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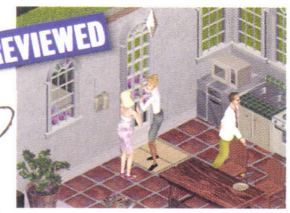
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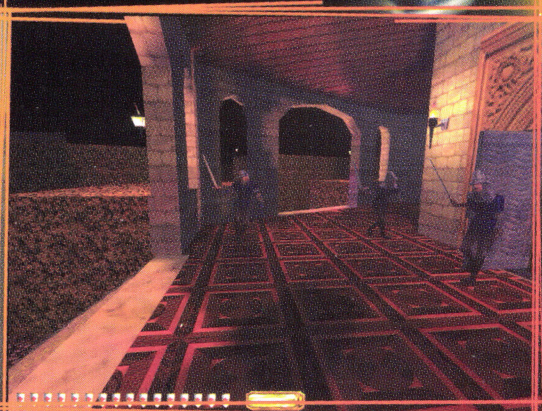
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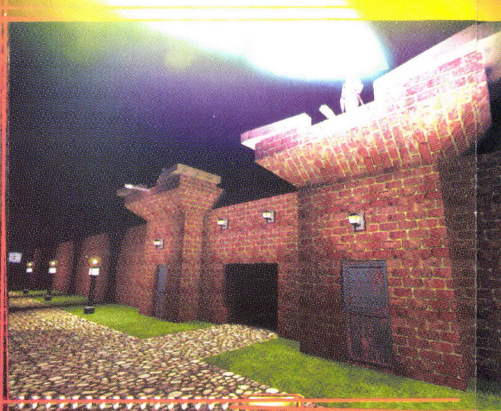
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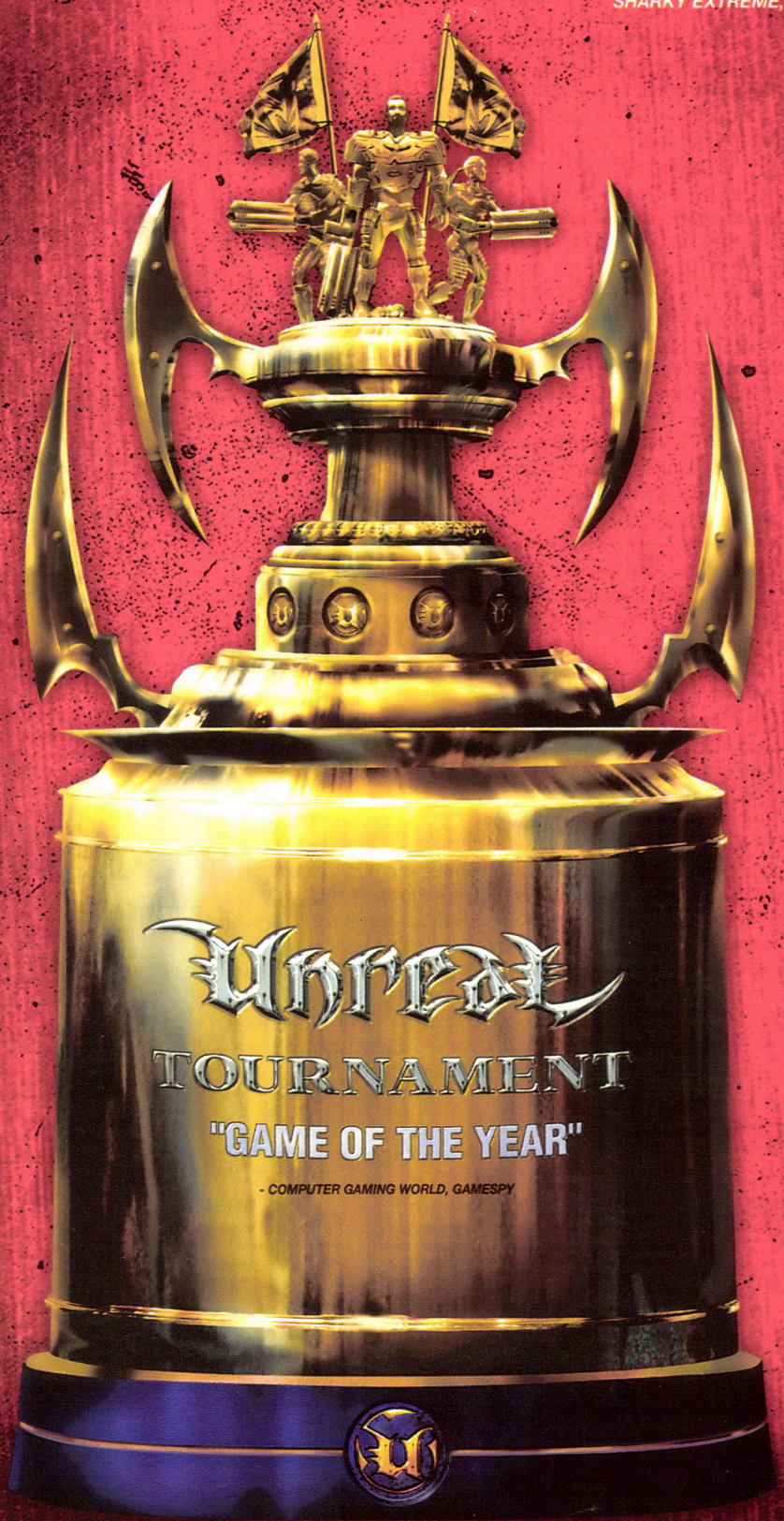
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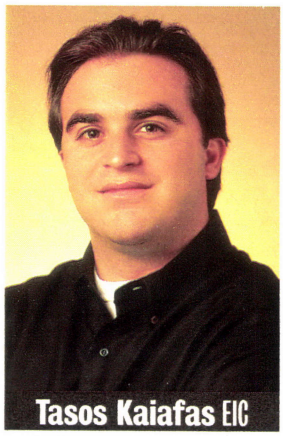
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Team Talk

Comments, suggestions? Send any feedback to: letters@incitepcgaming.com
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Tasos Kaiafas EIC

Face it mom, games aren't only for kids, and we don't create this magazine for kids. If little Johnny gets a hold of one, then throw it away.

You now hold the fifth issue of *incite PC Gaming* in your hands, and if you've been reading the magazine since the first one you know we're not averse to putting photos of nice looking ladies in it. This issue with Julie Strain is certainly proof of that. So before you send in your letters asking "What in the hell is a half-naked woman doing in a PC gaming magazine?" let me answer that question now: posing. And quite provocatively, I might add.

Face it mom, games aren't only for kids, and we don't create this magazine for kids. If little Johnny gets a hold of one and you don't want him to have it, then throw it away. Don't get mad at us. It's his fault for buying it. Tan his hide good and send him to bed without dinner. Or maybe it's time to have "the talk" and we just helped you open the discussion. (You're welcome.)

What set me off on this topic was a letter I got from a schoolteacher who said we shouldn't create magazines like this for children. She said the world is bad enough without magazines like ours contributing to their corruption. I couldn't agree more.

I wouldn't want my kid reading this magazine either. Any more than I want would him reading *Maxim* or *Details* or any of the other men's magazines that show women in most of their glory. But I only have a daughter, so I don't really care. Her mom's fashion magazines show a lot more flesh than *incite PC Gaming* does.

Remember, *incite PC Gaming* is for players—*adult* players. So here's some advice for you angry moms: If you find this magazine in Johnny's room, just tear out the pictures of the girls. There aren't that many anyway. Or throw it away and tell him he has to stick to his Nintendo until he grows up.

On another note, some of you noticed that we bumped up our price once again. No, we don't raise it to keep young boys from buying it. We raised it because the early prices were only introductory specials. Rest assured, though, we won't be raising it again anytime soon. Anyway, we will always be the lowest priced gaming magazine around, guaranteed.

Meet the Editorial Team

Joe Vallina



Deputy EIC

When Joe isn't getting crushed by Gary at *High Heat 2001*, he laments the end of the AFC's Super Bowl reign. Luckily for him, he's got the coolest glasses of anyone on staff.

Gary Eng Walk



Senior Editor

Gary's beloved Yankees prove to be just as dangerous in *High Heat 2001* as they are in real life. He takes pride in giving Vallina's Oakland A's the ultimate PC baseball smackdown.

Darren Gladstone



Senior Editor

Darren is the tough guy on staff. He proves this by chasing off bums who are taking a leak in his alley in North Beach. His intimidating stance (evil stare, hands on hips) is truly scary.

Steve Klett



Senior Editor

Steve has abandoned real life after playing a marathon *The Sims* session in preparation for the strategy. His wife has threatened to leave him if he doesn't socialize with her more.

William O'Neal



Senior Editor

Wil never stops talking. Ever. In fact, he was out of the office for a week and the silence was so overwhelming that several editors thought they were actually going deaf.

Dave Rees



Multimedia Editor

Dave is obsessed with his alternate persona—the Devil Doll. He now only speaks in the Flash-animated creature's voice and constantly brings everyone boiling hot coffee.

Paul Semel



Entertainment Editor

Paul went to Julie Strain's house a boy and came back a man. But then he played a couple games of *Tomb Raider* and regressed to boy stage again.

Di Luo



Editorial Assistant

Di dropped out of college to pursue a career in the circus as the bearded lady. But one night he got hammered and shaved. Doh! Guess it's back to school.

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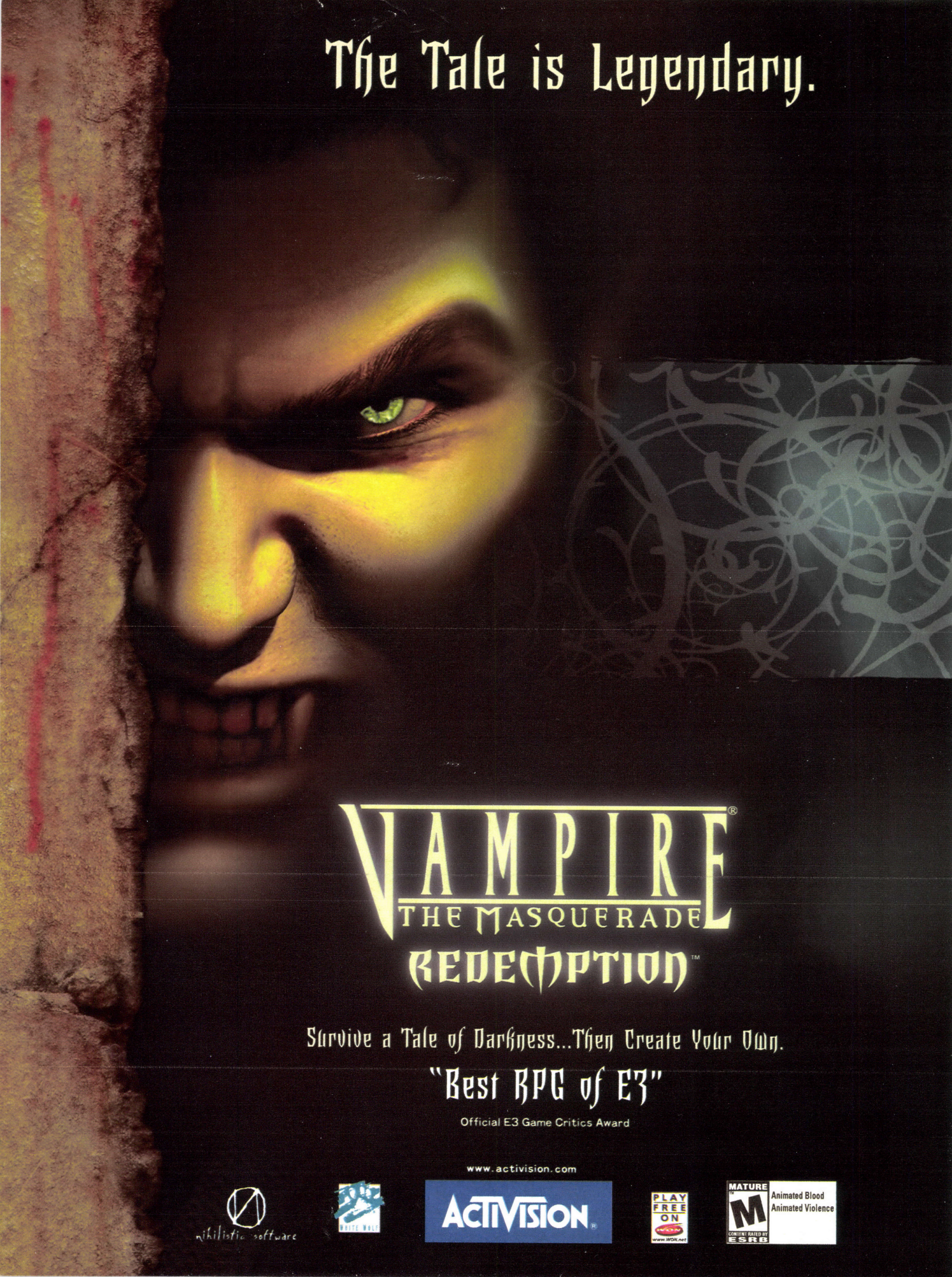
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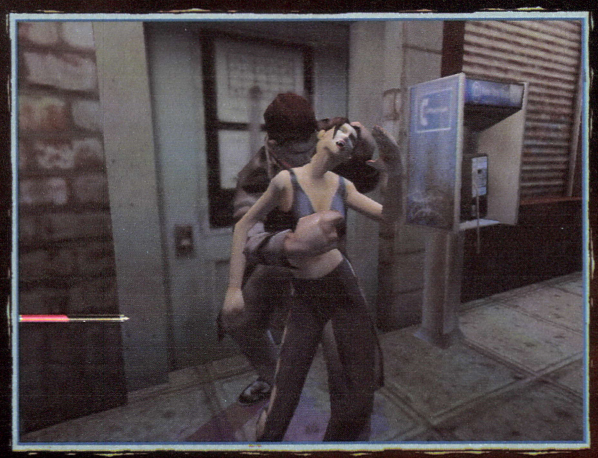

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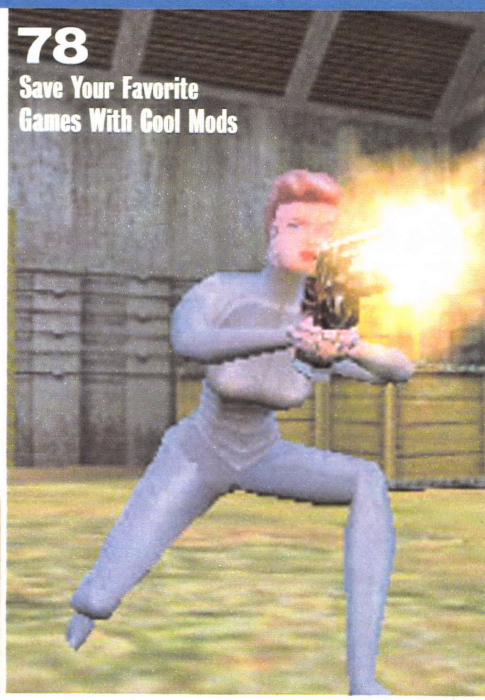
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COVER PHOTO BY BENJAMIN HOFFMAN

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THIS MONTH'S PREVIEWS

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Take to the skies in this futuristic air pirate game that shows what could have been.

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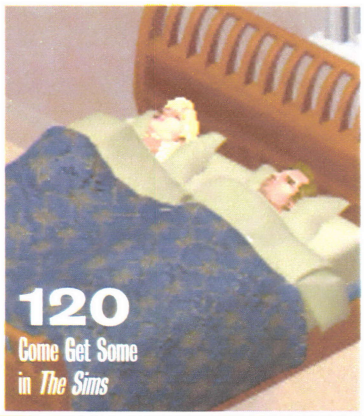
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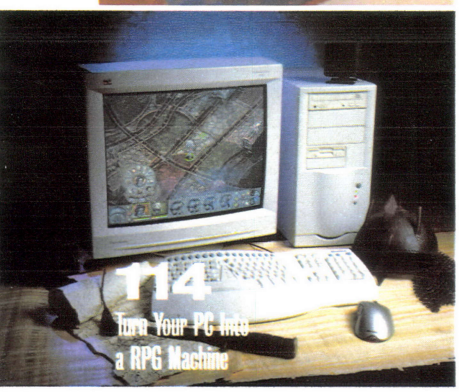
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ON THE incite CD-ROM

The *incite CD-ROM* is loaded with videos, game demos, and other goodies.

This month we feature the beauty of *Heavy Metal*, Julie Strain. She really (really!) bared all during our photo shoot, and though we can't show her nude, the video comes close.

To get the disc out of the cover, first peel back the access flap located on the inside of the front cover. Then carefully slide the disc out and that's it. Here's what you'll find on the *incite CD-ROM* this month:

PLAYABLE DEMOS

Railroad Tycoon II Gold—The Full Game!
Install and play the FULL NetActive version for a few hours for free. Then log on to the NetActive Web site to pay for as long as you want to play.

Thief II
Try out the sequel to the stealthy original.

Metal Fatigue
Will this dethrone *C&C: Tiberian Sun*?

C&C Tiberian Sun
Should it fear *Metal Fatigue*?

VIDEOS

Julie Strain
This beautiful vixen has been in countless B-movies, including the classic *Lingerie Kick Boxer* (who could miss that one?). Now she adds the *incite CD-ROM* to her illustrious resume.

Heavy Metal
This exclusive movie shows Ritual's new game in all its graphic glory.

WarCraft III
Exclusive! Nobody else has this secret footage of the most anticipated game since *StarCraft*.

Electric Playground
Our exclusive partnership with Canada's best gaming show continues.

Rune
This Viking-era game aims to stomp, beat, and bludgeon you into submission!

TOOLBOX

Tweaks
Now that you have your hands on the final release of *Quake III Arena*, we've put together a complete tweak to make sure you can enjoy it to the fullest. We also brought back our classic *Wheel of Time* and *Freespace 2* tweaks.

Drivers, Patches, Gamespy
We have all the drivers and patches for the games you want to play. We also include a front end for the deathmatch-up service Gamespy. There's no need to download.

Having problems with your CD-ROM? Please let us know and we'll help you fix it or replace it for free. Email us at cdsupport@incitepcgaming.com or send a letter to incite PC Gaming, 650 Townsend St., Suite 305, San Francisco, CA 94103.

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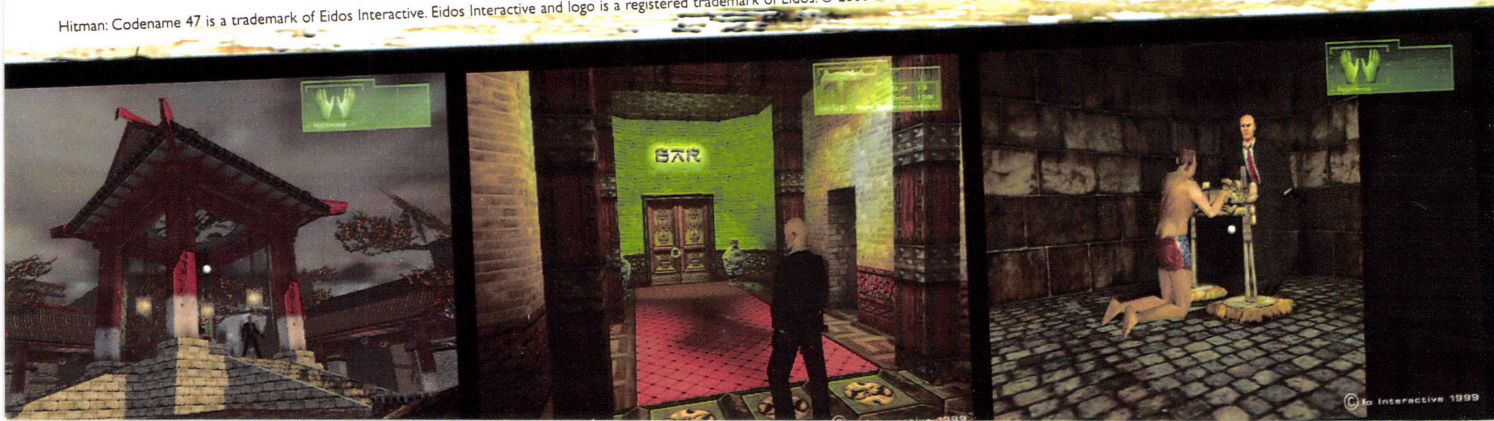


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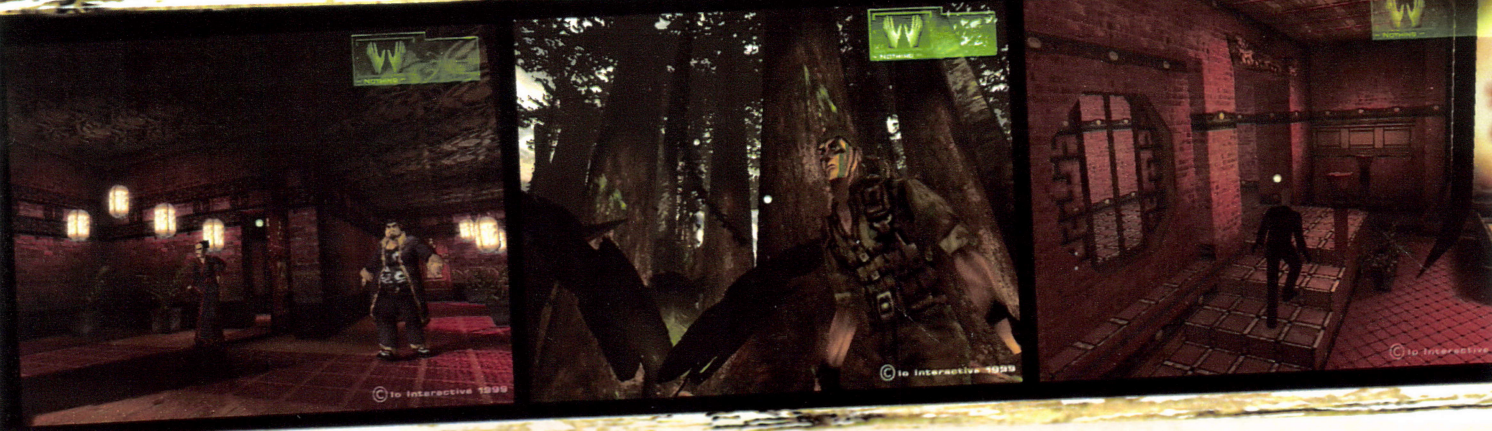
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7 The Big Story

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8 Helping Hand

Don't let our gaming expertise go to waste. Check out our **Strategy Guide** section for all the latest codes, cheats, and strategy tips, complete with screen shots and movies.

9 Take It for a Test Run

Not sure if *Tomb Raider: The Last Revelation* is the game for you? Download the demo from our fast and reliable **Download** section and take it for a spin before you buy.



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****CONFIDENTIAL****

III. BREAKING THE OATH: TRUTH AND CONSEQUENCES [redacted]

1. A verbal warning accompanied by a review of security oath.
2. A stronger warning, sometimes accompanied by browbeating [redacted] and intimidation.
3. Psychologically working on an individual to bring on depression that will lead to suicide.
4. **Elimination of the individual** that has been made to appear as an accident, suicide or heart attack

Sources say Deus Ex was created by Ion Storm to **uncover the truth.** Some say it's merely the latest conspiracy fueled by a madman. And some say it's a future training tool made to look like a hyperrealistic 3-D roleplaying computer game. Whatever it is, **proceed with caution.** They know you want it.

[SECTOR 1]

The year is [redacted], and the world is a dangerous and chaotic place. Terrorists operate openly, killing thousands. The world's economics are close to collapse and the gap between the insanely wealthy and the desperately poor has grown to the size of the Grand Canyon. Worst of all, an ages old **CONSPIRACY** bent on world domination has decided that the time is right to emerge from the shadows and take control. No one believes they exist. The conspirators must be stopped from spreading -GREY DEATH-. *This world is full of lies and betrayal, a world where nothing is as it seems and entire nations can seemingly be turned at the pushed of a button.* ***TRUST NO ONE.***

No. 34561

BUILT ON REAL CONSPIRACY THEORIES
current events and expected ADVANCEMENTS in technology. Research shows, it can happen.

RECOGNIZABLE, REALISTIC ENVIRONMENTS
Many locations are built from actual blueprints. And every object in the environments is useful.

← TRUTH

- **Fight terrorists,** as ordered by UNATCO, to maintain control over [redacted].
- Survive constant attack and/or incarceration as **you** establish ties to a new ally base.

EIDOS INTERACTIVE
eidos.com

JOIN THE CONSPIRACY
at deusex.com

AMD Athlon

RATING PENDING
RP
Visit www.esrb.org or call 1-800-771-3772 for more info
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

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BEST COPY AVAILABLE

- Send any and all information to www.unatco.com. It could be the difference between life and death.

- Establish a new base of operations with [redacted] and forge alliances.

- Find a way to build your own capabilities to the point where you have a chance of defeating the one with God-like powers.

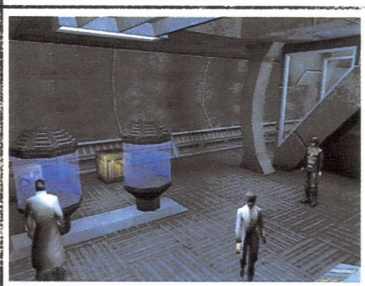
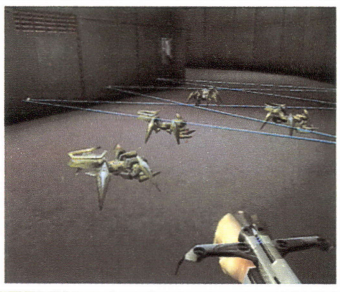
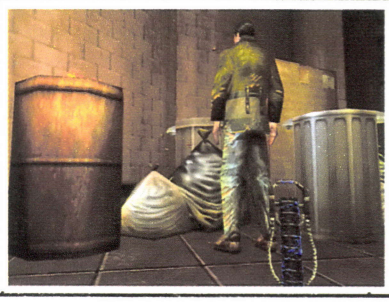


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CONSEQUENCES:

Diagram B2 Situational Missions (Fig.'s 2.1-2.6)

Fig. 2.1 build your own capabilities	Fig. 2.2 establish base of operations	Fig. 2.3 maintain control over Ambrosia
		
Fig. 2.4 Survive incarceration	**Fig. 2.5 establish ties to ally base**	**Fig. 2.6 Expand your pool of allies**
		

ION STORM

ionstorm.com

DEUS EX™

QUESTION EVERYTHING.

Spill Yer Guts!

Got a burning question you need answered? Want a gaming matter cleared up once and for all? Need to vent some bile? We'll accept any and all of your thoughts. This, your letters forum, is the place to shout. Send all intelligent missives to: **incite PC Gaming Magazine, 650 Townsend, Suite 305, San Francisco, CA 94103 USA**. Alternatively, put finger to keyboard, and type to us via email at **letters@incitepcgaming.com**.

LETTERS FROM READERS

Off the Mark With Bleem!?

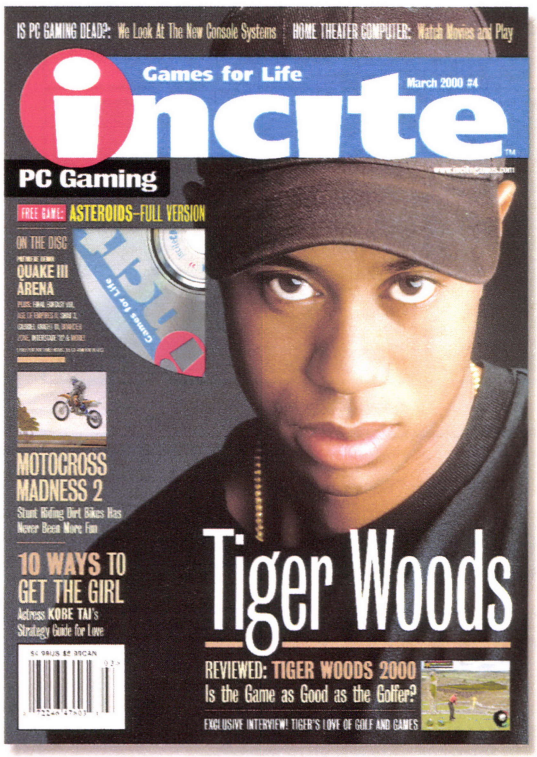
Your Bleem! article missed the point. The reason Sony is fighting the Bleem! emulator is to prevent third-party software from being run on PlayStations, be they real or virtual. Remember that Sony loses money on every console they sell. They also write little software for the consoles. So how do they make money? By controlling the access to the console from third-party software developers.

Those game developers, the life blood of the gaming industry, must get approval from Sony to run their games on the console, then they must pay a royalty to Sony for every game cartridge that gets sold. Would the same software house need to pay a royalty to Sony for a game run on the Bleem! emulator? Couldn't Sony be bypassed completely in this process? You bet they could, and Sony's legal department knows that, and will stop at nothing to destroy Bleem!

Third-party software continues to be the lifeblood of the PC gaming industry, and it is the real number one reason why PCs are better than consoles. The reason is that a two-bit, third-party software house can bring a product to market without the consent of either Intel or Microsoft. In consoles, the control of Sony or Nintendo is absolute.

PC gaming will continue to grow because gamers like us are always on the lookout for the next great game, and we know we will find it in a free software market, unencumbered by corporate giants.

Loretta Smollinger
Via the Internet



Sense of Humor...Lacking....

"You can shun your geeky ways and transform yourself into a man worthy of gorgeous women like Kobe Tai."

Does that mean, with your help I can be worthy of women who have sex on screen for a living?

Step #1 "More email accounts than sexual partners...." How many movies has she done?

Step #3 "Hide Your Joystick." Why? Someone like Kobe Tai would not be scared of my Wingman Force at all. In fact I'd probably have to crank the feedback up all of the way for her to like it.

The reason I picked up *incite* was because its hard to find a PC game magazine for under $8. I don't think I'll need to explain the reason I've now stopped reading it.



DON'T HURT KOBE'S FEELINGS **Ms. Tai thinks Jeremy is mean, mean, mean.**

Jeremy
Via the Internet

Did our article strike a little too close to home, Jer? Don't worry, I'm sure Ms. Tai (star of such hits as Very Bad Things*) will forgive your geeky ways if you just follow our advice.*

The Big KISS Off

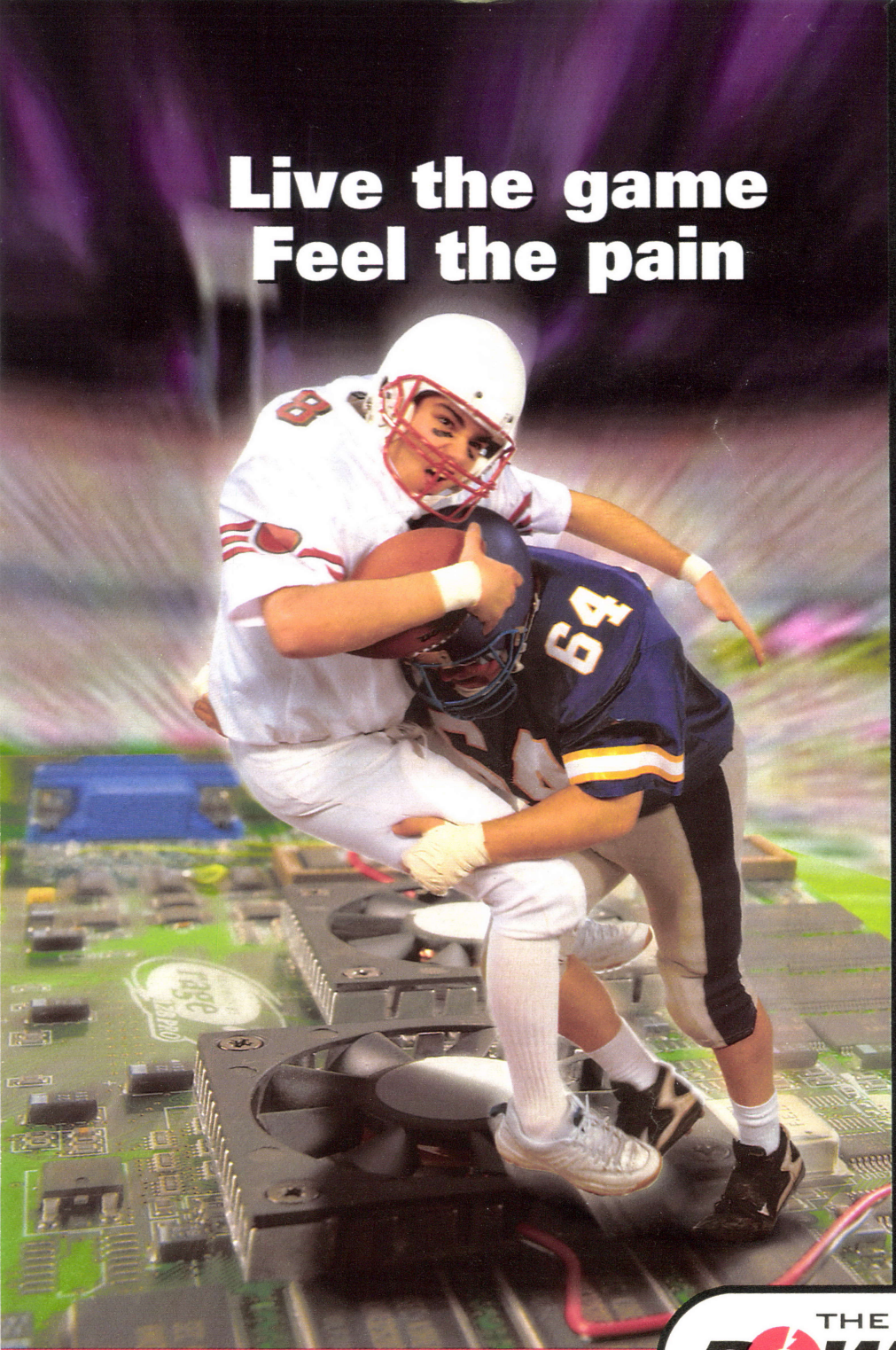
I practically puked when I saw Gene Simmons on the cover. I thought to myself, NO! That's not true!! THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE!!! But alas, as I scanned through the pages my deepest, darkest fears were made real.

The magazine I had come to know and love had, instead of spending money and time on interviewing a beautiful model of some sort, WASTED their money on KISS. And the game looks like a corny take off of *Half-Life*! With stupider AI!

Otherwise, great magazine!

Mr. Gabe
Via the Internet

Live the game
Feel the pain



GRAPHICS BY rage 128 PRO

ATI RAGE FURY *MAXX*™ and RAGE FURY PRO™ –
3D so real it's gotta hurt

RAGE FURY *MAXX* – 64MB of extreme 3D gaming power

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QUAKE III ARENA

■ PUBLISHER Activision ■ DEVELOPER id Software

This is modern-day technology at work. With a myriad of player models from which to choose and beautiful new maps being released all the time, *Quake III: Arena* really shows what you can do with a few million lines of computer code. It still boggles our minds that a seemingly random series of zeros and ones can be magically transformed into translucent skeletons, giant machine guns, and glowing power-ups that are realistic enough to make us jump in our seats.



Metal Fatigue

■ PUBLISHER Psygnosis ■ DEVELOPER Zono

Giant bipedal robots clashing in a great war never looked so good. This shot is just one example of the broad scope of *Metal Fatigue*, Psygnosis' upcoming revolutionary real-time strategy game. Building a well-defended base, and gathering resources are essential, but the fun really begins when you assemble a Combot. Pick and choose your arms, legs, and torso, assign a crew, and stomp into your enemy's base with rockets blaring and katanas swinging.






27
24
15
40
11
6
Kawasaki



Superbike 2000

■ PUBLISHER EA Sports ■ DEVELOPER Milestone

What do you get when you combine awesome graphics and unsurpassed technical realism with 25 riders on the fastest motorcycles in the world? EA Sports' *Superbike 2000,* that's what. These riders wriggle about on their seats when they lose their balance and flip an obscene gesture or two when the bump and grind gets a little dicey. We'll give you a full review next month–if we can quit playing the damn thing long enough to write it.



Sacrifice

■ PUBLISHER Interplay ■ DEVELOPER Shiny

This shot is just a teaser for next month's no-holds-barred preview of what could be one of this year's most intriguing titles. Shiny is blending two genres into one beautiful game. In this ambitious role-playing, real-time strategy game, you will control a wizard, much like you would control your queen and king in chess. Your wizard will cast spells to create legions of minions that you can then use to smite thine enemies. If your wizard dies, it's game over.



NEWS

Inspectin' Gadgets

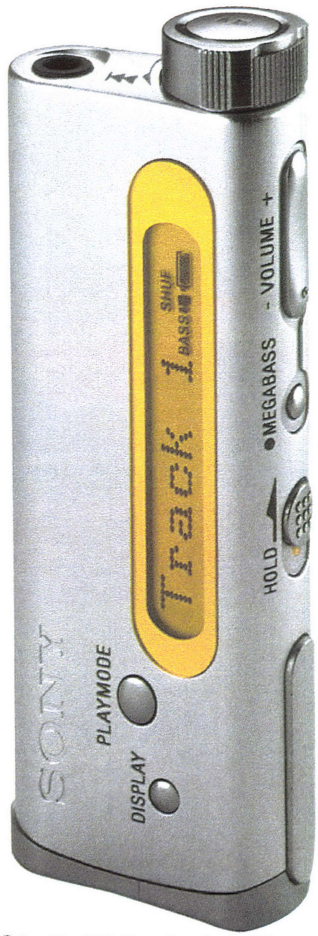
The Consumer Electronics Show (CES) Offered Plenty of Must-Have Gizmos

Going to CES is a little like Christmas morning, your birthday, and a trip to a cheesy strip joint all wrapped up into one. Held every January in Las Vegas, the gaudy trade show ushers in all the electronic wares that you'll see on store shelves in the coming year. This year's wave of wonders didn't disappoint, despite a notable no-show.

Rumor had it that "Big" Bill Gates was going to announce Microsoft's **X-Box** at his keynote address. But that wasn't the case at all. He did, however, perform a hilarious Austin Powers spoof, billing himself as an International Man of Technology ("I put the sin in syntax, baby!").

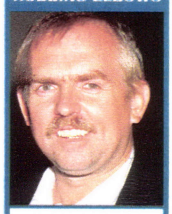
We may not have learned anything about Microsoft's mystery console, but there was plenty to see on the show floor. Battered by sights, sounds, and surgically enhanced women displaying electronic wares they didn't understand, we managed to navigate the crowds. Following are some of the funkier gadgets that we found.

There were several reoccurring themes during the course of the show: Digital TV, Wireless connectivity, lots of MP3 players, and the next generation of geek watches.



STICKING IT TO THEM Sony jumps on the MP3 bandwagon with the Memory Stick Walkman.

RUBBING ELBOWS



John Ratzenburger, actor, ex-TV mailman

THE SETUP: While attending a...ahem... *club* we saw "Cliff Clavin" from *Cheers* leaning against a wall, smoking.

INCITE: I've got to ask, do you still like *Cheers* after all this time?

JOHN RATZENBURGER: Oh, sure. I still occasionally watch the episodes I like in reruns.

INCITE: Do you have a favorite "Cliff Clavin" piece of obscure knowledge?

WOMAN: [walks up to John] Hey baby, how are you doing?

INCITE: Take it easy, John...[This was our cue to leave him alone. However, we walked by a few minutes later and he was still standing there smoking.]

ON THE TUBE

ReplayTV and **TiVO** are currently duking it out for personal video recorder supremacy, but who is winning the battle of TV hard drives? Sony announced that it is siding with TiVO by coming out with the **SVR-2000**, a $400 30-hour model in the spring. Another sign of activity was the announcement of **AOLTV**.

By partnering with TiVO and Philips (among others) users will be able to surf the Web, check AOL email, digitally record TV, and watch the tube.

Want to turn your PC into a TV rather than the other way around? **Creative Labs** showed a $400 graphics card coming out by year's end with HDTV support. Spokespeople wouldn't comment, but it may be a part of the next nVidia card. Also on display was a prototype wireless keyboard kit that would let you watch and control your computer from the comfort of the living room couch. The 2.4GHz signal will transmit not only a digital signal, but also 4-channel Dolby Digital sound.



QBE JOB You'll be one step closer to *Star Trek* with Aqcess' Web surfing pad.

WEB TO GO

Talk about cutting the cord: there was plenty of wireless technology to drool over. National Semiconductor showed off the **Geode WebPAD**, a wireless Web-surfing tool. This simple little unit will be mimicked by other companies and should be ready by 2001.

But if you're looking for some more horsepower, check out Aqcess Technologies' Qbe (pronounced "cube"). It is the size of a large notepad (14" x 10" x 1.5") with a 13.3" display, has an imbedded camera, and—get this—600MHz processors...starting at a mere $4,500, it's a steal.



RUBBING ELBOWS AT CES

PAMELA ANDERSON LEE

SHOOTING STAR PHOTO

THE SETUP: An A&R buddy calls and tips us off that Pamela Anderson is making a cameo at ReplayTV's booth. One quick bribe later and we're interviewing the V.I.P. herself.

INCITE: So what do you record on your ReplayTV?

PAMELA ANDERSON LEE: Old movies and TV shows like *Beretta*, *The Dukes of Hazard*, and *The Fall Guy*.

INCITE: Does this mean that you're a closet gadget freak?

PAL: No, but Tommy [Lee] is. I call him a "Gizmologist." He really loves gadgets. We always have the newest, latest, and greatest in the house. I can't even figure out how to turn on the lights anymore.

INCITE: Missing the good old days of the light switch, huh? So where is Tommy?

PAL: He's walking around the show floor figuring out all the stuff he's going to fill the house with next.

INCITE: What's down time like at your house? Late night Nintendo sessions?
PAL: No, they're too young. Dylan is two and Brandon is three and a half. I wind up watching *Toy Story* with them and stuff like that. But Tommy is another story. He loves the PlayStation. He even put one in his truck...oh, he's definitely a fun dad.

INCITE: Before I go, what does the next year have in store for you?

PAL: Tommy's new band [Methods of Mayhem] is touring Europe, Australia, and Japan this spring, and I'll travel with him. Then, we start shooting the next season of *V.I.P* in May. After all that, a lot of quality family time.



PLAY IT AGAIN, PAM Showgoers were more than happy to hear about Replay TV.

RUBBING ELBOWS



Dave Mustaine, Heavy metal rock star

THE SETUP: JVC is sponsoring a major promotional campaign with Megadeth. Some PR person promised an interview with the lead singer but nixed it at the last second. We hated to see our questions go to waste, so we answered them ourselves.

INCITE: Are you thankful that video games have taken all the heat off music as being "the cause of corrupting the youth of America?"

NOT EXACTLY DAVE MUSTAINE: No kidding! Every time some unstable dope gets on a rooftop and goes postal, I'm wondering if my lyrics are being blamed for pushing him over the edge. Me? I'd blame Spandeu Ballet or Simply Red. You ever try listening to *that* crap?

INCITE: Unfortunately, yes. So, have you tried playing *Quake III: Arena* backward to find a hidden message?

NEDM: I keep trying, but those guys in Type O Negative keep fragging me every chance they get. Hmm, I wonder if those guys in Whitesnake or Winger are up for a little competition. After all, they've got plenty of free time now.

MAP QUEST

Lost your way? You should consider getting Garmin's **eMap** or **eTrex**. For $200 the eMap has built-in map data for North and South America and can store 8 to 16MB worth of map data from optional map CD-ROMs. The $150 eTrex is built for hiking and packed into a tiny, bright yellow case for one-handed use...including setting waypoints (to prevent *Blair Witch* sequels, we suppose).

PALM PARAPHENALIA

It may not be a wireless solution for email, but the **PocketMail BackFlip** is certainly a nice one for the people that own a Palm III, IIIx, or IIIe. For $100 you slap the BackFlip to the back of your Palm and can transfer email by placing it over a phone handset. A $10/month service charge assures that you'll always be in touch anywhere in the world.

MP3 MEETS FM

Tired of listening to your MP3s on some tinny PC speakers? Here's an option: listen to 'em on your FM tuner. With the **Sonic Box imBand Remote Tuner** you plug one end into your PC and take the controller with you around the house. The MP3s are sent out via FM signal to any radio in the house. Not bad for 50 bucks.



GOING MY WAY? Armed with Garmin's eMap device, you'll never get lost again.

RANTING

HIGH-PING BASTARDS

SHUT-UP AND PLAY ALREADY!

Steve Klett is sick to death of all the whining HPBs (High-Ping Bastards) online.

We've all crossed with them while deathmatching in games like *Unreal Tournament*. They hang out online, detracting from our enjoyment of our favorite games. The guilty parties are, of course, HPBs!

Typically, the whining comes in the form of continuos streams of text messages across your screen just after you waste someone with a nicely placed head shot from your sniper rifle. They come in many forms, shapes, and sizes—but they usually read something like this:

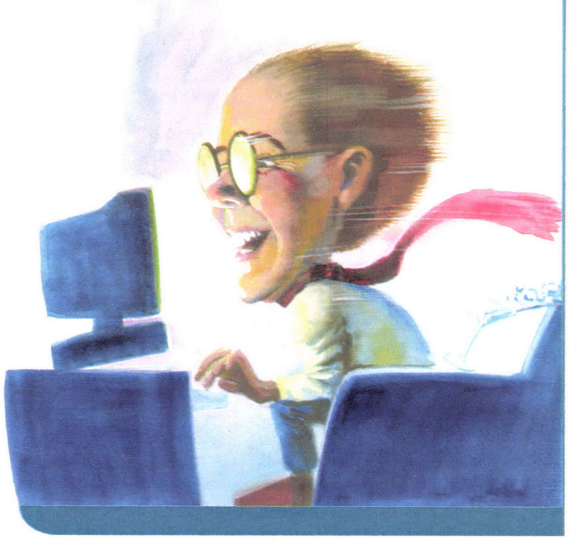
"F#%king lag! This Server Sucks! You're only winning 'cuz you have a lower ping! LPB!"

LPB, of course, is short for Low-Ping Bastard—the handy moniker slapped on us by the petulant children who manage to blunder their way into an online game. Like we should care?

If you're too tight to pony up the dough for a better connection: Seek out games with players with similar ping times.

Here's a brainstorm for the HPBs out there: if you're too tight to pony up the dough for a better connection (you've heard of DSL and cable modems, haven't you?), seek out games with players with similar ping times—why do you think *UT* and *Quake III Arena* supply all of this information for you? It's so you can find a fair game to join—and there's one out there for every ping time.

So if you're in a game with all LPBs, it's your own fault. And all of us HPBs will continue to frag you without mercy.



ILLUSTRATOIN BY FRED HARPER



DANGER ZONE *EverQuest* will meet its greatest challenge yet when *Eternal City* comes out.

Look Out, EverQuest

A New Massively Multiplayer Game Is Coming

The success of current online RPGs such as *Ultima Online, EverQuest*, and *Asheron's Call* has the Internet-only focused iEntertainment Network (IEN) thinking the time is right to get in line for a piece of the pie. IEN—the company formally known as iMagic—has partnered with Worlds Apart Productions to create a "massively multiplayer" role-playing game called *The Eternal City 3D*.

It will combine role-playing and simulation gaming in a rich and detailed virtual world based on ancient Rome. Players will race chariots, fight as gladiators, or lead armies while striving for political and economic power. *Eternal City* will be developed using an open-source game engine and will feature a Linux version of its game client. Linux has been gaining popularity in the gaming world as a potentially faster and more stable server OS alternative to Windows and Windows NT.

No word yet on how many players the game will support at once, but an IEN representative said it would be competitive with the Big Three. IEN's offering should be out by the end of the year, so stay tuned for more details.

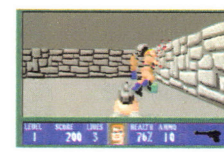
GERM WARFARE

Activision Drafts a New *Wolfenstein*

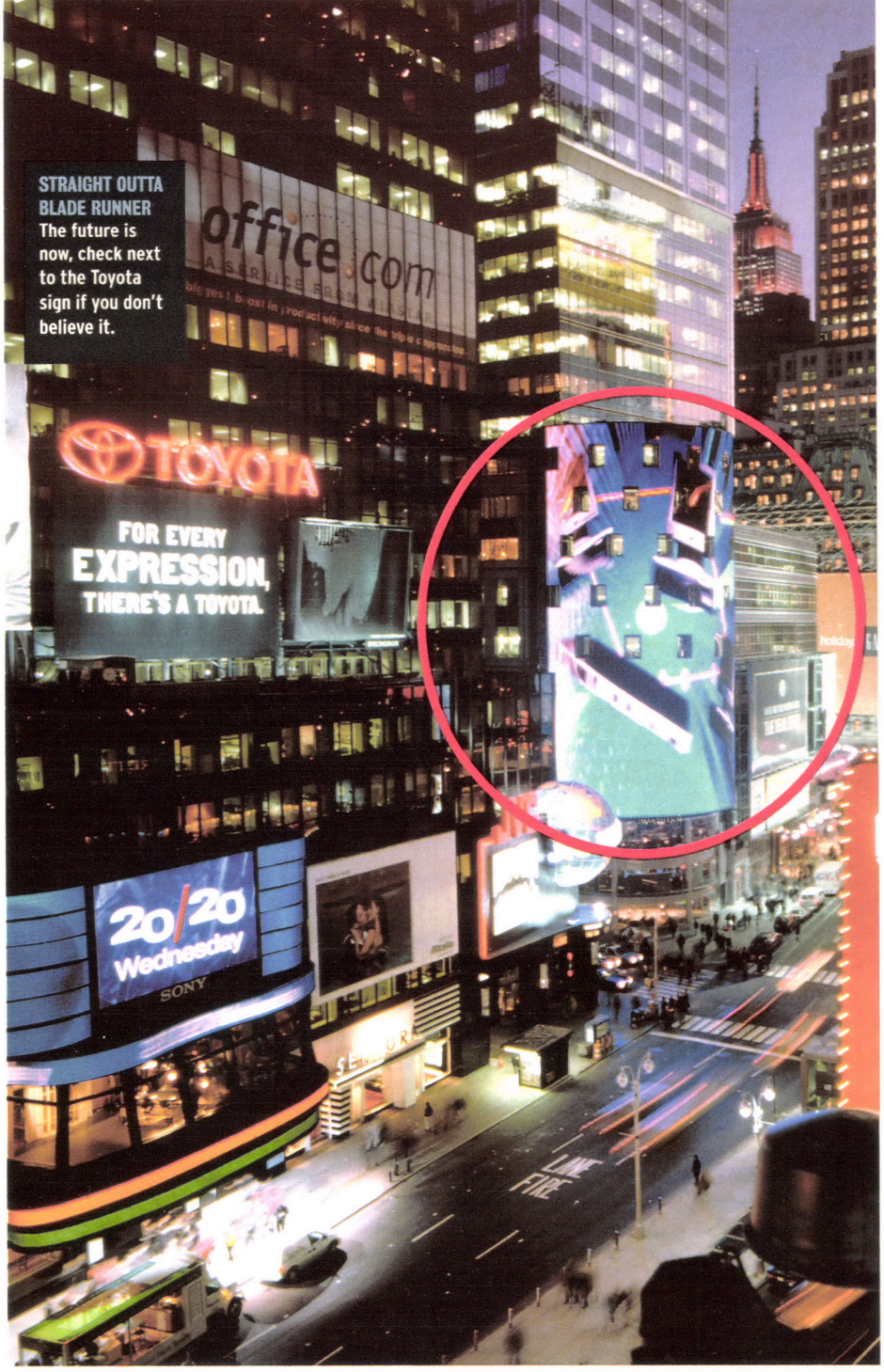
Achtung! id Software has given its blessing to Activision to publish a 21st century makeover of *Wolfenstein 3-D*—one of the earliest pioneers of first-person shooters that paved the way for *Doom* and the *Quake* series.

Gray Matter Studios, a new company formed by ex-Xatrix Entertainment (*Redneck Rampage, Kingpin*) designers, are working on the new title, called *Return to Castle Wolfenstein*, and are using the *Quake III: Arena* engine. *Wolfenstein's* sinewy hero, B.J. Blazkowicz returns, as do those naughty Nazis, who no doubt will supply ol' B.J. with plenty of body counts.

Activision is betting heavily on Gray Matter and its *Wolfenstein* game: the software giant recently bought a 40 percent stake in the company and holds an option to buy out the remaining 60 percent at a later date. Gamers get to return to *Wolfenstein* later this fall.



REMEMBER ME? The old *Wolfenstein* is a classic.



STRAIGHT OUTTA BLADE RUNNER The future is now, check next to the Toyota sign if you don't believe it.

Hey, Look Up in the Sky!

It's a Bird, It's a Plane, No — It's The World's Largest Video Screen

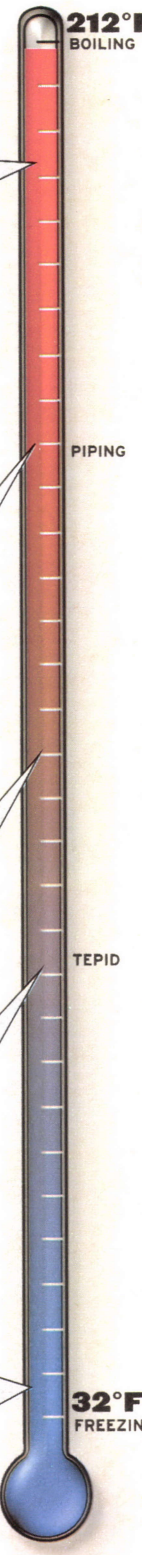
Need a place to watch the Oscars on March 26? If your name's not John Rocker, there's plenty of room in New York's Times Square, where the largest video display in the world was just activated.

Manufactured by Montreal-based Saco Smartvision, the massive LED screen (seen just to the right of the Toyota billboard in the photo) measures 120ft x 90ft and occupies about nine stories of a skyscaper.

The LED-based screen is capable of 16.7 million colors and crisp images viewable from much wider angles than other gigantic sceens. All that's missing is the world's largest couch and the world's largest remote control.

Hot and Cold

Let's Bring Out the Thermometer to Gauge the Latest Happenings in the Game Industry



The Blair Witch Project: Episode 1– Rustin Parr
Could the title of Gathering of Developers' first *Blair Witch* game be any longer? The spookfest will use Terminal Reality's *Nocturne* engine and will be followed by two sequels.

Sacrifice
It's the name of the next game from Dave Perry and Shiny Entertainment. Not much is known but Shiny has said *Sacrifice* is a *Command & Conquer*-style game that's "a bit like chess". Please let it be a little more exciting than that, though.

Viva Las Vegas
The other city that never sleeps joins Chicago, Havana, and Rio as the new cities featured in GT Interactive's sequel to *Driver*.

Fallen Down
Trekkers won't be playing *Deep Space Nine: The Fallen* anytime soon: the action game, originally due in the spring, drops to an August release date.

Episode I Woes
Despite the incessant pleas from its fans, the *Star Wars* prequel, due next month on VHS, won't be coming to DVD for the foreseeable future. The Force is not with George Lucas after all, it seems.



FIRED UP McFarlane is creating new *Ultima* characters. Let's hope they're as cool as Spawn.

Spawning a McPartnership

Origin Taps Todd McFarlane for *Ultima 2*

Origin's plans for the sequel to its popular *Ultima Online* "Persistent State World" game became even more intriguing with the news of its partnership with comic book artist Todd McFarlane.

The *Spawn* creator is contributing design concepts for new creatures, characters, and costumes. He's also serving as a creative consultant to the me, though Origin's Andy Hoyos is still in charge of directing *Ultima 2. Ultima* addicts will also be pleased to know that the entrepreneurial artist's McFarlane Toys company, known for its highly detailed action figures, will manufacture a line of toys based on the new *Ultima* characters.

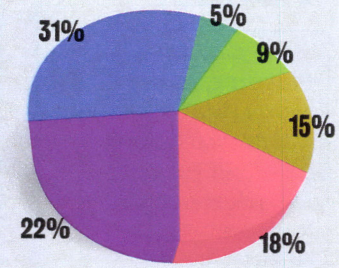
As for the game itself, Origin is using a brand-new 3D engine and claims that none of the code from the original *Ultima* or *Ultima Ascension* is being used. It will also feature state-of-the-art motion capture technology and even better character customization. Origin claims a winter 2000 release on its Web site, but an Origin spokesman admitted that it could be as late as 2001 before players get to set foot in the new online world.



MONSTER MASH *Ultima 2's* world could be pretty frightening with company like this.

Cast Your Vote

If the Academy of Motion Pictures had an Oscar category for Best Performance in a PC Game, who would win this year?



- **Mike Myers** in *Austin Powers: Operation Trivia*
- **David Bowie** in *Omikron: The Nomad Soul*
- **Patrick Stewart** in *Star Trek: Hidden Evil*
- **Ted Nugent** in *Wild Hunting Adventure*
- **Isaac Hayes** in *South Park: Chef's Luv Shack*
- **Tim Curry** in *Gabriel Knight III*

Source: www.incitegames.com. Poll 2/4/00
Visit our Web site and cast your vote now!

Site of the Month

www.spacebattles.com



Ever wonder what would happen if a TIE Fighter went up against the Enterprise? So do the amateur CG artists who exhibit their work on this out-of-this-world site.



Contra-Banned in Asia!

Banned in Brazil

- Doom
- Postal
- Requiem: Avenging Angel
- Blood
- Duke Nukem
- Carmageddon
- Carmageddon 2
- Grand Theft Auto

Singapore Shoots Down *Half-Life*

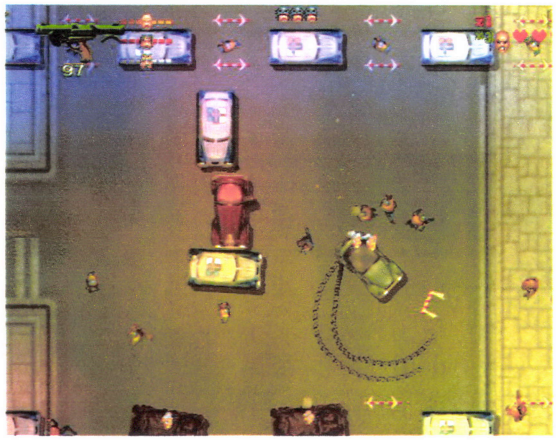
First-person shooter addicts were up in arms after hearing reports of a nationwide ban of Valve Software's *Half-Life* in Singapore.

The country's Board of Censorships and Ministry of Arts cited excessive violence and parental backlash as reasons for outlawing the distribution of the popular game.

While Singapore may be the capitol of caning (just ask Michael Fay), the country has a long way to go before matching Brazil's zero tolerance policy on violent PC games. Stores selling games on the banned list are fined upwards of 20,000 reals (about $11,200 U.S.). Check out the "Banned in Brazil" list on the left and collect them all!



DUKE NUKED *Duke* has, not surprisingly, been banned.



WICKED GAME Don't be caught with Rockstar Games' *GTA2* in Brazil. We're talking serious zero tolerance.

CAMPAIGN ROADSHOW

Every month, our readers scrutinize the print and television media for inventive, humorous, or off-the-wall adverts. Here are this month's picks.

TOP PRINT ADS FOR FEBRUARY

1 COMPUSA

God help us, we've been there. There's nothing like a couple dozen hours of *Unreal Tournament* to wreck your eyes—and your sleep patterns. This ad is dead on.



2 FOX
DIE HARD 2

Fox's promo features Polaroid pictures of mangled Bruce Willis stunt doubles. Hey, at least they didn't have to appear in *Hudson Hawk*.



3 EIDOS
HITMAN

It's the most morally corrupt game since *Grand Theft Auto* (you play an assassin), but this ad makes us want to sign up right now.



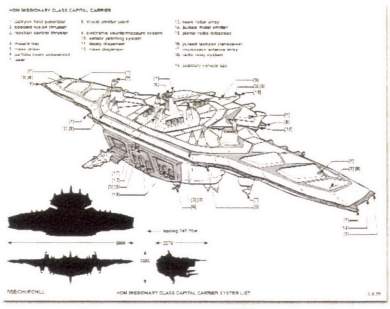
Vote online at www.incitegames.com, or send your votes to: **incite PC Games, 650 Townsend St, Ste 305, San Francisco, CA 94103**, Source: Reader voting.

SPACING OUT

Rainbow Six's Publisher Storms the Final Frontier

Red Storm Entertainment is working on a 3D, tactical space-combat game. In *Vanguard*, players assume the role of a United Forces Navy starship captain who leads the battle against an evil space alliance with—what else?—plans of galactic domination.

***Vanguard* makes its debut at this May's Electronic Entertainment Expo in Los Angeles and is scheduled to go on sale in August 2000. Ahoy mateys.**



SHIP HAPPENS This conceptual art hints at *Vanguard's* complexity.

TOP 20

In association with The NPD Group, here are the best-selling PC games for the month.

1 ▲14
Who Wants to Be a Millionaire
• Disney Interactive • Lifestyle

Disney has hit the jackpot with this PC game adaptation of the enormously popular TV show. The CD-ROM made history by becoming a different kind of millionaire: it cracked the seven-figure sales mark in its first four weeks on sale. Who would have thought the fastest-selling PC game ever would star Regis Philbin? Armageddon is nigh.




2 ▲3
Roller Coaster Tycoon
• Hasbro • Simulation

Gamers continue to pony up the admission fee to Hasbo's amusement park sim.



3 ▼2
Pokémon Studio Blue
• The Learning Company • Education

Pikachu and co. drop from the top spot of the charts. Let's hope the trend continues.



4 ▼1
Pokémon Studio Red
• The Learning Company • Education

Pokémaniacs' "Gotta Catch 'em All" slogan apparently applies to the two CD-ROMs, also.



5 N
Quake III: Arena
• Activision • Action

id Software's latest finally makes an appearance on the charts. Expect a long stay.



6 ▲7
Barbie...Gotta Groove
• Mattel • Lifestyle

Barbie and her gal pals bust a groove in this girlie dance game.



7 ▼5
Age of Empires II
• Microsoft • Strategy

Empire isn't striking back: the FTS game drops two more spots.



8 ▼6
Deer Hunter 3
• WizardWorks • Sports

The *Deer Hunter* series represents what every publisher hunts for: a cash cow.



9 ▲12
Frogger
• Hasbro • Action

The frog won't quit: staying in the top 10 after almost three years in release is quite a feat.



10 ▼9
Cabela's Big Game Hunter 3
• HeadGames • Sports

Activision's *Deer Hunter*-challenger is still raking in the bucks.



11 N
Toy Story 2 Action Game
• Disney • Action

It still doesn't look as good as the film, but that's not stopping gamers from buying it.

12 ▲10
RCT: Corkscrew Follies
• Hasbro • Simulation

The first *Roller Coaster Tycoon* expansion pack has reinvigorated the series.

13 ▲16
Flight Simulator 2000
• Microsoft. • Simulation

Earn your wings in the latest flight sim from Microsoft.

14 ▲ N
Rainbow Six Gold Pack
• Red Storm • Action

Tom Clancy fans are still snatching up this deluxe version of the original *Rainbow Six*.

15 ▲17
SimCity 3000
• Maxis • Simulation

SimCity has enjoyed a good run on the charts. It's time for *The Sims* to take over now.

16 ▼13
Rainbow Six: Rogue Spear
• Red Storm • Action

Fans have the new expansion pack, *Urban Operations*, to look forward to.

17 ▲19
Sim Theme Park
• Electronic Arts • Simulation

This second-rate *Roller Coaster Tycoon* is holding its ground.

18 ▲20
C&C: Tiberian Sun
• Westwood • Strategy

The *Sun* is setting: *Tiberian Sun* is barely clinging to a spot on the chart.

19 ▼8
Half-Life
• Sierra • Action

Visually, *Half-Life* is holding its own against *Quake III* and *Unreal Tournament*.

20 N
Wheel of Fortune
• Hasbro • Lifestyle

Think *Wheel* is jealous of *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire*?

CHART LEGEND

Position This Month
Position Last Month
9 ▲0
Movement
▲ Moving Up
= Same Position
▼ Moving Down

RANK RULES

Chart information on this page provided by The NPD Group (NPD TRSTS Interactive Entertainment Service).

NPD
THE NPD GROUP, INC.

TOP 10 Action

1	—1	**Frogger** • Hasbro
2	—2	**Half Life Op. Force** • Sierra
3	▲14	**T. Raider Last Revelation** • Eidos
4	▼3	**Barbie Super Sports** • Mattel
5	▼4	**Tomb Raider** • Eidos
6	▼5	**Family Game Pack** • Hasbro
7	▲15	**Pong** • Hasbro
8	N	**Q*Bert** • Hasbro
9	—9	**Action Game Pack** • Hasbro
10	▼9	**Tomb Raider 2** • Eidos

It looks like Hasbro has the action genre locked up. *Frogger, Q*Bert, Pong*...what year is it?

TOP 10 Sports

1	—1	**Deer Hunter 3** • WizardWorks
2	—2	**Big Game Hunter** • HeadGames
3	▲4	**Deer Hunt Challenge** • EA
4	▲7	**Links LS 2000** • Microsoft
5	—5	**Madden NFL 2000** • EA
6	▲11	**Tiger Woods Collection** • EA
7	▼6	**Deer Avenger 2** • S&S
8	—8	**NFL Fever 2000** • Microsoft
9	▲10	**Big Game Hunter** • HeadGames
10	▼3	**NBA Live 2000** • EA

As always, hunting games rule this category. When is a real sports game going to step up?

TOP 10 Shooters

1	N	**Quake III Arena** • Activision
2	▼1	**Half-Life** • Sierra
3	▼2	**Unreal Tournament** • GT
4	▼3	**Delta Force** • Novalogic
5	▼4	**Redneck Rampage** • Interplay
6	▼5	**Quake II** • Activision
7	N	**Quake III Elite** • Activision
8	▼6	**Unreal** • GT
9	▲14	**Spec Ops 2** • Ripcord
10	▼7	**Aliens vs. Predator** • Fox

Quake wins this month, but don't count out *Unreal* and *Half-Life* from staging counterattacks next month.

Slash 'N' Burn

Will Microsoft Follow the NFL's Lead and Outlaw the Controversial Throat-Slashing Gesture in *NFL Fever 2000*?

Last fall the NFL caused quite a stir by outlawing the now-infamous celebratory act of throat slashing. It's a sticky situation for Microsoft's *NFL Fever 2000*, since it has recently come to light that something that resembles running a knife across someone's throat makes an appearance from time to time in the computer game.

According to Microsoft's John Rodman, the game's product manager, "*NFL Fever* started showing up on store shelves in late August. As you know, the league did not change their ruling on that celebration move until late October or early November. And by then our game had been out for three months. So there was nothing that we could do."

The NFL considers the move to be "an unacceptable act of violence," and players caught performing it on the field will be flagged for taunting and unsportsmanlike behavior, a call that carries with it a 15-yard penalty as well as a league imposed fine. If a player on the bench does it, that player will be subject to a league fine.

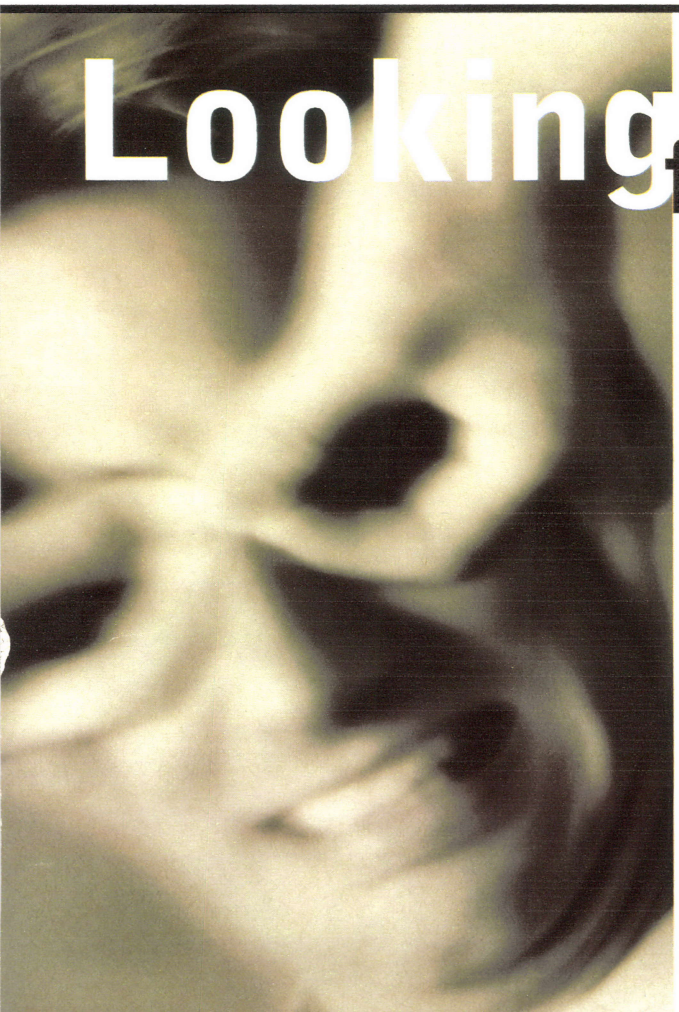


BACKSLASH The throat slash gesture is verboten in the NFL...and in *NFL Fever* soon.

According to Rodman the league hasn't required Microsoft to release a patch disabling the move in the games that have already shipped, but the move will be absent in subsequent versions of *NFL Fever*.

Again Rodman, "We're a licensed partner with the NFL and always observe their rules, both on and off the field. So all future versions of *NFL Fever* will have celebrations that are only in compliance with the NFL's rules."

Both the NFL and Microsoft are in agreement that there was little that either party could do about the rule change. Concludes Rodman, "We've spoken closely with the NFL on this, and they agree that with the timing of the rule change that there was nothing they could do about titles that were already out on store shelves."



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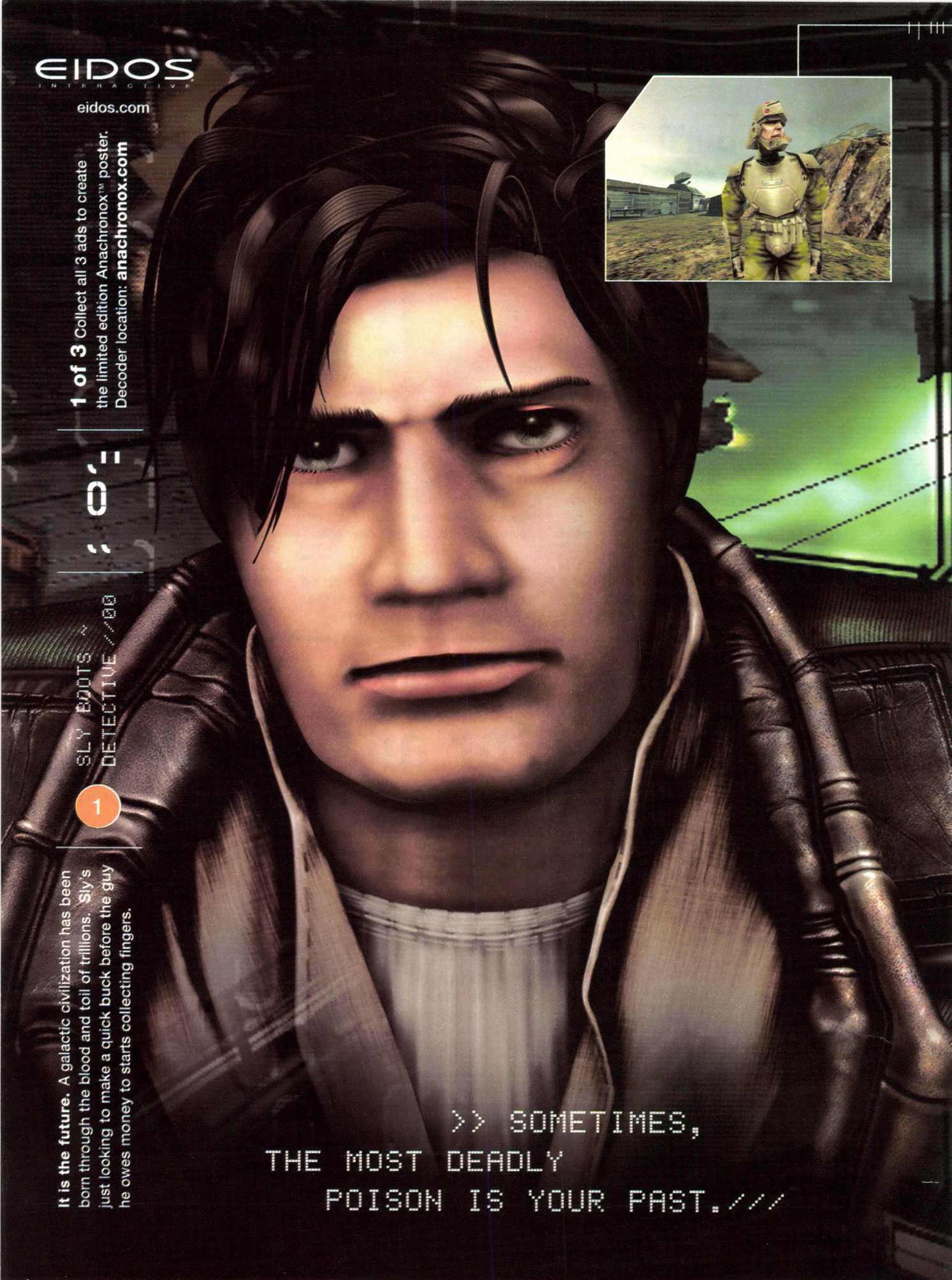
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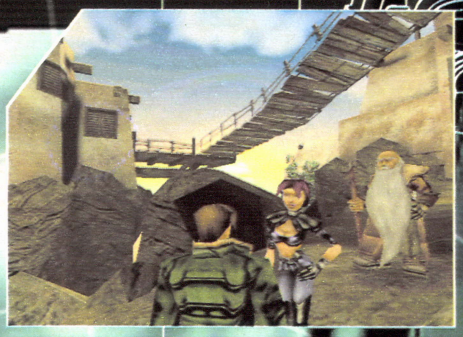
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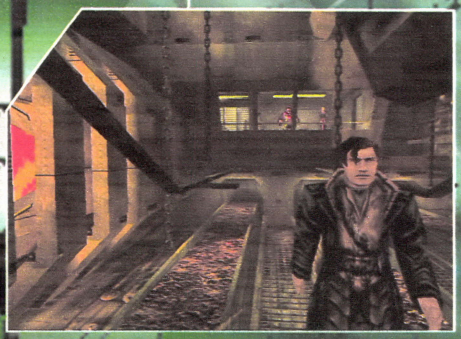
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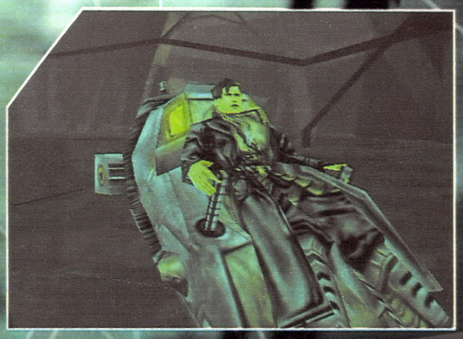
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RED BARON
Sure, my plane looks like a flying cigar, so what? You're still blown to smithereens!

History Revised

CRIMSON SKIES Takes Off Into a Wild Alternate History

■ PUBLISHER **Microsoft** ■ DEVELOPER **Microsoft/Zipper Interactive** ■ GENRE **Simulation/Action** ■ PLAYERS **1-16** ■ RELEASE DATE **Q2 2000**

INSIGHT

Q. God I hate blimps. Will I be able to bring 'em down in *Crimson Skies?*

A. Hells yes! While the zeppelins in Crimson Skies are pretty tough and filled with helium as opposed to hydrogen, you'll still be able to knock them down into Hell.

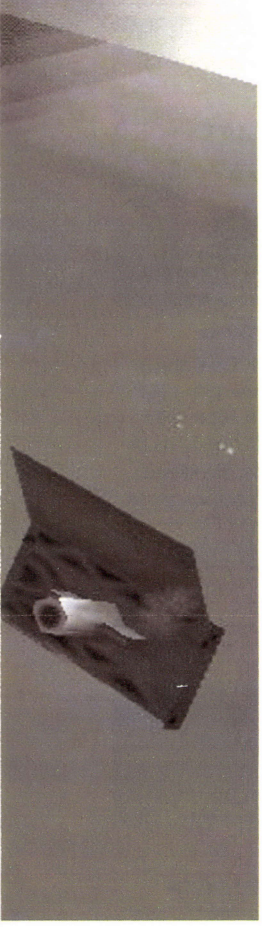
Game developers seem obsessed with alternate histories. The thing that many game makers seem to have forgotten, though, is that it's possible to create alternate histories that are actually fun. That's where *Crimson Skies* comes in.

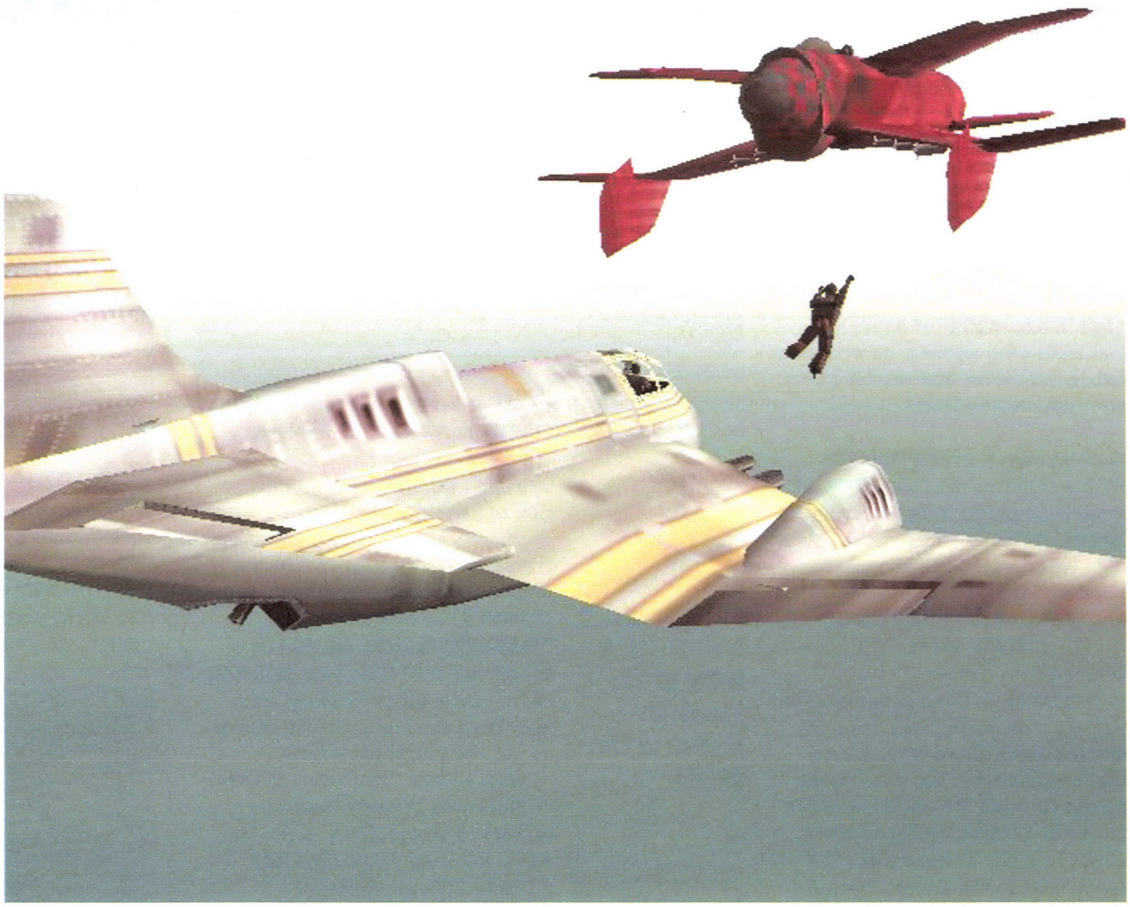
By William O'Neal

The 1930s America portrayed in *Crimson Skies* is vastly different than the one that we've come to know. Starting with the Spanish influenza virus that wracked the country in the beginning of the 20th century, Americans developed a keen distrust of anything foreign.

Following that, states began to quibble over prohibition legislation, with some going dry while others continued to drink to their hearts' content. The last straw was the Great Depression. The states had had enough, Texas seceded from the Union, and the rest of the United States shattered into smaller shards of land loosely bound together to fight for their own rights.

According to Jordan Weisman, creative director for *Crimson Skies,* "The budding national highway system was just getting started at the time, as was the romance with the car as the primary means of transportation. The railroads, too, which were in essence the iron bands that tied the nation together, all became worthless." In order to travel between newly formed nation states (like the Nation of Hollywood on the west coast, the Empire State on the east coast, the Republic of Texas, and Dixie in the south), people





ON "THREE" LET GO! In this, one of the game's many cut-scenes, one of the Fortune Hunters jumps from one plane onto another in an attempt to steal it. Look out below!

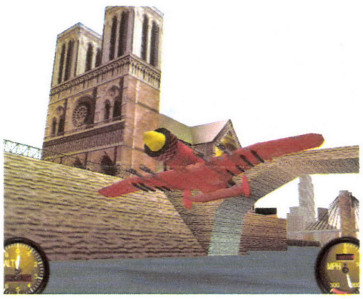
Texas seceded from the Union, and the rest of the United States shattered into smaller shards of land.

abandoned the highways. Aviation became the way to transport goods and people from one friendly nation-state to another across vast stretches of enemy territory.

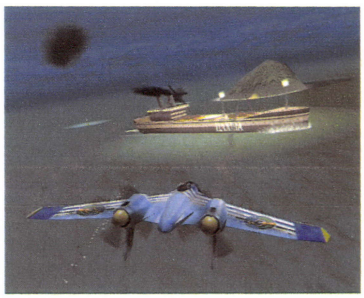
"As the cargo and luxury liners took the air, the next things to follow were the pirates," says Weisman. "[Zipper Interactive's] goal was to recreate the situation in the Caribbean in the 16th and 17th centuries in the air over the United States. A situation where there were gentlemen pirates and state-supported privateers who would go out and steal from other states."

It's Got Personality

Microsoft and co-developer Zipper Interactive's goal with *Crimson Skies* was to create a rich background that was all about fighter pilots and, according to Weisman, "Bring it to life in a game that was very accessible and highly reward-based. *Crimson Skies* isn't really a flight sim, but a flight/action game.



HIGHWAY TO THE DANGER ZONE "Danger zones" like this bridge earn players points.



THIS AIN'T PRINCE WILLIAM SOUND This tanker is gonna meet its maker.

We didn't want to simulate the reality of flight or aerial combat. *Crimson Skies* is all about the fantasy of being a fighter pilot. Which is different from the reality of being a fighter pilot."

Crimson Skies' designers realize that one of the big problems in flying games is that you have to think in a complicated manner about information that's not even on the screen. This can be a huge turn-off to casual gamers. Hence, Microsoft and Zipper Interactive are toning down the flight-sim minutiae in favor of a very user-friendly interface that anyone can understand.

The player will take on the role of Nathan Zachary, the quintessential pirate with a heart of gold. Prior to the crash of '29, he was a stockbroker. For obvious reasons that career fell through. The story in *Crimson Skies* revolves around Zachary and the band of pirates he's put together—the Fortune Hunters.

Battling other pirates on their way across North America, the Fortune Hunters fly, steal, destroy, or otherwise encounter a total of 11 types of planes in the game: nine fighters, one light bomber, and one auto gyro (which was the precursor to the helicopter). Sticking with *Crimson Skies'* alternate-history theme, the planes too represent the game's overall wackiness. With names like the Hughes Devastator and the William and Colt Peacemaker, Zachary and his cohorts will engage in any matter of adventures, including wing walking, parachuting, felling zeppelins, and rescuing people from moving trains.



AIRWOLF'S GRANDPA If Stringfellow Hawke were around in the '30s he could whoop a little ass on the Hollywood set of *King Kong.*

Automatic for the People

With a significantly relaxed physics model compared to other flying games, *Crimson Skies* hopes to not only be accessible to the hard-core flight sim fan, but also to the casual gamer. The developers are counting on the game's storyline to keep gamers riveted.

According to Lead Designer John Howard, *"Crimson Skies* has a significant story element to it. And that's something that only comes across through the missions. When you're in a plane, similar to when you're in a big robot or a car, it's really hard to tell a story, because you can't get out, walk around, and talk to people."

The Fortune Hunters fly, steal, destroy, or otherwise encounter a total of 11 types of planes in the game.

Players will come to understand the storyline through radio communications, mission objectives, and cut-scenes. Howard says that, "These little cut-scenes will be a bridge between the flying elements of the game [and the story] and help keep the story moving as well as get the player involved."

With a deep, fascinating backstory and many primary, secondary, and tertiary objectives, *Crimson Skies* will keep would-be pilots glued to their joysticks.



TAKE THAT, YOU FILTHY DIRIGIBLE! In *Crimson Skies,* felling these gigantic zeppelins will be one of the many objectives that Nathan Zachary and the Fortune Hunters will take on. Oh no! The humanity! The humanity!

■ CASTING CALL

OTHER HISTORIES

Be careful, **dorking around with destiny** can have varied results, as these examples show.



MY MOM KISSED ME!

Back to the Future

■ Boy goes back in time and runs into his parents–pre- his own conception. He soon realizes that mom ain't nearly as pious as she purports. He repels mom's...uh...disturbing advances.



CYBORGS R US

Terminator

■ Computers take over the world, cause World War III, and try to destroy human rebels by going back in time and killing the rebel leader's mom. Easily the most convoluted story ever.



STOP, OR I'LL ACT AGAIN

Timecop

■ Bad guys from 10 years in the future come back and kill Van Damme's wife. He figures the whole thing out when he becomes a Timecop 10 years later.

SHOOTING STAR (3).



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Red Storm ENTERTAINMENT

TEEN T CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

TEEN (13+)
Descriptor(s)
Animated Violence

SHADOW WATCH™

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A Little Space Combat, Anyone?

Erin and Chris Roberts Are at It Again With **STARLANCER**

■ PUBLISHER **Microsoft** ■ DEVELOPER **Digital Anvil** ■ GENRE **Arcade Fighting** ■ GAME GENRE **Action/Flight** ■ RELEASE DATE **Q2 2000**

INSIGHT

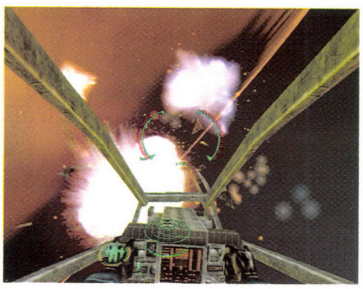
Q. Will my character gain experience?
A. Not necessarily in the RPG sense, but your pilot's individual accomplishments will affect the game's overall gameplay.
Q. How do you travel from one part of space to another?
A. *Starlancer* has jump gates that act like wormholes to teleport you all over the solar system.

If anyone knows how to make a space combat game it's Erin and Chris Roberts, creators of both the *Wing Commander* and *Privateer* series of games. Their new space game, *Starlancer*, is poised to take the duo's legend even further.

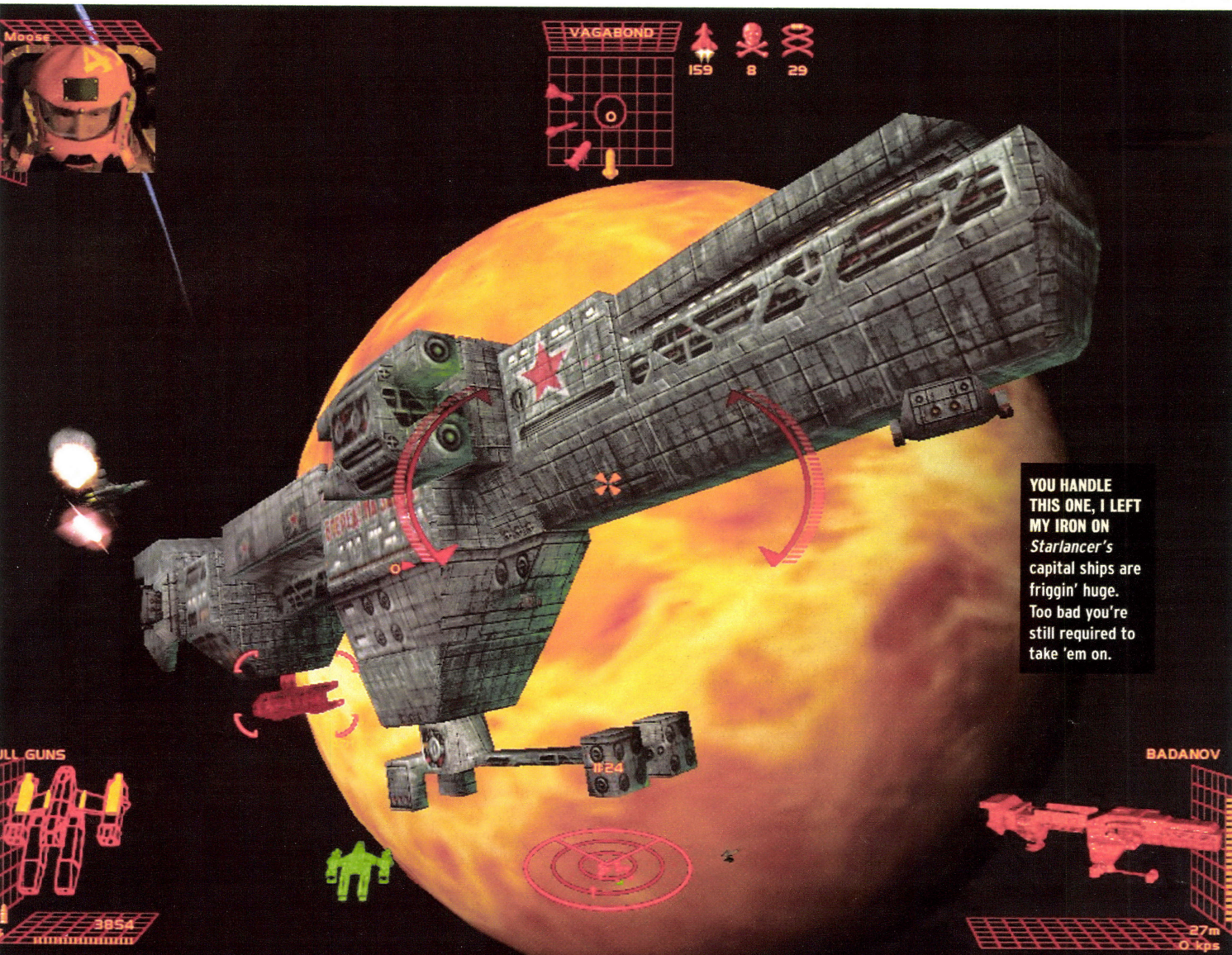
By Wil O'Neal

Starlancer takes place approximately 100 years in the future. According to Product Manager Todd Stevens, "NATO has become the Western Alliance and Russia, China, and the Eastern Bloc countries have formed the Eastern Coalition. Humans have expanded into space and are steadily depleting its resources. The Alliance and the Coalition are set to sign a treaty, but things go wrong just as the player is about to jump into the fracas."

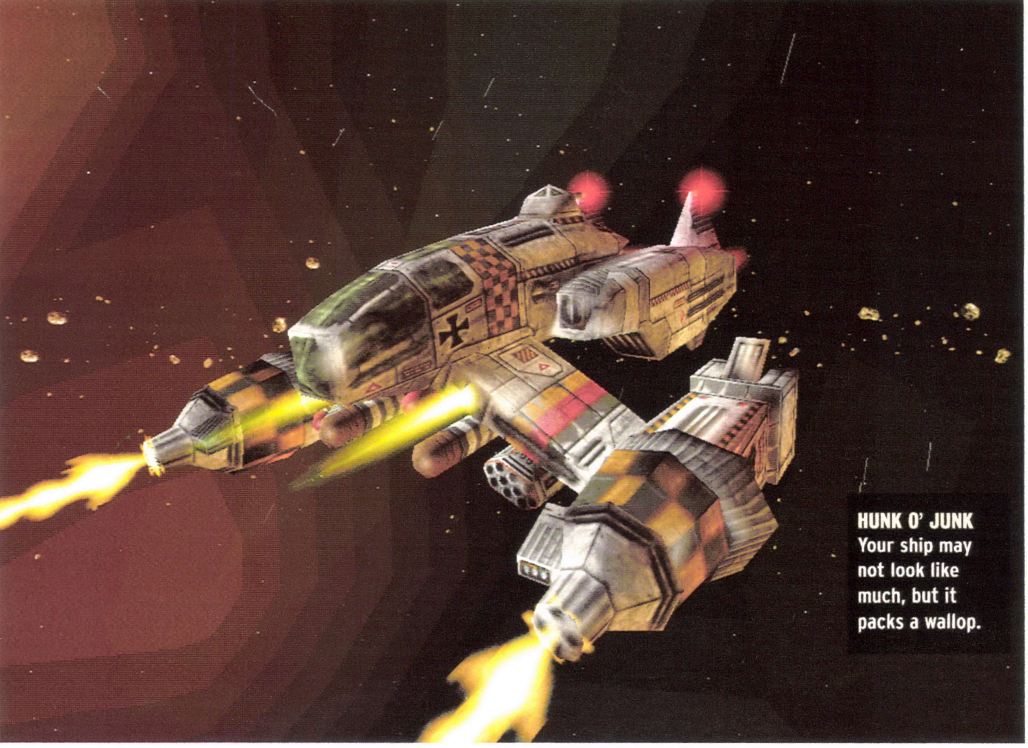
When the treaty talks crumble, the Alliance and Eastern Coalition go back to their old ways of fighting each other. As a member of the piecemeal 45th Volunteer squadron, you will have more than a dozen ships to choose from in your quest to defeat the Eastern Coalition. Before each mission, you will be required to choose a ship before outfitting it with any number of the game's 20 different weapons. Some of these weapons at your disposal include nova cannons, pulse



SAY MY NAME! Blowing stuff up good will be a big part of *Starlancer*.



YOU HANDLE THIS ONE, I LEFT MY IRON ON *Starlancer's* capital ships are friggin' huge. Too bad you're still required to take 'em on.



HUNK O' JUNK Your ship may not look like much, but it packs a wallop.

lasers, collapser guns, and jackhammer missiles. Sounds like fun, huh?

In an attempt to make the *Starlancer* experience ever more immersive, the game's universe won't suffer from a dearth of inhabitants. Says Stevens, "There are a lot of neutral ships in the *Starlancer* universe, as opposed to past space games where space is kind of empty and you just wait around for some enemy fighters to show up."

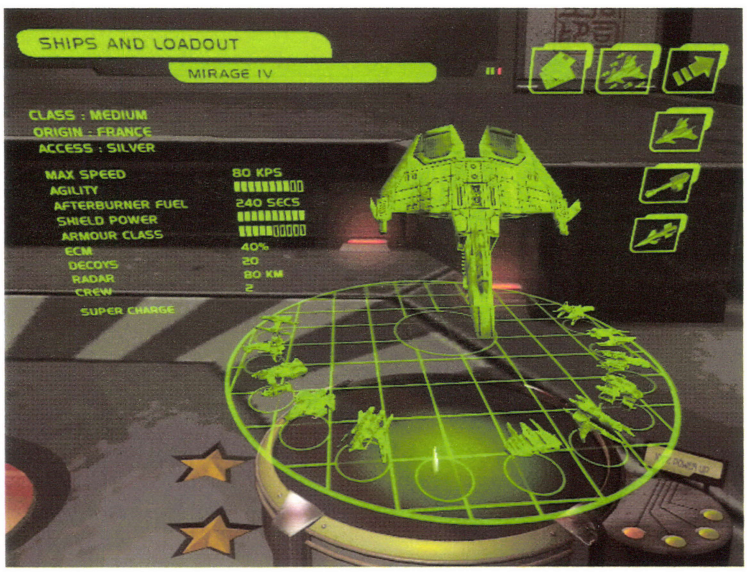
Starlancer will boast 80 types of spacecraft, from neutral cargo vessels to gargantuan capital ships, which are anything but neutral.

Both the Eastern Coalition and the Western Alliance have a large variety of capital ships. Historically, interacting with a game's capital ships has been limited to cut-scenes and menu screens, but in *Starlancer* players will actually be able to walk around parts of their capital ships.

The game will sport a full salvo of multiplayer options, including your basic deathmatch mode or cooperative play through the entire story mode for up to eight players on a LAN or on Microsoft's Gaming Zone.

Erin and Chris Roberts are banking once again on gamers' desires to save mankind. This time however, there are no Kilrathi to watch out for. In *Starlancer* it'll be your charge as a member of the 45th Volunteer squadron to take control of not just the Earth, but Mars and the rest of our solar system to boot.

As a member of the piecemeal 45th Volunteer squadron, you will have more than a dozen ships to choose from.



YOU CAN TAKE IT WITH YOU Before each mission pilots are required to load out their ships with the armaments they think they'll need to complete the mission.

QUICK LOOK

Allegiance

■ Microsoft ■ Microsoft Research ■ Q2 2000

With the imminent release of *Starlancer*, and the eventual release of *Freelancer*, it seems that Microsoft is fully committed to the space combat genre. Set to ship this spring, *Allegiance* will bring their massively multiplayer model to the space arena.

The *Allegiance* story begins in the year 2140. After an asteroid collides with the Earth, destroying the brunt of mankind, the only survivors of the catastrophe are military, corporate, and independent inhabitants of near-Earth space. These groups splinter even further creating a myriad of warring factions.

As a multiplayer-only game, *Allegiance* will have many play styles, including deathmatch (on the Allegiance Zone) and teamplay by joining one of the game's factions. Players will also have the option of setting up their own servers for play over the Internet or on a LAN. *Allegiance* will support up to six teams of 3-15 players each.

Expect *Allegiance's* pricing model to resemble that of *Starsiege: Tribes*, where gamers purchase the boxed game and play for free on the Internet.



MUST GET TO WORM HOLE! Pilots travel through space via wormholes.



LIFE ON MARS IS OVER And you can single-handedly end it for good.


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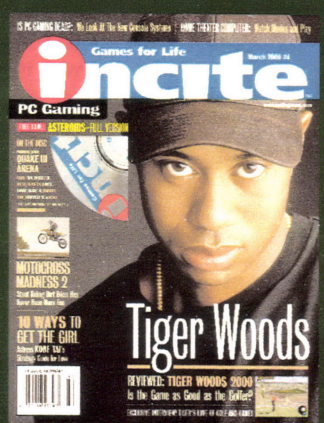
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incite

FIGHT CLUB The first rule is don't talk about it. The second: Duck!

Nordic Fight Club

Grab a Sword or the Nearest Severed Limb and Get Ready to Rumble in **RUNE**

■ PUBLISHER Gathering of Developers ■ DEVELOPER Human Head Studios ■ GENRE Action/Adventure Fighting ■ PLAYERS 1-8 ■ RELEASE DATE Q3 2000

INSIGHT

Q. Did Vikings really wear those horned hats?
A. Yep...and in the off hours, they hung their clothes on them to dry.
Q. What are some Nordic contributions to western culture?
A. Victoria Silvestedt calendars, *Thor* comic books, fondue, and swedish meatballs.
Q. Will playing this game help you in a real fight?
A. If your idea of fighting is pressing the attack button, you're in for a beating.

Some may say that there's more to life than wearing horned hats, drinking grog 'til the Valkyries come home, and kicking ass, but what do they know? It's time to get ready for some serious hack-'n'-slash action. As far as we're concerned, it's a Viking's life for us!

By Darren Gladstone

You think high school was tough, try being in Ragnar's shoes. He's a 16-year-old Viking at the brink of manhood. His rite of passage is about to start, and you're going along for the ride in *Rune* by Gathering of Developers.

For those not well-versed in Norse mythology and culture, here's the *Cliff's Notes.* When young Vikes were old enough, they would be put in a boat and had to search out adventure before returning. Some, like Leif Eriksson, found unknown lands and returned in glory. Ragnar, our hero, didn't make it too far. He got sucked into a whirlpool only to find himself in the Viking underworld. All Ragnar has left are his wits and whatever weapons he can find as he tries to fight his way back to Midgard, the land of the living.

Immortal Combat

You won't often see the *incite PC Gaming* editors tipping our hats to console gaming, but we've yet to see a good fighting game on the PC. And that was the same conclusion that Tim Gerritsen, business development director at Human Head Studios, came to. That's why he wanted to craft a sword-swinging, hammer-bashing world to conquer. "Nordic mythology is really deep, with quite a bit of material to draw upon. It was perfect," said Gerritsen. "Nothing says hand-to-hand [combat] like a Viking with a big axe."





DON'T AXE ME NO QUESTIONS The Molly Hatchet album-cover models didn't get along.

IT'S ON THE CD!
Check out the *Rune* video on the *incite CD-ROM!*

Based on the *Unreal Tournament* engine, *Rune* is being billed as a third-person action/adventure game with the emphasis being put on bloody, melee-style combat. *Rune*'s designers improved upon the *Unreal Tournament* engine, so the game boasts a full skeletal system for complex, lifelike animations. But does that make the game tougher to control? "We wanted to go for more of a fighter system...kind of like *Soul Calibur* [on the Dreamcast], but more context-based rather than having to tap left, left, up, and then a button," said Gerritsen. That drains a lot of fun out of actually playing the game.

For example, if you run forward and attack, your character will perform a certain maneuver, if you strafe and attack, he'll execute another move, and so on. Once you think you're battle hardened enough, you can pull off complex combination hits by timing your button presses.

Since Human Head is simplifying combat controls, why stop there? Probably one of the most annoying issues with third-person games is that you have too much control over the character. You end up spending most of your day trying to time a jump and then figure out the right moment to press a button to grab a ledge. You wind up throwing the gamepad in disgust and then moving on to the next title (at least that's what we do). It becomes more of a "How do I make the character move or jump," exercise rather than "How do I solve this puzzle?" In *Rune*, Ragnar makes the grab onto a ledge for you while jumping and performs the basic actions you shouldn't have to concern yourself with. All you've got to worry about now is staying alive.



WHEN WENDELLS ATTACK Damn, where did Ragnar leave his flea collar?

Valhalla Awaits

We've established that this is neither your usual dungeon romp nor your average action/adventure, but how stacked are the odds against you in the more than 30 levels of gameplay? You'll be facing off against beasties from both Norse mythology and the warped minds at Human Head.

Goblins, who live deep underground, will be the first creatures to bar your path. They'll be easy enough to get you up to speed on your fighting skills. After that you'll have to stave off superintelligent dwarves, Yeti-like wendells, titanic dangler fish, and giant crabs, to name but a few. You'll



50-POUND HAMMER If I had a hammer, I'd hammer in the morning, I'd hammer in the evening, I'd hammer your frickin' head.



ABOMINABLE SNOWDORK Listen you Yeti wannabe, I'm gonna slice ya, I'm gonna dice ya, I'm gonna...hey those claws are pretty big....

BECOMING A REAL MAN IN AMERICA

AMERICAN RITUALS OF MANHOOD

Growing up in this modern age is no walk in the park. Though we don't hand our kids an axe and tell 'em to set sail, we do have our own **manly rites** to deal with.

NO, REALLY, THAT'S ME IN THE PICTURE

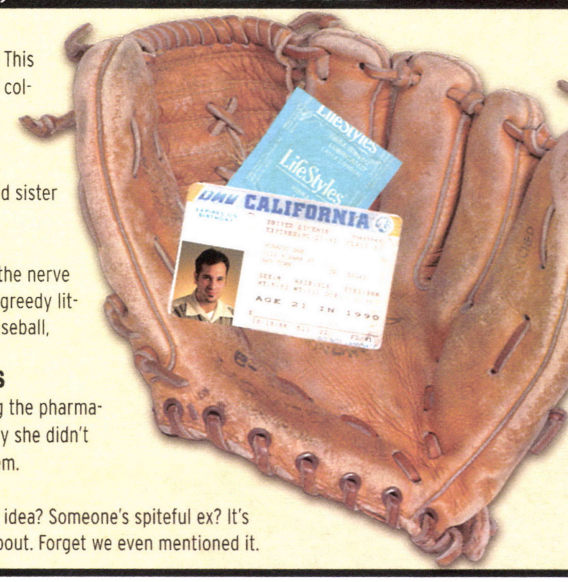
USING A FAKE ID
Who cares if the picture even looks like you? This is your golden ticket to the promised land of college girls and cheap beer.

GOING HUNTING
Nothing is manlier than tracking down and killing animals. No, using a BB gun on your kid sister doesn't count, Sparky.

GETTING TO SECOND BASE
Nothing compares to that first time you get the nerve to take a long lead off first and stretch your greedy little fingers out to tag second. We do mean baseball, right? Right?

BUYING YOUR FIRST PACK OF CONDOMS
Ah, that nerve-wracking experience of asking the pharmacy cashier for a pack of ribbed Trojans. If only she didn't look like your grandma. We'd rather steal them.

CIRCUMCISION
What twisted, evil bastard came up with that idea? Someone's spiteful ex? It's too painful to talk about, think of, or write about. Forget we even mentioned it.





VIKING 500 "And here we are on the final lap. Hagar the Horrible still in the lead...."

even encounter fallen brethren—dark Vikings. These nasty guys may have been corrupted over the years, but they have skills much like your own—they even wield different armaments that you'll be able to pillage and use for yourself.

Rune's choice of only close-range weapons also makes for a different kind of challenge. This means no arrows or magic fireballs, just swords, axes, and hammers. Fighting in *Rune* will be of the up-close-and-personal variety. And, since there are no missile weapons in *Rune*, don't expect any hiding and sniping at enemies from a distance. Sure, you'll be able to throw your weapon at someone, but you'd better get it back quick. Until you grab something else, it's you and your bare hands against some bloodthirsty Viking with a battleaxe. Final numbers were not established at press time, but there are going to be over 20 weapons ranging in three different categories.

Swords will strike quickly, but they won't cause that much damage. Axes will also be fast, while hammers will be slow to use but are guaranteed to leave your enemies with a major headache. If you're feeling extra sinister, you can lop the arm or leg off an opponent and proceed to beat them with their own appendage.

Knock Down, Drag Out

Nothing gets the blood pumping like a barroom brawl, and Human Head is banking on people really getting into the game's multiplayer options. *Rune* will include theme-based deathmatch levels, and whether inspired by film, book, or legend, they all promise to be epic. One level takes place in a Viking beer hall. You can jump on tables, smash kegs, and have them roll onto the opposition. You'll have to use the environment to your advantage. Gerritsen is also planning to put in a level where two pirate ships pull up next to each other and you can have boarding parties leap back and forth between them.

Nothing says hand-to-hand [combat] like a Viking with a big axe.

Rune is set to hammer PCs this summer, so prepare to unleash the berserker that lies within.



SPLITTING HEADACHE Sometimes these Nordic baddies only understand the logic of a giant sword crunching their skulls.



DANCE OF THE DOOMED
Hello my little purple friends. You seem to be angry—WHAP!



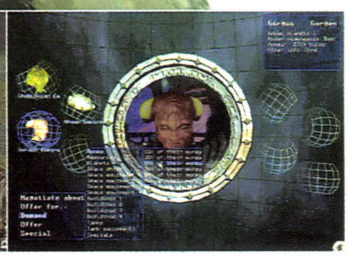
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PC CD ROM

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Too Fast for Love

EA Sports' First Formula 1 Game, **F1 2000**, Is Highly Anticipated From Houston to Helsinki

■ PUBLISHER **Electronic Arts** ■ DEVELOPER **EA Sports** ■ GENRE **Arcade Racing** ■ PLAYERS **1 - 22** ■ RELEASE DATE **Q2 2000**

INSIGHT

Q. Will I be able to get with my buds for a full race weekend?
A. Since 22 players will be able to race simultaneously on LAN or Internet, you will be able to arrange a full race weekend with training, qualifications, and a full-scale race.

Q. Why has EA Sports been so secretive?
A. Certain Formula 1 teams have tight restrictions on the use of their logos until the start of the season. They do not want their brand-new sponsorships announced by a computer game.

On the Imola course in northern Italy there is tradition among fans to climb the fence in the night and paint graffiti on the track. In *F1 2000*, there is graffiti on the exact same spot on the course. Get ready to get real.

By Steen Bachmann

So you think your job is tough? Well, EA Sports hired a photographer in the beginning of 1999, gave him a stack of airline tickets, and asked him to take pictures of every Formula 1 track in the 1999 season. His assignment: detail every inch of every track.

When you play *F1 2000*, you drive on courses modeled in exacting detail on those photos.

Illusion of a Real Season

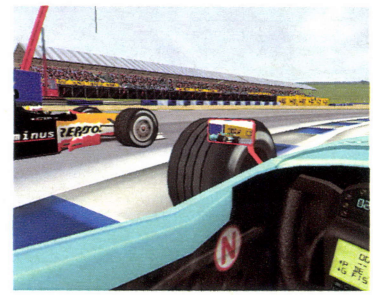
"We want to give the gamer a realistic feeling of how it is to drive a Formula 1 car," says F1 2000 Producer James Hawkins.

Gamers can choose the number of laps per race, the strictness of the track referees, and how damage will affect your car, engine, and transmission. Go with full damage and the clutch might get stuck, the engine could overheat, or you might lose a gear or two.

Hawkins explains, "You want ultra realism? Just turn off all driving assist and choose manual shifting. You want some help? Choose automatic shifting and turn on the braking and anti-spin assists."



YELLOW MAGIC You've customized your entire car, and now it's time to rock!



GETTING BUTTERFLIES? Starting a race is the most nerve-racking part.

For the Hard-core Mechanic

Setting up your race car is a complicated, yet logical, process. If you just want to jump into a race, you can skip the car setup and race with the standard setup, but your car might be 10 percent slower than it could be if you customize it yourself.

If you do decide to play mechanic, you can opt for the simple route, in which you change the gear ratios and the front and rear spoilers.

If you are a serious grease monkey, though, you'll head right to the hard-core setup screen. Here you can change the engine's momentum (do you want raw power at the bottom of the rev-scale or a higher top speed?) and the weight proportion between front and rear of the car, among other complex adjustments.

But that's not all. If you happen to have the know-how of a bona fide Formula 1 mechanic, you can access the "super hard-core" setup menu. Here you have control over almost every aspect of your car's performance, including each wheel's shock absorbers. It's a good

■ JUST IN CASE THE GAME DESIGNERS ARE LISTENING

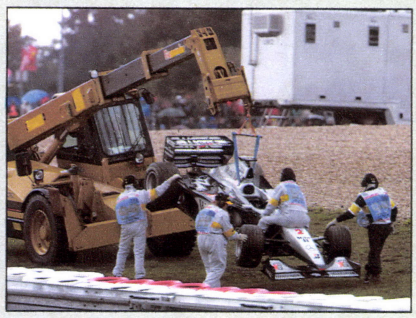
OUR WISH LIST FOR *F1 2001*

AMBULANCES



■ When a Formula 1 race starts, a doctor's car and an ambulance drive in the back of the pack. They will be included in the next version of the game, or so promise the producers of *F1 2000*. If an accident occurs, an ambulance will show up.

TOW TRUCKS AND TRACTORS



■ Whenever Jaques Villeneuve crashes, and that happens all the time, his car is towed away or lifted off the track by a tractor. That will be a part of the next version of the game, according to the folks at EA Sports.

BABES AT THE FINISH LINE!



■ Producer James Hawkins won't confirm that future winners will be kissed on their cheeks by beautiful women wearing tight sponsor T-shirts. Come on, EA, this is the best part of winning the confounded race!

idea to customize these if you are planning to drive like Michael Schumacher on one of his angry days, when he attacks the curbs as hard as Darryl Strawberry attacks a gram of coke.

Action or Bad Taste?

Damage is modeled in many racing games, but *F1 2000* has an almost religious obsession with details. If you plunge into a wall because you hit the brakes too late, your wheel will be seriously damaged. For the next couple hundred meters, the damaged wheel will dance like a man on the wrong end of a flame thrower as you struggle to keep the car from wandering off the track. Keep going and the rubber will fly off. If you don't make it to the pit, the whole wheel will fall off. One down, three to go....

Michael Schumacher attacks the curbs like Darryl Strawberry attacks a gram of coke.



UP YER BUM Drafting behind the lead car and biding your time until you can make your break is a good strategy.

The designers studied hundreds of hours of video from Formula 1 races to be able to create spectacular and realistic crashes. Hawkins explains, "We spent hours discussing the subject: Where is the border between believable action and tasteless entertainment in a racing game?

"What we have come up with is that once in a while you will experience some serious crashes with airborne cars that land upside down. It will be a risk you will have to get used to, just like in real motorsports."

The attention to detail is inescapable. After hard braking, the brake discs will glow. When drivers go around sharp curves or slam on the brakes, their heads are affected by the G-forces. Cockpits are exact replicas of those in the real cars.



BACK OF THE PACK This is a scene you'll see often. These drivers go for broke.

The design team has made individual 3D models with exact specifications of all 11 car brands in the season, and the motor sounds are also very realistic.

F1 2000's attention to detail and great game dynamics promises to give Formula 1 fans what they've been waiting for in a driving game. Get ready for some serious speed this spring.



DAMN! SECOND AGAIN The other drivers in *F1 2000* won't be push-overs. You'll have to practice hard to win.

Triple Threat

EA Sports Finds New Ways to Take You Out to The Ballgame in **TRIPLE PLAY 2001**

■ PUBLISHER **EA Sports** ■ DEVELOPER **Trey Arch** ■ GENRE **Sports** ■ PLAYERS **1-2** ■ RELEASE DATE **Q1 2000**

INSIGHT

Q. So who's the *Triple Play* cover guy this year?
A. All-Star catcher Mike Piazza gets the honor this year.
Q. Do fans in the game throw garbage at John Rocker?
A. Unfortunately, no. Not even if you play in New York.
Q. Are all of the new stadiums opening up featured in the game?
A. Yes, but it'll cost you extra to see the cushy luxury boxes.

***Triple Play 2000* sold well but failed to stir up much excitement among the baseball sim faithful. *Triple Play 2001* hopes to get some respect on the virtual baseball diamond.**

By Gary Eng Walk

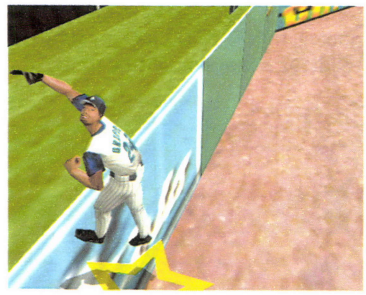
The feature in *Triple Play 2001* that will get the most attention is the Big League Challenge mode, based on the new Major League Baseball-sponsored event that took place in Las Vegas in February. Basically a variation of the Home Run Derby event we've become accustomed to during the annual All-Star Game, the real-life Big League Challenge event matches up present ball players in one-on-one home run hitting contests.

The *Triple Play* version of the contest has the added benefit of featuring members of the ultra-elite 500 Home Run Club, one that includes the likes of Reggie Jackson and Babe Ruth, plus other retired legends of the game such as Ted Williams. The real fun happens in the Extreme Target mode, which spurns tradition and places huge archery targets in the outfield that shatter when hit with a well-placed, prodigious shot.

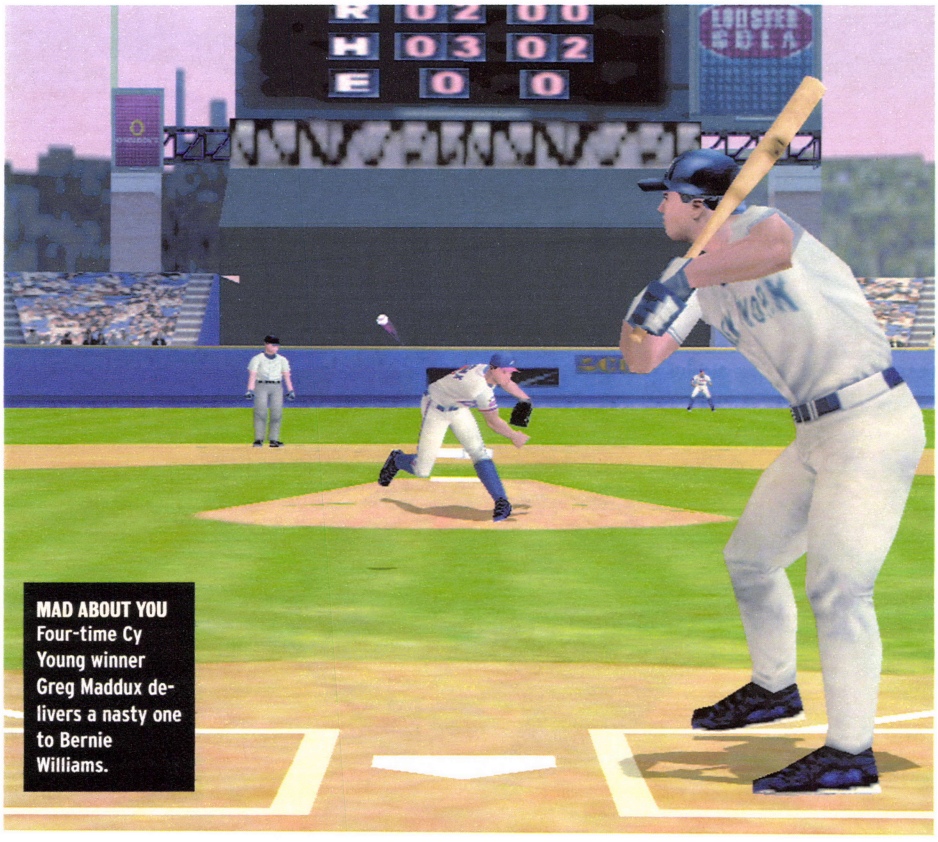
EA admits the strong showings from the offerings of 3DO and Microsoft opened their eyes. "The influx of competition has definitely made us raise the bar in terms of features and options for the user," observed producer Shyang Kong.



GOING GONE Jim Thome calls his shot...or just ordered some peanuts. We're not sure.



KID'S GLOVE Junior Griffey attempts to rob someone of a home run.



MAD ABOUT YOU Four-time Cy Young winner Greg Maddux delivers a nasty one to Bernie Williams.

The most impressive new addition to *Triple Play* is its unique Behind-the-Fielder camera view. According to Kong, this view finally recognizes the importance of the glove in PC baseball games and "takes defense to another level." The Behind-the-Fielder perspective snaps into view whenever your opponent puts the ball in play. If it works as promised, the adventure of catching a sky-high pop fly becomes as exciting as launching a 450-ft. home run.

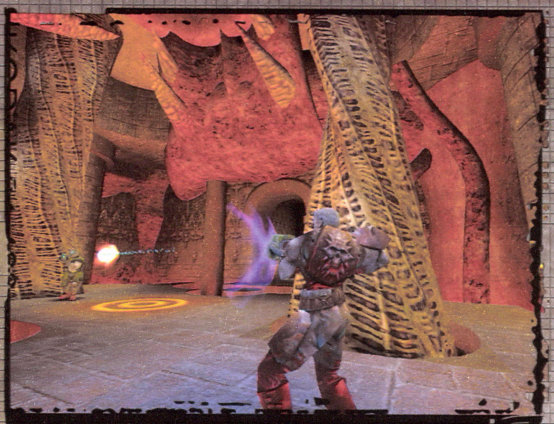
Expect an even more detailed Create-a-Player mode in which you can define a player's characteristics down to his batting stance style and fielding accuracy. EA Sports has also included its signature Face in the Game feature, which gives you the ability to import a digitized photo of yourself onto a custom MLB athlete.

Triple Play 2001's online capabilities will be much better than last year's edition. When you're up against other teams on EASports.net, *Triple Play* can now keep track of your stats and log your victories on an Internet-wide leader board.

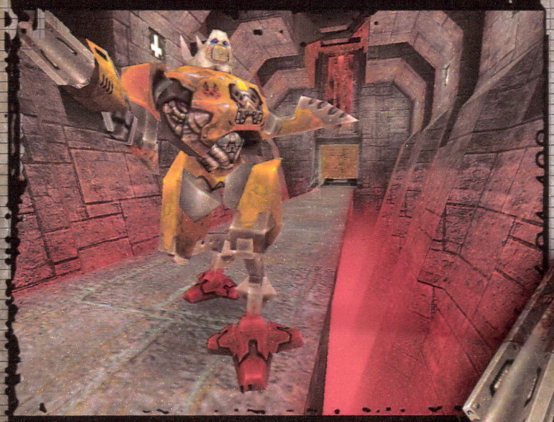
Triple Play 2001 looks like it's had a productive off-season: it has more features than ever, and thanks to gameplay-enhancing improvements like the Behind-the-Fielder view, it has the potential to beat up on its younger siblings, *High Heat* and *MS Baseball*. Isn't that what big brothers are for?

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"WILL IT BE WORTH IT? YOU BET YOUR @#%!" - COMPUTER GAMING WORLD

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Takin' It to the Wall!

What Does Team .366 Do for an Encore to **HIGH HEAT BASEBALL**?

■ PUBLISHER 3DO ■ DEVELOPER Team .366 ■ GENRE Sports ■ PLAYERS 1-2 ■ RELEASE DATE Q1 2000

INSIGHT

Q. Will Sammy Sosa be the most powerful guy in the game now that he's the spokesman?

A. The guy has hit 129 home runs in the last two years–how much more powerful do you want him to be?

Q. Who has the nastiest high heat in baseball?

A. Our vote goes to the Big Unit, Diamondback ace Randy Johnson. Make sure your will is notarized before stepping in the batter's box with him on the mound.

Go figure: last year's edition of *High Heat Baseball* was a critical hit with the media and baseball sim fans, yet even Humongous Entertainment's kids-only game, *Backyard Baseball*, outsold it. As Yogi Berra once said, "In baseball, you don't know nothing."

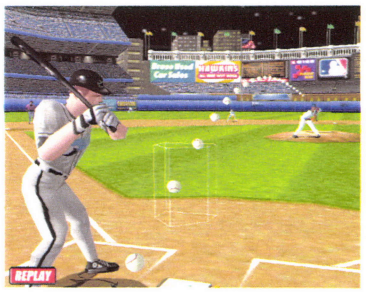
By Gary Eng Walk

High Heat Baseball 2001 is bound to have sales that better reflect its elite status, if only because it's now known as *Sammy Sosa High Heat Baseball 2001*. 3DO smartly signed the Cubs slugger–and one of Major League Baseball's best-known ambassadors–to a multi-year deal.

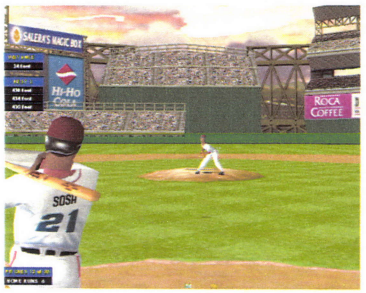
Even without Slammin' Sammy's presence, *High Heat* enters the new baseball season with the most momentum and promise. Last year's version was already the most realistic in terms of the actual baseball experience (*Triple Play 2000* still got the nod for aesthetic realism such as player likeness). Your computer opponent, for example, actually knew the best time to insert a relief pitcher. This year, developer Team .366 promises even more authenticity. According to Executive Producer Mark Dickenson, computer-controlled base runners behave more like the real McCoys. Whereas last year's players were always far too conservative on the base paths, this year's opponents sometimes display aggressive tendencies, taking chances and going for that extra base, even if there's a good chance you'll throw them out.



JOSE CAN YOU SEE Slugger Jose Canseco digs in against the Yankees. If that curve breaks over the plate, you can kiss it goodbye.



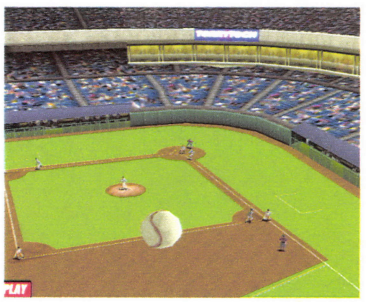
CAUGHT LOOKING *High Heat's* pitch replays show you where you *should* have swung.



INTO THIN AIR Sammy Sosa hits one out in the homer-friendly Coors Field.



DOWN AND OUT Tampa Bay gets caught red-handed trying to steal second base.



GOING, GOING, GONE We're pretty sure this ball isn't coming back...ever.

Expect to see an even greater variety of the type of hits you can get: light flares that find a hole in the outfield, drives to the gap, opposite-field singles, they're all in there. Foul balls–a rarity in baseball sims–occur more frequently in the new *High Heat*. Associate Producer Jason Ray estimates that the sim is a mere 20-25 percent off the average amount of foul balls hit in an actual game. This discrepancy is by design: programmers could bump up the foul ball frequency to real-life Major League levels (it's not uncommon to see well over a hundred foul balls in a game), but a single game on the PC would take hours to complete. That's a little too realistic.

A Game for Everyone

Team .366 has tried to address the needs of all kinds of baseball sim players. "Every baseball fan has a different perspective on what they think the sport is and is really about," observes Dickenson, "they play the game differently. Some people want it to be arcade-like, some people want to play it managerially. We want to make a game that can meet all these perspectives." As a result, *High Heat* now has a Custom League feature for players who want to choose exactly the number of games, teams, divisions, and leagues there are in a season.

For players who place more of an emphasis on looks, Dickenson's team added stylish bat and ball blurs to the hitting animations and more accurate player uniforms and body characteristics to the mix.

Smaller but no less significant enhancements include in-game saves that enable you to quit a game midway through and return to it the next day. Also, at the end of each game, *High Heat* generates video highlights and a text-driven play-by-play game summary.

High Heat already had the pristine gameplay. Now it has Sammy Sosa promoting it. The competition should be worried.



Don't worry, at NVIDIA, amazingly fast, cutting-edge graphics processors are all we do. The results are ultra-smooth frame rates and incredibly vivid colors that allow you to see and play 3D/2D games exactly the way game makers intended. Not to mention an Internet experience that comes to life. If you demand this kind of performance out of your games and the Internet, then demand your next PC or graphics accelerator comes loaded with a NVIDIA chip. There's no reason to settle for anything less. Graphics to the nth degree.

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HEAVY METAL



HAIR & MAKEUP: MARA CAPOZZI



Prepare to enter the world of ***HEAVY METAL*** in this dangerous, sexy, hard-hitting new computer game from Ritual.

Dressed TO KILL!

By Joe Vallina

Photography by Benjamin Hoffman

HEAVY METAL

Heavy Metal is making a comeback. Ever since the animated movie debuted in 1981, fans of the movie and the magazine on which it was based have been clamoring for a sequel. Finally, the wait is over. *Heavy Metal 2000* is set to be released this summer, bringing the cult favorite back to the big screen in a very big way.

At the center of this triumphant return is the movie's heroine is a woman named Julie from the planet Eden. A nasty villain from outer space named Tyler rudely interrupts her daily routine. He seeks eternal life by way of a life-giving water source on Julie's planet and will go after it by any means necessary. We won't give away the film's entire plot, but let's just say that Tyler and Julie have a fairly tense relationship, and this conflict of interest leaves Julie's home planet a wasteland.

The Sequel to the Sequel

It should be no surprise to anyone that veteran game designers Ritual Entertainment jumped at the chance to make a video game based on the new movie. After all, gamers tend to like both *Heavy Metal's* fantasy-based storytelling and its outlandish, giant-busted war vixens that fight the most evil



UP SHE GOES Julie has to do lots of climbing, jumping, and running in *Heavy Metal.* But don't worry, action fans, there will be plenty of bizarre monsters to fight.



Julie's sword will have multiple attacks, depending upon which crystal is attached to it at any given time.

HEAVY METAL



It takes a lot of time to dress for battle. In the following photos, Julie Strain—the inspiration for the Julie character in both the movie and the game—takes us step by step through the process.

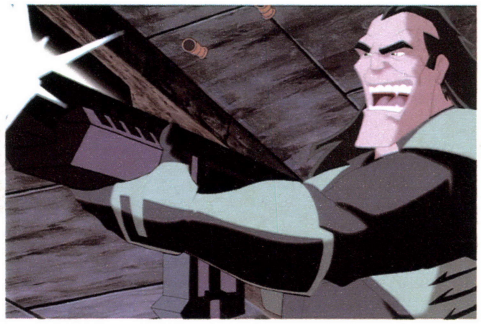
Heavy Metal 2K the New Movie

The New Movie Takes the Magazine to the Big Screen...Again

The first *Heavy Metal* movie was a true cult favorite that turned on legions of new fans to the graphic novel magazine. By the same token, Ritual is hoping that *Heavy Metal 2000* will encourage fans to buy the game. Although the movie won't be out until this spring, here are some shots from the flick to whet your appetite.



EDEN...NOOOOOOO! Julie's homeworld of Eden is ripped to shreds as she watches helplessly.



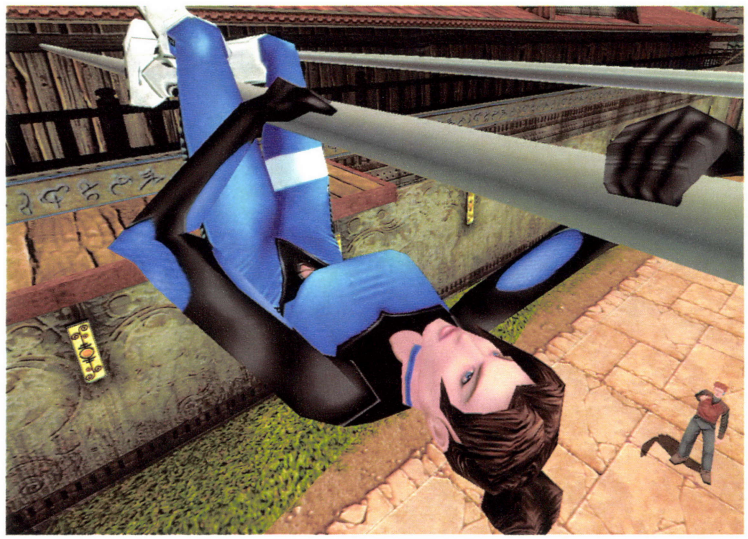
NICE CHOPPERS Tyler is the cause of Julie's pain and her main target in *Heavy Metal 2000.*



GATLING JUSTICE Julie ventilates her nemesis with a few hundred rounds...but will it kill him?



PUZZLE PAWNS This Shgleik might look cute, but you'll have to put him and his buddies in harm's way often to solve many of the game's puzzles.



HANGING AROUND You'll have to use many ordinary objects, such as these clotheslines, to get Julie from place to place. Don't slip!

alien beasties imaginable. Who wouldn't love that?

Art Director Robert Atkins explains, "Kevin Eastman [legendary comic book author and owner of the *Heavy Metal* license] came to us with the property, and of course we were all fans so we all realized the potential that a property like *Heavy Metal* meant. The universe has the potential to do anything. There are no laws or guidelines that the artists in that universe have to follow. That allowed us to be more creative."

In planning the game, the guys at Ritual soon discovered that the enormity of *Heavy Metal 2000*'s universe would prove too complicated to duplicate in a video game. Therefore, a different approach to the title was needed.

According to Atkins, "We loved the Julie character, but there would be no way we could accomplish a game that duplicated the movie exactly. So we asked ourselves, 'How are we going to take this property and make a compelling video game?' The idea was, why don't we tell the sequel [to *Heavy Metal 2000*]? When we approached Kevin with the idea, he was like, 'I love it!'"

World Designer Tom Mustaine remembers that he was as surprised

HEAVY METAL



as anyone about Eastman's backing. "We were at E3 last year, and Kevin said in an interview, 'Oh yeah, this is the sequel to my movie.' It's pretty cool to think about it like that. Kevin really wanted us to create our own content for this."

Atkins feels that Ritual is continuing in the tradition of the magazine's many artists. "Each month four or five artists contribute to the magazine, and each artist has his own story to tell. And that's how we are approaching this video game. We are taking this character [Julie Strain] and telling our little piece of what's happening."

How the Movie Fits In

The game picks up long after the movie's conclusion. According to Atkins, "It's 30 years later, and Julie has re-established her colony on a different part of the planet. She puts out a F.A.K.K.2 (Federation Assigned Ketogenic Killzone) beacon as a warning for everyone to stay away." Of course, this tactic doesn't work and, in fact, has the exact opposite effect by attracting the attention of the nastiest scum in the universe—Gith.

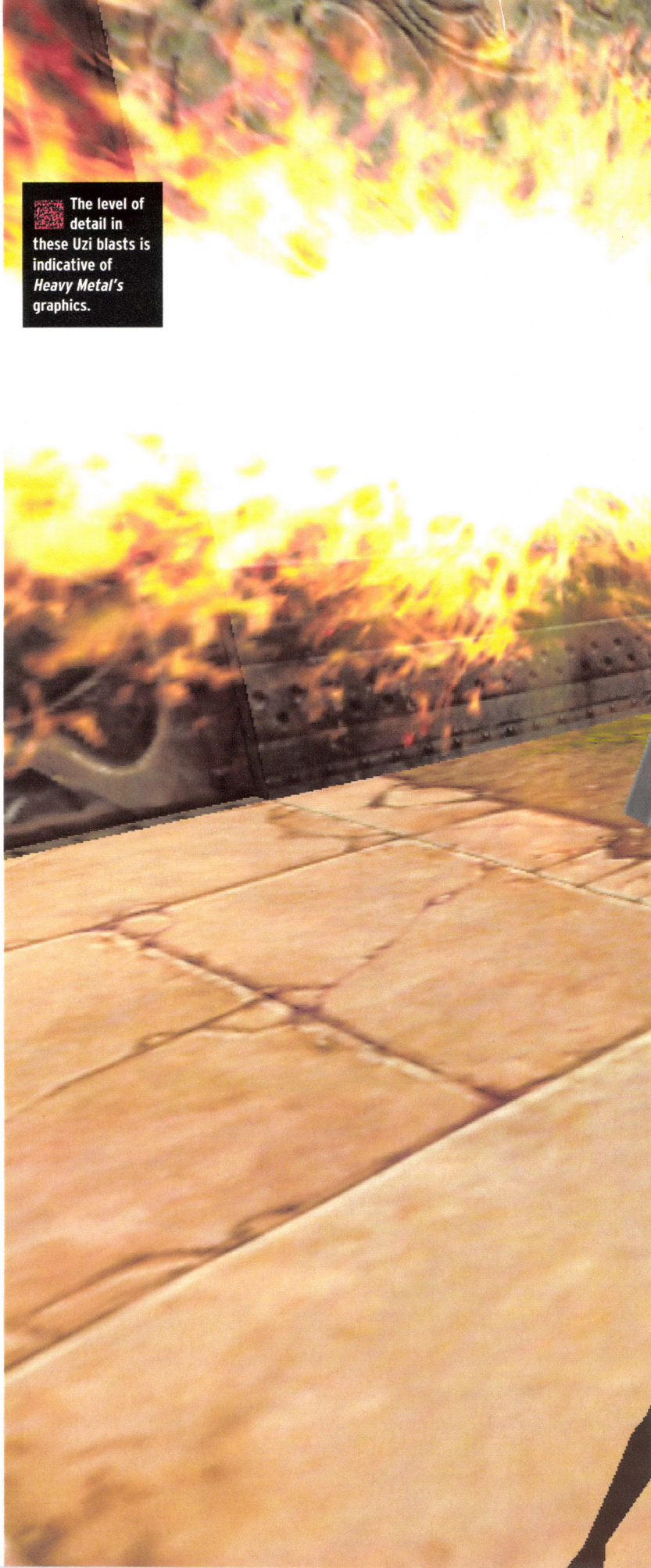
Heavy Metal is a third-person action/adventure game with a sexy female character. But *Heavy Metal*'s designers assure gamers that their game is far from a Lara Croft rip-off.

Gith is an alien on a mission: find eternal life or die trying. He has been searching the universe for eons looking for the mythical fountain of life-giving water that can make him immortal. He believes that this fountain of youth exists in the form of a god, and if he eats the heart of this god, he will become invincible and immortal. "Gith," adds Atkins, "makes Tyler look like a f–king punk."

When Gith's spacecraft picks up the F.A.K.K.2 signal from Julie's planet, he initially takes it as a challenge. Being the evil bastard that he is, he decides to go have some fun with this planet that dare broadcast such a warning. But as he gets closer to Eden, he begins to realize that this is the place he has been searching for all along...the source of the life-giving water. It's up to you—as Julie—to get to the source before he does.

A F.A.K.K.ing *Tomb Raider* Clone? Hardly

Heavy Metal is a third-person action/adventure game with a sexy female character. The comparisons to the *Tomb Raider* series couldn't



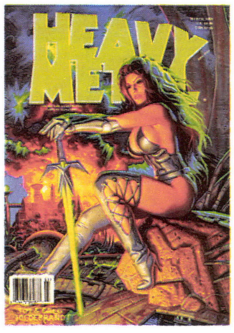
The level of detail in these Uzi blasts is indicative of *Heavy Metal*'s graphics.

HEAVY METAL



One-Way Ticket to Midnight

Heavy Metal Owner Kevin Eastman on the Magazine



What is the history behind *Heavy Metal* Magazine?
The magazine is based on a French magazine called *Metal Hurlant* that was started in 1974. Maddie Simmons, who worked with Len Mogul at *National Lampoon*, saw this magazine on a European trip and decided it would work great in the States. They changed the name–I think the more literal translation is "Screaming Metal"–and pubished the first issue in 1977. In 1979, Ivan Reitman, who had done *Animal House* and *Stripes*, became aware of *Heavy Metal* and thought it would make a great movie. So he started working with Len Mogul on the idea, and it took them until the summer of 1981 to get it finished.

How did you get involved?
I've been a fan of the magazine from the first issue, and in the late '80s, a friend of mine who's a fellow artist and publisher in Europe was visiting the *Heavy Metal* offices in 1991, and he called me and said the magazine could be for sale for the right price. And it worked out that the price was right.

How has the magazine changed over the years?
Very little. I mean, one difference is that in the early days, say from '77 to '84, they did more editorial, and I think that was because they had such a tight partnership with *National Lampoon*, which already had an editorial staff. So I think they had writers do double duty, and they'd write reviews and do interviews. I'd actually like to do more of that.

How did you decide on Ritual for the video game?
Fortunately for us, we met up with Ritual at the right time and hit upon a pretty mutual respect. We wanted to work with them, and they have a fondness for *Heavy Metal*. But they didn't want to do a straight adaptation [of *Heavy Metal 2000*], they wanted to do something different, like the sequel. And I just did a backflip, "That's brilliant!" So if fans like the movie, they're not just going to play the movie on their computers, they're going to get to continue the story.

Lastly, what's your all-time favorite comic book?
I was told that whenever someone asks you a question like that, that you should say the first thing that comes to mind, and the first thing that came into my mind when you said that was *Ronin* by Frank Miller. A lot of people didn't care for it much, but I thought it was great. - *Paul Semel*

have been a surprise to the Ritual team. But *Heavy Metal*'s designers assure gamers that their game is far from a Lara Croft rip-off.

Mustaine explains, "We asked ourselves, 'How do we make this game different?' So we said, why don't we put a different weapon in each hand and use different fire buttons?"

Mustaine goes on to point out that, in the grand tradition of console fighting games, different combinations of weapons and moves can lead to specialized attacks and finishing moves. "You may have to use a protective weapon in one hand and a melee weapon in the other. Or, you can have a sword in one hand and an Uzi in the other. Nobody's seen that before. We wanted to have layered combat, like in *Tekken* or *Street Fighter*. You use attack combos and use a finishing move to kill your opponent."

The designers have also incorporated a complex set of power-ups to complement the hand-to-hand combat. According to Mustaine, "Julie uses swords that you can attach different crystals to. Each time you attach a different crystal, it does a different thing."

But it's not just the attack combos that set *Heavy Metal* apart; the



TWO-FISTED ACTION Julie will use two different weapons at once, and you'll need to choose the best combinations at the appropriate times to survive Gith's wrath.



SUCH A TASTY MORSEL Julie tries to avoid becoming lunch. Um...Jules...try using those dual Uzis as something other than expensive dumbbells.

HEAVY METAL



HEAVY METAL



Julie uses her cross-bow to clear a safe passage through this nasty sewer level.

storyline and puzzle solving in the game will be very original as well. Atkins explains, "We want to create such a compelling story that the gamers have to finish the game. They start caring at the beginning about this character and all the other characters around her. It's their obligation to keep playing because they want to save her."

That said, Atkins is quick to point out that action-game fans won't be bogged down by the game's puzzle elements. "This game is not just puzzles. It has a lot of combat. The pacing is going to be: discovery...fighting, fighting, fighting...jump puzzle...fighting, fighting, fighting. It's going to be a real roller coaster."

One thing's for sure, *Heavy Metal* isn't even finished, but it already looks amazing. The textures in the levels teem with life, and water flows freely throughout the game-world. The beautiful and sometimes very bizarre levels are filled with amazing creature and enemies. In one level, huge breasts spout milk down into a giant abyss. And that's just the tip of the...uh...a small representation of the wild worlds gamers will be able to explore in the final game.

The creatures you'll fight are every bit as strange as the environments they populate.

The creatures you'll fight are every bit as strange as the environments they populate. Giant creatures with fists that contain mouths lined with razor-sharp choppers are out there waiting for you. So are huge, demonic beasts that, if they don't crush you with a vicious bear hug, will stomp out your life in one terrible hop.

Before the Ritual team signed on to do *Heavy Metal*, it was known primarily for its first-person shooter titles, most notably *Sin* and *Scourge of Armagon*, a *Quake II* Mission Pack. Designing first-person shooters taught the team a lot about how to—and how not to—design a game.

"'Design by Insanity' was the old first-person shooter credo," says Mustaine. He adds, "We would start to design a map with no prior planning, and a month later, a map would come out. Whereas we found that if we predesigned a map, it got done in two weeks."

The team found that by pre-planning, they could not only save time, but also avoid some of the common pitfalls that drag down many third-person action/adventures. Mustaine says of the process, "We basically have combat meetings once a week where we go through level by level where the player interacts. In a third-person game, I want to walk 10 feet and see something every 10 feet. If I'm gonna pay $50 for this game, I wanna see something happen."

It looks as if Eastman was right on the money when he entrusted Ritual to take his epic story to the computer screen. The team is working night and day to live up to the *Heavy Metal* series' reputation and make Eastman proud. Look for *Heavy Metal* to storm onto store shelves this spring.

HEAVY METAL



IT'S ON THE CD!
Hear the game's developers speak on the *incite CD-ROM!*



Julie Strain

Queen B

Julie Strain

As the undisputed **Queen of the B-Movies** and the voice and curves of the lead character in *Heavy Metal,* Julie Strain is not ashamed to show off her assests.

For some actresses, there is no sweeter sound than hearing their name follow the phrase, "And the Oscar goes to...." But for Julie Strain, there's a sweeter sound, and she wants to hear at least five times a year for the rest of her life: her name following, "Next on Showtime...." That's because while many actresses spend their careers pursuing the empty accolades of their peers, Julie gets greater satisfaction from being the Queen; Queen of the B-Movies, that is. A former *Penthouse* Pet, Strain has starred in such classic "late night on Showtime" fare as *Bikini Hotel, Lethal Seduction,* and *Return to Savage Beach,* and is also the judge on the Playboy Channel's *Sex Court* (think *Loveline* meets *Judge Judy*).

But now Julie has a different role as the lead character in both the movie and the PC game of *Heavy Metal.*

BY PAUL SEMEL
PHOTOGRAPHY BY BENJAMIN HOFFMAN

HAIR & MAKEUP: MARA CAPOZZI



IT'S ON THE CD!
See more of the lovely Julie Strain on the *incite CD-ROM!*

Let's start at the beginning. What were you like as a kid?
Well, I had four brothers, so I was a tomboy and got into trouble. I lit the hill on fire, I stole a horse, I broke into the school and poured a can of Coke all over the principal's office—I was a little rebel.

So how did you go from rebel without a cause to model without her clothes?
Well, I always wanted to be a supermodel, but since I was also reading *Playboy* from under my mom's bed, I wanted to be a centerfold as well. So every two years I tried to model, but I always missed the boat. Then, when I was 28, I was discovered in Vegas, so I threw my clothes in a garbage bag, drove to Los Angeles as fast as I could, and for eight years I took every modeling job I could get. And every job contained some form of nudity or bikini work.

Was that ever a problem for you?
No. It was my way in the door. I used my body to make me more youthful. I was a *Penthouse* Pet at 31, which is unheard of.

And you've been working ever since....
I've just been busting my butt. I wanted to keep alive, and I wasn't supplementing my income like some of the other girls in town [*laughs*].

So how many movies have you made?
I've lost count, but around a hundred. There's some that haven't been released, and there's five in my safe that haven't even been edited yet. I'm hoping to have five movies a year come out for the rest of my life.

At what point did you accept being a B-movie actress?
After my first auditions for bigger movies, I realized that at six-feet-one I was only going to play vampires, witches, double agents, and killers. I was not going to get to do the "Hold five-foot six-inch Brad Pitt's hand and walk through the park" scene in a movie. So I really honed in on those characters.

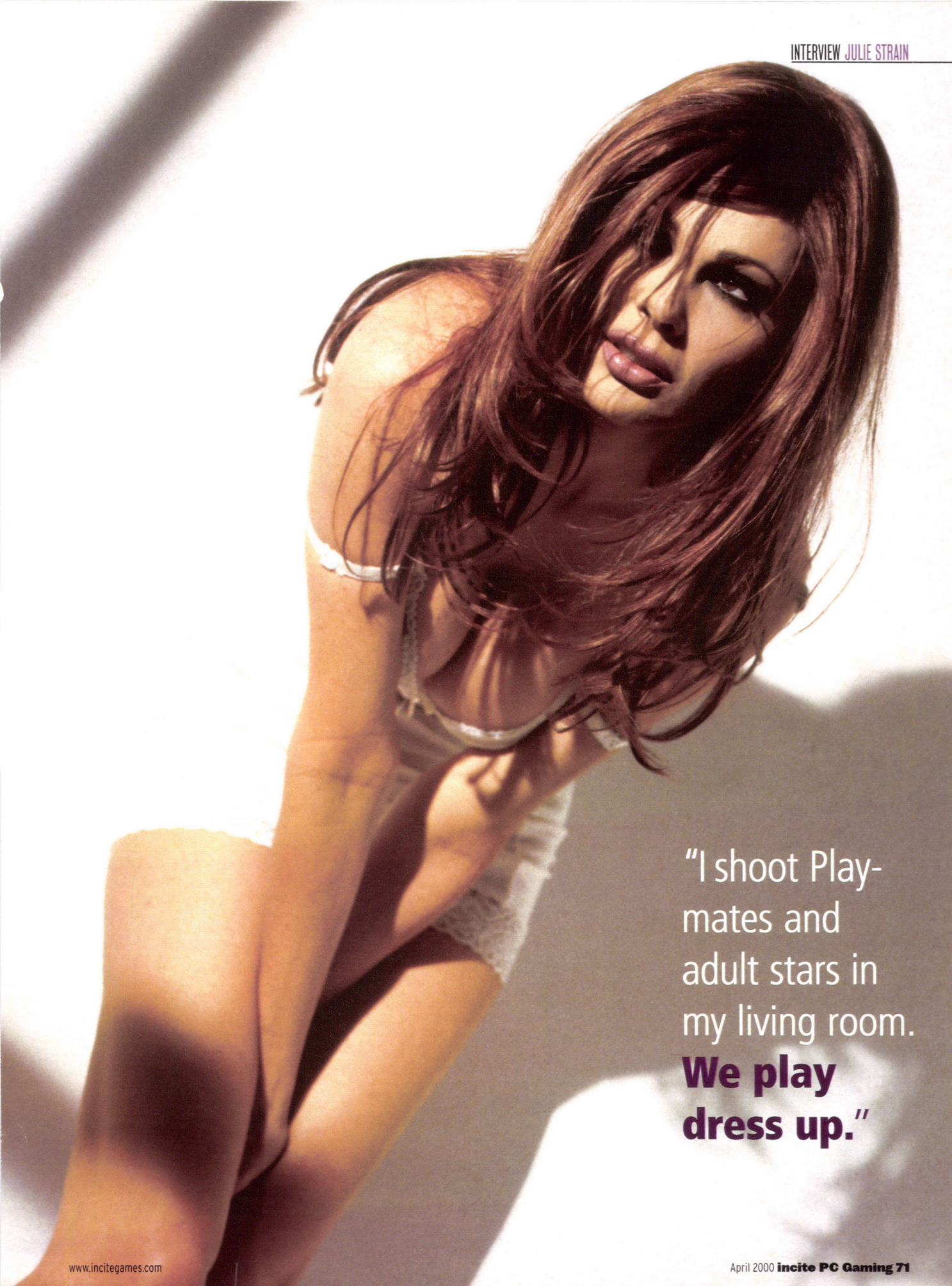
When did you hit your growth spurt?
Oh, I was six feet one when I was 13. And my mom cut my hair like an inch short my freshman year. Let's put it this way: I was a virgin for a very long time.

You do realize that there's a lot of guys you went to high school with who are kicking themselves right now?
A few of them had the chance, but I think God was on my side. Any time I was alone with a guy he either got sick, arrested, in an accident, or into a fight.



The Struggle of Julie Strain

"I was a tomboy and got into trouble. **I was a little rebel.**"


"I shoot Play-
mates and
adult stars in
my living room.
We play
dress up."



Julie Strain

Is it hard to get producers and casting agents to take you seriously because of the B-movies you've made?
I don't think they have a problem taking me seriously, though I do think that my height always comes into play. But I'll be real honest, I don't think my acting is A-quality; I do well with my acting coach, but when I go in to audition, I choke. When you're sitting in a room being judged, it's just the most uncomfortable feeling, and that's part of the reason I don't care if I ever do A-movies. But then, I have all the work I can handle; I turn down 20 movies a month.

You often play the tough broad. When are you at your most girlie?
When I'm with all my girlfriends. I'm a photographer now. I shoot Playmates and adult stars in my living room, and when I do, we play dress up. I do their make-up and hair, we sit and talk about their problems.

When did you take up photography?
My grandparents gave me a camera when I was a kid, and I remember taking pictures of my dog and my friends and then riding my bike to Thrifty as fast as I could to get them back. And I still, to this day, drive to the lab as fast as I can. I shoot for six different magazines, including *Femme Fatale*, *Celebrity Sleuth*, and *Fetish*.

What involvement did you have in the *Heavy Metal 2000* movie?
We worked on this film every day for four years. Kevin [Eastman, her husband, and the film's co-creator] would do sketches and send them off to Simon Bisley. We took photographs, I met with the artists so they'd know how little my nose really is, I recorded the voice three separate times—this has been such a bigger production than a regular movie.

Did you have to do anything additional for the *Heavy Metal* game?
I still have to do voices for the game.

Does the game character look like you?
Yes, though there was a time when it looked like Minnie Driver.

Speaking of celebrities, have any ever called you up out of the blue and asked you out?
Yeah. Sylvester Stallone...Jean Claude Van Damme...Donald Trump....

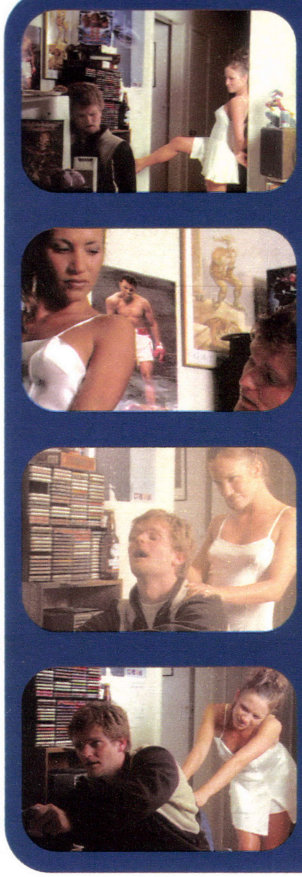
You could've been the first lady?
Well, Donald Trump called up the *Penthouse* mansion before he married Marla and said he just had to go on a date with me, just to be sure. So I went and met with him, but I was in love with an idiot at the time, so nothing happened. But on the way to the elevator he grabbed my chest and said, "Real, huh?"

Ewwww....
Yeah, that's my Donald Trump experience.

For more photos, articles, and general information on Julie Strain, head to www.juliestrain.com, or to our Web site, www.incitegames.com.

"Donald Trump **grabbed my chest.**"

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Get Your



The **Dance Hall Crashers** Get Jiggy With Mary-Kate & Ashley

When we got our copy of *Mary-Kate & Ashley's: Dance Party of the Century*, we didn't know what to make of it. For some reason "creepy" came to mind. I mean, they're only 13 years old. Playing this game made us all feel like marks in a FBI sting involving the Santa Monica Pier. That being said, we decided to wash our hands of the whole business and hand the thing over to some real professionals. Who better to grade this game than alternative rockers Dance Hall Crashers?

Groove On

BY WILLIAM O'NEAL PHOTOGRAPHY BY STEVE JENNINGS

Talkin' Games

What kind of games do you like?
Jason Hammon: I'm still playing *Baldur's Gate* like two hours a day. I'm one of those people who got *Baldur's Gate* really late. It's the best game I've played in a while. *Baldur's Gate* takes me back to the eighth or sixth grade when I was into *Dungeons & Dragons*.

What do you like about *Baldur's Gate*?
It's a really involved game. You've got the characters and all that stuff. The whole *Dungeons & Dragons* thing.

Aren't you worried that if people found out that you were into *D&D* that they'd kick your ass?
Pretty much. But when I was in the sixth grade I was into *Heavy Metal* and *Dungeons & Dragons*. It's amazing that I've lived this long.

What other games, besides RPGs, do you like?
I don't even like RPGs that much...just that one.

That's good, 'cause chicks hate guys into RPGs.
I really loved *Half-Life*. That was one of my favorite games ever. *Quake III* is cool, although I'm not really into playing games over the Internet. I'd rather play something like *Half-Life* that actually has a story.

Do you play games when you're on tour?
Constantly. Everyone brings laptops, but we also bring consoles. So we play a lot of console games. Last time, we brought a Nintendo 64 along, and we played a lot of wrestling games, *WWF Attitude*. When we bring the PlayStation, *Tekken 3* is always a favorite.

Which do you prefer, console or PC Games?
It depends. I'm not going to play fighting games on a PC. But I'm not going to play a game like *Baldur's Gate* on a console.

Why don't you have a Dreamcast yet?
I think I'm the only guy that doesn't have one yet. My brother and I have owned pretty much every system you could imagine: Vectrex, Atari 2600, Intellivision, Colecovision, Sega Master System–you name it, we've had it.

Let's say you have a $50 gift certificate to EB World. Are you going to buy a PC or console game?
Right now I'd buy a PC game–either *Half-Life: Opposing Force* or I'd wait for *Baldur's Gate II*.





We Don't Need Your Stinkin'



Jitterbug deconstructed. In case you've ever wanted to know how to jitterbug, Mary-Kate and Ashley will show you how!



According to Elyse Rogers (left), "This is the most f–ked up game I've ever seen!

Always energetic, the Dance Hall Crashers (from left: Mikey Weiss, Elyse Rogers, Gavin Hammon, Jason Hammon, and Karina Denike) had no problem getting excited with Mary-Kate and Ashley. Drummer Gavin wonders, "Do you have to be 18 to buy this?"

Dance Lessons!



These girls sure do know how to party down. Go Olsens, it's your birthday, it's your birthday!

ALTERED STATES These custom *Quake III: Arena* skins are available for download on a Web site near you!



You Don't Look So Good, My *Half-Life* Friend



The Sims? More Like the Mauls



LIFE SUPPORT

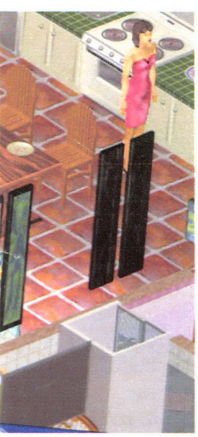
With a Few **Free Modifications**, Great Games Live a Lot Longer on Your Hard Drive

BY STEVE KLETT

It's four months after Christmas and a rash of similar 911 calls is sweeping across the country like the flu. They go something like this: "Help, my favorite game X has become dull and lifeless. I've beat it into submission, and I don't have any dough for a new game. Help me—please!"

We at *incite PC Gaming* can help! There are many ways to administer a little CPR to your favorite games that will give them an extra few months or more of top-billing on your hard drive. This CPR comes in the form of game modifications. On the Web you'll find total conversions, minor tweaks, and new skins, maps, and models for hot action games like *Half-Life*, *Quake III: Arena*, and *Unreal Tournament*; new units, maps, scenarios, and campaigns for *Tiberian Sun* and *Age of Empires II*; and new aircraft, cars, and paint jobs for *Need For Speed: High Stakes*, *Microsoft Flight Simulator 2000*, *Combat Flight Simulator*, and *Interstate '82*.

Best of all, all of these gaming goodies are just sitting on the Web, waiting for you to download—and they're all free!





***Quake III* Insectoids Attack!**

Attention Action Fiends

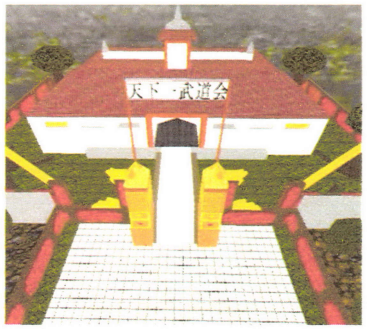
Many of you probably found the two hottest online action games going—*Unreal Tournament* and *Quake III: Arena*—under the tree this holiday season, and by now you've probably played 'em near to death. While it's early yet for much to be officially available for these games (the *Quake III* source code was released just prior to press time), cool news and toys are beginning to trickle out.

For instance, *Rocket Arena*, a conversion of one of the most popular game mods for *Quake II*, is in the works for *Unreal Tournament*. And another classic *Quake II* mod, *Jailbreak*, is being converted for *Quake III* as well (you can expect the same for *Rocket Arena*). These mods feature new weapons, effects, and special power-ups, as well as sets of brand-spanking-new maps.

In *Rocket Arena*, you engage in a series of one-on-one or two-on-two deathmatch games fought in tight "arena" maps. These maps are designed for a small number of players, and everyone starts with full ammo, full weapons, and full armor. The focus is on who has the best twitch skills out there—rather than who can hog the most power-ups. A new form of "Red Rover"-style game mode is being added as well. In this mode every person you kill is added to your team, with the goal being to add everyone in the game to your team.

Jailbreak is a deathmatch mod with many Capture-the-Flag similarities. In a nutshell, there are two teams, and each team has a base with a jail. When someone on the other team dies they go to your jail. When your jail is full, everyone in it gets executed, and your team wins all the frags. The twist is that there's a button on each base is that can be used to free the people in jail, which each team will be trying to do.

Another *Quake III* mod that did look promising was *Dragonball Q*, an anime-oriented multiplayer mod with many deathmatch and teamplay options.



ANIME THIS! *Quake III* will do bright colors if *Dragonball Q* has its way.

Be aware, however, many mods are announced that never seem to get finished—so we'll hold off on our enthusiasm for now.

One more to watch is *Vahalla: The Warrior's Paradise*, which pits fighters killed in *Quake III* against each other in "warrior heaven," if you will. An ambitious mod, *Vahalla* will feature all new models, textures, and maps.

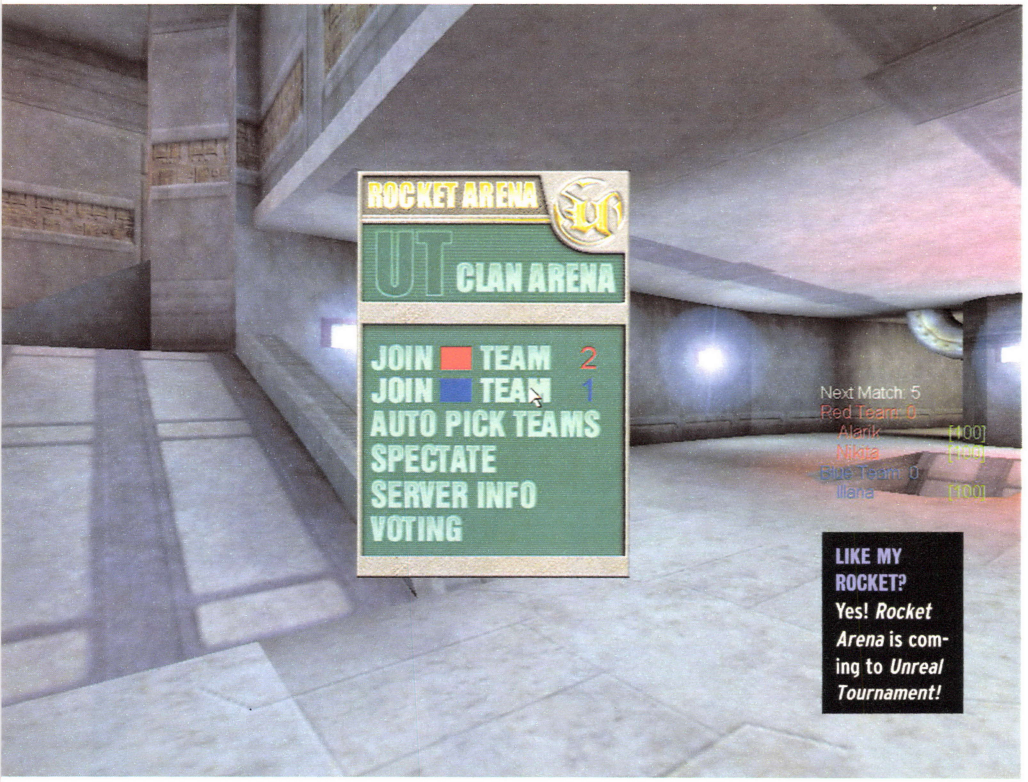
Sure, upcoming mods are great, but you want something now! How about new maps? There are tons of really excellent new user-created maps of all shapes and sizes coming

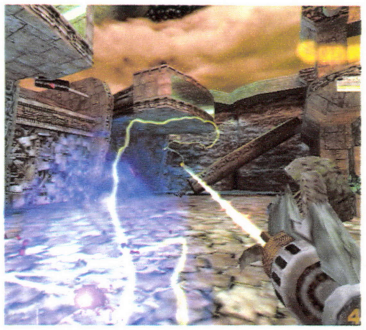


MAP MAVENS Unreality for *Unreal Tournament* is one of the excellent maps out there.

out daily for all the top action games. They download quickly, are simple to install, and they are tons of fun to explore. *Bloodlust* for *Quake III*, *Unreality* for *Unreal Tournament*, and *Inquisition* and *Kingdomcome* for *Wheel of Time* were hot at press time. (See sidebar for links where you can find these and everything else in this story.)

Got a *Half-Life* jones that has made you forget about the newer shooters? If so, you're in for a treat as there are many more mods available. *Counterstrike* is perhaps the most popular *Half-Life* mod out there. It's a multiplayer mod that focuses on teamwork and delivering highly realistic gameplay. With all





MAKE MINE FRIED *Gunman* is one of the most-promising *Half-Life* total conversions.

new weapons, maps, and models it alone can sustain your *Half-Life* fix for months—if you've a good internet connection, of course. If single-player's your thing there are some excellent choices available for download, such as *USS Darkstar* and *They Hunger*. There's also a new total conversion—all new levels, weapons, textures, original sound and music, and models—in the works called *Gunman*, which may be out in the next month or so.

Another simple way to pump some fresh air into online death-matching is to install some new player models and skins—models are the actual animated polygonal "people" you frag; skins are the textures that decorate them. From



ME SO HORNY Instill fear in online opponents with the *Quake III* "Horny" model.

Wilma Flintstone to Darth Maul you'll find a user-created model and/or matching skin for just about every character you can imagine. There are hundreds of skins and models available for *Half-Life* (see sidebar) and *Quake II* and several *Quake III* models as well. Perhaps the coolest of these are the Horny and Ben models, which depict the Horned Reaper from *DungeonKeeper* and Ben from *Full Throttle*, respectively.



MEMOREX And it's great fun to smash-up in *Need For Speed: High Stakes*.

Since action games are perhaps the most popular games to play online, there are more mods available for them than for any other game genre. However, that does not mean you're outta luck if you're into racing games, flight simulations, or real-time strategy games—not at all!

It's a New Car—No, it's a Plane!

Need for Speed: High Stakes is one of the coolest racing games ever—we can't stop playing it! In a clever move to keep it fresh on our hard drives, Electronic Arts periodically makes new cars available for download on its Web site. There are currently five free cars to wreck, and these include the BMW M Roadster and M Coupe, the Aston Martin DB7, the Lister Storm, and Ferrari 360 Modena. The downloads are large (approximately 5MB), but installing the cars is a breeze and it's a ton of fun to master these great racing beasts.

Or, if vehicular combat—à la *Interstate '82*—is more your style, you can add scores of custom paint jobs to your ride that will make you stand out in multiplayer battles.

PC pilots that own either of Microsoft's latest sims—*Flight Simulator 2000* or *Combat Flight Simulator*—are in for a similar treat. Both of these sims are highly user-configurable—thanks to their open design and the availability of third-party tools, such as those from Abacus. Therefore, lots of new aircraft, aircraft gauges, scenery, missions, and scenarios are out there just begging for your attention.

BROWSE OUR MOD-MAKERS DIRECTORY, IT'S FREE!

In general, it's always wise to start looking for mods on the game developer's Web site. From there you can find almost everything from the now-standard links pages. Here are some good sites to find the mods mentioned in this story.

www.needforspeed.com/hs_pc *NFS: High Stakes* car downloads
sims.xtremesimz.com Nice fan site with new wall/floor/skin textures for your Sims—can be slow
www.ensemblestudios.com/aoeii/index3.shtml Ensemble Studios *Age of Empires II* site
ageofkings.com/blacksmith/index.shtml Good *Age of Empires II* fan site with maps and map-making tips
www.highway82.com Good fan site for everything *Interstate '82*
www.combatfs.com/warbirds/cfs.shtml Excellent resource for user-created *Combat Flight Sim* goodies!
www.davemiddleton.com An excellent fan site for both *Combat Flight Sim* and *FS 2000*
www.tiberian.com/files/mods.shtml Good fan site for user-created *Tiberian Sun* mods
www.geocities.comTimesSquare/Avatar/4161/utmnm.html *Unreal Tournament* fan site
www.planetunreal.com All things *Unreal Tournament*-related
www.planetquake.com All things *Quake*-related
www.planethalflife.com All things *Half-Life*-related
www.planetwheeloftime.com All *Wheel of Time*, all the time
www.quake3mods.net The name says it all
gunman.telefragged.com Home page for the *Half-Life Gunman* mod
www.vahallaq3a.com Home page for the *Valhalla Quake III* mod
www.yahoo.com Search for "Game Mods" and you'll have happy hunting

FEEL THE FORCE You can now pit Naboo Starfighters and Droid Fighters against each other in *Combat Flight Sim.*



Megatron Attacks in *Half-Life*



7 of 9 Kicks Ass in *Half-Life*



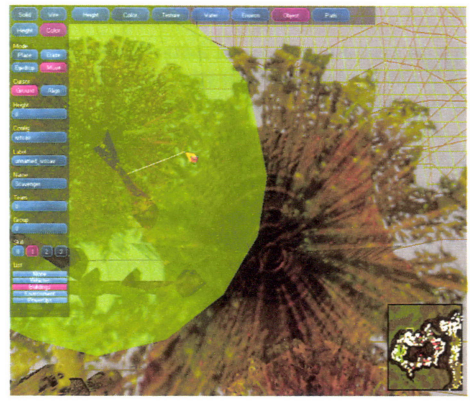
She'k Cone Heads



BATTLEZONE II EASTER EGG

A Good Mission Editor Can Be Hard to Find, So Here's How to Get to It in *Battlezone II*

You'd never know it from the box or the documentation that comes with the game, but there's a mission editor included with *Battlezone II*. Accessing it can be a little tricky, however. You can edit the game's desktop shortcut to include /edit in the command-line parameters, which would look like this: "X:\Activision\battlezone2\bzone.exe -/Edit" (where "X" would be the letter for the drive where you have the game installed). Launch the game and load a mission, then use "Ctrl-E" to launch the editor. Or, launch the game, load a mission, then hit Ctrl and the tilde (~) key to go to the console and type "GAME.CHEAT BZEDITOR" (without quotes). Then hit Ctrl and the tilde key again to close the console, and then type "Ctrl-E" to launch the program. The editor is not officially supported, but you'll find documentation for it at **www.pandemicstudios.com/bzii/editor_documentation.rtf**.



New aircraft for *Flight Simulator 2000* include the Beechcraft A-80 Queen Air, the Boeing 707, Lockheed C-130A, and the Douglas DC-3.

Combat pilots will relish the new planes for *Combat Flight Simulator*, which include various Hellcats, Corsairs, Zeros, and bombers. However, the user-created missions and scenarios (which often include new aircraft) are the main attraction. For instance, one lets you fly a Naboo Starfighter against hordes of Droid Fighters!

Strategic Modifications

Last but by certainly no means least is the strategy category of modifications. *Age of Empires II* addicts will find a new Conquistador scenario in which they can take on the role of Cortez as he explores, invades, and conquers the Americas. You'll also find an AI Editor for *Age of Empires II* that will let you modify how all the civilizations act.

As you'd expect, there are also plenty of new mods for *Command & Conquer: Tiberian Sun*. These come mainly in the form of user-created scenarios with new maps that modify existing units or even unlock units that were hidden in the original game! Some cool ones to start with include: *TS Gold, Tiberium In The Myst,* and *Old CNC.*

Finally, there are tons of toys online for fans of *The Sims*. It hasn't been out for long, but there were new skins available for *The Sims* long before the game was finished—courtesy of *SimShow*, a utility made available by Maxis that lets you design skins for your Sims and export them into the game. Skins for Darth Maul, 007, The Flash, and Scary Spice are but a few of the ones available. *The Sims HomeCrafter* is another Maxis utility that you can use to create custom walls and floors for your Sims' houses.

If you're not ambitious enough to do this yourself, rest assured that there are already hundreds of user-created wall and floor textures that you can download. Then there's *FaceLift*, a utility that lets you generate custom faces for your Sims.

More Than You'll Ever Use

There are plenty of creative mods out there that you can use to administer CPR to games that are losing life fast. Indeed, many games' lifespans have surely been extended a year or more simply because mods are still surfacing for them. We've given you just the tip of the iceberg. So start modifying your games!





Review Nuts & Bolts

WHAT DOES IT ALL MEAN? | Here's the Rosetta Stone of Our Game Reviews

We test our games on 240 different system configurations. Yours is guaranteed to be one of them.

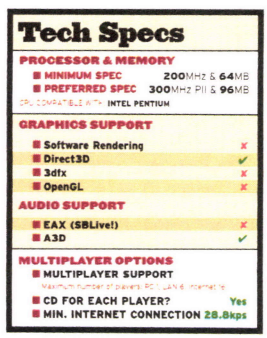
Sure, that super-cool new 3D action/adventure might get five stars on a Pentium III/500MHz screamer, but what good does that do your Pentium/166MHz-using ass? Now you'll get that important little piece of info before you buy. What a concept!

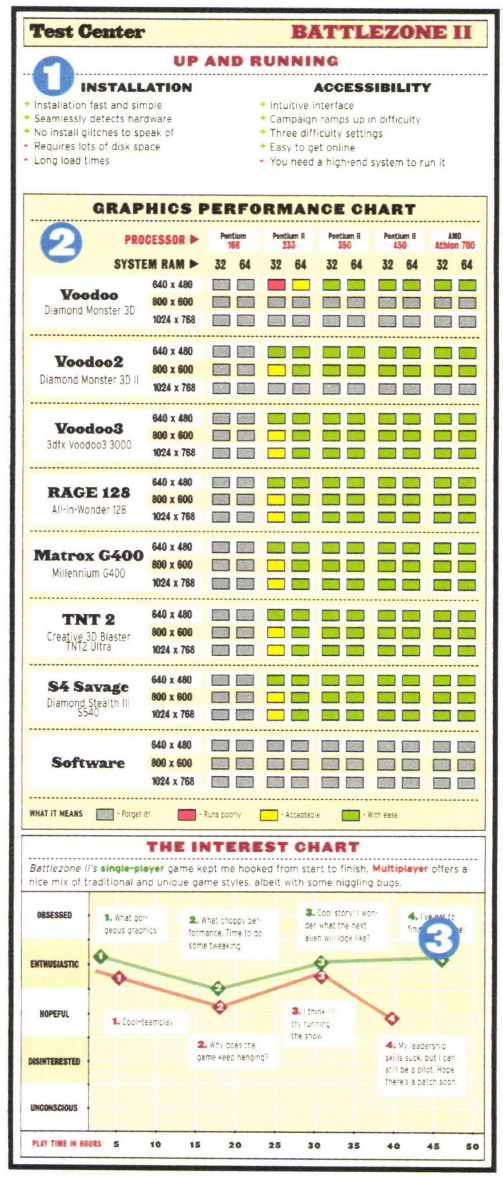
Golden Award

So what if a game is the ultimate in its genre—a true classic? Then it gets the *incite* Golden Award, the most coveted award in the computer gaming industry. Only the best can get one. When you see it, you know the game is good.

Tech Specs

Here's your at-a-glance box-out of the game's requirements. We outline the minimum processor and memory requirements, CPU compatibilities, audio and graphics support, and multiplayer options. Do all players need to have a copy of the game to play multiplayer? We'll tell you here.





1 Up and Running

Finally, an easy-to-understand pros-versus-cons listing of what makes a game a breeze (or utter hell) to install and play. Say goodbye to those "Why won't this damn thing install?" blues.

2 Graphics Performance

This is the meat and potatoes of the Test Center. Here's where you find out if your system will run that hot new game we've been raving about for months. Simply cross-reference your processor and RAM configuration with the graphics card you're using. You'll then be able to see how the game will play at three different resolutions on your computer.

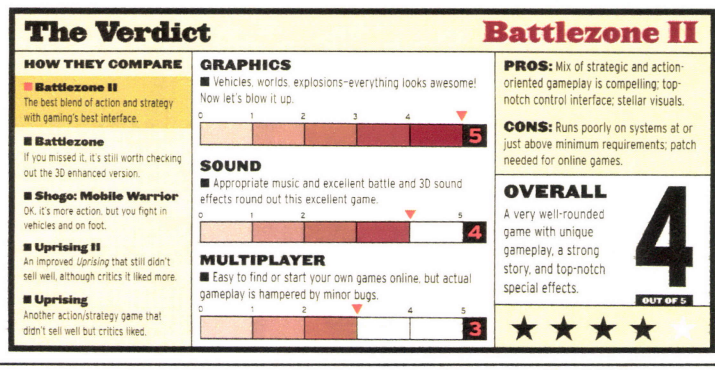
If your preferred settings box is gray, you haven't got a chance in hell. If it's red, you'll likely be watching a slide show. If it's yellow, the game will run fast enough to be enjoyable, although you might see some jitters. If you're in the green, you're golden. The game will run as smooth as silk, and you will be one happy gamer.

3 The Interest Chart

Ever play a game that's a blast at the beginning and then about four hours in starts to feel about as fun as a third-world prison camp? So have we. That's why we devised this nifty little chart to tip you off to the point at which our interest level took a nosedive (if it ever did). We even break this up into two sections: solo play and multiplayer. Why do we do all this? Because we care.

The Verdict

This is where we tell you what we think about the game. First, we show you how the game in question stacks up against other similar games in the genre. We then line out how the game's graphics look, how its sounds sound, and how its multiplayer option plays. We also give you all the game's pros and cons and an overall score (which ranges from one to five stars). This overall score is not an average of the graphics, sound, and multiplayer scores. Rather, its how the entire package performs when taken as a whole. Our score is honest and fair, and since it's coming from *incite PC Gaming*, you can take it as gospel!





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OUR HERO Squall embarks on a journey through time and space in the epic that is *Final Fantasy VIII*.

It's Finally Here!

PC Gamers Have Waited a Long Time For **FINAL FANTASY VIII**–No Longer!

FACT FILE ■ PUBLISHER **Squaresoft** ■ DEVELOPER **Squaresoft** ■ GENRE **RPG** ■ PLAYERS **1** ■ ESRB RATING **Teen** ■ PRICE **$39.99**

GAME GLANCE

- 4 Discs
- 11 Playable Characters
- 18 Guardian Forces
- 30+ Hours of Gameplay
- 1 Leonardo DiCaprio Look-alike

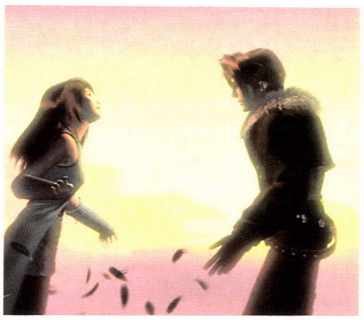
You've heard the hype, and it's all true: *Final Fantasy VIII* is one of the best RPGs ever made. But while the PlayStation version blew gamers away, the PC version is just very, very, very good.

By Bryan Stratton

If you played *Final Fantasy VII*, the premise of *Final Fantasy VIII* won't shock you: You control a moody young man with a convoluted past. His name is Squall Leonhart, and although he looks uncannily like a certain *Titanic* pretty boy, he's actually a student at the Balamb Garden military academy, which trains teenagers to become magic- and weapon-wielding mercenaries called SeeDs. It sounds like a Kathy Lee Gifford operation, but it turns out that the SeeDs have a secret purpose that you'll soon discover.



DOG BREATH Cerberus, a Guardian Force, guards you from his post–the gates of Hell.



YOUNG LOVE Squall Leonheart and Rinoa Heartlily have a good thing going.

Of course, Squall isn't alone in his adventure. He's initially joined by fellow SeeD candidates like Seifer, Squall's trenchcoated rival, Zell, a hotheaded youth who lets his fists do the talking, and Selphie, a giddy young transfer student from another Garden. There's a total of 11 playable characters in the game, although some are only controllable in certain scenes.

Final Fantasy VIII is more emotionally complex than its predecessors. The interactions between the characters often revolve around serious issues of love, betrayal, loss, and memories. At times, *Final Fantasy VIII* comes off as a little hokey,

but most of the time it succeeds in drawing you in and bringing the characters to life.

Use the Force(s)

Instead of acquiring Materia to use special abilities in *Final Fantasy VIII*, you "junction" magical Guardian Forces to your characters. The Guardian Forces allow you to draw magic from enemies, cast that drawn magic, use items, and summon the Guardian Force into combat as a spell that does massive amounts of damage. Since there's no limit to the number of times you can summon a Guardian Force, combat is sometimes weighted too much in your favor. But Guardian Forces will not solve all of your problems.



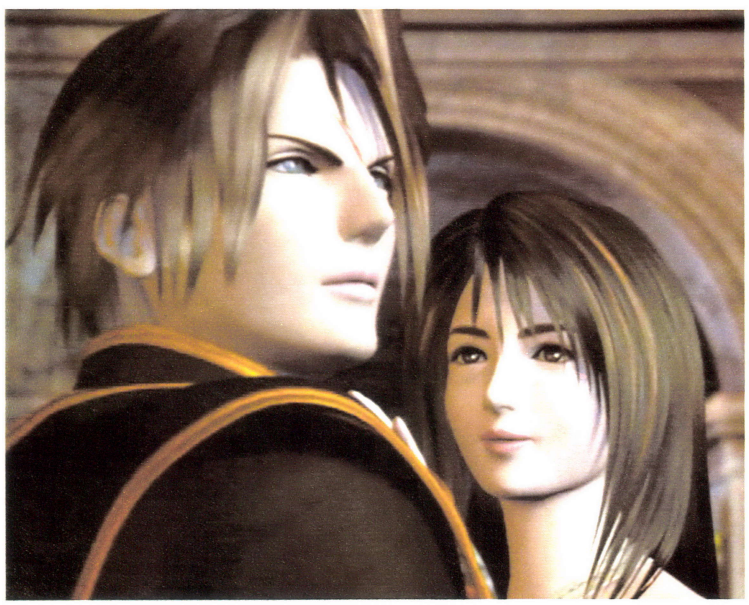
TRAIN-ING EXERCISE They might be young, but the SeeDs are no strangers to danger.

The cut-scene movies look only slightly better on the PC than they did on the console, and although the characters' skins and animations are smoother on the PC, they're not stunningly crisp.

Also, the game is a direct port of the PlayStation version, and so your keyboard takes the place of the gamepad. Redesigning the interface so that it allowed for the use of a mouse would have simplified gameplay a bit more and made *Final Fantasy VIII* feel more at home on the PC.

Interactions between *Final Fantasy VIII's* characters often revolve around serious issues of love, betrayal, loss, and memories.

But in the end, *Final Fantasy VIII* is proof that a popular game can live up to its own hype. The naysayers and the nitpickers can focus on the tiny flaws that even the best games can't escape, but to say that *Final Fantasy VIII* is anything less than astounding would be like saying the Mona Lisa is merely "okay" because da Vinci forgot to give her eyebrows.



I'M READY FOR MY CLOSE-UP *Final Fantasy VIII's* cut-scene animation packs an emotional punch. Even if that emotion is the desire to punch Squall in his pretty little face.

CARD SHARK

FFVIII'S TRIPLE TRIAD

Sometimes Adventure Is All in the Cards You're Dealt



Square has replaced the tedious Chocobo races with a collectable card mini-game. Like the game of "Go," "Triple Triad" takes five minutes to learn and a lifetime to master. Each side of each card has a numerical value. Your goal is to place high-value cards next to lower-value cards, which causes the lower card to "flip" into your possession. Whoever winds up with five or more of the nine cards at the end of the game wins. The rules vary from place to place in the game, and because the cards can be "refined" into other objects, only master card players can discover the best secrets.

Tech Specs

PROCESSOR & MEMORY

MINIMUM SPEC	200MHz & 32MB
PREFERRED SPEC	266MHz PII & 64MB

CPU COMPATIBLE WITH: INTEL PENTIUM, AMD K6-2

GRAPHICS SUPPORT

Software Rendering	✓
Direct3D	✓
3dfx	✓
OpenGL	✗

AUDIO SUPPORT

EAX (SBLive!)	✗
A3D	✗

MULTIPLAYER OPTIONS

MULTIPLAYER SUPPORT	
Maximum number of players: PC 1, LAN N/A, Internet N/A	
CD FOR EACH PLAYER?	N/A
MIN. INTERNET CONNECTION	N/A

The Verdict

Final Fantasy VIII

HOW THEY COMPARE

Final Fantasy VIII
Damn close to an interactive movie, *FFVIII* is emotionally compelling.

Final Fantasy VII
The first *Final Fantasy* to capture the PC world's interest.

Baldur's Gate
RPGs don't get any more classic than this game based on *D&D*.

Darkstone
Mindless fun with a mindless computer-controlled adventuring buddy.

Ultima IX Ascension
Maybe it's good. But I couldn't get it to run long enough to find out.

GRAPHICS

The cut-scenes are spectacular, but the in-game graphics aren't much of a leap from the PlayStation.

0 1 2 3 4 5 — 4

SOUND

Nobuo Uematsu's soundtrack score makes the experience cinematic, but the sound effects are just average.

0 1 2 3 4 5 — 4

MULTIPLAYER

Final Fantasy VIII does not support multiplayer.

0 1 2 3 4 5 — X

PROS: The best damn turn-based RPG you're likely to see this year; breathtaking movies; great characters.

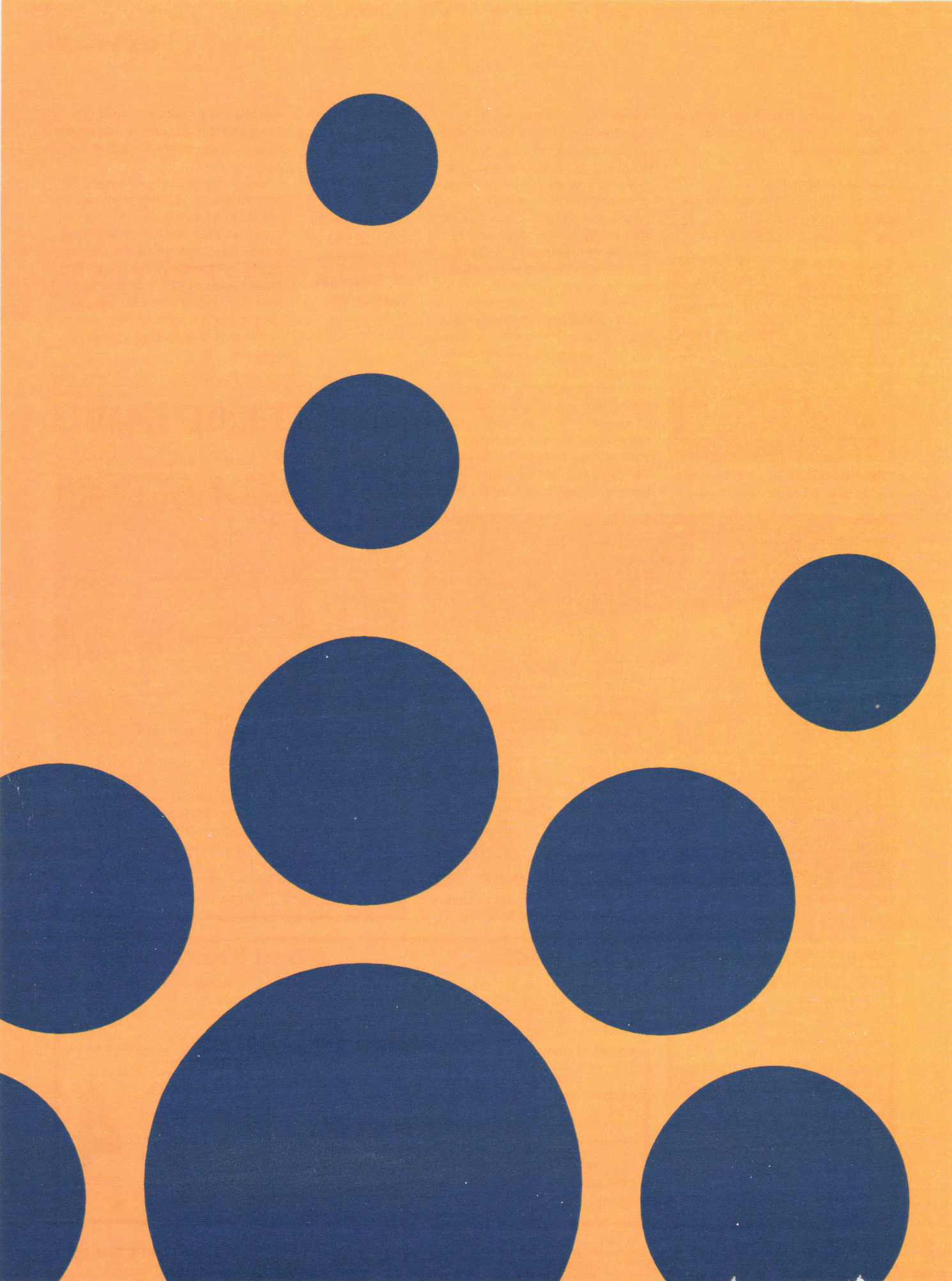
CONS: It feels too much like a console game running off of an emulator; no mouse support.

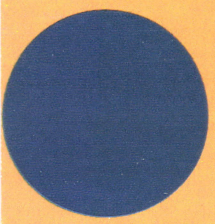
OVERALL

Every serious RPG gamer must experience *Final Fantasy VIII*, though not necessarily on a PC.

4 OUT OF 5

★ ★ ★ ★

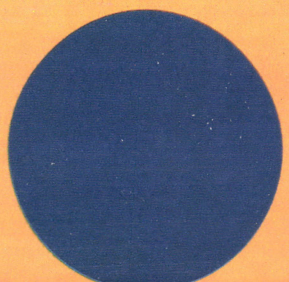


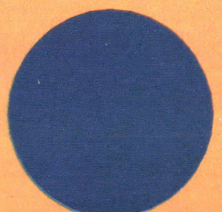


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Your Own Real World

THE SIMS Turns You Into the Director of Your Own Personal Sit-Com

FACT FILE ■ PUBLISHER **EA** ■ DEVELOPER **Maxis** ■ GENRE **Simulation** ■ PLAYERS **1** ■ ESRB RATING **Teen** ■ PRICE **$49.99**

GAME GLANCE

- 150 Objects to Play With
- 5 Carpool Vehicles
- 10 Residences to Manipulate
- 1,000,000 Mundane Tasks to Accomplish
- 1,000,000 Sim People to Control

The next logical step for the *Sim* series is a game that lets us create and control people. That game is finally here, and it's a game unlike any you've played before.

By Steve Klett

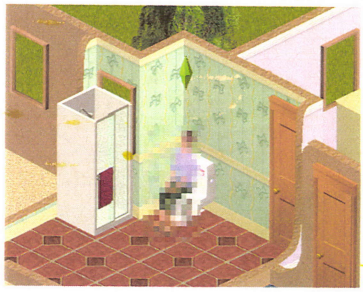
Live, love, and work. Lie, cheat, and steal. Love thy neighbor. Covet thy neighbor. Party with thy smokin' neighbor in the hot tub whilst your betrothed is at work bringing home the bacon....

These are just a sampling of the things you can do in *The Sims*, a groundbreaking simulation from the folks that brought us the *SimCity* series. This time, instead of creating and running a virtual city, you're tasked with playing God and ruling over a neighborhood full of virtual people—known, of course, as Sims.

Domestic Bliss

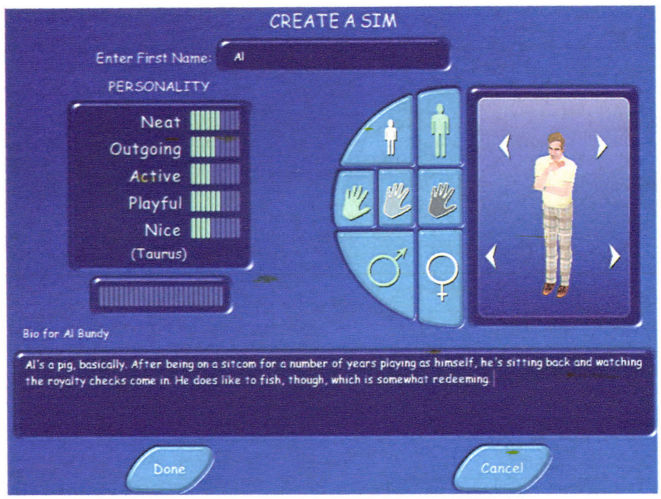
You decide what type of home Sims will live in, what career path they take, who they live with, and who they marry. You decide if they have children, if they go potty on the potty or on the floor, if they clean up after themselves, if they have good hygiene or are pigs, and even whether each Sim lives or dies. Fail to manage them well, and their simulated lives may come to an abrupt end.

And let me tell you, after spending dozens of hours with them, you may get some satisfaction out of that outcome. These Sims will frustrate you, they'll annoy you, they'll drive you crazy. But in the end, they'll entertain you.



SIM LOAF PINCHERS Some things are better left un-Simmed.







MARRIED...WITH SIMS Feel like modeling your Sims after TV characters? Say hello to Sim Al and Peggy Bundy. Luckily for Sim Al, in *The Sims* there is no hanky panky. Instead, babies come via the Federal Stork Express. Too bad, it's fun hearing him whine about it all the time.



HELPING HAND Take our advice, hire a maid as soon as you can!

You can create a well-rounded family of Sims that just want to have a happy, normal life and climb the corporate ladder of success. (But what fun is that?) Or you can create an ill-mannered pickpocket that wants to see how many Sim relationships and households it can disrupt. Can't be a ladies' man or men's lady in the real world? You can here.

That said, getting started in *The Sims* can be a bit perplexing. There perhaps has never been a game as freeform as this. When you start the game there are a few pre-built domiciles of varying prices to choose from, as well as a few pre-set Sim families to move into them. Or you can create your own Sim families from scratch—customizing the personality traits of up to eight total family members—and move them into a home you design from the ground up.

At first you'll have barely enough Simolians to provide the bare essentials—bed, TV, shower, toilet, oven, fridge, etc. But if your Sims have career ambitions, you can eventually buy all sorts of things to improve their lives, such as hot tubs (Sims love 'em), big-screen TVs, pools, pinball machines, and basketball hoops. Along the way you can add new rooms and even a second story to your home to accommodate any new family additions.

Can't be a ladies' man or men's lady in the real world? You can here.

Overspend early on and you may have a penniless Sim with an empty fridge on your hands, and that's not good. Progress in the game is measured by the number of "family friends" a Sim has, its bank account, and how many toys it has to play with. This is largely contingent upon establishing and maintaining relationships with the other Sims in the neighborhood. And a big part of that is food. To be a good host, a



ROAMING HANDS Dating in the Sims is much like dating in real life. You invite a girl over, ply her with Merlot, put on Barry White, grab her ass, get slapped, and take a cold shower.

TRY IT BEFORE YOU BUY IT

SIM TASTE TEST

Not Sure if You Want to Take the Sim Plunge? Go to the Web Site and Give It a Test Drive

Maxis has made some components of *The Sims* that will give you a flavor for the game available at **www.thesims.com**. These include two mini-games that let you raise a Sim baby or—if you're not ready for that level of responsibility—some fish. The third component is called Chatterbox, and it lets you listen in on some Sim conversations. (Be forewarned, however, that taken by themselves the Sim's voices can be like fingernails on a chalkboard.)





GAME ON! After reading the latest issue of *incite PC Gaming*, Sims can't help but indulge one of their favorite pastimes—playing computer games. Now you know who plays as bots in *Unreal Tournament*.

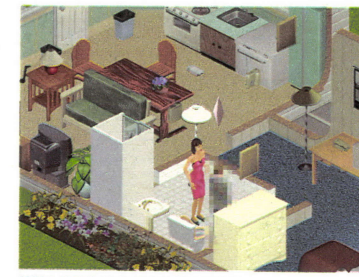
At first, *The Sims* appears to be amazingly simplistic, but it soon unveils a hidden cache of inner complexities.

Sim needs to have plenty of goodies on-hand to serve up—a well-fed guest is a prospective life-long pal.

Normalizing Social Network

However, striking up a relationship with another Sim is the easy part. That relationship must then be maintained. If you neglect a friend for too long, you'll eventually lose that friendship. For a single Sim, marriage should really be a goal as it brings two salaries and two bank accounts together under one roof, which of course will allow you to buy a bigger house and more toys. While same-sex marriages are not possible, polygamy is.

But getting two Sims to marry is easier said then done. First the relationship between two opposite-sex Sims must be nurtured to the highest level possible. Then a good amount of smooches, gifts, backrubs, and hugs, are needed. Then—if all the Sim moon, stars, planets, and tides are in alignment—a successful proposal is possible. (Babies arrive in stork fashion, so don't start hoping for a bedroom scene!)



HEY, HOW 'BOUT KNOCKING! Sims aren't the best at respecting other Sim's privacy.

A Sim's overall well-being is measured by many factors, including hygiene, hunger, energy, social, and fun. Social factors are the most important. If a Sim's not interacting enough with other Sims, it will not be happy. If it's not happy, it won't get promoted at work, find romance, or have children.

Unfortunately, this is where the game becomes a little too much like real life and bogs down a bit. There's simply too much micromanagement of mundane tasks required. There is so much, in fact, that finding time for your Sims to have fun can be difficult (sound familiar?). You have to make sure your Sims pay the bills, take showers, sleep, eat, and even that they relieve themselves. Sure, Sims have some will of their own and will do some of the above themselves. However, leave a Sim to its own devices for too long and you'll find a house riddled with trash, piddle puddles, dead plants, and unpaid bills. You can hire a maid, gardener, or repairman, but running an efficient household is still more monotonous than it needs to be.



PEAS IN A POD Wright advises that you should start your game with two Sims to make the game go easier.

FROM THE MAKER'S MOUTH

WILL WRIGHT SAYS

Five Tips to Get You Started Off the Wright Way

We asked *The Sims'* creator to give us his top five tips for making progress in the game—thanks, Will!

1. Get the best bed you can afford. Never underestimate the value of a good night's sleep for your Sims.
2. Don't be afraid to take a day off from time to time to develop friendships and skills you'll need to prosper.
3. Some personalities have a very hard time getting along; if you can't get two people to like each other maybe it just wasn't in the cards.
4. Get the best objects you can afford, and try to match them to your Sim's personality (active Sims don't enjoy TV as much, playful Sims enjoy games more, serious Sims like to read). This will keep their mood high, which makes everything much easier.
5. Starting out with two Sims is probably the easiest starting position. One Sim can work while the other stays home maintaining the house and developing family friends. They can also provide social satisfaction for each other when you don't feel like entertaining the neighbors.

This is further compounded by the fact that there is no calendar in the game—there is no Monday, Tuesday, etc. Every day is the same, which means there are no weekends. To find free time, Sims are forced to skip work. If they miss two days in a row, they're fired. So you need to balance the time they take off with their need for income. Incorporating a calendar would surely have been difficult, as it would have required things like seasons and holidays being incorporated as well. (*The Sims II*, perhaps?)

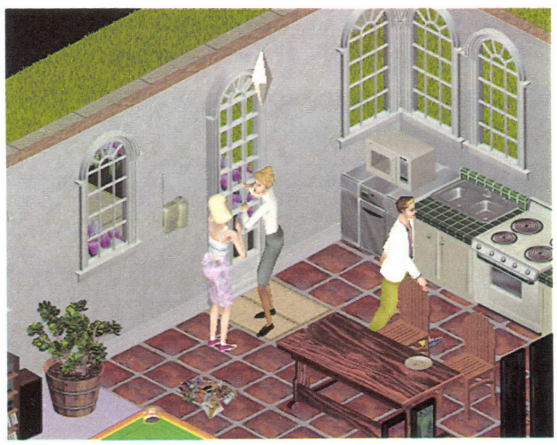
Minor bugs also detract from the fun. For example, Sims have a hard time navigating around a crowd of other Sims or objects in a room. If you've lined up a series of tasks for a Sim (you can issue up to eight orders at time for each Sim) they tend to forget them the instant they bump into something.

In addition, there's no multiplayer to speak of—think of what fun it would have been to go online with a Sim character you created and join a virtual world with other "human" Sims. However, there are a variety of tools and resources available online with which you can further customize your Sims.



FIRE! FIRE! FIRE! Anyone for a used patio bench, well-done? We don't need no water, let the mother burn.

These Sims will frustrate you, they'll annoy you, and they'll drive you crazy.



CAT FIGHT! Trust us, try not to flirt with the neighbor while your significant other is around. It gets ugly.

Reticulating Spines

However, it must be stated again that there's really never been a game like this before. And thus, we should focus on what is in the game rather than on what's missing. *The Sims* is a game that at first appears amazingly simplistic but soon unveils a hidden cache of inner complexities that really draws the player in and keeps him playing until the wee hours of the morning.

At one time or another, most of us have wondered what goes on under our neighbors' roofs. *The Sims* lets you be a virtual voyeur and indulge that curiosity to your heart's content. It even lets you go one step further by giving you the strings to each virtual marionette to create your own little soap opera. Just remember to step out into the real world once in a while too.

GOING TO THE CHAPEL

A DAY IN THE LIFE

What Was **Al Bundy** Like Before He Was Married With Children?

Just for kicks, in my Sim neighborhood I created a single **Al Bundy** and **Peggy Wanker**, and I imagined what they were like before marriage and children ruined their lives. As you can see from the pics, Al was actually on the fast track to a successful business career—he dressed well, kept himself clean, had a wide range of friends, and was quite the ladies' man. Then he had one too many shots from the bar and accepted Peggy's offer of marriage. Dork!



JUST SAY NO Peggy proposes to Al one night after much time at the bar.



TOO LATE Al throws caution to the wind and makes the mistake of his life....

Tech Specs

PROCESSOR & MEMORY

MINIMUM SPEC	233MHz & 32MB
PREFERRED SPEC	300MHz PII & 64MB

CPU COMPATIBLE WITH: INTEL PENTIUM

GRAPHICS SUPPORT

Software Rendering	✓
Direct3D	✗
3dfx	✗
OpenGL	✗

AUDIO SUPPORT

EAX (SBLive!)	✗
A3D	✗

MULTIPLAYER OPTIONS

MULTIPLAYER SUPPORT	
Maximum number of players: PC 1, LAN N/A, INTERNET N/A	
CD FOR EACH PLAYER?	N/A
MIN. INTERNET CONNECTION	N/A

The Verdict

The Sims

HOW THEY COMPARE

SimCity 3000
Think *The Sims* at the macro level. You can build entire metro areas.

The Sims
Think *SimCity* at the micro level. You get down and dirty with your people.

Pharoah
Think *SimCity* only in Egyptian times. You're the pharaoh, baby!

Caesar I-II-III
Think *Pharaoh* only in ancient Rome. These things are all similar.

Creatures
Think raising furry Norms instead of Sims. Also think boring.

GRAPHICS

Solid 2D visuals with nice attention to detail throughout. One more level of zoom would have been nice, however.

0 1 2 3 4 5 — 4

SOUND

Sim voices are grating. Excellent mix of music and use of positional sound effects.

0 1 2 3 4 5 — 4

MULTIPLAYER

The Sims does not support multiplayer.

0 1 2 3 4 5 — X

PROS: Totally wide-open game design leaves how to play up to you; graphics are fun.

CONS: See above. A more in-depth tutorial is needed; too much micromanagement; some path-finding bugs.

OVERALL

A frustrating, yet extremely addictive game that breaks new ground. You'll like it, we promise.

5 OUT OF 5

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Chasing Shadows

Keep Tabs on International Terrorism in **SHADOW WATCH**

FACT FILE ■ PUBLISHER **Red Storm Entertainment** ■ DEVELOPER **Red Storm Entertainment** ■ GENRE **Strategy** ■ PLAYERS **1** ■ ESRB RATING **Mature** ■ PRICE **$39.99**

GAME GLANCE

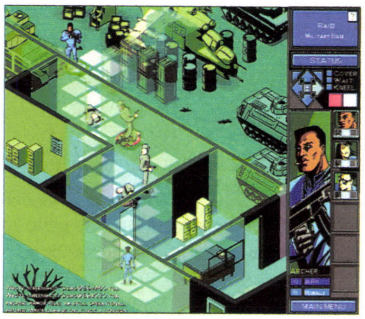
- 18 Mission Maps
- 8 Mission Types
- 6 Operatives
- 54 Commando Skills
- 0 Tolerance

Do you love it when a plan comes together? Well, you may not be leading The A-Team, but in Red Storm Entertainment's new turn-based strategy game *Shadow Watch* you're in charge of an elite anti-terrorist squad.

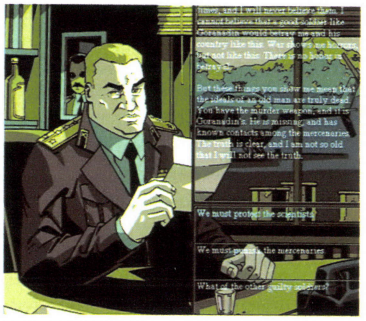
By Darren Gladstone

Okay hotshot, pop quiz: You've got six specialists at your command to keep terrorists from sabotaging a space station. What do you do? What do you do?

Well, the first thing you're going to have to do is attempt to grow yourself a brain. Turn-based strategy games often require a lot of thought and planning. Where real-time strategy games like *StarCraft* have you racing to beat the clock—and your opponent—you've got all the time in the world here. However, that's what makes these games tough: Do you want to leave your soldier out in the open, have him kneel behind cover, or scan what's behind the next door? The choice is yours—and that choice can have deadly consequences.



MEET MR. BUCKSHOT It's my turn to fire and your turn to die a grisly death, mofo.

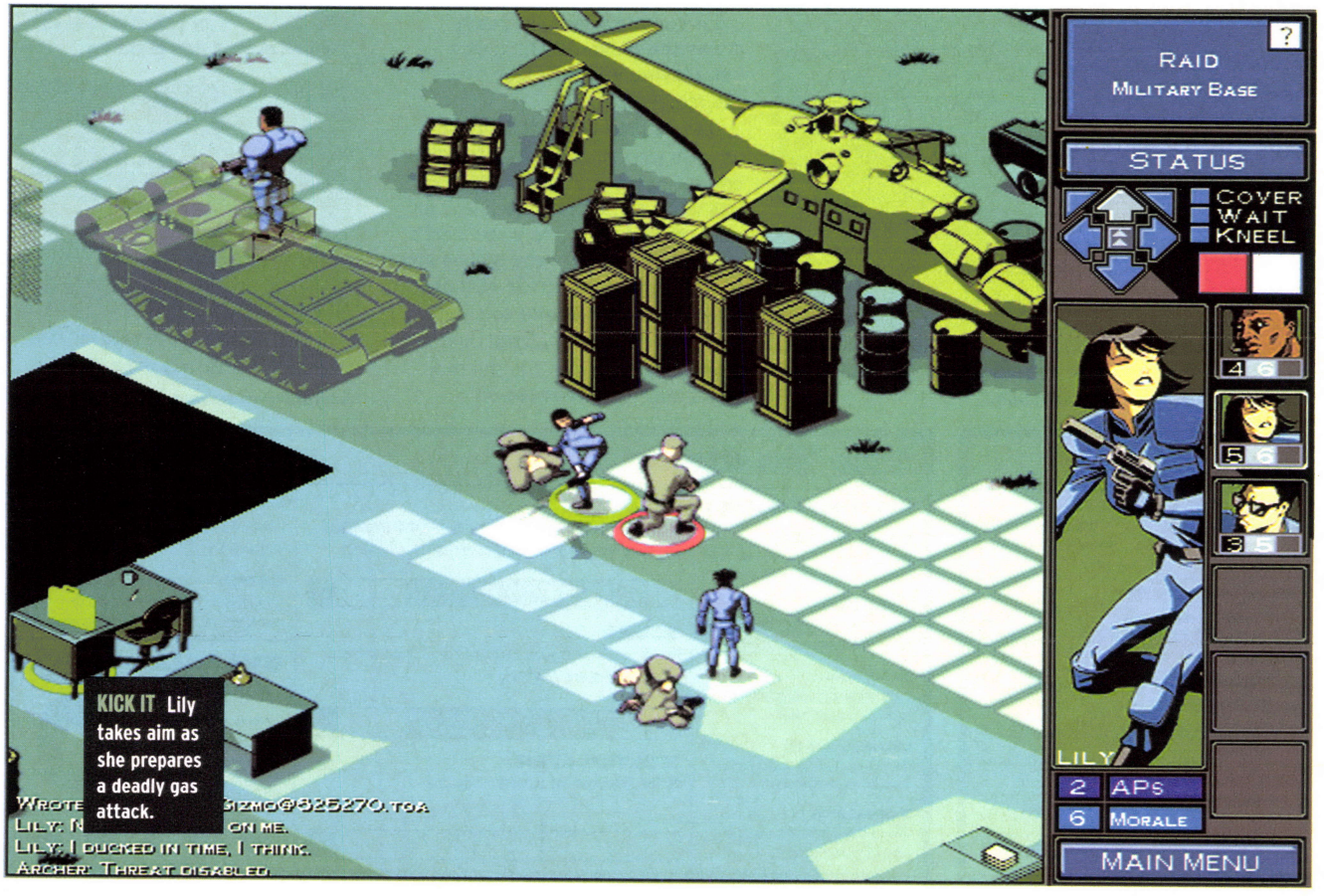


MULTIPLE CHOICE Interrogations will lead you on different missions—choose wisely.

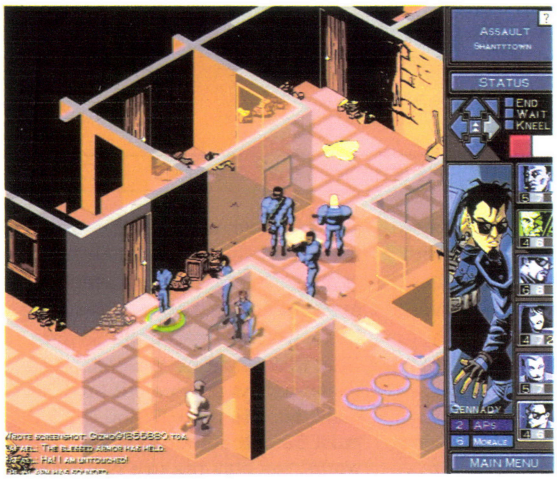
Each map in *Shadow Watch* is stylistically drawn to look like a pulp-fiction graphic novel, and the dark mood and comic book graphics immerse you into the plot. The flip side: the game doesn't support randomly generated maps as an option.

Choose Your Play Style

You can play *Shadow Watch* in two ways: As a complete campaign to



KICK IT Lily takes aim as she prepares a deadly gas attack.



DIRTY HALF DOZEN Six Characters, 18 levels, one mission: Kick ass and take the names of those whose ass you've kicked.

uncover the conspiracy storyline, or as an attempt to save the world one mission at a time.

The full campaign mode offers many play elements that borrow slightly from role-playing games. You start by investigating different locals and interrogating officials. The choices you make determine the missions you take. And those mission objectives give every map new life. You can have full-blown combat in Raid, Assault, and Defend missions; rely on stealth in Raze, Surveillance, and Theft modes; or select a mixed squad to kidnap or free hostages in Hostage missions.

In the single-mission generator, you can change the map, the number of guards, and who you're taking with you. You'll then get into the heat of battle with just a few button presses.

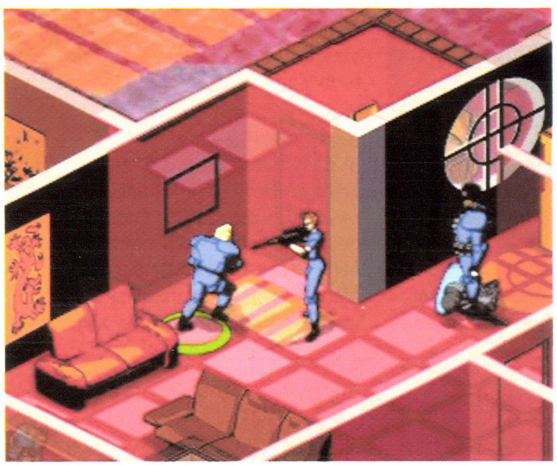
The game's campaign mode borrows slightly from RPGs.

Who Watches the Watchmen?

Each squad member at your command has unique skills and abilities. There's a sniper, a brawler, a demolitions expert, a ninja-in-training, a hacker, and the fearless leader of the crew. The rich biographies detail the strengths and weaknesses of each character and help add to the overall flavor of the game.

Then you can further develop your characters' traits. As mentioned earlier, you can acquire skills, but you must choose them carefully. New abilities will either open up new missions or force you to use different tactics in combat.

Shadow Watch gets you into the action quickly. Unfortunately, that action didn't hold my interest for long. The campaign mode has role-playing elements, but only does a mediocre job at implementing them. If we could explore the world or have more character interaction, *Shadow Watch* could have provided a much more compelling experience. The absence of multiplayer options is also a shame, but not as much of a shame as an unexplored story.



PARTY CRASHER Not wanting to be left out, Bear decides to bust in on the keg party next door. Paaaaarty!!!!!

TWO-SECOND STRATEGY SESSION

STAY IN SHADOWS

Here are a few good ways to clear a room in *Shadow Watch* **without getting capped.**

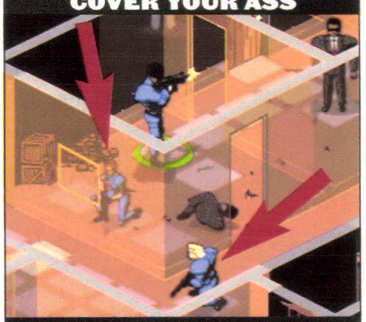
KEEP IT SAFE

1. Steer clear of windows. Remember genius, those things work both ways.

2. Have Grenady scope out the room before you enter. The hacker's special ability is to scope out life signs...even behind walls and closed doors.

3. Silence is golden. Missions are obviously a whole lot easier if guards don't know you're lurking around, so have Archer and Lily do all the killing at first. They are silent, but deadly.

COVER YOUR ASS



4. Cover your ass. Before a room breach, have characters set to lay down cover fire (see arrows above).

5. Tag teams are key. Have teams of two covering doors and let the character with more action points lead the charge into a room.

6. Low profiles are a must. Try to have your heavy weapons folks (Bear, Rafael, and Maya) lay low until the alarm sounds. Then the kid gloves are off.

Tech Specs

PROCESSOR & MEMORY
- MINIMUM SPEC: 133MHz & 32MB
- PREFERRED SPEC: 133MHz PII & 32MB

CPU COMPATIBLE WITH: INTEL PENTIUM

GRAPHICS SUPPORT
- Software Rendering ✓
- Direct3D ✗
- 3dfx ✗
- OpenGL ✗

AUDIO SUPPORT
- EAX (SBLive!) ✗
- A3D ✗

MULTIPLAYER OPTIONS
- MULTIPLAYER SUPPORT: N/A
  Maximum number of players: PC 1; LAN N/A; Internet: N/A
- CD FOR EACH PLAYER? N/A
- MIN. INTERNET CONNECTION N/A

The Verdict — Shadow Watch

HOW THEY COMPARE

- **X-Com** One of the oldest and most revered turn-based strategy games ever.
- **Jagged Alliance 2** Lead a team of mercs in this complex but fun game.
- **Incubation** Compelling characters, missions, story, and gameplay.
- **Odium** An excellent blend of RPG storytelling, character advancement, and strategy.
- **Shadow Watch** A good attempt at simplifying turn-based strategy.

GRAPHICS

Stylistic noir cartoon look gives it a gritty graphic novel feel. You'll feel like you're playing a comic book.

0 1 2 3 4 5 — **4**

SOUND

Allegedly made to support most major formats, but this jack of all trades sounds awful.

0 1 2 3 4 5 — **1**

MULTIPLAYER

Unfortunately, *Shadow Watch* does not support multiplayer gaming.

0 1 2 3 4 5 — **X**

PROS: Good concept; excellent single-mission generator; good character development.

CONS: The full campaign mode is over far too quickly, and we would have liked a richer world to explore.

OVERALL

A solid first-effort, but *Shadow Watch* could be better if the campaign mode was cleaned up a little.

3 OUT OF 5

★ ★ ★

Bucking the Trend

BATTLEZONE II is better than its precursor in every way, but will it sell?

FACT FILE ■ PUBLISHER **Activision** ■ DEVELOPER **Pandemic Studios** ■ GENRE **Action/Strategy** ■ PLAYERS **1-16** ■ ESRB RATING **E** ■ PRICE **$49.95**

GAME GLANCE

- 24 Missions
- 20 Unique Units
- 6 Worlds
- 25 Weapons
- 1 Awesome Interface

***Battlezone* was a rare breath of gaming fresh air. Unfortunately, it didn't catch on. But not willing to give up with just one try, Activision has delivered a gorgeous sequel that should earn a permanent spot on more gamers' hard drives.**

By Steve Klett

Activision's original *Battlezone* had suits and game critics the world over scratching their heads. It offered what was—and still is—the best control interface in gaming, a compelling blend of strategic and action gameplay, a good story, and decent visuals. Yet, inexplicably, nobody bought it. Still, Activision's confidence in the title was obviously strong enough to try, try again with *Battlezone II: Combat Commander*, which improves upon its predecessor in every way.



CHEESEBURGER PLEASE The Constructor will build most anything you want to order.

Activision knew it had something special with *Battlezone* and apparently chalked up the sales to marketing and channel issues, allowing Pandemic Studios (an Activision offshoot) the opportunity to make a bigger and better sequel without requiring a wholescale shift in design philosophy.

And what a design philosophy! Indeed, it would have been difficult for Pandemic to make *Battlezone II* more like the competition, as it is one of those rare games that truly deserves the term "unique." *Battlezone II* offers a hybrid gaming experience that blends equal parts of strategy and action served up on a high-end visual platter.

The Skinny

In *Battlezone*, the U.S. and U.S.S.R. were embroiled in a nasty war for resources during the Cold War period. But this war was anything but cold. Waged in secret across the planets of Earth's solar system, the war was for control of an alien resource known as Bio-metal—a living metal that thinks, remembers, and changes shape. The U.S. used Bio-metal to create a superior fighting force, which defeated the Soviets. Now, in *Battlezone II*, an alien enemy threatens to wipe out humankind, and the U.S. and U.S.S.R. must band together to save the world. You play the role of a soldier in that war. As you delve deeper into the missions, more of the story and information unfolds.



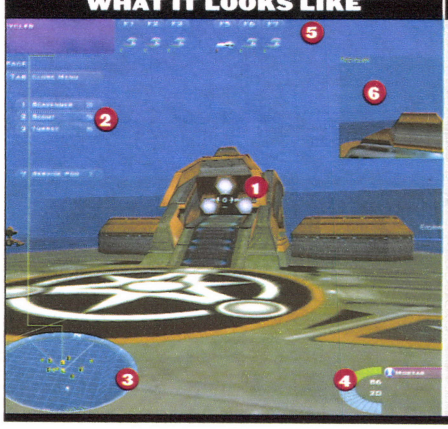
RED LASER, GREEN LASER Time to put some aliens on ice. Zap time, baby.

■ BLASTING ENEMIES FOR DUMMIES

GAMING MADE SIMPLE

Battlezone's interface is the **best in the biz**, allowing you to quickly and efficiently do everything the game asks of you.

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE



WHAT IT DOES

1. Smart Recticle: Simply point it at a target and fire or hit the space bar to bring up a list of possible orders.
2. You can then quickly issue an order by pressing the corresponding numeric key.
3. The topographical map shows a 3D view of the surrounding terrain, as well as the location of friendly and detected enemy units. Switch to a longer-range radar with the "R" key.
4. The weapons HUD shows which weapon you have selected, how much ammo you have for it, and its rate of regeneration (how quickly its ammo replenishes, if applicable).
5. You can use the function keys to group units and issue orders to units wherever they might be on the battlefield.
6. The target window shows you what unit you currently have selected, no matter what your orientation is to that unit.

***Battlezone II* offers a hybrid gaming experience blending equal parts of strategy and action served up on a high-end visual platter.**

You can play the game as a pilot or as a commander. If you choose the former, you must worry mostly about fighting and leave the heavy strategic choices up to the computer-controlled brass. Choose the latter and you will have to direct all the moves. You'll collect resources, build up your base and units, and direct your forces to successfully complete the mission objectives.

Battlezone vets will recognize this mode as the classic play style offered in the original game, which did not include the option to play as a pilot. This is a welcome option and a smart concession on the part of the developers, as it should make the game more appealing to a more casual, action-oriented gaming audience. As a pilot you still have to contend with some strategic decisions about how to use the resources you have available to you to beat a given mission, but in the end, it's your twitch skills that will win or lose the day. Whichever mode you choose, you'll have plenty to do—and it can really get hairy trying to issue orders, resupply, and fend off a horde of attacking alien scum. Thankfully, the in-game interface is simply brilliant, allowing you to do everything as efficiently as possible.



DIE, ALIEN SCUM, DIE! We like to imagine Jar Jar is piloting the enemy ships.



THE ARMY Join up, go to interesting planets, meet new life forms, and waste 'em.



Test Center — BATTLEZONE II

UP AND RUNNING

INSTALLATION

- \+ Installation fast and simple
- \+ Seamlessly detects hardware
- \+ No install glitches to speak of
- \- Requires lots of disk space
- \- Long load times

ACCESSIBILITY

- \+ Intuitive interface
- \+ Campaign ramps up in difficulty
- \+ Three difficulty settings
- \+ Easy to get online
- \- You need a high-end system to run it

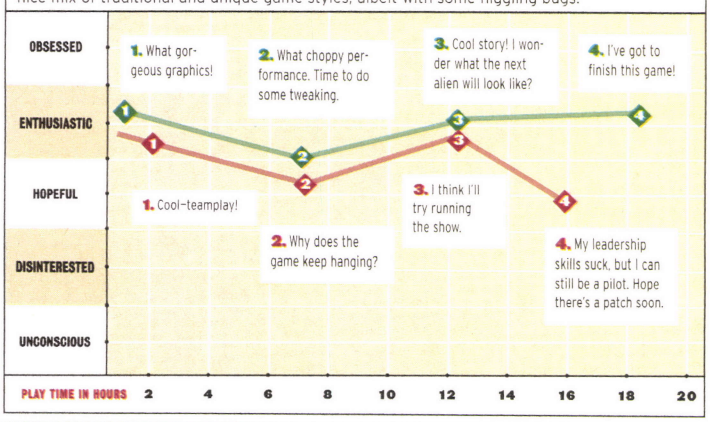
GRAPHICS PERFORMANCE CHART

		PROCESSOR ▶	Pentium 166		Pentium II 233		Pentium II 350		Pentium II 450		AMD Athlon 700	
		SYSTEM RAM ▶	32	64	32	64	32	64	32	64	32	64
Voodoo Diamond Monster 3D	640 x 480											
	800 x 600											
	1024 x 768											
Voodoo2 Diamond Monster 3D II	640 x 480											
	800 x 600											
	1024 x 768											
Voodoo3 3dfx Voodoo3 3000	640 x 480											
	800 x 600											
	1024 x 768											
RAGE 128 All-in-Wonder 128	640 x 480											
	800 x 600											
	1024 x 768											
Matrox G400 Millennium G400	640 x 480											
	800 x 600											
	1024 x 768											
TNT 2 Creative 3D Blaster TNT2 Ultra	640 x 480											
	800 x 600											
	1024 x 768											
S4 Savage Diamond Stealth III S540	640 x 480											
	800 x 600											
	1024 x 768											
Software	640 x 480											
	800 x 600											
	1024 x 768											

WHAT IT MEANS — Forget it! · Runs poorly · Acceptable · With ease

THE INTEREST CHART

Battlezone II's **single-player** game kept me hooked from start to finish. **Multiplayer** offers a nice mix of traditional and unique game styles, albeit with some niggling bugs.



Every once in while lightning would strike one of the trees, causing it to fall to the ground. It was so beautiful I almost forgot I was at war.



WHEN LIGHTNING STRIKES One wrong move and it's Kentucky Fried Hovercraft.

Wacky, Wonderful Worlds

You can't really compare the looks of *Battlezone* to those of *Battlezone II*. There's just so much more detail this time around. The original *Battlezone* used Activision's *MechWarrior II* engine, and thus its environments were sparsely populated. All the technical 3D buzzwords are there in *Battlezone II*, however: specular lighting, volumetric lighting, localized ground-fog, multiple lens flares, and water ripple effects (with special support for Pentium III machines).

All this jargon translates into environments that are incredibly realistic and much more immersive than before. The new weather effects are truly impressive as well. In one mission I found myself in a jungle landscape in the midst of a coppice of palm trees with a heavy rain pelting my windshield and fog rising from the ground. Every once in while lightning would strike one of the trees, causing it to fall to the ground. It was so beautiful I almost forgot I was at war.

The vehicles you pilot—as well as those you fight against—feature a diverse mix of unique designs adapted for various roles, such as



NOT YOUR GRANDMA'S WALKER Run into this bad boy online and you better be in a quicker ship!

long-range bombardment, recon, and close-range slugfests. Some are tracked or bipedal, but most use hover technology to skim above the surface at high speeds, which also enables them to slide laterally (or strafe) to dish out and avoid punishment. And the physics reflect whether you're piloting a heavy tank or fast recon unit with believable accuracy.

You can also jump out of your craft while in your base and enter various buildings—jump into a gun tower to blast away or into a relay bunker to get a god's eye view of the action, for instance. Certain missions will even require you to rely on just your own feet, handheld arsenal of weapons, and guile to survive. There are just a few of these missions, but they provide a welcome change of pace from the fast-paced vehicular action.



TIME FOR A NEW RIDE Hmmm...better check out the gas mileage before buying. Did you kick the tires? Uh...I mean...tracks.

Those new weather effects are truly impressive.

Online Shenanigans

With five different play styles, *Battlezone II* also brings a lot to the multiplayer table. In addition to traditional deathmatch, king-of-the-hill, and capture-the-flag options, you can engage in a strategic duel for control of resources against another team of human players. One member of the team acts as the commander and constructs and manages the base, while the others provide combat support.

Unfortunately, a variety of frustrating issues—such as system freeze-ups, server kicks, and frequently choppy performance even on fast connections—marred the appeal of Internet games at press time. However, a patch was in the works to address these blemishes.

Aside from the multiplayer issues, there's really not much else to complain about here—other than the typical high-system requirements issues (you'll need a decent PII system and high-end 3D card to enjoy the game) and occasionally vague mission objectives.

While there's not a lot that's new here, *Battlezone II* is a much-improved version of the original. It's more of the same for *Battlezone* vets—with much improved graphics and new story—which isn't necessarily a bad thing at all. But the upside is there aren't nearly enough people that fit that category, and those of you who are new to *Battlezone* are in for a treat.



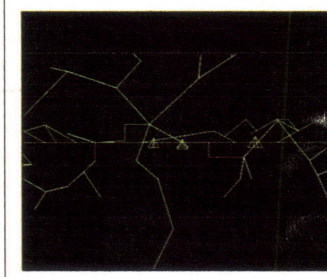
BOOM, THERE IT IS! That's one more alien that won't be home for dinner.

FLASHBACK 1980

BZONE EVOLUTION

It's hard to believe *Battlezone II* has evolved from a 1980 **vector-based arcade** game.

ARCADE VERSION



Did you know the military adapted *Battlezone* for training purposes?

FIRST PC VERSION



When *Battlezone* hit the PC in 1997, it looked quite a bit different.

Tech Specs

PROCESSOR & MEMORY

- MINIMUM SPEC 200MHz & 64MB
- PREFERRED SPEC 300MHz PII & 96MB

CPU COMPATIBLE WITH: INTEL PENTIUM

GRAPHICS SUPPORT

- Software Rendering ✗
- Direct3D ✓
- 3dfx ✗
- OpenGL ✗

AUDIO SUPPORT

- EAX (SBLive!) ✗
- A3D ✓

MULTIPLAYER OPTIONS

- MULTIPLAYER SUPPORT
  Maximum number of players: PC 1, LAN 6, Internet 16
- CD FOR EACH PLAYER? Yes
- MIN. INTERNET CONNECTION 28.8kps

The Verdict

Battlezone II

HOW THEY COMPARE

- **Battlezone II** The best blend of action and strategy with gaming's best interface.
- **Battlezone** If you missed it, it's still worth checking out the 3D enhanced version.
- **Shogo: Mobile Warrior** OK, it's more action, but you fight in vehicles and on foot.
- **Uprising II** An improved *Uprising* that still didn't sell well, although critics it liked more.
- **Uprising** Another action/strategy game that didn't sell well but critics liked.

GRAPHICS

Vehicles, worlds, explosions—everything looks awesome! Now let's blow it up.

0 1 2 3 4 **5**

SOUND

Appropriate music and excellent battle and 3D sound effects round out this excellent game.

0 1 2 3 **4** 5

MULTIPLAYER

Easy to find or start your own games online, but actual gameplay is hampered by minor bugs.

0 1 2 **3** 4 5

PROS: Mix of strategic and action-oriented gameplay is compelling; top-notch control interface; stellar visuals.

CONS: Runs poorly on systems at or just above minimum requirements; patch needed for online games.

OVERALL

A very well-rounded game with unique gameplay, a strong story, and top-notch special effects.

4 OUT OF 5

★ ★ ★ ★

South o' the Border

Join Cartman and His Buddies in **SOUTH PARK RALLY**–a Wholesome, Family Racing Game...Not

FACT FILE ■ PUBLISHER **Acclaim** ■ DEVELOPER **Tantalus Interactive** ■ GENRE **Racing** ■ PLAYERS **1-6** ■ ESRB RATING **Mature** ■ PRICE **$39.99**

GAME GLANCE

- 17 Types of Races
- 35 Characters
- 1,000 Saddam Hussein Cameos
- 19 million Cheesy Poofs
- 1 Anal Probe

If there's one thing that's lacking in PC games these days, it's brainless, lowbrow entertainment. Sometimes you're just in the mood to wield vomit and masturbation toys as weapons. Enter *South Park Rally*.

By Gary Eng Walk

Inspired by (read: stolen from) the premise of Nintendo's old *Mario Kart* games, *South Park Rally* is a race to the proverbial finish line, but puts equal emphasis on screwing over your opponents with a bevy of outrageous weaponry. These power-ups will be familiar to any fan of the show and are strewn across the tracks, waiting to be picked up by Rally cars whizzing by. And since this is *South Park*, your arsenal covers the entire spectrum of vulgarity, from gross to disgusting (how's that for range?)

Unleash Sparky the Dog and the frisky pup slows down the nearest car by proceeding to hump it. If STDs are your thing, you can sic Frida the hooker on unsuspecting foes and have her give them herpes. The list goes on: dildos are homing missiles, diarrhea tacos are land mines, cheesy poofs are smoke bombs, and anal probes are laser guns.



SHUT YOUR F.... Stan locks bumpers with Terrance and Phillip. Look out for the barf! Hey, that T&P license plate is really clever. Go, Stan, go!

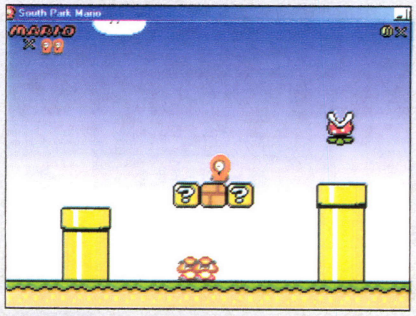
Acclaim ambitiously crammed in as many *South Park* characters as possible into the game. In addition to the Fab Four (Cartman, Kyle, Stan, and Kenny), there's also Chef, Jesus, Big Gay Al, Mr. Mackey, Scuzzlebutt, Terrance and Phillip, and many more. Even Satan and his guy-pal Saddam get into the action. Most are unavailable in single-player mode until you start winning contests. If you can't wait that long, grab a few buddies, fire up a multiplayer session, and engage in a game of "Ass Battle": all of

■ DON'T PAY TO PLAY CRAP—PLAY IT FOR FREE ON THE NET

OR IF YOU WANT THE REAL DEAL

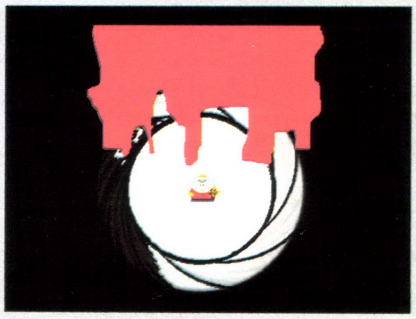
If you've been let down by Acclaim's commercial *South Park* PC game offerings, don't get discouraged: you have options. Those in the know head to *Southpark Games* (www.spgames.com) for their **interactive fix of the naughty cartoon series**.

SP MARIO



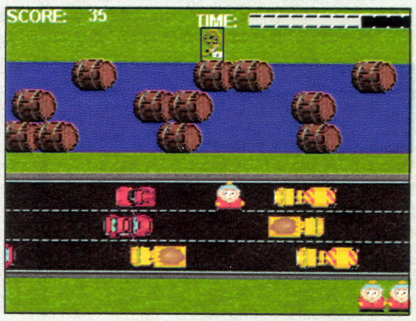
■ *South Park Mario* puts a hopping and running Kenny in seven Nintendo-style levels.

SOUTH PARK 007



■ The Nintendo rip-offs keep on coming. This one is based on the *Goldeneye* first-person shooter.

CARTMAN FROGGER



■ You guide Cartman through an intersection filled with vehicles. None respect his authori-tah.

South Park's denizens will be at your disposal.

Need for Speed This Ain't

Despite the diversity of the characters and the vehicles they drive (Cartman drives a Big Wheel; Jesus drives a puffy cloud), each car performs in exactly the same way: like a broken shopping cart. Whether you're using a controller or the keyboard, cars have abysmal turning radii and steer like they're in cookie dough, regardless of which one you choose.

Sloppy control is only part of the problem. The entire experience can easily confuse you because of some spurious level design. Paths tend to be too circuitous for their own good and often lead to dead-ends. *South Park Rally* tries to give some order to the chaos by providing brief directional arrows and a track map, but these aids are hardly a solution. More often than not, there's way too much going on at once. You're running into cows. A water balloon explodes on you. Mr. Hankey screams, "Hidey-Ho!" and begins to circle around you. Images of Saddam's face flash across the screen. Somebody make it stop.

Unleash Sparky the Dog and the frisky pup slows down the nearest car by proceeding to hump it.

Acclaim tried their best to endow the game with reply value. There are over a dozen ways to race, each of which follows a holiday theme. Some of the more entertaining ones are Read-A-Book Day, in which you (in the absence of Chicken Lover, who's busy promoting a literacy campaign) race against others to collect and deposit four chickens at the police station. In the Halloween race, you compete against the clock to deliver treats to a candy checkpoint. The other kinds of races offer only slight variations of this collect-the-(insert humorous object here)-and-zoom-over-a-checkpoint premise.

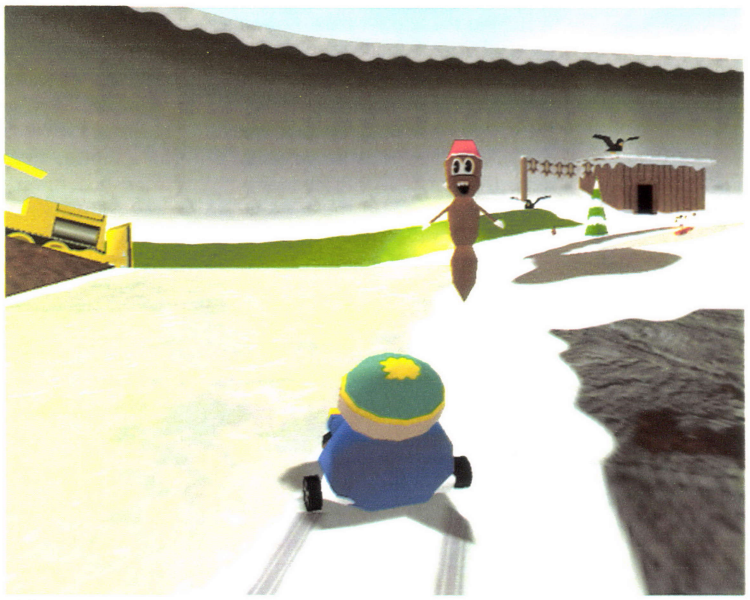
Even if you're a die-hard fan of the show, *South Park Rally* provides a few moments of hilarity at best. You'll be pleading for mercy and reaching for the escape key in about 10 minutes. Too bad you can't blame Canada for this one. Ah, what the hell, go ahead.



WHAT WOULD BRIAN BOITANO DO? Big Gay Al tries to keep his Volkswagon in gear.



SOIL THYSELF Stan is obviously spooked by what he sees. This cow is about to be on the wrong end of a slick turn.



POO ON YOU Mr. Hankey protects you from incoming projectiles. There's nothing like having your life saved by a giant, stinky, talking clump of feces.

Tech Specs

PROCESSOR & MEMORY
- MINIMUM SPEC 166MHz & 32MB
- PREFERRED SPEC 200MHz PII & 48MB

CPU COMPATIBLE WITH: INTEL PENTIUM, AMD K6-2

GRAPHICS SUPPORT
- Software Rendering ✗
- Direct3D ✓
- 3dfx ✓
- OpenGL ✗

AUDIO SUPPORT
- EAX (SBLive!) ✓
- A3D ✗

MULTIPLAYER OPTIONS
- MULTIPLAYER SUPPORT
  Maximum number of players: PC 1, LAN 8, Internet 8
- CD FOR EACH PLAYER? Yes
- MIN. INTERNET CONNECTION 28.8kbps

The Verdict — South Park Rally

HOW THEY COMPARE

- **Chef's Luv Shack** — Get some sweet, sweet lovin' in this trivia game inspired by *You Don't Know Jack.*
- **Midtown Madness** — Microsoft's urban racer has a few faults, but it's still a solid title.
- **The Dukes of Hazzard** — More fun than *South Park Rally*, plus you get to see a sexy Daisy.
- **South Park Rally** — Cartman and company deserve to get their licenses revoked.
- **Jeff Gordon XS Racing** — *South Park Rally* may be weak, but Gordon's game is still the king of crap.

GRAPHICS

■ Visually, there's nothing wrong with the game. *South Park Rally* supports fancy graphics options like 32-bit color.

0 1 2 3 4 5 — **4**

SOUND

■ Surprisingly, foul language is kept to a minimum. Producers didn't have enough fun with the sound.

0 1 2 4 5 — **3**

MULTIPLAYER

■ There always ends up being too much distance between you and the other racers, limiting the fun.

0 1 2 4 5 — **3**

PROS: An army of playable *South Park* characters; decent graphics; the Mexican Staring Frog weapon.

CONS: Humor gets old fast; multiplayer pacing is off; no real gameplay variety; sloppy controls.

OVERALL

Not very fun, really. Hard-core *South Park* fans should just save their money and buy *Chef's Luv Shack* instead, mmmkay?

2 OUT OF 5

★ ★

Rally to Win

Even if You're Not a Rally Racing Fan, You Can't Miss **MOBIL 1 RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP**

FACT FILE ■ PUBLISHER **Electronic Arts** ■ DEVELOPER **Magnetic Fields** ■ GENRE **Driving** ■ PLAYERS **1-8** ■ ESRB RATING **Rating: E (Everyone)** ■ PRICE **$29.95**

GAME GLANCE
- 22 Unique Cars
- 6 Locations
- 36 Stages
- 2 British Co-drivers

Because rally racing isn't wildly popular in North America, you might be wondering why we'd dedicate four pages to a review of a rally racing game in a magazine that sells mostly in North America. The reason is simple: This is one great racing game, rally or not.

By Tasos Kaiafas

It's a shame Americans don't enjoy rally racing. Particularly in England, rally racing draws a lot of attention. Last time I was in London, it seemed like there was a race on every night. Watching these guys blast down narrow back roads made up of gravel surfaces or covered in mud and snow is a riot. And what's even crazier is the crowds watching the race from the side of the road with nothing more than a rickety old wooden fence between them and certain death if a car loses control.

In rally racing, you don't race against other cars as much as you race against the clock. Races are broken up into six stages that run through the course of a day from morning until nightfall. The course goes through different locations, road surfaces, and weather conditions, and teams can only repair their cars after certain stages and for a limited time. The challenge is to drive aggressively enough to stay competitive but cautiously enough that your car is able to finish the race.

Driving a car in *Mobil 1 Rally Championship* is like trying to steer a stone as it skips over the water.



FREE ADS Believe it or not, this is not a Sony PlayStation 2 publicity screenshot.



SLIP SLIDING AWAY You'll have to know how to countersteer if you want to win.

You'll really learn what anticipation means, because you have to be prepared to enter a turn—or slide into it—way before you get there. Add a force-feedback driving wheel into the mix and you'll be begging for a break when you reach the end of the stage because you'll feel so rattled.

The Real Deal

Don't be fooled into thinking that *Rally Championship* is like the arcade game *Sega Rally*. In *Sega Rally*, Sega turns down the realism a few notches for the sake of ease and fun, and the tracks are extra wide in most places. In *Rally Championship*, as in most racing simulations, it will take you about an hour of practice just to get used to how the cars handle. And all of the roads are usually one lane wide, with high banks on each side that will cause your car to flip if you take a turn too wide.

Although *Rally Championship* is as realistic as any simulation, it's not too difficult to play. That's because instead of sacrificing realism for ease of play, *Rally Championship's* cars drive so realistically that you won't have much trouble getting used to them. The problem many people have with driving sims is that the car's physics are so abnormal and unpredictable that they can't quite get the hang of its handling. In well-made driving sims, the cars handle like you would expect them to, allowing you to get good at the game in no time.

However, that said, it took me a while to get the steering wheel set



WINDEX SHINE You can see the water streaking across the lens.



WET AND WILD Rally is a rough and wild kind of racing that's not for the queasy.

PHOTO BY MIKE HEWITT/ALLSPORT

up right, which is probably the game's biggest problem. The culprit was steering sensitivity. At the neutral sensitivity setting, the steering felt jerky. I was able to fix the problem by turning the sensitivity all the way down at first and then nudging it up a couple notches until it felt right. Fortunately, you can customize the controls, so you can set everything to your own liking.

My only other complaint is that your co-drivers (one male, one female) have strong English accents. It might take you a little while to figure out what in "the bloody hell" they are saying. But once you've run through the gamut of what they say a few times, you should be able to pick it up a little easier.

Driving a car in *Mobil 1 Rally Championship* is like trying to steer a stone as it skips over the water.

Buddy System

Once you get down their lingo, you'll be glad those co-drivers are there. In most driving simulations, you have to spend hours practicing on each course to become proficient on it. It takes a long time to learn the whole course—where all of the breaking points are, how fast a turn is, and the like. In *Mobil 1 Rally Championship*, your co-driver will tell you everything that's up ahead.



COUNTRY ROAD This bucolic setting is the perfect place to push the pedal to the metal and let 'er rip—just watch out for any stray cattle.



SUNDAY DRIVER This is no quiet stroll through the countryside.

Test Center — Mobil 1 Rally Championship

UP AND RUNNING

INSTALLATION

+ Very simple installation process
+ few steps to go through
+ Detects hardware easily
+ Reasonable hard drive space
+ No install glitches

ACCESSIBILITY

+ Can create and save your own driver setup
+ Manual explains rally racing well
- Narrow roads are unforgiving for the inexperienced
- Need to adjust steering wheel sensitivity

GRAPHICS PERFORMANCE CHART

		Pentium 166		Pentium II 233		Pentium II 350		Pentium II 450		AMD Athlon 700	
PROCESSOR ▶											
SYSTEM RAM ▶		32	64	32	64	32	64	32	64	32	64
Voodoo Diamond Monster 3D	640 x 480										
	800 x 600										
	1024 x 768										
Voodoo2 Diamond Monster 3D II	640 x 480										
	800 x 600										
	1024 x 768										
Voodoo3 3dfx Voodoo3 3000	640 x 480										
	800 x 600										
	1024 x 768										
RAGE 128 All-in-Wonder 128	640 x 480										
	800 x 600										
	1024 x 768										
Matrox G400 Millennium G400	640 x 480										
	800 x 600										
	1024 x 768										
TNT 2 Creative 3D Blaster TNT2 Ultra	640 x 480										
	800 x 600										
	1024 x 768										
S4 Savage Diamond Stealth III S540	640 x 480										
	800 x 600										
	1024 x 768										
Software	640 x 480										
	800 x 600										
	1024 x 768										

WHAT IT MEANS — Forget it! · Runs poorly · Acceptable · With ease

THE INTEREST CHART

Mobil 1 Rally Championship's **single player** game modes are varied enough to keep you playing for a while, but its **multiplayer** games don't have as much to offer.

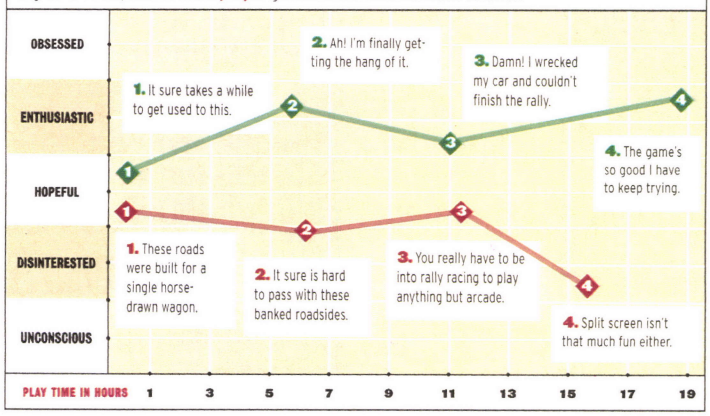




PHOTO BY CLIVE MASON/ALLSPORT

Just because you might live in **North America** doesn't mean you can't get into SCCA rally racing. Here are some local events.

April 14-15	Oregon Trail-Tillamook, OR
May 5-6	Rim of the World-Palmdale, CA
June 2-3	Susquehannock Trail-Wellsboro, PA
July 28-29	Maine Forest-Rumford, ME
August 25-26	Ojibwe Forests-Bemidji, MN
September 29-30	Prescott Forest-Prescott, AZ
October 20-21	Lake Superior-Houghton, MI
June 23-25	RallyUSA FIA Asia-Pacific Rally Championship-CO

For more information go to www.scca.org

You don't have to memorize and practice driving in every stage. If you simply pay attention to what your co-driver says, you can still be competitive.

Turns are measured in five degrees, with one being the most gradual and five being a right angle, plus hairpins. You'll also be told about upcoming hazards and how far away everything is.

For example, a typical statement from your co-driver is, "100 left one, into right three, caution fence, into hairpin." Translated, this means 100 meters ahead lies a gradual number-one left turn that immediately leads into a sharper number-three right turn, followed by a fence that you have to drive through, and then into a hairpin. What this means for you is you don't have to memorize and



NO CHAINS And you thought those wet gravel roads were bad.

practice driving in every stage. If you simply pay attention to what your co-driver says, you can still be competitive. There are also signs on the road that will tell you what the upcoming turn is like.

If you want a fresh driving game with cars that handle predictably and are grounded in their environment, with enough variety to keep you playing for a long time, you have to give *Mobil 1 Rally Championship* a try—it's a blast, mate!



GRAB YER RUBBERS Check the cool droplet effects on the windshield.



BURN RUBBER You'll stick to the road and the chicks will stick to you.

Tech Specs

PROCESSOR & MEMORY

- **MINIMUM SPEC** 266MHz PII & 64MB
- **PREFERRED SPEC** 500MHz PIII & 128MB

CPU COMPATIBLE WITH: **INTEL PENTIUM, AMD K6-2**

GRAPHICS SUPPORT

Software Rendering	✘
Direct3D	✔
3dfx	✔
OpenGL	✘

AUDIO SUPPORT

EAX (SBLive!)	✔
A3D	✘

MULTIPLAYER OPTIONS

- **MULTIPLAYER SUPPORT**

Maximum number of players: PC 2, LAN 8, Internet N/A

CD FOR EACH PLAYER?	Yes
MIN. INTERNET CONNECTION	N/A

The Verdict — Mobil 1 Rally Championship

HOW THEY COMPARE

Rally Championship
Not only the best rally racing game for the PC, one of the best racing games, period.

NFS: High Stakes
Although it's not rally racing, the cars still have a similar feel on the open road.

Sega Rally
Much more of an arcade game, but it's a lot of fun against others.

Motocross Madness
There might not be cars in this one, but riding off-road is a blast.

Test Drive Off-Road 3
Neither a good simulation nor a good arcade racing game.

GRAPHICS

Rally Championship's graphics may not be as spectacular as *NFS: High Stakes*, but they still look realistic.

0 1 2 3 5 — **4**

SOUND

The great variety of effects when driving over different terrain really adds to the realism.

0 1 2 3 5 — **4**

MULTIPLAYER

Although it's awkward playing on the same split-screen computer, it's still a nice option to have.

0 1 2 4 5 — **3**

PROS: Some of the best car physics you'll find in a racing sim; cars handle predictably; six events mean lots of variety.

CONS: Time-consuming steering controller setup process; co-drivers' British accents annoying.

OVERALL

This will probably be one of the best racing games of 2000—even for non-rally-racing fans. Pick it up!

5 OUT OF 5

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Up From Relegation

INTERNATIONAL SOCCER 2000 Is a Decent First Attempt on Goal by Microsoft

FACT FILE ■ PUBLISHER **Microsoft** ■ DEVELOPER **Rage Software** ■ GENRE **Sports** ■ PLAYERS **1** ■ ESRB RATING **Everyone** ■ PRICE **$19.99**

GAME GLANCE

- 73 National Teams
- 7 Custom Teams
- 1 Player Only
- 8 Play Modes
- 0 Player Licenses

FIFA 2000 should be looking over its shoulder. For the first time, a competing soccer title is close to catching up with the reigning champion.

International Soccer 2000 is almost ready for a cup final.

By Joe Vallina



BOING!!! This Frenchman does some high flying, as evidenced by the cool shadows.

International Soccer 2000 is the newest game in Microsoft's line of low-cost sports titles (all of which run under $20). Microsoft is using this "budget" strategy to try to break EA Sports' iron grip on the sports genre, and, at least in the soccer realm, it is very close to succeeding.

International Soccer 2000's gameplay is generally fluid and fun. Players realistically sprint around the pitch and the AI players set up plays the way they would in the real world. Lob a pass over the opposing midfielders and your forwards will streak down the sideline and position themselves for a centering pass in front of the goal. Botch a goal kick and be prepared to have the ball rammed through the back of your net as the opposing forwards take full advantage of your blunder.



RIOT GOIN' ON With a stadium this packed, the cops will be working overtime.

At times you'll wonder what your defense is smoking when they all bunch up around the ball, and goalies occasionally become brain dead, but for the most part, these foul-ups don't impact the game's fun factor. The only potential game killer is a bug which prevents defenders from attacking you if you run in circles with the ball. But, if



SPREAD 'EM This Portuguese keeper should learn to keep his legs together.



HEADS UP The Spaniards try to head one to the back of the net. Take that, Frenchie! That World Cup win is history now!

you don't go around in circles trying to kill the clock, you won't notice this glitch.

The visuals in *International Soccer 2000* are average for the genre. Players look smooth enough to keep their appearance from distracting you from the game, but some of the animations leave a lot to be desired. Many times a player's foot never even touches the ball when he kicks it (as you'll notice on the instant replay of a goal). Also, some player motions are jerky and seem patched together.

The game's graphics can be tweaked for better performance. For instance, you can turn off the animated crowd and opt for a simple texture in the stands to make the game run more smoothly on a slow machine. You can also turn off other system-slowing details like the shadows (which look great, I might add) and the player details.

As you might expect, the teams' artificial intelligence roughly matches their skill in real life. No

Botch a goal kick and the ball will be rammed through the back of your net.

Latvia upsets of Brazil here, folks. Microsoft didn't secure the licenses for the real players, but you can customize the teams and individual players. So if you've got the time and gumption you can plug in all the correct names and stats. Of course if you are that hard-core, you'll probably just shell out the extra 10 bucks for *FIFA 2000,* which has all the correct names and numbers built right in.

The game features eight modes of play, but sadly, multiplayer is missing. This has been the downfall of all of the Microsoft budget releases, and it's a major letdown. Microsoft takes the easy way out here. It's too bad, because this omission really hampers the game's appeal.

FIFA 2000 is still the PC soccer champion. It has better gameplay; sharper graphics; and more clubs, leagues, teams, and players than does *International Soccer 2000.* But *International Soccer 2000* is good for an inexpensive, fun soccer game—just don't expect to play any office cups with your buddies.



RIDING DER BIKE This German has been to one too many Tours de France. Or at least that's what the English goalkeeper thinks.

■ ONLINE FOOTIE MADNESS

IN THE NET

U.S. soccer fans are at last free from the U.S. press blackout of the world's favorite sport.

CNN/SI



■ **www.cnnsi.com/soccer/world/index.html** This site, run by the editors of *Sports Illustrated,* is one of the best on the Internet.

FinalWhistle.com

■ **www.finalwhistle.com**
Covers the English Premier League and European football mostly.

CBS Sportsline Worldwide

■ **cbs.sportsline.com/u/worldwide/soccer/index.html**
Includes soccer news from 15 countries and Latin America. The catch: the country pages are in the local language.

NHS Soccer Links

■ **www.nhsoccer.com/links.htm**
This site lists every link imaginable for just about every league in the world!

Tech Specs

PROCESSOR & MEMORY

■ MINIMUM SPEC	133MHz & 32MB
■ PREFERRED SPEC	200MHz PII & 64MB

CPU COMPATIBLE WITH: INTEL PENTIUM, AMD K6-2

GRAPHICS SUPPORT

■ Software Rendering	✔
■ Direct3D	✔
■ 3dfx	✔
■ OpenGL	✘

AUDIO SUPPORT

■ EAX (SBLive!)	✔
■ A3D	✔

MULTIPLAYER OPTIONS

■ MULTIPLAYER SUPPORT
Maximum number of players: PC 1, LAN N/A, Internet N/A

■ CD FOR EACH PLAYER?	N/A
■ MIN. INTERNET CONNECTION	N/A

The Verdict — International Soccer 2000

HOW THEY COMPARE

■ **FIFA 2000**
This is the cream of the soccer crop. Still beats all comers into the pitch.

■ **FIFA 99**
If you can find this guy in your local bargain bin, snatch it right up!

■ **Intl Soccer 2000**
For $20, you can't go too wrong with this bare-bones title from Microsoft.

■ **World Cup 98**
For international play only, this *FIFA* sister game was great.

■ **Fox Sports Soccer 99**
Run as fast as you can from this monstrosity of a game.

GRAPHICS
■ The graphics aren't world class, but they don't suck, either. Great replay feature.
0 1 2 3 4 5 — 3

SOUND
■ Play-by-play commentary by British announcers Ron Atkinson and Jon Pearce is good, but crowd noise isn't.
0 1 2 3 4 5 — 3

MULTIPLAYER
■ In a giant misstep, Microsoft doesn't include multiplayer gaming in this title.
0 1 2 3 4 5 — X

PROS: Great action; great shadows; lots of options for a budget title.

CONS: AI marking bug; no real player names; graphics are only average; players' AI isn't the smartest ever seen; no multiplayer games.

OVERALL
If you are a casual sports gamer with a 20 burning a hole in your pocket, this title should suit you just fine.

3 OUT OF 5

★ ★ ★

Schindler's Hit List

In **MORTYR: 2093-1944** the History Books May Say the War's Over, but It's Not for You

FACT FILE ■ PUBLISHER **Interplay** ■ DEVELOPER **Mirage Media** ■ GENRE **Action** ■ PLAYERS **1 - 16** ■ ESRB RATING **Mature** ■ PRICE **$49.95**

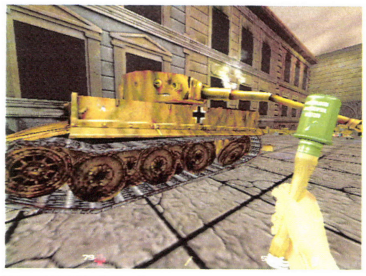
GAME GLANCE

- 21 Levels of Nazi-Stomping Fun
- 15+ Different Types of Fascists to Fight
- 8 Authentic WWII Weapons
- 5 Freaky Futuristic Armaments
- 1 Suicidal Editor

Being able to go back in time to wipe out the Nazi menace would sure make my mom proud. But is it worth the holocaust of playing *Mortyr*? Only if you want to set the time machine to gameplay and graphics from a few years ago.

By Darren Gladstone

Imagine my joy when I heard that I'd be able to step back in time and cap a few pixellated Nazis on my PC. As *Mortyr* came closer to release, I insisted...no, demanded that I get to review it, almost drooling at the possibilities. Was it my Jewish heritage, was it seeing *Saving Private Ryan* for the 20th time, or was it just that I've been waiting for a good WWII shooter since *Wolfenstein 3D*? Maybe it was a bit of all three. *Wolfenstein 3D*, after all, is not only one of the forefathers behind the current first-person shooter genre, but it also brought an interesting slant to the history of World War II. I guess I was hoping to re-live a little of that.



NEED VIAGRA? After you destroy the tank boss, its cannon goes limp.

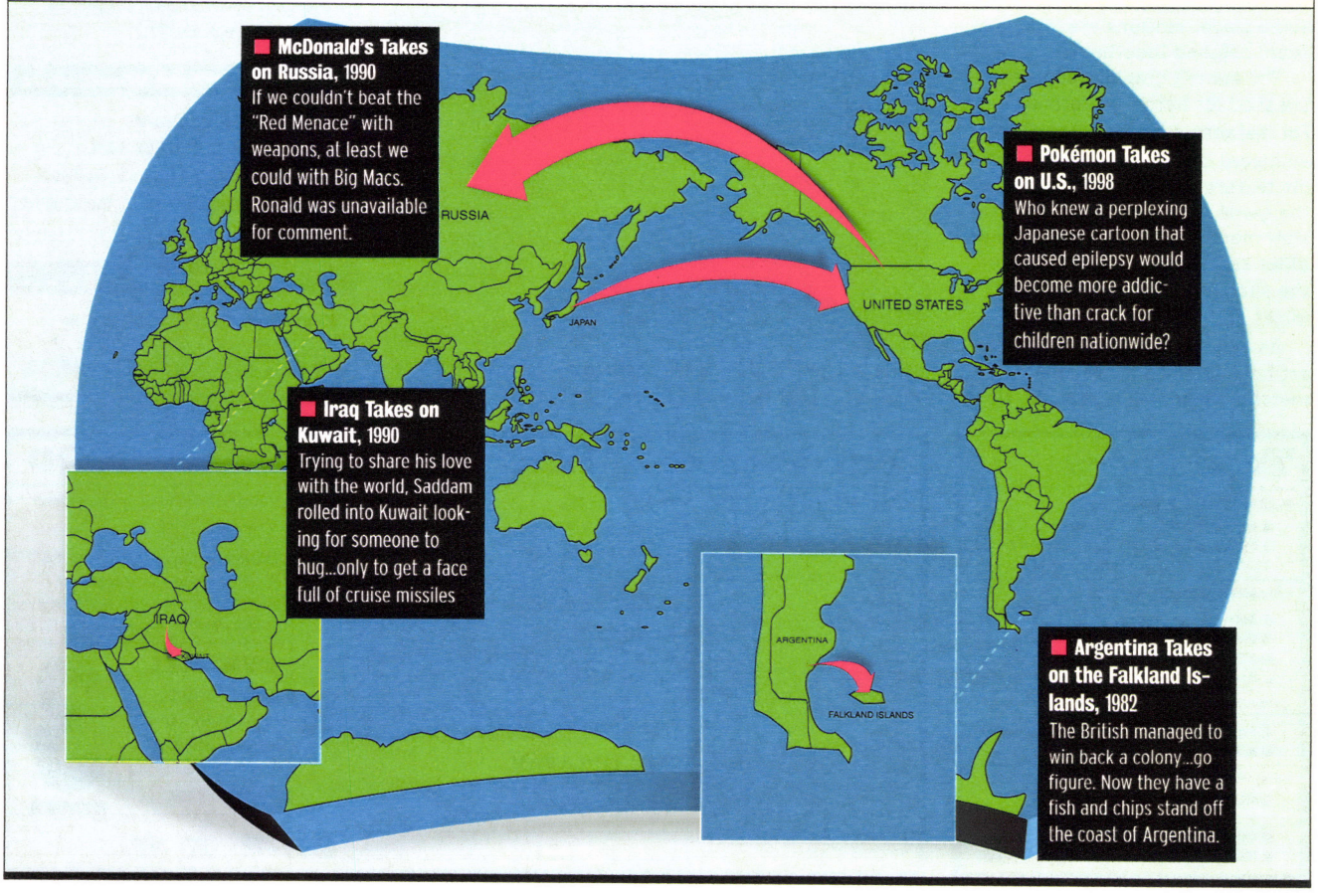
Halt! Your Papers, Please.

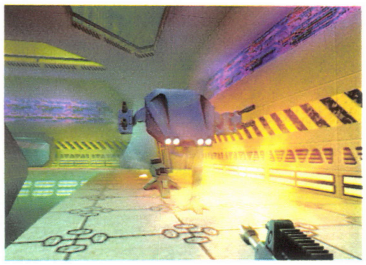
First, some revisionist history from hell: Germany won World War II. In 1944, the Nazis began using a mysterious new weapon and stopped the allied forces cold. Fast-forward about 150 years, and the world is falling apart. Storms are threatening the planet, the Nazis are still in power, and lederhosen are considered high fashion. Like any good

■ HISTORY 101

INVASIONS 'R' US

In *Mortyr's* alternate history, **Germany conquered the world.** Let's open up the history books and look at some real invasions.





I, ROBOT Futuristic meter maids don't appreciate you parking in handicapped spots.

time traveler, it's up to you to go back to the last days of WWII and stop this insanity.

The story's not bad, and—on paper—the game looks like it *should* be good. *Mortyr* boasts 21 levels set in past and future Germany; 13 assorted weapons, including classic Lugers and futuristic mind-control guns; six deathmatch maps; one capture-the-flag game; and even four two-player co-operative levels that you can play with a buddy. The problem comes, however, when you actually *play* the game.

While your character goes back to in time 1944 the gameplay sends you back to 1994.

While your character goes back to 1944, the gameplay sends you back to 1994. Nothing new, exciting, or innovative reared its head in this pathetic tribute to *Wolfenstein 3D*. All you do in the game is simply run through a level, shoot anything that moves, grab a key, and move on to the next level. The levels vary from pretty and ornate to chunky and just amazingly dull. That's what they get for using a dated proprietary 3D graphics engine. Even worse, the enemy artificial intelligence (or lack thereof) ranges from blistering idiot to ridiculous sharpshooter.



MR. CLEAN We just finished mopping up the floor, and now this guy comes along!



MEET MY LITTLE FRIEND Probably the most satisfying (and brainless) parts of the game: simply running and shooting.

Ve Haff Vays to Hurt You

The only thing more painful to deal with than the gameplay is the sound. Your character delivers cheesy, unfunny comments in a lame Schwartzenegger impersonation with clever one-liners like, "Gee, it's dark," and, "Hmm, big statue."

Even the ridiculous sound effects are weak. Sporadic background weather effects and vehicle sounds cut in and out, while some sounds make no sense. Slice at metal bars with a knife and they shatter like wood; kick a door and you hear a bullet ricochet.

End My Pain, Mach Schnell

Mortyr's story is fascinating. And with all the hype about this game getting banned from store shelves for its controversial Nazi-related content, it caught my attention. The plot could make for a good movie, and certainly a good game, but that isn't the case. In short, avoid *Mortyr* at all costs. We're just trying to prevent history from repeating itself.

Tech Specs

PROCESSOR & MEMORY

MINIMUM SPEC	200MHz & 32MB
PREFERRED SPEC	350MHz PII & 64MB

CPU COMPATIBLE WITH: INTEL PENTIUM

GRAPHICS SUPPORT

Software Rendering	✗
Direct3D	✓
3dfx	✗
OpenGL	✗

AUDIO SUPPORT

EAX (SBLive!)	✓
A3D	✓

MULTIPLAYER OPTIONS

MULTIPLAYER SUPPORT
Maximum number of players: PC 1, LAN 16, Internet 16

CD FOR EACH PLAYER?	Yes
MIN. INTERNET CONNECTION	56k

The Verdict

Mortyr: 2093-1944

HOW THEY COMPARE

Unreal Tournament
A thin plot but with superior gameplay and different play modes.

Half-Life: OpFor
A great add-on game with a deep story in this man vs. man vs. alien epic.

Quake III: Arena
Super-fast gameplay and excellent visuals, but not as many game options as *UT*.

Kingpin
Realistic gang warfare with enough cursing to earn the "Mature" rating.

Mortyr: 2093-1944
Change history...or make it by actually getting through the entire game.

GRAPHICS
The graphics are bipolar at best. Very pretty at some points, just plain ugly at others.
0 1 **2** 3 4 5

SOUND
The horror...the horror. If a game's sound is going to be this bad, why even bother putting it in?
0 **1** 2 3 4 5

MULTIPLAYER
We like the cooperative mode, but why so few maps? Really weak level design, to boot.
0 1 **2** 3 4 5

PROS: A good storyline that could very well have created an ongoing series or movie plot.

CONS: From abysmal sound to average graphics and poor gameplay, *Mortyr* is a well-rounded disappointment.

OVERALL

Before playing *Mortyr* please remember that any time spent on this game is lost forever. Nein! Nein! Nein!

1 OUT OF 5

★

Twisting Some Trees

BOARDERZONE Will Have You Shredding the Slopes Like Craig Kelly on Crank

FACT FILE ■ PUBLISHER **Infogrames** ■ DEVELOPER **Housemarque** ■ GENRE **Sports/Action** ■ PLAYERS **1-8** ■ ESRB RATING **Everyone** ■ PRICE **$39.99**

GAME GLANCE
- 6 Crazy-ass Riders
- 5 Play Modes
- 3 Regions
- 9 Courses
- 20 Sick Tricks

I was loath to play any of the snowboarding games for the various console systems for fear of giving the editors over at *incite Video Gaming* something to gloat about. My patience paid off: *Boarderzone* for the PC was well worth the wait.

By William O'Neal

With winter in full swing and the Winter X Games behind us, my desire to grab my Burton and head to the slopes has been boundless. However, California winters being what they are—drought-ridden—the only respite in sight seems to be that of the digital variety. At least *Boarderzone* provides an excellent virtual ride.

Boarderzone's four event types—Race, Pipe, Big Air, and Time—offer enough variety to hold you over until you can actually get your nappy ass to the slopes. Also, the fact that competition is either time- or score-based means that there's always room for improvement...without having to spend all that time in the hospital learning from your mistakes.



GETTIN' ILL Makin' half pipe magic on the virtual slopes.



COPY EDIT THIS! *incite* Copy Editor Pete Babb puts his moves to the test.

This is one of those addictive titles that you'll be embarrassed to admit that you enjoy as much as you do. The event types that sucked up most of our precious deadline time were the Race modes, which are "Boarder X"-style free-for-alls between six riders.

What makes straight-up racing so compelling is the fact that winning relies on achieving the rare combination of flawless riding, perfect technique, and picking the right line. There's nothing like hitting a tree a hundred yards away from the finish line to move you from first to fourth in the standings. Likewise, the Pipe and Big Air competitions are frustrating, yet so addictive you'll forget all about your crack pipe.

While few activities can rival the fun of actually snowboarding, *Boarderzone* does about as well as possible in simulating the experience. Add to that the fact that the game supports multiplayer for up to eight players over a LAN and the possibilities are endless. If you're in the mood to hit the slopes in the comfort of your home, here you go.

Tech Specs

PROCESSOR & MEMORY
- MINIMUM SPEC: 233MHz & 32MB
- PREFERRED SPEC: 333MHz PII & 64MB

CPU COMPATIBLE WITH: INTEL PENTIUM, AMD K6-2

GRAPHICS SUPPORT
- Software Rendering ✔
- Direct3D ✔
- 3dfx ✔
- OpenGL ✘

AUDIO SUPPORT
- EAX (SBLive!) ✘
- A3D ✘

MULTIPLAYER OPTIONS
- MULTIPLAYER SUPPORT
  Maximum number of players: PC 1, LAN 8, Internet N/A
- CD FOR EACH PLAYER? Yes
- MIN. INTERNET CONNECTION N/A

The Verdict — Boarderzone

HOW THEY COMPARE

Boarderzone
Play this game only if you can afford to lose some serious hours.

Episode I Racer
It's more exciting than Queen Amidala's nighttime wardrobe.

Re-Volt
Who doesn't love remote control cars? This game is a hoot.

Powerslide
Think *Re-Volt* but in the desert. Over a LAN this game is tons of fun.

Trickstyle
Sports only two-person multiplayer support, which isn't enough.

GRAPHICS
■ *Boarderzone* is about as close as you'll come to snowboarding without actually freezing your "extremities."
0 1 2 3 4 **5**

SOUND
■ The sound of catching an edge on the slopes is cool, but the game's techno music is less than inspiring.
0 1 2 4 5 **3**

MULTIPLAYER
■ Playing the game over a LAN is fun, but the lack of Internet play leaves a little to be desired.
0 1 2 4 5 **3**

PROS: This game is seriously addictive and is easily the most realistic snowboard game for the PC.

CONS: It's perhaps *too* addictive. Just be sure to crank down the prosaic techno music or risk brain death.

OVERALL
Sure, it has some faults, but snowboarders and lovers of extreme sports games everywhere will get a gang of kicks out of *Boarderzone*.

4 OUT OF 5

★ ★ ★ ★ ☆



A four-letter word worth repeating

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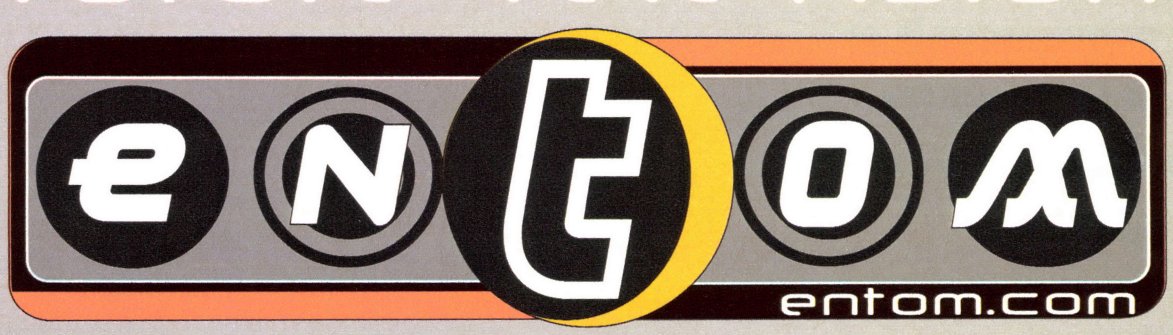


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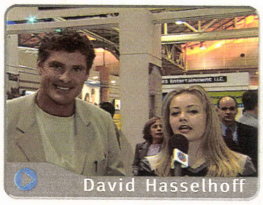

Jerry Springer

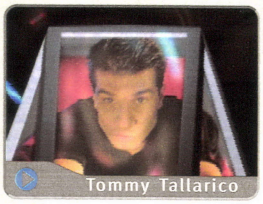

Kevin Sorbo

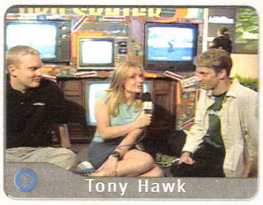

Shigeru Miyamoto

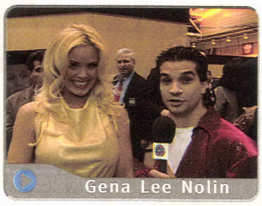

Spiderman

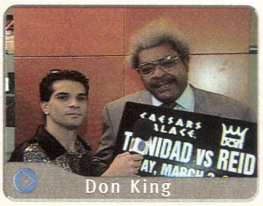

Stormtroopers


David Hasselhoff

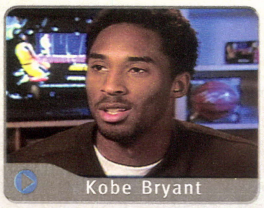

Tommy Tallarico


Tony Hawk


Gena Lee Nolin



Don King


Kobe Bryant

reviews
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previews
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CUTTING EDGE ENTERTAINMENT

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Professional Series
P810
ViewSonic

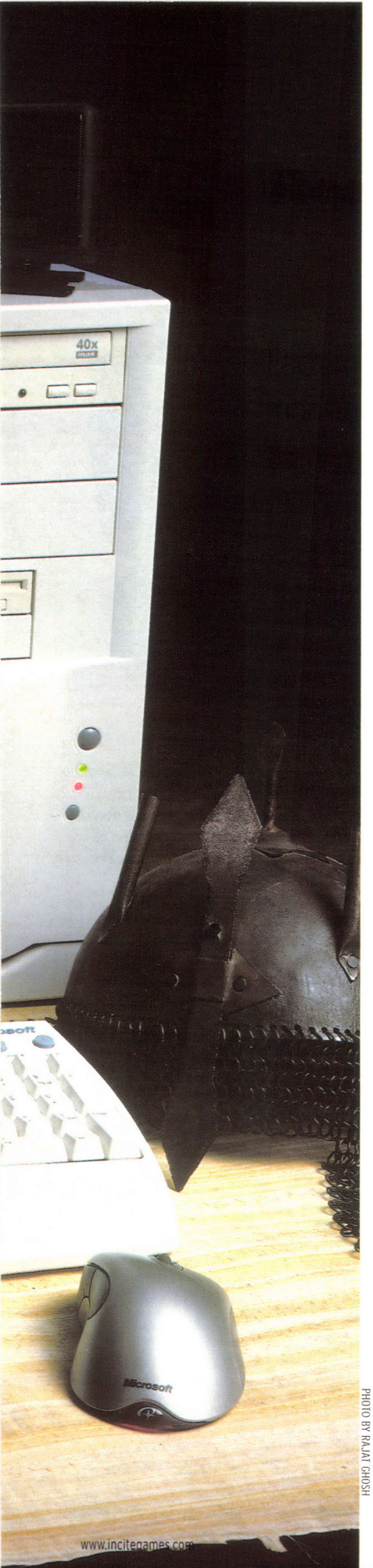


PHOTO BY RAJAT GHOSH

Realize Your Every Fantasy

Each month, we'll bring you the recipe for your very own monster machine. THIS MONTH | RPG Machine

IN THE RIG

1. CPU: Pentium III/600MHz, www.intel.com, $430

2. RAM: 128MB, www.kingston.com, $155

3. Hard Drive: 9.1GB 7200RPM ULTRA 66, www.ibm.com, $110

4. Video Card: Voodoo3 3000, www.3dfx.com, $130

5. Sound Card: Guillmot Fortissimo, www.guillmot.com, $35

6. CD-ROM: Kenwood 42x TRUEX CD-ROM, www.kenwood.com, $75

7. Speakers: Cambridge SoundWorks FourPoint Surround FPS2000 digital, www.soundblaster.com, $150

8. Monitor: Viewsonic P810 21-inch monitor, www.viewsonic.com, $800

9. Modem: 3Com U.S. Robotics 56K Faxmodem, www.3com.com, $60

10. Keyboard: **(a)** Generic keyboard, $10 **(b)** Microsoft Natural Keyboard Pro, www.microsoft.com, $55

11. Mouse: Microsoft IntelliMouse Explorer, www.microsoft.com, $75

12. ZIP Drive: Backup internal ZIP Drive, www.iomega.com, $95

13. Case: Generic 250 watts power supply, 7 expansion slots: $30

14. Motherboard: Asus P3B-F, www.asus.com, $130

*prices calculated 1/14/2000 at www.pricewatch.com

Ever feel like taking an axe to your computer because it can't play your favorite role-playing games? Same here. These games are notorious for bringing even the mightiest computer to its knees. Why? Because the PC is trying to simulate an entire world for God's sake. Universities need million-dollar supercomputers to do the same thing! Since we don't have that kind of money to burn, there are some key tricks you can look into for boosting your performance.

We'd recommend getting at least a Pentium III/600MHz CPU, because these games are only getting more demanding with time. Want a perfect example? Don't even think of playing *Ultima IX: Ascension* with anything less than a 500MHz machine. At least with the 600MHz you should be good for a while. Of course you'll need to pile on the RAM as well, so get at least 128MB under the hood.

As for why we chose the Voodoo3 3000 video card, there are still plenty of RPGs out there with 3dfx-enabled 3D. Since the card will also support Direct3D, it should be a sound choice until the newer Voodoo4 and 5 cards appear in stores. And since you're doing so much to enhance your view of the world you're about to explore, get a nice display. The bigger the better, and the Viewsonic P810 21-inch monitor will definitely do the trick.

Try Guillmot's Fortissimo sound card. It is relatively cheap and will do a good job of supporting both EAX and A3D sound effects on your favorite dungeon romp. We've yet to find a suitable replacement for Cambridge SoundWorks FPS 2000 speakers, so why change a good thing?

This is your basic hardware solution for getting medieval on your PC, but you should also keep your eye on the distant worlds awaiting you on the Internet. Some RPGs have multiplayer options, but many online-only games are commanding top dollar these days. How do you get into one of those?

If you're venturing into the online RPG world, having a 56K connection is a no-brainer. In fact, if you plan on sacrificing your life and $10 a month for an *Everquest* account, you should look into something faster. A cable modem or DSL connection through your home phone line is likely to give you better results. Prices will vary by area, but you can spend as little as $60 a month and get blazing speeds. Rather than go into more detail here, check back at our December 1999 issue for more details on the ins and outs of online gaming ("Online Adventures," page 90), or check out our Web site at www.incitegames.com.

The more you can see, the greater the advantage. Since that requires setting your PC to a higher image resolution, you need a top of the line graphics card.

Add Microsoft's IntelliMouse Explorer and Natural Keyboard Pro to get the most out of your role-playing and soon enough, you'll be lord and master of the kingdom. Just be careful of the mighty upgrade dragon coming over the horizon.

–Darren Gladstone

We Like to Watch

TESTED **Web Cam Go,** Creative Labs, www.creativelabs.com, $150
QuickCam Pro, Logitech, www.logitech.com, $150

If we had an Internet camera, would hot exchange students come in and strip for us?

If you've seen *American Pie*, you already know where this is going. In fact, the film used Logitech's QuickCam Pro for Nadia's infamous Internet show.

This got us thinking. If we had an Internet camera, would hot exchange students come in and strip for us? Not quite. But it couldn't hurt to try. Preparing for our USB-enabled peepshow, we perched the QuickCam Pro atop the computer. A crisp picture, simple software control interface, and bundled microphone sweetened the deal.

Without even cracking open the instruction manual we could do everything from recording videos and still pictures to creating video emails and posting video streams to the Internet. The picture quality ranged from 320x240 resolution at 30 frames per second to 640x480 resolution at 15 frames per second. Another cool feature for the paranoid types is the motion detection software.

Of course, spying upon co-workers is frowned upon here in the office (wink, wink).

If your needs are a little more sinister and sneaky...or you just want some flexibility, check out Creative Labs' WebCam Go. With it you get much of the same functionality as with Logitech's model, minus the microphone. It is also packed with video and photo editing capabilities, motion surveillance, and equally impressive display resolutions mirroring the QuickCam Pro inside its chunky plastic shell.



R2-D0-U This little guy might look like a bland droid, but it works.

But here's the part where it gets cool. Yank the WebCam Go from your PC and it doubles as a basic digital camera. Sure, it lacks both flash and any high-end digital camera features, but with two AAA batteries, the 4MB internal memory can store 90-200 images (depending on picture quality). Bear in mind that this won't give you stellar digital images; it's just a nice additional feature.

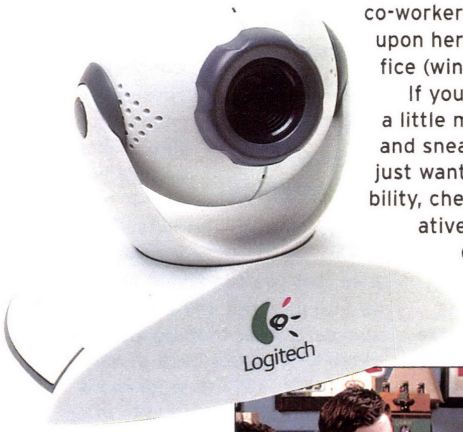
Both models are fairly evenly matched, but considering that both cameras come in at $150, we found that the big difference laid in the extras. Logitech's software bundle has more flexibility and is easier to use. The WebCam Go software certainly looks prettier, but in our opinion, doesn't work as well.

So, it boils down to your needs. The WebCam Go wins points on the "geek-on-the-go" factor, while the QuickCam Pro gives you some killer images from only one spot. But if Nadia showed up at your place, would you really want to leave?

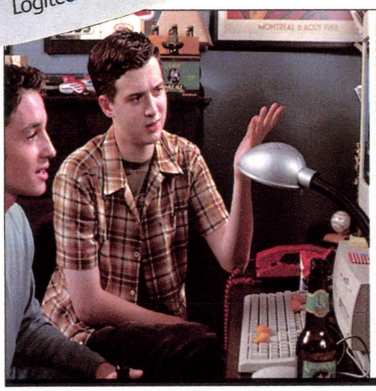
–Darren Gladstone

QuickCam Pro
Overall ★★★★½

WebCam Go
Overall ★★★★½



EVIL EYE The QuickCam Pro looks a little too much like an actual eyeball.





Piece of the Pie

American Pie is the *Porky's* of the '00s. But for the two people out there that have yet to see the film, here's the premise for the scene we're talking about: Our hero, Jim, gets the bright idea to use a Web camera to spy on Nadia while she's changing in his room. Little does he know that he is broadcasting the event to everyone at school. For the full unedited version, **pick up the special edition DVD for about $25.**

3D Cards at War

TESTED **Rage Fury MAXX**, ATI, www.atitech.ca, $270
3D Blaster Annihilator Pro, Creative, www.creative.com, $300

It's getting to the point where CPU speed has been rendered nearly irrelevant. That is if you take into consideration the fact that scoring a Pentium III/650MHz with 128MB RAM for under $1,000 isn't an outlandish prospect. But this doesn't mean that hardware manufacturers aren't continuing to push the technological envelope. Years ago, a CPU was obsolete only a few months after its purchase. Nowadays graphics cards have this dubious distinction.

We got our hands on two of the latest combatants in the graphics cards wars: the ATI Rage Fury MAXX and the Creative 3D Blaster Annihilator Pro, which boasts nVidia's venerable GeForce256 DDR chipset. Pitting these two against each other isn't so much akin to comparing apples and oranges, but rather comparing a red delicious to a granny smith. Sure, both are apples, and both taste damn good, but the two taste decidedly different.

Sporting two Rage 128 Pro chips, each with 32MB of memory, ATI's Rage Fury MAXX is no slouch with a 500Mpixel/second fill rate and DVD playback. As a 2D/3D card, the Rage Fury MAXX can hold its own; the thing is, other cards—namely the Creative 3D Blaster Annihilator Pro—are far better for gaming.

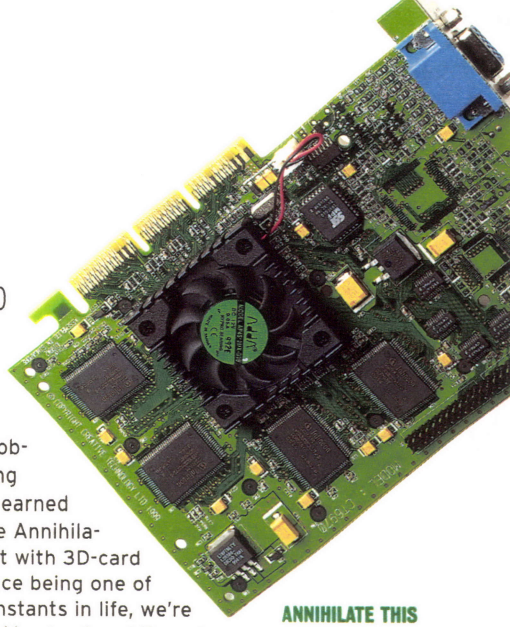
For Example, with *Quake III: Arena* frame-rate tests, the Rage Fury MAXX consistently achieved frame rates in the 50s: 56.97fps at 800x600/32-bit and 52.2fps at 1024x768/32-bit. Likewise it achieved a 3DMark2000 score of 2602.

On the other hand, the Creative 3D Blaster Annihilator Pro has been built exclusively for gaming. Sporting hardware T&L (transformation and lighting), the card frees up the CPU to handle its own business: "mundane" things like game physics and artificial intelligence.

In the lab we achieved mixed results with the Creative 3D Blaster Annihilator Pro. *Quake III: Arena* tests varied widely depending on whether or not we were in 16- or 32-bit mode. At 800x600, the 3D Blaster achieved frame rates of 64.03fps in 32-bit mode. However, when we changed to 16-bit mode the frame rate went up to 76.47fps. The numbers were consistent as we increased the game's resolution: 40.7fps at 1024x768/32-bit and 67.2fps at 1024x768/16-bit. The 3D Blaster likewise achieved a 3Dmark2000 score of 3242.

We were hoping for better 32-bit color support and the lack of TV-out was a bit of a let down. But if we absolutely had to buy a new graphics card right now, we'd have no problem plunking down hard earned cash on the Annihilator Pro. But with 3D-card obsolescence being one of the few constants in life, we're waiting for Voodoo4 and 5 cards before we buy anything.

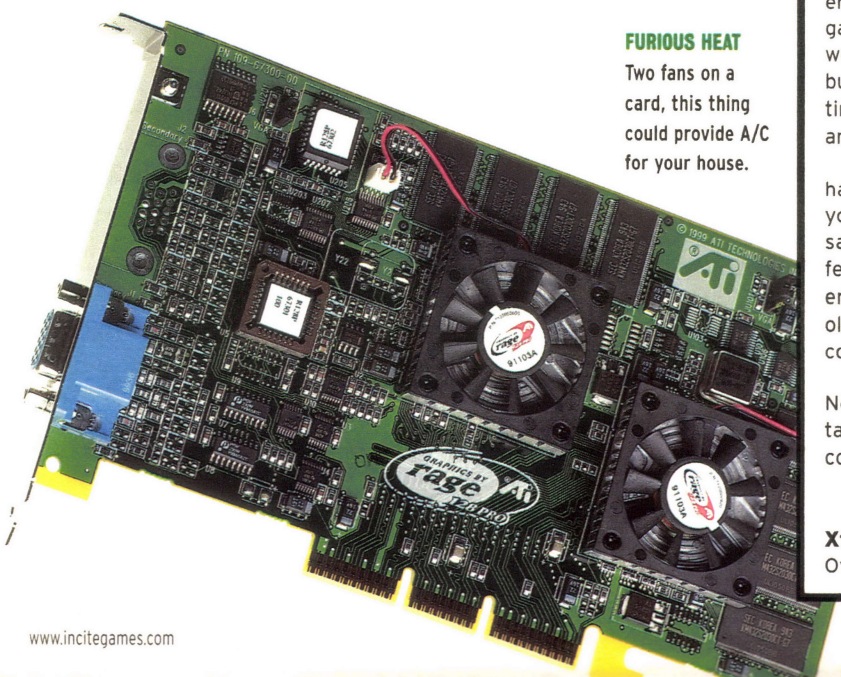
—William O'Neal



ANNIHILATE THIS WEEK It is perfection for now. But for now ain't gonna last very long, folks.

Rage Fury MAXX
Overall ★★★☆☆

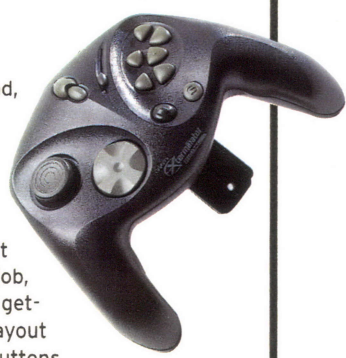
3D Blaster Annihilator Pro
Overall ★★★★★



FURIOUS HEAT Two fans on a card, this thing could provide A/C for your house.

Grip Dis

TESTED **Xterminator Digital Game Pad**, Gravis, www.gravis.com, $100



The Xterminator is shaped like a gamepad, but bristles with more buttons and knobs than an F-16 cockpit. It promises to be the be-all end-all controller for games...and to a degree it works. It will handle any job, but it's just a little tricky getting accustomed to the layout and feel of some of the buttons.

If you're thinking that you have seen this model before, you're right. This is the exact same controller that came out a few years ago. The only difference being a plug that turns the old unit into a USB compatible controller.

It's nothing revolutionary. Next time we'd prefer true digital response and a little more comfort close at hand.

—DG

LOTSA JOY You can kill some bots and fly a flight sim with this thing.

Xterminator Digital Game Pad
Overall ★★★☆☆

Gearheads

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The Big Question of the Month

Quick 3D Fix or 3dfx?

Q. Should I sink my money into a new GeFORCE card or wait until the Voodoo4 and Voodoo5 cards come out? What's the difference anyway?

A. First, let's look at nVidia's GeFORCE 256 DDR cards, which you can find in products like Creative Labs' Annihilator Pro (reviewed in this issue).

GeFORCE technology has built-in hardware support for transformation and lighting (T&L), but the newer DDR cards provide a huge performance gain. Our in-house estimates are about a 30 percent improvement over the regular GeFORCE 256 cards. The main catch is that these cards promise to take a good deal of the heat off of your PC, but there aren't any games that currently take advantage of hardware T&L support.

3dfx, however, will throw an outrageous amount of horsepower at games with its new Voodoo4 and 5 cards and will be Voodoo3 friendly out of the box. The scalable VSA-100 chips mean that you can get a "simple" one chip Voodoo4 4500 with 32MB RAM or go all out and get a four-chipped Voodoo5 6000 with 128MB RAM. The goal of the new cards is to be fully compatible with current Voodoo drivers, provide 32-bit color, and still maintain 60 frames per second at high (1600x1200) resolutions. Will it succeed? We'll have to wait and see when it hits store shelves...-allegedly by the time you read this article.

Our take on the matter is this: If you want to play existing games faster, 3dfx looks like the better choice in the short run. However, if you want a card that will work well with most games on the market but will really strut its stuff in a couple of months, go for nVidia.

Of course, once Voodoo4 and Voodoo5 cards hit the streets and we can actually get a look at them, our views may change. Stay tuned to Gearheads!

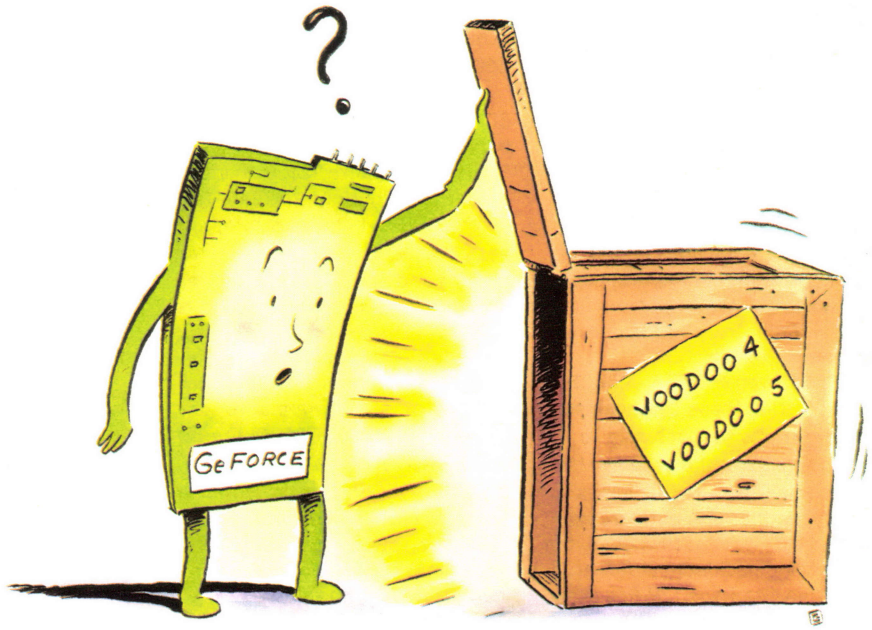


ILLUSTRATION BY A.J. GARCES

Bigger, Better Stronger

Q. My friend and I have the same exact system specs down to our Voodoo3 2000 cards. The only difference is that I've got 128MB RAM and he's got 64MB. Why, then, does he get 35 frames per second (fps) playing *Unreal Tournament* while I'm dragging along at 24fps?

A. There are a lot of other factors that come into play. To find out exactly why your system is running like a pig, we'd need to look closely at all your system specs, but here's a quick troubleshooting checklist for boosting performance. Any of the following can slow down your system significantly.

Are you playing at a higher resolution than your buddy is? Do you have the newest drivers for your hardware? Have you downloaded the latest patches for the game? Do you have anything running in the background (such as antivirus programs)? All of these could spell the type of performance disaster you've been talking about.

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GeFORCE 256 DDR An improved GeFORCE card that calculates graphics more quickly than older cards (DDR = Double Data Rate)

3dfx VSA-100 Chips New Voodoo chips promising to work in tandem for boosted game performance

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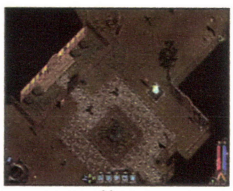
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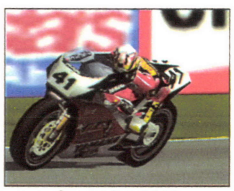


Windows Games

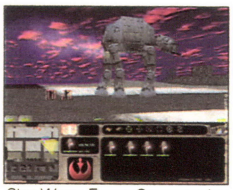
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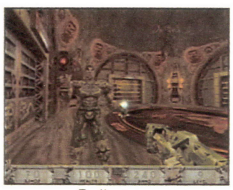
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Sim Your Life

The Sims Gives You the Golden Opportunity to Play God—Don't Blow It

As with our own lives, time management is perhaps the greatest challenge in the wonderful world of *The Sims*. Between going to work, the fact that there are no weekends, and the seemingly endless chain of mundane tasks you must accomplish each day, it's very hard to find the time to concentrate on the things that matter most to your Sims—having fun and socializing.

The fact that the game is so free-form and there really is no one way to play "correctly" makes it just that much more challenging.

This strategy guide will show you one way to play that can and will lead to a prosperous—albeit unscrupulous—household of Sims.

We'll start with the Sim creation and building stages, and then we'll walk you through the daily lives of our Sims in diary fashion—pointing out helpful tips and strategies along the way.

Keep in mind that this isn't the only way to play, but rather one of many. Rest assured, however, there's useful information here for every play style.

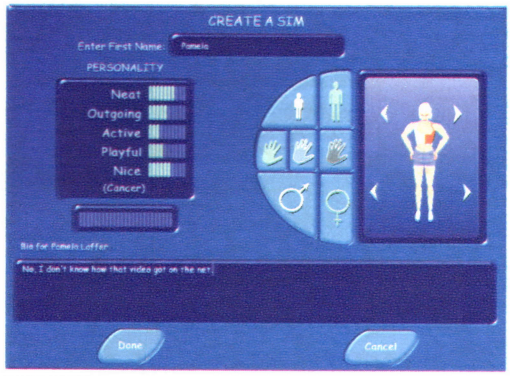
On the 10th Day

Perhaps the easiest way to start is to create your own Sims to torment, rather than use the prefabricated families. Why? Because this way you know exactly what you are getting and have no one to blame for your Sims' behavior but yourself!

No one wants a lazy Sim that lives like a pig and does nothing to help themselves. So it's really important to pay attention to the Personality box settings, where you determine your Sim's Neat, Outgoing, Active, Playful, and Nice levels.



RAISE 'EM RIGHT Well-rounded Sims are easier to keep happy than those high in one Personality trait and low in others.



BABEWATCH Yes, two Sims are always better than one. Larry, say hello to your new roomie!

The simplest thing to do when you are first starting the game is to distribute the personality points evenly among all the traits, thereby creating a well-rounded Sim. However, our first dabblings with our Sims led us to believe they were slobs so we upped the neatness points a bit for our Larry Laffer (see screen). You may be better off, however, using those neatness points for the rest of the traits and then hiring a maid as soon as you can.

We are sure, though, that it's easier to start with two Sims in a household than one. This way each Sim will have a social partner 24 hours a day. Thus, we created a second Sim—this time a foxy woman named Pamela—to move in with Larry.

We'll stop our Sim family here, as adding to the mix now will only make things more complicated. It is important to note that while Larry and Pamela share the same last name they are not married—you'll have to build up their relationship as you would with any other two Sims.

It's Martha Stewart Time

Now it's time to build our Sims a house. We choose to build rather than buy because, again, we'll have control over what we get—and plus, using the home design tools is just plain fun!

First we need to choose a lot to build on—one choice would be to demolish Sim Lane 5 or 6, which are the most affordable lots, and build there. However, we'll leave those for single Sims to move into, and we'll build on 7 Sim Lane instead.

With only $14,000 left after buying the property, there's not a lot of creative things you can do—you just need to get the bare essentials for your Sims. First we'll build the walls for a small house with four rooms—kitchen, living room, bedroom, and bath. It's important to make each room as large as possible—Sims love space. However, it's also important to make them as architecturally interesting as possible too—Sims aren't fond of boring rectangular rooms. It's tough, as you don't have much money to play with, but it is possible to create a design that's suited to future expansion and is at least a little creative.

Now that we've got the basic design of our rooms, we'll add the items every Sim needs to have a chance in Sim life—a bed, toilet, fridge, TV, sofa, microwave, and shower. We'll also add a sink, a side table and lamp, and a kitchen table to give our Sims a place to serve food. Other than the toilet and fridge—both important for obvious reasons—



WALLS ARE US Get your Sims off to a good start with a spacious room design and all of the bare necessities before you buy anything else!

Sim Nudist?

Um...Hey Larry, Forget Something?

Strange things can happen in the world of *The Sims*—and not all of them by design. Pay attention, or you might miss something really funny, such as Larry's nudist phase. One day, after taking a shower, Larry simply didn't put his clothes back on and he went to work in the buff. This lasted for several days, until he decided clothes were a good thing. Maxis confirmed this was a bug, albeit one many gamers might appreciate.



NAKED POOL ANYONE? Just watch where you put that cue stick, please. One false step and Larry's a kebab.



BIRTHDAY SUIT Larry tries to impress his hot neighbor by greeting her nude. James and Pam stare in disbelief.

the two most important items are the bed and TV. Buy the absolute best you can afford, as these items have a huge impact on your Sims' feelings of well-being right off the bat.

Next, we'll place as many windows as possible—Sims love bright, airy rooms—and decorate sparingly with the most affordable carpets, tiles, and wall textures. These are all of secondary importance as they can be easily upgraded later, but no Sim likes a bare wall or floor.

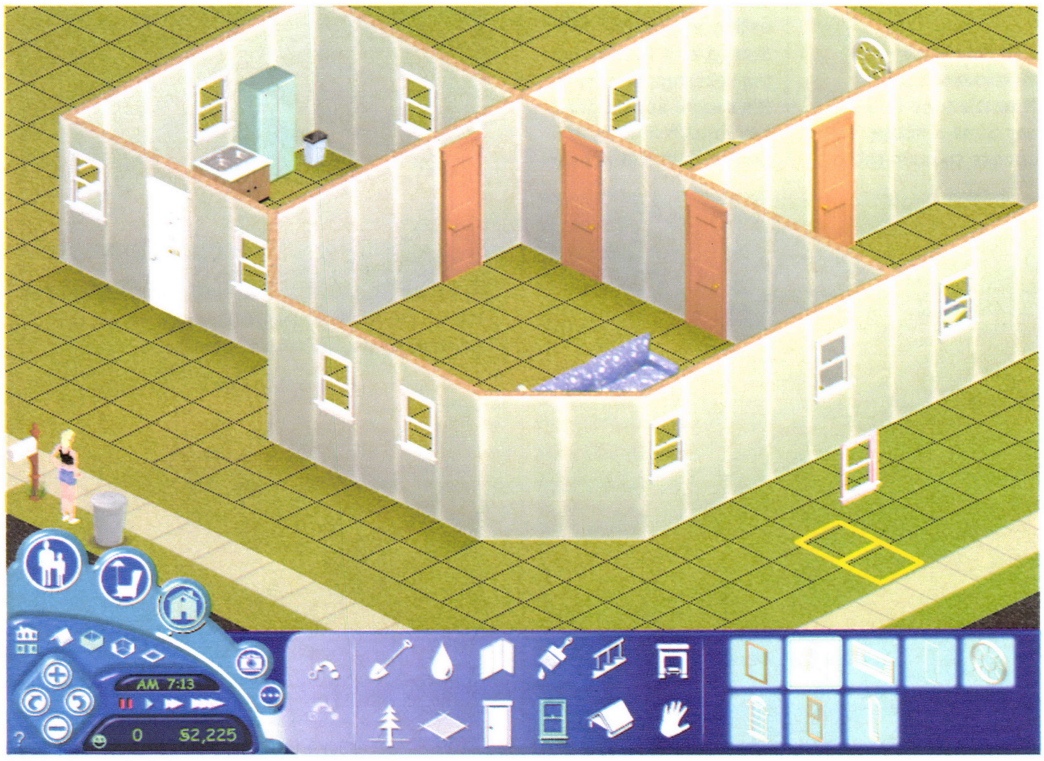
Last but by no means least comes the telephone—make sure you have enough money left to buy one! Without a phone, your Sims can't call the neighbors to come over for a visit, they can't order a pizza, and they can't call the fire department. Get one and place it in a central location in the house.



PHONE HOME Whatever you do, don't forget to buy a phone as soon as possible! Think about it—without a phone you can't order pizza, call your friends, or have phone sex.

Unless you want your Sims to throw their trash all over the house, you should buy a wastebasket or two. If you have any dough left, spend it on some cheap wall decorations and houseplants to spruce up the place a bit.

Okay, time to start living already! Let's hit the Live mode button and let Larry and Pam explore their new digs. It's important for you to follow them around as they do because they'll let you know what they like and what they despise.



SIMS DO WINDOWS The more windows you put in your house, the happier your Sims will be. Nobody likes to live in a prison cell, even in the virtual world. Plus, your Sims will be able to see the hot neighbors in the next yard.

THE DAYS OF OUR SIM LIVES

Day One: Move-in.

After getting acquainted with their new digs—which they liked overall—Larry and Pam got down to the business of living. Larry checked the paper for a job and got hired as a daredevil for $175 a day! Pam fixed meals and greeted the neighbors that came to visit. All told, Larry and Pam met three other Sims, which is not a bad day at all.

Larry, a self-proclaimed lady-killer, took it upon himself to make some time with his hot roomie. After a little chit-chat he turned on the flirtation charm and promptly received a slap across the face from an indignant Pam!

Day Two: Hard Times!

Larry and Pam overspent for their house and appliances and pay the price. After having their neighbors over for lunch and snacks, they're out of money when dinnertime comes around. Well, they can't go hungry, so Larry and



HARD, HUNGRY TIMES Hungry and out of cash? Sell something for a quick fix—you can always replace it tomorrow! Do you really need that coffee table? How much can you get for the stereo?

Pam sell their dining room table to get some quick cash for food. Larry's got to go to work well-fed and in a good mood if he hopes to get promoted. After dinner Larry manages to flirt with Pam without getting slapped! The trick appears to be "talk-joke-compliment-flirt." Before, Larry did the ol' "talk-flirt" combination.

Day Three: Good Times!

Selling that table was a good call—Larry got promoted to Bungee Jump Instructor! Now they can replace the table, buy a dresser (which will let them change their clothes), and even buy a few plants to spruce up the place. Larry really puts the moves on Pam, adding dancing, hugging, and kissing to yesterday's mix. The next thing you know they're in bed together—Larry no longer needs to sleep on the couch (which is good because the bed obviously has a much higher comfort quotient)!

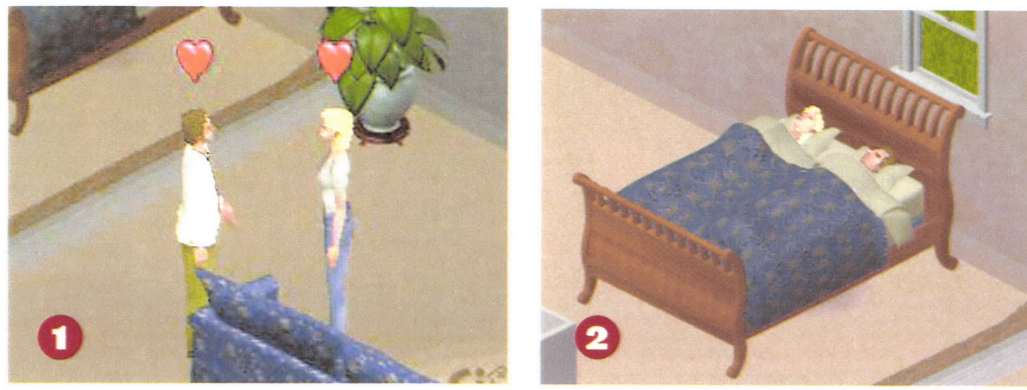
Day Four: Burgled!

Money's tight, so Pam finds a job as a waitress—her long-term goal is to be an actress, of course. After work, Larry meets Chris Roomies from across the street and hits on her—naturally. In the process, though, he makes a new family friend. Cool!

On a whim, Larry decides to buy a burglar alarm because you can never be too careful. That night, what do you know, they get burgled! However, thanks to the alarm the thief is caught red-handed and Larry and Pam receive a $1,000 reward for his capture (plus $400 from their insurance company for the TV, which the police need to keep as evidence).

With the money, they buy a new TV, a bookcase (to improve their mechanical and cooking skills and for recreation), and some more decorations for the house. They also buy a trash compactor, which should help keep the place neater as it can hold lots more waste than a trash basket.

Oh yeah, and Larry and Pam heat it up and end up getting married in the living room. Almost forgot about that.



LANGUAGE OF LOVE Larry's aggressiveness with Pam (1) actually pays off—he's now allowed to sleep in the same bed with her (2)! Time for a little kissy-kissy. But be careful! You might see the stork sooner than you would like!

Day Five: Love Comes Again!

All that smooching with Larry puts Pam in a great mood and she gets promoted at work to "Extra." Can *Bay Watch* be far behind?

With the extra dough they buy a new stove, which should produce more substantial meals. Pam goes right to work studying cooking. The house is still a mess so they hire a maid. Meanwhile, Larry stays home from work to patch things up with Chris, who was feeling neglected. But he goes too far and ends up proposing—and Chris accepts!

Polygamy is allowed in the world of *The Sims,* and it is an excellent way to bring a large sum of cash into the household. When a single Sim moves in with their beloved they bring their net-worth with them. However, Chris wasn't single—she had a roommate. So all she brought to Larry and Pam's household was herself. Remember to marry for money next time, Larry! (He has a thing for blondes.)

Day Six: Tragedy Strikes!

Though borne from good intentions, Chris' decision to try to make breakfast without the slightest inkling about how to fry an egg turns bad. Fire erupts in the kitchen and spreads to the surrounding appliances. Chris tries to douse the flames but instead is surrounded by them and dies a ghastly death!

Larry and Pam do their best to move on. Pam skips work to clean up the house while Larry mourns over Chris' ashes and then goes to work.



NICE ROCK! Larry gets carried away and asks Chris to marry him—now Larry and Pam have a new housemate!

They sell the bookcase and a painting to replace the burned stove and fridge. (Note: works of art go up in value! An enterprising Sim can make a lot of money buying and selling art.) Alas, Larry can't put Chris' death out of his mind, and he and Pam sell the house and move into 6 Sim Lane to put the bad vibes—and Chris' ashes—behind them. After refurnishing the new house, they get back into their regular routines.

Day 7: New Neighbor

The house at 7 Sim Lane doesn't stay empty for long. We leave Larry and Pam to move in a new neighbor, Pussy Galore. A stunning out-of-work actress with just one hit part to her name, Ms. Galore's looking for a man to take care of her, and Larry's ripe for the plucking. Larry, you see, came by to say hello, and before you know it the two of them were smooching like teens on prom night.

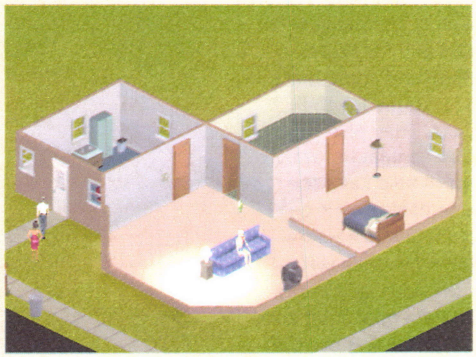
Day 8: Dirty Larry

A consummate Bond fan, Larry can't get Ms. Galore off his mind. After work he invites her over, and while Pam fixes dinner—poor naive Pam—he turns on the charm. After dinner,

A Sim's Castle Is His Home

From Dump to Divine

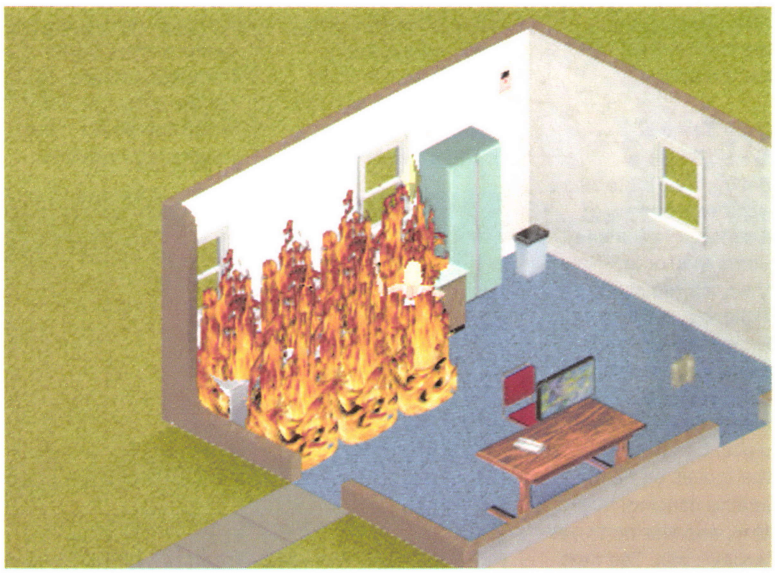
Designing, building, and modifying your Sims' houses is a ton of fun—as is watching how the houses evolve over time (if you're doing well, that is). Here's how The Laffers' house grew from its humble beginnings at the start of this article into its current near-castle status by the end.



SIM HOVEL Hey, you gotta start somewhere—at least the house isn't just a big square!



SIM PARTY CENTRAL With a house like this, finding neighbors to party with should never be a problem.



I'M BURNING FOR YOU Pam should have spent more time studying cooking before trying to make that Baked Alaska! Her last words: ARRGHHHHHH—ACHKKKKK—ARGHHHHHHHHHH!!!

The Inside Scoop From the Real Experts

Who Better Than the Folks That Made *The Sims* to Dispense a Little Gameplay Wisdom? We Go Straight to the Source at Maxis to Give You the Best Advice

Will Wright, Designer

1. Each kid in the family counts as a tax credit, your bills are 10 percent lower for each kid in the family. 4 kids = 60 percent (100 percent - 40 percent) of the regular tax bill.
2. Once you have a good pile of cash, you can earn a nice living by just buying and selling the expensive artwork (buy low, sell high).
3. Make rooms on the larger side to allow them to hold more objects down the line.
4. You can build outside stairways to save on interior space. Just make sure the top landing for the staircase falls on a valid second floor tile.
5. You can build elevated walkways around your lot using the columns and floor tool.
6. You can use the flooring tool to entice your Sims to prefer certain routes outside. They will try to stay on a floored path if it's not too far out of their way (a useful trick for keeping them out of the flowerbed).
7. Sims prefer rooms with interesting shapes (rather than boxy, rectilinear ones).



Kana Ryan, Producer

1. Move in single people to your neighborhood. Get them to move in with or marry another of your Sims...they bring their money with them!

Chris Trottier, Assistant Producer



1. Invite neighbors to do fun things with you (like watching TV, getting in the hot tub, or playing pool). They will only do most of those things if you're doing them first.
2. Likewise, neighbors will leave if they don't get enough comfort. To help them, invite them to do something where they'll be sitting, like eating, playing chess, or watching TV.
3. Don't spend personality points on neatness. It's cheap to get the maid to clean up after your Sims.
4. To avoid neat Sims washing their hands constantly, don't buy a sink.



David Oester, Programmer

1. If you have a TV or radio in your bedroom, be sure to turn it off before your Sim goes to bed or he'll have trouble sleeping.
2. Buying a burglar alarm can protect you from losing property, and you can gain reward money when the crook is caught.
3. If your Sim is a bad cook, consider buying a microwave instead of a stove.
4. Hire a maid if you don't like to spend time cleaning up the house.
5. Hire a repair guy to do routine upkeep on your household appliances before they break down.

Sean Baity, Assistant Producer



1. If you don't like the original "skin" (clothing) you picked for your Sim, buy them a dresser and they can change into any clothes you want.
2. Sims will try to find a counter to prep food on when you tell them to cook dinners. Make sure there is a counter near the fridge so they don't walk all over the house looking for a counter.
3. The Couch Potato Strategy: Don't buy beds...buy expensive recliners and sofas. Not only can you use them for sitting comfort, but you can also use them to sleep on. Couple them with TVs and you get comfort and fun at the same time.
4. Invite guests over and you can ask them to watch TV with you so you get social points while receiving comfort and fun!

Don Hopkins, Software Engineer

1. Here's an interesting way to subtly "tilt" the game by distorting time, one person at a time:

If you point to the selected person while they're walking, they will speed up. If you point to an unselected person (or a visitor) while they're walking, they will slow down.

Applications: You can follow the selected person around with the cursor to make them more efficient! If a hot babe comes over and two wild and crazy guys are racing over to her for some one-on-one social interaction, you can give one guy the advantage by slowing the other guy down.

Rationale: The "real" reason for this feature is to make people easier to select for social interactions: they slow down when you point at them so they don't slip out from under the mouse as fast. The slowing down when you point at deselected people was such an interesting way to subtly effect the game that we decided to make it speed up when you point at the selected person too (since you don't need to click on the selected person).

Patrick Buechner, PR Director



1. Purchase critical furnishings before you design your house. That way you won't run out of money and not be able to purchase a source of food and hygiene.
2. To have more career choices for my Sims early in their lives, I'll purchase the cheap computer so they can search the Internet for jobs. Then I'll sell the computer back quickly before it loses too much value.



PERSISTENCE PAYS OFF Marriage is an excellent way to boost your Sim's bank account quickly. In this case, the lovely Ms. Pussy Galore brings in a ton of friends and, more importantly, 17,954 Simolians to the household.

Pam's worn out so she retires early, which means Larry has no need to hold back.

After a little dancing, a little hugging, a little backrub, a little gift, and a little kissing, Larry pops the question and is shot down! It turns out that even after Larry's full-court-press, Ms. Galore's in too bad of a mood to accept. Larry dishes out a few more hugs, kisses, jokes, and tickles and tries again with the same result.

Undaunted, he turns on the TV and watches a romantic "chick flick" with Ms. Galore, and then he serves up some more food. Then a hug, tickle, and kiss later Ms. Galore accepts! This time Larry did it right, and Pussy brings $17,000 to the household, which now consists of three adults and no kids. Kids, however, provide a good tax break, so maybe some spawning is in order.



FAST FRIENDS Can you believe another woman finds Larry charming? He's already got one in bed! What a swinger!

Day 9: Familiar Territory

The house at 6 Sim Lane is too small for three people so the Laffers sell (this is done by evicting the Laffers from 6 Sim Lane) the house and move back into 7 Sim Lane. Now, they have $31,000 to play with (Larry and Pam's net worth plus Ms. Galore's), so they can do a lot of remodeling. They add a second bedroom—again, with the best bed—because you can't have three Sims in a bed.



LOVE...SO EXCITING AND NEW Larry lives up to his reputation by scoring with another lovely lady.

A mirror, which Sims use to brush their teeth and practice their speeches (which boosts charisma), is added to the bathroom. After upgrading all the windows to brighten up the rooms, there's still a lot of money left. How does a kick-ass stereo and dance floor (for partying), a $3,000 PC (for gaming), a bookcase and chessboard (for mental enrichment), a bathtub (for hygiene and comfort), and a new kitchen floor sound? We thought so—Pam, Larry, and Pussy are starting to live large now!

Day 10: The Stork Visits

Juggling two wives in the same house is tough, but Larry manages by paying attention to one while the

From the SimHorses' Mouths

Did You Know?
In Buy mode, you can group items according to their usage by clicking twice on the Buy mode icon.

Talk Is Cheap
Get us talking as soon as possible and as much as possible. We gotta make friends. A social Sim is a happy Sim.

Timing Is Everything
Don't just go for a smooch or, for that matter, a compliment, without some conversational foreplay. Most Sims will take this as being too forward. Chat us up first!

We Want Our MTV
Have your Sims watch a lot of TV–with others if possible. It boosts Sims' Fun and Social quotients simultaneously.

Divide and Conquer
If you have two married Sims in a household, keep one at home to do chores and establish friendships with the neighbors. One Sim spouse's friends are the other Sim spouse's friends as well!

Get Off to a Fast Start
Start a house with two same-sex roomies. That way each can marry a single Sim of the opposite sex from the neighborhood and add their net worths to the household without having to worry about petty jealousy–at least initially.

Good Hands
Never underestimate the power of a good backrub!

Be A Good Host
It's not enough just to invite neighbors over–you have to feed them and keep them entertained too! Remember to serve a meal when Sim neighbors arrive and then to invite them to watch TV, play pool, or soak in the hot tub with your Sims.

Be Secure
Buy an alarm system as soon as you can–it's a good source of income!

Answer the Phone
Always drop what you're doing–unless that's putting out a fire–to answer the phone. More often than not it's good news, which usually comes in the form of more Simolians!

Percolated Sims
Buy a coffee machine–a good cup of joe can provide a needed energy boost in a pinch.

Switch Sims
Having trouble getting two Sims together because her husband is around? If the other Sim's single, switch your control to its household and invite the interested Sim over for some private shenanigans.

Be Considerate
If one Sim gives another a hug and you hear an exclamation of disgust, perhaps it's time for a shower.

other is busy cooking, studying, or taking a bubble bath.

In fact, Larry manages a little too well–while Pam's on the computer he smooches with Pussy in the living room and she asks if he wants a baby. The next thing you know there's a screaming bundle of joy in the living room.

Day 11: Easy Come, Easy Go

The Laffers' bundle of joy is taken away by Social Services after just one warning. It seems that when a baby cries, one of the Sims should feed it, play with it, or sing to it until it stops. Pam–who has the lowest-paying job–should have stayed home to care for it.

On the bright side, a new Sim has moved into 6 Sim Lane–his name's Bond...James Bond, and Pam thinks he's hot (Pussy knows better than to get involved, however).

End of Days

You're probably starting to sense the cycle here, so we'll stop with the daily reports. Suffice it to say Pam seduces James, who then moves in and adds another $18,000 to the happy household.

A new neighbor, Flash Gordon, moves into 6 Sim Lane, and Pussy Galore seduces him, bringing yet another $18,000 to the Laffers' coffers. This, plus continuing to go to work and seek promotions gives the Laffers enough Simolians to turn their little house into a castle. The house is expanded to have enough bedrooms (three) to keep everyone in the right beds at night and enough room to add the finer things in life. The end.



FORCED RESPONSIBILITY The Laffers ignore their child's needs, and Social Services takes away what the stork gave.



GOING UP? A second story addition–with a wrap-around deck, third bedroom, second bath, and recreation room–is called for to make room for all these unscrupulous Sims.

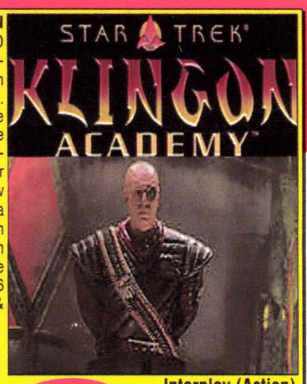
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Eidos (Action)
Release: 3/00
PC CD

$32.95

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N64

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Release: 3/00
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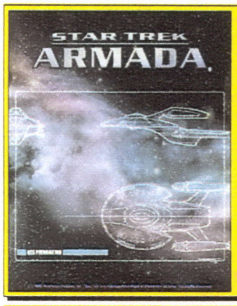
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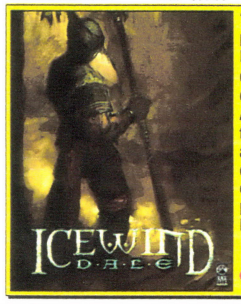
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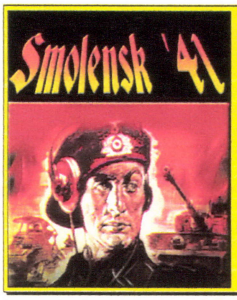


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Blizzard (Roleplaying)
Release: 02/00
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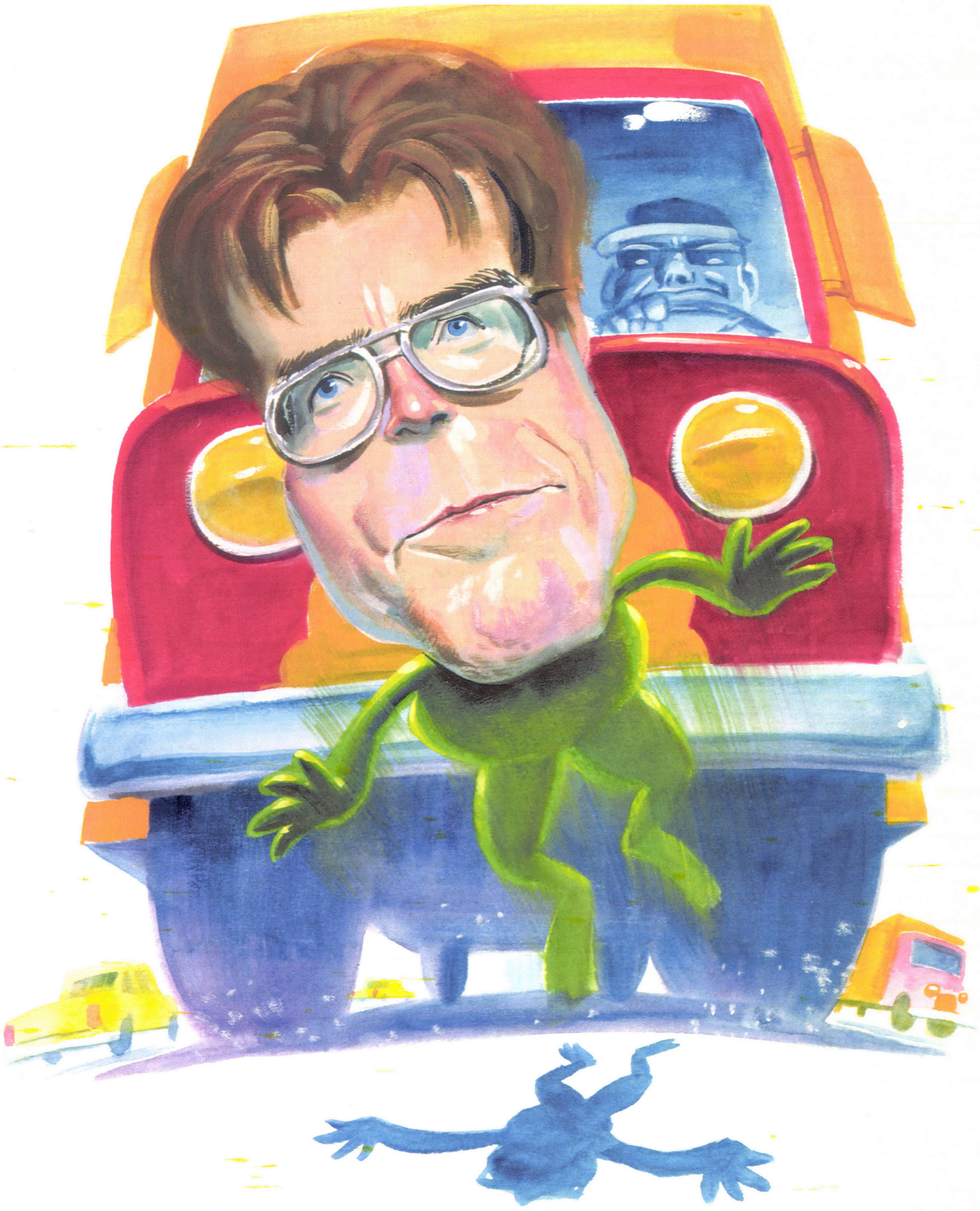
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What's Stephen King's penance for releasing the terrible *F13?* His next game must be *Stephen King's Frogger*

Coming Next Month...



Let's Play Ball!

Spring is upon us and we can't get our minds off of the upcoming baseball season. Of course Senior Editor Gary Walk has his NY Yankees bandwagon all fueled up and ready to pursue their third consecutive title.

But Spring Training also signifies the release of this year's baseball titles. There will be some heavy hitters this year, including EA's *Triple Play 2001*, 3DO's *High Heat 2001*, and *Microsoft Baseball 2001*.

- **KNOCKOUT!** Can Mike Tyson's comeback begin in the gaming arena? Codemasters sure hopes so. We'll preview their upcoming title *Mike Tyson Boxing*.
- **START YOUR ENGINES** Editor-in-Chief Tasos Kaiafas chews the fat with CART racing champion Juan Montoya.
- **WIZARDS OF WAR** Shiny, the makers of *MDK* and *Messiah*, are putting the finishing touches on their masterful strategy RPG, *Sacrifice*.

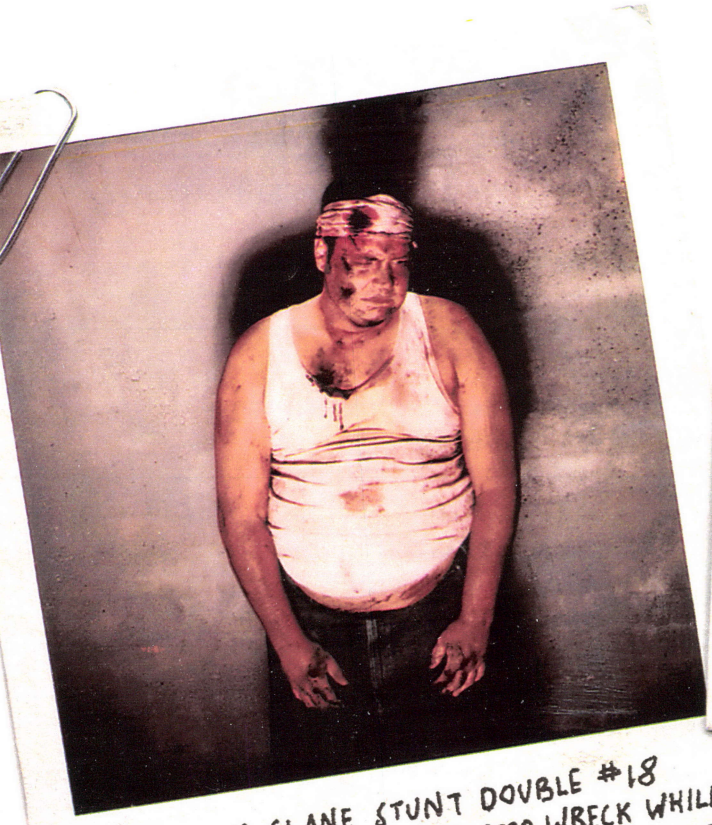
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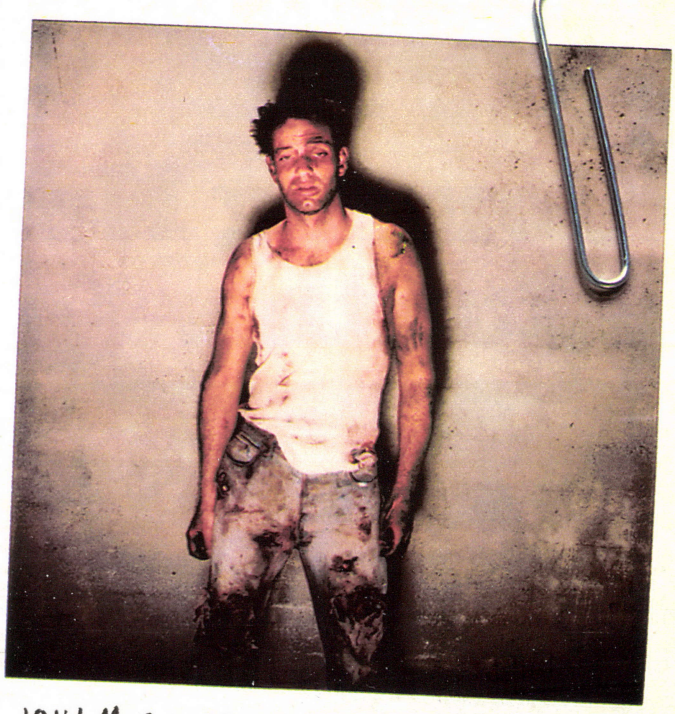
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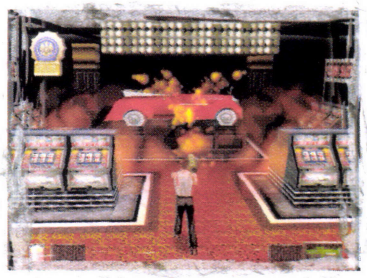
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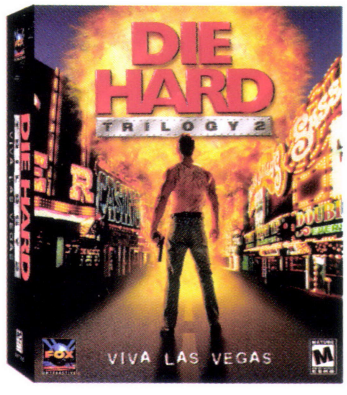
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