

PLAYSTATION PREVIEW 2006

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JANUARY 2006, ISSUE 106

100% INDEPENDENT PLAYSTATION 2 MAGAZINE

YES, WE PLAYED IT!

PS3 IS UNREAL

HANDS-ON with PS3's Showcase Game: **UNREAL TOURNAMENT 2007**

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ACTUAL PS3 GRAPHICS!



PSP
Sony's Prez tells you what's next
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Washed up? 5 new games say "Hell No!"
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NEW EXCLUSIVE CODES!

grand theft auto

Liberty City Stories



MGS4
BRAND-NEW Screens & Secrets
+ Hideo Kojima interview!
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SHAME! Top PS2 game character INCARCERATED!
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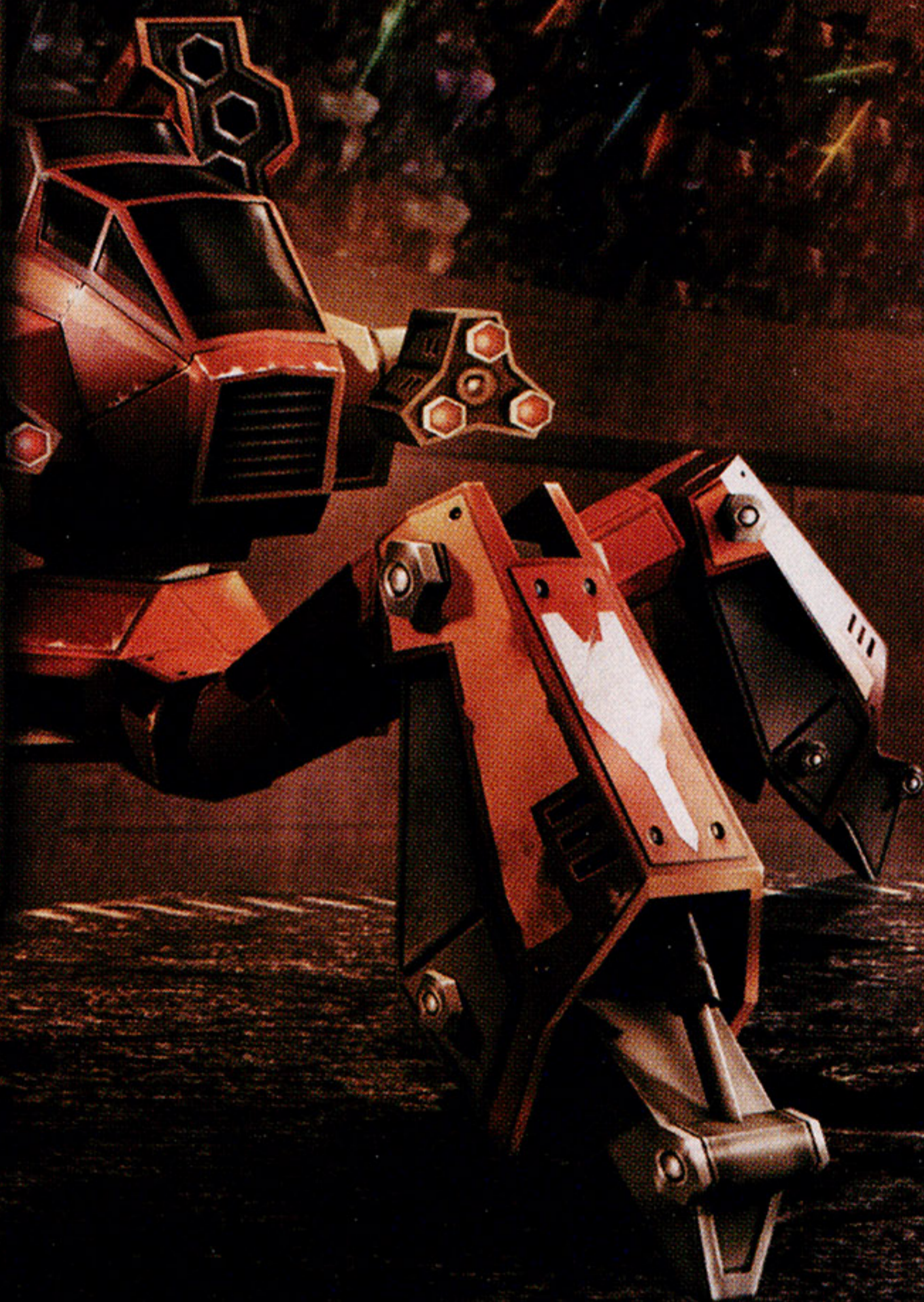
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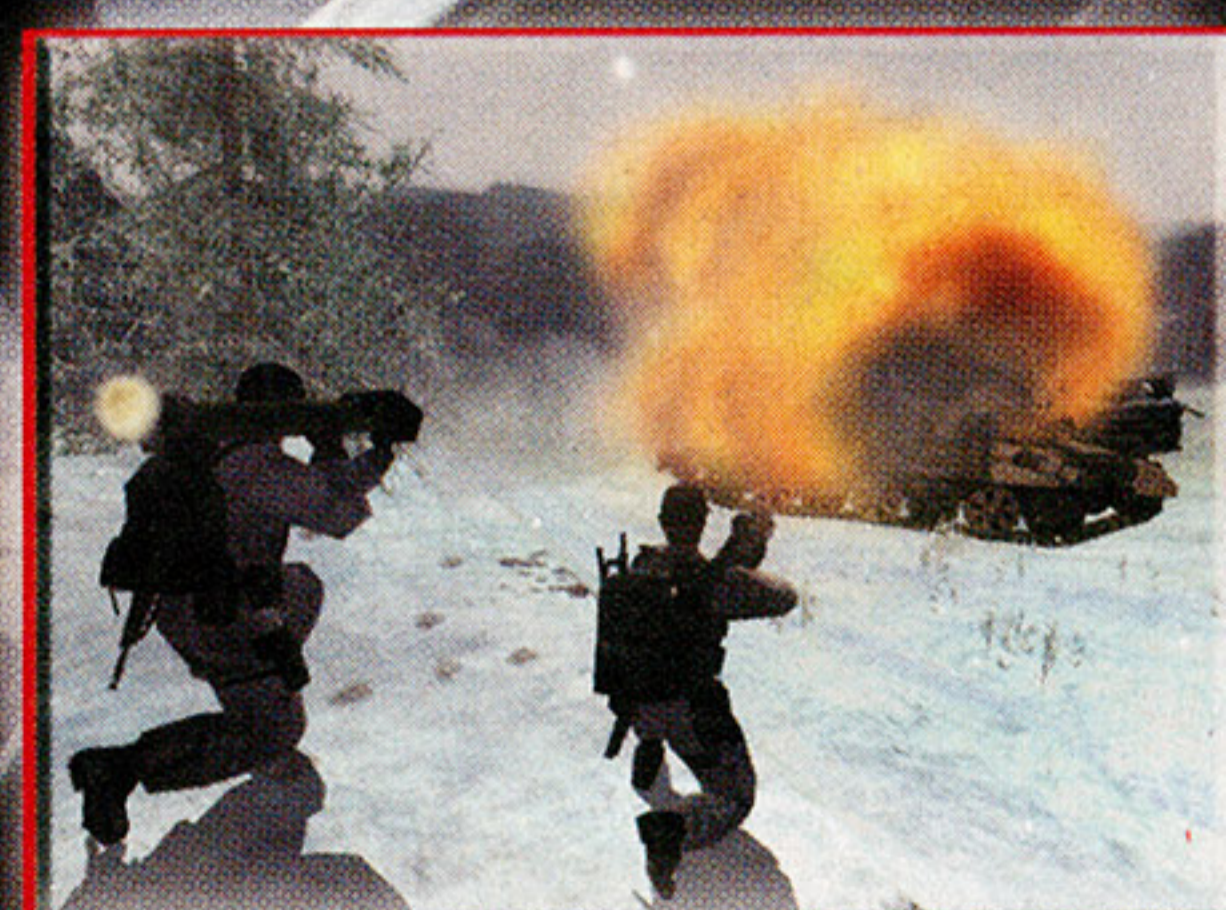
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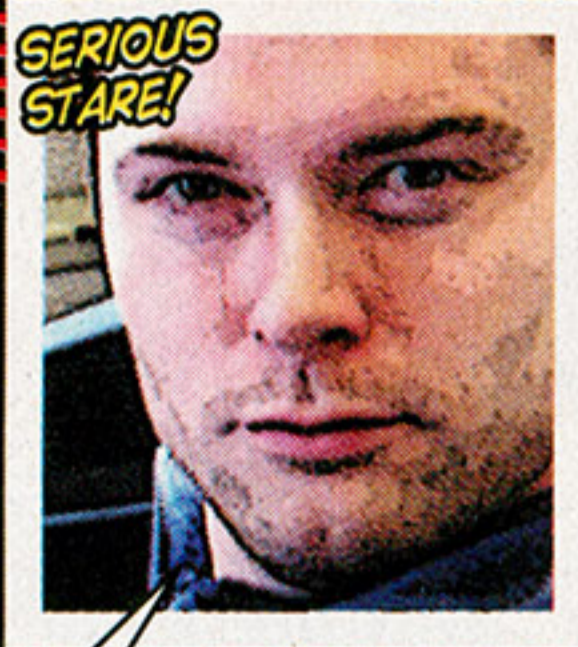
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CHRIS SLATE
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

FAVORITE GAMES
Platformers, action-adventure, arcade racing

SUCKER FOR Goofy games, NES-era nostalgia, cool character designs

OTHER INTERESTS
Comics, anime, action flicks, hoops, drawing, fast food, *Bleach*

"I've been really jealous lately — jealous of the happy campers over at our sister Xbox magazine. There's nothing like a new console launch to get the ol' gaming pulse racing, and those guys are living the high-life in Xbox 360 heaven. But, y'know what? Our turn comes later this year. As the hype for the 360 launch dies down, the PS3 roller coaster will just be getting started — and you know it's gonna be one helluva ride!"



RANDY NELSON
EXECUTIVE EDITOR

FAVORITE GAMES
Platformers, first-person shooters, arcade racers

SUCKER FOR Online multiplayer, *Guitar Hero*, and anything by Hideo Kojima.

OTHER INTERESTS
The Nightmare Before Christmas, my cats, Kari!

"A little advance warning: you're going to read some pretty harsh comments from me about the PSP later in the issue. I just want to set things straight: I love the hardware. I think it can do great things. I take it everywhere. I don't regret buying it, but I've gotten a surprising number of letters from readers who do, so I hope the criticism we voice eventually leads to more original games. It's what everyone wants."



KAISER HWANG
SENIOR EDITOR

FAVORITE GAMES
God of War, *Splinter Cell*

SUCKER FOR Full-frame digital SLRs I can't afford

OTHER INTERESTS
Hayden, Kyra at Stilo, phones that sync with Outlook, the international network, DS

"Sometimes it's hard to take a game for what it is, whether it's due to personal bias, an aesthetic you can't appreciate, or simply from feeling jaded. It's important for all of us here to remember that, and express our impressions, expectations, and eventual judgement on any and all games we cover to you as honestly as we can. Ultimately, we play most games because they're fun, plain and simple. Let's not ever forget that."



JUSTIN CHENG
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

FAVORITE GAMES
Fighters and arcade racers

SUCKER FOR Anything even vaguely connected to *Infinite Crisis*.

OTHER INTERESTS
Walking Dead, *Berserk*, Nintendo DS, collecting lots of useless stuff.

"See? All that hard work has finally paid off! After almost two years as an intern, I've been officially added to the main staff of this here magazine. I've been here a long time, but I'm still considered the new guy. I'm a new/old guy. Is that like *Oldboy*? No, I guess not. Actually, life isn't too different now. I still sit at the same desk and everything, but now I have an official-sounding title... and business cards! Sweet!"



BILL DONOHUE
MANAGING EDITOR

"My resolution this year is to spend as much time with Genny G. as I possibly can... either here or there!"



CHRIS IMLAY
ART DIRECTOR

"Look, people, it's an antennae! GOSH! Don't hate my hat. It's just there because I roll like that!"



GARY LIEW
ASSOCIATE ART DIRECTOR

"I am having the new year, which is good, even though I have many days left over from last year."

IT BEGINS

The Year of the PS3 is finally here! Of course, we'll probably still have to wait another 10 or 11 months for it, but hey — at least we've arrived at its "launch year." The real question is, can PS2 and PSP keep us happy and satisfied while we wait? To get a good idea of everything that 2006 has in store, turn to our big-ass feature on page 31.

Also be sure to check out our exclusive new Q&A with *Metal Gear* creator Hideo Kojima. *MGS4* + PS3 = mmm.

CHRIS SLATE
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
<http://chrislate.blogspot.com>

OUR MISSION

PSM IS devoted to giving our readers what they deserve: the absolute *best* coverage *anywhere* of everything that matters to PlayStation gamers, because we love it just as much as you do.

WE WILL give the games that matter to you, the hardcore gamer, the in-depth coverage they demand. We will *only* review games when they're ready, after we've beaten them; we'll pull no punches with our verdicts and stand behind them 100%. We will dig deeper behind the big stories, and never settle for "just okay" with anything we do. When we make a

promise, we'll keep it. When we make a mistake, we'll admit it. We will surprise you and always strive to give you more.

WE WON'T waste your time with movie or music reviews. We won't waste space interviewing celebrities who know *jack* about games, in some lame attempt to look cool. You know what? *Games* are cool. We don't care about being kid-tested and mother-approved, and we'll *never* hesitate to call B.S. when necessary.

WE'RE PSM, we're fiercely independent, and we're all about making the best damn PlayStation mag you've ever read!

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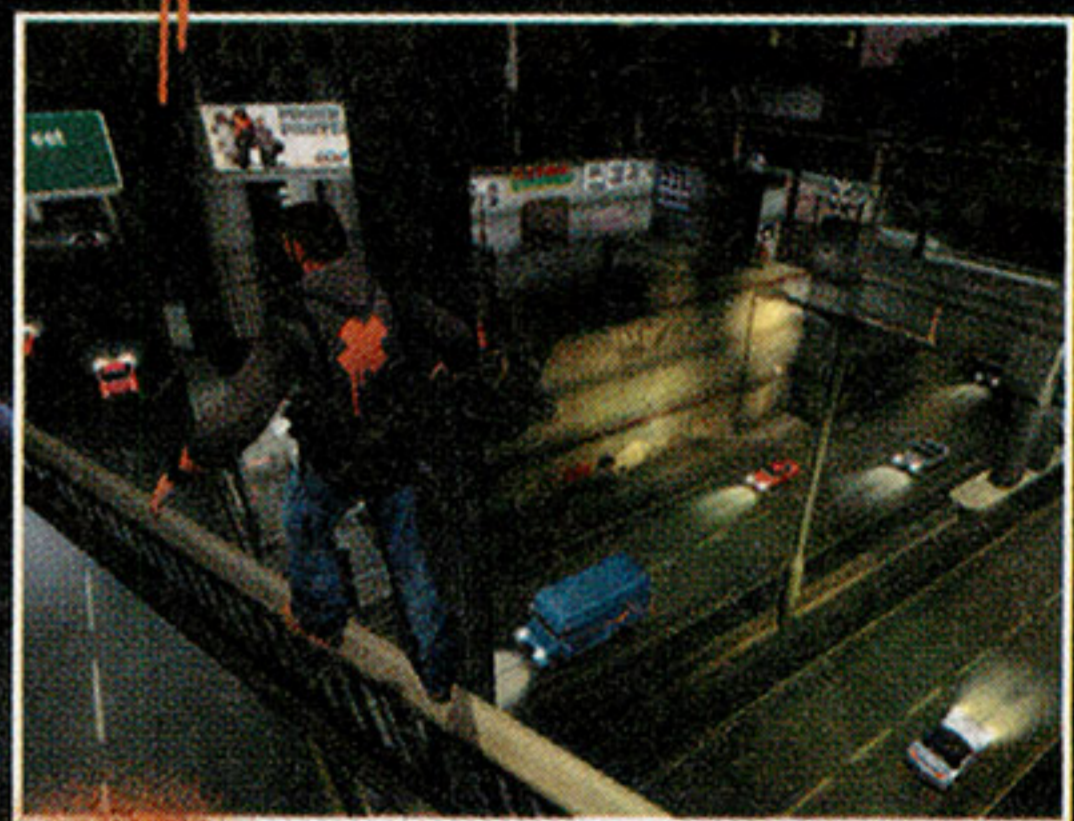
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PSM is more than what you're holding in your hands. It also has a companion web site, psmonline.com, that's your gateway to the polls, contests, and interaction with the PSM staff, game makers, and other PSM readers that appear in our pages every month. If you don't check it out, you're missing out!

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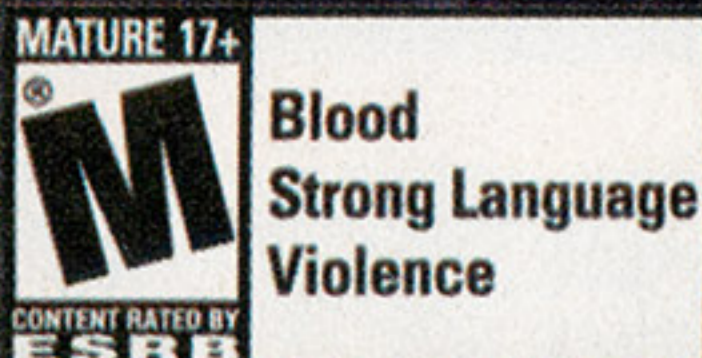
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++ JANUARY 2006 ++ ISSUE 106 ++

PLAYSTATION PREVIEW 2006!

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Q&A WITH HIDEO KOJIMA

The Master of *Metal Gear Solid 4* reveals more insider secrets from his upcoming masterpiece.



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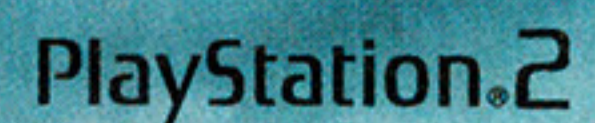
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A photograph of a person sleeping in the back seat of a car. The person is covered with a patterned blanket. The car's interior, including the seat and window, is visible. A large, semi-transparent orange graphic is overlaid on the lower right portion of the image, containing text.

truth found

In 1995 a major tobacco company planned to boost cigarette sales by targeting homeless people. They called their plan "Project SCUM: Sub Culture Urban Marketing."

2005: THE YEAR IN REVIEW

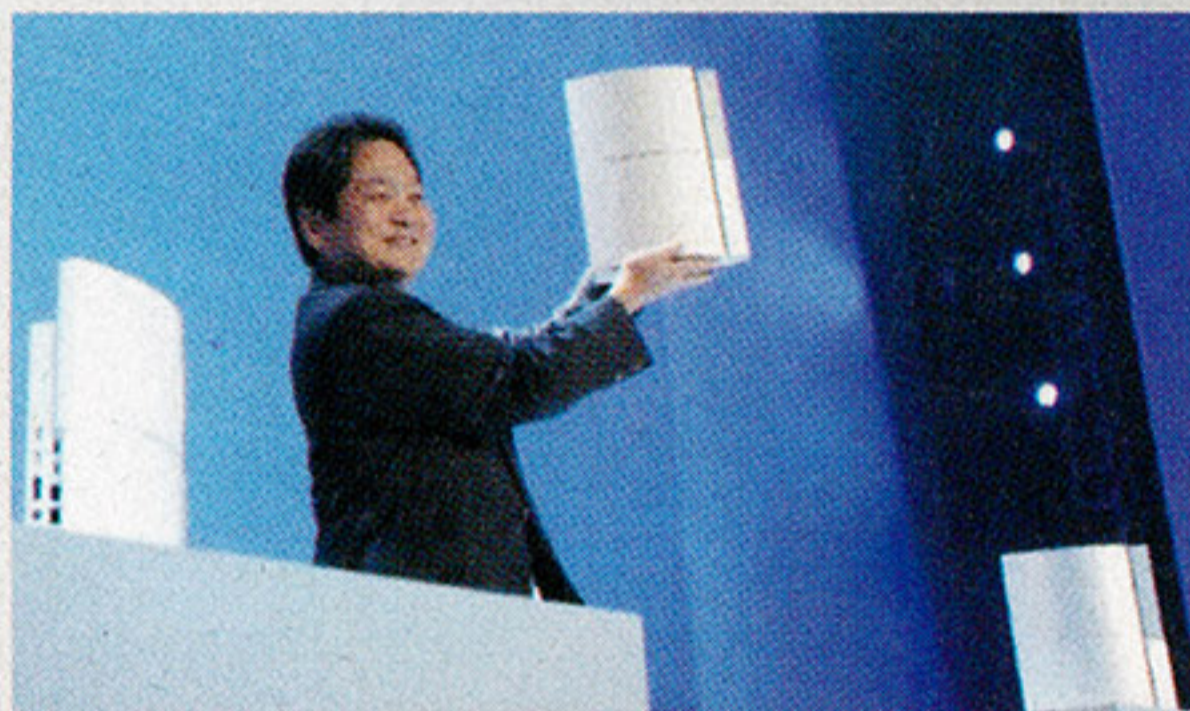
PSM recaps the past year's biggest events and looks at the impact they'll make on the year to come

Without a doubt, this was PlayStation 2's year to shine. Long-anticipated, high-profile games such as *Gran Turismo 4* finally hit shelves. Classic series returned to their former glory; most notably *Devil May Cry*. Sony showed that it could produce games rivaling *Metal Gear Solid* in terms of sheer majesty (*God of War*) and the PS2 proved with *Resident Evil 4* that it could not only handle games supposedly possible only on competing hardware, but do them better.

Beyond the games, though, it was a year of major happenings in the PlayStation world. Events that shocked us, made us laugh, or just plain scratch our heads. Whatever their effect at the time, they all have lasting repercussions for PlayStation owners. Here are the ones that topped the list.

PlayStation 3 Unveiled

Okay, so this was a given to make our list of top happenings in '05. After all, it's the next generation of the most popular game machine ever. Everyone expected to see something relating to PS3 at this year's Electronic Entertainment Expo – actually, given their past moves, we expected Sony to show something before that – but it's safe to say no one outside of Sony and a close circle of partners knew how huge the unveiling would be.



Sony had to divulge something on the PS3 during 2005. One-upping everyone, they showed nearly all their cards on one morning.

While many expected to hear some hardware specs and maybe see a few technology demos, we instead got something very rare: the actual physical design of the system, games in development, and projected launch timeframe of the system were revealed in the United States.

It's certainly no secret that much of what was shown in terms of upcoming games was simply pre-rendered to spec, but Sony wasn't slow to admit it, and to many it was well beyond their expectations from the system.

Also unexpected was the radical aesthetic change to the classic PlayStation controller itself. While only a rough hand-carved

mock-up has been shown, it's been enough to draw more skepticism than appreciation from gamers. Certainly, just as the PSP's did, the pad's appearance will change. As Sony Computer Entertainment America head, Kaz Kirai explains later in this issue, you'll understand the changes when you finally get your hands on one.

In recent months following the unveiling, PSM has faced many questions regarding PS3. Will it really be capable of the graphics seen at E3? Will Sony really get their online act together? Will it really come out in 2006? Will I be able to afford it? Sony's top brass themselves answer those questions in a Q&A which begins on page 40.

The Metal Gear Solid 4 Trailer Debuts

Anyone who wanted real proof of what the PS3 will be capable of got their answer in resounding fashion at Tokyo Game Show 2005. Always on the leading edge of PlayStation development, Hideo Kojima introduced the latest installment in his *Metal Gear* series in the form of a real time teaser trailer running on honest-to-good-



Running on real PS3 hardware, the teaser trailer for *MGS4: Guns of The Patriots* can honestly be said to blur the line between videogame visuals and movies.

ness PS3 hardware... stopping to pause, rewind, and manipulate it just to drive the point home.

It looked simply amazing, and had the PlayStation world abuzz – within what seemed like minutes of its debut – about the system truly ushering in movie-quality visuals in games. If there's one thing to take away from the trailer, it's that Kojima has never shown anything in his *MGS* trailers that couldn't actually be done in the game, and the final products have always looked much better than when the first trailers were shown. This game will sell systems; the question is whether it will be in 2006 or 2007.

EA Buys NFL Exclusivity

Maybe that should have read "EA buys pro sports?" Well, not exactly, but close. When it was announced that the company had made a multi-million-dollar deal with the NFL for the exclusive rights to create pro football games featuring actual players and stadiums, the first response was shock. Then the questions began. Most everyone wanted to know what this would mean for the competition, beyond the fact that they couldn't make NFL games, but also whether it would mean EA Sports would start to slack off without any competition.

This year's *Madden* arrived and was good, but many assert that it wasn't as evolutionary as it would have been with other NFL games on shelves. Midway continued its *Blitz* series, creating a fictitious league and playing off its trademark over-the-top attitude. Sony tried a similar approach, but ended up scrapping its football-fighting game *Road to Sunday*.

No sooner proposed than done, EA snapped up the exclusive rights to NCAA college football and arena football. It had



EA Sports put forth a good effort with this year's only NFL game, *Madden 2006*. Everyone's waiting on next season, however, to see if the passion fades without competition.

never had any real competition in the collegiate football arena, and the AFL move... well, many thought that was just kicking other publishers while they were down, saying "No football of any type for you!"

EA's got NFL through 2012, so it's going to be very telling to see what *Madden 2007* brings to the table in terms of evolving the sport in videogames. PSM doesn't doubt it will strive for a quality product, but does question how far – beyond moving it to PS3 – it's really willing to improve it.

PSP Launches

We always knew somewhere in the back of our minds that Sony would someday enter the handheld game business. Following its announcement and impressive tech promises at E3 2003, we knew it was happening, but simply wondered "how?" The specs, after all, seemed too good to be true. Maybe they were, but the fact remains that the system did arrive this year, as promised, landing on U.S. shelves at a price



The PSP finally hit shelves this year with a roar, but software support since has been more like a whimper. Hopefully this will improve in '06.

much lower than many believe possible and with one of the best lineups of games ever available at the launch of the system. To date, there are more UMD movies than games available for the system, but, according to Sony, that should change in 2006. We're definitely hoping so.

Hot Coffee Spilled

Birds do it. Bees do it. Even the main character of *GTA: San Andreas* did it. The controversy surrounding a hidden "mini-game" (if you can call an obviously thrown together thing like this one) enabling players to do the old horizontal bop began when gamers digging through the more easily exploitable PC version of *San Andreas* discovered this hidden part of the game. Rockstar Games called foul, claiming it was a hack created by those who claimed to have found it. Cheat device codes were soon posted on the Internet that exposed the same "mode" in the PS2 and Xbox versions of the game, proven that someone at the game's developer was behind the whole thing after all.

The game was quickly given an AO (Adults Only) rating by the ESRB ratings



Killing, drugs, and mugging? They're okay, but show a little nookie and you're public enemy #1. Cripes. In the future, even kissing will be AO.

council and pulled by most major retailers. A big fuss was made in the non-gaming media and Rockstar eventually released a version without the offending, er, "gameplay" hidden away on the disc.

If anything, this event really showed how far videogames have to go before they're accepted as a form of entertainment like movies. *GTA* is an M-rated series, after all, and R-rated movies are rife with sexual situations. On top of that, people who know little about games, in this instance, were quick to claim that accessing the "Hot Coffee side-game" was easy (it wasn't) and was horrible since games are for children. Well, not all of them are, obviously, when most of the top-selling games for 2005 were not intended for sale to anyone under the age of 16.

Acclaim Bites... The Dust

Rounding out the noteworthy happenings of the year was one that many a jaded gamer had been expecting for years: the shuttering of games publisher Acclaim. Having filed for bankruptcy in late 2004, the company was just starting to make headway towards the steady release of above-average games (*Juiced* and the still-publisher-less *The Red Star*) when the axe fell. For all their sour notes, it was still sad to see such an institution go. Some of their games were good, many weren't, but their legacy will live on. Buena Vista Games, the videogame-making offshoot of Disney, recently picked up the rights to make new games based on one of Acclaim's most successful properties, *Turok: Dinosaur Hunter*. So, in a sense, Acclaim will live on after all.



The Red Star, a great-looking throwback to classic shoot-'em-ups, could have been one of the best games Acclaim ever shipped. It's still waiting for a publisher, and we hope it gets one.

THE EVENTS THAT WEREN'T

You've read about the events no one really expected to go down in '05, but what about the things that were? Here are some that still have gamers red in the face.

No Gran Turismo Online

When *Gran Turismo 4* was finally released for PS2, its developer, Polyphony Digital, had an unfortunate announcement: The game's long-touted online multiplayer mode was being removed. Why? Some say it was to get the game out sooner. No one outside of Sony really knows for sure. All we know is that Sony announced that an online version of *GT4* would soon follow the initial release, but it never surfaced. PSM recently asked Sony what ever happened to it, and was told they "had nothing on it" at the time.



Kingdom Hearts II skips '05

Square-Enix scored a huge – not to mention surprising – hit with the original *Kingdom Hearts*. The idea of combining Square and Disney characters in an action RPG never struck PSM as that odd, but to some it was.

Regardless, gamers ate it up, and a sequel was already in the works. However, despite providing a steady flow of updates on the follow-up throughout 2005, the game has yet to hit stores in Japan or the U.S. To this day, we get more letters asking when *KH2* will come out than anything else. To everyone who sent them, we say: "2006."



A Year Without a New Final Fantasy

Since the legendary role-playing series jumped shipped from Nintendo systems to PlayStation with *Final Fantasy VII*, Square-Enix has shipped a new game in the series every year. PSone saw three of them, while PS2 has only received one true *FF* game, *Final Fantasy X*, a spin-off of it (*FFX-2*), and an online game dubbed *FFXI* that's great, but not really one of the series' "main" titles. *FFXII* has been shown as many times as it's been delayed – which is often. Fortunately, despite numerous setbacks, the game is looking good for launch in the U.S. before summer 2006.



NEWS & VIEWS

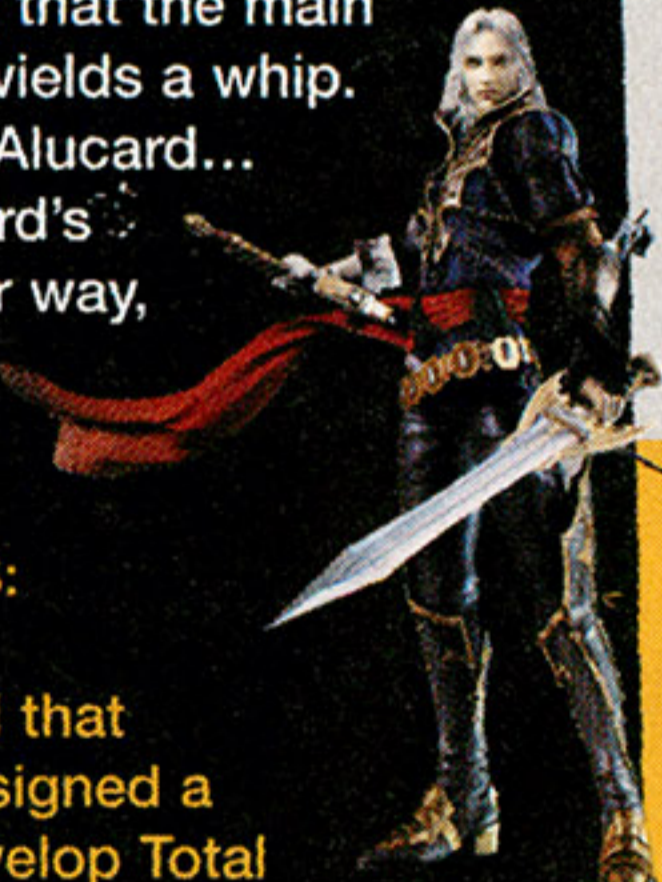
THE NEWS: Sony revealed that their "The Best" line — think "Greatest Hits" — will now encompass PSP games. For just 2800 yen (around \$24), you can get a variety of the launch window games like *Lumines*, *Ridge Racers*, and *Metal Gear ACID* (which is, strangely, the only game priced at 2100 yen).

THE VIEW: We can probably expect America to follow suit with some PSP Greatest Hits games. Considering that PSP games cost as much as PS2 games, it will definitely help gamers' wallets to have some budget-priced games.



THE NEWS: There's a new *Castlevania* movie in the works to be directed by Paul W.S. Anderson. There's no word on whether the story will be adapted from a particular *Castlevania* game.

THE VIEW: While Paul W.S. Anderson isn't on of the most beloved directors around, at least he's better than Uwe Boll. Man, *House of the Dead* was truly awful. We're just hoping that the main character wields a whip. Unless it's Alucard... then a sword's okay. Either way, no guns allowed.



THE NEWS: Midway announced that they have signed a deal to develop Total Nonstop Action wrestling games. The first game, titled *TNA impact!*, is scheduled to be released in 2007.

THE VIEW: With its hexagonal ring and more of an emphasis on high-flying, high-impact wrestling, TNA is definitely different than the usual WWE fare. Ideally, we'd love to see the TNA games use the sweet AKI engine, but unfortunately, that won't happen.

Sega's Arcade Stunners Coming Home?

A new *Virtua Fighter* and *Afterburner* on PS3? Probably

Sega unveiled its latest arcade titles, *Virtua Fighter 5* and *Afterburner Climax* — two titles that are sure to make old-school Sega fans like us salivate. Even better, the new arcade board it's running on, the Lindbergh, shares

many similarities with the PS3 hardware, most importantly its NVIDIA graphics card. Of course, this is no guarantee that we'll actually see these two games on the PS3, but the odds are very good given the ease with which they can be ported.



Even the arcades are entering the next gen. *Afterburner Climax* (above) and *Virtua Fighter 5* (below) look amazing!



The real motorcycling simulator

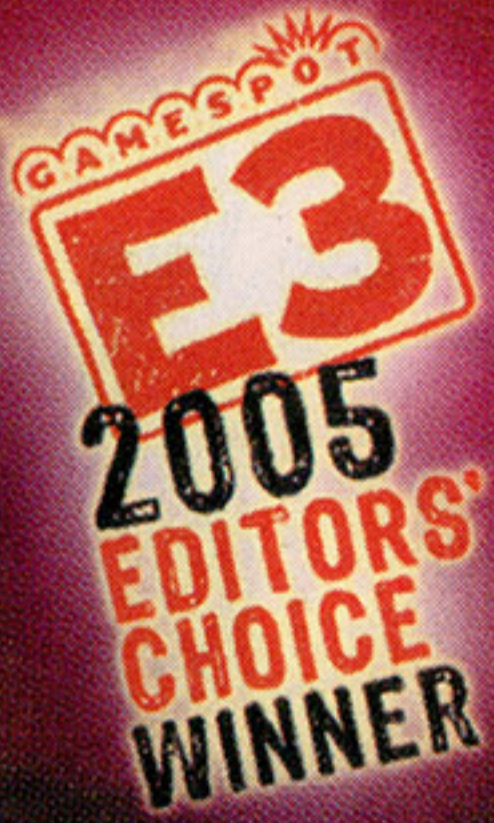
Gran Turismo staff trade exotics for crotch rockets

Not content with simply being the king of automobile driving simulators, Polyphony Digital is now trying its hand at motorcycles with its recently announced new title, *Tourist Trophy*, slated to be released in spring 2006. It should definitely appeal to the many motorcyclists out there, but we have to wonder how much demand there is for a game like this. Gamers seem more interested in driving cars than riding motorcycles, but who knows? Maybe this really is an untapped market.



Just like in *GT*, you can probably expect some challenging license tests. Oh, and hyper-realism, too.

KISS YOUR AIR GUITAR GOODBYE



"THE LATEST RHYTHM ACTION GAME FROM HARMONIX CONTINUES TO KICK ALL KINDS OF ASS."
- GAMESPOT.COM

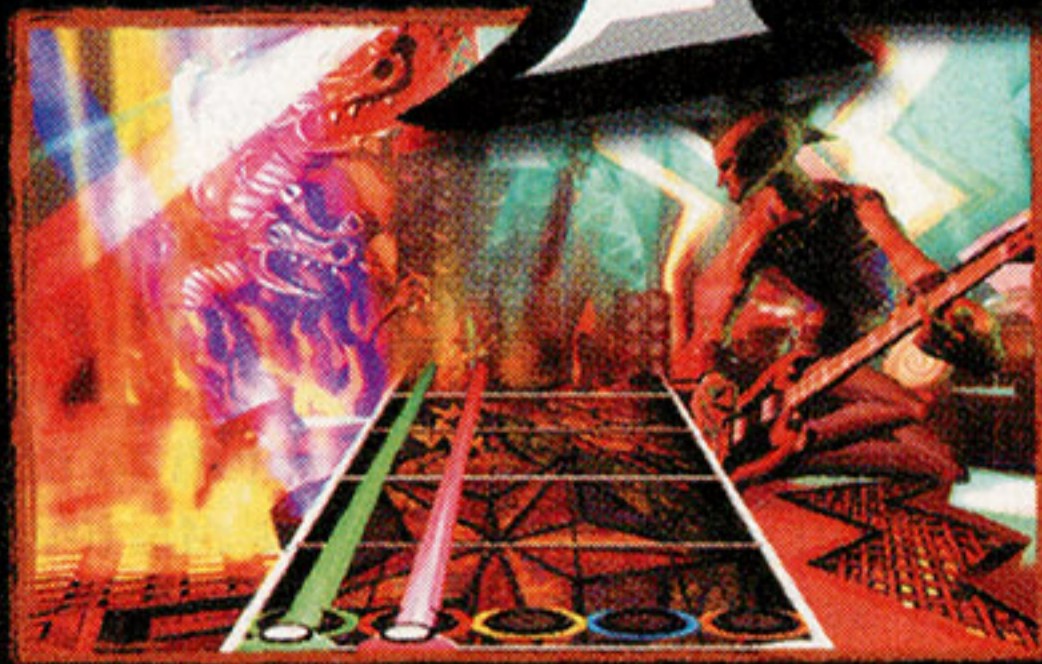
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INBOX

Have a question for the PSM team? Want to sound off about something we wrote? Visit psmonline.com to get in touch with us!

INSERT ORIGINAL TITLE HERE

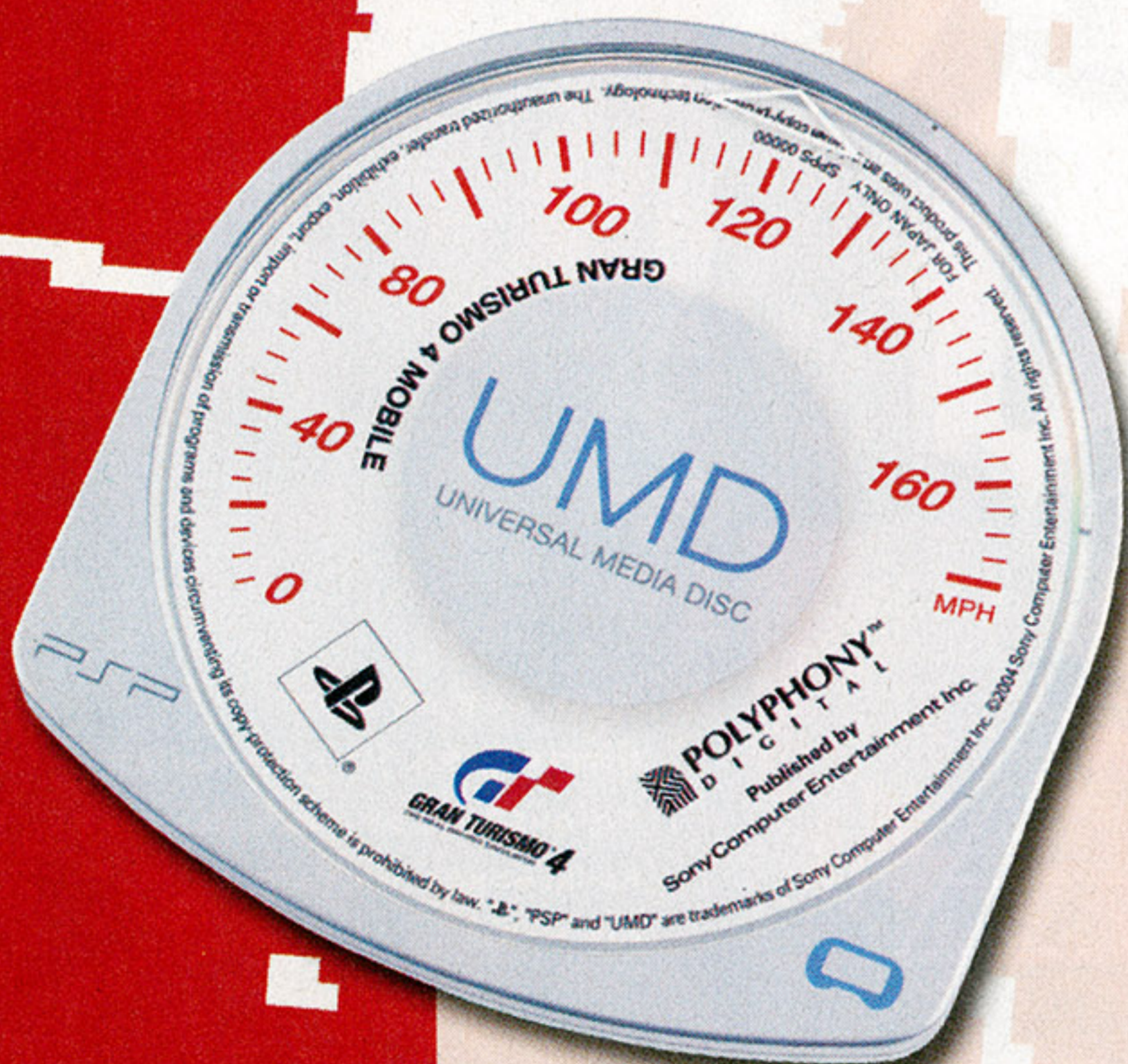
Gaming Gurus, I think it's worth mentioning that your December cover mentions a total of zero original titles (out of seven, if you count *Super Mario for PSP*). —*Dan Balsler, Atlanta, GA*

KAISER: There are several good reasons for that. One, as we get closer to the end of a console's life (the PS2), we tend to see more sequels, as no one wants to risk launching a new, unproven franchise, especially during the holiday season. Two, around the beginning of a console's life (the PSP and PS3), we tend to see updates to familiar franchises because companies want us to buy the new console, and old names give us something to relate to and want. On top of all this, we cover what's out there and apparently, very little of that consists of new brands!

Help!

I have a PSP and I love it, but with a couple of the games I have that white case that says "UMD" and that holds the disk has come apart. Now I have \$100 of games that don't work. Is there any way to fix this or buy replacement cases? —*Michael Tuschman, Graettinger, IA*

JUSTIN: Wow, that really sucks. As far as I know, there's no way to replace those things... short of re-buying all your games, that is. In the future, just try to be more careful with your UMDs, and keep them in the game boxes when you're not using them.



We have no idea how your UMD cartridges came apart, Michael, but if this has happened to anyone else, we definitely want to hear about it.



Hey,

What's up with your reviews lately? You're clearly reviewing betas and unfinished games. —*Allen O., Phoenix, AZ*

CHRIS: Why, it's just part of our plan to provide the most inaccurate reviews possible, Allen! Really though, I'm not sure what you're trying to get at, or why you seem to think you know so much about our review process. We don't review boxed copies of games, if that's what you mean, but we do review games that are finished (they just haven't been mass produced yet). So rest easy, champ!

Hey guys,

I was wondering if you were thinking of changing Randy's name to something more creative. I was thinking something like "Handy Randy" or "Dandy Randy" or possibly "Sandy Randy." If you wanted to just go wild, you could mix them all up and call him "Handy Dandy Sandy Randy." What do you think?! —*Robby, rpt91@earthlink.net*

BILL: Wow! What a great idea! How did you ever come up with that one, Robby? Or should I say Robby Lobby... Hmm... or would that be

Robby Hobby... or how about Robby Hobby Lobby Jobby? And people wonder why I'm a little "unhinged." Imagine reading 25 letters like this last one A DAY! Sheesh!

This one's for Chris, I was just wondering, with three platforms from Sony – PS2, PSP, and soon the PS3 – what is PSM's vision for the future of the magazine? Will the magazine become bigger to accommodate all three platforms or will there be spin-off magazines for each of the platforms? I, personally, would like to see a bigger magazine so that I can stay in the loop regarding the other two platforms without having to take on another subscription (I wouldn't mind paying a little more either). —*Nixon Khoo*

CHRIS: Right now the balance works okay because there aren't very many PSP games, there isn't tons of PS3 stuff to cover, and the PS2 scene is starting to slow down. As things begin to transition later this year, however, we'll definitely make some changes to ensure that PSM continues to be the absolute best place for PlayStation coverage. Big things are coming, but for now, my lips are sealed. :)

PAY TO PLAY

Hi guys, I was updating my PSP firmware when I saw something about a "Location Free Player." It piqued my interest, so I looked it up online. Anyhow, come to find out, I can use it to watch DVDs and TV on my PSP remotely. Then I saw the price: \$350. Before dishing out that kind of cash on this incredibly cool item, I wanted to know if the PS3 will have this feature. —*Kyle Blackman, New York, NY*

RANDY: Yes, in fact. Sony spoke about PS3 being able to stream DVDs, music, and other multimedia content to a PSP anywhere in the world via the Internet during its 2005 pre-E3 press conference. No really specific details were mentioned, nor was the functionality part of any official press release, however. Considering that Sony has been touting this "location free" technology as a key feature of PS3 to publishers and developers PSM has spoken to, it's a fairly safe bet that the system will support it eventually, if not right out of the gate.

Dear PSM,

I live just outside a decent sized city (about eight miles) and the high-speed Internet suppliers won't hook me up because I'm too far from any central hub. This is not fair. Many times in your magazine you point out how awesome online play is for games such as *SOCOM* and *Ratchet & Clank*, but I never get the chance to play because most require broadband and I'm stuck with dial-up. Now the PS3 is coming and it also has hook-ups for broadband, and I'll still be out of luck in my little hick town. Do you know why the high-speed providers don't "provide" it to everyone? —*Josh A. Thacker, Kankakee, Illinois*

RANDY: Well, Josh, you kind of answered your own question there... at least partially. In order to get DSL broadband, you need to be within a specific distance of your nearest "central office."

If the phone company's saying you can't get DSL, you must not be close enough to the central office in your area. As for cable-based broadband, the cable system in the area you live needs to be up-to-date enough to carry digital channels. In your case, it probably isn't. There is hope on the horizon, though. A new technology called WiMAX coming in late 2005 / early 2006 will use microwave signals to provide high-speed access to areas like yours that aren't serviceable by DSL or cable Internet. The actual hardware needed to send/receive data will run between \$250 and \$350, and you can read more about it at <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wimax>

Hey PSM,

I had a great idea the other day. For the Gamer's Diet, you would wake up and play some video games. Forget about breakfast, that's just calories you have to

burn off later. And since you burn more calories awake than asleep, just play video games into the night. Do you think I should start writing my book?

—*Michael Pfeiffer, thesecondbiggestlosernexttoyou@yahoo.com*

BILL: Drop that controller and pick up that word processor, Mike! You're wasting valuable time. You need start writing. Here's a few ideas I had for the title of your masterpiece:

"Wow! I Can See My Ribs!"

"Malnutrition: The Big Lie."

"What's That Gurgling Noise?"

"Chicks Dig Weak Guys"

and my all time favorite:

"Toilet? We Don't Need No Stinking Toilet!"



The capabilities of Sony's Location Free Players, one of which is shown here, will most likely be part of the final PS3 hardware.

RANTS & RAVES!

RANT "How many war games do we need? Honestly? I can't believe when I go to the store to look for a new game or to just browse how many of these games there are. Second, sports games, some are good, some are bad. Do we honestly need a new one every single year? With a lot of sports games, we have one coming out every year from multiple companies! It's totally ridiculous! It just makes me so mad to see the gaming world slowly spiraling into the cat litter, so to speak." —*Q. Silver, Internet*

RANT "Are PSP games ever going to get cheaper? They're only 10 dollars less than Xbox 360 games! What's up with that?" —*Oscar Real*

RANT "I'm really mad at Ubisoft for making the first *Prince of Persia* T-rated, then going off and making the next two M-rated. For the sake of all the other 14 year-old gamers out there, why would you do that to us?" —*Donna Sullivan*

RANT "I hate it when people judge me because of my love for video games! I mean, it's terrible and wrong, because I usually get the question "Aren't you a little old for video games?" Where exactly is it stated that only children can play video games?! I'd really like to know! If games were only meant for children, why would there be a 'M' rating?! Or even 'T'?! People make me feel like I should be ashamed of the fact that I like video games! Why should anyone feel ashamed for liking something? What right does anyone have to make anyone feel this way? The answers: No one should feel ashamed, as long as they like it, because it doesn't matter what others think." —*Eric A. Maldonado, Buffalo, NY*

Rant or Rave at psmonline.com

Ask a Stupid QUESTION...

THE 800-POUND GORILLA GIVES YOU AN ANSWER!



Dear 800-lb Gorilla, I was just recently playing *We Love Katamari* when I got to thinking "What makes katamaris stick?" Is it intense super glue, a high powered magnet, or maybe double sided sticky tape? What are your thoughts? —*Jordan, Manitoba, Canada*

800-LB GORILLA: Those are some

pretty good ideas, Jordan, but they're wrong. Allow me to help you out here.

There are only two substances that lend themselves completely to the type of gathering action displayed in *We Love Katamari*. Both come from Nature. Here are your clues:

The first substance can be

either a liquid or a solid. It has amazing adhesive qualities. It can even defy gravity (just look under my desk...)! It can also be sculpted into many amazing shapes. It's color can range from clear to green to brownish-red, making it an ideal camouflage paint (if you can get enough of it...). What is this amazing substance, you ask? Why... it's snot!

The second substance can be described by the creature whose actions mimic the behavior shown in *We Love Katamari*. The creatures name is the Dung Beetle and it rolls a big, steaming, stinking ball of...

FANDOM

Step up and share your mad love for PS2 with the world!

FANDOM YEAR IN REVIEW!

These are the best of the best entries from the past year, so we thought they deserved to be seen again! Now it's your turn to vote for your favorite piece of fandom on our forums at psmonline.com — your A-number-one pick will be showcased next issue!



Natalie



Edi Gaudiamo



Donna Brown



Terrance Kelly



Kristoffer Rimmell



Nicole Thomas



Xero Reynolds



Timothy Lim



Roland Cooney



Andrew McWhorter



Gabriel Timothy Lim



Petersen Phiscien

HOLIDAY'S BEST FANDOM!



The PSM Prize Pack for this issue goes to **C.R. MAJORS** for this great illustration of Jak and Daxter from *Jak II*. Hey, Jak kind of looks like a pirate there! Arr, matey!

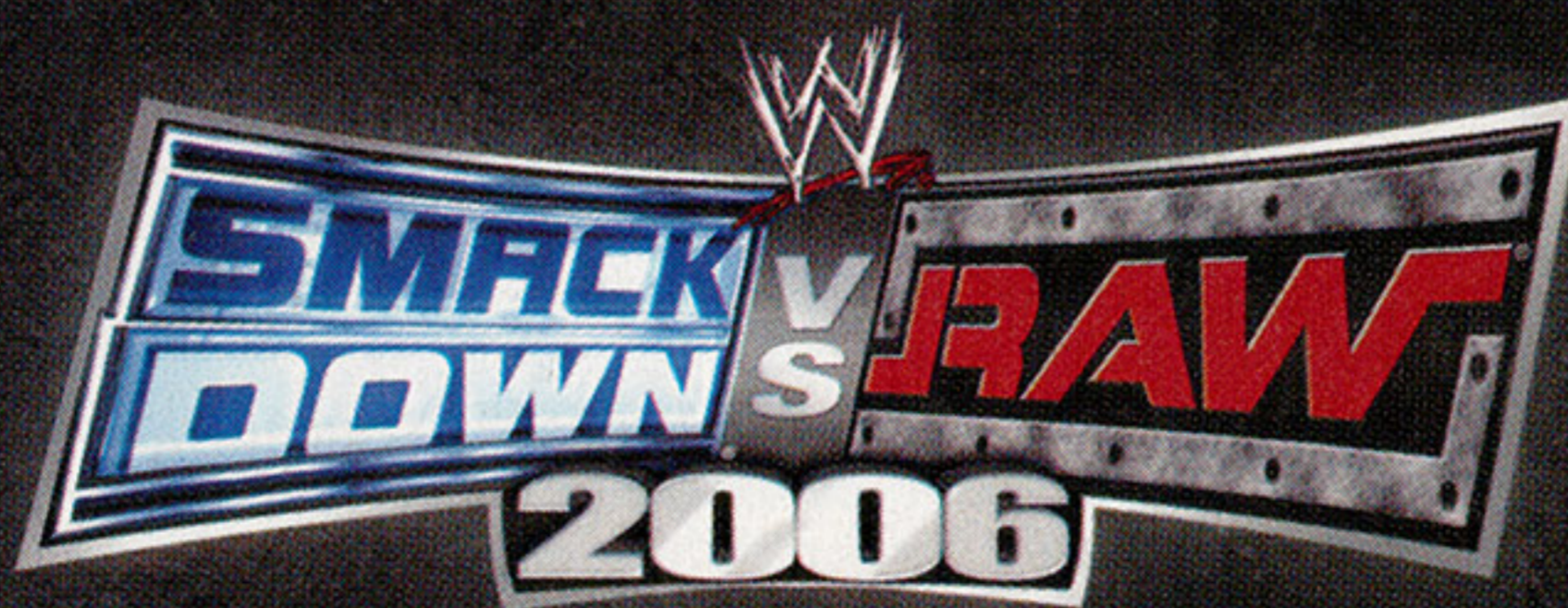
HIT US WITH YOUR BEST STUFF!

Get over to psmonline.com and submit your displays of fandom — fan art, cosplay, custom toys... you name it, we want it! The best of the best will be displayed here each issue!

WIN!

Every issue, PSM's editors will choose the best entry from the previous month. The lucky winner will receive a free one year subscription to the online videogame rental service GameFly (a \$300 value, www.gamefly.com). In addition, everyone who gets their fandom printed will receive a GameFly hat or T-shirt for their effort.

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www.thq.com

Pitch the Pros

Your game ideas — reviewed by PS2's top game makers!

"Powder-Puff Football"

FIRST
DOWN
MY
ASS!!



Illustration by Ryan Kinnaird

Dear Pitch the Pros, With the somewhat success of games such as *Leisure Suit Larry*, *Rumble Roses*, and *Dead or Alive Extreme Beach Volleyball*, it got me thinking that those games got me interested in a few things: college, wrestling, and volleyball. Why not make a game with girls that have bouncy... personalities (what did you think I was going to say?) in a game involving many sports that I would normally never be interested in.

Football is one of them. But this would be a "Powder-Puff Football"-type game. Something in the fashion of *NFL Street*, but with foxy ladies. There would be some original girls, create-a-

babe characters, and some of the all-time great babes of PlayStation past and present. You know, girls from *Tekken*, *Resident Evil*, *Mortal Kombat*, etc.

This could draw anti-football/pro-babe fans to an arcade-style football game. There could be different costumes that you could unlock and tons of stages to play from each of the girls' games. Some stages could include outside the Raccoon City Police Department parking lot and plenty of other areas that PlayStation fans would recognize.

There could also be different game modes such as; keep away, playing in mud, hot potato, and "4 Teams" mode (which is like a free for all or Chinese checkers). Release it for 20 bucks and you've got yourself a goldmine!

VEEDUBDRIVER

Tron Bonne might look adverse to the idea of being tackled by Lara Croft, but she's in the minority.

THIS MONTH'S PRO:

ERIC MARCOULLIER
Director of Serious Games, Cyberlore
He worked on *Playboy: The Mansion*



Where would we be without Sports Games For The Rest Of Us? Way back when, I spent hours launching cliff divers head first into rocks in Epyx's *World Games*. These days, everyone's making sports games for people who can't stand sports games. I hear *Outlaw Curling* is just around the corner.

I want to like this pitch, but as it stands there's something missing. Like, you know, gameplay. Diet Sports games work when they take the pure essence of a sport and then amp the hell out of it. Bodyslammng a receiver in *NFL Blitz*; breakin' ankles in *NBA Street*; serving a beatdown in *Outlaw Tennis* — this is what makes sports compelling to the average person. Sure, some people like NASCAR because of all those left turns, but the rest of us want to see bits of car flying into the crowd.

Now don't get me wrong, I love me some boobies. But as Pamela Anderson will tell you, giant knockers only get you so far. Sure, the team has cat fights in the locker room. Maybe they even compete in the lingerie. Sexy? Oh

yeah! Fun? Beats me. You gave me my favorite condiments but forgot to put meat on the bun. There's something here and I'm not going to let you squander it. I reject the pitch for now, but I want a rewrite on my desk tomorrow morning! Try Again!

REJECTED!

Check out psmonline.com for details on how you can pitch the pros with your own game idea — and win a PSM prize pack, unlike Veedubdriver.

ONE WANTS TO FREE HIS PEOPLE...



I RETURNED HOME EXPECTING PEACE. INSTEAD I FOUND MY KINGDOM RAVAGED BY WAR AND MY PEOPLE ENSLAVED. NOW I AM A FUGITIVE, HUNTED BY HOSTILE ARMIES AND PLAGUED BY A CURSE THAT IS GRADUALLY POSSESSING MY SOUL. A DARKER PRINCE RESIDES IN ME NOW. AND I MUST EMBRACE HIS POWERS AND SKILL IF I WANT TO RESTORE PEACE TO MY LAND, MY PEOPLE, AND MY SOUL.

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PSM PLAYLIST

CHRIS

Liberty City Stories hasn't left my PSP since it came out, and I may not pop the disc out until the sequel drops sometime late next year. While *LCS* doesn't offer much new, *GTA* never fails to entertain. (Oh, and 360 is fun too, but I probably shouldn't mention that!)



RANDY

Star Wars Battlefront II and *Battlefield 2: Modern Combat* have been eating



up most of my free time. It's great to have two really awesome online games hit at once, but also tough to split time between the two. My most anticipated game is also online: *MGS3: Subsistence*. I will make the PSM staff salute me!

KAISER

Having just played through *Prince of Persia: The Two Thrones*, I can



gladly say it was worth the wait. Don't believe me? Just check out my review this issue! Now if only *Tomb Raider* would hurry up and get here. I'm almost afraid it won't live up to my expectations — but only because it looks so good.

JUSTIN

I've had a lot on my plate lately when it comes to games I had to play for reviews and whatnot, but the game I've found myself playing the most in my spare time is *Star Wars Battlefront II*. Oh, and I also try to play a little *Mario Kart DS* when I get the chance. As for what the future holds, I can't wait to play *Black* and *MGS3: Subsistence*.



READER PLAYLIST

TED TORTORICI, GRASS VALLEY, CA

I've been playing *Ratchet & Clank: UYA*. Man, that game is so awesome! I've also been playing *MGS3: Snake Eater* and *Black Hawk Down*. I'm really looking forward for *King Kong*.



JANUARY'S BIG RELEASES

- | | | | | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|---|---|
| 1/1
Drakengard 2
Final Fight: Streetwise
Gander Mountains Trophy
Guilty Gear Judgment (PSP)
Hitman: Blood Money
Hummer
Jaws Unleashed
MotoGP 4
Onimusha: Dawn of Dreams
River King: A Wonderful Journey
Sandlot Basketball
Sandlot Football
Sandlot Hockey
West Coast Choppers | 1/3
Def Jam Fight For NY (PSP) | 1/10
Wild Arms 4 | 1/17
25 To Life | 1/24
P.Q.: Practical Intelligence Quotient (PSP) | 1/31
SpongeBob SquarePants: The Yellow Avenger (PSP) |
|--|-----------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|---|---|



FUTURE OUTLOOK

FEBRUARY

- | | | |
|---|-------------------------------|--|
| 2/1
50 Cent: Bulletproof (PSP)
Advent Shadow (PSP)
AND 1 Streetball
Ape Escape Academy (PSP)
Bounty Hounds (PSP)
Commandos Strike Force
Cowboy Bebop
Curious George
Daxter (PSP)
EyeToy:Chat
Free Running (PSP)
Full Spectrum Warrior: Ten Hammers
Ghost Recon: Advanced Warfighter
Greg Hastings' Tournament Paintball MAX'd
Greg Hastings' Tournament Paintball MAX'd (PSP)
History Channel: American Civil War
Mortal Kombat: Deception Unchained (PSP)
Neopets Petpet Adventure: The Wand of Wishing (PSP)
Payout Poker & Casino
Payout Poker and Casino (PSP)
StarCraft: Ghost
Suikoden V
Tales of Legendia
Teen Titans
TOCA Race Driver 2 (PSP)
TOCA Race Driver 3
Tomb Raider: Legend
Untold Legends: The Warrior's Code (PSP) | 2/27
Field Commander (PSP) | 2/28
24 The Game
Generation of Chaos (PSP)
Stacked with Daniel Negreanu
Stacked with Daniel Negreanu (PSP)
World Soccer Winning Eleven 9 International
World Soccer Winning Eleven 9 International (PSP) |
|---|-------------------------------|--|

MARCH

- | |
|---|
| 3/1
beatmania
Fear & Respect
FFVII: Dirge of Cerberus
Grandia III
James Bond 007: From Russia with Love (PSP)
Kingdom Hearts II
Metal Gear ACID 2 (PSP)
Metal Gear Solid 3: Subsistence |
|---|

- | | | | |
|--|--|---------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Okami
The Godfather: The Game
Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell 4
World Poker Tour (PSP)
Ys: The Ark of Napishtim (PSP) | 3/7
Shadow Hearts: From The New World | 3/14
The Godfather: The Game (PSP) | 3/28
Metal Saga |
|--|--|---------------------------------------|--------------------|

APRIL

- | | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------|
| 4/1
Bully
Dance Factory | 4/15
Battlestations: Midway | 4/25
Atelier Iris 2 |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------|



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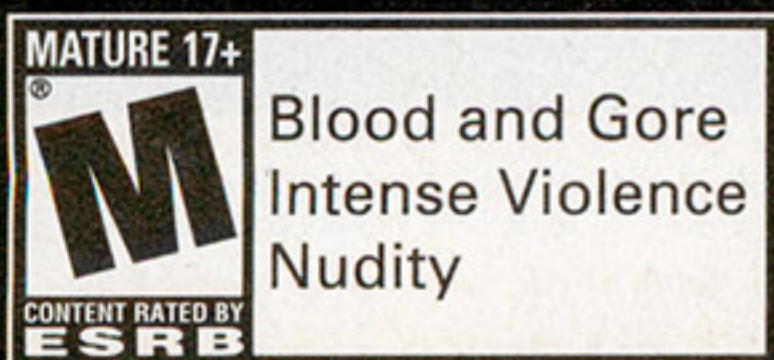
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BEMANI

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MusicInEveryDirection.com



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(HIRED) GUNS OF THE PATRIOTS

Metal Gear creator Hideo Kojima explains more about MGS4's plot and reveals some incredible new gameplay details you haven't heard anywhere else!



Solid Snake may be getting old, but he's still strong enough to disarm and take down a much younger enemy using CQC.

Except for the unveiling of the PlayStation 3 itself, it's safe to say that there was no more exciting moment in 2005 than the first teaser trailer for its flagship game, *Metal Gear Solid 4: Guns of The Patriots*.

PSM was in Japan for the game's unveiling, and we were just as amazed as everyone else who saw it.

Of course, what we saw immediately had our minds racing with possibilities and filling up with questions. Fortunately, we'd also gone to Japan for a rare opportunity to interview Hideo Kojima, creator of the series — rare because he and his team have been locked away since E3 working on the game and trailer.

In the limited time we had, the imminently cool "gaming god" (who's actually a very down to earth guy) revealed a treasure trove of new secrets for us to smuggle back to his favorite contingent of fans — those that read PSM.

PSM: Now that the trailer's out, is there anything more you can tell us about the story or environment?

Hideo Kojima: Well, first of all, this time, Snake is on a mission not to go to a certain place, but a battlefield. In the past *Metal Gear* games, it was pretty obvious that Snake had to sneak into the enemies' facilities — meaning everyone around you was an enemy. The biggest change we have for *MGS4* is that, where Snake sneaks in — whether that's a country or location or battlefield — it doesn't mean that everyone around him are enemies. When Snake goes into the battlefield, it's a battlefield, meaning that there are at least more than two sides who are fighting each other, where Snake is maybe the third person or the third aspect to the battle. That means that what you do with Snake could affect that battle.

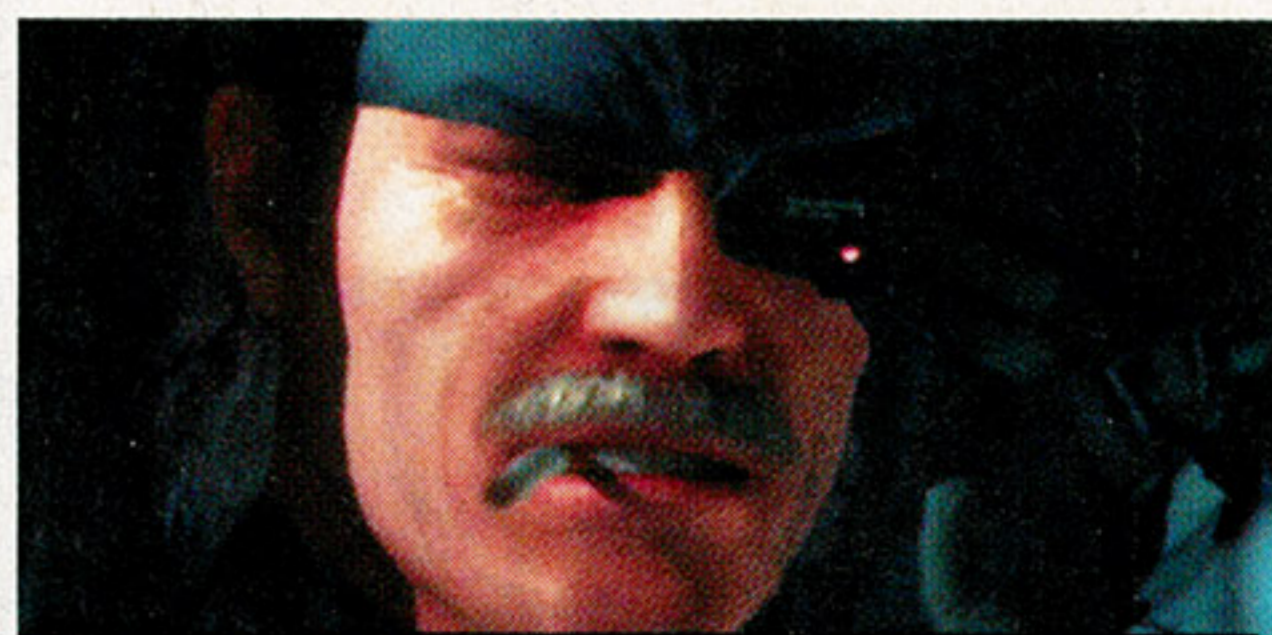
The whole environment changes in real time, so the player controlling Snake has

the option to make any sort of involvement they would like to in order to progress in the game. If you've seen the trailer, you've seen that it's a battlefield, not a specific one. And this happens to be true in the game also — it's not set in a specific location, because Snake goes into several battles, and that creates the whole drama in *MGS4*.

In *MGS3*, it was set in the Cold War with the Soviets versus the U.S., but they were not directly fighting. It was the spies of each country who were fighting on behalf of the Soviet Union and the U.S. That was in the 1960s. That was *MGS3*.

So for *MGS4*, it will be, of course, the type of war we have today. This is what we have in mind for *MGS4*. We're also predicting what will happen in the wars of the near future as well, and how those wars will happen. This will all be in *MGS4*. All of the wars in the past were between nations or ideologies or politics. They were fought for those kinds of reasons. But in the near-future war, it's more like a business, so there's lots of money involved, meaning they'll hire mercenaries to fight on behalf of their country. And that is the setting for *MGS4*.

In the near future, I predict that war will be like this. There is already a company that lets you hire a bounty hunter who will fight on behalf of you or your



Solid Snake's "Solid Eye System" — the fancy eye patch — takes the place of his Soliton Radar, night vision goggles, and thermal scope.

"IT'S NOT SET IN A SPECIFIC LOCATION, BECAUSE SNAKE GOES INTO SEVERAL BATTLES, AND THAT CREATES THE WHOLE DRAMA IN MGS4."

country. It will be a more indirect war in this sense. In the trailer, you saw the new gadgets and robots, meaning that war won't necessarily be man against man. Even in war now, there are remote-controlled robots and weapons and AI. So it's not a human being versus a human being. It's more nations fighting bounty hunters and robots — not humans physically fighting each other. To wrap the whole thing up, the battlefield that Snake goes into this time won't have a very apparent enemy. It will be more complex because it's more of a made-up business war, and Snake goes into that setting. And that's what *MGS4* is all about.

PSM: How many years after *MGS2* does this game take place?

Kojima: Right now, I'm still working out the scenario so there won't be any [continuity] mistakes, but I'd say a couple of years — maybe as many as 10.

PSM: Snake looks significantly older in *MGS4*. Is he aging faster because he's a clone of Big Boss?

Kojima: [Laughter] You're exactly right! You're right, he is a clone. He was a copy, but the cloning technology was from the '70s. It was a very new technology back then. It's not like it is today with our technology. Snake is aging very fast. If you look at Otacon, you'll notice that he has not aged very much, but Snake has.

PSM: In the trailer, Snake appears to have a heart attack of sorts and injects something into his neck. Is that to slow the aging or ease his pain? What is that?

Kojima: I can't say really specifically because I'm still figuring out the whole game system. But as a story background fact, you're right — he is aging fast and his health, power, and stamina are not as good as they were when he was younger. So, yes, he is injecting some sort of power, but we're not sure if we're going to actually put that in the game or not so I can't really say what that is.

PSM: Is there ever a time you play as a younger Snake?

Kojima: That's not planned at the moment. What were your impressions of the old Snake? I might have second thoughts about a younger Snake if everyone thinks he looks too old.

PSM: Will we see the return of CQC, eat-

ing, stamina, etc.?

Kojima: I can say that CQC will return, but it doesn't really make sense because that's Big Boss' technique. People will have question marks if Snake can do CQC, but if you follow the story, you'll understand why he has it. Stamina will probably remain in *MGS4*, but we're still discussing most of the aspects of the game. We're not even sup-

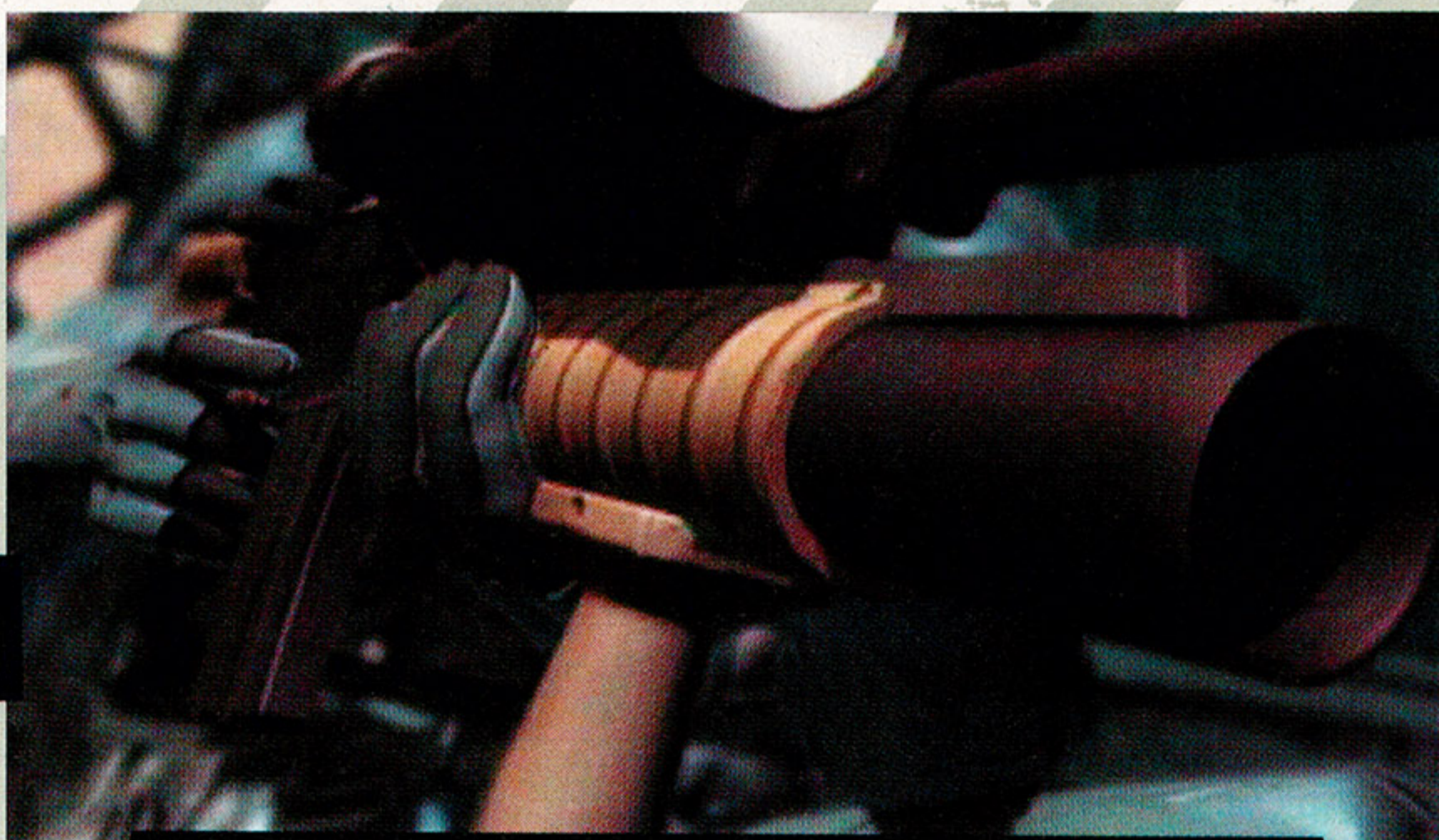
posed to say this because we might upset the team members, but we're still undecided on the food capture system.

PSM: In the trailer, Snake has the eyepiece that looks like it might replace the radar, though without showing any cones of vision. Can you talk about that?

Kojima: You're actually right about that



“WE’RE MAKING RAIDEN A VERY COOL CHARACTER. YOU’LL PROBABLY LIKE HIM VERY MUCH. THERE’S EVEN POTENTIAL YOU’LL LIKE HIM MORE THAN SNAKE!”



MGS4 will feature a modular weapons system for mixing and matching gun parts. Here, Snake is adding a grenade launcher to his rifle.

gadget that he has over his eye. That will replace all his different vision modes, such as thermal, etc. I can't say very specifically how the system works, but you're pretty close.

PSM: How about the little Metal Gear that comes out where Otacon appears on the screen. Will that replace the codec and be the main form of communication?

Kojima: Yes.

PSM: So he'll be talking to more people through it than just Otacon?

Kojima: That's a secret.

PSM: Will you ever control it yourself to scout ahead or take pictures?

Kojima: Yes. We're trying to do it at this stage, but if the game comes out and those features are not in the game, please realize that it was because we couldn't do it for a good reason. We had the plan for a remote-controlled robot for even *MGS2*, however, due to the specs of the PS2, we couldn't do it. We especially wanted to do it in *MGS3*, but of course the story and background prevented us from doing so.

PSM: Have you ever thought about having a second player, or even using the PSP to control it?

Kojima: Yes, I'm thinking about it.

PSM: The bigger robots in the trailer look like Metal Gear Ray on the bottom and Metal Gear Rex on top. Can you explain this?

Kojima: I cannot say what that is or what it will do because of the plot. What I can say is that the leg part of what you saw is not 100% robot. It's like biotechnology. It's kind of like a cyborg. Think of it as the ninja suit in *MGS1*. If you shoot the leg, blood comes out. But it's very fast because it's not a robotic thing — it's got muscles. So it can move quite fast.

The upper part, like you said, is a robot and is AI-controlled. It's not very smart. We're going to let you in on a little secret regarding that machine. If you watch the trailer again, when it comes out, you can hear the crying noise of the cicada bug. In Japan, when you hear the cries of cicada, to most Japanese people, it automatically makes them think of summer. And then it brings you back to your childhood, because there was so much nature in the past; so many cicada.

The footstep sound it makes is actually a horse. When it approaches you, you have the cicada sound and the sound of a horse approaching you. Also, the cries of that machine are from a cow. So there's a horse, a cow, and a cicada. All that combined gives you a natural feeling. This is the mental, psychological way to kill an enemy. See, in a battlefield you have a tense feeling. But when this machine approaches you, you have the horse sound, and the cow cry, and the cicada cry, and it makes you forget where you are and think about your childhood. You feel a little peaceful.

PSM: And then they strike?

Kojima: Yes, then they attack. So it's very psychological.

PSM: Can you talk about how Raiden is involved in the story?

Kojima: Should Raiden appear? [Laughter]

PSM: We think so!

Kojima: In Japan, Raiden is quite a popular character. He will, in fact, appear in *MGS4*. We know he's not very popular in the U.S., but this time we're making Raiden a very

I can CQC you!

Although Kojima realizes that it was Solid Snake's progenitor, Big Boss, who was actually trained in Close Quarters Combat (CQC) — a new gameplay mechanic in *MGS3* — he's glossed over this continuity conundrum in order to get CQC into *Guns of The Patriots*.

This is what CQC looks like from the eyes of Snake's enemies... for that brief moment they're conscious.



Snake disarms his opponent in the trailer and takes his rifle — our wish of acquiring weapons from enemies may actually be coming true.

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cool character. You'll probably like him very much. There's even potential you'll like him more than Snake! You should forget the image that appeared in *MGS2* because as you can see, Otacon has changed dramatically in the trailer. He's much more of a hard-boiled character. So Raiden will make this type of personality change as well.

PSM: Is there any chance of Snake actually controlling some vehicles this time?

Kojima: In the *Metal Gear* series, we've never done that before. But in all the so-called "popular" games available now, you can control or ride anything. So in *MGS4*, yes, we will try to make Snake control anything that's possible.

PSM: At the end of the trailer, it says that the Cell processor is the key to the console war. Does that mean you prefer the PS3 over the other next-gen consoles, or think it will be the reigning game console?

Kojima: I mentioned the console war, but I actually think there won't be a console war. It will be more of a war of creators. Think about the Nintendo Revolution. You see the new controller. For the Revolution,

the game concept or idea has to be designed for that machine. So it will be a war of if the creators have great ideas or not.

It won't be possible to do multi-platform games like today where you have one title and have it on PS2, GameCube, and Xbox. This will not be the way in the near future. For the high-spec machines like the PS3 and the 360, you will need a lot of time and money to make a game to the standard of those machines. The creator must be a gifted creator, because expressing their ideas will be very difficult using those high-spec machines.

It won't be the publishers' way that will win the game industry battle. No matter how good the publisher is, you must always have good production; how many of these titles and creators you have will be the key. It will not be a matter of the platform.

In 10 to 20 years, the company that remains will be the one with most talented, innovative creators, and not the one with just well-known franchises. It's important that we have good production. So in the next era, if you could imagine this example: in the movie industry, it won't be the Disney that's important, it will be the Pixar. Who has the Pixar? That's what will be important.



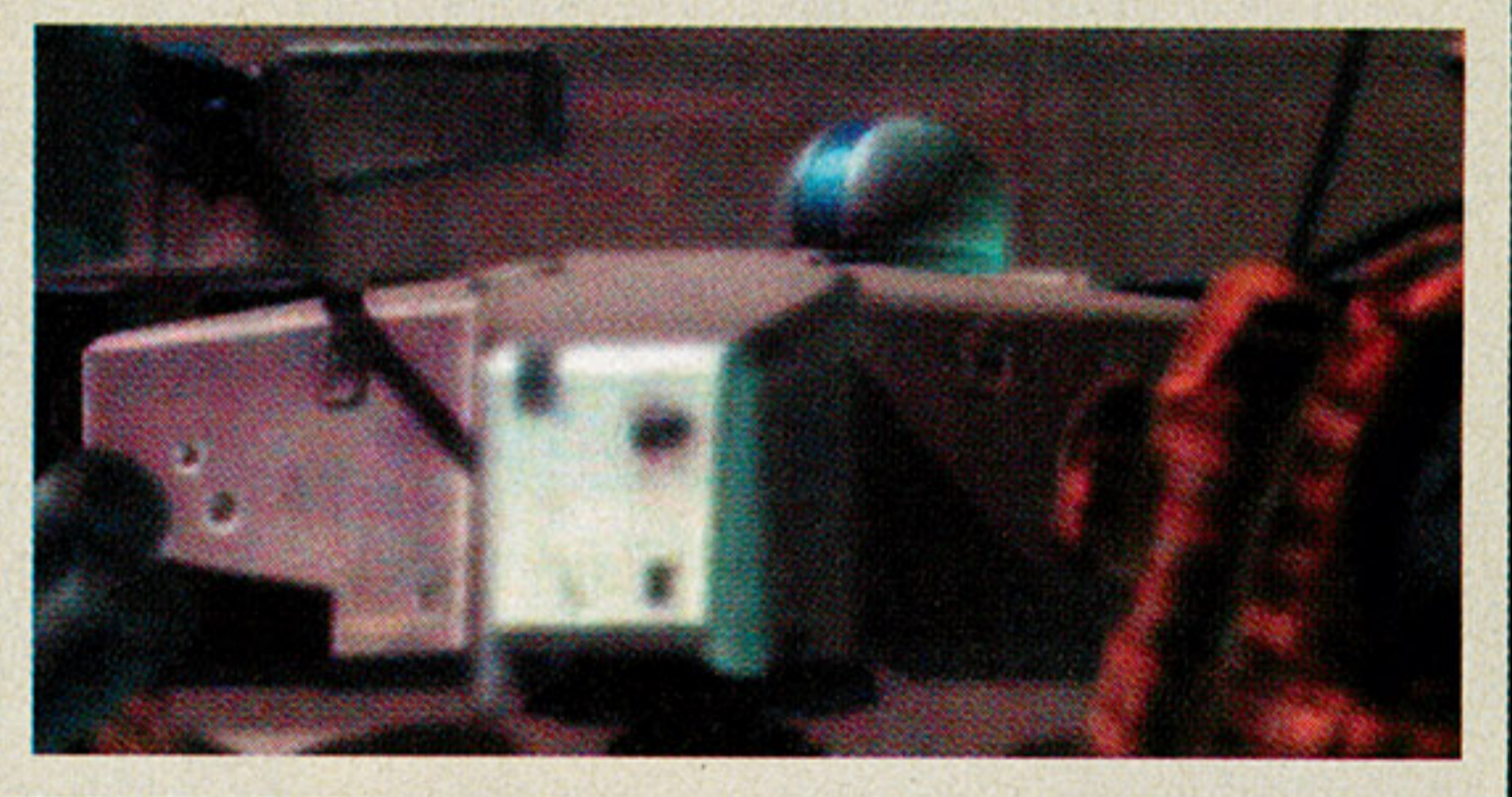
The effects of Snake's accelerated aging are definitely showing. He'll need to use an item to keep stable, but Kojima isn't exactly sure how it will work yet.

Not-Entirely-Metal Gear

The new, smaller Metal Gears that Snake will encounter en masse on the battlefield are actually cyborgs. Half machine (top) and partially organic (legs), they're designed to mess with the minds of enemies and be very agile.



This may look like Metal Gear Rex from *MGS1*...



...after all, it has a turret that looks almost identical.



It's legs, however, look like they're borrowed from Metal Gear Ray, and they're partially organic. They'll bleed when shot. Yikes!

"I MIGHT HAVE SECOND THOUGHTS ABOUT A YOUNGER SNAKE IF EVERYONE THINKS HE LOOKS TOO OLD."



The Metal Gear Mk II will follow Snake on his mission, replacing the traditional communication codec. Kojima is also thinking of using it as a reconnaissance tool.

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PLAYSTATION PREVIEW 2006

We've tossed out the crystal balls, the magic eight-balls, and the bowling balls (sorry about that, guy outside the window!) and have gone straight to the game makers — and the makers of the PlayStation itself — to bring you the definitive look at the year ahead across PS2, PSP, and, yes, that certain new system known as the PlayStation 3.

Is the PS2 on its last legs? Is PSP doomed to play second fiddle to portable DVD players? Will the PS3 really make you breakfast and file your taxes while powering a city the size of Albuquerque, New Mexico? You'll find the answers to the first two questions in this, the 2006 edition of our annual PlayStation Preview feature. Only this year, it's a mega-feature. We know, "mega" is usually overused in this day and age, but we just had to break it out. After all, no one but PSM is going to kick the year off with a first-hand, we-controlled-it preview of a massive PlayStation 3 launch game. That's pretty damn "mega," if you ask us. It's also pretty "mega" to get the president and executive vice president of Sony Computer Entertainment America for an exclusive Q&A on all things PlayStation. And yes, that includes PS3.

Most of all, we want you to come away mega-excited about what 2006 has in store for PlayStation fans. We know we are. Now turn the page for a mega-dose of eye-melting PS3 goodness!

YOU'RE LOOKING AT THE REAL DEAL!

UNREAL TOURNAMENT 2007

**Hands-on with
— and under the
hood of — PS3's
stunning flagship
online game!**

The place: Los Angeles, California. The date: May 16, 2005. The event: Sony's pre-E3 press conference. The star: PlayStation 3.

Everyone expected the system to show in some form. No one expected that Tim Sweeney, one of the world's top game programmers, would walk out on stage and present a real time demonstration of Unreal Engine 3 — the next-generation game engine that will be used by a vast number of PS3 developers — that would leave everyone in the room without a doubt that next generation PlayStation was the real deal. Or, in this case, the Unreal deal.

Six months later...

Unreal Engine 3 had been in development for nearly two and a half years, and up-and-running in just two months on early PS3 hardware back in May. The demo was impressive, but it was much more than just a technology tease. It was a taste of things to come. A taste of *Unreal Tournament 2007*, an online, adrenaline-fueled PS3 launch title, to be exact.

It's been a long time (five years, to be exact) since PlayStation 2 owners have been exposed to *Unreal Tournament*, and a lot has

changed. The series has gone from a frantic frag-fest to a strategic battlefield epic and online classic on the PC. (Okay, there's still plenty of frantic fragging in it.) For its 2K7 iteration (think of it like a sports game; the year's bumped ahead by one) the series is not just coming back to the console world — it's aiming to set a new benchmark for online multiplayer in the process.

Building a better battle

"We've been working on the gameplay side of things for about a year," the game's lead designer, Steve Polge, told us as we first laid eyes on it. "We started off refining the basics, the movement and the weapons," he recounted. "We went back to the roots; played older *UT* games, other first-person shooters, so that it just feels really good." However, Polge was quick to add: "We're still in the early part of development." Judging by the level we saw, you wouldn't have thought it.

In a classic segue into "the really cool stuff," Polge quickly talked about the weapons being familiar, but enhanced, then got down to one of the major elements that could make *UT2007* the PS3's online killer-app: its vehicles. "We're really innovating

most with the vehicles," explained Polge. "We think it's something that will really translate well to the console. It's actually one case where a console controller is actually better suited for gameplay." (No, Epic Games doesn't have a PS3 boomerang controller — no one does — we controlled the dev kit with a stock Dual Shock 2.)

Big guns are good. Big vehicles with bigger guns are better. There will be 18 in all, up from the six that debuted in *UT2004*. Executive Producer Jeff Morris landed an Axxon Cicada in front of us, giving us our first look at the detail achievable by pairing Unreal Engine 3 with great artists. With its vertical wings, belly turret, and nose art, it looked like the offspring of an aircraft from WWII and WWXXII. It was also difficult to look at it and not think that it would look perfectly at home in a big-budget Hollywood movie without needing to be pre-rendered.

Next up, we got to see the returning, but improved, Scorpion. This all-terrain vehicle now becomes a self-destructing projectile if the player uses its newly added boost to rush enemies and then ejects before impact. It's also great for showing off how the game's ground vehicles have evolved from "floating boxes" to heavy feeling, realistically handling terrors of the terrain.

In fact, the vehicles have evolved to the point that entire battles can be played out using them. It's something that Morris has no problem with. "Where is the *'Twisted Metal Championship?'*" he wondered aloud. "There's no real leader of the vehicular combat genre on consoles. In fact, the genre has really evaporated over the years," he observed. "We see a real opportunity to bring that type of gameplay back in *Unreal Tournament 2007*."

The men (and women) behind the machines

We can't disagree with that, but this is a FPS, right? You're not just a car — you're a man, woman, alien — a being packing some major firepower. Fear not, the foot soldier has not been forgotten.

At this point in development, the Onslaught mode is the major focus of the *UT2007* team. The battlefields feature many elements well known to players of *Unreal Tournaments* past. Capture nodes, turrets,

The screen you're looking at came from the PS3 dev kit at 720p resolution.



COVER STORY



You can hopefully understand why, when this real time demo was shown at E3, people were stunned.

and the like... but there are, of course, some new twists.

"We're trying to give the level designers a lot more freedom to experiment with doing all new types of Onslaught levels," explained Polge. "We have special objectives now that can be mixed into the mode. We have low-key objectives, like 'blow up this bridge,' but they can also be very elaborate."

Morris is especially excited about this new aspect. "Even though you're still playing Onslaught, you know that if you complete this one special objective, for example, you're going to start out the next match in a really cool vehicle." He loves his vehicles.

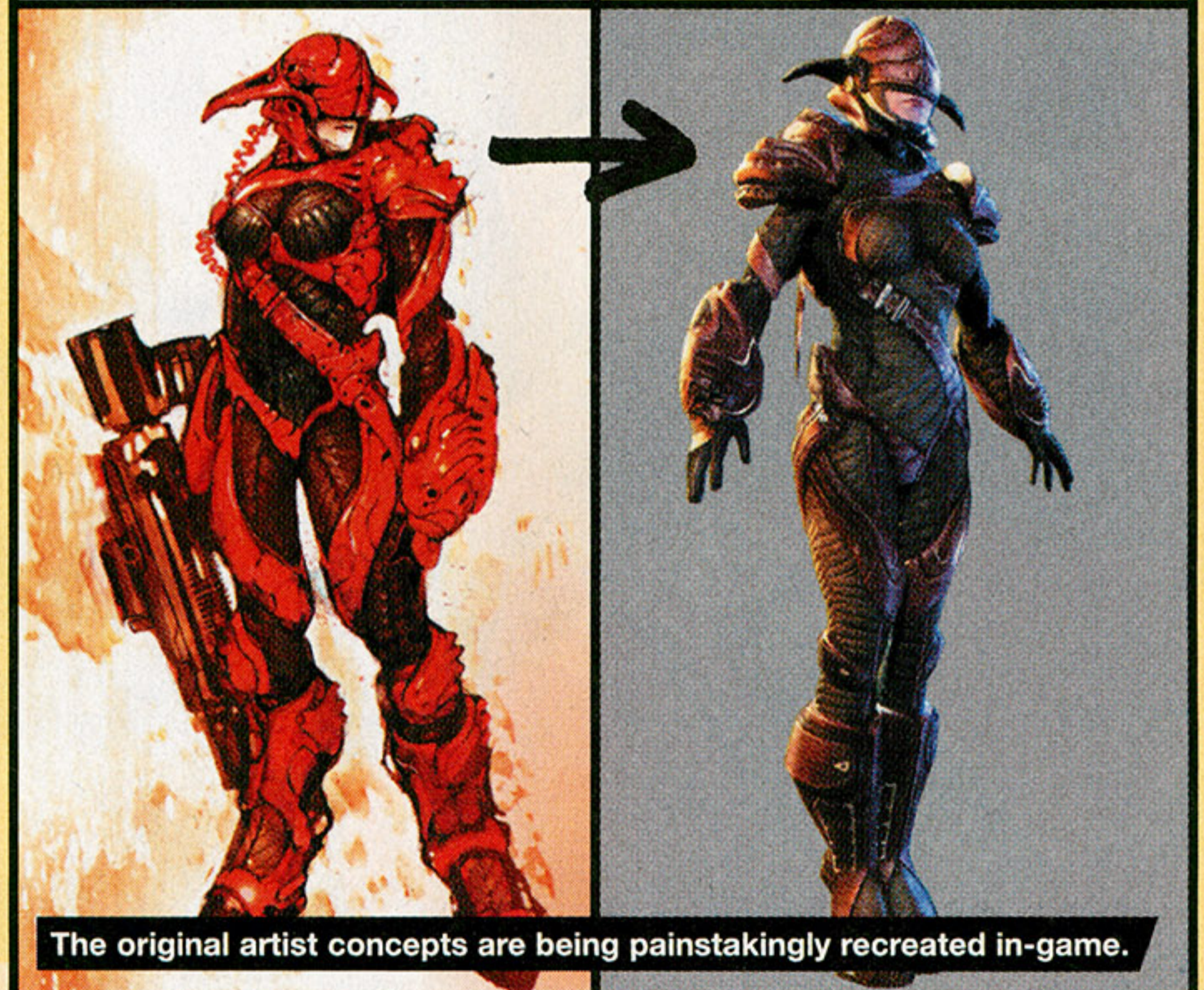
How does all this cause and effect gameplay fit into the

whole picture? "The other big thing we're adding in *UT2007* is a campaign called Warfare," explained Polge. "The outcome of one battle will realistically affect the next one. It gives a more story-driven aspect to the game, offline or online."

The design team is also very big on giving the player the freedom to change their role on the battlefield at any point. Polge explains: "We're not going to have classes. What we're trying to do, though, is encourage people to take on roles." His example: "You can go and grab a sniper rifle and be a sniper for a while, but if you decide you're tired of doing that, you can play as an engineer by picking up some deployables, which are some-



This will likely be the main player character, but he'll be customizable.



The original artist concepts are being painstakingly recreated in-game.



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thing else we're adding to *UT2007*."

"Mines, energy barriers — we have a lot of ideas," he teased.

Blurring the off/online


"Even though it's an online-oriented title, a staggering number of people play *UT2004* offline," Morris revealed to our amazement. "We always take the single player very seriously," he continued. "One of the ways we're doing that in *UT2007* is by giving the characters lots of personality." According to Morris, offline bots will interact with the player and each other much more realistically now. The game is set to incorporate Epic's voice recognition technology for communicating with bots as well. "My goal is to be able to use natural words to banter with the bots," Morris explained. "I want to say

'Go take this point!' to the bot and have him say 'Nah, I don't want to,'" taking it a step farther, Morris adds: "Then I'll say 'You WILL take that point!' and then he goes ahead and does it. And that's just that one guy's personality."

UT2007 is also set to include a deeper create-a-character feature than the previous games, enabling you to customize nearly every aspect of your character's physique and battle gear.

Oh, the eye candy

Gameplay explained, the entire team wanted to regale us with details about the technology and art that makes *UT2007* look so damn amazing. And hey, we were just as eager to listen. As the game's executive producer explained to us in words and on the screen,



This shot is 1280x720, the same resolution the final PS3 game will run at, only it will have even more effects and detail in place.

the real time level we were in originally “looked too clean. Too sci-fi.” So the team decided to base it more in reality and give a grungier look to everything. “The cool thing is, every little grungy bit we added caught the light and gave the game an even more amazing look,” Morris explained as he pointed out the remarkably crisp floor and wall textures on the 720p display, light glinting off the floor’s diamond plate as the camera moved.

Yes, the game is targeted to run at 1080x720, a.k.a. 720p resolution if you have a high-definition display. We asked Epic Games vice president Mark Rein, who was also present at the demo, about the target frame rate. “It’s simply too early to say, but we’re aiming for it to be as high as possible,” he responded. For the record, the

720p, totally un-optimized build running on hardware less powerful than the final PS3 spec was clipping along at 49fps.

We asked Rein about the now famous E3 demo of Unreal Engine 3. How difficult was it, really, to get it up and running? “The only trick we did to make sure that the lighting looked right and the shadows looked right when we were doing our E3 demo was to change the mode in the game engine from Direct X to Open GL,” he confirmed, adding: “There’s no difference in what you see running on this test bed PC [a high-end system with a \$500+ NVIDIA 7800GTX video card] and the PS3, which is really amazing.”

“People are going to be totally blown away when they get a PS3 and play it,” Rein continued. “PC gamers are used to having

the absolute cutting-edge graphics — console players are just going to say ‘Wow!’” As for how PS3 will ultimately run the game? “When you see the [final] game running on PS3, it’s going to be smoother [than on the PC]. You’re not going to have the operating system in the way and all the other things that can make a PC game look ‘poppy,’” he said. Driving home the point, he added: “People ask me what the next generation is going to offer other than better graphics, and I say ‘Stop! Go back and look at the graphics!’ Don’t downplay that. People spend \$600 on a video card to get this kind of performance on their PC, and this is a potentially sub-\$500 console!”

Rappin’ with the tech master

There are a lot of very talented game cre-

The new weapon models are amazingly details, but it was really their animations and lighting effects when fired that had us floored.



ators working to make *UT2007* a showcase game for the PS3 launch. Without the three years of work lead programmer Tim Sweeney and his team put into creating Unreal Engine 3, however, it would never have been realistic to bring the game to PS3. Sweeney was the first developer to have his say on the hardware in front of the world media, so we thought it only appropriate that he have the final say in this article.

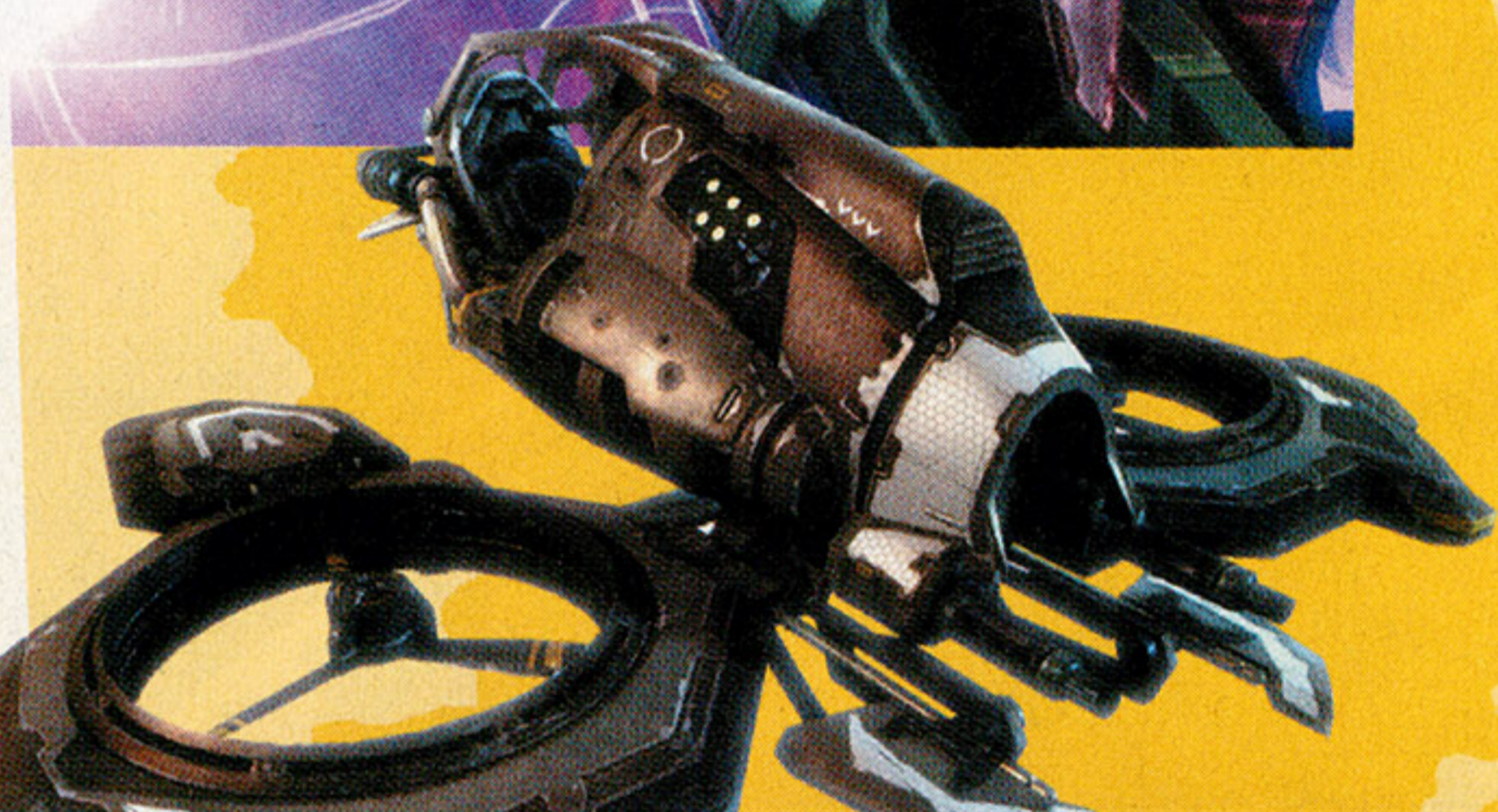
While we flew through a test level running on the latest PS3 dev kit (basically a large brushed aluminum box with two retro-looking red LCDs on its face — and nothing else), he and fellow programmer Josh spoke about their experience with Sony's next-gen technology.

Josh explained that coding for PS3 was "really a night and day difference" from what he was used to on PS2. Easier? "There's just a lot more preexisting knowledge you can apply from the entire game development world," he elaborated. "You don't have to learn everything all over again. So in that way, it's a huge difference."

Sweeney applauded Sony's decision to go with NVIDIA for PS3's graphics processor, which is based on familiar programmable pixel-shader technology. "It was a very developer-friendly move and we were thrilled to see it happen. Sony could have developed its own proprietary graphics accelerator again, but what they ultimately did was take the route that allows us to get the best-looking games up and running much more quickly."

Unreal Engine 3 is helping in that respect, too. "Right now, most developers have been so caught up in PS2 and Xbox 1 development cycles that when they went to begin working on this hardware generation, they realized that they'd have to spend years just building their own engines," Sweeney explained. "Now they can use our technology instead of losing half of the console's lifespan ramping up to get where we're already at."

Where they're at with *UT2007* is still a year away from completion, but it's already, well, simply unreal to see in action. **RANDY NELSON**



The Manta: A very zippy single pilot vehicle that's great for fighting ground troops.



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The Goliath can raise a energy shield in front of the turret, shoot it, and cause a blast to knock away would-be saboteurs.

Did they say "hoverboards?"

Hate it when you're killed in an online game and have to trek all the way back from a spawn point to the action? Enter *UT2007*'s hoverboard. Everyone has one, and they're mighty handy. When riding, players can fire a "tow beam" and latch onto world objects and vehicles. The latter lets you hitch a ride, or gather momentum for clearing large gaps. Or perform a crazy jump and pull off some tricks. Yes, there are *SSX*-style tricks. No, we're not kidding. Yes, it's actually cool.



In this piece of concept art, you can get an idea of the hoverboard and the grappling beam you can utilize while riding it.

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i hear some tunes. all thanks to one little card.



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SONY SPEAKS

PSM gets the latest on PlayStation 3, plus the outlook for PS2 and PSP in a rare tag-team interview with Sony Computer Entertainment America's top brass, Kaz Hirai and Jack Tretton



Kaz Hirai
President and Chief Executive Officer, Co-COO, Sony Computer Entertainment America



Jack Tretton
Executive Vice President, Co-COO, Sony Computer Entertainment America

PSM: What do you say to the PlayStation 2 owner that knows the PS3 is coming in 2005, and isn't sure what that means for their current system?

Kaz Hirai: We're into year five now with the PlayStation 2, and we see a lot of life left in the PlayStation 2 even after the PlayStation 3 is launched. I think that a lot of publishers who were really not as aggressive in pursuing the older platform in terms of software support saw how the PlayStation was in business for 10 years, so I think this time around you're going to see a lot more titles coming out for the PlayStation 2, certainly next year and even beyond, obviously from first-party, but also the third-party community as well.

PSM: What ever happened with the PS2 HDD and the media software for it?

Kaz Hirai: A couple of things there. One, we felt that a lot of those uses were suited for a portable environment, so you see a lot of that on the PlayStation Portable. By the nature of the portability of the product, you're going to have more uses for

"WE WOULDN'T BE MAKING CLAIMS OF WHAT OUR PLATFORMS COULD DO IF WE DIDN'T FEEL WE COULD DELIVER ON THEM"

—Jack Tretton

things like showing photos to your friends and what have you. That, as well as, quite honestly, the ramp up and the number of units we were able to get out of the hard drive and the software support unfortunately did not mean we were going to have close to a 1:1 tie ratio with the PlayStation 2s we had out in the market. We also had the redesign to the slim model PS2 as well, so, what we've done, again, is realize that these are all good functions to have, and we've incorporated them into the PlayStation Portable. I think it's proven to

be nice functionality that many people will take advantage of.

PSM: Can we expect more totally original titles on PSP in 2006?

Kaz Hirai: Yes. We certainly want to bring a lot of franchises to the PSP that are originally developed for that platform, but, at the same time, one of the things we want to accomplish with the PlayStation Portable is to really expand the PlayStation experience to the handheld environment. So both in terms of variations of existing franchises — which, as you know, aren't just simple ports; they're using the same name but have completely different gameplay — we want to take advantage of the franchises we've built, but also being cognizant that you don't establish a new platform by just relying on existing franchises and you do need to push the envelope with great original content, like, for example, *Pursuit Force*.

we're still looking at, and it's obviously a decision that needs to be made with us weighing a variety of factors, including how many units we can ramp up to, what is the manufacturing capacity, but, more importantly, what kind of software lineup are we going to have between first- and third-party in any of the three major territories that will get the product first, being Japan, Europe, and the U.S. Which territory has the flow of software, the lineup of software? That will factor into it as well. So, basically, in a nutshell, it's too early to answer that question both from the manufacturing ramp up standpoint as well as the software lineup standpoint.

PSM: Can we squash the rumors of PS3 slipping into 2007?

Kaz Hirai: [laughs] Yes... unless we have no software, which I doubt very much, we're still on track for a spring 2006 launch.

PSM: Are you still committed to a spring 2006 launch for PS3?

Kaz Hirai: We are still strategizing over that, and we've not come to a decision yet as to whether we want to go with Japan first, the U.S. first, two territories at the same time, three territories at the same time. Those things

PSM: How much of an impact on PS3 will Microsoft's head start with Xbox 360 — however long it may be — have?

Jack Tretton: I consider myself somewhat of a student of history, and while I don't think that the past is ever any guarantee of the future, a couple of things I like

Pursuing PSP Originality

No sooner than he mentioned it to us during our interview, SCEA picked up the U.S. publishing rights to British developer BigBig's totally original PSP racing-action game *Pursuit Force*. Set for release in March, the game mixes police chases with daring vehicle-to-vehicle platforming for a game that's totally unlike any you've played on PSP, or PS2, for that matter. We'll have an expanded look at the game next issue, so look for it.



In *Pursuit Force*, chasing the crooks is only half the fun. You'll even get to shoot them from helicopters.



The other half is fearlessly jumping onto their cars and shooting it out while hanging on for dear life.

"WITH PLAYSTATION 3 YOU CAN EXPECT MORE FEATURES THAT MAKE IT EXCITING TO BE PART OF AN ONLINE COMMUNITY"

—Kaz Hirai

to point out factually that clearly are indicative of what you can expect going forward. Number one, we've never been the first platform to market. When we original launched the PlayStation, the Sega Saturn hit the market before we did and ultimately that didn't help them prevail. The last time around with PlayStation 2, the Dreamcast hit the market first and ultimately that didn't help them prevail.

Number two, if you say that this generation really came down to a battle between us and Microsoft, we sold three million PS2s before it hit the shelves in the States and if you look at the score now, it's 34 million for PS2 to roughly 14 million for Xbox. I think that, in Microsoft's mind, that three million we sold was really paramount. As far as what it would take for a lead by Microsoft to be significant, I don't think it's a matter of time, but rather a matter of units.

PSM: How important to Sony is the idea of a simultaneous worldwide launch of PlayStation 3?

Jack Tretton: I don't think a consumer really cares whether or not it [the PS3] is available in another country before or after it's available for them. Everybody wants a new platform as soon as they can get their hands on it, and I guess selfishly every territory wants to be first, but I think ultimately what the consumers are going to be excited about is going to be the software content that's available for it. The actual machine isn't very exciting unless you have compelling software to put into it. Often times, the first territory the system launches in suffers from the weakest launch lineup because the other territories have that additional time to do development and really get more games available and make each game that much better in time to hit the launch window.

PSM: Are you confident that the final PS3 will deliver the quality of visuals seen in the E3 demos?

Kaz Hirai: Yes, and I think the proof will have to be in the pudding. Because no matter what I say here, people are going to try to dispel that and be skeptical until they see what we bring in terms of the final product. I'm going to say it's going to be just as exciting or even better than what people have seen, We will deliver, just as we have

on the original PlayStation, the PlayStation 2, and, most recently, the PlayStation Portable.

Jack Tretton: We wouldn't be making claims of what our platforms could do if we didn't feel we could deliver on them. We've actually got three internal [PS3] titles that we're working on at Sony Computer Entertainment America. One of them, *WarHawk*, is playable, and you can compare the graphics and see them live, and also with another one of our launch titles, a game from Factor 5 called *Lair*, again live footage, that footage compares very favorably to what was shown at the E3 press conference. I think that, in the very near future, you'll see some comparable gameplay footage that will really put those rumors [that PS3 can't be as powerful as we're claiming it is] to bed.

PSM: There's been a lot of speculation about downscaling the PS3 in order to keep the price of the system down — is this really happening?

Kaz Hirai: The specifications that were distributed at E3 are the only version of the PlayStation 3 that exists. I have not seen any revisions to that, certainly not any official internal communication. (Note: SCEA has since clarified that it was never officially stated that the PS3 would serve as a full wireless router. The system will simply act as a basic hub for connecting other Ethernet devices via an existing connection to a home wireless network.)

PSM: When will we get to play actual PS3 games on a real PS3?

Kaz Hirai: It's hard to say when at this point in time, but what I can say is as soon as we feel that the quality of the software is up to where we expect it to be, and that we're confident of us being able to present that to everybody and have everybody go home with the impression that, yes, these guys are really pushing the envelope in terms of what they bring to gameplay, graphic qual-

ity, and everything else. If that takes longer, then again, people are going to be skeptical until the day we show that. If it takes longer than a lot of people expect, and that causes more speculation, it is what it is. I don't think it's something we can do anything about until we come out with an exact showing of those games, and we'll present those games just as soon as we're good and ready to go.

PSM: How will the PlayStation online experience change with the introduction of PS3?

Kaz Hirai: With the PlayStation 3, you can expect to see a lot more of the features that make it exciting to be part of an online community, beyond just the gameplay. Whether it's match-making or other community features, those are an integral part of being an online community. We're hard at work on integrating those functionalities, as well as other functionalities that people have come to expect, and even some new things that people will find very refreshing.

PSM: What about the talk from others at Sony that PS3 online will be just like PS2 online, more or less?

Kaz Hirai: I think that when people at SCEA or SCEA talk about keeping the online model pretty much along the lines of what we have now [on PS2] what they're actually saying is that they want to make sure that we maintain all of the good business model points that we had in the open model and try to improve upon those with our third-party publishing partners.

PSM: Can you tell us anything about the pricing of the PlayStation 3?

Kaz Hirai: Pricing [of the system itself] is again something we'll have to take a very close look at as we get closer and closer to launch. So at this point in time, it's really difficult to say what the pricing structure is going to look like.

PSM: There's some concern about PS3 being priced out of the reach of everyone but the hardcore early adopters. Is this valid?

Kaz Hirai: I would say that our past performance is the best indication of our future performance, and for at least three platforms, I think we have been bringing an excellent value to consumers, but also providing them with cutting-edge technology. I go back to less than a year ago when people looked at the PSP, and I got questions like "Wow, this thing is great, but what do you think? \$500?" and I said, "Well, the proof is in the pudding: We've done PlayStation and PlayStation 2 at an affordable price," and people just said "Yeah, right!" response. But we went out there with a \$249 value pack, and I think people were pleasantly surprised. I'm not saying, therefore, that the PS3 is going to be \$249, \$299, whatever, but I think we have a pretty good history of providing value for what we bring to the consumers.



PSM: What do you think of the PS3 controller? Have you held it?

Kaz Hirai: [laughs] Kutaragi actually showed it to me, and he was kind of waving it in my face, and when I tried to reach out for it, he said "No, no, no, no, no — not yet!" So I've actually not held it. I don't think too many people have held it, because I've not held it. But I know what Kutaragi wanted to do. He tasked the designers with the challenge of "Look, we've had this great controller for the PlayStation and the PlayStation 2, but this has been around for a good 10 years now, so what can we do to change the look of the design. But, at the same time, when you actually hold the controller, it's something that's very familiar that you've come to love for the past 10 years."

THE GAME MAKERS SPEAK

**Ted Price**

President and CEO,
Insomniac Games
Makers of *Ratchet & Clank*
NEXT UP: The codenamed
first-person shooter "I-8"
for PS3

PSM: Okay, first things first: We're totally excited about "I-8." There has to be something you can tell us about it other than "it's still in development."

Ted Price: Ha-ha! Nope.

PSM: When will we learn more about the game?

Soon. Very soon.

PSM: Do you feel that the PS2 era is pretty much coming to a close in 2006?

Ted Price: Not at all. My guess is that the mainstream player will be more interested in sticking with the PS2 for longer than we think and waiting for a solid number of PlayStation 3 games to show up before switching over.

PSM: Going forward into the next generation, what would you say are the most important lessons you learned about game design during PS2's run?

Ted Price: I think the first lesson we learned that being too ambitious can kill you. I guess that's always been true with design, but as the game platforms have gotten more powerful, assets are harder and harder to create. If you have a design that includes everything but the kitchen sink, your artists, programmers, animators, etc. will simply drown trying to get everything done.

As assets increase in complexity, the time and money it takes to create the games increase and therefore the risks go up. And this leads to the second thing we learned: we're no longer a garage developer. While it was great to have enough people to make bigger and bigger projects, our size came at a cost. We had to jettison our habits of custom coding everything and making lots of late-stage changes in our games.

PSM: What excites you, as a developer, about the PS3?

Ted Price: Memory and processing power are the two biggies. We'll now have 16 times the memory to work with and a lot more computing muscle. This means we can simply do a lot

more to create more immersive games.

PSM: Is the Blu-Ray Disc format particularly exciting from your standpoint?

Ted Price: Absolutely. We've already been running out of space on PS2 DVDs with current-gen games. Since next-gen assets are a lot bigger, you need a lot more space. Not only will in-game assets demand more space (like higher res textures, normal maps, light maps etc.), since the PlayStation 3 supports 1080p and 1080i, our video assets are also going to need a lot of room.

PSM: What's your honest opinion of Xbox 360 versus PS3?

Ted Price: They're both very powerful machines, but like every console war to date, it's all about the games. While Xbox 360 has the advantage of coming out earlier and reputedly being easier to develop on, PS3 has more raw horsepower. I think what you'll see on PS3 at launch are games that look as good or better than Xbox 360 games, but a couple years down the road, the gap will widen between the PS3 games



Ted Price has a great sense of humor, but when he says you'll be hearing more about Insomniac's PS3 debut game "I-8" very soon, he's dead serious.

and Xbox 360 games as PS3 developers discover better ways to take advantage of the Cell's unique architecture.

PSM: What's one big thing you can tell us about your next game that will get us even more excited about it?

Ted Price: While there aren't any Lombaxes in the game, you definitely get to blow lots of stuff up! Plus we'll be drawing 529,670,000,000 polygons per frame (give or take a few), the game will be run by an AI that can also do your taxes or your homework for you and we'll support full-body biofeedback suits. Probably. (Editor's note: Ted is just being silly here. We think. You never know...)

**Alex Ward**

Creative Manager,
Criterion Studios
Makers of the *Burnout*
series
NEXT UP: The PS2
uber-shooter *Black*

PSM: You're still working on what could be one of the last big games for PS2. After *Black*, do you think that the PS2's time in the spotlight will pretty much be over?

Alex Ward: No, I don't think so at all. For many of us in the industry it will feel that way to us, but not for the massive audience out there. Sony will most likely sell as many PS2 machines over the next year as it has in the past two or three years put together. We must all remember that a huge number of gamers out there have not yet bought a PS2 yet.

Some people will be just receiving a machine tomorrow for a birthday present or gift. Look at VHS. Personally, I've owned a DVD player for around

seven years now, but people are still renting videocassettes from Blockbuster. I think it's a definite issue for the games business to address — we're much too quick to be excited about the next thing, whatever that is.

PSM: Going forward into the next generation, what would you say are the most important lessons you learned about game design during PS2's run?

Alex Ward: Personally speaking here, I would say that I have learned a lot about presentation



If any game proves there's plenty of untapped power left in the PS2, it's Criterion's incredibly intense first-person shooter, *Black*, blasting its way onto the system this spring.

in a game. Compare the first *Burnout* to the latest one, you'll see the difference. You can never spend enough time on presentation. If players do not understand what to do with what you are giving them then they will most likely not enjoy the game, and then go onto the Internet and tell a billion people that the game is bad.

PSM: What changes to the way games are presented or played do you think we'll be seeing right out of the gate on PlayStation 3?

Alex Ward: I think everyone was excited by the materials presented at E3 in May. Truly cinematic gaming is really just a heartbeat away. I think the line is going to blur between the TV, movie, and game business.

PSM: What excites you, as a developer, about the PS3?

Alex Ward: More power under the hood to enable us to do incredible things.

PSM: How about some more Criterion games on PSP? *Burnout Legends* was great. Is *Black* PSP next, or are you cooking up something new?

Alex Ward: I think we're just getting started on PSP. It's been a very busy year for us. I think you'll see some stuff from us on that hardware.

PSM: In your opinion, what's stopping more developers from creating deep, original titles for PSP?

Alex Ward: I think it honestly comes down to time. I was not personally involved with *Burnout* on PSP this year as much as I originally planned to be due to being very busy working with the *Revenge* team. I think to really create something deep and original as you say developers will have to choose between making a game for say a next-generation system and the PSP. I don't know how I would choose — I like all the systems right now.

WHEREVER FREEDOM
IS THREATENED,

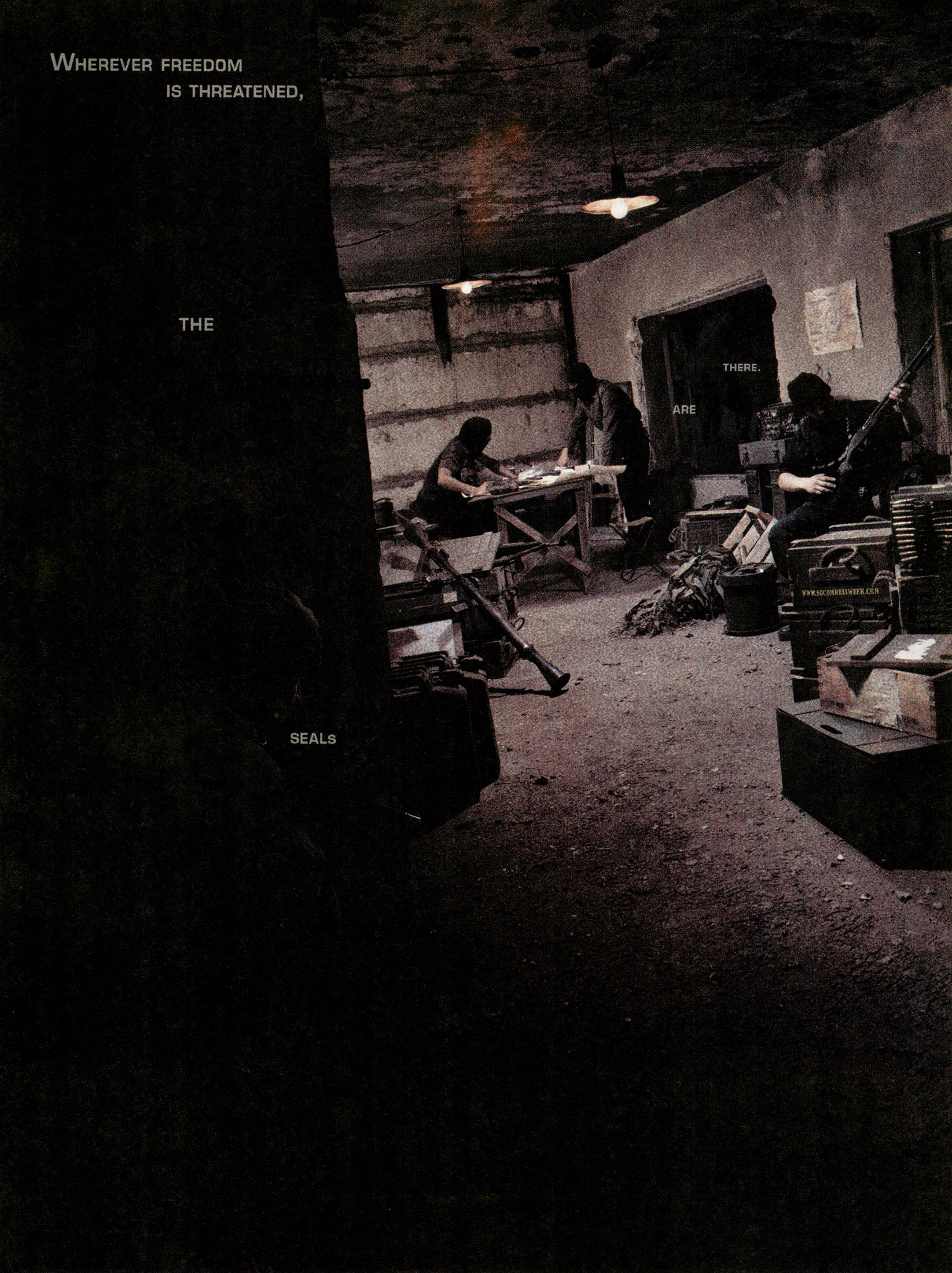
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Neil Young

General Manager,
Electronic Arts Los
Angeles

HE'S BEEN BEHIND:
EA's games based on *The Lord of The Rings* saga
NEXT UP: A secret project for PS3

PSM: Do you feel that the PS2 era is pretty much coming to a close in 2006?

Neil Young: No, I don't think so. The PSone surprised us all with its longevity and I think we'll see the same thing with the PS2.

PSM: Going forward into the next generation, what would you say are the most important lessons you learned about game design during PS2's run?

Neil Young: You can't make up for a poor game with good graphics! At the end of the day we need to be building games that are fun, innovating and fresh – not just beautiful to look at. I

don't think we saw enough of that in this last generation.

PSM: What changes to the way games are presented or played do you think we'll be seeing right out of the gate on PlayStation 3?

Neil Young: Well, on the presentation front, I think you'll notice a dramatic difference. Visually the games will look stunning and will really show off that HDTV that you've got in your living room. I think from a gameplay standpoint, there'll be a few games that begin to use the power of the machine. It's incredible from a computational performance standpoint, but it's going to take a while for developers to really unlock the full potential of the machine.

PSM: What excites you, as a developer, about the PS3?

Neil Young: What we can do with all that computational power! It'll take a while, but before too



EA's *LOTR* games were incredibly well presented, looking as close to the movies as possible. Imagining what Young and crew can do on PS3 is very exciting.

long you'll start to see games that you could only once dream of.

PSM: Will the PS2, PS3, or PSP receive the most support from EALA in terms of software titles and development focus in 2006?

Neil Young: We will support all of the systems, but, as a studio, we are very focused on development for PS3.

PSM: What's the ratio of established franchises to entirely new properties looking like right now

for EALA on PS3?

Neil Young: We've not announced our line-up for PS3 yet, but you can count on the fact that we're going to be bringing some of our best known franchises to the platform as well as original products, in particular the ones developed with Steven Spielberg.

PSM: What is one thing you can tell us about the new titles EALA is working on that will get us even more excited about them?

Neil Young: We're going to try to avoid the trap of creating shinier versions of the same old thing. As a gamer, I'm bored with seeing the same thing with better graphics. We're going to try some new things both in terms of features within our existing game series and with new series that will hopefully push gaming further forward.



Evan Wells

Studio Director, Naughty
Dog Inc.

HE'S BEEN BEHIND: He designed *Jak II* and oversaw *Jak 3* and *Jak X*.
NEXT UP: A big PS3 secret.

PSM: In what ways is the reorganization of Sony's worldwide studios into one entity going to affect the games we'll play on PS3 and PSP?

Evan Wells: Ultimately it will result in better games coming out of Sony's first party studios. With an increased focus on worldwide strategy and sharing of resources and technology, first-party developers can concentrate on creating the best games possible. Next generation development requires an unprecedented amount of attention to detail and facilitating communication on a global level will certainly help lessen some duplicated effort across studios.

PSM: Do you feel that it's important for Sony to offer a standardized online experience comparable to Xbox Live for this upcoming generation?

Evan Wells: I think that it's absolutely imperative. With every console being broadband ready out of the box, the number of gamers looking for an online

experience is going to be huge. Online games are only as fun as the number of people playing them so an environment needs to be in place that fosters a sense of community that extends beyond the borders of an individual game.

PSM: In your opinion, is the PS2 era pretty much coming to a close in 2006?

Evan Wells: With the installed base of the PlayStation 2, I don't think the end of the PS2 era is near. The current library of games is enormous, the number of triple-A titles available at Greatest Hits pricing offers consumers an unprecedented value for their entertainment dollar, and developers are continuing to develop games for the PlayStation 2.

PSM: Going forward into the next generation, what would you say



Jak X: Combat Racing was produced by one team at Naughty Dog while another was getting started on PS3.

are the most important lessons you learned about game design during PS2's run?

Evan Wells: Gamers are expecting more sophisticated experiences out of the games they play these days. That's not to say that gameplay has become any less important, but all of that tried and true fun from games of the past has to be wrapped up in ever more impressive and immersive experiences.

PSM: What changes to the way games are presented or played do you think we'll be seeing right out of the gate on PlayStation 3?

Evan Wells: I think many of the first wave of games are going to focus on impressing the player with how realistic and believable the graphics look. Complex physics simulations and a massive number of interactive objects will also be used to demonstrate the power of the PlayStation 3. Over time, we'll probably see a shift stylistically to include a more diverse range of looks.

PSM: What excites you, as a developer, about the PS3?

Evan Wells: Each new generation of hardware always opens up new opportunities. I think the PS3 is going to knock down the last few barriers that have held back achieving the highest level

of immersion whether it be in a fully realistic environment, or a completely believable fantastic one.

PSM: Is the Blu-Ray Disc format particularly exciting from your standpoint?

Evan Wells: I believe that the increased capacity of the Blu-Ray Disc format is going to be vital in allowing developers to create games with the quality of visuals that next-generation hardware allows. The increase in size of game models, textures and animations is going to require an enormous amount of storage, and that's not even factoring in the demands that HD pre-rendered cutscenes will put on disc space. Sure, putting a game on multiple discs is an option for some genres, but games like *Jak and Daxter* or *GTA* that have you spooling data from all over the disc would be ruined by the amount of disc swapping that would be necessary.

PSM: Will *Jak* be back on PS3, or are you working on an entirely new series?

Evan Wells: We have not announced the project that we are developing currently, but I think that it is safe to say that you have not seen the end of *Jak and Daxter*.

BIG IN '06

As we march towards the impending launch of the PS3, it's easy to forget about the world of PS2, but there are a lot of great PS2 games yet to be released. Here's just a sample of the A-list games that should be on your radar as we head into 2006.

Metal Gear Solid 3: Subsistence

FROM: Konami
RELEASE DATE: March

How do you improve upon the nearly perfect *MGS3*? By adding some cool new features and online multiplayer, of course! It's everything you loved about our 2004 Game of the Year and so much more.



Kingdom Hearts II

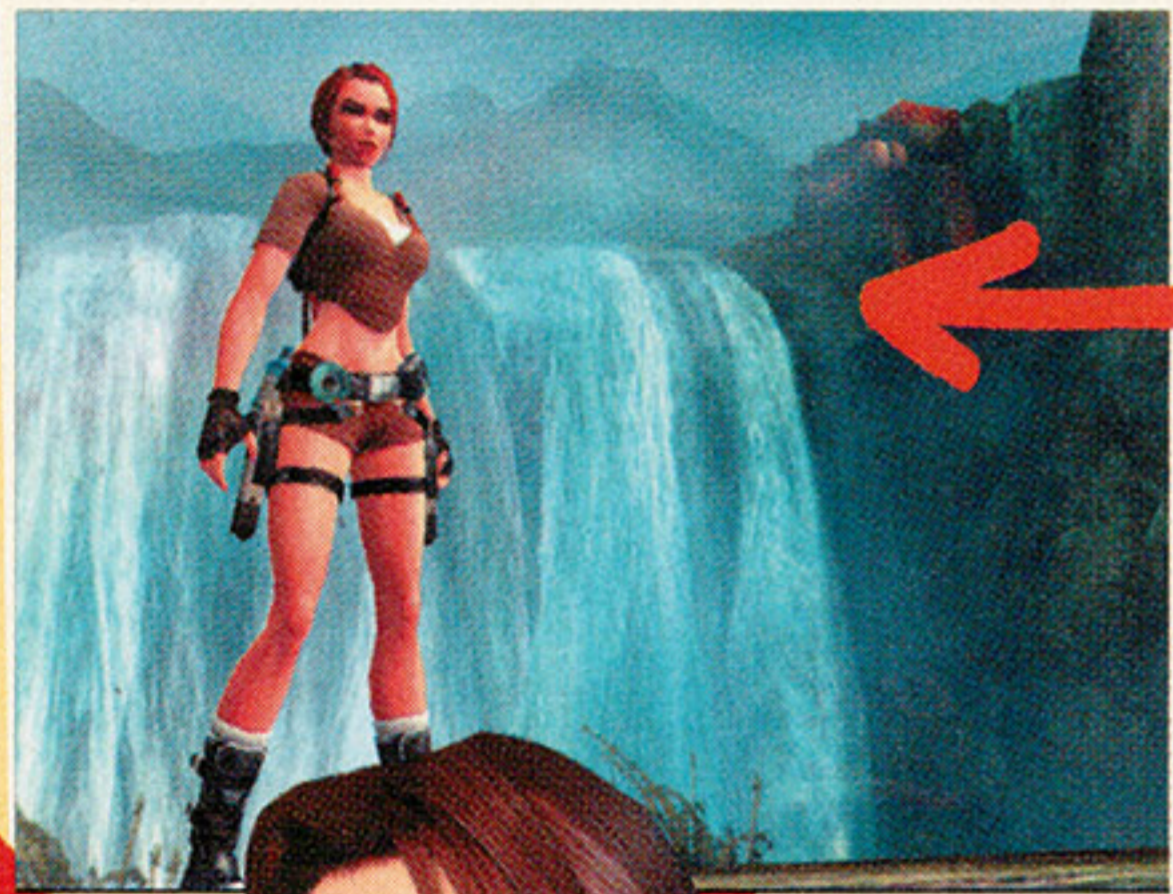
FROM: Square Enix
RELEASE DATE: March

The first game proved it — Disney and Square make an awesome team. This sequel takes what worked about the first game and adds new worlds to explore and new characters to interact with — including Captain Jack Sparrow!

Final Fantasy XII

FROM: Square Enix
RELEASE DATE: August

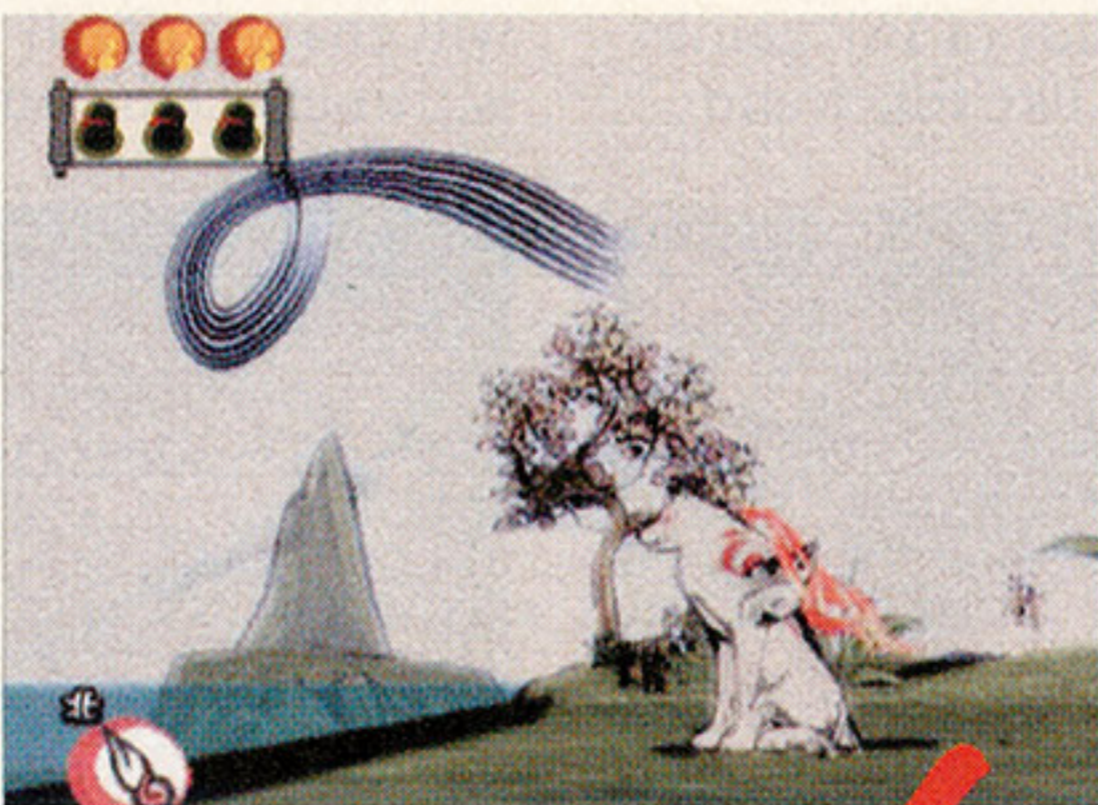
It feels like this game's been in the works for, like, ever, but it's finally coming out! After experimenting with the online realm in *FFXI*, the series gets back to its roots in this gorgeous sequel.



Tomb Raider: Legend

FROM: Eidos
RELEASE DATE: April

Okay, so the *Tomb Raider* franchise hasn't been all that hot in recent years, but *Tomb Raider: Legend* promises to change all that with some sweet graphics, clever puzzles, and just overall better gameplay.



Okami

FROM: Capcom
RELEASE DATE: February

Just look at it — *Okami* is a work of art. It's also a lot of fun to play and is directed by Hideki Kamiya, director of *RE2*, *DMC*, and *Viewtiful Joe*. Why wouldn't you play it?

SOCOM 3

U.S. NAVY SEALS



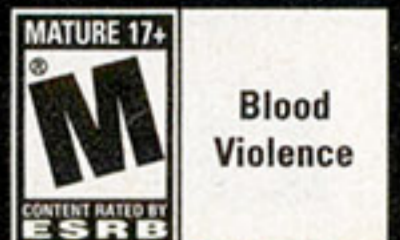
Up against the most skilled Special Ops force ever assembled, enemies can run but they can't hide. Welcome to the world of the U.S. Navy SEALs, where stealth, intelligence and teamwork are your tools for protecting freedom across the globe. Armed with the best weapons, vehicles, technology and training known to man, you're about to lead your four-man fireteam into some of the most fearsome battles imaginable, penetrating enemy territory and executing tactical strikes with razor-sharp precision. Terror may know no bounds. But neither do the elite warriors of the U.S. Navy SEALs. Ready or not, here they come. Hooyah.

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PlayStation 2



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POSSIBLE PS3 LAUNCH GAMES

Sure, we know there are a wide variety of games currently being developed for the PS3 as we speak, but we don't know the most important question: What can we expect to play on day one? (Not

MGS4, unfortunately.) Well, while we probably won't know for sure until sometime just before the system and its games actually come out, we can make some predictions...



WarHawk From: SCEA



Unreal Tournament 2007 From: Midway



Madden NFL 2007 From: EA



Lair From: SCEA



Armored Core 4 From: From Software

PSP: MOVIES? CHECK. GAMES? CHECK BACK LATER.

We hate to be downers, but there weren't a whole lot of PSP games to be excited about in '05. While it doesn't seem like this trend

will change much in '06, there are a few games that'll definitely be worth checking out.



Metal Gear ACID 2

FROM: Konami
RELEASE DATE: March

This sequel adds a new comic book-ish look and real 3D game-play (thanks to the clever Solid Eye viewer).



Dexter

FROM: SCEA
RELEASE DATE: February

Jak's little buddy is all by his lonesome self in this action-adventure set between the first two *Jak* games.



Gran Turismo 4 Mobile

FROM: SCEA
RELEASE DATE: TBA

We've seen the PSP in action, and there's no way this game can match the visuals of its older siblings. PROVE US WRONG!



Untold Legends 2

FROM: Sony Online Ent.
RELEASE DATE: February

One of the best-selling PSP games gets an even better sequel — and it's actually playable online this time around!

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THE PSM FORECAST

We've heard from the people who made PlayStation 2, PSP, and the games that run on them, so now it's our turn to have our say

on what's in store for the year to come — or at least what we'd like to have happen in 2006.



Chris Slate

What I hope happens:

I would love for Sony to launch the PlayStation 3 here during its previously announced "Spring" time-frame, and have it roar

out of the gate with an amazing lineup of games that look better than anything on the Xbox 360. Also, I hope that Sony finally gets serious about online gaming with a full-featured service that matches or tops 360's impressive setup. I'd love to see the PSP game development scene explode with fun, fresh games that aren't just bare-bones versions of existing PS2 titles. And speaking of the PS2, all I could realistically hope to get out of the old codger is a handful of solid games that show the developers are still showing the system some love.

What I think will happen:

PS3 will hit Japan in the Summer, and migrate here around November. Typical of most console launches, there will be a couple standout games and steady stream of pretty "7s". Sony will, at long last, introduce an online solution that's had some thought put into it, but we shouldn't expect it to match up to Xbox Live overnight. With the PS2 dying down, and the PSP slow to really get things rolling, it's likely going to be a long, hard wait for PS3 all next year.

Last year's predictions revisited:

"PS2 will be short on blockbuster hits" — pretty much true. "The best development teams have moved on to PS3" — true. "We won't see or hear much about PS3 until 2006" — also true. "Expect a lot of PS2 ports and so-so software for PSP" — I wish I had been wrong about this one, but sadly, I nailed 'em all.



Randy Nelson

What I hope happens:

Please, please will someone flip the "on" switch on the machine that pumps out must-have PSP games?

I mean, seriously, the hardware is great, but next to no one is doing anything remarkable with it. I really hope Sony blazes a path with some totally original, high-quality content for the system so that I can start using it for something more than a portable flash drive? Also, the thing is portable — made to be played on the go — so while someone's making some truly great games for it, maybe someone else can figure out how to make games load faster?

What I think will happen:

The PS3 will launch in the U.S. in either October or November with a better software lineup than PS2 had at launch. It'll street at \$399. UMD movies will outnumber PSP games by a ratio of 100:1 and the system will have only a handful of truly noteworthy game releases, especially once it falls under the shadow of the PS3 launch. (Man, I'm really down on PSP. But I can't deny the truth.)

Last year's predictions revisited:

I predicted that UMD movies would turn out to be a complete and utter failure. Someone in power obviously read this and made the exact opposite happen just to spite me.



Kaiser Hwang

What I hope happens:

I'll accept the reality that the PSP is what it is — a dumbed down PS2 on the go. Sure, I want better games like any-

one else, but at this point, I'll take a portable USB keyboard, a higher capacity battery, and a better browser so I can use it more as an internet terminal. I'd also like to see the PS3 controller get redesigned, and Sony to change its mind about *not* introducing a unified online infrastructure. An official PSP-to-TV device with Dual Shock support would be great, too.

What I think will happen: The PSP will be in exactly the same place it is now, with "good" games — just nothing spectacular. Sony will continue to make illogical decisions and announcements and justify them with equally illogical rationale, but still come out on top as they make an earth-shattering announcement early in the year.

Sony's plans to make a big splash at E3 will get even bigger after they see how well the Xbox 360 does at launch. EA will release another Madden.

Last year's predictions revisited:

I predicted a number of things, most of which came true: Sony brought *SOCOM* to PSP; the PS2 was shown and its controller looked remarkably like a Dual Shock (kinda); EA released another *Madden* (two, actually). Sadly, no PSP download kiosks or *Killzone* PSP came to light. (At least it hasn't yet, anyways.)



Justin Cheng

What I hope happens:

Well, 2006 is the year of the PS3, and I hope the PS3 launches in early to mid 2006 with some really awesome games to play on day

one. It'd also be awesome if there were some reason for me to dust off the ol' PSP. Sure, there was *GTA: Liberty City Stories* this year, and we know there's a new *GTA* on the horizon, but there need to be more games to get really excited about. And finally, I'd like to see some great PS2 games still being released up to the PS3's launch.

What I think will happen:

Unfortunately, we'll have to wait till the tail end of 2006 for the PS3 to launch in the U.S., but it will definitely be worth the wait; there will be some graphically impressive launch titles; Xbox Live will still be the best way to play online; the DS will continue to have better original games than the PSP; and UMD movies will continue to sell well for some reason.

Last year's predictions revisited:

I didn't make any predictions last year, for I was but a lowly intern. Had I been able to make predictions, however, all of my predictions would have come true. Maybe.

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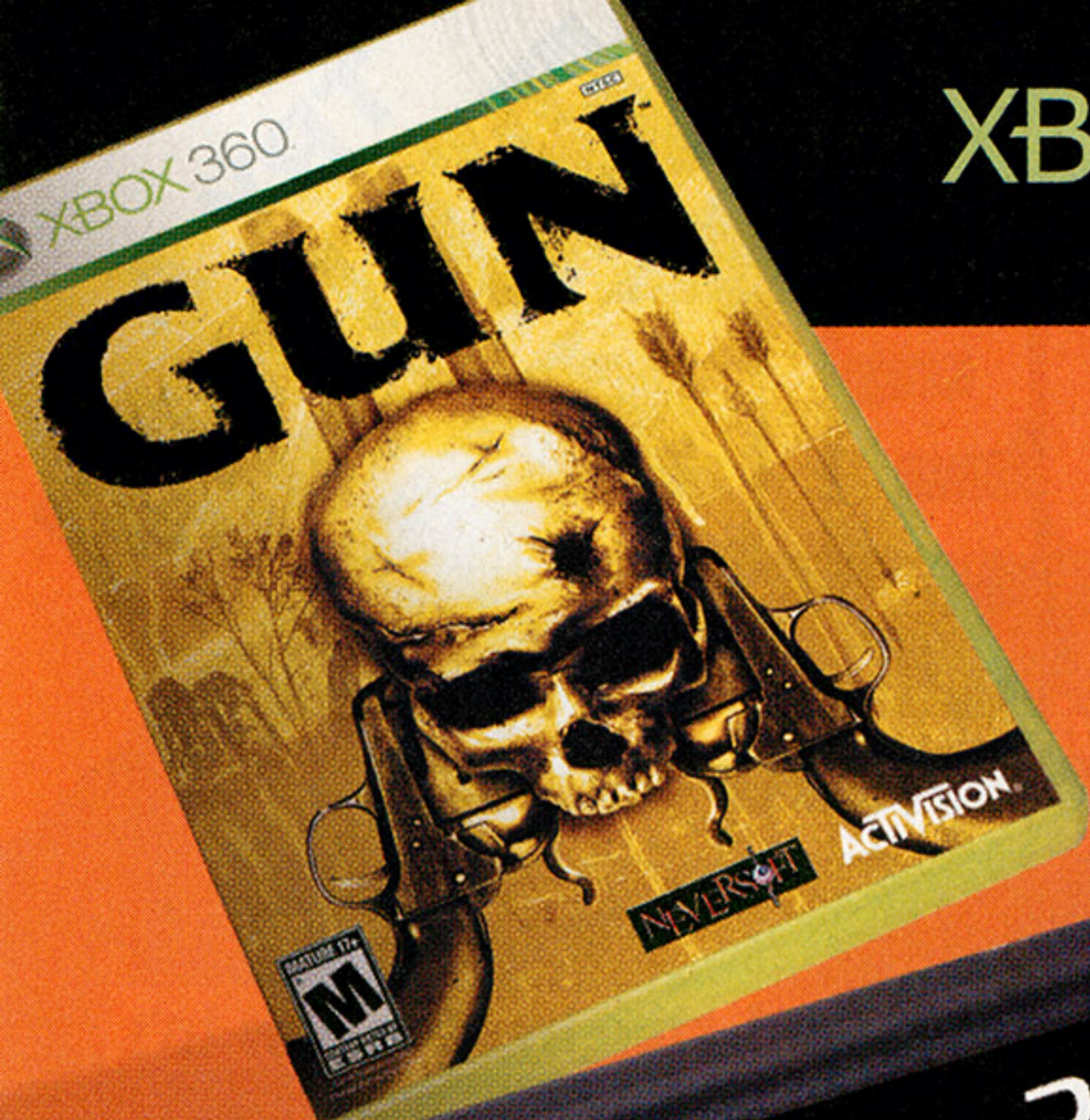
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PREVIEWS

Based on this shot, it's clear that Sam (he's the bald guy) hasn't forgotten his stealth training. It almost looks to us like he's talked another inmate into distracting a guard for him... maybe just long enough to slip away or get a shot in.



WHAT THE CELL?

Splinter Cell 4

Sam Fisher: Covert agent, bank robber... prisoner!

FROM CELL TO A CELL

Bald and wearing a fetching orange prison jumpsuit, Sam Fisher, ex-covert operative, has certainly come a long way from his days of high-tech guns and sneaking gear provided to him by Third Echelon as seen below.



SPLINTER CELL 4

PUBLISHED BY
Ubisoft

MADE BY
Ubisoft Montreal

WHAT IS THIS?
The most realistic spy series ever, now in a prison

ESRB RATING
Not yet rated

IT COMES OUT
Spring

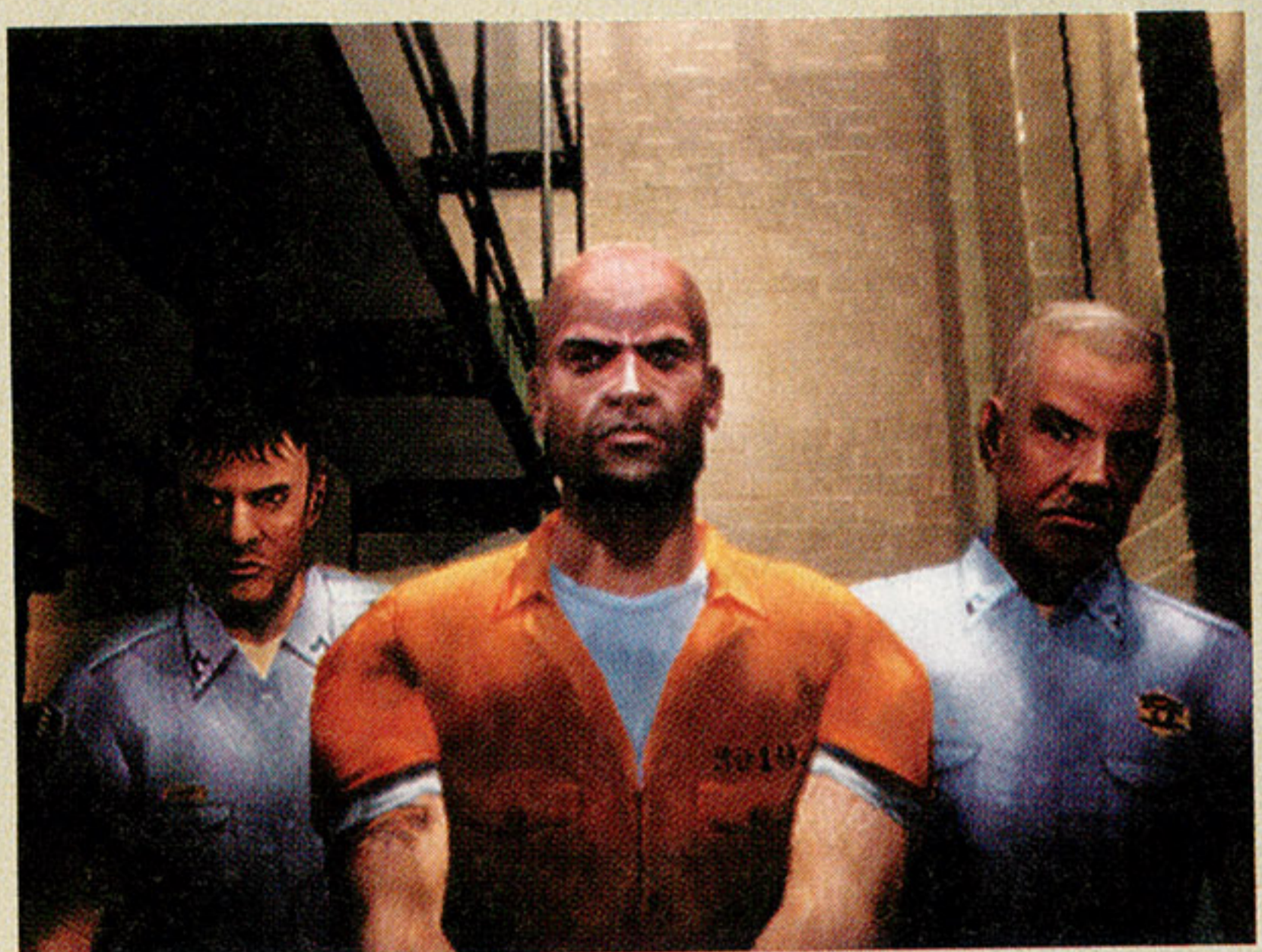
MULTIPLAYER
Yes

ONLINE
Yes

Right about now, you're probably asking yourself the same thing we were when we got these first screen from *Splinter Cell 4*. What the hell is going on?

Ubisoft is keeping the plot of *SC4* under extremely tight guard, but we do know that series star Sam Fisher has been sent to jail for robbing banks and killing innocent civilians. His motives? Who knows, but the money he's stolen is still unaccounted for. **RANDY NELSON**





They've made Sam shave his head. Maybe they were worried that any head lice he might have was actually have been super high-tech nano machines capable of boring a tunnel out of the prison for him. Hey, he has used some pretty amazing technology in the previous *Splinter Cell* games.



It's entirely possible that only a portion — maybe the first part — of the game takes place in the prison, but in this shot you can see that Ubisoft Montreal has gone as far as to add game mechanics such as covertly receiving a shiv from another inmate while walking past him.

“THE MILLIONS OF DOLLARS SAM STOLE ARE STILL MISSING”

It looks like the jig's up in the scene. Sam's lost his shiv and been gassed by the guards before getting to use it. Just tell us he doesn't have to join a team of inmates to play football against the guards for the delight of a corrupt warden.





Before: Your normal sun-drenched warehouse with pillars ripe for carving. Also note the fabulous gun.



LOBBY SCENE REDEFINED

Black

The makers of Burnout trade cars for guns

Black. It doesn't say much, but it does convey a very singular, discrete message: don't beat around the bush.

Appropriately then, its literal simplicity is paralleled by the game's intensely focused design. This game is not about exploration. It's not about leveling-up your character. It's not about awkwardly combining disparate genres in an attempt to create something "new"

and "innovative." No, it's actually something much more simple; something much more instinctive. *Black* is about shooting.

Like Criterion's other franchise, *Burnout*, *Black* takes an idea and pushes it as far as humanly possible. In this case, the concept of shooting (or guns, if you're a glass-half-empty kind of person) is stripped to its bare essentials, revealing a visceral, almost primal gameplay experience. The gunplay is accented by a ridiculous amount of structural carnage and suffocating debris, as the environments are whittled down from dense logs to fragile toothpicks. The lobby scene in the *Matrix* is far and away the best visual analogy, though we'll admit that *Black* uses that iconic scene as a starting point.

This exaggerated nature of destruction causes a bit of dilemma at this point, though. On one end, the sheer thrill and rush of adrenaline can't be denied, as you pump thousands of rounds into any and every piece of



This game is about Hollywood-style action, and this guy knows it.

solid matter around you. On the other end, the blinding amounts of building shrapnel, kicked-up smoke, and explosive sparks left us as little more than open bait for all of the AI opponents whose vision isn't hampered in the slightest by the chaos.

The overwhelming intensity of the levels we've played also brought up another concern: is it simply too much? Some games are impossible to demo, as they require prolonged play periods in ideal environments to express their deliberate narrative pacing, for instance. Other games demo amazingly, creating first impressions that never seem to fade. *Black* is one of those games — it's immediate and unforgettable. The question is whether the game can find equilibrium, balancing its black and white, silent and explosive dynamics. **KAISER HWANG**

BLACK

PUBLISHED BY EA

MADE BY Criterion

WHAT IS THIS? An FPS with excessive amounts of gunplay.

ESRB RATING Pending

IT COMES OUT March

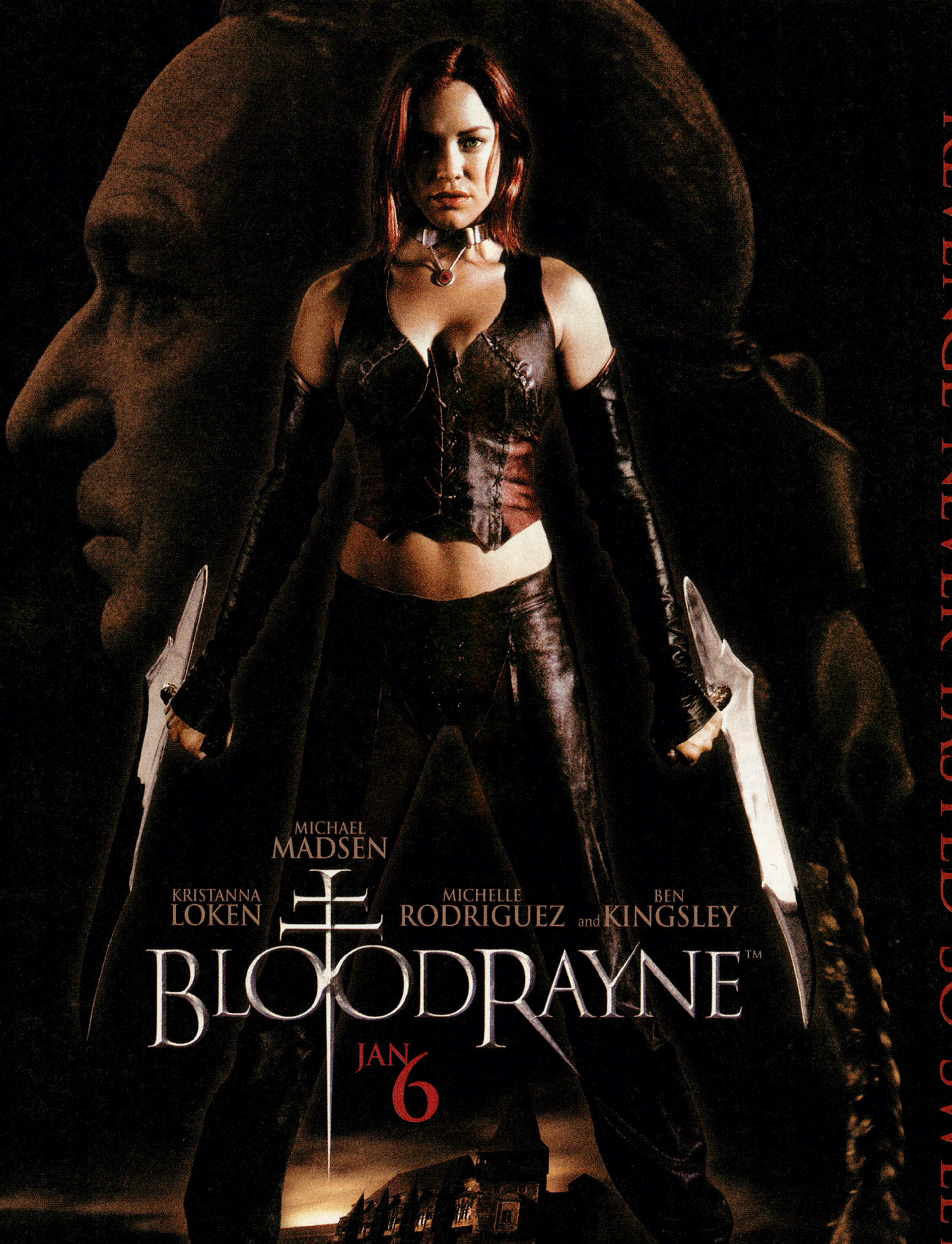
MULTIPLAYER No

ONLINE Nope



After: A few minutes later, your pristine level can look like this. Yes, collateral damage does occur.

REVENGE NEVER TASTED SO SWEET



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KRISTANNA LOKEN

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The useless-but-cool action cam view makes its triumphant return.



Driving has always been the series' strong point.

! = DRIV4R

Driver: Parallel Lines

A tale of two cities and decades

DRIVER: PARALLEL LINES

PUBLISHED BY
Atari

MADE BY
Reflections

WHAT IS THIS?
Lots of chaotic driving, bits of on-foot shooting.

ESRB RATING
Pending

IT COMES OUT
March

MULTIPLAYER
8 players

ONLINE
Yes

Love it or hate it, you can't help but be fascinated by the *Driver* franchise. From its stellar debut to the mind-boggling disaster that was *DRIV3R*, the brand has something always going for it: the idealistic hope that it will become what it strives to be. The problem is that no one knows what that is. A *GTA* clone? A driving game? A Sudoku puzzle?

Actually, we lied. *Someone* knows what *Driver* should be, and that's developer Reflections. The answer? *Driver* has always been about driving

(seems logical enough), and that's what *Parallel Lines* hopes to get across to gamers. The biggest hurdle it faces is the negative stigma that's been attached to the series. We recently checked out a new build of the game, and while we're hesitant to say we have no worries about the game, we will say the game is making some pretty innovative conceptual moves.

We're not talking about the driving so much — it's always been good, and not much has changed. We're talking about the storyline. Since its announcement, the idea was that you play a kid in 70s NYC on his way to becoming the prime car man in town; that much hasn't changed either. What we *did* find out was that halfway through the game, your buddies set you up and you get thrown into for prison some 20-odd years.

But more than just a clichéd tale of betrayal, this event has a direct and significant impact on the game — you play the rest of the game in modern day NYC; the architecture, automobiles, soundtrack, and weapons all evolve into contemporary selections. More than just a visual skin swap, as



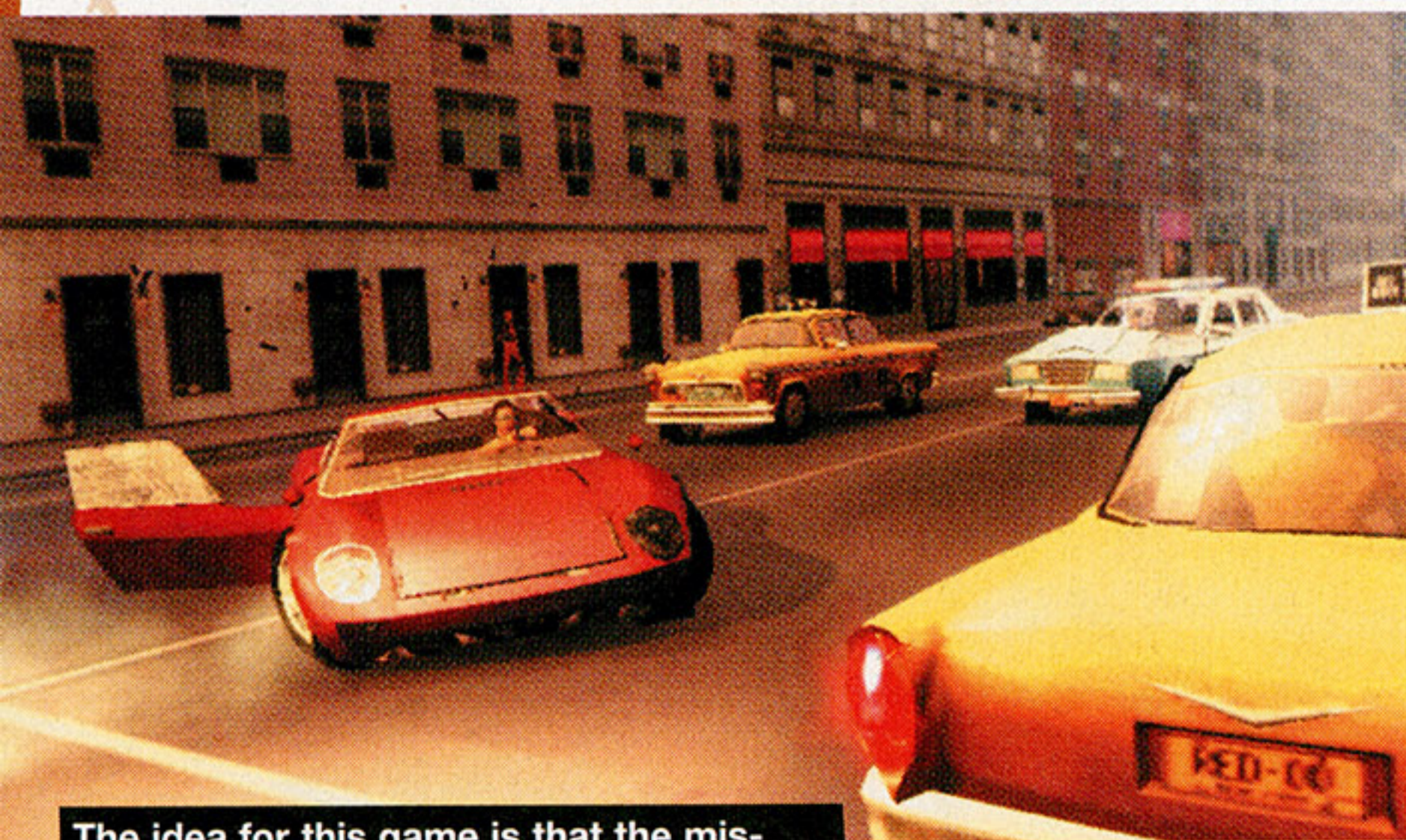
The on-foot missions highlight the driving episodes, not replace them.



NYC is virtually recreated in both the 1970s and in current times.

technology has improved over time in real life, it also has in the game. For instance, cars are immediately faster and weapons are deadlier. It's a novel idea to say the least.

While the curtains are slowing being pulled away to unveil what *Driver: PL's* intentions are, we admit we're looking through our fingers, hands over eyes. With a lot to live up to (and make up for), as well as some purely logistical conundrums (how will online play work with the two time periods?), we're tempted to throw in the towel early from pure anxiety. For now, we'll give it the benefit of the doubt, if only from pure curiosity. **KAISER HWANG**



The idea for this game is that the missions and multiplayer will be seamless.



Graphically, the game looks pretty much identical to the PS2 game (and it should!).

Expect to see more of the unique level goals found in the console sequel.



ROLL WITH IT

Me & My Katamari

Giant, sticky balls, on the go

KATAMARI DAMACY

PUBLISHED BY
Namco

MADE BY
Namco

WHAT IS THIS?
A portable
version of the
PS2 hit.

ESRB RATING
Pending

IT COMES OUT...
In March

MULTIPLAYER
TBA

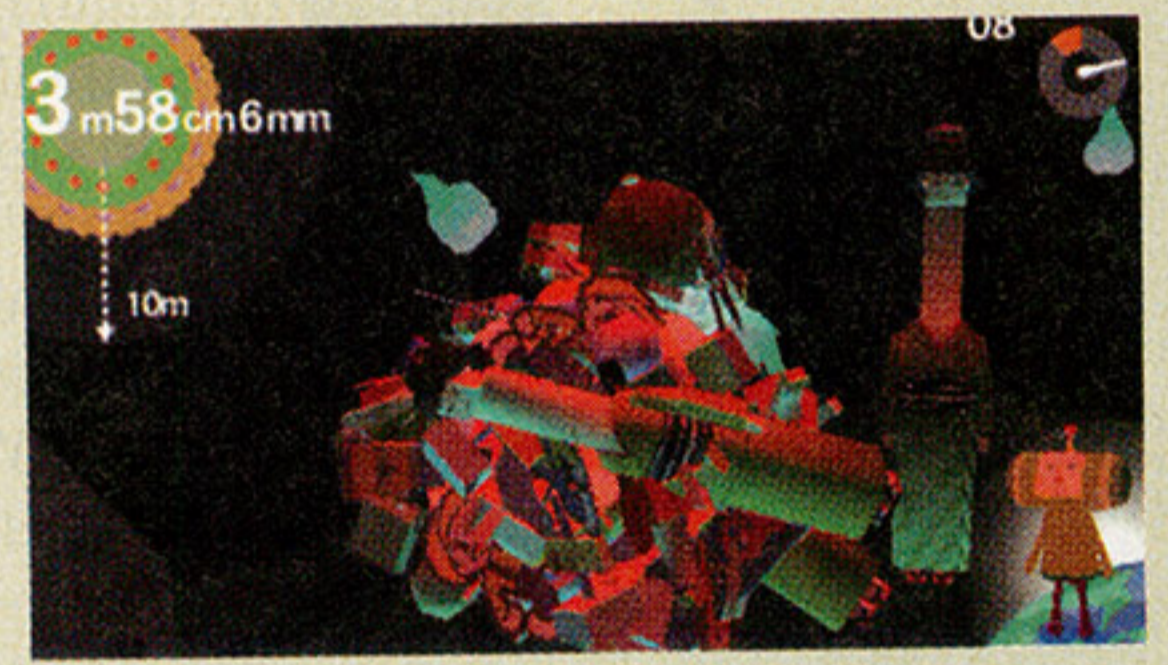
ONLINE
No

No one saw *Katamari Damacy* coming. Could anyone really have predicted that a game where you're rolling up the world into a ball would have become such a success? Even before its U.S. release, the idea that it would see a stateside release at all seemed slim, given the game's impossibly Japanese visuals and music. But it did — and

what a commotion it created. Here's one we saw coming a mile away: *Me & My Katamari*. Rather than being a simple port, the game features a whole new adventure for the Prince. While we don't know too many story specifics, we doubt they'd make sense even if we did. Something that *does* make sense, but doesn't work quite as well as you'd

think is the control scheme. Because the PSP does not have two analog sticks, the dual-analog controls have been mapped to the d-pad and four face buttons. This layout isn't quite as intuitive or responsive as it should be. If it were us, we'd simplify the controls by using the single analog stick to move around while using the shoulder buttons to rotate.

Even if this option isn't put in, the idea of having a *Katamari* on the go does have its merits. Let's hope it's enough to make us forget about the controls. **KAISER HWANG**



The Prince's cousins will make a return, and join the cast of needy animals in the game.

VINYL HERO

beatmania

Actually, you're not making any beats

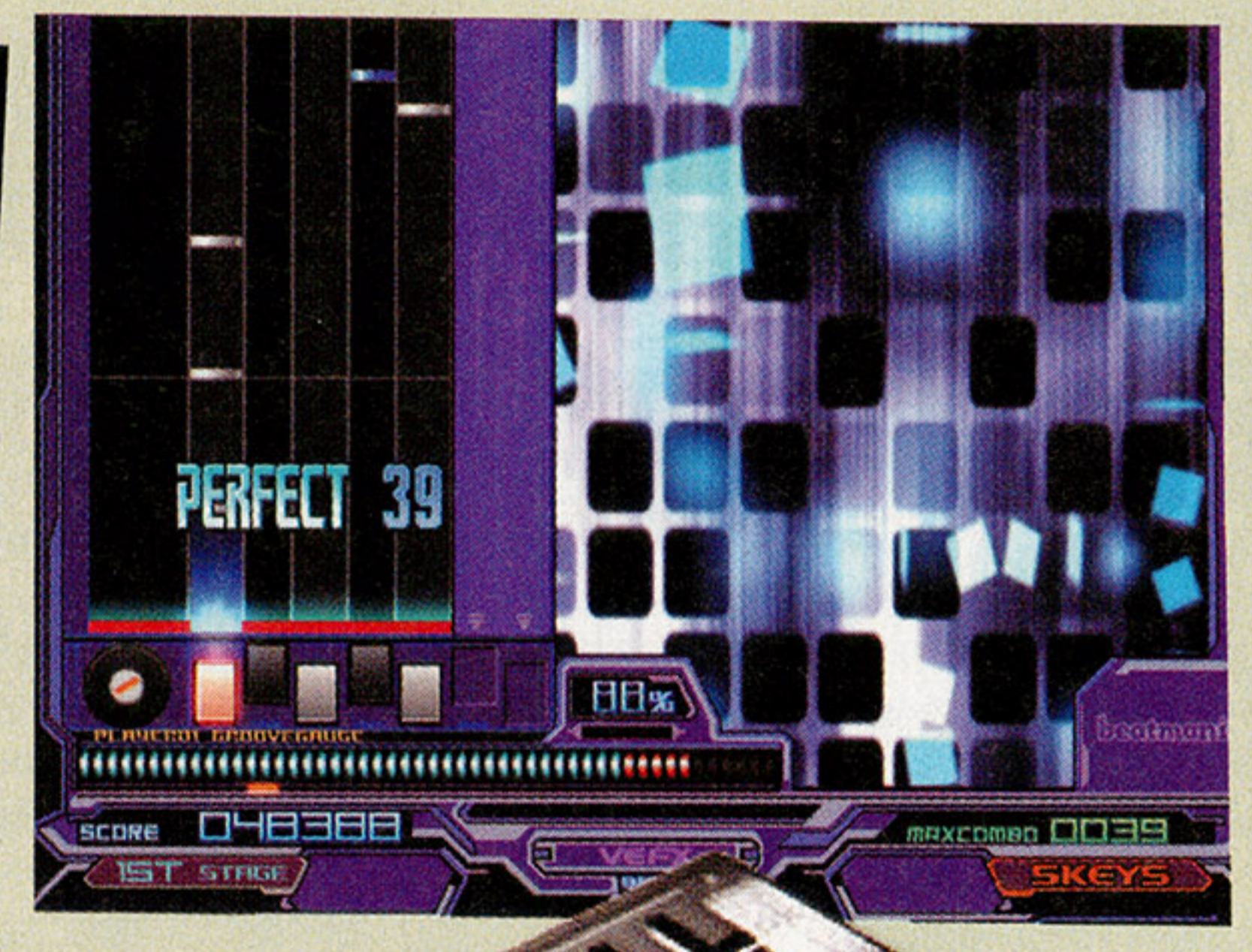
Long before gamers were mastering taikos and becoming heroes with their guitars, they were pressing keys and spinning records in Konami's *beatmania*. Though the game has had upwards of 10 sequels in the arcades, and even saw its way onto consoles in Japan, this is the first time it's made an appearance on the PS2 stateside.

The concept, like every other rhythm-based game, is to press a button in sync with a corresponding action onscreen — in this case, falling rectangles. What makes *beatmania* unique, though, is the controller and its seven keys and turntable. The idea

is that you're a DJ of sorts — hence the large selection of electronic music — and creating and scratching music. The turntable on the controller will even make a different sound depending on whether you scratch upwards, or downwards.

beatmania purists will be glad to know that the game and controller support the older five-key format, and includes songs specific to the scheme; *beatmania* fanatics will be glad to know that you can use two controllers to play ten- or fourteen-key songs; for everyone else, get ready for one of the most unforgiving but addictive rhythm games ever created. **KAISER HWANG**

There's not much to see in screenshots of the game — it's something you really have to play for yourself.



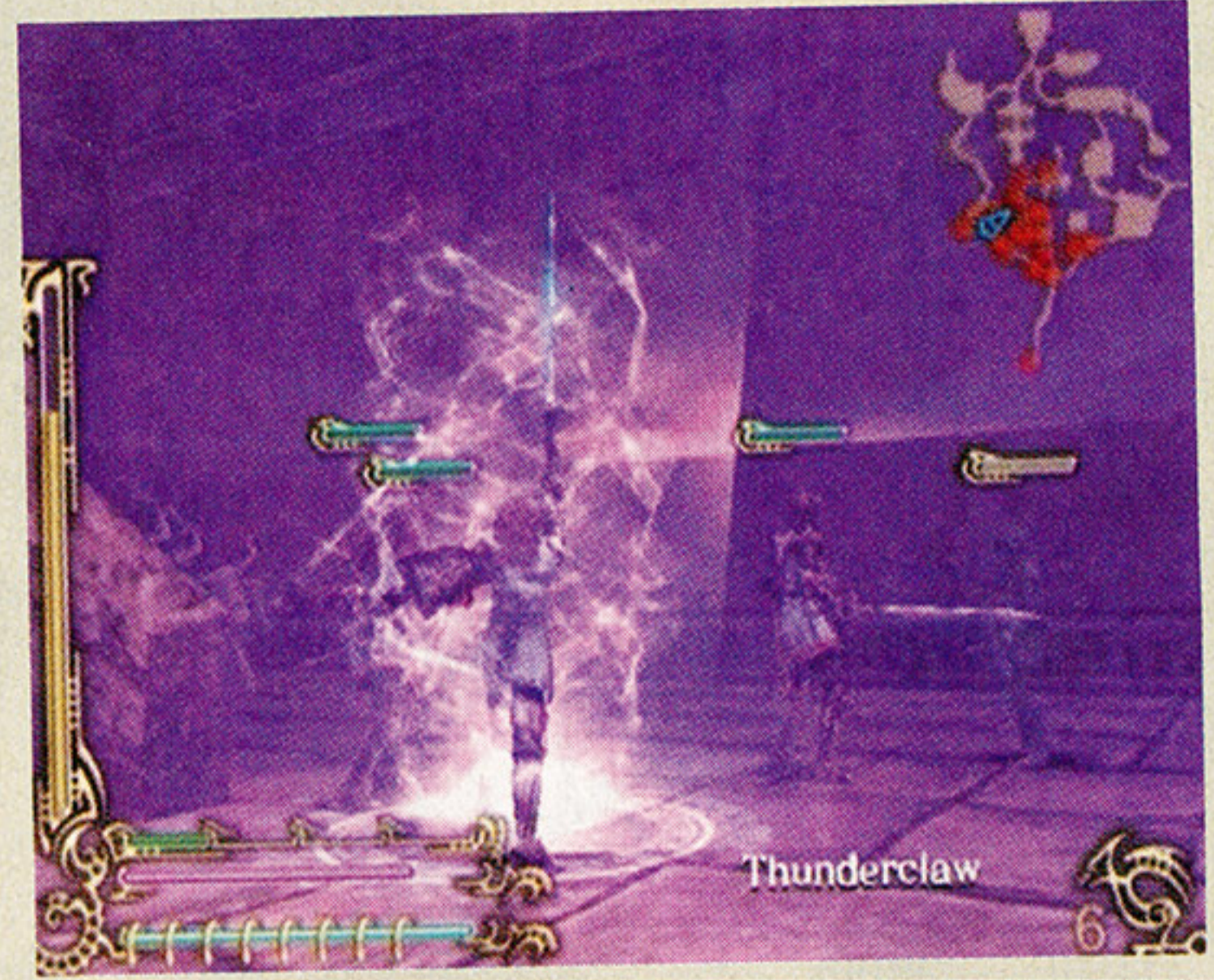
The U.S. controller will feature a slight redesign that's a little rounder and... that's it.

† PUBLISHED BY Konami † MADE BY Konami † WHAT IS THIS? Rhythm game with special controller † ESRB: RP † IT COMES OUT March † MULTIPLAYER 2 players † ONLINE No

Dragons are cool. Why aren't there more games with dragons?



REIGN OF FIRE



Surrounding yourself in energy? Good. Surrounding yourself with purple energy? Better.

advancements, your characters (yes, that's plural — you have four to choose from) and weapons are now upgradeable, which gives the game a more RPG-ish slant, and should give the game some depth beyond simple hacking and slashing. With that said, all of the game's progressions seem to be on the right track. **JUSTIN CHENG**

PSYCHONAUTS

PUBLISHED BY Ubisoft/Square Enix

MADE BY Cavia

WHAT IS THIS? A deeper, more intense sequel to the 2004 title.

ESRB RATING Pending

IT COMES OUT... March

MULTIPLAYER Nope

ONLINE Nope

Drakengard 2

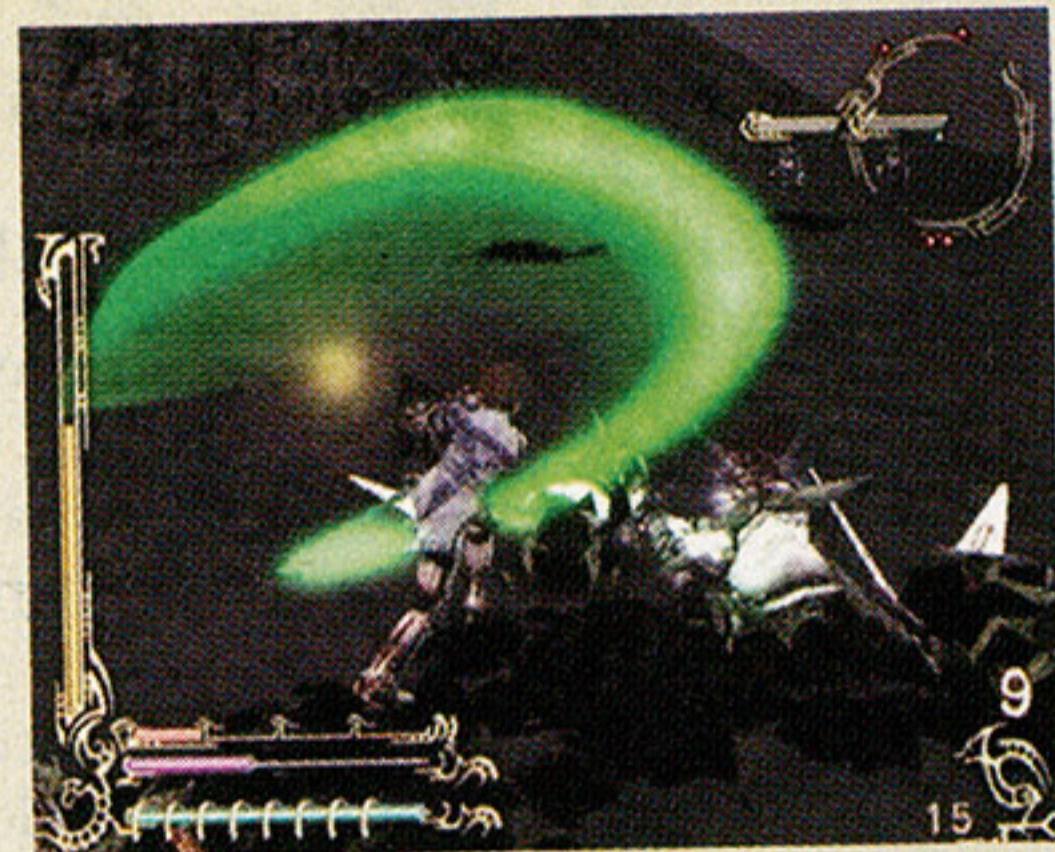
More weapons, more enemies, more...

The original *Drakengard* had some thoughtful ideas, but it didn't execute them very well. Instead of a game that could have rivaled the *Dynasty Warriors* series, we got a game that was at best on par. While it remains to be seen whether the sequel — aptly titled *Drakengard 2* — will be able to improve upon its predecessor's flaws, its new features do seem to address the

problems that many gamers had with the first game.

For one thing, there's a new, deeper combo system which should make the ground battles more fun, but no less intense. Also, there are purportedly more boss battles to be had, and are said to be much balanced. The vital dragon-based aerial combat will also see its share of evolutionary upgrades.

In line with the rest of the game's



Main character Nowe does his best Luke Skywalker impression.

NOT A FANTASY

Final Fight: Streetwise

3D version of the beat-'em-up classic

When nostalgia strikes, it can hit hard. Other times, it's a bit more subtle, as is the case with this update to Capcom's pre-*Street Fighter II* mega-hit, *Final Fight*. Outside of some shared characters and the fact that both are essentially beat-'em-ups, there's very little to connect the two games together.

Ironically, *Streetwise* shares more in common with Capcom's own *Beatdown*, as both feature limited open worlds to explore and characters to interact with. During your quest, you'll fight just about every thug you run into using a new combat system

that's far more advanced than its 1989 predecessor, but also considerably less sophisticated than a dedicated fighting game. The addition of melee weapons and guns and even grenades gives the game a bit more variety, but feels a little awkward at times.

The original *Final Fight* definitely felt gritty for its time, showcasing prostitute-like females and even a character named Sodom. *Streetwise* takes a similar approach with its tenacious edge and script so full of expletives that it'll make you wonder what happened in the characters' lives when making the jump to the third



Have you ever wondered why so many brawlers have subway levels? If you don't know why, we're not gonna tell you.



The fighting system has a basic set of attacks and counters... and guns. Lots of guns.

dimension. It's almost comical at times, though it remains to be seen if that was the intention.

KAISER HWANG

"5/5 STARS"

— Maxim Magazine



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— Pocket Games

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- GameOver.net



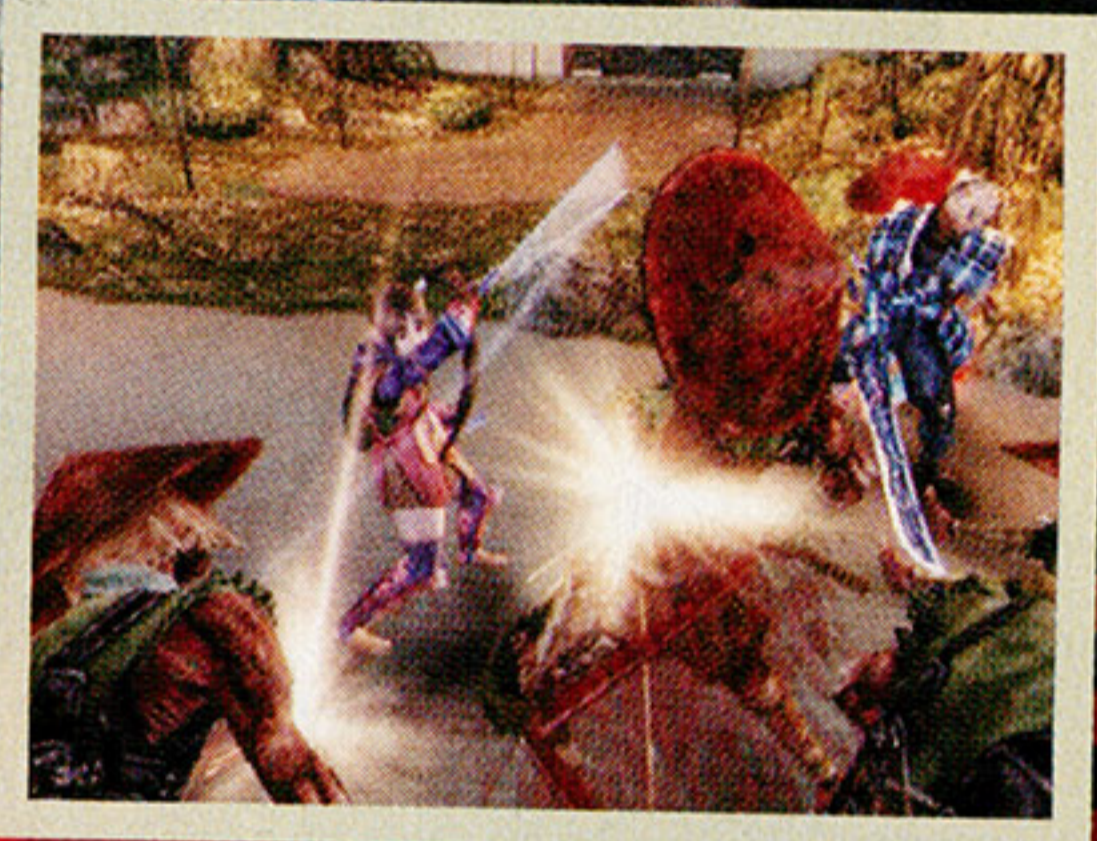
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M. E. N. A. C. E. VS. S. O. G. G. Y.

Onimusha: Dawn of Dreams



You can't go wrong with the sword and bow combination.

ONIMUSHA: DAWN OF DREAMS

PUBLISHED BY
Capcom

MADE BY
Capcom

WHAT IS THIS?
Onimusha: the central point for two warring factions

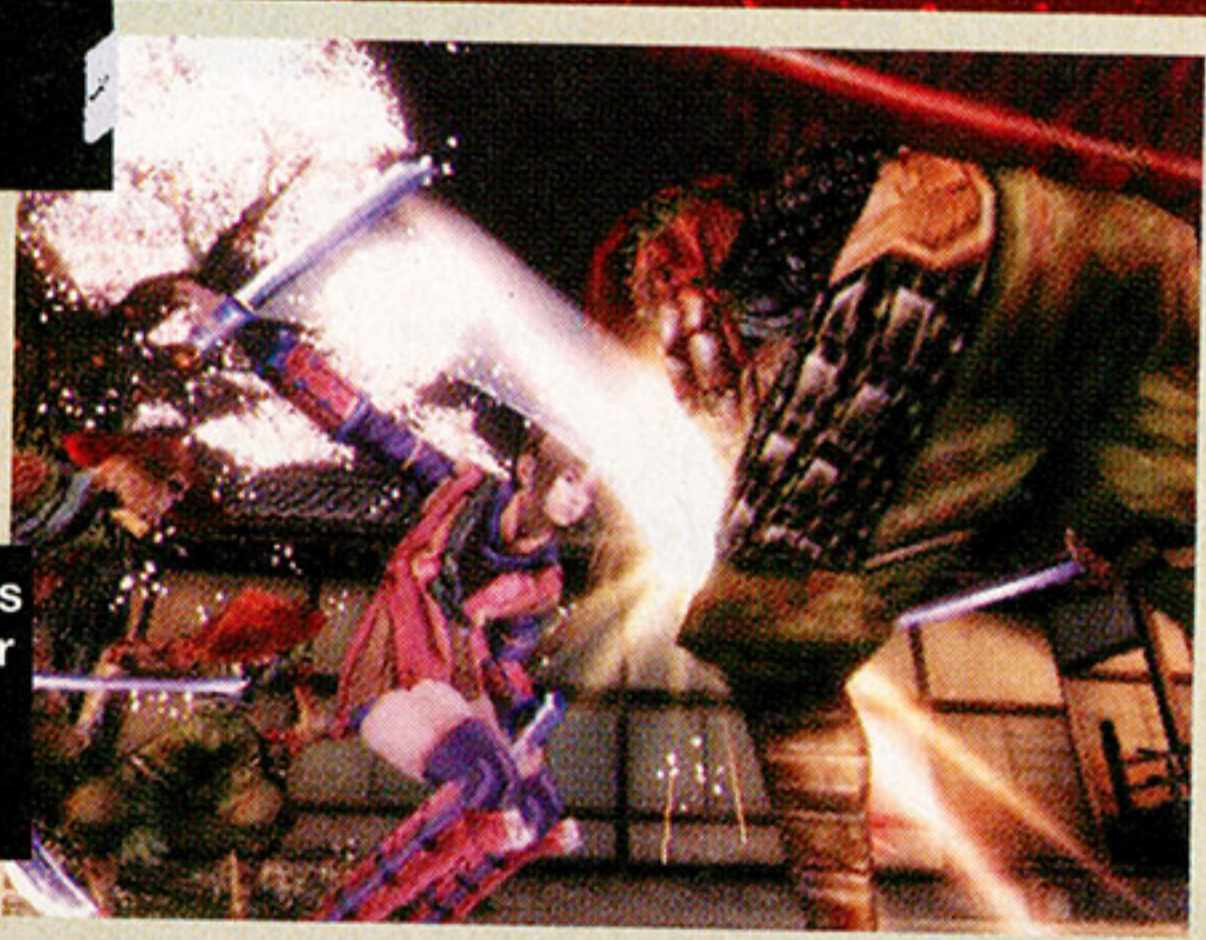
RELEASE
March

ESRB
Pending

ONLINE
No

MULTIPLAYER
2-player co-op

Two passionate camps go head-to-head in *Onimusha: Dawn of Dreams*, one striving for innovation, the other tried and true tradition. Who will be the victor?



Is she striking his knee, his face, or his, uh... grape-fruits? In any case, ouch!

M.E.N.A.C.E. — believes a new *Onimusha* game should break away from the mold and offer a new experience to not only series veterans, but new players as well. They believe in the following:

Multiple characters: The ability to not just play as one, two, or even three characters, but four or five. The game should also allow for switching between two characters on the fly, as well as utilizing team attacks and unique abilities.

Extra costumes: Unlockable character outfits should be standard in a game like *Dawn of Dreams*. Having them based off of other preexisting Capcom characters would be an even better idea. Which ones, you ask? That is best left a secret.

Numerals: Though this is actually the fourth (or sixth, if you count *Blade Warriors* and *Tactics*) game in the

Onimusha series, it should rid itself of having a numeral in the game's title. This will help to emphasize the fact that the first three games were a closed trilogy.

Actors: No more lead characters that are visually based on real life actors, dead or alive. While the idea was novel at the time, having new, original characters allows us greater freedom in character design.

Camera: A fully controllable camera must be implemented, which will give the player a better sense of empowerment in the game. While the static cameras of yore worked well for the time, an upgrade is needed.

Exploration: Take the emphasis off linear levels and encourage the player to explore — and re-explore — the levels. Having different playable characters that can access different areas of the maps will be a good way to achieve this.



Now you can move the camera to spot all the enemies around you.



“IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN IF ANY OF THESE IDEAS WILL MAKE IT”



Who would win: Ares from God of War or this guy?



All you've got is a sword to take down this ginormous samurai. Sounds fair to us.



As you can see, the graphics are as gorgeous as ever.

S.O.G.G.Y. — believes that *Dawn of Dreams* must retain a number of series staples in order to not alienate longtime fans of the series, and also because they simply worked well. They believe in the following:

Souls: The ability to absorb enemy souls must be preserved, though giving the player to upgrade this ability would be a smart move.

Onimusha: *Dawn of Dreams* cannot exclude the *Onimusha* name from its title. To do so would completely misguide players, and give them false expectations from the game.

Genma: An *Onimusha* game without Genma demons is not an *Onimusha* game. While old, familiar faces will work, new enemy Genma are also suggested so the game won't feel too similar to the previous games.

Graphics: Like *Onimusha 3*, *Dawn of Dreams* should utilize a full 3D graphics engine, and not use any pre-ren-

dered backgrounds. Like before, this will allow for dramatic camera angles and simply more control. Also, the level of detail must remain high, and possibly run at a constant 60 frames per second.

Yagyu: Yagyu Jubei, and possibly some other signature *Onimusha* characters, should either make a cameo, or at least be referenced during the game's storyline. This will aid in creating a common thread among all the games, and also be a good place to develop the new characters' backgrounds.

While it remains to be seen if any of these ideas will make it into the game... Breaking News Flash: Both M.E.N.A.C.E. and S.O.G.G.Y. have met with *Dawn of Dreams* game director, Keiji Inafune, and have had successful negotiations in including any and all features they believe should be in the game. A full PSM review should follow soon, and give the final verdict on just how well these ideas are integrated into the game. Over and out.

KAISER HWANG

"IT'S EASY TO BECOME INFATUATED WITH..."



As you can see, the action can get a little chaotic at times.



Will Norma, if we hand them over to you, we'll never see them again. I'll manage them myself. thanks.

The characters are interestingly designed, and the English voice acting ain't half bad.

fighting is instinctively fun, and takes place on a 2D plane — much like a fighter. In reality, there's not too much that *Legendia* is doing that hasn't been done many times before, but similarly, most players aren't playing the series expecting a revolution. No, they're looking for the familiarity and comfort they expect from a *Tales* game. With that said, *Legendia* should fill its niche quite nicely. **JUSTIN CHENG**



Like most RPGs, there are many random battles to be had while exploring.

A NEW BEGINNING

Tales of Legendia

A role-playing... fighting game?

Namco's *Tales* series has never really taken the spotlight as far as RPGs go — it's rather difficult to outshine perennial favorite *Final Fantasy*, after all — but hopefully RPG fans will give *Tales of Legendia* a go. We got some hands-on time with the game, and we definitely liked what we played.

Shirley are on a ship when it wrecks, and find yourselves on an island-that-isn't-an-island — it's actually a giant ship called the Legacy. Naturally, Shirley gets kidnapped, and it's up to you and your recently acquired allies to save her.

As the hot-headed youth, Senel Coolidge, you and your meek sister

The story may start out on the conventional side, but it's easy to become infatuated with, thanks to the adorable visuals. Plus, the real-time

TALES OF LEGENDIA
 PUBLISHED BY Namco
 MADE BY Namco
 WHAT IS THIS? Namco's first *Tales* game on the PS2.
 ESRB RATING Pending
 IT COMES OUT February
 MULTIPLAYER No
 ONLINE No

FULL STEAM AHEAD

Steambot Chronicles

Mechs make everything better



Steambot *Chronicles* is a hard game to classify. On the one hand, it looks like it might be an RPG of some sort. The actual gameplay, on the other hand, is more reminiscent of an adventure game, while the battle system is a direct descendant of any standard action game. The *Bemani*-style harmonica playing further broadens the game's classification, and makes the game feel like a giant melting pot of gameplay ideas.

both analog sticks, not unlike *Katamari Damacy*. With your Trotmobile, you can lift obstacles that impede your path and fight any opposing mechs. You can also customize the Trotmobile to your liking, creating a little more personal attachment to your ultra-handly Renaissance machine.

The Trotmobile — *Steambot's* name for a mech — is the game's claim to fame, and is controlled using

Anime fans should also take note of *Steambot*, as it showcases some delightful cel-shaded visuals. The effect is subtle, but combined with the playful art direction, creates an

We know there are mechs in the future, and this game shows mechs in the past, so where are our mechs today?



inoffensive look that could easily be sourced from any number of quality animated series.

It's hard to delegate the appeal of the game to just one aspect, and it certainly doesn't have a hype machine working for it, but *Steambot Chronicles* will without a doubt create its own cult following. **JUSTIN CHENG**

† PUBLISHED BY Atlus † MADE BY Irem † WHAT IS THIS? A sandbox adventure with mechs. † ESRB: Pending † IT COMES OUT Spring 2006 † MULTIPLAYER No † ONLINE No

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JAWS Unleashed

Imagine a game where you're being hunted by one of the most ferocious beasts known to man, the great white shark, and must do everything in your ability to stay alive and find the safety of land. This isn't that game. No, rather than being hunted by a shark, you *are* the shark. Developed by the team that made *Ecco the Dolphin* (sweet, sweet irony), *JAWS Unleashed* has you scarfing down humans, demolishing boats, and battling rival sea life for domination of the sea. It's all pretty gruesome and hokey, but you just can't help but want to pick up the controller and try it yourself.

PUBLISHED BY Majesco + MADE BY Appaloosa + IT COMES OUT March



We're not sure why a shark needs money, but this one sure is rich as hell!



Some fun control mechanics let you chew and/or thrash your prey around until they die.



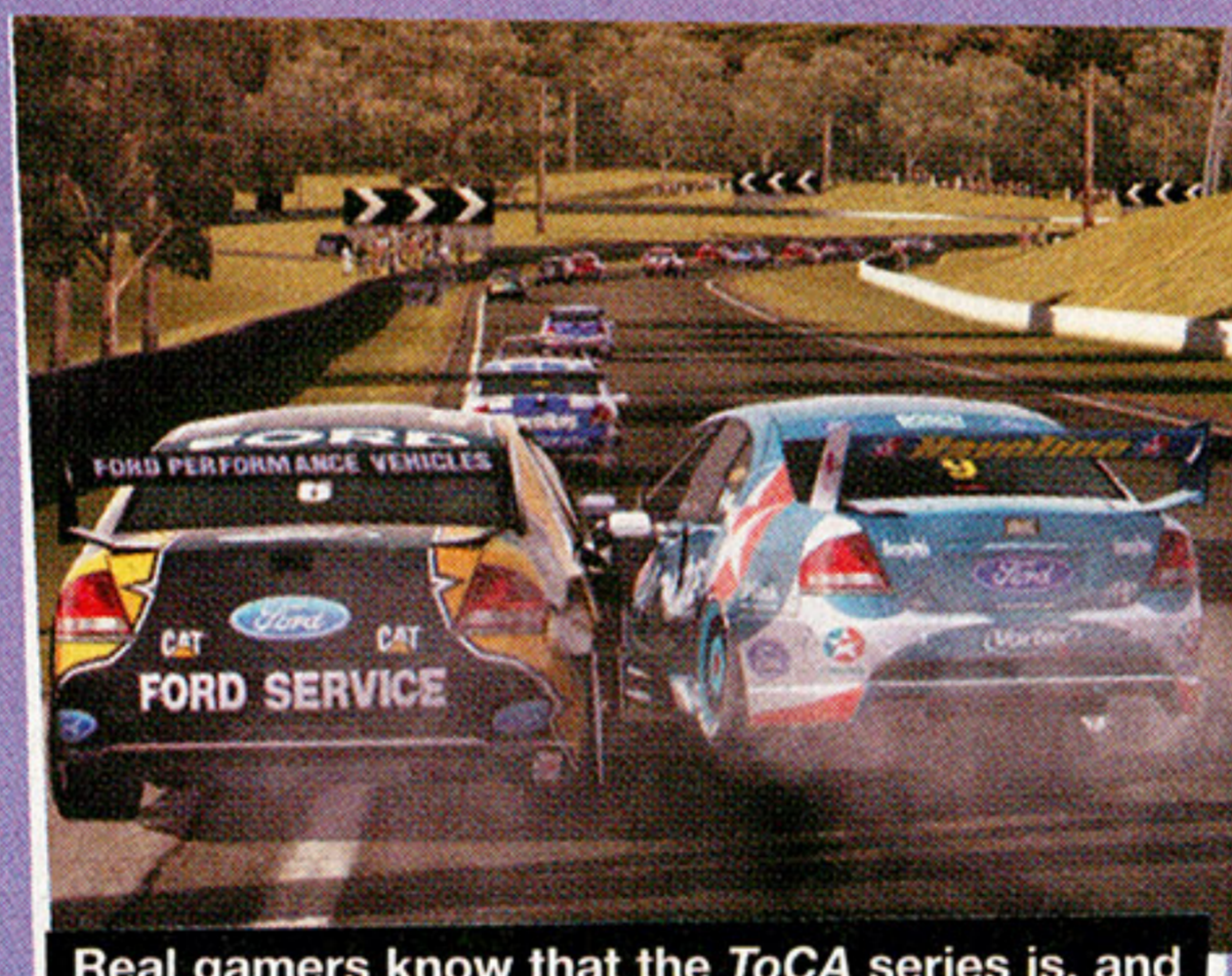
ATTACKS 4
TOTAL DAMAGE 0

It's thanks to companies like NIS that even new gamers can experience great 2D sprites.

Disgaea 2

Here comes more strategy RPG lovin' from the people who pretty much made it popular in the 21st century. This sequel is based on one of Nippon Ichi's more popular series, and pretty much gives you more of what you loved from the original. That means more nostalgic visuals (they're slightly higher resolution now), more fantastic grids to battle on, and more of that deep, addicting, and strategic gameplay that kept you up on all those cold and lonely winter nights.

PUBLISHED BY NIS America + MADE BY Nippon Ichi + IT COMES OUT Summer



Real gamers know that the ToCA series is, and always has been great. Now go be real gamer.

ToCA Race Driver 3

Here's a series that people just don't understand in the U.S. It's got first-rate visuals and gameplay that could give any racer out there a run for its money (yes, even *Gran Turismo*), yet no one wants to buy it. It's the best example of the worst effects of brand marketing. So while we can't personally make any changes to the game or its public perception, what we can do is tell you that this game needs you like the PSP needs games. Rock the vote.

PUBLISHED BY CodeMasters + MADE BY CodeMasters + IT COMES OUT February



Drugs? Check. Money? Check. Fake wood-panel walls? Check. Welcome home, Justin.

25 To Life

Can a game get any more controversial than *GTA*? If things continue at this rate, Eidos' *25 to Life* may be the game that *GTA* gets compared to. More or less *SOCOM*, only with gangsters and cops, this online shooter has been making big headlines -- none of them very positive (unless you're in marketing). Here's hoping for some universally positive headlines when the game finally ships in January.

PUBLISHED BY Eidos + MADE BY Avalanche + IT COMES OUT January 18

Worms

Some things never get old. In fact, they can get better over time, as is the case with *Worms*. While the core concept has never really changed (move, aim, shoot), in the years since its inception, new weapons, levels, and balancing have tweaked the game almost to perfection. On the PSP, *Worms* has found perhaps the most fitting platform for its design. With wireless options, gameplay that truly benefits from the widescreen format, and visuals that are gorgeous yet won't cause heavy load times or drain the battery, this could be the PSP's killer app-lite.

PUBLISHED BY THQ + MADE BY Team 17 + IT COMES OUT March



The PSP's widescreen format should make viewing the large levels much easier.



This is one of those games that's pretty much timeless due to its simple, addicing and clever concept.

Game

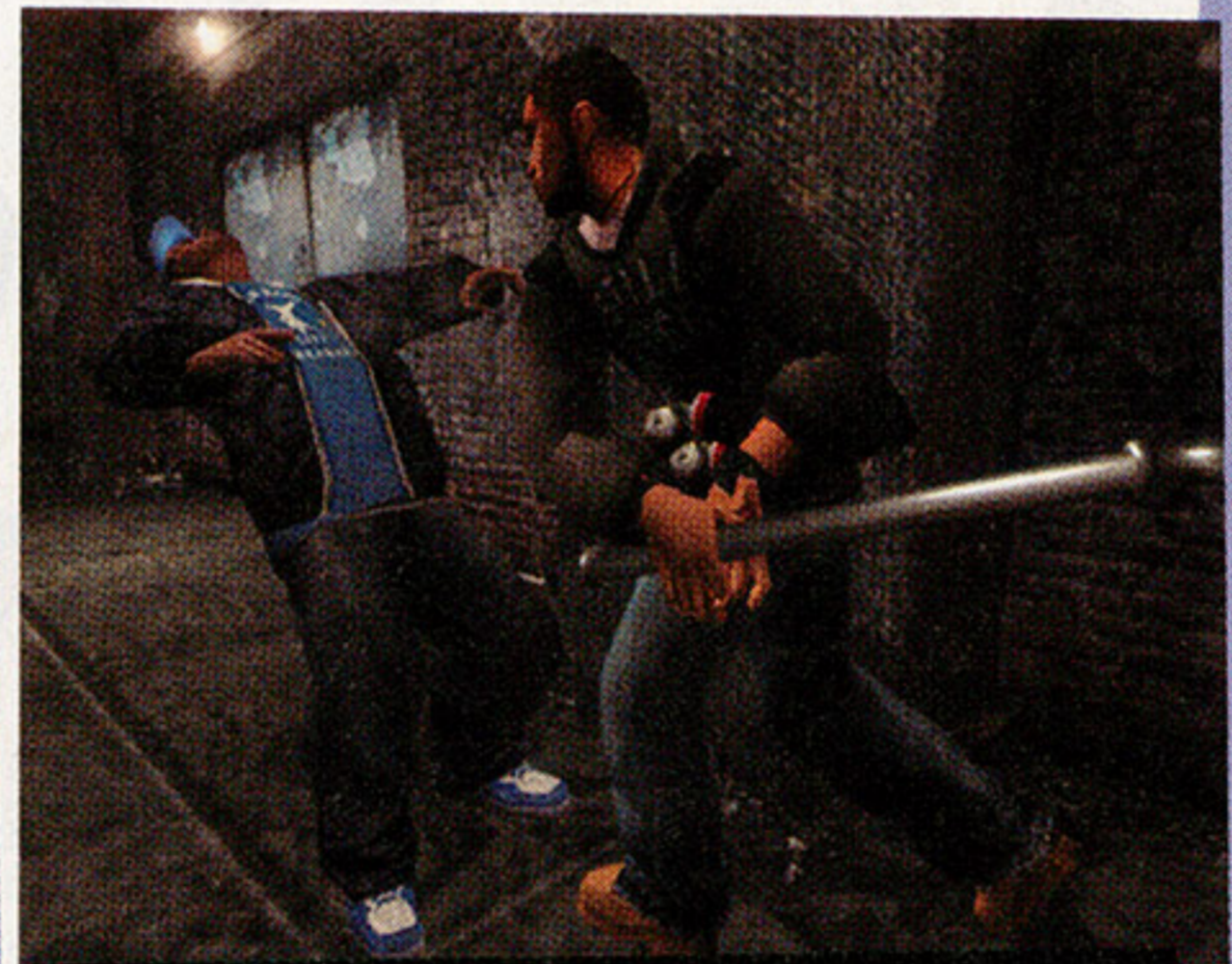


We're guessing the game will take exactly 24 hours to beat. Call it a hunch.

24: The Game

There's not enough time! Actually, Jack, there is — a couple more months, to be exact. In *24: The Game*, you'll play as Jack Bauer, as well as two others, and get all sorts of story filler for the time that took place between seasons two and three. We're down with all the driving, sniping, and interrogations, but what we really want to know is, where did Kim and Chase go on their first date? CTU?

PUBLISHED BY 2K Games + MADE BY SCEE + IT COMES OUT February



In this alternate reality, everyone dresses like they're featured on the cover of *Complex*.

Marc Ecko's Getting Up

Last time we checked out fashion mogul, Marc Ecko's foray into gaming, we walked away impressed with the amount of detail and thought put into making a graffiti-based game; it actually has as much in common with *Prince of Persia* (the platforming) as it does urban culture. Though that much hasn't changed, its release date has. Expect a full review sooner than later.

PUBLISHED BY Atari + MADE BY The Collective + IT COMES OUT February



Hey, a ghost level in a Pac-Man game! The best part of this game is the icons in the lower right.

Pac-Man World Rally

Kart racing games automatically induce uncontrolled spasms in most people, and rightly so; really, how many kart-racing hack jobs have we seen mutilate franchises we once loved? Too many. Yet this game kinda made us smile. A strange but logical mix of standard kart racing and classic *Pac-Man* gameplay, we'd just love it if this game did its source material justice.

PUBLISHED BY Namco Hometek + MADE BY Smartbomb + IT COMES OUT Summer

PSM REVIEWS

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Back to the Future

PRINCE OF PERSIA THE TWO THRONES

HOW WE RATE GAMES

We take our reviews very seriously. We spend hours upon hours play-testing each game so that we can give you the absolute best information to help you buy.

Games that score an 8, 9 or 10 earn a PSM Buy-Or-Die Award. We don't hand these beauties out easily, so if you see one on a review or anywhere else, you'll want to be sure to check that game out.

Finally, when looking up past scores, keep in mind that older games usually wouldn't fare as well if reviewed today since the bar is constantly being raised.

10 CLASSIC

A rare gem; our highest recommendation

9 OUTSTANDING

One of the better games you'll play all year

8 VERY GOOD

You can't go wrong

7 GOOD

A solid game

6 OKAY

Kind of fun, but no big deal

5 SO-SO

You've got to really love the subject matter

4 LACKING

Big flaws really hurt this game

3 BAD

Not fun at all

2 AWFUL

This game is an insult

1 WHY?

Why would anyone do this to us?

The first *Prince of Persia* broke new ground with its brilliant platforming and crafty puzzles, mostly lacking only in the combat department. Its sequel, *Warrior Within*, more or less mended those combat issues with a highly versatile fighting system, though some were taken aback by the extremity of its darker tone and slight de-emphasis on skilled navigation. That leaves the third game, *Prince of Persia: The Two Thrones*, in a pretty obvious position: bring back the platforming/puzzles and lighten that dark

cloud hanging over the Prince's head. Thankfully, someone's got a good head on their shoulders, and has done exactly that.

Drawing Maps

Traversing the game's world has always been only half the challenge in every *Prince* game; the other half is simply figuring out what that path is. *The Two Thrones* exudes a sense of refinement as you meticulously plan each and every move you'll perform to reach your semi-final destination. Camera issues previ-

"THE TWO THRONES STANDS AS A WORTHY CLOSING TO A MOMENTOUS TRILOGY"



This boss battle requires a mix of platforming, combat, and Speed Kill-like button presses. Too bad there aren't more of them like this.



The Dark Prince uses a unique weapon that's far more powerful — and useful — than a simple dagger or sword.

ously made such advance planning a bit difficult as you could never quite get that exact angle you wanted. Now, mostly through cleaner level design, drawing that invisible dotted line from the starting gate to the white tape is a much more efficient affair.

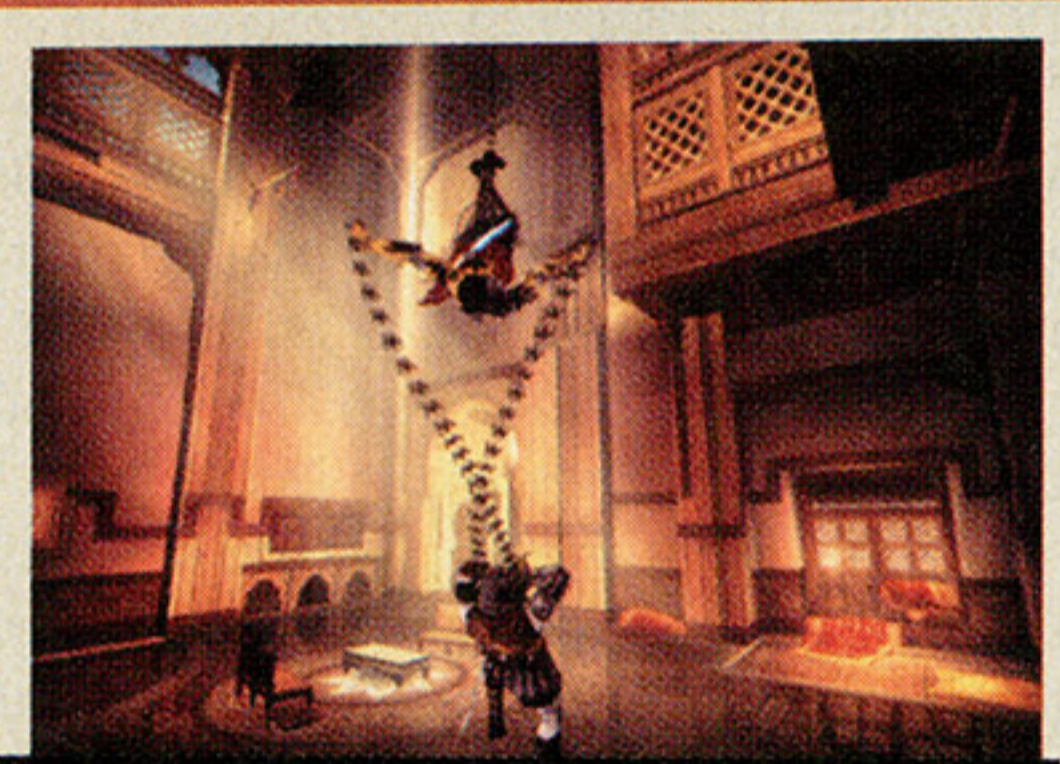
Smartly, when situations arise where the intended target is off-screen, an eye symbol will appear letting you zoom the camera out in an almost panoramic view. This angle was previously available in the other two *Prince* games, yet it differed in that it could be used at almost any time, and its purpose was more to give you a macro view of the environment as opposed to acting as a guiding hand. While the ability to use such a view is now man-

dated by the game, it is in no ways limiting. Again, the accomplished level structures and smarter overall camera work make the need of such a feature almost obsolete, with the exception being when it's near impossible to directly see where you need to go.

The other significant changes to the platforming involve the use of springboards for diagonal movement, and stabbing your dagger into plates to both scale walls, and horizontally navigate across large sections of seemingly blank wall space. The implementation of these new elements is superb, and only furthers the idea that the *Prince of Persia* series is in fact the king of platforming.

A Fight Worth Fighting

Combat in *The Two Thrones* has remained largely unchanged from *Warrior Within*. While a year ago the system was good, if not great, games like Sony's *God of War* have raised the bar to new heights. Now, the general action feels a bit rough around the edges. It lacks that explicit feeling of knowing that you executed exactly the moves you intended, consequently encouraging you to stick to the one or



It's almost as if the (Dark) Prince learned a few moves from Sam Fisher...



The Dark Prince segments are more or less timed, and are the ultimate test of your platforming skills.

PlayStation 2

PRINCE OF PERSIA: THE TWO THRONES

PUBLISHED BY
Ubisoft

MADE BY
Ubisoft Montreal

HOW MUCH?
\$49.99

ESRB RATING
Mature

MULTIPLAYER
Nope

DIFFICULTY
Varies

SUPPORT
+Dolby Pro Logic II
+Progressive Scan

TRY THIS



+ Because the Speed Kills allow you to avoid needless battles, it's best to use them as much as possible. Chances are you'll mess up on more than a few as you learn the timing. Rather than accepting defeat and battling, though, you can rewind time and try again. And again. And again.



You'll see some familiar faces in the game, as well as some very familiar gameplay sequences. It's quite touching.

two moves you *know* will work. This almost nullifies the idea of the game's free-form fighting system.

But all is far from lost, as an entirely new offensive tactic have been added to the game that in essence allows you to forgo many of the game's battles — if you're skilled enough. Aptly named Speed Kills,



Despite the fact that most of our screenshots feature fighting scenes, you can essentially avoid most of them using the game's Speed Kills. If you like fighting, though, go right ahead.



The Prince still needs to attend some anger management classes, but overall, the game has a lighter tone that almost pays homage to the legendary first game. Funny how things work out...

these stealth attacks mirror the context-sensitive kills found in *God of War*, where you press a button at just the right time to execute a killing move. The use of only one button gives the impression that it's been simplified as opposed to *God of War's* use of all four buttons, but the timing is less forgiving and less predictable.

This same concept is applied to the game's boss fights, though the purpose is slightly skewed; rather than quickly disposing of an enemy — that would negate the whole purpose of the larger battles — these timed presses allow for some inspiring attack animations that would simply be impossible to execute otherwise. Additionally, the inherent skill required to press the button at the right time provides you with a greater sense of accomplishment when finally defeating a boss.

Me, Myself, and I

By far the largest deviation from previous games is the inclusion of Dark Prince, a second playable character that brandishes new weaponry, and showcases a more nefarious side to the game. The Dark Prince segments are characterized by mobs of enemies and urgent level designs — the direct results of being more powerful and on a time budget. Because your energy is constantly draining, it's always in your best interest to reach your goal in record time. This causes the pace of the game to jarringly shift gears from slow and meditated, to

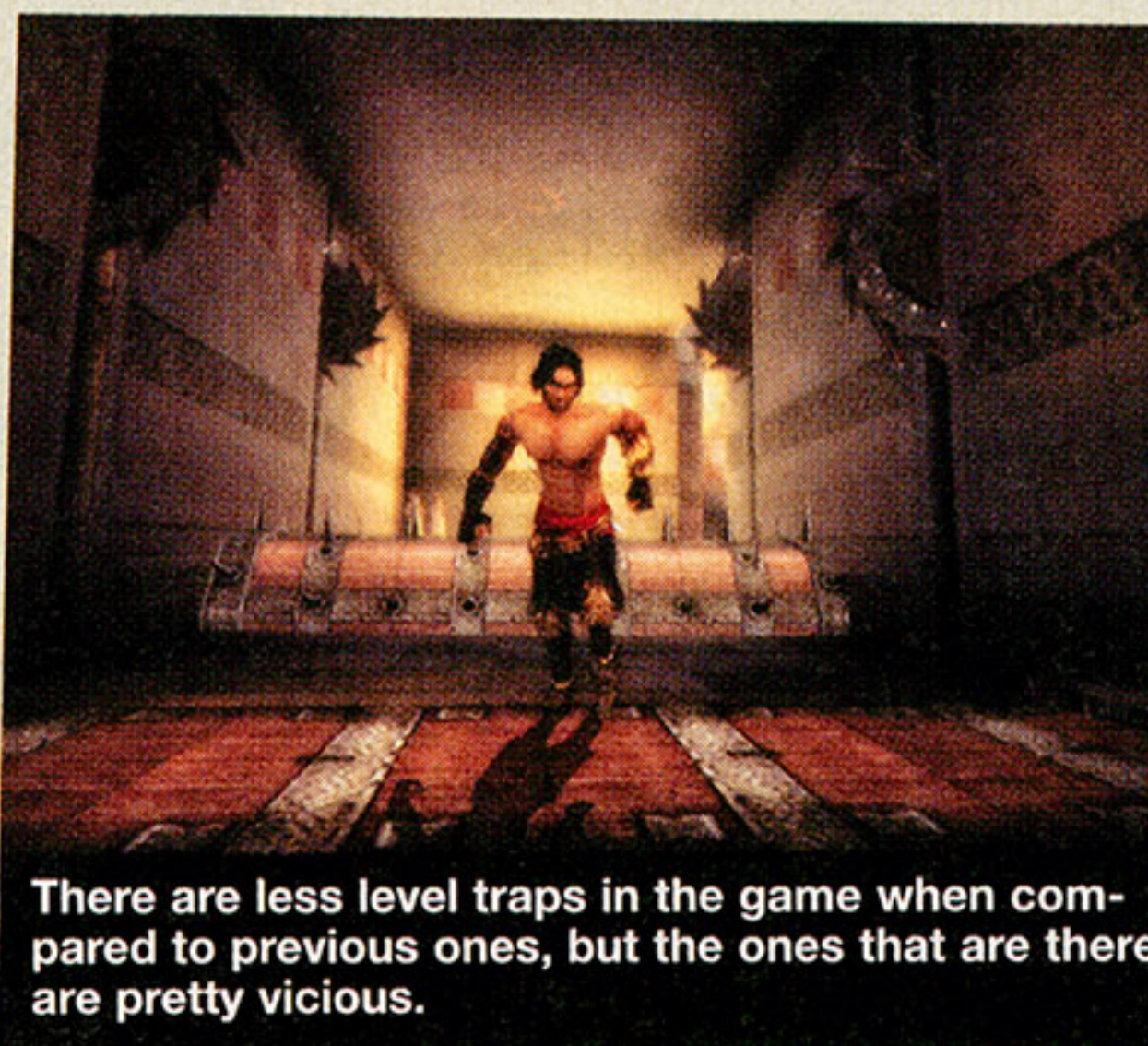
We've compared the game to *God of War*, and we'll do it again: the Dark Prince's weapon is very similar to Kratos', but we're definitely not complaining in any way.



rushed and nervous. It's mostly a fun change in dynamics, though it also forces some elements of trial and error into the game, because chances are, you won't calculate the correct path on the first try.

The Dark Prince also serves another purpose: narration duties. Most like the first *Prince* game, the story is largely told in real time through the Prince's inner thoughts. Eventually, the secondary persona will begin to converse with the Prince, leading to an inevitable confrontation where the battle turns psychologically inwards. It's all very Freudian in a sense, if a bit clichéd. One does wonder though how much marketing thought was put into creating a "dark" version of the Prince, despite the public outcry from the Prince's extreme makeover in *Warrior Within*.

Black and White



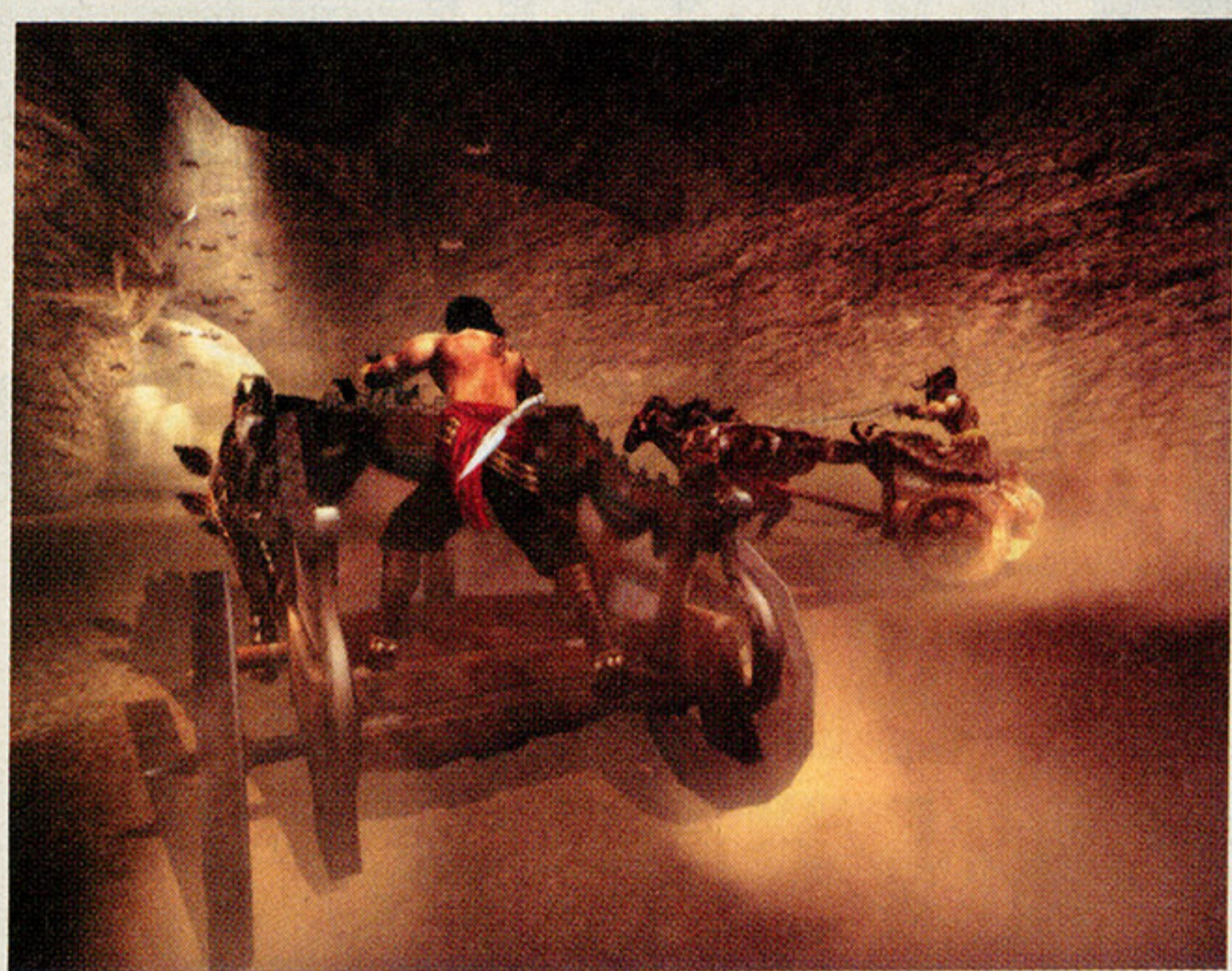
There are less level traps in the game when compared to previous ones, but the ones that are there are pretty vicious.

The Two Thrones is a visual mishmash of the previous two games. For every earth-toned rooftop, there's a blood-red brothel to counteract it. For every elegant palace corridor, there's the Prince's persistent five o'clock shadow. You can't help but feel a sense of schizophrenia as the game plays tug-of-war with its own aesthetics. But surprisingly, you get used to the dichotomy, and the visual contradictions themselves become the cohesive thread; rather than exuding a feeling of innocence and naiveté as in the first *Prince*, or a tone that's much too dark for its own good as in *Warrior Within*, you get something in the middle that feels balanced in its asymmetry.

The same can be said for the overall plot, dialog and storytelling. At times, the narration breathes regal air, emphasizing austere concepts with a touch of grimness. Other times, you're aurally flooded with lines that could have been ripped straight from a Roger



This is the perfect setup for a Speed Kill. Thankfully, the game knows it and conveniently sets up most enemies in a similar way so you can avoid combat if you want to.



Corman film. Once again, the game struggles to find its identity, but in doing so, defines it; much like confused teenagers are just that — confused teenagers.

Future Perfect?

We'll go on the record and say that this is, without a doubt, the most diverse and thrilling *Prince* game to date. There are a few points during the game, though, that break you away from what is almost always a captivating experience. At the top of that list are the boss battles. *The Two Thrones* starts out with a huge bang, pitting you against a larger-than-life behemoth, then gradually fizzles out with encounters that are nowhere near as memorable. Factor in some balancing issues that only make matters worse, and you'll almost wish they weren't in the game at all.

Next are the chariot races that feel much too tacked onto the game. While we can appreciate the idea that these break up the monotony of a platform, fight, platform cycle, they don't provide the thrills or depth that you want or expect. They don't necessarily detract too much from the game, but similarly, they don't add much value either.

Lastly, we come to the puzzles. Simply, they're not quite as sophisticated as they could be, nor are there enough of them. The solutions are just too simple, so that rather than generating the exhilarating rush of an epiphany, you're just slaving through the motions to progress through the game. They're by no means terrible — and the levels themselves are effectively ingenious puzzles themselves — they just miss the mark of brilliance.

The End of Time

When all is said and done, *The Two Thrones* stands as a worthy closing to a momentous trilogy. It ties up most of the paradoxical loose ends of a time-shifting fiction, introduces and successfully executes a number of creative innovations, and satisfyingly emphasizes its strengths while largely smoothing out its rough-hewn edges. The final product is a game that deserves to be played — and will be remembered — by both videogame cognoscenti and mainstream gamers alike. **KAISER HWANG**

PSM SCORE 9.0

MORE TALK

†Incredible platforming, great visuals, new ideas well executed

LESS ROCK

†Unbalanced boss battles, some tacked on features, average puzzles

HOW IT STACKS UP

God of War	9.5
Prince of Persia: The Two Thrones	9
Aeon Flux	6.5
The Matrix: Path of Neo	6.5
Batman Begins	5

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"THE RANDOM BATTLES ARE AS CONSTANT AS THEY ARE FURIOUS"

Long before Gandalf made bright lights trendy, *Wild ARMS* was illuminating games the world over.



WILD ARMS ALTER CODE: F

PUBLISHED BY Agetec

MADE BY Media Vision/SCEI

HOW MUCH? \$49.99

ESRB RATING Teen

MULTIPLAYER No

DIFFICULTY Average

SUPPORTS +Nothing

TRY THIS



+We've said it before and we'll say it again: there are way too many random battles in the game that it makes things feel a bit tedious. Because of this, you'll definitely want to make efficient use of your escape meter, which lets you avoid battles. It's not a perfect solution, but it's a lot better than not having it at all!

THREE'S COMPANY

Wild ARMS Alter code: F

An updated blast from the RPG past

Rudy, Jack, Cecilia... the original heroic trio who debuted on the PS one back in 1997 in the original *Wild ARMS* (known as "that RPG between *Beyond the Beyond* and *Final Fantasy VII*" to non-fans) return after going under developer Media Vision's polygonal knife. The result is a new feel for a series that's much beloved among RPG nerds like us. The question is, was it necessary, and more importantly, is the game any better for it?

Wild ARMS Alter code: F blends together the original's straightforward, no-frills role-playing with some updated elements also found in *Wild ARMS 3*. You're still able to wield personal skills on the overhead map (Rudy's bombs and Jack's hanpan and wire hook bring the déjà vu in full force),

but now you're privy to upcoming battles via a colored exclamation point that appears above your character's head. You can then choose to avoid the battle, but only as long as you have points in your escape meter.

A large part of the game is juggling and balancing different point systems and fighting turn-based battles. You've got your escape points as noted earlier, force points that increase during battle and give each character access to a unique force spell, magic points, and of course, health points. We just wish the battle system was more streamlined or simply quicker, as the random battles are as constant as they are furious.

It's the blending of different elements found in the past *Wild ARMS* games that gives *Alter code: F* a weird,



You won't be blown away by the visuals, but they definitely get the job done.



Don't tell Lara, but picking up boxes is set to replace pushing and pulling them.

Frankenstein feel. It's not necessarily a bad thing, really. Actually, longtime fans will be thrilled at the secret new playable party members, and wax nostalgic at the reworked opening cutscene and its unforgettable theme song. Sadly, things like the brutal random battle frequency, a very rough localized script, and an overall feeling that *Alter code: F* is outdated (even for an update) keep its appeal restricted to the converted. **FRANCESCA REYES**



Hey, do my guns look bigger and badder in 2D or 3D? That's what I thought.



It's amazing that RPGs never really have to change to provide a decent time.

PSM SCORE 6.5

- FIRST STRIKE!** +Great opening music; tried and true gameplay; very nostalgic.
- AMBUSH!** -Localization needs work; too many random battles; feels outdated.

HOW IT STACKS UP

X-Men Legends II	8.5
Digital Devil Saga	8
Wild ARMS Alter code: F	6.5
Radiata Stories	6.5
Fullmetal Alchemist: BA	5

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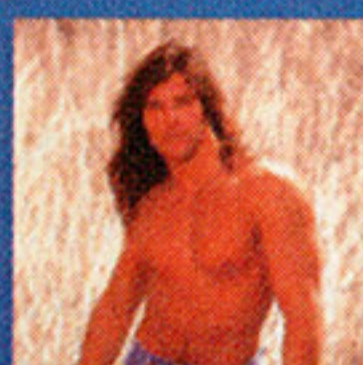
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RINGTONES

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 01124015 - Take On Me - A-Ha
 01124066 - Barbie Girl - Aqua
 01123950 - P.I.M.P. - 50 Cent
 01125428 - Dilemma - Nelly
 01126241 - Stunt 101 - G-Unit
 01124685 - Party Up - DMX
 01126416 - Why - Jadakiss
 01124876 - Seinfeld - Theme
 01125236 - Terminator - Theme
 01126346 - The Jetsons - Theme
 01125653 - Ignition - R. Kelly
 01125791 - Duality - Slipknot
 01125866 - Santeria - Sublime
 01124529 - Clocks - Coldplay
 01124037 - Fallin' - Alicia Keys
 01129414 - Faint - Linkin Park
 01126701 - Numb - Linkin Park
 01125732 - Push It - Salt N Pepa
 01124594 - Sandstorm - DaRude
 01133713 - Roxanne - The Police
 01133696 - Transformers - Theme
 01131947 - Will And Grace - Theme
 01124851 - Incredible Hulk - Theme
 01129602 - Are You In - Incubus
 01124244 - No Rain - Blind Melon

01133275 - Home - 3 Days Grace
 01129678 - Angie - Rolling Stones
 01126086 - Can't Deny It - Fabolous
 01125939 - Hey Jude - The Beatles
 01125958 - Yesterday - The Beatles
 01133715 - Ironic - Alanis Morissette
 01126453 - Change Clothes - Jay-Z
 01129571 - Kashmir - Led Zeppelin
 01125805 - Beautiful - Snoop Dogg
 01133703 - To Be With You - Mr. Big
 01125468 - Don't Speak - No Doubt
 01124453 - Dirty - Christina Aguilera
 01126312 - Clint Eastwood - Gorillaz
 01133734 - Foolish Games - Jewel
 01132644 - Like A Virgin - Madonna
 01132442 - Lovefool - The Cardigans
 01124194 - Sabotage - Beastie Boys
 01124388 - Fire It Up - Busta Rhymes
 01124960 - With Or Without You - U2
 01124853 - Inspector Gadget - Theme
 01124900 - Law And Order - Theme
 01133310 - Days Of Our Lives - Theme
 01133316 - Meet The Flintstones - Theme
 01131208 - Rocky - Gonna Fly Now - Theme
 01125214 - Singing In The Rain - Theme
 01131210 - Starsky And Hutch - Theme
 01124892 - The Twilight Zone - Theme
 01133333 - Woody Woodpecker - Theme

01133741 - We Will Rock You - Queen
 01124606 - My Own Summer - Deftones
 01124696 - American Pie - Don McLean
 01129668 - American Idiot - Green Day
 01129616 - Start Me Up - Rolling Stones
 01133503 - Let Me Go - 3 Doors Down
 01131188 - The Reason - Hoobastank
 01126635 - Rock And Roll All Nite - Kiss
 01133698 - Lady Marmalade - All Saints
 01129674 - Ain't It Funny - Jennifer Lopez
 01126529 - With You - Jessica Simpson
 01124713 - The Next Episode - Dr. Dre
 01126458 - Dirt Off Your Shoulder - Jay-Z
 01126756 - Block Lockdown - Ludacris
 01126837 - No More Drama - Mary J. Blige
 01126888 - Get Ur Freak On - Missy Elliot
 01123922 - Until The End Of Time - 2Pac
 01123982 - More Than A Woman - Aaliyah
 01126581 - Seniorita - Justin Timberlake
 01129521 - 1, 2 Step - Ciara feat. Missy Elliot
 01129617 - Drop It Like It's Hot - Snoop Dogg
 01133468 - Let's Get Blown - Snoop Dogg
 01129426 - My Boo - Usher & Alicia Keys
 01126383 - Cops - Bad Boys - Inner Circle
 01126423 - Miami Vice - Jan Hammer
 01125419 - Batman Theme - Neal Hefti
 01125674 - Ghostbusters - Ray Parker Jr.
 01125700 - La Bamba - Ritchie Valens

01129387 - Monkees Theme - The Monkees
 01133733 - All That She Wants - Ace of Base
 01129527 - I'm a Slave 4 U - Britney Spears
 01129605 - Breaking the Habit - Linkin Park
 01124253 - All The Small Things - Blink 182
 01133292 - Numb / Encore - Jay-Z & Linkin Park
 01126284 - I Will Survive - Gloria Gaynor
 01126822 - She Will Be Loved - Maroon 5
 01126860 - Black Or White - Michael Jackson
 01125481 - Don't Know Why - Norah Jones
 01125693 - Livin La Vida Loca - Ricky Martin
 01123925 - Away from the Sun - 3 Doors Down
 01124368 - Oops! ... I Did It Again - Britney Spears
 01126283 - Turn The Beat Around - Gloria Estefan
 01126792 - Sweet Home Alabama - Lynyrd Skynyrd
 01133682 - Mama I'm Coming Home - Ozzy Osbourne
 01133725 - The Man With The Golden Gun - Theme
 01129412 - Old School - Dust In The Wind - Kansas
 01126754 - 2 Fast 2 Furious - Act A Fool - Ludacris
 01125607 - Another Brick In The Wall - Pink Floyd
 01129546 - City Of Angels - Iris - Goo Goo Doll
 01133705 - Crouching Tiger Hidden Dragon - Theme
 01126339 - Pink Panther Theme - Henry Mancini
 01125911 - House Of The Rising Sun - The Animals
 01133720 - Pour Some Sugar on Me - Def Leppard
 01126664 - Stairway To Heaven (Intro) - Led Zeppelin
 01129672 - Boulevard of Broken Dreams - Green Day
 01124158 - As Long As You Love Me - Backstreet Boys

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"AN EXPEDITION INTO THE RUGGED UNKNOWN"

In the US version of the game, we swear he'll speak English...



TOUGH LOVE

Romancing SaGa

Not tonight, dear... I've got a headache

Square Enix often defies (and also defines) RPG tradition. However, this latest *SaGa* game – actually a remake of the Japan-only SNES original – demonstrates that sometimes a reinvented wheel doesn't turn nearly as well. The player begins by selecting one of eight characters, each of whom starts in a different part of the world before getting sucked into a typical, rudimentary storyline involving a mighty, evil god about to escape his magical imprisonment. Well, the *idea* is to get sucked in. Sadly, there's alarmingly little guid-

ance, so plan to do a ton of wandering. Furthermore, survival is tough – the complex battle system is okay, but the difficulty is totally erratic. It's actually common to find yourself trapped in a battle, or even in an entire dungeon, meant for characters 400% more advanced than yours. It's not an aesthetically unpleasant journey at least, thanks to decent graphics and oddly appealing, "Final Fantasy meets *Hot Shots Golf*" art design, but it's an expedition into the rugged unknown – not a luxury vacation. **ERIC BRATCHER**



ROMANCING SAGA
 PUBLISHED BY Square Enix
 MADE BY Square Enix
 HOW MUCH? \$39.99
 ESRB RATING Everyone
 MULTIPLAYER Nope
 DIFFICULTY Schizophrenic
 SUPPORT †Dolby Pro Logic II



If there's one thing Square Enix knows well, it's how to make gorgeous spells.



What if people really looked like this? Think the world would be a better place?

PSM SCORE 5.0

FINAL FANTASY †Interesting visual style; battle system is okay if you don't mind breakable weapons.
 THE BOUNCER - Poor plot, too open ended, encourages you to enter unwinnable situations.

DYING FOR A GOOD TIME

Aeon Flux

A "T" rated Aeon Flux?

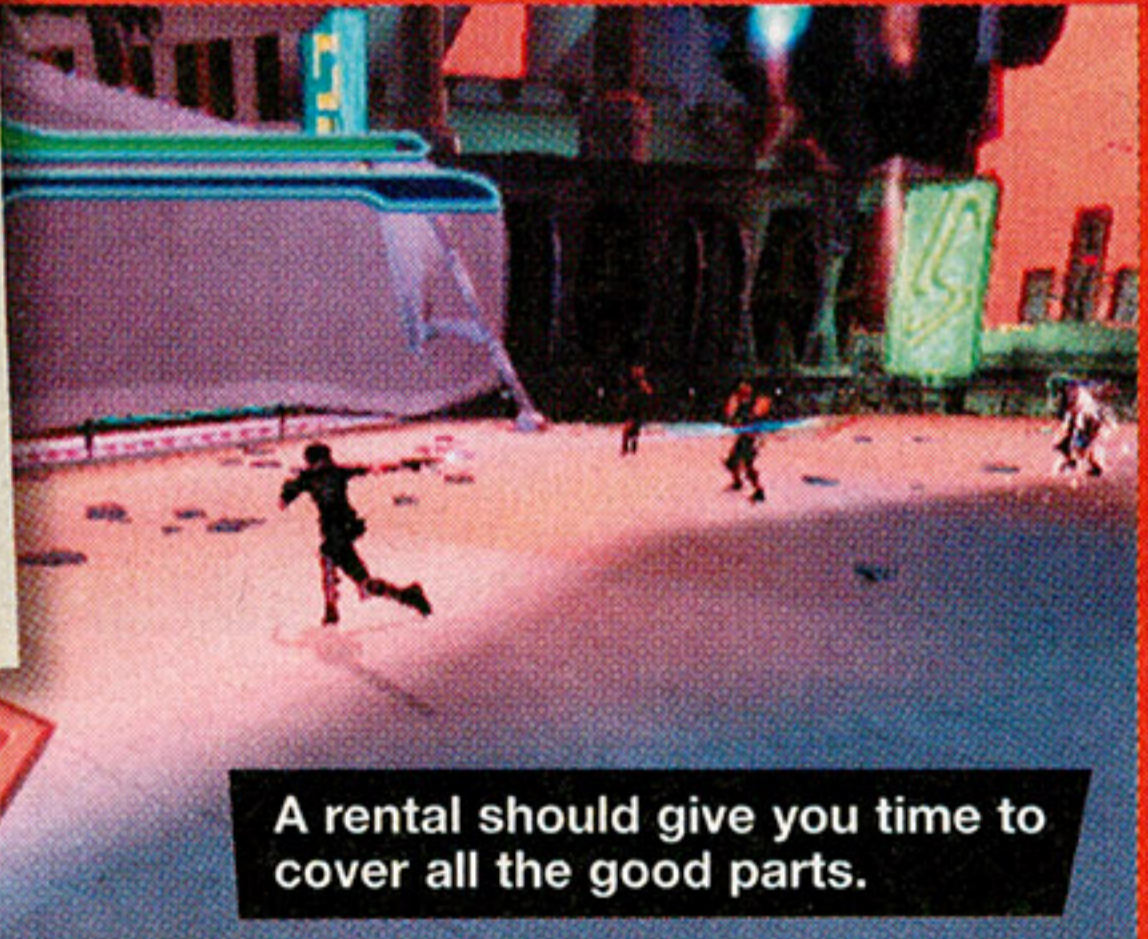
This game should be way better than it is. It's from the same folks who brought us *BloodRayne*, so they know a bit about chicks with guns. And whether the movie turns out to be any good or not, the character of Aeon is a natural for a game adaptation. Setting aside the less-than-snappy controls and often unhelpful camera, the real problem is that there's no sense of progress; for all the different faces of Aeon, you never once learn a new move, or grab a new weapon. The enemies get tougher, but that's it. And since Aeon dies at the end of every level (oops... sorry!) with the

Charlize Theron is much hotter in person.



next level picking up in some random place, the story never has any real direction. It's actually not that much of a challenge either, and is over pretty quick – eight, maybe ten hours, tops.

Aeon Flux has its moments, and some of them are actually pretty cool, but there's not enough of them. In the end, the game plays exactly like what it is: a quickie tie-in title that cashes in on the license. **JEFF LUNDRIGAN**

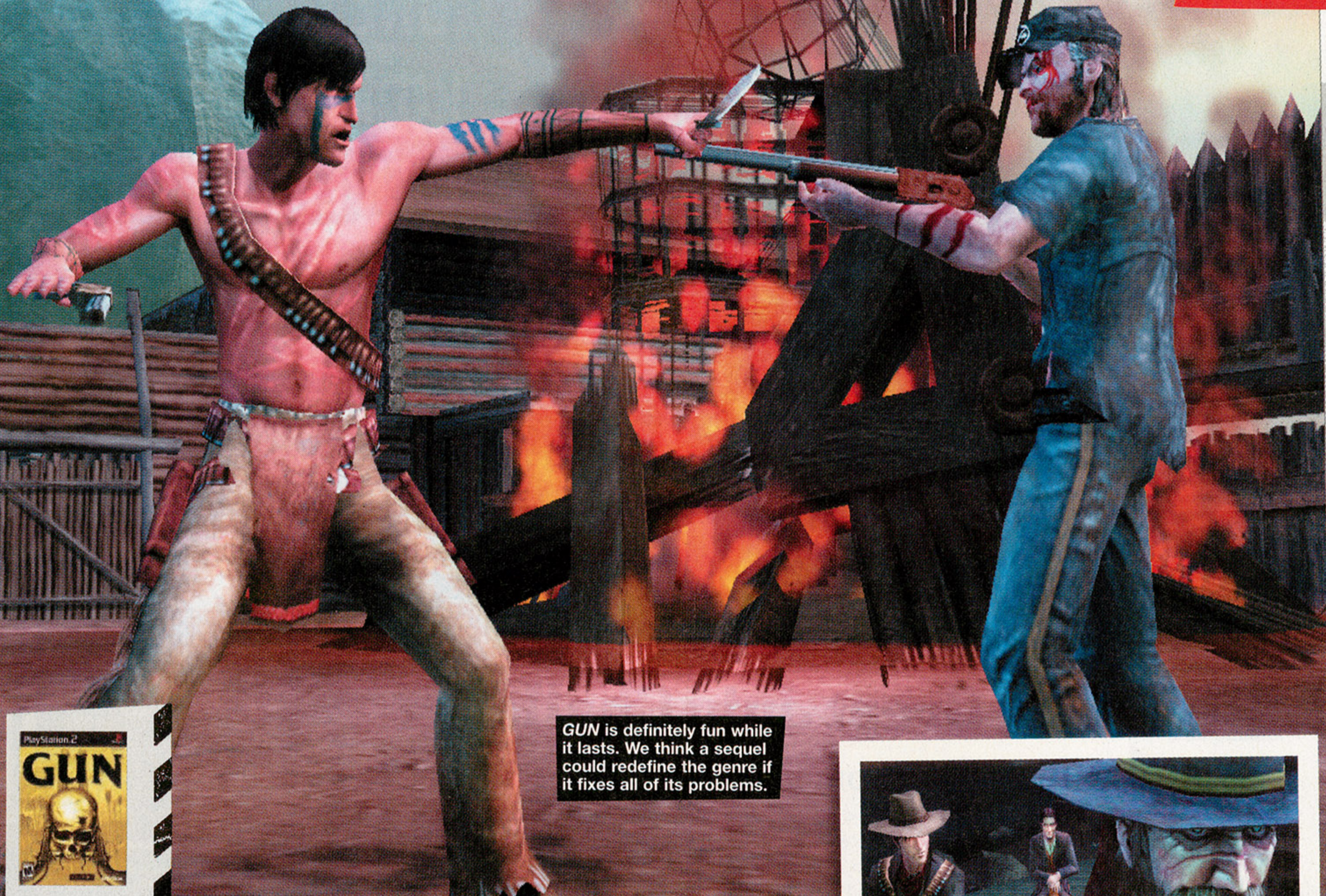


A rental should give you time to cover all the good parts.

PSM SCORE 6.5

I LIVE! †It looks good, and at times captures a nice slice of "classic" *Aeon Flux*.
 DEAD AGAIN - No sense of progress; floaty controls and camera; not enough game.

†PUBLISHED BY Majesco † MADE BY Terminal Reality † HOW MUCH? \$49.99 † ESRB Teen †MULTIPLAYER None † DIFFICULTY Easy, but with a few speed bumps † SUPPORTS Widescreen



GUN is definitely fun while it lasts. We think a sequel could redefine the genre if it fixes all of its problems.



GUN

PUBLISHED BY
Activision

MADE BY
Neversoft

HOW MUCH?
\$49.99

ESRB RATING
Mature

MULTIPLAYER
No

DIFFICULTY
Average

SUPPORTS
+Progressive Scan
+Widescreen
+Dolby Pro Logic II

TRY THIS



+ Though the side missions aren't mandatory, it's best to do as many as humanly possible early in the game. The reason for this is that your stats raise every time you complete one. Do a bunch early on, and the rest of the game is a breeze.

FULL OF SPAGHETTI

GUN

The best of the Wild West, nothing more, nothing less

The Wild West has only been touched on in recent gaming years, and for no good reason, really. The vast lands, lax social morals, and even sexual debauchery make for a fertile garden just waiting to be sowed. Let's not forget the cowboys and Indians, either. It's borderline paradoxical that the one to come save us from this deprivation is Neversoft, a company that's made its name producing a series on the other side of the historical timeline: *Tony Hawk*.

The contrast between the two titles is a little misleading, as *GUN* shares its overarching game structure with *Hawk* and pals: explore an open environment, interact with conveniently placed characters, and complete the goal given to you. *GUN* also mirrors the almost evasive, but undeniably fun qualities of *Hawk*, with its responsive, logical controls and overall feel.

The real reason you'll play *GUN*, though, is for the story. Expertly voiced,

elegantly choreographed, and at times unpredictable, the Randall Jahnson-penned script (*The Doors*) conjures the best of the West, from *Gunsmoke* to *Deadwood*. It's clichéd at times, but honestly, that familiarity is what makes the tale as inviting as it is.

The question remains, however: is *GUN* how the West will be won? Not quite. While the game gives you an

open, *GTA*-like world to toy with, it forgets the most important thing — the toys. There's simply not enough to do in the vast world, as it mostly consists of open plains and deserted canyons. Even when you do come upon, say, wildlife, there's no real gratification from interacting with it as the rewards feel hollow.

Also, a large portion of the story missions are protection missions, where your success is dependent on the survival of an AI entity — whether that's a carriage, a slew of Indians, or simply one of your partners in crime. If you're going to take this route, you need the AI to back it up. *GUN* doesn't. Compound this with a littering of shallow boss battles (save for the last), and you can't help but feel that if you scratch beneath the brilliant production values and story, you'd be left with a game that's as vacant as the world it throws at you. **KAISER HWANG**



The cutscenes are so well done, they feel like rewards for playing the game.

PSM SCORE 7.5

UNFORGIVEN

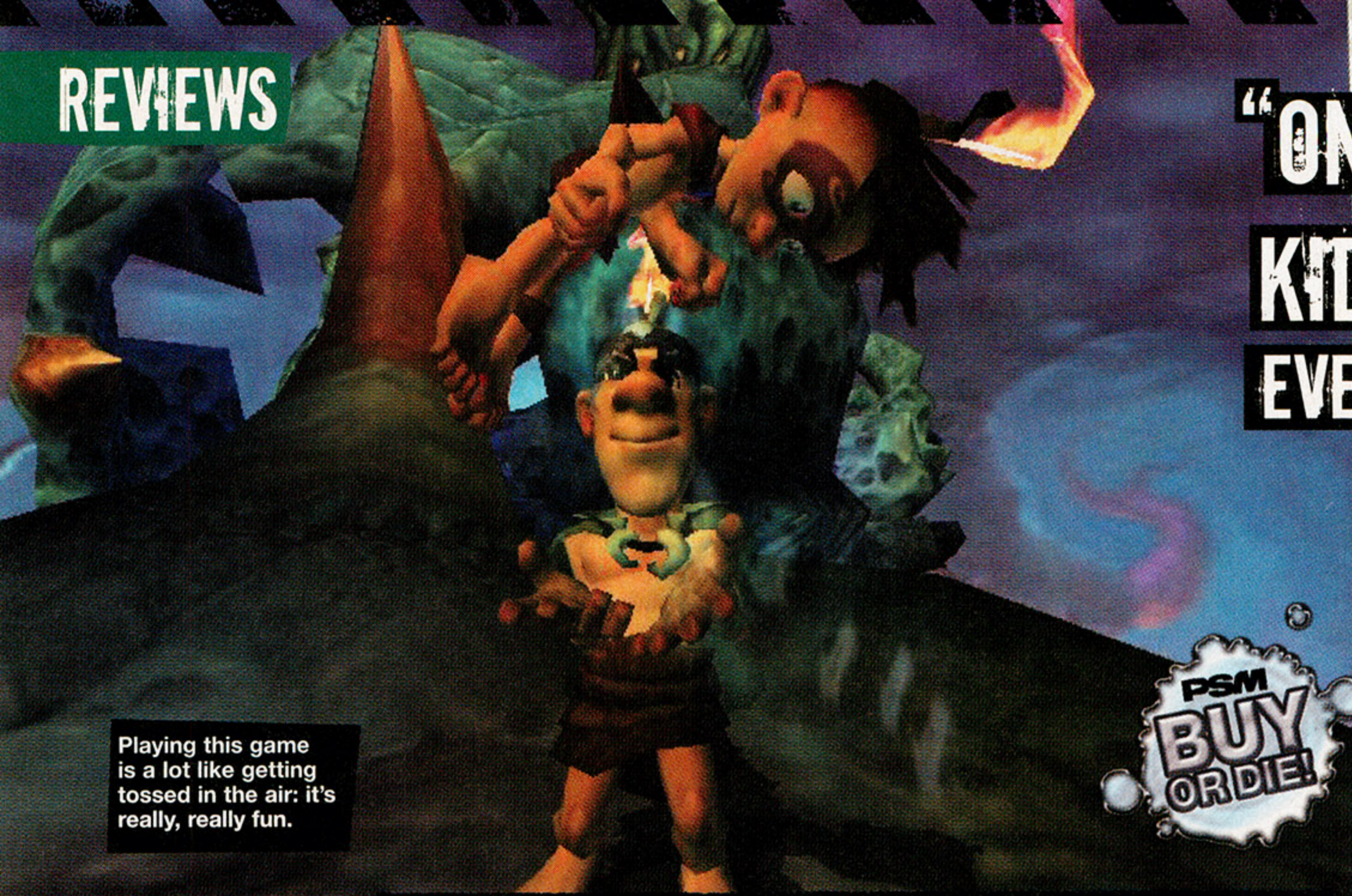
+Compelling storyline; great voice work; fun gameplay mechanics.

YOUNG GUNS

-World is too empty; side missions feel tacked on; not enough variety.

HOW IT STACKS UP

GTA: San Andreas	10
True Crime: New York City	8
GUN	7.5
Total Overdose	7
Red Dead Revolver	6



"ONE OF THE BEST
KID'S GAMES YOU'RE
EVER LIKELY TO PLAY"

Playing this game is a lot like getting tossed in the air: it's really, really fun.



Man, how come I never noticed those corns on his feet before?

JUUU THAT YOU DO SO WELL

Tak: The Great Juju Challenge

A little help from your friends

The first *Tak* was a solid platformer for the elementary school set, with a likeable character and solid gameplay that was challenging, but forgiving. The Great Juju Challenge takes that formula and runs with it, adding features that make this one of the best kids' games you're ever likely to play.

First and foremost, *Tak* is joined by the bumbling Lok in this new adventure, and the two Pupanunu tribesmen must work together in order to beat every level in the game. The beauty part, though, is that a second player

can jump in and out of the game at will with a simple press of the start button on a second controller. One person can also control both tribesmen, though, so the co-op aspect isn't lost even in the single-player mode.

We urge you not to let the younger visual style turn you away from this game. It really is well done and sincerely enjoyable. Plus, the genuinely funny antics of Patrick Warburton (*Seinfeld*, *The Tick*) as the voice of Lok will keep older players laughing while they play along with the younger folk.

GREG SEWART



One of the best things about this game is that you can play with a friend, whether they're younger or older.

PSM SCORE 8.0

JUUU
+Puzzles mixed with hilarious dialogue for an enjoyable experience.

VOODOO
-Too easy to die during a single-player game when switching characters.

JAZZ HANDS!

FLOW: Urban Dance Uprising

Play that funky music

FLOW was originally going to be called *Get On Da Floor*, a companion dancing game to Eidos' "hip-hop career simulation," *Get On Da Mic*. Had that happened, the game would've tanked faster than Dubya on a tour of Latin America. The game later got bounced to Ubisoft, who re-christened it with a slightly more obtuse title (although if you speak jive, you'll know that "flow" is actually the word for "floor"). All signs pointed to *FLOW* sucking, and sucking hard.

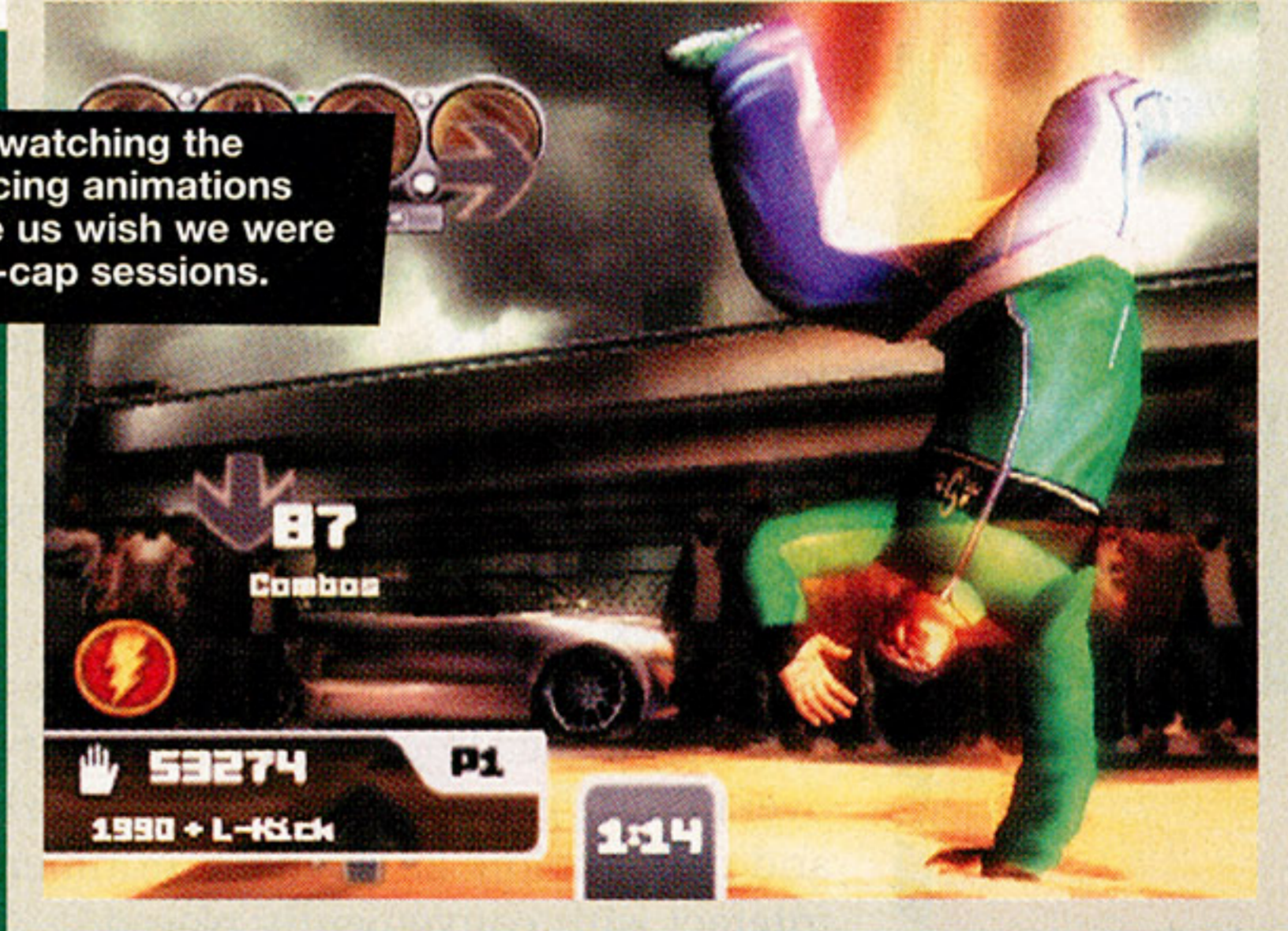
Good news — it does not, in fact, suck hard. Granted, its appeal is still pretty limited, but for the most part, so

is the suckage. Actually, *FLOW* gets a slight leg up on its main competitor, *DDR*: instead of watching a little movie as each number plays, you have an onscreen 3D character whose poppin' and lockin' breakdancing routine gets increasingly more impressive the better you perform.

The rhythms and routines also have a slightly different feel from *DDR*, but this contrast gives the game a sense of individuality. As a game, *FLOW* can take on *DDR* any day, though its hip-hop-only soundtrack will determine if the game's right for you.

JEFF LUNDRIGAN

We loved watching the breakdancing animations — it made us wish we were at the mo-cap sessions.



PSM SCORE 7.0

BUST A MOVE!
+Onscreen character instead of a movie; lots of great hip-hop numbers.

BUSTED
-The jump from easy to medium is steep; nothing but hip-hop numbers.

+ PUBLISHED BY Ubisoft + MADE BY A2M/Highway 1 + HOW MUCH? \$39.99 + ESRB Teen + MULTIPLAYER 8-Player round robin + DIFFICULTY Varies + SUPPORTS Dance pad, EyeToy

WIN! The Ultimate Gaming Rig!

OVER \$20,000⁰⁰ IN PRIZES!

Baindramage
"We Make You Think..."



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

Computer Contest. Win a tricked out gaming computer with 4.0 Ghz Pentium 4, 4 Gig. RAM, 500 Gig. HD, DVD, Windows XP, Nvidia card and more!

Video Game Contest. Play on the hi-tech cutting edge with this line-up: Microsoft Xbox 360, Sony PS3, Nintendo Revolution and Sony PSP! Get all three or trade the ones you don't want for CASH! Bonus options include: 33" monitor, \$1,000 in games you choose, Nintendo DS, cash, accessories and more!

Media Rig Contest. The Ultimate Gaming Environment, 72 inch HDTV monitor, 170 watt/ch. surround sound and all components shown. Win \$1,000.00 in movies YOU choose. This rig will blow you away!!

We're talkin' GAMING HEAVEN!

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

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

Mystery Word Grid

	H				
		E			
P	I	N	C	H	W
	R				
S					

M
Y
S
T
E
R
Y

W
O
R
D

WORD LIST and LETTER CODE chart

PINCHW	PRESS.....K	BLASTA	WRECK.....D
BREAK.....Z	PUNCHS	SPRAYC	TURBO.....V
STOMPT	STAND.....R	PRESS.....E	DREAMO
CRUSH.....I	SCOREH	SLANTL	CHASE.....P

MYSTERY WORD CLUE:

WORLD RULERS HAVE IT AND IN THIS CONTEST YOU HAVE IT

Yes!

ENTER ME TODAY, HERE'S MY ENTRY FEE:

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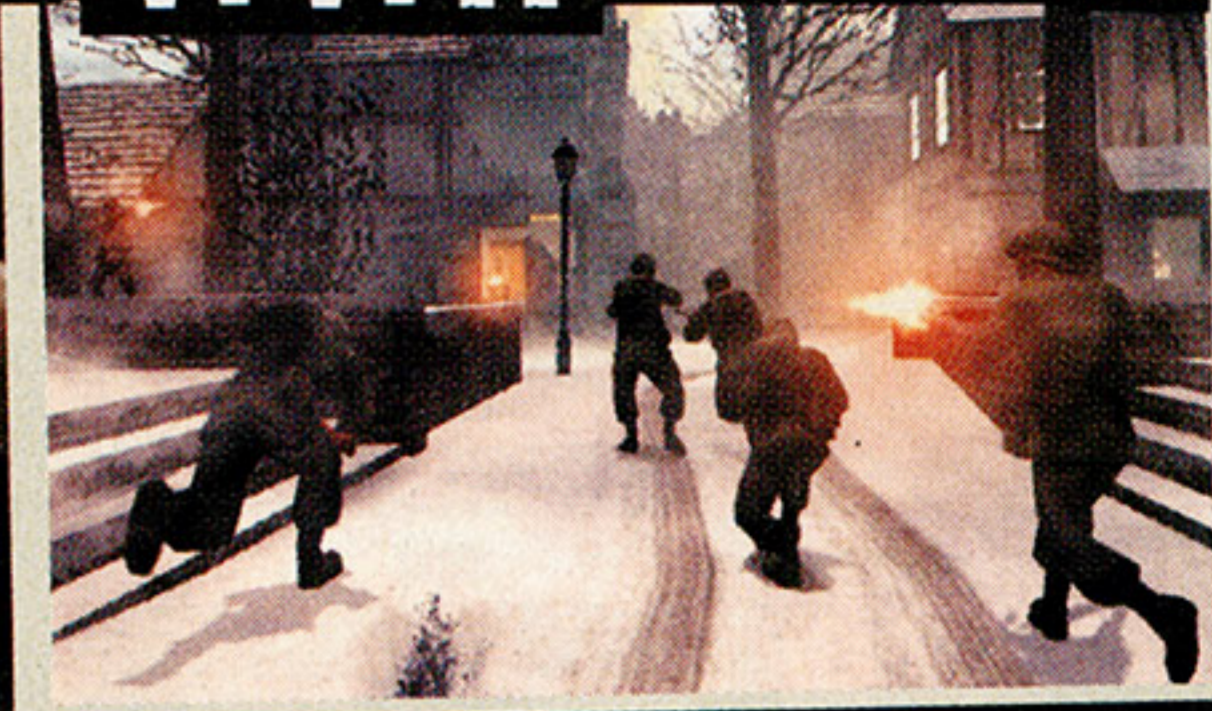


Verifiable retail value of the prize packages as follows: Media Rig Contest package \$7,012.00 core components shown, bonus options \$3,449.00, cash options \$1,250.00. Computer Contest package \$2,500.00 for computer, bonus options \$2,337.00, cash options \$1,250.00. Video Game Contest \$700.00 for systems shown, \$3,549.00 bonus options, \$1,250.00 cash options.



"...A SIMPLE ARCADE SHOOTER CLOAKED IN WWII GUISE..."

Honestly, there needs to be more firemen in the game.



Sometimes having a group of buddies is a bad thing, since you kinda have to wait for them even when you're ready to go.



If we have a WWII, do you think we'll finally see some new types of games? Nah...



CALL OF DUTY 2: BIG RED ONE

PUBLISHED BY Activision

MADE BY Treyarch

HOW MUCH? \$49.99

ESRB RATING Teen

MULTIPLAYER 16-players

DIFFICULTY Average

SUPPORT †Online multiplayer

GERMAN POTSHOTS

Call Of Duty 2: Big Red One

Super size me

The Big Red One is the elite U.S. Army 1st Infantry Division that withstood Hitler's final assault. Problem is they lost some of that elitism in the virtual translation. The heavy reliance on scripted events and questionable enemy and team AI are the main culprits here.

A perfect example is the fact that you can't open any doors; a member of your squad must do so. That means you'll be left waiting literally doing nothing while you wait for some flag to go off telling your mate to open the door. There's no better way to negate

the suspension of disbelief than to have the player consciously wondering why they're incapable of opening the door themselves.

Also, while the scenic anarchy around you does have its merits, any feeling of true realism is gone when you realize that you're sniping soldiers hundreds of feet away with a machine gun.

Ultimately, you're left with a simple arcade shooter cloaked in WWII guise that completes every prerequisite for the genre, from shooting down enemy planes to riding the back of a half-track while sniping German forces. It's

everything we expected, really.
JOHN BRANDON/KAISER HWANG

PSM SCORE 7.0

CRACK SHOT †Call of Duty 2 does everything it's supposed to, and that's a good thing.	CRAP SHOOT -Call of Duty 2 does everything it's supposed to, and that's a bad thing.
---	--

J-RPG, CIRCA 1996



The Legend of Heroes: A Tear of Vermillion

Back to the good old days

RPGs have changed a lot since the early days of wandering outside of town and smacking slimes with a bamboo pole, but you wouldn't know it from playing *The Legend of Heroes: A Tear of Vermillion*. This remake of a 1996 Falcom RPG is like a blast from the genre's past, with cute sprites instead of fancy cutscenes and nary a hint of depth or complexity.

That's not really a bad thing, though, as *Legend of Heroes'* back-to-basics approach is well-executed and charming. You start out as a lowly orphaned teenager, set out on an adventure, gain companions, level up, and save the

world. The gameplay is similarly typical, with speedy, turn-based battles, a fair bit of town exploration, and lots of equipment to save up for.

The production values are quite good. Important characters are blessed with lovely, full-screen portraits, and the music might be described as comfortably familiar. Nothing earthshaking is going on here, but it's all good quality.

The Legend of Heroes is like comfort food for the seasoned RPG-er. It's familiar, well-crafted, and fits well on PSP. BENJAMIN TURNER

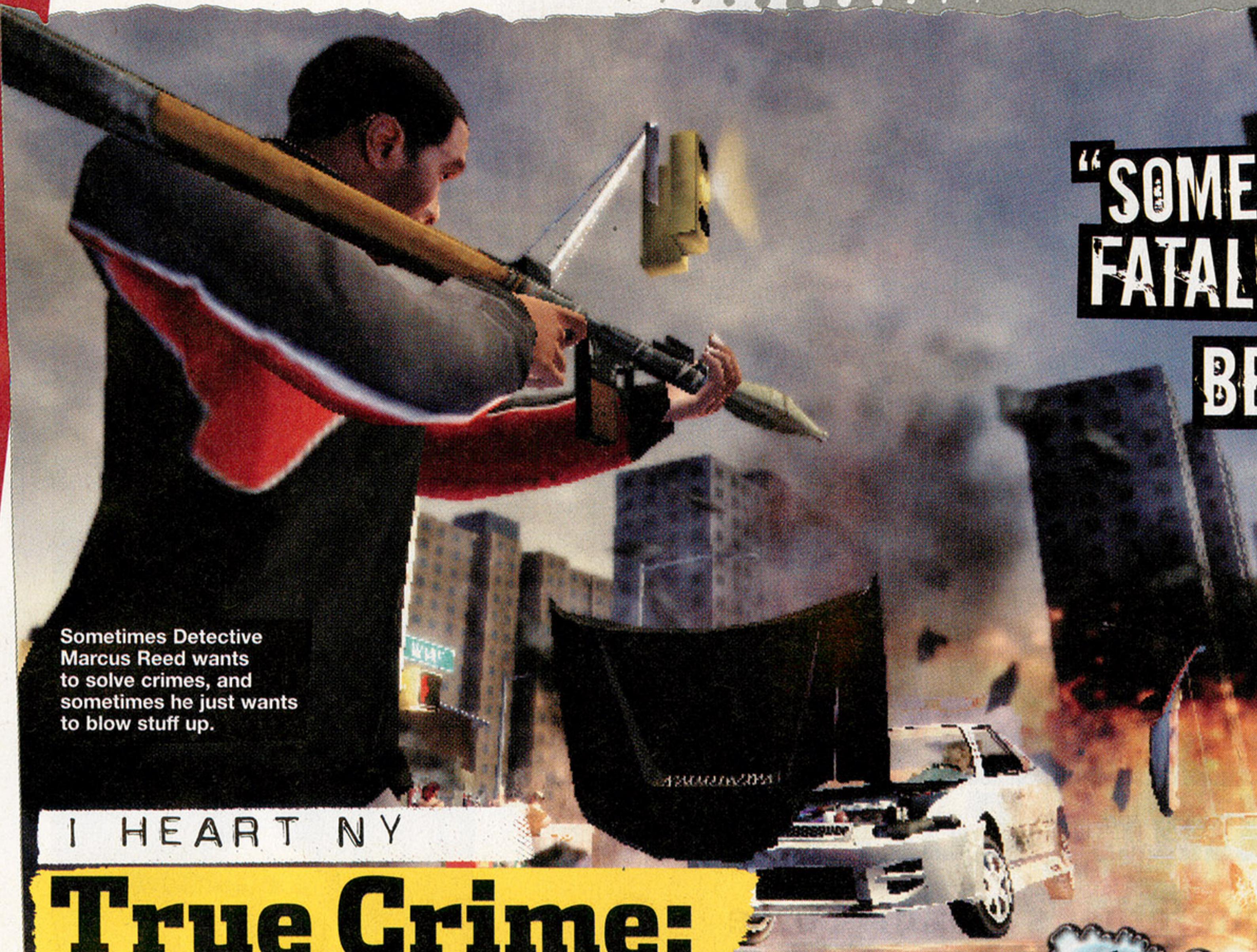


You've seen it all before, but that doesn't mean you won't still like it. You may even cry...

PSM SCORE 7.0

LONG SWORD †It's got classic RPG gameplay, and the PSP-enhanced graphics look nice.	BAMBOO POLE -There is nothing new here, so if you're looking for innovation look elsewhere.
---	---

†PUBLISHED BY Bandai † MADE BY Falcom † HOW MUCH? \$39.99 † ESRB Teen †MULTIPLAYER None † DIFFICULTY Blue Slime † SUPPORTS Nothing



Sometimes Detective Marcus Reed wants to solve crimes, and sometimes he just wants to blow stuff up.

“SOMETIMES THOUGH FATALITIES CAN’T BE AVOIDED”



The environments are really quite impressive — it really feels like NYC.

I HEART NY

True Crime: New York City

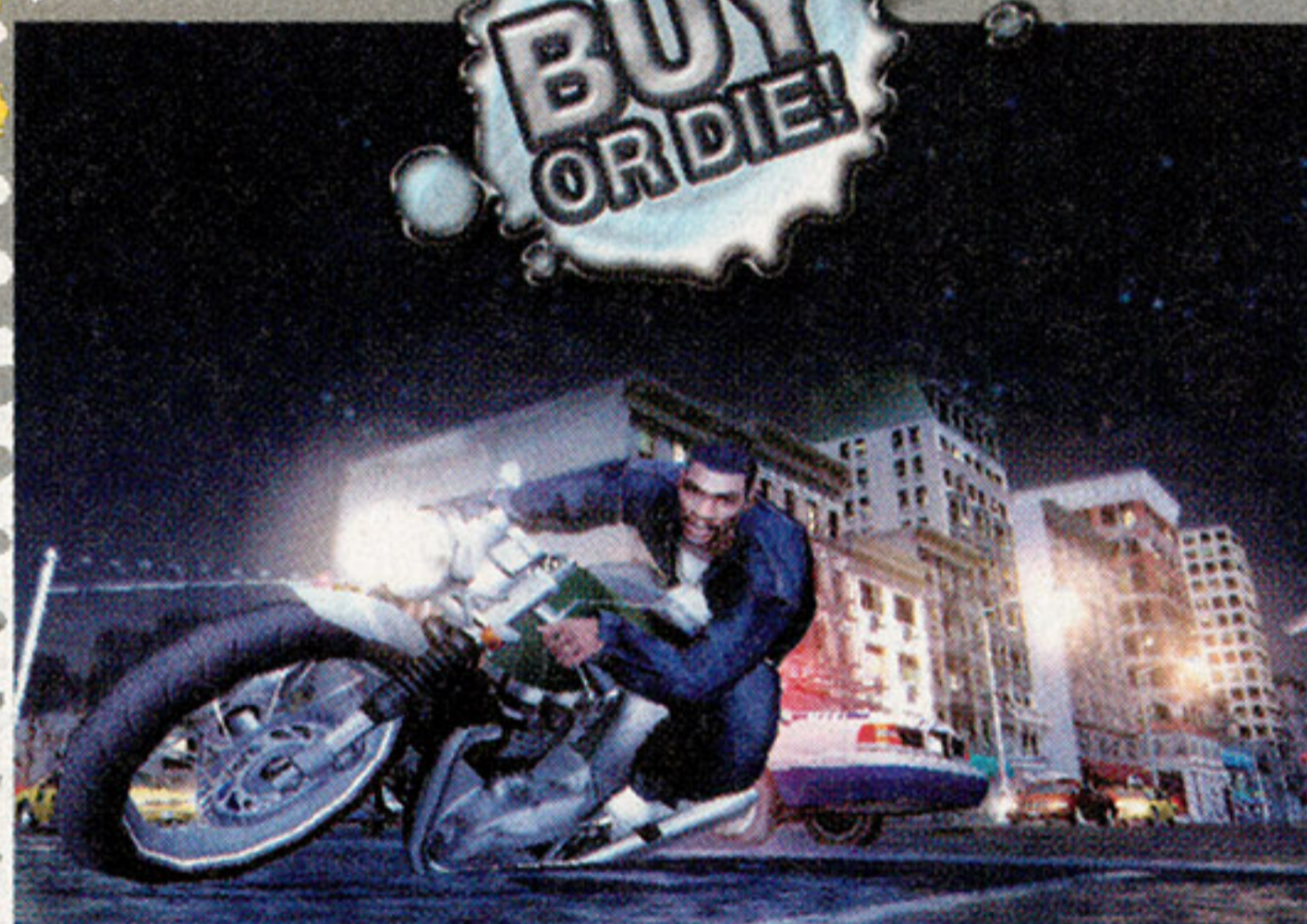
Good cop/bad cop, anyone?

The first *True Crime* wasn't quite the *GTA*-killer everyone wanted it to be. There were a lot of innovative concepts introduced; their impact was just dampened by some awkward execution, and a thick coating of cheese. This time around, the series takes a more serious — though still appropriately Hollywood-ish — tone while honing the overall gameplay experience, which makes for an honestly enjoyable game that is, in some ways, better than the ever-popular *GTA*.

Like its predecessor, you're given the choice to be either good or bad — a moral choice that isn't really available to you in *GTA*. While it may be tempting to simply jump to the Dark Side, there is a sense of satisfaction when you disarm a perpetrator and arrest him instead of just riddling him with bullets. Sometimes, though, fatalities can't be avoided. The problem here is that you're not the one doing the killing — bad AI is. Case in point: there are times when a crook is subdued and ready to be cuffed when he/she is suddenly run over by a random car. The cross traffic AI only gets worse when you're driving, as it will either slow down directly in front of you or simply pay no attention to you at all when you're blaring your siren. Suicidal pedestrians and a short draw

distance only compound the problem. Thank the heavens for a working subway and taxi system.

AI problems aside, the game has a lot going for it. That includes a virtual NYC that's mostly breathtaking, with tons of detailed interiors and visually distinctive neighborhoods, and great production values. Plus, what's cooler than being a cop in NYC and cleaning up the streets? The story itself is predictable-but-captivating, and the open world has enough life to keep you occupied even after you've finished the story. The series is still a step away from unquestionable greatness, but there's no true crime in that. **JUSTIN CHENG**



Change your clothes, get a haircut, hop on a motorcycle — you can do it all.

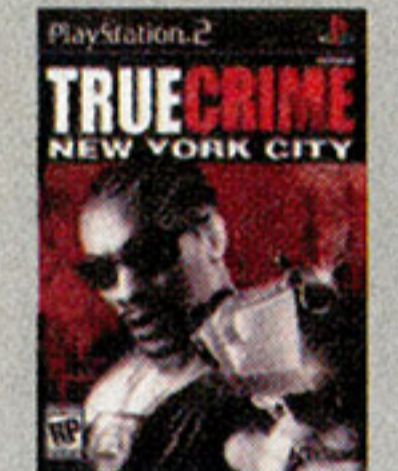
MR. CLEAN

Sweeping up the mean streets

One of the more subtle new features is the fact that the city will actually change visually depending on how much crime you clean/don't clean up. The screen below is the result of a really crappy cop.



Less crime means cleaner neighborhoods — it's just that simple.



- TRUE CRIME: NEW YORK CITY**
- PUBLISHED BY** Activision
- MADE BY** Luxoflux
- HOW MUCH?** \$49.99
- ESRB RATING** Mature
- MULTIPLAYER** No
- DIFFICULTY** Average
- SUPPORTS**
 - +ProLogic II
 - +Widescreen
 - +Progressive scan

TRY THIS



+Sometimes it's better not to worry about being a good cop or a bad cop — especially if you're in the middle of a firefight. For these situations, it's best to just use the lock-on button and start shooting. It won't affect your moral status unless you accidentally shoot them in the face, which, of course, would make you a bad cop.

PSM SCORE 8.0

JOE FRIDAY

+Good use of Hollywood voice talent; the graphics are pretty good.

VIC MACKAY

-Annoying graphical issues; some odd AI; menus could be more streamlined.

HOW IT STACKS UP

GTA: San Andreas	10
True Crime: New York City	8
Mercenaries	8
GUN	7.5
Total Overdose	7

"CLEARING ROOM AFTER ROOM OF BRAIN DEAD ENEMY DRONES STOPS BEING ENGAGING AFTER ABOUT AN HOUR"

Step 1: Find a giant group of enemies to fight and begin hacking away at them.

HERE'S JOHNNY!

Shining Force Neo

Not your father's Shining Force

It's so painful to watch this once-great series devolve from trail-blazing strategy-RPG to mediocre *Diablo* clone. The changeover to real-time hack-n-slash gameplay isn't what bothers us so much as the fact that it's simply not very well done.

Shining Force Neo is plagued with problems. The gameplay itself is solid enough, though clearing room after room of brain-dead enemy drones stops being engaging after about an hour. You have to be a real fan of this genre to stay interested in *Neo*.

The pacing is completely messed up, too, forcing you to sit through what feels like hours of vapid, poorly-acted dialogue revealing a plot that's

so full of clichés it would make even George Lucas cry.

So in the end, what we've got here is a button masher that doesn't really live up to the best in the genre — such as *Baldur's Gate* or *Champions of Norrath*. *Neo* has decent graphics, gorgeous animated cutscenes, but not much else going for it. **GREG SEWART**

PSM SCORE 5.5

SHINING

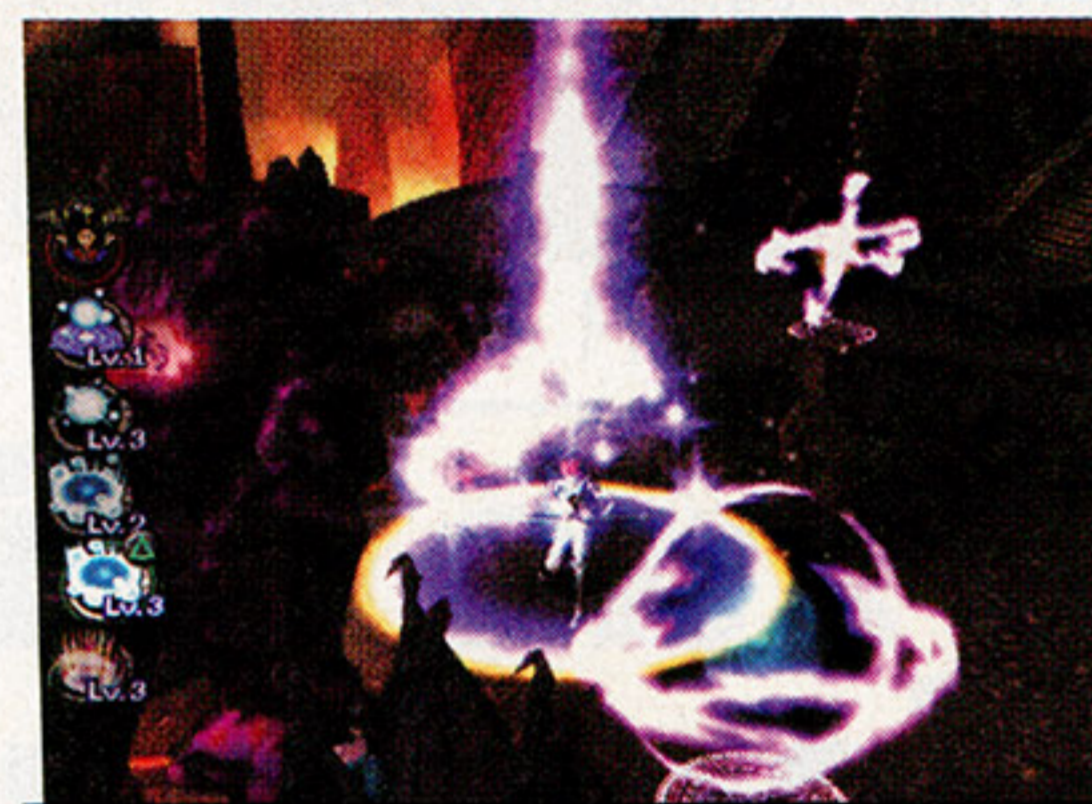
†If you dig endless hacking through hundreds of enemies, *SFN* delivers too well.

DULL

-There's repetitive action, mediocre story, and awful voice acting... Ack!



Step 2: Continue to hack away until you're tired of it. Then continue hacking some more, or turn off your PS2.



Step 3: Assuming you didn't turn off your PS2, hack just a bit more, mixing it up with some fancy-looking spells.



Step 4: Pull out your big sword for some true hacking action. When the credits roll, go play *Diablo* on your PC.



SHINING FORCE NEO

PUBLISHED BY Sega

MADE BY Neverland

HOW MUCH? \$49.99

ESRB RATING Teen

MULTIPLAYER Nope

DIFFICULTY Average

SUPPORT †None

SONIC DOOM

Shadow the Hedgehog

Armed hedgehog destroys childhoods

By just looking at *Shadow the Hedgehog*, you know what to expect: a *Sonic* game with guns. (Yes, we know he's *Shadow*, not *Sonic*, but it really makes no difference.)

The game's concept is rotten at its core. It's not so much that it's trying too hard to be whatever it is it's trying to be, but gunplay completely counters what *Sonic* games are about: speed. Once you add a gun to the equation, everything slows down. So rather than jetting through levels at breakneck speeds, you now have to stop running and start shooting things. An uncooperative camera — that ensures that you're blind to half the enemies surrounding you — takes this game

from nonsensical to almost unplayable. By now hardcore *Sonic* fans may be asking, "C'mon, is it really *that* bad? To which we would sadly have to reply "Yes. Yes it is."

We could go on and on about the frustrating platforming, inconsistent controls, and barely-first-generation graphics, but we're anything but sadists. We hate to say it because we're huge fans of Sega, but it looks like the only thing *Shadow*'s new gun is good for is shooting himself in the foot. **JUSTIN CHENG**



See that purple cube on the left? Staring at it is more fun than this game.

PSM SCORE 3.0

SONIC

†You can thankfully reach the end of the game pretty quickly; intro movie is okay.

SHADOW

-The graphics, the gameplay, the story, the... everything... just doesn't work.

†PUBLISHED BY Sega †MADE BY Sega Studio USA †HOW MUCH? \$49.99 †ESRB Everyone †MULTIPLAYER 2-player versus †DIFFICULTY Easy to average †SUPPORTS Dolby Pro Logic II

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PULSE

**Answers from
the Future**

Got a PlayStation 3 or PSP question? Ask away!
Fandom
Send us your fan art, cosplay and tattoo photos - anything that shows how crazy you are about PlayStation!
Answer November's Fandom poll here.

General Letters

Write about anything you want, as long as it relates to PlayStation gaming or PSM.

Pitch the Pros

Got a good idea for a game? Write it below and maybe we'll see what real game makers think of it!

Rants & Raves

What are you really loving or hating right now? Tell us all about it, and don't pull any punches!

Sound Bytes Poll

If you've got an HDD in your PS2, did you get it just for Final Fantasy XI, or because you were excited about future games / programs that would make use of it?

Got it just for FFXI

Got it with future games in mind

Submit Vote

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PULSE

PREVIEWS

REVIEWS

SUPER-PLAY

FORUMS

PSM FAQ

PSM

THIS MONTH

PSM's New Look!
We've gone and made PSM even better. It's not just about the look, you won't believe all the cool changes we've made.

Ratchet vs. Jak!
PS2's hottest characters go head-to-head for the top score! Exclusive double review.

Bad Girls Bare All
BloodRayne and Darkwatch's Tala are gonna be in Playboy. Take a peek at these hot pix.

The Fiendish Five
The absolutely worst villains in the PlayStation universe.

Best RPG of 2004
It scored a perfect 10 rating. Plus, a surprise hit that involves rolling a giant ball around.

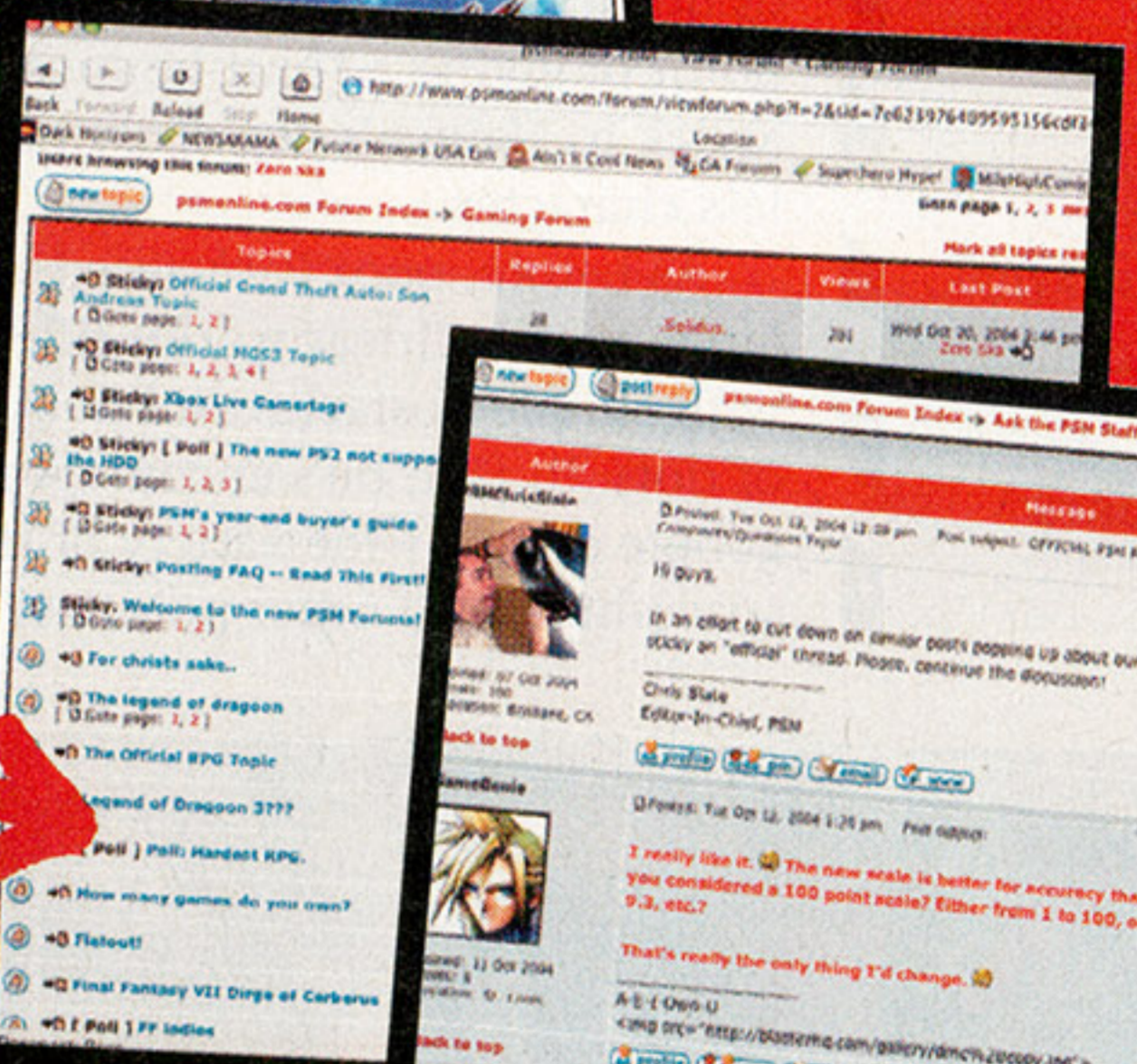
GameDAILY TOP 5 DOWNLOADS



November Iss
On Sale Sept

**CHAT WITH
PSM WRITERS
AND READERS**

Join with gamers nationwide to discuss PlayStation (and pretty much everything else), and talk directly with the editors of PSM! (Help 'em out folks, they don't have many friends.)



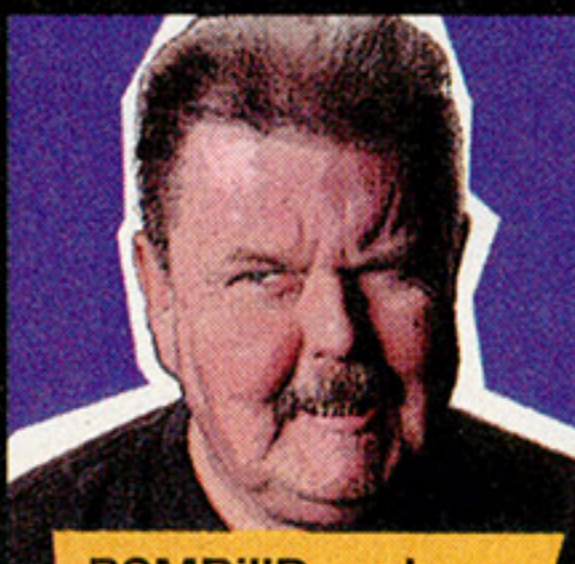
LOOK FOR
US ONLINE!



PSMChrisSlate



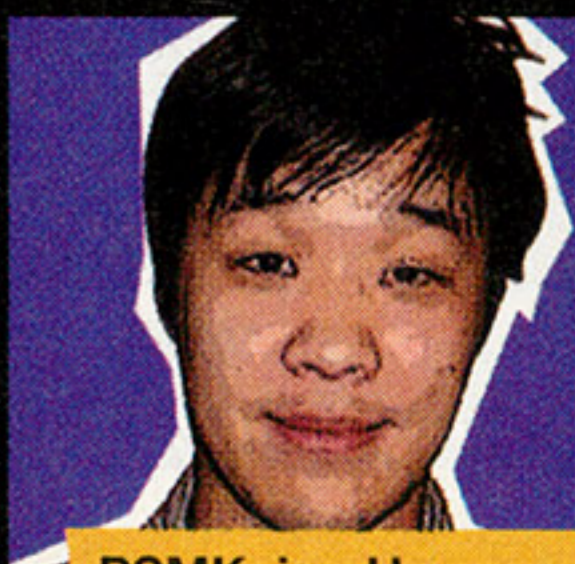
PSMRandyNelson



PSMBillDonohue



PSMEricBratcher



PSMKaiserHwang

"STOP THE MADNESS!"



18 down, 392 units of pure yellow fun to go!

STOMACHACHE

Pac-Man World 3

Not the ghost-gobbler we once knew

Pac-Man just celebrated his big 2-5, and he's celebrated by sprouting arms and legs. While Namco's newly mobile muncher can certainly hop and bop with some aptitude, his new adventure is the very epitome of mediocrity. *Pac-Man World 3* slavishly adheres to platformer conventions because it can think of nothing better to do, to the point of giving a "butt-bounce" attack to Namco's decidedly butt-less character.

As before, poor Pac's faced with large, mostly linear worlds filled with simple obstacles and dots... lots of dots. In fact, he's encouraged to gobble dots, a wide variety of fruits, spaceships, and other pointless

things. It's not quite as ridiculous as in *Donkey Kong 64*, but is no less inane for it. Stop the madness!

If you can ignore the pointless collecting, the gameplay is still only average. Pac-Man has a surprisingly wide range of moves, but it's just not very fun to use 'em to romp through the uninspired, basic levels. The game tries for variety by layering on extra moves, characters, and mini-games, but lackluster execution and a lack of complexity lends everything that deadly feeling of been there, done that, don't care.

Pac-Man World 3's basic platforming might satisfy undiscerning younger players, but then, so would something better, like *Sly Cooper* or *Ratchet*. **BENJAMIN TURNER**



- PAC-MAN WORLD 3**
- PUBLISHED BY** Namco
- MADE BY** Blitz Games
- HOW MUCH?** \$29.99
- ESRB RATING** Everyone
- MULTIPLAYER** None
- DIFFICULTY** Pinky
- SUPPORTS** †Nothing



See, not even the guy who made this screenshot collected all the darn fruits. But at least Pac is happy.



He's probably reminiscing about the good old days right about now.

PSM SCORE 4.5

BLUE GHOST

†Lots of moves and little mini-game sequences; control is okay; cute.

RED GHOST

- Just about everything is bland, from the gameplay to the graphics.



Videogame poker is slow by nature, but if you must have it, this one's not bad.

PENNY ANTE

World Championship Poker 2: Featuring Howard Lederer

Up from the basement

Okay, sure, *World Championship Poker* is on the same poker game bandwagon as *World Series of Poker* and *World Poker Tour*, but at least it can claim to have hopped on it first. In fairness, it does boast the most interesting single-player game of the lot. You start in your basement, and the money you win buys you new clothes and new digs (which you can then hock if you hit a losing streak). It also adds in some mini-games, like spinning the control stick to keep from showing a "tell," which is a neat idea though ultimately kind of annoying.

Still, when the pickings are slim, you gotta take what you can get.

JEFF LUNDRIGAN



If you don't have real friends, this game is great.



Never, ever trust a guy with a crazy, nonsensical shirt like this.

PSM SCORE 6.0

RAKING IT IN

†Decent game of poker; gets points for trying to pump up single-player game.

DOWN IN THE HOLE






- Okay, let's be really honest here... who really needs "wacky" characters?

†PUBLISHED BY Crave † MADE BY Point of View
 † HOW MUCH? \$29.99 † ESRB Teen †MULTIPLAYER 8-players † DIFFICULTY Average † SUPPORTS Online play and EyeToy

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REVIEWS

"SOCOM: FIRETEAM BRAVO IS EASILY THE BEST SINGLE-PLAYER SHOOTER ON THE PSP BUT OF COURSE THERE AREN'T THAT MANY AVAILABLE"



Walk slowly and your reticule will inch towards the head.



We really hope more shooters stop using the face buttons to aim.



Using a special headset, you can actually chat with other players when playing online.



SOCOM: FIRETEAM BRAVO

PUBLISHED BY Sony

MADE BY Zipper Int.

HOW MUCH? \$39.99

ESRB RATING Everyone

MULTIPLAYER 16-player online

DIFFICULTY Easy

SUPPORT +16-player ad hoc and online

AUTO-TARGET THIS

SOCOM: Fireteam Bravo

More killing, less chilling

Believe it or not, flawed perfection exists. Just take one look at *SOCOM: Fireteam Bravo* (or Denise Richards). It faithfully recreates the great console experience, and even modifies it, thanks to the ability to share data between versions. Yet deep down inside, we know we're getting a little less when we play *SOCOM* on the go.

See, where *SOCOM 3* on PS2 is all about weapon selection and strategy, *Fireteam Bravo* is all about run-and-gun gameplay. It's just "see terrorist, shoot terrorist," no matter which weapon you carry, though some of the sniper

missions do require a little more strategy. Additionally, you only get one teammate in this portable campaign, but all the commands from its console brother are here. This simplifying of the gameplay is almost an inevitable compromise when porting downwards.

Simple or not, though, the game does work thanks to the clever control scheme; implementing a smart auto-targeting feature has effectively negated the need for a second analog stick. There's even a bit of depth to it as the slower you move, the closer you'll get to a lethal headshot. This, combined with the stutter-free 16-player online



games (complete with voice chat no less), makes *Fireteam Bravo* not only a proper *SOCOM* game, but also one of the PSP's finest shooters. **JOHN BRANDON**

PSM SCORE 8.0

SEAL

+Clever control scheme; stutter-free 16-player online games with voice!

WALRUS

- Requires less strategy; not as many team members; controls aren't perfect.

MINI-MUTATION

X-Men Legends II: Rise of Apocalypse

Slightly worse, but better suited

The PSP version of Activision's top-notch mutant melee-a-thon has a few weaknesses that the full-sized iteration doesn't have. However, its straightforward gameplay is so well suited to portable gaming that this is arguably the more desirable version.

For the uninformed, *Rise of Apocalypse* is a mutant-astic action RPG in which the player leads a team of four X-men or Magneto-led X-villains (from a roster of nearly two dozen) in beating the spandex off of enemies, ranging from overgrown insects to Apocalypse himself. The PSP version even boasts some exclusive

characters (Cable, X-Man, Cannonball, and possibly one more).

The worst parts of the translation are the load times and frame rate, which both move a bit slower than we'd like. Plus, the PSP's small screen makes it tough to see certain enemies and land attacks which require fairly precise aiming, like Wolverine's Feral Slash. Still, everything else is so fun, so pretty, and just so cool that you'll easily forgive the game for these minor issues. **ERIC BRATCHER**



The PSP shows that it can create PS2-worthy visuals.

PSM SCORE 8.0

X-MEN

+Looks almost like the PS2 version; full online play; tons of cool characters.

BROTHERHOOD

- Screen blurs when the camera moves; some enemies are tough to target.

+PUBLISHED BY Activision + MADE BY Vicarious Visions + HOW MUCH? \$49.99 + ESRB Teen + MULTIPLAYER 4-player ad hoc and online + DIFFICULTY Average + SUPPORTS Ad hoc and online multiplay

“THIS IS THE REASON TO HAVE A PSP”

Don't upset the cops, because they're really aggressive this time around.



Really, why would you drive a car when you can ride a motorcycle?



PSM BUY OR DIE!

POCKET MOBSTERS

GTA: Liberty City Stories



It's GTA in the palm of your hand!

We hate to say it, but there haven't been many reasons to be excited about PSP lately. There have certainly been some good games — and there are always UMD movies to watch — but nothing really worth getting worked up about... until now, that is. This is the killer app. This is *the* reason to have a PSP. This is *Grand Theft Auto: Liberty City Stories*.

It's got virtually everything you'd expect from a *GTA*, most notably the three Liberty City islands to play around in, and all the freedom they allow. Sadly, swimming, flyable planes, and a really engaging story weren't included, and emphasize the fact that *LCS* is in fact a downgraded port of sorts. Likewise, the ever-present framerate and draw distance problems that have plagued the series since *GTA III* are still present here, and we haven't even mentioned the odd graphical glitches: in our final, boxed copy, the pedestrians would occasionally have really, really long arms, and we even saw a car that spawned within a wall. The laundry list of complaints continues, with cops that are even more zealous than before, and an uncooperative target-lock that would rather target an innocent bystander and not the guy shooting you.

Regardless, *GTA* has never been about technical perfection; it's about the freedom and ability to do

anything you want, when you want. In that respect, this is *GTA* through and through. It's fair to say that *LCS* even surpasses *GTA III* in several ways (motorcycles, graphical effects), though the A-list voice talent is sorely missed.

Rockstar even went the extra mile and included some enjoyable multiplayer games, too, which give the game some longevity — a nice touch, considering that the main story missions can be completed in less than 15 hours. And did we mention the customized soundtracks off Memory Stick? The worst part of the game is tied directly to the PSP hardware: it eats the battery with no remorse, which hurts the whole portability aspect. Still, *GTA: LCS* is truly a great achievement in portable gaming, and will surely be talked about for some time to come. **JUSTIN CHENG**

PSM SCORE 9.0

GOODFELLAS

+ Pretty much everything you like about *GTA*, only portable.

GODFATHER III

- Battery life is short; the same glitches from the previous *GTA*s show up again.

HOW IT STACKS UP

Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas	10
Grand Theft Auto: Vice City	9
Grand Theft Auto: Liberty City Stories	9
Grand Theft Auto III	9
True Crime: New York City	8



GTA: LIBERTY CITY STORIES

PUBLISHED BY Rockstar Games

MADE BY Rockstar Leeds/Rockstar North

HOW MUCH? \$49.99

ESRB RATING Mature

MULTIPLAYER 6-player wireless multiplayer

DIFFICULTY Average to hard

SUPPORTS + Custom soundtrack

TRY THIS



+ Don't like the soundtrack? Make your own! You'll need to download the Rockstar Custom Tracks application (just search online and you should find it soon enough), a music CD (apparently, MP3s will not work), a personal computer, a PSP, and the USB cable to connect your computer to your PSP. Now you're good to go! Rock on, Geddy!



You may not be able to swim, but you can still unleash your inner Sonny Crockett.



Yes, there are airplanes in this game. No, you cannot fly them.

"DON'T EXPECT ANYTHING EVEN REMOTELY LIKE RESIDENT EVIL; THIS IS PURE UNADULTERATED BLAST-'EM-UP MADNESS"



Cows killing zombies on Christmas in NYC — the perfect concept for a new sitcom.



We really don't think a caption could convey our feelings right now.

PSP

THE FLESHMAKER

Infected

Just when you thought it was safe to go back in the streets, Majesco gives zombie-blasting the portable treatment...

Riding the zombie resurgence well into 2005, Infected brings over-the-top head-splattering mayhem to your bus ride, toilet, or wherever you find yourself busting out your PSP. The premise is simple: New York City has been overrun by the living dead, and it's your job to prevent the Big Apple from becoming Undead Club Med.

Don't expect anything even remotely like Resident Evil, however; this is pure, unadulterated blast'em-up madness, full of combo-busting, point-scoring, adrenaline-pumping gameplay. Infected is very "gamey," taking an old-school concept (think Asteroids) and giving it new life in a series of 3D, zombie-infested arenas. Like most classic games, missions here are focused on killing a certain number of zombies and/or saving civilians in a given period of time.

And kill you will. True to its title, once Infected contaminates your brain, it's like hell trying to get it out. As is one of the hallmarks of great game

design, Infected at first appears to present an insurmountable challenge — but very quickly allows you to start taking out swarms of blood-suckers like you wrote the book on it. The simple, lasting mechanic of breaking down a zombie with your heavy ammo and then exploding it with a shot of serum is what makes the whole thing hum: the combo system is brilliant, and the linked explosions are a visual treat. Stages are short and sweet, and perfectly suited to the on-the-go nature of PSP gaming.

One of the game's most innovative touches is its host of multiplayer modes. Once you beat someone in multiplayer combat, you then "infect" their PSP system with your avatar and gain ranking points — and in doing so, create a viral chain whereby your avatar is passed on to other systems. It's a simple, inventive touch that prolongs the experience, and helps seal Infected's deal as one of the best PSP titles to date. EVAN SHAMOON



There's a lot of data being thrown at you in the HUD, but it's all very useful.

PSM BUY OR DIE!



INFECTED
PUBLISHED BY Majesco
MADE BY Planet Moon
HOW MUCH? \$39.99
ESRB RATING Mature
DIFFICULTY Average
MULTIPLAYER 8-player versus
SUPPORT +Ad hoc multiplayer +Online multiplayer

PSM SCORE 8.5

CHEWY +Designed from the ground up for PSP; great multiplayer; funny cutscenes.
CRUNCHY +Missions feel similar; aiming sometimes difficult; could use a few extra weapons.

Table with 2 columns: Game Title and Score. Rows include Grand Theft Auto: LCS (9), Infected (8.5), SOCOM Fireteam Bravo (8), Star Wars Battlefront II (7), Ghost in the Shell: SAC (5.5).



"THERE SIMPLY ISN'T AS DIVERSE A PLATFORMER ANYWHERE IN SIGHT"

- x22
- x14
- x21

It'll take the combined weight of Bolt and his Tokobots to press these switches.

YO QUIERO TOKOBOT

Tokobot



More and less than meets the eye

Tokobot is a charming platformer with a few twists — namely, the Tokobots, the little helper robots that work together to aid you on your adventures. The basic idea is that you order the Tokobots into various formations that allow you to bash baddies, move blocks, glide across chasms, and reach higher ground, among other things.

The platforming can get pretty creative when you start using all of the Tokobots' abilities, though that creativity brings some baggage in tow. The camera control, or lack thereof, immediately comes to mind. Yes, it's a well-documented fact that the PSP's compromised controls offer, at best, serviceable 3D management (when compared to consoles, anyhow). It's for this very reason we should be seeing smarter camera systems and/or level designs that make camera manipulation less of a hassle. Sadly, *Tokobot's* design ambitions hamper the camera more than it should.

Also, everything needs to speed up — a lot. The main character, Bolt, moves like he's underwater, and simply performing moves can take an

unnecessary amount of time, affecting both combat and platforming. For instance, you have to warm up the helicopter spin ability — which proves especially irritating since anything you initially hit, enemies included, will kill your momentum before you can get going fast enough to actually do some damage. Not good.

Still, *Tokobot* is hands down the most versatile game in its genre for the PSP, with enjoyable mini-games and a number of different forms the Tokobots can transform into, from a railcar to a giant sword-wielding robot. There simply isn't as diverse a



It's a pity that you'll have to enter those dark catacombs on such a sunny day.



Stuff like these railcar bits help break up the gameplay, so you don't get bored.

platformer anywhere in sight for the handheld. If the controls and camera were as clean and efficient as the visuals, we'd be looking at the PSP's equivalent of *Jak* or *Ratchet*.

JUSTIN CHENG

FATAL FRIEND

Horrorbot

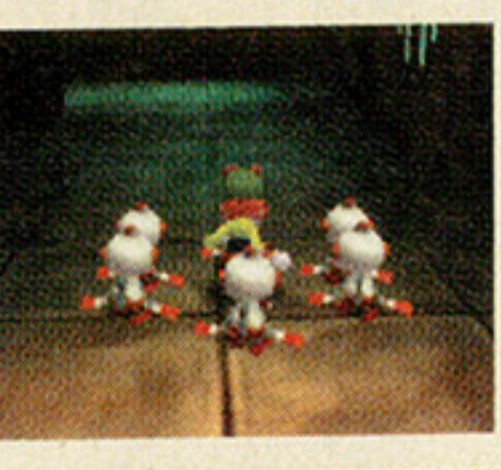
The man behind this adorable platformer is none other than Keisuke Kikuchi, the mastermind responsible for *Fatal Frame*. Oddly enough, the game's bubbly, upbeat soundtrack was created by the shutterbug horror game's composer. Stranger things *have* happened...



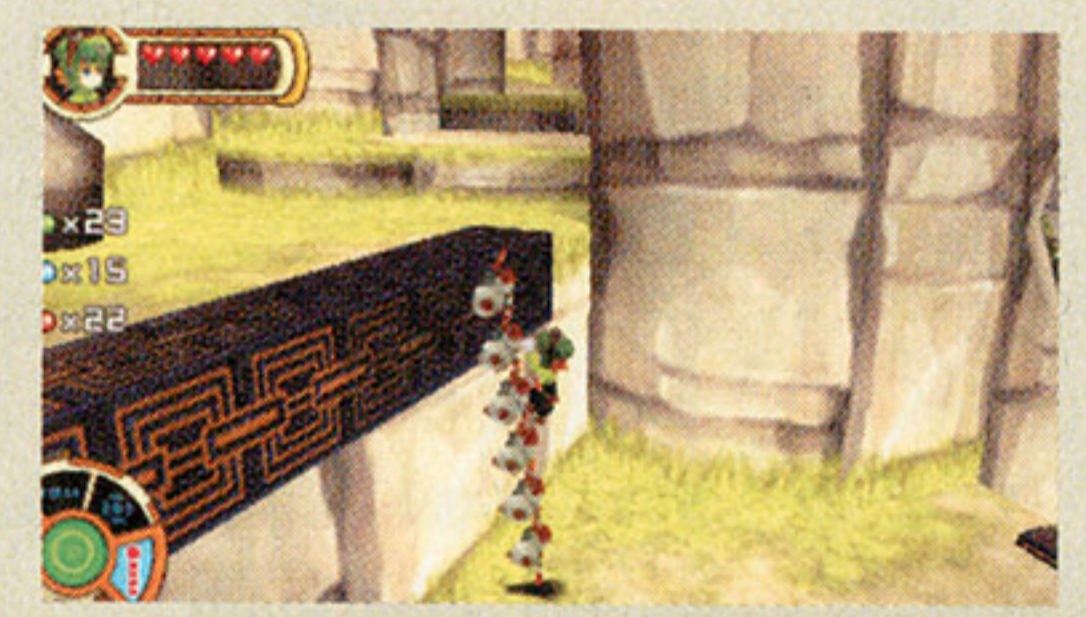
What if there were Tokobots in *Fatal Frame*? That would be a pretty cool!

- TOKOBOT**
- PUBLISHED BY**
Tecmo
- MADE BY**
Tecmo
- HOW MUCH?**
\$29.99
- ESRB RATING**
Everyone
- MULTIPLAYER**
No
- DIFFICULTY**
Average to hard
- SUPPORTS**
+Nothing special

TRY THIS



+Yes, things feel slow, but that doesn't mean you should try to rush things to compensate for this fact. It's much better to take your time, lest you make a deadly mistake. It also pays to look around at your surroundings, because the key to the puzzle might be somewhere nearby.



You can use your Tokobots like a ladder. It's a metaphor for life.



Your Tokobots can take many forms, like a giant hammer or this catapult here.

PSM SCORE 7.0

- TOKOBOT**
+ It looks good, and there's a lot of variety to the puzzles and platforming bits.
- R.O.B.**
- The combination of sluggish controls and the camera can make things frustrating.

HOW IT STACKS UP

Death Jr.	7.5
Tokobot	7
MediEvil Resurrection	7
Ape Escape: On The Loose	6.5
Rengoku: Tower of Purgatory	6.5

Kirin 7 dan-2nd

It's a good thing there are a lot of moves to add to your arsenal because you'll be doing a lot of fighting.

PSP

"A FUN ACTION RPG WITH A HEAVY EMPHASIS ON THE ACTION"



976/1000



Chi isn't just used for fighting — you'll have to use it to open some doors, too.



Wow, we're getting dizzy just watching main character Shinbu twirl around like that.

ALL YOU NEED IS CHI

Kingdom of Paradise

Paradise? Not quite, but still fun

Despite its generic name and awful box art, *Kingdom of Paradise* is actually a fun action RPG, with a heavy emphasis on the action. The game is more *Dynasty Warriors* than *Untold Legends* — all for the better considering that a lot of the story bits lack the gravitas they should have, and unfortunately leaves many of the characters underdeveloped.

At least the real-time combat is fun, giving you loads of moves that can be customized to a great degree. Blocking is problematic, however; you'll still

take damage no matter how early you anticipate an attack. But why bother fighting when you can just use the unbalanced Chi (read: magic) to get through the game? It's more powerful than most physical attacks, and you only need a few seconds to recharge it, making most battles too easy.

As such, the game can be easily beaten in a weekend. Even with unbalanced gameplay and a short playtime, the game still looks great and the combat system is unique, so it's not a total loss. **JUSTIN CHENG**

PSM SCORE 6.5

PARADISE CITY
+ Good graphics; fighting is more action-oriented than other action RPGs.

PARADISE LOST
- Story should be more compelling; no camera control; blocking needs work.

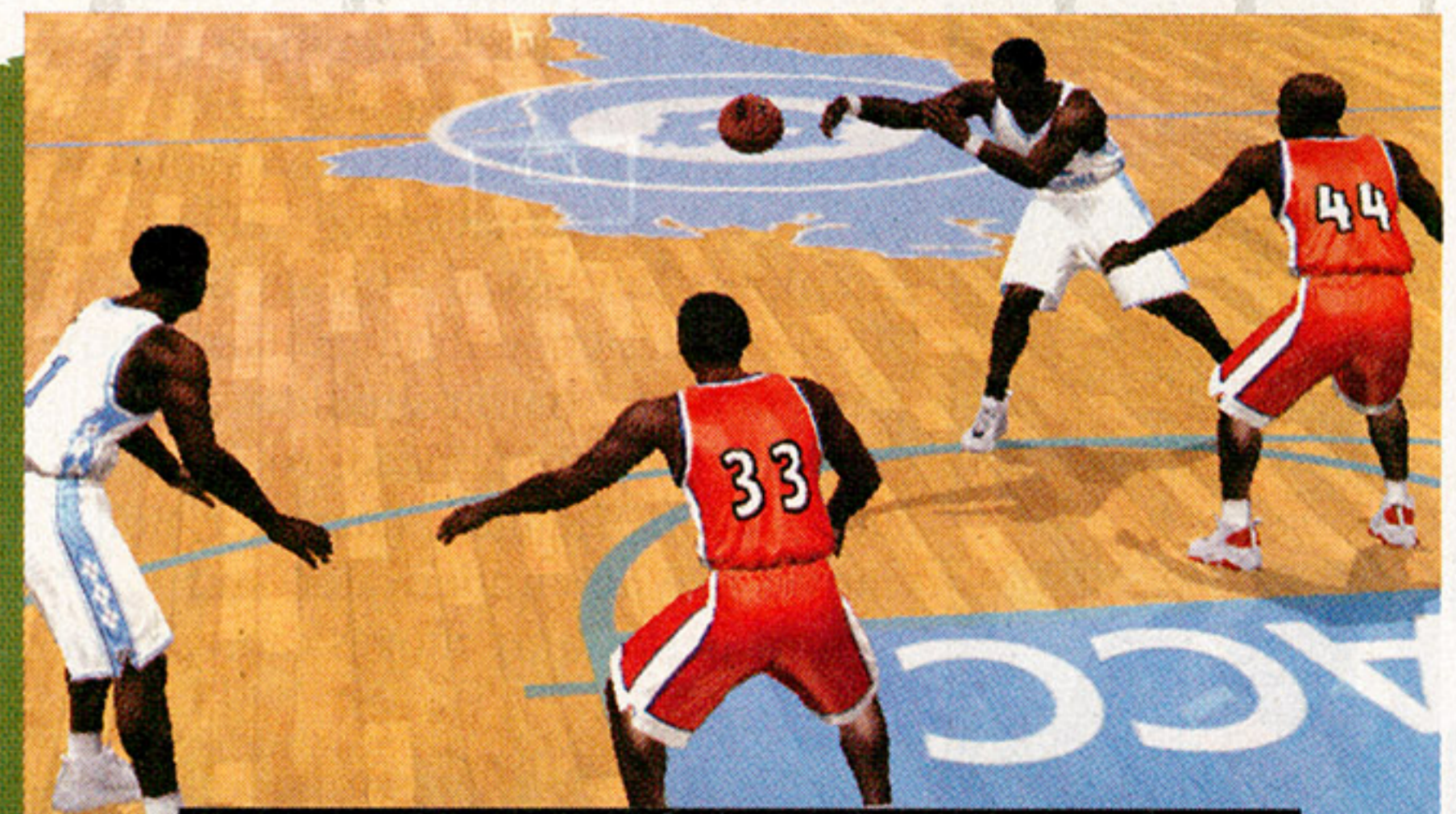
STATISTICIAN'S DREAM

College Hoops 2K6

Too much coaching, not enough action

If pouring over recruitment stats and participating in endless shooting drills is your thing, then go out and buy *College Hoops 2K6*. It's a coach's dream come true — if you coach at state prep school in the middle of Smalltown, U.S.A., that is. The rest of us will notice butt-ugly graphics, poor player mechanics, and a confusing array of micro-management screens that only emphasize the competition's (read: EA) flair for flashy-but-functional presentation. Simply, there are far too many screens to navigate through, and not enough incentive to play through a season.

In the game's favor, you do get an extensive Legacy mode where you can pick a Division 1 squad and build your team from scratch. Sadly, anytime you actually get out on the court, you'll pine for the ability to perform shoulder-button leans, any sort of serviceable jukes, and analog-stick freestyle control, all of which are marked absent on the roll call list. **JOHN BRANDON**



Why is it that college hoops games always lag behind their NBA counterparts? Where's the love, y'all?

PSM SCORE 6.0

SLAM DUNK
+ All these stats do make you feel like you are controlling a real team...

NOTHIN' BUT AIR
- ...but sadly, on the court, there's just not enough action to keep anyone happy.

+ PUBLISHED BY 2K Sports + MADE BY 2K Sports + HOW MUCH? \$29.99 + ESRB Everyone + MULTIPLAYER 2 players + DIFFICULTY Stat happy + SUPPORTS Online multiplayer

coming
soon.

FROM THE CREATORS OF

PC GAMER



PSM
100% INDEPENDENT PLAYSTATION 2 MAGAZINE

SCOREBOARD



Okay, we get it - she doesn't understand everything you say. So what? Who does?

SICK PICK

Lifeline

Few games of this generation were as cutting-edge as this sci-fi thriller, in which you used the PS2's USB headset to issue vocal commands to a young girl trapped in a space station overrun by alien creatures. It got a bum rap because the voice recognition is spotty, but the story, novelty, and Krista Miller's very able voice work make this one worth playing.

GAME NAME	SCORE	ISS
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 06	9	103
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 06 (PSP)	9	103
TimeSplitters Future Perfect	8.5	96
T. Hawk's American Wasteland	8	105
Tony Hawk's UG 2 Remix (PSP)	7.5	98
Top Spin	6.5	102
Total Overdose: AGTIM	7	105
Trapt	6.5	105
Twisted Metal: Head-on (PSP)	8.5	97
Ty the Tasmanian Tiger 3	6.5	103
Ultimate Spider-Man	8	104
Untold Legends: BOTB (PSP)	7.5	97
Urban Reign	6	103
Virtua Quest	3	93
Virtua Tennis: World Tour (PSP)	9	104
Wallace & Gromit: CotWR	6.5	104
The Warriors	8	105
We Love Katamari	9	103
Winning Eleven 8	8.5	95
Wipeout Pure (PSP)	9	97
Without Warning	3.5	104
World Championship Poker	7	94
World Series of Poker	5	104
World Tour Poker	4	105
World Tour Soccer	7	98
World Tour Soccer 2006	5	96
Worms Fort: Under Siege!	7	96
WWE Smackdown! Vs. Raw 06	8	105
Xenosaga Episode II: JVGUB	6	94
X-Men Legends II: Rise of Apocalypse	8.5	104
Yourself! Fitness	8	98
Ys: Ark Of The Napishtim	8	95
Yu-Gi-Oh! CMC	6.5	93
Yu Yu Hakusho: DT	5	93
Zatch Bell!: Mamodo Battles	6	105

GAME NAME	SCORE	ISS
187: Ride or Die	7.5	103
Ape Escape: On The Loose (PSP)	6.5	97
Archer MacLean's Mercury (PSP)	7	98
Arc The Lad: End Of Darkness	5.5	100
Area 51	6.5	98
Armored Core: Nine Breaker	6	102
Armored Core: FFEB (PSP)	6.5	104
Atari Anthology	8	99
Atelier Iris: Eternal Mana	8	99
ATV Off-Road Fury: BT (PSP)	7.5	99
Batman Begins	5	101
Battlefield 2: Modern Combat	8.5	104
Beat Down: Fists Of Vengeance	5	102
Big Mutha Truckers 2: TMH	5.5	102
Blitz: The League	6	104
Brothers in Arms: EIB	9	105
Brothers In Arms: Road To Hill 30	9	97
Burnout Legends (PSP)	8.5	103
Burnout: Revenge	9	103
Capcom Classics Collection	9	103
Castlevania: Curse of Darkness	7	104
The Chronicles of Narnia	4	105
Colosseum: Road To Freedom	6	101
Champions: Return To Arms	8	94
Charlie & The Chocolate Factory	4.5	102
Coded Arms (PSP)	7	100
Cold Fear	7.5	97
Cold Winter	6.5	98
The Con (PSP)	6.5	105
Conflict: Global Terror	7.5	104
Constantine	6	97
Crash Tag Team Racing	6.5	104
Darkstalkers Chronicle: TCT (PSP)	7.5	98
Darkwatch	8	101
DDR Extreme 2	8	103
Dead To Rights II	7	99
Dead To Rights: Reckoning (PSP)	6	101
Death By Degrees	7	94
Death Jr. (PSP)	7.5	101
Delta Force: Black Hawk Down	5.5	103
Destroy All Humans!	8.5	100
Digimon World 4	4	101
Devil Kings	6	104
Devil May Cry 3	9	95
D.I.C.E.	5	103
Disney's Chicken Little	5.5	104
Dragonball Z: Budokai Tenkaichi	8	105
Dragon Ball Z Sagas	5	98
Drive To Survive	6.5	98

GAME NAME	SCORE	ISS
FRANTIX (PSP)	7	103
Frogger: Ancient Shadow	6.5	103
Frogger: Helmet Chaos	6	104
From Russia With Love	7.5	105
Fullmetal Alchemist & Broken Angel	5	96
Fullmetal Alchemist 2: CCE	6.5	102
Full Spectrum Warrior	7	98
The Getaway: Black Monday	8	94
Genji: Dawn of the Samurai	7	103
Ghost in the Shell: SAC	5.5	105
Ghost Recon 2	5.5	94
God Of War	9.5	97
Graffiti Kingdom	7.5	97
Gran Turismo 4	9	95
Gretzky NHL (PSP)	6.5	98
Gretzky NHL 2006	5	104
Gretzky NHL '06 (PSP)	6.5	105
GripShift (PSP)	5	103
Guitar Hero	9	105
Haunting Ground	6.5	98
Heroes of the Pacific	7.5	105
Hot Shots Golf: Open Tee (PSP)	8	99
Incredible Hulk: Ultimate Destruction	7	101
Indigo Prophecy	8.5	103
In The Groove	7.5	100
IruYasha: Feudal Combat	5.5	103
Jak X: Combat Racing	7	104
Juiced (THQ)	8	98
Karaoke Revolution Party	8.5	104
Kessen III	8	96
Killer 7	7.5	100
King Of Fighters: 02/03	7	94
L.A. Rush	6.5	105
Legend of Kay	5	102
LEGO Star Wars: TVG	7	97
Lord of the Rings Tactics	7	105
Lumines (PSP)	8.5	103
Madagascar	6	100
Madden NFL 2006	9	101
Madden NFL 2006 (PSP)	8.5	104
Magna Carta	5.5	105
Makai Kingdom	8	102
Marvel Nemesis: RotI	5.5	103
Marvel Nemesis: RotII (PSP)	5	103
The Matrix: Path of Neo	6.5	105
Medal Of Honor: EA	8	101
MediEvil: Resurrection (PSP)	7	103
Mercenaries	8	94
METAL GEAR ACID (PSP)	8	97

GAME NAME	SCORE	ISS
NBA 06	7.5	105
NBA 06 (PSP)	6	105
NBA 2K6	7.5	103
NBA Live 06	8.5	103
NBA Live 06 (PSP)	9	104
NBA (PSP)	5.5	98
NBA Street Showdown	7.5	99
NBA Street V3	9.5	95
NCAA Football 2006	10	100
NCAA March Madness 06	8	103
Need for Speed: Most Wanted	8.5	105
Need for Speed UMW 510 (PSP)	8.5	105
Need For Speed UR (PSP)	6.5	97
NFL Street 2: Unleashed (PSP)	8	98
NHL 06	8.5	101
NHL 2K6	7	103
Nightmare Before Christmas	7.5	103
Obscure	5.5	98
One Piece: Grand Battle	7.5	103
Outlaw Tennis	5	102
Outlaw Volleyball: Remixed	7	100
Peter Jackson's King Kong	9	105
Pinball Hall Of Fame	7.5	94
Playboy: The Mansion	6	96
PoPoLoCrois (PSP)	6	105
Predator: Concrete Jungle	5.0	99
Project: Snowblind	8	96
Psychonauts	9	100
Pump It Up: Exceed	8	102
The Punisher	8	94
Radiata Stories	6.5	104
Rainbow 6: Lockdown	7.5	102
Ratchet: Deadlocked	8	104
Red Ninja: End Of Honor	5	96
Rengoku: Tower of Purgatory (PSP)	6.5	98
Resident Evil 4	10	104
Resident Evil Outbreak File #2	5.5	97
Ridge Racer (PSP)	9.5	97
Rise of The Kasai	8	97
Robots	7	97
Romance of the 3 Kingdoms X	7	101
RPG Maker 3	7	100
Rugby 2005	6.5	96
Samurai Western	6.5	99
Scooby-Doo: Unmasked	6	103
Sega Classics	4	95
Sega Superstars	7.5	93
Shadow Of Rome	7.5	93
Shadow of the Colossus	9.5	104
Shellshock: Nam '67	5	90
Shin Megami Tensei: DDS	8	99
Shin Megami Tensei: DDS 2	8	103
Shining Tears	6	95
The Sims 2	9	104
S.L.A.I.	7.5	103
Sly 3: Honor Among Thieves	8	104
Smart Bomb (PSP)	6.0	99
Sniper Elite	9	103
SOCOM 3: U.S. Navy SEALs	9	105
SOULCALIBUR 3	10	105
Spartan: Total Warrior	7	103
Spider-Man 2 (PSP)	7	98
Splinter Cell Chaos Theory	9.5	97
SSX On Tour	6.6	104
SSX on Tour (PSP)	6	105
Star Wars Battlefront 2	9	104
Star Wars Battlefront 2 (PSP)	7	105
Star Wars Episode III: ROTS	5.5	100
Stella Deus: The Gate of Eternity	6.5	98
Stolen	4.5	99
The Suffering: Ties That Bind	7.5	103
Suikoden IV	6.5	94
Suikoden Tactics	7	104
Super Monkey Ball Deluxe	8.5	96
Suzuki TT Superbikes	7.5	104
Taito Legends	7	105
TMNT 3: Mutant Nightmare	5	104
Tekken 5	9	97
Tenchu: Fatal Shadows	8	95
Tiger Woods PGA Tour (PSP)	7.5	98

"I just recently got *Indigo Prophecy*... WOW... this game is brilliant" — David "Big D" Adams, Gwinn, MI

Dynasty Warriors (PSP)	7	97
Dynasty Warriors 5	7.5	97
Dynasty Warriors 5: XL	8	105
Enthusia Professional Racing	7	98
Evil Dead: Regeneration	7.5	103
EyeToy: Kinetic	6.5	104
EyeToy: Play 2	7.5	101
EyeToy: Operation Spy	5.5	105
Fantastic Four	6	101
Fatal Frame 3: The Tormented	8	105
FIFA 06	8	103
FIFA 06 (PSP)	8	103
FIFA Soccer (PSP)	7.5	99
FIFA Street	6	96
Fight Night Round 2	9	96
Finny The Fish And The 7 Waters	5	96
Flatout	7.5	100
Flipnic: Ultimate Pinball	7.5	100

Metal Slug 4 & 5	7	98
Midnight Club 3: DUB Edition	9.5	98
Midnight Club 3: DUB Edition (PSP)	6.5	101
Midway Arcade Treasures 3	8	103
MLB 2K5	7.5	96
MLB 2006	6.5	96
MLB (PSP)	7.5	99
Mobile Suit Gundam: GVZG	7	101
Mobile Suit Gundam Seed: NET	6.5	103
Mortal Kombat: Shaolin Monks	8	104
Musashi Samurai Legend	6	98
MVP Baseball 2005	9	96
MVP Baseball (PSP)	7.5	100
MX Vs. ATV Unleashed	9	96
Namco Museum 50th Anniversary	8	103
Namco Museum Battle (PSP)	8	103
Nanobreaker	6	95
NARC	6	98
NASCAR 06: TTC	8.5	102

MY TOP 5 Games a fat kid would love

By Jon Crocker, Troy, IL

We here at PSM are a staff of toned, muscular men who, as a side business, pose for those R-rated birthday cards girls buy. However, we do endorse this list. That is, we would. If we weren't so hot and in shape and stuff.



5 MGS 3: Snake Eater

You get to play a badaSS soldier (every fat kid's dream) and eat your favorite snacks while doing it... like snakes.

4 Playboy: The Mansion

You get to play as Hef, which is great for obvious reasons. Not obvious? Well, Hef gets to [censored by editor]! How cool is that?



3 Splinter Cell series

Every fat kid wishes he could suspend his body in the air between two walls, just like Sam can. Or at least, look that good in tight clothes.

2 MK: Deception

For once, our kind is appreciated: Bo Rai Cho! But for the record, the vomiting thing... not so cool, but we have so few role models from which to choose...



1 GTA: San Andreas

Two words: fast food! Not only that, but there's a girl in the game who actually likes her man meaty. Best game ever.

Got your own Top 5 list to share with the world? Just point your browser to psmonline.com and tell us about it — be sure to include your pic and hometown!

1) Use them as a ladder 2) Be your wingmen 3) Clean your room 4) Screen your calls 5) Wash your car

50 uses for your

6) Play it while you're waiting for the bus 7) Play it on the bus 8) Feed you grapes 9) Walk with your dog 10) Help you save the planet



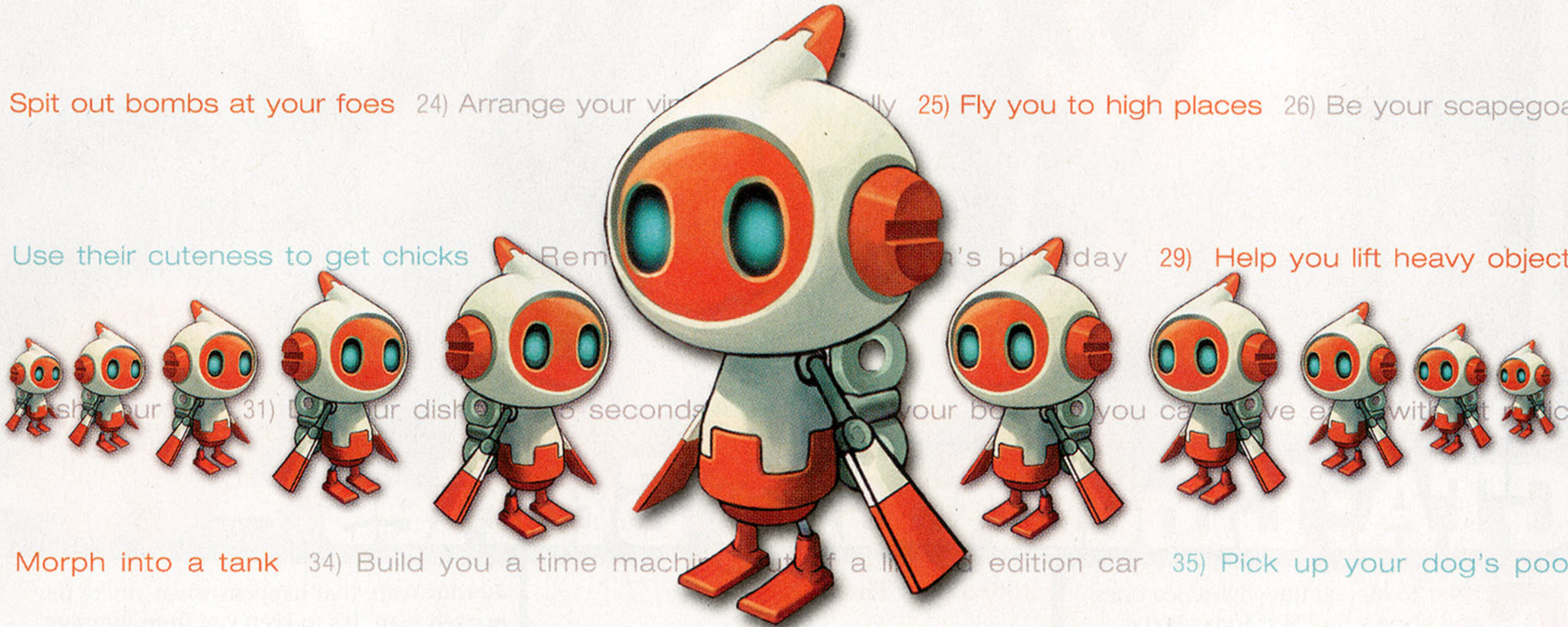
11) Watch the big game with you 12) Give you change for a dollar

15) Get you into the hottest clubs 16) Exercise for you 17) Watch scary movies with you 18) Turn into a train

19) Jump into a mosh-pit with you 20) Help you when you're lost 21) Bake you brownies 22) Take out the trash

23) Spit out bombs at your foes 24) Arrange your virtual life 25) Fly you to high places 26) Be your scapegoat

27) Use their cuteness to get chicks 28) Remember your friend's birthday 29) Help you lift heavy objects



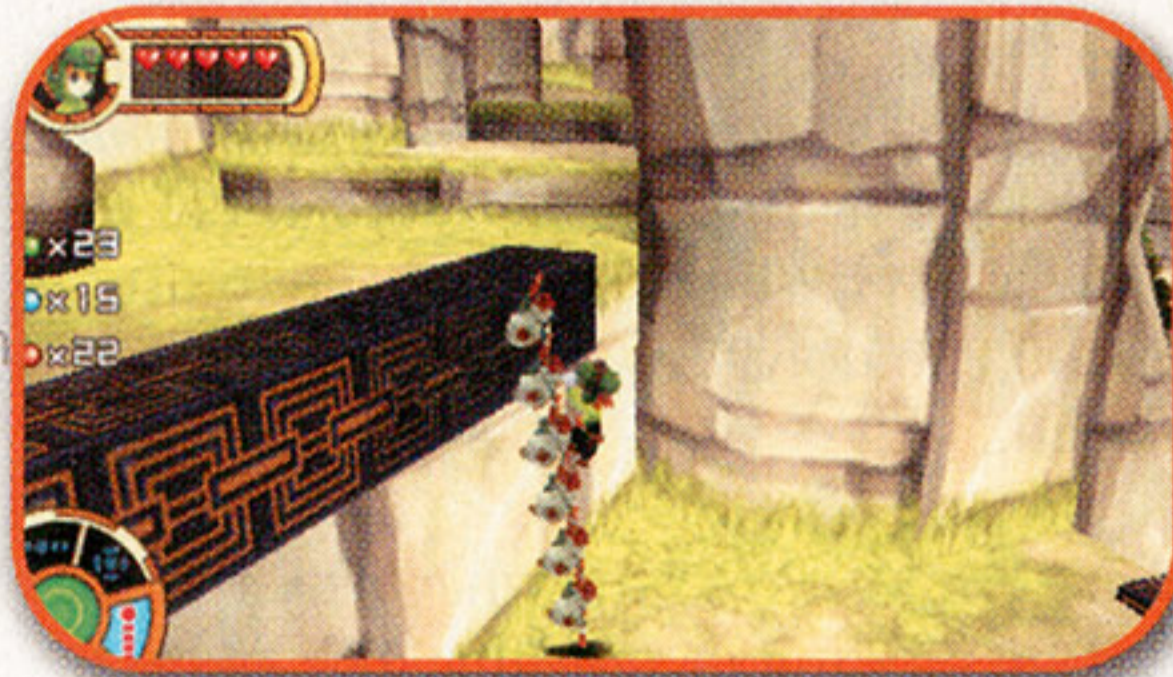
30) Wash your car 31) Turn your dishes into seconds 32) Turn your bed into you can love even without a pillow

33) Morph into a tank 34) Build you a time machine out of a limited edition car 35) Pick up your dog's poop

36) Tuck you in at night 37) Scrub your toilet 38) Play it over and over and over 39) Do your laundry 40) Order you a pizza

What will you do with yours?

41) Be your samurai warrior 42) Protect you from evil 43) Win you prizes at the carnival 44) Burn your CD collection to your PC



45) Recharge your PSP™ battery 46) Be your best friends

49) Recharge your spare PSP™ battery 50) Be your best friends



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TECMO 100% GAMES

SUPER-PLAY PSM THUNDERDROME!

For **Chris Slate**, videogames aren't just a job — they're also a great way to impose your iron will upon your humble subjects. Thus, every month, the PSM editors enter the **THUNDERDROME** to prove that they have what it takes to call themselves hardcore... and to appease Chris, who still believes Bill's story that he was eating lunch at the Liberty City Diner the day C.J. visited.



THIS MONTH'S COMBATANTS
Chris Vs. Randy Vs. Kaiser Vs. Justin

This Month: GTA: Liberty City Stories

Chris: To me, oh unenlightened ones, and bring your PSPs! Today is the day that I prove my superiority not only in the "getting things down from high shelves" department, but also at multiplayer in *Liberty City Stories*.

Justin: Chris — you know I reviewed this, right? So I've played it. A lot. And you haven't. Your copy is still in shrink wrap.

Chris: Ha! You think that gives you an edge on the Great Slate? It... wow, do you think it could?

Randy: Hey, is there a PS3 version of this game? 'Cause you know, I recently got my hands on a PS3 game, and it was sooo cool. Hey, you guys didn't get to see that game, did you? Just me.

Justin: [sighs] Yes, you've mentioned that... repeatedly. Just play, okay?

Chris: Let us commence! But first, unwrap this game for me. The Great Slate once got a cellophane cut and it bled for hours.

Round One: The Hit List

Kaiser: I am uncertain as to my goal here. Am I to emulate a tasteful business suit in Carmen Electra's closet, or shall I instead channel the essence of the dyslexic Eskimo fisherman, hovering over his eloh in the eci waiting for a eihisif to stab with his reaps?

Chris: What?

Randy: You know, if Carmen Electra was a character in a PS3 game like *Unreal Tournament 2007*, which I've already checked out before any of you guys, I'll bet they'd have to use about 100,000 polygons just on her big, fat, round...

Justin: *AHEM*. Anyway, what Kaiser is asking is if he's hiding or hunting. The answer is that it alternates. One player is marked as the target, and when he gets iced, the game chooses a new one. The winner is the guy who survives the longest after being marked.

Chris: What the?! The Great Slate was just driving around like the car-jacking badass that he is, and his car caught fire and then blew up!

Justin: Yeah, that happens when you're the marked man. It's to keep you from jumping into some nearly indestructible vehicle like a Trashmaster or Linerunner and hanging out for the whole match. However, you can still jump into a vehicle for a short time, which is great when someone is trying to run you over, like I just did to the new marked man.

Winner: Justin

Round Two: The Wedding List

Justin: What next? We've got Street Rage, which is basically racing, Liberty City Survivor, which is more or less Deathmatch...

Randy: If this was a PS3 game, like *Unreal Tournament 2007*, the one that I got to go see when you guys had to stay here and didn't get to see it, there would probably be even more game modes.

Justin: I wasn't done yet! How about Get Stretch? It's like two-flag CTF, except you're stealing limos instead of flags. Or Protection Racket, where you're defending your car from destruction by the other team? Oh, here's a good one. The Wedding List. It's like one-flag CTF, but with cars instead of flags.

Chris: A-ha! You beat me to the marked car, but I can still keep you from scoring if I destroy the car, correct? I'll simply blockade the exit to the parking garage with my car, then get out and shoot you with the rocket launcher... aagh! You ran me over! My foolproof plan! How?

Justin: You should have stood behind your car instead of in front of it, Mr. Strategist. But it was much better than Kaiser's plan to camp the drop-off point and snipe me when I get there. Just so you know Kaiser, each player has a different drop point. You're camping your own. Not mine.

Kaiser: I am as scarlet as the embarrassed strawberry in its Valentine's day suit.

Winner: Justin

Round Three: Tanks For The Memories

Randy: Oh, I get it. You see who can stay in the tank the longest, right? That's really cool!

Chris: Then why do you look so sad, unnaturally red-topped one?

Randy: Well... I was just thinking that, if this game was on PS3 like *Unreal Tournament 2007*, which I got to see before anyone else...

Justin: That's it! That's enough!!! Gimme a Dual Shock 2! As the Penny Arcade boys would say, "Pepsi or Choke, Carrot Top? Pepsi or Choke?!?!!" [strangles

Randy with controller cord]

Randy: *cough*... Did you *kaff*... if this *wack*... PS3 *ack*troller... It would *hack* be... wirel*ack*less? [faints].

Chris: Erm... well, then. Randy's disqualified. He's not the winner.

Kaiser: Nor am I. For, like the swallow laden down with a coconut, I was unable to arrive before the rocket blasted off toward the orbital cheeseball.

Chris: [eyeing Justin, who still holds the cord] That leaves Justin and the Great Slate...who has just realized that he's a Pepsi man. Congratulations, new guy!



PSM JANUARY CHALLENGE

RULES You can only send an entry for one challenge. If you cheat or use codes, you'll be disqualified and bring shame upon your house. The final contest entry will be accepted on February 1st. If there are multiple qualifying entries, the winner will be decided by the best paragraph that explains why you should be the winner. Send a photo or a videotape (non-returnable) proving you've met the challenge, and your short paragraph explaining why you're the winner. *Sorry, no e-mail entries!* This contest is open only to residents of the United States, age 18 years or older. PSM reserves the right to substitute prizes of equal or greater monetary value, if necessary.

SEND YOUR ENTRIES TO:

PSM January Challenge #
(the challenge you're entering)
c/o Future Network USA,
4000 Shoreline Court, Ste. 400
South San Francisco, CA 94080

Challenge #1: True Crime: New York City

Do some community service and get 100% completion in City Cleanup.

Challenge #2: Tokobot

Pretty straightforward — beat the game and show us the ending.

Challenge #3: GUN

Complete all the Pony Express missions and show us what you get when you're done.

OCTOBER WINNERS

NASCAR 06: Total Team Control

Darin Yoder, Corry, PA

Graffiti Kingdom

Albert Lee, Los Angeles, CA

Darkwatch

Rob DeMeulemeester, Clinton, MI

This month's winners will receive:

Dynasty Warriors 5 XL
Fatal Frame 3: The Tormented
Weird Tales of the Ramones skateboard



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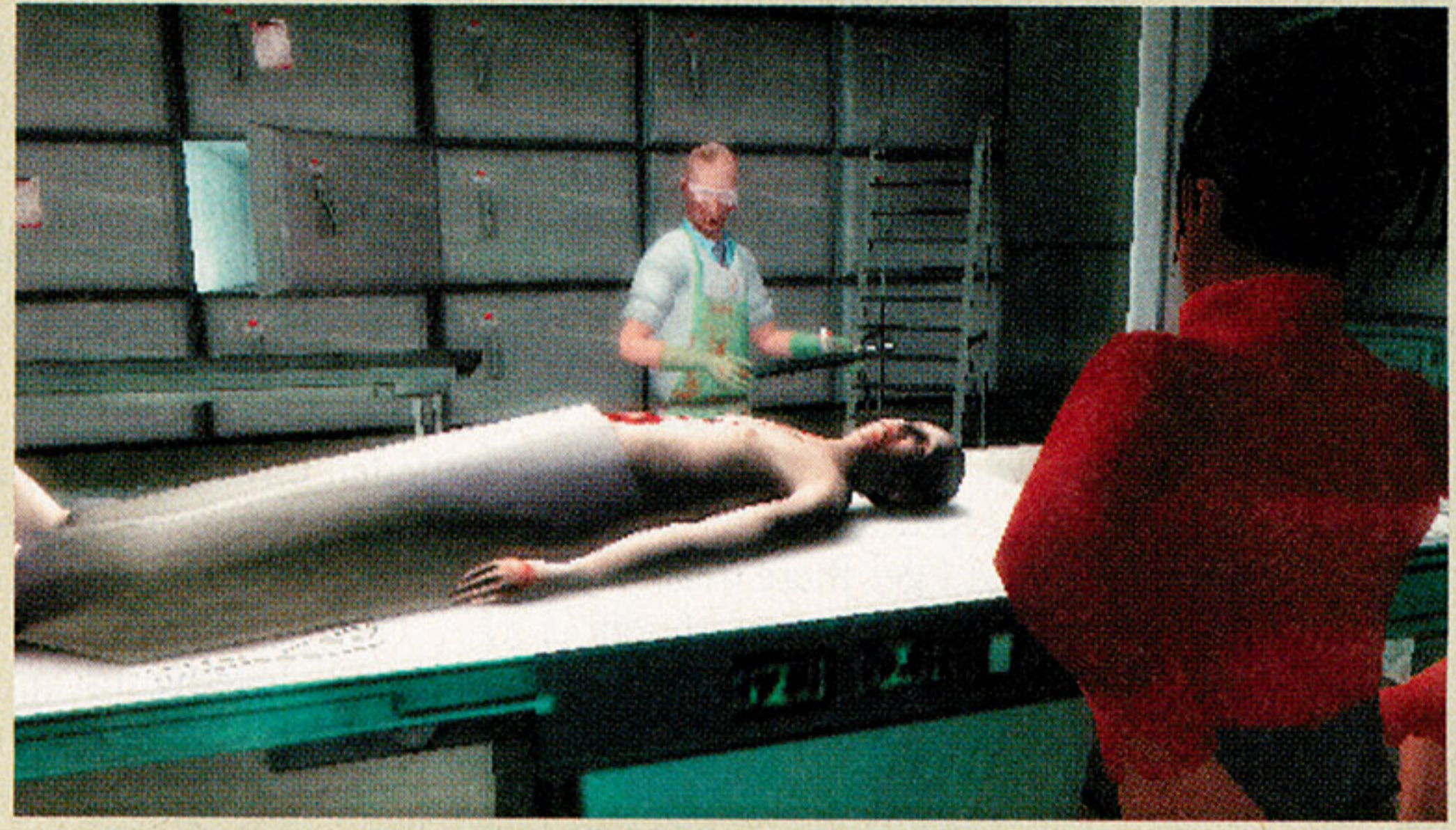
Caption Contest

Make us laugh, win a prize!

Think you're funny? Then write down a caption for this screen and e-mail it to us at psm@futurenetworkusa.com, with the subject line "106 Caption Contest!" Or, simply send it to us through the SuperPlay section of our website at psmonline.com. The deadline is February 1st. If we choose your caption as the funniest, it'll net you a PSM Prize Package. Include your full name and mailing address, or your loot gets sent to The Spoiler.



Caption Contest Winner



"I'm not sure, but I think the cause of death was the hole in his stomach."

September Issue Winner:
Josh Flowers,
Tyler, TX

CHEATER, CHEATER!

GTA: Liberty City Stories

Character Codes

- Full Health: $\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square$
- Full Armor: $\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square$
- Get \$250,000: $\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square$
- Weapons Pack 1: $\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square$
- Weapons Pack 2: $\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square$
- Weapons Pack 3: $\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square$
- Never Wanted: $\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square$
- Increase Wanted Level: $\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square$
- Change into Pedestrian Outfit: $\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square$
- Commit Suicide: $\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square$

Vehicle Codes

- Spawn Rhino: $\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square$
- Spawn Trashmaster: $\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square$
- Perfect Handling: $\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square$
- Cars Float: $\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square$
- Aggressive Drivers: $\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square$
- Destroy All Traffic: $\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square$
- Black Vehicles: $\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square$
- Chrome Vehicles: $\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square$
- White Vehicles: $\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square$
- Motorcycle Tires Change Size: $\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square$

Pedestrian Codes

- Armed Pedestrians: $\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square$

- Pedestrians Riot: $\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square$
- Pedestrians Attack You: $\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square$
- Become a Guy Magnet: $\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square$

Environment Codes

- Clear Weather: $\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square$
- Foggy Weather: $\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square$
- Overcast Weather: $\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square$
- Rainy Weather: $\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square$
- Sunny Weather: $\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square$
- Extra Sunny Weather: $\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square$
- Faster Clock: $\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square$
- Faster Gameplay: $\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square$
- Slower Gameplay: $\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square$
- All Traffic Lights Are Green: $\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square$

Multiplayer Codes

- Unlock the 1st island in Multiplayer: $\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square$
- Unlock the 2nd island in Multiplayer: $\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square$
- Unlock the 3rd island in Multiplayer: $\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square$
- Unlock Everything in Multiplayer: $\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square$

Crazy Codes

- Big Heads: $\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square$
- Upside Down Gameplay: $\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square$
- (Enter $\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square$ to turn the game right side up)

Display Game Credits: $\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square$

Dragon Ball Z: Sagas

- Pause the game, select "Controller," then enter the code.
- Become invincible: $\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square$
- Get all upgrades: $\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square$
- Unlock Everything: $\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square$

Dynasty Warriors 5 XL

- Unlock all of the harnesses
- Red Hare Harness: In the Battle of Yan Province, defeat 300 enemies and all of the stage's attack bases.
- Hex Mark Harness: In the Rescue of Lou Sang Village, rescue all three sections of the village within 300 seconds of the start of the stage.
- Storm Harness: In Imperial Rescue, obtain the carriage (Emperor), and do not let anybody attack the carriage for 240 seconds.
- Shadow Harness: In Battle of Ji Castle, open all 3 gates without defeating a single officer within 120 seconds of the start of the stage, defeat 300 enemies within 300 seconds of the start of the stage, and capture all enemy checkpoints that they started the stage with, except the one that appears with Xiahou Yuan's reinforcements.
- Elephant Harness: In Showdown at Nan Zhong, defeat the attack base in the central region, and defeat Xu Zhu, Xin Pi and Sun Li, so you

occupy the central region. From there, defeat Xiahou Ba, Jia Kui and all Wei Army Destroyers within 180 seconds

Fatal Frame 3

- Get "Crush" Lens: Collect 150 ghosts on Spirit List
- Get "Serial" Lens: Beat the Mission mode
- Get "Stop" Lens: Beat the game
- Get "Sense" Equipment (you can see all hidden ghosts): Beat the game
- Get "Zoom" Equipment (zoom function becomes available): Collect 100 ghosts on Spirit List
- Get "Infinity" Equipment (never run out of film): Beat the game on Nightmare
- Get "Festival" Equipment (camera is in the strongest condition): Beat all the missions with S rank
- Unlock Hard Mode: Beat the game
- Unlock Nightmare Mode: Beat the game on Hard

For more codes, hints, and strategies, go to www.cheatplanet.com.

LOOK TO PLAY?

CHECK THE RATINGS ON EVERY VIDEO GAME BOX

ON FRONT



ON BACK



ESRB
Entertainment Software
Rating Board
WWW.ESRB.ORG

SUPER-PLAY

WARNING! READ AT YOUR OWN RISK!

PSM IS STILL USING THIS PICTURE, EVEN THOUGH ERIC, THE MAN BEHIND THIS MASK...

...HAS LEFT THE MAGAZINE!

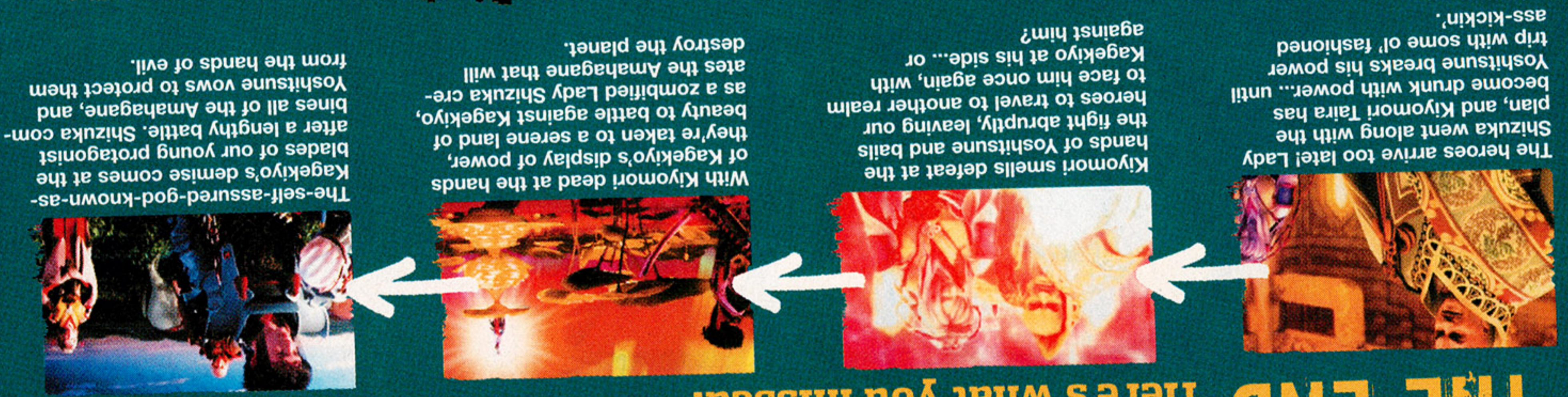
HA! THE SPOILER STRIKES AGAIN!

THE SPOILER PAGE



Hello PSM readers, and welcome to The Spoiler page! I am your host, The Spoiler, a man who does not know the meaning of the word "parian"... nor the definitions of the words "secret" or "taboo." Here,

game stories will be revealed with nothing withheld: who lives, who dies, how it ends... anything at all. So **BE WARNED!** If you read this page, you may learn something you *didn't* want to know...



The self-assured-god-known-as-Kagekiyo's demise comes at the blades of our young protagonist after a lengthy battle. Shizuka comes to protect them from the hands of evil.

With Kiyomori dead at the hands of Kagekiyo's display of power, they're taken to a serene land of beauty to battle against Kagekiyo, as a zombified Lady Shizuka creates the Amahagane that will destroy the planet.

Kiyomori smells defeat at the hands of Yoshitsune and bails the fight abruptly, leaving our heroes to travel to another realm to face him once again, with Kagekiyo at his side... or against him?

The heroes arrive too late! Lady Shizuka went along with the plan, and Kiyomori Taira has become drunk with power... until Yoshitsune breaks his power trip with some ol' fashioned ass-kickin'.

Face it: not all of us finish every game we play.

THE END



GENJI: DAWN OF THE SAMURAI

The epic samurai game that doesn't start with an "O"

SAMURAI SHOWDOWN

Welcome to feudal Japan, where Yoshitsune Minamoto is determined to get revenge against the Heishi clan for taking his father's life. He gets in a little over his head, however, so with the help of the ninja Otchiko, he finds shelter and strength at Kiichi Hogen's house. Hogen's not alone, though — there's Hogen's daughter, Minazuru, and Lady Shizuka, a woman with the power to bind Amahagane, an ancient jewel, and make them more powerful in the process called Yosegane. But it turns out that they aren't the only ones with an interest in Amahagane — it seems that the Heishi clan's leader, Kiyomori Taira, has found a way to use the Amahagane in combat.

Along the way, Yoshitsune stumbles into Benkei, a great warrior with a grudge against the Heishi. Naturally, these two duke it out, then decide to join forces. After some adventuring, Yoshitsune and Benkei return to find the village of Kyoto in shambles and Princess Minazuru abducted. It's princess-rescuing time! After find-

ing her, they learn the Heishi are on their trail again, and they're invading the hideout to capture Lady Shizuka. Then, Yoshitsune and Benkei square off against Kagekiyo Taira, the right-hand man to the evil emperor.

Hogen steps in and orders Yoshitsune to leave for Oushu. At first, it seems that Hogen knew best as Lord Hidehira and Kichiji welcome them to his humble city... but it's strongly suggested that they drop their Amahagane. They decline, of course, and the group goes off to complete advanced training to defeat the Heishi, as their last confrontation proved they pretty much sucked. Afterwards, they learn that Kichiji has turned against them, and Kagekiyo stands in their way. After Kagekiyo escapes, the team finds the hideout destroyed and Shizuka kidnapped. Gasp! With all hell broken loose, the heroes return to Kyoto and Minazuru drops a bombshell: Otchiko was really Lady Shizuka in disguise! The team picks off the Heishi henchmen one by one until finally reaching their leader...

PSM

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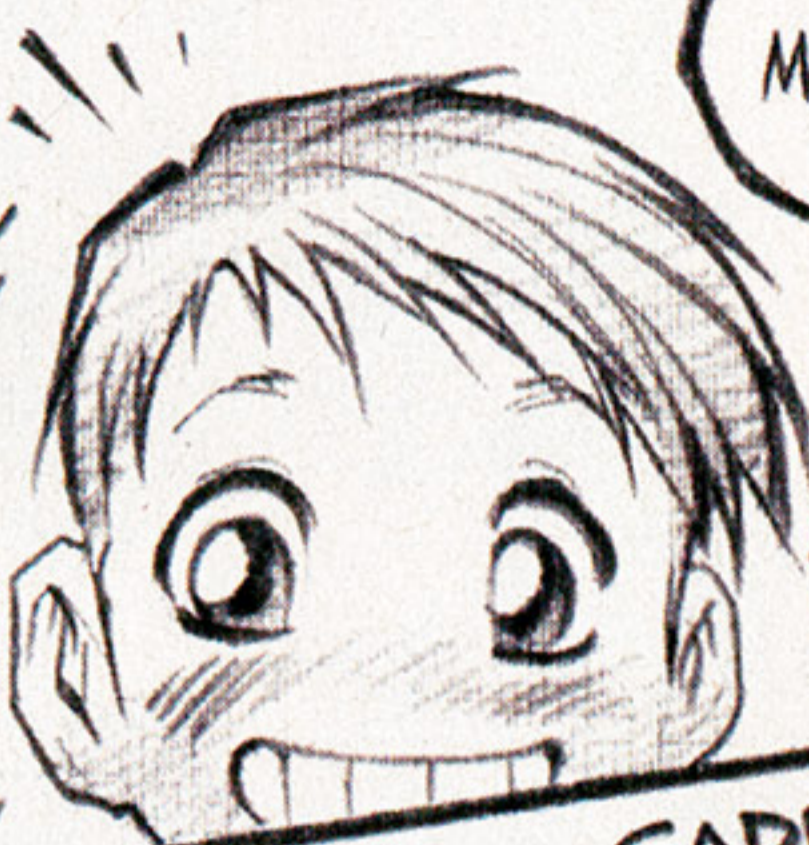


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PlayStation Preview 2026

Think the PS3 is bleeding edge technology?
Take a look a little further down the road...
by ADAM WARREN

BY 2026, ALL PLAYSTATION GAMES HAVE BECOME INCREDIBLY, EVEN INSANELY VIOLENT, FEATURING HYPERREAL GORE AND SICKENINGLY GRAPHIC BRUTALITY!



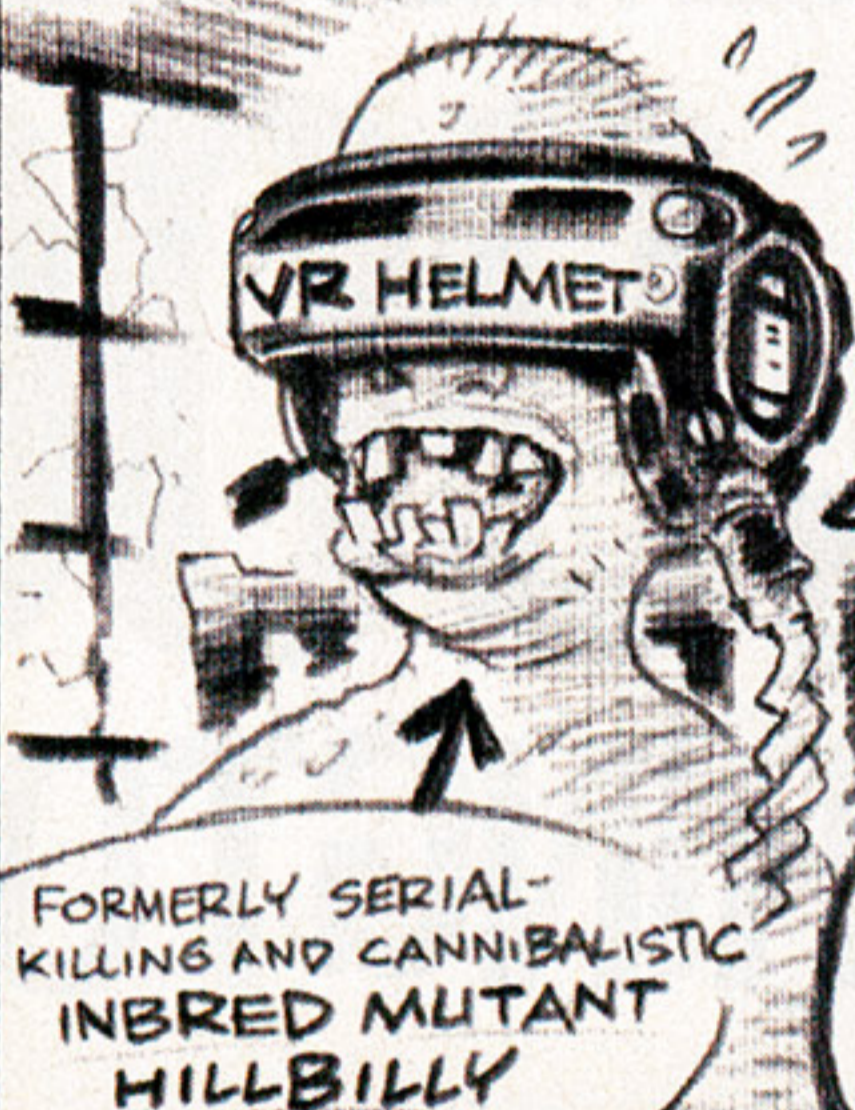
MOMMY(1)! MOMMY(3)! DADDY(5)!

CAN WE UPLOAD IT? THE MUTILATION-ENGINE PHYSICS ARE AWESOME!*

BUT SINCE VIRTUAL GAMING VIOLENCE HAS BECOME MORE AND MORE IMMERSIVE AND SATISFYING, REAL-LIFE VIOLENCE HAS DECLINED PRECIPITOUSLY!

YEHP, TORTURIN', MURDERIN' AN' EATIN' FOLKS IN TH' REAL WORLD JUST DON'T MEASURE UP TO TH' GAMING SIMULATION OF SAME, Y'ALL.

NOW, IF Y'ALL WILL EXCUSE ME, I'M ABOUT TO HAVE A VIOLENCESASM.



FORMERLY SERIAL-KILLING AND CANNIBALISTIC INBRED MUTANT HILLBILLY

FAMILY FUN!

THE MARQUIS DE SADE'S

THE 120 DAYS OF SODOM!

FAMILY GAME OF THE YEAR!

UPLOAD NOW

GAME RATING: ALL AGES

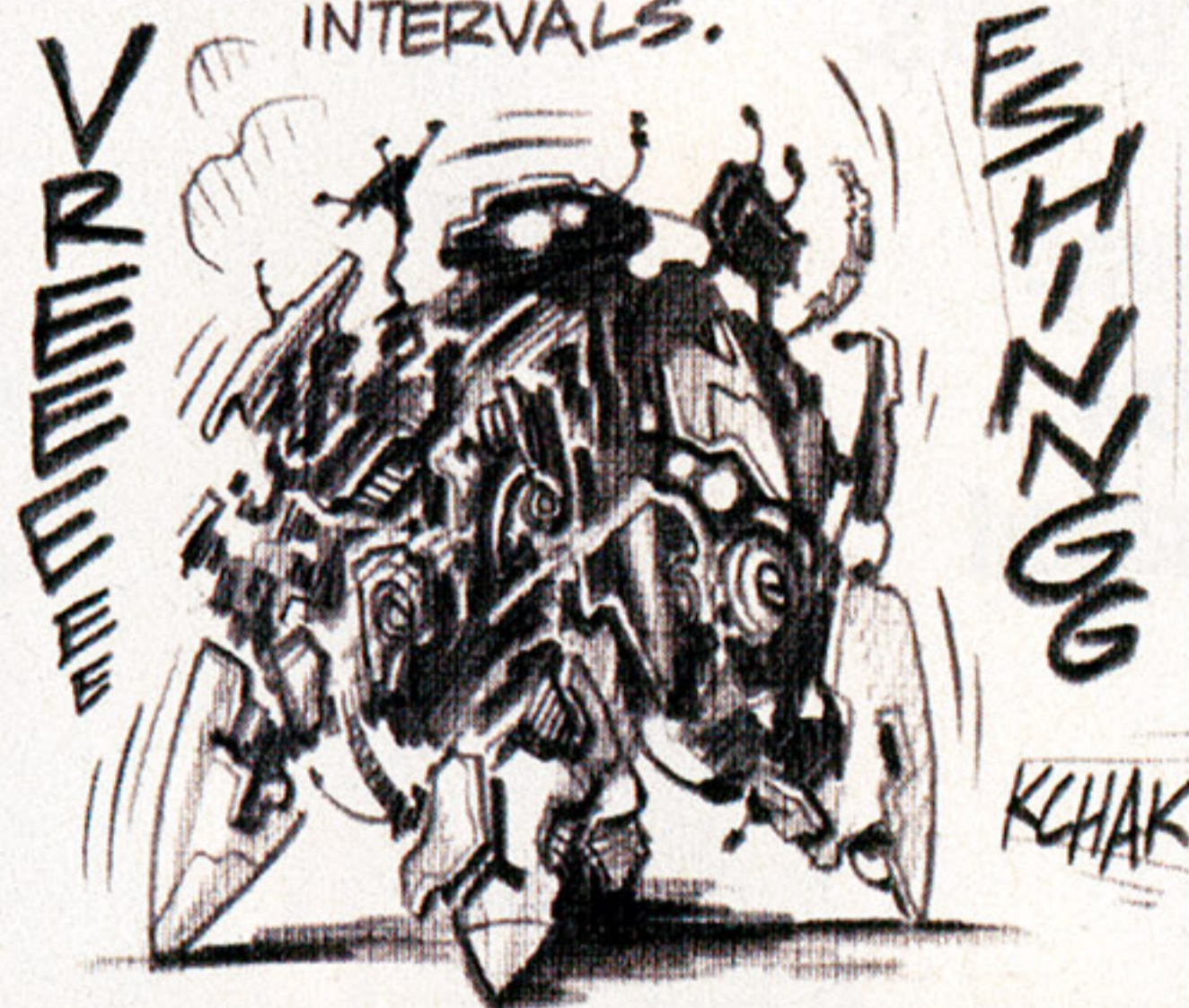
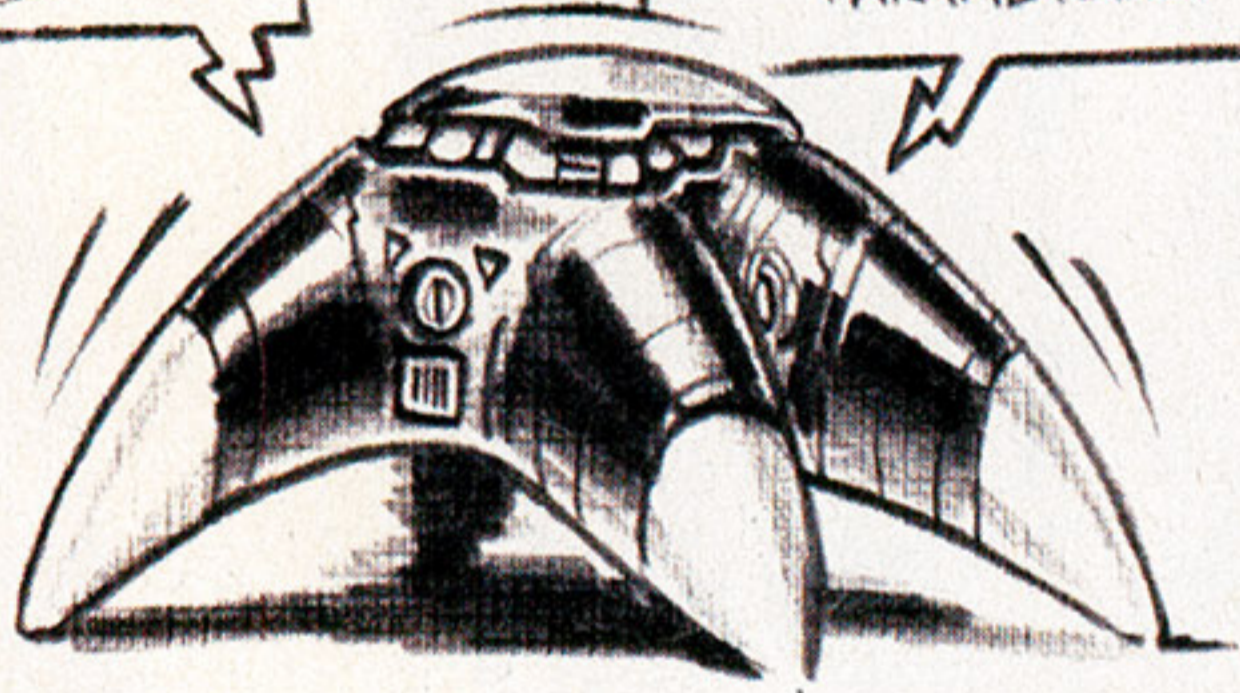
DUE TO THE WONDERS OF NANOTECHNOLOGY, GAMERS NO LONGER HAVE TO BUY A NEW AND IMPROVED MODEL OF PLAYSTATION EVERY FEW YEARS.

INSTEAD, THEIR PLAYSTATION WILL AUTOMATICALLY REBUILD AND UPGRADE ITSELF AT REGULAR INTERVALS.

IN FACT, IT'S ESTIMATED THAT, BY 2027, PLAYSTATIONS WILL BE SELF-UPGRADING THEIR HARDWARE EVERY 45 SECONDS!

BEEEP!

RECEIVING HARDWARE UPGRADE PARAMETERS.

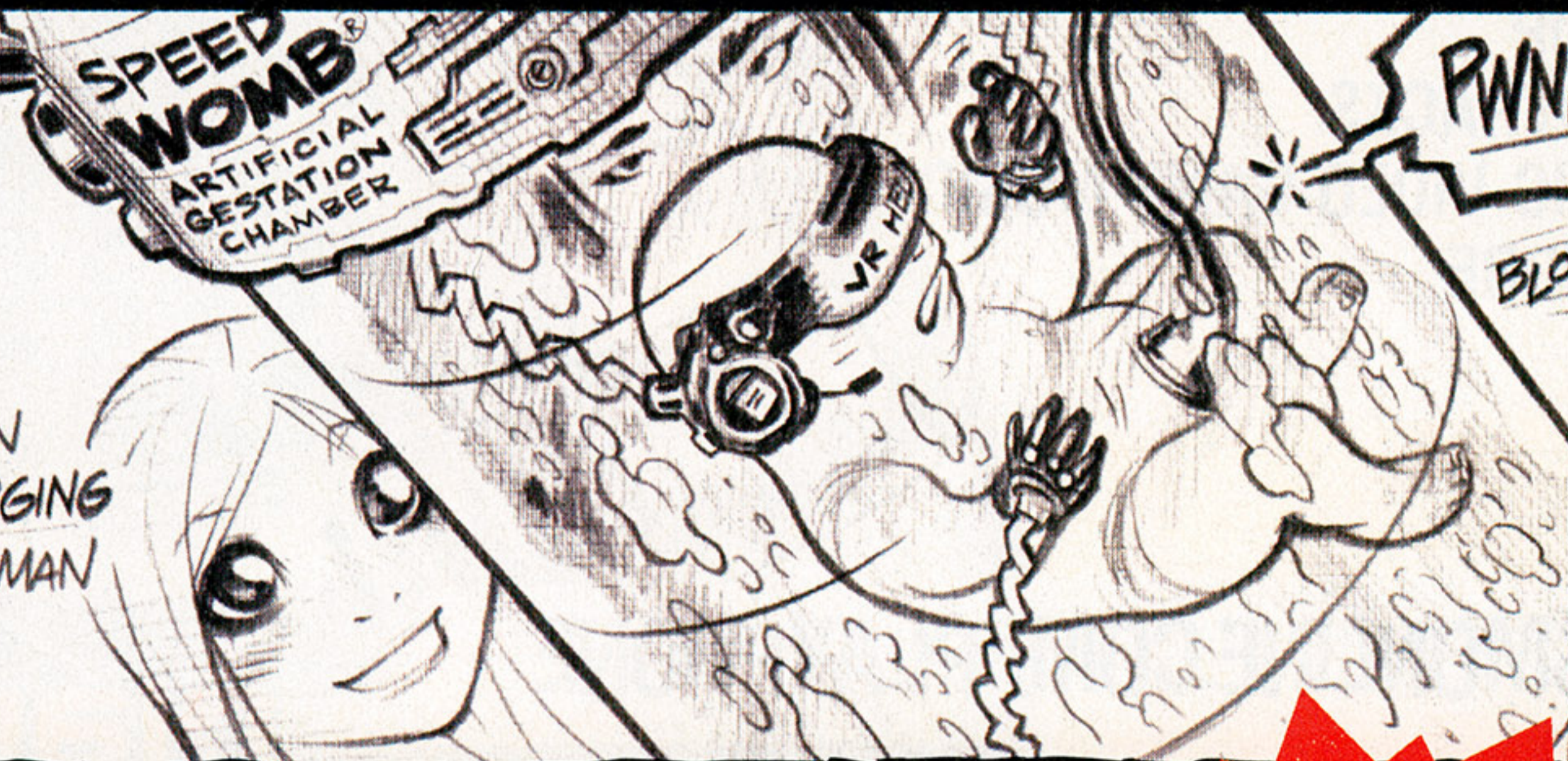


HONEY, THE PLAYSTATION UPGRADED ITSELF AGAIN.

I AM YOUR GOD NOW.

TO KEEP UP WITH HARDWARE ADVANCES, GAMERS THEMSELVES WILL HAVE TO BECOME NEW AND IMPROVED!

LUCKILY, BY 2026, GAMER PARENTS WILL HAVE THE OPTION OF GENETICALLY SUPERCHARGING THEIR PROGENY INTO POSTHUMAN LIBERGAMERS!



PWND! STEFU, NOOB.*

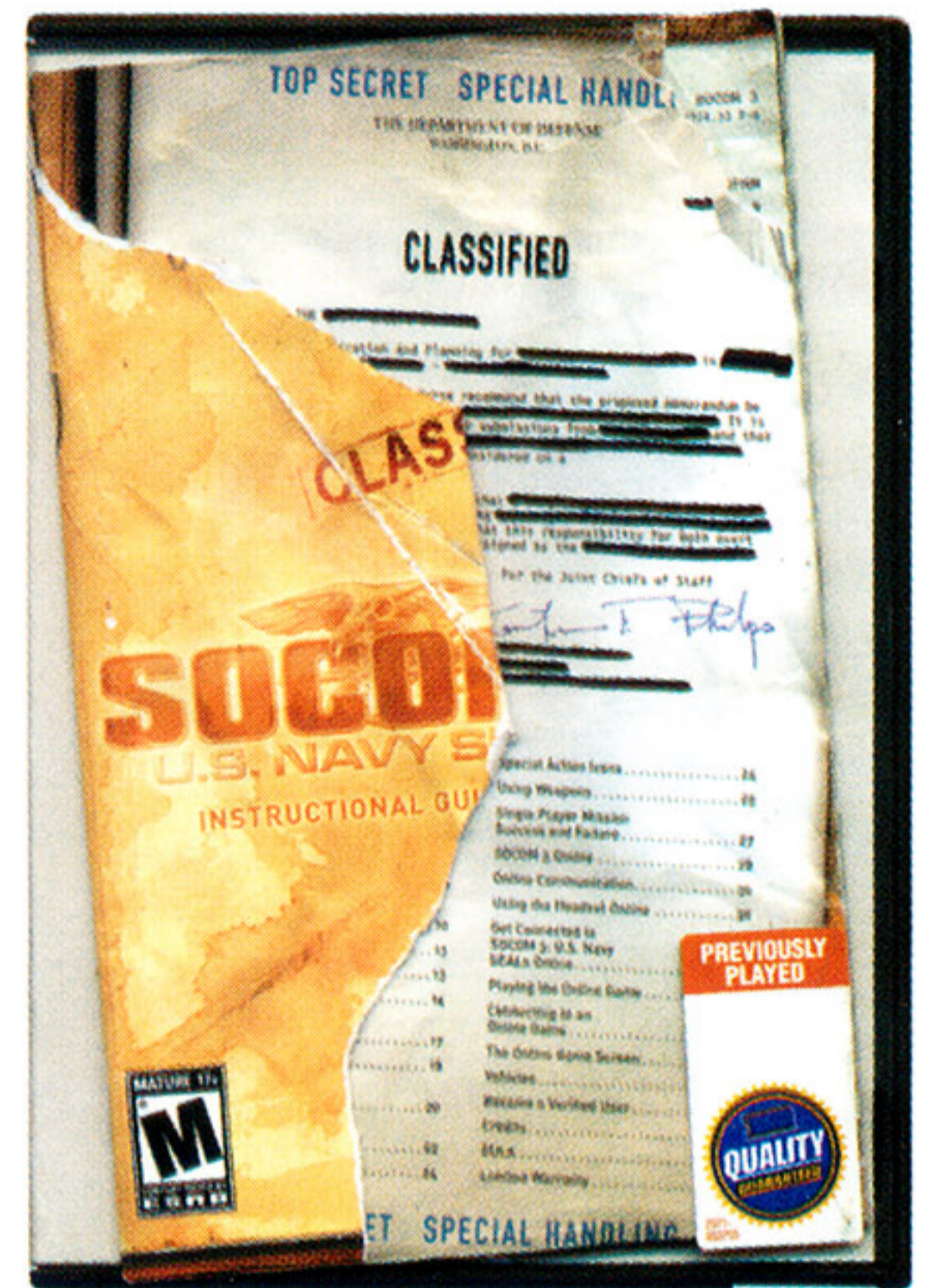
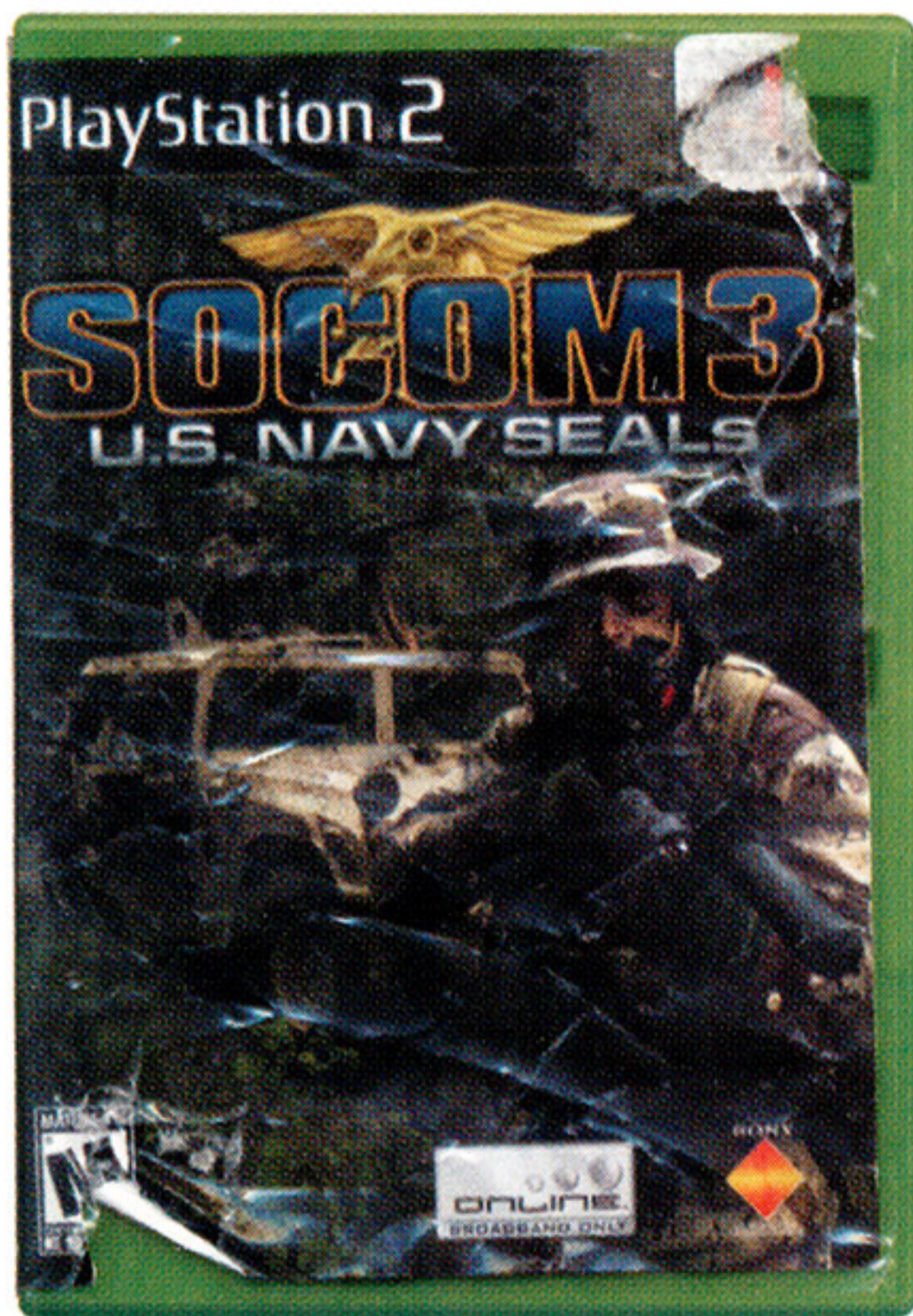
BLOPPP

*TRANSLATED FROM A.D. 2026 FUTURE SLANG YOU COULDN'T POSSIBLY UNDERSTAND.

NEXT ISSUE

The new year is here, and that can only mean one thing: it's time to hand out awards for last year's best games! That's right, next month we name our annual **PSM 10**, the games that rose high above the rest to define the PlayStation experience for 2005. With incredible titles like *Resident Evil 4*, *God of War*, and *Grand Theft Auto: Liberty City Stories*, we're going to have a hell of a time picking the winners! See you in 30!

SEE YOU IN JUST 30 DAYS!



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