sequence is entered. From here, select any mode, any rider, and any course. When the game begins, Mix Master Mike will replace the character you chose.

Steve Myers
St. Paul, MN

**SOLDIER OF FORTUNE: GOLD EDITION**

Replenish Ammo – During gameplay, press Select to bring up the Mission menu. From here, simultaneously press Left, □, and R1.

God Mode – During gameplay, press Select to bring up the Mission menu. From here, tap R1, L1, R2, L2, □, then Left.

Emmitt Smith
Dallas, TX

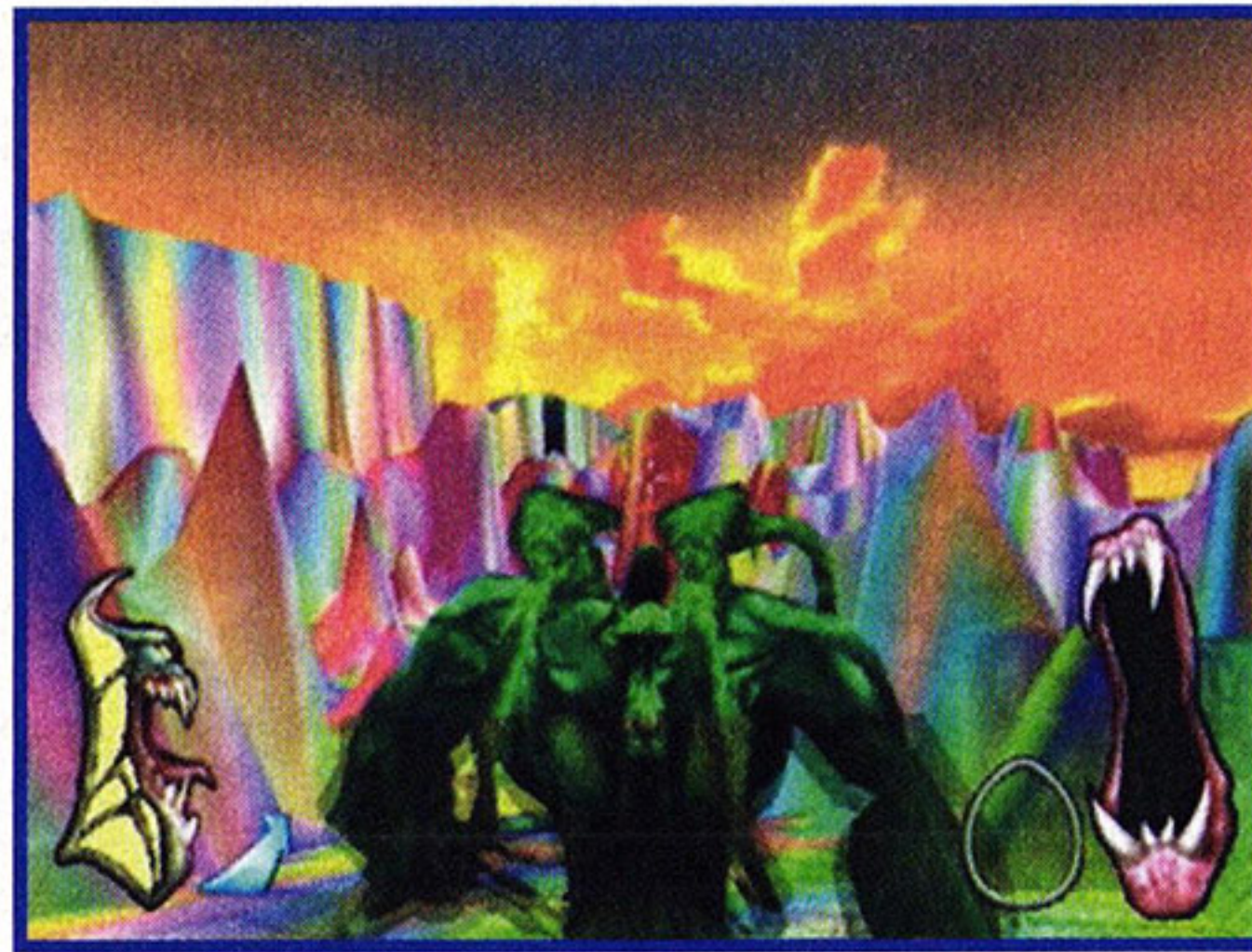
BATMAN: VENGEANCE

Enter this code at the Main Menu.

All Cheats – L2, R2, L2, R2, □ (x2), O (x2)

All Moves & 120 Achievement Points – L1 (x2), R2 (x2), L2, R2, L1, R2

"Daddy Fat Sacks"
Memphis, TN

**GIANTS: CITIZEN KABUTO**

Enter all of these cheats at the Player ID screen. You'll hear Kabuto roar when the codes are entered correctly. Most of the cheats will appear in the Extras screen at the Main Menu.

All Missions – MBP4UJP (appears in Load menu)

Alternate Camera – XTRASEE

Blue Screen – UDDOIT2

Cheat Menu – ALPUN

Green Screen – SNIPEME

Infinite Ammo – FALLOUT

Infinite Jet Pack – 38HK

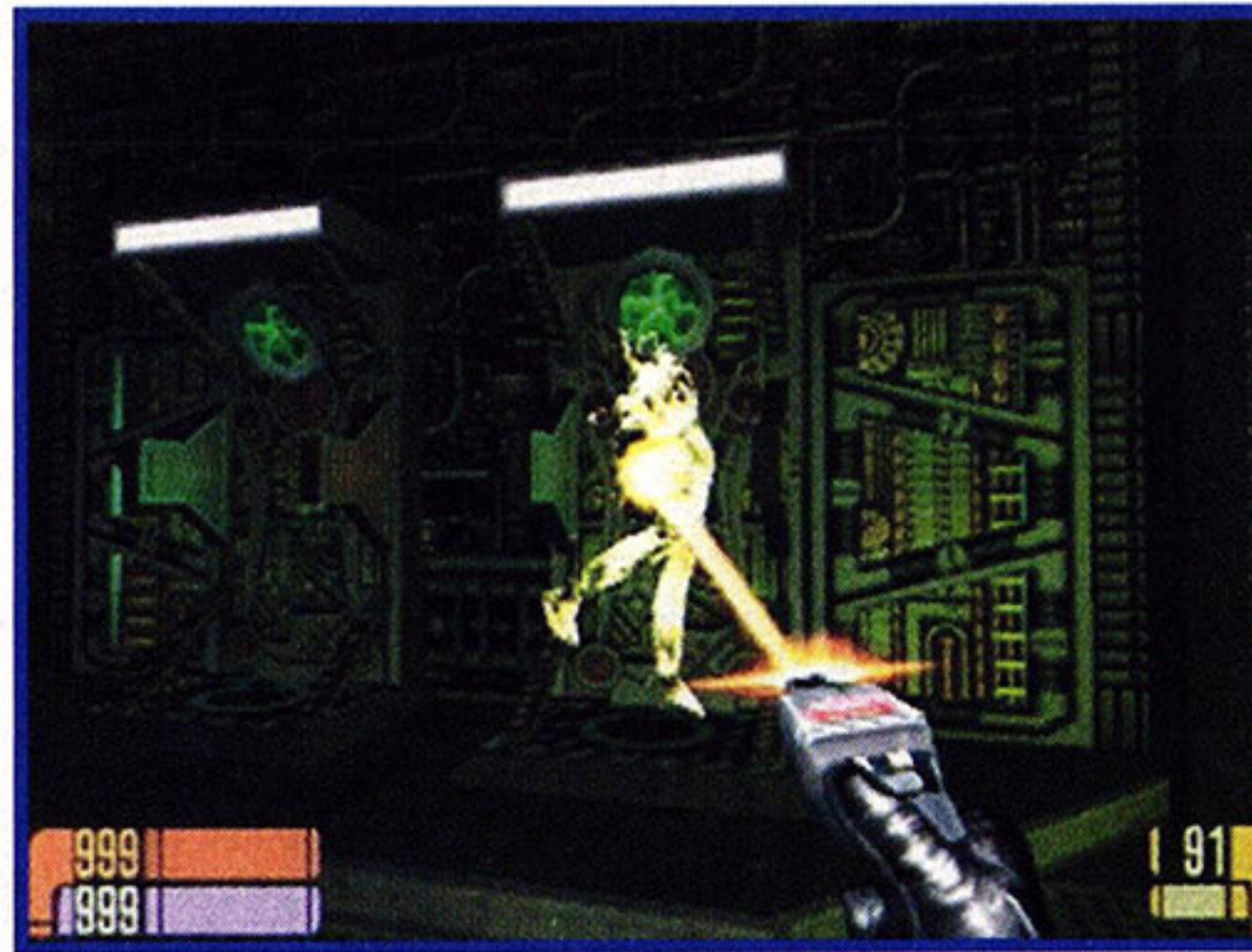
Infinite Mana – BGDA

Invincibility – MOLITOR

Rainbow Mode – DOROTHY

Red Screen – ANGRY

Thomas Wellstone
Aurora, IL

**STAR TREK: VOYAGER ELITE FORCE**

Enter all of these codes from the in-game pause screen. You'll know the code works, when you hear Janeway say, "Impressive."

All Weapons – Hold L1, L2, L3, R1, and R2, then press Select.

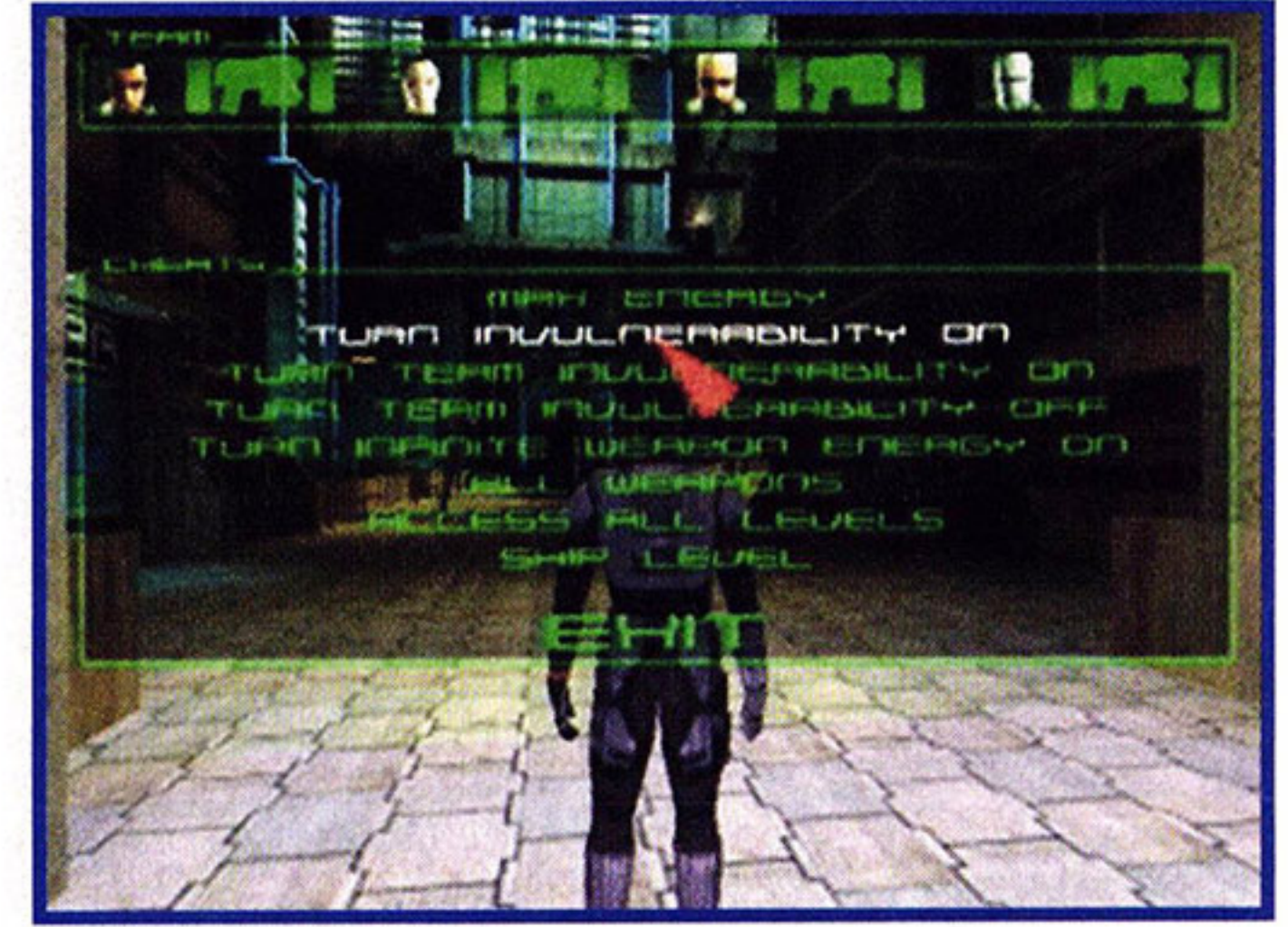
Auto Targeting – Hold L1 and L2, then press Select.

Invincibility – Hold L1, L2, R1, and R2, then press Select.

Max Ammo – Hold R1 and R2, then press Select.

Max Armor – Hold L1 and R1, then press Select.

Joey Torelli
New York, NY

**PROJECT EDEN**

Cheat Mode – During gameplay, press X to bring up the Team menu. From this screen, hold Select and press Up on the left analog stick, rotating it clockwise three times. Immediately after this action, rotate the stick counterclockwise three times. If you do this correctly, a new icon will appear in the lower right-hand corner. Access this icon to toggle invincibility, weapons, energy, and level warps.

Wes Chen
Honolulu, HI

**MAX PAYNE**

Enter all of these codes from the in-game pause menu. **Note:** Some of the codes need to be reactivated after an auto-save.

All Weapons – L1, L2, R1, R2, Δ, O, X, □

Invincibility – L1 (x2), L2 (x2), R1 (x2), R2 (x2)

For the Level Select, you'll need to complete the Subway A1 stage. Now, return to the Main Menu and input the code below.

Level Select – Up, Down, Left, Right, Up, Left, Down, O (the Stage Select will appear under Load Game)

Tim Meadows
South Bedford, NC

THUNDERSTRIKE: OPERATION PHOENIX

Level Select – Head into the Options menu and set SFX to 0, Music to 0, and Vibration to 1. Now, press and hold L1, L2, R2, R1, O, and □. The desired cheat (Spooky Cat) will pop onto screen when the code is entered correctly.

Peter Parker
New York, NY



EXTREME G3

Enter all of these codes at the Main Menu. A message will flash onto the screen when the cheat sequence is inputted correctly.

- All Bikes & Tracks** – L Button (x2), R Button (x2), Z (x2), L + R Buttons + Z
- Double Prize Money** – L Button, R Button, Z, L Button, R Button, Z, L + R Buttons
- Extreme Lap Challenge** – L Button, R Button, L Button, R Button, L Button, R Button, Z, L + R Buttons
- Infinite Ammo** – L Button, R Button, L Button, R Button, L + R Buttons, Z
- Infinite Shields** – L + R Buttons, Z, L + R Buttons, Z

*Mike Hovan
Galebrook, KY*

BATMAN: VENGEANCE

Enter both of these codes at the Main Menu.

- All Movies** – L Button (x2), X (x2), Y, X, L Button, R Button
- Unlimited Batarangs** – L Button, R Button, Y, X

*Dale Silvern
Seattle, WA*

STAR WARS: ROGUE LEADER

Unlimited Lives – Head to the Password screen and input JPVI?IJC. Unlike the codes printed in previous months, R2-D2 won't cheer in excitement. From here, input RSBFNRL. This time around, R2 will howl in glee as the code will be activated.

*Timothy Zahn
Des Moines, IA*

WAVE RACE: BLUESTORM

To enter these codes, you'll first need to activate the Password screen. To do this, head into the Options menu, then simultaneously press Z, X and Start. Now, enter the menu that appears and input any of the codes below.

- Dolphin Mode** – DLPNMOD
- Dolphin Park Stunt Track** – 463YWNX3
- La Razza Canal Time Track** – MJV8LKL6

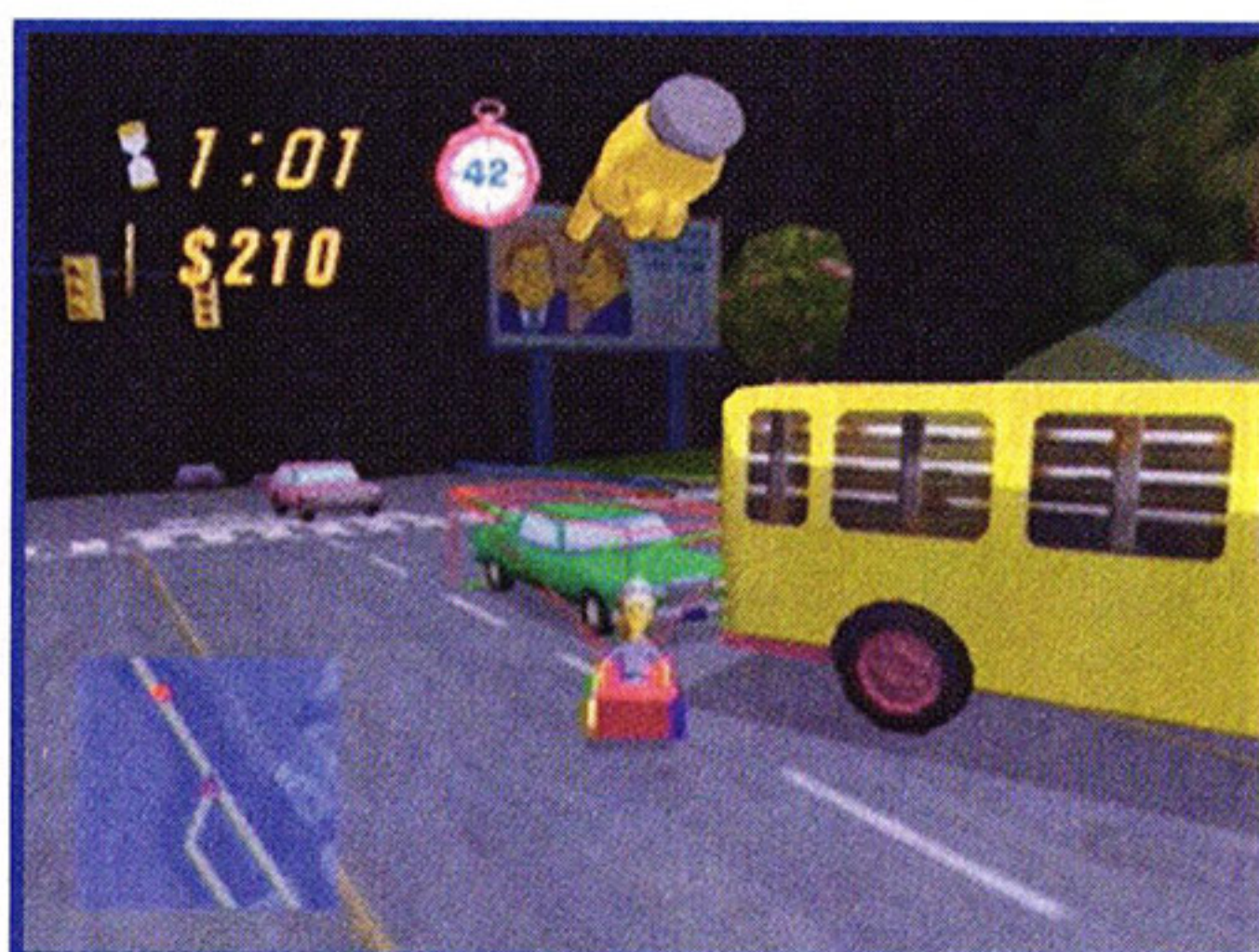
*Lauren Willis
Oyster Bay, FL*

TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 3

Enter this case-sensitive code at the Cheats menu.

- All Cheats** – MARKEDCARDS

*Daniel Myers
Chicago, IL*



THE SIMPSONS: ROAD RAGE

Enter all of these codes at the Options screen.

- 2D Characters** – Hold the L and R Buttons, then press X (x4).
- Additional Camera Views** – Hold the L and R Buttons, then press B (x4).
- Christmas Mode** – Hold the L and R Buttons, then press B (x2), X, B.
- Collision Lines** – Hold the L and R Buttons, then press B (x2), A (x2).
- Extra Cash** – Hold the L and R Buttons, then press Y (x4).
- Halloween Mode** – Hold the L and R Buttons, then press B (x2), X (x2).
- New Year's Mode** – Hold the L and R Buttons, then press B (x2), X, Y.
- Night Driving** – Hold the L and R Buttons, then press A (x4).
- Overhead Perspective** – Hold the L and R Buttons, then press X (x3), Y.
- Soapbox Car** – Hold the L and R Buttons, then press B (x2), Y, X.
- Smithers' Car** – Hold the L and R Buttons, then press B (x2), Y (x2).
- Thanksgiving Mode** – Hold the L and R Buttons, then press B (x2), X (x2).

*Nancy Lewis
Grand Valley, MI*



4x4 Evo 2

Enter all of these codes at the Press Start screen.

- All Missions** – X (x2), White (x2), Y (x2), White, X, Y (x2), X, White
 - Extra Cash** – Y, X, White, Y, X, White, X (x2), Y, White, X, Y
 - Reputation** – Y (x2), White, X (x2), White, Y (x3), X (x3)
- "Eagle Eye Ed"
San Jose, CA*



STAR WARS: OBI-WAN

Start a new game, then enter these case-sensitive codes as your entry name.

- All Levels (Up to Maul)** – M1A2U3L4!?
- All Normal & Bonus Levels** – GREYTHERAT

*"The Rhino"
Toledo, OH*

SSX TRICKY

Annete Board – At the Title Screen, hold the L and R Buttons, then press X, A, Right, X, A, Down, X, A, Left, X, A, Up. Release the L and R Buttons and a faint sound will ring. Now, enter an event and choose Kaori as your character. When the game begins, the Annete will replace her board.

Mallora Board – At the Title Screen, hold the L and R Buttons, then press A (x2), Right, B (x2), Down, Y (x2), Left, X (x2), Up. Release the L and R Buttons and a faint sound will ring. Now, enter an event and select Elise. When gameplay commences, Elise will be wearing a new disguise and she will be riding the Mallora Board.

Play as Mix Master Mike – At the Title Screen, hold the L and R Buttons, then press A (x2), Right, A (x2), Down, A (x2), Left, A, Up. Release the L and R Buttons and a faint sound will ring. Now, enter an event and select any character. When the game begins, Mix Master Mike will replace the character you originally chose.

Sticky Boards – At the Title Screen, hold the L and R Buttons, then press X (x2), Right, Y (x2), Down, B (x2), Left, A (x2), Up. Release the L and R Buttons and a faint sound will ring. Now, enter an event and select any character. The board will now function quite differently.

*Justin Lee
Bigloser City, ME*

BATMAN: VENGEANCE

Enter both of these codes at the Main Menu.

- Master Cheat** – L Button, R Button, L Button, R Button, X (x2), Y (x2)
- Unlimited Batarangs** – L Button, R Button, B, White, L Button

*Darren Nelson
Boston, MA*

**GAME BOY ADVANCE****PC PERSONAL COMPUTER****GAME SHARK****STAR WARS: JEDI POWER BATTLES**

Enter this code at the Password screen.

Unlock Darth Maul – VMT3BYJ*George Greenberg
Holland, MI***ECKS VS. SEVER**

Enter all of these level codes at the Password screen.

Ecks

Level 2 – EXTREME
 Level 3 – EXCITE
 Level 4 – EXCAVATE
 Level 5 – EXCALIBUR
 Level 6 – EXTORT
 Level 7 – EXPIRE
 Level 8 – EXACT
 Level 9 – EXHALE
 Level 10 – EXHUME
 Level 11 – EXONERATE
 Level 12 – EXPEL

Sever

Level 2 – SEVERE
 Level 3 – SURVIVE
 Level 4 – SAVANT
 Level 5 – SUFFER
 Level 6 – SULPHUR
 Level 7 – SERVE
 Level 8 – SEETHE
 Level 9 – SEVERAL
 Level 10 – SEVERANCE
 Level 11 – SAVAGE
 Level 12 – SACROSANCT

*"Air Akira"
Boris, NM***SPYRO THE DRAGON:
SEASON OF ICE**

Enter all of these codes at the Press Start screen.

99 Lives – Left, Right (x3), Down, Up, Right, Up, A.**All Portals Open** – Down (x2), Up (x2), Left, Right, Up, Down.**Infinite Weapons (Sparx Stages)** – Down, Right, Up, Left (x2), Up, Right, Down, A.**Invincibility (Sparx Stages)** – Down, Up (x2), Left, Right (x2), Left, A.**Sparx Cheats** – Right, Up, Right, Left, Down, Up, Left, Down, A (After entering this code, input the sequences below during gameplay).**All Keys** – L Button + Select**Homing Bombs** – Down + Select**Rapid Fire** – Left + Select**Shield** – Up + Select**Smart Bomb** – Right + Select*Vincent Perez
Salo, SD***SHAUN PALMER'S
PRO SNOWBOARDER**

Enter this cheat at the Password screen.

All Boards & Tracks (Shaun Palmer) – QFJ7MP9N?5CM4*David Seer
Yosemite Peak, NV***GHOST RECON**

To enter these codes, first bring up the console window by pressing the [Enter] key. Now, any of the cheats below can be typed in.

Complete Mission – autowin**God Mode** – superman**Grenades & Chickens** – chickenrun**Invisibility** – shadow**Team God Mode** – teamsuperman**Team Invisibility** – teamshadow**Unlimited Ammo** – ammo**Unlimited Items** – refill*Louise Hudson
Indianapolis, IN***STRONGHOLD**

To activate these cheats, you'll need to rapidly press the button combos for each corresponding cheat.

Change Characters – [Alt] + C**Change Time** – [Alt] + S**Defeat Enemy** – [Alt] + Z**Defeat All Enemies** – [Alt] + Y**Destroy Fortress** – [Alt] + K**Destroy Stronghold** – [Alt] + G**Level Up Characters** – [Alt] + P**Level Up Unit** – [Alt] + L*Tara Carlton
Seattle, WA***HARRY POTTER AND
THE SORCERER'S STONE**

Enter all of these codes during gameplay.

Debug Mode – HarryDebugModeOn**Refill Health** – HarryGetsFullHealth**Super Jump** – HarrySuperJump*Devin Malfoy
Tampa, FL***PS2 PLAYSTATION 2****FINAL FANTASY X****Note:** Do not activate any of these codes until you have completed the Sphere Grid Tutorial.**Master Code (Must Be On)** –
OE3C7DF21645EBB3
OC08E7C3F8A9A297**Anima In Party** –
1C28EE2BF8FCFE01**Auron In Party** –
1C28E8CFF8FCFE01**Bahamut In Party** –
1C28ED97F8FCFE01**Cindy Magus In Party** –
1C28EF53F8FCFE01**Complete AI Bhed Dictionary** –
3C28CDBFFBFFFFF**Infinite Gil** –
3C28CEF785F19EFF**Ixion In Party** –
1C28EC6FF8FCFE01**Kimahri In Party** –
1C28E863F8FCFE01**Lulu In Party** –
1C28E98BF8FCFE01**Mindy Magus In Party** –
1C28F07BF8FCFE01**Rikku In Party** –
1C28EA1FF8FCFE01**Sandy Magus In Party** –
1C28F0E7F8FCFE01**Seymour In Party** –
1C28EAB3F8FCFE01**Shiva In Party** –
1C28ED03F8FCFE01**Wakka In Party** –
1C28E9F7F8FCFE01**Yojimbo In Party** –
1C28EEBF8FCFEF1**Yuna In Party** –
1C28E73BF8FCFE01**ENTER TO WIN**

Send in your codes and passwords, and if we choose your entry as Code of the Month you'll win a wonderful prize from the Game Informer Vault! All other entries printed within these hal-
lowed pages will receive a Secret Access T-shirt.

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 secretaccess@gameinformer.com

CLASSIC GI

KUNKEL, KATZ AND WORLEY:

CLASSIC GI INTERVIEWS THE FOUNDING FATHERS (AND MOTHER) OF VIDEO GAME JOURNALISM

GI: How did you three first meet?

Arnie Katz: We met each other through the world of science fiction. Bill began corresponding with Joyce, I think. All three of us published amateur fanzines, and we began trading our little magazines with each other, and correspondences struck up. Joyce and I finally met Bill for the first time at the 1967 World Science Fiction Convention in New York City.

Actually, Electronic Games was not the first magazine we started. We started a professional wrestling magazine in 1974, called Main Event that was sold on arena concession stands all over the Northeast, including Madison Square Garden and Nassau Coliseum.

GI: How did Electronic Games come about?

Katz: The first thing that happened was that Bill and I began writing a column called Arcade Alley for Video Magazine, which was the first professional video game review column in the world. [The response to] that column led the publisher of Video Magazine to work with us to bring out the world's first electronic gaming magazine, Electronic Games.

Bill Kunkel: I had been writing comics for DC, Marvel, and Harvey. In any case, I was a musician and a freelance writer, so I didn't have any place I had to be. So, I spent the summer of 1981 working out of the cramped offices of Reese Publishing. We just went in and toiled all day and we toiled all night. Arnie and I shared an office that was a good-sized closet.

Joyce Worley: A small closet. [laughs]

Katz: I was the executive editor and Joyce

was the senior editor, but she functioned essentially as the managing editor. She did the news and edited out all of our mistakes. Bill did so many different things. First of all, he was, along with me, the co-lead writer of the magazine. The second thing that he did was that he did a lot of photography. Also, he, Joyce, and I were doing coverage of things like CES and ToyFair.

Katz: The idea that we had was that video games and computer games represented more than just a new toy, more than just a fad, that it was the start of something that might someday become one of the world's great hobbies. We felt that a magazine that appealed to a wide age spectrum and attempted to be intelligent, low on hype, and graphically interesting would be successful.

Kunkel: Of course, when we were doing our first few issues, we still don't know who our reader was. We were writing it for ourselves.

GI: Was the magazine instantly successful?

Kunkel: As you know, it takes a while to get feedback in the magazine business, but we started getting calls in because the news vendors were actually getting people calling them after they had sold out and asking for more copies. Somebody told me that the only time that had happened was if Jackie Kennedy did a nude layout in Playboy. So, we knew we had a winner from day one.

GI: How big was your staff at the peak?

Katz: Most of our writers were freelance.

Kunkel: The biggest staff we ever had was the three of us, plus a secretary and an associate editor, and a managing editor. About five to six people maximum, plus an art director and ad sales people.

Kunkel: I'll tell you one thing: We never played a game in the office.

Katz: Yes, we never played in the office. That was a rule. We didn't even allow game equipment in the office, because that's the kind of thing a diligent journalist should be doing on his own time.

Kunkel: It also leads to people sitting there, playing games all day.

GI: These days, the industry is pretty corporate, and PR really holds the cards in terms of distributing information. Was this always so, or did you guys have a lot of access to the programmers in the Electronic Games days?

Katz: It was very entrepreneurial. You had a lot of little video game companies that were start-ups. They would have a programmer, a salesman, and that was it. Also, there were so many companies that the environment was much more open to the press.

Kunkel: Of course, the press was only about five people at that time!

Katz: When Nintendo came in and started Nintendo Power and began competing against independent magazines – that's when it changed. Nintendo had a forum that would grind out favorable reviews of its products, and an uncritical public comprised of very young kids who could not distinguish between what amounted to a

For gamers with fond memories of the early '80s, the names Arnie Katz, Bill Kunkel, and Joyce Worley are synonymous with video game journalism, and for good reason. In 1981, the trio founded Electronic Games, the first ever magazine to be devoted entirely to video games and gaming culture. Over a storied four-year run, Electronic Games chronicled the boom and bust of video game's golden age. The magazine, known for its intelligent and unbiased writing, is recalled fondly by all who read it, and mint issues often fetch as much as \$300 on the collector's market.

Today, the three live within a mile of each other in sunny Las Vegas, and remain busy working on projects, including the wrestling site www.prowrestlingdaily.com. Katz and Worley are also working on a book about pop culture collecting for Krosey Publications, and Bill Kunkel recently signed on to do game design for prestigious Westwood Studios. Recently, Classic GI had an opportunity to interview the legendary triumvirate, getting the real story behind the birth of Electronic Games, and their views on industry issues both old and new.

Nintendo catalog and a real magazine. Nintendo didn't need the other magazines; they had Nintendo Power.

GI: In the heyday of Atari, the company was reputed to be pretty freewheeling and unconventional, in terms of partying and other things. Did you ever get in on any of that fun?

Katz: Any company that's making money faster than they could spend it or give it away develops some pretty loose habits.

Kunkel: But, remember, they were taken over by Warner Brothers very early in the game. I think that most of what you're talking about were the reasons they were taken over by Warner Brothers [laughs].

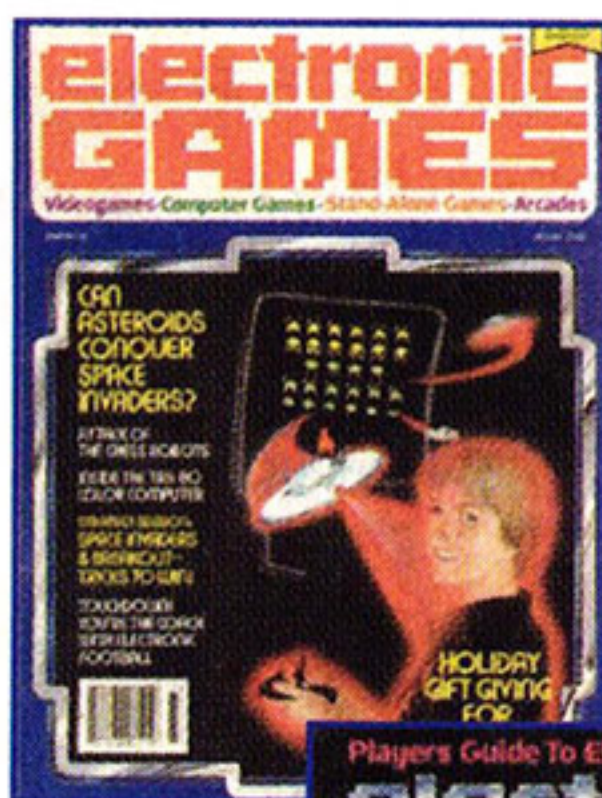
Now, Activision. Boy, there was a company that spent money! The parties that they threw at CES are still legendary in the industry. I've been to parties for movies and just about everything you can think of, as I'm sure Arnie and

Joyce have, and never seen anything like the Activision parties.

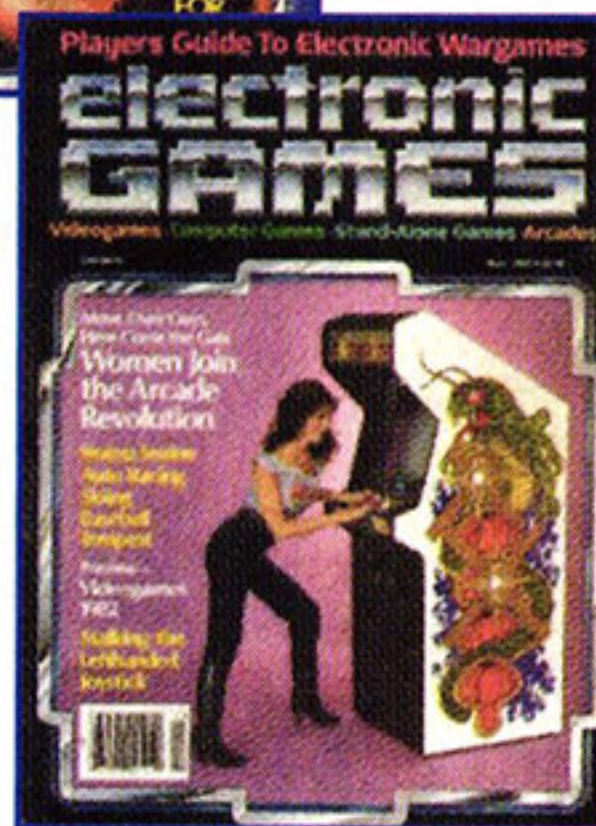
GI: You were all around, and victims of, the meltdown of the industry in 1983. What was that like to go through? Where were you when you realized the industry was in serious trouble? What mistakes led to this?

Kunkel: I think it was when our ad person walked in and said, "We've got twelve pages!" [laughs]

Katz: I remember very distinctly, in June or July of 1984, that I recommended that the magazine move away from video games and more towards computer games, at least in the short term.



Winter 1981



May 1982



Left to right: Kunkel, Worley, and Katz

GI: Did you think video games would ever recover?

Katz: I never doubted that they would recover. We felt that now the pendulum was swinging towards computer games, so let's go with that now. It was obvious by late '84 that the video game field had become saturated. That supply was way ahead of demand.

Kunkel: Also, the consumers, for the first time, were encountering a form of entertainment that demanded them to update their hardware. They'd had basically the same record player for 40 years. Here video games were telling you, "Trash that system, it's time to move on up. You've been playing those games since 1978. It's 1983 and we're going to the next generation." That was a really tough sell in this country.

Katz: In terms of the great crash, not only did you have the soft demand, the supply way over the top, and a lot of bad games, but the bad games were not confined to small publishers. Atari put out some of the worst games that have ever been seen in a retail store.

Kunkel: ET and Raiders of the Lost Ark, for example. These were licenses that cost more than the games cost to develop.

Katz: The other factor was the destruction of the price structure. In 1984, as companies went under or reached the edge, they would dump their games on the market. All of a sudden, whereas before even the cheapest game had been \$20, there were now \$5 games. You could walk into a Walgreens or a Kmart and find bins and bins of them.

Kunkel: Now, remember, other retailers had paid full price for these games just a couple of months earlier.

Katz: What that did was send gigantic paper losses through the entire industry. Ultimately, those paper losses had an impact on companies like Atari and Activision, which numbered among their assets the unsold games in the warehouse. But what if the unsold

games in the warehouse can't be sold? All of a sudden, instead of \$50 million of unsold inventory, you've got about \$1.98. That's when you start bulldozing them into a landfill. We actually had a picture of a landfill with the games being pushed into it.

GI: How do you think video game magazines have changed, for better or worse, since Electronic Games?

Worley: I think Nintendo's emphasis on the younger game player has tainted the entire industry, and seems to have caused a lot of people to forget that we are basically playing to an adult market.

Katz: When I look at what's left of the magazines, I see much too much hype. I think it's also fair to say that we have seen an erosion in the magazine field, and I believe it's due to the generally low quality of that field.

Kunkel: ...and the free competition online!

Katz: That's also true.

Kunkel: [Another problem is this] obsession that began with discussing the tech specs on a system that's just being discussed in Japan. In other words, we're three years away from seeing in the United States, by which point it would be virtually unrecognizable. Everything that was coming was phenomenal, and everything that was here sucked!

Katz: Of course, what that does to the credibility of the press is terrible. What's happened to the gaming magazines is they've blown their credibility so many times.

Kunkel: I also remember when the various companies like EA and Sega started doing their Gamers Days for the press. It's very easy to be charmed by that, I'm sure. You go out there and you see these young kids, who aren't used to this, being absolutely swept off their feet. They're being taken around the offices, staying at a nice hotel, and it's very flattering.

Katz: It's the ultimate Walter Mitty

fantasy of all the teenage gamers that become journalists.

Kunkel: And the one thing you don't want, even subconsciously, is you don't want the company to feel as if you've been ungrateful. So, the one way the industry has learned to deal with the gaming press is in terms of manipulating them.

GI: How do you feel about the current generation of game consoles on the market?

Kunkel: I think Nintendo survives no matter what. Nintendo just makes such good games. I also must say, on a personal note, that I think the GameCube is the most adorable piece of hardware I've seen since the old PC Engine.

Katz: It's also the first new look in a while.

Kunkel: Of course, to a certain extent, they'll be hurt by the use of non-traditional media, but that's Nintendo. They want control over the medium. I think you've got a real problem with Microsoft, which has never shown really any sort of consistent vision in regards to the game end of the industry. The PlayStation 2, after a rocky start, seems to have become a viable system. I feel like PC games are basically doomed at the moment when the console systems develop a solid Internet.

GI: So you feel that Microsoft might have bitten off more than it can chew with the Xbox?

Kunkel: I think it's a problem when you put out a system and you run these boss commercials for the system, but there's no real software that you want to play. Other than Halo, I haven't seen anything that makes me say, "Boy, I wish I had an Xbox."

Katz: They have the same problem that often beset Sega, in that they have professionalism and a certain technical level of expertise they hit, but the games are very seldom compelling.

GREATEST GAME OF ALL TIME

By Branden Helms

Every month one of Game Informer's readers picks his or her personal choice for Greatest Game Of All Time.



BLOOD OMEN: LEGACY OF KAIN

■ FORMAT PLAYSTATION
■ PUBLISHER EIDOS

Without a doubt, the Greatest Game of All Time has to be Blood Omen: Legacy of Kain. With the exception of games like Resident Evil and a few others, it was one of the first PlayStation games to use dialogue that actually had a purpose. While most games used speech to make gamers say "Wow!", Crystal Dynamics used its dialogue to tell a story that still stands out in the minds of anyone who ever experienced this amazing title. Some might disagree, but anyone who's played and beat the game won't. The control scheme was simple, the items and spells were all used in some way that actually mattered. For example,



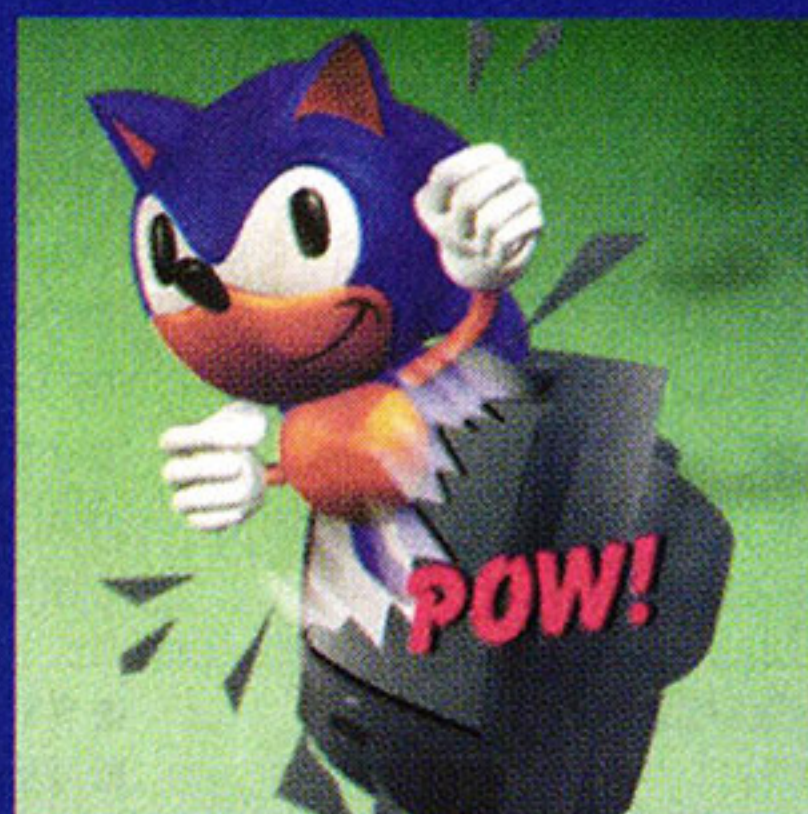
you transformed into a bat to get across the huge world and you used a wolf to jump over spikes. This dynamic gave the special abilities a purpose that added to the overall scope of the gameplay.

Of course, the story and characters are what make this game. The characters come alive through their words and actions. Kain doubts himself, Vorador is pompous, and Mobius is bent on silent revenge. Not only that, but the weapons are unique and each has a story behind it, even if it's as simple as who forged your first store. The puzzles were a pain and the enemies weren't pushovers like they were in Soul Reavers 1 and 2. If you don't own this game, I recommend finding one because you'll be graced with a great story, great action, and the best dialogue of its time. You want a game that'll keep you glued to the seat like Reiner is to his Star Wars videos? This is the game for you.



THIS MONTH IN GAMING HISTORY

This month back in 1994, the Sega Channel, a joint venture between the Japanese firm and Time-Warner/TCI cable, began a test run on 12 cable systems across the US. For a small subscription fee and a one-time charge for a special interface unit that plugged into the back of the company's successful Genesis console, Sega Channel offered gamers on-demand access to dozens of popular titles. Although Mattel had met with little success with a similar service for its Intellivision system, the Sega Channel proved to be a moderate hit with users, and boasted over 250,000 subscribers at its peak. However, as the 16-bit game market waned, so did the Sega Channel, and it was discontinued in 1998.



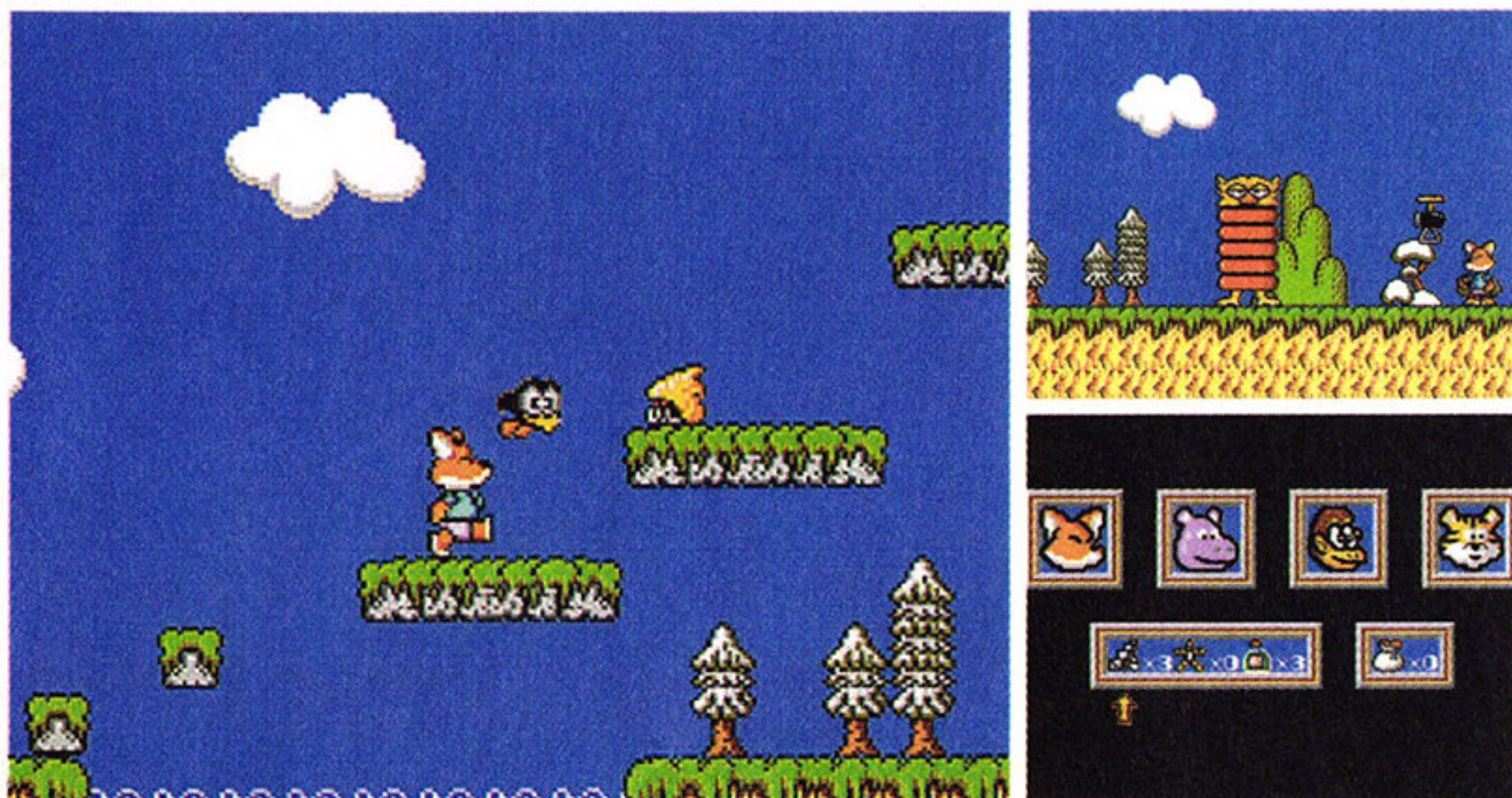
CLASSIC REVIEWS

SEGA MASTER SYSTEM

PSYCHO FOX



RETRO RATING
7



Eight-bit platformers are as common an '80s export as the mullet, but Psycho Fox was one of the more revered games for Sega's short-lived Master System. The star was a spry fox who, with help from his other animal friends, would battle the forces of presumed evil. Much like fellow Master System icon Alex Kidd, Psycho Fox had the ability to punch adversaries. His offensive tactics far from ended there, though. He could jump on their heads to net victory, but he needed to hit them twice for the kill (unlike that lardbutt Mario). Each of his animal allies could be used against baddies, too. Power-ups found in eggs, or taken from expired enemies, allowed for higher jumping or invulnerability. Get your speed up, and Fox would skid across water and run over small gaps. Despite all these powers, Psycho Fox is quite mediocre as a platformer. The levels, while sprawling, weren't all that exceptional, and repetition abounds. Psycho Fox isn't quite as sly as you'd like, and ends up being just one of the pack.

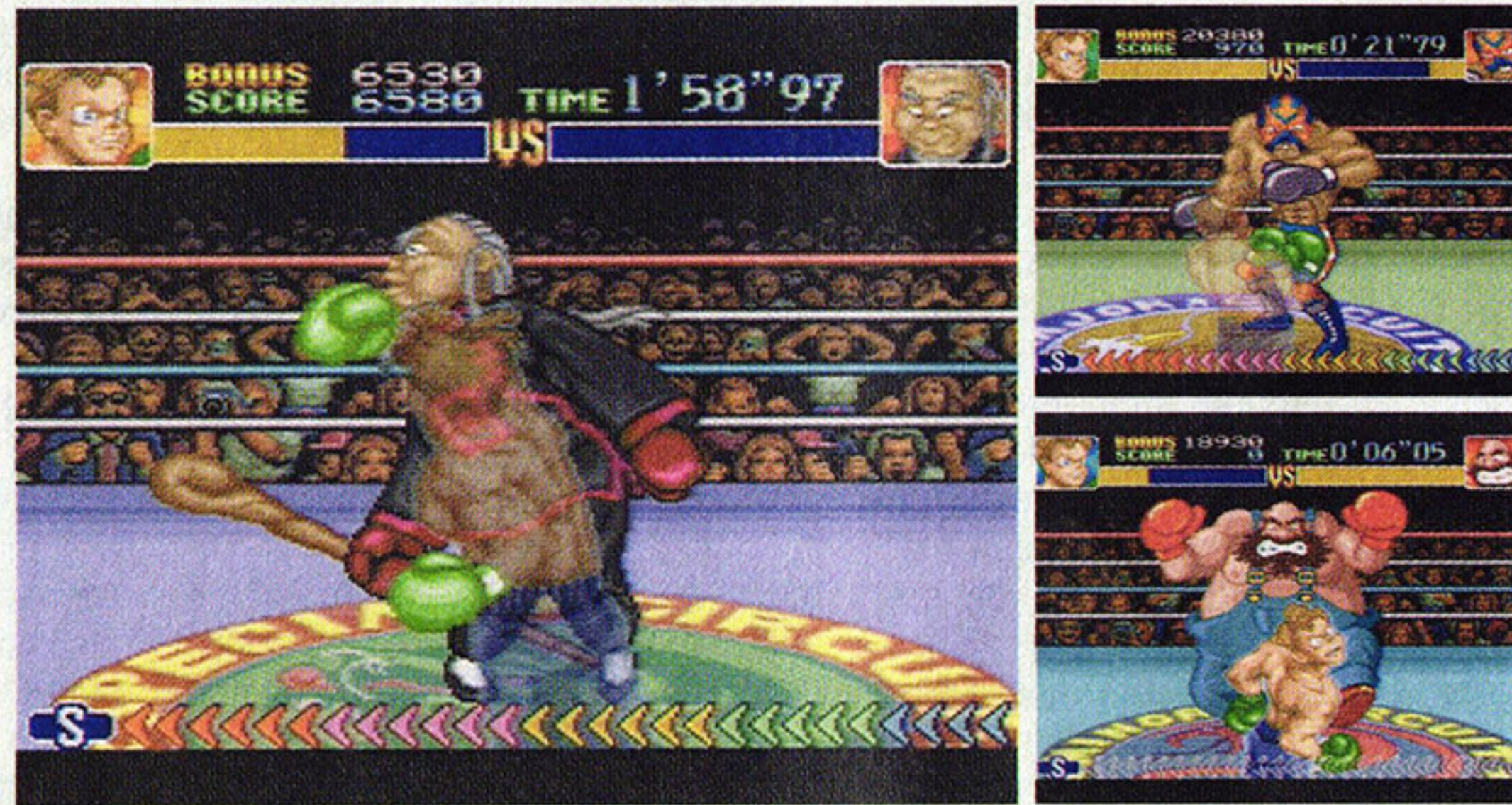
■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER PLATFORM ■ **PUBLISHER** SEGA ■ **DEVELOPER** SEGA
■ **YEAR RELEASED** 1989

SUPER NINTENDO

SUPER PUNCH-OUT!!



RETRO RATING
8.75



Everybody's played Punch-Out on the NES. Everybody. Your mailman? Played it. Your middle-school bus driver? She's got Soda Popinski tattooed on her ass. Everybody has not, however, played Super Punch-Out, and that's a bloody shame. It did everything a sequel should. It was larger, with more fighters to master. Character design was out there, with a martial artist, a Rasta man, and an angry clown. Their attacks were extremely original, and the strategies to beat them much more intricate. Punches with each hand had varying degrees of speed and power. Graphically, the sprites were amazingly large and well animated. Pain weighs on pummeled faces, as does a look of determination when they reach in to strike. One of the best new additions was Time Attack Mode, which kept track of the best knockout times for every opponent. You can spend hours just trying to shave off precious milliseconds in the attempt to KO Super Machoman before the one minute mark. Everyone who enjoyed the original is encouraged to check out its excellent 16-bit sequel.

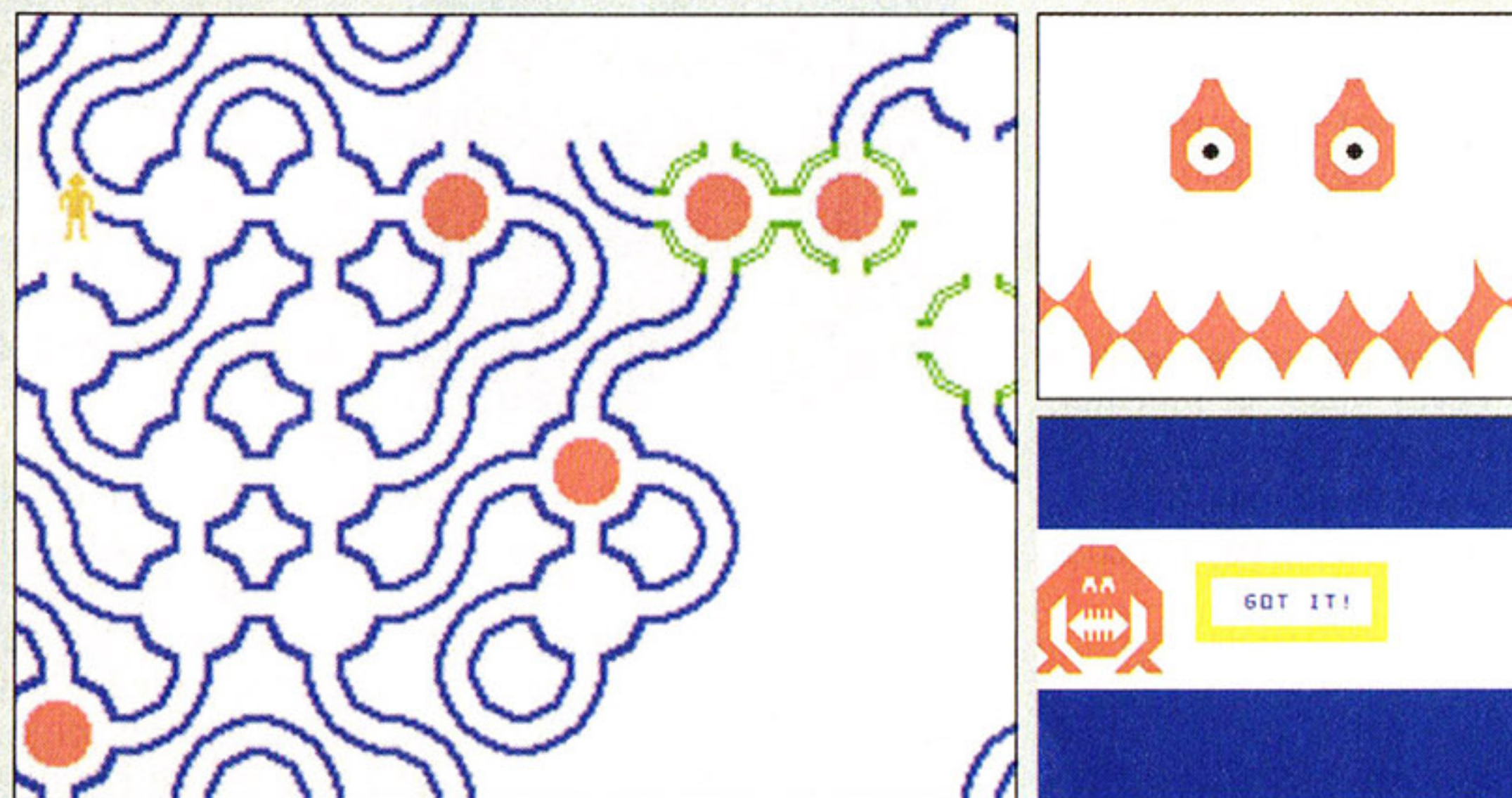
■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER FIGHTING ■ **PUBLISHER** NINTENDO ■ **DEVELOPER** NINTENDO
■ **YEAR RELEASED** 1994

TI-99/4A

HUNT THE WUMPUS



RETRO RATING
7.5



What is a Wumpus, you ask? Who cares? Just kill it before it kills you! This suspenseful maze game for the TI-99/4A led you on a chase to find the dreaded Wumpus, while avoiding slime pits, until you've pinpointed its location. Each room, which is invisible until you enter it, usually gives a good indication of how close you are to doom. A bloodstain means the Wumpus is no greater than two rooms away. A green outline means you're near a slime pit, which will also kill you. A bat will teleport you to a random spot on the maze if you inhabit its domain. You only have one arrow, and you'd better make it count. The easy setting has rooms right next to each other, while harder difficulties have more winding paths between the rooms, making them harder to distinguish. The suspense of not knowing what lies ahead was something that games hadn't conveyed before, but the thrills didn't last long enough for you to play hours on end. Still, Hunt the Wumpus is an original concept and a good old-school history lesson.

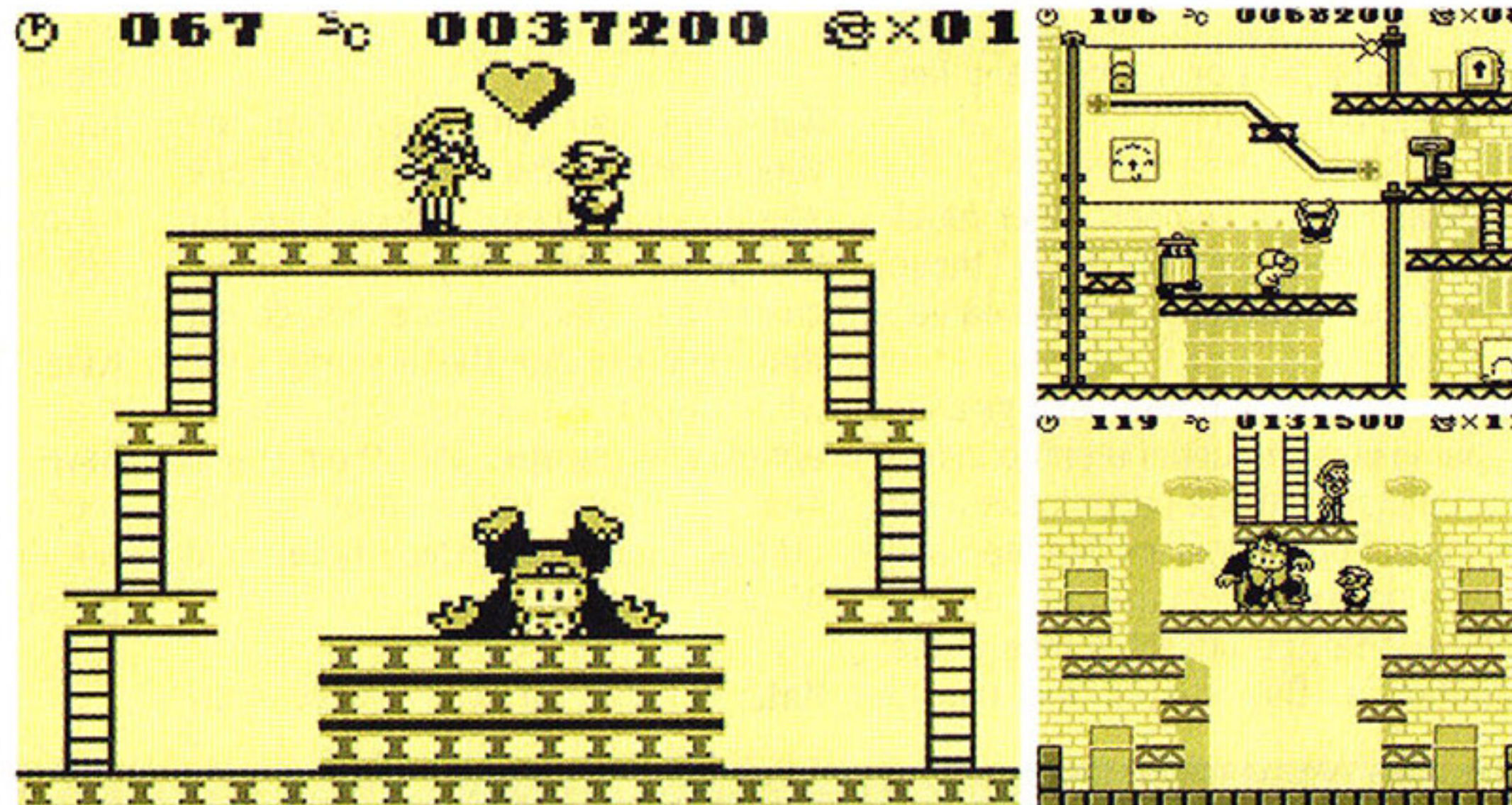
■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER PUZZLE ■ **PUBLISHER** TEXAS INSTRUMENTS ■ **DEVELOPER** TEXAS INSTRUMENTS ■ **YEAR RELEASED** 1980

GAME BOY

DONKEY KONG



RETRO RATING
9



With its primitive technology and small cartridge medium, Game Boy was a natural for porting old-school arcade hits. Most were poorly done, though, since fast movement on the dot matrix screen was accompanied by blurring, and the four-shade palette made things difficult to see. Donkey Kong on the other hand, was tailor-made for this system, and with Nintendo at the helm, you knew things would be done right. The original title's four stages were there, but Nintendo took things much, much further. Dozens of puzzle-style levels followed, with keys, conveyors, zip lines, plus many other nifty features and tools. Collect all of a stage's items, and you'll be taken to a bonus game to win 1-ups. There are also boss battles with the big ape himself. The battery backup to save progress was crucial, and this was also the first game to support Super Game Boy, a peripheral which let you add color to Game Boy games and play them on Super Nintendo. For platforming and puzzle game thrills on the go, you really can't do better than Donkey Kong.

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER PLATFORM/PUZZLE ■ **PUBLISHER** NINTENDO ■ **DEVELOPER** NINTENDO
■ **YEAR RELEASED** 1994

CLASSIC CODES

SNES

SUPER EMPIRE STRIKES BACK

99 Lives – For more than enough Lukes to level the Empire, go to the **Game Select** screen and hit **X, Y, B, B, B, X, A, Y, Y, B, A, X, Y**. Then hit **Start**. Make sure to complete this task before the demo comes up. Now take your best shot, kid, and don't get cocky.

Debug Code – To manipulate the game like a pro, go to the **Main Menu** screen and hit **A, B, Y, X, A, B, Y, X, A, B, A, B, Y, X, X, Y, A, B, Y, X**. Now you can change just about anything by pressing the **L** and **R** shoulder buttons simultaneously during gameplay. Have fun, cheat!



Force Powers – To be a Jedi master without all of that pesky training, go to the **Main Menu** screen when you turn on the game and hit **X, B, B, Y, X, A, A, X**. Now hit **Start** and the Force will be with you.

OUT OF THIS WORLD

Level Passwords – In this surreal and original adventure game, you may find it difficult to make progress. Never fear! We have all the passwords to get you where you want to go.

Level 2: HTDC	Level 9: DDRX
Level 3: CLLD	Level 10: HRTB
Level 4: LBKG	Level 11: BRTD
Level 5: XDDJ	Level 12: TFBB
Level 6: FXLC	Level 13: TXHF
Level 7: KRFK	Level 14: CKJL
Level 8: KLFB	Level 15: LFCK



STREET FIGHTER II: TURBO

10-Star Turbo Mode – Is the fastest setting not fast enough? Need to do your butt-kicking at an even more accelerated rate? Fine! When the **SFII logo** shows up, grab the second controller and pound out **Down, R, Up, L, Y, B**. Do this quick, and you can now make the game even faster.

Toggle Special Moves – Sometimes you want to leave all the fireballs behind, or ban dragon punches, and just do some down and dirty punching and kicking. To choose which special moves to allow and which to turn off, be on the **Stage Select** screen in Vs. mode, and use the second controller to hit **Down, R, Up, L, Y, B**. Hit **Start** and get to fighting.



SUPER PUNCH-OUT!!

Enter your Name in Japanese – To enter your name in Japanese, highlight **"New Game"** and press **X + A**.

TETRIS ATTACK

Hardest Bowser Level – To go to the hardest VS. mode level in the game, type in: **S6?L7B7!**.

Secret Characters – Go to the select screen for Player vs. Player. Hold **L + R** on both controllers for a spell. The question marks (?) at the bottom of the screen will then turn into the bosses.

SATURN

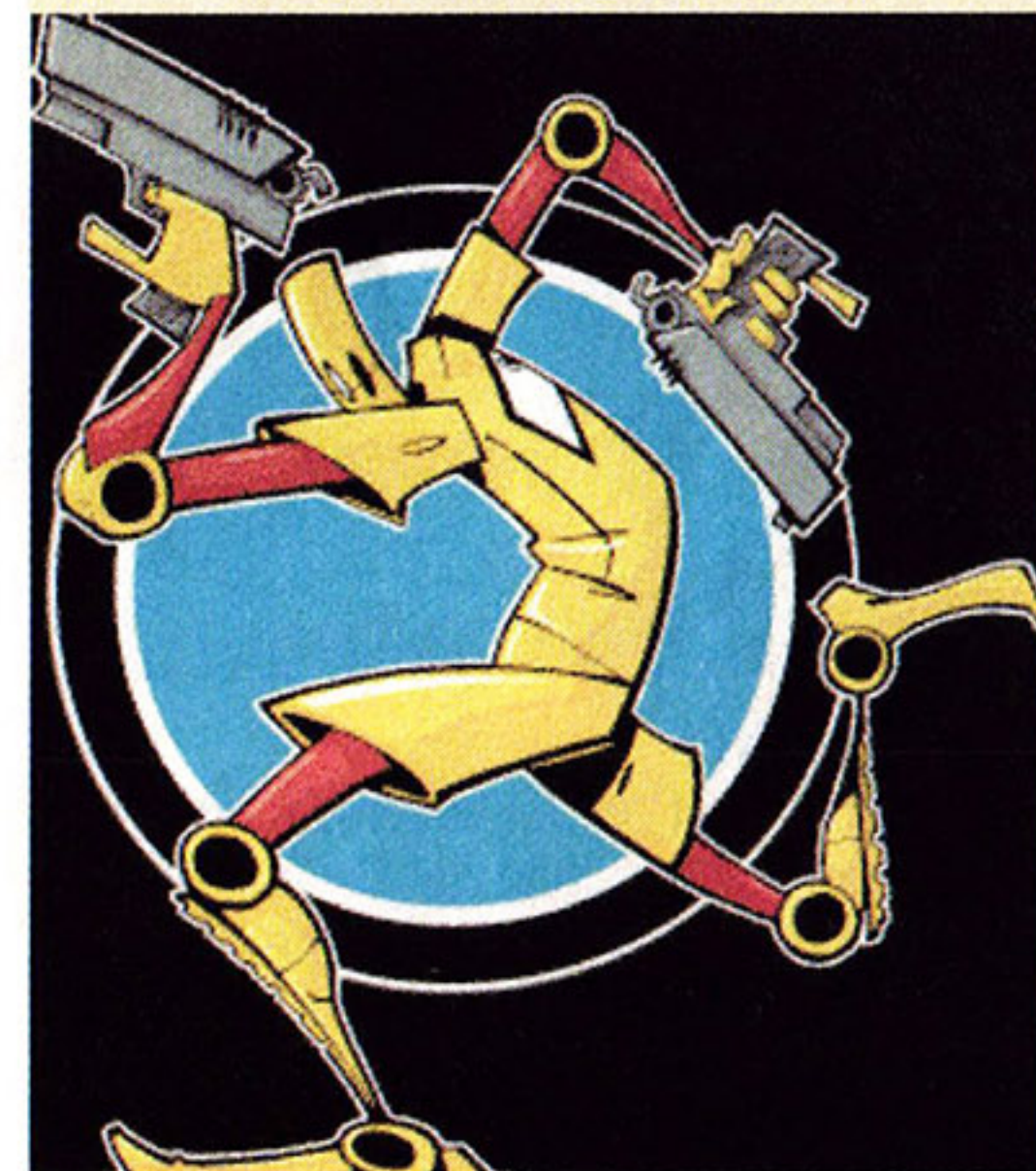
SCUD: THE DISPOSABLE ASSASIN

Bonus Artwork – Beat Scud to see some new artwork on the menu screen. Love that Scud.

Six Continues – Want more continues? Just go into a two-player game and sacrifice Drywall. He dies, but you get the continues.

Scud Answering Machine Message – Put the disc in a CD player and check track eight for some laughs.

Level Skip – When at the title screen, hold **Down/Right, Y**, and **Start**. In around 30 seconds, you'll here some strange sounds. Now to skip a level, pause and press **L** and **R**.



GAME BOY

DONKEY KONG

Level Select – This game has a gorilla's butt-load of levels. Check them all out by going to the **Title** screen and hitting **Up, Up, Down, Up, Down, Up, Up, Up, Up**.



Catch Level 100+ Pokémon – You want to catch the big boys? First, go to the old guy in Viridian City who shows you how to catch Pokémon. Watch his spell yet again, then Fly to Cinnabar Island. Surf up and down the area where water meets land on the east side. You'll be attacked by some tough honking Pokémon. You'd better have some strong ones in your party. If you catch them, they will lower their level if they gain experience, so use them wisely.

POKÉMON RED/BLUE

Catch Safari Zone Pokémon With Ease –

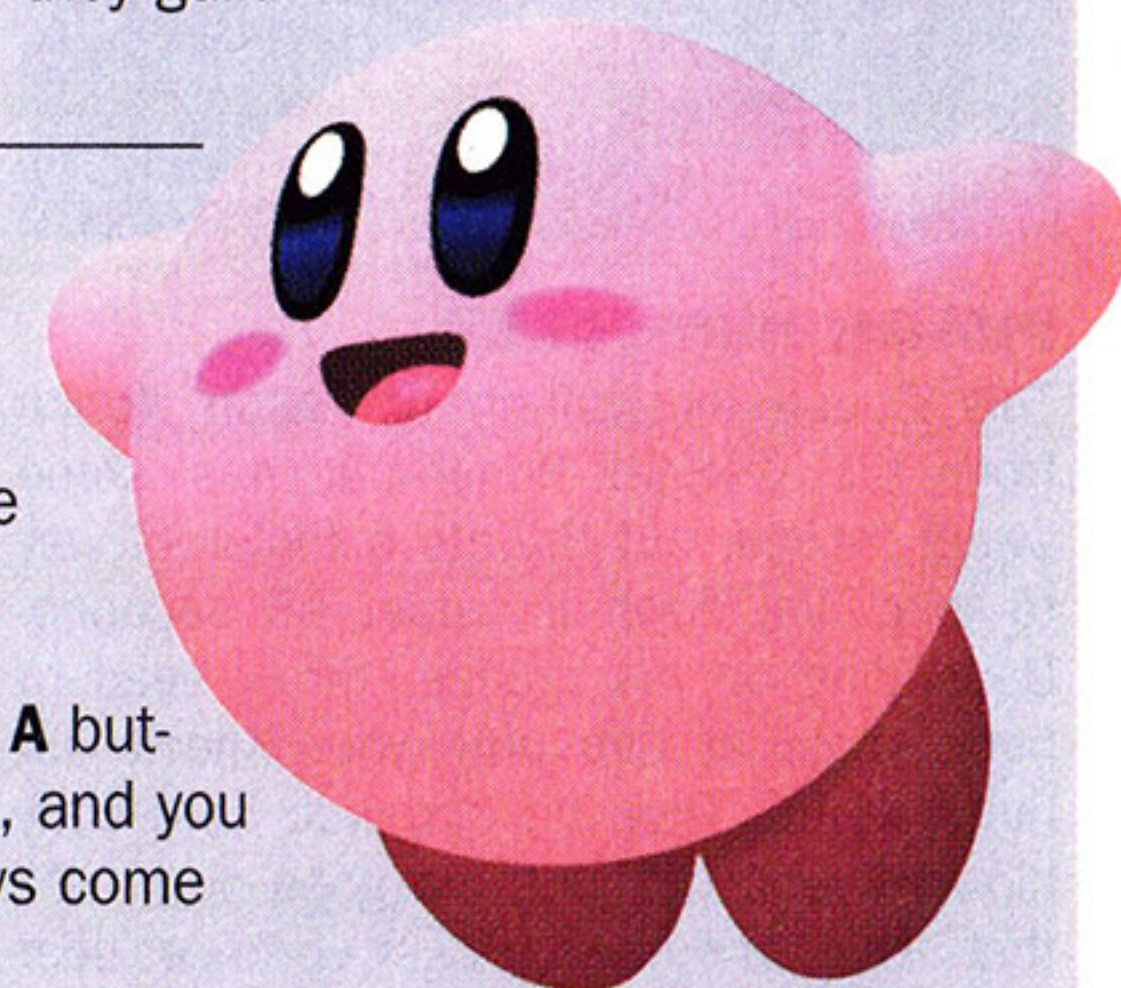
The Safari Zone has some the rarest, most elusive Pokémon in the game, but you're only given a limited time to catch them. Forget that! Use this trick to get the Chansee, Scyther, and other monsters you've always dreamed of! First, go to Safari Zone, and take your turn inside. Next, go to Cinnabar Island. It's a good idea to avoid being randomly attacked along the way. Now Surf on the spot between the land and water, and you should be attacked by monsters from Safari Zone! The encounters are still random, but stick with it and you'll get a bunch of rare Pokémon.



KIRBY'S BLOCK BALL

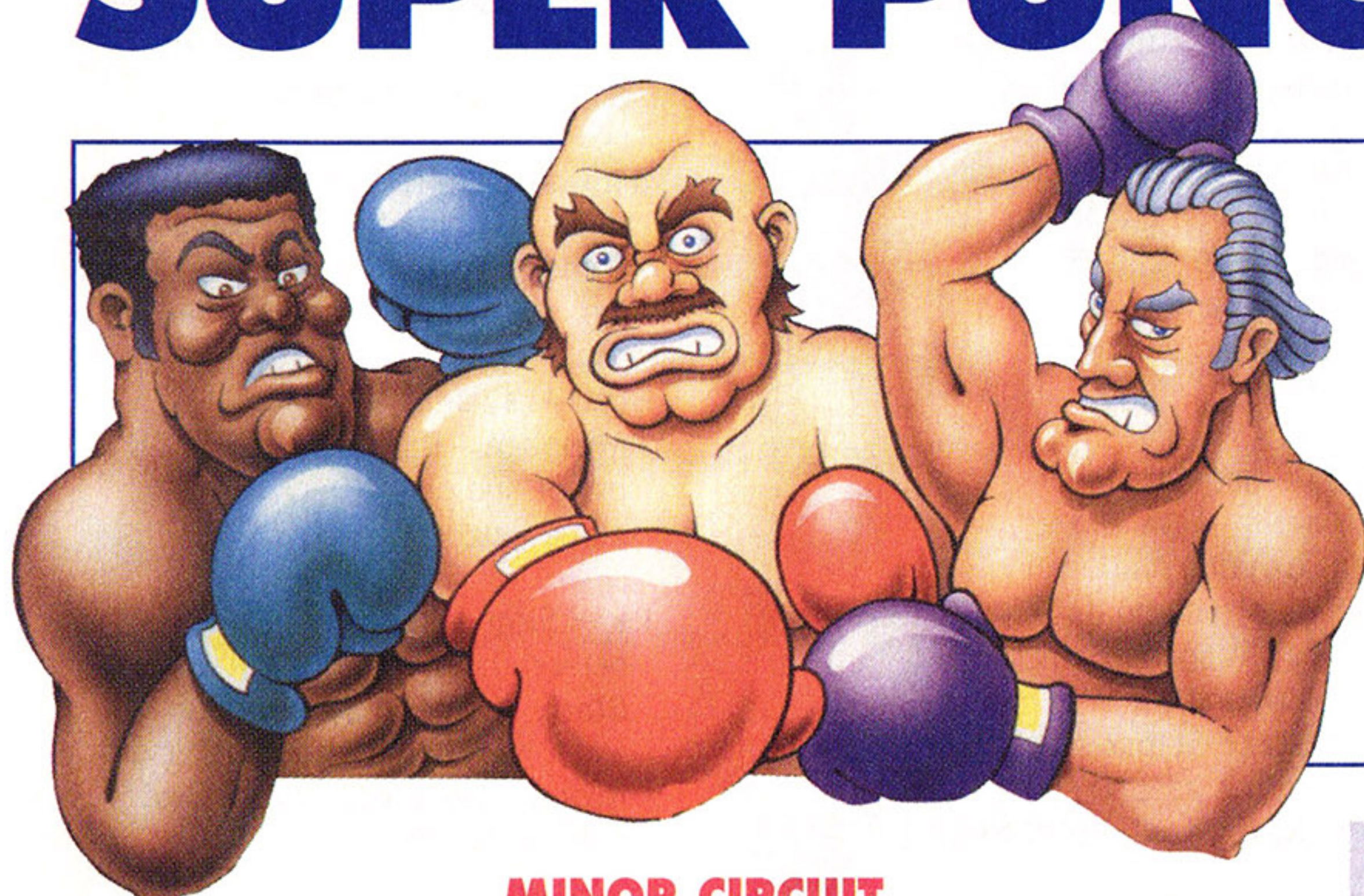
Level 11 – To get to a bonus level, beat all of the first 10 levels' Border Line scores. Now, a bridge shows up to take you to the elusive Level 11.

Bonus Round Select – Simply press the **A** button while you're grooving with Level 11, and you can practice bonus rounds till the Kirbys come home.



SNES

SUPER PUNCH-OUT!!



FIGHTING TIPS

- Left jab is your fastest punch. Use it to measure how many times you can strike an opponent on a counter-attack.
- After knocking down an opponent, jam on the buttons to regain your health.
- Knock Out punches do a lot of damage. Don't forget to use them when your meter's full.
- Master defense as well as offense. Most opponents hit a lot harder than you, so ducking and blocking are crucial.
- To unlock Special Circuit, you must have a 4-0 record in each of the three previous circuits.
- Float like a butterfly, sting like a mosquito.

MINOR CIRCUIT



GABBY JAY

The pushover of all pushovers. A dead dolphin caught in a fishing net could beat this guy. Just punch away at him. If he backs up for his "Come on!" charge, just nail him in the gut.

Our Best Time: 0:10:88



BEAR HUGGER

This big lump of crud should pose little threat. You usually can't harm him with gut shots, so go for the face. When he blocks, make sure to duck his counter, then assault his facial structure. He'll then be renamed Fish Sleeper.

Our Best Time: 0:19:90



PISTON HURRICANE

This Cuban incarnation of Piston Honda from the original Punch-Out has some sweet moves, but there's a foolproof way to take him down in under 15 seconds. Depending on his stance, throw head or body shots at him until your Knock Out meter is up. Then hit him with hard body blow KO punches until he goes down. Do that again, and he won't get up to get beat down a third time.

Our Best Time: 0:10:71



BALD BULL

This is the champion of the Minor Circuit. Big whoop. Take him out the same way you did on the NES: When he charges you, nail him in the gut on the third hop. If he comes up short, punch for the guts on the second hop. Adios, cue ball. You must master this, because he'll automatically do it nonstop after the second knockdown.

Our Best Time: 0:28:73

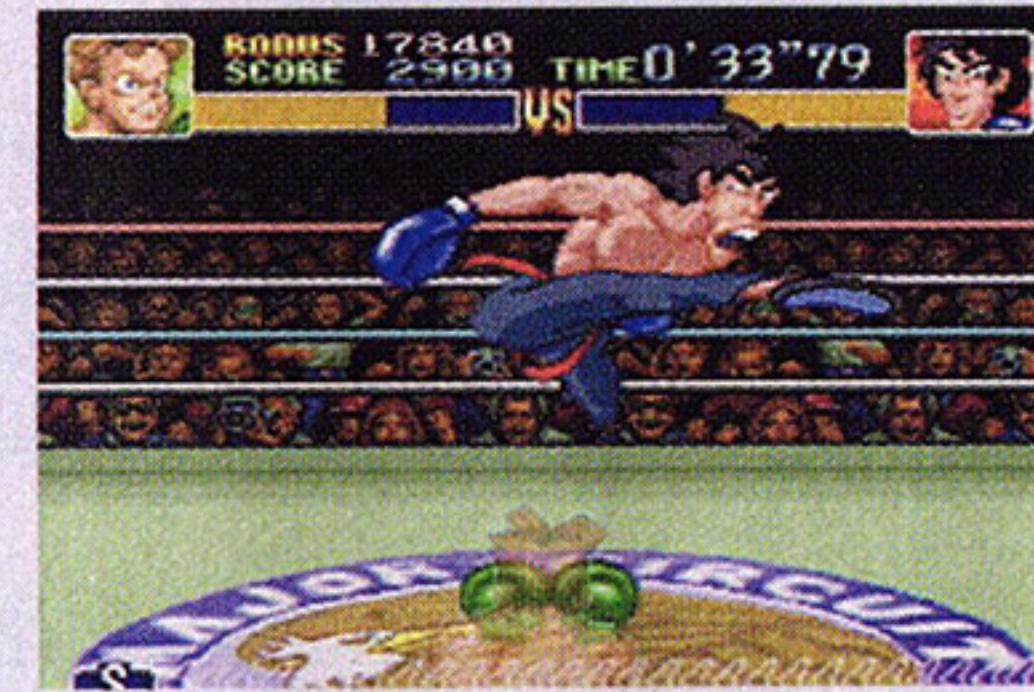
MAJOR CIRCUIT



BOB CHARLIE

This guy doesn't have any money moves to exploit. Rather, he requires solid skills to take out. Be in counter-attack mode most of the match. When he comes at you with his twisting punches, duck out of the way. If he comes at you with arms wide open (Die, Creed!), one gut shot will bring him down.

Our Best Time: 0:29:07



DRAGON CHAN

Chan's the first guy to use an unorthodox style (a.k.a. cheating). His kicks are bad news. When he starts doing kicks in place, just sidestep him, then toss a body blow on his last one. When he bounces off the turnbuckles, make sure to time your ducks so he won't hit you. Once he lands, attack the face.

Our Best Time: 0:42:82



MASKED MUSCLE

This guy should be in a wrestling ring, not a boxing ring. He's the reincarnation of Soda Popinski. When he goes to spit, you'd better move out of the way. His double headbutt also requires some evasive action, in the form of a long dodge. Hold the button down, just in case. When he shakes his hand, he's going to punch high then low. Just block and lay waste.

Our Best Time: 0:32:69



MR. SANDMAN

The Major Circuit champ is a slouch, but only until you piss him off. When his hands pump twice, he's going high, high, then low. Make sure to dodge the low, since you can't block it. After being downed twice, he'll turn on the fury of a thousand souls, or something. Be wary of his triple uppercut combo, be fast with your specials, and take him out for the last time.

Our Best Time: 0:41:56

WORLD CIRCUIT



ARAN RYAN

Aran Ryan. A. Ryan. Aryan. Get it? Taking out this bigot with a mullet is your biggest task so far. If you hit him with a KO punch that doesn't eliminate all his health, he'll dish out a powerful hug to uppercut attack. You can counter by hitting his gut when he moves his hands, but it's tough. He'll also come at you with alternating strikes. For this, block low, high, low, high, low, high, then dodge the uppercut and counter. He'll alternate again, this time starting high.

Our Best Time: 0:47:22



HEIKE KAGERO

Fighting this guy is almost tougher than trying to pronounce his name. He's a hard hitter, despite his effeminate appearance. When he starts to teleport, throw left-handed body shots to try and knock him out of it, dodging if you miss. He'll also brush his hair, then come at you with it twice. Dodge the first, duck the second, and unload on his face. His other signature move is a body blow combo followed by an uppercut. Just block low twice, dodge, and counter away.

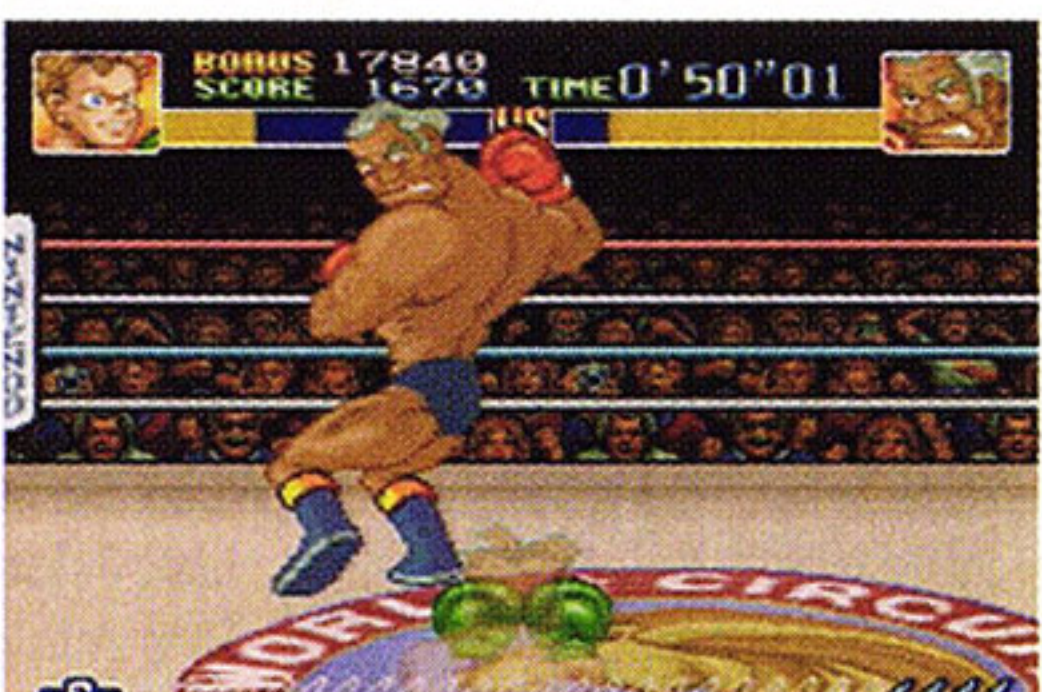
Our Best Time: 0:41:97



MAD CLOWN

He looks strangely like Bear Hugger, but this Frenchy is much harder. He'll try to hug you as well. Make sure to duck this. If he gets you, mash the buttons, then be very wary of the following uppercut. Leave his body alone. Keeping with the circus gimmick, he will jump back and start throwing balls at you. Pause the game to see where the gap in the balls is. Duck the charge after, and lay waste to him. He also does a lot of feigning attacks, which require a keen eye to counter. Knock him down twice, and he'll go ape on you. It's best to let him knock you down once (especially if you're going for time), because he'll stop when you get up.

Our Best Time: 0:44:24



SUPER MACHO MAN

One of Punch-Out's big-time players, Macho is a chore this time as well. His nostalgic corkscrew punches are back. He'll spin between one and three times. Duck each one, then plug the back of his skull when he stops. His three exercise programs are easily countered. A is a series of jabs, which you can block high. Program B is three body blows, so block low. Finally, Exercise Program C is a series of three uppercuts, easily dodged. Get back in the gym, Mr. 'Roid Rage.

Our Best Time: 0:40:62



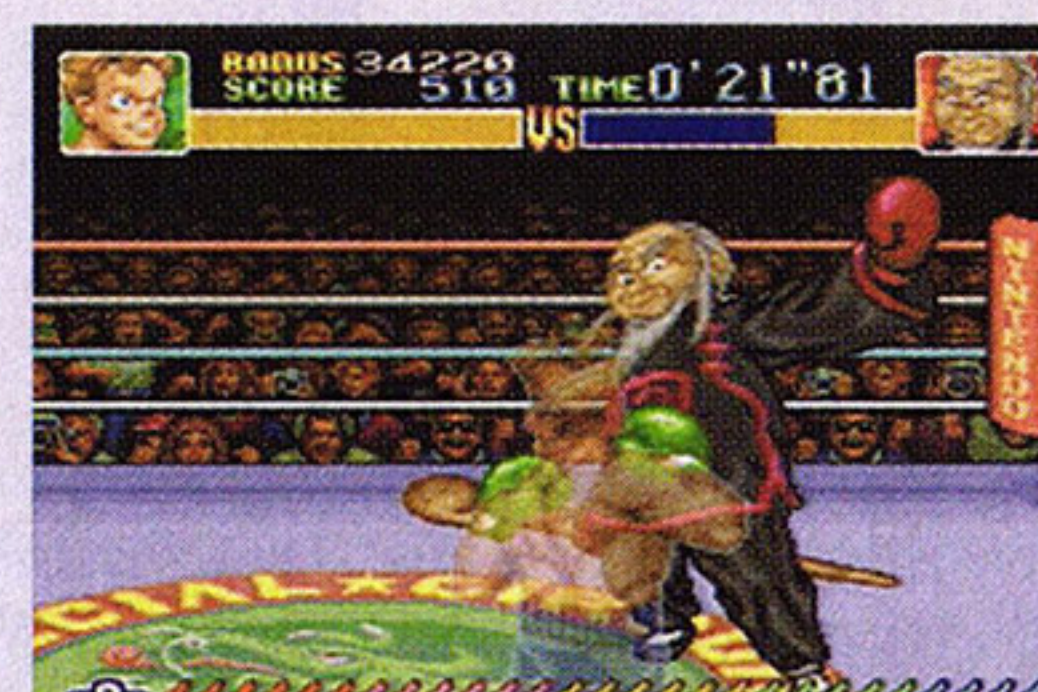
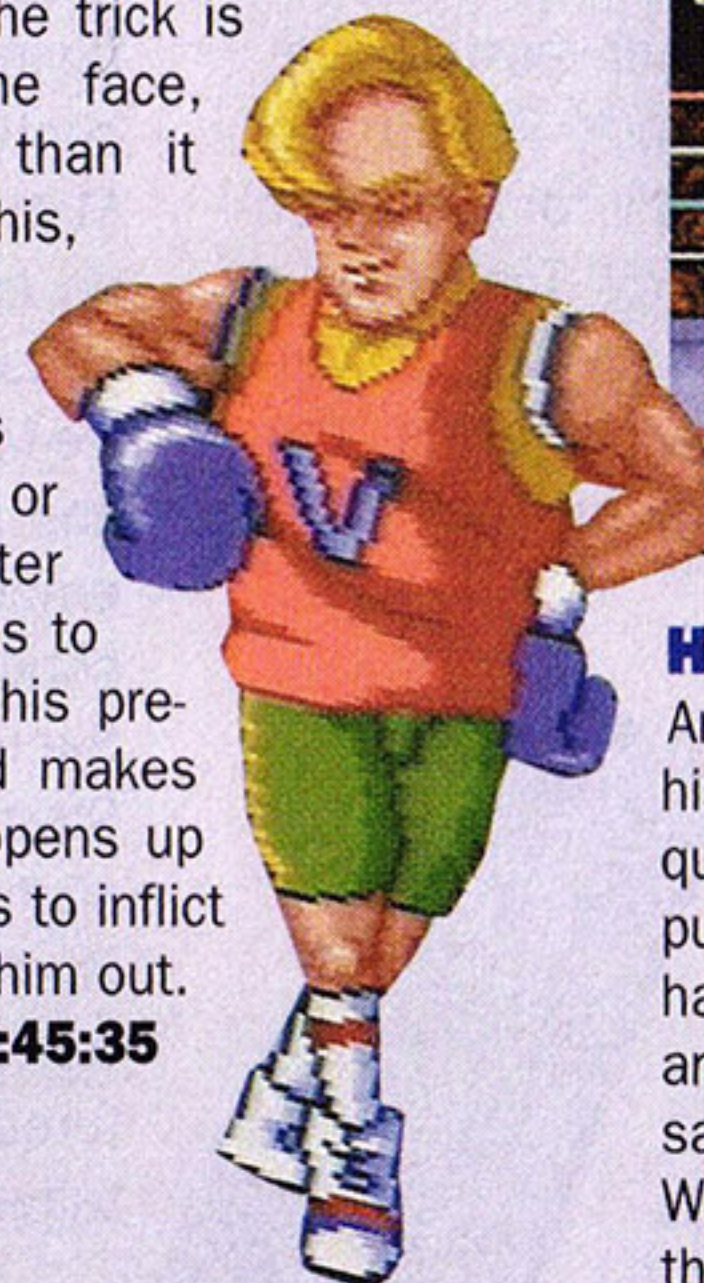
SPECIAL CIRCUIT



NARCIS PRINCE

Here's another pretty-boy who packs a punch. The trick is to hit him in the face, which is harder than it sounds. To do this, dodge his uppercut and throw a gut shot, block his three-jab combo, or body-blow counter one of his punches to stun him. Having his precious face dented makes Prince mad, but opens up more opportunities to inflict damage and take him out.

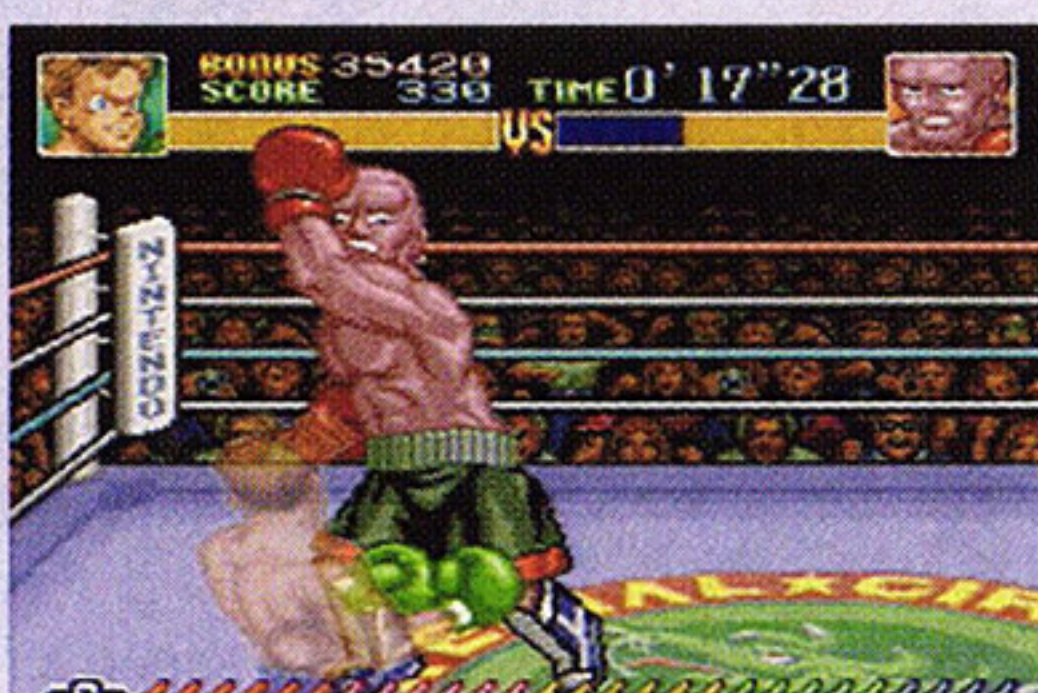
Our Best Time: 0:45:35



HOY QUARLOW

Another cheat from out east, Quarlow uses his staff with great precision, necessitating quick dodges and blocks. Also, you must punch him with alternating left and right hands. He has many combinations of high and low attacks that start out looking the same, so you must be fast on your feet. When he goes from one side of the ring to the other, making slashing strikes, dodge the opposite direction, and be ready to counter. His palm strike and spinning back-fist are strong attacks as well; sometimes they come one after the other.

Our Best Time: 0:45:50



RICK BRUISER

Don't bother trying to beat Rick to the punch. He'll either block and send an elbow to your arm that can put it out of commission for a while, or rear back with a big counter of his own. This counter follows every KO punch you hit him with, too. When he flickers, he'll go downstairs, upstairs, then uppercut. React accordingly. If he steps back, he'll come in with two punches. Only dodge once, but hold down the direction to stay there, or you'll be floored. His other dangerous move is a double attack, uppercut then elbow.

Our Best Time: 0:49:26



NICK BRUISER

You'll need to rely on all the skills you've learned for Nick. There's no quick way to beat him. Keep a clear head - his punches hurt A LOT. Like Hoy, he needs to be hit with alternating hands. Like Rick, he can take out your arms (both at once, even). When he backs up and flies at you (always around 26 seconds in), dodge, don't duck. This is a knock-down attack. He'll then toss two jabs. Duck those, and you'll have ample time to lay the smack down. When you hear a bellowing noise, he's coming at you with alternating low and high punches. Block these (you'll still lose lots of health), and look out for the uppercut. You can sneak in a stunner after the high ones, but it's tough. He usually does this late in the match. Good luck!

Our Best Time: 1:22:56

GAMECUBE TOTAL CONTROL

Manufacturer: Innovation

Website: www.innovation1.com • **List Price:** 19.99

Do you hate the GameCube controller? Well, never fear, Innovation has created a device that will allow you to use the PlayStation 2's Dual Shock 2 instead. All you have to do is plug this device into one of the GameCube's controller ports, then insert the Dual Shock 2 into the other side. We used it for a number of games, including Tony Hawk, and didn't experience any difficulties whatsoever. Where's the Total Control device for Xbox?



MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE

Manufacturer: Mattel

Website: www.mattel.com

List Price: \$7.99-\$24.99

Last year, Mattel reissued a handful of figures from the original line of Masters of the Universe toys that debuted in 1982. Rather than continue this nostalgic line, Mattel has opted to create an entirely new series. Designed by the legendary sculpting team the Four Horsemen, He-Man has been completely reinvented and is ready to take on a whole new generation of evil. The first wave of figures should be out by this fall and includes He-Man, Skeletor, Man-At-Arms, Beast Man, Mer-Man, and Stratos. Additional series will be released and vehicles such as the Battle Ram Chariot, and creatures like Battle Cat and Panthor, are expected to release by the end of the year. If you're a He-Man fan, these figures are well worth owning. From what we hear, Mattel hopes to continue this line for years to come. In the future, Teela, Orko (pictured), Ram Man, Trap Jaw, Whiplash, and Mekaneck will join this exciting series of toys. Each figure has a tentative retail price of \$7.99.



DREAMCAST VCD & MP3 PLAYER

Manufacturer: Innovation

Website: www.innovation1.com

List Price: \$29.99

This inexpensive little gadget allows gamers to play VCD movies and MP3 CDs on the Dreamcast. It supports version 2.0 VCD playback and most MP3 CDs, and comes with a wireless remote with over 20 functions. If you're not familiar with the VCD format, the picture quality isn't as sharp as DVD, but it's definitely a step above the VHS format. Most retailers don't specialize in VCDs, but you can purchase them online at www.videocds.com and www.vcdgallery.com.



X-SELECTOR

Manufacturer: Innovation

Website: www.innovation1.com

List Price: \$19.99

This miniscule Xbox replica is actually a switch box that supports up to four different systems. Any video game console, movie player, or audio device can be plugged into this cute little gizmo. The green circle on the top of the mini-Xbox is the power switch. The Open Tray button is the selector that cycles through the devices you have connected. It's actually pretty cool, but to much dismay, it only supports standard A/V cables.



EVERQUEST: RUINS OF KURNAK

Manufacturer: Wildstorm

Website: www.dccomics.com

List Price: \$5.95

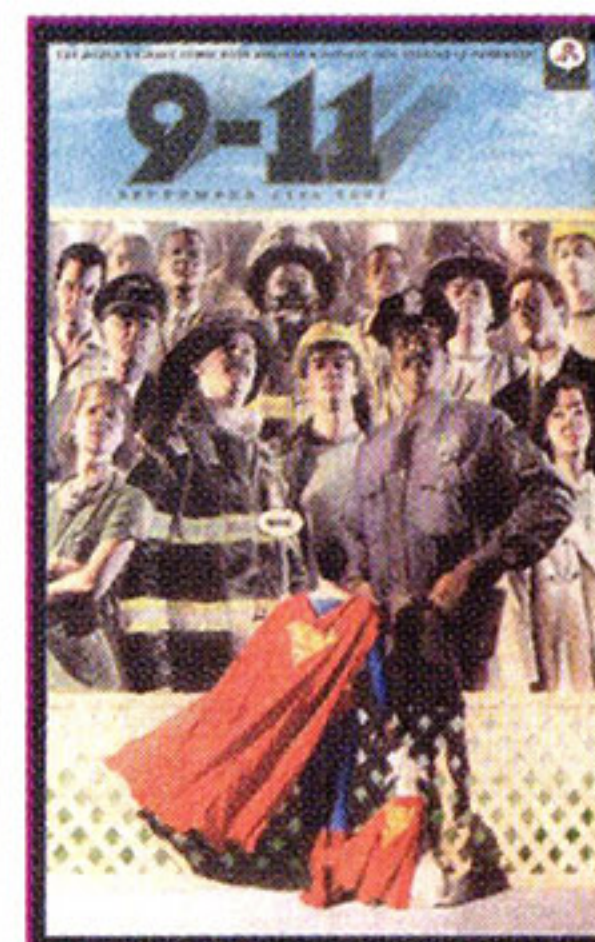
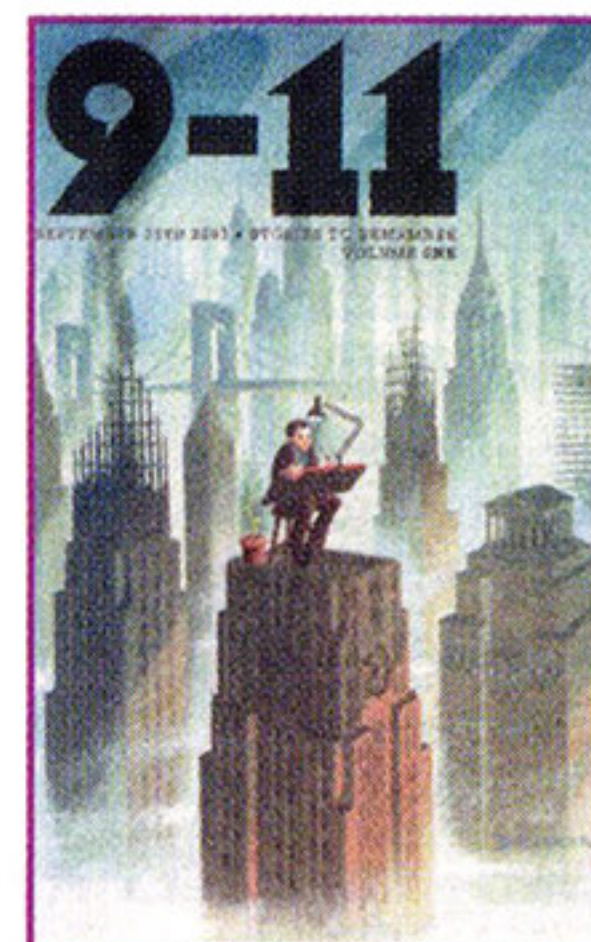
This offbeat graphic novel clocks in at 48 pages and is written and penned by the infamous Jim Lee. We were hoping the story would follow the exploits of the game – you know, running around aimlessly for 47 pages, then finally killing a rat on the last page – but it actually centers around Princess Firiona Vie and the Elven Armies. This comic is already on newsstands and will be joined by a monthly series and additional graphic novels. Apparently, Jim Lee is a huge EverQuest fan, so his work should appease all of the players out there.

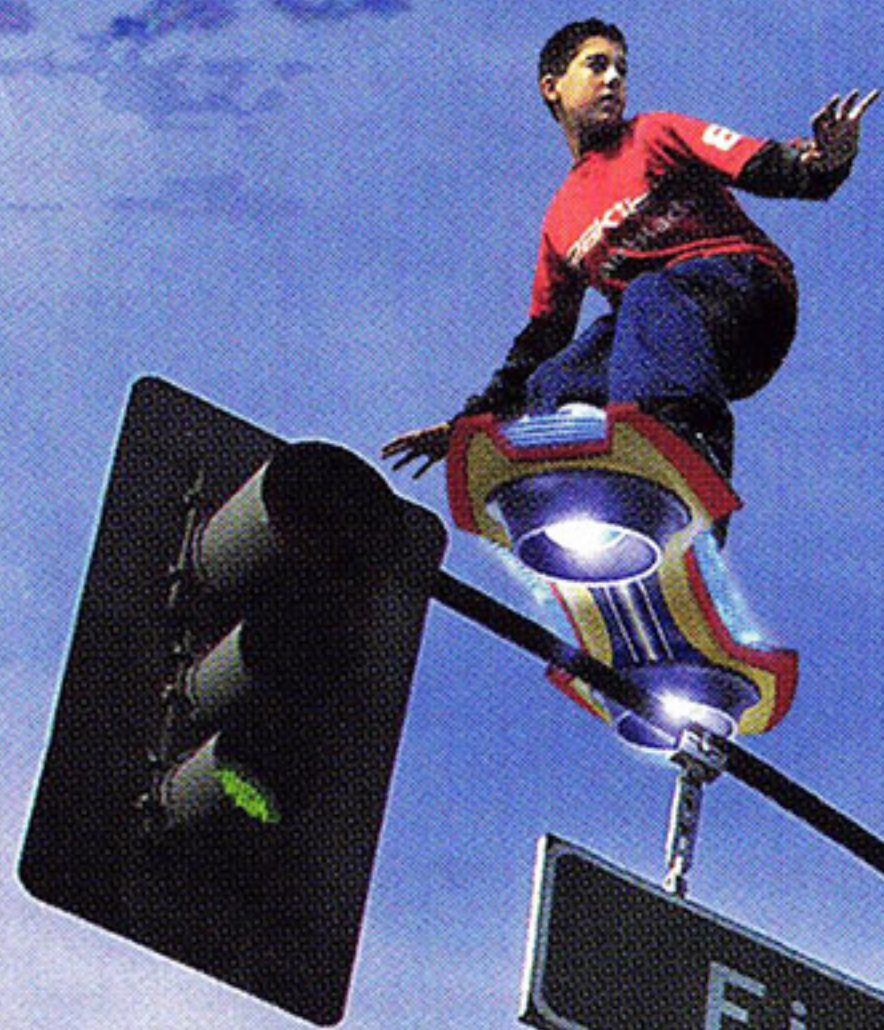


9-11

Manufacturer: Quebecor Printing • **Website:** N/A • **List Price:** \$9.95

From Frank Miller to the legendary Will Eisner, the greatest writers and artists in comics have joined forces to honor the events surrounding the September 11 tragedy. Through two expansive volumes, emotionally charged stories and gorgeous illustrations combine to create what will be some of the most talked about and collectible comic books of all-time. Some of the stories are profoundly touching, while others are extremely controversial. All the contributors were given complete freedom to express their views. Both volumes feature a cover price of \$9.95, and all of the profits will benefit victims of the September 11 attacks. Volume I is a 192-page softcover with color and black-and-white illustrations. Volume II is a full-color softcover with 224 pages and cover art by Alex Ross.





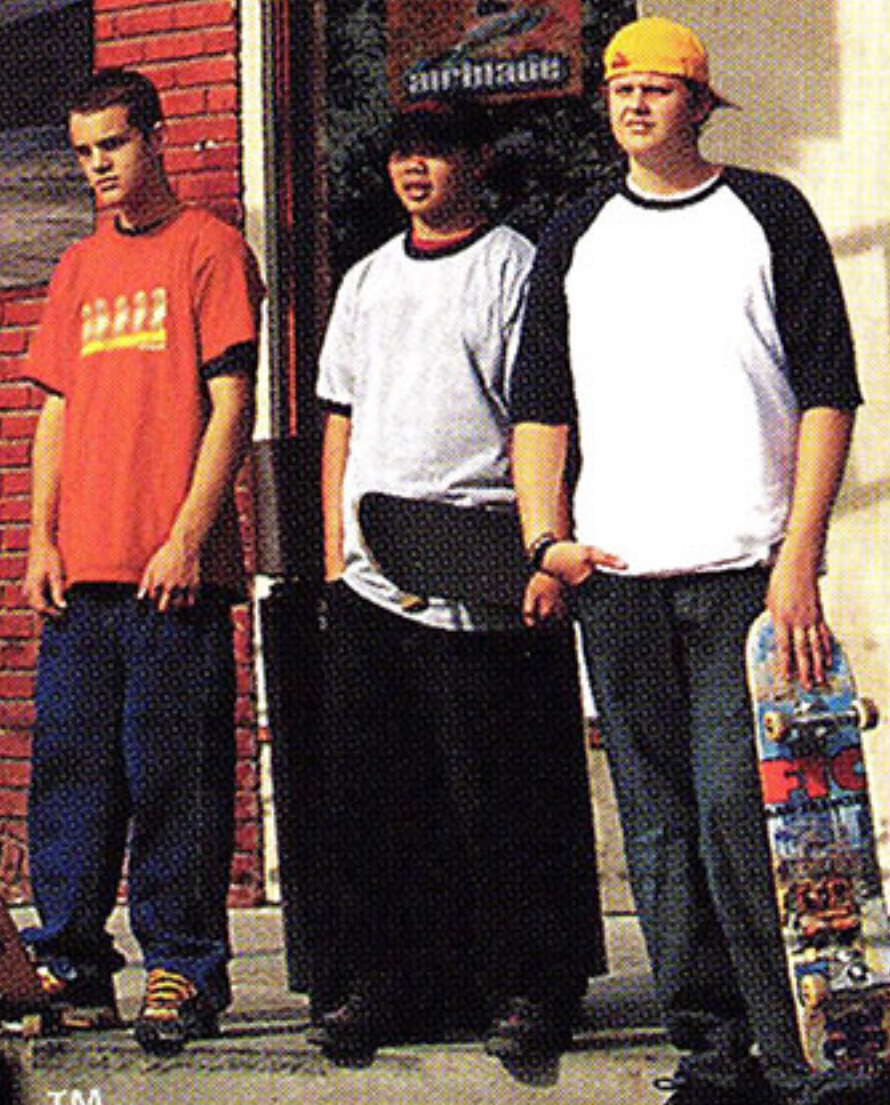
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