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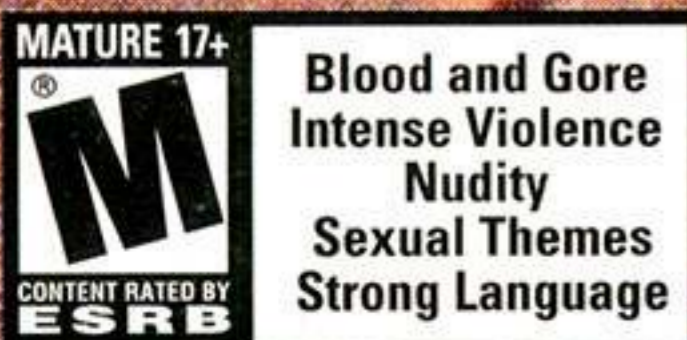
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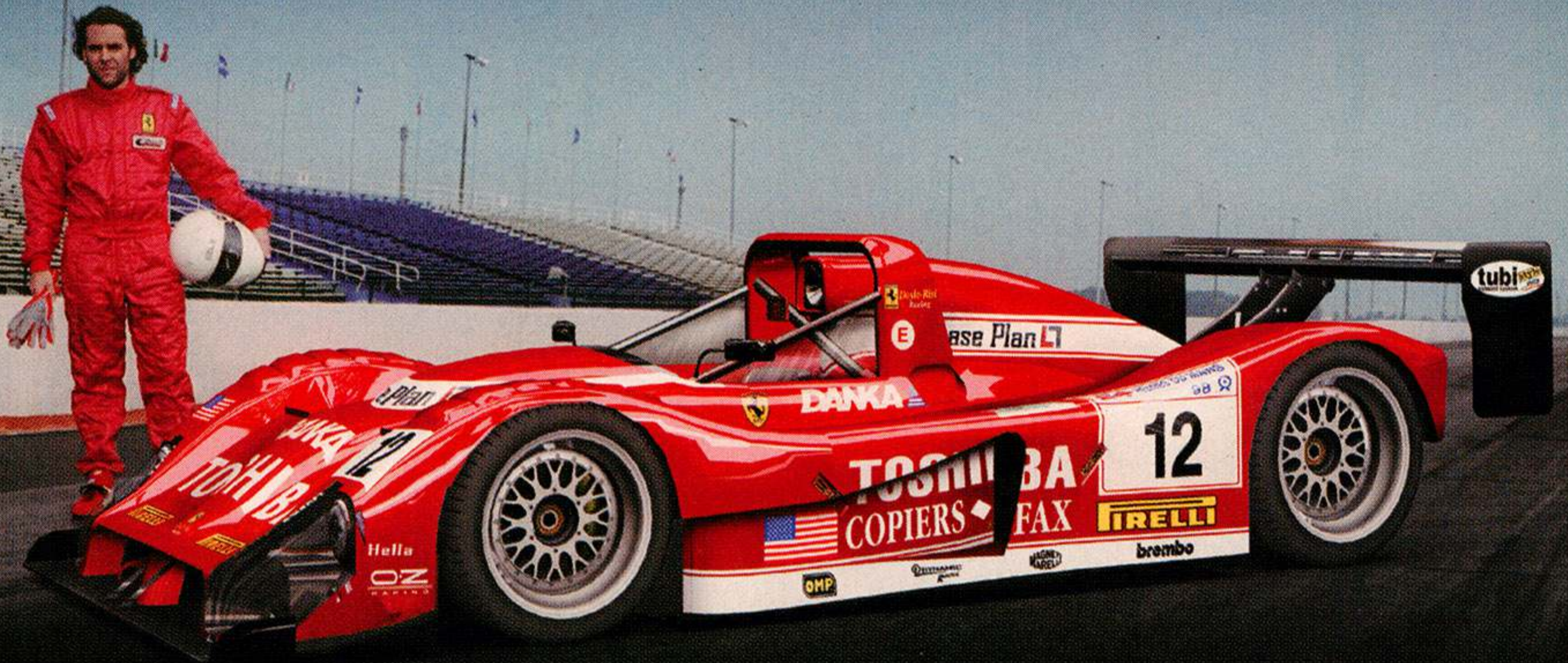
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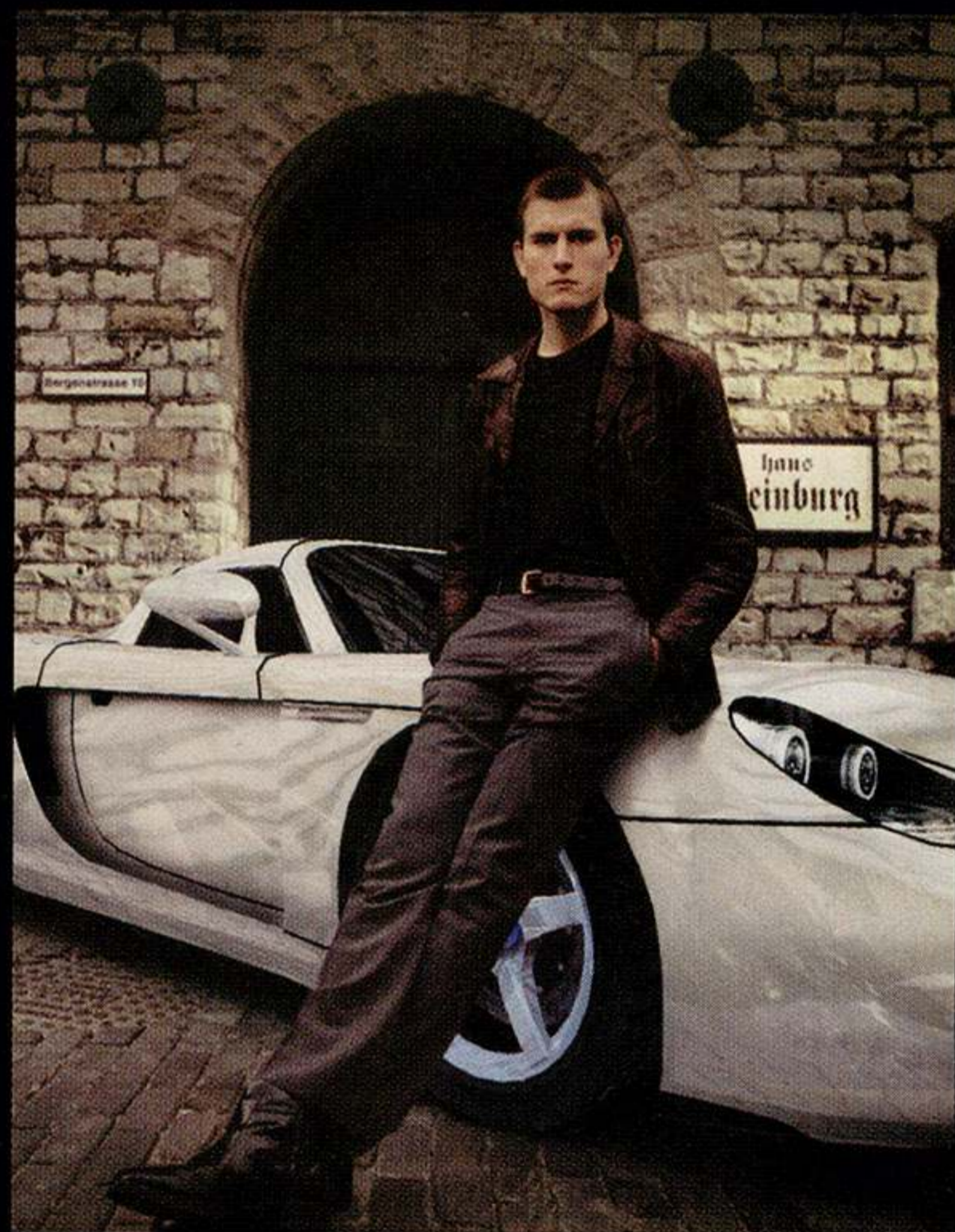


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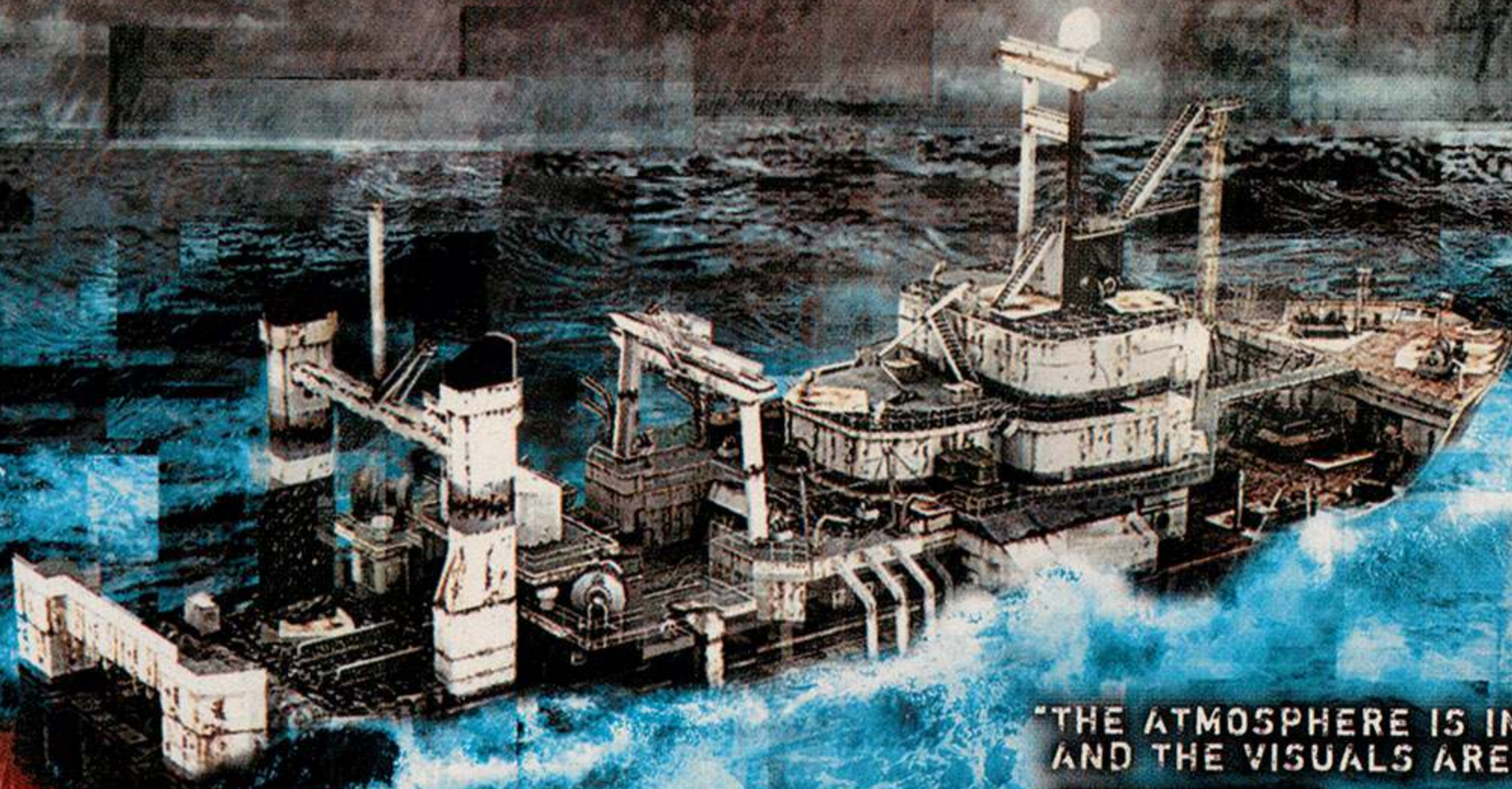
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## FEATURES

### ON THE COVER 32 | Games Go Hollywood

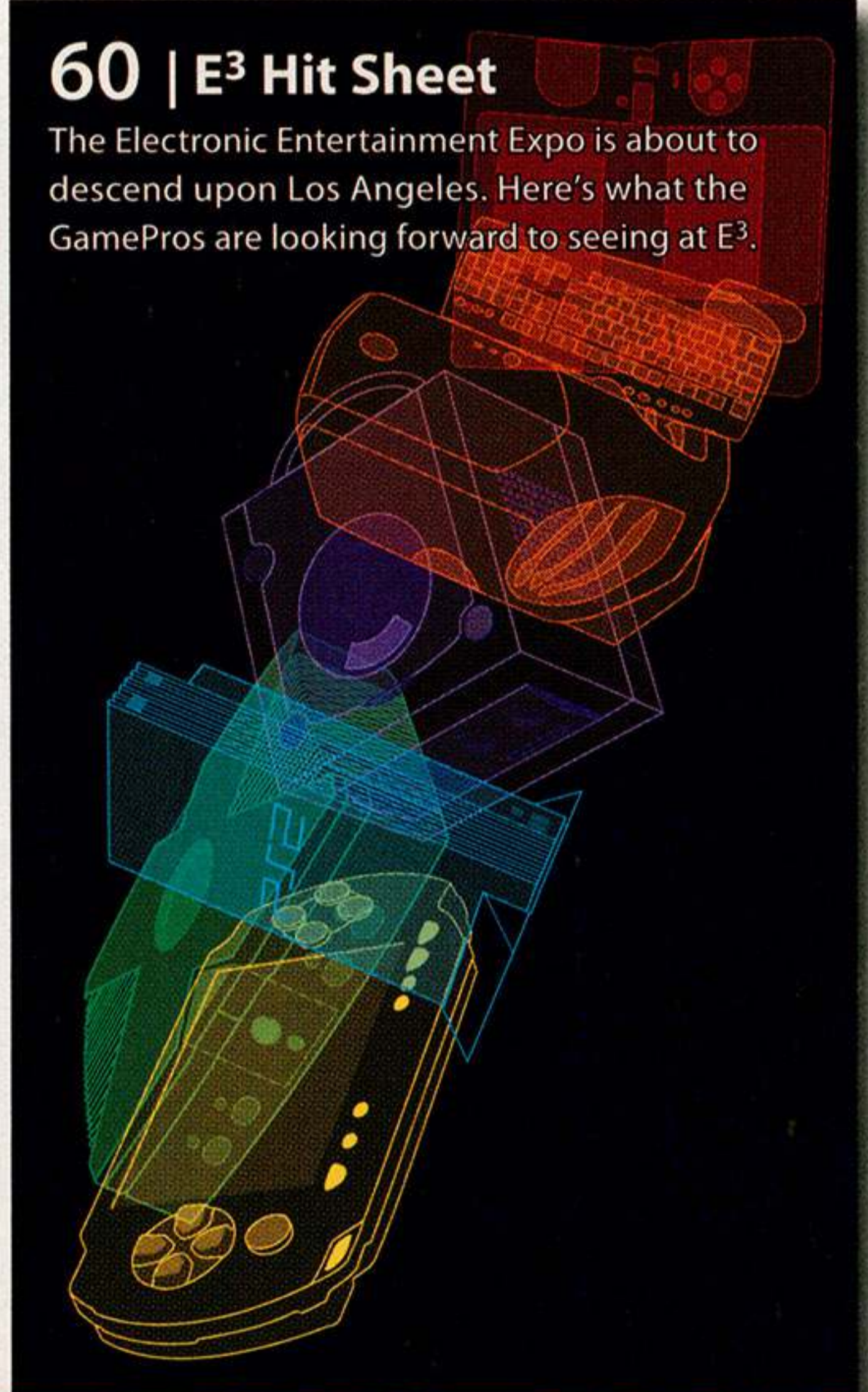
Whether it's movies becoming games or games becoming movies, there's no doubt that the star power of video games is making an impact on Hollywood. Take a look behind the screens at some of the top properties on the horizon.



Cover art: Jason Palmer

### 60 | E<sup>3</sup> Hit Sheet

The Electronic Entertainment Expo is about to descend upon Los Angeles. Here's what the GamePros are looking forward to seeing at E<sup>3</sup>.



### 48 | The Fighter's Edge: Tekken 5

Tekken continues to rule in the fighting-games arena. Now, you can learn the intimate moves and tactics for three new characters: Asuka Kazama, Feng Wei, and Raven.

### 54 | Emulate This!

More and more gamers are turning to their PCs in order to quench their thirst for retro gaming. Here's the latest on the emulation scene.





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## LOADING

### 24 The Game Developers Conference

The GDC has quickly become one of the key sources of news, views, and previews about the world of games. Here's what went down in San Francisco this year.

### 26 Plastic Fantastic: Star Wars: Episode III

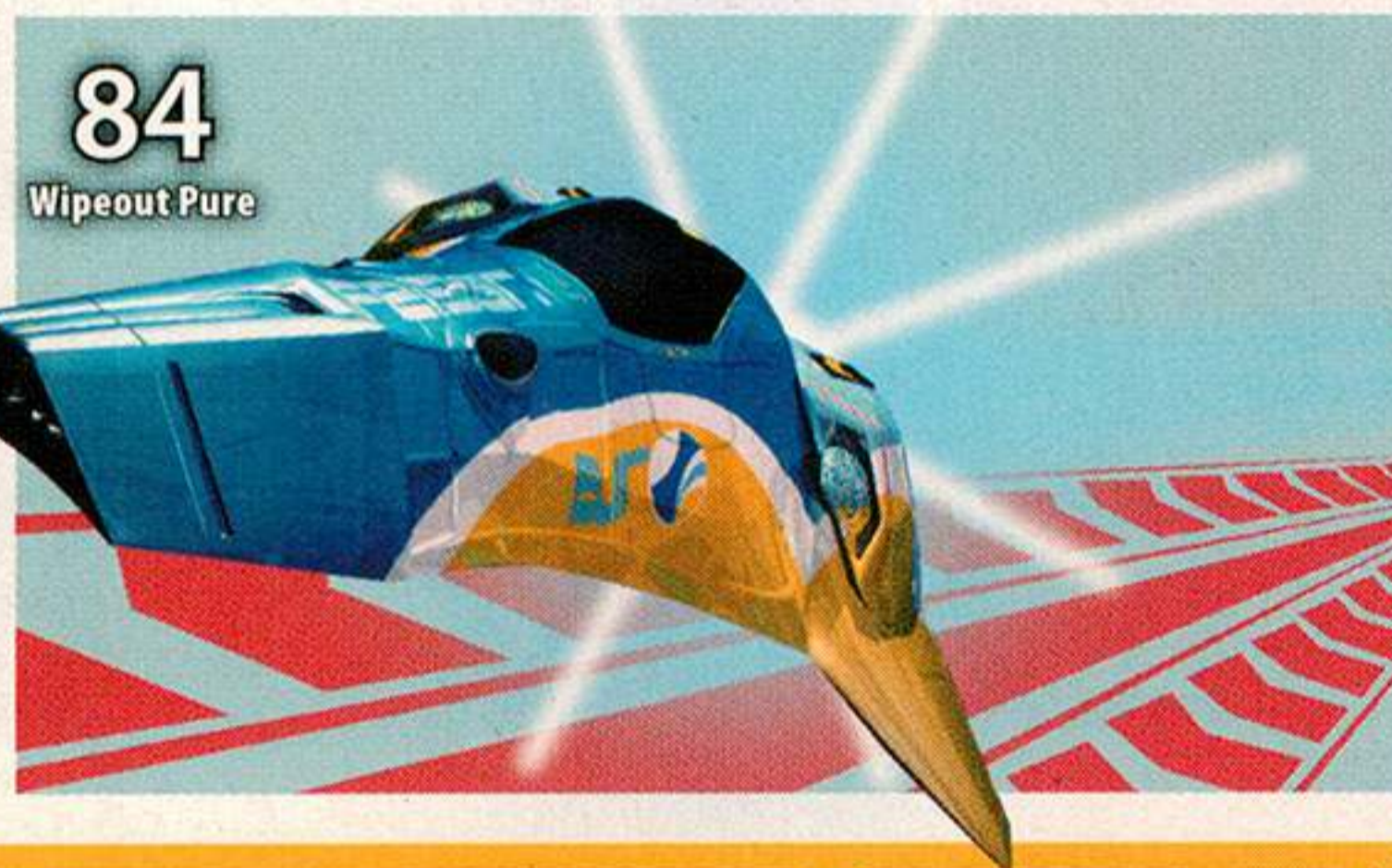
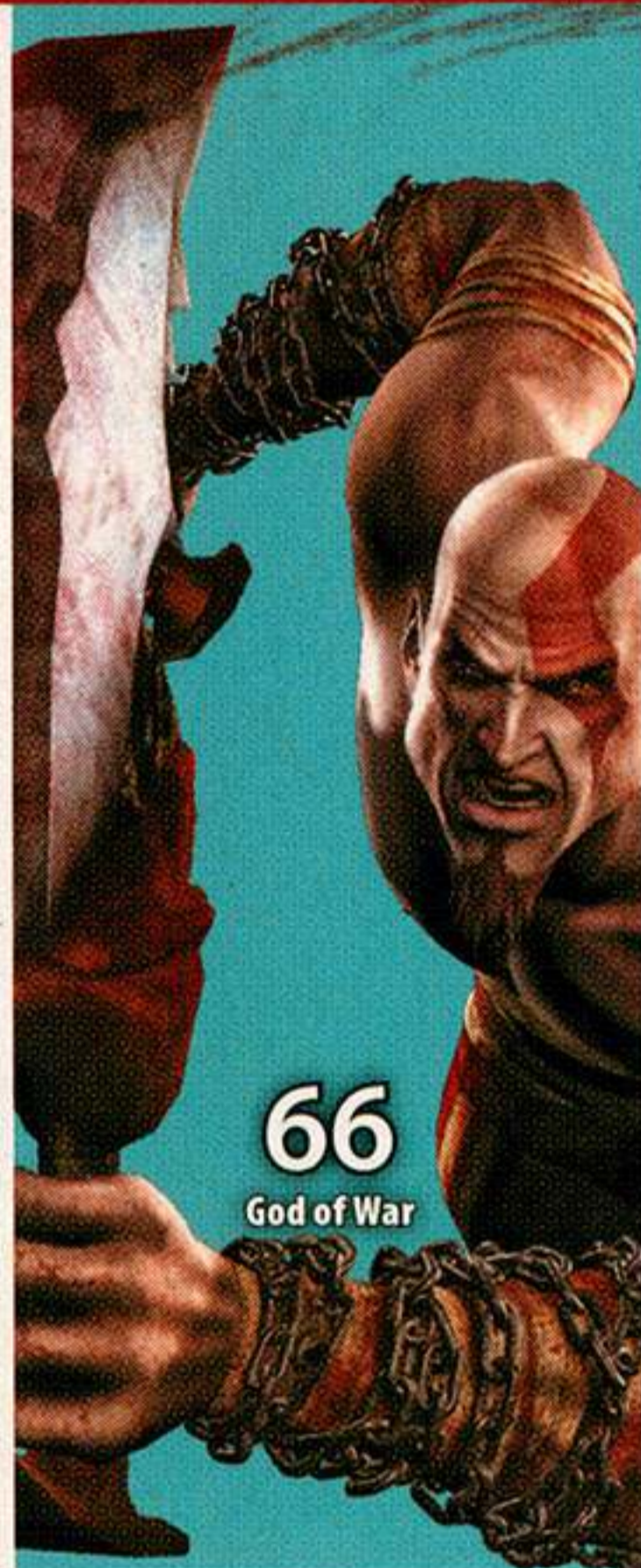
In the world of action figures, it's probably no surprise that Star Wars rules this year. Find out what's in store for collectors everywhere.

...And more!



## DEPARTMENTS

- 12 HEAD2HEAD
- 18 BUYERS BEWARE
- 24 LOADING
- 66 PROREVIEWS
- 78 PC GAMEPRO
- 82 GAMES TO GO
- 88 SPORTS PAGES
- 90 ROLE-PLAYER'S REALM
- 92 CODE VAULT
- 96 CHARTBUSTERS



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THIS MONTH:

### XBOX 2! PLAYSTATION 3! REVOLUTION!

Microsoft and Sony will unveil info about their new consoles at this year's E3—Nintendo is keeping quiet but will likely do the same. Go to GamePro.com for the latest screens and specs!

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Will you take the blue pill or the red? See our up-to-date coverage of Monolith's new MMORPG based on the hit movie franchise.

### NEXT-GEN GAMING

With a whole slew of new consoles on the horizon, take a first glimpse of next-gen games on GamePro.com.

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## GAME FINDER

### Previews

- E3 PlayStation 2 Preview.....61
- E3 Xbox Preview.....62
- E3 GameCube Preview.....63
- E3 PSP Preview.....64
- E3 DS Preview.....64
- E3 PC Preview.....65
- Hellgate: London.....78

### Reviews

#### Multiplatform

- Cold Fear.....72
- Dragon Ball Z: Sagas.....76

#### PlayStation 2

- Area-51.....70
- Cold Winter.....74
- Enthusia Professional Racing.....76
- God of War.....66
- Graffiti Kingdom.....90
- Rise of the Kasai.....68
- Shin Megami Tensei:  
Digital Devil Saga.....90

#### PSP

- Ape Escape: On the Loose.....85
- ATV Offroad Fury Blazin' Trails.....85
- Gretzky NHL.....87
- NBA 2005.....87
- Need for Speed  
Underground Rivals.....82
- Rengoku:  
The Tower of Purgatory.....86
- Spider-Man 2.....84
- Tony Hawk's  
Underground 2 Remix.....82
- Twisted Metal: Head-On.....86
- Wipeout Pure.....84
- World Tour Soccer.....86

#### PC

- SWAT 4.....80

### Codes and Cheats

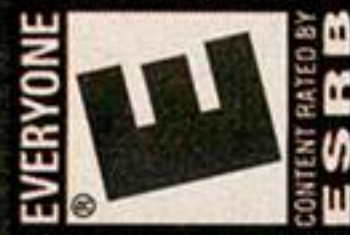
- Ace Combat Advance.....93
- Classic NES Series: Metroid.....93
- Devil May Cry 3:  
Dante's Awakening.....92
- FIFA Street.....92, 93
- Fight Night Round 2.....93
- Killzone.....92
- MVP Baseball 2005.....93
- RalliSport Challenge 2.....92
- Rumble Roses.....92
- Sonic Adventure 2 Battle.....92
- Tenchu: Fatal Shadows.....92



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# HEAD 2 HEAD

## First Steps Toward the New Era

**A**t this point, it should come as news to just about nobody that the Electronic Entertainment Expo (E<sup>3</sup>) in Los Angeles will see a revelation about the next generation of video gaming. Microsoft, Sony, and Nintendo have all stated that they will disclose...something...about their next-generation consoles with the Xbox crew banging spears on shields the loudest.

It's hard to believe that five years have already passed since the PlayStation 2 kicked off the current crop of consoles with its unbelievably fine games. At that time, Sony was the big gorilla, Microsoft was a snarky upstart, and Nintendo was...well, Nintendo. The PS2 represented the essence of cool video-game tech, the Xbox was a humongous hunk of hardware with an oversized controller (and what was up with that fluorescent green X?), and the GameCube was...very square.

Now the tables are turning. As predicted, Microsoft is shamelessly juicing its X-muscles, Sony is making prodigious promises (again) of out-of-this-world gaming technology, and Nintendo is...well, it's still Nintendo. It's almost certain that Microsoft is going to be first out of the...er, box this time around, and even Nintendo might unleash its Revolution before Sony can get its Cells together for the PS3. The world of video games is about to turn over again, and gamers everywhere couldn't be more ready.

Much will be revealed via E<sup>3</sup> (even though there's already much we aren't allowed to share with you, yet). Be prepared to key into GamePro.com (on May 16) for the latest news and stay tuned for next month's issue—if you want to find out what you're going to be doing for the next five years!

The GamePros  
Oakland, CA  
letters@gamepro.com

## Disgusted with EA

I have become increasingly disgusted by the "EA Takeover," which started with the NFL/NFLPA license and moved on to the ESPN license. For those of you who don't know, this is the deal: For the next six years, EA gets exclusive rights to the NFL, stadiums, teams, logos, players' names (those in the NFLPA, of course), jerseys, etc. As well, they are now locked in a 15-year agreement, starting in 2006, to be the sole distributor of ESPN licensing, broadcasters, logos, commentary, etc. for use in their games. All things considered, I used to be a fan of Madden, but this year I really realized what a great up-and-coming product ESPN had in their 2K5 series and never looked back. Apparently, EA thought highly of the Sega/Visual Concepts product as well and in turn, cut their legs out from underneath them.

Now we are going to be left with a monopolized NFL video-game market. I think it is unfair to players and consumers, who now will be faced with one proprietary game wrapped in a \$50 bow. The choices

are to either swallow it or not buy it at all and miss out on the latest NFL action. Maybe there is nothing we as gamers can do other than to stop buying the products or to simply continue to voice outrage. Whatever we do, we as gamers must accept the cold hard fact: Money buys everything in the gaming industry, and EA has proved it.

► Michael Amburgey—Nashville, TN

The EA deals raise important questions in the games industry, and other such licenses for sports leagues and other types of intellectual property are sure to be bought out by enterprising game publishers. Business is business, and no company has shown itself to be a stronger player in this arena than Electronic Arts.

## Nintendo DS Back at You

In your March issue, Jeremy D. states facts about the Sony PSP that are true, but being a loyal Nintendo fan I highly disagree with what he said. I have a question for him: Has he ever played with a Nintendo DS?



Ronald brings up some simple yet intriguing ways to make games easier to complete. Thus, he earns a Logitech Cordless Action Controller.

## Hardcore Casual

I am a 33-year-old married male with a full-time job. I am also an avid gamer, way back to the Telstar Arcade. I currently own an Xbox, a PS2, a GameCube, a DS, and soon a PSP. Herein lies the problem: So many great games but not enough time. This will get worse once I have kids.

As a result, I tend to gravitate toward games that provide a "quick video-game fix," such as fighting games, wrestling games, sports games, and racing games where you can play a few minutes and be on your merry way. But I am missing out on all those great platform games that require a much greater time commitment. I've tried to play these games "casually" but always manage to get stuck—not knowing what to do, where to go, or what to find to get to the next level. Ninja Gaiden comes to mind as I'm stuck trying to beat a boss and can't advance to the next level. A level select feature would have been nice. I know I can look on the Internet for solutions to all my questions, but that just kills the experience for me and is already too much work.

Developers should consider adding features for us casual gamers (a casual gamer mode?), who are more concerned about experiencing a game rather than finding everything that there is to find. Every game should have a level select, an ad hoc invincibility code, a hint mode, and a save anywhere feature. It is also helpful if developers place the basic game controls on the back cover of the manual so that you don't have to open the manual every time you want to play the game. I would buy so many more games if these features were included.

► Ronald Sukhu—Via Internet

Your ideas probably run against the grain of every hardcore gamer, who sees the endings of games as a reward for skill, dedication, and persistence. But they cause cheers to rise from casual gamers who enjoy playing games yet for various reasons are often denied the satisfaction of completing an adventure. Finding a happy medium would be an interesting challenge for game designers.

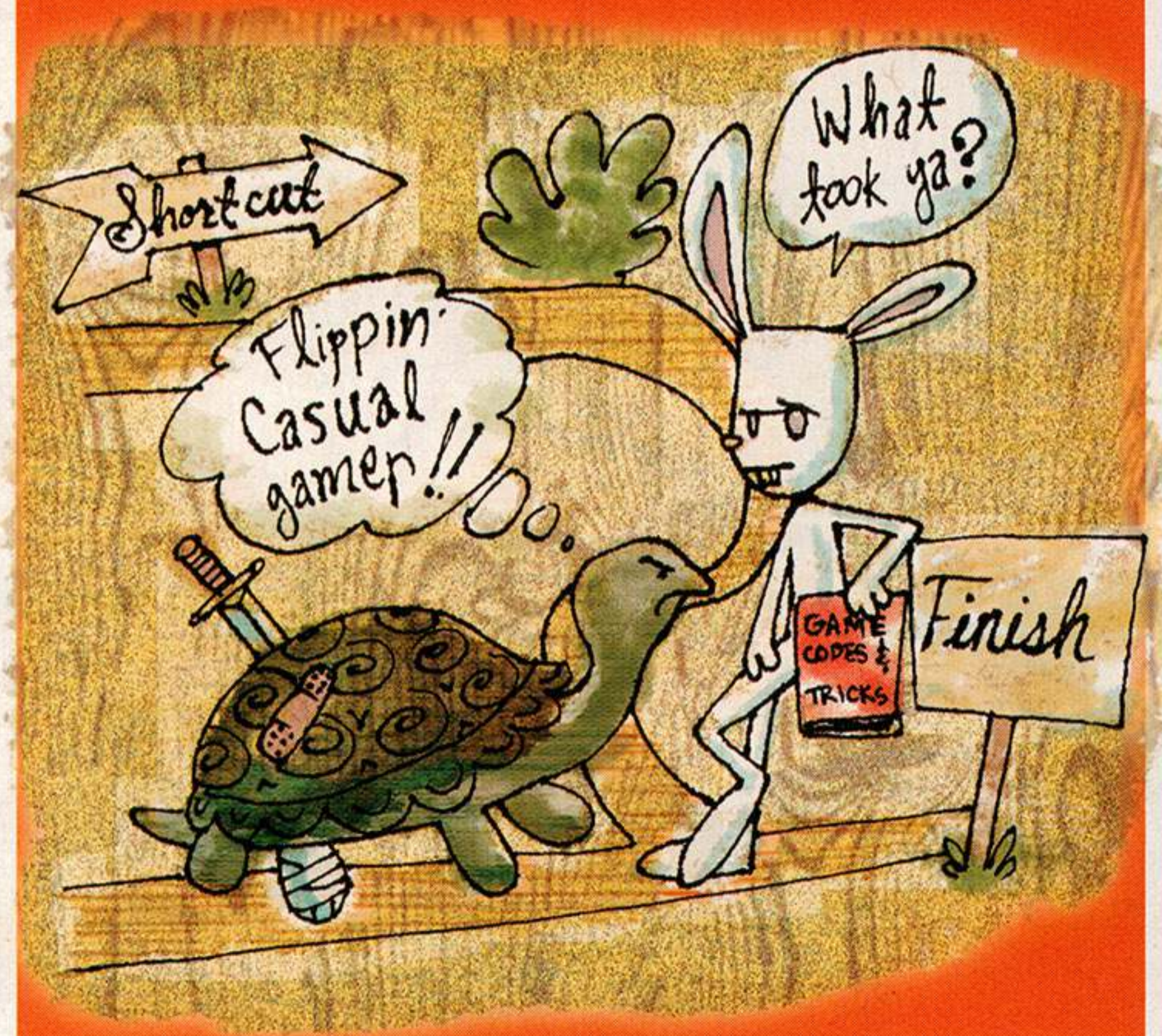


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He criticizes DS graphics, but he's seen only the blurry screen shots in magazines. Sure, they may look like the N64's but in different ways. I think the DS's graphics are somewhere in between the N64's and GameCube's, crisp and intriguing. The PSP is basically just showing off what a processor can do, when gameplay is one of the major fractions of entertainment in games.

Speaking of which, many say that the handling and control of the DS is off. This I highly disagree with as well. For example, even you, the GamePros, said the control scheme for *Metroid Prime Hunters: First Hunt* was strange. I don't believe so. It's simple: walk with the directional pad, aim with the stylus, and fire with the L button—three, easy, simple hand and finger combinations. I had no trouble at all holding the DS in one hand—heck, I didn't even need to set it down.

I bet you, Jeremy, were once a Nintendo player yourself but won't admit it. The fact is, the world of gaming wouldn't be where it is today without Nintendo.

► Theron Rapuzzi—Via Internet

One thing is certain, the conflict between Nintendo fans and Sony fans will rage on in all shapes and sizes.

## You've Been "Dragon Balled"

I really hate to point out mistakes, but I'll do it anyway, if not for the edification of the *GamePro* staff then for my own personal enjoyment. In issue #199 of *GamePro* magazine, on page 30 during your preview of *Dragon Ball Z: Sagas*, your first screen shot has a caption stating "Vegeta takes on Android 16 on planet Namek. Just as in the anime, you have to power up your Ki before you can fire off any spirit blasts." First of all, Vegeta doesn't face Android 16 on planet Namek. Second of all, Android 16 doesn't even go to planet Namek; planet Namek was destroyed well before Android 16 was even awakened. The person in your screen shot depicted as Android 16 is actually Recoome of the Ginyu Force. Thank

## Robo Paranoia

We're building a nightmare, one robot at a time. Call me crazy, but am I the only person who is concerned about technology getting out of control? I found an advertisement in a magazine for the ASIMO. For those of you who are unaware of the "coup" that is happening in our very homes, the ASIMO is the robot that Honda has been developing for over 15 years. It can do only small tasks like climb stairs, walk, and recognize voices and faces, but is this the first step toward a robot dependence and even eventually dominance in our society? Haven't the people researching this robot ever seen a movie? I'll start a list for them:

you for your time. It is my pleasure to point out your mistakes.

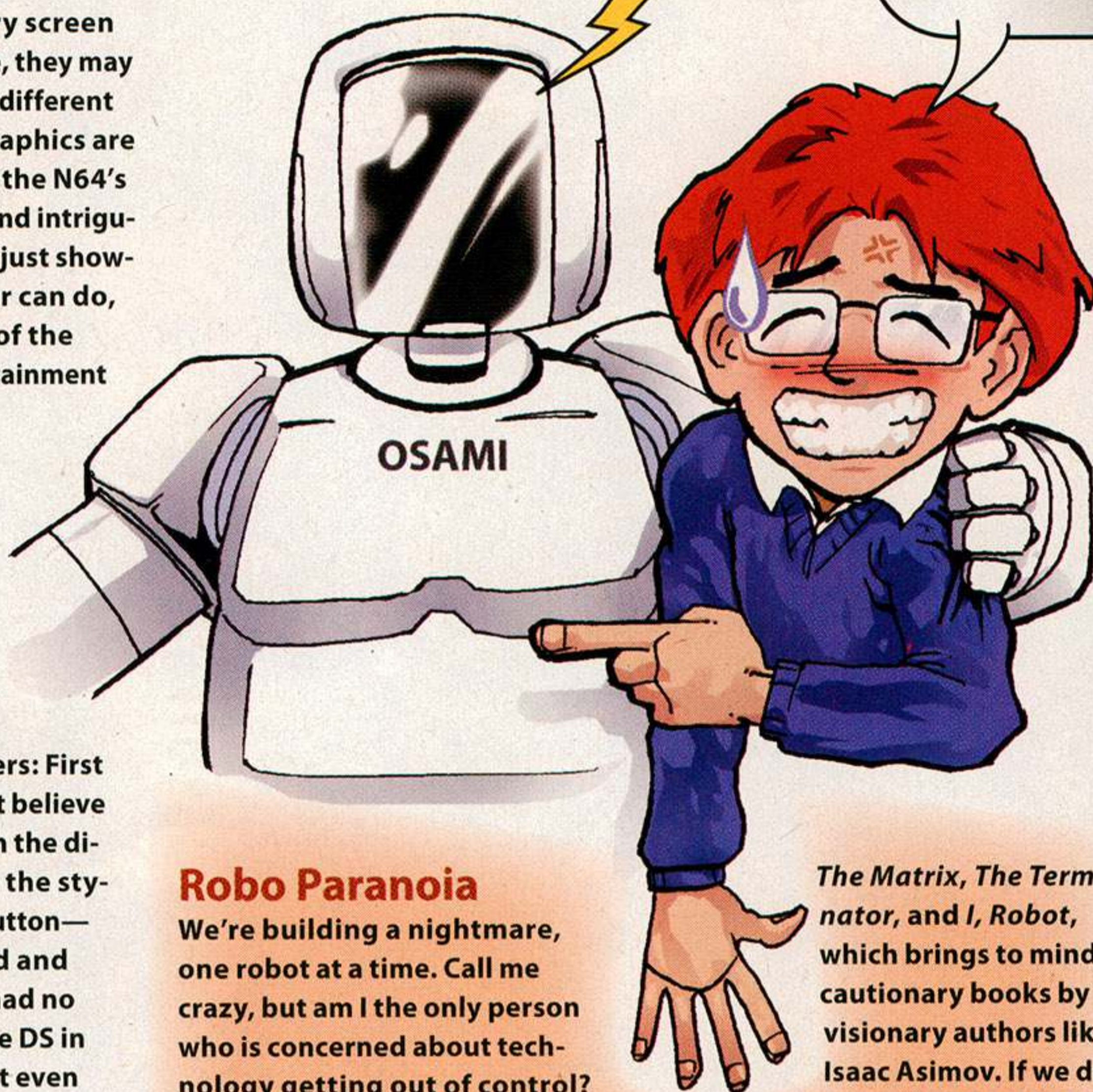
► Justin Darnell—Via Internet

Thank you, sir, may we have another? The hairdo fooled us. If that is the planet Namek, then indeed that must be Recoome of the Ginyu Force facing off with Vegeta...it must!



That reader is crazy

HAI! YES! YOU ARE RIGHT MY ROBOT MASTER, UH, FRIEND!



*The Matrix*, *The Terminator*, and *I, Robot*, which brings to mind cautionary books by visionary authors like Isaac Asimov. If we do not pay more attention

to the increasing presence of robots, all I can say is *dewa mata*, which means "see you later" in Japanese.

► Matthew Mahar—Via Internet

Okay—you're crazy. No, really. Thank you for the warning about the robot takeover. Now is that "ASIMO" as in "Asimov?" Whoa. Would you mind sending us your picture? We'd like to place it in our "C" file and share it with some friends downstairs in building security. Until then, sayonara, which means "sayonara."

## Who's Left?

How many of the original *GamePro* writers, editors, and designers are there left over since 1989? I've noticed a whole lot of characters have left and new ones have spawned to life.

► Rom—Chicago, IL

Hopefully you checked out the "Where Are They Today" story in the 200th anniversary issue last month. To answer your question, Dr. Zombie and Brother Buzz are still alive and kicking. The Whizz checks in once in a while, and even Hack and Slash was...er were sighted in the hallway recently.

## Avengers Assemble!

I was reading my new April issue of *GamePro*, and while looking through

the "Comics-To-Games Time Line" section, I was appalled that the year 1992 was missing from the lineup. That was the year that "Captain America and the Avengers" came out for the Sega Genesis, which was in my opinion one of the best comic-book beat-em-up games ever made. Now don't get me wrong, you know I love you guys for all the great gaming info you bring me every glorious issue, but why did such a good game not make the list?

► Matt L.—Philadelphia, PA



Matt, you are truly a keeper of the faith! We hear you—Iron Man, Hawkeye, Vision, Captain America, the Red Skull, mind control, save the universe. The *GamePros* apologize to you, to the rest of the true believers, and to Cap (next time we see him).

## PC Games on TV?

PC gaming is not nearly as popular as console gaming, and although this is in big part due to the price of keeping computer hardware up to date, I believe that it is also because people are not aware that PC games possess superior graphics capabilities. I haven't ever seen a television commercial for a PC game that was not a multiplatform game. I think that if games like *Half-Life 2* and *Doom 3* were advertised on television, people would be able to see the beautiful graphics and they would have a better idea about the power of the PC.

► Jay Smith—Via Internet

This is a good point. You'd think that because just about everyone owns a PC and many of those are being used by gamers you'd see more TV advertising for PC games. But television time costs mucho denaro, and the PC games market is not so robust that bottom-line conscious publishers will gamble on mass media advertising.





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## READER REVIEW

### Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell Pandora Tomorrow



A great stealth game gets even better. When Splinter Cell came out in 2002, stealth/action fans loved it and for good reason. It really made you feel like a spy as you could infiltrate places and shoot out any light you saw. But there were a fair amount of problems with Splinter Cell, such as it being too linear and short. The sequel, Pandora Tomorrow, attempts to fix these problems while also taking a step forward for multiplayer gaming.

On its own, Pandora Tomorrow's single-player mode plays almost exactly like the original Splinter Cell, but there are some noteworthy additions—whistling being one. Now you can whistle to lure enemies to you. Gadgets like the spy camera and binoculars have been carried over from the GameCube and PS2 versions. The level designs remain linear with just a few rooms giving you an opportunity to approach soldiers. The single-player is also relatively short, but at least it clocks in around 10 hours.

Thankfully, multiplayer saves the day by making Pandora more than just a mission pack. Here in four-player matches, you play as either a Spy or a Mercenary. Spies are tasked with having to neutralize nodes, while Mercenaries try to stop them. Playing as a Spy resembles the single-player mode as the controls are essentially the same, but you can stall Mercs for only a few seconds with laser bullets. To compensate, you can use an array of gadgets, such as chaff and smoke grenades, designed to give you a chance to grab and terminate a Merc.

The Mercs play from an FPS view. But to even up the match, the reticles on their weapons are loose to give Spies an extra chance to escape if they are seen. Merc's, too, have gadgets like wall mines and spy traps. Playing multiplayer online is a load of fun, even if you experience some lag. Still, that problem can easily be overlooked—especially when you realize there aren't many online stealth games for consoles. Splinter Cell Pandora Tomorrow is the essential stealth game this year. With a multiplayer mode never seen before and a solid single-player adventure, this game must be played.—ox

FUN FACTOR  
**5.0**

Agree? Disagree? Or just think you can do better? Write your own user reviews at [GamePro.com](http://GamePro.com), and maybe you'll see your opinions here next.

### Zelda Over Final Fantasy

I have been a *GamePro* subscriber since November '04, and this is my first time writing you guys a letter. Let me start by congratulating you on a wonderfully entertaining and useful magazine.

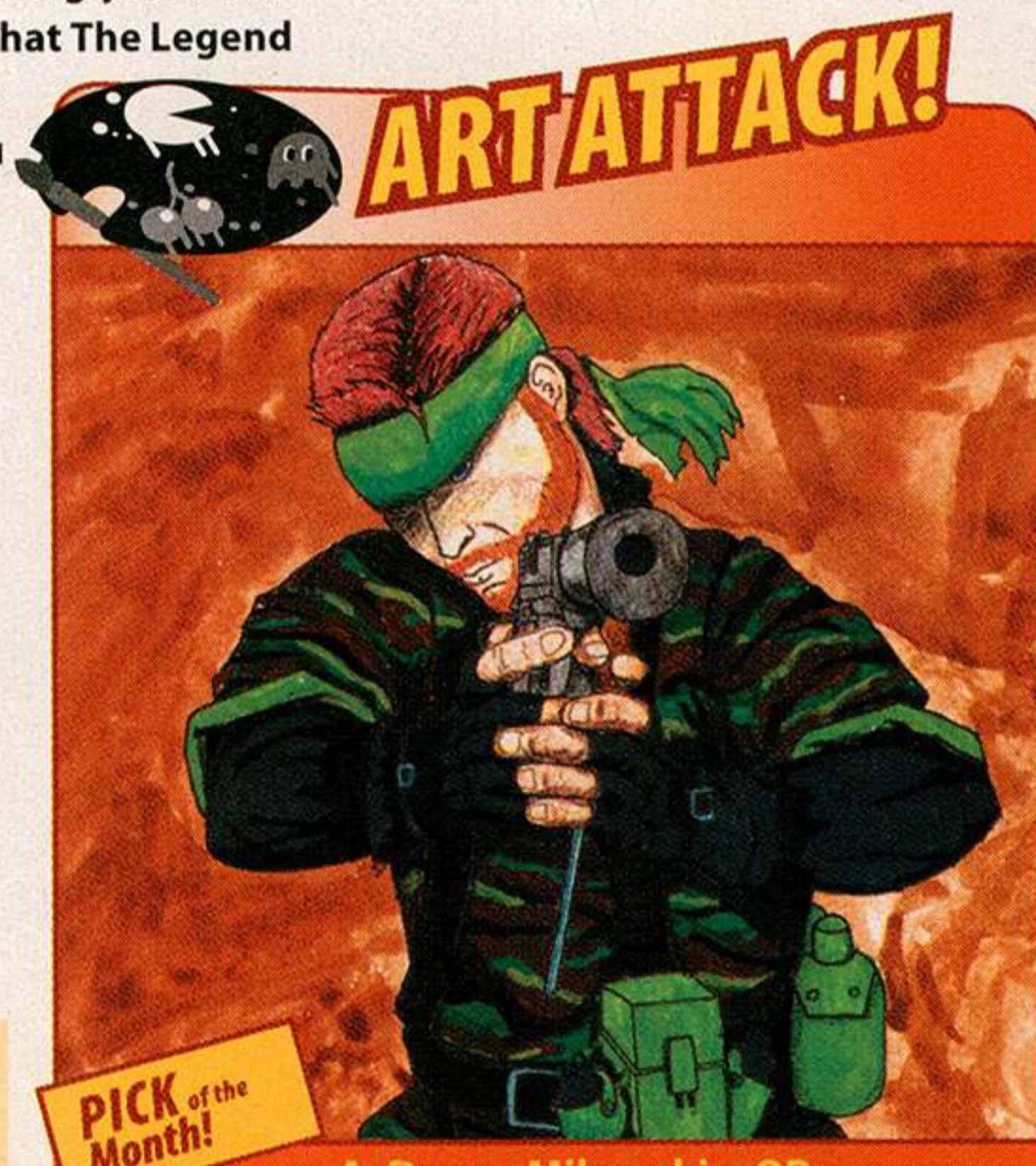
In the March issue, I was delighted to see the beginning of the Top 10 Best Video-Game Franchise series, and I am very excited to watch this all-star list grow over the next nine issues. You are probably already receiving lots of fan-mail that contains personal Top 10 lists as well as dire threats to your lives should you not post them. I realize you can't please everyone, but the least I can do is cast my vote into the mix. In order: 9. Gran Turismo, 8. Pokémon, 7. Warcraft, 6. Resident Evil, 5. Metroid, 4. Grand Theft Auto, 3. Mario, 2. Final Fantasy, 1. The Legend of Zelda. Runners-up include: Metal Gear Solid, Mortal Kombat, Tomb Raider, The Legacy of Kain, Star Wars, and Doom.

I urge you to strongly consider for your final list that The Legend of Zelda takes the cake. Do what you want with 9-2, but please recognize Link as number one. I have an inkling that some of you might lean toward Final Fantasy as number one and The Legend of Zelda as number two, but this is the incorrect order.

The Legend of Zelda is one of the most original and successful video-game franchises ever, and many games now use its blueprints. The Final Fantasy story lines are good, but in most cases there is no common story that links the whole series together. The Zelda theme story, on the other hand, is beautiful and unique, and is present in every game. The characters of The Legend of Zelda are much more interesting and the creatures much cooler than those of Final Fantasy. I do not know which franchise has sold more, but as Bomberman shows, this is not the Top 10 Best-Selling Franchises but merely the Top 10 Best. I am down on my knees begging you to truly and un-prejudicially consider your choice for number one, and if you do, I have no doubt that I will see "The Legend of Zelda" in bold letters come next December.

► Charles Skold—Freeport, ME

The gauntlet has been thrown down, Final Fantasy fans!



A. Drey—Milwaukie, OR



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I LEARNED ABOUT SOBRIETY  
THROUGH THE ABUSE OF MY FRIEND  
IN JUNIOR HIGH  
NAME: RUSTY  
DRUG OF CHOICE: WEED  
CLOUDS OF SMOKE DISTORTED HIS VISION  
UNABLE TO SEE THAT HE WAS A GENIUS  
THE FIRST KID THAT SHOWED ME HIS POETRY  
THAT INSPIRED ME TO WRITE

THE RED VEINS IN HIS EYES  
TRACED THE TIMELINE  
OF THE PURPLE HAZE HE LIVED IN  
'TIL HE WAS CAUGHT ON CAMPUS  
WITH A NICKELBAG OF HERB

NOW I'M COLLEGE BOUND  
I STAYED SOBER  
THROUGH THE DAY HE DROPPED OUT  
OF HIGH SCHOOL  
AND I DON'T KNOW WHERE HE IS NOW  
BUT I HOPE HE KNOWS  
THAT HE CHANGED MY LIFE  
AND HE COULD'VE CHANGED THE WORLD  
IF ONLY HE COULD'VE STAYED  
SOBER.

-JOSE



# BUYERS BEWARE

**D**rastic bugs call for drastic fixes—but when millions of dollars are on the line, cutting corners is too often a temptation impossible to resist. This month, The Watch Dog investigates how a major recall may be only a temporary fix to a greater problem.



## Shocking Revelation

In a moment of uncanny candor, Microsoft announced that it is recalling power cords for Xbox consoles, citing an electrical and fire hazard. However, some tech-savvy users have reported that the real issue is with the power connector and not the power cord itself, meaning the solution may be only a temporary Band-Aid to a defect within the Xbox unit.

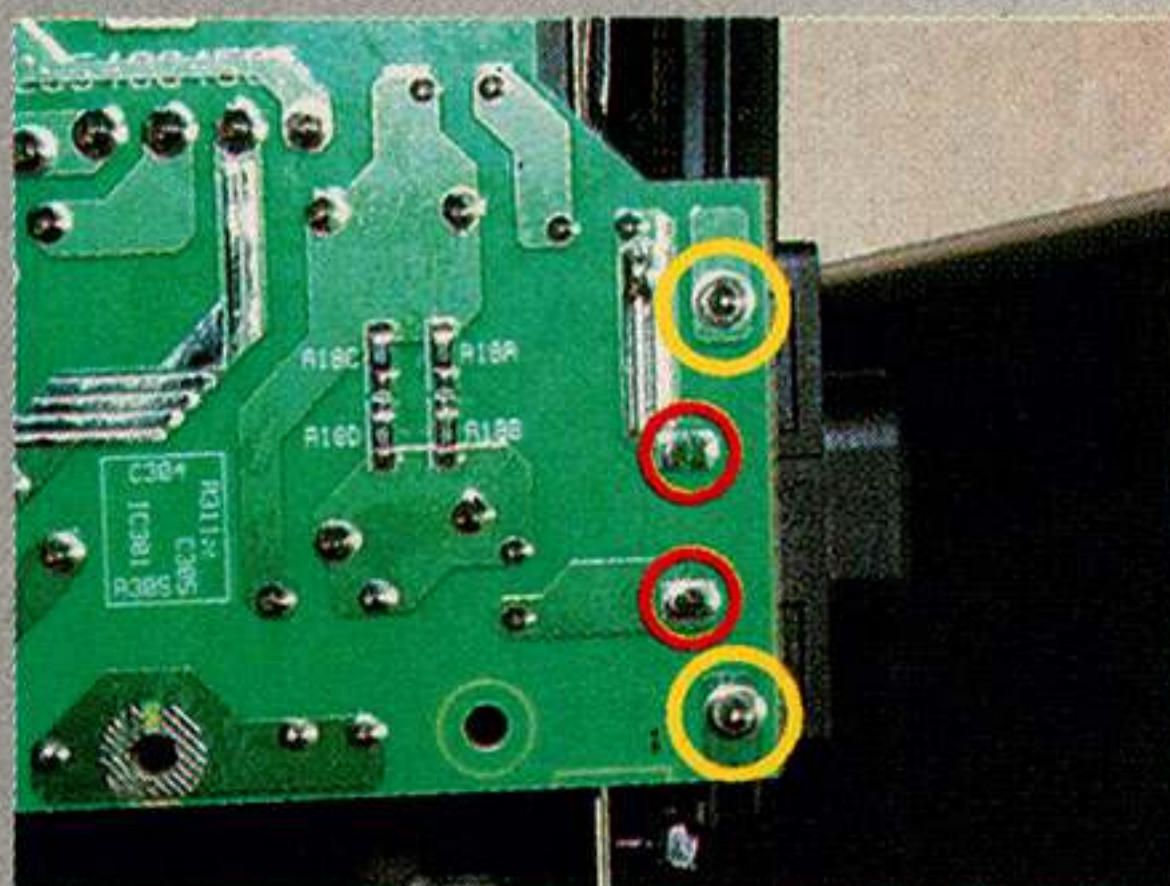
The recall applies to consoles manufactured before October 23, 2003, in the United States (January 13, 2004 for Continental Europe). Xboxes made after October 23, 2003 (after January 13, 2004 for consoles purchased in Continental Europe) do not require replacement cords "because design improvements to the cord and console already protect against the problems that are addressed by the replacement cords," according to Microsoft. Customer service and warranty repair data shows one in 10,000 consoles were affected—seven of those cases resulting in minor burns as users attempted to touch the cord.

Speculation has been floating that the source of the problem is actually with the power connector on the Xbox. The power supply unit (PSU) connector solder joints purportedly become loose after years of use, which then could spark or lead to an electrical failure. We decided to open some Xboxes and take a look.

**Dismantling the Xbox yourself requires unpeeling the warranty stickers, voiding any warranties remaining on the console. Do not open if you want to keep the warranty.**



With only two soldering joints, the connector for the Foxlink PSU can easily become loose, putting it at risk of burnout or electrical sparks.



The Delta PSU has the connector securely attached to the motherboard by two additional outer soldering joints.



Opening the different models of Xboxes, we discovered that not all Xboxes have the same connector. Some units have a PSU made by Foxlink, characterized by a connector that is only attached by two solder joints to the motherboard—which also serve as a conduit to the power supply. Other Xboxes have a more securely fastened connector made by Delta that not only has the two solder joints that connect to the power supply but also two pins on the outside to reinforce the inner two solder joints.

With only two solder joints, the Foxlink is indeed susceptible to electrical fires and burnouts, and that is the likely explanation for why Microsoft recalled power cords (Delta seems safe, however).

The new brick-like power cord will cut power when there is a burnout but not prevent the burnout itself—meaning it is only a haphazard stop gap measure. Whether it bursts into flames or not, your Xbox will still be busted. This raises the question, how do you know which PSU



David and Goliath: On the left is the old plug, and on the right the new bulkier power cord.

you have without opening your Xbox? The bad news is, you don't. Microsoft will replace your power cord either with the large brick cord or a slender one similarly shaped to the original—but the larger power cords have been sent to both those with Delta PSU Xboxes and Foxlink PSU Xboxes. Even early model Xboxes (such as our office Xbox dated 10-18-2001) come with the Delta PSU, so the date itself doesn't indicate which PSU you have.


There are two things you can do to prevent your Xbox from failing:

1. If there are no symptoms of problems: Don't put stress on the power cord when it's connected to the Xbox. Rigorously wiggling the power cord to pull it out or having something pulling down on the power cord when connected to the Xbox will put stress on the solder joints.
2. If you see signs of a problem with your connector, contact Microsoft's technical support at 800/469-9269 to see if they can fix the problem, or check the Xbox website. If you smell something burning, Microsoft may fix your console free of charge or offer up to 75 percent in discounts (or maybe no discount at all). Although it is possible to resolder the loose joints yourself, proper soldering requires experience, so it's best to get it fixed by a specialist.


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# The GAMEPRO TOP 10 BEST VIDEO-GAME FRANCHISES

## #7 Metal Gear Developed by Konami

What's YOUR Top 10? Visit [GamePro.com](http://GamePro.com) and let the GamePro nation know!

10 BOMBERMAN

9 CASTLEVANIA

8 STREET FIGHTER

7 METAL GEAR

6

5

4

3

2

1

To continue our Top 10 Franchises list that we started in the March issue, here's #7. One rule was made before we chose a series: For a franchise to be considered, it had to have more than one sequel. So don't bother sending hate mail in regards to Halo, Half-Life, The Sims, and other omissions—they will be eligible next time.

Without Metal Gear, there probably wouldn't have been a Tenchu or even a Splinter Cell, and the game developing community for years strove to create "another Metal Gear" as developer Hideo Kojima and his team have established an enduring franchise for the ages.

Metal Gear was an anomaly when it was released on the Nintendo Entertainment System in the United States in 1988 in that it emphasized avoiding conflict rather than taking enemies head-on. In the game, you played as the main character, Solid Snake, and took on a mission to infiltrate an enemy base. The sequel, Snake's Revenge, was similar thematically and was a hit in its own right, but the hardware limitations were beginning to become apparent.



One of the series' most enduring traits: Snake using the trademark cardboard box to avoid detection by his enemies

In 1997, Konami bowled everyone over when it ran the first Metal Gear Solid PlayStation trailer at the Electronic Entertainment Expo. People gasped in awe as Solid Snake ran around, fired weapons, dangled from ledges, and silently took out enemies with his bare

hands or with exotic weapons—all in full 3D. It was one of the few games that delivered exactly what it promised, and it was a rare find in that it was as exciting to play as it was to watch.

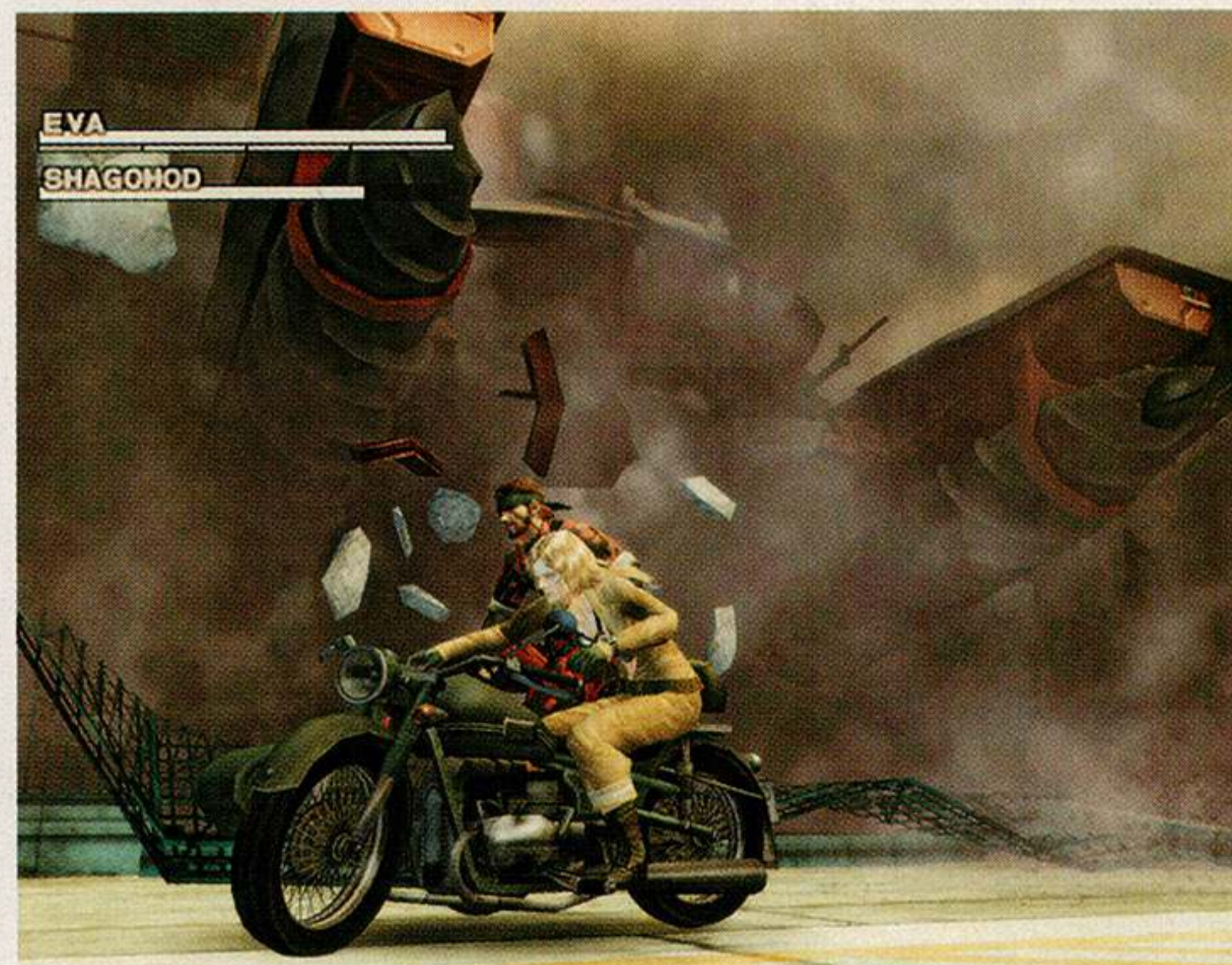


With Metal Gear Solid, the series went to 3D with astonishing and satisfying results.

Released in 1998, the game was a remarkable and bold step forward in the evolution of action video games—especially with its use of cinema scenes. Crafted with care, expertise, and dynamite voice acting, the game's cut-scenes were of the quality that one would find in a big-budget Hollywood movie.

The eagerly awaited sequel, Sons of Liberty (the first game on the PlayStation 2) was a huge risk for the series, and for diehard fans, unsatisfactory. Not only was the main character, Solid Snake, taken out of the action after the prelude chapter (and replaced with a wuss named Raiden), but also the game's repetitive soapbox speeches and convoluted plot all climaxed in an ending that didn't make much sense. However, Sons brought some new combat techniques to the series, such as switching to first-person view on the fly.

With the most recent Metal Gear, Snake Eater, Kojima and company pulled out all the stops and created one of the series' most engrossing and memorable adventures yet. Besides letting you play as Big Boss in the jungle during the Cold War, Snake Eater had all the successful gameplay facets of its predecessors while throwing in some new character "micromanaging" aspects, such as healing bone fractures and donning different camouflage to better adapt to the surroundings, as well as a compelling narrative. Kojima's future plans for Metal Gear: an adventure taking place on the successor to the PlayStation 2 system.—Major Mike



Metal Gear's smart dialogue, innovative play mechanics, and strong cinema scenes make it an essential part of the action genre.

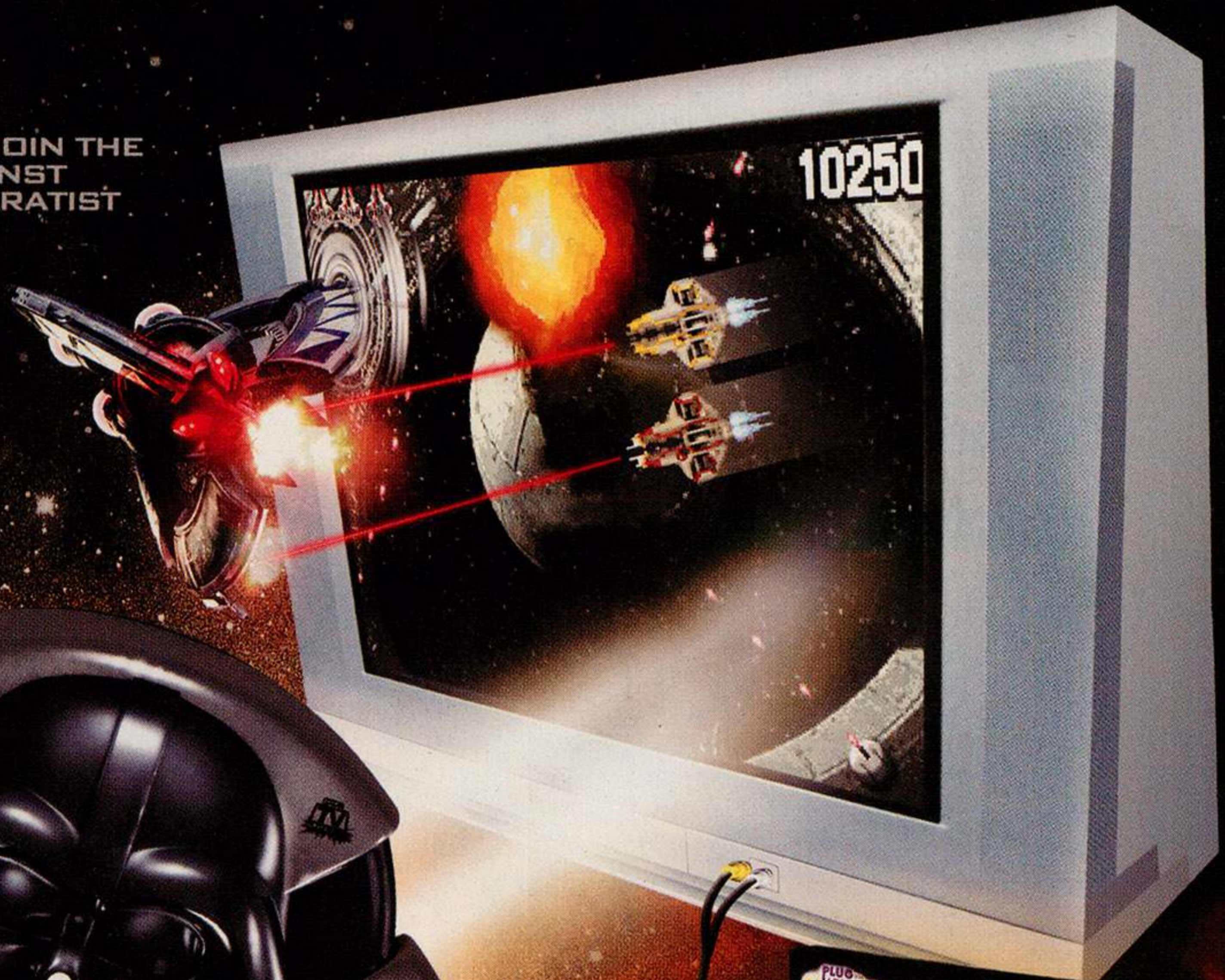
### Key Games in the Metal Gear Series

- ❑ Metal Gear (NES, 1988)
- ❑ Snake's Revenge (NES, 1990)
- ❑ Metal Gear Solid (PlayStation, 1998)
- ❑ Metal Gear Solid: VR Missions (PlayStation, 1999)
- ❑ Metal Gear Solid (Game Boy Color, 2000)
- ❑ Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons of Liberty (PS2, 2001)
- ❑ Metal Gear Solid 2: Substance (Xbox, 2002)
- ❑ Metal Gear Solid: Twin Snakes (GameCube, 2004)
- ❑ Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater (PS2, 2004)
- ❑ Metal Gear Acid (PSP, 2005)

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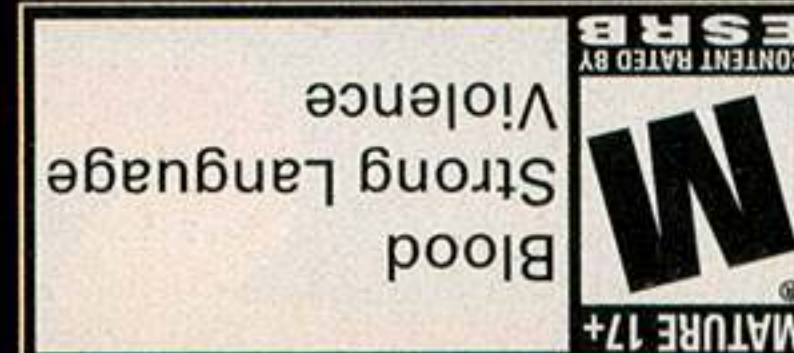


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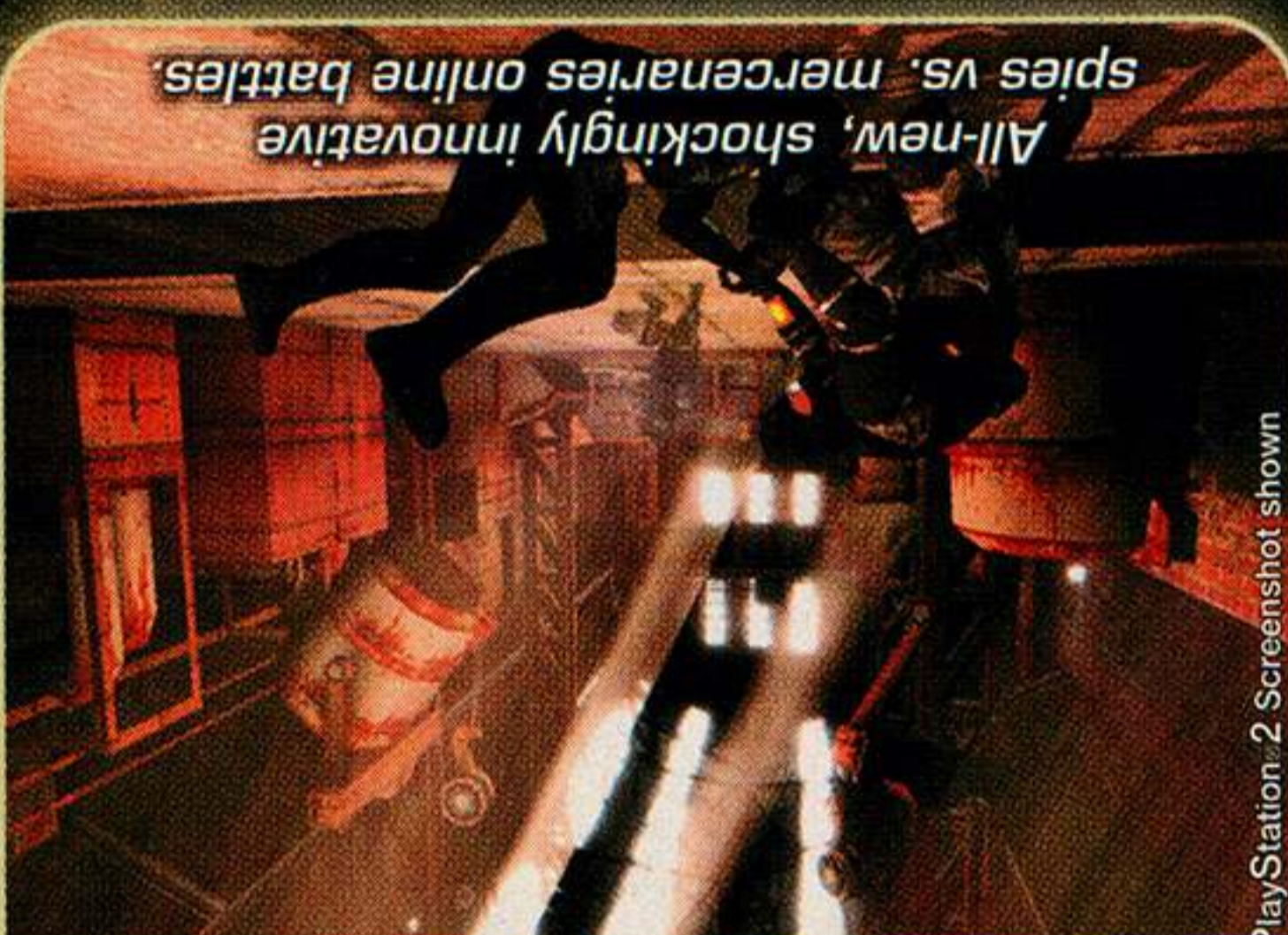
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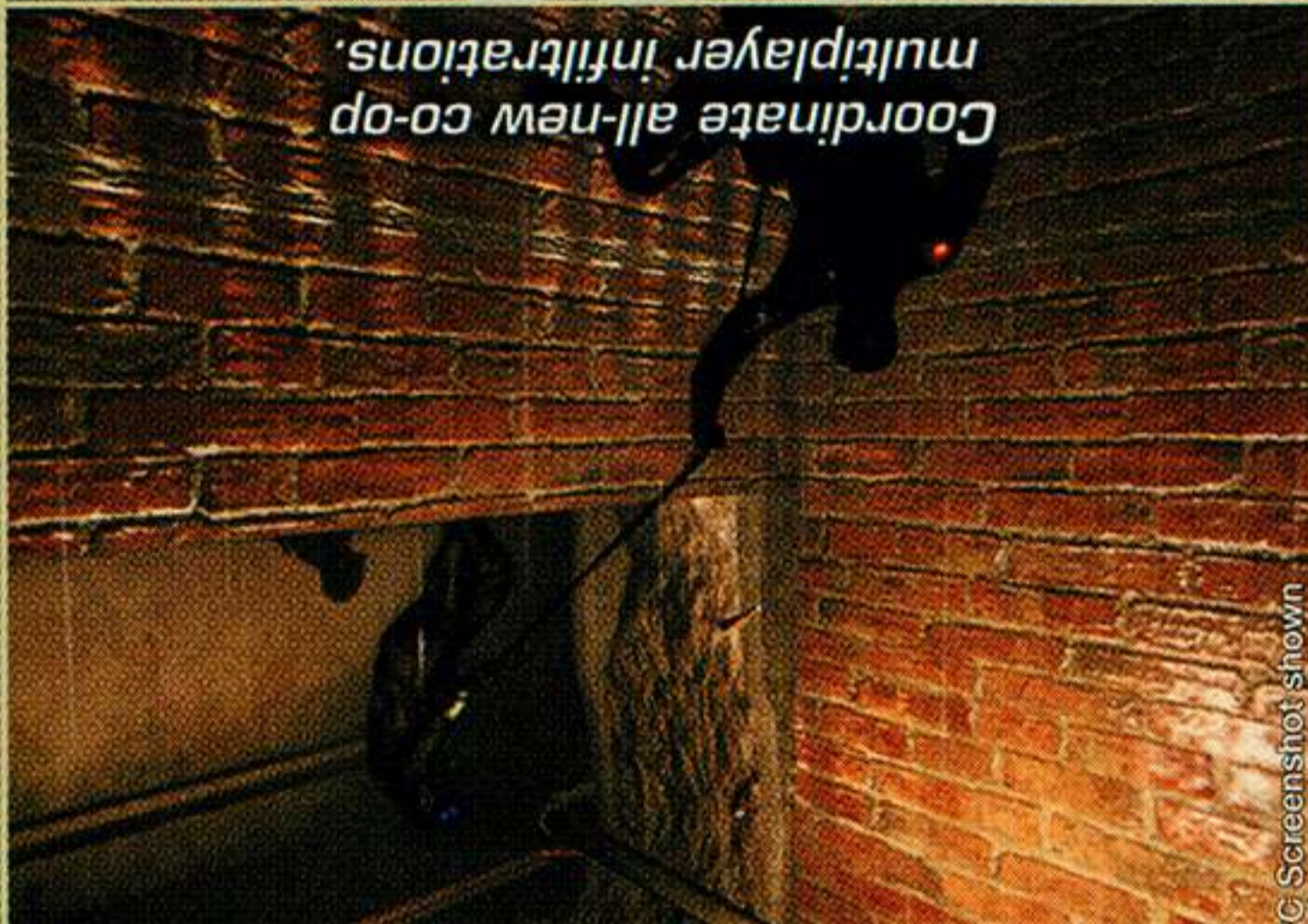


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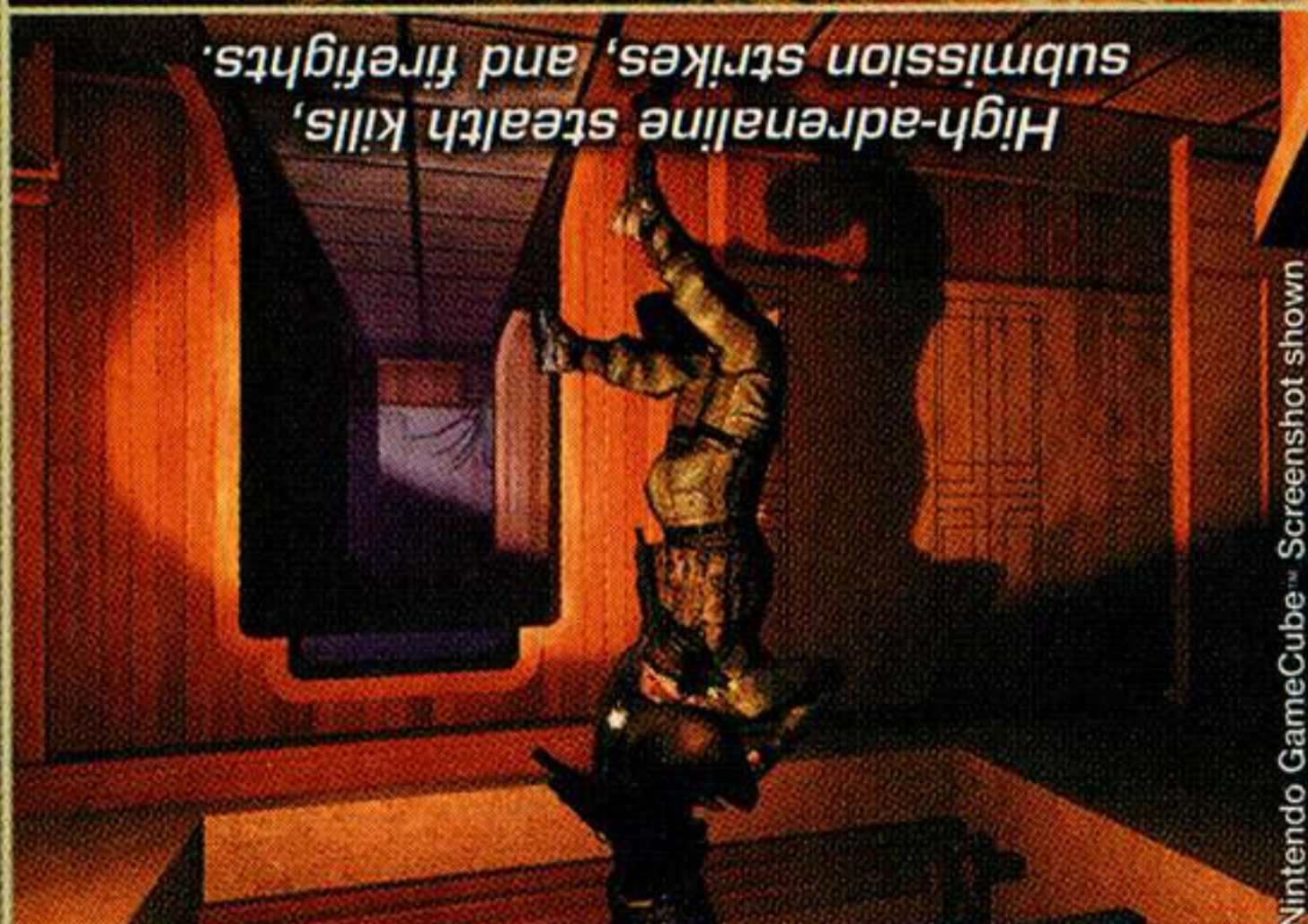
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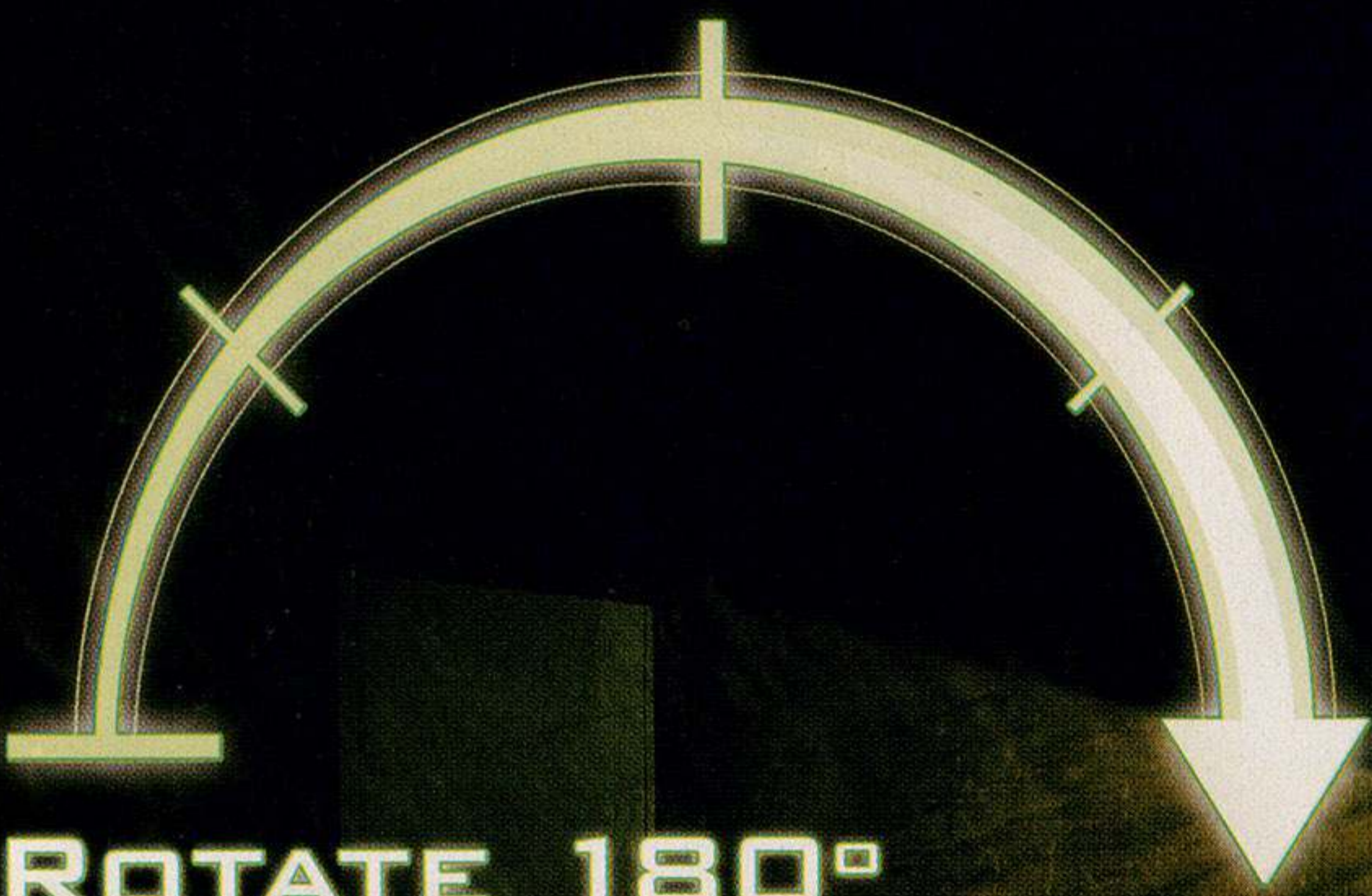
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 9 out of 10; 9.5 out of 10  
*Electronic Gaming Monthly*

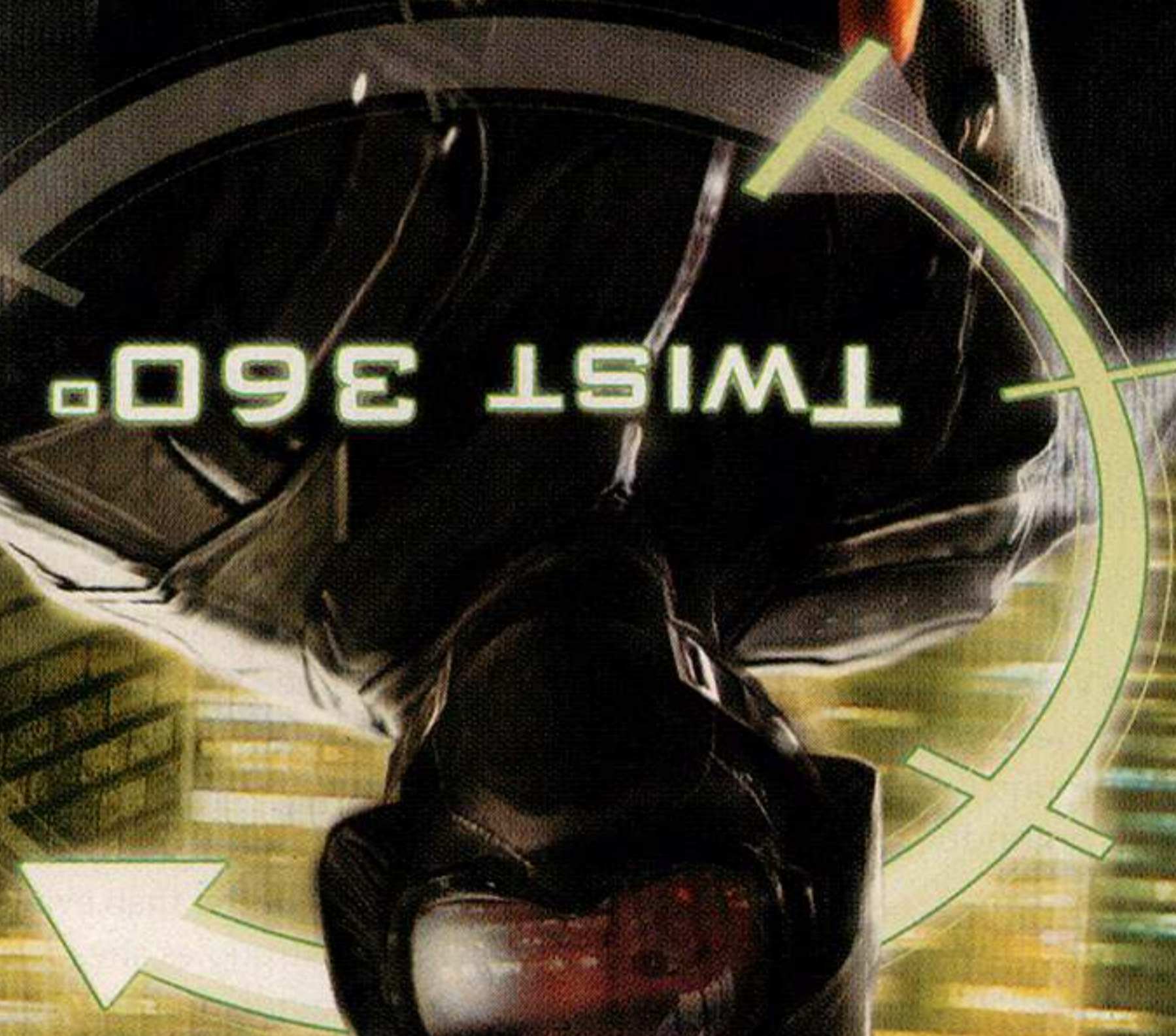


# SPLINTER CELL

Tom Clancy's



TWIST 360°



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# GAME DEVELOPERS UNITE

The annual Game Developers Conference in March was a little like a dress rehearsal for E3 but with more brains than brawn. As the name suggests, it focused on *development* not consumer marketing. That means the expo floor wasn't as flashy and noisy as it can be at E3, and there was much more substance to the panels, keynotes, and discussions. While GDC has gotten larger with every passing year (around 10,000 attendees this time), it's still considered the mini-E3—and that's what makes it so important.

## Looking Ahead

The theme at this year's GDC was, very appropriately, Future Vision, and next-gen systems were the big buzz. The big three are obviously reserving their showstoppers for E3, but speculation and rumors flew around the conference floor. Two keynote speeches by Microsoft and Nintendo addressed them.

For Microsoft, J Allard, corporate vice president and chief XNA architect, claimed that the Xbox would usher in a new era for digital entertainment: the "HD Era." But while it was exciting to hear hints about new technology features, developers were less than happy when he predicted that game-design teams would have to get even *bigger* to keep up. Allard promised to ease the burden by streamlining the tools and process, although he didn't give any specifics.

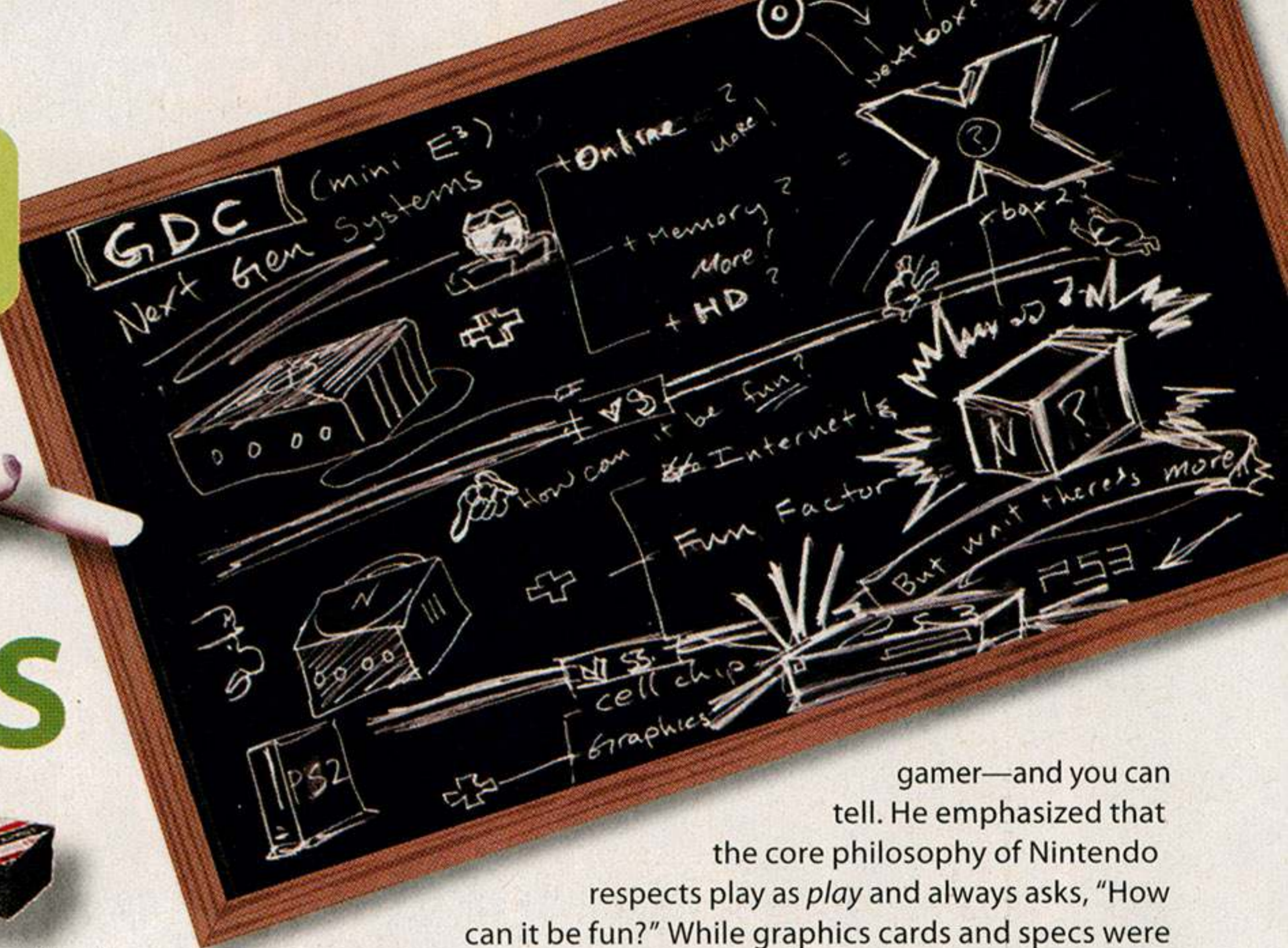
The Xbox team is betting heavily on online, touting improved technology and highly sophisticated tools as the means to deliver. The message was clearly this: Those with the best technology will win the race. And if Allard's clan has its way, the Xbox will take over the world by code.

## Nintendo Revolution

Nintendo President Satoru Iwata, on the other hand, gave a talk that bypassed tech speak and went straight for the heart. Iwata is a true



The Game Developers Choice Awards Ceremony



gamer—and you can tell. He emphasized that the core philosophy of Nintendo respects play as *play* and always asks, "How can it be fun?" While graphics cards and specs were mentioned, the speech was really about exploring new ways to let gamers entertain themselves. The demos were highly original and intriguing. *Nintendogs* is *Tamagotchi* meets *Aibo* with a DS twist: The digital pet responds to voice commands. *Electro Plankton* is uniquely engaging: You arrange plankton in the ocean to make music. The DS's microphone will also let you put in your own custom sounds to make tracks. It's hard to explain how charmingly eccentric this "game" is and how much it reflects the whimsical spirit of Nintendo.

The other blockbuster, of course, was the upcoming *Legend of Zelda*, the game that many fans expected *The Wind Waker* to be. Link's grown up now, and the themes will be darker with a more adult feel.

## The Future of Innovation

The big question is, how will the next-gen systems transform the game industry? While games may look better than ever and pack in brand-new features, developers face some struggles ahead. New XNA requirements and even more specialized Nintendo proprietary development software will make games almost impossible to port to other systems.

Moreover, the GDC has gotten a lot of support in the past from the Independent Game Developers Association. The Experimental Gameplay Workshop, the Indie Game Jam, and the Independent Games Festival showcased new creative endeavors from unknown teams. The work they displayed was truly innovative, interesting, and very impressive given that the teams working on each project were often quite small—sometimes, it was just one person. But the mainstream industry risks shutting out this burgeoning new talent with its hefty requirements and the pressure to produce massive, big-budget blockbusters. Creator of *The Sims* Will Wright's call to arms during his talk, titled *The Future of Content*, argued against the grain, saying that gamers should have far more control over their own stories: We should feel like we own them, he said. He introduced a new game concept, *Spore*, which he had previously described as *Sim Universe*: a completely emergent and elegant simulation of evolution. But Wright is swimming upstream on this one, at least in ideology. *Spore* is a risky design that he's only allowed to try because of his success with franchises like *SimCity* and *The Sims*.


With that in mind, the hardware and graphics races could drown out more inventive voices like Wright's. Under that scenario, we may never see another *Katamari Damacy* on these shores...and that would be a shame.



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## Sammy at High Moon

In March, Sammy Studios, Inc. became High Moon Studios following a separation of the U.S. developer from its Japanese parent. Sammy President and CEO John Rowe led a private investment group to purchase all shares of the company along with all original video-game properties in development at the studio. The newly named company will remain in its current building in Carlsbad, California, as an independent development house. *Darkwatch: Curse of the West* will be High Moon's first game.



*Darkwatch will still ride—but not under the Sammy name.*

## Video-Game Bills

The Illinois State Assembly recently approved a bill that would make it a misdemeanor to sell a Mature- or Adults Only-rated game to anyone under the age of 17. The state of Alabama also introduced a similar measure after three police officers were gunned down by a suspect who claimed that the Grand Theft Auto game series was his inspiration for the act. The bill



was passed in the wake of the Entertainment Software Rating Board's introduction of a new classification, E10+, which designates a game suitable for children 10 years of age or older. According to the ESRB, games that fall into this category are "fighting games with superheroes and racing games with extreme crashes."



HALO 2  
WATCH

## More Halo 2

For those of you who can't get enough of Master Chief's latest Halo 2 gunplay (and that's all of you), Microsoft will release the Halo 2 Multiplayer Map Pack on June 28. The \$19.99 package will feature nine new multiplayer maps, two videos, an animated side-story, interviews with the map designers, strategies, and more. Players will be able to use the maps offline in split-screen and system link play.

Xbox Live subscribers can already play two of the maps—Warlock and Containment—for free with two more maps—Turf and Sanctuary—available for purchase at \$5.99. The remaining five maps in the collection can be purchased the same day as the complete collection streets, for \$11.99.—Major Mike



A far-off shot of the Containment map...



...and what it looks like in play.

## NCsoft Lawsuit Dropped



Marvel Comics suffered a setback when its lawsuit against video-game publisher NCsoft and developer Cryptic Studios was dropped by a U.S. district court judge. The suit alleged that the game *City of Heroes* infringed on the copyright of Marvel's comic-book characters.



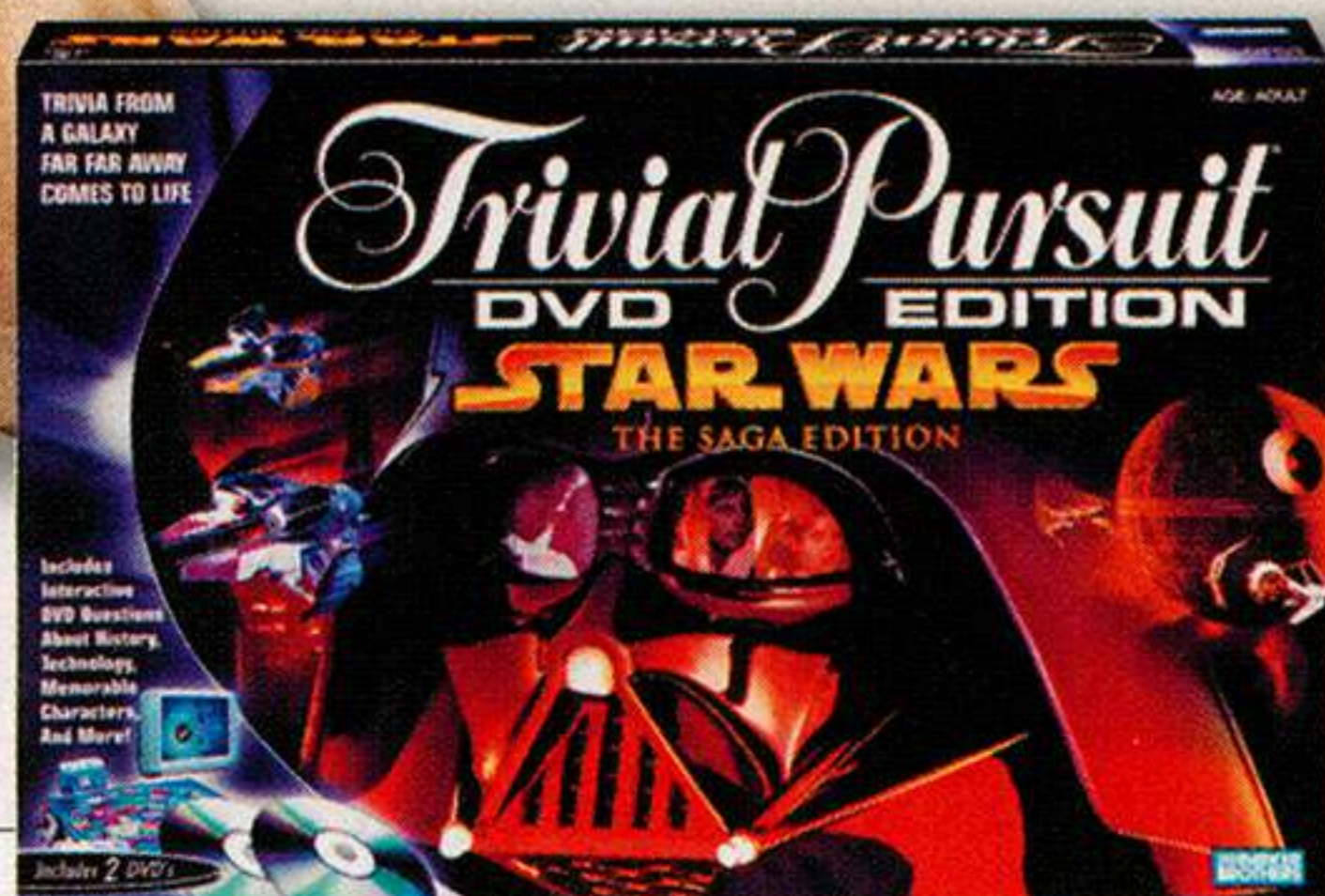
PLASTIC  
FANTASTIC

## Feel the Force

On May 19, *Star Wars: Episode III Revenge of the Sith* hits movie theaters, and in keeping with the trends of merchandising, the toy line is already available. Hasbro is offering a diverse lineup of toys based on the sixth installment of George Lucas's space epic—from weapons to board games to action figures and more. Among the more arresting products are Trivial Pursuit DVD Star Wars The Saga Edition, Mustafar Final Duel Playset, Darth Tater (a Mr. Potato Head version of Darth Vader), and Call Upon Yoda (a fully animated replica of the Jedi master armed with more than 500 phrases to answer your most perplexing everyday questions).

—Major Mike

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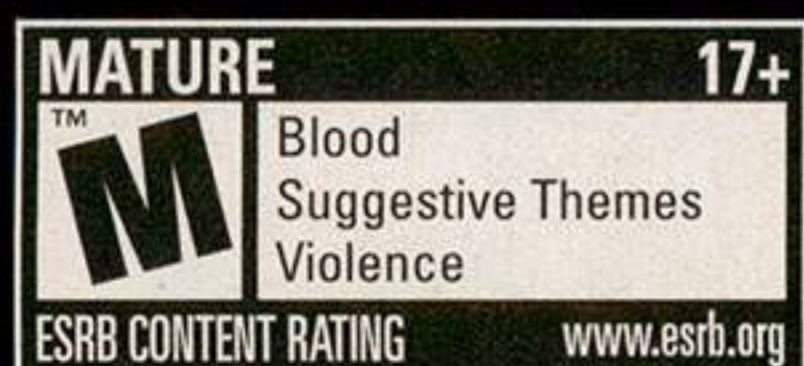
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## PLASTIC FANTASTIC

## Hello Again, Halo! Sneak peeks at new Halo 2 alien figures

Our buddies at JoyRide Studios broke open their vaults to give us a peek at some of their upcoming Halo 2 action figures, including a first look at the prototype sculpt of the Arbiter (from Series 5). Halo 2 action figures and vehicles have been flying off the shelves, so here's a score sheet of what's coming up in the next few months:

### Series 3 (on sale May 2005)

Blue Spartan (three variants), Tartarus, Ghost with Brute, and Active Camo Spec Ops Grunt

### Series 4 (on sale August 2005)

Red Spartan (three variants), ODST, Ranger Elite, and Banshee

### Series 5 (on sale October 2005)

Steel Spartan (three variants), Arbiter, Spec Ops Elite, and Spectre

Visit [joyridestudios.com](http://joyridestudios.com) and [bungie.net](http://bungie.net) for more information.—*Dr. Zombie*

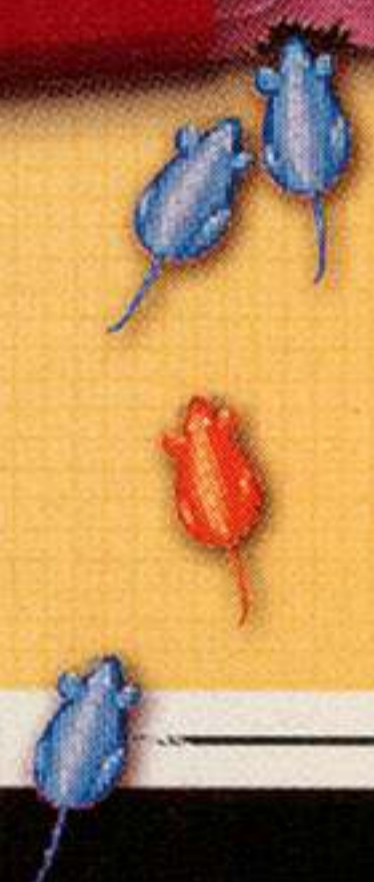


Arbiter (Series 5)



Tartarus (Series 3)

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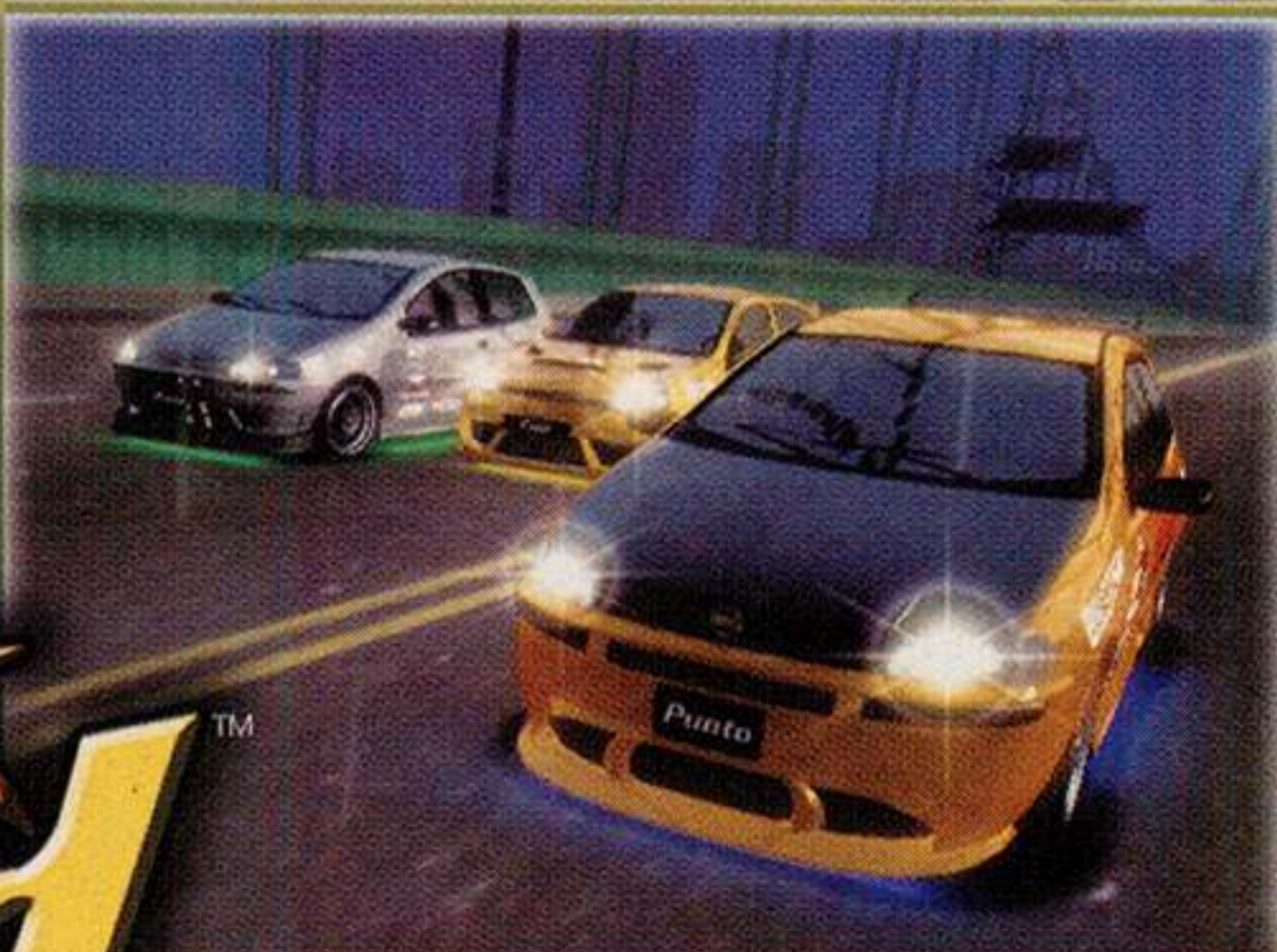
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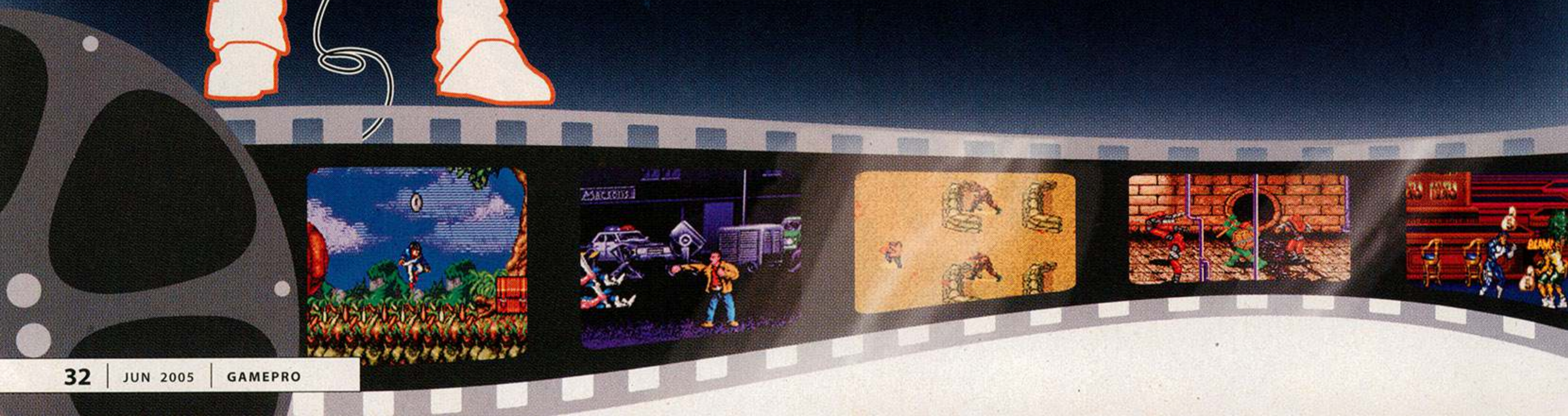
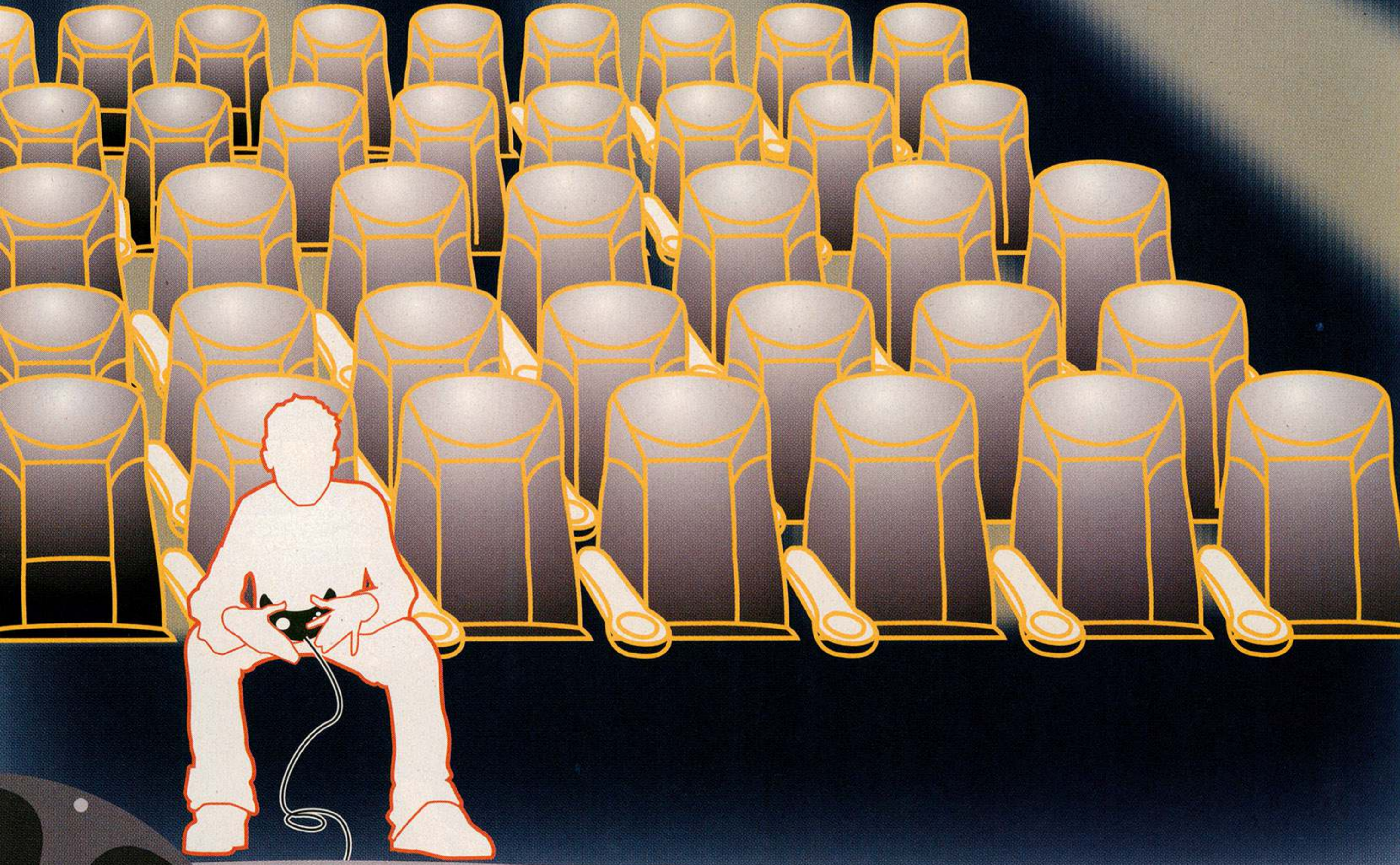
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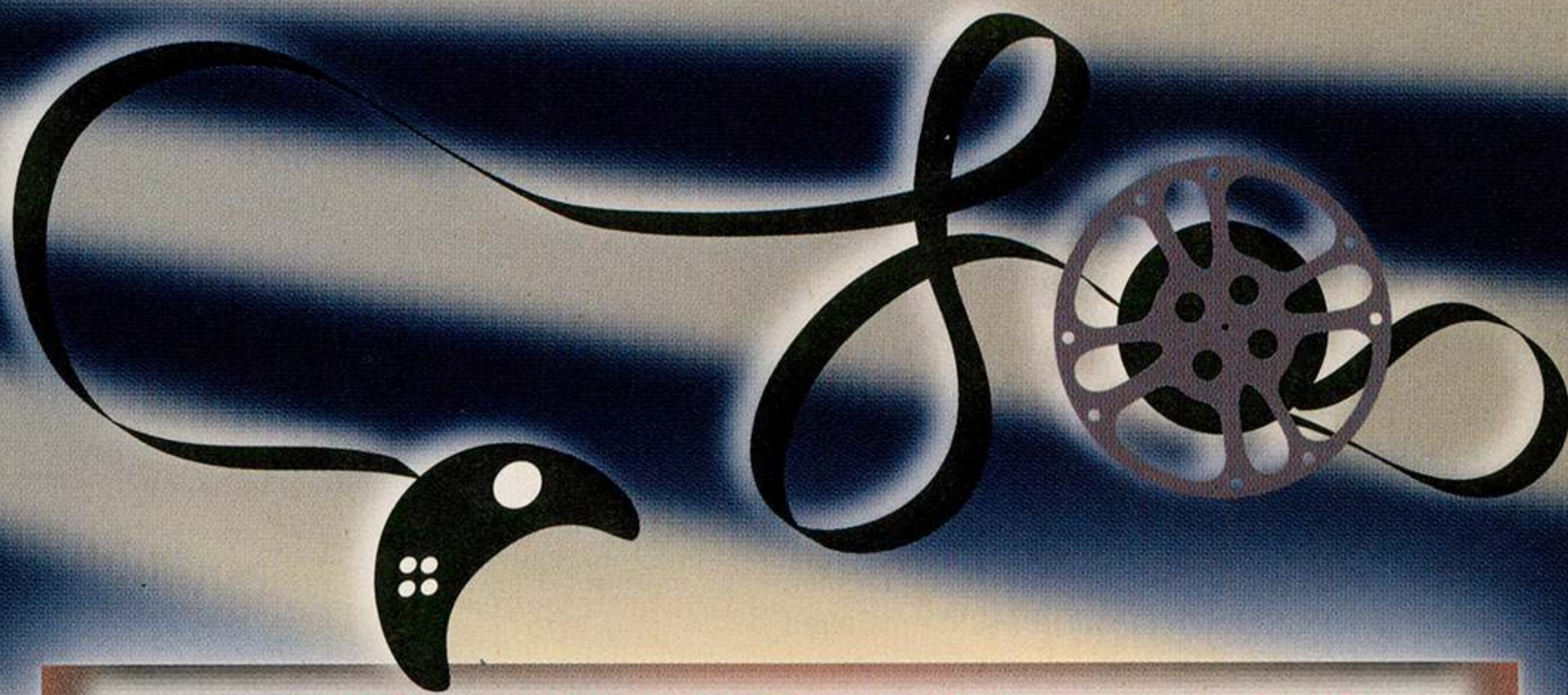
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# GAMES GO HOLLYWOOD

You see more of them every day—video games based on movies. *GamePro* takes a look at these titles in progress and gives them an early thumbs up or thumbs down. By The GamePros





COMING  
SOON

# THE STUDIO SYSTEM



Video games have come a long way since their inception. Like the motion pictures, they've evolved from simple black-and-white entertainment with accompanying tinny sound to full-blown color productions with state-of-the-art audio. Also like the movies, games have developed their own star system. Throughout their growth, video games have produced in-

stantly memorable small-screen icons, such as Mario, Sonic, and Lara Croft.

Some software developers, though, seemingly discontent with their own video-game creations, have decided to look elsewhere for inspiration, and what better archive to raid than motion-

picture vaults. There, one can take already well-known characters and either recast them in familiar situations or send them on brand-new adventures. Yet games based on licensed properties have an inconsistent track record with only a few of these titles (such as GoldenEye 007) being destined for classic game status. With video games becoming more of a mass-market commodity with each passing holiday season and licensing fees steadily rising, the stakes are higher than ever.

stantly memora-

ble small-screen icons, such as Mario, Sonic, and Lara Croft.



**Blasto**, the main character from Sony's 1998 release for the PlayStation...

Not solely content with contemporary cinema, game publishers have gone after the classics as well. *The Godfather*, *From Russia with Love*, and *Jaws* are just a few of the famous films that have been revisited for game translation. In fact, some of the original players have even redubbed their dialogue exclusively for the interactive version. Moreover, famous actors have also lent their talents



...and Mr. Incredible from the 2004 Oscar-winning movie *The Incredibles*. Hmmmm...

to the video-game industry for titles that have nothing to do with movies—be it likeness, vocals, or technical expertise.

Conversely, Hollywood has raided the video-game industry for intellectual properties and adapted them to the silver screen. That track record has been similarly inconsistent with few big-money makers and several flops (*Alone in the Dark*, for instance, pulled in approximately \$5 million at the box office after three weeks).

On the following pages, the *GamePro* editors take a look at upcoming video games based on motion-picture properties that are coming to a small screen near you. Will they be blockbuster hits or box-office disasters?

Here are some additional video games based on movies that are not covered in this feature but are slated for release in the coming months.

### **Aeon Flux** PS2, Xbox • Majesco • Fall 2005

The popular cyberpunk animated series will hit the silver screen with Charlize Theron in the title role of a deadly assassin 400 years in the future.

### **Cars** To be determined • THQ • Fall 2005

Pixar's animated follow-up to the successful *The Incredibles* and *Finding Nemo* will show what really goes on under the hood of today's high-powered racing machines.

### **Charlie and the Chocolate Factory**

PS2, Xbox, GameCube, GBA, PC • Global Star • July



An adaptation of the remake of *Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory* directed by Tim Burton and starring Johnny Depp

### **King Kong**

PS2, Xbox, PSP • Ubisoft • Fourth Quarter 2005

An adaptation of the upcoming big ape movie starring Naomi Watts and directed by Peter Jackson (*The Lord of the Rings* trilogy)

### **A Sound of Thunder**

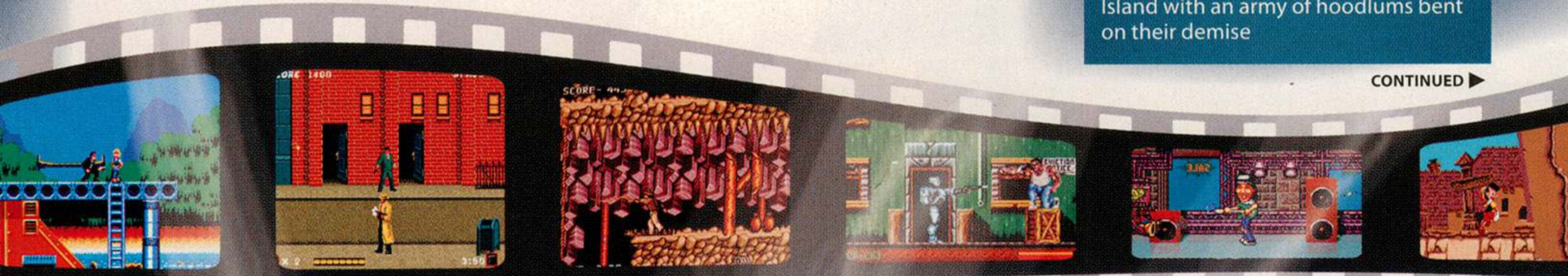
PS2, Xbox • Bam! Entertainment • Summer 2005

Based on the Ray Bradbury short story, this video game will follow the events of the movie that stars Edward Burns and Ben Kingsley.

### **The Warriors**

PS2 • Rockstar Games • Summer 2005

Walter Hill's 1979 controversial cult film about a gang trying to return to Coney Island with an army of hoodlums bent on their demise



CONTINUED ▶


# THE MATRIX ONLINE

Developer: Monolith Publisher: Sega/Warner Brothers PC Available now

When it was released on the eve of Y2K (remember how the apocalypse was supposed to happen?), I watched *The Matrix* four times—in theaters, no less. But the second film was bad enough to make me skip the third. And as for *Enter the Matrix*, rarely has material so sublimely suited for a video-game adaptation been so clumsily fumbled. But don't count the supremely imaginative Wachowski brothers out yet; they've embraced the flexibility of pop culture, releasing comic books, a series of animated shorts, and now an online game designed to expand the Matrix universe.

It's a good-looking game and a terrific idea. You can't play as Neo, but you can join the cause and fight the power—and look cool in the process with brand-name clothes and the requisite dark glasses. But the environments feel thin as if constructed from a single tile set. Without going through a tutorial, and in an online game you shouldn't have to, the combat system is confusing. Luckily in a deviation from the film, a death in game doesn't mean...you know, *death*.

In spite of some initial flaws, the beauty of an online game is that the designers can keep adding content to evolve the game, and Monolith is committed to doing just that. Besides, wouldn't it be fun to beat up on Agent Smith?

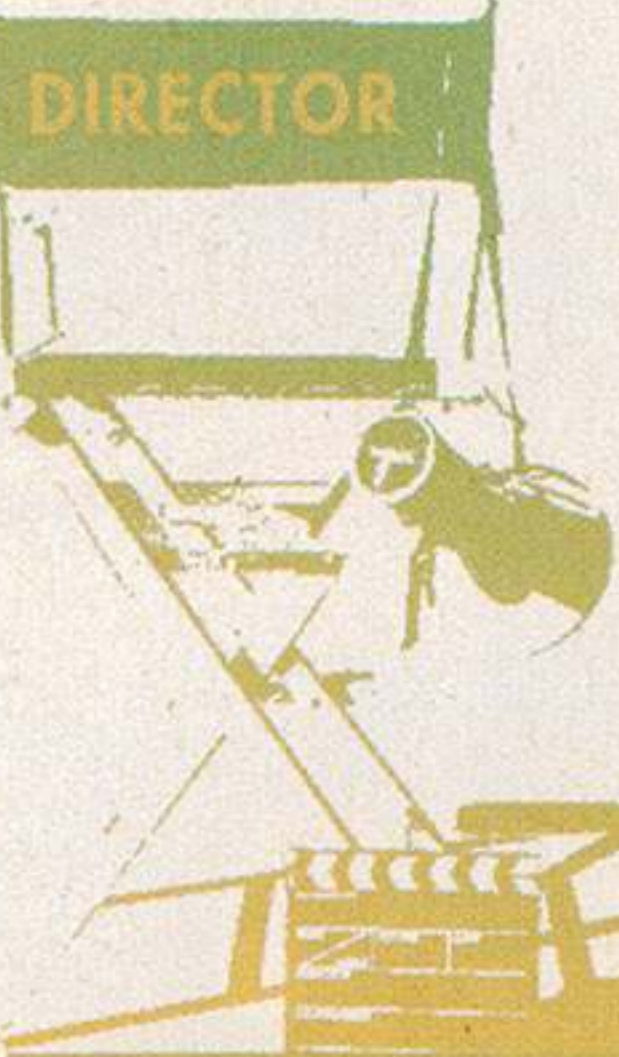
 I'm gonna take the red pill.  
—GameGirl

With its cyber agents, brooding conspiracies, and superhero kung fu, *The Matrix* is a perfect fit for an MMORPG. However, Monolith's vision of the virtual realm seems drab compared to the lurid world portrayed in the movies.

In *The Matrix Online*, players experience chronic déjà vu as textures and building interiors are endlessly rehashed throughout generic missions. The city feels more like an abandoned housing project than a sprawling metropolis with random hobo mobs scattered across the desolate urban landscape. While the interface for the most part is intuitive, the combat sequences are sheer chaos; with various action icons constantly flying about, the game demands Agent Smith-like reflexes to keep pace with your opponent's moves. After experiencing a couple of brutal deaths in the beginning, you realize it's no casual-gamer MMO (as is Blizzard's *World of Warcraft*).

And for many, that would be the appeal of *The Matrix Online*: Its depth, character customizability, and complexity falls in a comfortable niche between the hardcore crowd of *EverQuest II* and the weekend warriors of *WOW*. Also, it helps that assault rifles and trench coats are cooler than leather tunics and maces.

But like the *Matrix* itself, ultimately the MMORPG chiefly serves to generate juice from its inhabitants. And eventually, you'll likely get the feeling that something's wrong with the world of *Matrix Online*.—Funky Zealot



## THE MOVIES



In *The Movies*, Peter Molyneux's much-delayed but eagerly anticipated opus, you take control of a fledgling movie studio. You are capable of transforming almost any warm body into *The Next Big Thing* or throwing your star away like an overripe piece of fruit. But watch out; make too many poor decisions, and you'll wind up as a schlock studio cranking out Z-grade dreck. To help you drum up publicity, you can also create a marketing campaign. And your film will even be reviewed by film critics, who will refer to specific details (like your film's visual style) in their reviews.

But outside the core simulation, the biggest attraction in *The Movies* is definitely the custom movie mode. Designed with simplicity and flexibility in mind, the film production interface can be used to churn out a cheapo grindhouse flick in minutes using generic genre specifications. But players can also take the necessary time to polish off a much more sophisticated film, provided they have some handy vocal talent at hand. Lionhead Studios is hoping to hold a contest where players can submit movies to be judged by A-list directors. Will you be the next Scorsese? *The Movies* goes live this fall.



# FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE

Developer and publisher: EA Games ■ PS2, Xbox, GameCube ■ Available Fall 2005

Released in 1963, *From Russia with Love* is regarded as probably the finest of all the Bond films (along with *Dr. No*), and now EA Games is readying an interactive game version of the prized Ian Fleming adventure. However, the big hook for this one will be the use of Sean Connery's likeness as Bond (a first) in the game. After all, 007: Everything or Nothing was pretty good, so hopefully this one can follow in the same footsteps (we'll just forget about GoldenEye: Rogue Agent for now).

Purists may complain about some of the apparent continuity errors (the game features Bond's jetpack, which wasn't used until two films later in *Thunderball*), but one can only hope that the game includes a one-on-one fight between Bond and Donald "Red" Grant (played by Robert Shaw in the film), boat-chase sequence, helicopter duels, and a final battle with Rosa Klebb (complete with the knife-in-the-shoe weapon)—just to name a few

It was the Golden Age of spying—the Cold War put the freeze on normal diplomatic relations, and feminism hadn't advanced far enough to prevent lovely ladies with silly names from tumbling onto a suave secret agent's silky sheets. Re-creating this piece of diplomatic history can be done with wit and style as proven by games like Monolith's *No One Lives Forever*. The pitfalls of working with the Bond license, however, are many: Can you update the material for a modern audience without losing the creamy, quirky voluptuousness of the original films? Will your star actor step down? (Pierce, I'm looking in your direction.) Can you take well-worn and now-classic espionage plots and provide enough twists and turns to keep the John Le Carré and Robert Ludlum fans engaged?

historic Bond events. How the game will handle the convoluted plot, which involves double and triple crosses (not to mention the first glimpse of evil conglomerate SPECTRE), also remains to be seen. Historically, Bond-movie adaptations have ranged from excellent (*GoldenEye 007*) to lousy (*007 Racing*), so who knows where *From Russia with Love* will ultimately fall.

Yet based on the brand (and the involvement of Sir Connery), I'll give it the benefit of the doubt.

—Major Mike



I suspect the game will ultimately not appeal to the so-called hardcore gaming audience; we've seen it all and then some. Though long in the tooth, the Bond license still has legs with contemporary fans like P. Diddy working his own "urban" angle on Ian Fleming's character.

So far, EA's biggest selling point is that it's getting Sean Connery to reprise his role and voice. While that won't be enough for most gamers, there hasn't been a good Bond game since *GoldenEye*, and we're about due. Like Major Mike, I'm keeping the faith on this one.

—GameGirl

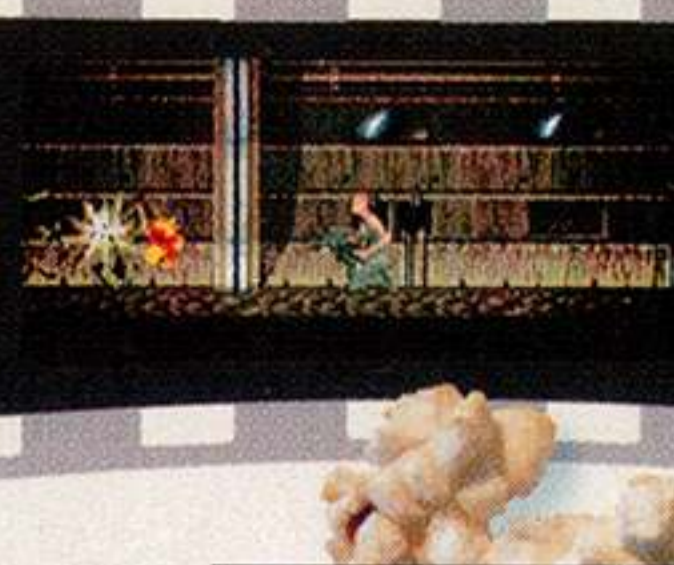


## THE WORST MOVIE-TO-GAME ADAPTATIONS

We've all played them, so *GamePro* went back into the vault, weeded through the trash, and came up with this list of the 10 worst movie-to-game adaptations. There are more titles, to be sure, but these were true stinkers.

- 1. Batman Forever** SNES, Genesis • Acclaim • 1995  
Probably the worst Batman video game ever. You play as the Caped Crusader and follow the events from the snoozer movie. The "product" was bad enough, but why are there load times in this game cart?
- 2. Blade** PlayStation • Activision • 2000  
The cool Marvel character is wasted by derivative platform-hopping mechanics and a host of technical deficiencies.
- 3. Catwoman** PS2, Xbox, GameCube • EA Games • 2004  
Unplayable junk based on the flop film
- 4. E.T.: The Extra Terrestrial** Atari 2600 • Atari • 1982  
E.T. is the legendary game that was rushed to store shelves...and then rushed almost as quickly to the landfill.
- 5. Friday the 13<sup>th</sup>** NES • LJN • 1989  
You defend campers from being slaughtered while fighting Jason and his mother's decapitated head. "You and your friends are dead." Sick.
- 6. A Nightmare on Elm Street** NES • LJN • 1989  
Defeat tot murderer Freddy Kruger by collecting his bones and then throwing them in a furnace. Yes, it's as gross as it sounds.
- 7. Seven Samurai 20XX** PS2 • Sammy Studios • 2004  
License: great idea. Setting the game in the future: lousy idea.
- 8. Street Fighter: The Movie** PlayStation, Saturn, Arcade • Acclaim • 1995  
"Stool kick!" This was an insult to all Street Fighter fans as their favorite sprite-created characters were replaced by live-action models. Lame in every respect.
- 9. Superman 64** Nintendo 64 • Titus • 1999  
The Man of Steel couldn't fight for truth, justice, and the American way with the awful controls in this game.
- 10. Total Recall** NES • Acclaim • 1991  
You play as a hilariously imperfect-pixel Schwarzenegger through completely rote side-scrolling levels. You'll lose your mind after the first five minutes.

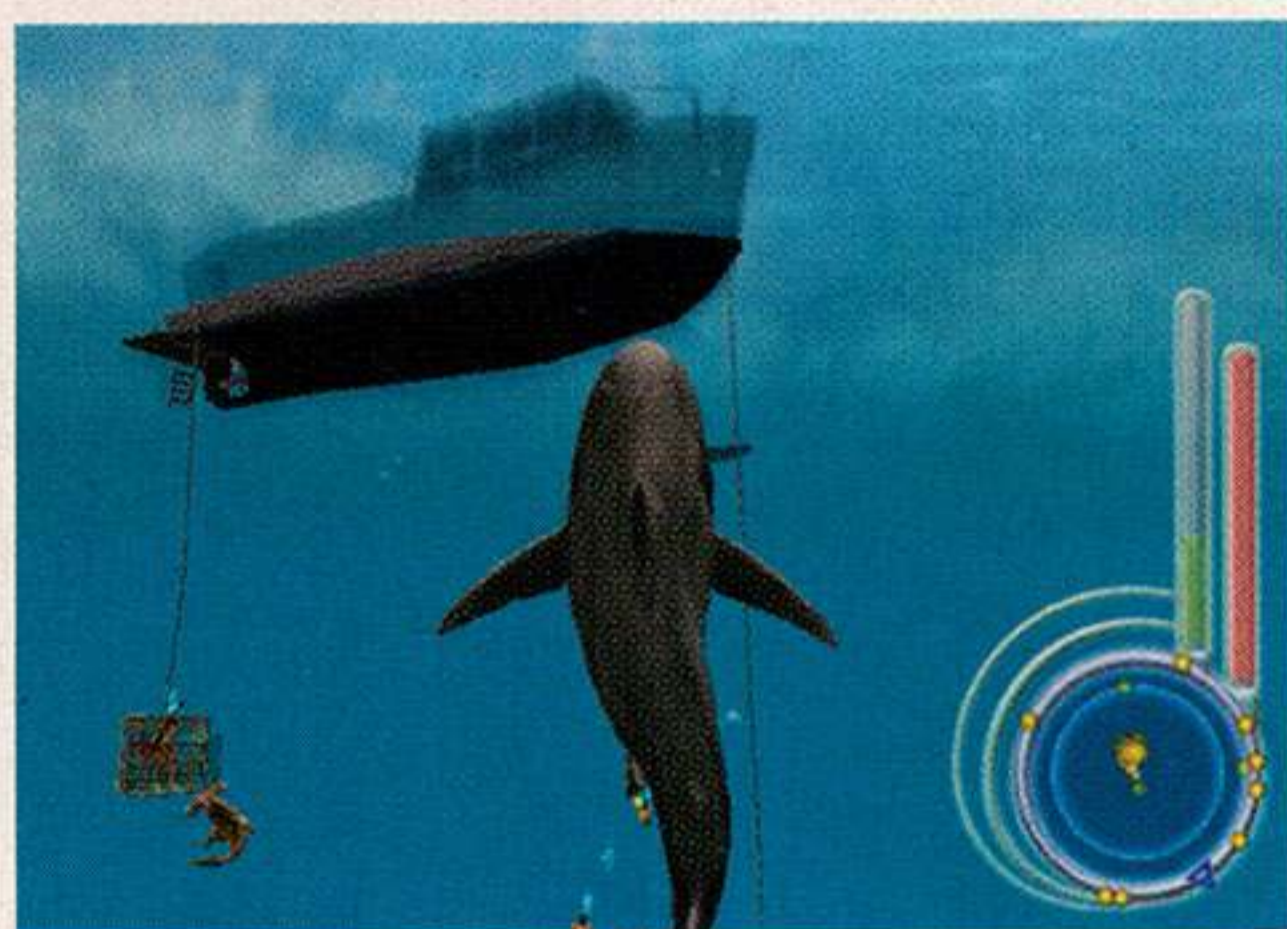
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# JAWS

Developer: Appaloosa Interactive Publisher: Majesco PS2, Xbox Available August

In these days of flashy gore, the 1975 classic *Jaws* stands out for its minimalist refusal to indulge in theatrics. Taking mythological cues from traditions like *Moby Dick* and *The Old Man and the Sea*, Steven Spielberg enhanced the suspense with suggestion and an eerie soundtrack. Majesco's game is a cheap trick. It might be perversely fun to turn the tables on mankind by playing as the shark, but the spirit of the film is utterly lost. The game devolves into a bloody feeding frenzy that—while mildly interesting on the Discovery Channel—gets boring quickly.—*GameGirl*



Okay, so the shark in *Jaws* usually gets blown up or destroyed in a nasty way, and why? For living its life *the way a shark should*. Yet playing as the shark is what gives this game a type of guilty pleasure that few titles

can match. Tired of humans invading your aquatic space? No problem—you can eat them. But hapless swimmers aren't your only prey: The game features killer whales and other shark species that are just as nasty as you are. *Jaws* doesn't come off as much as a play on the movie as it does a cool side story or adventure.—*Major Mike*



# MADAGASCAR

Developer: Toys for Bob (PS2, Xbox, GameCube); Vicarious Visions (DS, GBA); Beenox (PC) Publisher: Activision PS2, Xbox, GameCube, DS, GBA, PC Available May

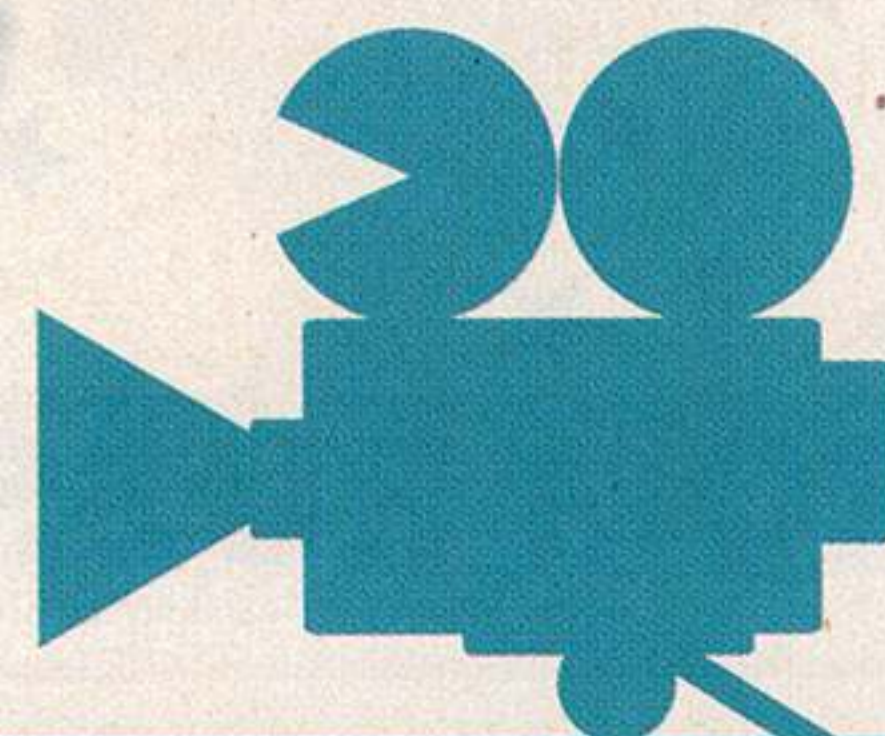
Based on the DreamWorks computer-generated feature film, *Madagascar* lets you control one of four animal characters—a hippo, giraffe, lion, or zebra—and guide it through locales that range from New York City to the titular island. So far, *Madagascar* doesn't lack diversity as each character has his or her own specialized powers and abilities that will come in handy depending on the situation. This game is undoubtedly suited for younger players as belied by the colorful visuals and cartoony escapades. Older gamers may want to keep that in mind when they pick up the controller.—*Major Mike*



When Major Mike mentioned "Madagascar" to me, I drew a complete blank. A movie about an island republic off the coast of East Africa? I thought briefly of Humphrey Bogart, probably mixing *Casablanca* and *The African Queen* in my head.

It turns out that it's actually an animated animal romp, and judging from the screen shots, the game's visuals should be as smooth as the film's. My guess is that it's a

competent adventure game, but I suspect that like the film, it will be pretty light on real substance. No word on whether Ben Stiller and Jada Pinkett Smith will provide the voices as they did in the film. If only!—*GameGirl*



## BEST GAMES THAT ONCE WERE MOVIES

Common wisdom says that movies—with their reliance on narrative, emotion, and character—don't usually make for great games. Here are 10 video games that started as movies but bucked the trend and turned into solid games.

- 1. GoldenEye 007** Nintendo 64 • Nintendo • 1997  
Based on the so-so 1995 movie, *GoldenEye 007* transcended the license to become the first great console multiplayer shooter.
- 2. Spider-Man 2** PS2, Xbox, GameCube • Activision • 2004  
The first one felt flat; the second one, however, felt exhilaratingly expansive—it will make you look at skyscrapers in a whole new way.
- 3. Tron** Arcade • Midway • 1982  
*Tron* and its sequel, *Discs of Tron*, are stunning arcade games that seemed futuristic then. This is old school at its best.
- 4. The Chronicles of Riddick: Escape from Butcher Bay—Director's Cut** PC • Vivendi Universal Games • 2004  
A mix of action, stealth, and a dash of RPG lift it above the standard FPS. The "Director's Cut" is a first.
- 5. The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King** PS2, Xbox, GameCube • EA • 2003  
If there were Oscars for video games, *The Return of the King* would have won them. It's as critically acclaimed as the film.
- 6. Super Star Wars** SNES • LucasArts • 1992  
A wonderfully engaging platformer, it's a fitting tribute to the license.
- 7. Alien vs. Predator** PC • Fox Interactive • 1999  
A stellar example of a movie mash-up that makes one scary game. Chaos ensues as you battle both Aliens and the Predator.
- 8. Robocop vs. Terminator** Genesis • Virgin Games • 1993  
Another terrific mash-up, this is a platformer that's heavy on the violent action and true to the spirit of both films!
- 9. Dick Tracy** Genesis • Sega • 1990  
This is a case of a mediocre movie's ability to translate into a decent game. Action goes noir.
- 10. The Goonies** NES • Konami • 1986  
A Japan-only release based on the cult sleeper hit, *The Goonies* was followed with *The Goonies II*. Great flick, fun games.

# SCARFACE

Developer: Radical Games Publisher: Vivendi Universal Games PS2, Xbox Available Fall 2005

Sure, it's clearly inspired by Grand Theft Auto, but considering the source material, that's not necessarily inappropriate. Unlike in GTA, players can't hurt noncombatants—Tony's strict "moral code" prevents it. Also interesting is that many segments take place in the open seas with the player smuggling drugs past DEA agents. For more straightforward shootouts, Tony's "Blind Rage" ability bestows limited invincibility and enhanced marksmanship. It all comes down to whether or not Al Pacino will take the role (or opt for a role in EA's Godfather game). Prediction: Pacino will ultimately choose Scarface. Call it cautious optimism.—Vicious Sid



Tony Montana cradling an M16: Classic Al Pacino. Tony Montana resurrected in a video game: Classic blunder—even if it starred Pacino. Criminal-minded shootfests are so yesterday. With the name Scarface

slapped onto it, the game not only trivializes the fantastic film, but it also makes it seem like the developer couldn't come up with an original idea for an action game. Scarface has to prove that it's not just a game full of drug deals, boat rides, and over-the-top murders. As of now, Tony Montana is better off dead as the film rightfully shows him to be.—Four-Eyed Dragon



# BATMAN BEGINS

Developer: Eurocom/Vicarious Visions Publisher: EA Games PS2, Xbox, GameCube, PSP, GBA Available June

As *Batman Begins* is an origin story, I imagine the game as an RPG: young Bruce Wayne leveling up as he trains, donning the mask at a critical plot moment. These moments, I fear, may get lost in an action game. I always admired Frank Miller's psychological



Hollywood execs were obviously inspired by *Equilibrium*, a thinking man's action flick, when they cast Christian Bale for the role of the Dark Knight in *Batman Begins*. And what a choice they made; Bale cuts quite a dashing figure in both the flick and the

shading of the Dark Knight. But "dark" should only go so far: Batman is still a good guy; he avoids killing. He has his demons, sure, but they make him more human. He is also first and foremost a *detective*—he uses smarts and gadgets to survive, not superpowers. If the game features mindless punch-sneak action, I'll stick to Spider-Man.—GameGirl

game. But pretty pictures aside, information on *Batman Begin's* gameplay is murkier than a Gotham City back alley. We know that the game will feature action components but also include stealthier segments. But for *Batman Begins* to soar, it will need to shrug off the weight of its movie license and focus on one thing: being a good game.—Vicious Sid



## MOVIES THAT WOULD MAKE EXCELLENT GAMES

The *GamePro* editors put their collective movie and gaming knowledge together and devised this list of 10 motion pictures that would make excellent games.

### 1. The Dirty Dozen

Imagine a WWII *Brothers in Arms*-esque FPS, where you take a group of condemned prisoners on a suicide mission in occupied France. This definitely has online potential.

### 2. The Iron Giant

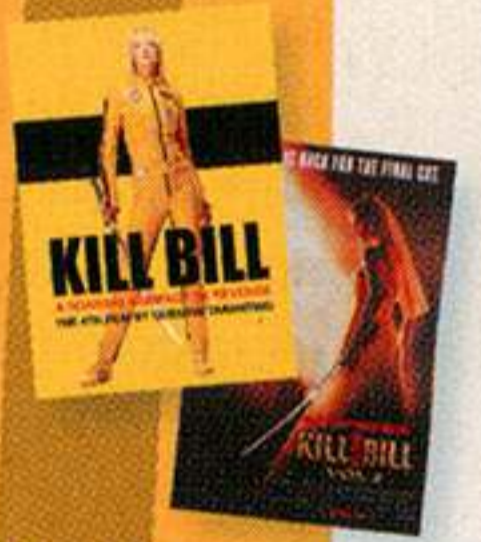
Make full use of CG cel-shading to recreate the adventures of Hogarth trying to help the Iron Giant escape from the military.

### 3. It's a Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World

Greedy online players can collect clues and race to the loot that's buried under the "big W." Gameplay elements could consist of flying, driving, and even hand-to-hand fighting.

### 4. Kill Bill Volume 1 and 2

A no-brainer: You play The Bride, whose sole mission is to wipe out the goons who killed your husband and left you for dead. The Crazy 88 fight sequence has *Dynasty Warriors* inflections written all over it.



### 5. Lone Wolf and Cub

Hack-n-slash *Onimusha*-esque swordplay, and the baby cart could provide all types of additional weapons (*Shogun Assassin* was the 90-minute feature of footage taken from some of the six *Lone Wolf* films).

### 6. Mad Max

This was done as an NES game in 1990 by Mindscape, but with today's technology, it's time to take up the franchise again—especially with similar-themed games like *Twisted Metal* and their popularity.

### 7. The Magnificent Seven

Another online multiplayer experience, where seven people hook up to defend a peasant-farmer village from bandits. Tie in a combat engine reminiscent of *Red Dead Revolver's*.

### 8. Paycheck

Lousy movie (remember *Riddick?*), but it's an interesting concept. You're given everything you need at the beginning of the game, but the challenge is figuring out where and when to use those items throughout your quest.

### 9. Saturday Night Fever

Sure, use licensed music from the movie, throw on a DDR interface, and for a real challenge, work in the EyeToy. A must for disco fans (we know who you are).

### 10. Shaolin Soccer

Use the underrated *Sega Soccer Slam* as a template for this over-the-top soccer game, where players have all kinds of supernatural powers.

CONTINUED ▶





## STAR WARS: EPISODE III REVENGE OF THE SITH

Developer: The Collective Publisher: LucasArts PS2, Xbox Available May

Star Wars gamers have been longing for a kick-ass action/adventure game for almost as long as they've been waiting for *Episode III* itself. So far, this game looks like a winner. The lightsaber combat rocks in the three-tiered boss battles, and there's a mean fighting game mode. What's more, you can make the story mode give up an alternate ending (Anakin does not become Vader?). If that's not enough, you can beat the game and take part in the original Vader versus Obi-Wan 'saber duel from *Star Wars Episode IV* (cool!). The kicker: Former *GamePro* editor Uncle Dust is overseeing the game.—*Brother Buzz*



Lucas has a knack for creating engaging trailers but disappointing movies, and history may repeat itself for *Episode III*. True to form, the video-game adaptation sounds catchy, at least on a press release. Launching on May 5, the game

will feature sequences expanded from the movie, even offering an alternate ending of Anakin besting Obi-Wan. It will also have characters exclusive to the game, such as flamethrower-wielding Clone Blaze Troopers, Air Battle Droids, and Grapple Droids. With its safe and conventional gameplay, the game may end up being a mediocre blockbuster. But for now, it's the New Hope.—*Funky Zealot*



## FANTASTIC FOUR

Developer: 7 Studios Publisher: Activision PS2, Xbox, GameCube, PC Available June

More like *The Spastic Bore*, if the ridiculously hammy theatrical trailer is anything to go by. The Commish as *The Thing?* *Fuged-aboudit*. At least the game shows a few flashes of inspiration: You'll be able to switch between the superheroes at any time, and the two-player cooperative mode will allow you and a friend to combine your superpowers to inflict devastating damage. But at its heart, the game looks like just another button-mashing brawler. Unless you're a slave to superhero games, you'll be better off dyeing your underwear red and practicing kung fu in front of the bathroom mirror.—*Vicious Sid*



The Fantastic Four are the ultimate adventuring party for the 21st Century (and the model for *The Incredibles*): You've got a human flameball, a monster of rock, a force-field generator, and, well, a guy who stretches... a lot. All but the last of these powers are

easily translatable into video-game actions and could be tactically exploited in combat. I'm also pleased that the game doesn't seem to indulge in the uselessly "edgy" art direction the film exhibits. My advice: Skip the movie, play the game.—*GameGirl*



## THAT'S ENTERTAINMENT

Here's some creative talent that has been involved in some high-profile video games—past and present.

### Bruce Campbell

Sam Raimi's favorite cameo-appearance actor has voiced several video-game titles, including *Pitfall 3D: Beyond the Jungle*, *Evil Dead: A Fistful of Boomstick*, and *Broken Helix*.

### Kyle Cooper

The designer of the memorable movie title sequences for *Seven*, *Twister*, *Dawn of the Dead*, *Mission Impossible*, and *Spider-Man 2* lent his creative talents to *Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater's* opening credits.

### Brian Cox

Rockstar's dark and depressing *Manhunt* got a lift from Brian Cox, who voiced the game's nemesis, "the director." Cox also performed the vocals for *Killzone's* Scolar Visari. He has an excellent reputation for his strong supporting roles in such films as *The Ring*, *The Bourne Identity/Supremacy*, and *Troy*.

### Dana Gould

The stand-up comedian did the wise-cracking one-liners for *Gex*. Gould has starred in his share of movies (*Mystery Men*) and television shows (*Seinfeld's* "The Junk Mail" episode). He has also written episodes for *The Simpsons*.

### Harry Gregson-Williams

In addition to composing the music for *Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons of Liberty* and *Snake Eater*, Gregson-Williams was behind the music scores for *Armageddon*, *Spy Game*, *Man on Fire*, and *Shrek 2*.

### Linda Hunt

The Oscar-winning actress from *The Year of Living Dangerously* (in which she played a man, no less) lent her voice as the narrator of Sony's brutal Greek mythology epic *God of War*. Hunt had a regular gig on the TV show *The Practice*.

### Michael Ironside

Everyone's favorite B-movie bad guy provided the voice for Sam Fisher in the Tom Clancy's *Splinter Cell* games. Ironside's rap sheet includes such movies as *Total Recall* and *Scanners*, and the TV mini-series *V: The Final Battle*.

### Bruce Willis

Willis voiced Trey, the main character in the futuristic action/shooter *Apocalypse*. The 1998 video-game release got a lot of press as it was one of the first instances of a mainstream Hollywood personality appearing in a game.

### Stan Winston

Oscar-winning makeup and special effects maestro (*Aliens*, *Terminator*), Winston created the character artwork for *The Suffering* and his Stan Winston Studio designed the alien monsters for the first-person shooter *Area-51*.





# DIRTY HARRY

Developer to be determined ■ Publisher: Majesco ■ System(s) to be determined ■ Available date to be determined

This is one of those dangerous film franchises. On paper, it sounds like a great game concept. But in the wrong hands, it could be a disaster. When Harry Callahan jams the barrel of his .44 into that punk's face and practically hisses as he asks him if he "feels lucky," the magic is that the guy backs down and that Harry's gun is actually empty. That's attitude.

Capturing that in a game will be the challenge. I see *The Getaway*, *True Crime: Streets of L.A.*, and *Grand Theft Auto*...but I don't want to. I don't see a game that's either "dirty" or "Harry" enough.—*Brother Buzz*



*Dirty Harry* is one of my favorite "cop" films, and it contains what is probably Eastwood's finest moment (the football field with Scorpio), so there is a natural reticence to see it translated into an interactive game. Although Eastwood's personal involvement is promising, some nagging questions remain: Is this going to follow the events of the movies, or will it be an all-new adventure?

Also, consider the time period: Will Harry's .44 Magnum be used against modern-day gang weapons? I agree with Buzz—please don't give us a *Getaway* engine with a digitized Eastwood peeling off repetitive one-liners.—*Major Mike*

# THE GODFATHER

Developer: EA Redwood Shores ■ Publisher: EA Games ■ PS2, Xbox, PSP ■ Available Fall 2005

This is another personal favorite movie that has now been raided for use in the interactive arena. In listening to the features of the game, so many familiar buzzwords jumped out ("non-linear action/adventure gameplay"), and the game sounds more and more like *Grand Theft* you-know-what. However,

the use of James Caan and Robert Duvall (where's Al Pacino?) has some appeal, and this could well be Marlon Brando's very last performance. Thankfully, the game will take place from 1945–55,

the time frame for *The Godfather* and *The Godfather Part II* (excluding the events from the disastrous *The Godfather Part III*).—*Major Mike*



Think of the top mafia movies: In addition to *The Godfather*, there's *Goodfellas*, *Casino*, *Donnie Brasco*, and Sergio Leone's *Once Upon a Time in America*. What's interesting is that

there's more dialogue than action...or rather, the dialogue is the action. When a killing happens, it's fast, violent, and shocking—not *fun*. These movies are, at heart, dramas that revolve around intense relationships—families, friends, and lovers. How are you going to put all that into an action game

without destroying what made the movie great? Leave the gun. Take the cannolis.—*GameGirl*

## TOP 10 GAMES THAT PLAY LIKE A MOVIE

Most games are about instant gratification. But then there are those few that pull you in and compel you to watch every cut-scene and listen to every word. These are the games that play just like an award-winning movie.

- 1. Dragon's Lair** *Arcade*  
There's a plot twist at every turn. And at the end, you even save the girl.
- 2. Metal Gear Solid** *PlayStation*  
From the opening cinematic to the in-game action, *Metal Gear Solid* has the presentation of a top-tier action thriller.
- 3. Half-Life** *PC*  
The sci-fi story is cool, but the cast of supporting characters gives it real life.
- 4. Fear Effect** *PlayStation*  
Take one gun-toting heroine, add in mature themes and supernatural shenanigans, and what do you get? An unforgettable adventure game.
- 5. Max Payne** *PC*  
This theme is timeless. You're rooting for the cop who is out for revenge against those who murdered his family.
- 6. Beyond Good & Evil** *PS2*  
*Beyond Good & Evil* nearly got lost in the holiday shuffle, but its sophisticated story deals with political corruption and other weighty topics.
- 7. Medal of Honor: Allied Assault** *Xbox*  
The dramatic cut-scenes bring the WWII-era story to life.
- 8. XIII** *Xbox*  
Stylized, comic book-inspired close-ups and great angular camera shots add zest to this two-fisted shooter.
- 9. Night Trap** *Sega CD*  
An homage to B-movie excellence, even if it did enrage a few senators.
- 10. Onimusha: Warlords** *PS2*  
Ghoul, gauntlets, and guts—a perfect example of how samurai games should be made.

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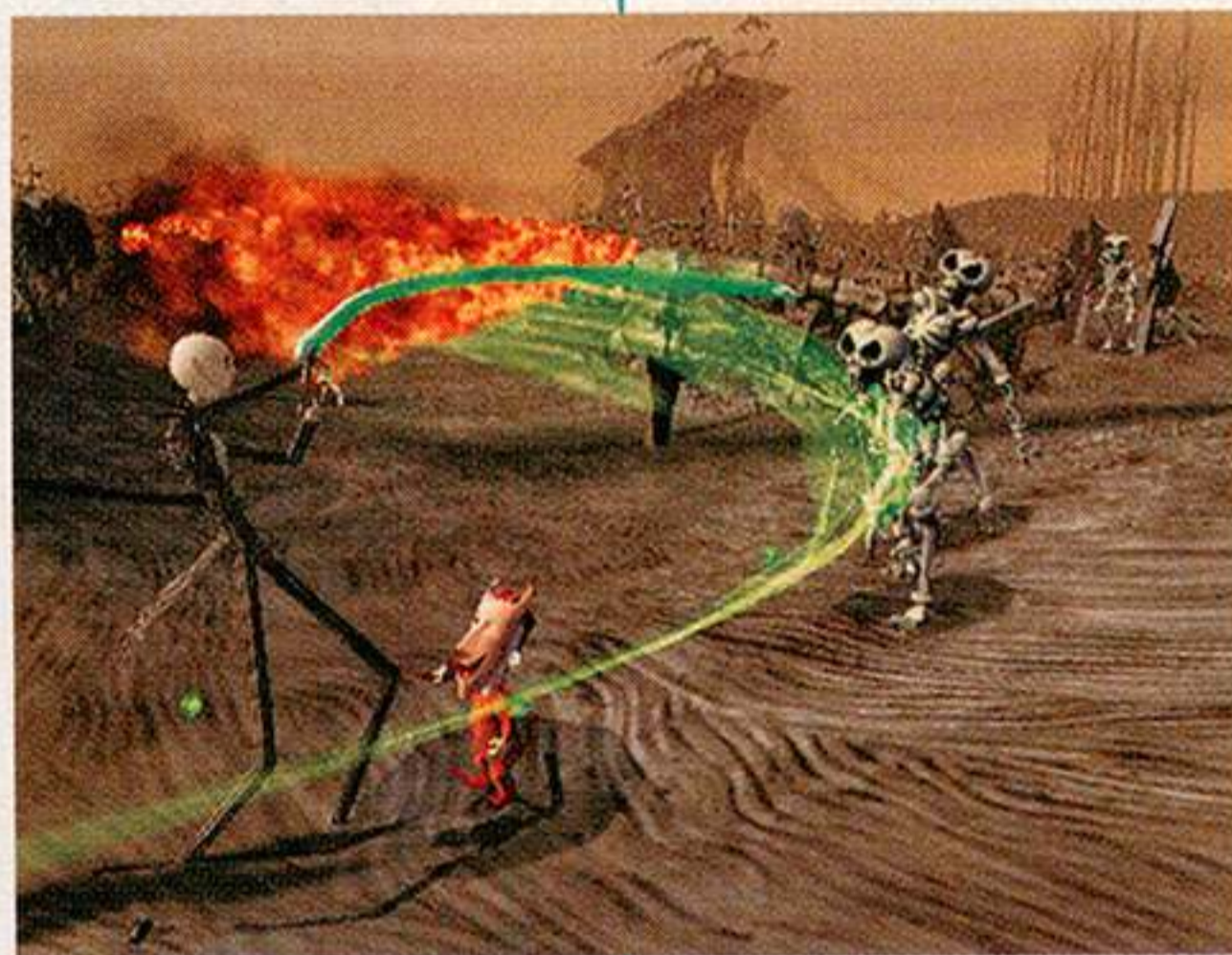


# TIM BURTON'S THE NIGHTMARE BEFORE CHRISTMAS: OOGIE'S REVENGE

Developer: Capcom Publisher: Buena Vista Interactive PS2, Xbox Available October

Even though he didn't actually direct it, *The Nightmare Before Christmas* is one of Tim Burton's crowning achievements. It's filled with fantastic, iconic images and an emotionally affecting story.

So whose idea was it to transform this masterpiece into a generic action/adventure game? Burton's eye-popping vision deserves a loftier treatment—say, as an old-school adventure title or a deep, engrossing RPG. In the game, Jack Skellington can morph into other forms and attack foes with a "Soul Robber." But from the sound of it, the only thing being robbed is the integrity of this classic film.—*Vicious Sid*



Although it's been more than 10 years since the movie captivated us, the legend of Jack Skellington and friends continues to live on

strongly. It's all the more reason to have a game that uses the unique look and quirky story line for interactive entertainment. If done right, Tim Burton's bizarre world can be turned into a fascinating ride of hysterical music-based battles and wacky challenges that

border on the freakish and colorfully eccentric. I predict a fulfilling ride that will elevate the

Nightmare into a fantastical dream.—*Four-Eyed Dragon*



# THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA

Developer: Traveller's Tales/Griptonite Games Publisher: Buena Vista Interactive PS2, Xbox, GameCube, DS, GBA Available Fall 2005

It's the association with CS Lewis that makes this game special. But don't fool yourself—precious little of the solemn joy, not to mention

the Christian theology that shimmered so magically throughout the book, will exist in this competent but uninspired interactive adaptation. Slapping on some fancy graphics isn't going to push *The Chronicles of Narnia* from decent to good. The same goes for the movie. Do yourself a favor—make a cup of hot chocolate, curl up on the sofa, and re-read the book again. Some stories were never meant to be turned into mediocre video games.—*GameGirl*



Create a kick-ass game born out of a classic childhood book? *The Lord of the Rings* did it, so why can't it happen with C.S.

Lewis's enchanting tale? Imagine *The Wizard of Oz* meets *Harry Potter*, mix in fanciful-looking creatures and epic battles, and you get a game that exudes an unforgettable adventure. Just as long as the game receives the same gold treatment as the movie—including heavy on

the special effects, quality voice acting, and compelling gameplay—then Narnia should be a place that everyone visits in their lifetime.—*Four-Eyed Dragon*



CONTINUED ►



## GAMERS AT THE MOVIES

The film industry has become increasingly fascinated with interactive media. Take a look at how video games have infiltrated our cultural lexicon in these inventive films.

### 1. Tron 1982

From the dawn of the video-game era, *Tron* downloads Jeff Bridges into the program.

### 2. Toys 1992

Director Levinson's warning about mixing play with violence is just as resonant today.

### 3. Groundhog Day 1993

The best example of procedural thinking—if you're confused about the term "emergent gameplay," go watch this film.

### 4. Run, Lola, Run 1998

Pure action/adventure! Lola has one mission and a time limit—when she fails, it's not game over but reload.

### 5. Sliding Doors 1998

Parallel lives diverge from choices made—just like in an RPG.

### 6. The Matrix 1999

The Matrix blends existential philosophy with a sci-fi premise—the world as we know it is a giant video game.

### 7. eXistenZ 1999

David Cronenberg's heroine is a top video-game designer whose latest game jacks directly into players' heads with deadly consequences.

### 8. Time Code 2000

The plot is not at all game-like, but the cinematography is straight four-player split-screen...and just as chaotic as a round of Halo.

### 9. The Butterfly Effect 2004

What if you could save and reload in your life?

### 10. Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind 2004

Michel Gondry, big-time gamer, blends dreams and reality.



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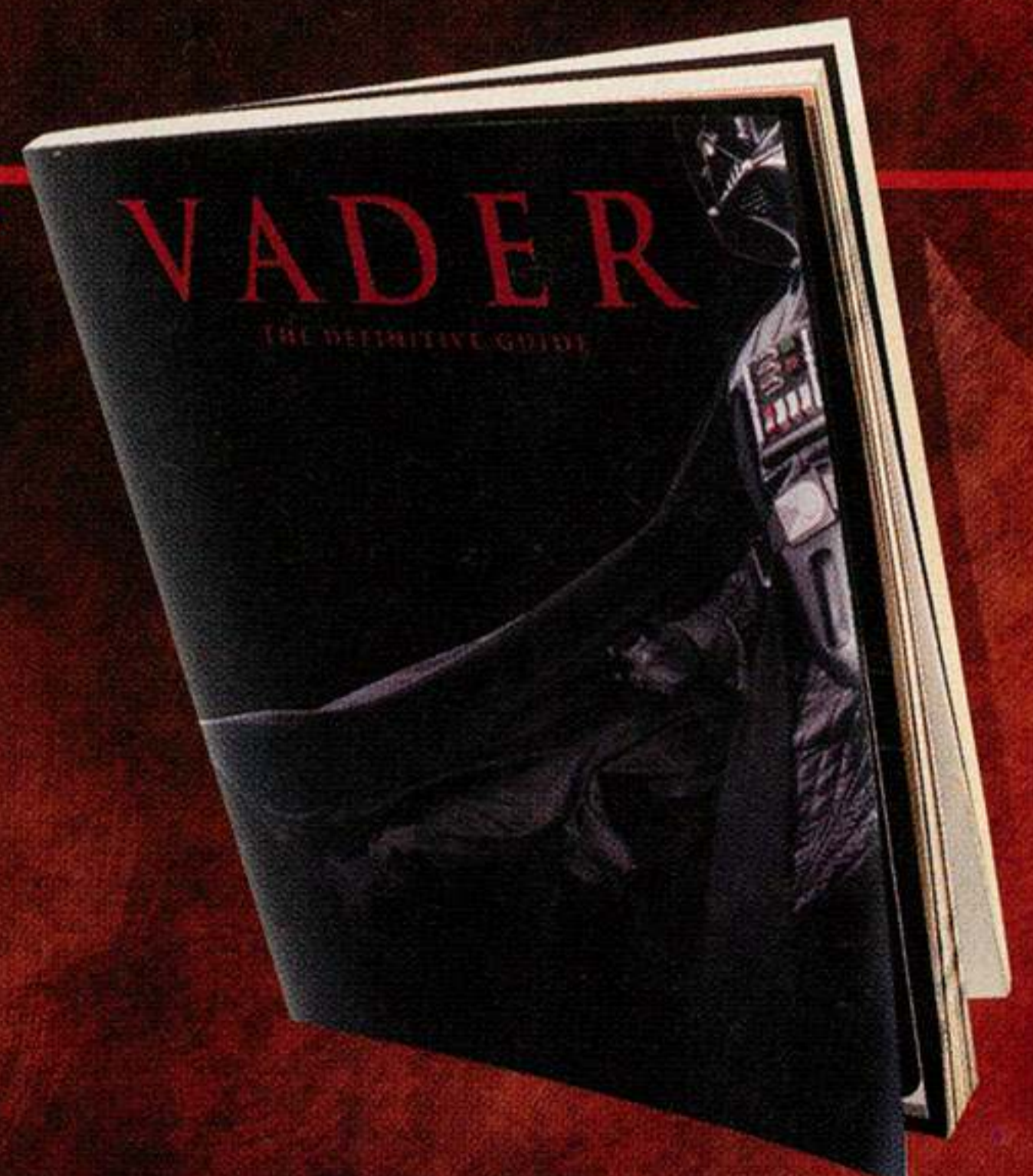
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# THE MOVIE GAME

The trail from video game to film is littered with failures and critical disasters, but that may be about to change thanks to a new generation of game-savvy moviemakers and a festival of games preparing to go Hollywood. By John Gaudiosi

Although failures like *Alone in the Dark*, *Double Dragon*, *Final Fantasy: The Spirits Within*, *Super Mario Bros.*, and *Street Fighter: The Movie* outnumber hits like *Lara Croft: Tomb Raider*, *Mortal Kombat*, and *Resident Evil*, video games have never been hotter in Hollywood. And the reason is simple: In a crowded Hollywood box-office field where even blockbuster movies usually only get a weekend or two to earn their keep, video games provide a built-in, worldwide audience that's even more mass market than many comic books.

## It Starts with a Story

Hollywood producers are calling video games the "new comics." Video-game writer John Zuur Platten of the Bureau of Film and Games said that video games today are where comics were 10 years ago. Like Hollywood movie producers and screenwriters, video-game creators are telling original stories through interesting characters.

"An idea can be proven as a video game today and attract a large audience, which makes the property ripe for a film," said Platten, who pitched a survival/horror-game document called *Backwater* to Dimension Films in 1999 and has a movie hitting theaters later this year. A game is in the works and could potentially hit game consoles in conjunction with a theatrical sequel.

Dimension Films signed Platten and game-writing partner Flint Dille to a two-year first-look deal—a first in Hollywood. "When we create a new game concept, we're creating a franchise," said Dille. "And games are as good a place as any to start a franchise."

Christine Peters, who's producing movies based on Midway Games' *Area-51* and *Fear and Respect* for Paramount Pictures, believes that today's movie producers have learned lessons from past video-game-to-movie failures, which lacked stories. "You can't just pick up a game license and assume that because everyone knows the game, people will pay to sit in a theater for two hours and watch the movie," said Peters. "The key is to take what you can from the game but to have a solid three-act movie that tells an interesting story."

Paramount Pictures has four movies based on games in development. Universal Pictures and Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson, an avid gamer, also understand the power of a game franchise. This August, Universal will launch a new horror-movie franchise based on the granddaddy of first-person shooters, *Doom*.

"As long as games continue to have interesting characters and cool stories, they will provide Hollywood with film opportunities," said Jeremy Steckler, coexecutive producer for *Doom* and *Dead to Rights*. "The key in translating a game to film is to be passionate about the game. Gamers aren't going to put up with a bad movie translation."

## Gamers Go Hollywood

That brings up another reason for the rash of video-game movies. A group of 30-something producers in Hollywood has grown up playing games. They understand the power of video games and the devotion game fans can have to a hit franchise like *Metroid* and *Halo*. Jason Hall, senior vice president of Warner Bros. Interactive Entertainment, said that the climate has changed dramatically in Hollywood in recent years. Even older studio executives who don't play games either have kids that do or know someone who plays games.

Many of the active producers in the game-to-movie business play video games in their spare time. And production houses like Impact Pictures (*Resident Evil*, *Driver*, *Dead or Alive*) even use interns or paid employees to play through a variety of new video games in order to search for future film properties.

"There are nice cinematics in many video games, but that doesn't mean the game will work as a movie," said Impact Pictures' Paul Anderson, who wrote and directed *Mortal Kombat* and *Resident Evil*. "There has to be something inherent within a game that would work as a film. It has to go beyond a game that looks cool on the small screen."

"I think it's important to resist the pressure that from now on, every new video-game franchise we launch has to be a movie-friendly, licensable, cross-marketable property or it's not worth doing," said Jordan Mechner, creator of the *Prince of Persia* franchise and screenwriter for the Jerry Bruckheimer *Prince* movie adaptation for Disney. "Games and movies are completely different animals. There are things you can do in a game with character and atmosphere and story that you can't in a movie, and those are some of the aspects of game design that I personally find most interesting."

## Made for the Movies

The advent of next-generation, high-definition gaming will only up the ante, enabling game makers to create richer worlds and more believable characters.

"Video games are more sophisticated today. They're more like movies," said Mark Altman, who is producing *Crazy Taxi*, *House of the Dead: Dead*



## Coming Attractions

An unprecedented number of video games are headed to the big screen—over 40 games have been licensed, many with sequels planned. Here's a roundup of what's happening with the convergence of polygons to multiplexes. By the time you read this, additional deals will have been struck in Hollywood, so be sure to stay tuned to GamePro.com for updates.

### In the Can

*Backwater* Dimension Films • 2005 release  
*BloodRayne* October 2005 expected release  
*Doom* Universal Pictures • August 2005 release  
*House of the Dead: Dead Aim*  
 Lions Gate Entertainment • Early 2006 release

### Now Filming

*Silent Hill*  
 Now filming in Toronto • Spring 2006 release

### Script Complete

*Dead or Alive* Producers Paul Anderson, Jeremy Bolt, and Mark Altman  
*Driver* Producers Paul Anderson and Jeremy Bolt  
*Mortal Kombat* Producer Larry Kasanov  
*Onimusha*  
 Producer Samuel Hadida • Christmas 2006 release  
*Prince of Persia* Disney Films

### Scripts in Revision

*Psi-Ops* Producer Adrian Askarieh  
*Spy Hunter*  
 Universal Pictures • Summer 2006 release

### In Development

*Darkwatch*  
 Producers/writers Glen Morgan and James Wong  
*Dead to Rights*  
 Producers Nicolas Cage and Lorenzo di Bonaventura  
*Death Jr.* Director Larry Guterman  
*Devil May Cry* GaGa Communications  
*Far Cry* Producer/director Uwe Boll  
*Fatal Frame* DreamWorks Entertainment  
*Fear Effect* Producer/director Uwe Boll  
*The Getaway* Screen Gems  
*Halo* Screenwriter Alex Garland  
*Hitman* Producer Adrian Askarieh  
*Hunter: The Reckoning*  
 Producer/director Uwe Boll  
*Max Payne* Collision Entertainment  
*Metroid* Producer John Woo  
*Resident Evil: Afterlife* Screen Gems  
*Return to Castle Wolfenstein*  
 Warner Bros.  
*Tekken* Dimension Films  
*Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six*  
 Paramount Pictures  
*Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell*  
 Paramount Pictures

*Aim, Shinobi, and Dead or Alive.* "The bar's much higher than it was with *Mortal Kombat*. It was because *House of the Dead* was a successful game franchise that helped us get the movies made."

Producer Scott Faye, who is working on films based on *Alice* and *Max Payne*, said the key to a successful game-to-movie translation is to capture the essence of the game universe and make it a competitive entertainment experience that satisfies the millions of game fans. But it also has to entertain the mass market not familiar with the game.

John Woo, who is directing wrestling superstar The Rock in the film version of Midway's *Spy Hunter* this fall for Universal Pictures and producing the movie version of Nintendo's *Metroid*, is at the center of Hollywood convergence. Woo, who owns his own game studio, Tiger Hill Entertainment, said that the technology of video games enables him to think of new ideas to bring to the filmmaking process. "Hollywood and video games are creative industries, and great ideas can come from anywhere," said Woo.



"It was because *House of the Dead* was a successful game franchise that helped us get the movies made."—Mark Altman, producer

### Money Talks

According to creative talent in both the worlds of Hollywood and video games, the current trend of turning polygon creations into live-action blockbusters isn't a passing whim. "Movies based on games aren't a fad. It's only going to get bigger and better," said Adrian Askarieh, producer of *Spy Hunter*, *Psi-Ops*, and *Hitman*. "As soon as one of these new game movies rakes in \$200 million, every producer in Hollywood is going to be searching for a game."

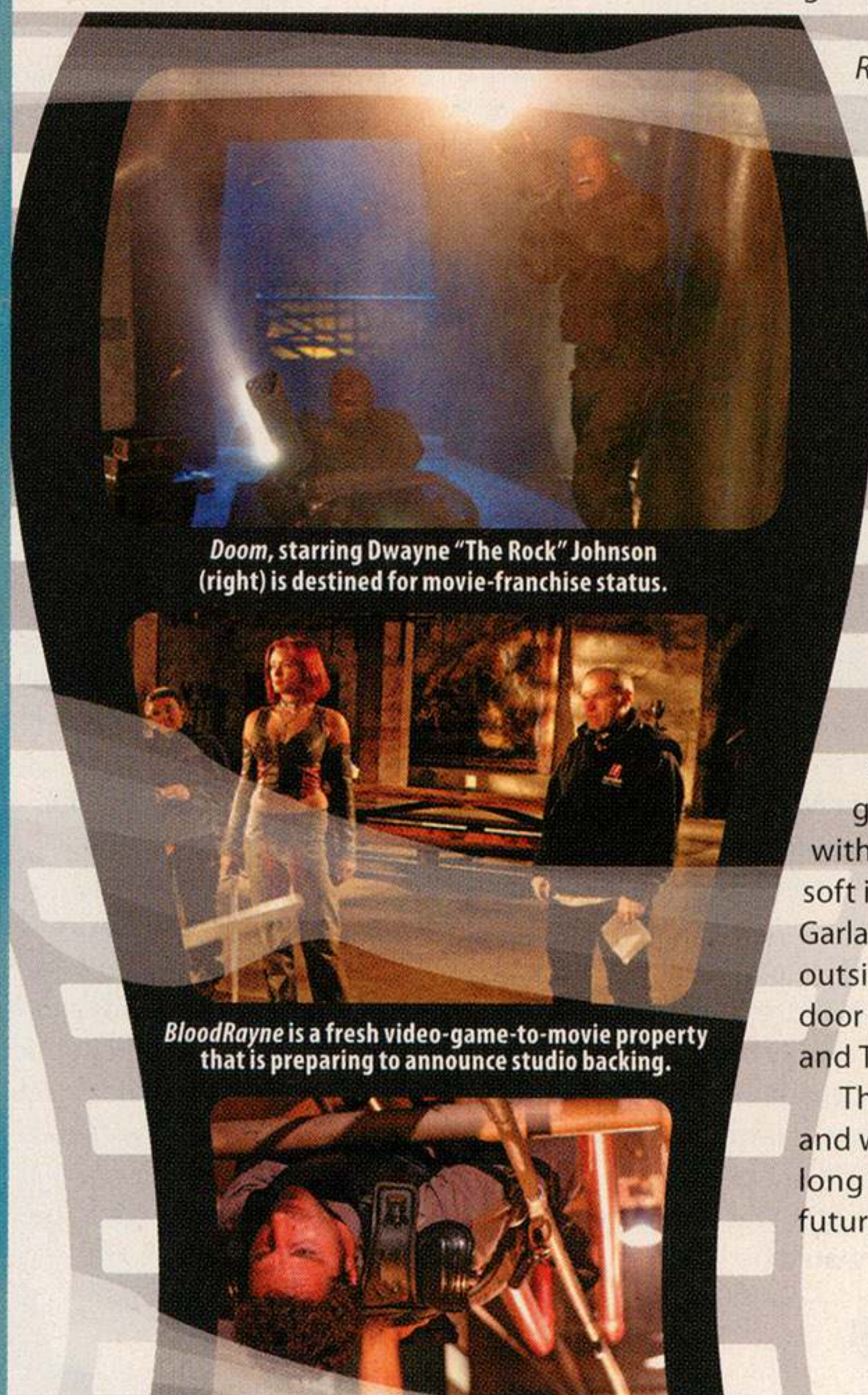
Keith Boesky, who orchestrated the *Tomb Raider* movie deal when he was president at Eidos, said that Hollywood likes to paint in broad strokes. "A lot of people in Hollywood will be watching *Doom* this summer, and if it does well, there will be a lot more game activity," said Boesky.

### Playing the Movie Game

There will be more failures—and more successes. Over time, as game studios become more familiar with the Hollywood process and Hollywood studios become more open to work from game creators, convergence will become an established form of entertainment rather than just an overused buzzword.

Movie studios are already enlisting game creators to pen Hollywood scripts for their games, a common occurrence for novelists with movie adaptations. The model that Microsoft is using for *Halo*—hiring screenwriter Alex Garland (*28 Days Later*, *The Beach*) to pen the script outside of the studio system—could open up a door for big game franchises like *Metal Gear Solid* and *The Legend of Zelda* to hit the big screen.

The video-game industry is still in its infancy, and when you consider that it took Hollywood a long time to get comic-book movies right, the future of video-game films looks bright.



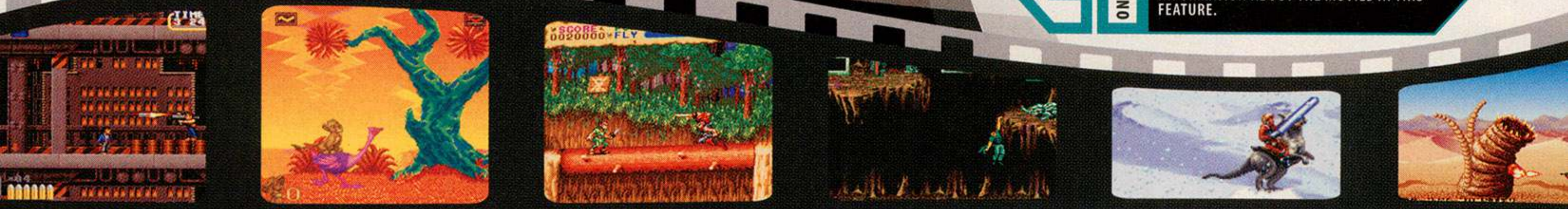
*Doom*, starring Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson (right) is destined for movie-franchise status.

*BloodRayne* is a fresh video-game-to-movie property that is preparing to announce studio backing.

No matter what you thought of the first movie, *House of the Dead* is making the transition from video-game series to film franchise.

CONTINUED ▶

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# CREDITS

The GamePros put their heads together and chime in on what it takes to make a successful game based on a movie.


## Make Me a Hero



No one fires up a video game based on a movie expecting to just reexperience the film; that would make it a DVD. It's the difference between passive and interactive entertainment that's key. The best movie games focus on some aspect of the action that's at the core of the film, and great action video games empower you to accomplish amazing feats, often in heroic fashion. Spider-Man 2 focused on Spidey's skills. A good movie game—like any game—gets down to basics: tight controls and a compelling challenge.

—Brother Buzz


## The Never-Ending Story



The quality of the story differentiates a good movie from a great movie. The same needs to be applied to games, especially games that are based on movies. Although Enter the Matrix played horribly, the story line was unique and also stayed true to *The Matrix Reloaded* plot, so it was compelling enough to play through to the end. If a game can continue the emotional connection that the audience had with the movie, then the rest of the game's features will naturally fall into place.

—Four-Eyed Dragon


## Try a Little Romance



Love interests abound in films but are often completely ignored or ineptly tacked on in video games. And yet, there are a few video games, such as Knight of the Old Republic or Final Fantasy VIII, that handle relationships fairly well. Why not take a movie suffused with romantic themes and make it into a game? Imagine *Dr. Zhivago* as a game—escape the Communists, find the beautiful Lara. I'd love to see more games explore emotional depth in witty and subtle ways.

—GameGirl


## Choosing the Right Movie



Films like *Aliens* and *The Matrix* are practically screaming to be made into games because they combine a strong premise with intense, quasi-logical action scenes. Films like *The Matrix Reloaded* and *Scarface* are far trickier game candidates: The former was a cold, technical exercise, while the latter was an actor's piece that relied on Al Pacino's charisma. You just can't shoe-horn video-game shootouts into any preexisting film premise. Case in point: the upcoming *Reservoir Dogs*-based game. How on Earth will they pull off that one?

—Vicious Sid


## Deliver the "Money Shots"



Stay true to the core of the movie experience. Sure, some liberties have to be taken to deliver a compelling interactive experience, but don't do so by forgoing the essence of what made the movie great in the first place (and worth all that licensing money). A perfect example is Spider-Man 2. The game delivered all the best elements from the movie while presenting a compelling, free-roaming action/adventure game on its own rights.

—Dr. Zombie

## Take a Different Angle



Few games have been successful at it: having the ability to play an angle of the film that's part of the plot but not actually in the movie. EA's real-time strategy *Battle for Middle-Earth* is a great example—in one stage, you play as the horsemen of Rohan trying to rendezvous with the struggling forces of Helms Deep. Enter the Matrix explored this idea but fell flat simply because it was a mediocre game. Playing as the Imperial remnants following the defeat of Emperor Palpatine in a Star Wars FPS...now that would be cool.

—Funky Zealot


## "Man's Got To Know His Limitations"



All too often, movies based on video games are rushed to store shelves to coincide with the film's release date, causing the quality to suffer. The most successful movies-to-game adaptations are the ones that use licensed properties and place them in original settings. My two favorites are *GI Joe* (NES) and *Robocop* vs. *Terminator* (Genesis) because they offer a new experience rather than rehashing familiar movie scenes that have to be invariably changed to fit the game.

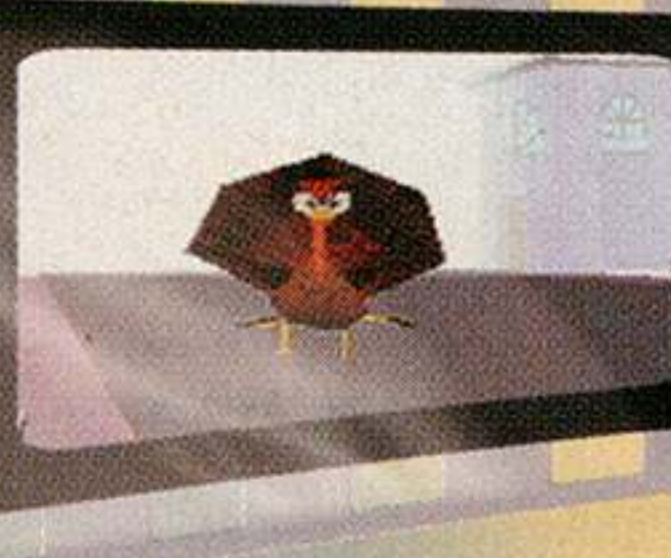
—Major Mike

## Have Your Cake...and Eat It, Too



For a video game based on a movie to be successful, you need two main ingredients: 1/2 cup of realism and 1/2 cup of imagination. That is, the game has to fulfill your desire to be a part of the movie and carry out sequences just as they happened on screen, but it also has to give you the freedom to do some things differently and explore plot lines that weren't flushed out. If the recipe is right, you can have your cake and eat it, too.

—The Vixen

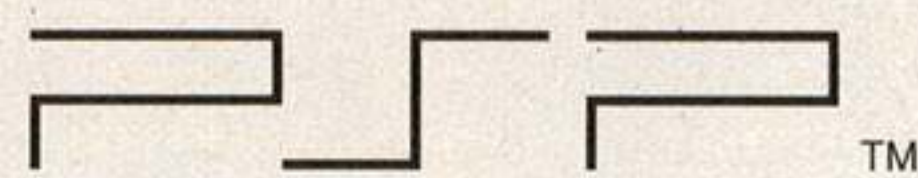
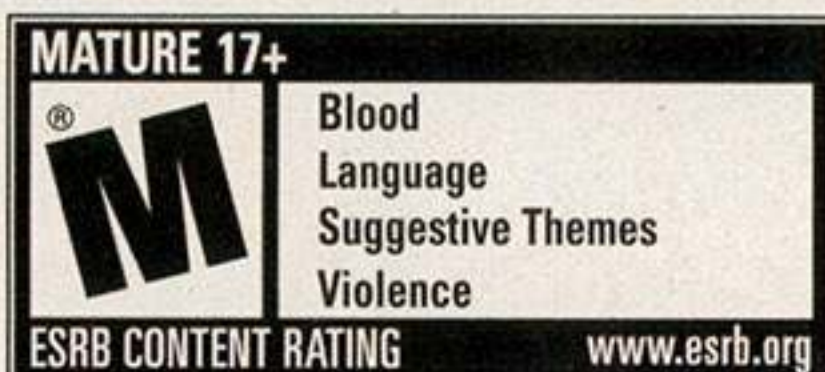


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Violence  
Language

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# Asuka Kazama

**Fighting Style:** Kazama Style Traditional Martial Arts  
**Country of Origin:** Japan

As a child, Asuka received training in Kazama Style Traditional Martial Arts from her father. Born with a strong sense of justice, Asuka was well known around Osaka for breaking up fights in the neighborhood.

Upon returning home one day, Asuka discovered that pupils of her father had been roughed up. She learned from her father's pupils that an unknown Chinese man showed up at the dojo, severely beat them, and sent her father to the hospital.

Several days later, an Interpol detective from Hong Kong came to investigate the incident, mentioning that the suspect was most likely planning to enter the King of Iron Fist Tournament. Upon hearing this, Asuka decided that she, too, would enter the tournament.



## Want to know more?

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### Move List

Move	Commands	Properties	Damage	Notes
Whiplash	☼☼	H, M	6, 15	
Jab Uppercut	☼☼	H, M	6, 10	
Jab Uppercut To Spinning Heel Drop	☼☼☼	H, M, M	6, 10, 28	Knockdown
Jab Uppercut to Front Kick	☼☼☼	H, M, M	6, 10, 20	
Jab Low Kick	☼☼	H, L	6, 10	
Jab Leg Cutter	☼☼	H, L	6, 14	
Rising Palm	☼	M	16	Launcher
Piercing Spear	☼	L	12	
Sacred Blade	[☼☼]	L	22	Knockdown
Inner Strength	☼	M	22	Knockdown
Thunder Fall Kick	☼	M	10, 21	Knockdown
Wheel Kick	☼	H	21	Knockdown
White Heron Dance	☼☼☼	L, H, H, H	5, 8, 10, 23	
White Heron Lower Dance	☼☼↓☼	L, H, H, M	5, 8, 10, 18	Knockdown
Blizzard Combo	☼☼☼	L, H, H, L	5, 8, 10, 12	Knockdown
Lunging Mist Thrust	→☼	M	18	
Demon Slayer	→☼	M	21	Launcher
Spinning Heel Drop	→☼	M	30	Knockdown
Back Spin Kick	→☼	H	25	Knockdown
Falling Tower	↘☼☼	M, H	10, 13	Knockdown
Step-In Rising Palm	↘☼	M	18	Launcher
Minazuki	↘☼	M	22	Knockdown
Heaven's Hammer	↓☼	M	18	
Funeral Palm	↙☼	M	16	Launcher
Enchanted Circle	↙☼	L	15	
Violet	←☼	L	16	
Swallow Mallet	←☼	M	12	
Swallow Mallet To Lunging Mist Thrust	←☼☼	M, M	12, 15	
Swallow Mallet To Leg Cutter	←☼☼	M, L	12, 14	
Swallow Mallet Elbow	←☼☼	M, H	12, 13	
Dragon Wheel Kick	←☼	M	20	Launcher
Dragon Wheel Kick Demon Slayer	←☼☼	M, M	20, 14	Knockdown
Dragon Wheel Leg Cutter	←☼☼	M, L	20, 9	
Heart Stopper	←☼	M	18	
Iwato	↗☼	M	16	
Night Sky	↗☼	M	25	Launcher
Exorcisor	→☼	H	32	Knockdown
Raging Storm	↘☼	M, M	10, 22	Knockdown
Double Lift Kicks	↓☼	L, H	5, 20	Launcher
Mist Palm Thrust	→☼☼	M	23	Knockdown
Leaping Spin Kick	→☼☼	M	30	Knockdown

Grace	While crouching	L	12	
Twin Cloud Kicks	While crouching	M, M, M, M	10, 10, 10, 10	
Violet Strength	While rising	M	19	
Rising Elbow	While rising	M	15	
Moon Scent	While rising	M	22	Launcher
Tornado Kick	While rising	H	25	Knockdown
Camellia	During sidestep	H	18	
Whiplash to Toe Kick		M, M	18, 16	
Whiplash Combo		M, M, H	18, 16, 12	
Whiplash Double Lift Upper		M, L, H	18, 5, 20	Launcher
Whiplash Sacred Blade		M, L	18, 22	Knockdown
Leg Cutter Thunder Fall Kick		L, M, M	14, 10, 21	Knockdown
Leg Cutter		L, L	14, 16	
Leg Cutter Thunder Fall Kick		L, L, M, M	14, 16, 10, 21	Knockdown
Whiplash to Leg Cutter		L, L, L	14, 16, 18	
Leg Cutter Thunder Fall Kick		L, L, L, M, M	14, 16, 18, 10, 21	Knockdown
Leg Cutter White Heron Dance		L, L, H, H, H	14, 5, 8, 10, 12	
Leg Cutter White Heron Sweep		L, L, H, H, M	14, 5, 8, 10, 23	Knockdown
Leg Cutter White Heron Combo		L, L, H, H, L	14, 5, 8, 10, 18	Knockdown

Ten-Hit Combos				
Move	Command	Properties	Damage	Notes
Ten-Hit Combo 1	While rising	M, H, M, M, M, L, M, L, M, M	15, 10, 8, 8, 6, 6, 7, 7, 25, 25	Knockdown
Ten-Hit Combo 2	While rising	M, H, M, M, M, L, H, H, L, H	15, 10, 8, 8, 6, 7, 5, 6, 21, 24	Knockdown
Ten-Hit Combo 3	While rising	M, H, M, M	15, 10, 8, 10	Knockdown

Throws				
Move	Command	Properties	Damage	Escape
Aiki Nage	Approach enemy  (or	H	35	
Katanuki	Approach enemy  (or	H	35	
Cloud Taste	Approach from left side  (or	H	40	
Wind Wheel	Approach from right side  (or	H	40	
Twisted Limbs	Approach from behind  (or	H	50	X
Attack Reversal	Time with enemy attack  (or	Varies	Varies	Varies
Destabilizer	Approach enemy	M	0	X
Cherry Blossom	Approach enemy	H	40	
White Mountain	Approach enemy	H	40	
Falling Rain	Approach enemy	H	45	

### Player 1 Colors

### Player 2 Colors

Color: Black/White  
18,000 G



Color: Red  
8000 G



Color: Blue  
8000 G



Color: Yellow  
8000 G



Color: Green  
8000 G



Color: Lime Green  
8000 G



Color: Purple  
8000 G



Color: Pink  
8000 G



Color: Black/White  
18,000 G



Color: Red  
8000 G



Color: Blue  
8000 G



Color: Yellow  
8000 G



Color: Green  
8000 G



Color: Orange  
8000 G



Color: Purple  
8000 G



Color: Pink  
8000 G



### Items

#### Head



Head: Trendy Hairstyle  
300,000 G  
Both Outfits: No



Head: Feather Accessory  
500,000 G  
Both Outfits: No



Head: Braids  
80,000 G  
Both Outfits: Yes



Head: Visor  
200,000 G  
Both Outfits: No



Head: Hunting Cap  
300,000 G  
Both Outfits: No

#### Face



Face: No Bandanna  
30,000 G  
Both Outfits: No



Face: Morning Glory  
200,000 G  
Both Outfits: No



Face: Bookworm Glasses  
50,000 G  
Both Outfits: Yes



Face: Headset  
120,000 G  
Both Outfits: No



Face: Sports Sunglasses  
60,000 G  
Both Outfits: No

#### Upper Body



Upper Body: Chest Protector  
120,000 G  
Both Outfits: No



Upper Body: Bow  
60,000 G  
Both Outfits: No



Upper Body: Choker  
30,000 G  
Both Outfits: Yes



Upper Body: Bag  
150,000 G  
Both Outfits: No



Upper Body: Pendant  
30,000 G  
Both Outfits: No

#### Lower Body



Lower Body: Kusarigama  
60,000 G  
Both Outfits: No



Lower Body: Ribbon Belt  
150,000 G  
Both Outfits: No



Lower Body: Chain Belt  
40,000 G  
Both Outfits: Yes



Lower Body: Leg Warmers  
60,000 G  
Both Outfits: No



Lower Body: Kneepads  
500,000 G  
Both Outfits: No



Player 1 Costume



Player 2 Costume



Alternative Costume

CONTINUED ▶

# Feng Wei

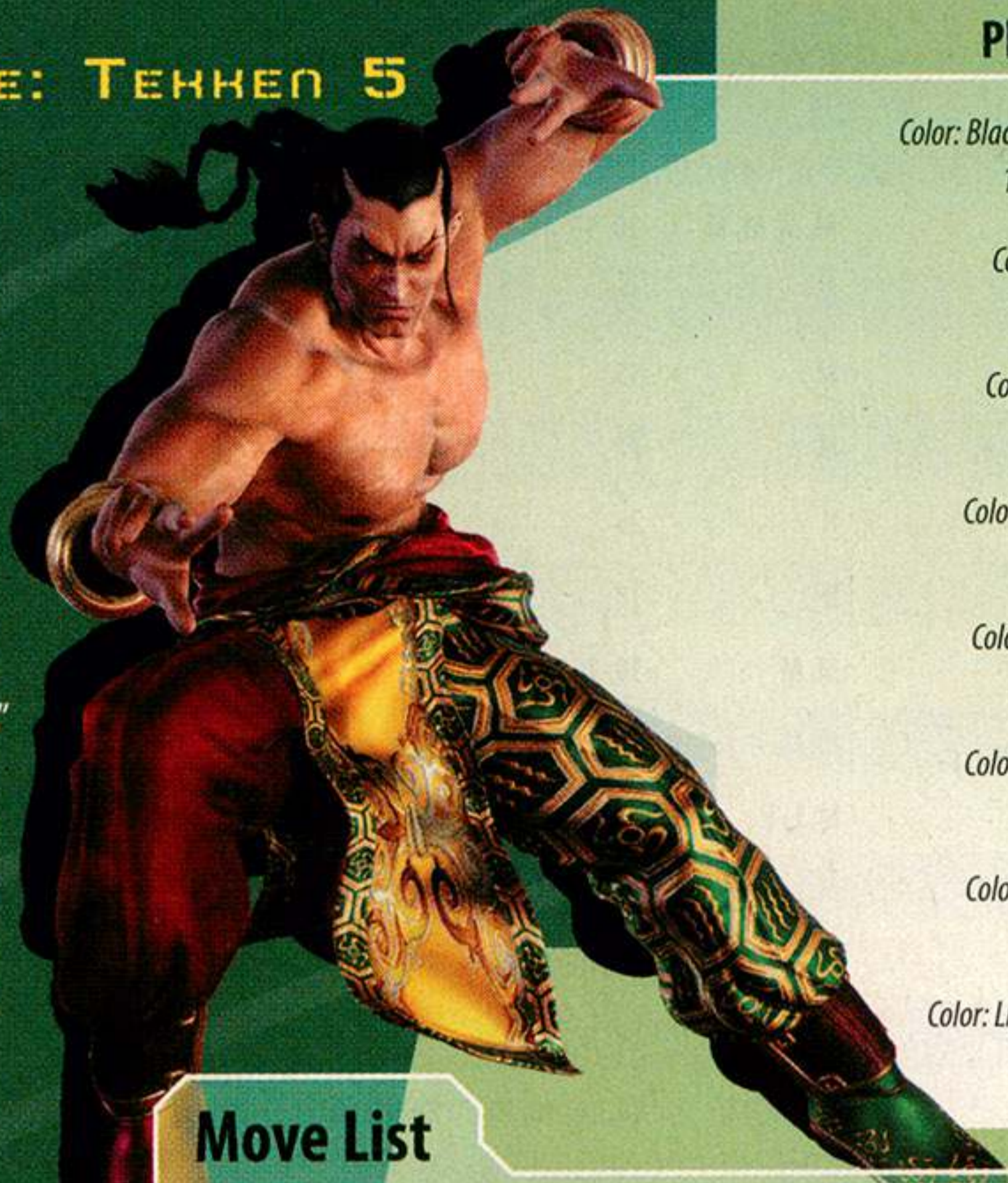
**Fighting Style:** Chinese Kenpo  
**Country of Origin:** China

Master of Chinese Kenpo, Feng Wei continues training on his path to become the strongest fighter alive.

As a young boy, Feng Wei began training under a Kenpo master who was so skilled that he was known as Shinken, or one who possesses "divine fists." As he matured, Feng Wei became the strongest fighter at his dojo.

In his quest to be the strongest, however, he broke the dojo's rules, which forbid contests with martial artists of other styles. When his master tried to interfere, Feng Wei killed him. During this confrontation, Feng Wei learned that in order to truly master the art, he must learn the secrets hidden in the Shinken scrolls that were stolen by the Mishima clan.

Feng Wei entered the King of Iron Fist Tournament intent on recovering the secret scrolls.



**Player 1 Colors**

**Player 2 Colors**

Color: Black/White 18,000 G			Color: Black/White 18,000 G
Color: Red 8000 G			Color: Red 8000 G
Color: Blue 8000 G			Color: Blue 8000 G
Color: Yellow 8000 G			Color: Yellow 8000 G
Color: Green 8000 G			Color: Green 8000 G
Color: Brown 8000 G			Color: Brown 8000 G
Color: Purple 8000 G			Color: Orange 8000 G
Color: Light Blue 8000 G			Color: Purple 8000 G

## Items

**Head**

**Face**

**Upper Body**

**Lower Body**



Head: Alternate Hairstyle  
200,000 G  
Both Outfits: No



Face: Earrings  
60,000 G  
Both Outfits: No



Upper Body: Chinese Armor  
500,000 G  
Both Outfits: No



Lower Body: Mercury Boots  
60,000 G  
Both Outfits: No



Head: Monk  
300,000 G  
Both Outfits: No



Face: Songoku Circlet  
150,000 G  
Both Outfits: No



Upper Body: Tattoo  
30,000 G  
Both Outfits: No



Lower Body: Truncheon  
120,000 G  
Both Outfits: No



Head: Kung Fu Ponytail  
80,000 G  
Both Outfits: Yes



Face: Beijing Opera Mask  
50,000 G  
Both Outfits: Yes



Upper Body: Broad Sword  
40,000 G  
Both Outfits: Yes



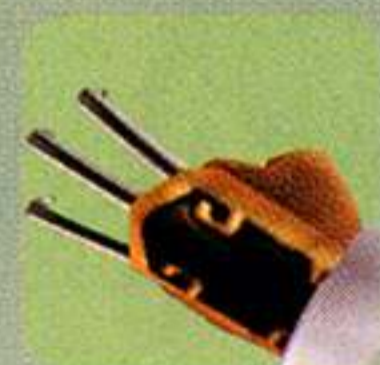
Lower Body: Scrolls  
30,000 G  
Both Outfits: Yes



Head: Gangster Hat  
200,000 G  
Both Outfits: No



Face: Round Glasses  
60,000 G  
Both Outfits: No



Upper Body: Claws  
500,000 G  
Both Outfits: No



Lower Body: Deer-Antler Knives  
120,000 G  
Both Outfits: No



Head: Long Hair  
300,000 G  
Both Outfits: No



Face: Sunglasses  
150,000 G  
Both Outfits: No



Upper Body: Gong  
30,000 G  
Both Outfits: No



Lower Body: Buckle  
60,000 G  
Both Outfits: No

## Move List

Move	Commands	Properties	Damage	Notes
Jab Spear Fist	☐☐	H, M	5, 21	Crumple on Counterhit
Firestorm	☐☐☐	H, H, H	5, 10, 12	
Firestorm	☐☐☐↵	H, H, H	5, 10, 12	
Jab Roundhouse Combo	☐☐	H, H, H	5, 15	
Pummeling Windmill	[☐☐]	M	21	Knockdown
Throat Gouge	[☐☐]	M, H	12, 12	Staggers
Leaping Whirlwind Combo	[☐☐]☐	M, L	32, 21	Knockdown
Iron Shield	☐	M	28	Knockdown
Boar's Tusk	→☐☐☐	M, M, M	12, 13, 25	Knockdown
Jade Spear to Hustle Elbow	→☐☐	H, M	21, 22	Knockdown
Tornado Stomp	→☐☐	H, M	18, 24	Knockdown
Tornado Reverse	→☐←	H	18	Shifts to Back Turn
Tornado Sweep	→☐☐	H, L	18, 15	Knockdown
Stunning Palm	↘☐	M	12	
God Fist	↘☐☐	M, M	15, 21	Knockdown
Lift Kick	↘☐	M	21	Launcher
Front Kick	↘☐	M	15	
Heavy Hammer	↓☐	L	18	Knockdown on Counterhit
Spear of Lu Bu	↖☐☐	M, M	15, 21	Knockdown
Hellwinds	↖☐☐☐	L, L, M	10, 10, 14	Knockdown
Hellwinds	↖☐☐↵	L	10	
Piercing Arrow	↖☐	L	10	Knockdown on Counterhit
Sweep Kick	↖☐	L	21	Knockdown
Iron Palm	←☐	H	12	Knockdown on Counterhit
Hungry Tiger	←☐☐☐☐	M, L, M, M	15, 8, 12, 14	Knockdown
Spin Kick Spear Fist	←☐☐	H, M	12, 21	Crumple on Counterhit
Fish Hook	←☐	M	15	
Eagle Claw	↗☐	M	12	
Leaping Hammer Fist	↗☐	M	30	Knockdown
Side Swipe	↗☐	H	25	Crumple Stun
Soaring Eagle	↗☐	M	13	Launcher
Reverse Backfist	→☐	H	35	Knockdown
Shifting Clouds	→☐			
Palm Thrust	→☐☐	M	20	
Spinning Backfist	→☐☐	H	18	Crumple Stun

# REMIXED FOR THE PSP™

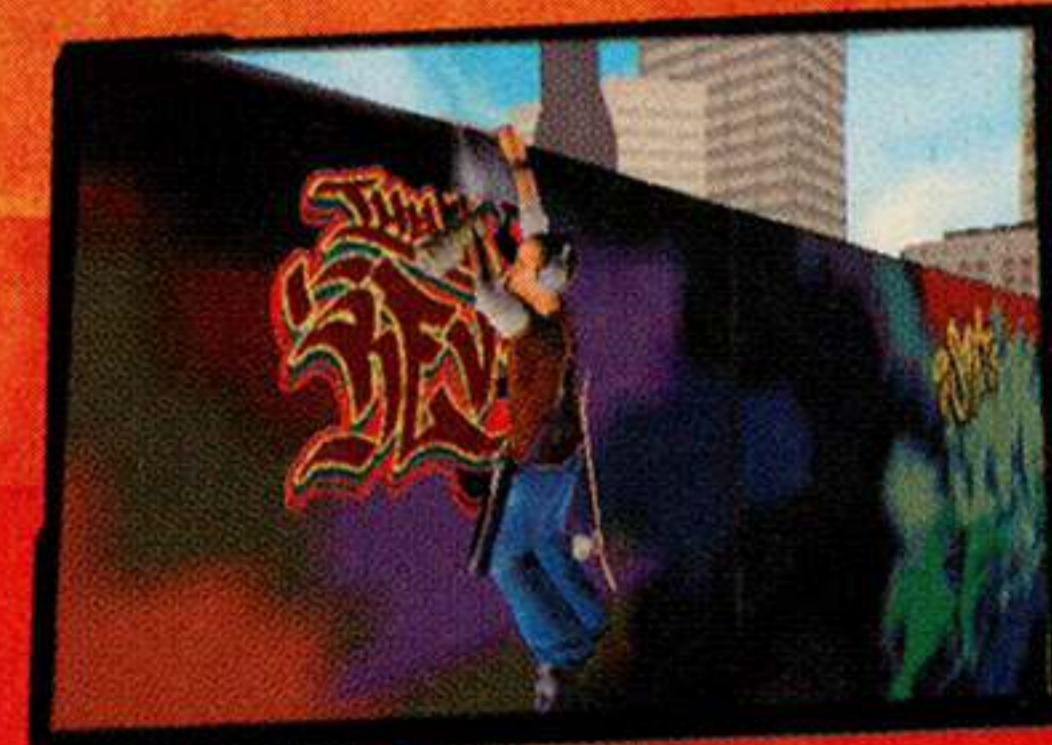
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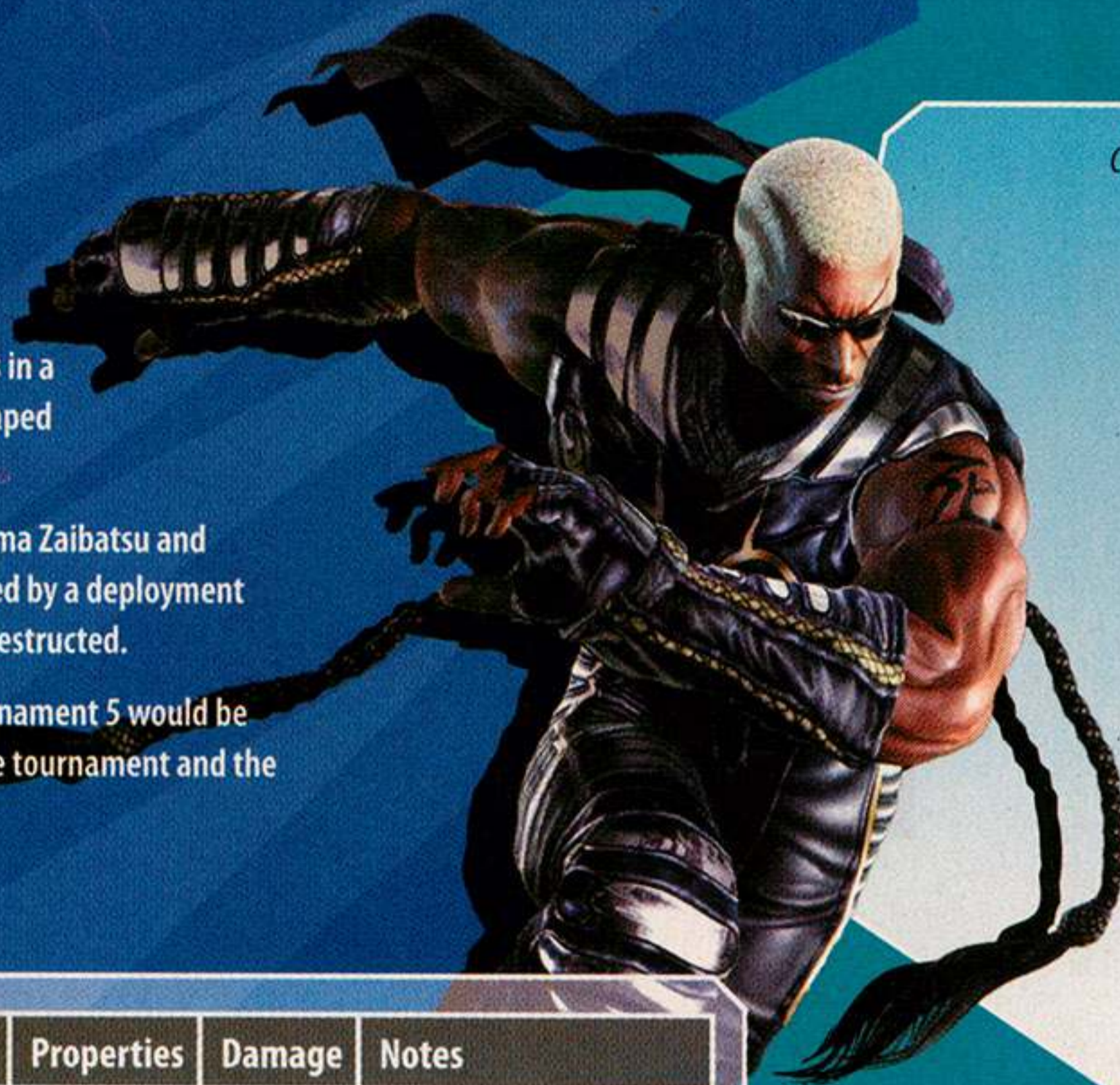
# Raven

**Fighting Style: Ninjutsu**  
**Country of Origin: Unknown**

Raven is known as one of the most skilled and ruthless agents in a certain government intelligence agency. Other than the X-shaped scar on his face, little is known about him.

While on a mission to investigate connections between Mishima Zaibatsu and G-Corporation, he witnessed Heihachi Mishima being assaulted by a deployment of JACKs and the explosion that ensued when the JACKs self-destructed.

Afterward, news reached Raven that the King of Iron Fist Tournament 5 would be held. Raven decided to enter in order to gather intel about the tournament and the motives of those behind it.



## Player 1 Colors

## Player 2 Colors

Color: Black/White 18,000 G			Color: Black/White 18,000 G
Color: Red 8000 G			Color: Red 8000 G
Color: Blue 8000 G			Color: Blue 8000 G
Color: Yellow 8000 G			Color: Yellow 8000 G
Color: Green 8000 G			Color: Green 8000 G
Color: Purple 8000 G			Color: Orange 8000 G
Color: Brown 8000 G			Color: Sea Green 8000 G
Color: Sea Green 8000 G			Color: Purple 8000 G

## Move List

Move	Commands	Properties	Damage	Notes
Left Right Combo	⬅ ➡	H, H	5, 12	
Right Straight to Left Low Kick	➡ ➡	H, L	12, 10	
PK Combo	⬅ ➡	H, H	12, 16	Knockdown
Valkyrie Lance Combo	⬅ ➡ ➡	H, H, H	14, 12, 18	Knockdown
Chariot	[⬅ ➡]	M, M	13, 15	Knockdown
Hydra Bite High	[⬅ ➡] ➡	M, M, H	10, 12, 23	Knockdown
Hydra Bite Mid	[⬅ ➡] ➡	M, M, M	10, 12, 12	Knockdown
Hydra Bite Low	[⬅ ➡] ➡	M, M, L	10, 12, 10	
Crusader	⬅	M	33	Knockdown
Shuriken Kick	⬅	M	21	Knockdown
Gate Keeper	➡ ➡ ➡	M, H	12, 19	
Shadow Spear	➡ ➡	M	30	Knockdown
Crescent Kick	➡ ➡	H	22	Launcher
Lance Kick	➡ ➡	M	24	Knockdown
Chakram	➡ ➡ ➡ ➡	M, L, M	22, 7, 25	Knockdown
Heavy Chakram	➡ ➡ ➡ ➡ ➡	M, L, M	22, 12, 25	Knockdown
Spinning Chakram	➡ ➡ ➡	M, M	22, 17	Knockdown
Body Blow	↘ ➡	M	15	
Short Uppercut	↘ ➡	M	21	
Meat Hook	↘ ➡ ➡	M, H	21, 25	Launcher
Shadow Snap Kick	↘ ➡	H	21	Launcher on Counterhit
Pendulum Kick	↘ ➡ ➡	M, M	13, 15	
Death from Above	↘ ➡	!	35	Knockdown
Blind Ghost	↘ ➡	M	28	Knockdown
Low Kick	⬇ ➡	L	9	
Basilisk Fang	⬇ ➡	L	13	
Summon Force	⬇ ➡			
Dead End	⬇ ➡ ⬇ ↙ ↘ ↖ ↗ ➡	!	60	Knockdown
Assassin's Sting Combo	↙ ➡ ➡	M, H	16, 6	
Assassin's Sting	↙ ➡	M	16	Shifts to Back Turn
Killer Bee	↙ ➡	L	17	
Shinobi Cyclone	↙ ➡	L	10	Knockdown
Elbow Strike	⬅ ➡	H	18	Knockdown on Counterhit
Unicorn's Tail	⬅ ➡ ➡ ➡	H, M, M	15, 12, 20	Launcher

## Items

### Head

### Face

### Upper Body

### Lower Body



Head: Cornrows  
200,000 G  
Both Outfits: No



Face: Blindfold  
300,000 G  
Both Outfits: No



Upper Body: Knife Holder  
60,000 G  
Both Outfits: No



Lower Body: Kunai  
30,000 G  
Both Outfits: No



Head: Hachigane  
120,000 G  
Both Outfits: No



Face: No Sunglasses  
500,000 G  
Both Outfits: No



Upper Body: Long Scarf  
150,000 G  
Both Outfits: No



Lower Body: Shinguards  
60,000 G  
Both Outfits: No



Head: Straw Hat  
50,000 G  
Both Outfits: Yes



Face: Half Mask  
40,000 G  
Both Outfits: Yes



Upper Body: Giant Scroll  
80,000 G  
Both Outfits: Yes



Lower Body: Jutte  
30,000 G  
Both Outfits: Yes



Head: Mendicant Hat  
150,000 G  
Both Outfits: No



Face: Robot Mask  
300,000 G  
Both Outfits: No



Upper Body: Shoulder Plates  
120,000 G  
Both Outfits: No



Lower Body: Double Ninjato  
60,000 G  
Both Outfits: No



Head: Demon's Horns  
500,000 G  
Both Outfits: No



Face: Ninja Mask  
200,000 G  
Both Outfits: No



Upper Body: Shakujo  
60,000 G  
Both Outfits: No



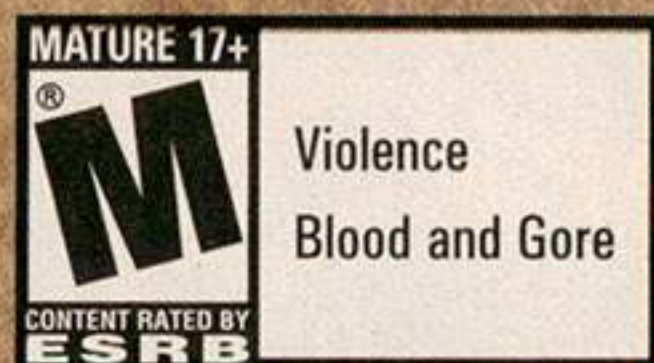
Lower Body: Medicine Case  
30,000 G  
Both Outfits: No

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# EMULATORS

Thanks to powerful PC hardware and equally powerful communities, classic gaming is bigger than ever. Will game publishers ever wise up? By Vicious Sid

The next generation of gaming consoles is drawing inexorably closer. Sony, Microsoft, and Nintendo are making the usual promises: bleeding-edge technology, photorealistic graphics, and cinematic gameplay. But some players are growing tired of that rat race. Thanks to the magic of emulation, classic gaming is back in a big way...and now the real question is: When will game publishers wake up and smell the profits?

## No Quarters Asked and None Given

In layman's terms, game emulators work by re-creating the functions of one piece of hardware (such as a mid-1980s arcade board) using different hardware (such as a PC or even consoles like the Xbox and Dreamcast). If you're "emulating" the arcade version of *Joust*, it means you're tricking the modern hardware into acting just like a mid-1980s arcade cabinet. Thanks to do-it-yourself programmers and hobbyist coders, emulation programs are becoming more and more refined. New features and supported games pop up almost every day—try getting that kind of progress out of your typical corporate software development team. And this movement is exploding.

Case in point: MAME. The first DOS-based versions of the Multiple Arcade Machine Emulator, released in 1997, could emulate only a few arcade games. Eight years and countless upgrades later, MAME now accurately emulates over 3000 unique arcade ROMs, from ancient proto-games like *Pong* and *Space Invaders* to more recent titles like *Area-51* and *Soul Calibur*. As long as you possess an arcade game's ROM—a file that includes artwork, sounds, and gameplay code—you have access to a virtual arcade library contained entirely within your PC. Other unofficial MAME spin-offs are even compatible with the Xbox, Dreamcast, Pocket PC, N-Gage, and certain digital cameras. But that doesn't change the fact that arcade ROMs are illegal to possess, unless you own the original arcade hardware. And let's face it—how many diehard MAME players are hoarding *Alien Syndrome* chipsets in their garage? Game publishers could easily end this pointless charade by releasing authentic compilations, but to date, only Atari, Midway, and Namco have truly stepped up to the plate.

## A Call to Action/Adventure

So why don't more game publishers simply follow Midway and Atari's lead by releasing "Classic Compilations" of old titles at mass-market prices? Even the slow-to-act television industry has responded to similar demands by releasing cult shows (like *Miami Vice* and *V: The Final Battle*) on DVD. The game industry could take a similar approach by releasing classic compilations that include extra levels or "remix" versions, plus DVD-style bonuses like artwork and developer interviews (as found on some Midway collections). Another example is Namco's *Tekken 5*, which includes arcade-perfect translations of the first three *Tekken* games. That's an unbelievably awesome bonus for *Tekken* fans, and it keeps the entire series fresh and relevant to players. Imagine where that model could lead. What if the next-generation *Grand Theft Auto* title included a full, playable version of *Vice City* or *San Andreas*?

But none of that will happen until game publishers recognize the enormous potential of this long-ignored market. The advantages are obvious: The games are already finished, so development costs would be miniscule. The alternative—doing nothing—is a dopey, short-sighted move because it drives more fans to emulation. So enough with the hand-wringing already—it's time for publishers to cut through the red tape and open the vaults. Gamers can do their part by rewarding companies who release classic compilations (see sidebar, "Insert Coin") and putting pressure on publishers who won't play ball. In time, the industry will see the light. Until then...emulate this!





# Small Console-ation

**T**hough MAME tends to hog the limelight, console emulators are also enjoying an immense surge in popularity. With the rise of broadband connections and file-sharing programs, it's easier than ever to download ROMs of your favorite 8- and 16-bit titles. Understandably, the Genesis and Super Nintendo emulators boast the biggest communities, though careful searching uncovers wellsprings of support for lesser-known consoles like the TurboGrafix-16, Sega Master System, and Jaguar. In fact, seemingly every console ever released has at least one corresponding emulator, from the ColecoVision to the original PlayStation. Nostalgia, it seems, knows no bounds.

Hobbyist programmers are already hard at work emulating the PlayStation 2 and Xbox, but these contemporary systems have extremely complicated inner workings. Current PS2 and Xbox emulators can run only a handful of commercial games, and the game performance is dreadful—even on high-end PCs. But if MAME's history is anything to go by, PS2 and Xbox emulation will continue to improve at a slow, steady pace. The process is inexorable, and within a few years, PS2 and Xbox emulation will likely be widespread. But the situation is far from hopeless as Sony and Microsoft can fight back by supporting backward compatibility in their next-generation systems (as Sony did with the PS2). Nintendo's got the right idea as its upcoming console will support GameCube games.

INSTRUCTIONS: INSERT COINS • SELECT 1 OR 2 PLAYER GAME

• Shoot to destroy rocks, saucers and enemy ships for points.  
• Collisions with rocks, saucers, bullets leave your own, and enemy ships destroy you to avoid them.

• Press and HOLD Shields Button to protect your ship against any collision but beware shields wear out with use.  
• In a two player game, players alternate until his supply of ships is exhausted.



20 POINTS

100 POINTS

200 POINTS

500 POINTS

1000 POINTS

# TRAILS!



## OLD GAMES, NEW VISUALS

Why settle for gritty, jagged visuals in your emulated titles? Your PC's brute strength can enhance the visuals of almost any emulated game.

Enabling Direct 3D effects like "2x SAI," "Prescale," and bilinear filtering can clean up the low-resolution 2D graphics found in many arcade and 16-bit games. You can find these enhancements in MAME Plus (a popular MAME 32 spin-off), as well as well-supported 16-bit emulators like Gens and ZSnes.



Before: Gritty and low-res.



After: Smooth, sharp, and crisp. Haggard-approved!

Image enhancement has hit 3D console emulation as well. The Nintendo 64-based emulator Project 64 can boost a game's video resolution and apply anti-aliasing and anisotropic texture filtering. The results? Razor-sharp 3D graphics that will make your jaw drop—if your PC's jam-packed with high-end gear. FPS games like GoldenEye 007 and Perfect Dark benefit the most from these graphical enhancements.

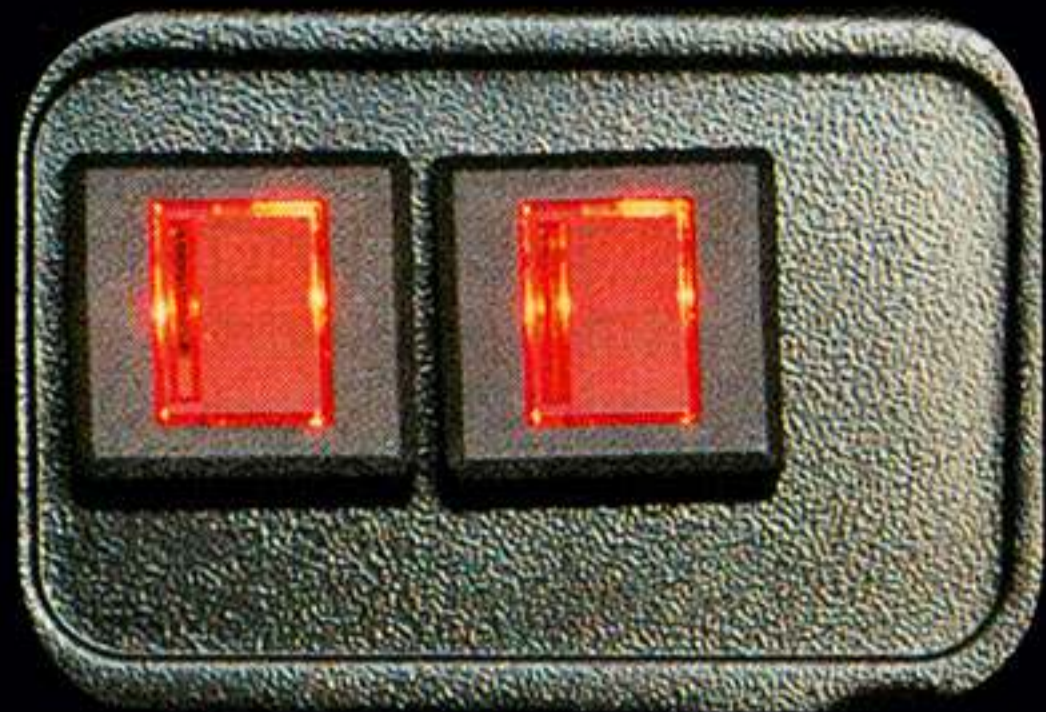
CONTINUED ►

## STEALING SUCKS

If you own a game, you're allowed to emulate it. But don't act like a greedy, selfish jerk by illegally downloading games you don't actually own. Thanks.

EMULATE THIS!

# INSERT COIN



Some smart publishers are finally opening their vaults and cashing in on their back catalogs. Here are a few that do the job right.

## Midway Arcade Treasures 1 and 2

Midway's got a hell of an arcade legacy, and Defender, Robotron 2084, and Smash TV are proof. Arcade Treasures' 24-game collection also scores major nostalgia points by including quirky gems like Paperboy and Toobin'; Arcade Treasures 2 serves up 20 more games, including brawlers like Mortal Kombat II and Primal Rage. Available for all three consoles (plus the PC), each Midway Arcade Treasures collection sells for \$20—that's a steal, boys and girls. The third Arcade Treasures collection, due this fall, will include racing games like Super Off Road and Hydro Thunder. Did somebody say "must buy?"



## Atari Anthology

This collection features a whopping 85 games, though it tilts in favor of quantity over quality. Look for familiar 2600 and arcade selections like Millipede, Missile Command, Asteroids Deluxe, Tempest, and Pong. Not stellar but still worthwhile.



## Taito Arcade Collection

An upcoming Taito collection from Empire Interactive will include 20 games from the company's sparkling arcade past, including Operation Wolf, Bubble Bobble, Space Invaders, and Rastan. Another can't-miss compilation.



# THE DIGITAL DUSTBIN

How a tiny group of PC gaming diehards are fighting to keep the dream—and the games—alive.



Manhunter: New York on the Apple IIGS



King's Quest III on the Apple IIGS

Back in the day, state-of-the-art computers like the Commodore 64 and Apple IIGS were world-renowned for their gaming prowess; now you're lucky if you can just get the damn things up and running. Emulating ancient PC games is an option, but the results are often frustratingly imperfect and inconsistent. The problem is that emulating a 1980s-era computer is a ridiculously complex process. Arcade and home console hardware is well-documented, stable, and fairly predictable; a PC from 1986 isn't. Making matters worse is the always-shifting hardware and software landscape—for the PC emulator programmer, it's like trying to hit a moving target while blindfolded. But this problem is becoming only more relevant, given the fact that even relatively recent titles are succumbing to this insidious digital entropy (2000's Soldier of Fortune, for instance, is incompatible with Windows XP). Classic PC games like Day of the Tentacle and Duke Nukem 3D don't deserve oblivion. You can do your part by supporting the Electronic Frontier Foundation (eff.org) and Orphan Works (orphanworks.org).



GP LABS

## Essential MAME Accessories

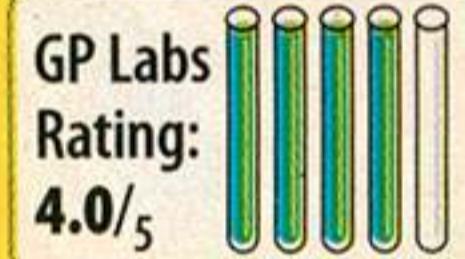
It's not enough to have four gigs of RAM and an Athlon 64 4000+ processor. If you're going to emulate classic games on your PC, remember: It's the little things that count.



### Nyko Air Flo EX

Nyko's Air Flo EX is a sleek, comfortable controller for the PC and Mac. The set-up process is straightforward: Just assign the EX's buttons to your emulator's default keys. Sadly, the directional pad is somewhat clunky (for a more precise d-pad, try Belkin's Nostromo line).

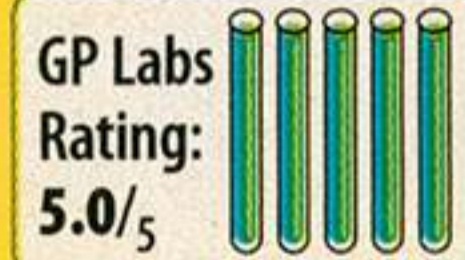
Still, the EX is a great overall package.  
PC/Mac. Price: \$24.99  
Contact: Nyko, nyko.com



### Logitech MX 1000 Laser Cordless Mouse

This sleek, light, cordless mouse uses a laser for enhanced pointing precision, a handy feature in MAME lightgun-compatible games like Terminator 2: Judgment Day and Space Gun. Best of all, the new Lithium-Ion battery can last for weeks between recharges.

PC/Mac. Price: \$79.99  
Contact: Logitech, logitech.com



blogcore.com

Interested in MAME? Want to run Duke Nukem 3D under Windows XP? What about emulating ancient PC games? Let Vicious Sid show you the light.

# Get more action this weekend.

**\$16.99**

PS2 and Xbox Wireless Controllers



**\$29.99**

Yoda Wireless Controller



**\$29.99**

TV Game: Mortal Kombat



**\$24.99**

TV Games: Star Wars and Batman



Yu Gi Oh! Collectible Card Game



EXCLUSIVE COMING SOON

The Wayans Bros. presents The Dozens Collectible Card Game

Teen Titans Collectible Card Game



Buy 3 Booster Packs, Get 1 Free

**\$3.99**



Get more out of your game.

THE NEW

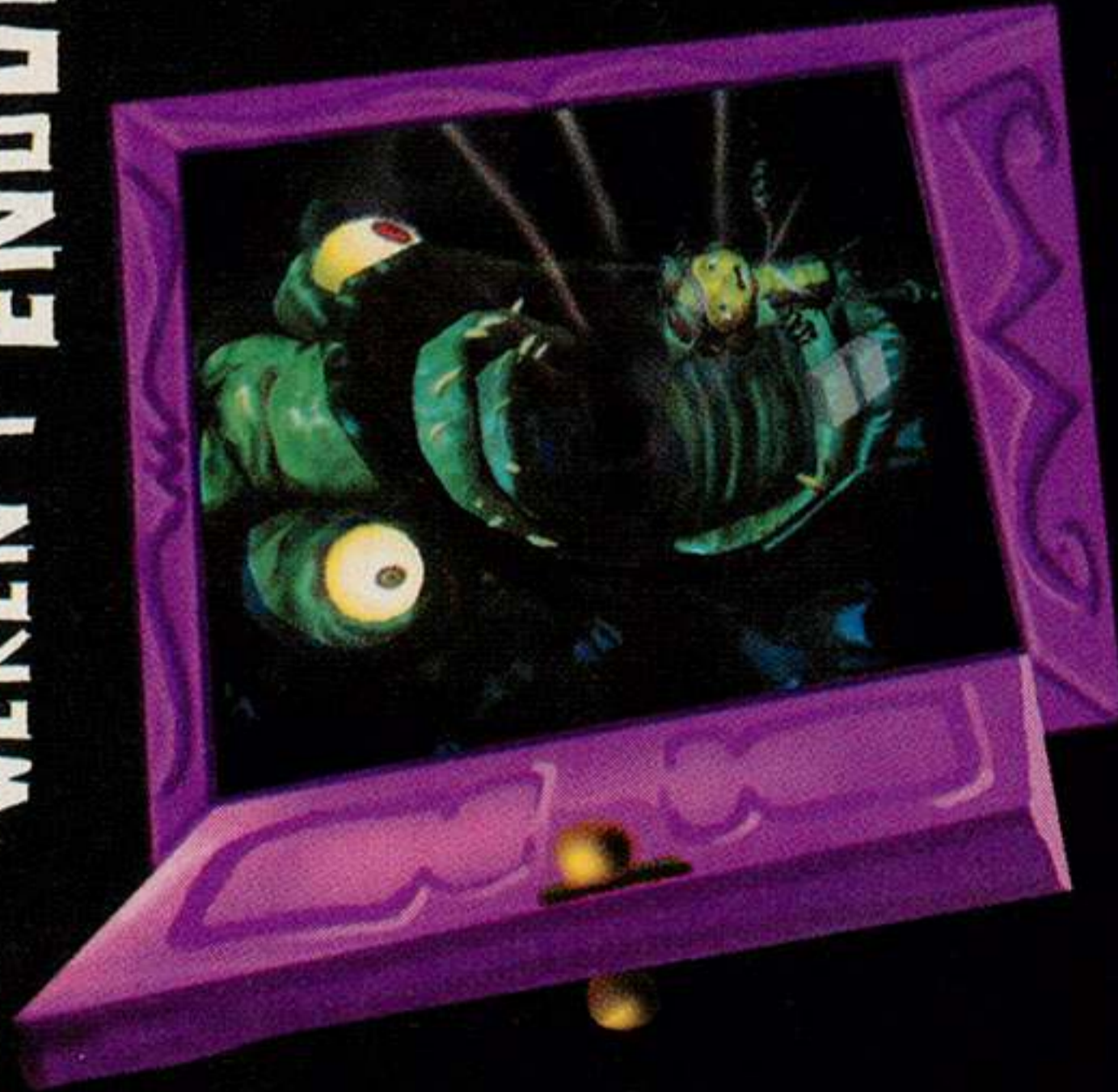
**BLOCKBUSTER**



A PSYCHIC ADVENTURE  
FROM THE MIND OF  
TIM SCHAFFER

# PSYCHONAUTS<sup>TM</sup>

**AS IF THE  
VOICES IN YOUR HEAD  
WEREN'T ENOUGH...**



**"...a game ahead  
of its time."  
-Xbox Nation**

**"...as groundbreaking  
as it is genius."  
9.5 OUT OF 10  
-Play**



**"...an instant  
classic."  
-Electronic Gaming  
Monthly**



**"...incredibly creative,  
wonderfully humorous,  
and refreshingly  
original."  
-GameSpy**

Telekinesis, Clairvoyance and Pyrokinesis make the brain the ultimate weapon. Now Psychonauts makes the brain the ultimate battlefield in a twisted adventure through the beautifully demented minds of misfits, monsters and madmen. Report to **PSYCHONAUTS.COM** to start your adventure.



**Cartoon Violence  
Crude Humor  
Language**



**PlayStation 2**



**PC  
CD**

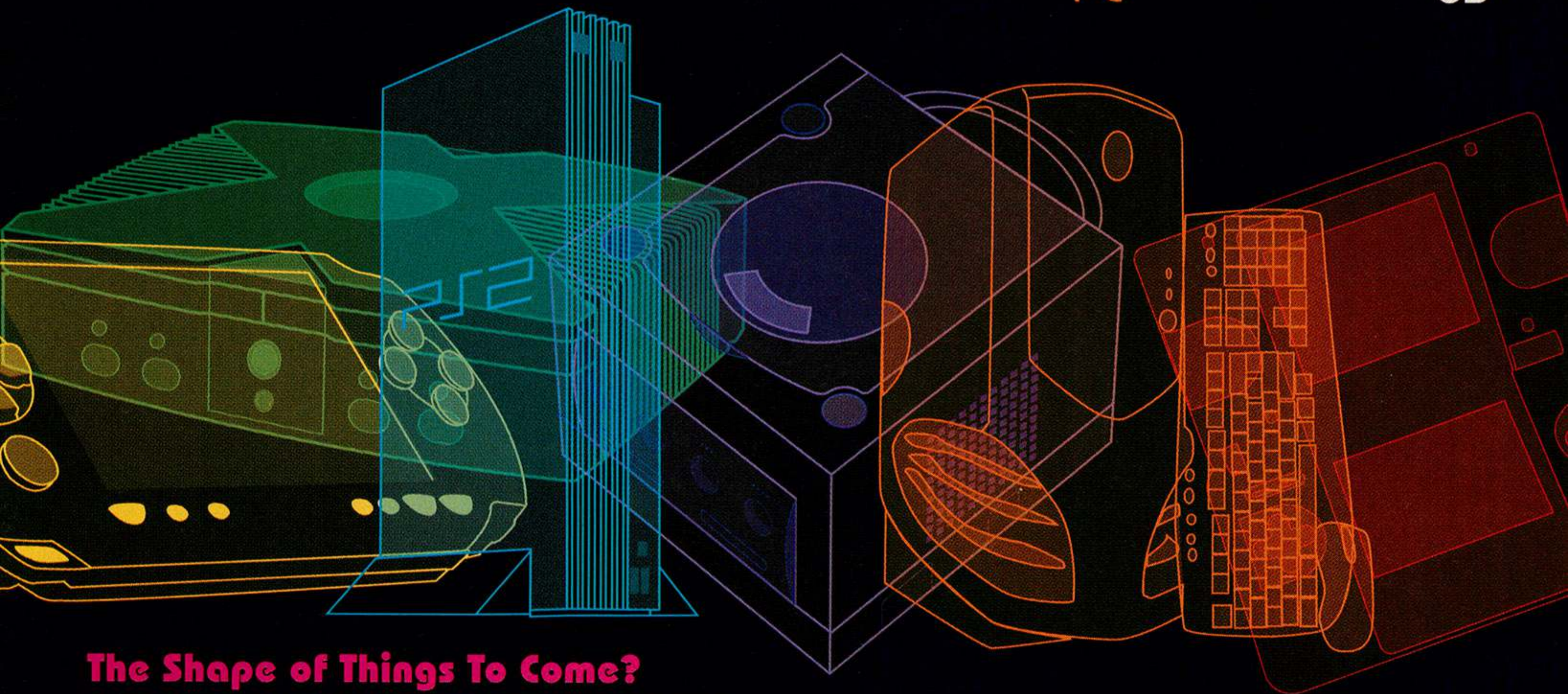


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# E3 Hit Sheet

Let's get the obvious Electronic Entertainment Expo headliner out of the way: It's the year of the next-generation consoles. Sony, Microsoft, and Nintendo will compete for your attention, promising new technical wonders, a strong game library from the get go, unprecedented developer support, and an enriching online experience with their new systems. It's already known that Microsoft's new system will be released this fall, and at this year's E3, we can safely say that Sony and Nintendo will unveil the ship dates along with new information for their respected systems, too. But E3 won't be about just next-generation gaming. A strong support for the current machines will also be evident at the show. Just take a look for yourself at what you can expect to see. *By The GamePros*

PlayStation 2	61
Xbox	62
GameCube	63
PSP	64
DS	64
PC	65



## The Shape of Things To Come?

In the spirit of pre-E3 hype and online rumor mongering, here's what we know (and don't know) about the next-generation consoles.

### The Xbox 2

- **Name:** Unknown, but front runners are Xbox HD, Xbox Next, NeXt Box, and Xbox 360.
- **Launch date:** Fall 2005
- **Backward compatibility:** Unknown; the rumor mill can't make up its mind.
- **Central processor:** Three IBM PowerPC processors
- **Graphics processor:** Courtesy of Canadian graphics giant ATi (of Radeon fame)
- **Memory:** 256 MB RAM; that's as much raw visual horsepower as the most powerful PC graphics processor on the market, the \$600 ATi Radeon x850 XT.
- **Controller:** Possibly wireless, supporting four (or more) players
- **Online play:** A huge focus with Xbox Live and support for game microtransactions
- **Big debate:** Hard drive. Will it have one? Will it be removable? Will it be optional?
- **Cool rumor:** 512 MB of video RAM, which would be absolutely *insane*
- **Note:** Microsoft's goal is to create a massive Live community, so look for more community-building tools and customization options.

### The PS3

- **Name:** Unknown. PlayStation 3 sounds like a logical candidate.
- **Launch date:** 2006
- **Backward compatibility:** It's rumored...but you can bet on it.
- **Central processor:** Advanced, multicore Cell central processor courtesy of IBM, Toshiba, and Sony
- **Graphics processor:** Courtesy of nVidia, and far more powerful than even the current (and obscenely expensive) PC powerhouse GeForce 6800 Ultra
- **Controller:** Definitely, but who knows what form it will take?
- **Online play:** Who knows?
- **Connectivity:** PSP...probably
- **Big debate:** Will the PS3 Cell connect to other Cell processors in a way that's meaningful to gamers?
- **Cool rumor:** The PS3 is the most technologically robust of the three systems, even beating out the mighty Xbox 2.
- **Note:** Of all three consoles, the least is known about the PS3, which means that Sony is in a prime position to surprise everyone.

### The "Revolution"

- **Name:** Unknown. Revolution sounds awfully boastful, but then again, this *is* Nintendo.
- **Launch date:** 2006
- **Backward compatibility:** Confirmed backward compatibility with the GameCube
- **Central processor:** By IBM as are those in the Xbox 2 and PS3
- **Graphics processor:** Courtesy of ATi, who with the Xbox 2, is seeing brisk business these days.
- **Online play:** Nintendo has partnered with GameSpy, but for what? Is the company taking the plunge?
- **Connectivity:** Built-in Wi-Fi to connect with other Revolutions and probably to the DS
- **Cool rumor:** Touch-panel controllers that are completely customizable
- **Note:** Nintendo has said that it will not compete with the PS3 and Xbox 2 in terms of hardware, so you can probably expect midlevel graphical performance and a significantly lower price point.

# PREVIEW



CALL OF DUTY: BIG RED ONE



SHREK SUPER SLAM



STARGATE SG-1: THE ALLIANCE



With the largest installed base, the PlayStation 2 is the oldest of the current gaming systems, and it continues to show its resiliency as the console machine "that could." At the Electronic Entertainment Expo, the underlining theme will be: Don't count out the PS2 just yet.

## TRIED AND TRUE

Sony is leading the charge with familiar names that will predictably do well on the show floor. Military first-person shooting continues as **SOCOM 3: U.S. Navy SEALs** will soak up most of the attention. Following close behind are the further adventures of Ratchet and Clank in **Ratchet Dead Lock**. The other whimsical duo, Jak and Daxter, are returning, too, but not as an adventure. Instead, in **Jak X** you jump behind the wheel and compete in crazy off-road driving. Thievery will continue to run rampant when the band of animal robbers again appears in **Sly Cooper 3**. Other publishers know when they have a hit series on their hands, too. **Burnout 4** is a no-brainer as is **Onimusha 4**. And don't count out Square Enix: **Dragon Quest VIII**,



ONIMUSHA 4 CAPCOM



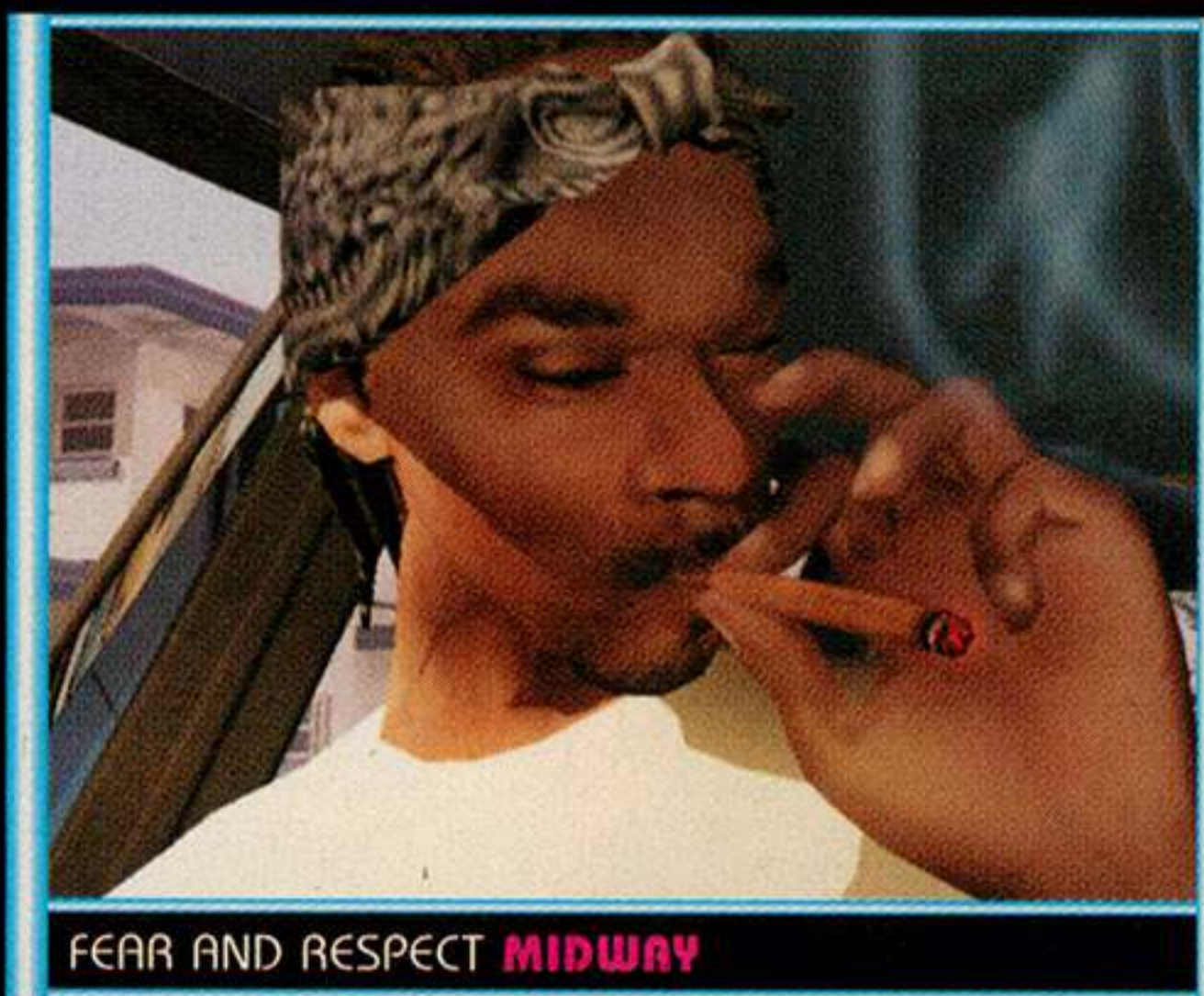
SOUL CALIBUR III NAMCO

**Kingdom Hearts II**, and **Full Metal Alchemist 2: Curse of the Crimson Elixir** should

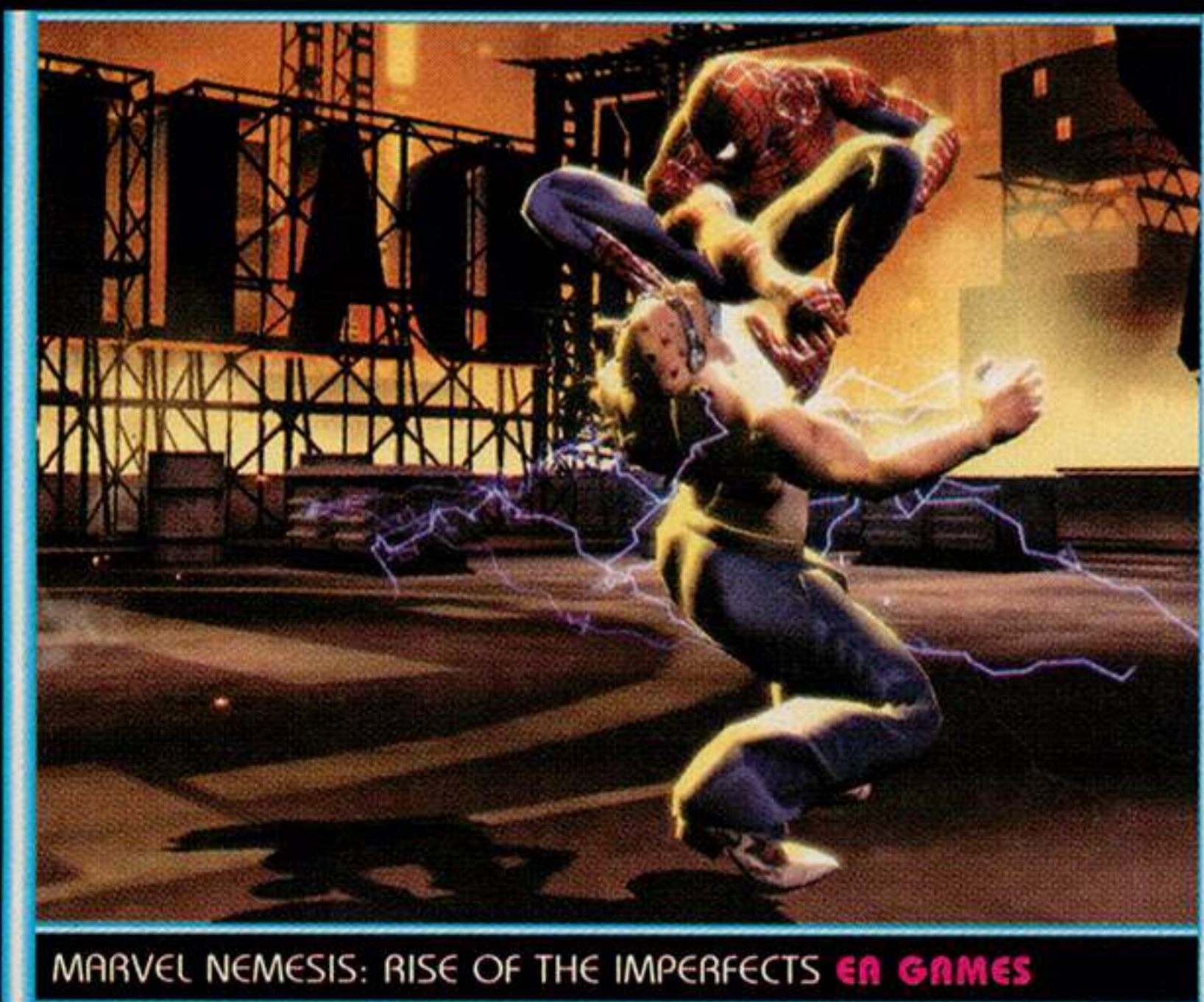
hold you off until **Final Fantasy XII** is finally released. Not enough RPGs for you? Namco has picked up the next **Arc the Lad** game, Sega should be unveiling **Shining Force Neo** and **Dragon Force**, and the fab mutants will return in Activision's **X-Men Legends 2**. Talking about Marvel, EA will be showing off its new fighter, **Marvel Nemesis: Rise of the Imperfects**, a group melee-type brawler. But true fight fans will...er, marvel at **Soul Calibur III**.

## URBAN ORIGINALITY

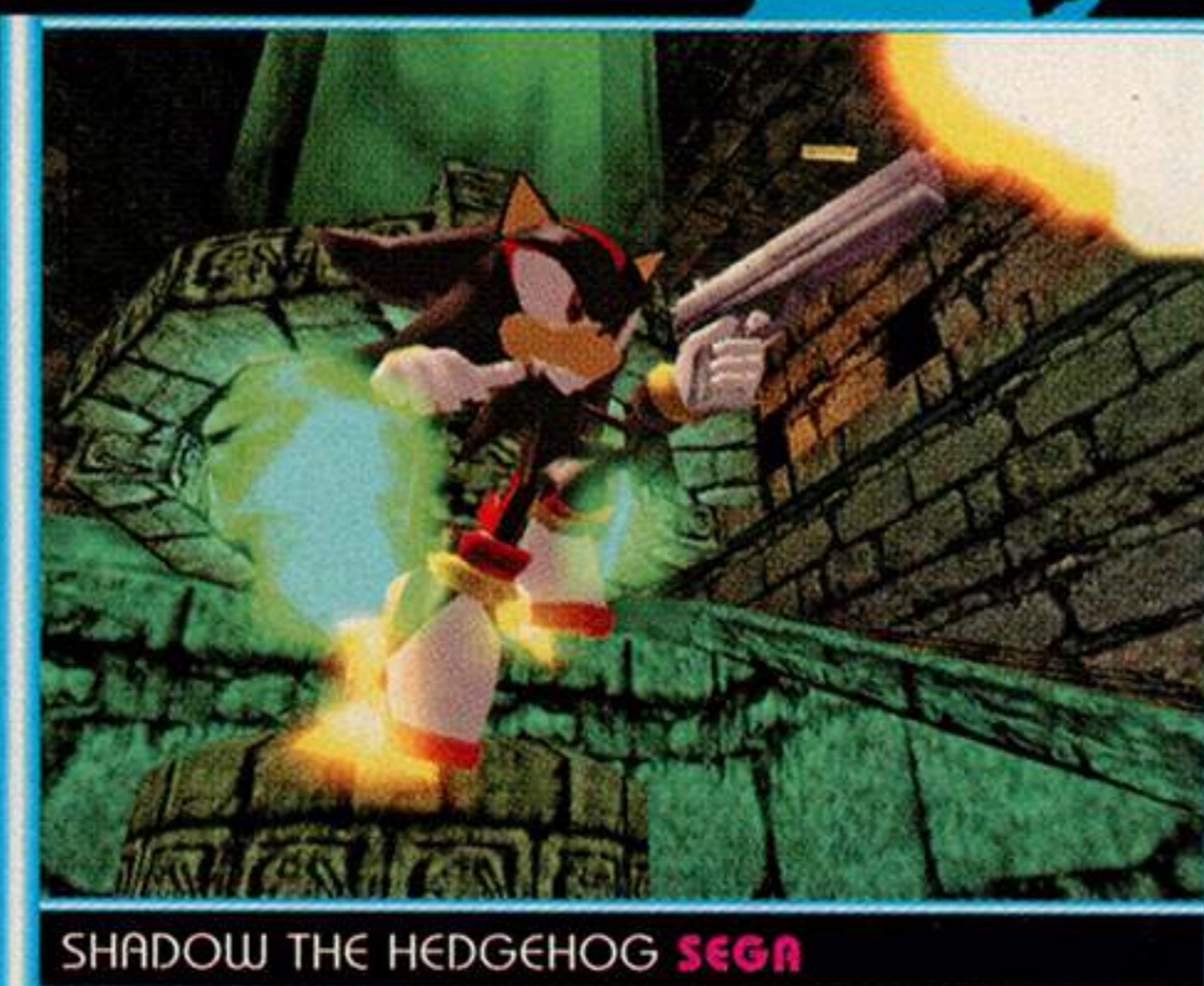
Takes on colorful street life will be accentuated when Atari finally unveils **Marc Ecko's Getting Up: Contents Under Pressure**, while Ubisoft shows us what homicide really means in **187: Ride or Die** and Midway recruits talent Snoop Dogg for **Fear and Respect**. Shading into the darker style of gameplay is a theme for Sega's venerable cutesy mascot Sonic in **Shadow the Hedgehog**. And EA is counting on **Black** to be a head turner in the shooting genre. Evil is back with the blood-sucker prince in **Castlevania: Curse of Darkness**... and despite EA's stranglehold on the official football league license, Midway is continuing its hard-hitting pigskin fest with **Blitz: The League**.



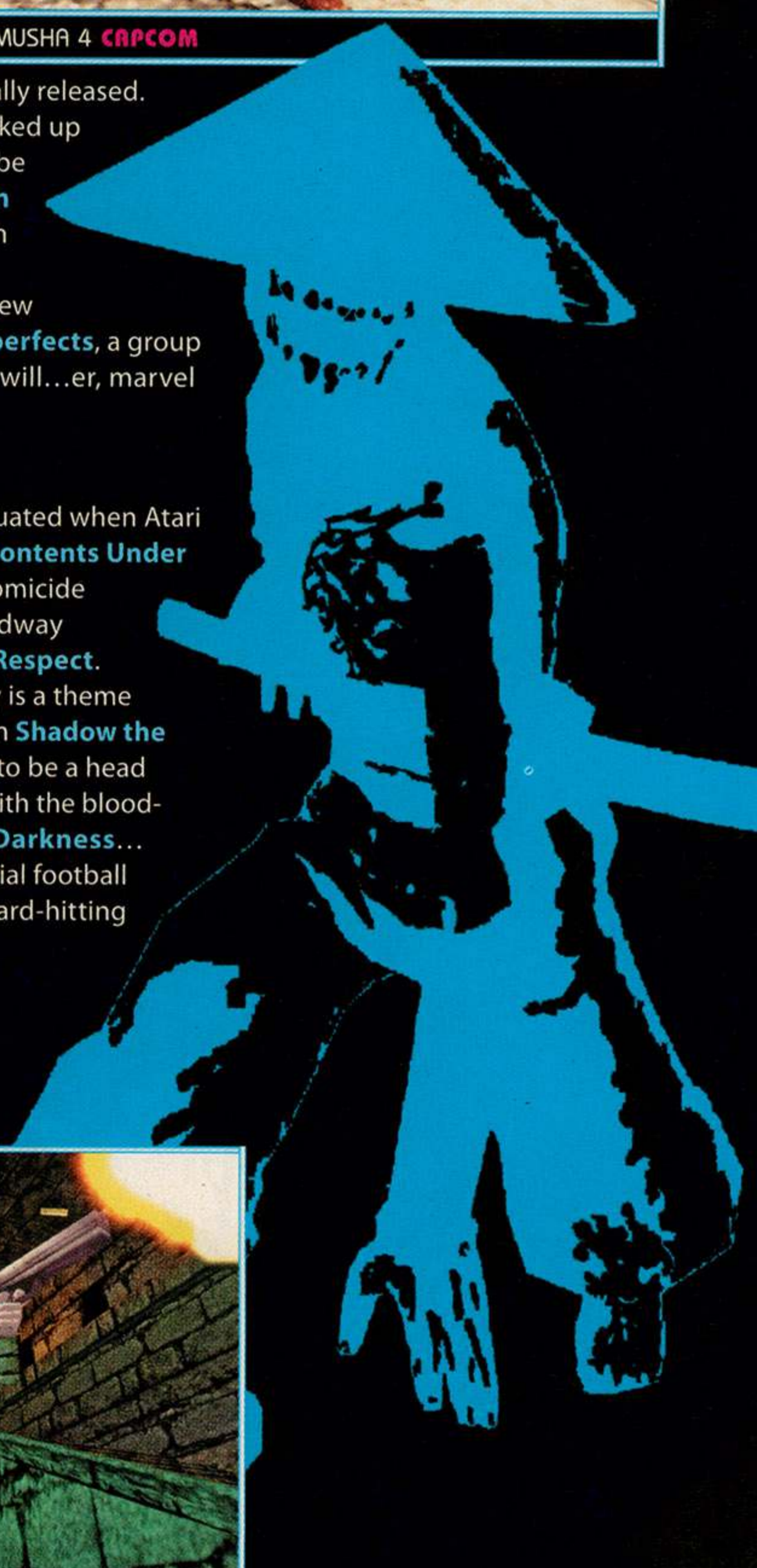
FEAR AND RESPECT MIDWAY



MARVEL NEMESIS: RISE OF THE IMPERFECTS EA GAMES



SHADOW THE HEDGEHOG SEGA



CONTINUED ►

# PREVIEW



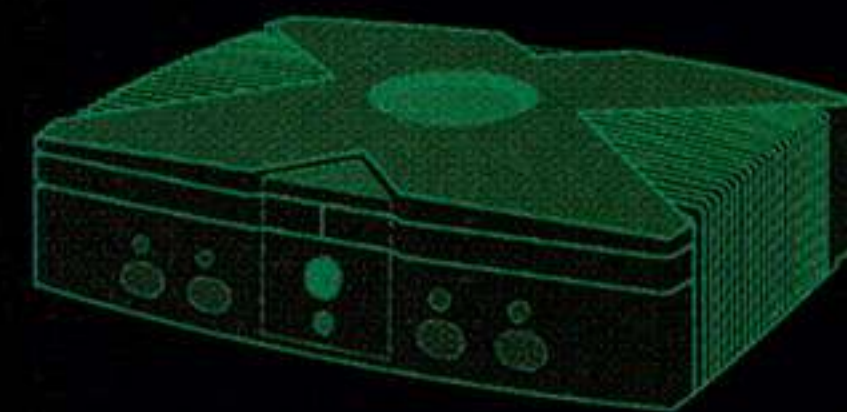
LARA CROFT  
TOMB RAIDER: LEGEND



JUICED



NHL 2K6



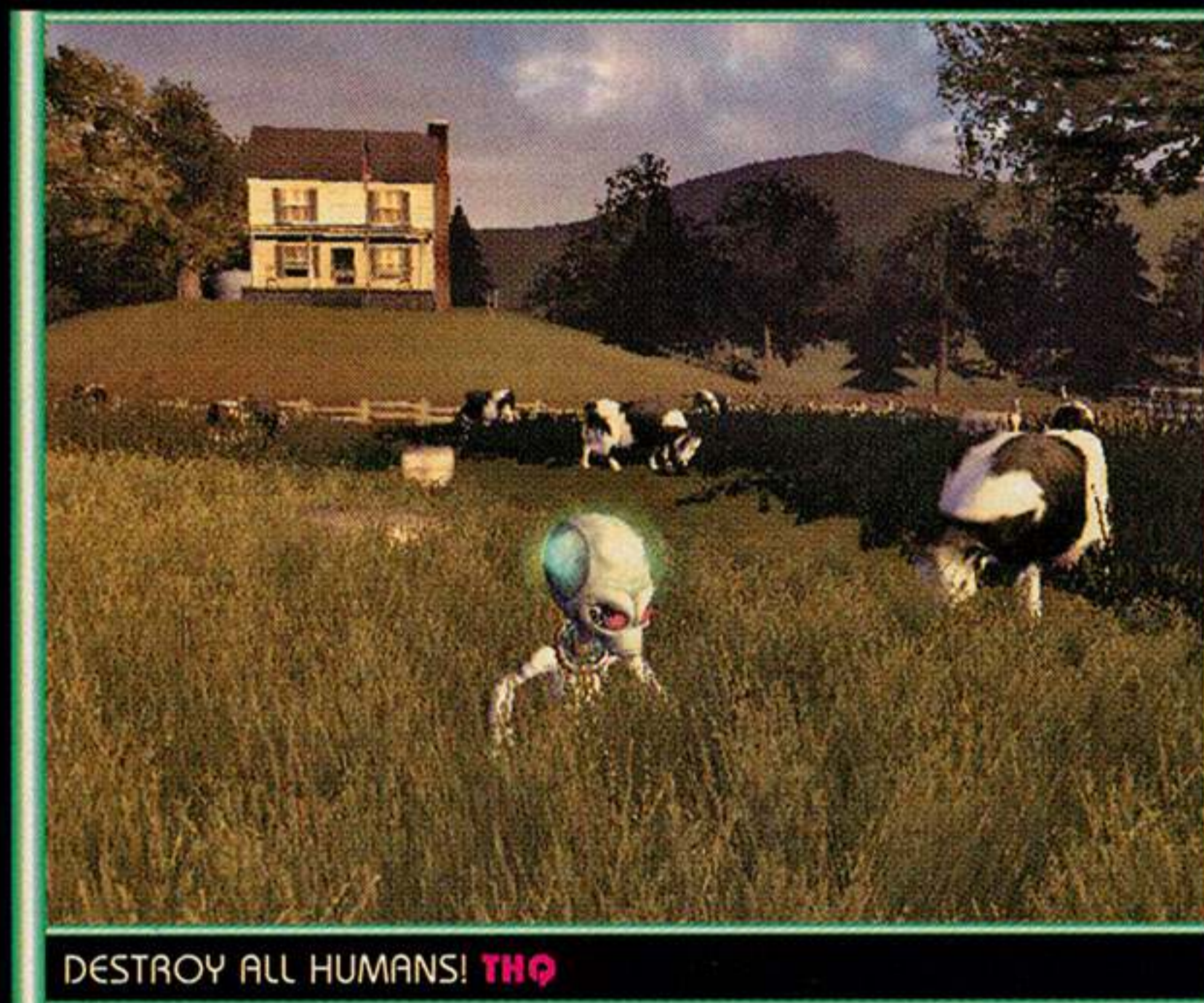
Is Microsoft jumping ahead too quickly? It may seem that way with the arrival of the Xbox 2 later this year despite the fact that the first Xbox is still going strong. There's still plenty of power under the hood that has yet to be fully realized, and developers are finding new programming tricks every day.

## WARMONGERING ON THE BOX

Nothing looks better than bullets flying on the Xbox. The battles of realistic military campaigns will continue as THQ sets its sights on **Full Spectrum Warrior 2**. The U.S. Army will be promoting its acclaimed **America's Army**, which already has a solid fan base on the PC. World War II fans will be ecstatic to see a brand-new Call of Duty game—**Call of Duty: Big Red One**, as well as **Medal of Honor: European Assault**. Eidos will rely on **Commandos Strike Force** for the armchair war strategist, while campers can rejoice in Namco's **Sniper Elite**. But if you tire from humanity's need to destroy each other, then THQ invites you to **Destroy All Humans** with a race of creative aliens.

## SHOW US ALREADY

Majesco will have a strong lineup this year. Its long-delayed sci-fi tale, **Advent Rising**, should be playable. The company will also give us a first look at the cult hit **Aeon Flux** and at comic sensation **Teen Titans**. Hopefully, Ubisoft will finally show **Far Cry Instincts**. Along that same line, Microsoft may finally show more rambunctious shooting with **Conker: Live and Reloaded**. A hint of Lionhead's epic sequel **Fable: Sacred Realms** should be viewable, too. THQ picked up **Juiced**, appropriately named for its steroid-injected cars. And more racing will be found with Vivendi Universal's demolition derby racer, **FlatOut**, where rag-doll physics—apparent when the driver is catapulted out of the car—are the main feature.



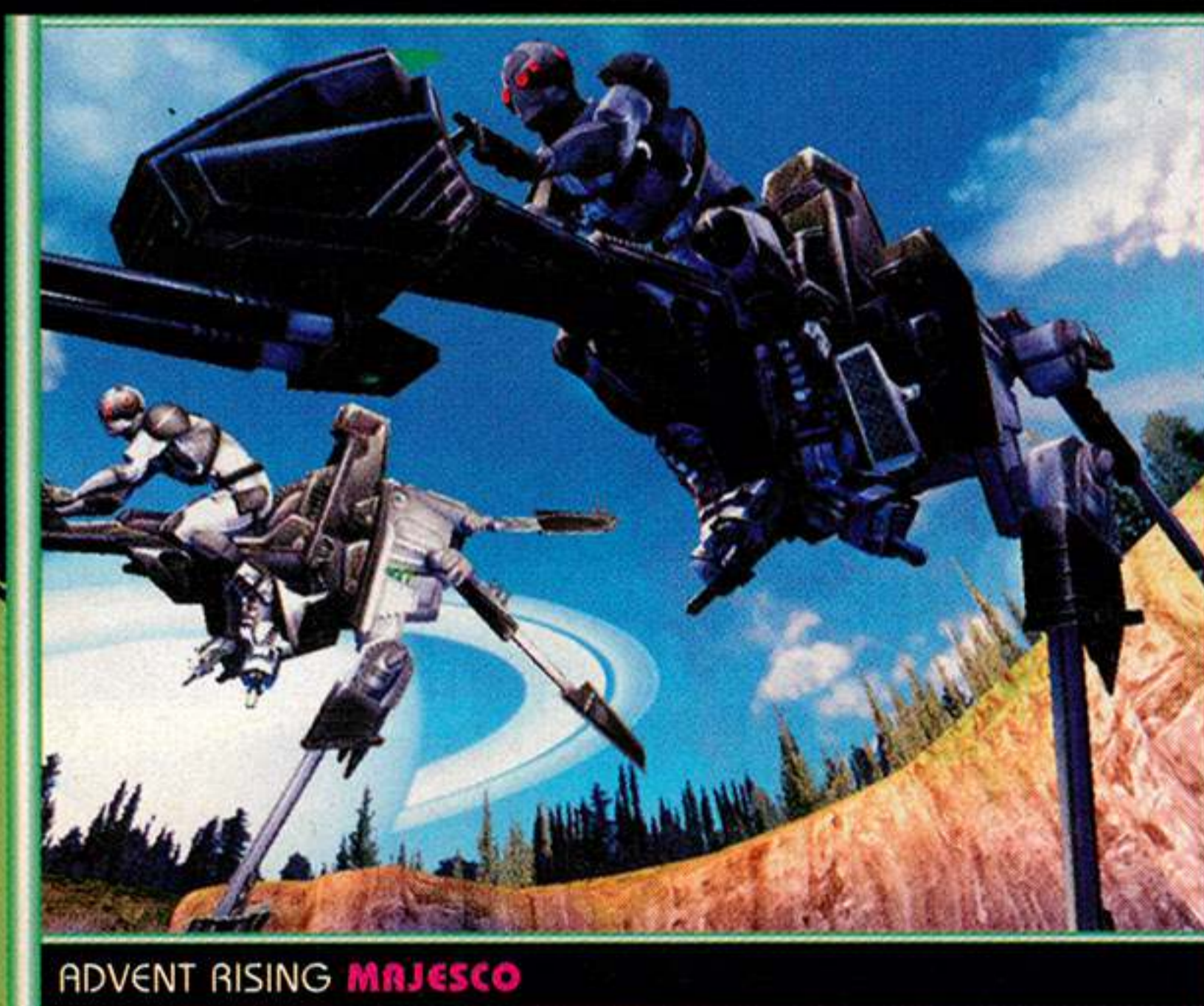
DESTROY ALL HUMANS! THQ



MEDAL OF HONOR: EUROPEAN ASSAULT EA GAMES



SNIPER ELITE NAMCO



ADVENT RISING MAJESCO



AMERICA'S ARMY UBISOFT



# PREVIEW

Many have criticized the GameCube as an inferior system with a limited game library. But Nintendo has something for the nay sayers—even though it's already prepping for a...um, Revolution.

## IT'S THE FIRST PARTY

The new **Legend of Zelda** is a no-brainer...so is the sequel to fun monkey rhythm, **Donkey Konga 2**. Nintendo will also show a lot more of its spooky thriller, **Geist**, and the visually impressive **Advance Wars: Under Fire**. The company's penchant for baseball will be evident with **Pennant Chase Baseball**, too. And we may just find out more about the long-awaited **Fire Emblem** and the mysterious strategy game **Odama**.

## MIX AND MATCH

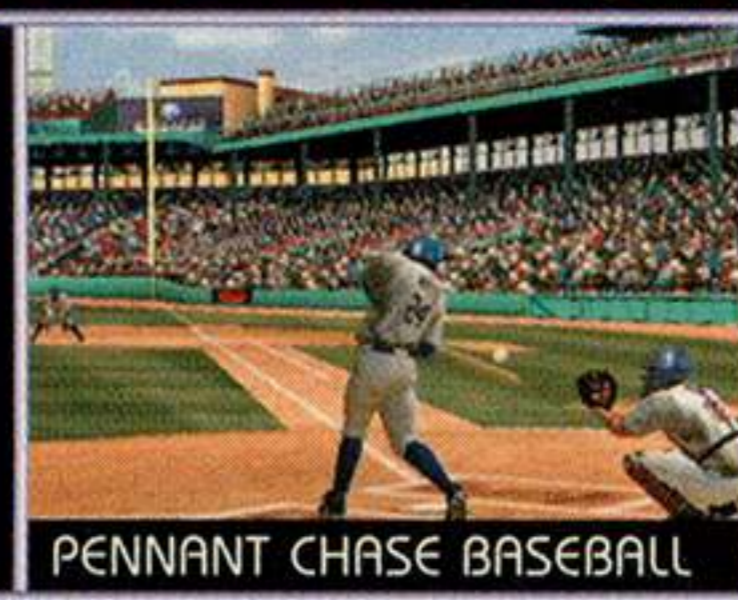
Movie-based games are still all the rage. Ubisoft will introduce **King Kong** and Global Star will sweeten our desires with **Charlie and the Chocolate Factory**. Years, not months, have passed, but Blizzard's **StarCraft: Ghost** and Capcom's **Killer 7** should finally be close to completion. Vivendi Universal will reveal Bruce Banner's new adventure, **The Incredible Hulk: Ultimate Destruction**. Natsume will slow down the pace a bit with more farming techniques in **Harvest Moon: Another Wonderful Life**. And dot-eating adventures will continue when Namco reveals **Pac-Man World 3**.



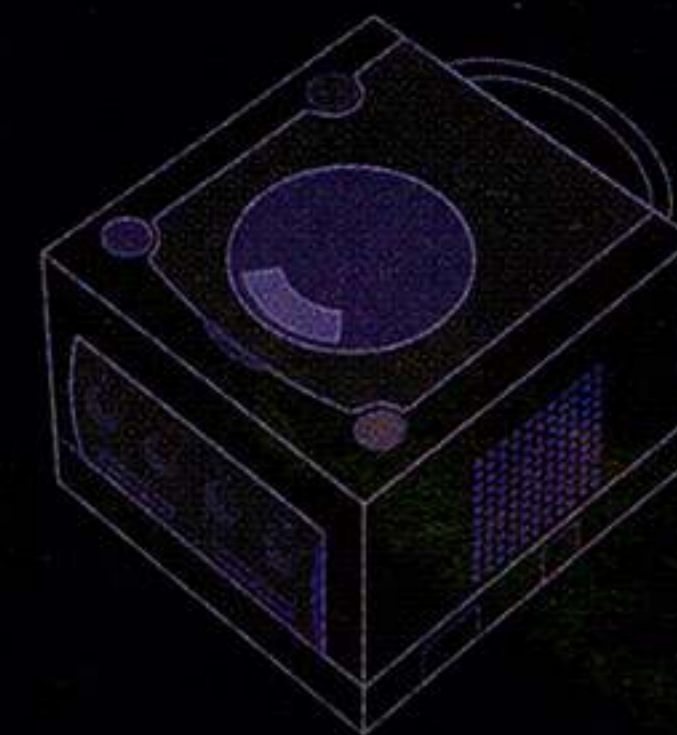
HARRY POTTER AND THE GOBLET OF FIRE



CHARLIE AND THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY



PENNANT CHASE BASEBALL



DONKEY KONGA 2 NINTENDO



THE LEGEND OF ZELDA NINTENDO



GEIST NINTENDO



PAC-MAN WORLD 3 NAMCO



KILLER 7 CAPCOM



ADVANCE WARS: UNDER FIRE NINTENDO



CONTINUED ►

# PREVIEW

It seems like the launch was only yesterday, but already Sony's portable is gaining momentum. The first round of games was predictable—now it's time to see if the real titles will make or break the PSP.

Enough of the standard racing—**Gran Turismo 4 Mobile** should be on the show floor. Majesco will try out a new action/adventure game with **Infected** but will also bet on solid names with **BloodRayne** and **Advent Shadow**. Eidos plans to test your brain cells with the puzzler **Smart Bomb** while Konami wants to test your trigger fingers with **Coded Arms**. Old standbys shouldn't have a problem as well: Rockstar will most likely give us a glimpse at **Grand Theft Auto**; Agetec will

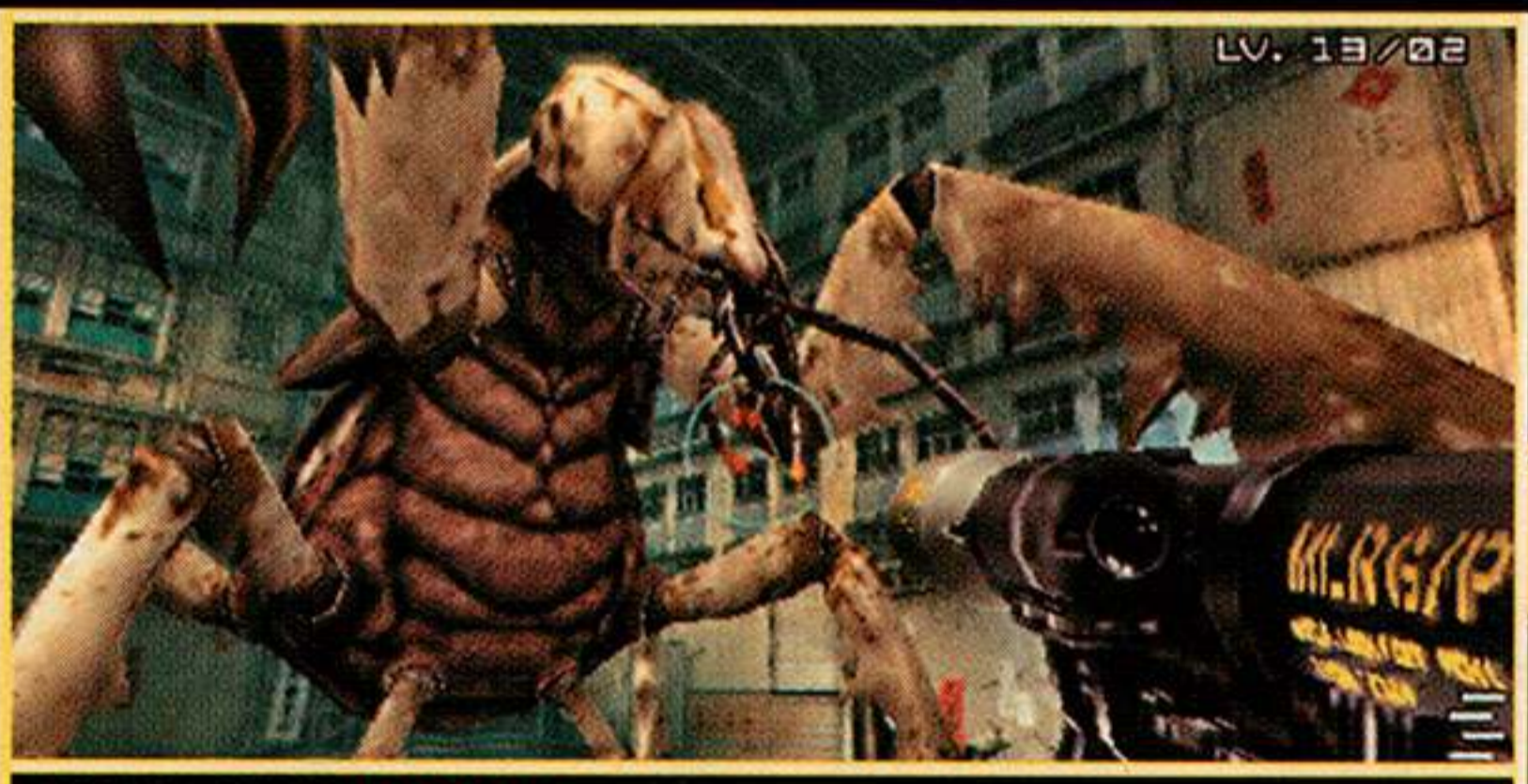
show us why it's still the mech king with **Armored Core: Formula Front**; and Ubisoft will have the force on its side with **Star Wars: Episode III Revenge of the Sith**. For an urban warfare experience, Namco will give us a taste of its rogue cop in **Dead to Rights**.



INFECTED MAJESCO



DEAD TO RIGHTS NAMCO



CODED ARMS KONAMI



# PREVIEW

Is the DS's touch-screen and built-in microphone too forward-thinking? Not many companies have created games that take advantage of such innovative technology, except for, well, Nintendo.

Nintendo's classic headliners will make an appearance. The new **Super Mario Bros.**, **Mario Kart**, **Advance Wars**, and **Animal Crossing** will predictably have an easy time finding a home. The demo whetted our appetite, so it's only natural to see more of **Metroid Prime: Hunters**. And will **Nintendogs** be the next Tamagotchi? Konami will be showing strong support with versions of **Castlevania** and **Frogger**, along with newcomers **Dragon Booster** and **Lost in Blue**. Atlus will try to attract a younger audience with **Snowboard Kids**, while Majesco will have the most varied lineup with **Age of Empires II**, **Texas Hold 'Em**, and **Nanostray**.



ANIMAL CROSSING NINTENDO

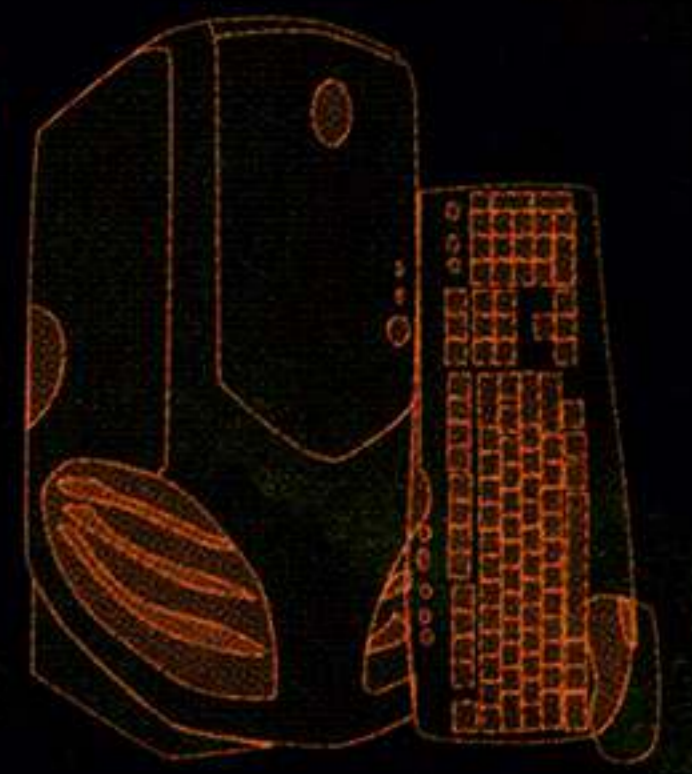


NINTENDOGS NINTENDO



MARIO KART NINTENDO

# PREVIEW



This year will see some of the biggest PC launches yet, from high-profile sequels to earth-shaking 3D hardware.

## FIRST-PERSON PARADE

Activision's got high hopes for **Quake IV**, which uses bleeding-edge Doom 3 graphics technology to render its biomechanoid, metal-meets-marrow game environments. The game won't retread Doom 3 or Quake 3: Arena, but will pick up where Quake 2's Stroggos campaign left off. Speaking of **Doom 3**, the expansion pack **Resurrection of Evil** is rapidly approaching completion. Look for more enemies and more weapons (including a double-barreled shotgun and a "grabber gun" that can reflect fireballs). And don't count out **F.E.A.R.**, an upcoming shooter with magnificent graphics and an eerie, supernatural story line. On the war games front, **Call of Duty 2** will feature advanced tactics (snipers can hold their breath to attain better accuracy) and huge vehicle-based missions. Meanwhile, **Battlefield 2**'s modern-era online warfare is creeping ever closer to launch.

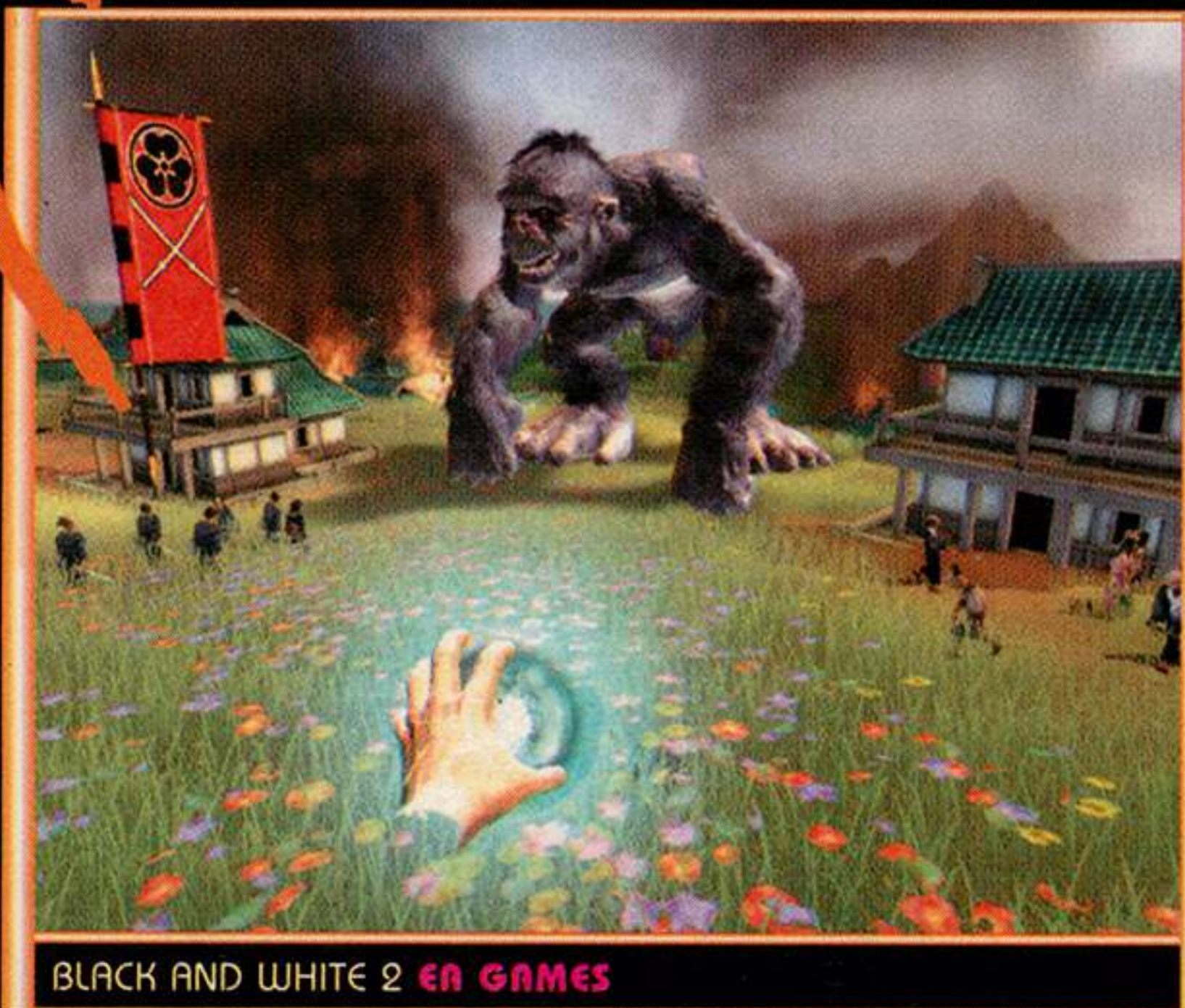
## MO' MMOS

Sony Online Entertainment is preparing its **EverQuest II** expansion **Bloodline Chronicles**, a five-dollar downloadable adventure pack. Meanwhile, **Rage of the Wookiees**, an upcoming expansion for **Star Wars: Galaxies**, will enable players to visit the homeworld of those ferocious fur balls. NCsoft's **Auto Assault** is also turning some heads for its Twisted-Metal-meets-MMO gameplay. Last but not least is the new **Asheron's Call 2** expansion, **Legions**.

## LION'S SHARE

Lionhead Studios is gearing up for **Fable: The Lost Chapters**, which will feature new weapons, quests, and a longer adventure. Next up is **Black and White 2**, which is showing signs of being a genre-busting classic in the tradition of The Sims and Populous. The press demo was positively awe-inspiring (the terrain included grass and flowers that swayed in the breeze), and the beefed-up RTS component looked like a Warcraft-killer. Finally, **The Movies** will let players guide the day-to-day operations of a movie studio and piece together custom movies. All three games are slated for this fall.

As for hardware, nVidia is readying a new 512 megabyte version of its \$600 GeForce 6800 Ultra video card, which (trigger sheer conjecture) will presumably surpass the Xbox 2 in terms of raw graphics performance. Presumably. nVidia is also gearing up to release its **nForce 5** motherboard, which will finally enable Intel users to "double up" two GeForce cards for unbelievable graphics performance.





Weakening an enemy enough so that you can grab him is only half the battle in the world of God of War.

**PRO TIP:** As you gather energy, your first objective is to max out Kratos's Blades of Chaos.

**PRO TIP:** Gorgons can be used to your advantage when you're attacked by mixed company as their petrifying gaze can turn non-Gorgons into stone. One more thing: Never jump while fighting a Gorgon.

## God of War

**God of War is a tough, long quest that will test even the mightiest of warriors.**

PS2



The PlayStation 2 got a decent dose of bloody Roman history earlier this year with *Shadow of Rome*, a playable version (more or less) of the movie *Gladiator*. However, Sony has completely upped the ante with *God of War*, an adventure of Herculean proportions that brilliantly plays off Greek mythology and delivers one of the most intense gaming experiences of the year.

### My God Can Beat Up Your God

The game's premise is as ancient as the mythos itself: Ares, the titular deity with serious self-esteem issues, has gone on a rampage and must be stopped—but not by the Greek gods, who are prone to sit on their eternal asses and “empower” others to do their dirty work. So, a mortal dutifully takes up the task: Kratos, a tortured Spartan warrior who can pry off Gorgon heads, tear some enemies completely in half, and perform other superhuman feats. As formidable as Kratos's strength is, the only thing that can kill Ares is Pandora's Box, an artifact resting behind a series of bosses, devilishly constructed traps, and perplexing puzzles (most of which come in the form of moving objects and pulling levers).

*God of War* borrows perhaps a bit too liberally from *Devil May Cry* (the first one, anyway) as Kratos is a serious-minded one-man slaughterhouse sans the oh-so-cool swagger. The Spartan is equipped with a pair of extending chains each capped with a sword, which he uses for midrange combo attacks, including vicious air juggles. Larger foes, though, require more skill, and some must be softened up before they can be finished off by a series of onscreen button-press cues. Additional combos are unlocked by cashing in dead souls collected from felled enemies. Accessory weapons are also available. For instance, once you wrench off Medusa's head, it can be used as a power-up to temporarily petrify enemies that can then be shattered if struck before they can thaw. The gods chime in, too, and dole out various devastating powers, such as Zeus' lightning bolts and Hades' dead souls.

### Let the Gods Decide

Robust fighting engine aside, *God of War* draws additional strength from the diversity of tasks to be completed and the clever way it plays off the source material. Classic monsters, such as Hydra, Minotaur, the Sirens, and the Harpies (among others), require specific techniques in order to be defeated, and the game's events take place against a driving music score reminiscent of those in the best Roman movie sagas, such as *Ben-Hur*. The excellent visuals bring these foes to life, and the detailed architecture delivers the aesthetic punch of an era long gone.



**PRO TIP:** Tap Heavy Attack (△) to send an enemy into the air; while your foe is airborne, tap ○ repeatedly to execute Orion's Harpoon and slam them on the ground.

All is not perfect on Olympus, though. The inconsistent camera (that destroyer of so many games) takes its toll as it makes seemingly simple tasks like navigating lengthy catwalks more perilous than it should be. Also, some of the puzzles rely excessively on split-second timing, which can result in repetitive trial and error. Setbacks aside, *God of War* is an exhausting, epic quest that challenges the mightiest of video-game warriors from the throne of their living-room couch.—Major Mike

**KEY MOMENT:** When you weaken a Gorgon to the point where you can grab it and then successfully follow the onscreen prompts to wrench off its head

PS2	GRAPHICS	4.5	EDITORS' CHOICE	FUN FACTOR 4.5
	SOUND	5.0		
	CONTROL	4.0		

Developer: Sony Studios Santa Monica Publisher: Sony  
\$49.99 Available now Action/adventure 1 player ESRB: M

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June 2005

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Screens are taken from development version.

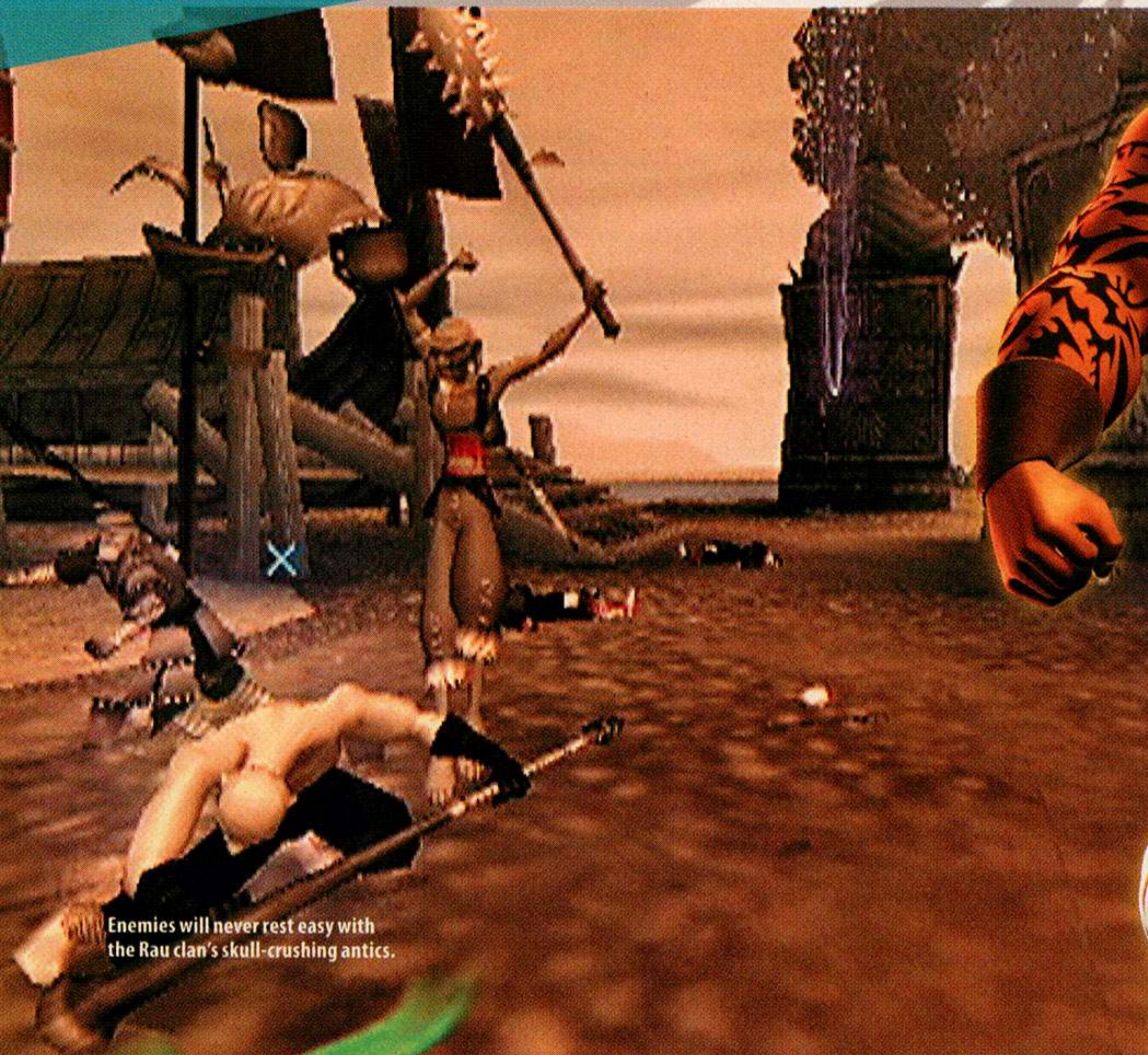


Mild Language  
Mild Violence  
Use of Alcohol

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PlayStation 2





Enemies will never rest easy with the Rau clan's skull-crushing antics.

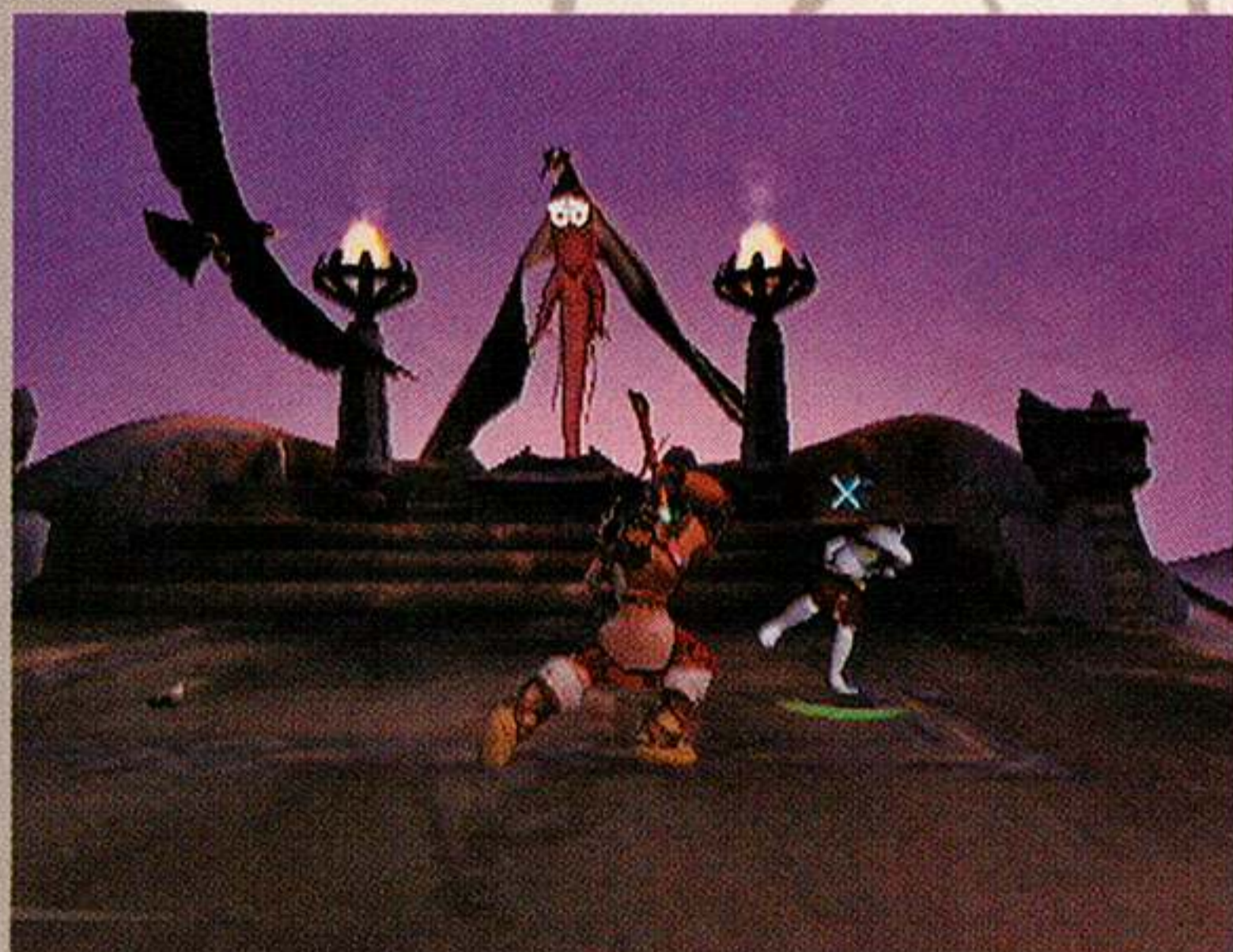
# Rise of the Kasai

Sony's fierce warrior returns with more of the same whack, hack, and slash formula.

PS2



The way of the warrior can easily be summed up in Rise of the Kasai: It's a life of tragic misadventures that can be at times inspiring to watch but difficult to experience first hand (or in this case, both hands). In essence, the warrior in Rise of the Kasai offers the same experience that he did in his first outing—a tale of innovative design mixed with uneven gameplay.



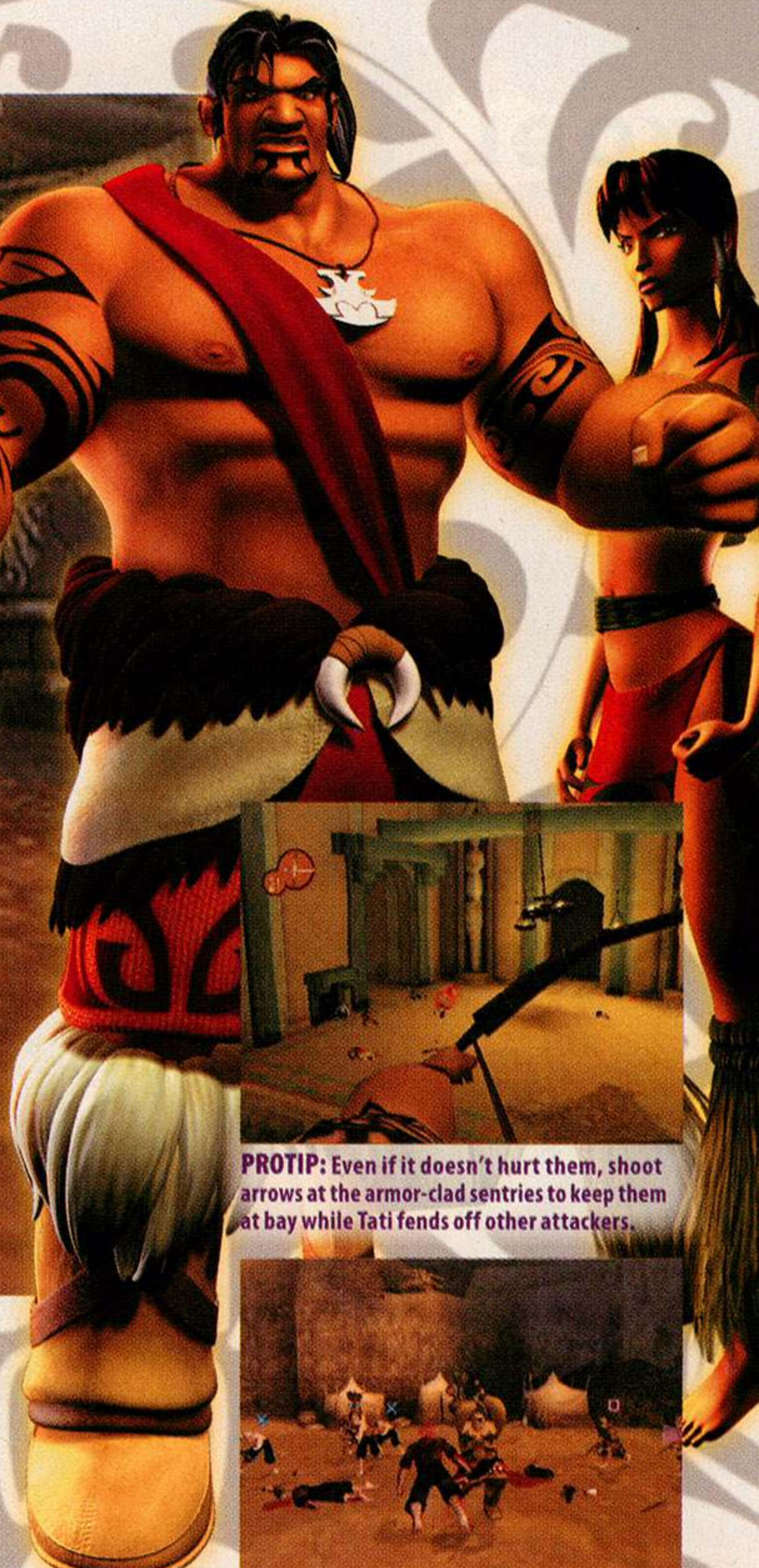
PRO TIP: Time your attack carefully when slaying the dragon. He'll breathe fire onto the entire roof after he grows tired of just watching you.

## Sticking with It

You do remember The Mark of Kri, don't you? It was one of those unique adventures that creatively blended a Disney-like cartoony atmosphere with a brutal warrior who had a penchant for decapitating others. His name was Rau, and when you rotated the right analog stick, he could select surrounding adversaries and then attack them separately with devastating combinations that usually left bloodied results. In Rise of the Kasai, this unique control scheme remains as does the tale of Rau. New, however, is the ability to play not only as Rau but also as his sister and two other fierce warriors. You don't, however, go at it alone on your assigned tasks: The game plays as a simplified co-op mode where you and a computer-controlled character fight together through each level. It's certainly a different way to play a game, but the computer can sometimes be really, really dumb. It won't pick up health when it really needs to, and you can't coordinate attacks effectively with each other. The fighting also starts to feel like it did in The Mark of Kri as you progress: repetitious without any diversity in the battles.

## The Voice of the Kasai

As in The Mark of Kri, the art and sound direction in Rise of the Kasai should be praised. The story is told through hand-drawn sketches that come to life and beautifully lead right



PRO TIP: Even if it doesn't hurt them, shoot arrows at the armor-clad sentries to keep them at bay while Tati fends off other attackers.



PRO TIP: If you're surrounded by enemies, press R3 to disengage, run to a better spot where your back isn't facing anyone, and then select your victims at will.

into the actual gameplay. And although the levels are displayed with simple architecture and environmental elements, the stylized coloring brings a lot of character to what could have been an otherwise drab experience. The music may be off-cue at times, but the narrator's voice speaks with authority and conviction, making this tale even more engaging.

Still, the lack of new and innovative gameplay elements prevents Rise of the Kasai from reaching superstar-sequel status. It's instead a mild-mannered, blood-splattered adventure that's worth a one-time run-through, but it doesn't have a warrior's tenacity for a long-term fight to legendary status.—*Four-Eyed Dragon*

**KEY MOMENT:** Nothing beats the one-stroke swift of the Battle Axe in close range, which rips multiple enemies in half at once.

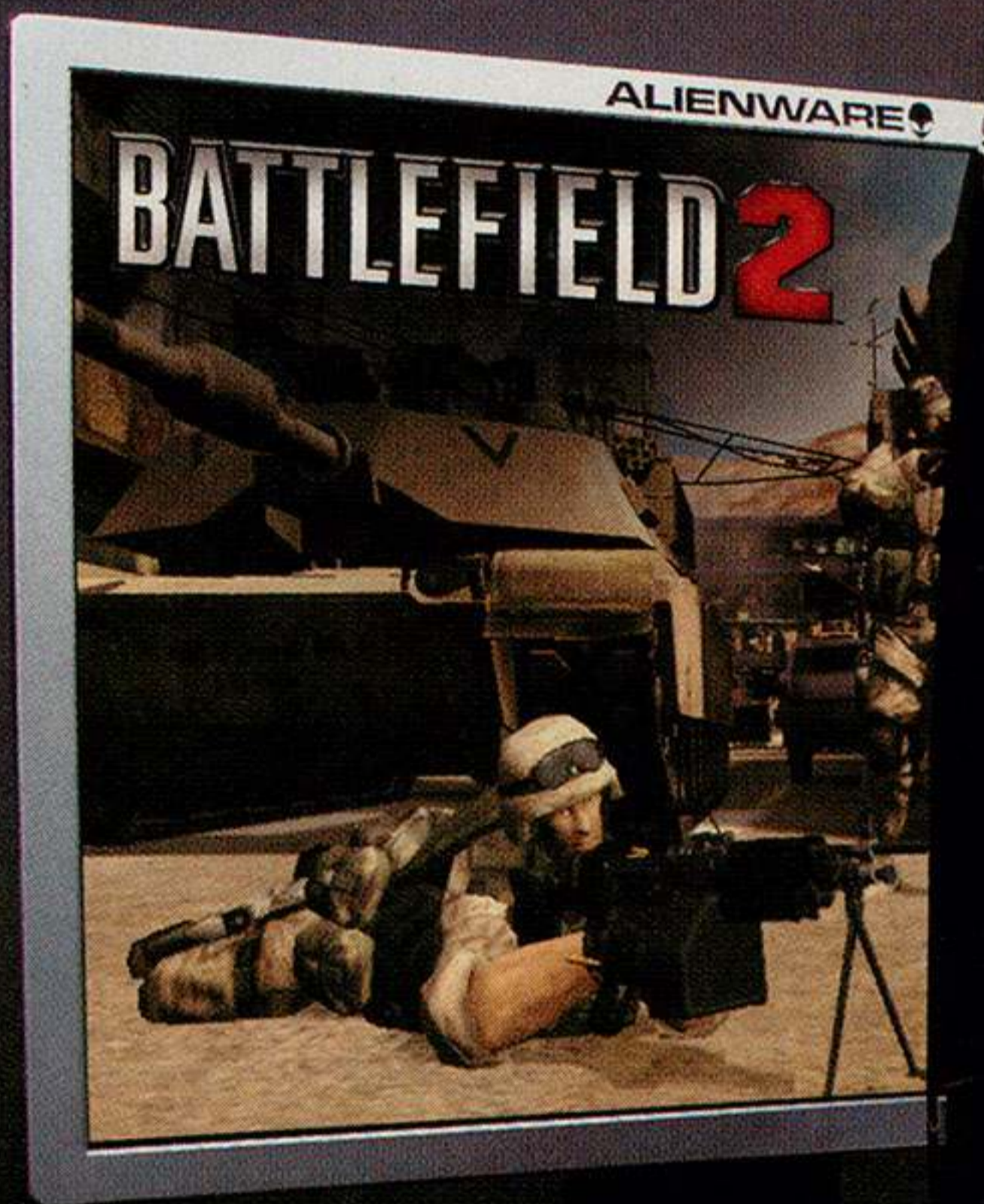
PS2	GRAPHICS	4.0	FUN FACTOR	3.5
	SOUND	3.5		
	CONTROL	3.5		

Developer: BottleRocket Entertainment Publisher: Sony  
 \$39.99 Available now Action 1 player ESRB: M

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**PROTIP:** Mutate to detect cloaked operatives or online opponents hiding in the dark.



The BBG fires plasma particles that stick to foes before exploding.



**PROTIP:** Save megapowerful meson ammo for shooting at shielded gray aliens.



# Area-51

**Almost-AAA shooter Area-51 sends E.T. home with a big-budget bang.**

PS2



The magicians of our era wear lab-coat capes and wave soldering-iron wands. In Area-51, New Mexico's supersecret, federally funded, black-science compound, and in the PS2's surest, sharpest shooter (the Xbox's marksman-flush firing range is always another story), dragons are conjured behind closed doors...as are mutants, Illuminati, little gray men, bogus moon landings, and other sci-fi specters that go bump in the night of reason with gasp-worthy gloss.

## All's Well in Roswell

Bogeymen don't beam in only to be blasted before dematerializing back into a shortcutting code, either. They shimmy through crawl spaces, bound over barricades, and scabble claw over claw along sheer vertical and inverted surfaces, and when they get theirs, they slump and spin, and sail sky high. All tooth and nail, some take the shortest path to your throat, and that's that. Other, more evolved E.T.s employ the types of tactics you'd expect from bigger brains: They use cover, concealment, and a withering combo of guns and grenades (ouch!)—it's not Halo lethal...but it's lethal nonetheless.

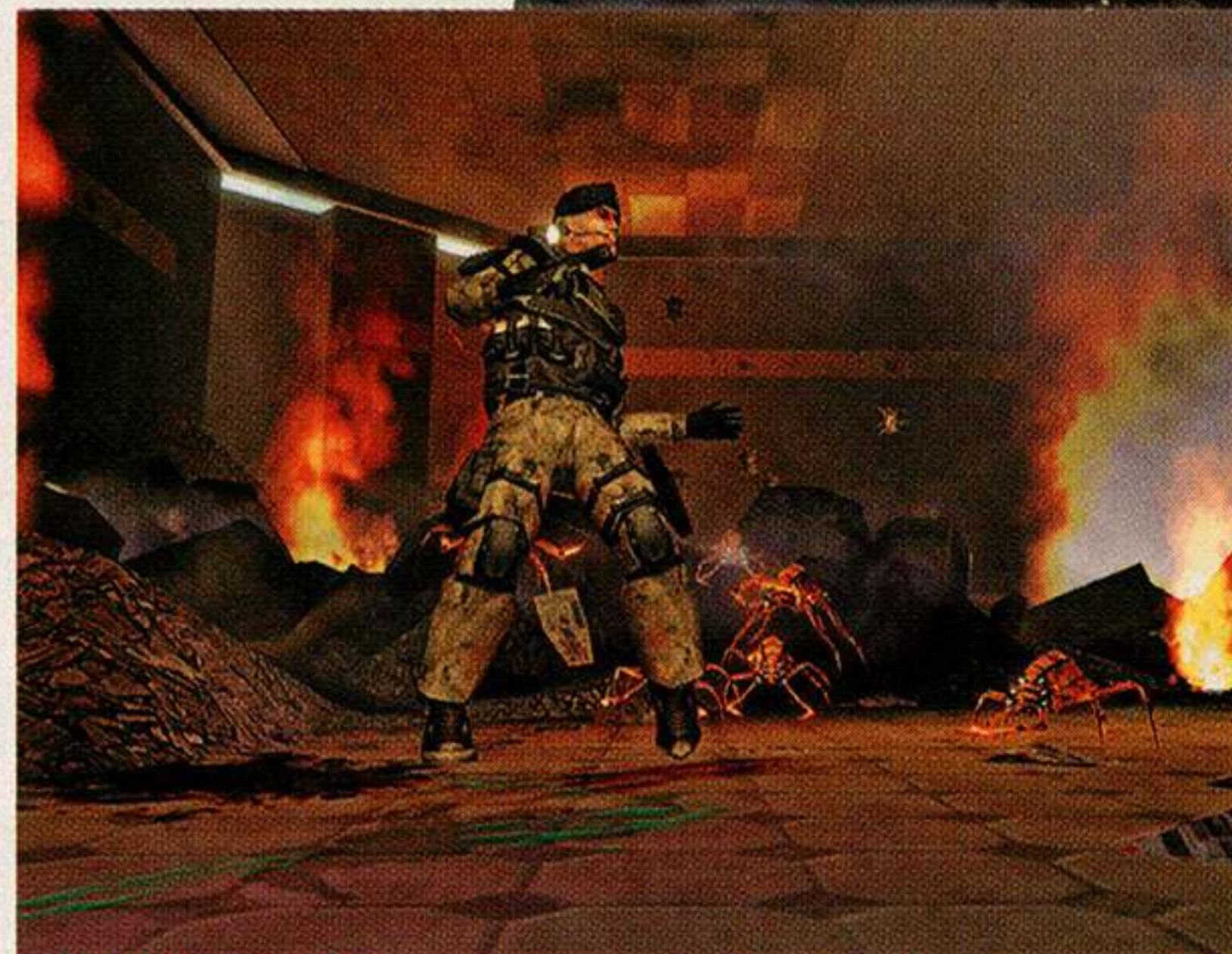
Where the Xbox-only goliath Master Chief uses a self-replenishing shield gimmick to pace

cavalry charges and tail-between-the-legs lollygagging, Area-51's life-saving twist works in reverse and just as well. To stay strong, hero Ethan Cole (serviceably voiced by *X-Files*'s deadpan sleuth David Duchovny) must mutate into his own sort of monster and parasitize power from opponents. The closer he is to death, the more desperate the measures become, and blitzing opponents as a snake-eyed beastie gussies up Area-51's solid but otherwise stock online game.

## This Way to the Future

If Area-51 is short (about 8–10 hours) and occasionally incoherent (who conspired with who, and for what, again?), its spacey settings go where few games have gone before. Its otherworldly sets (as in alien and not pages nicked from next season's consumer electronics catalogs) are done up in such bewildering detail that you'll want to wipe out pissed off spacemen if only to have a more leisurely look-see at all their busy, mind-bending contraptions. Quite the feat for a remake of a ratty light-gun game we played in the gigaplex only because, like the change in our pockets, it was there. No rational explanation for that.—*Fart of War*

**KEY MOMENT:** Staving off attackers in a see-through room while aliens conduct an autopsy on the other side



**PROTIP:** Listen closely to your scanner; its chirping will guide you to secret files and substances.

PS2	GRAPHICS	4.0	EDITORS' CHOICE	FUN FACTOR	4.5
	SOUND	4.0			
	CONTROL	4.5			

Developer: Midway Studios Austin | Publisher: Midway | \$49.99  
 Available now | First-person shooter | 2 players; 16 online  
 ESRB: M | Also on the Xbox and PC





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**PROTIP:** The only way to kill an infected human is to shoot or stomp on its head. It helps if your target is lying on the floor—a few torso shots should tilt the balance in your favor.



# Cold Fear

**An unholy union of Resident Evil 4 and The Thing, Cold Fear features intense gameplay that will make survival/horror fans flip.**

PS2

Xbox



F.E.A.R. is Vivendi Universal Games' upcoming PC shooter. And Cold Winter just arrived on the PlayStation 2 (see ProReviews, this issue). Now we have Cold Fear. Do these game publishers conspire in order to create game name confusion, or what?

## Revival Horror

Most survival/horror games ultimately boil down to roaming in circles and jiggling door knobs. Cold Fear is no exception. "Is this the right door?" you'll ask yourself again and again, only to be answered with your character snarling, "Damn, it's locked." Damn, indeed. But once the story line kicks into gear and cadavers start sprouting tentacles, Cold Fear finds its purpose.

For what it is—a glossy update on Resident Evil 4—Cold Fear is remarkably effective. For one, the setting is unique. You begin on a storm-drenched whaling ship that lurches to and fro endlessly. This swaying heightens the tension by limiting your vision (as well as your aiming abilities). The same goes for the curtains of pounding rain; aside from being a wonderfully atmospheric visual effect, the constant downpour jacks up the suspense by concealing

your foes. And what foes they are. The Exocels are squirming, tentacle-sprouting abominations that are dredged from the bowels of some ancient tar pit—and they're *seriously* pissed off. The battles with these wriggling, elastic critters are the stuff of nightmares. Luckily, the controls are (mostly) up to the challenge. You can even move while aiming and reloading in Cold Fear, something that's impossible in Resident Evil 4.

## Fear Me

Cold Fear's jaw-dropping visuals steal the show, oozing hi-res malevolence at every turn. It's enough to make you wonder why Sony and Microsoft are so obsessed with hurrying expensive new consoles to market—these amazing graphics will do just fine, thanks. The rusted-out whaling ship boasts so many disturbing details and dark corners that it's practically a character unto itself. That said, the Xbox version offers the superior visual experience. Its advanced lighting system casts advanced real-time shadows (much like those in Doom 3), a high-tech feature that the PS2 hardware can't match. Cold Fear also looks great on the PS2, but its comparatively primitive lighting (the flashlight and shadows look far simpler than the Xbox version's) can't inspire the same level of primal dread. The freaky sounds help pick up the slack, pumping out dynamic music that reacts to the action.

Cold Fear is an impressive achievement and the first game to offer a serious alternative to



**PROTIP:** The squiggly Exocel parasites are a handful; their tendrils have a long reach, and they tend to drop on you from above. Waste them with two AK-47 shots or a single Shotgun blast.



"Hope this is not Chris's blood...."



**PROTIP:** Search dead enemies as quickly as possible, or else they'll melt away and take their ammo and health packs with them.

the venerable Resident Evil series. Resident Evil 4's massive arsenal gives it an edge, but Cold Fear's maneuverable controls are a huge advantage. Call it a tie. Whether you're bummed about missing the GameCube-only Resident Evil 4 or you're looking for a new thrill, pick up Cold Fear post haste. But if you've got a choice, spring for the darker, freakier Xbox version.—Vicious Sid

**KEY MOMENT:** Splattering an infected enemy's engorged head and spraying streamers of bloody mucous in all directions. Ewwww!

PS2	GRAPHICS	4.5	FUN FACTOR	4.0/5
	SOUND	4.5		
Xbox	CONTROL	4.5	FUN FACTOR	4.5/5
	GRAPHICS	5.0		
	SOUND	4.5		
	CONTROL	4.5		

Developer: Darkworks Publisher: Ubisoft \$49.99 Available now Survival/horror 1 player ESRB: M Also on the PC

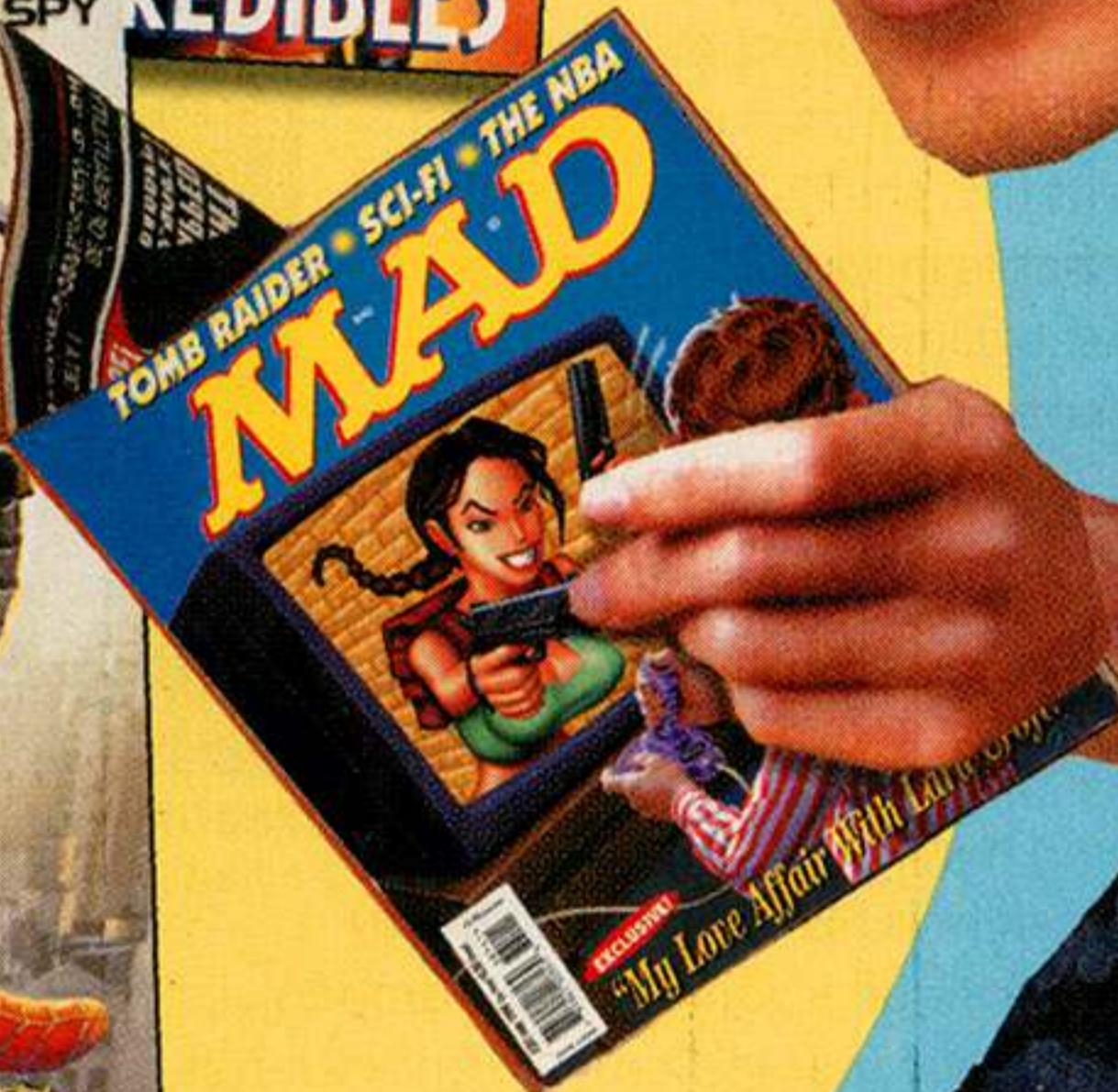
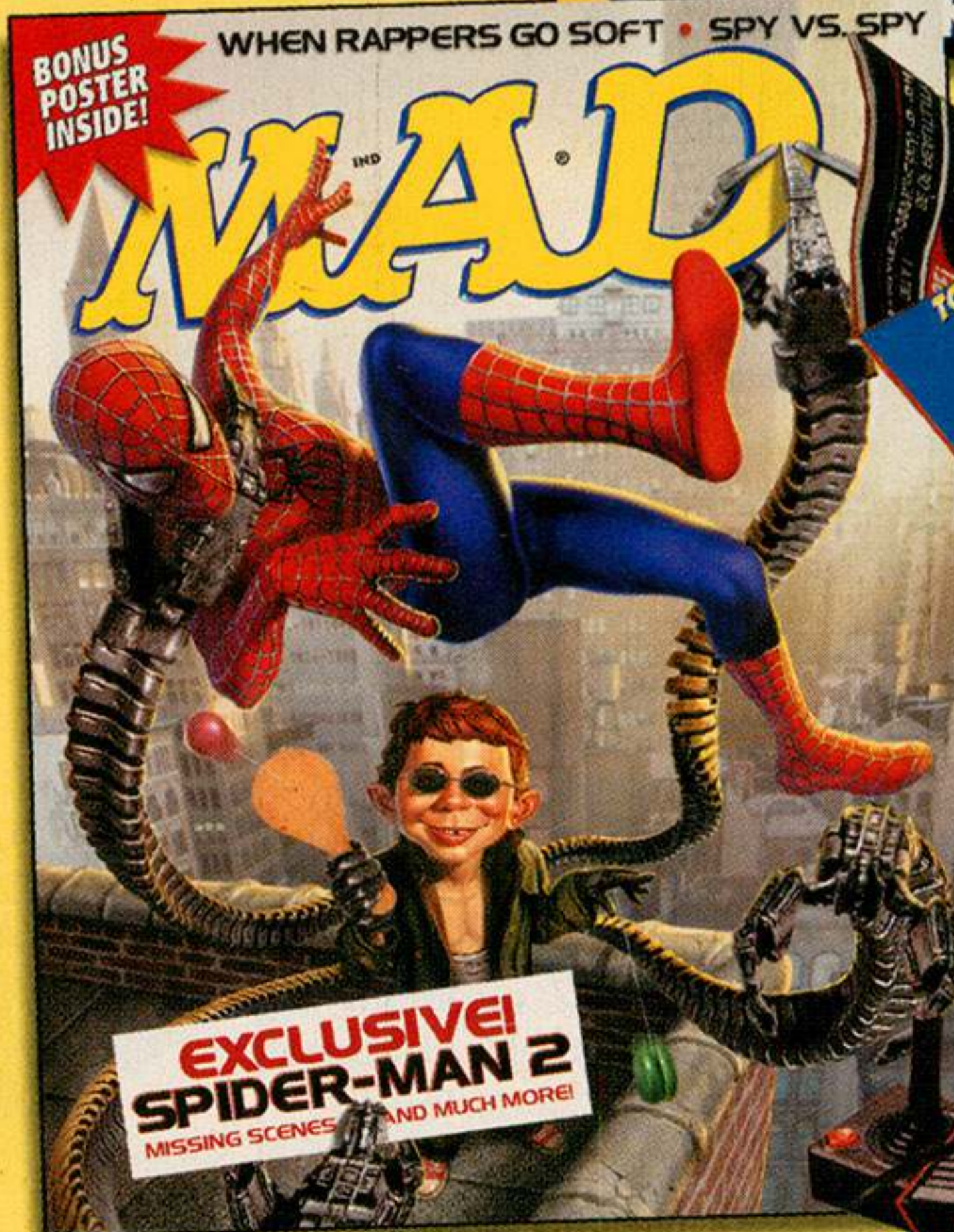
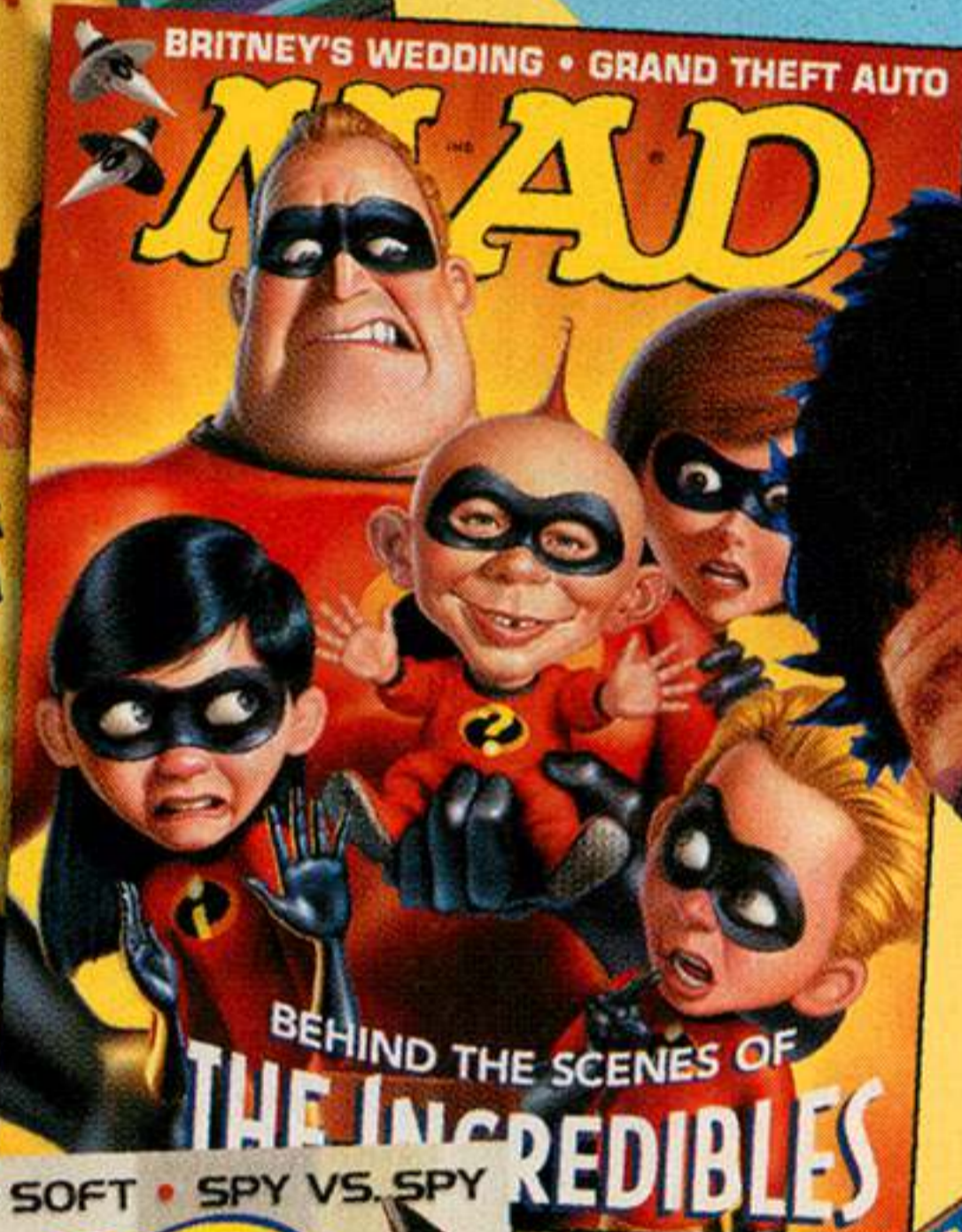
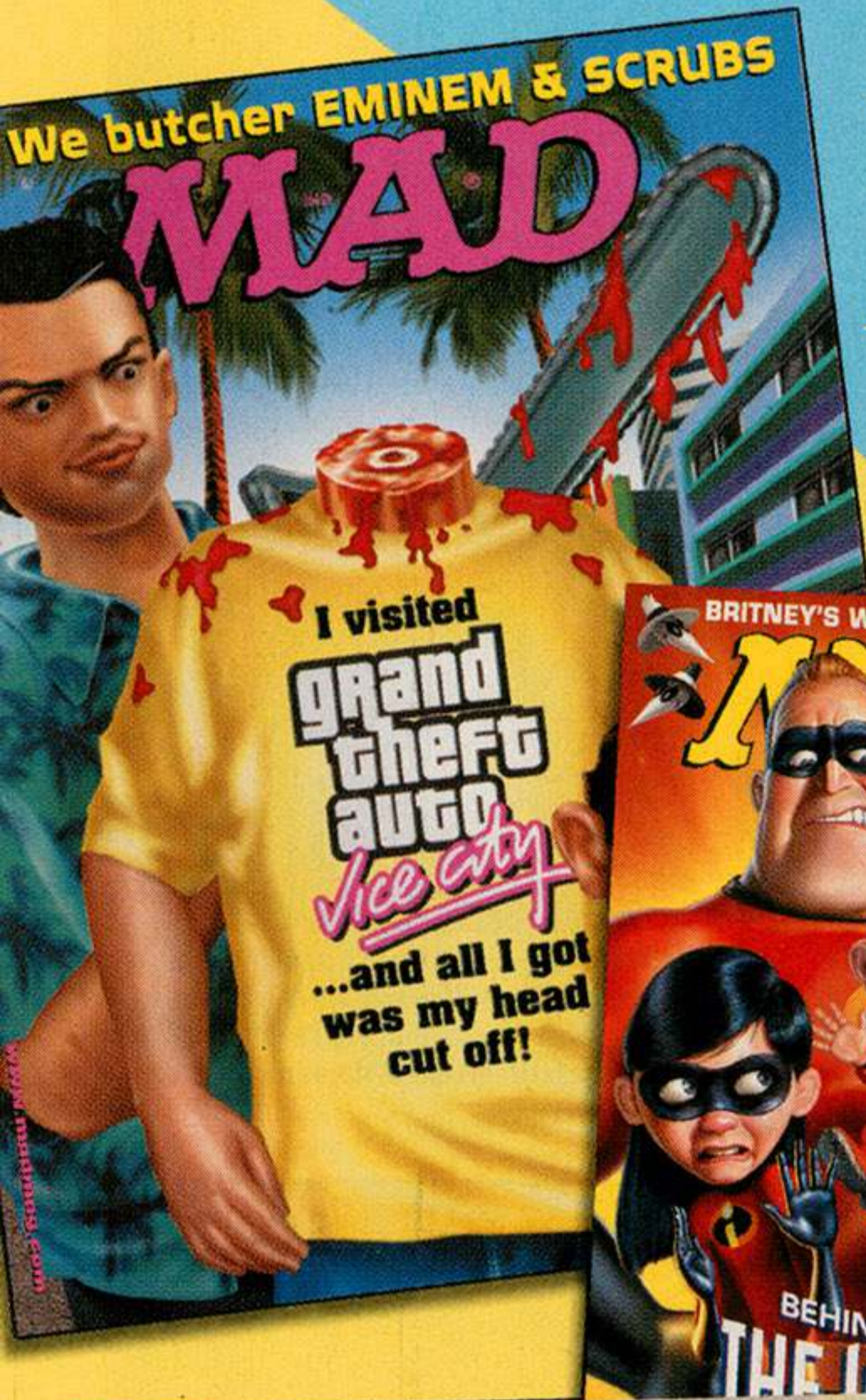
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**PROTIP:** Practice using the zoom mode (press and hold R3) to score headshots against distant foes. This is particularly helpful when you're trying to peg explosive canisters.



**PROTIP:** Shoot the explosive canisters—they'll often do your dirty work for you.



**PROTIP:** You can heal yourself at any time by pressing Left on the directional pad, and you can boost your armor by searching dead bodies.



**PROTIP:** Rummage through items like desks or cabinets. They often contain knickknacks, such as wires or rags, that can be combined to create useful items like Molotov cocktails and lock picks.

# Cold Winter

**Cold Winter proves once and for all that the PlayStation 2 can handle a killer first-person shooter.**

PS2



In *Cold Winter*, players take on the role of Andrew Sterling, a rogue British secret agent. The story line is a mishmash of kooky conspiracy theories and secret-agent shenanigans, but you won't play *Cold Winter* to marvel at its intricate plot; you'll play it because it's the best PlayStation 2 first-person shooter ever made.

## Cold Man Winter

Compared to graphical prodigies like *Halo 2*, *Cold Winter* features gritty visuals that don't hold up particularly well. But based on its own merits, the game sparkles. The designers have clearly paid special attention to small details, such as the flies that cluster around freshly killed corpses. The special effects, including snazzy lighting and motion blurring, are eye catching. The immersive audio, meanwhile, crackles with intensity. Gunshots are loud and clear, and the tiny bits of sonic wallpaper, such as the faint snap-crackle-pop of distant fireworks, make the entire experience come alive.

## Touch and Go

*Killzone's* jerky, imprecise analog aiming system doomed it from the start, and that game wasn't the only casualty; from day one, PS2 shooters

have routinely suffered from imprecise analog controls. Some folks have even argued that these recurring control problems are proof that the PS2's analog sticks are technologically inferior to those of other consoles. But *Cold Winter* makes a compelling argument that the PS2 controller is quite capable in the FPS arena. Upon playing the game, you'll immediately notice the smooth, responsive analog aiming. Though you can't customize your button settings (or even the analog-stick sensitivity!), you likely won't mind because *Cold Winter's* default scheme works quite well.

Sterling may be a superspy, but his greatest talent is his tanklike ability to absorb enormous amounts of punishment. In the single-player game, Sterling can scrounge armor off fallen foes and even heal himself in the field thanks to a portable med kit. These strategic gameplay elements make playing *Cold Winter* a less frustrating experience—even if you're a lousy FPS player, you shouldn't encounter many problems. But multiplayer is a big standout here, especially given the massive arsenal of over 30 diverse guns. Between the robust single-player game and the addictive (and highly customizable) multiplayer component, *Cold Winter* is one well-balanced package.

## Bloody Awesome

Old-school FPS junkies will notice some striking similarities between *Cold Winter* and *Soldier of Fortune*, a brilliant little niche shooter released



**PROTIP:** Use the Hammer shotgun whenever it's available: Its rapid-fire buckshot blasts tear through flesh and armor like they were tissue paper.

in 2000 for the PC. Both games are immensely violent with shotgun blasts literally tearing targets limb from limb. Both games are also immensely playable. In the end, there's no doubt about it: *Cold Winter* is easily the most enjoyable first-person shooter available for the PS2.

—Deuce Magnum

**KEY MOMENT:** Cutting a multiplayer opponent in two with a close-range blast from the sawed-off shotgun

PS2	GRAPHICS	4.0	EDITORS' CHOICE	FUN FACTOR 4.5
	SOUND	4.5		
	CONTROL	4.5		

Developer: Swordfish Studios Publisher: Vivendi Universal Games  
 \$49.99 Available May First-person shooter 2 players; 8 online  
 ESRB: M





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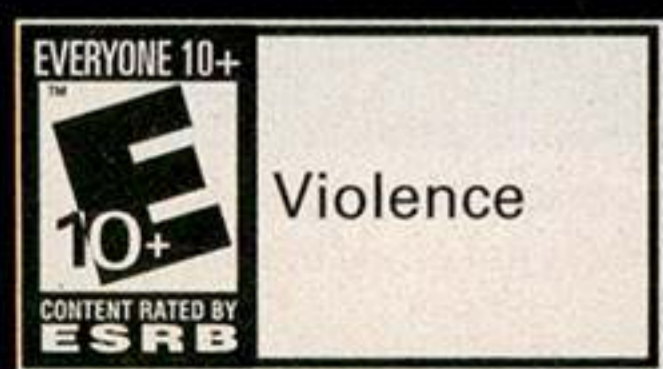


# STAR WARS

# EPISODE III

## REVENGE OF THE SITH™

### THE VIDEO GAME



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# Dragon Ball Z: Sagas

PS2

Xbox

GameCube



Gone are the days when all a video game needed for a story was some power pills and ghosts, but making Dragon Ball Z's story line into a video game is like cramming Shea Stadium into a teacup.

## In the Beginning...

Dragon Ball Z: Sagas therefore wisely limits itself to a couple of cherished early story arcs; but even then, the brief cut-scenes feel painfully rushed. If you're new to the DBZ universe, this isn't the best introduction. The mechanics of Sagas' gameplay are familiar: beat up low-level goons between bosses, upgrade with coins and power-ups, and repeat until golden brown. The



**PROTIP:** It pays to destroy everything you possibly can wherever you go, even on stages where fighting is nonstop. You never know where you'll find a Z coin, senzu bean, or other power-up.

formula exists for a reason: It works. Unfortunately, it's also been done better in other video games.

## Up, Up, and—Oh, Wait

Some of the design decisions in Sagas are baffling. For instance, you can fly but only for a few feet. Want to fly up? You can't. You'll need to find higher ground to jump off. The most nagging problem, though, is the lack of any control over the camera. Enemies wind up offscreen, emitting few audio cues to aid you. Lock-on targeting helps, but immersion suffers. The sound effects are thin, but the taunts and the strenuous groans as you charge up Ki are amusing.

The environments are minimalistic, but destructible objects break with vigor, and the scenery changes often enough to avoid monotony. The visual presentation is crisp and vibrant. Solid colors rather than textures on the characters enhance the sense that you're controlling an anime hero and make the cool cel-shaded effects look that much more appealing, but they do leave them a bit bland on their own.

If you're not already a DBZ fan, there are better action games out there with story lines that won't make your head spin. On the other hand, if you're a diehard, you'll relish playing through your favorite early battles in the epic story.



**PROTIP:** Keeping your Ki meter filled is essential to your survival. Take every opportunity to recharge it, even if only partially.



**PROTIP:** If you've found enough Z coins, you can learn combo attacks, including unblockable finishing moves. Buy them as soon as you can.

Sagas is a competent—but not exemplary—first entry into the action genre.—*Ouroboros*

**KEY MOMENT:** The first time you send an enemy flying hundreds of feet away and through solid rock with a powerful combo attack



PS2	GRAPHICS . . . . .	3.5	FUN FACTOR <b>3.5</b> <sub>5</sub>
	SOUND . . . . .	3.0	
	CONTROL . . . . .	3.5	
Xbox	GRAPHICS . . . . .	3.5	FUN FACTOR <b>3.5</b> <sub>5</sub>
	SOUND . . . . .	3.0	
	CONTROL . . . . .	3.5	
GameCube	GRAPHICS . . . . .	3.5	FUN FACTOR <b>3.5</b> <sub>5</sub>
	SOUND . . . . .	3.0	
	CONTROL . . . . .	3.5	

Developer: Avalanche Publisher: Atari \$49.99 (PS2 and Xbox); \$39.99 (GameCube) Available now Action 2 players ESRB: T

# Enthusia Professional Racing

PS2



Gran Turismo has been the driving series for...oh, you know the drill. Everything else is just arcadelike in comparison. Finally, there's another worthy driver on the simulation road: Enthusia Professional Racing. It isn't perfect, and it doesn't usurp the throne, but it's pretty darn good.

## Quantum Mechanics

The linchpin of any simulation is the physics model, and this is Enthusia's high point. Each vehicle has its own handling personality with four independent wheels that respond to every wrench twist. From the stability of a front wheel-drive sedan to the tail-happy power of a rear

wheel-drive sports car, the variety is admirable. The game's Visual Gravity System gives traction and handling data; newbies may think it's a gimmick, but it delivers valuable information for tweaking.

The simulation is convincing but inferior to Gran Turismo 4's in key respects. The most obvious problem is that it's too forgiving of dragging a wheel off track. Do that in real life, and you'll easily lose control of your vehicle. In Enthusia, you barely feel the car pull in that direction. This may alleviate rookie frustration, but vets will find it maddening.

Enthusia is second fiddle to GT4 in other ways, too: It features 500 fewer cars, and unlocking them amounts to a lottery; you can't buy new parts—you can only upgrade; the A.I. drones yield at a nudge; the graphics, while beautiful, are not as polished; and the sound isn't as rich.

## That's Not the Engine Knocking

GT4 is not without its weakness, so it's odd to see missed opportunities. Enthusia could have implemented a damage model, improved collisions, or delivered online support; instead, cars

remain invulnerable, impacts resemble bumping pucks on an air-hockey table, and gaming bandwidth goes unfilled. Even the technical trials of Driving Revolution mode are just a replacement for license tests.

This is the first competition that the Gran Turismo franchise has faced in ages, but there's little question who's king. If you find yourself needing a break from the series master, Enthusia is certainly worth your time.—*Ouroboros*

**KEY MOMENT:** Making it through the brutal 14-mile Nurburgring without a single collision, albeit in last place



**PROTIP:** You can often pass your more conservative opponents on the inside of sharp turns as long as you're not afraid of swapping some paint.



**PROTIP:** If you can get in front of your opponents, most of the time you can block them for the remainder of the race to win.

PS2	GRAPHICS . . . . .	4.5	FUN FACTOR <b>4.0</b> <sub>5</sub>
	SOUND . . . . .	4.5	
	CONTROL . . . . .	4.0	

Developer and publisher: Konami \$39.99 Available May Racing 2 players ESRB: E

KONAMI

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Calling all Flesh Eaters! Hellgate's ghoulish graphics may look decadent, but the focus is squarely on addictive RPG gameplay.



## Doom Goes Diablo

**Diablo II was the most fiendishly addictive RPG ever made, but the boys at Flagship Studios are cooking up Hellgate: London, an FPS encore that will leave you breathless.**

believe [Hellgate: London] will dominate the PC market when it is released." Strong words. But then again, Hellgate is shaping up to be one hell of a game.

### The Devil Made Them Do It

Flagship Studios is a new PC games development house that claims many ex-Blizzard employees among its ranks. According to Flagship's gregarious CEO Bill Roper, Flagship's designers came up with the idea of Hellgate: London "literally the day after we left Blizzard."

Hellgate: London's premise is simple but effective: Five years after a worldwide demonic invasion, London is undergoing "the Burn," a supernatural terraforming process that is twisting the city into a vision plucked from H.R. Giger's fever dreams. Normal guns and bombs barely scratch the hides of the demonic interlopers, and thus far, only a mystical sect of the Knights Templar have kept the fiends at bay. Naturally, it's up to the player to halt the invasion by shutting down the titular Hellgate. The finished game will offer multiple player classes, but the only playable class currently implemented is a Templar, a sort of sorcerer-knight hybrid.

### The Devil's in the Details

Though Hellgate isn't aiming to directly compete with visual dynamos like Half-Life 2, the game is still decked out with some hellacious graphics technology. The designers showed



The HARP (Harmonic Resonance Projector) locks on to one opponent, regardless of your lousy aim. Upgraded models can project more energy "ribbons."

off two main environments: a crumbling, fire-ravaged city and a collection of safe zones (based within the creepy confines of the London underground and abandoned WWII-era bomb shelters). The game world certainly looked impressive, but there was a catch; as in Diablo II, Hellgate's environments are completely randomly generated. As Diablo II fans will attest, randomized environments can tremendously boost replay value. But Hellgate's environments looked smooth and natural, not pieced together.

Hellgate's dazzling special effects redefine the term "bleeding edge." In the alpha preview version, napalm explosions set enemies ablaze amidst an eye-catching flurry of cinders and ash. The character models made extensive use of normal mapping, and the Havok physics supplied satisfying rag-doll death animations. Monster development is currently in full swing,

**N**amco...and PC games? It's true; the console gaming giant is looking to bust into the competitive PC gaming market, and it's betting that Hellgate: London is just the game to do the job. Namco's director of PC product development doesn't mince any words on the subject: "Hellgate is Namco's premiere PC product. We



Shock Minions are a common sight on the ruined streets of London. Don't get too close!



but the prototypes already looked creepy. Flesh Eaters are lowly reanimated corpses with horribly burned bodies. The dog-like Ravagers, meanwhile, can leap from great distances to maul hapless targets. One airborne foe—the hovering Orbile—would attack every nearby target in a wild frenzy but only after it absorbed the souls of nearby corpses. In the final product, the developers are shooting for 60 different enemy types with each individual monster sporting countless cosmetic variations and weapon combinations.

### Up in Arms

Despite its first-person viewpoint, Hellgate isn't really an FPS game in the strictest sense. As the developers explained it, it's "an RPG played from the first-person perspective." Where games like *Doom 3* and *Half-Life 2* rely upon the player's superhuman reflexes, Hellgate differs because it won't require pixel-perfect shooting accuracy and hardscrabble ammo conservation. The game's unusual arsenal, which often fuses strange technology and Templar magic, reflects this design mentality. In fact, the designers repeatedly described Hellgate's guns as "spell delivery systems." The Grenadier, for example, lobbs rapid-fire incendiary rounds, while the Jacklight casts expanding electrical novas. Other weapons like the magic-infused Peacemaker pistol practically aim themselves. It's all in the name of simplicity.

Close-quarters melee combat will figure prominently in Hellgate. So far, it looks like Hellgate's hand-to-hand combat will shift the gameplay to a third-person camera perspective. Also, melee combat is likely to focus chiefly on swords (with the possible exception of a cricket bat, in tribute to *Shaun of the Dead*). And in a final, awesome twist, you will be able



The rapid-fire Vulcan Bolter will turn unlucky enemies into walking bonfires. Better hope they're not fire resistant!

to dual-wield most of the weapons—you'll even be able to use a gun and a sword at the same time! All told, Hellgate should feature over 100 weapons, though some high-level armaments are still shrouded in secrecy; the designers alluded to a long-range grappling weapon that could drag monsters into melee range.

### Hell To Pay

Hellgate borrows elements from *Diablo II*'s trademark inventory system with slots for headgear, armor, shoulder pads, boots, and jewelry, among other item types. Players can even skip armor entirely and cover themselves in arcane tattoos for protection. Players will also be able to insert various components, such as batteries or holy relics, into their weapons and armor to add bonus effects. One interesting visual detail is that mod components will drastically alter the look of a weapon or item, which means that your enhanced flamethrower will look more bulky and impressive than the off-the-shelf models. And in a crucial nod to the *Diablo* canon, defeated monsters pop like poisonous piñatas, spewing magic, unique, and rare items.

Online play? Oh, you betcha. Though the game isn't an MMO, Hellgate will encourage players to form online parties with other players (or NPC mercenaries). And it will definitely pay to find buddies: As players join up in parties, the monsters will automatically get tougher, which will shoot item drop quality and experience points through the roof. But don't count on any deathmatch modes, although the designers are toying with the idea of Arenas or other competitive challenges.

### Addiction, Thy Name Is Hellgate

Hellgate has all the raw ingredients for a can't-miss RPG title. But it will be interesting to see whether the final product can deliver on this ambitious concept. For now, answers will have to wait—Flagship Studios is taking a "when it's done" approach (though they know damn well that gamers hate that phrase). Our conservative guess? Look for Hellgate sometime in 2006. Maybe...hopefully...—Vicious Sid

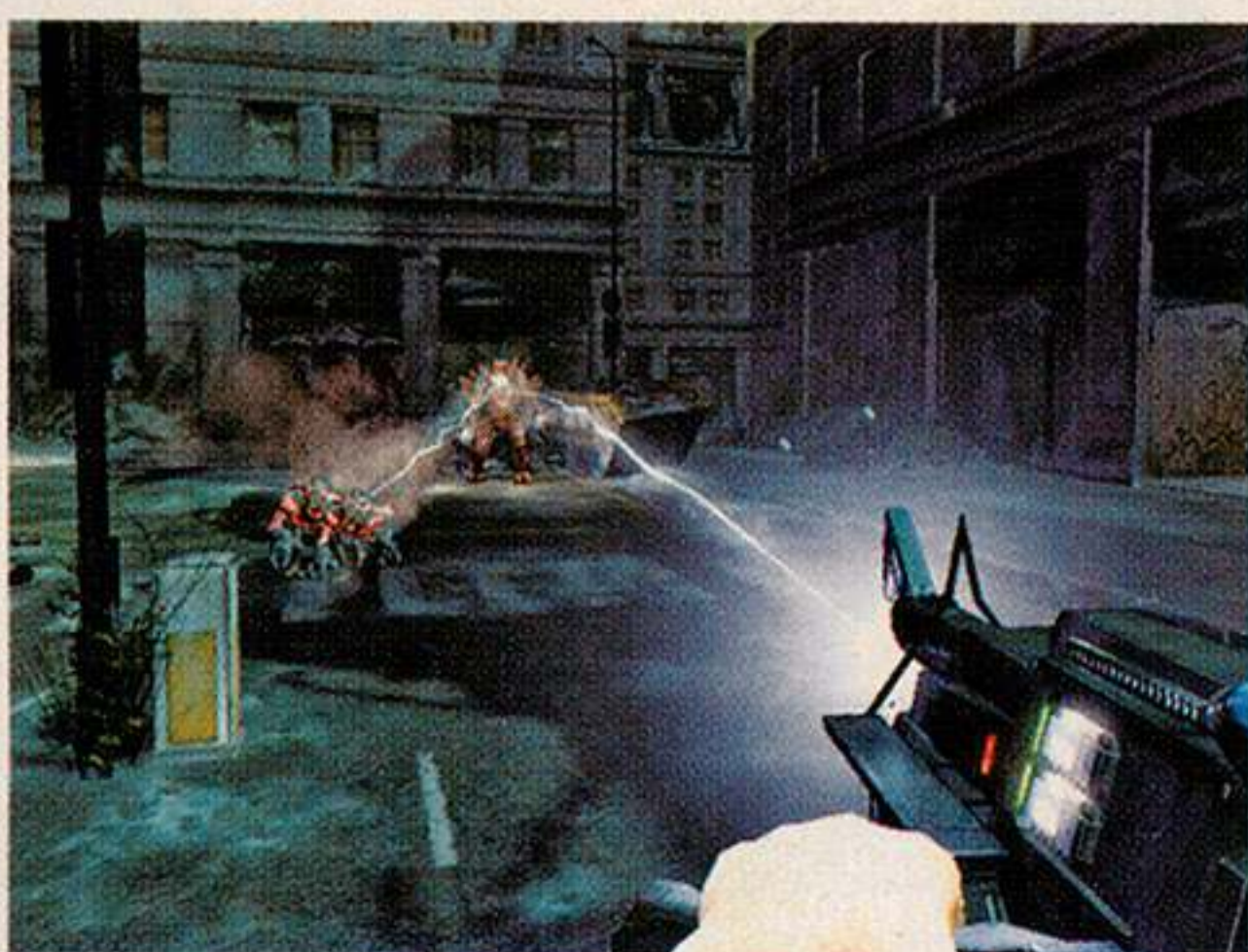
## Why Diablo II Still Reigns Supreme

Five years after its release, *Diablo II* is still the champion of carnage and capitalism. Just be sure to bring plenty of SOJs.

Dungeon Siege. Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance. Champions: Return to Arms. *Diablo II* is one of the most imitated games on the planet. But unlike its peers, it still commands an immense army of devoted followers. Its graphics are primitive and its adventures are mechanical, but those criticisms are missing the point. The real draw is Battle.net, Blizzard's online matchmaking service. It's outrageously corrupt (though Blizzard keeps up pressure on the scammers), obsessed with profit ("ne1 got SOJs?"), and filled with mindless repetition (Baal runs and Cow runs come to mind). In other words, it's a perfect microcosm of the real world. More importantly, it's also fun, fun, fun. And if that's not reason enough to keep playing, what is? See you on the Arreat Summit....



The Tempest Rifle fires swarms of energy sparks, perfect for zapping crowds of unruly creatures.



The Zeus Rifle can flash-fry a gaggle of monsters, much like *Diablo II*'s Chain Lightning.



**PROTIP:** Catch the perp(s) before they harm hostages, or you'll fail the mission.

Equip Zipcuffs to Restrain



**PROTIP:** Equip at least one officer with the Optiwand, but remember that it doesn't always see everything.



**PROTIP:** After using the zip-cuffs, you'll automatically revert to your primary weapon. Many have died needlessly....



**PROTIP:** It may look like a paintball gun, but pepper balls can bring armored foes to their knees: Aim for the head.

# SWAT 4

You'll need to keep your wits about you in this highly tactical shooter, which focuses on nonlethal solutions to deadly situations.

It's much too easy to get hung up on things like doorjamb. Nothing kills the rush of a flashbang entry like getting stuck in the doorway. Also unwieldy is the weapon damage system. At one point, I riddled a gangster in a T-shirt with 9mm rounds. Rather than drop like a sack of meat, he killed me with one shot from his pistol. Maybe it's time for SWAT to ditch the armor and go casual?



As the leader of a SWAT team, you're tasked with protecting the innocent and "bringing order to chaos." In addition to a six-man entry team, SWAT 4 gives you control over two snipers who provide valuable intel about suspects' movement. Overall, SWAT 4 does a good job of capturing the intensity of close-quarters tactical combat.

## "Sting and Clear!"

SWAT 4 is very much about stealth and positioning with sudden outbursts of gunfire punctuating the careful execution of your planned sweeps. Chess with bullets might be an apt analogy. The entry team is divided into red and blue squads, enabling for flanking and trapping maneuvers. Splitting up the unit is always a gamble but is necessary in certain situations.

Commands are issued through a highly intuitive menu that's accessed via a left click. For example, if your reticule is centered on a door, breach and entry options will be listed. The tab key toggles squads for those times when you need to split up the element and issue separate orders. While the command system works brilliantly, in-game movement can be frustrating.

The game's lighting and textures are mostly well executed, but the surprise gem in SWAT 4 is the sound design. Subtle but effective effects bring the environments to life. Whether it's "happy shopper" muzak in the diamond store or the muffled cries of hostages, the soundscape is an invaluable part of the SWAT 4 experience.

## Beanbags vs. Buckshot

At the end of each mission, your performance is evaluated based on a number of factors. One of the best ways to improve your score is to arrest—rather than incapacitate or kill—your suspects. Luckily, the game offers many load out options that can help you attain this goal, including beanbag shotguns and tasers. Always pack at least one nonlethal weapon as SWAT 4 curiously lacks a melee attack option.

Multiplayer (especially co-operative mode) and a quick mission editor (that lets you remix enemies and objectives for each map) add some much-needed replay value. The single-player



**PROTIP:** Splitting up the element into squads helps clear rooms more efficiently.

career mode is surprisingly short, and after a few missions, it starts to feel repetitive. Though it won't blow many minds, SWAT 4 is a pick-up-and-play tactical shooter with a solid pedigree.—DJ Dinobot

**KEY MOMENT:** Rescuing a kidnapped coed from a creepy *Silence of the Lambs*-like basement where snuff films are being produced

**Recommended System Specifications**  
 ■ Windows 2000/XP ■ Pentium 4 2.0 GHz ■ 512 MB RAM  
 ■ 2.0 GB on HD ■ GeForce 3/Radeon 8500 or higher video card

**PC** GRAPHICS ..... 4.0  
 SOUND ..... 4.0  
 CONTROL ..... 3.0

**FUN FACTOR**  
 4.0

■ Developer: Irrational Games ■ Publisher: VU Games ■ \$49.99  
 ■ Available now ■ First-person shooter ■ 16 players ■ ESRB: M

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# PSP on

# the STREET



The first batch of PSP games goes through the evaluation process. See what cooks and what flops on the new hot handheld system.

## Need for Speed Underground Rivals



This latest incarnation of the now-classic Need for Speed series is certainly a hot ride. In a supercharged tuner, you race the city streets in competitions that are all too familiar to Underground fans. You need to avoid careening into oncoming traffic, keep the steering wheel tight after a jump, and, of course, bump your...well, rivals out of the way to become the top honcho on



**PROTIP:** Drift as close to the column as possible. It's a smaller area to cover and will give you more time to recover for the next skid zone.

the streets. On your road to glory, you'll need to upgrade your auto with performance parts and visual panache to keep

up with the tougher crowd. And your custom job pays off as the thrill of flying at over 100 miles per hour down a street is nicely replicated in the game. The sense of speed, the slick look—this is true Underground mechanics.

But somewhere in the garage, Rivals doesn't quite meet its console counterpart's standards. The big feature missing, which also made past Undergrounds innovative, is the ability to draft other cars. Without it, Rivals is just another racing game. Once the green light flashes, however, you won't hesitate to get behind the wheel of Need for Speed Underground Rivals.

—Four-Eyed Dragon

**KEY MOMENT:** Using the nitrous at the very last moment to edge out an opponent



**PROTIP:** You won't lose any speed if you cut through gravel or in between trees.



PSP	GRAPHICS	4.5	FUN FACTOR	4.0
	SOUND	4.0		
	CONTROL	4.0		

Developer: EA Canada Publisher: EA Games  
\$49.99 Available now Racing 4 players ESRB: E

## Tony Hawk's Underground 2 Remix



It was expected—the release of a Tony Hawk game on the PSP. It was not expected, however, that Remix would bring so much to a portable system. Instead of completely copying the console version of THUG2, Remix actually features brand-new

levels to explore. Each new town offers a lot to see and do, and contains the series' outlandish and creative challenges that really test your skating prowess. Besides the single-player surprises, Remix also holds plenty of multiplayer modes. Up to four people can compete in 10 wireless games, which all run smoothly and without any hindrances. Visually, Tony and friends have never looked better. The frame rate runs superfast even when you're busting out multiple combos. The controls are spot on compared to those in past Tony Hawk

games. You can even perform a Focus move, which enables you to slow down time and maneuver even more insane tricks. A game that moves this fast requires solid button response, and Remix is certainly equipped with it. With the amount of options that Remix offers, you can't grind enough in what is a fabulous ride on a skateboard.—Four-Eyed Dragon

**KEY MOMENT:** Busting a sweet combo even without the help of slow-motion powers



**PROTIP:** In Santa Cruz, don't forget to look high because roofs offer some elevated fun.



In keeping with tradition, this Tony Hawk game features a cast of hidden characters to unlock.

PSP	GRAPHICS	4.5	EDITORS' CHOICE	FUN FACTOR	4.5
	SOUND	4.0			
	CONTROL	4.0			

Developer: Shaba Games Publisher: Activision \$49.99  
Available now Skateboarding 4 players ESRB: T

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## Spider-Man 2



Clearly, this version of Spider-Man 2 looks and plays better than the one for Nintendo's DS. But with wonky controls plaguing the game at times, Spidey doesn't spin an entire web of delight. The camera moves ineffectively in tight spaces, which when you're fighting means that you almost never have the best angle of an attack. Spidey also inadvertently crawls up walls when, instead, he should stand against a wall and defend himself. Unbalanced controls aside, Spider-Man 2 clearly shines in the visual department. Even if you're not a CG cut-scene fan, the sharp, movie-



**PROTIP:** The easiest way to take down a group of enemies is to concentrate on one aggressor at a time.



You can count on Spider-Man to encounter such legendary villains as Rhino, Shocker, and Vulture in this new adventure.

like cinemas played in between missions will pleasantly surprise you. In the game, Peter Parker animates well, and the areas in which you fight are diverse enough with many hidden facets to explore. The game loosely follows the movie, so you'll recognize many of the faces in the story—plus, you'll also be treated to challenges that extend beyond the film's plot. Spider-Man 2 offers a lot of gameplay variety, so if you can manage the troublesome control scheme, playing as Spidey can be a heroic feat for a few hours at a time.—*Four-Eyed Dragon*

**KEY MOMENT:** Receiving points for randomly destroying objects in the environment

PSP	GRAPHICS	4.0	FUN FACTOR	3.5
	SOUND	3.5		
	CONTROL	3.0		

Developer: Vicarious Visions Publisher: Activision \$49.99  
Available now Action/adventure 1 player ESRB: T

## Wipeout Pure



Sony resurrects the beloved Wipeout franchise in a sleek, smooth, portable package that looks flashier than ever and is backed with the same great gameplay. You can race through panoramic fantasy scenery, but don't forget to keep your eyes on the road.



When you're done sightseeing, it's time to get down to the core of Wipeout: the racing. While it's fun enough to try out different vehicle models against computer opponents, the real delight lies in the multiplayer mode, which adds a whole new dynamic to the game. The wireless link up is definitely key here. It's incredibly easy to set up a multiplayer game—just select that mode and then either host a race or join one. You can play with people across the room that you've never even met and wipe them out with your arsenal of boosts and shots. Serious speed freaks should drop into the Zone, an abstract level that gets faster and faster with each lap. Wipeout Pure looks like liquid nitrogen and feels like pure adrenaline.—*GameGirl*



**PROTIP:** If there's someone behind you, tap the shoulder button twice to quickly shift to the side.

**KEY MOMENT:** Gliding through the Zone, blissing out to the electronic sound track. If ravers made a game, this would be it.



**PROTIP:** Weapons you can't use can go toward replenishing your shield.

PSP	GRAPHICS	4.5	EDITORS' CHOICE	FUN FACTOR	4.5
	SOUND	3.5			
	CONTROL	5.0			

Developer: SCEE Publisher: Sony \$39.99  
Available now Racing 8 players ESRB: E

# ATV Offroad Fury Blazin' Trails



Sony has the formula down for its venerable ATV franchise. In Blazin' Trails, you pick from a garage of 24 ATVs represented by real manufacturers, customize your rider, and then you're off to the races. If you've played previous ATV games, then you've played this one. But where as pulling off stunts was manageable on the PS2, it's frustratingly difficult on the PSP. The

PSP's buttons (including the shoulder buttons) are in such close proximity to each other that your fingers constantly tumble over each other to pull

off the right stunt. Add controls that are really twitchy when you use both the analog stick and digital pad to turn, and the end result is a driver who unintentionally swerves too many times. All told, this ATV runs its course as another Offroad game. If you're into this type of genre, then you'll be slightly intrigued. For the rest of us, wait for another extreme sportster to reach the PSP.—*Four-Eyed Dragon*

**KEY MOMENT:** Not once steering off course in a heated competition

PSP	GRAPHICS	3.0	FUN FACTOR	2.5
	SOUND	2.5		
	CONTROL	2.5		

Developer: Climax Publisher: Sony \$39.99  
Available now Racing 4 players ESRB: E



Fidgety controls lead this ATV off the road all too often.



**PRO TIP:** Time your jump right, and you can bump a rider off course by landing on him. Be careful, though, because he can do the same to you.



# Ape Escape: On the Loose



Sony's new Ape Escape title, On the Loose, mashes a classic Planet of the Apes plot with cutesy animation into a PSP and shakes them up together for a barrel full of...monkeys. The original PlayStation title won over fans with solidly

fun gameplay

and an intuitive

control scheme

using the dual

analog sticks. The new-

est version falls along the

same story lines but with

mechanics that are adapted

fairly well to the PSP's specs.

You use the analog stick to

move around and the buttons to

activate a special tool to capture

those pesky monkeys and send

them back where they belong.

The aesthetics, however, are grating and don't take advantage of the PSP's

technology. The colors are bright but flat, and the environments feel like card-

board play sets, not the immersive, expansive worlds you'd like to explore.

Games don't have to look like this anymore...and a final word of warning: The

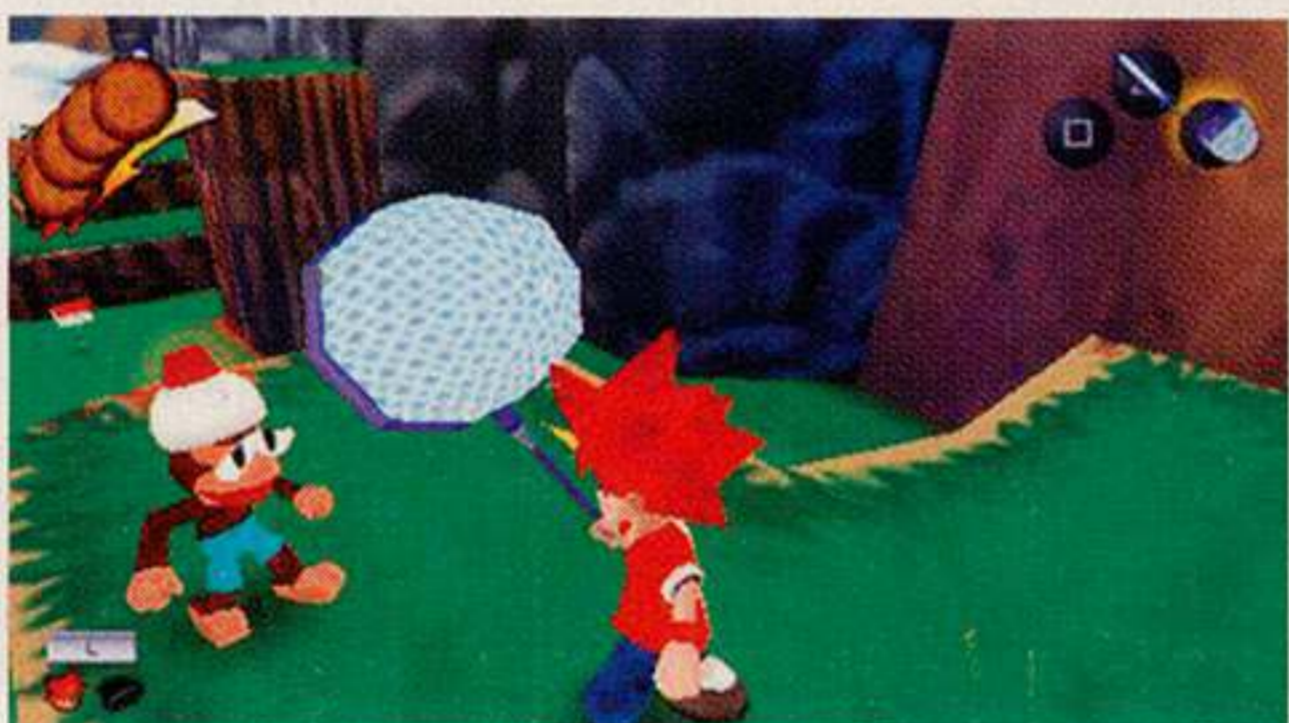
incessantly upbeat music may induce madness, causing you to run around

maniacally, too.—*GameGirl*

**KEY MOMENT:** Chasing down that final monkey on each level...after a while, you wish that the stunner would do some permanent damage.

PSP	GRAPHICS	3.0	FUN FACTOR	3.5
	SOUND	3.0		
	CONTROL	4.0		

Developer and publisher: Sony \$39.99  
Available now Action 8 players ESRB: E



**PRO TIP:** Try to sneak up on apes and then wait until the very last minute to catch them.



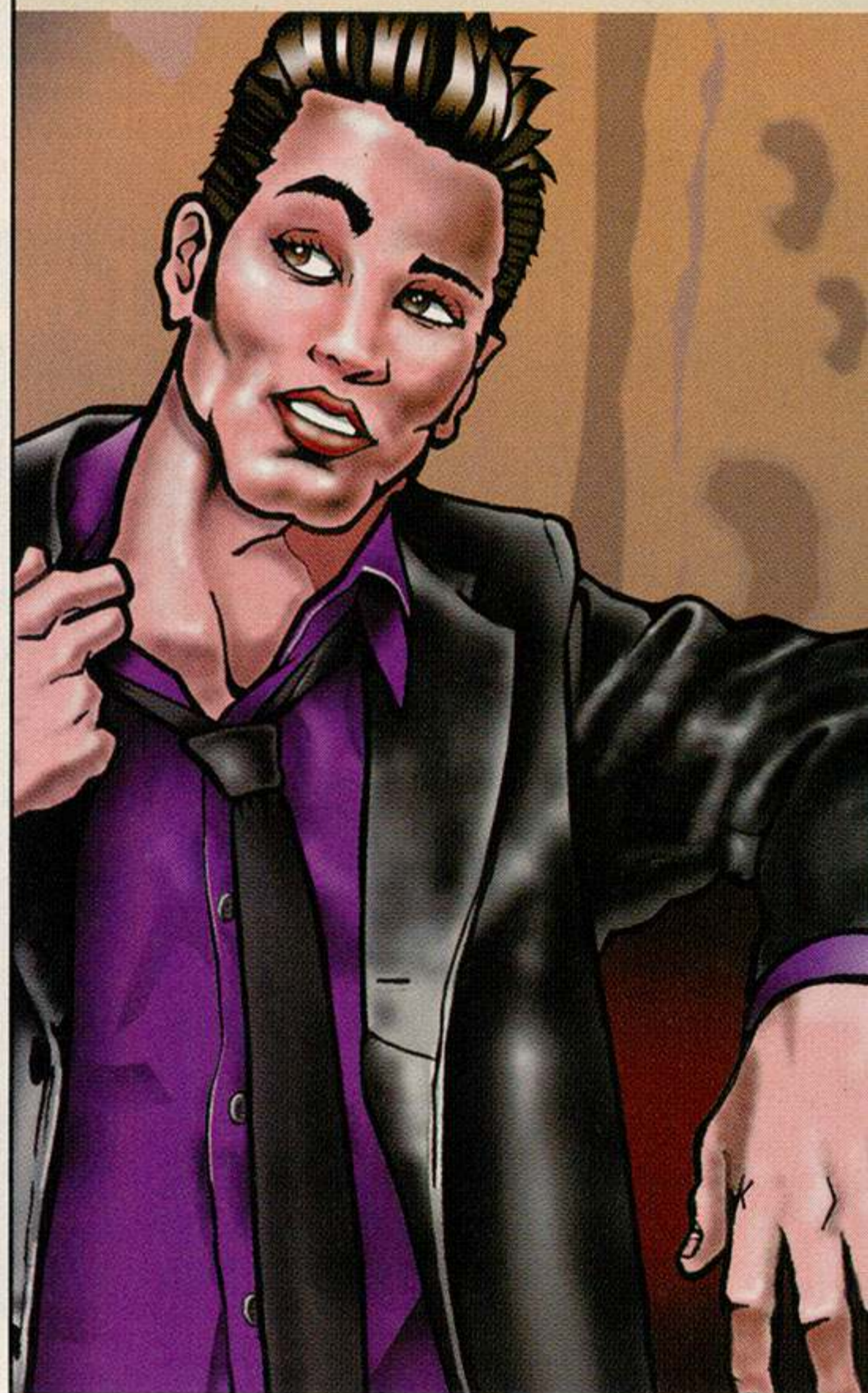
Loads of multiplayer mini-games are the best part of Ape Escape: On the Loose.



“Without guys like me, you'd still be playing Pong.”

—Mark Hartlieb

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| WEB DESIGN        | GAME PROGRAMMING      |

# Twisted Metal: Head-On



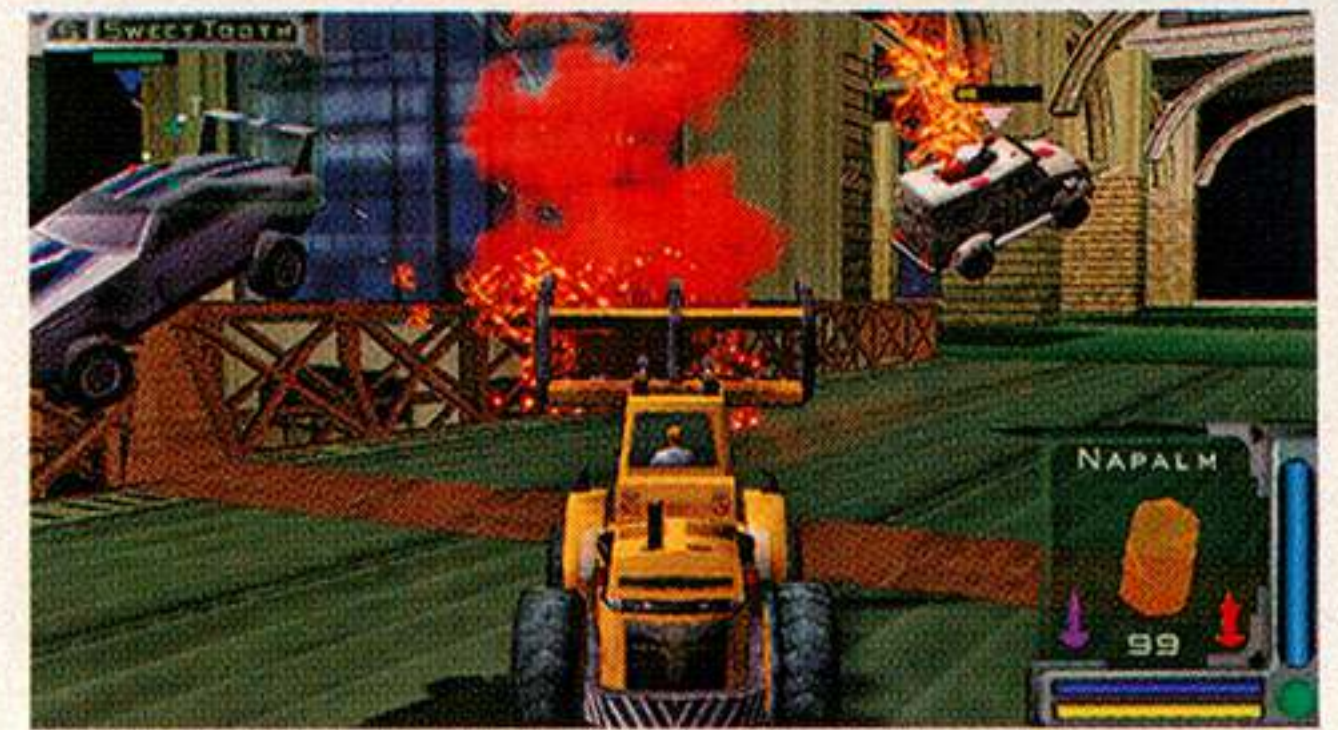
Although it's on a handheld system, Head-On exemplifies the Twisted Metal name. The car combat moves at a superfast frame rate even if you're receiving fodder or giving lead love to an opponent. All of the 12 carnage-filled arenas are surprisingly big, designed completely different from the others, and feature a good amount of detail. The visual effects are fun to watch even if you're the one getting blown up. Moving at a fast frame rate, however, has its setback. The PSP's analog stick is just too small for your thumb to entirely fit on it and too sensitive to finger movement, making it hard to maneuver a vehicle that flies at such high



**PRO TIP:** Concentrate on destroying one opponent at a time. If you stop pursuing a damaged enemy, he has a chance of regaining health.

speeds. Even using the directional pad to control the auto frenzy still results in twitchy, jerking actions onscreen. Still, you can sit back with some friends and alleviate all of that road rage against each other with Head-On. Car combat has always been done right in the Twisted Metal franchise, and Head-On isn't an exception. The game is even great for just a quick fix of brainless destructiveness on your own.—*Four-Eyed Dragon*

**KEY MOMENT:** Nothing can beat a well-placed napalm attack on an annoying adversary.



The core of vehicular combat can easily be found in this great Twisted Metal incarnation.

PSP	GRAPHICS	4.0	FUN FACTOR	4.0 <sub>5</sub>
	SOUND	3.0		
	CONTROL	3.0		
■ Developer and publisher: Sony ■ \$39.99 ■ Available now ■ Car combat ■ 8 players ■ ESRB: T				

# Rengoku: The Tower of Purgatory



In Rengoku: The Tower of Purgatory, you're an android soldier with a conscience. War no longer exists, but now you fight other androids just to entertain humans. You ask, "Why?" but your android brethren just say, "Die!"

Rengoku plays like a PS one game and looks like a PS2 game on a smaller screen. It's an old-school, button-mashing beat-em-up, where you equip weapons to all your limbs and even your head. The controls use the directionals for movement and the shoulder buttons for strafing, but combat maneuverability remains stiff. In over eight levels, you'll take more than your fair share of punishment just because onscreen reactions are slow. As said before, the game looks like a PS2 game shrunk down for PSP duty. The



**PRO TIP:** Dodge attacks by pressing the shoulder buttons to strafe, then double tap forward to charge in for a kill.

Equip and Status screens hint at superb android designs, but they're impossible to see in action. Right down to the tiny lettering in the inventory screens, this looks like it was meant for a larger display. Rengoku doesn't break down, but it doesn't break new ground either.

—*The Man in Black*

**KEY MOMENT:** You access the status screen to finally see a larger image of yourself...and it looks good, too.



**PRO TIP:** After completing a level, always check the inventory screen to see what you've picked up. It's very hard to tell during a battle.

PSP	GRAPHICS	3.5	FUN FACTOR	3.0 <sub>5</sub>
	SOUND	3.5		
	CONTROL	3.0		
■ Developer: Hudson Soft ■ Publisher: Konami ■ \$49.99 ■ Available now ■ Action ■ 4 players ■ ESRB: M				

# World Tour Soccer



This version of World Tour Soccer has the same exact feel and treatment as that of its PlayStation 2 relative, complete with all the flaws that makes this "football" game just an average kicker. The game scores with over 200 teams from which to choose but features only eight stadiums. The gameplay is just as unbalanced. Opponents are too complacent on easier levels and overly aggressive on the higher difficulty setting. The refs are inconsistent as they'll quickly pull out a yellow card if you trip someone—even if you do it mildly—but your opponents have free reign in tackling your team. Your plan of attack also has mixed results. You can set up offensive formations before you start a game, but the execution of set plays just doesn't work. Visually, for a handheld game, World Tour



**PRO TIP:** Try not to tackle too often. The refs will pull out the yellow card for you whenever they have the opportunity.

Soccer looks good. But because you're playing as a generic team with no official real-life superstars in the group, the players pretty much all look the same. World Tour Soccer will have a challenge in convincing soccer fans that they're making a goal. It is a decent soccer game, but with its unbalanced gameplay, the field may be a bit greener somewhere else.—*Four-Eyed Dragon*

**KEY MOMENT:** The computer opponent finally receives a yellow card after all the ankle bruising he's given you.



Despite its lack of any licensing and some inconsistent gameplay, you can still score a goal in this soccer game.

PSP	GRAPHICS	3.5	FUN FACTOR	3.5 <sub>5</sub>
	SOUND	2.5		
	CONTROL	3.5		
■ Developer: 989 Sports ■ Publisher: Sony ■ \$39.99 ■ Available now ■ Soccer ■ 2 players ■ ESRB: E				



# NBA 2005



Every NBA fan knows that the toughest games are played on the road. NBA 2005 doesn't dispel that notion. One of the main challenges is adjusting to the miniscule players. Running a set offense or trying to set up a defense in side view can be confusing because the characters are so small.



**PROTIP:** If you're having a tough time following the action, try Follow view.

It's easy for an opposing A.I. player to spring free near the basket. A better way to play is via Follow view, which tracks the action down court from behind the team. In general, the workmanlike controls manage the game nicely. The passing is fairly intuitive, and a double-tap shooting system eliminates some guesswork for casual gamers.

NBA 2005 is best for quick pick-up games. The multiplayer Wi-Fi mode enables two players to go head-to-head or up to eight players to take on entertaining mini-games. Big-screen basketball still rules, but NBA 2005 can temporarily satisfy a serious basketball jones. —Atomic Dawg

**KEY MOMENT:** Weaving your way through the defense for a slam-dunk and then seeing it in a close-up view



**PROTIP:** Go ahead and let loose a shot even if the indicator is in the red. You might not be 100 percent accurate, but you could still be on target.



PSP	GRAPHICS	3.5	FUN FACTOR	3.5
	SOUND	4.0		
	CONTROL	4.0		

Developer: 989 Sports | Publisher: Sony | \$39.99  
Available now | Basketball | 8 players | ESRB: E

# Gretzky NHL



Maybe the NHL was willing to shovel the hockey season into the deep freeze, but the Great One would not stand for it. Gretzky NHL is a pretty good hockey sim that mirrors the just-decent PlayStation 2 version and still presents a good handheld game. The controls on the ice are loose but acceptable. Players don't respond with the lightning-quick reflexes you expect from such a fast-paced sport, but they're just quick enough to keep casual hockey players interested. The A.I. doesn't help the cause either when it allows players (even goalies) to drift away from the action. Still, the game's Franchise mode is surprisingly deep with drafts, trades, create a player or a team, and a regular 82-game season for the Stanley Cup.

If you're feeling feisty, you can chase the great Gretzky's numerous records. Wireless head-to-head play with a pal is a kick. It might not win over fans looking for a hardcore sim, but in the handheld rink, Gretzky NHL at least holds home ice. —Atomic Dawg

**KEY MOMENT:** The opposing team is making a power play, and your goalie is floating toward the stands.



**PROTIP:** When you're close to the goal, flick the puck with a quick wrist shot by double tapping O.

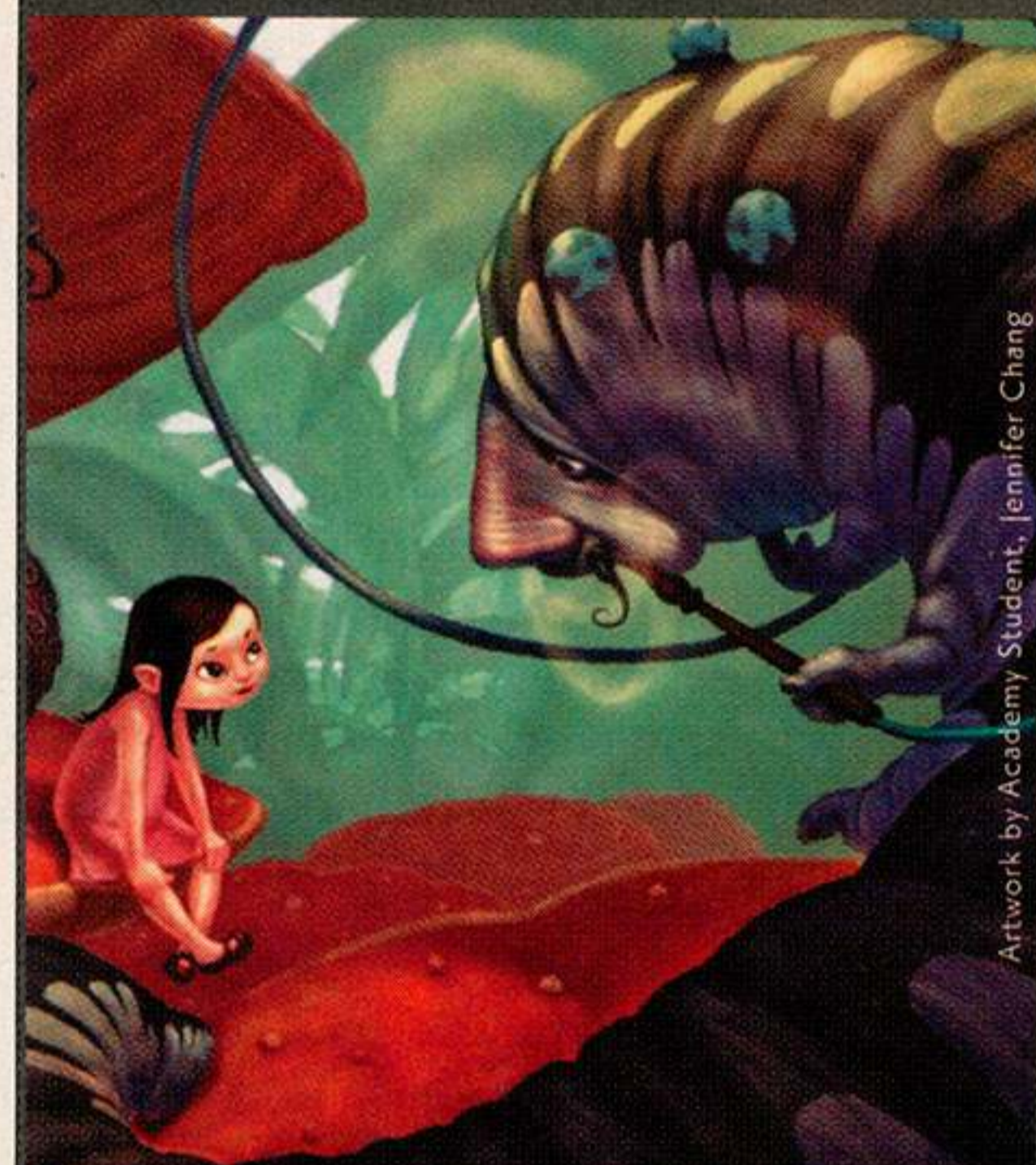


**PROTIP:** If you're going to attack the goalie one on one, try to work the corners of the goal.

PSP	GRAPHICS	4.0	FUN FACTOR	3.5
	SOUND	4.0		
	CONTROL	3.0		

Developer: 989 Sports | Publisher: Sony | \$39.99  
Available now | Hockey | 2 players | ESRB: E

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# EA Sports Prepares the Big Games

When EA Sports needs some game design muscle, it turns to its go-to, Florida-based powerhouse, EA Tiburon. Here's a report on the latest works in progress from one of the best sports developers around. **By Four-Eyed Dragon**

Don't let the backdoor, exclusive licensing deals skew your opinion about EA's most coveted sports franchises. Sure, it helps to have NFL, ESPN, and NASCAR exclusivity to leverage your best games, but it also helps that you have a team dedicated to making this season's titles better than ever. For the people at Tiburon, the licensing deals are no reason to get comfy. They're only an excuse to put pressure on themselves to come up with even more innovative gameplay than ever. Here's what's in the works so far for the next Madden NFL, NCAA Football, and NASCAR games:

## Madden NFL 2006

This year's playbook is heavy on passing. The focus for quarterbacks is on vision and precision to zero-in on receivers and toss darts to them. Prior to the snap, you'll select a primary receiver, then during the play, the QB's line of sight to him is highlighted onscreen. This enables you to throw the ball where he can get to it easier. You can refocus your line of sight at any point during a play to confuse the defense, too, but chucking the ball at a receiver on whom you are not focused will reduce the chances of a completed pass.

## NCAA Football 2006

Winning the Heisman Trophy is your goal this year. Fresh out of high school, you're asked to pick a position on your team and then attend a sort of spring combine where depending on how well you complete drills, you'll be recruited by several schools. Choose a campus, and your collegiate career begins. You'll have to work your tail off at practices and then prove on the field that you're an "Impact" player worthy of the coveted award.

## NASCAR Chase for the Cup 2006

"Teammates win together" is the motto here. Just like on the real oval track, the pit crew and drivers need to work together in order to win a race. That means you're in constant communication with your crew chief and spotter, as well as with your racing teammates. Drivers will coordinate strategy by drafting together and even boxing out rivals for each other. And if you crash, you can automatically swap into your teammate's driver's seat.



Madden NFL 2006



NCAA Football 2006



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# Graffiti Kingdom



PS2



A simply charming game from Taito transforms the PS2 into a bottomless toy box. It's fresh, fun, and innovative, and much better than the predecessor, Magic Pengel.

### Picture It! Play It!

The story line of Graffiti Kingdom is sketched from a classic fairy tale: A young prince accidentally unleashes a demon that captures his parents and takes over the palace. His instrument of rescue is not a sword but a paint brush and palette. With these he can create powerful avatars in which he can transform himself—and the fun begins in earnest.

The title is misleading as there's no graffiti. The original Japanese title of the game is "Rakugaki Oukoku," which means something more like Scribble Kingdom. And "scribble" perfectly describes the casually childlike simplicity found at the core of the game that adds an ele-



**PRO TIP:** Selecting the right combo moves will make all the difference.

ment of magic. Stepping into special portals as Prince Pixel activates the "draw" option, enabling you to paint creatures and save them into card packs. Need to be faster for a level? Jump in and patch on some wheels. Blocked by a deep pool of water? Add the "freeze" attack ability and walk over the ice, or draw on some wings and fly across. The possibilities are as endless as your imagination.

### Your Very Own Doodle

Once you've drawn the creature, you can give it a lot of character by choosing from different voice sets (including one amusingly called "dandy") and movement types like "swingy" and "thumpy." Then, edit fight combos. Fighting other monsters will let Prince Pixel collect their cards and with them all their attributes, which can then be grafted onto your own critters.

You can't unlock the more powerful drawing features until you've played through several levels, and for that you have to wade through the awkwardly cute voice acting and slightly silly cinematics. The drawing tool is clumsy and takes a while to master, but the rewards are well worth the time and trouble. Graffiti Kingdom will transform any player into a kid



GameGirl in action!



**PRO TIP:** Drawing is tricky. Go slowly and use the "copy" feature to duplicate. Practice makes perfect.

in a playroom—and inspire glee in the heart of the most jaded gamers. Dream it, draw it, play it. —GameGirl

**KEY MOMENT:** Kicking butt as GameGirl in a pink GamePro T-shirt! Whooh!



PS2	GRAPHICS . . . . .	3.5	EDITORS' CHOICE	FUN FACTOR <b>4.5</b>
	SOUND . . . . .	3.5		
	CONTROL . . . . .	4.0		

Developer: Taito Publisher: Hot-B \$39.99  
Available May Action/RPG 2 players ESRB: E

# Shin Megami Tensei: Digital Devil Saga

PS2



Cannibals. Demonic Powers. These aren't the kinds of things one normally finds in a console-based RPG, but then again, Digital Devil Saga isn't your average game. The latest release in the Shin Megami Tensei franchise, Saga drops the Neo-Tokyo backdrop featured in Nocturne and replaces it with a forlorn wasteland that is more Mad Max than Akira.

### Tapping Your Inner Power

As the game begins, your characters are fairly basic, but as they develop, you are faced with

a number of choices. Although each can choose from almost any demon power, mastering a skill costs money and there is not nearly enough in the game for every character to learn everything. You are forced to specialize. These specializations come into play during battle as your opponents are similarly situated. Learning an enemy's weak point, as well as covering your own, is a necessary survival strategy due to the way the battle system works.

When a battle occurs, the game switches from real time to turn based. Each side is afforded a number of turns equal to the number of party members. Turns can be extended by hitting an opponent's weak spot or shortened if you use the wrong attack and find yourself blocked. Because Saga is heavy on magic, a big part of battle is watching your character's status. An enemy who is weak versus ice can be hit for a bonus, but if that same enemy has an ice shield up, attacking with ice magic will backfire.

### Random Encounters, Oh My!

With a strong story and excellent battle system, Saga's Achilles heel is the sheer number of



**PRO TIP:** Learn enemy weaknesses and exploit them to gain extra turns during battle.



**PRO TIP:** Learn Use the Hunt skills to devour enemies and master new Mantras faster.



**PRO TIP:** Sell your cells when Solar Noise is at MAX to maximize profit. The exception is the Jack Cell. It is worth the most when noise is at MIN.

random encounters. Atlus has created an incredibly intriguing world, and exploring it is half the fun. When you find yourself fighting opponents every minute, though, things start to feel repetitive. Thankfully, an "auto battle" system is implemented; however, it won't fight nearly as efficiently as you.

Distinctly Japanese, Saga is a game that may miss the mainstream but shouldn't be overlooked. The disturbing visual style and complex play mechanics overcome any minor deficiencies to result in a game that is surprisingly engrossing. —Syriel

**KEY MOMENT:** Watching the interactions between characters as the moral consequences of cannibalism and wiping out the other tribes weigh heavily on some souls

PS2	GRAPHICS . . . . .	4.0	FUN FACTOR <b>4.0</b>
	SOUND . . . . .	4.5	
	CONTROL . . . . .	4.5	

Developer and publisher: Atlus \$54.99  
Available now RPG 1 player ESRB: M



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## READER OF THE MONTH TIP

PLAYSTATION 2

PS2

### DEVIL MAY CRY 3: DANTE'S AWAKENING



**Unlock All Costumes, Gallery Items, and Modes:** At the main menu, simultaneously press and hold L1, L2, R1, and R2, and then rotate L3 counterclockwise. If you entered the cheat correctly, you'll hear a confirming sound and all costumes, gallery items, and modes will be unlocked.

Johnny Billfern—Melville, NY

PLAYSTATION 2

PS2

### FIFA STREET



**Miniature Players:** During gameplay, simultaneously press and hold L1 and  $\Delta$ , and then press Start. At the Pause menu, press Up, Left, Down, Down, Right, Down, Up, Left. If you entered the cheat correctly, the players will be smaller.

**Turn Off Miniature Players:** During gameplay, simultaneously press and hold L1 and  $\Delta$ , and then press Start. At the Pause menu, press Right, Right, Up, Down, Down, Left, Right, Left. If you entered the cheat correctly, the players will return to normal size.

**Unlock All Kits:** At the Main Menu, simultaneously press and hold L1 and  $\Delta$ , and then press Right, Right,

Left, Up, Up, Up, Down, Left. If you entered the cheat correctly, all Kits will be unlocked and available in the Create Player mode.

### KILLZONE



**Big-Head Enemies:** At the main menu, press  $\circ$ ,  $\square$ ,  $\times$ ,  $\circ$ ,  $\circ$ . If you entered the code correctly, the cheat will immediately take effect.

**Unlock All Levels:** At the main menu, select Game and then select Campaign. At the Create Profile screen, enter **Shooterman** (case-sensitive) as your profile name. If you entered the cheat correctly, all levels will be unlocked.

### RUMBLE ROSES



**Unlock Beach Arena:** At the main menu, press Down, Right, Down, Right, Down, Right, Down,  $\square$ , Select. If you entered the cheat correctly, you'll hear a confirming sound.

**Unlock Swimsuit #1:** At the main menu, press Down, Left, Down, Left, Down, Left, Down,  $\square$ , Select. If you entered the cheat correctly, you'll hear a confirming sound.

### TENCHU: FATAL SHADOWS



**Play as Ayame in Tutorial:** At the main menu, highlight "Tutorial," simultaneously press and hold L1, and then press  $\times$ . If you entered the cheat correctly, you'll play as Ayame in the tutorial.

### XBOX

#### RALLISPORT CHALLENGE 2

**Unlock All Tracks and Vehicles Sets:** At the main menu, select Options and then select Credits. At the Credits screen, enter the following codes to unlock the corresponding cheats. If

you entered the cheat correctly, you'll hear a confirming tone.

**Unlock Track and Vehicle Set #1:** Press Down, Left, Down, Right, Up, Up.

**Unlock Track and Vehicle Set #2:** Press Left, Left, Down, Down, Right, Right.

**Unlock Track and Vehicle Set #3:** Press Down, Down, Left, Left, Up, Down.

**Unlock Track and Vehicle Set #4:** Press Right, Down, Right, Down, Left, Up.

**Unlock Track and Vehicle Set #5:** Press Left, Left, Right, Right, Down, Left.

**Unlock Track and Vehicle Set #6:** Press Right, Up, Up, Up, Down, Left.

**Unlock Track and Vehicle Set #7:** Press Left, Left, Left, Up, Up, Right.

**Unlock Track and Vehicle Set #8:** Press Right, Up, Left, Up, Down, Right.

**Unlock Track and Vehicle Set #9:** Press Down, Up, Down, Left, Left, Down.

**Unlock Track and Vehicle Set #10:** Press Up, Up, Down, Down, Left, Right.

### GAMECUBE

#### SONIC ADVENTURE 2 BATTLE



**Clear Pause Menu:** During gameplay, press Start to pause the game. At the Pause screen, simultaneously press and hold Y and X to completely clear the pause menu.

MULTIPLATFORM



### FIGHT NIGHT ROUND 2



**Miniature Fighters:** At the Select Venues screen, press and hold Up on the directional pad for five seconds. If you entered the cheat correctly, you'll hear a bell ring and all fighters will be miniature.

**Unlock Fabolous:** At the main menu, select Create Champ and then select New Boxer. Create a new boxer with the first name GETFAB. If you entered the cheat correctly, Fabolous will be a selectable fighter in the heavyweight boxer class at the Select Boxer screen.

### MVP BASEBALL 2005



**Bone-Scaling:** At the Main Menu, select Manage Rosters and then select Create/Edit Player. At the Create/Edit Player screen, select Create Player and then enter kenny lee (case-sensitive) to enable the Bone-Scaling cheat.

#### Red Sox's St. Patrick's Day Jersey:

At the Main Menu, select Manage Rosters and then select Create/Edit Player. At the Create/Edit Player screen, select Create Player and then enter Neverlose Sight (case-sensitive). If you entered the cheat correctly, the Red Sox's St. Patrick's Day Jersey will be selectable at the Select Team screen.

#### Squat Player with Big Bat:

At the Main Menu, select Manage Rosters and then select Create/Edit Player. At the Create/Edit Player screen, select Create Player and then enter Jacob Paterson (case-sensitive) to create a squat player with a big bat.



MULTIPLATFORM



### FIFA STREET



**Miniature Players:** During gameplay, press Start to pause the game. At the Pause menu, simultaneously press and hold L and Y, and then press Up, Left, Down, Down, Right, Down, Up, Left. If you entered the cheat correctly, the players will be miniature.

**Turn Off Miniature Players:** During gameplay, press Start to pause the game. At the Pause menu, simultaneously press and hold L and Y, and then press Right, Right, Up, Down, Down, Left, Right, Left. If you entered the cheat correctly, the players will return to normal size.

**Unlock All Kits:** At the Main Menu, simultaneously press and hold L and Y, and then press Right, Right, Left, Up, Up, Up, Down, Left. If you entered the cheat correctly, all Kits will be unlocked in the Create Player mode.

GAME BOY ADVANCE



### ACE COMBAT ADVANCE



**Unlock All Missions and Planes:** At the Main Menu, select Enter Code and then enter QF9B9F59. If you entered the password correctly, the Continue option on the Main Menu will be selectable.

#### CLASSIC NES SERIES: METROID

**Passwords:** At the main menu, select Continue and then enter the following codes to unlock the corresponding cheats. If you entered the cheat correctly, the game will automatically begin.

*Passwords are case-sensitive.*

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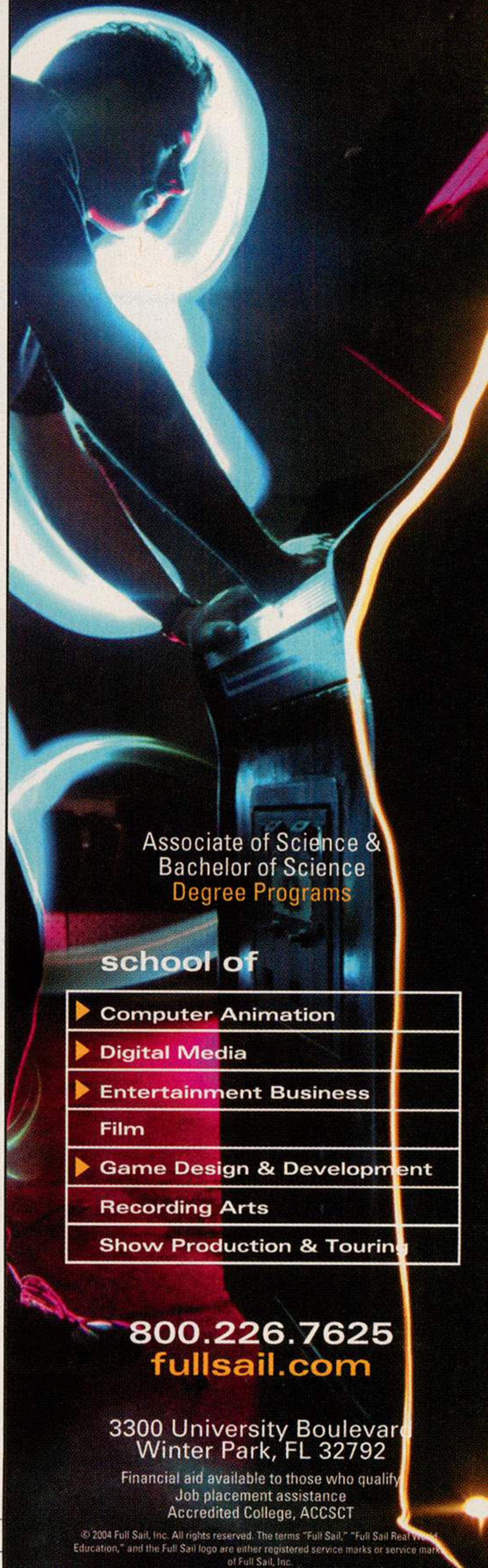
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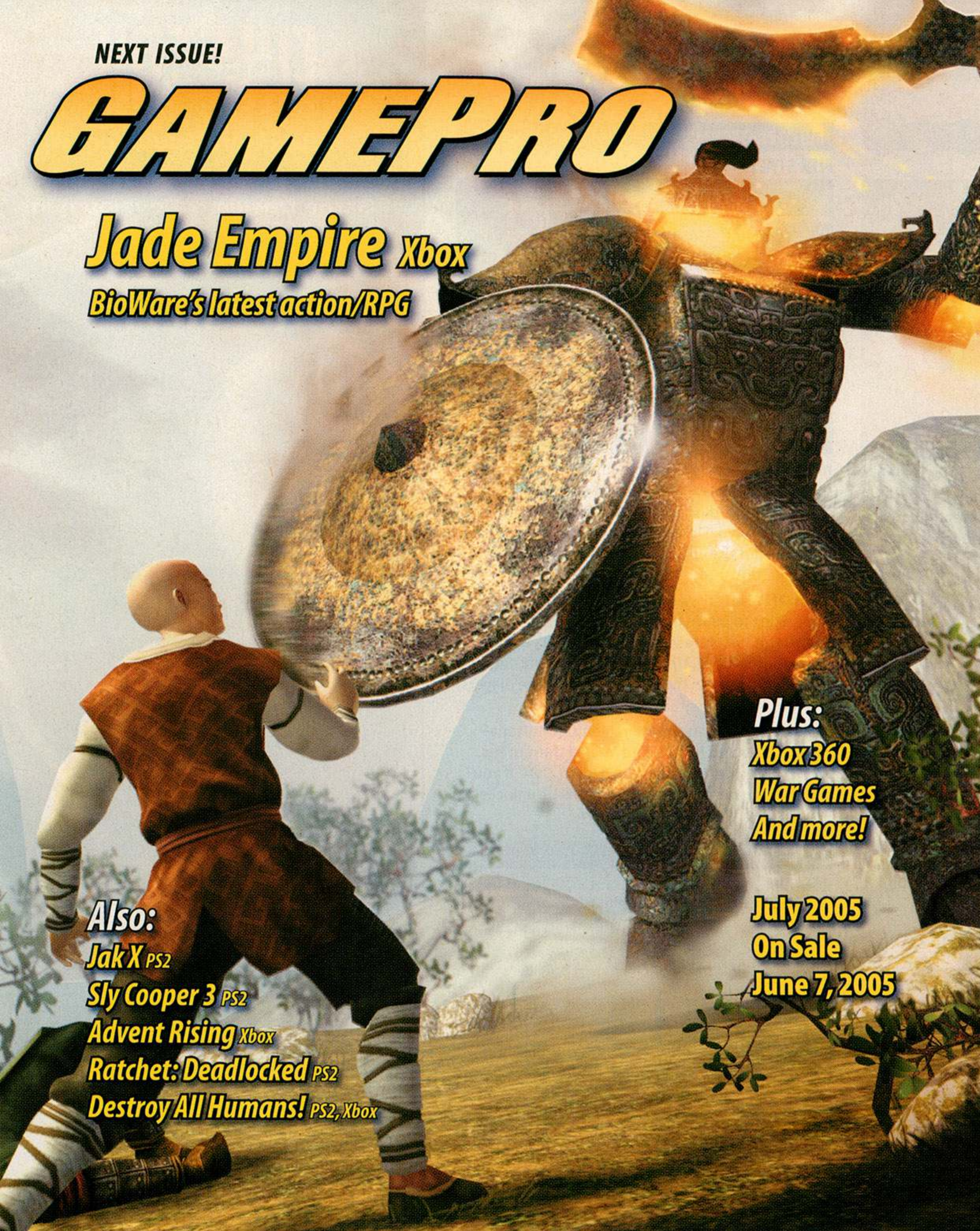
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Academy of Art University .....	87
ACADEMYART.EDU	
Activision, Inc.....	13, 51
ACTIVISION.COM	
ADV Films.....	71
ADVFILMS.COM	
Alienware .....	69
ALIENWARE.COM/GPRO	
AXE Deodorant .....	15
THEAXEEFFECT.COM	
Blockbuster Video .....	57
BLOCKBUSTER.COM	
Capcom.....	27, 4th Cover
CAPCOM.COM	
Discovery Channel .....	2, 3
DSC.DISCOVERY.COM	
E3 Insider.....	91
E3INSIDER.COM	
Electronic Arts.....	46, 47
EA.COM	
Full Sail Real World Education .....	93
FULLSAIL.COM	
Gameloft .....	25
GAMELOFT.COM	
Intec, Inc.....	3rd Cover
INTECLINK.COM	
Jakks Pacific Inc.....	21, 81
JAKKSPACIFIC.COM	
KOEI .....	67
KOEIGAMES.COM	
Konami.....	45
KONAMI.COM	
Mad Magazine .....	89
DCCOMICS.COM/MAD	
Majesco .....	9, 58, 59
MAJESCO.COM	
Master Replicas .....	84
MASTERREPLICAS.COM	
Microsoft Xbox .....	4, 5, 53
XBOX.COM	
Namco .....	83
NAMCO.COM	
ONDCP .....	17
FREEVIBE.COM	
Sony Computer Entertainment America, Inc.....	2nd Cover, 1, 11
SONY.COM	
THQ, Inc.....	30, 31
THQ.COM	
Ubisoft Entertainment .....	7, 22, 23, 75
UBISOFT.COM	
University of Advancing Technology .....	85
UAT.EDU	
Upper Deck Company LLC .....	19, 77
UPPERDECK.COM	
WM. Wrigley Jr., Co. ....	29
WRIGLEY.COM	

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## Why GP Editors Aren't Getting Enough Sun

1. Wipeout Pure (PSP)
2. Graffiti Kingdom (PS2)
3. Mega Man Anniversary Collection (Xbox)
4. Tekken 5 (PS2)
5. World of Warcraft (PC)
6. Tony Hawk's Underground 2 Remix (PSP)
7. NBA Street V3 (PS2)
8. Gran Turismo 4 (PS2)
9. God of War (PS2)
10. Ridge Racer (PSP)

## Top 10 Best-Selling Console Video-Game Titles February 2005

TITLE	PLATFORM	LAST MONTH
1. <b>Gran Turismo 4</b> Sony	PlayStation 2	NEW
2. <b>NBA Street V3</b> EA Sports Big	PlayStation 2	NEW
3. <b>Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas</b> Rockstar Games	PlayStation 2	2 ▼
4. <b>MVP Baseball 2005</b> EA Sports	PlayStation 2	NEW
5. <b>The Legend of Zelda: The Minish Cap</b> Nintendo	GBA	3 ▼
6. <b>NBA Street V3</b> EA Sports Big	Xbox	NEW
7. <b>Mercenaries</b> LucasArts	PlayStation 2	5 ▼
8. <b>Resident Evil 4</b> Capcom	GameCube	1 ▼
9. <b>Champions: Return to Arms</b> Sony Online Entertainment	PlayStation 2	NEW
10. <b>Madden NFL 2005*</b> EA Sports	PlayStation 2	8 ▼

\*Includes Limited and Collector's Editions  
Source: The NPD Group/NPD Funworld/Point-of-Sale

1

## Gran Turismo 4



It doesn't matter that it was delayed for countless months. It also doesn't matter that despite Sony's promise, there is no online support. What does matter is that Gran Turismo 4 delivers what driving fans have always expected in this series: a super realistic simulation of today's autos. Additionally, not only do the cars look and feel authentic, but the international tracks on which you can race are also mirror images of the real courses. If you could pick only one racing game for your PlayStation 2, it should definitely be this latest Gran Turismo.

2/6



It's all about flashy moves, outrageous dunks, and customized shoes (no kidding) in what is perhaps the best street basketball game yet. The three-on-three tournaments on urban courts offer easy accessibility to those who just want an enjoyable pick-up-and-play ball game without worrying about inflated egos.

9



Brainless demon slaying is at the core of this sequel to Champions of Norrath. Hack-n-slash gameplay never gets tiresome, and while you have some managing duties with keeping track of equipment and magic, it's your thumbs that get the most workout. Hordes of monsters are waiting to die at your hands.

## Top 10 Video Game-Console Accessories for February 2005

1. PS2 8 Meg Memory Card (Sony)
2. PS2 8 Meg Memory Card (Nyko)
3. PS2 Blue Dual Shock 2 Controller (Sony)
4. Xbox DVD Play Back Kit (Microsoft)
5. PS2 Dual Shock 2 Controller (Sony)
6. PS2 Red/Blue Memory 2 Pack (Sony)
7. Xbox Blue Controller S (Microsoft)
8. PS2 Cordless Action Controller (Logitech)
9. Xbox Green Controller S (Microsoft)
10. Xbox Live 12 Month Starter Kit (Microsoft)

Source: The NPD Group/NPD Funworld/Point-of-Sale



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**gamepro.com/chartbusters** or  
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- PROGRAMMABLE WITH RUMBLE!

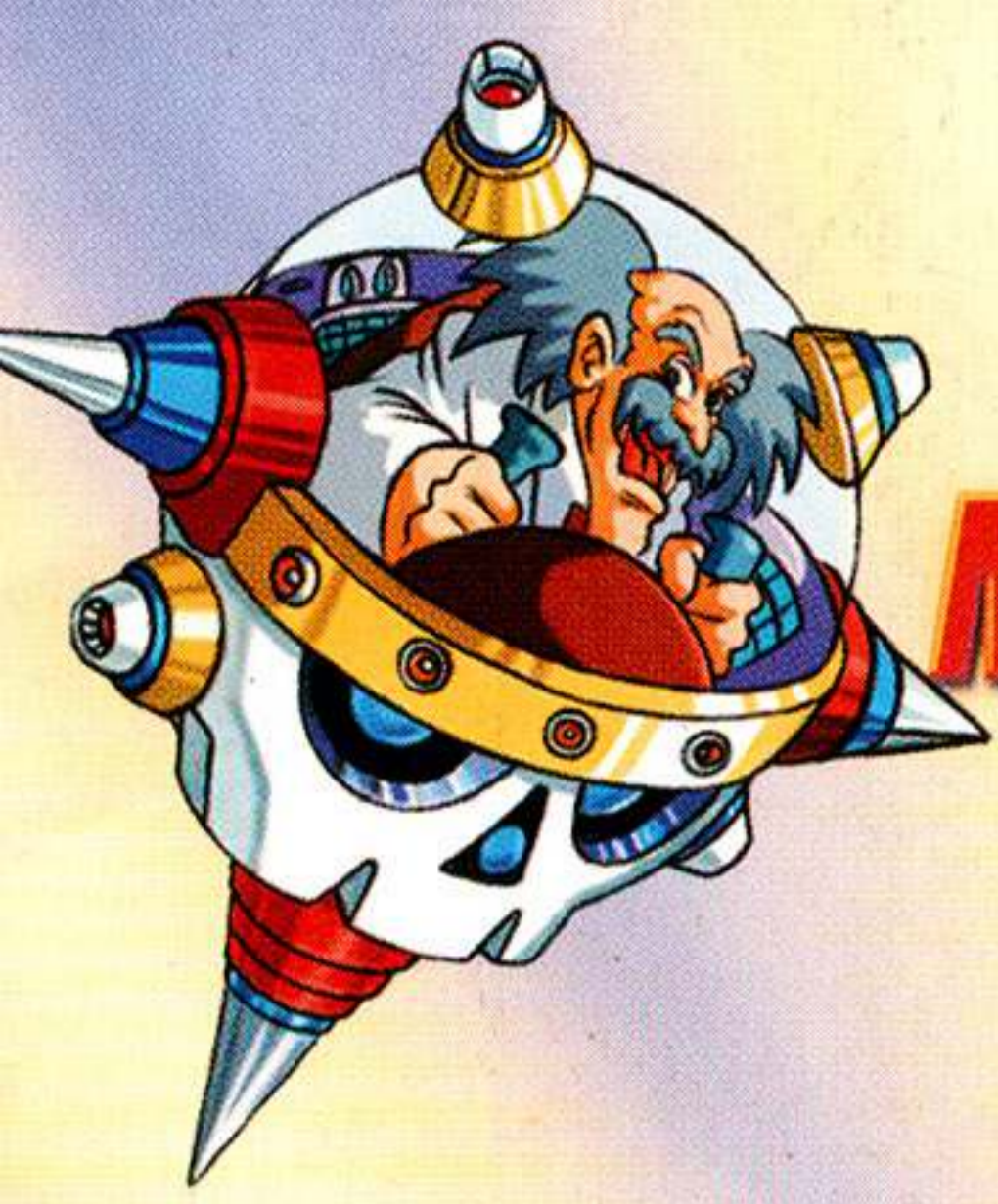


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