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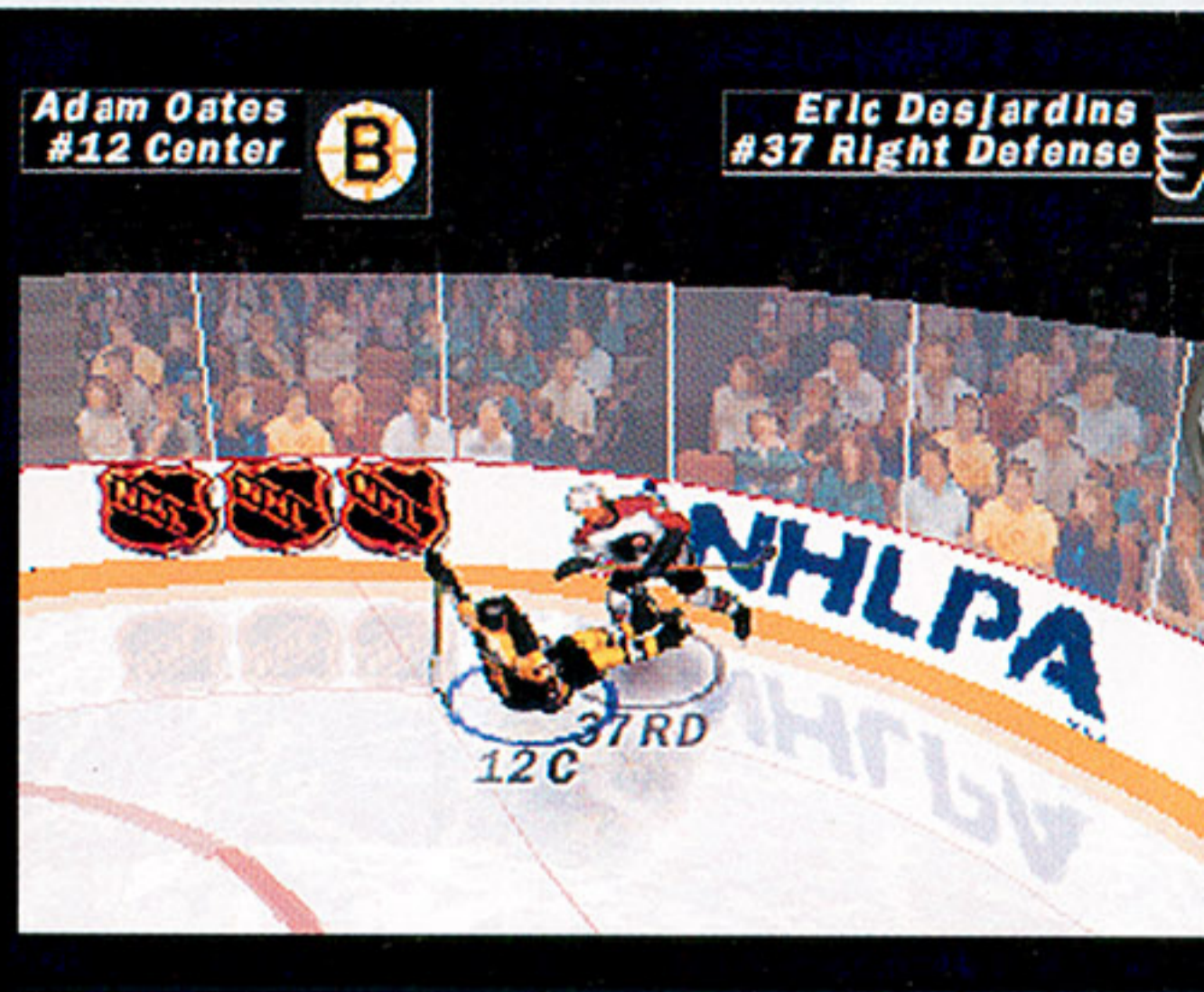
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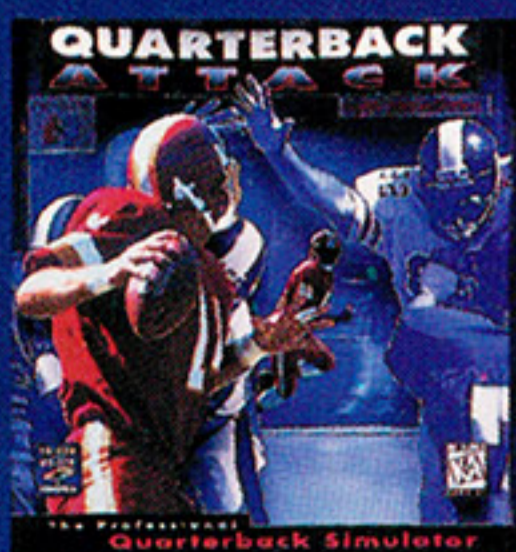
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# Contributing Staff



**Chris Bieniek**

Chris has been acting all nutty and stuff ever since The Atari Quest!



**Frank O'Connor**

A Jack-of-all-trades, Frank is our resident TEKKEN champion! AAARRGH!!!



**Brian Patrick O'Toole**

If he's not playing PFX, Brian's usually tracking down fresh leads!



**Tyrone Rodriguez**

When it comes to fighting games, you just can't touch this guy! We're proud!



**Geoff Higgins**

Word has it that Geoff is still seeing CIVILIZATION icons in his sleep. Yeesh!



**Wataru Maruyama**

He's recently taken time off to scan the arcades in search of unwary foes.

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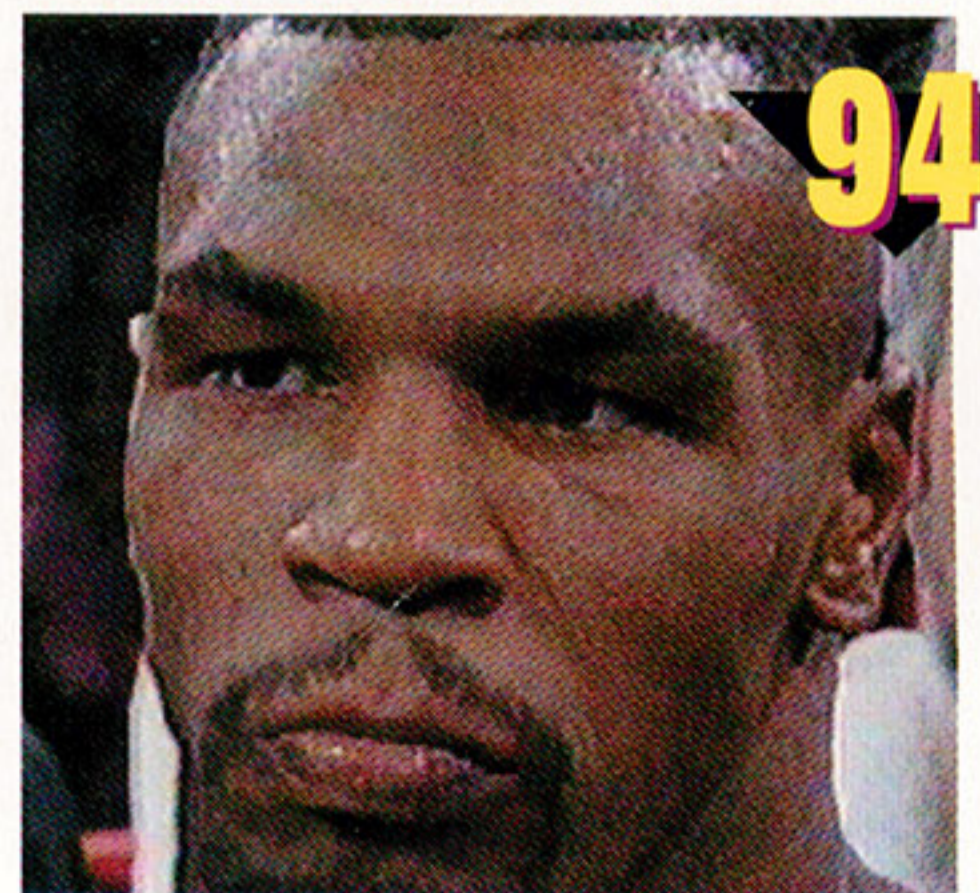
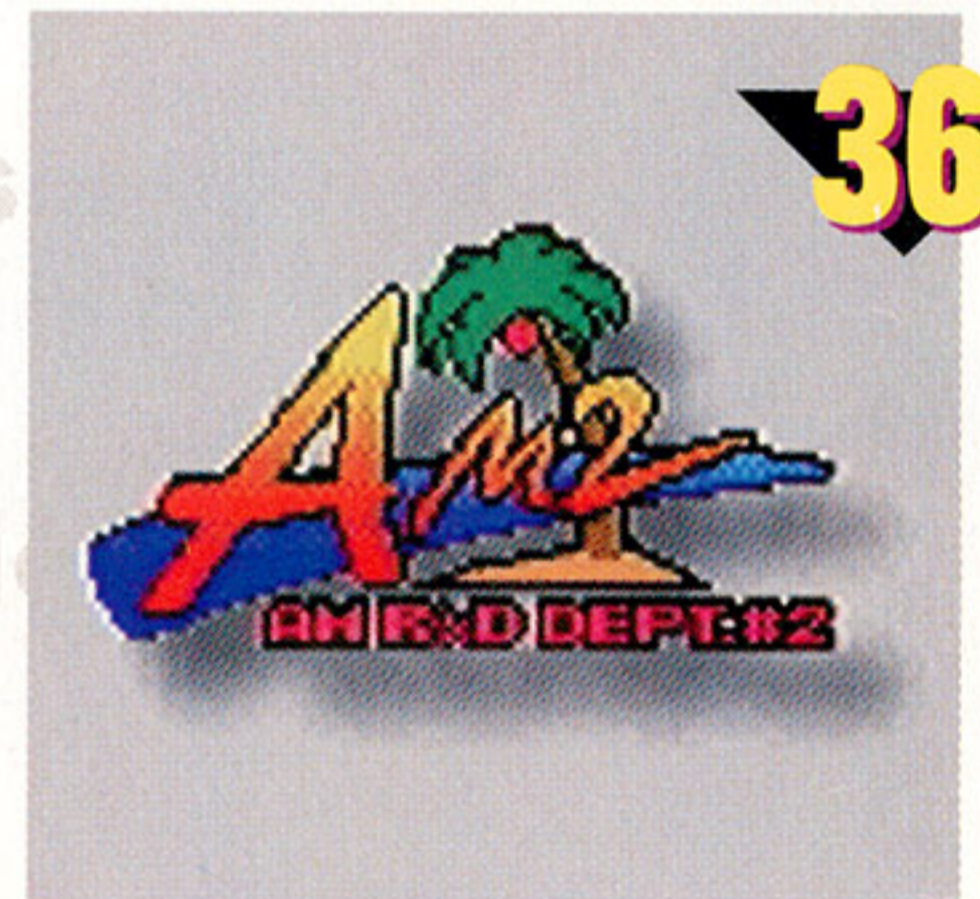
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So you've got 300 bucks to spend on a system. But which one? Think of this as your comprehensive guide to the system wars as they stand right now. We expose the weapons, the armies and the ammunition.

## The Atari Quest

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Yes! Atari products you thought you'd never see, but we found 'em! Some people in this world would kill a man to get his paws on a copy of *Tempest* for the 2600. Thank God it didn't come to that...

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# Plugged In...

## So many games and so little cash

It was a good Christmas. As gamers, we had a bigger selection of hardware and games than ever before. A greater selection is always good news for the consumer, but it also means that even more difficult buying decisions need to be made. The past year hailed the debut of four brand-new systems: PlayStation, Saturn, Nomad and Virtual Boy. And once those choices are made, what about the games? There are so many, yet just a few games can easily set you back another couple of big ones. A game player can go broke in a heartbeat.

But buying decisions have always been difficult. And expensive. Atari 2600 or Odyssey<sup>2</sup>? Intellivision or ColecoVision? One dilemma I faced was back in 1989, when two new game systems went head-to-head: The Genesis and the TurboGrafix 16. I practically spent entire days at Toys 'R Us staring through the display case going over the pros and cons of those two consoles (images of **Altered Beast** and **Keith Courage** are burned into my brain cells to this day). But I made my decision, and before going off to college, I had received a shiny new Genesis system as a gift (my girlfriend was eager to please). After playing **Last Battle** and **Ghouls N' Ghosts**, I was blown away.

It was off to school! I had very little in the way of disposable income, but I just had to have more of those amazing games! While I attended college in Pittsburgh, I used to scrimp and save every possible cent I could get my hands on in order to buy more game carts. To save money, I remember cooking funny little meals on my \$5.99, 8-inch diameter grill out back behind the apartment complex I was living in. I also remember getting a nice, big fat school loan refund check (they claimed they owed me money, and I wasn't about to argue). From the bank, I headed straight for the toy store and systematically yanked about a dozen or so game cartridge pull-tags. This was gonna be a good day! One last stop at the liquor store for a case of Bud, and I was ready for the weekend. **Strider**. **Phantasy Star 2**. **Castle of Illusion**. **Forgotten Worlds**. **Madden**. Was this a dream? Could this all come to an end?

It did. Sort of. Two weeks later, after blowing my money like a nut-cake on games (and booze), I was back in the real world eating burnt offerings from my rusty little grill. On the upside, I did end up finishing off **Mother** from **PS2**.

These days, on top of the \$300 32-bit hardware and \$60 games, you've got RAM carts, memory cards, link-cables, extra controllers, VR helmets and God-knows-what-else to contend with. All these choices and only so many ways to spend your cash. The ironic thing is, when you do have the money, it's easy to jump the gun and buy like a lunatic.

Spend that Christmas money wisely.



*Jim Loftus*

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- Die Hard Game Fan 93%

"Best home racing game ever"  
- Ultimate Gamer 9/10



# STATIC

## Reach out and touch someone...

Okay, so we get our say all the time, but we want to know what you guys are thinking. Opinions, objections, questions and answers. Send us your letters and the star letter each month wins the game of your choice on any system.

Static, ULTIMATE GAMER, 8484 Wilshire Blvd. Suite 350  
Beverly Hills, CA 90211

### NINTENDO IS COOL

Dear ULTIMATE GAMER,  
I love your magazine. After reading it, all other computer mags that I usually read fail to compare to the accuracy and quality of your magazine. Enough said! I have some questions that I need to have answered. Please, for my sanity's sake... help!

Do you think that the Saturn, PSX, etc. are designed specifically for polygon fighting games and 3-D type games? If this seems true, then when these trends die out and new trends (different types of games) come about, then these next gen systems will be crap at playing them because they're only designed for a few types of games. Therefore, when trends change, we'll need to buy expensive add-ons.

In this respect, Nintendo is totally cool and instead of upgrading the machines, they upgrade the chips inside the games. Maybe that's why they are making the Ultra 64 cartridge compatible. Hah, hah. Didn't think of that one did you?

By the way, please write the pros and the cons of each new machine and decide for me which machine to buy because I'm going mad trying to decide.

Jason Andas  
London, England

**You're in luck, Jason. Check out our monstrous, no-holds-barred "System Wars '96" feature in this issue!**

### FED UP

Dear ULTIMATE GAMER,  
What the hell is wrong with Nintendo? Can't they see that they're really screwing up with the Ultra 64? I don't care about the delayed launch, but what's the big deal with them staying cartridge-based? Everyone knows that CDs are much better. They've got better sound, more storage capacity and are a lot cheaper to manufacture.

Do you think Nintendo will realize they're making a mistake and change to CD format? If so, how long do you think it would take them to switch everything

over to CD?

Oh, one last thing: What exactly is M-Peg? Does Saturn or PlayStation have it? Will the Ultra have it? Thanks.

Martin Yates  
Trenton, NJ

**You've got a valid point, Martin. We have to wonder ourselves what Nintendo would have to gain in going cart-based with its Ultra 64. Certainly CDs are much cheaper to manufacture. They're also capable, as you mentioned, of storing large amounts of data. But the real reason behind the decision is, according to Nintendo, the fact that CDs are too slow with access times.**



**Are polygon games like VIRTUA FIGHTER REMIX merely a passing trend?**

**Data can be retrieved from a cartridge at lightning speed; even faster than the fastest quad-speed CD drives on the planet. It seems Nintendo will not sacrifice gameplay for the sake of CD costs. M-Peg is a standardized format for video compression for carts and CDs. Full-Motion Video eats up an awful lot of data, and for even just a few minutes of FMV to fit onto a CD efficiently, for example, that data must be compressed in order to fit. Saturn does not have M-Peg capabilities built-in, but there is a Saturn movie card (it retails for around \$200) which is essentially M-Peg. The card is available on import, but whether it will be released here in the States is**

**another question entirely. No, the PlayStation does not have M-Peg built-in. Ultra? Theoretically, it's possible, but it's still too early to know for sure.**

### THE WONDER YEARS

Dear ULTIMATE GAMER,  
First of all, I'm sure you like to hear praise and all, so here it goes: Good job! You're one of only a few (two that I know of) gaming magazines aimed at adults. Thank you! Now more importantly, I have a few things I would like to comment on about video games.

The first being, thank you so much for including a retro column. I look forward to reading about the good ol' days of video gaming every month. I thoroughly enjoyed Flashback: Atari 2600. I still own my Atari and play it often. In fact, I still buy games for it too. (Yes, you can still find them...you just have to look!).

Which leads me to my first point: gameplay. It seems to me that while there are a lot of enjoyable games on the market, none are coming close to many of the original, classic arcade games.

It really hit me the other day while playing a rousing game of **Millipede**—a colored block shooting other colored blocks in the midst of even more colored blocks, while blocky looking blocks tried to kill you (for anybody under the age of 20 who's confused). I must have played for over two hours non-stop, yet I didn't even realize the time. There are numerous games like this available for the 2600. **Galaxian, Joust, SeaQuest, Keystone Kapers, Q\*Bert, Defender, Asteroids**, and, probably my all time favorite—**Missile Command**. Back then developers had to concentrate on gameplay...not 3-D rendered graphics, not realistic blood, not a killer soundtrack. All they worried about was, "Is this fun?"

And coming to my second point, just what the hell happened to Atari? Are a bunch of clowns running that place or what? I'm unfortunate enough to own a Jaguar. Atari really blew this one. Don't



Are retro games like **MISSILE COMMAND** VR enough to boost Jaguar sales?

get me wrong, it is a great system, but talk about not taking advantage of a year's head start! Numerous software delays, horrible games, a much-delayed CD attachment, and just bad advertising. It's sad to say, but I think Atari is never going to make any headway with this system. (Although the new ad campaign actually made me laugh.)

Atari's big problem is not giving the gamer what he wants. This sort of ties into my point above, but what game was the highest rated and most popular for the Jag? **Tempest 2000**, of course. Atari should have immediately set hard at work on a 2000 series. Sure, **Defender 2000** is set to come out in December, but there should have been something out months ago. Atari could have really cashed in on nostalgia, but they didn't and once again blew it.

In my opinion, magazines have been all but truthful in their reviews of Jag carts. And any anti-Atari comments are just truths that Atari fans don't want to accept. As a Jag owner, the only people I blame are Sam Tramiel and all those other bozos who operate Atari.

I was going to buy the Jag CD, but opted instead to buy the Sony Playstation. I would rather buy a system that is 1) supported by its own company 2) supported by other companies and 3) is just superior in every way.

Unless Atari pulls off a big miracle, they had better start planning their next attack.

Matt Solovey  
MountainTop, PA

## EARTH CALLING SEGA

To: Tom Kalinske

Sega of America

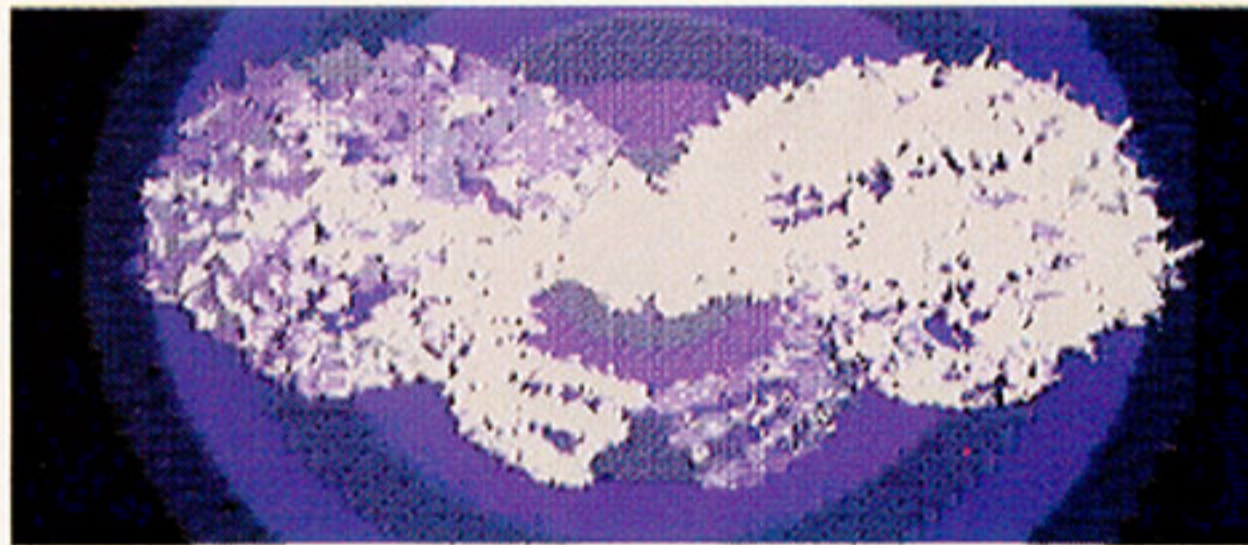
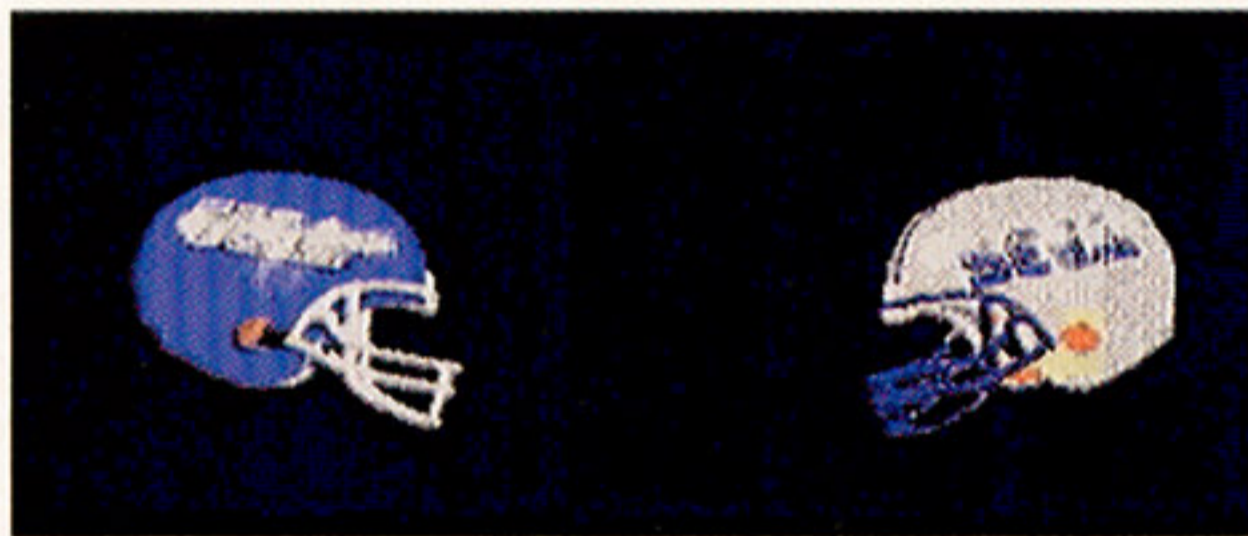
Dear Tom,

Let me preface this letter by saying that I've been a loyal Sega customer for over

five years. When I bought my Genesis in early 1990 there really wasn't any competition and frankly it was Electronic Arts sports titles that made me loyal to the platform. A friend of mine bought Genesis so he could play **Madden**, and I bought my dad a Genesis so he could play.

Then in 1993 I bought a Sega CD and frankly, my opinion of Sega has been declining ever since. After **Joe Montana** CD football had been hyped for more than six months as the greatest football game of all time, I eagerly dropped \$230+ for the platform and \$60 for the game. I was so disappointed by the bugs in the game and the poor playability that I actually wrote a letter to customer service. The lip service I received in response was a rude awakening to the arrogance of your company. But because I had three years of good experience as a customer, I remained loyal and didn't run out and buy a 3DO, even though I was tempted.

I did start having questions; If it only



**JOE MONTANA NFL FOOTBALL** for the Sega CD was plagued by glitches and recalled shortly after its initial release.

costs \$3 to physically manufacture a compact disc, a fraction of the cost of a memory chip, why don't CD's sell less than a cartridge? Why can't these cost savings be passed along to us poor saps who invested \$250 for "the next level?" Why weren't more CD's with 4 "classic" games developed and sold? Where are all my issues of Sega Visions that I was promised every time I filled out a customer survey card? Why is Sega treating me like dirt?

Then Christmas 1994 rolled around and the 32X made a debut. I bought one. And I bought four games. That's an investment of about \$370 not including sales tax. My feelings on the matter? Let's see...disappointment, embarrassment, regret and anger. How did I feel when the Saturn was released a mere six

# ULTIMATE GAMER TOP TEN

Wow! It seems we've got quite a lot to choose from this holiday season. This isn't easy, but here are our picks...

**NBA In the Zone**  
PlayStation

**Bladeforce**  
3DO

**Yoshi's Island**  
Super NES

**Warhawk**  
PlayStation

**Twisted Metal**  
PlayStation

**Loaded**  
PlayStation

**Tekken**  
PlayStation

**Virtua Fighter 2**  
Saturn

**Mortal Kombat 3**  
PlayStation

**Virtua Cop**  
Saturn



CREDITS

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months later? Like a sucker!

Does your marketing department have even the remotest idea what the market is like anymore? I am the person who can afford a 32-bit platform. I have the disposable income to buy games. I have influence over other potential customers. So why would you want to alienate me? I think I know even though I'm sure my opinion is falling on deaf ears. Sega and Nintendo have begun to believe their own press releases. Name recognition and hype will only carry sales and loyalty to a limit and I think you've reached yours. When was the last time Sega developed a system that wasn't rushed to market before it was ready? You know that the honest answer is 1989.

But, Tom, I'm not angry, just very, very disappointed. After all, actions speak louder than words, right? That's why I bought a Sony Playstation yesterday.

Regards,  
John E. Van Valkenburg  
No Address

**The law of averages applies here, I'm afraid. With five completely separate platforms to support, there are bound to be some occasional "less-than-thrilling" Sega products. In the case of Sega CD, the system had been living on borrowed time almost from the get-go, with highly-superior technology just around the corner (3DO, for one). In regards to 32X, Sega would have been wise to abort the project altogether. When they realized that a U.S. Saturn launch wouldn't work in time for the holidays (too little software), they cranked out something else to generate sales. Nintendo on the other hand, has approached this same situation in a completely different manner. They realized that the Ultra could not be launched here successfully in time for Christmas of 1995, so they stayed focussed on good, solid Super NES titles. By the way, we passed your letter on to Tom.**

## GOIN' BERZERK

Dear ULTIMATE GAMER,  
Hey! I just woke up. Here's my story.... I'm 25 and have been in the jungle since I burned out on **Donkey Kong** around '84. So naturally, I don't know squat about the game scene now. But about six months ago, a friend of mine turned me on to his Sega Genesis. He had **Mortal Kombat**, **Ms. Pac-Man** and of course, **Sonic 2**. Needless to say, I'm from the old school, so I went straight for the Ms.

Pac-Man cart. Well, after 2 days I was sick of it, so I switched to **Sonic**. I went BERZERK!!! To the store I go.... A new Sega Genesis, **Sonic 2**, **3** and **Sonic & Knuckles**. But I'm not addicted and I'm not in denial, dammit!

This morning, I got up and plugged into my newly-found passion and realized how sick I was of Sonic. So off to the local book store I go to find a gaming mag for new game ideas. ULTIMATE GAMER. Hmm, let's see. It was awesome! A subscription plan is in the works as I look at my bank book. "Poetry in Motion" was excellent. And you're right; gameplay does it. Power does it. And emotional episodes are rewarding. For example, when I finally defeated Robotnik in Sonic 2, I have to admit, I got a little teary. The end was beautiful. But I was pissed when I worked my ass off to get through the other two Sonics and they flopped. Sonic has potential, but for 60 big ones, Sega should show a freakin' movie and serve popcorn as the finale!

Thank you for opening my eyes to a new generation of games. We've come a long way since **Frogger**. And thank you for showing me there's more to life than Sonic. I'm thinking about gutting my Genesis. My cat needs a new litter box.

Chris Harrison  
Four Oaks, N.C.

The ULTIMATE GAMER staff thanks you.



For those who enjoyed our Game Girls feature in the October issue, here's one more to wet your willy.

## K-RAZY EXPERIMENT

Dear ULTIMATE GAMER,  
I've got some questions. How many bits was the 2600? How about the 7800? What would happen if you put a PlayStation processor in a 2600 or a Saturn processor in a ColecoVision?

Green Octopus a.k.a. David Ex  
Grand Blank, MI

**I'm assuming your question regarding what would happen if you put a PlayStation processor in a 2600 pertains to newly acquired graphic enhancements. The answer is, nothing. The games for the 2600 were programmed specifically for the 2600 and would never in a million years be able to recognize the alien architecture. Can you even begin to imagine the bi-planes from **Combat** upgrading to the hovercraft from **Wipeout**, for God's sake?!! As far as bits go, both the 2600 and the 7800 are 8-bit machines.**

## ME SO HORNY

Dear ULTIMATE GAMER,  
I think you've got the best video game mag in the industry. I do have a couple of suggestions for you, though. Bring back the interview and arcade sections. One more thing: Give us more articles like "Game Girls" so we readers know that you guys are totally shameless and will go to any lengths to sell the magazine (that was a compliment). By the way, the Sarah swimsuit picture really caught my attention. How about a whole article on game girls in swimsuits? [insert pathetically sad heavy-breathing sound effects here.—Ed]

In closing, I'm gonna point out the fact that your mag is not only appealing because of the video game coverage, but also because of the blatantly sexist nonsense that fills your hallowed pages. See ya next issue!

Gabriel Hernandez  
Avondale, AZ

**Glad we could be of, er... service, Gabriel. We do our best to see to it that no beautiful game girl goes unnoticed.**

## A NEW SEGA MASCOT?

Dear ULTIMATE GAMER,  
I purchased a Saturn recently, and I am very confident that Sega knows what it's doing. **World Series Baseball** is the best sports game I have ever laid my eyes on! Not only that, but **Daytona** is a blast, especially when played with the steering wheel attachment. I believe that Sega has a very good chance of upsetting Sony's plans for the number one 32-bit spot, even more so now that it's down to \$299. By the way, I've noticed that **Sonic** hasn't shown his face yet. Are there any plans for a Sonic game?

Randy Gross  
Toledo, OH

**We asked Sega directly if there was a**



Does BUG! have what it takes to be Sega's next mascot?

Saturn Sonic in the works, and they told us no. We also wondered why the isometric-viewpoint Sonic arcade game wasn't ported over, and they explained that they want to focus on fresher product. As far as a mascot goes, Sega does appreciate all of the things that Sonic has done for them in the past—like make them filthy rich, for one thing—but they would prefer not to have to rely on him for their next-gen machine.

## THE BIG LIE?

Dear ULTIMATE GAMER,

The import game coverage in your mag is incredible. Your reviews on **Fantastic Pinball**, **Battle Monsters** and **Power Pro Baseball** (a game that will never see the light of day here in the U.S.) were simply amazing.

There is something that's been bothering me for a long time, and although some magazines have touched on part of it, the real answer remains a mystery to me. CDs are cheap to manufacture; this I understand. Big-budget FMV Hollywood-style games cost companies more money than your standard platform game, for example, because they have to pay for all those actors and expensive sets. This bumps up the price of a CD game to around the same amount. But why do CD games like **Daytona** and **Primal Rage** have to cost 50 and 60 bucks? I think that companies are flat-out lying when they tell us, "Our CD games cost this much because of our added expenses." Bull. With **Daytona**, for example, Sega has no actors or sets to pay for, yet it costs the same as **Burn Cycle**. What's up with that?

Jesse Torres  
Sacramento, CA

You have a valid point, Jesse. It does make you wonder about the reasoning behind price-points on CD games. One

possibility is that while there are no FMV-type, "Hollywood" cinemas in **Daytona** (your example), the technology used in creating that 32-bit game is much more sophisticated and hence, requires additional man-power. A logical spin on the whole pricing issue would be for companies to drop prices down by ten or 15 bucks on games that have been previously developed for a system. Porting over a game requires much less effort than creating one from thin air. Think about it.

## PARANOID

Dear ULTIMATE GAMER,

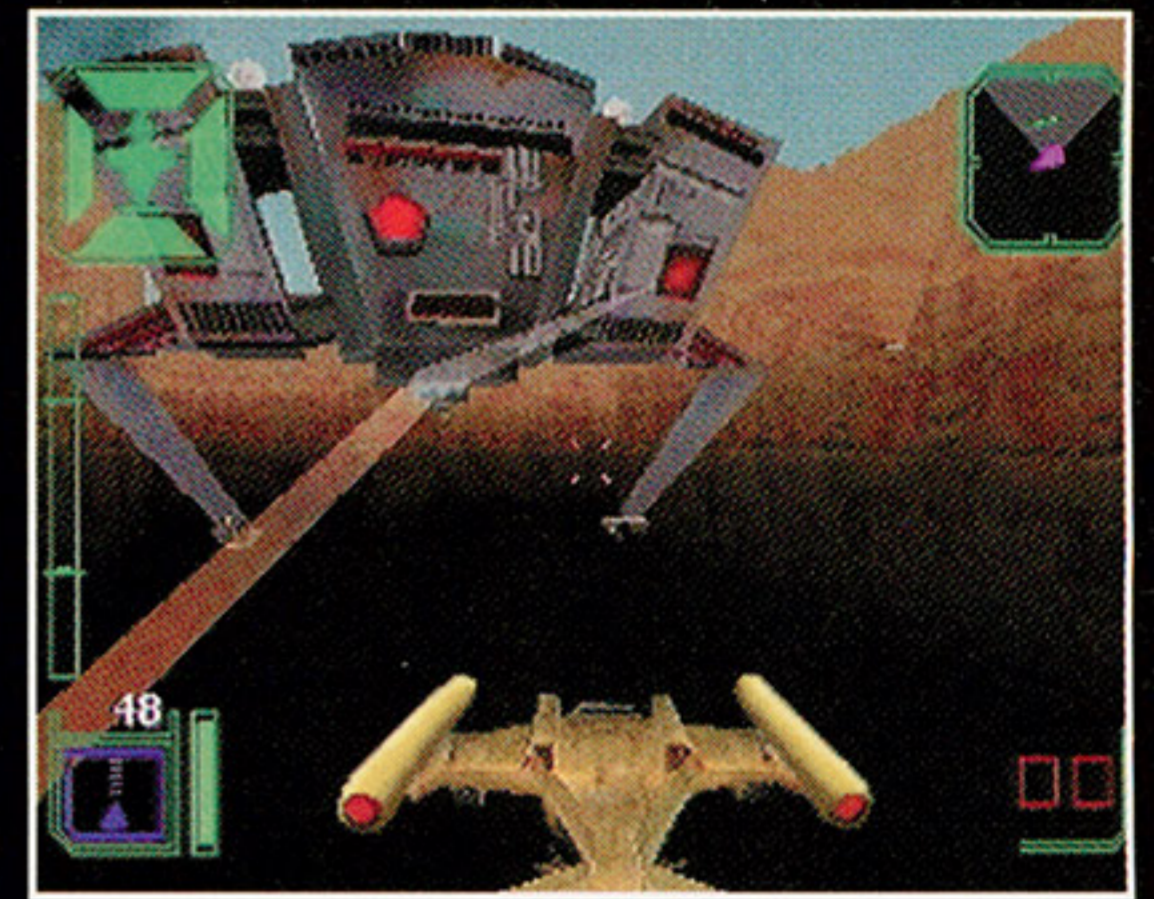
Will Ultra 64 be so awesome that when it comes out next spring, 32-bit will immediately become obsolete? I hope not; I just spent 300 big ones on a PlayStation!

Al Monroe  
No Address

The U64 mystery will come to an end at the Shoshinkai show in Japan. Check back next month for exclusive coverage!

## WHAT THE %\*#@#?

Can you figure out what's wrong with this screen shot from **WARHAWK** (for the PlayStation)? If so, you could win the game of your choice!\*



Send your answers to:  
**What the %\*#@#?, Ultimate Gamer**  
8484 Wilshire Blvd. Suite 350  
Beverly Hills, CA 90211

In the likely event of a tie, we will hold a random drawing. Good luck!

\* Maximum value \$80.00 retail.

## Play Import Games On Your U.S. PlayStation!

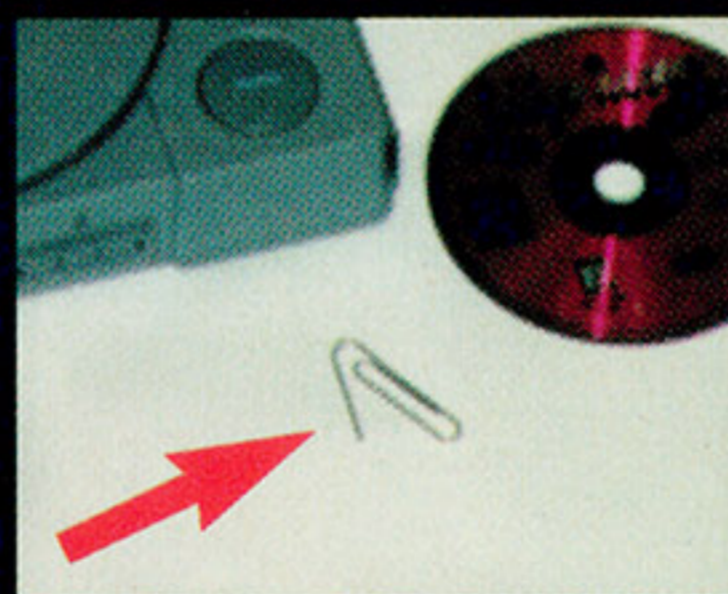
### STEP A:

You'll need a large paper clip and a copy of a U.S. PlayStation game in order to play the Import game.



### STEP B:

Bend the paper clip approximately 45 degrees as shown. Open the CD lid. (do not insert a game yet).



### STEP C:

Turn the power on—with no CD inside. Go to the audio CD menu. Now insert a U.S. game. Do not close the lid.



There's more than one way to do it, but below is the easiest method we could come up with. We can't guarantee that this trick will work for every game, but hey—ya can't have everything! By the way, we do not condone this activity, as it may result in damage to the drive motor. In addition, you may void your system warranty. Proceed at your own risk.



### STEP D:

Wedge the paper clip into the upper right corner of the CD tray and down into the hole on the small button. The CD will begin to spin.



### STEP E:

Once it stops spinning, take the U.S. game out and replace it with the import game. Now exit the audio CD menu screen. Joy!



## WE DON'T NEED NO STEENKEEN' TRICKS!

Working at ULTIMATE GAMER does indeed have its advantages! Many months ago, Sony thoughtfully provided us with several cool Blue Testing Stations like the one pictured on the right. Yes, they're blue, but essentially the same as the retail units, and we can use these very special PlayStations to play Beta versions and imports. Whee!



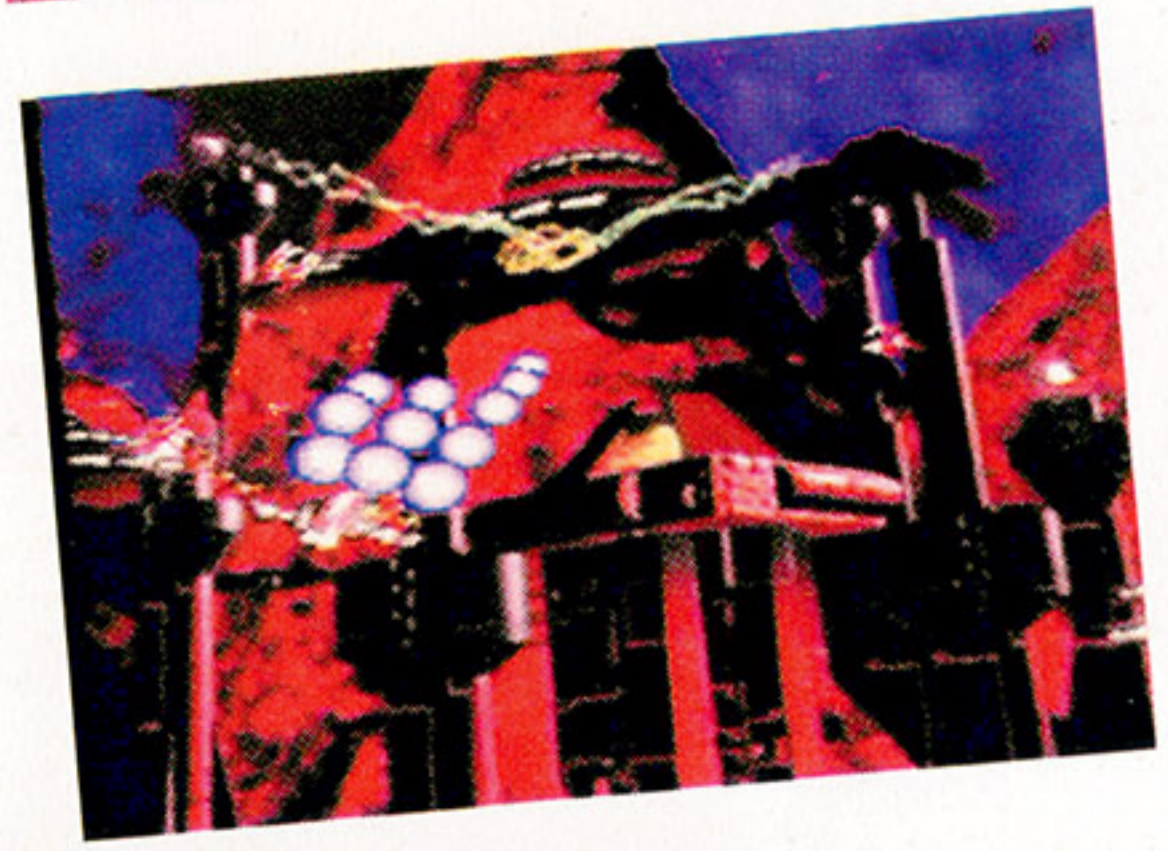
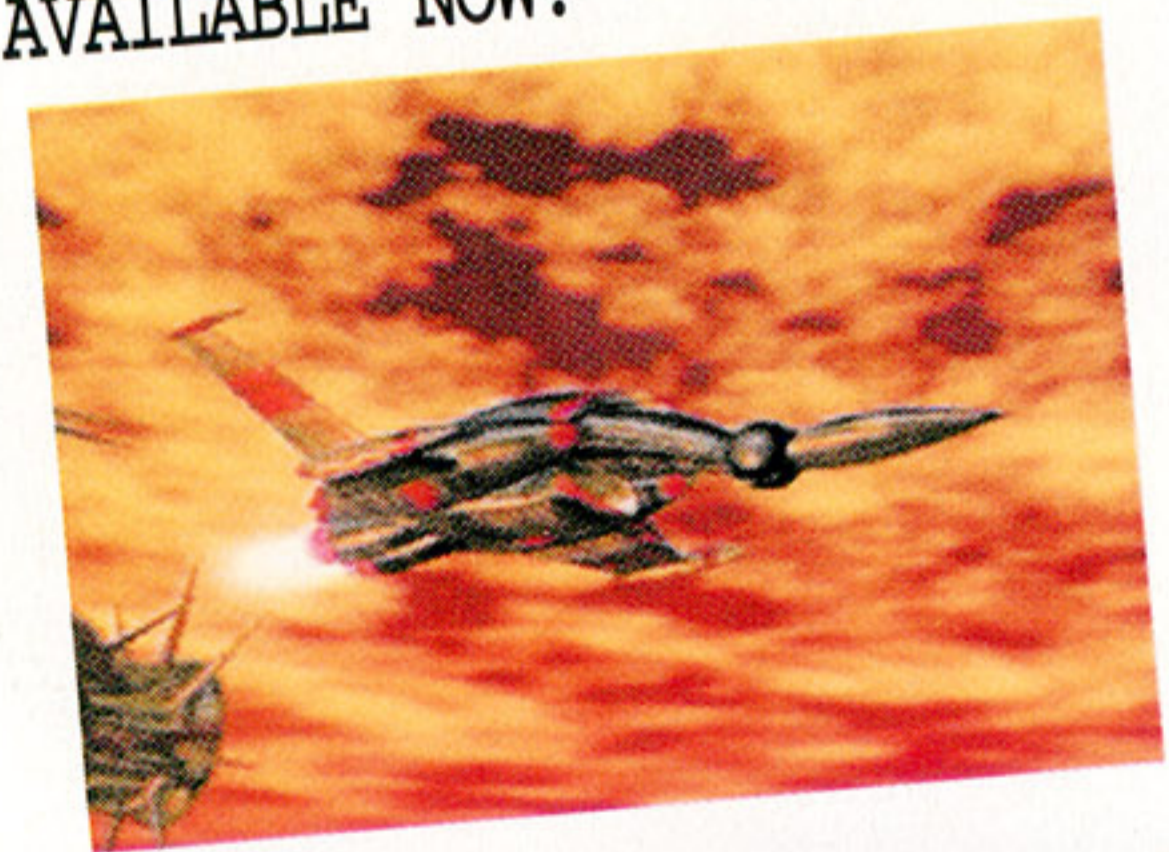
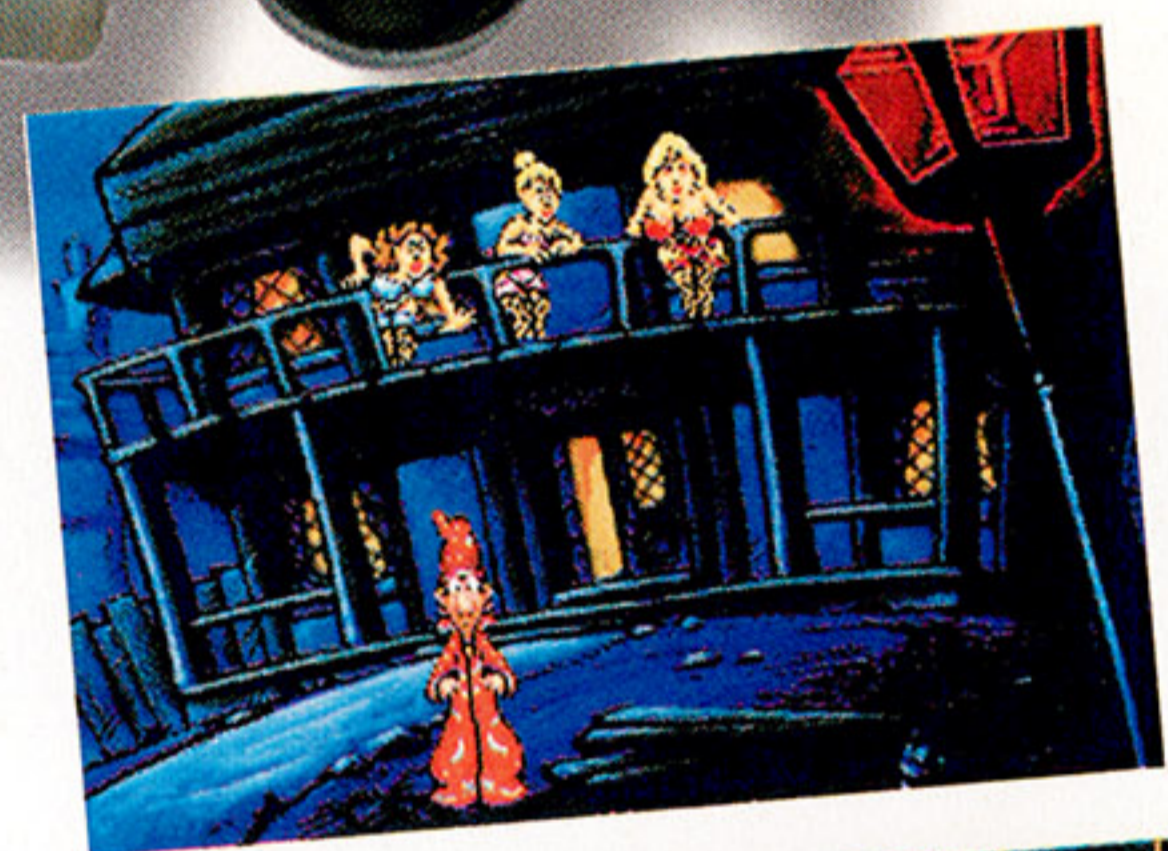
# DEAD THE

Because after all,



## NOVASTORM™

The 3DO version was **Die Hard Game Fan's** 1995 Shooter Of The Year, but the PlayStation version leaves it eating dust! With level after level of all-out blasting fury and graphic to die for, Novastorm has enough fire-fight action to keep the itchiest trigger finger happy!  
**AVAILABLE NOW!**



## WIPEOUT™

Savor the "wild, stomach-twisting driving" (**Game Pro**). Go full-throttle on "an incredible selection of tracks" (**Game Players**). Understand that "the sensation of speed is utterly terrifying" (**Ultimate Gamer**). Then face up to the fact that "with WipeOut, the future really is now" (**Die Hard Game Fan**).  
**ALSO AVAILABLE FOR PC**



## DISCWORLD™

Featuring the voice of Monty Python's Eric Idle, Discworld is the lunatic land you explore in this crazy comedy adventure game. Trade insults with trolls, hunt for dragons and discover new uses for custard, as you experience PlayStation's most surreal scenarios yet. Like the guys at **EGM2** said, "Discworld will totally boggle your mind."  
**AVAILABLE NOW!**



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# MACHINE

you are what you eat!



You've got the hottest console around and it's hungry.

Hungry for software that really satisfies. Hungry for 3D worlds and realistic racing thrills.

Hungry for action. Hungry for adventure. Hungry for an all-out-gaming feast.

So what are you waiting for? Don't starve your PlayStation.

Feed it with the meatiest software you can buy.

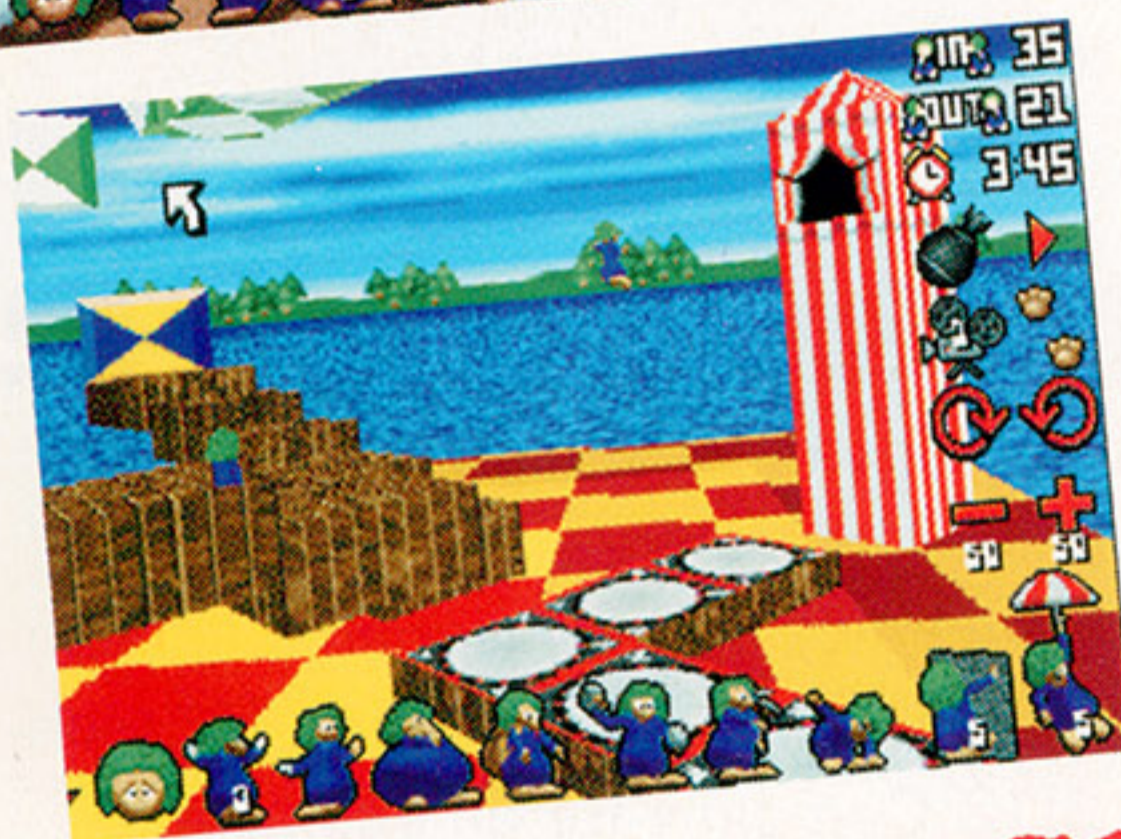
No fat. No flab. Just 100% protein From the game-play chefs at Psygnosis™.

WHEN YOU'RE READY TO TASTE THE DIFFERENCE.



## DESTRUCTION DERBY™

Electronic Gaming Monthly called it "stock-car racing on steroids"! Game Players raved at "the most realistic crashes we've ever seen!" Next Generation sez "it's the most impressive PlayStation™ game yet." So what are you waiting for? Buy or die. ALSO AVAILABLE FOR PC



## 3D LEMMINGS™

"You've never played Lemmings like this before," said EGM2. Too true, 'cause those suicidal superstars have just taken a step into the third dimension. An amazing brain teaser in 3 gloriously goofy dimensions, 3D Lemmings is the most fun you can have while rescuing rodents! ALSO AVAILABLE FOR PC



# Incoming

Late-Breaking News & Info

**N64 Set to Launch in Japan** - Matsushita Buys M2 - Nintendo Sells One Billionth Game - Sega's New Software - Atari Lay-Offs



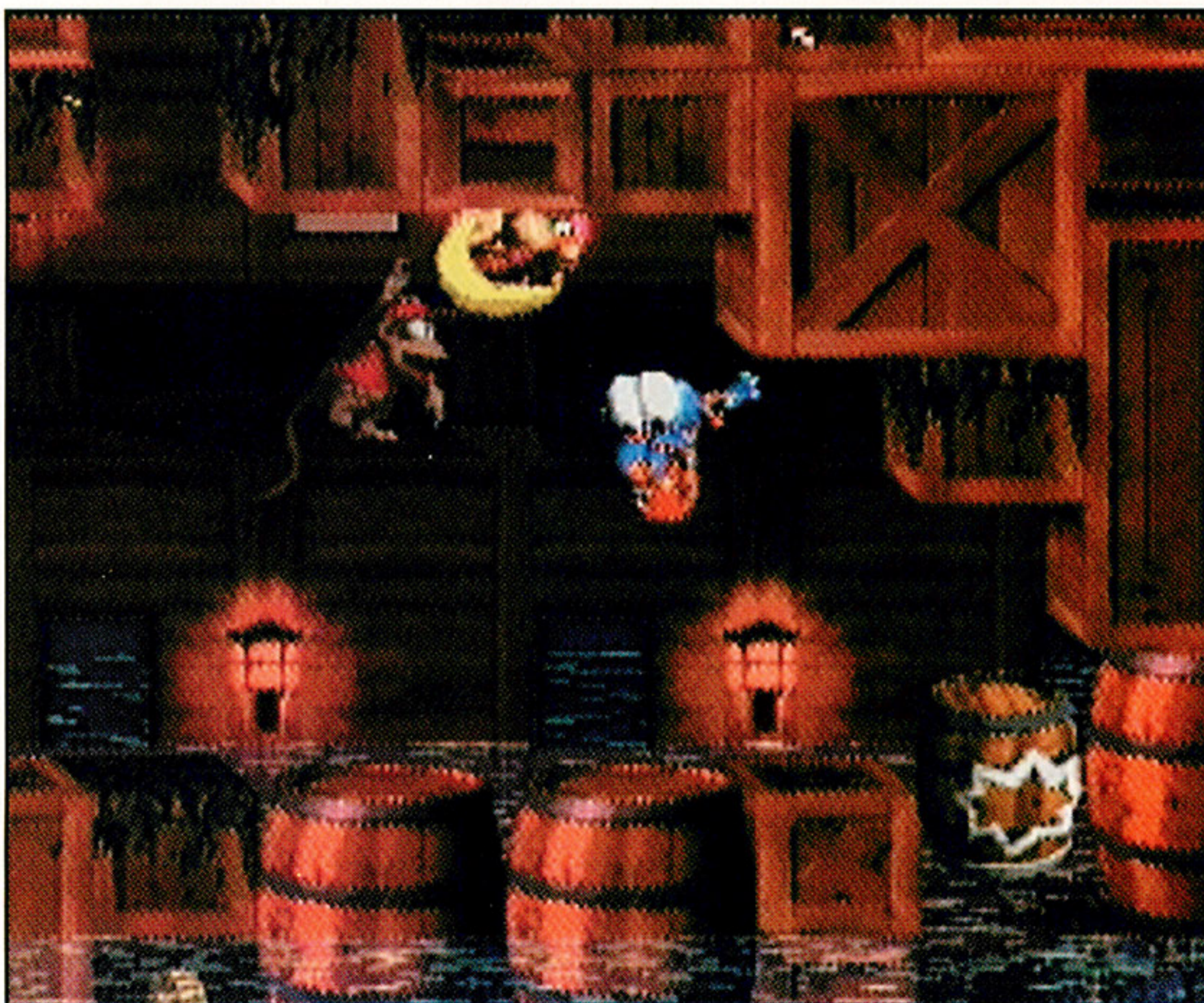
Here it is, in glorious full-color: The Nintendo 64.

## Nintendo Readies N64

The event the whole world has been waiting for for nearly three years is almost here. Nintendo of Japan will at long last officially open the curtains on their Nintendo 64 console (the new name of the Japanese console) and games at the Shoshinkai show in Japan. Shoshinkai will be the place to be on November 23, 1995, that's for sure. The biggest news is that at the show, Nintendo will have 100 Nintendo 64 system kiosks on display, as well as ten finished N64 games! Word has it that 200 lucky media representatives will walk away from the show with an actual completely-finished-and-in-the-box Nintendo 64 machine! Wow! I have to go now; I'm drooling all over my keyboard...

## Matsushita Pays \$100M For M2

It has been made official: In early November, electronics giant, Matsushita—parent company of Panasonic, Technics and Quasar among others—has purchased the highly-vaunted M2 technology from 3DO Company for an estimated \$100 million. This move may give the electronics powerhouse a new position of strength within the industry by holding all patents on M2's new 64-bit technology. As a corporation, Matsushita is a monster, and far more powerful than Sega, 3DO, Atari and Nintendo combined. But will they manufacture and distribute M2 or simply license-out the technology for a price? At the present time it is unclear just what Matsushita plans to do with their newly-acquired technology, but it could get quite interesting in the coming months. This maneuver just goes to show what kind of lure the \$7 billion+ video games industry really is.



DONKEY KONG COUNTRY 2: DIDDY'S KONGQUEST is currently responsible for bringing in mega Nintendo bucks.



# Nintendo Sells One Billionth Video Game

As of October, 1995, Nintendo of America has sold an incredible one billion video game cartridges worldwide. That comes out to a staggering three games sold per second during a 12-year period. If all of the game carts were placed end-to-end, they would reach around the equator two and a half times.

Of the one billion titles, 50% are for play on the original 8-bit NES, 23% for the Game Boy and 27% for the Super NES. Of these amounts, Japanese gamers have purchased 44% and North American gamers have shelled out 42%. The remaining 14% sales are from the rest of the world. Nintendo also claims that their largest-selling single game was the original **Super Mario Bros.** cart for the NES (40 million copies worldwide). We think that's a tad odd since the game came free with the system for many years. God knows how many more millions of pirated Nintendo games were sold illegally in addition to the one billion claimed by the big N (who could forget the Samsung incident?). We will probably never know.



Could VIRTUA FIGHTER be on its way to the Macintosh? It's quite possible.

Macintosh and, of course, their own Saturn 32-bit console. Sega has shown signs that they may be growing weary of hardware development, so this new label may be a big safeguard for future ventures. There is always the possibility that the company is planning to publish games on competing systems somewhere down the road, but as of press time, there has been no confirmation. **Virtua Cop** on the PlayStation? Yeah!

## Sega Soft Label Formed

Sega has announced the formation of a new software label appropriately named Sega Soft. The company will publish all of their in-house software under this new label. Platforms involved for publishing include PC,

# OOPS!

In our November issue, we incorrectly placed screen shots of **NFL Quarterback Club** for the Saturn where **Quarterback Attack** for the Saturn should have gone—and vice-versa. We apologize to Digital Pictures and Acclaim for this error, and it won't happen again. Aaarrghh!

# ULTIMATE GAMER

≡sniff≡ ≡sniff≡

## Goodbye, Cruel World!

Bad news/Good news: The **bad** news is, you are now holding in your hands the last issue of **ULTIMATE GAMER**. We are obviously very sad (maybe even a little suicidal... just kidding! -Ed) that it should come to an end after only six issues. We had a wonderful time bringing you news on the latest and greatest video games, and we'll certainly miss you.

The **good** news is that you can catch our sister publication, **VIDEOGAMES**, for all your gaming needs. Take care and thanks.



Apparently, FIGHT FOR LIFE has a rather fitting name; the game has been killed twice.



It looks as if MISSILE COMMAND VR will have to be played without the Jaguar VR helmet.

## Bad News For Atari

As we go to press, we are being informed that Atari Corporation has laid off a large number of their in-house development staff. While the news may not come as too much of a surprise to some within the industry, it is nonetheless stirring. In the search for details regarding the lay-offs, we spoke to Ron Beltramo of Atari Corp. "The lay-offs had to do largely with specific titles. It is true that some 20 full-time employees were let go, but we are continuing to develop and prepare software

for the Jaguar." In addition, Ron went on to explain that the employee cut-backs involved development teams for **Black Ice/White Noise** (for the Jag CD) and the on-again-off-again **Fight For Life** as well as the team responsible for the **Hover Strike** series. The reduction in Atari's work force may be a sign of shaky things to come. With Atari's third-party software numbers embarrassingly low, the future seems questionable for the Jaguar. As if there weren't enough delays with Jag games to begin with; now this! In other Jaguar-related news, we have been told that Atari has severed ties with Virtuality, the company solely responsible for developing the Jaguar VR headset. At this juncture, the Jag VR helmet project has been completely cancelled. Step right up and place your bets, everyone...

# SEGA TO DEBUT NEW

**A**lthough the Saturn has basically just arrived in stores, the R&D department back at Sega is already hard at work with plans for its next machine. The company has a number of internal codenames for new projects, but one of the words used a lot in connection with the Saturn successor is Eclipse. Whether that's the name of the project or not is unimportant. What is important is that Sega plans to have a 64-bit console on the market by the year 1998.

The new machine is based around 64-bit technology, similar to that found in Matsushita's upcoming M2 unit, but with different custom graphics processors and as yet undecided architecture. The big news about the new Sega machine though, is that it will be aimed at the audio/video market as well as the gaming market. Why? Because it will be an

officially licensed DVD (Digital Video Disc) player. DVD is the new standard which many industry analysts believe will replace both Laserdisc and MPEG formats. A single DVD compact disc will be able to (in theory at least) hold 133 minutes of film with perfect picture clarity (in excess of VHS quality) and possibly digital sound. The proposed industry standard DVD disc will contain 4.7 gigabytes of space and will be backward compatible with CD-ROM, CD audio, Compact Disc Interactive (CD-i), Photo CD and CD Video. Interesting enough, DVD can allow large amounts of FMV and video game graphic data to exist simultaneously on the same disc.

This compression is achieved through the use of hardware and mathematical algorithms developed by Toshiba and Time Warner. The companies joined forces to compete with a rival standard being developed by Philips and Sony. However, it looks like Time Warner's recent acquisition of Ted Turner's movie and television properties will give Toshiba and Time Warner a virtual

monopoly on the media. But in the end, of course, software always decides which format wins.

Sega's foray into this market is still a few years away, but firm plans are already in place to take advantage of this brand-new technology. The Sega player will not only accept DVD movies and TV shows, but will play proprietary 64-bit video games and is also rumored to be backwardly compatible with Saturn. So, far from abandoning existing Saturn users, Sega is offering them a logical and beneficial upgrade path. Your Saturn could well be the core of a complete home entertainment system. The Saturn's open architecture means that a DVD upgrade cartridge as well as a 64-bit accelerator are both viable options.

A darker bit of speculation regarding this new Sega 64-bit console is that it may not be manufactured by Sega at all. Sega's rumored attempts to acquire Matsushita's 64-bit M2 technology (which Matsushita recently purchased from 3DO), their recent signing with Nvidia to create a Sega PC multimedia

**"Your Saturn**

**could well**

**be the**

**core**

**of a**

**complete**

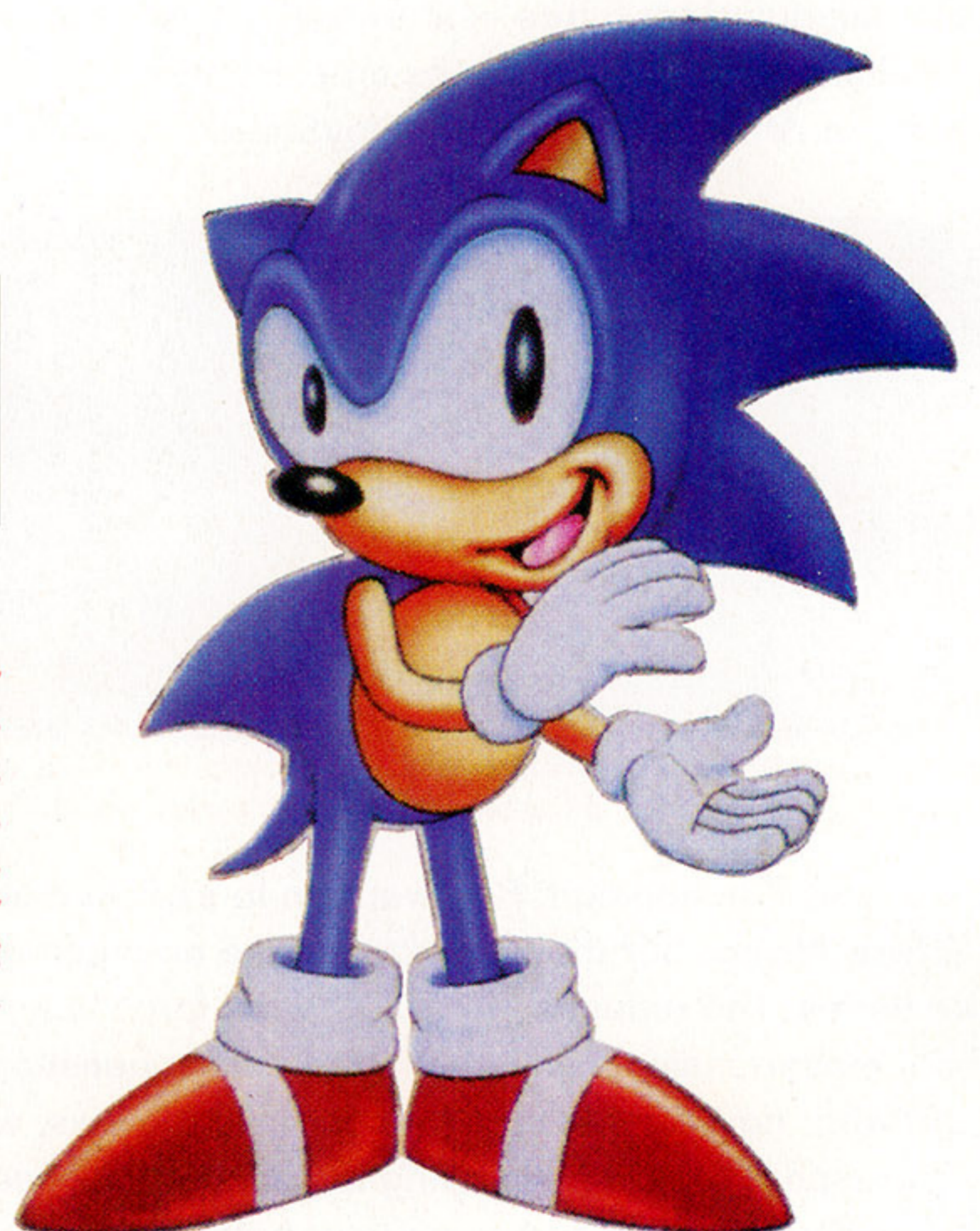
**home**

**entertainment**

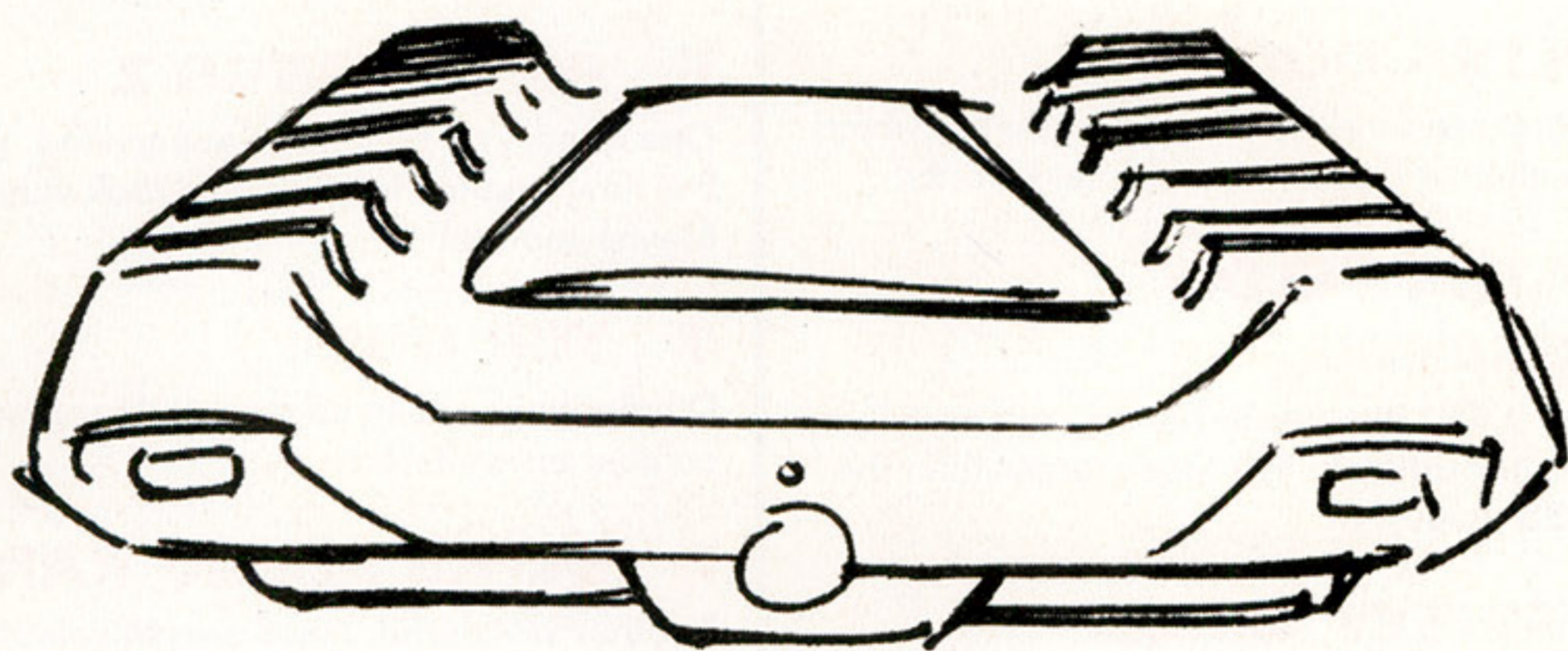
**system."**



Much like their best-selling mascot, Sega doesn't like to waste a lot of time. A 64-bit console is already on the drawing board.



# 4-BIT CONSOLE IN '96



An artist's conception of the Eclipse. The design was based on the evolution of previous Sega hardware designs.

card, their recent partnership with DreamWorks and MCA/Universal to create 150 Sega Virtual Land entertainment centers by the year 2000, and their recent disappointments with 32X

and Saturn sales show tell-tale signs that Sega has grown weary of the hardware wars and may plan to leave such developments to a third-party developer.

That developer could very well turn out to be Matsushita. One possible (and highly logical) scenario would be for Sega to turn to Matsushita in hopes of licensing their newly acquired M2 technology. This maneuver would eliminate any further hardware headaches for Sega and subsequently leave them free to do what they do best: Develop great software.

Sega, by no means, has plans to simply let the Saturn run its course. Instead, they have recently announced a Saturn modem connection that will give Saturn owners access to the Internet as well as a new storage component that will permit the console to store games received over telephone or cable lines (much like the way the Sega Channel is currently handled).

**BUTAH**

"Yee-haw! I'm a Killin' maniac, AND I LIKE IT!!!"  
— Game Players

When I find F.U.B.  
I'm gonna dress  
him up in  
a hideous day-glow  
mini-skirt,  
paint his toes  
violet, and  
call him "Dolly."  
Then I'll  
waste him.

Zoom In & Out Of Action

Features Music of  
*Pop Will Eat Itself*

What Good Is A Sony® Playstation™ If It Isn't

**LOADED™**

Interplay  
BY GAMERS. FOR GAMERS.™

Gremlin  
INTERACTIVE

**KILLER TIP:** Fights best against the ropes. Back into a corner and mow 'em down.

**WEAPON OF CHOICE:** Flame Thrower  
**SUPER WEAPON:** Explosive Ring

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# TEN FINISHED NINTENDO

**A**s we go to press, we've been informed of some rather earth-shattering info. Yes, we have been handed the list of the ten finished—or nearly finished—Nintendo 64 (formerly known as the Ultra Famicom in Japan) games! Here's the breakdown of each title, along with descriptions:

### 1-5 FINAL FANTASY VII

These are real-time, rendered-on-the-fly Nintendo 64 graphics. Millions of Japanese gamers will be lining up in order to buy a copy of FFVII when it debuts as the first N64 game at launch in spring of '96.

### 6 KILLER INSTINCT

There's no reason why this should not look exactly like the coin-op.



### 1 ULTRA DOOM

A completely re-rendered SG environment which includes all-new creatures and level layouts.

### 2 ULTRA ZELDA LEGENDS

Word has it that this one's not only the best-looking, but approximately five times larger than the Super NES game.

### 3 CRUISIN' U.S.A.

It has been said that the N64 version will be an exact duplicate of the coin-op. If so, it would likely place first among home drivers.

### 4 FINAL FANTASY VII

This one will sell the N64 to Japanese gamers more than any other game on earth.

### 5 STAR WARS: SHADOW OF THE EMPIRE

Lucas Arts may have outdone themselves on this one.

### 6 PILOT WINGS 2

One of several Miyamoto-supervised games for the new system, PW2 should look very real. Maybe too real!

### 7 TOP GUN

Dogfights galore in an extremely realistic aerial combat environment.

### 8 ULTRA MARIO KART

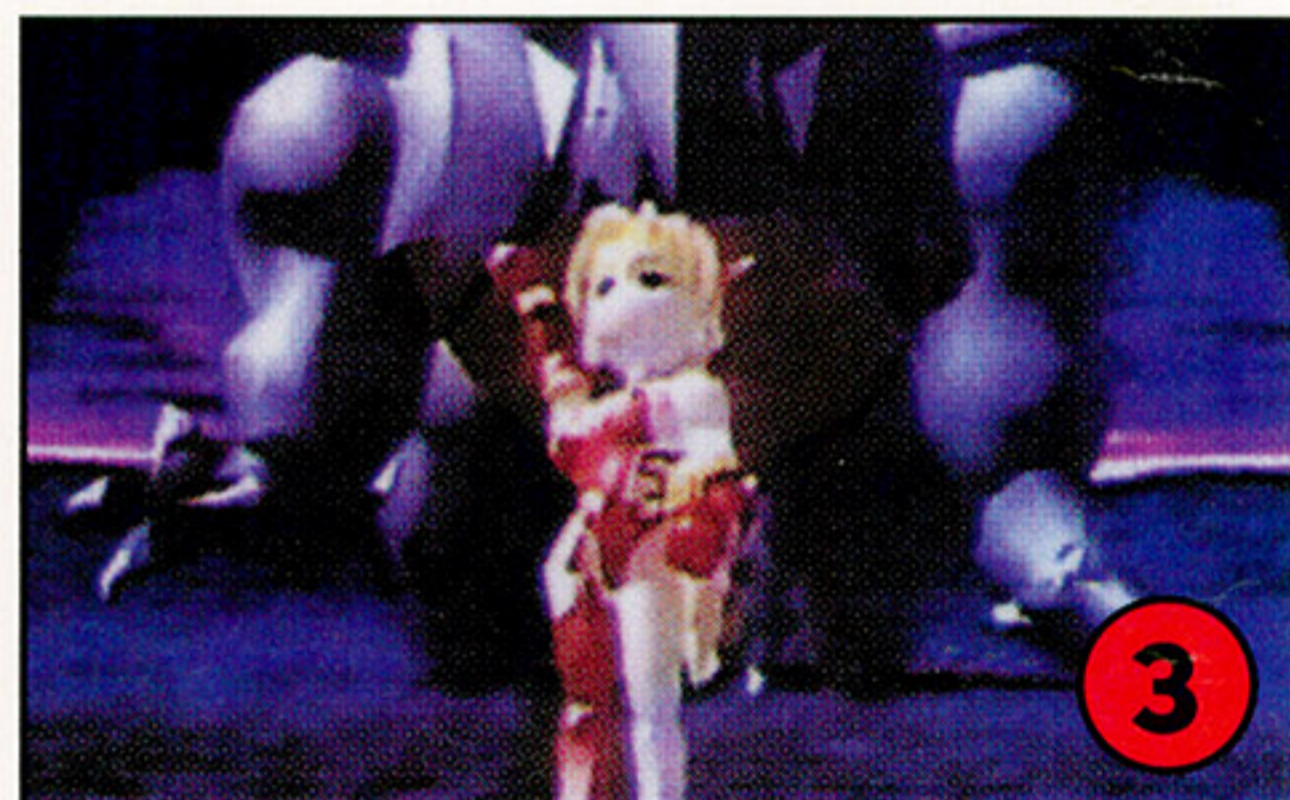
Another wonderful, must-own Miyamoto game? Could be.

### 9 KILLER INSTINCT

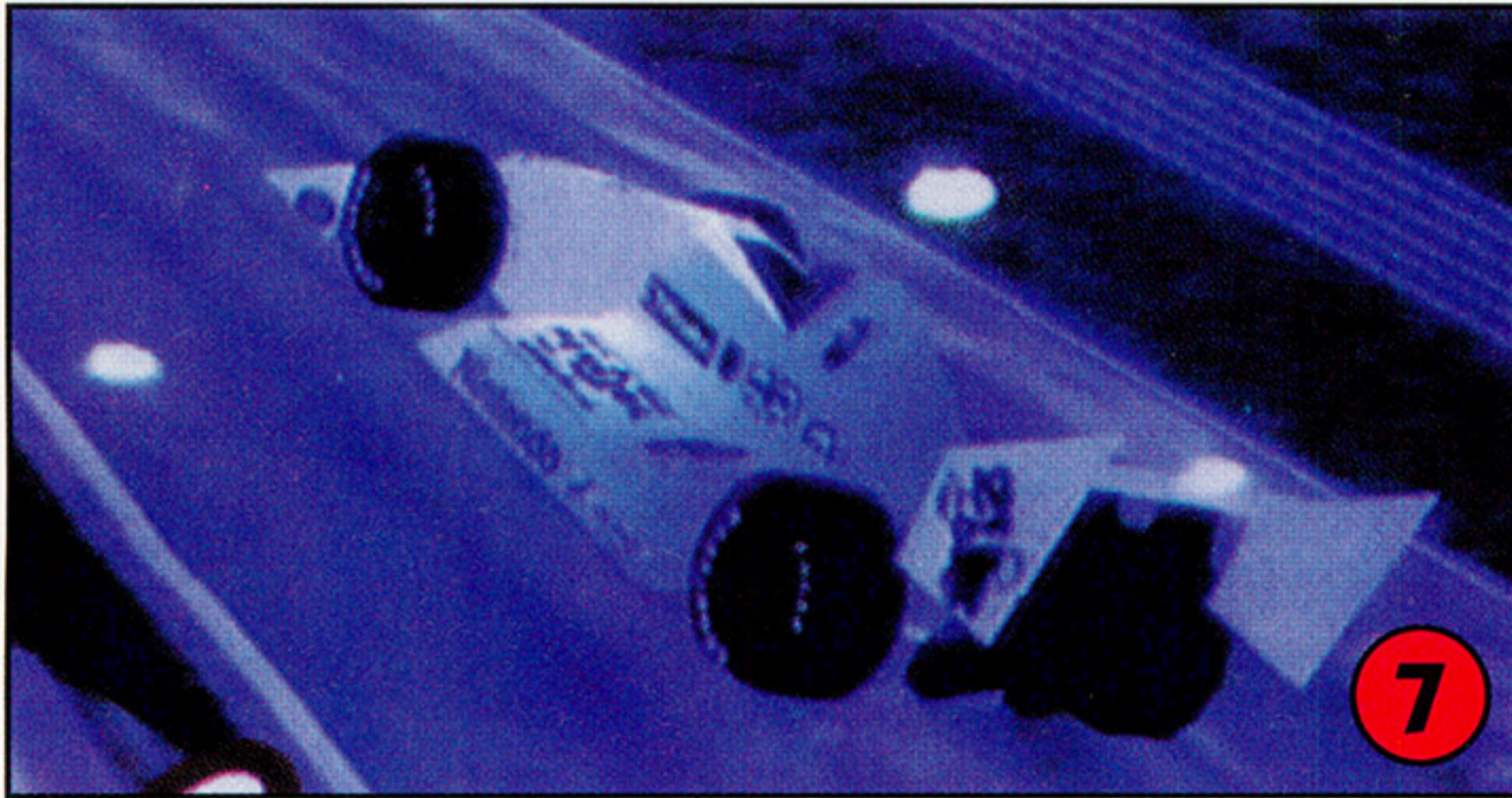
Early on, we were told that the big N was having trouble getting the arcade version to run on the N64, but we'll soon see, won't we?

### 10 ULTIMATE MORTAL KOMBAT 3

Nintendo will have dibs on the home version of this 2-D game for at least six months. One question: Why?



# 64 GAMES CONFIRMED



**7 DRIVING GAME**  
 Could this be a screen shot from the all-new F-ZERO N64 game from Nintendo? Let's hope so...



## Cap-n-hands

"Prepare for complete testosterone pumping mayhem."  
 — Diehard Game Fan

When I find F.U.B. I'm gonna plunder his liver and pump his scurvy belly full o' gunshot... just after I make him swap the deck with his tongue.

15 Enormous Levels To Explore

What Good Is A Sony® Playstation™ If It Isn't

**LOADED™**

**WEAPON OF CHOICE:** Flintlocks  
**SUPER WEAPON:** Buckshot

**KILLER TIP:** Fire up double shotguns and keep enemies at bay with long range attack.

PlayStation  
 LOADED™  
 M  
 Gremlin Interactive

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Interplay  
 BY GAMERS. FOR GAMERS.™  
 Gremlin  
 INTERACTIVE

# SNK AND SEGA AGREE

**N**o doubt the mutual success that came from the multi-platform release of SNK's *Samurai Showdown* on the Sega CD and Genesis during the Christmas season of 1994 had something to do with the recent agreement between Sega and SNK to trade off games that were formerly exclusive to their individual systems.

Sega and SNK, in a short-term agreement, have agreed to break their software exclusivity tradition and develop versions of their software for one another's 32-bit machines. This will allow Sega to develop titles formerly exclusive to SNK's Neo4Geo CD and SNK in return will have access to games originally developed for the Sega Saturn.

Sega has rarely permitted transla-



tions of their games to appear on competing hardware. The exceptions of games like *Altered Beast* and *Outrun* were done only after sales had died for their parent system. And of course, Sega's trade deal with Atari in early 1995.

With this new agreement, SNK and Sega have agreed to trade off only their best games. Which games will be the first picked in the exchange won't be decided until Sega and SNK meet in January of '96.

Some speculation into the deal claims that the possibility exists that Sega may give SNK the go-ahead to make a 2-D fighting game based on the *Virtua Fighter* characters.

Acquiring the rights to SNK's long list of Neo-Geo titles, along with Sega's recent deal with Nvidia to develop Saturn games for the PC, gives Sega a larger arena for its games and more shelf awareness in a very competitive marketplace. How this recent deal will effect Sega's previous agreement with Atari to swap games for their respective systems is unknown at this time.

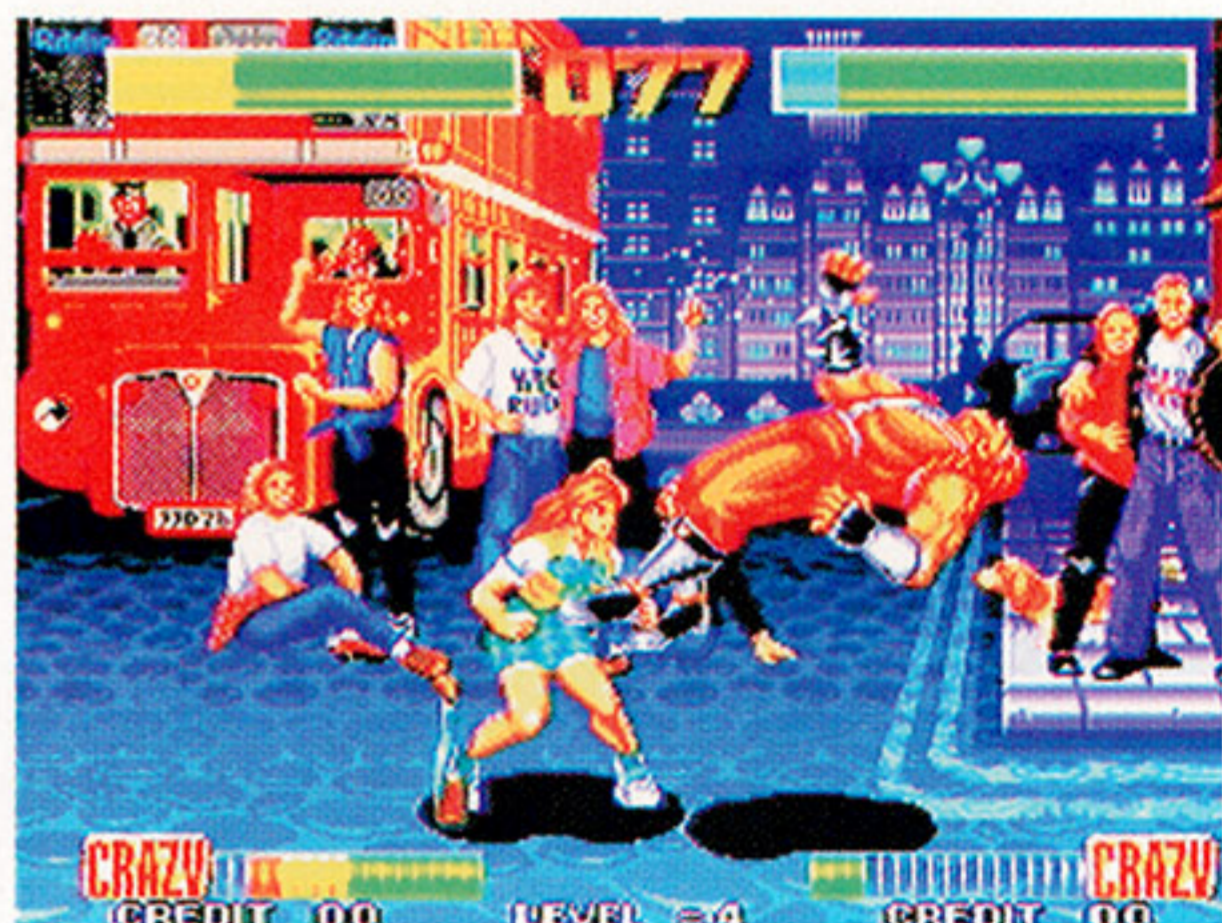
**"Sega may give SNK the go ahead to make a 2-D (Virtua Fighter) game..."**



The King of Fighters '95



VOLTAGE FIGHTER



Aggressors of DARK KOMBAT



Aero Fighters 3



Pulstar

ALL ZOMBIES IN FAVOR OF BANNING  
CORPSE KILLER RAISE YOUR, WELL,  
RAISE WHATEVER YOU GOT LEFT.

 *Welcome to Cay*

*Nair, a cozy little island*

*infested with enough zombies*

*to film the next 8 sequels to*

*Night of the Rotting Dead.*

*As a Special Forces officer,*

*you must mow your way*

*through a C.I.A. plot gone*

*awry, stopping only to spit,*

*reload and wipe the splattered*

*zombie blood off your boots.*



*The new Graveyard Edition features gory sounds, tons of shooting targets, full-*

*screen zombies and, yes, lots of blood. Enjoy. You trigger-happy little sicko.*



**CORPSE  
KILLER**  
GRAVEYARD EDITION

AVAILABLE ON WINDOWS 95 AND MS-DOS CD-ROM, SEGA SATURN AND MACINTOSH CD-ROM. SEE YOUR LOCAL RETAILER. <http://www.digipix.com> 1-800-332-0032

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# SHYSS WAAH

The real wars begin now. Ultimate Gamer is ready and willing to take you onto the front lines for an explosive heads-up...





# THE NEW 16-BIT WAR

**N**ever before have so many new game systems jumped into the gaming arena at the same time; all vying for your hard-earned bucks. The choices were so overwhelming this past Christmas season that I began longing for simpler times when there were only two main players, SNES or Sega Genesis.

We've seen a lot happen since that time. By March of 1995, the SGI-rendered characters in DKC had long rescued their banana horde and I had come to the decision that the 32X had done nothing more than turn my Genesis into a Super Nintendo. But while I sat playing ring toss using my 32X and Activator, the future had already begun in Japan. It had 32-bits and it was heading this way.

The System Wars would be tough and dirty. Sega fired the first salvo by releasing the Saturn four months earlier than its previously announced September release, leaving Sony scrambling in defense. Sony struck back by pricing the PlayStation at \$299; \$100 cheaper than the Saturn. Sega returns fire by offering three free games if you scooped up a Saturn by September 31. The freebies proved to be too little too late and so by year's end, Sega dropped its price, offering its core Saturn system at \$299—at last, on equal footing with Sony.

September 9, 1995, D-Day: Sony broke records by selling (and selling-out of) 100,000 PlayStation units within the first week of release. PlayStations were as hard to find as the White Ranger Ninjazoid was last Christmas season. With no PlayStations around, a curious trend began. Some gamers, perhaps swayed by its library of over a hundred titles, walked away with 3DOs instead. This might have been the small miracle that would put Trip Hawkin's folly back in the battle.

For the Christmas of 1995, a combined total of \$100 million dollars were spent to convince gamers which system was right for them. Marketing analysts might claim that the System War is our buying decision between Sony and Sega. I beg to differ. I believe gamers have an even more difficult decision to make: Whether to buy a Saturn or PlayStation now or hold on until April of '96 when the elusive Ultra 64 makes its attempt at recapturing Nintendo's home gaming flag.

Make no mistake about it, there is more than one war going on here. There are battles raging over marketshare in two main categories. The low-priced war involves the Genesis and Super NES 16-bitters. The high-priced war pits 32-bit systems: Saturn against the PlayStation against the 3DO against the Jaguar/Jag CD against the Neo•Geo CD against the upcoming Ultra 64. The New Year has begun and the companies responsible for these consoles have regrouped their troops for an even bloodier assault on our wallets. Strap yourself in, turn the page and brace yourself....



# THE RIGHT

**“At this point, Sega's got to be scared stiff. Even with a three-month jump on Sony, They're still behind in U.S. penetration. Will VF2 be able to provide the momentum they need?”**



Sega has come a long way from the days it sent and serviced pinball machines to Marines stationed in Japan during World War II. Through the years, Sega has developed a reputation of quality and confidence among the video game industry and the public. With the abysmal reputation of the 32X, however, it came as no surprise that the Saturn got off to such a slow start—selling only 60,000 units in its first three months.



## Sega Saturn

A big problem Sega had with the Saturn, which likely contributed to its poor sales, was the steep price point of \$399. Obviously, Sega's hand was forced with the launch of Sony's \$299 miracle machine; hence the price drop. Initially, from a developer's standpoint, the Saturn was a programming nightmare. The system uses multiple chips to do multiple tasks instead of just one proprietary chip to drive everything. To add insult to injury, not all of the chips were used to program early games because not all of the chips were available when development systems went out. Another problem responsible for less-than-spectacular sales was that "early adopters" were burned by the 32X add-on and may have become gun shy.

At this point, Sega's got to be scared stiff. Even with a three-month jump on Sony, they're still behind in U.S. penetration. Will **Virtua Fighter 2** be able to provide the momentum they need? Like everything else in life, only time will tell.

### The Weapon

#### Sega Saturn

**Main Processor:** Two main processors running at 28MHz.

**Co-Processors:** A DSP math co-processor at 28 MHz to aid in polygon rendering.

**Sound Processors:** A custom 23 MHz DSP chip with 32 channels.

**Maximum Colors:** 16 million

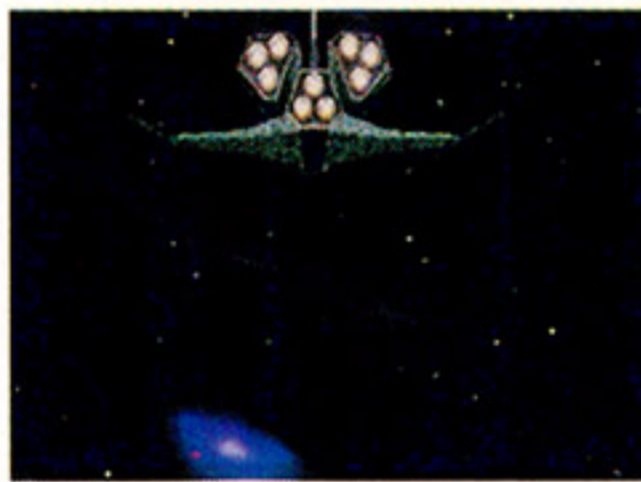
**Maximum Resolution:** 640x480

**Maximum Sprite Movement/Size:** 90k per second with a max. size of 256x256 pixels.

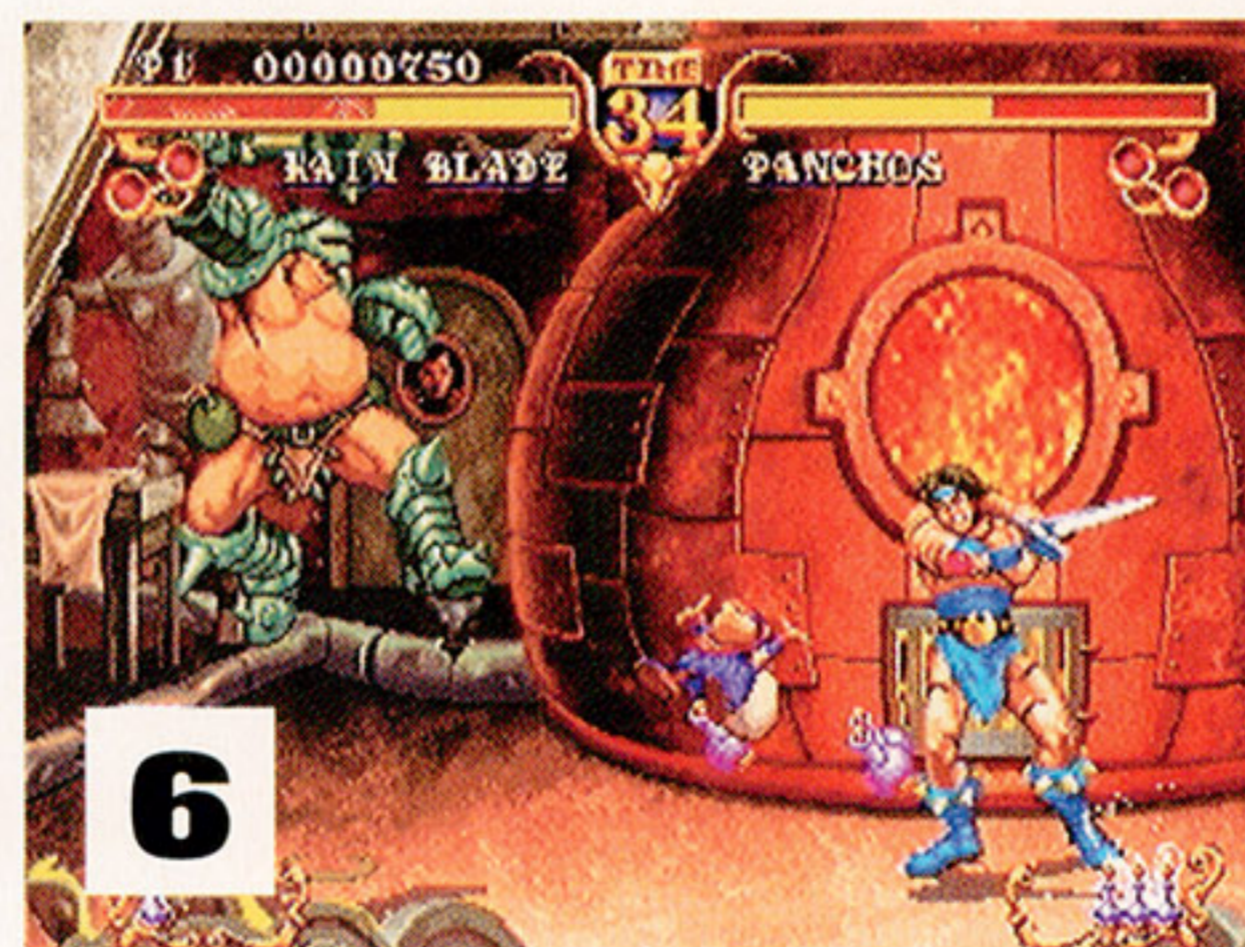
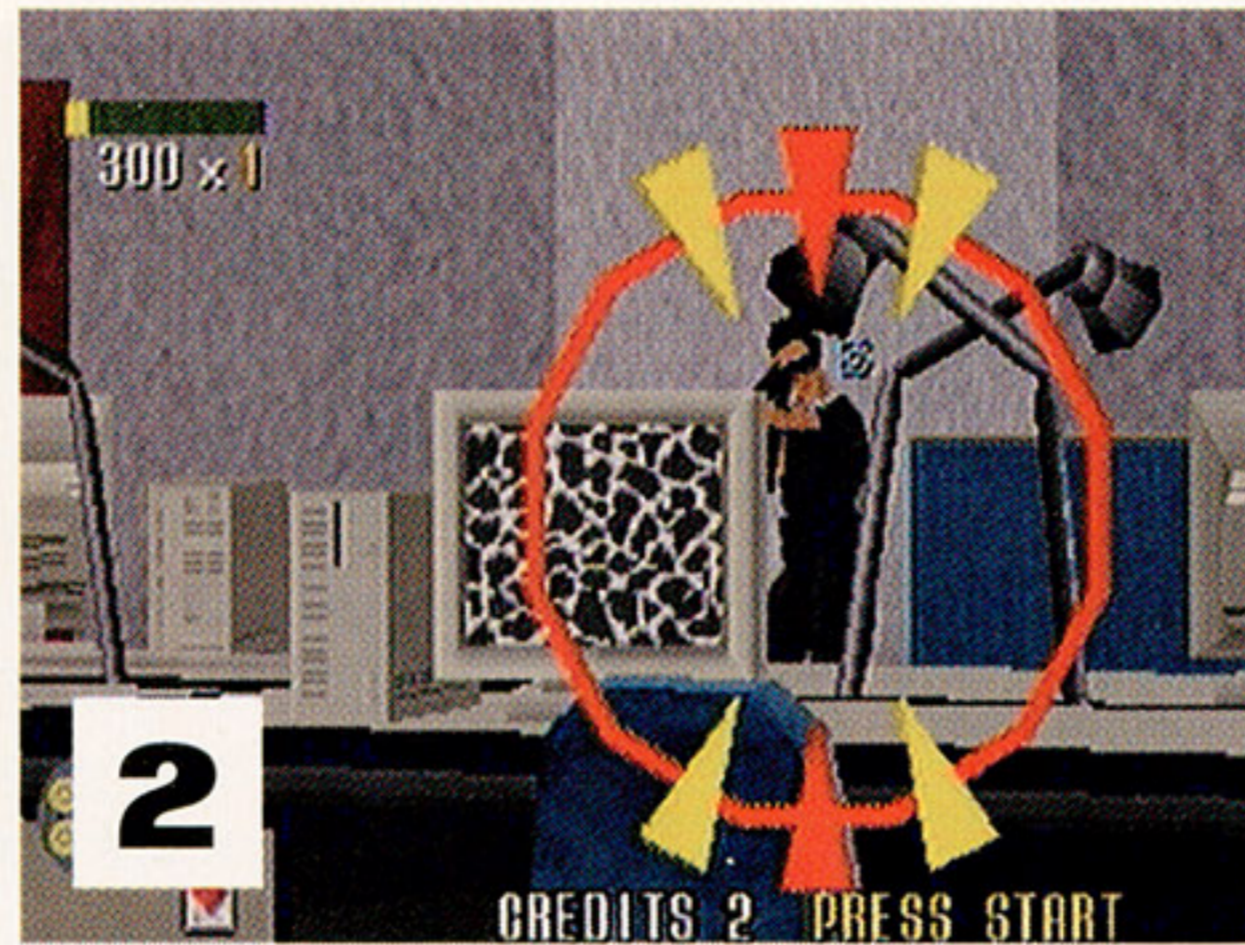
**Polygons:** 150 thousand flat polygons per second and 90 thousand textured-mapped polygons per second.

**OnBoard RAM:** 3.5 megabytes of RAM as a memory buffer.

CD: Double Speed



# IT STUFF?



## The Ammunition

- 1 SEGA RALLY**  
Clipping problems which plagued Daytona U.S.A. have been significantly reduced here.
- 2 VIRTUA COP**  
Cops and Robbers for real! I wanna live in Sega's Virtua world!
- 3 WORLD SERIES BASEBALL**  
Arguably, the greatest baseball video game the planet has ever seen.
- 4 VIRTUA FIGHTER 2**  
The reason the Saturn was created! Ah, to play this classic at home!
- 5 GALACTIC ATTACK**  
Otherwise known as Layer Section in Japan, word has it that this Raiden-esque shooter is being ported-over for the U.S. market.
- 6 GOLDEN AXE: THE DUEL**  
I think it's safe to say that the Golden Axe franchise has run its course.



## CD Interface

The Saturn's music CD menu is by far the best of the bunch. Load a CD right in and the menu pops up. The control screen is well laid out. Skipping music tracks is much easier than on the PlayStation.



## Top Secret Plans

The word for 1996 is going to be communication. All the major systems have or are in development with modems and other communication devices. There will be no more playing with yourself. Also, rumor has it that work has begun on the Saturn 2 upgrade. Just please don't call it the 64X!

# SERIOUS



Sony has spent the last five years trying to capture a piece of the now \$7 billion-a-year video games industry. The electronics giant collaborated with Nintendo back in 1992 on a proposed Super NES CD add-on—ironically dubbed “PlayStation”—but the alliance was short-lived. Before the Super NES CD attachment could become reality, the two companies parted ways. But Sony barely missed a beat. Even as they walked away from the table, their PlayStation plans were kept firmly in place.

“It seems that in developing the PlayStation, Sony had done more than its fair share of homework.”



## Sony Playstation

On December 3, 1994, the PlayStation went on sale in Ikebukuro, Japan for ¥37,000 (\$387) and it reeled in tens of thousands of anxious Japanese gamers. People were forced to take numbers and wait in very long lines just to purchase one. Americans would be forced to either buy an import system or wait until Saturday, September 9, 1995 for the official U.S. launch. In its first week, Sony sold over 100,000 consoles in the U.S. Compare that number to the embarrassingly low 60,000-odd Saturn units sold in its first three months and come up with your own conclusions.

It seems that in developing the PlayStation, Sony had done more than its fair share of homework. First and foremost, Sony has done what many in the industry said it could not do: Garner third-party support. With quality-oriented game companies like Namco, Williams and Capcom on board, Sony's 32-bit console is one to be reckoned with. Second, the price. At \$100 less than the Saturn, Sony's machine is very enticing. Third, the memory cards. Acting like a bookmark, these little plastic cards can not only keep track of game data, but the information can be copied from one card to another via the twin card slots on the front of the machine. Ingenious? Close. Fourth, Sony gave a free developer's demo disc to those who pre-booked a PlayStation system. Anyone who's seen the dinosaur demo on that CD will attest to the processing power growling inside the console. Lastly, instead of including a non-playable demo disc with the unit, Sony packed in a CD demonstrating 12 games—four of which are playable!

Games developed for new hardware are usually out-classed within a couple of years' time. If this theory holds true for the PlayStation, then we may have many, many great surprises in store in the years to come.

### The Weapon

#### PlayStation

**Main Processor:** R3000 RISC running at 33.8688 MHz., 500 MIPS

**Sound Processors:** 24-channel

**Maximum Colors:** 16.7 million

**Maximum Resolution:** 320X224 or 640X480

**Maximum Sprite Movement:** 4,000 8X8 onscreen

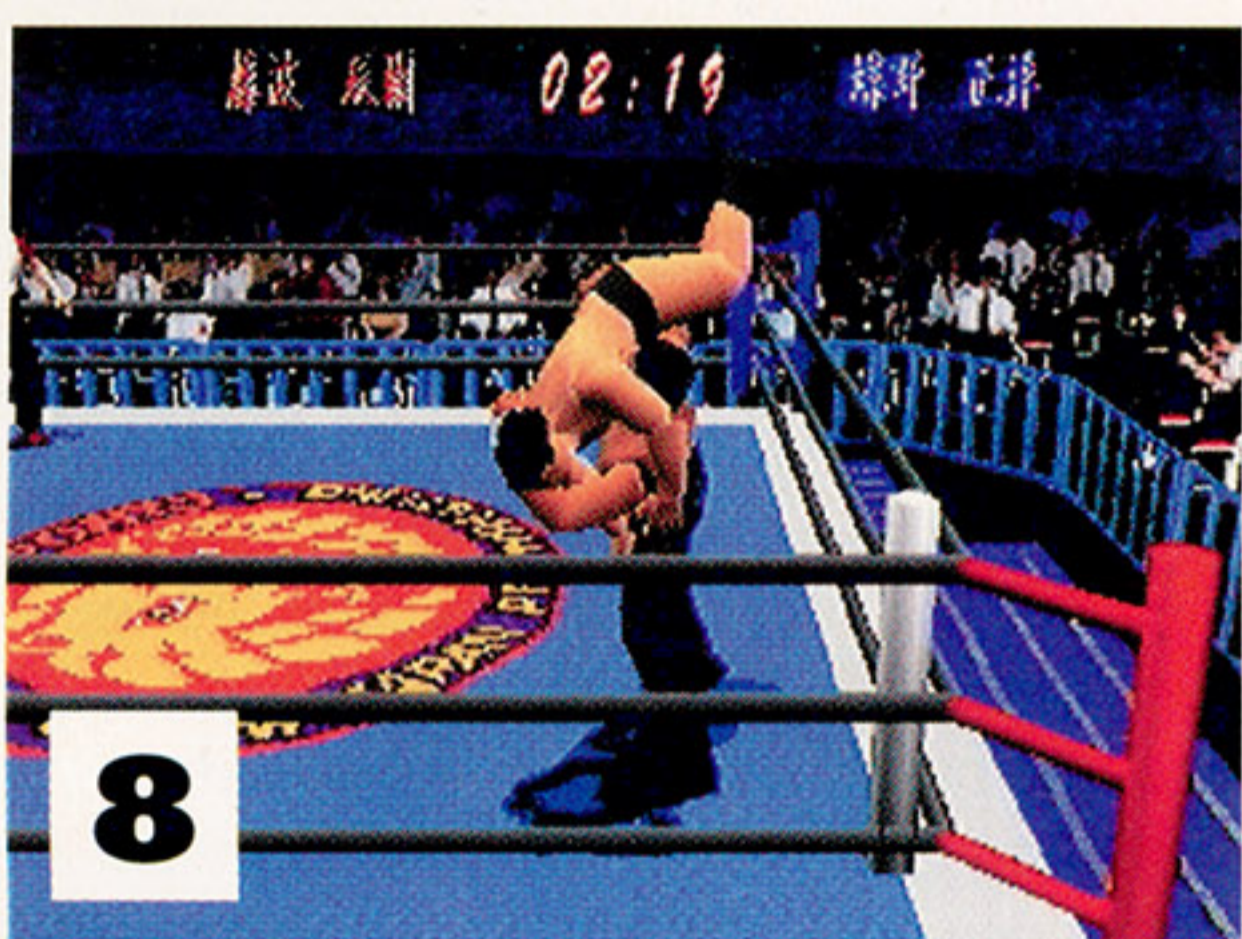
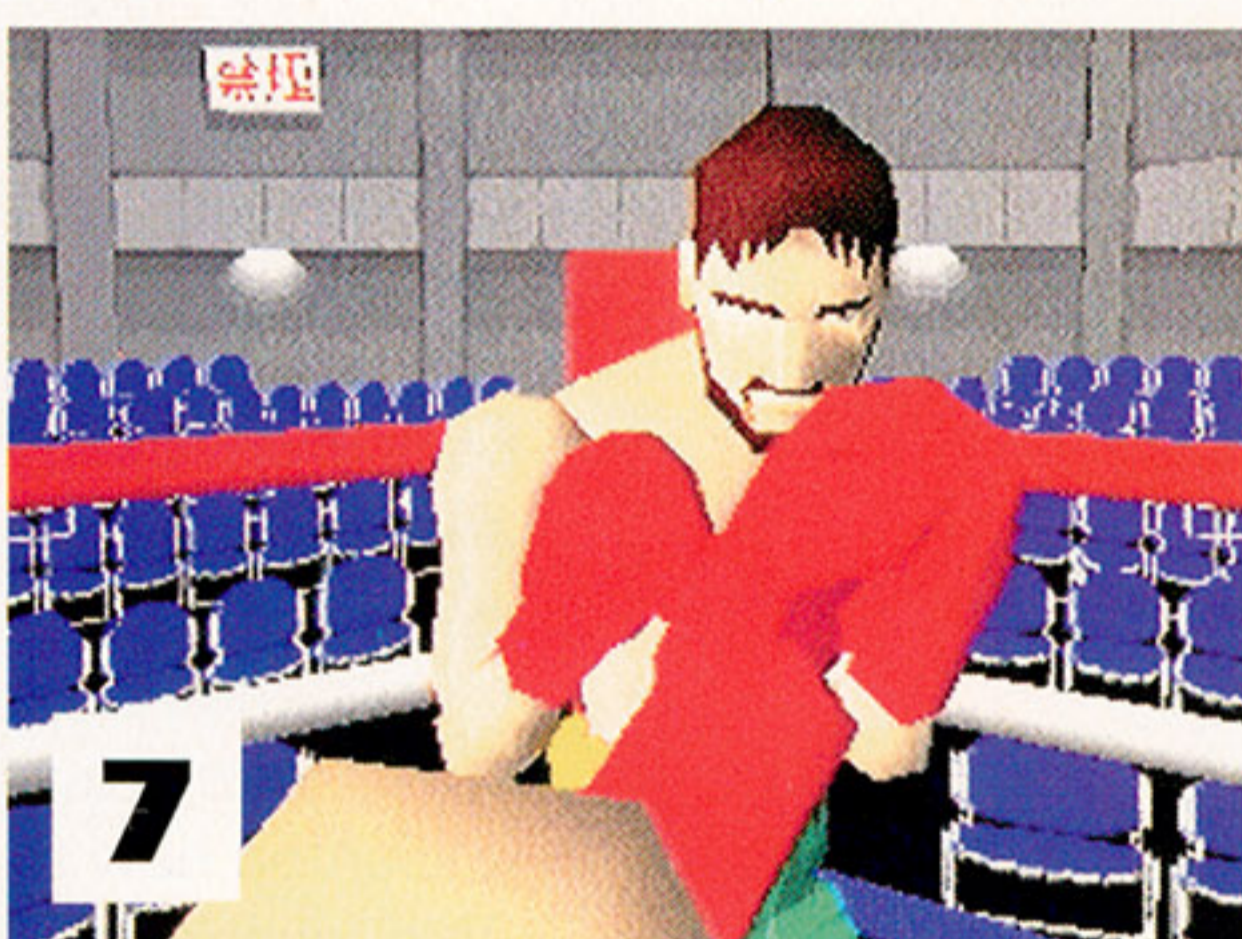
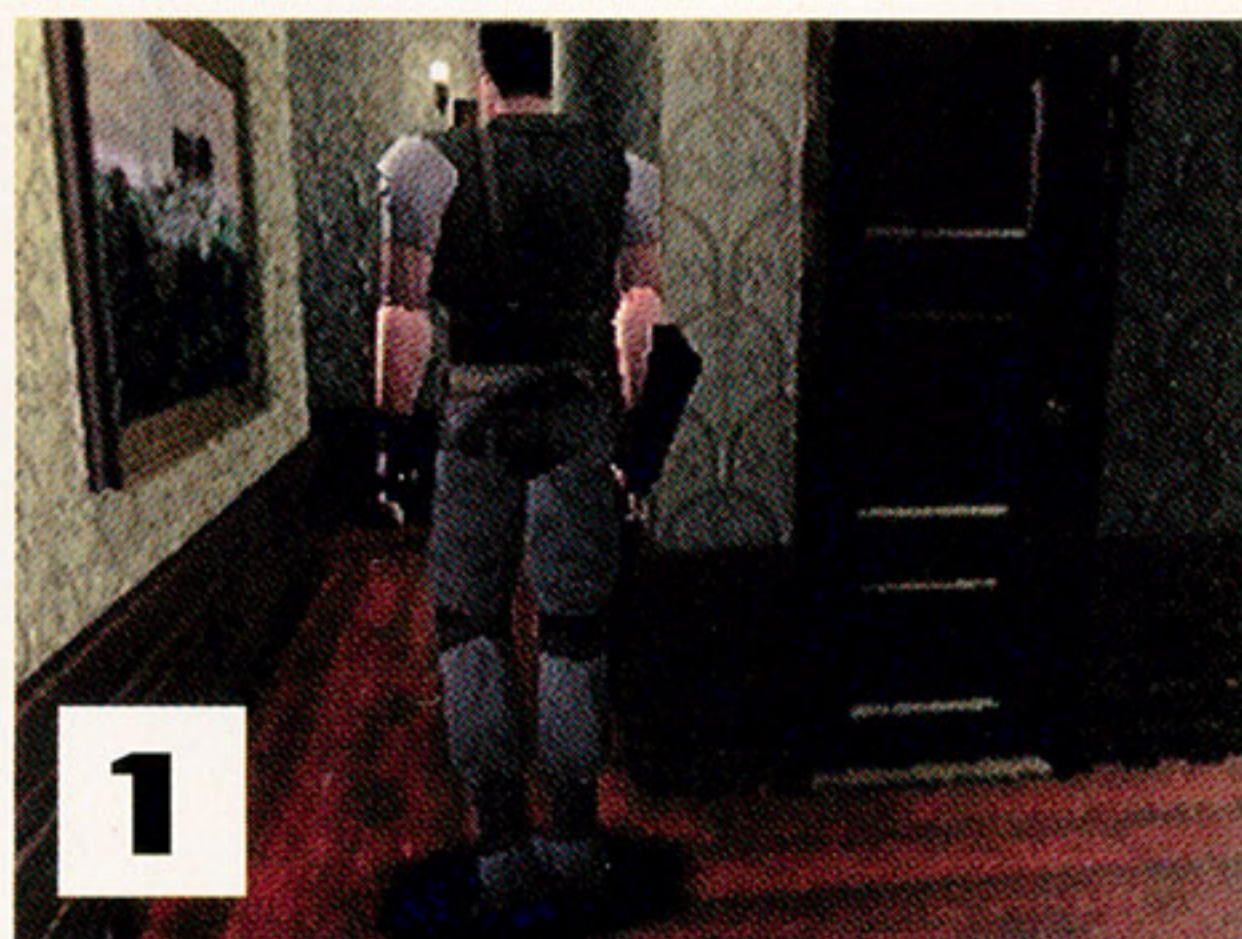
**Polygons:** 4.5 million flat polygons per second, 360,000 texture-mapped polygons per second

**Storage Medium:** Compact Disc

**Other:** Memory cards allow for game data storage and retrieval



# BUSINESS



## CD Interface

Although it's a minor flaw, the PlayStation's music CD control panel is pretty weak. Skipping tracks—something common when listening to music CDs—becomes tiresome because of the large distance between the forward and backward track skip icons. A real pain in the butt.

## Top-Secret Plans

Sony is at this very minute assembling plans for its own set-top box capable of some pretty scary things. For one, its network capabilities, allowing for huge, cross-country **Doom**-style multi-player gaming fun. The unit might also be part of a large games-online service. Sony will release PlayStation 2 with this new feature built in as well as an add-on for the original PlayStation.

## The Ammunition

### 1 RESIDENT EVIL

Called **BioHazard** in Japan, this 3-D adventure game gave everyone here at the office the creeps. Simply incredible.

### 2 DOOM FOR PLAYSTATION

With 60+ levels, this is the definitive **Doom** compilation. An absolute must-have for your PlayStation collection.

### 3 ZERO DIVIDE

Bizarre mechanical beasts make up this 3-D fighting game. If your character gets knocked off a platform, you can grab the edge and pull yourself back up.

### 4 WARHAWK

This game just grabs you and never lets go. The volcano level has to be seen to be believed, and the music... oh, man!

### 5 TWISTED METAL

Cruise the savage streets of L.A. in the year 2013. Select from 12 vehicles—all with very cool weapons! Raaagh!

### 6 TEKKEN

Quite possibly the best fighting game available in and out of the arcades. Once you've beaten a character, you gain access to his alter-ego in the character select screen. Awesome!

### 7 BOXER'S ROAD

A bit heavy on the simulation side, but it's still a very playable game with some great features.

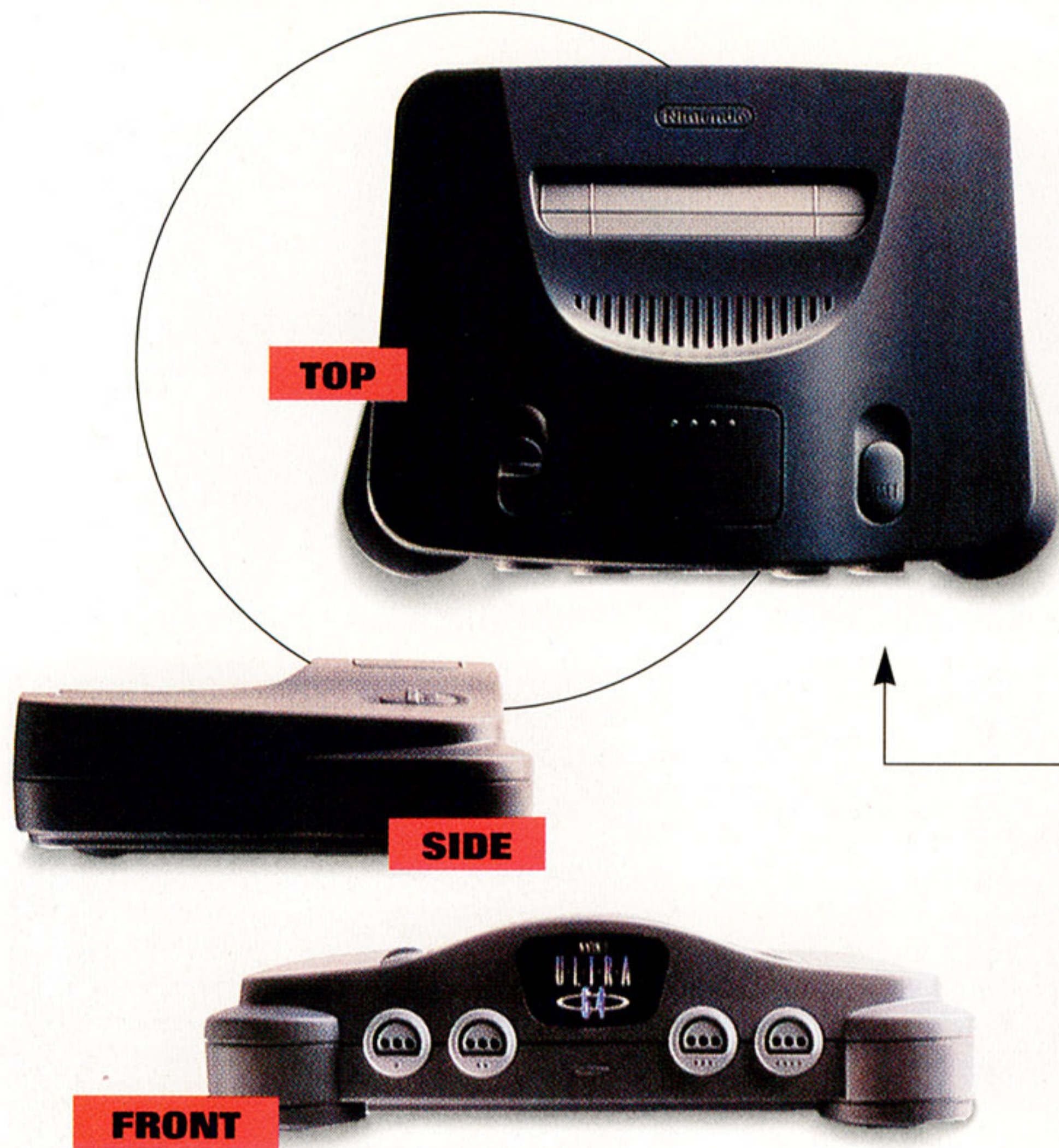
### 8 JAPAN PRO WRESTLING

We may actually never see this game, as it centers on specific Japanese wrestlers. It's pretty cool, so hopefully the game will be reconfigured and released over here.

### 9 REVOLUTION-X

George Petro, designer of the arcade original, calls this "an excellent conversion," with graphics upgrades not found in the original coin-op. Cool!

# COUNTDOWN T



The fuse was lit over two and-a-half years ago. And waiting at its end is the TNT; in this case, Nintendo's system-killer, the Ultra 64. And we are now on the brink of detonation. When it does come, the explosion could send everyone in the industry scurrying to pick up the pieces. Then again, with so much pre-release hype, Nintendo's latest bomb may simply turn out to be a dud.



## Ultra 64

Some say that Nintendo has arrived too late for the party this time. Some say that by the spring of 1996, the PlayStation will have accumulated such a wide installed user-base, that catching up to them will be next to impossible.

But doing the impossible is what Nintendo does best. For evidence, look back to 1991 and the Super NES—a 16-bit system which many industry pundits dismissed early on as being nothing more than a pesky gnat on Sega's shoulder. Nintendo has been in the video game business a lot longer than Sony, as well, and they have the icons to back it up: **Link, Mario, Donkey Kong** and **Samus Aran** are recognizable characters that have proven to sell game systems.

Nintendo's third-party army is vast and their in-house developers are some of the world's best. Sony could take a lesson on how to treat their developers from Nintendo. Also, ever since 1985, Nintendo has been a real stickler for quality control and it is suspected the same tradition will continue with the Ultra 64.

The Ultra could very well turn out to be the A-Bomb of video game systems. The system that survives its initial blast will indeed be worthy of our respect and admiration. It has been said that when the smoke clears, there will only be one real winner in the higher-priced, 32-bit-and-up market. With Nintendo's proven expertise in the gaming arena, that position could very well be taken by the Ultra—with the PlayStation coming in a close second. We shall see.

While the world has been on the edge of its seat in anticipation of Nintendo's new 64-bit machine, many have

**"The system that survives its initial blast will indeed be worthy of our respect and admiration."**



### The Weapon

#### Ultra 64

Main Processor: Nintendo/Silicon Graphics custom 64-bit processor running at an estimated 100 MHz.

Co-Processor: Nintendo/Silicon Graphics custom embedded architecture

Sound Processors: 16-bit digital stereo—can it match CD quality?

Maximum Colors: Millions of colors

Maximum Resolution: n/a

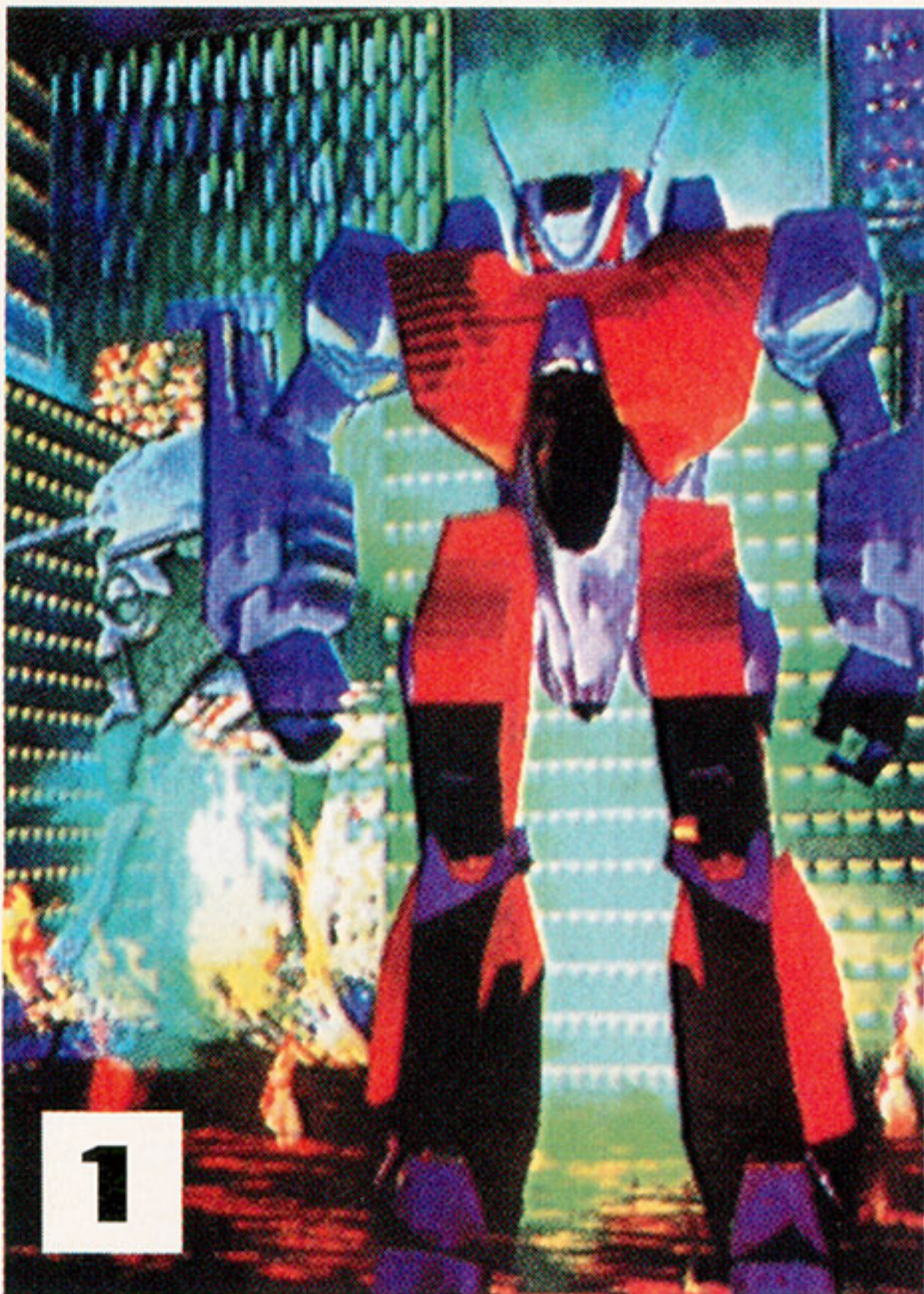
Maximum Sprite Movement: Unknown custom architecture

Polygons: Estimated in excess of one million texture-mapped per second

OnBoard RAM: Unknown

Storage Medium: Custom Nintendo cartridge; high capacity; real-time compression/decompression

# 0 DETONATION



## 1-3 BATTLETECH

If the screen-shots above are any indication of the Ultra's real-time graphics abilities, we are all in for a treat. Gametek has been working hard on this title for many months, and the company claims that the game's environment is fully-interactive. Now instead of watching cinemas, you can roam through 'em! Goodbye, FMV!

## The Ammunition

- BATTLETECH
- KILLER INSTINCT 2
- PILOT WINGS 2
- TUROK
- DINOSAUR HUNTER
- ULTIMATE
- MORTAL KOMBAT 3
- ULTRA DOOM
- ULTRA DONKEY KONG
- ULTRA F-ZERO
- ULTRA MARIO WORLD
- ULTRA ZELDA LEGENDS
- SHADOWS OF THE EMPIRE
- STACKER

questioned the very sanity of the company. Even with the latest breakthrough compression techniques, Ultra 64 cartridges would likely be very, very expensive. Many believe there is only one logical reason behind Nintendo's insistence on the cartridge as a primary medium. That reason? It is a known fact that Nintendo has been assembling their own satellite-linked games service (similar to the Sega Channel for the Genesis). Buying expensive cartridges—or any other type of retail software—could theoretically become obsolete. With this type of service in place, Ultra 64 owners would be able to select from a wide range of titles and download them into their own homes (for a monthly fee, of course). Online games services make sense; after all, isn't that where we've been heading for the past few years?

While we here at ULTIMATE GAMER try to stay away from rumors regarding the Nintendo 64 (the new name for the Japanese console), there are a couple tidbits which just can't be ignored. First, we've heard that there is a warehouse somewhere in Japan which has been storing N64's—finished and in boxes, no less—for months. In addition, Nintendo's assembly line has been running off 10,000 hardware units per month since as early as September of 1995 in preparation for the big day. Hmmm. A launch of such magnitude would require lots of lead time, so this speculation may actually hold water. The second piece of info we've been told is one concerning the actual date of the launch: Thursday, March 21, 1996. This is a national holiday in Japan as well as the first day of spring break for schools, and would be an ideal date for N64's launch. If the date is correct, Nintendo would also make its fiscal year, which ends March 31. As a result, technically they would not have lied about launching the console by the end of '95—fiscal '95. But the most intriguing thing is, is that Nintendo of Japan seems to have a thing for the number 21. The Famicom Disc system debuted on February 21, 1986, the Game Boy on April 21, 1989, the Super Famicom on November 21, 1990 and the Virtual Boy on July 21, 1995. This is not a coincidence.

You may be wondering about the Japanese system's name change from Ultra Famicom to its new title, Nintendo 64. Apparently, the name Ultra conflicted with that of an established company in Japan and to avoid legal hassles, Nintendo agreed to change the console's name. One last thing: A source has indicated to us that the American console casing will not be black in color, but instead, gray, similar to the Super NES.

As I write this, there are only three days to go before the Shoshinkai show in Japan. Yes, the day of reckoning, and we'll be there. Join us back here next month for an all-out Ultra 64 assault—ULTIMATE GAMER style!



## ABOVE

An artist's rendition of the U64 controller as seen in Media Works Super Famicom, a Japanese video game magazine. As you can see, there is a concave-style joystick at the center of the pad, which is used to manipulate characters throughout three-dimensional game environments.

# LIFE AFTER DEATH

**"The \$699 launch price... sure as hell didn't help much to install the user base."**



The 3DO has been seen by many as somewhat of a wounded animal limping around now for almost three years. The \$699 launch price was the likely bear trap and it sure as hell didn't help much to install the user base. Adding to this was the fact that there were very few hit arcade conversions to make the system a REAL must-have.



By Christmas of 1994, the 3DO dropped to \$399 and had **Super Street Fighter II Turbo** in its arsenal of games. That helped. **Time Magazine** naming the 3DO as "the number one best product of the year" didn't hurt. Then, GEX came along and showed the world some of 3DO's potential. Early last spring, it looked as though the system had a chance of scooping up the 32-bit market. Then suddenly, the game well dried up again. And when Saturn and PlayStation arrived, the "VHS of the video game world" seemed doomed to disappear into the land of the lost. On the positive side, both the Panasonic and Goldstar 3DO-compatible machines are now priced at the \$249 mark, and there are nearly 200 titles available. In addition, Studio 3DO currently has ten different titles in development for the upcoming 64-bit M2 add-on/console.



In late October of 1995, the 3DO Company sold its 64-bit M2 technology to electronics powerhouse Matsushita Corporation (owners of Panasonic) for a staggering 100 million dollars [for the whole story, see this month's Incoming—Ed]. What exactly Matsushita does with M2 is anyone's guess, but if used properly, the advanced technology could make Matsushita a serious force to be reckoned with within the industry.

## The Weapons

### 3DO

**CPU:** ARM60 Processor at 12.5 MHz

**Co-Processors:** None

**Sound Processor:** 25MHz Digital Signal Processor (DSP) with 12 voice channels

**Maximum Colors:** Millions

**Maximum Resolution:** 640x480

**Maximum Sprite Movement:** 20,000 polygons per second; less when textured

**OnBoard RAM:** 3 Megabytes of RAM as a memory buffer

**CD Drive Speed:** Double-Speed

### M2

**CPU:** 64-bit Power PC 602, 66 MHz RISC—Backward-Compatible with all 3DO titles

**Graphics:** 100 million pixels per second rendering speed w/one million polygons per second. 700,000 texture-mapped polygons per second

**Sound:** MPEG Audio Decompression, 32-channel

**Memory:** 48Mbits



## The Ammunition

**1 BLADEFORCE**  
Studio 3DO's finest hour.

**2 KILLING TIME**  
Hunt or be hunted.

**3 FOES OF ALI**  
EA's fantastic boxing title is a must-have for fans of the sport.

**4 PRIMAL RAGE**  
Finally, 3DO owners can RAGE!

**5 DEATHKEEP**  
Evil lurks in this 3-D action title.

**6 CAPTAIN QUAZAR**  
Everything is fair game for destruction!



## CD Interface

Functional. There's also a built-in light show which responds to changes in the audio bandwidth, creating a soothing effect.

## Top Secret Plans

The M2! If it's priced lower than the Ultra 64 we might see a dark horse winner.



# CLOSE TO EXTINCTION

Atari's Jaguar has always had plenty of potential, but has garnered, at the most, lukewarm reception from both the gaming public and third-party developers (who, by the way, still have a rather bad taste in their mouths).



## Atari Jaguar

There's an old saying that goes, "Fool me once; shame on you. Fool me twice; shame on me." Consumers are not an easily forgiving lot once you've successfully screwed them over. And over. And over. Months would pass between games like **Tempest 2000** and **Alien vs Predator**. When the games did come, many seemed half-baked or had bugs. It's really not all that complicated. Eventually, when a trail of broken promises gets long enough, people stop taking you seriously.

Yet Atari insists that the games are coming. And that paying \$149 for a (64-bit) Jaguar makes more sense than paying \$300 for a 32-bit console. It all sounds good on paper.

Now, with the introduction of the Jaguar CD, Atari is hoping to capture some of the next generation game players. The Jag CD add-on comes with three pack-in games: **Blue Lightning**, **Vid Grid** and a **Myst Sampler** disc. The system also has a built-in VLM feature which provides tripped-out eye candy good for playing music CDs. Even the harshest critic has to concede that that's an amazing deal for \$149. But once again, there is very little additional software available to warrant the purchase.

One might begin to wonder what Atari is doing with the ninety-odd million dollars won in their lawsuit with Sega. Hey, here's an idea: How about paying some old debts and making up with third-party developers?

## The Weapons

### Jaguar

**CPU:** Motorola MC68000

**Processors:** Two custom-built 64 RISC processors; high-speed Blitter GFX chip with hardware support for Z-Buffering and Gouraud shading; custom graphics processor with 27 MIPS

**Sound Processor:** DSP with 16bit DAC

**Maximum Color:** 16.7 Million colors

**Maximum Resolution:** Up to 720x576

**Maximum Sprite Movement:** 850 million pixels per second

### Jaguar CD

**Drive Speed:** Double-Speed with 790 megabytes of data storage capacity; MPEG built in; will support 8xJPEG compression.

**Other:** Built-in Virtual Light Machine provides a light show with 81 different pattern settings.

## Top Secret Plans

Even with the VR helmet and other goodies planned, there is some doubt as to whether or not the Jaguar can survive this war. It would be truly ironic—not to mention tragic—if the Godfather of home video games died from lack of software.

“Eventually,  
when a trail

of broken promises

gets long enough,

people stop taking

you seriously.”



2



3



4



1



5



6

## The Ammunition

**1 ATARI KART**  
The best-looking kart—next to Defender 2000, of course.

**2 DEFENDER 2000**  
Bring it on, Minter!

**3 I-WAR**  
Weird polygon 3-D shooter.

**4 IRON SOLDIER II**  
Fans of the original rejoice!

**5 ATTACK OF THE MUTANT PENGUINS**  
The stupidest name of all time?

**6 MISSILE COMMAND VR**  
A cool twist on the original.



## CD Interface

With no cursor control, the music/player interface is a complete and utter mess. Just click and pray you get it right the first time. The built-in VLM scores big points, though.

# THE FIGHT GOES ON

**"The U.S. console is now slated for release in '96, but it may never happen..."**



Having sold 300,000 units in its first six months, the Neo•Geo CD is a certified hit in The Land of The Rising Sun. SNK has had plans in place for the American debut of this console since the 1994 WCES. Neo•Geo CD systems were to begin shipping in late fall of '95, but the company has since then decided to delay the U.S. launch until "sometime in 1996."



## Neo•Geo CD

Oh, how the times have changed. When SNK first introduced their Neo•Geo system, we all gawked at its amazing power and even more powerful price tag. But just to know that for the first time on Earth, you could play the exact same game at home as in the arcades was temptation enough to break out the checkbook. Unfortunately for SNK, the cross-section of the gaming public who would ever write that check was very select. For those who could not bear the hefty \$700 price tag of a Gold System, owning a Neo•Geo home console was restricted to wet dreams. But man, those who did own a Neo•Geo had access to some of the best fighting games ever created.

Enter 1996 and the Neo•Geo CD. A more powerful machine at half the price would seem to make it a more tempting purchase than before. The system is doing very well in Japan, but what about the U.S. version? As fate would have it, the U.S. console is now slated for release in '96, but it may never happen, and for a couple of reasons.

First, there is a warehouse in Japan packed with overstocked single-speed drives. These are the same single-speed drives which go into the Japanese Neo•Geo CD units. Since there are so many of these drives in storage, SNK of Japan wants to integrate them into U.S. units. But here's the rub: SNK of America knows that single-speed drives just don't cut it with the American gaming public.

Second, the release of technologically superior systems from Sega, Sony and soon, Nintendo, may have given SNK second thoughts as to the validity of a U.S. launch. It would also buy them time—if they wanted it—to surprise everyone on the planet with an even more powerful console in 1996 or '97.

## The Weapons

### Neo•Geo CD

**Main Processor:** 16-bit 68000 chip running at 12MHz with a 4MHz Z80 chip

**Co-Processor:** NA

**Sound Processors:** 13-channel Yamaha sound chip

**Maximum color:** 65,536 Color palette; 4,096 colors on-screen

**Maximum Resolution:** NA

**Maximum Sprite Movement:** NA

**Polygons:** NA

**OnBoard RAM:** 56M-Bit D-RAM, 512K V-RAM, and 64K S-RAM

CD: Double-Speed

**Other:** The new D-pad on the controllers is revolutionary. The surface of the pad is concave and perfect for positioning your thumb. The D-pad is built on a rocker switch, and boy, does it feel slick—projectiles are now a snap!



## The Ammunition

### 1 KING OF FIGHTERS '95

The title says it best.

### 2 PULSTAR

Much like the R-Type series.

### 3 VOLTAGE FIGHTER

Great anime characters!

### 4 STAKES WINNER

Place yer bets, and go nuts!

### 5 AERO FIGHTER 3

Straight-forward vertical action.

### 6 AGGRESSORS OF DARK KOMBAT

The wrestling elements suck.

## CD Interface

Logically laid-out. A little red hand acts as the cursor and it's easy to get around the screen. Like many other consoles, you can program the interface to play tracks in specific order.



## Top Secret Plans

Unless you're willing to pay big bucks for an import console, you're gonna have to sit tight on this one. King of Fighters '96 as the pack-in? Please, SNK, make it so!

# Destruction

LOVE THY NEIGHBOR.  
WRECK HIS CAR.

derby

AVAILABLE NOW

KIDS TO ADULTS



AGES 6+



PlayStation

PC  
CD  
ROM

"It's the most impressive PlayStation game yet"  
Next Generation

"A carnage-filled crunch fest" Die Hard Game Fan

"The most realistic crashes we've ever seen"  
Game Players

"This is stock car racing on steroids"  
Electronic Gaming Monthly



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# Yu Suzuki of AM2



ULTIMATE GAMER recently caught up with Sega's amazing AM2 Team. The AM2 Team spent many months porting over two of Sega's hottest coin-op games to the Saturn. Now that AM2 has wrapped up work on **Virtua Cop** and **Virtua Fighter 2**, we figured we'd do a little Q&A with AM2 team leader, Yu Suzuki.



**Ultimate Gamer: Virtua Fighter** has played a huge role, not only in the success of the Saturn, but in setting the standard for polygon-based fighting games around the world. How does it feel to be the father of such an incredible creation?

**Yu Suzuki:** I don't think of myself as anything so grand. **VF** is the result of the pursuit and realization of one type of ideal game, but that doesn't mean I'm satisfied. It's important to always create games with new concepts. And even if a game sets the standard for fighting games, we are constantly trying to render it obsolete by working on the next project. So I think we are still far from a level we can be satisfied with.

**UG:** Do you find it difficult to come up with new ideas?

**YS:** I don't think it's difficult. Sometimes ideas come to me in the middle of the night, or when I'm eating. I think those flashes of inspiration are very important. Also, constantly coming up with new ideas is very enjoyable.

**UG:** With very busy production schedules, do you ever find the time to actually sit back, relax and play games for fun?

**YS:** I enjoy creating games but I do not play them very often.

**UG:** What are some of the earlier games you've worked on?

**YS:** I have been involved with eight projects: **Hang On** (1985), **Space Harrier** (1985), **Outrun** (1986), **Afterburner** (1987), **G-LOC** (1990), **R360** (1990), **Virtua Racing** (1993). More recently of course, there's **Virtua Fighter** (1993), **Virtua Fighter 2** (1994), **Virtua Cop** (1994) and **Virtua Cop 2** (1995).

**UG:** Okay, let's get right to it: Saturn **Virtua Fighter 2**. We've all been anxiously awaiting its arrival. It looks very good. Was it difficult to convert?

**YS:** Obviously, I think it is difficult to port a game from a high-spec arcade machine. But thanks to the hard work of our staff, we were able to do it. The programming is of course complex, but after the **VF2** Saturn release, the staff is becoming used to that type of development. I think we can improve even further in the future.

**UG:** Now that everything is said and done, what are the differences between Saturn **VF2** and the coin-op version?

**YS:** Because this version will be for home use, we have included some original modes in addition to the arcade mode. These are a ranking mode, and also a mode where players can choose characters and fight in teams.

**UG:** What is the actual frame rate in Saturn **VF2**? At 60 fps, the early version was running great, but that was with only one character onscreen. What did the final version end up with?

**YS:** It is 60 frames per second as well; exactly the same as the arcade version.

**UG:** Everyone here at the ULTIMATE GAMER office enjoys **VF2** very much, and one character in particular—Shun, the Drunken

Master. Did Jackie Chan inspire you to create this character?

**YS:** Jackie Chan was of course a factor, but I was able to see the actual Suiken when I was in China doing research for **VF2** which inspired me to try to include it in the game. Shun is a fighter that was created to show the kind of character expression that is possible with 60 frame per second visuals.

**UG:** You mentioned going to China to research **VF2**—what kind of research did you and your staff do to create such a realistic game?

**YS:** China is the birthplace of many forms of martial arts, and my purpose in visiting was to get ideas for new martial arts to include in **VF2**. I was able to gain a lot from watching a Suiken demonstration at a Shaolin temple, and from a martial arts troupe in Beijing. While I was there, I was able to meet and spar with kung fu masters and listen to lectures about attacks and defense. All of this was recorded on camera and video, and I used those and my own experiences in producing the game. In addition, the dynamic Suiken and kung fu from Jackie Chan's movies were used for reference.

**UG:** Can you tell us a little bit about the new development tools and what results you achieved from using them for **VF2**?

**YS:** Yes, there are new tools and those tools have been distributed to third-party developers as well. The SGL (Saturn Graphics Library)

includes a library of 3-D computer graphics such as those developed for **Virtua Fighter**, so it's much simpler for third parties to create games like **VF**. The contents should be easy to use for those who are just beginning to work with 3-D graphics.

**UG:** It has been widely circulated that very few game programmers are skilled enough—technically—to take full advantage of the Saturn's 3-D abilities. What roles did the VDP1 and VDP2 chips have in the finished **VF2** product?

**YS:** I don't think it's true that only a few programmers can take full advantage of the Saturn. It is unavoidable to some extent as development begins, but that can be said for any hardware. In the case of Saturn **VF2**, we still had some VDP power left over, so that means the hardware still has the potential to support even better games.

**UG:** The side-by-side comparison of **VF1** and **VF2** on the Saturn is mind boggling. As with all new hardware, the power of knowledge is gained with each and every project, as certainly seems to be the case here. Percentage-wise, how close do you feel you've come to tapping the Saturn's full potential at this point in time?

**YS:** **VF2** in no way uses the Saturn's full power. The Saturn still has a lot of untapped potential, and the possibility is high of even better games.

**UG:** Are there any games on the PlayStation that you would admit to playing? Have you played **Tekken**?





# Combat can take many forms...

**YS:** I'm not clear on what the games are, so the answer would be no. With regards to **Tekken**, I have seen it, but I haven't played it.

**UG:** Namco has released a coin-op gun game, **Time Crisis**—clearly a game inspired by **Virtua Cop**.

**YS:** I'm not too worried about the competition. What AM2 does is concentrate on making our own games—without worrying about what kind of games the other companies are making.

**UG:** We just received the final on **Virtua Cop** yesterday, and I must tell you—being a huge fan of the arcade game, I was just as excited to see this one as I was to see **VF2**. It is of the best quality—with graphics almost identical to the arcade version!

**YS:** I'm very happy to hear that. The **Virtua Cop** staff worked very hard on this project, so we are grateful.

**UG:** Are the background elements in the Saturn version completely polygonal or simply large, scalable sprites?

**YS:** I can't answer that at this stage [hmmm...—Ed.].

**UG:** What is the frame rate on Saturn **Virtua Cop**?

**YS:** It's 30 frames per second, the same as the arcade version.

**UG:** Are any of the movements of the polygon characters in **Virtua Fighter** or **Virtua Cop** based on the moves of real athletes or actors? If so, who are they?

**YS:** The movements of the fighters in **VF** were recorded directly from actual martial artists. Who they are is a trade secret, so I cannot say.

**UG:** At the AMOA show here in the States, I had the pleasure of playing **Virtua Cop 2**. I literally headed straight for the Sega booth to get to it. It is amazing! Rather than simply going the easy "let's just add some new backgrounds" route, you increased the speed and intensity of the game by adding more

aggressive enemies. The high-speed pursuit stages are breathtaking as well. The game literally blazes at you and makes the first one look like it's standing still!

**YS:** I'm very happy. I would like to continue making games that not only live up to the players' expectations, but surpass them as well.

**UG:** In designing **Virtua Cop** and **Virtua Cop 2**, did you and your staff do any kind of research on police procedures or records of real crimes?

**YS:** We did research with some materials, but we didn't interview police officers or anything like that.

**UG:** Is it safe to assume that we'll be playing **Virtua Cop 2** for the Saturn sometime next year?

**YS:** I would like to wait and see the reaction to the arcade version of **Virtua Cop 2** before the decision is made. However, we are conducting some basic research into its development for the Saturn.

**UG:** On a different note, we're very excited about the prospect of **Virtua Fighter 3**. Would you be so kind as to give us some insight on it?

**YS:** We are considering a new male character and a female character. But this is only for consideration and is not a final decision. We're looking into the use of weapons, as well. As for any additional information, we are currently conducting some basic research, so unfortunately, I cannot elaborate on much more at this time.

**UG:** Speaking of weapons, how do you feel about the overall use of them in fighting games as opposed to just punches and kicks?

**YS:** I think it's perfectly fine. Combat can take many forms.

**UG:** Could you at least tell us whether or not **VF3** might utilize a true 3-D playfield—one in which a character can maneuver around his opponent at will, rather than simply away from and toward them?

**YS:** This type of maneuvering is possible in **VF2** to some extent. But when we consider that one-on-one combat is the focus, I think that the 2-D perspective is the best in that sense. As far as how we might deal with environments in **VF3**, nothing has been decided yet.

**UG:** Is there anything at all you might be able to comment on regarding Model 3? What kinds of effects do you hope to achieve with it?

**YS:** I don't have any realistic ideas as of yet. I'm really taking my time to think long and hard about it.

**UG:** What is player reaction to **Fighting Vipers** in Japan? Are you pleased with the product?

**YS:** The reaction was very good. The rate of operation is close to 100%, and we are satisfied.

**UG:** A source close to **ULTIMATE GAMER** has informed us of the existence of a Sega **3D Marvel Super Heroes** fighting game. The word was that the game is completed, but that it is secretly being kept in storage. Has the Capcom **Marvel** game proved to be some sort of conflict for Sega?

**YS:** I have never heard anything like that.

**UG:** Did Francios Bertrand used to work as an AM2 team member?

**YS:** I cannot say [Hmmm...—Ed.].

**UG:** It is no secret that Japanese and American gaming markets are very different. RPG's, for example, sell very well in Japan, but here in the U.S., games are primarily mainstream, big-name licenses. Any comments?

**YS:** It's a difference in the people of the two countries, and as a result, there will be a difference in sales.

**UG:** What kinds of things do you look to for inspiration when designing a game?

**YS:** I am inspired by various types of entertainment, from videos to magazine articles. Ideas sometimes come to me in the middle of the night.

**UG:** Are you more creative at night?

**YS:** For me, the time of day doesn't have much to do with it.

**UG:** Do you have any concerns as to where the industry is heading?

**YS:** It will depend on the evolution of the hardware, but I think it will continue to grow.

**UG:** What do you make of the Ultra 64?

**YS:** Since it's a machine that hasn't gone on sale yet, I know nothing about it and as much as I'd like to, I really can't form an opinion.

**UG:** Other than quicker access times, are there any legitimate advantages of cartridges over CDs?

**YS:** Not many that I can think of.

**UG:** Once a person plays and then completes a game, much of the play value is diminished. How do you feel about monthly online games services (like the Sega Channel, for instance), where players can select from a large number of games, rather than spending lots of money on games from a retail store? Do you believe this will eventually replace store-purchased software?

**YS:** I think both types of games can coexist, much like the relationship between movie theaters and rental movies.

**UG:** What kinds of games do you imagine we will be playing, say, five years from now?

**YS:** I think the interactivity will increase. And along with the evolution of the hardware, the quality of the visuals will also increase.

**UG:** This is true. What kinds of interactivity would you like to see integrated into the games of the future?

**YS:** [Laughs] I have some ideas, but I'm not telling...!

**UG:** Have you been involved in the research and/or development of any "virtual reality" types of interfaces? Is this something you'd like to work on at some point in time?

**YS:** Very much. As a matter of fact, that work is currently in progress.

**UG:** The biggest improvement in the newer 32-bit game machines (like the Saturn) is in the area of graphics. This is, of course, good. Beautiful visuals are of course, very important. But do you think that some games rely too much on graphics, and not enough on new, innovative gameplay concepts?

**YS:** Yes, I think that is sometimes very true, but I'd rather not single out anyone or any games in particular.

**UG:** Technically speaking, what are the Saturn's biggest strengths—and weaknesses?

**YS:** Rather than having strengths and weaknesses, I think the Saturn is a machine with all-mighty powers. It is ideal not only for polygon-based games, but also for 2-D bitmapped games.

**UG:** What are some of your favorite movies and TV shows?

**YS:** I am enjoying the **Virtua Fighter** animation that's being broadcast in Japan right now.

**UG:** Has there ever been a secret in an AM2 game that has never been discovered? A hidden character, secret stage or special cheat?

**YS:** [Huge grin] Absolutely. Each game has hidden secrets. However, I'd like to withhold comment on the specifics.

**UG:** Do you ever take a vacation?

**YS:** Oh, yes. After projects are completed, I take time off to relax and drive my sports cars.

**UG:** Thank you very much for your time. It is sincerely appreciated.



# ARCADE

## Tekken 2

Tekken 2  
Tekken 2

**N**amco places its bet for best 3-D fighter with **Tekken 2**. The original, in all its greatness, always played second fiddle to **VF2**. Now, my friends, Namco fights back. It's taken **Tekken** and souped up the gameplay, along with just about everything else.

How much better can T2 be than its year-old predecessor? To use a cliché, mere words cannot suffice, no matter what anyone says.

Tekken did suffer from a sort of flatness, but in T2, one can actually dictate to which side one would like to move. This open-endedness leads to very fulfilling gameplay. If you see a vicious combo within range just move to the side and cause the attacker to become the prey. Gotta love that!



**What was your name? VIRTUA what? I'm sorry, but I'm really, really busy playing TEKKEN 2.... Please leave me alone.**

Compare the screen-shots of Tekken and its more-than-worthy sequel. The polygon count on each character is far higher than before. Pay close attention to the detail in each one of the backgrounds. Tekken was littered with flat floors and dull backdrops. Now the backgrounds have a crisp, very clean look. Jun's flower-filled domain is popping with life. The shoddy marionette-like shadows have been retouched to give them more appeal. The fighters of old have learned a few new tricks and been given snazzier garbs; Heihachi's got the Shogun action goin' on and Nina appears to have bought her newest outfits at Frederick's of Hollywood. In the truest of Tekken traditions, all attacks give off a show of pyrotechnics that any red-blooded arsonist would be proud of.

Most of the tunage remains as non-descript as in Tekken. Nothing too exciting, but noth-



### TEKKEN 2 (Namco)

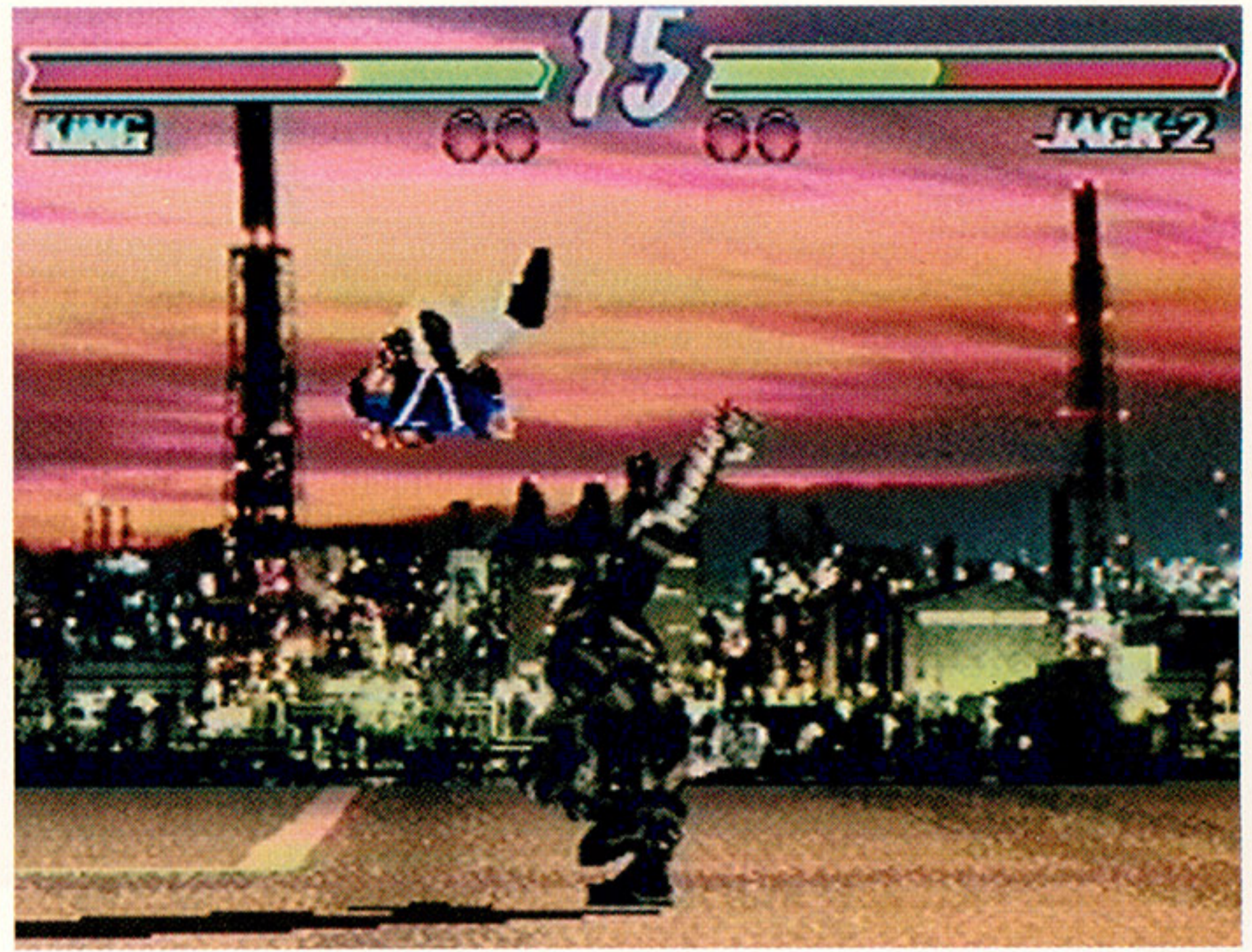
- One/Two-Player 3-D Fighting
- 19 controllable fighters...thus far
- 10-Hit Combos, Spirit Moves, Pop-Up Attacks, and some very sexy chicks
- JAMMA Configuration







If you can't discern the major background improvements from **TEKKEN** to **T2**, you should be shot.



Damn, am I glad I own a PlayStation!

ing to complain about, either. Some of the sound effects still give me the chills. Bones cracking, joint displacement—it all sounds like an S&M party.

Control is flawless, period. With four buttons, each representing the appropriate appendage, everything becomes second nature. Unfortunately, some attacks haven't been altered or altogether removed. Namco swears it was to balance game-play even more. I'm sure even Geoff "I have no clue what a combo is" Higgins could get aggro with the proper training.

One flaw—and one flaw only. Hits continue to inflict far too much damage. Add two or three extra hits to a 10-Hit Combo and it's all over for the recipient. Stun attacks piss me off, too; they give players an unfair advantage when used correctly. Very cheesy.

One last note: Arcade purists may be interested to know that the original arcade kit had a huge bug concerning the time-release characters. The intention of the time-release feature was to release a new fighter at the rate of one per week, after the initial installation of the arcade cabinet. Each time the machine was turned off for the night however, the timer on the board would reset to "day one" and thus the machine would never know when it was time to cough up the first new character. Namco has remedied the problem with an internal battery.

Let's wait and see if Namco can make good on its promise of an arcade-perfect translation onto the PlayStation. If not, they should take a bow anyway; they deserve it. Tekken 2 is practically perfect. **Toh Shin Den II** should hit arcades in the near future, but if the gameplay is as lean as in the original, Namco has nothing to fear. And Sega? They just might whip out an ace with **VF3**. We'll see....



The putrid shadows from **TEKKEN** are no more; check out these beauties.



Let me show you that metal floor! Crunch!



The Yin-Yang symbol on the rooftop is a nice touch.



Some crazy stunts can be pulled off.



One of the most beautiful levels is the church.



The ever-lame-looking King makes his return in **T2**.



Newcomer Jun is definitely a hotty!



# Preview

## Vital Info

System: PlayStation  
 Genre: Sports  
 Developer: Konami  
 Publisher: Konami  
 Completion Status: 80%  
 Release Date: December  
 Notes: 3-D playing area,  
 memory card support

## Strengths

- Smoothest graphics around
- Signature moves
- Intense basketball action

## Weaknesses

- More of an arcade game than a sim
- There is no Barkley, Jordan or Shaq
- Didn't come out sooner

# NBA In The Zone



NBA JAM has nothing on this supercharged medley of basketball madness.



Check out these replays—they'll show you another camera angle on the play.



Alas, the Garden of old is no longer.

**W**hen you think of great platform sports games, you think of companies like Electronic Arts, Sega Sports, Accolade, Konami... Wait a minute, *Konami!*? That's right, Konami. The company that brought you such forgettable home sports games as **Double Dribble**, has done a complete about-face. Its popular, coin-op hoop game, **NBA In the Zone** is now available for the PlayStation in all it's glory.

There was a while there when no one was quite sure about the future of the Konami corporation. Financial troubles have plagued this developer of such classics as **Contra**, **Castlevania**, **Gradius** and **Pooyan** (remember that game?). It appears, though, that basketball has saved them. Starting with **Run 'N' Gun**, a coin-op favorite, Konami looks to bounce back. Now, with the imminent release of its new sports line-up, including **NFL Full Contact**, **MLBPA Bottom of the 9th**, **Goal Storm**, **Give 'N' Go**, **ISS Deluxe** and **NBA In the Zone**, Konami will make a bid for part of that most coveted of consumer groups: the

sports nut.

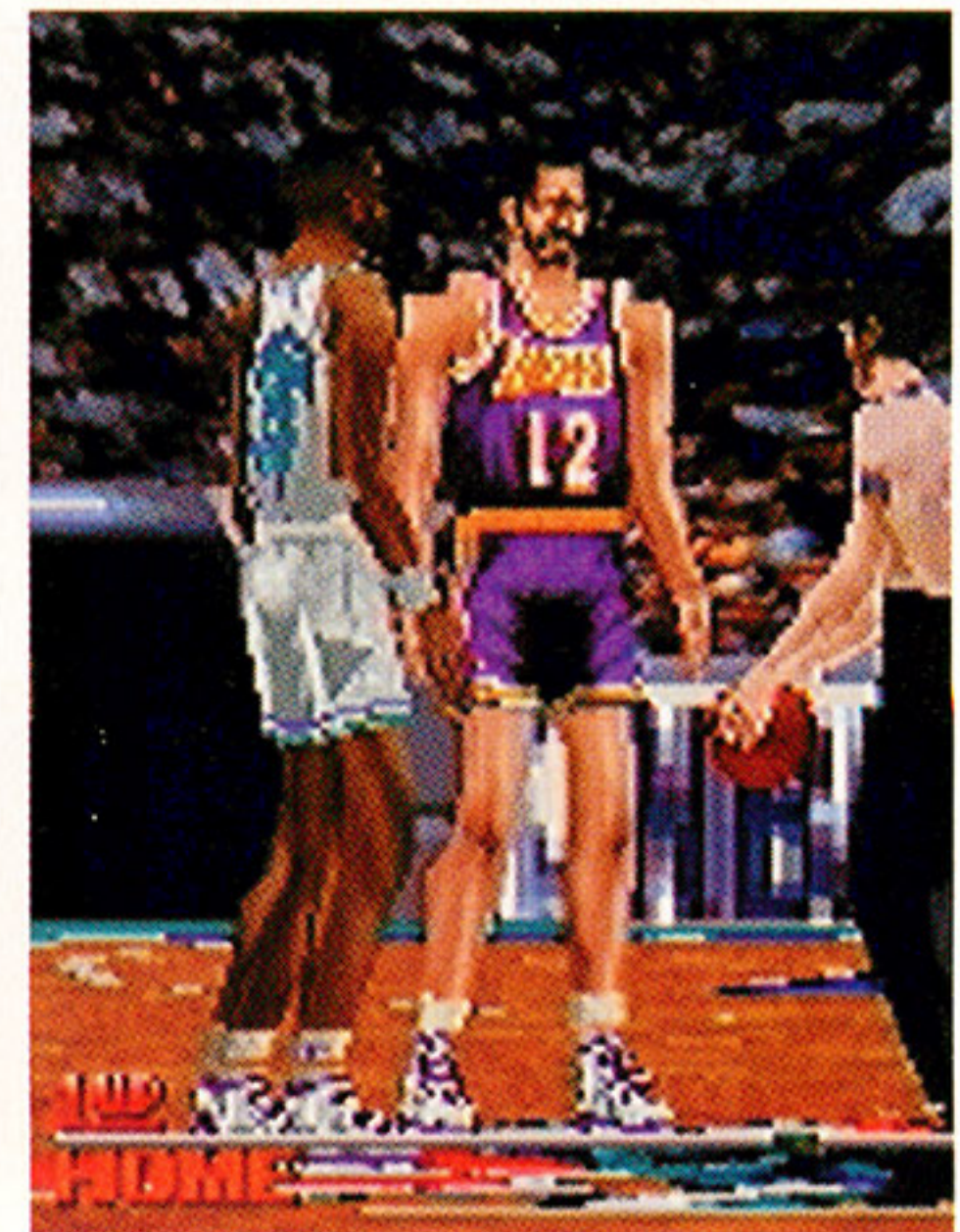
When I asked the folks at Konami how they managed to develop this monumental title, they weren't talking. Now, whether that's because they have some bit of revolutionary technology that they don't want to give away, or the fact that I don't speak Japanese, I don't know.



What I do know is that their boast, "The fastest and most realistic 5 on 5 basketball game ever designed," may just be true. Sure, I've been to EA Canada and seen what they have in store for PlayStation owners, but that's still a ways off. I live in the here and now, baby, and what I see before me is a near-complete piece of basketball heaven.

Here's the lowdown on what you'll be getting with your copy of **NBA In the Zone**:

No game would be complete without all 29 teams, including those expansion boys from the Great White North. On each of these teams, you'll find all of your favorite players, equipped with their special moves and physical features; not too shabby. Each arena has all of the





color and familiar court fixin's that make it unique to itself. The characters are, of course, texture mapped to give them that oh-so-real look.

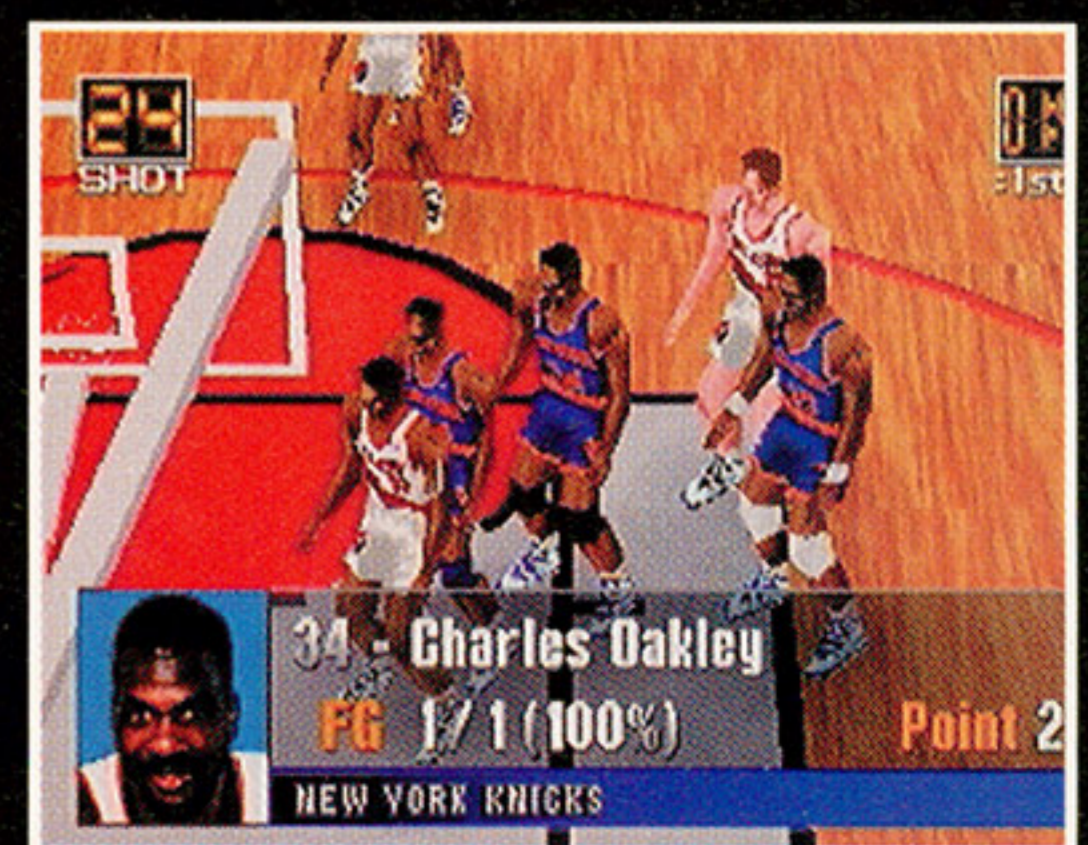
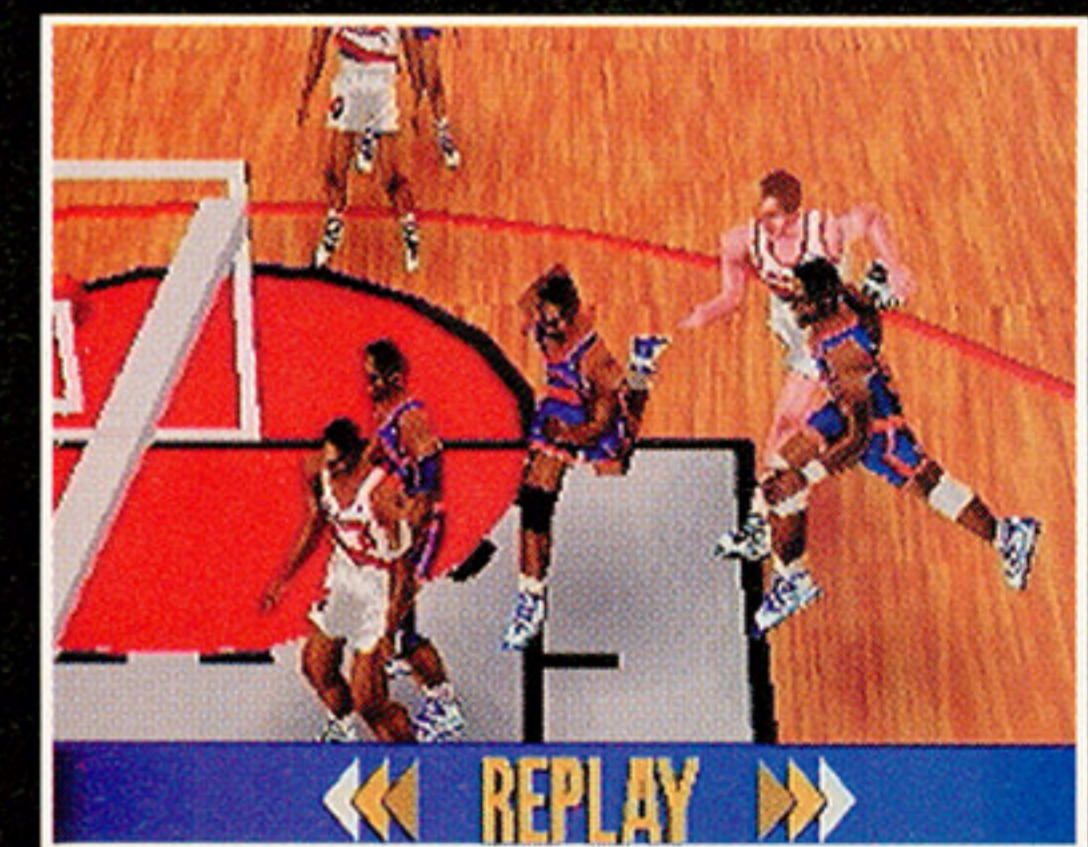
On top of all that, there are many different types of offensive and defensive plays that you can implement in your over-all strategy. You can watch your players execute these plays from the many different camera angles and perspectives that the game allows you access to.

Did I mention that this game includes a replay system that isn't annoying? After every score, watch a close-up of the action from a different angle and see how your player goes in-your-face on your opponent. You can start the trash-talkin' early....

All of these nifty features wouldn't matter if the playability sucked. Well, don't worry about that: **NBA In the Zone** plays like a Stradivarius and delivers the oomph of a schoolyard bully's punch. Konami has gone to great lengths to add all of the little

extras that set real hoop apart from a closet-case developer's vision of what basketball is. For one, there are fade-away jumpers. I can't believe that, until now, no prior basketball sim bothered to add something so fundamental to avoiding blocked shots. Also, with the use of the triangle button, you can now perform some slick ball moves while you are dribbling: dribble behind your back, do 360-degree spin moves, etc.... Also, you can have your players dishing off no-look passes and executing sweet pivot moves.

Tie all of this up in a pretty little bow and you've got a reason to stop dating. The scariest thing about **NBA In the Zone**, is that all of the stuff I just described was in an unfinished version. Makes you wonder how kick-ass the rest of this line-up is.





# Preview

## Vital Info

System: Playstation  
 Genre: Driving  
 Developer: FunCom  
 Publisher: JVC  
 Completion Status: 75%  
 Release Date: January  
 Notes: Memory card support,  
 Password

## Strengths

- Power-ups! Power-ups! Power-ups!
- Incredible sense of speed
- Great control over cars

## Weaknesses

- The sound! The sound! The sound!
- Only three main tracks
- Weapons are difficult to switch in battle

# Impact Racing



The graphics zoom along at a remarkable rate, giving a great sensation of speed.



Just ahead is one of IMPACT RACING's many leaps. Hold on!



Only a well-trained eye will see any extreme pixellation as you zoom through tunnels.

In the future, you don't need no stinking driver's license—just a license to kill.

Welcome to yet another chapter in the continuing saga of the lone highway warrior who must use his armed-to-the-teeth, souped-up car to avenge a wrongful death by the city's criminal element. This storyline is about to overtake the "save-the-princess" scenario as the most over used plotline for a video game. But, I'm not a film critic so let's move on to the game.

**Impact Racing** is the first Playstation game from those wonderful people at JVC who brought us such classic Super NES games as the **Star Wars** trilogy, **Ghoul Patrol** and **Indiana Jones' Greatest Adventures**. This first attempt can best be described as a cross between **Road Avenger** and **Rock 'N' Roll Racing**.

Impact Racing offers six different cars, each having its own pluses and minuses in the acceleration and handling

departments. Also, each car has a separate meter that represents Armor—how much damage a car can take from enemy hits, and Payload—how much ammunition a particular car can handle at one time.

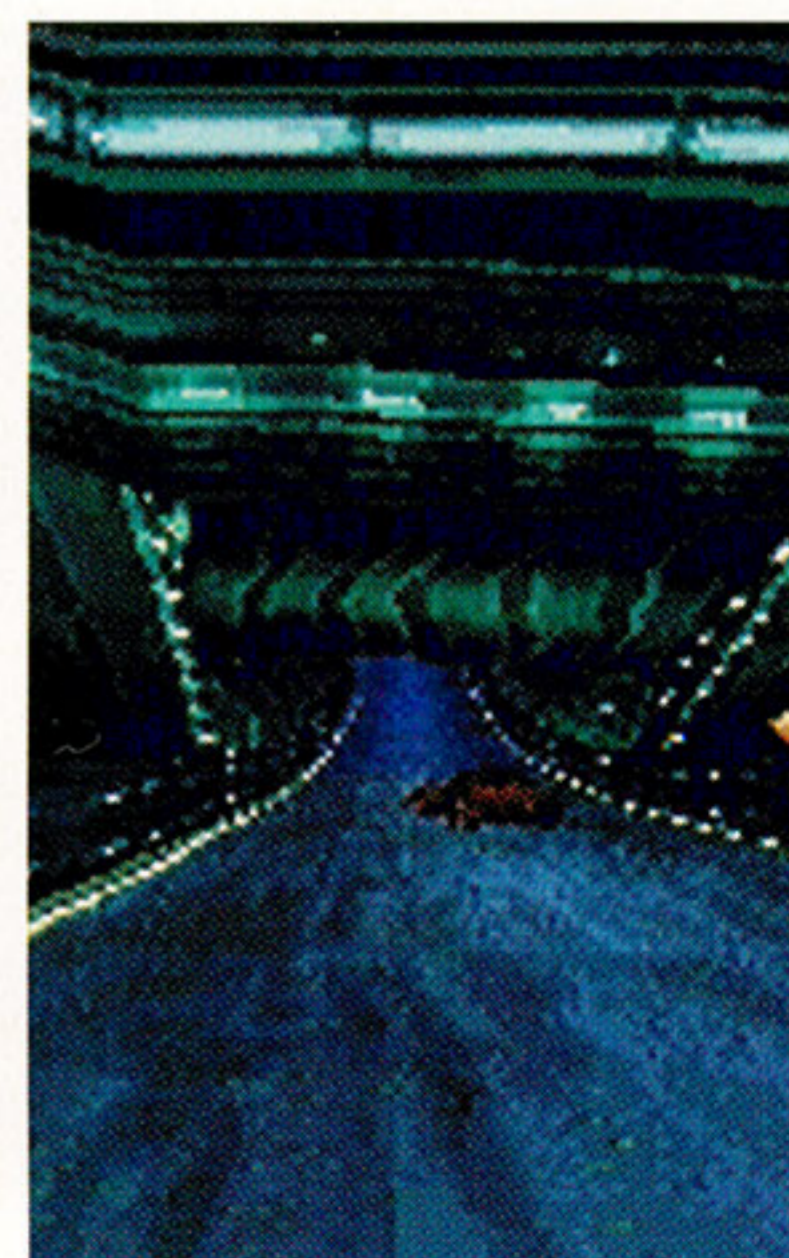
Wait! Did I just say ammunition? Oh, yeah! This puppy offers power-ups like double lasers, quad lasers, mines, missiles, firewalls, heatseekers and smart bombs. Believe me, you're



gonna need this fire-power in order to survive in Impact Racing's world

because destroying enemy cars is sometimes the only way to get other power-ups like energy, extra time, front armor and rear armor.

The game has only three main tracks (urban, mountain resort and outer space) but there are variations to each track that actually brings the count up to 12. As in other driving games, you have to race around a set track in order to proceed to the next track/world. The difference here is that you don't have to win, just survive



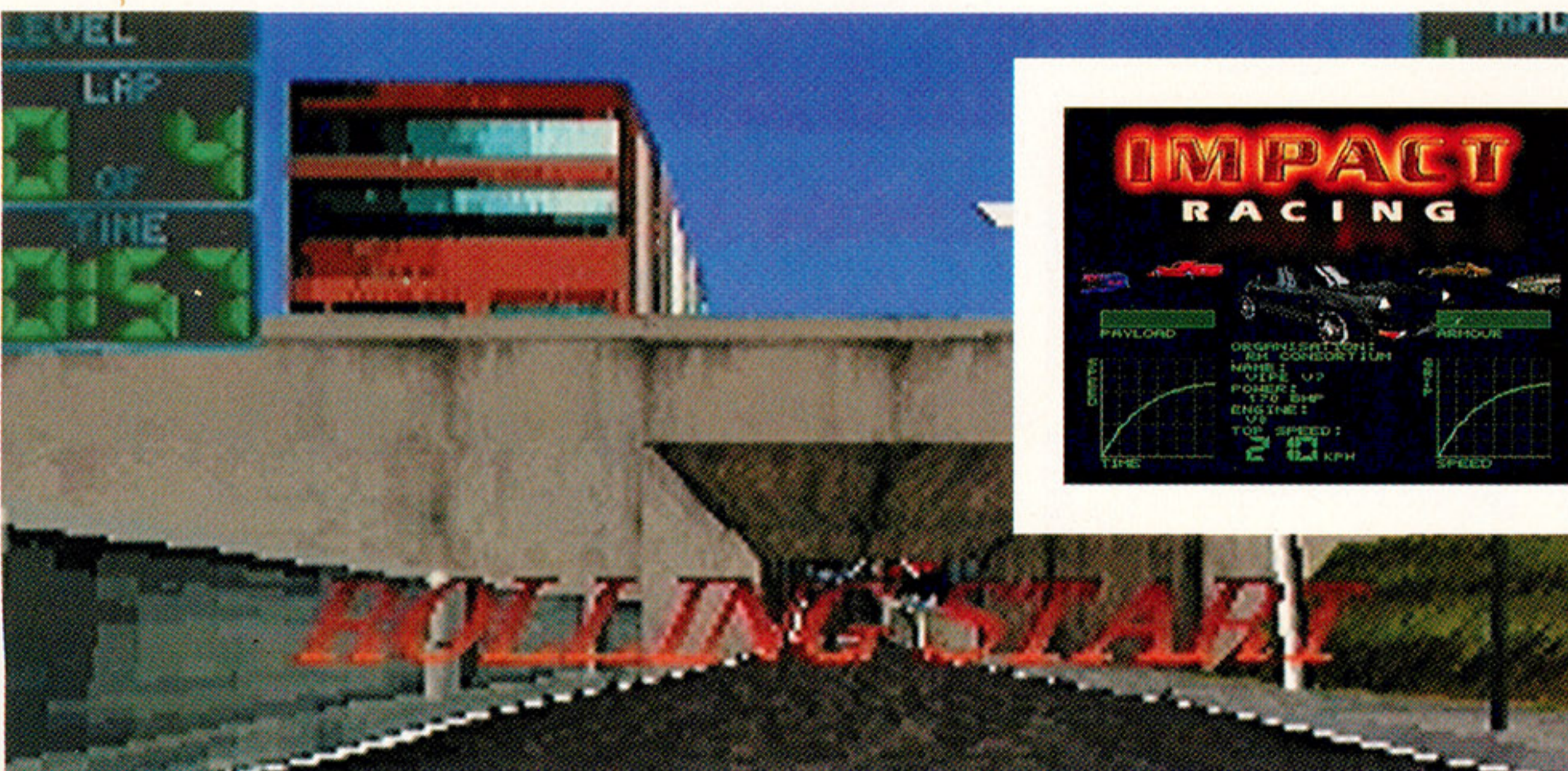


the four laps. Get a high count on the "gore score" by destroying enemy cars and you'll get the chance to race a candy-cane lane bonus track for more power-ups and a really long password.

There are two things that make Impact Racing finish ahead of the new crop of driving games. First, this game is fast! You can feel those turns! You can feel each leap over a hill! The graphics are smooth—although there was some major clipping in the tunnels of the outer space track. And you know what? No one danced around the television singing Pop Go The Graphics! Now that's saying something. Second, the enemies are tough! The programmers have taken the time to make the AI just right. However, there is one thing that gives this game a flat tire: the sound bites! The explosions poof when they should rock! The cars make a go-kart whine that is bound to drive your pet under the house. Also, there is not the

necessary tunage here to keep that pedal to the metal. This may not seem like much in the beginning but after awhile it will become all you think about. My suggestion: Put on your favorite CD—I found Ozzy Osbourne's "Crazy Train" fit the mood of this game pretty well—and turn the sound down!

A problem that is true with most racing games is their replayability. What keeps you going back for more once you've placed first on all the tracks? In the case of **Daytona USA**, you have the chance to play as the horse. In the case of **Ridge Racer**, you have the chance to play **Galaxian** for additional cars to race. Impact Racing's longevity lies in the ability to collect elusive power-ups. Is that enough? Well, with so many driving titles coming out soon, the competition is going to be tough. I suggest the developers slip in a few more perks to keep this game from the bin of the one-night rentals.





**Vital Info**

System: Saturn  
 Genre: 3-D first-person shooter  
 Developer: Core  
 Publisher: U.S. Gold  
 Completion Status: 70%  
 Release Date: December

**Strengths**

- Beautifully smooth scaling abilities
- Loads of non-stop action
- The sound effects are very realistic

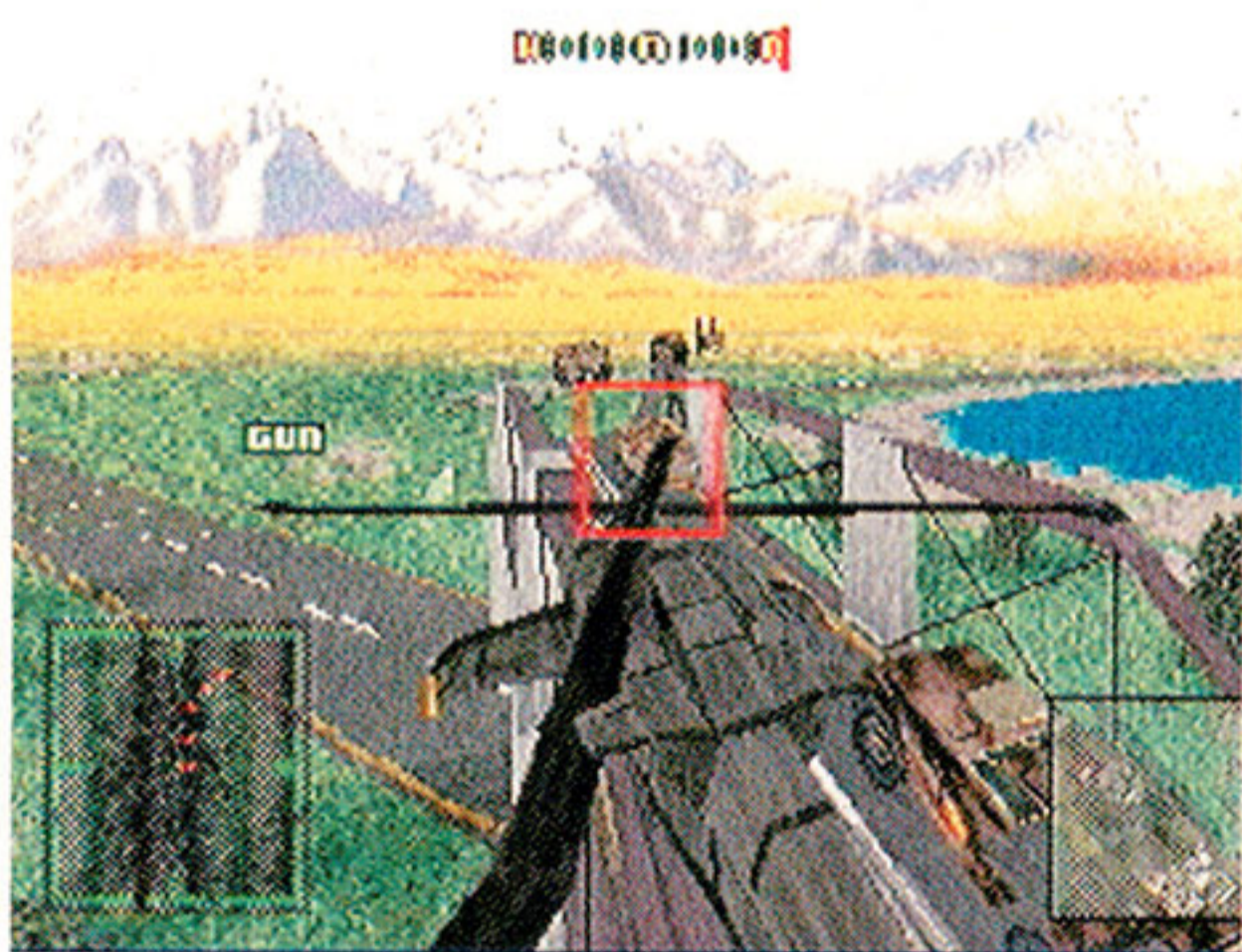
**Weaknesses**

- Some clipping problems
- Confusing controls take getting used to
- How 'bout a sub-game while loading?

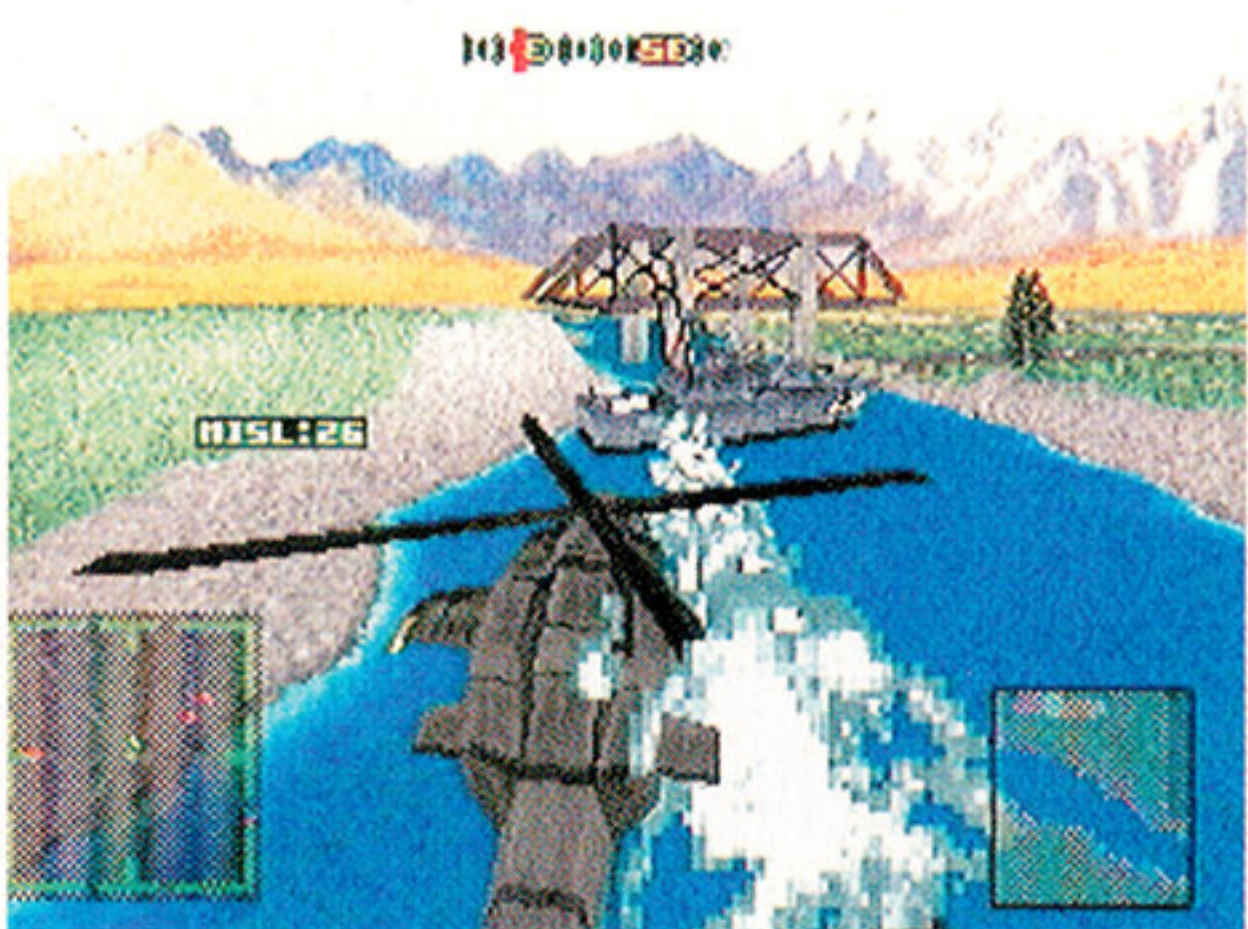
# Thunderstrike



You don't have to play levels in order. There are ten locations to choose from.



Lock onto enemy vehicles with your rockets before they cross this bridge.



Head down the river to say goodbye to this seaworthy vessel.

In my opinion, one of the greatest games ever to appear on the Sega CD was **AH-3 Thunderstrike**. Man, I remember spending hours on that puppy. The JVC-published game was really only one of a very few select titles to take advantage of the system's true capabilities; scaling and rotation were done to perfection. More importantly, the thing was a total blast in the gameplay department. The programming team at Core Design knew exactly what they were doing with the Sega CD.

In this sequel to the original AH Thunderstrike game, U.S. Gold has demonstrated that it knows how to get the most out of new hardware as well. The frame-rate is impressive—much smoother than that of, say, **Ghen War**. Even better still is the fact that this ain't no FMV bullshit. There are a few polygon rebuild problems, but U.S. Gold has assured me that this would be taken care of completely before the release of the final product.

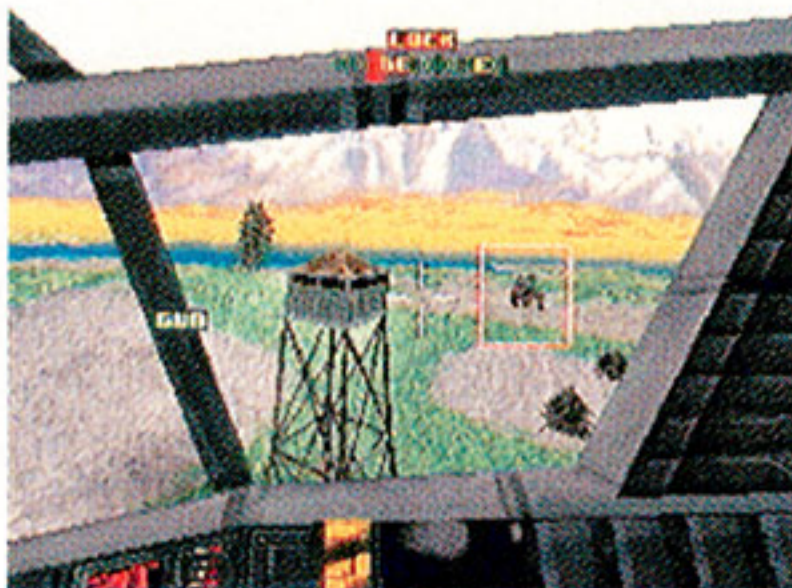
**Thunderstrike II** contains 35 missions taking place in ten different locations

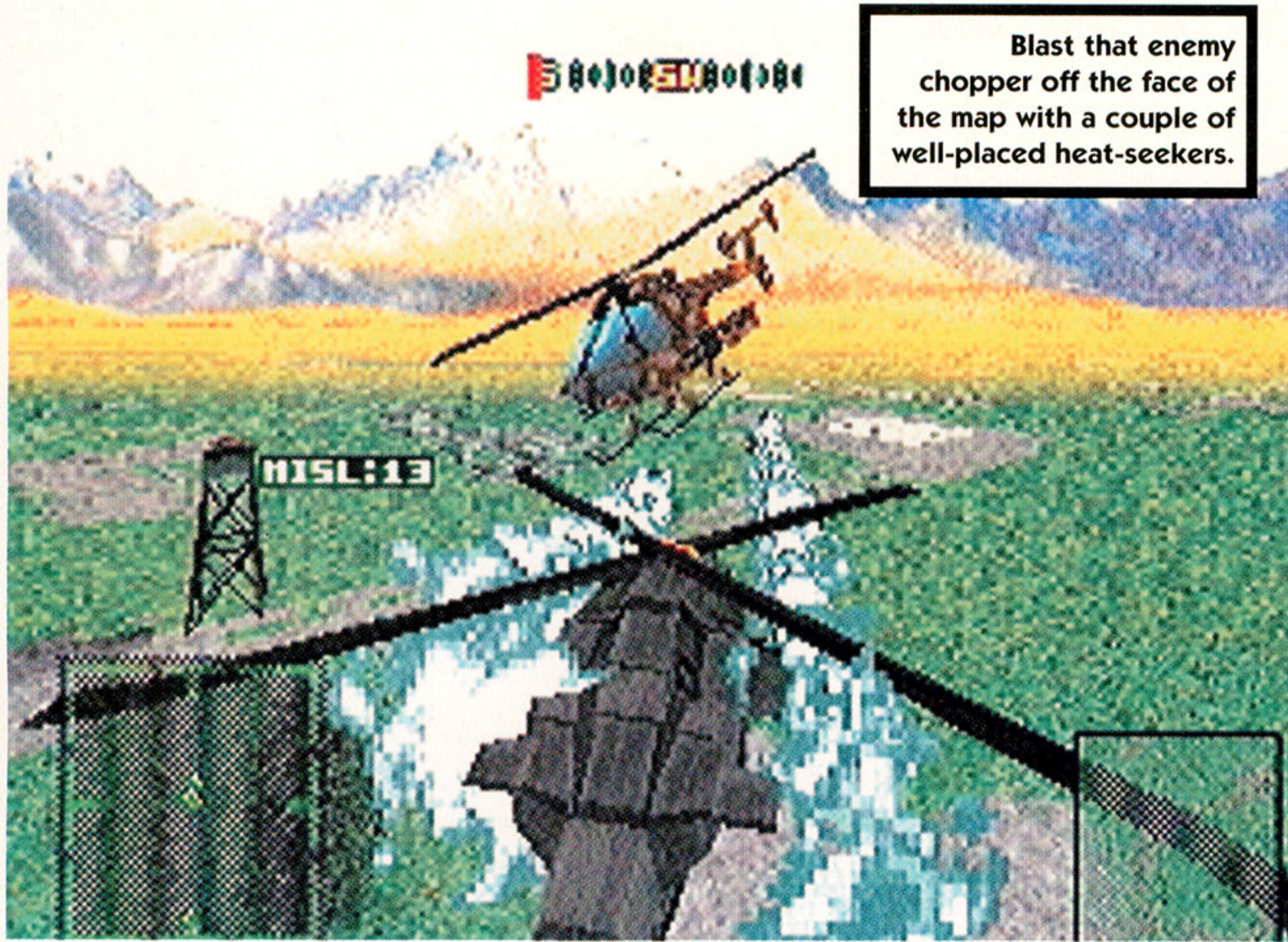
around the world. The missions involve many of today's real-world problems, from Middle Eastern oil conflicts to gun-running in South America. It's almost like picking up the **New York Times** and reading the news of some maniac dictator attempting to take over the world. Thanks to Thunderstrike II, rather than just reading about it, you can now **do** something about it—namely, take flight in your gunship and eliminate those goofs.



There are multiple viewpoints in the game. You can view your helicopter from just outside and behind or from Virtual Cockpit mode, which provides a slightly more realistic perspective. With the in-helicopter vantage point, you use the top left and right buttons to swivel your head from side to side. This enables you to look out each of the two side windows as well as the front, and it's a very cool feature.

There is a price to be paid for such realism. Controls will take some getting used to. Here's the rundown: **X** changes your viewpoint, **Y**—used in conjunction





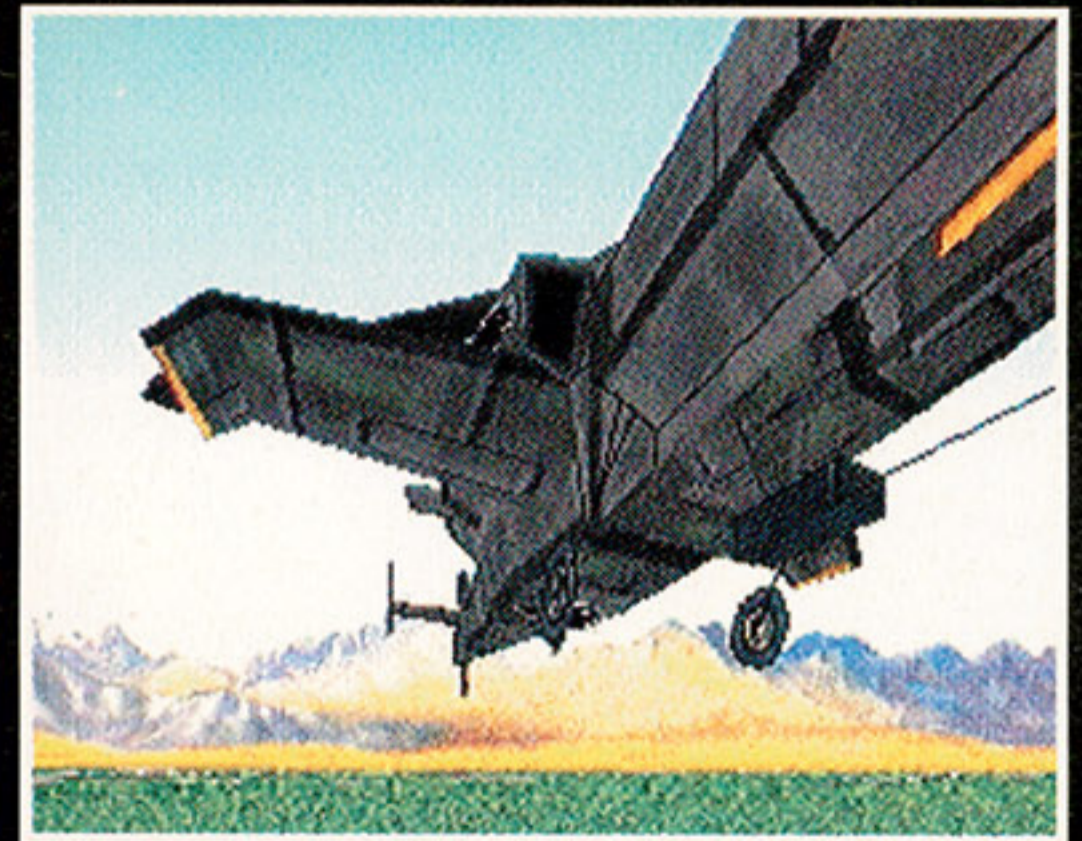
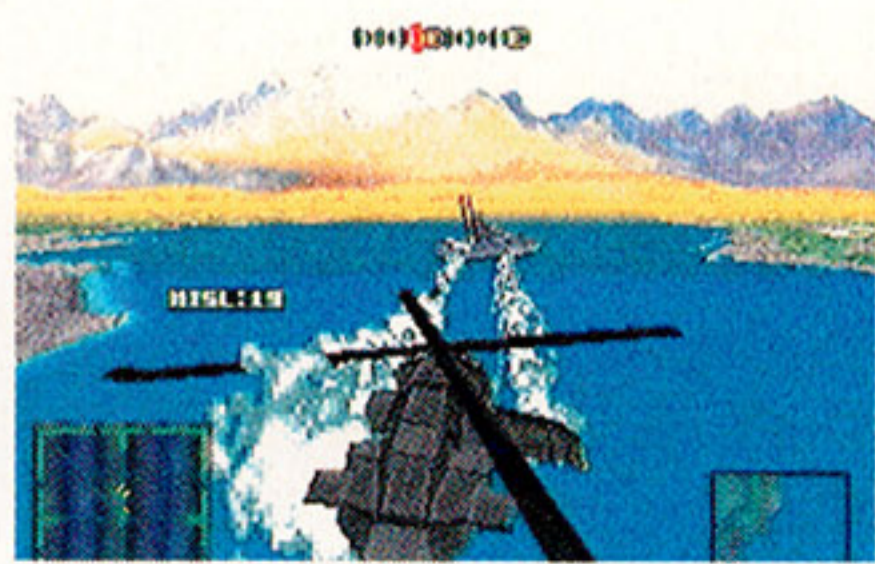
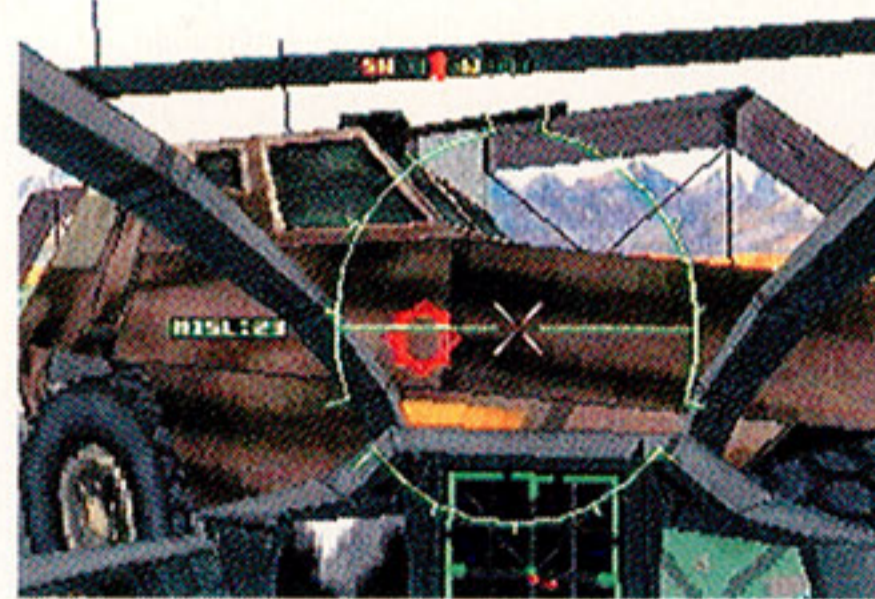
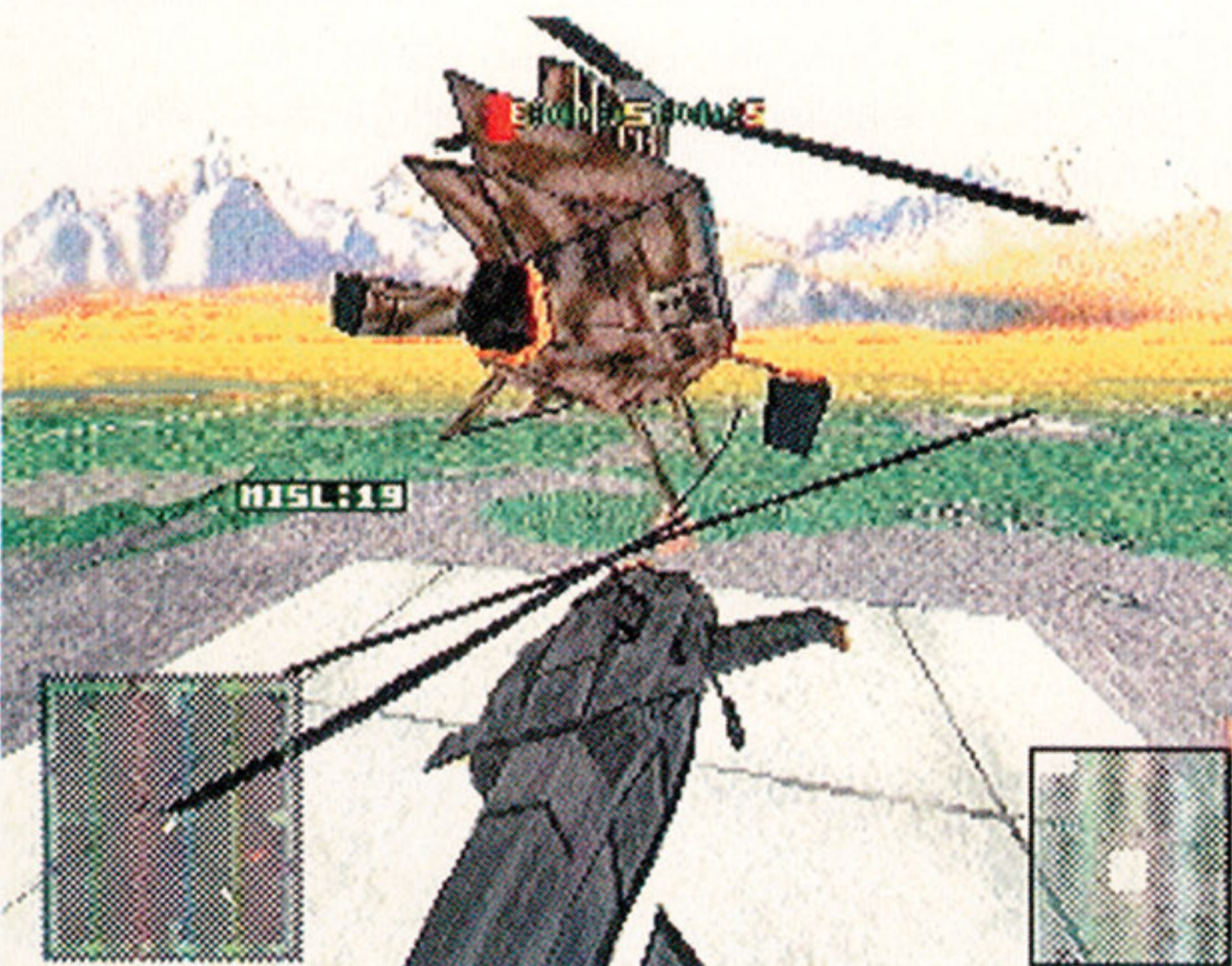
with the D-pad—allows for rapid left and right turns, and the **Z** and **C** buttons make your chopper move up and down, respectively. Then there's **B** for selecting weapons and **A** for firing them. Whew! Dat's a lotta stuff to remember. It gets pretty hairy when you've got a half dozen or so enemies on your butt and you're frantically searching for the correct button combinations.

Thunderstrike II really smokes as a Saturn game—or any game, for that matter. There is plenty of enemy variety—something which a lot of developers overlook when creating this type of battle simulation, probably due to memory constraints and processing power. But not here. It seems as if there is always something new in Thunderstrike II which I "never saw the last time I played." Not only are there loads of various enemy tanks, jeeps and helicopters, but there are even little soldier guys running around who you can choose to mow

down in a hail of gunfire. All it takes is the push of a button and, "See ya!" And the landscaping of each level seems to continue on for miles (as well it should—this is the almighty Saturn). After all, who wants to run into invisible barriers after 60 seconds?

Several people here at **ULTIMATE GAMER** were heard commenting on how great this Saturn game looks. I can't stress enough how nicely the terrain flows. Sure, there is the clipping problem I mentioned earlier, but the actual frame rate of the scenery is quite swift.

If, as a Saturn owner, you prefer slam-bang aerial dogfighting action, you might want to go with Sega's simplistic, although still incredibly fun **Wing Arms**. If, on the other hand, you're looking for the real deal in helicopter action/sims, place your bets on Thunderstrike II; you'll be glad you did.





# Preview

## Vital Info

System: PlayStation  
 Genre: Action  
 Developer: U.S. Gold  
 Publisher: U.S. Gold  
 Completion Status: 60%  
 Release Date: January

Notes: As is, letter-boxed format increases speed and slickness of graphics

## Strengths

- This sucker moves fast!
- 25 covert missions! 25!
- A true virtual environment

## Weaknesses

- Music doesn't seem appropriate
- Action is a tad bit weak at this point

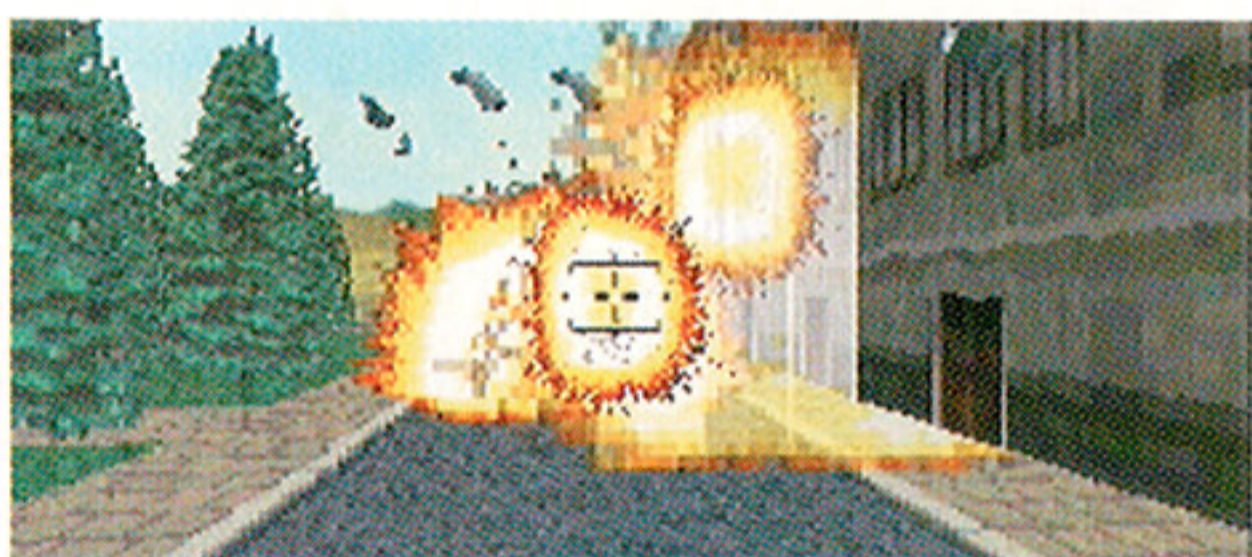
# Shellshock



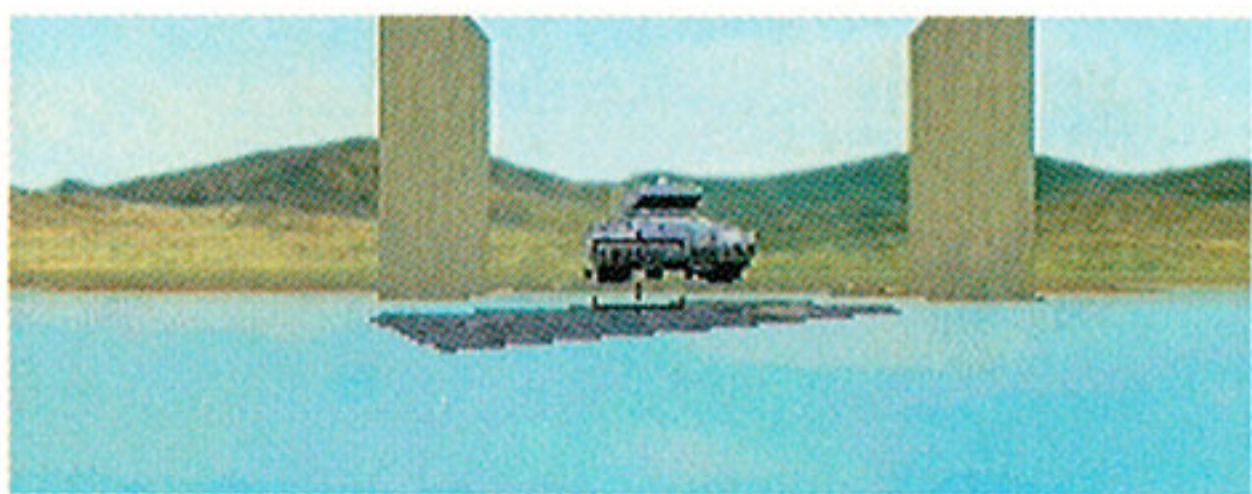
The game is viewed in butter-boxed format, similar to a movie theatre screen.



The explosions in SHELLSHOCK are looking mighty devastating.



Blow stuff to kingdom come. If you screw up, you can always hit reset.



This game is extremely fast-moving, due to the reduction in screen height.



Strategy plays a much bigger role in this game than, say, DOOM.

Once again, in the bleak crime-ridden future, a mysterious group of ne'er-do-wells known as Da Wardenz are called upon to stand up for truth, justice and the oppressed everywhere as they fight the good fight in various politically volatile locations around the world. Armed only with their wits—an awesome, fully armored, state-of-the-art M-13 Predator Battletank—Da Wardenz combat all kinds of terrorist attacks while protecting the innocent.

Well, that's the story according to the press release anyway. In the preview disc I played, there was no sign of a story but after three minutes I could have cared less. This is a shooter fan's dream! Everything, except a few buildings, could be blown, up and when they blew up, they blew up real nice! I'm talking shrapnel flew and the speakers rocked. When something exploded near a building, it didn't just remain a fiery poof, it reacted to the building and formed around it! In this preview version, there was no enemy fire, so it's hard to say how action-packed this game is, but I can say it's fun to blow things up!

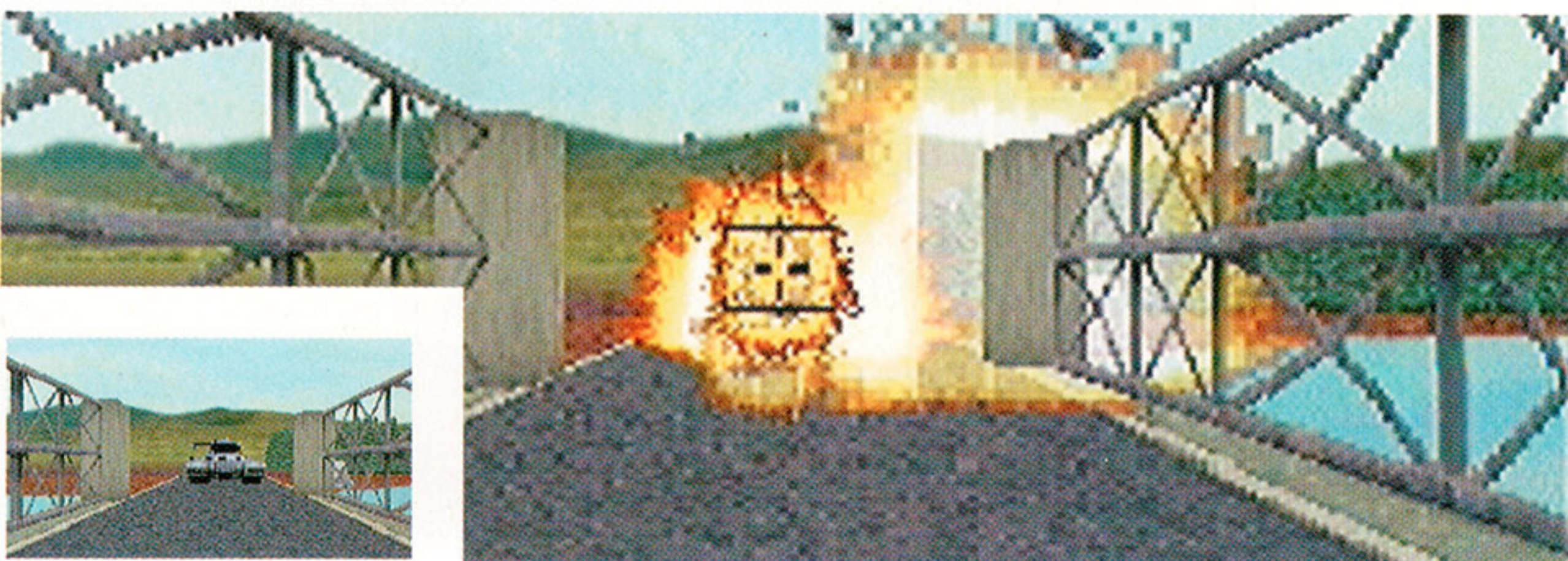
Shellshock isn't your average first-person kill-or-be-killed game like **Doom** or the dreadful **T-Mek**, it is better placed in a strategy category with **Thunderstrike**

for the Sega CD or **Iron Soldier** for the Atari Jaguar. In fact, Shellshock is Iron Soldier but with texture-mapped walls and awesome real-world graphics. Unlike Iron Soldier, this game progresses by developing plotlines and giving gamers a better sense of accomplishment. This game is fast, although I'll assume the reason it is right now is because the game screen is like watching a letterboxed film. I hope U.S. Gold can go full screen without sacrificing speed.

The one complaint I have about Shellshock is the music. I don't like rap (if I want rhymes, I'll read Dr. Seuss,) but if it adds to the total game experience, then I don't mind. The rap music here—performed by Bar None—just seems inappropriate for this type of game.

Shellshock would rule if you were able to use a communications link system to allow more than one player to battle it out. Now that Sega and Sony have announced modems for their systems, this dream might come true. That would be awesome!

If the developers can manage to go full screen with this game without sacrificing speed and add more obstacles to annihilate, I have no doubt that Shellshock will blow all gamers away.







# Cyberia

## Vital Info

System: Sega Saturn  
 Genre: Adv./Shooter  
 Developer: Interplay  
 Publisher: Interplay  
 Completion Status: 50%  
 Release Date: December

## Strengths

- Visually Breathtaking
- Screwing up can be fun
- Impress your neighbors!

## Weaknesses

- A little randomization, please!
- Frustrating gameplay
- Don't hit the gas trucks!

**W**hat do you get when you combine state-of-the-art graphics with a 1983 laser disc game based on a Clint Eastwood film called **FireFox**? That's right! **Cyberia**! Trust me, this is **FireFox**, from the spy plane down to the wild chase through an ice canyon.

Now, straight from the PC and into your Sega Saturn, comes **Cyberia**, a beautiful to look at, difficult to control blastfest that is uneven at best. It combines an espionage storyline with a slew of puzzles and arcade shoot-'em-up action. The hero, Zak, has his moments in the role-playing sections and takes his various error/punishments like a real trooper. For example, Zak can accidentally take a spill on some oil or burn off a few fingers if you command him to dip his hand into an oil drum. Most of the character control involves the same trial-and-error moves that made **Alone In The Dark** so much fun. Here's a hint: Don't kiss the girl!

The puzzle sequences are never mind-numbing. The shooting segments are awkward and reminded me a lot of playing **Rebel Assault** with a sloppy mouse.

The graphics are visually breathtaking

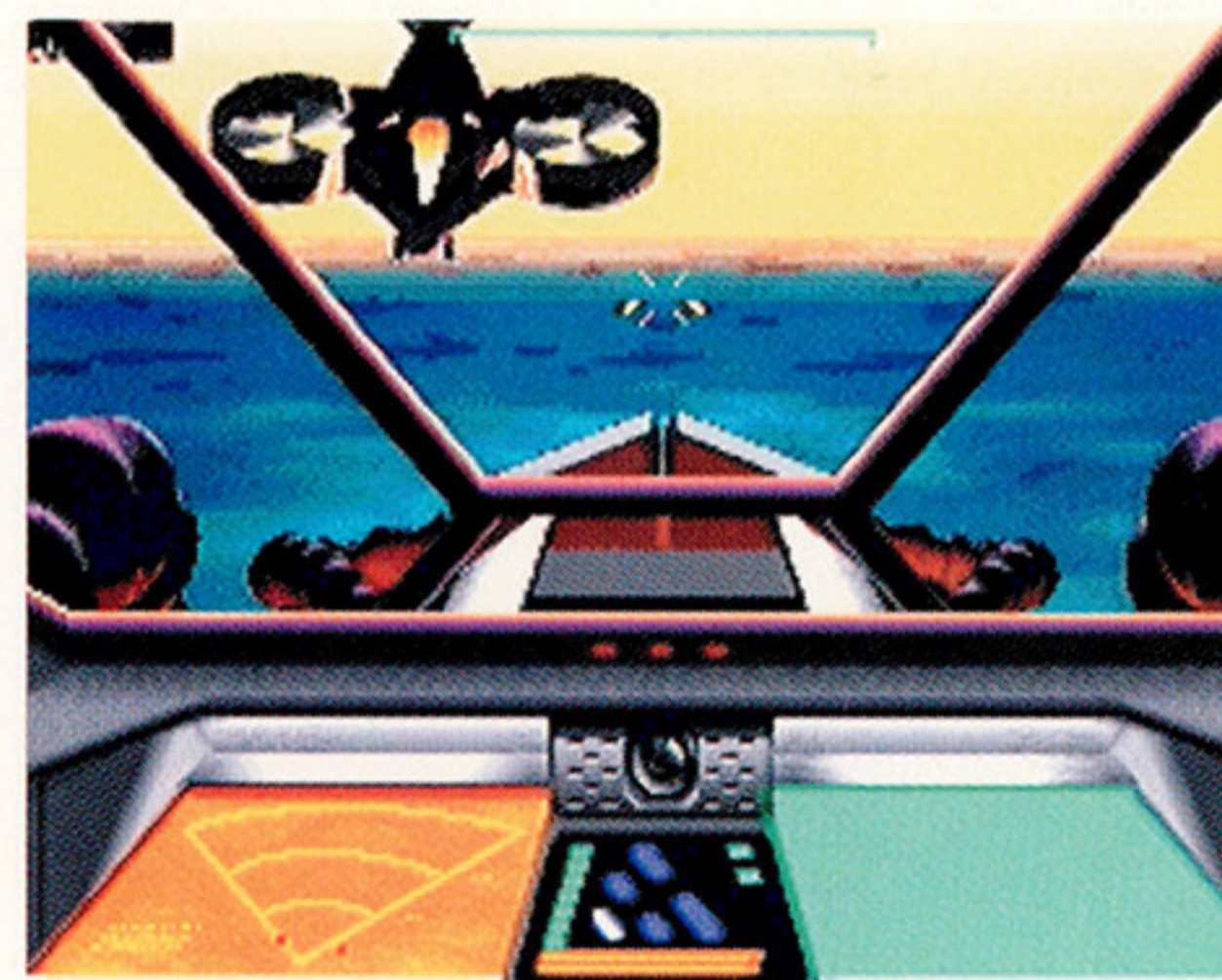
but the game itself is so difficult at times that you'll find yourself repeating levels again and again and again. Now don't get me wrong; I think that FMV is perfectly fine when used sparingly for things like cinemas and between-level intermissions. But until the technology allows for total

freedom of movement throughout an environment, FMV and real-time graphics simply do not mix. The level of interaction in these types of games is restricted to **Dragon's Lair**, **Sewer Shark**-style absurdness. Once a player prompts his character with up, down, left and right movements, the game just takes control of the reins and "walks" him automatically. This is 1996, and I don't think it takes a rocket scientist to figure out that gamer's want real-time, rendered on-the-fly control. It may sound harsh, but I'd almost rather be scrubbing a urinal than play these types of games.

If **Cyberia** wasn't so unforgiving in gameplay, I would embrace it like an old friend, but as it stands now, it's just a frustrating walk down memory lane.



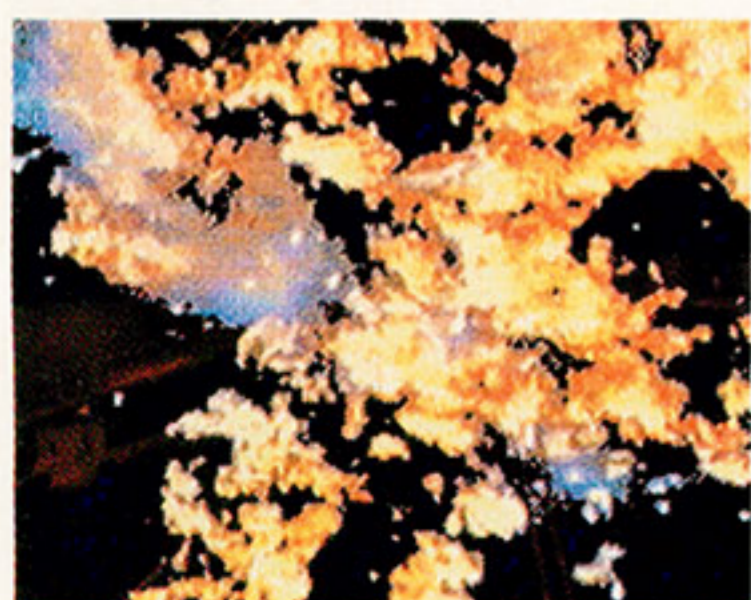
Witness my 15th try through this canyon. Was there really another side of it?



Introducing the slowest gun in the West!



Does Clint know you have his plane?





**Vital Info**

System: PlayStation  
 Sega Saturn  
 Genre: Golf  
 Developer: Interplay  
 Publisher: VR Sports  
 Completion Status: 85%  
 Release Date: March

**Strengths**

- Some of the nicest-looking courses ever seen in a golf sim
- Loads of options, including multi-player

**Weaknesses**

- Rock 'n' Roll does not mix with golf
- Too many options may be an overload
- Where's the caddy?

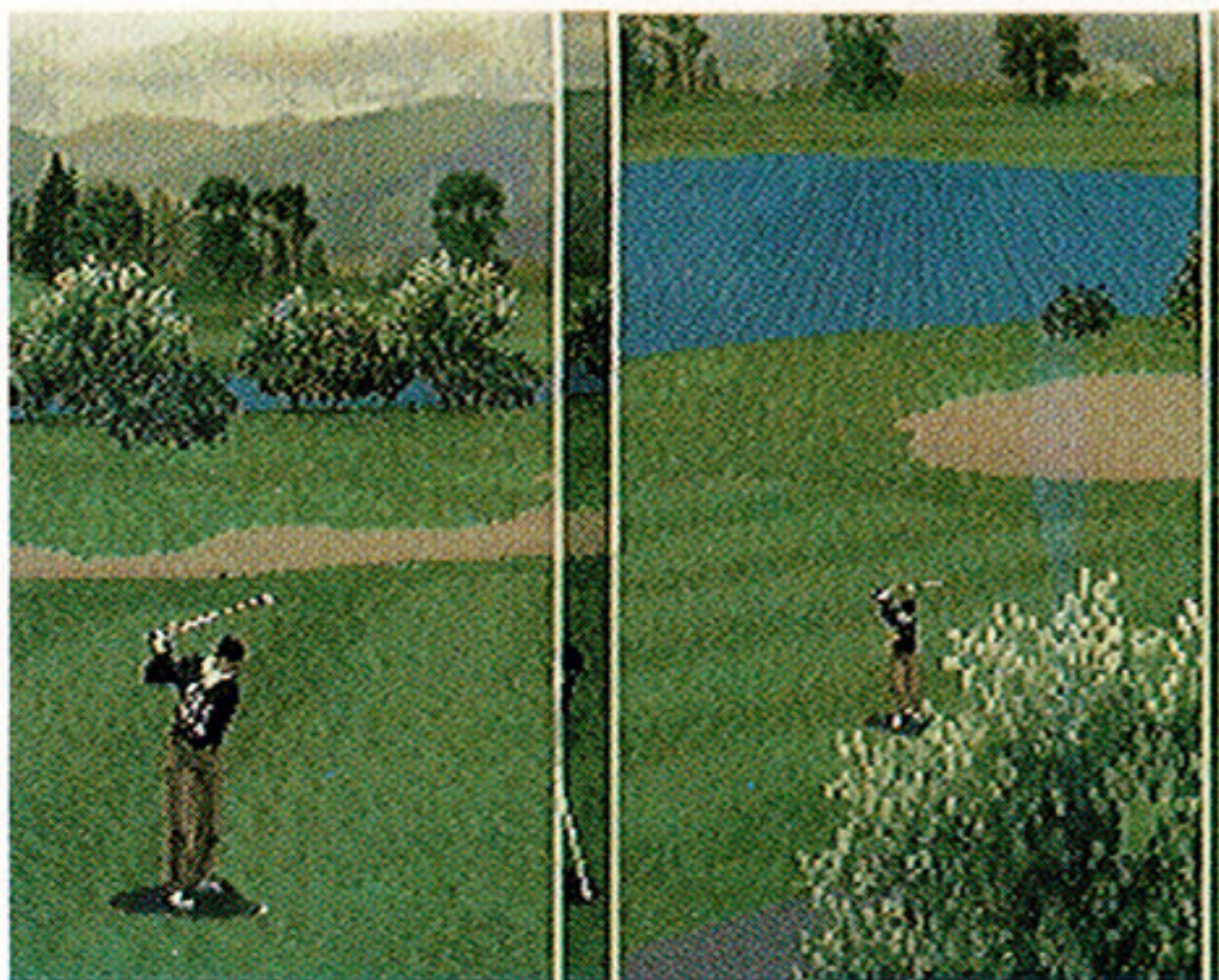
# VR Golf '96



Interplay's Virtual FieldVision makes for an even greater sense of realism.



Getting that sucker over the water is always frustrating.



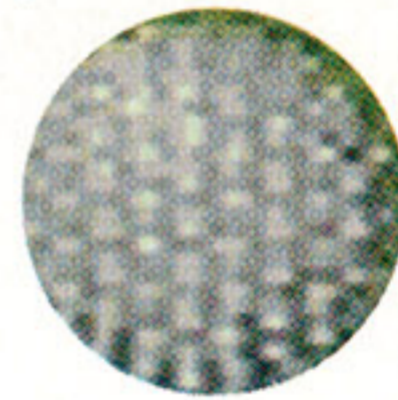
Split-screen Mode allows for two-player, simultaneous competition.

If you're a PlayStation and/or Saturn owner, and happen to be a golfing enthusiast, Interplay has got you covered. In March of '96, VR Sports will release their version of 32-bit golf in the form of **VR Golf '96** (a highly-original name, no less).

Gremlin Interactive has developed what looks to be a sweet little golf sim. It's integrated VR Sports' motion-capture technology into the game, and you know what that means—realism extraordinaire! The players look like real people instead of goof-ball, box-looking thing-a-majiggy's. And the courses? They're simply gorgeous, and rendered in eye-popping 3-D. Another graphic plus is that they've kept playfield chop to a bare minimum. Nothing's worse than getting a headache because of sluggish polygon rebuild. The field of vision is authentic in VR Golf '96, too; a full 360 degrees. This means you can now play your shot from any angle!

There are so many great options in this game, I almost don't know where to begin. First, you can customize your club

selection to your personal specifications. You can also customize your golfer with a variety of skills, which gives a player's character a bit of uniqueness. And, like many other sports games these days, there is a replay feature which comes in handy showing off those unbelievable shots (of course, if you suck, you may want to forget this option). Lastly, to add variety, there are Amateur and Professional Tour modes.



VR Golf '96 has a nice little multi-player feature. In addition, the game goes into split-screen mode when two or more players go at it simultaneously.

Other tiny morsels include real commentary ("ssshhhhhh...") and a save feature—great for those long tourneys when you need to quit for the day to mow the lawn or shave the dog. Being able to stop and then pick up from where you left off at a later date is important in a game like this.





# VR Baseball '96

## Vital Info

System: PlayStation  
 Sega Saturn  
 Genre: Baseball  
 Developer: Interplay  
 Publisher: VR Sports  
 Completion Status: 60%  
 Release Date: March

## Strengths

- The scaling routines are smooth as ice
- Real stadiums!
- Real Players!

## Weaknesses

- Control may be overly complicated
- More cardboard characters—yeah!
- Level of realism may effect object locations

The pre-release hype behind Interplay's VR Sports lineup has been tremendous. Interplay's only real 32-bit "virtual sports" threat is Crystal Dynamics and its Championship Sports series. But considering we've seen almost nothing from CD (short of some beautiful demos), the spotlight has now fallen on Interplay.

Several sports game projects have been in development at Interplay for quite some time now. But two titles are at last nearing completion: **VR Golf '96** and this one, **VR Baseball '96**.

The game incorporates what Interplay terms Virtual FieldVision. Basically, that's just a fancy-shmancy name for multiple camera angles. Stadiums have been painstakingly rendered to mirror (within reason, of course) the real thing. The faces of actual ballplayers have been mapped onto the heads of ploygon figures. When you see Albert Belle step up to

the plate, you'll know it!

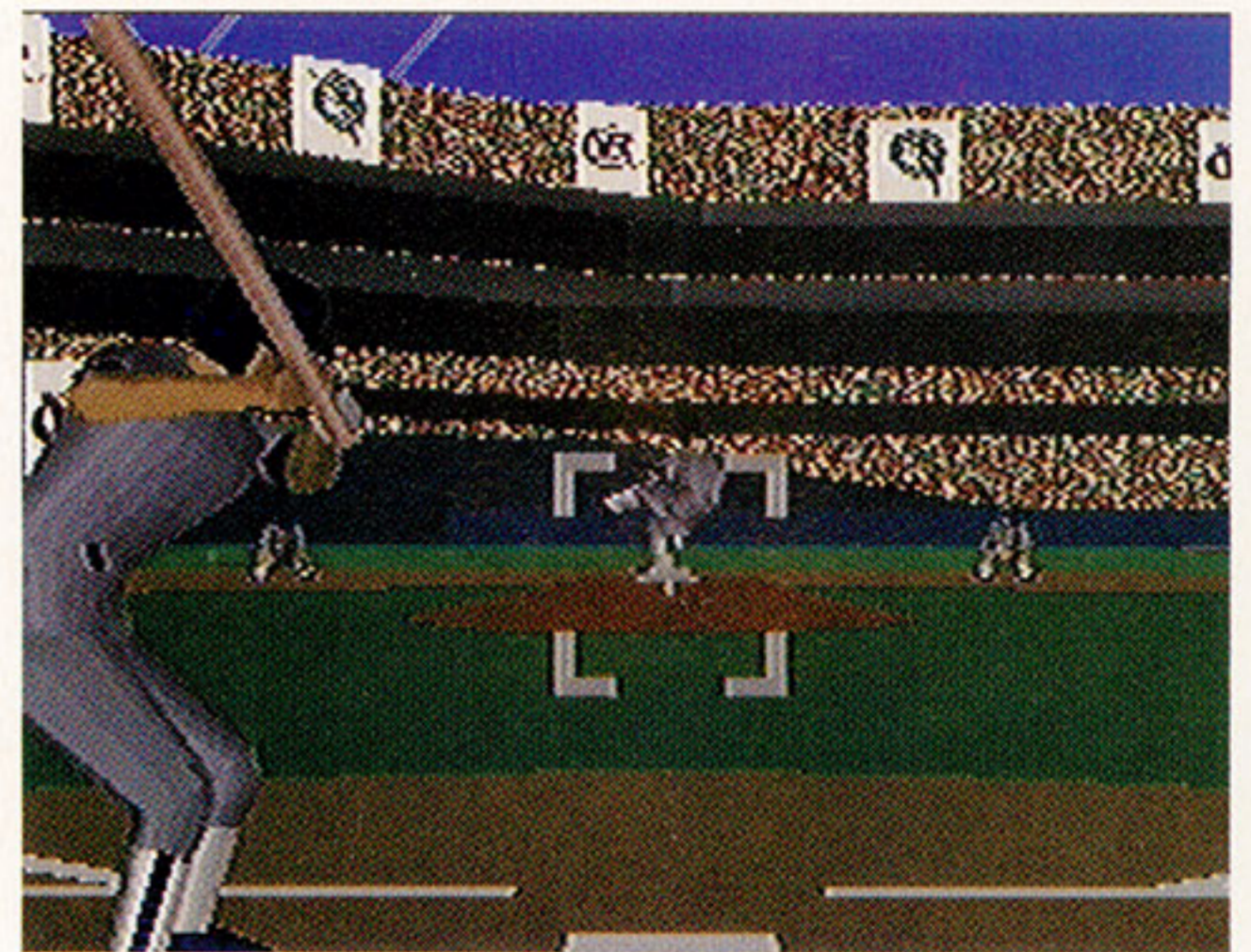
Gameplay is split into two primary modes. There is the option of playing a full season or, if you prefer a quick dose of action, you may select an exhibition game. Either way, Interplay has ensured us that there will be a truckload of real player statistics in the final version. And as we all know, statistics



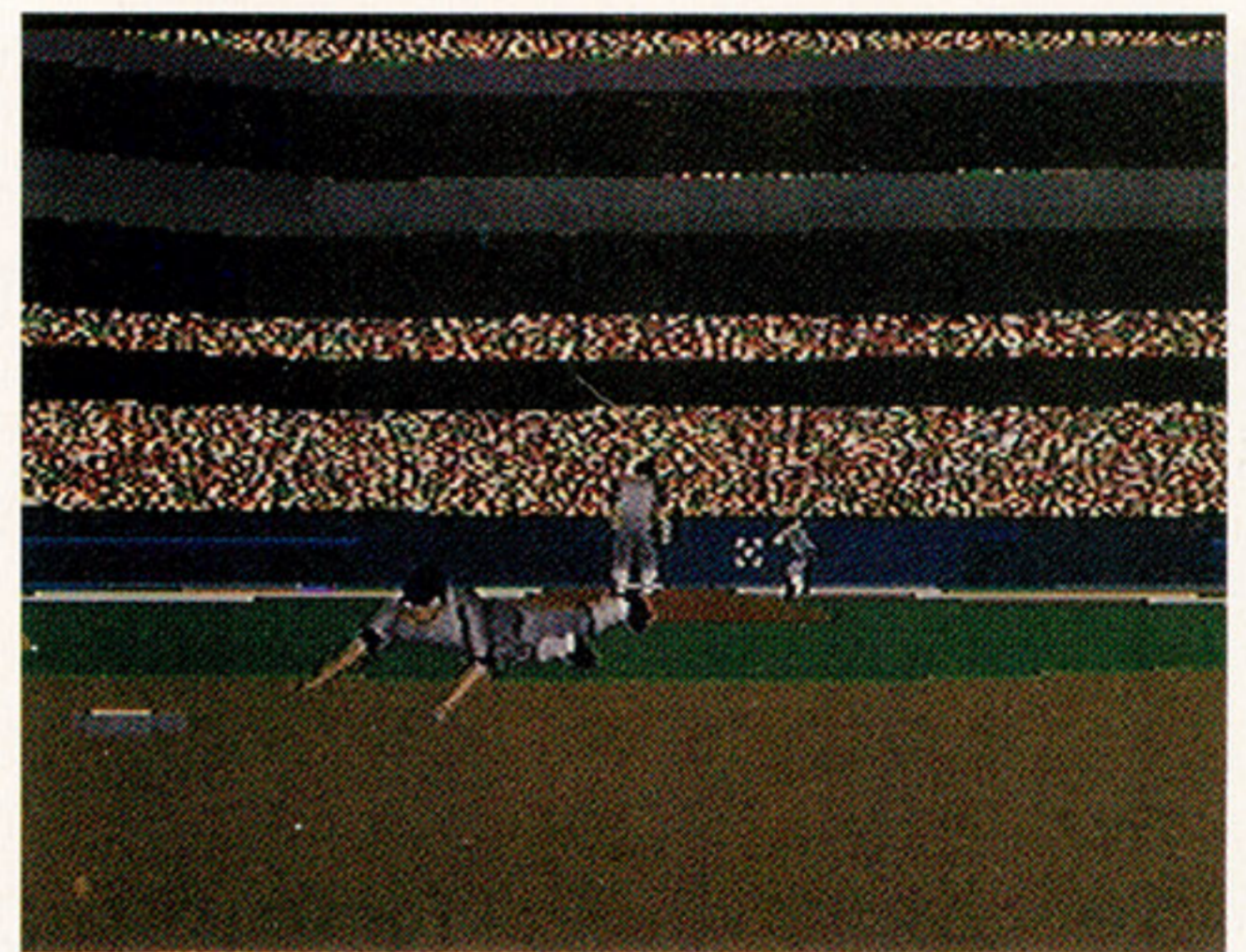
add that extra level of authenticity to a sports game. Lastly, there is an added Homerun Derby Mode which puts you in front of a pitching machine and lets you slug away.

One nice feature found in VR Baseball '96 is something called VR PressCenter. This FMV-style aspect of the game updates you from time to time on all of the happenings in the rest of the Major League. Nice touch.

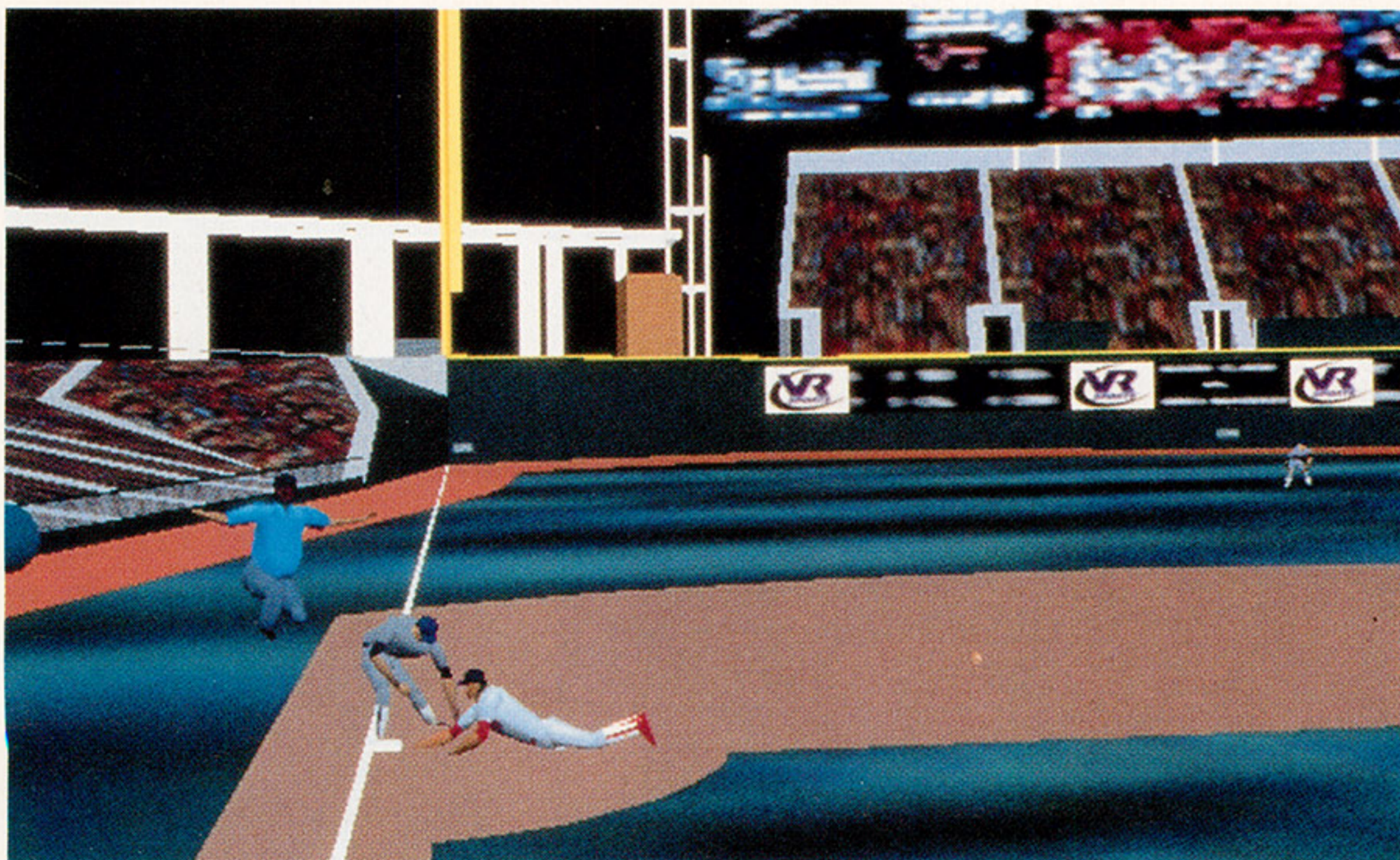
Does Interplay have what it takes to bring their VR Sports vision to reality? Will it truly live up to the hype? Judging by what we've seen so far, I think the answers to these questions is yes.



Play an entire season as any of your favorite Major League players.



3-D polygon graphics have never looked so good.



Actual team stadiums are available, including Coors Field and the Ballpark at Arlington.



# Preview

## Vital Info

System: PlayStation  
 Genre: Football  
 Developer: Electronic Arts  
 Publisher: EA Sports  
 Completion Status: 90%  
 Release Date: December

## Strengths

- Gorgeous FMV
- Smooth scaling
- Hey, it's Madden and Summerall!

## Weaknesses

- The franchise is wearing a bit thin
- Your ego, after your wife cracks you in the head because you won't stop playing!

# Madden '96



Wow. Pretty soon, these guys are gonna have to be propped up with a stick.



This is a great view from the sidelines.



The camera angles are all adjustable in the options screen.

The whistle blows! The crowd cheers! The players move out onto the field! The snow starts to fall! And that familiar voice with chubby cheeks gives us all the sideline info! Of course, all this can only mean one thing... No, not the Macy's Christmas Parade! 'Tis the season for **Madden '96**, Electronic Arts' latest version of its annual gridiron masterpiece.

Hey, I've probably logged more man-hours with the Madden franchise than any other sports game. And I would've spent even more time than that if it weren't for having to do stupid stuff like do the dishes and take out the trash. I wish my wife would understand—I got priorities!

Back to the game. I'll be honest with you. I was not blown away by **Madden '95** and thought for sure that the franchise had gone as far as it could before the inevitable creation of a Virtua Madden game. However, that was last year and we now have the Sony PlayStation to contend with in 1996.

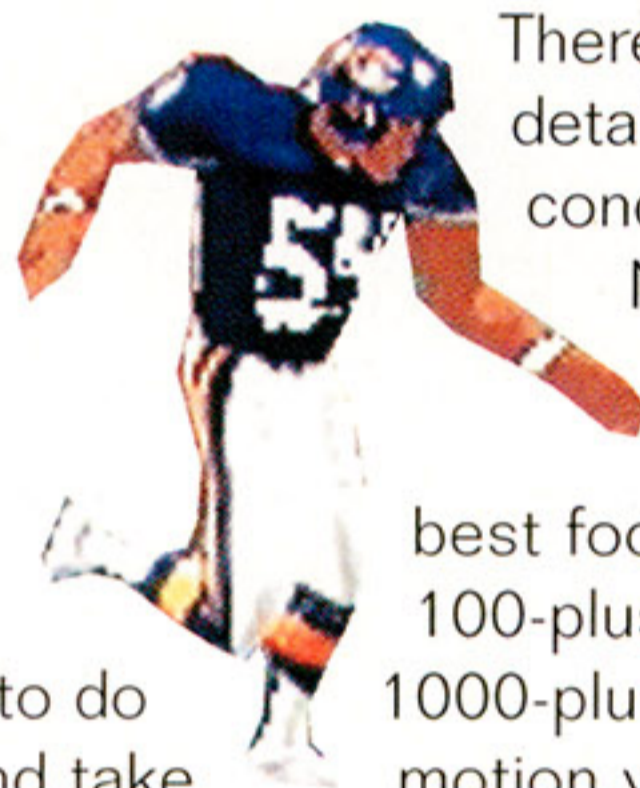
After playing this bulldog of a game on the PlayStation, I realized that there was a lot of life left in this sports favorite.

Always one of the strongest titles on the 3DO, Madden '96 makes the jump to the Sony's monster machine and creates the perfect football experience. The digitized graphics are hardcore excellence.

There is a lot of attention paid to detail; from the different weather conditions to the changing skies.

Never one to tamper with success, Madden '96 still offers everything that made it the

best football simulation out there; the 100-plus plays to choose from, the 1000-plus player ratings, and the full-motion video playback of great games of the past. Everything from the animations of the teams on the field to those crazy trademark touchdown dances is superbly done and very, very clean. Add John Madden's gruff commentary and you have yourself the total football package. Now, go out there and win a Super Bowl ring...after you take out the trash, of course. AAARRGH!!!



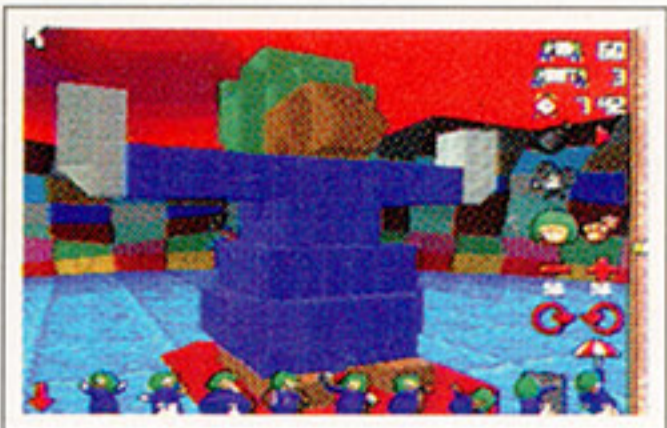
SONY



# 3D Lemmings™

BE AN INDIVIDUAL. JOIN THE MASSES

AVAILABLE NOW



PC Gamer Editor's Choice

"Every bit as clever as the original." - Game Players

"An immersive, satisfying and original experience." - Ultimate Gamer

"The only complaint I have is that I wish I had more time to play the game...3D Lemmings is a winner." - Electronic Gaming Monthly (Editor's Choice Gold)





## Vital Info

System: Sega Saturn  
 Genre: Fighting  
 Developer: Takara  
 Publisher: Sega of America  
 Completion Status: 80%  
 Release Date: March

Notes: New moves, FMV cinemas and one new special move per character

## Strengths

- Saturn owners can celebrate!
- New special moves
- Awesome 3-D environment

## Weaknesses

- Someone must've spent too much time taking basket-weaving courses
- Polygon count is down from the original

# Toshinden Remix



Ellis and Sofia go toe-to-toe in what could be a serious cat fight.



Each fighter in TOSHINDEN REMIX will possess one new special move.



Notice the shadows on the ground. Not too good when compared to the PS version.

**T**oshinden was truly a phenomenal fighting game on the PlayStation, despite its slightly flawed play mechanics. The game broke new ground in the utilization of its 3-D environment. And with Sony's heavy marketing of the game (primarily Sofia), many PlayStation owners assumed that it was to be exclusively available on their system...for a while, at least. These days, apparently nothing is sacred ground for long. Toshinden is on its way for the Saturn with a few surprises—and a brand-new name: **Toshinden Remix**.

By and large, the game is identical to its PlayStation original: You battle it out in awesome 3-D arenas and fight the good fight. Weapons can be used to strike and block, and there are a number of (sometimes crazy) special moves inherent to each character. And—just like the PS version, a fighter can be maneuvered around his opponent via the upper **L** and **R** buttons. Of course, this translates into good news for Saturn owners.

But sometimes you gotta take the

bad with the good. More specifically, the game's graphics. In the Saturn version (at this juncture, anyway), many of the graphic subtleties which made the PS version so damn sweet-looking—namely, the lighting effects and shadows—have been substantially reduced. Smooth character shadows have been rendered in a screen-mesh, cross-hatch fashion. Not only that, but the polygon count is lower. This lowers the impact of the game's normally awesome graphics.

On the plus side, the Saturn version will contain some new features not found in the PlayStation original. For one, Takara is inserting some cool animated cinemas (not jealous of **Tekken**, are you?). Second, each fighter will have at his disposal at least one never-before-seen special move. Lastly, we've been told that there will definitely be—again, at the very least—one totally new character.

Problems aside, Toshinden Remix is great news for Saturn 3-D fighting game fans.





# Zero Divide

## Vital Info

System: PlayStation  
 Genre: Fighting  
 Developer: Zoom  
 Publisher: Zoom  
 Completion Status: 90%  
 Release Date: February

## Strengths

- Pulling yourself up from the edge of a platform after getting your robotic ass kicked is very cool!

## Weaknesses

- Another **Virtua Fighter** rip-off
- Clunky, oversized mech fighters are difficult to maneuver properly

The world isn't experiencing any kind of polygon fighting game shortage, that's for sure. **Zero Divide**, developed by a company called Zoom, has been available for the PlayStation in Japan for a few months now. The great news is that very soon, it'll be slamming onto U.S. soil.

It's evident that Zoom must've studied **Virtua Fighter's** playability because everything from the three-button control right down to the weight and feel of the characters has been carefully emulated. But that is not necessarily a bad thing. To the contrary, Zero Divide is fairly well-connected (a term I like to use in describing the combination of control response and hit-detection in fighting games). But before I move onto playability, let's start with the fighters, shall we?

Zero Divide has some seriously off-beat, wacky-looking characters to select from. The future of mankind must involve some sort of bizarre cross-breeding, because there are characters in this game which appear part mechanical, part

animal and part...God knows what. One of my personal favorites is the giant mechanical chicken/robot guy. You can literally extend your mechanical chicken-liver neck and bite your opponent. That's a riot.

One aspect of Zero Divide which really stands out is the background graphics—particularly, the later levels in the one-player game.

There are some amazing-looking fighting arenas to battle it out in.

And even more amazing is the fact that the gameplay expands on VF's "ring out" system in that if your character goes plummeting off the edge of the platform, you can grab onto the edge of said platform and pull yourself up for a second chance. That's certainly a fresh twist on an already overdone play mechanic.

If you're into Virtua Fighter and the way it handles, then be on the lookout for Zero Divide. The game has a lot going for it: Superb graphics, cool sounds and crafty gameplay mechanics. Hell, there's even a secret shooter—Phallanx—hidden in this thing!



It doesn't get much weirder than the weirdness you'll see in ZERO DIVIDE.



The voice announcer in this game is even cheesier than the one heard in RIDGE RACER.



Even the sound effects are heavily tattooed with anime. Ssshhh-weeeen!



**Vital Info**

System: Saturn  
 Genre: Sports  
 Developer: JVC  
 Publisher: JVC  
 Completion Status: 75%  
 Release Date: December

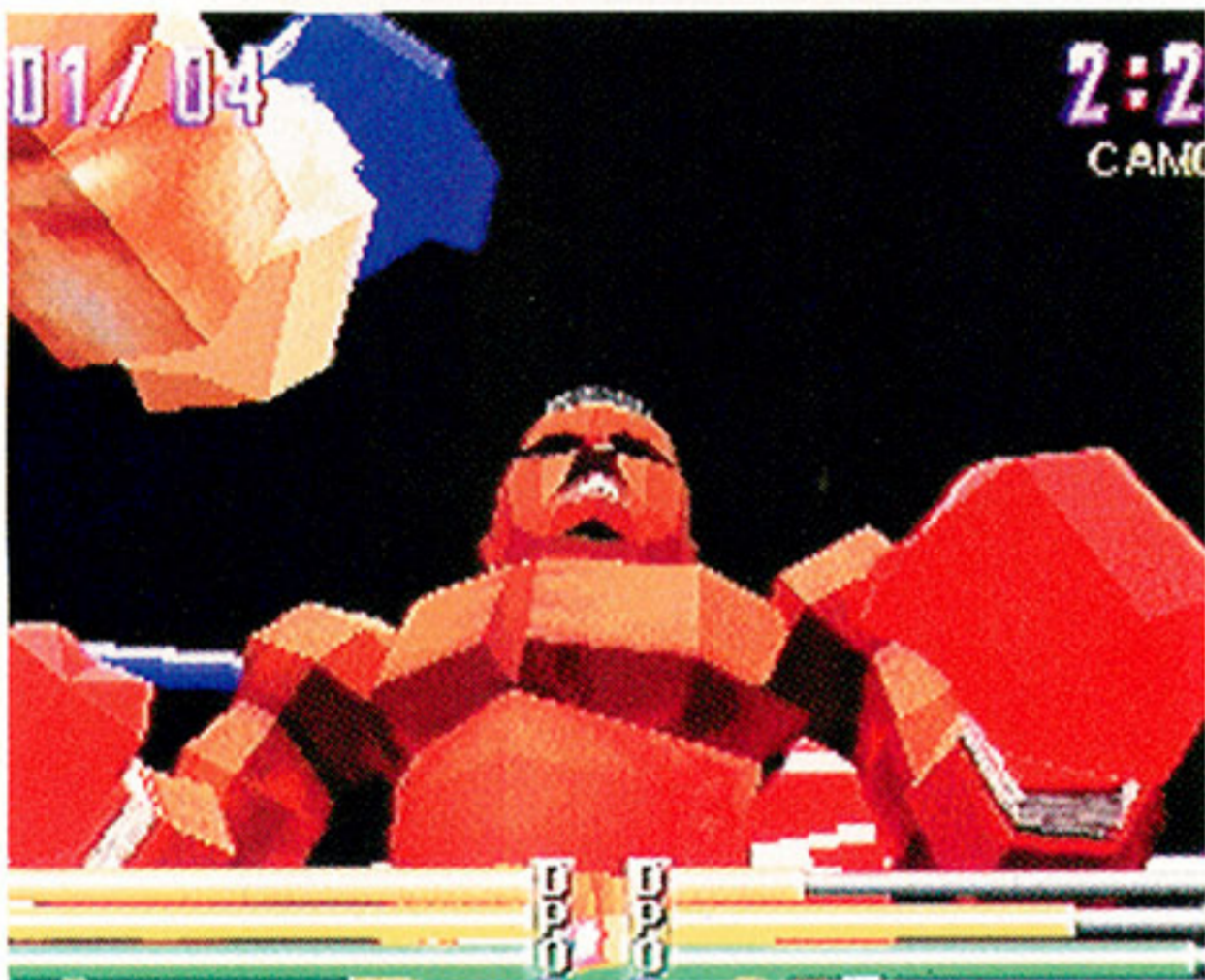
**Strengths**

- Customizable boxers
- Multiple vantage points
- Walter Mathau?!!

**Weaknesses**

- The boxers should look half as good as the ones in the cinemas
- Your thumbs after you bang the buttons

# Center Ring Boxing



A melodramatic viewpoint just seconds from the start of the fight.



Talk is cheap when the bell rings. "Come on and fight, you wimp!"



For variety, you can change camera angles at any time during the bout.

Taking a visual cue from **Virtua Fighter**, **Center Ring Boxing** from JVC provides us with even more, "Hello. I am made out of cardboard" polygon fighting characters. I guess that's okay until affordable high-technology allows for even greater realism (Maybe, "Hello. I am made out of shaved styrofoam" characters are next.) Hold onto your ticket stub, take a seat and enjoy the fight.

The game has many positive aspects, the most significant of them being the customization abilities you have over the fighters. There are many, many options. For starters, select a specific weight class from bantam to heavyweight or in between. Then factor in all of the little details like height, weight, speed, skin color and trunk color.

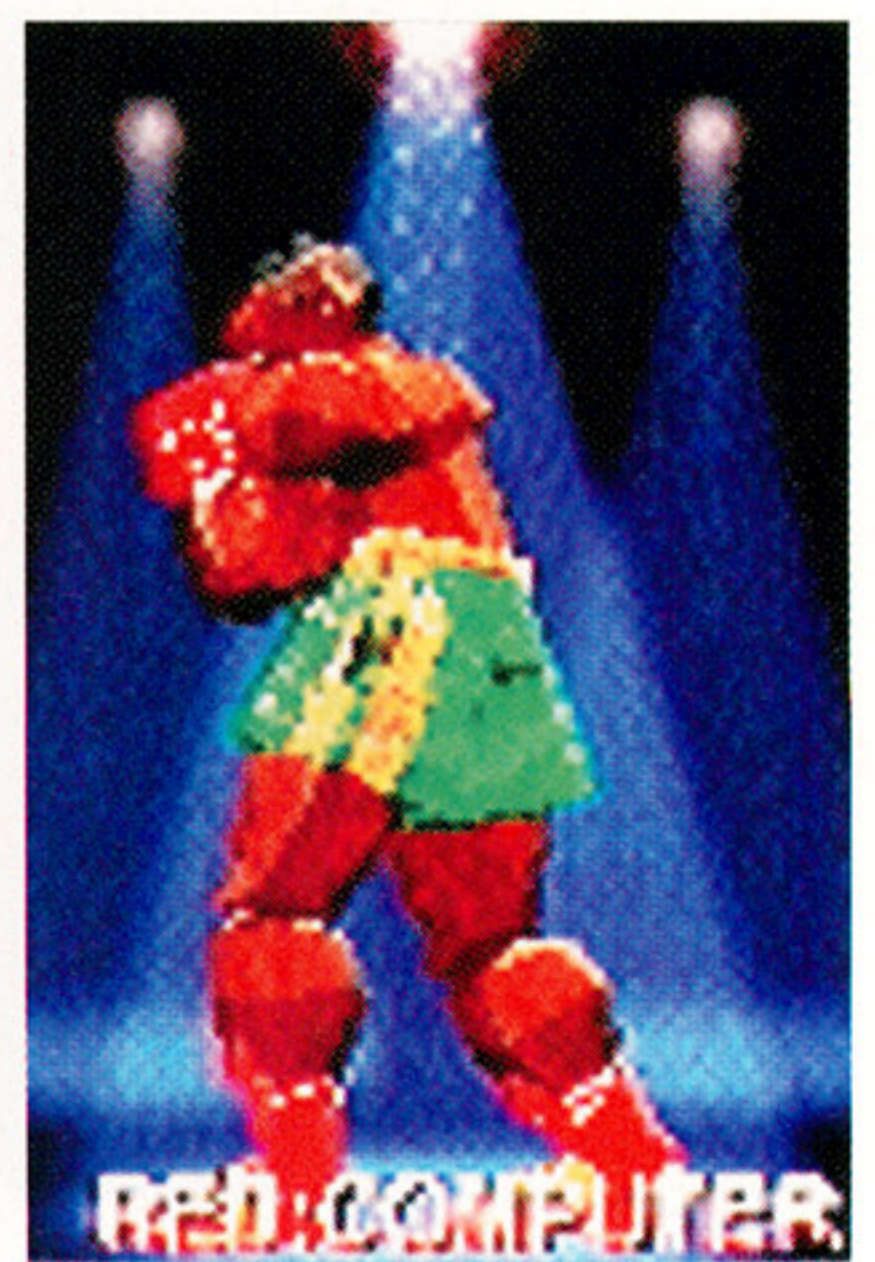
By adjusting the level meters for three training exercises—punching ball, heavy bag and jump rope, you are, in effect, adjusting your physical abilities. Focussing mainly on the punching ball, for example, gives you added speed, but lowers some of your other attributes like

power and stamina. An even balance will give you the best results. I would have preferred seeing real time, onscreen training sessions rather than the boring meter approach, but oh, well.

Once the brutality begins, you can adjust the camera angles at will using the left and right top buttons on the controller. Some of the views are extremely cool; the in-your-face angle being the best. Gameplay-wise, the boxer's movements seem sluggish at this point, but it's still early, so we'll have to wait and see.

When I first saw the boxers step into the ring for a bout, I couldn't help but notice the similarities in stiffness of the CRB fighters and the ones in Atari's axed **Fight for Life** polygon fighting game (which was a complete and utter disaster). They face off at center ring staring at each other with their Lego block arms held straight at their sides. It just looked a bit strange.

One thing made me roar with laughter. The ring announcer sounds exactly like Walter Mathau, I kid you not! Bottom line: CRB still looks very promising.





# B.C. Racers



## Vital Info

System: 3DO  
 Genre: Racing  
 Developer: Core Design, Ltd.  
 Publisher: LG Software  
 Completion Status: 80%  
 Release Date: December  
 Notes: 2-Player Split-Screen Mode

## Strengths

- Steer and fight control is smooth
- Some funny animations
- Funky Stone Age tunes

## Weaknesses

- We've all played this game before
- Tracks grow too difficult, too quickly
- Collisions take away too much energy

**A**ll righty cave dudes and dudettes! Grab your favorite sidekick to ride shotgun, hop on that stone tricycle and burn some granite in the race of the first century—**B.C. Racer!** The only rule is to win—by any means possible! So go ahead throw-backs, bash some Cro-Magnon cranium and win the prize: A dynamite new turtle-shell car! Yabba-Dabba-Go!

B.C. Racer is a racing game right out of history—prehistory, that is! And that's the problem. This game seems older than the cave racers themselves. A year ago, when this was first announced for the Sega CD, I would have been all over this racing/battle hybrid like a Tyrannosaurus Rex on a lawyer, with its cool cartoony look, humongous sprites and two different points of view. Unfortunately, a year has passed and B.C. Racer has moved on from the dead and buried Sega CD to the help-us-we-need-a-successful-system selling mascot 3DO without any noticeable upgrades. Not good.

Now that home systems can shift

textured polygons fast enough to create realistic racing experiences, B.C. Racer feels kind of like last year's model. Instead of showing off the advantages of a 32-bit upgrade, this game shows off some of 3DO's limitations, like less-than-fluid scrolling (sudden death for a racing game) and slower-than-sinking-in-a-tar-pit load times.

The game itself has nothing I would call innovative going for it. Since B.C.



Racer was first announced in December of 1994, a lot of games have come out that have made better use of this game's ride and battle technique, like EA's **Road Rash**, Ubi Soft's **Street Racers**, and ESPN's **Extreme Games**.

That leaves only B.C. Racer's wacky animations left to recommend. Smack a pedestrian or onlooker and watch him fly. Pretty cool...the first time around. The weapons the sidekicks use range from a guitar to a cavewoman's scream. Pretty funny...for about an hour.

Younger gamers might find this racer amusing, all others steer clear.



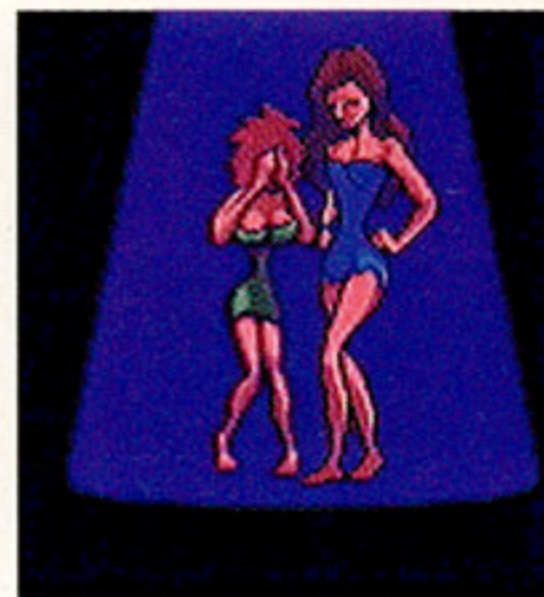
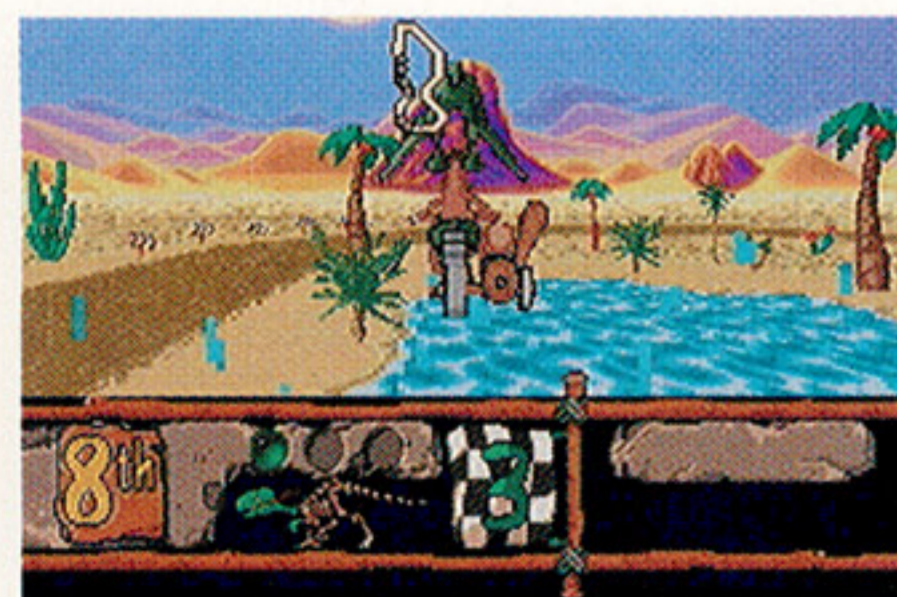
Beautiful to look at, easy to control, but games like this are things of the past.



Club or be clubbed! It's a wonder why early man didn't beat himself extinct.



If you find yourself losing, feel free to take your anger out on the bystanders!



GENESIS

**Vital Info**

System: Genesis  
 Genre: Hybrid:  
 Platform/Driving/First-Person 3-D  
 Developer: Disney  
 Interactive Entertainment  
 Publisher: Traveler's Tales/Psygnosis  
 Completion Status: 90%  
 Release Date: November

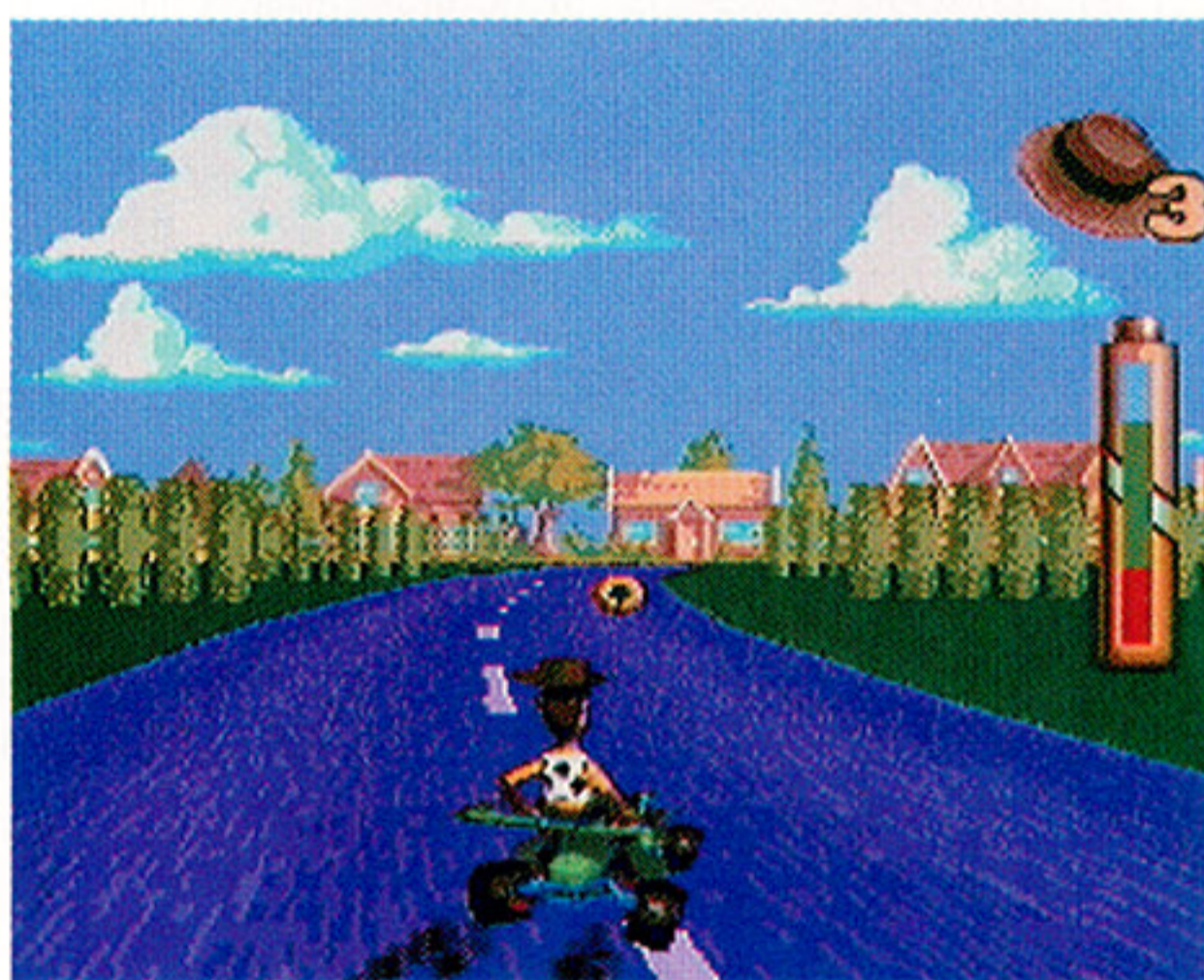
**Strengths**

- Amazing 3-D Graphics/Huge Sprites
- 19 levels of mayhem
- Great variety in gameplay

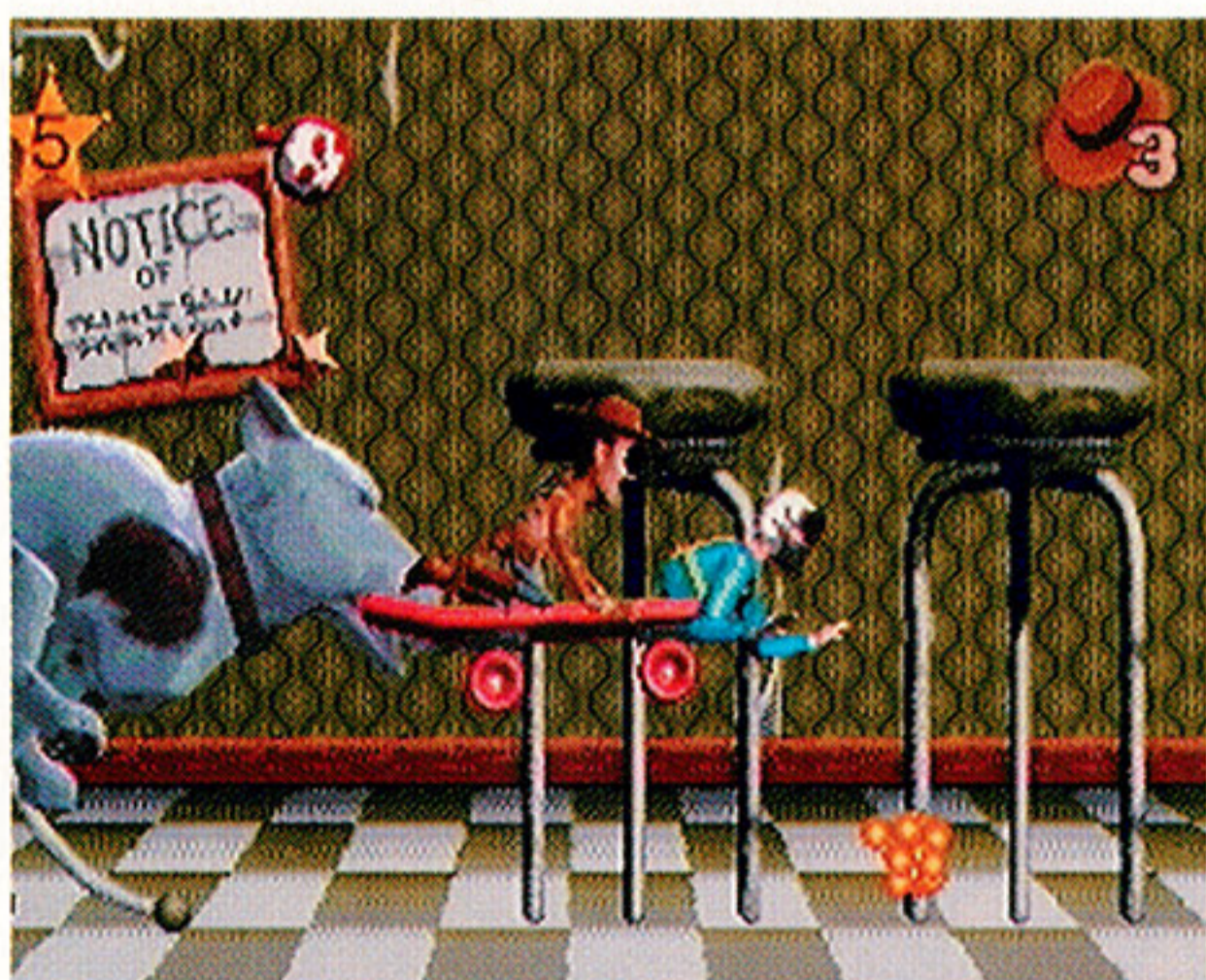
**Weaknesses**

- High frustration level for the youngsters
- You'll hear the music in your sleep

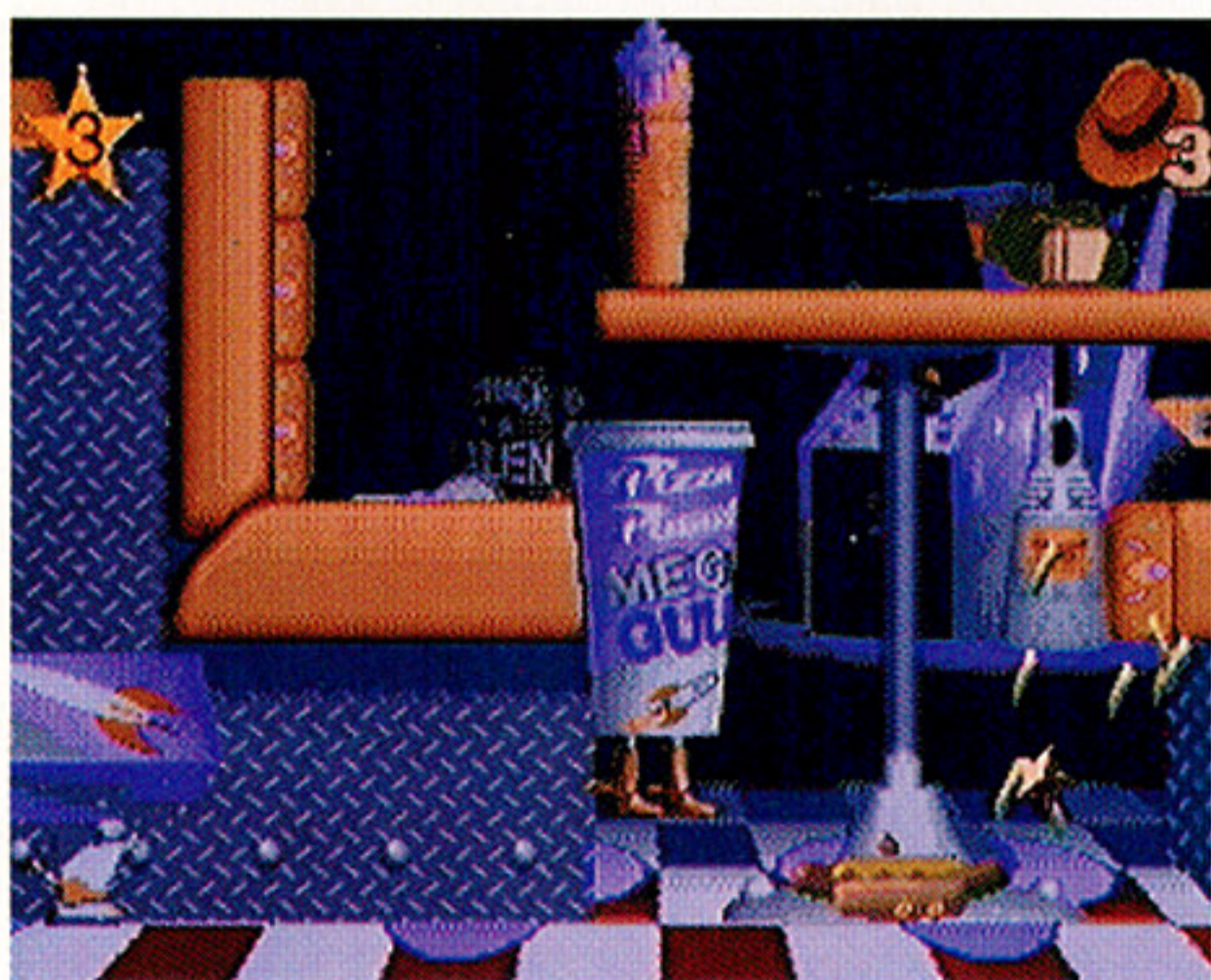
# Toy Story



Guide Woody the Cowboy down the road in this, er...driving level.



Life too serious for you? Use the skateboard and act all nutty and stuff.



Got Saturn envy? The same tricks in CLOCKWORK KNIGHT are used here. So smile!

**R**emember how amazing **Aladdin** for the Genesis was, with its fluid animation and amazing gameplay? Well, kiddies, Disney Interactive has done it again with their latest title, **Toy Story**—a toy-rrific (insert your groan here) game based on the recent film.

TS follows the plotline of its parent film fairly closely. Gamers take on the role of Woody the Cowboy, armed with his trusty pull-string lasso, as he tries to outfox his rival Buzz Lightyear, a superhero astronaut action figure inside the toy room and outside in the real world. I think this is the first time in a Disney film where one of the characters is trying to catch a "buzz." But I digress....

Although the "toys come to life" idea was recently done in **Clockwork Knight** for the Saturn, **Toy Story** manages to do something its 32-bit cousin couldn't: keep your interest throughout the entire game.

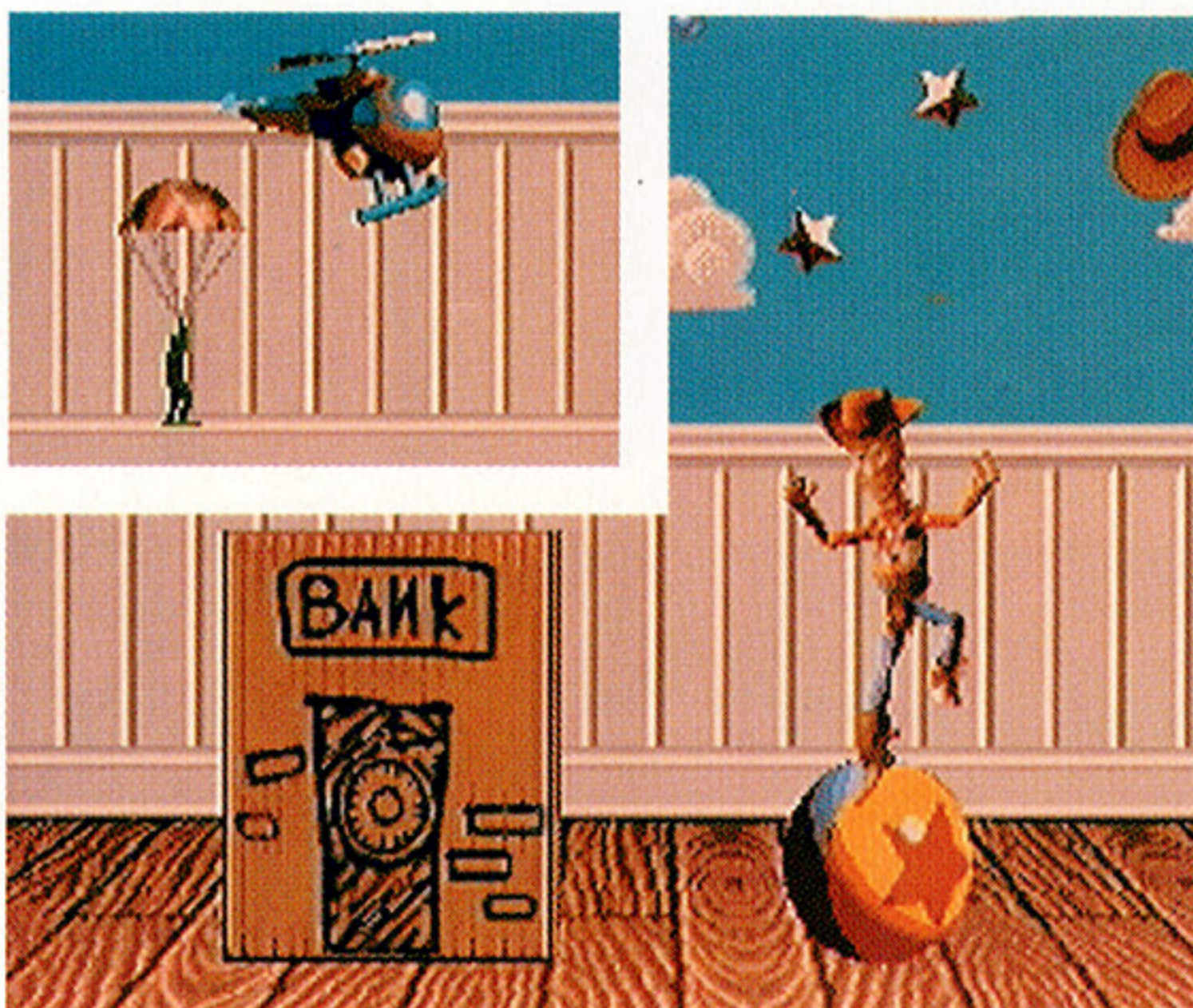
Everything in **Toy Story** is huge! Pixar, the same company responsible for the film's computer animations, have

crammed a lot of 3-D model animations into this 32-meg game. The characters are all double-sized sprites and pretty much mirror their movie counterparts in regards to movement and facial expressions, which I found just a little bit eerie. The game itself is 19 levels long, which in these days of "crank 'em out as fast as we can" is a major plus.

Another thing about **Toy Story** is its variety in gameplay. Gone is the same old game engine used in **Aladdin**, **The Jungle Book** and **The Lion King**. This is a whole new engine—or should I say engines. **Toy Story** has three main playing fields; side scrolling, race car driving and a **Doom**like first person perspective maze.

The only real downside to TS is its difficulty level. As with Disney's **The Lion King**, the target audience, 8- to 14-year-olds, might find this game a little too frustrating to sustain interest beyond the one-night rental.

**Toy Story** is an amazing 3-D game that takes time to master but is ultimately rewarding. And isn't that what a good game is all about?



GENESIS  
32X

# Spider-Man Web of Fire

## Vital Info

System: Sega 32X  
Genre: Platform  
Developer: Blue Sky  
Publisher: Sega  
Completion Status: 35%  
Release Date: January

## Strengths

- Big bad bosses
- Well-hidden power-ups
- Long levels

## Weaknesses

- What's so 32X about this game?
- Gameplay is nothing new
- The sound is like a broken tweeter

**D**aily Bugle news flash! Hydra has released a laser web that blankets the skies over Manhattan, slicing the tops off many of the skyscrapers. If the mayor's office does not pay Hydra his \$1 billion in ransom money, he will continue covering the city with his web of fire until New York is no more! To ensure success, Hydra has deployed The Enforcers. They have already abducted Daredevil. Beseiged by super-villians, a terrified metropolis can only ask, "Where is Spider-Man?"

Ah, now this is the type of story that comic books are made of. Unfortunately, it's the throwaway plot of yet another mediocre Spider-Man game, this time on the Sega 32X. Spidey deserves better than this.

**Web of Fire** is a 32X game in need of a serious repair job. This is just a sneak peek so I can forgive the unavoidable little glitches and bugs. However, there is still a lot of fine tuning needed to make this a worthy game. The levels are long but the villains pose no real threat. In fact, the best way to survive in this game is to just swing over all obstacles. The

sprites are all small, except for some bosses who can't help but tower over our tiny web-slinging hero. The animation frame counts are all low. The fight sequences consist of you pushing the **A** button once and letting the animation pound away. The spider sling doesn't stick near the ledges of building causing you to fall unexpectedly—a glitch I'm sure the developers will fix. Like in the

Acclaim's **Arcade's Revenge** and **Spider-Man** games, after you save a superhero friend—in this case, Daredevil—he can be called upon to wipe out enemies. How about something new and innovative, guys?

Let's be honest here. There is nothing in this game that screams, "Hi, I'm a next generation machine game." This a Genesis game if I ever saw one. **Web of Fire** has some nice 3-D modeled characters here and there but nothing spectacular. Without new gameplay techniques, all the computer enhanced graphics in the world don't mean a thing.

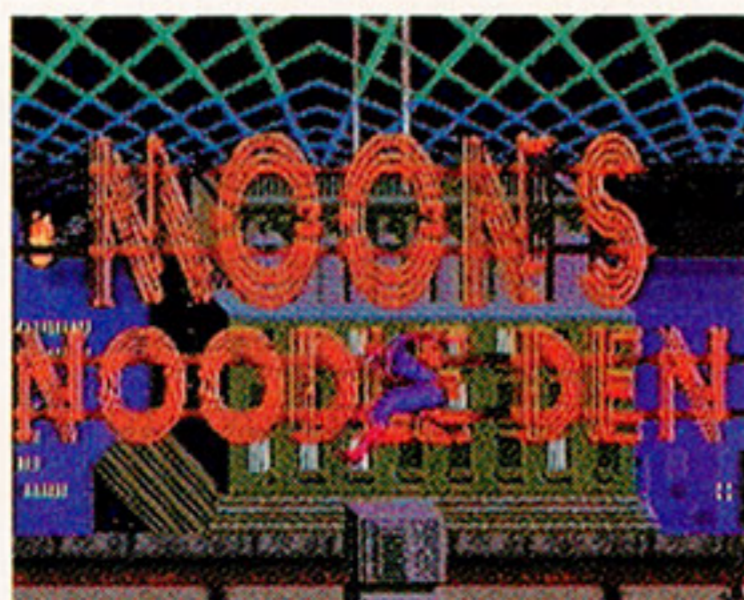
Use your spider sense and seek adventure elsewhere.



Spidey battles goons galore as the city lies in peril. A "Tholian" web, perhaps?



When you need to get out of harms way, stick to building surfaces.



Spider-Man, Spider-Man, does whatever a...ahh, forget it.

# the Atari Quest

An • U L T I M A T E • G A M E R • E x c l u s i v e

by Chris Bienenle



It all started just a few months ago as I was doing some research for a project involving classic video games. While sorting through some old magazines and press releases from the early '80s, I came across an Atari brochure that I picked up at the 1984 Summer Consumer Electronics Show in Chicago. The list of upcoming cartridges for Atari's Video Computer System (or VCS, also known as the Atari 2600) was fascinating—given that several of the featured games were never released—but the thing that really caught my eye was the back cover, which was devoted entirely to a seemingly revolutionary Atari peripheral called the MindLink. It appeared to be a sort of visor that—when strapped to your forehead—allowed you to control a video game with some type of electrical impulses from your brain, or possibly your eyebrows.

By coincidence, ULTIMATE GAMER Executive Editor Jim Loftus was on his way to Atari for a press event just a few days later. When he asked me if there was any information I needed from Atari that he might be able to get on his trip, I showed him the MindLink brochure and jokingly asked if he could find somebody who knew what it was, how it worked and why it was never released.

During his day at Atari's offices in Sunnyvale, Jim happened to wander outside for a cigarette and was soon drawn into an informal conversation with Jeff Minter and John Skruch, both of whom were taking a break from the press event going on inside the building. Minter is the talented designer/programmer who developed the Jaguar's **Tempest 2000** and Jag CD **Virtual Light Machine**, and Skruch is Atari's director of software development—he's also been an Atari employee for 13 years. On a whim, Jim brought up the MindLink, fully expecting blank stares and shrugged shoulders, and was shocked when Skruch revealed that he has a working MindLink prototype in his possession!

After further questioning, Skruch admitted that many of Atari's top-secret projects and never-released games still exist today. He also thought that he might be able to dig up the legendary Atari 5200 version of **Tempest**, which was on Atari's release schedule for years but had never been seen outside of the company. Some

game historians refer to this mysterious cartridge as the Holy Grail of video-game collecting; upon hearing that Skruch might have a prototype copy, Minter—who obviously has a great interest in **Tempest**—coughed, "Ho, ho! I'd love to get my hands on that!"

We know that a lot of ULTIMATE GAMER readers feel the same way, so Jim and I packed our bags and returned to Sunnyvale, where Skruch was kind enough to share a few pieces of the long-lost legacy of Atari with the world for the very first time....



# CHAPTER 1:

## THE QUEST BEGINS

Like most archaeological expeditions, The Atari Quest got off to a great start when the smog-bound rush-hour traffic of L.A.'s 405 freeway kept me from the airport until 20 minutes after our flight took off—with Loftus on board, naturally. When I finally arrived at Atari H.Q. on Borregas Avenue, John and Jim were already headed outside for their first cigarette break.

Surrounded by smoke, I asked Skruch how he came to be Atari's unofficial museum curator. He explained that—upon joining the company in 1982—his primary responsibilities involved the AtariSoft line of computer software, which consisted of games that Atari had created (or

owned the rights to) and were being translated for play on home computers other than Atari's own. However, just after ex-Commodore kingpin Jack Tramiel bought the company in 1984, the collapse of the video-game industry triggered a reduction in Atari's staff; of its approximately 10,000 employees, only 150 remained at

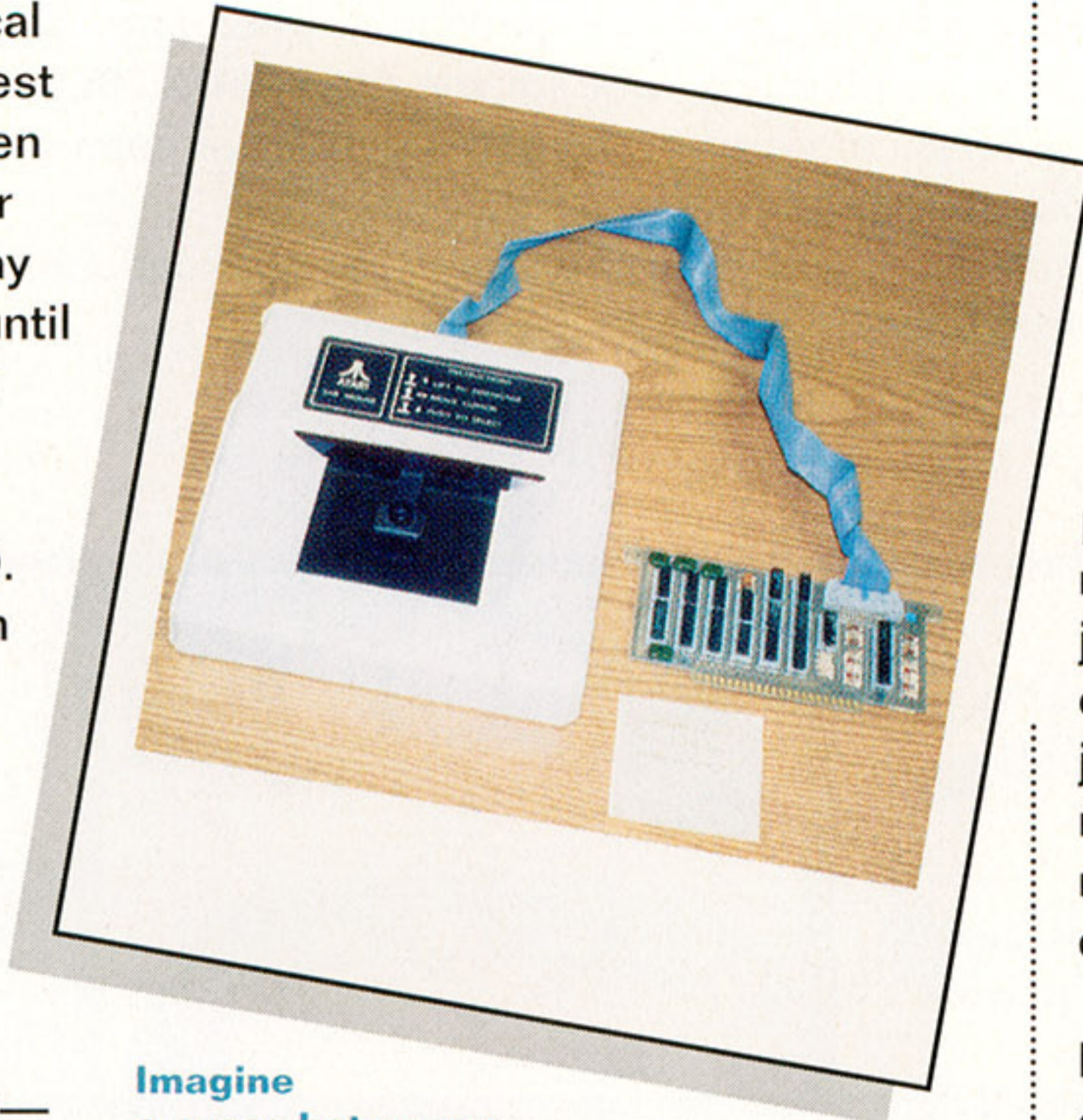
the end of the year. "There were a lot of 'Black Fridays' back then," Skruch admits. Given that there were dozens of products which were in development at the time of the "downsizing," Skruch soon became involved with trying to identify and catalog the various projects and prototype cartridges that remained and determine if any of them could be completed.

The VCS version of **Road Runner** was a good example. The game's programmer,

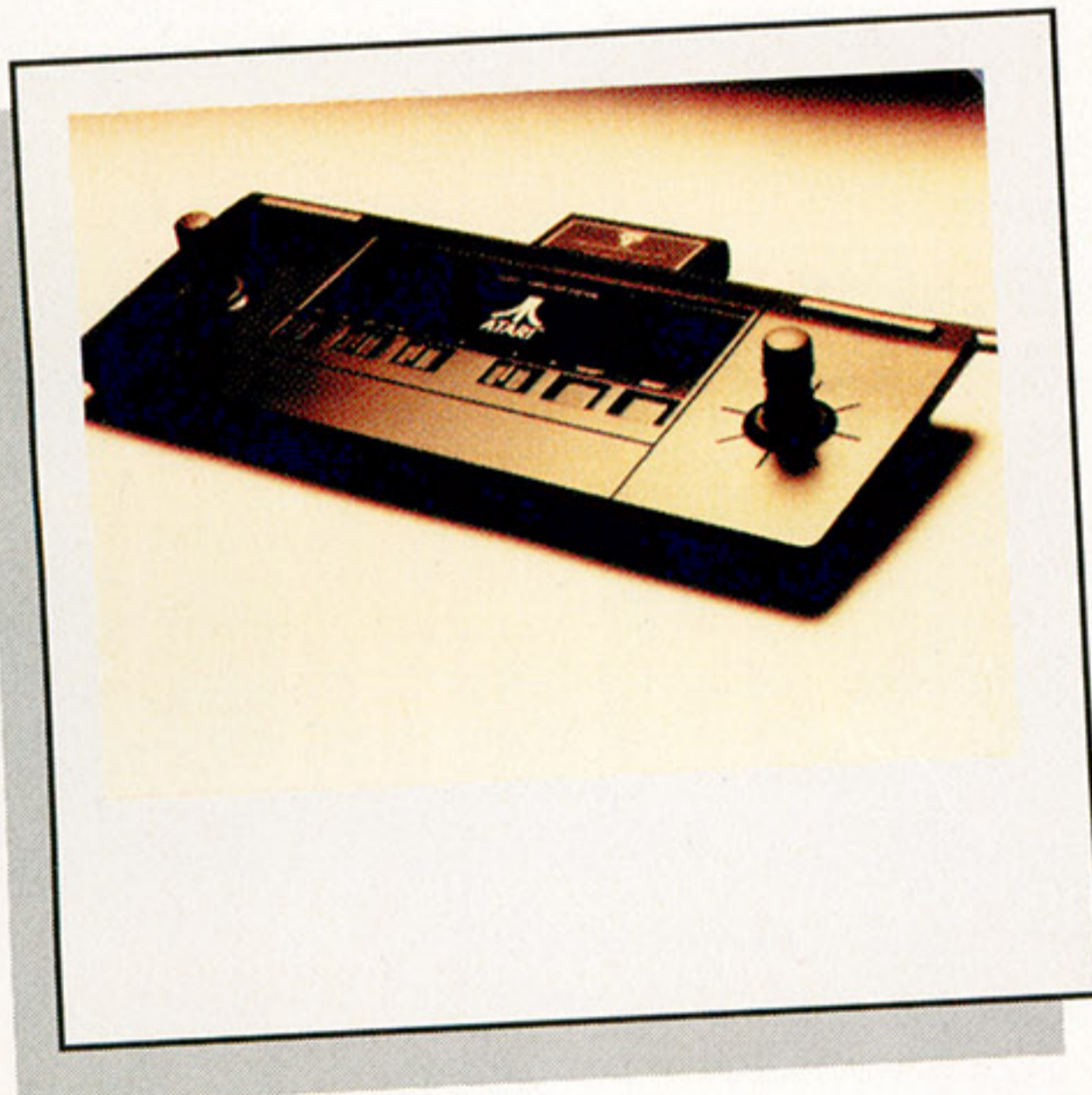
Bob Polaro, had been forced to abandon the project in 1984, but remained with the company and eventually worked on software for the hand-held Lynx when Atari purchased the rights to the machine from Epyx in 1988. One day, as

This previously unpublished photo shows a prototype VCS that was designed by Atari's New York R&D lab in 1982. It was deemed impractical because the built-in joysticks were not detachable from the base unit.

Skruch was testing an incomplete prototype copy of Road Runner that had been salvaged from the "crash" of 1984, Polaro saw the game and commented, "Hey, I programmed that!" In fact, he had a more complete version of the game at home. Polaro was asked to finish the game, and the result is considered in some circles to be one of the best VCS cartridges ever released.



Imagine a cross between a standard mouse and a graphics touch tablet. That's the Atari Tab Mouse, a clever—if bulky—input device designed for use with the company's home computer line. This peripheral was never released.



# CHAPTER 2:

## THE STATE OF THE ART FOR THE STATE OF YOUR MIND

As promised, Skruch produced not one, but two MindLink peripherals from his office. One was a worn-looking—but supposedly functional—prototype; the other, a sleek, black plastic mock-up of the final production model. Of the latter, Skruch recalls, "I distinctly remember a former Atari Vice-President standing in front of a group of third-party publishers at the CES and saying, 'You guys really should be developing games for this thing,' just as this headband came loose and slipped down over his eyes." Still, he insists that the project was canceled mainly due to its suggested retail price being too high (in the \$70-\$80 range), not because of the industry's lack of faith in Atari's claims of the MindLink's abilities.

What exactly were its abilities? Think of the MindLink as a high-tech version of the VCS "paddle" controller. Instead of a knob attached to a variable resistor, the MindLink could calculate a character's position on the screen by measuring the electrical resistance between three sensors which are in contact with the player's forehead while wearing the MindLink. That being the case, only "paddle"-type games were designed to be used with the peripheral, including a skiing game and a **Breakout** variation which Skruch referred to as "**Bionic Breakout**," but is in fact identified as **Bionic Breakthrough** in Atari literature from 1984.

The MindLink headband was connected by a cable to an infrared transmitter box. Powered by a 9-volt battery, the transmitter sent information up

**2600**  
**7800**  
**COMPUTER**

# ATARI

## THE MINDLINK SYSTEM™

**FEATURES:**

- Uses DSK technology to respond to each individual's level of concentration and muscle tension
- Compatible with 7800™, 2600™, and Atari home computers
- Offers two player enjoyability
- Works on infrared control with up to 20 foot range
- Includes Bionic Breakthrough cartridge

**BENEFITS:**

- Exciting and innovative. Offers the magic of no-hands control and the challenge of using your mind
- Helps you to concentrate and learn
- A revolutionary new way to communicate with your Video Computer System or Atari computer using your mind instead of your hands
- Broad market appeal to all ages, both male and female
- Increases game system and computer purchase interest

**ADVERTISING/PROMOTION:**

- Network television and magazine advertising
- Large scale publicity program
- Coordinated promotional support (joint with 7800)

**SYSTEM:**

Package includes headband, cartridge and infrared transmitter and receiver

**DESCRIPTION:**

Atari MindLink is an innovative system that enables you to control your Atari game system or computer without hand controls. seemingly by magic. It relies upon special software designed to interact with every individual's unique EMG. It both fun and challenging to master.

**REQUIREMENTS:**

- Atari MindLink is accompanied by a unique line of software and will not work with existing 2600 or computer software
- In order to use MindLink with the 2600™ you will need an Atari VCS™ Adapter
- The headband and transmitter require a 9V DC battery, which is not included in the package

**AVAILABILITY:**

2600/7800	Computer
4th Qtr. 1984	4th Qtr. 1984
5th Qtr. 1984	5th Qtr. 1984
6th Qtr. 1984	6th Qtr. 1984
7th Qtr. 1984	7th Qtr. 1984
8th Qtr. 1984	8th Qtr. 1984
9th Qtr. 1984	9th Qtr. 1984
10th Qtr. 1984	10th Qtr. 1984
11th Qtr. 1984	11th Qtr. 1984
12th Qtr. 1984	12th Qtr. 1984

Order Number: 10718  
5th Qtr. 1984  
Case pack: 10719 unit  
4  
For Further Information: Phone (900) 536-6543 (Outside California) (900) 670-1504 (In California)

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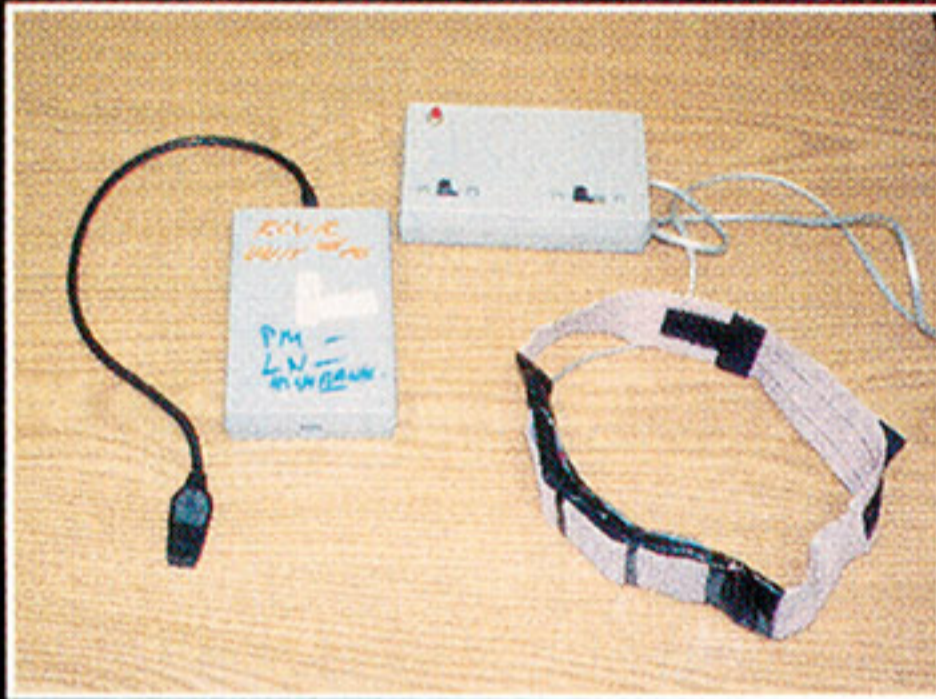
ENTERTAINMENT  
**HARDWARE**

This page from Atari's 1984 sales brochure mentions several interesting facts about the ill-fated "4th Quarter" launch of the MindLink, including some kind of coordinated promotion with Lucasfilm.

## CHAPTER 2 (continued...)

to 20 feet away into a similar-sized “receiver” box which was connected by a standard controller cable to the joystick port on the VCS. The planned MindLink package was expected to include the headband, transmitter and receiver, as well as a Bionic Breakthrough cartridge. Two distinct packages were planned—one for the Atari 2600/7800 and one for Atari’s 8-bit home computer line—but we suspect that the only difference between the two would have been the pack-in game, which, in the latter, would obviously have been a version of Bionic Breakthrough for the computer.

Sadly, this revolutionary input device was never released, and all of the promising applications that it could have made possible have been lost in the halls of video-game lore for over ten years.



The working MindLink prototype, complete with infrared transmitter and receiver.



A mock-up of the finished MindLink design; this is one of several demonstration models which were assembled for the 1984 Summer CES.



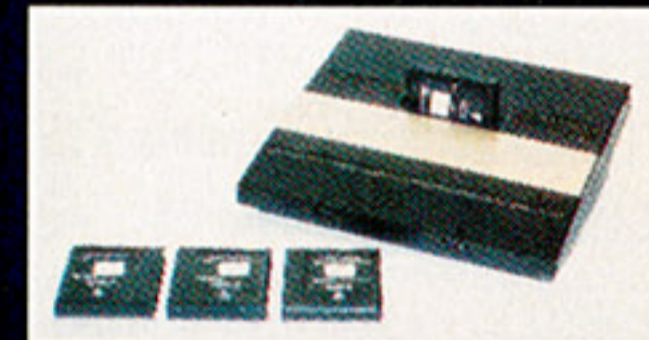
These exclusive photos show how the sensors on the underside of the prototype MindLink (top) differed from those of the production model (bottom).



Skruch dons the pre-production MindLink get-up. Hey, John, are you sure there isn't a copy of BIONIC BREAKTHROUGH in the cabinet in that back room?

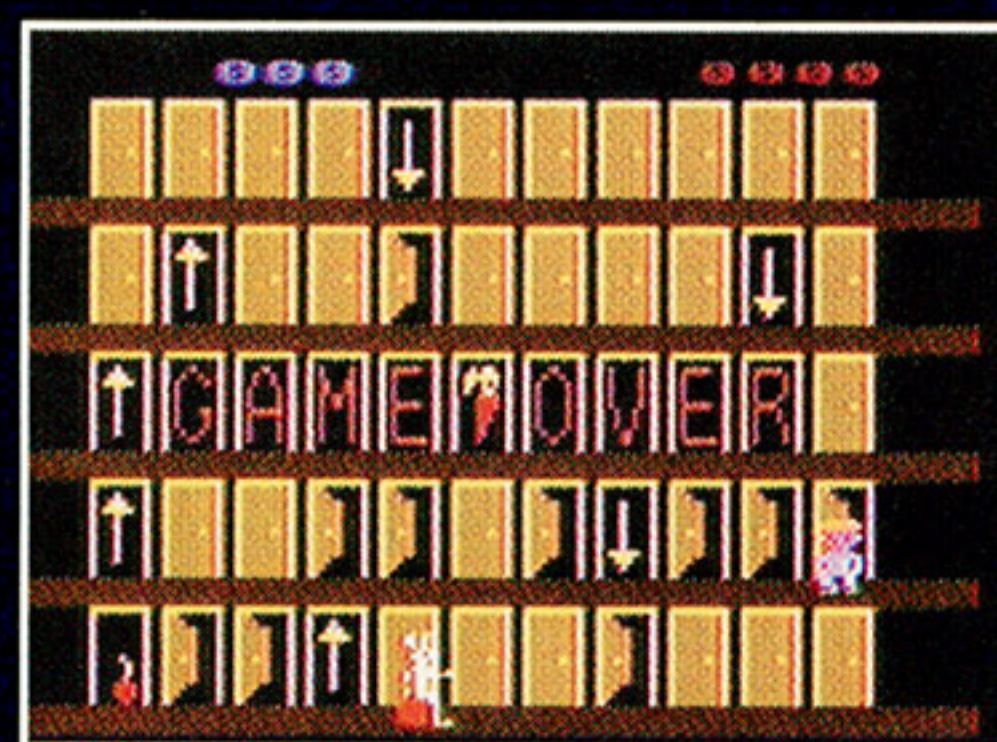
## CHAPTER 3:

### THE LOST 5200 GAMES



#### LOONEY TUNES HOTEL

By the mid-'80s, Atari had forged Acclaimlike licensing agreements with big-leaguers like Disney, Warner Bros. and the Children's Television Workshop to create games that featured recognizable cartoon characters. **Looney Tunes Hotel** is a puzzle/platform adventure that closely resembles the arcade game **Elevator Action**—which, incidentally, Atari had just licensed from Taito. You play as Bugs Bunny, and you must travel from door to door in the hotel, rushing from one elevator to the next as you avoid the bombs of Elmer Fudd and the misguided wrath of the Tasmanian Devil (inexplicably referred to as simply “Devil” on the game’s title screen.)

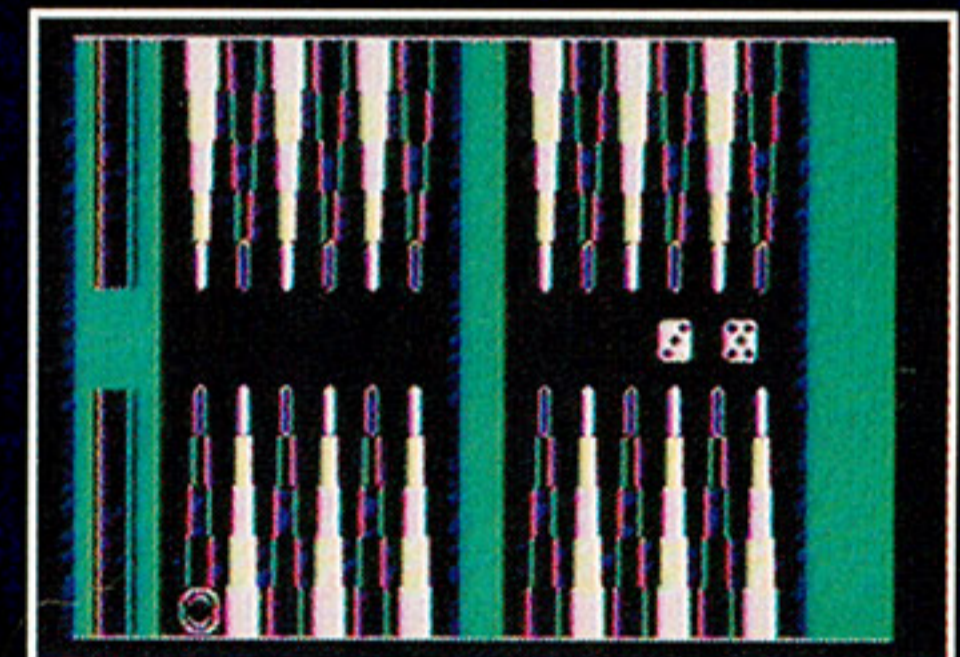


#### MICROGAMMON SB

This prototype cartridge is essentially an electronic version of the board game Backgammon. It's not the greatest-looking one we've ever seen, either; the screen is drawn in

the 5200's high-resolution graphics mode, which unfortunately allows just two colors, white and black.

Clever programmers knew how to exploit the fine horizontal resolution of this particular mode to create artificial shades of green and purple on the 5200 and Atari computers; the XL/XE versions of the early **Ultima** games were good examples of how to do this skillfully. **Microgammon SB**, on the other hand, is graphically unappealing. Hey, there are good reasons why some of these games were never released....



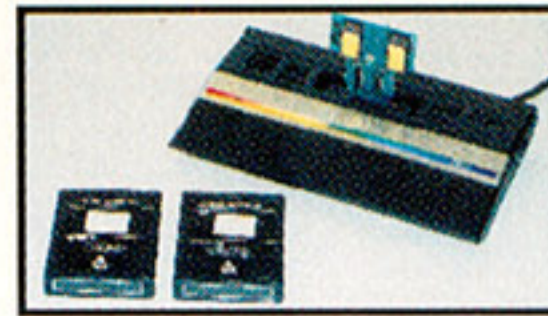
#### MEEBZORK

A bizarre-looking shoot-'em-up that plays like a defective version of Sega's **Buck Rogers** coin-op. Instead of a sleek spacecraft, however, the cursed 5200 joystick is used to control what looks like a Galapagos turtle. This prototype cartridge is obviously unfinished, which is a good thing for former 5200 owners, who may have been swayed by the game's appealing title had it reached store shelves. (Yeah, right.)



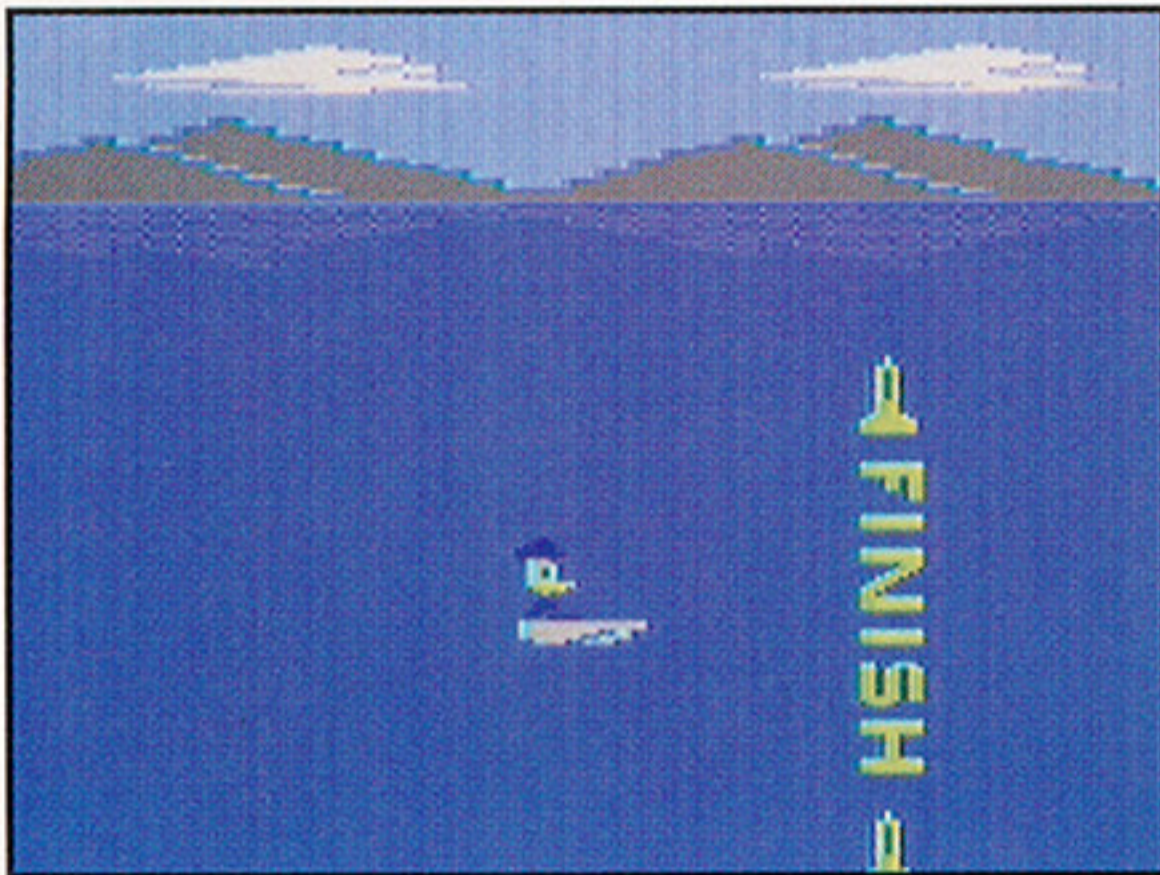
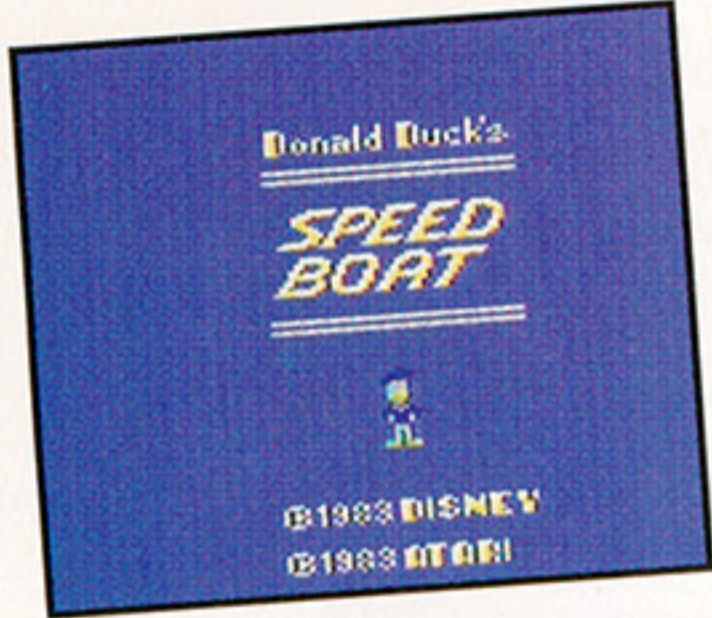
# CHAPTER 4:

THE LOST 2600 GAMES



## DONALD DUCK'S SPEED BOAT

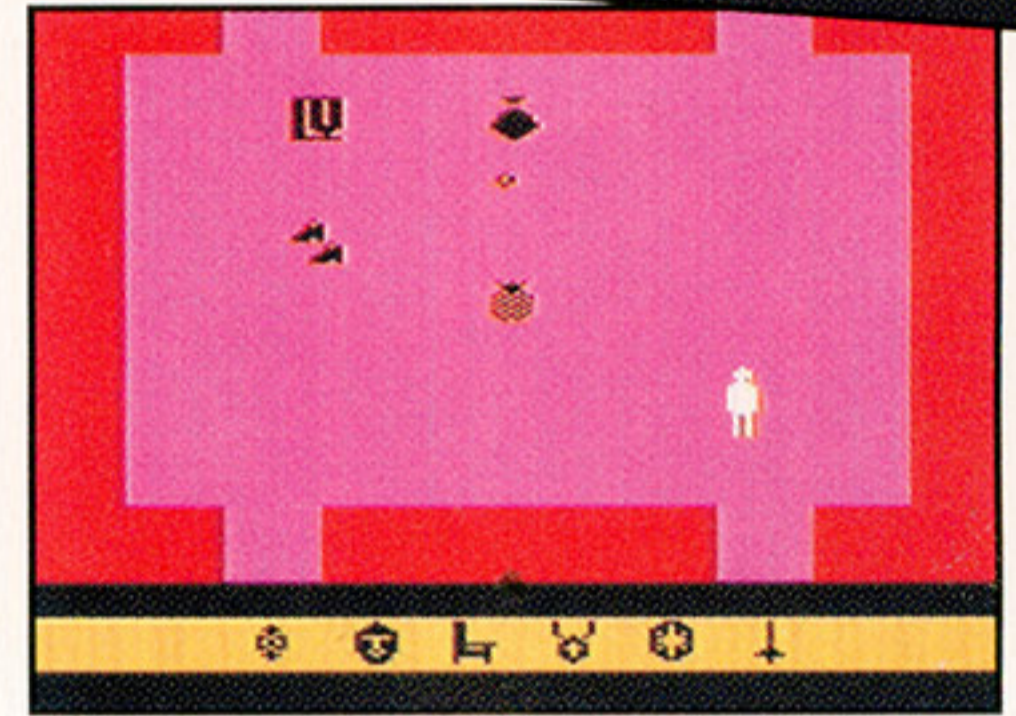
Disney's marvelous mallard starred in this prototype racing game, which plays like a cross between a sideways **River Raid** and the original **Pitfall!** adventure. Copies of this unfinished cartridge have been circulated by collectors, but final packaged copies do not exist.



## SWORDQUEST: WATERWORLD

Final packaged copies of **SwordQuest: Waterworld** do exist, but they're extremely difficult to find; it's one of the most collectible VCS cartridges ever released.

We asked Skruch about the famous four-part **SwordQuest** series of adventure games—and the high-profile contest that offered valuable, jeweled prizes to those who were among the first to complete each chapter—and he offered the following anecdotes: After the Tramiel takeover, many of the company's loose ends were simply left hanging. The ongoing **SwordQuest** contest was immediately deemed to be the responsibility of "Old Atari," a company so carefree with its expenditures that it actually had a *psychic* on retainer. Only the first two games in the series (**Earthworld** and **Fireworld**) had been published—and the contest prizes related to those titles had been awarded at the time of the takeover—so, as a gesture of good will to its customers, "New Atari" closed the door on the **SwordQuest** promotion by sponsoring an event in which players competed for less valuable prizes by playing prototype copies of **Waterworld**. Skruch also hinted that Atari never even started to develop the fourth and final game in the series, **SwordQuest: Airworld**.



## SPORT GOOFY

Atari's Disney license threatened to bring this olympic-style contest to the 5200; unfortunately, the incomplete version Skruch showed us seemed to have just two events: a rough high-diving scenario and a **Q\*Bert** variation in which Goofy gets to pop a thousand Mickey-shaped balloons. Some clever animation is included—a parachute pops out of Goofy's back just *after* he's crash-landed on a floating platform—but the game just didn't measure up to its promising full-color title screen.

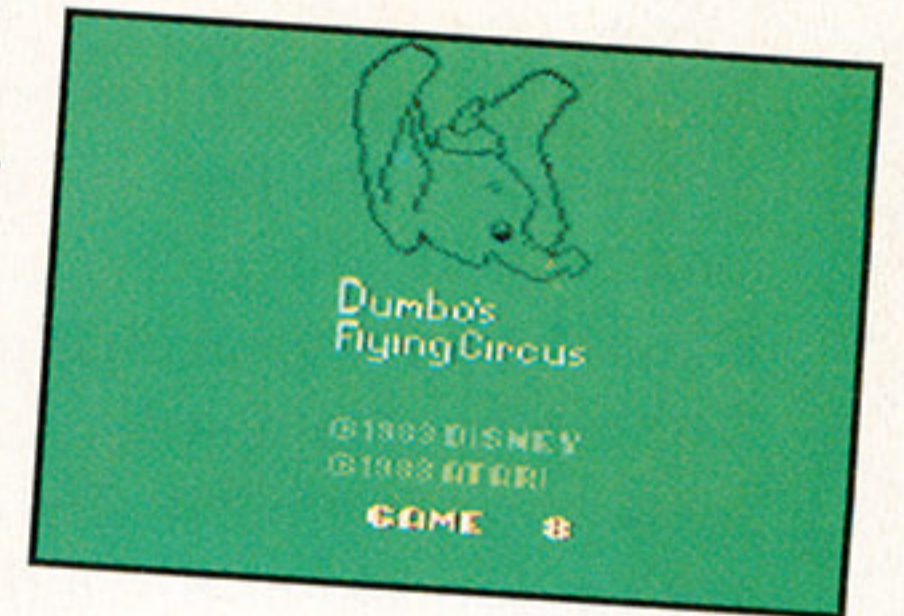


## DUMBO'S FLYING CIRCUS

Yet another by-product of the Atari/Disney licensing agreement, **Dumbo's Flying Circus** is actually a very challenging action game in which Dumbo must fly around and collect balloons, saving friendly clowns from falling to the ground and avoiding the projectiles fired by evil clowns who ride unicy-

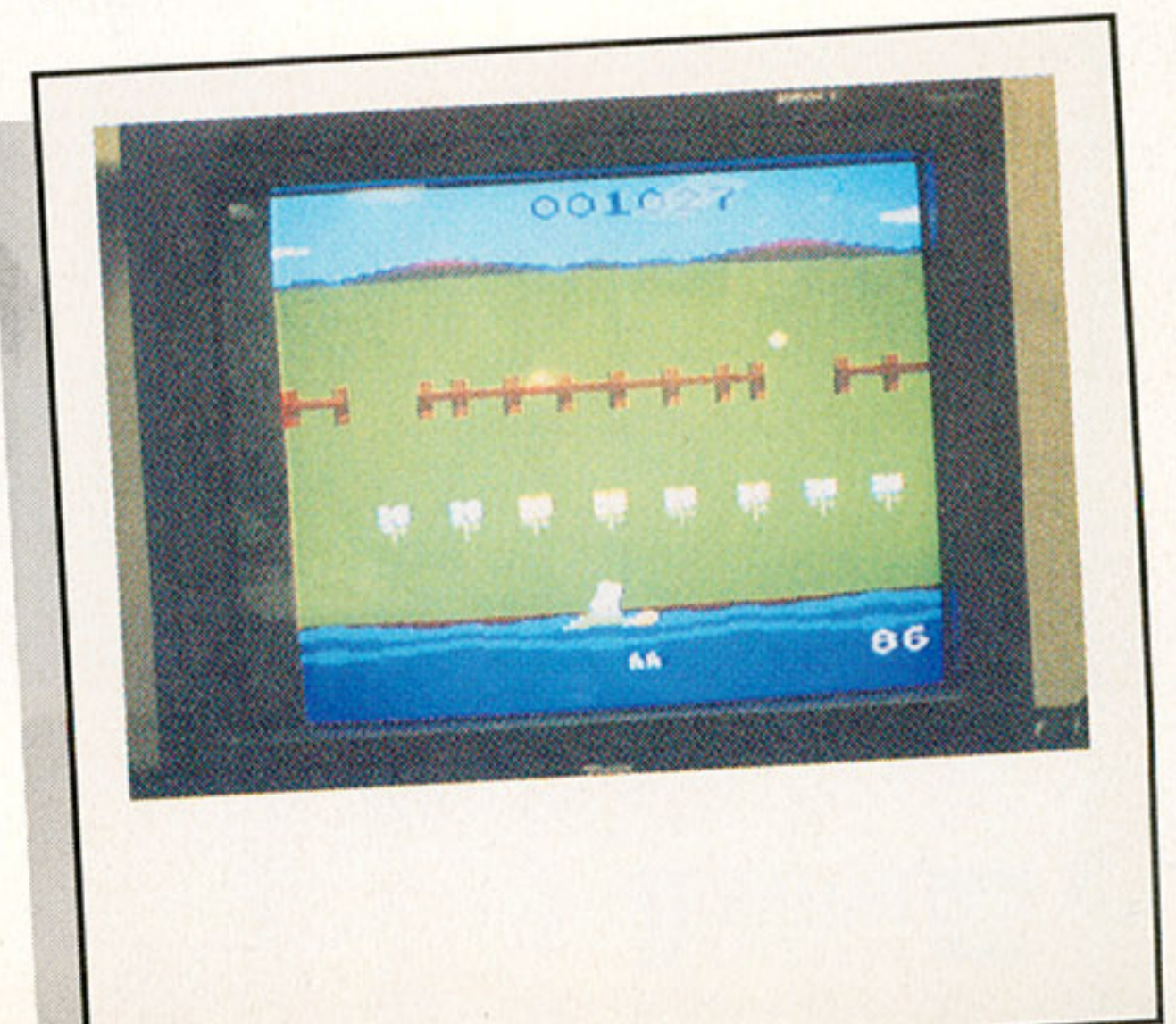
cles across the ever-descending high wire.

This prototype game seems to be complete, and it's a shame that it was never released; we were pleasantly surprised by the excellent controls, the fluid animation of Dumbo's flapping ears and the variety of different clowns that appear as you progress through the game.



## RABBIT TRANSIT

Hello, what's this? This incredibly fun and playable prototype cartridge seemed familiar, and for a good reason: The game was released for use with the Arcadia/Starpath Supercharger, a VCS peripheral that added extra RAM to the machine's internal limit and read games that were stored on standard audio cassette tapes. Skruch seemed genuinely baffled when we identified this one. What was Atari doing with a prototype version of a non-Atari game, particularly one that has never previously been seen in cartridge form? The world may never know.



# CHAPTER 5:

## A TEMPEST IN A TEAPOT



First, the bad news: Skruch was mistaken when he said he thought he had a copy of the Atari 5200 version of the classic arcade shooter, *Tempest*. The good news was that he did have an unfinished proto-

type of *Tempest* for the VCS! This cartridge was, by far, the most significant find of the day. Unlike the 5200 *Tempest*, this 2600 adaptation was never announced to the public as a project in development; most video-game collectors and historians will no doubt be surprised to learn of this important

discovery. Currently, Skruch's copy is the only one known to exist in the world. The idea of cramming the arcade game's crisp vector graphics, resonant soundtrack and hellishly addictive gameplay into a tiny

64K 2600 cartridge seems absurd, and it is. Whoever programmed this skeleton of a game must have come to the same conclusion, because he or she only put in one screen; it's a rough approximation of the coin-op's V-shaped stage, but the playfield resembles nothing more than a pair of striped undershorts. Four game variations are available, but we couldn't spot the difference between them except for the number of lives you start with (five in the odd-numbered games and three in games 2 and 4.) Players can earn one extra life for every 10,000 points scored. Holding the button down gives you auto-fire, and the Super Zappers are triggered by pointing the joystick up and pressing the fire button.

We were surprised to discover that the game is controlled with a joystick and not the widely-available VCS paddle controller,

This stage repeats itself endlessly; it's the only screen in this unfinished prototype.



which might have helped to duplicate the control scheme of the arcade game. (Come to think of it, the free-spinning VCS "driving controller" would have been perfect, since it can be twirled endlessly in either direction, just like the original *Tempest* control knob.)

In any case, playing the VCS *Tempest* prototype was quite a rush. The graphics are blocky, the sounds are primitive and the controls are sluggish and imprecise; definitely not a lost classic. However—to the programmer's credit—even this one simple stage somehow manages to capture an identifiable bit of the essence of the *Tempest* play mechanic. Both Jim and I agreed

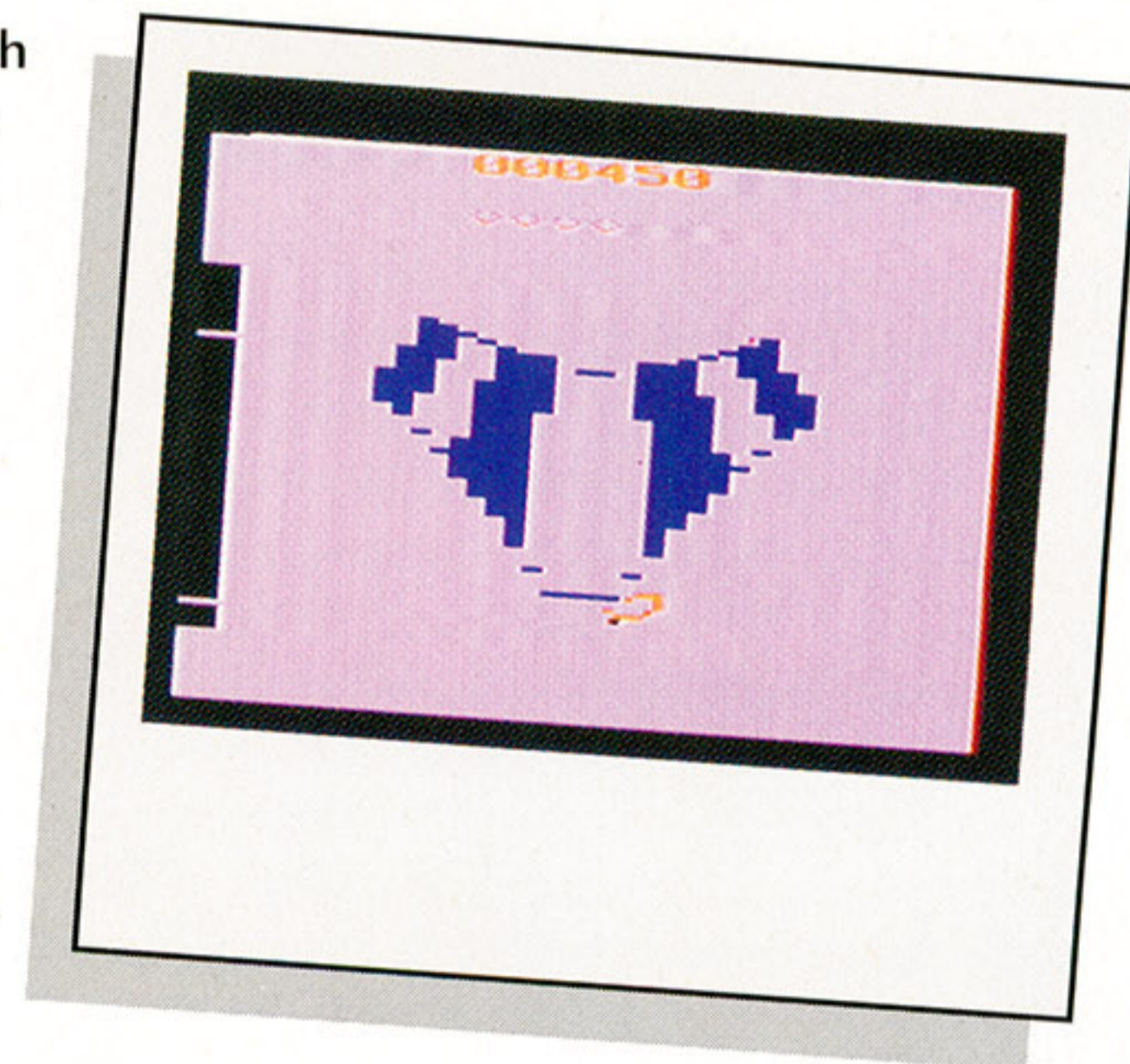
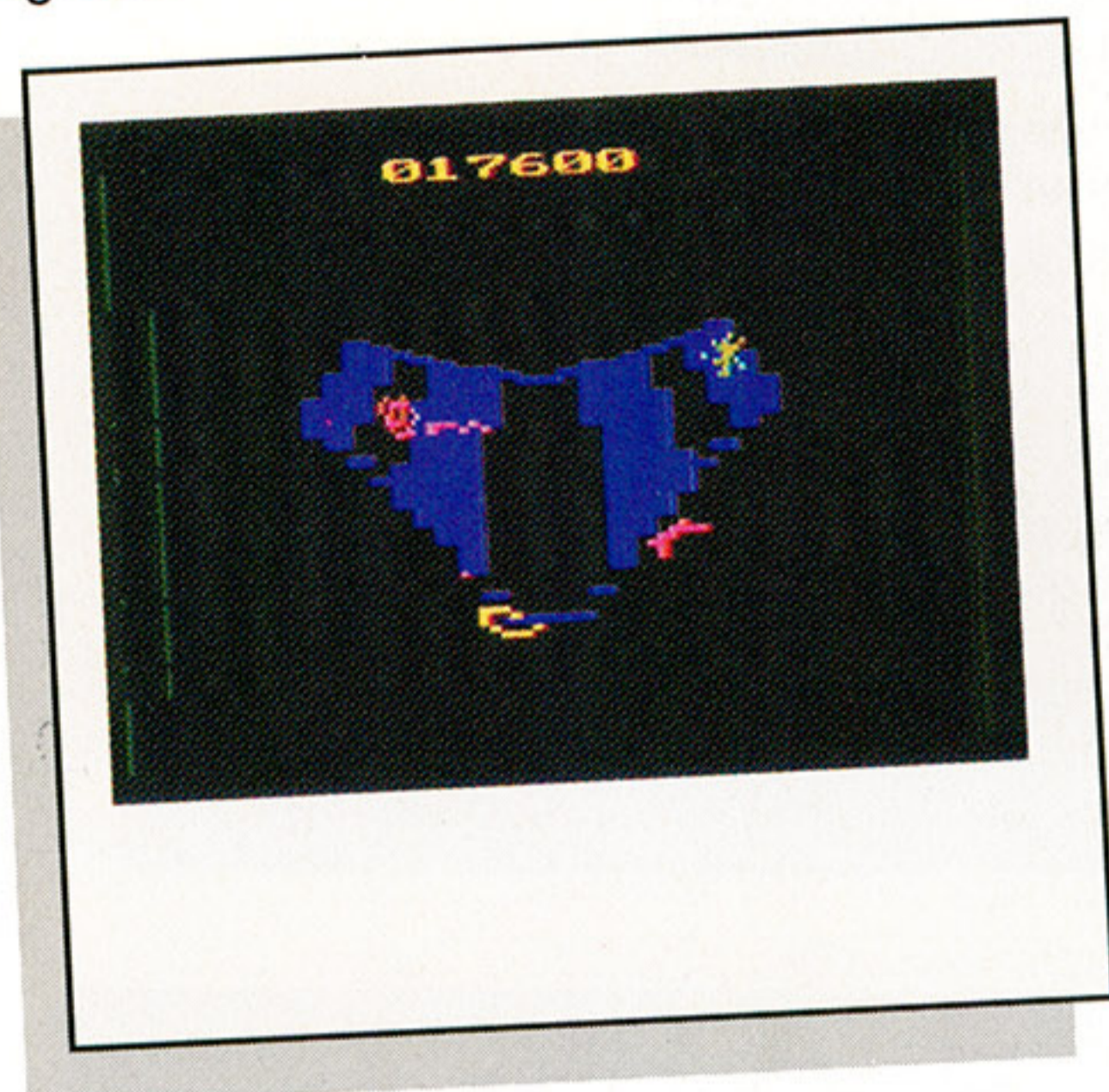
that—with a few more stages added—we probably would have been happy with this crude version of the game back in 1983. Hell, if Atari could sell zillions of copies of that abominable

**Pac-Man** conversion (which Skruch affectionately refers to as "*Flicker-Man*") then maybe a 2600 *Tempest* wasn't such a bad idea.

Speculation: Is it possible that *Tempest* was being considered as a premium cartridge to be sold only through the Atari Club magazine? Consider that

the game's official product number in Atari's record books is CX2687. This closely follows CX2683

(**Crazy Climber**) and immediately follows CX2685 (**Gravitar**) and CX2686 (**Quadrant**); when these games were originally released in 1983, all three were special Atari Club premiums, available only by mail through Atari direct. Twelve years later, nobody seems to remember exactly what the company had planned for *Tempest*.



TOP: The crackling Sparks don't appear until you've cleared several stages.

BOTTOM: Holding the joystick Up and pressing the action button triggers a Super Zapper!

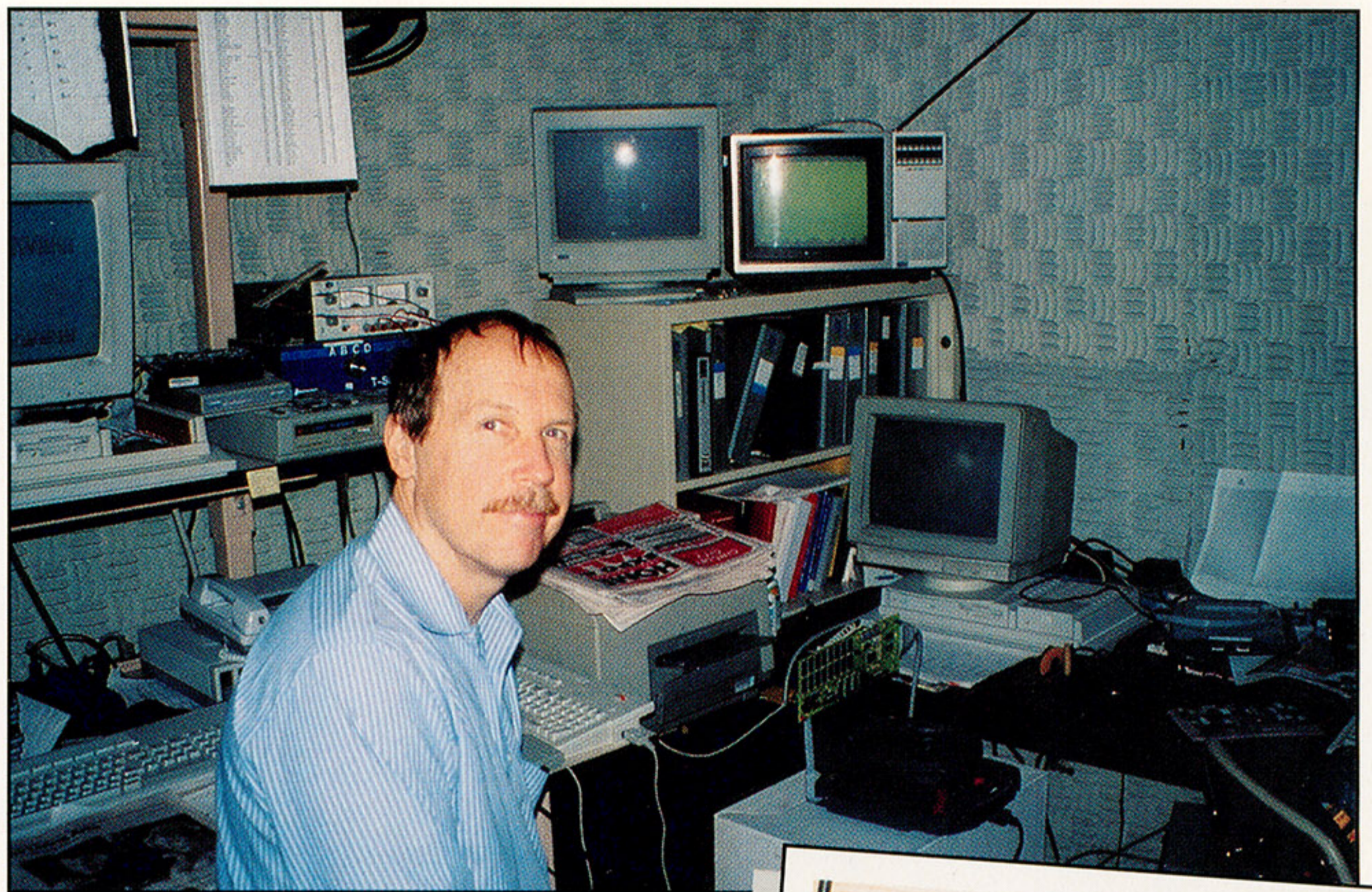


## CHAPTER 6:

EVERYTHING OLD IS NEW AGAIN

On our way out, Skruch introduced us to Dave Staugas, an Atari engineer who also happens to have been the programmer of two noteworthy VCS cartridges, **Millipede** and **Krull**. As fate would have it, Dave was hard at work on a software emulator which will allow the Atari Jaguar to play 2600 games stored on CD, just as Activision's popular **Action Pack** series does for PC CD-ROM systems. Yes, Atari plans to release collections of classic VCS titles on Jaguar CD; however, Skruch unofficially mentioned the possibility of putting "six or seven" games on each disc, which seems ludicrous when you consider that the entire VCS library of 500-odd games could easily fit on a single CD.

Regardless of Atari's marketing plans, we think the VCS collections will be a perfect complement to the company's **2000** series of classic game upgrades for the Jaguar. Hey, wouldn't it be great if each disc included an unreleased VCS gem like *Tempest*, **Donald Duck's Speed Boat** or any other lost title—**Elevator Action**, **Zookeeper**, **Garfield**, **Sinistar**, **Honker Bonk** or even **Save Mary?**



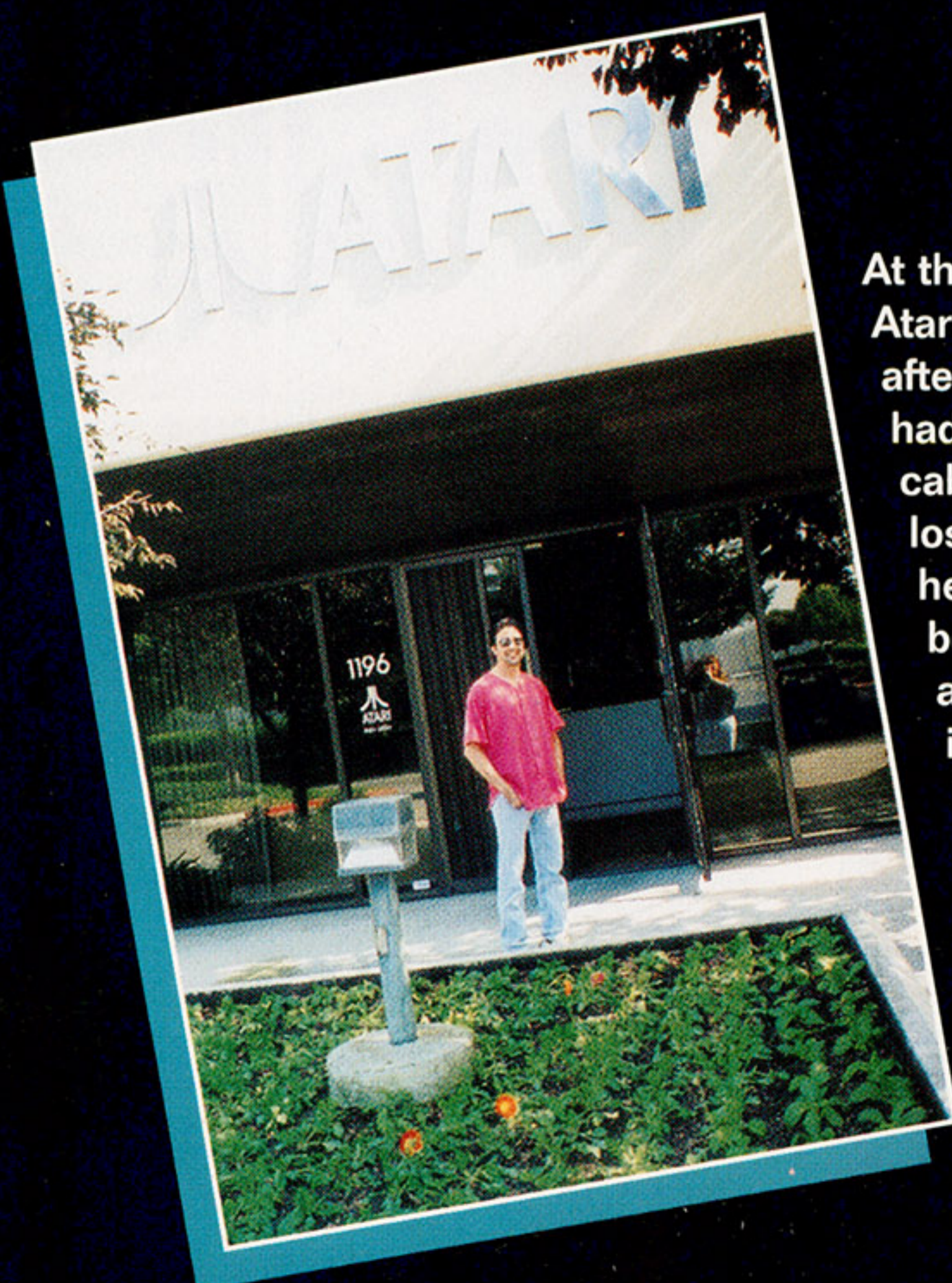
**ABOVE:** Atari software design engineer Dave Staugas, seen here with some of the equipment he's using to develop the Atari VCS emulator for Jaguar CD.

**RIGHT:** We spotted this creamy gray-and-blue Jaguar controller in Dave's office; according to Skruch, it's a leftover from some product tests that Atari conducted in mid-1993 before deciding on the Jaguar's final color scheme.



## EP7LOGUE

At the end of the day, Jim sat down on on the cement planter in front of the Atari building to enjoy another (cough) cigarette. I was too excited to sit; after all, how many people in this world can say that they have actually had an Atari MindLink controller strapped to their heads? Waiting for the cab to pick us up and return us to the San Jose airport, we were both lost in nostalgic thought, and Jim didn't even see the very short, bald-headed man who quietly walked out of the building, carrying a satchel in both hands as he climbed into a modest-looking burgundy-colored car and drove off. We never made eye contact, but he just looked so familiar that I had to step inside and speak to the receptionist. She confirmed that it was indeed Jack Tramiel who had just walked between us. The elder Tramiel is retired now, and it's said that he only comes into the office about once a month. His cameo appearance at the end of *ULTIMATE GAMER's* Atari Quest came as a fitting end to a very strange day; I saw it as a sign, but I'm not sure of what.



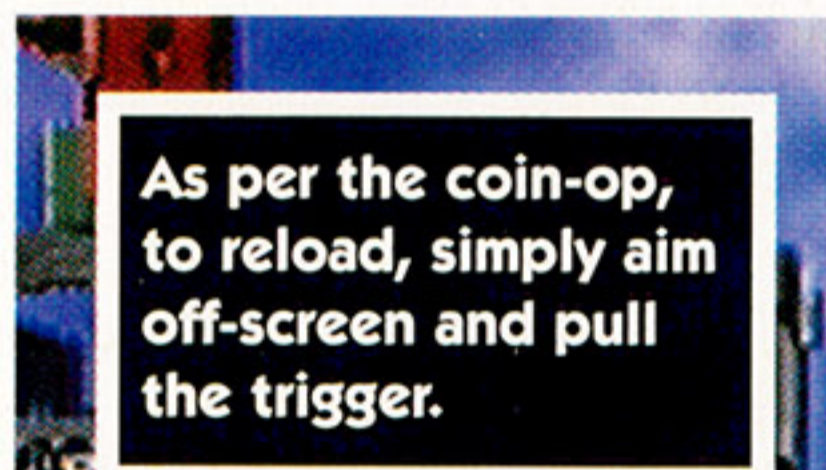


# Review

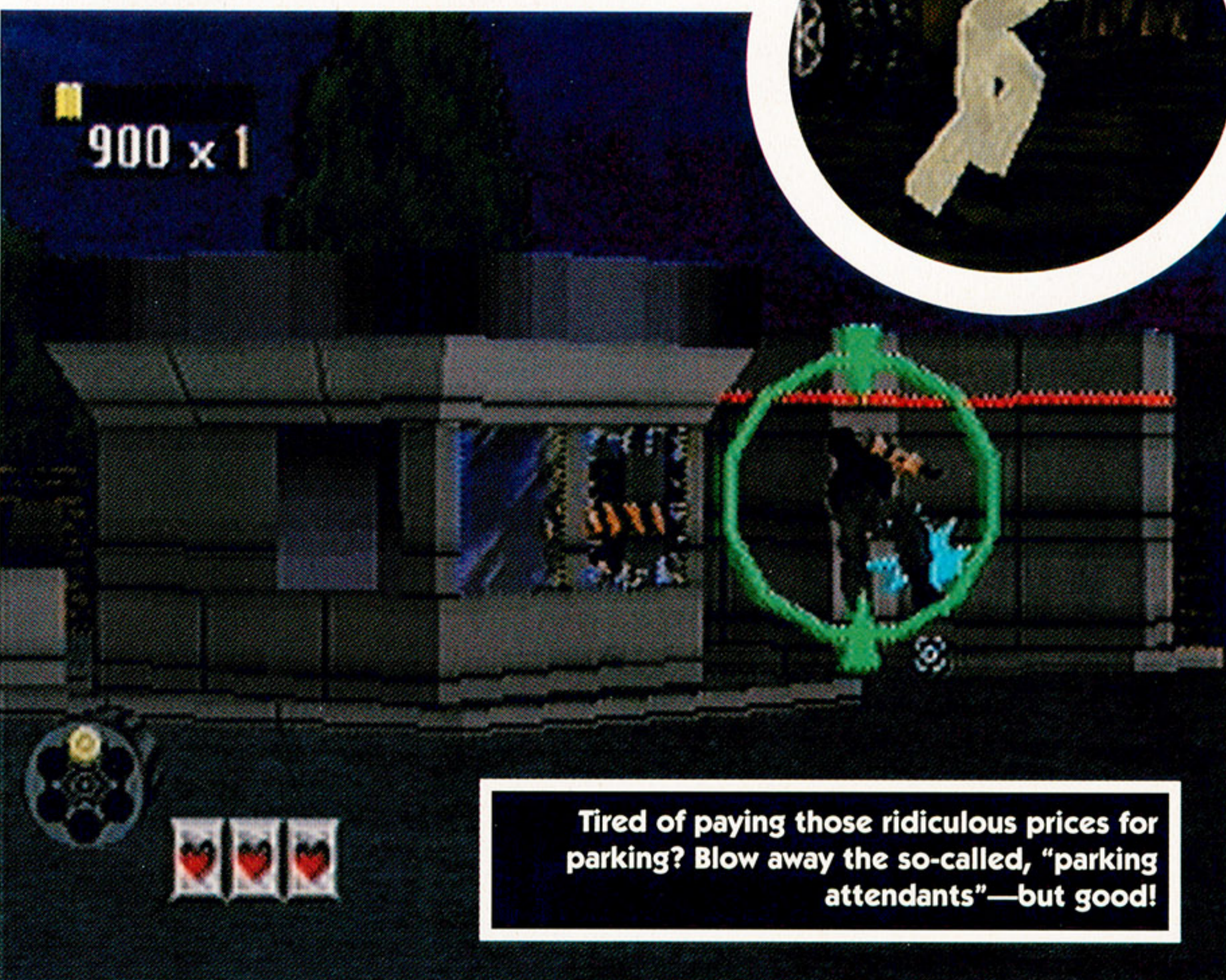
# VIRTUA COP



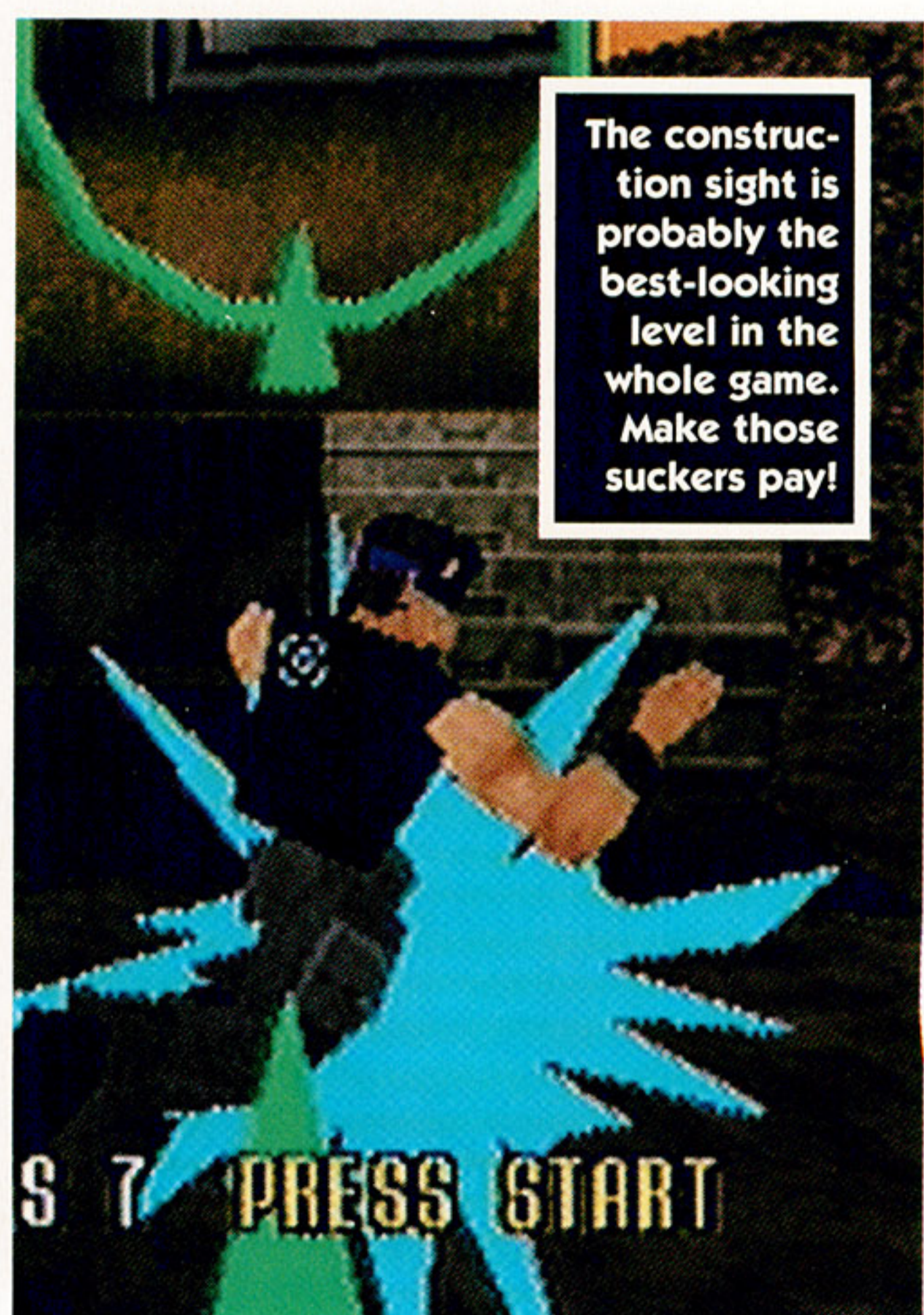
VIRTUA COP.  
Saturn.  
'Nuff said.



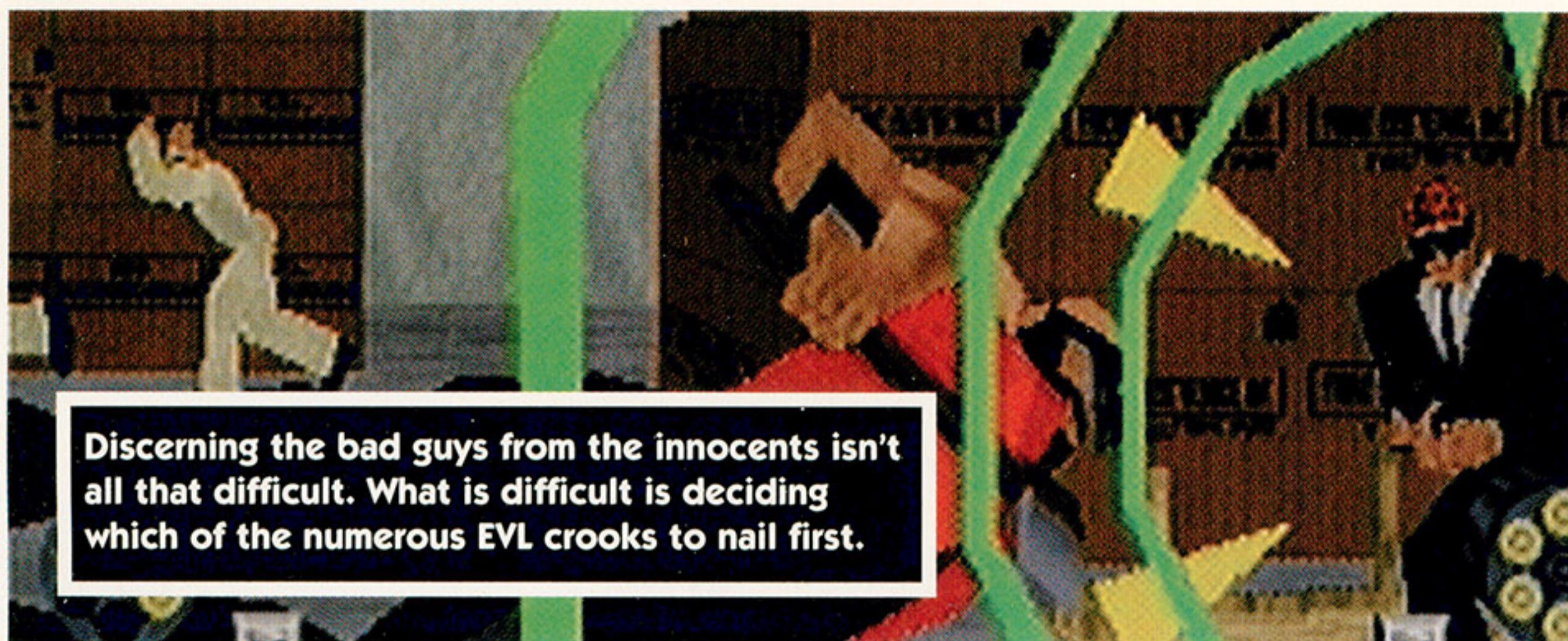
As per the coin-op,  
to reload, simply aim  
off-screen and pull  
the trigger.



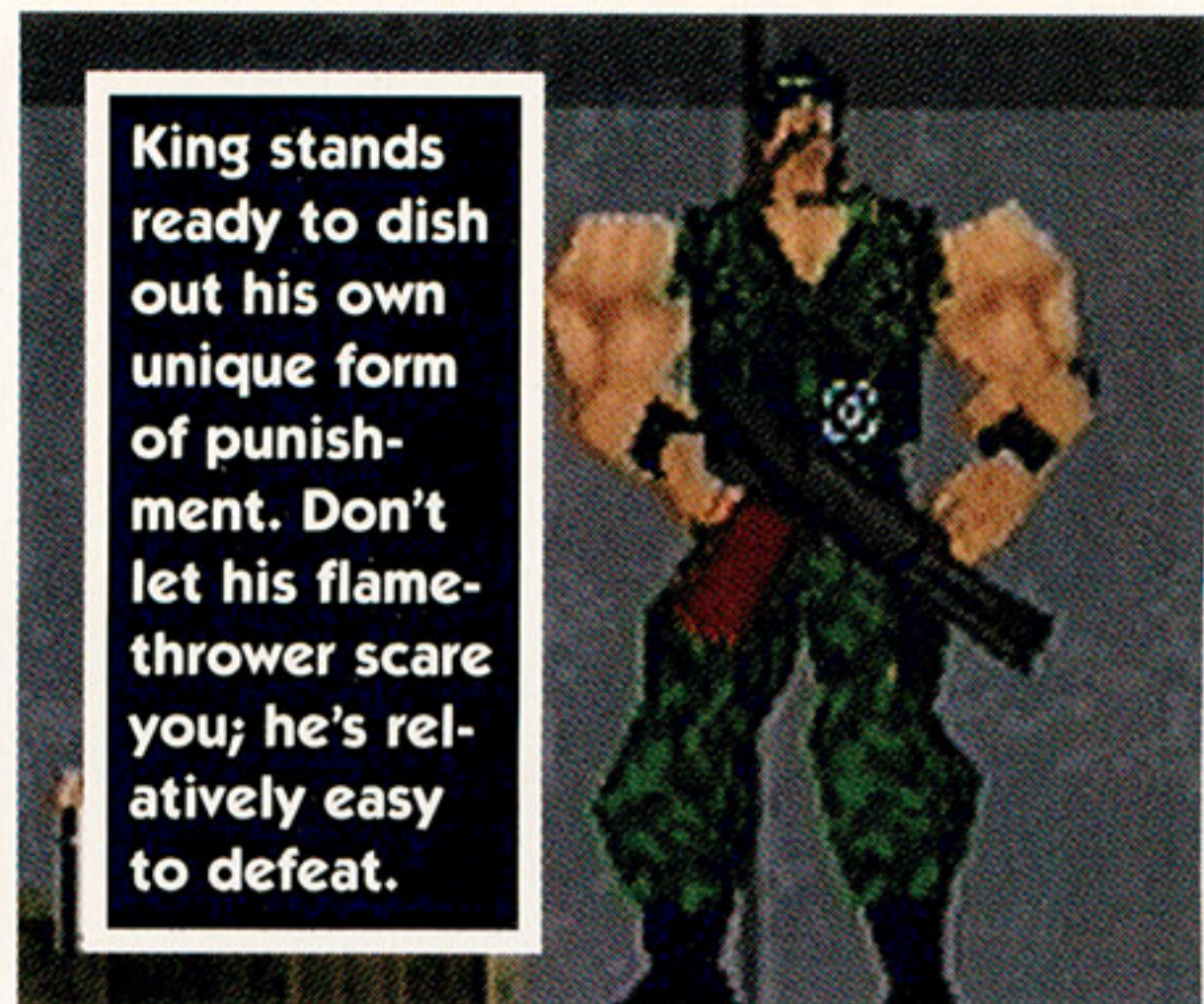
Tired of paying those ridiculous prices for parking? Blow away the so-called, "parking attendants"—but good!



The construction sight is probably the best-looking level in the whole game. Make those suckers pay!



Discerning the bad guys from the innocents isn't all that difficult. What is difficult is deciding which of the numerous EVL crooks to nail first.

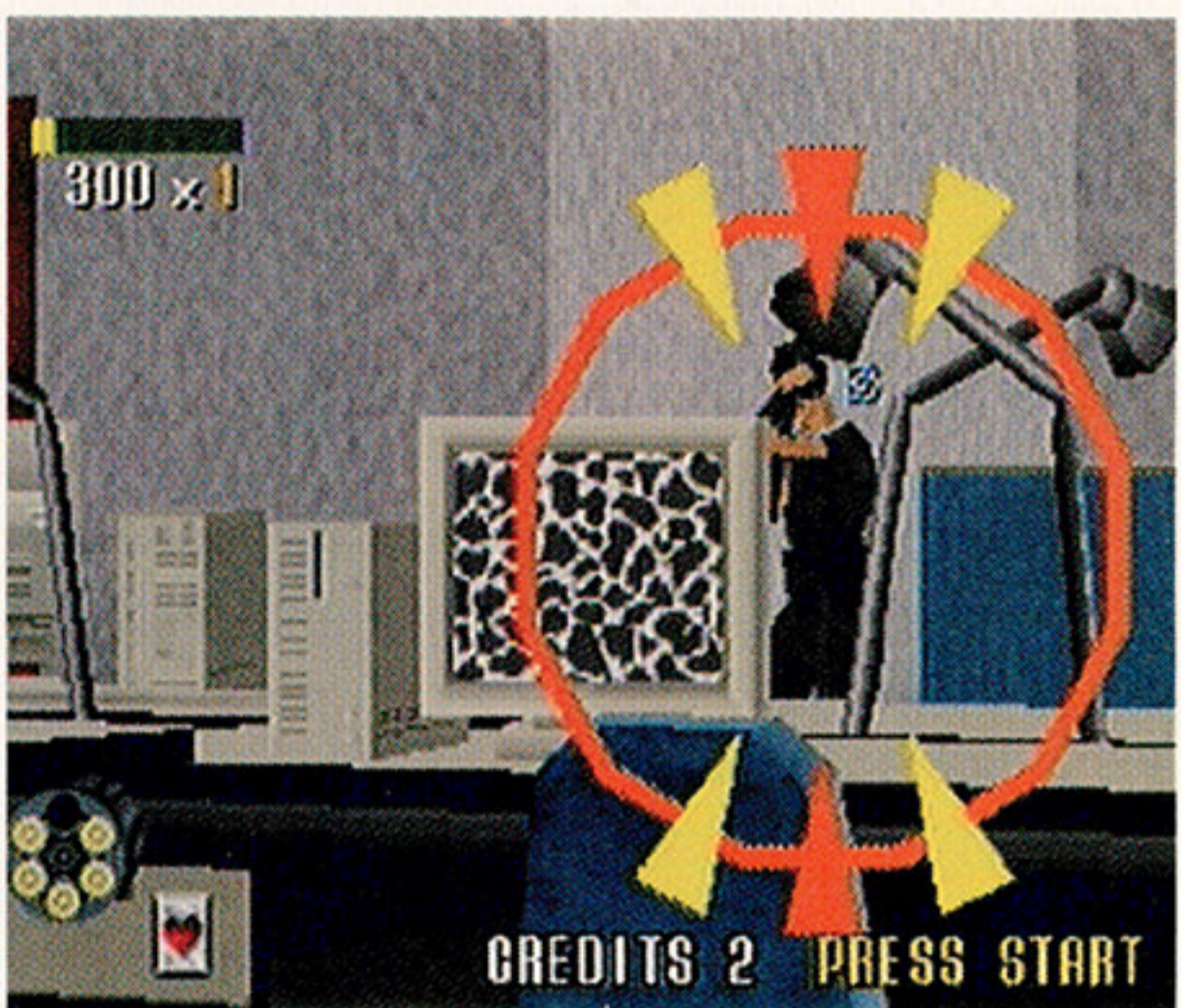


King stands ready to dish out his own unique form of punishment. Don't let his flame-thrower scare you; he's relatively easy to defeat.

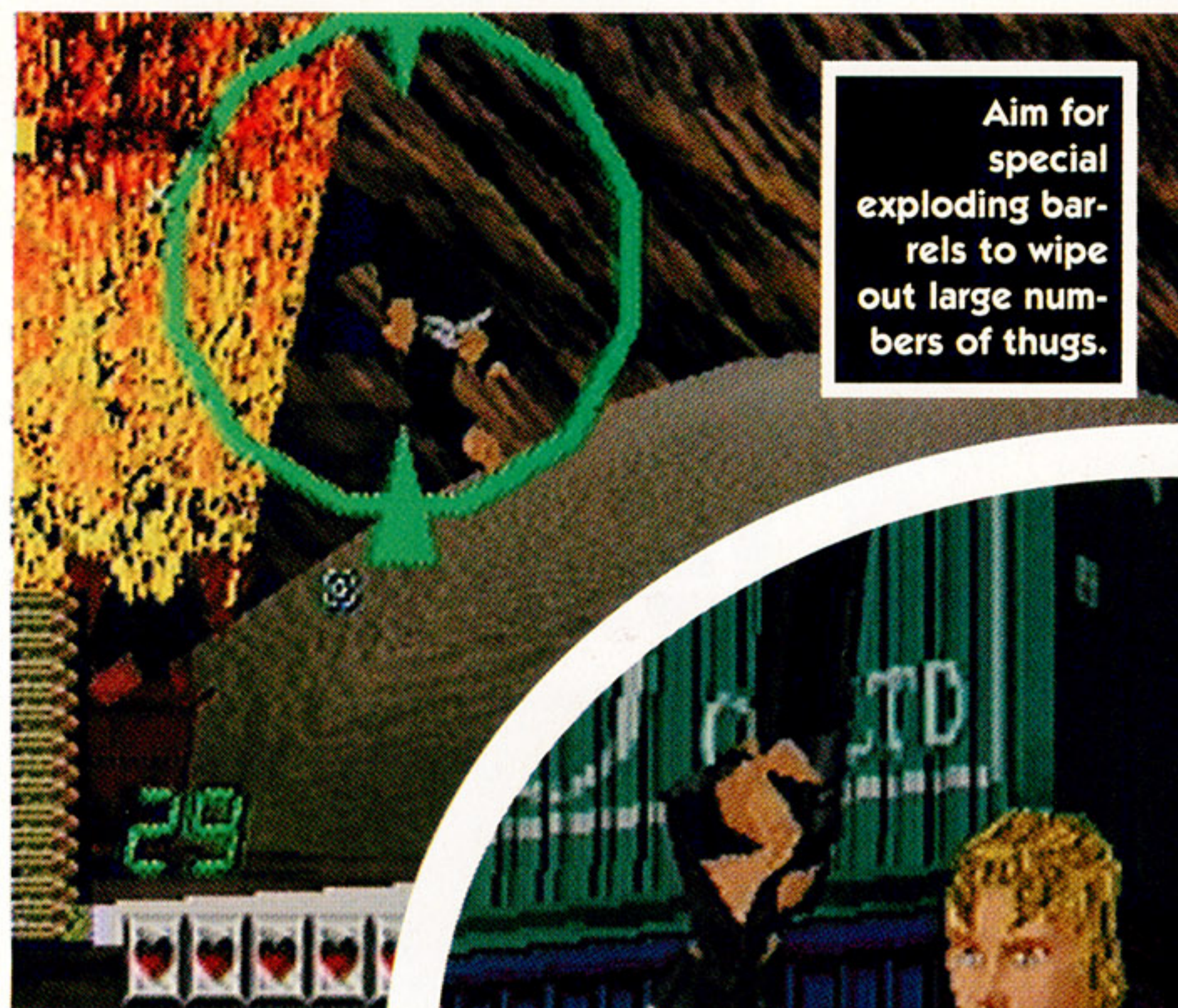


Sega of Japan's AM2 team is directly responsible for the Saturn's new lease on life: There is more amazement to be found in VIRTUA COP than any other Saturn title to this date.

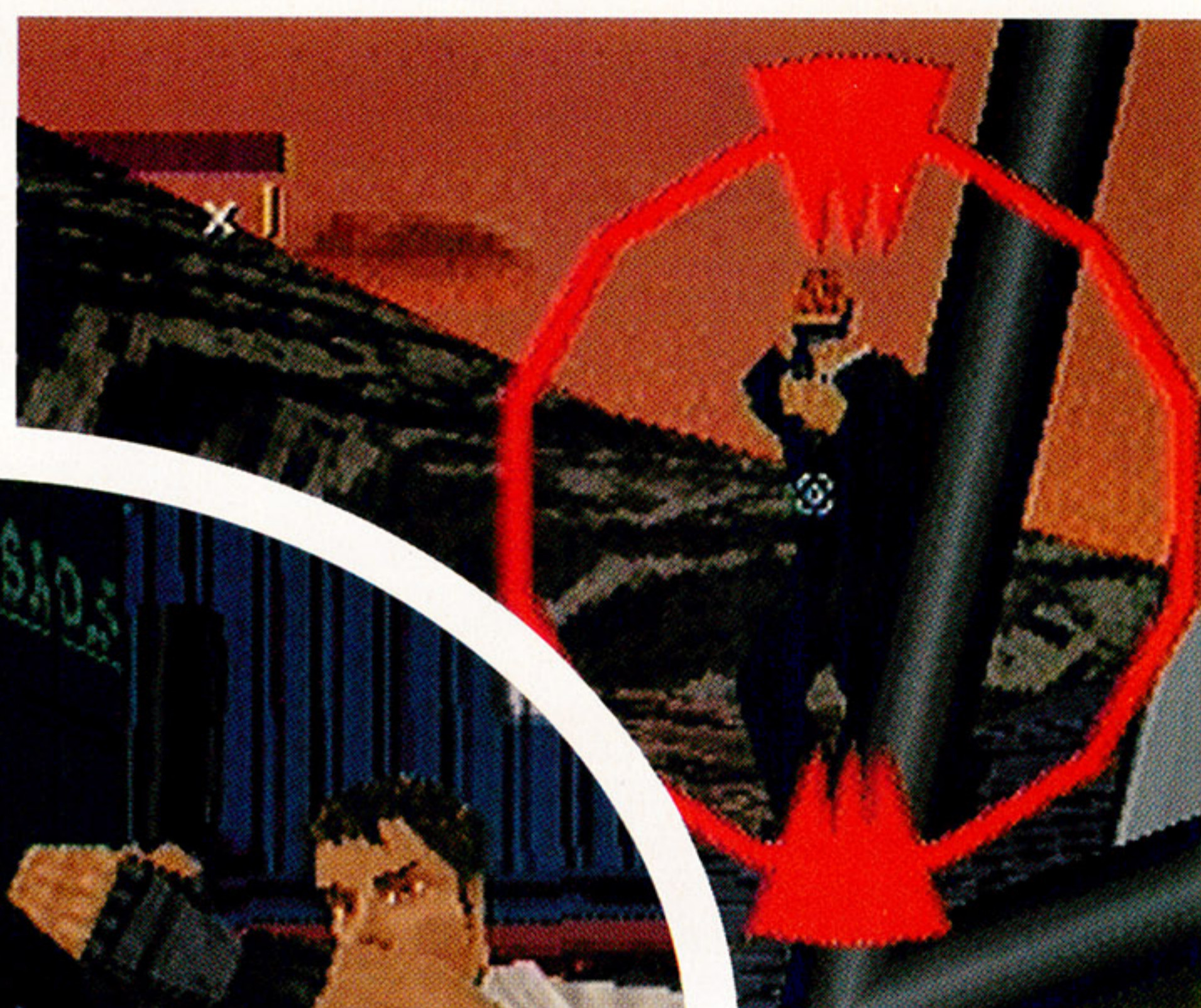
The bank level holds many surprises. Once you get off the escalator, grab the machine gun and spray these jerks.



Even the computer monitors in the bank can be obliterated!



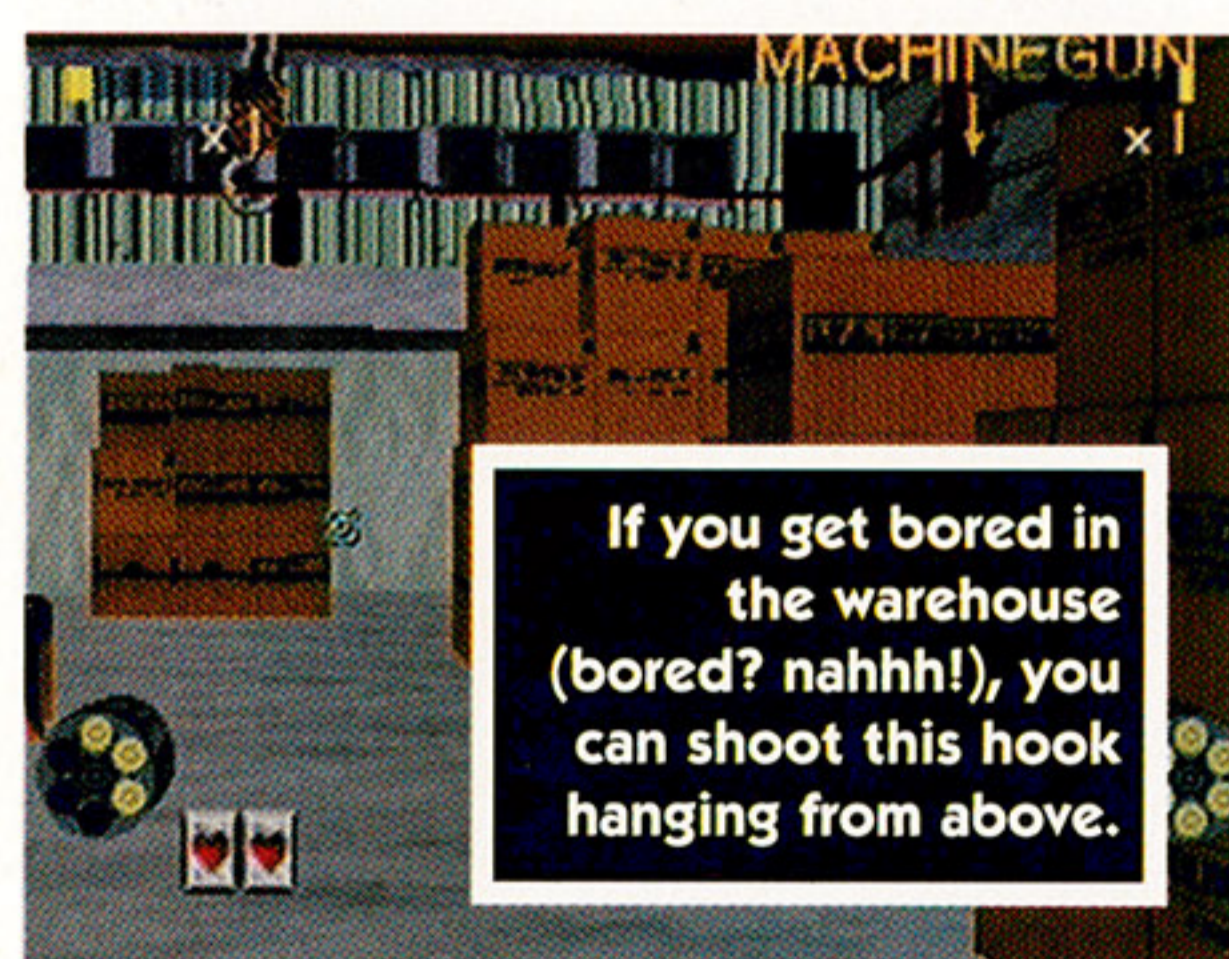
Aim for special exploding barrels to wipe out large numbers of thugs.



Awesome!



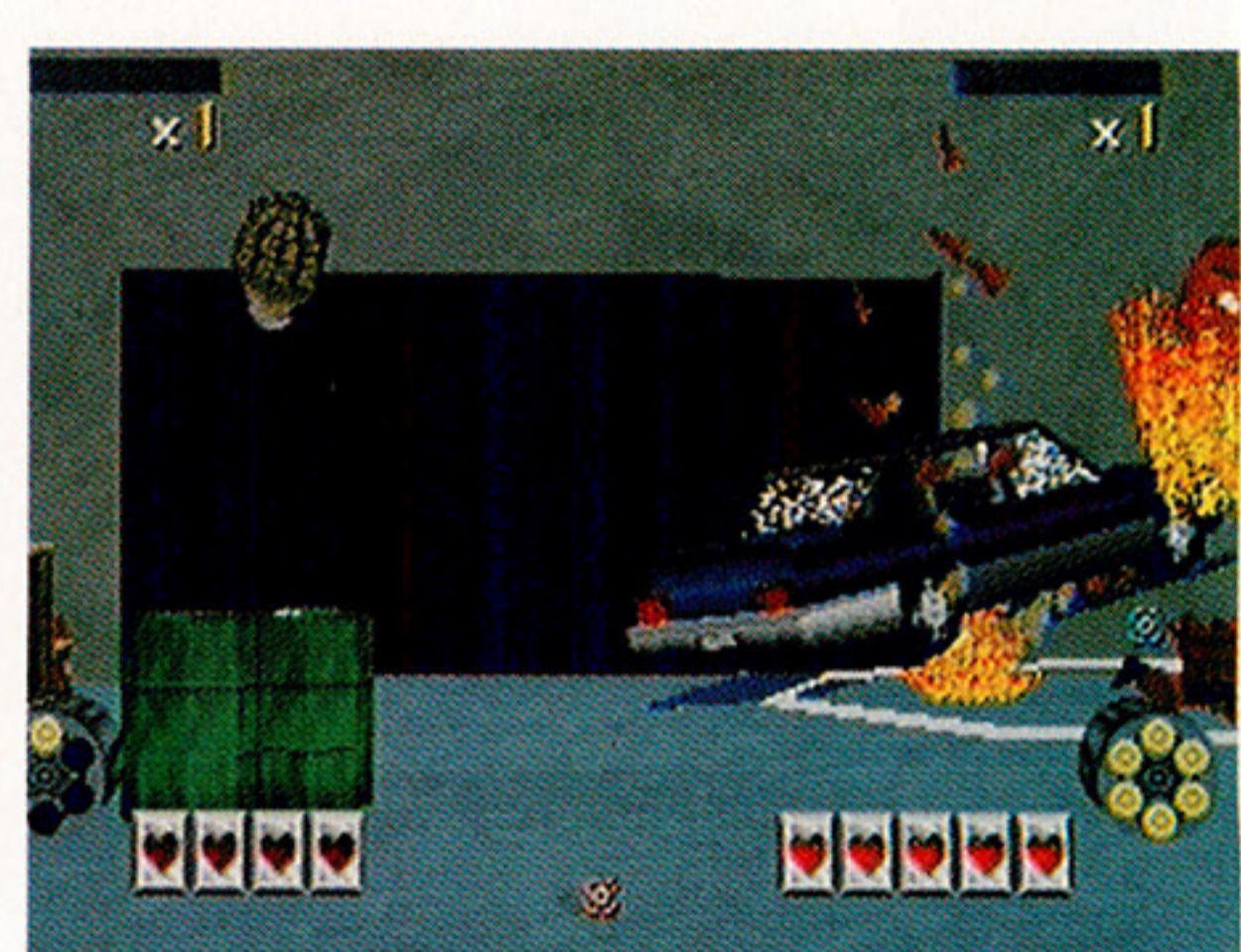
The hatchet guys can be the most annoying creeps in the game.



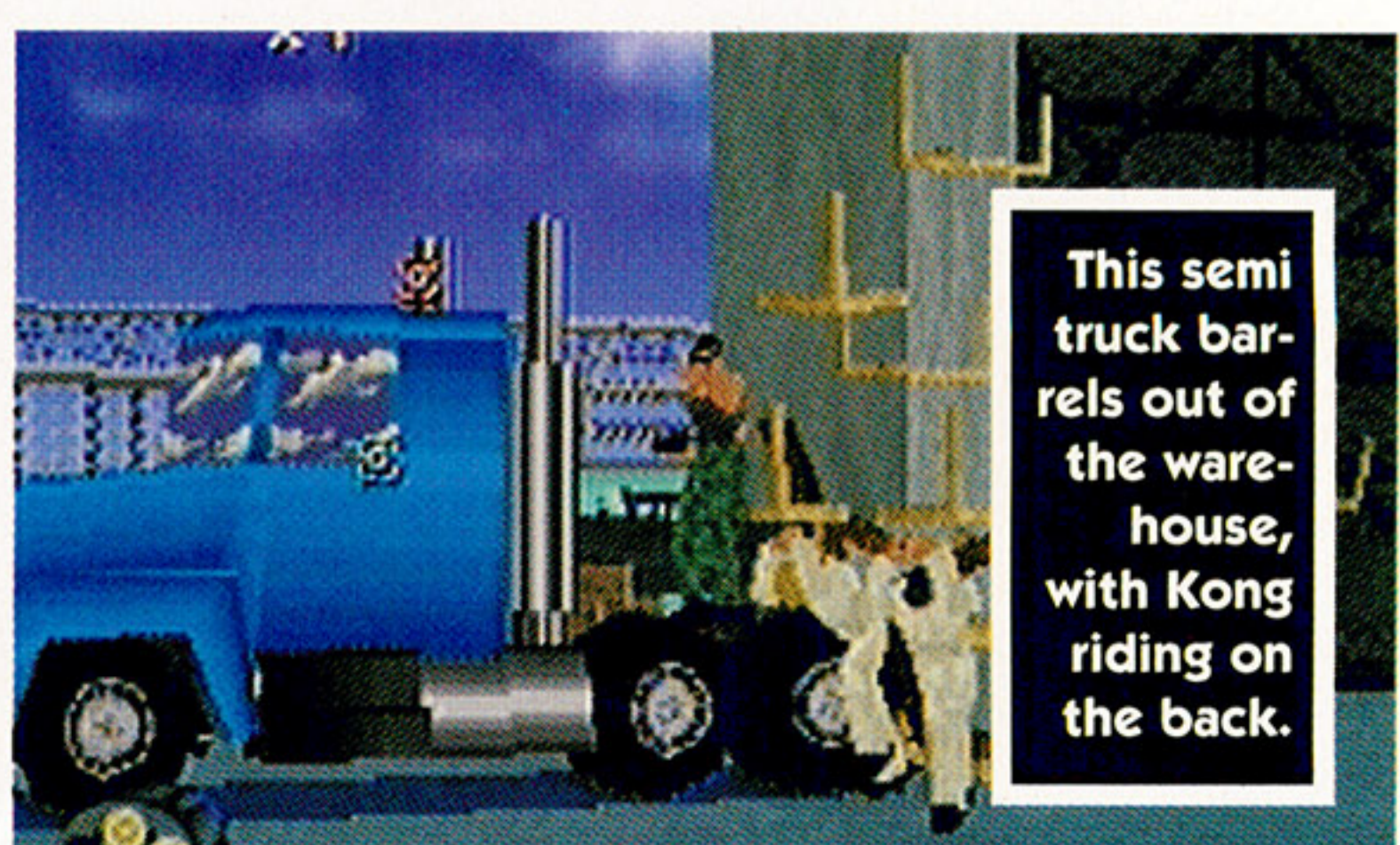
If you get bored in the warehouse (bored? nahhh!), you can shoot this hook hanging from above.



Hello. I am VIRTUA COP. I will not hesitate to kick your VIRTUA ass.



RELOAD



This semi truck barrels out of the warehouse, with Kong riding on the back.

Blast away as the goons from the EVL crime syndicate rain down from above.



I believe the gaming world now owes Sega a formal apology. Many, many people have been underestimating the Saturn's ability to go head-to-head with their main competitor (I think we all know who that is by now). Look, I'll admit it; I'm just as guilty as the next guy, so here goes: "I'm sorry." There. I said it. **Virtua Cop** is simply fan-freaking-tastic and it has literally given the Saturn a new lease on life.

The current AM2 staff should be given some kind of programming achievement award, because this game will leave the skeptics speechless. We're not talking about converting your typical coin-op here; this is Virtua Cop—an enormously complex 3D polygon wonder. Everything about VC—and I mean **everything**—has made it onto the Saturn with regards to graphics and gameplay. And anyone who

## "A massive, massive turning point for Sega and the Saturn."

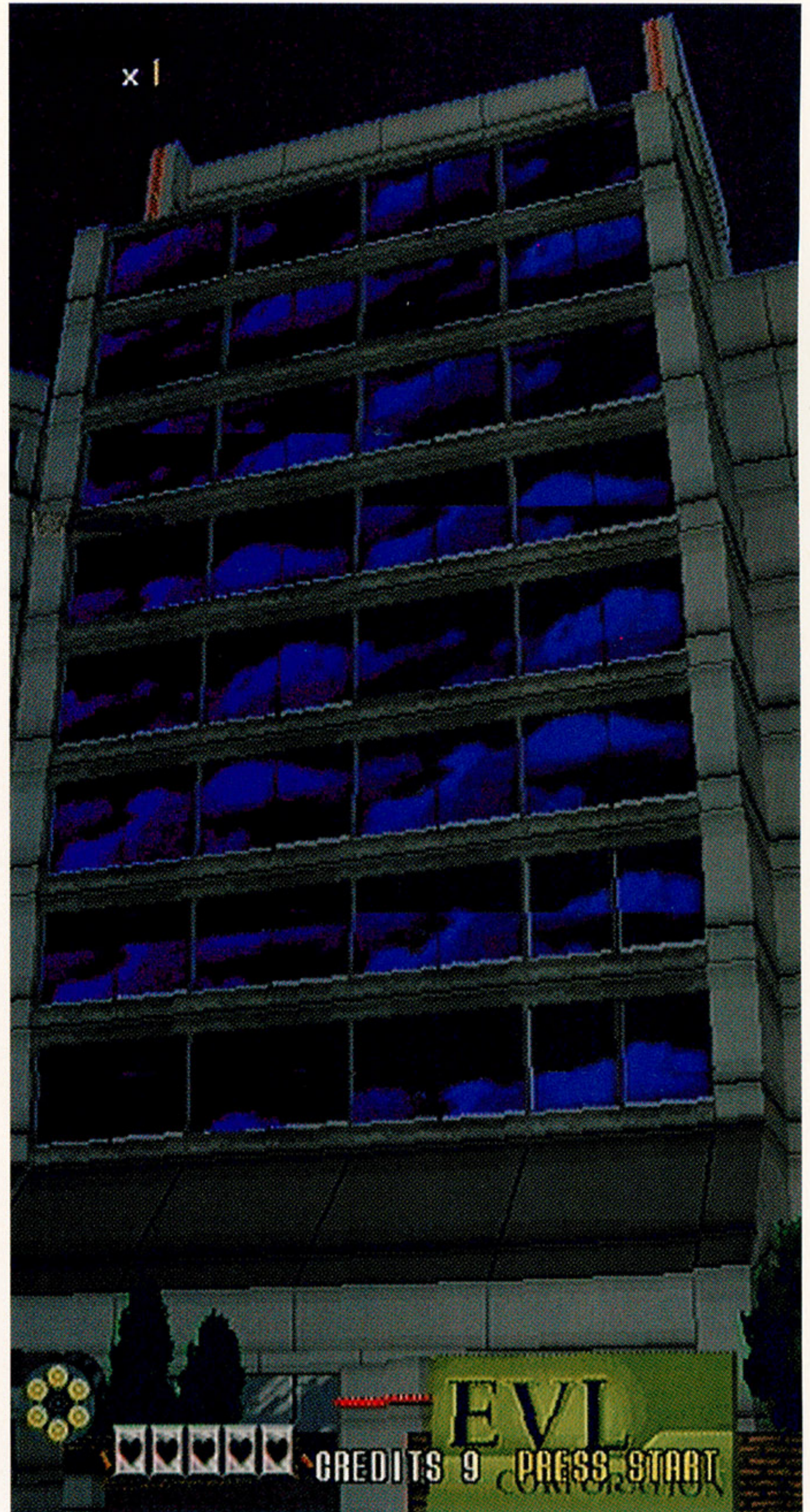
thinks otherwise probably doesn't know the coin-op. Those people can go away now, because from the moment the final on this came into the office, all I wanna do is blast those jerks from the EVL Corporation to bits.

First off, the gun. Thank you. Sega's Stunner light gun comes packed with VC, and it is incredible; the size, the weight, the feel—it's about as close to perfection as you could ask. Second, all three stages of the game have been masterfully translated, bosses and all. In addition, the explosions, the shattering glass, the chaos, you name it—it's here.

For those in need of a brief recap of the story, here it is: The EVL Corporation may look like a legitimate business on the outside, but that's just not the case. The company is merely a front for gun running, drug dealing organized crime, and as an officer of the law, you know what needs to be done. Your job is to wipe the sarcastic smiles off their filthy little faces by putting a bullet right between their eyes. Playing solo is great fun in it's own, but two-player action is where it's really at. Enlist a friend as a fellow officer in the VCPD and go to work.

With the exception of the music and voices (they're not 100% up to arcade standards), the game is so close to a 10, it's not funny. What is funny, are the looks on people's faces as they walk by my office and see me blasting away at my monitor. Maybe I do take this game a bit too seriously. Maybe I do. Maybe I just don't care.

**Jim Loftus**



One/Two-Player Shooting  
Stunner Light Gun/Cursor Control  
Training Mode  
Twelve Levels

Sega of America  
Machine: Sega Saturn  
Price: \$79.95 w/Gun  
Available: Now

GRAPHICS 10  
SOUND 8  
PLAYABILITY 10

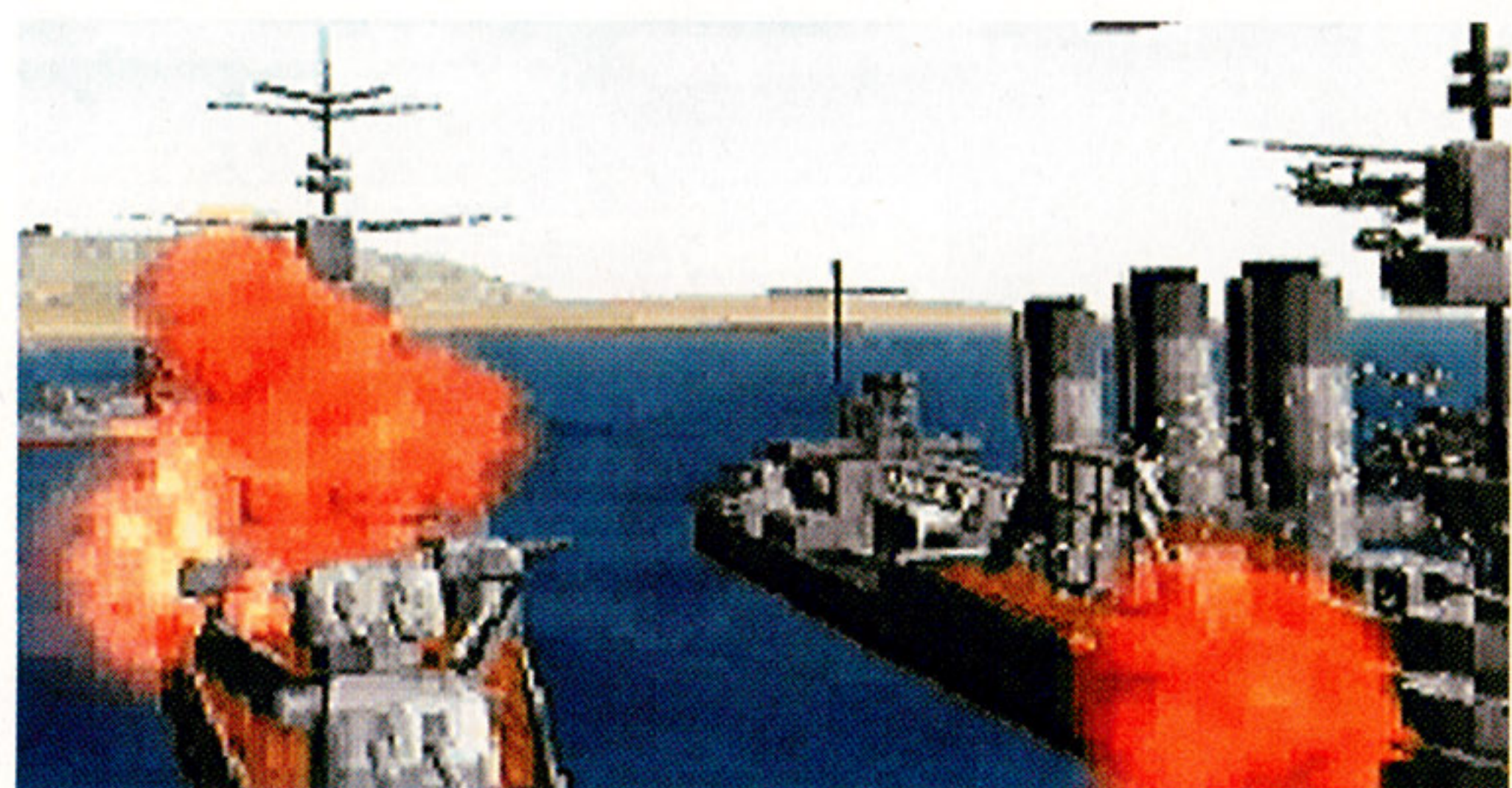
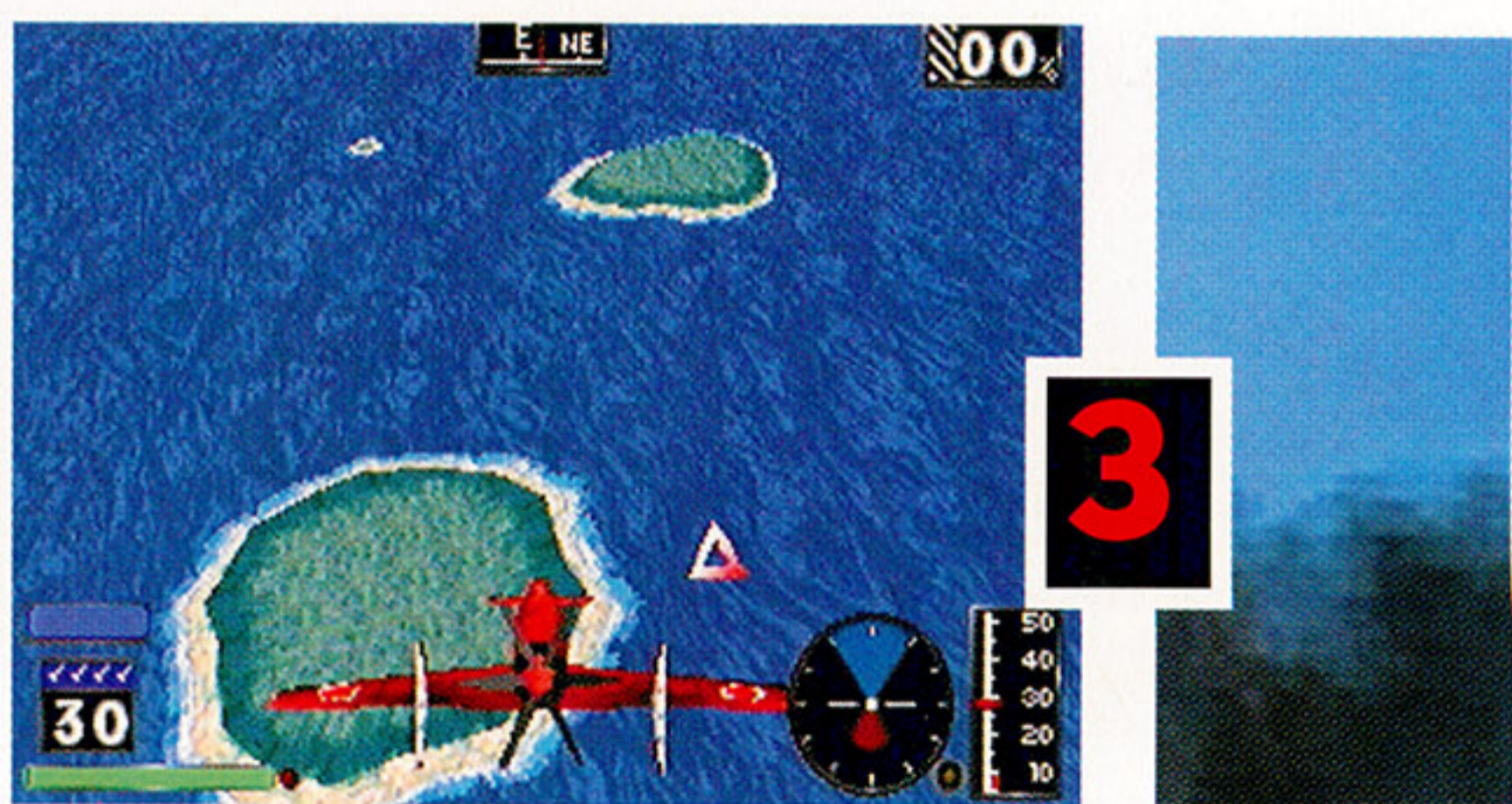
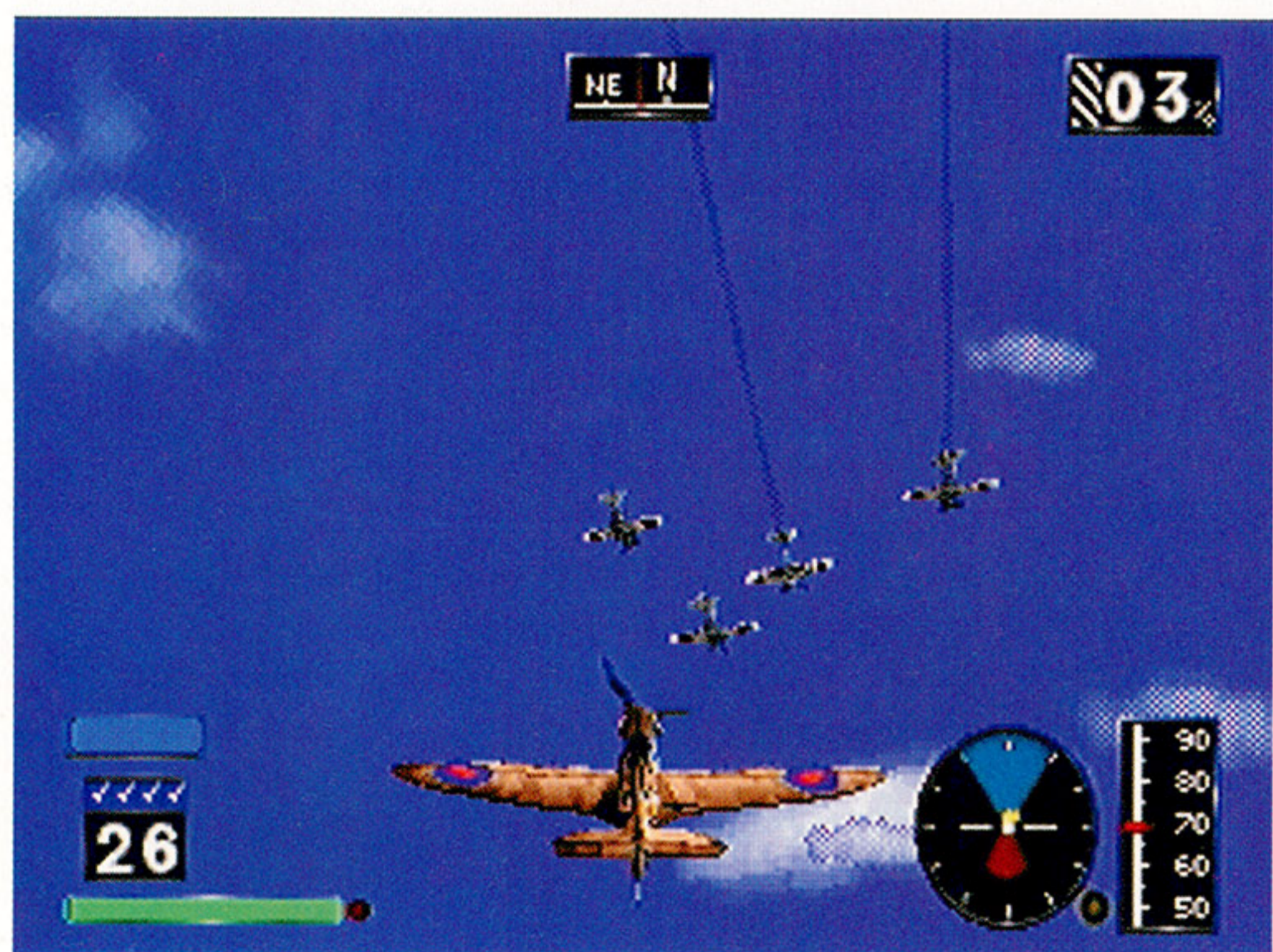
ULTIMATE GAMER FINAL RATING 9



# WING ARMS



1 You'll need plenty of skill to match their superior numbers  
 2 Bombs away!!!  
 3 Get a rear-view of the action if someone's on your tail  
 4 Check your radar in the lower right—you're gonna need it





**T**ired of simulators? Do games like *Agile Warrior* and *Air Combat* piss you off? If you answered yes to these questions, then you are like me. Realism like this has no business finding its way onto your TV; that's what flight school's for. What you want to do is immerse yourselves in what romantics would like to think actual WWII combat is, not the actual thing.

For this reason, I recommend Sega's *Wing Arms*. Choose from any one of a dozen authentic, WWII fighter planes: there's the Japanese Zero, British Spitfire and the American Mustang, to name a few. Once in the cockpit,

## "For those who are tired of simulators."

don't worry about the little things, like altitude and speed, just bob and weave, trying to avoid being blown out of the sky by a hostile ship. Without the burden of realism, you are allowed to fully enjoy the dogfighting experience. Planes will buzz your canopy and try to position themselves behind you for a clean shot. Go into a nose dive to avoid a flurry of machine gun fire; it's all there!

Missions in *Wing Arms* are fairly standard. Like in a *Warhawk* or a *Desert Strike*, your commander will give you an objective and you will need to reach it in order to continue on to the next stage. For example, on stage one, the primary goal is to eliminate all enemy fighters; for stage two, destroy the enemy base; and so on, and so on.... Despite the game's straightforwardness, *Wing Arms* is actually quite difficult. The first level alone will aggravate the hell out of you when you get down to just a couple of planes left for you to destroy. But, the relentlessness of the game and the ease of the controls will keep you hooked. *Wing Arms* is a refreshing shooter that, like *Afterburner* and other games of its ilk, will have you dreaming of the Zero Hour for many night to come.

**Geoff Higgins**

1-2 Player Shooter  
Tons of different planes  
Multiple battle scenarios  
Disregard for simulation

Sega of America  
Machine: Sega Saturn  
Price: \$69.95  
Available: Now

GRAPHICS	7
SOUND	8
PLAYABILITY	8

ULTIMATE GAMER FINAL RATING

# 8



# PRETTY FIGHTER X



A new way to play Twister!



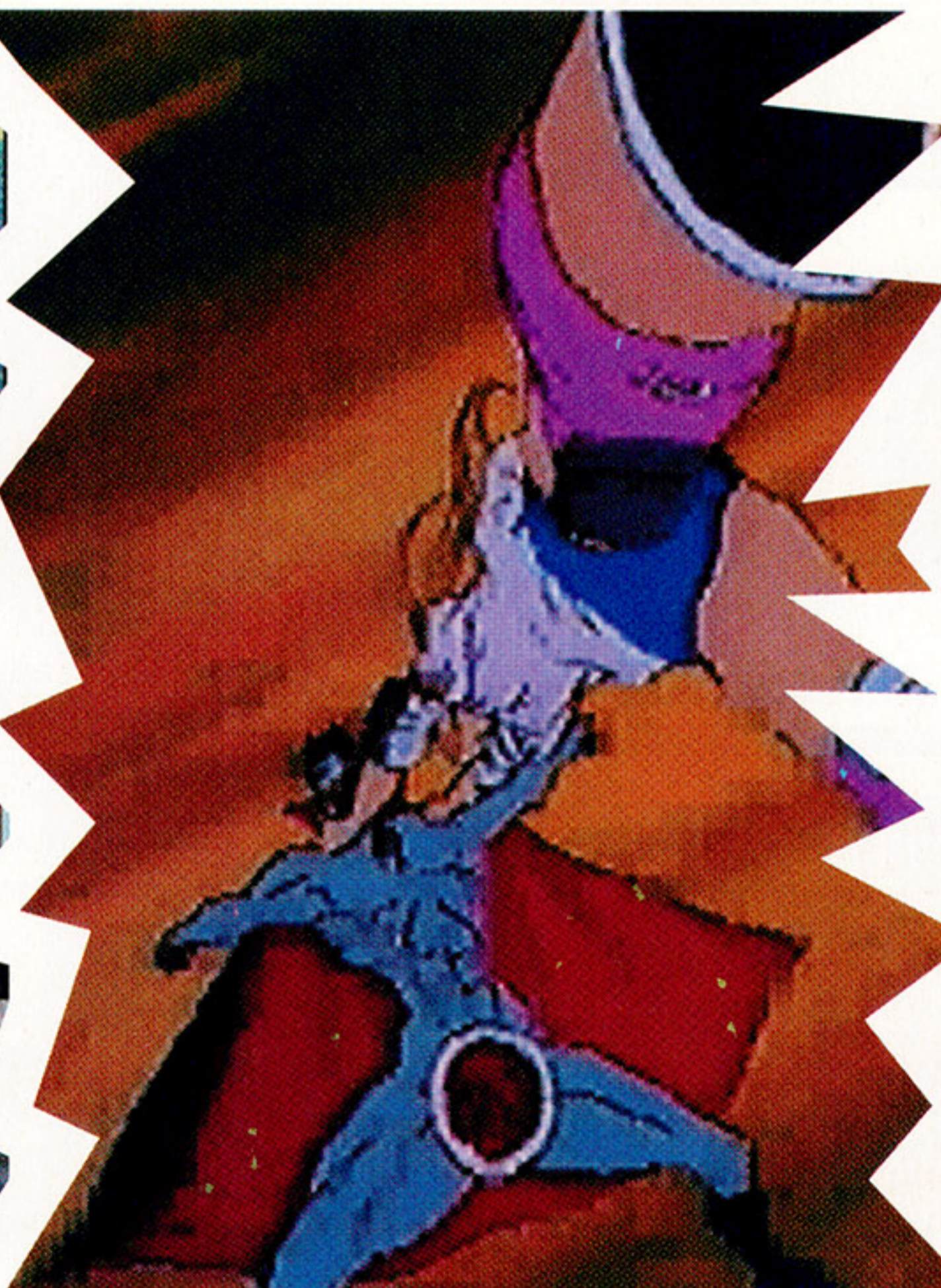
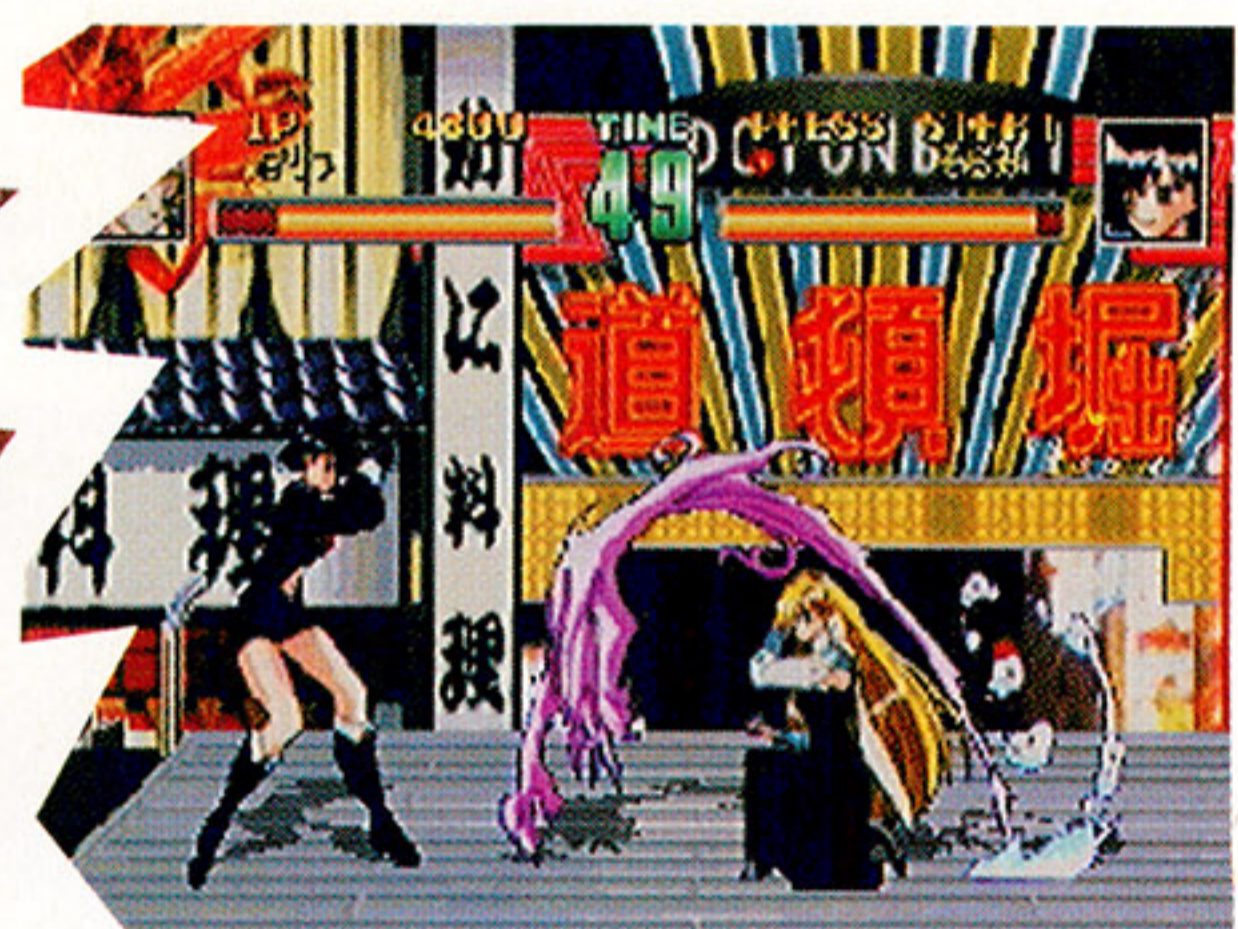
Bad, bad girl!



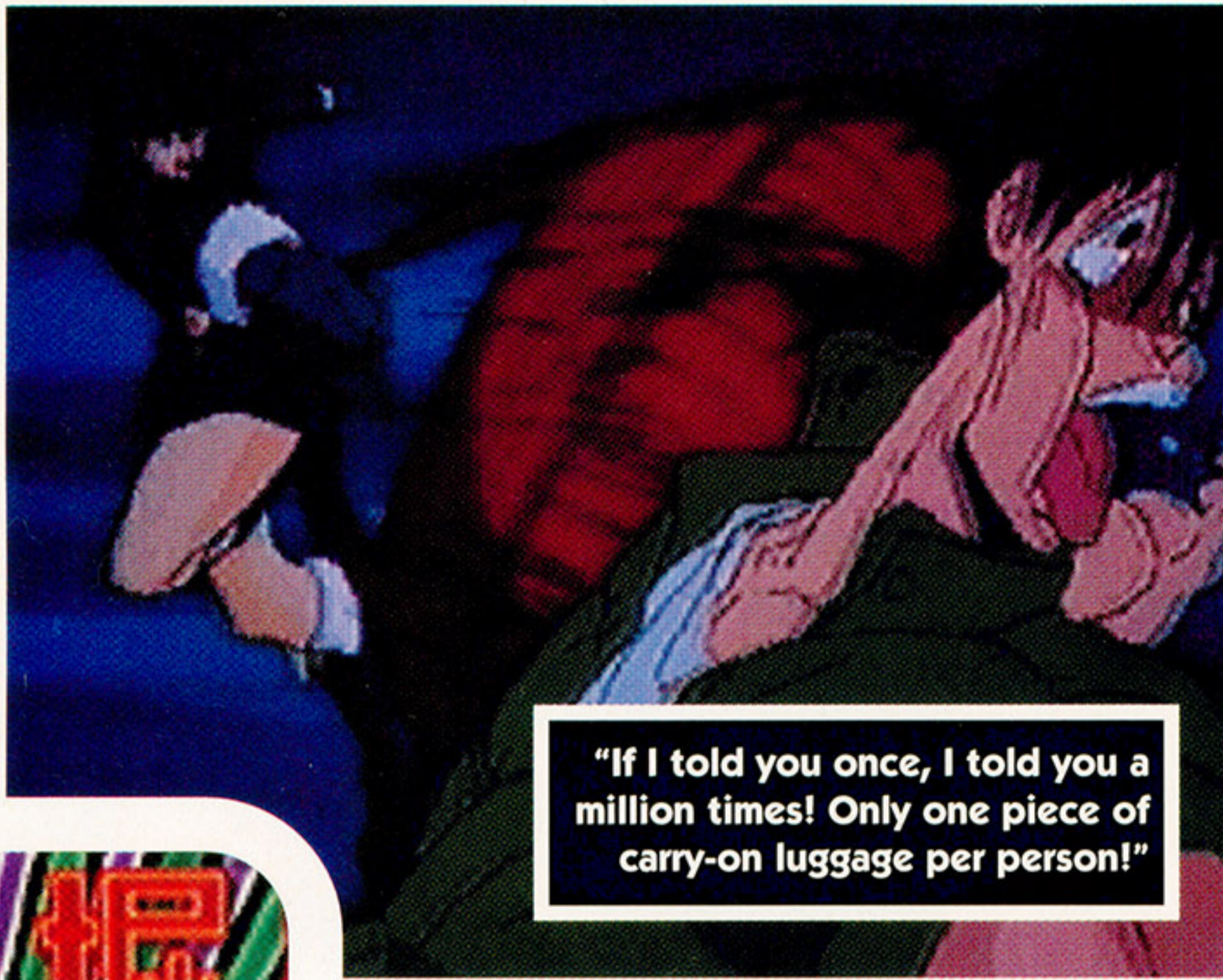
Okay, so we like this game, big deal! Call us desperate nerds or pathetic perverts...just don't call us late for dinner!



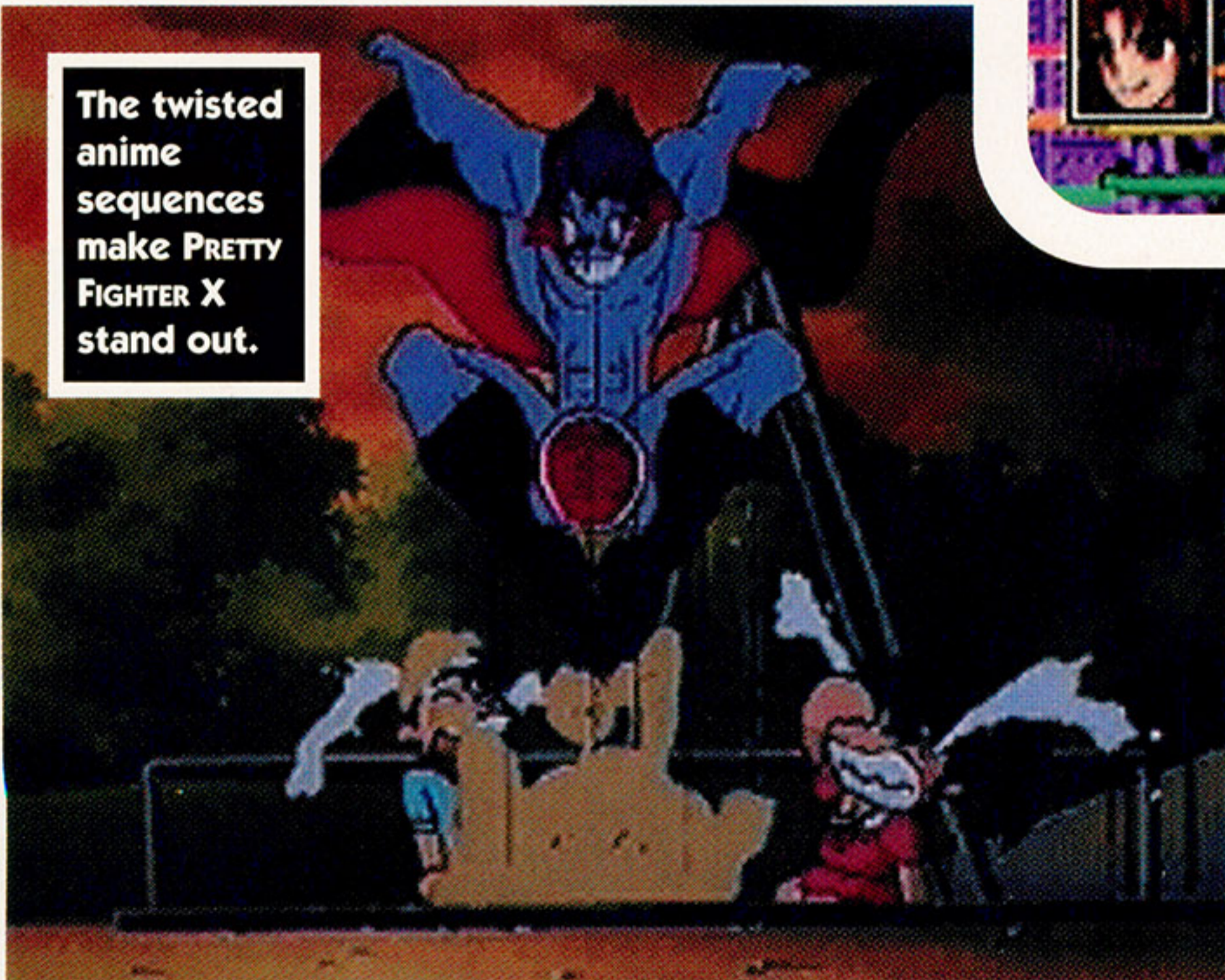
Finally, an equal opportunity fighter!







"If I told you once, I told you a million times! Only one piece of carry-on luggage per person!"



The twisted anime sequences make PRETTY FIGHTER X stand out.

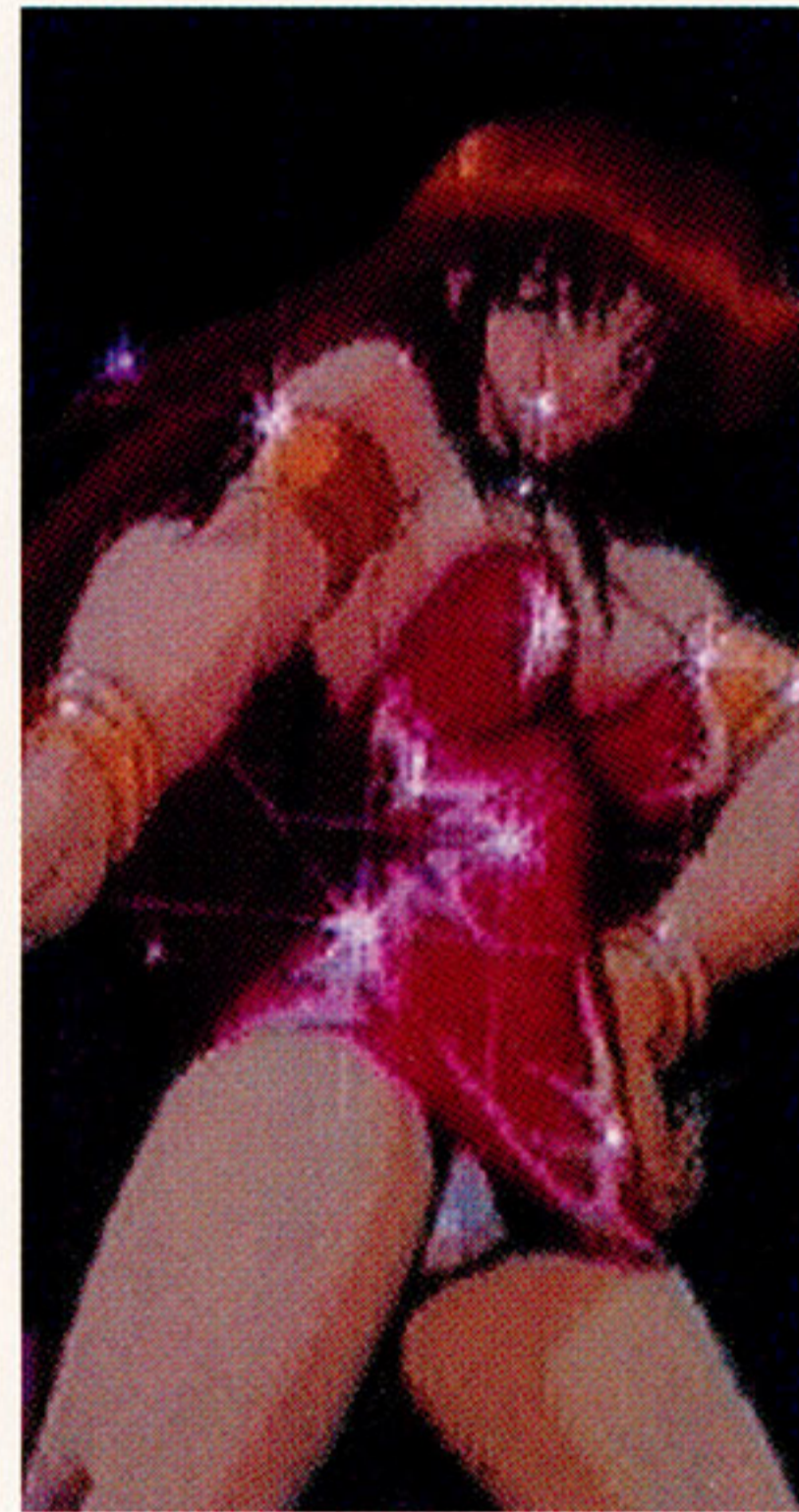
**C**hicks fighting is cool, eh huh, eh huh. This game offers gorgeous working-class girls battling it out for possession of a magical crucifix with beautifully drawn anime characters and awesome special moves like a spanking grab, a pulverizing butt attack, a suitcase throw, a hypodermic needle squirt move and the ever popular heart shaped fireball.

This ain't your sister's game though. **Pretty Fighter X** offers plenty of challenge even for the seasoned **Street Fighter** addict. The photographic backgrounds are well animated and the sound is crisp. The

**"Great moves, but the bizarre, fat-head anime will have you rolling."**

cries of the girls range from goofy to orgasmic. Plus, as an added bonus, with every three rounds that you win, you're rewarded with a centerfold of your character. The more rounds you win, the more clothes she loses. Why are you sitting there gawking when you could be going to your import gaming outlet to pick up this worthy, babe-licious game? Oh, I know why.

**Brian Patrick O'Toole**



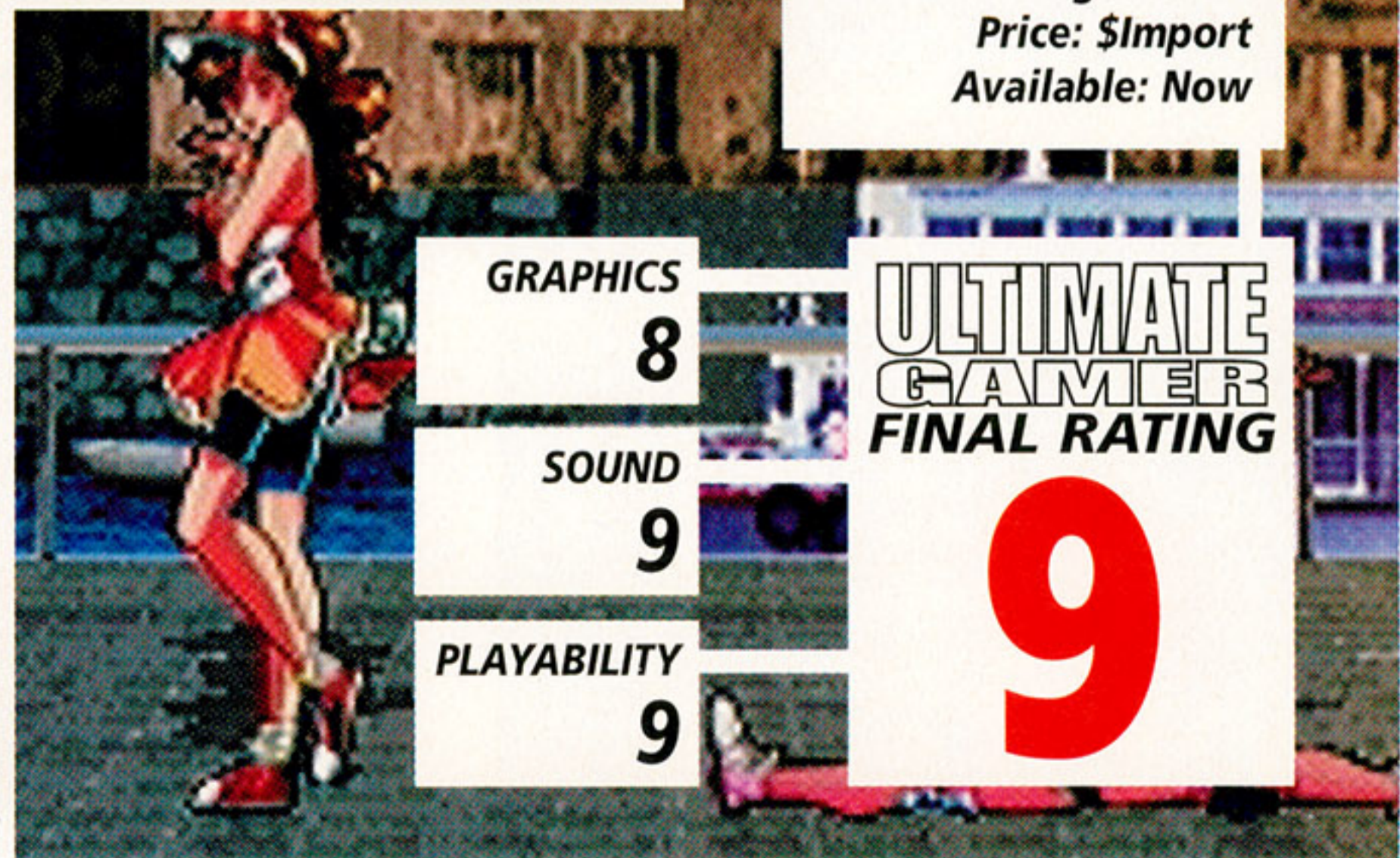
The breast of the best fight here!



One / Two Player Fighting  
Bizarre special moves  
Animated storylines for each girl

Boi-oi-oi-oi-oi-oi-oi-oi-oi-oi!

Imagineer  
Machine: SegaSaturn  
Price: \$1mport  
Available: Now



GRAPHICS  
**8**

SOUND  
**9**

PLAYABILITY  
**9**

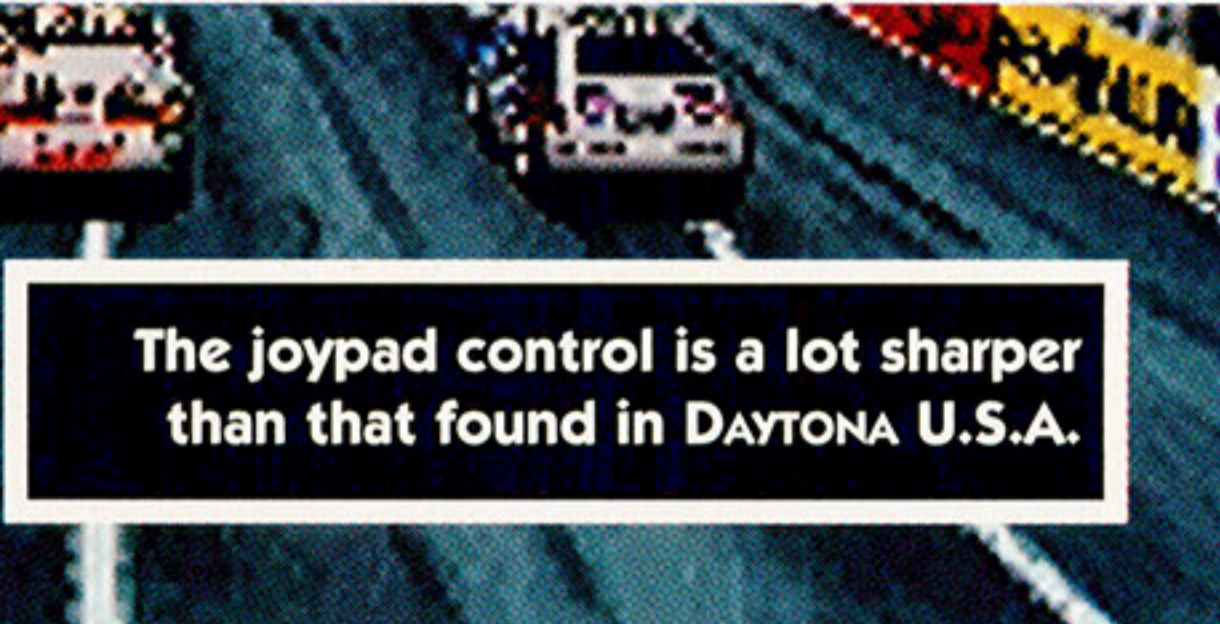
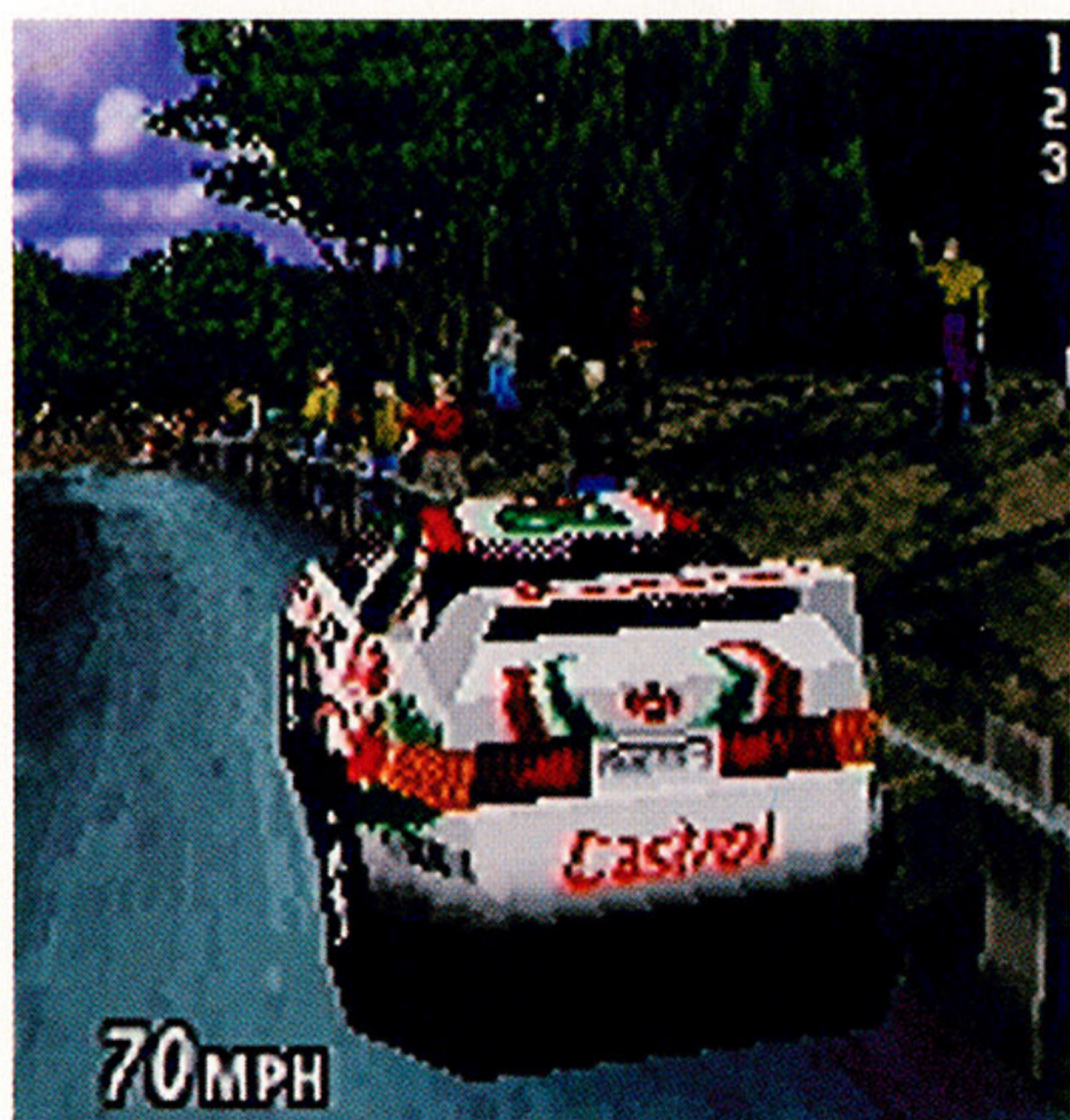
ULTIMATE  
GAMER  
FINAL RATING

**9**



Review

# SEGA RALLY





**S**ega should really have made sure that **Daytona USA** looked this good before they released it. **Sega Rally** is easily the smoothest, fastest game available on the Saturn today. As a matter of fact, this little racer is so cool it even gives **Ridge Racer** a run for its money.

It's not perfect though. There are a couple of problems with **Sega Rally** that sharp-eyed gamers may spot from the screen shots. Although the frame rate is high (approximately 30 per second) the polygon build and texture map detail have been sacrificed to allow this kind of speed. So while the game looks as smooth as Sega's original coin-op, it's still nowhere near as detailed or sharp-looking as the arcade version.

## "Say hello to the Daytona-destroyer."

The gameplay, as ever, is the important thing, and **Sega Rally** proves to be an enjoyable and playable feast of frantic racing fun. Joypad control is responsive and smooth, while the Sega Steering Wheel is just as annoying to use as it was in **Daytona**.

The three different tracks give the game a good deal of variety and Sega has sneakily included a bunch of cheats, including a rumored reverse mode. This should expand your options even more. Sadly there are only two cars to choose from, a Toyota Celica and a Lancia Delta Integrale. Both cars are pretty nifty, but they're also pretty much identical in response, especially on the muddy, slippery tracks.

This game does have lots of options, including time trials, a split-screen two player mode and a car tuning clinic and is so much better (technically at least) than **Daytona**, you'll be kind embarrassed you bought it. This is the first of Sega's new wave games. AM2 is the driving force behind Saturn technology now.

**Frank O'Connor**

**TOTAL TIME**  
0'00'00  
**LAP TIME**  
0'00'00  
**POSITION**  
1

Onetwo Player Racing  
Memory support  
3 tracks  
Multiple viewpoints

Sega Of America  
Machine: Sega Saturn  
Price: \$59.95  
Available: December

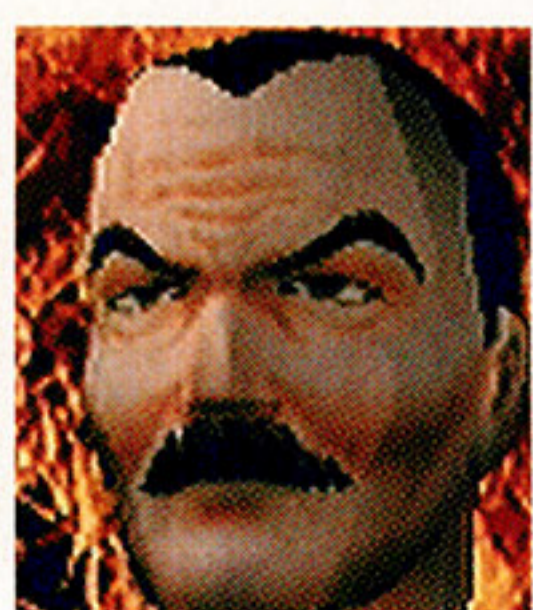
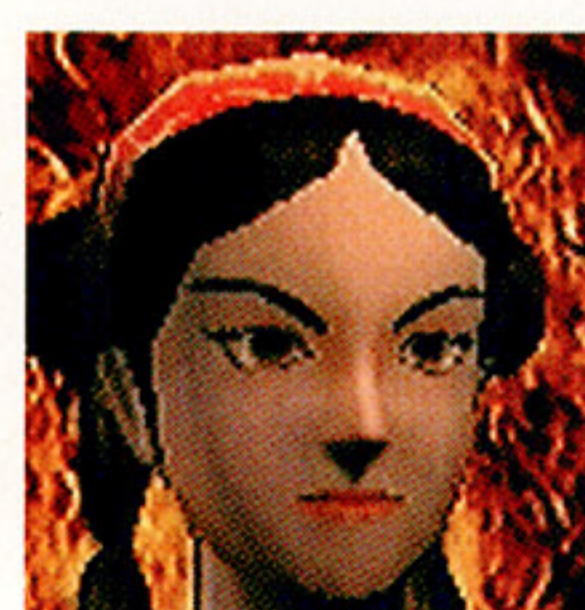
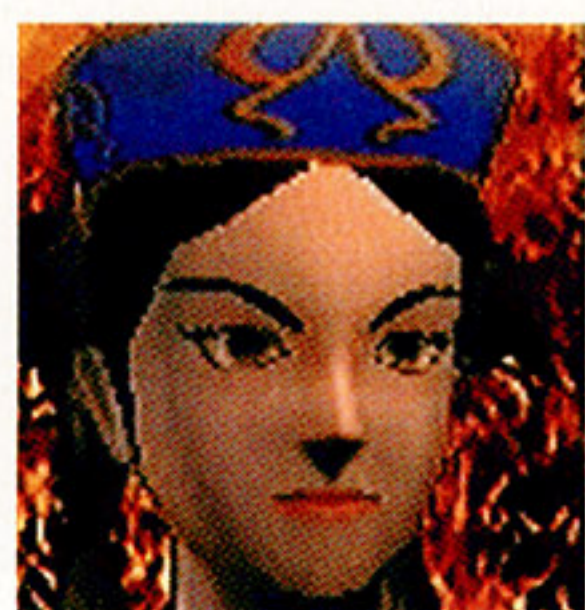
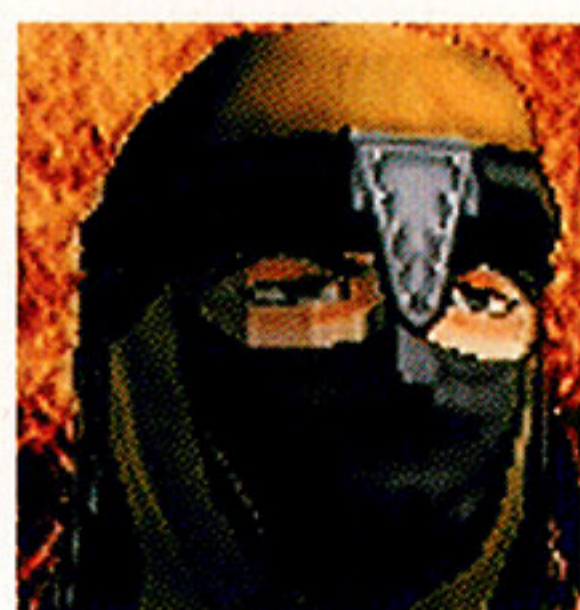
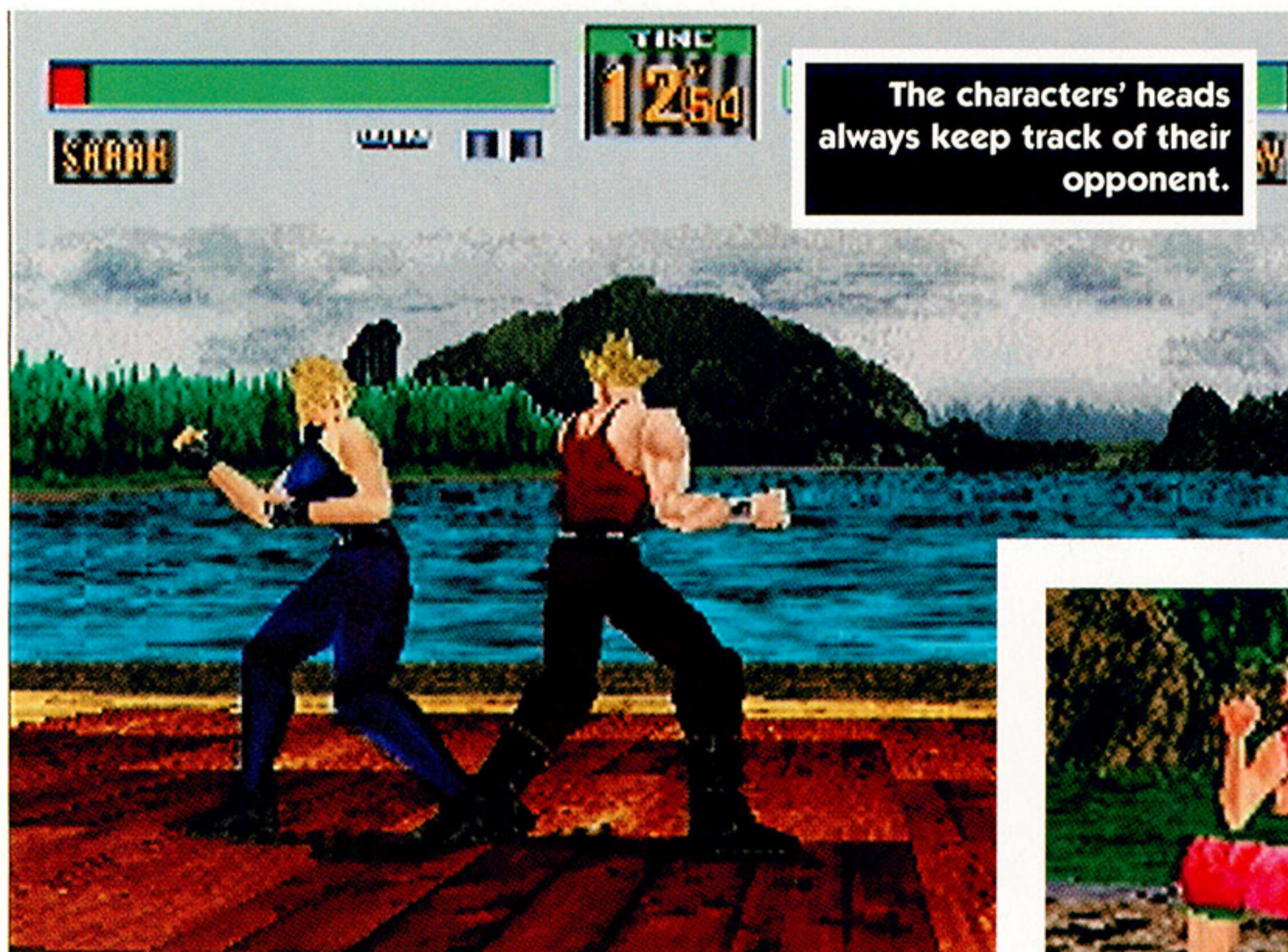
GRAPHICS	9
SOUND	7
PLAYABILITY	9

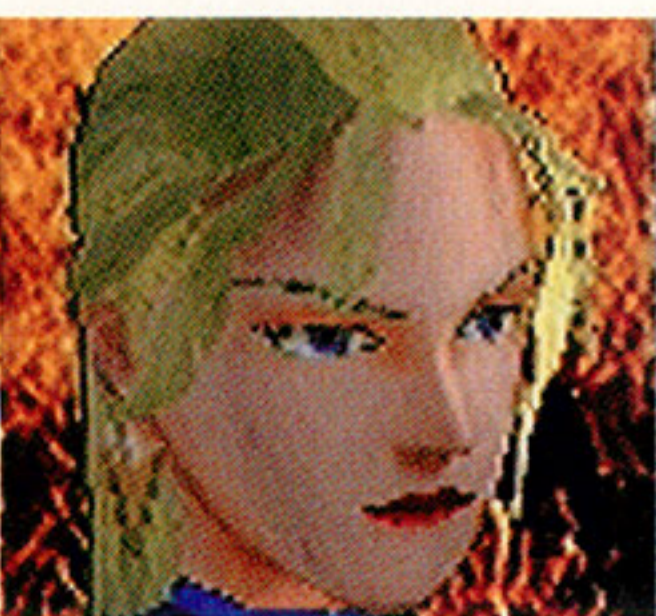
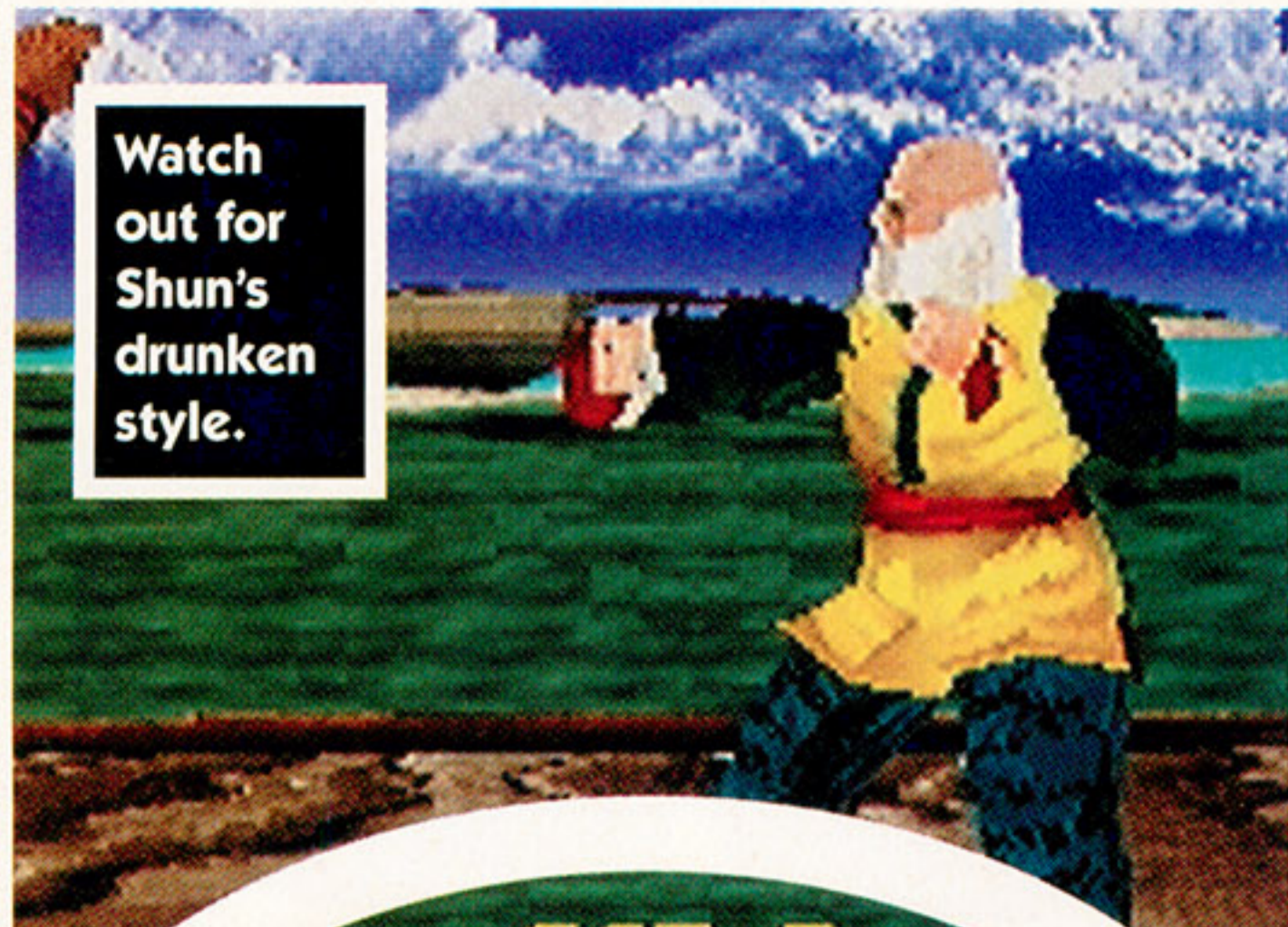
**ULTIMATE GAMER FINAL RATING**  
**9**



# Review

# VIRTUA FIGHTER 2





**V**irtua Fighter 2 is arguably the best fighting game out there. In terms of originality and play mechanics, Virtua Fighter didn't copy any established style and garnered a devoted audience with the sequel going beyond anyone's wildest expectations. While there are newer games coming to the market, such as VF3, home users have been anxiously awaiting the arrival of the AM2 masterpiece.

When comparing part 2 to the excellent VF Remix, you'll immediately notice what an incredible job AM2 has done in pushing the Saturn to new limits. The movement of the characters is running at or close to 60 frames per second, rivaling the arcade's speed. It makes everything else look choppy and clumsy by comparison. The look of the characters is right on the money. The only time you can tell the difference between

**“The action is so smooth, it will spoil you rotten.”**

the arcade and the home version is when the camera zooms in for replays and winning poses. The polygon count is noticeably less than that of the arcade, but the extra time spent on the shading and detail of the characters more than makes up for this shortcoming.

Loading takes about the same time as the earlier Saturn VF games. The biggest casualty is the backgrounds. The coin-op version has amazing backgrounds that move in convincing 3-D—and in relation to your character's position. For the Saturn version, the 3-D backgrounds have been severely compromised. The eye-popping, 3-d bridge level is completely missing! This was done as a method of getting the frame-rate higher, no doubt. AM2 may be improving on what can be achieved with the Saturn hardware, but you can't squeeze blood out of a rock.

The meat of VF2, however, is its play mechanics, and the hit detection is arcade-exact. A cool bonus for the Saturn version is the inclusion of not only the arcade demo intro, but a new character profile intro!

This game is a must-have for Saturn owners, and although it's not arcade perfect, it is a tremendous leap for the Saturn.

**Wataru Maruyama**

One/Two-Player Fighting  
Eleven Characters Including Dural  
Team Fighting Mode  
Ranking Mode

Sega of America  
Machine: Sega Saturn  
Price: \$59.95  
Available: Now

GRAPHICS	8
SOUND	8
PLAYABILITY	9

**ULTIMATE GAMER FINAL RATING**

**9**



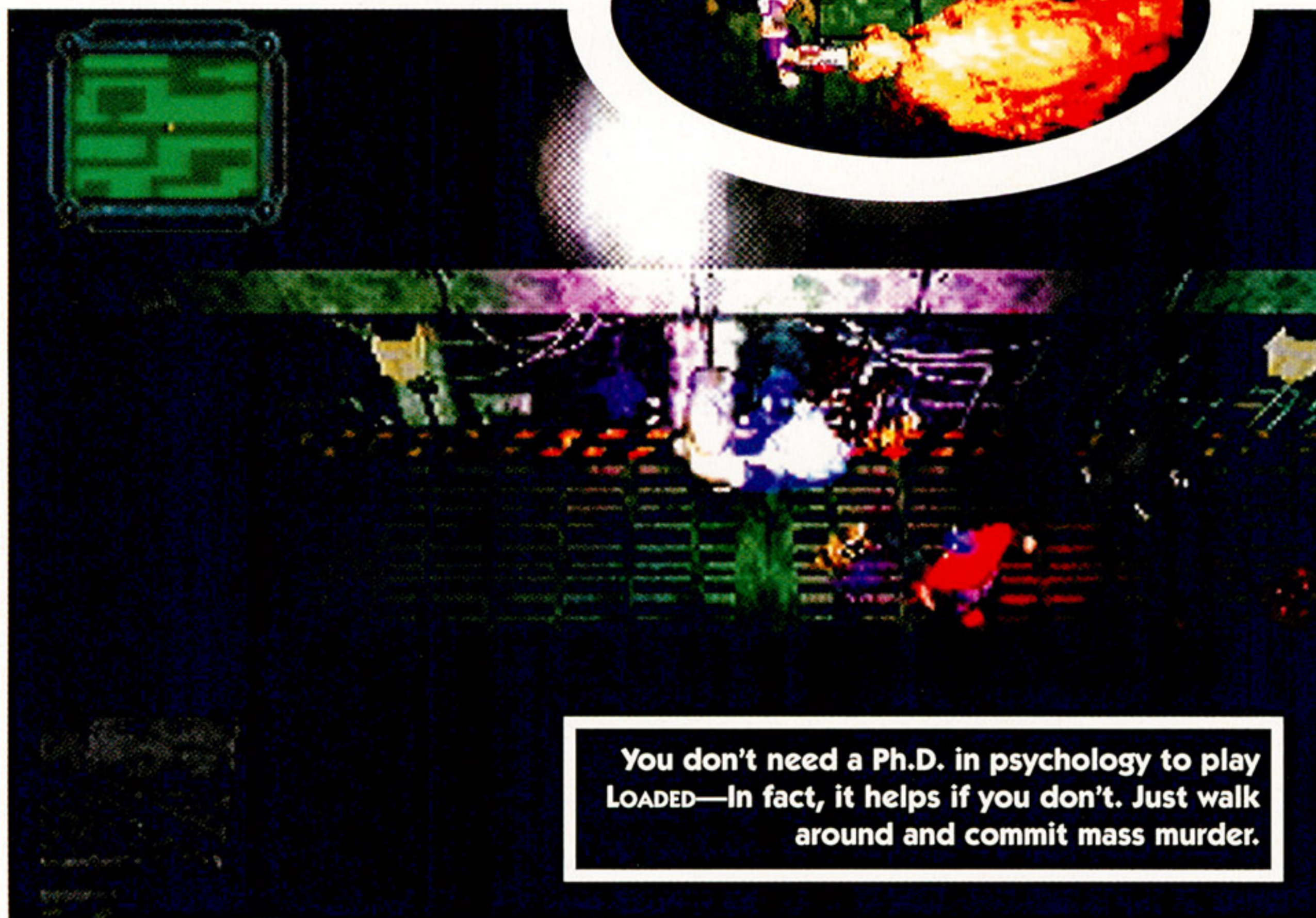
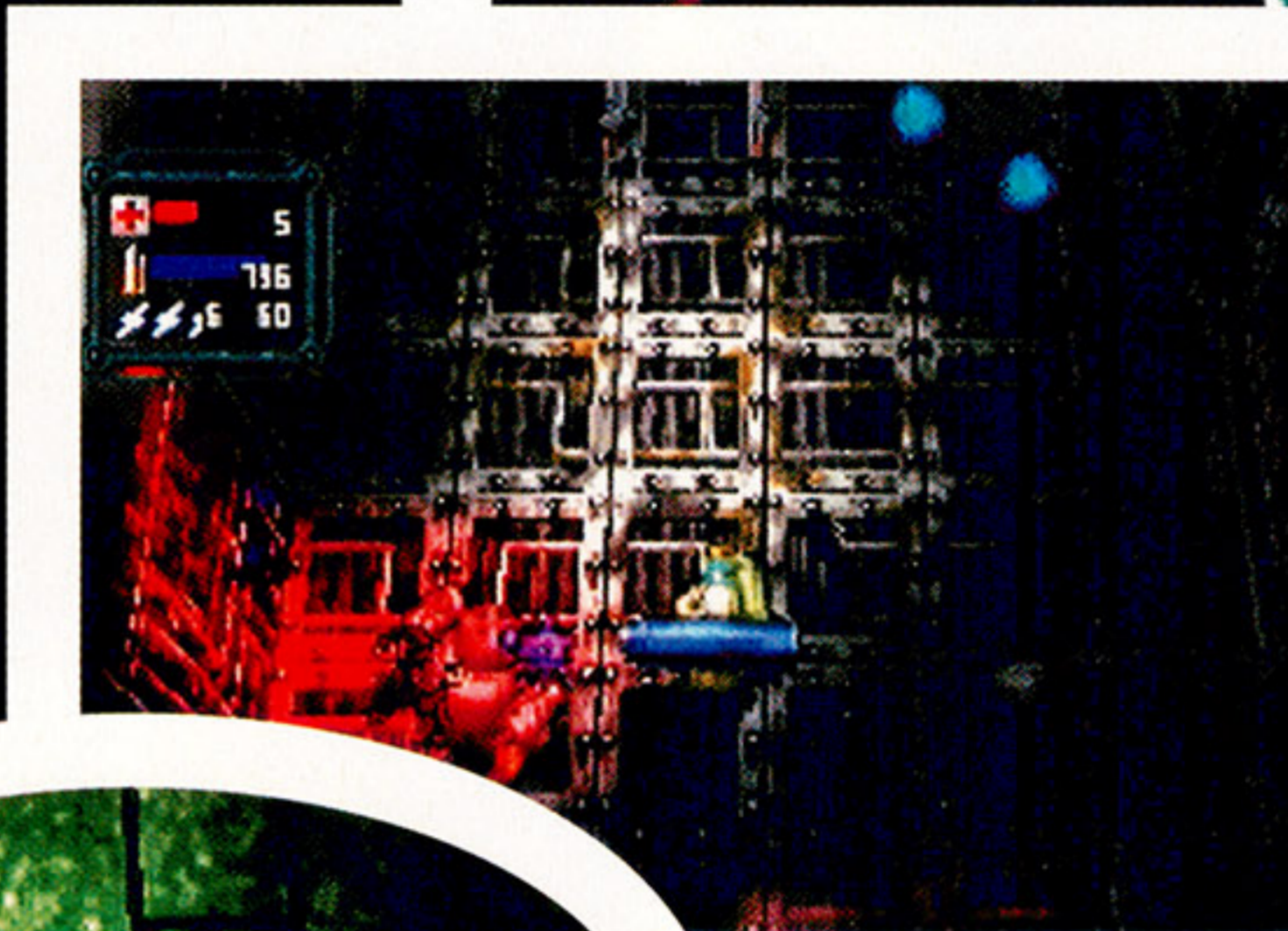
# LOADED



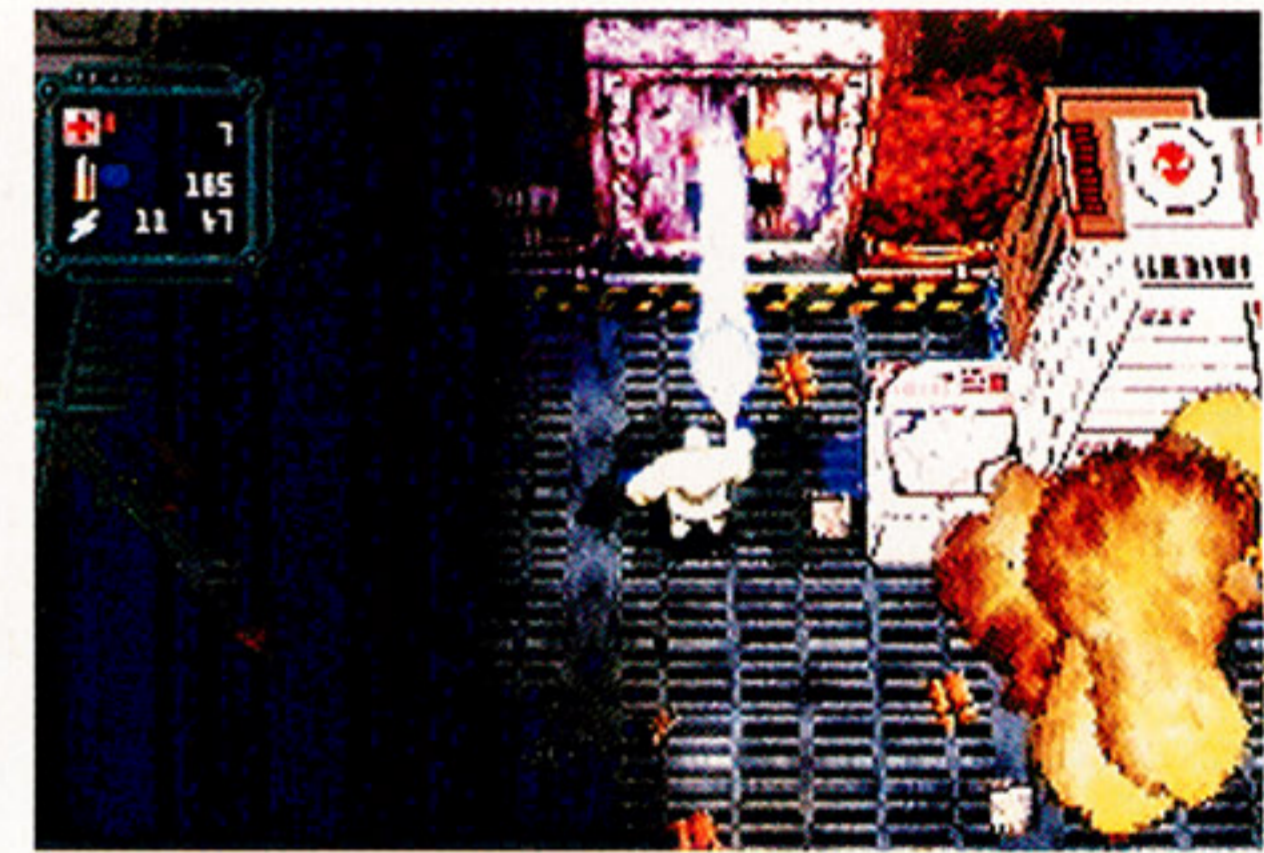
Hello. How are you today? Oh, by the way, I am going to kill you.



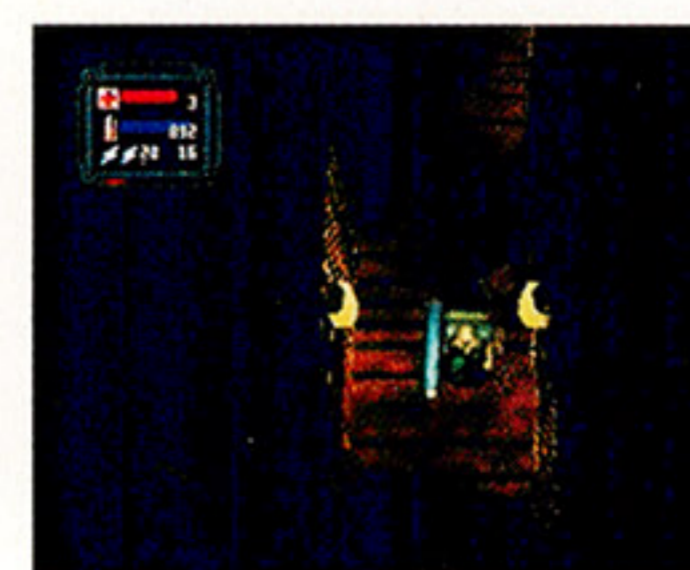
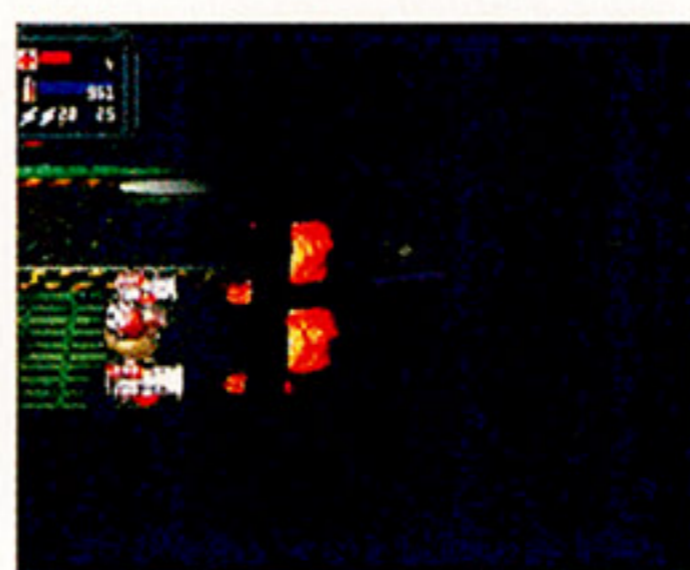
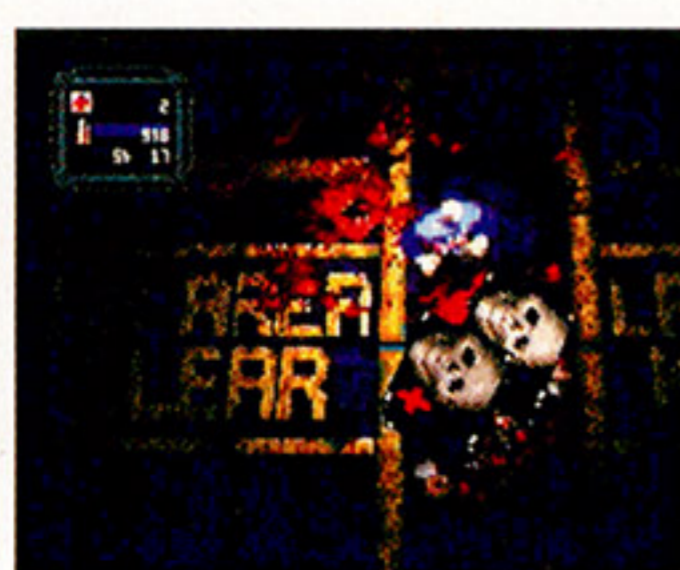
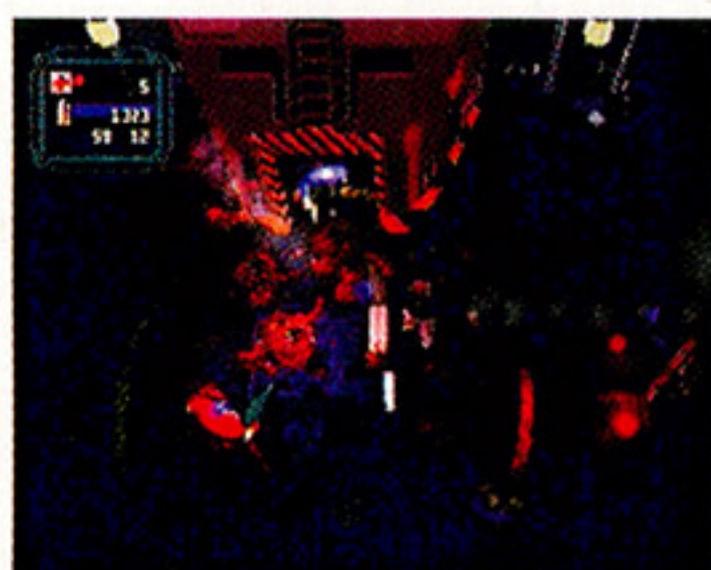
As it turns out, it seems Mama has the most devastating weapon in LOADED.

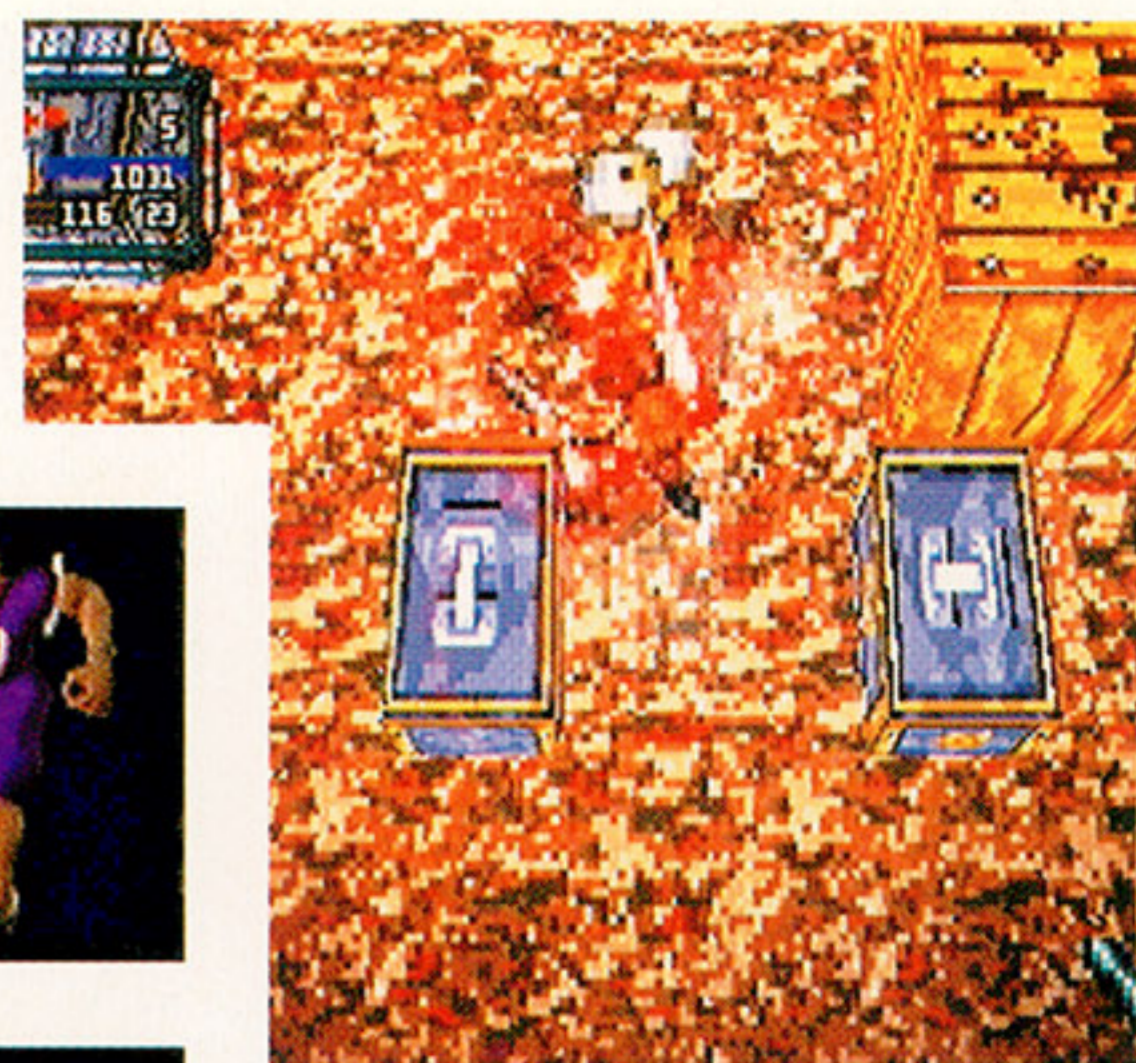
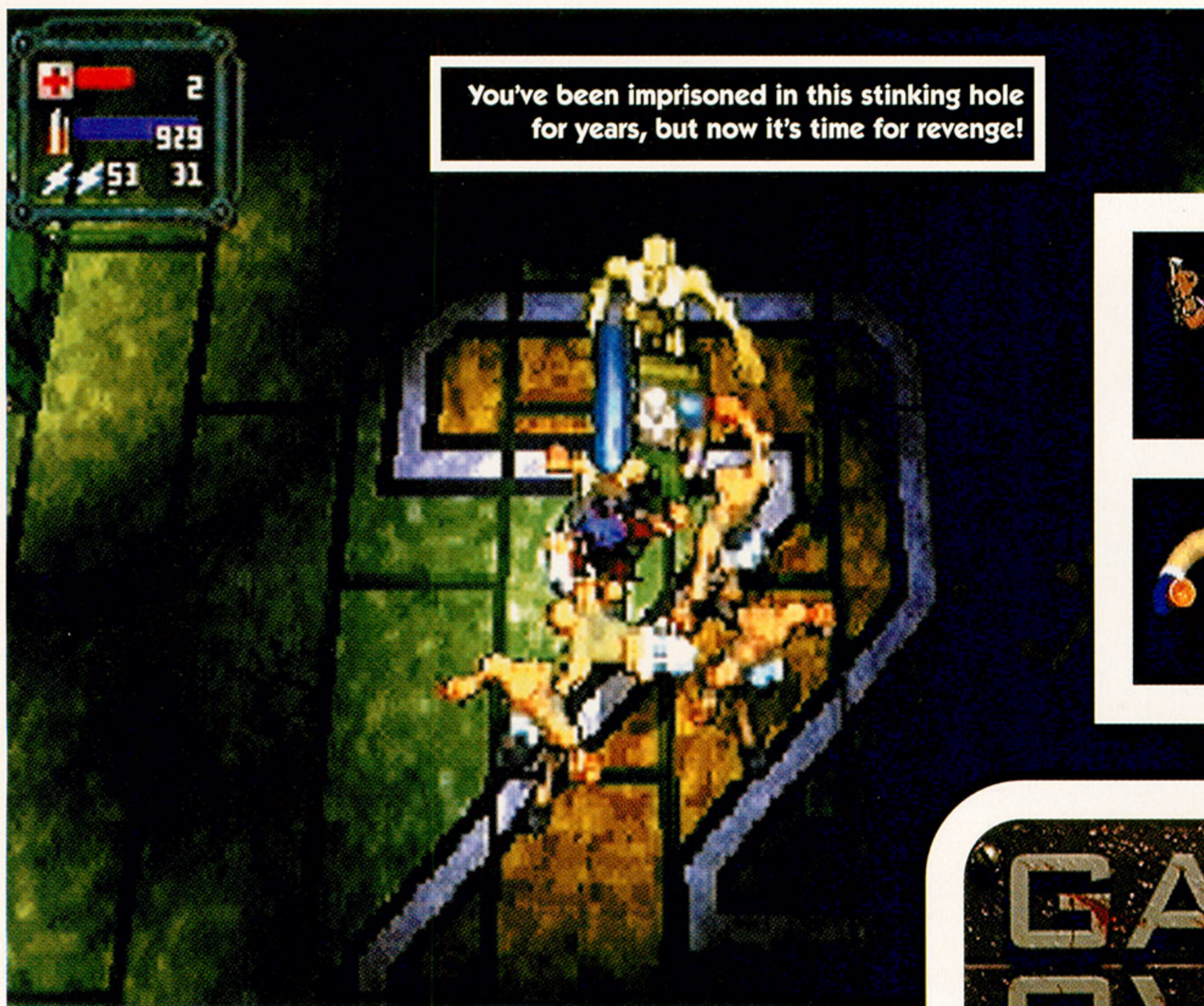


You don't need a Ph.D. in psychology to play LOADED—In fact, it helps if you don't. Just walk around and commit mass murder.

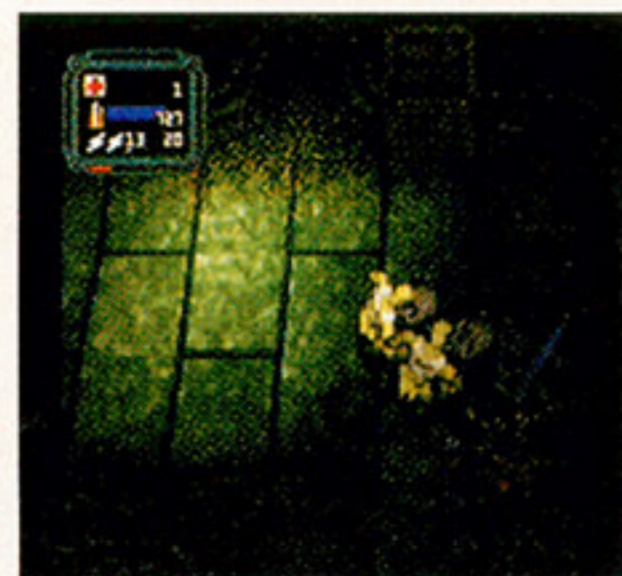
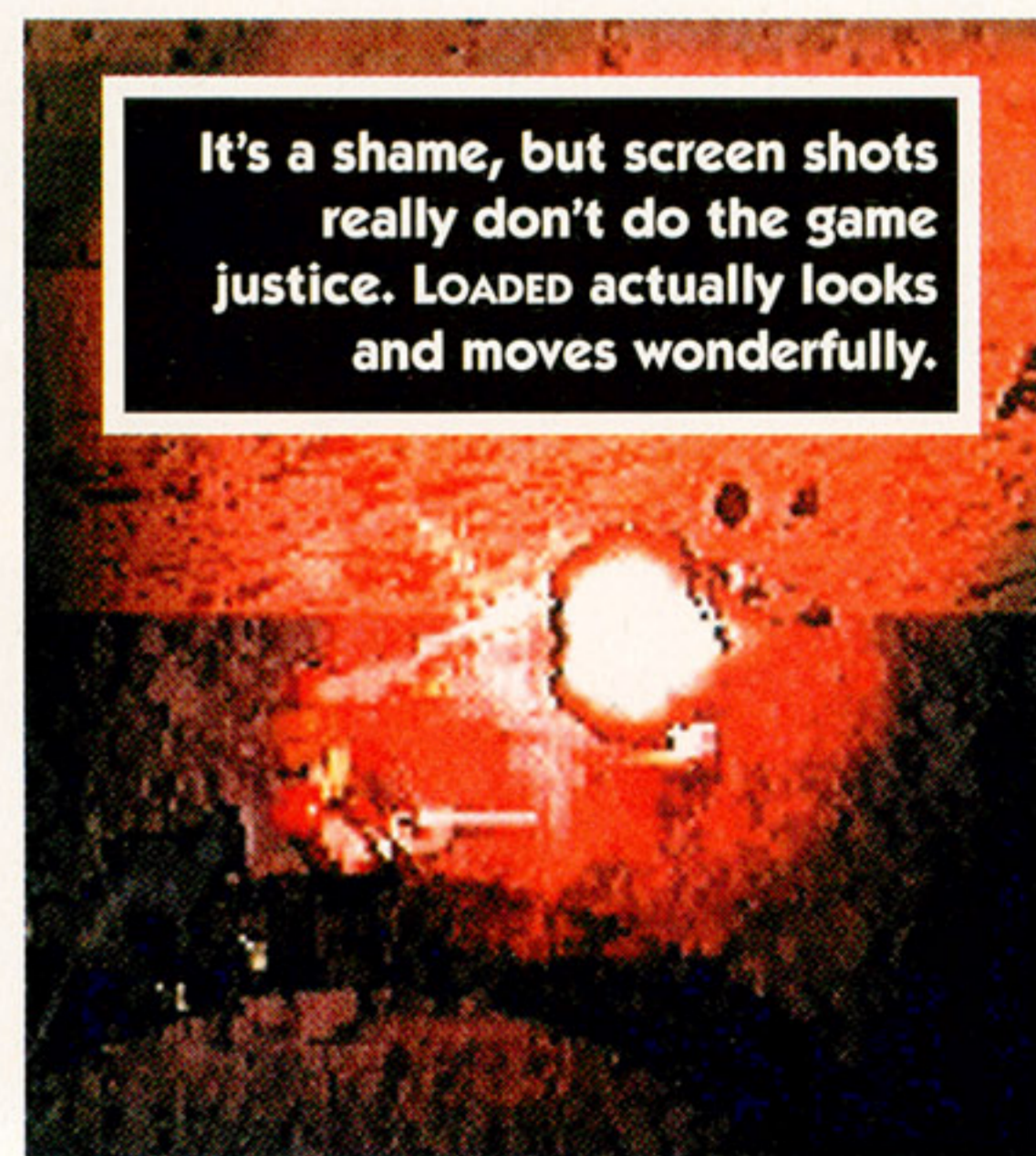
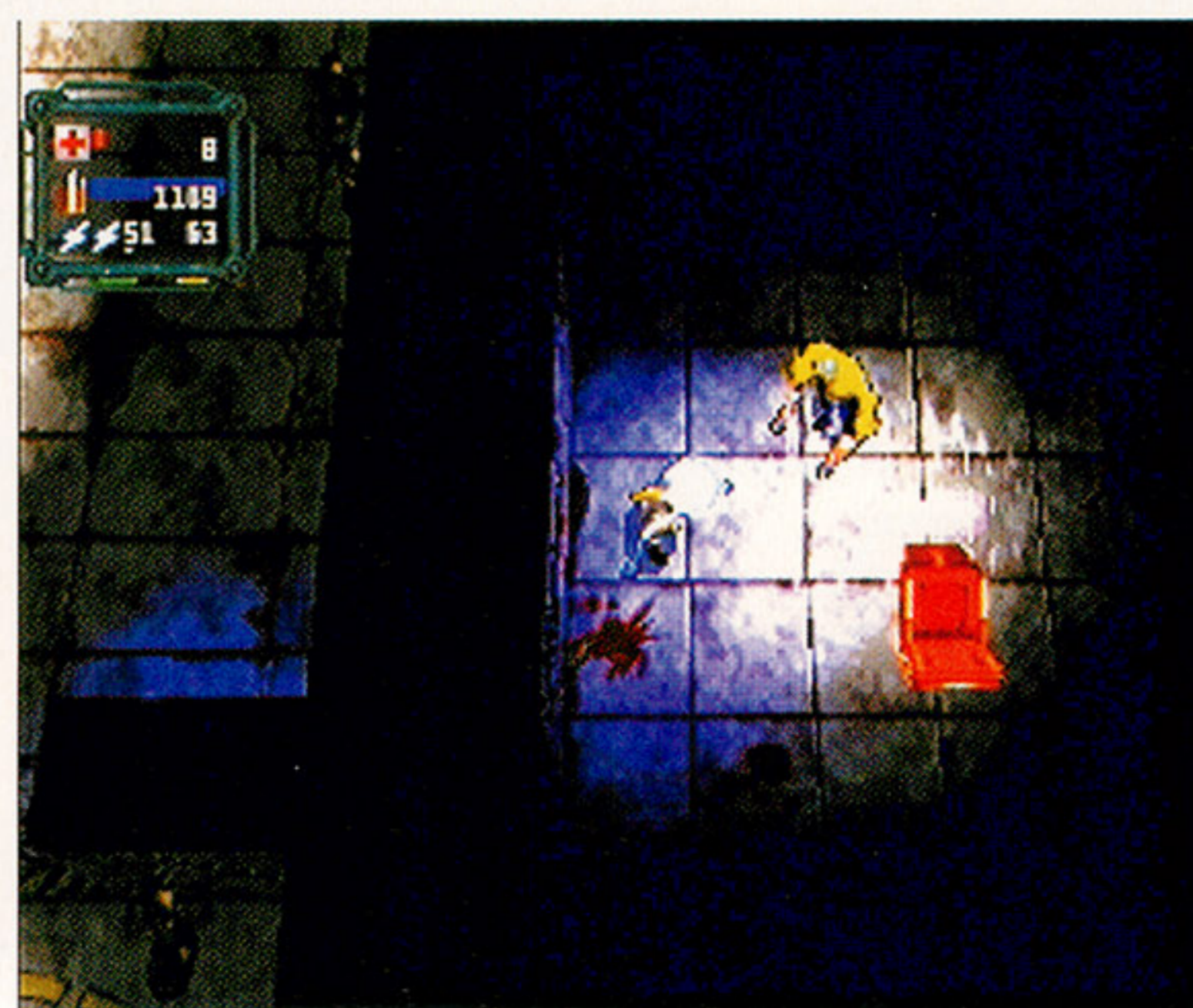
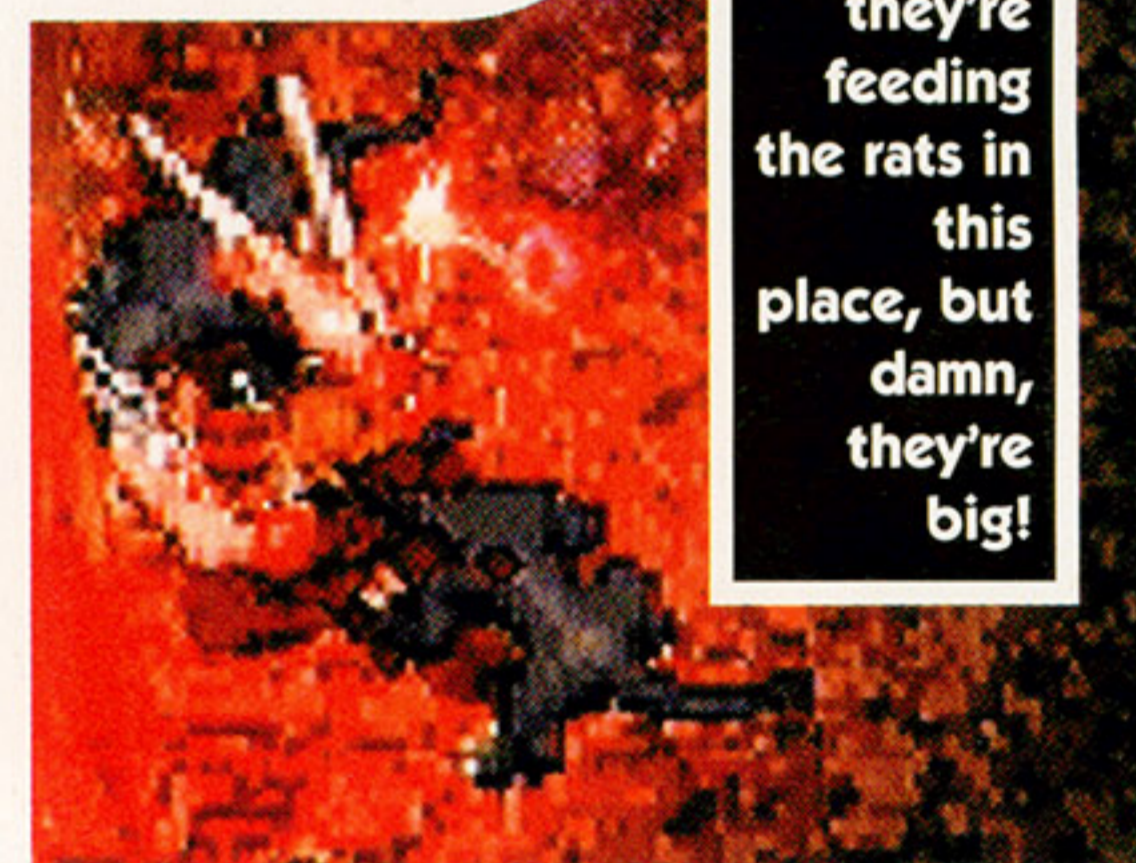
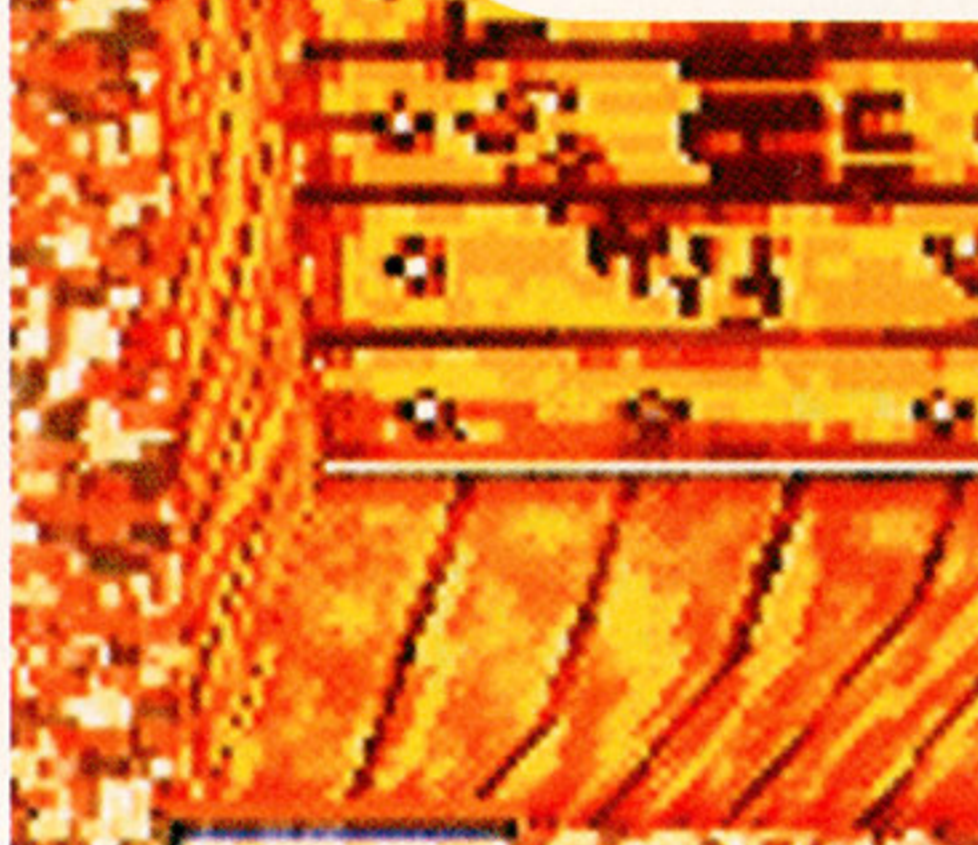
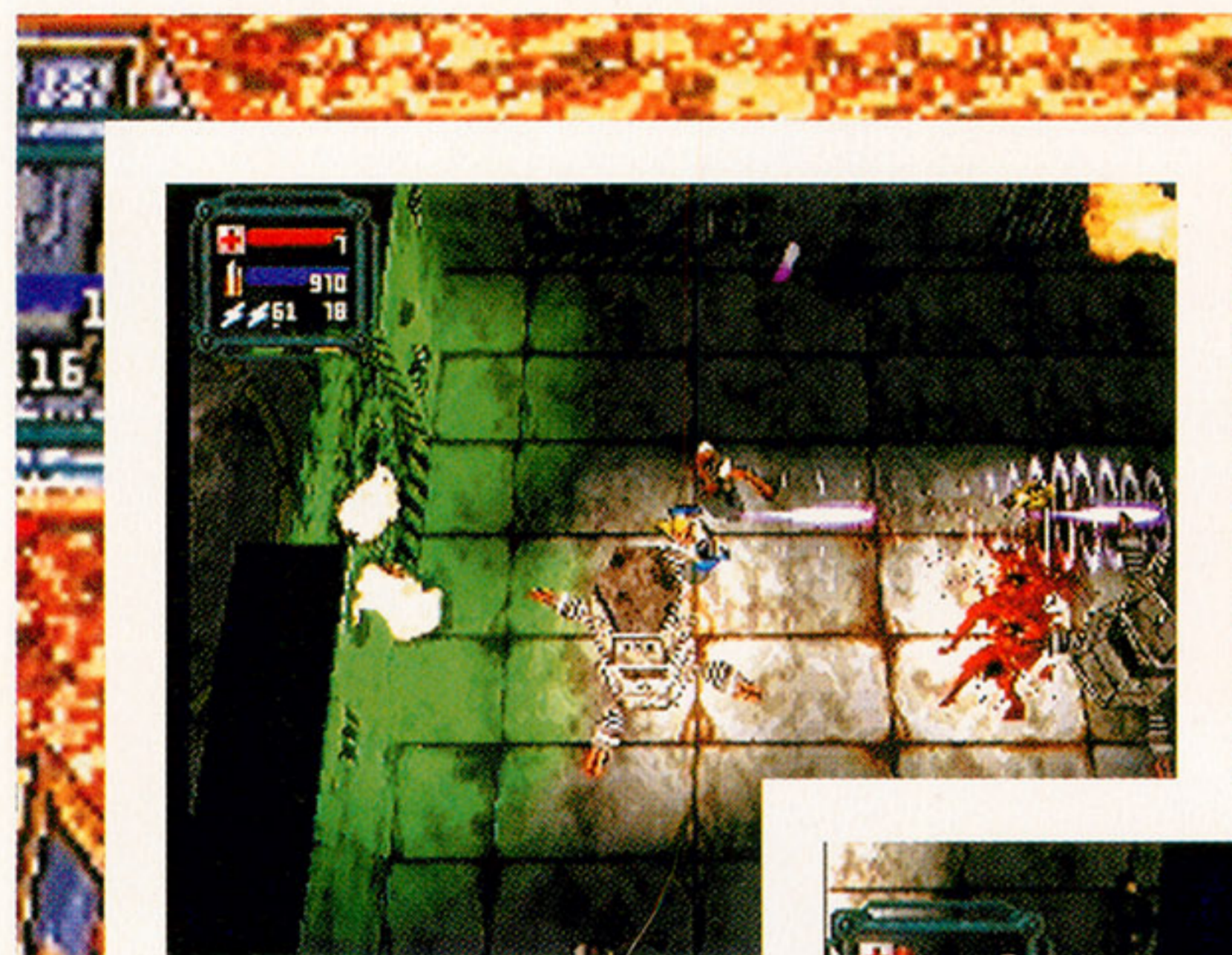


Excellent smoke effects... yeah, definitely excellent.



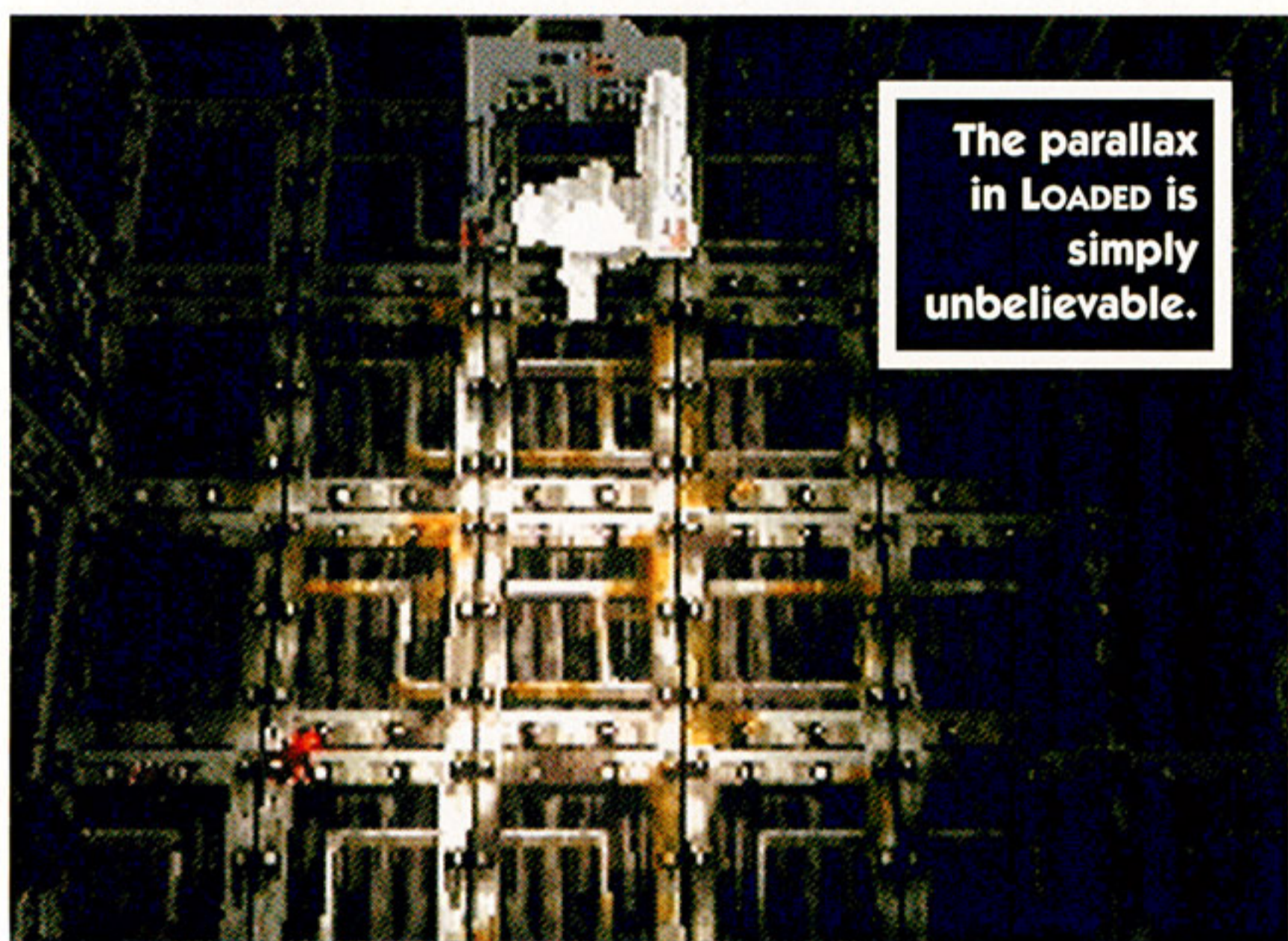


# GAME OVER





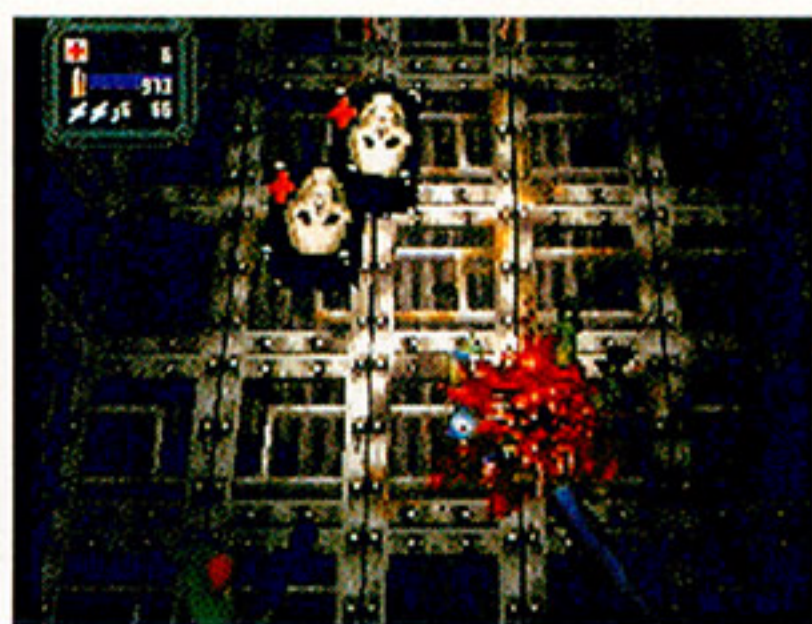
Take out the huge armed robots before they turn you into toast.



The parallax in LOADED is simply unbelievable.



Go on... grab a Death Box. Oops!



**S**crew strategy. This game is obviously for those who crave an emotional outlet after a rotten day of dealing with the hordes of incompetent boobs and idiots in society. Step right up and unleash your fury right here, baby!

Simpleton's of the world, unite. **Loaded** is about as basic as it gets. And it's as down-and-dirty...as gritty...as out-and-out **nasty** as a \$50 whore. You wake up and find out that you've been framed for a crime you didn't commit. To make matters even worse, you're sitting in a blood-soaked, 4X8 maximum-security prison cell with a bar of Soap-on-a-Rope hanging around your neck. Needless to say, you're a tad pissed.

**“For those whose wife's have left them and job's have been lost, this is a very good outlet.”**

Loaded has you roaming various levels in search of the character(s) responsible for your frame job. Those who remember **Smash T.V.** will likely take notice of a few similarities; most notably, the game's three quarter view, “spray ammo at everything that moves” playability.

As great fun as Loaded is, I still feel just slightly let down by its lack of interaction; you know, stuff like hidden switches to activate secret passageways and the like. There's no sense of urgency in the game either. Imagine how creepy it would be to walk into an empty room only to have the exit door slam shut and lock behind you, as a half dozen goons crawl out from their hiding places to force you into blasting your way out. That's the kind of urgency which shifts the pace of a game into overdrive.

But Loaded has a flavor—albeit a filthy one—all its own. The level-layouts are dark, damp and eerie. The walls and floors are rendered in three-dimensional ways that have, quite honestly, never been seen before now. Smoke and light effects are presented in a fashion that you simply won't believe. And the sound is phenomenal.

Shortcomings aside, this is a must-have title for your PlayStation game library. It has eye-bulging graphics, addictive play-mechanics, and power-ups out the butt. But above all else, buy it for its sheer brutality.

**Jim Loftus**

One-Player Action  
Six Different Characters  
Multiple Power-Ups  
Adjustable Scaling

Interplay  
Machine: Sony PlayStation  
Price: \$59.95  
Available: Now

GRAPHICS  
9

SOUND  
9

PLAYABILITY  
7

ULTIMATE  
GAMER  
FINAL RATING

8





# CRITICOM



CRITICOM suffers from numerous unforgivable control problems.

**K**ronos, known for high-end computer imagery, makes its maiden voyage on the PlayStation—or any other platform, for that matter—with **Criticom**.

When I received my first glimpse of Criticom at E<sup>3</sup>, I was in total astonishment. First, the images were extremely clean, and second, Vic Tokai was touting that the game would be ready in time for Christmas.

Kronos' forte lies in manipulation of SG images, and so, it would seem understandable for them to work on their greatest strength; the introductory cut-scenes could be a movie. To pull off the hi-res effects during play, Kronos opted to have

**“You can throw control right out the window...”**

the game run at 30Hz as opposed to the customary 60Hz. While the levels are beautiful—and in some instances, on the verge on reality—the control lags. I'm a sucker for outstanding graphics, but if it's gameplay or graphics that must be sacrificed, I'm a purist: Give me the control, you can have the graphics. Sure, from the still shots, it might look as good as **Tekken** or **Toshinden**. However, the control is just...bad. After playing Criticom, I feel like an invalid. Just a mish-mash of random button presses. I don't think a single combo was documented on my part.

Criticom has an absorbing storyline, fighter upgrade feature and the sound effects aren't half bad either. I just wish that the game didn't feel so unfinished.

**Tyrone Rodriguez**



One/Two-Player 3D Fighting  
8 Fighters  
SGI-Rendered Cinemas

Vic Tokai  
Machine: Sony PlayStation  
Price: \$59.95  
Available: December

GRAPHICS	7
SOUND	8
PLAYABILITY	5

ULTIMATE  
GAMER  
FINAL RATING

**6**

# ULTIMATE GAMER™

## Bidding you a fond farewell.

The Editors and staff of ULTIMATE GAMER wish to bid you farewell. It is with much sadness that we announce that this, our January 1996 issue, will be our last. It has been our distinct pleasure to produce ULTIMATE GAMER, and we want to thank you, our readers, for your support. Many of you have been with us since the premiere issue, and we will most assuredly miss all of you.

If you subscribe to ULTIMATE GAMER, the remaining portion of your subscription will be serviced with copies of VIDEOGAMES magazine. If you prefer to receive VIDEOGAMES' TIPS & TRICKS magazine, or if you wish to receive a refund for the unserved portion of your ULTIMATE GAMER subscription, please fill out the coupon below. If you already subscribe to the magazine you have chosen as a replacement, we will simply extend your subscription for the remaining copies left on your ULTIMATE GAMER subscription.

Thanks again for your support, and farewell from your friends at ULTIMATE GAMER!

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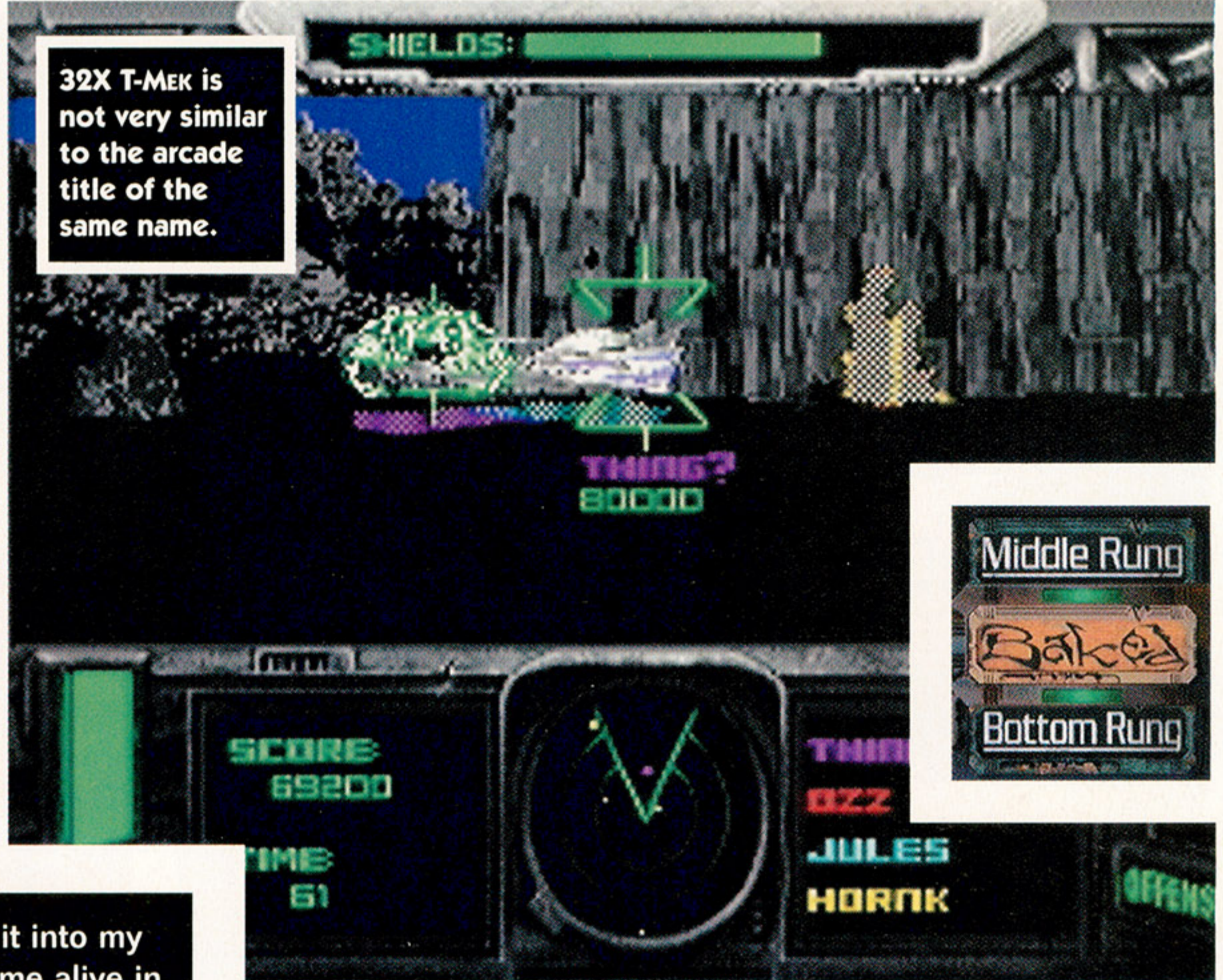
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# T-MEK



**T**-Mek! No way! I immediately jammed it into my 32X expecting the arcade classic to come alive in my living room and totally "mech my day." Unfortunately, what I got was another half-baked, poorly-translated arcade game for my soon-to-be-a-doorstop 32X.

T-Mek really shows the limits the 32X has in regards to using scaling and rotation effects. First off, this game hurts your eyes with all the texture mapped polygons popping in and out and the enemy Meks flashing in and out when there's too many of them on the screen. Second, the controls are the worst! There's no problem going in a circle; it's when you desperately

## "Standard 32X B.S."

need to go left or right that the controls feel like you're wading through mud. Not good.

Third, the sound effects and music are the usual 32x repetitive garble. Why don't they just record a rake pulled across a blackboard? It would be less irritating.

T-Mek is slightly better with two players, but alone it's a cakewalk. I won several rounds by just waiting in a corner for most of the ships to blow themselves up and then went after the last two using the acid drone mech. Zzzzzz.

With it's uninspired graphics and poor control, T-Mek really comes off as no big mechin' deal.

**Brian Patrick O'Toole**

## TOURNAMENT

One/Two-Player Action  
Split-Screen  
10 Levels  
Multiple Weapons, Power-Ups

Sega of America  
Machine: Genesis 32X  
Price: \$59.95  
Available: Now

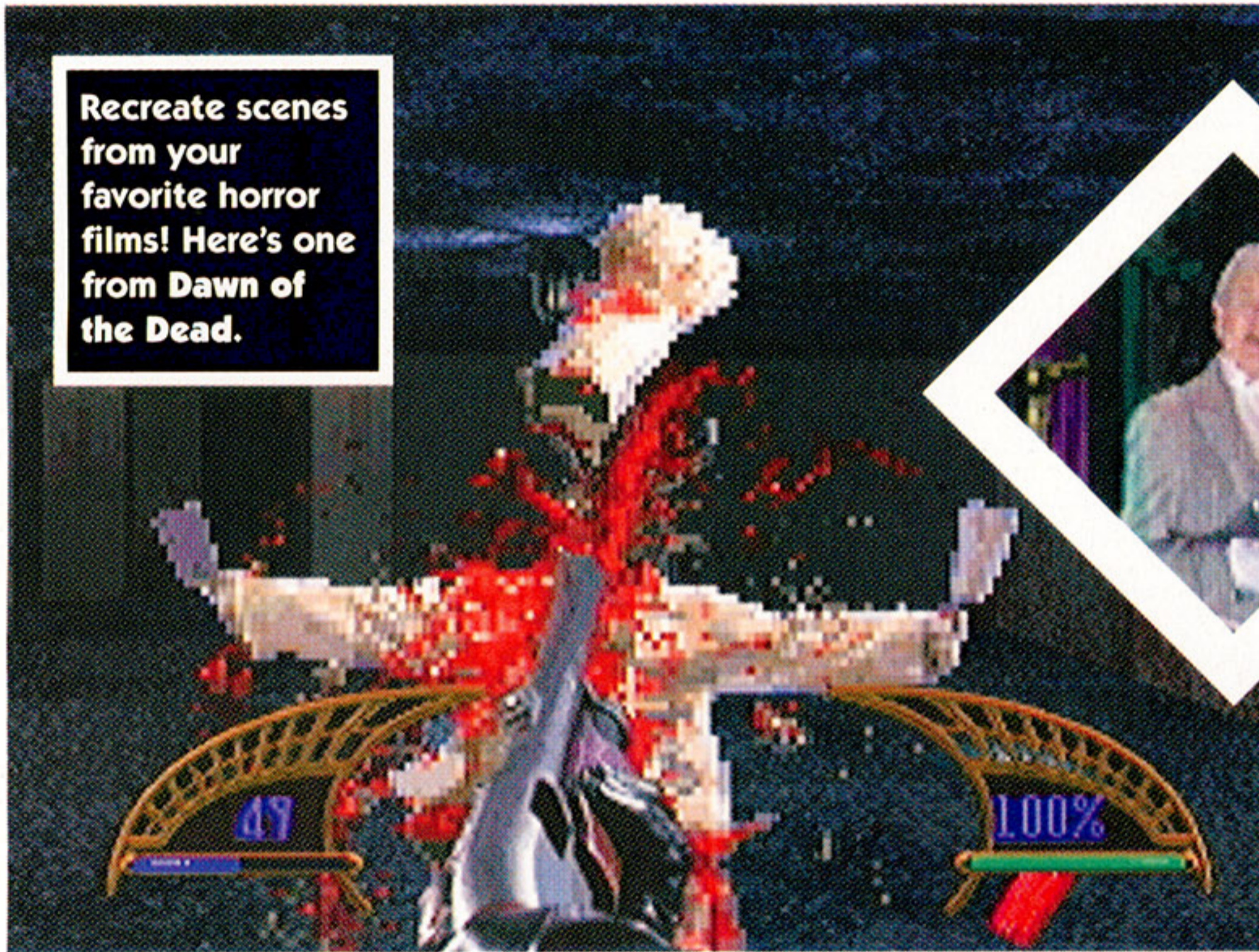
GRAPHICS 5  
SOUND 4  
PLAYABILITY 5

ULTIMATE GAMER FINAL RATING 5

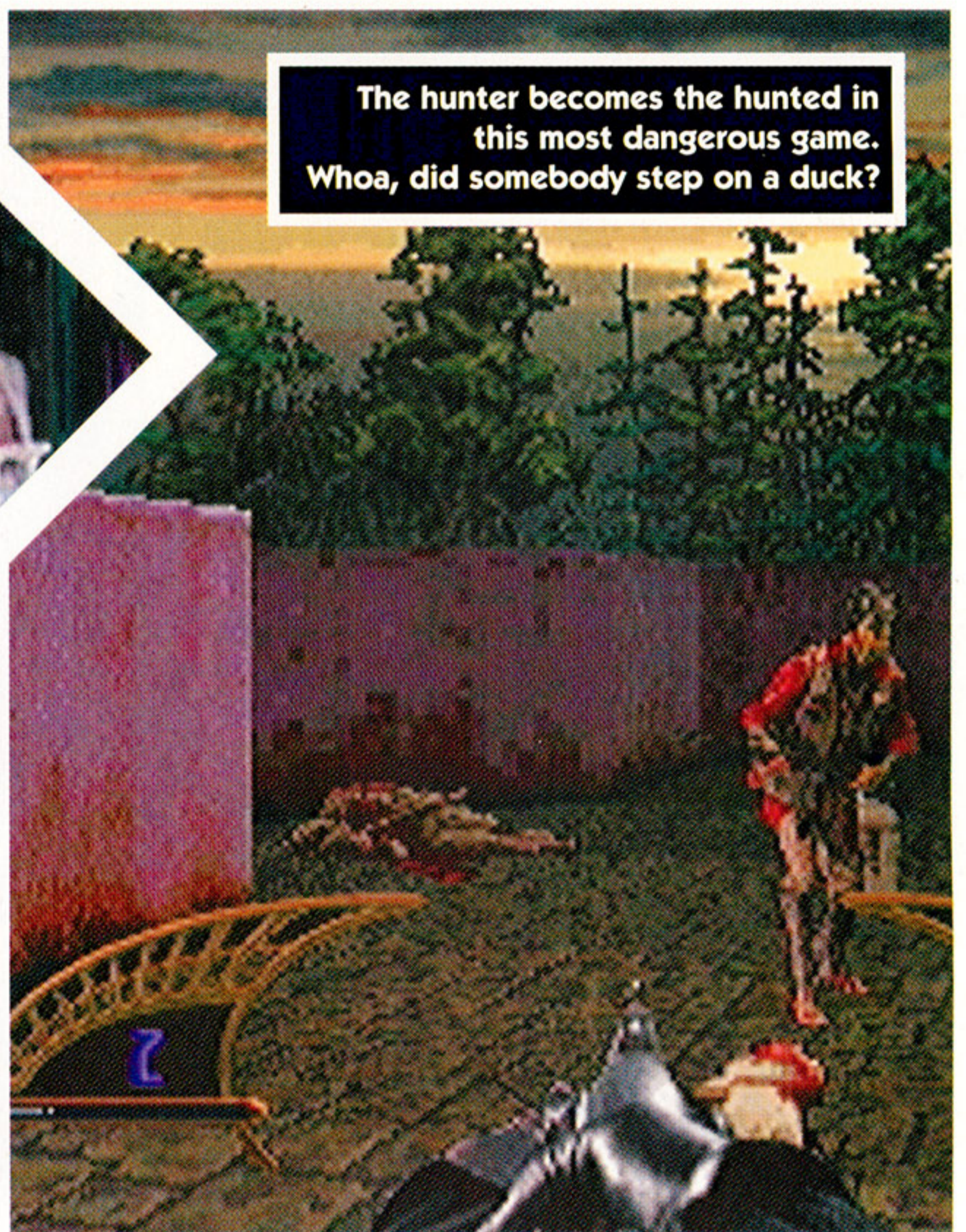


# KILLING TIME

Recreate scenes from your favorite horror films! Here's one from Dawn of the Dead.



The hunter becomes the hunted in this most dangerous game. Whoa, did somebody step on a duck?



**G**reetings, game zombies! 'Tis I, the Crypt Kicker, performing one of my favorite pastimes, **Killing Time!** All kinds of video nasties await as you explore Conway Mansion in search of answers to questions better left unasked. Don't turn off the lights as you travel through more than 45 different areas of terror! This frightfest offers continuous gameplay, meaning

**“Choppier than a Friday the 13th movie!”**

no loading and no time to scream! But beware! **Killing Time** will also give you something the other **Doom** spin-offs don't: A massive headache. The movement is so choppy that basic navigation is made impossible—you'll end up almost always under- or over-shooting enemies every time. Play at your own risk! Hee, hee, hee! And remember, there's a sign that hangs on all haunted houses: "Visitors Accommodated!"

**Brian Patrick O'Toole**

One-Player 3-D Action  
Multiple weapons  
Auto-Mapping Feature  
Save Feature

Studio 3DO  
Machine: 3DO  
Price: \$59.95  
Available: Now

GRAPHICS

7

SOUND

8

PLAYABILITY

6

ULTIMATE  
GAMER  
FINAL RATING

7

# WIN! The Ultimate Gaming Rig! OVER \$20,000<sup>00</sup> IN PRIZES!



**You have the POWER.** In this contest you don't rely on the luck-of-the draw. You determine if you win or not. You win by outscoring others in a game of skill. Can you solve the puzzle below? Then you have what it takes. It looks simple, but it's only the start. Each of five more puzzles gets a little harder. But this time it's all up to you. Stay in to the end with the highest score and the gear is yours. With whatever options you want. Do you have what it takes? Then play to win!

**Computer Contest.** Win a blazing fast computer with Pentium 133 Mhz processor, 16 meg. ram, 1.2 Gig. hard drive, CD-ROM, 17" monitor, modem and more!

**Video Game Contest.** Play on the hi-tech cutting edge with this line-up: Sony Playstation; Sega Saturn; Virtual Boy; 3DO; and Atari Jaguar. Get all five or trade the ones you don't want for CASH! Bonus options include: 33 inch monitor, \$1,000 in games, cash, accessories and more!

**Media Rig Contest.** The Ultimate Gaming Environment, 40 inch monitor, 130 watt receiver w/ Dolby Pro Logic Surround Sound, and all components shown. Win DSS Satellite Receiver as a BONUS OPTION! This rig will blow you away!!

## We're talkin' GAMING HEAVEN!

**Directions.** Fill in the Mystery Word Grid with words going across that spell out the Mystery Word down the side. Hint: use the Mystery Word Clue.

**In the future.** There will be four more puzzles at \$2.00 each and one tie-breaker at \$1.00 which will be sent to you by mail. You will have 3 weeks to solve each puzzle. We don't know how many will play but typically 55% will have the highest score possible score to Phase I, 43% to Phase II, 36% to Phase III, and 32% to Phase IV. The tie-breaker determines the winner. If players are still tied they will split the value of the grand prize they are playing for.

## Mystery Word Grid

H						M Y S T E R Y  W O R D
	E					
P	I	N	C	H	W	
	R					
S						

### WORD LIST and LETTER CODE chart

PINCH .....W PRESS.....K BLAST .....A WRECK.....D  
 BREAK .....Z PUNCH .....S SPRAY .....C TURBO.....V  
 STOMP .....T STAND.....R PRESS .....E DREAM....O  
 CRUSH.....I SCORE .....H SLANT .....L CHASE.....P

#### MYSTERY WORD CLUE:

WORLD RULERS HAVE IT AND IN THIS CONTEST YOU HAVE IT

## Yes!

### ENTER ME TODAY, HERE'S MY ENTRY FEE:

- (\$3.00) Computer Contest
- (\$3.00) Video Game Contest
- (\$3.00) Media Rig Contest
- (\$5.00) SPECIAL! Enter them all (SAVE \$4.00)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_

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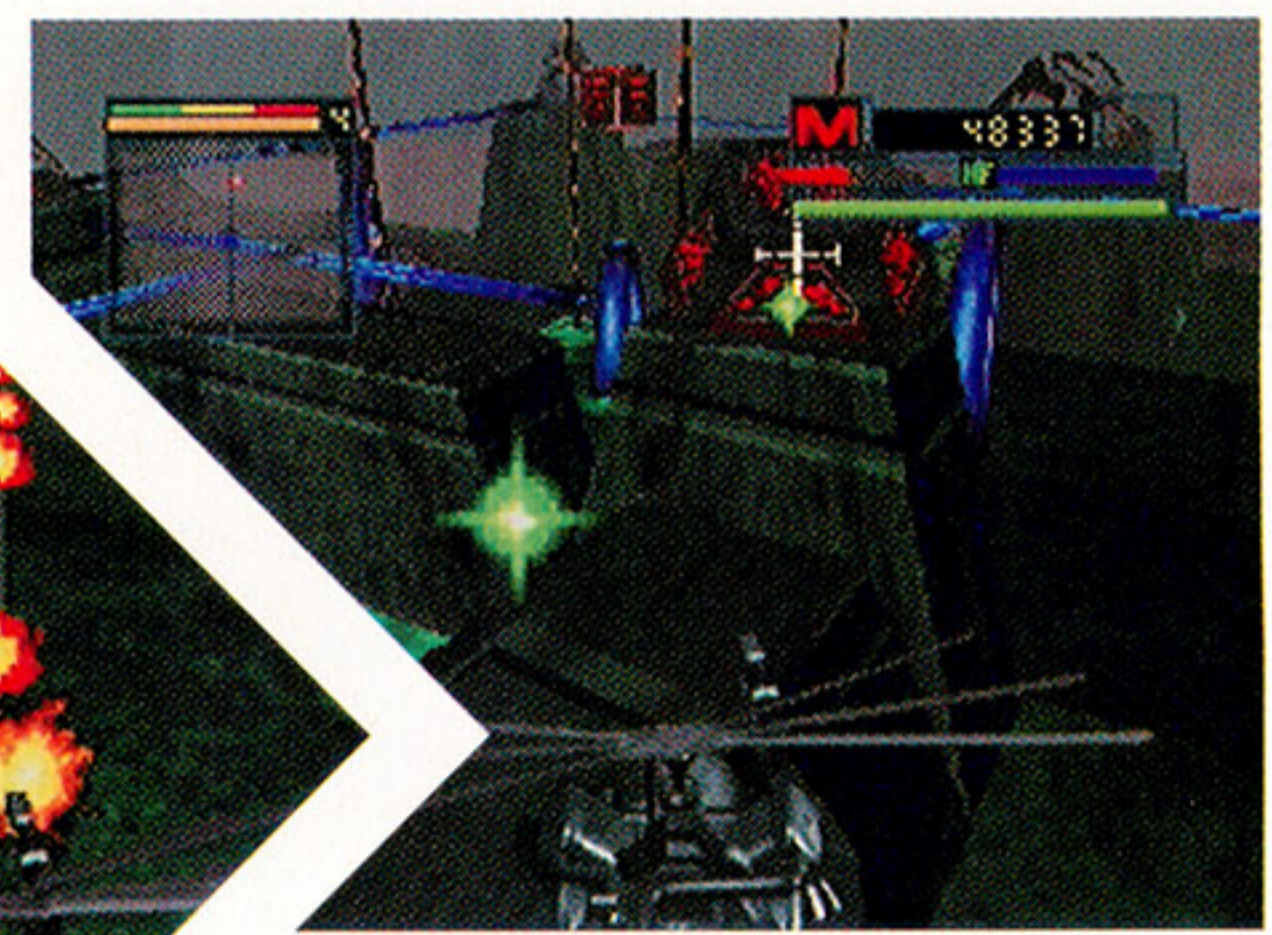
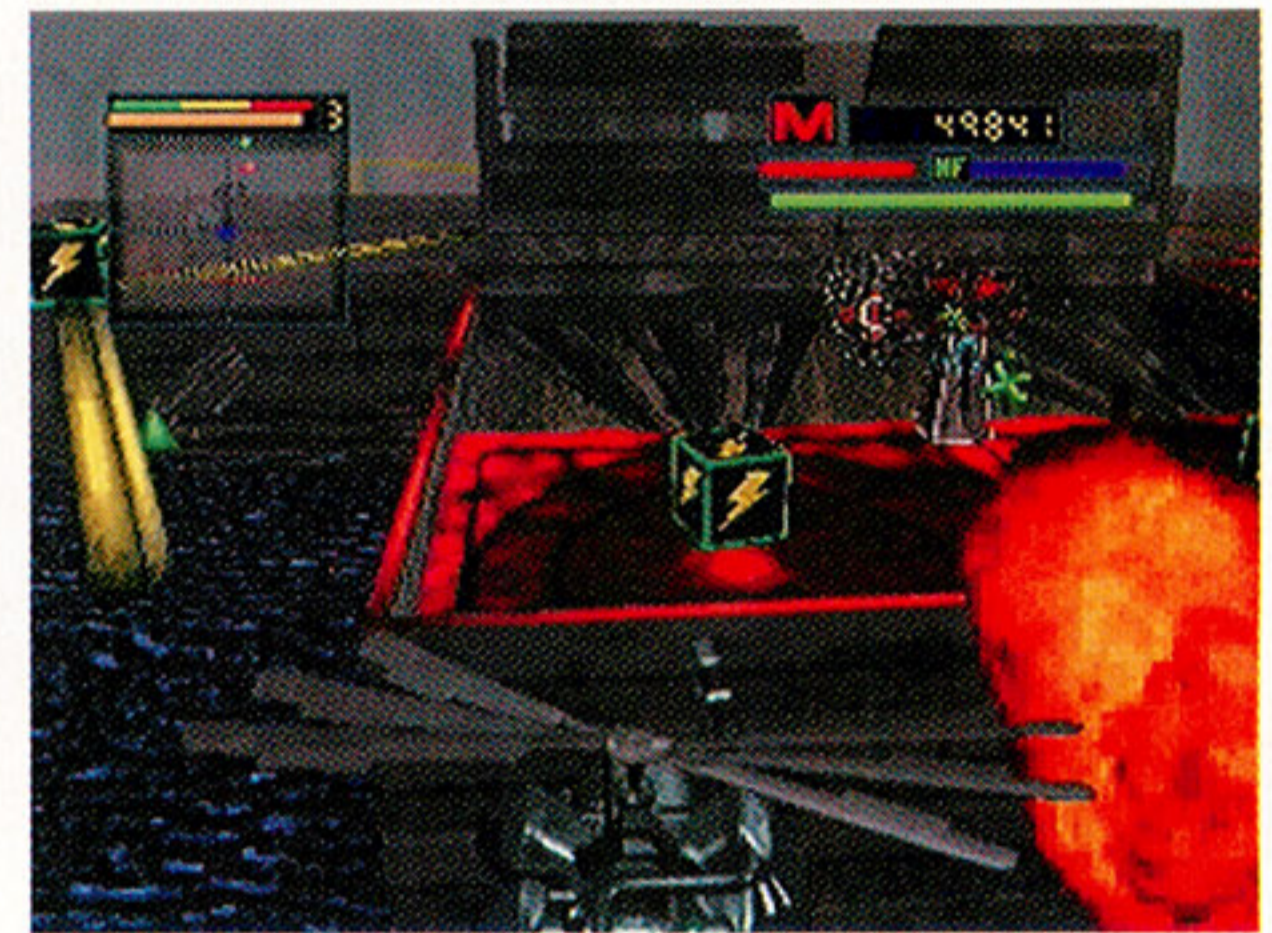
CLIP AND MAIL



# Review

# BLADEFORCE

Big, beautiful explosions on the 3DO.



BLADEFORCE is great fun...for a while. Its main problem is the fact that the terrain is so immensely vast, and the enemies ridiculously repetitive, that it holds very few surprises.





**O**ne thing screamed at me while I was playing through this game, Studio 3DO is no joke! Not only does this break new ground in terms of 3-D for the system, but the storyline and characters are really cool. While watching the intro, I couldn't help but be pulled into this psychotic world and couldn't wait to start flying around and hunting down those bad guys.

The story takes place in the Megagrid which is a new industrial city that's built on the ruins of the city known as Los Angeles (That doesn't seem too far-fetched now does it?). Crime is a big problem and a small band of police and concerned citizens must take back the city from this terri-

## "Studio 3DO scores."

ble menace that has befallen this metropolis.

You basically fly via your heli-backpack and view the action from over the shoulder. It would have been nice to have multiple views, but the absence of them doesn't detract from the game since the view you do have is very playable. You have your usual array of neat weapons like shrapnel bombs, power bombs and the good old pulse gun.

The wacky bosses are one of the coolest features of the game. You have the evil (aren't they all?) Terrence Pitt, the Steel Medusa sisters, Pyro Megally, Ugly Two Head, Eddy Extacy and the Reverend Bea-atch. Ugly Two Head warrants extra mention as he is a demented doctor with a long serrated knife with blood flying everywhere. Unfortunately, you won't fight with any of these bosses face to face, but rather you destroy a box with their picture on it which is called the boss source which puts them into the lock-up.

The missions get repetitive at times and more interaction with the boss characters would have done a lot more for me, but the package Studio 3DO has delivered is fairly well rounded and a must purchase for 3DO owners.

**Wataru Maruyama**

One-Player Action  
Multiple Missions  
Multiple Bosses  
3D viewpoint

Studio 3DO  
Machine: 3DO  
Price: \$59.95  
Available: Now

GRAPHICS  
8

SOUND  
8

PLAYABILITY  
7

ULTIMATE  
GAMER  
FINAL RATING  
**8**



# Review

# DKC 2: DIDDY'S KONGQUEST



Diddy's up to some more monkey hijinks.



I hope you're better behaved than those reptiles. Why, I even caught one sharpening his sword in class yesterday!



The lava stage is just one of many spectacular-looking stages.



A stormy night aboard the pirate ship with some hairy stowaways.



Dixie better watch out!

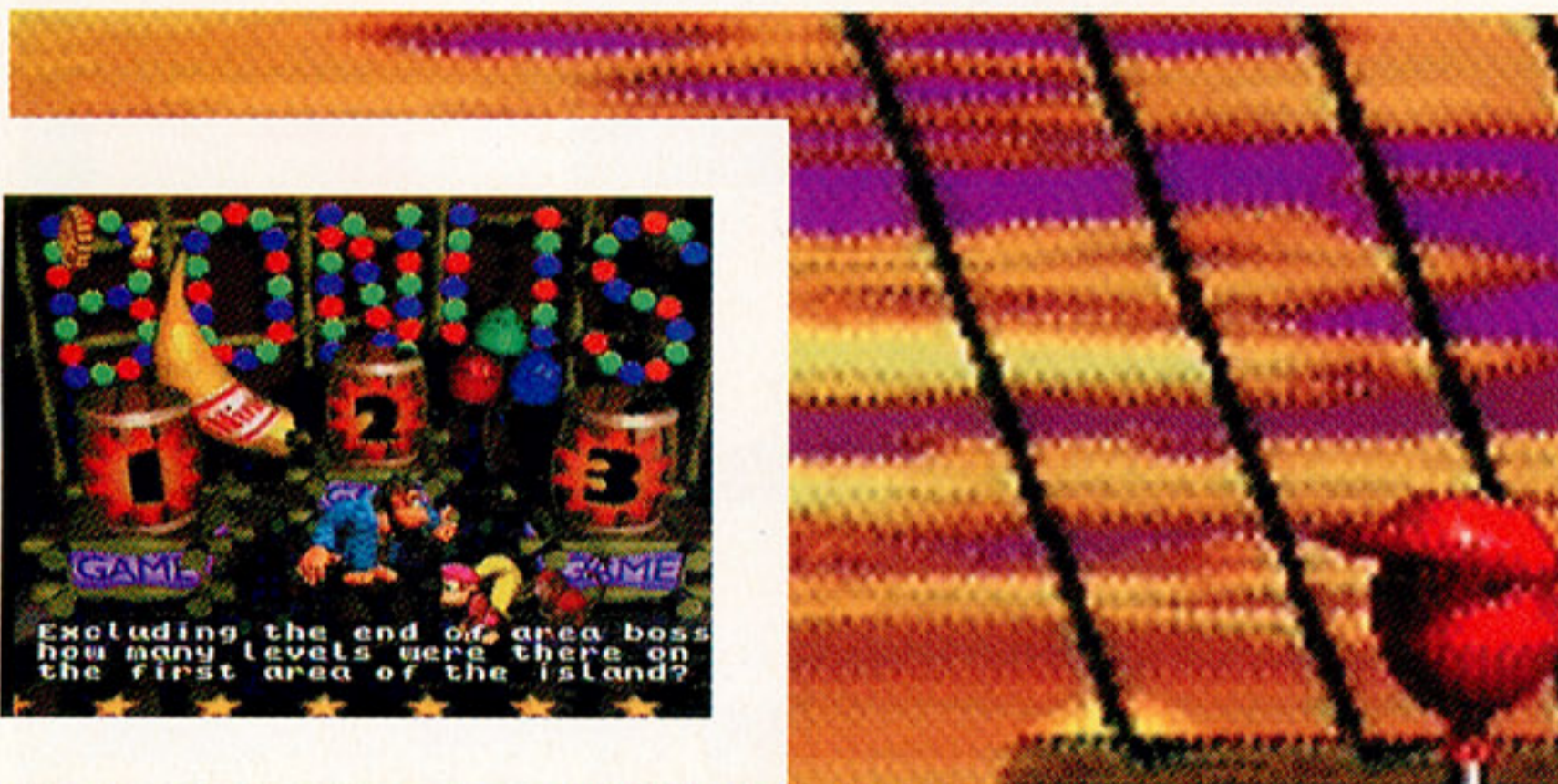


Give them a big hand folks! Good evening, I'm Skanky Kong and you're tonight's contestants on my Bonanza! It's easy to play, just pick a game and you're away!





Wacky,  
nutty and  
lovable.



Excluding the end of area boss  
how many levels were there on  
the first area of the island?



Aim Diddy  
carefully at  
the bull's-eye  
for bonus  
points.



That is one big rat.

**T**he year is coming to a close and we all know that the hot games of last Christmas will revisit us in the form of sequels like the ghosts who visited Scrooge. **Donkey Kong Country** is the game that comes back for the holidays, but this time out, it's Diddy Kong who's the star of the show. The two player wackiness that was so much fun in the first game will continue via a new partner for Diddy in the form of Dixie Kong.

When I first saw this game at E3, I was impressed with the added special effects that made the action look even better than the original. Now that the game is complete, I can say that the overall package is a worthy sequel to the mega-hit of last year.

The water effects in DKC2 are much improved from part one and create a more immersive world. The lava effects also

## "Diddy's back and he's come for his poppa."

are worth extra mention with the overall detail in graphics receiving a little boost. The gameplay is not that different from DKC1, with the exception of the cool ability to float/fly. This play mechanic definitely adds more to the enjoyment of the game as well as adding to the difficulty.

The stages are all redone and look very different from the first one. Of course there are also new enemies that roam around and are generally up to no good.

I thought this game was longer, harder and more enjoyable than the fantastic original. If you haven't gotten totally jaded on platformers, I don't even have to tell you to watch out for this game. That is unless you haven't finished **Yoshi's Island**.

**Wataru Maruyama**

1-2 players  
back-up memory  
24 megs  
action

Nintendo of America  
Machine: SNES  
Price: \$69.95  
Available: Now

Graphics  
**9**  
Sound  
**8**  
Playability  
**9**

**ULTIMATE  
GAMER  
FINAL RATING  
9**

**SUPER NINTENDO**

## Secret of Evermore Square Soft



If RPGs are your thing, then you know that the bed you want to be sleeping in is Square Soft's. Now, with the release of **Secret of Evermore**, that bed will seem all the more comfortable. This game has it all: a great story, slick graphics and cool monsters. Action is turned-based and game depth is great. That—and the fact that it's from Square Soft—is all you pretty much need to know. It's just that good.

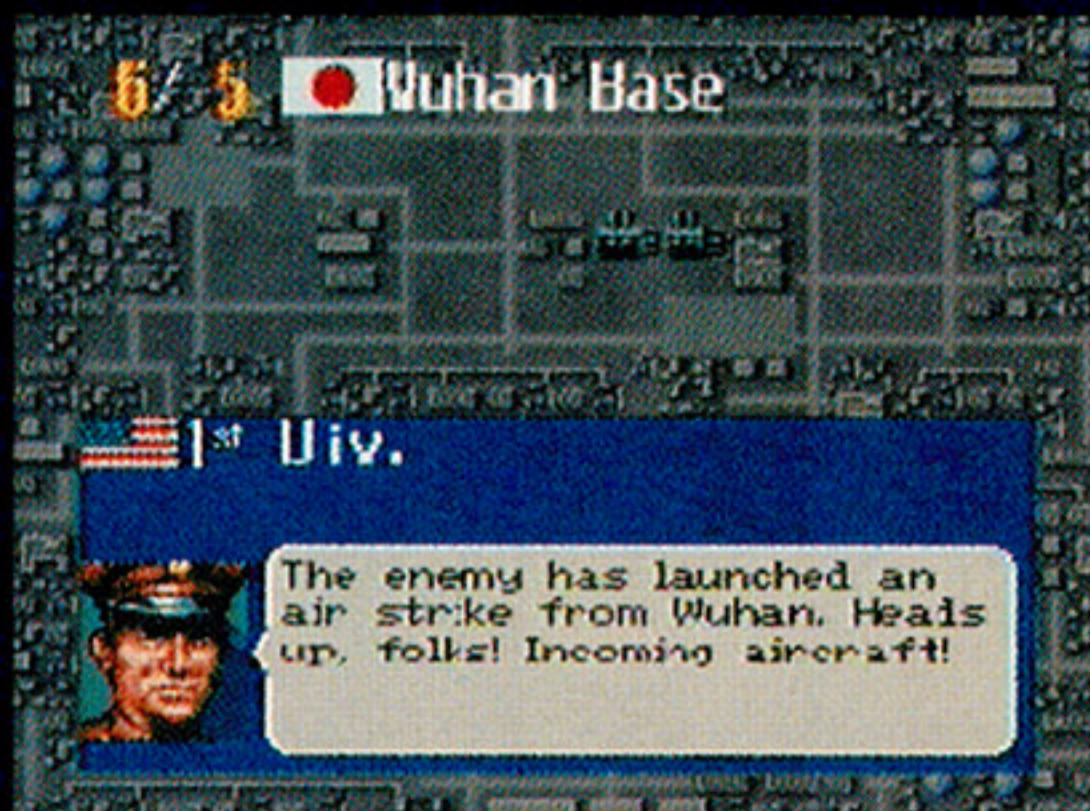
FINAL RATING

**8**

GRAPHICS	8
SOUND	6
PLAYABILITY	8

**SUPER NINTENDO**

## PTO II Koei



Koei is synonymous with quality, historical sims. So what's with the "6"? **PTO II**, is chock-full of stats, historical records and things to do, but that's just it: there's too much. You get so bogged down in every minute detail, that the big picture, and the enjoyment, get lost in the soup. If you are heavy into sims, this will be paradise, otherwise, stick with Koei's other stuff; too much is going on here.

FINAL RATING

**6**

GRAPHICS	7
SOUND	5
PLAYABILITY	4

**SUPER NINTENDO**

## Separation Anxiety Acclaim



Remember **Maximum Carnage**? There was a game that people either loved or hated. Personally, I found a lot of enjoyment in that game. The sequel, however, doesn't do it for me. I don't like the graphics; plain and simple. The moves and sound are almost the same, as are the enemies, seemingly ported directly out of the original. With so little changed, you must ask yourself, "Is it really worth it?"

FINAL RATING

**5**

GRAPHICS	5
SOUND	6
PLAYABILITY	6

**GENESIS 32X**

## Star Trek: Starfleet Academy Interplay



Can you believe it? Two 32X games in the same issue! You'd think someone bought the thing. 32X's graphic and sound capabilities are used effectively here, unfortunately this game is boring. **Trek** geeks can test themselves in a number of areas to see if they have what it takes to dawn the uniform of a Starfleet officer. Yawn. They should make fewer **Star Trek** and more **Star Wars** games.

FINAL RATING

**5**

GRAPHICS	8
SOUND	7
PLAYABILITY	3

**GENESIS 32X**

## World Series Baseball Sega



The best baseball sim has been given a facelift. **WSB** is now available for duped 32X owners nationwide. What does this mean? Better sound, better graphics and better gameplay. This is a remarkable game that will now take its predecessor's place at the top of the baseball ladder. So, if you are one of the unlucky few stuck with that monstrosity of a Sega system, here's your vindication.

FINAL RATING

**8**

GRAPHICS	8
SOUND	7
PLAYABILITY	8

**JAGUAR**

## Pitfall: The Mayan Adventure Activision



Jaguar owners rejoice! Now you too can enjoy the fine look and playability of Activision's **Pitfall: The Mayan Adventure**. Play Harry Jr., on an adventure to save Harry Sr. The look and sound of this game are an improvement over other versions. With more colors and sound capacity, the game jumps out and grabs you. Also it is said that the playability has been enhanced, but I couldn't tell.

FINAL RATING

**7**

GRAPHICS	8
SOUND	7
PLAYABILITY	7

PC  
CD-ROM

## Hardball 5 Accolade



Another **Hardball** game; you know what to expect. Although I, myself, don't particularly like sports games on the PC (it's an RPG world), I can't find much fault with this title. Cool graphics, 3 different commentators, solid playability and a butt-load of stats make this a top contender in the world of baseball sims. My only beef is that the field looks flat, but that's because I'm spoiled by 3-D platform games.

FINAL RATING

8

GRAPHICS	7
SOUND	8
PLAYABILITY	8

JAGUAR  
CD

## Hover Strike: Unconquered Lands Atari



Why? That's the first thing that popped into my head when I cranked this game up. Why is this so lame? I don't know. Hell, I don't think anyone knows for sure. What I do know is that they can keep these unconquered lands; I don't want 'em. Confusing play, choppy scrolling and uninspired sound make this game tedious to review and even more tedious to play. Stick to **Doom**.

FINAL RATING

4

GRAPHICS	6
SOUND	3
PLAYABILITY	4

PlayStation

## FIFA '96 EA Sports



VS: Virtual Stadium—the buzz word of the next generation of EA Sports games. A truly 3-D playing field with some nice little soccer players peppered on top running about is what you will get. Same great gameplay as seen on the 3DO version, but this time the graphics are souped-up as is the audio, which boasts over a million possible combinations of color commentary. Not bad.

FINAL RATING

9

GRAPHICS	8
SOUND	10
PLAYABILITY	9

GENESIS

## College Football Nat'l Champs II Sega



It's not **College Football USA '96**, but what is. Instead of the 108 teams in the aforementioned cart, here you only get 32. Tough breaks. The playability is okay, but the zoom feature can really throw you. You can turn it off, but then you have to play from blimp view. There are lots of stats and bone-crunching hits, but it still doesn't hold a candle to **CFU '96**. This game just doesn't do your alma mater justice.

FINAL RATING

6

GRAPHICS	7
SOUND	5
PLAYABILITY	6

PlayStation

## Theme Park Electronic Arts



You've gotta love this game. It was great on PC, it was great on 3DO and now its greatness can be experienced by PlayStation owners. Build your own theme park, it's as simple as that. Unfortunately, you will have to deal with ride breakdowns, litter, unhappy patrons and the high cost of property. Think you can handle it? One of Bullfrog's best creations, **Theme Park** is pure enjoyment.

FINAL RATING

8

GRAPHICS	8
SOUND	8
PLAYABILITY	8

SEGA  
SATURN

## Sim City 2000 Maxis



This must be heaven: two of my favorite sims coming to the 32-bit systems. **Sim City 2000** is an engrossing, complex and exciting (for reasons I haven't figured out yet) game that will keep you glued to the boob tube for heinous amounts of hours. Build and run your own metropolis, controlling crime, pollution and safeguarding against disaster in order to keep your city a thriving community.

FINAL RATING

8

GRAPHICS	8
SOUND	6
PLAYABILITY	8

# TACTICAL

STRATEGIES ▾ CHEATS ▾ CODES

We here at **Ultimate Gamer** understand that even the best of players may have a bad day every now and then. Since we don't want any unnecessary mass-murders taking place, we feel it's our duty to arm you with nothing but the very best tips and codes available. Depend on **Tactical** every month for an easy solution to your gaming problems.



## MORTAL KOMBAT 3 SPECIAL

### PLAYSTATION CHEATS

#### Play as Smoke

Rotate the D-pad clockwise during the opening demo to access the "Ultimate Kombat Kode" input screen. Enter the code Dragon-MK-Dragon-Goro-Skull-Goro by pressing **R1** once, **△** six times, **X** six times and **○** nine times. Now the hidden character Smoke is at your command!

#### Secret Cheat Mode

During the opening demo, quickly press **X, ○, △, R1, R1, R2, R2, R1, R1**. You'll hear Shao Kahn say, "You will never win." Now press **START**; when the stone block ap-

pears with the word "KOMBAT" in red, press **Up** to access a secret cheat menu. Turn "Free Play" on for infinite credits in the one-player mode. Turn

"Smoke" on to activate him as a playable character without using the Ultimate Kombat Kode. Turn "Fatality Time" off to give yourself infinite time to perform fatalities. Turn "Level Select" on



and you'll be able to choose any stage—including the Hidden Portal—from a menu at the bottom of the character-select screen after you choose your fighter. With "One Round Match" on, fights will last just one round, and with "One Hit Death" on, the first player to strike will automatically win the round. If you can't remember this code, here's a simpler version: During the demo, press **X, L1, L2**. Now you can access a shorter version of the cheat menu without the "One Round Match" or "One Hit Match" options.

### GENESIS CHEATS

#### Play as Smoke

When the MK3 logo appears on a black background at the beginning of the game and you hear a gong, press **A, B, B, A, Down, A, B, B, A, Down, Up, Up**. You'll hear Shao Kahn say, "Smoke," and the background will change to red. Now Smoke is a playable character in both the one- and two-player modes.

#### Endurance Mode

At the main menu, highlight the words "Start Game," hold the **A** and **C** buttons and press **START**. This takes you to a hidden character-select screen in which both players can choose up to eight fighters for an Endurance match. With a multi-player adapter, up to four people can play.

#### "Cheats" Menu

At the main menu—while the words "Start Game" and "Options" are on the screen—press **A, C, Up, B, Up, B, A, Down**.

A new menu item called "Cheats" will appear; select this and you'll be able to access several new cheat options, including a sound test and the ability to give yourself up to 95 credits.

#### "Secrets" Menu

At the "Start Game/Options" menu, press **B, A, Down, Left, A, Down, C, Right, Up, Down**. A new menu item called "Secrets"



will appear; this allows you to change the timer speed, see any character's ending story and choose your Kombat Zone.

#### "Killer Codes" Menu

At the "Start Game/Options" menu, press **C, Right, A, Left, A, Up, C, Right, A, Left, A, Up**. A new menu item called "Killer Codes" will appear; this lets you play the hidden shooter game or activate Smoke, Motaro and Shao Kahn as playable characters. (Note: the bosses can only be used in one-player mode.) There's also a "Quick End" option that lets you perform fatalities, animalities, etc. with just one or two buttons; it's usually the last button (or combination of buttons) you'd hit if you did the finishing move normally.

### SUPER NES CHEATS

#### Play as Smoke

At the copyright screen that appears when you first turn the game on, hold **Left** and **A**. When the Williams logo appears, release the buttons and hold **Right** and **B**. When the words "There is no knowledge that is not power" appear, release the buttons and hold **X** and **Y**. Continue to hold the buttons until the MK3 logo appears; Smoke will walk into the screen and you'll hear Shao Kahn say, "Outstanding!" Smoke is now a playable character in the one- and two-player modes.

#### Tournament Mode

At the main menu, highlight the word "Start," hold the **L** and **R** buttons on top of the controller and press **START**. This

gives you a hidden character-select screen in which both players can choose up to eight different fighters for an Endurance match. Hold **Up** and press **START** for a random selection of all eight characters.

#### Sound Test

At the main menu, press **A, Y, B, X**. This adds a "Sound Test" option.

#### "Kool Stuff" Menu

At the main menu, press **Up, Up, Down, Down, Left, Right, A, B, A**. This adds a new option called "Kool Stuff." Here you can disable the timer, disable the fatality time limit, play the secret shooter game, pick any stage, enable a "Pause" feature and



see the ending credits.

#### "Kooler Stuff" Menu

At the main menu, press **SELECT, A, B, Right, Left, Down, Down, Up, Up**. This adds a new option called "Kooler Stuff." Here you can get extra continues or activate Smoke, among other cheats. You can also activate Motaro as a playable character (only in two-player games.)

#### "Scott's Stuff" Menu

At the main menu, press **X, B, A, Y, Up, Left, Down, Right, Down**. This adds a new option called "Scott's Stuff." Here you can activate Shao Kahn as a playable character (only in two-player mode) and enable many of the "vs. screen" codes. There's also a "Hyper Fighting" mode and a slot machine to help you find more codes.

## PLAYSTATION



### NBA JAM TOURNAMENT EDITION

#### • Extended Roster

Each of the NBA teams in *Jam T.E.* has more than three players available to choose from. To find these hidden bonus characters, just put the cursor on the team you'd like to choose, hold the **SELECT** button and rotate the D-pad in a counter-clockwise direction. A card will drop from the top of the screen that says "EXTENDED ROSTER"; now you'll see extra players as you toggle through the line-ups with the **SELECT** button. Note that if you choose the extended roster for one team, then decide to choose a different team, the extended roster will not be available for the second team. This trick also works at the "Substitution" screen.

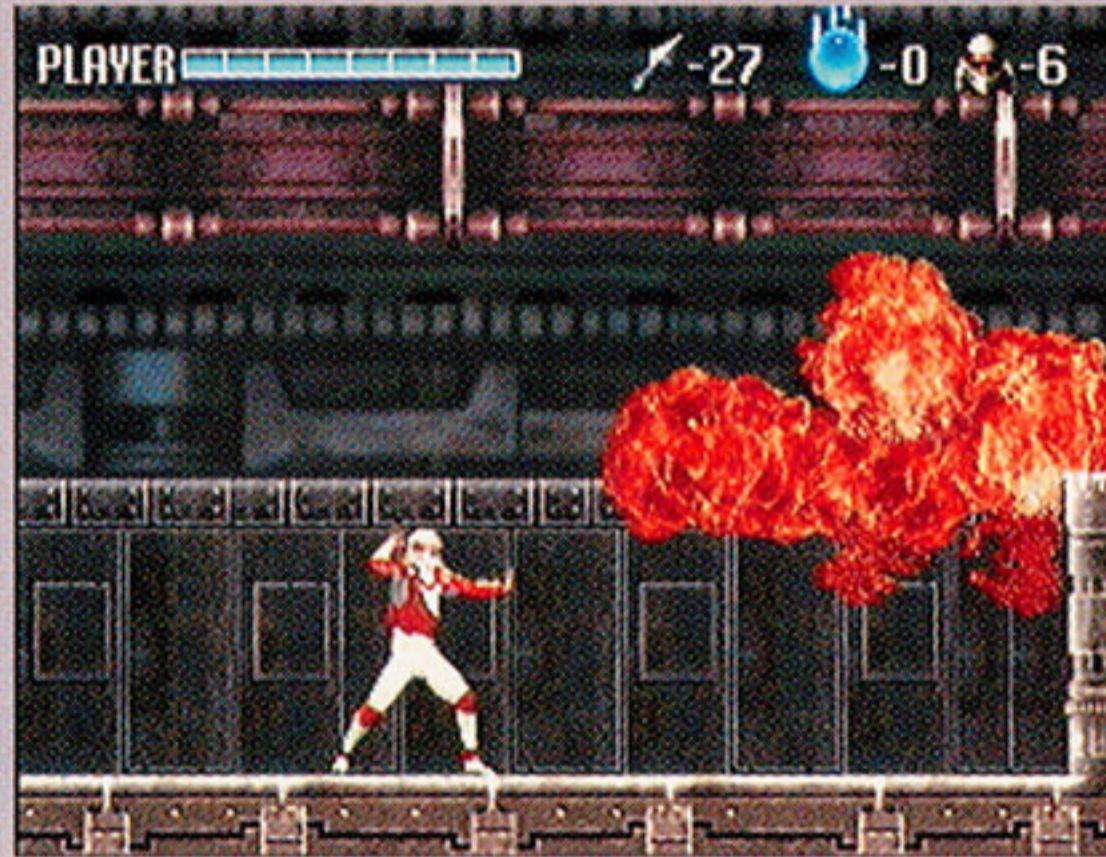
#### • Power-Up Codes

Just like all of the other versions of *NBA JAM*, the *PlayStation Tournament Edition* offers plenty of power-up codes. Each of these codes must be performed at the "Vs." screen, when the announcer is saying, "Tonight's match-up...etc." In most cases, you'll see text on the screen that tells you the code is in place. Some of the codes don't show you immediate results on the screen, but you'll know they have been activated if you see your player flashing white before the tip-off.

- Display Shot Percentage: ↑ ↑ ↓ ↓ ▲
- Power-up Dunks: ← → × ○ ○ ×
- Power-up Defense: → ↑ ↓ → ↓ ↑
- Power-up 3-Pointers: ↑ ↓ ← → ← ↓ ↑
- Power-up Fire: ↓ → → ○ ▲ ←
- Quick Hands: ← ← ← ← ○ →
- Max Power: → → ← → × × →
- High Shots: ↑ ↓ ↑ ↓ → ↑ ○ ○ ○ ○ ↓
- Push one opponent and both fall: ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ← ← ← ← ○ ○
- Push one opponent and only his

- teammate falls: ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ← ← ← ← ○ ▲
- Baby Mode: ○ □ ○ □ ○ □
- Huge Mode: ▲ × ▲ × ▲ × ▲ × ▲ × ▲ × ▲ ×
- Big Head: ▲ □ × ○ ▲ □ × ○
- Mammoth Head: ○ × □ ▲ ○ × □ ▲ ○ × □ ▲ ○ × □ ▲

## SATURN



### SHINOBI LEGIONS

#### • 999 Shurikens

Every *Shinobi* game has an "extra shuriken" cheat, and *Legions* is no exception. To earn a huge supply of these deadly throwing stars, just visit the "Options" menu and move the pointer to the "Shurikens" option. Now hold the **L** and **R** buttons on top of the controller and press **C**, **A**, **B**. The number of Shurikens will change to 999, more than you'll ever need.

#### • 99 Lives

To start the game with dozens of extra lives, try this code: Press **START** at the first title screen, then highlight the words "Game Start" and press **A**, **Z**, **B**, **Y**, **C**, **X**, **START**. You won't get any kind of signal to confirm that the code has been entered properly, but when the game starts you'll see that you have 99 lives in reserve.

#### • Expert Mode

If you're so good at *Shinobi Legions* that you can beat the game with your eyes closed and one hand tied behind your back, try this code, tough guy: Press **START** at the first title screen, then highlight the words "Game Start" and press **A**, **B**, **C**, **B**, **A**, **START**. You won't get any signal to confirm that the code has been entered properly, but when the game starts you'll be in "Expert Mode"—with no lives in reserve and only one hit on your energy bar.

#### • Stage Select

The stage-select code in *Shinobi Legions* is so simple, we wouldn't be surprised if some of you have already found it just by messing

around with the buttons on the controller. However, for those of you who insist on having every cheat handed to you on a silver platter, here goes: Start a game, then press **START** to pause. While the word "PAUSE" is on the screen, simply press **A**, **B**, **A**, **B**, **C**. You'll see a number appear in the lower-left corner of the screen; this represents the number of the current stage followed by "-1". To change the number, press **Left** or **Right** on the D-pad. Once you've decided which stage you want to play, press the **START** button to warp directly to it.

## PLAYSTATION/SATURN



### STREET FIGHTER: THE MOVIE

#### • Play as Akuma

This works in all modes except the "Movie Battle". To do it, you must enter the following button code as fast as humanly possible at the character-select screen. If it doesn't work, it's because you didn't do it fast enough, so try again:

**PLAYSTATION:** Press **Up**, **R1**, **Down**, **L2**, **Right**, **L1**, **Left**, **R2**.

**SATURN:** Press **Up**, **B**, **Down**, **Z**, **Right**, **X**, **Left**, **Y**.

If you've done this correctly, you'll see a faint, scary image of Akuma in the TV monitor where your fighter's face is displayed. Now the devil fighter is at your command.

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# IN SEASON

IN THIS CORNER . . .

**M**an has always been violent by nature. From dragging women by the hair through caves to throwing his enemies to the lions, man has had an almost magnetic attraction to brutality.

It seems a bit sad, but other than a few select things like laptop computers and ice beer, humanity has not changed all that much since those primitive days. Maybe that's why the sport of boxing has always maintained a steady following since its inception. Two men getting into a 12-foot ring for the sole purpose of beating each other to a pulp may not be everybody's cup of tea, but there's no denying that it's about as basic as it gets in this technology-driven world.

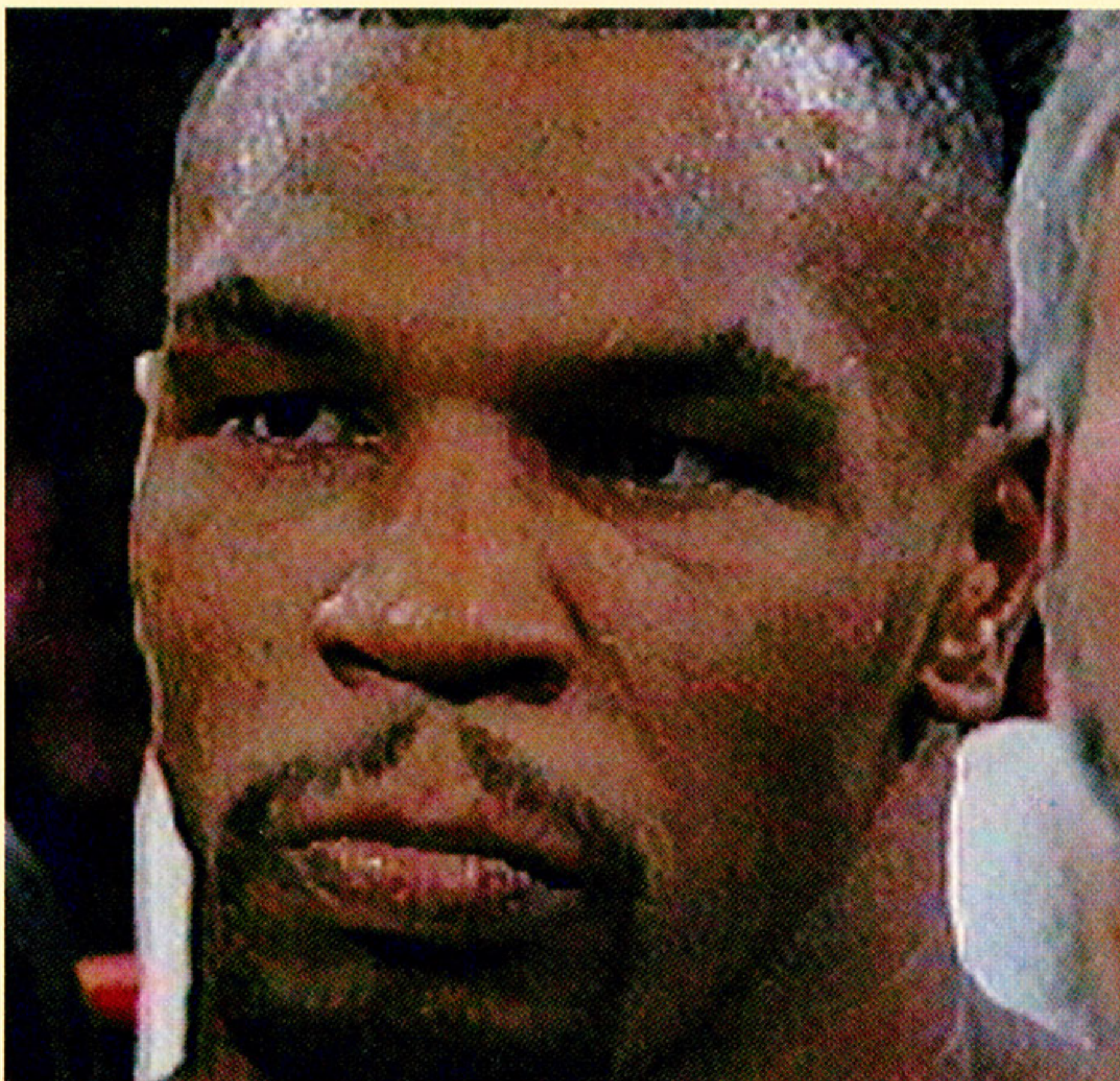
Boxing's biggest asset has traditionally been found not in the sport itself, but rather in the combatant's personalities. People like Jorge Paez, George Foreman and Mike Tyson add fuel to an already exciting sport with colorful dialog and—sometimes—illegal activities. With the addition of the violence factor, one might automatically assume that this sport would make a great translation to video game format. Not so. Out of all of the major sporting events in this country, boxing has probably had the worst video game track-record of any other. Is it simply because there just haven't been as many boxing games produced as, say, football games? That is one likely reason, but the other is less obvious. Boxing requires many subtleties; you can't win solely on throwing punches-in-bunches. There is feinting, ducking, shoulder movement, footwork, stamina and a host of other physical attributes which, unfortunately, do not translate easily to the video game screen.

Within the last six months, there has been a big increase in the number of boxing game titles. Tyson's release from prison may have something to do with it, too. We all remember what Nintendo did with **Mike Tyson's Punch Out** for the NES a few years back, but has Iron Mike signed on with any of the major sports game developers since his release from the slammer? We haven't confirmed it, but there are rumors circulating in the gaming community that a Mike Tyson boxing game deal has been in negotiations for some time. Who the lucky publisher is, we don't know, but as soon as we get word, we'll be sure to let you know.

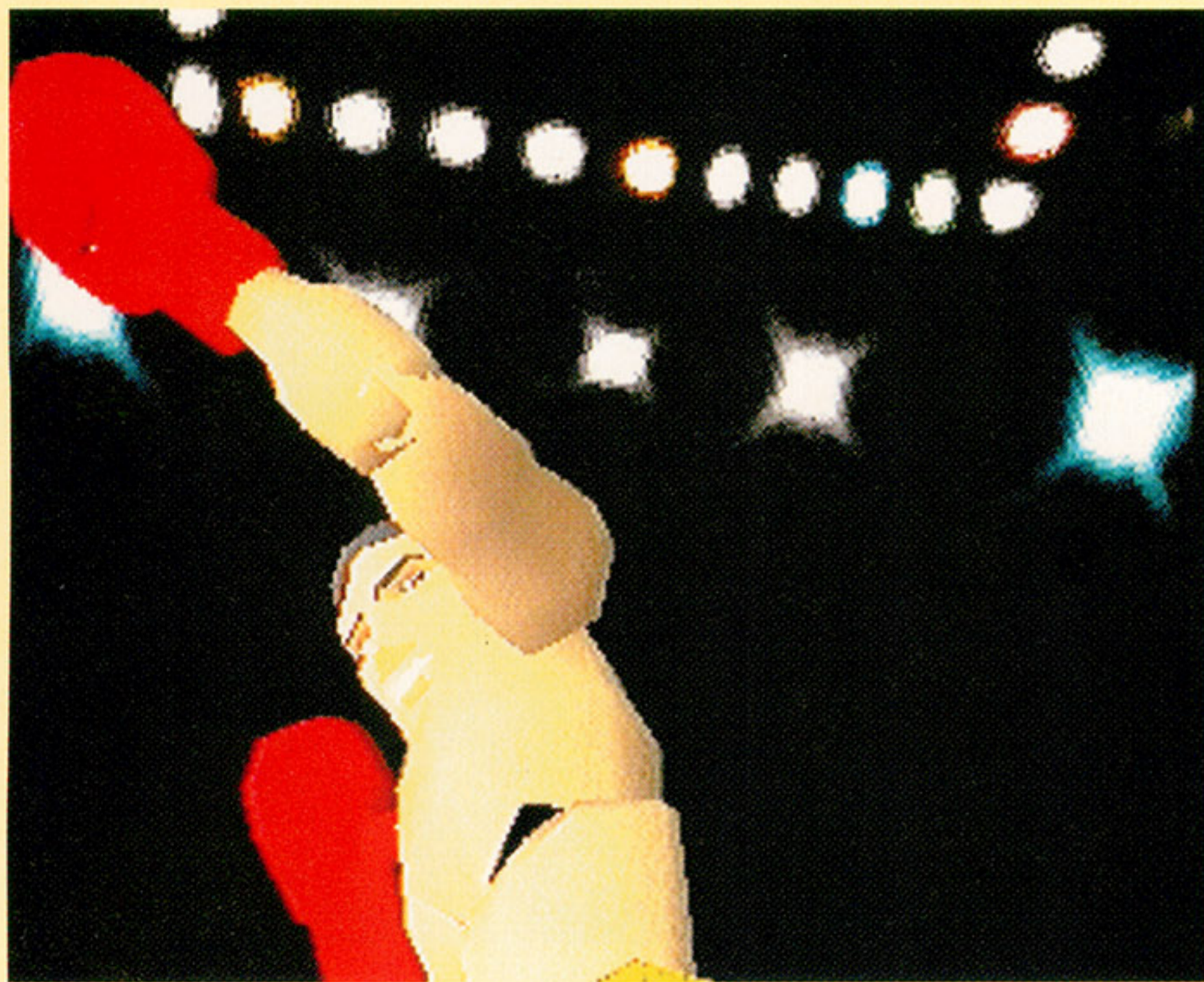
And now, onto the games. We've compiled a list of pivotal boxing video games along with screen shots and commentary. Some are well-known, established boxing titles, while others are in the works as I write this. And now, ladies and gentlemen...let's get ready to rumble!



**Evander Holyfield and Riddick Bowe have each made video game appearances.**



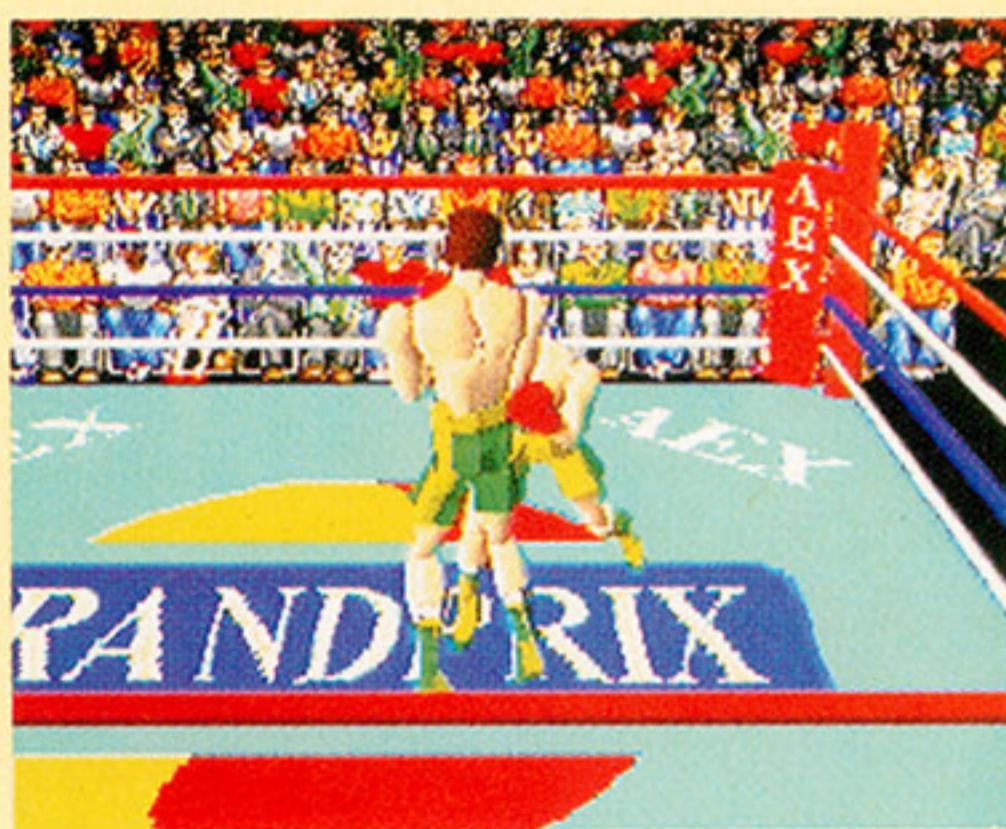
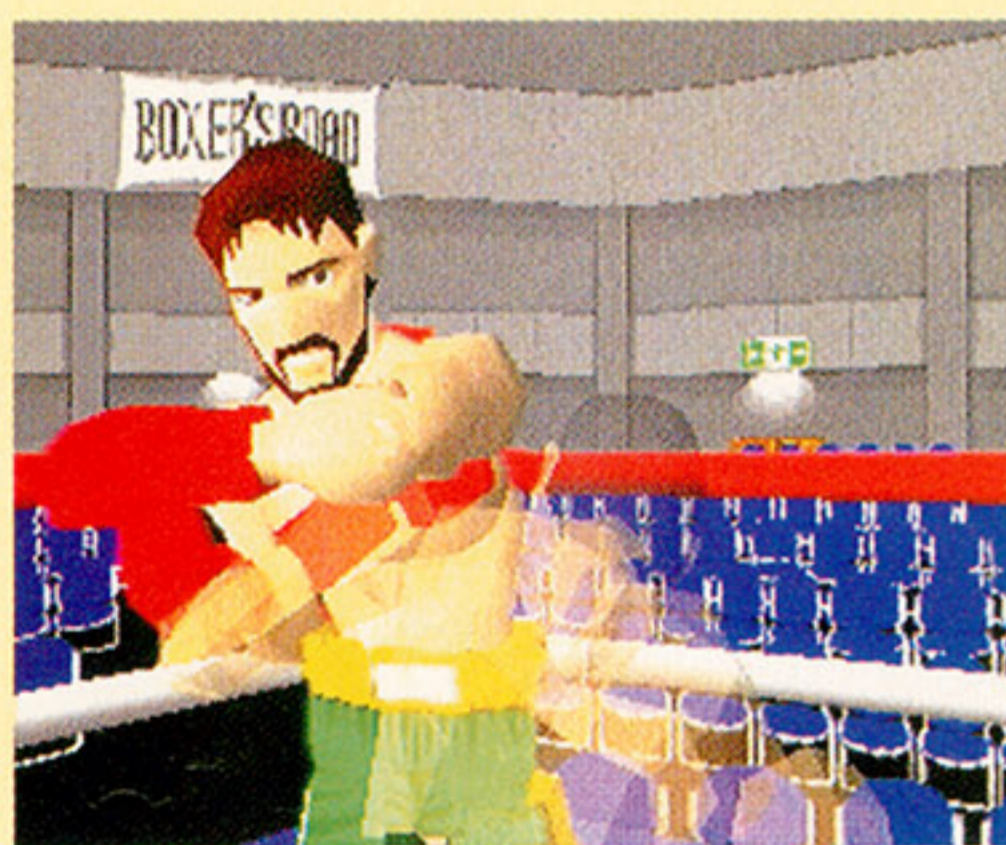
**Regardless of his rape conviction, Tyson should have no problem licensing himself a second time around.**



## BOXER'S ROAD

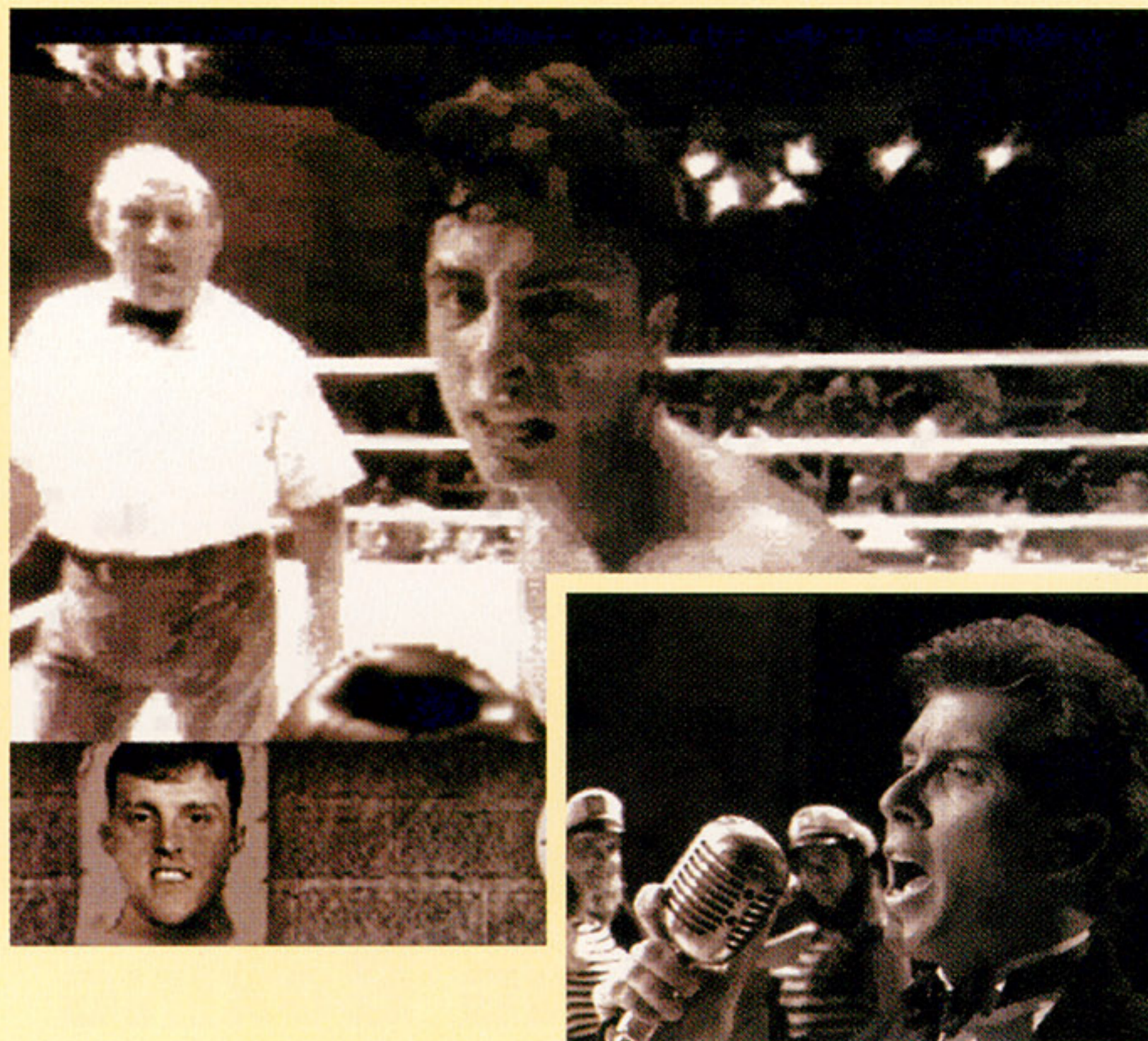
SONY PLAYSTATION (IMPORT)  
ONE/TWO-PLAYERS

This is definitely not your average boxing game! A mixture of simulation and action, **Boxer's Road** is a decent effort by a company called New [check out the review in last month's *ULTIMATE GAMER*—Ed]. Build the perfect fighter and go for the title by training hard and eating right.



The game features a built-in calendar which lets you pace your boxer's career; after all, it wouldn't be wise to schedule two bouts for the same week. One very cool feature is the video playback mode. You can record your fights on a virtual VCR and save them onto a memory card. And since the game takes quite a long time to complete, this option comes in very handy. If you'd rather skip the strategy end of it, you can get right to the action by selecting arcade mode.

The graphics are a few notches below PlayStation standards, but *Boxer's Road*, as a whole, isn't half bad. If you're looking for a boxing title for your PlayStation, and can accept the fact that this game devotes a large chunk of its content to the simulation aspect, you'll probably enjoy it.



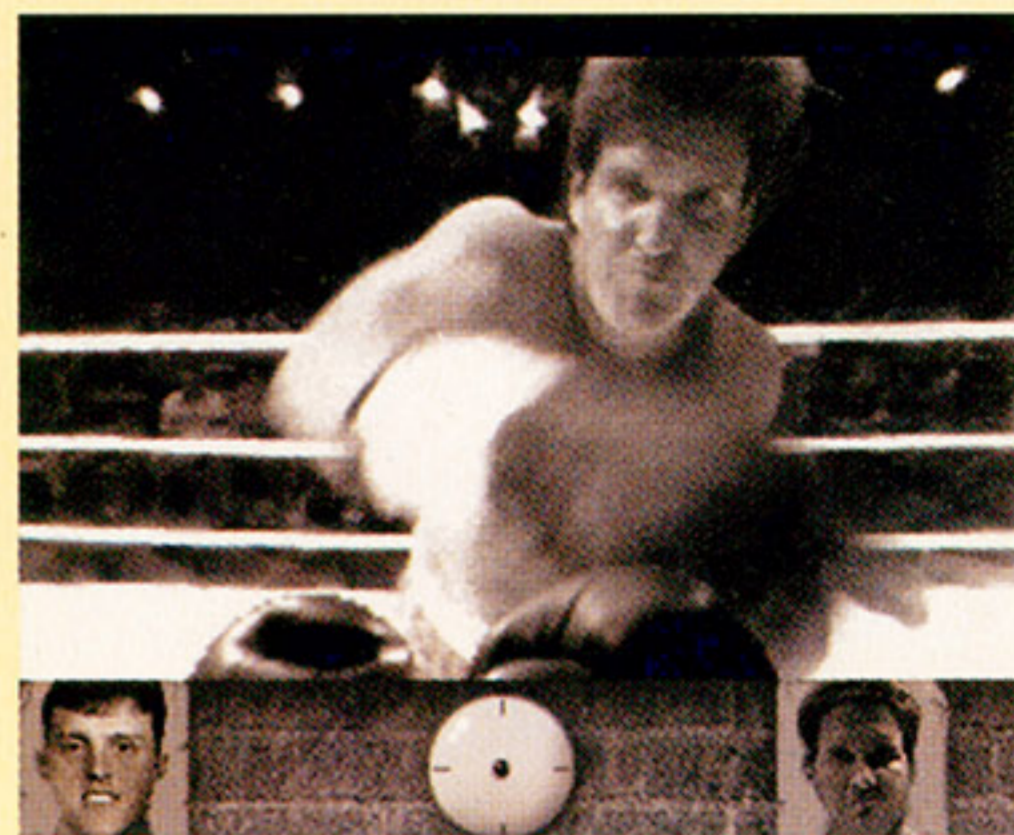
## PRIZE FIGHTER HEAVYWEIGHT EDITION

SEGA SATURN  
ONE-PLAYER

If you're a regular reader of *ULTIMATE GAMER*, you may already know our feelings towards FMV-based games. **Prize Fighter** made its debut on the Sega CD in the spring of '94, and it broke new ground in the video game boxing category. Now Digital Pictures is releasing a sequel for the Saturn. High production values and 32-bit technology translate into an even slicker boxing fest than the original.

Viewed in first-person 3D, the game provides a very realistic, in-your-face boxing experience. The use of Full-Motion Video is abundant (in fact, it's the whole game), but in this case, it works to an advantage. Your fighter's arm movements are actually made up of individual FMV segments, but amazingly, there is no CD access lag time at all! You work your way through the standings by fighting four tough guys in an effort to get to a title fight. On your way, you'll come in contact with a variety of people. Like the original game, there are even shady characters with dollar signs in their eyes. It can get pretty rough out there! The ring card girls are hot, though!

The only drawback to *Prize Fighter Heavyweight Edition* is the fact that—like the first game (and 99% of all FMV-based games)—once you've seen most of the footage, replay value is near zero.

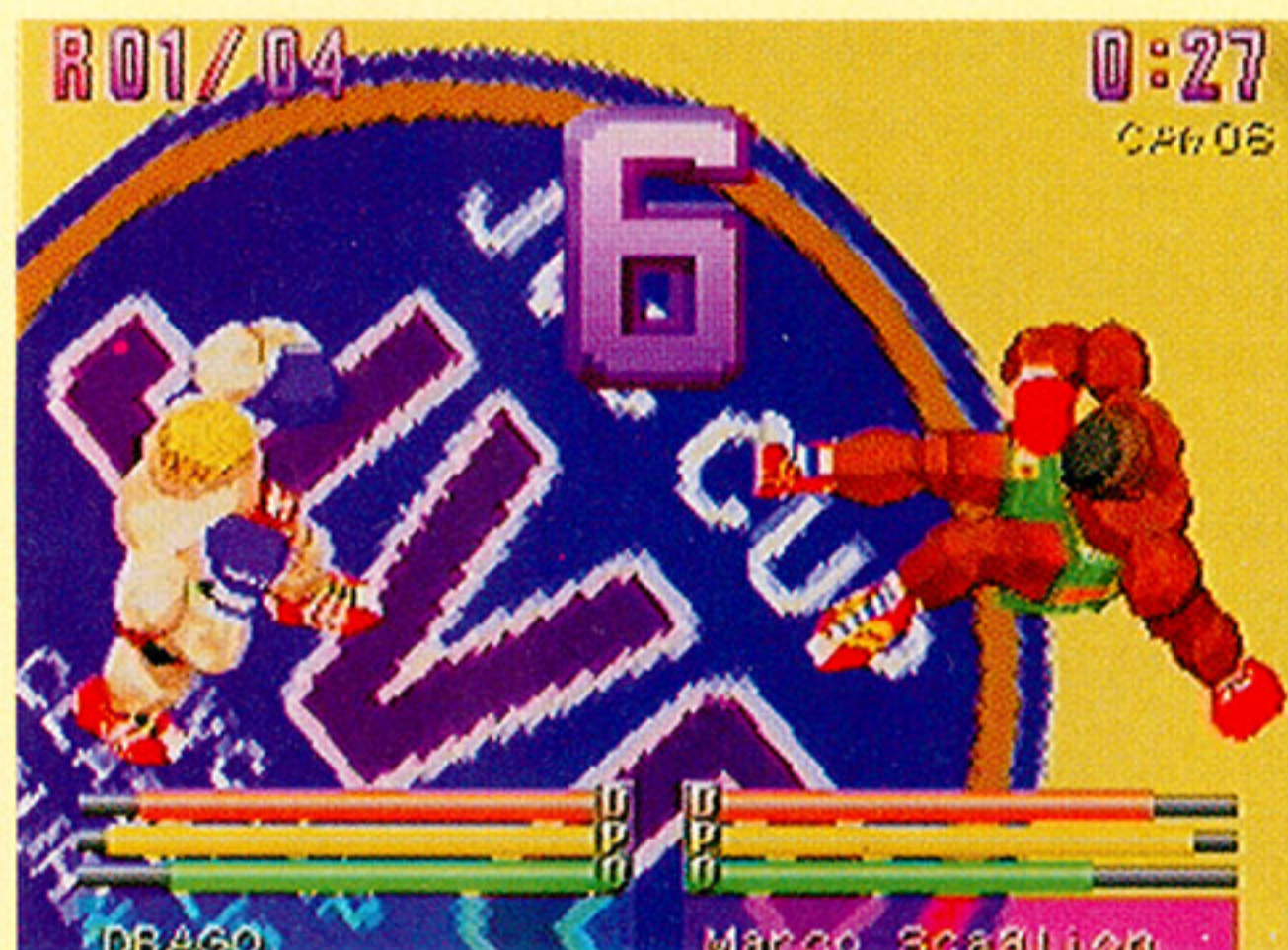




## CENTER RING BOXING

SEGA SATURN  
ONE/TWO-PLAYERS

**P**olygon-filled, Gourad-shaded boxers are cool-looking! **Center Ring Boxing** is still in the finishing stages as I write this, but judging by the 75% version we've got, it should do very well for itself once it ships. Build a customizable fighter and name him or her (yes! there are chicks in this game!).



In choosing a name for your boxer, up to 16 characters are available, so you can just imagine the sorts of names you can type in! Weight, height, speed and many other attributes are all completely adjustable, and as you make selections, the fighter's image changes accordingly on-screen.

Camera angles are switched on the fly via the top L and R buttons,

and they look good! Playability-wise, the controls are simple and easy to find in the heat of battle. The announcer yells out stuff like, "Wow! Whatta blow!" and, "The capacity crowd is on its feet!" One beef I have with the game at this point: The fighter's move around the ring as if they're just getting back from the Shady Acres Nursing Home (slo-owwww)! JVC—the developer of CRB—may have this corrected before final, though. For even more info, check out the preview in this issue.



## FOES OF ALI

3DO  
ONE/TWO-PLAYERS

**W**e previewed this game in last issue's **ULTIMATE GAMER**, and judging by what we've played so far, **Foes of Ali** could turn out to be the undisputed heavyweight champion of the world! Electronic Arts is taking no chances with its first entry into the boxing ring, and it shows! Every pivotal Muhammed Ali bout—with the exception of the fights with Foreman—is in here. The legendary faces of Ken Norton, Joe Frasier, Larry Holmes and Leon Spinks among others, have been completely digitized and are just waiting for the bell to ring! Just think: It's now possible to relive *The Rumble in The Jungle*, or *The Thrilla in Manilla*!

The control in *Foes of Ali* is superbly crafted, with true-to-life physical movements associated with boxing. As fighters accumulate damage, their faces become progressively bloodier and more bruised. And in first-person perspective, your vision can actually become blurred if you've taken too many nasty head shots! The 3DO is approaching PlayStation-caliber with this game, and that's no joke. Some 20 individual camera angles are at your disposal; a staggering amount. The viewpoints aren't switchable on-the-fly, as in **Center Ring Boxing**, but rather in the camera options screen. That's fine with me, just bring it on!





# FORMER CONTENDERS

**W**e've compiled a listing of several well-known boxing games from past years. Some of them are excellent all-around, some are barely playable, while others are...um, may we suggest you throw in the towel?

## EVANDER HOLYFIELD'S "REAL DEAL" BOXING

GENESIS

**G**ood graphics and fantastic control made this the leader in Genesis boxing games until 1993, when it was officially revamped and stamped with the new name, **Greatest Heavyweights**. In "Real Deal," create the perfect warrior and go for the belt by winning the title fight against Holyfield himself. The quickest route to Holyfield of course, was to enter in your name as "The Beast." This lit-

tle trick literally turned your boxer green and gave him full power, stamina, speed and defense. Lastly, taunting opponents with, "Come on and fight, you wimp!" has brought many a chuckle here at the office over the years.



## GREATEST HEAVYWEIGHTS

GENESIS

**W**hen Holyfield lost his belt to Riddick Bowe in their first championship bout (1993), Sega reworked their "Real Deal" Boxing title and slapped on a new label. **Greatest Heavyweights** contained virtually the same character designs, backgrounds and options as the Holyfield game, but added a rather impressive lineup of champions to the roster. Fighting as Muhammad Ali, Joe Frazier, Larry Holmes and Floyd Patterson made an already great



game even better! On top of that, Sega improved the scoring system and threw in a nifty instant replay feature. In our opinion, this is by far the best boxing game available for the Genesis.

## SUPER PUNCH-OUT!

SUPER NES

**M**ore of a goofy action game than a serious contest of wills, **Super Punch-Out!** was—and still is—a whole lotta fun. Based on the arcade game and a subsequent NES title (which initially bore the name of Mike Tyson), this Super NES version contained a first-person viewpoint and lots of crazy characters. If you want action and plenty of laughs, this is your ticket.



## GEORGE FOREMAN'S KO BOXING

SUPER NES

**R**eleased in 1992, this game brought new meaning to the word lame. Even with the official endorsement by big George, this game turned out to be a real weiner. The controls were sluggish, the fighters unresponsive and after five minutes of throwing punches, your fingers felt like they were going to fall off. In the end, **George Foreman's KO Boxing** was merely another unforgivable Acclaim disaster. Raahhgg!!!



# FLASHBACK

Every month, we step into the **ULTIMATE GAMER** Time machine and relive those early days of gaming. Think back with me to a time when some snazzy little portables were all the rage.

## The Second Generation of Portable Gaming

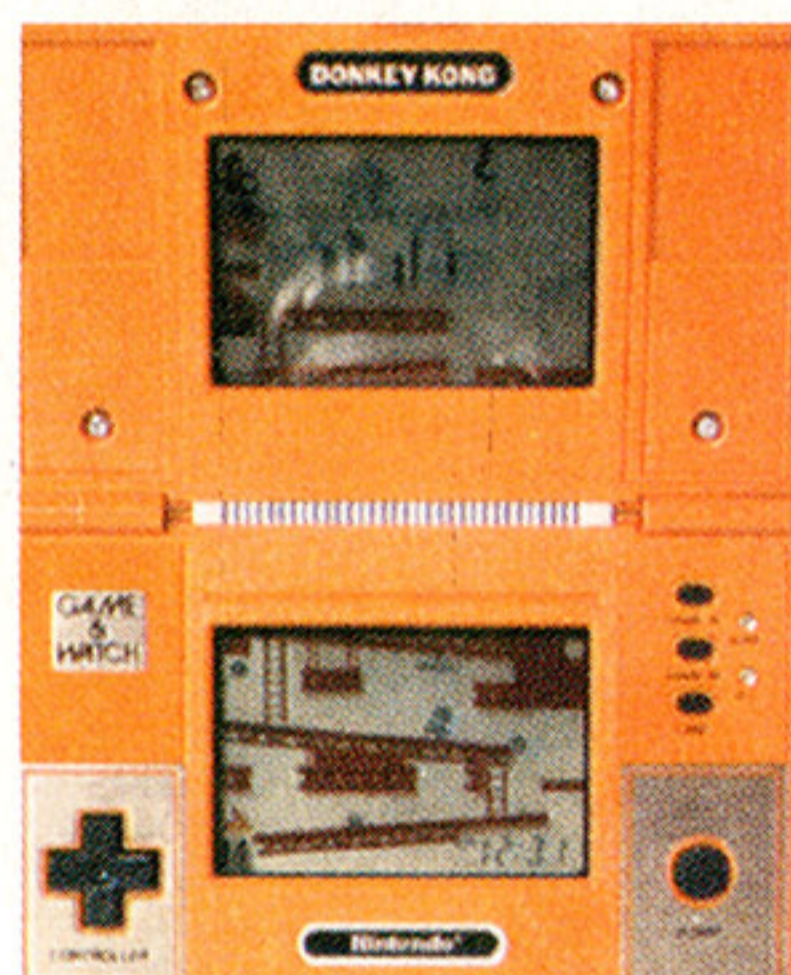
I can still recall lunchtime in the third grade at my elementary school. After eating whatever culinary delights our moms had prepared for us, we would hurriedly rush to the third grader's designated play area. We would almost get into fights to see who got to play **Parachute**, **Octopus**, or **Mickey Mouse** first. I don't think any of us realized the significance of this new entertainment phenomenon known as the Game & Watch.

The early '80s were turbulent years in gaming. The fall of the console systems such as Intellivision and Atari signaled to retailers that the public was moving away from gaming. As we now know, that is entirely untrue. Subpar games were released in hordes and at outrageous prices, triggering widespread consumer rejection.

Out of this swamp rose the Game & Watch series of portable happiness that spread across the country in a measured but effective pace. Effective in the sense that it generated word of mouth excitement and created

demand. G&W's were well designed and extremely addictive. Plus, they were also known for their durability, which I can personally vouch for since me and my fellow third graders really put it through its paces. They certainly took a licking and kept on ticking, which was important since they functioned as watches as well.

The first Game & Watch I actually owned was the multi-screen **Donkey Kong**. I remember being extremely upset



**DONKEY KONG**



**Nintendo's extremely successful Game & Watch lineup was just a small sign of many great things to come from the company.**

because local stores had been consistently sold out, but a visiting relative from Japan heard my pleas (well, probably through my mom) and presented it to me complete with an extra set of batteries! I took my G&W every where and I still have it to this day and it still works!

The single screen G&W's were the first to appear, followed closely by the Multi-screens. Some time later, micro vs. systems were released and contained a single wide screen and two connected controllers for two player action. I guess I was on to other things by then since I never saw these vs. systems or perhaps they were never released here in the States.

These gems were the product of the geniuses at Nintendo and were a precursor to their launch of a certain 8-bit entertainment system that would achieve global domination, but that's another story for another time (actually, another issue). I believe you can still find some of these treasures secondhand somewhere, but their place in history and all-around quality ensure these puppies will command a hefty bounty.

**Wataru Maruyama**



**The cool, two-player "versus" Game&Watches were only available in limited quantities.**

### SYSTEM SPECS:

**SYSTEM:** Games and Watches  
**MANUFACTURER:** Nintendo  
**RELEASE DATE:** Early '80s  
**PRICE:** \$14.95 to \$39.95  
**CONFIGURATIONS:** Single, Multi screen, and two player vs. systems

# CYBERIA™



Heavily-armed gunboats



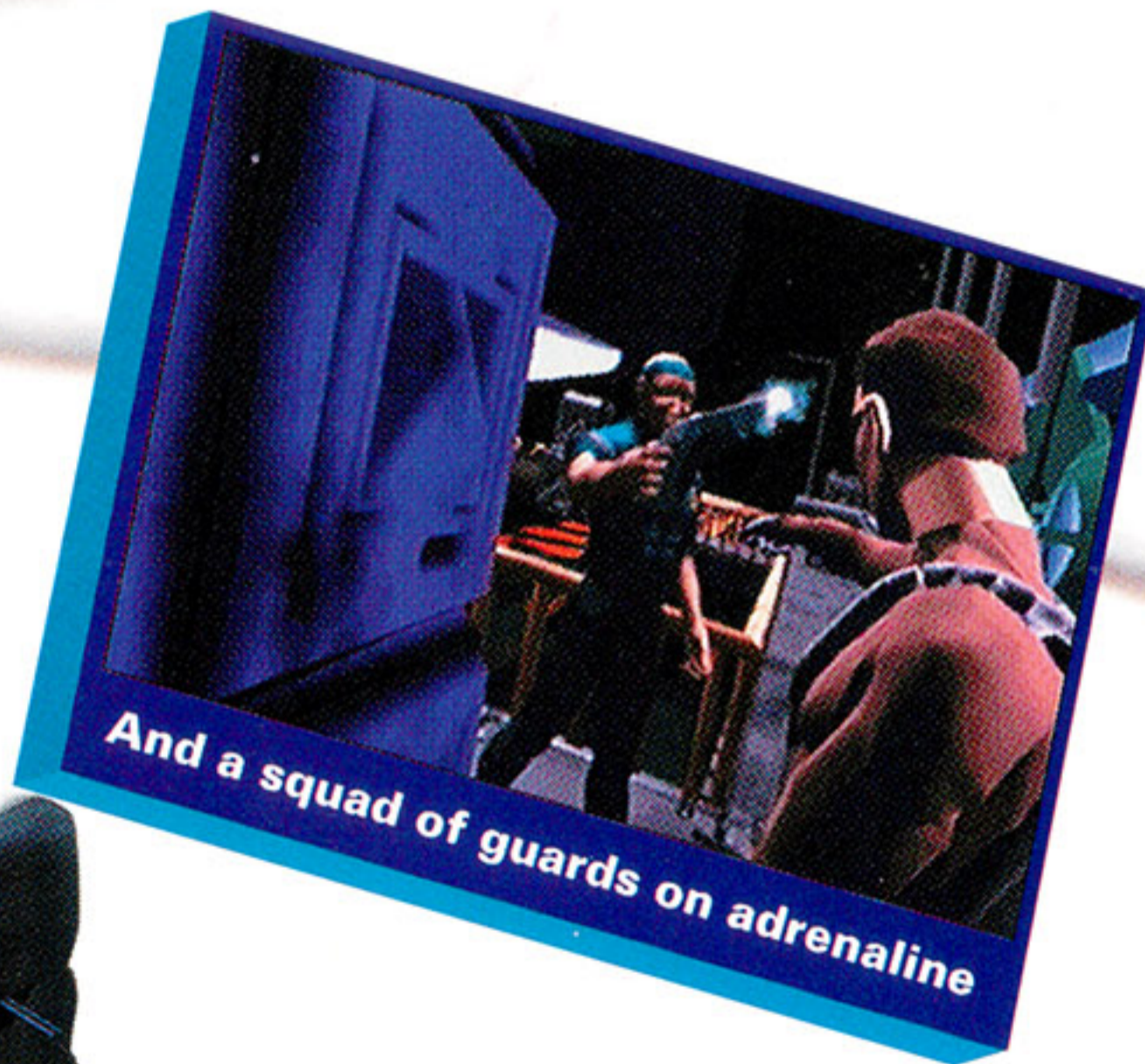
Jet fighters on your tail



Anti-aircraft fire



A fleet of armored tanks



And a squad of guards on adrenaline

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If PlayStation's Your Vessel...

# Jupiter Strike™

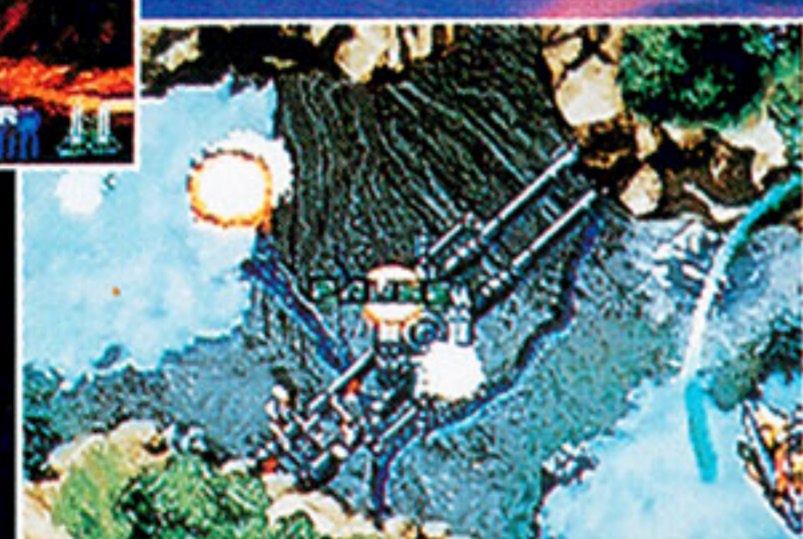
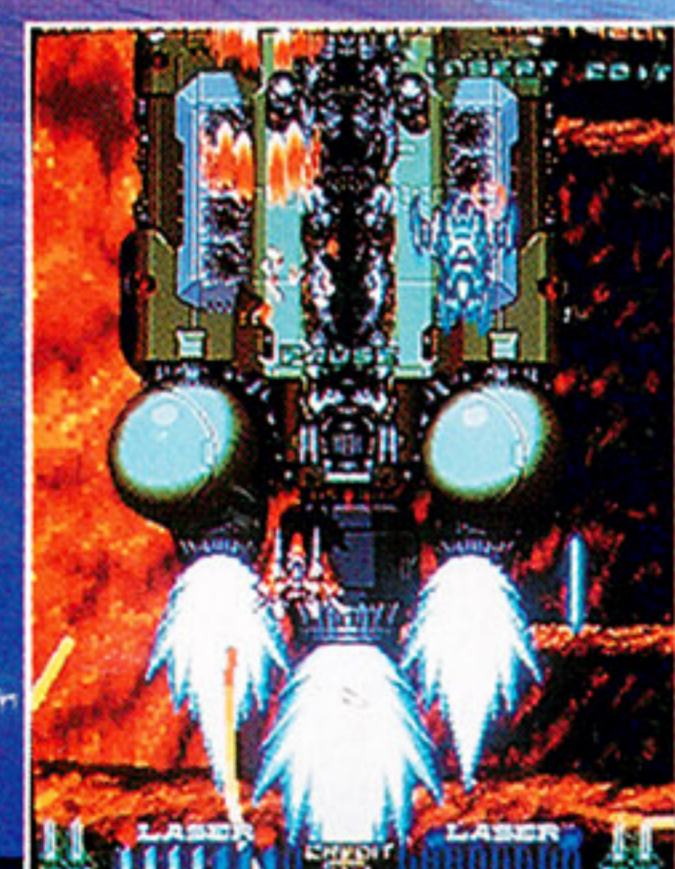
Earth invasion! Earth invasion! Annihilation is imminent! Deploy Jupiter Strike... Survival of the human race boils down to you! You're in the cockpit for the most realistic 3-D intergalactic war of all time! Through blackest space, raging asteroid belts with deadly



robotic colonies and vast armadas of alien warships, mankind's only hope for survival is...Jupiter Strike!



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